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1 SEWARD PENINSULA SUBSISTENCE  
2 REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

3  
4 PUBLIC MEETING

5  
6 VOLUME II

7  
8  
9 Old St. Joseph's Hall

10  
11 Nome, Alaska  
12 March 23, 2023

13 9:07 a.m.  
14  
15

16 COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

17  
18 Louis Green, Chairman  
19 Martin Aukongak  
20 Tom Gray  
21 Raymond Hunt  
22 Ronald Kirk  
23 Mary Freytag  
24 Robert Moses  
25 Elmer Seetot

26  
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30  
31 Regional Council Coordinator - Nissa Pilcher  
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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Nome, Alaska - 3/23/2023)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Tina, are we ready?

REPORTER: Yes, we're on, ready.

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Good morning. We're going to call this meeting to order at 9:07. Nissa, what, I'm going to turn it over to you for a minute for introductions, checking on who's online, go ahead.

MS. PILCHER: Good morning everybody. For the record this is Nissa Pilcher, Council Coordinator for the Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council. This is Day 2. Just to let -- so in the room, Council members.

We've got Mary Freytag.

Raymond Hunt.

Louis Green.

Tom Gray.

Elmer Seetot.

And Martin.....

MR. AUKONGAK: A.

(Laughter)

MS. PILCHER: On the phone do we have Ronald Kirk.

(No comments)

MS. PILCHER: And how about Robert.

MR. MOSES: Yes, I'm here.

MS. PILCHER: Okay. Hello Robert.

MR. MOSES: Good morning.

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1 MS. PILCHER: Good morning. Just so we  
2 know who else is online, can we get a quick rundown of  
3 who else called in. First, if there's any tribal or  
4 Native organizations online, if you could let us know  
5 you're on.

6  
7 (No comments)

8  
9 MS. PILCHER: Okay. And, once, again,  
10 if I shoot past you just speak up, okay.

11  
12 All right, how about U.S. Fish and  
13 Wildlife Service not affiliated with OSM.

14  
15 MS. KLEIN: Good morning. This is Jill  
16 Klein. Listening in again from Anchorage. I'm the  
17 Regional Subsistence Coordinator with U.S. Fish and  
18 Wildlife Service.

19  
20 MS. PILCHER: All right. How about  
21 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, OSM affiliated.

22  
23 MR. LIND: Good morning.....

24  
25 MS. LAVINE: Good morning, everyone,  
26 this is.....

27  
28 MR. LIND: .....Chairman and Board  
29 members. This is.....

30  
31 MS. LAVINE: .....Robbin.....

32  
33 MS. PILCHER: Is that Orville?

34  
35 MR. LIND: Yes, good morning, it's  
36 Orville, Native Liaison for OSM. Good morning, Robbin.

37  
38 MS. LAVINE: Good morning, Orville.  
39 This is Robbin LaVine, the Subsistence Policy  
40 Coordinator with OSM.

41  
42 CHAIRMAN GREEN: All right, we're in  
43 good company today, we've got Orvi.....

44  
45 MR. STONE: Good morning, Council.  
46 This is Jarred Stone, Fisheries Biologist with the  
47 Office of Subsistence Management.

48  
49 MS. PILCHER: All right. U.S. Forest  
50

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1 Service.

2

3 MR. RISDAHL: Good morning everyone,  
4 this is Greg Risdahl, USDA Forest Service, Subsistence  
5 Program Lead and InterAgency Staff Committee member  
6 back today. Thank you.

7

8 MS. PILCHER: Thank you. National Park  
9 Service.

10

11 MS. PATTON: Good morning everyone.  
12 This is Eva Patton, Subsistence Program Manager for the  
13 National Park Service in Anchorage and InterAgency  
14 Staff Committee member. Good morning.

15

16 MR. ADKISSON: Good.....

17

18 MS. PILCHER: Do we.....

19

20 MR. ADKISSON: .....morning. Ken  
21 Adkisson, National Park Service, Nome, Alaska.

22

23 MS. PILCHER: BLM.

24

25 MR. PATTERSON: Good morning. Dillon  
26 Patterson, National Park Service, Regional Subsistence  
27 Program.

28

29 MS. PILCHER: Sorry for jumping the gun  
30 there. Anybody from BLM on.

31

32 (No comments)

33

34 MS. PILCHER: Okay, how about Alaska  
35 Department of Fish and Game.

36

37 MR. VIALPANDO: I'll go back real  
38 quick. BLM. This is Jake Vialpando, the Field Manager  
39 in Anchorage. Good morning.

40

41 MS. PILCHER: Good morning.

42

43 REPORTER: Who was it?

44

45 MS. PILCHER: Could you state your name  
46 again, it was a little muddled?

47

48 MR. VIALPANDO: Yes, Jake Vialpando,  
49 Anchorage Field Manager at BLM.

50

0158

1 REPORTER: Who is it Chris?

2

3 MR. MCKEE: Jake Vialpando.

4

5 MS. PILCHER: How about members of the  
6 public that are on.

7

8 MR. BURCH: Good morning. This is Mark  
9 Burch. I may have missed my opportunity to introduce  
10 myself almost for the second day in a row, sorry about  
11 that.

12

13 MS. PILCHER: No problem, sorry. We  
14 get -- I'm trying to speed through, too. So thanks for  
15 calling in Mark. I think that concludes the  
16 introductions unless I missed somebody or spoke over  
17 somebody.

18

19 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, thanks, Nissa.  
20 I think we're going to start with Scott Ayers.

21

22 MR. AYERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good  
23 morning, Council members. This is Scott Ayers from  
24 OSM. I wanted to start out our second day with a quick  
25 note to the group.

26

27 There were a couple of salty comments  
28 yesterday and we need to try to avoid those moving  
29 forward. You all are discussing topics that you are  
30 clearly passionate about, which is why we're here, I  
31 just wanted to remind the group that this is a public  
32 meeting of a FACA chartered committee and that we need  
33 to make sure that we are keeping our discussions civil.  
34 I hope we have a productive day and look forward to the  
35 rest of the agenda.

36

37 That's all I had, thank you.

38

39 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Scott.  
40 Appreciate that.

41

42 MR. KIRK: Good morning, Mr. Chair.  
43 Ron Kirk, Stebbins.

44

45 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Ron.  
46 You're on, we got you marked down now, thanks.

47

48 (Pause)

49

50

0159

1 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, Gay, you're on  
2 deck.

3  
4 MS. SHEFFIELD: All right, thanks.  
5 Thank you very much for having me here. This is my  
6 first RAC meeting so I'm learning.

7  
8 CHAIRMAN GREEN: And we're 24 hours  
9 late I'll have you know.

10  
11 MS. SHEFFIELD: I know, that's okay.

12  
13 (Laughter)

14  
15 CHAIRMAN GREEN: And, Nissa, can you  
16 take care of that.

17  
18 (Laughter)

19  
20 MS. SHEFFIELD: That's all right. We  
21 know it's better to get it worked out than rush it.

22  
23 So my name is Gay Sheffield. I work at  
24 UAF-Alaska SeaGrant here in Nome. I'm housed at  
25 Northwest Campus and people don't really know, I think,  
26 what Alaska SeaGrant is, but it is a NOAA program that  
27 is embedded in Land Grant Colleges, which is what UAF  
28 is. So our mission is research and service -- well,  
29 research, service and education. So that's my contact  
30 phone there and also my email.

31  
32 So to talk about -- I was asked to talk  
33 about marine mammals but I'm going to put it in  
34 context. Yesterday it was really interesting for me to  
35 see what you guys are talking about, all the land  
36 issues, land animal issues, so I'm going to talk about  
37 the ocean.

38  
39 I started working up here in '92 and  
40 have spent most of my time working west of Nome and on  
41 the island, so my emphasis is in the marine  
42 environment. So we're going to talk about is where we  
43 are right now and some -- three of the wildlife  
44 concerns for -- are marine wildlife, health concerns  
45 for marine wildlife coming up. I don't want to be a  
46 Chicken Little but it's better to, since I was asked,  
47 I'll let you know what is potentially coming, and we're  
48 going to need everybody's help this summer.

49  
50

0160

1                   So this map shows in that little green  
2 box, shows the Bering Sea from about Diomedede down to  
3 Bristol Bay. These are temperatures for -- average  
4 temperatures, sea surface temperatures for the ocean in  
5 that green box. It's huge. And you can see the  
6 timeline on the bottom goes from 100-whatever, 22 years  
7 ago, right to now. So for May to September where we  
8 have open water, you can see that the cold years, the  
9 coldest years for water temperature was from -- they  
10 went from 1900 to 1960 and right after that you can see  
11 -- or right before that, in the '50s the temperature  
12 starts going up. It is shocking that the -- I don't  
13 know what that is, maybe the 10 hottest years of water  
14 has been about the last 15. So that is the big story  
15 for us and I just wanted to make that -- because I know  
16 you guys are talking about land issues.

17  
18                   Right now, as of March 12th, this shows  
19 you the extent, so the southward movement, or how far  
20 south the ice has gone in the Bering Sea, how many  
21 kilometers, it doesn't matter if it's U.S. or Russian,  
22 it's just how much ice has gone south. So this is from  
23 1978 to this March 12th, and all the squiggles is every  
24 single year and you could see that in November, yep,  
25 the ice starts growing and then usually by April we get  
26 a big pulse of, you know, the ice is all the way down  
27 as far as it's going to be and then by May, June, it's  
28 going north, we're melting in place. So the two lowest  
29 squiggles that were seemingly way out of bounds on the  
30 bottom, those little grey squiggles, each squiggle of  
31 grey is a year and the black line is the average of all  
32 those squiggles. So '18 and 2019 are the ones on the  
33 very bottom. So you can see that recently we've had  
34 some rough years with our ice. Currently, last year,  
35 everyone was like, well, the ice is back, you know, and  
36 we couldn't really -- it was very easy to go south and  
37 retreat. And this year you can see where we are and it  
38 looks like there will be our longest extent, the most  
39 southerly extent of the ice will have occurred in  
40 February for this year, which is unusual -- getting to  
41 be normal. Here is where we are as of March 15th, this  
42 is prior to the storm we just had and we don't know,  
43 you know, of course, the strength of what's coming in  
44 on Saturday but it should move even more because it's  
45 going to come straight out of the south, should move  
46 the ice around. What is noticeable is -- I wish the --  
47 the ice edge is kind of from -- you can't see it here  
48 unless you know your map but the southern gulf of  
49 Anadyr from Cape Navarin and a southeasterly projection  
50

0161

1 down towards Nunivak is the main ice, it should be  
2 noted that Kotzebue Sound is already shattered and  
3 starting to show movement. And actually most of the  
4 ice is shattered and there's thin high clouds up in the  
5 Chuckchi but there's been open water off of Wellen\* and  
6 Shishmaref, and recently Savoonga and I mean prior to  
7 the last storm, the north shore of St. Lawrence Island  
8 was open to about 50 miles.

9

10 What does this mean?

11

12 So from 2010 to -- I just have these  
13 two years to sort of show because 2010 was the first  
14 time NOAA actually did a bottom trawl survey and got  
15 temperatures and a very high resolution of the ocean  
16 bottom. They do the southern Bering Sea which runs  
17 from the Pribilofs in a southeast direction to the  
18 border, and then they do Bristol Bay down to the  
19 Pribilofs -- down to the Aleutians. So on this one you  
20 can see that in 2010 that black/blue, that is a normal  
21 reflection later once the ice has retreated of the cold  
22 water, and I won't -- if anyone wants to talk about how  
23 that happens, I'm happy to, but for the sake of time I  
24 won't, just know that anything that lives in the  
25 southern Bering Sea and likes warm water and doesn't  
26 like cold water, that big tongue of blue stops the  
27 forward progression. They can sneak in up on our west  
28 coast where you can see where the river runoff is and  
29 where warmer temperatures -- but you need that  
30 black/blue, that is minus -- that's colder than  
31 freezing water, that's liquid on the bottom and that  
32 stops a lot of the fish from the south and keeps our  
33 northern Bering Sea ecosystem in place, which is full  
34 of small fatty forage fish for example, which feeds our  
35 millions of seabirds and young seals, things like that.

36

37 Right now, in 2021, this is two years  
38 ago, you can see that the black/blue has retreated and  
39 that is actually recovering from -- there was no  
40 black/blue basically in 2018/2019 and it's actually  
41 gotten warmer along the coast, so anything that.....

42

43 MR. KIRK: Mr. Chair, I'm going to step  
44 out for a minute, I got to bring my wife to the  
45 airport.

46

47 MS. PILCHER: What was that Ron?

48

49 REPORTER: He's got to go to the

50



0162

1 airport.

2

3

MS. PILCHER: Okay, gotcha, thanks,

4

Ronald.

5

6

MS. SHEFFIELD: All right. So anything  
7 that is from the south and the southern Bering Sea is  
8 the one where the commercial fishermen are -- what you  
9 guys were mentioning yesterday, the commercial  
10 fishermen are feeding, you know, 45 percent of the  
11 United States come out of the southeastern Bering Sea  
12 and those are large fish, they are predatory fish and  
13 they are commercially valuable fish. Those fish have  
14 been swimming up into -- and now they can, they can go  
15 up where it's warmer now and there's no barrier, the  
16 gate is kind of open, so we see that, we've seen that  
17 for the last several years, right, people were catching  
18 Pacific -- big Pacific cod in their net -- in their  
19 cages out here and the pollock and what not have come  
20 north, changing a lot. This is just where we are as of  
21 the three month sea surface temperature average so this  
22 is December through February, December, January and  
23 February, a three month average, it's in fahrenheit,  
24 and you can see this is departure from normal so where  
25 the ice is or where the temperatures are where they  
26 should be are it is white, where it is a little colder  
27 it is blue. And the blue is because last year we had a  
28 lot of open water as well and now we have some ice down  
29 there so it is a little colder. But what is really  
30 striking is the red. The red is now -- it used to just  
31 be more on the Russian side, and now it goes all the  
32 way across and this is, what, so one and up to 2.5  
33 degrees or more fahrenheit warmer than it should be,  
34 still cold, but it's warmer than it should be for the  
35 three month average. So we know that the waters are  
36 coming north in the spring and that's what we should  
37 anticipate that is there's a striking difference there  
38 now between the temperatures.

39

40

41

And just as a harbinger of where I'm  
42 going, these have already been turned in, we had  
43 Shishmaref report this murre, a gentleman from -- he  
44 was working with a loader and he hopped off and took  
45 this picture, this was February 26th, Diomedes is  
46 reporting in the open water that they have had at the  
47 end of February, eider ducks and murre and also just  
48 -- just actually I was going to come in and say, yeah,  
49 last night but on -- just on the other day there  
50 someone handed me this murre, they were coming back

50

0163

1 from crabbing on West Beach and they watched two ravens  
2 kill this thing and they ripped out the guts quickly  
3 before he could get to it, but he handed me this still  
4 warm murre. So that's unusual for our region to be  
5 seeing these types of seabirds in February and March.  
6 So it'll be interesting to see where our next ice  
7 overhead image, what it looks like.

8

9 So here's the three things.

10

11 Again, I don't want to be Chicken  
12 Little, but these are realistic things to think about.

13

14 We have had all three. So maybe we  
15 will again. What do to about it, what it looks like,  
16 that kind of thing. That's what I'm going to do.

17

18 So I mentioned that those big fish come  
19 up and I call it ecological havoc and what has resulted  
20 in what looks like hunger. Poor body condition for a  
21 lot of our seabirds. This has been ongoing since 2017  
22 since when the gate really opened up and that warm  
23 water rushed in and the big fish followed their waters,  
24 it was really their temperature, their waters, they're  
25 okay with it. And our blue cod, Arctic cod, Tom cod,  
26 those kind of small fatty fish, eulachons, kind of went  
27 down. In 2018, 2019 there was so many young bearded,  
28 ringed and spotted seals that were emaciated and you  
29 can see those pictures on the lower right, that NOAA  
30 declared an unusual mortality event for those, which is  
31 at the national level, which sort of shows you the  
32 concern.

33

34 So when you see something that's  
35 hungry, what you could see on the beach is something  
36 that's thin, something that looks tired, or  
37 approachable, or just dead.

38

39 I don't know, the U.S. Fish and  
40 Wildlife Service is in charge of seabirds, they are  
41 authorized for that and NOAA -- NOAA is in charge of  
42 our seals so I couldn't tell you right now the  
43 population level for birds, if it's having an effect  
44 these several years of hunger, but it certainly is a  
45 food security threat for people in this region. Also  
46 having the seals -- I think we learned yesterday  
47 they're not really worried about the numbers but it is  
48 a daunting and not a good trend to see animals in poor  
49 condition in what was -- we are the Bering Strait

50

0164

1 region, we are the bread basket, we should be rich at  
2 sea. So to see starving, hungry animals should be of  
3 concern.

4

5 All right.

6

7 But we've been living with that, we've  
8 been living with that, sort of situation.

9

10 Highly pathogenic Avian Influenza,  
11 H5N1, or the bird flu, it's not new to us now, we saw  
12 it in seabirds and land birds, it was -- it's a very  
13 difficult situation for us because the Fish and  
14 Wildlife Service limited collecting of birds because of  
15 human health concerns so I was allowed to collect birds  
16 and some people within the North Slope Borough, like  
17 their vet are allowed to collect birds. So between  
18 Brandon Ahmasuk, he's the Natural Resources Director at  
19 Kawerak, he and I were able to get about 15 really --  
20 you know you want pristine dead birds, which is hard to  
21 do. So we got about 15 of those and we got glaucous  
22 gulls, tested positive, certainly there were more than  
23 15 birds, there were literally hundreds of birds  
24 reported from the Bering Strait region from Unalakleet  
25 to Port Clarence, Brevig, Wales, Shishmaref, just in  
26 our region and everybody saw that, Safety Sound, there  
27 was a big event in the spring. Also there was a red  
28 fox in Unalakleet that was rabid and now the Fish and  
29 Game, I believe is testing all foxes for rabies and  
30 Avian Influenza because it has jumped into animals.  
31 I'm just sticking to the -- and mammals, I'm just  
32 sticking to our region. Red fox in the Bering Strait  
33 region have -- were positive for Avian Influenza as  
34 well as in the Aleutians. They're currently testing  
35 the foxes this year as well for both. So we know it's  
36 crossed over elsewhere in the state into brown bear and  
37 black bear and then in the U.S. alone, this is a global  
38 event, in the U.S. alone it's jumped into multiple  
39 different types of mammals like mink, and raccoons and  
40 so forth.

41

42 Last year on the East Coast of the  
43 U.S., they actually -- NOAA had an unusual mortality  
44 event in the Gulf of Maine for harbor and grey seals  
45 because of the increased number of deaths and they  
46 tested positive for Avian Influenza as well as a  
47 dolphin in Florida. Since 2022, this winter, globally,  
48 it has caught on, the Caspian seals in the Caspian Sea  
49 in Russia are having a mortality event, they are having  
50

0165

1 a large die-off. It is in sea lions in South America.  
2 It is in small citations like harbor porpoise in  
3 England and in Sweden, and so we should anticipate in  
4 our birds and potentially our land animals, a return of  
5 Avian Influenza and we are -- I am currently part of  
6 the stranding -- marine mammal stranding network and  
7 NOAA is gearing up to try to figure out what tissues we  
8 need to be collecting to test the marine mammals for  
9 Avian Influenza.

10

11 What is Avian Influenza, or the bird  
12 flu look like. At the -- at the very end stages you'll  
13 be able to walk up to the birds. We saw that last  
14 year. And seals -- I was asking -- they are now  
15 posting some of the symptoms, very similar. You may  
16 see seizures, and in the next slide I'll show you what  
17 that looks like in birds, and, of course, that, to me,  
18 is actually a relief in a way because someone who is  
19 harvesting will see an animal seizing and know that  
20 there is something wrong, or the animal will just be  
21 dead and will just be dead on the beach.

22

23 There is a threat, right, food  
24 security.

25

26 But also with Avian Influenza, it is --  
27 I think we've only had one person sick in the country  
28 so far but it is a global event and the switch from  
29 being a poultry disease to a wild bird disease to being  
30 a mammal disease is making people -- we can get it --  
31 it has not happened in great numbers on this go around,  
32 but it is switching and doing things we have not seen  
33 before or in a very long time so there is a potential  
34 to human health impact to this, that's why you're going  
35 to see notices this year again, just like last year,  
36 that say wear gloves, you know, if you see an animal,  
37 report it and all that.

38

39 All right.

40

41 So this first one is from Golovin Bay.  
42 I hope this will work. This is a brant. This is the  
43 kind of thing you might see. This was last spring.  
44 This circling is pretty diagnos -- a pretty -- a big  
45 symptom of Avian Influenza. The birds are -- they're  
46 having this seizure, their brain is swelling and  
47 they're having a lot of neurological problems.

48

49 This next one is the south side of St.

50

0166

1 Lawrence Island. This is a seagull, too bad it's not  
2 dark, but you can see it's having trouble with its  
3 head. It's not able to do what it wants to do. It's  
4 -- it's -- there it's shaking its head. There's a  
5 fourwheeler right there, it can't get away from it.

6

7                   And then this was not from this region,  
8 but this was just a few weeks ago in Kodiak so it  
9 hasn't left yet. This is what it might look like in a  
10 big bird of prey, this is a Golden Eagle, or young bald  
11 eagle, I'm not a bird person, on Kodiak. There are  
12 people walking their dog, this is in Bushkin Bay Park,  
13 which there is dogs around. This eagle doesn't want to  
14 be there. And that's the kind of thing you should look  
15 for in the birds, if that's helpful.

16

17                   And this is sort of near the end stage,  
18 that bird will probably be gone in a few hours.

19

20                   They may be fat. It's a fast acting  
21 disease once it gets going. And so the birds could be  
22 fat and dead.

23

24                   So I don't know, if you guys want to do  
25 questions at the end or anything like that.

26

27                   (No comments)

28

29                   MS. SHEFFIELD: Harmful algae bloom.  
30 If you've been reading the Nome Nugget and listening to  
31 the radio and stuff, is everyone kind of familiar or do  
32 you want me to go over what a harmful algae bloom event  
33 is.

34

35                   CHAIRMAN GREEN: Go ahead.

36

37                   MS. SHEFFIELD: Go ahead, go over it,  
38 or keep moving. Do you know, what do you want me to  
39 do?

40

41                   CHAIRMAN GREEN: Go ahead.

42

43                   MS. SHEFFIELD: Do you want me to  
44 describe what a harmful -- is everyone familiar with  
45 harmful algae bloom?

46

47                   CHAIRMAN GREEN: I don't know if  
48 everyone is familiar with it, it's a good idea to go  
49 over it.

50

1 MS. SHEFFIELD: Okay. So we have lots  
2 of algae. We need algae to live. That's the base of  
3 the food chain in the ocean and it gives us the air we  
4 breath and it's really super important and everyone's  
5 been noticing there's more algae because it's gotten  
6 warmer, they've noticed it on rocks and things like  
7 that. There are, unfortunately -- well, fortunately  
8 we've been blessed. In cold water you don't normally  
9 see harmful algae species. There's a bazillion  
10 different types of algae. There are some in the south  
11 that like warm water. We have them in Alaska, we have  
12 them in the Bering and Chuckchi and Beaufort Sea  
13 actually in very, very small numbers, but there are  
14 some types that protect themselves by making a very  
15 strong poison. Unfortunately it affects your nervous  
16 system and it can affect your health if it is in high  
17 concentration. Well, we never really had to worry  
18 about it too much in recent years because our water's  
19 been cold and it's been around and so it's not new, the  
20 animals have been dealing with it. However, the water  
21 has gotten warmer, and starting in -- so what happens  
22 is if you get a type of algae that is not one that we  
23 want to see, if it's in low numbers, not a problem.  
24 What a plant, which is what an algae is, it's just a  
25 one cell plant, what it needs is lots of daylight,  
26 nutrient rich water, in this case, not soil but water,  
27 and it needs warmth. So lately we've been seeing that  
28 certain types of algae are showing up and the word  
29 bloom is when conditions are just right for it it  
30 explodes and starts splitting and splitting and making  
31 lots and lots of it, lots and lots of it. So if you're  
32 like a clam and, again, it really only affects the  
33 nervous system of things like birds and mammals, it  
34 doesn't bother the clams, it doesn't bother the crab,  
35 they'll be eating lots of it because if lots of it is  
36 in the water they don't -- they don't care, and they're  
37 just going to eat it. If you fill your little clam  
38 stomach with that particular type of algae and then say  
39 you're a walrus and you eat 50 pounds of that clam and  
40 that clam is full of the wrong kind of algae with that  
41 nerve poison, you're going to eat it and then you're  
42 going to digest it and then boy you're going to get a  
43 dose of poison. Normally, like I say, we have such low  
44 numbers, it's in things, it's in our animals but it's  
45 very low but what has happened recently is in 2017  
46 Diomedea shot a walrus, they called it and it came over  
47 to the beach. There was a bunch of walrus out front  
48 but this one climbed out of the water, a bull, put its  
49 head down and for the next 45 minutes never moved,  
50

0168

1 while people were walking around it. That was in 2017.  
2 So there was a big discussion; shoot it, don't shoot  
3 it, what's the matter with it and so forth. It's so  
4 tired. It's so tired. I got a phone call, it's so  
5 tired, what do we -- well, I said it's up to you guys,  
6 but anyway it got harvested and then there was a -- I  
7 got another phone call, should we eat it, or no, well,  
8 because of its behavior, again, I said you know what  
9 just -- if you could get some of the unuk out of the  
10 intestine, some of the fecal matter, send in three feet  
11 of intestine, I'll get it tested because that sounds  
12 like something that might be -- something that might be  
13 more nerve, you know, a tired bull walrus, that's a lot  
14 of tiredness for him to be on the beach, under the  
15 corporation store for 45 minutes not doing anything  
16 with people walking around him. So it turned out, that  
17 was amazing, Diomedea did send in a whole suite of  
18 samples including the three feet of intestine, we were  
19 able to get the fecal matter, the unuk out, and the  
20 saxitoxin, the poison associated with this particular  
21 type of algae, the algae's called alexandrium, there's  
22 tons of different types but, in particular, this was  
23 alexandrium, which we know we have in small numbers,  
24 except the poison in his unuk was five times over the  
25 seafood safety limit for the commercial sale of clams.  
26 Now, why is it like that. That is the only information  
27 we have to show what is good or not good for people,  
28 it's a Federal regulatory marker for the sale of clams.  
29 We know that for commercial -- because, you know, gulf  
30 of Alaska, Southeast, holy cow, they have to live with  
31 this all the time. They've got much warmer water, they  
32 get harmful algae all the time of this alexandrium,  
33 they know the poison, it happens all the time and they  
34 eat a lot of clams. Know that all the clam --  
35 commercial clam harvesting is tested for free by the  
36 State of Alaska. So if you have a bunch of clams and  
37 you're going to sell them you're going to get it tested  
38 by the State of Alaska. If you're a subsistence user  
39 the State does not recognize subsistence in shellfish,  
40 it's recreational or commercial. It hasn't been a  
41 problem in Southeast Alaska, they figured all that out  
42 and there's a lot of commercial clamming down there but  
43 now this problem coming north is a little different  
44 because we don't recreationally clam, or if you're  
45 shooting a walrus for subsistence and you want to eat  
46 out of the stomach, right, you just -- then that --  
47 that's something they're wrapping their head around.

48  
49  
50

Anyway so that was in 2017, which kind

0169

1 of was a warning. Like, how did that walrus get that  
2 much in his poo, he must have eaten something. So  
3 there's some research that's been going on by NOAA and  
4 a whole bunch of other groups, but, in particular,  
5 WoodsHole Oceanographic Institute getting money from a  
6 whole host of different places and in 2018 and 2019  
7 they were on the U.S. Coast Guard Ice Breaker Healy and  
8 they were sampling all the way up from St. Lawrence  
9 Island up to Utqiagvik and they found two places where  
10 the clams were above the seafood safety limit and that  
11 was 70 miles north, northwest of Savoonga, between  
12 Savoonga and Diomede and about 50 miles north of Point  
13 Hope, and they were testing everything. So these were  
14 two hot spots where they found clams that had more than  
15 should have been good for human consumption in those  
16 two locations, the rest of it was fine.

17  
18 Last year, and these are all the  
19 headlines, I hope somebody been's reading the Nome  
20 Nugget so it'll be not unfamiliar, we had an event, a  
21 big event, we had a research vessel that their whole  
22 job was to check for algae. And sure enough, they  
23 started -- left Nome were going to St. Lawrence Island  
24 and then they were going to go up through the Strait to  
25 Utqiagvik, come down, back to Nome, reoutfit and go do  
26 the trail again. So that's from July to -- mid-July to  
27 late August, early September, and along their way from  
28 south of St. Lawrence Island to north of Shishmaref is  
29 where they found massive persistent, and what would be  
30 considered, honestly, a dangerous level of the algae.  
31 Now, this was from July to August, late August, early  
32 September, there were warnings put out, we're working  
33 closely with the Department of Public Health on this,  
34 with Norton Sound Health Corporation, with a whole  
35 host, I mean I'm just one person and I'm not the boss  
36 of this at all, I'm just trying to make sure that we  
37 are getting what the agencies need to test our foods  
38 and, anyway, you should know about this.

39  
40 What would it look like.

41  
42 If you have shellfish poisoning,  
43 paralytic shellfish poisoning, which is what happens  
44 when you have too much alexandrium that produces the  
45 poison, saxitoxin, if you have too much of that and  
46 you've eaten it, you -- for people you can get tingly  
47 fingers and your lips tingle and then you'll be  
48 throwing up, diarrhea and what not, you should go  
49 contact -- if you've been eating any shellfish and you  
50



0170

1 feel sick you should contact your local health care  
2 people immediately.

3

4

5 For the animals, and I can't talk about  
6 health care, but for the animals, the animals will look  
7 tired, right, approachable, it blocks your nerve  
8 signaling. So you're going to eventually paralytic,  
9 you're going to get paralyzed temporarily, but what  
10 happens is your diaphragm in an animal, or whoever,  
11 mammal, if your diaphragm becomes paralyzed that's a  
12 problem for breathing, so that's the worse case.

12

13

14

15 So the animals will look tired, or  
16 approachable or just dead as well.

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45 All right, now, these are kind of all  
46 the people, not even, I could even fill this page  
47 again. I put the local responders up on top and  
48 everyone else down below, and some of those down below  
49 should be up on top, like Eskimo Walrus Commission, but  
50 these are the ones really literally responding, and  
we're all first responders. We are all first  
responders to this, we have been for years. We've seen  
the hunger, we've seen the seals lose their hair,  
right, there was all that business. It's not our first  
rodeo. So I'm just bringing this up but we don't have  
any of the Federal entities that would be responding  
here in Nome, so it is on us to take pictures and  
notify.

44

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45 What can you do.

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47 Some of these are going to be tricky  
48 because like last year they told us not to touch the  
49 birds, that is good advice. But what can you do, you

0171

1 can take video of those seizures, like those people did  
2 in Golovin and south side of St. Lawrence Island and  
3 Kodiak. That is hugely important. The Fish and  
4 Wildlife and NOAA need to know and Fish and Wildlife is  
5 in charge also of walrus and polar bear, they need to  
6 know what is going on and by taking those photos, doing  
7 the video, those are all documented. That is all a  
8 serious documentation plus it's a clue to show what's  
9 going on up here. So I really emphasize that, the cell  
10 phone is really a good weapon. I mean people don't go  
11 hunting to take photos but do bring your cell phone, if  
12 you see the unusual, if you start seeing numbers of  
13 birds. I will be collecting birds.

14

15                   So for the first one just take photos.  
16 If you start seeing any animal, marine mammal, or a  
17 land animal, there's been video of the fox in  
18 Unalakleet seizing, you know, doing a lot of jerking  
19 head motions, repetitively, get a video of that.  
20 Report it. People, Fish and Game, or someone in the  
21 area will hopefully give better instruction or will  
22 come out. Fish and Game, myself, Kawerak, am I missing  
23 anybody.

24

25                   Right now for the seabirds, I will take  
26 whole seabirds and they will go to Fish and Wildlife  
27 Service. They will be tested now, unusually this year,  
28 they're going to the State lab, not the Federal lab,  
29 I'm not sure, that's their issue. And for marine  
30 mammals there will be -- they're determining right now  
31 whether they want anal and oral swabs just like in  
32 Covid days, right, up your nose, you do the same thing  
33 for a seal or beluga, you swab the blowhole or the  
34 butthole, but it looks like brain may be a better  
35 tissue so, you know, if -- for marine mammals it may be  
36 a kind of thing where you want the head, like a seal  
37 head or something, I don't know if it can be, I think  
38 it can be the brain tissue, it's okay if it's been head  
39 shot, you can just get some brain tissue. There will  
40 be more information coming out in that but I just  
41 wanted to make you guys aware.

42

43                   And then for harmful algae bloom,  
44 that, the whole seabird again will be sent to the Fish  
45 and Wildlife Service and it will get tested by the  
46 Federal lab for harmful algae bloom. For marine  
47 mammals what will be -- there will be notices going up  
48 in about -- as soon as -- again, our ice conditions --  
49 pretty soon here, requests to work with, or get three  
50



0173

1 Chuck M\*'s number, he'll be dealing with marine  
2 mammals, and also for birds I threw up there for the  
3 Fish and Wildlife, that is going to be their hotline  
4 number for 24/7, I understand, for reporting anything  
5 wonky with the birds, any kind of birds.

6

7

That's it.

8

9 Thank you, very much for having me, and  
10 I hope that is what you were looking for.

11

12

13

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Gay.  
Charlie, you had a question or something, or a comment.

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MR. LEAN: Just on fish, since that's  
my thing, is there's a lab in Anchorage that does fish  
pathology at Fish and Game, and if you find a fish I  
heard earlier in the meeting that the Tom Cod were in  
small numbers and small in size, that's an indication  
-- they had an epidemic sweep through. Typically  
that's a fungus. But if you find a fish that's rotten  
inside or sick, you don't want to freeze it, you want  
to refrigerate it. If you freeze it, it's worthless.  
But if you can get a fresh refrigerated sick fish to  
that lab in Anchorage, call Fish and Game, ask for the  
pathology lab, they'll tell you how to get it there,  
and that's really useful. I've done that many times  
and they come back with a nice call back of what's  
wrong.

30

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37

And on crab, NSEDC is required to check  
commercial crab for edibility but they don't check for  
PCB because it's only in the gut and not in the muscle.  
So if you're really concerned, the State says that just  
eating the muscle of crab is okay but if you eat the  
butter or the yellow stuff inside that -- that's where  
the PCB would be.

38

39

Thanks.

40

41

42

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Charlie.

43

44

MS. SHEFFIELD: Do you want me to leave  
these?

45

46

47

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Sure. That way people  
can bring them back to their hometowns there.

48

49

I wanted to ask a question. Now,

50

0174

1 saxitoxin, now, you can't cook it out of the animal?

2

3 MS. SHEFFIELD: No, you cannot cook it,  
4 you.....

5

6 REPORTER: Can you turn on that  
7 microphone -- thanks.

8

9 MS. SHEFFIELD: Yeah, you cannot --  
10 thanks. You cannot cook it, you cannot freeze it out.  
11 So it is water soluble but it is some really potent  
12 stuff. The Army tried to weaponize it, they probably  
13 have, actually, because it is so persistent and it's  
14 hard to break it down. It is a nerve toxin and so when  
15 you eat something it goes right in your blood stream,  
16 it goes right up here and it starts blocking your --  
17 it's a sodium channel blocker so it starts blocking  
18 your signal so, you know, you're telling make a fist  
19 and pretty soon, ahh, I can't make a fist, there's  
20 nothing wrong with me, I can't make a fist, that's the  
21 signaling. So it's a nerve toxin, it goes that way.  
22 It works that way. And it can work pretty quickly.  
23 That's why some people, if you get a dose right away  
24 you start feeling the tingly lips.

25

26 CHAIRMAN GREEN: What can reverse it?

27

28 MS. SHEFFIELD: Nothing. So what  
29 they'll do, if you have a serious case of it, they'll  
30 try to -- like I say, you'll -- the hard part is when  
31 your diaphragm gets paralyzed, so they can -- if it's  
32 really that bad, which, you know, that occurs  
33 sometimes, they'll put you on a ventilator, they'll  
34 medivac you out and put you on a ventilator. But  
35 you'll -- you know, your body will be shedding it every  
36 -- and trying to get it out of you as fast as possible.  
37 You'll know something's wrong.

38

39 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, thank you.  
40 Anybody else have questions.

41

42 MS. FREYTAG: May I.

43

44 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Mary.

45

46 MS. SHEFFIELD: Yeah.

47

48 MS. FREYTAG: Yes, just going back  
49 to.....

50

0175

1 MR. KIRK: Mr. Chair.

2

3 MS. FREYTAG: .....what Charlie was  
4 saying about the crab, were they testing the crab also  
5 because the crab are, they eat anything and everything  
6 so -- and a lot of our residents subsist on the crab  
7 and they send out to the villagers that can't go out  
8 and get them so I just was concerned about that and if  
9 they do the crab.

10

11 Thank you.

12

13 MS. SHEFFIELD: Good question. So the  
14 -- Charlie was right, like the stomach of the crab, the  
15 guts of the crab are where it would be, right, it would  
16 eat the algae and it would have the poison in the guts.  
17 So that -- know that it is not in the legs. So the  
18 meat -- if you break off the legs you wouldn't have  
19 exposure to it, but if you cook it all as whole in the  
20 pot, it wouldn't be a good thing because then it would  
21 let go and it'd be all in the juice. But they are,  
22 Norton Sound Health Corporation is looking -- going to  
23 look at crab. I think they just ordered, or they have  
24 plans to order 10 crab from different places and that's  
25 why they're asking, if you want to send in seafood like  
26 tuna kits. Again, the big problem was from July to  
27 late August last year, so right now it's not such a  
28 concern until the water heats up.

29

30 MS. FREYTAG: Yeah, a lot of the  
31 residents that do subsist on the crab towards the --  
32 they like to drink the juice.....

33

34 MS. SHEFFIELD: Yeah. Yeah, eat the  
35 gills.

36

37 MS. FREYTAG: .....you know from right  
38 there instead of the legs, we call that the soup and  
39 it's a delicacy. So thank you.

40

41 MS. SHEFFIELD: Yeah. Yeah. And it's  
42 -- it is just something to be aware of and hopefully  
43 we'll get more information if -- and certainly there'll  
44 be notification if something goes out. Along those  
45 lines there is a study ongoing on walrus so the --  
46 they're taking the NOAA researcher, her name is Kathy  
47 LaFayette out of Seattle, she's working at St. Lawrence  
48 Island and taking a full suite of tissue from walrus so  
49 she's taking unuk and then she tests the intestine,  
50

0176

1 she's testing the kidney, she's testing the liver,  
2 she's testing the meat, she's testing the blubber.  
3 Right now it looks like meat and blubber will -- are  
4 not affected in any dangerous way and I think she does  
5 not know yet regarding kidney, liver, intestine so if  
6 that's a help, too, for anybody who's hunting marine  
7 mammals.

8

9 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Mary. Ron,  
10 online had a question or comment. Ron.

11

12 MR. KIRK: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair.  
13 Through the Chair. What was that number you have,  
14 ma'am, and do you have a phone number we can contact  
15 you?

16

17 MS. SHEFFIELD: Yeah. Do you mean me  
18 or.....

19

20 MR. KIRK: Yeah, you.

21

22 MS. SHEFFIELD: My number is 907-434-  
23 1149. And I live here in Nome. My name is Gay  
24 Sheffield.

25

26 MR. KIRK: Okay. I have another  
27 question. You say this algae is active when the water  
28 gets warm; is that correct, and if that is correct,  
29 what will happen to our kelp coming spring when the  
30 water warms up and the herring fish come in? See, I've  
31 been bringing up this issue to the scientists and to  
32 Fish and Wildlife for years about our ocean water, the  
33 bedding, the bedding of our ocean out there. Every  
34 time the Earth shifts our ocean floor cracks open and  
35 every time it cracks open we don't know what comes out  
36 from under the ground out there under the ocean. It  
37 could be mercury, it could be something harmful like  
38 that. And anything like that that's going to affect  
39 our subsistence way of life is very important to us,  
40 that stuff needs to be studied out there. What I'm  
41 concerned about is this algae that you're talking  
42 about, it mingles with the plankton and if the plankton  
43 is out there in the ocean and the fish eat the  
44 plankton, the smaller fish eat the plankton and then  
45 the bigger fish eat the smaller fish we'll be in dire  
46 trouble. We're already having problems with our fish  
47 throughout the region. We got no salmon coming in, no  
48 fish coming in and now we have this new disease coming  
49 in to our marine mammals out there, I'm pretty sure

50

0177

1 it's going to affect our fish too.

2

3

4 So is there any study being done  
5 concerning our kelp and our fish because this spring  
6 when the ice is gone and the herring, everybody is  
7 going to be going out there going after kelp and  
8 herring eggs and the herring. So that's my concern,  
9 once this algae gets blooming and the plankton and  
10 stuff get into it and the fish get into the plankton,  
11 then what, is that being studied?

11

12

13 MS. SHEFFIELD: All right, so there's a  
14 lot in your statements and questions so that's good,  
15 and I'm really glad you voiced up. So know that the  
16 algae doesn't affect the fish, it doesn't affect the  
17 crab, they can eat it and they're okay with it, it  
18 bothers seal -- you know mammals and birds, and we're a  
19 mammal as well. So it won't bother the herring eggs,  
20 it won't bother the -- actually it won't bother the  
21 crab, the thing is that we need to know when it is in  
22 high number so we know not to eat the stomach of the  
23 crab, that kind of thing. So -- and we know not to eat  
24 the guts of the herring, something like that.

24

25

26 But, you're right, as it is in the food  
27 chain, it can concentrate, like in a clam, like in a  
28 herring, and then a whale comes and eats a herring,  
29 maybe it gets a dose.

29

30

31 So we've been living with alexandrium  
32 all this time. All this time. And if you go back,  
33 when I -- if this is any comfort, Wenton Wayapuck, Jr.,  
34 from Wales, when this first issue broke, he wrote me a  
35 letter and this was about 2016 when they first started  
36 talking about this, and he wrote, and I've never met  
37 him in person, but he wrote me and said, you need to  
38 look back, I think we've gone through this before, long  
39 ago, so he said you need to go find -- the Park Service  
40 has a book of place names and he goes, I don't know  
41 where, the name of the book or anything, but find that  
42 book so I went to the Park Service and there is a book  
43 of place names for the northern Seward Peninsula and  
44 there is a place called Ipnarik\*, which is about 18  
45 miles northeast of Shishmaref where they turn the dogs  
46 around during Spring Carnival, if that gives you an  
47 idea. And in that place name history, it doesn't give  
48 a date, it's from long ago, if you know what I mean.  
49 That place name is a place where several people died  
50 after eating -- or several people died during a red

50



0178

1 tide and often times red tide is another word for  
2 harmful algae bloom. So maybe when things were  
3 warming, or times were different, we have lived with  
4 this.

5  
6 We do know that recently, up until  
7 fairly recently it's not unusual to find it in the guts  
8 of walrus or the guts of bowhead even, even up in  
9 Barrow. Sea lions. Bearded seal. Small amounts of  
10 it. It's only recently that we're starting to realize  
11 that there's maybe sometimes in the summer when it does  
12 start growing a little too fast and that is being  
13 studied. So I hope that is being studied, we need more  
14 of it. I think this region should be -- you know I  
15 heard this meeting yesterday, there's a lot of concern  
16 about -- god, there's a lot of concern, I didn't know  
17 the Western Arctic Herd was in the state it was or the  
18 -- or, you know, the level the trouble the people are  
19 having voicing up about the bycatch, but, anyway, know  
20 that it is being studied. We, of course, need more.  
21 And I think the biggest -- I don't know what community  
22 you're in, do you know?

23  
24 REPORTER: Stebbins.

25  
26 MS. SHEFFIELD: Okay. Stebbins.

27  
28 MR. KIRK: Stebbins.

29  
30 MS. SHEFFIELD: Stebbins. Okay, so  
31 Stebbins, yep.

32  
33 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Stebbins.

34  
35 MS. SHEFFIELD: Yep. So Norton Sound  
36 Health Corporation is going to be coming to Stebbins  
37 and asking for help with your -- through your IRA  
38 Council for sampling the sea water so we can get a  
39 handle on whether or not there is a growth, a big bloom  
40 or a high growth of the harmful algae species and I  
41 would encourage you to have your Council work with the  
42 Norton Sound Health Corporation on that. That is  
43 local. That is paid. And that is going to provide  
44 really important information on a long-term monitoring  
45 of our region. And you're in southern Norton Sound so  
46 that matters, especially.

47  
48 Thank you.

49  
50

0179

1                                 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Ron. Thank  
2 you, Gay.

3  
4                                 MR. KIRK: One more question, Mr.  
5 Chair.

6  
7                                 CHAIRMAN GREEN: I think Tommy you got  
8 a short quick one. I got -- we got time constraints  
9 here, we're going to have somebody calling in here  
10 about now, so Tommy's got something.

11  
12                                MR. GRAY: So I hear not to worry about  
13 crabs but in the guts it can get caught up in it, in  
14 the seals and oogrucks and that's a delicacy to us,  
15 right, the guts, can this, whatever you call it,  
16 compound year after year and get more toxic and more  
17 toxic over time or it kind of washes out? And a good  
18 example of a concern would be look at all the crabs  
19 that people ate in the last two weeks. And -- and I  
20 mean if it's washed out of the system and not an issue  
21 that's fine, but hopefully everybody's looking at all  
22 different angles on this.

23  
24                                MS. SHEFFIELD: Good point. So it's a  
25 plant. So right now, hopefully our water is too --  
26 still too cold, we're ice covered, I mean it's not -- I  
27 mean it's not -- I don't think people are really  
28 concerned when we have sea ice because that's not the  
29 environment it wants, it's a warm water loving plant.  
30 It does not build up its toxin, it's got enough giddyup  
31 as it is so it just is what it is, it's just a plant  
32 that produces a toxin. There's several different  
33 kinds. But this one you really don't want and we seem  
34 to -- we've had it.

35  
36                                MR. LEAN: Let me.....

37  
38                                CHAIRMAN GREEN: Charlie's got  
39 something to add here.

40  
41                                MR. LEAN: So -- so saxitoxin is  
42 consumed by clams or filter feeders and then something  
43 like a crab, crabs eat lots of clams, seals eat lots of  
44 clams and so it bioaccumulates in those predators of  
45 the second and then saxitoxin in people has a half life  
46 of two years or something. So if you get really sick  
47 from saxitoxin and then get a small dose a year away  
48 you could -- it could be much worse than you think it  
49 should be so there is a -- a half life, it's pretty  
50

0180

1 short, but there's always some -- it takes awhile to  
2 get out of your body.

3

4 So I think that's the answer.

5

6 You know, and also on the kelp -- kelp  
7 is not a plant that would -- kelp doesn't eat other  
8 algae, so it's not susceptible to this at all. And  
9 eggs, like herring spawn is an encapsulated thing that  
10 has a shell on it and it can't -- the eggs themselves  
11 don't get saxitoxin.

12

13 CHAIRMAN GREEN: All right, well,  
14 thanks, folks. That's a lot of good information for  
15 people to be packing around in their back pocket and  
16 taking it home.

17

18 MS. SHEFFIELD: Call if you see  
19 anything.

20

21 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yeah.

22

23 MS. SHEFFIELD: That's the thing.

24

25 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yeah, we got somebody  
26 online here but just a comment, I seen over 10 years  
27 ago raven killing the murrens over here in Dry Creek as  
28 a bus driver, and I caught pollock and I caught grey  
29 cod back in the late '90s, late '90s here, so  
30 something's been changing for a long time in our water.

31

32 But, anyway, we have Brian Newland  
33 online, am I right?

34

35 MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa for.....

36

37 MR. NEWLAND: You betcha.

38

39 MS. PILCHER: .....the record, I  
40 believe.....

41

42 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Gay.

43

44 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you.

45

46 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Charlie.

47

48 MS. PILCHER: All right, Brian, are you  
49 available?

50

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1 MR. NEWLAND: Yes, ma'am.

2

3 MS. PILCHER: All right, the floor.....

4

5 MR. NEWLAND: You betcha. All right,  
6 well, good morning everybody. I hope you're all doing  
7 well. Mr. Chairman, thanks for having me here with the  
8 Council today. My name is Brian Newland. I serve as  
9 the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian  
10 Affairs here at the Department of the Interior and  
11 appreciate the opportunity to join you all by phone  
12 today to talk about the President's proposed budget for  
13 the upcoming fiscal year and the proposal to move the  
14 Office of Subsistence Management from the Fish and  
15 Wildlife Service over to our office here at the Office  
16 of the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs.

17

18 I think most of you know that last year  
19 the Department of the Interior, along with USDA and  
20 NOAA hosted a number of tribal consultation sessions as  
21 well as listening sessions on how to improve our  
22 Federal Subsistence Management Program so that we can  
23 better meet the needs of subsistence users and Alaska  
24 Native subsistence users. One of the top asks of all  
25 of those who participated in those consultations and  
26 listening sessions, and this was consistent across the  
27 board was a request that we move the Office of  
28 Subsistence Management from the Fish and Wildlife  
29 Service to the direct supervision of the Secretary of  
30 the Interior, or policy office. And this is consistent  
31 with what we, here, at the Department heard way back in  
32 2010 when the Department was conducting a statewide  
33 review of the Federal Subsistence Program. So this has  
34 been a consistent ask of folks of the Department for  
35 the past 13 years.

36

37 And, you know, I think everybody on the  
38 line and in the room knows that subsistence practices  
39 are vital to the way of life for Alaska Native  
40 communities and people and in addition to non-Native  
41 rural Alaskans. Alaska Natives and other rural  
42 Alaskans depend heavily on subsistence to meet their  
43 food needs and for Alaska Natives it's vital to  
44 maintain their way of life.

45

46 During our consultation sessions last  
47 year we heard a number of comments about the harmful  
48 impacts of climate change. I came on the line just now  
49 and was listening to some of that and we recognize that

50

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1 these impacts affect all subsistence users in Alaska.  
2 And the comments that we heard in the consultations  
3 also highlighted the need for us to expand tribal  
4 partnerships and improve the incorporation of  
5 indigenous knowledge into our subsistence management  
6 program.

7  
8 So elevating the Office of Subsistence  
9 Management to my office is going to, we believe, ensure  
10 that the Program gets a higher level of policy  
11 visibility here at the Department of the Interior, as  
12 well as access to resources necessary to carry out its  
13 mission. And if this proposal is adopted by Congress  
14 the Office of Subsistence Management will continue to  
15 provide support for the Federal Subsistence Management  
16 Program for the benefit of all rural users consistent  
17 with Title VIII of ANILCA. And the Department believes  
18 that this move would strengthen the program and all  
19 users would benefit from the additional opportunities  
20 here in our office to leverage indigenous knowledge and  
21 enhance partnerships and collaboration with tribes  
22 across Alaska.

23  
24 So as for the details itself, what I  
25 can share with you today is that under this proposal,  
26 all of OSM's functions and funding would move from the  
27 Service over to our office here at the Assistant  
28 Secretary level at Indian Affairs and that all OSM  
29 Staff would retain their positions and responsibilities  
30 unless they chose to remain with the Fish and Wildlife  
31 Service. So I want to emphasize this, again, that this  
32 move would not result in changes to Staffing. All OSM  
33 Staff would keep their positions and responsibilities.  
34 Of course, those who are Fish and Wildlife Service  
35 employees who want to remain with the Service would  
36 have the ability to do that at their choice.

37  
38 As part of our budget request we're  
39 also asking Congress to provide an additional 2.5  
40 million dollars to OSM, which would add 1.5 million to  
41 the existing FRMP Program, and another million dollars  
42 to begin a Wildlife Resource Monitoring Program similar  
43 to the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program.

44  
45 As it stands right now this proposal  
46 wouldn't go into effect unless Congress approved it as  
47 it's currently structured in the upcoming  
48 appropriations process and as I mentioned at the top,  
49 this proposal has been submitted to Congress, and we're  
50

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1 going to continue to work with Congress over the next  
2 several months as it works on the President's FY24  
3 budget request and getting a new budget in place for  
4 the upcoming fiscal year.

5

6 So, with that, Mr. Chairman, and  
7 members, I want to thank you again for allowing me this  
8 time to join you this morning, and I'd be happy to take  
9 a few questions.

10

11 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Brian.  
12 Anybody at the table.

13

14 Tommy, go ahead.

15

16 MR. GRAY: So my head is spinning here  
17 trying to keep up with what you were saying. You know  
18 I'm -- I guess a couple of questions. This move from  
19 Fish and Wildlife sounds -- it sounds like a good thing  
20 but like anything else -- I'm the head of the Beluga  
21 Whale Committee and I'm under NO -- with NMFS and I am  
22 starting -- I have no program dollars on -- and so it  
23 sounds like you're moving money over and you're going  
24 to get a couple million extra dollars to improve on  
25 programs which sounds great, but, you know, I guess the  
26 one question is, is it reality that we're going to be  
27 able to improve the program in dollars in the program  
28 under this new regime and maintain our -- where we're  
29 at, I guess.

30

31 The other issue is with this move, I  
32 would think that there would be help with our  
33 subsistence salmon issues here in Alaska. Hopefully  
34 Biden and his team would look at our -- you know,  
35 nobody wants to acknowledge we have a salmon problem  
36 and our salmon resources are dying and I mean look at  
37 the Yukon River, it's all but dead. And we need help  
38 from agencies like the agency that you're moving this  
39 program to and -- and make it a big deal. I mean the  
40 politics involved in this has the -- the players on  
41 let's rape the resource side, and we need help.

42

43 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Tom.

44

45 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you for that. Let  
46 me just respond to that, is that, I am a member of  
47 President Biden's Team and Administration here and I  
48 will say that -- I will acknowledge that there are --  
49 we have a lot of concerns with the state of salmon and,

50

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1 particularly in the Yukon and Kuskokwim, and I've been  
2 up to Alaska several times in the last year to engage  
3 in tribal consultations and meetings with folks about  
4 that and working with colleagues here at the Department  
5 of the Interior, as well as Commerce on addressing that  
6 very issue. And I just wanted to make sure I  
7 acknowledged that part as well.

8

9 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Brian.  
10 Just a comment. There's been a study done on this and  
11 it took into the consideration the health of the  
12 Pacific Rim, I think, and it had to do with salmon, and  
13 now at that point of time when they did that, it was  
14 like in the early 2000s, I think. It's been a long  
15 time since I seen the report. But, anyway, it honed in  
16 on the necessity of salmon throughout, you know, the  
17 Lower 48, Northwest Alaska, Japan, Russia and what not,  
18 but there were two salmon production areas identified  
19 on the West Coast of Alaska and one was the Bristol  
20 Bay, we all hear about the big red salmon fishery down  
21 there. It seems to be going along just fine, it's  
22 healthier than heck. But the other one is the Norton  
23 Sound. Now the Norton Sound has been tripping over  
24 itself for the last 40 years, so I just wanted to put  
25 that in your hand there, that you might want to look  
26 into the Norton Sound. It's not just the Yukon and the  
27 Kuskokwim, the Norton Sound was the first failures in  
28 Nome Subdistrict to be exact, where the beginning of  
29 the chum crash started, that I recall, in my last 40  
30 years around here. So you might want to stick that one  
31 in your pipe to allow -- and add that to the Yukon and  
32 Kuskokwim, Norton Sound is an important contributor to  
33 the salmon population of the Pacific Rim.

34

35 Thank you.

36

37 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

38

39 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Anybody else online  
40 have anything to add or ask of Brian.

41

42 (No comments)

43

44 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Hearing nobody online  
45 I'll go to Tommy.

46

47 MR. GRAY: This is Tom Gray again. And  
48 I just assume that you would understand our situation  
49 up here, you know, Norton Sound is -- has struggled  
50

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1 with the salmon issues and both Norton Sound and the  
2 Yukon need -- I don't want to call it political help  
3 but I think we do need political help. And it -- we're  
4 -- we're not going to solve our issues without some  
5 higher powers or somebody that has a lot more control  
6 than we do. We've been pushed aside for 20, 30 years.

7

8 And the -- the heartache that I have is  
9 agencies will not pay attention until it's a crises,  
10 well, we're in a crises mode now. And we do need help.

11

12 But the reason I got back on is you  
13 talk about moving from Fish and Wildlife to  
14 subsistence, how far out are you looking at this move  
15 happening?

16

17 MR. NEWLAND: Well, this is -- so this  
18 is a budget proposal. It's in the President's budget  
19 request. and the way that would work is Congress would  
20 have to approve it and I think in an ideal world, you  
21 know, the old days, you know, budgets were done earlier  
22 in the year but I think realistically we're looking at  
23 several months to coordinate with Congress on a budget  
24 for the next year and then the move -- the process of  
25 moving would begin after that. That's the best  
26 timeline I can give you right now. So it's --  
27 realistically that process wouldn't begin for, at  
28 least, several more months, depending on when Congress  
29 takes up the budget.

30

31 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you for your  
32 comment, Tommy.

33

34 One of the things Brian -- this is  
35 Louis Green, sorry I didn't introduce myself earlier,  
36 I'm the Chair.

37

38 You know, I kind of threw it out there  
39 that co-management's kind of a buzz word anymore, it  
40 seems to me. I've been involved in this stuff for 30  
41 years, going back to 1993 when I first got involved in  
42 these discussions at committee levels, and one thing I  
43 really want to stress is that if it's going to be a co-  
44 management, the Feds and the State need to start  
45 working together, because those fish maybe they're out  
46 in the Bering Sea for our area, the Bering Sea where  
47 they're rearing and they start off in the river, and  
48 they go out into the Bering Sea and they go back to the  
49 river, and when they're not getting back to the river,

50



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1 that's a marine problem. If they're leaving in good  
2 numbers of our rivers, through the State system,  
3 they're getting out in the Federal waters and they're  
4 not coming back, there's something going on in the  
5 marine waters.

6  
7 Yeah, there's climate change, I get all  
8 that, but there are other fisheries taking place under  
9 Federal jurisdiction.

10

11 So that would be my biggest concern is  
12 whether or not the Feds and the State are really going  
13 to co-manage our resources. They haven't in the last  
14 30 years I've been involved. I haven't seen a very  
15 good working relationship so I would like to see you  
16 carry that to the President, or whomever you're working  
17 there with.

18

19 Thank you.

20

21 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you.

22

23 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Mary Freytag, Council.

24

25 MS. FREYTAG: Yes, thank you. Not a  
26 question, just a comment. I just want to applaud the  
27 traditional customs and knowledge that you guys are  
28 going to be incorporating into the program. It's very  
29 critical because a lot of the subsistence users, you  
30 know, are indigenous to this region and all of that  
31 knowledge there needs to be shared, so I just want to  
32 applaud your guys' mission.

33

34 Thank you.

35

36 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Mary. Any  
37 other Council.

38

39 (No comments)

40

41 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Online, Ron and  
42 Robert.

43

44 MR. KIRK: Mr. Chair, Ron Kirk,  
45 Stebbins.

46

47 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Was that you Kirk?

48

49 MR. KIRK: Hello, Brian, Ron Kirk,

50

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1 Stebbins. I am concerned about our fish. If the  
2 Federal government is going to take over the U.S. Fish  
3 and Wildlife, my concern is we're having fish problems  
4 around the Norton Sound and the Kuskokwim area and the  
5 Federal government allows commercial fishing down in  
6 the Bristol Bay area or somewhere, and how do you --  
7 how do we know that our stock doesn't mingle with the  
8 Bristol Bay fish, then start coming up and by the time  
9 it gets here it's a way less stock than before. If  
10 we're stopping commercial crabbing and commercial  
11 fishing in the Yukon area, why can't we put a little  
12 damper on the commercial fishing elsewhere to  
13 revitalize our stock, bring it back up. Because we're  
14 subsistence all over the state of Alaska and, we, on  
15 the Board right now -- Federal Seward Peninsula Board,  
16 all of us on this Board, we're not fighting for  
17 ourselves, we're fighting for our children's children's  
18 future. What are they going to be looking at in their  
19 future, in their lives, when we're gone.

20

21 That's my concern.

22

23 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

24

25 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Ron.

26

27 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you for that.

28

29 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Go ahead, Brian.

30

31 MR. NEWLAND: I was just going to  
32 acknowledge Ron's comment there and thank you for that.  
33 I share your desire to protect traditional ways of life  
34 for coming generations. That's something that's  
35 important to Secretary Haaland. It's something that's  
36 important to me, not only in my role as Assistant  
37 Secretary, but personally and making sure that --  
38 making sure that future generations have the ability to  
39 exercise their rights and to maintain their way of life  
40 as our ancestors have worked to protect.

41

42 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Brian.

43

44 MR. KIRK: Yes, that would.....

45

46 CHAIRMAN GREEN: I would -- oh, go  
47 ahead, Ron, you're still on.

48

49 MR. KIRK: Yes, that's my concern

50

0188

1 there, is our children's children's future is we have  
2 to think about them, not us, them. It's their future  
3 we're thinking about. They have to live and try to  
4 live off the land, and with all this algae and all this  
5 flu going around, bird flu, and marine mammal flu,  
6 everything happening out there in this planet, we have  
7 to think about how to teach them to learn and survive a  
8 subsistence way of life.

9

10 Thank you, Brian.

11

12 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you. Friends, I  
13 apologize, I'm going to -- I can maybe take one more  
14 quick question or comment, I have another meeting  
15 coming up in four minutes, but I appreciate, again, the  
16 chance to visit with you by phone today and just kind  
17 of explain a little more in-depth about the proposed  
18 move of OSM.

19

20 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Brian. So  
21 just one last comment out of me, I'm Chair.

22

23 You know this study that I talked about  
24 that took place back in the, I think it was in the  
25 '80s, it was so important to do that study that when  
26 the findings of it pointed to the necessity of having  
27 salmon in our streams, tribes and the Federal  
28 government and maybe the States down below there, I  
29 think California, Oregon and Washington, they got all  
30 behind it and they cleaned their rivers up, they got  
31 rid of the dams, or they made water ladders or whatever  
32 it was for the salmon to get around. But today the  
33 Columbia River salmon is so important, they're working  
34 on that right now. They're -- I've heard something in  
35 the news, I haven't followed up on it yet but it's  
36 really important down there, but we have the Yukon and  
37 the Kuskokwim and the whole Norton Sound, Norton Sound  
38 being one of two salmon production areas in Western  
39 Alaska, those are really important to the whole outlook  
40 of the health of the Pacific Rim also.

41

42 So I hope that from our conversation  
43 here that you can bring that to the table, too.  
44 Because we're not any less important than Washington or  
45 Oregon or the Columbia River.

46

47 So thank you very much for your time.

48

49 MR. NEWLAND: Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

50

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1 And let me just emphasize that the tribe that I come  
2 from, we're based in the Great Lakes. I grew up in a  
3 fishing community. We have Treaty fishing rights, a  
4 difference in subsistence fishing, but what I wanted --  
5 the reason I share that and what I want to emphasize is  
6 that I understand deeply, just as a person who grew up  
7 with my life experience and my family, how important  
8 this way of life is, and it's important for tribal  
9 people in the Great Lakes, important for the people --  
10 tribal people on the East Coast, it's important, of  
11 course, for tribal people in the Pacific Northwest and  
12 every bit as much, if not more so it's important for  
13 Alaska Natives and people who depend to hunt, this  
14 life, this way to feed themselves and their families.  
15 And I value that, I appreciate you emphasizing that and  
16 that's something that we have in mind when we come to  
17 work everyday.

18  
19 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you. All right,  
20 well, thank you very much for calling in.....

21  
22 MR. NEWLAND: I want to thank you for  
23 your comments.

24  
25 CHAIRMAN GREEN: .....and having this  
26 conversation with us Brian, it's really appreciated.

27  
28 MR. NEWLAND: You bet. Thank you guys,  
29 take care.

30  
31 CHAIRMAN GREEN: You, too, thank you.  
32 So that moves us into -- we have two Council members  
33 here that didn't get to do their community reports and  
34 Mary Freytag and Martin Aukongak, you have the floor.  
35 Starting with Mary, she looks like she's ready. You're  
36 still awake over there somewhere.

37  
38 MS. FREYTAG: Alrighty, thank you, Mr.  
39 Chair. It's a pleasure to be here. It's my first  
40 report, village report.

41  
42 I'll begin with the moose. The moose  
43 quota was met. The only concern that we had was  
44 outsiders coming in with their nice planes during moose  
45 season on our Federal lands and that was a big concern  
46 because they take the big bulls, that's their target.  
47 And that was concerning the moose.

48  
49 As for the fish. The king salmon was  
50

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1 marginal but was able to put a couple kings in my  
2 freezer and like everyone else just a couple, a couple  
3 three, four, five into the freezer, which is better  
4 than nothing.

5

6                   As for the caribou. Our hunters travel  
7 each spring all the way to Granite or toward Buckland  
8 for their harvest of the caribou. There were times,  
9 like every 50 years the caribou do come all the way  
10 down towards Unalakleet and even farther down towards  
11 the Yukon, but last time that happened was when my 30  
12 year old son was in middle school.

13

14                   As for the muskox. A couple of  
15 residents were able to harvest as the muskox has  
16 migrated towards the Unalakleet area. We're getting to  
17 see more and more muskox in our area right there in  
18 Unalakleet.

19

20                   As for the other subsistence of fish  
21 such as trout and grayling. Very abundant as well as  
22 the Tom Cods.

23

24                   Trapping as well. We have a few  
25 trappers out there and they had a really good trapping  
26 season.

27

28                   For the herring egg harvest. It was  
29 phenomenal, boat loads and everyone got to share and  
30 eat all the good, yummy, crunchy stuff.

31

32                   And my last thing would be on the  
33 berries. We had a very high storm surge that went all  
34 the way into our mouth of the river and flooded our  
35 flats where we pick the salmonberries so the  
36 salmonberries last summer were very scarce but a lot of  
37 the residents did fly here to Nome, Alaska because  
38 there was an abundance of salmonberries here. So that  
39 took care of, you know, a lot of the people for our  
40 salmonberries.

41

42                   And, Mr. Chairman, thank you. That is  
43 the end of my report.

44

45                   CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Mary. That  
46 leaves Martin.

47

48                   MR. AUKONGAK: Mine's pretty short.  
49 Everybody knows I wasn't here for the last meeting,  
50

0191

1 sorry about that. We had that Merbok and we had to do  
2 a lot of clean up.

3  
4 I'm very thankful we got moose from  
5 White Mountain and we got from Unalakleet too, so that  
6 was very good for the community of Golovin.

7  
8 And right now, you know, they get a lot  
9 of Tom Cod, trout, trapping is good. My cousin got a  
10 few caribou.

11  
12 Moose. In January, a few people got  
13 some.

14  
15 And I'm very happy to be here, thank  
16 you.

17  
18 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Martin. I  
19 guess we pushed it off to the side yesterday, the  
20 election, so I'm going to hand that over to Nissa at  
21 this point. You're on Nissa.

22  
23 MS. PILCHER: All right. Once, again,  
24 this is Nissa Pilcher, Council Coordinator for the  
25 Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council.

26  
27 In accordance to the Council charter  
28 Council members elect a Chair, Vice Chair and  
29 Secretary for a one year term. This usually starts at  
30 the beginning of the calendar year. Right now we're  
31 doing it right now so this would be the officers for  
32 this meeting, the remainder of this meeting and then  
33 the fall meeting. So I will take the reins for the  
34 election of the Chair and then I will turn it over to  
35 the newly elected Chair.

36  
37 So currently I would like to open the  
38 floor for nominations for the Council Chair. Just keep  
39 in mind that the nominations do not need to be  
40 seconded.

41  
42 All right.

43  
44 MR. GRAY: And who -- who's in the  
45 seats.....

46  
47 MR. KIRK: Ron Kirk, Stebbins. I  
48 nominate.....

49  
50

0192

1 MR. GRAY: Who's -- who's in these  
2 seats.....

3  
4 MR. KIRK: .....Louis Green for Chair  
5 and move to close nominations.

6  
7 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Hold on, we got three  
8 microphones on. Excuse me, Tommy had a question and  
9 Ron had a question. So Tommy, go first.

10  
11 MR. GRAY: Who fills these seats right  
12 now?

13  
14 MS. PILCHER: So currently Louis Green  
15 is the Chair. You, Tom Green -- Tom Gray, sorry --  
16 Tommy's the vice Chair, and then Elmer is the  
17 Secretary. And currently we're just doing Chair.

18  
19 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, Ron, your turn.

20  
21 MR. KIRK: I nominate Louis Green for  
22 Chair and move to close nominations.

23  
24 MR. GRAY: I second.

25  
26 MS. FREYTAG: Question.

27  
28 MR. KIRK: Question.

29  
30 MS. PILCHER: So Mr. Green was  
31 nominated to serve as the Council Chair. Since there  
32 was no other nominations I don't believe a vote is in  
33 order but we could do it anyway just -- just to say we  
34 did it because I'm not sure of the proprie -- yeah. So  
35 all in favor say aye.

36  
37 IN UNISON: Aye.

38  
39 MS. PILCHER: All right. So I -- Mr.  
40 Green was elected as the Council Chair.  
41 Congratulations. So I will turn it back over to the  
42 Chair to handle the elections for the Vice Chair and  
43 then the Secretary.

44  
45 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, well, thanks to  
46 the Council for your vote of confidence for another  
47 year. I don't know -- I can't wait until Tommy gets  
48 into this seat.

49  
50

0193

1 MR. GRAY: No.

2

3

CHAIRMAN GREEN: All right. So now we  
4 have -- we're looking at nominations for Vice Chair at  
5 this point. So I'll call on the floor -- somebody.

6

7

MR. SEETOT: Mr. Chair. I nominate Mr.  
8 Tom Gray as Vice Chair.

9

10

11

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CHAIRMAN GREEN: Nominations need no  
second.

MR. KIRK: I close -- I move to close  
nominations, Mr. Chair. Ron Kirk.

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Ron's moved to close.  
Do we need a second for that.

MR. SEETOT: Second.

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Elmer seconds to close  
nominations.

MS. FREYTAG: Question.

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Question's been  
called. Those in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Tom, you are now the  
Vice Chairman for another year.

MR. GRAY: Okay, thanks for.....

CHAIRMAN GREEN: You can take over the  
meeting.

MR. GRAY: .....the confidence -- no, I  
-- I'll have to learn how to not talk so much.

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, thank you,  
Tommy. Okay, so now that moves us into the third and  
final, right, is the Secretary, so we're looking for a  
nomination for an individual for Secretary.

MS. FREYTAG: This is Mary Freytag.  
I'd like to nominate Elmer Seetot, Jr., for Secretary.



0194

1 MR. GRAY: Second and ask for unanimous  
2 consent.

3  
4 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Elmer, you got  
5 something.

6  
7 MR. SEETOT: May I rebutt, I -- I think  
8 I'm not -- I'm pretty much at the close of my tenure  
9 over at the Federal Subsistence -- or the Seward  
10 Peninsula and would like to get someone younger, you  
11 know, to at least learn what -- what is being  
12 circulating, you know, in these positions. I -- I woul  
13 -- I mean let me say, I do not reject the nomination  
14 but I would prefer, you know, that someone, you know,  
15 learn the ropes along the way. That's what I'm trying  
16 to get at.

17  
18 Thank you.

19  
20 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. If you decline  
21 -- if you decline the nomination then if you want to --  
22 do you want to pick somebody -- do you want to nominate  
23 somebody or do you want to take it.

24  
25 MR. GRAY: Too late.

26  
27 (Laughter)

28  
29 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Too late, you're  
30 already -- you've been overruled by the Vice Chair.

31  
32 (Laughter)

33  
34 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. So all those in  
35 favor.....

36  
37 MR. KIRK: You're stuck Elmer.

38  
39 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Go ahead, somebody  
40 else out there.

41  
42 MR. KIRK: I was just telling Elmer  
43 he's stuck with it now.

44  
45 CHAIRMAN GREEN: And we closed  
46 nominations and there was unanimous consent, I think,  
47 Elmer you are the Secretary and it's all done.

48  
49 Thank you.

50

0195

1 All right, we filled all three seats  
2 for another year. And that moves us into.....

3

4 (Pause)

5

6 CHAIRMAN GREEN: So Nissa's pointing  
7 out something here about, under M?

8

9 MS. PILCHER: Yeah.

10

11 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yeah. Under new  
12 business there's an Item M, proposed changes to hunting  
13 and trapping regulations in National Preserves in  
14 Alaska, National Park Service, and who would be doing  
15 that. Jeanette.

16

17 Jeanette.

18

19 There's two microphones ladies.

20

21 (Laughter)

22

23 CHAIRMAN GREEN: That girl with Diomede  
24 written all over her shirt, she needs to sit up there  
25 and be noticed too.

26

27 (Laughter)

28

29 CHAIRMAN GREEN: My children have  
30 ancestry from Diomede.

31

32 Okay, ladies you're on.

33

34 MS. KOELSCH: Good morning. (In  
35 Native). Through the Chair. My name is Jeanette  
36 Koelsch. For those that don't know me, I've been the  
37 Superintendent of the Bering LandBridge National  
38 Preserve since 2009. And I'm here to seek comment from  
39 the Seward Peninsula RAC membership on a proposed  
40 wildlife rule for the National Park Service and I would  
41 like to give some background on this rule that began in  
42 2015, was amended in 2020 and now the Park Service has  
43 been asked by the Department of Interior to, again,  
44 reinstate that rule.

45

46 And do you want to say who you are  
47 Nikki, just in case.

48

49 MS. BRAEM: Sure. Good morning. My

50

0196

1 name's Nikki Braem and I am the Cultural Anthropologist  
2 here at Bering LandBridge National Preserve in Nome.

3

4 MS. KOELSCH: I believe this rule is in  
5 your packet -- yeah -- no?

6

7 MS. PILCHER: Yes.

8

9 MS. KOELSCH: Okay. Just in case, I  
10 just want to make sure.

11

12 The National Park Service proposes to  
13 amend its regulations for sporthunting and trapping in  
14 National Preserves in Alaska. Now this proposed reg  
15 would only affect sporthunters in National Preserves.  
16 And Bering LandBridge is a National Preserve. This  
17 would not affect any other Federal lands within the  
18 Bering Strait region, just Bering LandBridge National  
19 Preserve and other Preserve lands in Alaska.

20

21 This proposed rule would prohibit  
22 certain harvest practices by sporthunters including  
23 bear baiting and prohibit predator control or predator  
24 reduction on National Preserve lands.

25

26 Some quick background on this.

27

28 ANILCA, the Alaska National Interest  
29 Lands Conservation Act, allows harvests of wildlife in  
30 National Preserves for subsistence purposes by local  
31 rural residents under Federal regulations. ANILCA also  
32 allows harvest of wildlife for the purpose by any  
33 individual under the laws of the State of Alaska that  
34 do not conflict with Federal laws. ANILCA requires the  
35 National Park Service to manage National Preserves  
36 consistent with the NPS Organic Act of 1916, which  
37 directs the National Park Service to conserve the  
38 scenery, natural and historic objects and wildlife in  
39 the units and to provide for the enjoyment of the  
40 scenery, natural and historic objects and wildlife in  
41 such a manner and by such means as will leave them  
42 unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.

43

44 The older proposed rule in 2015 -- or  
45 rule in 2015 was reversed. The 2015 rule outlined  
46 certain sporthunting practices that would not be  
47 allowed in National Preserves. Those included bear  
48 baiting -- let's see, I don't want to forget what they  
49 are -- sorry.....

50

0197

1 MS. BRAEM: Jeanette, would you like me  
2 to weigh in?

3  
4 MS. KOELSCH: It's a lot of papers.

5  
6 MS. BRAEM: Yeah, I'll just.....

7  
8 MS. KOELSCH: They included -- oh,  
9 sorry -- bear baiting, harvesting of black bears, cubs  
10 and sows with cubs in dens, hunting wolves and coyotes  
11 during the denning period and hunting swimming caribou.

12  
13 And that 2015 rule was reversed in 2020  
14 to allow for those practices by sporthunters.

15  
16 Now the Park Service is going back, as  
17 asked, to create a reg that prohibits those practices,  
18 which also includes no predator control or predator  
19 reduction in National Preserves.

20  
21 I don't know -- I don't know, I feel  
22 like I'm droning on, or am I missing anything Nikki.

23  
24 MS. BRAEM: I would just point out that  
25 the take home message here is these changes affect  
26 sporthunters, not Federally-qualified subsistence  
27 users. So this rule change doesn't affect you or you  
28 or anyone at this table, it would affect sportshunters  
29 coming in to hunt on National Preserve lands in Alaska.  
30 So I think that's the most important message besides  
31 the various practices.

32  
33 MS. KOELSCH: And those -- and just to  
34 reiterate those practices that we're proposing not to  
35 allow on National Preserves in Alaska would be bear  
36 baiting, you know, for several reasons. The National  
37 Park Service believes that bear baiting habituates  
38 bears, this includes brown bears, to human food and  
39 creates a public safety issue. The other one is the  
40 harvesting of black bear cubs and sows with cubs in  
41 dens. Hunting wolves and coyotes during the denning  
42 period and would prohibit the hunting of swimming  
43 caribou by sporthunters.

44  
45 Did I forget anything?

46  
47 CHAIRMAN GREEN: So what I'm getting is  
48 it doesn't apply to the residents, basically, that are  
49 Federally-qualified?

50

0198

1 MS. KOELSCH: Yeah, this only applies  
2 to non-Federally-qualified, or sporthunters.

3  
4 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Any questions.

5  
6 Tommy.

7  
8 MR. GRAY: Yeah, I'm -- I'm thinking  
9 about wolves, and I have a problem with the wolves, and  
10 if I could kill every wolf on the Seward Peninsula I  
11 would.

12  
13 I went to Fish and Game with the  
14 question, can I kill little baby wolves, brand new born  
15 baby wolves, can I kill them? And they said, according  
16 to our regs you can. I just want to make sure that I  
17 still have that right, especially if I end up with  
18 reindeer again. And you guys are a long ways from  
19 where I'm at but that -- you know, I guess I'm talking  
20 on behalf of the reindeer industry also. I just -- you  
21 know, we're going to be all locals and we'll fit the  
22 box.

23  
24 But, again, I don't condone baiting.  
25 I'm a big game guide. I have -- you know if we got to  
26 bait bears, black bears, brown bears, I don't condone  
27 either one of them. The industry has built a  
28 reputation around black bear and baiting and, you know,  
29 it's unfortunate that the whole United States is in  
30 that ball park. If I had my way nobody'd get to bait,  
31 but on the other side of the coin if I shoot a moose  
32 and I go back to that moose gut pile is that baiting,  
33 to kill a bear.

34  
35 So a couple of oddball questions, I  
36 guess.

37  
38 CHAIRMAN GREEN: So that question.....

39  
40 MR. GRAY: And we have Walker back here  
41 who probably has more insight on that than all of us.

42  
43 MR. GUSSE: I'd prefer everybody  
44 to.....

45  
46 REPORTER: Walker, come on up.

47  
48 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Your turn to the mic.  
49 You can't just sit there for another day without saying  
50

0199

1 something.

2

3

4 MR. GUSSE: Through the Chair. This is  
5 Walker Gusse with the Bureau of Land Management out of  
6 Anchorage. I don't have the regulation book in front  
7 of me for the State regs but I'd refer everybody to the  
8 State regulations as to the trapping rules and for the  
9 baiting rules.

9

10 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. That's your --  
11 are you done, Tom?

12

13

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MR. GRAY: Yeah, I'm done.

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, you're done. So  
the question I had was this is referring to the Bering  
LandBridge Preserve, there are other Federal lands out  
here so it doesn't apply to those. I just wanted to  
make sure that.....

MS. KOELSCH: It doesn't apply to those  
but it does apply to other National Preserves in the  
State of Alaska including Wrangell-St. Elias, Noatak  
National Preserve, the Preserve part of the Gates of  
the Arctic, the Preserve part of Katmai National Park  
and Preserve. Am I missing another one here?

MS. BRAEM: I think you got them.

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Tommy likes it. Just  
like that commercial of Life Cereal.

(Laughter)

MS. KOELSCH: Do you have any other  
comments that you would like to bring to the record in  
regard to the Park Service's proposed rule to limit the  
sporthunting practices as well limiting, or prohibiting  
predator control and predator reduction in National  
Preserves before we go?

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Any folks on the  
Council. Mary, you have something.

MS. FREYTAG: Not directly for the  
Bering LandBridge, but our area, we consider certain  
areas critical subsistence that have been utilized by  
our ancestors for eons and eons and we had tried to  
list them as critical so that no mining can take place

0200

1 but we had gotten the response back that those areas  
2 that we chose weren't going to be protected. So I just  
3 wanted to bring that to your attention that there are  
4 still are critical areas that people do utilize for  
5 subsistence and have been utilizing since time and  
6 memorial, so I really thank you for this information.

7

8 MS. KOELSCH: I think, too, if you --  
9 through the Chair, is it okay if I answer.

10

11 CHAIRMAN GREEN: (Nods affirmatively)

12

13 MS. KOELSCH: There was some discussion  
14 yesterday about the Bureau of Land Management's plans  
15 and input from the tribes and public and how tribes and  
16 the public could comment on BLM land plans. So I do  
17 know that Unalakleet has a fair amount of BLM lands and  
18 so I would refer to some BLM folks here if you have  
19 questions about that, those plans. Is that what you  
20 were going to say Tom -- sorry.

21

22 MR. GRAY: My -- I'm going to turn my  
23 hat a little bit and I'm going to be a reindeer herder.  
24 I wear too many hats. You know we talk about predator  
25 control. And if the reindeer industry ever got up and  
26 running, up in the Park, there's going to be need for  
27 predator control, I'll just say it, wolves are going to  
28 be an issue. And hopefully you guys will work with the  
29 locals to address those kinds of issues.

30

31 You know the industry, it's real easy  
32 to say, oh, it's your problem. I mean the State said,  
33 oh, it's not a big issue. We got overwhelmed by  
34 caribou, we are hanging on by our fingernails as an  
35 industry. We need to rebuild that industry. But we  
36 need partners and work together to address issues,  
37 rather than, oh, go fight it yourself. We don't  
38 condone this. You know we need to be able to sit at  
39 the table and work out issues.

40

41 MS. KOELSCH: I agree. And we have, at  
42 the Reindeer Herder meetings, Maggie Stang, when she  
43 was the State Wildlife Trooper talked to the herders,  
44 that was before she went on sabbatical, maybe three  
45 years ago, yeah, about predators and property and she  
46 laid out the State regs for protection of life and  
47 property for the reindeer herders.

48

49 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yeah, so just to

50

0201

1 follow up on all of this, this does not apply to  
2 Federally-recognized, and Federally-recognized, I'm  
3 sure, would be reindeer herders. Is there somebody  
4 that would -- Nikki, go ahead, is that?

5

6 MS. BRAEM: This rule applies to non-  
7 Federally -- only to non-Federally-qualified hunters.

8

9 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Right. Sporthunters,  
10 okay. So I think that kind of seals the deal there  
11 that it's local only use.

12

13 MS. KOELSCH: Yeah, and of course it  
14 doesn't mean that folks can go and do these things  
15 unless it's in the books to allow for it, even for  
16 subsistence. So you still have to follow the State and  
17 the Federal handy-dandy's for what you can and cannot  
18 do so.

19

20 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. Well, I recall  
21 a herder up there on the upper side of the Bering  
22 Strait -- or the Seward Peninsula, there was some  
23 question about dealing with defense of life and  
24 property and reindeer herders, somebody's property, and  
25 it was kind of getting muddled up, I think this was  
26 back in the '70s or maybe even early '80s and that  
27 person took a bear, it mixed with the herd, and froze  
28 it and then took a chainsaw and cut it in half and  
29 tagged it, freight collect to Fish and Game.

30

31 (Laughter)

32

33 CHAIRMAN GREEN: So I just wanted to  
34 throw a little bit of humor in there.

35

36 MS. KOELSCH: I did get a comment  
37 online from somebody who texted me and they said that I  
38 didn't make it clear enough that it would prohibit  
39 sport taking of caribou, swimming caribou. So I'm just  
40 clarifying -- clarifying that, that it's about swimming  
41 caribou for sport so.

42

43 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. Any more  
44 information from you ladies on this?

45

46 MS. KOELSCH: (Shakes head negatively)

47

48 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Any more questions or  
49 comments about it.

50



0202

1 MR. KIRK: Ron Kirk, Mr. Chair.

2

3 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Ron. Let Ron go first  
4 -- is that Ron?

5

6 MR. KIRK: Yes, Mr. Chair. Just  
7 concern -- this is concerning the Bering LandBridge,  
8 she had mentioned about predator control, there's no  
9 predator control on the Bering LandBridge, is that my  
10 understanding, and if that's my understanding, you have  
11 to realize that we need predator control even on the  
12 Bering LandBridge because a pack of wolves -- let's  
13 take -- let's go wolves, let's go to the area of  
14 wolves. A pack of wolves will travel over a 100 miles  
15 to go get their -- to go get something to eat. Now,  
16 they don't know where the Bering LandBridge ends. They  
17 will cross over to Federal lands or State lands and do  
18 whatever they have to do and then bring the food back  
19 into the Bering LandBridge. If there's no predator  
20 control in Bering LandBridge, I'd like to see that we  
21 have predator control in the Bering LandBridge because  
22 it's going to affect the subsistence way of life  
23 outside the Bering LandBridge. Because wolves, they  
24 got no -- they don't know there's an invisible gate  
25 saying you can't cross the Bering LandBridge and go  
26 over there and hunt something or put down a moose.

27

28 So that's my concern there.

29

30 We need to have predator control on the  
31 Bering LandBridge, too.

32

33 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

34

35 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Ron. I  
36 think what this applies to is sporthunts and non-  
37 resident, non-Federally-qualified people can't go in  
38 there and do any of this and, you know, people are  
39 allowed in the LandBridge that are local to take  
40 wolves, take bears, there's the State defense of life  
41 and property. If a bear is tearing your cabin up or  
42 going after your reindeer herd or taking your dry  
43 fish, ripping your stuff apart then you have the right  
44 to do that, take the life of that bear, or take into  
45 the wolf population if you need to remove some. so  
46 that doesn't take the right away from the Federally-  
47 recognized people, just the sporthunters.

48

49 Tommy.

50

0203

1 MR. GRAY: So you caught me off guard  
2 there when you talked about swimming caribou. I  
3 thought that all the rivers were State controlled and  
4 there must be Federally-controlled waters that -- that  
5 are being shut down to outsiders, so to speak, is that  
6 the case?

7  
8 MS. KOELSCH: So in National Preserves,  
9 non -- specific to non-navigable waterways in the  
10 Sturgeon case, those are still for subsistence  
11 purposes, Federal water ways. If they were under --  
12 truly under State management for that it would -- they  
13 would also -- I don't know how to explain the issue  
14 with Federal subsistence.

15  
16 So in National Preserves, still, unless  
17 it's been adjudicated by the State, those water ways  
18 are still under Federal jurisdiction. So I guess that  
19 is what I'm saying. Everything else I just said didn't  
20 make any sense, I apologize. It's a -- it's  
21 complicated.

22  
23 Nikki's laughing.

24  
25 CHAIRMAN GREEN: That was a good  
26 answer, you cleared it up there, it's under the  
27 Federal.

28  
29 MS. BRAEM: Excuse me. One -- one  
30 correction.

31  
32 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Oops, go.

33  
34 MS. BRAEM: Just a minor point. So  
35 there's a lot of water ways in Alaska where the  
36 question of navigability has not been adjudicated and  
37 -- whether it's navigable or not, a lot of water ways,  
38 some are up in the Preserve. It is the BLM ultimately  
39 that does the adjudication, not us and not the State of  
40 Alaska. So we're all kind of in a state of one day  
41 this will all get sorted out.

42  
43 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Nikki. Are  
44 we done with this, what are we -- Nissa.

45  
46 MS. PILCHER: Nissa Pilcher for the  
47 record. Just so you guys are aware, this is an action  
48 item so what we can do, if you wish, is we can -- I  
49 believe the comment date for this is the 27th so it is  
50

0204

1 looming very quickly. What we can do is we can compile  
2 your comments into a -- it would be a rather short  
3 comment to submit to the National Park Service about  
4 this if you guys so choose to.

5

6 Just to be clear, basically what I did  
7 hear from the Council was as the -- the concern of this  
8 Council was ensuring that the current practices of the  
9 Federally-qualified subsistence users are maintained  
10 and as long as those are maintained there's no problem  
11 that this Council currently has with the proposed rule  
12 going forward. Is that correct?

13

14 CHAIRMAN GREEN: I think you hit the  
15 nail on the head, Nissa. That's fine.

16

17 (Council nods affirmatively)

18

19 CHAIRMAN GREEN: I'm seeing a lot of  
20 yes nods here.

21

22 MR. GRAY: So moved.

23

24 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Is there a second if  
25 we're voting on it.

26

27 MR. KIRK: Second.

28

29 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Second, Ron Kirk. All  
30 those in favor.

31

32 IN UNISON: Aye.

33

34 CHAIRMAN GREEN: All those against,  
35 same sign.

36

37 (No opposing votes)

38

39 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Hearing none it  
40 passes. Thank you, Nissa. So that's -- we're done  
41 with you ladies, thank you very much.

42

43 (Pause)

44

45 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Where are we?

46

47 MS. PILCHER: So when we approved the  
48 agenda yesterday we added going over a wildlife special  
49 action request, 22-05. It was supposed to go after the  
50

0205

1 Board of Game wildlife proposals but we kind of jumped  
2 around but we can start again and start with that one,  
3 if that works, and then we can work down the rest of  
4 the agenda.

5

6 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yep.

7

8 MS. PILCHER: All right. So that would  
9 be Dr. Voorhees, and I will pass out the special action  
10 request as it was submitted.

11

12 (Pause)

13

14 MS. FREYTAG: Mr. Chair. Just a  
15 clarification, when Nissa goes through the agenda, if  
16 she can point out where, on the agenda, the number and  
17 the thing, so we can correspond. Thank you.

18

19 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yeah, thank you, Mary.  
20 We're kind of bouncing around here so much that --  
21 she's passing out this wildlife proposal here.

22

23 (Pause)

24

25 CHAIRMAN GREEN: This is Northwest --  
26 Northwest has this out there, the Kotzebue folks, the  
27 group, or the Council I should say, for Mary's sake,  
28 Martin -- Ron, are you there, he doesn't have a copy of  
29 this.....

30

31 MS. PILCHER: Oh.

32

33 CHAIRMAN GREEN: .....I'm sure, him and  
34 Robert -- Robert and Ron won't have a copy.

35

36 MR. KIRK: Yeah, I'm still here, Mr.  
37 Chair.

38

39 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yeah, this was added  
40 after the book was sent out, too, so go ahead Nissa.

41

42 MS. PILCHER: Yeah, apologies for that.  
43 Yeah, we just got it, I believe, on Tuesday. It is on  
44 the meeting website materials but that's probably --  
45 oh, yeah.....

46

47 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Maybe we could take  
48 pictures and send it to your cell phones.

49

50

0206

1 (Pause)

2

3 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Go ahead. Ron, did  
4 you hear me, this is Louis?

5

6 MR. KIRK: Yeah, I heard you. If  
7 you're going to do that, you can send it to 944-1182.

8

9 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, I heard 944-  
10 1182, is there another number also?

11

12 MR. MOSES: This is Robert, 739-1334.

13

14 CHAIRMAN GREEN: 73.....

15

16 MR. MOSES: 9.

17

18 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you.

19

20 MR. MOSES: 1334.

21

22 CHAIRMAN GREEN: 1334.

23

24 (Pause)

25

26 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yep, she's doing the  
27 side show over here, you guys have the main floor show.  
28 Start dancing.

29

30 (Laughter)

31

32 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you. Brian.

33

34 Dr. Hannah.

35

36 DR. VOORHEES: Good morning, Mr. Chair  
37 and members of the Council. This is Hannah Voorhees,  
38 Anthropologist with Office of Subsistence Management.  
39 And this is a brief presentation on a special action  
40 request pertaining to caribou in Unit 23. This was  
41 recently submitted by the Northwest Arctic Regional  
42 Advisory Council and it's been named WSA22-05.

43

44 This is an action item so I'll be  
45 looking for the Council's formal recommendation.

46

47 During their meeting on March 6th and  
48 7th, the Northwest Arctic Council submitted a special  
49 action request asking that the Federal Subsistence  
50 Board reduce the harvest limit in Unit 23 to four

50

0207

1 caribou, only one of which may be a cow per year, for  
2 the remainder of the 2022 to 2024 regulatory cycle,  
3 which ends on June 30th, 2024.

4

5 This request is intended to align with  
6 proposals submitted by the Kotzebue AC and the Western  
7 Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group to the Board of Game.  
8 The Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group also  
9 expressed its intent to submit their proposal to the  
10 Federal Subsistence Board.

11

12

13 These proposals are being submitted in  
14 responses to the declining caribou herd numbers. The  
15 most recent estimate for the Western Arctic Caribou  
16 Herd based on the 2022 census places the herd at  
17 164,000 and in addition to their special action  
18 request, the Northwest Arctic Council also submitted  
19 this proposal as a standard regulatory proposal. And  
20 that means, if adopted, the regular proposal would go  
21 into effect in July 2024, but this special action that  
22 I'm putting before you right now is meant to cover the  
23 time until then.

23

24

25 So currently in Unit 23, as you know,  
26 there's a harvest limit of five caribou per day under  
27 Federal subsistence regulations and residents of Unit  
28 22 have a customary and traditional use determination  
29 for caribou in Unit 23, and this is why this special  
30 action request is coming before your Council.

30

31

32 And OSM will be scheduling a public  
33 hearing, we don't yet have specific information on when  
34 or how that will be held but we should know soon and  
35 there will also be an opportunity for consultation by  
36 tribes and ANCSA Corporations, if requested, through  
37 OSM.

37

38

39 So there's not yet an analysis for  
40 WSA22-05 since this was a very recent special action  
41 request so we don't have much more information to bring  
42 before you right now. But this is your opportunity to  
43 weigh in as a Council on this request.

43

44

45 Thank you, Mr. Chair. And Brian  
46 Ubelaker and I are here if you have any questions.

46

47

48

49

50

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you. So what

0208

1 you're saying, that if this gets implemented -- when?

2

3 DR. VOORHEES: Mr. Chair. There's no  
4 set timeline for the special action request but I would  
5 wager that it could be in effect for the fall hunting  
6 season this year.

7

8 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. That's some  
9 kind of a timeline now. So if everybody votes this in  
10 -- which is -- because we're part of the -- we utilize  
11 part of that herd it's coming across our table, folks.

12

13 Anybody got a comment, I think Tommy's  
14 smiling over here.

15

16 MR. GRAY: So my comment was is I was  
17 part of that process to come up with four caribou so  
18 I'm going to support it.

19

20 CHAIRMAN GREEN: And so this is one  
21 year, this is a yearling thing or is this going to be  
22 -- yeah, that's what I'm asking, is it permanent?

23

24 DR. VOORHEES: This is a special action  
25 request so it would be in place for one regulatory  
26 cycle.

27

28 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay.

29

30 MR. GRAY: Except you're also asking it  
31 to go into the regular cycle which would -- now what  
32 would it be, a permanent?

33

34 DR. VOORHEES: So we currently -- OSM  
35 has an open period and we're accepting proposals to  
36 change Federal subsistence regulations for wildlife and  
37 so this proposal, assuming that we do, in fact, have it  
38 submitted as a regular proposal, will be coming before  
39 this Council at the appropriate time and then would go  
40 into effect in July 2024.

41

42 MR. GRAY: You didn't answer my  
43 question.

44

45 (Laughter)

46

47 MR. GRAY: If it goes through the  
48 Council in '24 and is adopted, is that law from then on  
49 until it's a -- a proposal goes in to change it back?

50

0209

1 DR. VOORHEES: Through the Chair,  
2 that's correct. Any standard regulatory proposal is in  
3 place until changed by another regulatory proposal.

4  
5 Thank you.

6  
7 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. So it's a --  
8 when is that cycle coming up? I'm just trying to make  
9 sure. If we're going to do something like this, and my  
10 feeling is if it's a one year, this is a special action  
11 for one year, I could see that but the one question I  
12 was going to have is you pointed out it might be in  
13 place in the fall hunt, is that -- what does that do  
14 for sporthunting, that's all, there's a lot of  
15 sporthunting going up on up there.

16  
17 DR. VOORHEES: Thank you for that  
18 question. There is currently a closure on a portion of  
19 Federal public lands in Unit 23 and a small portion of  
20 26A for caribou, it's a closure to non-Federally-  
21 qualified users so while this -- this only applies to  
22 -- this change that's been proposed would only affect  
23 Federal regulations -- yeah, there currently is a  
24 closure. So I don't know if that answered your  
25 question.

26  
27 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yeah, so it only  
28 applies on Federal lands and non-qualified can't hunt  
29 on Federal lands so this applies to basically local  
30 folks.

31  
32 DR. VOORHEES: they can apply -- excuse  
33 me -- they can hunt on some Federal public lands for  
34 caribou in Unit 23 but -- and I can read the closure  
35 language to you if you'd like.

36  
37 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. So I guess I'm  
38 trying to home in on this -- I know the State's got a  
39 hunt up there, we're looking at Unit 23, is what I'm  
40 referring to.

41  
42 DR. VOORHEES: Uh-huh.

43  
44 CHAIRMAN GREEN: So there's a State  
45 hunt up there too, is this going to apply to only  
46 Federal lands or will it apply to State lands?

47  
48 DR. VOORHEES: This will only apply to  
49 Federally-qualified subsistence users hunting on  
50



0210

1 Federal lands, however, a similar proposal has been  
2 submitted to the Alaska Board of Game.

3

4 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, so there you go,  
5 that filled the gap.

6

7 Nissa.

8

9 MS. PILCHER: Nissa Pilcher for the  
10 record. Just to -- just to note. So the proposal was  
11 submitted to the Board of Game, it would not be enacted  
12 for this current hunting season, they'd vote on it in  
13 January of 2024 for the 20243 hunting season. There is  
14 a process to submit the equivalent of a special action  
15 request to the Board of Game but they have timelines --  
16 it would actually be an emergency petition at this  
17 point if one was submitted. So I'm just saying that  
18 there might be a lag on the State side. This is an  
19 immediate -- the special action request would be an  
20 immediate action. The proposal that was submitted to  
21 the Board of Game is going to have a lag just because  
22 of how their process works.

23

24 That's all.

25

26 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. So it's going  
27 to happen to both but if we -- if -- if this one goes  
28 through then it gets enacted on Federal lands by the  
29 fall hunt?

30

31 DR. VOORHEES: Most likely.

32

33 CHAIRMAN GREEN: And that only applies  
34 to local folks.

35

36 DR. VOORHEES: Correct. And thank you,  
37 nissa, for those qualifications.

38

39 CHAIRMAN GREEN: So in other words if  
40 the -- on Federal lands for local folks this applies  
41 this coming fall, State sporthunters can still hunt and  
42 they can get five a day; am I right?

43

44 DR. VOORHEES: That's exactly right.

45

46 CHAIRMAN GREEN: That kind of sounds a  
47 little bit out of balance.

48

49 Tommy, go ahead.

50

0211

1 MR. GRAY: So I was involved with the  
2 Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group when this all  
3 was proposed. The State's going to come in line. They  
4 are going to follow suit on this thing. The -- the  
5 problem that we have, and now I'm wearing my Western  
6 Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group hat, the problem  
7 we've got is we're down to 165,000 animals and we have  
8 a management graph that dictates how many harvestable  
9 surplus animals are available and in reality we're  
10 below the ANS. Our subsistence users, and I'm just  
11 going to use -- exaggerate numbers -- our subsistence  
12 users need 15,000 animals and what is out there with  
13 165,000 animals is 7,000 harvestable surplus; we're in  
14 an ANS situation, and the State recognizes that. They  
15 don't want to deal with that. And this process right  
16 here is the outcome. I mean if we push the ANS issue,  
17 the State is going to blow up and be pissed off. And  
18 the ANS, it automatically has shut out outsiders and  
19 outside hunters are not going to be able to caribou  
20 hunt after this all -- the dust settles, it'll get shut  
21 down.

22  
23 You know your concern about people from  
24 outside, it's on its way because the numbers are so low  
25 and that's what's driving all of this and that's why we  
26 went -- I mean, gosh, you could have shot five animals  
27 a day -- Tom Gray could have, 365 days a year, and  
28 we've gone to four animals, I mean that's a drastic --  
29 that's what we recommended to the Feds and to the State  
30 so it's coming. It's going to happen.

31  
32 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, so I hear what  
33 you're saying Councilman Gray. My problem is, if this  
34 thing gets Federally -- the Federal side enacts it then  
35 Federally-recognized folks can only get four caribou  
36 this year, this fall. And then if you're hunting on  
37 State lands you can get five a day for a total of 20,  
38 if I'm right, so I'm trying to weigh this out here.

39  
40 I suppose -- I might be answering my  
41 own question.

42  
43 A Federally-recognized person can still  
44 hunt in the State -- can still go under the State  
45 regulation so they can still get their equal share of  
46 20 caribou for the season, am I tracking good -- if --  
47 if we do this and it's enacted in the fall hunt, it's  
48 only Federal lands, this -- the State hunt is still on  
49 and it's still open to a resident up there so they can  
50

0212

1 still -- they could not -- we're not going to hunt on  
2 Federal lands, we're going to go hunt on State lands  
3 and get our five a day -- so am I tracking correctly on  
4 that?

5

6 DR. VOORHEES: That's correct. And if  
7 someone from the State wants to jump in as we're  
8 discussing the specific State regulations, I'm happy to  
9 hear that. I believe it's five caribou per day, not  
10 like a 20 numbered limit.

11

12 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Hello Sara.

13

14 MS. GERMAIN: Good morning, how's it  
15 going. This is Sara with Fish and Game in Nome. Yeah,  
16 you're right it depends on what side of the line you're  
17 on so in Unit 22 it's up to 20 total, five a day, but  
18 Unit 23 there's no limit. So like Tom was saying up in  
19 23 you could get five a day every day out of the year  
20 but in 22 it caps out at 20.

21

22 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. So we're  
23 limited to 20 already on State lands.

24

25 MS. GERMAIN: (Nods affirmatively)

26

27 CHAIRMAN GREEN: I thought they were up  
28 in Northwest.

29

30 DR. VOORHEES: We're talking about Unit  
31 23.

32

33 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Is it the same up  
34 there?

35

36 MS. GERMAIN: Through the Chair. Can  
37 you repeat what your question was?

38

39 CHAIRMAN GREEN: There was talk that  
40 you could get five a day for the whole year but I think  
41 -- I thought they implemented the 20 total per hunter,  
42 five a day, up to 20 per season, or per year I should  
43 say, in 23 also.....

44

45 MS. GERMAIN: (Shakes head negatively)

46

47 CHAIRMAN GREEN: .....wasn't -- it's  
48 not there. Okay, so they've been able to do it --  
49 okay. So anyway, what this does is it applies on  
50

0213

1 Federal lands, it would be the Preserve this fall is  
2 basically in our area and any BLM lands, would  
3 that.....

4

5 DR. VOORHEES: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
6 So if we look at Unit 23, the current closure area is  
7 in Noatak National Preserve including the Nigyu River  
8 portion of the Preserve in Unit 26A and BLM managed  
9 lands between the Noatak and Kobuk Rivers in Unit 23,  
10 and importantly this is only for August 1st to  
11 September 30th that this closure exists, and that's to  
12 non-Federally-qualified users. So for the rest of the  
13 year, and for lands that don't fall within that  
14 description, Federal public lands that don't fall in  
15 this description in Unit 23, other than National Parks  
16 and Monuments, then there would be this more liberal  
17 limit under State regulations on State lands and it's  
18 true that Federally-qualified subsistence users could  
19 hunt those regulations.

20

21 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. So I understand  
22 now that this is just for 23, okay, and it won't apply  
23 to 22 on the Preserve?

24

25 DR. VOORHEES: That's correct. As  
26 written right now this special action request is only  
27 for Unit 23.

28

29 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. That's where I  
30 was having a problem there and I was worried about  
31 people getting -- getting a decrease in what they are  
32 able to get in our -- in our Unit 22. Okay, so I'm  
33 settled with it. These folks want to implement this on  
34 their own selves, if it's good for them, it's good for  
35 us in my mind.

36

37 Brian, you got anything to add?

38

39 MR. UBELAKER: For the record, Brian  
40 Ubelaker, Wildlife Biologist with OSM. And, no, I  
41 believe Hannah covered everything that needed to be  
42 said. It sounds like you got it all figured out.

43

44 CHAIRMAN GREEN: I don't know if what I  
45 said anybody followed.

46

47 (Laughter)

48

49 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. All right, so

50

0214

1 we need to take action on this, or if we choose to? Do  
2 we want to act on this Tommy, Vice Chair?

3

4 MR. GRAY: What's that?

5

6 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Do we want to act on  
7 this and help our friends up north?

8

9 MR. GRAY: It's a matter of time and  
10 it's all going to be four.....

11

12 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. Well, if we  
13 want to vote on it let's vote on it now so it could be  
14 an action item for us if we want to do it.

15

16 MR. GRAY: Like I'm saying, that.....

17

18 REPORTER: Tom. Tom, come to the mic.

19

20 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Any Council have  
21 comments. Raymond, go ahead.

22

23 MR. HUNT: I was going to ask when --  
24 when would we start on this if we were to vote on it,  
25 you know, a date as to on the plan?

26

27 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Hannah alluded to the  
28 fact that it could happen to them, in Unit 23, by this  
29 fall on Federal lands up there, not on our -- in our  
30 unit, 22, correct?

31

32 DR. VOORHEES: That's correct. There's  
33 a process with special action requests such as this.  
34 It's for a temporary action so there will need to be a  
35 public hearing, an analysis will be developed and there  
36 will be a special Board meeting, the timeline of that  
37 is a bit uncertain but once that's complete then it  
38 could go into effect.

39

40 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, thank you. So  
41 the curtain is coming down, Tommy Gray has alluded to  
42 that, the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group has  
43 already been a part of this process so this is only up  
44 in Northwest around the Kotzebue area that this is all  
45 about and it falls in to place on Federal lands in the  
46 fall. Is that clear enough?

47

48 (Council nods affirmatively)

49

50

0215

1 CHAIRMAN GREEN: So if somebody wants  
2 to vote.....

3  
4 MR. GRAY: I want to say something.

5  
6 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, Tommy's got  
7 something to add.

8  
9 MR. GRAY: You know, I guess it really  
10 surprises me that the State and the Feds didn't get  
11 their act together because the message that we sent  
12 from the working group was all players are going to get  
13 to shoot four animals a year. It doesn't matter where  
14 you live or whatever, it's four animals, whether you  
15 live in Nome or you live in Wainwright, or whatever,  
16 that was the intent, and I was part of that process and  
17 here we are talking about dictating to Kotzebue and  
18 they have proposed this to bring the numbers down  
19 themselves and, yet, the Seward Peninsula's going to  
20 stay at 20 animals. And now it's going to be a catch  
21 up thing. I mean people are going to -- you'd think  
22 there'd be some uniformity on this thing and people  
23 working together to come in line to do the management  
24 of this with the intent that the Western Arctic Caribou  
25 Herd Working Group was trying to set up and, you know,  
26 here, I've got Louis sitting next to me, that's not  
27 fair, they're going to get to shoot five animals a day  
28 and I'm limited to 20, and I mean that's reality.

29  
30 You know, if we're going to manage this  
31 resource and -- and there was a big push from the  
32 Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group that we want  
33 to start conserving, we want to come in line and make  
34 this work and, yet, you know, you guys need to be  
35 working together with the State and everybody playing  
36 ball together. Let's all work it out in the sandbox.

37  
38 But, anyway, I just had to say that.

39  
40 I'm going to vote in favor of this  
41 thing but we're going to be fighting this battle this  
42 fall. You guys -- somebody's going to come in and say  
43 you need to go down to four animals a day and we're  
44 going to propose Unit 22, I mean believe me somebody's  
45 going to bring that up and here we are a half a year  
46 later when -- when it could have been addressed now.

47  
48 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. So my intent  
49 earlier about this was that it was going to take our  
50

0216

1 hunters down to four in Federal lands and it's not.

2

3 MR. GRAY: Not right now.

4

5 CHAIRMAN GREEN: It's not going to.

6 But it's going to take those folks up there in the  
7 National Wildlife Refuge -- I don't know, BLM, it  
8 applies to BLM lands too for Kotzebue in 23, so all  
9 these lands up here, they still have open State lands  
10 that they could exercise their one a day every day, or  
11 10 a day or whatever it is, it's not going to go away  
12 from them until the State clamps down on it.

13

14 So all I wanted to do was make sure  
15 that we still had the opportunity in our area because  
16 of subsistence and we're here because of subsistence  
17 and I didn't want to see it limiting us and it doesn't  
18 apply to us.

19

20 Brian.

21

22 MR. UBELAKER: Mr. Chair. Brian  
23 Ubelaker, OSM. Thank you. And, Mr. Gray, it's  
24 actually fortuitous that you said that because the call  
25 for wildlife proposals is now open and if Unit 22 would  
26 like to submit a proposal to change Federal harvest  
27 regulations now is your chance to do that and you can  
28 take care of it now versus a half a year or year down  
29 the road when population is really in trouble.

30

31 MR. GRAY: I've told you my stand on  
32 proposals and managing wildlife and I think the  
33 managers need to step up, you know, and not make Tom  
34 Gray submit a proposal, you know, the managers need to  
35 take a stand and -- and manage the regulations  
36 accordingly so -- you know Tom Gray's not going to put  
37 in a proposal, not for this issue. It's going to come.  
38 Somebody's going to put it on the table because we  
39 can't have Kotzebue having five animals a day, Nome  
40 having 20 animals a year, and somebody else having four  
41 animals annually, I mean shit's going to hit the fan.

42

43 So, anyway, I'm not interested in  
44 proposals, but I think you guys should be talking to  
45 somebody to make it happen.

46

47 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Tommy. We  
48 do need to have a little bit of courtesy on the mic.

49

50

0217

1 MR. GRAY: I apologize.

2

3 CHAIRMAN GREEN: I didn't call point of  
4 order, I just figure I'll say it now.

5

6 (Laughter)

7

8 DR. VOORHEES: Mr. Chair.

9

10 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, so we understand  
11 what this is about, it's about 23, they're asking --  
12 they're putting this out there, if we want to act on it  
13 we can, if we don't need to -- we don't need to act on  
14 it.

15

16 MR. GRAY: No, we don't.

17

18 CHAIRMAN GREEN: And so -- oh, Hannah,  
19 you're going to go, maybe you're going to correct me.

20

21 DR. VOORHEES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I  
22 just wanted to note that this would apply to Federal  
23 public lands on the northern part of the Seward  
24 Peninsula in Unit 23, there's some BLM lands there and  
25 the Bering LandBridge National Preserve and also this  
26 would apply -- so since residents of Unit 23 are  
27 Federally-qualified hunters for caribou in Unit 23,  
28 because you have a customary and traditional use  
29 determination, this would apply to residents of Unit 22  
30 if you're hunting further north.

31

32 So I just wanted to clarify that.

33

34 Thank you.

35

36 CHAIRMAN GREEN: North of this line.  
37 This is the line, right? This is ours?

38

39 DR. VOORHEES: Uh-huh.

40

41 CHAIRMAN GREEN: This is 23?

42

43 DR. VOORHEES: That's correct. I just  
44 wanted to.....

45

46 CHAIRMAN GREEN: And that's what you're  
47 talking about.

48

49 DR. VOORHEES: .....clarify, yep.

50



0218

1                   CHAIRMAN GREEN: Anything over the  
2 line.

3  
4                   DR. VOORHEES: Yes. Thank you.

5  
6                   CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. We're looking  
7 at Deering and what not, the north -- let's see the  
8 Imuruk Lake on the Kuzitrin, the Good Hope River,  
9 that's all in 23, Buckland. And that would apply this  
10 fall -- this is 23, so, go ahead Elmer.

11  
12                   MR. SEETOT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
13 Anyone at the table like we are, we can pretty much  
14 determine -- or we just think about human removal of  
15 animals and then, oh, the numbers are so down, you need  
16 to look at predators -- predators that -- predators can  
17 do a lot of damage to a resource. I seen that happen  
18 before, whether it be the swift caribou, whether it be  
19 the milling (indiscernible), whether it be the moose; I  
20 seen these things happen. We talk about it all the  
21 time. But it just seems that we really never take into  
22 account the removal of animals by nature, extreme  
23 weather events. Western Arctic Caribou Herd, they just  
24 don't know, or ADF&G or U.S. Fish and Wildlife, just  
25 doesn't know how many animals were in 1975, they have  
26 an unknown number. But what got to me was the  
27 presentation on the weather extremes in 1960 to '75, I  
28 was -- I was -- that was very cold. That was very,  
29 very cold. Because when I was maybe 8 or 9 maybe, we  
30 used to wait for the Northstar under BIA to go to  
31 Brevig because, you know, we were little tykes, poor,  
32 you know, we didn't have no -- nothing, no sweets at  
33 that time but Captain Mo, he used to bring candy all  
34 the time and we looked forward to that. That one year  
35 in September, in mid-60s, Port Clarence froze in  
36 September and in that first week in September and --  
37 and then looking at what was presented by Sheffield on  
38 the ice conditions and it pretty much affects the whole  
39 region, is that very extreme cold conditions and I  
40 assume that, you know, I have -- I have heard from  
41 elders in the past about the animals and -- and I think  
42 that, you know, rain, frozen ground on top of their  
43 feed would -- would get them to maybe expire because  
44 they didn't have no food to eat.

45  
46                   So -- so we -- we could talk about the  
47 human related removal of any natural resource to death  
48 but you just got to look at the other extreme. We hunt  
49 during the day, the animals at night. We don't know.  
50

0219

1 The agencies, the biologists do not know what is being  
2 taken from our natural resources because they don't  
3 have no monitors, they don't have anybody out there to  
4 see what's being removed. If I got five fish, I'll  
5 know how much fish I got, without any predators taking  
6 it, but if I'm not careful they are going to expire  
7 sooner or later -- what -- what I'm trying to get at is  
8 we mostly talk about harvesters from the human side but  
9 we're not really too sure of what happens on nature  
10 side and I think we're pretty much equal on that and  
11 that we impose restrictions on the removal of animals  
12 within our area, within the region but -- but then  
13 natural wildlife, as it is, the predators, they go in,  
14 when they're hungry they're hungry and they know how to  
15 survive out there.

16

17 And that was pretty much what I was  
18 trying to point out. We could talk forever about human  
19 cause but not so much about natural mortality, predator  
20 take and what not, because I have seen that happen in  
21 the past and I have heard things in the past that where  
22 large -- large number of natural resources, whether it  
23 be fish, whether it be ducks, whether it be something  
24 on land. Last summer, area the size of this space in  
25 my fish camp we have Ranger Creek, where the humpies --  
26 humpies, let me put it technically -- pink salmon -- go  
27 to spawn. And then after they -- after they -- or  
28 maybe from the year before, after they pretty much turn  
29 into small fish there was a little creek that -- or  
30 water way that went out but was kind of blocking --  
31 kept flowing into that and it was the size of -- size  
32 of this space right here and that was small fish that  
33 were -- would not be able to add back to the inventory  
34 out there. So many things seen and unseen that we  
35 think is pretty much human caused but we just got to go  
36 out there and look. Mother Nature does its duty to for  
37 its own natural resources so that's where I was at.

38

39 Thank you.

40

41 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, Elmer, thank you  
42 for your comment there. I'm -- if anybody wants to  
43 move on this we can move on it, it's -- these folks up  
44 there in 23 are doing this and they're requesting it, I  
45 don't think we need to act on it if we don't want to.

46

47 MS. FREYTAG: Mr. Chair, this is Mary.

48

49 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Go ahead, Mary.

50

0220

1 MS. FREYTAG: Not a question, just a --  
2 well, actually maybe a question. This proposal for 23,  
3 was that based on a survey that was done prior to the  
4 proposal or what prompt -- when was that survey done  
5 and did they take climate change into effect because  
6 there was a lot of rain that's been happening during  
7 the winter and a lot of thick ice built up too so I was  
8 just curious.

9  
10 Thank you.

11  
12 MR. UBELAKER: Through the Chair. This  
13 is the result of the last photo census that ADF&G  
14 conducted and I don't know the date off the top of my  
15 head, they try to do one, I believe, every year.

16  
17 DR. VOORHEES: Last year.

18  
19 MR. UBELAKER: Okay, last year, 2022.  
20 Which showed the population at 164,000 animals, which  
21 prompted the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group,  
22 which I was just handed their proposal they are  
23 submitting, is to limit pretty much everybody that  
24 hunts on the Western Arctic Caribou Herd. So it would  
25 include Units 21B, 22, 23, 26A, 24B, C and D. That is  
26 the expected proposal that the Federal Subsistence  
27 Board will be getting and I believe Northwest Arctic  
28 acted preemptively to try to get ahead of it to put in  
29 the special action to limit it to four for this coming  
30 season.

31  
32 DR. VOORHEES: For Unit 23 only.

33  
34 MR. UBELAKER: Correct. Sorry.

35  
36 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you. Oh,  
37 somebody's -- go ahead, Tommy.

38  
39 MR. GRAY: So I hate to put Charlie on  
40 the spot but I see, and a meeting for the AC which  
41 Charlie and I sit on, and I checked on that agenda, is  
42 caribou, and I would assume that we're going to talk  
43 about caribou issues, and he might be able to shed a  
44 little light on this. He also sits on the Western  
45 Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group and he went through  
46 this process. I don't mind making a motion to adopt  
47 this or support it and I will at the appropriate time  
48 but the -- the proposal that you read and you said it's  
49 going to the Federal Big Board is a State proposal that  
50

0221

1 is going through the State system or is that just a  
2 Federal proposal going through the Federal system?

3

4 MR. UBELAKER: Through the Chair.  
5 There is an expected proposal coming to the Federal  
6 side and I believe also through the Board of Game on  
7 the State side, both proposing the same thing.

8

9 MR. GRAY: So like I said it's coming  
10 and anyway I don't know if Charlie would have anything  
11 to add to this.

12

13 MR. LEAN: So the working group, which  
14 I participated in, was talking about they -- they  
15 actually -- we debated whether we should try to  
16 accelerate the passing of this proposal or just let it  
17 go into the normal Fish and Game cycle which is a year  
18 out so there was apparently disagreement with the  
19 Kotzebue group and the general working group as a  
20 whole, because they've taken action to move it ahead a  
21 year, but the working group's proposal is still a year  
22 out and, yes, we -- the language that was -- was  
23 described is what we voted on and it was agreed that it  
24 should be the entire -- the entire range of the Western  
25 Arctic Caribou Herd, all people affected equally was  
26 the thought pattern.

27

28 There was debate about the Teshekpuk  
29 Herd up on the North Slope and we -- I don't remember  
30 taking specific action but I think we kind of expected  
31 the people in the Barrow area, or the Utqiagvik area to  
32 say -- they wanted a little bit different rule for the  
33 -- the Teshekpuk Herd is doing better than the Western  
34 Arctic Herd, so that -- I'm not clear what's going to  
35 happen there.

36

37 But the Unit 23 contingent was adamant  
38 that this needed to happen soon, and they put their  
39 money where their mouth is, they're trying to move it  
40 up as fast as they can.

41

42 So that's what I had to say.

43

44 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Charlie,  
45 for weighing in.

46

47 Tommy.

48

49 MR. GRAY: So I move to support this

50

0222

1 proposal.

2

3 CHAIRMAN GREEN: There's a motion on  
4 the floor to support, is there a second.

5

6 MS. FREYTAG: This is Mary Freytag. I  
7 second.

8

9 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Call for the question,  
10 somebody.

11

12 MR. SEETOT: Question.

13

14 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Question's been  
15 called.

16

17 MR. KIRK: Question.

18

19 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Question's been  
20 called. All those in favor say aye.

21

22 IN UNISON: Aye.

23

24 CHAIRMAN GREEN: All those against,  
25 same sign.

26

27 (No opposing votes)

28

29 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Hearing none, motion  
30 passes to support Unit 23, Northwest.

31

32 Thank you folks for the enlightenment.  
33 Thank you, Charlie.

34

35 (Pause)

36

37 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Nissa wants to be next  
38 she said it's me turn. She kept saying me.

39

40 (Laughter)

41

42 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, me, it's all  
43 yours.

44

45 MS. PILCHER: I was trying to be  
46 succinct, so maybe I was a little too succinct.

47

48 Okay, the next item on your guys'  
49 agenda is review and approve the FY22 annual report.

50

0223

1 Your annual report can be found on Page 11 in your  
2 supplemental materials packet, it's the one you got at  
3 the meeting, that blue folder, or the blue -- the first  
4 page. I did send copies to Ron and Robert, but I can  
5 certainly read it into the record if that is preferable  
6 as well.

7  
8 So as a reminder, your annual report  
9 ensures the Board has the most up to date awareness of  
10 issues, concerns and current events that impact your  
11 subsistence way of life. With your report and  
12 recommendations, the Board can make informed decisions  
13 on regulatory and policy actions. At your last meeting  
14 in October, your Council identified three different  
15 topics that your Council wanted to include in this  
16 report.

17  
18 Topic 1. The presence of resident  
19 caribou herd in the northern Seward Peninsula and the  
20 lack of data on them.

21  
22 Topic 2. Your concern over marine  
23 mammals being taken in the Bering Sea and Aleutian  
24 Island trawl fleet fishery.

25  
26 Topic 3. Was to inform the Board that  
27 the Alaska Beluga Whale Committee is working on  
28 updating the Alaska Beluga Management Plan.

29  
30 At that meeting you were informed that  
31 I -- after hearing from everyone at that meeting, I  
32 would draft the report and I would bring it back to you  
33 at this meeting to review for you to provide edits, any  
34 additional information and then ultimately approve it.

35  
36 As noted, if you guys would like me to  
37 read it into the record, it is two pages so it would  
38 take a minute, but I'd gladly do that if you'd like.

39  
40 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Go ahead, Nissa,  
41 please read it.

42  
43 MS. PILCHER: Okay. I am going to skip  
44 the opening paragraph and the end paragraph which is  
45 all standard language, so I'll jump right into Topic 1.

46  
47 Resident caribou herd in the northern  
48 Seward Peninsula. The Council discussed the presence  
49 of a resident caribou or reindeer population in the  
50

1 northern Seward Peninsula. This topic was previously  
2 brought up on the FY21 annual report to the Board.  
3 During its fall 2021 meeting the Council heard from the  
4 Alaska Department of Fish and Game on the estimated  
5 population and movement of this resident herd. At that  
6 time ADF&G stated that no genetic research had been  
7 done on the herd to determine if it is comprised of  
8 rouge reindeer, members of the Western Arctic Caribou  
9 Herd or a mix of both. Furthermore, no work has been  
10 done to determine if this resident population affects  
11 the migration of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd.

12

13 Your recommendation was:

14

15 In the FY21 annual report reply, the  
16 Board acknowledged that this request for --  
17 acknowledged this request for additional information.  
18 It stated that the Bering LandBridge National Preserve,  
19 or BELA recognized that the President's -- presence of  
20 this resident herd but noted its population status and  
21 extent of its range was unknown. The report reply  
22 specified that BELA Staff would initiate tribal  
23 consultations, conduct a literature review and engage  
24 with Staff from the University of Alaska-Fairbanks  
25 reindeer research program to learn what genetic work  
26 had been accomplished with the reindeer on the northern  
27 Seward Peninsula. The Council requested that this work  
28 be started as the report reply further stated that  
29 these efforts are obtainable within the near future and  
30 that information will be brought forward to the  
31 Council.

32

33 Topic 2. Impact to marine mammals in  
34 the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands trawl fleet  
35 fishery.

36

37 The Council recently became aware that  
38 many traditionally important marine mammal species are  
39 caught and discarded as bycatch in the Bering Sea and  
40 Aleutian Islands trawl fleet fishery or the BSAI. The  
41 National Ocean -- or Oceanic Atmos -- sorry --  
42 Atmospheric Administration, or NOAA fisheries website  
43 states that in 2022 NOAA observers recorded harbor  
44 seals, humpback whales, ribbon seals, ringed seals and  
45 stellar sea lions killed or injured in the BSAI fishery  
46 as the -- as the BSAI fishery was conducted. This is  
47 of great concern to the Council as marine mammals are  
48 heavily relied upon as subsistence foods by subsistence  
49 users and are of vital importance to this region and  
50

0225

1 its culture. Marine mammals are Federally protected  
2 animals under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972  
3 and many culturally important marine mammal species are  
4 already in a population decline.

5

6 Recommendation.

7

8 The Council requests that the Board be  
9 made aware of this bycatch harvest and asks the Board  
10 to direct Federal agencies to review whether the  
11 current practice violates the Marine Mammal Protection  
12 Act and other protections in place for marine mammals  
13 that prohibit the take of these animals other than by  
14 Alaska Natives. The Council also requests that these  
15 agencies review any current bycatch numbers and caps on  
16 marine mammals in the BSAI fishery and report back to  
17 the Council with information on this topic.

18

19 No. 3. Update to the Alaska Beluga  
20 Management Plan.

21

22 The Council would like to inform the  
23 Board that the Alaska Beluga Whale Committee, or the  
24 ABWC, is currently updating the Alaska Beluga Whale  
25 Management Plan, or the ABWMP. The ABWC is a co-  
26 management committee made up of representatives from  
27 approximately 30 communities that harvest beluga whales  
28 as well as Federal and State managers and scientists.  
29 The intent of the ABWC is to manage beluga whales for  
30 sustainability and the updated plan will assist with  
31 this intent. The updated ABWMP will have harvest  
32 number targets as well as list areas of biological  
33 importance to the species such as calving and --  
34 calving and molting areas. The ABWMP is currently out  
35 for review in the communities that harvest beluga  
36 whales.

37

38 Recommendation.

39

40 None at this time. The Council would  
41 just like the Board to be aware of these ongoing  
42 efforts.

43

44 And then that's -- after that is the  
45 conclusion paragraph which is standard.

46

47 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Nissa. Any  
48 Council want to weigh in here. Ron and Robert.

49

50



0226

1 (No comments)

2

3 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Hearing none.....

4

5 MR. MOSES: No comment, but that sounds  
6 good.

7

8 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. Okay, Ron, are  
9 you there.

10

11 (No comments)

12

13 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Any Council.....

14

15 MR. KIRK: Hello, Mr. Chair, I'm here.

16

17 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Sorry.

18

19 MR. KIRK: No comment.

20

21 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Did you have any  
22 comments or anything to say about it?

23

24 MR. KIRK: No, no comment, Mr. Chair.

25

26 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you guys.  
27 Anybody in the room here.

28

29 Elmer.

30

31 MR. SEETOT: Concerning the resident  
32 caribou in northern Seward Peninsula. Western Arctic  
33 Caribou Herd or any biologists notice any movements  
34 from that herd, I wonder, because our residents noticed  
35 two large bands of reindeer or caribou in and around  
36 Igloo Creek, that -- that goes up around Mary's Igloo  
37 -- not Mary's Igloo -- American River, that joins the  
38 Agiapuk, and then the Igloo goes up and around and --  
39 and east and it's kind of close to these -- it's kind  
40 of close to the Serpentine River area or the northern  
41 Seward Peninsula, in and around that area is the big  
42 beds of -- lava beds that I went through one time,  
43 along with another hunter and we keep trying to go a  
44 shortcut but we have to keep turning back because the  
45 lava beds are humongous, I mean you're just a little  
46 fellow on a snowmachine, you -- you got all these rocks  
47 there, but the Shishmaref hunters were having  
48 difficulty trying to locate the caribou in and around  
49 these areas during the summer/fall season, I guess, up  
50

0227

1 that way, they -- they might have been in higher  
2 elevations but I really haven't heard anything about  
3 those reindeer, caribou that are situated in that area.

4  
5 But I just wanted to know if there was  
6 any movement from that area. Because wherever the  
7 animals are the predators will be right behind, no  
8 sweat about it, because that's their -- that's their  
9 food. And when -- when we're talking about the  
10 predator control, pretty much that's all they eat if  
11 they have no other available food source nearby then  
12 they'll deplete that resource very rapidly.

13  
14 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

15  
16 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Elmer, for  
17 your comments there. Anybody else, any comments,  
18 concerns. Is somebody pointing somewhere.

19  
20 MR. GRAY: She's sitting at the table  
21 there.

22  
23 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Oh, sorry, Jeanette,  
24 Park Service.

25  
26 MS. KOELSCH: For the record, Jeanette  
27 Koelsch, Bering LandBridge National Preserve, through  
28 the Chair. I do have a draft recommendation to change  
29 this report. Bering LandBridge National Preserve  
30 Staff, at least, the Superintendent, does not recognize  
31 that there is the presence of a resident herd and I  
32 only say this because there has not been enough work  
33 done to make a determination as to whether or not there  
34 is one.

35  
36 I, specifically, feel that we can't --  
37 I don't believe we should label something until there  
38 is the work done to do it, if that makes sense.

39  
40 I do agree that we need to do tribal  
41 consultation, work with the State of Alaska and try to  
42 figure out some type of coordinated monitoring plan  
43 with them and that would be the State, but at this  
44 time, to say there is a resident caribou herd without  
45 specific data -- like we don't know numbers, we don't  
46 know any of that. We do know that there is calving on  
47 the Seward Peninsula but that is not the only  
48 indication without collaring, that there is some kind  
49 of resident herd or if it is Western Arctic Herd

50

0228

1 occupying the Seward Peninsula for longer periods of  
2 time.

3  
4 So I would just like clarification that  
5 I -- you know, I understand this, it's been talked  
6 about for quite some time but as the Superintendent, I  
7 don't recognize the presence of a resident herd.

8  
9 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you. What are  
10 we looking at at where the -- was there something about  
11 the actual National Park recognizing -- how did that  
12 get in there, how did that become?

13  
14 MS. PILCHER: I believe it was directly  
15 from the FY21 annual report, which I was not in the  
16 room for, so I can't say anything other than what I  
17 read.

18  
19 CHAIRMAN GREEN: subsistence Okay.

20  
21 MS. KOELSCH: Yeah, and I don't think I  
22 would have said that. It may have been another Park  
23 Service Staff person that said it, but as far as  
24 management, yeah, I mean I think we need to do work on  
25 it thought. So -- oh, Tom, was going like this.

26  
27 CHAIRMAN GREEN: No, I'm next, I'm the  
28 Chair.

29  
30 (Laughter)

31  
32 CHAIRMAN GREEN: So I recognize there's  
33 something there because I've been hunting on it for  
34 three decades so there is something there, and the  
35 State recognized it because Alex, the fellow from  
36 Kotzebue, I had some discussion with him over the  
37 phone, I think he was -- he had -- had participated in  
38 our meeting and they haven't done the work, that's  
39 correct. But there is a herd here that has been there  
40 since the time of the Dorothy Isabelle, Barbara, and  
41 the other side of the range in the Bendelebens, and so  
42 the first time I ever heard about it was from Maggie  
43 Olson where her and her husband used to target them.  
44 The other one was Stinky Hardy, so that goes way back  
45 so there is a distinct herd there and people need to  
46 get this down and get it -- because if this herd is  
47 just different than the Western Arctic Caribou Herd,  
48 chances are it can get obliterated so.....

49  
50

0229

1 MS. KOELSCH: Through the Chair. I'm  
2 not -- I'm not saying there isn't, I'm just saying that  
3 I don't feel that I feel comfortable acknowledging the  
4 presence in the way that this is written. I do believe  
5 that there needs to be work done in coordination with  
6 the State of Alaska. Alex isn't -- Hansen, isn't here,  
7 but you do have a State wildlife biologist that might  
8 -- if they wanted to.....

9  
10 MS. GERMAIN: (Shakes head negatively)

11  
12 (Laughter)

13  
14 MS. KOELSCH: Nope, she doesn't want  
15 to.

16  
17 (Laughter)

18  
19 MS. KOELSCH: I'm just asking that.....

20  
21 CHAIRMAN GREEN: We could take that out  
22 of there, I guess. We can take the comment in there  
23 and.....

24  
25 MR. GRAY: Can I comment?

26  
27 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yeah, in a minute. We  
28 could take that out if we wanted to. But, Tommy Gray,  
29 your turn.

30  
31 MS. KOELSCH: I do believe the  
32 population status does need to be determined, though.  
33 So it's just a small part of that is all I'm asking,  
34 but I mean it's up to you ultimately if you want to  
35 edit your own report.

36  
37 MR. GRAY: So I thank you for bringing  
38 this up. I really do. I brought this up at the  
39 Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group probably 115  
40 years ago when Jim Dau was there. Jim Dau and I had a  
41 big fight. I wanted to know, are these reindeer, are  
42 these caribou, let's put satellite collars on them.  
43 Kyle Joly came to me and said, hey, I got satellite  
44 collar money let's go put them on, I said, great idea,  
45 and -- and the State said no way. So it got killed  
46 putting satellite collars on. Today it might be a  
47 different story.

48  
49 The reindeer industry, back in the day,  
50

0230

1 back when Jim Dau was around, Jim Dau kept saying,  
2 these are young animals, these aren't staying on the  
3 Seward Peninsula, they're moving off the Seward  
4 Peninsula. Animals that stay are probably yearlings or  
5 young animals, and I said let's put collars and find  
6 out, I mean that's the only way we're going to find  
7 out, and his -- his solution to this was, okay, let's  
8 do a DNA study. The University of Alaska Reindeer  
9 Program did their DNA study on reindeer, the State did  
10 not. And this thing has just fallen through the  
11 cracks. And in the meantime we have people for 20  
12 years have been shooting animals up there saying, I got  
13 a caribou, I got a caribou, there's no -- no -- you  
14 know, the reindeer industry can be saying, no, you  
15 don't have a caribou, that's a reindeer, and we go in  
16 circles.

17

18 I've got my reindeer hat on now.

19

20 I'm saying we need a study. We need to  
21 understand what these animals are. And, you know, I  
22 would dearly like somebody to take the lead in saying,  
23 yep, we're going to do a project, whatever that project  
24 is. The public has -- they don't care if they're  
25 reindeer or caribou at this point, they're calling them  
26 caribou and is that right, you know, I'm a reindeer  
27 herder so to speak, without reindeer, I look at those  
28 animals thinking, man, I could have reindeer in there.

29

30 And so anyway I do think we need to do  
31 some kind of a study and get our act together. I don't  
32 think the State is -- I mean, how can I say this -- I  
33 think it's going to take a bunch of people sitting down  
34 at the table saying this is what we want to do, this is  
35 what we want to accomplish and, you know, there's  
36 public opinion, there's going to be people that are,  
37 nope, those are caribou, and that's great, whatever,  
38 let's get down to the nuts and bolts of it.

39

40 If you look at the reindeer industry  
41 side of it, Weywana, Goodhoop, Leonard, Teller, there's  
42 so many herds that got wiped out that those animals  
43 could be residue of those herds.

44

45 So with that said, there's one other  
46 issue in this particular thing that says, engage with  
47 the Staff, University of Alaska-Fairbanks research  
48 reindeer program; there is no program anymore, it's  
49 gone. So Greg is gone, that whole program got shut  
50

0231

1 down in Davis' time. So anyway it is an issue.

2

3

4 Now, one thing I would suggest that was  
5 kind of a heartburn in this meeting, we're not talking  
6 about the fish and the State of Alaska, our fish  
7 issues. And maybe we need to somehow insert fish  
8 issues in this letter.

8

9 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, let's take care  
10 of this one first. Okay, thank you.

11

12

13

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So, you know, the caribou, the Western  
Arctic Caribou Herd doesn't start moving into the Kobuk  
or the Noatak early on, what is it, like September --  
all right.

MS. KOELSCH: August.

CHAIRMAN GREEN: All right.

MS. KOELSCH: August, September.

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yeah, way up there,  
right. They're well documented when they're moving.

MS. KOELSCH: Yeah, in their calving  
areas they're well documented.

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. So the animals  
that Tommy and I are talking about were already in the  
Bendelebens in August, I've seen them there.

MS. KOELSCH: I'm not disputing your  
indigenous knowledge. What I'm.....

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. So what I'm --  
so now let me finish, I'm sorry.

She has something to read here from the  
Federal Subsistence Board level on this subject so I  
just want to bring this to light, it has something to  
do with what you're talking about on this report. So,  
Nissa, go ahead and.....

MS. PILCHER: Yeah, Nissa Pilcher for  
the record.

CHAIRMAN GREEN: .....put that on.

0232

1 MS. PILCHER: So the report reply from  
2 the Federal Subsistence Board dated July 27th, 2022  
3 does state, in response to this concern from FY21  
4 annual report, the Bering LandBridge National Preserve  
5 or BELA, recognizes that there are caribou year-round  
6 on the northern Seward Peninsula but the population  
7 status and extent of the range is unknown. And is  
8 there -- and there is no assessment project in the  
9 works.

10

11 MS. KOELSCH: That is correct. It  
12 doesn't say resident herd though. That is the wording  
13 that I have a little bit of heartburn with but you --  
14 we do acknowledge that there are year-round caribou.  
15 So I mean you don't have to change your report but I'm  
16 just -- I'm leery of calling it a resident herd without  
17 having the means to do the research and I do believe  
18 that through -- like your indigenous knowledge, Louis,  
19 and other peoples, like Shishmaref and Wales and  
20 Deering, that should be incorporated into some study  
21 about this and we should also look at finding funding,  
22 possibly, to do some work on this. But it would take a  
23 cooper -- I feel like we could do a cooperative effort  
24 with also other Federal land managers because it's not  
25 just Bering LandBridge, right, we're just the northern  
26 part -- part of the northern part, it would take a  
27 coordinated effort to discuss this.

28

29 But that was the only heartburn I had,  
30 was the resident caribou herd language.

31

32 CHAIRMAN GREEN: That's -- okay. It is  
33 a my tech, and Tommy's tech that I find it's fine to  
34 write resident herd because it is a resident herd and  
35 it's not being identified so I don't have a problem  
36 with it.

37

38 Tommy, go ahead.

39

40 MR. GRAY: So this is what Fish and  
41 Game, back in the day, their attitude was there may be  
42 caribou on the Seward Peninsula but the -- what I've  
43 been told is the caribou staying are young caribou that  
44 aren't smart enough to go off the Seward Peninsula. A  
45 year later they follow the herd and a different batch  
46 of caribou are staying. This is what Jim Dau put on  
47 the table to me. And you're right, that there are  
48 caribou on the Seward Peninsula, but, quote, resident  
49 caribou, is a whole different story. And I do know you  
50

0233

1 guys flew this herd and looked for calves and you  
2 struggled finding calves so that tells me that the  
3 animals staying on the Seward Peninsula -- the caribou  
4 will calve in June, the reindeer will calve in May and  
5 -- and, you know, it tells me if they're not seeing a  
6 lot of calves out there there is some truth to this  
7 changing of guard on the animals and -- and, you know,  
8 that's why I agreed to the DNA process.

9

10 But rather than fight this out at the  
11 table, I think somebody needs to organize a meeting  
12 with the RHA and the State and you guys and talk this  
13 out reasonably.

14

15 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, thank you,  
16 Jeanette. So are you telling me, Tommy, that there's a  
17 difference between a year-round herd and a resident  
18 herd?

19

20 MR. GRAY: Yes.

21

22 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. I want to hear  
23 that again.

24

25 MR. GRAY: So what I have been told  
26 from Fish and Game and Jim Dau is there's a changing of  
27 the guards. The animals that are here let's say in 22  
28 are probably moving up to the North Slope in 24 or 23  
29 and different animals are staying here so what -- what  
30 I would call a resident herd is -- has moved off and  
31 now we have new players and they move off and that's  
32 what Fish and Game was saying. They wouldn't  
33 acknowledge that there's animals staying and  
34 establishing a resident herd, quote/unquote, they're  
35 not -- they're not calving. And, again, I go back to  
36 these guys, did a lot of flying and looking at the  
37 animals on the range looking for calves and they  
38 weren't there. So that told a story in itself.

39

40 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Uh. Nissa, you have  
41 something to add.

42

43 MS. PILCHER: Yep. So I did write this  
44 and my background is in fisheries and I didn't realize  
45 there was a distinction between year-round and  
46 resident, so first off I apologize. And the current  
47 language in the draft does say, it's stated, as  
48 referred to the annual report reply and it did state  
49 year-round and not resident, and so if you guys are  
50



0234

1 fine with that I will gladly change it.

2

3 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. Follow the  
4 report, what was already currently written.....

5

6 MS. PILCHER: Yep.

7

8 CHAIRMAN GREEN: .....prior.

9

10 MS. PILCHER: Yep. And then the other  
11 thing that was brought up was in the 2021 report reply  
12 the Board did reference the Fairbanks Ranger Research  
13 Program, which Member Gray did mention doesn't exist  
14 anymore so that could potentially be removed, or at  
15 least a side comment could be put that it no longer  
16 exists.

17

18 MR. GRAY: So what I know as the  
19 reindeer research program was Greg and Doctor -- I mean  
20 there's a whole bunch of -- there was a program that  
21 came -- 40 years of program, that died. It got  
22 completely wiped out and what is referred to there is  
23 no longer there, it's gone. And, you know, the -- what  
24 I tried to get done, in the end was, let's do a DNA  
25 study because we can all point fingers and say, yep,  
26 those are caribou, I mean I'm going to put Charlie on  
27 the spot, Charlie's shot animals up there, he's going  
28 to say there's caribou there, Tom Gray's going to say  
29 there's reindeer there. And we're going to be at odds.  
30 And the only way to resolve that is go do a DNA study.  
31 And he may be right, maybe there's animals up there.  
32 You know when it comes to push come to shove I'm going  
33 to submit to science but until then I'm not so.

34

35 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. The verbiage is  
36 going to be around -- year-round, okay, because that's  
37 what she misinterpreted and wrote resident, so we're  
38 going to go back, it's going to be year-round; and I  
39 don't know the difference yet. If they're year-round,  
40 they're resident so it's like the halibut out here. I  
41 found resident halibut out here identified back in the  
42 late '90s so that means that they're here.

43

44 (Laughter)

45

46 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, so we're done  
47 with this so we beat it to death.

48

49 MS. PILCHER: It's an action item.

50

0235

1                   CHAIRMAN GREEN: It's an action item,  
2 do we approve it with the change, the addition -- the  
3 additional change of year-round and elimination of  
4 this.....

5  
6                   MS. PILCHER: Reindeer -- caribou --  
7 Fairbanks.....

8  
9                   CHAIRMAN GREEN: Say it again.

10  
11                   MS. PILCHER: Sorry. Fairbanks  
12 Reindeer Research Program.

13  
14                   MR. GRAY: So I'm going to throw the  
15 question out, during this meeting there was a big to-do  
16 about the fishery, and -- and then when they talked  
17 about moving the Subsistence Program over to -- out of  
18 Fish and Wildlife over to another program, that seemed  
19 like a big, big issue, and I just wonder if we need to  
20 talk about a couple of these things in the letter to  
21 the Big Board.

22  
23                   CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. So anyway, that  
24 kind of leaves a gap in there. But this intercept --  
25 this intercept and the trawl fishery stuff that we talk  
26 -- we homed in on the marine mammals, but it also  
27 applies to chum salmon and chinook salmon, king salmon  
28 or whatever you want to call them. How would we enter  
29 that in there, we never had the discussion of it so we  
30 need to discuss it before we put it in the letter.

31  
32                   MS. PILCHER: Through the Chair, this  
33 is Nissa. So, yes and no. So one of the things that  
34 you were doing with this report was bringing it back  
35 up, editing it, and adding anything you wanted to, so  
36 you can certainly add that. You've already had the  
37 discussion about your concerns about the fishery, and I  
38 believe without verifying, but I can do that over the  
39 lunch break, that similar veins out of your concern  
40 about this fishery has been in previous reports -- or  
41 annual reports to the Board, so I can come up with some  
42 verbiage over lunch or if you're comfortable with it I  
43 can come up with it and then run it by Louis prior to  
44 it being submitted to the Board.

45  
46                   MR. GRAY: It's fine with me.

47  
48                   CHAIRMAN GREEN: It's fine with the  
49 Vice Chair it's probably fine with everybody else.

50

0236

1 (Laughter)

2

3 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Because he's the only  
4 one that's going to bark at me.

5

6 (Laughter)

7

8 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, so Nissa -- we  
9 can vote on this with the additional verbiage that she  
10 puts in there after, so there needs to be.....

11

12 MR. GRAY: So moved.

13

14 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Is there a second.

15

16 MR. AUKONGAK: Second.

17

18 CHAIRMAN GREEN: All those.....

19

20 MR. KIRK: Second.

21

22 CHAIRMAN GREEN: .....in favor.

23

24 IN UNISON: Aye.

25

26 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Any against, same  
27 sign.

28

29 (No opposing votes)

30

31 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Hearing none, we've  
32 passed the report with the additional verbiage that  
33 Nissa will add in there.

34

35 MS. PILCHER: I was just going to  
36 clarify, so the removal -- the changing of the -- the  
37 one word -- the removal of the other phrase about UAF  
38 and then work with you on the correct language to  
39 submit about the fishery concerns.

40

41 MR. GRAY: And maybe an afterthought, I  
42 -- you know, I suggested that the powers that be get  
43 together and create a plan to address that herd can be  
44 incorporated in that letter also, that way it will help  
45 push the Federal side of this thing and maybe the State  
46 side. You know the State was the resistance in the  
47 beginning and, you know, I think we need some help, but  
48 if Jeanette wants to go forward and try to pull a  
49 meeting of all the power players to address that herd,  
50

0237

1 just a blurb in this letter would help put that  
2 together, I think.

3

4 CHAIRMAN GREEN: So you're talking  
5 about a one sentence deal sort of?

6

7 MR. GRAY: One sentence. The Board  
8 discussed cooperation between all the entities and  
9 hopefully they can put a meeting together to address  
10 this year around herd.

11

12 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Local herd.

13

14 MR. GRAY: Local herd, or whatever,  
15 yeah.

16

17 CHAIRMAN GREEN: My pets.

18

19 (Laughter)

20

21 MR. GRAY: Yeah.

22

23 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Those are my  
24 Bendeleben pets.

25

26 MR. GRAY: Yep.

27

28 (Laughter)

29

30 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. Tommy you got  
31 it -- are you done.

32

33 MR. GRAY: I am.

34

35 MS. PILCHER: Okay. So.....

36

37 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Go ahead, Nissa.

38

39 MS. PILCHER: So just to -- okay, so  
40 Tom initially voted and then he added -- does the  
41 second concur to add the additional language of what  
42 Tom just said, insert an additional sentence to go.....

43

44 MR. GRAY: Do you need a.....

45

46 MS. PILCHER: We didn't vote the first  
47 time so I think.....

48

49 REPORTER: Yes, you voted.

50

0238

1 CHAIRMAN GREEN: We did vote.

2

3 MR. GRAY: Yep.

4

5 MS. PILCHER: You know what, we did  
6 vote?

7

8 CHAIRMAN GREEN: We did vote.

9

10 MS. PILCHER: So, yep, start over, we  
11 need a.....

12

13 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Can we -- can we  
14 rescind that and.....

15

16 MR. GRAY: Okay, I agree to rescind my  
17 motion. Who seconded it?

18

19 REPORTER: Martin.

20

21 MR. GRAY: Second, do you rescind?

22

23 MR. AUKONGAK: (Nods affirmatively)

24

25 MR. GRAY: Okay. And I'll make a  
26 motion to the new effect that will include the language  
27 of the State and the reindeer industry and the Park all  
28 getting together to -- to create action to address the  
29 year around animals up around Serpentine.

30

31 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Serpentine,  
32 Bendeleben.

33

34 MR. GRAY: Yeah, wherever.

35

36 CHAIRMAN GREEN: There you go, all  
37 right. Because there's -- all right, so if he wants to  
38 look at that, Nissa, and.....

39

40 MR. GRAY: I'm good with it.

41

42 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, whatever she's  
43 got there then -- you might want to read it anyway.

44

45 MS. PILCHER: Who seconded it?

46

47 CHAIRMAN GREEN: All right, we're done.

48

49 REPORTER: Wait, Martin, did you second

50

0239

1 it, you nodded only.

2

3

MR. AUKONGAK: (Nods affirmatively)

4

5

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Oh, Martin.

6

7

MR. GRAY: I moved, do you second?

8

9

MR. AUKONGAK: (Nods affirmatively)

10

11

REPORTER: Yeah, okay, nods.

12

13

MR. GRAY: Okay.

14

15

16

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. So there's a motion and a second on approving what we're sending forward to the Federal Subsistence Board, our report. So all those in favor.

17

18

19

20

IN UNISON: Aye.

21

22

23

CHAIRMAN GREEN: All those against, same sign.

24

25

(No opposing votes)

26

27

28

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Hearing none, motion passes with the amendment, verbal -- verbiage in there.

29

30

Thanks.

31

32

Okay, are we going to do a lunch here?

33

34

35

36

MS. PILCHER: More than likely that would be a good idea. We do have a time certain at 1:30, North Pacific Fisheries Management Council, Diana Stram will be online at 1:30. That is not an action item, it is a presentation.

37

38

39

40

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, so we're back at 1:25.

41

42

43

MR. GUSSE: Mr. Chair.

44

45

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Go ahead.

46

47

48

MR. GUSSE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Walker Gusse with the Bureau of Land Management. I learned early on in my career not to quote the regs

49

50

0240

1 without having them in my hands so answers to Mr.  
2 Gray's questions earlier.

3

4 First, regarding leaving a gut pile and  
5 taking a bear on that. In your definitions in the reg  
6 book you'll see that parts of legally taken animal that  
7 are not required to be salvaged and which are left at  
8 the kill site are not considered bait. So like with  
9 everything in law enforcement, you change one little  
10 thing and it can change the whole situation. So if you  
11 move any of those parts they could become bait pretty  
12 quickly. So at the kill site.

13

14 The second one, much more complicated  
15 and I'm tracking down the answer. I'm going to need to  
16 get my hands on the 50 CFR full book regarding wolf,  
17 wolf pups. The one I found is there's not a  
18 differentiation between an adult and juvenile wolf in  
19 the reg book here. So you're probably good to go  
20 there. However, furbearers and fur animals, which  
21 wolves aren't, they're big game, you can't disturb  
22 their den. So -- excuse me -- fur animals, you can't  
23 disturb their den, wolves are big game so I'm tracking  
24 down if there's also something in 50 CFR that says you  
25 can't disturb their den. Now, again, that's within the  
26 subsistence regulations.

27

28 Thank you.

29

30 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thanks for answering  
31 the hard questions, Mr. Walker.

32

33 Okay, we're adjourning for -- or --  
34 what am I saying, not adjourning, we're.....

35

36 REPORTER: Taking a break for lunch.

37

38 MS. PILCHER: Standing down, take a  
39 break.

40

41 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Recess.

42

43 REPORTER: Yes, for lunch.

44

45 (Off record)

46

47 (On record)

48

49 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, folks in the

50

0241

1 room, it looks like we're ready to go. We have a  
2 presentation here by Diana Stram and it is now 1:35.  
3 Diana, you now have the floor, and if you -- I guess  
4 you already got your deal in the page number.

5

6 Thank you.

7

8 DR. STRAM: Thank you. This is Diana,  
9 can you all hear me okay.

10

11 CHAIRMAN GREEN: I can hear you, it's  
12 all that counts -- no, I'm kidding.

13

14 (Laughter)

15

16 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yeah, you're coming  
17 across everybody's speakers, thank you.

18

19 DR. STRAM: Okay, great, thank you very  
20 much. Thank you for the time. My name is Diana Stram.  
21 I work for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council  
22 and I'm going to provide you a brief overview of what  
23 -- both what the Council's jurisdiction is and where we  
24 are at with addressing salmon bycatch at the moment in  
25 the pollock fisheries.

26

27 Next Slide, Slide 2.

28

29 Just to acquaint everyone with kind of  
30 what our jurisdiction is. Under the Magnuson-Stevens  
31 Act it was adopted in 1976 in addition to establishing  
32 the 200 mile limit, three to 200 miles offshore. It's  
33 a Federal fishery. It also established both the  
34 National standards, which are what the Council is  
35 required to address and any management efforts, there  
36 are 10 of them, as well as establishing eight regional  
37 fishery management councils. So we are the North  
38 Pacific Fishery Management Council. Our jurisdiction  
39 is in the Bering Sea, the Gulf of Alaska, and the  
40 Arctic. We do have representation on our Council from  
41 members in Seattle as well as Oregon, but most are from  
42 the state of Alaska.

43

44 Slide 3.

45

46 So together we manage the Federal  
47 fisheries with the National Marine Fisheries Service,  
48 so the Council makes policy recommendations that are  
49 sent to the Secretary of Commerce to approve or

50



0242

1 disapprove and once approved the National Marine  
2 Fisheries Service does the in-season management. For  
3 some stocks, specifically, Bering Sea crab stocks as  
4 well as Alaskan scallop stock, we manage jointly with  
5 the State of Alaska.

6  
7 Fourth -- next slide.

8  
9 Just a little bit more overview. We do  
10 meet annually five times and these are where the needs  
11 are located are part of the Magnuson Act, so  
12 Congressionally mandated we meet in Anchorage three  
13 times a year, once a year we meet in a local Alaskan  
14 fishing community and then once we meet in Seattle and  
15 Portland. All of our meetings are open to the public.  
16 So our Advisory Panels, it's a science and statistical  
17 committee, which is the SSC, and the advisory panel  
18 meet at the -- concurrently with our Council and  
19 provide their input to the Council at every meeting.  
20 All of our meetings, again, are open to the public and  
21 public testimony is taken at every agenda item that's  
22 taken up by the SSC (indiscernible) Council . Our  
23 meeting agendas and our schedules are published online.  
24 And even prior to Covid we were livestreaming. We now  
25 have arranged, since Covid, and will continue into the  
26 future, to allow for remote public testimony as well.

27  
28 Slide 5.

29  
30 I already covered kind of the regions  
31 that we manage, the Arctic, the Bering Sea, the  
32 Aleutian Islands and the Gulf of Alaska.

33  
34 Slide 6.

35  
36 Moving more into specifically what is  
37 bycatch. The bycatch is something that's defined  
38 specifically under the Magnuson-Stevens Act. And it's  
39 fish which are harvested in fishery but are not sold or  
40 kept for personal use. That includes both economic  
41 discards and regulatory discards so that's important  
42 because those have different distinctions. So  
43 basically bycatch is the discarded fish that are caught  
44 in a targeted fishery. Economic discards then are fish  
45 that could be legally retained but are of insufficient  
46 value to retain so things such as sculpin,  
47 (indiscernible) brittle stars, regulatory discard are  
48 fish that are harvested -- required by regulation to be  
49 discarded when they're caught but are required by  
50

0243

1 regulation to be retained and not sold. And so  
2 prohibited species catch, which we call PSC, is a  
3 special type of regulatory discard. Those are fish that  
4 must be returned to the sea with a minimum of injury  
5 and that includes all Pacific halibut, herring, all  
6 species of salmon, steelhead, king crab, bairdi, and  
7 opilio crab.

8

9 Next slide. I'm on Slide 7 now.

10

11 So we focus our management measures on  
12 chinook and chum bycatch and primarily what we're  
13 talking about here is the Bering Sea pollock fishery.  
14 So the Bering Sea pollock fishery encounters both  
15 chinook and chum salmon bycatch. And the -- when we  
16 manage them they are managed as two separate  
17 categories, chinook bycatch and then total non-chinook  
18 bycatch and the reason why this table is on the screen,  
19 it shows you the other five species that comprise the  
20 -- I'm sorry, the other four species that comprise the  
21 non-chinook category. We have coverage and so this is  
22 just showing you that 99.9 percent in any year are chum  
23 salmon. So when we talk about non-chinook bycatch  
24 we're really only talking about chum salmon, the  
25 fishery does not encounter sockeye, coho or pinks.

26

27 Next slide. So this is Slide 8.

28

29 This is just showing the trends and  
30 I'll walk through this to go through how we've managed  
31 over the years. This is a trend from 1991 through 2022  
32 of chinook and chum salmon bycatch. The chum is in the  
33 blue and chinook is in the red and they are on  
34 different axis because they have different magnitudes  
35 and this just shows you the bycatch in the pollock  
36 fishery over those years.

37

38 The next slide then.

39

40 This next slide then just shows you --  
41 so the pollock fishery is prosecuted in the A season,  
42 which is the winter season which begins January 20th  
43 and technically goes until June but is always wrapped  
44 up by the middle of April. And then the B season,  
45 which is the summer season begins June 10th and  
46 operates under November and it's usually wrapped up in  
47 October. The pollock does not encounter chum salmon  
48 until the B season. So that's what this graph is meant  
49 to show you, is the amount of chum on the top in red

50

0244

1 that's encountered in the A season. But they do  
2 encounter chinook salmon in both the A season and the B  
3 season. And what these black dots are showing you,  
4 this is over from 2011 to 2022, is just showing you the  
5 general nature, it's a very predictable trend and that  
6 they run into some chum salmon in the beginning, in  
7 July, but the majority is in the first couple weeks in  
8 August and so those -- those are meant to show you over  
9 all those years, how much -- what the trend is and then  
10 the -- the width -- the height of the box as well as  
11 the whiskers on either side show you the variability  
12 and the dots just show you when something is -- is  
13 outside of the general variability of that, but in  
14 general always for chum they encounter -- the pollock  
15 fishery encounters them only in the B season, for  
16 chinook they definitely are encountered in the  
17 beginning of the -- the -- during the A season, winter  
18 season, as well as in the B season and typically, and  
19 what you're looking at are statistical weeks, typically  
20 they tend to run into chinook more during the latter  
21 part of the B season, so into September and October,  
22 which is why, as I'll get into, we have management  
23 measures that are structured more specifically towards  
24 that.

25

26 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Diane.

27

28 DR. STRAM: Next slide, Slide -- I'm  
29 sorry, go ahead you can ask questions at any point too.

30

31 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yeah, this is Louis.  
32 Somebody was wondering if -- because you're kind of  
33 muffled on the mic, or whether you're too close to it  
34 or not, I can't tell, but I mean it seems if  
35 something.....

36

37 DR. STRAM: Oh, I'm sorry, can you hear  
38 me okay here?

39

40 MS. FREYTAG: Much better, yes.

41

42 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yep, she says you're  
43 better. Thank you.

44

45 DR. STRAM: Okay, sure, I'm sorry.  
46 I'll try like this -- I'm just holding my phone as  
47 well.

48

49 Okay, on Slide 10 then, just to walk

50

0245

1 you through historically how the Council has managed.  
2 We've been managing salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea  
3 pollock fishery since the early 1990s but we've -- the  
4 Council has changed management measures as trends and  
5 issues have changed. So throughout the '90s into the  
6 early 2000s we had very large scaled salmon saving area  
7 closures for both chum and chinook so they had a limit  
8 associated with them, and when that limit was reached a  
9 very broad area of the Bering Sea would be closed to  
10 either chinook or chum, depending on the timing. And  
11 that was how, for awhile, during the '90s and the early  
12 2000s that's how that was being managed.

13

14 Next slide, Slide 11.

15

16 What we found is from about 2002 to  
17 2004 those large scale area closures, which were called  
18 salmon savings area closures, they seemed to be  
19 exacerbating the bycatch so there was one portion of  
20 the fleet that could fish inside the closures when the  
21 rest of the fleet was kicked out of the closures and  
22 they were experiencing lower bycatch rates than the  
23 fleet was outside of it, so those closures were set up  
24 based up on historical bycatch patterns and it just  
25 seemed to be that that was a dated way of managing.  
26 And so in 2005, while looking at the -- the fleet  
27 encountered the highest ever level of chum salmon  
28 bycatch of over 700,000 chum salmon so the Council  
29 immediately started looking into how could we change  
30 management of salmon bycatch, at that time,  
31 particularly chum, in the Bering Sea because those  
32 closures weren't working. So as an interim measure the  
33 Council developed what we call Amendment 84, which  
34 allowed the fleet to have developed a rolling hot spot  
35 program to -- as long as everyone was participating in  
36 the very short-term, so when they saw high quantities  
37 and hot spots of chum or chinook, as long as they were  
38 participating in that program, of being kicked out on  
39 three to seven day measures, they weren't held to the  
40 overall closure.

41

42 Next slide, No. 12, then.

43

44 While we were developing all of this,  
45 in 2007 then, the fleet ran into over 120,000 chinook  
46 salmon and that really changed the whole nature of the  
47 prioritization of management measures and chinook  
48 stocks were obviously in decline then as they are now  
49 so the Council then put measures and started to develop  
50

0246

1 overall caps on chinook salmon and so our -- for a  
2 series of time our science and statistical committee,  
3 our SSC held multiple bycatch workshops to try to  
4 advance knowledge of how best to manage this. And then  
5 the Council created a bycatch committee to assist them  
6 in developing cap levels.

7

8 Next slide, now I'm on Slide 13.

9

10 That led to development of what's  
11 called Amendment 91 and we began doing extensive  
12 outreach to Western Alaska communities. We have  
13 participated in the -- the Regional RAC meetings since  
14 2009 to try to help explain what the Council's doing  
15 and what the rationale is behind the management  
16 measures for chinook. The Council took action on  
17 Amendment 91 in 2009.

18

19

Next slide.

20

21

22 So I will go through some of the  
23 provisions of Amendment 91 but it's important in terms  
24 of our process it takes awhile from the time, both the  
25 way that analysis to the Council as well as how much  
26 time it takes from the time the Council takes final  
27 action until a program is put in place. Amendment 91  
28 is extremely complicated. And so it was almost about  
29 18 months from the time of final action before it went  
30 into place. So in the beginning of the fishing year in  
31 2011 Amendment 91 was implemented and there are a  
32 number of additional factors to that in addition to  
33 just the cap level. The National Marine Fisheries  
34 Service is -- systematic genetic sampling so rather  
35 than the opportunistic genetic sampling that we had  
36 gotten from 2005 to 2009, beginning in 2011 every 10th  
37 chinook that's brought on board is sampled for  
38 genetics, every 30th chum that is brought on board is  
39 sampled for genetics. And those genetic reports are  
40 reported back to the Council on an annual basis. In  
41 addition to that, there was a census requirement for  
42 salmon counting so there are -- they're on board on  
43 both vessels as well as at shoreside processing plants,  
44 so every single salmon that is brought on board is  
45 counted. In addition to that requirement, in order to  
46 make sure of compliance, there are also electronic  
47 monitoring requirements put into place so there's  
48 cameras on board at every point of entry so that it is  
49 clear that every single salmon is being counted and  
50 that there's no way to avoid it, so everywhere the fish

50

0247

1 is being moved there are cameras. Immediately  
2 following the implementation of Amendment 91 in 2011,  
3 the Council started developing chum bycatch measures to  
4 revisit where they were at with what to do with chum  
5 bycatch and in 2012 we -- the Staff came to the Council  
6 with an announcement of different cap levels for chum  
7 and at the time more than one year of implementation of  
8 Amendment 91 the Council decided to table that analysis  
9 because all of the information -- the best information  
10 we had at that time was that we needed (indiscernible)  
11 measures on chum would then -- would undermine the  
12 priority for avoiding chinook.

13

14                   Next slide. Apologies. I have a  
15 little bit of a sore throat so I hope this that this  
16 comes through okay.

17

18                   While looking at chum measures, the  
19 Council also looked at how performance was underneath  
20 Amendment 91 and immediately in 2011 we saw a spike  
21 even though well below the cap levels, but the  
22 intention of Amendment 91 was to have every vessel  
23 avoiding chinook at all levels of encounter, so whether  
24 it was low encounter or high encounter, to stay below  
25 the cap level. And so in response to both the low  
26 returns in chinook as well as the indications that we  
27 had that maybe not all vessels were working as  
28 stringently as all of them. Amendment 110 was  
29 developed and that set up a cap system where the cap is  
30 -- is dropped in years of low chinook abundance.

31

32                   Next slide, 16 then.

33

34                   So this just provides you kind of the  
35 overall how we manage chinook salmon bycatch right now.  
36 So under Amendment 91 there are two different cap  
37 levels and it's important to realize that those cap  
38 levels are allocated by the four sectors of the pollock  
39 fishery as well as by season. So there's an overall  
40 limit but the sectors are allocated as specific part of  
41 their performance standard and if they are to reach  
42 their performance standard in more than two of seven  
43 years they are restricted to a lower cap level. Under  
44 Amendment 110 then we put in the three river system  
45 index and so if the -- every year in October ADF&G  
46 provides the Council an estimate of the chinook salmon  
47 abundance using this index that's based on a post-  
48 season in-river chinook salmon run size for the  
49 Kuskokwim and Unalakleet and the upper Yukon, so it's

50

0248

1 an aggregate and if that is below 250,000 there is a  
2 lower cap level that goes into place in that year and  
3 that has been the management system for the last  
4 several years including in 2023. The pollock fishery  
5 also has (indiscernible) plan agreement, those are in  
6 regulations and they have requirements for how we must  
7 manage in order to stay below the performance standard.  
8 So that includes different measures of both  
9 (indiscernible) strict measures for the pollock fishery  
10 to avoid chinook salmon bycatch. We also -- the  
11 Council also included chum avoidance as part of the  
12 Amendment 110. And so the little graph to the lower  
13 right of your slide, that just shows you some of the  
14 locations of some of the hot spots that the SeaState,  
15 third party initiates, they have information sharing  
16 and so when they see high abundance of chum or chinook  
17 they will close the fishery for -- anywhere from two to  
18 seven days.....

19

20 (Teleconference interference)

21

22 DR. STRAM: .....from specific  
23 (indiscernible) -- I'm sorry, is there a question, I  
24 couldn't hear.

25

26 (No comments)

27

28 DR. STRAM: Okay, I'll keep going.

29

30 Moving on to Slide 17 then.

31

32 REPORTER: So Diana.

33

34 DR. STRAM: This slide.....

35

36 REPORTER: Diana.

37

38 DR. STRAM: .....one -- oh sure.

39

40 REPORTER: Yep, could you hold up a  
41 minute. So could you just slow down a little bit while  
42 you're talking. There's a couple of Council members  
43 that are having a difficult time understanding.

44

45 DR. STRAM: Oh, I'm sorry.

46

47 REPORTER: Okay, just -- yeah, just  
48 slow down a little bit. Thank you.

49

50

0249

1 DR. STRAM: Okay. Sure. I'm going to  
2 stay with Slide 16 then that has the regulatory  
3 measures in place. And just to note that under the  
4 industry agreement, in order to stay below the cap  
5 levels, they have a number of measures. Those hot spot  
6 closures, which are short-term closures that are  
7 identified based on observers data and the fleet has to  
8 move out of those for three to seven days. There are  
9 also salmon escape panels, which I'll go over in the  
10 next slide, on all of the nets that are used in the  
11 pollock fishery as well as provisions to donate to an  
12 organization called SeaShare which is a hunger relief  
13 organization. And so because we cannot retain or sell  
14 any salmon that's brought on board, those that are able  
15 to be processed by the industry to food grade quality  
16 on their own dime are donated to an organization called  
17 SeaShare, which then redistributes that to different  
18 hunger relief organizations, both in Alaska as well as  
19 outside.

20

21 Next slide, Slide 17 then.

22

23 Just to explain a little bit about what  
24 salmon excluders are. So right now every vessel that's  
25 fishing has a salmon excluder device built into their  
26 nets. And so that's something that the pollock  
27 industry themselves have been developing. And so  
28 starting with the graph on the left side, the general  
29 intention of that is that as the fish enter the -- the  
30 trawl net there is a -- basically a hole and a flap  
31 that's built into the net prior to the cod and where  
32 the fish congregate and because salmon are better  
33 swimmers than pollock, the salmon are able to move into  
34 the area of the net, having that hole in the net means  
35 that the current is less at that area and they are able  
36 to find the area of less current and swim out of the  
37 net. So there are a variety of designs for salmon  
38 excluders that have been tested over the years. They  
39 do work better for chinook than for chum. And the  
40 results of them are fairly variable by vessel and by  
41 horsepower. The most recent tests show that the range  
42 is up to about 39 percent of chinook that can escape.  
43 They've been testing these in various ways to try to  
44 see how best to get the chinook out of the net without  
45 losing the pollock as well. So to the lower right in  
46 that graph you just see two different excluder devices.  
47 They tried putting an excluder on the top and bottom as  
48 well as one just on the top. If you are interested in  
49 more information I included the email address for  
50



0250

1 John\*Kruger, who has been really working on behalf of  
2 the pollock industry and designing of the excluders.

3

4

Moving on to Slide 18 then.

5

6

7 Just a little background on the pollock  
8 fishery. The graph that you see shows you years on the  
9 X (ph - cuts out) axis from '91 to 2021 and catch and  
10 it just -- the color coding is just showing you A  
11 season versus B season, so winter versus summer and  
12 east and west of 170 west longitude. So to the right,  
13 the maps that you're looking at, that's just showing  
14 you basically the locations. It's somewhat consistent  
15 but it can be variable, but from 2019 to 2021, just  
16 giving you a snapshot of where the fishery is fishing  
17 in the winter season. So in general the shoreside  
18 fleet is restricted to an area that's very close to  
19 Unimak Island. The rest of the fleet, the mother ship  
20 and the catcher/processors are fishing slightly to the  
21 Northwest but in the winter they're constrained by ice  
22 cover so that's why you see them pretty much restricted  
23 west -- south of the Pribilof Islands.

23

24

Slide 19. Next slide then.

25

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This just shows you the exact same  
information but for B season, so the summer season.  
And here you can see that, again, the fishery is  
concentrated to the north of Unimak Island and that is  
generally the shoreside, catcher vessels, but the  
catcher/processors move much further north and west up  
along the shelf edge all the way up until the 200 mile  
border in most years.

34

35

Next slide, 20.

36

37

Moving into a little bit of an overview  
of the genetics summary.

39

40

Slide 21 then.

41

42

Starting with chinook. This gives you  
-- this graph is just showing you, again, the same  
trend in the number of chinook bycatch in the pollock  
fishery and then in red is what the PSC limit is, so the  
overall limit for all sectors is and then what the  
performance standard is. And then when you see that  
drop, that's because of the low chinook abundance where  
a lower cap was in place. The lower pie chart then is

49

50

0251

1 showing you what the genetic composition is of the  
2 bycatch. So, in general, for chinook, and this is just  
3 a snapshot, but in general for chinook about more than  
4 50 percent of the bycatch is from a grouping called the  
5 Coastal Western Alaska or CWAG grouping (ph). The only  
6 way to differentiate genetics for chinook across  
7 Western Alaska is in two groupings, the upper Yukon we  
8 can differentiate genetically from the other fish, the  
9 rest of the fish in Western Alaska cannot be  
10 differentiated so they end up in a very large group  
11 called the Coastal West Alaska Group. They also can  
12 break out the North Alaska Peninsula, British Columbia  
13 and then an aggregate for all other areas.

14  
15 And I apologize, I didn't update this  
16 number, but th -- for this week -- but as of earlier  
17 this month the number of chinook caught as bycatch in  
18 the pollock fishery in 2023 was about 8,300.

19  
20 Next slide.

21  
22 This is showing similar information for  
23 chum. And generally for chum, the proportion to  
24 Western Alaska is much, much lower because it's -- the  
25 chum that's caught as bycatch in the fishery is  
26 dominated by Asian hatchery releases of chum. I would  
27 note that preliminary information that we just received  
28 earlier this week in our salmon bycatch committee that  
29 the 2022 information shows a higher proportion of  
30 Western Alaska than this 2021 stock composition  
31 estimates indicates and the Council will be receiving  
32 those reports in a week and a half.

33  
34 And, again, chum bycatch spiked in  
35 2021, was lower in 2022, the highest still is in 2005  
36 but there's been a renewed focus on trying to address  
37 chum bycatch measures by the Council particularly based  
38 on the recent spike.

39  
40 Slide 23 then.

41  
42 A little bit of a head's up on what's  
43 going on with the Council. In June we received a lot  
44 of salmon reports and the Council created a salmon  
45 bycatch committee. That committee had an open  
46 nomination period over the summer with the committee  
47 appointed in November. There were specific tasks of  
48 the committee. The Council has many standing and issue  
49 specific committees, so this would be an issue specific  
50

1 committee. The committee was tasked with reviewing the  
2 State of Alaska Bycatch Task Force recommendations and  
3 that includes -- if you're familiar with the State of  
4 Alaska Bycatch Task Force they have some subcommittees  
5 as well, one of which was the Western Alaska Salmon  
6 Subcommittee and they have different recommendations as  
7 well. As Staff we provided a discussion paper in  
8 December on chum salmon bycatch and the committee  
9 reviewed that and then the committee is also tasked to  
10 review current information, including local,  
11 traditional and subsistence knowledge and discussions  
12 of research to determine what's driving the Western  
13 Alaska salmon decline. In December then, the Council  
14 received the first report from the committee as well as  
15 a discussion paper on chum salmon bycatch and tasked  
16 that committee to provide recommendations to the  
17 Council on the range of management measures both  
18 regulatory such as a cap as well changes that could  
19 occur within the pollock incentive plan agreement  
20 structures with a report intended to the Council in  
21 2023.

22

23 The next slide, 24.

24

25 So this is just a what's next.

26

27 We just completed the salmon bycatch  
28 committee, the salmon bycatch committee met January  
29 25th and then met again March 20th and 21st, so earlier  
30 this week the committee met. We will have a report  
31 from that committee, we're still writing that as Staff  
32 coming out of the committee two days ago. That  
33 committee provided a purpose and needs statement to the  
34 Council by consensus and then a group of conceptual  
35 alternatives including caps and changes to the IPA,  
36 those were not by consensus. The report from that  
37 committee will be posted to the Councils agenda most  
38 likely near the end of next week but I provided the  
39 address for that there. It was a public meeting. We  
40 had a number of people that attended, both in person as  
41 well as online. The Council will be meeting in April.  
42 The intent of the Council meeting is to review the  
43 salmon bycatch committee's recommendation and then  
44 while we can't predict what the Council will do, the  
45 assumption is the Council may adopt a purpose and needs  
46 statement as well as alternatives to initiate an  
47 analysis and that Council meeting will be happening in  
48 Anchorage when the Council convenes beginning April 6th  
49 through 11 and the agenda for that meeting and the  
50

0253

1 schedule are posted to our website.

2

3

Next slide, 25.

4

5

6 So this slide is just to kind of -- we  
7 have a cumbersome process for making changes. In  
8 general, this is the way that process occurs. At best  
9 a process change requires almost two years to be  
10 initiated. When it's extremely complicated it takes  
11 longer. But in general it starts with a proposal from  
12 the public or from a committee and then the Council  
13 will develop a problem statement, also called a purpose  
14 and need, as well as alternatives that would address  
15 the purpose and needs. Sometimes those discussion  
16 papers are iterative to try to figure out what the best  
17 alternatives are, and sometimes there's committee input  
18 as we have right now with our salmon bycatch committee.  
19 So when it comes to the analysis stage, and, again,  
20 everything above the dotted line is Council issue, the  
21 Council will then take an initial review of the  
22 analysis and they might change the alternatives at that  
23 point and then they will eventually take final action  
24 which is on a public review draft and then at that time  
25 they'll select what the preferred management approach  
26 is. From that point forward, the Council then refers  
27 that information to the National Marine Fisheries  
28 Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service then  
29 is responsible for the rulemaking aspect and that means  
30 that they are publishing a proposed rule. They also  
31 have a public comment period associated with that and  
32 then they publish a final rule and then eventually it  
33 goes to the Secretary of Commerce to review and approve  
34 the regulation and the rule and then it's implemented.

34

35

Next slide, please, Slide 26.

36

37

38 So this is just the same graphic but I  
39 just circled where we are in the process right now.  
40 We're very much in the process of developing a purpose  
41 and need and alternatives that will address that, and  
42 this is specific to chum salmon bycatch. The Council's  
43 identified that right now they're interested in looking  
44 at management measures to address chum salmon bycatch  
45 because it is currently managed within the pollock IPAs  
46 but without an overall cap or an area closure  
47 associated with it.

47

48

Next slide, 27.

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50

0254

1                   This is just additional resources. Our  
2 website, NMFS website, and additional information.

3  
4                   And I'm very happy to take any  
5 questions on anything and I hope I didn't go too  
6 quickly through.

7  
8                   Thank you.

9  
10                  (Pause)

11  
12                  CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Diana, I  
13 couldn't quite hear you.

14  
15                  DR. STRAM: Did I lose audio? Oh, I'm  
16 sorry, I just said that I'm happy to take questions and  
17 I hope I didn't lose you all, I -- it looks like I lost  
18 audio for a little bit.

19  
20                  REPORTER: We didn't lose you Diana.

21  
22                  CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yeah, very hard to  
23 hear. This building here we're in is kind of like an  
24 echo chamber so I was way to the back where I could  
25 kind of hear better. But I'm going to ask anybody on  
26 the Council here, on the phone -- I'll ask you first,  
27 are there any questions from Ron or Robert.

28  
29                  MR. KIRK: Just one, Mr. Chair.  
30 Through the Chair. Ma'am, are all your bycatch  
31 counted, for real, through the pollock fisheries,  
32 because I brought this issue up with Congresswoman Mary  
33 Peltola a couple days ago when I was talking to her  
34 through a computer.

35  
36                  DR. STRAM: Hi, this is Diana,  
37 hopefully you can hear me okay. Thanks for the  
38 question. Yes, as part of the -- since 2011. So t  
39 here was basket (ph) sampling that was occurring prior  
40 to 2011, but since the implementation of Amendment 91  
41 there is a requirement for a census for all salmon  
42 species, both chinook and non-chinook so there are  
43 observers that are censusing the salmon on board  
44 catcher vessels and motherships and then there are  
45 observers at the processing plant shore side to ensure  
46 that all of the salmon that are brought on board are  
47 censused. So it is an exact count, yes.

48  
49                  MR. KIRK: I still have a little  
50

0255

1 problem with that because even the census counters on  
2 board the ship have to take a little 15 to 20 minute  
3 break to go use the restroom and nobody's counting the  
4 bycatch at that time and I'm pretty sure the captain  
5 won't want his crew to count bycatch knowing t hat if  
6 he catch too many bycatch he might be shut down for  
7 that day for commercial fishing and he's not about to  
8 lose money because of bycatch.

9

10 So that's my concern.

11

12 DR. STRAM: Yeah, thank you for the  
13 comment. I mean I understand that concern. All I  
14 would say is that in order to implement the Amendment  
15 91 Program which has the ability to legally shut down  
16 the pollock fishery at any time if they reach those  
17 caps, there are a lot of requirements that were legally  
18 required to go into place including cameras on every  
19 point of entry of salmon coming on board, so there are  
20 observers that are censusing all of the salmon that are  
21 coming on board during a -- the -- on a  
22 catcher/processor, there are cameras that are  
23 specifically on vessels to show every point of entry to  
24 ensure that there is compliance with censusing the  
25 salmon and that that can't occur.

26

27 MR. KIRK: Okay, yeah, thanks for that  
28 information. But I still have a problem because we're  
29 having salmon shortages all over Alaska and that's our  
30 table out there and that's how we survive with our  
31 subsistence way of life is through our salmon and our  
32 fish and that's my concern, because that's my  
33 children's future, their children's children's future.

34

35 Thank you.

36

37 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Ron. Any  
38 other Council.

39

40 (No comments)

41

42 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. Okay, so this  
43 is Louis Diane. I got a couple here. What is the  
44 percentage of coverage -- of the observer coverage  
45 that's required?

46

47 DR. STRAM: Sure, thanks for the  
48 question. It's 100 percent observer coverage. We call  
49 it 200 percent on catcher/processors because there are  
50

0256

1 more than one observer but all of the hulls are  
2 observed and, again, that is a requirement as of 2011.  
3 Less of the shoreside fleet was covered by observers  
4 prior to 2011. When you look at like how -- what the  
5 percentage on the catch is, but since 2011 it has been  
6 a requirement that 100 percent of the catch is  
7 observed.

8  
9 CHAIRMAN GREEN: It's 100 percent of  
10 100 percent of the vessels fishing?

11  
12 DR. STRAM: Yes, in the pollock fleet,  
13 yes. It's different in other fleets but in the pollock  
14 fleet, largely as a requirement of this management  
15 program the observer coverage had to be increased so  
16 that all of the catch was observed.

17  
18 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you. How many  
19 vessels are involved in this pollock fishery?

20  
21 DR. STRAM: Oh, gosh that's a question  
22 I -- I do have another Staff member on the line as  
23 well, that's Dr. Kate Haapala, I -- I would -- it  
24 varies by year, primarily in the shore side sector but  
25 I am just going to ball park it, we're probably talking  
26 about 120 vessels, of which maybe three-quarters of  
27 those are catcher vessels that are either delivering  
28 shore side or are delivering to mother ships and  
29 there's less vessels in the catcher/processor fleet and  
30 then at the CDQ sector tends to be prosecuted by the  
31 same vessels that are in the catcher/processor fleet.

32  
33 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you. How many  
34 CDQ boats are involved? Ball park.

35  
36 DR. STRAM: Oh, gosh, I can probably  
37 get back to you on that. I can let Nissa know but I  
38 don't know off the top of my head the exact number of  
39 CDQ vessels that are involved. The CDQ has a -- they  
40 receive 10 percent of the pollock quota and a  
41 percentage of the -- as well, of the salmon bycatch  
42 limit, but they are closely prosecuted. Their  
43 incentive plan agreement is encompassed in the  
44 catcher/processor agreement because they are fished off  
45 the same vessels but I can certainly get that  
46 information back to you but I don't know it off the top  
47 of my head. I'm sorry.

48  
49 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, thank you. That  
50

0257

1 would be good to have that at a later date, I guess.  
2 You know we hear about genetics. There's been a couple  
3 of studies that I know of in the past that were  
4 targeting the genetics of our salmon in Western Alaska  
5 and one of them is the Jim Seeb and Lisa Seeb study in  
6 the early 90s and then there was a WASSIP study and I  
7 hear there's another one. How good is that -- how good  
8 is that science when it comes to you folks taking  
9 samples of the fish on board? We used to hear a lot  
10 about, oh, the Asian salmon, it's all Asian, we hear  
11 that at Area M also, so I'm curious. How good.....

12  
13 DR. STRAM: Yeah, thanks for the  
14 question actually.

15  
16 CHAIRMAN GREEN: .....is the.....

17  
18 DR. STRAM: So we work -- we worked  
19 closely with the Seeb's when we were doing Amendment 91  
20 and it was actually their data from 2005 through --  
21 they worked also with the pollock fleet to get some  
22 data in 2007 so we had opportunistically sampled data  
23 so not the best but still a good estimate and that's  
24 when we worked with both Jim and Lisa Seeb on -- for  
25 the genetics that we used to identify Western Alaska  
26 salmon, chinook salmon specifically for Amendment 91.  
27 But since 2011, again, as part of the requirements,  
28 there's not systematic sampling so the precision is a  
29 lot better. I wouldn't say that the results have  
30 varied so substantially for chum, it is still dominated  
31 by Asian fish. For chinook it is still dominated by  
32 Western Alaska fish. But what we are seeing is,  
33 especially as we're talking about chum and most  
34 recently, in the last couple years, we are seeing that  
35 where the fishery operates has an impact on the  
36 proportion in the bycatch of Western Alaska fish. And  
37 that's pretty consistent. We've been working with  
38 ADF&G so we have talked to them about the WASSIP  
39 results. You know they just did a one year survey for  
40 identification of the Area M fishery under WASSIP. I  
41 don't know if it was under WASSIP, but it was of the  
42 Area M fishery for the last, most recent year, and  
43 their results are pretty consistent with the genetic  
44 results that we're getting from the pollock fishery in  
45 terms of relative proportions, but that fishery  
46 operates in an area where the genetics are identical.  
47 They're using the same decline but the Area M fishery  
48 is operating in an area that intercepts more Western  
49 Alaska fish than the pollock industry does, but the  
50



0258

1 genetic, as a baseline, are exactly the same.

2

3

4 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, thank you for  
5 that. It's really interesting to see from like -- I'm  
6 gaging this from about 2002 to about 2008 where those  
7 spikes went up to over 700,000 fish and that -- I guess  
8 that was both for kings and chums. And about that same  
9 time, somewhere in that timeframe it was about the same  
10 number that Area M was intercepting chums that I  
11 recall. I haven't seen those reports for a long time.  
12 But that's just a -- what I remember from seeing that  
13 in the past. So you see those spikes go way up in  
14 about a six year period and then you (indiscernible)  
15 see them drop and they're finally starting to work  
16 their way back up again, it's almost like it indicates  
17 that there was a high catch of these fish out there and  
18 then the returns, the returning fish never made it back  
19 home to spawn and then you show up with these low  
20 numbers of intercept bycatch. Kind of almost like  
21 correlation to what took place when you did have the  
22 spike, you got a low some years after.

22

23

Care to elaborate on that?

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DR. STRAM: Yeah, thanks for that. We  
are looking into all of that. Obviously our  
jurisdiction is not Area M, that's squarely within the  
Board of Fisheries, and the magnitude of what we know  
is that when we look at the genetics by sector. The  
sector of the fishery that's fishing closer to the  
southeastern Bering Sea is going to intercept more  
Western Alaska chum. So right now we're dealing with  
chum. Chinook is a different story. And that -- that  
is the same area that the Area M fishery operates in  
that relative area. So we know that the fish that are  
coming back from the Gulf of Alaska into the Bering Sea  
and the ones that are returning to spawn within the  
Bering Sea are moving through that area. We're trying  
and we will eventually, in an analysis to the Council,  
do our best to estimate what the impacts of, again,  
solely the pollock fishery because that's our only  
directly regulated entity, we don't have any  
jurisdiction over Area M, what the relative impact of  
the pollock fishery interception of Western Alaska chum  
is. We're a little bit limited both by the genetic  
specification, we can't determine which rivers those  
are coming from. They've just broken out Kotzebue  
separately and that's something that will come out in a  
report next week, but they still can't break out for

0259

1 chum anything other than the upper Yukon and the rest  
2 of Coastal West Alaska. So we can't say specifically  
3 what would have gone back to the Kuskokwim or the lower  
4 Yukon or anything like that. We can just estimate what  
5 amount of -- the composition of the bycatch of fish  
6 that would have gone back to Western Alaska in any one  
7 year and we make estimates on -- you know, obviously  
8 they're not all going back in that same year so all the  
9 fish that's caught in the bycatch isn't going back in  
10 that year so for both last year and this year about  
11 50,000 of those fish would have originated from Western  
12 Alaska but their ages range from about three to five  
13 years. And so not all of them were going back in that  
14 year so the impacts are disproportionate. But we also  
15 don't know to which river system within the entire  
16 Coastal West Alaska they would be returning to.

17

18 I know that doesn't directly address  
19 your question but hopefully that helps a little bit.

20

21 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, thank you for  
22 that. Are you seeing a lot of immature kings in your  
23 catches?

24

25 DR. STRAM: Yeah, thanks. In general  
26 it's been pretty consistent for king salmon and then in  
27 general it ranges between three to seven but the  
28 majority of them are around three, four, five, and for  
29 chum it's almost entirely three, four, five. So we're  
30 not seeing a lot of mature fish, but we are seeing sort  
31 of the middle range.

32

33 CHAIRMAN GREEN: And so if you've got  
34 -- okay, so you're catching -- you're not catching  
35 mature kings, but you're catching immature kings, is  
36 there a limit on the pounds of kings you can catch?

37

38 DR. STRAM: Yeah, thanks for that  
39 question. There's a limit on the number of fish. So  
40 we don't do it by pounds, we do it by the number of  
41 fish and so each fish is censused so there is an actual  
42 number associated. It doesn't matter if it's immature  
43 or mature, or how old the fish is. It just matters  
44 whether or not each fish is counted as one fish and  
45 that corre -- and then that goes against the limit that  
46 is allocated to the fishery by season, by sector, and  
47 then within the sectors each of the vessels has a  
48 specific limit that they're trying to not reach by  
49 number.

50

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1                   CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, thank you for  
2 that. I used to fish halibut so I'm just going to  
3 throw this one in there, I know it's a little off the  
4 salmon conversation. So there's a lot of halibut  
5 bycatch and I know that what I've seen in data is that  
6 there's -- these halibut are getting to be like the  
7 size of say a five pound fish. Is halibut on  
8 individual number or is halibut based on bycatch --  
9 bycatch limits based on the weight?

10

11                   DR. STRAM: Yeah, thanks that's a great  
12 question. I have also just recently spent a great deal  
13 of time working on a halibut bycatch analysis. Halibut  
14 is not based on the number of fish, halibut is based on  
15 overall weight and discounted by discarded mortality  
16 rate that is associated with the vessel and gear that  
17 catches it. So it's very different for halibut than  
18 it is for salmon, it is not based on number of fish.

19

20                   CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, thank you.  
21 Thanks for that answer. And so if you've got a million  
22 pounds of bycatch of halibut and they're 30 pounds as  
23 opposing to five pounds, you're going to catch fewer  
24 halibut at 30 pounds apiece to get to that million  
25 pounds but if you're catching -- your bycatch is five  
26 pound fish, if you get to a million, I'd venture to say  
27 that you're really killing the future of those fish.  
28 Have you people discussed any of that?

29

30                   DR. STRAM: Yeah, thanks for that  
31 question. It definitely a little bit of a conundrum.  
32 So there's been a lot of effort on deck sorting.  
33 Halibut has the same prohibitive species status as  
34 salmon does and there's been a lot of effort by the  
35 industry for deck sorting so that they are able to  
36 return primarily large halibut back to the sea quickly  
37 rather than them going into a hold and so they -- they  
38 are returning the bigger fish. It doesn't help with  
39 the issue of potentially catching the smaller fish.  
40 And these are, again, conversations that have been  
41 occurring between the agency and the Council in terms  
42 of what the most appropriate method. We -- the Council  
43 did take action two years ago on -- two years -- a year  
44 and a half ago, on an analysis to lower the bycatch  
45 limits for halibut depending on the relative abundance  
46 that's observed in both the International Pacific  
47 Halibut Commission set line survey and the NOAA Eastern  
48 Bering Sea trawl survey. So there is -- we're awaiting  
49 implementation of new measures that the Council's spent  
50

0261

1 a lot of time debating on lowering limits when -- when  
2 the halibut abundance appears to be lower.

3

4

5 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you. So -- I  
6 haven't heard that. I've been made aware of that orca,  
7 I've seen pictures, okay, I don't know when the dates  
8 are of the photos of orcas and gear on the deck of a  
9 trawler, but I've been lead to believe that orca follow  
10 these boats. I remember the day when the hook and line  
11 was working on the Aleutians that orcas were taking the  
12 black cod off the hook. I used to longline out of  
13 Kodiak. So, anyway, I've been led to believe that orca  
14 were following these trawlers and as those fish are  
15 going over the side, I think orcas are feeding on them.  
16 Have you had those discussions?

16

17

18 DR. STRAM: Gosh that's a great  
19 question. I -- I sit on the stock assessment plan team  
20 so I hear a lot about the sablefish stock assessments  
21 of black cod and I know they do adjust for whale  
22 depredation in the survey in terms of setting the  
23 appropriate catch limits because the whales are  
24 definitely feeding off of those lines. I haven't  
25 actually heard that with respect to trawls or discards  
26 in trawls, I mean as it relates to at least salmon  
27 those are not they -- they are brought shore side, at  
28 least for the catcher vessel fleet and then discarded  
29 at sea so it's 100 percent mortality for salmon. For  
30 halibut it's a little -- it's different. There's a  
31 discard mortality rate applied. For pollock fishing  
32 trawl halibut it's 100 percent mortality. For some of  
33 the other gear types, hook and line it is -- it's much  
34 less than 100 percent assumed mortality when they go  
35 back into the ocean but I -- I haven't heard and I  
36 can't say that that's not something that somebody's  
37 considering but I haven't heard those conversations as  
38 it relates to halibut and hook and line gear. But for  
39 sure it is something that we talk about annually as it  
40 relates to black cod.

40

41

42 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you. We have  
43 had conversations here about sea mammal bycatch,  
44 bearded seals, ringed seals, walrus. So there is some  
45 of that going on and I find -- I find that hard to  
46 believe that it's allowed with the trawl industry, that  
47 you can take a sea mammal when a sea mammal is under  
48 the Marine Mammal Protection Act. I think that was  
49 back in '71. What are you seeing there and what is the  
50 discussion about sea mammal intercept for bycatch?

50

1 DR. STRAM: Yeah, thanks for that  
2 question. As it relates to the pollock trawl that's  
3 not the case. I -- we were trying to work and Nissa  
4 maybe could speak to this better, with the National  
5 Marine Fishery Service. That's a little bit out of my  
6 wheelhouse for anything I work on as it relates to  
7 marine mammals. So we were trying to work with the  
8 National Marine Fishery Service to provide you guys  
9 more information on how they're addressing marine  
10 mammal and marine mammals under the Marine Mammal Act.  
11 So I guess I would be less comfortable trying to  
12 address that and trying to refer you guys to the  
13 regional office for the National Marine Fishery Service  
14 for more information on that. But it's not -- it's not  
15 something -- if we're talking only about the pollock  
16 trawl industry that is not something that is an issue.  
17 Whether it's an issue with other fisheries in the  
18 Bering Sea and the Gulf of Alaska, I'm really not the  
19 best one to speak to on that.

20  
21 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, thank you on  
22 that one. I -- I had overlooked a question I had here.  
23 Hatchery fish. Have you been able to identify hatchery  
24 fish salmon when it comes to salmon? We got the  
25 genetic.....

26  
27 DR. STRAM: Yeah, thanks for.....

28  
29 CHAIRMAN GREEN: .....study, you can do  
30 genetics but I was wondering about hatchery ID?

31  
32 DR. STRAM: Thanks, that's a great  
33 question and one we talk about all the time. So the  
34 issue with hatchery fish is that the only way to  
35 identify them, genetically, they're exactly similar to  
36 non-hatchery fish from the same region of origin unless  
37 they're thermally marked and their otoliths are  
38 thermally marked. So when we have thermally marked  
39 otoliths, the -- the bone in the ear, again, we can  
40 tell if it's a hatchery fish. The general assumption  
41 on Asian chum is that it is almost entirely hatchery  
42 origin. So we try to maintain the -- the National --  
43 the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission provides  
44 information on hatchery uses by country on an annual  
45 basis and so we try to pay attention to that and those  
46 fish are not thermally marked. But the general  
47 assumption is that the Asian origin chum salmon, at  
48 least, in the Bering Sea, are almost entirely hatchery  
49 origin. There are no -- there's no Alaska hatchery  
50

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1 origin fish for -- for chinook so that's not -- it's  
2 not an Alaskan issue. For chum it is an Asian issue.  
3 And it gets to carrying capacity issues and -- and  
4 overall general ecosystem level considerations.

5

6 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you. So if  
7 there was a Western Alaska hatchery salmon caught in  
8 your gear you wouldn't be able to tell if it was  
9 thermally -- if it was thermal marking of the otolith  
10 you'd be able to tell where it came from, right?

11

12 DR. STRAM: Yeah. There were some --  
13 there was some tagging going on in the Gulf of Alaska  
14 and so for awhile we had some, basically, like some tag  
15 releases and that sort of stuff on -- on fish from the  
16 Gulf of Alaska. There are no hatcheries in Western  
17 Alaska so when we're focusing our efforts on the Bering  
18 Sea and we're looking at returns to Western Alaska  
19 fish, the hatchery component of the Western Alaska  
20 salmon is not part of it.

21

22 CHAIRMAN GREEN: How is that you can  
23 tell that it was Asian stock?

24

25 DR. STRAM: Oh, sorry, based on the  
26 genetics. So the genetics, they -- they can break it  
27 out by -- in general they aggregate it by about six  
28 groups and so genetically they've got a lot of markers  
29 (indiscernible) markers that they use to aggregate the  
30 genetics and to different areas so they can very easily  
31 show you the genetic origin of both northeast Asia and  
32 southeast Asia fish so differentiating there, Russian  
33 fish. And then unfortunately most of Western Alaska  
34 kind of bleeds across genetically because of the lower  
35 river systems so they just -- they've intermingled so  
36 much that you can't tell the difference between a lot  
37 of the lower Kuskokwim or Yukon type fish. But the  
38 genetic signature of Asian fish versus Russian fish  
39 versus Pacific Northwest those are very easy for our  
40 geneticists to identify.

41

42 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. So what you're  
43 saying is that Western Alaska fish that are -- the  
44 genetics aren't specific enough to a river but you can  
45 identify them?

46

47 DR. STRAM: Yes. They can definitely  
48 -- thank you for the question. Yes, they can  
49 definitely identify what's coming from Western Alaska

50

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1 as well as -- so the upper Yukon for the fall chum is a  
2 -- has a different genetic signature as does the upper  
3 Yukon chinook. So those they can differentiate. But  
4 all the rest of Western Alaska, for the most part,  
5 because of the tributaries kind of crossing each other  
6 and the way the intermingling has occurred, the  
7 genetics of those get much more difficult so they can  
8 definitely identify them to Western Alaska but within  
9 Western Alaska it's difficult to identify them to  
10 specific river systems. When they have been identified  
11 to specific river systems, Kate Myers had some tagging  
12 studies from way back in the early '90s to identify,  
13 like for the Yukon, the Kuskokwim, but you would have  
14 to do it that way, you couldn't do it by genetics.

15

16 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. So the genetics  
17 are not river defining but they are defining Western  
18 Alaska salmon stocks, so.....

19

20 DR. STRAM: Yes, they're defined  
21 regional.

22

23 CHAIRMAN GREEN: .....if you had  
24 thermally marked salmon, that would direct you to a  
25 specific river, wouldn't it?

26

27 DR. STRAM: You would have to tag --  
28 because they're wild -- they're all wild stocks so the  
29 only way they would thermally mark is -- my  
30 understanding is if it's a hatchery so without -- with  
31 no hatcheries for Western Alaska you'd have to do more  
32 of a tagging study on fish in order to figure out which  
33 ones they're coming back to. But the genetics are very  
34 good at determining to Western Alaska, just not -- you  
35 just -- for example, with chinook, you can't tell the  
36 difference between the Kuskokwim, the lower Yukon,  
37 Nushagak. For chum they've just figured out a system  
38 for how they could define Kotzebue separately based on  
39 genetic markers to Kotzebue fish because they're a  
40 little bit more removed from the rest of the Western  
41 Alaska lower river systems.

42

43 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. So I guess what  
44 my question was more about was if there was a hatchery  
45 marked, thermally marked chum salmon, or chinook, you  
46 would be able to define it to a certain river, right?

47

48 DR. STRAM: That's my understanding.

49

50

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1                   CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you. Mr. Gray,  
2 did you have something. Thank you, Diane, appreciate  
3 you answering all my questions. I think the.....

4  
5                   DR. STRAM: Absolutely.

6  
7                   MR. GRAY: .....Vice Chair had a  
8 question or two. He's just coming back from the coffee  
9 machine. That's what keeps us old guys going.

10  
11                   (Laughter)

12  
13                   CHAIRMAN GREEN: Here you go, Tom.

14  
15                   MR. GRAY: So I guess I apologize, I'm  
16 not as well versed as some of these guys around the  
17 room on bycatch and on and on and on. The one thing  
18 that did catch my eye was the graph of bycatch in 2005,  
19 somewhere in that ball park, there was real high  
20 bycatch. And in the recent years, you know, we have up  
21 and down spikes but the bycatch is a lot less. And to  
22 a layman like myself, I thought, well, maybe in 2005  
23 there was lots and lots and lots of king salmon and  
24 chum salmon and whatever, and all of us are screaming  
25 nowadays that there's no more kings. I mean I look at  
26 the Yukon River and you can't set nets for kings on  
27 the Yukon. My river, Fish and Game came in and cut out  
28 the escapement goal so there is no escapement goal for  
29 my river for king salmon.

30  
31                   Anyway, I -- I guess in my mind the --  
32 the fishery, king salmon and chums and so on and so  
33 forth have taken such a hard hit, I was thinking to  
34 myself these -- these lower spikes look good on a graph  
35 but with our king runs and chum runs, what they are,  
36 the takes, your bycatch may be way out of line still.  
37 And the other thing that I -- I try to read into was  
38 you're at 8,000-something bycatch on king salmon and  
39 you made a comment that's from -- the kings are coming  
40 from Western Alaska. And, you know, those of us  
41 sitting around the table we're here to represent  
42 subsistence and yet what we're talking about is  
43 industry and -- and their bycatch is probably quite a  
44 bit more than the take of Western Alaska today. It's  
45 frightening to see the subsistence issues not -- not  
46 taken into consideration. I mean you've got a board  
47 that regulates all this stuff and power players at the  
48 table but subsistence, I don't feel is at that table.  
49 And somehow we need to change this way of thinking and  
50



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1 addressing resources so it doesn't impact Western  
2 Alaska. I mean we've got a handful of boats that might  
3 -- might help X amount of people but we got whole  
4 Western Alaska being impacted by this process.

5  
6 I just -- I don't know.

7  
8 One thing I thought of and maybe I'll  
9 throw this at you, is, do you guys understand the  
10 numbers in the runs of fish in Western Alaska, you  
11 know, to me that -- that shouldn't be that hard to put  
12 together. I'm the Chairman of my Native Corporation  
13 and we have a fish counting tower on our river system  
14 and for 20-some years we've been counting fish on our  
15 river system and we have a good idea of what's going  
16 on. 8,000 kings in Norton Sound, I'll guarantee you  
17 there's no escapement of 8,000 kings, it's -- it's  
18 horrible and you throw the Yukon and the Kuskokwim in  
19 that king escapement, you know, the numbers are going  
20 to go up but the 8,000 is going to be a high  
21 percentage, I think, of take and can we afford it.

22  
23 DR. STRAM: Yeah, thanks for that. I  
24 guess the only way I can really respond is that we did  
25 -- we have just had a committee meeting this past week,  
26 the committee's comprised of five Western Alaska in-  
27 river representatives and five members of the pollock  
28 industry so we've been having all of these discussions  
29 in a public forum at the committee meetings. That will  
30 continue at the Council meetings. We do have all the  
31 information. We work closely with ADF&G so that we can  
32 provide the Council with stock status information by  
33 river system. Again, we're not able to break out,  
34 genetically, by river, so it's important to keep in  
35 mind when you look at an overall number of bycatch --  
36 you know you can do a rough percentage by multiplying  
37 it by the rough percentage from the genetics but the  
38 age matters as well, so those are not the numbers that  
39 would have returned to any individual river system in  
40 that year.

41  
42 But I just would say that we are taking  
43 all that information into consideration and we do work  
44 closely with the -- the State of Alaska obviously has a  
45 seat on the Council and has been extremely responsive  
46 trying to raise all of these issues. And we do work  
47 with ADF&G. We worked with them extremely closely in  
48 developing Amendment 110 in order to figure out the  
49 best way to determine what are years of low abundance  
50

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1 for chinook salmon in Western Alaska and that is  
2 something that the Council is receiving information on.

3  
4 Thanks.

5  
6 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Diane. I'm  
7 going to -- I have a Council Member Mary Freytag out of  
8 Unalakleet wanted to ask questions.

9  
10 MS. FREYTAG: Yes, thank you, Chairman  
11 Green. This is Mary Freytag. Actually I got a two  
12 part question.

13  
14 The first part is I don't know if  
15 anyone watches the TV as I do during the winter, but on  
16 some of the episodes of Life Below Zero or, anyway, I  
17 would -- it would be neat to see some research done on  
18 the upper inner Yukon area where the salmon go to  
19 spawn. Seeing all these resident non-Natives take tons  
20 and tons of chum and salmon and feed them to their  
21 dogs, I mean that's our food that they're giving to  
22 their dogs and I would just be curious if that's in the  
23 radar.

24  
25 And my other question would be  
26 concerned about regulation. Is there any way to change  
27 the regulations on the bycatch of salmon to where they  
28 need to save and process them and not just throw them  
29 away because it's such a shame to throw them away  
30 especially with the villages not able to harvest salmon  
31 or does it take the act of Congress?

32  
33 Thank you.

34  
35 DR. STRAM: Thanks for the question.  
36 To answer your second one first. In terms of changing  
37 the regulations -- we are looking at regulations for  
38 minimizing the bycatch. In terms of changing the  
39 regulations for discarding of the fish, that was  
40 originally put in place to disincentivise catching  
41 them. A lot of them, again, are being processed and  
42 provided as food quality donations to SeaShare which  
43 then redistributes them and since 2011 they've worked  
44 extremely hard to provide distribution centers in  
45 Western Alaska, understanding that that doesn't  
46 mitigate in any way, shape or form the actual bycatch  
47 but that those fish that are from Western Alaska should  
48 be returned to distribution centers in Western Alaska  
49 within the ability of SeaShare to distribute them.

50

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1                   The Council has often considered  
2 changing the way the regulations are. At this point  
3 right now that's not something that I have heard is on  
4 their radar screen but it -- it could always be  
5 something that they consider in terms of changing them.  
6 There's -- I think some of the concern is the  
7 consequences of changing a regulation where those fish  
8 -- they -- they don't want the bycaught fish to be  
9 something that is profitable to industry and that's the  
10 reason why both halibut and salmon as well as crab, the  
11 regulations are written the way they are so that those  
12 are something that you are inscentivized to avoid, not  
13 retain.

14  
15                   To your first question about research  
16 on the upper river, that would probably be better  
17 directed to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game as  
18 that -- we -- we only manage three to 200 miles off  
19 shore so we -- we -- the National -- the North Pacific  
20 Fishery Management Council is responsible for the off  
21 shore trawl fisheries, the Alaska Department of Fish  
22 and Game has sole jurisdiction on -- on managing within  
23 rivers as well as research programs that they have in  
24 place for -- for in-river fisheries.

25  
26                   I hope that answered your question.

27  
28                   MS. FREYTAG: Is there any specific  
29 reasons why the Federal and State don't work together  
30 collaboratively on this matter since it's so very  
31 important? Even though the outreach is 200 miles out  
32 there, the salmon are going up there so you have to  
33 work together, come together as one to make something  
34 happen. Just my suggestion, thank you.

35  
36                   DR. STRAM: Yeah, thanks for that. The  
37 only thing I guess I would say is, is the way the  
38 Council process is set up is the Alaska Department of  
39 Fish and Game, the Commissioner has a seat at the  
40 Council table and right now that seat is run by the  
41 Deputy Commissioner, Ms. Rachel Baker, and they are  
42 taking the lead on this, so -- so we are -- we, as the  
43 Council itself, is working collaboratively with the  
44 Alaska Department of Fish and Game through the Council  
45 process to address a lot of these issues, understanding  
46 that our process is restricted to regulations on the  
47 off shore fisheries but we are working with the Alaska  
48 Department of Fish and Game through our Council process  
49 to address the issues that we understand are of concern  
50

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1 in Western Alaska.

2

3 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Mary. I  
4 have Councilman Martin Aukongak.

5

6 MR. AUKONGAK: We all know trawling is  
7 bad. Do you have any plans for those big boats when  
8 there's nothing to trawl, you're going to have a bunch  
9 of lead in the port and maybe you're going to have to  
10 have a new career because you're not regulating. We  
11 just regulated caribou about a few hours ago and  
12 there's a bunch of paperwork in front of me saying  
13 regulate, but trawling is bad at the end of the day.

14

15 DR. STRAM: Thanks for the comment.  
16 There's -- I mean there's not much I can -- I can  
17 augment to that. I mean obviously you can provide  
18 public comment to the Council at any point to make  
19 different regulatory changes in terms of gears and  
20 species that are prosecuted.

21

22 CHAIRMAN GREEN: I've got Councilman  
23 Tom Gray.

24

25 MR. GRAY: So I sit on a lot of boards  
26 and I keep hearing the same issue, that's not part of  
27 my -- what I'm regulating or what I'm deemed to manage,  
28 that's somebody else's problem, let them manage it.  
29 And I'll take the king salmon that go from the ocean to  
30 Canada, I mean there's so many players involved in  
31 that. And yet trying to get people at the table to  
32 talk and manage this resource as a whole, you know,  
33 it's mind boggling that we have any fish left.

34

35 You go a certain way up the river and  
36 the State's managing it and then another piece the Feds  
37 are managing it, you go way up and a whole 'nother  
38 country's managing it, and you know I -- I come back to  
39 subsistence because everybody forgets about subsistence  
40 and that's supposed to be the No. 1 priority in Alaska  
41 for our resource, is subsistence, and, yet, industry  
42 has set up regulations and laws and on and on that I  
43 sure don't understand and if I can't understand it a  
44 lot of people in Alaska will never understand it. But  
45 somehow we need people like you and players and the  
46 State and on and on to work together to manage the  
47 resource and it's not only this issue here, it's all  
48 the resources. I'm the head of the Beluga Whale  
49 Committee and I'm deemed to -- I'm supposed to manage

50

0270

1 beluga whales but there's a lot of players that need  
2 help.

3

4 So anyway I just -- subsistence.

5

6 Subsistence.

7

8 Subsistence.

9

10 And we can't forget that, that's more  
11 important than all these boats out in the ocean, so,  
12 anyway.

13

14 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Councilman  
15 Gray. This is Louis again, Green.

16

17 I've been to believe that the trawl,  
18 the pelagic gear is on the bottom, 40 percent to 100  
19 percent of the time, something that just came out here  
20 as of late, is that true?

21

22 DR. STRAM: Thanks for the question. I  
23 don't actually have the information on that in front of  
24 me, but, yes, it is true that the pelagic gear is on  
25 the bottom some of the time. It's -- it's designed  
26 quite differently for mid-water trawls than bottom  
27 trawls are, but the National Marine Fishery Service  
28 did an examination -- I believe it's posted to our  
29 December agenda and may come up again in June in terms  
30 of ways of establishing the relative impact of pelagic  
31 trawling on -- on the bottom.

32

33 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, thank you. And  
34 I've been led to believe also that in the crab saving  
35 areas where pelagic gear is allowed in there, that it's  
36 also being drug on the bottom, is that true?

37

38 DR. STRAM: Again, that would be the  
39 same analysis because the National Marine Fishery  
40 Service and the Council are looking at an analysis of  
41 the red king crab savings area and so that -- that's  
42 exactly why they're looking at the percentage or some  
43 ability to estimate whether through a fishing effects  
44 model or number of crab that are caught in pelagic  
45 trawl nets, or for how much time that trawl is near the  
46 bottom instead of higher up in the water.

47

48 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. So I see that  
49 you're the scientist and so that's why I'm asking you

50

0271

1 these questions, I figure you might know something  
2 about this stuff. So it's all over the internet and I  
3 just wanted to follow up and see what was factual and  
4 what was not factual.

5  
6 One thing I would.....

7  
8 DR. STRAM: Yes, thank you. And I'm  
9 happy to.....

10  
11 CHAIRMAN GREEN: .....request -- I'm  
12 sorry,go ahead.

13  
14 DR. STRAM: .....send some links and --  
15 oh, sorry. I can try and provide some links to some of  
16 those analysis to Nissa to distribute to the committee  
17 if that helps that would provide more specific  
18 information that they have been trying to estimate more  
19 recently. This has certainly been an issue that's been  
20 discussed at the Council in recent meetings.

21  
22 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you for that. I  
23 guess one other request for this Council, I would like  
24 to see the total tallies of all bycatch since 1992, and  
25 I'm sure you folks have got that information. And it's  
26 probably easier for you to pull it up than it would be  
27 for me to go look for it, I'm a little bit old  
28 fashioned, but I'd like to have that for the Council at  
29 some later meeting.

30  
31 But, you know, I come from a community  
32 that was the only -- was the first and only Tier II  
33 salmon fishery in the State's history and the depletion  
34 of salmon seems to have migrated from the Nome  
35 Subdistrict south. And back in the '90s we were  
36 talking about the trawler industry and the Area M  
37 intercept industry, fishing industry there, State, that  
38 if they weren't managed together in a real co-  
39 management effort that we were going to have what we  
40 see today. So I have a hard time understanding why  
41 people who need these fish and the culture of it, to  
42 practice their traditions and it just -- it doesn't  
43 matter what race you are, if you're living in the Bush  
44 you're needing these fish. It also is noted that the  
45 nutrients from these fish also pass on to vegetation,  
46 they pass on to animals that live off the vegetation  
47 and other animals that live off the animals that eat  
48 the vegetation so there's a big circle there. And  
49 noting that the importance of salmon in the Pacific Rim  
50

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1 through a study that had gone through many years ago  
2 created all this enhancement of salmon runs down in  
3 California, Oregon and Washington and I think some has  
4 happened up in Alaska but Western Alaska is untouched.

5  
6 So what I'm saying is I find it very,  
7 very unfair that the trawler industry can go out there  
8 and continue fishing in a wasteful manner and the rest  
9 of us from the Bering Sea fishermen of the Big Bering  
10 out there all the way to the little folks up the Yukon  
11 River, the Kuskokwim River and Norton Sound have to sit  
12 on the beach. I feel that the trawler industry needs  
13 to shoulder a good portion of the brunt of conservation  
14 that you have never had to.

15  
16 So I know that sounds kind of harsh but  
17 we're living the nightmare and as my old cousin Jack  
18 Fagerstrom used to say, welcome to my nightmare when we  
19 were at Board of Fish meetings in the '90s.

20  
21 I don't know if anybody else has  
22 anything. I think Elmer Seetot, one of my other  
23 Council members has a question or comment.

24  
25 Thank you.

26  
27 MR. SEETOT: Comment from Elmer Seetot,  
28 Brevig Mission.

29  
30 Going back to TV, you look at that  
31 5,000 miles seaweed that is going on on the eastern  
32 side of USA, you also hear of fish turning belly up due  
33 to lack of oxygen in the water. It's not only over  
34 there but it's happening in the state of Alaska where  
35 fish are turning belly up because either they're -- the  
36 place where they spawn is being blocked by other  
37 species such as beaver or -- or that our water is being  
38 so polluted now that all we talk about is bycatch. By  
39 the time the bycatch problem is solved there'll be no  
40 more fish to talk about.

41  
42 Why?

43  
44 You look at TV reports of micro-plastic  
45 out there, our water is being polluted from all sides.  
46 Sewer discharge, accidental oil spills and then  
47 increased traffic that is going in the Bering Straits  
48 on the Russian side. Wales -- Wales has people that  
49 keep track of ships that go over there and every ship  
50

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1 or every boat that passes, or goes through the water is  
2 going to leave some kind of discharge, whether it be  
3 waste discharge from the engine itself, or from human  
4 discharge, which I would think -- nobody's watching me,  
5 but I'll just do it anyway -- and that's -- I think  
6 that's one of the main things -- well, everybody's  
7 talking about bycatch, I'm not too sure who's taking  
8 care of the waters that these fish inhabit. And by the  
9 time, like I say, you try and get the pounds down, no  
10 other stuff will be there to be regulated.

11

12 Thank you, very much.

13

14 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. Any other  
15 Council.....

16

17 DR. STRAM: Yeah, thanks for that. I  
18 guess the only thing.....

19

20 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Oops, sorry, go ahead.

21

22 DR. STRAM: .....I could say is we are  
23 looking -- sorry, just to comment. I -- I do  
24 understand all of that and I would say that outside of  
25 the individual -- so when we look at different changes  
26 to our management system we tend to be very specific to  
27 the actual change, I would say that we are looking more  
28 broadly -- so we're looking more broadly in terms of  
29 climate change over the entire Bering Sea, we are  
30 looking more broadly over our entire groundfish harvest  
31 system so to -- to the extent that it is possible to  
32 pay attention to the Council process, the Council is  
33 looking at a more programmatic overall view of all of  
34 these changes, it's just not specific to this one  
35 particular issue. We understand that they're all  
36 interrelated.

37

38 I hope that helps.

39

40 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Diane. I  
41 think we're pretty much at the ends of questions. I  
42 don't see anybody else. I don't hear anybody online  
43 unless Ron or Robert, one last shot.

44

45 MR. KIRK: Yes, Mr. Chair. Ron Kirk,  
46 Stebbins. Trawler fisheries, you're -- you're talking  
47 about at the end of the year you have 8,000 -- 8,000  
48 salmon -- fish that you've counted as bycatch, to you  
49 that's a low number, to me that's a big number. Why?

50



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1 Because each salmon is carrying, what, 200 eggs there,  
2 and you take that and you times it by 8,000, you're  
3 talking 18,000 salmon being destroyed in one season by  
4 bycatch with the pollock fisheries, maybe even more.  
5 That's a big concern we have in our State of Alaska  
6 here because it affects the Kuskokwim, it affects  
7 Bering Straits, it affects all of our fisheries  
8 throughout the state, we live off our fish.

9  
10 So you're not only taking 8,000 fish  
11 out of our sea, you're taking 18,000 fish out of our  
12 seas.

13  
14 Thank you.

15  
16 CHAIRMAN GREEN: This is Louis back on  
17 again, and I'm not trying to step on my Councilman  
18 Member's toes, but it's 16 million eggs out of 18,000  
19 fish killed.

20  
21 MR. GRAY: 8,000.

22  
23 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Excuse me, I jumped  
24 the number. 8,000 fish killed, 16 million eggs, yes.  
25 So a lot of wasted resource.

26  
27 Anyway, I think that will bring us to  
28 an end there Diane, and appreciate you calling in and  
29 giving us your presentation. I think that will be all  
30 we need today.

31  
32 Thank you.

33  
34 DR. STRAM: Yeah, thank you for your  
35 time, we're always happy to provide information.

36  
37 Thanks.

38  
39 CHAIRMAN GREEN: So we're at -- Nissa's  
40 got something to add here real quick.

41  
42 MS. PILCHER: The original -- this is  
43 Nissa Pilcher. On the original agenda it did say  
44 salmon bycatch as well as marine mammal bycatch update.  
45 IT took a long time to track down who was responsible  
46 for tracking that and by the time I found her, it  
47 wasn't that far away from the meeting, and she was  
48 going to be out of state during your meeting, and she  
49 was very apologetic, she would love to be here and  
50

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1 present and so she gave me something to read to you  
2 guys and we're supposed to connect about getting her on  
3 the agenda at your next meeting.

4  
5 Her name is Dr. Suzie Teerlink, and  
6 she's a marine mammal specialist for the Protected  
7 Resources Division of the -- of -- for NOAA, and she  
8 wanted me to read:

9  
10 NOAA Fisheries and Marine -- excuse me  
11 -- NOAA Fisheries and Fish and Wildlife Service is  
12 responsible for implementing the Marine Mammal  
13 Protection Act, which includes stipulations for marine  
14 mammal and fishery mortality and serious injury or  
15 bycatch. NOAA Fisheries generates and publishes an  
16 annual Marine Mammal Protection Act list of fisheries  
17 which tracks marine mammal mortality and serious injury  
18 from fisheries and uses -- and uses them in management.  
19 The specific mortality and serious injury levels are  
20 found in the marine mammal stock assessment reports,  
21 which are located online, which I -- I am unavailable  
22 for this meeting, though, I would love the opportunity  
23 to dig more into detail and share specific fisheries  
24 data at the next meeting.

25  
26 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you for that --  
27 following up on that Nissa and reading that to us. I'm  
28 sure we'll accommodate her to give her presentation at  
29 a later meeting.

30  
31 And Mr. Scott Ayers, it's your turn to  
32 try to crank this thing up and speed up and roll us out  
33 the door. You're first, thank you.

34  
35 MS. FREYTAG: Who is he wi.....

36  
37 MR. AYERS: All right, thank you, Mr.  
38 Chair. Members of the.....

39  
40 MS. FREYTAG: Yeah, I know but with  
41 agency and where are we on the agenda.

42  
43 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Oh, okay, sorry.  
44 Yeah, he needs to do that, I kind of just opened it  
45 with his name -- sorry.

46  
47 MR. AYERS: No problem. Thank you, Mr.  
48 Chair and members of the Council. This is Scott Ayers.  
49 I am with the Office of Subsistence Management. I'm  
50

1 the Fisheries Division Supervisor there. And I'm going  
2 to be talking to you this afternoon, hopefully briefly,  
3 about an update to the Subsistence Regional Advisory  
4 Council correspondence policy. So the best way for us  
5 to have this conversation is Page 96 of your book has  
6 the existing Council policy and then there is also a  
7 supplemental handout that Nissa provided for you that  
8 says Subsistence Regional Advisory Council  
9 correspondence policy at the top and it's got a bunch  
10 of bold font on it.

11

12 MS. PILCHER: That's Page 15 of that  
13 supplemental material pack that you were given.

14

15 (Pause)

16

17 MR. AYERS: All right, so the Office of  
18 Subsistence Management would like you to review and  
19 comment on a suggested update to the current Council  
20 correspondence policy. This policy has been in effect  
21 and unchanged since 2004. So that's what's in your  
22 book, is the original policy that's been in place since  
23 2004. We have an update to it. It's meant to  
24 streamline and clarify the policy and, hopefully, the  
25 edits eliminate any unnecessary language or  
26 information, and clarifies guidance on the official  
27 scope of Council correspondence and to whom Councils  
28 may or may not correspond directly with and the  
29 process.

30

31 So, again, the item in your  
32 supplemental materials shows any new language in bold,  
33 although the removed language is not represented on  
34 there.

35

36 The primary changes in the draft policy  
37 include a shortened preamble, that section at the very  
38 beginning that introduces policy and summarizes the  
39 intent of the policy.

40

41 Element 1 uses clear language to define  
42 the content and focus of Council correspondence.

43

44 Element 5 combines elements that define  
45 the correspondence process.

46

47 Element 7 confirms that Councils can  
48 submit comments on State regulatory proposals directly  
49 to the Board of Fish and Board of Game without review

50

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1 by the Assistant Regional Director for the Office of  
2 Subsistence Management.

3

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Element 9 clarifies that the Councils may not write directly to Federal elected, or appointed officials due to Hatch Act restrictions.

Finally, and most importantly, these changes will not prevent Council members from writing to whomever they wish as private citizens or in other capacities.

So we're asking you to take a moment to review these suggested changes and we will hope that you share any comments or questions that you have, which will be noted, and then the Board is planning to take action on this draft policy during a summer work session and then you'll be updated in the fall on what action came of that.

CHAIRMAN GREEN: And, of course, this is not an action item guys, gals.

What else do we need, Mr. Scott?

MR. AYERS: Ultimately this is something that hasn't been updated since 2004. We've made some updates to clarify items that have popped up over the years and we're just seeking input from the Councils all around the state on their thoughts on the changes we've made.

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Is there a timeframe?

MR. AYERS: We're hoping to get comments from the Councils at this meeting because I believe the Board is going to take up the draft during a work session this coming summer.

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Any Council members have anything to add or comment on on this. I don't have anything.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN GREEN: It looks like it's a thumb's up, Scott, the way it is. Thanks.

MR. AYERS: Well, I really appreciate

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1 that and thanks for the time and happy to keep moving  
2 things forward here this afternoon.

3

4 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Speedy delivery.

5

6 (Laughter)

7

8 CHAIRMAN GREEN: So we got the -- I  
9 should look at mine, I got it right here. The 2021  
10 Council charter review and Nissa's going to present  
11 Page 1 of 2.

12

13 MS. PILCHER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
14 Members of the Council. For the record my name is  
15 Nissa Pilcher, the Council Coordinator. Your Council's  
16 2021 charter can be found on Page 102 in the meeting  
17 book.

18

19 So all 10 Subsistence Regional Advisory  
20 Councils were chartered under the Federal Advis --  
21 Advisory Committee Act, also known as FACA. Under the  
22 Act, each Council charter needs to be renewed every two  
23 years, so approximately a year before it is renewed  
24 each Council can have a discussion to see if there's  
25 anything you want to change. Most of the language  
26 currently in the charter is required by FACA and it's  
27 implementing policies and that required language cannot  
28 be changed, but you can request top make minor  
29 modifications to such things as the name of your  
30 Council, the number of seats on your Council, the  
31 number of frequency of meetings, adding language on  
32 desired geographic membership balance. Just please  
33 keep in mind that any requests to change or modify the  
34 charter must be accompanied by a detailed  
35 justification.

36

37 One thing to note that specifically  
38 speaking regarding membership balance, of course, you  
39 guys know we receive applications, so while you can  
40 request as a broad diversity of possible on the Council  
41 it depends on who submits applications to the Council  
42 in order to make sure that we can carry through with  
43 that.

44

45 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Who is submitting?

46

47 MS. PILCHER: Uh?

48

49 CHAIRMAN GREEN: What was that about

50

0279

1 who is sub.....

2

3 MS. PILCHER: Oh, it just depends on  
4 who submits, like who turns -- who -- who applies to  
5 sit on the Council.

6

7 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay.

8

9 MS. PILCHER: And, of course,  
10 individuals can do it for themselves and also, you  
11 know, tribal councils can submit names as well, or  
12 applications for individuals so it's a pretty -- pretty  
13 broad range of that.

14

15 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Nissa. Any  
16 questions or comments.

17

18 (No comments)

19

20 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Ron, anything.

21

22 MS. PILCHER: Oh, I didn't.....

23

24 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Oops.

25

26 MS. PILCHER: I'm sorry, I forgot to  
27 turn the page.

28

29 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Hang on folks.

30

31 MS. PILCHER: Some of the changes made  
32 to the charters over the last four years include  
33 language on carryover terms, which allow Council  
34 members to continue to serve on the Councils if a new  
35 round of appointments have not been made before the  
36 winter Council meetings, which you guys have run into  
37 the last couple goarounds.

38

39 Another change in language added a  
40 clause on out of cycle alternate appointments that  
41 allows vacated seats to be filled by previous years  
42 applicants to make sure that we have as many people on  
43 the Council as we can.

44

45 These two language additions hopefully  
46 allow less vacant seats on the Council during meeting  
47 cycles.

48

49 If the Council is satisfied with all

50

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1 charter provisions, as is, and requests no changes then  
2 the Council can just simply vote to forward the charter  
3 to the Board. If the Council would like to make a  
4 request for modification you would need to provide  
5 justification and then I can provide the InterAgency  
6 Staff for review, that, in turn, will provide this  
7 request to the Federal Subsistence Board that will  
8 review it and decide to move it forward to the  
9 Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture for their  
10 approval. If you did wish to modify your current  
11 charter that would make this agenda item an action  
12 item.

13

14 And please let me know what your wishes  
15 are.

16

17 CHAIRMAN GREEN: At this point I have  
18 no desire to change anything. Anybody else.

19

20 (No comments)

21

22 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Seeing none in the  
23 room, anybody online? Ron. Robert.

24

25 MR. KIRK: Ron Kirk, Stebbins. No  
26 desire.

27

28 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Ron.

29

30 Robert.

31

32 (No comments)

33

34 MS. PILCHER: He did say that he might  
35 need to step out to attend to some powerline stuff.

36

37 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. Okay, yep. All  
38 right, we've gone around the table, we're -- this is --  
39 we're done with that one. So we're on to the next item  
40 here.

41

42 Thank you.

43

44 This would be -- is this something to  
45 do with Hannah here, Fisheries Resource Monitoring  
46 Program update -- Doctor Hannah, I got to remember  
47 that.

48

49 DR. VOORHEES: Good afternoon, Mr.

50

0281

1 Chair and members of the Council. This is Hannah  
2 Voorhees, Anthropologist with the Office of Subsistence  
3 Management. My colleague, Fisheries Biologist, Jarred  
4 Stone, is also on the line.

5  
6 I'll be providing an update on three  
7 fisheries program topics, including the Fisheries  
8 Resource Monitoring Program, Partners for Fisheries  
9 Monitoring and the fisheries regulatory cycle. These  
10 will be brief updates and they're not action items.

11  
12 First up is the update on the Fisheries  
13 Resource Monitoring Program. The mission of the  
14 Monitoring Program is to identify and provide  
15 information needed to sustain fisheries, subsistence  
16 fisheries on Federal public lands. The Monitoring  
17 Program also supports meaningful involvement in  
18 fisheries management by Alaska Native and rural  
19 organizations and promotes collaboration among Federal,  
20 State and Alaska Native and local organizations.  
21 During the open funding opportunities the Monitoring  
22 Program seeks applications for projects that address  
23 priority information needs developed by Regional  
24 Advisory Councils such as this one. The most recent  
25 funding opportunity closed recently on February 24th.  
26 Applications will be reviewed by the Technical Review  
27 Committee and summaries of project proposals submitted  
28 for your region will be presented to you at your next  
29 meeting for your input.

30  
31 If there are any questions, Jarred and  
32 I would be happy to address them now. And that  
33 concludes my presentation on this first fisheries item.

34  
35 Thank you.

36  
37 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Hannah. I  
38 don't think anybody has any questions or comments,  
39 please continue.

40  
41 DR. VOORHEES: Next I'll be presenting  
42 on the Partners for Fisheries Monitoring.

43  
44 This winter the Office of Subsistence  
45 Management sought proposals for the Partners for  
46 Fisheries Monitoring Program to strengthen Alaska  
47 Native and rural involvement in Federal subsistence  
48 management. The Partners Program funds salaries for  
49 biologists, anthropologists or educators and Alaska  
50



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1 Native rural non-profit organizations with the intent  
2 of increasing the organizations ability to participate  
3 in Federal subsistence management. The Program also  
4 supports a variety of opportunities for local rural  
5 students to connect with subsistence resource,  
6 monitoring and management through science camps and  
7 paid internships. For this funding cycle it is  
8 anticipated that approximately that \$1 million will be  
9 available yearly. There were 15 proposals received for  
10 this cycle and the review panel met in mid-February to  
11 determine which applicants.....

12

13 (Teleconference interference -  
14 participants not muted)

15

16 DR. VOORHEES: .....would b funded.  
17 More information about that will be provided in the  
18 near future through a news release from OSM and Karen  
19 Hyer is the point person in our office for that  
20 Program.

21

22 Are there any questions about the  
23 Partners Program.

24

25 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Looking around the  
26 table, no, I don't see any. I don't have anything,  
27 thank you.

28

29 DR. VOORHEES: All right. And next the  
30 fisheries regulatory cycle update.

31

32 The Federal Subsistence Board took  
33 action on all of the fisheries proposals and closure  
34 reviews at their January Fisheries Regulatory meeting  
35 and we expect the new regulations should be published  
36 in the Federal Register in late spring or early summer.

37

38 The Board rescinded closures to  
39 subsistence fishing in the Federal waters of Kanuti  
40 River and Bonanza Creek and supported FP23-02, Yukon  
41 River customary and traditional use determination for  
42 salmon by residents of Chevak, Hooper Bay and Scammon  
43 Bay for fishing in the Yukon River drainage. I'm  
44 mentioning those proposals and closure reviews, in  
45 particular, because these are the ones for which this  
46 Council has customary and traditional use  
47 determinations.

48

49 We will begin our next fisheries cycle

50

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1 during your winter 2024 meeting. At that meeting we  
2 will provide the Councils with draft closure reviews,  
3 if there are any for your region, and we'll also  
4 solicit proposals to change the Federal fish and  
5 shellfish regulations.

6  
7 This concludes the fisheries regulatory  
8 cycle update. And, again, please let me know if there  
9 are any questions.

10  
11 Thank you.

12  
13 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Dr. Hannah.  
14 Thank you, Dr. Hannah. I got to push my button for  
15 Tina.

16  
17 (Laughter)

18  
19 REPORTER: Yep, thanks.

20  
21 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Anybody. Mary.

22  
23 MS. FREYTAG: Yes, you mentioned the  
24 villages on the -- the three villages being closed,  
25 those are the lower river areas near the mouth. Do you  
26 guys consider the whole river, not just the lower  
27 villages, do you guys go all the way up the river to  
28 those other villages, those other little towns and  
29 regulate up there also? I just would like to know.

30  
31 Thank you.

32  
33 DR. VOORHEES: Thank you. I don't --  
34 I'm not the best person to address your question since  
35 I don't work on the Yukon and Kuskokwim River regularly  
36 but I know for those three communities, there was a  
37 regulatory history that was rather complicated and it  
38 appeared that most communities in the area had already  
39 appropriately been included in a customary and  
40 traditional use determination, but those three villages  
41 had not, and in the process of going back and looking  
42 at our regulations it was decided that they needed to  
43 be added as well so -- but it was for a wider customary  
44 and traditional use determination.

45  
46 Sorry, I'm not the best person to  
47 answer that question and if there's anyone else on the  
48 line right now who would like to jump in, please, go  
49 ahead.

50

0284

1 Thank you.

2

3

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Mr. Scott.

4

5

(Teleconference interference -  
6 participants not muted)

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29

MS. LAVINE: Hello, Mr. Chair. Scott,  
members of the Council, this is Robbin.

30

31

32

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Go ahead, Robbin, it's  
about time you spoke up.

33

34

(Laughter)

35

36

37

38

39

40

MS. LAVINE: You all are doing a really  
good job. I am having a wonderful time listening to you  
all. The only reason why I'm speaking up is because I  
am actually having a hard time hearing you.

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

Somebody on the line who's listening  
like me, needs to mute their phone. I can hear papers  
rustling, I can hear clanging, maybe kitchen, maybe  
somebody eating so please check and make sure that your  
phones are muted so I can continue to enjoy your  
wonderful meeting even though I'm not there.

48

49

50

Nice to hear you all, bye.

0285

1                   CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Robbin. I  
2 was going to blame it on Tina but I looked over there  
3 and she was just standing there looking at everybody  
4 else, quietly.

5  
6                   (Laughter)

7  
8                   CHAIRMAN GREEN: So thanks whoever  
9 turned their phone off.

10  
11                   Where are we at? Any questions. Mary,  
12 you're good with Scott's and Hannah's answers?

13  
14                   MS. FREYTAG: (Nods affirmatively)

15  
16                   CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. Oh, Elmer.

17  
18                   MR. SEETOT: I just have a comment.  
19 Elmer Seetot from Brevig Mission. I fish on the  
20 northwest side of Grantley Harbor. I have a fish camp  
21 there and my only source of communication is a radio  
22 and throughout the summer last summer I listened to  
23 reports, ADF&G reporting closures along the Yukon,  
24 Kuskokwim drainage areas and also later on in the year  
25 they -- they were mentioning closures for the Pilgrim  
26 River area where Nome, in the past, used to really go  
27 up there and go for the reds. However, this year it  
28 was very different and then they kept announcing closed  
29 -- that it was still closed because the red salmon did  
30 not make it and enough escapement numbers for them to  
31 be comfortable to open that area. However, we -- we do  
32 have a lot of chum salmon that -- that usually -- the  
33 Agiapuk River, in our area, and that -- that's -- I  
34 would say that's the third fish I would have in line  
35 with kings -- kings and reds, and then chum. For me,  
36 silver is a good fish fry but I -- I try to smoke or  
37 salt, I think their flesh is just a little bit too  
38 thick and they didn't -- my salted fish didn't turn out  
39 as good as they were, so I had to kind of adapt to the  
40 chum salmon in that -- what we call (In Native), or  
41 half dried or just -- just -- I would say drained --  
42 drain of saltwater. I smoked them at least one hour.  
43 If you do more than two hours or if we do three hours,  
44 before you put them away then I think that's a little  
45 bit too smoky but that -- that's a good alternate, you  
46 know, for having a sandwich because, you know, that --  
47 that have a little smoke behind them but that -- that's  
48 how we have kind of adapt in -- in that the red salmon  
49 runs that go through Port Clarence, Grantley Harbor,  
50

1 Toksook all the way to Pilgrim, that -- that fed a lot  
2 of people in and around the Seward Peninsula even  
3 though they weren't close communities, but -- but I was  
4 -- like I said before I was very happy that our  
5 forefathers did not allow commercial fishing for red  
6 salmon. Why? Money. Where money is involved you  
7 argue about it. When arguments are about, you argue  
8 more and the fish resource won't be there -- on the  
9 human side.

10

11                   What we really don't look at is the --  
12 is the natural side of things, you know, it's --  
13 Unalakleet River, belly up salmon, you know, oxygen  
14 deprivation. I -- I seen other types of fish being  
15 harvested by marine mammals over -- over at Teller  
16 between the channels where seals will come together and  
17 then just corral -- corral the fish to the -- and have  
18 their take. So -- so that's one of the things that I  
19 think we kind of overlook is that there are other  
20 natural resources that -- that consume fish, we're not  
21 the -- we're not the only ones and then -- and also the  
22 -- the cycle in which natural events occur, we just  
23 kind of dismiss that and say, oh, nobody told me about  
24 that. I think many of you around the table that  
25 represent the communities, you hear of a lot of stories  
26 about fish going belly up or -- or this and that, and  
27 that's part of the issues that never really get out to  
28 the public or -- or in a public forum. Because you  
29 know many of the community members fish for certain  
30 stocks and then, you know, if they don't get certain  
31 things then they have to kind of adapt to other maybe  
32 non-salmon species, which is fine, I think, but for --  
33 for many of them that rely on the salmon, you know,  
34 that's a big departure from their diet of good red,  
35 good kings and then, you know, stuff like that.

36

37                   But I would say they would continue to  
38 do that until the fish are no longer or -- or that they  
39 have no other means.

40

41                   The one other thing about bycatch, they  
42 thought well discarding fish -- discarding fish --  
43 during the days of dog team, 30 years ago maybe, I  
44 would think so, our relatives used to go to Agiapuk  
45 River and pick up the chum salmon that had died from  
46 after spawning, bring them home and then have them for  
47 food. Because the -- the more that -- the -- I mean  
48 when they (In Native).....

49

50

0287

1                   CHAIRMAN GREEN:   (In Native)

2

3

4                   MR. SEETOT:  Yeah, those ones when they  
5 change color, when they go from salt water --  
6 freshwater it gets their flesh soft and that's what --  
7 that's what these oldtimers used to prefer.  Even  
8 though it stayed in the sun out there, you know,  
9 subsisting with the predators, wolves, fish and others  
10 that -- that ate these discarded salmon, we still  
11 continue the tradition of eating food that is their --  
12 it -- it might not look very appetizing but it  
13 nourishes the body that -- that we subsist on because  
14 our metabolism -- when we live out in the country our  
15 metabolism is very different compared to ones in the  
16 city because we need to have these foods that energize  
17 us, that keep us warm and keep our energy level up.  
18 And many of our young people switching over to  
19 commercial food or to store bought food it doesn't  
20 provide the necessary energy or the warmth to last  
21 throughout the day because that's -- that's -- today,  
22 they look so tired, they do this and that, but that's  
23 one of the main things that we, at the table, that have  
24 been in this region for a long time, that's what we  
25 continue to kind of promote, you know, because that's  
26 been engraved in our society.  Do not waste the  
27 resources, you know, make every use of it as possible.  
28 Because most of the food, I would say 50 percent of our  
29 food is not -- it's not stored frozen directly out of  
30 the freezer, from the water to the freezer, it's cut --  
31 it's fermented, Tom Cod -- you know, Tom Cods and  
32 herrings, you know, they're hung, I see whole Tom Cods  
33 over at -- maybe in the '60s because at that time our  
34 elders, our parents, our grandparent were the ones  
35 actively doing that and -- and they were still going by  
36 that knowledge, the more you use the resource, the more  
37 it will be there for you.  I still put that out to my  
38 child -- to my grandchildren.  I say don't -- can I put  
39 this in the dump, no, give it to me I'll hang it up  
40 and, you know, do this and that because all the food  
41 that we consume is not eaten directly out of -- not  
42 eaten fresh or -- or straight out of the container,  
43 it's processing the way that the dried fish tastes a  
44 lot better, we can store it for awhile.

44

45                   And -- and by the way if you're  
46 listening Ron I had some dried herring.  They were very  
47 good departure from what I usually just have, just  
48 dried fish, like dried humpies and stuff but I -- I  
49 would like, you know, something like that happening,  
50

50

0288

1 you know, where you look at that, no, it doesn't look  
2 very appetizing but once you get into it it's very  
3 beneficial.

4

5 That's my -- that's my take there.

6

7 Thank you.

8

9 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Elmer.  
10 You've been here what, 25, 30 years doing this.

11

12 MR. SEETOT: I think.....

13

14 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yeah.

15

16 MR. SEETOT: Since I was a young tot I  
17 pretty much, you know, learned the ropes like that.  
18 Pretty much trial and error but watching and learning  
19 and not -- not at this table, just when you're arguing  
20 over resources, that's not the way I was taught but,  
21 you know, give and share. But that's how we are, we're  
22 taught at an early age that this is how you're going to  
23 -- if you teach them early they will keep it in their  
24 heads to continue. And -- and for me I was doing it  
25 for awhile and then, oh, there's -- there's other stuff  
26 that I need to take care of, you know, during the  
27 younger days, that's -- I think that's when I forgot  
28 quite a bit because our parents, our grandparents they  
29 taught us a lot of things and then most of it kind of  
30 filtered out of our minds and then, oh, I got to get  
31 somebody else -- aft -- after losing our community --  
32 parents and stuff like that, what -- whatever a woman's  
33 chore, you know, it was separated, you know, women do  
34 this, women do that now I'm all just like that for  
35 taking care of food, anything from a way the way women  
36 prepare it to the way men hunt and stuff like that. I  
37 integrated it all to enjoy because who else can I ask.  
38 My -- my relatives, I don't think -- they might not  
39 have the necessary skills or experience to make that  
40 food taste like our parents, or grandparents made it so  
41 -- so I'm -- I kind of started late but that's where  
42 I'm going right now.

43

44 Thank you.

45

46 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Elmer,  
47 again. So we.....

48

49 MR. KIRK: Elmer, Ron. It took you

50

0289

1     awhile to try herring, you got to try it a little bit  
2     fermented.

3

4                     CHAIRMAN GREEN: All right, Ron. I  
5     might be -- I might be into that.

6

7                     Okay, so we've got to move on here.

8

9                     Thank you two folks, Scott and Hannah,  
10    for going through your material there for us. And that  
11    puts us in -- we were looking at -- we don't have any  
12    tribal governments on the line?

13

14                     (No comments)

15

16                     CHAIRMAN GREEN: Hearing none. Native  
17    organizations.

18

19                     (No comments)

20

21                     CHAIRMAN GREEN: Not hearing that. We  
22    got National Weather Service on here and they've been  
23    waiting for a long time. It's nice of them to make it  
24    nice and sunny outside so we can suffer in here and  
25    look out at the sunshine.

26

27                     (Laughter)

28

29                     MS. SOPOW: I speak for all of us when  
30    I say we're thrilled. We will send you an invoice for  
31    the sun so keep your eyes out for that.

32

33                     My name is Kitty Sopow. I'll introduce  
34    myself and then I'll move on -- okay. I'm from St.  
35    Louis, Missouri. Both my parents are from there as well  
36    as all four of my grandparents. I'm the first female  
37    in my lineage to leave the area actually since we  
38    immigrated over so I'm pretty proud of my background  
39    and so I thank you for letting me share that with you  
40    today.

41

42                     I'm a student of Playspace learning.  
43    So I really do well coming to a community living and  
44    experiencing the environment, including the weather,  
45    along side my new neighbors, so thank you for having me  
46    this winter. I got here on December 27th. My biggest  
47    job at the Weather Service is to like figure out  
48    innovative ways to improve the service of the Weather  
49    Service. And I then translate the context in which

50



0290

1 risk exists to my colleagues, like MaryBeth here.

2

3 Do you want to introduce yourself.

4

5 MS. SCHREK: Sure. So I am MaryBeth  
6 Schrek. I am with the National Weather Service in  
7 Anchorage but I work with the SeaIce Program, which is  
8 a statewide program so we analyze sea ice, forecast sea  
9 ice for all of Alaska waters, everything from the  
10 Beaufort Sea, Chukchi Sea, Bering Sea and Cook Inlet.  
11 And so we've been working to learn how we can support,  
12 especially our land based people better, and so that is  
13 part of what we're here for today.

14

15 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Well, I hope they're  
16 land based because the only time there's anybody on the  
17 ice, if they ain't hunting, they're going on to their  
18 journey to the next world.

19

20 (Laughter)

21

22 MS. SCHREK: But there are people that  
23 want the information from a marine based, like, you  
24 know, stay away from it, or work within it or  
25 something, so, yeah.

26

27 MS. SOPOW: And I don't want to forget  
28 about our best friend over there, Ryan Metzger, he's  
29 the Fairbanks forecaster and warning coordination,  
30 meteorologist. And so if you ever have any questions  
31 about the forecast Ryan is who would be the one in the  
32 office helping to answer your questions or to calm your  
33 nerves or concerns.

34

35 So we really just wanted to introduce  
36 our faces, specifically, show up, let you meet our  
37 personalities and kind of just try to connect in a way  
38 post-Covid, that we're finally able to.

39

40 And we also wanted to let you know  
41 about a project that's going on at UAF that the Weather  
42 Service is assisting with. MaryBeth, nor I, or Ryan  
43 are doing research at this time, we're Staff support  
44 for the University but we're trying to figure out a way  
45 to improve the communication of seasonal ice  
46 informational, seasonal to sub-seasonal, expanding the  
47 outlook in which we can predict ice behavior based on  
48 how ice has behaved in the past. And through these  
49 conversations with the University and other Staff at  
50

0291

1 the Weather Service we're slowly starting to really  
2 focus on how we can forecast, or if it's possible, ice  
3 quality. The biggest thing we keep hearing about is  
4 the quality of the ice that's important, not  
5 necessarily the extent only, we need the extent, plus  
6 quality to create a more useful product for our users.  
7 And so that's basically the first year of the project  
8 right now, is, just trying to learn more about like  
9 what types of quality is useful and if you were to  
10 receive information on the type of ice, would it help  
11 you make safer decisions when you're out there.

12

13 And so at this time we could answer any  
14 questions and by, we, I mean MaryBeth, because she's  
15 the sea ice expert.

16

17 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Council, anybody have  
18 any questions or comments.

19

20 Elmer.

21

22 MR. SEETOT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
23 Last year I mentioned that our summer sun, it's rising  
24 directly over Red Mountain in Brevig Mission. Over the  
25 -- before that time it used to rise pretty much north,  
26 northeast, now it's directly pretty much north -- north  
27 of our village. I -- I think I'm fortunate to have  
28 witnessed that. Because if I lived in the city, you  
29 know, I wouldn't care much about it because I'm in a  
30 comfortable place but then we're -- we're having more  
31 wind extremes. This is a -- he lives in a community  
32 where I have, over the past couple months, heard winds  
33 in excess of over, you know, hurricane force, and then  
34 coming to that I notice that we live in communities  
35 near the water and then I think, you know, water plays  
36 an extreme part in how the wind shapes up. I used to  
37 camp with my sister-in-law -- or I mean my sister and  
38 her brother-in-law on the south side of Port Clarence  
39 in the springtime to marine mammal -- or to subsistence  
40 hunt, and -- and then when it used to -- when the ice  
41 broke up we had constant winds because there's a strip  
42 of land where the camp was and it was constant wind all  
43 the time but then in Brevig, which is on the north side  
44 of Port Clarence that used to be calm. So I'm kind of  
45 associating wind with -- extreme wind conditions, you  
46 know, because of maybe the temperature of the water or  
47 stuff like that.

48

49 And many of these forecasts, they

50

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1 mention about the -- for the Bering Straits, or St.  
2 Lawrence Island usually happens more towards the  
3 western -- western portion of the Seward Peninsula.  
4 Wales is a good example. They're right at the tip.  
5 They get the extreme wind condition. Tent City (ph) is  
6 another part, they're high up -- you know high up in  
7 the altitude but it's right part of where -- those --  
8 those two places are pretty windy, pretty windy when it  
9 gets windy because I -- I've been in part of a spring  
10 hunt in that area in the springtime even though -- even  
11 though it looks calm you could have water, water  
12 blowing up on the sides, right down the sides of -- the  
13 south side -- the south side of mountains of Tent City,  
14 the loran station, I'm not -- or not loran station, the  
15 station bubble, what they call the bubble, and then  
16 this constant wind from there -- up to Cape -- after  
17 that I -- I think that that kind of full of mountain  
18 ranges and low hills and mountain ranges, that kind of  
19 determine the wind velocity especially when it breaks  
20 up. So that -- that's something I kind of look at.

21  
22                   And then if -- if I'm seeing the  
23 mountain straight -- or the sun straight -- straight  
24 from Brevig, is that because the Earth tilted or what  
25 happened to our Earth in the past 20 years. I heard of  
26 massive earthquakes, you know, in other parts, like  
27 Chile, how many years back, said that it moves their  
28 monument about 10 feet or so, we don't know of these  
29 natural things that are happening in other parts of the  
30 world. And that's what our elders used to kind of talk  
31 about, you know, of the present even though -- even  
32 though do they have the credibility due to the -- but  
33 -- but we continue to put that forward because they --  
34 they kind of mentioned something about like two winters  
35 in a row that we'll be seeing, the -- the fish will be  
36 the first to go, stuff like that that I hear from --  
37 not the ones that have passed on but people that I hear  
38 from other communities mention that also. So that --  
39 that's one of the things that I kind of look at is  
40 what's going to happen, you know, afterwards.

41  
42                   But what I was just curious, does the  
43 Earth have a chance to tilt, is it because of too much  
44 bombings over at Ukraine, or too much oil extraction up  
45 north, or what -- what's happened. That -- that's --  
46 you know many of these things, things happen because  
47 it's constantly happening somehow.

48  
49                   Thank you.  
50

0293

1                   CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Elmer.

2

3                   MS. SOPOW: I'm not familiar with  
4 Robert's Rules of Order so I can just respond.

5

6                   CHAIRMAN GREEN: (Nods affirmatively)

7

8                   MS. SOPOW: Okay. Well, you know, for  
9 those who are not aware, you know, Elmer and I are  
10 going to speak -- we spoke last night about the sun  
11 rising and setting in a different location and I found  
12 that to be really fascinating and I really am looking  
13 forward to learning more about this and how the  
14 earthquake, like you mentioned, might be a catalyst for  
15 this effect. You know we do have tons of people on  
16 staff that can help me answer this question and I can  
17 relay the information to you when I'm ready, or when I  
18 have a more accurate answer.

19

20                   And then I also -- you know, I really  
21 wanted to say thank you for saying earlier in this  
22 meeting how severe storm weather, such as post-Typhoon  
23 Merbok can impact animal population. I've been  
24 receiving images of, you know, marine mammals washed up  
25 on shore post that event and I hadn't really been able  
26 to combine those, like the access to subsistence or our  
27 predictive services that we provide, together, so  
28 creating this opportunity for us to present, like the  
29 products that we can provide to your group is something  
30 I think we have plenty of Staff hired that are excited  
31 to work with you, to figure out how we can work towards  
32 forecasting food security as well.

33

34                   MR. SEETOT: I notice that you're  
35 disciplined in certain topics, you know, when you come  
36 to the meeting, I think for many of us here, we were  
37 taught at an early age, you know, how to survive, it's  
38 just not only everyday life but, you know, something  
39 that was told to us to look for in the future and we  
40 keep an open mind. So even though we're not well  
41 educated in the sense of the Western World, our  
42 ancestors, our forefathers, our parents, our  
43 grandparents, our friends, our relatives, people from  
44 other places they put out the same information that I  
45 kind of hear from this, not exactly word for word but  
46 at least this thing that's going to happen because this  
47 is what was told to me. So everything that we -- we  
48 kind of talk about is kind of handed down orally, not  
49 in written paper, you know.

50

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1                   Some of it might be, you know, when  
2 they do studies or discussion about that, but most of  
3 that information that I put out it was heard from  
4 passed down from people that I just met from relatives  
5 or from others. So that's what I want to put out.

6  
7                   Thank you.

8  
9                   CHAIRMAN GREEN: Tommy.

10  
11                   MR. GRAY: So you two are with the  
12 weather, you're going to study weather, so to speak, is  
13 that true?

14  
15                   MS. SOPOW: Yes.

16  
17                   MR. GRAY: Okay. So my suggestion is  
18 go into this with an open mind because if you think  
19 you're going to study ice, you could study ice for 10  
20 years here and you will still not understand ice. But  
21 Tom Gray, I'm out in the country quite a bit, I'm out  
22 all over, I -- you know, I'm going bear hunting pretty  
23 soon, after bear hunting I go seal hunting, after seal  
24 hunting I move to my camp, I spend all summer at my  
25 camp, so let me -- for example.

26  
27                   The ice is going to go out by  
28 Unalakleet, by Mary's place and the ice -- the ice  
29 moves this way 150 miles and gets to Nome, when the ice  
30 turns to water we're going to have all kinds of wind  
31 and we better be done seal hunting. So, you know, my  
32 world, I measure my life and I watch the weather  
33 according to the seasons. You know, seal hunting, I  
34 got to be done by the time the water gets to Nome. I  
35 got to be done seal hunting because it's going to get  
36 windy. The first two weeks of July, I -- I have to dry  
37 my fish because it's going to be windy and then it's  
38 going to start raining and it's going to rain the rest  
39 of July and -- and in August we got real spotty times  
40 and we try to smoke salmon and kind of hit and miss.  
41 Then in September it could rain like the dickens or it  
42 could be beautiful. October it freezes up. And, you  
43 know, that's my weather world.

44  
45                   And, you know, you -- I don't know what  
46 you're after or who you're trying to appease or a  
47 project or whatever, but there's lots of projects, lots  
48 of ways of looking at weather, so keep an open mind.

49  
50

0295

1                   CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Gray.  
2 Are you -- you want to talk.

3  
4                   MR. SEETOT: Yes.

5  
6                   CHAIRMAN GREEN: Elmer.

7  
8                   MR. SEETOT: One thing I forgot to  
9 mention was that long range forecasting, our people  
10 before us, they knew how to look -- go out in early  
11 morning and look at the weather, look at the sun -- I  
12 mean look at the moon, the formation of clouds, stuff  
13 like that. Other things were -- were looking at  
14 animals, body condition, fur, stuff like that, is it  
15 going to be a long winter, is it going to be a cold  
16 winter, or is it going to be normal. Looking at the  
17 horizon, kind of hazy, it's windy over there, you look  
18 at the stars, twinkling, it's windy up that way. So --  
19 so it's a fast moving world, I guess, nowadays for long  
20 range forecasters to predict the weather accurately.  
21 Everything moves so fast.

22  
23                   When I was growing up, ice broke up --  
24 ice break up along the Bering Straits took a long time  
25 and we had long summer -- I mean long, warm, calm days  
26 when the ice was moving through. Other -- other times  
27 when the low pressure came that's what brought the ice  
28 out but we still continue that. Five, six years ago we  
29 had constant east winds in Port Clarence Bay, I -- I  
30 kept track of the dates. Our -- the ice in Port  
31 Clarence Bay froze January 4, that same year it melted  
32 May 24, so that's -- that's one thing I constantly look  
33 at. Things certainly have changed. Before that time  
34 it was constant -- constant easterly winds maybe for  
35 about 10 years or so that that kept the bay open and  
36 anywhere from May to December that was the freezing  
37 dates, but constantly kept the bay open, but nowadays  
38 weather is so unpredictable so, oh, okay, listen to the  
39 weather forecast.

40  
41                   One thing that I think I can get out of  
42 that is that being in Port Clarence I have a safety  
43 net, it's called Port Clarence East, east of Port  
44 Clarence the winds are 10, 15 miles less than the west  
45 coast. And then the south side, maybe seven -- seven,  
46 eight miles south of Brevig on Port Clarence Bay,  
47 that's constantly windy. So -- so we might be in a  
48 protective bay but when south winds come around you  
49 better watch out because they -- either from the  
50

0296

1 southwest or the southeast it will reach over the top  
2 and I seen that happen maybe about five times so far  
3 since maybe about 1974 so that's constantly, you know,  
4 going in our face of trying to see how the weather's  
5 going to be.

6  
7 CHAIRMAN GREEN: And that was the end  
8 of that. Are we done?

9  
10 (Council nods affirmatively)

11  
12 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Everybody's done.  
13 Anybody on the phone.

14  
15 (No comments)

16  
17 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Hearing nobody on the  
18 phone, thank you ladies.

19  
20 MS. SOPOW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and  
21 Council members, I really appreciate your time.

22  
23 MS. SCHREK: Thank you. And I just  
24 want to say that our base mission in the National  
25 Weather Service is to protect lives and property and so  
26 we are here to help you stay safe and I know that  
27 traditionally we have had a very, you know, distinct  
28 way of like here is the weather information and our  
29 goal is to learn how we can do that better for all of  
30 you. So if there is something we can do, please reach  
31 out.

32  
33 Thank you.

34  
35 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you. So next  
36 time you present to us you'll be like to go to the  
37 movie house there, when you go 3D, you get sunglasses  
38 so when you come in here bring sunglasses next time.

39  
40 (Laughter)

41  
42 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you. All right,  
43 I think we're done on the agenda here, or we're getting  
44 close to meeting dates, folks, or did I miss something.

45  
46 MS. PILCHER: We do have.....

47  
48 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Who's -- who's  
49 missing.

50

0297

1 MS. PILCHER: We do have a presentation  
2 from Brian, and I'm going to mess his name up.

3  
4 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Oh, that's right.

5  
6 MS. PILCHER: But just a quick time  
7 check, Martin does have to pop out in about 30 minutes.

8  
9 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Right.

10  
11 MS. PILCHER: I don't think Brian's  
12 presentation will be that long but if we could do the  
13 calendar stuff real quick just so everybody possible's  
14 in the room. Brian, sorry, hopefully it won't take  
15 very long.

16  
17 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Are we doing the  
18 calendar thing while he's here?

19  
20 MS. PILCHER: Yes.

21  
22 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yeah. Okay, did you  
23 look at your calendar with your three-ring binder or  
24 whatever it is, with one ring.

25  
26 MS. PILCHER: Okay. The first thing is  
27 -- sorry, Nissa Pilcher for the record.

28  
29 So we're looking at your next three  
30 meetings, which we did discuss at your last fall  
31 meeting, we were going to start asking you to project  
32 three meetings out. So the first is confirming that  
33 you would still like to meet in Nome November 1st  
34 through the 2nd. And so there's.....

35  
36 MR. GRAY: So where's.....

37  
38 MS. PILCHER: And you're going to want  
39 to look at the one in the ring-binder and not in the  
40 one in the comb-bound because these are updated with if  
41 any Councils have made any other changes.

42  
43 MS. FREYTAG: What page?

44  
45 MS. PILCHER: Starting on Page 35.

46  
47 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay.

48  
49 MS. PILCHER: And, also, please keep in  
50



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1 mind, of course, that we can only do two Councils in  
2 two weeks [sic] so if they already have -- like if you  
3 wanted to move it to the previous week, Bristol Bay and  
4 Southeast are already meeting so we wouldn't be able to  
5 do that.

6  
7 CHAIRMAN GREEN: What's over here?

8  
9 MS. PILCHER: So that's -- that one's  
10 different. So the winter meeting.....

11  
12 CHAIRMAN GREEN: These here?

13  
14 MS. PILCHER: This gets more  
15 complicated because we're going to try to do an All  
16 Council meeting in winter of 2024.

17  
18 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Oh, All Council  
19 meeting.

20  
21 MS. PILCHER: Yep, so you guys are all  
22 meeting together so we're looking at the fall.

23  
24 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Right. That's already  
25 set right there, okay.

26  
27 MS. PILCHER: Yep. Yep, I'm just  
28 making -- I'm just confirming. I think we're supposed  
29 to confirm.

30  
31 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yeah. Okay. I'm good  
32 with November 1st and.....

33  
34 REPORTER: So if we're all going to  
35 talk someone needs to turn at least one microphone on.

36  
37 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay.

38  
39 MR. GRAY: I'm amazed, I have the 1st  
40 and 2nd in my phone already so I guess I'm okay.

41  
42 CHAIRMAN GREEN: You're psychic.

43  
44 (Laughter)

45  
46 CHAIRMAN GREEN: So that's this fall,  
47 we've got fall of '23, November 1st and November 2nd.  
48 Anybody have any conflicts there, Tommy doesn't, he's a  
49 psychic, he already put it in there because he wanted  
50

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1 it -- I don't anticipate anything. Are we settled on  
2 that, the 1st and 2nd for the fall meeting.

3

4 (Council nods affirmatively)

5

6 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. So then we flip  
7 it over to the winter of 2024 and Nissa says  
8 something's complicated.

9

10 MS. PILCHER: Okay. So complicated may  
11 be the wrong word. So in winter of 2024 we're looking  
12 at doing an All Council meeting, which you guys would  
13 have participated, for those that were on the Council  
14 in 2016, it's where we pull all 10 Councils in to  
15 Anchorage, have a joint Council session where all 10  
16 Councils meet together and then we'd have break out  
17 sessions as well as you would break out and have your  
18 own Council meeting on that day, it would be an  
19 abbreviated meeting. Last time it was a day instead of  
20 two days. Also included would be informational  
21 sessions. Last time there was stuff on -- I'm trying  
22 to find some of this -- customary and traditional use  
23 determinations, Council member roles and  
24 responsibilities, understanding co-management, there  
25 were also panel discussions on tribal consultation,  
26 holistic management, challenges in outreach. So  
27 there'd be educational components as well.

28

29 So what we're looking at during this --  
30 on the winter 2024 calendar is basically what areas  
31 would work the best for you guys. The idea would be it  
32 would be a four to five day meeting, it would be in  
33 Anchorage. One issue that Eastern Interior and Western  
34 Interior have is there's no flight service on the  
35 weekends sometimes so they were -- well, Eastern  
36 Interior so far has requested we do it over a weekend  
37 and so basically where on there works the best for you  
38 guys. This one is different, in that, your previous  
39 one you picked, that's when it's going to happen, on  
40 this one, we're going to have to figure out where it  
41 works best for the most people and schedule it then.  
42 So it might not necessarily be what you picked but it  
43 is what it's going to have to be unfortunately.

44

45 MR. GRAY: So buyer beware, if I have  
46 my way I'm going to be driving reindeer and I will not  
47 be in a meeting.

48

49 MS. PILCHER: Duly noted.

50

0300

1 CHAIRMAN GREEN: What day?

2

3

4 MR. GRAY: I'm planning on starting to  
5 drive animals from Stebbins, St. Michael area the first  
6 part of March and I will be driving to White Mountain  
7 and if it all comes together I won't be there. If it  
8 doesn't come together I may make it. So pick your  
9 dates according to you guys.

10

11 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Iditarod starts the  
12 beginning of the month of March and that's an Anchorage  
13 meeting, I don't know if anybody's interested in the  
14 Iditarod while you're going to the meeting but the  
15 potential's there, but that's on a Saturday.

16

17 (Cell phone ringing)

18

19 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Somebody's phone is  
20 ringing, it's not mine. But you can see this Eastern  
21 Interior RAC is right there, Southcentral, Bristol Bay,  
22 Southeast, so -- and then Northwest is down on the  
23 bottom there. I don't know I'm kind of liking towards  
24 the end of the month of March or something. Well,  
25 there's the beginning of March.

26

27 Elmer.

28

29 MR. SEETOT: I would think less chance  
30 of poor travel if you do it later in the month or  
31 something like that. Because I think with Iditarod  
32 starting you're going to have a lot of people coming  
33 into Anchorage or something from other parts of the  
34 world that will make lodging and transportation maybe a  
35 little bit difficult for people.

36

37 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Good point. I kind of  
38 like towards the end of the month but that's just me.

39

40 MS. PILCHER: Would you want to say the  
41 week of the 18th is your first choice and the week of  
42 the 25th is your second.

43

44 MR. SEETOT: Either way.

45

46 CHAIRMAN GREEN: I guess we'll follow  
47 with the Northwest Arctic, they got a first and second  
48 choice there. Right.

49

50 MS. PILCHER: All right. Then that

0301

1 would lead us to the fall of 2024. And, of course,  
2 you'll have an opportunity, probably at each meeting  
3 until this meeting to verify that those dates work so  
4 just 'cause you say this is where you want it right now  
5 doesn't mean it's set in stone.

6  
7 CHAIRMAN GREEN: I guess we could be  
8 like.....

9  
10 REPORTER: Louis. Louis.

11  
12 CHAIRMAN GREEN: .....in here, right?

13  
14 MS. PILCHER: Uh-huh.

15  
16 CHAIRMAN GREEN: The end of.....

17  
18 REPORTER: Someone put a mic on.

19  
20 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Excuse me.

21  
22 REPORTER: Okay. Thank you.

23  
24 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Southeast is out at  
25 Ketchikan, they're at the October 22nd, we need three  
26 days, or two -- two days, right, so what about the end  
27 -- that week, the 21st or somewhere in there. It's  
28 more away from what we're doing around here at that  
29 time of the year, farther away from whitefish chasing  
30 to the -- better for me -- beluga -- whitefish.

31  
32 (Laughter)

33  
34 CHAIRMAN GREEN: So that week there,  
35 October 21st to the 25th, we fit it in there, two days,  
36 the 24th, 25th.

37  
38 MR. GRAY: Uh-huh.

39  
40 MR. SEETOT: Uh-huh.

41  
42 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, the 24th to 25th  
43 for now.

44  
45 MS. PILCHER: Just to verify, does  
46 Bering Air fly on Saturdays to your guys' communities?

47  
48 MR. AUKONGAK: Yep.

49  
50

0302

1 MR. KIRK: Every day.

2

3 MS. PILCHER: Okay.

4

5 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, so we'll just  
6 say that for now.

7

8 MS. PILCHER: All right.

9

10 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Are we close to the  
11 end here.

12

13 MS. PILCHER: All right, so that would  
14 go back to the next presentation by -- from.....

15

16 CHAIRMAN GREEN: With Brian?

17

18 MS. PILCHER: Yeah, with Brian.

19

20 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay.

21

22 MR. BRETTSCHEIDER: Can you hear me?

23

24 (No comments)

25

26 MR. BRETTSCHEIDER: Can you guys hear  
27 me?

28

29 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yep, we can hear you.

30

31 MR. BRETTSCHEIDER: Okay, great. Just  
32 let me know when it's up on the screen and I'll get  
33 started.

34

35 CHAIRMAN GREEN: There's a nice green  
36 pasture by the mountains on the screen.

37

38 MS. PILCHER: Hold on let me figure  
39 out.....

40

41 MR. BRETTSCHEIDER: Uh-huh.

42

43 MS. PILCHER: .....something -- hold  
44 on.

45

46 MR. BRETTSCHEIDER: So my name is  
47 Brian Brettschneider, I am with the Alaska region.....

48

49 REPORTER: Wait a second Brian.

50

0303

1 MR. BRETTSCHEIDER: .....National  
2 Weather Service.....

3  
4 REPORTER: Brian. Brian, hold up.

5  
6 MR. BRETTSCHEIDER: Yep -- yes.

7  
8 REPORTER: Yeah, hold up. She's  
9 getting it up there, not quite there yet.

10  
11 (Laughter)

12  
13 MS. PILCHER: Okay.

14  
15 CHAIRMAN GREEN: All right, there we go  
16 we got the main page to begin with, the title page. Go  
17 ahead.

18  
19 MR. BRETTSCHEIDER: All right. All  
20 right, thanks. So, again, my name is Brian  
21 Brettschneider. I'm with the National Weather Service  
22 in the Alaska region and I work with Kitty and MaryBeth  
23 and Ryan, not in the same office location but we're all  
24 part of the National Weather Service. I wish I could  
25 have been there in person. I did have the chance to go  
26 up to the Northwest Arctic fall meeting a few months  
27 back and it was a great privilege to be there and I  
28 hope some day to get to Nome to be there in person for  
29 another RAC meeting.

30  
31 But what I'd like to talk to you guys  
32 about today is the spring climate outlook. And so  
33 we've got some hints of what we think the spring is  
34 going to bring for us. Of course, we're already kind  
35 of into our spring a little bit but we have some  
36 information that the members of the RAC may find useful  
37 in your planning for either activities or for other,  
38 you know, for any other activity really.

39  
40 So if you could go to the next slide.

41  
42 And it shows a bar chart of some red  
43 and white and blue indicators, and this is the  
44 likelihood of where we are for ElNino or LaNina in the  
45 coming months. And I really like to show this because,  
46 you know, from the seasonal time scale, you know,  
47 predicting what the climate's going to be like there's  
48 a lot of uncertainty there. And one of the things we  
49 really clue in on is the state of ElNino and LaNina.

50

0304

1 And for those that aren't that familiar with it it  
2 represents the state of the ocean, really straddling  
3 the Equator in the Central Pacific Ocean. And so we  
4 might say, well, how is that going to affect Alaska.  
5 And it turns out the things that cause that part of the  
6 Pacific Ocean to be either warmer or cooler, strong  
7 trade winds and resulting big tropical thunder storms  
8 have really a global effect on wind patterns and where,  
9 you know, storm tracks are and it's really kind of a  
10 remarkable set of events that track with ElNino and  
11 LaNina. So what this chart shows is that -- and on the  
12 bottom the FMA, MAM, those are the months, so  
13 February/March/April, March/April/May and it shows  
14 right now we are in what we call insoneutral conditions  
15 so basically that part of the tropical Pacific Ocean is  
16 unremarkable. So we just came out of three years in a  
17 row of LaNina but now LaNina is officially declared  
18 gone and we're kind of in a transition period and it  
19 looks like we are going to transition, more likely than  
20 not, into an ElNino over the next six to nine months.  
21 So that's something to kind of keep an eye on.

22

23 But knowing kind of what the state of  
24 the ocean is, you know, gives us some clues about what  
25 our climate is going to be like over the next three to  
26 six, even nine months.

27

28 Next slide.

29

30 So the next slide, Slide 3 shows --  
31 remember we're kind of in an ElNino neutral state right  
32 now, so not Nina, not Nino, just neutral, and this kind  
33 of shows what our expectation is based on past history  
34 of what spring conditions are like.....

35

36 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Can you hold.....

37

38 MR. BRETTSCHEIDER: .....spring  
39 conditions are like, spring temperature conditions.

40

41 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Can you hold up just  
42 for a second here, they're chasing the screen.

43

44 MR. BRETTSCHEIDER: Yes. Yes.

45

46 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay.

47

48 MS. PILCHER: So we're looking at.....

49

50

0305

1                           CHAIRMAN GREEN: We're looking at the  
2 Alaska.....

3  
4                           MR. BRETTSCHEIDER: Right, hopefully  
5 there's a map up there. Yeah, a map of Alaska. And  
6 this shows kind of what the temperatures historically  
7 are like during the spring when we have this  
8 insoneutral conditions like we do have now. And it  
9 shows, you know, for the Seward Peninsula, a very  
10 slight tilt toward warmer than normal conditions. Not  
11 a really strong signal. Really what we find statewide  
12 if there's not a lot of predictability in the spring  
13 season, but to the extent that there is some  
14 predictability it is -- just tends to be a little bit  
15 warmer, all other things being equal.

16  
17                           So next slide should be a precipitation  
18 slide.

19  
20                           And hopefully that has loaded up and if  
21 it hasn't just let me know.

22  
23                           And it shows how precipitation  
24 generally performs or how much precipitation we get  
25 compared to normal, or compared to average when we have  
26 ElNino neutral conditions in the spring months. And  
27 what we find is in the Seward Peninsula there is a  
28 slight tilt toward wetter than normal conditions. So  
29 not a strong signal and not -- you know, not  
30 insignificant, but to the extent that it is predictable  
31 we do feel, in general, that there's going to be -- all  
32 other things being equal, a slight hint of wetter than  
33 normal conditions.

34  
35                           So next slide -- and really the next  
36 two slides I'm going to skip through, because when I  
37 put this presentation together we were still in LaNina  
38 so I was kind of hedging my bets and having some LaNina  
39 maps up. So we're no longer in a LaNina.

40  
41                           So if you could actually go to Slide 7  
42 and that should be a map of Alaska all painted in  
43 green. Let me know when you have that.

44  
45                           MS. PILCHER: Yep.

46  
47                           MR. BRETTSCHEIDER: Okay. So this is  
48 a little bit wonky but it's a statistical map and it  
49 shows the relationship between those oceanic  
50



0306

1 temperatures in the tropical Pacific and spring  
2 temperatures in Alaska. And basically what it's  
3 showing is that the warmer the temperatures are in the  
4 ocean the warmer our spring temperatures will be, and  
5 conversely the cooler those ocean temperatures are the  
6 cooler our temperatures will be. So we're really  
7 watching that ElNino, LaNina region, or insoregion,  
8 it's warmed up really rapidly the last two months. And  
9 if that were to continue we actually may end up in an  
10 ElNino sooner than we think. So maybe keep this map in  
11 mind that when, you know, the more that it warms up in  
12 the ocean the more that Alaska warms up.

13

14 And there really is -- you know I like  
15 to tell people in LaNina's -- LaNina's in Alaska tend  
16 to be cool, occasionally warm but mostly cool, ElNino's  
17 are really the opposite. It's just how warm is it  
18 going to be. Is it going to be a little warm or is it  
19 going to be really, really, really warm. So we really  
20 kind of take cool conditions off the table when we have  
21 an ElNino.

22

23 So next slide, No. 8.

24

25 And it shows the relationship between  
26 spring precipitation and the ElNino conditions and that  
27 is -- so a little bit of green on the western Seward  
28 Peninsula, a little bit of purple on the eastern Seward  
29 Peninsula, and that just indicates there's not a lot of  
30 strong relationships but that green would mean more --  
31 the warmer the ocean water gets the more precipitation,  
32 and the purple would be the warmer the ocean waters get  
33 the less precipitation, so kind of right on the edge of  
34 where we would find that relationship. So just not a  
35 lot really to go on there. So that ends kind of the  
36 ElNino part.

37

38 But I really wanted to go over that, or  
39 the ElNino, LaNina because it really does drive a lot  
40 of our thinking non the seasonal predictions of  
41 temperature and precipitation.

42

43 So if we go to Slide 9.

44

45 Just sea ice is a major factor in  
46 spring conditions. And certainly MaryBeth Schrek there  
47 could spend a lot of time talking about all the  
48 intricacies of what they do in monitoring sea ice.

49

50

0307

1                   But on Slide 10 you can see that kind  
2 of -- that right interior panel, and this is today's  
3 plot, hopefully it says March 23rd at the top, it kind  
4 of shows the approximate state of sea ice. This is an  
5 automated assessment, this is not what the Alaska Sea  
6 Ice Desk produces, they produce more detailed, more  
7 informational content, but this is an automated product  
8 that is produced by the National Data Center and it  
9 shows that we're basically, for the last 20 years,  
10 we're running today, we're at 93 percent normal in the  
11 Bering Sea. Of course Chukchi and Beaufort Seas are  
12 fully iced over and it kind of gives an idea of what  
13 conditions have been like on this date, you know, going  
14 back -- well, to 2007. It's actually dated a little  
15 farther back than that, but this goes back to 2007.  
16 And, you know, normally during this time period we'd  
17 have about 718,000 square kilometers and we have  
18 765,000 square kilometers so a little bit below our  
19 recent historical but, of course, well below the longer  
20 term historical.

21  
22                   In some recent years, like, you know,  
23 2019, 2018, 2020 as well had much less ice on this date  
24 and, of course, those ended being a very poor spring  
25 ice conditions.

26  
27                   Now, let's get to the actual official  
28 outlooks.

29  
30                   So if we go to Slide 12.

31  
32                   This is the official, you know, formal  
33 spring temperature outlook. So spring being  
34 March/April/May, and this was issued on February 16th.  
35 And it shows that the -- really the entire West Coast  
36 of Alaska is favored to be warmer than normal, and  
37 there's a couple of things for Alaska that go into  
38 this. One is the expectation that there would be less  
39 sea ice than normal. Now, as it turns out we're kind  
40 of hanging in there on sea ice so maybe with that in  
41 mind you would maybe think it's not going to be a  
42 little -- quite as warm as they thought, and it also  
43 has trend in there as well, and the trend has been  
44 warming. So that trend and the expectation of sea ice  
45 being less extensive really drove this to be warmer, so  
46 to that extent we could probably think of it as not  
47 being as warm as they originally thought. However,  
48 those tropical ocean temperatures have increased faster  
49 than they thought. So that would kind of tilt us back  
50

0308

1 toward warmer.

2

3                   So, again, overall, probably not a big  
4 surprise we should expect temperatures to be a little  
5 bit warmer than normal this spring.

6

7                   And then Slide 13 is precipitation.

8

9                   And the precipitation expectation is  
10 that it's going to be a little bit wetter than normal  
11 and at the seasonal time scale to have that little  
12 second shading of green, in this case over the western  
13 Seward Peninsula, that's -- that indicates a fairly  
14 strong signal. But I think in this case, again, most  
15 of -- most of the models were showing not much of a  
16 tilt toward wet or dry, but the trend has been wetter  
17 in recent years. So that really drove this seasonal  
18 outlook.

19

20                   So that's the official Climate  
21 Prediction Center temperature and precipitation  
22 forecast for the spring so warmer than normal and  
23 wetter than normal.

24

25                   Then the last couple of slides, if you  
26 go to Slide 14.

27

28                   This is kind of some under the hood  
29 stuff, some -- some of the -- the ingredients that they  
30 look at when they put together those official outlooks.  
31 And this is a -- what's called the NNME, this is their  
32 spring temperature outlook and that was issued in  
33 February and it shows -- this is a grouping, a  
34 clustering of a bunch of computer models that originate  
35 in North America and it shows kind of a less -- less of  
36 a warming signal for the Seward Peninsula and really  
37 all the West Coast. So that's, you know, something  
38 that if we believe this, and this does not take trend  
39 into account, this does not estimate sea ice extent.  
40 So this is purely kind of how it views the atmosphere,  
41 and based on the way it views the atmosphere it tends  
42 to think that there may be a slight tilt toward warmer  
43 than normal for the Seward Peninsula but -- but overall  
44 pretty typical for -- compared to all recent springs.

45

46                   Slide 15, which is the NNME's spring  
47 precipitation outlook.

48

49                   And that actually has quite a strong

50

0309

1 wet signal. So something in the atmospheric dynamics  
2 that it's -- that the models have kind of caught on to  
3 really pretty strongly indicates wetter than normal  
4 conditions. So -- you know, so particularly at the  
5 spring time of the year -- now, spring is the driest  
6 season of the year so a signal that shows, you know,  
7 wetter than normal, that still may not mean a lot of  
8 precipitation but as you know it's already been a  
9 pretty wet start to the spring and that's going to  
10 certainly continue for the next week or so and possibly  
11 -- possibly longer. So, again, something to keep in  
12 mind.

13

14 And then Slide 16.

15

16 This is a set of European models. So  
17 the previous one is North American models, these are  
18 European models and this is for the temperature.  
19 Actually the heading of the slide says winter, that's a  
20 mistake, this is actually the spring outlook, so  
21 apologize for that. And it shows really no tilt toward  
22 warm or cold in -- in most of the state, including the  
23 entire West Coast, you know, south of, you know, the  
24 North Slope basically. So the European model has this  
25 kind of typical near normal temperatures. And really  
26 to be honest the European models tend to perform a  
27 little bit better than the North American models. So,  
28 again, to the extent that we want to kind of focus in  
29 on one set of models over the other, you know, this one  
30 might be one to kind of keep more in the back of your  
31 mind.

32

33 And then just two more slides. Well, I  
34 guess, three. Trends.

35

36 So like I said a minute or two ago,  
37 trends that the computer models really -- or the  
38 official forecast take trends into account. We can't  
39 -- you know, we can't really ignore the fact that we  
40 live in a warming world.

41

42 And so on Slide 18.

43

44 You know trends are not our friend.  
45 The spring, the upper right map panel shows what the  
46 trend is in March through May temperatures over the  
47 last 50 years. And as you can see it's just orange,  
48 shades of orange and red everywhere, everywhere in the  
49 state and particularly on the North Slope but also as  
50

0310

1 you can see the Seward Peninsula -- at least the  
2 northern Seward Peninsula is in that second -- or is in  
3 the brighter red, but really everywhere in the West  
4 Coast has a significant warming trends in the spring  
5 and that's -- that's driven largely by reductions in  
6 sea ice but also earlier spring, snow melt-off. Once  
7 that snow melts out the sun, the ground, very  
8 efficiently absorbs solar energy and things warm up  
9 quite quickly. So -- so trend is a significant part of  
10 our assessment of how we expect the climate to do.

11

12 If we know nothing else, we should  
13 expect things will be warmer than cooler.

14

15 And then finally, Slide 19.

16

17 This is kind of a local -- this is how,  
18 you know, if you look at, say, all of 2022 and how the  
19 ocean sea surface temperatures look -- you know, when  
20 we get south of the Alaska -- I'm sorry, the Aleutian  
21 Islands, record to near record warm ocean temperatures  
22 and that actually extends right where the map cuts off  
23 to the west and the western Bering Sea, you know, we  
24 got a little bit of a reprieve in the Bristol Bay, you  
25 know, to Nunivak Island, but warming temperatures as  
26 you head farther north.

27

28 So with -- with the LaNina kind of  
29 having now faded away our expectation is that, you  
30 know, this kind of surge of warm waters from the south  
31 will advance northward and we would expect warmer ocean  
32 temperatures and then all the things that that does to  
33 influence the temperature and precipitation locally.

34

35 So I think I used up my time but I --  
36 if there is any time leftover I'm happy to take any  
37 questions or if there's not I'm happy to have questions  
38 forwarded to me and I would be happy to answer them at  
39 a later time.

40

41 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Brian.  
42 This is Louis. Anybody, questions or comments.

43

44 (No comments)

45

46 CHAIRMAN GREEN: I think we all know  
47 that fish drying season is going to be a little rough  
48 this year, damp and warm, is that what you said?

49

50

0311

1 (Laughter)

2

3

4 MR. BRETTSCHEIDER: Well, that's --  
5 that's -- you know that's the best bet but, again, it's  
6 important to keep in mind that seasonal forecasts don't  
7 always work out and, in fact, during the LaNina winters  
8 the last three years, our seasonal forecasts were --  
9 did quite poorly actually. We kept thinking it was  
10 going to be cool, cool, cool and it was kind of warmer  
11 than normal most of the time. Not all the time, but  
12 most of the time, so those didn't really work out. So  
13 hopefully these ones do.

13

14

15 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. I think that  
16 just about does it for us here. I don't see anybody  
17 raising their hands or hear anybody on the phone.

17

18

19 I'll tell you I appreciate your  
20 presentation, we have a little bit of an outlook and  
21 we'll see how it turns out.

21

22

22 Can we go home now?

23

24

24 MS. PILCHER: Uh? A little bit longer.

25

26

26 CHAIRMAN GREEN: I'm sorry, what?

27

28

28 MS. PILCHER: A little longer.

29

30

31 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, what do we have  
32 next. Jeanette. She's -- right, because we don't  
33 have these other ones, right.

33

34

34 MS. PILCHER: Okay.

35

36

36 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yep, the NPS.

37

37 Jeanette.

38

39

40 MS. KOELSCH: Jeanette Koelsch, Bering  
41 LandBridge National Preserve and ShareBringian Heritage  
42 Program. I just wanted to let you all know about some  
43 projects that we've been working on and I wanted to  
44 start with some cultural resource ones and some  
45 partnership projects.

45

46

47

48

49

46 Bering LandBridge entered into a  
47 PL93638 self-governance agreement with Kawarek on  
48 several projects. From 2022 to 2025 Kawarek will work  
49 on some maintenance of the Serpentine Hot Springs roof

50

0312

1 and three public emergency shelter cabins in the Park.

2

3 Kawarek will also be producing a  
4 manuscript on indigenous knowledge having to do with  
5 indigenous -- Bering Strait indigenous beliefs in the  
6 environment.

7

8 (Outside disturbance)

9

10 MS. KOELSCH: And then another part of  
11 that agreement was about enhancing tribal engagement in  
12 the Park Film and Exhibit Project.

13

14 (Outside Disturbance)

15

16 MR. KIRK: Mr. Chair, anybody still  
17 there, it's awfully quiet.

18

19 CHAIRMAN GREEN: We're still here, we  
20 just have something complicating the thing here.

21

22 REPORTER: Just tell them online that  
23 we're on pause for a little bit.

24

25 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Uh?

26

27 REPORTER: Just tell them we're on  
28 pause for a minute.

29

30 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yeah, we're on pause  
31 right now.

32

33 (Outside disturbance)

34

35 (Pause)

36

37 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, Jeanette.

38

39 MS. KOELSCH: Okay. So the next  
40 agreement -- part of this agreement with Kawarek also  
41 is for enhancing tribal engagement in the new exhibits  
42 the Park Service is working on in the Sitnasauk  
43 building and the new Park Film. We also have an  
44 agreement with Maniilaq Association for the  
45 participation of Deering residents for that same  
46 project.

47

48 We're working with Kawarek at Pilgrim  
49 Hot Springs. The National Park Service is working at

50

0313

1 the -- the -- on this.....

2

3 (Outside disturbance)

4

5 (Pause)

6

7 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay. Tina, you  
8 ready.

9

10 REPORTER: Yes. Go ahead, Jeanette.

11

12 MS. KOELSCH: I'll be quicker. So  
13 we're working.....

14

15 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, you're done,  
16 thank you.

17

18 (Laughter)

19

20 CHAIRMAN GREEN: I'm just kidding.

21

22 MS. KOELSCH: Jeanette Koelsch,  
23 National Park Service. We're also working with Pilgrim  
24 Hot Springs on their cemetery project. We're doing  
25 some ground penetrating radar to locate -- we located  
26 two mass graves and some unmarked graves there.

27

28 Letty has been working on several  
29 projects. She was not feeling well today. She just  
30 completed muskox population survey at Cape Krusenstern  
31 outside of Kotzebue. We were not able to help with the  
32 moose survey in 22A. The pilot that we hired got ill  
33 at the last minute. She's waiting for a data on a  
34 project that Nikki is also working on on fish  
35 assemblages and genetic stock determination of salmon  
36 in Bering LandBridge. I don't know if you have  
37 anything to add to that besides waiting for data.

38

39 MS. BRAEM: This will be the third and  
40 final year of sampling on the four major rivers in the  
41 Preserve basically from the headwaters on down so it's  
42 good that we finally got this done.

43

44 And, that's it.

45

46 MS. KOELSCH: All right. And we have  
47 got a -- the last time we met we let you guys see a  
48 water flow device at Serpentine. And we're going to  
49 monitor that this summer and see how it works, very

50



0314

1 similar device to what they put at Pilgrim when it  
2 started flooding the road out.

3

4 Letty's also analyzing moose brows in  
5 22E, that project. The -- she also has a proposal in  
6 to do some monitoring of beaver at Serpentine Hot  
7 Springs.

8

9 The project that Carol Gayle's talked  
10 about from the Habs (ph) Project that was housed here,  
11 the National Park Service funded that project. And  
12 also we were engaged in several mortality surveys along  
13 the coast of -- the northern coast on the bird  
14 mortality events that have been happening the last few  
15 years and Letty works on those projects.

16

17 And that's it.

18

19 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Usually about May this  
20 time of the year there's mortality of birds.

21

22 (Laughter)

23

24 CHAIRMAN GREEN: There's mortality of  
25 birds this time of the year.

26

27 (Laughter)

28

29 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Okay, anything else.

30

31 MS. KOELSCH: I don't know. Nikki.

32

33 MS. BRAEM: This is Nikki, for the  
34 record. I haven't been giving my name but you know who  
35 I am.

36

37 REPORTER: I do.

38

39 MS. BRAEM: I would add that the  
40 seabird mortality events, the unexpected mortality  
41 events maybe has been ongoing for several years. We  
42 expect it will happen in BELA. They'll do two survey  
43 periods in the spring and fall as they hear about  
44 things, we get reports they will collect carcasses for  
45 sampling and document, you know, how many they see in  
46 species and the researcher involves is very good at  
47 communicating with Gay Sheffield over at the SeaGrant  
48 and with Austin Ahmasuk as well so it's not just  
49 everybody with their little bins of information, she  
50

0315

1 makes a really good effort to reach out and share  
2 information.

3

4 I think that's it, we should call it  
5 good.

6

7 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, ladies.  
8 That brings us to Bureau of Land Management, if there's  
9 anybody.

10

11 MS. PILCHER: They just left.

12

13 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Yeah, I seen him  
14 running with his suitcase, so I think he's on his way  
15 out. It says Tom Sparks on there but I think Tom's  
16 out.

17

18 MS. PILCHER: Yeah.

19

20 CHAIRMAN GREEN: So we'll just go right  
21 on beyond that one. Alaska Department of Fish and  
22 Game, I don't believe there will be a report, maybe?

23

24 MS. GERMAN: (Shakes head negatively)

25

26 CHAIRMAN GREEN: None.

27

28 MS. GERMAN: (Shakes head negatively)

29

30 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Nope. Thank you,

31 Sara, Girls.

32

33 And then OSM has the final word.

34

35 Thank you, Scott.

36

37 MR. AYERS: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair  
38 and Council members for what's turned into a very  
39 interesting meeting.

40

41 On behalf of OSM I want to thank all  
42 Council members for your exceptional work on behalf of  
43 your communities and user groups. We value your  
44 expertise and the contribution of your knowledge and  
45 experience to this regulatory process. I'm going to  
46 quickly cover four areas as part of our report.

47

48 The first item is continuation of in-  
49 person meetings. Last fall we held our first in-person  
50

1 Regional Advisory Council meetings since the beginning  
2 of the Covid 19 pandemic three years ago. All 10  
3 Councils were able to meet as scheduled in rural and  
4 hub communities across the State. It's been a  
5 tremendous honor to work with all of you, our Council  
6 volunteers, OSM Staff and our multi agency colleagues  
7 in subsistence to accomplish our goals of informed  
8 subsistence management and the implementation of Title  
9 VIII of ANILCA. We plan to repeat this success for the  
10 winter of 2023 Council meetings as we are and we're so  
11 very happy to work with you all face to face again.

12

13                   Second item is RealID for travel to  
14 Council meetings. Over the past few years we've  
15 reminded Council members about the change in  
16 requirements for U.S. travelers who must be RealID  
17 compliant to board domestic flights and access certain  
18 Federal facilities. Beginning May 7th, 2025, so they  
19 pushed this back again, every air traveler will need to  
20 present a RealID compliant driver's license or other  
21 acceptable form of identification such as a passport to  
22 fly within the United States. This is applicable even  
23 when you fly on small commercial Bush carriers. Please  
24 note that all Council members will need to make sure  
25 they have required RealID for travel to the 2025  
26 Council meetings. You can find more information on  
27 RealID requirements on the State of Alaska's Division  
28 of Motor Vehicles website.

29

30                   The third item is the Federal  
31 Subsistence Board fisheries regulatory meeting. The  
32 Federal Subsistence Board recently held the fisheries  
33 regulatory public meeting in Anchorage the week of  
34 January 31st, 2023. This was the Board's second in-  
35 person meeting and first regulatory meeting since the  
36 Covid 19 pandemic. The Board had a packed agenda  
37 addressing fisheries proposals and closure reviews,  
38 deferred wildlife proposals and agenda items touching  
39 on important subsistence and regulatory issues across  
40 the State. We also listened to you, the Councils,  
41 through your participating representatives at the  
42 meeting. The Board is always better informed by your  
43 experience.

44

45                   The last item I have is changes in OSM  
46 staffing. As for changes in staffing at OSM there's  
47 not much new information to report since the last time  
48 we met. OSM is advertising for a cartographer or map  
49 maker position to help with our mapping needs. The

50

0317

1 closing date for applications was February 24th. We  
2 hope that during the fall meetings we'll be able to  
3 announce the hire for this important team member.

4

5 While there have been no new additions,  
6 there has been one very large subtraction. The great  
7 Tom Kron retired in early February after more than 22  
8 years with the program. Tom's been an institution at  
9 OSM and his generosity and wealth of knowledge will be  
10 greatly missed.

11

12 And with that I'd be happy to answer  
13 any questions.

14

15 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Good job. Any  
16 questions on the phone.

17

18 MR. KIRK: Just one, Mr. Chair. They  
19 mentioned RealIDs, our tribal IDs should work because  
20 our tribes are Federally-recognized, so our tribe IDs  
21 should work as a RealID.

22

23 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

24

25 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Ron.

26

27 Scott.

28

29 MR. AYERS: Yeah, I've got a little  
30 footnote in my notes here that say other forms of ID  
31 that are RealID compliant include a valid passport, a  
32 valid military ID and some forms of tribal photo IDs  
33 and there's a full list of valid IDs available that I  
34 can provide anyone that wants.

35

36 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Scott. I  
37 think that just about does it, it's a wrap, uh?

38

39 Oops, what did I do.

40

41 MS. PILCHER: Closing comments.

42

43 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Oh, yeah, everybody  
44 gets to talk.

45

46 (Laughter)

47

48 CHAIRMAN GREEN: And tell us their  
49 comments, end of the meeting comments. You guys ready,  
50

0318

1 go ahead, Elmer. Closing comments.

2

3 MR. SEETOT: It's been a long time  
4 since we had a full meeting, this is the first time in  
5 how many meetings that we had for two days, a long  
6 time.

7

8 The weather outlooks and forecasts.  
9 Sometimes it depends, is it going to be bad enough  
10 where I'm going to have to be stranded in Nome, I think  
11 that's a major factor in whether to make it to a  
12 meeting or not, you know, in a certain time period  
13 because, you know, they talk about weather forecasts  
14 are kind of extreme and the duration is of a long time  
15 but I -- I -- I'd just like to make sure that, you  
16 know, just in case we get storm bound that OSM will  
17 take care of whatever we need to do.

18

19 And then thank you to the Staff and  
20 presenters for this meeting here other than the wake up  
21 call we just had awhile ago.

22

23 Thank you.

24

25 MS. PILCHER: Free entertainment.

26

27 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Elmer.

28

29 Councilman Gray.

30

31 MR. GRAY: I think I've talked enough  
32 so thank you Staff and have a good spring everybody.

33

34 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you.

35

36 Mary.

37

38 MS. FREYTAG: Yes, thank you, Chairman  
39 Green and all the Board members here. This is my first  
40 in-person meeting. My first meeting was  
41 teleconference. This is a real eye-opener and I really  
42 enjoyed myself engaging with all of you and all of the  
43 agencies and just sharing my knowledge also. I look  
44 forward to the future meetings and I just wish everyone  
45 a very safe spring and happy harvesting.

46

47 Thank you.

48

49 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Mary.

50

0319

1 Raymond.

2

3

4 MR. HUNT: Thank everyone for  
5 presenting. It's my first time here and I enjoyed it  
6 and I look forward to the upcoming years coming here.  
7 And I'd like to add comment to your comment on the  
8 trawling, you know, you couldn't have said it any  
9 better, you know, like is one fisheries worth trying to  
10 fish for and are we -- is -- why do we have to suffer,  
11 you know, because of this fishery. I don't know what  
12 pollock tastes like but it must take good, I don't  
13 know, you know, because of their fisheries, you know,  
14 why -- how -- we're suffering from that and that's an  
15 eye-opener.

15

16

(Siren)

17

18

(Laughter)

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MR. HUNT: But yeah it's an eye-opener  
though on the trawling. Like I said you couldn't have  
said it any better. But, again, I look forward to the  
upcoming meetings and thank you for having me here.

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you for  
volunteering Raymond. There's Ronald and Robert.

MR. MOSES: This is Robert. I'd like  
to say thank you to everybody for all the input,  
especially for those that been there the longest, like  
Charlie and Tom and Louis. They say it takes something  
to make it happen and like we see in and go through the  
changes here but them guys have gone through, no matter  
how much testimony that they provide like Charlie said,  
he's been there like 50 years and gone to school and  
done his work and has a lot of hats like other people  
and the people in the office, they look at the data,  
what -- what they provide, and they look at it and it's  
on paper, they don't experience living in the Bush what  
we have to go through and live through to do our  
subsistence.

They also mentioned about the elders  
and that's a good thing, knowledge is passed down from  
generation to generation and we learn from our  
grandparents in a good way, you know.

But I'd thank everybody and look  
forward to other meetings.

0320

1 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, Robert.

2

3

Ron.

4

5

6

MR. KIRK: Yeah, Mr. Chair, it was good to listen to everybody's comments and I enjoyed the meeting and thanks to the Staff for making it possible for us to attend it teleconference.

7

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23

I have one more thing I'd like to bring up, and we discuss -- you almost discussed it at the ending of the last fall meeting when you mentioned honorarium. We need to get that up and running because a lot of us get out of our -- get away from our jobs to attend to volunteer for this meeting and there's no supplement, honorarium -- supplement income for us there and so -- and if we get stranded in Nome that per diem is only for two days, what happens if we get storm bound for almost a week, that's my argument there. That's why I'm bringing up honorarium because that's -- can our Secretary write to the Secretary of the Interior and bring that up for all RACs throughout Alaska.

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And thank you for everything.

And, Raymond, pollock -- imitation crab.

(Laughter)

MR. KIRK: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. MOSES: What'd he say?

MS. PILCHER: Imitation crab is what they call pollock.

MR. HUNT: Oh.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN GREEN: Imitation crab. Imitation shrimp. Fish sticks. Yes. Anyway, yuck.

MR. KIRK: That's what pollock makes. It's all made out of pollock.

(Laughter)

0321

1 CHAIRMAN GREEN: (In Native)

2

3 Okay, well, that leaves me here.

4

5 Appreciate the Staff's hard work  
6 getting us here, getting this all set up. They have to  
7 pick up and run here just like some of us -- the rest  
8 of us do, but they have a pile of luggage when they do  
9 it so I really appreciate it.

10

11 Tina, it's always been working with  
12 you. Stick around. You might have to.

13

14 So, anyway, my fellow Council members,  
15 appreciate the work that you do, it's not easy to be  
16 sitting here. And we go through some -- we've been  
17 doing this for a long time, some of us and like I said  
18 in my comments yesterday, I remember doing the same  
19 thing in 1993 I'm doing today and something didn't get  
20 fixed along the way and I'm really, really kind of set  
21 back because of that. When I'm hearing testimony about  
22 certain fishing, like Area M and the pollock trawler  
23 industry, like I said, we were talking about that in  
24 the '80s and '90s and we're still talking about it. So  
25 hopefully we can get to some kind of resolution in  
26 what's going on here. Like I said I think that  
27 everybody ought to be on the beach -- if somebody's  
28 grandma has to sit on the beach and can't cut fish or  
29 do anything like that then the trawlers should be  
30 sitting on the beach in Seattle for all I care.

31

32 So, anyway, thank you.

33

34 Have a good spring everybody and safe.

35

36 And that lady that's covering the news  
37 over there, thanks for putting up with us. I hope it's  
38 a good article.

39

40 (Laughter)

41

42 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Thank you, everybody.

43

44 MS. FREYTAG: Chairman Green.

45

46 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Anybody going to make  
47 a motion.

48

49 MS. FREYTAG: This is Mary, I move to

50



0322

1 adjourn the meeting.

2

3 MR. SEETOT: Second.

4

5 CHAIRMAN GREEN: Mary's first and Elmer

6 seconds it. Meeting's adjourned.

7

8 (Off record)

9

10 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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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, VOLUME II taken electronically on the 23rd 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 30th day of April 2023.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Salena A. Hile  
Notary Public, State of Alaska  
My Commission Expires: 09/16/26