

0001

1 WESTERN INTERIOR FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE  
2 REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

3  
4 PUBLIC MEETING

5  
6  
7 VOLUME I

8  
9 Pikes Waterfront Lodge  
10 October 19, 2022  
11 Fairbanks, Alaska  
12 9:00 a.m.

13  
14  
15  
16 COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

17  
18 Jenny Pelkola, Acting Chairman  
19 Timothy Gervais  
20 Don Honea  
21 Jack Reakoff  
22 Pollock Simon  
23 Darrell Vent  
24 Kevin Whitworth

25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31 Regional Council Coordinator, Nissa Pilcher

32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41 Recorded and transcribed by:

42  
43 Computer Matrix Court Reporters, LLC  
44 329 F Street, Suite 222  
45 Anchorage, AK 99501  
46 907-227-5312/sahile@gci.net

47  
48  
49  
50

0002

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50

P R O C E E D I N G S

(Fairbanks, Alaska - 10/19/2022)

(On record)

MS. PILCHER: Good morning, everyone. This is the Western Interior Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting. If folks could take their seats, we'll be getting started in just a few minutes. For those joining us on the phone you can find the agenda and meeting materials online on the Federal Subsistence Program website. The internet address is [www.doi.gov/subsistence](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence) under the regions tab choose Western Interior and then meeting materials.

For all participants on the phone please remember to mute your phones when you are not speaking. If you do not have a mute button on your phone you can press \*6. That will mute you. If you would like to speak, unmute by again pressing \*6. If we do find that a line is not muted and creating a distraction, the operator will mute that line.

All right.

MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. At this time we're going to have the invocation by Don Honea, Jr.

(Invocation)

MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you, Don. I'd like to call this meeting to order at 9:05. With that we'll have roll call.

MS. PILCHER: All right. So roll call. Member Rebecca Wilmarth, were you able to call in?

(No response)

MS. PILCHER: All right. So Don Honea, Jr. from Ruby.

MR. HONEA: Here.

MS. PILCHER: Pollock Simon, Sr. from Allakaket.

0003

1 MR. SIMON: Here.

2

3 MS. PILCHER: Kevin Whitworth from  
4 McGrath.

5

6 MR. WHITWORTH: Here.

7

8 MS. PILCHER: Jack Reakoff from  
9 Wiseman.

10

11 MR. REAKOFF: Here on the phone.

12

13 MS. PILCHER: Tim Gervais from Ruby.

14

15 MR. GERVAIS: Here.

16

17 MS. PILCHER: Darrell Vent from Huslia.

18

19 MR. VENT: Here.

20

21 MS. PILCHER: Jenny Pelkola from  
22 Galena.

23

24 MS. PELKOLA: Here.

25

26 MS. PILCHER: And then Tommy Kriska,  
27 were you able to call in?

28

29 (No response)

30

31 MS. PILCHER: He's stuck in a weather  
32 hold, but he's hopeful to be in this morning. We do  
33 have a quorum.

34

35 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. As you  
36 know, my name is Jenny Pelkola and I'm sitting in for  
37 Mr. Reakoff today, who is home, but he's on the phone.  
38 So thank God. Welcome again to everyone. If you would  
39 introduce yourself. We'll start over here in the front  
40 row.

41

42 MS. WILLIAMS: Good morning. I'm Liz  
43 Williams. I'm an anthropologist with Office of  
44 Subsistence Management. This is my first meeting with  
45 you guys.

46

47 MR. SIMON: Good morning. My name is  
48 Jim Simon. I'm a consultant with Tanana Chiefs  
49 Conference Tribal Resource Stewardship Program and the  
50

0004

1 Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. Good  
2 morning.

3  
4 MR. HAVENER: Good morning, everyone.  
5 I'm Jeremy Havener. I'm the Refuge Subsistence  
6 Coordinator for Koyukuk/Nowitna/Innoko in Galena and  
7 it's great to see everybody in person.

8  
9 MR. GRAHAM: Good morning. I'm Cory  
10 Graham. I'm a fisheries biologist with OSM. It's nice  
11 to be here.

12  
13 MR. UBELAKER: Good morning. Brian  
14 Ubelaker, wildlife biologist with OSM.

15  
16 MS. JULIANUS: Good morning, everybody.  
17 Erin Julianus, wildlife biologist for BLM, Central  
18 Yukon Field Office.

19  
20 MS. MCDAVID: Good morning. My name is  
21 Brooke McDavid. I'm Council Coordinator with OSM and I  
22 coordinate Eastern Interior and Y-K Delta.

23  
24 MS. FARNHAM: Good morning. I'm Nicole  
25 Farnham with the Tanana Chiefs Conference and I'm one  
26 of their fisheries biologists.

27  
28 MR. CAMERON: Good morning. My name is  
29 Matt Cameron. I'm a wildlife biologist for the Gates  
30 of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. It's great  
31 to be here in person.

32  
33 MS. OKADA: Good morning. My name is  
34 Marcy Okada. I'm the subsistence coordinator for Gates  
35 of the Arctic National Park and Preserve.

36  
37 MR. DOWDLE: Good morning. I'm Mark  
38 Dowdle with National Park Service Superintendent, Gates  
39 of the Arctic National Park and Preserve.

40  
41 MR. RICHARDS: Good morning, Madame  
42 Chair, members of the Council. I'm Mark Richards. I'm  
43 the executive director of Resident Hunters of Alaska  
44 and I'm here representing our organization today.

45  
46 MS. STUBY: Good morning, everyone.  
47 I'm Lisa Stuby. I'm with the Alaska Department of Fish  
48 and Game and I'm the area management biologist for  
49 Sport Fish Division for the Yukon River excluding the  
50

0005

1 Tanana.

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

MS. CARROLL: Good morning. I'm so happy to be here in person. I'm Holly Carroll. I work with Fish and Wildlife Service as the Yukon Federal In-Season Manager.

MR. MASCHMANN: Good morning. I'm Gerald Maschmann. I'm a fisheries biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service here in Fairbanks.

MR. MOSES: Good morning. Aaron Moses. I'm the subsistence specialist for Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge.

MR. GUSSE: Good morning. Walker Gusse, Bureau of Land Management, Law Enforcement out of Anchorage.

MR. CHEN: Aloha, Council Members. My name is Glenn Chen. I'm the subsistence branch chief of Bureau of Indian Affairs. Always a pleasure to be here.

MS. WESSELS: Good morning, Madame Chair. Members of the Council. My name is Katya Wessels and I'm Council Coordination Division Supervisor with OSM. I'm very happy to see you here in person today. Thank you.

MR. KRON: Good morning, Madame Chair and Council. I'm Tom Kron here for the OSM leadership team to help with this meeting and I'm super happy to be here in person after two and a half years. Thank you, Madame Chair.

I wanted to say a special thanks to your Chairman. Jack, I'm sorry to hear about your accident. I was looking forward to seeing you, but I'm looking forward to hearing you at this meeting. Thank you.

MS. PILCHER: All right. This is Nissa Pilcher again. So now we'll do introductions of those on the phone. So what I will do is I will run down a list of organizations and call out if you're with that organization, introduce yourself, and then we'll go to members of the public.

0006

1 So we'll start with tribal governments.  
2 If there's anyone online representing a tribal  
3 government if you could please introduce yourself now.

4  
5 (No comments)

6  
7 MS. PILCHER: All right. How about any  
8 Native organizations.

9  
10 (No comments)

11  
12 MS. PILCHER: All right. And then how  
13 about U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

14  
15 MS. MONCRIEFF: Hi. This is Catherine  
16 Moncrieff with the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries  
17 Association.

18  
19 MS. PILCHER: All right. If I breeze  
20 by anybody, feel free to jump in as well. How about  
21 National Park Service on the phone.

22  
23 MS. KLEIN: Nissa, this is Jill Klein.  
24 Sorry to go back to Fish and Wildlife Service.

25  
26 MR. NICORI: Hi, my name is Emmitt  
27 Nicori with the Yukon Delta.

28  
29 MR. HARRIS: Good morning. Frank  
30 Harris, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I'm a  
31 fisheries biologist with the Kenai Fisheries Office.

32  
33 MS. FOX: Good morning. Joanna Fox.  
34 I'm the Refuge Manager for Kanuti National Wildlife  
35 Refuge.

36  
37 MS. PATTON: Good morning to everybody.  
38 This is Eva Patton, Subsistence Program Manager for the  
39 National Park Service Regional Office here in  
40 Anchorage. Good morning, everyone.

41  
42 MS. PILCHER: Good morning, Eva.

43  
44 MR. DEACY: Good morning. This is Will  
45 Deacy with National Park Service.

46  
47 MS. PILCHER: All right. This is  
48 Nissa. Sorry, I'm moving fast. This is only my second  
49 meeting so I'm still a little nervous. If anyone is on  
50

0007

1 from BLM, if they'd introduce themselves.

2

3 MR. MCKEE: Good morning. This is  
4 Chris McKee, Statewide Subsistence Coordinator for BLM  
5 and Interagency Staff Committee member.

6

7 MS. PILCHER: Good morning. If there's  
8 anyone on from Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

9

10 MS. JALLEN: Hi, Nissa. Good morning.  
11 This is Deena Jallen with the Alaska Department of Fish  
12 and Game. I'm the Yukon River Summer Season Manager.  
13 I'm located here in Fairbanks. Thanks.

14

15 MS. GLEASON: Good morning. This is  
16 Christy Gleason, the Yukon River Fall Season Manager  
17 here in Fairbanks with Alaska Department of Fish and  
18 Game. Good morning.

19

20 MS. COLEMAN: Good morning. This is  
21 Jesse Coleman. I'm the Subsistence Resource Specialist  
22 for the Yukon and Interior Region.

23

24 MS. DECKER: Good morning. This is Sam  
25 Decker with Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Thank  
26 you.

27

28 MS. PILCHER: All right. Then the last  
29 on the list. Is there anyone on from OSM that's not in  
30 the room?

31

32 MS. LAVINE: Robbin Lavine, Subsistence  
33 Policy Coordinator with OSM.

34

35 MR. FOLEY: Good morning, Nissa.  
36 Madame Chair and Members of the Council. This is  
37 Kevin Foley, fish biologist with the Office of  
38 Subsistence Management. Good morning.

39

40 MS. VOORHEES: Good morning. This is  
41 Hannah Voorhees, anthropologist with OSM.

42

43 MR. AYERS: Good morning. This is  
44 Scott Ayers. I'm the Fisheries Division Supervisor  
45 with OSM based out of Anchorage. Glad to hear  
46 everybody this morning. Thank you.

47

48 MS. PILCHER: All right. Any members  
49 of the public or anyone else that's on that I missed.

50

0008

1 MR. RISDAHL: Good morning, Madame  
2 Chair. This is Greg Risdahl. I'm the USDA Forest  
3 Service Subsistence Program Leader and Inter-Agency  
4 Staff Committee member. Pleased to be here.

5  
6 MS. STRAM: Good morning. This is  
7 Diana Stram with the North Pacific Fishery Management  
8 Council. Hopefully you guys can hear me okay.

9  
10 MS. PILCHER: Yes, we sure can. Loud  
11 and clear. Is there anyone else online that would like  
12 to introduce themselves.

13  
14 (No comments)

15  
16 MS. PILCHER: All right. Just a couple  
17 quick things before we get started. I just wanted to  
18 let everybody know Fairbanks is currently sitting at a  
19 low Covid community level as indicated on the CDC  
20 website. So we can proceed with this meeting with no  
21 restrictions or mask requirements. Those that would  
22 like to are more than welcome to wear one and they're  
23 provided on the public table for any who wish to do so.

24  
25 For those attending our meeting in  
26 person please make sure you do sign in at the front  
27 table. There's a sign-in sheet for each day of the  
28 meeting and we'd appreciate if you would sign in each  
29 day you are here. It does help greatly with our  
30 process.

31  
32 This is a regulatory meeting and the  
33 Council will be discussing and deliberating fish  
34 proposals and closures. There will be an opportunity  
35 for public comment during the proposal period. You can  
36 see the steps for the proposal presentation procedure  
37 on Page 67 of the meeting book.

38  
39 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: I think a couple  
40 more people walked in. If you would introduce  
41 yourself.

42  
43 MS. GOSSELIN: My name is Monica  
44 Gosselin. I currently work as (indiscernible).

45  
46 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Anybody else?

47  
48 (No comments)

49  
50

0009

1 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you.  
2 Okay. With that we'd like to review and adopt the  
3 agenda. Is there any additions or changes?  
4

5 MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa again for  
6 the record. Just to let you guys know there was an  
7 updated one at your meeting place when you guys first  
8 walked in. It's a little different from the one that's  
9 in your meeting book. There's also copies over on the  
10 public table as well.  
11

12 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. With that  
13 is there a motion to adopt the agenda.  
14

15 MR. HONEA: So move.  
16

17 MR. VENT: Second.  
18

19 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Moved by Don  
20 Honea and seconded by Darrell Vent. All in favor say  
21 aye.  
22

23 IN UNISON: Aye.  
24

25 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: All opposed  
26 say.....  
27

28 MR. REAKOFF: Aye.  
29

30 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Sorry, Jack.  
31 Motion carries. The next one we have is review and  
32 approve the previous minutes. I'm sure you've all had  
33 a chance to read it. Is there a motion to accept the  
34 meeting minutes.  
35

36 MR. REAKOFF: I make a motion to adopt  
37 the minutes as presented.  
38

39 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: A motion by Jack  
40 and seconded by Darrell. All in favor say aye.  
41

42 IN UNISON: Aye.  
43

44 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: All opposed same  
45 sign.  
46

47 (No opposing votes)  
48

49 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Motion carries.  
50

0010

1 Now we're up to.....

2

3

4 MR. HONEA: Madame Chair. Can we go  
5 back? Usually there's discussion on the -- or am I out  
6 of order here? I thought that we put it on the floor  
7 and accept it, but any questions or comments about it.  
8 Is that open?

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Yeah.

MR. HONEA: Okay. I specifically have a question on the meeting. This was a teleconference and there was a motion on Page 9 of this book by Arnold Demoski, seconded by Tim to select Tim and Darrell and Kevin to be the Council's delegation to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council June meeting. I was just wondering if they wanted to give a brief update on that. I mean did that happen? Would they like to discuss it? Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Madame Chair. I was going to discuss it in my opening comments.

MR. HONEA: Okay, okay. Great. No other questions. Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. With that I guess the motion passed to accept the minutes. Reports. Council reports. We'll start off with Kevin.

MR. WENTWORTH: Madame Chair. Kevin Wentworth. Could I pass and let the elders of the group go first.

MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Sure. Sorry about that.

MR. WENTWORTH: Caught me off guard.

MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Pollock. Pollock, can you do your Council report, please.

MR. SIMON: Thank you, Madame Chair. I'm Pollock Simon, Sr. from Allakaket, upper Koyukuk River. It's kind of different nowadays with no fish and no numbers of moose and no black bears. Occasionally you see some grizzly bears that still roam

0011

1 the country.

2

3                   Yeah, we're getting used to not eating  
4 king salmon. No chum salmon to eat. We rely heavily  
5 on sheefish and whitefish. The last two years I've  
6 been restricted to even setting a 6-inch mesh net. We  
7 just have a smaller net like 4-inch mesh for little  
8 whitefish and pikes. The dogs eat the pikes and the  
9 suckers and the little whitefish.

10

11                   So kind of hard times in Allakaket  
12 because the virus is going around and we're losing some  
13 peoples, some elders, some young peoples. This is the  
14 first time we sit down and face each other at a meeting  
15 for maybe two years or more. It's good to see all of  
16 you. I took part in the teleconference, but sometimes  
17 I couldn't hear what the speaker was talking about.  
18 Sometimes I just hang up my phone and leave. This is  
19 good facing all of you. I'm glad I'm here.

20

21                   Thank you, Madame Chair.

22

23                   MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you,  
24 Pollock. I look around and I guess I'm next.

25

26                   (Laughter)

27

28                   MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: It's good to be  
29 here with all of you. Like Pollock said, it's been over  
30 two years that we met. It's hard to meet on the phone  
31 because all you're looking at is paper and just  
32 yourself in the room. So it's good to be here and good  
33 to have an audience, to see all of you. I recognize  
34 some faces.

35

36                   I'd just like to say that over these  
37 couple years we've had a hard time with our fishing.  
38 As you know, there's been no fishing, but our Village  
39 Council was able to get some fish from -- I can't  
40 remember where, but we cut it like we did with the king  
41 salmon and it's a different kind of fish, so we had to  
42 learn how to work a drier fish I guess you would call  
43 it. There's hardly any oil in it.

44

45                   Many of us had a hard time with that  
46 because it was a new type of fish for us. But we're  
47 thankful for everything we did get. I'm sure the  
48 people along -- whoever received the fish were also  
49 thankful for it. Many councils did get fish, so we

50

0012

1 just thank the people that donated it to us.

2

3

4 With that I believe many people were  
5 successful at their moose season. My husband and I  
6 were unable to go due to Covid and the aftereffects of  
7 Covid, but I'm sure everybody is enjoying their catch.

7

8

9 I know last winter the Loudon Council  
10 had a bounty on moose -- not moose, wolf. I know some  
11 other councils that are doing that, which would keep  
12 the moose surviving in the years to come. Just last  
13 week someone told me that they took a ride about maybe  
14 five miles out of Galena and they saw 16 cows with  
15 their babies, so I think there were like 12 babies. So  
16 the moose are coming back, I think. Hopefully.

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

With that, again I'd like to say it's  
good to be here. I'm sorry that Jack couldn't be here.  
He's the one that knows this job in and out. I'll just  
do the best I can. With that I'll just close my  
report.

Jack, you're up next if you want to do  
yours on the Chair. You can do it then or you can do  
it now.

MR. REAKOFF: Thank you, Madame Chair.  
After our meeting in February I participated in writing  
and shepherding the Wildlife Special Action Request  
22-02 for the Dall sheep closure for Unit 24A and 26B  
west of the Sagavanirktok through the Federal Board  
process.

I also participated in the wood bison  
planning meeting that was held last week. Wood bison  
are in our region and I've been filling in Robert  
Walker that would do that, participate for the Council,  
but so far nobody in our region has been able to  
participate in that aspect. We need a member from GASH  
area, Grayling, Shageluk, Holy Cross, Anvik, if we can  
get that.

But I will continue to participate in  
the wood bison plan because it's very important. This  
Council advocated for the release of wood bison within  
our region and the wood bison project is a very  
worthwhile for future generations of people in our  
region. Mainly they talked about allocation and when a  
hunt would occur.

0013

1                   Conditions here we have two inches of  
2 snow and very few caribou have come into the Central  
3 Brooks Range and the Upper Koyukuk Drainage. Very few  
4 rabbits, hares, snowshoe hares. Really the only  
5 increase in abundance of any animal has been spruce  
6 grouse. Moose population is low and there's lots of  
7 bear predation. It was a bad blueberry year and  
8 berries in general. So we're digging roots and chasing  
9 moose around quite a bit.

10

11                   That would be my report. Thank you,  
12 Madame Chair. I also wanted to inform the Council that  
13 I had a nine-foot fall on the frozen ground and damaged  
14 my heels and feet and lower legs. I have small cracks  
15 and bruising, so I can't walk at this time. I really  
16 wanted to participate in this meeting.

17

18                   Thank you.

19

20                   MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you, Jack.  
21 With that we'll go to Kevin.

22

23                   MR. WHITWORTH: Thank you, Madame  
24 Chair. Thanks for passing it on to the elders of the  
25 group. Don had brought up the North Pacific Fisheries  
26 Council summary, so I had to scramble to try to find  
27 that summary and I found it. Anyway, Kevin Wentworth  
28 from McGrath. Council member from McGrath. I'll keep  
29 this brief.

30

31                   So right now on the Kuskokwim River  
32 we're experiencing a multi-year multi-salmon collapse  
33 in the fishery. Ten years ago, as you all know,  
34 chinook salmon crashed, Federal management took over.  
35 We've been trying to rebuild that fishery. It's doing  
36 better. It's not good. People aren't reaching their  
37 subsistence needs for chinook salmon and they haven't  
38 in the past 10 years.

39

40                   About three years ago roughly the chum  
41 salmon crashed and this year again the fishery is not  
42 good at all. The chum salmon crash is historically low  
43 for three years now. It's rebounded. I mean it's just  
44 low. It's really, really low, the chum salmon. That's  
45 a prized fish as well.

46

47                   People talk about that fish being less  
48 oily so elders like to have chum salmon. They like to  
49 have chum salmon for drying. There's other means for  
50

0014

1 using chum salmon. There's still lots of dog teams on  
2 the Kuskokwim River. People use those for feeding  
3 dogs. So chum salmon is a very important resource and  
4 it's not there.

5  
6 This year also we saw the first ever  
7 major closure for the coho salmon run on the Kuskokwim  
8 River. So three species now has collapsed and this is  
9 a huge hardship for the people on the river. It's a  
10 food security issue. The ecosystem is just completely  
11 upside-down and it's just hurting the people on the  
12 river. Up and down the river, from the bay to the  
13 headwaters.

14  
15 The coho run it was coming in weak. It  
16 looked low. The fishery was open 24/7 until about  
17 August 16 and that's about when they start to arrive in  
18 the middle part of the river and get up into the upper  
19 headwaters. That's when the closure took effect. It  
20 was a river-wide closure for all gear types.  
21 Everything was closed.

22  
23 You couldn't have a whitefish net out.  
24 Fishwheels were closed, seine nets. Everything was  
25 closed. All gear types were closed except for rod and  
26 reel. I think you could use those for catching pike in  
27 slack water areas. I think there was other areas you  
28 can fish for in slack water. You can have a fishwheel  
29 in slack water, which doesn't make sense to me.

30  
31 Anyway, it was a huge hardship to have.  
32 Everybody who couldn't catch chinook salmon they'd  
33 usually wait for the chum. Then if they can't catch  
34 chinook or chum, they wait for the coho. This year the  
35 coho was completely shut down. So with these high  
36 restrictions on the Kuskokwim River to try to conserve  
37 these three species, folks aren't able to catch  
38 relatively healthy sockeye salmon.

39  
40 I can't remember the numbers. Over  
41 500,000 sockeye salmon on the Kuskokwim. They don't  
42 all go up to the upper headwaters. Most of them stay  
43 in the middle to lower river. They spawn in those  
44 areas. So with these high restrictions for chinook and  
45 chum during the sockeye run people aren't able to  
46 target those species. It's really difficult for people  
47 to supplement sockeye salmon.

48  
49 Also in the fall time when the coho  
50

0015

1 salmon were completely closed folks aren't able to  
2 catch whitefish or pike or sheefish or any of the other  
3 species to try to supplement their diet. So people are  
4 really hurting. I mean this is the -- I've never seen  
5 -- I know I'm young, but I've never seen an entire  
6 system closed for that long.

7  
8 So June 1st was a chinook salmon  
9 closure and it was basically -- I mean it opened a few  
10 times for chinook salmon and then the same with chum  
11 salmon and then there was a complete month-long closure  
12 for coho through September 15th. So August 16 through  
13 September 15 roughly it was completely closed for coho.  
14 We've never seen that.

15  
16 So when you're out moose hunting you  
17 bring your fishnet for whitefish and you can't do that.  
18 In the fall time you're trying to put some fish in your  
19 freezer. We couldn't do that. By the time September  
20 15th comes around, the silver salmon, they're getting  
21 more towards their spawning time, so they're not as  
22 good as the first part of the run.

23  
24 I know that silver salmon fishing all  
25 my life basically. The first part of the run is when  
26 you find the best fish to put away in the freezer, jar  
27 them, whatever you want to put them away for. So by  
28 September 15 people are mostly hunting as well, so  
29 they're not focused on fishing.

30  
31 It's very difficult times right now for  
32 the people. I just wanted to touch on the food  
33 security issues there, the three river three salmon  
34 collapse. I think that could be probably said on the  
35 Yukon as well from what I'm hearing from folks. Three  
36 multi-year multi-species collapse of salmon on the two  
37 rivers.

38  
39 Don had brought up the North Pacific  
40 Fisheries Management Council June bycatch meeting and I  
41 was supposed to attend that and I did not attend that  
42 meeting. It's in June, which is right in the middle of  
43 -- which is unfortunate, but that's right in the middle  
44 of in-season management for chinook salmon. I just  
45 could not go to that meeting. But there's people who  
46 went, people I work with, people that I collaborate  
47 with often, so I can give a summary of that meeting.

48  
49 Basically North Pacific Fisheries  
50

0016

1 Management Council -- that June meeting is when salmon  
2 bycatch issues was brought up, which is unfortunate  
3 because in June is when us subsistence fishermen are  
4 busy fishing. So to have that meeting, to talk about  
5 it at a June meeting, it does not make sense to me. I  
6 had brought that up with NOAA before at other meetings.  
7 Not at this meeting. I brought that up before, but  
8 that schedule does not work for us.

9

10 The North Pacific Fisheries Management  
11 Council took no action on any concrete -- to limit  
12 chinook or chum bycatch. Right now there is a cap on  
13 chinook, but they did not take any action to lower  
14 that. They took zero action on establishing a chum  
15 bycatch cap at all. There isn't anything right now.  
16 So even though chum bycatch, even if it's low right now  
17 or I don't even know the numbers, but if it is low, we  
18 don't know what next year will bring.

19

20 It could be a high bycatch here next  
21 year. There's no cap. It's basically unregulated for  
22 chum salmon. They could catch whatever they want.  
23 It's not unregulated, but you know what I mean. As far  
24 as chum bycatch goes, they could catch 500,000 without  
25 -- it's not a problem for them. There needs to be a  
26 chum bycatch limit. At that meeting they took no  
27 action at all.

28

29 That's basically that meeting, Don. I  
30 hope that helps with the summary. Also I represent the  
31 Western Interior RAC on the Kuskokwim River Salmon  
32 Management Working Group. This is a State of Alaska  
33 riverwide working group. It's a lot like the YRDFA  
34 weekly call-ins. We have something similar with the  
35 Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group, which  
36 I represent this body on that.

37

38 Very busy summer, like I said. All  
39 three species, lots of food security issues. There's a  
40 lot I could talk about there, but I won't talk about it  
41 now. The entire summer it was just depressing. The  
42 amount of restrictions on the people, people not  
43 reaching their harvest needs. We were doing everything  
44 we can to work with the State of Alaska through this  
45 working group to try to provide some opportunity while  
46 conserving the fishery, especially in that coho run  
47 when people were completely cut off from catching  
48 anything.

49

50

0017

1                   My understanding with the State of  
2 Alaska they didn't have the tools in the toolbox that  
3 they could allow for any four-inch opportunity during  
4 that coho closure or silver salmon closure. They  
5 couldn't allow for fishwheels to be run so you could  
6 release coho salmon like they've done with chinook  
7 salmon. That's just not in their toolbox. It's not in  
8 their management plan, so they just -- they can only  
9 open it or close it. So they decided it was best to  
10 close it completely.

11  
12                   We tried to ask the State of Alaska at  
13 this working group meeting to do window closures or do  
14 roaming closures, whatever it's called when you close  
15 the lower river first and you work your way up as the  
16 run builds, but they said no. Complete closure.

17  
18                   Anyway, I don't want to get into  
19 details at this working group. Please ask questions if  
20 you guys have other questions. I will just leave it at  
21 that. Thank you. I hope, Jack, you get feeling better  
22 soon. We miss you.

23  
24                   Thank you, Jenny.

25  
26                   MR. REAKOFF: Thanks, Kevin.

27  
28                   MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you,  
29 Kevin. With that we'll go to Don.

30  
31                   MR. HONEA: Good morning. Hey, I'm  
32 real thankful my cousin Jenny is able to Chair this  
33 meeting. I'm sure it's not an easy thing to do. So  
34 I'm really thankful. Thank you, Jenny, for chairing  
35 this. I'm sorry -- you know, Jack has always been at  
36 the helm of our -- you know, and he's real  
37 knowledgeable and everything and I'm thankful for that.

38  
39                   Like Tom mentioned from OSM there, it's  
40 really good to be online. It's really hard out in the  
41 villages or anywhere to be online. I've got to have an  
42 extra cell phone and stuff like that. So it's really  
43 great to meet like this.

44  
45                   I thank Kevin for bringing up the  
46 fisheries thing. It was kind of a surprise to him to  
47 -- for me to point that out, to ask about that, but I'm  
48 sure that we're not going to find a lot of willing  
49 participants to be on that board. I'm sure it's going  
50

0018

1 to be -- you know, it's already a controversial issue.  
2 I'm hoping that we get that filled.

3  
4 As for hunting, Jenny mentioned no fish  
5 and that's how it is for the last two years. No fish  
6 at all. We don't even put a net in. In fact, last  
7 week in Ruby somebody put a net in and whitefish to  
8 feed his dog team. So it's really kind of trying.  
9 It's gotten to the point where some places -- I  
10 remember 10, 15 years ago, maybe when I first got on we  
11 were talking about Area M and the effects that it might  
12 have. Yet, in the last year or something I seen kind  
13 of a bycatch of 200,000 chum or something. Maybe it  
14 was destined for the Yukon. Maybe it was destined for  
15 the Kuskokwim. I think we have to bring all these  
16 factors into place and find something.

17  
18 I mentioned coming to this meeting and  
19 somebody mentioned bring up the bycatch. The bycatch  
20 issue is almost kind of a moot point when we're talking  
21 about -- you know, I remember meeting in Galena there  
22 and Ken Chase and I were on the same page saying, hey,  
23 we could always -- let's not bother the kings for a  
24 year or so or whatever. We can always depend on the  
25 fall -- summer and fall chum, 500,000, 700, you know.  
26 Now what's the number, 200 or less? 200,000 or less?  
27 I mean there's something definitely wrong.

28  
29 So whether it's a global issue it seems  
30 like we're not doing anything. Right, Mr. Simon? It  
31 seems like -- I mean, you know, I think we have to  
32 bring it on a more humanitarian global issue than that.

33  
34  
35 Other than that one other point I'd  
36 like to make is, you know, there's some areas in our --  
37 in the Western Interior that's not represented and I  
38 don't really like that. I'm thankful for Kevin to get  
39 on here taking Ray's place. He's knowledgeable in  
40 fisheries and stuff, but what about Aniak, Stoney  
41 River, Georgetown, that area.

42  
43 Years ago we had a meeting in McGrath,  
44 so I was just relating to what was going on because I  
45 only know what's going on in my particular area. So  
46 one of the Council members says, hey, Don, you've got  
47 to remember you're speaking for the whole area. Sure,  
48 that's fine and dandy, but I don't know what's going on  
49 in Koyukuk or Nulato or Kaltag. I just know what's  
50

0019

1 going on around Ruby.

2

3

4 With that I really think that we ought  
5 to somehow in some form get those places represented.  
6 That's a concern for me because right now -- I mean,  
7 you know, when the topic of hunting and fishing with  
8 the Federal -- with our respective refuges coming up,  
9 I'm concerned about my moose population. It's really  
10 down from 19 moose. It's always been consistent, maybe  
11 30 or better. The wolf numbers on the Novi. So that's  
12 what I mean. I want all of our areas represented.

12

13

14 So with that I will -- this is my last  
15 year on here, but I'm going to re-up for maybe next  
16 year because I think we have too much at stake. It's  
17 always been my kind of take and my contention if we  
18 can't do a doggone thing about fishing, if we can't  
19 somehow bring those fish back, we've got to take care  
20 of our moose. We've got to take care of our game. So  
21 I'm really concerned about that. I'm just going to  
22 keep our AC alive and work on that matter.

22

23

24 Thank you, Madame Chair.

24

25

26 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you, Don.

26

27 Tim.

27

28

29 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Madame Chair.

29

30

31 Jenny, I really appreciate you taking over the meeting  
32 on short notice. I hope you have a good rehab there,  
33 Jack. We all know each time we fall down every year  
34 it's harder to get up, but keep trying. We're rooting  
35 for you.

34

35

36

37 Okay. So regarding the report. We  
38 have a lot of frustrated people with the closure on the  
39 Yukon River for salmon. People didn't eat that much  
40 fish. They utilized whatever store canned fish or  
41 canned strips that they had left over from prior years.  
42 People did eat. I was not there, but I believe they  
43 got some red salmon shipped in. There was kind of some  
44 mixed reaction to it, but I mean they appreciated to be  
45 able to get fish.

44

45

46

47 Sockeye is kind of an unknown species  
48 in our region. People didn't quite know how to prepare  
49 it and their pallets weren't used to it, but they  
50 appreciated other fishermen from around the state and  
51 some of the transportation companies and TCC helping

49

50

0020

1 out with distributing that. I think there was about  
2 four families that put out whitefish nets to get  
3 whitefish harvest in lieu of any king, chum or silver  
4 harvest.

5  
6 The commercial harvest for chum in Area  
7 M was approximately 813,000. That's down about 25  
8 percent from the 1.1 million last year. Area M  
9 fishermen, that's a seine drift gillnet and setnet  
10 fishery. They have quite a bit of fishing opportunity  
11 in June and then July and August the State managers had  
12 to choke down or close down quite a bit for protection  
13 of chum and protection of pink salmon.

14  
15 This Council had nominated me to speak  
16 at the Sitka North Pacific Fisheries Management Council  
17 meeting in Sitka, which was June 6th to the 14th. As  
18 we got more information on the meeting, we learned that  
19 the salmon testimony was not going to be until the  
20 latter half of the meeting, like the 13th or 14th of  
21 June, and I had to depart on my boat for fishing by  
22 that time.

23  
24 So I apologized to the Council for not  
25 -- for saying I would participate in a meeting. I was  
26 hoping to be able to do a testimony June 6, 7 or 8, but  
27 basically in any year until I retire I'm commercial  
28 fishing. Anything after June 10th would be unlikely  
29 for me to be -- have access to testify by telephone or  
30 by internet. So I apologized for that.

31  
32 But, yeah, Kevin did make a good point  
33 that it is -- June is always problematic for  
34 subsistence or commercial salmon fishermen to be able  
35 to make testimony. These North Pacific Management  
36 Council meetings they cover a lot of topics and they're  
37 very long and I would hope maybe there is or maybe  
38 there could be a way that people could record their  
39 testimony and then the Council could play that  
40 testimony whenever it comes up.

41  
42 Unless you're professional in fishery  
43 management council things it's really hard to make  
44 someone available for three days knowing -- not knowing  
45 exactly when you'll actually be able to get to testify.  
46 We can talk with Dr. Stram later on in the meeting and  
47 see what kind of options are available so that we can  
48 make our voices heard.

49  
50

0021

1                               One other thing on North Pacific  
2 Fisheries Management Council is they are accepting  
3 nominations for -- I believe it's a newly-formed Alaska  
4 Native tribal seat on its advisory panel. The advisory  
5 panel is not the actual council itself, but it's a  
6 panel that discusses the same issues and makes advisory  
7 or preferential recommendations to the North Pacific  
8 Council. I'm glad to see that the North Pacific  
9 Management Council is recognizing -- starting to  
10 recognize that there should be some Native voice in  
11 their system. Hopefully we can get some good  
12 participation through that.

13  
14                               That nomination needs to be in prior to  
15 November 15th. It's on their website. I have interest  
16 in applying for the bycatch task force that North  
17 Pacific Fisheries Management Council set up, but I was  
18 involved in a deposition process for a lawsuit against  
19 me at the end of September. From that distraction I  
20 forgot to get my nomination in on time for that bycatch  
21 board so that didn't happen.

22  
23                               This recent typhoon that put a lot of  
24 high storm surge into western Alaska knocked out power  
25 to some of the villages. I think that situation where  
26 a lot of subsistence fishermen lost a lot of meat and  
27 fish product from losing electricity, that highlights  
28 the significance on the Yukon and I imagine the  
29 Kuskokwim also.

30  
31                               We've lost a lot of our fish camp  
32 culture in the last three decades due to declining  
33 salmon runs. Because of that people aren't putting up  
34 as much fish traditionally as they used to and the  
35 younger generations are ignorant as how to prepare  
36 strips or eating fish and to some extent pressure  
37 canning. With those traditional methods they wouldn't  
38 be affected by power outages or by a big storm event  
39 such as that. So that incident just kind of highlights  
40 on a food security situation the value of being able to  
41 put up fish and meat and traditional methods were not  
42 relying on modern conveniences such as electricity and  
43 freezers to hold your subsistence harvest.

44  
45                               We had a Priority Information Needs  
46 meeting approximately about a month ago. That went  
47 pretty good. We had good representation up and down  
48 the river. People from OSM communicated with us that  
49 the Kuskokwim PIN meeting they were able to reduce  
50

0022

1 their needs down to about five things of real priority.

2

3

4

5 The way our meeting went we barely took  
6 anything off the list because we felt, whether it was  
7 salmon or alternative species, such as whitefish or  
8 pike, that all those things are important now because  
9 we don't have a reliable salmon resource now or in the  
10 foreseeable future. We'll probably get some  
11 information later in the meeting from OSM on the status  
12 of those PIN meetings.

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

So one thing I would like some  
assistance on either from Council members in particular  
Jack or OSM Staff, I would like to know what this  
Council can do to -- I mean it's advisory capacity, but  
I would like to know what kind of powers are granted to  
the Western Interior Council because we could take some  
more significant action on trying to get our salmon  
runs resolved. It just seems to be getting worse and  
worse every year. I just would like this Council to be  
able to operate at its best level to bring a change  
about in supporting stronger salmon returns.

From the meeting minutes I read for the  
North Pacific Management Council meeting, it seems like  
a lot of membership there just interested in continuing  
on with business as usual with the Bering Sea/Aleutian  
Island trawl fishery and talk about having a task force  
or having research or whatnot, but I think what really  
needs to happen is they need to slow down the amount of  
fishing and the amount of time they have their nets in  
the water until we can get some kind of reversal in our  
salmon abundance.

We've talked about in other meetings  
how -- I mean we have documentation that there's Alaska  
Native doing net fishing for salmon on the Yukon back  
in the 1860s and anthropological theory would suggest  
that people have been eating salmon on the Kuskokwim  
and Yukon Rivers for approximately 12,000 years. It  
would seem unlikely that people could survive without a  
salmon resource in a pre-contact setting.

So I feel that that historical use of  
that resource is more important than any kind of use of  
that resource is more important than any kind of  
commercial, whether it's a State-managed fishery or a  
Federally-managed fishery that's taking salmon out of

0023

1 the ecosystem.

2

3 That's all I have for now, Madame  
4 Chair.

5

6 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you, Tim.  
7 Darrell.

8

9 MR. VENT: Good morning, everyone.

10 Glad to be back here enjoying the meeting. Yeah, we're  
11 going to have to start really looking at how this  
12 management of our resource is being affected. Our  
13 people are not able to go out to their summer camps and  
14 utilize the traditional ways of harvesting their fish  
15 or taking of fish for food for our families or animals.

16

17 I was raised up in an Iditarod racing  
18 family. My grandpa raced in there and my father raced  
19 in there, so I was busy all the time in the summer. I  
20 remember about eight, ten years I was out there  
21 constantly all summer long except for 4th of July, but  
22 now we can't carry on those traditions. Our kids are  
23 not learning these traditions.

24

25 Recently I heard -- last night or about  
26 3:00 this morning I got a phone call. There was a bear  
27 trying to break into a window of a house in the  
28 village. A grizzly bear. So we're seeing all kinds of  
29 signs. Our Native traditional ways we understand  
30 what's going on out there, but we aren't taking --  
31 we're only taking that advisory. We're not taking  
32 seriously when it comes to managing our game and our  
33 fish, our gathering.

34

35 There's not a lot of berries out there.  
36 The water was high this fall. It was hard to catch a  
37 moose in our area. There was no fish. You know, we  
38 look 10, 15 years down the road, 10, 20 years, what are  
39 we going to live on? We're supposed to be living a  
40 subsistence lifestyle and that's not happening. Our  
41 rural people are really going to be affected because of  
42 this.

43

44 We can't think that the moose  
45 population is going to increase in our areas. We have  
46 no information on that, but that's our main source of  
47 food now because we don't have fish, we don't have  
48 caribou. A lot of our animals are starting to  
49 disappear. We need some kind of management that's  
50

0024

1 going to either replace what we have there or  
2 repopulate.

3  
4                   It's going to be hard to replace the  
5 fish that was taken from the river because of the size.  
6 When you have this big Yukon River kings that were 90  
7 pounds, those fish were Canada-bound. We don't have  
8 that no more. You've got a lot of jacks, you've got a  
9 lot of smaller king salmon. They're not going to  
10 survive. We can see that already.

11  
12                   This is something that's really  
13 affecting our people. We depended on all that kind of  
14 fish. Now we can't even catch our fall chum. It's  
15 hard to think about what our future is going to be.  
16 We're not really thinking of this is a management.  
17 It's more of a money controlled environment. People  
18 are taking what they need for the money and then  
19 leaving us with nothing. That's what happened. I can  
20 see our kids are going to be growing up and it's going  
21 to be hard for them because they're going to have to  
22 depend more on stores, which is not a subsistence use.

23  
24                   You know, it's a reality. We all got  
25 to look at what we're doing here and think, you know,  
26 hey, how could we relieve the situation. How could we  
27 help our people. How could we help the State. How  
28 could we help the Federal government. It's been a  
29 one-sided venture for our people. We've been  
30 complaining, saying that we're not getting this, we're  
31 not getting that, but it's advisory capacity only.  
32 We're not taken seriously because they think, you know,  
33 money is more important than what you guys are living  
34 on.

35  
36                   So that's the way it looks because this  
37 meeting down in Sitka they were telling me that, you  
38 know, it's just business as usual. It's not about our  
39 people. It's about everybody in the whole world,  
40 international waters. These are big companies that  
41 we're trying to go up against and we don't have the  
42 power or money to influence them from a little village.  
43 But we're hurting and we're going to complain and  
44 that's our nature. We need to figure out how to work  
45 with management. If we don't, then we're not going to  
46 -- there's not going to be no management. What is  
47 there going to be to manage.

48  
49                   Those grizzlies are coming out of the  
50

0025

1 mountains now because they're hungry. There's no fish  
2 up in there. Our moose are getting hit hard. I mean  
3 that's our main thing that -- main food that we depend  
4 on for the whole year now because we don't have the  
5 fish, we don't have the caribou. The moose will have  
6 to provide for us and they're not in very good shape  
7 sometimes too.

8  
9 I'm just concerned just from our area.  
10 Not our area alone. It's all over Kuskokwim. We're  
11 all saying the same thing. When are we going to be  
12 listened to. It's hard to address these issues when  
13 you have to sit there and listen to the same stories.  
14 I wish that we could, you know, change things when it  
15 first happened, but now it's too late. We're trying to  
16 figure out how to fix a mistake and we're pointing  
17 fingers when we should have fixed it before it  
18 happened.

19  
20 That's just some of the things that I  
21 think of and I hear from my elders. We're going to get  
22 hit really hard with hard times here. Our food  
23 resource is not going to be there, so we've got to  
24 figure out ways to replace that food source in our  
25 areas as people are really relying on moose. The  
26 grizzlies are doing the same thing. They're getting  
27 hungry and they're coming into our village.

28  
29 About three, four years ago we had  
30 about four or five of them that had to be gotten rid of  
31 in the village. It's something that people don't want  
32 to talk about because they're scared. They might get  
33 in trouble with the State because they got to have a  
34 tag or something just to take that bear. All along  
35 when we used to manage our resource we didn't have to  
36 buy tags or get a license. Our people just took care  
37 of the problems. Now the restrictions make it harder  
38 and people don't want to do it. So we're having an  
39 increase in predation.

40  
41 We can't talk about bounties. You  
42 know, it's incentive programs. You know, it's  
43 something different when it comes to bounties. They  
44 don't understand how it is for us to live up in this  
45 area. We have to compete for this food and that's what  
46 predation is all about. We're a major part of the  
47 problem right now because we have to learn to manage.  
48 That's our issue right now. I'm just concerned, so I  
49 just wanted to mention that.

50

0026

1 I sure wish I could have made the  
2 meeting this spring in June, but I'm busy working.  
3 I've got to try to provide for the family. These  
4 meetings are not at the right time. I sure wish I  
5 could have went there and spoke, but it's hard when you  
6 have to make your choices.

7  
8 You know, predation is going to get  
9 harder and more and more because in our area we noticed  
10 that the wolf population is picking back up again.  
11 That means that the kind of moose -- there's more moose  
12 around Koyukuk and Galena area than there is around our  
13 area. We used to have way more moose in our area.

14  
15 Like I said, when you take a look at  
16 your management, you're taking those big breeding bulls  
17 and you're catching them and taking the horn, but  
18 you're also taking the strain when you do that. So  
19 your moose are not able to compete against predation.  
20 They've got a higher percentage of loss then the moose  
21 are smaller or weaker when they don't breed with them  
22 big bulls.

23  
24 That's the same thing happened with  
25 fish. You take the big strain out and it's hard for  
26 them to compete against going up the wrong river or  
27 predation. So we understand from a different point of  
28 view of what's going on with our fish, our moose, our  
29 caribou. We lost our caribou migration pattern. We  
30 used to have caribou coming in in the fall time. That  
31 don't happen no more.

32  
33 I always spoke about that because my  
34 grandpa always told me about it one time, Pollock's  
35 uncle. He used to tell me stories about fishing stuff.  
36 It was good to listen to elders, but now we're getting  
37 at that stage where I'm starting to getting to be  
38 halfway elder now.

39  
40 Thank you guys for letting me speak in  
41 the meeting.

42  
43 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you,  
44 Darrell. With that I know when we start our meeting  
45 sometimes we forget to ask the question is there  
46 anything else to add or delete from the agenda. We're  
47 thinking and then later on we think of something. I  
48 think Tim thought of something and maybe we'll just see  
49 what he has. If the Council wants to add it or not to  
50

0027

1 the agenda, we could.

2

3 MR. GERVAIS: It's not an agenda item,  
4 Madame Chair. It's just a part of my report because I  
5 forgot to put it in. That was the moose hunting around  
6 Ruby went fairly well. Quite a bit better hunting  
7 towards the second half of the season. Subsistence  
8 needs were met for the village. So that turned out to  
9 be a real big or real important issue right now that  
10 salmon is not part of our subsistence economy this  
11 year.

12

13 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you. Don.

14

15 MR. HONEA: Yeah. Hey, I think that's  
16 real important that we discuss whatever we've reported  
17 on. Like we're going to get into some heavy stuff, but  
18 I just wanted to mention what Darrell had mentioned and  
19 maybe we could use that for future whatever.

20

21 It just goes back to something that  
22 happened in the village of Ruby maybe three, four years  
23 ago. There was a brown bear, grizzly, whatever,  
24 entered the village and for safety sake a villager got  
25 the bear, harvested, and yet in the next day or say,  
26 whether it was -- I don't believe it was Fish and  
27 Wildlife, but Alaska State Troopers, whatever, their  
28 Game Division, and it almost led to somewhere where you  
29 -- instead of thinking about the village's safety, they  
30 were more concerned about, hey, you shouldn't have shot  
31 that bear in the village or did you have a tag, crap  
32 like that.

33

34 You know, it was -- so things like  
35 that, I agree, we have to change those. You know, I  
36 mean for instance brown bear or grizzly tags and stuff,  
37 you're not going to see one hardly in your lifetime. A  
38 lot of time you don't. There's a few times I've been  
39 able to do it, but, you know, do you have a harvest  
40 ticket. Stuff like that.

41

42 So I'm glad he mentioned that. For  
43 safety sake maybe it was something we could use as a  
44 valid measure or something to think about in the  
45 future. I thank you for the time that we can discuss  
46 this.

47

48 Thank you, Madame Chair.

49

50

0028

1 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Kevin.

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Kevin.

MR. WHITWORTH: Thank you, Madame Chair. Tim had brought up the question of what we can do to get these salmon back. I was just thinking about that as well. I don't know if it's in the agenda, but can we have a discussion about writing letters, comment letters to like the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council? I don't know if it's in the agenda or not.

MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: I guess you can add that on somewhere. We usually write letters anyways.

MR. WHITWORTH: Yeah. I just didn't see it on the agenda. One thing that's coming up is this December North Pacific Fisheries Management Council meeting is coming up and they are going to take up salmon bycatch issues again at that meeting. This may be a good time for us to write a comment letter for that meeting. There's other things I'd like to talk about too for letters.

Thanks.

MS. PILCHER: Diana Stram with the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council will be giving an update later on in the agenda and at that time would be a good place to bring up if you wanted to draft a letter to that Council. I guess as for the other correspondence things we can figure out where they can get it as they go.

MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you. Okay. With hearing the other Council members speak, I also added a couple things on my list. Tim said he couldn't attend a meeting.

MR. VENT: Are there other Council members on the line too?

MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. Just a minute. Rebecca, are you online?

(No response)

MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Tommy.

(No response)

0029

1                   MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: I guess not.  
2 Maybe Tommy is flying in. I'll ask Jack after I do  
3 mine. With that we were talking about how Tim couldn't  
4 attend a meeting. Darrell couldn't attend a meeting.  
5 I know at one time -- well, we've talked about this  
6 many times in our past meetings about getting an  
7 alternate, a couple of alternates in case the main  
8 person couldn't make it. So we should think about that  
9 again.

10  
11                   Hearing Darrell's story about the bear  
12 is weird because I dreamt about last night in my dream  
13 was a bear was trying to break into somebody's house  
14 and woke up. Hearing him say that, oh, my gosh.

15  
16                   I was thinking about the bulls, about  
17 our moose. In the past I've seen -- I don't know,  
18 maybe it's just me, but it seems like the big bulls are  
19 where the moose continue to come from. They stay way  
20 back in the woods. And then come to think about it,  
21 when the hunters go out there, the planes they drop  
22 those people way out in the woods. I just started  
23 thinking that's where they're getting those big bulls.  
24 They go out for the horns. We don't eat horns. It's  
25 good to see them on the walls, I guess. I don't have a  
26 moose horn in my house.

27  
28                   I hope many of you in the audience will  
29 understand that -- you probably hear us gripe all the  
30 time, but it's part of our life because we grew up  
31 eating fish, moose, beaver, chickens. We call them  
32 chickens, but they're spruce grouse. A lot our -- like  
33 king salmon, when I came to one of the meetings,  
34 somebody was talking about something else and I didn't  
35 know what they were talking about. We were talking  
36 about the same fish, but different names.

37  
38                   So we grew up on that and, you know,  
39 it's good to have. It's good to have. Like one day I  
40 was just craving my king salmon with all that oil in  
41 it. Thankfully I have a couple cases from the last  
42 time I fished and I just went and opened that and there  
43 was all that grease staring at me. Oh, my goodness,  
44 that was -- you know.

45  
46                   And something like that -- and I know  
47 you probably go to the store or you're craving, oh,  
48 man, I want a chicken or I want pork, I want this, you  
49 can just run down the street and get it. It used to be  
50

0030

1 like that a long time ago for us. We used to just be  
2 able to go in the woods and get what we want. Now we  
3 can't with all the regulations.

4

5 I agree with Don about bears walking  
6 into our village. We have to defend ourselves. If  
7 somebody came into our house, broke into our house,  
8 they always say defend, but make sure you shoot them in  
9 the house or whatever. Get them in the house. So if  
10 the animal comes into our house, we have to protect  
11 ourselves and I don't see why in cases like that that  
12 it's allowed. I'll defend my grandkids if a bear comes  
13 in or try anyway. I'm sure anybody in this case would  
14 also defend their family. So we need to think about  
15 something like that.

16

17 The bears now are actually living in  
18 our village. They're right in town. Right in our  
19 backyard. So it's sort of scary. With that, Jack, do  
20 you have anything else to add?

21

22 MR. REAKOFF: Thank you, Madame Chair.  
23 I'm pretty distraught with the North Pacific Fisheries  
24 Management Council having a bycatch meeting on salmon  
25 in June when they know full well most of the people  
26 who are having a problem with bycatch are in the middle  
27 of their subsistence fisheries.

28

29 I feel strongly that the North Pacific  
30 Fisheries Management Council should redo their agenda  
31 to address salmon bycatch at appropriate timeframes in  
32 the winter, a winter meeting schedule, so that the  
33 people who are most affected by bycatch can  
34 participate.

35

36 The reason this Council did not is  
37 everybody was too busy. Everybody knows there's  
38 seasonal work in Alaska, especially rural Alaska. The  
39 North Pacific Fisheries Management Council should be  
40 strongly reprimanded for not providing a platform to  
41 address the bycatch of salmon when it's appropriate for  
42 people to participate.

43

44 Thank you, Madame Chair.

45

46 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you, Jack.  
47 With that -- do you have something to add?

48

49 MS. PILCHER: I was just going to add

50

0031

1 in I got a note from a member of the Staff that the  
2 next Council meeting looks like it will be December 5th  
3 through the 13th.

4

5 MR. GERVAIS: North Pacific Council.

6

7 MS. PILCHER: Sorry. Yes, the North  
8 Pacific Fisheries Management Council. And then just to  
9 revisit what Kevin had asked. So one thing we could do  
10 is we could entertain a motion to reconsider the agenda  
11 to add stuff to it. We just have to put it back on the  
12 table. Since everybody voted in the affirmative, then  
13 it would just take anybody making a motion to put it  
14 back on the table to add stuff.

15

16 MR. WHITWORTH: Madame Chair. I'm not  
17 sure we will need to add anything. If we can discuss  
18 letters, you know, like under North Pacific Fisheries  
19 Management Council update. That was the only thing I  
20 was thinking about, just the discussion of potential  
21 comment letters coming from this body.

22

23 MR. HONEA: Madame Chair. I also agree  
24 with that. Jack brought up a very good point, very  
25 valid point in drafting a letter to them. Maybe we  
26 could have that under consideration when we do write  
27 letters or whatever. Thank you.

28

29 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Tim.

30

31 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Madame Chair.  
32 In regards to changes of the agenda, I guess I would  
33 like feedback from Jack or OSM Staff. Is this Council  
34 already doing everything they can that's vested in  
35 their charter to address salmon bycatch or is there  
36 other functions we can do other than our advisory  
37 letter writing and testifying to other committees or  
38 councils such as North Pacific Fisheries Management  
39 Council? Is there more to our toolbox than what we're  
40 already doing? If so, I'd like to add that to the  
41 agenda.

42

43 MS. PILCHER: Through the Chair. This  
44 is Nissa. So I'm new. That's a really good question.  
45 I'm not sure I can answer you exactly right now. I  
46 believe you are doing everything the Council possibly  
47 can do, but I can certainly take another look.

48

49 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you.

50

0032

1 Thank you, Tim. I just want to thank Nissa for helping  
2 us like we're both new up here, so we keep looking at  
3 each other. So I hope you can bear with us.

4

5 With that, Jack, are you going to give  
6 your chair report now?

7

8 MR. REAKOFF: I pretty much gave my  
9 report when I spoke earlier. I do feel that the  
10 Council has only certain abilities. We can't lobby --  
11 you know, we (indiscernible) the reauthorization for  
12 the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council. We  
13 can't lobby because of the Hatch Act. So we can write  
14 letters to the North Pacific Fisheries Management  
15 Council through the Federal Subsistence Board process  
16 to change their agenda to address bycatch at the  
17 appropriate time. The next meeting is in December, but  
18 they're probably not going to be talking about salmon  
19 bycatch. They need the participation of the people who  
20 are affected.

21

22 We also need to write a letter to the  
23 State Board of Fish because of this Area M extreme  
24 interception in the South Alaska Peninsula Fishery.  
25 The Area M Fishery is taking as many or more chum  
26 salmon than the trawl fleet. So we need to be writing  
27 to the State Board of Fish, Chairman of the Board of  
28 Fish, to recognize the extreme hardship of meeting  
29 escapement and subsistence needs on the Yukon -- AYK  
30 stocks. The Board of Game needs to direct Department  
31 of Fish and Game, managers of Area M, to consider the  
32 extreme dire situation of the chum salmon and chinook  
33 salmon and other stocks that move through the South  
34 Alaska Peninsula.

35

36 Thank you, Madame Chair.

37

38 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. If our  
39 Council is done with any more of their reports, if you  
40 have anything else to add, this is your last chance.

41

42 MR. WHITWORTH: Madame Chair. Thanks.  
43 Last chance. On the lines of writing a letter and  
44 Darrell had brought up what can we do more than just  
45 advise as a body. That's hard to -- for me it's hard  
46 to figure out. I mean I have no idea -- like Nissa  
47 said, we're new -- what this body can do.

48

49 As far as tribal governments go,

50

0033

1 there's -- the Biden Administration is on the table  
2 trying to do more for co-stewardship and co-management  
3 of resources that are important to tribal people. I  
4 think that's maybe something this body cannot do, but  
5 we can write a letter acknowledging this that DOI and  
6 NOAA both should build these relationships with tribes  
7 so that we are at the table more than an advisory role,  
8 but more at a co-management role. Co-stewardship. So  
9 there's this push.

10

11 Last week we had a Bethel meeting. I  
12 think there was a meeting here in Fairbanks as well,  
13 October 5 and 7, for DOI and NOAA tribal consultation.  
14 I don't know if anybody -- if you all went to it. But  
15 that meeting had a good turnout from tribal people.  
16 This topic, co-stewardship and co-management of these  
17 species came up and I think it's a really important  
18 thing especially at this time period with this  
19 administration with the people in DOI.

20

21 To make that happen at NOAA may be a  
22 little bit more challenging, but I think DOI is really  
23 ripe for co-management and co-stewardship. I know it's  
24 not idea, but it is a step in the right direction as  
25 far as getting people's voice. More than just an  
26 advisory role. So I would hope this Council could form  
27 a letter of some sort writing the DOI leadership and  
28 NOAA leadership in talking about this opportunity.

29

30 I think we should also put in that  
31 letter that there needs to be more of a gravel to  
32 gravel management for salmon species. So where the  
33 salmon are born in the gravel all the way out to their  
34 migratory paths out into the Bering Sea, whether  
35 they're going through False Pass, whether they're going  
36 out to the Bering Sea, and then their return trip back  
37 home to spawn.

38

39 Entire management needs to -- there  
40 shouldn't be jurisdictional boundaries here. There is.  
41 There's State, there's Federal, there's NOAA, there's  
42 DOI, there's other State agencies in Area M compared to  
43 in-river. There's very little collaboration between  
44 all those agencies. There needs to be more  
45 collaboration. So I think if we -- we need to point  
46 that out. There should be.

47

48 So, for instance, folks talked about  
49 bycatch, talked about intercepting the Area M and  
50

0034

1 bycatch. Those bycatch numbers are not part of --  
2 they're not considered -- how do I put it. They are  
3 bi-caught out in the Bering Sea and they're not  
4 considering our escapement goals and the people's needs  
5 being met, right? It should be.

6  
7 So people when they come -- when those  
8 fish come into Pilot Station and are counted, the  
9 regulations are affecting the people in the river the  
10 most. The regulations out in the Bering Sea they're  
11 not accounting for us and there needs to be a  
12 connection there.

13  
14 So gravel-to-gravel management, DOI and  
15 NOAA, tribal consultation, working with the tribes,  
16 working with the people in river, more co-stewardship  
17 and co-management of the species so we have more than  
18 an advisory role.

19  
20 Anyway, thank you.

21  
22 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you,  
23 Kevin. Anyone else? Darrell.

24  
25 MR. VENT: I agree that we need to  
26 really look at this because it's a big area. That bowl  
27 we're talking about, that's our food there out in the  
28 ocean, but it's not only ours. Like he's pointing out,  
29 you know, we need to be at the table sitting there  
30 discussing these issues because international waters  
31 and there's a whole bunch of different places that have  
32 hatchery fish that are being injected into these, their  
33 areas where it's becoming more of a competition for our  
34 natural stocks. So, you know, that's something that we  
35 have to consider too because they put a lot of hatchery  
36 fish out there. I hear that there's been quite a bit  
37 that's been injected into their waters over there.

38  
39 The chinook salmon that -- you look at  
40 a plate of food over there in the international side  
41 and it's pretty expensive to buy our chinook salmon.

42  
43 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you,  
44 Darrell. Okay, with that we have service awards, I  
45 guess.

46  
47 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Yes. So we  
48 wanted to take a moment to recognize those for their  
49 time spent volunteering on this Council. It's time  
50

0035

1 spent to represent your communities and your region,  
2 but it is time spent away from family both while  
3 preparing for the meetings as well as attending them.

4  
5 So one thing to note, I was only able  
6 to search a few years going back on transcripts to  
7 check who had been recognized. So if I've missed  
8 anyone, please let me know and we can address that  
9 during the fall meeting. I will now be turning it over  
10 to Mr. Kron.

11  
12 MR. KRON: Madame Chair. I would ask  
13 for a round of applause for you, for Ms. Jenny Pelkola.

14  
15 (Applause)

16  
17 MR. KRON: Thank you, Madame Chair.  
18 You've served on the Western Interior Regional Advisory  
19 Council since 2006. We want to thank you very much for  
20 your service. For your 15 years of service.

21  
22 You've rarely missed meetings. You  
23 always bring you're A game. That's what we see.  
24 You've been attentive. You add relevant information,  
25 help with questions and discussion on many subsistence  
26 and non-subsistence topics. You also ensure that the  
27 meetings move along by offering motions as needed.

28  
29 You've been active in your community,  
30 participating in subsistence activities and effectively  
31 communicate trends and concerns in your community and  
32 your region.

33  
34 Ms. Pelkola is also quick to recognize  
35 other Council members through their communities and she  
36 also makes people laugh. We appreciate that.  
37 Sometimes we need to laugh.

38  
39 Ms. Pelkola is an important voice for  
40 the Western Interior Regional Advisory Council and we  
41 thank her very much for her service.

42  
43 (Applause)

44  
45 MR. KRON: We have a plaque for you to  
46 put on your refrigerator or your wall.

47  
48 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you.

49  
50

0036

1 (Applause)

2

3 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: It's like  
4 getting an award for first place or something.

5

6 (Laughter)

7

8 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. With that  
9 we'll -- we don't need a break, do we? Do you need a  
10 break? Okay. I'm usually right on time, so if I say  
11 five minutes, it's five minutes. So I'll give you a  
12 10-minute break. Be back in 10 minutes.

13

14 (Off record)

15

16 (On record)

17

18 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, with that  
19 we'll continue with our meeting but before we do that,  
20 I think we have more people online, do you want to.....

21

22 MS. PILCHER: For the record this is  
23 Nissa Pilcher with OSM. If anyone's joined us that  
24 wasn't able to introduce themselves this morning at  
25 9:00, if you'll please go ahead and do so right now  
26 we'd appreciate it.

27

28 MR. BLIHVDE: Hi, good morning. This  
29 is Boyd Blihovde with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
30 and Refuge Manager at Yukon National Wildlife Refuge.  
31 Thanks.

32

33 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. At this  
34 time we're going to have the public, tribal comments on  
35 non-agenda items.

36

37 MS. PILCHER: For the record this is  
38 Nissa Pilcher with the Office of Subsistence  
39 Management. During the fall 2022 Council meeting cycle  
40 the public can provide written or oral comments to the  
41 Council in-person, telephonically, or by email. You  
42 can submit written comments up until the start of the  
43 presentation of each proposal or closure review.  
44 Please indicate your name, affiliation, if that's  
45 applicable, and if commenting on a proposal or closure  
46 review, please review the proposal or closure review  
47 number. You can submit your comments by either  
48 emailing your comments to subsistence@fws.gov, bringing  
49 a hardcopy of your written comment to the Council

50

0037

1 meeting and presenting it to the Council Coordinator  
2 for distribution, or asking someone to deliver it to  
3 the Council meeting on your behalf if you are unable to  
4 attend. You can also provide oral comments to the  
5 Council either in-person, or telephonically. The Chair  
6 will announce the opportunity to provide oral comments  
7 after the presentation on the analysis of the proposal  
8 or closure review. To provide in-person comments, you  
9 must fill out a comment form provided on the public  
10 table. These blue cards. And turn it in to the  
11 Council Coordinator or other OSM Team member. During  
12 the appropriate time the Chair will call your name when  
13 it is your turn. Telephonically, after the in-personal  
14 oral comments and summary of written public comments,  
15 the Chair will ask if anyone on the phone -- if there  
16 is anyone on the phone that would like to provide  
17 comments. For those on the phone who would like to  
18 speak start by saying Mr. or Madame Chair, and wait to  
19 be recognized by the Chair before speaking. Comments  
20 on non-agenda items are accepted at the start of each  
21 day of all Council meetings. The Chair will announce  
22 this opportunity daily, which that's where we're at  
23 right now in the agenda.

24  
25 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: All right, I  
26 guess at this time we have Jim Simon on non-agenda  
27 items, public testimony. Are you online Jim.

28  
29 MS. PILCHER: He's here.

30  
31 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Oh, I'm sorry.

32  
33 MR. SIMON: Thank you, Madame Chair.  
34 For the record my name is Jim Simon. I'm a consultant  
35 with the Tanana Chiefs Conference and the Kuskokwim  
36 River InterTribal Fish Commission but I'm just giving  
37 my personal comments here right now.

38  
39 And because of the great conversations  
40 the Council has had regarding the impacts of commercial  
41 fisheries on our failure to have reasonable  
42 opportunities for subsistence and meeting escapement  
43 goals, et cetera, I wanted to bring to your attention  
44 to something that I believe is in your book, it's the  
45 2022 Kuskokwim River Salmon Situation Report produced  
46 by the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission.  
47 And, in particular, on Page 8 there's a blue box that  
48 says: At a Glance: impacts of commercial salmon  
49 interception and bycatch. And the last bullet in that  
50

0038

1 blue square, both State and Federal policy declare that  
2 meeting salmon escapement goals and providing for  
3 subsistence uses are to be prioritized over commercial  
4 harvest. However, in practice, the current management  
5 regimes under both North Pacific Fisheries Management  
6 Council and the Alaska Board of Fisheries effectively  
7 prioritize commercial uses over Western Alaska  
8 escapement needs or subsistence uses. For example, in  
9 2021 when chum salmon harvest were severely restricted  
10 on the Kuskokwim and not allowed on the Yukon, over  
11 740,000 Western Alaska chum were legally caught between  
12 both the Area M Fishery and the Bering Sea pollock  
13 fishery. And that's just one example of the.....

14

15 (Teleconference interference -  
16 participants not muted - on hold)

17

18 MR. SIMON: .....more extensive efforts  
19 that the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission  
20 Team did in their situation report this year where  
21 there's a lot of information about both bycatch and  
22 interception of our salmon are discussed.

23

24 I also wanted to mention that I believe  
25 that Council Member Whitworth briefly mentioned some of  
26 the efforts that Alaska tribes are working with and the  
27 recent joint consultation between NOAA and the  
28 Department of Interior regarding the salmon crises in  
29 the AYK region. But I also wanted to mention that  
30 Arctic, Yukon, Kuskokwim Tribal Coalition has hired a  
31 Staff member and Kevin Whitworth can give you more  
32 information about this if you'd like, to focus on  
33 bycatch and try to really bring the voice of AYK  
34 tribes, that's Kawarek, Tanana Chiefs Conference,  
35 Association of Village Council Presidents, the Yukon  
36 River InterTribal Fish Commission and the Kuskokwim  
37 River InterTribal Fish Commission. You know the  
38 coalition was first established more than 20 years ago  
39 with just the three regional non-profits to partner  
40 with NOAA, Fish and Wildlife Service and the Alaska  
41 Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial  
42 Fisheries and Division of Subsistence and Bering Sea  
43 Fishermens Association to establish the AYK Sustainable  
44 Salmon Initiative, and through the late Senator  
45 Stevens, you know, there was a lot of funding provided  
46 prior to the loss of earmarks to that effort and  
47 something like 30-some million dollars worth of salmon  
48 research has been conducted there, mostly focused on  
49 chinook or king salmon and we are beginning to see  
50

0039

1 managers actually take into account, particularly the  
2 Federal manager on the Kuskokwim in partnership with  
3 the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission to  
4 recognize the importance of the loss of large salmon on  
5 the spawning grounds, et cetera, a lot of this approach  
6 that's being applied to the co-management of the  
7 Kuskokwim River salmon stocks is being informed by this  
8 extensive research that's been conducted.

9  
10                   You know local people tend to make  
11 these observations and it takes scientists, you know, a  
12 decade or two to sort of catch up. You know 20 years  
13 ago when I first started working at the Department of  
14 Fish and Game after leaving Tanana Chiefs Conference  
15 everyone was talking about the declining size of salmon  
16 and how mesh size was affecting perhaps the decline of  
17 salmon and the concerns that local tribal  
18 representatives had about what that means for salmon  
19 escapement and, you know, we finally are seeing the  
20 Department of Fish and Game recognize that on the Kenai  
21 River where they actually have an escapement goal for  
22 large chinook salmon reaching the spawning ground. And  
23 I really encourage the Department to avail themselves  
24 of all of this new salmon science that's coming out to  
25 really try to rebuild these runs. What we see -- I  
26 really agree with what Member Darrell Vent said we  
27 really see money driving the decisionmaking and the  
28 call for more research before taking any action and I  
29 don't think that is serving the fish very well and I  
30 think that both the Federal and State governments need  
31 to start prioritizing the fish over money.

32  
33                   And with that I'd also like to point  
34 out that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service does have a  
35 role on the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council,  
36 it's only advisory I believe but there is an annual  
37 report that is submitted to the North Pacific Fisheries  
38 Management Council by the Fish and Wildlife Service and  
39 it would be really good if that report was -- a little  
40 more attention was paid in that report to -- for  
41 example, acknowledging the Kuskokwim River InterTribal  
42 Fish Commission and the Yukon Delta National Wildlife  
43 Refuge's efforts for in-season harvest monitoring  
44 rather than attributing to the Department of Fish and  
45 Game. The Department of Fish and Game has assessed in-  
46 season harvest management and has basically concluded  
47 that it can't be done, but the Yukon Delta National  
48 Wildlife Refuge and the Kuskokwim River InterTribal  
49 Fish Commission has demonstrated that it can be done  
50

0040

1 and it can be done well with scientific rigor.

2

3

Thank you.

4

5

MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you, very  
6 much.

7

8

MR. GERVAIS: Can we ask him questions  
9 Jenny.

10

11

MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: I guess Tim has  
12 some questions.

13

14

MR. GERVAIS: Thanks for your comments,  
15 Jim. From what I've seen in this situation report it  
16 looks like a lot of good information that everybody on  
17 the Council needs to go over and be familiarized with  
18 all the information brought in here.

19

20

So you're saying that the Fish and  
21 Wildlife Service has an advisory capacity with the  
22 North Pacific Council, do you know who prepares that  
23 report?

24

25

MR. SIMON: I do not have a lot of  
26 familiarity with the specific role of that Fish and  
27 Wildlife Service person advising the North Pacific  
28 Fisheries Management Council. I don't know who that  
29 person is. And it is unclear to me, specifically, who  
30 writes that report for the AYK region to give to the  
31 North Pacific. But because of the three river index,  
32 you know, that is used to determine whether or not the  
33 lower hardcap for chinook salmon is put in place for  
34 bycatch or the higher -- you know it's 60,000 if the  
35 combined three river index of the Yukon, I believe it's  
36 the middle and upper Yukon, the Kuskokwim and the  
37 Unalakleet if it's something like a quarter of a  
38 million or higher it's the king bycatch cap is 60,000  
39 and if it's below that, so depressed runs it's  
40 something like 45,000 and we've been in a number of  
41 years now where that 45,000 hardcap for bycatch of  
42 chinook salmon is in place. And that's what I believe  
43 Member -- Council Member Whitworth was talking about is  
44 there is no such provision to protect chum catch and  
45 why you see the -- from that Kuskokwim River  
46 InterTribal Fish Commission situation report that I  
47 read into the record, why there is so much chum  
48 harvested that would return to Western Coastal Alaska  
49 stocks. It's hard to genetically distinguish each  
50

0041

1 river from that genetic group. In part because of lack  
2 of interest in trying to find more specific genetic  
3 markers, at least, from my experience being on the  
4 steering committee of the Arctic, Yukon, Kuskokwim  
5 Sustainable Salmon Initiative for 13 or so years for  
6 the Department of Fish and Game.

7

8 Thank you.

9

10 MR. GERVAIS: Jim, do you know if the  
11 Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission, do they  
12 conduct their own genetic testing in addition to the  
13 Federal and State testing?

14

15 MR. SIMON: I should probably let my  
16 boss speak to that but he can correct me if I'm wrong.  
17 But, no, at this point they're not conducting any  
18 specific genetic stock identification work but I think  
19 that it is definitely of interest. The most recent  
20 project that I am aware of, and, again I'm not a  
21 fisheries biologist, I'm the Anthropologist for that  
22 InterTribal Commission, it's really starting to look at  
23 smolt out-migration and following up on a previous Fish  
24 and Wildlife study that really -- that demonstrated a  
25 dramatic decline in the numbers of salmon smolt leaving  
26 the Kwethluk River drainage. This is something that I  
27 hope the Department of Fish and Game will also start  
28 paying attention to. A year ago when representatives  
29 from the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission  
30 and the Yukon River InterTribal Fish Commission had a  
31 meeting with Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang about the  
32 salmon concerns, his comments were that it's all a  
33 marine ocean issue and so we were able to point out  
34 this decline in small out-migration through the four  
35 years of that study on the Kwethluk as an indication  
36 that it's not just -- you can't just all blame it on  
37 what's happening in the ocean, I think some of the  
38 Department's own research that Dr. Katie Howard and  
39 Sabrina Garcia are working on with looking at Yukon  
40 smolt out-migration into near shore waters and how that  
41 has become a reliable predictor of future adult returns  
42 also demonstrates that there is -- there are things  
43 happening -- and the lack of predictability to some  
44 extent for chum salmon indicate that there are things  
45 happening in both fresh water and the marine  
46 environment that need to be addressed.

47

48 You know bringing that up makes me  
49 think, you know, that everything we're hearing is, oh,

50

0042

1 it's climate change and we can't do anything about it,  
2 well, climate change is nothing new to indigenous  
3 people in Alaska. I'm sorry I cannot remember the  
4 gentleman's name but I know that there was a Point Hope  
5 tribal citizen testifying before Congress about the  
6 impacts of climate change in 1975. My own neighbors,  
7 growing up in the Ahtna region, you know, spoke about  
8 how the climate was changing with watching tundra in  
9 the Ahtna region becoming shrubby, you know, and  
10 forested and landscapes and how that affected caribou  
11 herds. I mean none of this is really new. It's maybe  
12 new to the Western Scientists but indigenous stewards,  
13 you know, are aware of these connections in this  
14 ecosystem approach that fortunately Western scientists  
15 are beginning to embrace and look into more.

16

17 Sorry, that was a long-winded answer to  
18 that question.

19

20 MR. GERVAIS: Okay. So I'm learning  
21 that you're an anthropologist, can you give this  
22 Council a story or a case where some disenfranchised  
23 people were able to overcome money and politics to do  
24 the right thing, and then how that may -- how that  
25 could play into what needs to happen to get our salmon  
26 back.

27

28 MR. SIMON: That's a tough ask but  
29 actually I think I have a good answer. The Kuskokwim  
30 River InterTribal Fish Commission, I think is one of  
31 the best examples I can come up with. Many of the  
32 elders and the formal elder advisors to that Commission  
33 and it's in-season management team were -- were  
34 commercial fishermen. You know commercial fishing in-  
35 river disappeared long ago and many of the elders on  
36 the Kuskokwim that I have learned from speak to, in now  
37 retrospect, how the co-modification of those fish for  
38 commercial sales was really the beginning of these  
39 problems and I think that's why they are being  
40 successful in trying to -- every year that the  
41 Commission, in partnership with the Federal -- you know  
42 the Fish and Wildlife Refuge there have met the  
43 escapement goals but it's not making a difference, the  
44 runs aren't -- the escapement goals have been met for  
45 something like ever since this -- the last time the  
46 escapement goal wasn't met was when the State was still  
47 managing the chinook run and I believe in 2013, and so  
48 we should start to see the returns based on those  
49 escapements being met and we're not. And so something  
50

0043

1 else is going on and we need to really look at these  
2 management plans, both in the Kuskokwim and the Yukon  
3 River, look at these management plans in light of  
4 climate change and what we've learned since many of  
5 them have been put into place, you know, a decade or so  
6 ago, to see if they are still consistent with the  
7 Sustainable Salmon Fisheries Management Policy adopted  
8 by the Board of Fish like 20 years ago, which calls for  
9 precautionary management. Precautionary management to  
10 this anthropologist, anyhow, does not mean we keep  
11 doing everything we have been doing to co-modify and  
12 sell, make money off of these resources when the whole  
13 regime, the ecosystem regime is changing and when  
14 escapement goals are met but the returns are not coming  
15 back from those, something is wrong with the system and  
16 precautionary management says be cautious, don't just  
17 say, well, we're going to keep doing everything we have  
18 been doing until we have new data that suggests we  
19 should do something differently. That's not  
20 precautionary in my understanding of that means.

21  
22

Thank you.

23  
24

MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Any more --

25  
26

Darrell.

27  
28

29 MR. VENT: Yeah, Jim, thank you for  
30 that information and input there. You know we always  
31 sit in meetings and speak about how, you know, we're  
32 trying to figure out what's going on with the fish and  
33 we have a -- you know, in our environment we have a lot  
34 of issues that could affect our fish. I know I hear  
35 stories from down in the Lower 48 where the fish were  
36 being affected by predation. They injected a lot of  
37 fish in there but it didn't come back the way it should  
38 have because predation was pretty high so they had to  
39 like put a bounty or incentive program on the pike or  
40 predation that was taking the fish. And I see  
41 something similar up in our area here. You know we  
42 have a lot of pike in our area now, it's more than  
43 usual. You know a lot of people are catching them in  
44 their nets. And back in the early '90s and 2000s there  
45 was not as much but now we look at all these fish racks  
46 and you're seeing a lot more pike. So, you know,  
47 that's one of the issues that maybe they could put in  
48 as information on how to get that fish back in our  
49 river. You know, we're being affected by many, many  
50 ways, more than just predation, it's out in the ocean,  
it's in our areas, it's maybe pollution, we don't have

0044

1 everything on record of how our fish are being  
2 affected. So there's more information that we need to  
3 try to look at. And when the small ones are heading  
4 down the river we don't -- we don't look at predation,  
5 we talk about it but, you know, there's more  
6 information out there that we need to look into.

7  
8 MR. SIMON: Yeah, thank you, Darrell.  
9 I think you're right and, again, having worked for the  
10 Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence  
11 for the AYK region for 14 years, I know that the  
12 research Staff there have documented many local  
13 observations about how even some whitefish will take  
14 and eat salmon eggs. Pike, in particular, you know, as  
15 some of you may know there are programs in Southcentral  
16 Alaska to actually poison the pike, you know, because  
17 of their impacts on Alexander Creek salmon returns, et  
18 cetera. I think that in the AYK region on the  
19 Kuskokwim and Yukon, the Department, you know, relies  
20 on subsistence fishermen to take care of that. And I  
21 think some of the problems that Kevin Whitworth spoke  
22 about earlier with during the coho closure of any  
23 gillnet gear, you know, in the river, that prevented  
24 taking of non-salmon fish, that's -- we need to come up  
25 with better solutions. And it's my hope that the  
26 Department will have submitted proposals to give them  
27 the management tools they need to address coho  
28 conservation on the Kuskokwim.

29  
30 You know, again, following up on what  
31 Kevin Whitworth said about the working group meetings,  
32 I mean there were also questions made to the Department  
33 of whether or not they have considered submitting an  
34 emergency petition to give them that management  
35 flexibility and those tools so that they could provide  
36 for some non-salmon subsistence fishing opportunities  
37 in the middle and upper Kuskokwim, but they said the  
38 process would take too long, I guess. But a month  
39 closure -- an emergency petition implies, you know,  
40 that it could happen within that month timeframe but.

41  
42 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Darrell.

43  
44 MR. VENT: Yeah, on that note there's  
45 issues that we got to look ahead on is that whitefish  
46 and sheefish are being utilized in our villages now  
47 because we can't rely on the salmon. We don't have any  
48 data on these fish but they're really starting to get  
49 hit now. I'm just hoping that we could maybe get some  
50

0045

1 more information on the other species because now that  
2 we're relying on them they're going to start declining,  
3 we don't know what kind of shape they're in or  
4 anything, at the moment. I know up around Allakaket  
5 and up in the rivers up there that's where the sheefish  
6 spawn up there and those are really important areas to  
7 us. So I just wanted you to know that.

8

9 MR. SIMON: Thank you, Darrell. I know  
10 that you didn't have a specific question for me but,  
11 you know, it is important for the Council to recognize  
12 that this is also not new. You know some of the  
13 studies done in the upper Koyukuk River by the Division  
14 of Subsistence by Dave Andersen of 20 years ago was  
15 specifically looking at non-salmon fish populations and  
16 their uses given the salmon collapse of 20 years ago  
17 and so the Councils adopted priority information needs  
18 to provide funding to study those non-salmon fish. I  
19 believe there is another project starting to do that  
20 same thing in the upper Koyukuk that's being funded by  
21 the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. I could be  
22 wrong but I think that's accurate. To look at this.

23

24 And so the question is, what are we  
25 going to do differently from 20 years ago.

26

27 You know the problem with the way our  
28 current management regimes operate is that we only  
29 study things after a crises has happened, it's like  
30 ichthyophonus. 20 years ago it was being studied but  
31 then it sort of disappeared so it wasn't being studied,  
32 and now it's being studied again so that we can  
33 evaluate what we might -- how management might be  
34 influenced by that information. And, you know, also  
35 with those non-salmon projects that the Fisheries  
36 Resource Monitoring Program have funded, you know, when  
37 I became the Regional Supervisor at Subsistence  
38 Division was a major priority of mine to do non-salmon  
39 work throughout the Kuskokwim and Yukon areas and there  
40 was sort of a hold put on the FRMP funding of those  
41 until there was sort of a research and management plan  
42 developed, which then.....

43

44 (Teleconference interference -  
45 participants not muted)

46

47 REPORTER: Go ahead Jim.

48

49 MR. SIMON: Which then Caroline Brown

50

0046

1 with the Division of Subsistence and Randy Brown with  
2 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conducted and is  
3 really -- identifies the information gaps and what the  
4 information needs are that we have to make sure that  
5 that non-salmon fish species can continue to be  
6 sustainably managed as people shift their focus from  
7 non-existent salmon to those other species.

8  
9 I can tell you that after looking at  
10 some of that work 20 -- 15 to 20 years ago I could not  
11 see a clear indication that people were harvesting a  
12 sufficient replacement poundage of non-salmon to  
13 replace the lost salmon. So it's just also like what  
14 Kevin Whitworth was mentioning earlier, you know,  
15 because of the conservation concerns on the Kuskokwim  
16 for chinook, chum and now coho, those conservation  
17 management restrictions prevent people from being able  
18 to fully utilize sockeye. So even before the coho  
19 collapse if you looked at whether or not people were  
20 harvesting more coho in order to replace the lost kings  
21 or chums, you don't really see it being a sufficient  
22 replacement value. So I think that's why we're seeing  
23 such hardship, is that, while the opportunities may  
24 exist for these other replacement fish, for whatever  
25 reason they're really not filling the gaps from the  
26 loss of salmon. So we really need to rebuild the  
27 salmon stocks. And if -- and on the Kuskokwim, if  
28 meeting the escapement goals aren't helping, then maybe  
29 the escapement goals aren't right or something. That's  
30 why the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission has  
31 been shooting for the upper end of the escapement goal  
32 range, not the bear minimum. And -- but unfortunately,  
33 you know, on the Yukon they're just not being met  
34 period. Not meeting Treaty obligations. You know the  
35 Fish and Wildlife Service gets a couple million dollars  
36 a year to support the Yukon Panel process, funds a  
37 bunch of the Department of Fish and Game and a team of  
38 managers and yet the metrics are a failure, I mean  
39 we're not meeting Treaty goals, we're not meeting  
40 escapement so we can't, as -- and what I'm hearing from  
41 the various tribal official representatives of the 37  
42 member tribes of Tanana Chiefs Conference we cannot  
43 keep doing the same thing over and over again and  
44 expect a different result, something needs to be done  
45 differently because what we have been doing is not  
46 working.

47  
48 Thanks.  
49  
50

0047

1 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you, Jim.  
2 Okay.

3  
4 MR. GERVAIS: One more please.

5  
6 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: One more.

7  
8 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Madame Chair.  
9 Jim, can you estimate what percentage of ADF&G's  
10 management, not just in-river, but the commercial  
11 management too, how much of that comes from regulation  
12 and how much comes based from the top down, either the  
13 Governor or the Commissioner of Fish and Game?

14  
15 MR. SIMON: Wow, that's a loaded  
16 question for sure.

17  
18 (Laughter)

19  
20 MR. SIMON: You know I never  
21 specifically studied this as a social scientist, you  
22 know, your question, so all I have is sort of my  
23 observation and my gut. I do know that State  
24 Administrations change just as Federal Administrations  
25 change you can see differences in management. I know  
26 that not so much for this -- and let me also say that  
27 the managers on the ground, you know, they are doing  
28 the best that they can and trying, I do know that in  
29 recent years I do -- I have been told by some, at least  
30 one manager outside of the AYK region that those  
31 decisions are coming from Juneau, you know, the actual  
32 on the ground decisionmaking. I think there's various  
33 levels of review and approval depending on which  
34 Administration is in office and that's not really a big  
35 surprise I don't think to anyone.

36  
37 I guess that's all I can really say at  
38 this point.

39  
40 MR. GERVAIS: All right, that's good.

41  
42 MR. SIMON: A lot of it, it's just the  
43 uncertainty. You know it's the uncertainty. And  
44 that's where the importance of precaution comes in.  
45 Commercial fish managers and commercial fishermen, from  
46 my experience having never been either, are very  
47 optimistic people and I think that optimism could be  
48 better balanced with a dose of realism and precaution.  
49 Oh, it'll be better. There are many times in the past  
50

0048

1 20 years, especially when I worked for the Division of  
2 Subsistence where there was still incidental sales of  
3 king salmon allowed in the lower Yukon River and then  
4 by the time the sort of picture of what the run was  
5 doing arrived to the managers minds, and the data they  
6 would then try to shut down the Yukon Flats, 5D, and,  
7 you know, there were still times when I still worked  
8 there when I would say well how many sales of kings did  
9 you just allow to happen and it turned out to be about  
10 the same amount that the subsistence priority fishery  
11 in the Yukon Flats had and I said, so you just sold  
12 their fish and now you're going to shut them down, and  
13 at least in that particular year, in that instance,  
14 they chose not to shut them down. And so that's, you  
15 know, that was a different era perhaps for the  
16 Subsistence Division, the subsistence isn't a division  
17 anymore at the Department of Fish and Game and what I  
18 hear is they call the Staff Subsistence Resource  
19 Specialists now, not Subsistence Research Specialists,  
20 [sic] not Resource Specialists -- when I worked there  
21 they were all Subsistence Resource Specialists with  
22 jobs of helping to implement the subsistence priority  
23 law.

24

25 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, thank you  
26 very much. Okay, at this time we'll have Virgil  
27 Umphenour on Proposal 140 Area M.

28

29 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you, Madame  
30 Chair. My name is Virgil Umphenour, I'm representing  
31 the Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee this  
32 morning. We submitted a proposal to the Board of  
33 Fisheries to address the issue in Area M and the June  
34 Fishery. It's Proposal 140. I served three terms on the  
35 State Board of Fisheries and when I was on the Board of  
36 Fisheries we attempted various and numerous times to do  
37 something about the interception of the, primarily chum  
38 salmon, in the Area M June Fishery and the post-June  
39 Fishery as well.

40

41 But a little bit of history on the Area  
42 M Fishery. The Area M Fishery is on the south side of  
43 the Alaska Peninsula, commonly referred to as False  
44 Pass, that fishery has been going on, the commercial  
45 fishery there since the early 1900s but the one on the  
46 Yukon has as well, basically, if you count what the --  
47 if it wasn't going out of state for commercial purposes  
48 it was not called a commercial fishery although there  
49 was a giant commercial fishery and it started with when  
50

50

1 Alaska became a state and the Army had to have dog  
2 teams and so there were people that were hired by the  
3 Army to catch fish for the Army for their dog teams and  
4 to feed the soldiers. And then Hudenstuck\* when he was  
5 the Archdeacon of the Episcopal Church in Alaska he  
6 started orphanages, because we had the big flu epidemic  
7 that killed lots of people and there were lots of  
8 orphans, anyway he had one at Nenana and he operated  
9 out of Fort Yukon, but there was a big crash of salmon  
10 in the Yukon River in 1918 and 1919 right at the time  
11 when they had all that as well and he went back to  
12 Washington D.C., and spoke before what was called the  
13 White Commission, because Congressman White was in  
14 charge of the fur and fisheries division for the United  
15 States Congress and that's who controlled the fisheries  
16 and the fur trade in Alaska prior to statehood and that  
17 resulted in what was called the White Act, where they  
18 dissolved -- they did away with the commercial fishery  
19 and they did away with that to provide subsistence use  
20 for the people on the Yukon. And about the same time  
21 then that put a lot of emphasis when the White  
22 Commission -- put a lot of emphasis on management of  
23 the fisheries and on what the subsistence needs were of  
24 the people. So that stayed that way until about the  
25 early 1930s when they started a commercial fishery  
26 again.

27  
28 But the Area M Fishery, there's no  
29 spawning fish, no local fish in the June fishery and  
30 very few until after the middle of July, so that  
31 fishery is an intercept fishery. It's harvesting  
32 migrating stocks and most of those migrating stocks are  
33 headed north but not all of them. At the -- and this  
34 last April the Department put out a summary of the  
35 previous fishery, the 2021 fishery and an outlook for  
36 the 2022 fishery and in the very opening paragraph of  
37 that it states:

38  
39 This is not an exact quote but to the  
40 best of my memory it's a pretty close to an exact  
41 quote.

42  
43 It says: The Area M June Fishery is --  
44 and the Southeast Alaska chinook salmon fishery is the  
45 only two fisheries in the state, commercial fisheries  
46 that are managed by what returns, by the -- the in-  
47 season management of what returns. The one in  
48 Southeast, the chinook salmon fishery, that is set by  
49 the Pacific Salmon Commission, it's a Treaty between  
50

0050

1 the United States and Canada. I've been on the -- I'm  
2 part of that as well but I'm on the Yukon River Panel  
3 and I've been on it since 1988, before we even had a  
4 Treaty, I was one of the people that helped negotiate  
5 the Treaty and, in fact, I've been on that -- I think  
6 I'm the senior member as far as longevity, been on the  
7 Salmon Commission longer than anyone from either  
8 country, since 1988 -- anyway, so that fishery is set  
9 by a Treaty. The one in Area M is only set by the  
10 management plan, the current management plan.

11

12 Now, like I said when I was on the  
13 Board of Fisheries we addressed this numerous times.  
14 The first time it really got addressed as far as  
15 interception goes was after 1982. Because in 1982 the  
16 fall chum run failed on the Yukon River and the Area M  
17 June Fishery caught over a million chum salmon in the  
18 June Fishery. Now, this past year -- and so what the  
19 Board did is they ended up putting a chum cap on. When  
20 they caught X number of chums then the fishery would  
21 close. In 1991, this is right after YRDFA was formed  
22 and I was co-Chair of YRDFA for the upper Yukon at the  
23 time and I testified before the Board of Fish in I  
24 believe, November of 1991, I know Mr. Kron was there  
25 when that happened, and they had a big outlook for  
26 Bristol Bay sockeye, at that time the management plan  
27 said that they would get 8.3 percent of Bristol Bay  
28 sockeye, that was the allocation for the Area M June  
29 Fishery of sockeye salmon, 8.3 percent, but they know  
30 how many sockeye salmon -- or chum salmon they would  
31 catch to catch a certain amount of sockeye, it's called  
32 a sockeye to chum ratio. And so going by the  
33 historical sockeye to chum ratio they would have to  
34 catch at least 900,000 chum salmon in order to harvest  
35 the forecast for Bristol Bay, their share of the  
36 forecast for Bristol Bay. So at that time the chum cap  
37 was 600,000, they changed it to 900,000. So after that  
38 happened I wrote a petition to the Board of Fisheries  
39 and the Board of Fisheries rejected my petition so I  
40 said well to the heck with this and so I got with other  
41 people I knew in the AYK region and I sent that  
42 petition -- well, I got signatures here in Fairbanks,  
43 Will Mayo was the Chair or Executive Director or  
44 whatever you want to -- President of Tanana Chiefs  
45 Conference, he sent the petition to the Tanana Chiefs  
46 Conference villages, I sent my petition to Nome and  
47 Kawarek got it to the Nome villages because I knew a  
48 lot of people in the Norton Sound region because I had  
49 been an officer in the National Guard up there for  
50

0051

1 awhile, anyway, and we collected over 10,000  
2 signatures. At the time Jack Coghill was Lt. Governor  
3 and I knew Jack Coghill, he's from Nenana and so I sent  
4 the petition to him and then he told the Governor, we  
5 need to make the Board of Fish readdress that chum cap  
6 so the Governor ordered the Board to do that and we had  
7 a meeting -- or they had a meeting in Juneau coming up  
8 so they put us on the agenda for that, we got it  
9 reduced down to 700,000.

10

11 But anyway so this thing's been going  
12 on for years. And then they -- like I said the Board  
13 of Fish did all kinds of different things to the  
14 management plan but there was one thing that was always  
15 going on, they called it chum chucking, and that is the  
16 Area M fishermen, because they got a lot more money for  
17 sockeye salmon and if they caught the cap of chum  
18 salmon their fishery would close, so they would just  
19 throw them overboard but we never had any hard evidence  
20 of that. So I told the Trooper Captain that came out  
21 to all the Board of Fish meetings I said, you know,  
22 there's no reason with the new optics that are  
23 available now that you guys just can't set up an  
24 observation post up on one of those mountains in Area M  
25 and watch where they're chucking and record what's  
26 happening. So he secretly did that. And so they  
27 caught several seiners that were doing that. They had  
28 people throwing the chum salmon overboard. Well, they  
29 got a conviction on that -- or got them convicted and  
30 that happened just prior to the Board of Fisheries  
31 meeting in January of 2001 but that meeting lasted  
32 about 25 or 26 days, somewhere in there because the  
33 Board's budget had been cut by 35 percent by the  
34 Senator from Kenai who was mad at the Board over the  
35 Board restricting their fishery to get escapement in  
36 the upper reaches of Cook Inlet in the Susitna River  
37 drainage, and so he was Chairman of Senate Finances so  
38 he got the Board's budget cut by 35 percent, which not  
39 just got the Board of Fish budget cut, it got the AC's  
40 budget cut and the Board of Game's budget cut as well  
41 so we had to do Bristol Bay, AYK, Area M in one meeting  
42 and that was in January and February of 2001. Also  
43 something that kind of coincided with that was I knew  
44 that if I could get the fish tickets, copies of the  
45 fish tickets that I could really come close to proving  
46 that they were not counting all the chum salmon because  
47 the processors didn't want the fishery to get closed  
48 either. And so I had requested and it took three -- at  
49 least three years I worked on this with Dr. White from  
50

1 Bethel trying to get printouts of the fish tickets for  
2 the Area M fishermen and so we finally got it, got 10  
3 years worth of fish ticket printouts with a discreet  
4 permit number that belongs to that permit, we had the  
5 harvest by day and by statistical area and by species  
6 and so in that South Unimak fishery there were  
7 fishermen that caught more chums than sockeye, that's  
8 what they sold, more chums than sockeye. There were  
9 other fishermen that it was kind of half and half, and  
10 some fishermen -- there was one fisherman that caught  
11 over 7,000 sockeye in that June Fishery and zero chums.  
12 And so Area M always took this guy -- Stanley was his  
13 name, an attorney with him to the meetings, and so that  
14 attorney threatened the Department and said he was  
15 going to sue the Board because that violated the  
16 statute for confidentiality, that the processors would  
17 be able to figure out who the fisherman was that didn't  
18 sell all their fish to that processor. And so -- I  
19 can't believe that they did this, but they withdrew  
20 that. But everyone got to see it for a couple of days  
21 before that happened. So when we went into  
22 deliberations I said there's only one thing that works  
23 and that's to get them to be treated like everyone  
24 else, instead of getting to fish seven days a week, 24  
25 hours a day, because that is what they were fishing, as  
26 long as they didn't get the chum cap, give them a set  
27 schedule and so that's what we did, and that is what  
28 Proposal 140 is about.

29  
30 But what ended up happening a few  
31 months later after Dr. White and myself and a couple  
32 other conservation minded Board members got off the  
33 Board they changed it, and they increased the fishing  
34 time by 285 percent, is what they did. And so as a  
35 result of it those guys get to fish all they can stand  
36 to fish and the seiners especially like in -- well,  
37 it's here in the proposal on the second page, it tells  
38 how much -- or the third page, it tells how much those  
39 guys caught, but they caught chum salmon in 2001 they  
40 caught 1.168 million which was a record number of chum  
41 salmon, more than what they caught in 1982 and look at  
42 what the numbers were on the Yukon River. Our summer  
43 chum run for that year was 152,000. That's all that  
44 went past the sonar. That's with zero subsistence  
45 fishing, zero of any kind of fishing, and the numbers  
46 past that sonar with the commercial fisheries south of  
47 there down river catching in the neighborhood of a half  
48 a million fish before they even get to the sonar and  
49 subsistence fishermen taking what they need, it would  
50

0053

1 normally be around 1.6 million, but if you didn't count  
2 that it would have been over 2 million. That's that  
3 long-term average. On the fall chum salmon they  
4 normally average 998,000 past the sonar. And, again,  
5 that's with the commercial fishery down river from  
6 there and with the subsistence fishery down river from  
7 there. Last year they got 102,000 that's all. And the  
8 king salmon, the same type of thing.

9  
10 So speaking of king salmon I got to add  
11 something else to this. They always say they don't  
12 catch any -- none of the king salmon headed to the AYK  
13 region or in -- they say in the Bering Sea, they don't  
14 go down to the Gulf of Alaska which is south of Area M.  
15 But that's bologna. We started really noticing  
16 ichthyophonus in the late '90s. And I'm a processor  
17 here in Fairbanks and I buy fish up and down the river.  
18 I've bought fish all the way from Mountain Village to  
19 the Border. In fact I've even bought fish out of  
20 Dawson years ago. But where I buy fish primarily from  
21 is District 5 and 6 which is from Tanana up and Nenana  
22 and Fairbanks. And so we noticed this -- something  
23 wrong with the fish. And so one time Tanana -- or  
24 Doyon was going to have some type of a function and  
25 they wanted 200 pounds of king salmon fillets for their  
26 function so I got out 29 king salmon out of my freezer,  
27 we thawed them out and started filleting them and my  
28 filleter comes to me and he says these fish all have  
29 the fungus, that's what he called it, the fungus.  
30 Anyway it was ichthyophonus and what it looks like when  
31 you fillet the fish, you can't tell from the outside  
32 that it's got it, when you open it up it's got, and  
33 they're about the size of a pea, maybe a quarter inch  
34 or a little bit smaller, round spots in it that look  
35 like they're full of puss is what it looks like, that's  
36 when they really have ichthyophonus bad. Anyway, out of  
37 those 29 fish I got Louie Barton, who was a research  
38 scientists out of Fairbanks, Fish and Game, I called  
39 him up immediately and I said Louie you need to come  
40 over here and bring your camera, I want you to see  
41 this. And so out of those 29 fish, 15 of them were  
42 like that, and they're all the big older fish and  
43 primarily the females had that. So we raised all kinds  
44 of, you know, tried to really emphasize that and we  
45 finally got the Department to pay some attention and we  
46 got some funding. And so this guy, Dr. Kocan, who was  
47 a retired professor and researcher from the University  
48 of Washington and he was the guy that did all the  
49 ichthyophonus research after the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill  
50

0054

1 in Prince William Sound, he came up, I think at least  
2 three years in a row for sure and then he did some more  
3 work after that and I actually dealt with him because  
4 what he would do is take his samples and then they had  
5 to be refrigerated and then shipped to the laboratory  
6 in Seattle and the U.S. Geological Survey Laboratory is  
7 the one that analyzed all these samples for  
8 ichthyphonus, anyway, and so one of the things that he  
9 was trying to determine was how do these king salmon  
10 get ichthyphonus because ichthyphonus kills them, they  
11 don't make it to the spawning grounds, the majority of  
12 them don't if they have ichthyphonus. And so the way  
13 the fish get it -- or the salmon get it in Prince  
14 William Sound and in other places is they get it from  
15 infected herring that they eat and so he went and  
16 sampled a bunch of the herring in Norton Sound and the  
17 Bristol Bay to see if they had ichthyphonus, he could  
18 not find any ichthyphonus in the herring in Bristol Bay  
19 or in the Bering Sea and so his assumption was that  
20 they have to be going into the Gulf of Alaska south of  
21 the Alaska Peninsula in order to get ichthyphonus. Now  
22 in 2- and Tom Kron can correct me if I'm wrong, but I  
23 think it was 2017, in the June Fishery in Area M, they  
24 caught 44-thousand-something king salmon in the June  
25 Fishery alone. If the trawl fishery caught 44,000 king  
26 salmon in one month people would go ballistic. No one  
27 did nothing about that. They're taking genetic samples  
28 again of the catch of chum salmon in Area M but they're  
29 not doing it on the king salmon and that really, really  
30 aggravates me that they're not, but they're not.

31  
32 But anyway, this proposal addresses all  
33 three species that are really in biological trouble  
34 here in all of AYK, not just the Yukon, but the  
35 Kuskokwim, Norton Sound as well. Norton Sound, this  
36 past year, the fishery up there, because they don't  
37 have the escapement projects or the counting projects  
38 that we do on the Yukon, and the reason why we have  
39 them on the Yukon the way we do, a big part of it is  
40 because of our Treaty with Canada, we get money to do  
41 that and we're obligated, the United States government  
42 is obligated to pass X number of fish across the border  
43 into Canada which we haven't done for awhile. But  
44 anyway, that's why we get the money. But they do know  
45 how many fish they catch. And in Norton Sound this  
46 year, they shut their commercial fishery down when they  
47 weren't catching hardly any chum salmon but they only  
48 caught five percent of the average. Five percent is  
49 all they caught.  
50

0055

1                   And so this proposal really needs to  
2 pass because we need to get those nets out of the  
3 water.

4  
5                   And just so you know, you know, it's  
6 easy to look up on the computer how much money those  
7 guys make, the average income of those seiners in Area  
8 M this last year was over \$600,000 for a little over a  
9 month's work.

10

11                   Thank you, Madame Chair.

12

13                   MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you,  
14 Virgil. Do we have any questions for Virgil.

15

16                   Tim.

17

18                   MR. GERVAIS: Virgil, this is Tim  
19 Gervais. So can you just briefly go through the points  
20 on this 140 that are -- are you bringing this stuff --  
21 is this all historical or are these dates of this.....

22

23                   MR. UMPHENOUR: Now, the majority of  
24 this writing on this piece of paper is stuff that's  
25 getting taken out of the management plan. Everything  
26 that's in brackets goes out. If you start, you know,  
27 on the front page it says: South Unimak and Shumigan  
28 Island's June Fisheries harvest and then it's got both  
29 in brackets and then chinook salmon added, chinook  
30 salmon, sockeye salmon and chum salmon in a mixed stock  
31 fishery.

32

33                   And then something that's real  
34 important is the definition of where the fishery takes  
35 place because when they changed it in 2004, when they  
36 changed it, they added a whole bunch more area that  
37 they couldn't fish prior to that. This puts that area  
38 back in is what it does. Because it eliminates a bunch  
39 of the area that wasn't opened up to them. And then it  
40 goes down there again, if you look it says: June 10  
41 and then it's in bold print, through June 30, that  
42 gives the dates. But then you get to the second page  
43 and it says, right after paragraph two it's got in bold  
44 print with brackets around it, that comes out and then  
45 June 24th comes out, and then -- and then just below  
46 there where it says, B, the fishery will be closed for  
47 one period, okay, there all the way down almost to the  
48 bottom of the page, all that bold print, that would  
49 come out because that's what they used to do and that's  
50

0056

1 pretty much it.

2

3 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, thank you,  
4 Virgil, that was very interesting.

5

6 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you.

7

8 MR. WHITWORTH: Madame Chair.

9

10 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Oh, I'm sorry.  
11 Kevin.

12

13 MR. WHITWORTH: Thank you, Virgil.  
14 Kevin Whitworth. I've got several questions or  
15 comments that you had brought up.

16

17 One thing I wanted to mention here, the  
18 genetics, I know that Member Gervais has brought this  
19 up, too, with the genetics. So they're starting to  
20 take genetics, I guess, this year, so that data is not  
21 helpful, right, I mean you don't have that data at this  
22 moment?

23

24 MR. UMPHENOUR: We don't have any of  
25 that yet. The latest data would be from the WASSIP  
26 study that was '07, '08 and '09 and there, the average  
27 of three years, I think, 57 percent or 59 percent,  
28 somewhere in that neighborhood where AYK bound fish or  
29 north of there fish, they always try to say they're all  
30 Japanese fish but that's not true, it's only 20-  
31 something percent fish were from Asia in the WASSIP  
32 study. But in the middle -- in the '90s a bunch of  
33 genetic samples were taken and what they used to do is  
34 before they could start that fishery, this is one of  
35 the things that the Board did when I was on the Board,  
36 is they would have to do a test fishery and determine  
37 the sockeye to chum ratio and so they took genetic  
38 samples of a lot of those fish and then they also took  
39 samples and we had two different people analyzing these  
40 samples, we had the Federal guy, Dick Wilmont, who was  
41 a geneticists for the Alaska Science Center out of Auke  
42 Bay, which is next to Juneau, he did a bunch of the  
43 samples and then we had Lisa Seeb and Penelope, and I  
44 can't think of her last name, the other geneticists for  
45 the State and they analyzed a lot of those samples and  
46 some of those samples came from the trawl fishery as  
47 well. So -- but when they were going those samples  
48 there was a period of time, because this thing -- you  
49 know the genetics is constantly improving. And like  
50

0057

1 right now for our salmon Treaty meetings, they can  
2 break down the Tanana River whether it's summer chum or  
3 fall chum and then for fall chum we have the Border  
4 stocks, which is Chandalar and Sheenjok River,  
5 primarily and the Black River, they're separate from  
6 the main stem Yukon stocks in Canada and they're  
7 separate from the ones that go up the Porcupine River,  
8 what they call the Fishing Branch, which is up past Old  
9 Crow. All those stocks are totally separate and they  
10 can tell them in fall chums. And summer chums, Tanana  
11 River like I just said is separate and then in king  
12 salmon the Tanana River is separate and they've got, I  
13 don't know, at least three stocks, I think, in Canada  
14 that are separate -- that they can tell that, so why  
15 they can't tell it in the WASSIP study is beyond me,  
16 why they can't tell that. And also when I was on the  
17 Board they would not separate -- they said they  
18 couldn't separate the Western Alaska stock except for  
19 fall chums from Canada but I don't know why they can't  
20 tell the Tanana River stocks or the Border stocks in  
21 chums, and at that time they said they couldn't really  
22 tell Kotzebue chums because you have to have a 90  
23 percent confidence interval before they will make a  
24 management decision on it. Okay, and Kotzebue at the  
25 time was only 88 percent confidence interval. And the  
26 way they do the confidence intervals and there's people  
27 in here that are biologists and if I'm wrong they can  
28 correct me, but they run this through a computer a  
29 bunch of times. And so what they do is they take  
30 samples of -- that they know where that fish came from  
31 and they run those genetics through the computer and it  
32 has to come out mixed in with all these other ones, it  
33 has to show up 90 percent of the time before they can  
34 count it, basically, if you're not really educated like  
35 me, to try to explain it I think. But, anyway, now  
36 Kotzebue they say it's over 90 percent and so they can  
37 count the Kotzebue fish.

38  
39 But anyway, no, that's been done since  
40 the early 90s -- well, since the '80s, I know Dick  
41 Wilmont, I think he's one of the pioneers of this  
42 genetic stuff and he used to call it electrofrieses the  
43 way they did it.

44  
45 MR. WHITWORTH: Uh-huh, thank you. And  
46 yeah that's the best available data we have is from  
47 that -- the most recent study was in 2009 through, like  
48 Virgil's mentioning there, 2009 through I think it was  
49 -- I can't remember -- 2007 through 2009 which  
50

0058

1 estimated 57 percent like you said. And so 2020 if you  
2 look at those numbers in 2002 chum bycatch or  
3 intercept, whatever you want to call it, Area M  
4 harvest, if you took 57 percent in 2020 it'd be almost  
5 300,000 fish going to the coastal Western Alaska,  
6 middle upper Yukon, 2021 -- I'm saying this a little  
7 bit because Tim had asked the question, too, 2021 it  
8 was near 700,000 and that's the best available data  
9 that we have and it's not the first time where we're in  
10 a data limited environment on the Kusko/Yukon River.  
11 There's a lot of times we're having to make really hard  
12 decisions when we are in a data limited environment and  
13 so this fishery -- we're in a data limited environment  
14 but we do have a little bit of data from those studies  
15 that tells us that these fish are being intercepted in  
16 that fishery and coming to Western Alaska.

17

18 Appreciate the history there too.

19

20 But also those numbers, and Virgil had  
21 brought this up, those numbers of roughly 300,000  
22 coming to Coastal Western Alaska are not accounting for  
23 those chum chuckers. I know trawl boats -- I mean --  
24 not trawl boats, but the boats down there that are  
25 receiving the fish from the boats, the fishing boats.

26

27 MR. GERVAIS: Seines.

28

29 MR. WHITWORTH: No, the tenders. The  
30 tender boats, they see this. You know I've had people  
31 ask me just a couple of years ago how's the chum doing  
32 on the Kusko, well, there's your problem, part of it's  
33 these chum chuckers. So these numbers that were  
34 300,000, or 700,000 is the minimum. There's a lot more  
35 that's not being accounted for, and that's coming from  
36 the fishers, it's not coming from me, it's coming from  
37 the people who know this fishery and see it day by day.

38

39 Also fishers, I know down there, the  
40 seine fishers, their boats are getting way more  
41 efficient. You know there may be limits on the size of  
42 the boat but the technology they have in those boats,  
43 and this is coming from fishers down there in that  
44 fishery who tell me this, and they have fish finders,  
45 if they limited in the number of hours that they can  
46 fish it's not helping to lower these bycatch numbers  
47 because they're so efficient. And these are people  
48 from these fisheries, from those local areas that own  
49 two boats, they know that those fisheries are -- if

50

0059

1 they're limited to -- I mean from 10 hours to five  
2 hours it's not making a difference.

3

4 So I appreciate this proposal. There's  
5 a lot of talking points that you could bring up here  
6 with this issue.

7

8 Also Virgil had brought up mixed stock  
9 fishery, you know, in-river, these are mixed stock  
10 fisheries, when they come in the river like we were  
11 talking this morning, when these fisheries like for  
12 instance the chum salmon, the chinook salmon, they come  
13 into the Kuskokwim River and when there's restrictions  
14 on those two species and there's a 100,000 sockeye  
15 salmon in front of Bethel there, you cannot catch them.  
16 We're being restricted in-river. These fisheries down  
17 there are not restricted enough. They're dealing with  
18 the same mixed stock fisheries we are but they're not  
19 being restricted enough. We've got to get these  
20 species past that area.

21

22 Anyhow, I do appreciate this proposal,  
23 Virgil, thank you. That's all.

24

25 MR. GERVAIS: Madame Chair. Could I  
26 get some clarification while we're on the topic.

27

28 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Yes.

29

30 MR. GERVAIS: I'm trying to remember  
31 what year it was, I remember -- I think we were in  
32 Aniak talking about it but I had thought through the  
33 State chinook salmon initiative, I thought they did a  
34 bunch of genetic work on commercially caught salmon and  
35 they were supposed to -- I thought they were collecting  
36 information on genetic composition of Kodiak, Chignik  
37 and Area M and just getting baseline information on  
38 what the origin of those king salmon were from all  
39 those fisheries. Wasn't that after 2009, I'm thinking  
40 it was 2013, 2014. Does anybody remember this.

41

42 MR. UMPHENOUR: The only thing I know  
43 is the Deputy Commissioner told me when I -- and this  
44 was probably in 2018, he told me that they did sample a  
45 few king salmon, just when they caught the 40-something  
46 thousand in the Area M June Fishery, they did take a  
47 few off of the top of totes and analyzed them but  
48 that's not really an analysis of what they're catching.  
49 And then one of the other things they said about the  
50

0060

1 king salmon was that they were all small ones, they  
2 only averaged around eight pounds. Well, our king  
3 salmon on the Yukon River now only average around 12  
4 pounds, that's all they average.

5  
6                   And one other, just final thing to say,  
7 we have a number of problems. The marine environment,  
8 the pasture and the ocean is not what it used to be,  
9 it's basically in a drought status, like you would call  
10 a drought on land. Every rancher, every farmer in the  
11 world knows how many cattle or sheep or whatever it is  
12 he raises, how many of them the land will support in  
13 various weather conditions and if you don't get any  
14 rain they know that they're going to have problems.  
15 They've got to get rid of some of their animals or  
16 they're going to have to be buying feed from someplace.  
17 Well, that's what's happened in the ocean. And we have  
18 all these hatcheries. The North Pacific Fisheries  
19 Commission, which is the Treaty between United States,  
20 Canada, Japan, South Korea and Russia, those scientists  
21 have come out recently and said between 5 and 6 billion  
22 hatchery fish getting into the North Pacific is totally  
23 overwhelmed the capacity of the ocean pasture to  
24 support all these fish and Alaska is the biggest  
25 producer. They just came out with the figures of how  
26 much each country dumped into the ocean last year and  
27 Alaska dumps more than any country. And Washington and  
28 Oregon also have hatcheries that dump fish. But Alaska  
29 alone averages near 2 billion a year and they're mostly  
30 pinks and chums and then there's all kinds of recent  
31 studies and some of them not really that recent that  
32 point out that the pink salmon are the biggest  
33 competitor due to their life history cycle, just every  
34 other year, they gain roughly 80 percent of their  
35 weight in the last three or four months of their life,  
36 they're gobbling up everything out there in the ocean  
37 and they're out competing the wild fish is what they're  
38 doing and not only that they're eating up out-migrating  
39 smolts, and I think, and I think a lot of people think  
40 that's the main reason why it's in every other year,  
41 one year it's a big run, and the next year it's not,  
42 and so we need to -- and this is a psychological  
43 decision to have all these hatchery fish out there  
44 competing with the wild fish and there's only a  
45 political answer to that to reduce the hatchery  
46 production and the Board of Fish has the authority to  
47 do that, by the way, they can reduce the hatchery  
48 production but it's going to take a gigantic effort on  
49 the part of people that depend on the fish and want the  
50

0061

1 fish want to comply with what our Constitution says, is  
2 that we will, you know, have sustained yield on our  
3 fisheries that's -- it's going to be something that has  
4 to be done politically.

5

6 But I just wanted to throw that in. We  
7 got to do something about these hatcheries because no  
8 matter what we do we're still going to have the same  
9 problem, the fish are starving to death in the ocean.  
10 They measure these fish every year when they come back.  
11 In all these test fisheries they do what they call ASL,  
12 age, sex, length of the fish, they get smaller every  
13 year and the last two years all three of our species of  
14 our fish in the Yukon, that's chum, both summer and  
15 fall, the coho and chinook, all of them are record  
16 small fish and it's because they're starving to death.

17

18 Thank you.

19

20 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you, very  
21 much Virgil.

22

23 Don.

24

25 MR. HONEA: Virgil, I find this really  
26 interesting. Like I mentioned prior, or this morning  
27 or something when I first got on this Board years ago I  
28 remember speaking about it, been talking about Area M,  
29 I don't know maybe 10 years ago, Pollock you remember  
30 talking about this, and it just kind of interesting or  
31 ironic that in the last couple years or whatever that  
32 these numbers are staggering. These are really high  
33 numbers and I've always, you know, there's so many  
34 variables to consider when we're talking about why or  
35 we don't have at least the summer chum on the Yukon or  
36 the Kuskokwim or the Bering Sea community rivers.

37

38 So this actually usually, you know,  
39 when the proposal come out like this, so you're just  
40 curtailing maybe the take of it by three weeks or  
41 something like that, it usually says, you know, who is  
42 it going to benefit and, you know, who's it going to  
43 hurt or whatever but I agree that it's time that we, at  
44 least, try to knock on some of these -- some of these  
45 things. Like I said, I mean certainly North Pacific  
46 bycatch numbers are concerning, in itself, but, hey,  
47 we've already gone that route. We've tried to knock  
48 those numbers down and, you know, during that time the  
49 loss of our chums, it's discerning. So I, as an

50

0062

1 individual, I, could at least support this idea when it  
2 comes around.

3

4

Thank you.

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

But, yeah, I just -- I just, you know,  
looking at it from just a layman's all you're asking  
for is like a three week curtailing of taking of the  
fish, is that it?

MR. UMPHENOUR: If this proposal passes  
it would be great. What really needs to happen is they  
totally need to close that fishery, that's what really  
needs to happen. Because it's the only fishery in the  
state that gets to go fish regardless of what's coming  
back, you know, where the fish are headed, so they  
don't -- they don't have to worry about making  
escapement goals, nothing, just go fish, that's what  
they do. And what's really -- limited entry really  
messed us up and that's a part of that problem, is the  
way limited entry happened. What happened is a lot of  
people knew that limited entry -- well, fishermen knew  
limited entry was going to take place and so what they  
would do, is you were going to have fish tickets to  
prove that you would fish commercially, anyone could  
just go buy a commercial fishing license and so what a  
lot of people did is they fished different gears, a lot  
of those people did fish different gears anyway but  
instead of a 58 foot limit seiner that can fish a net  
that's 2,400 feet long and 118 feet deep which is what  
they can fish in Area M with a purse seine, a lot of  
them had a 20 or a 24 foot boat with a 40 or 50 board  
horsepower outboard on it and a hand purse seine, well  
they got issued a purse seine permit, and then because  
we had mega bucks, when we were pumping 2 million  
barrels of oil a day down the pipeline the State had  
lots of money to spend and so they gave people loans to  
buy these big new boats and what they did is because  
would fish -- some people got issued three permits in  
Area M, they got issued a purse seine permit when they  
were just using a little 20 foot boat with a 40  
horsepower engine on it, a drift gillnet permit, and a  
set net permit. And then we had the tribes down in the  
Pacific Northwest, they were really upset because the  
commercial fishermen were catching all the salmon and  
not many salmon were going up the river where they  
lived and they were suffering from the same problem  
we're suffering right now, they weren't getting enough  
fish to eat for them and their families and so they

0063

1 went to court. Because in the 1850s when we colonized  
2 -- when the United States colonized Washington and  
3 Oregon, the Pacific Northwest, they made a Treaty with  
4 the tribes and so there was a Federal judge named Bolt  
5 and he issued the decision, that Treaty is valid, it  
6 was a valid Treaty then and it's a valid Treaty now so  
7 we're getting rid of half of these commercial fishermen  
8 and we're going to give those fishing permits to the  
9 tribes and that's what they did. So they put all these  
10 guys out of business. So here we got guys in Area M  
11 that got issued three permits and so those guys that  
12 were really aggressive fishermen down from Washington  
13 and Oregon, they wanted to keep fishing and they had  
14 their boats and everything so what happened, you can  
15 sell your limited entry permit so they sold their extra  
16 permits to those guys, aggressive fishermen to come up  
17 from Washington State. That's what happened. But the  
18 same thing happened in Bristol Bay except it was two  
19 permits, or a drift gillnet and a set gillnet, some of  
20 that happened there, it happened in Cook Inlet as well  
21 with both purse seines, in there they used hand purse  
22 seines and now they can use big purse seines and with  
23 setnets as well and with -- like a school teacher or  
24 someone that doesn't have to work in the summer anyway,  
25 what a lot of them did and they did this all over the  
26 state, people that could not -- didn't necessarily have  
27 to work in the summer would get these commercial  
28 licenses and so then all their recreational equipment,  
29 their boat everything, camping gear, it's all income  
30 tax deductions and they might make a little bit of  
31 money on the side anyway so a lot of them were doing  
32 that, you can't blame them for doing that. And then  
33 they knew that limited entry was coming so they would  
34 get their kids a permit too and their kids would issue  
35 -- you know and they may be fishing one set of gear,  
36 well a set of gear in Cook Inlet is 11 -- I think 1,000  
37 feet, or maybe it's 900 feet, 300 fathoms, that would  
38 be nine -- whatever that is.

39

40 (Laughter)

41

42 MR. UMPHENOUR: Anyway that's what they  
43 did. And so those people had all those extra permits  
44 and then they ended up selling lots of them. And  
45 that's what's caused a big bunch of our problems and  
46 part of, Bristol Bay, Cook Inlet, Area M, all over the  
47 state.

48

49 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you,

50

0064

1 Virgil. That was very interesting and I learned a lot  
2 from you, thank you.

3

4 (Pause)

5

6 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, I think  
7 we'll take one more report and then we'll go to lunch.  
8 Nissa has a report on .805.

9

10 MS. PILCHER: All right. Ms. Chair.  
11 Members of the Council. For the record my name is  
12 Nissa Pilcher, Subsistence Council Coordinator with  
13 OSM. This will be a fast one -- well, I guess  
14 depending on if you guys have questions or not. I'm  
15 going to present you with a brief summary of the  
16 .805(c) report to the Council. The material for this  
17 agenda item can be found starting on Page 14 of your  
18 meeting materials book, that's the one with the comb  
19 binding. This is not an action item.

20

21 The Board adopted actions that were in  
22 line with your Council's recommendation on one regional  
23 proposal concerning the boundary between two hunt areas  
24 in GMU22A, three statewide proposals and three  
25 proposals from other close regions and the Council --  
26 excuse me -- from other close regions that the Council  
27 chose to weigh in on, as well as seven wildlife closure  
28 reviews, which included six reviews on moose in GMU22  
29 and one on caribou in GMU23.

30

31 The Board's actions differed from the  
32 Council's recommendation for two proposals and a  
33 closure review. I will briefly give some information  
34 on these but for a full explanation please review that  
35 .805(c) report as noted that is in your meeting book on  
36 Page 14.

37

38 The Board adopted actions that were in  
39 line with your Council's recommendation on two wildlife  
40 closure reviews from other regions your Council chose  
41 to weigh -- wait, I think I might have -- I'm repeating  
42 myself, my apologies.

43

44 The Board's action differed from the  
45 Council's recommendations for two proposals.

46

47 WP22-40 requested that Federally-  
48 qualified subsistence users be allowed to use a  
49 snowmachine to position wolves and wolverines for  
50

0065

1 harvest on Federal public lands in Units 9B, 9C, 17B  
2 and 17C provided the animals are not shot from a moving  
3 snowmachine. Your Council supported this proposal as  
4 modified by OSM but the Board action was to defer to  
5 the winter 2023 Board meeting as the proponent of the  
6 proposal, which was the Bristol Bay Regional Advisory  
7 Council requested this deferment to allow them to  
8 formulate better language defining this practice.

9  
10 WP22-47 requested that cat harvest be  
11 permitted for caribou in Unit 22. Your Council  
12 supported this proposal but the Board action was to  
13 reject it. To briefly summarize their justification,  
14 this herd is currently at a population level where it  
15 is considered under preservative management and the  
16 Western Arctic Caribou Management Plan recommends a  
17 prohibition on calf harvest when this is the case and  
18 since as the Board had previously reviewed and voiced  
19 approval of this plan.

20  
21 And then thank you, Madame Chair, that  
22 concludes this report.

23  
24 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Wow, that was  
25 fast, thank you very much Ms. Nissa.

26  
27 MS. PILCHER: Yeah, we did skip over  
28 one thing. We did forget to ask if anyone on the phone  
29 had any comments for any non-agenda items.

30  
31 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. Anyone on  
32 the phone have any comments.

33  
34 (No comments)

35  
36 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: They probably  
37 went to lunch. Okay, if not maybe we'll take a lunch.  
38 How many hours do we get for lunch.

39  
40 (Laughter)

41  
42  
43 MR. HONEA: 1.5 is good.

44  
45 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Yeah.

46  
47 MR. HONEA: Hour and a half. I mean I  
48 just as soon be back in an hour if I could but usually  
49 it takes an hour and a half.

50

0066

1 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. So we'll  
2 be back at 1:00 o'clock -- no, not 1:00 o'clock --  
3 okay, be back at 1:45. Be back at 1:45.

4  
5 (Off record)

6  
7 (On record)

8  
9 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, we'll  
10 continue our meeting. And the next report we have will  
11 be the Board FY2021 by Nissa.

12  
13 MS. PILCHER: Madame Chair. Members of  
14 the Council. For the record my name is Nissa Pilcher,  
15 Subsistence Council Coordinator with OSM and I am going  
16 to present you with a very brief summary of the Federal  
17 Subsistence Board FY21 annual report apply to the  
18 Council, which in its entirety can be found on Page 19  
19 of your meeting materials book which is the one that's  
20 comb bound. While this is going to take a little bit,  
21 it's very much reduced from what is in your book so  
22 please bear with me. This is not an action item.

23  
24 The reply starts with: The Board  
25 appreciates your effort to communicate through your  
26 annual report to the Board issues outside of the  
27 regulatory process that affect subsistence users in  
28 your region. In FY21 there were five topics of concern  
29 on the Council's annual report.

30  
31 Topic 1 was regarding the poor return  
32 of Yukon and Kuskokwim River chinook and chum salmon in  
33 2021. The Board replied that it is clear that the  
34 catastrophically low returns of salmon to Western  
35 Alaska caused extreme hardship for subsistence users in  
36 the region. The low in-river returns forced managers  
37 to make difficult decisions and required them to  
38 prioritize future runs over the 2021 subsistence  
39 harvests. It was a terrible situation for all who  
40 depend on this resource. The reply then summarizes the  
41 managers actions on both the Yukon and the Kuskokwim  
42 for the 2021 season and the very beginning of the 2022  
43 and finished by noting that the Board wanted to  
44 acknowledge the efforts by this Council and other  
45 Councils that work on these Yukon River and Kuskokwim  
46 River issues, and noted that rebuilding these stocks is  
47 going to take engagement from all groups that interact  
48 with these fish during their life cycles and your input  
49 is helping to facilitate that process.

50

1                   Topic 2 was regarding concerns about  
2 other species utilized by subsistence users as a result  
3 of these poor salmon returns. The Board acknowledges  
4 that poor salmon returns cause extreme hardships for  
5 subsistence users in the Yukon and Kuskokwim regions.  
6 The Board also recognized that as a result of this  
7 subsistence users shift their harvest and that  
8 monitoring is necessary to ensure healthy populations  
9 of these species as well. One way the Council can  
10 direct research of non-salmon fish species is through  
11 the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program or the FMO --  
12 FRMP, which more information on this program will be  
13 presented later in this meeting by Cory Graham and Ms.  
14 Williams with OSM as well as an update on a whitefish  
15 project from Frank Harris with the U.S. Fish and  
16 Wildlife Service. The best way for the Council to  
17 direct additional non-salmon research is through  
18 priority information needs development and thank you,  
19 Tim and Kevin, for volunteering and participating  
20 during this last season to assist in this process. The  
21 Council will also identify and approve priority  
22 information needs for the 2024 monitoring program cycle  
23 later this meeting. This is an opportune time for your  
24 Council to highlight the need to monitor non-salmon  
25 fish populations in the Yukon and the Kuskokwim  
26 regions. I realize I should have said Member Gervais  
27 and Member Whitworth, apologies there. The reply also  
28 noted Federal and State monitoring of terrestrial  
29 animals and finished by noting that the Federal  
30 Subsistence Program can support adaption to changing  
31 conditions by using various tools available that enable  
32 the program to respond to subsistence users need, such  
33 as the special action process and the Board's ability  
34 to delegate authority to the local land managers to  
35 enable managers to respond quickly to unforeseen  
36 circumstances.

37  
38                   Topic 3 concerned tribal representation  
39 on the FRMP Technical Review Committee or the TCR  
40 [sic]. The Board appreciates and agrees with the  
41 Council's guidance on additional tribal involvement  
42 with the FRMP funded research and is receptive to the  
43 concerns raised about tribal input into this process  
44 for selecting awards. In 2020 -- or excuse me, 2005  
45 TRC membership was expanded briefly to include two  
46 representatives of tribal organizations, however, the  
47 TRC membership quickly reverted back because including  
48 members of the public, which includes Council members,  
49 meant that the TRC should have been chartered as an  
50

0068

1 Advisory Committee under the Federal Advisory Committee  
2 Act or FACA, just as the Councils are chartered. In  
3 the absence of a FACA charter, any funding decisions  
4 based on recommendations made by the TRC at the time  
5 would have been reversed by a court which is the  
6 standard legal remedy for a FACA violation. In other  
7 words, the FRMP was legally vulnerable and the report  
8 reply details some issues with some FACA requirements  
9 and current operations of the TRC. The report then  
10 highlights the Partners for Fisheries Monitoring  
11 Program, which the Council will also hear more about  
12 later during this Council meeting as well.

13

14 Topic 4 concerned the State violation  
15 of ANILCA Title VIII during a Federal closure on the  
16 Kuskokwim. The Board notified the Department of  
17 Justice and the Solicitor's Office regarding this issue  
18 and the Council will be getting a brief update on this  
19 topic near the end of the meeting.

20

21 Topic 5 concerned the Bureau of Land  
22 Management guide's use permitting for dall sheep. The  
23 Board appreciates the Council's comments regarding the  
24 decline in dall sheep population in the Central Brooks  
25 Range. More information can be found in the report on  
26 this topic. I've been talking for a bit so I will just  
27 summarize the reply quickly by saying that the BLM  
28 State Dire -- the BLM Director has received your letter  
29 and acknowledges the.....

30

31 (Teleconference interference -  
32 participants not muted)

33

34 MS. PILCHER: .....Council has  
35 regarding the special recreation permitting process.

36

37 In closing, the Board wanted to thank  
38 your Council for your continued involvement and  
39 diligence in matters regarding the Federal Subsistence  
40 Management Program and expressed their appreciation for  
41 your efforts representing the subsistence users of the  
42 Western Interior region through your work.

43

44 Thank you, Madame Chair, that concludes  
45 my report.

46

47 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. Any  
48 questions or comments from the Board.

49

50

0069

1 (No comments)

2

3 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: If not we're  
4 going to move on to special action Brian Ubelaker.

5

6 MR. UBELAKER: You don't have to try to  
7 attempt my last name.

8

9 (Laughter)

10

11 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. Ubelaker.

12

13 MR. UBELAKER: Good afternoon, Madame  
14 Chair. Members of the Council. My name is Brian  
15 Ubelaker, for the record. I am a Wildlife Biologist  
16 with the Office of Subsistence Management. I will give  
17 you a brief rundown of the results for Temporary  
18 Wildlife Action -- Special Action WSA22-02. Which the  
19 news release can be found on Page 27 and the proponent  
20 letter is under Tab 1 in your meeting books.

21

22 Temporary Special Action WSA22-02  
23 submitted by this Council requested the Federal  
24 Subsistence Board close Federal public lands to the  
25 harvest of dall sheep in Units 24A and 26B for the  
26 222/23 and 23/24 seasons. Population metrics, harvest  
27 pressure and unpredictable weather events led to a  
28 conservation concern with a dismal outlook for ram  
29 abundance along the Dalton Highway Corridor. While  
30 portions of the Brooks Range sheep population appear to  
31 be doing well, the easily accessed portion along the  
32 Dalton Corridor appear to be faltering. The most  
33 recently available survey data indicate a few, if any,  
34 legal rams available for harvest. Therefore, the  
35 Federal Subsistence Board adopted this temporary  
36 special with modification to simplify regulatory  
37 language during their July 2022 meeting.

38

39 And as I said, brief, that is it, thank  
40 you, Madame Chair. I'd be happy to answer any  
41 questions that anyone may have.

42

43 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Do we have any  
44 questions.

45

46 MR. REAKOFF: Madame Chair, this is  
47 Jack.

48

49 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Yes, Jack.

50

0070

1 MR. REAKOFF: I wanted to commend the  
2 Office of Subsistence Management, Brian, in particular,  
3 the analysis was concise and very thorough and I  
4 appreciate the Federal Subsistence Board taking action  
5 on this very important issue.

6  
7 Thank you, Madame Chair.

8  
9 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you, Jack.  
10 If there's no questions I think thank you very much.

11  
12 MR. UBELAKER: Thank you, very much.  
13 Thank you, Jack.

14  
15 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. With that  
16 we'll hear from Cory, Cory Graham.

17  
18 MR. GRAHAM: Madame Chair. Members of  
19 the Council. For the record my name is Cory Graham and  
20 I'm a Fisheries Biologist at the Office of Subsistence  
21 Management. Materials relevant to this presentation  
22 can be found on Page 28 of your Council Book. And this  
23 is not an action item.

24  
25 So I'm here today to present a brief  
26 update on four fisheries temporary special action  
27 requests. FSA22-01, 02, 03 and 04 that were submitted  
28 to the Federal Subsistence Board last spring. All four  
29 of the special action requests were identical and each  
30 requested the Federal Subsistence Board close Federal  
31 public waters of the Yukon River drainage to the  
32 harvest of chinook and summer and fall chum salmon  
33 except by Federally-qualified subsistence users and  
34 further reduce the pool of eligible harvesters based on  
35 an ANILCA Section .804 subsistence user prioritization  
36 analysis. The Board met on May 4th, 2022 and adopted  
37 Temporary Special Action FSA22-01 for conservation  
38 purposes, and, specifically, the Board closed Federal  
39 public waters of the Yukon River drainage to the  
40 harvest of chinook, summer and fall chum and coho  
41 salmon except by Federally-qualified subsistence users  
42 effective June 1, 2022 through September 30th, 2022  
43 with harvest opportunities to be determined by the  
44 Federal fisheries manager should fisheries run strength  
45 be sufficient to allow a Federal subsistence fishery.  
46 However, in short, the returns this summer were so poor  
47 that no directed opportunities were provided. Holly  
48 Carroll, the Federal fisheries manager for the Yukon  
49 River implemented the Board's action. Holly will be  
50

0071

1 updating the Council on Yukon River salmon management  
2 and can answer any questions related to the  
3 implementation of this action at that time.

4

5 That concludes my update and I'll  
6 standby to answer any questions the Council may have.

7

8 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. Any  
9 questions from the Council.

10

11 (No comments)

12

13 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Jack, you have  
14 anything.

15

16 MR. REAKOFF: No that was great, thank  
17 you.

18

19 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. Thank  
20 you. Thank you, very much. Okay, at this time I guess  
21 we have -- this is for the Council, I guess, wood bison  
22 restoration, a working group update. Do we want to  
23 have a discussion to nominate an alternate.

24

25 (Teleconference interference -  
26 participants not muted)

27

28 MR. REAKOFF: Madame Chair, this is  
29 Jack.

30

31 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Yes, go ahead,  
32 Jack.

33

34 MR. REAKOFF: I participated in this  
35 wood bison planning process and as I stated in my  
36 report, it's an important issue, the wood bison,  
37 reconstruction of this population within our region.  
38 At this time we don't have anybody from the GASH on our  
39 Council, I will continue to participate unless any  
40 other Council member would like to participate in this  
41 and the closest Council member would be Kevin. So that  
42 would be a question for you Kevin.

43

44 Thank you.

45

46 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, I'd decline.  
47 I'd decline. I haven't been following that issue and I  
48 feel like it's out of my area. The GASH region, wood  
49 bison, I wouldn't want to do that.

50

0072

1 Thanks.

2

3 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Nissa.

4

5 MS. PILCHER: Through the Chair. I'll  
6 just use this as a shameless plug to remind folks that  
7 currently nominations are open for all Councils,  
8 including the Western Interior Council and we have  
9 applications here, we have applications online, contact  
10 me, I will certainly get you an application if you're  
11 listening in from the RAC region and would like some  
12 representation on this Council. I will also be  
13 contacting Council offices in that area to try to get  
14 some interest in that region as well.

15

16 Thanks.

17

18 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, thank you.  
19 So you decline, right.

20

21 MR. WHITWORTH: (Nods affirmatively)

22

23 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Anybody  
24 interested. Darrell.

25

26 MR. VENT: I recently spoke with Walker  
27 down there and he -- Robert Walker and he asked me to  
28 say a few words for him so he could put his application  
29 in, he used me as a reference and I said, okay,  
30 whatever you got to do. I know he's been a Board member  
31 for past years and he'd probably be interested in this  
32 wood bison one.

33

34 MR. GERVAIS: Which one? Isn't there  
35 two Robert Walkers.

36

37 MR. REAKOFF: Madame Chair, this is  
38 Jack.

39

40 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Go ahead Jack.

41

42 MR. REAKOFF: Robert Walker was on the  
43 working group this last meeting but Western Interior  
44 needs representation on there. So he will submit his  
45 application and would be nominated and then we could --  
46 but we do need to be represented on this planning group  
47 and I'll volunteer until such time as we have a GASH  
48 member.

49

50

0073

1 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, thank you,  
2 Jack. So do we have a volunteer from our Council.

3  
4 MR. GERVAIS: Jack.

5  
6 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay.

7  
8 MR. GERVAIS: Jack said he would  
9 continue.

10  
11 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Oh.

12  
13 MR. REAKOFF: I'll continue to serve,  
14 Madame Chair.

15  
16 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Oh, so you'll  
17 continue to volunteer, Jack?

18  
19 MR. REAKOFF: Yes, I do.

20  
21 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Oh, okay. Okay,  
22 I misunderstood, sorry about that.

23  
24 MR. WHITWORTH: Madame Chair.

25  
26 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Kevin.

27  
28 MR. WHITWORTH: Were we looking for an  
29 alternate as well, is that what Jack was asking and I  
30 think Tim is volunteering, maybe, as an alternate.

31  
32 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Is that what you  
33 were asking, Jack, for an alternate?

34  
35 MR. REAKOFF: No. For the record, that  
36 I've been participating in this for the Western  
37 Interior. The Western Interior's been involved with  
38 this for many years, in fact, we wrote in support of  
39 changing the Endangered Species Act for the 10(J) rule  
40 for experimental population to get them released within  
41 our region so I have quite a bit of familiarity with  
42 this issue and will continue to serve for the Council  
43 until such time as we have a member from our Council  
44 from that area that would like to participate.

45  
46 Thank you, Madame Chair.

47  
48 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, thank you,  
49 Jack. So I guess we need to get someone from the GASH  
50

0074

1 area to get on the Board. Okay.

2

3

MR. REAKOFF: Correct.

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

area to get on the Board. Okay.

MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. So with that we're going to go to new business and we're going to -- oh, not yet, Joint Meeting with the North American Caribou and Arctic -- whatever that word is -- conference in May, and this is Brian.

MR. UBELAKER: Yep, me once again. Good afternoon, again, Madame Chair. Council members. For the record my name is Brian Ubelaker and I'm a Wildlife Biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management. This is an action item which we will get to at the end of my presentation. But I will be presenting an announcement about a caribou and ungulate conference next year that will hopefully be of interest to Council members. I'll also be seeking your input on a couple matters related to the conference. An informational flyer about the conference can be found in your meeting books on Page 29.

A joint meeting of the North American Caribou Workshop and Arctic Ungulate Conference will be held in Anchorage from May 8th through the 12th of 2023. The meeting will bring together an international group of managers, researchers and indigenous and local knowledge holders who will want to share their knowledge of caribou, muskox, Dall sheep, moose and reindeer. The theme for the meeting is crossing boundaries. Arctic ungulates regularly cross landscape boundaries connecting ecological processes between different systems. This necessitates collaboration across geographical boundaries and also calls for crossing boundaries between Western Science, local and indigenous knowledge. The conference will include sessions on co-management, the status of caribou globally, integrating Western science and indigenous knowledge and the effects of climate change on caribou. Field trips, workshops, research talks, symposiums and a poster session will also be part of the conference. The conference web address is included on the flier in your meeting books and I encourage you to visit that website for more detailed information.

Before I move on are there any questions.

0075

1 (No comments)

2

3

4 MR. UBELAKER: All right. Next, I'd  
5 like to ask as a Council. One of the events that will  
6 take place during the conference is a facilitated  
7 discussion on Alaska State and Federal ungulate  
8 management. This session is intended to be a neutral  
9 forum for Council members, such as yourselves, State  
10 Fish and Game Advisory Committee members, Federal and  
11 State agency Staff and other interested parties to  
12 discuss ungulate management in Alaska specifically  
13 regarding harvest regulations.

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

50

50

50

50

50

50

50

50

50

50

50

50

50

My question for the Council is, what  
topics and issues would you like to be discussed during  
the session. It could be anything of concern related  
to harvest regulations and ungulate management.

Madame Chair, I will now turn the  
discussion over to you for this topic. Your  
suggestions will be very important in helping set the  
discussion agenda.

MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: So you want the  
Board to discuss this right now?

MR. UBELAKER: Just looking for any  
suggestions, if you have any concerns. It'll be a  
discussion related mostly to harvest so if you have any  
concerns that you want discussed into -- a deeper dive  
into, any ideas you have over concerns we'd like to  
hear.

MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Chugach National  
Forest Any Council members -- Darrell. Jack, were you  
going to say something.

MR. REAKOFF: Yes, Madame Chair, I'll  
speak to this issue. There's many concerns that I have  
especially with caribou management and dall sheep  
management. I feel that the managers don't fully  
understand the ecology of caribou. I don't feel that  
they understand what caribou eat throughout their  
annual cycle and where their protein sources are at.  
And I do feel that there needs to be discussion about  
the basic protein intake of ungulates at specific times  
of the year, how summer and winter conditions both  
dictate the productivity of fecundity of those  
populations. I do have concerns about harvest of bull

0076

1 caribou during the rut when they're completely  
2 unpalatable. A lot of sporthunting that occurs during  
3 the rutting season on caribou, that should be avoided.  
4 So there's some management issues that need to be more  
5 widely discussed in this forum.

6  
7 So that would be my comments so far,  
8 thank you, Madame Chair.

9  
10 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you, Jack.

11  
12 Darrell.

13  
14 MR. VENT: Yeah, you know, we're  
15 talking about how this hunting pressure on these herds  
16 compared to how our people hunt them is a little  
17 different and positioning is one of them, but also the  
18 way that -- you know we talk about letting the leaders  
19 through because we always know that the rest will  
20 follow. I know I was up in Anaktuvuk a couple days ago  
21 and they were talking about, you know, their caribou --  
22 their caribou don't migrate the same pattern no more.  
23 They said it seems like they're diverted, they're not  
24 going in the same areas. And I heard from people over  
25 in Shungnak and Ambler area, they're saying that they  
26 have to go to different places now to go hunt their  
27 caribou. So, you know, the hunting pressure that  
28 really gets to them is that you -- they wait for a  
29 certain area to get them at when they're hunting, they  
30 fly in and there's a lot of hunting pressure there. So  
31 you know, we'll probably be noticing this Fortymile  
32 herd pretty soon. I think it's, you know, something  
33 that we got to learn to understand how these caribou  
34 move to different areas because of hunting pressure.  
35 And that's something that maybe we got to discuss, too,  
36 because it's -- yeah, I hear people talking about the  
37 Fortymile herd and it's like going into a combat zone,  
38 you know, it's -- there's just too many people. And up  
39 in Anaktuvuk they said that it was just the hunting  
40 pressure and it diverted the whole caribou migration  
41 pattern. So I think we need to discuss that, you know,  
42 how to prevent that from happening and getting those  
43 caribous coming back into those areas. Because when we  
44 go hunting from Huslia we have to go practically past  
45 Shungnak going toward Kobuk and that's a long travel  
46 just to get a few scrawny caribou when we used to get  
47 them in the falltime and they had fat on them. And,  
48 you know, it's hard to depend on food resources when  
49 you catch those skinny caribou, it's just not worth the  
50

0077

1 travel no more and, you know, we're really running out  
2 of food resources so, you know, this is a pretty  
3 important matter to us.

4

5 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you,  
6 Darrell. Pollock.

7

8 MR. SIMON: Thank you, Madame Chair. I  
9 just want to talk a little bit about caribou. In 1974  
10 was the last time there was caribou around Allakaket,  
11 they were just (indiscernible) and the shot into the  
12 Ray Mountain Ray where there is good caribou habitat.  
13 But they started pushing north with the oil pipeline  
14 that year and they put in the Haul Road which was at  
15 first for a private road but later the road was turned  
16 over to the State and of course it was open to the  
17 public and lots of peoples go up the road, not only to  
18 look at the mountains but hunt here and there, and try  
19 for fish, and up on the road there's a place that  
20 caribou cross into the Koyukuk River Valley but with  
21 the road going by with the hunters and more hunting  
22 pressure there and the caribou moved more to the west  
23 and no caribou has gone by since then in Allakaket.  
24 Last year was nothing, and I don't know this year, it's  
25 kind of early yet. But the road development impacted  
26 the migration route for caribou. Every time I talk with  
27 caribou -- the road building is not too good for  
28 caribou but now they're talking about the Ambler Road  
29 that will go north -- not too far from us, Allakaket,  
30 that road will impact the caribou migration route also.  
31 So the peoples in the Allakaket area they're talking  
32 about caribou, with the moose population down and no  
33 black bears, we're looking for some more meat and  
34 caribou could be meat for the peoples but they're not  
35 coming by.

36

37 Thank you, Madame Chair.

38

39 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you,  
40 Pollock.

41

42 Tim.

43

44 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Madame Chair.  
45 The Western Interior Council is really concerned with  
46 like what -- we've had a lot of discussion about  
47 Mulchatna Caribou Herd and we were trying to wonder --  
48 not trying to wonder, we were wondering what level of  
49 population would be like a critical threshold to get  
50

0078

1 below, like we're having a lot of trouble now getting  
2 that herd to rebuild and at some point it must have  
3 crossed some kind of threshold level where the herd's  
4 having a lot of trouble rebuilding and it would be good  
5 if there was some research done on what that number was  
6 that the herd got below a certain population and now it  
7 cannot seem to recover despite very limited hunting  
8 pressure on it now.

9  
10 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, thank you.  
11 Any more comments.

12  
13 MR. WHITWORTH: Madame Chair.

14  
15 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, Kevin.

16  
17 MR. WHITWORTH: Thanks, Madame Chair.  
18 One concern I think should be discussed at this  
19 conference is the waste of moose meat, especially, for  
20 instance in McGrath, we have transporters that  
21 transport from McGrath, go out to Farewell, hunt moose,  
22 sheep, caribou and then they also go out to the Innoko  
23 Refuge and this year the amount of waste was just -- it  
24 was sickening. It was -- once these moose are brought  
25 to McGrath, broth to the butchers, the butchers just  
26 had to salvage what they could and it was -- it was  
27 really terrible. Probably legal but the amount of  
28 waste was just -- I mean the elders there in McGrath  
29 are already suffering. They're not catching their  
30 fish, the black bears, like Darrell said, they're  
31 skinny, and then they go to the dump and they see all  
32 of this moose waste. And it's just -- I mean it's just  
33 piles. It's amazing. It's an area like half the size  
34 of this room, it's just piled with meat and bones. And  
35 I had an elder who told me this, he said you got to go  
36 look, I didn't because I didn't want to get pissed off,  
37 but he did and he said I didn't even get out of the  
38 truck, it was just disgusting.

39  
40 And so it's harder, too, because the  
41 transporters that leave McGrath and they go to Innoko,  
42 they have to fly over the Kuskokwim range and there'll  
43 be weather days like this and they'll be stuck for  
44 several days so you'll have 40 hunters and 30 moose  
45 sitting on the ground for a long time so this is a  
46 concern that should be discussed.

47  
48 Thank you.

49  
50

0079

1 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you,  
2 Kevin.

3  
4 Darrell.

5  
6 MR. VENT: Yeah, I agree with -- we  
7 used to see that in our area when, you know, we had a  
8 lot of hunters there, between 600, 800 hunters and then  
9 we used to hear stories about how it would be full down  
10 there in their dumps and then go to Fairbanks and  
11 Anchorage it would be the same thing, they'd be tired  
12 of all this smell and it was all the way down to  
13 Seattle. So, you know, that's when they came up with  
14 the wanton waste so, you know, that's got to be  
15 addressed with this caribou too so, you know, it's --  
16 we don't know what kind of situation that's putting  
17 them -- when you're talking about transporters, I  
18 don't know what the regulations are around there for  
19 transporters, whether it's the same that applies to  
20 guided hunters. You know I haven't had any, you know,  
21 information on that area there so that might be  
22 something that we'd want to kind of get a little update  
23 on.

24  
25 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you,  
26 Darrell. Yeah, I know this caribou -- discussion on  
27 this caribou has been going on for years and years and  
28 I've learned a lot from Mr. Reakoff on caribou and I  
29 know he's very concerned about that because I never  
30 knew the history -- or not the history but, you know,  
31 how they feed and -- well, I just learned a lot from  
32 Jack and it's hard to put into words, but, Jack just  
33 continue to talk for caribou and I know a lot -- you  
34 said a lot of hunters go out and you take your camera  
35 and if they're doing something that they're not  
36 supposed to be doing you just take a picture of them  
37 and I think that's scary but if it works, it works.

38  
39 Any more questions or comments for  
40 Brian.

41  
42 MR. REAKOFF: I have one final comment.  
43 Madame Chair.

44  
45 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Go ahead, Jack.

46  
47 MR. REAKOFF: Yes, I feel that this is  
48 an important question that Brian brought before the  
49 Council. I feel that the agenda should be given --  
50

0080

1 climate change is highly affecting grazing animals,  
2 caribou, dall sheep, the bison population was highly  
3 impacted with rain on snow events, late springs, these  
4 are issues that need to be on that agenda.

5

6 Thank you, Madame Chair.

7

8 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you, Jack.

9

10 Tim.

11

12 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Madame Chair.  
13 One thing that could be added to that climate change  
14 with the caribou is the amount of increase of  
15 shrubification that's purportedly creating some of the  
16 migration pattern changes for the Western Arctic Herd.  
17 So I know in our area in the middle Yukon there's a lot  
18 of grass land and some of the tundra areas are now just  
19 shrubby and becoming forested. So say habitat issue.  
20 And then one thing that may be of interest to the  
21 conference is ADF&G was interested in doing a  
22 controlled burn in the Cochrane Hills between Ruby and  
23 Tanana to try to return some of that shrubification  
24 area back into tundra and help out a small herd, the  
25 Wolf Mountain Herd, and the people at the conference  
26 might want to look at that case study to learn some  
27 stuff on management technique.

28

29 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you, Tim.  
30 Any more comments or questions.

31

32 (No comments)

33

34 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: If not, thank  
35 you, Brian.

36

37 MR. UBELAKER: Sorry not done just --  
38 you're not rid of me just yet.

39

40 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Oh.

41

42 (Laughter)

43

44 MR. UBELAKER: Number 2. A critical  
45 component of this conference is making sure that local  
46 knowledge holders are able to attend and participate.  
47 The Office of Subsistence Management is able to provide  
48 financial support to send one member of each  
49 Subsistence Regional Advisory Council to attend the  
50

0081

1 conference. We are asking that, as a Council, you  
2 nominate a member to attend and participate. Again,  
3 the conference will be held May 8th through the 12th  
4 next year in Anchorage and OSM will cover all expenses  
5 such as travel and conference registration. One  
6 expectation of the nominated Council member is that  
7 they will be an active participant in the State and  
8 Federal Ungulate Management Symposium for which you  
9 just provided input.

10

11 So now I will turn the discussion back  
12 over to you, Madame Chair, and Council, to ask that you  
13 nominate a member of your Council to attend whom you  
14 feel will represent local knowledge and.....

15

16 (Teleconference interference -  
17 participants not muted)

18

19 MR. UBELAKER: .....in your region  
20 related -- and on a side note, I know at Southcentral  
21 they nominated an alternative as well so nominate a  
22 member that would like to attend and a possible  
23 alternative.

24

25 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. Anybody  
26 interested. Darrell -- Darrell is interested.

27

28 MR. VENT: I'll be interested if you  
29 have a -- you know it's up to you guys though.

30

31 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: How about.....

32

33 MR. REAKOFF: I'd be interested, Madame  
34 Chair.

35

36 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, Mr.  
37 Reakoff is interested. Okay.

38

39 MR. JOLY: Madame Chair.

40

41 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Yes, go ahead.

42

43 MR. JOLY: Hello, Madame Chair, my name  
44 is Kyle Joly, I'm with the National Park Service. I'm  
45 also the lead organizer for the conference. I would  
46 suggest having a list of folks that could come and give  
47 priority order. We're working on trying to get travel  
48 funds for additional people to come besides the one  
49 person that OSM's going to fund. So if you would like  
50

0082

1 to do a priority list we will try and get as many  
2 people there as we can.

3

4 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, thank you,  
5 Kyle. So do we have anybody else interested. Jack --  
6 oh, Jack said he was going to. Anybody else -- Kevin.

7

8 MR. WHITWORTH: I'm not interested but  
9 do we have to nominate folks -- so I'd like to nominate  
10 Darrell and Jack to go to this meeting.

11

12 MR. SIMON: Second.

13

14 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. So we  
15 have Darrell and Jack nominated to go. So who's the  
16 motion by Tina?

17

18 REPORTER: Kevin.

19

20 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: The motion was  
21 made by Kevin to nominate Darrell and Jack and it was  
22 seconded by Pollock. Sorry, I got all mixed up here  
23 but all in favor -- oh, Darrell.

24

25 MR. VENT: If either Jack or myself is  
26 not able to attend are we going to nominate alternates?

27

28 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: We could do that  
29 but let's get this one done first. All in favor for  
30 Jack and Darrell say aye.

31

32 IN UNISON: Aye.

33

34 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: All opposed same  
35 sign.

36

37 (No opposing votes)

38

39 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, so Darrell  
40 and Jack will go. Now do we need an -- or would like to  
41 have an alternate go, anybody interested, Don.

42

43 MR. HONEA: My seat is expiring.

44

45 MR. GERVAIS: You said you were  
46 renewing.

47

48

49 MR. HONEA: I am. Would it continue

50

0083

1 on.....

2

3

REPORTER: Don. Don, your microphone.

4

5

6

MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: I think it would  
continue until the next.....

7

8

MS. PILCHER: No.

9

10

MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: No, oh, sorry.

11

12

MR. HONEA: Yes, I will, Madame Chair.

13

Thank you.

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa, for the  
record. So unfortunately how it's going to work is  
Don's going to -- his term is set to expire in December  
and since we didn't get his application -- we didn't  
get an application in last year he'll have to sit out a  
year so he wouldn't be able to represent the Council at  
a May 2023 meeting because he wouldn't -- we wouldn't  
-- he wouldn't be able to sit again until potentially  
December 2023 or even January of 2024 so at least  
through the Western Interior he wouldn't be able to sit  
because we've got -- you've got to sit out for a year  
until we can catch up with your application.

27

28

MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. Sorry.

29

30

31

MR. HONEA: Is that not sufficient, I  
mean I am going as an alternate?

32

33

34

35

MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Discussion -- or  
any comments on that. I don't mind him sitting on it,  
are we breaking the law?

36

37

38

MS. PILCHER: I wouldn't know about  
law.

39

40

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: In essence.

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

MS. PILCHER: I'm good at breaking  
rules but I don't think I can break this one. So,  
yeah, Don won't be seated on the Western Interior  
Council in May of 2023 so he wouldn't be able to  
represent the Council during this meeting but we'll  
hopefully get him back on as soon as possible but,  
yeah, for this meeting he wouldn't be able to be a  
representative.

50

0084

1 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. Anybody  
2 else.

3  
4 (No comments)

5  
6 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: If not I guess I  
7 can try to take a stab at it. I've never -- but I'll  
8 try being an alternate.

9  
10 MR. VENT: You'll be a good alternate.

11  
12 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. With  
13 that, do we have anything else, anybody else want to be  
14 an alternate too.

15  
16 MR. GERVAIS: I'll nominate Jenny for  
17 alternate for the caribou conference.

18  
19 MR. VENT: Second.

20  
21 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: We got a  
22 nomination by Tim to have Jenny as an alternate and  
23 second by Darrell. All in favor say aye.

24  
25 IN UNISON: Aye.

26  
27 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: All opposed same  
28 sign.

29  
30 (No opposing votes)

31  
32 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, I guess  
33 she's the alternate.

34  
35 (Laughter)

36  
37 MR. UBELAKER: Okay. Then unless there  
38 are any more questions that concludes this agenda item.  
39 Thank you, Madame Chair and Council members. I'm  
40 certainly looking forward to this conference.

41  
42 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you,  
43 Brian. I didn't mean to kick you off before.

44  
45 (Laughter)

46  
47 MR. UBELAKER: That's quite all right,  
48 I'm used to it.

49  
50

0085

1 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: I'm just trying  
2 so hard to focus on what I'm doing up here. Okay with  
3 that we're going to go to our salmon reports. We're  
4 going to move Diane up if she's here.

5  
6 REPORTER: She's online.

7  
8 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Oh, she's  
9 online.

10  
11 REPORTER: Yes.

12  
13 MS. PILCHER: Yeah.

14  
15 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, Diane are  
16 you on.

17  
18 (No comments)

19  
20 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: I guess she's  
21 not on.

22  
23 REPORTER: Jenny, ask for her again.

24  
25 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Diane.

26  
27 REPORTER: Stram.

28  
29 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Diane Stram are  
30 you online.

31  
32 (No comments)

33  
34 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Anybody knows  
35 where she is.

36  
37 (No comments)

38  
39 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Well, I guess  
40 we'll just continue. I hope she's on and one thing I  
41 forgot to ask who's online -- anybody online.

42  
43 MR. WHITWORTH: Does anybody have  
44 Diane's cell phone number and we can give her a head's  
45 up.

46  
47 (Off record comments regarding Stram)

48  
49 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Tina is there

50

0086

1 anybody online.

2

3 REPORTER: There's plenty of people  
4 online but it doesn't sound like Diana is.

5

6 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: She's on, she  
7 can't unmute herself.

8

9 REPORTER: She can't unmute herself,  
10 tell her to star, six or unmute with her mute button,  
11 or hang up and call back. It might be easier to hang  
12 up and call back.

13

14 (Pause)

15

16 MS. STRAM: Hi, this is Diana, are you  
17 guys able to hear me?

18

19 MS. PILCHER: Yes, we are, thank you,  
20 Diana.

21

22 MS. STRAM: Okay, thank you. I'm sorry  
23 about that. Okay, do you want me to get started?

24

25 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Yes, go ahead,  
26 Diana, Diane, Diana.

27

28 MS. STRAM: Okay, thanks. Okay, I'm  
29 not sure -- I'll start.

30

31 Madame Chair. Members of the Council.  
32 My name is Diana Stram, I'm the Senior Scientist with  
33 the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. I  
34 submitted a longer version awhile back that's in your  
35 reference book. I sent Nissa a shorter version today  
36 understanding that you wouldn't have quite as much time  
37 but I'm happy to answer more questions afterwards about  
38 either the longer presentation or the additional slides  
39 that I have for you today. I'm mostly going to walk  
40 through kind of some background on salmon bycatch  
41 management and current issues, issues that were taken  
42 up at the June meeting and what we anticipate for the  
43 December meeting.

44

45 So moving to Slide 2. Hopefully you all  
46 can see that, it says presentation to the Council in  
47 June of 2022. So we had a number of presentations that  
48 were requested of different agency Staff to our June  
49 Council meeting and I have been listening all morning

50

0087

1 so I just wanted to provide you a little bit of  
2 feedback in terms of why this was taken up in June. We  
3 do normally take up salmon bycatch in April for all the  
4 reasons that you have raised in comments, we had an  
5 extensive data list request from the Council in October  
6 but we were also, as we'll get into, responding to the  
7 high chum bycatch in the summer of 2021 and in working  
8 with the geneticists if we delayed the salmon reports  
9 to June we would then get the genetic reports back from  
10 the 2021 fishery to see if it looked different in terms  
11 of the stock of origin of the bycatch. So we can talk  
12 through that but I do understand that there's concern  
13 about this regularly occurring in June and we'll  
14 certainly bring that information back to the Council.

15

16 But going back to what we did take up  
17 in June of 2022 is a list of a number of reports. I'll  
18 only go over a couple of these but, again, I can answer  
19 questions as needed.

20

21 The Council had asked us to provide a  
22 stock, status and research update for both Western  
23 Alaska chinook and chum, an overview of ongoing AFSC,  
24 the Science Center NOAA research and mandates and the  
25 ADF&G State of Alaska ongoing research and plans and so  
26 we have some coordinated presentations. The longer  
27 presentation that I provided you in your book includes  
28 some of those research updates, I'm not going to go  
29 over those right now but we can talk about it if you  
30 wish after. I do have information on the -- both the  
31 Bering Sea -- I don't have the chum salmon genetics  
32 reports in this report, I just focused on the Bering Se  
33 for this. We -- the geneticists have been working  
34 really hard to catch up, they have been years behind in  
35 providing the genetics from the salmon bycatch. They  
36 are nearly caught up for chum and that we were able,  
37 again, by taking this up in June, we were able to get  
38 the report of the previous year's bycatch from the  
39 pollock fishery. for chinook we only received report  
40 through 2020, they are again working really hard to  
41 catch up on those reports so that we can get them only  
42 one year out from when the salmon were bycaught in the  
43 fishery. We got some updates on their work and plans,  
44 again, primarily to streamline things. We also took up  
45 an updated chinook adult equivalency and impact report  
46 and had some Staff meetings and recommendations for  
47 assessing chum impacts.

48

49 In the interest of time I moved those

50

0088

1 to extra slides but if you wish me to go through them  
2 at the end of this presentation I'm happy to do that.

3

4

5 And then from the industry we also  
6 received a report on the salmon excluders, some ongoing  
7 investigations that they're doing with that. We  
8 received our reports from the pollock industry and then  
9 we received an update from SeaShare, which is a food  
10 donation program that works in distributing bycaught --  
11 both bycaught and donated fish to the Gulf of Alaska  
12 and Bering Sea.

12

13

14 So with that I'll move to the next  
15 slide to provide you a brief history of the actions  
16 related to chinook and chum bycatch management. This  
17 is just for context and then I'll provide more  
18 information on the genetics.

18

19

20 Next slide, Slide 4. Hopefully you can  
21 see this is a graph that shows you in red the chinook  
22 bycatch from 1990 to 2021 and then in blue the chum  
23 bycatch. I have this on a different slide but just to  
24 note that for 2022, you know, we completed the B season  
25 for the pollock fishery so we have the information from  
26 the whole of 2022 so for chum the numbers from the 2022  
27 year were 242,350, for chinook they were 6,336.

27

28

29 The next slide then just to provide you  
30 an overview of how we've evolved in managing salmon  
31 bycatch in the Bering Sea. Between the 1990, until  
32 early 2000 we had large scale time area closures called  
33 salmon savings area in the Bering Sea and those were  
34 triggered by a limit and when that limit was reached for  
35 either chum or chinook these closures were in place for  
36 a number of months. What we found then is that --  
37 sorry, this is the next slide, Slide 6, we found that  
38 those closures then, because they're based on  
39 historical bycatch that we were starting to see  
40 indications that they're misspecified so they're not in  
41 the right place and so the bycatch of chum and chinook  
42 outside of the closures when they were triggered was  
43 higher than the ones that were inside of it. So the  
44 Council understood that they needed to develop a  
45 different measure because those time area closures were  
46 actually making things worse. And so as an interim  
47 measure they developed an exemption to those closures  
48 provided that the industry was participating in a  
49 rolling hot spot program which would put into place  
50 short-term near time closures that the pollock fishery

50

0089

1 would adhere to in order to be exempt from those large  
2 area closures.

3

4 Next slide.

5

6 Then at that time -- sorry, I guess I  
7 should mention that this was also in conjunction with  
8 the very high amount of over 700,000 chum that was  
9 experienced in 2005. So as we were working to address  
10 chum bycatch the fleet ran into 120,000 chinook in 2007  
11 as you're well aware and so at that point the policy  
12 shifted from addressing chum as an emergency situation  
13 to addressing chinook. And then all of the focus went  
14 from chum to chinook. We held a number of workshops to  
15 try to figure out a new management program. The  
16 Council at that time appointed a salmon bycatch  
17 committee to work in assisting with developing what's  
18 called a hardcap, a cap that will close the fishery,  
19 and up until this point any caps on the fishery had  
20 just been associated with a closure that would move  
21 them out of a certain area.

22

23 Next slide.

24

25 That's when we developed what's called  
26 Amendment 91. At that time we also did extensive  
27 outreach to Western Alaska communities. We brought  
28 Council members out to a series of every RAC meeting at  
29 that time, over 2009 and 2010. The Council took final  
30 action on Amendment 91 in 2009 and after that we were  
31 also providing outreach efforts to communities to  
32 explain the program and what the rationale was in  
33 deciding upon it.

34

35 Next slide.

36

37 Immediately upon implementation, so in  
38 2011 of the implementation of Amendment 91 there were a  
39 number of provisions that went into place in  
40 conjunction with putting that cap system in place which  
41 I'll go over in just a minute. Part of that was  
42 systematic genetic sampling, so prior to 2009 genetic  
43 sampling had been opportunistic, whenever they could  
44 get samples, so we didn't have a systematic sampling  
45 that would be equivalent across years. From 2011 on  
46 we've had a systematic sampling. One in 10 chinook and  
47 one in 30 chum are sampled for genetics and that's why  
48 we can provide these annual genetic reports. And  
49 there's also a census on counting for salmon,  
50

0090

1 previously there were estimation procedures in place  
2 for counting salmon at sea, now it's a census so every  
3 salmon that is brought on board is counted and there  
4 are cameras in place to ensure that any salmon brought  
5 on board is not thrown overboard before it's counted  
6 and is either brought into the hold and then counted by  
7 an observer, shoreside -- if it's a catcher vessel  
8 delivering shoreside or it is counted by an observer on  
9 board on a catcher processor or a mother ship that are  
10 processing at sea. And, again, cameras are in place to  
11 ensure that there is accountability at all levels.

12

13 At that timeline the Council begin to develop  
14 chum bycatch measures understanding that they had had  
15 to switch gears to chinook in order to figure out a new  
16 program for chinook, but knew that they needed to come  
17 back to chum and so beginning right in 2010 we started  
18 to develop chum bycatch measures and so we did similar  
19 investigations as we did with the chinook. We looked  
20 at time area closures for chum, chums are only caught  
21 in the B season so in the summer season, and so we  
22 looked at different areas based on the opportunistic  
23 genetics that we had that were indicating that Western  
24 Alaska chum were more prevalent in June and July on the  
25 pollock fishing ground than they were later in the  
26 season. So we looked at some time area closures that  
27 would go into place in June and July. We also looked  
28 at a variety of cap measures. In 2012 then the Council  
29 decided to hold off on taking any of these measures for  
30 chum because the chinook program was brand new and many  
31 of the measures, in particular, the time area closures  
32 looked like they would serve to undermine the incentive  
33 to avoid chinook and would cause the fleet to move into  
34 higher chinook areas later in the season.

35

36 Next slide. Slide 10.

37

38 So in 2015 we implemented Amendment 110  
39 that was developed in response to continued low chinook  
40 in Western Alaska and we had done an analysis that  
41 showed the need for stronger vessel level incentives  
42 under the incentive program agreement. At that time  
43 then the Council moved to, rather than manage chum  
44 separately moved to include chum as part of the rolling  
45 hot spot system that the industry was pursuing under  
46 their incentive plan agreement.

47

48 Next slide.

49

50

0091

1                               So this slide just shows you an  
2 overview on how Bering Sea, Aleutian Island pollock  
3 fishery is managing -- how we're managing salmon  
4 bycatch, both chinook and chum. So particularly for  
5 chinook we have extremely strong regulatory measures.  
6 As you're probably aware under Amendment 91 we have a  
7 higher and a lower cap level and with the incentive  
8 plan agreements that the industry and us put forward in  
9 order to fish under those agreements. With Amendment  
10 110 then we put into place what's called the Three  
11 River Index so every year the State of Alaska provides  
12 us chinook salmon abundance for post-season in-river  
13 chinook run size for the Kuskokwim, the Unalakleet and  
14 the upper Yukon and that's provided to the Council in  
15 October and if that value is below 250,000 chinook then  
16 we kick over into a low cap system, in which case the  
17 performance standard is dropped and the overall cap  
18 level is also dropped. So the overall cap level and  
19 this is across all sectors, goes from 60,000 chinook to  
20 45,000 chinook with the actual cap that they're  
21 managing towards dropping to 33,318 salmon. So in  
22 recent years we have been under that low cap system and  
23 we will be under that low cap system again in 2023  
24 based on the information we got from the State of  
25 Alaska last week. Some measures included in the  
26 incentive plan then are part of their plans are  
27 considered voluntarily but there are plans in place to  
28 ensure that the individuals, individual captains are  
29 avoiding chinook and chum under any condition of  
30 encounters. They have both rewards and penalties  
31 included in there for failure to avoid, particularly  
32 chinook, at vessel levels, they have hot spot closures,  
33 salmon escapement panels which I'll show a figure on,  
34 called excluders, and then again a high proportion is  
35 donated to food banks. The little figure to the bottom  
36 right just shows you some of the hot spot closures that  
37 are put into place when they see a high aggregation of  
38 bycatch, there's a notice to the fleet and they are  
39 required to stay out of those areas for a period of  
40 three to seven days.

41  
42                               Next slide.

43  
44                               This slide just shows you just for  
45 perspective season and area of catch patterns of the  
46 Eastern Bering Sea pollock fishery. Again, chinook is  
47 caught in both the A season, which is the winter season  
48 and the B season, the summer season, where chum is only  
49 caught in the B season. So this just gives you by  
50

0092

1 year, this shows you the catch and it shows you the  
2 catch, east and west of 170, which is a line that we  
3 draw looking at that as well as what's caught in the A  
4 season. And then the panels to the right just show you  
5 those bars are the concentration of catch and it shows  
6 you for 2019 through 2021 where the fishery itself is  
7 actually operating. So they're operating much closer  
8 to shore, they're limited very much below the  
9 Pribilofs, usually for extensive ice cover and they  
10 operate the -- the shoreside catcher vessels operate  
11 fairly close to Unimak Island.

12

13 Next slide.

14

15 This slide shows you the same series of  
16 years 2019 to 2021 but gives you the distribution of  
17 the fishery during the B season. So, again, when  
18 they're not limited to ice cover, in particular,  
19 catcher processors and mother ship, they move up along  
20 that shelf contour right up really to the 200 -- we  
21 manage to three to 200 miles offshore and that boundary  
22 is where they bump up against the Russian boundary in  
23 the EEZ to the upper northwest.

24

25 Next slide.

26

27 This slide just shows you what a salmon  
28 excluder is and all vessels are now required to use  
29 them and these are designed to allow pollock to fall  
30 back into the end of the net while salmon use that --  
31 the lower curtain that's made -- put in place by that  
32 hole in the net and the panel and the salmon are able  
33 to escape. So for a number of years up until this past  
34 year the industry has been testing different designs  
35 and providing information to the Council on the  
36 percentage of escapement that they're able to achieve  
37 with different net designs. This excluder tends to  
38 work much better for chinook than it does for chum.  
39 The highest estimates I believe that they had for  
40 chinook on the more recent ones were between 25 and 30  
41 percent escapement, those are lower for chum, they've  
42 never had quite as much success with the excluders for  
43 chum as they have for chinook so pretty good success  
44 rate for chinook.

45

46 Next slide.

47

48 I'm going to move into just the summary  
49 of the genetics, again, including the recent genetics

50

0093

1 that we heard at the June 2022 Council meeting.

2

3

Next slide.

4

5

6 This first slide then just gives you  
7 kind of an overview, these are all the years for which  
8 we've done systematic sampling so, again, beginning  
9 with Amendment 91 in 2011 so these are comparable  
10 sampling years, the way that the sampling design has  
11 been done. These are the breakouts of the way that the  
12 geneticists are able to break out chinook into these  
13 categories starting from the left then: Coastal West  
14 Alaska, middle Yukon, upper Yukon, North Alaska  
15 Peninsula, the Northwest Gulf of Alaska, Coastal  
16 Southeast Alaska, British Columbia and then from there  
17 down the whole West Coast of the United States. And so  
18 we're obviously primarily interested in the Western  
19 Alaska catches, in particular the Yukon and Coastal  
20 West Alaska. So the difference between the upper graph  
21 and the lower graph, the upper graph gives you the  
22 proportion of the sample, the lower graph translates  
23 those into numbers and so you can see you had a higher  
24 going from the red bar at about 17,000 chinook that  
25 were -- that would have returned to the aggregate  
26 Coastal West Alaska grouping. And then, again, an up  
27 turn in 2020 for that group. That's the most recent  
28 data we have is from 2020 but there was an up turn in  
29 the proportion. So it's a proportion of the samples  
30 that were from there and then that translates into the  
31 higher number.

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

Next slide.

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

And then similar information is  
available for chum. This just shows you the same sort  
of information but on a graph instead of in bars. And,  
again, the stock proportion on top and the chum bycatch  
numbers on the bottom. And here yellow is the Coastal  
West Alaska, blue is the upper and middle Yukon that  
are combined and then for comparison, the purple is  
Southwest Alaska. So in general the proportion for  
Western Alaska and Yukon has been much lower than the

0094

1 average over the two years and the -- in general even  
2 with the large bycatch the catches have been below or  
3 near average but I would note that even though the  
4 proportion is small for West Alaska because the numbers  
5 were so high in 2021 you'll see that while the bycatch  
6 is over 500,000 and of that about 50,000 would have  
7 returned to Western Alaska.

8

9 So next slide then just to finish up  
10 with what the Council action is in June and what we're  
11 looking for in December.

12

13 Next slide.

14

15 This is part -- there's several parts  
16 to what the Council has requested for December. Again,  
17 we don't normally take this up in December, we are in  
18 this cycle right now because of the requests that were  
19 made by the Council in June. So one of the things that  
20 the Council had stressed is acknowledging the Western  
21 Alaska salmon crises and the impact it's having on  
22 culture and food security throughout Western Alaska.  
23 The Council is committed to continued improvements in  
24 bycatch management for salmon and made a number of  
25 requests.

26

27 The first is the request to the pollock  
28 industry to implement additional chum salmon bycatch  
29 measures beginning immediately and for the summer of  
30 2022 the Council will rehear back from the pollock  
31 industry in December on the outcome of those additional  
32 measures. They did receive some reports in June of  
33 additional measures that the industry was intending to  
34 put into place for the B Season and then they'll hear  
35 back on how effective those were in December.

36

37 The next thing the Council requested  
38 then was an updated discussion paper. So this is a  
39 request to Staff and so we're working currently on  
40 compiling and writing this discussion paper. And that  
41 discussion paper is intended to include information on  
42 the bycatch and genetics, on how that varies in space  
43 and time. A description of the Council's rationale for  
44 the current mechanism by which Bering Sea chum bycatch  
45 is managed. Again, coming out of the 23012 analysis  
46 that was not brought forward, they want a summary of  
47 what was considered in 2012 and why it was not brought  
48 forward, what rationale was used to move to a different  
49 program under Amendment 110 in conjunction with  
50

0095

1 chinook, as well as some tradeoffs in terms of the  
2 different species -- prohibitive species that the  
3 pollock fishery is avoiding in their fishing  
4 operations, which includes both chum, chinook and  
5 herring and other incidental catch. And then a summary  
6 of conditions that have changed since they last looked  
7 at chum separately in 2012, specifically in terms of  
8 Western Alaska chum stock status as well as there's a  
9 lot of interest in looking at the hatchery releases,  
10 not just Asian but across the Pacific Rim and to what  
11 extent those have changed over time, particularly since  
12 we last looked at this about a decade ago.

13

14 Next slide.

15

16 I'm not sure how much you know about  
17 the State of Alaska's bycatch task force but there is a  
18 Gubernatorial task force that's been working over the  
19 last six months with different meetings. One is  
20 focused on crab bycatch in the Bering Sea and the Gulf  
21 of Alaska. The other is particularly focused on  
22 Western salmon subcommittee is working on  
23 recommendations for better management of salmon in  
24 Western -- bycatch of salmon specifically for Western  
25 Alaska stocks. So those subcommittees have been  
26 meeting. The overall bycatch task force itself has  
27 also had meetings, they just had a meeting yesterday,  
28 they had one a week ago. They're due to complete their  
29 meetings on November 15th and their recommendations are  
30 due to be provided to the public by November 29th. The  
31 Council then intends to consider those findings and the  
32 recommendations of that State of Alaska bycatch task  
33 force in December as it looks at how to manage --  
34 continue to make changes to salmon bycatch management  
35 in the Bering Sea.

36

37 The Council also indicated that it  
38 wishes to form a work group, especially a salmon  
39 bycatch committee and that'll be comprised of tribal  
40 members, industry representatives and other experts.  
41 The intent of that salmon bycatch committee would be to  
42 review and provide recommendations on the chum  
43 discussion paper that we'll have listed (ph) by  
44 November 11th, as well as the findings from the State  
45 of Alaska bycatch task force overall for salmon as well  
46 as the specific work by the Western Alaska salmon  
47 subcommittee. And to include current information,  
48 including local, traditional and subsistence knowledge  
49 and research to determine what's driving Western Alaska  
50

0096

1 salmon declines.

2

3

4 So the nominations for that committee  
5 were made available -- were taken through -- I'm sorry  
6 -- on to just the next slide that says Part 3 and then  
7 I'll get through the timeline of what we're coming back  
8 with.

8

9

10 The Council also prioritized research  
11 on Bering Sea salmon and noted the support for NOAA and  
12 ADF&G and developing models for -- predictive models  
13 for where salmon stocks will be located in the Bering  
14 Sea. And they are continuing to stress the need to  
15 reduce the time for the analysis of the genetics data  
16 and then prioritizing increased survey work in near  
17 shore environments which has been proposed by the State  
18 of Alaska as a really vulnerable area for salmon in  
19 their first year at sea.

19

20

Next slide.

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

So then this slide just has a timeline.  
Again, we had a call for nominations to the salmon  
bycatch committee that was posted in August. That was  
taken up until the day before our Council meeting began  
two weeks ago. Those appointments have not yet been  
made but they are due to be made soon, either -- they  
were not made during the October Council meeting so we  
anticipate that they will be made and published to our  
website within the next week or so.

In November then the intention was that  
salmon bycatch would meet for the first time and would  
review -- at the very least that committee would have  
an introductory meeting and review the information in  
the Staff chum discussion paper. If those task force  
recommendations are available they could also be  
reviewed by the committee at that time. We do have the  
Western Alaska subcommittee recommendations so those  
would be made available to the committee, we just don't  
know whether or not we'll have the overall State of  
Alaska bycatch task force committee recommendations in  
time for a meeting in late November. And then, again,  
in December the Council will be reviewing that  
discussion paper as well as the committee  
recommendations on it and then if the task force  
recommendations are available the Council will be  
considering those, if they had not yet been available  
there is the intention that this salmon bycatch

0097

1 committee would meet after those overall bycatch task  
2 force recommendations are made available.

3

4 Madame Chair, I'll pause there. I'm  
5 happy to walk through additional slides but if you'd  
6 rather pause now for questions I'm happy to do that as  
7 well.

8

9 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, do we have  
10 any questions or comments from the Council.

11

12 Tim.

13

14 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Madame Chair.  
15 Thank you for your presentation Diana, this is Tim  
16 Gervais. During the Sitka meeting was there any  
17 discussion on limiting the amount of time the trawl  
18 fleet is engaged in fishing or using some kind of model  
19 of marine protected areas where there's areas where  
20 trawling's not allowed to as to potential conservation  
21 measures?

22

23 MS. STRAM: Thank you. Through the  
24 Chair. Tim. The Council didn't discuss that as  
25 options. What the Council put forward was what was in  
26 their motion requesting this discussion paper and to  
27 give themselves time to look at the task force  
28 recommendations from the Governor's task force and then  
29 with the intention to discuss, if possible, what, if  
30 any, additional management measures they'd consider in  
31 December. So they heard public comments on a variety  
32 of different aspects to management that they could  
33 consider modifying but they didn't make any of those  
34 changes or indicate that they were making those changes  
35 at this time, instead, they deferred that discussion  
36 largely to December when they take up this new  
37 information.

38

39 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Any other  
40 questions or comments.

41

42 Darrell.

43

44 MR. VENT: Yeah, thanks. I just wanted  
45 to, you know, give a little bit of information on we  
46 were discussing in the meeting that, you know, the  
47 salmon's supposed to be going all the way to Canada and  
48 all of a sudden there was like 30,000 fish that wasn't  
49 accounted for, that was supposed to be heading up into  
50

0098

1 Canada. I spoke before, you know, that the breed of  
2 the fish, you have a good strain in that breed and  
3 they're able to swim all the way up into Canada and  
4 people were talking up around Fort Yukon area and they  
5 said, yeah, we've been having a lot of fish up in our  
6 streams so I'm assuming that, you know, the fish are  
7 not strong enough all the way up into Canada anymore.  
8 So they go into tributaries that are on the Alaska side  
9 and it's because they don't have the strain no more.  
10 They can't go as far as they used to. IT just brings  
11 up, you know, that we have to take into consideration  
12 that that strain is not in the fish no more so they  
13 can't make that long swim and same thing with the chum  
14 salmon. We're not seeing a lot of chum in our area but  
15 maybe in the lower Yukon they're starting to, you know,  
16 they see chum but they're just not going as far no  
17 more. They don't have the strength to go as far as  
18 they should. So, you know, there's something going on  
19 in the ocean. And like Virgil explained maybe it's  
20 because there's competition out there for the food,  
21 there's not enough to be eaten by the fish to make that  
22 long run so they have to make shorter runs and so maybe  
23 the fish are breeding in places that are unfamiliar  
24 with so it's not -- you're not getting as many fish  
25 coming back out anymore because it's not the right  
26 place for them to, you know, go and hatch their eggs.

27  
28 It's something that, you know, we  
29 haven't really talked about but I think that should be  
30 brought up in discussions that we have to really start  
31 understanding what's going on with our fish in order to  
32 try and make it to where we can start learning to  
33 repopulate our strength in them. So we have to  
34 understand from their side, not only what we, as, you  
35 know, sitting here at the table, they go full cycle,  
36 they go down in the waters in the fall time, under the  
37 ice and there's a lot of predation going on, not only  
38 pike, you know, there's whitefish, sheefish, eels all  
39 these other areas -- when we start losing the salmon  
40 then the eels start disappearing too. About the only  
41 thing I see a lot around is the pike, they haven't  
42 disappeared, they increased. Our ducks, our geese, our  
43 muskrat, there's, you know -- Pollock said he went  
44 fishing and sees some big pike now, they're huge. And,  
45 you know, I spoke about predation in their fish down in  
46 the Lower 48 so, you know, that's some of the things I  
47 just wanted to bring up that I think is interesting to  
48 understand how the fish, how the salmon, how do we, you  
49 know, try to make them come back. We have to really,  
50

0099

1 you know, get together and put our minds to it.

2

3 Thank you.

4

5 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you,  
6 Darrell, that was.....

7

8 MS. STRAM: Thank you for that. I  
9 would also encourage if you have the information in  
10 your packet, there is some more information under the  
11 research updates, we had some really interesting  
12 research updates presented to the Council by both NOAA  
13 and the State of Alaska and a lot of it had to do with  
14 warming waters and how that really changed a lot of the  
15 diet that both chinook and chum are experiencing at sea  
16 and how that basically they're getting a less  
17 nutritious diet and in recent warm years the capelin,  
18 the thing that they really are thriving on is less  
19 prevalent and so that that's having a real effect on  
20 their ability to survive basically and thrive. So  
21 that's -- there's a number of factors but that's also  
22 one of them that was brought up to us.

23

24 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you,  
25 Diana. Darrell, that was very good comments. I never  
26 really thought of that, gave that a thought, I just  
27 thought they had a lot of food out there but evidently  
28 not. Times are changing. I was just thinking about  
29 when I was young, I used to be able to run many miles,  
30 now I can hop, you know, one foot, not even that. But,  
31 you know, as things get older and the fish do get older  
32 and the cycle gets older, it slows down, so it's  
33 something to think about. I think we should continue  
34 this discussion and maybe even have a work shop or  
35 something on it, I don't know. We got to do something.

36

37 Kevin.

38

39 MR. WHITWORTH: Madame Chair, thank  
40 you. Thank you, Diana. You had mentioned a number of  
41 factors that may be causing the salmon collapse. Can  
42 you just take a moment to elaborate on that, what NOAA  
43 has discussed as far as the factors that may be  
44 affecting the salmon out in the ocean. You had  
45 mentioned warming waters and climate change, can you  
46 just elaborate a little bit more on that.

47

48 Thanks.

49

50

0100

1 MS. STRAM: Sure, I'm happy to, just to  
2 provide a brief overview of some of the information  
3 that they've provided to us. They showed some graphs  
4 of, particularly Northern Bering Sea juvenile chinook  
5 salmon abundance from 2003 to 2021 and they basically  
6 noted that the abundance of juvenile salmon has been  
7 below average since 2017 but that they're smaller than  
8 average size during the recent warm years in  
9 particular, so 2014 through 2017, and that's when they  
10 started looking at some diet data and noted that during  
11 those very warm years 2014 through 2017, that the diet  
12 that they have of the juvenile chinook salmon is  
13 showing a real lack of particularly capelin which is a  
14 really high quality prey for them. And so they further  
15 were discussing that the future runs, Yukon chinook at  
16 least, is determined really early in their life before  
17 their first winter at sea while Yukon fall chum are  
18 also driven by factors early in life until 2016 and  
19 that's 'when things sort of tipped over and that had to  
20 do with ocean temperature and basically it seemed that  
21 juvenile chinook were doing better, at first, as  
22 temperatures rose but reached a tipping point whereas  
23 juvenile chum, their stored energy basically it goes  
24 down as temperatures warm. So the way that the scien  
25 -- the researchers had likened it is that while they're  
26 getting food it's basically getting less rich food so  
27 instead of getting a steak you're getting celery. And  
28 so they just don't have -- they're running kind of on  
29 empty in terms of their ability to store some of that  
30 energy and so they're less viable after that, that  
31 first year, because they just aren't getting the high  
32 quality prey and that one of the major factors to that  
33 has to do with warming temperatures and the switching  
34 of the available -- switching to other less nutritious  
35 prey items where capelin is absent from their diet.

36

37 I hope that answers your question.

38

39 There's a number of factors and there's  
40 a whole lot of people that are doing research on this.

41

42 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Kevin.

43

44 MR. WHITWORTH: Yeah, thank.....

45

46 MS. STRAM: Madame Chair, if I may. I  
47 neglected to mention one thing. This isn't about  
48 salmon bycatch but I did hear somebody mention this  
49 earlier in the meeting and I just wanted to make sure  
50

0101

1 that you're aware and I'll give Nissa the information.  
2 One thing that the Council took up on Tuesday was  
3 appointing an AP tribal seat. So we don't have  
4 designated seats for our advisory panel, but they did  
5 decide to add one seat as a designated tribal seat on  
6 the advisory panel. So the information is on our  
7 website to apply and noting -- it gives the criteria  
8 noting that the individual does not need to be Alaska  
9 Native but they must be nominated by a tribe and/or a  
10 consortia so that they can speak for the tribes and  
11 consortia and so that nomination period will be open, I  
12 believe, until early April. But, again, I'll forward  
13 Nissa all the information on that and so that's the  
14 first time that we have had a designated seat and it is  
15 an additional seat on our advisory panel that would be  
16 permanent. So I just wanted to make sure you're aware  
17 of that but I will make sure that I give Nissa the  
18 information to circulate on that as well.

19

20 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Tim.

21

22 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Madame Chair.  
23 Diana has -- I don't know, since 2005, have -- or maybe  
24 even earlier, I don't know what year your rolling hot  
25 spot program came out, but since 2001 has -- or excuse  
26 me, 1991 has the implementation of salmon conservation  
27 measures ever prevented the BSAI trawl feet from  
28 reaching their tact?

29

30 MS. STRAM: Thanks for the question.  
31 Just in terms of when the rolling hot spots --  
32 voluntarily the fleet started imposing the rolling hot  
33 spots back in 2000 when they were getting closed out of  
34 these chinook salmon savings areas and no, I don't  
35 believe that being moved out of those areas has ever  
36 prohibited them from reaching their tact. There have  
37 been some years where they haven't reached their tact  
38 in recent years for other reasons, or because the  
39 pollock were so dispersed they weren't able to find it.  
40 They have provisions in place now to not extend their  
41 season very much into October in order to avoid higher  
42 chinook bycatch at that time so they're balancing  
43 different aspects. But the closures, no, they did not,  
44 because they didn't have an overall limit. I would  
45 note that the fishery has not reached their overall  
46 limit since the imposition of Amendment 91. It would  
47 shut them down in a season for the remainder of the  
48 season. That limit's divided by sector and by season  
49 and so there are smaller boxes for the different  
50

0102

1 sectors and by season. But if they do reach that limit  
2 now it does shut them down. But those time area  
3 closures were never hard limits, they were triggered  
4 closures, so by design the fishery had to move out of  
5 areas that had historically had high bycatch in order  
6 to fish in what was supposed to be cleaner areas but as  
7 we're learning static time area closures don't work  
8 particularly well when conditions are shifting in the  
9 ocean.

10

11 MR. GERVAIS: Has the pollock stocks  
12 been affected by global warming?

13

14 MS. STRAM: Thanks, that's a great  
15 question. General -- not really, we've been starting  
16 to look at kind of the winners and losers of climate  
17 change as it goes with groundfish stocks and obviously  
18 I'm sure you've heard about the decline in the crab  
19 stocks which are definitely losers in climate change.  
20 Pollock so far doesn't seem to have a strong response  
21 to it, partly they're fairly short-lived. Other  
22 species such as sablefish, seem to be doing better  
23 under warming conditions. They just had a real huge  
24 recruitment event in recent years so we're still kind  
25 of looking into that but there hasn't been -- but the  
26 pollock stock was down, I think in 2008 kind of to some  
27 of its lower levels but since then it's been at a  
28 fairly stable level. We'll be getting our new stock  
29 assessments for pollock, and all of our stocks actually  
30 in just a couple of weeks so we'll have updated  
31 information that includes the information from the 2022  
32 survey.

33

34 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Don.

35

36 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Madame Chair. I  
37 think Tim brought up a pretty interesting question, I  
38 mean, you know, Diana -- oh, my name is Don Honea, I'm  
39 from Ruby. I guess the thing, I mean, you know, we can  
40 go on about there's so many doggone many facets to this  
41 whole thing here, you know, but whether it's chinook or  
42 chum or something they're feeding and I think it's kind  
43 of interesting that are what are the numbers of the  
44 pollock doing. Because, you know, I mean a few years  
45 back we could consider global warming, maybe it's  
46 getting too warm over there in the ocean and then an  
47 elder mentioned the feeding, you know, it's kind of  
48 interesting that, you know, what exactly is pollock  
49 doing, is it -- is it remaining the same, why are we --  
50

0103

1 I guess the point I'm trying to make is if I saw that  
2 graph correctly and it showed that from 2017 to 2020 or  
3 something that a lot of chum salmon was taken, much  
4 more than chinook, is it because -- I mean is there --  
5 can we -- do you have an answer to why that's happened,  
6 what do we attribute that to, lack of chinooks now, or  
7 it seems like there's an increase and it's -- I don't  
8 know, if you could answer that or not it'd be nice.

9

10 Thank you.

11

12 MS. STRAM: Through the Chair. Thanks  
13 for the question. We don't know the actual answer to  
14 that. That's, again, why the Council's asking for  
15 additional information. Some of that is most likely  
16 higher encounters on the grounds. If you look at those  
17 graphs you can see that chum has really fluctuated.  
18 Obviously we had that high in 2005. It was gradually  
19 climbing from about -- the encounters that is, so when  
20 they catch them as bycatch, not necessarily what you're  
21 experiencing on the grounds in Western Alaska because  
22 the proportions of those fish that are from Western  
23 Alaska, the chum salmon caught in bycatch is really  
24 low, as compared to Asian fish and so that's why we're  
25 being asked to look at has there been an increase in  
26 the hatchery release of Asian fish because they're  
27 running into -- when they run into these really high  
28 numbers, that's still the greatest proportion of those  
29 is by and large Asian hatchery fish and so we're  
30 looking at is it a carrying capacity thing, are there  
31 more -- are there more chum salmon on the grounds.  
32 Certainly avoidance is undoubtedly an issue because  
33 there hasn't been -- while there's been incentives in  
34 place to avoid chum, chinook has always been the  
35 priority and so when the fleet runs into chinook they  
36 move off of it and that would be at the expense of chum  
37 if they can't get away from both and that's because the  
38 chinook has always been the priority to try to reduce  
39 any possibility of encounters with chinook bycatch. So  
40 I think we don't have that answer.

41

42 We did a lot of work and studies  
43 initially during Amendment 91 to try to figure out is  
44 there a smoking gun for the chinook encounters. We  
45 looked at a lot of things, we looked at temperature at  
46 depth, whether or not there could be temperature  
47 directed fishing, whether or not there could be  
48 day/night differences. We don't have a good estimate  
49 of at-sea abundance of salmon unfortunately and so we  
50

0104

1 have to look at co-location of pollock and salmon and  
2 then look at runs to look at all of them and basically  
3 the short answer, for chinook, at least, is that it was  
4 some part of all of those things but it wasn't any one  
5 single thing. So the decision was made to put the cap  
6 system in place even though we didn't know if there was  
7 a more refined measure but we knew that it wasn't just  
8 temperature, it wasn't just depth, it's presumably co-  
9 location but sometimes even in low abundance years they  
10 could -- they can run into additional chinook. We've  
11 looked at time areas, the -- the geneticists have done  
12 a really fantastic job, with chum especially of trying  
13 to break out spacial and temporal -- so time and areas  
14 across the Bering Sea by season and by week where they  
15 might see more -- higher aggregations of Western Alaska  
16 chum because the point is to avoid the Western Alaska  
17 chum above all other chum.

18  
19 So I don't have a good answer for you.  
20 I hope that we'll have more information to bring  
21 forward in December when we start to look at hatchery  
22 releases across the Pacific Rim to see if that's an  
23 exacerbating factor. But it's -- that's basically what  
24 we know right now. We haven't done a lot of  
25 investigation into chum encounters, we've been focused  
26 up until now on refining chinook measures to make sure  
27 that that stays as the most stringent measure.

28  
29 Sorry I can't answer your question  
30 better than that.

31  
32 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Any other  
33 comments or -- Kevin.

34  
35 MR. WHITWORTH: Thanks, Madame Chair.  
36 Thanks Diana. I got a lot of comments but I'm going to  
37 try to keep it simple -- or short.

38  
39 You know, this morning I was talking  
40 about gravel to gravel fish management and NOAA's  
41 trying to do it, they're trying to look at in-river, or  
42 escapement goals, the people not getting their harvest  
43 needs met. I think there could be more collaboration  
44 between, you know, the tribal people on the river, I  
45 think Fish and Game has some research in the reports  
46 with NOAA so I applaud them for working with Fish and  
47 Game. NOAA needs to continue to work with the tribal  
48 people, the people from the river.

49  
50

0105

1                   Also I think they need to take a better  
2 look at the cumulative effects over the years. We have  
3 a lot of data here looking at the bycatch for the past  
4 year or two. She had talked about climate change being  
5 an impact, the heat stress on different prey for the  
6 salmon, there's human cumul -- there's cumulative  
7 effects, environmental and human effects, both of them  
8 need to be accounted for. Going back all the way to  
9 the 2007 even where 150,000 chinook were bycaught, have  
10 we recovered from, that one year? We don't know. We  
11 used to have commercial fisheries on the Kuskokwim  
12 River and the Yukon River, have we recovered from those  
13 events? We don't know. We need to look at a more  
14 cumulative effect here, not just one or two years back,  
15 not look at the impacts from last year's catch and how  
16 it's affecting our runs this year, in-river. That's  
17 not going to help us to get these runs back to where we  
18 want them. If there is, for sure, climate change,  
19 environmental impacts on these runs then fisheries  
20 management like NOAA needs to take these into account  
21 seriously and take a more precautionary approach when  
22 it come to harvesting their species like pollock.

23

24                   We have -- out in the Bering Sea  
25 there's -- all the salmon are decreasing, the two crab  
26 fisheries are decreasing, West Coast Alaska they talk  
27 about bird die-offs and there's bird bycatch as well.  
28 There's endangered species being bycaught. Some  
29 fisheries, if they catch one endangered species they'll  
30 be completely closed yet pollock fishery continues.  
31 There's -- you know I'm rambling on here but -- but  
32 NOAA needs to take a more precautionary approach to get  
33 to where we want to get to and that's where -- we need  
34 to get to where subsistence people are getting their  
35 food back. And I really do believe that NOAA needs to  
36 take this more seriously.

37

38                   I'll just leave it at that.

39

40                   Thank you.

41

42                   MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you,

43 Kevin.

44

45                   MS. STRAM: Thank you.

46

47                   MR. REAKOFF: Madame Chair, I have a  
48 question.

49

50

0106

1 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Yes, go ahead.

2

3

4 MR. REAKOFF: Diana, this is Jack  
5 Reakoff. Is marine temperature correlated to increase  
6 chum salmon bycatch irrelevant to the chum salmon  
7 biomass and can be used as a predictor, counter-  
8 intuitively bycatch increases with chum salmon decline  
9 but is there consideration to use this predictor as to  
10 move the fleet west of the travel routes of the chum  
11 salmon during the season when they would be  
12 encountered.

12

13

14

Thank you.

15

16 MS. STRAM: Thanks, Jack, those are --  
17 those are great questions. I'm probably not going to  
18 be able to answer either of them. We did look at  
19 temperature and bycatch. I think we looked at both  
20 chum and chinook, it was a project that we had years  
21 back but I'd have to go back to it. At least the  
22 chinook, it was correlated, somewhat weakly but still  
23 correlated, we haven't had a lot of success in how to  
24 predict where and when we might find the bycatch.  
25 That's something that we're trying to work on,  
26 particularly working with the geneticists to see if  
27 other -- are there times of the year, particularly for  
28 chum, if we see something early on, is there a way we  
29 can predict, or at the end of one season predict what  
30 we might be seeing the next season, we're not really  
31 there yet but we're trying to work on that. And in an  
32 ideal world, having a predictive measure in place  
33 management-wise would be much better than having blunt  
34 management measures in place but right now we haven't  
35 moved towards the sophistication to have that kind of a  
36 predictive approach. I think we're trying to look into  
37 that much more -- I mean we looked into it as a blunt  
38 tool, that's with the three river index is supposed to  
39 do, is just say, okay, when things are going down you  
40 make a change. We're trying to look at much more  
41 sophisticated predictive measures to see is there  
42 something about the timing and the location and the  
43 stock of origin, or the bycatch is this year that would  
44 tell us something about next year, and I think we do  
45 need to look into all those factors. We need to look  
46 into temperature, we need to look into the spacial and  
47 temporal location of the bycatch by stocks. They're  
48 trying to isolate them by strataboxes in the Bering Sea  
49 so we can get a better idea under different conditions  
50 in the ocean are we seeing more aggregated, say Western

50

0107

1 Alaska stocks in certain areas so we would know to move  
2 away from there, but we're not there yet. I think  
3 that's where we're trying to go in this next year if  
4 the Council continues to move forward with  
5 considerations for something that we might do more for  
6 chum.

7

8 I hope that helps, I'm sorry, I don't a  
9 have better answer to that but I think we are thinking  
10 of it.

11

12 And I also hope that you feel better,  
13 I'm sorry about your accident, that's really horrible.

14

15 MR. REAKOFF: Thank you. That answers  
16 quite a bit. Thank you, very much.

17

18 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you, Jack.

19

20 Kevin.

21

22 MR. WHITWORTH: Yeah, thank you, Madame  
23 Chair. So I just want to keep on this idea that  
24 management's not working and Darrell's brought this up.  
25 He brought this up this morning. I really do think the  
26 current management at NOAA, there needs to be a deep  
27 review. So their current programmatic supplemental EIS  
28 that they are functioning under right now, it's a 2004  
29 EIS, that is managed -- they use to manage the fishery,  
30 it's outdated. It doesn't reflect the issues that are  
31 going on right now well. So we've talked about climate  
32 change issues, environmental issues that Diana has  
33 brought up, we've heard, you know, with Fish and  
34 Wildlife, Fish and Game in-river say that climate  
35 change is driving some of these issues, we don't know  
36 if it is or not, but the current EIS that NOAA is  
37 managing the fisheries under does not account for  
38 climate change, it does not account for the significant  
39 shifts in the Bering Sea that Virgil has talked about,  
40 a lot of people have talked about this, and the salmon  
41 collapse, the crab collapses, the marine mammal  
42 collapses, the bird collapses, there's studies out in  
43 the Bering Sea that go back a long time about these  
44 collapses and I really do think that we should write a  
45 letter to NOAA telling them that they need to do a  
46 complete NEPA process so that the people throughout the  
47 entire Bering Sea ecosystem, including tribal people  
48 from up and down the Kuskokwim and Yukon Rivers, we are  
49 part of that environment, the fresh water environment

50

0108

1 is part of the Bering Sea and if they do a full NEPA  
2 process to evaluate, come up with alternatives that are  
3 alternatives that come from the people, not just within  
4 NOAA -- NOAA right now will try to rewrite this plan  
5 but without tribal input, without our input, like a  
6 full NEPA process would and so I would like to -- I can  
7 help draft this letter if you guys would entertain it,  
8 to write to NOAA to implement a full NEPA and revision  
9 of their EIS.

10

11 That's all, thank you.

12

13 MR. REAKOFF: Madame Chair.

14

15 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Yes, go ahead.

16

17 MR. REAKOFF: I make a motion to write  
18 that letter to NOAA referring to the NEPA process and  
19 Kevin writing it and with the Council making input into  
20 that. That's the motion.

21

22 MR. VENT: Second.

23

24 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: A motion made by  
25 Jack to write to NOAA, seconded by Darrell, all in  
26 favor say aye.

27

28 MR. GERVAIS: Can we discuss it for a  
29 minute.

30

31 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: You need to.

32

33 MR. GERVAIS: Yes.

34

35 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Darrell.

36

37 MR. VENT: Yeah, just you know, I  
38 remember years back they declared a fishing disaster  
39 for commercial fishing and the people in our villages  
40 were affected by not being able to go out and get their  
41 salmon, do their traditional, and I look back at that  
42 and I say, you know, what are our tribal people, how  
43 are they being compensated for a disaster that took  
44 their food off their table, you know, that's like to  
45 going to somebody's store and just robbing it and  
46 saying, okay, you don't have no more food there, you  
47 can't eat it. That's something that really affects our  
48 people because they depend on this fish and it's really  
49 serious that, you know, that something we got to  
50

0109

1 consider later on, how do we propose to the State, the  
2 Federal government, you know, all these areas that are  
3 depleting what our area used to have. We haven't  
4 really, you know, looked into the full depths of what  
5 we got to do yet. I mean we're still just sitting on  
6 the edge kind of right now but this is something that,  
7 you know, our people depended on this and then it was  
8 taken away from them. How are we going to go about  
9 that. You know that's one of the things that we're  
10 going to have to consider later on.

11

12 So I just -- you know, just been  
13 thinking about that, you know, our people are really  
14 hurting because we don't have that traditional use no  
15 more.

16

17 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you,  
18 Darrell.

19

20 Tim.

21

22 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Madame Chair.  
23 Kevin, let me know if I'm trying to add too much stuff  
24 into the letter or everyone on the Council.

25

26 So Kevin's going to cover information  
27 about initiating or reinitiating the NEPA process. I  
28 think it's important in the letter to mention that --  
29 it's my understanding that the transboundary escapement  
30 on the Yukon was only about a quarter of the goal. So  
31 if you look at that as a spawning escapement goal, if  
32 you're only -- you're only getting 25 percent of the  
33 fish you want on the ground that's just a tragic state  
34 of the stock. And I think NOAA and all the Council  
35 members on the North Pacific Management Council need to  
36 understand that with zero nets in the water, zero  
37 fishwheels in the water, we could only get 25 percent  
38 of our spawning escapement and that's just really poor  
39 biological performance. So I'd like information  
40 stating those numbers in the letter and I would like  
41 this Council to forward a -- or create -- or start the  
42 discussion instead of just trying to manage bycatch we  
43 need to try to get into a scheme of more precautionary  
44 management where -- so there's -- there is a lot.....

45

46 (Teleconference interference -  
47 participants not muted - typing)

48

49 MR. GERVAIS: .....of factors that are

50

0110

1 probably affecting the salmon populations with the  
2 bycatch and hatchery release and water temperatures and  
3 nutrition available and probably some other factors  
4 too. But since all the scientists all over the Pacific  
5 can't really figure out or quantify what percent of  
6 these effects are, how detrimental they are in the  
7 overall picture, that the precautionary management  
8 means that we need to have less salmon taken out of the  
9 ecosystem until we have a better science-based  
10 understanding of what's causing these declines.

11

12 So I hope that we can get that message  
13 across to limit the bycatch below what's currently  
14 allowable because there's no spare salmon available  
15 right now and these fish are being eliminated in a  
16 commercial venture which when we can't meet escapement  
17 goals there should be no commercial predation on the  
18 stocks.

19

20 So that's a point I would like included  
21 in the letter.

22

23 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, anybody  
24 else from the Council.

25

26 MR. GERVAIS: Is it -- Kevin, are you  
27 proposing that this is a letter to NOAA or North  
28 Pacific Management Council?

29

30 MR. WHITWORTH: Madame Chair. I would  
31 probably title it to both -- we could send it to both,  
32 management, NMFS and North Pacific Fisheries  
33 Management, the Chair at least, I would do that. We  
34 could work on that, figure that out, but I would at  
35 least send it to those two entities.

36

37 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay.

38

39 MR. GERVAIS: And how do we get the  
40 Federal Subsistence Board involved or just CC them on  
41 it or does it have to go through them?

42

43 MS. PILCHER: Through the Chair, this  
44 is Nissa Pilcher. You could certainly CC the Board on  
45 it. It does not have to -- my understanding is it  
46 doesn't have to specifically go through them in order  
47 to get to the other entities Member Whitworth's was  
48 talking about. I could be mistaken but I don't believe  
49 it specifically has to go to the Board first but they  
50

0111

1 can for sure be CC'd on the letter.

2

3 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Pollock.

4

5 MR. SIMON: Yeah, thank you, Madame  
6 Chair. I think we're spending a lot of time on this  
7 one item of business.

8

9 Thank you, Madame Chair.

10

11 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. All in  
12 favor say aye.

13

14 IN UNISON: Aye.

15

16 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: All opposed same  
17 sign.

18

19 (No opposing votes)

20

21 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Motion carries.  
22 Thank you, Jack.

23

24 Okay, with that we'll go to the Yukon  
25 River salmon season summary by Holly Carroll.

26

27 MS. CARROLL: Good afternoon, Members  
28 of the.....

29

30 REPORTER: Holly, can you hang on a  
31 second. Let me tell these people to mute first, hold  
32 on.

33

34 (Pause)

35

36 REPORTER: Okay, go ahead Holly. Sorry  
37 about that.

38

39 MS. CARROLL: Madame Chair. Members of  
40 the Council. I'm Holly Carroll with U.S. Fish and  
41 Wildlife Service. I'm the Yukon River in-season  
42 Federal Manager. I will try to keep this report brief  
43 because I feel like we've touched on a lot of your  
44 concerns and questions already with previous  
45 presentations.

46

47 You have a full summary of the season  
48 in your packet but I would have to ask Nissa what tab  
49 it's under, it's in your supplemental materials -- Tab  
50

0112

1 2 of your supplemental materials. And I will just kind  
2 of reiterate that, you know, a lot of the season data  
3 is still finishing up. The Alaska Department of Fish  
4 and Game will produce its season summaries very soon  
5 for the summer and then typically the fall season  
6 summary is produced around December, so we'll  
7 definitely get those full summaries to you by your next  
8 RAC meeting.

9

10 So I won't belabor the details, I think  
11 you all are very familiar with how the Yukon salmon  
12 season went, it's been discussed a great deal today.  
13 We've seen some of the lowest runs on record,  
14 particularly for chinook it was the lowest run on  
15 record, for chum salmon it was the second lowest. We  
16 did fail to meet likely all goals within the drainage  
17 for both chum and chinook. So, again, this has all  
18 been discussed.

19

20 Our management was, you know, very  
21 harsh as many of you said, it's -- we've had three  
22 years of closures for chum, two years of closures for  
23 chinook and our only ability to offer some opportunity  
24 was trying to keep pretty liberal fishing for whitefish  
25 and other non-salmon and we did that with our four inch  
26 gear this summer. On the Yukon we were able to offer  
27 that usually 24/7. We did restrict those four inch  
28 gillnets to 60 feet maximum length and that's just to  
29 help keep those on shore-based so that they're better  
30 able to target resident species.

31

32 So, you know, in a nutshell, you know,  
33 many of you discussed this, when we have runs this  
34 poor, you know, our first priority is always  
35 perpetuating the runs in to the future. We have those  
36 biological imperatives to try to meet escapement goals.  
37 And as you can tell from these abysmal run sizes there  
38 wasn't enough fish to meet escapement goals even with,  
39 as one of you said, zero nets in the water and zero  
40 harvest of salmon, we had pretty much no chance of  
41 meeting many of these goals.

42

43 So I wanted to touch on a couple things  
44 some of you guys have been talking about and, you know,  
45 it can be very frustrating when management and research  
46 doesn't keep up with the concerns that you guys have  
47 been expressing, some of you for decades. And I want  
48 to echo that that's very true. I mean I actually agree  
49 with a lot of the sentiments that have been discussed  
50

0113

1 here today and as a biologist myself, I just feel like  
2 we're always chasing our tail trying to figure out one  
3 problem after another. When we think we got one  
4 figured out, one species comes back, we're fishing  
5 again, and another species just continues to struggle  
6 no matter what we do. But one thing that I wanted to  
7 highlight is that at the Service we've really tried to  
8 take a more collaborative approach, I mean we have to,  
9 it's kind of all hands on deck right now, but we're  
10 really trying to coordinate better with the people  
11 doing ocean research, with the people at the  
12 universities doing research on the smolt or the  
13 juvenile life cycles, or the ecosystem type of studies  
14 and one of the studies that I'm particularly involved  
15 with is the ichthyophonus study. I know you also heard  
16 mention of that disease and there is a flier at the  
17 table over here that describes what that study is  
18 doing, why we are doing it, what are goals are for the  
19 next few years but, you know, this is a very acute and  
20 real problem particular for the Yukon. So we've heard  
21 lots of speculation is it climate, is it warming water,  
22 you know, there's a lot of areas of speculation  
23 affecting lots of salmon but what we do know for Yukon  
24 chinook, specifically, this is one disease that likely  
25 could be killing them. It is definitely a disease that  
26 is in higher prevalence in the population right now.  
27 We've been taking samples the last two seasons and we  
28 have seen some of the highest prevalence, which is to  
29 say, more fish in the population appear to be carrying  
30 this disease than we've seen in the past. And what  
31 we're also finding is that the disease appears to be  
32 more severe. And so this kind of goes along with what  
33 Darrell was saying earlier, this theory that, well,  
34 wait a minute, they're not making it to Canada, we're  
35 seeing this big discrepancy between what's counted in-  
36 river at Pilot Station, for instance, and then what  
37 arrives at the Border. For chinook, at least, we  
38 really have concerns that if ichthyophonus is killing  
39 them before they make it to their spawning grounds that  
40 could be one of the main reasons we are seeing far less  
41 chinook at the Border than we expect to. It doesn't  
42 really answer that same question for chum but I think  
43 that heat stress and other things, in fact, it was  
44 Darrell that took me on the river and showed me the  
45 heat stress mass die-off of chum that occurred in 2019.  
46 And so while we're scrambling to understand heat stress  
47 effects in salmon, we're also scrambling to understand  
48 what's going on with this ichthyophonus disease.  
49  
50

0114

1                   So right now that program does require  
2 that we sample at three sites on the river. Pilot  
3 Station is in the lower river so we like to look at how  
4 the disease is affecting the fish down there but it's  
5 really important to check the disease at Rapids area  
6 because I'm sure Jim Simon and Virgil, you may recall  
7 them mentioning previous studies were done many years  
8 ago and many of them centered around that Rapids area.  
9 So we have a good baseline of what the disease has  
10 looked like over decades and so we need to continue to  
11 look at Rapids.

12  
13                   But one of the theories is that people  
14 in the upper river say communities like Fort Yukon and  
15 communities like Eagle, they say they don't see this  
16 disease in the fish and that could imply that those  
17 fish are dying, the sick fish are dying before they  
18 ever get there and that's why they don't see those  
19 hearts with the spots and the spoiled meat. And so we  
20 do want to expand our sampling into Fort Yukon next  
21 summer, and we hope that the sampling will continue at  
22 Eagle.

23  
24                   This is controversial sampling because  
25 as you've all discussed, people can't go fishing for  
26 salmon, they can't even do their normal traditional  
27 harvests. We've got fishing very heavily restricted.  
28 But for the importance of this study we've limited the  
29 number of sample sizes needed to be statistically sound  
30 and we need to take about 200 samples from each  
31 location. To do that we have to kill the fish because  
32 we have to take that heart and study that heart. But  
33 what we do, is we distribute those fish to locals who  
34 are getting to use those king salmon for their  
35 traditional use.

36  
37                   So if you have more questions about  
38 that study I'll be here after, there's also the flier.  
39 But it's just really important that we study that  
40 disease now while it's prevalent because it does come  
41 and go and so we really need to understand what  
42 percentage of these fish could actually be so affected  
43 that they might not be making it to their spawning  
44 grounds.

45  
46                   I also just wanted to briefly touch on  
47 the Service has a real important part of its mission to  
48 consult with tribal governments and on the Yukon we've  
49 made an effort to have tribal consultations. Last year  
50

0115

1 we did some post-season teleconferences. We offered  
2 them by district and then we did a preseason round of  
3 tribal consultations. And this year we'll be doing  
4 that preseason round again, especially once we have  
5 forecasts and start to let people know what we're  
6 expecting for run sizes. But this fall we also  
7 recognized that, you know, we have a Board of Fish this  
8 year, we have a Federal Subsistence Board, there's so  
9 many meetings. You guys have all talked about the  
10 December Council meeting and it sounds like that's  
11 another one to go to. So for tribal consultations we  
12 would like to just have them with you whenever you want  
13 or need them. And so just as a reminder that any  
14 tribal government can request a tribal consultation  
15 with me, the Federal Manager, and we will set up a  
16 meeting for you. So just to remind you, that if you  
17 want something post-season we'd like to maybe hold  
18 those in November or whenever would work with you but  
19 just to get in touch with us directly to schedule  
20 something.

21

22 I guess I just also heard a lot of  
23 other great conversation about -- you know, a lot of  
24 frustration about these very complicated meeting  
25 processes and what can you really do to make any change  
26 and I believe that you are right some of these changes  
27 are glacial and painful and there's some of you that  
28 have been fighting on these issues for over 20 years.  
29 But I guess I just want to remind you that, you know,  
30 your work, through attending these meetings, especially  
31 through the North Pacific Fishery Management Council,  
32 those chinook bycatch caps and amendments that are in  
33 place, those weren't there before and I believe that  
34 the work of the stakeholders to make these concerns  
35 known and to go to these meetings and to spur us  
36 biologists, us agencies to do a better job, I do  
37 believe that's working, and so I just want to remind  
38 you that the December Council will be taking up salmon  
39 bycatch.

40

41 I wanted to also answer a couple  
42 questions that came up earlier.

43

44 The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service does  
45 have just a non-voting seat on the Council. The member  
46 that sits on that is our assistant Regional Director,  
47 Pete Fasbender. We have various Staff that work to  
48 provide reports to the Board and so one of those folks  
49 is Aaron Martin at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
50

0116

1 and then we produce reports for the Board, we call them  
2 the B report, and that might be any information that  
3 the Service wants to present at that meeting. So it  
4 could be anything from information about migratory  
5 birds or mammals or it could be about salmon and myself  
6 and the Area Manager Boyd, out of Kuskokwim, we have  
7 been pushing to produce our B reports and to focus on  
8 the -- sort of the outcomes and the effects on our  
9 fishing users for the December meeting and the reason  
10 is because that's a meeting where salmon bycatch is  
11 brought up. So we will be giving a B report where we  
12 describe our run sizes, the effects of those run sizes  
13 on the fishermen for that meeting, but that's typically  
14 when we produce that B report. So hopefully that  
15 answered some of those questions.

16

17 And I'm certainly happy to standby for  
18 any more questions you have. I am giving this report  
19 on behalf of the Fish and Game managers as well so I  
20 guess it would be good to see if they had anything that  
21 they wanted to add about management, if they're on the  
22 line.

23

24 MS. JALLEN: Hi Holly. Yeah, thank you  
25 for that excellent report and good update on -- this is  
26 Deena Jallen with the Alaska Department of Fish and  
27 Game, I'm the Yukon River Summer Season Manager.

28

29 Yeah, and just a few things to add is  
30 that we'll be getting our 2022 summer season summary  
31 published here fairly soon and we're putting out  
32 additional reports as part of the Board of Fish process  
33 later on this winter. The 2021 area management report,  
34 the AMR will be published later this winter, as well as  
35 a stock status report that will include updates from  
36 chinook, summer chum, fall chum and coho salmon. ADF&G  
37 Staff comments on the Board of Fish proposals have been  
38 drafted and those will also be put on the Board of Fish  
39 website.

40

41 And, yeah, also just to echo Holly's  
42 comments on her sentiment that we really, really  
43 appreciate all the hard work that you do on the Council  
44 and all the hard work that you do especially as good  
45 stewards of the resources that we're working to protect  
46 and, yeah, with that I'll turn it over to Christy if  
47 she has anything else to add for the fall season.

48

49 MS. GLEASON: Yeah, hi, members of the

50

0117

1 Council, this is Christy Gleason, I'm the Fall Season  
2 Manager. I work really close with Holly and Deena.

3

4

5 We were listening to your guys' opening  
6 comments and your concerns for the low salmon runs. We  
7 hear you. We have the same concerns. Especially with  
8 -- this is the third year in a row for low fall chum  
9 and coho runs. We did hear that you guys have concerns  
10 for Area M and I want to let you know that they are  
11 having a Board of Fish meeting this year, it's February  
12 20th to the 25th in Anchorage and you can submit public  
13 comments by February 3rd. There are some proposals  
14 that are in right now to try and protect Yukon salmon  
15 and so you guys will probably be talking about those a  
16 little later in your agenda. Deena and I are also  
17 available if you have any questions about the Board of  
18 Fish Yukon proposals. Our Board of Fish meeting is  
19 January 14th to the 18th and you can submit public  
20 comments by December 30th.

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

Yeah, and I guess one other thing with  
the low salmon runs that we're seeing on the Yukon  
River, I want to let you know we are trying to do some  
additional research for fall season. We restarted the  
Sheenjek River sonar, which is a historical project  
that we've had on an important fall chum spawning river  
in the Porcupine River drainage. We also worked with  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife and Yukon Delta Fisheries  
Development to tag -- put radiotags in about 350 coho  
salmon this year and we're tracking them in the Yukon  
River drainage right now. We know very little about  
coho salmon and so we're trying to understand more.

Another thing that we did this year was  
we collected some samples to look at some stress  
hormone analysis on fall chum salmon and so hopefully  
we'll wrap up these research projects and have more to  
report to you guys at a later time.

So thank you.

MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, thank you  
very much. Any comments. Darrell.

MR. VENT: Yeah, Holly, just, you know,  
something that I kind of remembered and I had spoken  
about a few years ago on the crash on the coho, I said  
we really got to start worrying about our chum salmon  
because it might becoming the same was as the coho and

0118

1 it actually has happened. So, you know, I was worried  
2 about it then and now what I'm worried about is our  
3 sheefish and whitefish. Those are going to be getting  
4 hit hard and we don't have no numbers on those and it's  
5 concerning because we're losing a lot of our fish  
6 already.

7

8 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you,  
9 Darrell. Any other comments. Don.

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

MR. HONEA: Thank you, Madame Chair.  
Thank you for your presentation, Holly. It's  
interesting, the fact that, you know, I guess we've  
heard for a couple years now that the fish that went by  
X arrived at Z or whatever and the numbers are way  
down, whatever, and so would you know about the studies  
on say they mentioned the Sheenjok or the Porcupine or  
something, and you also mentioned ichthyophonus or  
something, the fish at the Rapids, how come they're not  
getting them in Fort Yukon. So I don't know if the  
Porcupine is -- comes in before the -- before you get  
to Fort Yukon or not but I -- I was just wondering, you  
know, if the Sheenjok or the Porcupine or something,  
you know, reflects a higher number of fish that were  
destined for Canada in the first place. I don't know  
if you're -- if you have access to those numbers or who  
actually does.

Thank you.

MS. CARROLL: Yeah, that's an excellent  
question. Through the Chair. Mr. Honea. So this kind  
of relates to what Darrell said earlier, too. Is it  
that the fish that are going to Canada, are they going  
into other tributaries like the Porcupine or something  
else. And we have -- you know we have an extensive  
network of agencies that are collecting data and so  
within Canada they have projects on the Porcupine  
River, they have multiple projects, long-term projects  
and we have not seen this phenomena of, instead of fish  
going to Canada they're going into other streams, we  
aren't seeing higher numbers in those streams, we're  
actually seeing record low numbers everywhere. And  
even like you were saying, in the lower river, you  
know, maybe they're just going and spawning in the  
lower rivers, we're seeing no evidence of that  
whatsoever. Every spawning area appears to be lower  
than historical and that's for both chums and chinook.

0119

1 And so, no, we're not just seeing them just turn off  
2 sooner. And so this problem with Rapids, you know, at  
3 first -- in the very first year when it happened it was  
4 mostly with chinook, we don't see the data problem with  
5 chums. We don't count a certain number of chums at  
6 Pilot and then not see them at the Border at Eagle,  
7 those match very well. So there wasn't an indication  
8 that the chums are dying but there is now, after four  
9 years in a row an indication that the chinook might be  
10 dying before they get there. And there's no indication  
11 that they're just going off into other tributaries.

12

13 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you,  
14 Holly, that was very good. Kevin.

15

16 MR. WHITWORTH: Thank you, Madame  
17 Chair. Thank you, Holly, for the report. I've got a  
18 few questions. Just looking at my notes here. Thanks  
19 for touching on the ichthyophonous, that's scary stuff  
20 and one thing I would -- and, you know, you mentioned  
21 Pilot Station versus Eagle River sonar, those two and  
22 the discrepancy there, have you thought about -- I know  
23 in years past, you know, we've thought maybe it's just  
24 harvest taking place in between the two, 30,000, 40,000  
25 chinook salmon being harvest somewhere, I know that's  
26 been discussed in the past. Maybe they're dying  
27 because of this disease. I've also heard of it could  
28 be that the sonar's not accurate. There's a lot of  
29 variability within the sonar estimate. I know the  
30 graphics, they are black bars, you know, they just have  
31 basically -- they show this number. Well, there's a  
32 lot of variability this -- this confidence interval so  
33 it may be helpful to point that out in these graphics  
34 to have -- show that there is a variability in those  
35 estimates. And as well as Eagle. You know it's a big  
36 river. And when you are trying to estimate chinook  
37 salmon runs or coho, whatever it is, past the sonar and  
38 you're using a sonar, it's very difficult to estimate  
39 each species. So just wanted to point that out.

40

41 Also will be interested later on in the  
42 winter report when we have a post-season harvest  
43 estimates coming out of the Yukon, especially like  
44 Darrell's concern for whitefish and sheefish. If, you  
45 know, now that the salmon have been basically closed  
46 would be interesting to see if harvest for these other  
47 species have gone up, like whitefish.

48

49 And also since there had been a lot of

50

0120

1 four inch mesh net, I'm just wondering if there's been  
2 discussion about the -- this has been a big discussion  
3 on the Kuskokwim with the four inch, is the die-off,  
4 and the, you know, what's that, people call it, roll  
5 out.....

6  
7 MS. CARROLL: Drop out.

8  
9 MR. WHITWORTH: Yeah. That is a  
10 concern for me. People are able to catch king salmon  
11 with a four inch net and if they're out 24/7 they are  
12 catching king salmon, but there's also going to be a  
13 lot that are not caught at all and they'll just drift  
14 down stream dead and they won't be going to the  
15 spawning grounds at all.

16  
17 I do want to point out -- I would like  
18 to ask, too, you know, the Biden Administration and  
19 Holly -- no, excuse me, the Secretary of Interior,  
20 there's this push for co-stewardship, co-management  
21 with tribal governments, especially in DOI, I do  
22 believe there's a lot of room for this on the Yukon  
23 River, on the Kuskokwim, we're trying to build it more  
24 and more every year. I mean even just small steps,  
25 like this B report from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife  
26 Service going to NOAA in December, that report, there  
27 could be tribal consultation and co-management or co-  
28 development of that report. That's just a small  
29 gesture to tribes, they can get their voices heard  
30 through a report that goes directly to NOAA and if you  
31 were open to work with tribes, that's a big step in the  
32 right direction. And that's just one example, I think  
33 there's a lot of examples for co-stewardship, co-  
34 development, co-management of these species and if you  
35 work with tribes, both entities we'll win. So I really  
36 encourage you to try to work with tribes as much as you  
37 can in-season especially with these reports, like the B  
38 report.

39  
40 Thank you, that's all.

41  
42 Thank you, Jenny.

43  
44 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you,  
45 Kevin. Any more comments or questions.

46  
47 Tim.

48  
49 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Madame Chair.

50

0121

1 Yeah, I have a question for all three of you ladies,  
2 when we were having a discussion earlier with Kevin and  
3 Virgil on genetics and I was recalling some kind of  
4 genetic study done by Department of Fish and Game in  
5 the mid-teens where they were -- I thought they were  
6 sampling king salmon harvests randomly for genetics in  
7 each management area, Kodiak, Chignik and Area M, do  
8 any of the three of you recall that study and what year  
9 was it and where could we find that information?

10

11 MS. CARROLL: Through the Chair, this  
12 is Holly Carroll. You know actually I worked with Matt  
13 Keyes and he's now the Assistant Area Manager for Area  
14 M and he did mention that study that you're talking  
15 about that Fish and Game did get money when he was back  
16 there managing the fishery and I believe it was 2015 or  
17 2016 where they got year of funding but then something  
18 happened with it so they may have only gotten one year  
19 of funding, so I think unless Deena or Christy had more  
20 information on that it probably is just worth  
21 contacting the Kodiak office because they may have  
22 information about that or letting Fish and Game follow  
23 up on that.

24

25 MR. GERVAIS: Okay. So Tina [sic] and  
26 Christy this is Tim Gervais. How -- in our discussions  
27 and in the Board of Fish proposals there's a lot  
28 of.....

29

30 (Teleconference interference -  
31 participants not muted)

32

33 MR. GERVAIS: .....concern with  
34 interception, how -- has Department of Fish and Game  
35 discussed genetic sampling on kings and chums off the  
36 commercial harvest for the different management areas  
37 so all the stakeholders could have accurate information  
38 on how much is intercept and how much is locally caught  
39 fish?

40

41 MS. JALLEN: Hi, yeah, this is Deena  
42 Jallen with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.  
43 There was genetic sampling done in Area M this year --  
44 let me pull up the preliminary information from that --  
45 and this is going to be a topic of a lot of discussion  
46 at the Board of Fish meeting in -- next -- later on  
47 this winter that's going to discuss Area M fishery so  
48 there'll be a lot of written comments, there'll be a  
49 lot of ACR's, there'll be a lot of supporting  
50

0122

1 documentation about, you know, Yukon fish in the Area M  
2 fishery and so those would probably be good discussions  
3 to weigh in on, support comments, submit comments  
4 (indiscernible - paper shuffling/typing - muffled) a  
5 lot more deeper than we probably want to get into it  
6 here.

7  
8 MR. GERVAIS: Are the genetic testing  
9 programs very expensive to conduct? I commercially  
10 fish in Chignik and we have allocation discussions or  
11 conflicts frequently with Kodiak and Area M and I know  
12 Cook Inlet fishermen get involved too with Kodiak  
13 interception, so I'm just curious if the genetic  
14 testing is economical and it can be part of the  
15 commercial harvesting programs going forward for all  
16 the areas so we can all understand what's -- how much  
17 interception's going on.....

18  
19 (Teleconference interference -  
20 participants not muted - typing)

21  
22 MR. GERVAIS: .....and also would allow  
23 some fisheries to continue on harvesting local stocks.

24  
25 MS. JALLEN: Yeah, that I don't know,  
26 it might be worth reaching out to either Dan -- there's  
27 a regional operational plan that's out -- I think it's  
28 available through our report that talks about the study  
29 plan for genetic stock composition and the dates on the  
30 regional operation plan are from 22 to 26 and I'm  
31 trying to scroll through it and see -- but I can email  
32 that to you, Tim, I think I have your email address,  
33 but, yeah, I don't know how much it cost to run that  
34 project and how the associated sampling and analysis  
35 cost breakdown.

36  
37 MR. GERVAIS: All right. I can text or  
38 email you my email address.

39  
40 MS. GLEASON: And this is Christy  
41 Gleason, just to add a little bit more to what Deena  
42 said about Area M, we have had a lot of public  
43 questions about Area M and Deena and I are not the  
44 managers for that fishery and so it's hard for us to  
45 answer questions but the Department did put together a  
46 summary about Area M and some of the frequently asked  
47 questions that people have and so we can distribute  
48 that to the RAC members if you'd like, like we're  
49 trying to distribute it to our AC members as well.

50

0123

1 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, this is Tim, I  
2 would appreciate that study.

3  
4 MR. REAKOFF: Madame Chair. I would  
5 like that document also.

6  
7 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Yes Jack. Go  
8 ahead, Jack.

9  
10 MR. REAKOFF: I said I would like that  
11 document also about Area M, the question and answer  
12 sheet.

13  
14 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. Darrell.

15  
16 MR. VENT: Yeah, just one more, you  
17 know, she spoke on the disease the fish are getting.  
18 We were discussing that in our meeting and we want to  
19 put in a sonar around the Galena area to try to see if  
20 that -- because you have a long distance from Pilot --  
21 you know, from there, the mouth all the way up to  
22 Eagle. And we wanted to see if we could get a better  
23 idea of what's really going on with the fish so we're  
24 trying to get a sonar put in around the Galena area for  
25 that. And, you know, Virgil spoke about the size of  
26 the fish, they're not the big healthy fish anymore. So  
27 that's one thing that I wanted to mention. That's why  
28 I spoke about, you know, they can't swim as far as they  
29 used to anymore. That's just some of the things I was  
30 mentioning.

31  
32 (Teleconference interference -  
33 participants not muted - typing)

34  
35 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you,  
36 Darrell. Any more comments.

37  
38 (No comments)

39  
40 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: If not, then if  
41 you don't have anymore, Holly, are you done?

42  
43 MS. CARROLL: I guess, Madame Chair, I  
44 would like the opportunity to followup to Kevin had  
45 very many comments about some information that I could  
46 actually quickly provide.

47  
48 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Sure.

49  
50

0124

1 MS. CARROLL: So you've brought up a  
2 couple things about the difference between the sonars.  
3 You bring up a really good point, there's large  
4 confidence intervals around our sonar estimates. I  
5 have extensive experience operating both at Eagle and  
6 Pilot and other sonars, I know how complicated those  
7 apportionment models are. And as a manager, the first  
8 year it happened, it's the first thing you think, is  
9 what's going on with the sonar. When it happens four  
10 years in a row and it only happens with one species and  
11 it's not an undercount, it's an overcount, right,  
12 essentially, you think you have more fish and then they  
13 don't arrive. That raises a lot of red flags. And  
14 we've had a team of experts from Fish and Game, Fish  
15 and Wildlife and also members of the Joint Technical  
16 Committee in Canada review multiple datasets and  
17 presentations, and I won't say that we've ruled out  
18 that sonar is the problem but we're definitely looking  
19 at other things as a problem. But we had a whole  
20 subcommittee formed to look at this difference between  
21 estimates. I don't bother presenting all that stuff  
22 here because it is -- you know I could give a whole  
23 presentation on it but suffices to say we also looked  
24 at other factors, like you mentioned, could it be  
25 harvest, and I mean we are talking about in high run  
26 years, like 2019, we had a harvest of 50,000 chinook on  
27 the river so it was actually a decent chinook harvest  
28 year and we failed to meet the goal by about 500 fish  
29 but we were expecting another 20 or 40,000 fish there.  
30 So, again, we had a massive chinook discrepancy. It --  
31 our entire fleet of subsistence users could not  
32 possibly have harvested 40,000 fish and have it go  
33 unreported. Our subsistence harvest survey on the  
34 Yukon actually has confidence intervals around the  
35 harvest estimate, they're actually really quite  
36 accurate, we get really good reporting. People even  
37 report when they take fish illegally or with gear  
38 that's not legal. People generally are quite honest on  
39 those surveys. And so we have this long dataset, we  
40 can see outliers pretty easily and we also have a long  
41 dataset of the non-salmon.

42  
43 And so to get to your question about  
44 should we be concerned about the harvest of non-salmon,  
45 Darrell, you brought this up as well, actually we do  
46 need to keep looking at that very closely but what we  
47 found in the first year of the massive closure is that  
48 we actually saw a decrease in the harvest of whitefish  
49 that year. That could have to do a little bit about  
50

1 the fact that surveyors go door to door in the  
2 community or last two years it's been by phone, but we  
3 typically go do that in the fall, well, typically most  
4 fishers are going to fish for their whitefish in the  
5 winter because they're going to do it under the ice and  
6 so we think that could have been a lower estimate. So  
7 we're going to look at those estimates of non-salmon  
8 way closer this year. But one of the things we found  
9 was that those harvests are going down. And one of the  
10 theories on that is that most people in the summer are  
11 not choosing to harvest those fish and some may not be  
12 able to afford to open their fish camp, or go for the  
13 gas to go gillnet for those whitefish because it may  
14 not be worth it to them, that is what we're hearing  
15 from some folks. So we're definitely going to present  
16 that kind of data. I'll make a note that we highlight  
17 those kind of data when we come back and do our summary  
18 in the winter.

19

20 I hundred percent love your idea about  
21 the tribal collaboration on the B reports and I'll  
22 definitely run that up the chain to the team who works  
23 on the Council.

24

25 And then I also just wanted to say that  
26 when it comes to the Eagle sonar you mentioned error,  
27 what's unique about the Eagle sonar is it's not like  
28 the Kuskokwim and it's not like the Pilot. Those  
29 species are very discreet. They don't even really see  
30 a lot of resident species. So the error around the  
31 estimate is usually less than 1,000 fish, it's almost a  
32 fish per fish count when we're talking about the  
33 chinook and the chum. So actually we don't consider  
34 the Eagle sonar as likely being any part of the  
35 problem.

36

37 So I just wanted to address all those  
38 questions with you because I think they're super valid  
39 and I certainly wouldn't want them glossed over. If  
40 you want more information about that we can certainly  
41 followup.

42

43 The final thing you mentioned was drop  
44 out, and we have been hearing a lot of concerns about  
45 that from even members here. It certainly started when  
46 we reduced mesh size to six inch so on the Yukon, we  
47 have been using six inch for almost 10 years in the  
48 subsistence fishery and so those concerns came up for  
49 large fish, particularly the large fall chum, large  
50

0126

1 kings and then they've come even more now that we're  
2 requiring -- or only allowing that four inch that --  
3 and I, myself, have run gillnets so many times, I know  
4 exactly what you're talking about, a big fish it going  
5 to get entangled on the small mouth parts and then when  
6 the fisherman goes to retrieve it, it's just going to  
7 roll out and so not only is not retrieved and didn't  
8 make it to the spawning grounds but now they need to go  
9 get more fish. So we are aware of that. But what  
10 we've seen on the Yukon is we're not seeing enough  
11 evidence that that's a problem to warrant taking away  
12 that one last final opportunity for people to get any  
13 kind of food. So kind of like what you were saying in  
14 your early testimony about the Kuskokwim, during coho  
15 there's no ability to offer any opportunity. On the  
16 Yukon we are down to people eating nothing, you know,  
17 and so us being able to offer that four inch  
18 opportunity, at least to me it's.....

19

20 (Teleconference interference -  
21 participants not muted - typing)

22

23 MS. CARROLL: .....really important  
24 that we continue to try to offer that whenever we can  
25 as it's one of the last methods for people to feed  
26 their families at this point.

27

28 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you,  
29 Holly.

30

31 Kevin. Tim.

32

33 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Madame Chair.  
34 Holly, I just wanted to -- you said it but I'm pretty  
35 hard of hearing. So you said that Pete Fasbender, he's  
36 a non-voting member of the North Pacific Management  
37 Council?

38

39 MS. CARROLL: Yes. Through the Chair.  
40 That's correct, he's our Assistant Regional Director  
41 and he's the Fish and Wildlife Service non-voting  
42 member for us, yeah.

43

44 MR. GERVAIS: Okay. So he can  
45 participate in any Council discussion but he never gets  
46 to vote on an action item?

47

48 MS. CARROLL: Correct.

49

50

0127

1 MR. GERVAIS: Okay. And then Erin --  
2 you're -- you're writing the B report and giving it to  
3 Erin and Erin is presenting the B report to the Council  
4 in December.

5  
6

7 MS. CARROLL: Aaron Martin is one of  
8 our Staff members who attends the meeting and compiles  
9 documents so, yes, and I can get all of this  
10 information and send it to Nissa to distribute. But  
11 basically he's the one that makes the call on the B  
12 report. I will say the B report turnaround is usually  
13 less than three weeks because the Council has a meeting  
14 every couple months. There's a meeting -- a three  
15 meeting outlook so it's a pretty quick turnaround on  
16 those reports.

17  
18

18 MR. GERVAIS: Okay. And then it's an  
19 annual event, every December this happens even if it's  
20 years when there's not a salmon problem?

21  
22

22 MS. CARROLL: No -- so actually these  
23 Council meetings occur, I believe, five times a year,  
24 and they're always a week long. What I was saying is  
25 that the Fish and Wildlife Service will submit a B  
26 report for any -- for anything that we might want to  
27 tell the Council. So sometimes marine mammal issues  
28 come up, we'll submit a B report. We have chosen to  
29 start putting our salmon information more likely into  
30 those December meeting reports because that is when  
31 they take up the salmon bycatch issue but at any time  
32 the Fish and Wildlife Service has the opportunity to  
33 give a B report to the Council at any of their Council  
34 meetings.

35  
36

36 MR. GERVAIS: Okay. So like this  
37 December the B report might have Western Alaska salmon  
38 and also sea otters in the Aleutian or Southeast and  
39 walrus and then at the next meeting in March or April  
40 you may revisit more information that becomes available  
41 on salmon, is that how the B report process works?

42  
43

43 MS. CARROLL: Yeah, through the Chair.  
44 The B report is just a way for the Fish and Wildlife  
45 Service to communicate any relevant information to the  
46 Council pertaining to that meeting. So at every single  
47 meeting there's a B report. What we put in that B  
48 report could vary meeting to meeting, there's a lot of  
49 flexibility there.

50

0128

1 MR. GERVAIS: All right, thank you.

2

3 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you, Tim.  
4 Kevin, did you have something.

5

6 MR. WHITWORTH: No.

7

8 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. Okay,  
9 I'll make a comment. I thank you Carol -- Holly -- I  
10 keep calling you Carol. But I remember years back when  
11 they first started reducing the mesh size, I was a  
12 little bit upset because we had one type of gear and  
13 then they were reducing it from 8 to 7 or whatever. I  
14 got up and I made a comment and I said, gee, every --  
15 you're going to be reducing us going down from 8 to 7  
16 to 6 and now you're going to bring us down to 4 and now  
17 we're down to 4 inch gear. And something that Darrell  
18 said was -- about the fish that we're -- we're  
19 concerned -- we're concerned about years ago and it's  
20 happening now and he's bringing up whitefish and pike  
21 and I'm also thinking about the other fish, we have  
22 grayling, burbot, what do we call the burbot -- and  
23 something else in our language.

24

25 MR. VENT: Lush.

26

27 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Lush. We call  
28 them lush. But anyway -- and I know down river, the  
29 lower river they get eels and I don't know what other  
30 type of fish that we eat but we should also be thinking  
31 about those fish because maybe that's the next thing  
32 that's going to be on our tables and, you know, the  
33 decline of all the fish that's going on we'll probably  
34 be losing those too and I don't know maybe we'll be  
35 getting a new type of fish that we don't like now, when  
36 we got this fish from somebody else we didn't even know  
37 how to work at it so maybe we better be prepared to be  
38 getting fish from way outside or different countries.

39

40 But with that, I think if you're done  
41 Holly, I think we need a break.

42

43 MR. HONEA: Can I comment.

44

45 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: I think we need  
46 a -- okay.

47

48 MR. HONEA: Can I comment?

49

50

0129

1 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Yes. And then  
2 we'll go on break.

3  
4 MR. HONEA: Sure. Thank you, Madame  
5 Chair. Holly I find it kind of interesting that, you  
6 know, what is your take on this, I mean -- I mean so --  
7 so we come up with, you know, this and that and  
8 everybody else, I mean do you have an opinion on this,  
9 I mean I don't want to carry this on but you know what  
10 there's actually fish out there. I have a cousin that  
11 lives up above Ruby, Big Eddy and most of the boats are  
12 out right now but it's surprising that she put a net in  
13 and caught maybe three, four whitefish but eight, nine  
14 chums. I -- you know, we just text back and forth, I  
15 don't know what condition they're in or anything like  
16 that but it's fish, it's edible maybe and so, you know,  
17 maybe I'm saying that -- maybe some of this fish just  
18 hang around, like you say and go into these tributaries  
19 and stuff but, you know, I mean not to go on and on  
20 about this but I just wanted to know your opinion about  
21 especially the chum crash or, you know, the runs. And  
22 I appreciate that, thank you.

23  
24 MS. CARROLL: Thanks. Through the  
25 Chair. I just want to clarify, so you brought up two  
26 things. One is that people could go out fishing right  
27 now and they're catching some chums and we do know that  
28 chums come in way late. They'll continue to come in  
29 under the ice. People get nice bright chums under the  
30 ice and that's why, actually from a management  
31 standpoint, we still have salmon fishing for chum  
32 closed in all the major tributaries where they go, so  
33 the Koyukuk River, the Porcupine and the Treejendik  
34 River are still closed. They'll stay closed because  
35 those chum are going to be actively spawning way up in  
36 those tributaries.

37  
38 But to the other point where you're  
39 saying, you know, why do you think the chums crashed, I  
40 think it's what everyone is saying here. It's all  
41 these things. You know the marine environment is  
42 producing poor food, I think -- Kevin I think you said  
43 it best, I love that phrase that we need gravel to  
44 gravel management, that has never been more true. You  
45 know we are so silhoed in what we do. I'm a manager, I  
46 manage just the fish that come back, whatever God gives  
47 to me or the ocean gives to me or however you want to  
48 look at it and this year I got, you know, we got 20,000  
49 fall chum to the Border, you know, it should have been  
50

0130

1 more than 70,000. For the kings we were supposed to  
2 have 44,000 to the Border, we counted 40,000 at the  
3 Pilot Station sonar that should have been more like  
4 150. So at that point there's nothing I can do, right.  
5 But we need to be thinking about what's happening with  
6 the smolt and what's happening in the gravel. You know  
7 someone brought up Sabrina Garcia's research, she  
8 presented it at the Eastern Interior RAC and I think  
9 you guys would really benefit from a presentation of  
10 that data at your next meeting because they are  
11 starting to see that what happens to those fish from  
12 gravel to three months in the ocean might be the most  
13 important. And, I, myself wonder if we are looking at  
14 those things enough, you know. We have this major  
15 spawning river, the Chena, for our Yukon kings and yet  
16 we have hundreds of miles of degradation in the city  
17 and yet young little salmon rely on good stream banks  
18 and so I know that at Fish and Wildlife Service we have  
19 Mitch Osborne doing restoration projects on the Chena  
20 with land owners, even like this place, Pike's Landing,  
21 I believe has done some great work. But that's one  
22 little program trying to fix on spawning area that's  
23 super important. So there's all these areas I think we  
24 can be working on.

25  
26 So that's a super long answer to say,  
27 you know, these chums crashed 20 years ago, they're  
28 crashing again now. The difference before when they  
29 crashed was in three or four years we saw record  
30 returns. I hope that occurs now. But if it was going  
31 to occur we're seeing those returns creeping at a very  
32 small pace. So 2022 the only bright spot for me,  
33 biologically was that those chum returns were what we  
34 forecast roughly so that tells me our forecasts are  
35 working okay and they were a little better than 2021.  
36 But will they rebound like they did before and have  
37 record runs, I don't know, because we haven't seen  
38 escapements this low ever.

39  
40 So short answer is I don't know what's  
41 happening to the chums but what is happening is  
42 affecting all four species of salmon now for the Yukon  
43 and for Western Alaska.

44  
45 MR. HONEA: Madame Chair. Just one  
46 last, you know, maybe this is kind of a brighter spot  
47 but we had a fisheries meeting here and whether it was  
48 YRDFA or somebody this past summer and so Catherine  
49 Moncrieff of YRDFA did some research for me and found  
50

0131

1 out that this one -- yeah, you're exactly right, I  
2 don't know if it was in the late '50s or what -- what  
3 exact year it was but this has happened before and  
4 maybe it's just a -- some kind of encouragement that it  
5 will rebound.

6  
7 I appreciate that, thank you for saying  
8 that.

9  
10 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Kevin.

11  
12 MR. WHITWORTH: I just want to make one  
13 quick comment. So in the summer, you know, we always  
14 talk about run size, you know, the forecast for the run  
15 size is going to be 100,000 let's say, and I'm glad  
16 Holly had mentioned this, you know, in-river her job is  
17 managing just in-river and so when we, as managers,  
18 think of run size, it's just in-river, so it's in-shore  
19 returns basically from the mouth of the Yukon up river,  
20 or the mouth of the Kuskokwim up river, well, really  
21 run size should include all the bycatch and all of the  
22 intercept fisheries. That's that gravel to gravel that  
23 I keep talking about. The entire run of the Kuskokwim  
24 or Yukon chinook salmon, when they go out to the ocean,  
25 that's their run size. When they return into the  
26 river, that's in-shore run size.

27  
28 So it's a little thing but, anyway, I  
29 just wanted to make that comment.

30  
31 Thank you.

32  
33 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, thank you.  
34 Okay, any more comments.

35  
36 (No comments)

37  
38 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: If not we'll  
39 just take a bathroom break. So that's really quick.

40  
41 (Off record)

42  
43 (On record)

44  
45 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, if we  
46 could make our way back to our seats. We have some  
47 more stuff to cover.

48  
49 (Pause)

50

0132

1 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Are you ready  
2 Tina?

3  
4 REPORTER: We're on, yes.

5  
6 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, we're  
7 ready to go. Darrell had to leave, he has another  
8 meeting but we still have a quorum so we'll continue  
9 our meeting. With that we have the next report from --  
10 we'll have an update on the Kuskokwim River broadfish  
11 -- whitefish subsistence harvest and spawning abundance  
12 project by Frank Harris.

13  
14 REPORTER: Number 2 Jenny.

15  
16 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Oh, sorry.

17  
18 MS. PILCHER: Sorry.

19  
20 REPORTER: No. 2.

21  
22 MS. PILCHER: Sorry, No. 2.

23  
24 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, No. 2,  
25 sorry about that. And this is by.....

26  
27 REPORTER: By Aaron Moses first.

28  
29 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: .....by Boyd --  
30 oh, Aaron.

31  
32 MR. MOSES: Madame Chair. Boyd  
33 Blihovde, the in-season manager is online. I'm just  
34 here to make sure that you guys have the paper, it's  
35 the handout that was given out and I just wanted to  
36 make a small point.

37  
38 We work really closely with Kevin and  
39 the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission and on  
40 Fish and Wildlife side we have a management team that  
41 consists of five of us and four of us are from Yukon  
42 Delta, grew up, born and raised on the Delta and so we  
43 work really well with the Kuskokwim River InterTribal  
44 Fish Commission and our Refuge Manager and the in-  
45 season manager. So, Boyd, are you online.

46  
47 MR. BLIHOVDE: Hey, Aaron, thank you.  
48 Can everyone hear me okay.

49  
50

0133

1                   MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Yes, we could  
2 hear you.

3  
4                   MR. BLIHOVDE: Okay, thank you. Hello,  
5 Western Interior RAC members. Madame Chair. Thanks  
6 for allowing the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge  
7 to give a report on the Kuskokwim River salmon  
8 situation. As Aaron mentioned my name is Boyd  
9 Blihovde, I am the Refuge Manager at Yukon Delta  
10 National Wildlife Refuge based here in Bethel. I wish  
11 I could have made it there to the meeting in person,  
12 especially after hearing most of your voices for the  
13 last two years. Really apologize for not being able to  
14 be there. Although I've been in this position for over  
15 two years I consider myself new here to the Yukon Delta  
16 and someone who will continue learning from the local  
17 indigenous people who care for and utilize this  
18 resource. I am proud to say that I live in the Yup'ik  
19 country and I work with Yup'ik, Chup'ik and the  
20 Athabascan cultures that are here represented in the  
21 Yukon Delta Refuge.

22  
23                   You heard from Aaron Moses there and he  
24 mentioned this a bit, I just want to expand on what he  
25 was saying. Aaron Moses is our Subsistence Specialist  
26 and he's there in Fairbanks with you and I'm glad that  
27 he could be there in-person. As he mentioned, Aaron  
28 and the rest of our fish management team at the Refuge  
29 are local, experienced fishers on the Kuskokwim River  
30 and I think that is very important. The team is made  
31 up of Aaron Moses, who's there with you, Spencer  
32 Riorden, our Supervisory Biologist, Christopher Tulik,  
33 who's our lead Resource -- sorry Refuge Information  
34 Technician, and then Emmitt Nicori is a new member of  
35 the team who's from Kwethluk and also another RIT, we  
36 call it, basically like a tribal liaison position. So  
37 I believe it's a very strong team that helps me and the  
38 rest of the Fish and Wildlife Service make good  
39 decisions here on the Kuskokwim. Those decisions, we  
40 try to make the best decisions for salmon conservation  
41 but also for the people, balancing conservation of  
42 salmon with a continuation of subsistence uses. So a  
43 huge part of our salmon management and conservation  
44 team is the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish  
45 Commission. The partnership we have with the  
46 InterTribal Fish Commission is vital to conserving  
47 salmon and lately that conservation concern has meant  
48 concern not only chinook salmon but for chum, and now  
49 this past year, coho, also. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife  
50

0134

1 Service and the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge  
2 depends heavily on the traditional knowledge that the  
3 InterTribal Fish Commission brings to the table at our  
4 in-season management meetings. And I hope that will  
5 only increase and become stronger in 2023.

6  
7 So to get to the point of what happened  
8 in 2022, I'd like to say that as Aaron mentioned, he  
9 had a hand out that basically includes all the  
10 information we wanted to provide on the Kusko salmon  
11 summary for 2022 so I hope you all have that in front  
12 of you. And there's no real need for me to go through  
13 it page by page or line by line. But, once, again,  
14 salmon conservation started on June 1st this previous  
15 year with the start of conservation measures for  
16 salmon. And in your packet you can see the number of  
17 special actions that we initiated on the Kuskokwim for  
18 Federally-qualified subsistence users, those special  
19 actions were set to both conserve salmon species for  
20 current and future generations but also to allow for  
21 that traditional harvest of salmon that we're also  
22 charged with here at the Refuge.

23  
24 The harvest estimates coming from those  
25 opportunities were well received and they were very  
26 productive this past year. For instance, if you look  
27 at Table 1 in the back of your handout, or packet, it  
28 should be the last page, you will notice that on June  
29 22nd, Kusko fishers had one of the -- a record harvest  
30 day for chinook salmon. Since Federal protection has  
31 begun, we've had very few days that have hit this  
32 level, an estimated 14,000 chinook salmon were  
33 harvested on that single day opportunity. And the  
34 conservation significance of a harvest like that might  
35 be kind of confusing or hard to understand but it is  
36 significant that people were allowed to go out and  
37 catch chinook salmon at that level because what  
38 happened was the lower Kuskokwim felt some relief from  
39 harvest pressure and the middle and the lower Kuskokwim  
40 felt that relief and salmon managers were able to  
41 comfortably keep the lower Kuskokwim waters closed  
42 until June 29th, which you might notice was one of the  
43 next dates down for another harvest opportunity which  
44 we had a set net opportunity that was allowed for two  
45 days. So in total we had 13 days of harvest  
46 opportunities for salmon fishing in 2022 during the  
47 Federal closure period. The opportunities targeted  
48 different species as best we could but on July 21st the  
49 InterTribal Fish Commission and the Yukon Delta  
50

1 National Wildlife Refuge team agreed that Federal  
2 restrictions could be rescinded. At this point  
3 managers felt okay about how we handled fishing on the  
4 Kusko this past year given the challenges and the low  
5 number of fish overall. But 2022 was once, again, an  
6 unprecedented year on the Kuskokwim. Fisheries  
7 managers were taken by surprise by the coho numbers and  
8 how low they were as Kevin had mentioned earlier in his  
9 summary, they really took many of the fisheries  
10 managers by surprise. So the coho situation that we  
11 held meetings and had salmon restrictions up to  
12 September 15th and through September 15th of this past  
13 summer and into the fall. And that was also  
14 unprecedented. The State placed restrictions on the  
15 main stem of the Kuskokwim specific to coho on August  
16 16th, those restrictions lasted, like I mentioned,  
17 until September 16th when they were lifted. The State  
18 restrictions included Units -- all of the units on the  
19 Kuskokwim, 1 through 5, of the river. The Yukon Delta  
20 National Wildlife Refuge supported those conservation  
21 measures in principle for coho but we recognized that  
22 the restrictions were going to be difficult for up  
23 river communities as they were. The State's  
24 restrictions were directed at coho but they were harder  
25 on up river communities, one, because of the timing  
26 being that it was getting into the fall and they had  
27 already gone through all the restrictions of summer  
28 just like the lower and middle river communities. But  
29 because the rules targeted all gear types it was very  
30 difficult for anybody to fish for other species, like  
31 whitefish and that was something that they  
32 traditionally would do during that time of the year.  
33 So it was a challenging part of the year and something  
34 we didn't deal with in previous years, or really any  
35 time since Federal closures had started to take place  
36 on the Kuskokwim.

37  
38 So coho really was a different  
39 situation this year for us just like chum had been for  
40 the previous two years, something fairly unprecedented,  
41 now we're dealing with a third species of serious  
42 concern and that's coho.

43  
44 So in total some more news about the  
45 harvest is that the harvest data as documented in Table  
46 1, that you can see there, is just an estimate and it's  
47 not a complete picture but it does show the estimate of  
48 species, all the species of salmon that were harvested  
49 for the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge boundary  
50

0136

1 and as you can see the numbers look better than many  
2 other rivers were able to harvest but it wasn't even  
3 close to the historical or the traditional harvest  
4 needed for subsistence by the local users. So you can  
5 see the estimate for chinook salmon was 29,300, 3,650  
6 for chum, and 24,840 for sockeye. So those harvest  
7 estimates, again, are, you know, just estimates, but we  
8 put a lot of work into those numbers with the Kuskokwim  
9 River InterTribal Fish Commission taking survey data on  
10 the ground and then our Fish and Wildlife Service Pilot  
11 and aircraft counting boats from the air. And I just  
12 want to make it very clear that although there was  
13 harvest opportunity those numbers are very poor harvest  
14 numbers for the traditional local subsistence users on  
15 the Kuskokwim.

16

17 So it was basically a real dire year  
18 again for folks trying to depend on salmon for their  
19 food.

20

21 On the positive side, it looks like the  
22 preliminary numbers for chinook escapement were right  
23 around where we are targeting. We and the InterTribal  
24 Fish Commission have come up with a 110,000 escapement  
25 goal for the Kuskokwim and we have sort of a confidence  
26 interval around that number and it looks like based on  
27 ADF&G's post-season preliminary estimate 143,622  
28 chinook was the total for the Kuskokwim with an  
29 escapement of 105,774, those are very preliminary  
30 numbers still and they will come up with a more solid  
31 number here later on but that's the estimate so far and  
32 the State also estimates that the total harvest for the  
33 entire Kusko, this is the harvest estimate is 37,848  
34 and that's for the whole river, even outside the Refuge  
35 boundary. So, again, not where it needs to be or where  
36 it has been over the tradition in the past but we are  
37 happy that we were able to provide for harvest  
38 opportunities working with the Kuskokwim River  
39 InterTribal Fish Commission to come up with the dates  
40 and timing of those to both conserve and balance for  
41 subsistence at the same time.

42

43 So I could continue and go on and on  
44 about some details but I don't want to take too much  
45 time. I'd like to conclude, though, that just a  
46 reminder that, you know, the goal right now for the  
47 Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge and working with  
48 partners is that we've got to continue to focus on  
49 people and relationship building and then, at least, my  
50

0137

1 personal belief is that conservation is all about  
2 people and people like you in the room that are putting  
3 your time into RAC meetings and giving advice and  
4 guidance to managers like myself. So we're happy to be  
5 at the meeting and to provide our summaries but we  
6 really want to hear from you and folks like Kevin who's  
7 on the InterTribal Fish Commission and other local  
8 users who really depend on the salmon. We believe that  
9 we need to continue to focus on building strong  
10 relationships on the Kuskokwim, we should expand our  
11 efforts to understand the issues that are facing the  
12 Yukon users as well, that's also in the Refuge and we  
13 also need to expand our attention to the Coast where  
14 salmon are also an issue there, along with waterfowl  
15 and other species that are also in decline.

16  
17 So we need to work harder to be a good  
18 partner to groups like the InterTribal Fish Commission  
19 who are doing so much to help us. So our relationship  
20 is good with the InterTribal Fish Commission and strong  
21 and we believe that to be true and we hope that they do  
22 too. But we also want to improve on that relationship  
23 in 2023.

24  
25 So there's more data and info we could  
26 provide but I think that's enough for now and I could  
27 turn it back over to Aaron if he's got anything to add  
28 that maybe I missed.

29  
30 Thanks.

31  
32 MR. MOSES: Thank you, Boyd. The only  
33 thing I have is for escapement goals. And we hit -- we  
34 achieved escapement goals on two of the species but we  
35 didn't on two so for chinook and sockeye for the  
36 Kuskokwim, we did make our escapement goals, but for  
37 chum salmon and coho we did not. And with coho we  
38 didn't make it by a lot, like on the Kwethluk it's  
39 supposed to be over 19,000 and by the end of the season  
40 they counted roughly 6,000. So we've been pretty low  
41 on the coho.

42  
43 And with that, if you guys have any  
44 questions for Boyd or me.

45  
46 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Anybody have any  
47 questions or comments.

48  
49 Don.

50

0138

1 MR. HONEA: Yeah, Madame Chair. Aaron,  
2 I was just wondering, I mean you're throwing a lot of  
3 numbers out there so you have a lot of sonars or you  
4 have some way of counting -- coming up with these  
5 numbers?

6  
7 MR. MOSES: Yeah, we have -- the Alaska  
8 Department of Fish and Game has a test fish and a sonar  
9 out in Bethel, and then the tribes, Fish and Wildlife  
10 Service, InterTribal Fish Commission have, what is it,  
11 about five weirs, roughly, throughout up and down, so  
12 we do have one sonar and one test fishery.

13  
14 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Any other  
15 comments or questions.

16  
17 MR. WHITWORTH: Madame Chair.

18  
19 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Kevin.

20  
21 MR. WHITWORTH: Thanks, Madame Chair.  
22 Thank you, Aaron. Thank you, Boyd. Really appreciate  
23 your participation here. I just wanted -- you had  
24 mentioned you hoped that our partnership is good and  
25 I'll tell you what, our partnership is very good.  
26 Working with Boyd, his local Staff like Aaron Moses,  
27 Spencer, Chris, those guys from the Refuge but -- they  
28 work for the Refuge but they're from the Region. There  
29 couldn't be a better situation as far as working with  
30 that Refuge and the collaboration that they bring to  
31 the table and working with us and they're so open to  
32 working with the tribes. It couldn't be any better.  
33 We've had it in the past where it's been very rocky and  
34 difficult.

35  
36 Even though -- I mean 2022 was  
37 difficult in different ways. I mean the salmon run was  
38 very difficult, it was hard on the people, we had  
39 pressure continuously throughout the entire summer to  
40 try to provide some opportunity but we had to do what  
41 we had to do to try to conserve and it always impresses  
42 me that the people from the river are leading the  
43 conservation effort to try to rebuild chinook, chum and  
44 now coho, people like Boyd's Staff, people from the  
45 Fish Commission, even other people within the river,  
46 that is something that Boyd told me when he first moved  
47 to Alaska that he was so surprised that the people from  
48 the river were leading the way for conservation and  
49 it's still that way today.

50

0139

1                   And people had to sacrifice. The  
2 reason why we made escapement goals on chinook salmon  
3 was because of the people, they forego harvest, they  
4 had to, they knew that. I mean it's not hard -- I mean  
5 it's not easy, but the people agreed with management  
6 and there was no protest fisheries and it worked out  
7 real well. And this co-management agreement that we  
8 have with working with Fish and Wildlife Service is  
9 just -- it's getting better and better and Boyd is open  
10 to doing more and more so we have -- now we have  
11 management plans and harvest strategies that we've co-  
12 developed. There's other reports that Boyd reaches  
13 out to the Fish Commission to review and collaborate  
14 on. It's a really good working relationship and I'm  
15 just proud to work with him.

16  
17                   I just want to leave it at that.

18  
19                   Thank you.

20  
21                   MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Thank you,  
22 Kevin. Any more.

23  
24                   MR. GERVAIS: Jenny.

25  
26                   MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Tim.

27  
28                   MR. GERVAIS: Who's operating these  
29 weirs?

30  
31                   MR. MOSES: Yes a lot of them are  
32 partnerships like on the Kwethluk, and even Takotna,  
33 the Fish Commission is working with the tribes and Fish  
34 and Wildlife Service. The Native Village of Napaimute  
35 operates, I believe it's two weirs and that's mostly  
36 the middle river, the Aniak River and I think they help  
37 out on the George River. So a lot of these are in  
38 partnership with Alaska Department of Fish and Game and  
39 Fish and Wildlife, but it's also the Fish Commission  
40 and the tribes are the ones that are leading a few of  
41 them.

42  
43                   MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Any other  
44 comments or questions.

45  
46                   (No comments)

47  
48                   MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: If not then --  
49 oh, Tim.

50

0140

1 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, I would just  
2 comment that congratulations to the parties involved  
3 for getting this opportunity to the people and without  
4 too much drama. I was talking to Kevin and Aaron  
5 during the break about a lawsuit that the Fish and  
6 Wildlife Service had sued the Department of Fish and  
7 Game but it sounds like they got past that and even  
8 though it wasn't a big year for fish they were able to  
9 meet two escapement objectives and not have a lot of  
10 protests on the river. So that's significant to have  
11 that many successes given the low abundance.

12  
13 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. Any other  
14 comments or questions.

15  
16 (No comments)

17  
18 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: If not thank you  
19 Aaron and Boyd, thank you very much. Okay, with that  
20 we're going to -- we're going to hear from who?

21  
22 MS. PILCHER: Frank.

23  
24 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, we'll hear  
25 from Frank, Frank?

26  
27 REPORTER: He's online.

28  
29 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Oh, Frank is on  
30 the phone, okay, go ahead, Frank.

31  
32 MR. HARRIS: Good afternoon, Madame  
33 Chair. Members of the Council. My name's Frank  
34 Harris, I'm with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,  
35 Fisheries Biologist with the Kenai Fisheries Office.  
36 Can everybody hear me fine?

37  
38 MR. GERVAIS: Yes.

39  
40 MR. HARRIS: Okay. Yeah, I'm just  
41 going to give you a brief update on the Kuskokwim River  
42 broad whitefish subsistence harvest and spawning  
43 abundance project and then kind of ask for everybody's  
44 help and assistance in getting some recapture  
45 information on that.

46  
47 But in an effort to collect baseline  
48 information and address subsistence fishers concern  
49 about seeing fewer broad whitefish on the Kuskokwim  
50

0141

1 River than in the past, the -- and forgive me if I  
2 don't pronounce this quite right, the Orutsararmiut  
3 Native Council, the Native Village of Napaimute and the  
4 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have begun a four year  
5 study of broad whitefish spawning in the Kuskokwim  
6 River near McGrath. So there's multiple spawning  
7 aggregates of broad whitefish, we're just focusing on  
8 one of them and it's near the -- the population that  
9 spawns near McGrath. And this project was funded by  
10 OSM during the 2022 FRMP funding cycle. The purpose  
11 was to estimate the project -- to estimate the number  
12 of broad whitefish on the spawning grounds between  
13 McGrath and Medfra, estimate harvest rates of this  
14 spawning aggregate in the Kuskokwim River and describe  
15 population demographics.

16  
17 To accomplish this the U.S. Fish and  
18 Wildlife Service, with the help of ONC will be using  
19 electrofishing techniques to capture, mark and  
20 recapture tagged broad whitefish in the area around  
21 McGrath. Since most broad whitefish spawn every other  
22 year it will take us several years of sampling to come  
23 up with an estimate for the total number on the  
24 spawning grounds in this area.

25  
26 The tagging will occur in the fall and  
27 last six to eight weeks. During 2022 we began sampling  
28 and tagging on August 22nd, and the tagging ended  
29 October 11th, so just last week we finally finished up  
30 with tagging just before the river started running ice  
31 there in McGrath. In 2022 we had one crew tagging and  
32 we tagged 628 broad whitefish. In 2023 we anticipate  
33 having two crews to maximize the number of fish we can  
34 tag and we anticipate similar timing for the next three  
35 years. These tags on the broad whitefish, they are  
36 long, maybe up two inches long, they're grey so that  
37 predators can't easily spot them, and they're located  
38 near the dorsal fin. They have a tag number and an 800  
39 phone number to call to the Fish and Wildlife Service  
40 to report this tag if any subsistence fishers capture  
41 one. Additionally, the tags can be reported to ONC,  
42 NVN, and the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge.

43  
44 After spawning, which occurs right  
45 about now near McGrath, these broad whitefish will drop  
46 back down stream of McGrath to overwinter. Some of  
47 these fish will travel as far down stream as  
48 Tuntutuliak and we know from previous tagging studies  
49 that some of these fish will be harvested down stream  
50

0142

1 of McGrath in the subsistence fisheries. As part of  
2 our study we'll need to estimate mortality from the  
3 harvest. This is where the help of the subsistence  
4 fishers come in. When you capture a tagged broad  
5 whitefish, we would like to know the date caught, the  
6 location, tag number, your name, the village you live  
7 in, and phone number. So this is so we can enter you  
8 into a monthly drawing for a gas car. Additionally,  
9 there will be a yearly grand prize gas card for the  
10 people who have captured these fish and reported  
11 capturing them to us. The data, again, the data from  
12 the tagged recoveries will be used to estimate the  
13 harvest from this population and this informs  
14 researchers on how many tags are no longer in the  
15 population and are available for recapture in the  
16 future. So basically we take them out of the pool of  
17 what might be available to make our estimates from.

18

19 So getting all these tagged fish  
20 reported is very important for accurate estimates.

21

22 We appreciate everyone's help on this  
23 in reporting these tags.

24

25 That's all I really had on this  
26 project. We just got done doing the sampling this  
27 year. The only information we have is how many we  
28 captured this year. We haven't done any age  
29 information yet, aging of the fish. But I just wanted  
30 to update the Council on this and start spreading the  
31 word that we're looking for recapture information and  
32 that there's gas cards available for a monthly drawing  
33 for people who report catching these fish.

34

35 So I thank you for your time and if  
36 anybody has any questions I'll do my best to answer  
37 them.

38

39 Thank you.

40

41 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. Do we  
42 have any questions or comments.

43

44 Tim.

45

46 MR. GERVAIS: Hi, Frank, this is Tim  
47 Gervais. Thanks for your presentation. Does this  
48 study area, does this correlate to the spawning area  
49 that we tried to set aside during the BLM area of --

50

0143

1 what was it AC -- ACEC program, is this the same part  
2 of the river?

3

4 MR. HARRIS: You know I'm not familiar.  
5 When they were going through the ACEC stuff I was  
6 working on the Yukon primarily so I'm not familiar with  
7 what they had put in the ACEC for the broad whitefish  
8 spawning area but the area they spawn in is up stream  
9 of McGrath, primarily between McGrath and Medfra, I  
10 think most of them -- I used to help Ken Harper with a  
11 lot of the radiotelemetry on those whitefish projects.  
12 I don't recall getting too many of the radiotagged  
13 broad whitefish even as far up stream as the Big River  
14 but they certainly could because I know we captured  
15 some of our radio -- or electrofished up some fish in  
16 the mouth of the Big River earlier this fall so I know  
17 some of those fish go up that far, but primarily the  
18 spawning area is from the mouth of the Big River down  
19 stream to McGrath.

20

21 MR. GERVAIS: Do you know how long a  
22 broad whitefish will carry their eggs?

23

24 MR. HARRIS: I'm sorry, Tim, could you  
25 ask that question again.

26

27 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah. How -- I was  
28 wondering, in our region on the Yukon, the whitefish  
29 egg is a delicacy and I was curious how long before and  
30 after spawning the females are carrying their eggs?

31

32 MR. HARRIS: Oh, okay. So there's an  
33 index called the gonadosomatic index, or GSI and you  
34 can kind of get an idea of like if a fish is going to  
35 spawn that year, particularly with females, by looking  
36 at this GSI index, and somewhere in June you can start  
37 making this distinction in terms of whether these fish  
38 are going to spawn that year or if they're going to  
39 wait and spawn the following year. The females that  
40 are going to spawn, the current year, their eggs will  
41 begin to grow and mature beginning in about mid- to  
42 late June, and so they won't be up to full size  
43 probably until September, mid-September but, you know,  
44 to fully mature, but they do start growing in June.

45

46 Does that answer your question?

47

48 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah. And then once the  
49 eggs are mature they -- does a female lay them like

50

0144

1 salmon and then they get fertilized?

2

3

MR. HARRIS: So whitefish are what are  
4 considered broadcast spawners, humpback whitefish do  
5 this too, sheefish, when the conditions are right --  
6 and I haven't witnessed this but I've heard people who  
7 have, when the conditions are right, they all kind of  
8 go up to the surface in the spawning area and they  
9 expel their gametes, just kind of up at the surface,  
10 and everything just kind of mixes together and it all  
11 kind of falls to the bottom and the eggs are kind of an  
12 sticky substance and they'll kind of stick to the  
13 bottom and that's where they'll -- in the gravel there  
14 and that's where they'll kind of incubate until they  
15 hatch.

16

MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, any other  
17 questions or comments.

18

19

20

(No comments)

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

MS. PILCHER: Through the Chair.  
Madame Chair. Nissa Pilcher for the record. So it is  
currently 5:18 it is up -- so Cory -- the Staff's ready  
to present on the fisheries proposals if you'd like to

0145

1 hear but it is up to you guys if you'd like to continue  
2 this evening or not since it is after 5:00 but like I  
3 said it's up to you.

4

5 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: What's the  
6 preference of the Board.

7

8 MR. HONEA: I myself wouldn't go over  
9 another half an hour, or 20 minutes or something  
10 because I have something going on at 7:00 so, I mean if  
11 it's -- you know, I've got to go eat and then attend  
12 something at 7:00 but, you know, 20 minutes is fine  
13 with me. I don't know about anybody else, but not more  
14 than a half an hour.

15

16 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, that  
17 sounds good. I think he'll make it short.

18

19 (Laughter)

20

21 MR. GRAHAM: Madame Chair. Members of  
22 the Council. Again, for the record my name is Cory  
23 Graham and I'm a Fisheries Biologist with OSM. I'll  
24 now present Fisheries Proposal 23-01, which can be  
25 found on Page 68 of your Council book. This proposal  
26 was submitted by your Council and requests the Federal  
27 Subsistence Board rescind the closure to the harvest of  
28 non-salmon fish in the Jim River drainage by Federally-  
29 qualified subsistence users and modify regulations to  
30 allow rod and reel gear only and an Arctic grayling  
31 harvest and possession limit of 10 per day.

32

33 The proponent states this would  
34 continue subsistence uses by allowing harvest of non-  
35 salmon fish by Federally-qualified subsistence users in  
36 an area that is currently closed. The Council believes  
37 there is a verifiable traditional use of non-salmon  
38 fish in this drainage and a limited harvest by rod and  
39 reel should be allowed. While the Council also  
40 believes there's a verifiable traditional use of salmon  
41 in this drainage it does not believe the salmon runs  
42 can support any harvest at this time and the closure  
43 should be rescinded only for non-salmon fish.

44

45 The Jim River drainage is closed to  
46 subsistence fishing under both Federal and State  
47 regulations, however, sportfishing is allowed under  
48 State regulations. The Federal closure was reviewed  
49 during the previous fisheries regulatory cycle and your  
50

1 Council recommended eliminating the closure and  
2 modifying regulations as they are in this proposal,  
3 however the Board determined those modifications would  
4 not allow appropriate notice and opportunity for public  
5 comment, therefore, the Board voted to maintain the  
6 closure with the expectation that a proposal could be  
7 submitted to eliminate the closure and that is the  
8 proposal that is currently before you.

9  
10 The Jim River drainage crosses the  
11 Dalton Highway. Approximately 3 miles of Jim River  
12 exists within the Kanuti Refuge boundary managed by  
13 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the remainder of the  
14 drainage is on general domain land managed by BLM.

15  
16 Chinook, chum and coho salmon spawn and  
17 rear in the Jim River but aerial surveys indicate  
18 relatively low numbers in the drainage. The  
19 predominate non-salmon fish include Arctic grayling,  
20 burbot, humpback and round whitefish, long nose sucker  
21 and northern pike. Stock assessments of Arctic  
22 grayling indicate the Jim River is one of the more  
23 productive drainages in the area. Wiseman and Coldfoot  
24 are the communities most likely to subsistence fish in  
25 the area if the closure is rescinded due to their close  
26 proximity to the drainage.

27  
28 Harvest is allowed under sportfishing  
29 regulations and Arctic grayling make up the majority of  
30 sportfish harvest along the Dalton Highway Corridor.  
31 During 2009 to 2018 an average of 122 Arctic grayling  
32 were harvested from the Jim River.

33  
34 If this proposal is adopted,  
35 subsistence fishing for salmon would remain closed  
36 under Federal regulations in the drainage, non-salmon  
37 fish could be taken by rod and reel only, subsistence  
38 rod and reel harvest limits would match State  
39 sportfishing harvest and possession limits except for  
40 Arctic grayling, which would have a harvest and  
41 possession limit of 10 per day. The current sportfish  
42 harvest and possession limit is five per day.

43  
44 If this proposal is not adopted  
45 subsistence fishing will remain closed and Federally-  
46 qualified subsistence users could continue to harvest  
47 fish under State sportfishing regulations.

48  
49 The OSM preliminary conclusion is to  
50

0147

1 support Proposal FP23-01. The drainage is, again,  
2 currently closed to subsistence fishing but open to  
3 other uses. Allowing a limited subsistence harvest  
4 using rod and reel only would provide subsistence  
5 opportunity and protect populations from overharvest.  
6 Increasing harvest and possession limits of Arctic  
7 grayling would provide a subsistence priority for  
8 Federally-qualified subsistence users, and maintaining  
9 the closure to salmon will protect small populations  
10 within the drainage.

11

12 That concludes my presentation and I'll  
13 standby for any questions you may have regarding the  
14 analysis.

15

16 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. Do we  
17 have any questions or comments for Cory.

18

19 (No comments)

20

21 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Hearing none I  
22 guess -- that was fast, thank you very much. I didn't  
23 mean that fast but.

24

25 (Laughter)

26

27 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: I didn't mean to  
28 scare you.

29

30 (Laughter)

31

32 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. We  
33 have.....

34

35 MR. REAKOFF: Madame Chair, this is  
36 Jack Reakoff.

37

38 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Yes, go ahead.

39

40 MR. REAKOFF: The analysis and overview  
41 is very thorough and I appreciate that. Is that the  
42 end of the presentation.

43

44 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Yes, that was  
45 fast.

46

47 MR. REAKOFF: Okay, I make a motion to  
48 adopt FP23-01.

49

50

0148

1 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Not yet. Not  
2 yet.

3  
4 MR. REAKOFF: Okay.

5  
6 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Hang on.

7  
8 MS. WESSELS: Madame Chair. Sorry, Mr.  
9 Reakoff, you know, we need to go through all the  
10 closure review procedure first before the Council can  
11 make a motion.

12  
13 MR. REAKOFF: Excuse me.

14  
15 MR. HONEA: Madame Chair. I'm kind of  
16 confused here. If Cory could come back to the mic and  
17 maybe discuss, are we doing the three -- I realize  
18 there's three of them, are they submitted by -- who is  
19 actually submitting this?

20  
21 MR. GRAHAM: Through the Chair. This  
22 is the proposal FP23-01 and it was submitted by the  
23 Western Interior Regional Advisory Council.

24  
25 MR. HONEA: Okay.

26  
27 MR. GRAHAM: We have closure reviews  
28 after this but we're not discussing those yet.

29  
30 MR. HONEA: Okay.

31  
32 MR. REAKOFF: Madame Chair, this is  
33 Jack.

34  
35 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Yes, Jack, go  
36 ahead.

37  
38 MR. REAKOFF: Yeah, there's -- I failed  
39 to -- I don't have the card in front of me, there's  
40 public comments, et cetera, et cetera, State comments,  
41 we need to go over those, I don't have that card in  
42 front of me.

43  
44 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: They gave me a  
45 bigger one.

46  
47 MR. REAKOFF: Do you want to help,  
48 Nissa.

49  
50

0149

1 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay,  
2 introduction of the draft analysis. Okay. Are there  
3 any -- is there any tribes on the line.

4  
5 (No comments)

6  
7 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: ANCSA  
8 Corporations.

9  
10 MS. WESSELS: I'm sorry, so the first  
11 thing there in the procedure, that's the result of the  
12 tribal consultations on this closure review with tribes  
13 and ANCSA Corporations and I -- Nissa, have you heard  
14 that there were any comments from the tribes or ANCSA  
15 Corporations?

16  
17 MS. PILCHER: Through the Chair. No, I  
18 have not.

19  
20 MS. WESSELS: Yeah, so we don't think  
21 there were any comments from the consultations from the  
22 tribes or corporations. There may be additional  
23 comments from tribes and ANCSA Corporations but they're  
24 later in the procedure.

25  
26 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, thank you.  
27 ADF&G.

28  
29 MS. JALLEN: Hi, yeah, this is Deena  
30 Jallen with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.  
31 Could you read back which waters are in Proposal 01?

32  
33 MS. STUBY: Madame Chair, Lisa Stuby,  
34 Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The Department's  
35 -- Alaska Department of Fish and Game is neutral on  
36 Federal Proposal FP23-01. The proposed daily harvest  
37 of 10 Arctic grayling from the Jim River by Federally-  
38 qualified users from low population areas will not be a  
39 conservation concern. However, this amendment will  
40 result in conflicting State and Federal regulations for  
41 the Jim River and could complicate enforcement.

42  
43 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, thank you.

44  
45 Federal.

46  
47 (No comments)

48  
49 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. And we

50

0150

1 already went through tribe, right, tribal -- okay,  
2 Advisory Group comments, other Regional -- other RACs.

3

4 MR. GRAHAM: Madame Chair. The Eastern  
5 Interior Regional Advisory Council supported this  
6 proposal. The Council noted there is no biological  
7 concern related to the proposal and it will benefit  
8 subsistence needs of people in the area. The North  
9 Slope Regional Advisory Council also supported this  
10 proposal. And the Western Interior -- or excuse me,  
11 Yukon Kuskokwim Delta RAC has not met yet, they'll meet  
12 next week and consider this proposal then.

13

14 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, thank you.  
15 Fish and Game Advisory Committees.

16

17 (No comments)

18

19 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Subsistence  
20 Resource Commissions.

21

22 (No comments)

23

24 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Nissa, any  
25 written comments.

26

27 MS. PILCHER: (Shakes head negatively)

28

29 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: No written  
30 comments, okay. Public testimony.

31

32 (No comments)

33

34 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay. Regional  
35 Council recommendation.

36

37 MR. REAKOFF: Madame Chair, this is  
38 Jack Reakoff.

39

40 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Yes, go ahead.

41

42 MR. REAKOFF: I jumped the gun. I make  
43 a motion to adopt Proposal FP23-01 with my intention to  
44 support.

45

46 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, is there a  
47 second.

48

49 MR. HONEA: Second.

50

0151

1 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: A motion made by  
2 Jack to support FP23-01 and seconded by Don.

3  
4 Discussion.

5  
6 MR. REAKOFF: Madame Chair.

7  
8 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Yes, go ahead.

9  
10 MR. REAKOFF: As I said previously the  
11 analysis was very thorough, the fresh water stocks of  
12 the Jim River drainage can support this harvest by  
13 subsistence -- Federally-qualified subsistence users.

14  
15 Thank you, Madame Chair.

16  
17 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, thank you.

18  
19 MR. SIMON: Question.

20  
21 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: There's been a  
22 question. All in favor say aye.

23  
24 IN UNISON: Aye.

25  
26 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Those opposed.

27  
28 (No opposing votes)

29  
30 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Motion carries.  
31 Whew, that was good.

32  
33 (Laughter)

34  
35 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: Okay, with that,  
36 I think we'll just go ahead and break until tomorrow.  
37 I think we're getting a little worn down here.

38  
39 MR. HONEA: Yeah.

40  
41 MADAME CHAIR PELKOLA: So at 9:00  
42 o'clock we'll resume here in this room and I hope it's  
43 warmer tomorrow. We'll see you tomorrow, Jack.

44  
45 MR. REAKOFF: Thanks so much, have a  
46 great evening.

47  
48 (Off record)

49  
50

0152

(PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50

