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SEWARD PENINSULA SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME I

Old St. Joseph's Hall

Nome, Alaska
March 22, 2023
9:19 a.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Louis Green, Chairman
- Martin Aukongak
- Tom Gray
- Raymond Hunt
- Ronald Kirk
- Mary Freytag
- Robert Moses
- Elmer Seetot

Regional Council Coordinator - Nissa Pilcher

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Nome, Alaska - 3/22/2023)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN GREEN: All right, folks, so I guess we're going to call this meeting to order here right after we do an invocation. So, Mr. Seetot, if you would.

MR. SEETOT: (Invocation)

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Elmer. So that brings us to the calling the meeting to order, it will be called to order at 9:19 on my clock here. 9:19.

So we have roll call. Nissa.

MS. PILCHER: Hello. For the record this is Nissa Pilcher, Council Coordinator for the Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council. So we have Mary Freytag from Unalakleet, who is not in the room currently, she will be in later so.

Raymond Hunt from Shaktoolik.

MR. HUNT: Yeah, I'm present.

MS. PILCHER: Louis Green from Nome.

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Here, thank you.

MS. PILCHER: Tom Gray from Nome.

MR. GRAY: Yep, here.

MS. PILCHER: Deahl Katchatag is absent today, he is attending another meeting.

Martin from Golovin, he is also -- he will be with us shortly but he is not currently here.

Elmer Seetot, Jr.

MR. SEETOT: Here.

MS. PILCHER: Here. And then Robert

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1 Moses, are you online.

2

3 MR. MOSES: Yes, I am.

4

5 MS. PILCHER: Morning, Robert.

6

7 MR. MOSES: Good morning.

8

9 MS. PILCHER: And then Ronald Kirk, are
10 you online?

11

12 MR. KIRK: Yes, here.

13

14 MS. PILCHER: Morning, Ronald.

15

16 MR. KIRK: Good morning.

17

18 MS. PILCHER: All right, we currently
19 do have a quorum.

20

21 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, thank you for
22 that Nissa. We have established quorum so now we're at
23 the meeting announcements, what do you have for us
24 Nissa.

25

26 MS. PILCHER: All right, so welcome,
27 good morning everyone. Welcome to the Seward Peninsula
28 Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting. Once,
29 again, my name is Nissa Pilcher and I am the Council
30 Coordinator for this Council and I'm also the
31 Designated Federal Officer for this meeting as well. I
32 have a few housekeeping announcements to make before we
33 get started.

34

35 For those attending our meeting in
36 person please make sure that you sign in at the front
37 table. There is a sign in sheet for each day in the
38 back, if the pen goes missing let me know, we could get
39 a new one. For those joining us on the phone, you can
40 find the current agenda and meeting materials online on
41 the Federal Subsistence Program website. That internet
42 address is www.doi.gov/subsistence. Under the regions
43 tab choose Seward Peninsula, and then meeting
44 materials. For all participants on the phone please
45 remember to mute your phones when you are not speaking.
46 If you do not have a mute button on your phone you can
47 press star, six and that will mute your phone. If you
48 would like to speak unmute your phone by, again,
49 pressing star, six. If a line is not muted and creates
50

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1 a distraction the operator will have to mute your line.

2

3 So just to give you guys a current
4 membership update. We do have one new member who was
5 appointed to the Council in December, Raymond Hunt,
6 from Shaktoolik. Welcome and thank you for
7 volunteering to represent subsistence users in the
8 Seward Peninsula region.

9

10 We also did have one resignation from
11 the Council this winter. Leland Oyoumick stepped down
12 from the Council and, therefore, we do currently have
13 one vacant seat.

14

15 The application period for the Regional
16 Advisory Council seats just closed on March 7th for the
17 2024 year and from there hopefully we can get all the
18 seats filled.

19

20 For those wanting to address the
21 Council on non-agenda topics there will be an
22 opportunity for this each morning. The Chair will
23 announce this opportunity and call on individuals who
24 wish to address the Council. Folks here in person,
25 please fill out a blue card located on that back
26 information table if you wish to address the Council
27 either during this time or during a specific agenda
28 topic and hand them to me and I will relay them to the
29 Chair. The Chair will also ask if there's anyone on
30 the phone that would like to provide comment after
31 folks comment in person. For those on the phone who
32 would like to speak start by saying, Mr. or Madame
33 Chair -- Mr. Chair, in this case, and wait to be
34 recognized by the Chair before speaking. Please
35 identify yourself for the record by stating your first
36 and last name and if you are representing some
37 affiliation other than just yourself when it is your
38 turn to comment. If you would like to submit written
39 comments instead or in addition to oral comments you
40 may turn those in to me or by emailing
41 subsistence@fws.gov.

42

43 And then just one more brief update
44 that is new.

45

46 So Council member conduct and ethics.

47

48 Just as a quick reminder, as Council
49 members, you represent the people of your region to the

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1 Federal Subsistence Board, the Secretaries of the
2 Interior and Agriculture, agency Staff and the general
3 public. As Secretarial appointees, Council members
4 also represent the Federal Subsistence Management
5 Program to the people of their region so Council
6 members are expected to engage respectfully towards all
7 persons both at public meetings and elsewhere.
8 Additionally, the Department's policy regarding the
9 ethics responsibility of Advisory Committee members
10 states that no Council or subcommittee member will
11 participate in any specific party matter including a
12 lease, license permit, contract claim agreement or
13 related litigation with the Department in which the
14 member has a direct financial interest. If any topic
15 will be discussed during the meeting where you may have
16 a conflict of interest, please make a conflict of
17 interest statement on the record and recuse yourself
18 from the discussion.

19

20 And that concludes my morning update.

21

22 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Nissa.
23 That concludes Item No. 4. So we're into Item 5.

24

25 I'd like to welcome everybody here. I
26 see a lot of agency folks here that have presentations
27 to give. So what I'd like to do is have the Council,
28 to my right, to the left, to the phone to introduce
29 themselves starting with you Mr. Seetot.

30

31 MR. SEETOT: (In Native) Elmer Seetot,
32 Jr., Brevig Mission.

33

34 MR. GRAY: Tom Gray from the Seward
35 Peninsula, Nome recently.

36

37 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Louis Green from Nome,
38 always.

39

40 (Laughter)

41

42 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Seward Peninsula.
43 Thank you.

44

45 MR. HUNT: Raymond Hunt from
46 Shaktoolik.

47

48 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Do we have somebody on
49 the phone at all.

50

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1 MR. KIRK: Ronald Kirk, Stebbins.

2

3 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Say that again,
4 please.

5

6 MR. KIRK: Ronald Kirk, Stebbins.

7

8 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Ron. Any
9 other Council members on the line.

10

11 (No comments)

12

13 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Hearing none we'll
14 move on. The lady at the end of the table over there
15 is our -- just introducing you, Tina, the lady with all
16 the gadgets.

17

18 We'll start with you, please, thanks.

19

20 MR. AYERS: Scott Ayers. I'm the
21 Fisheries Division Supervisor at the Office of
22 Subsistence Management.

23

24 MS. BELLA: Hello. Elizabeth Bella,
25 National Park Service Regional Office.

26

27 MR. UBELAKER: Good morning. Brian
28 Ubelaker, Wildlife Biologist, OSM.

29

30 DR. VOORHEES: Good morning. Hannah
31 Voorhees, Anthropologist with OSM.

32

33 MS. LITTLE: I'm Suzanne Little with
34 the PEW Trusts.

35

36 MS. KOELSCH: (In Native) Jeanette
37 Koelsch, Superintendent of Bering LandBridge and the
38 Beringia Heritage Program of Nome.

39

40 MS. BRAEM: Good morning. Nikki Braem,
41 Bering Landbridge National Preserve, Nome.

42

43 MR. MCKEE: Good morning. Chris McKee,
44 I'm the statewide Subsistence Coordinator for the
45 Bureau of Land Management out of Anchorage.

46

47 MS. JOCHUM: Good morning. Kim Jochum,
48 National Park Service, Subsistence -- Regional
49 Subsistence Program.

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1 MR. SEPPI: Good morning. Bruce Seppi,
2 Anchorage Field Office, BLM, Wildlife and Subsistence.

3
4 MR. CHEN: Good morning, Mr. Chair and
5 Council members. My name is Glenn Chen. I'm the
6 Subsistence Branch Chief for the Bureau of Indian
7 Affairs. Always a pleasure to attend your meetings.

8
9 MS. GANNON: Morning. This is Megan
10 Gannon, I'm a reporter with the Nome Nugget in Nome.

11
12 MS. GERMAIN: Good morning. Sara
13 Germain, Fish and Game, Area Biologist for Game
14 Management Unit 22.

15
16 MS. SCHREK: MaryBeth Schrek, National
17 Weather Service, SeaIce Program.

18
19 MS. IVANOFF: Morning. Renae Ivanoff,
20 I'm with NSEDC. I'm the Fisheries Research and
21 Development Department Director.

22
23 MR. METZGER: Good morning. I'm Ryan
24 Metzger and I'm a Meteorologist with the National
25 Weather Service in Fairbanks.

26
27 MR. LEAN: Hello. I'm Charlie Lean,
28 the Northern Norton Sound Fish and Game Advisory Chair
29 and sometimes biologist.

30
31 MS. SOPOW: Good morning. I'm Kitty
32 Sopow. I also work for the National Weather Service
33 stationed here in Nome for the winter of 2023 and I'm a
34 social scientist.

35
36 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you. Anybody on
37 the phone -- Nissa, go ahead.

38
39 MS. PILCHER: Okay, I'm going to take
40 the reins for just a little bit. So what we're going
41 to do is we're going to do introductions by agency and
42 then as well as members of the public. So if there's
43 anyone online for tribal government or Native
44 organization, if you could introduce yourself now
45 please.

46
47 (No comments)

48
49 MS. PILCHER: All right. If there's
50

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1 anyone online with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
2 not OSM affiliated, if you could introduce yourself now
3 please.

4

5 MR. GARLICHMILLER: Good morning. Joel
6 GarlichMiller, Marine Mammals Management at Fish and
7 Wildlife Service. Thank you.

8

9 MS. KLEIN: Good morning. This is Jill
10 Klein, Regional Subsistence Coordinator with U.S. Fish
11 and Wildlife Service based in Anchorage. Good morning.

12

13 MS. PATTON: Good morning. This is Eva
14 Patton, Subsistence Program Manager with the National
15 Park Service in Anchorage. Good morning everyone.

16

17 MS. PILCHER: All right, so if -- and
18 if I skip over somebody and you don't get an
19 introduction please feel free to pipe up later. So
20 anyone online from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
21 that is OSM affiliated, if you could introduce yourself
22 now please.

23

24 MS. WESSELS: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
25 Council members. This is Katya Wessels, Council
26 Coordination Division Supervisor with OSM.

27

28 Thank you.

29

30 MR. STONE: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
31 Members of the Council. This is Jarred Stone,
32 Fisheries Biologist with the Office of Subsistence
33 Management.

34

35 MS. PILCHER: All right. Is there
36 anyone from the U.S. Forest Service on.

37

38 MR. RISDAHL: Yes, good morning, Nissa.
39 This is Greg Risdahl with the USDA Forest Service. I'm
40 the Subsistence Program Leader for the Forest Service
41 here in Alaska and the InterAgency Staff Committee
42 member out of the Chugach Forest Supervisor's office in
43 Anchorage. Nice to be here today, thank you.

44

45 MS. PILCHER: Good morning, Greg.

46

47 Is there anyone online from the
48 National Park Service other than Eva.

49

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1 MR. PATTERSON: Good morning. This is
2 Dillon Patterson, National Park Service, Regional
3 Subsistence Program.

4
5 MS. PILCHER: Could you say that one
6 more time, it was kind of garbled on our end.

7
8 (No comments)

9
10 REPORTER: It was Dillon Patterson,
11 NPS.

12
13 MS. PILCHER: I think there might have
14 been two people that introduced themselves and we
15 didn't hear it in the room, could you try it again,
16 please.

17
18 MR. PATTERSON: Yeah, sorry about that.
19 This is Dillon Patterson with the National Park
20 Service, Regional Subsistence Program.

21
22 MS. PILCHER: Thank you so much. All
23 right, how about is there anyone on from the Bureau of
24 Land Management.

25
26 MR. GUSSE: This is Walker Gusse with
27 the Bureau of Land Management out of Anchorage.

28
29 MS. PILCHER: All right. And then is
30 there anyone online from the Office of -- or excuse me,
31 Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

32
33 (No comments)

34
35 MS. PILCHER: All right. Is there
36 anyone on that is just represent -- not just, but is
37 there any members of the public that are on that would
38 like to introduce themselves now.

39
40 (No comments)

41
42 MS. PILCHER: All right. I think that
43 concludes the introductions.

44
45 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Nissa.
46 Thanks for all you folks coming up to the mic, it's
47 kind of a hassle but it's kind of necessary. I wish we
48 would have had a couple of mics to pass around, maybe
49 that could be something to look forward to bringing to
50

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1 the meeting the next time. Especially here, this place
2 is terrible for sound as you can tell.

3

4 So we move on to the Council here. We
5 have review and adopt the agenda. What do we have
6 here?

7

8 MS. PILCHER: This.

9

10 CHAIRMAN GREEN: You want to add those
11 on there. We have a couple of additional items that
12 Nissa will put on here.

13

14 MS. PILCHER: All right. So the agenda
15 items that we're looking to add would be the Assistant
16 Secretary of Indian Affairs briefing on Office of
17 Subsistence Management. That would be at a time
18 certain 10:00 a.m., tomorrow, on the 23rd. And also --
19 and that would be under reports, but since it's time
20 certain it would be at that time.

21

22 And then under new business, WSA22-05,
23 it's a special action request submitted by the
24 Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Council concerning
25 Western Arctic Caribou. That agenda request --
26 addition request would be under -- after the call for
27 proposals so it would be inserted under new business,
28 which is 12G.

29

30 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thanks, Nissa. So I
31 would ask the Council members to review and adopt -- or
32 move to adopt this agenda, and at that point in time
33 when we're ready somebody can make a motion.

34

35 MR. GRAY: So moved.

36

37 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Tommy makes a motion
38 to approve and adopt the agenda as amended. Is there a
39 second.

40

41 MR. SEETOT: Second. Brevig.

42

43 MR. KIRK: Second.

44

45 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Second by Elmer. All
46 those in favor of the motion say aye.

47

48 IN UNISON: Aye.

49

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1 CHAIRMAN GREEN: All those against,
2 same sign.

3
4 (No opposing votes)

5
6 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Hearing none, the
7 motion is passed, the agenda's been adopted. So at
8 this time there's No. 7 there. We've got some Council
9 members that are attending other meetings and we'll
10 move this No. 7 item, election of officers, to later on
11 in the afternoon when we have a full Council here. So
12 is that good with you?

13
14 (Council nods affirmatively)

15
16 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yeah, okay. So we
17 have the Item No.8 would be review and approve previous
18 meeting minutes. Any Council have any comments,
19 concerns, have you reviewed -- the only thing I worry
20 about is my own comments.

21
22 (Laughter)

23
24 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Mine are fine, have
25 you read yours.

26
27 MR. GRAY: No. But I'll move to
28 approve.

29
30 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Is there a second.

31
32 MR. KIRK: Ronald Kirk, seconds.

33
34 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Ron. First
35 and a second on the motion to approve previous meeting
36 minutes dated October 4th and 5th of 2022. All those
37 in favor of the motion say aye.

38
39 IN UNISON: Aye.

40
41 CHAIRMAN GREEN: All those against,
42 same sign.

43
44 (No opposing votes)

45
46 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Hearing none, the
47 motion to approve the previous meeting minutes of
48 October 4th and 5th 2022 has passed. That moves us
49 into No. 9 -- Item No. 9, with Council member reports,
50

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1 I will start with those on the line, I think there's
2 Ron and Robert. Ron you go first, you have any report.

3
4 MR. KIRK: Not really, Mr. Chair. The
5 only thing that I'd like to report is that our climate
6 change weather is really affecting us and I'm pretty
7 sure it's affecting our reindeers because with a little
8 bit of rain it's hard for them to get to their food
9 once it freezes over.

10
11 Other than that we're doing good,
12 subsistence-wise, and I'm hoping the ocean will open up
13 so we can go out oogruk hunting.

14
15 Okay, good morning.

16
17 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Ron. Good
18 morning.

19
20 Robert.

21
22 MR. MOSES: The winter has been pretty
23 stormy this year and few people got caribou above Fish
24 River. A few (indiscernible), just a couple people got
25 a few. No caribou has been around. They're pretty
26 scarce now. Some people have been subsistence
27 crabbing. The Tom Cod showed up pretty late this year.
28 They're mostly small. We also got smelt, some trout.
29 People did good moose hunting this fall, and the quota
30 was lower for January because of the storm for our
31 region.

32
33 Other than that everything's been great
34 so far except the storms.

35
36 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Council
37 Member Robert.

38
39 Elmer.

40
41 MR. SEETOT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
42 Brevig Mission, early ice -- early ice melting last
43 spring was that we had to do our marine mammal hunting
44 in a timeframe that wasn't -- that we had to adjust to,
45 late April and early May.

46
47 The red salmon run was pretty dismal.
48 We keep waiting for the red salmon to come around in
49 numbers that we had seen before but we didn't catch too
50

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1 much red salmon in our area.

2

3

4 Snow conditions were pretty good
5 November and December and then recently with the wet
6 weather, it seems like April conditions right now in
7 and around Brevig. Outside of Brevig and Teller I
8 think the snow conditions are a little better because
9 being in and around the water causes our precipitation
10 to kind of change in a way that what we used to except
11 in early winter, now it's pretty much like now and then
12 April.

12

13

14 Tom Cod and melt fishing throughout the
15 winter was dismal in the fact that we had had constant
16 south winds in Grantley Harbor, that's our main fishing
17 area for Tom Cod and smelt. With the current going in
18 they're going into Imuruk Basin and then we really
19 can't catch any fish like that. Recently, Port
20 Clarence ice -- the ice in front of Teller and Brevig
21 is about three and a half to four feet thick because I
22 was trying to fish for Tom Cods to hang and anyway the
23 hunters are, I think, going up toward the American
24 River area to look for caribou.

24

25

26 Other than that a few wolves have been
27 harvested and I think that's a good outlook for the
28 ungulates to be up there, especially moose. I think we
29 are seeing big declines. I know that wolves play a big
30 part in moving the animals around and hopefully with
31 the harvest of these wolves that our animals on our
32 side, on the northern Seward Peninsula will kind of be
33 in their places.

33

34

Thank you.

35

36

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Elmer.

37

38

Mr. Gray.

39

40

41 MR. GRAY: Well, I was reading my
42 comments from last year and not a whole lot's changed.
43 You know we have lots of wind, lots of snow. I was
44 down in Stebbins and I was kind of shocked at how
45 little snow they had. And looking at the snow that we
46 have here, you know, the same storms hit Stebbins and
47 St. Michael's down in that region but we've been dumped
48 on.

48

49

Oogruk hunting, beluga hunting, you

50

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1 know, that's all -- it was all awesome last year,
2 everybody got what they needed. Beluga hunting, it can
3 be tough catching them sometimes and other times
4 there's lots of -- I think region-wide they were
5 catching -- they caught belugas all the way up to
6 Brevig and Shishmaref which is, in recent years, has
7 been something new. It's not a common thing.

8

9 So the fisheries. I am always crying
10 and whining about silver salmon. And I want silver
11 salmon recovered in my river system. But if you look
12 at the fish as a whole, I mean the chums and the pinks
13 and the, whatever, silvers and reds, you know, we
14 struggled last year, we couldn't get reds. I had to
15 buy reds from the fish plant last year. I mean it cost
16 me a fortune to buy a handful of reds. But, you know,
17 life goes on. But the fishery itself needs attention.
18 And whether it's -- wherever the problem is, whether
19 it's in the rivers or out in the high seas or wherever,
20 I mean people need to start paying attention. Look at
21 the Yukon. I mean people are affected all the way to
22 Canada. And everybody's saying oh, gee whiz, golly,
23 that's too bad. Well, let's figure out how to fix it,
24 and it's not going to fix itself. I mean you put a
25 human nature into any of these problems, the humans are
26 going to win. And, you know, I looked at the
27 commercial fishery, there's 200 commercial permits that
28 could take up to 2,000 fish a day, or 2,000 pounds of
29 fish a day. How is that impacting that run on the
30 Yukon, and people wonder why we have no fish. I mean
31 the trawlers in the ocean. You add all this together
32 and it just -- you know, we sit here and try and figure
33 that we're going to help manage this stuff but, boy,
34 there's bigger issues than what we can adapt to.

35

36 Last year we got fish, dry fish and
37 it.....

38

39 (Cell phone ringing)

40

41 MR. GRAY: Let me turn this off.

42

43 (Laughter)

44

45 MR. GRAY: You know after -- in my
46 river system nobody got dry fish last year, or two
47 years ago, last year we did. So that was a bonus to
48 us. I mean everybody's racks were full and a lot of
49 happy campers. Let's just hope that that goes on.

50

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1 Moose hunting, you know, we should be
2 in a Tier II situation. Moose hunting, we got a two
3 week hunting period and some areas are closed in three
4 or four days. And it's just a rat race to get out
5 there and get the animal and get home and some of us
6 are good at it, I mean we get our moose every year, and
7 others whine and cry and want regulations changed. I
8 was in an AC meeting a couple years ago and a guy was
9 talking about changing the regulations so he would have
10 opportunity, the season would go longer and he would
11 have opportunity to get an animal, you know, there's
12 issues with our hunting here.

13
14 Caribou. We don't see the caribou that
15 we seen in the past. And that's another situation that
16 is in the dog house and it's going to take some
17 attention to fix. Our people got used to eating
18 caribou and they don't come anymore in numbers like
19 they have. So, you know, White Mountain, Golovin, all
20 the villages are struggling when it comes to caribou,
21 it's not like it was in the past.

22
23 So what else.

24
25 Rivers. You know, last year we -- two
26 years ago we had lots and lots of rain and we, again,
27 we did not get dry fish. Last year we got dry fish and
28 the rivers stayed high but they didn't -- at least we
29 had windows of time to put dry fish away and smoke
30 salmon and stuff.

31
32 But, you know, I've been sitting here
33 at the table for a long, long time and I was thinking
34 the other day, we're putting our two cents in in
35 managing different resources whether it's moose, muskox
36 or whatever it is and I'm not a fan of Zoom or the
37 calling in and participating in meetings, it's like
38 checking a box. I like to look somebody in the eye and
39 see if they're lying to me or what's going on. But I
40 -- and this is to the Board, I think we need to have a
41 time, a session that we evaluate or talk about who
42 should be in this meeting, who are the -- the core
43 products, I mean we're talking about -- and I'm talking
44 about State and -- and the government, OSM, or whoever
45 the players are, we're both managing a resource,
46 whether it's fish or animals or whatever it is and we
47 can't manage -- we can't have information come to us
48 just one sided. I see one Fish and Game person in the
49 room here and -- there's two, okay -- and they're both
50

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1 from the game division. You know we -- we need to
2 manage this as a marriage, you know, the State and the
3 Feds work together one way or the other to manage
4 resources and we should have the -- this Board should
5 have the common courtesy of the agencies coming to this
6 meeting and being on key, ready to respond to our
7 questions and work with us, I mean we're the conduit to
8 the people in this region.

9

10 So anyway, I'm going to get off the
11 soap box and let somebody else tear you up.

12

13 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Gray.
14 We have a lot of say there because it's the honest
15 truth and the facts about things around here so
16 appreciate your speak.

17

18 Mr. Raymond Hunt.

19

20 MR. HUNT: Raymond from Shaktoolik.
21 Just like Tom said, in Shaktoolik it's pure brown, no
22 snow, all the snow we had got in December had blown
23 away and same thing for both subsistence and commercial
24 fishermen, I always worry about the silver salmon runs.
25 Over the past few years it's been low. Same as the
26 chum salmon. The humpies were normal. Seem normal
27 numbers over the past few years but, you know, I always
28 -- we always worry about our silvers but over the past
29 few years I've become a concerned fisherman, it's
30 become more controlled, you know, fishing, you know,
31 nothing that we can do about it but could see the
32 declined numbers and that's kind of a -- a concern, for
33 sure. Not only just for a commercial fisherman but
34 also subsistence.

35

36 And as far as oogruck and beluga it's
37 been good numbers. Everyone got what they needed and
38 have never over catch anything.

39

40 As far as moose, moose season has been
41 great over the past few years. And I honestly think it
42 has a lot to do with our wild fires that we had -- not
43 in Shaktoolik, but I want to say more Interior, you
44 know, the wild fires I want to think that they pushed
45 them to our region. Because let's say 10 years ago
46 you'd be lucky to catch a moose, if you got one.
47 Nowadays we get, you know, over 20 easily in a season,
48 which is good for the community. So I honestly think
49 that our -- you know the surrounding wild fires around
50

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1 Shaktoolik had pushed them in our direction.

2

3 And also for muskox. Muskox as well,
4 over the past few years, I know we have two or three
5 different herds or, you know, number -- areas, anywhere
6 from 20 to 30 plus and that's a concern because last
7 summer -- actually before that accident happened here,
8 in our own village area, not too far, there's a whole
9 herd of like 27 muskox roaming around and not only that
10 but tearing up our berry -- where they are at they sure
11 tear up our salmonberry area. And I don't know, if
12 anything, could try to focus on trying to maintaining
13 the muskox or the herd or if there's anything that we
14 can do about it or hopefully, I don't know it's hard to
15 say on that, but do have more numbers -- high numbers
16 of muskox in Shaktoolik which wasn't like that in the
17 past few years.

18

19 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Raymond.

20

21 Mr. Gray, you wanted to add something.

22

23 MR. GRAY: So I'm sure those of you
24 living in the region have heard all the horror stories
25 of the bears and something this last summer happened,
26 I'm not sure if it was the lack of fish, the lack of
27 berries, but I personally had -- how many, one, two, I
28 had four cabins tore up by bears. And in the region
29 there was lots and lots and lots of cabins, and this is
30 kind of unique. You know the last time I had a cabin
31 tore up was probably 25 years ago and I mentioned that
32 to somebody up north in Shishmaref and they said, yeah,
33 we had lots of cabins tore up a couple of years ago and
34 then it disappeared, you know, the bears didn't tear
35 them up afterwards. So I don't know if it was a food
36 related issue last year. You know all of us ran out
37 and bought bear fences and now we have bear fences and
38 on and on but there was a big, big issue, and I expect
39 to hear more and more about the bear problems that we
40 had last year but I -- you know, I'm a hunting guide
41 and I hunt bears and I can't say there's more bears
42 than there's ever been. I think this bear issue, it
43 was something tied back to feed or something, smaller
44 bears maybe, who knows.

45

46 So thanks.

47

48 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Gray.

49 I don't think that leaves anybody else but me to make

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1 my comments. Anybody else on the Council have anything
2 additional that comes up, how about you, Ron Kirk, or
3 Robert, on the line, do you have anything to add after
4 hearing others.

5

6 MR. KIRK: Mr. Chair. Through the
7 Chair, Ronald Kirk, Stebbins. Yeah, our snow is gone
8 and our moose season was pretty good and I agree with
9 what Tom is saying concerning bears because we had an
10 abundance of bears in our neck of the woods down here.
11 I don't know, like Tom says, I don't know if that's
12 related to the lack of salmon or we don't know what.

13

14 But another thing I'd like to mention
15 is -- what I forgot to mention was, yesterday I was
16 very fortunate to be on a -- on a two way conference
17 via computer to Mary Peltola, Congressman Peltola, and
18 I brought up the issue concerning pollock fisheries,
19 letting her know that pollock fisheries are interfering
20 with our marine mammals and our bycatch of salmon here
21 throughout in Alaska. Not only in our area but all
22 over Alaska. And she was very thankful that I brought
23 that tissue up and I told her that we need to do
24 something about pollock fisheries. And she also
25 mentioned that the pollock fisheries, they get a lot of
26 crab and what not in their nets and she mentioned that
27 they destroyed crabs, broken crabs are not counted in
28 the pollock fisheries when they do their fishing out
29 there, they're not counted by the people doing the
30 bycatch counts on the boats.

31

32 That's all I have for now, Mr. Chair,
33 thank you.

34

35 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Ron.
36 Robert, you're online, do you have anything to add.

37

38 MR. MOSES: No, I don't, not at this
39 time.

40

41 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, thank you. So
42 we've heard from all Council members and a little bit
43 of additional comments here.

44

45 So it's my turn.

46

47 I can be as lengthy as Tommy and, if
48 not, longer. So, yeah, the -- Tommy and others have
49 talked about the moose. There's different areas, sub-

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1 units around here that are more better -- are more
2 successful with the herd than others and unfortunately
3 around our road system we have a tough time because
4 there's an over abundance of hunters and an under
5 abundance of moose. We have plenty of bears, we have
6 plenty of wolves running around that causes competition
7 for those animals. And like Tommy says, you have to be
8 -- some of us are really good and some of us aren't and
9 those of us that are well prepared usually are able to
10 fill our freezers with our fresh moose meat around
11 here. That's not very easy to come by. Some people
12 spend \$15,000 on a machine just to get out there and
13 get something and sometimes they don't.

14
15 Last fall -- or this fall, like Tommy
16 said there was beluga hunters out there, we heard from
17 Raymond from Shaktoolik how there was a lot of success
18 with beluga and my crew did well. So we could say
19 something good about that beluga herd, that it just
20 keeps feeding people. And it seems like there's more
21 additional hunters taking -- the younger guys are
22 getting involved too so that's a good thing.

23
24 I hear about the Tom Cods, the Tom Cods
25 are far and few between and some people are saying
26 they're small and some people are saying they're
27 showing up late and some people are saying they're not
28 showing up at all so that's -- to me that's a worry
29 because belugas eat Tom Cods in the falltime, they also
30 eat herring. I'd sure like to know what's going on
31 with these Tom Cods, it's been happening for the last,
32 I don't know, half a dozen years, been hearing about
33 it. To me that's the bottom of the food chain and so
34 when we start seeing something like that that's
35 something to really worry about.

36
37 Caribous. We have to travel a long
38 ways from the Nome area here to get out here to get
39 them. People, there are some that are successful and
40 the probably majority aren't, and so the herd is
41 affecting our gathering, hunting, by not getting enough
42 of those and that's an issue that, I think -- well,
43 we're going to hear about it today from Charlie, who
44 will be talking about it, the Western Arctic Caribou
45 Herd conversation will come up. But, you know, to get
46 caribou you have to travel a long ways from here.

47
48 Oogruks. I'm looking forward to a good
49 hunt this spring. I see a lot of ice out here so I
50

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1 think that there might be some ice hanging around here
2 for quite a while so I'm hoping that the spring hunt
3 for oogruck and walrus will be a good one for everybody
4 in the area.

5
6 I'm going to hit the deal with the
7 salmon. I was looking at my notes from this fall and I
8 was fortunate last year that I had a friend that grew
9 up in Nome a long time ago that invited me to go down
10 there and dipnet for the first time in my life. I
11 thought that was a -- quite the interesting way to fish
12 for your reds but we were able to get some reds.
13 Because up here in Nome there was nothing. The salmon
14 runs weren't very good and the -- you heard from Elmer
15 over there, the red run on the Pilgrim River to Salmon
16 Lake, was terrible. The people all the way down to --
17 from the coast all the way up the river weren't doing
18 so well with them.

19
20 So I hear this thing about co-
21 management and, you know, I've been listening to this
22 co-management -- I don't know if it's a buzz word or
23 what because I haven't seen any co-management and I've
24 been dealing with this stuff since 1993 and I'm really,
25 really disgusting with the direction we are -- where
26 we're at now.

27
28 In 1993 I decided I was going to be on
29 the Advisory Committee and I got on the Advisory
30 Committee and started representing my community here at
31 Board of Fish meetings. And every time I opened my
32 mouth and said something about a trawler I was told,
33 you can't talk about that, that's a Federal fishery and
34 we don't have any jurisdiction. I understand that.
35 Fully. What I don't understand is why these two
36 agencies can't sit down at the table and get this thing
37 straightened out and hammer it out because, look, we --
38 there was a handful of us at these meetings. My first
39 meeting, I think, was at the Fourth Avenue Theater in
40 Anchorage and I met Virgil Umphenour there, and he's
41 still out there, talking about this intercept and Area
42 M and a statewide fishery, oh, we don't have any -- we
43 don't have any proof that it's our fish. You know,
44 I've heard that, you know, there's two genetic studies
45 that have been done. Lisa Seeb and the WASSIP study
46 and it just seems to be that that's not enough evidence
47 to point a finger at somebody, or point the fish in the
48 direction of a certain river and catching that fish
49 over here in a trawler or in Area M, and being able to
50

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1 prove it came from the Nome River, for instance,
2 there's not enough there. And all this time. Back
3 then we talked about -- there was a handful of us that
4 said, if you don't start managing this thing, co-
5 managing this thing with the Federal and the State
6 getting together on this thing, our salmon runs are
7 going to -- they're going to walk away from us and, you
8 know, there was like a handful of us that would talk
9 about it, and we came to the conclusion -- I said, you
10 know, Nome's the first red flag in the whole doggone
11 deal, Western Alaska, which is one of two salmon
12 production areas in the state. One is Western Alaska,
13 up here in Norton Sound, and the other one is in
14 Bristol Bay. That's been proven. That was a study
15 that was done a long time ago. It had to do with the
16 Pacific Rim and why it was here and why it was so rich.
17 It was because of salmon.

18
19 So we talked about this and I just -- I
20 came to the conclusion, I said, look, you know, people
21 in Unalakleet are going to start suffering, you watch.
22 Our kings are disappearing here. We don't have a real
23 big king runs, but we had big kings in our rivers, and
24 those are gone. The Pilgrim River was the last stand.
25 There used to be a thousand fish running in there a
26 season and which was a -- biologically a run, you need
27 400 fish to make -- to consider it a run. They're
28 gone. Fish and Game keeps allowing people to take them
29 in the seine fishery and I don't understand that. But
30 I guess they've written them off themselves.

31
32 So we talked about the Unalakleet area
33 is going to suffer. We even went as far as to say the
34 Yukon is going to happen and the Kuskokwim is going to
35 get it. Where are we now? That's exactly where we're
36 at. And we still say we're co-managing. I don't -- I
37 don't get it. We're not co-managing anything, if we're
38 co-managing anything we're running it into the ground
39 until there's nothing left.

40
41 And that's why I sit at these tables,
42 I've been doing this over 25 years. I've done it
43 between the State and the Feds and I still see the same
44 thing, nothing's getting done, we're just getting
45 worse.

46
47 You're hearing about the trawlers right
48 now, they're out there fishing and squishing everything
49 in the bottom of the sea floor to get what they're
50

0022

1 going to get but there's no crab -- king crab, red king
2 crab fishery, there's no -- what is it bairdi snowcrab,
3 that's the first time it's been shut down.

4

5 I fail to understand how we're still
6 saying we're co-managing when there's no management at
7 all in my mind.

8

9 1993 was a long time ago. There's some
10 people, maybe in here, that were pretty young at the
11 time.

12

13 So I've watched -- I'm going to use the
14 Nome River for instance. Back in the '80s I was down
15 with Frieda Larson, Lela Oman, Irene Kapik, and Assica
16 Muse and you know what we were cutting, we were cutting
17 chum salmon. So since then we've allowed the Fish and
18 Game to manage our fisheries into a cultural
19 deprivation, or whatever you want to call it,
20 assassination if I was to choose a word. We've taken a
21 chum culture and we've turned ourselves into a pink
22 culture if we're lucky because the pink salmon is a
23 boom and bust fish. It could be there in the millions
24 one year and the next two years it comes back it's not.
25 So I -- I fail to see where this co-management is
26 really taking place.

27

28 You know, we've asked for people to
29 come to the table, Tommy Gray talks about
30 participation, and I'm not asking for anybody to feel
31 sorry for me by any means but my father just died, I'm
32 sitting at this doggone table, where are the agencies
33 at, where are these people, why are they going to call
34 us on the phone and talk to us and give us these
35 summary reports or whatever it is they're going to do.
36 You know, I think it's that important, I'm here.

37

38 I've asked for Fish and Game to have
39 representation at this table over and over again in the
40 fisheries and that's been far and few between, it's not
41 always there. I've thanked the man for being here when
42 he does come here. I appreciate Charlie coming in
43 here, the Chair of the Advisory Committee. I served 13
44 years over there. And I expect people to be here. So
45 I'm like Tommy, you know, been involved in this for a
46 long time. Elmer. We're here. Elmer you have 25, 30
47 years in here. I don't know what Tommy's got but he's
48 probably got more than I do. So these agencies need to
49 come to the table and there needs to be real co-

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1 management between the State and the Federal government
2 on our fisheries in the Bering Sea.

3

4

5 Marine mammals. That's another one.
6 When I saw an allowance for, I think it was the NOAA, I
7 think it had to do with -- I think there was 9,700
8 bearded seals allowed as bycatch and 8,200 ribbon
9 seals. They can -- in a trawler rock fishery. That
10 blew my mind. I could not fathom that. We don't even
11 do that in one year for just bearded seals alone, we
12 don't come close to 9,700 in all of Western Alaska, I'm
13 sure. So why is it that this industry is still out
14 there hammering the Bering Sea, I don't know, when
15 everybody else has to sit on the beach. When a
16 subsistence fisherman and a fisherwoman and their
17 family has to sit on the beach then everybody should be
18 on the doggone beach. So I can't wait to talk to my
19 basketball teammate Mike Dunleavy one of these days and
20 he's going to get an earful. I just saw that they put
21 another industry person on the North Pacific Fisheries
22 Management Council, I didn't get the name, but I don't
23 understand that. But what about us. What about the
24 people that are at this table, why aren't we involved
25 in that kind of stuff. We probably have more knowledge
26 about what's going on around here than the doggone
27 Department as a whole.

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30 So enough from the Chairman. The
31 Chairman needs to calm down a little bit and get back
32 to the meeting. So that was my report.

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32 Tommy, your turn.

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34 MR. GRAY: Before we get too far away
35 from this mind set that we're in I want to make sure
36 that at our next meeting we have a discussion of who
37 should be in this place, who's representing what, what
38 is this Board, what is our goals and our options -- not
39 options, why are we sitting here, what are we going to
40 do, what are we going to manage, who are the players
41 that should be here. And, again, I understand Ron Kirk
42 not making the meeting because of the storm and having
43 to be on speakerphone, but I do not understand agencies
44 not making this meeting. And I would like to make sure
45 that at our next meeting that we discuss -- have a good
46 discussion about this so -- so I've been sitting here
47 for many, many years and I brushed it off, oh, Fish and
48 Game isn't here, oh, Johnny isn't here, Sam isn't here
49 and blown it off. Well, if we're going to co-manage

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1 something we need the co-managers at the table, not
2 half the co-managers, not a third of them, we need
3 everybody represented so we can have a good discussion.
4 We're here to help manage that resource, whatever the
5 resource is. And we can't do our job unless everybody
6 else is doing their job.

7

8 So, anyway, I just want to make sure we
9 get that on the next agenda as a work session.

10

11 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Gray.
12 And I want to be.....

13

14 MR. BURCH: Mr. Chair, this is Mark
15 Burch, Department of.....

16

17 CHAIRMAN GREEN:clear that.....

18

19 MR. BURCH:Fish and Game.

20

21 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Who is that?

22

23 REPORTER: Mark Burch, Fish and Game.

24

25 MR. BURCH: Mark Burch from the
26 Department of Fish and Game.

27

28 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Mark Burch.

29

30 MR. BURCH: Yes. B-U-R-C-H.

31

32 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, just hold on a
33 minute Mr. Burch. Just to follow up on Tommy, I wanted
34 to be clear that I'm talking about agencies and
35 managing entities here, not Council members. We don't
36 even get paid, we're volunteers to this thing. So I
37 have a lot of respect for the people on the Council.

38

39 So Mr. Burch, you have something to
40 bring to the table.

41

42 MR. BURCH: Yes. For the record this
43 is Mark Burch from the Department of Fish and Game. I
44 serve along with Ben Mulligan, the Deputy Commissioner
45 in kind of a liaison role between the Federal
46 Subsistence Program and the State, Department of Fish
47 and Game. I'm usually one of the people that get the
48 invitations to attend Regional Advisory Council
49 meetings and I just wanted to say that I hear the
50

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1 discussion here today and we generally -- have, of
2 course, limited Staff doing a lot of different kinds of
3 work and so what we do is we assign Staff or ask Staff
4 to attend meetings that we're invited to when there's
5 an agenda topic where, let's say in this case the
6 Federal Subsistence Program has a fishery that they're
7 managing and they put the agenda on your -- the topic
8 on your agenda, whether it's to discuss a proposal or
9 perhaps to develop proposals for management and that's
10 when we send our Staff to give presentations, answer
11 questions and that kind of thing.

12

13 So I just wanted to invite you to -- as
14 you're developing your agendas to think about what
15 Staff you might need for what purposes and include
16 those invitations to us when you work with your local
17 coordinator there.

18

19 Thank you.

20

21 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Burch.
22 Appreciate your comments. We'll take note of that.
23 And I do understand there's Staff shortages everywhere.

24

25 So I've given my report, now we have
26 Nissa, Item No. 10, what are we doing with Item 10?

27

28 Go ahead.

29

30 MS. PILCHER: I think I actually
31 accidentally gave that update earlier when I said how
32 you can give public comment so just as a reminder in
33 order to give public comment, if you're in person,
34 there's a blue card located in the back, fill it out
35 and turn it in to me, or actually any OSM Staff, and if
36 you're online get the Chairman's attention by saying,
37 Mr. Chairman, I'd like to speak about this and then
38 wait for him to call on you. But otherwise, we do have
39 a blue card so we can go with public comments.

40

41 CHAIRMAN GREEN: This blue card has a
42 name of Suzanne Little on here so we'll call you to the
43 mic. And please get a chair there for her.

44

45 (Laughter)

46

47 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Suzanne,
48 you have the floor.

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1 MS. LITTLE: Thank you very much. My
2 name is Suzanne Little. I'm employed by the PEW Trust
3 and I provide Staff support to the 37 tribe member,
4 Bering Sea Interior Tribal Commission, but I am not
5 representing the tribal commission today, I am just
6 here to provide some information.

7
8 I wanted to make sure that the
9 Subsistence Regional Advisory Council was aware and I
10 think Bruce Seppi told me that he's made a presentation
11 to you before, but there is an environmental impact
12 statement process going on right now that's really --
13 the decision made in that process is really going to
14 impact this region. If you look at this map over here
15 that I hung on the wall, the giant chunk of red up in
16 the Seward Peninsula, Bering Sea region is going to --
17 decisions are going to be made about that land.
18 Currently there are these things called Public Land
19 Orders that sit on top of this BLM managed land that
20 currently prevent different forms of mineral entry.
21 And this environmental impact statement process is
22 going to decide whether to keep those Public Land
23 Orders that prevent mining, lift them to open the land
24 to mining or modify them somehow. Only the Secretary
25 of the Interior can make this decision. And the
26 Secretary makes the decisions based upon
27 recommendations in resource management plans.

28
29 So this environmental impact statement
30 process is looking at five -- recommendations in five
31 resource management plans; the Kobuk/Seward Plan; the
32 Bering Sea Western Interior Plan; the East Plan; the
33 Bay Plan; and the Ring of Fire Plan and it involves 28
34 million acres. It's a big deal.

35
36 So I wanted to make sure you all knew
37 about it. The process is under way. The announcement
38 was made about the EIS process last August. And we
39 expect that sometime in late September or early October
40 there will be a Draft Environmental Impact Statement
41 issued by the BLM. But I just wanted to make sure you
42 knew about it because it's going to really impact the
43 -- the decision will impact the spawning and rearing
44 habitat of important subsistence fisheries, fish
45 resources.

46
47 So I have a little bit of other
48 information here too. Would be glad to provide it to
49 you, but I just wanted to bring that to your attention
50

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1 and make sure you knew about it.

2

3 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Suzanne. I
4 think Mr. Gray might have a question.

5

6 MR. GRAY: So EIS scares me. I can't
7 stand that process. I went through that process with
8 the reindeer industry. The reindeer industry got hosed
9 in stipulations and stipulations and stipulations. So
10 -- but the question I have is is this going to impact
11 all Federal lands, or is it just zoning in on certain
12 things, certain areas?

13

14 MS. LITTLE: This is pertaining only to
15 BLM managed lands, and there's a lot of it. All that
16 red area is BLM managed lands. And Bruce is the expert
17 here.

18

19 MR. GRAY: Okay.

20

21 (Laughter)

22

23 MR. GRAY: So what I'm digging for is
24 this a blanket coverage to open up whatever this EIS
25 project is, is it -- it's not handpicking certain like
26 Ambler Mine or the Ambler Road or the -- the fields up
27 north that they're trying to open up for oil
28 development and things like that. Is it.....

29

30 MS. LITTLE: No.

31

32 MR. GRAY:a blanket coverage that
33 addresses all lands and Bruce maybe you're the one to
34 answer that.

35

36 MS. LITTLE: Yeah, in this area, the
37 Kobuk/Seward planning area and the Bering Sea planning
38 area, all of the BLM managed lands are covered with
39 these Public Land Orders and there's about 25 different
40 ones and they've all been amended. It's very
41 complicated. So the choices in the EIS will be to -- I
42 think, to retain, modify or lift these Public Land
43 Orders. And it'll be up to BLM, based upon public
44 input as to what the agency decides to do.

45

46 MR. GRAY: So -- and, again, I'm going
47 to ask Bruce because you're probably ramrodding this
48 thing.....

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1 (Laughter)

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3

4 MR. GRAY:I'm -- again, I was
5 involved with Ambler Mine and I was -- and this
6 reindeer issue, I just cringe when we go into these
7 things because there's a process for the public to have
8 public input and if you miss that process you're
9 screwed and life goes on. And granted the process
10 might be a year, it might be five years, but at the end
11 of the day if -- and my people, Tom Gray might be
12 aggressive in jumping on things, but my people aren't,
13 and -- and all of a sudden they wake up and realize
14 that, oh, geez, the Ambler Mine's a true reality now
15 because BLM let them go through or something in that
16 scenario. So -- but what I'm curious about is, is this
17 a blanket coverage to open up all BLM lands to whatever
18 the issues are?

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MR. SEPPI: I have to respond. This is
Bruce Seppi, BLM, Anchorage Field Office. Mr. Chair.
Members of the Council. It's a little dangerous for me
to do this off the cuff because it is very complicated.

But these lands aren't -- these are
lands that were withdrawn at Statehood, they've been
withdrawn for decades under Public Land Order and as
lands were selected and conveyed to the State and
Native Corporations, these are the lands that were
withdrawn because they had special significance or
there was more lands that were over selected but over
the years BLM has been slowly conveying lands to both
the State and Native Corporations but because these
lands were withdrawn they were never able -- able to be
conveyed or selected.

So the last Administration went through
this process to make this happen quickly, and they did.
And there was an .810 subsistence analysis done and the
biggest thing about this is these lands won't be
Federal lands anymore, if these withdrawals are lifted
and they become selected lands or they're conveyed to
the State there's no longer a subsistence priority on
them. That's the key thing.

We're not talking about whether they're
mined or not but it's an administration action that
when it happens they're no longer selected so there's
no longer a priority for them for subsistence hunters.
So if there was a moose hunt on these lands that only

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1 Federal subsistence had a priority they're not Federal
2 -- they're selected so they're not Federal lands under
3 ANILCA and it doesn't apply. That's the key thing
4 that's happening here.

5
6 So this -- the new Administration --
7 this was done at the very end of the last
8 Administration and the new Administration, the Biden
9 Administration has stopped the whole conveyance process
10 and wanted to reanalyze this and I know, Mr. Gray, when
11 you hear EIS you think, oh, my God here's another
12 Federal Bureaucracy but it's a process that he wanted
13 to -- this Administration wants to slow the process
14 down and they realize it was done too quickly and they
15 wanted to look to see what the impacts to subsistence
16 were going to be from this, among a lot of other
17 things. So BLM has contracted with a contractor to do
18 this, it's a monumental task, it's not just in this
19 region, it's 28 million acres over five land use plans.
20 And so for Staff to just be dumped on that -- for me to
21 do an .810 analysis on 28 million acres, I think I'd
22 have to retire first before I would be able to handle
23 that so it was a -- a contractor has been hired and BLM
24 Staff are now working on it, we're putting together
25 alternatives which some of these lands may not be
26 conveyed under these alternatives. Some of them -- if
27 they're important to subsistence, this is the chance
28 where we can say these lands are too important to be
29 conveyed away and opened.

30
31 The main thing people think about when
32 this happens is all these lands, 28 million acres are
33 going to be opened to mining, and, oh, my God, there's
34 going to be tons of mining and in some areas, in some
35 instances, yes, but for the vast majority of them
36 they've already been opened and there's been no mineral
37 potential there and they were open anyway and there's
38 no interest in mining them. Some of them are -- have
39 been closed to mining and now when they are -- these
40 withdrawals are lifted they will be open to mining but
41 the whole process of NEPA and an environmental impact
42 statement will be done if -- if a mining company comes
43 in and says we're interested in mining there, but it's
44 a smaller portion of those 28 million acres that will
45 be open for that, it's not all of them.

46
47 And, Mr. Gray, you were talking about
48 Ambler Road, it's not associated with that, it's just
49 these lands, these 28 million acres, and they're on the
50

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1 map over here that Suzanne has brought. Those are the
2 only lands we're talking about, it's not all BLM lands,
3 it's not all Federal lands, statewide, it's just those
4 ones that were withdrawn under this Public Land Order
5 during Statehood.

6
7 So I know that's not giving you a
8 complete picture here but are there any other basic
9 questions that I can answer?

10
11 MR. GRAY: I hate to be the bad guy but
12 there's a couple of things.

13
14 Number 1 is if this blanket coverage
15 happens to all this 28 million acres, is the government
16 retaining part of that 28 million?

17
18 MR. SEPPI: Potentially, yes. Under
19 this last Administration, it was all going and so
20 they've pulled them back and said some of these lands
21 will potentially be too important to convey to the
22 State and we want to retain them and so this process
23 will allow us to pick the most important areas and
24 potentially retain them and not convey them all to the
25 State.

26
27 MR. GRAY: So I guess, and you're
28 talking to a layman here that really doesn't understand
29 this process, why -- why isn't the government -- and I
30 have another question about the Western Arctic Caribou
31 Herd area, but why isn't the government talking about,
32 well, if we're going to hand out this land to this
33 selected process, give it to the State or the
34 Corporations, or whoever, that the lands that are being
35 handed out will have a lifted process, or whatever
36 you're -- the -- the EIS thing you're going through,
37 that way you're fulfilling whatever agreements or needs
38 for these people and, yet, you're not affecting the
39 other Federal lands that are in the region? That is --
40 but, you know, I sit here and listen to this and I
41 think our big Board just passed a ruling that non-
42 Federally-qualified people can't hunt caribou on
43 Federal lands and it seems like this process would wipe
44 that out.

45
46 MR. SEPPI: Yes. That's the -- the
47 concern, the main concern with this. This whole
48 process, by the way, is different than the regular
49 conveyance process of lands -- of Federal lands going
50

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1 to the State and Native Corporations. These lands were
2 withdrawn at Statehood, they were removed from that
3 whole process and so the State and the Native
4 Corporations have gone along and selected lands and
5 some of them have been conveyed, a lot of them have
6 been conveyed but these with withdrawn from the process
7 and BLM was supposed to be working on, over the years,
8 getting all of these lands into a process where they
9 could be surveyed and then when the withdrawals were
10 lifted they would go to the State or the Native
11 Corporations, mostly the State, but it took
12 Congressional and Presidential action to make it happen
13 and now that it's finally happened and accelerated,
14 this Administration has held it back and said, well,
15 wait a minute, before we let those lands go, especially
16 lands that are what we call top filed by the State we
17 want to know what the impacts to subsistence are and
18 some of those lands may be held back and remain in
19 Federal ownership and still be open as Federal lands to
20 qualified subsistence users.

21

22 MR. GRAY: So, you know, we sit here as
23 representing subsistence for our region, and it just
24 galls me that I look at the fishery and commercial
25 fishing supersedes subsistence. We look at all kinds
26 of different avenues, industry shuts out subsistence,
27 on and on, and -- and, you know, here we are trying to
28 manage a resource together, whatever that -- whatever
29 it is, whether it's a river, whatever, you know, I sit
30 here and look at you and your land issue, under your
31 EIS system, my subsistence should supersede whatever
32 you're talking about. My subsistence is a lot more
33 important than any, any -- and, you know, we can all
34 cry but I'm Big Brother, I'm the government, but we're
35 the bottom line and -- and I just struggle, you know,
36 the EIS with the reindeer program taught me a little
37 bit about how the government operates and -- and stand
38 up and be counted or you're going to be left behind and
39 I feel sorry for our people in the region because this
40 lady understands how important this is, our people
41 don't and it's going to have huge, huge impacts, but
42 subsistence, again, is the bottom line, whether you go
43 to the State or the government, subsistence is the
44 bottom line and that should carry a lot of weight in
45 your guys' decisions, you know, and I'm -- I'm the
46 Chairman of a Native Corporation and I looked at you
47 guys, BLM was going to give us a final paperwork for
48 the thing and I'm going through it and I said, wait a
49 minute, we got short changed on the land. Your people
50

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1 went back and, oh, no kidding, we short changed you
2 5,000 or 8,000 acres and so, you know, I understand a
3 little tiny bit about this process of giving people
4 land and here we are eight years later waiting for this
5 land to come and -- and it takes a long time for this
6 process.

7
8 But, you know, what she's talking
9 about, and I hope you give the public time to respond
10 or interact. You know these Zoom meetings and crap,
11 I'm not -- I don't believe in it, I don't -- you guys
12 need to go out and talk to the people and make them
13 understand.

14
15 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Tom.
16 Bruce.

17
18 MR. SEPPI: Mr. Gray. I can respond
19 quickly. Part of the EIS process, under ANILCA,
20 requires there to be a subsistence impacts analysis
21 under Section VIII, an .810 analysis, which I do for --
22 as a subsistence biologist for all levels of NEPA,
23 whether it's a simple action or it's an EIS, this EIS
24 will also have that. And, if, in the preliminary
25 findings of that, if they find significant impacts to
26 subsistence and I suggest that they probably will
27 because they've got all of these million of acres going
28 out of Federal ownership to the State and they're no
29 longer would be Federal lands and have a priority for
30 subsistence so I would call that an impact, that would
31 mean that we would have to go and do public hearings in
32 all the communities that would be impacted. And that's
33 what the -- how the -- the message would get out to
34 people on the ground and subsistence people to have
35 their comments of what areas are important to them and
36 whether they should remain in Federal ownership or be
37 conveyed to the State. So I'm hoping that process --
38 or I know that that process is going to take place, I'm
39 responsible for that -- for this EIS, so I hope that
40 answers your question.

41
42 I know it's not very satisfying to hear
43 me say that but it's.....

44
45 MR. GRAY: I'm going to back off. I
46 just -- the message I want to leave is make sure people
47 are well informed, don't do it by Zoom, go talk to
48 people in the villages, go talk -- I mean subsistence
49 is everything to my people. Everything. And we can't
50

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1 just let industry or whatever it is -- the State is
2 industry as far as I'm concerned, Native Corporations
3 is industry, I'm the head of a Native Corporation and
4 we can't let industry walk all over our subsistence.
5 We can't. We're going to have nothing in the end so.

6
7 MR. SEPPI: Just finally, the meetings
8 are required to be in person so they won't be over
9 telephonic, they're required to be in person.

10
11 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you. One
12 question, Bruce. BLM lands, mining. What we're seeing
13 here that has come up pretty much all our BLM, all our
14 Federal lands, can you get a mining permit on any of
15 that land?

16
17 MR. SEPPI: Yes. Yes, those lands are
18 -- unless they're withdrawn from mining by this PLO,
19 yes, but it's a process that they have to go through.

20
21 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you for that.
22 So that tells me there's no real danger of worrying
23 about mining because nobody's chose them in the first
24 place.

25
26 MR. GRAY: There is.

27
28 CHAIRMAN GREEN: There may be some.
29 One of the things, you know, I talked about going back
30 to 1993 and Board of Fish meetings, listen, the Seward
31 Peninsula was heavily mined, it's been mined for over
32 120 years. JakebowlWinnono is one guy that I reflect
33 on, making comment, running a dredge, he was the lever
34 man running a dredge, he said the way we're going down
35 there, and this (indiscernible) coming up the bucket
36 line and going out the tail chute, he chuckled and said
37 we had lots of salmon we didn't have any problem with
38 salmon, okay. Carl Evans said every river and creek
39 and stream on the Seward Peninsula was pushing mud and
40 silt out into the ocean but we still had salmon. I
41 never heard of any stuff back in the times of salmon
42 shortages when people were crawling all over the Seward
43 Peninsula. I guess I'm trying to say that mining's not
44 that -- has never been really detrimental to our salmon
45 runs. What I do see has happened to our salmon runs is
46 we've had commercial fisheries in Norton Sound, since
47 we have got trawler industry pounding the heck out of
48 everything out in the Bering Sea, that's the mining
49 that I see that's happening, and it's eliminating
50

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1 subsistence. So if all the commercial fishing went
2 away I'd be happy because I think doing away with all
3 that commercial use of that wild stocks we'd start
4 seeing everything come back to normal again.

5

6 But, anyway, I grew up in a mining
7 industry, I mean that's what the Seward Peninsula has
8 been about. And it's really interesting, you know,
9 they're talking about this EIS thing and I agree that
10 if there's something there that is of significance to
11 the priority of subsistence that the government
12 maintains it under that and hangs on it so that it's
13 not given to the State because sometimes I wonder about
14 the State management.

15

16 But I kind of want to push away at this
17 idea of mining is all terrible because it's not all
18 terrible. There's been good mining. I guess in
19 Montana you could see a mountain moved and it's over
20 there in the water zone, they got to worry about that
21 kind of mining but we don't have that, we have water
22 and gravity and mining.

23

24 So I'm glad that you guys are on it,
25 Bruce, and it's not just a hurry up and push it over
26 the edge. Appreciate Suzanne for enlightening us here
27 at the meeting and Bruce filling in the rest of us from
28 the other side of the fence.

29

30 Thank you.

31

32 MR. SEPPI: Thank you. No further
33 questions?

34

35 MR. GRAY: The.....

36

37 (Laughter)

38

39 MR. GRAY: I can't -- I'm sitting here
40 -- I'm sitting here, Bruce, thinking, I'm glad we're
41 not hurrying this process up and just a minute ago I
42 heard in six or eight months we're going to have an
43 answer to this question and, yet, the public has not
44 had a chance to respond, so to speak, and I'm a little
45 -- again, I got to speak for the little guys and I -- I
46 need to make sure that the people -- I mean I look at
47 the red on that map over there and I think, holy Toledo
48 if that happens it's going to impact people all through
49 Alaska and you don't have time in the next eight months

50

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1 to go talk to all the people in Alaska. So, anyway,
2 that was my thought.

3

4 MR. SEPPI: Just for clarification, the
5 draft will be done in six to eight months, then it goes
6 out to the public and so then it goes out to
7 subsistence hearings in the communities so.

8

9 CHAIRMAN GREEN: And as my mother's
10 first cousin, Richard Fosser, representative of our
11 district used to say -- he'd refer me to Junior because
12 I'm Junior, he said the wheels of bureaucracy turn
13 slowly and only the squeaky wheel gets the grease so
14 it's going to take a long time.

15

16 MR. SEPPI: Yes, it's bureaucratic and
17 there's no doubt about it, it's the Federal government,
18 it's bureaucratic but by law we're supposed to bring it
19 out to the public and take public comment so we have to
20 do it.

21

22 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. Well, thank you
23 folks for sharing that with us and that's on the record
24 so we're doing our part to make sure that public has
25 access through this process.

26

27 I'm chasing my new agenda.

28

29 Anyway, I forgot to ask people if there
30 was any comments. This is public testimony from
31 Suzanne Little about the EIS process that's coming our
32 way on BLM lands, Federal lands in our area. I beg
33 your pardon on that. Is there anybody out there that
34 has any questions of Bruce or Suzanne.

35

36 (No comments)

37

38 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Hearing none we'll
39 move on.

40

41 MR. MOSES: This is Robert.

42

43 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Oops there's somebody
44 there, go ahead.

45

46 MR. MOSES: This is Robert Moses, I
47 have a question for Bruce.

48

49 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Go ahead, Robert.

50

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1 MR. MOSES: Okay. So when no one hunts
2 or subsists on BLM land or the corporation, will BLM
3 just take it over and make use for farming, or is that
4 just a cover up for to show that we don't use our land
5 where we subsist and if there is fine print with that,
6 or is BLM just using it like Tom said, a cover up to
7 take over the land for farming in the future. Because
8 our country is growing, you see it on the news, it's
9 going to take way more to farm and is that a way to
10 come get Alaska to get into farming like that, and if
11 that's right or wrong, and if they do that, is there
12 any fine print along with that. You see on the news
13 how much land they're taking for farming nowadays even
14 in other countries. And you know Alaska has a lot of
15 land per square mile and acres and there has been
16 farming outside of Anchorage in Palmer area, you see it
17 on the news. I was just wondering what BLM is going to
18 do about that or if it's up to us or them to protect it
19 from farming, because Alaska is a great big subsistence
20 use for everybody in each community and there's also
21 some sport in it if they do it right and manage it
22 right and that's where we have all the problems. A lot
23 of people use it and some people go -- abide by the law
24 and some people don't.

25

26 So I just had a question for Bruce, if
27 BLM has the -- the farming has something to do with the
28 BLM with the land?

29

30 MR. SEPPI: Hi, this is Bruce again,
31 BLM Anchorage Field Office. Lands that are Federal
32 public lands need permits to do any activity on them so
33 to generally answer your question, no, lands -- Federal
34 lands would not be open to farming. Any activity that
35 would require a special authorization to do anything,
36 reindeer grazing is the closest thing we have to any
37 kind of agriculture in the state, especially in the
38 Northwest Arctic. It's not really land and climate
39 that would be useful for agriculture and any type of
40 farming outside of reindeer grazing, so, generally, to
41 answer your question, no, those lands would remain
42 Federal public lands under BLM management and would not
43 be open to farming.

44

45 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Bruce.
46 Does that answer your question, Robert?

47

48 MR. MOSES: Yeah, it does. Okay, I
49 understand. But he has to understand, see, there's no

50

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1 reindeer in the whole state of Alaska, you know, and
2 the reindeer -- there's no reindeer outside Fairbanks
3 grazing where there's no herd and there's BLM land
4 everywhere. Are they just basing it on the reindeer
5 grazing statistics or what he just mentioned?
6

7 MR. SEPPI: No. This is Bruce again,
8 BLM. Those lands, no matter where they are would
9 remain under Federal management, they would be Federal
10 public lands under BLM management. So to answer your
11 question, no, they would not be open, wherever they are
12 in the state.
13

14 MR. MOSES: Okay, thank you.
15

16 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Bruce.
17 Thank you, Robert, for your questions. I don't think
18 we have anybody else asking anything online so that
19 gets us into Item No. 11 of old business and I think we
20 have something from Hannah Voorhees about caribou, and
21 she's already at the table with her sign, Doc.
22

23 (Laughter)
24

25 CHAIRMAN GREEN: I like that.
26

27 (Laughter)
28

29 CHAIRMAN GREEN: You have the floor
30 Hannah.
31

32 DR. VOORHEES: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
33 Good morning. Members of the Council. This is Hannah
34 Voorhees, I'm an Anthropologist with OSM. And during
35 your fall 2022 meeting you heard about a conference on
36 moose, caribou, reindeer and other ungulates that will
37 take place in Anchorage May 8th through 12th this year.
38

39 All Councils nominated one member to
40 attend the conference and also provided input on a
41 specific management symposium that will take place at
42 the conference and the symposium is on ungulates such
43 as caribou and moose. And an informational flier about
44 the conference, in general, can be found in your
45 meeting books on Page 12.
46

47 Before I proceed are there any
48 questions from Council members on the conference, in
49 general?
50

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1 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Hannah, thank you for
2 that. Anybody online, Ron or Robert, Council members
3 online any questions of Hannah about this conference.

4
5 MR. MOSES: No.

6
7 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, thanks, we'll
8 move forward. Go ahead Hannah.

9
10 DR. VOORHEES: So on Page 13 of your
11 meeting books you'll find a summary of potential topics
12 for this specific ungulate symposium and if you
13 remember at your last meeting, I believe that this
14 Council added No. 16, muskox harvest management. I
15 don't know if other Councils also addressed that topic.
16 This is, you know, obviously, all the topics combined
17 so when the organizers of the symposium are choosing
18 the topics that will be addressed, they'll be probably
19 focusing on those topics that got the most interest
20 from the most Councils so some of these will fall off
21 but I know at your last meeting, I believe Leland
22 brought up a concern about muskox numbers around his
23 community and then we also discussed concerns about
24 wanting to keep management of muskox local and you
25 noted that the current management structure doesn't
26 seem to be working very well for -- when it comes to
27 muskox and local needs.

28
29 So I'm here just to get your feedback
30 on this list of topics and to see if there are certain
31 topics that you would like to prioritize as you're
32 looking through it. If you want to expand the language
33 of that muskox harvest management bullet point, and if
34 you have any other feedback.

35
36 And just to let you a little bit more
37 about this symposium. This session is intended to be a
38 neutral forum for Council members, State Fish and Game
39 Advisory Committee members, National Park Service
40 Subsistence Resource Commission members, Federal and
41 State agency Staff and other interested parties to
42 discuss management of caribou, moose and other similar
43 species in Alaska regarding harvest regulations
44 specifically.

45
46 So, Mr. Chair, now I'll turn the
47 discussion over to you and any additional feedback you
48 may want to provide will be very helpful to OSM.

49
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1 Thank you.

2

3 MR. GRAY: So with him gone I guess I
4 got to ask a question.

5

6 (Laughter)

7

8 MR. GRAY: I'm on the Western Arctic
9 Caribou Herd Working Group and the executive committee
10 and I haven't been -- I haven't involved myself in the
11 discussions even though I've been asked to of -- of
12 building the platform and on and on for this -- this
13 symposium. You know I think what -- what can this
14 group get that is -- that would be worthy of that
15 symposium and -- and, you know, things that impact my
16 people are numbers of animals, cycles of animals, fish
17 runs, and to me I think what would be worthy in
18 promoting in this process is issues that can be
19 reported back to this committee after the symposium
20 talking about what can be done to manage muskox, what
21 can be done to manage moose, what are the critical
22 issues in managing a resource and things like that.
23 Because we can talk all day about the effects of
24 managing antlers and -- and managing a herd.

25

26 You know I brought this up earlier, we
27 have X amount of moose that we're going to kill in this
28 region, we already know that, so, you know, unless
29 there's something in that report of shooting a spike or
30 shooting a 50 inch animal that would help the herd, you
31 know, if -- if it all just ties back to opportunity I'm
32 not interested in hearing it. But, you know, I think
33 about when I was a kid there was thousands of moose on
34 the Seward Peninsula and today it's pretty dismal.
35 Muskox, you know, muskox boomed and then they crashed.
36 They were on their way and all -- I mean we had areas
37 that they were shooting in 22D or something, 50 animals
38 a year, and all of a sudden we have the whole herd is
39 35 animals or something, and, you know, so -- so what
40 would be worthy -- coming back to us is something that
41 we can report and look at in managing that -- whatever
42 the resources are.

43

44 There's going to be a lot of people.
45 They're coming from all over the world to talk about
46 all kinds of things so there's going to be lots of
47 information. But, you know, you got 20-some things
48 here and you want us to prioritize it. I'm not going
49 to prioritize it but I'll tell you we need something
50

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1 that comes back to us as a report that is going to help
2 us make decisions.

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CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Tom. So basically these potential topics are what people have put in there from the Councils, or from agencies?

DR. VOORHEES: That's correct, yep. And this includes the one that you offered, No. 16. So, you know, I think it's -- I can take what Tom Gray stated as well just the general discussion that this Council has about ungulates, moose and caribou and, you know, I understand which issues are most important to you.

In terms of a report -- if I may, Mr. Chair. In terms of a report coming back to this Council, I would note that Louis Green has been nominated by this Council to attend the conference and I believe that the hope is that you will also participate in this symposium, if you so desire, you're certainly invited, and I will note that most other Councils have nominated one person, then an alternate to attend. So if you would like to name an alternate in the case that you can't attend, that's something you could do today. I just wanted to note that. But I will be there and I'm certainly happy to bring a report back to this Council.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Hannah. And I was just discussing that with Nissa about an alternate. So Council members think about that here and let me know is there somebody here that wants to -- Mr. Gray is probably going to -- are you going to be avail -- you're not going to be available -- Elmer.....

MR. GRAY: So -- so I've already told the reindeer industry that I want to go on behalf of the reindeer industry so.

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Elmer, go ahead.

MR. SEETOT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I've been with the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group for, I think it's inception, replacing a Shishmaref person who was not doing his duties according to the ADF&G biologist, Mr. Trent, who was

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1 very involved in formulating, or putting together the
2 management plan for the Western Arctic Caribou Herd.
3 Mr. Tim Poolman, who's on the conservation side sent me
4 a letter inviting me to participate in this forum
5 talking about how we went about formulating the
6 management plan for the Western Arctic Caribou Herd so
7 I said that I would go since -- since I was there from
8 the start pointing out -- or putting out the Western
9 Arctic Caribou Herd management plan to its approval so
10 I -- I wanted to just inform you that I have accepted
11 an invitation to be -- be part of a discussion to
12 discuss, you know, the management plan from the Western
13 -- or from the TEK side and along with the Western
14 science and -- and that's just what I -- I wanted you
15 to be aware of.

16

17 Thank you.

18

19 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Elmer. So
20 you're going to represent WACH, are you part of the --
21 I'm trying to make sure. I was just going to say that
22 if you're representing something that's not at this
23 table then we could actually pick another one for an
24 alternate, that would give us more -- what was it?

25

26 MR. SEETOT: I was invited to
27 participate in a panel discussion on the formulation of
28 the Western Arctic Caribou management plan and that --
29 that was the main focus of the invitation from Mr.
30 Poolman of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd.

31

32 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. So you're going
33 to be representative of the WACH group, right, is that
34 what I'm.....

35

36 MR. SEETOT: Just -- just for the
37 management plan. I'm -- I'm not really too sure.

38

39 CHAIRMAN GREEN: You've already
40 accepted and invited so I'm -- I'm -- okay, so with
41 that I think if we picked another person as an
42 alternate from this Council that would be appropriate.
43 So Raymond?

44

45 MR. HUNT: Yeah, I'd be up for that.

46

47 (Laughter)

48

49 CHAIRMAN GREEN: There you go. That's

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1 pretty direct.

2

3 (Laughter)

4

5 CHAIRMAN GREEN: All right, so
6 Raymond's going to be the alternate at this point. I
7 want to make sure we fill all the shoes.

8

9 All right, so we'll move on. Any -- I
10 guess, Hannah, do you have anything further to add to
11 this.

12

13 DR. VOORHEES: I guess just one more --
14 just to make sure that there aren't any other topics on
15 this list that you want to flag for me, but other than
16 that that's all I have.

17

18 Thank you.

19

20 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. Any -- go
21 ahead, Raymond, you have a question.

22

23 MR. HUNT: On 16, the muskox harvest
24 management. Would Shaktoolik somehow be on the list on
25 this? Over the past few years, like I said we never
26 had a muskox problem at all and now that we have muskox
27 all over the place, up our rivers, and the Toomingak
28 River and this past summer there was a whole herd of,
29 like I said, 27 not too far from our village and just
30 checking to see if we can have somehow manage on that
31 with the harvesting them or something. We never did
32 hunt them before. We had one person harvest one but
33 other than that I think we kind of need to manage in
34 our area, for sure, in Shaktoolik.

35

36 DR. VOORHEES: Thank you, Mr. Hunt.
37 Through the Chair. So I'm hearing, again, that this is
38 a very important topic in the region and is
39 particularly in Shaktoolik. So I want to reiterate
40 that the conference is open to the public and we are
41 very much hoping to have lots of rural participation
42 and participation by subsistence users with concerns
43 such as these.

44

45 OSM was only able to provide funding
46 for one member of each Council to attend. There are
47 some other efforts that are being made to bring people
48 from the villages and I can certainly be in touch with
49 you on that. And it might also just be worth talking
50

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1 to the -- I'm not the actual organizer of the
2 symposium, just checking in with them and seeing how
3 they're making contact with different communities to
4 let them know about the symposium. But the conference,
5 more widely, I think will be a really great
6 opportunity. It'll be a, you know, neutral forum, and
7 I just hope that we can get as much participation as
8 possible and thanks for your interest.

9
10 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Well, thank you
11 Hannah. Any more comments, concerns, questions.

12
13 Tommy.

14
15 MR. GRAY: So I'm sitting here again
16 because of subsistence. And if you look at across the
17 state, across the world, and this is basically a
18 northern hemisphere symposium talking about resources
19 all around the top of the world, I thought how does
20 subsistence play into this thing and the -- the need
21 for subsistence and -- and -- and how it impacts our
22 lives here. As I read through this thing I see a
23 couple places in there that could tie into subsistence
24 but it does not directly talk about subsistence. And
25 to me it's really important that people hear how the
26 people's needs are met through caribou, moose, muskox,
27 whatever it is and how subsistence is an issue in the
28 northern hemisphere and the impacts that it has to our
29 people all around the top of the world and, you know,
30 hopefully comes in with a talk on that type of an issue
31 so.

32
33 But you were asking to raise things to
34 the top and I want subsistence talked about.

35
36 DR. VOORHEES: Thank you, Mr. Gray.

37
38 CHAIRMAN GREEN: If there's no further
39 questions, is there anybody in the public out there
40 that had any that's online, any questions, comments,
41 concerns for Hannah.

42
43 MR. GRAY: No, I don't know if there
44 are.

45
46 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Not hearing none,
47 anybody at the table, any more?

48
49 (No comments)

50

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1 CHAIRMAN GREEN: All right, Hannah,
2 thank you.

3
4 DR. VOORHEES: Thank you.

5
6 CHAIRMAN GREEN: We have Renae Ivanoff
7 under old business, Norton Sound Economic Development
8 Corporation on Salmon Lake and the South River.

9
10 MS. IVANOFF: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

11
12 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you. Renae, you
13 have the floor.

14
15 MS. IVANOFF: Renae Ivanoff with NSEDC.
16 I'm just here to give some insight on a couple of our
17 projects, Salmon Lake and our South River chinook
18 restoration project.

19
20 Salmon Lake, we've been in cooperation
21 with Fish and Game, Kodiak Island Limnology Lab since
22 2015. We have a cooperative agreement and we're
23 working with them to assess the health of the lake and
24 look at the sockeye returns. We have been taking
25 limnology samples twice a year to do that and we're
26 looking at physical data, we're looking at nutrients,
27 we're looking at zooplankton abundance and -- and --
28 and do you guys have any questions on that program? I
29 know you guys had some questions regarding this -- this
30 project that we have been doing for quite some time
31 now.

32
33 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Any Council members.

34
35 MR. SEETOT: What's she asking?

36
37 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yeah, she's asking if
38 you have any questions about this topic here. I guess
39 you're asking about -- were you just talking about the
40 Salmon Lake at this point?

41
42 MS. IVANOFF: Yeah, just Salmon Lake
43 but I could move on before -- if we have any other
44 further questions for -- or we could do it all at once,
45 you know.

46
47 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, we'll hold off
48 on the continue but we'll -- these guys wanted to ask
49 about Salmon Lake.

50

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1 MS. IVANOFF: Okay.

2

3 CHAIRMAN GREEN: So I think Elmer.

4

5 MR. SEETOT: Elmer Seetot, I represent
6 Northern -- Grantley Harbor. All the fish that go to
7 Pilgrim River kind of pass through Port Clarence Bay,
8 Grantley Harbor, Toksook Channel, Imuruk Basin.....

9

10 MS. IVANOFF: Uh-huh.

11

12 MR. SEETOT:and -- and when ADF&G
13 or the regulatory agencies said that they were going
14 to, what you call it, feed the small fry, or what do
15 they call that.

16

17 MS. IVANOFF: Oh, yeah, our fertilizer
18 program.

19

20 MR. SEETOT: Fertilizing.....

21

22 MS. IVANOFF: Yes.

23

24 MR. SEETOT:fertilizing.....

25

26 MS. IVANOFF: Yes.

27

28 MR. SEETOT:Salmon Lake, I had
29 some questions because they -- I was saying that with
30 all the fertilizer or whatever they put into Salmon
31 Lake it's going to have some residue and -- and I would
32 think that residue from -- from the chemicals or from
33 the food that -- that comes out of Salmon Lake into
34 Pilgrim River, into -- into these river systems that it
35 would provide -- or promote growth or something in the
36 water, like algae or some -- I -- I have been in and
37 around Brevig. We used to go up to Kuzitrin River
38 every summer to go pick berries up there because that
39 -- that's where they used to grow first and every --
40 every time we went up there we used to run into green
41 algae on top but -- but that was pretty much around
42 Imuruk Basin and over the years I -- I think beaver
43 have colonized part of that and I know there are a lot
44 of pike in and around that system. You -- you get a
45 three footer or four foot pike up there, you see
46 there's egg -- egg counts, they're huge and -- and --
47 and in the early years the -- Mary's Igloo people,
48 especially the ones that lived in Teller, John Earl,
49 these old-timers, they -- they used to fish for pike

50

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1 and -- and then cut open the belly and have their roe
2 like that, have -- have eggs like that. And -- and
3 over the years I think my -- my assumption was that
4 fertilizing Salmon Lake would -- would provide some
5 kind of residue run-off to our waters, promoting algae
6 growth or stuff like that. Is there any -- anyway,
7 NSEDC told me in the early years that -- that it didn't
8 have any effect on that. In and around Imuruk Basin, I
9 -- I went up the rivers some years ago and I noticed
10 algae growth on the bottom of the river systems. I --
11 I never really did see that in the early -- during the
12 early times I was growing up, now I see it pretty much
13 prevalent, even -- even around town, even around the
14 community of Brevig Mission with the sun rays shooting
15 down on the water provides algae or something, and then
16 they talk about these algae blooms now, you know, I --
17 I know it's a process of synthetic, it's a process of
18 turning something -- our water into green algae.

19

20 And -- and my -- I -- I'm still not
21 comfortable with -- with the -- what -- what that it
22 didn't produce any algae growth or anything else like
23 that. And then I say I'm -- I'm still skeptical about
24 that because anything you put in the water, something's
25 going to come of it because it's not just going to stay
26 dormant. Look at pretty much our ocean bottom. In and
27 around Grantley Harbor, our bottom is pretty much mud,
28 sand, mud, sand, dirt, whatever all the way from the
29 river system and goes all the way to the Bering -- or
30 into Port Clarence Bay so our waters are getting
31 shallower and -- and that over years and years of -- in
32 and coming out of tide, in and around Teller area, our
33 ocean bottom -- or our sea bottom has been kind of --
34 kind of went up a little bit and -- and that's how come
35 our water, when it's from the south when it produces
36 kind of brown dirty look but -- but with the warming
37 climate, will the nutrients, or -- or will the
38 fertilizer for the nutrients for the Salmon Lake, will
39 it help the growth.....

40

41 MS. IVANOFF: Through the Chair.

42

43 MR. SEETOT:on the bottom of the
44 Kuzitrin River because I -- I noticed that there's
45 everything -- everything on the bottom of these fresh
46 water systems that will provide growth to all kinds of
47 whatever is imagined that can live in these systems.

48

49 MS. IVANOFF: Yeah, through the Chair.

50

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1 Thank you, Mr. Seetot, for all of your background and
2 to the -- the traditional knowledge on Salmon Lake.

3

4

5 We do work with -- we have a calculator
6 to the amount of fertilizer that we're putting into the
7 lake and phosphorus and nitrogen are the nutrients that
8 we're putting into the lake. And so this year we're
9 going to be putting 17 tons of certo -- fertilizer,
10 that's two tons up from last year, this, in turn, does
11 -- it's going to supplement -- giving nutrients to the
12 lake so that in turn is going to produce phytoplankton,
13 phytoplankton is going to -- the zooplankton is going
14 to feed on the phytoplankton and then that in -- in
15 turn it's going to feed the juvenile salmon for the
16 zooplankton abundance and so that is our main goal and
17 why we do the fertilizer.

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As far as the algae growth, I can't really speak to that because we haven't really looked at that and maybe Charlie, do you have anything on algae? He might be able to be -- he's the -- obviously he's the, you know, historian, so maybe he has better insight on that, but for our program we're just making sure we're getting enough food for the juvenile salmon to be able to go out into -- out-migrate into the ocean at a healthy and -- and a good size that we can assess whether they're going to come back in good returns or if they're going to be a poor -- based on their weight and their length.

Go ahead, Charlie.

MR. LEAN: Yeah. So we started the fertilizer program, I think, in 1997 and for the first five years the -- the fertilizer rate was the 60 tons as I remember, per year, and she just told you it's about one third of that today. So after the first five years the fish came back very strongly, the red salmon, and so we thought, well, job's done. I was working at Fish and Game during -- until 2000, I was the lead biologist for fish and I'm probably the guy you talked to. And then -- then after about five years the -- the number of fish crashed because there was -- the lake was over populated. So then we started to fertilize again but everything costs money and at that point BLM had pulled out of the three-way partnership, Fish and Game had reduced their -- their participation. NSEDC took it over at -- at about 2005 and the fertilizer started again at about half of what we'd done in the

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1 past.

2

3 Anyway, now we've -- NSEDC has refined,
4 with the help of Fish and Game the amount necessary to
5 keep it going.

6

7 I guess the short answer is the
8 fertilizer does enhance the algae, mostly in the lake.
9 Most of the algae that's produced in the lake is
10 microscopic free floating algae, not weeds that grow in
11 the bottom. It -- it's possible that some of that
12 productivity moves down stream, probably not as
13 fertilizer anymore, probably as algae. As it goes
14 things consume it, zooplankton, you know, bugs
15 basically and it really is a more likely component of
16 -- the algae production further down river is probably
17 dead fish carcasses so dead fish and fertilizer are
18 almost the same thing and, yeah, it's called marine
19 drive trans -- or nutrient transport.

20

21 Anyway, I don't know -- yes, once you
22 put something in the river it's going to get down the
23 river but I don't think it's -- if you look at the
24 streams in Nome area it's -- there's algae too, so,
25 yes.

26

27 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Charlie.
28 So what -- I just wanted to -- from what I know about
29 this fertilization process, and I know it's gone back
30 all the way to '97. It was done with 60 tons per year,
31 we had about 100,000 fish show back up. Some people
32 talked about over carrying capacity. I asked Eugene
33 (Indiscernible) about have you guys taken samples at
34 the bottom from three to 500 years ago, what's in the
35 sediments and he said they did and they got a report
36 back and it was phenomenal numbers of 200,000 or
37 something beyond that. Well, Tommy and I grew up on
38 that river as well as he did on the lower end, we know
39 we had a lot of sockeye back in the '60s and then they
40 kind of disappeared on us but we had a fleet fishing
41 right out here with sunrise to sunset nets and probably
42 targeted a lot of those fish so our runs went down so
43 that depletes the nutrients in the system in the lake
44 and it's a cold lake and so you got to do something to
45 bring it back. I thought that 60 tons was what we
46 needed and when we see 100 [sic] fish come back up the
47 river, that, to me, was a good thing.

48

49 When we shut down the fertilization

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1 process, Elmer, we basically starved the -- the little
2 fellows that were in the lake and so then they
3 reintroduced it again but it's a lower level now. So
4 back when it was high level of 60 tons it didn't seem
5 to affect anything in the river system and just like
6 Charlie says there's -- there's going to be some kind
7 of pay off on the way down and he's talking about,
8 what, phytoplankton, zooplankton, and that's what the
9 sockeye feed on in the lake and so maybe some of it
10 dribbles down that -- that other species like those
11 little crabby looking things that are in the water,
12 different types of bugs and what not would benefit from
13 it. But there's one thing missing out of that whole
14 sequence there -- what is it, nitrogen, and phosphorus,
15 is they found that a carcass dying in the river was
16 more effective than treating a river -- or a lake
17 system with what those two were because carbon is the
18 other ingredient and that's the best one so what
19 they're doing, I don't have a problem with, I'd like to
20 see them put more in that lake than they do. But
21 because of past results, certainly showed the -- the --
22 great benefits to the system.

23

24 So I don't think there's any harm in
25 these nutrients going into the ground.

26

27 Go ahead, Elmer, you got a question.

28

29 MR. SEETOT: You mentioned about the
30 fat in juvenile fish, I have an exception to that. The
31 fat in juvenile fish are good food for the pike and
32 that's how come they're increasing. You -- you -- you
33 check the whole Kuzitrin system, on the north side I --
34 I mentioned a couple years -- quite a few years back in
35 a meeting, I -- I fish -- I -- I put my salmon net in
36 the slough to fish for broadnose whitefish on the north
37 side. I set it overnight, you know, in -- in front of
38 Kuzitrin River there's a slough that goes in pretty
39 much it used to be around (Indiscernible) Fish Camp.
40 Hogue and I, we caught 63 pike in just that one area
41 maybe in lake slou -- maybe on -- that wasn't very big,
42 oh, well, we'll try on the other side. And then on
43 Windy Cove side we -- we set a net again for -- for the
44 same purpose of getting broadnose whitefish. Guess
45 what, we got two more -- two more -- we got 65 pike on
46 the other side. So, you know, from the north side to
47 the south side, Imuruk Lake is about 15 miles or so.
48 That -- that was gathering place for many -- many of
49 the early people that -- that harvested fish, berries,
50

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1 whatever, in and around Quoruk.

2

3

4 And so that -- that's what he's saying,
5 they're -- they're helping the juvenile fish, you're
6 also helping fatten the pike on the other side. Pike's
7 got to eat something. Chum's got to eat something. So
8 -- so -- so.

8

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10 So that's my argument on that side.

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11 We need to find a way to keep the pike
12 numbers down. I don't think we can because not only
13 the pike but other -- other -- other fish than the red
14 salmon and I'm not too sure what other salmon, you
15 know, don't go after the small fish, Tom Cods,
16 whatever, they all go after the small but -- but I
17 would say that with fattening juveniles it also fattens
18 the pike and maybe gets their numbers up.

21 But -- but for me to say, we'll get all
22 the pike in and around that system is -- is impossible
23 because there's so many numerous lakes, ponds, you
24 know, where -- where the fish can go. And I -- I know
25 a place -- or I know a place, Old Igloo where -- where
26 that slough -- or where that channel was blocked off by
27 beavers so that's one of the things that I see quite a
28 bit. Beavers and northern -- northern pike.

29 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

31 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Elmer.

33 MR. GRAY: Tom.

35 CHAIRMAN GREEN: This is the Pilgrim
36 River guy here.

38 Go ahead, Tommy.

41 MR. GRAY: So like Elmer and Louis,
42 when these guys talk about Old Igloo, New Igloo, mouth
43 of the Kuzitrin, I grew up down there as a kid too.

44 And -- and that was my education to
45 being a river rat, I guess. The pike, we're not going
46 to get rid of it. Bottom line. The pike is going to
47 be there forever. The -- you know, I think about this
48 -- this fattening up of pike, I -- in my opinion, and I
49 don't know, biologists know, to me the -- the fry

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1 running that run from Salmon Lake to the ocean is a
2 gauntlet and that happens in a short period of time and
3 poof they're out to sea and -- and the process starts.
4 You know when I was young I remember Laura Johnson, my
5 aunt, was one of the few people that canned reds and I
6 was just -- you know, this is 60-some years ago, so the
7 -- you know, the big thing that -- that I look at at
8 Salmon Lake is -- is we've conditioned our people to
9 love reds. I mean Tom Gray, I couldn't get reds last
10 year so I bought reds. I spent \$500 buying reds so I
11 could have reds and we've -- we have -- I am of the --
12 I won't put silver salmon in my freezer, I put reds, if
13 I got to buy them, I got to buy them. The -- the --
14 and Nome has become a hub for these reds. We've got
15 two rivers that have reds. And I'm very concerned
16 about Senik River. You know right now there's a limit
17 of 100 fish per person on that river and that run can't
18 stand that if -- if we -- and I've run that river and
19 got 50 reds. There's a group of guys that run that
20 river. That river's going to get hammered. Over time
21 people are going to figure it out and if it isn't
22 protected, it's going to get hammered.

23

24 This Salmon Lake thing, you know, I --
25 it's kind of like ebb and flow, you know, you try one
26 thing and it works, works great for awhile and then all
27 of a sudden, oh, it's not working and we all kind of
28 learn from it, I guess. And eventually it'll get
29 dialed in. But as soon as it's dialed in then the need
30 is going to change, there's going to be twice as many
31 people here and it's going to be a Tier II situation
32 and on and on. So we're constantly dealing with it.

33

34 I look at the last two or three years
35 and last year I did not put reds in the freezer. The
36 year before I think I put 25 in the freezer. The year
37 before it was 25. It's been kind of dismal for awhile.
38 Is this what we're looking at, and I think I'm asking
39 Charlie this because he's probably more educated than
40 all of us on Salmon Lake, but is this going to be this
41 way for awhile yet?

42

43 MR. LEAN: Yeah, that's two more years
44 of low numbers, this year and next. The -- it's a
45 balancing act. So the original thought, assumption was
46 that when we had a huge run we would be able to cut it
47 down with the commercial fishery in Port Clarence but
48 that -- that's a no go so the towns of Teller and
49 Brevig have said they don't like that idea. So now the
50

1 problem is trying to temper the production of the lake
2 so that it produces approximately 10 to 15,000 for
3 harvest and 10 to -- 10 or so for reproduction, so a
4 total run of 45-ish-thousand. And, yeah, we've had
5 runs as big as 90,000 so that -- that's when we did
6 over did it so we don't want to do that again. So the
7 trick is to temper it, produce a moderate number, and
8 that's -- in a sense we're only using subsistence
9 harvest that on the very best years took 15,000 fish,
10 that's -- that's -- sometimes we're trying to cut a
11 tree down with a pocket knife, it's -- we just don't
12 have the power to do it. So that's what's going on,
13 it's a balancing act and that's why the smaller amount
14 of fertilizer and trying to not hit those really high
15 numbers.

16
17 MR. SEETOT: One thing I forgot to
18 mention earlier was that I was going to put into a
19 sentence, during World War II the military stockpiled
20 fuel. There's a stockpile, I see drums around the
21 north side of Brevig and around Davidson, around that
22 one pond where the lake starts -- I mean the Davidson
23 River goes down without interruption but in and around
24 the east of the river there's a lake that is
25 constantly, you know, just colored wrong and then
26 talking with people who had been up there, the Mary's
27 Igloo people who live in Teller they told me that that
28 has been like that for a number of years and that they
29 assume that something was buried in and around Davidson
30 landing area. And with that leaching into the water
31 system, that's an off shoot of the Kuzitrin River that
32 goes all the way to wherever, Bendeleben Mountains, I
33 think. And I have witnessed or known that people that
34 were in and around that area during the early days, you
35 know, they kind of died from cancer so that's something
36 that I have been -- we have been looking at for a long
37 time. And people in and around these areas, you know,
38 that their life expectanc -- how long they live, I
39 think, is determined, you know, by what -- what
40 exposures they had to certain stockpiles which they
41 probably didn't know at that time.

42
43 So I think that that was one of the
44 things that I was going to put that -- World War --
45 military stockpile field in -- and over many places and
46 -- and then they would leach out into the water system,
47 how -- how would that interact with what fertilizer,
48 you know, that is put into the system -- you know, into
49 Salmon Lake. That was what I was getting to.
50

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1 Thank you.

2

3

4 MR. LEAN: Mr. Chair. So my dad was in
5 World War II in Nome, has interesting stories about
6 fuel storage around Nome, where they'd just go out and
7 they'd put 10 or 15 drums in a pile and then over here
8 and over there so that if the Japanese bomb, the whole
9 thing wouldn't go up in a big fireball and then to get
10 the drums out of the frozen ground the next winter or
11 two they would go out with a Cat and put a chain around
12 one drum and just burst it, just rip it out of the
13 ground and then they could pull entire drums out into
14 the hole they'd created by wrecking one drum so there's
15 major oil spills around town.

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Davidson Landing was a fuel depot, even before World War II in the 1920s and '30s, Davidson's Landing's function was to stockpile fuel in the summer, they'd bring it in by barge and tugboat and -- and then a Cat train in the early winter up to the Taylor or to a number of mines up there on the Kougarok area so there's all -- so if you fly over there's all these Cat trails all over the ground and that's from pre-World War II and then World War II it was, again, a fuel depot and weather station and back in those days, you know, accounts of how they stored oil by digging a pit, dig a big pit, fill it with oil because they didn't have a container to put it in, you know, some of it ran away but they got most of it, right, you just keep adding water, it floats up and floats on the water, you don't lose much oil -- I'm being facetious but that's how the attitude was. And so I am sure that's why the military went in to clean up Davidson's Landing, there's a lot of oil spill there. There's less than there used to be but I don't think -- there's no cure for what's left. It's just going to be there.

Also Davidson's Creek was dredged and so part of that brown stuff is leaching from the broken bedrock from where the dredge worked and so leaching in this area is pretty high in arsenic, that's a cancer causing element. That's a metalloid. But anyway, I would bet you there's a lot of arsenic there, I haven't tested that. So -- and I don't -- it's just one of those things it has to dilute itself and wash away, I don't know how to fix that.

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Question, Charlie. Is there any data to go along with what you just said

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1 about arsenic to go with these, in Davidson's Landing
2 or anything of the sort?

3

4 MR. LEAN: No, I don't have any.

5

6 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay.

7

8 MR. LEAN: I -- I -- it's -- here in
9 Nome, arsenic is really prevalent out there at
10 Satellite Field and the creeks running out of Satellite
11 Field, the Center Creek and Dry Creek are well
12 documented to be saturated to the point that fish can't
13 survive in arsenic.

14

15 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Well, the Dry Creek,
16 since my kids were little, running around out at
17 Icyview in the mid-90s or so, even before that, I -- I
18 would say in the '60s, I've seen silver salmon all the
19 way up and now there's a dredge bond up there and
20 silver salmon are actually populating in the creek
21 better than they ever did. Dredge 5 has been sitting
22 there for, I don't know, a couple decades now.

23

24 But, anyway, I wanted to say something.
25 I'm hearing about all these chemicals, basically it's
26 fuel we're talking about and I'm aware of all this
27 World War II stuff too and the activity they did. They
28 did go up there and clean up Davidson's Landing, went
29 up there in 1991 or so. Ronnie Angston was one of the
30 guys that was there and talked to me about it. They
31 did a pretty good job cleaning it up. All we got to do
32 is look at the worst oil spill in the history of Alaska
33 and that was the Exxon Valdez, and that was crude oil,
34 but, geez, Prince William Sound is producing Copper
35 River reds that chefs around the world can't wait for,
36 Alaska Airlines are flying the king salmon all the way
37 down to Seattle and makes these big presentations,
38 there's ways to recover our salmon runs, we're just not
39 doing them. We're doing nothing.

40

41 And when it comes to this hatchery
42 stuff, we should be doing hatchery work up here.
43 There's a lot of things we could be doing that we're
44 not doing. So I want to see Salmon Lake produce
45 something and I wish you folks would bring that tonnage
46 up, that's just my two cents about that. If we're
47 going to do any kind of recovery around here, you need
48 to work together and get things going. The CDQ is
49 getting a bad name because of the trawler industry, you
50

0055

1 know, they're getting hammered. I might be one of
2 those people that are hammering them. I don't want to
3 talk about that at the moment but the point is is that
4 back in the 2000s or so, the trawler industry in Nome,
5 I said why don't you folks just put into a hatchery
6 process, you know, and then there'll be plenty of fish;
7 they didn't want to do it. I couldn't understand why
8 but then, again, now I know why, because if there's
9 chum salmon swimming out of the Hopson Creek Hatchery
10 in the Nome River, getting out in the Bering Sea and
11 they're getting caught in a trawl and they're showing
12 up in the samples, there's your scientific data that
13 says you're catching my fish. The same thing with Area
14 M State fishery.

15
16 I wanted that on the record today
17 because I think that's something that people just don't
18 think about and, you know, educating people in Brevig
19 and Teller about what the commercial fishery could do
20 for their economic benefit over there, and that should
21 come first. There's a lot of young people we need to
22 take care of. Subsistence benefits from that, and it
23 -- it could. So if you have a commercial fishery
24 developed before you start doing this -- building up
25 that red run again to what it should be, maybe people
26 could be convinced that it is a benefit to them. I'm
27 listening to guys here saying they're not catching any
28 reds anymore, well, apparently there's not enough
29 tonnage being put in the lake because it's not
30 producing enough. A healthy river -- he's talking
31 about healthy, fat, how many grams -- whatever they're
32 leaving -- the sockeye are leaving the lake, the more
33 grams they weigh the better off they have a chance to
34 survive but also the other thing is they're feeding
35 other things down the river. Healthy salmon runs are
36 healthy rivers. You get chums, you get pinks and you
37 get silvers running together that's a healthy river and
38 so why can't we just sit down and pencil out something
39 that's going to benefit subsistence and benefit the
40 economy around here instead of, you know, I don't know
41 I've been interested in salmon since I was kid. I did
42 the first lake study at Glacier Lake in 1974. It was a
43 class project. I was the first guy to go do it. The
44 State hadn't even gone up there. I brought them their
45 samples and stuff and they were, oh, geez, thanks, we
46 never did this yet. After that it was -- there was
47 some work done after that.

48
49 But, anyway, I -- you know, people
50

0056

1 don't know -- they don't understand. Like he's asking
2 about the phosphorus and nitrogen going in to the
3 water, is it causing other problems. I don't think it
4 is. Salmon do it all the time when they die, they
5 leave phosphorus, they leave nitrogen and they leave
6 carbon in the water. It's the same thing.

7

8 So that's my two cents for now.

9

10 And, Mr. Elmer, you got one more to go,
11 we have to move on.

12

13 MR. SEETOT: Additional comment. When
14 I was a little tot, maybe about that big, maybe a
15 little bit bigger, my -- not my parents, but the
16 community leaders at that time said that they did not
17 want to see any commercial fishing in and around
18 Grantley Harbor or Port Clarence Bay because it
19 benefited -- you know, subsistence lifestyle. If -- if
20 we did go commercial fishing probably wouldn't have
21 seen the Nome community flock to Pilgrim River to get
22 their fish aft -- after they go into the river. I'm a
23 front line observer of the salmon that come into Port
24 Clarence Bay, majority of the salmon that pass through
25 to -- the red salmon that pass through to Salmon Lake
26 occurs when there's good south winds and -- and I -- I
27 was commenting one time, gee, I only got 20 fish
28 because of constant south winds and wet weather and
29 then I hear that I wasn't -- I just was kind of saying,
30 oh, I guess at least we feed the people, the community
31 of Nome, by not going into the commercial fishing
32 business because I think forefathers had initiative to
33 say, I think we need to, you know, keep this area for
34 the benefit of subsistence fishermen.

35

36 During the early days it was very tough
37 for our people because they had to fish for, not only
38 for themselves, but for their transportation, you know,
39 dogs and stuff like that but nowadays I'm happy that we
40 didn't go into commercial fishing or, at least, the
41 communities Teller and Brevig -- go into commercial
42 fishing because it benefited the people of the Seward
43 Peninsula, especially those that were coming from Nome
44 to the Pilgrim River to go after the number 1 prized
45 fish that I think it is, other than king salmon, and
46 silver.

47

48 Thank you.

49

50

0057

1 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Elmer.
2 What's interesting is before the State took over the
3 State there was a real bartering system up there and
4 dry fish was a big thing, sockeyes, chum salmon, that
5 was the industry up there. It was a commercial
6 industry. The people going to the store trading fish
7 for goods. So -- when I bring it up about commercial
8 fishing, I think that it is something that could be
9 introduced up there to the benefit of the people right
10 there and not against it. But it's something to
11 control the population that returns to the lake so
12 that's why I brought it up.

13
14 But, anyways, we've gone a long ways
15 here and, Charlie, I really appreciate your comments
16 here and Renae, you have something about South River.
17 Maybe we could.....

18
19 MS. IVANOFF: Yes, Mr. Chair.

20
21 CHAIRMAN GREEN:get through that,
22 it's about lunch time.

23
24 MS. IVANOFF: Yep. One last.....

25
26 CHAIRMAN GREEN: If Charlie has
27 anything to add he.....

28
29 MS. IVANOFF: Yeah, just last one
30 comment.....

31
32 CHAIRMAN GREEN:can add.....

33
34 MS. IVANOFF: We should also be working
35 with ADF&G managers in terms of high abundance, we need
36 to -- you know, for subsistence users to exploit that
37 resource and in terms -- and in times of low abundance
38 we need to conserve so we need to -- another thing we
39 need to look at is just working with managers to better
40 -- during these cyclic -- cyclic years, and for sockeye
41 salmon.

42
43 Okay.

44
45 And actually I want to talk to you
46 later but this is off the record about pike in Salmon
47 Lake, it sounds like you have a lot of good traditional
48 knowledge that I would like to talk to you about, but
49 off the record.

50

0058

1 Before I move on to our king salmon
2 program we have our -- it's a rehabilitation program,
3 it's not a hatchery. It's enhancement. So we apply
4 for aquatic resource permits through the State of
5 Alaska, we're not going through the P&P hatchery
6 process, this is small scale. It started off
7 experimental and this is just to enhance our king
8 salmon run on the Unalakleet River so we're taking the
9 wild stock king salmon from Old Women River and
10 Unalakleet River and then we are taking their eggs,
11 fertilizing them, and we did this same process here in
12 Nome for -- for Snake; coho and -- and we did in the
13 past on chum as well, Solomon and Snake River chum, but
14 we're -- we're shifting our efforts towards Snake River
15 coho.

16
17 But anyways for the king salmon in
18 Unalakleet, this last year -- in the past we started
19 off with mist incubation and we went over to upgrade it
20 to better heat trays and we used to plant them as
21 (indiscernible) before but less chance of survival and
22 we -- we now rear them all the way through the fry
23 stage just before the sac is absorbed, before we
24 release them out in South River. And so during this
25 process we're marking them, their otoliths, their ear
26 bones with a specific mark that is provided by Fish and
27 Game and so that we know that these fish are -- they're
28 essentially like a tree ring, you -- they tell you --
29 they can -- it's a distinct mark that -- so we know
30 that that fish is ours that we had fertilized.

31
32 And so this last year we had actually
33 had success in our program, we've been doing it since
34 2012 but we haven't had a lot of effort to collect the
35 dead fish to collect their ear bones, their otoliths,
36 and last year I finally put in the effort -- I mean I
37 applied to collect king salmon from subsistence users
38 so I found that the best way to collect these king
39 salmon because -- because not a lot of people, too, are
40 willing -- you -- and they wash out up river, water
41 gets high, you're not going to be finding -- you have
42 to access it through helicopter, it's pretty hard if
43 you want to go all the way up there, float down, so
44 there's a lot of logistics and stuff so I found it
45 easier to collect the king salmon from subsistence
46 users. And we only collected 29, I believe, last year,
47 and 11 percent came back. Three -- three of those 29
48 fish came back with a mark and so that's our first
49 evidence of a successful return for king salmon.
50

0059

1 So I just want to let you know it's not
2 a hatchery, it's just an enhancement program right now
3 that we're doing. And we plan to continue to do that
4 again this year if our escapement allows.

5

6 And do you guys have any other
7 questions before we -- lunch?

8

9 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Just a question,
10 Renae. So you got three fish returning out of 29, when
11 you said the subsistence fisher provided the samples,
12 say at the cutting table or something, or did they find
13 dead ones and bring them to you?

14

15 MS. IVANOFF: They -- through nets,
16 like it could be -- it was in-river. Like during the
17 openings we target king and chum and people catch kings
18 and so I'll ask -- I post fliers around town but a lot
19 -- not a lot of people are actually willing to give up
20 their king salmon heads, you know, their prize fish,
21 and so a lot of my samples I take are from my own
22 personal catch and -- and we had a few submissions with
23 my fliers but it's still hard to try to get those
24 samples still.

25

26 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. So you're
27 getting some samples back and you're saying -- well,
28 there's no more mist incubation, I understand that, so
29 if you're not operating a hatchery, how are you making
30 these fish, how are you raising -- rearing them from
31 egg to.....

32

33 MS. IVANOFF: Heat tray incubators.

34

35 CHAIRMAN GREEN: What?

36

37 MS. IVANOFF: Heat tray. Heath.

38

39 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Heat tray incubators?

40

41 MS. IVANOFF: Yes.

42

43 CHAIRMAN GREEN: I'd like to see what
44 that looks like. Where are you doing that at?

45

46 MS. IVANOFF: We can -- if you want to
47 stop by our NSEDC we have some set up there too,
48 they're -- they're actually not -- we tested them -- we
49 ran -- we did a testing run just to make sure, you

50

0060

1 know, everything water and plumbing is all good but,
2 yeah, they're all set up that way, they're not your
3 typical.....

4
5 CHAIRMAN GREEN: What's the situation
6 with the water quality and where you're getting the
7 water from?

8
9 MS. IVANOFF: In Unalakleet or?

10
11 CHAIRMAN GREEN: No, here.

12
13 MS. IVANOFF: Here.

14
15 CHAIRMAN GREEN: You said you got your
16 heat trays here.

17
18 MS. IVANOFF: Oh. Yeah, we use
19 biofilters and we -- we do a bunch of -- I'm very
20 unfamiliar with the program here. Our -- our -- and
21 that's what we're trying to get under control here is
22 because a lot of our Staff in the Nome office and all
23 of our people that worked here in Nome for the
24 incubation program here, they essentially left and
25 we're here with all new biologists, and so I'm kind of
26 getting a grasp on that and learning the functions here
27 in Nome as well, and so part of that is why I'm here
28 because we have a new employee and so we're just
29 running through. So hopefully we can -- I'll get that
30 all sorted out this -- this spring before -- or summer
31 before our field season.

32
33 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Well, thank you,
34 Renae. I'm looking forward to seeing something maybe
35 in the Nugget. Maybe you'll have something that you'll
36 put in there and get that information out to folks
37 because I've had -- I've had questions about it for the
38 last several years and I've talked bits and pieces with
39 people in Unalakleet and around here and never got the
40 whole story so I think -- I think that the people's
41 resource -- that the people ought to know about it.

42
43 MS. IVANOFF: Uh-huh.

44
45 CHAIRMAN GREEN: So I'd really
46 appreciate it.

47
48 MS. IVANOFF: Okay.

49
50

0061

1 CHAIRMAN GREEN: And when it comes to
2 subsistence, if that's going to benefit subsistence
3 then I think people really ought to see what's going
4 on.

5
6 MS. IVANOFF: Yeah.

7
8 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Maybe that'll lead on
9 to more work like that.

10
11 MS. IVANOFF: Yeah.

12
13 CHAIRMAN GREEN: So I.....

14
15 MS. IVANOFF: Yeah, and they do
16 retrieve fish to assess the mark for -- they do have
17 some success but again they it's based on the amount of
18 fish you collect and so -- and it does appear that coho
19 seem to be more successful than, say, chum, for
20 incubation so.

21
22 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, thank you.

23
24 Mr. Gray.

25
26 MR. GRAY: So this ecolith -- whatever
27 you called.....

28
29 MS. IVANOFF: So otolith -- yeah, you
30 could just say.....

31
32 MR. GRAY:the otolith.

33
34 MS. IVANOFF:yeah, it's ear --
35 you could just say ear bone.

36
37 MR. GRAY: Otolith. So -- so a
38 suggestion. I don't know if it was Fish and Game or
39 NSEDC or who it was but they contracted with me to pick
40 up a bunch of heads.

41
42 MS. IVANOFF: Oh, okay.

43
44 MR. GRAY: And -- and a suggestion, if
45 you're going to run a project I would look to some
46 local person in Unalakleet or whatever and tell them so
47 much a head and, you know, the problem -- the problem
48 with -- silver salmon, and I produced silver salmon
49 that time -- the problem, unless you're seining a lot
50

0062

1 of silvers and smoking or canning or whatever, you
2 know, I would go through 50 to 100 silvers a year so
3 that's why they came to me, but if you're going to go
4 on the river and pick them up, they're hard to find. I
5 mean I'm on the river every day all summer long and
6 you're -- it's going to be hard to find the otoliths or
7 whatever. But guys like me that have a smokehouse
8 going, you could capitalize on that real quick.

9
10 MS. IVANOFF: Thank you, yes. Through
11 the Chair, yes, Tom. We -- that is why I put in for
12 our -- when we do -- under our permit is you have
13 different methods to collect these fish and so some of
14 it -- you can actually request subsistence users to
15 prov -- to -- to provide the fish or if they want to
16 volunteer their -- to obtain their head -- or the ear
17 -- otoliths.

18
19 Thank you.

20
21 CHAIRMAN GREEN: So I guess for science
22 sake, for it to make it through the peer press --
23 whatever it's -- peer review or what not, you got to do
24 that consistently so you got to take this crusty old
25 guy and he's the only one that gets to it so you get
26 them.....

27
28 (Laughter)

29
30 CHAIRMAN GREEN:samples every
31 year, consistently, right, and then Charlie's over
32 there running around the Snake River picking them up.
33 So you have to do it consistently so hopefully -- I
34 mean if you're going to do this recovery plan with --
35 with these -- recovering these otoliths, I hope you
36 find a way to do it that's consistent that works for
37 science because that's what we need.

38
39 My only other thing is, if we'd just
40 get to work and get our hatchery back together and do
41 our hatchery work like we should be doing, like they
42 started in the '90s, we'd probably be way ahead of
43 ourselves right now but for some reason we're just not
44 making much forward momentum, movement, whatever you
45 want to call it.

46
47 But, anyway, thank you very much for
48 your presentation, Renae.

49
50

0063

1 MS. IVANOFF: Okay. Thank you, Mr.
2 Chair.

3
4 CHAIRMAN GREEN: I know we put you
5 through the task here and you have Charlie as a back up
6 and that's.....

7
8 MS. IVANOFF: Yeah, that was good.

9
10 CHAIRMAN GREEN:that means we are
11 doing our job. Okay, thank you.

12
13 MS. IVANOFF: Thank you.

14
15 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Are there any other
16 questions.

17
18 (No comments)

19
20 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Anybody online, sorry.

21
22 (No comments)

23
24 MR. GRAY: Good luck.

25
26 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Nobody online, anybody
27 as far as public online.

28
29 (No comments)

30
31 CHAIRMAN GREEN: I have to ask these
32 questions.

33
34 (No comments)

35
36 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Hearing none, thank
37 you. I think we're about at lunch time break here,
38 we're hitting right at noon. Are we going to want to
39 come back at 1:00 or 1:30, tell me folks.

40
41 MR. SEETOT: We went all morning
42 without even a break.

43
44 (Laughter)

45
46 CHAIRMAN GREEN: You had a break, you
47 were going back there all the time.

48
49 MR. SEETOT: Not only me, there was no
50

0064

1 break.

2

3 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, so what time.
4 Tina, what do you want it to be.

5

6 REPORTER: Any time is good with me,
7 your call.

8

9 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. Council.

10

11 MR. SEETOT: 1:30.

12

13 CHAIRMAN GREEN: I hear 1:30, the guy's
14 older than me that are telling me that, so 1:30.

15

16 (Off record)

17

18 (On record)

19

20 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, I'm going to
21 call the meeting back to order here at 1:36. And, Mr.
22 Charles Lean has something to tell us about Western
23 Arctic Caribou.

24

25 Thank you, Charlie.

26

27 MR. LEAN: Good afternoon. I'm Charlie
28 Lean, I think most people know that. But this is my
29 50th year in Nome, that snuck up on me. Anyway.....

30

31 CHAIRMAN GREEN: I'm at 60-something.

32

33 (Laughter)

34

35 MR. LEAN: Yeah, well, I didn't say
36 Alaska I just said Nome. So my dad was here before me,
37 so you haven't gotten rid of the Lean clan in a long
38 time.

39

40 I have two things I hope to talk to you
41 about today. One was the caribou working group,
42 Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group and that's my
43 first topic. I hope to give you a report on the recent
44 Board of Fisheries meeting regarding Area M and
45 intercept fishery of salmon in Western Alaska. But
46 that's second.

47

48 So I asked this figure be distributed,
49 and that's for those -- there may be one or two extra
50

0065

1 copies. Alicia with Fish and Game was kind enough to
2 make copies for me and -- because people take care of
3 elders like me.

4

5 (Laughter)

6

7 MR. LEAN: So, anyway, what I wanted to
8 show with this graph is this is the representation of
9 the past 50 or so years of the caribou -- Western
10 Arctic Caribou Herd population, and this population
11 cycles roughly every 50 years and it's pretty well
12 documented from about 1870 to present, it cycles up and
13 it cycles down about every 50 years, and we're now at
14 the second low point of the cycle in my lifetime. It's
15 a -- in 1976 the population was estimated to be 70,000
16 animals, right now it's 160,000 animals. So -- and
17 it's still going down from the looks of it. So when
18 any population gets really low that's when all the
19 conservation flags get raised and -- and hunting is
20 poor just because there aren't many animals and also
21 because of regulation management, people are concerned
22 that if you overharvest when the population's low you
23 can knock it flat.

24

25 So we had some false hopes raised about
26 2015. You can see in the graph it -- it seemed to be
27 bottomed out and it started to come up and then it
28 collapsed again. This has been a concern at the
29 Western Arctic Working Group for a number of years.
30 The rapid decline beginning in about 2010 to -- and --
31 and so the last three censuses, that trend is very
32 alarming to me and others, in fact, the entire working
33 group, and I know that there are people in the room
34 that were there with me at this last meeting.

35

36 In 2021 we had quite a discussion about
37 the state of the caribou and how they were declining so
38 fast. And we discussed taking conservation actions but
39 chose not to and then this -- this past fall, the
40 caribou -- well, the caribou last winter didn't really
41 migrate very far south on the Seward Peninsula. A lot
42 of concern there. And then more concern this year
43 because apparently they weren't migrating south again.
44 Kotzebue really missed the caribou, they went much
45 further east and the Kotzebue RAC came to the Western
46 Arctic Herd Working Group meeting with a proposal to
47 severely restrict caribou harvest because they were
48 concerned about the lack of caribou and the trend
49 that's going on. Their proposal was a total of four
50

0066

1 caribou per year, only one of which should be a female,
2 or one of which could be a female, preferably it would
3 be a male. You know that's a huge cutback from what
4 they had which was 20 days unlimited year-round. That
5 showed just how serious they were. And there was a
6 lot of discussion, a lot of concern. But even the
7 people that lived in the Kobuk/Shungnak/Ambler area
8 where the bulk of the caribou herd overwintered in
9 2021/22 agreed that it was a serious problem. And
10 after much discussion, the working group put forth a
11 proposal -- and now I've forgotten how many people were
12 there but it was like 17 to 1 the vote favoring this
13 very restrictive harvest. One disagreed from -- from
14 Ambler -- or not Ambler, I'm sorry, from Kobuk Village.

15

16 But, you know, that doesn't -- the
17 rule, if this passes the Board of Fish [sic] and
18 everything, won't go into effect for another year.

19

20 If you extend the line on this graph
21 that I just showed you and continue it down, it passes
22 the 130,000 level in about two years. 130,000 is a
23 significant number because that's when this would trans
24 -- go from what has been termed as a preservative
25 management action to a preservation, critical
26 management action and that -- that warrants even more
27 restrictions.

28

29 So this whole management plan, it's a
30 working document, but this was the goal of what Elmer
31 remembers, and I remember, at the first caribou working
32 group meetings, is trying to come up with a plan, you
33 know, before it was a crises, and trying to figure out,
34 what, step wise, we should be doing as the population
35 rose and fell. And as I said it's a 50 year cycle.
36 And so we were pretty assured that it was going to
37 collapse again someday but that someday is today.

38

39 And so I know this is bad news but it's
40 what -- for those of us that believe that we kind of
41 own the resource, we need to take care of it to make
42 sure it's still here. And I could talk to more issues
43 but I think that's the nuts and bolts of what I was
44 trying to say.

45

46 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you. Council
47 members, any questions for Charlie.

48

49 (No comments)

50

0067

1 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Come on, you got your
2 chance now, Tommy's not here.

3
4 (Laughter)

5
6 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Martin, go ahead.

7
8 MR. AUKONGAK: I think you know, you
9 know, with the fish, you know, you can't get any
10 salmon, what do you do, you go after caribou, or vice
11 versa. If you don't have the caribou you're going to
12 go get more to put something in your freezers so -- and
13 look at the prices of meat in the store right now, it's
14 super high. So if you add one and one and one it's
15 going to have an effect. So that's my comment.

16
17 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Elmer. Thank you,
18 Martin.

19
20 MR. SEETOT: I wasn't able to make it
21 to the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group since
22 I got away from there. Where is the main herd at, are
23 they still up around Unit 23, Kotzebue area, or did
24 they move down to Buckland, Deering and then move on
25 down? That's my question, thank you.

26
27 MR. LEAN: So last year the -- I think
28 only 20 percent of the population really got south of
29 the Kobuk River. Most of those got over to -- got over
30 in the Buckland area. This year there was a small
31 pocket that came down towards Buckland, too, but,
32 again, it was even less than 20 percent. The main herd
33 seemed to be staying up in the Kobuk country. And then
34 I heard recently that there are caribou getting into
35 the Kuzitrin -- upper Kuzitrin area.

36
37 The -- you know that there's these -- I
38 call them rainbou herds, one up near Serpentine and one
39 over by Mt. Bendeleben and those are kind of hybrid
40 groups of half caribou, half reindeer and they are
41 resident year-round on the Seward Peninsula. And
42 there's been occasional calves observed on the Seward
43 Peninsula so -- but I don't think it's out of line to
44 say that there's a resident herd on the Seward
45 Peninsula and I could go on a little bit of a rant
46 about that.

47
48 Sheldon Jackson, back in the 1800s, a
49 missionary decided that we needed reindeer and then
50

0068

1 reindeer were going to substitute for the caribou that
2 had just seemed to have disappeared. I don't really
3 believe that all the caribou were dead when he brought
4 in the reindeer, but I do think that the reindeer
5 herder industry in the early 1900s homogenized all the
6 caribou and reindeer on the Seward Peninsula and so we
7 have great big reindeer compared to, say, Lapland and
8 that's probably hybrid vigor, I mean that's the mixing
9 of two genetic stocks and that's a good thing, and I
10 think that that accounts for why the animals on the
11 Seward Peninsula are healthy where they are.

12

13 I mean I hope I answered the question.

14

15 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Elmer.

16

17 MR. SEETOT: Nope.

18

19 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Tommy.

20

21 MR. GRAY: Am I supposed to say
22 something.

23

24 (Laughter)

25

26 CHAIRMAN GREEN: I don't know, you got
27 that look in your eye.

28

29 MR. GRAY: So I -- I will say this,
30 that when caribou come on reindeer range, the reindeer
31 herders can introduce them to their reindeer herds and
32 they are now reindeer. And BLM and I will fight over
33 that, but that's our interpretation.

34

35 And, you know, Tom Gray is trying to
36 get a reindeer herd and I'm wanting to reintroduce
37 reindeer on the Seward Peninsula from
38 Stebbins/St. Michael and it's a project I've been
39 working on for a couple years. We thought we were
40 going to drive reindeer this year but didn't happen.
41 And I think, what I've been told, all the paperwork's
42 been signed, it will happen next year. We did have a
43 permit to drive animals. BLM pay attention. I'm
44 coming whether it's reauthorized or not. It's -- so,
45 anyway.

46

47 You know, if you talk to some of the
48 old-timers the caribou will peak and then they'll drop
49 to nothing and it takes 100 years to make this cycle.

50

0069

1 If I never see another caribou in my life I would be
2 one happy camper. I don't think that's true for
3 subsistence users on the Seward Peninsula but, you
4 know, I think we're a few years -- quite a few years
5 away from lots of caribou on the Seward Peninsula.

6
7 The reindeer industry tried to get
8 studies done on the animals that were staying on the
9 Seward Peninsula. Kyle Joly came to me, they wanted to
10 -- he wanted to put satellite collars on animals, the
11 State had a conniption fit and threw a tantrum and
12 said, over my dead body, and the results of that was we
13 will do a DNA study and -- and go forward on that. The
14 University did the reindeer DNA study, the State didn't
15 do shit. So it -- it never went anywhere.

16
17 I -- I do know through history, I
18 guess, you can see reindeer in caribou DNA up around
19 Barrow. So -- and if you look at the history, I mean
20 we had 500,000 reindeer at one time on the west coast
21 of Alaska, then all of a sudden there's 500,00 caribou
22 on the west coast of Alaska so it only makes sense that
23 there's traces of reindeer in the caribou.

24
25 A few -- or one thing I'm a little
26 frustrated with is I'm all about subsistence. And the
27 Western Arctic Caribou Herd is at a low and the ANS
28 can't meet the harvest needs right now and in reality
29 what that means is it should be in a Tier II situation.
30 Nobody wants to talk about this. Nobody wants to go
31 there. It's going to be a mountain of work and nobody
32 wants to acknowledge it. But as a subsistence user I'd
33 like to shove it down the people's throats and do your
34 damn job. Because it's our livelihood, it's our
35 lifestyle, it's -- you need to protect that
36 subsistence. And -- and, you know, people are getting
37 paid big bucks to manage this herd and look at this
38 herd and -- and do their thing, but, you know, for what
39 it's not -- it's not for the biologists that's in
40 Kotzebue managing it, it's for us subsistence users.
41 That's what that herd's here for. And we need to
42 follow that and ensure that the herd is managed
43 correctly.

44
45 You know there's a big crying, how can
46 I say this, the non-resident hunters can't come to
47 Kotzebue and go hunting anymore on Federal lands. I
48 don't care. If the ANS can't be met, we can't meet our
49 own needs, why should the outsiders get it, and I'm a
50

0070

1 hunting guide. I'm a guy that stands up for these non-
2 resident hunters. But subsistence first. We need to
3 keep that in mind.

4

5 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you. Go ahead
6 Charlie.

7

8 MR. LEAN: I just wanted to relay a
9 story I read recently and I think it's true. The -- so
10 the Loman Brothers, which ran their reindeer industry
11 right after World War I they had a contract with the
12 government of Canada, Northwest Territories, to drive
13 a couple thousand reindeer from the Seward Peninsula to
14 the Delta of the McKenzie River. And their chief
15 herder, the best herder at the time was Mr. Barr, from
16 Shishmaref, and they called him Moses of the North in
17 the newspaper articles. This guy was a highly
18 respected reindeer herder and in the course of three
19 years he drove -- started out with like 2,200 reindeer
20 and took off across the North Slope, north around Point
21 Hope and north over the Slope and he got there with --
22 now, I've forgotten, about three-quarters of the number
23 he started with, but only a quarter of those animals
24 were animals he'd actually started with, the rest were
25 either born on the way or caribou he picked up on the
26 way. And so you know that he lost three-quarters of
27 what he started with too, so that's another explanation
28 why there's reindeer blood in all the caribou because
29 he just -- his herd was leaking both ways, in and out,
30 and I thought that was very interesting and I think it
31 just shows how inter-connected things are, even then.

32

33 So, anyway, thanks.

34

35 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Charlie.

36

37 Go ahead, Elmer, you're next.

38

39 MR. SEETOT: You could pretty much
40 quantify animals on a range by -- by a harvest report
41 and by photo census but you really can't quantify
42 predator kills because you have to have someone out in
43 the field doing that.

44

45 About 15 -- about 15 years ago we ran
46 into wolf kills where -- I think maybe more than that,
47 the Maniilaq Herd was being hammered by wolves in and
48 around Mary's Igloo and we were following the tracks of
49 the wolves, here they were just killing the reindeer

50

0071

1 just for the tongue and -- and for the blood and we
2 counted over 15-plus, but we couldn't go in the brush,
3 you know, to see if there was any further more. So
4 wolves are predators that can do indiscriminate killing
5 if they need to.

6
7 And then in a winter of about 25 years
8 ago going through the Kuzitrin, American and Davidson
9 Landing river system, me and my nephew we counted over
10 20 moose kills, you know, that were pretty much over
11 the winter, so -- so the wolf kills are pretty
12 devastating to local herds.

13
14 And one that I heard, that was from
15 many years -- not many years ago, many generations ago
16 was maybe up around the Kougarok Mountains or so, the
17 reindeer or the animals were spooked by wolves and they
18 just milled around constantly until they dropped dead
19 just from milling around, so those numbers can't be
20 quantified because, you know, nobody's out there. We
21 can quantify the numbers by, okay, here's a harvest
22 ticket, here's a photo census, oh, we think there's
23 just so many animals, but for other stuff like that,
24 you know, you have to have someone out in the field
25 doing that kind of work.

26
27 I'm just only one of a handful of
28 persons maybe that have seen these kind of kills but,
29 you know, that's not really forwarded to the
30 regulators. Our -- our TEK, you know, nature happens
31 and that's how nature's intended it to be so we just
32 got to kind of go from that. With the Western Science,
33 I think, you know, we're being regulated constantly.
34 You have to get so much, you have to hunt so much,
35 don't hunt this and that, certain things that have been
36 ingrained into our heads by State and Federal
37 regulations, we have been so much, but we do have TEK,
38 get only so much, whatever you need, you know, this and
39 that, share, share alike, waste not, want not, you
40 know, all these TEKs but that's not -- pretty much
41 that's not integrated with Western Science, they just,
42 oh, is that something you just heard, and they don't
43 take that into account, but -- but for us living in the
44 real world, I get a moose out of season, I don't tell
45 anyone, guess what, it's going to kick me in the butt
46 in later years, maybe when I need it the most. That's
47 been what's ingrained into our heads over the years by
48 community leaders, by our forefathers, by our
49 grandparents and -- and that's how we've been able to
50

0072

1 subsist, how we've been able to survive. Right now
2 we're talking about caribou and caribou wasn't really
3 part of my diet until the mid'90s until I shoot -- I
4 went over toward the Bendeleben Mountains and I went
5 over toward the Lava Beds, Imuruk Lake, Bendeleben
6 Mountains, those are the ones that hold the animals,
7 they're going there because there's food for them to
8 subsist on. I met this guy how many times out in
9 Bendeleben Mountains.

10

11 (Laughter)

12

13 MR. SEETOT: Couple times, muskox
14 hunting. I -- I met Tom.....

15

16 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Sparks.

17

18 MR. SEETOT:Tom Sparks. He -- I
19 think I mentioned it one time, they were down towards
20 Mary's Igloo and they happened to see us at Davidson's
21 using binoculars, he was hunting with a buddy. He
22 said, let's go see those Brevig guys. He say how you
23 know they're Brevig, he say they're the only ones I
24 know use parkies.

25

26 (Laughter)

27

28 MR. SEETOT: So, you know, you could
29 identify people, you know, out in the country.

30

31 But for him to come from his side and
32 for me to come that side, you know, once -- you don't
33 -- you don't, oh, I'll meet you over there, you know,
34 just -- we just so happened to be going after the same
35 -- or other resources that, you know, we have to go far
36 and wide to get our animals.

37

38 But I think something like that needs
39 to be documented because all of a sudden you're losing
40 24,000 animals, where'd they go, I know I didn't poach
41 them, you know, they're so far out.

42

43 But I think with Western Science they
44 just have that tunnel vision, this is so many animals
45 that were lost and -- and what happened, oh, I'll --
46 I'll tell you on my side, they wouldn't listen to me,
47 am I credible, I don't know. You know it's all to the
48 person that's taking all the information.

49

50

0073

1 Thank you for me commenting on that,
2 thank you.

3
4 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Elmer.
5 And, Mr. Gray.

6
7 MR. GRAY: So I sit here and listen to
8 him and it caught my mind one of the hurdles that, or
9 struggles that I've had sitting on the Western Arctic
10 Caribou Herd Working Group is these biologists will
11 come in and say you can't shoot a cow, you can't shoot
12 a calf, you can't, you can't, you can't and they're
13 bringing their idea of -- of how this herd is to be
14 managed and good or bad, it's still their idea. It's
15 an outsider's idea. And our people -- I was sitting
16 there one time thinking, I want a calf skinned parkey,
17 or I want a sleeping bag that's made out of a calf,
18 that's history, that's our ancestry. And, yet, some
19 outsider's telling me I can't go there anymore. You
20 know it's a grain of salt that I can't stand sometimes.
21 And people need to be open-minded and compassionate
22 when it comes to stuff like this and weigh these
23 thoughts or ideas. You know, again, I'm subsistence
24 and I'm going to look at a decision based on my
25 subsistence lifestyle. I've had wolf skin leggings,
26 I've had reindeer leggings that I wear. I've had fox
27 skin parkeys. I've had all this stuff and -- and, yet,
28 I'm told, oh, you can't shoot a calf. I've gone out to
29 my reindeer and clubbed calves so I can have a calf
30 skin parkey and killed them, killed the calf reindeer
31 when they were about three weeks old. You know the --
32 and -- and there's generations in our history of Native
33 people that probably did the same thing with caribou.

34
35 So anyway I -- I went home and I told
36 my wife, I got to learn how to keep my dang mouth shut.

37
38 (Laughter)

39
40 MR. GRAY: But, anyway.

41
42 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Keep talking Tommy,
43 I'm looking gooder [sic] all the time.

44
45 (Laughter)

46
47 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Charlie, go ahead.

48
49 MR. LEAN: Yeah, I could tell you

50

0074

1 family stories too about subsisting and shooting things
2 out of season and some are amusing and some are not.
3 But I walk the line between both.

4
5 But I wanted to say that this -- this
6 management plan was the product of a collaboration
7 between agency people and subsistence users and this is
8 -- this is what we agreed to when the animals were
9 abundant and then this year -- you know, in 2021 we had
10 our meeting and, hell, no, we're not going to restrict
11 caribou hunting and this year, the majority of the
12 group thought things were bad enough that there needed
13 to be conservation, you know, and it's a -- this
14 proposal was put forth by Kotzebue and Noatak. They
15 were the ones that really pushed this one. So it's not
16 just some agency guy saying this is what has to happen
17 it was a real hot topic and Maniilaq's lead guy was
18 leading the charge. So it's not a -- this is not a
19 management biologist telling you what to do, it's a
20 strong suggestion that things have reached a point you
21 need to take action.

22
23 So anyway, that's it.

24
25 MR. GRAY: So I just want to say that I
26 sat there with Charlie at the Western Arctic Caribou
27 Herd Working Group meeting and I was part of that and I
28 agree, we need to back off. I mean the subsistence
29 world needs to be conservative. I'm the head of the
30 Beluga Whale Committee in Alaska and we're looking at a
31 management plan for beluga whales and we're talking the
32 same language. We have so many animals and we have a
33 certain amount that we can slaughter and we have to set
34 up a management plan, that's exactly what this thing is
35 going to do. So don't get me wrong, I'm supportive of
36 this proposal but I'm also -- one side of me, one half
37 of me is White, and half's Native, my Native side is
38 very critical sometimes so.

39
40 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, thank you, Tom.
41 Anybody online, any folks online on the Council have
42 any questions, comments or concerns for Charlie. I
43 don't know who's on.

44
45 Mary, you're here, go ahead.

46
47 MS. FREYTAG: Hi, yes, my name is Mary
48 Freytag, I'm from Unalakleet and also there's other
49 villages below me and also on the Yukon and the
50

0075

1 residents that travel up to the herd to subsist and I
2 just wanted you to reiterate on the restrictions, the
3 proposed restrictions that the working group had put
4 together, the proposal, I just would like you to
5 reiterate because it affects a lot of residents that do
6 really rely on this subsistence caribou herd.

7
8 MR. LEAN: Okay. So the proposal
9 that's probably going to pass is that one hunter should
10 only take four caribou per year from the Western Arctic
11 Herd and only one of those legally could be a female.
12 And the idea is that the -- the female/male ratio, that
13 there's too few female for the number of males, that's
14 one way to look at it, and we're saying it that way
15 because we think that the total population should be
16 greater than it is now. We're trying to get up to the
17 200,000 plus herd size. It's been as high as 400 10
18 years ago so.

19
20 CHAIRMAN GREEN: So, Charlie, I'm
21 looking at this continued study on how predation has
22 anything to do with it. Do -- is there any information
23 out there about like the wolf -- kind of a wolf census
24 and a bear census that would -- bears probably not the
25 easy one but I would think that wolves would be kind
26 of.

27
28 MR. LEAN: There's not. There's been
29 some attempts at bear census, but as far as caribou go,
30 the Caribou Working Group thinks wolves are by far the
31 greater predator because they operate all year long and
32 the bears only operate in the summer. So -- so, yeah,
33 we talked a lot about predation, about wolves in
34 particular and as far as I know there's -- it's not
35 addressed.

36
37 One of the problems with wolves is that
38 they're -- you know, one litter is five puppies and you
39 really have to almost exterminate wolves to control the
40 population of wolves. Where bears have generally one
41 or two cubs, it takes a lot longer for a bear
42 population to recover if you're trying to knock it
43 down. So the wolf is the -- is the big predator that's
44 hard to manage.

45
46 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yeah, I hear people
47 telling stories like what Elmer's talking about,
48 predation by the wolves. I seen what the wolves did to
49 the Davis Reindeer Herd up on the other side of Salmon
50

0076

1 Lake back in the late '70s, I mean they just do
2 whatever they wanted. I was going through them putting
3 them to sleep because they were all chewed up and just
4 laying there. So I know what wolves and how fast and
5 these things aren't even close to the area where
6 they're coming to these wolves, they can be 30, 40
7 miles away. So, yeah, I understand that wolves are
8 pretty devastating.

9

10 So like you say the bears are a
11 seasonal, summertime, springtime, falltime, the
12 predation is probably on a different order.

13

14 So, anyway, anybody else.

15

16 Mary.

17

18 MS. FREYTAG: Yes, one more.

19

20 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Mary and then Elmer.

21

22 MS. FREYTAG: Sometimes during the
23 winter we get really, really warm weather and it starts
24 to rain, rain, rain like a couple of winters ago and an
25 ice forms over the tundra and sometimes it affects the
26 -- for the caribou to reach their food. Do you guys
27 take that into consideration?

28

29 MR. LEAN: I mean we discussed that and
30 we try to document when there's a freeze-down like
31 that. And if you ever look at caribou and reindeer,
32 you know, the -- the females, especially in late winter
33 are the ones with antlers and the pregnant females, and
34 then the males are out without antlers and the females
35 are chasing them away from any food that the males
36 find, so the males are the scouts that run around and
37 dig up feed and then the females all move in and chow
38 down. So it's -- we talk about this a lot but, you
39 know, it's important to see the vanguard of males going
40 across the tundra looking for food because they're
41 feeding the rest of the herd and -- but, yeah, we
42 haven't -- I mean we're looking at this at a higher
43 altitude picture saying that, you know, the population
44 is down. We're not saying that we can -- we want to
45 have at least, what, at least 15 males per -- 15 males
46 per 100 females but right now it's much more than that.
47 So the males are not the problem right now, it's the
48 lack of females so.

49

50

0077

1 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you. Great
2 question, Mary.

3
4 Elmer.

5
6 MR. SEETOT: Not really a question but
7 a comment in line with what Mary said. Even though the
8 biologists talk about numbers and about the animals,
9 what other considerations are they taking into account,
10 are they taking into account the ecosystem and, you
11 know, we -- we do have a lot of low pressure systems
12 that carry clouds, what is in -- are there any airborne
13 articles, you know, that may be landing on our side
14 from the Russian side to alter, you know, the grass
15 growth. Because you know over the years what used to
16 be prime reindeer grazing areas, those areas have kind
17 of dried up because of not enough snow or rain during
18 the winter and then possibly not being used as much as
19 before but I -- I think you'll be missing the whole
20 point of the size of -- or the population of animals if
21 you disregard the ecosystem, period. Because that --
22 that's -- that's their place where they live, that's
23 their garden, that's where they eat, that's where they
24 flee, give birth, stuff like that. But our land has
25 been going through many changes over the years and --
26 and being so close to Russia we don't know what's
27 happening over on that side, airborne particles, oh,
28 no, I don't think so. I went to (indiscernible) in
29 '92, pretty much almost -- almost like our mountains
30 and then I was staying in an apartment, they were using
31 coal and you -- you could see soot all over, you know,
32 all over the place where you were walking because they
33 were using that coal for heat so that's -- that's
34 something that I don't think we really consider at all.
35 We just maybe take it as a given but in order to really
36 study the animals you have to look at the whole aspect
37 of what makes the animal as it is. It's not just being
38 an animal, because it's there, it has to go from there
39 to there, much like we are doing here in this room. We
40 stay in our communities but we come here for the
41 meetings. We go to different places for this and that.
42 So many factors I think not -- that we kind of forget
43 about in, you know, determining, oh, the size of a
44 population, or the health of the population.

45
46 Thank you.

47
48 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Elmer.
49 Charlie, if you have nothing else to add -- do you have
50

0078

1 something or are you pretty well?

2

3 MR. LEAN: Well, you know, that -- the
4 -- the Reindeer Herding Association and the BLM did a
5 couple of vegetation studies on the Seward Peninsula
6 and it's been 10 years or so since they did those but
7 they did one like 20 years ago, 10 years ago and it's
8 about time for another one but there is a little bit of
9 work on that but it was Reindeer Herders that did it.

10

11 So, I don't know, that's all I -- I
12 think I'm done on caribou so.

13

14 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. Tommy, one
15 second, go.

16

17 (Laughter)

18

19 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Time's up.

20

21 (Laughter)

22

23 MR. GRAY: So the reindeer industry did
24 this study on the Seward Peninsula probably 35 years
25 ago, 30 years ago. Dave Swanson did that study. And
26 -- and I've requested, because I'm planning on getting
27 reindeer next year, I've requested to, gosh, Karen, the
28 Soil Conservation Service to reevaluate my range and
29 I'm only worried about winter lichens so that's going
30 to happen, that will be in the process. But that's
31 something -- this being said, that's something that the
32 Western Arctic Caribou Herd has never done and they
33 should look at how the range has been impacted by all
34 these animals. I mean they've gone from 70,000 in the
35 early '70s to 500,000 back to 100-and-some thousand,
36 and they cry because, oh, Onion Portage doesn't have
37 the animals coming again. They quit coming for 10, 20
38 years. Well, let's get real, maybe they overgrazed the
39 range coming into Onion Portage and they're going a
40 different path now. I mean caribou and reindeer feed
41 in different styles, but the impacts are the same at
42 the end of the day.

43

44 So, anyway, I just wanted to suggest
45 that to the Western Arctic Caribou Herd and Charlie's a
46 whole lot more effective at getting stuff done at that
47 group than I am.

48

49 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, thank you.

50

0079

1 Charlie, are you?

2

3 MR. LEAN: I'm done with caribou and if
4 you would hear me sometime I could talk about fish or
5 not.

6

7 MR. GRAY: I'd like to hear the fish.

8

9 CHAIRMAN GREEN: He wants to hear the
10 fish, you're on.

11

12 MR. LEAN: Okay. I have my fish hat
13 on. So I went -- I'm the Chair of the Advisory
14 Committee and I got sent to the Board of Fish twice
15 here in the last three months to talk about fish. So
16 we -- what, this is March, April -- so in January I
17 went and spoke about my primary issue was -- was about
18 Salmon Lake and how to manage Salmon Lake and -- and
19 that's why I'm pretty well versed in it right now
20 because I've been thinking about Salmon Lake, but the
21 point is that we -- the NSEDC Program and Fish and Game
22 programs don't match. We're about to see a change over
23 in management. I heard that the Assistant Area
24 Manager, Kevin, is going to be the new area manager so
25 I have a new target to work on. But, anyway, the idea
26 is to align management of the fishery to be more
27 responsive to whether it's strong or weak and try to
28 run the red salmon.

29

30 And then last month I went to the Board
31 of Fish again to talk about the collapse of salmon in
32 the Bering Sea. And I have graphs and all kinds of
33 stuff to show you but -- trend lines for salmon,
34 different species they're all in decline, including
35 pink salmon. And then there's another graphic about
36 how the young salmon, chum salmon, primarily, migrate
37 back and forth through the Aleutians and all the way up
38 to Norton Sound and back every year and so chum salmon
39 spend a couple years at sea, up to three years at sea.

40

41 Anyway, the Area M fishery, since 2003,
42 has been gradually raising their fishing time and
43 catching more and more salmon and so the State is
44 talking about Area M, if you wanted to talk about the
45 pollock fishery you would be talking to the North
46 Pacific Council, so I was focused on chum salmon in
47 Western Alaska and I don't know if everybody in this
48 room knows both the Kuskokwim, and the Yukon River have
49 had complete, or nearly complete closures for the last
50

0080

1 three years. That's not just chums or kings, that's
2 chums, king, coho, even pinks.

3

4

5 So -- so what people need to remember
6 is that those -- the Bering Sea summer chums were the
7 largest single chum run in North America, perhaps the
8 world, and now they barely exist. The king salmon on
9 the Yukon was the -- still is, the premiere king salmon
10 in the world, highest oil content, most desirable, best
11 tasting fish, you know, the basis of subsistence trade
12 for millennia; those things are closed completely.
13 It's really a black eye to the State of Alaska that we
14 let that fall apart so badly.

14

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So there were roughly 130 AYK
testifiers at the Board of Fish meeting this last
month. That's a lot of people, it took three days for
everybody to get their say. And everybody was limited
to three minutes or 10 minutes, depending, so I got to
talk for 13 minutes because I'm a resident and because
I'm an Advisory Committee Chair; I spoke for the
committee. It was to no avail. It was very
frustrating. There were three Board members that were
basically sympathetic to the Bering Sea fishers and
there were four that weren't and they wouldn't change.
And it was -- I couldn't have -- I'm getting pretty
emotional so let me read a few statements that were
written cold turkey so I wouldn't scream at anybody.

The four members of the Board of Fish
who voted down Proposal 140, which was a proposal put
forth by the Fairbanks Advisory Committee but we all --
all of AYK supported and Bristol Bay and Chignik and
Nelson Lagoon, all communities that target salmon
locally, were -- we were trying to increase the windows
for fish to move through that Area M fishery to two or
three day lengths. That's what Proposal 140 was. So
it basically reduced the Area M commercial fishery by
about half during June -- the month of June. So,
anyway, the four members of Board of Fish that ignored
it, or didn't vote in our favor ignored science,
ignored subsistence law, ignored the precautionary
principle and sustainability clauses in the
Constitution of Alaska and -- and just kind of blew us
off. So what they did was they made a very token
restriction of fishing time at Area M and gave us one-
sixth of the amount of time we'd asked for. It was
just enough so that they could avoid a lawsuit.

0081

1 Anyway, the Board of Fish basically
2 delegated chum conservation to the commercial seine
3 fleet, the commercial seine fleet was the only fishery
4 that was restricted, not the drift gillnet fleet, drift
5 gillnetters saw no restrictions at all.

6
7 The Area M fishers, you know, average
8 \$250,000 a year in their fishery, many make a million,
9 it's a pretty lucrative fishery. The Fish and Game
10 asked the commercial fishers there to be on the honor
11 system and try to avoid chum. And that's really hard
12 to accept the Department who has the authority to close
13 fishing just said, well, we trust you, do something, so
14 the -- so there was a genetic study, you've heard of
15 WASSIP, you've heard about -- today you heard the
16 Seeb's, Mr. and Mrs., Doctors, did genetic studies,
17 well, there was another genetics study last summer and
18 it's continuing for the next three summers and they all
19 agree that anywhere from 55 to 25 percent of the chum
20 caught in Area M in June are bound for Western Alaska.
21 Last year that was about 100,000 chums. Of those
22 chums, about 20 percent might have gone to Norton
23 Sound. It doesn't even talk about the king salmon.

24
25 So you may hear that, oh, it's
26 inconsequential, the Area M doesn't really affect
27 Western Alaska. When you can't make escapement and you
28 can't have subsistence fisheries, 100,000 chums would
29 go a long way.

30
31 They tried to lay the blame on climate,
32 particularly in the ocean, and food -- food changes and
33 things like that. And the Commissioner of Fish and
34 Game said, oh, this is an allocative issue. And I have
35 another letter -- I have way too much stuff here -- the
36 Chief Counsel for the Alaska Outdoors Council, a group
37 that usually scorns subsistence responded and said
38 that, you know, there's a subsistence priority, there's
39 an escapement priority, it is not allocative in the
40 definition of the law to award fishing and harvest to a
41 commercial entity and not provide for escapement and
42 subsistence first.

43
44 That's the State law.

45
46 That's the Federal law.

47
48 So anyway there was -- after the
49 meeting, disappointment, a whole bunch of us walked out
50

0082

1 of the meeting and Tanana Chiefs, Calista both had
2 their legal teams as did Alaska Outdoors Council all
3 write pretty tough sounding letters and there's still a
4 group of people that I participate with trying to
5 figure out what to do and maybe make this a Legislative
6 issue or elevate it to the Federal Board.

7

8 So lots of frustration and, you know,
9 we really did give it our best effort.

10

11 So it's very frustrating.

12

13 And to some of the things I heard said
14 this morning, Calista determined that Area M was eight
15 times as impactful to the chum runs as the pollock
16 fishery. That's a group that studies -- that did that
17 study that's not employed by the -- not employed by the
18 pollock industry or the State.

19

20 And another thing you should realize,
21 that if you look at the king salmon kind of collapsed
22 about 2000, the year 2000 and if you look at the
23 hatchery production of pink salmon in the Gulf of
24 Alaska, Alaskan hatcheries, that is when they reached
25 full production for pink salmon. So there's kind of
26 circumstantial evidence and there are studies in Oregon
27 and Washington with the Columbia king salmon and pink
28 salmon production there that indicate that the ocean
29 isn't an endless cornucopia of food, in fact, pink
30 salmon do compete with king salmon and it's very
31 coincidental that the pink salmon production in
32 hatcheries peaked at the same time the king salmon
33 populations collapsed all over Alaska, not just in the
34 Bering Sea. So the Board of Fish, in their wisdom
35 decided they didn't need to have a hatchery meeting
36 this year.

37

38 CHAIRMAN GREEN: What?

39

40 MR. LEAN: The Board of Fish decided
41 that they would cancel their hatchery discussions this
42 year and cancelled the meeting because this Area M
43 meeting took too long because we made too big of a
44 stink. So they have a budget and they're saying that
45 they can't afford to do their job.

46

47 So it's -- anyway, I think this is an
48 issue that's going to boil for a couple years. I hope
49 to come back with better news sometime.

50

0083

1 Thanks.

2

3

4 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Charlie.
5 You know, you know as well as I do I got involved back
6 in '93, we were at the table together, we played good
7 cop, bad cop with the Board of Fish, you and I, I'm
8 hearing the same story again. We're right back at the
9 table, we're pointing fingers in one direction when we
10 need to point them both ways. There's no way that I'm
11 going to be convinced that the trawler industry isn't
12 part of the problem. It just doesn't add up.

12

13

14 I am not disagreeing with you or
15 anybody about Area M. In fact I raised my hand at AFN
16 to take them on there with a resolution. But what I'm
17 hearing is we're going to fight with the same swords
18 that we used in 1993 and it didn't get us anywhere then
19 and I'm wondering what we're going to do to change the
20 way we fight this, and that's why one of the things I
21 do is I keep preaching that -- you know, I keep
22 preaching the hatchery issue. Use the fish -- use the
23 hatchery fish to find an ID and do all this stuff.
24 That Kotzebue hatchery up there, Sisualik, my buddy
25 Brian has been living there for seven years, that was
26 his dad's place and he worked there when he was a
27 little kid, Peter Robb and Kate, he said the fish are
28 still coming back to the creek. So if those fish are
29 -- DNA is built into those guys, go back to that creek,
30 and the last release was in '94, why can't we do that
31 with hatchery marked fish, put them in those guys'
32 plate there and say, look, you're stealing our fish.
33 We've got scientific proof.

33

34

35 You know we went through this thing
36 with the Norton Sound Advisory Committee, I was the
37 Vice Chair for, I don't know, more than half the time I
38 was there. We went in there and we battled all the way
39 through there and then we got to 1998 and by golly we
40 had a Tier II -- we had Board of Fish show up here on
41 our doorstep and tell us, you know, if you guys don't
42 want us to do the Tier II right now we'll give you a
43 year to create the framework for it. I ended up with
44 the -- it was Caleb Pungowi that started it off as the
45 Chair and I ended up getting the Chair seat and I went
46 through that whole year, I think there was -- maybe I
47 am hallucinating, but I think there was 20-something
48 meetings and it got divisive at the table. I mean I
49 could tell people were starting to play chess with how
50 they were going to get their chance at it. And there

50

1 were certain people that I think were right that said
2 don't go there, don't let them do this to us, we've got
3 the only Tier II salmon fishery in the whole state of
4 Alaska, in the history of the state of Alaska put on us
5 and it didn't do anything for conservation. It just
6 put a band-aid on the whole issue and until we went to
7 a commercial fishery, the Nome subdistrict, again was
8 lifted and that was nothing, that didn't do us any good
9 either, it just stripped some more fish out of our
10 system.

11

12 So, you know, how do we fight this. We
13 can't fight the way we did before, we got to do
14 something different. So I'm saying this because I'm
15 reaching out, I'm saying we need to look at all
16 alternatives. Yes, there's fish out there, those pinks
17 are taking a lot of the feed away from the kings but in
18 the Gulf, why don't we put some of our own fish out
19 there and let them do what the Sitsusualik Hatchery did
20 for 14 years, they got some wonderful runs up there, I
21 mean some of the best chum salmon in Alaska are there.
22 I think you'd agree with that, they're big fish.

23

24 So you know how they got the hatchery
25 up there, it was kind of -- it was supposed to come to
26 Nome, but they said well, heck, you guys are
27 intercepting our fish so we'll just put it up there and
28 people went, oh, yeah, we'll catch them on the way by,
29 well, that didn't happen but they got a nice 14 year
30 run up there and they still have fish. The EIS said
31 the Aggi River was a trout run, it's a great chum run
32 I've heard, I haven't been there myself.

33

34 But, anyway, Charlie, I was just trying
35 to make that point that we should be looking at
36 something else to do that. Because at these Board of
37 Fish meetings -- that's why I haven't gone because I
38 know I'm going to be doing what you're doing, banging
39 your head against the wall, it's frustrating, how do we
40 fight these guys. Science. We got to use that -- but
41 we got to use that building that has a can in there
42 that's going to put some eggs in there so when they go
43 out they get marked and they get caught, there's two
44 fisheries they could get caught in.

45

46 So anyway, that's my -- thank you.

47

48 So go ahead.

49

50

0085

1 MR. LEAN: So I wanted to say when
2 we're -- trying to take it to the Legislature, trying
3 to -- trying to look for other allies as well. We
4 picked up Nelson Lagoon and Chignik which are next door
5 neighbors to Area M. So we're -- and Bristol Bay has
6 always been on our side. So I think there's hope.

7
8 The other thing is that the Yukon and
9 Kuskokwim are more affected than they were back in our
10 day. And so there's, you know, 130,000 people in the
11 state affected badly by this, that's, you know,
12 geographically about half the state is badly affected
13 by this. I think we can make points, you know, it's
14 different than when just Norton Sound was in crises.

15
16 I have some hope, I'm not trying to be
17 as depressed as I probably sound, but it was a terrible
18 frustration so.

19
20 MR. GRAY: So one of my downfalls is I
21 usually don't like to start at the bottom, I like to
22 start at the top. If I have a problem, I go make a
23 phone call right to the top. And, you know, I -- I've
24 heard this fishery issue since I was, gosh, a young
25 adult, and it's been all of -- everybody who is local
26 here has lived through this, different ideas, different
27 fingerpointing and stuff. You know my thoughts on this
28 is we should ask OSM to give us a report on this,
29 somebody in OSM figure this out, study it, look at the
30 trends, look at whatever it is and come back and give
31 us a report. This is where it's at. We need them to
32 go to the big Board, our big Board and say we want
33 action. And not only action, let's get the
34 Congressional Delegation involved. We're in politics
35 that we can't compete in. I mean when the Board votes
36 and three vote in favor and four vote against, that's
37 -- that's not -- that's been set up by the industry and
38 we're never going to get that control so now it's how
39 do we get control, let's quit piddling around down at
40 the bottom here, let's climb the ladder and make
41 somebody responsible to advise us, which I think -- and
42 my thoughts is to throw it in OSM's lap, go deal with
43 it, figure it out, come back to us and advise us and
44 then we throw it in the big Board's lap and so on and
45 so forth.

46
47 But, you know, we're going to be here
48 20 years from now talking about the same issue. And,
49 you know, all of us have game plans. I've got my
50

0086

1 traditional council trying to get a half a million
2 dollar study and part of that study is to do DNA work
3 on Fish River salmon. And once we get that on the
4 shelf we can go back to Area M and buy some fish and,
5 oh, there's my DNA right there, whether it's ecol --
6 whether it's DNA from the river or whatever it is.
7 And, you know, marking fish through a hatchery,
8 whatever -- whatever the process is. We're down in the
9 weeds trying to make things better for ourselves and in
10 reality it may be Congress that has to step in and say
11 this is the way it's going to be. But somehow we've
12 got to get out of the weeds and get up on top of this
13 thing.

14
15 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Gray.
16 I threw myself at this pretty hard back in 1993. By
17 1994 I was running for the Board of Fish. I had to
18 wait seven weeks to find out it was John White that got
19 it out of Bethel. All we got out of that guy was Tier
20 II. He was a green guy, he wanted -- they used us.
21 They used us to get what they wanted and it didn't
22 work, Tier II didn't work. We hashed it over at the
23 Advisory Committee level, came to the conclusion that
24 wasn't the right thing to do. Hannah Miller was asking
25 me, telling me not to go there, you know, my grandma
26 and her fished together. So I threw myself in the fire
27 there and -- and the region got behind me, I didn't get
28 it. Johnny (Indiscernible), of all people, told me,
29 you got really close, our lobbyist was pulling for you.
30 Since then AVCP has approached me a couple different
31 times and I just never went there because I seen what
32 we did then and we hadn't changed up.

33
34 And I'll end this one right now and
35 we'll move on, is that, to do the same thing over and
36 over again expecting a different result, a different
37 end result is insanity and Einstein, it's -- we can't
38 do this again. We're going to be here, like he says,
39 in 20 years talking about it, if we're still alive
40 Charlie, you and us guys here, so we got to change up
41 the fight and hatchery work is one way to do it.

42
43 So let's move on.

44
45 We're pretty emotional about or salmon.

46
47 And we've got -- oh, Mary, go ahead.

48
49 MS. FREYTAG: Yes. We talk a lot about
50

0087

1 the fish in the ocean. A couple of three years ago on
2 the Unalakleet River, going up the river, we had salmon
3 bellies up coming down, just dead, because of the
4 climate change. I was just wondering if ADF&G
5 collaborates with Canada on the spawning, where the
6 salmon actually spawn on the Yukon River on their side,
7 if anything's happening on their side, if it would
8 affect the small salmon going back into the ocean. You
9 know, that's just another instant to look at, it would
10 be neat to see, because we're neighbors, and we share
11 the river. So it would be cool to see some research
12 done at the spawning grounds.

13
14

Thank you.

15
16

MR. LEAN: So -- so Canada does do
17 research and studies their juveniles and things like
18 that. But speaking of dead fish floating down the
19 river, you may have heard of ichthyophonosis, it's a
20 disease kind of like gangrene in people. It creates a
21 necrosis, or dead flesh, you know, pussy growth stuff,
22 bad tasting fish, but it usually doesn't strike the
23 fish until they approach the spawning grounds. And on
24 the Yukon the place where those fish seem to fall apart
25 is at Rampart, which is below Ft. Yukon, above Tanana
26 and that's -- so there is studies going on right now at
27 the University of Alaska-Fairbanks and I think
28 Washington and they are trying to -- talking about
29 putting another sonar counter in the river to --
30 because if they get the right number of fish at the
31 river mouth, by the time they get to Eagle, at the
32 Alaska border and Canada, the fish have dropped by a
33 third or so so they're dying somewhere in between,
34 they're not dying on the spawning grounds, they're
35 dying before they get there, which means they didn't
36 spawn. So that is being investigated. I don't think
37 the results are in yet so.

38
39

CHAIRMAN GREEN: You good, Mary, did he
40 answer your question?

41
42

MS. FREYTAG: So you guys don't work
43 with Canada at all at the spawning grounds at all?

44
45

MR. LEAN: Just a disclaimer, it's been
46 20 years since I worked at Fish and Game.

47
48

(Laughter)

49
50

0088

1 MR. LEAN: But, yes, there's a Treaty,
2 and not only does Fish and Game and Canadian DFO,
3 Department of Fisheries and Ocean, and the Federal
4 government all work together trying to figure out king
5 salmon on the Yukon and I'm not really up on that
6 research because it's not what I usually worry about
7 but I want to assure you that there are people looking
8 at it and in what they're most recently concerned about
9 is ichthyophonous in the middle Yukon. So that's my
10 answer.

11
12 MS. FREYTAG: Thank you.

13
14 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Mary.
15 Thank you, Charlie. So, you know, I hear about
16 diseases, like humans, fish have diseases, salmon have
17 diseases, a curiosity of mine is because a human being
18 can have allergies to certain types of food, well, we
19 kind of pick and choose what we eat, right, so -- but
20 those fish that are swimming around in that ocean
21 rearing up in the sea don't get to pick what they get,
22 they're going to get what they can get, period. And if
23 there's a missing link in there somewhere and it's
24 causing these fish to be weakened out there in the
25 ocean in the marine environment to where they can't get
26 what they need like old Vic Olsbury told me, oh,
27 everybody needs their meat, potatoes and vegetables,
28 well, he said, they're not getting them out there, he
29 told me this over 20 years ago. So is that an issue,
30 is that causing a problem, we don't know. Nobody's
31 going to know until they decide to bless us with the
32 information some day but couldn't that be something,
33 you know, who knows.

34
35 But, anyway, I -- I guess Tommy wants
36 to make one more comment and then we got to get off of
37 this.

38
39 MR. GRAY: Yeah. And I'm sorry but I
40 -- I haven't heard -- you know I suggested OSM do a
41 study and a report and it got real quiet in here. And,
42 anyway, I'd like to throw this to Charlie, is how can
43 this Board help with this situation, is -- is -- are we
44 missing something that we can help the process with?

45
46 MR. LEAN: Well, I think you're doing
47 it in bringing heat to the table. The more people
48 complain, the more people pay attention.

49
50

1 So the thing to ask, you know, is if it
2 -- if it's -- any of these big businesses, you know,
3 whether it's the Area M fishery, whether it's
4 hatcheries, whether it's the pollock fishery, all those
5 are big, big entities with lots of money and lots of
6 expertise in addressing sticky issues. And what we, in
7 Western Alaska, lack is -- is money and -- and the only
8 thing we can do is make a big stink and I think that's
9 what we all need to do. You know this used to be the
10 capital of chum salmon. This used to be the place
11 where the best king salmon in the world lived. And
12 Alaska bills itself, you know, as the pristine place
13 where we really take care of our fish and wildlife
14 resources, and all those things are not true anymore,
15 and it's very frustrating. I spent my entire career
16 trying to make it that but it's not true. And it's
17 very frustrating so.

18

19 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay.

20

21 MR. SEETOT: I think -- think one --
22 one example is that Western Science versus TEK. I
23 think I can see in example what -- what I've been
24 taught over the years, argue about the resource it
25 won't be there for you. I talked to one elder before
26 he passed, he said that the fish will be the first to
27 go. When the time comes the fish are the first to go.
28 He had that prior knowledge, I don't know how many
29 thousands of years ago but it was known, you know, to
30 that person, and here we're overlooking, we -- oh, we
31 -- we could solve problems on our own, no we can't.
32 Look at the shape our world is in, it -- it -- no
33 matter how much we try to turn it back we really can't
34 turn it back. Bering Straits, the west side of
35 Diomede, lots of traffic now, going on the Russian
36 side, what invasive species are there, what kind of
37 pollution that they're doing, petroleum, other than
38 under ground, under water noise, pollution, micro
39 plastics in -- in the water, and then we really don't
40 know the sea dynamics of the Bering Straits. They talk
41 about cold bottom moving to the north side, letting the
42 fish go up north, the -- how much acid is in the water
43 bottom, natural mortality of the species. We can
44 pretty much estimate on land the mortality of certain
45 species of animals because we can see what is being
46 unfolding before our eyes. Under water, we just -- we
47 really don't know. We really don't know because we
48 can't -- we just only see the surface.

49

50

0090

1 Back home, a lot of plastic is washing
2 ashore on the shores, it's coming from somewhere. The
3 water quality isn't that great anymore due to water
4 run-off from the Kuzitrin River, stuff like that.

5

6 Certain things that we're not being
7 able to do like drink out of Imuruk Basin like we did
8 30 years ago before the beaver came around, you know,
9 we caught fish in untold numbers because during that
10 time we used the species more and according to TEK, the
11 more you use it, the more it will be there for you.
12 And -- and that's one side I think that is constantly
13 missing, is that, when we try to argue about a point,
14 we don't look at all the issues that arise and we just
15 focus on one thing and we start blaming this and that.

16

17 So water pollution.

18

19 And then it -- it just -- everything is
20 going at a face pace that we're not really up to speed
21 on that. And so our fishermen are able to catch large
22 numbers because of modified gear or new modern gear
23 that -- that can pretty much wipe out a species. But
24 that's one of the things that -- I live right along the
25 coastline, I -- we try to be good stewards to the
26 salmon that pass through there, but other than that
27 that's all we can do because unforeseen circumstances
28 come into play. Winds from the south bring pollution,
29 the winds from the south bring erosion and with that
30 erosion might be something uncovered from long ago,
31 that's constantly on our mind, constantly on my mind.
32 It might not be for those that are -- that think that
33 they're Native but are not -- did not receive that
34 instruction from early on from the elders and elders
35 before us. Because I grew up in a strict family --
36 family environment where we're doing this and that. We
37 were told not to do this and that, we were told to do
38 this and -- and many of the things that I kind of
39 forgot because I had my own agenda in the younger days
40 and I didn't quite process all that information
41 correctly. Now I'm trying to place catch up and most
42 of that information that I should have presented 30
43 years ago, you know, oh, maybe I think it's this or
44 that.

45

46 But it's pretty much like the caribou,
47 moose situation ecosystem here, you have to look at
48 what's underneath and all we can see is just the top
49 and the water -- so much of our planet but I'm seeing

50

0091

1 things into play, you know, that I was told to be
2 cautious about.

3

4

So that's all I got, thank you.

5

6

7 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Elmer. I
8 think like I said I think we'll turn this on there's
9 something else, but all I know is there's good, great
10 salmon runs up north of us and there's great sockeye
11 runs in Bristol Bay but in the middle, Norton Sound,
12 Yukon and Kuskokwim something's really wrong out there
13 and I sure would like to find a way to get to it and
14 I've told you what I think and I'm not going to change
15 what way I think how we could get there and it would be
16 lot sooner, five years. Bureaucracy, we got to elect
17 people to go out there and fight for us because the
18 people that are there now have not done it. I brought
19 Mike Dunleavy to a hatchery out here when he was a
20 Senator and was willing to put money there but he said
21 your Senator and your Representative have to ask for
22 it, we have the control over that and we'll send it
23 your way. It didn't happen. So I heard my Senator
24 tell me in Unalakleet during a chum salmon summit,
25 Bethel people were there, and everybody was there and
26 the old -- Jim, you were there, we have to do
27 something, he was dancing up and down yelling at AYK,
28 Director Jon Lindermann, and everybody else in the
29 room, we have to do something or our children and our
30 grandchildren are going to blame us for what's going on
31 and what's happening.

31

32

33

34

35

36

So bureaucracy, it's one way to do it
but it's going to take a long time. A simple project
of running a hatchery which has proven itself above the
Arctic Circle certainly could work here.

37

38

39

40

But, anyway, I've said enough and I
think we've been killing this one sweetly, and,
Charlie, thank you. Okay, we're done with that.

41

42

43

44

45

46

Where are we at?

Somebody here with moose? Poor gal,
she knows more about fish than she knows about moose
now.

47

48

49

50

Yes. Sara Germain, you have the floor.

MS. GERMAIN: Okay, thank you, Mr.

0092

1 Chair. Good afternoon and hello to the Council members
2 as well. It's been awhile since I've been before you
3 and I see a couple of new faces so I figured I'd
4 reintroduce myself. My name is Sara Germain. I have
5 moved into the Area Biologist position exactly a year
6 ago. Bill Dunker left us for Kodiak and so now I've
7 moved into his position and Alicia Carson is here with
8 me, she's moved into the Assistant Area Biologist
9 position coming to us from King Salmon most recently.

10
11 So I wanted to talk to you guys quickly
12 about a moose update. We just finished our survey
13 maybe five days ago so this is kind of breaking news to
14 share with you today and then a couple of other things
15 on moose and muskox. I'll stop after moose and feel
16 free to ask me questions and then move on to muskox.

17
18 So, yeah, we completed our survey out
19 in Game Management Units 22D and E and I think Nissa
20 handed out a flier with a map of where that is and a
21 little bit of information for you guys to look at.
22 But, yeah, it was kind of a cooperative effort between
23 Fish and Game, Park Service and BLM, and what we ended
24 up seeing is about exactly the same as we did back when
25 we did the survey last in 2020 so things look pretty
26 stable up north which is kind of what we expected. And
27 that's the most recent abundance survey that we've
28 done. Next year we're going to focus on muskox instead
29 of moose. So taking a year off from moose.

30
31 Otherwise, back in the fall we did a
32 composition survey in the same area, Units 22D and E in
33 November and we ended up seeing bull/cow ratios which
34 were pretty much the same as what we'd seen the last
35 time we'd gotten in the area. So for Unit 22D and the
36 Kuzitrin River we saw 28 bulls per 100 cows and 22D
37 Remainder, which is in the American and Agiapuk Rivers,
38 that was still pretty low at 23 bulls per 100 cows and
39 in 22E we found 30 bulls per 100 cows. So 30 bulls per
40 2100 cows is kind of what we aim for as a minimum when
41 deciding our harvest rates and so 22D Remainder is
42 still pretty low so still trying to figure out what's
43 going on in that neck of the woods but, yeah, that is
44 our composition survey.

45
46 And, otherwise, I wanted to quickly
47 touch on some research projects that we've got going on
48 with moose. So we have been surveying a sample of
49 collared moose since 2020 looking at their calving
50

0093

1 rates and twinning rates to kind of get a better idea
2 of what the reproduction looks like for moose in --
3 specifically in Game Management Units 22C around here
4 and in 22D. So we've been doing that for three years
5 now. And then last summer we just started a calf
6 collaring study, which is my graduate research project
7 and we just did that last summer and we're going to do
8 another year of that for two years total and then I've
9 attached a graph here showing the twinning rates. So
10 basically what that means is everything looks pretty
11 good. They've got really high calving and twinning
12 rates for our area. And then, yeah, the calving
13 mortality stuff should conclude next year and I should
14 have the report next time -- I guess next year, what
15 the mortality looks like.

16

17 And then the only other thing going on
18 with moose this year, Alicia and I are hoping to do a
19 browse survey in the Unalakleet area just to get a
20 better idea of what the habitat looks like out there.
21 So we're hoping to do a browse survey as soon as the
22 weather clears up down there and then next year we may
23 weigh short yearlings just to get a better idea of how
24 they're doing and that's pretty much it for moose and
25 so I'll stop there for questions.

26

27 Yes.

28

29 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Sara. You
30 mentioned browse and so you're doing a study on browse.
31 What do fires do for browse?

32

33 MS. GERMAIN: Yeah, so generally in the
34 forested areas I think when fires move through it's
35 kind of a 10 year period that new growth moves through
36 and it produces some pretty good moose habitat so fires
37 can be good for moose sometimes.

38

39 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yeah, and that's what
40 I heard. Thank you. I heard that years ago at a Board
41 of Game meeting. I guess I asked the question then.
42 But I just wanted to make sure I was on the same as
43 there. So browse is created by burn just like people
44 burning their yards every spring, they got nice grass
45 growing all summer long, uh, you see that in Unalakleet
46 every year.

47

48 Okay, so anybody else, any questions
49 about moose for Sara. Tommy, go ahead, you're next.

50

0094

1 MR. HUNT: Yes.

2

3 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, him first, old
4 guy, and you're next, young guy.

5

6 MR. GRAY: Your goal, 23 bulls to 100
7 cows in D Remainder, 28 bulls to 100 cows in the rest
8 of D, are we going to see changes in harvestable
9 surplus or what's your plans here? And then the other
10 question I have in those two sections, what kind of
11 numbers do we have for cows? I mean you say 23 bulls,
12 100 cows, is there 5,000 cows in there or 200 cows?
13 What -- what are we talking about? But more
14 importantly, you know, if I was a biologist and saw 23
15 bulls to 100 cows, I would say, oh, we got to slow
16 down, or maybe they're migrating, who knows, you know,
17 the remainder is not that big of an area. And I do
18 know at AC meetings we talked about migrating animals
19 in and out of that area, so this 23 number, are there
20 some hidden issues here?

21

22 MS. GERMAIN: Through the Chair, yeah,
23 good questions, Tom. As far as the number of cows I'd
24 have to do some weird math to figure that one out
25 specifically to get from there from the 1,900 moose
26 that we estimate in that 22D and E combined area.

27

28 But as far as differences in harvest
29 strategy, so that 22D Remainder, we already closed it
30 down and added it to -- well, it's not -- closed down
31 for non-residents but for residents it became part of
32 the RM8440 area and it was managed by a quota beginning
33 in 2020 so our quota has been just 17 bulls since then
34 and that was kind of the reduced response -- reduction
35 in harvest and response to that low bull/cow ratio so
36 it's been, I guess, three years since we did the
37 composition survey before this one we just did in 2022
38 and numbers haven't changed so you may see even fewer
39 moose being harvested than the 17 that we've got in
40 that area but haven't had any real concrete
41 conversations about that yet. But as far as the rest
42 of the area, in 22D Kuzitrin, I think the reason why
43 that kind of dipped a little bit is a really high
44 harvest this year. We went above the quota which of
45 like 27 moose, bulls, and ended up harvesting somewhere
46 around 38 bulls. I guess learning -- this is my first
47 year managing the hunt by myself and I just under
48 anticipated the hunting force of folks in Kuzitrin, you
49 know, usually the season goes for four days and this
50

0095

1 year it kind of seemed like it should have been closed
2 in two so it's kind of going the way of 22C these days.
3 It seems like hunters are just getting better and
4 better at harvesting moose and faster at getting them
5 in those two days. So, yeah, I guess nothing should
6 change as far as quotas for 22D Kuzitrin. And then in
7 22E in response to that, the fact that it's now right
8 at our threshold for 30 bulls per 100 cows, we did
9 reduce the non-resident number of draw permits that we
10 issue. It used to be 10 and now it's five starting
11 this fall and the next so.

12

13 MR. GRAY: So that was going to be my
14 next question, is, where is non-residents going to go
15 because, you know, 30 bulls to 100 cows is not a good
16 number to sit and tell us. If it was 40 bulls to 100
17 cows I think all of us would do backflips here. But,
18 you know, that's -- that's a tough, tough number.

19

20 So five bull -- so you're going to keep
21 it on the books, the non-resident hunt for the time
22 being, I mean that -- I mean if it's going to change
23 next year that's a two year cycle, is that, so we've
24 got -- we've got five bulls for non-residents for the
25 next three years.

26

27 MS. GERMAIN: (Nods affirmatively)

28

29 MR. GRAY: Okay. I mean you got this
30 year and it's got to pass so that would be at least
31 three years.

32

33 MS. GERMAIN: (Nods affirmatively)

34

35 MR. GRAY: Yeah, okay. Well, a lot of
36 people are watching us and everybody is after a moose
37 and you guys are going to get criticized for lowering
38 numbers but you got to remember you're managing a
39 resource and that resource is a whole lot more
40 important than my freezer, so, good luck.

41

42 CHAIRMAN GREEN: So these permits,
43 these five permits, non -- that's -- is that dealing
44 with some of the guides up there?

45

46 MS. GERMAIN: (Nods affirmatively)

47

48 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yeah, because I've
49 been over there and seen a lot of activity over there.

50

0096

1 Okay, so we got Raymond. Thank you.

2

3 Sorry, Raymond, you were supposed to go
4 after Tommy.

5

6 MR. HUNT: So you're saying that you're
7 going to go to Unalakleet next, I'm wondering would it
8 be possible -- I'm kind of curious of Shaktoolik's
9 numbers now, you know, I live there and I'm a hunter
10 there and see if it's possible to -- to count our bulls
11 and cows there. And is this a -- is this a yearly
12 thing or every two years that you guys survey or?

13

14 MS. GERMAIN: So through the Chair,
15 yeah, thank you. We usually do them every three years
16 but we've changed to a four year cycle just so we don't
17 have both a muskox and a moose survey in the same year.
18 It was just too hard to get both done. And Shaktoolik
19 area, I think that isn't a part of our schedule, it's
20 more of an extra credit, or bonus area if we do get the
21 weather but it seems like since I've been here anyway,
22 the weather has just been, you know, so poor that when
23 we do the Unalakleet area it's all we can do to finish
24 by the end of March when the snow is starting to melt
25 and moose are just harder to see. So Unalakleet
26 usually is the priority, that drainage, 22A Central,
27 but then if the weather were to work out we would try
28 to do what's called a minimum count where we'd just see
29 like how many moose are in that area. And then in this
30 fall there is a chance that -- we don't have any
31 surveys planned so I'm hoping if the weather looks
32 good, it's kind of on my wish list to get into the
33 Shaktoolik area as well as the Koyuk Drainage and look
34 at bulls and kind of report back so.

35

36 MR. HUNT: And were you going to go
37 over muskox next?

38

39 MS. GERMAIN: (Nods affirmatively)

40

41 MR. HUNT: Okay. I'll ask a question
42 then for that. Thank you.

43

44 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Raymond.
45 Of those permits that are up there, I think that's 22E,
46 what kind of size of animal are they taking out of
47 there, are they taking out some pretty big breeders,
48 and that's what I kind of think I see on Facebook every
49 now and then, somebody will show it off.

50

0097

1 MS. GERMAIN: Yeah, thank you, Mr.
2 Chair.

3
4 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Doesn't that kind of
5 put a dent in our breeding stock a little bit?
6

7 MS. GERMAIN: Well, they have an antler
8 restriction so it's 50 inches on -- 50 inch spread or
9 four or more brow tines on each side so potentially.

10
11 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you. Anybody.

12
13 (No comments)

14
15 CHAIRMAN GREEN: On the phone.

16
17 MR. KIRK: Mr. Chair, Ron Kirk,
18 Stebbins.

19
20 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Go ahead.

21
22 MR. KIRK: I've been asking this for
23 years, you know, you've been doing moose surveys up
24 that way and every year I ask, are you going to do any
25 moose counting in the remainder of 22A from -- towards
26 Pikmiktalik drainage, because with all these wildfires
27 we've been getting a lot of moose and I'm curious to
28 see what our moose count is in 22 -- the remainder of
29 22A from Golsovia to Pikmiktalik River. We've been
30 seeing moose off and on, even this past winter, so I'm
31 wondering what our count is in that area. I've been
32 asking that for years, since I've been on this board
33 and you guys haven't been responding or making an
34 effort to do a moose count in our drainage, of
35 Pikmiktalik River and Nunanakok (ph) River. There's a
36 -- there's a valley that goes up from Nunanakok River,
37 we call (In Native) and that -- that valley there
38 there's an abundance of moose there and I'm wondering
39 what the count is.

40
41 Thank you, through the Chair.

42
43 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Ron. Go
44 ahead.

45
46 MS. GERMAIN: Yeah, through the Chair.
47 Thank you, Ron, for that question. Yeah, I think the
48 last time we were in that neck of the woods was back
49 when Letty was working with Fish and Game and was able
50

0098

1 to do a spring recruitment survey back in 2018,
2 somewhere around there. But, yeah, it has been awhile.
3 I wish that we could get down there. But, again, same
4 as Shaktoolik, seems like our window to get down and
5 survey moose is so short these last few winters that we
6 really only get like a few days of flying and it is
7 just hard to get even the Unalakleet drainage done with
8 the short window and, of course, I would like to get in
9 there, it's just a matter of getting the weather window
10 and the pilots on the hook and being able to get it
11 done. But, yeah, again, our next survey -- the next
12 time we're going to do the abundance survey for moose
13 in 22A, that Unalakleet drainage, is 2024, so -- I'm
14 sorry, that would be 2025, the spring of 2025 so maybe
15 if things were to work perfectly and we were to get the
16 survey done right away and we had some time, of course,
17 we would love to get into that Shaktoolik and kind of
18 south of the Golsovia and your neck of the woods to
19 count moose but I guess we'll see what the weather
20 does. It usually doesn't cooperate with us.

21

22 MR. KIRK: I got the tail end of your
23 report, I got cut off somehow so I had to redial in.
24 This is Ron Kirk again from Stebbins. Did you say you
25 were going to do the Shaktoolik area then our area if
26 you have time or what was your response?

27

28 MS. GERMAIN: Through the Chair, yeah,
29 we -- I was saying that both the Shaktoolik, that 22A
30 north and that 22A Remainder, which is down by you Ron,
31 we -- that is kind of like a bonus area if the weather
32 is perfect and we'd get the Unalakleet survey done
33 right away but usually the weather does not cooperate
34 for us to even be able to get the Unalakleet drainage
35 done in time but, yeah, so not sure when we're getting
36 down there next. But Unalakleet is scheduled for
37 spring of 2025.

38

39 MR. KIRK: Okay. And I'm curious
40 because with all these wildfires happening down south
41 I'm pretty sure the moose are being pushed up into our
42 area and I'm wondering -- I've been wondering what our
43 count is in this area. I sure would like you guys to
44 make an effort to come down to our remainder of 22A and
45 do a moose survey and count and have that available for
46 our people in this area because we're curious, too, of
47 what stock we have in our area.

48

49 Thank you, through the Chair.

50

0099

1 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you for your
2 questions, Ron.

3
4 Mary, go ahead.

5
6 MS. FREYTAG: Yes, thank you, Mr.
7 Chair. I see that you done the survey in March, that's
8 springtime. Falltime is when the rutting season and
9 they start mating and stuff, that's when they all
10 congregate. Isn't that a better time to do a survey
11 than in March when they're all spread out and all over
12 the creation. I mean just a suggestion or a comment.

13
14 Thank you.

15
16 MS. GERMAIN: Yeah, through the Chair.
17 Thank you, Mary, for that. We do get our bull/cow
18 ratios in the falltime when they are aggregated in
19 those like post-rutting clusters like you're saying but
20 the spring surveys, everywhere else in the state it
21 seems like does surveys in the fall but we just have
22 such poor snow conditions, like in Unalakleet, Alicia
23 and I were there, I believe, in December, and there was
24 just not a lot of snow yet and it makes it really hard
25 for us to be able to see moose when we're looking
26 through like just patches of brown and tussock so
27 generally we get our bull/cow ratios during those
28 composition surveys during the fall and then we do the
29 abundance in the spring when the snow is theoretically
30 deep enough to push them into the drainages and the
31 main river so it's much quicker for us to count them,
32 but thank you for that.

33
34 CHAIRMAN GREEN: You got it, thanks.

35
36 MS. FREYTAG: Thank you. That was just
37 a suggestion since I had the benefit of witnessing 40
38 bull moose in the falltime in one area, in one sitting.
39 It was quite the scene. So just a suggestion I wanted
40 to make on the surveys, you know, take the surveys when
41 they're all congregating together and coming together.

42
43 Thank you.

44
45 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thanks for your
46 comments and suggestion, Mary.

47
48 Anybody else. Any questions of Sara.

49
50

0100

1 Okay, Tommy.

2

3

4 MR. GRAY: So I'm sitting here
5 crunching numbers and I caught 1,900 moose in D and E,
6 and I'm -- I came up with about 500 bulls, am I in the
7 ball park or, I'm sorry, 402 bulls, am I close to being
8 on track or no?

8

9

10 MS. GERMAIN: Through the Chair. I may
11 -- I guess if you just did it on your calculator maybe
12 but we -- I just got these numbers yesterday at 3:00
13 p.m., and I haven't been able to like do anything,
14 yeah.

14

15

16 MR. GRAY: So what I did was I took all
17 your so many bulls to cows and crunched it and, anyway,
18 I'm thinking about this non-resident hunt up there and
19 -- and want to make sure that we're not overstepping
20 by taking away from the non-resident hunters and,
21 believe me, I'm first one to cry subsistence but when
22 we're talking almost 2,000 moose and 400 animals, you
23 know, I think we're being very conservative at five
24 animals. So that being said, the -- the other point
25 that I want to make is that in the springtime all the
26 animals are coming out of the trees and I never hear of
27 surveys like in April, or in May, but I counted on a
28 hillside one time 106 moose in about a mile circle and
29 I couldn't figure out -- I thought, gosh, caribou are
30 coming, I got to get my reindeer out of here and I went
31 and looked at it and here it was a burn and all those
32 moose just were on this old burn, which amazed me. So
33 -- and, you know, as a guide, bear -- moose aren't
34 going to stick around the trees too much in the deep
35 snow when the bears are coming out. They're on the
36 creeks and rivers where they're pretty stable walking.
37 So, you know, I sympathize with Raymond Hunt because
38 he's asking to be -- his area be justified or whatever,
39 that his hunt is going good. You know these guys have
40 open registration and they can take 200 moose out of
41 there if they want to but hopefully you guys are
42 tracking that and making sure that it's not over
43 hunted, so to speak.

43

44

45 But, anyway, there's more to the story
46 and I just wanted to touch on his request because it
47 could go sideways on you.

47

48

49 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Anybody else.

49

50

0101

1 (No comments)

2

3 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Sara, is that it?

4

5 MS. GERMAIN: Oh, yeah, through the

6 Chair. I was just going to add to Tom's comment.

7

8 CHAIRMAN GREEN: I was just trying to

9 wake you up.

10

11 MS. GERMAIN: Oh, I look -- oh, I'm not

12 done.

13

14 (Laughter)

15

16 CHAIRMAN GREEN: You have the floor

17 yet.

18

19 MS. GERMAIN: Yeah, I was just going to

20 say as far as reducing that non-resident harvest, that

21 was -- we had kind of accumulated all of the resident

22 data and then harvest from, yeah, it just ended up

23 being too high a harvest rate for that neck of the

24 woods and that's kind of the justification for reducing

25 the number of permits that were going to non-residents

26 in 22E because they are just so successful with those

27 hunts and, yeah, whereas maybe resident numbers

28 fluctuate you are always going to see 10 come out of

29 there so that's the -- kind of what we did in an effort

30 to slow that bull/cow ratio from going down further and

31 we'll see how it goes.

32

33 CHAIRMAN GREEN: You can eliminate all

34 five of them.

35

36 (Laughter)

37

38 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, so you've got

39 muskox next right.

40

41 MS. GERMAIN: Yeah.

42

43 (Coughing)

44

45 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Bless you.

46

47 MS. GERMAIN: Okay. So through the

48 Chair, just transitioning over to muskox. We really

49 don't have a whole lot new items to update so I just

50

0102

1 kind of figured I'd reiterate the last survey that we
2 did which was back in 2021 just to inform those
3 wildlife closure reviews that we're going to next.

4
5 So the last time that a population
6 abundance survey and composition survey was done was
7 2021 and the results of the abundance survey was that
8 there is an estimated 2,071 muskox throughout the
9 Seward Peninsula. And just to translate that it just
10 means that it's been stable since, gosh, 2012 now, 10
11 years. So next year, like I was saying earlier we're
12 hoping to get back and do another abundance survey for
13 that and then the composition survey, again things seem
14 generally stable with that. So the bull/cow ratio --
15 or the mature bull to cow ratio for the muskox survey
16 was estimated to be 38 mature bulls per 100 cows and
17 our management goal is 40 mature bulls per 100 cows so
18 pretty much right where we want them. At our current
19 harvest rates everything stayed the same for the most
20 part. So that is the composition and abundance survey.

21
22 And otherwise the harvest, I just
23 wanted to quickly show that, we generally issue 45 to
24 50 permits every year and the most recent data we have
25 completed is from 2021 so 32 of those permits were
26 filled for a hunter success rate of 68 percent.

27
28 And I guess the only other thing to
29 talk about with muskox is there's a research project
30 going on by our co-worker Brinn Phar and she's doing a
31 calf mortality study and that's been going on for
32 several years now and should be concluding this year
33 and hopefully she's going to have an update for
34 everybody next year, the year after that with
35 everything she's found.

36
37 So that's it for muskox and if you guys
38 got questions.

39
40 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Sara. Mr.
41 Gray has a question or a comment.

42
43 MR. GRAY: So you -- you listed 47
44 permits issued, 32 permits filled, is this both State
45 and Federal or is this just.....

46
47 MS. GERMAIN: (Nods affirmatively)

48
49 MR. GRAY: It's both State and Federal?
50

0103

1 MS. GERMAIN: (Nods affirmatively)

2

3 MR. GRAY: Okay. Yeah. And I
4 understand -- I understand that you have increased the
5 number of permits around Nome. Did you increase it by
6 much or what's the story, and are you going to shut it
7 down early like you did bear hunting once you meet a
8 certain quota?

9

10 MS. GERMAIN: Through the Chair. So,
11 yes, in 22C we did increase the number of permits so
12 in the past years we had five permits for TX095, the
13 inner-Nome area, and four permits for the outer Nome
14 area for a total of nine permits for 22C and starting
15 this regulatory year we have gone up to 15 muskox, not
16 just bulls so 15 muskox for that inner-Nome area and 15
17 muskox for the outer Nome area and, yes, we will have a
18 quota on cows so up to five cows may be taken per
19 TX095/096 and we'll emergency order the season closed
20 once we hit those five cows but the bull season would
21 remain open so you could still hunt a bull, but the
22 cows might be a shorter season, depending on how many
23 people end up harvesting.

24

25 MR. GRAY: So you went from nine to
26 what?

27

28 MS. GERMAIN: To 30.

29

30 MR. GRAY: Nine and something, I caught
31 15 and what.....

32

33 MS. GERMAIN: Sorry, that was
34 confusing. Five and four to 30 total, 15 and 15, does
35 that make sense?

36

37 MR. GRAY: Nine -- from nine in both
38 areas to 30?

39

40 MS. GERMAIN: (Nods affirmatively)

41

42 MR. GRAY: But you're going to keep the
43 bulls open?

44

45 MS. GERMAIN: (Nods affirmatively)

46

47 MR. GRAY: And the rest of the region
48 we're just on the same path we've been?

49

50

0104

1 MS. GERMAIN: (Nods affirmatively)

2

3

4 MR. GRAY: Okay. And then, you know,
5 it looks, to me, this is kind of interesting because
6 for 10 years the herd hasn't grown, so to speak, and,
7 you know, the Seward Peninsula has a lot more wolves
8 than we had 10 years ago, you know, depends who you
9 talk to, the bear population is such as it is, but, you
10 know, my -- I know this herd has expanded. I mean
11 you're seeing animals a long ways from here and our
12 numbers, in a sense, have stayed the same, but would
13 you say that the herd has actually increased in
14 expansion it's taking in a bigger area, so we're
15 staying status quo? Am I making sense?

15

16

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MS. GERMAIN: Yeah, through the Chair.

I see what you mean. They have expanded their range
but we do survey that whole area for the census and you
can kind of see it, it's kind of a poor quality graph,
but we do look at the -- I guess the inner -- gosh, the
historical area I guess is what it would be called, if
I could show you a map, and then the expanded area
includes Unalakleet, Shaktoolik and now even parts of
what's called Game Management Unit 21Delta, but, yeah,
they have expanded the range but the numbers overall
have stayed the same from what we've seen. But every
time that we see muskox kind of outside of our survey
area we try to expand it to include that but like you
were saying, every time we fly it's like, oh, shoot,
there are muskox even south of what we just added on
so, yeah.

MR. GRAY: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Raymond.

MR. HUNT: So on the survey of the
muskox, I think really suggest open, you know, eyes on
Shaktoolik, because over the past few years we never
had muskox but I know there's like three different
herds and they grow and obviously you can see like more
than half of them are young, you know, babies that --
calves that grow and that's obvious that the herds are
expanding and but like I said there's like, I know
three different areas of Shaktoolik, up river from
Shaktoolik and then between Shaktoolik and Unalakleet
foothills we call it, but that area, that herd has
grown a lot too, I know over 30 or so. But I think
eyes need to be opened, or for Shaktoolik-wise. And

0105

1 so, you know, I'm a hunter and I don't -- I've never
2 hunted muskox before but I think, you know, wanted to
3 try to help, you know, Shaktoolik muskox has grown and
4 then we had a chance to see what kind of damage they do
5 to the land and the -- they did a lot to our salmon
6 grounds this past summer, or a different herd that we
7 didn't know, came, and -- but, yeah, trying to
8 maintain, manage, you know, their population because
9 it's grown quick for Shaktoolik.

10

11 And I don't know, how are the permits
12 -- how are they, let's say I want to get one, how do I
13 get one, or is it chosen, is it picked or what?

14

15 MS. GERMAIN: Yeah, through the Chair.
16 Thank you, Raymond, that's a great question. So a hunt
17 did just open up in 22A a couple years ago and that
18 includes just the whole game -- Shaktoolik, Unalakleet,
19 down to St. Michael and Stebbins and I guess I could
20 try to explain the Tier II system but maybe off the
21 record to you, but basically you apply in November and
22 December and it is like -- the applications get ranked
23 and the highest scores get permits. So like you were
24 saying someone from Shaktoolik has gotten a permit and
25 you, absolutely, could as well but we could talk about
26 it a little bit more and we will try and get out to
27 that neck of the woods this fall and help people apply
28 and hopefully get muskox tags because there are nine
29 available for that whole 22A area. So, yeah.

30

31 MR. HUNT: Okay, yeah, thank you.
32 Because I -- you know, been thinking about that, but I
33 think I need to get into that though because our
34 numbers, you know, or Shaktoolik's numbers has grown,
35 you know, tremendously over the past few years and it's
36 like kind of getting out of hand now. And like I said
37 we got to see what kind of damage that they do with --
38 to our land -- or, you know, it happened to our
39 salmonberries unfortunately and, yeah, I just want to
40 check up on that try to maintain, you know, because
41 it's going pretty crazy with the muskox.

42

43 CHAIRMAN GREEN: You're done, Raymond.

44

45 MR. HUNT: Yeah.

46

47 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, thank you.

48

49 Tommy.

50

0106

1 MR. GRAY: Okay, I'm back again, sorry.
2 The State program, you know, and the State, Federal I
3 really like the Federal program. I really like it.
4 I've been involved in this hunt since it started. And
5 when the State decided we're going to have you guys cut
6 the antlers and send me the antlers, for what? I mean
7 back in the day they justified this by we're going to
8 take the trophy value away from the animal. Get real.
9 It's a subsistence hunter, it's a subsistence hunt,
10 it's us guys that are out there hunting. And, you
11 know, my son is carving ivory -- or not ivory, muskox
12 handles out of this thing, you're taking away from our
13 people for a trophy value, that's a guide issue.
14 That's where that all started. And -- and I just
15 struggle with it, I do. And, you know, you're going to
16 say well go put a proposal in and change it, well, you
17 guys started this can of worms, you fix it. You know
18 I'm not agreeable to change this can of worms because
19 it's -- it's not going to fly unless you guys support
20 it and if you guys don't support it it'll die. I can
21 put proposal after proposal and it don't matter. But I
22 do have -- it just -- I got drawn for a permit and --
23 for next year and I'm going to put in for a Federal
24 one, and if I get a Federal one, shoot I'm going to
25 drop that State one in a heartbeat. So here we go now,
26 we've got a State permit that's out there that should
27 be reassigned but I don't think you guys will reassign
28 it, it just gets dropped and that's not fair to the
29 system either.

30
31 So, anyway, I'm sorry, I just -- some
32 things are not right.

33
34 This young lady's getting an education.

35
36 (Laughter)

37
38 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Sara. Sara, he's made
39 out of glass, you can throw rocks at him.

40
41 (Laughter)

42
43 MS. GERMAIN: I knew about you before
44 you even came in the office.

45
46 (Laughter)

47
48 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Elmer, go ahead.

49
50

0107

1 MR. SEETOT: Just a comment to Raymond.
2 Welcome to the muskox club.

3
4 (Laughter)

5
6 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, where are we at
7 here. Anybody online, muskox.

8
9 (No comments)

10
11 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Hearing none, I think
12 we're done.

13
14 MR. GRAY: Thank you.

15
16 CHAIRMAN GREEN: We're going to have a
17 break here because people got to set up a camera or do
18 a presentation or some sort of thing.

19
20 (Off record)

21
22 (On record)

23
24 MS. PILCHER: Actually real quick.
25 Nissa Pilcher for the record. Just to let everybody
26 know that's online, we did have Mary and Martin come in
27 after lunch, they've been here the whole time, I forgot
28 to give a rundown after we came back on the record so
29 we do have everyone other than Deahl on.

30
31 So, Joel, I guess we'll turn it over to
32 you.

33
34 MR. GARLICHMILLER: Okay, well, thank
35 you very much for inviting me to this meeting. Nissa,
36 I'll just check briefly, I'm -- if you have my slides
37 up and are able to help me.

38
39 MS. PILCHER: Yep, they are up and
40 Brian is ready whenever you say next slide, or you may
41 do it earlier, he's warned.

42
43 MR. GARLICHMILLER: Okay. Okay, well,
44 good afternoon everyone. My name is Joel
45 GarlichMiller. I'm a walrus biologist. I work for the
46 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Marine
47 Mammals Management. And I've been a walrus researcher
48 manager for the past 30 years. I've had the
49 opportunity to work with subsistence walrus hunters
50

0108

1 from Arctic Canada, Russia, and Alaska, and most
2 everything I know about walruses I've learned from
3 that.

4

5 So I'm currently working primarily with
6 the Eskimo Walrus Commission based in Nome on the co-
7 management of the subsistence use of walruses in
8 Alaska. So today I thought I'd give you a brief
9 overview of some of the information on current status
10 and likely future trends of the Pacific walrus
11 population and a brief update on some of our planned
12 walrus co-management projects for this coming year.

13

14 Next slide, please, which should be
15 titled current status and future trends of Pacific
16 walrus population.

17

18 So back in 2012 the Fish and Wildlife
19 Service was petitioned to list walruses under the
20 Endangered Species Act due to threats associated with
21 sea ice loss across the Bering and Chuckchi Seas. In
22 response we conducted a species status assessment which
23 examined the current status and future threats to the
24 Pacific walrus population to try to predict what
25 impacts population stressors might have on the
26 population over time. Major findings of the analysis
27 included that the Pacific walrus population is
28 relatively large and healthy at the present time.
29 Subsistence hunting is occurring at sustainable levels
30 and changing sea ice conditions do not appear to be
31 significantly impacting reproductive rates or growth so
32 far.

33

34 Now, the future of the population is a
35 lot less certain, we see a lot of ecological changes
36 occurring and stresses associated with changing sea ice
37 habitat are expected to increase in the future and
38 eventually result in a population decline but we don't
39 really have enough information. There's quite a bit
40 of uncertainty about how soon or how much the
41 population will decline.

42

43 I think for me the most importantly in
44 our analysis is that we identified several things that
45 we can do as a society can do to help walruses cope
46 with ongoing and projected environmental changes that
47 could help preserve walruses for future generations.

48

49 Ultimately the analysis we conducted

50

0109

1 supported a decision not to list the walruses under the
2 Endangered Species Act at the present time but in full
3 disclosure that decision is being challenged in court
4 and it sounds like we're expecting that we might have
5 to prepare a new analysis in the near future.

6

7 So next slide, please, and this is a
8 graph titled walrus population trends.

9

10 So for our ESA we have information
11 collected from all the previous population surveys, and
12 available information on walrus reproductive rates and
13 survival as well as historical harvest patterns in the
14 United States and Russia to describe population trends
15 up to about 2015. The data analysis suggests that the
16 walrus population experienced a decline in the 1980s,
17 the 1990s associated with high harvest rates in the
18 U.S. and Russia and relatively low reproductive and
19 survival rates for those -- for that time period. But
20 the population appears to have stabilized in the late
21 2010s. Our most recent data suggests that calf
22 production and survival rates have improved since the
23 2000s and it's notable that harvest levels in the U.S.
24 and Russia are also much lower today than they were
25 back in the '80s and '90s.

26

27 Next slide, please, titled, Pacific
28 walrus abundance.

29

30 Although the model I just described
31 talks about population trends to about 2015, it doesn't
32 really tell us how many walruses are currently out
33 there. So in -- starting in 2013 we began a project to
34 estimate the size of the Pacific walrus population
35 using a technique known as mark/recapture, mark and
36 recapture. So this approach involves collecting large
37 numbers of skin, biopsy samples from free-ranging
38 walruses. We use cross bows outfitted with black
39 (indiscernible). Those of you familiar with detective
40 stories know that all of us and every animal has a
41 unique genetic identity coded in their DNA and we can
42 extract and analyze this DNA to identify individual
43 animals, and based on the number of individuals we
44 captured every year we were able to estimate population
45 size. So we just published a paper with that new
46 population estimate. We collected and analyzed more --
47 or samples from more than 8,000 individual walruses and
48 this -- we were able to populate estimate of
49 approximately 257,000 walruses. There's still quite a
50

0110

1 bit of uncertainty around that estimate but it's
2 notable that it is higher than our previous 2006
3 estimate of 126,000 animals.

4

5 Next slide, titled, next generation of
6 walrus population surveys, population studies.

7

8 So we are currently planning another
9 series of walrus population surveys. We hope to
10 conduct three more annual walrus research cruises in
11 the Chuckchi Sea, Bering Sea, possibly starting in June
12 of 2023. We hope to collect about 1,800 genetic biopsy
13 samples per year using crossbows. We will also be
14 collecting information about the age and gender
15 structure of the population using visual observations.

16

17 Next slide, partnership with Alaska
18 Native communities.

19

20 So during our previous walrus studies,
21 Alaska Native walrus hunters joined us and they
22 provided invaluable guidance and walrus distributions,
23 behavior, sea ice conditions, and their participation
24 was very crucial to the success of the mission. This
25 year, three subsistence walrus hunting captains from
26 St. Lawrence will be joining our field team working
27 alongside our Fish and Wildlife Service biologists on
28 the skiff to sample walrus. As with our previous
29 survey efforts we plan to maintain close contact with
30 coastal communities during the survey effort and
31 coordinate daily with community contacts if we want or
32 need to approach within 15 nautical miles of the
33 village. We are very sensitive to concerns about any
34 potential conflicts with subsistence hunting
35 activities.

36

37 Okay, next slide, please, future
38 outlook for walrus.

39

40 So looking to the future there's
41 obviously some very significant environmental changes
42 occurring in the Bering and Chuckchi Seas that over
43 time are expected to influence walrus distribution and
44 abundance. By mid-century winter sea ice across the
45 Bering Sea is expected to be greatly reduced and it's
46 quite possible that areas of current winter and spring
47 abundance in the Bering Strait region and below St.
48 Lawrence Island may move north over to areas of heavier
49 ice over time. Potentially even to areas north of the
50

0111

1 Strait. There's also already some acoustic evidence of
2 walrus overwintering up in the Chuckchi Sea. Now,
3 historically most of the population spent -- of walrus
4 spend the summer months in broken ice habitats in the
5 Chukchi Sea but as you likely know in recent years
6 we've seen summer sea ice routinely retreat beyond the
7 shallow Continental Shelf waters will all recede
8 forcing walrus to relocate to coastal areas to rest and
9 forage from land. The increased use of coastal walrus,
10 it may have population consequences over time.
11 Walrus that haulout, appear to be spending more
12 energy traveling to find food sources and this could
13 potentially lead to less energy for reproduction. The
14 most immediate concern is sources of disturbances which
15 are much greater at coastal haulouts than in off shore
16 ice habitats and because the walrus haulout in tight
17 -- in large tight groups they could lead to trampling
18 events and trampling mortalities. Particularly small
19 calves, they're vulnerable. And the population models
20 we've looked at suggest that walrus population can be
21 very sensitive to even small changes in calf survival.
22 So these are some -- certainly some conservation
23 concerns.

24
25 So t he next slide is adapting to
26 climate change.

27
28 I've given you kind of a bleak outlook
29 but I think it's really important to note that the
30 future of the walrus population has not yet been
31 written and there are, indeed, some things, you know,
32 we can do and should figure out how to do to help
33 walrus with changing habitats and preserve them for
34 future generations. So as walrus become more
35 dependent of coastal areas and human activity and
36 Arctic (indiscernible) we'll need to work hard to
37 minimize disturbances at haulouts the best we can.
38 Mortalities at coastal haulouts is a very real
39 management concern but it has a lot of potential for
40 mitigation, or correction. We've seen in recent years
41 that some number of walrus dying from disturbances at
42 coastal haulouts, sometimes even exceeds the number of
43 walrus harvested by subsistence hunters so, you know,
44 reducing unnecessary mortality of calves is going to be
45 crucial to keeping the walrus population healthy into
46 the future. If and when the population starts to
47 decline due to environmental conditions, we, managers,
48 subsistence users need to work very closely together to
49 ensure that harvest levels continue to remain
50

0112

1 sustainable and obviously the best normal way for this
2 to succeed will be working through co-management
3 structures.

4

5 So I guess my outlook is as the climate
6 stressors increase, co-management efforts are going to
7 be increasingly important for the future of the
8 species.

9

10 The next slide is a picture of a large
11 coastal walrus haulout in the Chuckchi Sea village of
12 Bankorion and I'd just like to say there are many
13 reasons for optimism. We've seen some very effective
14 efforts to minimize disturbance related stampedes at
15 coastal haulouts occurring very much at the local
16 level. Coastal communities both in Alaska and in
17 Chukotka (ph) are developing local management programs
18 to help minimize impacts. These efforts are resulting
19 in some solid and positive conservation metrics
20 including -- efforts have included self-imposed hunting
21 restrictions for walruses at the haulouts, rerouting
22 aircraft supply flights away from the haulouts and
23 developing viewing guidelines for visitors to reduce
24 unnecessary trampling events. Here in Alaska, the
25 Native Village of Point Lay has taken on a very active
26 and effective role in the protection and stewardship of
27 an enormous walrus haulout which is has formed in front
28 of their communities in recent years. They actively
29 are involved in the management and protection of that
30 haulout from disturbances and are partnering with
31 Eskimo Walrus Commission and Fish and Wildlife Service
32 on walrus research and management at that site.

33

34 The next slide is keeping walrus
35 harvest sustainable in the future.

36

37 I know it's a sensitive topic but it's
38 one that -- that we're having fruitful conversations
39 on. Pacific walrus have been harvested by subsistence
40 hunters, as you know, for many thousands of years and
41 in many coastal villages, both here in Alaska and
42 Russia, they're very important to the economy and the
43 culture of those communities. We've seen harvest
44 levels fluctuate from about 2,000 to about 16,000
45 animals per year over the past 60 years. Recent
46 harvest levels, as I mentioned earlier, are much lower
47 than some of these historical highs. I think, in part,
48 due to the cessation of commercial hunting in Russia
49 starting about the mid-1990s and we've also seen

50

0113

1 steadily declining harvest rates in Alaska, this, I
2 think, is primarily, as I understand it from hunters,
3 due to lost opportunity because of unstable ice. In
4 recent years total harvest removal, you know, in the
5 United States and Russia, combined, have averaged under
6 4,000 walrus per year. This represents less than two
7 percent of our current population estimate and is a
8 harvest rate that we consider sustainable.

9

10 Next slide, and that's strengthening
11 walrus harvest management.

12

13 So to maintain sustainable harvest in
14 the future we'll need to, you know, work to try to keep
15 total harvest levels in the U.S. and Russia below a
16 safe biological removal level and this is going to
17 depend on good population and harvest monitoring data
18 to do that. We have always -- we continue to work on
19 strengthening co-management structures and
20 relationships. We work very closely and
21 collaboratively with the EWC and I think we're making
22 very good efforts there. We're trying to work to
23 develop a shared management vision and shared
24 decisionmaking for all of our decisions. It's
25 important, I think, to point out to this group, in case
26 you didn't know that the Fish and Wildlife Service, or
27 the government, does not have any authority or plans to
28 regulate the size or composition of the subsistence
29 walrus harvest in Alaska, but that the communities
30 certainly do.

31

32 Public outreach is another point I put
33 on the slide.

34

35 There's been one issue that has -- a
36 lot of walrus hunters in Alaska are facing, there's
37 been a growing number of restrictions on the sale of
38 walrus ivory products online, there's even some State
39 bans that have popped up, you know, due to the
40 misguided belief that walrus hunting is not
41 sustainable. And so, you know, the Eskimo Walrus
42 Commission and others face the challenge of trying to
43 educate the public to try and preserve markets for
44 ivory products.

45

46 The Marine Mammal Protection Act is
47 what sort of guides our management activities and it
48 provides -- it urges co-management of subsistence use
49 of walruses and so that co-management activities for
50

50

0114

1 walrus are carried out jointly by Fish and Wildlife
2 Service and Eskimo Walrus Commission, so we have laid
3 out sort of a shared vision for walrus co-management
4 through a series of meetings and our co-management
5 mutual -- co-management goals include maintaining
6 healthy walrus population, providing for sustainable
7 subsistence uses of walruses and preserving walrus
8 subsistence culture now and into the future. There's
9 not much we can do to reverse the effects of climate
10 change but we're trying to work together through a co-
11 management framework to help walrus adapt to changing
12 habitats. So key components of our co-management
13 framework include, you know, coming up with a shared
14 management vision and shared decisionmaking authority
15 for those decisions, relying on good and accurate
16 population and harvest data to inform those harvest
17 management decisions and we need to inform and involve
18 subsistence hunters broadly across rural Alaska on
19 walrus management activities and incorporate the
20 incredible knowledge base of subsistence users in our
21 management efforts.

22

23 So next slide, self regulation of
24 walrus harvest in Alaska.

25

26 Some of you may be aware of the efforts
27 by the tribal governments of Gambell and Savoonga on
28 St. Lawrence Island to develop, or they actually
29 resurrected old ones but they tried to reestablish
30 tribal marine mammal hunting ordinances including
31 establishment of trip limits for walrus hunting and so
32 this has been a really proactive effort on their part
33 and -- and may provide a potential model for
34 establishing tribally based harvest management systems
35 across the rest of the state at some point in the
36 future. In 2019 we participated in a joint meeting of
37 the Gambell and Savoonga Marine Mammal Advisory
38 Councils, and those are the traditional councils that
39 oversee the hunting ordinances and we talked about some
40 of the challenges faced by the communities in
41 developing and standing up the ordinances so we just
42 received some funding this year to support another
43 joint meeting and we're -- they want to develop a
44 business plan and we're trying to find out how the
45 Eskimo Walrus Commission and Fish and Wildlife Service
46 can help with technical, logistical or financial
47 support.

48

49 Next slide, please. I'm almost done.

50

0115

1 The next slide is walrus harvest assessment.

2

3

4 So one of the priorities identified by
5 our co-management partners at some of these recent
6 meetings is the need for accurate population and
7 harvest information to track the status of the
8 population and provide good information to inform
9 tribal hunting ordinances. The good news is that we
10 have some breathing room. The recent population
11 studies suggest that walrus population is larger than
12 expected and harvest levels appear to be well within
13 sustainable range so we have some breathing room to
14 figure out a good strategy before we go into any sort
15 of crises mode. And population models can be a really
16 useful tool for this purpose, for informing harvest
17 management strategies. And they also are able to --
18 may be helpful to win the battle for ivory bans by
19 demonstrating that current harvest levels is being
20 carried out in a responsible and sustainable way. So
21 we are in the process of building a population model
22 based on the best available information about walrus
23 population and its resiliency to sea ice loss and
24 disturbances. The model is intended to be developed as
25 a flexible tool, it could be used to evaluate various
26 harvest patterns for walruses in a changing
27 environment.

27

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Next slide. Incorporating indigenous
knowledge.

We wanted to make sure that the walrus
harvest assessment model includes both Western Science
and indigenous knowledge. There are many, many gaps in
Western Science about walrus life history and things
like that that the seasoned walrus experts around the
state could help us fulfill. The Eskimo Walrus
Commission is encouraged to incorporate indigenous
knowledge directly into the model and we're in the
process of consulting with the tribal governments to
see what management objectives and harvest scenarios
that they would like to see. So, again, we received a
grant this year to facilitate incorporation of
indigenous knowledge into the model and we're
tentatively planning this workshop in Nome in August of
2023.

Next slide is just my wrap up, I'm
sorry I went so fast. I wanted to take time to thank
you for your time and attention and I'm happy to

0116

1 address any questions or comments as time allows.

2

3 Thank you.

4

5 (Pause)

6

7 MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa
8 Pilcher.....

9

10 MR. GARLICHMILLER: Hello?

11

12 MS. PILCHER:for the record.
13 Joel, we do hear you loud and clear, I'm not sure
14 there's any questions at this moment but we did appear
15 to lose our Chair, are Council members good.

16

17 MR. GRAY: I asked who was that?

18

19 MS. PILCHER: Joel GarlichMiller with
20 Fish and Wildlife Service.

21

22 MR. KIRK: Tommy, you fall asleep.

23

24 MR. GARLICHMILLER: Did I put everyone
25 to sleep, apologies.

26

27 MR. GRAY: So my name is Tom Gray. I
28 don't know that I've met you. I've met some of the
29 Fish and Wildlife guys. I'm glad to see -- I was very
30 concerned that the State was doing all the talking here
31 and -- and I was happy to hear it's the Feds and -- and
32 involving hunters in co-management. You know, I'm head
33 of the Beluga Whale Committee and I deal with NMFS and
34 NOAA and on and on. And it's refreshing to see co-
35 management talked about and in a priority. And -- and
36 management of animals and working on issues prior to
37 usually things aren't worked on until it's a crises
38 and, anyway, it's good to see this process being talked
39 about and moving forward.

40

41 So thank you for your presentation.

42

43 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Tom.
44 Anybody have any other comments or questions.

45

46 Martin, go ahead.

47

48 MR. AUKONGAK: I will comment on the
49 ivory there. You know I was in Hawaii twice this

50

0117

1 winter and the people there they have shells, those
2 shells were living before too, but they get to sell
3 them, and that thing was a live animal. You know, I go
4 beachcombing, I get ivory all the time, you know, it's
5 our people, we do carving. You know I don't go to a
6 farm in Texas and tell a guy to kill a cow and don't
7 sell the leather. I mean our people are a little too
8 nice and I hope they reverse that law.

9

10 (Laughter)

11

12 CHAIRMAN GREEN: That was a great way
13 to put it, Martin, thank you.

14

15 Anybody else.

16

17 Ron Kirk, online.

18

19 MR. KIRK: Yeah, I'm online, Mr. Chair.

20

21 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Did you have a
22 question or a comment.

23

24 MR. KIRK: Only comment I'd like to
25 make is like that young man said, our ivory is our way
26 of life. I'm doing a little bit of that right now and
27 it's pretty hard to try to sell it to a non-Native
28 like our teachers that are from out of town and they're
29 afraid to take it back to their state because it's
30 illegal and everybody's saying that, you know, how do
31 they know it's not elephant ivory and where -- whereas
32 it comes from our source, you know, we go out there, we
33 comb the beach and we gather ivory and that's how we
34 make our living.

35

36 That's all, thank you, Mr. Chair.

37

38 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Ron. I
39 spent a lot of time on the beach with a SuperCub back
40 in the day so, yeah, it is a way of making a living up
41 here, it's our way. Appreciate your guys' comments.

42

43 Anybody else on the Council.

44

45 MS. FREYTAG: Mr. Chair.

46

47 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Mary.

48

49 MS. FREYTAG: This is Mary Freytag. I

50

0118

1 was just curious if, you know, we talk a lot about fish
2 bycatch, those Russian trawlers, I know you don't have
3 any information from them but is it possible that
4 there's any kind of bycatch possible when they're
5 trawling, do they catch big mammals and stuff and
6 report that, is that something in your area?

7

8 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Mary.

9

10 MR. GARLICHMILLER: Through the Chair.
11 Mary, hello. We do have some information -- oh, you're
12 talking about direct interaction with the walrus rather
13 than impacts to the bottom, those are two different
14 things. Here in Alaska we do have fishery observer
15 programs, and with respect to interactions with
16 walruses it's fairly limited, four or five walruses,
17 mostly down in the trawl fishery, yellow fin sole,
18 Bristol Bay, they -- they pick up and a lot of them
19 tend to be mortalities. So there's not too much of a
20 conservation concern here in Alaska. In Russia we
21 don't -- as you alluded, we don't have a lot of
22 information. I do hear anecdotally and I saw -- I've
23 seen a couple of videos, I know occasionally that
24 walruses do interact with pollock fishery gear over
25 there but we don't have a full picture of numbers.

26

27 MS. FREYTAG: Thank you.

28

29 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you. Thank you
30 for the question, Mary. It's interesting, is that,
31 there's such a thing -- I sat through the courthouse
32 hearings on the Marine Mammal Protection Act while they
33 were working it out and I -- I have a hard time
34 believing that doesn't apply to these trawlers, even on
35 the American side, how they can destroy that animal and
36 not have any repercussions. They're not Alaska Natives
37 fishing with a trawler boat.

38

39 Anyway, is there anybody else.

40

41 (No comments)

42

43 CHAIRMAN GREEN: I guess we can move
44 forward. Thank you.

45

46 MR. KIRK: Mr. Chair, Ron Kirk,
47 Stebbins.

48

49 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Oh, go ahead, Ron.

50

0119

1 MR. KIRK: Just one more comment.
2 Yeah, I just wanted the person making the -- talking
3 about the hand people that they're aware of what I was
4 taught when I was young going out hunting with our
5 elders, if you notice the walrus -- some of the walrus
6 have tan ivory like yellowish ivory. Our elders told
7 me that you have to -- you need to avoid those, they
8 consider those orphans, they consider those walrus
9 orphans. They're meat eaters. The elders used to tell
10 us to be very careful of walking on thin ice because if
11 a walrus see a shadow through the thin ice, a meat
12 eater, he's going to break through that ice and pull
13 you down. That's all I wanted to say, Mr. Chair.

14
15 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Ron, for
16 your comment. Anyone else.

17
18 (No comments)

19
20 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, thank you.
21 We'll move forward. Thanks.

22
23 MS. PILCHER: Mr. Chair, through the
24 record -- or for the record this is Nissa Pilcher, so
25 next up we have Mike -- or Michael Cameron with, I
26 believe NOAA. Mike, are you on?

27
28 MR. CAMERON: Hello, yes, I am, can
29 you hear me?

30
31 MS. PILCHER: Sure can. And your
32 presentation is up and ready.

33
34 MR. CAMERON: Okay, great, thanks very
35 much. I'd like to thank the Council for the
36 opportunity to talk today about our program of
37 research. I know that these Regional Advisory Councils
38 don't always include marine mammals, but the Alaska
39 Native Ice Seal Committee recommended that we gave this
40 presentation once we were invited.

41
42 One thing to be aware of, I guess, is
43 when I use the term, subsistence, I'm referring to
44 Alaska Native subsistence hunting and the use of marine
45 mammals, so that might be a little bit different than
46 the use of subsistence for moose and caribou that I
47 heard earlier today.

48
49 There's no restrictions on Alaska
50

0120

1 Native harvest of seals in Alaska other than if they're
2 -- it can't be wasteful.

3

4

5 I'm here to talk to you about the
6 program of research conducted at the Polar Ecosystems
7 Program, which is part of NOAA Fishery, the Marine
8 Mammal Laboratory in Seattle, Washington. Some of you
9 might know the name Peter Boveng, he was the leader of
10 our program for many years. He's actually still with
11 the program but he recently stepped down and I've taken
12 over those duties. So I wanted to take the opportunity
13 to introduce myself and the program.

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14 You can skip over Slide 2 and go to
15 Slide 3.

17 The Polar Ecosystems Program monitors
18 and studies bearded, ringed, spotted, ribbon seals,
19 collectively known as ice associated seals and also
20 harbor seals in Alaska. So we are responsible for
21 conducting Federal research on all five of the true
22 seals in Alaska. Given that this is the Seward
23 Peninsula RAC, I'll mostly just be restricting the rest
24 of this talk to the ice associated seals.

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26 Slide 4.

28 There's some evidence that seals might
29 be responding to changes in the Bering Sea. There's
30 been some evidence in some studies that have declined
31 in body condition of some age classes and species and
32 so it's more important to be monitoring these animals.
33 Many ways that we want to monitor them can only really
34 be done or can best be done in the spring when we
35 recognize that residents will be hunting marine mammals
36 and we've shown -- we believe and we've shown that we
37 can conduct this work without impacting that hunting
38 success. NOAA has a mandate under the Marine Mammal
39 Protection Act, which we just heard about and also the
40 Endangered Species Act to manage and conserve marine
41 mammals. The Marine Mammal Protection Act also
42 establishes ways for us to co-manage these species
43 directly with tribal nations and indigenous people.

44

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45 Slide 5.

47 So as part of that NOAA has a co-
48 management agreement with the Alaska Native Ice Seal
49 Committee. There are two representatives from each of

0121

1 the five regions that take ice associated seals for
2 subsistence purposes. From the Bering Strait region, I
3 believe your two current representatives are Brandon
4 Ahmasuk and Ben Kiwana (ph).

5

6 In addition to the co-management
7 agreement and the ice associated -- excuse me -- the
8 Ice Seal Committee also has a working group, which in
9 addition to NOAA includes researchers from the Alaska
10 Department of Fish and Game, educational institutions
11 like University of Alaska-Fairbanks and other
12 institutions. Together this co-management working
13 group developed the Alaska ice seal research plan.
14 This plan is available online and it outlines all of
15 the projects that the Ice Seal Committee and the
16 working group has deemed important, either have been
17 conducted in the past or are currently being conducted
18 or hopes for being conducted in the future. All of the
19 projects I'll be describing from here on out were
20 described in that plan.

21

22 Slide 6.

23

24 So as I mentioned we monitor and study
25 the four species of ice associated seals and harbor
26 seals in Alaska to support management and co-
27 management. We do that research mostly by two main
28 methods. The first is using aerial surveys for
29 abundance and distribution. We've been doing that
30 since the 1990s. But we also have a very active
31 tagging and sampling program. That work is either
32 based out of -- directly out of communities or from
33 vessels at sea.

34

35 Slide 7.

36

37 So speaking first about that program of
38 vessel based work, we want to understand how many seals
39 there are in the populations, their seasonal movements
40 and also how healthy they are and how they're
41 responding to habitat changes.

42

43 Slide 8.

44

45 So those vessel based projects
46 typically occur at the southern edge of the Bering Sea
47 pack ice. Earlier on these were being conducted
48 annually in May and June, but more recently since 2014,
49 in even years they've been conducted in April, although
50

0122

1 we did have to cancel our crews in 2020 for Covid
2 concerns. We are expecting to conduct these vessel
3 based projects again in the Bering Sea in April of 2024
4 and I'll be talking a little bit about that later.
5 Essentially we use the NOAA ship Oscar Dyson to help us
6 gain access to the sea ice edge. We launch small
7 inflatable boats, we move quietly through the pack ice
8 and when we can we jump out on the ice flows using
9 what's essentially salmon landing nets to capture the
10 seals on the ice flow where they are. At this location
11 and at this time of year we're mostly capturing ribbon
12 and spotted seals although we have had the opportunity
13 to capture ringed and bearded seals as well.

14

15 Slide 9.

16

17 So once an animal is captured, we will
18 instrument them with satellite tags. The satellite
19 tags are tags that are glued or affixed -- glued to the
20 seal's fur or hair or also connected to its rear
21 flippers. These satellite tags provide information on
22 their seasonal movements and their foraging behavior
23 which is useful for understanding how they use their
24 habitat and move within their ecosystem. These tags
25 also record information on the timing of their hauling
26 out, the time of day that they haul out on to the ice,
27 how long they're hauled out and when they go back into
28 the water. These vary with lots of different co-
29 variants, age and species, obviously but also weather,
30 time of day and such. And all of this goes into models
31 that help us to correct our aerial surveys. Aerial
32 surveys can only count the number of animals that are
33 hauled out on top of the sea ice and so we need
34 information from these satellite tags to help us
35 estimate the proportion of the population that's under
36 water at any one time. We also collect measurements
37 and tissue samples from these animals to help us
38 understand their health and condition and to help
39 measure their genetic distinctiveness which could be
40 useful for stock structure. And most recently we've
41 also started using uncrewed aerial systems, or UAS, to
42 help us start additional investigations into body
43 condition.

44

45 Slide 10.

46

47 This kind of shows the area where we
48 normally conduct our vessel based work, this black oval
49 to the left of St. Matthew Island is our general
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0123

1 location where we conduct our work. We chose this
2 location for a few reasons. One, it's close to the
3 shell break, the sea ice edge is also coincident with
4 the shelf break at about this location in April. Also
5 the distribution of ribbon and spotted seals tends to
6 increase the further we go to the west so we have the
7 greatest opportunity of encountering lots of animals to
8 capture. These pink buffers that you see around the
9 coastline I'll discuss a little bit later in detail,
10 but, specifically, they are locations where we have,
11 through various agreements, to never use our Oscar
12 Dyson, the large vessel, we'll never be entering into
13 those regions in April when we're conducting our work.
14 And, again, I'll mention that a little bit later.

15
16 I'd like to mention that this most
17 recent trip, in particular, in 2022, we were able to
18 partner with Bering Sea communities. The Ice Seal
19 Committee co-management group recommended that we
20 involve Alaska Native seal hunters in future
21 expeditions aboard our Oscar Dyson. In 2019 the Ice
22 Seal Committee agreed that we should work with Kawerak
23 to help make that happen. As I mentioned, in 2020 we
24 had to cancel our expedition, but in 2022 Kawerak
25 selected Austin Ahmasuk as a partner on that
26 expedition. Overall we found it very useful, rewarding
27 to be able to work with Kawarek and Austin, in
28 particular, on these cruises. We hope to continue this
29 relationship by partnering with other Bering Sea
30 communities for our crews in 2024. Decisions for the
31 regions that'll we'll be participating with will be
32 informed by the Ice Seal Committee. But really the
33 best part of that is, I think, is we're able to really
34 involve traditional knowledge and be able to see the
35 ecosystem and the habitat with the eyes of an Alaska
36 Native seal hunter, it's necessarily different than a
37 Western Scientists view it and I'd like to think that
38 the cooperative back and forth conversations that we
39 had while either out on the ice or around the dinner
40 table really helped to solidify that relationship and
41 can only serve to improve our science going forward --
42 our science and co-management going forward.

43
44 Slide 12.

45
46 So this is the slide that I wanted to
47 give you a little more information on.

48
49 These are the agreements we currently
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0124

1 have about restrictions on where we will and won't
2 work. In general, everywhere along the coast we won't
3 be entering within 12 nautical miles or 30 nautical
4 miles with any of the whaling and sealing communities.
5 If we ever see more than one walrus we tend to move to
6 a different location. If we ever see hunters we also
7 move to another location. We send out daily
8 communications via email and text to over 200 different
9 people in communities. Each one of those daily
10 communications gives a map of our location, the
11 existing sea ice concentration and an idea of what our
12 plan is for that day as well as ways to communicate
13 with us if any of the recipients decide that it would
14 be smarter for us to be operating in a different
15 location.

16

17 The main thing, though, that I think is
18 important is like hunters, we don't want to disturb the
19 seals. Capturing seals requires stealth and quiet and
20 any disturbance from any of our work will necessarily
21 impact our ability to effectively monitor these seals.
22 The Oscar Dyson, in particular, is specifically
23 designed as a fisheries research vessel and as such
24 it's one of the most acoustically quiet vessels out
25 there. All of these plans here have been developed
26 over years of discussions with the Ice Seal Committee
27 and coastal communities. It's an iterative process and
28 there's always room for improvement.

29

30 Slide 13.

31

32 Our next way of conducting research is
33 through aerial surveys. Our goal, of course, is to be
34 able to determine the abundance and distribution of
35 seals and polar bears, as a recent addition. Our
36 surveys are conducted as frequently as we can but they
37 are extensive and logistically challenging to conduct
38 so there's quite a lot of time in between being able to
39 conduct different surveys. Our first group of surveys
40 was conducted in the Bering Sea in 2012 to 2013. The
41 Chuckchi Sea then in 2016. And the Southern Beaufort
42 in 2021. We hope to be and we expect to be back in the
43 Bering Sea in 2024, next year, in April again
44 conducting aerial surveys. We conduct these surveys in
45 the spring when a large proportion of the seal
46 population has crawled out on to the ice in order to
47 give birth and to molt. All of the plans were, again,
48 discussed with the Ice Seal Committee, coastal
49 communities and various other organizations for their
50

0125

1 input and we have modified our plans multiple times at
2 their request and recommendation.

3

4

Slide 14.

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6

7 So I'm just going to give you a quick
8 example of what we've done here most recently in our
9 Beaufort Sea survey in 2021. Instead of using surveys
10 with a person looking out the window and estimating
11 distance and age and species of the seals that they're
12 seeing, we conduct all of our work with cameras. The
13 advantage of this is it allows us to fly much higher,
14 which greatly reduces disturbance, it also allows us to
15 fly faster, faster than a human being could be able to
16 reliably see all the animals in their field of view.
17 By being able to take images, it also allows us to go
18 back over any of these images to reanalyze them for
19 various other things, for example, habitats or new ways
20 of being able to identify seals on the ice.

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We have a suite of camera systems that we use to detect animals. The first is through a thermal or infrared camera which detects the heat signature of a seal against the cold background sea ice. Once we get those hot spots we link them up with the visual imagery which allows us to identify the hot spot to species. Recently we've also been incorporating an ultraviolet camera which being able to detect polar bears when they're in their habitat. Suffices to say we bring back a lot of imagery as these are recording continuously throughout all our flights.

33

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Slide 15.

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Well, I guess I should have used this slide with my earlier description, but on the left hand side you can see an example of our infrared imagery and this image on the left is hot, or warmer and you can see those same dots represented in the color imagery on the right hand side, we can zoom in and identify them as bearded seals.

42

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Slide 16.

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There's a lot of complications with conducting these sorts of research. I'm not going to be into all of the statistical methods that we've been using to make our estimates of our population abundances but suffices to say that we incorporate a

0126

1 lot of different variables in these estimates. The big
2 one, of course, the one that changes a lot, day to day,
3 is the sea ice concentration. So I wanted to make it
4 clear that we are incorporating the change in sea ice
5 during the course of our survey, basically making
6 multiple models each of the days that we're surveying
7 and using the combined model to be able to look at all
8 of those sea ice and abundance estimates together for
9 our final abundance estimate.

10

11 Slide 17.

12

13 This is a similar slide to the one you
14 saw before. Right now we're just looking at the water
15 here and data from 2013. You can see that bearded
16 seals have a broad distribution but a heavy presence in
17 the Central Bering. Ribbons and spotted seals tend to
18 prefer the southern ice edge at this time of year and
19 ringed seals occur in higher numbers up into the north.
20 I wanted to touch a little bit on the fact that these
21 surveys, at least in 2012 and 2013 in the Bering and
22 then in 2016 in the Chuckchi Sea were done
23 cooperatively with Russian researchers. We both
24 employed nearly -- well very similar, if not identical
25 methods in the same year surveying at the same time and
26 we came together and we were able to, in many ways,
27 analyze our data together so that we didn't have to
28 concern ourselves as much with the potential for
29 transboundary issues or animals moving from one side to
30 the other of the International Date Line while this
31 survey was happening. Unfortunately it looks like we
32 might not be able to accomplish that in these upcoming
33 surveys. The Russians are considering being able to do
34 some surveys closer to their shores mostly with
35 unmanned aircrafts but we're hoping that in 2027, the
36 same as we were able to do in 2016 in the Chuckchi,
37 we're hoping in 2027 the Russians will be able to also
38 conduct surveys on their side of the Chuckchi Sea.

39

40 Slide 18.

41

42 So this is a combination of all of the
43 Bering Sea abundance estimates combining both the
44 Western, meaning the Russian or the Eastern Bering Sea
45 numbers. I'm not going to be going through this, my
46 understanding is that you have been provided examples
47 of this presentation and if you have specific questions
48 about the numbers or any of these, anything that I'm
49 speaking about, feel free to reach out. At the very
50

0127

1 bottom you'll see a number of footnotes that gives
2 information on some of the published papers that are
3 the basis for these numbers that I'm showing in Slide
4 18.

5

6 Moving to Slide 19.

7

8 Ideas for Bering Sea 2024.

9

10 In 2024 we plan to switch to, or plan
11 to be using a NOAA King Air aircraft instead of our
12 standard Twin Otter aircraft. The advantage of the
13 King Air is that it's a faster airplane with a much
14 longer range. That means that we can conduct this work
15 in much less time. Previously in the Bering Sea we
16 would have required, in 2012 and in 2013, we were
17 required to use two different Twin Otter aircraft
18 flying at the same time over 200 flight hours and it
19 took us up to seven weeks of surveying. The King Air
20 that we'll have access to now will require just one
21 aircraft over three weeks with just 75 flight hours
22 because it can fly so much faster and has so much
23 longer range. The advantage of this, of course, is
24 we're able to minimize impacts to the models that
25 result from a changing sea ice habitat but it also
26 greatly reduces disturbance. Theoretically we can also
27 fly higher with the King Air and the new camera systems
28 we're planning to put in there. I'm putting these
29 lines up here as an example, that being said, I can
30 tell that just our most recent meeting with the Ice
31 Seal Committee has already recommended that we increase
32 the number of lines that we -- or increase the density
33 of lines that we use in the Bristol Bay region and so
34 based on their advice we're doing that. We do have
35 buffer zones around St. Lawrence Island and the Bering
36 Strait region as well. Like all of our work we'll be
37 communicating with that large list of folks that I
38 mentioned, giving weekly updates -- or excuse me, daily
39 updates of our locations and field plans.

40

41 The last slide is Slide 20.

42

43 This slide with the URL goes to a
44 handout that I think everybody was provided. This is a
45 field work flier that we produce once a year at the
46 Marine Mammal Lab and it identifies all of the marine
47 mammal research that our laboratory is conducting in
48 that year along with the month that it will be
49 occurring. And on the back side it provides a short
50

0128

1 blurb of why we're doing the work, what we expect to
2 gain from it and also contact information. It's very
3 brief, but it allows you to go to learn a little bit
4 about the work that we're doing and know who to contact
5 if you have any questions. You'll recognize that my
6 program, the Polar Ecosystems Program do not have
7 any.....

8

9 (Cell phone ringing)

10

11 MR. CAMERON:sorry about that,
12 field work planned in 2024 on ice associated seals.
13 All of our work this year will just be on harbor seals
14 so next year there'll be another flier coming out with
15 a lot more information from our work.

16

17 And that's it.

18

19 Thank you.

20

21 (Pause)

22

23 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Anybody with questions
24 or comments on the line.

25

26 (No comments)

27

28 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Ronald.

29

30 (No comments)

31

32 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Hearing none, and none
33 at the table.

34

35 MR. GRAY: No questions, just.....

36

37 CHAIRMAN GREEN: No questions, keep
38 moving. Thank you.

39

40 MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa, next up
41 should be Lori if she's still on.

42

43 MS. QUAKENBUSH: Yes, I'm still here.

44

45 MS. PILCHER: Or?

46

47 MS. QUAKENBUSH: Do you have my
48 presentation up, Nissa?

49

50

0129

1 MS. PILCHER: We're getting it -- yep,
2 it's up right now.

3

4 MS. QUAKENBUSH: Okay. Okay. Hi, this
5 is Lori Quakenbush. I work for the Alaska Department
6 of Fish and Game with Arctic Marine Mammals and I'm
7 also a member of the Alaska Beluga Whales Committee and
8 do research for them and I think you've heard a couple
9 times today that Tom Gray is the Chairman of the Alaska
10 Beluga Whale Committee, and Raymond Hunt, who's also on
11 your Council is a delegate of the Alaska Beluga Whale
12 Committee.

13

14 So I'm planning, today, to give you an
15 overview of the Eastern Bering Sea beluga stock, which
16 is the one in Norton Sound and Yukon area so it's very
17 adjacent to your RAC boundaries and it's an abbreviated
18 presentation that Tom and I have been using to kind of
19 go around Norton Sound down the Yukon to talk about the
20 status of this stock and what we know about it and what
21 we've learned in recent years.

22

23 So the slide that's up right now is the
24 summary areas of five different stocks of beluga whales
25 and in order to understand sort of what the Eastern
26 Bering Sea or the Norton Sound stock is doing we kind
27 of need to know how it fits in with the other ones, and
28 we know that belugas go different places in the
29 summertime and now we know from genetics, from samples
30 we see by the hunters and from satellite telemetry a
31 little bit more about how these different groups
32 operate separately and together. So the one stock
33 we're not talking about today is the Cook Inlet
34 belugas, which are, they don't winter in the Bering
35 Sea, so we're really just talking about the ones that
36 interact together in the Bering, Chuckchi and Beaufort
37 Sea.

38

39 So next slide, Nissa.

40

41 We kind of learn as much as -- more
42 than -- we're trying to learn something about the
43 Norton Sound, Eastern Bering Sea belugas and we
44 couldn't catch any of them to put satellite
45 transmitters on and Tom Gray kept telling us that he
46 catches them alive and if he could learn how to put a
47 tag on he'd put a tag on and let it go. So we ended up
48 training Tom and Tom went out with his crew and indeed
49 he caught six belugas and put tags on them and let them
50

50

0130

1 go.

2

3

Next slide.

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5

And sometimes he did it with his crew,
6 sometimes he did it with BJ, his wife, sometimes BJ was
7 in charge -- go to the next slide, Nissa.

8

9

Sometimes BJ was in charge of letting a
10 beluga go after it was tagged. I think Tom's taking
11 the picture here but it looks like he's letting the
12 women do all the work if you ask me.

13

14

(Laughter)

15

16

17

18

19

MS. QUAKENBUSH: So this is a beluga
whale with a satellite transmitter on it and it was one
that he caught in a net and let go.

20

21

So the next slide.

22

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29

So this a track of two different
belugas caught in the same year. The red one was
tagged on the 29th of September 2012, the yellow one
was on 14 October and both of these whales were tagged
by Tom. This shows you where they went between
September and November following the locations that go
up to the satellite that we can then link together and
see the track.

30

31

Next slide.

32

33

34

So this should be a slide of a beluga
and.....

35

36

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38

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Oops, this is Louis,
can you give the slide number?

39

40

41

MS. QUAKENBUSH: This should be Slide
No. 6.

42

43

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you.

44

45

46

47

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49

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MS. QUAKENBUSH: Okay. So this is the
crew, we went to Stebbins to try to capture belugas and
Tom Gray came from Nome, we worked with Kellen
Katchatag and his family and then Marvin*Okitkin from
Kotlik came with his two sons, Donovan and Duncan and
some of their crew members and we caught this male

0131

1 beluga between Stebbins and Kotlik.

2

3

Next slide, No. 7.

4

5

This is the track of that one whale.

6

We tagged it on the 23rd of May, the tags went off the
7 air on the 21st of January and this is the entire track
8 for that whale in 2019 and into 2020. So the yellow
9 track is where that male beluga spent most of the
10 summer. So more inner Norton Sound, 23rd of May to the
11 31st of August. And then in September and October and
12 it moved out of the bay a little bit, south of Cape
13 Nome, or south of Nome, and a little bit out of to the
14 outer part of Norton Sound. And then in November, the
15 green, out a little bit father, went up to Bering
16 Strait and then December -- this is the only tagged
17 whale we've seen go north of Bering Strait out of the
18 six that have been tagged, and then December this one
19 went north Bering Straits and they did a loop and it
20 came back out and then you can see January is in blue
21 and it got as far south as Kuskokwim, but outside of
22 Nunivak Island. So this is just the type of
23 information we can get from a satellite tagged whale.

24

25

And then we can go to the next slide,

26

No. 8.

27

28

So we can look at the whales that were
29 tagged in different locations from different stocks and
30 put all the dots out there together. Each dot is a
31 location of a whale that was tagged colored by what the
32 Nome stock is. So by genetic, or by location of
33 tagging, seven whales were tagged on the Russian side,
34 the blue dots, the Beaufort Sea is the orange and there
35 were 33 belugas tagged there. Bristol Bay we tagged
36 40. And eastern Bering Sea which is Norton Sound, and
37 mostly whale Tom tagged, six, and then the eastern
38 Chuckchi Sea is the green dots and so these are
39 locations for these whales in May through November. So
40 open water. And Bristol Bay, basically in Bristol Bay
41 but we'll show some winter data as well, so this sort
42 of shows there's some overlap between Beaufort Sea in
43 the red, kind of orange, sorry orange, and the Chuckchi
44 Sea in the green and there's more overlap there than
45 there is with the others.

46

47

So the next slide is Slide No. 9.

48

49

And this goes back -- so this was the

50

0132

1 first slide I showed, so this is the summering area and
2 you can see the Beaufort Sea and the Chuckchi Sea,
3 whales to the north, they overlap quite a bit and
4 really hard to tell them apart if you're just looking
5 at whales, counting whales, but they're all going to
6 come back into the Bering Sea for winter.

7

8 Next slide, this is Slide 10.

9

10 So now this is December through April
11 and you got the Russian whales are still along the
12 Chukotka*Cove, the blue lines, the Beaufort Sea belugas
13 now are coming into Bering Sea, closest to the Russian
14 whales that are on the farthest side of the Bering and
15 then the green ones, the eastern Chuckchi are coming
16 into the Bering Sea as well and then the red ones are
17 the Norton Sound eastern -- sorry eastern Chuckchi are
18 the green coming in, eastern Bering are the red, the
19 Norton Sound whales and they're kind of spread out
20 between Norton Sound and Bristol Bay, and then the
21 Bristol Bay whales come out of the bay more in the
22 wintertime as well.

23

24 So even though there's five different
25 stocks coming into the Bering Sea, when we look at
26 their winter data -- go to the next slide, No. 11.

27

28 And draw kind of lines around where
29 we've seen locations, these different wales actually,
30 even though they're kind of in the same general area,
31 they stay separate. There's a little bit of overlap
32 between eastern Bering Sea and Bristol Bay but when we
33 look at the actual time that whales are in that overlap
34 zone they're not there at the same time. So Bristol
35 Bay whales kind of stay to Bristol Bay, if eastern
36 Bering Sea whales move away they might go out and
37 overlap that area, but we -- the data don't show them
38 in the same place at the same time, and that's the same
39 thing with the Chuckchi and the Beaufort Sea, even
40 though they overlap in their range in the winter, they
41 don't -- they're not there at the same time. And this
42 is supported by the genetics data that does these five
43 stocks -- we can tell them apart by their DNA and
44 that's something -- yeah, that means that they've been
45 -- not been interbreeding for quite some time.

46

47 Slide No. 12.

48

49 So this slide you've seen before. This

50

0133

1 is the open water but what I wanted to point out here
2 is that, you know, we have yellow belugas, we have red
3 belugas, we have green ones and we have orange ones,
4 but if you look in Norton Sound the only color in there
5 is red. We don't see Bristol Bay belugas going into
6 Norton Sound and along the Yukon and we don't see the
7 green or the orange ones either. So this is pretty
8 strong evidence that the eastern Bering Sea stocks are
9 the ones that are found in Norton Sound and that all
10 the belugas harvested in this area are likely from the
11 eastern Bering Sea stocks. And this is fairly new
12 information and supported both by genetics and by
13 satellite telemetry.

14

15 So a little bit more about what we know
16 about just the eastern Bering Sea stock now is what the
17 current abundance estimate is and this comes from a
18 2017 aerial survey and so the estimate that we're using
19 right now is 11,112 whales.

20

21 So next slide, oops, I didn't -- we
22 should be on -- did we go through 13 -- I'm changing
23 slides for myself. Are you on Slide 13?

24

25 MS. PILCHER: Slide 13.

26

27 MS. QUAKENBUSH: Is that where we are,
28 okay. So those are the take home points from the
29 satellite telemetry work.

30

31 So now Slide 14.

32

33 It's a current abundance estimate that
34 we got from aerial surveys in 2017, and if we go to the
35 next slide, look at the harvest level and it averaged
36 229 over the last five years and it's gone up steadily
37 from 190 in 2016 to 259 in 2020. We've got an increase
38 in harvest of this stock.

39

40 Next slide.

41

42 We know the information for struck and
43 loss is not complete and we get some reporting on
44 struck and loss but -- and struck and loss is also hard
45 to know whether an animal is struck so that information
46 is hard to come by and not everybody reports it when
47 they have it.

48

49 Next slide, Slide 17.

50

0134

1 These are data from the Alaska Beluga
2 Whale Committee. The delegates go to the annual
3 meeting and report the harvest for their communities
4 and that's one of the delegates responsibilities and if
5 you just take 1988 just to kind of look at what these
6 information say, the harvest is 309; S/L is struck and
7 loss and in this case it's not available. As you can
8 see later years there are some struck and loss numbers.
9 And then at the bottom there's a percent population and
10 I think you can remember when Joel was talking about
11 walruses, he said that walrus populations, the harvest
12 was sustainable at two percent and at the Beluga Whale
13 Committee we've been using 2.4 percent, pretty similar
14 reasons. I'll talk about kind of how we get that
15 number. But anything over 2.4 percent we start getting
16 a little bit worried about that harvest may not be
17 sustainable. So I've highlighted the years where it
18 was over 2.4 percent here. And it doesn't happen very
19 often but if you look at the most recent years it's
20 getting pretty close more often, so the harvest is
21 going up for this stock and for the season so there's
22 some concern about that.

23

24 Next slide, please, No. 18.

25

26 So one of the things that affect the
27 sustainability of a harvest is how fast the stock or
28 the population can replenish itself and grow and that
29 has a lot to do with sort of your females and how
30 productive they are. Belugas can't reproduce for the
31 first time until she's about nine years old and she can
32 only have one calf every third year or so, so it's just
33 not like wolves, it's not like, you know, there's not
34 one calf per year, there's one calf every third year
35 and she can't start having calves until she's nine, so
36 it's a slower replacement type of situation, which is
37 why that two percent, I think, is like a safe
38 sustainable number.

39

40 Next slide.

41

42 So this talks about sustainability.

43

44 Go to the next slide.

45

46 What is sustainable take. And I think
47 everybody in this group knows what that is, but the
48 next one, how is sustainable take calculated. This is
49 where the 2.4 percent comes in and using the abundance
50

50

0135

1 estimate that we have and the average harvest over the
2 last five years at 229 is 2.1 percent. So that is in
3 the safe zone still but it's getting close to the top
4 and this is why the Beluga Whale Committee and Tom Gray
5 would like to get this message out to the hunters and
6 start talking about a management plan so that we don't
7 end up trying to figure out what to do when there's not
8 enough whales to harvest, but try to be proactive and
9 get out and see what can be done sooner, rather than
10 later.

11

12 Next slide, 21.

13

14 So this is just a slide of the human
15 population growth for the region and virtually all of
16 the human population is going up, not down, that
17 doesn't necessarily mean greater harvest but it does
18 mean there's more people that might want to eat
19 belugas.

20

21 Slide 22.

22

23 So what can we do.

24

25 Go ahead to Slide 23.

26

27 So, you know, how do you keep your
28 harvest sustainable, what are things that can be done
29 in the short term and certainly reducing struck and
30 loss might be a straightforward sort of way to go, talk
31 to the young hunters make sure everybody's ready to
32 hunt and has their gear, that kind of thing, or the
33 hunters locally know what that is and know what to do.
34 Target male belugas when you harvest, if you can.
35 That's not always possible but it's something to think
36 about, and conserving the females so they can have more
37 calves and keep the population growing. Make sure you
38 only harvest the number you need and then support and
39 work on a management plan and some conservation types
40 of things for what the Beluga Whale Committee has come
41 up with to talk about.

42

43 So I tried to go through pretty
44 quickly. I know you guys are -- it's after 5:00, but
45 you guys have some experts in the room if you have
46 questions and want to ask them tomorrow, Tom Gray knows
47 all the stuff really well and so does Raymond.

48

49 So that's all I have Nissa.

50

0136

1 (Pause)

2

3 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you.

4

5 Tommy.

6

7 MR. GRAY: I don't know what I can say,
8 she did a good job.

9

10 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, just making
11 sure. he said you did a good job. Thank you.

12

13 MS. QUAKENBUSH: Okay.

14

15 MR. GRAY: Hey, thanks for joining us
16 and doing this. And if I can help you answer questions
17 I'd be happy to. You know I think to the crowd here,
18 this is a good example of what it's going to take to
19 make co-management work. If we don't do it we're going
20 to have troubles. If we get a management plan in
21 place, we're going to be leaps and bounds ahead of the
22 problem and it's better to get it in place now than
23 when it's a crises. And, you know, some of the players
24 that -- the Beluga Whale Committee had a vision that
25 there will be a crises down the road and let's nip it
26 in the butt. And, you know, I'm sad to say that I've
27 been involved in this process and I understand it as
28 well as Lori, or maybe not quite as well, but it's
29 going to take cooperation from the government, it's
30 going to take cooperation from the hunters in the
31 region and sadly to say, it's going to take money to
32 put a program together to get this management plan in
33 place.

34

35 And, you know, we are a very fortunate
36 people. You've heard of the Marine Mammal Act, the
37 walrus and the seals and on and on, belugas fall under
38 the same thing, our Native people are in -- we are the
39 ones that can take these animals and we're the only
40 ones, you know, the White crowd can't take it, but with
41 this comes responsibility, and I think we need to be
42 better at managers than the government or the managers,
43 the science world. We have got to take the road and
44 run with it. So anyway, I'm -- I'm proudly talking to
45 the choir.

46

47 So any kind of questions.

48

49 MR. SEETOT: Elmer Seetot, Jr., with a

50

0137

1 comment. U.S. Coast Guard demolished a 13,000 -- 1,300
2 loran station a couple years back, they built it in
3 1963. Before that time, when I was growing up, we used
4 to see beluga going up the channel, up into Imuruk
5 Basin, after -- after the fall of the loran tower it
6 took maybe a couple years for the beluga to come -- or
7 to pass through Port Clarence.

8
9 Last year was a good example. I was at
10 a meeting, I think, in Anchorage, and they were talking
11 about a three day run of beluga from the north right
12 along the shoreline and from what I heard, a month or
13 two later, was that there was some killer whale
14 predation on both the beluga and the bowhead on the
15 upper waters of the North Slope, so I think that was
16 the reason we were -- Brevig Mission was able to see
17 and harvest belugas right from the beach. I -- I don't
18 see that happening very much. I heard that, you know,
19 Norton Sound, that they go after them by boat and get
20 the beluga like that. They were just a couple feet
21 from the beach so -- so the hunters were able to catch
22 a beluga from that position. I -- I hung a net --
23 beluga net for my son after giving instructions on
24 where to place the buoys and the line and that -- that
25 day when I went back he say he got four beluga in his
26 net so he was able to cut, harvest and share a majority
27 of the beluga with the community. How -- there were
28 some hunters that were able to get their beluga and
29 they were able to retrieve them, you know, like in
30 Louisiana they fish alligators with hook and line and
31 -- and that's how they were able to get their belugas
32 that they sank in Brevig Mission.

33
34 So -- so this is new. I think this is
35 a new species that we have been looking at for so many
36 years but we weren't able to harvest them due to their
37 sonar sensitivity to sound and electronic signals. Now
38 that -- now that they have gone through Port Clarence I
39 think that they will be a constant presence when they
40 migrate from the north and hopefully we will be able to
41 harvest and go with what -- what ABC has, you know,
42 with their regulations and harvest and -- and with that
43 in mind I'm not too sure if the community of Brevig
44 Mission would be able to get an invitation from ABC to
45 join their committee or be a part of their committee
46 because now we have an animal that passes regularly
47 through our waters. It -- we -- we do see them year-
48 round, or not year-round, we do see them throughout the
49 summer but they're out in the open water out in the
50

0138

1 Bering Sea and that -- that's what I would like to, you
2 know, present to the -- present my comments at this
3 time.

4

5 Thank you.

6

7 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Elmer.

8

9 So we're -- is there anybody else --
10 sorry, Mary.

11

12 MS. FREYTAG: Yes. No question, just a
13 comment on Mr. Gray's presentation -- what he was
14 saying. I just wanted to say that the co-management
15 plan that you guys are putting together is like
16 preventative maintenance, we're taking care of what we
17 need to do so I just want to thank you all for all the
18 hard work you guys are doing.

19

20 Thank you.

21

22 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Mary.

23

23 Anybody else.

24

25 (No comments)

26

27 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Ron.

28

29 MR. KIRK: No comment, Mr. Chair.

30

31 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Ron. Is
32 Robert still on?

33

34 MR. MOSES: No comment.

35

36 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, sir. Is
37 there anything else here?

38

39 (No comments)

40

41 CHAIRMAN GREEN: All right, so just
42 looking at this agenda here. We've got the wildlife
43 closure reviews with Brian Ubelaker. So I would like
44 to say thank you to, oh, my goodness.

45

46 MR. GRAY: Lori.

47

48 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Lori. I got two
49 pieces of paper here and I'm looking at the wrong pink
50

0139

1 one. Thank you, Lori, Quakenbush.

2

3 MS. QUAKENBUSH: No, problem, you're
4 welcome. Thank you for the opportunity.

5

6 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yes, we really
7 appreciate it. Thank you for your work.

8

9 I guess we'll call Brian here for a
10 dash to the end of the trail.

11

12 (Pause)

13

14 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Go ahead, Brian, you
15 got it.

16

17 MR. UBELAKER: Thank you. Good
18 evening, Mr. Chair. Members of the Council. My name
19 is Brian Ubelaker. For the record I am a Wildlife
20 Biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management.
21 Before we get into the closure review analysis I'd like
22 to give you a brief overview of the process for these
23 reviews.

24

25 In August of 2020 the Federal
26 Subsistence Board approved a revised closure policy
27 which stipulated all closures will be reviewed every
28 four years. This policy also specified the closures
29 similar to regulatory proposals will be presented to
30 the Councils for a recommendation and then to the Board
31 for a final decision. However, regulatory actions on
32 closure reviews are limited to retaining, rescinding or
33 modifying the closure. Actions such as changing
34 seasons and harvest limits or delegating authority to
35 in-season managers are outside of the scope of closure
36 reviews. To this end, closure review analysis are
37 being presented to the Councils now, during the call
38 for wildlife proposals, to inform their decision on
39 whether or not to submit a proposal addressing the
40 closure that would be outside the scope of the closure
41 review.

42

43 So this is not an action item, this is
44 just informational. However if Councils do decide to
45 submit a proposal to address the closure a motion and
46 vote is needed.

47

48 The Councils will make a formal
49 recommendation on the closure reviews during their fall
50

0140

1 2023 meetings and the Federal Subsistence Board will
2 take final action on these closure reviews in April of
3 2024.

4

5 So before I proceed into the summary of
6 the analysis, are there any questions I can answer on
7 this process.

8

9 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Any Council members
10 have any questions.

11

12 MR. SEETOT: What section are we on?

13

14 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Wildlife closure
15 reviews, under D, new business.

16

17 Anybody else.

18

19 (No comments)

20

21 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Hearing nothing,
22 Brian, go ahead.

23

24 MR. UBELAKER: Okay. And I believe as
25 Nissa has briefed you, I'm going to roll all the muskox
26 closures into one, provide a very, very brief summary
27 seeings how they're all related.

28

29 So these closure reviews, WCR24-10, 19,
30 28, 29, 30, and 44 all are dealing with Unit 22 and 23
31 muskox on the Seward Peninsula. Please keep in mind
32 that these reviews are all separate items that you will
33 take action on at the upcoming fall meeting but like I
34 say I will present them all as one closure review
35 today. If anybody would like more detail or have any
36 questions about anything specifically please stop me at
37 any time.

38

39 These closure reviews are found on
40 Pages 14, 37, 58, 69 and 78 of your meeting books. And
41 as I stated they all deal with muskox on the Seward
42 Peninsula and Units 22 and 23 Southwest.

43

44 Most of these closures have been in
45 place since 1995 when the Federal muskox season was
46 established. As the muskox population grew the range
47 expanded as well as hunting opportunity. As new hunts
48 were established Federal lands were closed to maintain
49 a Federal subsistence priority and then when the
50

0141

1 population was sufficient most of these closures were
2 rescinded and Federal public lands were open to all
3 users. However, as the populations started to decline
4 in 2011 Federal lands were closed to all but
5 Federally-qualified subsistence users and currently all
6 Federal public lands with an established muskox season
7 are closed to all but Federally-qualified users.

8

9 And because Sara was so nice to give us
10 a rundown on muskox biology I will skip that section
11 unless anybody wants me to dig in to it.

12

13 (No comments)

14

15 MR. UBELAKER: Moving on. Harvest of
16 muskox on the Seward Peninsula has declined drastically
17 since the increasing harvest rates leading to 2012 and
18 stabilized at lower levels since then. The majority of
19 muskox harvest occurs by State permit from 2013 to
20 2021, Federal harvest on the Seward Peninsula has
21 averaged 3.4 muskox per year accounting for about 10
22 percent of all muskox harvest.

23

24 If these closures are retained there
25 would be no change in how the hunts are currently
26 managed. Only Federally-qualified subsistence users
27 would be allowed to harvest muskoxen on Federal public
28 lands on the Seward Peninsula by either Federal or
29 State permit. If the closures are rescinded, Federal
30 public lands would be open to the harvest of muskoxen
31 by anyone hunting under State regulations. Overharvest
32 would not be a concern as harvest would still be
33 managed by a shared quota with a limited number of
34 permits issued. If the closures were modified to close
35 to all users, Federally-qualified subsistence users
36 would unnecessarily lose the opportunity to harvest
37 muskox under Federal regulations on the Seward
38 Peninsula.

39

40 Therefore, it is OSM's preliminary
41 conclusion to maintain the status quo on all these
42 closures.

43

44 Thank you.

45

46 And if there are any questions I will
47 answer them to the best of my ability.

48

49 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Any Council on the

50

0142

1 phone have any questions, Ron or Robert.

2

3 (No comments)

4

5 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Hearing none, anybody
6 in the room here, Council.

7

8 (No comments)

9

10 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Nope. Shame on you
11 Raymond, you're yawning.

12

13 (Laughter)

14

15 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Oh, Elmer, go ahead.

16

17 MR. SEETOT: In the literature you say
18 that the muskox were declining, is that in pretty much
19 all subunits that were -- I mean in previous years, was
20 that the problem, in most of the subunits within 22,
21 they -- it was stating that -- that there was probably
22 no growth but, you know, coming from other -- other
23 areas the muskox would come from other areas indicate
24 that maybe there was no population growth, you know,
25 from -- from the males and females, you know, that were
26 there to produce offspring. But that's what I kind of
27 understood that decline after they peak so many years
28 and then they kind of went or stayed at a stable rate,
29 is that pretty much a standard for the animals within
30 22 where, you know, I think -- you know, the
31 introduction of muskox was new to the areas, I think
32 that they found a growth and the food availability,
33 however, I -- I think predation might have stopped, you
34 know, some of these muskox from venturing out because
35 instances where the -- the bears were able to, you
36 know, attack from the front and gore the muskox in that
37 fashion. So I'm not really too sure how the predation
38 from the wolves are but -- but I'm assuming that they
39 -- they provide -- you know for the animals around
40 them, and that was just one of the things I was just
41 kind of looking at, is, why the decline when the
42 numbers speak in certain areas of 22.

43

44 Hopefully I -- hopefully I asked the
45 question in a way that you -- that you understand.
46 Sometime I don't even understand what I kind of say
47 because, unlike Tom, he keeps his comments to the
48 point, my -- mine are just all over so -- but -- but
49 what I was reading was that, you know, they peak and
50

0143

1 then they decline and then move on. Is that standard
2 in pretty much species or -- or just muskox?

3

4 MR. UBELAKER: I'm not sure if I can
5 speak to that specifically but as far as the Seward
6 Penn population went, I mean they -- when they were
7 reintroduced they grew fairly rapidly, experienced a
8 big decline, 2011/2012, mostly due to a lot of harvest,
9 I believe, and then they have -- harvest rates were
10 modified at that point so they have stabilized at a
11 lower level since then and kind of -- I wouldn't say
12 declined, they're -- they're not growing, so they're
13 kind of in a stabilized situation right now.

14

15 As far as predation maybe -- I don't
16 see Sara.....

17

18 (Laughter)

19

20 MR. UBELAKER: I would point to Sara to
21 answer that question. Maybe Alicia.

22

23 MS. CARSON: I can make a comment. Most
24 of the.....

25

26 REPORTER: So I'm going to need you to
27 make your comment from up here. Thanks.

28

29 MS. CARSON: From a general comment of
30 speaking with the muskox biologist, which is Brinn Phar
31 most of her mortality on her collared calves is from
32 predation and most of that predation is typically
33 classified to bears.

34

35 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Anybody else. Thank
36 you.

37

38 Mary has one.

39

40 MS. FREYTAG: Yes, just one question.
41 I was looking at the map and the areas that we're
42 concerned about, according to the map, are 22E and D.
43 With the muskox moving further down into areas 22C, B
44 and A, were those going to be included in the future
45 for these muskox?

46

47 MR. UBELAKER: Included as far as
48 surveys?

49

50

0144

1 MS. FREYTAG: (Nods affirmatively)

2

3

4 MR. UBELAKER: I believe, yes, State
5 surveys -- the extended survey area covers northern 22A
6 and 21D as the -- yeah, as the herd has grown and
7 expanded they've -- they've included all the areas that
8 they're seeing muskox so they're all getting counted.

8

9

10 MS. FREYTAG: Okay, thank you. Because
11 I was just seeing where the map showed that you guys
12 were concentrating in 22D and E and, you know, the
13 muskox did move further into A, B and C, too.

13

14

Thank you.

15

16

17

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CHAIRMAN GREEN: Anybody else got any
comments, questions or concerns for Brian.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Tina, did you raise
your hand.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN GREEN: I'm just kidding.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN GREEN: It doesn't sound like
it. It sounds like you got 'er taken care of to this
point. Thanks.

And what are we after now -- call to --
excuse me.

(Pause)

CHAIRMAN GREEN: We got to circle back
to the moose, it's a one line sentence there. You're
on.

MR. UBELAKER: Okay. Closure Review
WCR24-15 which deals with Unit 22D moose can be found
on Page 16 of your meeting books. And WCR24-15 reviews
the closure to moose hunting in Unit 22D Remainder
except by Federally-qualified subsistence users.

In relevant regulatory history, in

0145

1 2001, the Board divided Unit 22D into several hunt
2 areas which created the current subunit arrangement.
3 Then in 2002 the Board closed Federal public lands in
4 Unit 22D Remainder to the taking of moose except by
5 Federally-qualified subsistence users. The Board's
6 justification stated that the closure would improve
7 rural subsistence harvest opportunities in an area
8 recently deemed unnecessary by the State to restrict
9 the moose harvest. Then in 2006 this Council submitted
10 a proposal to eliminate the moose closure in Unit 22D
11 Remainder which was adopted in 2007. Then by 2016 the
12 Board closed the December antlerless season due to a
13 decrease in population estimate in order to protect cow
14 moose. Then in 2020 the Board reestablished the
15 closure of Federal public lands in Unit 22D Remainder
16 to moose hunting except by Federally-qualified
17 subsistence users. Unit 22D Remainder was the only
18 hunt area in Unit 22D that remained open to all users.
19 Also in 2020 the Board of Game established a
20 registration permit for both State hunts with a harvest
21 quota system. The registration permit is only
22 available in person from vendors on the Seward
23 Peninsula which helps limit the number of non-local
24 hunters that could obtain it.

25

26 Once, again, I'm going to jump over the
27 biology section unless anybody would like a repeat.

28

29 (No comments)

30

31 MR. UBELAKER: Moving to harvest.
32 Within the closure area, harvest occurs by Federally-
33 qualified subsistence users under Federal regulations
34 by State registration permit during the early fall
35 season and the may be announced winter season. In Unit
36 22D Remainder the average annual reported moose harvest
37 by State residents between 2009 and 2022 was 14 moose.
38 In 2022 ADF&G estimated the harvestable surplus for
39 Unit 22D Remainder as 17 moose per year which
40 translates roughly to a three percent harvest rate.

41

42 Another alternative to consider would
43 be under Federal regulations the winter may be
44 announced season required the use of a State
45 registration permit, therefore, the Federal season is
46 dependent on the State announcing a winter season,
47 which may preclude a Federal priority if the State does
48 not announce an opening. If the Federal regulations
49 were changed to require a Federal permit then a winter
50

0146

1 Federal hunt could occur independently from a State
2 hunt. Since this is outside of the scope of this
3 closure review, a proposal would have to be submitted
4 to institute a Federal permit.

5
6 If this closure were rescinded, non-
7 Federally-qualified users would be able to harvest
8 moose in Unit 22D Remainder. There would be no concern
9 of non-resident harvest as there is no non-resident
10 moose season in Unit 22D. Since moose harvest is
11 managed by State registration permit and a quota
12 rescinding the closure would likely result in a zero to
13 minimal increase in harvest and have no impact on the
14 moose population. Competition with non-Federally-
15 qualified users may increase, however, public lands
16 only compromise eight percent of the closure area and
17 State permits are only available on a restricted basis
18 limiting non-local hunter participation.

19
20 If the closure were retained there
21 would be little added protection for moose as the
22 amount of land protected by this closure is small.
23 While the closure remain -- excuse me -- while the
24 closure provides a subsistence priority for Federally-
25 qualified subsistence users it may also be an
26 unnecessary restriction for non-Federally-qualified
27 users. Given the actions by the Board of Game
28 maintaining this closure may slightly reduce
29 competition from non-local resident hunters but would
30 likely contribute little to overall conservation.

31
32 Therefore, it is OSM's preliminary
33 conclusion to rescind the closure.

34
35 I'd be happy to answer any questions
36 anybody may have.

37
38 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Go ahead.

39
40 MR. GRAY: So I sat here the whole time
41 you were reading this thing trying to figure out where
42 in the heck is he and -- and in this booklet is Page 22
43 the actual whatever you're talking about?

44
45 MR. UBELAKER: (Nods affirmatively)

46
47 MR. GRAY: Okay. And right now what do
48 we have in place that this proposal's going to change
49 -- first, what's in place?
50

0147

1 MR. UBELAKER: What is in place in this
2 closure review is that the Federal public lands in 22D
3 Remainder are closed to non-Federally-qualified
4 subsistence users.

5

6 MR. GRAY: And OSM is recommending to
7 rescind it, get rid of that closure and open it up to
8 non-Federally-qualified users; is that what I'm
9 hearing?

10

11 MR. UBELAKER: That is the preliminary
12 conclusion, yes.

13

14 MR. GRAY: And are you asking us to
15 take action today or is this at the next meeting?

16

17 MR. UBELAKER: Action will be taken at
18 the fall 2023 meeting.

19

20 MR. GRAY: And what's the
21 justification. You know I'm sitting here -- the first
22 thing I'm saying is pack your bags and leave, I need to
23 protect my subsistence people, and I could care less
24 about outsiders taking moose and aligning with the
25 State. You know the State doesn't make right decisions
26 sometimes and, again, I'm here to protect my
27 subsistence users and if that's to oppose this and keep
28 this -- this in place that's probably where I'm going
29 to go.

30

31 So anyway I -- the -- if you're talking
32 about getting rid of it and getting rid of that
33 protection for our local people and opening it up to
34 outsiders I'm not in favor of that, and that's what
35 you're saying.

36

37 MR. UBELAKER: That -- and so the
38 recommendation will be to lift the closure and that's
39 due to the fact of the action taken by the Board of
40 Game with RM -- what's the permit out there, 846?

41

42 MR. GRAY: Yeah. And I don't care what
43 the State does, I mean.....

44

45 MR. UBELAKER: 840-- it's the -- the
46 permit is available here locally in Nome for a
47 restricted timeframe. That in -- take that into
48 consideration along with, you know, there's still a
49 harvest -- or there's a quota system in -- in effect,
50

0148

1 harvest isn't going to increase just because Federal
2 lands are open and where -- we feel with the action
3 that the Board of Game has taken in restricting how the
4 permit is available to the public, you pick it up in
5 person in Nome in -- at licensed vendors, that's going
6 to restrict the number of non-locals that may come up,
7 that, along with eight percent of 22D Remainder is
8 Federal lands, is a very small portion that is being
9 protected by this closure.

10

11 But with that all being said, that's
12 our preliminary conclusion, the Board can take whatever
13 action they would like to take at the fall meeting.

14

15 MR. GRAY: So I don't mind taking a
16 stand and -- I sat on the AC forever and I was the lone
17 vote make people pay 25 bucks for a bear tag forever
18 and I still do that, but I'm here for subsistence
19 people and I'm going to -- you know if it takes you
20 guys to create a permit to -- if that's what you're
21 trying to get around, and I don't know for that certain
22 area, so be it, go create a permit, you know, we don't
23 need to follow the State in all the games or rules that
24 are being played.

25

26 So anyway we got time to think about
27 it, you got time to convince me that it's the right
28 thing to do, on and on.

29

30 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, are we done with
31 that one -- all right, Tommy's done, you're done,
32 anything else -- yeah, we have the call for proposals,
33 I was just going to -- call for proposals, Item F under
34 the new business.

35

36 MR. UBELAKER: Okay, thank you, Mr.
37 Chair. Once again for the record my name is Brian
38 Ubelaker, Wildlife Biologist with OSM.

39

40 And now is the call for wildlife
41 proposals land the Councils opportunity to submit
42 proposals to change Federal subsistence wildlife
43 harvest regulations. An informational flier on how to
44 submit a proposal to change Federal subsistence
45 regulations can be found on Page 89 of your meeting
46 books.

47

48 Proposals need to include the
49 regulations you wish to change, the specific changes

50

0149

1 you are proposing, an explanation of why the regulation
2 change should be made and any additional information
3 which may help in evaluating the proposed change. The
4 window to submit proposals opened February 27th and
5 closes April 12th. The Council can vote to submit a
6 proposal during this meeting and your Council
7 Coordinator will then officially submit it. Also the
8 opportunity for Councils to submit proposals is
9 available during this entire meeting. If a Council
10 member thinks of a proposal later or in response to
11 another agenda item they're welcome to suggest
12 submitting a proposal then. Of course anyone can
13 submit a proposal as an individual before the
14 submission window closes.

15

16 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

17

18 I am happy to answer any questions
19 about the proposal process and will standby while the
20 Council discusses.

21

22 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Brian.
23 Anybody on the phone there, Robert, Ron, questions.

24

25 MR. KIRK: No comment, Mr. Chair.

26

27 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Ron.

28

29 Anybody here at the table, any
30 questions for Brian.

31

32 (No comments)

33

34 CHAIRMAN GREEN: It sounds like we got
35 through that one pretty quick, right on.

36

37 (Pause)

38

39 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Nissa wants to talk.

40

41 (Laughter)

42

43 CHAIRMAN GREEN: She's been listening
44 to me and Tommy all day so.

45

46 (Laughter)

47

48 MS. PILCHER: For the record this is
49 Nissa Pilcher. And just to reiterate what Brian said,

50

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1 if you guys go home tonight and think about this and
2 come up with another -- with a proposal you want to
3 talk about tomorrow, please, this is your time to put
4 those in. I know we're rushing because it's the end of
5 the day and we're trying to get through it, but,
6 really, if you think of anything just bring it up
7 tomorrow morning and we can take care of it then.

8

9 Okay.

10

11 And then that will lead me into --
12 there's also currently a call for proposals for the
13 Alaska Board of Game.

14

15 So the Board is accepting proposals on
16 hunting and trapping for different state regions, one
17 of which is the Arctic Western region, which includes
18 the Seward Peninsula, the other one is the Interior
19 meeting. Your Council is welcome to discuss and draft
20 and submit proposals to the Board of Game. These
21 proposals are due by May 1st and the Arctic Western
22 meeting will occur in late January of next year in
23 Kotzebue. And, once, again, if you want to submit any
24 State proposals I will gladly work with you guys to get
25 them drafted and get them submitted in a -- before
26 they're due.

27

28 And that is it.

29

30 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Nissa.
31 Okay, so anybody have anything to add, any wishes,
32 you'll dream about them tonight and have nightmares and
33 cry on your pillow in the morning and come in and
34 introduce a new proposal.

35

36 (Laughter)

37

38 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yeah, right. Okay, so
39 thank you. What's -- what are we doing on Item G
40 there, the annual report?

41

42 MS. PILCHER: So that's your guys'
43 annual report. I can go through it -- oh.

44

45 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Somebody's over here
46 -- Hannah.

47

48 DR. VOORHEES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
49 believe we had added WSA22-05 to the agenda. I'm happy

50

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1 to do that now or later. Thanks.

2

3 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Mary's hungry, I think
4 we're going to wait. What is it that it was, I missed
5 it for some reason.

6

7 MS. PILCHER: It's this.

8

9 (Pause)

10

11 CHAIRMAN GREEN: We're going to recess,
12 it is now 5:47, okay, until tomorrow morning at 10:30
13 -- no.

14

15 (Laughter)

16

17 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Did you hear them go,
18 uh, what, yeah, in the morning, the earlier the better
19 guys.

20

21 MR. GRAY: You can have a meeting by
22 yourself.

23

24 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yeah.

25

26 (Laughter)

27

28 MS. PILCHER: It's your guys' call, if
29 you want to start at 6:00 we'll be here at 6:00.

30

31 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Recess back until
32 9:00.

33

34 MR. KIRK: Did you say back until 8:00?

35

36 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Well, we're just going
37 to go to the Airport Pizza and we'll be back in about
38 an hour and a half.

39

40 MS. PILCHER: He's pulling your leg.

41

42 (Laughter)

43

44 MR. KIRK: Okay.

45

46 MS. PILCHER: He's pulling your leg.

47

48 MR. KIRK: Okay. See you guys later.

49 Tomorrow morning at 9:00.

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MS. PILCHER: Yep, tomorrow at 9:00
sound good.

(Council nods affirmatively)

CHAIRMAN GREEN: That's what I said.

MS. PILCHER: Okay.

(Off record)

(PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)
) ss.
STATE OF ALASKA)

I, Salena A. Hile, Notary Public in and for the state of Alaska and reporter for Computer Matrix Court Reporters, LLC, do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing pages numbered ___ through ___ contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the SEWARD PENINSULA FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING taken electronically on the 22nd day of March 2023;

THAT the transcript is a true and correct transcript requested to be transcribed and thereafter transcribed by under my direction and reduced to print to the best of our knowledge and ability;

THAT I am not an employee, attorney, or party interested in any way in this action.

DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 27th day of April 2023.

Salena A. Hile
Notary Public, State of Alaska
My Commission Expires: 09/16/26