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NORTHWEST ARCTIC SUBSISTENCE  
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME II  
TELECONFERENCE  
November 2, 2021  
9:01 a.m

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Thomas Baker, Chairman  
Barbara Atoruk  
Elmer Armstrong  
Wilbur Howarth  
Michael Kramer  
Robert Schaeffer  
Enoch Shiedt

Regional Council Coordinator, Katya Wessels (Acting)

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

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(Teleconference - 11/2/2021)

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(On record)

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CHAIRMAN BAKER: Good morning,  
everyone, it's Thomas Baker. It is now 9:00 o'clock.  
I'd like to call the meeting to order and if Mr. Elmer  
Armstrong could get a brief roll call of the Council  
please.

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MR. ARMSTRONG: Enoch Shiedt, Sr.

14

15

(No comments)

16

17

MR. ARMSTRONG: Attamuk.

18

19

(No comments)

20

21

MR. ARMSTRONG: I just heard him a few  
minutes ago.

22

23

24

MS. ATORUK: I heard a ding, maybe he  
got disconnected.

25

26

27

MR. ARMSTRONG: Thomas Baker.

28

29

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Here.

30

31

MR. ARMSTRONG: Michael Kramer.

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33

(No comments)

34

35

MS. ATORUK: Michael Kramer is not  
going to come on until 1:30.

36

37

38

MR. ARMSTRONG: Okay.

39

40

Calvin Moto, II.

41

42

(No comments)

43

44

MR. ARMSTRONG: Wilbur Howarth, Sr.

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46

MR. HOWARTH: Here.

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48

MR. ARMSTRONG: Robert Schaeffer.

49

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1 MR. SCHAEFFER: Here.

2

3 MR. ARMSTRONG: Elmer Armstrong, Jr.,  
4 here.

5

6 Brian Lee Jones.

7

8 (No comments)

9

10 MR. SHIEDT: I think we're having  
11 connection problems, Attamuk here, I called in third  
12 time now.

13

14 MR. ARMSTRONG: All right, got you  
15 down, Attamuk.

16

17 MR. SHIEDT: Here.

18

19 (Teleconference interference -  
20 participants not muted)

21

22 REPORTER: Okay, Enoch, mute your phone  
23 now because I can hear your TV.

24

25 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Brian Jones said he  
26 won't be able to attend today.

27

28 MS. WESSELS: I'm sorry, I would like  
29 to ask everyone to mute their phones by pressing star  
30 six if they're not speaking currently. Please star  
31 six, dial star six. Okay, thank you. Please, you  
32 know, remember if you're not speaking put your phones  
33 on mute.

34

35 REPORTER: Thank you.

36

37 MS. ATORUK: This is Barbara, I'm here  
38 too, this morning. Good morning.

39

40 MR. ARMSTRONG: Okay, got you down,  
41 Barbara.

42

43 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So it appears we have  
44 a quorum. At this time for those Council members that  
45 weren't present yesterday morning for the Council  
46 member reports, I was hoping we could do Council member  
47 reports, but it seems that it's just Mr. Robert  
48 Schaeffer is here and, Bob, if you have any report  
49 you'd like to give now the floor is yours.

50

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1 MR. SCHAEFFER: Yeah, I guess it would  
2 be a good time if the Council would just indulge, it  
3 might be kind of a lengthy one.

4  
5 But I've been involved with this global  
6 warming issue for a lot of years, the six years I was  
7 with the Borough back in 2006 to 2012 I did a lot of  
8 studying and keeping up with trends as the Earth keeps  
9 up and trying to put in to perspective how it's  
10 affecting us up here. And it just so happens that  
11 during that particular decade it affected the Northwest  
12 Alaska more than any place in the state. So I became  
13 quite concerned. And I think the biggest concern  
14 happened when we started having bird die-offs on a  
15 regular basis. And after talking with some of the  
16 local elders, you know, it was easy for us to determine  
17 their cause of death, you know, it was no mystery, the  
18 waters are just heating up too much especially around  
19 the mouth of the Buckland or Echols Bay, Kobuk Lake,  
20 all the rivers. We had a huge salmon die-off in 2014  
21 and there was no mystery why they died, after  
22 Department of Fish and Game did an analysis of Salmon  
23 River area where they -- the -- Kobuk runs usually  
24 spawns and found that the waters there were just too  
25 hot and that the oxygen levels were very, very low and  
26 they couldn't support salmon life. And the entire  
27 Kobuk River and Noatak River that year, I drove both of  
28 those rivers constantly with my charter business and  
29 there were millions of dead salmon everywhere. In  
30 fact, the entire Noatak River, when we were going up to  
31 Noatak stunk, you know, of decaying fish. So that was  
32 an example of global warming at its worst, I think, you  
33 know, and how it's affecting our resources up here.

34  
35 And just recent, to put it into recent  
36 perspective we had a die-off of herring two years in a  
37 row. Last year it happened in December and this year  
38 it happened just a couple of weeks ago where millions  
39 have died. And that, too, after talking with some of  
40 the elders and some of the local folks, that, you know,  
41 we had probably one of the wettest summer, Kotzebue  
42 ever had probably in recent history, you know, it  
43 rained for three months for Godssake and, you know,  
44 water -- the entire of Northwest Alaska was pretty much  
45 saturated with water from the top of the mountains down  
46 to the rivers and the rivers were extremely high all  
47 summer. They were pretty much at flood stage the  
48 entire summer, it just got to be commonplace that --  
49 because of the amount of rain that we had -- that fell.  
50

1 And then of course when the falltime came everything  
2 sort of settled in but the water was still on the land,  
3 it was still seeping down into the creeks and the  
4 creeks stayed pretty much high throughout the entire  
5 fall. But there was tremendous amount of freshwater  
6 discharge that came out of the Selawik, Noatak, and  
7 Kobuk Rivers and all the drainages. So, you know, just  
8 commonsense would tell you that when you get that much  
9 water going out into the lakes, if there's any salt  
10 left in Kobuk Lake, which normally there is, when they  
11 have a lot of storm surge it'll get pretty salty up  
12 there and that, of course, is really important for  
13 herring. Anyway, all that discharge pretty much took  
14 all the saltwater that was in Kobuk Lake and shoved it  
15 out in the ocean. I had a survey fellow that stopped  
16 by Inivikin (ph) and did their analysis and the salt  
17 content on the lake, on Inivikin found that there was  
18 no salt and he drank the water and he said this is  
19 fresh water, he said .006 percent salt, almost no salt  
20 at all whatsoever. So later on what happened, of  
21 course, we had that massive die out of herring and, of  
22 course, herring are saltwater fish because they live  
23 and grow and feed out in the saltwater and they come  
24 in, not only in the spring to spawn, but they come in  
25 in the fall to feed because Kobuk Lake is just so rich  
26 because of all the -- all the small, the Kobuk Lake  
27 shrimp, they're real tiny ones and then there's also  
28 tremendous amount of, not only, herring but the  
29 whitefish and spawn all throughout the lake in the  
30 grassy areas so it's really a rich area for them to  
31 come into the lake and into Kotzebue Sound and to go  
32 over and feed and then continue to grow because these  
33 are the smaller species that are still -- I think they  
34 hatch last spring and they were just on their growth  
35 period.

36  
37 But I guess what our assumption was is  
38 that they went into -- the freshwater -- saltwater  
39 setting out in the Arctic Ocean, Chuckchi and Kotzebue  
40 Sound straight into freshwater and when I observed and  
41 took some photos of all the fish that were dying it was  
42 like they were in shock, they were swimming around  
43 sideways, you know, and -- and like they lost -- like  
44 they were in total shock and then we picked up a bunch  
45 and -- anyways, you could pick -- have pickled herring  
46 because they were there.

47  
48 But anyway that's just an example of  
49 what I saw the last 20 years or so that I've really  
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1 been involved in global warming issues.

2

3 The other, of course, is doing work  
4 with the university on observing some of the  
5 environmental changes out there, out on the lands  
6 around Kotzebue and Kotzebue Sound and Kobuk Lake and  
7 some of those changes. Of course you all know about  
8 2018 and 2019 when we had record warm years for winter  
9 and there was just no ice that formed that was  
10 permanent, between the end of the Kotzebue Sound and  
11 the Chuckchi. And there was a tremendous amount of  
12 effect that it had not only on the seal but on our  
13 ability to subsist out there because we couldn't get  
14 out there without any kind of -- it was just too  
15 doggone thin, you have to have safe ice out there to go  
16 out there and hunt seal and that never happened those  
17 two years because people were just -- the hunters were  
18 just so afraid to venture past, you know, the last ice  
19 around Kotzebue and Sisolik, after that it was all  
20 pretty much open water the entire winter.

21

22 But I was also involved in the sea ice  
23 study that was consummated pretty much in 2018/2019 and  
24 2020 so that was done by the university. There was  
25 also other universities that were involved in this and  
26 then on a national level -- but there was a number of  
27 scientists that came up and we took them out and they  
28 did their studies out in the ice and it was hard to  
29 find ice at the time, probably -- it was -- acting as a  
30 guide it was kind of difficult to get out there and  
31 keep them safe because the ice was not safe. But we  
32 did -- they did a lot of work out there, mostly around  
33 (indiscernible) and Sisolik and I was able to take them  
34 out to the Kobuk Sound safely just following the  
35 sandbars, they did some work out there. But they also  
36 had -- had a drone that they flew for a couple of  
37 weeks, where they finally got it going and did a lot of  
38 analysis on the ice, studies on the ice with the  
39 different -- different pieces of equipment that they  
40 had.

41

42 But, anyway, those were massive changes  
43 that were recognizable. But that was just sort of the  
44 tip of the iceberg, because my dad, you know, talked  
45 about that back in the '60s even in the '70s about the  
46 changes that he saw at that time. And -- because he  
47 was an Inupiaq hunter and those people, that's all they  
48 knew was how to observe and how the hunting went that  
49 year, they talked about it amongst themselves, you

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1 know, the elders and they -- they talked about the  
2 changes that they were seeing and, you know, he was  
3 born in 1916 so his hunting career started back in the  
4 '20s, you know, and late '20s and early '30s so, you  
5 know, he -- that we were -- written -- or our language  
6 was not written so the importance of sharing  
7 information was part of our culture. They talked about  
8 it and then, of course, they never forgot like we did  
9 because, you know, we got so much doggone stress in our  
10 lives today that remembering things that are really  
11 important are not as important as they were back in the  
12 day when that's all you had. So anyway they talked  
13 about it a lot and he talked about the changes that he  
14 saw, the waters rising, he always talked about the  
15 waters rising because there was massive erosion that  
16 started back in the '60s and especially got into the  
17 '70s. He talked about the massive storms that came up  
18 here, they never had that kind of intensity and the  
19 severity of those storms. Some of the storm events  
20 were quite scary especially living around the whole  
21 Peninsula area and observing and seeing the massive  
22 erosion that are taking place because of two things, of  
23 course, the water rising and the intensity of the  
24 storms that were hitting us, you know, during those  
25 years. So it's been around for a long time but -- and  
26 so as we started delving into it, as I got into delving  
27 into it further, you know, I started noticing that not  
28 only I was concerned about where this thing was going  
29 with global warming, but the scientific community did a  
30 lot of studies and, you know, to us, you know, you go  
31 down to the beach and you look at all this massive  
32 erosion stuff and you just -- your heart -- my gosh,  
33 what is happening on this land. And then -- but  
34 there's more to it than meets the eye, you know, you  
35 never see it. So when you don't see it you don't think  
36 about it but when they start delving into it, the  
37 massive emissions of carbon dioxide that is happening  
38 in our tundras and especially around those areas where  
39 the erosion is really taking place. And you go into  
40 those areas and you can smell, you know, the methane  
41 gas that's coming out of it and it's constant. And so,  
42 you know, you talk about global warming and the  
43 atmosphere and the greenhouses gases, you know, you  
44 talk about this and -- this is -- this is just what you  
45 can observe in front of you. But their studies were  
46 done with airplanes and they did a lot of studies and  
47 they determined that most of the Arctic tundra is  
48 melting at such a rapid pace that the emissions of  
49 carbon dioxide are really high. And he said, no,  
50

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1 that's not the worst part because you got the emissions  
2 of carbon dio -- not carbon but methane gas, and  
3 methane gas is 20 times as lethal in the atmosphere as  
4 carbon dioxide. So you got natural carbon dioxide and  
5 natural methane gas emissions and then you talk about  
6 the low -- the lake up there on -- right below the  
7 hatchery, you know, where they've been studying that  
8 now for the last 10 years trying to figure out why the  
9 intensity of that thing is increasing, you know, and  
10 using that as an example of our -- within the Northwest  
11 Arctic Borough that have a massive emissions of methane  
12 gas in a lot of the lakes.

13

14 And so those are the killers. That is  
15 what is probably affecting the atmosphere most and when  
16 you talk about carbon dioxide emissions world-wide,  
17 because as the population grows the demand for services  
18 grows so there'll be more jets, more cars, more trucks  
19 and so the burning of fossil fuels increases  
20 tremendously and then you have more stress on the  
21 atmosphere because of unchecked amounts of carbon  
22 dioxide flowing into the air because of the burning of  
23 fossil fuel.

24

25 So all that, in a nutshell, you know,  
26 it's affecting us big time. You know it's affecting  
27 our environment big time. It's affecting where our  
28 fish go, it's affecting where our subsistence fish  
29 resources are pretty much all affected and I'm sure  
30 it's affecting the caribou and the moose and everything  
31 else and all the animals that we use, and not only that  
32 but the plants that we eat, that we harvest as part of  
33 our subsistence diet. So there's a lot of things that  
34 are happening that doesn't meet the eye and if you  
35 haven't had the chance to observe and think about it  
36 you should make a -- because it's going to affect  
37 everything.

38

39 So as time goes on, I'm still an  
40 observer for the University of Alaska-Fairbanks. I  
41 give my observations and I sit down and talk to some of  
42 the elders. Talk to John Goodwin and, you know, I  
43 think we talked about some of the events that are  
44 happening and at some point or another, and at times,  
45 and (indiscernible) studious kind of a guy, too, so it  
46 was Yorkmans and Hall and we do sit down and talk about  
47 some of those things sometimes and see where it's  
48 going, you know, where this thing is going. You know  
49 is it going to get any worse, and, of course, it is

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1 going to get worse. It seems like every time you plant  
2 a tree to absorb the carbon dioxide that's put in the  
3 air because of the burning of fossil fuel, you know, 10  
4 trees die because, you know, certain parts of the Earth  
5 are warming up hotter, getting hotter, the Northwest --  
6 or the North -- or the West Coast of Alaska -- or the  
7 West Coast of the United States is getting so hot that  
8 every year there's so many fires, so many trees and so  
9 many shrubs that absorb carbon dioxide naturally are  
10 being burned and just destroyed. And you got portions  
11 of the other part -- where you go to the East Coast  
12 where it's getting wetter and wetter and the storm  
13 events are getting stronger, the hurricanes are getting  
14 stronger, so the whole world, and in our -- you know,  
15 it's not just what's happening in America but it's  
16 happening world-wide. You know Russia, just two years  
17 ago lost six million acres of trees and you think  
18 about, you know, an entire forest area that burned six  
19 million acres and you couldn't count the number of  
20 trees that burned. And those are -- those are the most  
21 important part of the world. The Amazon was on fire,  
22 you know, two years ago. Things of that nature that  
23 you look at in the global perspective that you can't  
24 see here and so since there's a lot -- like I said  
25 there's a lot to it and a lot that meets the eye and  
26 it's affecting us and it's going to affect us even  
27 worse as time goes on. We're just lucky that the last  
28 couple of years we've had the cool summers and so we  
29 haven't had die-offs like they had in Bethel last year  
30 where it got so hot that a whole bunch of their fish  
31 and whitefish and their streams and lakes -- you know,  
32 started dying and, of course, belly up. So, you know,  
33 that can happen again. And as time goes on and they  
34 predict that, that this is what's going to happen as  
35 the world heats up.

36  
37 You know, if you haven't tried to keep  
38 up -- you know, go on to the NOAA website on climate  
39 and you download that into your system so you can  
40 observe because NOAA has been doing this for a long  
41 time and their pictorial maps and graphs are really  
42 interesting to see observe to see where the world is  
43 going when it comes to heating up the world due to  
44 climate change.

45  
46 So anyway I just wanted to try to bring  
47 this out in a perspective in the way, at least the way  
48 I look at it, and how it's affecting us, you know, we  
49 talked -- remember I talked to you about what's  
50

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1 happening out in the lack of ice out there -- the lack  
2 of -- the lack of thick ice -- in 2018 we were out  
3 there and the poor seals had no way to -- no place to  
4 make a lair because there was no ice piled, so they  
5 were making lairs just in ice that was a foot and a  
6 half thick. And the foxes had an easiest feed year  
7 ever -- ever there -- there was foxes all over out on  
8 the ocean out there and they'd go to these makeshift  
9 lairs that the poor seals had because they had no other  
10 place to go and they just pick up these -- the young  
11 like it nothing and then-- and then -- you know had a --  
12 had an easy meal but there was foxes all over out on  
13 the ocean that year when we were out there observing  
14 and doing some work out there. But that's an example  
15 of what happened two years running. So the predation  
16 for poor seals was really bad for those two years, it  
17 was -- it was -- for the seal pups and -- and so that's  
18 how it affected the seal. Of course, you can really  
19 look out in front the last couple of weeks, you know,  
20 wondering, god, where'd all the seals come from but  
21 there are a lot of seals out there, you know, it's just  
22 that -- it's just that -- what's in store for them in  
23 the future remains to be seen. Are -- are we going to  
24 have a repeat of 2018/2019 to where it does affect the  
25 seal, you know, and the polar bear and whatever animals  
26 species are out there.

27

28 So it's -- it's -- and we talk about  
29 the oogruk and then we start discussing the issue of  
30 why they're getting a little skinnier and -- and when I  
31 was out to do some work over in Shamisol (ph) we ran  
32 into a herd of oogruk out there and they were 20 miles  
33 from the ice and they went into -- they went -- they  
34 went into one area that we know of that's really rich  
35 in shrimp and bottom fish and that's what they were --  
36 that's what they need to survive, so we ran into a herd  
37 of them out there and there was no ice to be seen  
38 anywhere but there was feeding and then when they got  
39 done feeding, of course, they had to find -- they had  
40 to go 20 miles, you know, to go to the ice, to -- to  
41 haul out of the ice so that they can rest and digest  
42 their food. But they were going so far, you know, that  
43 by the time they get filled up with the rich resources  
44 of the Kotzebue Sound they had to go find ice to haul  
45 out on so that they can rest and -- and that was norm --  
46 it was different that year because there was just --  
47 there was just no ice. You know the hunters had an  
48 easy time because the only -- the only solid fast ice  
49 is the land fast ice was right in front of Kotzebue  
50

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1 right here and -- and over in Espenberg and, of course,  
2 the ice that comes out of Buckland Bay and those --  
3 those were -- where hundreds and hundreds of oogruks  
4 went because that's the only place they can get out to  
5 haul out and rest. And not only does this affect them  
6 but as -- as June rolls along it started affecting the  
7 seals, we started finding more dead seals on the  
8 beaches and -- and these were full grown seals that  
9 drowned out there. They're -- they're used to hauling  
10 out in June and -- and we had a big storm in June that  
11 lasted for -- for, what, four or five days, maybe even  
12 longer as the west winds blew 35 to 40 miles an hour, I  
13 remember that day. But Ross said just between -- my  
14 brother Ross said that just between (Indiscernible)  
15 Creek and Cape Blossom he counted 10 adult seals that  
16 had perished, that had drowned out there because they  
17 had no place to go, they couldn't sleep because of the  
18 waves were, you know, six to eight foot tall and they  
19 couldn't rest and so they ended up drowning. And of  
20 course there was a lot of small, younger ones that were  
21 born that spring that had perished as well.

22

23 So all those, in a nutshell, is  
24 affecting us. And as we're kind of wondering, you  
25 know, how this is going to affect us in the future as --  
26 as -- as climate change does take even a greater hold  
27 on the environment and the weather and so -- but those  
28 I wanted to mention because when it comes to  
29 subsistence, not only for fish, or for crab, and for  
30 the resources out there the importance of -- of the  
31 smaller fish to feed the larger -- the larger -- a lot  
32 of the larger mammals -- the sea mammals that we have  
33 out there, are they going to be around, you know, are  
34 we going to have a point in time to where we -- to  
35 where, you know, you're going -- it's going to get so  
36 bad that we're going to see more repeat of mass die-  
37 outs of not only fish but of seabirds, you know, of  
38 seals, you know, of all those resources that we were so  
39 accustomed to and enjoying for so long and living up  
40 here, you know, for thousands of years.

41

42 So, anyway, I hope I put it into  
43 perspective where you can think about it and know that  
44 our subsistence resources, not only on land but in the  
45 waters are affected by what's happening and be more  
46 observant when you're looking at it and look at it more  
47 in a different perspective because with this global  
48 warming -- global warming is a real thing and it's  
49 happening and it's hitting us really hard and it's  
50

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1 still hitting us hard up here.

2

3                   Anyway, that's pretty much my report on  
4 what's been happening in my little world of observing  
5 global warming. Thanks Tom.

6

7                   CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Bob. Do we  
8 have any other Council members who might have joined  
9 since we started that weren't able to give their report  
10 yesterday morning.

11

12                   (No comments)

13

14                   CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, we will  
15 continue on from where we ended last night.

16

17                   MR. SHIEDT: Could I ask Bobby a  
18 question, Attamuk here.

19

20                   CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, Attamuk.

21

22                   MR. SHIEDT: Bobby, how many degrees  
23 did you see by warm up the waters?

24

25                   MR. SCHAEFFER: It was amazing, I'm  
26 glad you asked that question because, you know, a  
27 couple years ago we had the University of Alaska  
28 brought out a drone that was powered by a new saltwater  
29 jet, I think it was called a jet. But what it did was  
30 absorbed saltwater and it created power and they could  
31 stick that drone in the water and they can control the  
32 drones with the satellites and they could go and do all  
33 the different studies throughout -- in fact they just  
34 got done using that up in the North Slope and they were  
35 going to try it in Kotzebue so I took them out here,  
36 with my boat, 40 miles out in the ocean out here and  
37 that was in 2019 and we went out there trying to find  
38 the right amount of salinity and the right temperature  
39 so we could launch that thing and it would go and leave  
40 Kotzebue and go up and do all these studies and go up  
41 to the North Slope and they'd pick it up in Barrow.  
42 But we got out there in 40 miles between Espenberg and  
43 Sealing Point (ph) and the waters out there was 64  
44 degrees, 40 miles.

45

46                   MR. SHIEDT: Wow.

47

48                   MR. SCHAEFFER: We could not get over  
49 that, the salinity out there wasn't enough to propel

50

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1 the drones. They tried numerous times for a couple of  
2 hours, two, three hours and couldn't get that thing to  
3 work because the salinity was not -- was not -- was not  
4 strong enough to do -- you know to do -- to do what it  
5 was supposed to do to propel that thing. But, anyway,  
6 that's an example of what happened that year when we  
7 had, you know, the birds die-off in Shamisol and Cape  
8 Thompson and a number of places, when it gets that warm  
9 all that little fish that usually are on the beaches  
10 coming out of Echols Bay or Buckland Bay had to escape  
11 because the waters was too warm so they had to go out  
12 in the deeper ocean where the water was cooler. So  
13 what it did, basically, was all the puffins and murre  
14 and then all the birds that nested in the Shamisol and  
15 those other areas -- nesting areas up here had nothing  
16 to feed on so they all starved to death and of course  
17 that was corroborated by the Fish and Wildlife Service  
18 at the time because they couldn't find nothing, no  
19 reason other than starvation that -- that caused the  
20 death of these hundreds, probably even thousands of  
21 birds. But the temperatures are important and they are  
22 -- they are rising and, you know, I think as humans  
23 that -- living out in the Arctic we used to get 55  
24 degrees, that was the norm in Kotzebue, right, back in  
25 the day and it was comfortable.

26

27 MS. ATORUK: Yep.

28

29 MR. SCHAEFFER: And all of a sudden we  
30 start getting 70 degrees up here and the villages in  
31 some places it gets 100 degrees now. And, you know, so  
32 we're noticing those changes, we're enjoying them  
33 because you don't have to go to Hawaii to get heat, we  
34 go -- you know, just right in our backyard now. So  
35 people are enjoying going to the beaches and spending a  
36 lot of time in the water, but, you know, this is the  
37 telltale sign of what's to be, you know. It's  
38 happening today and it's probably going to continue to  
39 happen even at a larger scale in the future.

40

41 MR. HOWARTH: Bob -- Mr. Chair, it's  
42 Wilbur.

43

44 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes. Go ahead,  
45 Wilbur.

46

47 MR. HOWARTH: Hey, Bob, did you guys do  
48 any studies on the oogruk that are coming up this way  
49 like that -- like we had one young oogruk last month or  
50

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1 so that was hanging around here in Noorvik, pretty  
2 young, it was, I would say maybe newborn this year or  
3 something but we sure been running into lots over at  
4 (Indiscernible) Creek, oogruk calf, and on the banks.

5

6 Thank you.

7

8 MR. SCHAEFFER: Yeah, well, I have an  
9 answer to that, you know, but I think one of the  
10 scariest things that we don't observe and we don't see  
11 when it comes to the heating up of Kobuk Lake and all  
12 the creeks, especially the lakes there are so important  
13 for the spawning of our -- of all of our whitefish and  
14 (In Native) and all those other fish because those are  
15 all grass lakes and they're really important, always  
16 been important spawning area for millions and millions  
17 of fish but, you know, the -- the sad part, of course  
18 is when you've got an excessive heat and then still  
19 waters, you have an excessive growth of algae and it's --  
20 it's -- and as time goes on -- the Kotzebue IRA has a  
21 new mooring that we're going to put out next year to  
22 try to monitor what's happening with the waters insofar  
23 as the growth of algae is concerned. I've been working  
24 for Alex for a number of a years now, Alex Whiting,  
25 with the Environmental Department of Kotzebue and it's  
26 just really a concern because remember when you go out  
27 boating and -- and it's after a real hot summer -- and --  
28 and in 2018/2019 when you were -- you could look out  
29 the front and see the water when it splashes when -- on  
30 the boat, and it's either brown or green, you know, and  
31 on Kobuk Lake and the rivers, that's the growth of  
32 algae and, you know, algae is probably -- probably, you  
33 know, it -- it can become quite deadly when it -- when  
34 it starts getting into the food chain. And in many  
35 cases we try to find clams -- there's a lot of clams on  
36 the Kobuk Delta, there's a -- there's a huge amount of  
37 clams in the Selawik -- in the Selawik Rivers and the  
38 lakes and there's clams all over and try to get clams  
39 to determine the toxicity of the algae as it flows  
40 through the animals, you know, and the -- or the fish --  
41 and you have all the whitefish that feed on those --  
42 on the miniature snails that are found in every one of  
43 the lakes it seems in the -- and in the Kobuk Valley,  
44 you know, they've been doing -- you know how is the  
45 algae affecting them so, you know, it's -- it's  
46 affecting -- it's even killed -- it got so bad and --  
47 in Southwest Alaska that the clams became very toxic in  
48 some of the -- and killing walrus down there that --  
49 there was two walrus that died and they found out  
50

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1 later that during the autopsies and sending out -- and  
2 as they were sending out some of the tissues that they  
3 died of toxic stuff that are found in clams and also  
4 use the water -- they siphon in water to -- you know to  
5 get food, and they're like a huge vacuum down there,  
6 they just vacuum and it goes out the other end and all  
7 the micro -- micro organisms feed them and so they're a  
8 good telltale sign of -- of what's -- of what the water  
9 is doing and how toxic the algae growth is to the  
10 water. So we're doing a little -- we're going to put a  
11 mooring out there between probably I'd say about seven,  
12 eight miles outside of Pike's Spit, towards the middle  
13 to where the -- the converge of the Kobuk Delta, the  
14 Kobuk -- and the -- the water and the Selawik River  
15 waters are -- come together and it showed with using a  
16 satellite photo some of those areas that -- there's a  
17 high concentration of algae, so we're going to put that  
18 mooring there and it's going to work all summer picking  
19 up data in the water.

20  
21 So I thought I'd just bring that up  
22 because we're concerned about the heat and what it's  
23 doing to -- doing to -- you know, to the important  
24 subsistence fish that we have and other resources out  
25 here because I -- one of the guys came to me when I was  
26 fishing out there right by Kobuk Lake from Noorvik and  
27 he says, oh, I got a picture I got to show you, Bob,  
28 and I says, what, I got -- I got a green seal last  
29 year, I says, what, you got a green seal, he says,  
30 yeah, I'll show it to you, that seal was so bundled up  
31 in algae growth that he turned green, the skin turned  
32 green and he showed it to me and I couldn't believe it.  
33 But that's some of the dangers of some of the seals  
34 that meander, especially the oogruk calves that -- that  
35 come into the Kotzebue Sound after birth and go into  
36 all the shallows and the streams and the lakes and they  
37 feed there because it's easy for them to feed there and  
38 they feed and they grow. And so I'm sure it's going to  
39 affect them in some way as well.

40  
41 MR. SHIEDT: Thanks, Bobby, good  
42 report.

43  
44 MR. HOWARTH: Thank you.

45  
46 MR. SCHAEFFER: Yeah, thank you.

47  
48 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yeah, thank you for  
49 that Bob. So if there are no other Council members  
50

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1 with anything to report at this time we'll move on to  
2 the 2022 Fisheries Resource.....

3

4 MS. ATORUK: Can I ask something, Mr.  
5 Chair.

6

7 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Is that Barbara?

8

9 (No comments)

10

11 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Barbara, is that you?

12

13 MS. ATORUK: Can you hear me?

14

15 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, I can hear you  
16 now.

17

18 MS. ATORUK: Okay. I had my mute  
19 button on, I always forget that. But, Bobby, some  
20 riders in the back road, back there this summer, posted  
21 on Facebook there was some -- you know, some places  
22 back there there's some muddy areas and bubbles were  
23 shooting out of that one area back there. And that was  
24 something different that I hadn't seen in awhile in  
25 that area but years back, my aunt's great-grandma did  
26 say to her when she was a young girl, she died at 86,  
27 Aunt Vera, and she told her granddaughter and say if  
28 you grow up and have kids, please don't have them live  
29 near the ocean because it's going to come in, the ocean  
30 is going to come in. And from your report, you know,  
31 it's been happening for some time, but those gas  
32 bubbles that were seen back there, I wish they had  
33 contacted you but now we know who to call and to go and  
34 see. Would those be gas bubbles that are coming from  
35 below where the erosion or whatever is happening from  
36 that. And also this hadn't happened in a long time,  
37 when I lived in Kotzebue it happened one time where the  
38 seals (In Native) on the ice, there were lots of seals  
39 out there and would that be because they're resting or  
40 is that just an occasion that happens once in a blue  
41 moon.

42

43 MR. SCHAEFFER: Was that in the  
44 springtime?

45

46 MS. ATORUK: The seals?

47

48 MR. SCHAEFFER: Yeah.

49

50



0166

1 MS. ATORUK: No, this fall.

2

3 MR. SCHAEFFER: Oh, yeah.

4

5 MS. ATORUK: You know lots of seals  
6 were out.

7

8 MR. SCHAEFFER: They follow the herring  
9 in, just like the belugas, you know, two days before  
10 that -- before the seals showed up we had, you know,  
11 two to 300 beluga come in and they were following the  
12 herring because the herring came in, there was -- there  
13 was -- the tides had changed because of the moon, I  
14 guess, and we were having incoming tides and so a lot  
15 of -- a lot of herring came in, oh, the seagulls  
16 enjoyed it and especially, you know, the belugas and,  
17 then, of course, the seals are always there. They feed  
18 off of herring and they get fat, you know, herring is  
19 such a fat fish. So, yeah, they follow the herring,  
20 and almost every fall.

21

22 MS. ATORUK: Yep. And about those  
23 bubbles in that sand up on the hill, I think you would  
24 have been interested.

25

26 MR. SCHAEFFER: Yeah, I think it's  
27 methane, you know. As -- like I said, as the tundra  
28 melts and then permafrost is melting, you can't notice  
29 it. But because you're so accustomed to seeing it from  
30 a day to day but if you look at it from a year to year  
31 or a decade to decade. I had an uncle that told me at  
32 one time, that his lifetime, and he died when he was  
33 almost 80 years old, in his lifetime he said he always  
34 noticed from his house that hill, he said that hill was  
35 gone behind Kotzebue, in his lifetime.

36

37 MS. ATORUK: Hum.

38

39 MR. SCHAEFFER: We never ever notice  
40 those things because it's one of those things. But he  
41 noticed it because every little time he looked out his  
42 one window he would always see that hill, and in his  
43 lifetime, in 80 years, that hill was gone. So it's  
44 happening all the time, you know. I noticed it in my  
45 camp, you know, in my 40 years there, you know, how  
46 there's tremendous changes because as time goes on and  
47 permafrost melts because of the excess heat that we're  
48 having in the summertime and of course our summers are  
49 a lot longer than they ever were so the melting is

50

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1 happening but you never notice it. You know the  
2 elevation is lessening almost every year but you never  
3 notice it because we're just human, we're not machines  
4 and we just can't remember those things. But when you  
5 start observing those things -- methane gas will  
6 probably get worse as time goes on. As more permafrost  
7 melts the more emissions of it, that -- so -- so it'll  
8 start affecting the atmosphere a lot more as time goes  
9 on.

10

11 MS. ATORUK: Thank you.

12

13 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, thank you, Bob.  
14 So now we'll go on to the Fisheries Resource Monitoring  
15 Program, and that, I believe, starts on Page 227 and I  
16 have Karen Hyer, are you on the line this morning.

17

18 MS. HYER: Yes, Mr. Chairman, can you  
19 hear me.

20

21 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, I can.

22

23 MS. HYER: Great. Okay. All right,  
24 I'm going to give everybody a moment to get to Page 227  
25 of your book and then I'll start.

26

27 (Pause)

28

29 MS. HYER: Hello, Mr. Chairman and  
30 Members of the Council. For the record my name is  
31 Karen Hyer and I'm a Fisheries Biologist with the  
32 Office of Subsistence Management. I'm working with Dr.  
33 Hannah Voorhees today and she's the Anthropologist that  
34 works in the northern region with OSM.

35

36 So starting on Page 220 of your books  
37 I'm going to go over the Fisheries Resource Monitoring  
38 Program, which is a fairly long discussion and so we're  
39 going to be bouncing back and forth a little bit in  
40 this, and I recognize there's some new Council members  
41 so I'm going to give a overview, and if any questions  
42 come up while I'm presenting, please, just go ahead and  
43 ask them.

44

45 The Office of Subsistence Management  
46 provides money for fisheries research and monitoring on  
47 Federal public lands. They do this through an  
48 InterAgency InterDisciplinary approach, and there are  
49 two terms that you need to be familiar with as I go

50

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1 through the book. The first is the Fisheries Resource  
2 Monitoring Program. The second is the Fisheries  
3 Resource Monitoring Plan. And unfortunately the names  
4 are so similar that they get confused a bit. But the  
5 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program is the  
6 overarching administration and it's about implementing  
7 the Program. The final product of this implementation  
8 is a group of products -- excuse me -- a group of  
9 projects that collect fisheries data. This group of  
10 projects is what is called the Fisheries Resource  
11 Monitoring Plan. So the Fisheries Resource Monitoring  
12 Program produces the Fisheries Resource Monitoring  
13 Plan. So keep that in mind as we step through this.

14

15 The Fisheries Resource Monitoring  
16 Program is through six regions, and at the bottom of  
17 Page 227 you can see those regions in that map, it's  
18 divided up.

19

20 This Council is in the northern region  
21 and the northern region consists of three Councils, the  
22 North Slope, the Seward Peninsula and the Northwest  
23 Arctic RAC. So this Council works with the two other  
24 Councils to direct fisheries research in the northern  
25 region. The process -- this whole process starts with  
26 determining where there are information gaps in your  
27 region. So in the fall of 2020 Dr. Voorhees and I met  
28 with the Council to identify data gaps and research  
29 priorities for the region and each -- we met with each  
30 Council and each Council produced a list of priorities.  
31 And when we put this list together it was called -- the  
32 final project was called the priority information needs  
33 for the Northern Region, and if you look on Page 237  
34 and 238 you can see our final list. And if you look at  
35 that you'll see that there are priority information  
36 needs for your area and also for the other two areas.

37

38 (Teleconference interference -  
39 participants not muted)

40

41 MS. HYER: So once this list is put  
42 together and the priorities are sent out -- this list  
43 is sent out in an announcement and the announcement  
44 asks investigators to develop projects that will  
45 address these priorities. And during this  
46 announcements we reach out to tribes, rural  
47 organizations, the State and Federal organizations,  
48 consulting firms and universities and we also publish  
49 it in the Federal Register. And so the announcement  
50

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1 goes out and that we have money and that we're looking  
2 for projects to answer these questions. And then  
3 investigators that are interested in completing the  
4 projects that address these priority information needs  
5 actually submit proposals to OSM. And for the northern  
6 region, this round, there were four proposals that were  
7 submitted and you can find the proposals on Page 1 --  
8 excuse me -- in Table 1 on Page 239. So if you turn to  
9 Page 239 you can see the four project proposals that  
10 were submitted for this region.

11

12 And now we are in the middle of a  
13 competitive review process for these proposals. And  
14 the first step in this review process is the Technical  
15 Review Committee. And the Technical Review Committee  
16 is a panel of expert scientists and they review the  
17 proposals and they evaluate them based on five  
18 criteria. And so now if you flip back up in your book  
19 to Page 232 you can see the criteria, the initial  
20 criteria that these four proposals were reviewed on.  
21 And these criteria are strategic priority; the project  
22 must address an information needs related to Federal  
23 subsistence management; technical and scientific  
24 merits; the project is evaluated for scientific rigor  
25 and it's clarity of purpose; investigator ability and  
26 resources; the investigators must have the ability to  
27 complete the proposed work; partnership and capacity  
28 building; it must have participation and support from  
29 local organizations; and, finally, cost benefit; the  
30 work needs to be reasonably priced. A summary of the  
31 Technical Review Committee comments can be found on  
32 Page 239 and 240. So then, again, below the table with  
33 the projects you can see what the Technical Review  
34 Committee had to say about each project. And then I  
35 also want to point out, below that, there is also,  
36 starting on Page 242, Appendix 2, there's also an  
37 executive summary of the project, and these executive  
38 summaries are written by the investigator.

39

40 So now we have the Technical Review  
41 Committee comments, and that was the first step, and so  
42 today I'm here to collect the Council's comments on  
43 these projects, and I'll do that in just a few minutes.  
44 But your comments, in addition to the Technical Review  
45 Committee comments are put together and then the Staff  
46 Committee then is the step -- they go before the Staff  
47 Committee after the Council meeting and then the Staff  
48 Committee then adds their comments and they combine all  
49 the information together and this information is

50

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1 provided to the Federal Subsistence Board. In their  
2 January 2022 meeting, the Federal Subsistence Board  
3 will take all this information on what to fund, and  
4 they do that for the whole state of Alaska. And then  
5 once this recommendation is made OSM will fund as many  
6 of these recommended projects as they can given their  
7 budget. And historically OSM has been able to fund  
8 most of the recommended projects. And then once the  
9 projects are set to be funded they will be implemented  
10 in the spring and summer of 2022 so we're moving into  
11 the season when these projects will be implemented. So  
12 this group of projects that will be implemented is  
13 called the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Plan, so we'll  
14 call it the 2022 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Plan.  
15 And this whole process takes place every two years and  
16 each project within the Fisheries Resource Monitoring  
17 Plan can be funded up to four years.

18  
19 So before we start discussing  
20 individual projects, I just want to pause and ask if  
21 there are any questions on the overarching process.

22  
23 (No comments)

24  
25 MS. HYER: All right, well, if nobody  
26 has any questions I'm going to refer you back to Page  
27 239 so you can see.....

28  
29 MR. SCHAEFFER: Ma'am.

30  
31 MS. HYER: Oh, yes.

32  
33 MR. SCHAEFFER: Yeah, this is Bob.

34  
35 MS. HYER: Hi.

36  
37 MR. SCHAEFFER: Who -- is this a part  
38 of InterDepartmental stuff that you're doing or is it  
39 different agencies that are applying for these monies?

40  
41 MS. HYER: So different agencies apply  
42 for the monies, we administer the money and we oversee  
43 the implementation of the money. But different  
44 agencies actually receive the money and they do the  
45 projects, OSM just oversees the whole administration of  
46 the projects. So in your region, different  
47 organizations have applied for this money and they will  
48 actually be the ones implementing the project.

49  
50

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1 MR. SCHAEFFER: Yeah, I was actually  
2 kind of wondering because I didn't see anyone that was  
3 ever mentioned about who was applying for the funds and  
4 who's doing the project.

5  
6 MS. HYER: So if you look down in the  
7 appendix that starts -- Appendix 2, it starts on Page  
8 243, you can see the number of the project, and this is  
9 just a number that we assign so we can track them, and  
10 then the title of the project, and then you can see the  
11 principal investigator and who is actually going to  
12 implement the project if it's funded. That's part of  
13 the executive summary.

14  
15 So for this region, we have the four  
16 projects, and this is all of northern region and the  
17 first project is the Wildlife Conservation Society and  
18 then the second one is Alaska Department of Fish and  
19 Game, and then U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has the  
20 fourth one, and the fifth one I believe is Fish and  
21 Game again -- yes, the fifth one is the Alaska  
22 Department of -- excuse me, the fourth one is Alaska  
23 Department of Fish and Game and that information is all  
24 in Appendix B.

25  
26 Are there any other questions.

27  
28 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah, this is Wilbur  
29 Howarth, lower Kobuk.

30  
31 MS. HYER: Yes.

32  
33 MR. HOWARTH: In 2017 I believe we did  
34 study on the sheefish through their little wings, or  
35 whatever we cut off on the part of the sheefish and get  
36 age groups from them and stuff, Bob, have you guys in  
37 the Kotzebue area notice in the past year or so been  
38 getting these big huge sheefish, those were the 17 year  
39 olds. They were so abundant. So 21 year old right now  
40 -- maybe 20 years old is what you guys have been  
41 getting, and that's why the sheefish was so huge. But  
42 when they were 17 years old there was so much of them,  
43 they were getting them all over the Kobuk River, over  
44 towards the Selawik. So I guess this year we should be  
45 doing another study on them and checking on them. So  
46 I'm glad you guys came up with this one, maybe we need  
47 to do the whitefish now.

48  
49 Thank you.  
50

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1 MS. HYER: Mr. Chairman. Council  
2 members. Are there are any other questions or comments  
3 before I move on.

4  
5 MS. ATORUK: Karen.

6  
7 MS. HYER: Yes, hi, Barb.

8  
9 MS. ATORUK: Hi. Will there be a time  
10 for us to submit some new ideas or new add-in species  
11 or should I do it now?

12  
13 MS. HYER: You know, yes, so the  
14 official time will be -- we start this whole process  
15 over again so I'll be coming back with Dr. Voorhees  
16 next fall, so in a year, and we'll submit the official  
17 list -- we'll work on the official list, but if you  
18 have some thoughts, Barb, I'd be happy to hear them  
19 because it helps me prepare. But I think maybe if we  
20 go through the projects and then if there's something  
21 that you think you want to add on the end, that would  
22 be an excellent time. I'd love to hear what your  
23 thoughts are, if that sounds okay with you.

24  
25 MS. ATORUK: Oh, that's okay, because  
26 in another year I might not be here and my concerns are  
27 the grayling. We haven't had grayling here for awhile  
28 in this kind of study ever since Fred from Fish and  
29 Game left and the did the last study over in Wulik and  
30 also in Point Hope. And I've just seen pictures of the  
31 size of grayling that were just harvested up in Point  
32 Hope and they were like 12 or 13 inches and they were  
33 just amazed at how big those are. And then Fred -- I  
34 can't remember his last name, but with Fish and Game,  
35 said on his report at the time, that it takes 30 years  
36 for a grayling to mature to that size. And his advice  
37 was to the villages, at the time, is to back off in  
38 harvesting so much but just to get enough to get by.  
39 And he said some elders at Kivalina were doing that  
40 because of the depelmentation, the starting to decline,  
41 the size of -- at the time that he's talking about the  
42 grayling then, and also -- so I think the grayling  
43 studies need to come back on board sometime in the  
44 future.

45  
46 Thank you.

47  
48 MS. HYER: Thank you, Barb. I will put  
49 that on the list to bring up when we start on our 2024  
50

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1 priority information needs. I'm always interested in  
2 what people are seeing with fisheries in the region.

3

4 MS. ATORUK: Okay, back on mute.

5

6 MS. HYER: Any other comments or  
7 questions.

8

9 MR. SCHAEFFER: Just one, this is Bob.

10

11 MS. HYER: Hi, Bob.

12

13 MR. SCHAEFFER: Yeah, well, I'm a huge  
14 proponent of local knowledge and at the university did  
15 a good job, and -- and had the Advisory Committee up  
16 here during that entire sea ice study and a number of  
17 us elders were on that -- on that committee, an  
18 advisory committee that just talked about what they  
19 were going to do it and how they were going to do it  
20 and we gave suggestions on a lot of different items as  
21 to what local knowledge because nobody knows -- knows  
22 the country better than we do, nobody knows the fish  
23 and resources better than we do, we've been living with  
24 them and studying them for a long, long time.

25

26 But I just wanted to express the  
27 importance of local knowledge and of course the  
28 university did a wonderful job by working with some of  
29 the local elders. There's not too many of us left that  
30 have the inside knowledge of a lot of the subsistence  
31 resources and as time goes on there'll be even less,  
32 it's just one of those things where we're all getting  
33 old and we still have that knowledge that was passed  
34 down from my dad, you know, and some of the elders back  
35 in the

36 '40s and '50s that are still with us. But anyway I  
37 just wanted to stress the importance of the knowledge --  
38 if there's an RPF coming out for funding, that the  
39 local knowledge emphasis is placed within your  
40 framework of your -- you know, the grants that you are  
41 issuing.

42

43 MS. HYER: Yes, absolutely.

44

45 (Pause)

46

47 MS. HYER: Any other comments or  
48 questions.

49

50



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1 (No comments)

2

3

4 MS. HYER: Okay. All right, so what I  
5 need from the Council today is their thoughts and  
6 comments about the four projects that were proposed for  
7 funding in this region. And this isn't an action item,  
8 we just want to know if the Council has any specific  
9 concerns about the proposals or anything to add. And  
10 so I'll direct you back to the table on Page 239 and I  
11 will be recording your comments and those comments will  
12 be taken back to the Federal Subsistence Board and  
13 included with the TRC's comments and the Staff  
14 Committee comments for their consideration. So I'm  
15 just going to go through this one by one, I'm going to  
16 go through this table and then I'll pause -- I'll give  
17 you a little bit of an overview of each project and  
18 then I'll pause and if you have anything to add, or any  
19 comments, please let me know and I'll record them.

19

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So the first project is Project 21-101,  
Kotzebue Sound sheefish, describing coastal movement,  
temperature preferences and potential range expansion.  
This investigator proposes using satellite telemetry to  
characterize coastal movement of sheefish outside of  
their typical range in Kotzebue Sound. Currently, the  
extent of northerly coastal movement is not well  
understood and may potentially be influenced by climate  
change. Recent changes in movement patterns and  
abundance of sheefish has been observed by local  
subsistence users. Many studies of sheefish have been  
completed during their freshwater phase but little is  
known about their marine behavior. Originally it was  
believed that sheefish did not travel very far up the  
coast while in saltwater but recent local knowledge  
suggest this paradigm may not be true in the context of  
changing climate.

So I am going to pause here and if the  
Council has any comments or concerns about this  
project.

MR. SCHAEFFER: This is Bob, I've got a  
question, or more of a comment, I guess.

MS. HYER: Great, Bob.

MR. SCHAEFFER: Yeah, I know very  
little is known, I know that Fish and Game has always  
been concerned about trying to manage the sheefish but

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1    they -- it's kind of how do you do it when most of the  
2    activity is under the ice, you know, and we don't fish  
3    them in the summertime, you know, they get soft and  
4    then don't taste very good. But when the water gets  
5    cold, and in Kotzebue Sound, of course, and then  
6    Buckland, the Kobuk Lake there's 'a certain amount of  
7    salinity which really aides in making the fish nice and  
8    firm and so good to eat but I know I was talking about  
9    the movement of some of the fish and, you know, the  
10   herring is really, really an important species of fish  
11   because it feeds a lot of other fish and the sheefish  
12   just thrive on them. So when the herring come in in  
13   the late fall and the sheefish come down, you know, to  
14   scarf themselves and they just get super fat in no time  
15   and the sheefish fat are so delicious. But -- but the  
16   whole -- and, you know, the thing of tracking them, I  
17   guess, and see what their movements are would be kind  
18   of a challenge and I think more information that  
19   they're able to gather would better try to understand  
20   what the sheefish do.

21

22                   We were out hunting beluga one time  
23   back, I forgot how many years ago, and we got three  
24   belugas out there about past the Kobuk Channel and took  
25   them in because we wanted to know what they were eating  
26   and when we opened them up, the sheefish had followed  
27   the herring all the way out into the ocean and the  
28   Belugas were stuffed with sheefish and, you know, with --  
29   so different sizes from small to large so, you know,  
30   they do -- they do move out into the ocean into -- and  
31   thrive, I guess and in saltwater as well as freshwater  
32   and -- and so I -- so it always brings the question to  
33   mind, what do they do -- what do they do, where do they  
34   go, we know where they spawn, it's local knowledge in  
35   Selawik, and then the upper Kobuk and the  
36   (Indiscernible) River area, you know, they -- they go  
37   way up there and then they spawn. But it's just the  
38   idea that, you know, you try to gather as much  
39   information as you possibly can so that you can better  
40   manage as the -- does the -- you know as the domestic  
41   pressure on them increases as -- as the Borough  
42   population increases, you know. New road's coming in,  
43   the additional pressure that's going to be placed on  
44   that poor fish is probably going to increase as the  
45   highway expansions there in the upper Kobuk area.

46

47                   So I just thought I'd mention that,  
48   thanks.

49

50

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1 MS. HYER: Thank you. Any other  
2 comments.

3  
4 (No comments)

5  
6 MS. HYER: Mr. Chairman. Council  
7 members. The next project, Project 22-103, Unalakleet  
8 River chinook salmon escapement assessment is down in  
9 the Seward Peninsula. The Unalakleet River supports  
10 the largest chinook salmon subsistence fishery in  
11 Norton Sound, Port Clarence area. The subsistence  
12 fishery occurs primarily under State jurisdiction but  
13 Federal subsistence users participate in the harvest.  
14 Funding for this project would be used to continue  
15 operation of a floating weir on the Unalakleet River to  
16 monitor the chinook salmon passage. The Fisheries  
17 Resource Monitoring Program has funded the Unalakleet  
18 River since 2010. The results from this project will  
19 continue to provide chinook salmon in-season daily  
20 passage estimates and run timing. This information  
21 aides Federal and State managers in making in-season  
22 and post-season decisions.

23  
24 And I'm going to pause here and see if  
25 the Council has any comments or recommendations for  
26 this particular project.

27  
28 (Pause)

29  
30 MS. HYER: Okay. Let's move on to  
31 Project 22-194, this is back in your backyard. Selawik  
32 River sheefish population estimate. A permafrost slump  
33 located about 40 kilometers up stream from the sheefish  
34 spawning area in the Selawik River began admitting  
35 large amounts of sediment into the river in 2004. The  
36 Selawik River below this slump at times became turbid  
37 during the summer months transporting huge quantities  
38 of sediment down stream potentially having a negative  
39 effect on the habitat for spawning fish. In 2012 the  
40 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program began funding  
41 investigators to monitor the annual abundance and age  
42 structure of the Selawik River sheefish spawning  
43 population to determine if the sediment emitted from  
44 the permafrost slump impacted the population over time.  
45 The investigators were not able to establish an effect  
46 from the slump but recommended subsequent age data  
47 collection in five years to confirm their findings.  
48 And this proposal addresses that second request for age  
49 data collection. I need to point out that in the book  
50

0177

1 there is an error in the cost, and so I just wanted to  
2 point out, for the record, that this project, the cost  
3 for 2024 for this project are 126,682, and the cost for  
4 2025 should be \$34,036, so that is an error in the  
5 printed book.

6  
7 So I'm just going to pause here and see  
8 if there are any comments or concerns about this  
9 project.

10  
11 MR. HOWARTH: Yes, this is Wilbur  
12 Howarth.

13  
14 MS. HYER: Hi Wilbur.

15  
16 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah, this sheefish up  
17 the Selawik, we had a meeting here with the Fish and  
18 Game, I believe, when they did the counting and we --  
19 they got some samples of the aging of these fish and I  
20 believe we did lots of that so they are -- they wanted  
21 to do another deal on, you know, seeing how much --  
22 because they had a tough time counting that year, in  
23 2004 area because of the land slide they had up there,  
24 way up above the Selawik.

25  
26 MS. HYER: Uh-huh.

27  
28 MR. HOWARTH: And they tried counting  
29 fish, how much sheefish goes up there and we never hear  
30 any more counts being done on the sheefish but at least  
31 we know the aging and stuff and how much sheefish there  
32 is and there is still plenty. Because these sheefish  
33 they live to 40 years old. So, thank you.

34  
35 MS. HYER: Thank you, Wilbur. Is there  
36 anybody else.

37  
38 MS. SWEENEY: Hi, Karen. Hi, Council  
39 Members. This is Brittany Sweeney from Selawik Refuge.  
40 May I comment.

41  
42 MS. HYER: Absolutely, Brittany.

43  
44 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, please, Brittany.

45  
46 MS. SWEENEY: Okay, thanks. I just  
47 wanted to respond a little bit to what Wilbur said.  
48 So, yes, Selawik Refuge, our fish biologist Bill  
49 Carter, is not able to be on the call today but we've  
50

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1 been one of the people cooperating in the Selawik  
2 sheefish research over the years. And, you're right,  
3 Wilbur, this has been sort of an ongoing project for a  
4 number of years because we do want to keep an eye on  
5 that sheefish population over the long-term especially  
6 because of that soft slump and how, you know, it can  
7 continue to be active at times. So, you're right, we  
8 have done population counts or using sonar and also  
9 looked at the otoliths, the ear bones, to do the aging  
10 of the fish so I believe that the proposal for this  
11 year is to just come back and get another set of data  
12 to compare with and keep an eye on compared to what we  
13 had before. Because we're still trying to understand  
14 the population dynamics of the sheefish because they do  
15 live so long, you know, there's certain groups that  
16 stay in the population and those big fish sometimes eat  
17 the younger fish and then the younger fish don't  
18 survive until those older ones age out. So we're still  
19 trying to -- I think some of the reason for this  
20 project is to understand some of those population  
21 dynamics as well as continuing to monitor the numbers  
22 of fish in the Selawik River after the slump.

23

24 So hopefully that gives a little  
25 background. I don't know if Ray Hander is on the call,  
26 he's another person that's been involved in that work.

27

28 Thank you.

29

30 MS. HYER: Thank you, Brittany.

31

32 MR. HANDER: Yes, Mr. Chair, this is  
33 Ray Hander. If anybody has any further questions, I  
34 think Brittany did a really great job of describing  
35 where our project has been and wants to go but I'm here  
36 if you need me.

37

38 Thank you.

39

40 MR. HOWARTH: This is Wilbur Howarth  
41 again. Maybe Brittany might know this, are they doing  
42 any studies up the Kobuk where the sheefish spawned  
43 because I think that some of these sheefish that goes  
44 up the Selawik, they also come up the Kobuk, if I'm  
45 correct.

46

47 MS. SWEENEY: Hi, Wilbur.

48

49 MR. HANDER: Mr. Chair, this is.....

50

0179

1 MS. SWEENEY: Through the Chair.

2

3 MR. HANDER: Oh, sorry.

4

5 MS. SWEENEY: Oh, yep, this is  
6 Brittany.

7

8 MR. HANDER: Oh, go -- sorry, go ahead.

9

10 MS. SWEENEY: No, I was going.....

11

12 MR. HANDER: No, go ahead, yeah.

13

14 MS. SWEENEY: .....to -- yeah, so we  
15 have two sheefish spawning populations in our region  
16 which are separate. The ones that spawn on the Selawik  
17 River always go back to the Selawik River. And then  
18 there's another spawning population on the upper Kobuk  
19 and they do mix together in the winter and so the  
20 harvest and Kotzebue area, and wherever, are harvesting  
21 from both of those and they mix together in their  
22 rearing population. So while this project that's up  
23 doesn't do too much on the Kobuk, we do get samples  
24 from Fish and Game to compare the age structures but  
25 I'll let Ray talk more about the work because he's the  
26 expert on that subject.

27

28 So, thank you.

29

30 MR. HOWARTH: Thank you.

31

32 MR. HANDER: Yes, Mr. Chair, this is  
33 Ray Hander.

34

35 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, go ahead, Ray.

36

37 MR. HANDER: Okay. Hi, Wilbur. Yes,  
38 over the years, to address your first question there,  
39 there have been a number of tagging studies, oh, boy,  
40 from probably from the 1980s all the way through the  
41 2000s that have done studies on both the Kobuk and  
42 Selawik River sheefish and none of those tags -- let me  
43 back up -- the tags, they are put on in the fall where  
44 the sheefish are separated into their spawning rivers  
45 on the Kobuk and Selawik, and then those fish go back  
46 out in the wintertime and mix, like Brittany was  
47 saying, but as far as we know they do not go up -- the  
48 Selawik fish don't go up the Kobuk and the Kobuk don't  
49 go up the Selawik River and so it's an interesting deal  
50

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1 there. And, yeah, I'll leave it at that, if that  
2 answers your question.

3

4 MR. HOWARTH: Okay, thank you.

5

6 MS. HYER: Mr. Chairman. Council  
7 members. Any more questions or comments before I move  
8 on to our last project.

9

10 MR. SCHAEFFER: Ma'am, I have one -- I  
11 guess it's more of a comment.

12

13 MS. HYER: Absolutely, go ahead.

14

15 MR. SCHAEFFER: Yeah, I like what  
16 they're doing. I think it's really important to keep  
17 track of it and when you talk about global warming and  
18 its affect on our poor rivers, you know, and as -- as  
19 time goes on, so it becomes a real issue, as those  
20 rivers heat up, how is it going to affect -- affect the  
21 salmon, chinook, chum, kings, we're seeing a lot less  
22 of that.

23

24 Like, for example this year, you know,  
25 it was kind of a scary situation because I was hoping  
26 that we'd have a couple of days to dry out but it never  
27 happened and, you know, we worry about the salmon going  
28 up the Noatak and Kobuk Rivers and the rivers are at  
29 that flood stage and where are they going to lay their  
30 eggs, you know, and then they're going to go on to the  
31 first sand bar up that -- that -- up their spawning  
32 rivers that they normally go and they spawn on the sand  
33 bars and the river drops and, of course, the sand bars  
34 show up.

35

36 (Teleconference interference -  
37 participants not muted)

38

39

40 MR. SCHAEFFER: So we could anticipate  
41 that this is going to affect the population of the  
42 salmon going up those streams tremendously. But I  
43 think what they're doing is trying to monitor it and I  
44 like that idea, I think it's a good proposal and I  
45 think -- I think it should be -- I like what they're --  
46 anyway I just thought -- I thought I'd mention that  
47 because I think something like that on Kobuk and  
48 Noatak.....

49

50

0181

1 (Teleconference interference -  
2 participants not muted)

3

4 MR. SCHAEFFER: .....would be  
5 (indiscernible) because we're not getting salmon up the  
6 Kobuk like we used to. They're -- you know, the  
7 numbers just aren't there anymore and I think there's a  
8 reason for it and we need something like this so -- so  
9 keep good close tabs on what they're -- like what's  
10 happening within the Unalakleet River seems like a good  
11 start for them.

12

13 (Teleconference interference -  
14 participants not muted)

15

16 REPORTER: Could we have some people  
17 mute their phones please.

18

19 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, I agree.

20

21 MR. SCHAEFFER: Hello.

22

23 MR. HOWARTH: It sounds like someone is  
24 outside.....

25

26 MR. SCHAEFFER: It sounds.....

27

28 MS. WESSELS: Excuse me, this is Katya  
29 Wessels. Somebody does not have their phone on mute. I  
30 apologize but please mute your phones because we can  
31 hear you walking, please mute your phones if you're not  
32 talking.

33

34 (Teleconference interference -  
35 participants not muted)

36

37 REPORTER: Hi, this is Tina, the  
38 reporter. Could we all take a second, look at our  
39 phone and mute it. We're hearing a background  
40 conversation, people walking outside, if you could we  
41 could hear the presenters then. Thomas, go ahead.

42

43 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Tina.  
44 Karen, did you have anything.....

45

46 MS. HYER: Yes.

47

48 CHAIRMAN BAKER: .....else on 22-104  
49 that we were looking at.

50



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1 MS. HYER: I don't think so, I think  
2 we're ready to move on to 22-105 [sic], and this is the  
3 last proposal for a project in your area so I'll go  
4 over that.

5  
6 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Is it 22-150, or 105,  
7 I have it as 150 in mine.

8  
9 MS. HYER: I'm sorry, I misspoke if I  
10 said 105, it's 22-150, I apologize.

11  
12 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Okay, thank you.

13  
14 MS. HYER: Thank you for correcting  
15 that. Okay. Traditional ecological knowledge of  
16 salmon in the river drainages of Kotzebue Sound. This  
17 is a two year project that will contribute to the  
18 understanding of the effects of environmental change on  
19 salmon in Northwest Arctic, as well as the shifting  
20 capacity for subsistence uses in Ambler, Noorvik and  
21 Kotzebue to harvest them. This project updates the  
22 traditional ecological knowledge work funded through  
23 the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program in 2012.  
24 Researchers will investigate subsistence use for all  
25 four species of Pacific salmon on the Noatak River and  
26 all five species of Pacific salmon on the Kobuk River.  
27 The investigator will interview subsistence harvesters  
28 about traditional knowledge of salmon ecology, map  
29 historical and contemporary subsistence harvest  
30 locations and observe fish migration.

31  
32 So I'm interested in any comments or  
33 concerns that the Council has about this last project.

34  
35 MR. HOWARTH: Hello, it's Wilbur.

36  
37 MS. HYER: Hello, Wilbur.

38  
39 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah, that salmon that's  
40 been tested, I believe, almost every summer if I'm  
41 right, below Kiana with the Fish and Game, what are  
42 they really doing, taking samples or -- because I  
43 notice every year they're gathering salmon and giving  
44 them out -- giving them to the people up in Kiana.  
45 Maybe Barbara might know more about this than me.  
46 Because these salmon comes up both rivers. One year  
47 they would hit the channel area, which goes into the  
48 Riley and down to the mouth of the Kobuk River, we have  
49 so much names, and then on the other side they would  
50

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1 come in in different year so some years we don't get  
2 them and this Kobuk River side, which they come up the  
3 main Kobuk River, and then the other river on that  
4 side, towards the north or -- anyways, they go through  
5 there. So we really don't know much in this Noorvik,  
6 how the salmon are doing, how many, so those people are  
7 they doing counts up there, I'm wondering, Fish and  
8 Game.

9

10 MS. HYER: Mr. Chairman. Council  
11 members. That's the Alaska Department of Fish and  
12 Game's test fishery. And Ray Hander or Barbara, either  
13 may be able to add details, if either is on the line.

14

15 MS. ATORUK: Mr. Chair.

16

17 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes.

18

19 MS. ATORUK: This is Barb. Well, for  
20 some years now since I've been here in Kiana, Fish and  
21 Game has been doing studies, at first they were doing  
22 studies with sheefish. They were taking out right on  
23 top of the head, down to the nose, like a V, and they  
24 were taking those off when they caught the sheefish.  
25 But this summer they didn't. They have a local person  
26 who does gillnetting with a helper, but they had  
27 technical difficulties this summer and then, plus, the  
28 river was so high for a long time that they finally  
29 gave up. But Henry, Sr., (In Native), he put his net  
30 out and stuff and then shared a lot with the local  
31 people which made us very happy because we hardly got  
32 any salmon when the other fisheries were on. So I  
33 don't know what kind of count they're doing, Fish and  
34 Game, with the salmon now, or if they're just setting  
35 locally. And I haven't heard any report on that or  
36 heard why they are still doing it, if they're doing  
37 that -- I know they're not doing any more sheefish  
38 count because the first time they set they caught a lot  
39 of sheefish, and I ran down there and they didn't know  
40 what to do with it, or -- they had been announcing who  
41 would like sheefish, and I told them -- I just asked  
42 them, I said, since they were out and busy with this  
43 stuff I said, just bring it by my house, I'll work on  
44 them, and they did that and then shortly after that  
45 salmon were slow coming in, for a very long time, even  
46 when Henry set, they weren't really that -- up here  
47 until late August. And so I don't know what's going  
48 on, if they're doing salmon studies then or if they're  
49 just checking to see how many salmon they've caught and  
50

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1 just counting by numbers.

2

3 That's all I've seen here. Thank you.

4

5 MR. HOWARTH: Thank you, Barb.

6

7 MR. HANDER: Yes, Mr. Chair, this is Ray  
8 Hander.

9

10 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, go ahead, Ray.

11

12 MR. HANDER: Yes, Sir. If there is no  
13 Alaska Department of Fish and Game person online that  
14 can address this I think I can do a reasonable job from  
15 a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service perspective there.

16

17 (No comments)

18

19 MR. HANDER: Yes, so maybe hearing  
20 none, so the Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
21 operates a chum salmon test fishery there and that is  
22 through the Commercial Fisheries Division, that office  
23 base for that part of the state is in Nome. And from  
24 2011 to 2018, like Mrs. Atoruk was speaking, the U.S.  
25 Fish and Wildlife Service and the Alaska Department of  
26 Fish and Game were cooperating on the project that Ms.  
27 Hyer spoke about that we did on the sheefish from 2011  
28 to 2018 taking the ear bones and doing sonar counts.  
29 We also had cooperated -- or the Alaska Department of  
30 Fish and Game cooperated with us to be able to get age,  
31 sex, and length data from Kobuk River sheefish so for  
32 those eight years, 2011 through 2018, those sheefish  
33 were being distributed to the community of Kiana and  
34 maybe others close by there. So that's kind of where  
35 the sheefish part came in. And, yes, so 2019, 2020,  
36 and 2021 those sheefish weren't being analyzed like  
37 they had been in the recent past.

38

39 And the Alaska Department of Fish and  
40 Game, they've been running the chum salmon test fishery  
41 for quite a number of years and they are -- their goal  
42 mainly is to estimate abundance of the number of chum  
43 salmon going up the Kobuk River, and they take age,  
44 sex, and length data from those fish as they go by to  
45 help their management practices.

46

47 If that helps out, great, and if  
48 there's any Fish and Game persons on board, you can  
49 help clean up my description.

50

0185

1 Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Ray.

4 Anybody else have any questions.

5

6 (No comments)

7

8 MS. HYER: Mr. Chairman. Council

9 members. If there are no other questions or comments,

10 that concludes my presentation. I have everything I

11 need from you and I appreciate all your comments.

12

13 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Karen. Any

14 final questions or comments for Karen on her

15 presentations.

16

17 MR. SCHAEFFER: Just one, Tom.

18

19 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yeah, go ahead, Bobby.

20

21 MR. SCHAEFFER: Can you hear me?

22

23 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, I can hear you.

24

25 MR. SCHAEFFER: Hello -- okay. Yeah, I

26 just think -- I think more should be done, I -- I don't

27 know -- like I can attest to global warming and what

28 it's doing to us up here, you know, we're all feeling

29 the effects of it, if it's not the excess heat then

30 it's something like we had this summer, we had three

31 months of rain. And, you know, it's going to affect

32 our salmon, so the mortality rate is probably going to

33 be pretty high this year and the escapement is probably

34 not going to be very, very good four years from now.

35 But I think the more that we do and -- insofar as

36 understanding how global warming is going to affect the

37 species, the four species that we do have up here, you

38 know, it's going to be interesting. For the first

39 time, you know, the last couple years, we got so much

40 doggone pinks, it was like crazy how they just showed

41 up from somewhere and -- and I've been fishing

42 commercially since 1962 for Godssake and, you know,

43 it's -- it's just something that we've never seen

44 before. But we've always watched -- watch the fishery

45 from year to year and, you know, my -- my dad used to

46 always worry about the wet summers and he said in four

47 years from now it's not going to be good, the returns

48 are not going to be as good because the mortality rate

49 is going to be too high up the rivers. And I've been

50

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1 keeping track of those things and with the Department --  
2 from Fish and Game, and, you know, fish and wildlife  
3 is really important, I think -- God knows what's in  
4 store for us next summer. But I -- I just hope it's a  
5 better summer than we had this summer, if it's not the  
6 excess heat it's too much water so one thing after  
7 another, I guess. I -- I worry about the species very  
8 much, the four species of salmon, I -- I -- you know,  
9 when we have a summer like this you know that mortality  
10 rate for the -- especially the eggs is going to be  
11 high, there's washout and then also, you know, spawning  
12 on -- on sand bars that are normally dry during --  
13 during the winter months and so the -- the more work  
14 that we can get no salmon, more studies done on them,  
15 maybe the more we will understand what we can do to try  
16 to -- you know to try to -- you know to save our salmon  
17 runs.

18

19 Thank you.

20

21 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair, it's Wilbur.

22

23 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, go ahead, Wilbur.

24

25 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah, Karen. To get  
26 these fundings to do more studies, I would like to see  
27 studies being done on whitefish. Right now some of our  
28 locals still have nets out and we're getting the (In  
29 Native), they're probably -- that's the blunt-nosed  
30 whitefish, the huge ones we put away for eating, with a  
31 lot of eggs, but right now they're eggs -- once they  
32 come out of the water they just ooze out, but they're  
33 heading up -- up the Kobuk. Anyways one guy showed us  
34 a picture of the whitefish with a big 'ol giant bump  
35 right next to its head by the gill area and it looks  
36 pretty terrible. For me, anyways, as a subsistence  
37 person fishing all the time, I had my net out -- I just  
38 fished three days, and put enough away for the winter.  
39 But I'm concerned about the whitefish. They've been  
40 going up early, I believe, while the river is wide  
41 open, and, yes, we did have a lot of high water and it  
42 was kind of hard on fishing.

43

44 So, thank you.

45

46 MS. SWEENEY: Mr. Chair, this is  
47 Brittany Sweeney again.

48

49 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, go ahead,

50

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1     Brittany.

2

3

4                     MS. SWEENEY:    Hi.    I'd like to give  
5 more information on Wilbur's question if I could.    So  
6 Selawik Refuge has a Facebook page and we did receive a  
7 message on that Facebook page from a community member  
8 in Noorvik that included that picture -- or a picture  
9 of an abnormal looking whitefish.    So I sent that photo  
10 to some of the fish biologists, including Ray, that are  
11 on this call and the information that I got from Randy  
12 Brown, who specializes in whitefish, that, he said  
13 sometimes individual fish can get tumors, abscesses, or  
14 other sorts of growth on them for one reason or another  
15 and while they're somewhat rare they're not totally  
16 unusual.    And I asked him if there -- if, you know,  
17 looking at the picture if there would be any cause for  
18 concern about the safety of fish to eat, other fish  
19 that were caught in the same net with that fish and he  
20 said, yeah, I'd probably feed that one to my dogs, but  
21 those sorts of things would not tarnish any other fish.

21

22

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So hopefully, Wilbur, that answers that concern for you.    And any time that people have questions like that you're welcome to contact us at the Refuge, pictures are great on our Facebook page because that helps us, and then I could reach out to folks.

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Thank you.

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MR. HOWARTH:    Thank you, Brittany.  
Maybe I'll be calling you soon.

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CHAIRMAN BAKER:   If there are no other questions or comments, thank you, Karen, for all the information that you presented today, and I hope you got some meaningful input that will help moving forward.

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MS. HYER:       Yes, Mr. Chairman and Council members, I did. And I appreciate everybody's input, it's always good to hear what's going on up in the Northwest.

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CHAIRMAN BAKER:   All right, thank you.  
So with that, I'd like to propose that we take a 15 minute break before we move on to the identifying issues for the 2021 annual report.   Does anyone have any issues with that.

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1 (No comments)

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, it's now  
4 10:40 so we'll come back together at 10:55. Thanks  
5 everyone.

6

7 (Off record)

8

9 (On record)

10

11 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, it is now  
12 10:55, this is Chair Thomas Baker.

13

14 (Pause)

15

16 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Next on the agenda is  
17 Item E, identify issues for fiscal year 2021 annual  
18 report and I believe that'll be Katya that will be  
19 taking the floor on this one.

20

21 MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
22 Members of the Council. For the record my name is  
23 Katya Wessels, and I'm Council Coordination Division  
24 Supervisor with OSM. And the briefing on the annual  
25 report is located on Page 252 of your Council meeting  
26 materials book. I just wanted to talk briefly about  
27 the annual report mostly for the benefit of the newer  
28 Council members.

29

30 Section .805 of ANILCA, Title VIII, it  
31 outlines the Council's right to submit an annual report  
32 to the Federal Subsistence Board. Basically each  
33 Council, each of the 10 Councils, one is yours,  
34 Northwest Arctic Council, are advisors to the Federal  
35 Subsistence Board and you provide advice in two  
36 different ways; one, your comment on the fisheries and  
37 wildlife proposals and closure reviews, this is one of  
38 the ways you provide advice; the other advice you  
39 provide through the annual report. The annual report  
40 is your opportunity to submit your concerns about  
41 subsistence uses of fish and wildlife in your region.  
42 And Section .805 of ANILCA, Title VIII specifies that the  
43 Council should think about the current and anticipated  
44 subsistence uses of fish and wildlife populations in  
45 your region; it should also talk about the needs for  
46 fish and wildlife populations within the region,  
47 current and anticipated needs; other topics that can be  
48 included in the annual report can be your proposed  
49 strategy for the management of fish and wildlife

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1 populations within your region to accommodate such  
2 subsistence uses and needs; and, also the Council can  
3 provide recommendations concerning policies, guidelines  
4 and regulations to implement the strategy for  
5 management of fish and wildlife.

6

7 The Council should talk on the record  
8 about the topics that you would like to put in your  
9 annual report. This will be the FY fiscal year 2021  
10 annual report. And you will develop the topics during  
11 this meeting and then the OSM Staff by your winter 2022  
12 meeting will have a draft annual report. The Council  
13 will have an opportunity to review this draft annual  
14 report during your winter 2022 meeting. And at that  
15 time you can make additions or corrections in your  
16 report. Then after that the annual report is signed by  
17 the Chair and submitted to the Federal Subsistence  
18 Board and then the Federal Subsistence Board reviews  
19 your report and replies the reply to the topics that  
20 you brought to the Board's attention.

21

22 So I would -- you know, at this point  
23 I'm just going to open the floor to the Council, any  
24 Council member who has an idea of what topics should be  
25 put in the annual report. Just, please state the  
26 issues that you would like to put in the annual report  
27 and have a little bit of discussion on that topic. And  
28 it could be as few as one topic in your annual report  
29 or it could be many, you know, five, eight, 10,  
30 whatever the Council feels is important for your region  
31 and whatever you feel is important to bring to the  
32 Board's attention.

33

34 So, please, I'm opening the floor to  
35 the Council members to talk about proposed topics.

36

37 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Katya.  
38 This is Thomas. So one of the things that the Board  
39 has been -- the Council has been talking about a lot in  
40 the few meetings we've had is the trend in caribou  
41 harvesting in Game Unit 23, basically in that not many  
42 communities, not many members of communities in our  
43 Game Unit are able to successfully able to harvest  
44 caribou during the typical fall season that we  
45 traditionally would in large part due to the numbers of  
46 non-Federally-qualified subsistence users,  
47 predominately people from outside of the region and  
48 outside of the state of Alaska coming into the Game  
49 Unit to hunt caribou during that same season as we do

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1 and leading to what's been branded as the herd being  
2 displaced and interruptions with the migration pattern.  
3 I feel that this would be something that the Council  
4 should discuss now, if anyone has any opinions on it.

5

6 MS. WESSELS: I think that's a good  
7 topic, Tom, you know, to add to your annual report.  
8 You know if Council members would like to contribute to  
9 this topic that would be great. We also can reach out  
10 to Council members outside of this meeting, since you  
11 proposed this topic for your report, if Council members  
12 don't have any feedback right now, we can reach out to  
13 them also outside of the meeting. But it would be  
14 great if the other Council members could talk about  
15 that right now as well.

16

17 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Katya. Do  
18 any members want to talk about the caribou situation  
19 and how we can put that into our report going to the  
20 Subsistence Board.

21

22 MR. SCHAEFFER: Hello, Tom.

23

24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Is that Bob.

25

26 MR. SCHAEFFER: Yeah, I guess I got  
27 something. I was really disappointed in their lack of  
28 action on our proposal to close commercial hunting in  
29 the Federal lands around there. I felt that all the  
30 testimony that I listened to and the Board, you know,  
31 at that time, at least our Committee made a strong  
32 statement and, near and dear to our hearts, of course,  
33 is, you know, the preservation of our herd, making sure  
34 that it's healthy and it hasn't been, you know, for a  
35 number of reasons. And I was kind of disappointed in  
36 their lack of action. I just felt that out of all the  
37 effort that we made to try to, you know, lessen the  
38 pressure on that poor herd because it's eyeballed by  
39 every sportsman in the world now, I guess, and just,  
40 you know, you only have 230,000 left and you got  
41 230,000 sportsmen who want to come up and get a  
42 caribou, it makes no biological sense. So I just felt  
43 that there's a number of factors working against our  
44 herd, you know, global warming has played -- and has --  
45 and it's proven that it's played a really, really  
46 tremendous role in their behavior, you know, because  
47 they haven't come down, they haven't migrated, they've  
48 just sort of haphazardly -- you know I was talking with  
49 the Fish and Game -- and listening at the last meeting,

50

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1 you know, God, they went as far as the Haul Road, you  
2 know, trying to -- God knows what they were doing, you  
3 know, and they met up with the Teshekpuk Herd and  
4 summered over there for awhile and then I guess most of  
5 them headed back. And there's -- there's a huge  
6 contingent of our herd had wintered around Anaktuvuk  
7 Pass and over there in Noatak Valley and so it's hard  
8 to tell the norm, you know, we don't really look at it  
9 from that perspective but the Fish and Game does, and  
10 they were wondering why they were doing that. And --  
11 but, you know, with the changes that are happening  
12 today with the global warming stuff, there's longer  
13 summers, there's warmer winters, things that are --  
14 that are changing that are probably confusing the norm  
15 some.

16  
17 I think, you know, that the poor animal  
18 has so much pressure against it that it's just reacting  
19 to the changing times today.

20  
21 I guess I'm concerned about that herd  
22 because I was -- when I was being raised back in the  
23 '50s, you know, it was a little different then. You  
24 know winters were a little more -- were cold and you  
25 were guaranteed it was going to get 50 below up here,  
26 you know, in December and January and you don't see  
27 that no more. But in a nutshell I just -- I just -- I  
28 think the changes are happening, people are wondering  
29 why they're not following their usual routes that they  
30 normally follow during the annual migrations but, you  
31 know, when things change so drastically they -- they  
32 have to react and their reaction is out of the norm and  
33 -- and it's just something that I think we're going to  
34 have to deal with in the future.

35  
36 Anyway, I thought I'd mention that.  
37 You know, anything that we can do to try to preserve  
38 our herd and keep it strong is something that we should  
39 do, and I think there's been a recommendation to the  
40 Federal Subsistence Board, a legitimate one, and then  
41 that -- that -- you know, it becomes a matter of  
42 dollars, you know, the State gets a lot of money from  
43 all those non-residents that comes up here and hunts  
44 our herd. And the herds up here are the only ones left  
45 in the state, it's pretty much decimated all the other  
46 herds, and the population growth the way it's going and  
47 there's going to be more pressure on them and I just  
48 think we have to stand tall and try to put more  
49 pressure on the managers of our herd to, you know, to  
50

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1 do more than just react to big money and -- and try to  
2 do their jobs and -- and make recommendations that are  
3 to the benefit of the herd.

4

5 Thanks.

6

7 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Bob. Does  
8 anyone else have any comments at this time or any  
9 further discussion.

10

11 MS. ATORUK: Mr. Chair.

12

13 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes.

14

15 MS. ATORUK: This is Barb. I concur  
16 with what Bobby says. We need to keep on top of our  
17 caribou. We need more reports on transporters and who  
18 is giving out the permits to be hunting up there.  
19 Because I hear, heard real loud this fall that there  
20 was a lot of planes up there and a lot of hunters did  
21 come through, a lot of camouflage in Kotzebue passing  
22 through, over and back. And we need to first -- at  
23 first, get a hold of that, and start to control it more  
24 because we are the ones that live here and survive on  
25 caribou. Even Anaktuvuk Pass, this fall, we have one  
26 person from Shungnak that lives up there, has been for  
27 awhile, and they didn't get their caribou until after  
28 we got ours and that's late. And the hunting period  
29 time for these hunters in this region this fall was  
30 very short because they had just started crossing one  
31 day and the next day the ice came and a lot of them  
32 almost got stuck up there so -- but apparently it  
33 warmed up again and melted the ice and they went back  
34 out.

35

36 So we need to be on top of that. We  
37 need the reports on those transporters and the hunters  
38 and a lot of money is coming through with that and we  
39 need to know who is giving the permits for these  
40 hunters to be happening.

41

42 And then we need to be on top of the  
43 other stuff like our salmon, the beaver, our moose, and  
44 like earlier I mentioned, the grayling. The last  
45 person, whoever did a study in this region, including  
46 Point Hope and Wulik is Fred DeCicco from the State, so  
47 we need to ask and do another study on the grayling  
48 again please.

49

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1 I think that's all I have, thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Barb. Any  
4 other discussion regarding comments on our caribou herd  
5 for the annual report.

6

7 MR. SHIEDT: Attamuk here.

8

9 MR. BALLOT: This is Percy Ballot from  
10 Buckland.

11

12 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Attamuk, please.

13

14 MR. SHIEDT: Go ahead and get Percy,  
15 I'll wait.

16

17 MR. BALLOT: Okay, thank you, Attamuk.  
18 Good to hear you guys again, it's been awhile since we  
19 have any kind of meeting regarding our resources  
20 especially the ones we subsist on. And while I've been  
21 out of it a little bit I still know what's going on  
22 from our hunters out here. It's now end of October and  
23 we're still looking for the herd here and, you know,  
24 people are asking and asking and asking.....

25

26 (Teleconference interference -  
27 participants not muted)

28

29 MR. BALLOT: Can you hear me?

30

31 MS. WESSELS: I'm sorry, someone --  
32 yeah, we can hear you. Someone doesn't have their  
33 phone muted. If you're not actively speaking please  
34 mute your phones, star six.

35

36 MR. BALLOT: Okay. So as I'm talking  
37 here, this group has provided some good comments in  
38 regards to what's going on with the herd now and we  
39 don't know the full story, we need to know the full  
40 story and make our managers accountable. The Western  
41 Arctic Caribou Herd has the meeting December 15th and I  
42 don't know where, what information they share, I've  
43 been an alternate all these years, but Ron Moto has  
44 always made those meetings and I think we need to get  
45 him -- make them a little more accountable for their  
46 responsibilities as managers or whatever, for the  
47 Western Arctic Caribou Herd. The Western Arctic  
48 Caribou Herd winters here along the Buckland area, and  
49 it used to be near here and now it's going down farther  
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0194

1 to Unalakleet and all those places, Elim, wherever.

2

3 But we hear a lot that they're having a  
4 hard time too.

5

6 And now all we hear is there's a lot of  
7 planes over that way, up there, running around and we  
8 don't know those numbers. I'm pretty sure our local  
9 guides out of Kotzebue report what they do but I'm  
10 pretty sure these (indiscernible) planes, they -- they  
11 come out of Kivalina or wherever, we don't know who  
12 they are and who they're bringing, who they're dropping  
13 off and what they're doing except you hear a lot of  
14 people going and here and there with antlers and stuff.  
15 And we need to make somebody accountable to see if --  
16 where's the meat, at least give them to the people, the  
17 people need it, we live on that stuff. And it's just  
18 like -- it's helped our mental, our culture and our  
19 health.

20

21 So I hope that we could make a  
22 statement to the Western Arctic Caribou Herd and  
23 ourself too that the State or whoever, the Feds, need  
24 to be a little more accountable.

25

26 I heard you mention the RAC Members, I  
27 used to be there for 20 years or so and I didn't hear  
28 our member's name on there. I don't know if he's still  
29 on there, Ramey Jr., if he's still on there or not, but  
30 I don't know if we ever going to plan to have a group  
31 meeting with them, it might be -- a teleconference  
32 might be helpful for us with the Western Arctic Caribou  
33 Herd status, health, or whatever, update, might be good  
34 for us. We're all managers after the State and Feds,  
35 and try to get some common grounds or sharing of  
36 information that might make the herd last longer.  
37 We're right on the fine line as I understand it,  
38 several years ago, and if we're not doing something to --  
39 you know, Western Science and local knowledge, to work  
40 together, we need to get that married and we need to  
41 get together about how to best manage the herd in the  
42 coming years otherwise we will have no herd. What  
43 happened back in the '50s or '60s when we had 70,000 or  
44 something like that, that's pretty scary to see that  
45 stuff coming up. I heard you ask -- people have a good  
46 talk with those folks and discussion with whoever about  
47 the herd itself.

48

49 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Percy.

50

0195

1 This is Thomas Baker, I'm the Chair of the RAC, and I  
2 just remind everyone while comments are much  
3 appreciated right now, we're just looking to hear from  
4 members of the RAC to comment on this for our annual  
5 report. But what you're saying is greatly appreciated  
6 and echoed by a lot of us on the RAC, and I believe  
7 Attamuk had something he was going to say.

8

9 MR. SHIEDT: Yeah, thank you, Percy.

10 What I am going to say is this, that to begin with I'm  
11 going to go back a little bit. We talk about the  
12 Ambler Road earlier, I think what we need is a  
13 representative from this Board here to attend the  
14 Ambler Road discussions that are happening. And we  
15 need one to the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working  
16 Group from the Federal Board, we need to have a seat in  
17 there because they will look for our help, the Western  
18 Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group to get directions,  
19 because they have to go through the State of Alaska  
20 Board of Game. The problem we're having is it's not on  
21 the Federal lands, it's on the State lands that  
22 transporters and outfitters go out and disperse our  
23 caribou on their migration route. And we have to ask  
24 our -- the people that sit on the Western Arctic  
25 Caribou Herd Working Group to try to put their foot  
26 down to help us, we're crying about it. And the more I  
27 thought about it, the more I see it. I think the  
28 migration of the caribou is going back to the '50s  
29 where they never go south for the summer. If -- that's  
30 how it used to be in the '50s. People used to go way  
31 above Selawik and way up Noatak behind Point Lay and  
32 Wainwright to get caribou, maybe that's what's  
33 happening and we're not thinking about. Think about  
34 it. In the '50s they used to have to go up north to  
35 get caribou because they feeling the pressure from the  
36 transporters and outfitters dropping off hunters.

37

38 Just like the beluga, for an example,  
39 when we bother them they move. And I think that's  
40 what's happening, I don't know, it's just a thought.  
41 Think about it.

42

43 And I think we need a seat in the  
44 Ambler Road and the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working  
45 Group. Because Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working  
46 Group have to go through the Board of Game to get  
47 anything approved, they're just like more -- if we talk  
48 to -- a little bit different -- at least at the Board  
49 here and the Board level we could stop them from coming  
50

0196

1 into the Federal lands.

2

3

Thank you.

4

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CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Attamuk.

6

Any other Council members wanting to comment on the caribou situation for the annual report.

7

8

9

MR. HOWARTH: This is Wilbur, Mr.

10 Chair.

11

12

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Wilbur.

13

14

15

MR. HOWARTH: Yeah, if we go back to Page 157, Council, and look at this and you notice the State administered lands. I see that the closures, they closed some of that area and that's the green part, and I believe that's where most of the planes are dropping off hunters and that's State land, I believe. Would we, or the NANA get with the State and if we closed that area that's where most of the hunters are that comes in, flys in. If we could get control of that area, I'm sure we should be getting caribou running through our area because we're not getting any caribou down this way and there's so much State land yet, so we need to get control of our land.

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Thank you.

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CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur.

31

Any other comments regarding caribou.

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MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah, this is Elmer.

34

35

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, go ahead, Elmer.

36

37

38

MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah, I was kind of disappointed in the Federal Board deferring our Wildlife Special Action request. You know through the report that was given, I think there was over 400 caribou that were taken by outsiders and many communities didn't get any. So I was kind of disappointed in the Board's decision. And this year we're having pretty tough again.

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That's all I have to say, thank you.

47

48

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Elmer. And

49

that brings up something that I was hoping to touch on.

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0197

1 Throughout this whole process of putting in these  
2 special wildlife action requests, we have made the  
3 argument that local people are not catching caribou,  
4 that we are not getting them when we are accustomed to  
5 in the fall and we're having to wait until things  
6 freeze up and then we can hunt them via snowmobile, but  
7 the problem that I see in our efforts facing is the  
8 opposition, not wanting these closures to take effect,  
9 say, well, last year non-Federally-qualified  
10 subsistence users from outside of the state or outside  
11 of the region only harvested roughly 250 caribou but we  
12 estimate that local people harvested 12,000 and the  
13 problem that we have is that we're dealing with people  
14 who say that we don't have enough research in place, we  
15 don't have the science to support our claims that we're  
16 not catching the caribou when the science that's being  
17 used to argue with us is not exact, it's an estimate.  
18 So the argument that we are catching -- that local  
19 hunters are harvesting roughly 10 to 12,000 caribou  
20 annually versus the very hard numbers of how many  
21 caribou are tagged and brought out by non-local hunters  
22 because they have to have a tag and they have to report  
23 if they're successful, it's very demeaning and it's  
24 very insulting to our issue here, so that's one thing  
25 that I was hoping that we could have in the annual  
26 report, is that the fact that not enough data has been  
27 collected to warrant our position and -- for action to  
28 be taken. And just building on top of that, that more  
29 discussions need to be had with the local people, with  
30 the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group, with the  
31 RAC, with the Fish and Game Advisory Committees. I  
32 mean since June, when the Federal Game Board had their  
33 meeting where they decided to defer our special action  
34 request, I've had one person from one Federal agency  
35 reach out to me asking about the caribou situation and  
36 what information should be looked at so that we can  
37 gather ourselves and present a case. And I understand  
38 that the different agencies do what they can and  
39 they've been reaching out to people but what needs to  
40 happen and what needs to be recognized is the local  
41 people and the local problems that we're having of not  
42 being able to harvest caribou and a misrepresentation  
43 of numbers, which I don't see the support of that we're  
44 getting 10 to 12,000 animals a year every year, and  
45 these are estimates that need to be made into  
46 realities.

47

48 And that's what I have, does anyone  
49 else have any comments to make.

50



0198

1 MR. BALLOT: Tom, this is Percy Ballot.  
2 Maniilaq has a traditional food program and they give  
3 funds out to ever village in the region and they're for  
4 hunters, they get gas and shells to go out and, you  
5 know, in order for you to get these, you have to give  
6 your report, your hunters have to give their report. I  
7 don't know if anybody -- if they give them out to  
8 anybody, but that might be a source for helping with to  
9 look at a smaller picture of what's going on. But  
10 every person that gets gas have to give a report on the  
11 catch of caribou or what not, for the elders.

12

13 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Percy.  
14 Katya, can that be noted on record, I'm not sure who  
15 would be doing the reaching out for that kind of thing,  
16 but these elder support and subsistence programs that  
17 the Maniilaq Association, the different Native village  
18 organizations around Game Unit 23, have similar  
19 programs where, like Mr. Ballot said you have to report  
20 what you caught and what not. So I'm not necessarily  
21 sure if that would go into our annual report, but just  
22 regarding this conversation for future reference.

23

24 Thank you.

25

26 MS. WESSELS: Yeah, thank you, Mr.  
27 Chair. This is Katya. You know, we are, a little bit  
28 later in the agenda, we are going to have a discussion  
29 about the Wildlife Special Action 21-01. You know some  
30 of these things can be repeated or added there. You  
31 know, so I -- from the conversation that the Council  
32 has had, I, right now, I think, let's see, I think I  
33 have three topics. One is, you know, the main topic  
34 that you discussed mostly was regarding the caribou  
35 harvesting in Unit 23 and all of the concerns  
36 associated with it. Including, you know, possibly one  
37 of your RAC representative attending WACH meetings. I  
38 don't know if you can get a seat on the WACH because,  
39 you know, the have just representatives from different  
40 communities, like Kotzebue has a representative there,  
41 but I would think that the RAC member can attend the  
42 meetings, so we can ask the Board for this in the  
43 annual report.

44

45 And then two other topics that I caught  
46 on were, like one that Barbara presented. She was  
47 talking about additional -- where did I write it here  
48 -- oh, study on the grayling, that the Council would  
49 like to see another study on the grayling.

50

0199

1                   And another one that was proposed, I  
2 think -- yeah, I don't know who that was -- somebody  
3 said about attending Ambler Road discussions. I didn't  
4 catch the name who said that, was it Attamuk who said  
5 that; is that correct.....

6  
7                   CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes.

8  
9                   MS. WESSELS: .....or was it -- okay.  
10 So that's the three topics that I see. And then  
11 Barbara also mentioned salmon, beaver and moose. And,  
12 Barbara, if you can reiterate what you would like to  
13 put regarding that in the annual report, specifically,  
14 do you want more studies, or do you have specific  
15 concerns or are you proposing something.

16  
17                   MS. ATORUK: On the moose, you know, a  
18 few years ago we were saying that the moose was  
19 declining and if you have recent reports on how the  
20 moose is doing is what I was asking. And then they  
21 were talking about the decline of the moose, and that's  
22 what I was concerned about. And about the beaver, we  
23 know they're in abundance and I think wasn't there no  
24 limit in harvesting, and we also need to stay on top of  
25 our salmon, we need to, like Bobby said, you know, how  
26 serious this is about our moose, and that's also our  
27 mainstay in the summertime, is the salmon, or moose,  
28 than any other fish that we have on the river, so we  
29 need to have studies and learn more about the situation  
30 about the salmon.

31  
32                   Okay. Besides this, I have a question  
33 for Thomas. Did you say, or did I misunderstood you to  
34 say that the region harvested 12,000 caribou versus  
35 outside hunters of 256?

36  
37                   CHAIRMAN BAKER: That is the argument  
38 that's been made by the State of Alaska when they have  
39 brought the numbers forward, specifically from Fish and  
40 Game, and that number of 10 to 12,000 caribou annual is  
41 what Fish and Game estimates local people are  
42 harvesting.

43  
44                   MS. ATORUK: That's a lot of caribou  
45 and I don't see it. That's my version of seeing it,  
46 anyway, but I don't see 12,000. And what kind of proof  
47 do they have to be saying that and that would have to  
48 be reported from what records for them to say that.  
49 And then to be able to sit on the Western Arctic  
50

0200

1 Caribou Herd Working Group, I don't think we'd get a  
2 seat there because that's State and we're Feds, and if  
3 they -- if we ask they will say that the Feds would  
4 have to bring someone in on their own, pay for the  
5 airfare, the per diem and a place to stay and you would  
6 be able to attend in that way, but then I know they  
7 won't give us a seat on there because we're sitting on  
8 the Council, we have a voice here. But we can make  
9 request to the WACH regarding what they are doing and  
10 they do send their report out in -- like in newspaper  
11 form to us every year every time after they meet, but  
12 then -- that's how I see it anyway, it was that way  
13 when I was in, and I'm sure it's still that way, State  
14 is pretty strict and in control of what they have and  
15 see the Federal side in a different manner, and then  
16 the only ones that are helping us right now are the  
17 Federal Board.

18  
19 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

20  
21 MR. HANSON: Mr. Chair, this is Alex  
22 Hanson, Department of Fish and Game.

23  
24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, go ahead, Alex.

25  
26 MR. HANSON: Yes, I just wanted to  
27 mention that I'm on the line and happy to discuss any  
28 of these topics if you like. I don't -- I'm certainly  
29 happy to help, you know, get you in contact with the  
30 Working Group Staff, I don't see any conflict of  
31 interest there that -- you know, I don't know why one  
32 of the Board members, or Council members couldn't be on  
33 that group. And also happy to discuss harvest  
34 estimates at any time. So at your convenience just let  
35 me know, I'm happy to discuss those things.

36  
37 Thank you.

38  
39 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Alex.

40  
41 MS. WESSELS: Yeah, Mr. Chair, this is  
42 Katya. I just want to say that right now the Council  
43 is discussing the topics for the annual report and  
44 we're going to have a separate discussion later on the  
45 caribou so then perhaps you can help during that time.

46  
47 MR. SHIEDT: Yeah, Attamuk here.

48  
49 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, thank you, Katya,  
50

0201

1 that's what I was -- one second, Attamuk.

2

3 MR. SHIEDT: Thank you.

4

5 CHAIRMAN BAKER: We still have the  
6 discussion on the Western Arctic Caribou Herd and the  
7 deferred special action from yesterday that we moved to  
8 this afternoon so we can discuss that with Alex and  
9 continue this part of the conversation after lunch when  
10 we get to those agenda items.

11

12 Yes, Attamuk.

13

14 MR. SHIEDT: Yes, I think we're saying  
15 this all wrong on our caribou. I think what we need to  
16 do is say, hey, we're getting so many caribou -- the  
17 problem is, our disturbance from transporters and  
18 outfitters being dropped off on the State lands and  
19 they're disturbing us, of the migration route, it's not  
20 the numbers, how much we get, it's where transporters  
21 and outfitters are dropping off hunters and they're  
22 changing the migration of our caribou, that's why we're  
23 not getting them. I think we're going about this the  
24 wrong way, think about it. And this is just my  
25 thought. And we need our caribou. And when they're  
26 changing the migration from way up in the State lands  
27 and they never come here, look at Anaktuvuk Pass, they  
28 got two places to go through in Anaktuvuk Pass and when  
29 they never make their migration until later. It's all  
30 because of global arming and when they finally make it  
31 to Noatak there's already hunters up there changing  
32 them.

33

34 Thank you.

35

36 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Attamuk.  
37 And as Katya pointed out, we're still on the annual  
38 report. Are there any more issues that we'd like to  
39 put -- identify for the fiscal year 2021 annual report  
40 or are we ready to move on.

41

42 MS. ATORUK: Move on.

43

44 MS. WESSELS: Okay, Mr. Chair, this is  
45 Katya.

46

47 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Okay -- yes, please,  
48 Katya.

49

50

0202

1 MS. WESSELS: Yeah, I think the Council  
2 had a pretty good discussion, we have several topics  
3 now. The OSM Staff is going to draft the report, we  
4 will be, you know, showing you the first draft before  
5 you even see them during the winter 2022 meeting so --  
6 and then during the winter meeting the Council can add  
7 more things if they feel it's necessary to add more  
8 things to the annual report.

9  
10 And another thing I just wanted to  
11 remind you that we forgot this morning, to have the  
12 comments, public and tribal comments on non-agenda  
13 items, we forgot that item on the agenda. We're  
14 supposed to have it every morning at the beginning of  
15 the meeting. Sorry I didn't remind you earlier. But,  
16 you know, I suggest if we maybe have an open period  
17 right now for public and tribal comments on non-agenda  
18 items so meaning items that are not on the agenda, that  
19 would be great but it's at your discretion, of course,  
20 Mr. Chair.

21  
22 Thank you.

23  
24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you for that  
25 reminder, Katya. The time is now 11:40 and since we  
26 did skip over that, if we have any members of the  
27 public or any tribal comments, organizations that would  
28 like to comment on non-agenda items, I'm comfortable  
29 with doing that now, do we have anyone who would like  
30 to make any public comments on something that is not on  
31 our agenda.

32  
33 MR. HARRIS: Mr. Chairman. Cyrus  
34 Harris here.

35  
36 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, go ahead, Cyrus.

37  
38 MR. HARRIS: Yeah, I just couldn't help  
39 to hear -- a little bit of information on the hunter  
40 support program so just to clarify a few things, the  
41 reports that I do receive from the hunters regarding  
42 the hunter support from the villages is all -- the  
43 information I receive back is mainly from the  
44 distribution that was brought to the elders within the  
45 communities, not necessarily the entire community but  
46 the elders, caribou, moose that's delivered to the  
47 elders there in the community. Just to clarify  
48 something there.

49  
50

0203

1                   And a little bit topic that I hear on  
2 the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group meeting  
3 and the discussions on the closure, Federal -- this for  
4 Federally-qualified subsistence users, we do support  
5 that -- or the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working  
6 Group do support that. We are going to have a  
7 teleconference meeting December 15th and some members  
8 did have some meetings with the OSM and I'm sure they  
9 could share that with you, so we put in our two cents  
10 to support this discussion on bringing it back on the  
11 table.

12

13                   Thank you for your time.

14

15                   CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you for that  
16 Cyrus. Do we have any other public or tribal comment  
17 on non-agenda items at this time.

18

19                   MR. BALLOT: Mr. Chairman.

20

21                   CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, please identify  
22 yourself.

23

24                   MR. BALLOT: Percy Ballot from  
25 Buckland, I sit on the Seward Peninsula Advisory  
26 Committee. I'm not too sure but I'm going to make my  
27 comment anyway when you said non-agenda items. I  
28 wanted to get a feeling, fishing is a big part of our  
29 lives, subsistence and I know we do a little commercial  
30 there in Kotzebue, which is fine. But you've been  
31 seeing and I've been hearing and seeing of the salmon  
32 going farther up here and there and seeing pictures of  
33 fish with whatever marks or things on their bodies or  
34 faces, or whatever, whitefish what not, is anybody  
35 doing any studies on the food they eat, the plankton,  
36 or whatever, the food chain, or whatever. I think that  
37 probably needs to get working. You know over the years  
38 dead fish or dead birds or skinny seals, or dead seals  
39 and stuff like that, and is something going on with the  
40 ecosystem under water or the climate, whatever it's --  
41 do we have any people doing any of those studies.

42

43                   And the other part of my question is  
44 what's the feeling about the bycatch that's been going  
45 on over the years. Sooner or later, if it -- it's  
46 already affecting our king salmon, our salmon up this  
47 way. There's too much catch in the high seas. Is  
48 there any discussions regarding those talks about  
49 what's going on in the high seas, and bottom trawlers,  
50

0204

1 or whatever you want to call that. Is it in this  
2 group's radar?

3

4 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Percy. If  
5 there is anyone who is able to respond to those, the  
6 floor is yours.

7

8 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair, it's Wilbur.

9

10 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, Wilbur.

11

12 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah, our IRA, or  
13 environmentalist program that we started on doing water  
14 samples, we had the equipment to do studies on the  
15 whole Kobuk River but the farthest up we could go, I  
16 believe was just right below Kiana and do all the  
17 outlets from Noorvik and below, all the rivers that  
18 goes out to the Kobuk Lake. We had the funds and  
19 working with Lonnie Tibbitts, our Environmentalist  
20 Coordinator. Our fish, that's where we find out about  
21 our fish and stuff, what they're doing. But I think  
22 that's one that I believe we were going over with Karen  
23 on fundings and stuff. Maybe we'll just do more  
24 testing. I wanted them to go out after it freeze up  
25 and do some tests in all the drainage, out to the Kobuk  
26 Lake. And the reasons we're doing these tests is the  
27 start up of the Ambler Road, I was on one of the  
28 boards, that's where I went to Fairbanks and represent  
29 the NANA region and we started those tests. So I have  
30 a little knowledge about our fish and doing these  
31 tests. Tagloruk (ph) told them when we were in  
32 Fairbanks -- I should have had a pH on whitefish  
33 because they call me the whitefish specialist and  
34 that's what they underlined me for.

35

36 But anyways I hope things keep going.  
37 Lots of studies are still going and I believe all this  
38 high water, and like Bob said the fresh water coming  
39 out of the rivers and into the Kobuk Lake is what's  
40 really hurting our fish.

41

42 So thank you.

43

44 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur.

45

46 MS. ATORUK: Mr. Chair.

47

48 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes.

49

50

0205

1 MS. ATORUK: To go back on the annual  
2 report request, we need to look at our Council make up  
3 here. The Staff Committee need to look at this Council  
4 make up. If you look at your roster we have four  
5 people from Kotzebue, two people from Noorvik and we  
6 have one from Deering, one who is from Ambler who is  
7 not attending any meetings. We have one seat vacant.  
8 And we need to ask Percy to reapply and get back in, he  
9 was a good representative from that area. And we need  
10 to get Noatak in and we need someone from upper Kobuk,  
11 we need someone from Selawik. The Council is heavy in  
12 some areas and where it's most needed they're being  
13 blank seated. So we need to put that in the annual  
14 report to see if the Staff Committee need to look out  
15 more to mix us more up. My term is up as of the end of  
16 this year and I'm not reapplying. I am going to  
17 totally retire now and do my own thing some more. So  
18 that's just working in my personal opinion.

19  
20 Taikuu.

21  
22 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Barbara.  
23 Do we have any other public or tribal comments on non-  
24 agenda items.

25  
26 (No comments)

27  
28 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any public or tribal  
29 comments on non-agenda items.

30  
31 MR. HARRIS: Mr. Chairman, if I may.  
32 Cyrus Harris.

33  
34 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Is that Cyrus -- yes,  
35 go ahead Cyrus.

36  
37 MR. HARRIS: Yeah, okay. Yeah, a lot  
38 of this discussions got a lot to do with the  
39 terrestrial mammal studies, flora and fauna studies,  
40 you know, fish and what not. And there's more studying  
41 than that one particular fish but the habitat it live  
42 on and how sensitive these areas are and how we shall  
43 protect it for our future generations. And along with  
44 that is the future development highly coming in and  
45 roads and, you know, with all these resources going out  
46 of our own state to another state, I mean things like  
47 that we got to think about and protect these resources  
48 that we are studying on, each individual species.  
49 Excuse me, I get a little emotional speaking about this  
50



0206

1 kind of stuff, but, thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Cyrus. Any  
4 other public or tribal comments at this time.

5

6

7 (No comments)

8

9 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, up next  
10 on the agenda is the annual report reply process,  
11 revision discussion with Lisa. Lisa, would it be -- in  
12 your opinion would it be easier to start now, pause for  
13 lunch, or just to break a little early for lunch and  
14 then start with that after lunch.

15

16 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah, thank you, Mr.  
17 Chair. This is Lisa Grediagin. It's really at the  
18 discretion of the Council, and you as the Chair. I'm  
19 getting some feedback from other OSM Staff that we  
20 should just go ahead and do it now.

21

22 MS. ATORUK: Can we do it after lunch,  
23 Mr. Chair.

24

25 CHAIRMAN BAKER: How does the rest of  
26 the Council feel, do we want to start it now or just  
27 start after lunch.

28

29 MR. ARMSTRONG: After lunch.

30

31 MR. SHIEDT: Thomas, Attamuk here. I'm  
32 not going to log back in this afternoon, I have to go  
33 to the hospital and -- because my wife got to go to  
34 Anchorage tomorrow and we got to go pick up some  
35 paperwork and I have to get a blood draw.

36

37 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Okay. Thank you for  
38 the head's up, Attamuk, and thank you for joining us  
39 and voicing your opinions.

40

41 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah, Mr. Chair, sorry  
42 this is Lisa. And I'm just getting some feedback from  
43 other OSM Staff that this should be a really quick  
44 agenda item, it's mostly just a briefing. So I think  
45 it should only be about five minutes.

46

47 MS. ATORUK: All right, do it.

48

49 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Okay. Well, if that's

50

0207

1 the case the floor is yours Lisa.

2

3 MS. GREDIAGIN: Okay, thank you, Mr.  
4 Chair. Lisa Grediagin, for the record. So during the  
5 Federal Subsistence Board's August -- oh, and this is  
6 on Page 254 of your meeting book if you'd like to  
7 follow along, I'm just reading this briefing on Page  
8 254.

9

10

11 So during the Federal Subsistence  
12 Board's August 2021 work session the InterAgency Staff  
13 Committee briefed the Board on the annual report reply  
14 process and possible revisions to improve response to  
15 Regional Advisory Council concerns. The Board reviewed  
16 and discussed the report reply process and agreed to  
17 add this topic to the Councils fall meeting agendas for  
18 Council input on suggested revisions.

19

20 ANILCA, Section .805, authorizes the  
21 Councils to prepare an annual report containing  
22 information related to current and future subsistence  
23 uses of fish and wildlife populations, an evaluation of  
24 current and future subsistence needs for these  
25 populations, a strategy for their management and  
26 recommendations related to policies, standards,  
27 guidelines and regulations to implement the strategy.  
28 These reports are invaluable as they provide the Board  
29 with a broad holistic picture of local resource  
30 conditions and needs and challenges facing communities  
31 across rural Alaska. With this knowledge the Board can  
32 make informed decisions.

33

34 Historically the Federal Subsistence  
35 Management Program has strived to provide responses to  
36 every topic listed in annual reports regardless of the  
37 Board's ability to address the issues raised. While  
38 all topics are important to the Board, understanding of  
39 local conditions, many are on issues over which the  
40 Board has no regulatory authority and some of the same  
41 and similar topics are often repeated in subsequent  
42 years with no resolution. ANILCA does not require  
43 replies to annual reports from the Council and  
44 currently the Code of Federal Regulations state that  
45 the Board consider the reports and recommendations of  
46 the Regional Councils. For these and other reasons it  
47 is unclear if Board responses on all annual report  
48 topics are helpful to the Councils and warrants the use  
49 of often very limited Staff capacity.

50

0208

1                   One way to address Council reports and  
2 recommendations would be to change the process of how  
3 the Board responds to Council issues. Process  
4 revisions could include that Councils consider letter  
5 writing as the most appropriate means for requesting a  
6 response to topics of concern and that the annual  
7 report process be streamlined as a mechanism for  
8 informing the Board of local conditions and means.  
9 This revision would allow for more substantive and  
10 timely responses from the Board on topics most critical  
11 to the Council. Under this scenario, Councils could  
12 ask their coordinator to write a letter to the Board if  
13 there are annual report topics to which they're  
14 specifically requesting a response. Any other topics,  
15 such as those outside the regulatory authority of the  
16 Board, can be addressed to the appropriate Federal  
17 agency Staff at Council meetings, or Councils can write  
18 letters requesting a response directly from them, thus  
19 streamlining the response process and encouraging  
20 direct agency communications with the Councils.

21  
22                   These suggested revisions are not  
23 intended to diminish the ability of the Councils to  
24 report to the Board on topics of concern, and Councils  
25 will still receive responses, when requested, from the  
26 Board.

27  
28                   At this time the Board is seeking input  
29 from the Councils on these suggested changes to the  
30 annual report process. Council feedback on this issue  
31 is critical as the Board evaluates how to make the  
32 reply process more efficient and responsive. The Board  
33 will consider Council input on the annual report reply  
34 process at its winter work session at the end of  
35 January 2022.

36  
37                   So, thank you, Mr. Chair, that  
38 concludes my presentation on the issue. And I received  
39 a message from other OSM Staff that I may have missed  
40 something here so I invite anyone else to chime in if I  
41 missed something here. And, oh, Katya, just said she  
42 was dropped off the call, so I'm sure she's calling  
43 back in right now.

44  
45                   But, basically, there's just some  
46 concern that some of the responses to your annual  
47 report replies from the Board are rather perfunctory  
48 and not very meaningful because the Board has limited  
49 authority over some of these concerns, but writing  
50

0209

1 those responses take a lot of Staff effort and time and  
2 we just are not sure if they're really that useful to  
3 the Council if the Board doesn't really have authority  
4 over some of these topics and concerns from the  
5 Council, even though the Board really appreciates  
6 hearing everything the Council puts in their report,  
7 just some of the responses may not be very useful to  
8 the Council. So there's some thoughts by Staff  
9 about.....

10

11 MS. LAVINE: Mr. Chair.

12

13 MS. GREDIAGIN: .....streamlining this  
14 -- oh, okay, here's Robbin.

15

16 MS. LAVINE: Mr. Chair.

17

18 MS. GREDIAGIN: Thanks, Robbin.

19

20 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, go ahead, Robbin.

21

22 MS. LAVINE: Hello, Mr. Chair, this is  
23 Robbin LaVine. Thank you, Mr. Chair. The most  
24 important part of this briefing is to keep this issue  
25 in your minds between the fall meeting and the winter  
26 meeting. The InterAgency Staff Committee has suggested  
27 processes to improve the efficiency and responsiveness  
28 of the annual reports and reply process. While also  
29 recognizing how critical your annual reports are to the  
30 Board and informing our Federal Subsistence Management  
31 Program and process.

32

33 So the main thing is this is just a  
34 briefing, this is an opportunity for you to think about  
35 what you want from the Board in terms of replies as you  
36 develop and confirm your 2021 annual reports between  
37 the fall and winter meetings and we'll take this up  
38 again, this will be an action item in -- when we meet  
39 in 2022. So, once, again, this is not an action item,  
40 this is for your consideration. Again, as you're  
41 developing annual report topics to inform the Board,  
42 and as you think about what you want from the Board in  
43 return, especially considering some of these topics are  
44 for the Board's information and are potentially beyond  
45 the Board's scope of authority.

46

47 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

48

49 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Robbin.

50

0210

1 Thank you, Lisa. Does anyone have any questions  
2 regarding this for Lisa and/or Robbin.

3

4 (No comments)

5

6 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none. I don't  
7 have any questions but I'm sure that if I do I will  
8 reach out to Staff after the meeting just to get some  
9 clarification. Thank you, again, Lisa, for that. And  
10 if there's nothing else that you have to add, I'd say  
11 that we can break for lunch now being that it's 12:00  
12 and reconvene at 1:00 p.m., and we'll start back up  
13 with Item G, the 2022 Council application and  
14 nomination open season.

15

16 (No comments)

17

18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Sound like a plan  
19 everyone.

20

21 MS. SWEENEY: Mr. Chair, this is  
22 Brittany Sweeney.

23

24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hi, Brittany.

25

26 MS. SWEENEY: Hey. I just wanted to  
27 note the fact that I did some posting about this  
28 meeting yesterday on some regional Facebook groups and  
29 I've seen a lot of shares come in so I don't know if  
30 we'll see a higher participation rate or more people  
31 calling after lunch but I just wanted to let you know  
32 that that might be possible so just to let folks know  
33 where we are at on the agenda and all that stuff after  
34 lunch.

35

36 Thank you.

37

38 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Okay, good to know.  
39 Thank you very much for that Brittany. Anything else  
40 before we wrap up in the morning.

41

42 (No comments)

43

44 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, we will  
45 come back at 1:00 p.m., thanks everyone.

46

47 (Off record)

48

49 (On record)

50

0211

1 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hello everyone, it's  
2 Thomas Baker. The time is now 1:00 o'clock. If Elmer  
3 Armstrong is on the call, could we get a quick roll  
4 call Elmer.

5  
6 MR. ARMSTRONG: Okay. Okay, Attamuk  
7 was going to be off.

8  
9 Thomas Baker.

10  
11 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Here.

12  
13 MR. ARMSTRONG: Mike Kramer will call  
14 in in a little bit.

15  
16 Calvin Moto.

17  
18 (No comments)

19  
20 MR. ARMSTRONG: Wilbur Howarth, Sr.

21  
22 MR. HOWARTH: Here.

23  
24 MR. ARMSTRONG: Robert Schaeffer.

25  
26 MR. SCHAEFFER: Here.

27  
28 MR. ARMSTRONG: Elmer Armstrong, Jr.,  
29 here.

30  
31 Brian Lee Jones.

32  
33 (No comments)

34  
35 MR. ARMSTRONG: Barbara Atoruk.

36  
37 (No comments)

38  
39 MR. ARMSTRONG: Okay, there you go, Mr.  
40 Chair.

41  
42 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Elmer. So  
43 we will continue on with Item G on the agenda, which is  
44 under new business, the 2022 Council  
45 application/nomination open season and I believe that  
46 will be Katya that's taking care of that.

47  
48 (Teleconference interference -  
49 participants not muted)

50

0212

1 MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
2 Members of the Council.

3  
4 REPORTER: Katya.

5  
6 MS. WESSELS: This is Katya Wessels.

7  
8 REPORTER: Katya.

9  
10 MS. WESSELS: Yes.

11  
12 REPORTER: Yep, this is Tina. Let me  
13 just say I'd like to ask everybody to please look at  
14 their phone and see if you're on mute, we have an echo,  
15 which generally means that's many open lines. So if  
16 you could please look at your phone device, hit star  
17 six or the mute button, I would appreciate that so, not  
18 only everybody else can hear, but I can also hear for  
19 this recording for your transcript. Thank you. Go  
20 ahead, Katya. Sorry to interrupt.

21  
22 MS. WESSELS: So let's see, okay,  
23 there's still an echo.

24  
25 REPORTER: Yep. I'm going to call the  
26 operator and I will probably have that line  
27 disconnected, thank you, if we can't mute the phone.

28  
29 MS. WESSELS: Okay. There's still an  
30 echo.

31  
32 (Pause - Reaching Operator)

33  
34 MS. WESSELS: All right, Mr. Chair and  
35 Council. First before I talk about the 2022 Council  
36 application and nomination open season I would like to  
37 make an administrative announcement for the Council.  
38 So this is the second day of the Council meeting and I  
39 would like to remind all the participants please mute  
40 your phones when you're not actively speaking. You can  
41 do it either by pressing mute button on your phone or  
42 by pressing star button and six button, and then you  
43 can unmute your phone by pressing the same buttons  
44 again.

45  
46 So I also would like to remind the  
47 meeting participants, all the meeting participants,  
48 that this is a public meeting and the principal purpose  
49 of the public comment part of this meeting is to  
50

0213

1 receive information and comments from you on record so  
2 these opportunities for public comments come at the  
3 Chair's discretion, when the Chair announces those  
4 opportunities. And for every participant, I would like  
5 to remind, that, please when you speak be respectful in  
6 your statements, no insults or foul language will be  
7 tolerated in the public meeting. This concludes the  
8 administrative part of my announcement.

9

10 So now I am going to talk about 2022  
11 Council application and nomination open season.

12

13 So first I would like to thank all of  
14 you, Council members, for your service on the Council  
15 on behalf of the user groups that you represent, your  
16 knowledge and experience is of great value to the  
17 Federal Subsistence Management Program and to the  
18 Federal Subsistence Board.

19

20 We're currently going through some  
21 difficult times during the pandemic but at the same  
22 time we are constantly working to have robust Councils  
23 with full memberships. And as you know you currently  
24 have one vacant seat that was vacated by Vita Coltrain  
25 from Selawik. So while we are looking at keeping your  
26 Council seats all filled, we are looking to you,  
27 Council members. We're looking for your help because  
28 you are our connection to the communities that you  
29 represent.

30

31 So the 2022 Council application period  
32 was opened on September 12th of this year and it will  
33 close on February 28th, 2022. We are encouraging you  
34 to help us to spread the word about the open season to  
35 the region's communities and help us recruit new  
36 applicants throughout your region. You know the people  
37 in your region and you can also share the firsthand  
38 experience of what it means to serve on the Council and  
39 what is involved and how much time it takes.

40

41 (Teleconference interference -  
42 participants not muted)

43

44 MS. WESSELS: You can also nominate the  
45 candidates to serve on the Council if someone is  
46 interested in applying but is having a hard time, for  
47 example, filling out an application. You can talk with  
48 a person, if they're interested, you can nominate them,  
49 you can help them to fill out this application. The

50



0214

1 application packets are available on our website, and  
2 the address is: [www.doi.gov/subsistence/regions](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regions), and  
3 there's also a fillable copy of the application on the  
4 site as well, which can be filled on the computer, or  
5 you can print out a copy and fill it out by hand if  
6 you'd rather. The applications and nominations can be  
7 emailed, it can be faxed, it can be mailed, as long as  
8 it's done before February 28th. We're also waiting for  
9 the printer to print out the applications so we're  
10 emailing a number of application packets to the current  
11 Council members when we receive them so you can hand  
12 them out to interested persons or organizations and  
13 tribes in your region.

14  
15 Additionally, we are mailing around  
16 2,000 copies of the application packet to various  
17 addresses across the state. If someone needs a copy to  
18 be faxed to them we can do this as well. We are hoping  
19 to have a good number of qualified applicants applying  
20 this year so we are able to fill all vacant seats and  
21 have alternates available for the situations when  
22 Council members resign, move out of region, or pass  
23 away.

24  
25 I make a special appeal today to the  
26 members of the Northwest Arctic Council, you have just  
27 one open seat, but, you know, a couple of your Council  
28 members were not able to attend any meetings at all so  
29 we need to fill the vacant seats so we have the full  
30 Council. I want to let the Council members know that  
31 if you're aware of good perspective applicants, you can  
32 let us know and we will reach out to them and ask them  
33 if they would be interested to be nominated. If you or  
34 any applicants need help filling out the forms, please  
35 let us know.

36  
37 We would really, really appreciate your  
38 help with the recruitment this year.

39  
40 I also want to encourage the incumbents  
41 on your Council who's terms are expiring in 2022 to  
42 reapply to serve on the Council. You will need to  
43 reapply before February 28th of 2022 although your  
44 terms do not expire until December of 2022 you will  
45 have to reapply by February 28th. And the incumbents  
46 whose terms expire next year, who should reapply if you  
47 are interested in continuing serving on the Council is  
48 Enoch Shiedt, Thomas Baker, Michael Kramer and Elmer  
49 Armstrong, your terms expire in December of 2022. So I  
50

0215

1 am going to mail to you the incumbent applications that  
2 you will need to fill out, incumbents have different  
3 applications to reapply that are shorter versions.

4

5 So I know that Barbara spoke a little  
6 bit about the membership earlier before lunch, so I  
7 would encourage any Council members who have any ideas  
8 about how we can attract more applicants to speak out  
9 or any other suggestions regarding the Council  
10 membership, you know, you can express them now.

11

12 Thank you.

13

14 MR. SHIEDT: Attamuk here, Thomas. The  
15 hospital put the wrong Attamuk, they wanted Jr.

16

17 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Okay, thank you for  
18 joining us Attamuk.

19

20 MR. SHIEDT: Yeah, but what I'm going  
21 to tell you is -- you're not going to be happy, I'm  
22 going to make this last one, I'm done too, I'm getting  
23 tired. I might not even attend the SRC tomorrow. So  
24 Hannah I hate to say that but I'm getting tired. So  
25 thank you everyone for listening to me. Taikuu.

26

27 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Attamuk,  
28 and, again, we all appreciate all the knowledge that  
29 you share and the time that you've put into all this.  
30 Does anyone have any questions regarding the nomination  
31 or application process for Katya.

32

33 MR. BALLOT: This is Percy Ballot,  
34 Buckland.

35

36 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, Mr. Ballot.

37

38 MR. BALLOT: The rep, is that Buckland  
39 and Deering, that we don't have a Buckland rep?

40

41 MS. WESSELS: I don't think there's  
42 anyone from the Buckland on the Council right now,  
43 yeah, there isn't. And the way the Council membership  
44 works, it's not like you have a representative from  
45 each community, it's whoever applies from the region.  
46 You know if there are two people who apply from  
47 Buckland and they're both qualified then they're both  
48 appointed. There can be two representatives from  
49 Buckland or from, you know, Deering -- let's see we

50

0216

1 have -- we have a representative from Deering,  
2 Calvin.....

3

4 MR. BALLOT: I thought we.....

5

6 MS. WESSELS: .....Moto, II.

7

8 MR. BALLOT: Yeah, we had Raymond  
9 Lee.....

10

11 REPORTER: Okay, one at a time, go  
12 ahead Percy.

13

14 MS. WESSELS: Go ahead, you're breaking  
15 up.

16

17 MR. BALLOT: .....Jr., back in the  
18 past, he did not reapply or what happened with him?

19

20 MS. WESSELS: Well, we can't really  
21 speak about that in the public meetings who applied or  
22 reapplied, specifically because that's personal  
23 information.

24

25 MR. BALLOT: Okay. Okay, then that's  
26 fine. I will reach out for the Council. I heard  
27 Barbara mention my name but, like, Attamuk, we got a  
28 lot of young guys that have been around the block here  
29 in the village and I will talk to them and try to  
30 encourage some of those younger folks to apply from  
31 Buckland.

32

33 MS. WESSELS: That would be absolutely  
34 wonderful. We are looking for more younger Council  
35 members because, you know, we have a lot of older  
36 Council members who have a lot of experience who share  
37 their knowledge and wisdom with us but a lot of the  
38 older Council members have served for many years and  
39 just as Attamuk said, they're getting tired from this  
40 public service basically so it's great if they continue  
41 being on the Councils but it would be wonderful if we  
42 get new applicants that are younger that can also learn  
43 how to be on the Council, learn how to serve on the  
44 Council, learn about the regulatory world and how they  
45 can help their communities and subsistence and  
46 commercial/sport user groups, you know, with the  
47 regulatory changes. So thank you for that Percy.

48

49 MR. BALLOT: Yes. I got to say this,

50

0217

1    though, Attamuk, and guys like him, 30, 40 years ago we  
2    have done things that have never been done before, over  
3    the years, we've done no fly zone in Noatak years ago,  
4    we done nets across the mouth of the river; we've done  
5    so many different things that nobody has ever done  
6    before. These old guards are people that have listened  
7    to their elders and learned from their elders, these  
8    young guys they need to learn to pay more attention and  
9    just do it, not talk about it, just do it. So don't --  
10   even though I'm encouraging the younger guys, too, they  
11   just got to do it, there's nothing too hard and if you  
12   don't you try again and if you don't you keep on trying  
13   until you get something in there that's going to  
14   benefit and work for the resources, for the villages  
15   and for the people, and for everybody else for that  
16   matter, State or Federal.

17

18                   But I wouldn't downplay the good work  
19   of the guys that's been in there over the years, I'm  
20   thankful for them. Our herd is still in good hands  
21   right now, still okay but they need to get a little  
22   more humph in their step there and make it a little  
23   more harder -- or put more stuff into what's going on  
24   regarding the herd, whether it's in the State lands or  
25   the Federal lands, stay and do it.

26

27                   Thank you, Attamuk, for your service.

28

29                   (Teleconference           interference       -  
30   participants not muted)

31

32                   MS. WESSELS: Yeah, I just also want to  
33   clarify to the Council members whose term expire next  
34   year you're still serving on the Council until the end  
35   of 2022, even if you decide not to reapply like Attamuk  
36   explained to us, Attamuk, you're still on the Council  
37   for the whole of next year, so we really hope that you  
38   can join the next meetings next year but after that if  
39   you choose not to reapply that is absolutely fine.

40

41                   CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Katya.  
42   Does anyone else from the Council have any questions  
43   for Katya regarding the application process.

44

45                   (No comments)

46

47                   CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, thank  
48   you for that Katya. I'll be sure to point anyone with  
49   any questions in you or the rest of the Staff's

50

0218

1 direction, hopefully we can fill some of the vacant  
2 seats on the Council and get more people involved. So  
3 with that we can move on and we had shuffled the agenda  
4 yesterday so that we could have discussion on the  
5 Western Arctic Caribou Herd status, updates and  
6 management strategies. What's on the agenda here is  
7 Item B under new business. So I feel at this time we  
8 have as many people from the Council as we were going  
9 to get since some aren't able to join us again today  
10 and Mr. Kramer will be joining in the next 10 minutes  
11 or so so I feel that now is a good time to start the  
12 Western Arctic Caribou Herd discussion. Who would like  
13 to begin.

14  
15 MR. HANSON: Mr. Chair, this is Alex  
16 Hanson with Fish and Game here in Kotzebue, I can jump  
17 in if that works.

18  
19 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, please, Alex, the  
20 floor is yours.

21  
22 MR. HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
23 Members of the Council. For the record this is Alex  
24 Hanson, Alaska Department of Fish and Game here in  
25 Kotzebue, the Western Arctic Caribou Herd caribou  
26 biologist. I'll give you just a brief synopsis of the  
27 current metrics of the herd.

28  
29 As I mentioned previously the 2021  
30 census is nearing completion, we don't have that number  
31 yet but we typically do share that number once we get  
32 it all finalized at the working group meeting that'll  
33 be coming up in December. The last count that we have,  
34 and this is what we're going off of currently is the  
35 2019 census, we did not shoot a census in 2020, last  
36 year, the last count from 2019 is 244,000. And that's  
37 what we're modeling off our metrics off at the moment.  
38 Hope to have that other updated number for '21 soon.

39  
40 Recruitment is another thing that we  
41 look at very closely. This is an estimate of the  
42 number of young that are entering the herd is something  
43 we look at in the spring and we've been tracking that  
44 for a number of years. Currently it's about average,  
45 17 calves to 100 adults. Calving rates have gone down  
46 a little bit in the last couple of years, still  
47 average, or low average about 68 calves to 100 cows.  
48 The highs that we've seen as we were coming out of the  
49 bottom of the decline about 2015/2016 were low 80s so  
50

0219

1 it's down a little bit but not record lows by any  
2 means.

3

4 Fall composition, this is something  
5 that we don't do every year but the last one that was  
6 conducted was 2017 and then we were able to put one  
7 together this fall. So I just barely completed that  
8 and put those numbers together last night. So our bull  
9 to cow ratio in 2017 was 100 cows -- or 54 bulls to 100  
10 cows and then this 2021 that we recently completed was  
11 47 bulls to 100 cows. As you're probably aware we  
12 maintain, at least according to the working group  
13 management plan, looking to maintain to 30 bulls to 100  
14 cows. That was recently changed in 2019, a revision of  
15 that plan, prior to that we were shooting to maintain  
16 40 bulls to 100 cows.

17

18 One thing that I'd really like to touch  
19 on today is distribution and hoping, you know, some of  
20 the folks on the line and on the Council might be able  
21 to help facilitate this discussion as well. One thing  
22 that we've definitely seen in the past few years  
23 beginning in about 2018 is departure from normal  
24 movements, or what we term normal. You know we've  
25 certainly experienced a long period of fall caribou  
26 movements that favor wintering areas on the Seward  
27 Peninsula and, for instance, if we look back to collar  
28 data, we don't have to go too far but if we look back  
29 20 years or so, between 1992 and 1994 there was a  
30 substantial portion of the herd that wintered in the  
31 Nulato Hills. We jump forward a little bit, 2013 to  
32 2016 kind of that time period, the greatest portion of  
33 the collars were on the Seward Peninsula. And that  
34 was, you know, not that long ago but things changed  
35 quite drastically beginning in about 2018. And I don't  
36 have to point this out to you but, you know, last year  
37 what we saw was very different, very few collars, very  
38 few animals across the Kobuk River and most wintered on  
39 the North Slope or mostly in the Central Brook Ranges.  
40 So I guess my question to you is, you know, there's a  
41 lot of reasons that could be -- and I've heard a lot of  
42 discussion about changing weather patterns and how that  
43 has affected the resources that we have in this region,  
44 and I think back and I started looking, digging into  
45 some older reports and some historical accounts from of  
46 elders within the region and I was starting to see a  
47 pattern. You know things are very different today than  
48 they were 15 or 20 years ago, but caribou movements  
49 aren't all that different than they were 50 years ago

50

0220

1 or 60 years ago. One account from Nathan Hadley in  
2 Buckland said he saw his first caribou in 1955, you  
3 know, near Buckland and that was new, that wasn't  
4 something they'd been used to seeing. Ralph Ramos,  
5 Sr., of Selawik said his mother spoke of his  
6 grandfather traveling deep into the Brooks Range to  
7 hunt. A lot of accounts like that, you know, folks  
8 would travel for weeks on end up into the upper Noatak  
9 to harvest caribou by dog team. And one that really  
10 touched me was Ruby Foster of Selawik, said around my  
11 time there were no caribou, we just ate fish, ptarmigan  
12 and rabbit, that is all, there were no caribou around  
13 during that time, absolutely none, there were no moose  
14 and not much bear.

15  
16 So I pose the question to you, what do  
17 you suppose causes these changes? We certainly can  
18 look at, you know, pointing the finger at aircraft or  
19 other disturbances, and something that I want to  
20 understand, that's something that I want to understand  
21 with you and I'm happy to have those discussions but I  
22 would like to, you know, at least have a broader  
23 discussion and see if, perhaps, there may be bigger  
24 things at play.

25  
26 But I watch the collars, I do this  
27 everyday, looking at these collars and I see movements  
28 that go across 200 miles of the range, caribou are  
29 moving south and then all of a sudden they move north  
30 and I don't feel like that, you know, a few planes in  
31 the mountain, and that's not to say it can't cause  
32 disturbances, are causing these big shifts in movement  
33 patterns across such a large range, but points to  
34 weather to me. Maybe there's other reasons. But I  
35 want to understand those things and get to the bottom  
36 of them.

37  
38 I guess I would just leave that to you,  
39 I'm curious what you think the implications of changing  
40 weather patterns, and changing climate might have on  
41 the Western Arctic Caribou Herd movement.

42  
43 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you for that  
44 Alex. Does anyone have any opening questions or  
45 comments regarding what Alex is talking about.

46  
47 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah, this is Elmer.

48  
49 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah, Mr. Chair -- oops,  
50

0221

1     sorry, Elmer, go ahead.

2

3                     CHAIRMAN BAKER:   I heard Elmer first.

4

5                     MR. ARMSTRONG:     Okay.     What's the  
6 collar movement, is there any other data that has  
7 different directions to the present?

8

9                     MR. HANSON:     Yeah, through the Chair,  
10 Elmer. I apologize, yeah, aside from the collar data,  
11 yeah, we look at a lot of different things. Maybe you  
12 could expound on your question so I could answer it  
13 more fully.

14

15                     MR. ARMSTRONG:   Like, say, a certain  
16 year back they traveled this way and then you stated  
17 you seen them go south and then go north, so I just  
18 wanted to see if there was data.....

19

20                     MR. HANSON:     Yeah, according to.....

21

22                     MR. ARMSTRONG:   .....that would point  
23 towards the -- go ahead.

24

25                     MR. HANSON:     Sorry. Elmer, through the  
26 Chair. One example that comes to mind was just a  
27 couple years ago it was in October, I think it was  
28 2019, I'd have to look back, but you could see just  
29 kind of the caribou were spread across the range, it  
30 was like I said, October or late September, across the  
31 Slope there and they were all traveling south and, you  
32 know, we were getting excited because we thought they  
33 were going to come toward the Kobuk River and then all  
34 of a sudden they just turned and went north and I can't  
35 say exactly what caused that but I would say that, you  
36 know, perhaps it was something bigger than a small  
37 disturbance. Perhaps they were walking into the wind,  
38 perhaps it was weather patterns. What we see often --  
39 I'll cite 2019 there were a number of caribou in the  
40 mountains, we were hoping they would come down so that  
41 we could put some collars out on the Kobuk River there  
42 at Onion Portage and they just stayed there and they  
43 stayed there and they stayed there, and then we got a  
44 bunch of storms and snow then they moved out of the  
45 mountains. I think what we're seeing, in my opinion,  
46 is a lot of these later -- you know, later and later  
47 falls, it's been warmer, we've had a lot more rain, a  
48 lot less snow, things aren't freezing up like they used  
49 to, and those caribou were just staying put because

50



0222

1 they're comfortable. And then this year, boy, I was  
2 surprised I didn't think they were going to come down,  
3 I really thought they were just going to stay in the  
4 mountains like they've done for the past few years and  
5 then all of a sudden here they come. You know a lot of  
6 them crossed the river before it froze up, some of them  
7 struggled with that pan ice, we could see collars  
8 bouncing off the Kobuk River there and, you know, some  
9 of them were still in that Kobuk Valley. A lot of them  
10 were in the Selawik Valley. So very different  
11 movements this year. Very different weather this year  
12 than last year. I guess that's kind of what I'm  
13 pointing the finger at and asking those questions.

14  
15 But I'm curious what, you know, your  
16 collective traditional knowledge might do to inform me  
17 so that I could understand my job better.

18  
19 MR. ARMSTRONG: Okay, another question,  
20 too, is when they're traveling to Federal lands, do  
21 they move north when they're near rivers?

22  
23 MR. HANSON: Sorry, I missed that  
24 reference, north near where?

25  
26 MR. ARMSTRONG: Any rivers.

27  
28 MR. HANSON: Yeah, of course. And I  
29 don't know if Kyle's hearing, but Kyle Joly with the  
30 Park Service puts together kind of this timeline of a  
31 graphic of when the caribou cross, when the herd  
32 crosses the Noatak River. It's very informative and  
33 descriptive and you can find that information through  
34 the Park Service. I believe you can also link that up  
35 through Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group  
36 meeting. And I -- yeah, they definitely cross rivers  
37 and they go back and forth and kind of what we see,  
38 I'll just describe briefly, is, the Western Arctic  
39 Caribou Herd has a very strong fidelity to the calving  
40 grounds. They head to the calving grounds, kind of the  
41 Udakuk River up lands, end of May, first part of June  
42 and that's where they calve. From there, the next  
43 step, or their stop on their way is they move toward  
44 the Lisburne Peninsula and that's where we shoot our  
45 census, they're out there, this is what we call post-  
46 calving aggregations, they get together in giant groups  
47 hopefully so we can shoot photographs, and they're  
48 trying to find relief from bugs and other things out on  
49 the windswept areas, and snow patches. But after that,  
50

0223

1 you know, this fidelity or strong desire to be in a  
2 specific area kind of goes out the window. They start  
3 moving into the mountains there and they just disperse  
4 all over the place. A lot of them will go to the North  
5 Slope, some will go into the mountains, some go back to  
6 the coast, it can be very different every year and very  
7 dynamic and so after that shakeup, you know, kind of  
8 what we're seeing right now, is they then move into the  
9 rut and they just kind of slow down. But they're  
10 working their way slowly to where they're going to  
11 winter. And whatever those pressures are, whether it  
12 be weather or, you know, other things, desire to get to  
13 certain feeding areas or whatever, they just appear to  
14 move at some times randomly and eventually stop for the  
15 winter.

16  
17 So like I say it's very dynamic and  
18 challenging to understand and guess where they're going  
19 to go next.

20  
21 MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you.

22  
23 MR. JOLY: Mr. Chairman, this is Kyle  
24 Joly with the Park Service.

25  
26 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, Mr. Joly.

27  
28 MR. JOLY: I sent a presentation  
29 through Eva to you, would you like me to give that now,  
30 it's a talk about movements and distributions of  
31 caribou?

32  
33 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Alex, do you have  
34 anything else that you'd like to share right now or  
35 would you like to have Kyle do his presentation.

36  
37 MR. HANSON: I'm happy to do either. I  
38 guess one thing that I really want to share is that we  
39 need, you know, the local help, you mentioned briefly  
40 that, you know, we put out a number, you know, harvest  
41 between 10 and 12,000, we don't really know. I mean  
42 I'm being honest. And we put that out before we tell --  
43 we tell people that that's our best guess, it tracks  
44 long-term harvest. We feel like it's pretty accurate  
45 long-term but it doesn't do much good for short-term.  
46 And so our request to the members of the public and  
47 members of the Council, you know, we have this tool,  
48 this RC907 tool in 23 and 26A and it helps us track  
49 caribou harvest and we really need help so we can  
50

0224

1 understand what the harvest is. We don't want to  
2 guess. But that's kind of where we're forced when we  
3 don't have the participation that we need with this  
4 tool.

5

6 And I'm absolutely open to any other  
7 ideas. You know there were some ideas mentioned about  
8 working with Maniilaq to get harvest reporting.  
9 Harvest reporting can be very important especially as  
10 we get close to, you know, this line, the population is  
11 a little bit closer to, you know, those critical  
12 values. And so I would certainly be open to discussion  
13 for that. Anybody that has any ideas, whether it's now  
14 or, you know, come into my office, I'm happy to visit  
15 with you, let's try to figure out where harvest is so  
16 that we could understand it better. So that we could  
17 understand, you know, what the harvest level should be  
18 at in Noorvik or Kotzebue. So that's a real struggle  
19 for us to get that data. And I'm here, so any other  
20 questions I'm happy to entertain them, but that's kind  
21 of what I had and what I wanted to talk about.

22

23 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Alex. And,  
24 Kyle, before we move on to yours I just have a question  
25 for Alex. So thinking about those situations you  
26 mentioned, Alex, where the herd as a whole or large  
27 sections of the herd may be moving south and then they  
28 all of a sudden just kind of stop and swap directions,  
29 is there any way for you to cross reference those  
30 spots, say, working with some of the things that the  
31 National Park Service has done in looking for wolf  
32 dens, I'm sure Fish and Game has as well, seeing if  
33 there might be high concentrations of predators in that  
34 area or if those occasions where the herd, out of  
35 nowhere, turns around, if those are documented and if  
36 there's way, that over time, you could see if it was  
37 related to a specific valley, or a specific stretch of  
38 the mountains or whatever it may be?

39

40 MR. HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair,  
41 that's a good comment and good point to consider. You  
42 know the reference that I was talking about was kind of  
43 this, you know, basically the whole herd was across,  
44 you know, 150, 200 miles, and just to see that shift  
45 was pretty interesting and dynamic. But there's  
46 certainly, you know, instances where point disturbances  
47 might take place and those get very difficult to  
48 understand. We're typically recording movements in  
49 eight hour increments so seeing those minute changes in

50

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1 movement patterns can be very challenging and very  
2 difficult. We can see the large scale stuff, for  
3 instance if they come to the Kobuk River, occasionally,  
4 you know, whether it's ice pans or boat traffic or  
5 whatever, we might see some of those collars bounce on  
6 the river and eventually get through. We might see  
7 that, for instance, along the road corridor, and those  
8 are a little bit easier to understand because it's a  
9 well defined, you know, structure or feature on the  
10 landscape. But being able to pin down those really  
11 minute things can be super challenging, but I'm  
12 absolutely open to any discussion and ideas as to how  
13 we can get to that.

14

15 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair, it's Wilbur.

16

17 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, please, Wilbur.

18

19 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah, Alex, back when we  
20 had Mr. Dau flying around with Fish and Game and doing  
21 counts and now it's Brandon Sato, I believe, but  
22 anyways we did -- or we asked and had someone who did  
23 some studies on their food, what they eat. For so many  
24 years that they traveled along the coast now I'm kind  
25 of thinking that the abundance of the food is when they  
26 go through that same routing on their migration along  
27 the coast and they hit here the past maybe four or five  
28 years ago, maybe less than that, but how is the food  
29 affecting them now with all this climate change and --  
30 and another thing that was hurting our fawns when they  
31 were born up in the calving grounds, there was the  
32 eagle, the Golden Eagle that there was so many of them,  
33 how's that going.

34

35 Thank you.

36

37 MR. HANSON: Yeah, through the Chair.  
38 Thank you, Wilbur, those are great questions. I guess  
39 real briefly I would say that, yes, Mr. Dau is still  
40 around, I took his position about five years ago, I  
41 certainly don't know half the things he knows and  
42 probably never will but I'm doing my best.

43

44 As far as the feed situation, you bring  
45 up a very good point. If we think about, and I don't  
46 know all that much about lichen, I'll admit, but if we  
47 think about lichen and it takes many, many years to  
48 regrow, 20 to 50 years in some cases and we think about  
49 this giant mass of animals, the Western Arctic Herd

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1 that reached almost a half million animals in 2003 and  
2 for a number of years that mass of animals spent the  
3 winter on the Seward Peninsula and so with a half a  
4 million, dwindling down to a quarter million, you know,  
5 occupying that landscape for 20 to 50 years, you know,  
6 there's certainly going to be some potential for  
7 depletion of resource, depletion of that lichen or that  
8 winter feed that they need, so it certainly stands to  
9 reason, as you point out, that they're going to have to  
10 move to different areas. You know we see this, you  
11 know, they might be in one drainage, or one specific  
12 area one winter and then move to another next so that  
13 that resource can replenish. I believe the BLM had  
14 some studies on that, and Kyle may be able to speak to  
15 some of that as well with the Park Service, but I don't  
16 have any of that data at my fingertips.

17  
18 But as far as the calving, you  
19 mentioned mortality on the calving grounds. We  
20 recently wrapped up a study that we started in 2017 for  
21 three years, we went up to the calving grounds and we  
22 collared two day old calves, and we followed those  
23 calves through the first year of their life so that we  
24 could understand what the mortality causes and rates  
25 were. And you mentioned, you know, Golden Eagles  
26 taking calves and we certainly documented that, and we  
27 also documented brown bear mortality on the calving  
28 grounds. But it was a very interesting dynamic because  
29 the first year we saw high mortality from black [sic]  
30 bears and I believe two or three cases where Golden  
31 Eagles were involved and this was out of about 75  
32 individuals that we collared so it definitely was  
33 happening, it was very interesting to see in the  
34 document. The next year and the next year, this was  
35 three years the mortality on the calving ground went  
36 down quite a bit, we saw almost no mortality the next  
37 two years from bears, what we saw was, as near as I can  
38 tell, you know, we call it the calving grounds, you  
39 know, it's an area that they go to every year and it's--  
40 we like to think of it as a small confined space, but,  
41 in fact, it's huge, a very large area and they don't  
42 always calve in the exact same spot, and they moved a  
43 little bit further to the north in these second two  
44 years of the study, and appeared to have moved out of  
45 the home range of some of the bears, so that brown bear  
46 mortality went down quite a bit. So it was very  
47 interesting to see.

48  
49 But thank you for bringing up that  
50

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1 point about mortality on the calving ground.

2

3 MR. SCHAEFFER: Tom.

4

5 MR. HOWARTH: Yes, thank you so much.

6

7 MR. SCHAEFFER: Tom, you hear me?

8

9 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Is that Bob Schaeffer  
10 -- is that you Bob?

11

12 MR. SCHAEFFER: Yeah, I think I -- I  
13 don't know I've always thought about it because my  
14 father -- I was raised back in the '50s, you know, and  
15 I -- and when my father used to go with a bunch of guys  
16 from Kotzebue, Noorvik, they'd head north through the  
17 Squirrel and go up to the NorthFork and head over  
18 toward (In Native) and all the way around the other  
19 side of -- towards the Continental Divide, between the  
20 Brooks Range and between the north and the -- the  
21 Noatak area and they did that -- I was raised when that  
22 happened and every year back in the '50s and they'd  
23 spend a month, month and a half out there, you know, to  
24 go get the caribou. He was telling me, you know, that  
25 it was a long trek but that's what they did before that  
26 as well. There were reindeer herds all over but there  
27 was -- this was a business and they, you know, they  
28 just couldn't -- didn't have enough money to go out and  
29 buy a reindeer so all the reindeer herds were pretty  
30 much still intact, you know, the (Indiscernible) herd  
31 was still around, I think there was a herd over in  
32 Noatak, I can't remember what the name was, and York  
33 Wilson's over toward Wolf Creek and then the Noorvik  
34 herd and there was -- and Lawrence Grey's herd over  
35 towards Selawik, I could go on and on but, you know,  
36 they were established reindeer herds and -- and people  
37 thrived pretty much on them, you know, but the main  
38 thing was when I was young, and growing up in the '50s  
39 it was commonplace for the Kotzebue people then to pack  
40 up their 14 foot sleds and their dogs and they'd head  
41 up north like they did before when -- when before my  
42 dad was young, you know, the forefathers, I guess, they  
43 did the same thing. Because the caribou herd pretty  
44 much stayed on the North Slope and these were full-  
45 bloodied caribou, you know. And he said when he went  
46 up there and got a terrible he had to tip his sled on  
47 the side to get the big bull in there because there was  
48 no way they could lift them so they'd put them on its  
49 slide the caribou in and lift it up and then he said  
50

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1 that's how they got them in, into the sleds. And,  
2 anyway, they spent a month up there and got a sled load  
3 and they'd come back down and have their meat for a  
4 year. And it happened like clockwork almost every  
5 year.

6  
7 So the caribou really never came down  
8 at that time, and God knows what happened prior to  
9 that, there was no recorded history of, you know, what  
10 the -- we didn't have a -- our language -- our written  
11 language so it was all passed down. But he was always  
12 telling stories about the old -- and how they had to go  
13 back up there to get -- to get caribou.

14  
15 But anyway in the meantime, you know,  
16 at the turn of the century they had the reindeer  
17 introduced up here through the Bureau of Indian Affairs  
18 reindeer service and -- and the number of local folks  
19 got reindeers from -- from the -- through the BIA and  
20 the BLM and they -- they raised reindeer from the turn  
21 of the century all the way through until the caribou  
22 came in. But let me tell you something about the  
23 caribou, this is what my dad told me. He said back in  
24 1938 they -- they corralled over by (Indiscernible)  
25 over by -- by (In Native) across from us, across here  
26 from Kotzebue about 10 miles or so they had some huge --  
27 they had some huge fencing that they did with local  
28 wood and they stocked the herd from Noorvik and York  
29 Wilson's herd and they dropped them in and then it was  
30 after, you know, 40 years of feeding in those areas and  
31 they were -- they were getting quite concerned because  
32 they were over grazing and the food became quite scarce  
33 so they herded -- they -- he said they corralled 90,000  
34 over there in that -- in the (In Native) and he said a  
35 lot of them were in real bad shape. The next winter he  
36 said that that's when the movement north took place,  
37 they just over grazed, there was no food, there was so  
38 much death amongst the reindeer and he said that the  
39 reindeer herds just headed north. And therein met the  
40 other herd, the caribou herd and started something new.  
41 He said they interbred because of necessity, they had  
42 to find food. They were not -- they just over grazed  
43 their winter area, most of the grazing areas and you  
44 know lichens grow, they grow very very slow and so they  
45 stayed up north with the caribou herd and that's why  
46 our caribou is so small. He said he'd grab a caribou  
47 bull in comparison to the old full-blooded bulls and  
48 they were almost twice the size. So he said that was  
49 the caribou went from large to medium and he said  
50

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1 that's how it happened. And then all of a sudden, you  
2 know, we have the start of a new breed called the  
3 Western Arctic Caribou Herd, half reindeer and half  
4 caribou.

5

6 But, you know, the thing is it grew to  
7 a large size and started migrating to where the old  
8 reindeer coral, or reindeer herds -- most of the herd  
9 is along the local -- and those back in the '50s and  
10 '60s lost their herds to the caribou and then as time  
11 went on NANA got involved in the reindeer herding  
12 business because that herd never went to the Seward  
13 Peninsula, so there was still herds in Buckland and, of  
14 course, there's the Good Hope herd over in Shishmaref  
15 and a number of other herds all the way through the  
16 Seward Peninsula all the way to Nome and as mentioned --  
17 as I think Alex mentioned that they did spend a couple  
18 years on the Seward Peninsula and let me tell you they  
19 took a lot of reindeer. We'd see tags all over the  
20 place when we're hunting caribou for Godssake.

21

22 But, anyway, that's pretty much the  
23 history of it. It's something that was passed down to  
24 me from my father who worked for the reindeer herders  
25 back when he was young, back in the '20s and '30s and  
26 he had a real vast knowledge of reindeer. So anyway I  
27 think the haphazard way they're reacting is because of  
28 their bloodline, the reindeer, if there's no food in  
29 one spot they all know that they're not going to go  
30 back to that spot, they're going to go someplace else.  
31 But that's pretty much the history of how -- of what I  
32 know of it, you know. When they got on to the Seward  
33 Peninsula, of course they took all the reindeer herds  
34 over there and they mixed in with the caribou and then  
35 they left and then they followed the spring migration  
36 back up north and so that's part of it. Some of the  
37 reindeer still reside on the Seward Peninsula that  
38 don't leave there but there's a vast majority that did  
39 follow the caribou as they migrated north in the  
40 springtime.

41

42 But, you're right, Alex, that's pretty  
43 much the history of it as we know it because let me  
44 tell you there was a number of hunters from Kotzebue  
45 back from when I was growing back that left and were  
46 gone for a month, a month and a half to try to get  
47 caribou from the North Slope area. Dad said he'd go as  
48 far as Colville sometimes, the headwaters of the  
49 Colville just to try to find caribou in the wintertime  
50



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1 and so sometimes they'd go even closer, they'd migrated  
2 down into the upper Noatak and they'd find them on the  
3 hills up in the Noatak. But listening to them when  
4 they talked about it was kind of interesting because  
5 there was reindeer all over when I was growing up. We  
6 used to have people, the Yorks come in with reindeer  
7 sleds and have reindeers pulling their sleds into town  
8 and go stock up on grub and head back to his reindeer  
9 camp over by Wolf Creek. But those were the days that,  
10 I think, the reindeer and the caribou, are pretty much  
11 the same breed, but they were just a little different  
12 and they were interbred and that's the caribou that we  
13 have today.

14  
15 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Bob. Bob, for the  
16 sake of time do we have any questions for Alex.

17  
18 MR. BALLOT: Yeah, this is Percy Ballot.  
19 Maybe I do. Alex.....

20  
21 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, Percy.

22  
23 REPORTER: Who's speaking please.

24  
25 MR. BALLOT: .....regarding hunting  
26 fawns in Unit 22, and I'm a little bit perturbed about  
27 that because, you know, fawns, okay, but they should  
28 just be for elders.

29  
30 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Percy.

31  
32 MR. BALLOT: Yeah.

33  
34 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So this is Thomas  
35 Baker, and I think it was Tina that asked, this is  
36 Percy Ballot speaking.

37  
38 REPORTER: Oh, okay, thank you. Hi  
39 Percy.

40  
41 CHAIRMAN BAKER: And just so you know,  
42 Percy, we took care of all the proposals yesterday and  
43 that one regarding the harvest of fawns in Unit 22 we  
44 do not support, this RAC is opposed to. But for now we  
45 can.....

46  
47 MR. BALLOT: All right, I apologize.

48  
49 CHAIRMAN BAKER: That one is taken care  
50

0231

1 of and we're opposed to that.

2

3 MR. BALLOT: But my question was what  
4 kind of effect, you know, if there's killing females  
5 and stuff now that we're going to be going on because  
6 we got no choice, and we're killing three or four or  
7 whoever is killing, whatever, in the end, when's the  
8 best time to -- we got to stop this for this amount of  
9 time.

10

11 MR. HANSON: Yeah, through the Chair.  
12 Member -- or to Mr. Percy Ballot. Yeah, those are  
13 challenging questions trying to understand harvest and  
14 like I said we really don't understand it. We need  
15 more participation in our program, more reports so that  
16 we can see what's going on. But as we know if we were --  
17 let's say we were in a situation where we wanted to  
18 prevent further decline of the herd, you know, what we  
19 would typically recommend and that would certainly have  
20 to come with public support is reduction in cow harvest  
21 because that's where the production comes in. As I  
22 mentioned I just finished up the fall composition  
23 survey and we have a pretty good component of bulls, 47  
24 bulls to 100 cows and anecdotally we don't track this  
25 closely but, you know, it seemed to be a good  
26 representative ample of the age class in there, big  
27 bulls, medium bulls, small bulls and little bulls. So  
28 I would say that we have quite a few bulls to harvest  
29 and, you know, currently we're not asking anybody to  
30 reduce harvest, we just want to understand it better so  
31 we can see where we're at.

32

33 And I wanted to briefly respond to Bob,  
34 I appreciate that history, that was pretty incredible  
35 and I just want to say when we have more time perhaps  
36 you and I should sit down, I'd love to visit with you.  
37 So feel free to get a hold of me at the office and we  
38 can do that or I can find you somewhere else.

39

40 Thanks.

41

42 MR. BALLOT: Yeah, I guess the point,  
43 Mr. Chair, is.....

44

45 MR. KRAMER: Mr. Chairman, this is  
46 Michael.

47

48 MR. BALLOT: .....that there's got to  
49 be some sort of goals or plans, if we are down to the

50

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1 breaking point of there's 12,000 people shooting them  
2 for subsistence and there's 450 whatever hunters and  
3 you don't know the amount, there's got to be some kind  
4 of a balance in what we do to balance that herd. And  
5 if you, you know, think about all that, now is the time  
6 to start making some points, or moves, or goals, that's  
7 your job.

8  
9 MR. HANSON: Correct. Yeah, that's a  
10 very good point. Yeah, that's something we think about  
11 a lot and, you know, we may have to have those hard  
12 discussions in the future, depending on where the  
13 population goes. You know kind of pointing towards  
14 this discussion coming up about the closure, you know,  
15 from a biological perspective what we see is, you know,  
16 harvest from non-local folks on the order of, you know,  
17 250 to 350 almost all bulls each year. Biologically  
18 it's pretty insignificant but I understand that this is  
19 far more than biological information, and more than a  
20 biological discussion, it comes down to some very  
21 important social things and, you know, when we really  
22 look at reduction in harvest, if we have to go there,  
23 you know, it's you folks are going to have to visit  
24 with us and we're going to have to come up with some  
25 good solutions and some good plans, like you said, we  
26 need to make some plans and, you know, see where we can  
27 go with, heaven forbid, we have to figure a way to  
28 reduce harvest some day.

29  
30 I appreciate that.

31  
32 MR. BALLOT: And I thank you. I don't  
33 mean no disrespect to you or anybody, I'm just voicing  
34 my point. I apologize for not being there yesterday,  
35 Mr. Chairman, but I was invited to this meeting and I  
36 guess I had the wrong time. Caribou is important to  
37 me. Hearing that history reminded me of what my papa  
38 used to do about going out and being out a month at a  
39 time with dog teams and crossing the river even through  
40 break up stuff and everybody being happy to get a bite  
41 to eat, like how we gather together when we're hunting  
42 beluga, if somebody gets something we stop and share  
43 our food, you know. Miss those kind of times and just  
44 don't want to see that happening, if there's ways we  
45 could help through our tribes and getting those numbers  
46 you really need, Cyrus said something about it was for  
47 elders only but we need to capture those young folks  
48 that are out there and if we get the word out to the  
49 tribes I'm sure they'll step in and help us get those  
50

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1 real numbers.

2

3 MR. HANSON: Thank you, Percy. Briefly  
4 I would say that it's just amazing to hear those  
5 stories of how your ancestors traveled so far and, you  
6 know, a month at a time is just incredible. I think  
7 I'm kind of a little bit jealous that I don't get to do  
8 that but I probably would have died so it's pretty  
9 amazing.

10

11 MR. BALLOT: Yeah, I got pictures of  
12 Nathan Hadley when he was a young guy and my papa and  
13 him crossing the river with the ice broken up going  
14 through patched ice with full loads of caribou if I  
15 remember right, yeah. I need to find them some day.

16

17 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Mike Kramer did you  
18 join us.

19

20 (No comments)

21

22 CHAIRMAN BAKER: I thought I heard Mike  
23 Kramer join and ask to speak a little while ago. Are  
24 you on Mike?

25

26 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, I'm here. I had  
27 questions. I'm back. I was back before 1:30. One  
28 thing I'd like to see from Alex at our next meeting is  
29 the seven day periodic data from August 1st to October  
30 15th of collars in seven day intervals. And the other  
31 thing is what date is the last day of air traffic  
32 transporters and guides. That way we coincide the data  
33 with the movement of the caribou to see if the aircraft  
34 traffic is hindering and once it calms down then they  
35 start coming down. That's one of the reasons why I'm  
36 asking for that data. Number 3 is, you know, the drop  
37 off points of all commercial services. You know on a  
38 map where these commercial services are operating,  
39 where they have camps. And then the last thing is, is,  
40 you know, the female harvest. I see that we've been  
41 cut back to March 31st but, you know, I try not to take  
42 them anywhere past December 31st until maybe in  
43 January.

44

45 Because I know that ANILCA says that,  
46 you know, once a caribou herd becomes critical and  
47 critical steps and stages are taken that, you know,  
48 there's supposed to be three steps. One is -- I'm  
49 trying to remember, environment enhancement, first ones

50

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1 are cut off are transporters and guides, second one is  
2 predator control, you know, I seen that in ANILCA,  
3 that's one of the steps that are required to be taken  
4 if a lot of means of harvesting animals have been taken  
5 by a local area such as Game Management Unit 23 and  
6 we've taken a lot of cuts, we've probably taken more  
7 cuts than the transporters and guides to preserve our  
8 herd, you know, and it's very, very critical to this  
9 region. I haven't even gotten one caribou yet and here  
10 it is November. I'm waiting for the females to come  
11 down to be able to at least harvest two or three, you  
12 know, for my freezer, because all fall they're not  
13 nowhere near by so why waste the money to go out and  
14 look for them and you ain't going to see any. So I've  
15 been basically just waiting for them to come south end  
16 of October, November and into December. That's why I  
17 think a good cut off date for cows would be December  
18 31st that way you can ensure that they're carrying  
19 their young all the way up until they reach the calving  
20 grounds and give birth. You know, that way we're being  
21 able to monitor how many cows are taken. And that's  
22 the other question I have for Alex, in the last five  
23 years how many cows have been harvested by year. You  
24 know that kind of data really helps us to be able to  
25 prepare for what kind of cuts we have to take. And I  
26 know we've taken drastic cuts because we're one of the  
27 biggest harvesters of this herd and we've continued to  
28 take cuts and other places aren't taking cuts, it's  
29 just unfair, and I mean in kind of a way it's  
30 discriminatory because, you know, it's not just helping  
31 the local people fill their freezers and it's very  
32 critical that people fill their freezers because right  
33 now we're in this pandemic, you know, a lot of the  
34 grocery stores here they tend to run out of stuff very  
35 quickly. When you go to the store for a dinner plan,  
36 you better have five or six of them, you know, dinner  
37 plans because a lot of the stuff ain't going to be  
38 there. So a lot of people depend on, you know, caribou  
39 and moose to fill their freezers.

40

41 That's all I have for right now.

42

43 MR. HANSON: Thank you, Mike. Through  
44 the Chair. Yeah, I can certainly put together some  
45 data for you. I don't know if you've seen it or not  
46 but, or maybe Kyle can speak to this, but a few years  
47 ago they looked at, you know, just that thing, it was  
48 the collar data, the camps, the airplane drop off  
49 stuff, kind of between 2010 and 2013 and, you know,  
50

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1 they were looking at that to see if, you know, if those  
2 camps and landing sites changed the movements of the  
3 caribou and ultimately, from my understanding of this  
4 study, they didn't. They weren't able to detect any  
5 real change, you know, as to just caribou just  
6 wandering through the mountains, running into terrain  
7 and trees and rivers and what have you. So it's  
8 something that they looked at, didn't really see much  
9 impact but I'm absolutely interested in that and any  
10 other ways that we can study it because it's super  
11 interesting and super challenging to study and  
12 understand.

13

14 And, you know, happy to talk locations  
15 and that kind of stuff, and movements, we can't share  
16 specific locations per se, but happy to visit with  
17 anybody that wants to come into the office or give me a  
18 call.

19

20 Harvest of cows, you make a very good  
21 point, Mike, that's kind of where we grow the herd  
22 obviously, cows produce the calves that become the next  
23 generation of bulls and cows to produce more animals  
24 and, you know, if we can voluntarily reduce harvest --  
25 if we had the opportunity to harvest a smaller bull or  
26 something in the fall that's going to do great things  
27 for the herd potentially so appreciate that.

28

29 And if I missed anything, Mike, please  
30 let me know.

31

32 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair, it's Wilbur.

33

34 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, Wilbur.

35

36 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah, Alex, this -- we  
37 only had 29 bulls taken with the elders program this  
38 fall and 64 that I know of our hunters, so about 93  
39 bulls have been taken this fall if you guys want a  
40 Noorvik count. That's what I just put together.

41

42 MR. HANSON: Thank you, Wilbur, I  
43 really appreciate that.

44

45 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur.

46

47 MR. HANSON: 93, that's excellent to  
48 hear.

49

50

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1 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Does anyone else have  
2 any more questions for Alex at this time before we move  
3 on to Kyle's presentation.  
4

5 MR. BALLOT: I've got to leave but I  
6 want to thank you guys, this is Percy Ballot again.  
7 And maybe we need to start thinking about getting  
8 villages to start their reindeer business up.  
9

10 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you for joining  
11 us Percy. And like you mentioned, if there's anyone in  
12 the Buckland or Deering areas that wants to get  
13 involved with the RAC, they can go online or they can  
14 reach out to any of -- well, there's the Park Service,  
15 or Selawik National Wildlife Refuge or any of those  
16 agencies to get an application so we can keep more  
17 people from that part of the region involved. Thank  
18 you for calling in.  
19

20 MR. BALLOT: Yes, I will talk to two or  
21 three guys, they love hunting and they love sharing and  
22 they like hearing stories, too, I'll steer them your  
23 way.  
24

25 REPORTER: Bye Percy.  
26

27 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Percy. So  
28 with that, Kyle, if you're still able I think we can  
29 segue into your portion.  
30

31 MR. JOLY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, can  
32 you hear me okay.  
33

34 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes.  
35

36 MR. JOLY: Hello everyone. My name's  
37 Kyle Joly, I'm a Wildlife Biologist with Gates of the  
38 Arctic National Park and Preserve working with the Park  
39 Service. I work with Alex on the Western Arctic Herd.  
40 For those of you who don't know me, I've been working  
41 out at Northwest and Northern Alaska for more than 20  
42 years now. I was able to send a slideshow presentation  
43 to Eva and hopefully most of you got it. I'll try and  
44 describe what I'm talking about for those folks who  
45 don't have access.  
46

47 One thing I wanted to mention before I  
48 jump into that is I wanted to answer a question about  
49 lichen abundance. Yeah, Alex, was right it takes 20,  
50

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1 25 years for lichens to grow back after they're grazed.  
2 After a wildfire it could be 50 to 100 or even 150  
3 years, depending on the species. In the Buckland area  
4 I worked on a study that looked at lichen abundance and  
5 it started way back in 1981, before my time, and lichen  
6 cover back then was 35 percent, so 35 percent of the  
7 ground was covered with lichen. By the time I got  
8 there and did my study in 2005 the lichen coverage  
9 dropped to about 12.5 percent, and I know that BLM has  
10 continued to monitor those transects in Buckland, and  
11 east of Buckland into the Nulato Hills and the lichen  
12 abundance has gone down but I don't have those specific  
13 numbers as I wasn't involved with the study. But  
14 that's BLM would probably have the most up to date  
15 information on that.

16  
17 With that I'll start my presentation.  
18 So the first slide is just a picture from early October  
19 of the GPS locations. We started putting GPS collars  
20 out in 2009. We've got about a million GPS locations  
21 of caribou now all on females. The distribution right  
22 now is very heavily clustered in Kobuk Valley National  
23 Park and eastern part of Selawik, there is a bunch over  
24 north and west of Red Dog Mine and then there's a few  
25 scattered out in the Gates of the Arctic and then on  
26 the North Slope. You can feel free to interrupt me at  
27 any time if you have any questions. I'm happy to stop  
28 at any point.

29  
30 The next slide shows caribou movements  
31 near the Red Dog Road. So we've been talking a lot  
32 about movements and, you know, I was really happy to  
33 hear the discussion about, you know, transporters and  
34 I'll get to that a little more in a minute, but also  
35 climate change and I'll talk about that in a minute as  
36 well. But one factor that really hasn't been discussed  
37 much is the impacts of roads. And I think you can see  
38 from this image that, you know, caribou do have a tough  
39 times, and this year is one of them, trying to cross  
40 the Red Dog Road. We published a paper, Jim Dau, and I  
41 and a couple other folks back in 2016 and that showed  
42 that the Red Dog Road was having an impact and, you  
43 know, this map shows that this road is still having an  
44 impact.

45  
46 Another thing that we seen this year  
47 which Alex mentioned and other people have noted is  
48 caribou having trouble crossing the rivers. This slide  
49 here is -- it says Page 3, it's the movements near  
50



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1 Kiana. And so there's red arrows depicting the flow of  
2 caribou movements and it's north to south then they hit  
3 the Kobuk River and they really get hung up, and then  
4 they start moving to the southwest and then up into the  
5 Squirrel area. And what I think is going on there is  
6 that, you know, due to the late migration they ran into  
7 the Kobuk and there was pan ice and they were having a  
8 hard time betting across it and so their movements have  
9 been deflected. We really haven't seen it this obvious  
10 in previous years but this year it was super obvious.  
11 Just two days ago we had a paper come out and it was an  
12 analysis looking at caribou movements and what were the  
13 cues for caribou to migrate in the fall. And all of  
14 you know this if you've sat out on the tundra and  
15 watched caribou, but we were able to quantify it for  
16 the first time. We were able to look at data that  
17 showed snowfall coming in and temperatures dropping and  
18 when that combination of events would happen in the  
19 fall, caribou would start having directional long  
20 movements, that is, migratory movements. The  
21 interesting thing was is that they always continuously  
22 updated their decisionmaking process so that if they  
23 reached an area that didn't have snow and temperatures  
24 warmed up they would stop or even halt or sometimes  
25 even back up, but if those cold temperatures came back  
26 in and more snow they'd continue on in their migration.  
27 So this is something that hunters have seen, you know,  
28 for hundreds if not thousands of years but we were able  
29 to quantify it and that paper just came out this week  
30 and I can share that with the Council if anyone is  
31 interested in it. But, you know, that has a lot of  
32 implications for climate change, you know, if the fall  
33 temperatures are warmer, if those snows are coming  
34 later we should expect to continue to see late  
35 migrations.

36  
37 The next slide is another one of a  
38 river. This is higher up, this is on the North Slope,  
39 the Colville River. Animals coming in from the north,  
40 hitting the river, getting deflected, walking along the  
41 river but finally crossing up there.

42  
43 We've heard a lot of talk about  
44 movements through Noatak. Looking at, you know, this  
45 years movements, you know, these tracks, these white  
46 lines are 30 days of movement. So this is, you know,  
47 September movements through the Preserve and largely,  
48 you know, I don't see the obvious signs of delays that  
49 we saw, you know, in those images of Red Dog. The  
50

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1 animals seem to be getting through and, in fact, Alex,  
2 alluded to it back in 2017 Ken Fullman and myself and  
3 Andrew Ackerman, we took all the data that the Park  
4 Service had on where transporters were putting down  
5 sporthunter camps and we looked at that and we found  
6 that, you know, caribou movements were affected by  
7 rugged terrain, they tried to avoid the rugged terrain,  
8 they tried to avoid really dense vegetation so they  
9 stuck out in the tundra, there's probably a couple of  
10 reasons for that. One is easier traveling, but, two  
11 they can, you know, see predators better. They also  
12 tended to avoid rivers and that might just be because  
13 of the difficulties, the energetic expense of trying to  
14 swim across them. But we did not see impacts at this  
15 scale of the sporthunting camps. And when I say, at  
16 this scale, so it's eight hour relocations and so, you  
17 know, that analysis showed that the caribou were still  
18 able to migrate through the Preserve but it still  
19 leaves the potential that there's these shorter term  
20 local impacts that could very well, you know, really  
21 hinder a hunt for a local user. So it's not evidence  
22 that, you know, what people have been saying that  
23 there's impacts from these transporters, it's just  
24 saying that at this scale that we looked at we're not  
25 seeing them. So the bigger, broader scale the animals  
26 are getting through.

27  
28 The next slide is just some  
29 information. So Alex had mentioned that we had  
30 switched to net gunning, Alex leads up that operation.  
31 Two years in a row we've got out a record number of GPS  
32 collars, which has been fantastic. We've talked about  
33 the change in overwinter use. So in Bering Landbridge  
34 there was a few years that when we first put out GPS  
35 collars that there was very little use and then it  
36 really ramped up almost 75 percent of the animals ended  
37 up in Bering Landbridge about five or six years ago and  
38 -- but for the last three years we're down to zero  
39 percent of the collars coming. Last year we had 71  
40 percent of the collars end up in Gates of the Arctic,  
41 which it was an all time record for the GPS data, which  
42 only goes back to 2009 but it's 50 percent more than  
43 we've ever seen in Gates of the Arctic. And, you know,  
44 I found the discussions really interesting but, you  
45 know, the talk about the distribution going back to the  
46 1950s, I found that really interesting, I read Lois  
47 Crisler's book, Arctic Wild that took place in the  
48 '50s, her and her husband were photographers for Disney  
49 doing wildlife filming and they were in Gates of the  
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1 Arctic and they had caribou all winter long in the  
2 Kilik River area and so, you know, that was interesting  
3 to see that happen again last winter.

4  
5 On the next slide is a depiction of the  
6 annual range of the caribou. 2020 was just a really  
7 strange year, stranger than most years. I know that  
8 caribou movements and distribution are very variable  
9 between years, but last year was notable. It started  
10 off with the caribou not really spreading out over the  
11 North Slope during summertime. They really hung by the  
12 coast and stayed far northwest and then in the winter,  
13 like I said, almost all of them, more than 70 percent  
14 ended up in Gates of the Arctic and that's what that  
15 bright orange coloration is, is that concentrated use  
16 and that heavy use in Gates of the Arctic which was  
17 really unusual for our short GPS time period.

18  
19 The next slide looks at where caribou  
20 cross the Noatak River. So the upper pic is where they  
21 did it in 2020 and so the bigger the bar the more the  
22 caribou came through. And you could see that the  
23 distribution was very skewed to the east, a lot of  
24 animals coming through, the very upper Noatak where  
25 Noatak Preserve changes into Gates of the Arctic.  
26 Interestingly there was none that came on the far west  
27 side. Usually we have some that come through Cape  
28 Krusenstern, west of Noatak village and kind of come  
29 down to the mouth of the Noatak River. So we didn't  
30 have any of that in 2020, which is unusual. We haven't  
31 seen that since 2010, so 10 years. The graph below  
32 shows kind of a long-term average so it was more skewed  
33 to the east. One of the interesting things about the  
34 crossings that we've been seeing is that we do have  
35 animals cross the Noatak River in the end of July,  
36 which is well before what we think of as typical  
37 migration and a lot of those animals, they cross south  
38 of the Noatak and they just hang out south there until  
39 they figure out what they want to do for winter. So  
40 some of these movements aren't really particularly  
41 migratory movements.

42  
43 So this is a new slide. I haven't  
44 shown this to the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working  
45 Group before so you guys are the first ones to get to  
46 see it. But it's a graph of the number of collars, the  
47 percentage of collars that are crossing the Kobuk River  
48 in fall so north to south they're crossing. In the six  
49 [sic] year span from 2010 to 2015 [sic] an average of  
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1 82 percent crossed the river, so 82 percent of the  
2 collars crossed the Kobuk River migrating south. In  
3 the last five years it's been an average of 34 percent,  
4 so less than half of what we've been seeing, what we  
5 kind of thought was quote/unquote normal, 80 plus  
6 percent, now we're down at 34 percent. In 2020 we had  
7 a record low six percent cross the Kobuk River. This  
8 year it's going to be a little bit higher but, you  
9 know, that pan ice did deflect some animals and it's  
10 unclear if those animals will wait to freeze-up to see  
11 if they come south or they'll get north of the Kobuk.

12  
13 This next graph looks at the timing of  
14 fall migration. And we all talk about how migration  
15 has been getting later and later. Interestingly and I  
16 don't have an explanation for it, for a number of  
17 years, from 2012 to 2016 the average crossing date of  
18 the Kobuk was getting earlier and we didn't really  
19 understand why, I don't understand why, but the last  
20 four years have been the latest. Last year, in 2020,  
21 was tied for the latest ever migration that we have.  
22 You know, when I tried to figure out why the migrations  
23 were getting earlier I started looking at the time that  
24 the first animal crossed, so not the average of all  
25 animals that crossed, but the first animal that crossed  
26 and it really became really striking this year. We had  
27 the first animal cross the Kobuk River on November 2nd,  
28 that's two months later than just 10 years ago, which I  
29 think most people think of as kind of normal. When we  
30 had animals in 2010 and 2011 crossing the Kobuk River  
31 in late August. August. So now last year was  
32 November, which was a whole month later than the record  
33 late time of October 1st, which just happened last  
34 year. So those first animals are really showing up at  
35 a much much later crossing time. It's going to be late  
36 again this year but not quite as late as last year.

37  
38 The next slide is about spring  
39 migration. Really there's not a whole lot going on on  
40 the spring migration side. It was a pretty average  
41 year. There are a couple anomalous years, some very  
42 late years, that was 2012 and 2013. That -- those  
43 years were deep snow years, very late spring and I  
44 think the caribou just had a hard time getting through  
45 that and they kind of waited for it to melt a little  
46 bit before they made a run up to the calving grounds.  
47 And I think, you know, the explanation there is the  
48 calving grounds, you know, those animals they have to  
49 calve and, you know, so the spring migration is going  
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1 to be less flexible than the fall migration.  
2 Interestingly we haven't detected any significant  
3 change in when caribou are having their calves, it's  
4 the first week of June and that really hasn't changed  
5 all that much as far back as we can tell.

6  
7 The last couple slides are just brief  
8 updates on papers that we published this year. The  
9 first one was an analysis of calving. Like Alex said  
10 there's a huge, really strong fidelity to the calving  
11 area. The herd has used the calving area for over 100  
12 years, one of the only places that this has been  
13 documented. They do change from year to year a little  
14 bit but they go back to the core area and this core  
15 area has really high forage quality for them which is  
16 really necessary for them to replenish their stores  
17 that they lost over the winter and have enough energy  
18 to lactate, to provide milk for their calves.

19  
20 The next one is about patterns of  
21 fidelity. so, you know, again high fidelity to the  
22 calving area, also their insect relief areas, out on  
23 the Lisburne Hills, it's even more really strong  
24 fidelity there. Less so in winter. One of the  
25 interesting things that we were able to detect was that  
26 there's super high fidelity to calving areas,  
27 individual animals would calve, on average, 35 miles  
28 from where they calved the previous year. So they're  
29 not coming back to the exact same spot to calve year  
30 after year, they're kind of going up to a general area  
31 and finding the best forage and that differs from year  
32 to year depending on weather conditions, snow melt,  
33 rainfall, things like that. Interestingly, calves --  
34 cows had calves on average within four days year to  
35 year so there wasn't a lot of variability in when an  
36 individual calves, they were-- there was pretty tight--  
37 again, fall migration more variable than spring  
38 migration. We also looked at a proposed AStar program,  
39 so this is a series of proposed roads for the North  
40 Slope connecting various villages and development  
41 scenarios and so we looked at the flow of caribou  
42 migration and how that proposed road system might  
43 impact things and what we found is that like the other  
44 paper that I mentioned about sporthunting, caribou  
45 avoided dense vegetation, rugged terrain, major rivers,  
46 but they also avoided roads, which is something that we  
47 found in that Red Dog analysis as well. And if that  
48 proposed road system came in, different villages would  
49 have different impacts. Some villages would have  
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1 likely less flow of caribou coming to their villages.

2

3

4 The next paper is an analysis of the  
5 NPR-A, the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. There  
6 was an EIS out looking at the impacts of potential  
7 development there and so we did our own analysis on  
8 that and looked at the Western Arctic herd but also the  
9 Teshekpuk and some bird species and we quantified the  
10 amount of impact that the different development  
11 scenarios would have on caribou calving specifically  
12 for those two herds.

12

13

14 The last paper is a paper about a new  
15 initiative, it's a group that's called the Global  
16 Initiative on Ungulate Migrations. Long distance  
17 terrestrial migrations are imperiled globally and this  
18 group is seeking to try and conserve these migratory  
19 routes and so one of their ideas is to try and make  
20 sure that these routes are mapped so people can try and  
21 avoid development where those are.

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So that was the end of my slide show.  
The only other thing that I wanted to mention that  
hasn't been mentioned in terms of caribou migrations  
and population size. One thing to consider is that  
across North America is that when these large caribou  
herds that inhabit all Northern North America, when  
they get smaller, their ranges tend to get smaller and  
so that necessarily is going to mean they're going to  
have different migratory routes, different migratory  
destinations, different migratory distances. And so,  
you know, when we think back to the '50s, the herd was  
much smaller then too and, you know, there may be a  
population connection as well as these transporter  
issues as well as these changes in forage, as well as  
wildfire changing movements, as well as roads changing  
movements, so there's a lot of different factors. And  
I guess I'd like to echo what Alex said, you know,  
we've got a lot to learn from you folks and we'd love  
to hear your input on what we can do to help understand  
the system better and mitigate any issues that are  
arising.

So with that I'll be happy to take any  
questions.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Kyle. Does  
anybody have any questions regarding Kyle's  
presentation.

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1 MS. WESSELS: Mr. Chair, this is Katya.

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, Katya.

4

5 MS. WESSELS: Yeah, I just would like  
6 to let everyone know that we received this PowerPoint  
7 presentation from Mr. Joly yesterday so we emailed it  
8 to the Council members and to anyone we could, we don't  
9 have it published on our website and I would hope to do  
10 that so it's available to the public but, you know, we  
11 might have some technical difficulties doing it. But  
12 if anyone would like a copy of this PowerPoint please  
13 send an email to OSM and we will be able to send you a  
14 copy of this presentation that Kyle was referring to.

15

16 Thank you.

17

18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you for that  
19 Katya. Does anyone have any questions.

20

21 MR. KRAMER: Mr. Chairman, this is  
22 Michael.

23

24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, Mike.

25

26 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, I had a question.  
27 You know I know that you guys say that a lot of the  
28 caribou spend a lot of time north of the Noatak, we do  
29 notice that there's small groups and congregations, you  
30 know, even south of Kotzebue and, you know, there's  
31 still a lot of them that are still up in the mountains.  
32 I know I've gone sheep hunting in the past, in August,  
33 and we run into groups of 20, maybe 30, and even just  
34 singles, you know, way up high, you know, I've never  
35 seen a caribou at 5,000 feet in altitude but there was  
36 probably a dozen of them up there just staying up  
37 there, probably to avoid the bugs. But do you guys  
38 have any collar data that, you know, shows any caribou  
39 are staying south of the Noatak, south of the Kobuk,  
40 you know, south of Kotzebue that are just kind of  
41 mingling in certain areas, have you guys noticed any  
42 difference in that, or any collars.

43

44 MR. JOLY: Thank you. Mr. Chairman,  
45 this is Kyle Joly again. So, yeah, an excellent  
46 question. So there are as a member mentioned earlier,  
47 remanent reindeer groups and so I've seen that group on  
48 the Baldwin Peninsula and I believe that's a remanent  
49 caribou -- or, excuse me, reindeer bunch, because they  
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1 do tend to stay there and our collars don't tend to  
2 stay on the Baldwin Peninsula. We've had one, maybe,  
3 over the last 10 years just kind of hang out on the  
4 Baldwin but in general they go through there. We do  
5 find them up in very high elevations. I've worked in  
6 the Talkeetna Mountains, the Wrangell Mountains with  
7 caribou and we have them up five, six, 7,000 feet.  
8 They're very capable climbers. Mountains that we think  
9 of as extremely rugged they just walk right over.

10

11 Now, one of the interesting things that  
12 happens after insect harassment, the peak of insect  
13 harassment, which is usually like about the 7th of  
14 July, is that the animals tend to shoot from the  
15 Lisburne Hills directly east. And they go up and over  
16 the Brooks Range Mountains, you know, just basically on  
17 a due east course like the Brooks Range wasn't even  
18 there. It's an epic journey that would take the  
19 fittest humans months and months and they're just doing  
20 it in days. So they're incredibly good at navigating  
21 mountainous terrain. Most people of it as sheep  
22 habitat but I've collected collars from caribou  
23 mortalities and I'm picking up the collar and I'm  
24 looking down at sheep so they're very capable climbers.

25

26 Did that answer your question.

27

28 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. Like do you guys  
29 have any that kind of mingle in the DeLongs and the  
30 Bairds and south of the Kobuk, I mean during the  
31 summer. Because, you know, I know we have like little  
32 congregations like, you know, are scattered throughout  
33 our reg -- our game management unit, but I know that  
34 occasionally there's times where -- you know, like you  
35 said it's probably due to the reindeer congregation or  
36 mostly reindeer bred into them but yeah we do see some  
37 groups that kind of stick in around in certain areas.  
38 I know that I used to trap up in the Kobuk Valley and I  
39 used to run into some of them in between Ambler and  
40 Huslia, you know, a couple groups there, several  
41 hundred or more but, you know, they didn't migrate down  
42 towards Buckland or Selawik area. But I knew that  
43 some people say that some would winter in that area and  
44 those Huslia Hills in between Huslia and Ambler.

45

46 MR. JOLY: Yes, thanks for those great  
47 observations. This is Kyle Joly again. Yeah, you  
48 know, we've got usually 70 to 100 GPS collars out, you  
49 know, and there's a couple hundred thousand caribou in

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1 the herd and so there's always little bands doing  
2 different things you know we don't capture all the  
3 movements. And there's always scattered little groups.  
4 You know a lot of times, you know, you'll find younger  
5 animals kind of doing these weird things, I think they  
6 get lost from the main groups, they lose, you know, the  
7 leaders, the adult cows, and they kind of figure it out  
8 and they end up in kind of these strange places. We  
9 also, you know, get reports of either caribou or  
10 reindeer being out on the Seward Peninsula year-round,  
11 I've seen five, 6,000 animals out there during the  
12 summertime. Interestingly we looked at -- that  
13 fidelity paper, we looked at animals were wintering out  
14 at Red Dog and we kind of suspected that those animals  
15 maybe kind of hunt out there but we didn't have any  
16 caribou that wintered by Red Dog ever winter there  
17 again. So a lot of them moved up to Wainwright the  
18 following year, something like that, some moved off to  
19 the Brooks Range so, you know, what we saw on the  
20 winter range is that the animals really move about and  
21 they really aren't found in the same spot over and  
22 over, for the, you know, Western Arctic herd animals.  
23 But, you know, that's what makes me suspect that, you  
24 know, if you're seeing animals in the same spot, one,  
25 it could be that it's this little remnant reindeer  
26 band.

27  
28 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, one other thing I  
29 wanted to ask, you know, is what was the estimated --  
30 or maybe Alex, you know, what was the estimated count  
31 on the Teshekpuk Herd and, you know, has their  
32 migration ever intermingled with the Western Arctic  
33 herd in the last several years.

34  
35 MR. HANSON: Yeah, through the Chair,  
36 this is Alex Hanson. Kyle probably knows the answer to  
37 this as well. But I -- gosh off the top of my head the  
38 last count for the Teshekpuk Herd was in 2017 and if  
39 Carmen was online she could answer, but it was 54 or  
40 57,000 so a pretty good number. That was at the same  
41 time that we shot the 2017 census for the Western  
42 Arctic herd at 259,000. So absolutely they do mingle,  
43 they do get together, we saw that actually last winter  
44 as Kyle was taking about, how they wintered in the  
45 Gates of the Arctic, a good component of the herd was  
46 there, they mingle with the Teshekpuk. There's even  
47 some Central Arctic approaching that area. This year,  
48 very different, they seem to be very separated at the  
49 moment. So, yeah, they do get together, there's some  
50

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1 interchange, and some mixing that occurs for sure on  
2 certain years.

3

4 MS. DAGGETT: Mr. Chair, this is Carmen  
5 Daggett.

6

7 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hi, Carmen, go ahead.

8

9 MS. DAGGETT: So the Teshekpuk Caribou  
10 Herd count was last done in 2017 as exactly Alex said,  
11 however it was 55 to 56,000, just so that you guys have  
12 an accurate number. And it's been good listening to  
13 you guys. I miss seeing all of you and I know you  
14 wouldn't be seeing each other's faces, but I miss all  
15 of your faces and talking with all of you.

16

17 Thank you.

18

19 MR. HANSON: Thank you for that  
20 correction, Carmen.

21

22 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you for that.

23

24 MR. JOLY: Mr. Chairman, this is Kyle  
25 Joly.

26

27 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, go ahead.

28

29 MR. JOLY: Yes, thank you. I just  
30 wanted to add to Alex's comments there. We did do a  
31 formal analysis of the interchange and it was pretty  
32 interesting kind of contrary to what you might expect  
33 off the top of your head, we actually saw more flow  
34 from smaller herds like the Teshekpuk to the larger  
35 herds, like the Western Arctic, and so like there was  
36 more flow from the Central Arctic to the Porcupine, so  
37 Central Arctic's smaller than the Porcupine. And the  
38 flow rates, the interchange rates were higher than  
39 people had thought about, in some cases is like five  
40 percent of the collars would change herds, or, you  
41 know, calve -- you know, if a Western Arctic herd  
42 animal would go calve near Teshekpuk Lake or something  
43 like that. So if people are interested in that we do  
44 have a publication that outlines how much interchange  
45 and flow of interchange that occurs for all the four  
46 northern Alaska herds.

47

48 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, that is  
49 interesting to note, Kyle. Does anyone have any other  
50

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1 questions for Alex and/or Kyle at this point.

2

3

(No comments)

4

5

6 CHAIRMAN BAKER: One question I have  
7 for you Kyle, this is Thomas Baker. Is there any  
8 recording or -- is there any way for, in your studies,  
9 to overlay areas where there may have been large  
10 wildfires in the past and just correlating those  
11 estimated stretches of burned tundra wildland, whatever  
12 you want to call it, with these images that we're  
13 seeing representative of where the herds are moving at  
14 different times of the year, if there are any -- is  
15 there any possibility of being able to show that in the  
16 future.

16

17

18 MR. JOLY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
19 This is Kyle Joly. Yeah, that's a great question.  
20 Actually I did my PhD thesis on the Western Arctic herd  
21 and relations to wildfires and lichens and so, you  
22 know, that was back probably 10, 12 years ago now so,  
23 yeah, what we found was that, you know, first that, you  
24 know, wildfires are a little more prevalent than people  
25 expected. We were documenting fires out in the tundra  
26 and now people are seeing that much more commonly. And  
27 then the Anaktuvuk fire obviously was a big eye opener  
28 for a lot of people. So that was the first part of the  
29 project. The second part of the project was  
30 documenting, you know, lichen recovery in those burned  
31 areas and what we found was that, yes, like in the  
32 boreal forest, lichens were taking 50 years or more to  
33 recover after the fire. Other things were recovering  
34 very quickly, things like cotton grass, those are your  
35 tussock grasses, those were recovering the very next  
36 year, within three, five years for sure. And often  
37 they actually were more abundant than before the fire,  
38 but the lichens were taking a long time. And then we  
39 used collaring data, this is showing my age, but this  
40 is pre-GPS, so those collars were called PTT collars,  
41 they weren't quite as accurate, but using those old PTT  
42 data, we showed that the caribou were avoiding those  
43 burned areas for about the length of time that it took  
44 those lichens to recover. So, yes, what you're getting  
45 at is, you know, are the caribou moving around in  
46 response to fire and I'd say yes they are. And I'd be  
47 happy to share, you know, those papers with you or talk  
48 about it more if you have additional questions.

48

49

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Kyle. That

50

0249

1 -- the perfect person to ask this about -- the main  
2 reason I ask is just in one of the things in your slide  
3 show is that you see the shift in percentages of  
4 caribou crossing the Noatak River and how it's slowly  
5 moved more to the east and it just struck me that it  
6 was probably the 10 years ago there was a pretty  
7 sizable wildfire north of the Noatak River that a lot  
8 of people even then said this is going to destruct the  
9 herd, but just showing that transition over the years  
10 the animals steadily moving more towards the east just  
11 kind of supports that. I don't have any more questions  
12 but thank you for that.

13

14 Does anyone have any other questions  
15 for Kyle or Alex.

16

17 (No comments)

18

19 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Okay.

20

21 MR. JOLY: Mr. Chairman, I really.....

22

23 MR. KRAMER: Mr. Chairman, this is  
24 Michael.

25

26 MR. JOLY: .....appreciate the  
27 opportunity. If any other questions appear you can  
28 shout them out to me or you can connect with me after  
29 the meeting. I'm pretty easy to get a hold of.

30

31 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Kyle. I  
32 have in my notes here that we might have heard from  
33 Jeanette Koelsch and Hannah Adkinson on this topic.  
34 Jeanette or Hannah, do either of you have anything  
35 you'd like to add in at this time.

36

37 MS. ATKINSON: Hi, I missed the first  
38 part of what you said but, no, we don't have anything  
39 we were planning on sharing. It seems like it would be  
40 nice to have the discussion on the WSA21-01 and if any  
41 questions come up we're available to answer. Is there  
42 something specific that you wanted me to share that I  
43 missed?

44

45 CHAIRMAN BAKER: No, it was just in my  
46 notes, Hannah, that National Park Service may have  
47 something to add in, kind of in addition to Kyle, but  
48 if there isn't.....

49

50

0250

1 MS. ADKINSON: Oh, I see.

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: .....anything  
4 specific, I just wanted to check. At this time.....

5

6 MS. ADKINSON: No. Thank you.

7

8 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Okay. Then we'll.....

9

10 MS. ADKINSON: Yeah, we'll just respond  
11 to questions. Thank you.

12

13 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Okay, thank you for  
14 that clarification Hannah. So at this time I'm getting  
15 a note that there's some members of the public who want  
16 to know if there will be a period for public or tribal  
17 comment on this caribou discussion. We currently don't  
18 have this on the agenda and I'm just looking through  
19 what we have left on the agenda to see if we'll have  
20 time to do one. We're also scheduling public hearings  
21 on Wildlife Special Action 21-01, which will be next on  
22 the agenda and Hannah Voorhees will be discussing and  
23 announcing these once we get to that portion of the  
24 agenda. Does anyone else from the Council have any  
25 questions regarding this discussion on Western Arctic  
26 Caribou Herd status updates and management strategy.

27

28 MR. SCHAEFFER: Tom.

29

30 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes.

31

32 MR. SCHAEFFER: Yeah, this is Bob.

33

34 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, go ahead, Bobby.

35

36 MR. SCHAEFFER: Yeah, you know, I  
37 mentioned earlier on my presentation on global warming  
38 because I think it's going to affect the oceans huge  
39 and not only with the carbon dioxide, but what carbon  
40 dioxide does, you know, to an ocean when it becomes  
41 infused with it, of course, you probably all have heard  
42 of ocean acidification which is probably the most  
43 dangerous part of our -- of what can happen to an  
44 ocean. You know if 52 percent of the -- what do they  
45 call that --the -- the stuff that grows in the ocean --  
46 anyway I wanted to mention that because I think -- I'm  
47 not sure exactly how it's going to affect the caribou  
48 herd, I know it's probably going to affect others  
49 because of -- you know there's massive massive melting  
50

0251

1 of permafrost out there now and I wanted to ask Kyle  
2 and Alex about what they're noticing insofar as the  
3 changes out there now that global warming is pretty  
4 much speeding up in the process. Are there any dangers  
5 that you've noticed or have you predicted anything that  
6 may change, that may have a negative impact on our  
7 herd.

8  
9 MR. JOLY: Hello, Mr. Chairman, this is  
10 Kyle Joly.

11  
12 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, please, go ahead,  
13 Kyle.

14  
15 MR. JOLY: Thank you. Yeah, the number  
16 of implications of climate change on caribou are just  
17 probably too many to deal with in one meeting. But,  
18 you know, some of the big ones, you know, we pointed  
19 out already are changes in the ice that make it  
20 difficult for them to cross. We're going to see more  
21 and more shrubs. We go to Onion Portage -- or we used  
22 to go to Onion Portage to catch caribou and, you know,  
23 just in the short time, you know, 15 years or whatever  
24 that I've been going there, you know, the amount of  
25 shrubs that have appeared there and their height has  
26 really changed so that can affect how predators can  
27 hide in the bushes, it also affects where caribou are  
28 going to migrate. As I noted, you know, we have a  
29 couple of analysis showing that caribou like to avoid  
30 thick vegetation when they're migrating and so that can  
31 change migratory patterns. You know one of the big  
32 concerns that people voice is icing events. So if  
33 there's snow on the ground and it rains, what happens  
34 is there's an ice crust that can form and that can have  
35 several problems for caribou. It can make it very  
36 difficult for them to dig down, or crater to their  
37 lichens which is their primary winter forage which can  
38 be 70 percent or more of their diet in the winter and  
39 so that's very essential for them to be able to bust  
40 through that ice. Those ice crusts, as you know, when  
41 you walk through them can be very sharp and that can  
42 cut open the bottom of the caribou legs and that can  
43 expose them to diseases and other things. Another  
44 impact from climate change that we expect is more bugs.  
45 Typically bugs do better in the Arctic when it's warmer  
46 and so we're expecting the insect harassment to be  
47 worse and that's a very critical aspect of caribou  
48 ecology is how much insect harassment they get, it  
49 determines how much foraging they can do. I could go  
50

0252

1 on and on really about this. I'd be happy to have a  
2 discussion another day on it or I could send you a  
3 couple of articles that outline some of the more major  
4 threats that climate change has for the herd. Another  
5 one just off the top of my head that we've been  
6 speaking about in fires, is wildfire obviously, we're  
7 expecting more wildfires as temperature heats up and we  
8 get more lightening storms out in Northwest Alaska.

9  
10 Let me know if that covers it or if I  
11 should do some more.

12  
13 MR. SCHAEFFER: Yeah, thanks.

14  
15 MR. KRAMER: Mr. Chairman, this is  
16 Michael.

17  
18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, go ahead, Mike.

19  
20 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, you know, I know one  
21 of the major things that's been coming up within the  
22 last year or two is these algae blooms that we've been  
23 getting in the water. I know just recently we had a  
24 whole bunch of herring washing up on shore, you know,  
25 we don't know if that's due to the population, over  
26 population or has to do with this algae bloom. I know  
27 a lot of the North Slope in the spring and into the  
28 summer have a lot of these fog, big storms, you know,  
29 would some of that algae bloom coming airborne and  
30 traveling inwards along with the fog and the wind, you  
31 know, does that have any kind of an affect on the  
32 lichen and basically just the overall condition of the  
33 tundra. Because I know a lot of fish and animals and  
34 crustaceans have a lot of -- you know, there's been  
35 die-offs due to this stuff. I know that in the ocean  
36 we've had a lot of warming, the king crabbing up here  
37 near Krusenstern has nearly dropped off the deep end.  
38 Have you guys put any kind of, you know, temperature  
39 monitoring programs, or monitoring areas in the North  
40 Slope to monitor the temperatures, you know, from 365  
41 days a year in different areas because that would be  
42 very interesting to find out, you know, the  
43 temperatures within the areas of the calving ground,  
44 their migration, it'd be very interesting. I know that  
45 here in Kotzebue within the last -- you know, this last  
46 summer, you know, we only came over 60 degrees only a  
47 few days this year because it was very rainy, cold, you  
48 know, in the 40s and 50s. But I know that the  
49 temperatures, you know, have a lot of effect on  
50

0253

1 different things. But that was the question I had.

2

3 MR. JOLY: Through the Chair, this is  
4 Kyle Joly. Yeah, I'm not a climatologist. We do have  
5 Staff experts, unfortunately they're not on the call  
6 right now. What I do know is that, you know, the  
7 Arctic, including the Northwest Arctic is warming very  
8 rapidly, three times as fast as other parts of the  
9 globe. A lot of this warming is happening during the  
10 fall and, you know, that has potential to really  
11 strongly impact caribou movements but I -- you know,  
12 for -- for detailed information on temperatures and  
13 precipitation and things like that it would be better  
14 if I could get together with my team and get you  
15 precise information if that's okay.

16

17 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, that's okay. Thank  
18 you for your time.

19

20 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So it is now 3:00  
21 o'clock. Do we have any more questions or discussion  
22 from the Council for Alex or Kyle or anyone else  
23 regarding the Western Arctic Caribou Herd discussion.

24

25 (No comments)

26

27 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, next on  
28 the agenda we have the update and guided discussion on  
29 Wildlife Special Action 21-01. At this time does the  
30 Council want to entertain a 10 minute break or just  
31 keep going.

32

33 (No comments)

34

35 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any members of the  
36 Council wanting a short break or are we ready to just  
37 keep rolling forward.

38

39 (No comments)

40

41 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing no decisions  
42 one way or the other, Hannah Voorhees, I have it  
43 written down that you will be working with us on this  
44 one. If you are ready the floor is yours.

45

46 \*\*Transcriber Note\*\*

47

48 Hannah Voorhees contacted Computer Matrix Court  
49 Reporters requesting she be titled as Dr. Voorhees in

50



0254

1 transcripts and not Ms. Voorhees

2

3 \*\*End Transcriber Note\*\*

4

5 DR. VOORHEES: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
6 Before I begin, I just wanted to check and see if Tom  
7 Sparks had wanted to give any sort of presentation.  
8 He's with BLM and I have him noted as possibly , or  
9 perhaps he just wanted to answer questions later if  
10 needed.

11

12 (No comments)

13

14 DR. VOORHEES: All right, hearing  
15 nothing from Tom, I'll jump right in.

16

17 (Teleconference interference -  
18 participants not muted)

19

20 DR. VOORHEES: So good afternoon, this  
21 is Hannah Voorhees, I'm an Anthropologist with the  
22 Office of Subsistence Management. I'm here to give you  
23 an update on Special Action Request WSA21-01, get  
24 feedback from you and discuss the next steps for this  
25 request. Relevant materials begin on Page 139 of your  
26 meeting materials. And this is not an action item and  
27 no motions are needed.

28

29 Temporary Wildlife Special Action  
30 WSA21-01 was submitted by this Council in February this  
31 year and requested closure of Federal public lands in  
32 Units 23, 26A to caribou and moose hunting by non-  
33 Federally-qualified users from August 1st to September  
34 30th, 2021. This proposal was also supported by the  
35 North Slope Council. This Council expressed concern  
36 about the late migration of caribou for Unit 23. The  
37 caribou migration has been delayed in recent years.  
38 The effect that transporters and non-local hunters may  
39 be having on caribou migration is of particular concern  
40 to the Council.

41

42 Following submission of this request,  
43 OSM held a public hearing, opened a written public  
44 comment period and held two tribal and ANCSA  
45 Corporation consultations.

46

47 The original OSM conclusion was to  
48 support WSA21-01 with modification to only close moose  
49 hunting to non-Federally-qualified users in Unit 23

50

0255

1 from August 1st to September 30th, 2021.

2

3

4 In June 2021 the Board met to decide  
5 this request but deferred it until 2022. In the  
6 meantime the Board requested that OSM Staff seek  
7 additional input on concerns related to caribou from  
8 the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group, Federal  
9 land managing agencies, local Fish and Game Advisory  
10 Committees, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game,  
11 Regional Advisory Councils, commercial guides and  
12 transporters and subsistence users in the area. The  
13 Board also asked OSM Staff to include comparisons of  
14 moose harvest by survey area within Unit 23 in their  
15 analysis.

15

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After OSM has compiled feedback from these groups, updates will be made to include this information in the analysis which will then come before this Council at your winter 2022 meeting. The Council can make a formal recommendation at that time. The Board will take action on this request in 2022.

This item came before the Western Interior Council for discussion though not as an action item two weeks ago and they decided to defer all conversation on this item to the home region. It also came before the Seward Peninsula Council last week. In terms of conversation with that Council a member from Unalakleet noted that she [sic] had to go further and further for caribou and that member as well as the member from Brevig Mission said that weather is likely to be affecting caribou movements. Changing weather also interferes with access to caribou on the Seward Peninsula. A similar conversation will also occur at the North Slope Council meeting later this week.

Additional public meetings on the deferred closure will be held in November and December. The first will be held in the next few weeks and will be announced very soon, within the next couple days.

I do have some specific questions for this Council today but before I move on are there any questions or comments.

(No comments)

DR. VOORHEES: So as I go through these questions, I know that many of you have commented on

0256

1 these topics already today and in the past; if there's  
2 anything you'd like to add this is a chance to do so.  
3 If you have nothing to add then we can just move on to  
4 the next question. These are questions that we're  
5 asking of all four affected Councils, that is all four  
6 Councils with C&T for caribou in Unit 23.

7

8 So, first, can you tell me more about  
9 the recent success or lack of success of communities in  
10 your region with caribou harvest. Can you tell me  
11 about this fall's harvest, how much effort are you  
12 expending to harvest caribou, and is this more or less  
13 effort in the past. Do you have to go further than in  
14 the past.

15

16 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Geez.

17

18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: This is Thomas Baker  
19 for the record. From my experience and from those in  
20 and around Kotzebue and the Kotzebue area, yes, people  
21 are having to go further and farther afield, up rivers,  
22 or inland, depending on where they typically hunt  
23 caribou, but they are expending more time, energy,  
24 money, what have you, with minimal success.

25

26 DR. VOORHEES: Thank you for that  
27 response, Mr. Chair. Are there any other comments in  
28 response to that question.

29

30 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah, Mr. Chair, it's  
31 Wilbur.

32

33 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, please, Wilbur.

34

35 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah, our hunters here  
36 out of Noorvik had to go to Onion Portage and further  
37 probably and later on they were trying to go up to  
38 Squirrel and, yes, that is happening. We only had a  
39 few boats that went all the way up to Onion Portage and  
40 spend quite awhile up there, and got back before  
41 freeze-up, too bad the caribou didn't show up. So,  
42 yes, that global warming or, I don't know, it's just  
43 that that's keeping the caribou up high in the  
44 mountains and going further up.

45

46 Thank you.

47

48 DR. VOORHEES: All right. If -- thank  
49 you -- and if there are no other comments on that one

50

0257

1 the next question is in terms of your concerns about  
2 transporters, and non-local hunters, OSM is looking for  
3 some clarification if air traffic is more of the issue  
4 or whether non-local hunters on the ground are more of  
5 an issue, or whether it's both. I guess we've heard  
6 kind of -- we've heard both and we're just looking for  
7 some clarity.

8  
9 MR. KRAMER: Mr. Chairman, this is  
10 Michael.

11  
12 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, please, Mike, go  
13 ahead.

14  
15 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, I kind of think it's  
16 a combination of both. Also, you know, camp placements  
17 because of the area that's up there closed five miles  
18 on each side of the river, I know that it's pushing a  
19 lot of them either north. You know the biggest problem  
20 I see is, you know, we as our Inupiaq culture, is to  
21 allow the first caribou to go by unhindered but if, you  
22 know, within the first couple weeks of August you've  
23 got hunters north of the Noatak, you know, they're not  
24 allowing the first ones to come through, it's beginning  
25 to hinder the people that hunt up the Noatak River,  
26 specifically the village of Noatak. I know that they  
27 have done very well the last couple of years, somewhat  
28 well. I mean I see people have success but I hear a  
29 lot of people not having success because of, you know,  
30 the cost of fuel, you know, the pandemic, making a lot  
31 of things very limited in the villages. The biggest  
32 thing that I see is, in this pandemic, is food  
33 security. The grocery stores here in Northwest Alaska,  
34 they just can't keep up with the demand because they're  
35 literally buying out stores. I know in the beginning  
36 of the pandemic it was cut back hours, business being  
37 closed, you know, plus a whole bunch of other factors  
38 that have been affecting food security, and with the  
39 caribou coming later, limited time to be able to go out  
40 and go get any, bulls, you know, good healthy bulls and  
41 then like now a lot of people from Kotzebue didn't have  
42 the chance to make it up the Kobuk because they don't  
43 see very many caribou anymore. I know that there used  
44 to be a lot of boats that would leave Kotzebue, go up  
45 the Kobuk and harvest caribou and come down. I know  
46 that some people used to go up to Noatak and harvest  
47 caribou up there in the fall. But boats from Kotzebue  
48 having to go all the way up to (In Native), you know,  
49 that's -- I mean we're talking about a lot of fuel, a  
50

0258

1 lot of groceries, a lot of time, a lot of traveling,  
2 especially traveling and if they come back empty, you  
3 know, that's not good, you know, so the only reason --  
4 what I want to say is the reason for cutting back on  
5 transporters, whether we start limiting the amount of  
6 animals they could take or the amount of clients they  
7 could take because we've been taking cuts for the last  
8 five years because the population has dropped, the  
9 later migration, the access to caribou. I know that I  
10 quit wasting my money going up the rivers to hunt  
11 because they're not there so I wait until November --  
12 late October, November when the caribou herds start to  
13 come through Kotzebue, you know, around Kotzebue to be  
14 able to harvest my caribou and by then, you know, the  
15 big bulls are in their rut, some of the young bulls are  
16 in a rut, it's kind of a hit or miss whether you get  
17 one that's good or not and a lot of people depend on  
18 the cows. You know I know that we've cut back on the  
19 dates for harvesting cows in the winter months to be  
20 able to -- to be able to give them the advantage to be  
21 able to produce good healthy calves without being  
22 hindered. That's one of the steps that we have taken.  
23 You know we've taken -- on Federal lands went from 15  
24 to five a day, nobody got 15 caribou a day but there  
25 was like three or four or five people in a boat that  
26 got 20 a day because there's how many people in that  
27 boat and they're feeding a lot of families in the  
28 villages. And we used to call those the super hunters  
29 who provide and provide and provide for a lot of the  
30 elders and family members who could not afford a boat  
31 or the gas or the oil or the ammunition or the time to  
32 go out and harvest caribou. That was one of the  
33 benefits of being able to go out there with several  
34 guys is, you know, our IRA provided fuel for people to  
35 be able to go out there. You know, fuel, oil,  
36 ammunition to be able to go out there and go hunting  
37 and that's a real beneficial thing to the elders. Last  
38 year was a very bad year, you know, overall, the  
39 pandemic, we had zero cases here in Kotzebue and we had  
40 a big rush of hunters throughout the whole entire fall  
41 and there was a lot of conflicts outside the airport,  
42 you know, due to local people and hunters because we're  
43 limited on travel but they could travel in, a lot of  
44 them traveled in to Kotzebue to go out hunting. It's  
45 kind of a, you know, double-edged sword there, it's  
46 like what do we do, we can't do anything, you know,  
47 because it's the Federal Parkland, they're all able to --  
48 Federal public lands, we're only trying to -- at that  
49 time we were only trying to protect our community  
50

0259

1 because if one person went to the village and visited  
2 several families with Covid, well, you just infected  
3 possibly 20 or more people. And our healthcare system  
4 here just can't handle that kind of a crash so we were  
5 trying to limit the -- we wanted to limit the amount of  
6 people coming into Kotzebue but we couldn't. There was  
7 a lot of conflict between hunters and local people  
8 here at the airport.

9

10 That's all I have for right now.

11

12 Thank you.

13

14 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Mike.

15 Hannah, would you please restate the question. I want  
16 to say that the question that we're on is clarification  
17 between air traffic or actual non-local hunters on the  
18 ground for OSM's work purposes.

19

20 DR. VOORHEES: Yes, that's correct, Mr.  
21 Chair.

22

23 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Hannah.  
24 So, again, my stance on this and I've been very vocal  
25 but just to clarify for that question. As Mike said it  
26 is a combination of air traffic and boots on the ground  
27 but, predominately what we're seeing is it's boots on  
28 the ground just because the hunters that we're talking  
29 about are being taken so far north of Kotzebue, or east  
30 of Kotzebue or wherever the herd may be, just like Mike  
31 said, as early as the beginning of August, earlier, and  
32 earlier in the season when they aren't really making  
33 the southern migration yet. This particular season it  
34 would be just the number of hunters. I stated  
35 yesterday that at least two air transporters here in  
36 the region that aren't really based in the region, they  
37 mainly get their business during the hunting season  
38 each had 200 clients that they were flying out which  
39 adds up to at least 400 non-resident, non-local, non-  
40 Federally-qualified subsistence users coming in and  
41 going far out into the field to get caribou. There can  
42 be the argument that air traffic does hinder local  
43 hunters, say, that are stalking caribou or attempting  
44 to get close to a herd, but the vast majority of  
45 complaints at this time would be from boots on the  
46 ground and hunter location.

47

48 DR. VOORHEES: Thank you for that  
49 clarification. That was all very good information. So

50

0260

1 the next question I have is are there any concerns  
2 about potential side effects of the closure. I know  
3 one example of that that's been mentioned is  
4 concentration of non-local hunters hunting on State  
5 lands around communities. I just wanted to pose that  
6 to the Council.

7

8 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair.

9

10 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, is that  
11 Wilbur.

12

13 MR. HOWARTH: It's Wilbur, yeah.

14

15 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, please, Wilbur,  
16 go ahead.

17

18 MR. HOWARTH: Yes. Back to Page 157,  
19 and where Noatak was getting their caribou and stuff,  
20 crossing their river and they're telling us a lot of  
21 caribou were crossing and that wasn't too far out of  
22 Noatak at the time. And -- but we still have a big  
23 portion of the State land in the green there where all  
24 the traffic, planes, have been going, and just sitting  
25 and waiting for them there and they never get to come  
26 all the way through Kiana, Noorvik, so there's a lot of  
27 State land there that we -- I know we've been fighting  
28 for years to close that area but we got to work with  
29 the State somehow.

30

31 Thank you.

32

33 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur.  
34 anyone else wish to provide an answer to Hannah. I  
35 have one if no one else has anything.

36

37 (No comments)

38

39 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So, Hannah, my stance  
40 on this question of potential conflicts and the  
41 potential of non-local hunters going on to State land  
42 or being concentrated into different areas. The thing  
43 is at this point in time that's what would be  
44 preferable just in that if the non-local people are  
45 hunting the same area as local people, there, you're  
46 able to make sure that everyone is following kind of  
47 the same kind of community guidelines of, like has been  
48 brought up of different agencies, like staying on the  
49 south side of the river, of allowing the first group to

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1 pass, and as has been shown many times there's more  
2 than enough caribou for everyone it's just that we need  
3 them to be migrating through these areas for it to make  
4 an impact on the local people. So in the event that  
5 this closure were to happen, conflicts, I feel, would  
6 be minimal just because they would be able to be  
7 resolved with local knowledge and traditional use  
8 knowledge.

9

10 DR. VOORHEES: Thank you for that  
11 perspective. So the next question I have is does the  
12 Council have ideas about alternative ways to address  
13 the problem in Unit 23 but don't go as far as closing  
14 both units. For example, would it be desirable to  
15 expand the current targeted closure while following --  
16 you know not expanding to all of Unit 23 and 26A, but  
17 expanding to a smaller subset, and, if so, are there  
18 particular areas where caribou are being deflected and  
19 what are the areas of greatest concern to you. You  
20 know, how could we go about documenting that.

21

22 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hannah, this is Thomas  
23 Baker. One of the suggested changes that's been made  
24 to me and I'd like to bring up at this time is people  
25 have brought up not allowing non-Federally-qualified  
26 users to hunt north of the Noatak River itself, and  
27 just kind of waiting for the animals to cross to the  
28 south side of the river just allowing for that  
29 traditional knowledge of waiting for them to get to a  
30 certain point and letting X amount of animals pass by.  
31 I don't know how the rest of the Council feels, but if  
32 that were a compromise that we would have to make, I  
33 feel that waiting until the caribou have crossed some  
34 of the major rivers, whether it be the Noatak or the  
35 Kobuk, and then allowing outside hunters to hunt that  
36 would be preferable than closing both, and all of 23  
37 and 26A.

38

39 DR. VOORHEES: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
40 And of course we'd really welcome any more input on  
41 this now or going forward. And if no other Council  
42 members have comment on that, I guess another idea that  
43 OSM had was documenting if protecting traditional use  
44 areas and caribou hunting camps, so I guess are there  
45 areas that people used to hunt for caribou now but that  
46 you're avoiding because of non-local hunters, or key  
47 traditional areas. I know that may this is, you know,  
48 individual or community specific, and maybe not  
49 something everyone would want to share but that's

50



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1 another thought that we had in terms of strategies for  
2 targeted protections. If anyone has comments on that.

3

4 MR. KRAMER: Mr. Chairman, this is  
5 Michael.

6

7 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, please, go ahead,  
8 Mike.

9

10 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, my suggestion is is,  
11 you know, it's in our culture to allow the first ones  
12 to come by. Like I said earlier, I said, we've seen  
13 hunters come up from like August 1st until the end of  
14 August and usually we don't try to go up to go hunting  
15 until Labor weekend or beyond Labor Day weekend. You  
16 know they're north of the Noatak and they're targeting  
17 these animals on State lands, north of Noatak, north of  
18 the Kivalina or on the Kivalina River, or Wulik. You  
19 know, they're not allowing the first bunches to come  
20 through. I think what the State needs to do and us, as  
21 a government Advisory Council, is to allow out of  
22 state hunters to only hunt from September 15th to  
23 October 15th, that way you're allowing migrations to  
24 travel unhindered. It also allows local people to be  
25 able to go hunt in their traditional areas that they've  
26 done in the rivers for many years. That way that's  
27 allowing the first group to come through unhindered and  
28 you're also allowing, you know, our customary hunting  
29 areas to be used again when they travel through there  
30 unhindered. You know the main problem is air traffic.  
31 We know that they don't harvest very many but it's the  
32 air traffic. You know you got a plane flying to and  
33 from on a daily basis with multiple hunters on board,  
34 that's one of my main concerns. That was kind of one  
35 of my ideas I kind of thought up, you know, that, hey,  
36 we have to wait until the first bunches come through  
37 why can't they wait until the first bunches come  
38 through unhindered, you know, because the Fish and Game  
39 here has such a say on our commercial fishing season,  
40 when it could be open and when it could be closed, when  
41 can they have a period, when they can't have a period,  
42 why can't they do the same thing when it comes down to  
43 our caribou herd. We're only protecting, you know, our  
44 subsistence resources and our subsistence way of life  
45 that way.

46

47 Thank you.

48

49 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Mike. Does

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1 anyone else have any response or discussion for Hannah.

2

3 MS. ATKINSON: Hi, this is Hannah  
4 Atkinson with the National Park Service. I have some  
5 information about the delayed entry area that the Park  
6 Service uses that is determined, a timeline to allow  
7 caribou to pass through. If -- if -- I appreciate that  
8 this is a time for the Council members to respond to  
9 questions but if that would help discussion I am happy  
10 to share.

11

12 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, please, Hannah  
13 Atkinson, I think that would help.

14

15 MS. ATKINSON: Okay. So what I wanted  
16 to share about the delayed entry area and this is  
17 something that we've been discussing in the National  
18 Park Service and we've been having meetings about this  
19 topic and just reviewing what we know from the  
20 different strategies that we've tried. So the delayed  
21 entry area is like the western portion of the Noatak  
22 National Preserve so it includes like the Noatak River,  
23 and the Kelly and Tisikug and then down -- it includes  
24 the Eli and the Aggi and so it and -- and it's a map  
25 and it's like overlaying the other things that are in  
26 place right now, but the delayed entry area is given to  
27 -- it's in the stipulations for the commercial use  
28 authorizations, the permits that are given to the  
29 transporters which we can give like background  
30 information on that -- we haven't done a presentation  
31 on that yet at this meeting, and we are happy to share  
32 information if that would help, but the delayed entry  
33 area is closed -- it says in the stipulations that the  
34 transporters cannot drop off hunters in that area until  
35 -- from August 8th until September 22nd, is what it  
36 says. And then one thing in our discussions, Kyle,  
37 looking at the collar data, so this is just based on  
38 collar data, but one thing we noticed is that it's not  
39 really fulfilling the intended purpose which was to  
40 allow the caribou to migrate through and hunters to get  
41 the caribou that they need, in part, because the  
42 migration is not -- the collared caribou are not moving  
43 through that area as much as they have in years past  
44 so, you know, just because of the way that caribou  
45 migration varies and because of the -- how it varies in  
46 the year, you know, it doesn't stay within those dates  
47 that it's not fulfilling its intended purpose. So I  
48 think that -- like it's good to explore those options  
49 of like a time period that might protect the caribou

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1 migration but I just wanted to bring up that that was  
2 something in play when the Park Service -- with input  
3 from the RACs and the SRCs and the Unit 23 working  
4 group put that into the stipulations for the CUAs we  
5 were hoping to protect that lead group and it did not  
6 really work as intended. And I think that there is  
7 more to be studied as to why but I think that it wasn't  
8 very adaptive to the caribou movements, which are very  
9 dynamic. And we wanted it to be adaptive but it didn't  
10 turn out that way.

11

12 And so that's what I have to say about  
13 the delayed entry area. If there's any questions about  
14 locations, or not locations but the CUA holders that  
15 are in the Park Service and what they report back to  
16 the Park Service, we have that information.

17

18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Hannah.  
19 Does anyone have any questions for Hannah Atkinson.

20

21 (No comments)

22

23 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Does anyone have any  
24 further discussion or input for Hannah Voorhees.

25

26 (No comments)

27

28 DR. VOORHEES: Mr. Chair, this is  
29 Hannah Voorhees.

30

31 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, please.

32

33 DR. VOORHEES: I just want to just  
34 note, following up on Hannah Atkinson's comments that  
35 there's a map of the controlled use areas in place  
36 currently on Page 167 of your meeting material, just  
37 for your reference, there are a few in Unit 23 that are  
38 relevant. And also in the analysis in your meeting  
39 materials, there is information on what the dates of  
40 those CUAs are and the stipulations attached.

41

42 So I also wanted to respond to Mike's  
43 comments and thank him for those, and note that, you  
44 know, there may be avenues through State regulations as  
45 well that the Council may want to pursue and parallel.  
46 I believe one option would be submitting a proposal to  
47 the Board of Game to restrict the use of aircraft for  
48 caribou hunting and another option would be to submit a  
49 proposal requesting that the dates for -- especially  
50

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1 for non-resident hunters be changed. I wondered if  
2 anyone has any comments on that, I just wanted to put  
3 it out there.

4

5 Thank you.

6

7 MR. KRAMER: Mr. Chairman, this is  
8 Michael.

9

10 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, please, Mike.

11

12 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, as I grew up, you  
13 know, my father I pretty much grew up in the back seat  
14 of a SuperCub. My dad, you know, back in the days when  
15 he used to live here and hunt with us we believed that  
16 we -- we had a deep respect for the hunters in the  
17 river, my dad did. So we flew through -- you know we'd  
18 leave Kotzebue, we'd go straight towards Hugo's  
19 Mountain, through the Squirrel and we'd maintain a  
20 certain altitude and then we would go hunt in places  
21 south of the Noatak River, like up in the Eli, you  
22 know, and upper Aggi, up in the Cutler where, you know,  
23 back in the day that -- you know I would see sight  
24 unseen, you know if you have an airplane way back in  
25 the mountains and south of the Noatak then it was never  
26 really seen. Because my dad would take paths, you  
27 know, to where it did not hinder, did not bother  
28 subsistence hunters that were just mainly hunting in  
29 the river, and that was the only place they could hunt,  
30 you know, was just off the river. So you know my dad  
31 had a very, very deep respect for the people that were  
32 down there hunting. I see these days, I've been up  
33 there at the Aggi, and, you know, watch caribou back  
34 there two, three miles back and away from the Noatak  
35 River just watching them and I'm seeing airplanes just  
36 travel right, you know, right from -- I'd have to say  
37 from Nath\*(ph) Creek up the Aggi, right through that  
38 corridor, you know, but back in the day we used to  
39 travel straight through here to Hugo's Mountain and  
40 then, you know, into the mountains in the Squirrel, and  
41 NorthFork and then go farther from there. But, you  
42 know, I see a lot of air traffic just kind of spread  
43 out in this lower portion of the Noatak, and I'm not  
44 too sure which paths they take beyond the Noatak, you  
45 know, the Aggi, Nath Creek and Eli, you know, west/east  
46 of the Noatak River and that area. But my father, we  
47 grew up with a very deep respect for the people hunting  
48 down below because we hunted out of an airplane. Yeah,  
49 we had a boat, but we had an airplane and it took us to  
50

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1 places where there was literally nobody, you know, we  
2 were bothering nobody. But with the air traffic now  
3 days, they all spread out, they're all traveling to  
4 different areas and, you know, if the State can't help  
5 us, you know, to benefit the caribou coming through and  
6 delay commercial services, you know, areas -- you know  
7 drop-offs into the areas where the migration is then,  
8 you know, they might have to start coming up with just  
9 a specific corridor where these aircrafts could fly  
10 through and not deviate from that corridor. Like I  
11 said my dad would fly straight line from Kotzebue to  
12 Hugo's and then into the Squirrel and then north that  
13 way we didn't bother people down below hunting in the  
14 rivers.

15  
16 That's all I have for now. Thank you  
17 for your time.

18  
19 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Mike.  
20 Anyone else with any input for Hannah Voorhees, or any  
21 questions.

22  
23 (No comments)

24  
25 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hannah Voorhees, do  
26 you have any more questions or more to present?

27  
28 DR. VOORHEES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I  
29 do have a couple more questions, I'll try to be quick.  
30 But I just wanted to respond to Mike and everyone, you  
31 know, and say I continually hear that people feel that  
32 there needs to be respect for local subsistence needs  
33 and traditional rules and practices and completely  
34 understand and respect that. And I am -- you know,  
35 better education of non-locals has been put forth as  
36 one option. As we heard from some of the ADF&G  
37 representatives on the line there is already a set of  
38 requirements or training requirements for non-local  
39 hunters, or I guess hunters accessing the area by air,  
40 but, yeah, if there's any way to, you know, try to  
41 bring non-local practice better in line with local  
42 practice, I think, you know, I'm on board as an analyst  
43 to help think those possibilities.

44  
45 And I guess, so two -- no, just really  
46 one final question, which is are there any other  
47 suggested alternatives solutions or approaches --  
48 alternative approaches that could help solve this  
49 problem. I'll just put that out there one more time,  
50

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1 thank you.

2

3

(No comments)

4

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8

9

Thank you.

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DR. VOORHEES: And I do believe we've covered that topic pretty extensively so if there are no comments I just want to thank you for your time.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Hannah, for facilitating this portion. And hopefully we can -- if anyone has any further comments would they be able to just send those over to you in an email if they weren't able to join us today or what would be a good way to send any further comments along.

DR. VOORHEES: Sorry, Mr. Chair, could you repeat that last comment.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Oh, yeah, I was just saying thank you for facilitating that portion and if there were any members of the Council who weren't able to join us and they had some comments would they be able to just shoot you an email, or how would we best be able to pass that along if they had any input on the questions you were asking this afternoon.

DR. VOORHEES: Certainly. Yes, email or phone would be -- I would be very happy to hear from anyone who might have additional comments. I forgot to note that -- I just wanted to kind of underline upcoming opportunities for input.

So on top of the public hearings, which I mentioned earlier, we'll also have the winter 2022 RAC meetings and then the actual Federal Subsistence Board meeting, which will likely be in April 2022.

Sorry, just one moment, I just wanted to also give you some more information on our timeline.

So we've been conducting outreach phone calls with the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group, which was another entity that the Board asked for input from and their Executive Committee asked that we do it that way instead of at their actual meeting since they were time limited, and then we'll also be holding a discussion, just very briefly, at their

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1 actual December meeting. And let's see other OSM Staff  
2 can jump in if there's anything I've missed, but I  
3 think that's all the information I have for you now.

4

5 Thanks, again, for sharing your  
6 knowledge and perspectives.

7

8 MS. GREDIAGIN: Through the Chair, this  
9 is Lisa. And maybe Hannah already mentioned this but I  
10 just wanted all the Council members to be aware that  
11 OSM is compiling a lot of information, you know, so  
12 feedback from the Council today and other stakeholders  
13 from other hearings and the Western Arctic Caribou Herd  
14 Working Group and then updating the analysis and then  
15 at your winter meeting this will come back before the  
16 Council again with an updated analysis for the Council  
17 to actually vote and take action again on this special  
18 action and then it will go back before the Board most  
19 likely in April for final Board action. So I just  
20 wanted the Council to be aware that this will come up  
21 again at your winter meeting and it'll actually be an  
22 action item to vote on, the special action and the  
23 updated Staff analysis.

24

25 Thanks.

26

27 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you for that  
28 clarification, Lisa. If no one has any objections, I  
29 believe it's time to move on to the last big thing on  
30 the agenda which is agency reports and just remind  
31 everyone that.....

32

33 MS. SWEENEY: Mr. Chair, this is  
34 Brittany Sweeney, could I ask one question.

35

36 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, please, Brittany.

37

38 MS. SWEENEY: Okay. This is a question  
39 maybe for the OSM Staff, but prior to this meeting I  
40 was told that members of the public would have the  
41 opportunity to comment and engage in the discussion on  
42 WSA21-01 and so Hannah when you were asking your  
43 questions, I was unclear if that was just for members  
44 of the Council to provide input, or whether any members  
45 of the public who may be online would be able to  
46 comment on the record at this time or if that will only  
47 be allowed through the upcoming hearing.

48

49 Thank you.

50

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1 DR. VOORHEES: Thanks, Brittany,  
2 through the Chair. Yes, those questions were  
3 specifically for Council members. I leave it up to the  
4 Chair if he would like to invite comments and, yes, I  
5 would repeat that there will be three public comments --  
6 I mean public hearings held in the next several weeks,  
7 by the end of December they will be complete.

8  
9 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Brittany, do you know  
10 if at this time -- or I'll just ask is there anyone on  
11 the line right now who is a member of the public who  
12 was hoping to share their opinion on any of the  
13 questions on WSA21-01.

14  
15 MS. BALLOT: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair,  
16 this is Tonya Ballot with the Native Village of  
17 Selawik, also a community member, long-time resident.

18  
19 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hi, Tonya.

20  
21 MS. BALLOT: Hey, would this be a good  
22 time for me, I'm not sure if I missed the tribal  
23 portion. But you know how I feel personally about  
24 trying to continue the closure of Unit 23 for non-  
25 resident hunters, or either changing the timeframe from  
26 when they are allowed to come up here. I know that, you  
27 know, Alaska is the most beautiful place on Earth and  
28 even in the 40 below it's still pretty, you know, and  
29 people come up here for adventure, for -- to -- for  
30 pleasure, you know, and it gives money to guides and  
31 stuff but -- but right now it is a critical time in our  
32 region. We're going through a pandemic, people are  
33 suffering to provide food and meat for their table and  
34 for their families and I will reiterate what Michael  
35 has said, what different people have said that, you  
36 know, we're -- it's scarce, our freezers are empty and  
37 we -- we're not able to provide food for our families,  
38 we have to get it ordered in, flown in. We're not able  
39 to teach our children to hunt and subsist and  
40 culturally survive. And, you know, I heard somebody  
41 talking earlier about herding and how they worked long  
42 ago. And, you know, traditional knowledge, well, we've  
43 lost a bunch of elders in every community and the  
44 traditional knowledge went with them, and we're  
45 struggling to pass down that traditional knowledge  
46 because we, ourselves, are still learning and trying to  
47 understand. Global warming is a big part of it, you  
48 know, the food that they eat is getting scarce and  
49 maybe it's staying too wet or, you know, we got to  
50



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1 consider all the factors. But I will strongly voice my  
2 concern, if we could prevent the man-made distraction,  
3 then let's do that, let's work hard to, you know, give  
4 the folks that come here from Montana, Missouri, and I  
5 even heard somebody from West Virginia back in February  
6 when we were first having those hearings on this very  
7 topic, and, you know, if we can have them come at a  
8 later date or not at all, you know, we need to stand up  
9 strong, we need to be strong, we need to be more vocal  
10 in our communities to protect our most important food  
11 source. We're not going down to Montana or West  
12 Virginia to hunt their deer and their elk, you know, we  
13 want to protect our food and we have to do whatever we  
14 can, whatever it takes to do that or else, you know,  
15 we're going to lose quite a bit, not only our folks,  
16 we're using our cultural subsistence skills and things  
17 like that.

18  
19 And I really appreciate the time and  
20 there's a lot of information and I just thank everybody  
21 for doing what they can and we just need to work a  
22 little bit harder every day.

23  
24 Thank you.

25  
26 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Tonya. Any  
27 other members of the public who were hoping to speak on  
28 WSA21-01.

29  
30 MR. HARRIS: Mr. Chairman, Cyrus  
31 Harris.

32  
33 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, please, Cyrus.

34  
35 MR. HARRIS: Yeah, hello. Well, first  
36 of all I'd really like to comment to this group here,  
37 you know, keeping this WSA21-01 alive when it got kind  
38 of like tabled last year by the Federal Subsistence  
39 Board. It all makes sense in a way and it's something  
40 that I do support for many reasons. And I think you'd  
41 get a whole more larger audience if this meeting were  
42 to be live on air on KOTZ, you'd get many calls from  
43 many people because we hear it all the time about all  
44 the conflict that's been going on throughout the  
45 earlier part of the hunting season.

46  
47 Thank you.

48  
49 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you for that,  
50

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1 Cyrus. Anyone else from the public.

2

3 MS. BROWN: Mr. Chair.

4

5 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes.

6

7 MS. BROWN: This is Melissa Brown, and

8 I am from Selawik. And I just wanted to comment that

9 it's really sad that we didn't get our share of the

10 caribou this year. We went out boating and they

11 reached about right below the mountains over there and

12 they turned back for whatever reason and the next day

13 we tried going out but the river was already frozen.

14

15 That's just -- I would support the

16 later dates for the people, the non-resident people to

17 come in later. And it's just -- I don't know, really

18 sad, for people not to fill their people when we try to

19 clean it out and wait for the caribou and it never

20 really -- they're not here.

21

22 Thank you.

23

24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Melissa.

25 Anyone else from the public.

26

27 MR. MANNIX: Mr. Chair, this is Jacob

28 Mannix at Backcountry and Anglers.

29

30 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, Mr. Mannix,

31 please.

32

33 MR. MANNIX: Yeah, so there's a lot

34 that I'd like to say and I'll hold off on a lot of for

35 the public hearings. But, you know, on a personal

36 note, I just want to say that listening in on this

37 meeting for the last couple days when I've been able to

38 has been pretty eye opening for me. There's been a lot

39 of compelling testimony from local folks in the region,

40 there's been a lot of great testimony from agency

41 Staff; I appreciate that greatly.

42

43 I doubt anybody on this phone call

44 knows who I am. I live in Nome. I'm a Federally-

45 qualified subsistence user. I have a positive C&T for

46 the caribou up there in Unit 23. I can relate in some

47 ways to the frustrations about access. As far as

48 access and caribou from Nome, you know, for me, the

49 last caribou I got from here was in the spring of 2020

50

1 and I snowmachined from Nome all the way almost to  
2 Buckland, it was 450 miles roundtrip and we brought  
3 back two caribou. So access is hard. It can be  
4 difficult, it's hard to put food in your freezer  
5 sometimes. This year our salmon runs were real bad in  
6 Nome, our seine season got closed. I was fortunate  
7 enough to be able to put quite a few silvers in my  
8 freezer but even those runs were tough to get to. I  
9 did all that fishing with rod and reel, it took a lot  
10 of time. I don't have the vast amount of traditional  
11 knowledge that a lot of folks on the phone have spoken  
12 about today. I've only lived in Nome for five years,  
13 so I still have a lot to learn. I have a lot to learn  
14 about the subsistence culture in Western Alaska. I've  
15 a lot to learn about the caribou. And that's a large  
16 part of the reason why I'm on this call.

17  
18 Our organization was opposed to the  
19 closure of the Federal public lands, that's something  
20 -- you know, public land access is something that our  
21 organization works on pretty hard. The other thing  
22 that we work on pretty hard is habitat conservation and  
23 wildlife conservation. And that's one concern with  
24 this proposal that I have, is I'm not looking a year  
25 into the future, or two years into the future or three  
26 years into the future, regardless of the outcome of  
27 this proposal, whether there is a closure or whether  
28 there is not a closure, these conversations are still  
29 going to be continuing into the future and my concern  
30 is about the rift that creates between hunters and  
31 anglers regardless of whether you call yourself a  
32 subsistence hunter or a sporthunter or whatever. There  
33 are a lot of challenges that have been talked about on  
34 this phone call regarding climate change, and various  
35 threats to fish and wildlife in Northwest Alaska.  
36 Those threats are going to require a lot of people to  
37 come together and sit at a table and talk to each other  
38 about solutions to make sure that we have fish and  
39 wildlife resources, not five years from now, not 10  
40 years from now but for our grandchildren. I say that  
41 wholeheartedly. That's something that I believe in,  
42 that's something that my organization believes in. So  
43 I'm invested in continuing this conversation for the  
44 long haul. If this proposal goes through, and there is  
45 a closure, my organization will likely come out with a  
46 statement in opposition to it. I do not view the  
47 subsistence hunters or anywhere in Alaska to be  
48 adversaries, we will continue to have disagreements  
49 regardless of the issue. But I think it's important to  
50

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1 just understand that, you know, I guess the goal for  
2 the long-term is that a lot of the things that we want  
3 are the same.

4  
5 I'll leave it at that for now. I  
6 greatly appreciate the time that the Council members  
7 have taken out of their personal lives, away from work,  
8 and away from family to give their input and let us all  
9 listen and share their knowledge. I thank the agency  
10 Staff. And I hope that I will be able to help hunters  
11 and anglers work on long-term solutions that are best  
12 for the habitat and fish and wildlife that rely on  
13 those places.

14  
15 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

16  
17 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Mannix.  
18 I believe we have time for one or two more quick  
19 opinions if we have anyone else from the public.

20  
21 MR. KRAMER: Mr. Chairman, this is  
22 Michael.

23  
24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, Michael.

25  
26 MR. KRAMER: Hey, I just want to let  
27 you know I'm going to have to sign off. I'm at work  
28 right now. So it's been a pleasure with working all  
29 you guys. I'll see you guys at our next meeting but I  
30 got to get back to work. I wish I could take part in  
31 the rest of it but I'll try again.

32  
33 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Mike.  
34 Thanks for the head's up and thanks for being here. I  
35 understand your schedule isn't the easiest to get  
36 around with airport work but thanks for joining us.  
37 And so with that I'm not hearing anybody else for  
38 public comment on WSA21-01. It's 3:59 now.....

39  
40 DR. VOORHEES: Mr. Chair.

41  
42 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes.

43  
44 DR. VOORHEES: This is Hannah Voorhees.  
45 I just wanted to let everyone know that I am able to  
46 give you information on the exact date and time of the  
47 first upcoming public hearing. It will be on  
48 Wednesday, November 17th from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
49 And I'll just give you the phone number and passcode  
50

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1 now. It will be distributed through multiple channels.  
2 But the number is 888-942-9690 and the passcode is  
3 6071806.

4

5 Thank you.

6

7 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you for that  
8 Hannah. If anyone didn't get that we'll be sure -- I'm  
9 sure it will be disseminated by social media by  
10 different agencies. And with that we need to get on to  
11 the agency report section of the agenda. Just to  
12 remind everyone there will be a time limit of 15  
13 minutes for each report, and we'll start off on -- at  
14 this time we don't we have any tribal governments  
15 signed up to speak, but I'd like to ask if there are  
16 any tribal governments that have anything to present  
17 that they'd like to present now.

18

19

20 (No comments)

21

22 CHAIRMAN BAKER: If there are no tribal  
23 governments the same offer goes out to Native  
24 organizations.

25

26 (No comments)

27

28 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, I will  
29 go down to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. We'll  
30 go with the Selawik National Wildlife Refuge.

31

32 MS. GEORGETTE: Well, good afternoon,  
33 Mr. Chair, and Council. My name is Susan Georgette. My  
34 Inupiaq Name is (In Inupiaq) I'm the manager at  
35 Selawik Refuge. I've worked here at the Refuge for  
36 about 15 years and I've lived in Kotzebue for about 30  
37 years.

38

39 Selawik Refuge includes the Federal  
40 lands and most of the Selawik River Valley, the north  
41 side of Selawik Lake and the Kobuk River Delta. We're  
42 part of the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Refuge is  
43 one of more than 500 that are established by Congress  
44 across the country. We have eight people who work for  
45 us. Two of them are based in Selawik, Sonny Berry has  
46 worked with us for quite a few years and he's really  
47 our expert in the field and helps facilitate a lot of  
48 our field work. The other person who joined us just  
49 last month is Melissa Brown in Selawik as our Refuge

50

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1 Information Technician, and, Melissa, if you're on the  
2 call could you introduce yourself quickly.

3

4 MS. BROWN: Yeah, my name is Melissa  
5 Brown and I'm from Selawik. I grew up here in Selawik  
6 and thank you for having me today.

7

8 MS. GEORGETTE: Thank you. We're happy  
9 to have you. The other new Staff we have is Will  
10 Wiese. He's our new Assistant Manager. And, Will, if  
11 you're on the call could you introduce yourself  
12 briefly.

13

14 MS. WIESE: Yes. Mr. Chair. Members of  
15 the Council. This is Will Wiese. Like Susan said I'm  
16 the Assistant Manager so I kind of assist with  
17 everything here. I just got to Kotzebue in March.  
18 Before that I was up in Kaktovik for a few years  
19 working for the Fish and Wildlife Service there on  
20 polar bear issues, subsistence issues, oil and gas. I  
21 was the liaison for Fish and Wildlife Service to the  
22 community of Kaktovik. So I know a little bit about  
23 caribou, I know a little bit about cold places. And,  
24 yeah, I'm excited to be here. I am not quite used to  
25 the big city life of Kotzebue yet but I'm starting to  
26 settle in. When I'm not at work you might see me on  
27 the trail or on the water, in the spring out catching  
28 geese, in the summer fishing and berries and trying to  
29 catch moose and caribou in the fall and bringing that  
30 home and sharing with my family, friends and community.  
31 So that's a little bit about me. I look forward to  
32 working with you all for a very long time.

33

34 MS. GEORGETTE: Thanks, Will. I've  
35 mentioned this before to the Council but our program  
36 here mainly focuses on fish and aquatic habitat. Our  
37 one biologist Bill Carter, is a fish biologist and he's  
38 the only fish biologist that's based in Kotzebue in any  
39 of the agencies here. We also have a strong  
40 communications and outreach program that Brittany  
41 Sweeney runs with Christina Nelson and Melissa Brown.

42

43 Covid has kept us from doing some of  
44 our usual field work and youth activities this past  
45 year but we have been able to get a few things done.  
46 One of the things I wanted to mention is that we did  
47 some work with the University of Alaska-Fairbanks on  
48 beaver pond mapping on Selawik Refuge. This is all  
49 remote work from satellite images dating back to the  
50

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1 1950s. And as you know beavers were pretty much not at  
2 all on the Refuge in the 1950s. They gradually started  
3 moving west in the 1970s and '80s and by the early  
4 2000s they were throughout the Selawik River Valley.  
5 It was interesting to learn that the density of beaver  
6 ponds and dams on the Refuge has not really changed  
7 since about 2006. So that means that the Selawik  
8 Valley is pretty much saturated with beaver, that it  
9 can't really carry any more beaver dams and ponds than  
10 it does right now. You would not be surprised to know  
11 that Selawik lowlands have some of the highest beaver  
12 densities in Northwest Alaska. And this doesn't solve --  
13 this project doesn't solve the challenges that people  
14 have with beavers in our region, it's mainly looking at  
15 how climate change has allowed beavers to move and what  
16 their impact might be on the landscape. One of the  
17 things that happens with beaver dams and ponds is that  
18 it allows the water to warm up and when the water warms  
19 up it thaws the nearby permafrost and makes creeks  
20 wider. So we've been working on that, and the  
21 professor we've been working with is expanding his work  
22 to other parts of Northwest Alaska including an  
23 indigenous knowledge section.

24  
25 I also want to mention that in 2019  
26 before the pandemic we did some interviews with elders  
27 in Selawik with the UAF oral history program to  
28 document their stories about the muskrat trade in  
29 Selawik that went on a lot in the mid-1900s, and those  
30 interviews were finally edited and completed and  
31 they're available at the UAF online oral history  
32 program. So you can listen to Emma Ramoth, May Walton,  
33 Pauline Ramoth, Grant Ballot and Sally Gallahorn on  
34 that.

35  
36 Will's going to give a quick update on  
37 a couple other things, followed by Brittany, so, Will  
38 go ahead.

39  
40 MR. WIESE: Yeah, this is Will Wiese  
41 again. So a couple of projects we were able to work on  
42 this summer included putting some water temperature  
43 monitors in rivers on the Refuge. We started doing  
44 this back in 2017, I believe it was, the first one, and  
45 we've got five out now and these water temperature  
46 monitors are in the upper Selawik, the Tag, Kugarak  
47 Rivers and we're -- they're just small monitors. They  
48 get anchored in and sit out all year and then we come  
49 back in the summer and pull out the temperature loggers  
50

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1 out and so we can't kind of see what the water  
2 temperature is today but we can get temperatures every  
3 hour so we can see over so we can see over the course  
4 of a year and over the course of days what the  
5 temperature looks like. And I heard a lot of talk  
6 earlier today from Council Member Schaeffer and others  
7 about, you know, the importance of understanding water  
8 temperature and how a big of effect it can have on fish  
9 kills and that kind of thing. And so this is a project  
10 we're hoping to continue and expand to other rivers on  
11 the Refuge and possibly outside the Refuge, too, with  
12 partners. And in addition to that we're hoping to  
13 expand and look more at the flow rates of the rivers on  
14 the Refuge. And obviously this year was a really rainy  
15 year and water levels were really high much of the year  
16 and we'd like to have a better way of being able to  
17 sort of quantify that.

18  
19 Other things I'll mention, we heard  
20 about the herring die-off here at the Refuge. And,  
21 again, thanks to some folks on this call, actually, for  
22 letting us know about it and giving us the information  
23 we have. We worked with, and are still working with  
24 Alex Whiting and the Native Village of Kotzebue to try  
25 and get our best idea of the cause and I think as  
26 Council Member Schaeffer talked about this morning,  
27 those herring could have been stressed from high  
28 amounts of freshwater, other causes, you know,  
29 preliminary results from labs coming back say that some  
30 of those fish may have had a viral infection. And so  
31 looking at all the evidence and talking to Alex Whiting  
32 we're thinking that some sort of disease outbreak,  
33 virus may be at play and especially at play with other  
34 factors mixed in. You know, herring are not good at  
35 social distancing, they school up pretty tight and so  
36 it'd be fairly easy for a disease to transmit amongst  
37 them. And we're hoping to get more results back and  
38 get a more definitive answer.

39  
40 Other things I'll mention quick, we did  
41 take a look at the thaw slump this years. We didn't  
42 see large amounts of sedimentation in the Selawik River  
43 but that mud slide is active, there's some movement  
44 there.

45  
46 And, finally, Susan mentioned beavers.  
47 One project we got to do this year was go out to the  
48 Selawik Hot Springs in the summertime and myself and  
49 Bill Carter, our Fish Biologist, and Raymond Woods from  
50



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1 Shungnak all went out there and took a look at the bath  
2 house and the cabins out there because we heard last  
3 winter that there was flooding, that beavers had built  
4 a dam up stream and the cabins were flooding. And we  
5 were pleasantly surprised to get out there and there  
6 wasn't major damage to the cabins and kind of did an  
7 assessment of those and got a lot of pictures. And it  
8 really looks like there is an old dam up stream, it  
9 wasn't active when we were there this summer. And it  
10 looks like between the beaver dam and sort of an ice  
11 dam, that had possibly formed last winter, that's what  
12 caused the flooding but luckily the beaver dam didn't  
13 appear to be -- or the beaver hut didn't appear to be  
14 active or in play this summer.

15  
16 So that's what I've got, I'm going to  
17 hand it off to Brittany.

18  
19 MS. SWEENEY: All right, thank you,  
20 Will. This is Brittany Sweeney speaking. (In Native).  
21 The Outreach Specialist for Selawik Refuge. This is my  
22 11th year at Selawik Refuge. So I'm just going to give  
23 a couple updates on some of the projects that we've  
24 done in our outreach program. Christina Nelson on our  
25 Staff spent a week at Camp (In Native) as an  
26 instructor. Melissa Brown, who just introduced  
27 herself, had the great idea of doing story time over  
28 VHF in Selawik. I know kids have been out of school  
29 there for like five weeks now but she's doing nightly  
30 story times.

31  
32 The Refuge does maintain an active  
33 Facebook page to keep folks informed. It's designed  
34 with our regional audience in mind. We work hard to  
35 share information on hunting regulations and closures  
36 in a manner that's designed for people to -- for it to  
37 be understandable.

38  
39 We just recently had a project with the  
40 Northwest Arctic Borough Search and Rescue Program  
41 where we were able to use some Refuge funds to get new  
42 signs for all the shelter cabins. I'm excited because  
43 they'll feature the traditional Inupiaq place names.  
44 So for example instead of saying Aggi River, it'll say  
45 (In Native), and we'll be working with Sonny and the  
46 Search and Rescue to get all those posted on the  
47 shelter cabins this winter.

48  
49 So thank you all for your time and I'll  
50

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1 turn it back over to Susan.

2

3 MS. GEORGETTE: Thank you. The last  
4 thing I wanted to give an update on is the transporter  
5 permits. Commercial activities require permits on the  
6 Refuge so that would include air taxis and boat  
7 charters but not private pilots or private boaters.  
8 The western part of the Refuge, the Refuge lands near  
9 Selawik, Noorvik and Kiana are closed to transporters.  
10 Four air taxi permits were issued by Selawik Refuge  
11 this year. That's the same number that's been issued  
12 for the last several years. The permittees don't need  
13 to report their -- the number of hunters until the end  
14 of December, but two of them have already reported and  
15 neither took any hunters to the Refuge this year. The  
16 Refuge 20 years ago got a fair amount of hunters, non-  
17 local hunters, I mean up to 200 people probably but  
18 with the moose season closed to non-residents in Alaska  
19 and with the delayed caribou migration there's been  
20 very little hunting activity on the Refuge recently.  
21 Last year there was one party of two hunters.

22

23 So that's the conclusion of our report.  
24 I want to thank all the tribal governments in Selawik  
25 and along the Kobuk River for their willingness to be  
26 our partners and in many cases, our friends, in our  
27 work on the Refuge. IT's really what makes our work  
28 meaningful to all of us, so thank you.

29

30 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Susan, and  
31 to all your Staff. Do we have any brief questions for  
32 Selawik National Wildlife Refuge folks.

33

34 MR. BALLOT: I do, this is Percy  
35 Ballot.

36

37 CHAIRMAN BAKER: At this time we're  
38 going to keep it just to the Council members. Any  
39 Council members have any questions before we move on.

40

41 (No comments)

42

43 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, we'll go  
44 to the National Park Service and we'll start with the  
45 Western Arctic Parklands.

46

47 (Teleconference interference -  
48 participants not muted)

49

50

0280

1 CHAIRMAN BAKER: I'm sorry, what was  
2 that.

3  
4 MR. SCHAEFFER: Mr. Chair, can you hear  
5 me.

6  
7 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes.

8  
9 MR. SCHAEFFER: Hi, this is Damon  
10 Schaeffer with NANA. I got kicked off the call and I  
11 might have missed the spot on the agenda to just  
12 provide a short update.

13  
14 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Oh, hi, Damon, yes, we  
15 started off with the tribal and Native organizations.  
16 If you'd like to give your agency report you can go  
17 ahead and do that now and then we'll go with the Park Service.

18  
19 MS. SCHAEFFER: Okay, great, appreciate  
20 it. Thank you. I'll keep it short, I know we're short  
21 on time. So our trespass season, I just want to  
22 provide a short update. I will be at the winter  
23 meeting delivering our fully detailed end of season  
24 report. So just to provide a short update.

25  
26 This year we did have another season,  
27 Trespass Program. We started off in the first week of  
28 August patrolling and went through the first week of  
29 October, is when we shut down, and then we closed this  
30 year's season with we employed 19 officers. We did a  
31 lot of patrolling. It was a very wet year. But  
32 overall everyone was safe and we had a pretty good  
33 season, I felt. We appreciate support from the other  
34 agencies, the Wildlife Refuge, the Park Rangers, the  
35 Wildlife Trooper, Steve Canteen, he was great, so yeah  
36 I will be at the winter meeting and I will provide a  
37 more detailed report then.

38  
39 But I'm open to answer any questions if  
40 there are any.

41  
42 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Great, thank you,  
43 Damon. Are there any members of the RAC who have any  
44 questions for Damon and the NANA portions of the agency  
45 reports.

46  
47 (No comments)

48  
49 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, thank  
50

0281

1 you, again, Damon, for your report. If anyone does  
2 have any questions we will pass on your contact  
3 information and look forward to hearing from you again  
4 at the winter meeting.

5

6 MR. SCHAEFFER: Great, thank you.

7

8 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, thank you,  
9 again, Damon. And now we can move on to the Western  
10 Arctic Parklands, National Park Service.

11

12 MS. KOELSCH: Hello, through the Chair.  
13 This is Jeanette Koelsch, Acting Superintendent Western  
14 Arctic National Parklands. I began my acting in August  
15 and I will end my acting in December. For those of you  
16 who don't know me, I am usually and still the  
17 Superintendent of Bering Landbridge National Preserve  
18 in Nome. I've been the Superintendent in Nome for  
19 about 12 years working with Western Arctic National  
20 Parklands out of Kotzebue. I do have a short timeline  
21 to provide you about a new Superintendent.

22

23 So the National Park Service will have  
24 another Acting Superintendent after myself and I'm not  
25 sure who that will be. But we are hoping that a new  
26 Superintendent is hired by February or March there in  
27 Kotzebue. And my report on that is really short and  
28 now I'd like to move on to Hannah Atkinson.

29

30 MS. ATKINSON: Hi, good afternoon  
31 everyone. Through the Chair. This is Hannah Atkinson.  
32 (In Native). I'm the Subsistence Coordinator and  
33 Cultural Anthropologist for the National Park Service.

34

35 The first thing that I'll update you on  
36 is that the Cape Krusenstern and Kobuk Valley SRCs are  
37 going to be meeting. Cape Krusenstern tomorrow,  
38 November 3rd from 1 to 5, and Kobuk Valley November 4th  
39 from 1 to 5 on Thursday. And we were not able to  
40 squeeze in their meetings prior to the RAC. We usually  
41 try to do that so that they can provide comments on the  
42 proposals but it didn't work this year so I welcome you  
43 all to attend that if you have some more teleconference  
44 time available to you. We will be working over WSA21-  
45 01, having more discussion on that issue of protecting  
46 caribou hunt opportunities and the closure of Federal  
47 lands.

48

49 So that is my update on the SRCs. SRC

50

0282

1 is Subsistence Resource Commission. I'm going through  
2 it pretty fast but please let me know if you have any  
3 questions.

4

5 And then I also wanted to let you know  
6 about some research that I have been leading the Park  
7 Service and working with different researchers on. A  
8 lot of it dovetails from issues that are brought up by  
9 Subsistence Resource Commission members and RAC members  
10 and so a lot of it has to do with caribou. So one of  
11 the projects that the Park Service has been working on  
12 and this came up after the 2017 discussions about the  
13 proposal to close Federal lands, is study of  
14 significant traditional hunting areas and significance  
15 of caribou to the people in Noatak and then what  
16 dovetailed from that a little bit is a place names  
17 research project. And so in consultation with the  
18 Native Village of Noatak and talking about significant  
19 places to harvest caribou there was a lot of Inupiaq  
20 names being used and some community members, Ricky  
21 Ashby and Hilda Booth that were very interested in  
22 doing a project. So we're going to do field work for  
23 that project this summer and it got postponed due to  
24 Covid19 but I had the pleasure of working with an ANSEP  
25 student, Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program.  
26 My intern, her name was Iona Browning, and she was  
27 raised in Kotzebue and has family in Noatak and got to  
28 travel to Noatak as a part of this project. Wasn't  
29 able to go out on the boat trip this year but hopefully  
30 we'll get to work again with her this summer and she  
31 was just really excited about the topic of Inupiaq  
32 place names and was a great student to work with.

33

34 I also wanted to bring up an intern  
35 that was hired by Maniilaq Tribal Government Services,  
36 we have a partnership with them to coordinate the  
37 Subsistence Resource Commission and the intern that we  
38 have this summer is Tiana Capelli, she has family in  
39 Kiana and Noatak and other places around the region.  
40 She's Eva Hardy's daughter. And she was able to do a  
41 great project this summer on traditional Inupiaq values  
42 of caribou hunting and she combined interviews that she  
43 did this summer with interviews that were done in 2018  
44 by another student and turned them into a series of  
45 three minute videos about traditional hunting values.  
46 So I really appreciated working with those interns this  
47 summer and welcome anyone else interested in a career  
48 in subsistence, to talk to me.

49

50

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1                   And we have Raime going to give an  
2 update and Joe Dollemolle also going to give an update.  
3 But I'll just say one more thing, is, I'm really  
4 missing seeing you all in person and the opportunities  
5 that we have to talk one on one at those meetings. And  
6 I'd encourage you to call or you can come over to the  
7 Park Service office and meet with me or the Park  
8 Service Staff at any time and have those one on one  
9 discussions and that can be just so helpful to us  
10 working together and sharing information and really  
11 appreciate everything that was shared today.

12

13                   Thank you.

14

15                   MR. FRONSTIN: Hi, good afternoon, this  
16 is Raime Fronstin, Wildlife Biologist. Through the  
17 Chair. So I have placed the wildlife update in your  
18 packets and Hannah sent them to OSM so you should all  
19 have those. And in the interest of time I'm just going  
20 to be discussing the muskox harvest information because  
21 yesterday we felt like there was some questions about  
22 it.

23

24                   And so the Park Service and Alaska Fish  
25 and Game in Kotzebue monitor the Cape Thompson muskoxen  
26 population and harvest numbers are decided by  
27 population sizes and status. So, you know, larger --  
28 when the population size is large and increasing we can  
29 have larger harvest numbers and vice versa. And the  
30 NPS and Alaska Fish and Game split the permits each  
31 year. ADF&G, or Alaska Fish and Game issue their  
32 permits for their hunt through their Tier II harvest  
33 system and the Park Service uses a random lottery to  
34 determine who receives permits. And in June every year  
35 we open the sign up for those people who would like to  
36 enter and then in late July we do a random drawing for  
37 each of the hunts, which are FX2312 and that's the hunt  
38 for the Noatak Preserve area and then FX2303, which is  
39 the hunt for Cape Krusenstern. And then the muskoxen  
40 harvest season begins August 1st and ends March 15th.

41

42                   Any questions on that.

43

44                   (No comments)

45

46                   MR. FRONSTIN: Otherwise Joe is next.

47

48                   (No comments)

49

50

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1 MR. FRONSTIN: Thank you.

2

3 MR. DOLLEMOLLE: (In Native) Joe  
4 Dollemolle. I'm the District Ranger for the Western  
5 Arctic National Parklands. My wife is Albe Atoruk  
6 Dollemolle from Kiana and my mother is Lois Dollemolle.  
7 My brother, Daniel and I grew up in Kotzebue. My wife  
8 and I returned home in early 2008 after working  
9 elsewhere in Alaska and the Lower 48 for some time.

10

11 Just wanted to give you a basic summary  
12 of visiting resource protection activities for Western  
13 Arctic Parkland this year.

14

15 So first of all plans continue to move  
16 forward, but they've been delayed due to Covid, to  
17 study the issues and impacts of subsistence timber  
18 harvest in Cape Krusenstern National Monument after  
19 concerns by subsistence users about potentially user  
20 conflicts and increased number of timber harvesters  
21 from Kotzebue residents. Working with the Native  
22 Village of Kotzebue and the U.S. Forest Service on this  
23 project.

24

25 I'm also excited to announce that after  
26 a request by advisory groups, such as this Council, to  
27 have more rangers in the field. The Park Service has  
28 hired another law enforcement ranger permanently based  
29 in Kotzebue. This is going to be James (Indiscernible)  
30 and he has worked as a ranger for last seven years  
31 working in Kotzebue for about the last three summers,  
32 but only the summers during those times so he'll be  
33 with us full-time and we're pretty excited to have him  
34 on board with us.

35

36 For law enforcement operations during  
37 the fall hunting season, the National Park Service  
38 continues to work with our Federal, State and NANA  
39 Trespass Partners to coordinate patrols and share  
40 resources and enable better coverage in the field and  
41 communications with hunters, tribes and the general  
42 public. Park Service rangers were able to patrol the  
43 Kobuk River and sections of the Noatak River by boat  
44 and we utilized a ranger pilot in a fixed wing airplane  
45 as well as a helicopter to patrol and land on fly-in  
46 hunting camps in the Noatak National Preserve with an  
47 emphasis on the closed and restricted areas within the  
48 Preserve. In addition to the NPS, a Bureau of Land  
49 Management ranger pilot flew patrols and the Alaska  
50

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1 Wildlife Troopers actively patrolled and contacted  
2 hunting groups within Noatak for most of the fall  
3 hunting season. Rangers contacted at least 60 hunters  
4 in the field during these patrols. The only violations  
5 observed were several minor incidents where hunters  
6 failed to immediately stamp their harvest tickets upon  
7 a successful kill, however, in all of those cases  
8 though a locking tag had already been properly used.  
9 We had one minor case of failure to salvage all edible  
10 meat from a caribou after a bear had destroyed portions  
11 of a caribou rib cage, and no citations were issued in  
12 that case. We also assisted the Troopers with one case  
13 which is currently still under investigation. During  
14 these patrols we found no violations of the various  
15 closures in the Noatak National Preserve. We believe  
16 this is a good indication that these closures and our  
17 education and enforcement is generally being respected  
18 by those non-Federally-qualified caribou hunters,  
19 transporters and aircraft that the closures were  
20 designed to restrict and has reduced direct conflicts  
21 with subsistence users. And the vast majority of  
22 commercially transported hunters were observed in and  
23 around the Anasak River\* drainage with a few hunting  
24 parties scattered in other areas of the Preserve and  
25 for the most part they were all east of the  
26 Nimiuktuk\*River and north of the Noatak River at least  
27 through mid-September. We did not contact any  
28 Federally-qualified subsistence users in the field, but  
29 from the air we observed numerous boats, assuming from  
30 Noatak, all along the Noatak River as far out as Cotton  
31 Creek. Later in talking to Noatak residents, it  
32 appeared that the hunters from Noatak were relatively  
33 successful in their hunts starting around the second  
34 week or so of September. The Park Service will have  
35 2021 data on the number of hunters, animals and  
36 estimated flights transported to the field by big game  
37 transporters and other commercial means, at least on  
38 NPS lands, after those reports are provided by the  
39 companies after November 15th.

40  
41 As always, if local residents are  
42 interested in exploring jobs, particularly those in law  
43 enforcement on the National Park Service or report  
44 concerns, violations or to provide advice on how the  
45 NPS can improve public outreach and patrol strategies,  
46 please contact me, I'm going to give my phone number.  
47 That phone number for myself is (907) 385-8234. Again,  
48 that's (907) 385-8234.

49  
50



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1 I'd like to thank all the Council  
2 members for what you do to advocate and protect  
3 subsistence issues and for your advice to agency  
4 representatives such as myself so that we can improve  
5 how we protect a very important and unique subsistence  
6 way of life.

7

8 Thank you.

9

10 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you everyone at  
11 Western Arctic Parklands. If there's no questions for  
12 the Western Arctic Parklands folks, we will just move  
13 over to the Gates of the Arctic National Park and  
14 Preserve people.

15

16 MS. OKADA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My  
17 name is Marcy Okada. I'm the Subsistence Coordinator  
18 for Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve and  
19 I'd like to refer you to Page 255 in your meeting  
20 packet. This is what we'll be going over today.

21

22 So Gates of the Arctic National Park  
23 and Preserve lies within the Northwest Arctic, North  
24 Slope, and Western Interior region. We also have a  
25 Subsistence Resource Commission, and our last meeting  
26 was on April 14th. This is a venue where SRC members  
27 can receive updates on such things as the Ambler Mining  
28 District Road and as well as management updates from  
29 Park Staff. Our next meeting is going to be held in  
30 two weeks on November 16th, via teleconference.

31

32 Moving right along to Western Arctic  
33 Caribou Herd update. You already heard an update from  
34 our Wildlife Biologist, Kyle Joly. So I'm going to  
35 move right to our next moose survey.

36

37 Our moose survey in and around Gates of  
38 the Arctic National Park and Preserve is planned for  
39 late March in 2022. The last survey was conducted in  
40 2015. The survey is going to be based out of Bettles  
41 and it should take about a little less than a week to  
42 be conducted. Most of the survey is going to be done  
43 within the Western Interior region.

44

45 Sheep surveys were conducted, as you  
46 can see in the handout, by the map, surveys were  
47 conducted mostly on the eastern portion of the Gates of  
48 the Arctic National Park and Preserve so from Anaktuvuk  
49 Pass down to the Wiseman area. The survey results are

50

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1 still being analyzed and we have a sheep biologist who  
2 conducts these surveys and his name is Will Deacy.

3

4 Lastly, I'd just like to share a little  
5 bit of information about a conference that's being  
6 planned for May 2023. It's a joint meeting of the  
7 North American Caribou Workshop and Arctic Ungulate  
8 Conference. It'll be held in Anchorage and it provides  
9 the opportunity to bring international managers,  
10 researchers, indigenous and local knowledge holders and  
11 other stakeholders together so folks can share their  
12 knowledge on caribou, muskoxen, dall sheep, moose and  
13 reindeer. It's also an opportunity to share research  
14 findings and bring people together to provide  
15 opportunity for exchanging viewpoints, concerns and  
16 recommendations regarding the health, management, youth  
17 and study of these animal species. Kyle Joly, our  
18 Wildlife Biologist, is on the organizing committee and  
19 good contact information is in the handout if folks  
20 want to reach out to him.

21

22 So that was just a quick update. If  
23 folks don't have any questions I'd like to pass it on  
24 to Jeff Rasic who can provide an update on the Ambler  
25 Mining District Road.

26

27 (No comments)

28

29 MR. RASIC: Hi, thanks, Marcy. This is  
30 Jeff, can everybody hear me.

31

32 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, thank you.

33

34 MR. RASIC: Through the Chair. Thanks  
35 for making time for me. I am Jeff Rasic, I am the Chief  
36 of Resources for Gates of the Arctic National Park and  
37 I'm calling from Fairbanks today.

38

39 I wanted to provide a brief status  
40 report on Ambler Road. This is a project that people  
41 are familiar with. It's been in the works for several  
42 years. The Park Service received an application from  
43 AIDEA, the Alaska Industrial Development and Export  
44 Authority in 2015 and for the last six years the Park  
45 Service, along with other Federal agencies, namely the  
46 BLM and Army Corps of Engineers have been evaluating  
47 the application and conducting environmental  
48 compliance. In January 2021, just about 10 months ago  
49 that phase of the project ended and the new phase

50

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1 began. The major Federal permits for the Ambler Road  
2 have now been issued, the Park Service for a 26 mile  
3 segment of the road and the BLM for the remainder of  
4 the 211 or so mile route so, again, I want to emphasize  
5 that that major turning point has happened, the major  
6 Federal permits have been issued. The project is now  
7 in the pre-construction or pre-development phase. The  
8 question now has turned to how will the road be  
9 developed, the specific details of the design and  
10 engineering of the road are being worked on. So this  
11 last summer AIDEA's contractors conducted some modest  
12 amount of work out in the field that included cultural  
13 resource surveys, geotechnical work, and hydrology.  
14 Focused on bridge crossings on Park Service lands, that  
15 was at the Kobuk River, where a bridge crossing will  
16 be. So our role now has turned to issuing the smaller  
17 access permits for specific bouts of work during what  
18 will be a few year phase of pre-development activity.  
19 We're consulting with local communities, government to  
20 government consultation is ongoing. A subsistence  
21 working group is being formed to provide input to  
22 AIDEA. AIDEA is behind that effort and it's in its  
23 early stages, so that's a topic to stay attuned to.  
24 And then another note is that the field crews working  
25 out there now have community liaisons with them,  
26 community advisors, they've emphasized recruiting from  
27 the upper Kobuk, Alatna, Allakaket, Bettles, and  
28 Evansville, the communities that are most immediately  
29 adjacent to the project area.

30  
31 I'll leave it there unless there are  
32 any questions I can answer.

33  
34 Thank you.

35  
36 (No comments)

37  
38 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you. Any  
39 questions from the Council regarding Mr. Rasic's  
40 presentation.

41  
42 (No comments)

43  
44 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Anything else from  
45 Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve.

46  
47 MS. OKADA: That's it, Mr. Chair.  
48 Thank you for your time.

49  
50

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1                   CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Marcy, and  
2 thank you Jeff for your presentations. Much  
3 appreciated. We'll move on to Bureau of Land  
4 Management, is that Tom Sparks that'll be speaking with  
5 us.

6  
7                   MR. SPARKS: Yes, Sir, Chairman Baker.  
8 Pleased to be with you the last couple of days, I know  
9 it's been long days for everyone.

10  
11                   We have a written report, it's on Page  
12 257 through 260 in your packet, and I think rather than  
13 going through that I'll just make myself available for  
14 any comments that any member may have.

15  
16                   CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any questions from the  
17 Council for Tom, or BLM, in general.

18  
19                   MR. BALLOT: This is Percy Ballot, am I  
20 able to ask questions.

21  
22                   CHAIRMAN BAKER: Just for the sake of  
23 time here we're going to keep it to the Council, but if  
24 there are no Council questions at this time I'll allow  
25 you to have a question, Mr. Ballot.

26  
27                   MR. BALLOT: Thank you, I appreciate  
28 it. I'm just wondering about the activities for  
29 sporthunting or drop-offs or whatever you want to call  
30 them up in upper Buckland River, Selawik area. Do you  
31 have -- where would I get that report?

32  
33                   MR. SPARKS: I believe that Buckland has  
34 been closed to sporthunting. We do have a number of --  
35 we call them special recreation permits, and we have a  
36 number that we've issued up in the Squirrel River area  
37 but they've all been inactive except one in 2020. We  
38 had some activity, there were only four clients with  
39 that one guide permit that we issued.

40  
41                   MR. BALLOT: Okay. So you just have  
42 one up there but they're seeing activity up there  
43 earlier this summer, who would I talk to about that,  
44 can somebody email it to me and their email contact and  
45 talk about this?

46  
47                   MR. SPARKS: Through the Chair. Percy,  
48 can you can send me an email, Tsparks@blm.gov.

49  
50

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1 MR. BALLOT: Okay, thank you.

2

3 MR. SPARKS: I suspect that maybe  
4 private planes are flying up that way, Percy. But I'm  
5 just speculating there. Please send me an email. You  
6 can also call me at 443-2177. Thank you.

7

8 MR. BALLOT: Thank you.

9

10 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Tom and  
11 Percy. Anything else for the BLM.

12

13 (No comments)

14

15 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Is there any closing  
16 comments you'd like to make, Tom.

17

18 MR. SPARKS: Well, just you know a lot  
19 of people have expressed the appreciation for getting  
20 together in person and I'm certainly hoping that we can  
21 do that.

22

23 I did want to mention just for those  
24 locally in Kotzebue, BLM did finally close the office  
25 there in Kotzebue. The city of Kotzebue ended up with  
26 the two buildings on a lot that we had leased from a  
27 private individual there and sure want to express my  
28 appreciation for the community in helping us through  
29 that process.

30

31 Thank you, very much, Mr. Chair.

32

33 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Sparks.  
34 So with that we'll move on to the Alaska Department of  
35 Fish and Game, and up first I have Alaska Wildlife  
36 Troopers, do we have anyone representing the Wildlife  
37 Troopers this afternoon.

38

39 (No comments)

40

41 CHAIRMAN BAKER: And if we don't have  
42 any Wildlife Troopers, next would be the Wildlife  
43 Biologist, Alex Hanson, would that be you.

44

45 MR. HANSON: Yeah, Mr. Chair, this is  
46 Alex Hanson. I believe I've said plenty so I would  
47 defer to Christie Osburn if she has anything to report.

48

49 MS. OSBURN: Hi, Mr. Chair, and members

50

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1 of the Council. This is Christie Osburn with the  
2 Alaska Department of Fish and Game. I'm the Area  
3 Biologist here. I've lived in Kotzebue for the last  
4 two and a half years or so but have recently moved into  
5 this position. A couple new other additions to our  
6 Fish and Game office are Nichole Edmunson (ph), she's  
7 not able to make it on the call today but she has  
8 joined us as our new Regional Biologist. Another new  
9 addition is Georgie Phillips, and she is now our Board  
10 Support member for our Advisory Committee meetings. So  
11 if you hear some new voices in the office please feel  
12 free to introduce yourselves to Nichole and Georgie.

13  
14 And then as far as other information  
15 we've received a request from the RAC for the  
16 Department to provide updates on moose, bear, sheep and  
17 beaver. We've talked a bit about beaver already so  
18 I'll forego that discussion for the sake of time. And  
19 additionally a lot of our surveys are conducted  
20 collaboratively with the Park Service and Raime  
21 Fronstin will have provided materials that have  
22 information on some of the surveys that we've already  
23 completed this year.

24  
25 So I'll try and be fairly brief and  
26 start with a moose update. Again, this is -- our  
27 surveys are conducted in partnership with the Park  
28 Service and Fish and Wildlife Service. Last year we  
29 did surveys in the Selawik area. We completed an  
30 abundance survey in April and that produced an  
31 abundance estimate of 1,036 moose and observed 10  
32 calves per 100 adults. This is relatively similar to  
33 the last estimate for Selawik which was completed in  
34 2016 that found 940 moose and 14 calves per 100 adults.  
35 This similarity between the two estimates suggests that  
36 the population may have reached a low density  
37 stability, so while the current recruitment rates -- so  
38 the recruitment rates would be the number of calves  
39 coming into the adult population is still relatively  
40 low, they are not unusual for this survey area. A  
41 composition survey for the Selawik area was also  
42 completed in the fall of 2020 and during the fall  
43 composition survey we found 38 bulls per 100 cows, nine  
44 calves per 100 cows, and six calves for 100 adults. So  
45 the bull/cow ratio is within the average range of the  
46 area but our calf ratios are slightly lower than  
47 average. And then as far as our upcoming surveys, we  
48 plan to survey the lower Kobuk area for moose this year  
49 and that will start with the fall composition survey.  
50

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1 We're actually hoping to dive right into that in the  
2 next few weeks and I'm hoping that most of your  
3 communities have received some notice about that at  
4 this point. But the survey will entail areas of the  
5 Squirrel River drainage and then the Kobuk River  
6 drainage down stream of Ambler. We'll be using one  
7 SuperCub for this survey and we'll be flying for about  
8 four days total. So this will be a red and white  
9 SuperCub, and informational fliers have been  
10 distributed, but if you have any questions, please,  
11 feel free to call our Kotzebue office for more info.

12  
13 And then the last little bit of moose  
14 information that I have is regarding harvest. So we've  
15 got two moose harvest options. One is a registration  
16 permit, it's the RM880. Many of you probably have  
17 heard of this or know of it. We distribute it for a  
18 limited time only in the supper. And then the other is  
19 a general season harvest ticket. And both of those are  
20 only available to resident hunters, we have no non-  
21 resident moose hunt at this point. And to-date a total  
22 of 600 of our registration permits were issued, that  
23 was for the RM880 season. Of those 41 moose have  
24 already been reported harvested. And then as a  
25 friendly reminder, if you have already harvested moose  
26 or know someone who has, please remember to give our  
27 office a call so that we can get your moose as  
28 reported.

29  
30 So that's all I've got for moose. I'll  
31 go ahead and move on if no one has questions regarding  
32 moose.

33  
34 (No comments)

35  
36 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Just one question  
37 regarding the airplane you mentioned Christie.

38  
39 MS. OSBURN: Yeah, go ahead.

40  
41 CHAIRMAN BAKER: I've seen the notices  
42 that it will be active. Are the -- I haven't seen any  
43 of the pictures though, for that airplane, are the tail  
44 numbers -- is the tail number published or at least  
45 visible in the pictures just in case people see it and  
46 want to know if that's the actual plane that they're  
47 seeing.

48  
49 MS. OSBURN: Mr. Chair, yes, that's a  
50

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1 good question. At the time of the distribution of the  
2 fliers I wasn't sure what aircraft would be in use. So  
3 the number is not published on the flier. That's  
4 something that I can make available though. It'll be  
5 an Arctic Backcountry SuperCub, it's red and white, and  
6 I don't know the tail number offhand, but it is labeled  
7 Arctic Backcountry Flying. And like I said, I suspect  
8 that we'll be about four days total of flight. It will  
9 be a relatively low level survey. We typically will  
10 fly anywhere between 300 to 800 feet and you will see  
11 us circling an area essentially for these fall  
12 composition surveys. We're going out and we're trying  
13 to determine the ratio of bulls to cows. So this -- if  
14 anyone does see an aircraft, feel free to jot down the  
15 tail number, and if you have any concerns I will have  
16 left the aircraft tail number with our Kotzebue Fish  
17 and Game office, and I'll also give notice to the  
18 Wildlife Troopers. And so if you contact you can  
19 confirm if that aircraft is us flying the moose  
20 composition survey.

21  
22 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Great, thank you,  
23 Christie.

24  
25 MS. OSBURN: Yes, you're welcome. I'll  
26 briefly move on to move on to bear. I don't have much  
27 information here. Many folks and members of the public  
28 have noticed or have felt that they've seen an increase  
29 in bear in the area. I was curious whether Will Deacy  
30 with the Park Service would be on the call today, but I  
31 believe that he is -- the Park Service is considering a  
32 bear survey, abundance survey in the lower Noatak this  
33 year. I don't know if that has been confirmed at this  
34 point, but the Department of Fish and Game has not  
35 conducted a bear survey in this area for several years.  
36 One was completed in partnership on the Seward  
37 Peninsula this last summer and I'm just going to take a  
38 brief look here to see if Raime's information covered  
39 any of the results from the brown bear survey that was  
40 completed there. That's not -- if that is something  
41 that the Council is interested in I'm sure that we can  
42 get that information. As far as bear harvest goes for  
43 Unit 23, we still have a two bear bag limit in place  
44 for Alaska residents with a season of August 1st  
45 through May 31st. No harvest ticket is required on  
46 State managed lands but you are required to salvage  
47 hide and skull. So far this year we've sealed about 44  
48 bears in Unit 23 and that would have been since July of  
49 this last year. On average we seem to get about 50  
50



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1 bears per year harvested.

2

3 And that's all of the updates that I  
4 have for bear. If there's any questions I'll pause  
5 here.

6

7

8 (No comments)

9

10 MS. OSBURN: All right. I'll continue  
11 on to brief comments about sheep. We were unable to  
12 complete the sheep survey of the DeLong Mountains this  
13 year, primarily due to concurrent projects and some  
14 very poor weather conditions in July this summer. The  
15 last trend counts that were conducted in 2018 implied  
16 some relative stability in the population. The 2020  
17 count was only partially completed and thereby not  
18 comparable. However, we plan to conduct a survey this  
19 July in the DeLong Mountains and we'll hopefully have  
20 an update for next fall meeting.

21

22 That is all of the information that I  
23 prepared to share but I'm happy to answer any  
24 questions.

25

26 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Christie.  
27 Any Council members have any questions for Christie.

28

29 (No comments)

30

31 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, thank  
32 you again for your Biologist report Christie. We'll  
33 move on down to the Subsistence Division, does Helen  
34 Cold and/or Caroline Brown have anything to share.

35

36 MS. BROWN: Yes, thank you so much. My  
37 name is Caroline Brown and I'm the Statewide Research  
38 Director for the Subsistence Division for Fish and Game  
39 and I'm here in Fairbanks. And I'll be giving this  
40 presentation on behalf of Helen Cold, who is our Arctic  
41 lead. She went on maternity leave last weekend and so  
42 while she's enjoying some time with her new baby I will  
43 try to cover this for you guys and if there are any  
44 questions I'll do my best to answer them or at least  
45 get them to Helen so she can.

46

47 There's a couple of projects I want to  
48 update the Council on. And I think these materials  
49 should be in your supplemental materials, or these

50

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1 slides should be in your supplemental materials. But  
2 the first project that I want to update the Council on  
3 is a project that's funded by Fish and Wildlife Service  
4 with OSM and it's a traditional ecological knowledge of  
5 Dolly Varden and whitefish species in Northwest Alaska.  
6 That project will be focusing on the communities of  
7 Deering, Kotzebue and Noatak. And the project has been  
8 delayed because of Covid, you know, documenting  
9 traditional knowledge is pretty dependent on being able  
10 to have conversations in person with people and  
11 conducting ethnographic interviews. So we are working  
12 with the community for field work planning and  
13 developing contingency plans to make sure we're  
14 protecting the community's health and safety. But that  
15 project -- I know that Helen is in conversation with  
16 the communities right now about that and hopefully we  
17 can get that one underway.

18  
19 The second project, Susan Georgette  
20 briefly mentioned, and that's called the Arctic Beaver  
21 Observation Network and that one is funded by the  
22 National Science Foundation and it's a project with Ken  
23 Tape, who is the professor that she was referencing and  
24 he's been doing a lot of work documenting beaver  
25 colonization in Northwest Alaska and he asked us to  
26 come on and work with him documenting indigenous  
27 knowledge of beaver ecology and the impacts of beaver  
28 presence on fish and subsistence access and Arctic  
29 community well being in general. The communities that  
30 we'll be working with for that project are Shungnak,  
31 Kotzebue, and Noatak. And we hope to be -- well, we're  
32 starting that project now, we were working with the  
33 communities ahead of time when we proposed this  
34 research to NSF so we're going to be working over the  
35 next five years documenting traditional knowledge as  
36 well as biological metrics and remote censusing and GIS  
37 on beaver ecology and impacts on the landscape. Again,  
38 that's another project that involves, you know, a lot  
39 of community input and so we're trying to be super  
40 careful about contingency planning to preserve  
41 community safety.

42  
43 A third project we are working on is  
44 with the National Park Service and the Bering  
45 LandBridge Ethnographic Overview and Assessment. And  
46 that is with Bering LandBridge zone communities for you  
47 guys that's Deering. And this project really entails  
48 pulling together a comprehensive literature review on  
49 research in the area in that zone and also community  
50

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1 consultations to identify research needs and major  
2 concerns that will help the National Park Service guide  
3 their research program. And so that project started  
4 back in 2020 and we've made a lot of progress on the  
5 comprehensive literature review but we have, again,  
6 community consultations until things are a bit safer.  
7 So we are hoping to do that this coming year, you know,  
8 or next fall perhaps and into the following year.

9

10 A fourth project is the Western Arctic  
11 Caribou Herd Harvest Assessments. We work on that  
12 project in partnership with Fish and Game, Department  
13 of Wildlife Conservation. And that is -- probably many  
14 of you are familiar with this project, we have been  
15 conducting household surveys about large mammal harvest  
16 with a focus on caribou in eight communities within the  
17 range of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd. The focus  
18 area communities are Golovin, White Mountain,  
19 Shishmaref, Selawik, Shungnak, Noatak, Deering and  
20 Kobuk. We started this project in 2019 and collected  
21 data that year. Covid forced us to postpone for the  
22 2020 year and until last spring, and so we surveyed in --  
23 in spring of this year we surveyed in Deering, Noatak,  
24 Shishmaref, and Kobuk. We're currently analyzing those  
25 data now before reviewing with communities. And then  
26 next spring, 2022, we'll be working with Shungnak,  
27 White Mountain, Selawik and Golovin. And so hopefully  
28 we'll be getting some of that information out to the  
29 communities and working with communities on those  
30 surveys. Interestingly this last spring we actually  
31 did kind of a hybrid version of remote and in-person  
32 surveys using local research assistants and it went  
33 really well so I think that that sets up nicely for  
34 next spring.

35

36 A final project is a Community  
37 Subsistence Harvest Assessment in the community of  
38 Kiana, and that is also being funded by the National  
39 Park Service. And this will be to update subsistence  
40 harvest data on customary and traditional uses of  
41 wildlife by residents of Kiana and this is another  
42 project that has been postponed. It was scheduled to  
43 start in 2020 but we postponed it to make sure we were  
44 able to be safe and respectful of communities and their  
45 needs. And so hopefully we will be working -- we will  
46 be conducting that survey next spring so next spring  
47 sometime between maybe January or February or March and  
48 April of 2022. I believe that with this project  
49 specifically the community lead has had a meeting with  
50

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1 the tribal council and they are, you know, to provide  
2 information and answer any questions and they -- the  
3 council is considering the project right now.

4

5 And I think that's all I have in terms  
6 of projects to update the Council on. We do have an  
7 OSM proposal under consideration, the Traditional  
8 Ecological Knowledge of Salmon in the Kotzebue Sound  
9 but I believe that OSM went over these projects and got  
10 feedback, so that's all I have right now. I would be  
11 happy to take any questions.

12

13 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Caroline.  
14 Do any members of the Council have any questions at  
15 this time.

16

17 (No comments)

18

19 CHAIRMAN BAKER: It doesn't seem that  
20 we have any questions so thank you, Caroline, and best  
21 wishes to Helen, really appre.....

22

23 MS. BROWN: I will let her know. Thank  
24 you guys so much for your time.

25

26 CHAIRMAN BAKER: .....really appreciate  
27 the report. Thank you so much. Next, we will go on to  
28 Office of Subsistence Management and I believe that'll  
29 be Lisa.

30

31 MS. GREDIAGIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
32 Members of the Council. For the record this is Lisa  
33 Grediagin.

34

35 And on behalf of OSM I want to thank  
36 all Council members for your exceptional work that you  
37 do on behalf of your communities and region during  
38 these trying times. We value your expertise and  
39 contribution of knowledge and experience to the  
40 regulatory process. It has been a very difficult for  
41 all of us dealing with the Covid19 environment.

42

43 As you learned from Chairman  
44 Christianson's letter dated August 20th, 2021, we are  
45 holding all 10 fall 2021 Regional Advisory Council  
46 meetings via teleconference. This decision was made  
47 with the utmost consideration and concern for the  
48 health and safety of all Council members, families,  
49 rural communities, the public and Staff who are all

50

0298

1 part of the Council meetings. The health and safety of  
2 everyone is our highest priority. The DOI guidelines  
3 advise that people avoid travel and refrain from  
4 meeting in person to minimize risk and help prevent the  
5 spread of Covid19. The Regional Advisory Councils are  
6 the foundation of Alaska's Federal Subsistence  
7 Management Program. The Federal Subsistence Management  
8 Program recognizes that in-person meetings are  
9 preferable, however, until we can ensure the safety of  
10 all participants we will follow current guidance and  
11 hold all meetings via teleconference. We thank you for  
12 be willing to participate in this lengthy  
13 teleconferences and appreciate your patience as we deal  
14 with the various technical issues that arise from the  
15 poor telephonic connections, the vast distances  
16 involved and differing communication systems throughout  
17 the state.

18  
19 Some updates on the OSM Staff. Since  
20 your last Council meeting in winter 2021 the following  
21 OSM Staffing changes have occurred. We are very  
22 pleased to announce that Amee Howard has joined OSM as  
23 our new Deputy Assistant Regional Director. Amee  
24 previously worked in OSM as policy coordinator.

25  
26 We are also very pleased to see the  
27 number of Staff that worked at OSM for awhile grew with  
28 the program and got promoted.

29  
30 Katya Wessels was promoted from Council  
31 Coordinator to Supervisor of the Council Coordination  
32 Division.

33  
34 Myself, Lisa Grediagin, was promoted  
35 from Wildlife Biologist to Supervisor of the Wildlife  
36 Division.

37  
38 Robbin LaVine was promoted from  
39 Anthropologist to the Policy Coordinator position.

40  
41 Additional good news is that three  
42 wildlife biologist positions at OSM were filled. Tom  
43 Plank came to us from the Bureau of Land Management in  
44 Utah. Bryan Ubelaker came to OSM from BLM in  
45 Anchorage. And Kendra Holman came to OSM from the U.S.  
46 Army Corps of Engineers in Anchorage.

47  
48 We also had some departures at OSM  
49 through retirement and new opportunities.

50

0299

1                   We bid a fond farewell to Donald Mike,  
2 Caron McKee and Zach Stevenson.

3  
4                   The OSM team is diligently working on  
5 building capacity and will be filling several new  
6 positions in our Anthropology, Council Coordination,  
7 Fisheries and Regulatory Divisions, along with adding  
8 additional administrative support.

9  
10                  Moving on to RealID for travel to  
11 Council meetings. Over the past two years we have been  
12 reminding Council members about the change in  
13 requirements for IDs at airports. Beginning May 3rd,  
14 2023 every air traveler will need to present a RealID  
15 compliant driver's license or other acceptable form of  
16 identification, such as a passport, to fly within the  
17 United States. This is applicable even when you fly on  
18 small Bush carriers. Please note that all Council  
19 members will need to make sure they have their required  
20 RealID for travel to the fall 2023 Council meeting.

21  
22                  And, lastly some updates on the lawsuit  
23 from the State of Alaska.

24  
25                  As you were previously briefed, on  
26 August 10th, 2020 the State of Alaska filed a lawsuit  
27 against the Federal Subsistence Board after it adopted  
28 Emergency Special Action WSA19-14. This special action  
29 allowed the Village of Kake to engage in a community  
30 harvest of two antlered moose and five male Sitka  
31 black-tailed deer. Also included in the lawsuit was  
32 temporary special action WSA20-3 which closed Federal  
33 public lands in Units 13A and 13B to non-Federally-  
34 qualified moose and caribou hunters. As part of the  
35 lawsuit the State asked the court to issue two  
36 preliminary injunctions. One to prevent the Unit 13  
37 closure from taking effect and another vacating the  
38 Kake hunt and prohibiting the Board from allowing any  
39 additional emergency hunts related to the impacts of  
40 Covid19. On September 18th the U.S. District Court  
41 denied the State's request for a preliminary injunction  
42 on the Unit 13 closure. The court found that, because  
43 the State has not demonstrated either a likelihood of  
44 success or serious questions on the merits of its  
45 claims, the court need not consider the remaining  
46 elements of the preliminary injunction analysis.

47  
48                  Two months later on November the 18th,  
49 the Court also denied the State's motion for a  
50

0300

1 preliminary injunction on the Kake hunt after Judge  
2 Gleason concluded that the State had not demonstrated a  
3 likelihood of success on the merits, raised serious  
4 questions on the merits of its claim, or demonstrated  
5 any likelihood of irreparable harm.

6  
7 While these rulings on preliminary  
8 injunction are encouraging, they did not resolve the  
9 litigation. Recent developments are that settlement  
10 negotiations between the Department of Justice, the DOI  
11 Solicitor's Office, the USDA Office of General Counsel,  
12 and the State proved unsuccessful. A briefing was  
13 completed at the end of August 2021 and we are now  
14 awaiting the Court's decision.

15  
16 Based on legal guidance, Program Staff  
17 does not comment on any active litigation directed  
18 against the Federal Subsistence Board beyond what we  
19 have reported here.

20  
21 Thank you, Mr. Chair, that completes  
22 the report unless there are any questions.

23  
24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Lisa. Do  
25 any members of the Council have any questions for Lisa  
26 or OSM at this time.

27  
28 (No comments)

29  
30 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing no questions  
31 or comments, thank you for that Lisa and to all of our  
32 OSM Staff. We'll move on to future meeting dates and  
33 we just need to confirm how many members of the Council  
34 are still on the phone at this time. Just running down  
35 the list. Attamuk are you still on.

36  
37 (No comments)

38  
39 CHAIRMAN BAKER: I believe he wasn't  
40 going to be able to stay with us. There's myself. Mr.  
41 Kramer had to go back to work. Calvin Moto are you on  
42 the phone.

43  
44 (No comments)

45  
46 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Wilbur Howarth.

47  
48 MR. HOWARTH: Yes, I'm here.

49  
50

0301

1 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Robert Schaeffer.

2

3 MR. SCHAEFFER: Bob will be fine.

4

5 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Elmer Armstrong.

6

7 MR. ARMSTRONG: I'm here.

8

9 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Brian Jones.

10

11 (No comments)

12

13 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Barbara Atoruk.

14

15 (No comments)

16

17 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So it appears that we  
18 only have four members of the Council at this time,  
19 Katya. Do you have any recommendations being as we  
20 don't have a quorum.

21

22 MS. WESSELS: My recommendation is that  
23 we take five minute break and I'll try to call the  
24 Council members that are not on the phone and see if  
25 they can call back in. So if I understand correctly so  
26 we have you, Wilbur, Elmer and Attamuk, right?

27

28 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So the people we have  
29 on the phone are myself, Wilbur, Bob and Elmer.

30

31 MS. WESSELS: Okay. All right. Let me  
32 try to call a couple of Council members and see if they  
33 can get back on.

34

35 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Katya. We  
36 will take a brief break until we can get some more  
37 people on for a quorum.

38

39 (Off record)

40

41 (On record)

42

43 (Teleconference interference -  
44 participants not muted)

45

46 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Katya, are you there?

47

48 MS. WESSELS: Yes, I'm here and Barbara  
49 called in.

50



0302

1                   CHAIRMAN BAKER:    So that would make  
2 five people, do we need anybody else or will that be  
3 sufficient?  
4

5                   MS. WESSELS: Five is a quorum because  
6 you have nine seated members. Quorum is half, plus one  
7 so that's five people, is a quorum.  
8

9                   CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, well, thank  
10 you for that. And thank you, Barb, for calling back  
11 in. So we're down to the future meeting date and we  
12 just need to confirm the winter 2022 meeting date and  
13 location.  
14

15                  MS. ATORUK: Okay.  
16

17                  MS. WESSELS: Yeah, currently it is  
18 February 14th and 15th in Kotzebue.  
19

20                  MS. ATORUK: Yes, I was looking at that  
21 this morning when we were having our meeting and then  
22 looking at for the future meeting, fall 2022, I would  
23 again suggest that we have it on November 1 and 2 again  
24 because we have some -- it was good this time because  
25 everyone else have met already and we saw their votes  
26 on how they think on the ones that we propose. So if  
27 everybody's in agreement, I would suggest November 1  
28 and 2, 2022.  
29

30                  CHAIRMAN BAKER: Does anyone have any  
31 issues for those dates for the winter meeting.  
32

33                  MS. ATORUK: Oh, the winter meetings,  
34 I'm okay with for February 14 and 15. I'm good with  
35 that. I'm good with those dates, we picked those a few  
36 years back or a year ago. But what I'm trying to  
37 suggest of the fall 2022 when you guys meet then, I was  
38 suggesting November 1 and 2 again to be the last leg of  
39 the statewide Regional Council meetings, that way if  
40 there's any questions we have where we have other  
41 regions in sharing like with the North Slope, like on  
42 that Unit 26A then we can always get their information  
43 during your next meeting.  
44

45                  CHAIRMAN BAKER: Okay. Understood,  
46 thank you, Barbara. At this time do we need to vote on  
47 that or are we just in consensus that February 14th and  
48 15 will be confirmed for the winter meeting and then we  
49 can select October 31st and November 1st of 2022 for  
50

0303

1 the fall meeting. Does anyone have any objections to  
2 that.

3  
4 MS. ATORUK: So moved.

5  
6 MR. ARMSTRONG: Second.

7  
8 MS. WESSELS: Yeah, you don't really  
9 need to make a motion if everyone is in consensus and  
10 you have a quorum that is fine.

11  
12 MS. ATORUK: Okay.

13  
14 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, thank you,  
15 Katya. So with that we'll.....

16  
17 MS. WESSELS: So it's October 31st and  
18 November 1st, the dates for the fall 2022 meeting.

19  
20 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes. Yes.

21  
22 MS. WESSELS: Okay.

23  
24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So if there's no other  
25 questions on that we'll go to closing comments.  
26 Barbara, do you have any closing comments.

27  
28 MS. ATORUK: Yes, I think the winter  
29 meeting will be my last meeting. I'm not going to  
30 reapply for this position. I'm going to look around to  
31 see if someone else from Kiana can apply, if not I'm  
32 going to be asking the upper Kobuk, someone from upper  
33 Kobuk to apply or nominate somebody in because we need  
34 that on the Council. We're mostly lower Kobuk and the  
35 Sound Council for right now. But I really appreciated  
36 and enjoyed this meeting because I can continually be  
37 on the teleconference and hearing all your voices and  
38 knowing who you are is a plus so I really enjoyed it  
39 and you guys go forward with whatever challenges are  
40 ahead of you and don't forget us that are living out  
41 here and hunting and gathering and fishing. So Taikuu  
42 for the time, good luck.

43  
44 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Barbara.  
45 And thank you for all your time on the Council.

46  
47 (Teleconference interference -  
48 participants not muted)

49  
50

0304

1                   CHAIRMAN BAKER: Elmer Armstrong, do  
2 you have any closing comments.

3  
4                   (No comments)

5  
6                   MS. ATORUK: I guess he's not there.

7  
8                   CHAIRMAN BAKER: Elmer Armstrong.

9  
10                  MR. ARMSTRONG: Sorry, I was washing my  
11 hands. Okay good discussions. Good reports. I'll  
12 think about running again but I know Barbara expressed  
13 more participation from other villages and my seat is a  
14 one year term.

15  
16                  MS. ATORUK: No, you're not done until  
17 2022.

18  
19                  MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah, I know 2022.

20  
21                  MS. ATORUK: Yeah, you have one more  
22 year.

23  
24                  MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah. For me, it's  
25 been pretty good. I really feel that the Council is  
26 doing good. We struggle together as a region going  
27 through this hardship of not filling our freezers with  
28 caribou. I know I got my moose, I did salmon fishing,  
29 I got some whitefish. Just living through the season,  
30 it's important for everyone to at least have food in  
31 their freezers through the season.

32  
33                  Other than that, good reports. Good  
34 meeting. Thank you.

35  
36                  CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Elmer. Bob  
37 Schaeffer, any closing comments.

38  
39                  MR. SCHAEFFER: Yeah, I guess I got  
40 into this thing because I really, really feel for  
41 what's happening with our resources. And, you know,  
42 before in the past, you know, we never had that kind of  
43 pressure on them and then all of a sudden everybody's  
44 eyeballing up here because it's the only healthy herd  
45 left in the state and now we've got a tremendous amount  
46 of pressure on the herd and I -- we've been caribou  
47 people for thousands of years and, you know, it's all  
48 of a sudden it seems like the buffalo syndrome is all  
49 over again and I just don't want that to happen. Not  
50

0305

1 for me, mostly for my children, my grandchildren and my  
2 great-grandchildren as time goes on. I just want to  
3 see if I can participate and help in any way we can to --  
4 you know, to -- with these issues -- to come up with  
5 the outside influences, you know, talking about a  
6 powerful lobbying when you talk about -- about  
7 sportsmen and the amount of money that they could throw  
8 at policymakers that can change policy for the worst  
9 and I just feel that something like this maybe I can  
10 make a difference.

11  
12 Secondly, I'm concerned about global  
13 warming and how it's going to affect the rest of our  
14 subsistence resources because it's going to -- it's  
15 going to happen regularly. Like the herring die-off  
16 last year, very similar to what happened this year when  
17 the water just got too fresh, you know, you put a bunch  
18 of saltwater fish in a saltwater tank and you change it  
19 to freshwater, guess what happens to the fish, it dies.  
20 That's just the way it is and things are happening very  
21 negatively with what's happening with global warming.  
22 And I just want to let the agencies know that are here  
23 that work with us on a daily basis, you know, trying to  
24 do their jobs, to keep in the forefront, you know, with  
25 global warming and its impacts are doing -- not only  
26 with the environment but the animals that live on it.

27  
28 Anyway, I just wanted to put that in  
29 there. But I think having people like Barb and Attamuk  
30 on a committee like this is one of the attractors that  
31 I thought was a good thing because they're very  
32 outspoken, very knowledgeable and I guess if I was them  
33 I would consider -- what, we have just a couple of  
34 meetings a year, but yet on the other hand we've got a  
35 hell of a job to do and it's kind of stressful at  
36 times, but that's one of the sacrifices you make when  
37 you -- you know, when you decide to tackle those issues  
38 and try to preserve our way of life. So I would  
39 reconsider bowing out and if you can help, by God, you  
40 know, we could sure use you on a Board like this. And  
41 then, of course, those that aren't attending, maybe  
42 they should be replaced, you know, because if you're  
43 not.....

44  
45 MS. ATORUK: Yeah.

46  
47 MR. SCHAEFFER: .....going to  
48 participate on something that's important as this, I  
49 think we should ask them to resign or we just replace  
50

0306

1    them with someone what really cares and someone that's  
2    out spoken and someone that will stand up when need be.  
3    So that's my comments for the day.

4

5                   Thank you all, and see you next time.

6

7                   CHAIRMAN BAKER:       Thank you, Bob.  
8    Wilbur, any closing comments.

9

10                   MR. HOWARTH: Yeah, I would like to say  
11    thanks to everyone that called in today and thanks,  
12    Bob, for all your global warming, I learn something  
13    every day from up this way. And, yes, I would like to  
14    see more studies on our lichen. I know they are -- it  
15    takes awhile for the lichen to grow. And I also would  
16    like to find out about the next meeting for the Ambler  
17    Road because I only went once and that was Arctic  
18    Borough called our office here at the IRA at Noorvik  
19    and they paid my way to Fairbanks for that road project  
20    and I gave a report on all our fish and stuff that goes  
21    up the river. Because we found out they were going to  
22    build bridges to get to Ambler so, yeah. And we  
23    started monitoring the waters out -- as soon as it  
24    freeze up good enough I would like to go out with our  
25    environmentalist Lonnie Tibbits and do some water  
26    sampling. We have the equipment to do it.

27

28                   And thanks, Mr. Baker, it's been a good  
29    meeting and I'll listen in or chat with you guys on the  
30    next meeting.

31

32                   Taikuu.

33

34                   CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur, for  
35    those comments. And for myself, I'd just like to thank  
36    all the Staff and everyone who's been presenting, the  
37    people from the public who have taken the time to call  
38    in and provide any testimony. It's all part of the  
39    process and thanks again for everyone who took the time  
40    to share. This is how we make things happen is by  
41    having people call in to these meetings and making sure  
42    that we have our voices heard when things are on the  
43    table to be talked about. So for all the issues that  
44    we've brought up, plans, strategies and discussions,  
45    hopefully we can keep things moving and keep moving  
46    forward. Thank you, again, to all the Staff for  
47    coordinating this.

48

49                   And, with that, it is 5:35 and I would

50

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1 like to entertain adjournment if there's no further  
2 discussion.

3

4 MS. ATORUK: Mr. Chair.

5

6 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes.

7

8 MR. BALLOT: Mr. Chair.

9

10 MS. ATORUK: Can I make a comment.

11

12 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, who's speaking.

13

14 MS. ATORUK: Barbara.

15

16 MR. BALLOT: This is Percy.

17

18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Barb.

19

20 MS. ATORUK: Well, after listening to  
21 Robert, thanks, Bobby. But since we've always had  
22 problems having representatives from up river, the  
23 three villages up river, Ambler, Shungnak, Kobuk, since  
24 Louie left we've had problems in having representation  
25 from up river, I am originally from up river, and I know  
26 what goes on up river, their hunting, gathering,  
27 fishing, I hear from them every day by phone call. If  
28 I should decide to reapply that's who I would go in to  
29 represent because Brian is not doing it, he's not going  
30 to do it, he hasn't called in. He's just called in to  
31 say I'm not going to call in. So that would be one  
32 option that I would reapply for this position.

33

34 And also if our Coordinator would mail  
35 us a hard copy of Ross' letter on the Souder of  
36 September 30th. That is a good letter for the Council  
37 to chew on, to read, and study from it, there is some  
38 good information in there and he's right on with a lot  
39 of stuff he said in there. So we need to get a copy of  
40 that.

41

42 And, Wilbur, you need to get a hold of  
43 BLM for that Ambler Road. Actually we don't have any  
44 say on that because we're on subsistence and a lot of  
45 people do attend from the upper Kobuk villages and this  
46 last fall they had a meeting, about a couple weeks ago,  
47 and they had the representative go, an elder from here  
48 in Kiana so I don't know how that is going, how they  
49 are setting that up and I'm sure there's a coordinator  
50

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1 somewhere that you can get ahold of with BLM and set up  
2 your meeting with them through your IRA.

3

4 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

5

6 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Barbara.

7

8 MS. WESSELS: Mr. Chair, I have a  
9 question for Barbara. Barbara, which letter are you  
10 referring to specifically?

11

12 MS. ATORUK: Ross Schaeffer's letter on  
13 the Sounder on caribou.

14

15 MS. WESSELS: Okay, thank you.

16

17 MR. BALLOT: Mr. Chairman, it's Percy  
18 Ballot.

19

20 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, Percy.

21

22 MR. BALLOT: Am I allowed to speak.

23

24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: We're about to close  
25 up but if you have something you can go ahead.

26

27 MR. BALLOT: Well, Mr. Chairman, you  
28 sent a notice to me and my village about this being a  
29 public meeting and the right to participate. I took it  
30 wholeheartedly to take my time and even call back to  
31 hear because I know how important the job and the  
32 responsibilities that this group does. I know Bobby  
33 Schaeffer. I know Michael. I know Barb. I've worked  
34 with them for 20 years. And I had a 98 percent record  
35 of making all my meetings and being in the know and  
36 hearing from people and getting to hear other people.  
37 So I took myself seriously there and I still do. I  
38 called because I was worried and a couple of times I  
39 think we might have started off the wrong way but I  
40 felt that I wasn't able to question some of the things  
41 that I wanted to ask because the Selawik Wildlife  
42 Refuge is -- Buckland is included in there. We have  
43 common interest in animals and stuff. And I hope that  
44 next year, Mr. Chairman, that when you have your agenda  
45 that you -- I hear you including to the RAC members  
46 only and that kind of -- I think you should be able to  
47 have a spot in there for questions from all those  
48 reports from the public. I did have a couple of  
49 questions. And no disrespect at all, I just want -- if  
50

0309

1 you're going to do your job fully then you should be  
2 hearing and if there's other people that have questions  
3 like I had, and I'll call -- just so people can ask my  
4 question -- but think about that for your next meeting.

5

6 Thank you.

7

8 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you. Duly  
9 noted. And no disrespect to you as well, Mr. Ballot,  
10 thank you for your time and your opinions.

11

12 So with that it is 5:40, I'd like to  
13 close up our winter meeting. Thank you, everyone who  
14 has participated. If you have any questions feel free  
15 to reach out to any of the agencies, or to OSM Staff  
16 and thanks everyone and have a safe winter.

17

18 MS. ATORUK: Motion to adjourn.

19

20 MR. HOWARTH: Second.

21

22 MS. ATORUK: Motion to -- aye.

23

24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Moved and seconded,  
25 all in favor please say aye.

26

27 IN UNISON: Aye.

28

29 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, everyone.

30

31 (Off record)

32

33 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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0310

1 C E R T I F I C A T E

2

3 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA )

4 ) ss.

5 STATE OF ALASKA )

6

7 I, Salena A. Hile, Notary Public in and for the  
8 state of Alaska and reporter for Computer Matrix Court  
9 Reporters, LLC, do hereby certify:

10

11 THAT the foregoing pages numbered \_\_\_\_ through  
12 \_\_\_\_ contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the  
13 NORTHWEST ARCTIC SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL  
14 MEETING, VOLUME II taken electronically on the 2nd day  
15 of November 2021;

16

17 THAT the transcript is a true and  
18 correct transcript requested to be transcribed and  
19 thereafter transcribed by under my direction and  
20 reduced to print to the best of our knowledge and  
21 ability;

22

23 THAT I am not an employee, attorney, or  
24 party interested in any way in this action.

25

26 DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 27th  
27 day of November 2021.

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Salena A. Hile  
Notary Public, State of Alaska  
My Commission Expires: 09/16/22