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NORTHWEST ARCTIC SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME I

Nullagvik Hotel
October 31, 2022
Kotzebue, Alaska
8:37 a.m

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Thomas Baker, Chairman
Elmer Armstrong
Vern Cleveland
Wilbur Howarth
Michael Kramer
Enoch Shiedt

Regional Council Coordinator, Lisa Hutchinson-
Scarborough

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0002

P R O C E E D I N G S

(Kotzebue, Alaska - 10/31/2022)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Well, it's now 8:37. I know that we have a couple members of the RAC that will be calling in here shortly but welcome everyone. My name is Thomas Baker, I'm the Chair of the RAC. We'll go ahead and get started. I'll call the meeting to order now at 8:37 a.m. Next, we'll do an invocation or a moment of silence, do we have anyone who'd like to volunteer for an invocation.

MS. SWEENEY: I don't want to volunteer but I just wanted to make sure that long time RAC member Percy Ballot, his wife passed away so maybe we could (indiscernible - no microphone)

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Brittany. And just a little bit of housekeeping, if you aren't at a microphone the folks on the phone won't hear you. Would you mind repeating that into a microphone.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: For you?

CHAIRMAN BAKER: I didn't hear everything she said so.

MS. SWEENEY: Good morning, Mr. Chair. Just a suggestion. This is Brittany Sweeney. I know Percy Ballot was a long time member of this Council and so I just -- you know, his wife passed away and I thought we could remember him and his family in our moment of silence.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Brittany. So with that in mind we'll now have a moment of silence.

(Moment of Silence)

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you. Next, we'll have the roll call and establish the quorum. Lisa.

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1 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Yes, Mr.
2 Chair. Enoch Shiedt.

3
4 MR. SHIEDT: Shiedt. Here. Attamuk.

5
6 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Attamuk.
7 Welcome. Thomas Baker.

8
9 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Here.

10
11 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Michael
12 Kramer.

13
14 (No comments)

15
16 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: So we know
17 Michael's going to be calling in in a little bit. He
18 was running a little bit late and he will be calling in
19 because he's not feeling well today. But he'll be --
20 he won't be here in person but he'll be participating.

21
22 Calvin Moto.

23
24 (No comments)

25
26 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Calvin, are
27 you online yet?

28
29 (No comments)

30
31 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Calvin
32 wasn't able to make it either but he was -- he's
33 planning on being here online when he can.

34
35 Wilbur Howarth.

36
37 MR. HOWARTH: Here.

38
39 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Bobby
40 Schaeffer -- Robert Schaeffer.

41
42 (No comments)

43
44 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Robert
45 might be excused too because he's out at his fish camp
46 and he's having -- he has just a satellite phone so
47 it's a little bit hard for him to call in. He wasn't
48 able to come in because of the weather conditions. I
49 think it was he couldn't get through on his
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0004

1 snowmachine, it's not kind of froze up yet so -- but
2 hopefully he'll be able to join us in a little bit.

3

4 Elmer Armstrong.

5

6 MR. ARMSTRONG: Here.

7

8 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Vern
9 Cleveland.

10

11 (No comments)

12

13 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Vern, were
14 you able to get online?

15

16 (No comments)

17

18 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Yeah, Vern
19 -- Vern was also not able to come in yesterday for
20 personal reasons so couldn't -- wasn't -- also wasn't
21 feeling well. So, Mr. Chair, we have four online [sic]
22 right now, we do not have a quorum at this point.

23

24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Lisa. So
25 we'll go ahead with what we can deal with and if it
26 comes to a vote or if a vote is needed we'll just have
27 to wait until we do have a quorum established.

28

29 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Okay. Mr.
30 Chair, I'd like to just make a comment for those pretty
31 much online. So just to say that this is good morning,
32 this is the Northwest Regional Advisory Council. And
33 if any way all of you -- just remind you, you probably
34 already signed in but if you could sign in again
35 tomorrow because we want to keep a record of who's here
36 and it also helps us with the spelling when we have to
37 do our minutes. For those of you joining on the
38 telephone, you can find the agenda and the meeting
39 materials online on the Federal Subsistence Program
40 website just by doing a Google of the Office of
41 Subsistence Management and then you hit on regions and
42 you go to the Northwest Arctic and you'll find the
43 meeting materials there. There's a book there and then
44 there's also supplemental materials available for you.

45

46 And, Mr. Chair, I'll turn it back over
47 to you. Thank you.

48

49 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Lisa. So

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0005

1 with that we'll move on to Item No. 4, welcome and
2 introductions. If I could have the members of the RAC
3 introduce themselves and we'll start with Attamuk.

4

5 MR. SHIEDT: Attamuk Shiedt, Kotzebue.

6

7 REPORTER: Enoch, turn your mic on.

8

9 MR. SHIEDT: Sorry. Attamuk Shiedt,
10 Kotzebue.

11

12 MR. ARMSTRONG: Elmer Armstrong, Jr.,
13 Noorvik.

14

15 MR. HOWARTH: Wilbur Howarth, Sr.,
16 Noorvik.

17

18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Do we have any RAC
19 members on the phone.

20

21 (No comments)

22

23 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, we'll go
24 ahead and move on to any tribal governments. Do we
25 have any tribal governments present that would like to
26 introduce themselves, or ANCSA Corporations.

27

28 MR. KIRK: Good morning. This is Robby
29 Kirk. I'm working with NANA in the Lands Department.

30

31 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Robby. Any
32 other tribal governments or ANCSA Corporations on the
33 phone.

34

35 (No comments)

36

37 CHAIRMAN BAKER: We'll move on to U.S.
38 Fish and Wildlife. Do we have Fish and Wildlife in the
39 room.

40

41 MR. WIESE: Will Wiese, Assistant
42 Manager, Selawik Wildlife Refuge.

43

44 MS. NELSON: Christina Nelson, Wildlife
45 Refuge Specialist, Kotzebue.

46

47 MS. SWEENEY: Good morning. I'm
48 Brittany Sweeney. I'm the Outreach Specialist at
49 Selawik Wildlife Refuge.

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1 MR. CARTER: Bill Carter, Fish
2 Biologist, Selawik National Wildlife Refuge.

3

4 MS. BROWN: Melissa Brown, Selawik Fish
5 and Wildlife. I'm a Resource Information Technician.

6

7 CHAIRMAN BAKER: And do we have anyone
8 with U.S. Fish and Wildlife on the phone.

9

10 MR. HANDER: Yes, this is Ray Hander.
11 I'm a Fish Biologist with the Northern Alaska Field
12 Office in Fairbanks. Thank you.

13

14 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right. Next will
15 be the National Park Service. If we have any Park
16 Service folks in the room.

17

18 MR. MCPADDEN: Good morning. Ray
19 McPadden, Superintendent Western Arctic National
20 Parklands.

21

22 MR. FRONSTIN: Good morning. Raime
23 Fronstin, Wildlife Biologist, Western Arctic.

24

25 MR. DALLE-MOLLE: Joe Dalle-Molle, the
26 District Law Enforcement Ranger for the National Park
27 Service based in Kotzebue.

28

29 MR. YOUNG: Good morning. Justin
30 Young, Acting Integrated Resources Manager for Western
31 Arctic National Parklands in Kotzebue.

32

33 MS. FLOREY: Good morning. I'm
34 Victoria Florey. I'm a Subsistence Program Analyst out
35 of the Anchorage Regional Office, National Park
36 Service.

37

38 MS. LOON: (In Native) Hannah Loon
39 representing Selawik. I think I'm on RAC -- am I --
40 okay.

41

42 CHAIRMAN BAKER: And do we have anyone
43 from the Park Service on the phone.

44

45 MS. PATTON: Good morning everyone.....

46

47 MS. FRONSTIN: Good morning every --
48 oh, sorry, go ahead.

49

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1 MS. PATTON: No, go ahead.

2

3 MS. FRONSTIN: My name's Martha
4 Fronstin and I am Compliance and Research Permitting
5 for Western Arctic National Parklands in Kotzebue.

6

7 MS. PATTON: And, good morning, Mr.
8 Chair and Council members. This is Eva Patton now with
9 the National Park Service, Subsistence Program Manager
10 here in Anchorage. It's good to hear your voices and
11 (indiscernible - interference) good morning.

12

13 MR. KRAMER: Good morning, this is
14 Michael Kramer, RAC member.

15

16 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you for joining
17 Mike. Moving on from.....

18

19 MR. JOLY: Mr. Chair. This is.....

20

21 SEVERAL PEOPLE TRYING TO TALK

22

23 MR. JOLY:Kyle Joly. I'm a
24 Wildlife Biologist for Park Service.

25

26 MR. DOWDLE: Good morning, Mr. Chair
27 and members of the Council. This is Mark Dowdle,
28 Superintendent, Gates of the Arctic National Park and
29 Preserve.

30

31 MS. BRAEM: Good morning. This is
32 Nikki Braem, Cultural Anthropologist at Bering
33 LandBridge National Preserve down here in Nome.

34

35 MS. OKADA: Good morning. This is
36 Marcy Okada, Subsistence Coordinator for Gates of the
37 Arctic National Park and Preserve based out of
38 Fairbanks. Thank you.

39

40 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Do we have anyone else
41 from the Park Service on the phone.

42

43 MR. GUSSEY: Good morning. This is
44 Walker Gussey with the Bureau of Land Management out of
45 Anchorage.

46

47 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you. Do we have
48 anyone else with BLM.

49

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1 (No comments)

2

3

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Do we have anyone from
4 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in the room.

5

6

MS. URQUIA: Good morning. My name's
7 Morgan Urquia with the Division of Subsistence, Fish
8 and Game.

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1 MS. HYER: Good morning. Karen Hyer,
2 Fisheries Biologist with the Office of Subsistence
3 Management.
4

5 MS. PERRY: Good morning, everyone.
6 DeAnna Perry. I'm actually with the Forest Service
7 working with Office of Subsistence Management. Good
8 morning.
9

10 MR. KRON: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
11 Tom Kron. I'm here representing the OSM Leadership
12 Team to help. Thank you.
13

14 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Tom, can I ask you to
15 hit that button so we don't get too much feedback.
16 Thank you, sir. Do we have any other agencies in the
17 room or on the phone at this time.
18

19 MR. FRALEY: Hey, good morning. This is
20 Kevin Fraley, Fisheries Ecologist for the Wildlife
21 Conservation Society based out of Fairbanks.
22

23 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Anyone else before we
24 move on.
25

26 (No comments)
27

28 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, thank you,
29 welcome everyone.
30

31 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Yes, Mr.
32 Chair, this is Lisa Hutchinson-Scarbrough. I'm the
33 Council Coordinator for your Council. And I just had
34 one housekeeping thing to add to the -- to let
35 everybody know. That I'd like to also remind folks
36 that there will be a time for tribal and public comment
37 on non-agenda items. The Chair will announce this each
38 morning and that will be an opportunity for those
39 present as well as those participating on the phone to
40 speak on non-agenda items, which is on Item -- Agenda
41 Item No. 9.
42

43 If you would like to address the
44 Council during the meeting, for folks in the room,
45 please fill out a testifier form that you will find on
46 the front table, it's in blue, and then just give that
47 to me at some point and so the Chair will know that you
48 want to speak. This helps us keep track of anyone
49 who'd like to speak regarding specific agenda items.
50

0010

1 One of the main purposes of our meeting
2 is to encourage and promote local participation in the
3 decisionmaking process affecting subsistence harvest on
4 Federal public lands and we want to make sure that you
5 keep track of those and how you would like to address
6 the Council. If you're on the phone and you want to
7 speak, just say Mr. Chair and wait to be recognized by
8 the Chair before you speak. And also for those of you
9 participating on the phone please remember to mute your
10 phone when you are not speaking. If you do not have a
11 mute button on your phone you can press star, six, and
12 that will mute your phone and then star, six to talk.
13 Anyway, that's -- thank you for allowing me this time
14 to share this information, Mr. Chair, and it's back to
15 you.

16
17 Thank you.

18
19 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Lisa. And,
20 again, I'd just like to recognize that Mike Kramer is
21 on the phone so we do have five members of the RAC
22 participating so I believe we now have a quorum. We'll
23 move on to Item No. 5, review and adoption of the
24 agenda. Is there any changes, recommendations for
25 changes to the agenda.

26
27 MR. HOWARTH: I so move, Mr. Chair, to
28 adopt the agenda as presented.

29
30 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Mr.
31 Howarth. So we have a motion, do we have a second.

32
33 MR. SHIEDT: I'll second it.

34
35 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Seconded by.....

36
37 MR. KRAMER: This is Michael, second.

38
39 CHAIRMAN BAKER:Attamuk. Can I
40 get a roll call please, Lisa.

41
42 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Enoch
43 Shiedt.

44
45 MR. SHIEDT: Attamuk. Yes.

46
47 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Do you
48 prefer to be going by -- go by Attamuk.

49
50

0011

1 MR. SHIEDT: Always and will be.

2

3 (Laughter)

4

5 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Okay.

6

7 Thomas Baker.

8

9 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes.

10

11 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Michael

12 Kramer.

13

14 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

15

16 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Calvin

17 Moto.

18

19 (No comments)

20

21 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Wilbur

22 Howarth.

23

24 MR. HOWARTH: Yes.

25

26 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Robert

27 Schaeffer.

28

29 (No comments)

30

31 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Elmer

32 Armstrong.

33

34 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

35

36 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Vern

37 Cleveland.

38

39 (No comments)

40

41 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Mr. Chair,
42 we have five present.

43

44 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Lisa. So
45 with that we will go ahead and adopt the agenda as
46 presented and move on to reviewing and approving the
47 previous meeting minutes. Do we have any recommended
48 changes or amendments to the minutes or would we like
49 to approve our previous meeting minutes from the winter
50

0012

1 meeting of February 14 and 15, 2022.

2

3 (No comments)

4

5 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Do we have a motion to
6 approve the previous meeting minutes.

7

8 MR. ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair. I make a
9 motion to approve the previous meeting minutes.

10

11 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Moved by Mr.
12 Armstrong. Do we have a second.

13

14 MR. HOWARTH: Second, Mr. Chair.

15

16 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Seconded by Mr.
17 Howarth. For this one all those in favor of approving
18 the previous meeting minutes please say aye.

19

20 IN UNISON: Aye.

21

22 CHAIRMAN BAKER: And those opposed same
23 sign.

24

25 (No opposing votes)

26

27 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So with that we will
28 approve the previous meeting minutes of February 14 and
29 15, 2022. We will move on to reports. So at this time
30 I'd like to ask Mr. Michael Kramer, since he's the only
31 person on the phone from the RAC if you wouldn't mind
32 giving your Council member report at this time, Mike.

33

34 MR. KRAMER: Okay. Good morning
35 everybody, my name's Michael Kramer. I've been on the
36 RAC for quite some time. A lot of things that I
37 noticed this year, you know, we've been hit pretty
38 hard, our caribou herd has been hit pretty hard. A lot
39 of people this year were asking me out of Noatak where
40 the caribou were, why aren't they coming down. The
41 Kobuk didn't get any late so -- I mean didn't get any
42 until late October, and Ambler, Shungnak, I haven't
43 heard of anybody from Kiana getting any, and there's
44 still people around Kiana that haven't seen anything to
45 (indiscernible - garbled).

46

47 I got a lot of complaints on bears and
48 wolves. I work at a local airline here and I would run
49 into the floaters and trans -- you know, people who

50

0013

1 were out hunting and they said they'd never been
2 harassed by bears and wolves so bad that, you know,
3 they had to have a fire going all night and had to have
4 somebody up all night, you know, protecting the place
5 where they were staying where -- people had to deal
6 with a lot of wolves and bears as they were hunting.

7
8 Everything else, you know, it looks
9 like everybody had a good oogruk spring season. I seen
10 some people got some belugas. And a bunch of people
11 got a bunch of seal this year. As for moose, I haven't
12 really heard much about moose. I'm hoping to hear the
13 moose count for the Lower Kobuk Delta that they did
14 this spring, I believe.

15
16 Our caribou herd's been hit pretty
17 hard.

18
19 This year I've noticed not quite high
20 volume of hunters coming in and out, you know, compared
21 to the last several years. Usually we used to average
22 between 30 to 40 gun cases a day -- a flight, but this
23 year it was -- I talked to several people and they said
24 that, you know, they didn't come up here because they
25 were afraid of a Federal closure or a State closure. I
26 wonder if the caribou herd's been migrating farther
27 east to do their calving. I haven't heard if there's
28 been any other change. I have had a lot of people that
29 were real concerned about our caribou herd, the
30 numbers, people ask me about the numbers. I said we
31 won't probably be able to find out until our fall or
32 winter meeting.

33
34 A lot of people I talked to regarding
35 berries, you know, and other plant life, they said it
36 was a very good year for harvesting a lot of that
37 stuff. A lot of people got some salmon this year.

38
39 Other than that I'm not really too sure
40 if there's anything else.

41
42 Thank you.

43
44 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you for that,
45 Mike. Before we move on to the folks in the room, do
46 we have any other RAC members that have called in that
47 haven't been recognized.

48
49 (No comments)
50

0014

1 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, Attamuk,
2 would you like to go next.

3

4 MR. SHIEDT: Okay. Good morning all.
5 Attamuk here. This summer start -- I'll start from
6 this summer that oogruk wasn't great as it used to be
7 due to the way the ice conditions were but the few
8 people did get their catch. And the fish came -- the
9 salmon came in late. They came in but they were late,
10 that's what they usually do right around just before
11 July comes around -- the first catch we used to get at
12 Sisualik, we didn't get them until late.

13

14 And the berries were -- blueberries
15 were scarce for the whole Northwest Alaska. But there
16 were a lot of salmonberries at (In Native), but the
17 wind conditions to tell you the truth, we have -- due
18 to global warming we have a lot of bad winds here in
19 Northwest Alaska and it's really bad. You have to be
20 careful or you have to have the better boats now days
21 to go out there to go -- just to go home with. I had a
22 close call, it was rough for my little boat going home
23 but -- and went to camp, never seen this before, where
24 right at the beach I had bear tracks over a foot wide.
25 It's more like a migration route of caribou, but this
26 is the first time I even see narrow tracks on the
27 beach, these were over a foot wide, how many bear
28 tracks and I followed them down and up and they went
29 quite away. So they were scrounging. And I know
30 there's no caribou for them to get to, or anything else
31 so they were -- they were hungry, you could tell that.
32 You could tell. I mean when you see them they -- and
33 we saw some they were skinny. And back to the bears,
34 you know, we have numbers in high. As I was growing up
35 in Noatak we used to -- the elders used to like to get
36 them in April when they first get out of the den. The
37 reason why they take bears at that time is due to the
38 fat, that only one of our resources at that time of the
39 year that had fat in them, the rest of the caribou,
40 anything else, they're getting lean for the summer.
41 When the bears first come out they will be fat. That's
42 why we -- they used to like to get them and we used to
43 get them for the elders and they used to love to eat
44 that fat because when you put it away good it's good
45 for you.

46

47 And this is one year I did not see any
48 sheep from my camp at Aggi, I usually see some. But
49 it's different, I mean it's -- salmon were going up

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0015

1 there late, but the unusual part is what I noticed is
2 our trout were coming in more in numbers at our camp
3 than the salmon. That's the second year now they did
4 that. Trout came in earlier. First -- more than
5 salmon -- a lot of salmon but like we say they were
6 coming in late but they come in strong.

7
8 They got some belugas this year, which
9 is good for the people. In our culture we used to get
10 it but Kotzebue changing, we used to herd them and
11 harvest them, we don't do that anymore, it's first
12 come, first serve basis due to Kotzebue's getting too
13 large, you can't control the hunters anymore. We don't
14 go to our traditional where we harvest and we have one
15 person as a captain for the whole lot of boats that are
16 out there. They don't do that anymore, we tried it
17 once, it didn't work. So I tell my son they don't
18 know, it's first come, first serve. I got my catch,
19 which I was thankful for.

20
21 And, caribou, I started getting calls
22 that they were scarce. But if you want to talk about
23 the caribou, you people that are in the office,
24 anthropologist and everything, you have to start
25 worrying about caribou just before the migration from
26 north, that's where the beginning of the caribou
27 begins. Caribou, when they want to migrate, that's
28 where we should worry about how the numbers are at,
29 North Slope, it's in the calving, and that's where it
30 is and they migrate, but if it's too warm, they're not
31 going to come. You got to understand that all the
32 resources know the weather better than me and you.
33 I'll say that right now. It's over 70 years experience
34 as a harvester. I've been harvesting that -- and the
35 weather has a lot to do with -- even with fish. So the
36 global warming is affecting us big time. There's
37 nothing you could really do except unless you could
38 control the stacks down where it's coming up from the
39 other side of the world that's coming up this way. And
40 that's what is scaring me. Our people depend heavily
41 on caribou but if they keep going down, the numbers,
42 I'm getting scared they might limit us. Much I hate to
43 say this, but it's the truth, we, the Natives, are part
44 of the fault, because it's not us, it's -- our
45 population is increasing.

46
47 Years ago when I was younger there was
48 hardly any -- our population was low in numbers but our
49 population increased so we're getting more. The land
50

0016

1 could only provide so much for us and it can't do no
2 more than what it could do. We got to understand --
3 like migratory birds and anything else, we have to try
4 to find out how much of our resources could our land
5 take, depended on heavily. Sure you people that are
6 anthropologists and stuff like that, sure you know a
7 lot, but talk to the Natives because we are here, we
8 are the eyes of the north and we see our resources and
9 we worry about them as elders because that's our diet.
10 We are people in season. We start from geese, we start
11 craving for geese when they are coming. When different
12 resources are coming our bodies will crave it. If we
13 have it once we're happy. If we get more, better for
14 us.

15
16 And I will say that the reason why I'm
17 saying this now -- I'm having boiler problems, if my
18 wife calls, I'm out the door.

19
20 So I want to say it now, you have to
21 start worrying about our resources, how much could our
22 land take. And if it start keeping up -- keep having
23 fires and there's no food for our caribou, the lichens
24 take forever to grow, we know that. They not only live
25 on lichen they live on the others, but some years they
26 don't grow in numbers.

27
28 So -- and there are so many bears right
29 now and I think what we need to do is some how we
30 always talk about it that we need to open the season
31 for bears but I tell you one thing, we need to do
32 something. They're not only taking our resources,
33 they're destroying our camps. I got broken down last
34 year but I got lucky, did not destroy anything in my
35 house, he just went in there, opened the door, get a
36 couple things, but the bear was -- table manners -- he
37 went outside and eat it.

38
39 (Laughter)

40
41 MR. SHIEDT: I couldn't believe it, he
42 went out -- he take the sugar and the syrup and what
43 little cans we got if there's an emergency, somebody
44 break in, they need to survive we leave them there, he
45 take them out and he eat them all, he didn't eat
46 inside. Because I always tell him -- and this is what
47 those elders always tell us, when you talk to the
48 bears, that if you leave me alone, I'll leave you alone
49 and I won't shoot you unless I have to. You respect my
50

0017

1 camp, I will respect you as a resource.

2

3 And they always worry about wolves,
4 that we need to worry about wolves and beavers, but no
5 matter what resources we have and we don't like them,
6 we want to go after beavers, we want to go after
7 wolves, we want to go after bears, but respect them
8 when they have their young, let them have a chance to
9 rear their young. That's the cycle of life. Remember
10 that now. Just because they're young -- you don't like
11 bears, you don't kill the small ones. That's why I'm
12 saying that, and I wanted to hear -- because the way my
13 health is going, this might be my last meeting, as much
14 as I hate to quit. But old body's getting to be --
15 it's getting old. So I could say that.

16

17 And, please, start worrying about the
18 caribou when they start going, the young, because our
19 people live on caribou heavily. This is a bad year.
20 My boy got some. He didn't want to give up, so he
21 stayed at Onion Portage for two weeks, a little over
22 two weeks. He hauled over 25 to Kiana, gave them all
23 away. He came home with 15. But he gave himself one
24 and he gave me one. He gave the rest away. I mean I'm
25 still getting calls, they want meat, and I tell them,
26 okay, then I'll sell you my meat if you send me some
27 steaks, fair trade, which is true. Caribou's our
28 steaks. But we can't afford to go -- that's what I
29 told them, and some guy said, you're just being stingy,
30 I said no I'm not being stingy, it's a fair trade.
31 Because when my boy was going, me and him together,
32 just to buy gas, over three drums of gas because he had
33 to go to Kiana to get more gas because he hauled some
34 caribou to Kiana and went back to Onion Portage, that's
35 what I'm saying, it costs us money. And that's about
36 all I have to say. Because I am a caribou guy and I
37 won't live without caribou but I am going to hurt
38 because I think we're going to hurt because our numbers
39 are low, we could tell.

40

41 Okay, thank you all.

42

43 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Attamuk.
44 Elmer, would you like to go next.

45

46 MR. ARMSTRONG: Well, in early July I
47 was able to set my salmon net, which was good. We were
48 able to put away salmon for the freezer. During that
49 same time, too, people were noticing bears were going
50

0018

1 to their fish racks. Even one ate pretty good on dried
2 salmon and then he swam across the river to the village
3 side and someone just caught a moose so he had salmon
4 and then he swam across and ate good on moose so we had
5 bear problems right at the village.

6
7 And I've been working all summer up to
8 September, night shift, so my hunting -- moose hunting
9 was a few days, you know, when I had a day off, but I
10 was night shift, so I had to try to make it work out
11 because my wife, she really wanted to go berry picking,
12 moose hunting, just had to work.

13
14 But through media, I'm glad to see that
15 people caught caribou right before it freeze. They
16 were late. It was good to see through media that
17 Kotzebue were able to catch beluga. Through media I
18 saw my friends catch moose, which was good. I went out
19 a few times for moose but I think I might have to wait
20 for November moose.

21
22 Other than that, I caught some sheefish
23 too in my salmon net which was good. Probably one
24 trout. Big -- one of those big ones because my mesh is
25 pretty big.

26
27 That's all I have to report, thank you.

28
29 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Elmer.
30 Wilbur, would you like to go next.

31
32 MR. HOWARTH: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
33 had a -- pretty much a good season.

34
35 Starting with the spring, we got our
36 whitefish in our net. We didn't catch the pike, the
37 (In Native) we call them, and that's one of our
38 favorite, mine, anyway. They came out late this
39 spring. We didn't get them. But otherwise the summer,
40 the salmon was good. The fish are healthy. All fish
41 looks nice, they're healthy. I think we're -- the
42 region is doing real good with fish, so it's whitefish,
43 it's salmon, it's the pike, everything, they're nice
44 and healthy. But I am worried about this pretty water
45 that's coming out of the salmon, I want to hear some of
46 that later on. I think our people that are
47 investigating this different color water coming out of
48 the Salmon River is going to be interesting because I
49 went right by it and it was pretty. To me, the
50

0019

1 different color of water coming out of the Salmon River
2 is something that I haven't seen before and that was
3 just this fall going up toward Onion Portage.

4
5 Caribou, we don't see them in the
6 Noorvik area. They got a few, maybe a herd of 50, 40
7 that went by. They were along the Kobuk Lake area.
8 There's one caribou that was shot and it had a lot of
9 puss, green between the skin and the meat. There was a
10 lot of green and pussy stuff that I wish I had pictures
11 taken of that caribou, and there was another one up in
12 the Onion Portage area that had puss coming out of the
13 tongue. And that's one of the favorite parts of our
14 caribou, is the tongue. We take the tongue, we take
15 the heart, the liver and the kidneys and stuff like
16 that. But we saw puss coming out of the back part of
17 the tongue which I tried to get a hold of the guy that
18 called me over and said this caribou is sick. And I
19 just tell him, you know, don't take it home. I wish I
20 took pictures of that caribou that got -- was sick and
21 I didn't. So I tell some of the hunters that were
22 there, they're all young -- younger than myself. I
23 say, if you find something -- sick caribou or
24 something, take a picture or give me a call or send it
25 down here to Kotzebue because I can't store it for them
26 at my place at home, but the caribou was way up there
27 Onion Portage area and beyond.

28
29 The moose was good. The past two years
30 the moose was plentiful. A couple years ago I seen
31 them, a mother with two, and it's always a mother with
32 two. I never -- probably seen one female moose with
33 only one -- there's always two. So the past couple
34 years in the Delta below Noorvik I've seen a lot of
35 moose, so the moose was good the past two years. But I
36 am, myself, as boating all the time in subsistence I
37 seen a lot of moose. So the moose, I think, are doing
38 fine, but there's lots of bears. And the bears this
39 year was even charging a boater coming in to pick
40 berries. If you're coming up in an area to pick
41 berries, well, July, and they even post on FaceBook
42 this bear coming right at them, right through the
43 grasses and right, slapping the water, you know, the
44 bears, there's a lot of aggressive bears this year.
45 There's lots of those. And the bears are smart. They
46 tore up my net. They'll eat the fish out of my net.
47 They're hungry. There's just so much bears, you have
48 to watch your net when you subsist, you have to be
49 there at camp all the time. You can't just leave a net
50

0020

1 miles away from your area, the bears will get them.

2

3 But anyway, the fish are good.

4

5 Caribou is -- I know they're going
6 down. My son got caribou. I have caribou. So he gave
7 away to elders. And I always tell him don't get any
8 more, I'll stop him when we have enough caribou because
9 a family, my size, there's six of us in the family, and
10 four caribou is enough for the whole year, and I always
11 tell my son that's enough. When you get four caribou,
12 that's good. The caribou herd is going down, we're not
13 going to hunt this spring, or anybody. And young men
14 now, now days, if you teach them right they'll listen,
15 and I'm glad my son is doing that. Because I know the
16 caribou is going down and we have to respect that.

17

18 And there's lots of you, and I'm
19 thankful you're all here and I'm going to really get
20 lots of good information from our biologists and what's
21 going on with the warming. I know that the fish cannot
22 live without oxygen and the changing of our waters and
23 warmth, or -- of all waters, our fish ain't really
24 going to be around. But I want to hear lots about this
25 global, that's the most worrisome going on right now
26 with what we subsist and live with, is changing now,
27 and I am so glad that you all are here. It's good to
28 see people in the room. We haven't had a meeting with
29 hardly anybody.

30

31 And, welcome, Susan Georgette, I see
32 you made it, good to see you.

33

34 MS. GEORGETTE: Thank you.

35

36 MR. HOWARTH: That's all, thank you,
37 Mr. Chair.

38

39 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur. Do
40 we have any other RAC members that have called in that
41 haven't been recognized yet.

42

43 (No comments)

44

45 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, I will
46 go ahead and give my Chair's report.

47

48 MR. CLEVELAND: Yeah, this is Vern, I
49 just called in.

50

0021

1 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Is that Calvin Moto?

2

3 (No comments)

4

5 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Calvin Moto?

6

7 MR. CLEVELAND: Hello.

8

9 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Good morning, Calvin.
10 So right now we're under reports so if you'd like to
11 give your Council member report on subsistence in your
12 area.

13

14 (No comments)

15

16 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Can you hear us all
17 right, or are you muted Calvin.

18

19 (No comments)

20

21 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Well, Calvin, if you
22 can hear us, we can't hear you. I will go ahead and
23 give my Chair's report so we can keep moving and if you
24 can try to get through we'll get back to your report
25 when we can hear you.

26

27 So as far as Kotzebue with the seal and
28 oogruk season.....

29

30 MR. CLEVELAND: Hello. Hello. Mr.
31 Chair.

32

33 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes.

34

35 MR. CLEVELAND: Yeah, this is Vern, I
36 called in too. Thank you.

37

38 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Vern
39 Cleveland. If you wouldn't mind giving your Council
40 member report on how subsistence in your area has been
41 this year.

42

43 MR. CLEVELAND: Okay, thank you, Mr.
44 Chair. Pretty much listening to these folks from
45 different villages. But our count on the caribou, you
46 all know that they are down. Everyone pretty much
47 knows that caribou are down again this year, a lower
48 count than last year. And we pretty much nailed
49 everything, you know, the outside hunters, we get their
50

0022

1 counts, we get everybody's counts, but what about us,
2 us subsistence hunters. What do we do with our count?
3 Where does it go? How many caribou did we get? Where
4 does the count go? We got to start getting our people,
5 subsistence hunters to report at least maybe to our
6 IRAs, or the city office, and just put the count in
7 there, that way we know how many caribou per person get
8 or per village gets, that one is lost, we don't have
9 that count. We got outside hunters count. Everybody's
10 count, except us hunters that are subsisting. I know
11 we get -- yeah, I get five, four, you know, like that,
12 but we need the counts, accurate counts from each
13 village that way we know where and why, when, how much
14 we get. We need that count, please, we need everybody
15 to put their minds to where we going to put our count.
16 I brought this up to our executive director, Glenn Skin
17 here in Noorvik and we got to get something going,
18 either way, that way we can have an accurate count of
19 how many do we get, per year, per hunt. Everybody's
20 got to start reporting sometime because the count is
21 low now, it's down to 164 from 188. So we have to do
22 something -- somebody's got to be accountable for this,
23 you know. We blame the outside hunters, they're the
24 ones that are doing this and that but I would say what
25 about us hunters, us subsistence hunters, what do we --
26 where do we put our count? We need this count from
27 each village. It's very important because right now
28 our tutu, what we strive to live on and we want tutu
29 but there's no tutu so we -- please we need a count
30 from each -- at least each village and how many caribou
31 they get, everything. With no questions asked, just
32 get to the IRAs or -- and just put in a count of how
33 many caribou you get daily, that way it's very
34 important for us, for -- that didn't see caribou or
35 didn't hunt. I sure didn't hunt. My son took over.
36 And just might as well be a butcher. But, you know,
37 it's true that we have to help each other, each and
38 every one of us, if we get tutu at least let somebody
39 know, you know, the agencies, they pretty much tied up
40 on that.

41

42 So I think we're on radio and everyone
43 could hear, I mean they heard.

44

45 (In Native)

46

47 MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

48

49 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you for that

50

0023

1 Vern. Calvin, are you back with us yet?

2

3 (No comments)

4

5 MR. SHIEDT: For the record do you want
6 me to translate what he said?

7

8 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, please, Attamuk
9 if you wouldn't mind.

10

11 MR. SHIEDT: Yeah, what he said is our
12 numbers are down which we hear him, but he said it in
13 English. But what he was saying is he needs survey
14 done how much we are taking, our harvesters are taking.
15 He said it in English but I wanted to -- that way the
16 crowd won't wonder what he said, to be fair to
17 everybody. When somebody's talking Eskimo I could
18 translate, or Hannah's here, she could translate
19 better.

20

21 Go ahead Hannah.

22

23 MS. LOON: (In Native) What he is
24 saying that because our population has gone down to
25 164,000 for the Western Arctic Herd, of which we don't
26 know why that became low, that he is asking people to
27 work together in the communities to report their
28 harvest to the tribal IRA and that we must work
29 together.

30

31 Taikuu.

32

33 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Hannah and
34 Attamuk. Calvin Motto, are you back online with us.

35

36 (No comments)

37

38 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Okay. So with that I
39 will ask if there's any other RAC members that have
40 called in that haven't been recognized yet.

41

42 (No comments)

43

44 CHAIRMAN BAKER: And hearing none, I
45 will go ahead and do my Chair's report and if we do
46 have anybody call in from the Council we'll go ahead
47 and do their report at that time.

48

49 So starting with oogruk and seal this

50

0024

1 spring in Kotzebue, ice conditions were such that there
2 were animals to be harvested, it was just pretty
3 difficult to get through the ice in spots to actually
4 get to them and successfully harvest any animals.
5 Kotzebue folks were successful on the whole.

6
7 Moving from that season into salmon, on
8 the commercial side of things I want to say we had just
9 over 4.1 million pounds of salmon commercially caught
10 in Kotzebue and flown out of town. The trend that I
11 seemed to see was a lot of commercial fishermen would
12 catch whatever they got for the day and then rather
13 than selling the whole batch they would let people know
14 I have salmon if you want fresh salmon come down to the
15 harbor, the dock, and take some salmon home with you,
16 and not as many people setting specifically,
17 subsistence nets, so much as there was enough salmon
18 being caught in the commercial boats that people were
19 able to share what they caught.

20
21 Icefishing, sheefish this spring was
22 all right, we've had better years.

23
24 Moving into the fall, a lot of folks
25 from Kotzebue went up to Onion Portage and as we've
26 heard there were some people that stuck it out and were
27 able to harvest and come back with meat, not a whole
28 lot of people were able to stay that long just because
29 of weather conditions. I know a lot of the people that
30 were successful were dodging ice on the way home coming
31 down river and it seemed like a lot of people have
32 shifted to focusing on trying to get moose because
33 we've had pretty good moose numbers in the last year or
34 two to try and offset the lack of caribou.

35
36 As far as what I've seen and heard from
37 the outside hunters coming into the region, with the
38 Federal closures that we've seen over the last season,
39 a lot of folks were being brought out to the hills and
40 mountains behind Point Hope and getting weathered in or
41 weathered out. I know the Coast Guard had to go and
42 pick up at least one group where some folks got
43 hypothermia because it was snowing, and snowed about
44 two feet in the mountains that they were hunting in.
45 And not as many hunters as Mike brought up, coming from
46 out of region just because of the Federal closures and
47 what not, but we still had some pretty steadily coming
48 through throughout the whole hunting season. With the
49 early snow that we had in the more remote parts of the
50

0025

1 game unit we had less hunters coming in for as long
2 just because it started snowing up in the mountains and
3 up north pretty early this year.

4
5 That's what I have.

6
7 I heard a couple beeps, do we have any
8 RAC members that have called in and haven't been
9 recognized yet.

10
11 (No comments)

12
13 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So with that I will
14 conclude my Chair's report and we will move on to Item
15 No. 8, Service Awards.

16
17 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Okay, Mr.
18 Chair. Members of the Council. And public. This is
19 Lisa, the Council Coordinator. And at this time we
20 would like to recognize two of your Council members for
21 their years of service to the Bristol Bay [sic]
22 Council. OSM and the Federal.....

23
24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Northwest Arctic.

25
26 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: I'm sorry?

27
28 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Northwest Arctic.

29
30 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Did I say
31 Bristol Bay?

32
33 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes.

34
35 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Well, you
36 guys just got promoted to -- I'm sorry, maybe I should
37 change my script -- anyway to the Northwest Arctic
38 Council. Anyway, for every five years of service we
39 provide you with a recognition of appreciation. And so
40 as part of the Council -- is an important role to
41 advocate for subsistence hunting, trapping and fishing
42 issues on Federal public lands. Council members not --
43 knowledge about the resources and subsistence uses make
44 them -- you a valuable member to the Council.

45
46 So Michael Kramer today is being
47 awarded the 10 year service award. I'm sorry Michael
48 can't be here in person, we could present it to him
49 tomorrow if we can show up.
50

0026

1 And then Attamuk Shiedt, Sr., you were
2 acknowledged during the fall 2021 RAC meeting for your
3 20 years of remarkable service. However, it was on the
4 phone and we never really acknowledged you in person
5 and gave you your certificate so we wanted to
6 reacknowledge you again and present that to you today
7 because you really deserve it and we certainly hope
8 that you choose to stay on the Council a few more
9 years.

10

11 The work all of you do provides a vital
12 link between Federal policy and the impact of local
13 Federally-qualified subsistence users from your region,
14 and we wanted to thank you both to share -- and share
15 our utmost appreciation for the time that you have
16 served on the Council and your continuation of serving
17 on the Council. So today I'm going to ask Tom Kron,
18 he's with the OSM -- he's our Statewide Support
19 Division Chief, to do the honors of presenting the
20 awards, and afterwards, Mr. Chair and other members,
21 you're welcome to chime in and add your acknowledgement
22 as well to these Councilmen.

23

24 Okay, Tom.

25

26 MR. KRON: Thank you, Lisa. Thank you,
27 Mr. Chair. We'll start with our Chair -- or excuse me,
28 we'll start with Michael Kramer.

29

30 Michael was appointed to the Council in
31 2010 and has served many of those years as Vice Chair
32 and Chair. He's lived in Kotzebue most of his life and
33 grew up within a family that practiced subsistence and
34 loved participating. Much of his knowledge of fish and
35 wildlife resources was taught to him by his grandmother
36 and elders in the community. He continues to be active
37 and teaches his sons and other children of friends what
38 he knows about hunting and fishing and gathering. Mr.
39 Kramer also is active in his community serving as a
40 volunteer firefighter with search and rescue for over
41 20 years and has held seats on the Kotzebue Fish and
42 Game Advisory Committee. He also works as an assistant
43 hunting guide and worked in commercial fisheries.
44 While Mr. Kramer has been on the Northwest Regional
45 Advisory Council, he's been an effective contributor
46 and leader and the Federal Subsistence Program and
47 Northwest Regional Advisory Council would like to
48 acknowledge and heartedly thank him for his 12 years of
49 service and today we serve him a 10 year award. We
50

0027

1 hope Michael continues to serve for many years into the
2 future.

3

4 Let's give him a round of applause.

5

6 (Applause)

7

8 MR. KRAMER: Thank you everybody.
9 Thank you everybody. It's been a pleasure and it's
10 always fun.

11

12 MR. KRON: So I'll just take a minute
13 and ask if anyone else would like to add to what i've
14 provide.d Thank you.

15

16 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair.

17

18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Wilbur.

19

20 MR. HOWARTH: Thank you, Mike, you're
21 doing a great job. We'll see you maybe tomorrow at the
22 table.

23

24 MR. KRAMER: Yes, I'm hoping to be
25 there. Thank you all.

26

27 MR. HOWARTH: Thank you, Mike for your
28 service on this.....

29

30 (Cell phone ringing)

31

32 MR. HOWARTH:uh-huh.

33

34 MR. SHIEDT: Attamuk here, Michael.
35 Thanks for your calls and asking for advice and
36 everything else and what needs to be done for the best
37 of the people. And I thank you for your services where
38 you provide when you serve as needed, and i thank you
39 so much for your service. Thank you, Mike, and when I
40 need your help you're always there. Thank you.

41

42 MR. KRAMER: Yep, thank you.

43

44 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yeah, Mike, this is
45 Thomas Baker. And just echoing everyone else, thank
46 you for all the years that you've put in and the
47 knowledge that you've gathered. It's been a real
48 pleasure to work with you and to know that I will get
49 to continue to work with you on the RAC and around the
50

0028

1 community so thank you for everything that you've put
2 in.

3

4 MR. KRAMER: Thank you, everybody.

5

6 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, please, Brittany.
7 If you wouldn't mind just introducing yourself for the
8 record Brittany.

9

10 MS. SWEENEY: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
11 This is Brittany Sweeney with the Fish and Wildlife
12 Service here in Kotzebue. I just wanted to add on a
13 thank you to Mr. Kramer as well. So I'm a resident
14 here in Kotzebue as well so I've seen Mike around town,
15 at the airport, in different locations, and he's
16 talking with people about the issues, sharing
17 information from the meetings and then, you know,
18 getting people's input. And so, you know, I just
19 appreciate that he shares that information in the
20 community because, you know, it just goes beyond just
21 who's in the room for the meetings, but Mike does try
22 to represent and play a role with getting information
23 out and getting information back. So thank you, Mike,
24 for doing that.

25

26 MR. KRAMER: Thank you.

27

28 MR. ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair. Thank you,
29 Mike. I know I've been on for two years but it's
30 always good to hear from you with the information that
31 you give out and I'm glad that we get to work together
32 on subsistence issues and I look forward to working
33 with you again.

34

35 Thank you.

36

37 MR. KRAMER: Thank you, Elmer.

38

39 MR. KRON: Yeah, Mr. Chair. Again,
40 thank you very much, Mike, for your service to the
41 Federal Subsistence Management Program, your service
42 here on the Northwest Arctic Council on behalf of the
43 Office of Subsistence Management.

44

45 Next we'd like to also recognize
46 Attamuk, Mr. Enoch Shiedt of Kotzebue for his service
47 on the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory
48 Council since 2001 as a subsistence user
49 representative. Mr. Shiedt has a lifetime of
50

0029

1 experience as a subsistence hunter and commercial
2 angler. He has lived in the Northwest Arctic region
3 for his entire life, at various times in Noorvik and
4 Noatak but mostly raised in the Kotzebue area. He
5 learned a subsistence lifestyle from his parents and
6 grandparents and recalls his grandpa telling him when
7 he was just nine years old that the warming trend will
8 eventually hurt his people.

9
10 Other users consider him one of the
11 most knowledgeable elders in Kotzebue when it comes to
12 subsistence. In addition to living a subsistence way
13 of life, Mr. Shiedt has held jobs with Native and State
14 organizations and served in volunteer positions
15 addressing the management of subsistence resources and
16 natural resources. For many years Mr. Shiedt worked as
17 a Natural Resource Coordinator for the Maniilaq
18 Association in Kotzebue and was a very effective
19 communicator with people in the community. Mr. Shiedt
20 advocates for subsistence users in the region, leads by
21 consensus and makes informed decisions based on
22 evidence. Mr. Shiedt knows the importance of working
23 with others and making sure that everyone's voice is
24 heard. Because Mr. Shiedt is a skilled communicator
25 and is bilingual, people frequently contact him with
26 subsistence concerns and to share information cross-
27 culturally.

28
29 He reminds us all that everyone plays
30 an important part in the stewardship of lands and
31 waters that provide for subsistence needs and other
32 uses. Mr. Shiedt is also one of the founding members
33 and incorporates with the Bering Sea Fishermen's
34 Association whose mission is to support healthy and
35 vibrant fishing communities by fostering greater
36 social, financial, and political capacity to assess the
37 sustainable development and protection of fisheries in
38 the Arctic, Yukon Kuskokwim and Bristol Bay regions of
39 Alaska. Mr. Shiedt received the longevity award from
40 the State of Alaska for serving many years on the
41 Kotzebue Sound Advisory Committee. In 2012 Mr. Shiedt
42 participated in the SeaIce harvest survey for the
43 Northwest Arctic Borough and helped conduct a survey of
44 spotted, bearded, ringed and ribboned seals in the
45 Native communities of Kivalina, Noatak, Deering and
46 Buckland and Mr. Shiedt continues to participate in the
47 Federal Fisheries Resource Monitoring program projects.

48
49 The Federal Subsistence Program and the
50

0030

1 Northwest Regional Advisory Council would like to
2 acknowledge and heartedly thank you, Attamuk, for your
3 21 years of service and today we present you with a 20
4 year service award. We understand that you did not
5 reapply to continue to serve on the Council but we
6 sincerely hope that you will consider serving again in
7 the near future.

8

9 And I think we got -- awesome.

10

11 (Applause)

12

13 MR. SHIEDT: For your information my
14 wife just called and I got to call her back, sorry
15 about that.

16

17 (Laughter)

18

19 MR. SHIEDT: It was an honor to serving
20 the Northwest Arctic and our people. Like I always say
21 we depend on the land heavily to provide for us, in
22 return we got to service the country and respect our
23 country for he provided for us, in return we have to
24 take care of the land and the sea and the air. The
25 resources were put there for us to take but in return
26 we have to respect it which most people do and I always
27 say thank you, for providing for me and for being what
28 I am. I always say this, I was taught, when I was 7 to
29 9, an elder lived over 100 years and people won't
30 believe me -- when he told me he was 17 years old when
31 the first White man landed in Kotzebue, he said he was
32 17 or 18 years old, the year he died because it's
33 recorded data, that Otto landed here, and the year he
34 died, I'm talking about (In Native) to me, he died 117
35 years old, and he said, I'm going to teach you about
36 our resources because he said -- when I was 7 -- he
37 said, one day that's going to be your job is to provide
38 and try to protect our resources and I believed it.
39 (In Native) Thomas Mitchell's dad -- but he said, when
40 they were starving he used to walk from Noatak, the
41 third village from Noatak that -- originally there was
42 four villages at Noatak, up the river, that there's
43 camping sites, and the third village he said used to
44 take him about five weeks to get to Barter Island and
45 go get some blubber so that way he could feed the
46 people. That's a lot of walking. But he said he'd be
47 back in two months because he had to do it for the
48 people to survive. And he's the one that taught me
49 about everything I know, he said, don't give up on it,

50

0031

1 because if you take care of the land, the land will
2 take care of you.

3

4 So I thank you for the service and I
5 gladly serve for the people, but at my age I never
6 reapply, yet, I'm still thinking and my wife was trying
7 to talk me into it and I said, no, I said I'm getting
8 tired and by the time the meeting comes around, I think
9 my body's trying to tell me, I always try to get sick
10 just before the meeting like happened last year, but
11 that's Mother Nature's way of saying I think you're
12 getting old.

13

14 I got to answer my wife, it's the third
15 call.

16

17 (Applause)

18

19 MR. SHIEDT: I'm having boiler
20 problems. Okay, thank you.

21

22 (Laughter)

23

24 MR. KRON: Yeah, again, Attamuk, thank
25 you, on behalf of the Federal Subsistence Management
26 Program and the Office of Subsistence Management. And,
27 again, you know, was talking with Wilbur last night, we
28 need to listen to our wives, right, so, again, we hope
29 you reapply.

30

31 (Laughter)

32

33 MR. SHIEDT: 66 years.

34

35 (Laughter)

36

37 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Tom. At
38 this time I'd like to take a 10 minute break. The time
39 is now, let's call it 9:50, but it's 9:52, and we'll
40 reconvene here in about 10 minutes.

41

42 (Off record)

43

44 (On record)

45

46 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, everyone.
47 So this is Chair Thomas Baker. It's now 10:09 and
48 we'll come back together. And just so that we know,
49 which RAC members are on the phone, Vern, are you still
50

0032

1 with us.

2

3

(No comments)

4

5 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Vern Cleveland, are
6 you still on the phone?

7

8 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes, I am, Mr. Chair.
9 Thanks.

10

11 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Vern. And
12 Calvin Moto, are you with us?

13

14

(No comments)

15

16 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So Attamuk had to
17 leave and he's hoping to be back some time later today,
18 if not tomorrow. So we just finished up Item No. 8,
19 service awards, we'll move on to Item No. 9 on the
20 agenda, public and tribal comment on non-agenda items,
21 which is available each morning. Do we have anyone who
22 has a public or a tribal comment on anything not on the
23 agenda that they would like to bring up at this time.

24

25

(No comments)

26

27 CHAIRMAN BAKER: And if there's none
28 that'll be fine since we'll have an opportunity
29 tomorrow so we'll.....

30

31 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair. We have one
32 here, tribal.

33

34 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, please, Melissa,
35 if you want to just introduce yourself for the record.

36

37 MS. BROWN: This is Melissa Brown and
38 I'm from Selawik. I'm the RIT for Selawik Fish and
39 Wildlife. And I just wish that someone from Selawik
40 can apply for the RAC and I'll be taking home
41 applications for people to apply. And in the future I
42 would request that this Council here or if you
43 represent your village get all the information from all
44 the hunters and I think you guys already do that, but
45 it would be good to go to other villages and get an
46 understanding of what they do in their village. And I
47 like Vern's comment when he said, we blame the
48 outsiders, but what about us, we need to look into that
49 more and figure out what's going on with our caribou.
50

0033

1 And when we were talking about animals earlier, I don't
2 know there's some kind of animal that's been bothering
3 Selawik, it went there last year and it broke into a
4 home and there was like tracks and fur and we don't
5 know what it is and a couple people posted about it
6 over the fall and said they saw it and they even got
7 recording of it and we don't know what it is. So
8 there's something out there.

9

10 Thank you.

11

12 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you for that
13 Melissa. Yeah, we'd really appreciate if we could get
14 more representation from the whole region so we can get
15 the vacant seats that are on the Council filled back up
16 so if anyone knows anyone in the different villages
17 that might be interested or specifically in villages
18 that aren't represented on the RAC right now, you can
19 work with Lisa or probably anyone else from OSM to
20 figure out applications and when things open up.

21

22 Yes, Hannah.

23

24 MS. LOON: (In Native) Thank you, Mr.
25 Chairman. My name is Hannah Paniyayluk Loon. I used
26 to be in the RAC before and I miss being involved with
27 the RAC and I will be working with Lisa, and Melissa I
28 will apply and represent Selawik because that's where I
29 get most of my whitefish and pike and berries and
30 greens, through my daughter, who is a harvester of
31 whitefish.

32

33 And I agree with Melissa, absent are
34 Kivalina, Noatak, Ambler and Kobuk that have eyes. It
35 would be good to recruit or invite them to apply for
36 the RAC position. And I really appreciate the reports
37 that were given this morning from the members. And
38 those that retired, I really appreciate their hard
39 work, Michael Kramer, Attamuk, and Vern, thank you for
40 all your work. And I'm always for science, I'm always
41 for local knowledge because I live it. Like Attamuk
42 say we live it and today is much more different, the
43 weather is different, either too late of everything.

44

45 Taikuu. Thank you for listening to my
46 comments.

47

48 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Hannah. We
49 appreciate your comments and your interest in serving
50

0034

1 and helping getting more people involved with the RAC.

2

3 (Teleconference interference -
4 participants not muted)

5

6 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Do we have any other
7 public and/or tribal comments on non-agenda items at
8 this time.

9

10 MR. ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, this is
11 Elmer.

12

13 MR. KRAMER: Mr. Chairman, this is
14 Michael.

15

16 MR. ARMSTRONG: I just want to thank
17 Hannah for speaking up. She's the one that got me
18 interested in sitting on the RAC and that's why I
19 applied to represent the people on subsistence issues.
20 Thank you, Hannah.

21

22 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Elmer. Mr.
23 Kramer, was that you.

24

25 MR. KRAMER: Yes, it was. Lately I've
26 been getting a hold of Lisa, I got a hold of some
27 people in Noatak, Ambler. Sure wish we had Shungnak,
28 Kiana, Buckland and Deering Council members. Been
29 working pretty hard to try and get some people to
30 apply. I know that -- you know, I was told that my
31 brother was able to put in on the RAC also.

32

33 There's some very necessary subjects
34 that we take care of here at the RAC. This is your
35 subsistence rights to caribou. We make regulations
36 according to the population and the amounts of
37 subsistence resources we have available. We make
38 decisions. I thank KOTZ radio so much for being able
39 to air our meetings because this is a very serious and
40 very important to our subsistence lifestyle, is the
41 amount of caribou we're able to harvest.

42

43 I know that we've been having a lot of
44 ridiculous amounts of bear issues. I heard of bears
45 taking caribou out of people's boats. I've heard of
46 bears taunting people at their camps. You know,
47 they're getting bad. Some of the people that I talked
48 to that were going up the Kobuk up to Onion Portage, I
49 know a couple people were waiting at Onion Portage but
50

0035

1 there was no caribou, but there were like 20 boats so
2 they moved up a few bends, they said they got five
3 caribou but they said most of the night into the dark
4 the caribou were in such a rush that they were swimming
5 across even in the dark, that's kind of unheard of.
6 You know usually the caribou try to cross during the
7 early morning day, you know, during the day and during
8 the evening, early evening. These bear issues and wolf
9 issues that we have are going to be continuous. We
10 need to start looking at ways to protect, you know, our
11 caribou and our moose. It's beginning to get kind of
12 crazy the amount of animals that we're having to deal
13 with that are harvesting young calf moose and young
14 calf caribou. You know it's beginning to get
15 ridiculous. I know that here near Kotzebue we had
16 several incidences of bears within the city limits of
17 Kotzebue and law enforcement didn't want nothing to do
18 with it because they weren't bothering anybody. You
19 know what's it going to take, is it going to take
20 someone to get mauled by a bear back here on the Loop
21 Road in Kotzebue for them to finally move. They should
22 be at least taking necessary actions to at least try
23 and scare them away regardless whether it's rubber
24 bullets or M80shotgun shells. They need to be more
25 proactive in helping in the community. Because I do
26 drive on the Loop Road, I see kids out there on
27 bicycles, you know. These are people's little kids
28 that are out there riding their bicycles out on the
29 Loop Road because they like it. Something needs to
30 happen to where they don't just sit back and watch
31 someone else take the animal out in their own -- with
32 their own concerns about people that are out there on
33 the road. You know the Fish and Wildlife, Fish and
34 Game, Park Service, you know, the city of Kotzebue, we
35 need help trying to make sure and ensure that these
36 animals are staying way clear of Kotzebue. They need
37 to start stepping in and not try to fix the problem
38 after somebody gets hurt or killed or mauled. These
39 items need to be fixed ASAP because, you know, an
40 individual who knew he was doing the right thing by
41 getting a bear because there's kids out in those areas,
42 he ended up getting a citation for shooting a bear out
43 of season.

44
45 So, you know, when it comes down to the
46 bear issue it's going to be my recommendation that we
47 make a motion to change our bear status to no closed
48 season.
49
50

0036

1 Thank you. That's all I have for now,
2 Mr. Chairman.

3
4 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you for that
5 Mike. Do we have any other public or tribal comments
6 on non-agenda items.

7
8 (No comments)

9
10 CHAIRMAN BAKER: And hearing none, we
11 will move on to old business and we will start with
12 Item A under old business, the .805(c) report summary.
13 Lisa, you have the floor.

14
15 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Thank you,
16 Mr. Chair. Members of the Council. For the record,
17 again, my name is Lisa Hutchinson-Scarborough and I'm
18 your new Council Coordinator and the designated Federal
19 officer for this meeting.

20
21 Council members in your meeting books
22 on Page 14 is a letter and enclosure from the Federal
23 Subsistence Board. It's known as a .805(c) report.
24 This report provides the action taken by the Board last
25 April on proposals affecting residents in the Northwest
26 Arctic region. I believe the Chair has already
27 provided a summary of the Board meeting and actions to
28 you, however, I will also provide you a summary of this
29 report right now. So, anyways, this is not an action
30 item, it's just for your information.

31
32 As you know, the Board uses a consensus
33 agenda on these proposals where there is an agreement
34 among the affected Councils, most of the InterAgency
35 Staff Committee, or the ISC, and the Alaska Department
36 of Fish and Game. The consensus agenda contained one
37 proposal affecting the Northwest Arctic region which
38 the Board deferred to your Council's recommendations as
39 follows.

40
41 The Board eliminated the closure for
42 WCR22-77, which reviewed the closures to muskox hunting
43 in Cape Krusenstern National Monument by residents of
44 Point Hope.

45
46 The remaining proposals and closure
47 reviews affecting the Northwest Arctic region appeared
48 on the non-consensus agenda. For four of the proposals
49 and two of the closure reviews, the Board took action
50

0037

1 consistent with your Council's recommendations. The
2 Board adopted statewide proposal WP22-01, which
3 clarified who is and who is not a participant in the
4 community harvest system. And they also adopted
5 statewide proposal WP22-02, which removed language from
6 the designated hunter permit by a member of a community
7 operating under a community harvest system. The Board
8 also adopted and modified WP22-50, which increased the
9 harvest limits of beaver in Unit 23 to no limit. And
10 the Board opposed WP22-47, which requested that calf
11 harvest be permitted by -- for caribou in Unit 22.

12
13 Furthermore, the Board expressed
14 appreciation to our Council's active involvement and
15 your diligence with the regulatory process. So this is
16 just a formal opportunity to bring your attention to
17 the Board actions in documented form. There is -- it's
18 just for your information and it's not an action item
19 for the Council. So, thank you, Mr. Chair and members
20 of the Council for your attention. And if you have any
21 questions.

22
23 Thank you.

24
25 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Lisa. Do
26 we have any questions regarding the .805(c) report and
27 Lisa's summary.

28
29 (No comments)

30
31 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, Lisa,
32 would you like to move on to Item B, the Federal
33 Subsistence Board fiscal year 2021 annual report reply
34 summary.

35
36 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Yes, Mr.
37 Chair. Members of the Council. Again, I'm going to
38 present a summary of the Federal Subsistence Board
39 fiscal year 22 annual report reply to the Council which
40 was submitted to you this July. The materials for the
41 agenda item can be found starting on Page 19 of your
42 Council book. Again, this is not a meeting -- is not
43 an action item, it's just for your information.

44
45 The Board appreciates your effort to
46 communicate through your annual report to the Board on
47 issues outside of the regulatory process that affects
48 subsistence users in your region. In fiscal year '21
49 there were seven topics of concern on the Council's
50

0038

1 annual report.

2

3

4 Topic 1 was in regard to the lack of
5 success of harvesting caribou in Unit 23 by Federally-
6 qualified subsistence users due to changes in caribou
7 migration patterns and the associated affects of guides
8 and transporters and climate change on the Western
9 Arctic Caribou Herd. The Board's response and summary
10 recognized that residents of most communities in the
11 Northwest Arctic region have been unable to harvest
12 caribou during their traditional fall harvest season in
13 recent years due to changing migration patterns and
14 there are, indeed, multiple stressors on the Western
15 Arctic Caribou Herd, including climate change, human
16 activity and the Red Dog Mine Road. These factors,
17 have, in turn, created significant hardship for
18 residents. Local observations, indigenous traditional
19 ecological knowledge and Western science mutually
20 reinforce our understanding of these factors which are
21 likely cumulative. The earlier deferral of WSA21-01
22 allowed the Office of Subsistence Management to gather
23 and analyze substantial local testimony about both the
24 herd and people's inability to continued subsistence
25 uses of caribou in the region. Further OSM was able to
26 bring Federal land managers, including the National
27 Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management and U.S.
28 Fish and Wildlife Service together to outline a path
29 for better documentation and sharing of data on guide
30 and transporter activity on Federal public lands. The
31 National Park Service shared data on guide and
32 transporter uses of the Noatak National Preserve, which
33 was incorporated into the analysis of WSA21-01(a),
34 which is a wildlife special action. Finally, the Board
35 understands that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
36 is planning another photo census of the Western Arctic
37 Caribou Herd this summer, which we will get a report on
38 here in a bit. Further, ADEF -- ADEF -- ADF&G and
39 National Park Service put out 36 radio collars this
40 last April 2022 and plan on continuing this monitoring
41 protocol indefinitely. They will pick up collars from
42 mortalities and the camera collars which are programmed
43 to drop later this summer and will be sharing
44 preliminary findings with you at this meeting as well.

44

45 Topic 2 was in regard to the need for
46 Arctic grayling and salmon research in Unit 23. The
47 response from the Board is that they recognized the
48 need for research on Arctic grayling and salmon in the
49 Northwest Arctic region. The Board encourages the

50

0039

1 Council to add these research topics during the fall
2 2022 meeting as priority information needs for the
3 Fisheries Research Monitoring Program, which we're
4 going to be talking more about later today. Regarding
5 salmon updates, the Board will ask Staff and OSM to
6 reach out to regional research agencies to request
7 updates for future meetings on Arctic grayling and
8 salmon.

9
10 Topic 3 was in regard to a request for
11 updated reports on population change in moose and
12 beaver in Unit 23. The Board recognized that the moose
13 and beaver are two very important subsistence resources
14 in Northwest Arctic region. In reply to the Council's
15 request the Board provided the Council with the
16 following information on both species. Moose. State
17 and Federal agencies work closely with each other to
18 monitor moose in Unit 23. The National Park Service
19 partners with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to
20 monitor six survey areas in the Northwest Arctic
21 region. Survey-related costs, severe Staffing and
22 pilot shortages, environmental and seasonal limitations
23 as well as a responsibility to monitor many other
24 species in this region are all factors limiting the
25 completion of more moose surveys. During the spring of
26 2022, this last spring, ADF&G and NPS completed a moose
27 count survey in the lower Kobuk survey area. The State
28 and Federal agencies will continue to work together to
29 monitor Unit 23 moose populations and provide regular
30 reports on the moose population at the Council
31 meetings. And we have that scheduled as well for
32 later, under agency reports. Beaver. The beaver
33 population in Unit 23 are not currently surveyed,
34 however, John O'Donnell with the National Park Service
35 has began researching the implications of beaver range
36 expansion in the Arctic. Research -- recent research
37 suggests that beaver populations in the Arctic are
38 expanding their range due to climate change and the
39 population is increasing and expected to continue to
40 increase throughout the region. Ken Tape, pardon if I
41 said your name wrong, at the University of Alaska-
42 Fairbanks recently began a five year project studying
43 beaver range expansion in Arctic Alaska and the impacts
44 it will have and the Board encourages the Council to
45 work with the Council Coordinator to invite Mr. Tape
46 and others to this coming -- upcoming meetings to
47 discuss beavers in the Northwest Arctic. So we'll plan
48 that in the winter, if we can get him to speak. Beaver
49 harvest regulations are already extremely liberal in
50

0040

1 Unit 23 and at the April meeting, as we just said, the
2 Board adopted Wildlife Proposal WP22-50,. which
3 increased the beaver harvest limit to no limit in Unit
4 23. Currently under State and Federal regulations the
5 beaver trapping season is year-round with no harvest
6 limit, and also the Federal hunting season is also
7 year-round with no harvest limit.

8
9 Topic 4 was in regard to the need to
10 have the RAC representative attend the Ambler Mine
11 Access Road meetings and request comprehensive reports
12 on road development. The response from the Board. The
13 Board supports the Council's desire to participate and
14 voice your concerns regarding subsistence during this
15 construction project. At the Council's request,
16 representatives of the Ambler Access Project were
17 invited to report to the Council. And Sharlene Bloom
18 provided the Council with an update and overview of the
19 project formation of the Ambler Road Project
20 Subsistence Advisory Committee, or the acronym is SAC,
21 S-A-C; that was at your last meeting. Currently
22 Council Member Wilbur Howarth of Noorvik applied for
23 and was appointed to serve on the SAC, however, this
24 seat is not specifically reserved for a Council
25 representative. Inclusion of Council members on the
26 Ambler Road Project SAC is currently a matter to be
27 decided by the SAC and Co-Chairs. The Board believes
28 it would be beneficial to also have strong engagement
29 between the SAC and the Councils. The National Park
30 Service Resource Program Manager at the Gates of the
31 Arctic National Park and Preserve and Yukon-Charley
32 River National Preserve made this explicit
33 recommendation to the SAC organizers when he spoke with
34 them. Anyway, if they have not reached out to you --
35 your Council yet, a good contact would be Sharlene
36 Ostbloom and Cathy Mayo, and their contact and Ambler
37 Road website is listed in your meeting book on Page 26.
38 The Board will request that your Council Coordinator
39 reach out to the agencies leading to the road
40 development to request comprehensive reports for one of
41 the upcoming Council meetings. And I did reach out to
42 them and I had that -- to present at this meeting and I
43 never heard back from them so hopefully we can get them
44 to speak at a later meeting unless they call in and
45 give a report later.

46
47 Topic 5 was in regard to the Council's
48 request for Council representation of the Western
49 Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group, or WACH. The WACH
50

0041

1 working group is compromised of 20 members, most of
2 whom represent communities within the range of the
3 WACH. The working group sets the seats when the group
4 was formed and has never added additional seats. While
5 adding on additional seats to the working group is
6 beyond the Board's authority, the Board suggests that
7 the Council work with the Council Coordinator to write
8 a letter to the WACH working group requesting
9 representation from the Federal Subsistence Regional
10 Advisory Councils. Dependent on the Program's travel
11 budget allowance for each fiscal year, the Federal
12 Subsistence Management Program -- here it says that
13 they might be able to but we're going to be giving a
14 presentation later that we're actually going to be able
15 to provide transportation for one of you to attend,
16 but, anyway, at this point they said they might be able
17 to provide travel support for one Council member to
18 participate in the WACH working group public meeting
19 once a year.

20

21 And Topic 6 was in regard to the
22 concern about current Council membership and need for
23 representation from the upper Kobuk River villages and
24 from Selawik. So we might have Hannah here shortly but
25 we need to get more Council members from that area as
26 well. The Board hears the Council concerns about the
27 vacant seats and lack of representation on the Council
28 from the upper Kobuk River villages and Selawik. In
29 2022 the Board received seven applications from new
30 applicants and incumbents. The Board will review the
31 applications and will be made [sic] recommendations to
32 the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture on the
33 appointments by the end of the summer 2022. If any of
34 the 2022 applications are from the upper Kobuk River
35 villages and Selawik the Board will take the Council's
36 request into consideration when making the appointment
37 recommendations.

38

39 And Topic 7, your last topic, the
40 Council request for engagement with elder support
41 subsistence programs conducted by the Maniilaq
42 Association. The response from the Board is that they
43 appreciate the Council sharing information about
44 Maniilaq's Traditional and Healthy Food Programs which
45 are important parts of supporting traditional
46 subsistence practices in the region. The Board is
47 happy to support engagement between the Council and
48 these programs and OSM will reach out to Maniilaq to
49 request a report on an upcoming meeting. Further, the

50

0042

1 Board acknowledges the significant hardship that local
2 residents are experiencing as a result of difficulty
3 harvesting traditional subsistence resources especially
4 caribou.

5

6 Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the
7 Council. This concludes my report. Are there any
8 questions.

9

10 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any questions from any
11 RAC members over the phone.

12

13 (No comments)

14

15 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Questions from RAC
16 members in the room.

17

18 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes, Mr. Chair, Vern.

19

20 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Vern.

21

22 MR. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair. Do these
23 applications get to upper Kobuk and Selawik, why are we
24 not getting applications, is the message getting
25 through or what's the thing here on the applications
26 for the Regional Advisory Council because we need
27 someone from up river and the Selawik side and
28 Buckland.

29

30 Thank you.

31

32 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Yeah, Mr.
33 Chair and Mr. Cleveland. I don't have a list of -- I
34 wasn't allowed to see the list of who applied but we --
35 but in terms of trying to reach out to more of those
36 communities, it's a -- it's a topic that we've all been
37 talking about of how to continue is partly your
38 responsibility as Council members to reach out to
39 people, part of -- people in the community to hear
40 about it and OSM. And a lot of that is part of my job
41 as well, is to try to contact more communities and
42 really -- and explain to them what the Council process
43 is and to get involved. It's a -- I know sometimes
44 it's difficult to get representatives because it's a --
45 it's a volunteer job and a lot of you have a lot of
46 other jobs that you have to do in your community but
47 it's very, very important. If anybody out there is
48 interested in being on the Council, please, please feel
49 free to contact OSM, contact me, or your tribal council

50

0043

1 and get more information about it. And we're happy to
2 tell you more about what it involves and it's -- if
3 you're active in your community especially regarding
4 subsistence it's very, very important that you be part
5 of this to help your communities in your region.

6
7 So, thank you. I hope that answered
8 your question, Mr. Cleveland.

9
10 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes, thank you. And
11 one more other thing is on the road, we got to find
12 someone to attend more on this Ambler Road because as
13 subsistence hunters -- I know it's high cost of living
14 up river, it burns a big hole in your wallet once you
15 go to the store, I know that. And probably the fuel
16 costs will go down and grocery costs will go down on
17 the Ambler Road but the Western Arctic Caribou Herd
18 working group opposed the Road. I would like to hear
19 more -- more input from these villages upper Kobuk, to
20 where this road would do, and what it would do to the
21 villages, especially our tutu. I know up river,
22 Shungnak, caribou, and what's going to happen in the
23 future if this Ambler Road is set in in our future -- I
24 mean some of us might not be here but, you know, for
25 our younger generation to know that what's going to
26 happen to the fish, the caribou, with this road that's
27 coming in. We got to be more specific with what we say
28 and how we do it on this road because the road's going
29 to happen anyway, we're going to get runned over on
30 this for sure. If we don't say anything right now
31 about the road nobody's going to hear it. As long as
32 you come out and say it, we want the road, not the
33 road, that'd be good but right now as it is, I think
34 the road's going to go in, just like the Red Dog Mine
35 Road, that 52 mile, but it's a 200 mile road, this is
36 going to -- that road's going to be a long haul. But I
37 would like to hear more from our upper Kobuk on the
38 Ambler -- on this and AIDEA. I haven't heard anything
39 from them for awhile.

40
41 And also your beaver, we got to get our
42 beaver -- beavers are blocking everything, I mean
43 blocking all the creeks, everything. We got to do
44 something about that.

45
46 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

47
48 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Vern for
49 your comments. Wilbur, did you have something.
50

0044

1 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah, Mr. Chair. Thanks,
2 Vern. The Ambler Road Project, I'm sitting on -- for
3 the NANA region I'm sitting on that board too. Myself,
4 Larry Westlake, we have Grist from Shungnak, Nellie, I
5 believe her name is, Henry Horner and Morgan Johnson
6 from Ambler. We meet only once -- or once every four
7 months, maybe, with Doyon, there's five representatives
8 from the Doyon region. And this Ambler Project Road it
9 is on the verge of being built. They've been doing
10 studies since 2009 maybe was the first time they went
11 out to do all studies on creeks and rivers and fish,
12 where they spawned and all that has been practically
13 done already. So they're way ahead of us. Maybe
14 beyond the folks here in the NANA region. This kind of
15 meeting about the Ambler Road Project, I would like to
16 see more people or at least on the phone, or calling in
17 on this Ambler Road Project.

18
19 The reason I sit on there is they --
20 NANA got me because my involvement with subsistence,
21 the fish, the caribou, the moose. So our next meeting
22 is in December. We had one in April, it was here in
23 Kotzebue. And the next meeting is in December. And
24 I'll probably have a packet that I could report on
25 after this December meeting, which will be held in
26 Fairbanks.

27
28 Taikuu. Vern. Mr. Chair.

29
30 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur. Do
31 we have any other questions or comments on the annual
32 report replies and the summary.

33
34 MR. SHIEDT: Were we talking about the
35 Ambler Road?

36
37 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So Attamuk we're under
38 old business on the Federal Subsistence Board annual
39 report replies and that was one of the things that we
40 had talked about for our annual report, was wanting to
41 know more about the Ambler Road Project and seeing if
42 there's some way that we could have representation from
43 the RAC to learn more about the access road meetings.
44 So just, if you have anything you can say it now.

45
46 MR. SHIEDT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
47 Attamuk here. Yeah, on the Ambler Road, it's real
48 critical that under the Federal -- I don't know how
49 much Federal land we have around the Ambler Road, but
50

0045

1 we need to push the State into putting regulations in
2 place now that people that have -- that work around the
3 road, because eventually they're going to open it for
4 people, we need to put regulations in now and we need
5 to figure out a way to make them hard to change in the
6 future because that's going to impact not only our
7 caribou, it's going to impact people -- those mountains
8 up there are easy to get to and our sheep will --
9 they're already declining and they're going to get
10 worse and I'm pretty sure that's where most of them are
11 at right now, from Noatak. And the sheefish, if
12 there's a spill, it's not going to impact only Ambler,
13 Ambler down, all the way to Kotzebue, we going to have
14 an impact on it, it's going to hurt us. It'll hurt the
15 sheefish first of all. Like (Indiscernible) the Old
16 Man (Indiscernible) told me that almost every creek
17 where he know to go to upper Kobuk there are trout if
18 you know where to set net. The whitefish, different
19 whitefishes there, are going to be impacted, they're
20 going to be hurt if fuel, of any kind of spill is going
21 to hurt it. So we need to put restrictions but,
22 really, we can't do much, but we need the State to put
23 hunting regulations in place, hopefully they will hold
24 in place when we're gone. Because Ambler Road is not
25 going to -- it's going to open for sure. If you read
26 the Park Service there, they come first, we come right
27 behind it, but we need to put something in place as
28 regulation. And I think, Thomas, just us need to have
29 a meeting together, just the Board, just to see what we
30 could do, look at all, both State regulations and the
31 Federal regulations and see what we could put in place.

32
33 I mean, you Federal, for the Ambler
34 Road it's going to impact, there's a lot of money in
35 there, and they're going to push for it and there's
36 going to be a lot of high power, get people in there,
37 to get in there, and we need to put something in place,
38 not today, let's just say soon. Federal need to find
39 money for us to meet, even if they come to Kotzebue,
40 even just the people for the Federal Board to figure
41 out a way and a few people from the State to say what's
42 in place and what could be. You look at the Haul Road,
43 they did only so much and it's open road after that,
44 and that's going to hurt us. Because if they change
45 the migration and if they see how big the sheefish are,
46 big, falltime, sporthunting, sportfishing is going to
47 open up big time and it's going to hurt us. Our people
48 in Kobuk depend heavily on sheefish, even summertime
49 they depend heavily on sheefish. But like I say they
50

0046

1 do take a lot of the ciscos here, the whitefish in our
2 region. And just think about, not only that's going to
3 hurt -- it's going to hurt our ptarmigan and whatever
4 resources out there, and if there's a spill it's going
5 to impact us. And whatever they use on the mine, to
6 extract the minerals, their tailing ponds and their
7 lakes that they say -- if they ever leak it's going to
8 hurt the whole river, all the way to Kotzebue.

9

10 Thank you.

11

12 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Attamuk.
13 Do we have any other questions or comments on the
14 Federal Subsistence Board annual report replies.

15

16 Yes, Brittany.

17

18 MR. KRAMER: Mr. Chairman, this is
19 Kramer.

20

21 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, go ahead, Mike.

22

23 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, after doing a lot of
24 thinking, you know, about the Ambler Road Project, I've
25 thought a lot of the Noatak River, you know, that we
26 have a controlled use area on Noatak River within five
27 miles on either side, you know. Just like Attamuk said
28 we need to come up with regulations. I think one
29 regulation that would really help us and limit the
30 amount of people traveling on the Haul Road -- the
31 Ambler Haul Road to prevent people traveling would be
32 having a controlled use area throughout the entire
33 road. You know they have to be within five miles off
34 the road in order to be able to hunt and fish and what
35 not. You know, the other concern, too, with this
36 Ambler Road Project is there's an area up there where
37 there's naturally reoccurring asbestos. We know that
38 asbestos is not good for humans and animals. You know,
39 my question would be what is their plan to be able to
40 control the dust -- that asbestos dust that is created
41 by these vehicles.

42

43 That's all I have for right now. Thank
44 you, Mr. Chairman.

45

46 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Mike. Any
47 other questions or comments for the Federal Subsistence
48 Board annual report reply.

49

50

0047

1 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah, I just want to
2 add on. I think most of the road is through State
3 land. And I think on the State side they need to ramp
4 up their regulations now. And some of the meetings
5 that in the beginning there was talk about asbestos
6 gravel sites along that road. The reason being is
7 because House Bill 258, I think it was, in order for up
8 river to get rehab work done on their runways, for
9 instance, Ambler, they have a lot of gravel that has
10 naturally occurring asbestos, in order for them to use
11 gravel to do rehab work on the runway, House Bill 258
12 passed, but when you look at the wording, like for
13 AIDEA, it says in there they use that gravel there'll
14 be no accountability. There's a lot of rivers and
15 creeks up there that flow into the Kobuk and it feeds a
16 lot of people through subsistence. But most of that
17 road, I know there's probably.....

18
19 (Teleconference interference -
20 participants not muted)

21
22 MR. ARMSTRONG:I don't know how
23 many miles that goes through the Gates of the Arctic
24 but I know most of the land is through the State.

25
26 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hold on Elmer.

27
28 REPORTER: Elmer, hold on a second.

29
30 CHAIRMAN BAKER: If your name isn't
31 Elmer Armstrong, can you please mute.

32
33 (Teleconference interference -
34 participants not muted)

35
36 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So we're getting some
37 feedback.

38
39 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Somebody needs to
40 mute their phone. Thank you.

41
42 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yeah, if everyone
43 could mute their phones please we have someone
44 speaking. Go ahead, Elmer.

45
46 MR. ARMSTRONG: So, anyway, I think on
47 the State side we need to ramp up the regulations now,
48 have them in place if we want to have some protection
49 on the migration of caribou, and subsistence uses.

50

0048

1 Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Elmer. Any
4 other questions or comments for the annual report reply
5 -- yes, please, Brittany.

6

7 MS. SCHAEFFER: I have a comment.

8

9 CHAIRMAN BAKER: One second, we have
10 someone in the room and then we'll come back to
11 whoever's on the phone.

12

13 MS. SCHAEFFER: Okay.

14

15 MS. SWEENEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
16 This is Brittany Sweeney for the record. I just happen
17 to notice and see a post that there's a comment period
18 open right now with BLM on the Ambler Road supplemental
19 EIS and that comment period is open through November 4.
20 So this is just a point of information, if the Council
21 would like to submit any comments, or if any
22 individuals here would like to submit comments, I
23 happened to see that post and I can share with you the --
24 further information on where to submit and so on. But
25 there's a comment period currently open through
26 November 4th.

27

28 Thank you.

29

30 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Brittany.
31 If you wouldn't mind sending that to Lisa, we'll get
32 that distributed to anyone interested. Who was on the
33 phone, would you mind identifying yourself.

34

35 MS. SCHAEFFER: My name is
36 (Indiscernible) Schaeffer. And actually Brittany, if
37 you could go ahead and give the information publicly,
38 please, that would be greatly appreciated and then I'll
39 begin with my comment.

40

41 MS. SWEENEY: Okay. Through the Chair,
42 this is Brittany again. It says that comments must be
43 submitted by, and it lists multiple mechanisms to
44 submit. There's an email address, which is
45 BLM_AK_AKSO_AmblerRoad_comments@blm.gov. There is a
46 fax number where you can submit your comments, that
47 number is (907) 271-5479. There's a mailing address
48 BLM Alaska State Office, Attention: Ambler Road
49 Scoping Comments. 222 West Seventh Avenue, Stop No.
50

0049

1 13, Anchorage, Alaska 99513. And there's also a
2 website, it's [https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-](https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/57323/510)
3 [ui/project/57323/510](https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/57323/510).
4

5 So those are the locations where you
6 can submit the comments by -- on or before November 4.
7

8 I will also post this flier to the
9 Selawik National Wildlife Refuge FaceBook page shortly
10 if people would like to view it online.
11

12 Thank you.
13

14 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Brittany.
15 This is Thomas Baker. So, Ms. Schaeffer, this portion
16 of the agenda, when I am asking for questions or
17 comments, I'm directing it to the RAC members or to
18 members of the Staff that may have something to add to
19 this. And I'd just like to preface this by, if you
20 have something to say about the Ambler Road, this body
21 doesn't have any official say on the Ambler Road
22 Project, and you may have the floor.
23

24 MS. SCHAEFFER: Okay, thank you. So I
25 appreciate Michael's comment in regards to actually
26 having some representative on the Board for the Ambler
27 Road from the RAC but also I just want to make a note I
28 can be reached by email at K-A-T-A-G-I-A-Q@gmail.com.
29 And so just really quick, of course, I'm sure you all
30 are aware of the study that was done in regards to our
31 region by being the most toxic because of the Red Dog
32 Mine. And I don't see how that can not happen if this
33 Ambler Road is built. But also another note too is
34 that it's State funded and I guarantee you, they're
35 waiting to file a lawsuit to open up the road to the
36 public, which happened with the road up to the Slope
37 and I believe there was another one, I want to say
38 Metlakatla, although I could be wrong. But that's all
39 I have at this time.
40

41 Thank you.
42

43 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Ms.
44 Schaeffer. I'd just like to remind everyone that we do
45 have a portion each morning for public and tribal
46 comments on non-agenda items. If you have something
47 that is a public comment on something that we are not
48 discussing in the agenda that is your time for it.
49
50

0050

1 If there is no other questions from the
2 Council we'll go ahead and move on to Item C under old
3 business starting with the updates on the special
4 actions.

5
6 And, Dr. Hannah Voorhees, the floor is
7 yours.

8
9 MS. VOORHEES: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
10 members of the Council. This is Hannah Voorhees,
11 Anthropologist with OSM. And this is an update and
12 reminder about Temporary Special Action Request WA21-01
13 [sic], which requested that the Federal Subsistence
14 Board close Federal public lands in Units 23 and 26A to
15 caribou and moose hunting by non-Federally-qualified
16 users from August 1st to September 30th. So this is an
17 update only, it's not an action item.

18
19 This March, the Board approved this
20 request with some modifications. As a result some
21 Federal public lands in Unit 23 and a small portion of
22 Unit 26A are closed to caribou hunting by non-
23 Federally-qualified users from August 1st to September
24 30th for two regulatory years. In addition, all
25 Federal public lands in Unit 23 are closed to moose
26 hunting by non-Federally-qualified users from August
27 1st to September 30th also for two regulatory years.

28
29 For caribou, the closure area is Noatak
30 National Preserve including the Nigu River portion of
31 the Preserve in Unit 26A and BLM managed lands between
32 the Noatak and Kobuk Rivers in Unit 23. This area is
33 closed to hunting by non-Federally-qualified users from
34 August 1st to September 30th during the 2022 to 2023
35 and the 2023 to 2024 regulatory years.

36
37 The Board found this modification to be
38 a reasonable compromise that provides for the
39 continuation of subsistence uses and the conservation
40 of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd while precluding
41 unnecessary restrictions on non-Federally-qualified
42 users. The partial closure targets the areas of
43 highest user conflicts and minimizes potential
44 disruptions to caribou migration.

45
46 The Board approved these requests with
47 modification to last for two regulatory years to assess
48 the effectiveness of the closures in conserving these
49 wildlife populations and ensuring continuation of
50

0051

1 subsistence as well as to reduce the administration
2 burden of processing special action requests as
3 conditions are not expected to change in the immediate
4 future.

5

6 Thank you. This concludes my update
7 and I'm happy to take any questions you may have.

8

9 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Hannah. Do
10 any RAC members have questions regarding Hannah's
11 update.

12

13 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah, this is Elmer.
14 Thank you for your update. I know I traveled once in
15 September to Anchorage and going over and coming back I
16 noticed there was still hunters traveling and it made
17 me think why travel to Kotzebue. I know if you're
18 going to go to Unit 26 to hunt you got to travel
19 Anchorage, Fairbanks, Prudhoe Bay and Barrow and that's
20 going to cost money, but if you want to go to 26 you
21 could come to Kotzebue for a cheaper price and then get
22 on a transporter and fly to 26 from here. But I
23 noticed, I seen a lot of hunters come in with their --
24 looked like they were taking their food out but I don't
25 know the condition of their food going out, that could
26 be deceiving, but you have to think about all the
27 options. Sure, it's good they're taking their food out
28 but we don't know the condition of the meat they're
29 taking out.

30

31 And then what else was I going to say.
32 When the closures, when I read it, I saw a loophole and
33 it said that hunters -- non-residents can still hunt on
34 the rivers from the watermark to the high watermark.
35 At that time, the water is down, so it leaves so much
36 beach to be hunted on. That's the loophole I found
37 when I was reading the regulation for the closure.

38

39 But I thought of where these hunters
40 were going, so I was thinking maybe they were going to
41 26 from here. That's the only thing I could think of
42 seeing the hunters come through Kotzebue.

43

44 Thank you.

45

46 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Elmer.

47

48 MS. VOORHEES: Through the Chair.
49 Thank you Council Member Armstrong. Yes, it's correct

50

0052

1 that the riverbank corridors are under State
2 jurisdiction and are not subject to the closure. I
3 also wanted to -- I thank you for your observations,
4 and thank everyone for their observations during the
5 Council member reports, when you brought up what you're
6 seeing with caribou this past year, it's really
7 important information to understand with the closure in
8 place right now and it will be good to continue hearing
9 that next year as well.

10

11 MR. SHIEDT: This is Attamuk. I hear
12 what he's saying, that's what I always address, under
13 high water, low and high water mean mark, if they could
14 land, they could hunt. I've been saying that for a
15 long time. It's hard for me to digest and still I know
16 it's happening. But on the closure, it's only -- you
17 got to stress to the people that the closure you're
18 talking about is only on Federal land, not on the State
19 land, and not on the high and low water mean mark.
20 Don't fool the people, my people, Northwest Alaska.

21

22 People, that you could hear me out
23 there in the Radioland, like Noatak River, they could
24 land anywhere, anywhere they could land in the
25 sandbars, that's a State regulation, we, as Federal
26 don't have any control over.

27

28 But I would like to see that changed.
29 Maybe that Noatak IRA could request to make a change to
30 it, that no outsiders to come in on the high water mean
31 mark. That's a hard one to control and nobody really
32 can regulate it for enforcement. And we need to do
33 something because just like I said, this is the first
34 time this year I did not get a call from Germany, and
35 Italy and those three places that call me every year
36 for caribou, I think the guy that usually calls me, I
37 think they're getting old like me and they're not
38 coming anymore, which I'm happy, but at least they'd
39 call me and say they're coming, where could they
40 legally harvest caribou. I respect for people like
41 that, that say, you know, they want to hunt it legally
42 and where could they go and do and I would tell them.
43 That's the kind of people we need out there but we're
44 not -- and to make it harder. We have nothing to do
45 with the State but for the caribou, even the Federal
46 land, if they want to get permission to harvest in the
47 Federal land, I think we need to make sure they come to
48 Kotzebue in person to get their permit for the State
49 and the Federal lands, or they can get a permit from
50

0053

1 someone, they have to do it in person, they have to pay
2 their fare and before it open they have to go back and
3 come back, it's going to cost them, for the people,
4 that's not too high that making a lot of money, and
5 let's try and find a way to reduce the take of the
6 caribou. And that might be a way we have to go because
7 under the Federal lands, the way it's written, my son
8 can't come here to harvest caribou, but I was happy
9 when he send us gas so we send it, and that's what I'm
10 saying, our people that move from Kotzebue to Anchorage
11 to make it easier on their life because it's so
12 expensive here to live, it's even worse in the villages
13 and we need to -- like I say, we need to get together
14 and we need to find a way to preserve the caribou for
15 the future, for my grandkids to harvest the way I've
16 been doing it all my life. Not only that, it's theirs,
17 Wilburs, Elmers, Thomas' That way they could enjoy and
18 they could be proud of their culture of what their
19 forefathers did and live off this land.

20

21 It's a hard one.

22

23 And we got to find a way. And you
24 people that get together, and you guys, you experts
25 that meet in your office you need to find a way to help
26 the people of Northwest Arctic. It all starts from
27 Anaktuvuk Pass from the migration route on the
28 mountain. I flew over it, I wanted to see it. Right
29 side. Left side. Because the migration route starts
30 from Anaktuvuk Pass and we're affected. The guy that
31 take over Buck*Max I talked to him this summer, he
32 said, yeah, he's taking hunters way out to the State
33 lands, way up past Cutler and he say, yeah, they're
34 going up with small rubber boats, they're going with a
35 small motor, he's hauling them fuel. I talked to him
36 but he said, but this year they were different. He say
37 -- he like them because he make money off of them, but
38 he still don't like it they're taking food away from
39 the Natives but they were taking less this year due to
40 the way the migration happening. It's the State lands
41 we have to worry about. Federal land we could pretty
42 much control except for the high water, low water mean
43 mark. I don't know how we could do it and I've been
44 saying this -- and Vern if you could hear me, you and
45 Cyrus need to put a regulation in the State lands,
46 don't worry about the Federal lands, we'll take care of
47 our Federal lands here, and I would say good luck. And
48 I think more than one person from the Federal Board
49 should be attending the Western Arctic Caribou Herd --
50

0054

1 the Western Arctic Caribou Herd, the caribou
2 management, when we put it together it was for the
3 people, for the whole migration route of the caribou
4 was the plan that was put together. John Shayne and
5 Johnson (ph) help a lot put the way -- and there is few
6 changes made but at the time the plan was put together
7 for the people of Northwest Alaska.

8

9 Thank you.

10

11 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Attamuk.
12 Any other questions for Dr. Voorhees from the RAC.

13

14 (No comments)

15

16 MS. VOORHEES: Through the Chair, I did
17 just want to -- I am grateful for all that Attamuk and
18 Council Member Armstrong have shared. I also wanted to
19 just add that, yes, this is a closure only on Federal
20 lands and it's a patchwork and it's a challenge to have
21 an effect through closures and regulations only on
22 Federal lands. But I did want to note in terms of
23 access to the Noatak, which was brought up earlier,
24 there is the Noatak Controlled Use Area. In effect,
25 this area is closed for the period of August 15th to
26 September 30th to the use of aircraft in any manner
27 either for hunting of an ungulate, bear, wolf, or
28 wolverine or for transportation of hunters or harvested
29 species so I just wanted to let you know about that
30 mechanism that is in effect as well as a reminder.

31

32 Thank you.

33

34 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Hannah.
35 Yes, Elmer.

36

37 MR. ARMSTRONG: I just want to add on
38 too, if you're a shareholder you can hunt on NANA lands
39 even if you have relatives living in Anchorage or
40 elsewhere, when they come home they could hunt on NANA
41 lands, it's just the Federal side that we're closed. I
42 just want anyone listening to have a better
43 understanding.

44

45 Thank you.

46

47 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Elmer. Any
48 other questions from the RAC. I see a hand from Mr.
49 Dalle-Molle, if you'd like to come up and introduce
50

0055

1 yourself.

2

3 MR. DALLE-MOLLE: Yes, Joe Dalle-Molle,
4 District Ranger with the National Park Service.
5 Because of the questions we're getting on this topic, I
6 just wanted to offer, tomorrow during the agency
7 reports I plan to talk a little bit more about our
8 observations with the Park Service. I can go into a
9 little bit more detail to help answer some of these
10 questions. Happy to spend five or 10 minutes doing
11 that now or wait until tomorrow. It might clarify some
12 of the questions that have come up today.

13

14 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Does anyone have any
15 questions now or do we want to wait until agency
16 reports tomorrow.

17

18 MR. SHIEDT: Maybe since it's on the
19 caribou topic maybe it should be done now so we -- but
20 we would have to change the agenda for him to say it
21 now, right.

22

23 CHAIRMAN BAKER: No. Since right now
24 we're talking about the closure under old business we
25 could talk about it for a little bit.

26

27 MR. SHIEDT: Okay.

28

29 CHAIRMAN BAKER: If you have a brief
30 overview, you could give that now.

31

32 MR. DALLE-MOLLE: Certainly more than
33 happy to do that. The Wildlife Special Action that was
34 put into place it changed some dynamics that we've
35 seen. The National Park Service hasn't seen any of
36 these, I guess, outside, sporthunters, your non-
37 Federally-qualified users hunting within the Preserve.
38 I can only really speak to the National Park Service
39 lands, not too aware of what's going on elsewhere. I
40 can give some anecdotal information on where hunters
41 are going but we don't have direct access to those
42 reports nor do I think those numbers are necessarily
43 analyzed yet by the State but that would come from the
44 State at a different time.

45

46 In speaking with the transporters that
47 we have up here there are historically four transport
48 operations based out of Kotzebue and one local outfit,
49 being Golden Eagle. This year only one of those

50

0056

1 services provided transport to hunters this year. The
2 others either did not come to Kotzebue or in the case
3 of Golden Eagle decided they will not be transporting
4 hunters, mainly due to disclosure. All of the
5 transporters have been in great communication with the
6 National Park Service to kind of determine what extent
7 they can operate on, if they would be allowed to or if
8 they even should consider dropping hunters into the
9 rivers, the run through, say the Preserve, there would
10 be State land. In the end most transporters decided
11 not to do that. The transporter that did operate, from
12 our understanding, also forwent the dropping hunters
13 off into the rivers, at least in the Preserve, from our
14 understanding. Most of the hunters they were putting
15 in were up north of the Brooks Range into Unit 26, some
16 around kind of the Kivalina, Wulik or Point Hope areas
17 to the west of the Preserve but in very small numbers
18 considering there weren't a lot of caribou right in
19 those areas. Our understanding is most of the clients
20 that the other transporters decided not to operate this
21 year, they just didn't come up. So our one transporter
22 didn't -- doesn't appear, at this point, that that
23 transporter took on a lot of extra clients, his numbers
24 were probably about the same from what we understand.
25 And out of that their success rate was a lot less than
26 in previous years for the take of caribou.

27
28 Just to clarify on the navigable
29 waterways, right now there are only two navigable
30 waterways that have been determined -- two actually be
31 navigable. There are many others that may or may not
32 be determined at a future date to be navigable but
33 right now what we can definitively say is the Noatak
34 River up to Aniak, which is past the Cutler -- a little
35 ways past the Cutler, past the Aniak River, all that
36 area is determined navigable and so what that means is,
37 again, as was pointed out, the State does own the land
38 underneath that water, up to the mean high water mark.
39 And so exposed gravel bars, water itself, the hunters --
40 these hunters could technically be out there hunting,
41 although given our patrols that we conducted this year
42 and speaking with hunters and speaking with
43 transporters, all the information we have just
44 indicates that folks weren't really out there hunting
45 just subsistence users.

46
47 I'll leave it at that. I might -- if
48 other questions pop up before our report I'll try to
49 include those in my report or have the ability to
50

0057

1 answer more questions. I hope that clarifies some of
2 your questions today.

3

4 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dalle-
5 Molle. Any questions for Joe from the RAC.

6

7 MR. ARMSTRONG: So before the closure
8 and then through the closure, about -- what was the
9 numbers, do they have to get permits to enter and bring
10 visitors there?

11

12 MR. DALLE-MOLLE: Yeah, so your
13 question being to National Park Service lands
14 specifically, I can't really speak for the other
15 agencies, I have a limited understanding of how they
16 permit activities. Any commercial activity within the
17 National Park lands must be permitted. And so what we
18 have are historically for lately three air taxi's or
19 transporters that are permitted to bring people into
20 Noatak National Preserve as well as Cape Krusenstern
21 National Monument and Noatak National Park, but we're
22 really only speaking about the Preserve because already
23 the Monument and the Park, they don't allow any hunting
24 except for Federally-qualified subsistence users but
25 air taxi's can still, you know, they can drop people
26 off for, you know, rafting, sightseeing and there's a
27 little of that that occurs each year as well. In the
28 Preserve there is a permit process and those permit
29 holders, they need to report the precise, like
30 coordinates, the actual locations that they land, the
31 names and amount of people as well as the weight and
32 species of meat that they transport out of the
33 Preserve. Pretty similar to what the State of Alaska
34 requires from transporters. We have the additional
35 requirement of the actual coordinates so very precise
36 location. And from -- you know, from our field patrols
37 and interaction with hunters we believe that they
38 report pretty accurately to us and that they seem to be
39 doing right by the stipulation of those permits.

40

41 I guess I will make a caveat to what I
42 sort of said earlier about hunters coming up, and that
43 is guides, which differ from transporters and there
44 were hunters, non-Federally-qualified hunters in the
45 Preserve this year to a limited degree and they're up
46 there for bear hunting and specifically with the guide
47 outfits. And, you know, again, guides, they're not
48 permitted, they're actually on a -- they have contracts
49 with the National Park Service and we only allow three
50

0058

1 of those, three guides over a 10 year period with those
2 contracts to operate in the Preserve, and at most each
3 guide outfit is only permitted 12 hunters to bring in
4 and in the past that's for any big game, but primarily
5 it's all for -- they're all up here for bear. In the
6 past, before the Wildlife Special Action closure, they
7 may have, you know, shot a caribou, hunted a caribou,
8 just kind of by chance sort of ancillary to their bear
9 hunt. But, again, this year they're not doing that.
10 The guides, we work very closely with them, they're
11 held to a lot stricter standard even than the
12 transporters or what the State requires of the guides,
13 and so, you know, we believe they're reporting to us
14 accurately. And this year there was even less of those
15 hunters coming up than in typical years with the
16 guides.

17
18 MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you.

19
20 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any other questions
21 for Joe while we have him up now.

22
23 MR. SHIEDT: Thanks for that report.
24 Yeah, this is just to remind the Radioland, we have
25 more control over the Federal lands. Somebody got the
26 word out that they misunderstood that it was closed for
27 the whole Northwest Arctic region, I told them, no,
28 there's a difference between State lands and the
29 Federal lands and that's the information that a couple
30 people were telling other people, oh, we closed it for
31 the caribou for the transporters and outfitters, no,
32 like I stress -- I'm just trying to tell the Radioland,
33 this is only in the Federal lands. There's a
34 difference in the State lands and it's got to be done
35 through the Western Arctic Caribou Herd working group
36 to do the State side.

37
38 It's going to be a hard one for Vern
39 and Cyrus to do it, but like I say, when I was putting
40 the Western Arctic -- it closed for a year and it
41 worked. But I think we need to even go further on our
42 caribou because the number at 164,000, if I have to --
43 I don't have it -- I got it at home, I should bring the
44 Caribou Management Plan, the State have to take drastic
45 measures on our caribou. I'm not worried about the
46 Federal land, like I say, it's the State land that
47 we're being affected on.

48
49 Thank you.
50

0059

1 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Attamuk.

2

3 MR. KANTNER: Mr. Chair, may I speak,
4 I'm on the phone.

5

6 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Who is speaking.

7

8 MR. KANTNER: My name is Seth Kantner,
9 I'm on the phone, may I comment on Attamuk and Mr.
10 Dalle-Molle's comment.

11

12 CHAIRMAN BAKER: I'll allow a brief
13 comment just because I'm looking for questions from the
14 RAC but go ahead, briefly, Seth.

15

16 MR. KANTNER: Speaking about user
17 conflict, what Attamuk mentioned, in the lowering
18 caribou numbers, decreasing the range of the caribou
19 also, all this is handwriting on the wall for
20 diminishing hunting opportunities for local people.
21 Tied directly to that is this proposed Ambler
22 Industrial Road. A gentleman earlier suggested that
23 the road's already started, there's nothing you can do,
24 that is false. BLM is taking comments now. They've
25 been remanded to receive more comments concerning
26 caribou, caribou migrations, caribou habitat and then
27 cultural use of caribou, which is of utmost importance
28 here. And so the other thing they've been remanded to
29 do is to get more tribal consultation and a lot of that
30 presently is coming from Native Corporations and tribal
31 Councils.

32

33 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So Mr. Kantner.....

34

35 MR. KANTNER: So what's important in
36 there is actual tribal.....

37

38 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Mr. Kantner.....

39

40 MR. KANTNER:members who need to
41 speak out now to state all their concerns about hunting
42 caribou. These local people are being slightly
43 squeezed out of this comment process and that needs to
44 take place and that needs to be publicized. So the
45 main point here is concerns about hunting go back to
46 the concerns about this proposed road and this road has
47 not started and local people need to not be
48 misinformed.

49

50

0060

1 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Mr.
2 Kantner. I'd just like to remind everyone that while
3 we do appreciate comments for public and tribal
4 comments on non-agenda items, we do have a portion of
5 that each morning and that portion has passed for the
6 day. If there's no other questions from the RAC for
7 Mr. Dalle-Molle or Dr. Voorhees, we will go ahead and
8 move on to the muskox Unit 22 and 23 update.

9
10 Thank you both for coming up and
11 sharing what you have.

12
13 Mr. Tom Plank, the floor is yours.

14
15 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
16 members of the Council. My name is Tom Plank and I am
17 a Wildlife Biologist for the Office of Subsistence
18 Management and I will present a summary of the results
19 for Temporary Wildlife Special Action WSA22-01. This
20 is only an update and is not an action item.

21
22 Temporary Special Action, WSA22-01
23 submitted by the National Park Service and Bureau of
24 Land Management at the beginning of this year requested
25 that the Federal Subsistence Board change the Federal
26 muskox permitting system in Units 22 and 23 from a
27 registration to a drawing permit for the 2022 to 2024
28 regulatory cycle. This was a housekeeping request as
29 these permits have been distributed via draw since
30 about 1998.

31
32 The proponents also requested to
33 standardize the language in the delegation of authority
34 letters and to change the in-season manager from the
35 Western Arctic National Parklands Superintendent to the
36 Anchorage Field Office Manager for the Federal muskox
37 hunt in the southwestern portion of Unit 23. Federal
38 in-season managers consider a draw permit hunt to be
39 the best management strategy for conserving natural and
40 healthy populations while still allowing for equitable
41 subsistence use by Federally-qualified subsistence
42 users.

43
44 This Council acted on WSA22-01 in your
45 winter 2022 meeting and the Council considered this as
46 a housekeeping request and concurs with administering
47 the hunt in the same way it has in the past. The
48 Federal Subsistence Board adopted this temporary action
49 during their April 2022 meeting. This is a temporary
50

0061

1 action only and the proponent intends to submit a
2 regular proposal at the proper time.

3

4 Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the
5 Council. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

6

7 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
8 Do we have any questions from the RAC.

9

10 (No comments)

11

12 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any RAC members on the
13 phone with any questions for Mr. Tom Plank.

14

15 (No comments)

16

17 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, thank
18 you for your update. We will go ahead and move on to
19 new business and we will start with the 2024 Fisheries
20 Resource Monitoring Program with Karen Hyer and Hannah
21 Voorhees. So Karen and Hannah, the floor is yours.

22

23 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Mr. Chair,
24 may I.

25

26 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, please.

27

28 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Mr. Chair,
29 this is Lisa. The -- on -- something on the agenda
30 changed, one of our presenters is not going to be
31 arriving until after lunch so we could make some
32 progress on that, but it's Joe Spencer so his report
33 will have to come a little bit later, probably after
34 lunch. Okay.

35

36 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Duly noted, thank you,
37 Lisa.

38

39 (Pause)

40

41 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So Karen Hyer and
42 Hannah Voorhees, you're first on the agenda under new
43 business she was just mentioning that Joe won't be
44 available until later.

45

46 MS. HYER: Mr. Chair and Council
47 members. Yeah, I think it would be good to wait until
48 Joe gets here because we've had a lot of conversations
49 and he'll have some more information on what we're

50

0062

1 calling pretty water and he has a presentation. So I
2 think that we could wait, if it's agreeable with the
3 Council, until after lunch, but I could do the Partners
4 Program presentation which is the next one on the list.

5

6 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, if the Council's
7 all right with that change and Mr. Spencer isn't here
8 yet we'll just skip down to Item H, the call for the
9 Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program Proposals
10 with Karen.

11

12 (No objections)

13

14 MS. HYER: Mr. Chairman. Council
15 members. I'm going to ask you to turn to Page 41 in
16 your book, the one that has the beautiful sunset over
17 McLees River Weir.

18

19 So the Office of Subsistence
20 Management.....

21

22 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Oh, one second.

23

24 MR. HOWARTH: Excuse me, Attamuk
25 probably needs one of these. Thank you.

26

27 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So it's Page 41 in
28 that book they just handed you Attamuk.

29

30 MR. SHIEDT: Thank you.

31

32 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur.
33 You may continue Karen.

34

35 MS. HYER: Mr. Chairman. Council
36 members. In addition to the Fisheries Resource
37 Monitoring Plan which we'll talk about this afternoon
38 which grants money for research and monitoring
39 projects, we have a different pot of money that grants
40 money for Alaska Native and rural organizations to hire
41 a fisheries biologist, an anthropologist or an outreach
42 coordinator to actually work in their organization to
43 help the organization engage in Federal Subsistence
44 Management. And this program is on a four year cycle
45 so it comes up once every four years. There's
46 currently a notice of funding opportunity posted, and
47 that's the long name we use for just a call for
48 proposals. So we're seeking proposals, again, from
49 Alaska Native and rural organizations that would
50

0063

1 incorporate into their Staff a fisheries biologist and
2 anthropologist or an outreach coordinator, and there's
3 also money for youth involvement within the program.
4 And the call is open now.

5

6 I am the one that's helping administer
7 this, and so if you look on that page right above the
8 picture is my contact information. So what I ask of
9 the Council is please reach out to these organizations
10 that you know and you're involved in, let them know
11 that this is available and have them contact me because
12 I'm happy to walk me through the proposal process,
13 answer any questions that they might have and I really
14 encourage people to take this seriously here in
15 northern Alaska [sic] because we've never had a partner
16 up here and it would be great to have someone up here
17 that could help these organizations engage in the
18 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program and other things
19 that we do.

20

21 So I can answer any questions anyone
22 might have.

23

24 MR. ARMSTRONG: So within this program,
25 is water quality monitoring part of it?

26

27 MS. HYER: So what the partners -- we
28 call it the Partners Program for short. So what it
29 does is it actually pays for the organization to hire a
30 biologist then the biologist could do water monitoring,
31 they could seek funding through the FRMP for other
32 research projects, they could create youth programs.
33 There are a lot of things that the biologist could do,
34 or the -- it could be a social scientist too, as we've
35 heard earlier, some of these organizations just have
36 ologists where they rely on a lot for their
37 professionals to do. But the idea is that we're
38 providing salary money so they can actually hire
39 somebody so they have the capability then to put these
40 programs into effect or go seek money for new things.
41 So this particular pot of money isn't for the sampling,
42 it's for the biologist or anthropologist or outreach
43 coordinator that would do the work.

44

45 MR. ARMSTRONG: Okay. Say we do get a
46 biologist on the Kobuk River, or the lower Kobuk River
47 and they do monitor water samples, who has access to
48 the water samples, can the tribes have access to it to
49 use for their information?

50

0064

1 MS. HYER: Mr. Chairman. Council
2 members. Any information that we collect, the tribes
3 and the public and the Council members should have
4 access to. Our should be accessed by the public. So,
5 yeah, the short answer to that is yes. That anything
6 that's collected through this program also the tribes
7 would have access to.

8
9 MR. ARMSTRONG: All right. The only
10 reason I bring that up is because there's so much
11 beaver in the lower Kobuk and I'm not too sure, even
12 the upper Kobuk but there's a lot of camp sites and
13 they use these camp sites for subsistence use and with
14 all the beaver in the creeks and tributaries, you know,
15 I just thought that maybe it'd be important to have
16 water sampling to see if it's useable for use.

17
18 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair, it's Wilbur
19 Howarth. Our environmentalist out of our IRA tribe,
20 he's got grant monies and he has -- to monitor water
21 and do tests, he has those already. He'll be getting
22 the boat and motor coming on the spring and he's been
23 doing studies like with the sheefish too, fishermen
24 that bring home sheefish would clip the -- would clip
25 them and get their age and stuff. So this water, we've
26 been working with our environmentalist out of our IRA
27 for years now and they work with Browns, which is where
28 he gets the grant monies to do the monitoring with
29 water. So I'm glad you and Elmer brought this up. And
30 he said he's ready to go. He's got equipment now.

31
32 Thank you.

33
34 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any other questions
35 for Karen and the call for Partners.

36
37 (No comments)

38
39 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, thank
40 you for discussing this with us and it sounds very
41 exciting for these kind of funding opportunities to
42 happen. Before we move on -- thank you, Karen. I'd
43 just like to ask by consensus vote, if anyone has an
44 issue to take a few of the new business items out of
45 sequence just because of the folks that aren't
46 available yet, so what I'm going to ask is if we could
47 get a motion to amend the agenda moving forward with
48 Item H for the time being and then after lunch we'll
49 get back up to Item A through G, just because the folks
50

0065

1 that are going to be talking about them are coming on
2 the first jet.

3

4 MR. SHIEDT: I'll motion what you said.

5

6 MR. ARMSTRONG: Second.

7

8 MR. CLEVELAND: Second the motion, Mr.

9

9 Chair.

10

11 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So motion by Attamuk
12 and seconded by Vern to take some things out of
13 sequence starting with Item H under new business due to
14 speaker availability. All those in favor please say
15 aye.

16

17 IN UNISON: Aye.

18

19 CHAIRMAN BAKER: And those opposed same
20 sign.

21

22 (No opposing votes)

23

24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, thank you
25 everyone. So next we'll move right into Item I,
26 identify issues for fiscal year 2022 annual report with
27 Lisa.

28

29 (Pause)

30

31 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Okay, so
32 Mr. Chairman and members of the Council. For your
33 information guidelines for the annual reports can be
34 found on Page 42 of your meeting book. This is not an
35 action item.

36

37 ANILCA established the annual report as
38 a way to inform the Federal Subsistence Board of
39 regional subsistence uses and needs and to provide
40 recommendations for regional fish and wildlife
41 management strategies, policies, standards, guidelines
42 and proposed regulations. I would like to emphasize
43 that your annual report ensures that the Board has the
44 most up to date awareness of issues concerns and
45 current events that impact your subsistence way of
46 life. With your report and recommendations the Board
47 can make informal [sic] decisions on regulatory and
48 policy actions.

49

50

0066

1 So, Mr. Chair, and Council members if
2 you have items of information you would like to see
3 raised to the Federal Subsistence Board in your next
4 annual report I'll make a note of these items at this
5 time. And one thing I might want to add is after we
6 have our discussion with the priority information needs
7 we might come up with some more ideas to add to this
8 list but if you have any issues right now we could talk
9 about it.

10

11 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

12

13 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Lisa. So
14 any members of the RAC with issues they would like to
15 identify to include in the annual report.

16

17 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Excuse me,
18 I apologize, correction, it -- this is an action item
19 because you're making -- we're asking you to do
20 something so sorry about that -- correction.

21

22 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Lisa. Do
23 we have anything that we've discussed so far and has
24 been brought up that we'd like to add to the annual
25 report.

26

27 (No comments)

28

29 CHAIRMAN BAKER: One thing that I feel
30 like would be appropriate given the discussion that
31 it's brought up today is identifying the need for kind
32 of cohesive information regarding WSA21-01 and how
33 things have fared this season and just identifying that
34 we'd like as much information as we can from as many
35 different agencies as we can get the information from.
36 Just, because as Mr. Dalle-Molle brought up, there's
37 only so much that one organization can speak to when it
38 comes to their management of the lands and policies
39 thereof, so specific to that, I think it'd be very
40 important to stress the need for information
41 considering that this special action covers two
42 different hunting seasons.

43

44 Does anyone else have anything.

45

46 (No comments)

47

48 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Vern, or any other RAC
49 members on the phone, do you have issues that you'd

50

0067

1 like to include for the report?

2

3 MR. CLEVELAND: None at the moment, Mr.
4 Chair. Thank you.

5

6 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Vern.
7 Bobby or Calvin, have either of you managed to get
8 online with us?

9

10 (No comments)

11

12 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So hearing none at
13 this time I feel it'd be appropriate that if something
14 does come up throughout the rest of today or tomorrow
15 that we can add that to the list when we come to it and
16 make a note of it there, Lisa.

17

18 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Okay. We
19 can continue to talk about this, I'll write -- jot down
20 some ideas and we can, towards the end of the meeting
21 kind of go back over this again. It's just -- so,
22 again, the annual report replies that I listed earlier,
23 there were seven different topics of interest so you
24 might want to revisit some of those and then just see
25 what other interests or needs you would like to
26 address.

27

28 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

29

30 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Lisa. So
31 with that, if there's nothing else at this time we'll
32 go ahead and move on to Item -- the second Item I on
33 the agenda, fall 2022 Council application/nomination
34 open season with DeAnna Perry. The floor is yours.

35

36 MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
37 Members of the Council. For the record my name is
38 DeAnna Perry. I'm the Council Coordinator for the
39 Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
40 but I'm on loan so I'm delighted to be with you during
41 your meeting and I do feel it is a privilege to be in
42 your region today.

43

44 On behalf of the Program and us
45 Coordinators, I would like to thank all Council members
46 for your volunteer service on the Council and on behalf
47 of the Federally-qualified subsistence users in your
48 region. Your knowledge and experience is of great
49 value to the Federal Subsistence Program. I've heard

50

0068

1 several comments already today about representation on
2 your Council, I would like to let you know that the
3 Program is constantly working to have robust Councils
4 with full membership and at the request of the Board
5 we're going to engage the help of the Native liaisons
6 of several Federal agencies to help us solicit more
7 applications during this application and appointment
8 cycle. We're also requesting you, as Lisa had
9 mentioned earlier, we're asking the Council members to
10 help out because you are the connection to the
11 communities in the regions that you represent.

12
13 The 2023 Council application period
14 opened on September 13th and we're encouraging you to
15 help us spread the word about it in your region and to
16 help us recruit new applicants. Again, you know the
17 people in your region and you can also share the first-
18 hand experience of what it means to serve on the
19 Council, what's involved, how much time it takes. You
20 can also nominate a candidate. If someone is
21 interested in applying or having a hard time filling
22 out an application you can help them with that or point
23 them in Lisa's direction, she can help them do that.
24 We do have several application packets on the front
25 entry table so I would encourage you all to take a
26 handful and take back to your communities. And for
27 those folks listening on the phone, we do have
28 application packets available on the website and that
29 website address is www.doi.gov/subsistence/regions.
30 And I share with you, you have to click on the regions
31 tab on the blue bar because it doesn't appear on a drop
32 down if you just hover the cursor over it it doesn't
33 appear as a drop down, so you do have to click the
34 regions tab.

35
36 It is a tremendous benefit for
37 retaining current members, we have fewer open spots,
38 and I'm thinking of the wonderful contributions of
39 Enoch Attamuk, and I hope I pronounced that correctly,
40 please pardon me if I did not. But I've heard the
41 various contributions he has made and I am saddened
42 that he will not be reapplying, but we do value the
43 experience that all the Council members bring to us.

44
45 For your region there are three
46 expiring seats and I saw on your roster there are
47 already two vacant seats so right now we're looking to
48 fill five seats on your Council, that's half your
49 Council, five out of 10. So, again, I would encourage
50

0069

1 you to help spread the word. We do use FaceBook, some
2 social media outlets. Our tribal Native liaison in OSM
3 sends out lots of applications to various tribal
4 representatives, so, again, if there is something that
5 you can think of to help us spread the word, how we can
6 assist you, please, again, reach out to Lisa or reach
7 out to any of us here at the meeting and we'll be happy
8 to help you.

9
10 And I standby if you have any other
11 questions.

12
13 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

14
15 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, DeAnna.
16 Any questions from any of the members of the RAC
17 regarding nominations and applications.

18
19 MR. SHIEDT: I have one. My wife
20 called me in to work on our boiler for a little while
21 and I did and she said you better reapply.

22
23 (Laughter)

24
25 MR. SHIEDT: She said, I want you away
26 from home at least a few hours a day.

27
28 (Laughter)

29
30 MR. SHIEDT: No, she didn't say that, I
31 said that.

32
33 (Laughter)

34
35 MR. SHIEDT: But the more I hear, I
36 think I will reapply. She encouraged me when I went
37 home, to reapply, because like I always say, I'm
38 worried about what our future of our Western Arctic
39 Caribou Herd, not only our caribou herd but other
40 resources too. Thank you. Northwest Alaska is gifted
41 compared to the other regions. We have most of
42 everything, which we -- and the others don't have and
43 we got to preserve it.

44
45 MS. PERRY: Through the Chair. Member
46 Attamuk. I agree. And you made me very happy, I'm
47 very tickled to hear that and you do know that this is
48 all being transcribed so your mother -- your wife's
49 orders are now going to be set in stone. So that's
50

0070

1 wonderful news, thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you for that
4 Attamuk, for that wonderful news. And, thank you,
5 DeAnna. If there's no other questions -- Elmer, go
6 ahead.

7

8 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah, I just want to
9 thank Attamuk. I know when I got in, we started
10 calling in but living here in Kotzebue when I was
11 younger and seeing Attamuk and his boys out in the
12 ocean, hunting, or hunting on the Kobuk River, I always
13 recognize his boat and stop and say hi and try to get
14 report from each other, you know, what's going on,
15 how's the caribou, if they're moving. But I really
16 appreciate Attamuk with his information he brings to
17 the meetings, and to the region.

18

19 Thank you, Attamuk.

20

21 MR. SHIEDT: Yeah, thanks.

22

23 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Well, if there's no
24 other questions, thank you, Ms. Perry. We'll be sure to
25 let you know if we have any questions that come up.
26 Given that the next item is update on Western Arctic
27 Caribou Herd with Mr. Alex Hanson, which is usually one
28 of the biggest speaking topics of the day I'd like to
29 recommend that we break for lunch a few minutes early
30 and then we'll start with Alex at 1:00 if there are no
31 objections to that from the Council.

32

33 (No objections)

34

35 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, the
36 local time is now 11:54, we'll go ahead and break for
37 lunch. For those calling in on the phone we're going
38 to hopefully be back online at 1:00 p.m.

39

40 MR. CLEVELAND: Okay, thank you.

41

42 (Off record)

43

44 (On record)

45

46 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, everyone,
47 the local time is now 1:05 p.m., and we'll go ahead and
48 reconvene. Just before we get rolling, in the room we
49 have Wilbur Howarth, Attamuk Shiedt, Elmer Armstrong

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1 and myself, Thomas Baker. Do we have any other RAC
2 members on the phone.

3
4 MR. KRAMER: Yes, this is Kramer,
5 Michael.

6
7 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kramer.
8 Vern Cleveland, are you still with us?

9
10 (No comments)

11
12 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So with that we do
13 have a quorum with five members and as stated, before
14 we broke for lunch we'll continue on with Item J,
15 update on Western Arctic Caribou Herd from Alex Hanson.
16 Alex, the floor is yours.

17
18 MR. HANSON: Thank you, Chairman Baker.
19 And for the record my name is Alex Hanson. I'm the
20 Caribou Biologist for the Alaska Department of Fish and
21 Game here in Kotzebue. So I think -- is it Tab J, I'm
22 trying to remember where that presentation is located
23 in your.....

24
25 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Supplemental Tab 4.

26
27 MR. HANSON: Thank you. I was way off.

28
29 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So it's the book with
30 the agenda as the cover, not the one with the pretty
31 picture.

32
33 MR. HANSON: I'll give you just a
34 moment to find that. I do have some new updated
35 information that's not in this presentation so I'll
36 include that as we go through as well.

37
38 All right, so when you find it, the
39 first slide is a pretty picture of a mountain with a
40 bunch of caribou. And just kind of an overview of what
41 we're going to talk about, the abundance, biological
42 data, management, harvest reporting, et cetera.

43
44 So the first slide in this presentation
45 is a graph that shows the abundance over time. So this
46 is -- our population estimates throughout time --
47 actually let me jump back one, I skipped one here. The
48 WAH abundance, the 2022 count as we already discussed,
49 I believe Vern mentioned that, a few other folks,
50

1 Attamuk had mentioned that number, 164,000, so in this
2 current presentation it says the 2022 count is in
3 progress. We finalized that number, so it's 164,000
4 which is down from last year's estimate of 188,000. So
5 if we jump over to the next page, that abundance graph
6 kind of -- it kind of shows us what's happened over
7 time. We saw a real big valley in the '70s, the
8 population was around 74,000, somewhere around there.
9 In the mid-70s the population increased over time and
10 there was a little bit of a dip there at the top but
11 the peak estimate was 2003 at nearly half a million
12 caribou. So from that time period until now we've
13 essentially been coming down. We saw a little bit of a
14 blip in 2017 and 2018 -- or not '18, but '19, and then
15 we're continued down from there. So overall we can say
16 that it's kind of been in decline for about 20 years.

17
18 So moving on to the next slide there is
19 calving. So calving, or parturition is an estimate of
20 the number of collared adult females that we see on the
21 calving grounds that have calves. So we're out there
22 in the airplane in the spring, we're looking at marked
23 or collared individuals and seeing whether or not they
24 have a calf with them. So that rate was pretty high,
25 you know, between 2015, 2016 and up until 2019, I
26 believe, and then it went down a little bit. So below
27 average a little bit, the average -- long-term average
28 is about 70 percent, we're in the high to mid-60s right
29 now. Last year was 64 percent of adult females that
30 had a calf with them. So not super alarming but it's
31 something to think about and we're keeping a close eye
32 on that and we've been monitoring that every year for
33 30 years or so so we'll continue on that.

34
35 The next piece of information or metric
36 that we looked at is recruitment. This is a survey
37 that takes place in the spring of the year, usually
38 around April and sometimes we roll into May, but what
39 we're looking for here is the survival of the calves
40 through the winter. So about that springtime we're out
41 there looking at individual animals from an airplane.
42 So we're looking at about 10,000 animals and we're
43 basically taking the estimate of the number of adults
44 versus the number of calves within that population. So
45 that is represented as basically a number of calves per
46 hundred adults, that's how that number works. So we're
47 about average -- long-term average is 17 calves per 100
48 adults and we've been maintaining that average for the
49 past four years. It was a little bit higher for a few
50

0073

1 years there, which seemed to coincide pretty well with
2 that little spike in population that we saw around
3 2018, 2017 -- or 2017 through '19, I guess.

4
5 The next thing that we'll talk about is
6 adult survival. And this is something that we monitor
7 very closely. As you can imagine, you know, the adult
8 survival or female survival is very important for the
9 population to maintain or to grow.

10
11 Everybody still following? Maybe I'm
12 -- did I lose you already?

13
14 MR. ARMSTRONG: I lost you.

15
16 MR. HANSON: You lost me.

17
18 MR. ARMSTRONG: I got adult female.

19
20 MR. HANSON: Yeah, adult female
21 survival, it says 72 percent, okay, that's where we're
22 at. If you have a question or I'm getting too out
23 there let me know. Okay, so that's a little bit below
24 average, the long-term average is 81 percent. So
25 that's concerning to us.

26
27 If we can expect to see growth within
28 the population, we want to see adult female survival
29 above 80 percent and we haven't been seeing that for
30 the past few years. I guess the only bright spot is
31 this past -- deployment of collars, as was mentioned
32 earlier, we deployed 36 collars last year, all of those
33 collars are still alive and on air which is a little
34 bit interesting and exciting for us, but it's still too
35 early to say whether or not, you know, that survival is
36 going to carry throughout the full year. I will have
37 to qualify one thing here, prior to 2020 we were
38 catching on the Kobuk River, unsuccessfully for a few
39 years because the migration patterns had changed, but
40 we were modeling our survival from end of September
41 through the first of October, and now we've shifted
42 that because our capture dates have shifted to April.
43 So now our survival rates are modeled after a year
44 beginning -- would be the first of May through the end
45 of April the following year. Not that it matters that
46 much, I just wanted to make sure that that was clear.
47 So we're not quite finished with this collar year,
48 we're still about six months into it.

49
50

1 Next slide is fall bull to cow ratios.
2 It says 2001 through '21. We do these periodically,
3 it's not a survey we do every year. I'm more and more
4 interested in doing it now that our population is
5 lower. It's a very challenging survey to do, we need
6 to have the right conditions. I've been trying to get
7 this done this fall, the weather's not been
8 cooperating. The caribou are not cooperating, they're
9 very scattered and still 75 percent of the collars are
10 on the North Slope. So logistically it's very hard for
11 us to put together a fall comp, which involves a
12 helicopter and a SuperCub, you know, to get this
13 estimate when they're so far away. Last year our
14 estimate was 47 cows to 100 bulls, which is good.
15 According to the management plan we manage for 30 cows --
16 or sorry, 30 bulls to 100 cows, however, I would
17 caution you that one of the things that -- challenges
18 of looking at this is we can potentially have a high
19 number of bulls to cows and if we shoot too many bulls
20 that can go down really fast so we just need to think
21 about the harvest strategy moving forward. Right now
22 it looks like we have a surplus of bulls, however, it's
23 pretty easy to overcome that surplus with excessive
24 harvest.

25
26 The next slide is cause and mortality.
27 These are just put into three course categories. So
28 take this with a grain of salt, we're doing the best
29 that we can to understand mortality. And this is
30 coming directly from collared individuals so we don't
31 have a real solid understanding of what, you know,
32 survival is for all individuals, just those collared
33 individuals. So when we see a collared animal that
34 stops moving we'll do our best to get out there as soon
35 as we can, get on the ground and then make a sight
36 assessment of what that mortality event was. We can
37 pretty easily sometimes tell it was a bear or a wolf
38 and then a lot of times there's this other category,
39 unknown, you know, it might be that that animal died,
40 you know, in November and December and it's dark and we
41 can't get out there until next June and a lot of guess
42 work goes into that. So a lot of those kind of fall
43 into that catch-all of unknown. And then we do collect
44 some information on hunter harvest. If, you know,
45 hunters harvest an animal and then return that collar
46 then we can put that in there as well. And I will say
47 that, you know, totally fine if you harvest a collared
48 animal, that's not a problem, just please get it back
49 to us because it still contains some good information
50

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1 on that collar and we appreciate that and we'll pay the
2 freight, no worries.

3

4

5 So the next slide is population trend.
6 This is something that we kind of try to put a bunch of
7 stuff together, which includes adult cow survival, calf
8 recruitment and then that squiggly line on the top,
9 that's kind of a representation of the population. So
10 when we put those two things together, you know, we're
11 bringing more calves into the population, the cows are
12 surviving to reproduce more calves, then we kind of
13 just weighted those. So currently if we look over on
14 the far right, you know, to the end of 2021 it looks
15 like we're probably in a declining phase which is not
16 surprising, that's what we've been seeing, right. So
17 in a period of relative stability or growth, let's go
18 to the far left, you know, in a period of growth as we
19 saw in the '80s and early '90s we had high calf
20 survival and high cow survival. So obviously the more
21 cows that survive can produce more calves and then more
22 surviving calves can produce more individuals. So,
23 currently, we're fairly average on our recruitment,
24 that's calf survival and our cow survival is down.

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0076

1 harvest, and then the final one there would be limit
2 subsistence harvest if bull to cow ratio fell below 30
3 bulls to 100 cows. So all of those boxes have been
4 checked except the final one there with the bull
5 restriction to resident hunters.

6
7 So the next recommendations that would
8 come out of that under the preservative management
9 strategy would be no harvest of calves, limit harvest
10 of cows by residents through permit hunts and/or
11 village quotas, limit subsistence harvest of bulls to
12 maintain that 30 to 100 bull to cow ratio and harvest
13 restricted to residents only according State and
14 Federal law, which may include closure of some Federal
15 public lands. So some of those have already taken
16 place, closure of Federal lands, for instance but we
17 might, you know, moving forward have to talk about
18 restriction of cow harvest by local residents. And the
19 reason being is that, you know, those non-local, non-
20 resident hunters, as obnoxious as they may seem they
21 don't harvest very many animals and they're harvesting
22 almost strictly bulls. So before the closure that
23 harvest was about 350 bulls. From a biological
24 perspective, and my personal belief, that doesn't
25 really matter, but socially I know it's important to
26 users within the region. So my estimation, we're still
27 getting those numbers in yet, is that non-resident,
28 non-local harvest is probably been cut a third or more.
29 We might have seen 80 to 100 bulls harvested this year.
30 I'm still pulling those numbers, it's not finalized
31 yet.

32
33 So that's a huge substantial reduction
34 but we need to start talking about reduction in cow
35 harvest if this trend continues.

36
37 All right. So the WAH management
38 there. The C&T finding is positive, that means this is
39 a subsistence population. It's been designated so.
40 The ANS of 8,000 to 12,000 and that's a combined ANS,
41 or amount necessary for subsistence, so that's
42 designated by the Subsistence Division through the
43 Board of Game, and that includes the Western Arctic and
44 the Teshekpuk. So currently I think we're probably
45 still meeting that. There's quite a bit of harvest
46 that takes place on the North Slope from the Teshekpuk
47 Herd as well. That population estimate is still
48 pending, they're working on that now, but it sounds
49 like it's going to be at or above where it was last
50

0077

1 time. And the last time that was counted was 2017.
2 And I think that estimate was around 55,000.

3

4 So our best guesstimate, and I say
5 guesstimate because we really don't know is annual
6 harvest of 12,000, which may include up to 3,600 cows.
7 In the intensive management objective -- I'm sorry, all
8 these little acronyms here, but that is basically kind
9 of a line in statute, State statute, where we have to
10 start considering serious measures and that's 200,000.
11 So this is the second year we've been below that mark.
12 So it may be that the Board wants to consider harvest --
13 or intensive management practices, which could include
14 many different things, but that's up to the Board.

15

16 So currently our harvestable surplus --
17 I don't think that's right -- that's based off the last
18 number. Standby one.

19

20 (Pause)

21

22 MR. HANSON: I think it's in the 9,000
23 range, and that's based on a six percent harvest. But
24 what we may want to think about moving forward is
25 considering what is actually, you know, available for
26 bull harvest and for cow harvest. So currently if we
27 just say six percent of the total population, that's
28 9,800 individuals. So our long-term understanding is
29 that harvest is around 12,000 individuals, which tells
30 me first off we need to understand what the harvest is,
31 and, secondly, that maybe we're shooting too many. But
32 moving forward we may talk about, you know, ways to
33 really track a better understanding of what, you know,
34 harvest of cows, you know, is it one percent of the
35 cows, or two percent of the cows and 15 percent of the
36 bulls, we can manage a little bit better and understand
37 what our efforts might do to the population.

38

39 And I have to throw a plug in for Vern,
40 I really appreciate you, Vern, you know, asking local
41 folks to participate in harvest, or understanding of
42 the harvest reporting and getting better information
43 too because we're at a point right now that, like I
44 say, we might be harvesting too many we just don't know
45 but we need to get that information so that we can
46 understand that. I have no interest in, you know,
47 trying to get the Board of Game to shut things down and
48 close things and cause hardships for anybody, we just
49 want to make sure that we harvest at a responsible and

50

0078

1 sustainable level so that, you know, your children and
2 your children's children can hunt caribou within this
3 region moving forward.
4

5 The next one we'll look at is harvest
6 model. And I put this in here just for a point of
7 understanding long-term harvest. You can see those
8 dark bars and then there's a little bar on top. But
9 the big bar underneath, that is what our understanding
10 of local harvest is, you know, moving forward from
11 about 1999. And this is based on caribou locations and
12 we take the information that the Subsistence Division
13 gives us and we kind of extrapolate that. And it's a
14 model and it's very coarse and we know it's not
15 accurate but it makes it seem that that harvest kind of
16 hovers around 12,000 per year. So we kind of walked
17 away from that currently, you know, we realize that
18 that's too coarse of a model to really give us the
19 management decision level information that we need.
20

21 So next one, harvest reporting, you see
22 a couple short, fat -- well, four of them there for the
23 four years we've had that permit on the books, the
24 RC907. That information, I anticipate, or I kind of
25 figure we get about 10 percent of the harvest data
26 through the RC907 permit. Now I'm not going to come
27 out and say that the RC907 or RC800 is the only way
28 that we can get that information. I know there's folks
29 within the room and on the phone that have better
30 ideas. This is just the tool that the Board of Game
31 gave us as a State agency to manage that, and I know
32 it's not working the way we want it to. So, you know,
33 Vern had talked about working with the communities, the
34 IRA in collecting that information and then I think we
35 can get a lot closer to the truth of what harvest
36 actually is. So I appreciate any and all ideas on
37 that.
38

39 The next thing I'll bring you to and
40 we're about done here is annual variation of winter
41 range. And I put this in here because I think it's
42 very important to understand that the Western Arctic
43 Caribou Herd occupies a huge area, 157,000 square miles
44 or something like that. For -- if you have an
45 understanding of geography in the Lower 48, that's
46 roughly the size of California, so it's a huge area.
47 It's twice the size of my home state. And, you know,
48 as these caribou move to different areas within their
49 winter range, this is representing winter range only,
50

0079

1 you know, they're going to occupy an area for awhile
2 and then they're going to move to another area.
3 They're consuming a lot of resource, that winter lichen
4 feed, and they can't take, you know, 400,000 of their
5 bets friends to one spot every year and expect to live
6 into the future, right, they got to spread that across
7 different parts of the range. So if you can see kind
8 of '13/14, that was a period when they spent a lot of
9 time on the Seward Peninsula, for instance. And, you
10 know, about that time when I came to Kotzebue 70
11 percent of the Western Arctic Herd was down on
12 Espenberg, that's where they wintered. But shortly
13 after, as you well know, they moved away from there.
14 And by selecting winter sites that influences where
15 they go in the fall or the fall migration. So as I
16 mentioned, this year, you know, most of the herd is
17 still on the North Slope. We recently had, you know,
18 first to middle part of October about 20 percent of the
19 collars came through the Kobuk Valley, you know,
20 crossed over near Ambler and folks were able to get a
21 few before all the ice came in. So some of those are
22 still over there. I took a look at them, you know,
23 they were kind of working towards Selby Lake and then
24 some were heading south so who knows where they'll end
25 up, might get into the Buckland or Nulato Hills but
26 things have definitely changed in the past few years.
27 And I found it very interesting, this year was very
28 different for movements. You know oddly enough, you
29 know, with the closure of the Noatak Preserve there
30 were very little Western Arctic Caribou presence in
31 that Preserve this year. There was some in the fall
32 over the eastern side into the Nigu but the vast
33 majority of the Western Arctic Herd spent the summer
34 and fall kind of on the Lisburne Peninsula as was
35 mentioned, you know, pushing over toward Point Hope. I
36 was on the North Slope RAC call and they talked about,
37 you know, very good harvest out of Point Hope this
38 year.

39
40 All right, in summary, I would just say
41 that, you know, we're looking at some critical stuff
42 right here. Short-yearling recruitment is okay, it's
43 average. Calving's a little bit below average. And
44 adult cow survival is my primary concern right now so
45 anything we can do to understand that, we're working
46 toward that trying to understand it but we also need to
47 understand what the harvest data is so we can
48 understand what the harvestable surplus is.

49
50

0080

1 And I think that's all I have but I'm
2 happy to entertain any questions or tell you some
3 stories.

4

5 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Alex. Any
6 questions from RAC members in the room.

7

8 MR. SHIEDT: Attamuk, I have a question
9 for you. If we're going to take a reduction on our
10 harvest, I think it need to be done, not just for the
11 Federal Board, it need to be done on the State level.
12 What good are we going to if we say on Federal lands
13 you got to take a reduction but not take a reduction in
14 the State. I think the State and the Federal need to
15 talk together to make a reduction. It'll be hard for
16 the enforcement to enforce from the Federal and the
17 State. My argument will be strongly, I will tell
18 Dalle-Molle that why are you enforcing in the Federal
19 level if the State is not going to enforce in the State
20 level. Because this is one herd we're talking about,
21 all the way from Barrow to Unalakleet. Not only
22 Kotzebue got to decide but the other 19 villages got to
23 be involved with our decision here. All the people
24 that take the Western Arctic Caribou Herd need to be on
25 this table, like the table's going to be when they have
26 the Western Arctic Caribou Herd meeting next month. I
27 would love to attend and tell them that because in
28 order for the population to come back, because it's at
29 a danger level, where we have to take measures, to take
30 a reduction, it's got to be done at both levels. So we
31 strongly need to invite the people from the State, we
32 have a little bit advantage at the Governor's level
33 because his family -- he's married to is from Noorvik.
34 So we could push Noorvik to say, hey, son, listen to me
35 or else.

36

37 (Laughter)

38

39 MR. SHIEDT: I mean we got to get dirty
40 some place, some time to preserve and save our caribou.
41 We need to do it at both levels, not just at one level.
42 So if you're going to talk, I think you need this Board
43 as it's hear right now at the talking level with the
44 Western Arctic Caribou Herd. I will not respect if
45 you're going to do it just in the Western Arctic
46 Caribou Herd lands because I could harvest it in the
47 NANA lands, are you going to enforce on the NANA lands,
48 I don't think so. Because my camp at Aggi, wintertime,
49 they go there too. I could shoot them right at land

50

0081

1 and it's going to be on my land, I'll protect my land.
2 And that's what I'm saying so we have to be careful on
3 this level because these numbers, we're on preserve --
4 we got to start saving 130 to 200,000 -- Teshekpuk Herd
5 is a completely different herd. As someone that grow
6 up in Noatak I could tell the difference between the
7 Teshekpuk Herd and the caribou herd. A few years ago I
8 reported that Noatak people was getting a lot of
9 Teshekpuk Herd. Not only that, my Uncle Ivan would
10 call me and said got a Teshekpuk Herd and they're
11 better because they migrate less and their meat is --
12 they taste a little bit different because we grow up as
13 caribou, we could taste the difference. I could taste
14 the difference. It's like some people could taste the
15 difference between whitefish from different areas of
16 Noatak and Kobuk River, there's a big difference. Same
17 thing with the caribou.

18
19 So I would say, yes, let's take a level
20 -- but we need to talk to Vern and Cyrus and the rest
21 of the caribou working management plan people together.
22 So I think a majority of us need to attend next month
23 meeting, not only one. They got to hear it from the
24 whole Council.

25
26 Thank you.

27
28 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Attamuk.
29 Any other questions or comments.

30
31 MR. ARMSTRONG: You know it worries me
32 that the herd number is really low and we're talking
33 about taking measures on limiting a catch to a person
34 that lives off subsistence while gas prices are high,
35 bullet prices are high and hard to find. We could put
36 limitations in but still with climate change we're
37 going to probably take more fish and affect the fish
38 count too. I mean that's just my thinking but we're
39 doing this when times are tough but I think we need to
40 do it in order for the caribou count to rebound. It's
41 a tough decision but I think we need to work with WACH
42 and come up with a solid plan to where all the
43 subsistence users can go with.

44
45 Thank you.

46
47 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Elmer. Any
48 other questions from RAC members.

49
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0082

1 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair.

2

3 MR. KRAMER: Mr. Chairman.

4

5 MR. HOWARTH: Sorry.

6

7 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Wilbur went first and
8 then it'll be you, Mike.

9

10 MR. KRAMER: Okay.

11

12 MR. HOWARTH: Okay, Mike, sorry. Mr.
13 Chair. Most of the hunters that I run into after they
14 came back from hunting, and that's way above Onion
15 Portage and they were blessed to get caribou. There
16 wasn't very much boats but a few Kotzebue boats, maybe
17 just three I saw anyway during that week, but, yeah, we
18 need to probably need to limit ourselves. Myself, with
19 a family of six, four caribou will last over a year and
20 my wife said maybe even two now. She knows about the
21 caribou declining because we eat caribou every year, we
22 hunt. So I think we could put a limit on just to bring
23 this herd back up, it's getting too low and it is
24 scary. So we need to start stepping up here
25 somewheres, at least start.

26

27 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

28

29 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur. Go
30 ahead, Mike.

31

32 MR. KRAMER: Good afternoon, Mr.
33 Chairman. You know our concern is this caribou herd
34 big time because it's a big part of our daily, you
35 know, food. We all know that the grocery store here is
36 having a difficult time keeping up with the demand for
37 food. Our current harvest right now I believe on
38 Federal land is five per day, you know, I'd like to see
39 on Federal that it be dropped to three per day and
40 possibly keep cows two cows per year. Because a lot of
41 the times that, you know, these out of state hunters,
42 when they get to caribou up north we don't even know if
43 they're allowing the first ones to pass, who knows. We
44 don't know if they're letting the first groups of
45 caribou pass unbothered or anything like that. You
46 know I started to see caribou herds come through -- I
47 mean caribou horns and boxes of meat come through kind
48 of early this year but, you know, it's been difficult
49 all over. I'm pretty sure that the villages are having

50

0083

1 difficulty keeping their stores stocked. You know this
2 whole Covid thing keeps getting -- we've been feeling
3 the affects of it for quite awhile now, you know, the
4 ability to find ammunition when you need it. There's
5 going to be a lot of things that are going to really
6 start affecting us, especially if our caribou herd
7 continues to drop.

8
9 So one thing that I see that nothing's
10 being done on is the predator control. Under Federal
11 law we're required to have, one, predator control; 2
12 eliminate guides and transporters and 3, land in ANCSA;
13 we can't do much on land in ANCSA, you know, but
14 predator control we need to start looking at avenues we
15 could take to necessarily bring down these predators,
16 the big predators, bears, wolves, you know, I've heard
17 of a possibility they could come up with a dart where
18 they could hit them with a tranquilizer gun and it'll
19 make that animal sterile. Sterile. It wouldn't be
20 able to make babies anymore. You figure if you get 20
21 bears per year, you know, 20 bears next year, 20 bears
22 next -- you know, that's 60 bears that cannot produce
23 offspring. You know we're starting to help, you know,
24 especially the moose -- the moose get tagged the
25 hardest. Them poor calves they get nailed every day.
26 We got to start looking at taking measures on this
27 predator control thing. You know we just don't have
28 the use like we used to, we used to go out and go nail
29 a bunch of wolves. The price of gas has taken a major
30 effect, you know, the price of ammunition, everything
31 has gone up within our region but our wages. You know
32 this Northwest Arctic, we don't have a set cost of
33 living in place to protect the people for the ability
34 to survive. You could go to AC and buy \$180 worth of
35 groceries and you don't even walk out with two bags,
36 you know, it's beginning to get kind of ridiculous.

37
38 You know the ability to be able to
39 eliminate guides and transporters, that must be taken
40 pretty serious and it should be taken pretty serious at
41 this point in time because I do not want our herd to
42 drop below 130,000. You know if it does that then
43 we're going to have to take even a bigger cut. We've
44 been taking cuts for the last five to six years. I
45 could remember we were allowed to take 15 a day, you
46 know, some people did, some people took 15 a year, to
47 provide for other families who couldn't get their
48 caribou.

49
50

1 You know the predators have to be
2 controlled. We got to start doing something. They got
3 to start coming up with a secondary plan on predators.
4 We just don't have the people going out and harvesting
5 these predators anymore. We need to start either
6 giving some of these hunters that come up here, give
7 them a complimentary bear tag, here take a bear, you
8 know, we need to start doing something to encourage
9 locals and non-locals to be able to harvest bears. I
10 know that we're allowed to take two per year on the
11 State side and we're allowed to sell the hides and
12 skulls. That also kind of helps the people because
13 they're able to put a little bit more money in their
14 pocket. Those kind of -- you know, we've been taking
15 steps to reduce our harvest. A lot of time when
16 caribou finally start coming through Kotzebue we start
17 with the cows because the bulls are all stinked, you
18 know, so we're getting -- so the cows are getting
19 hammered from Kotzebue, below Noatak, Kotzebue all the
20 way down towards Buckland, you know, they're getting
21 hammered.

22
23 I think we need to go ahead and reduce
24 the cow harvest down to two a year per person and three
25 bulls, you know, per day. I think we're going to have
26 to start taking these drastic measures.

27
28 And I know a lot of you guys will agree
29 with me it's going to hurt. It's going to hurt our
30 freezers, it's going to hurt our economy here but we
31 have to be able to have some kind of supplemental, you
32 know, food. I know a lot of people started reverting
33 to harvesting moose. I'm curious how the lower Kobuk,
34 Delta, and upper Kobuk moose count here pretty soon.
35 You know we should be able to find out that and then we
36 should be able to take more measures on that one also.

37
38 But the bears, they're starting to get
39 pretty crazy, it needs to be taken care of soon. You
40 know if there's a possibility if we could get some kind
41 of an anecdote that could make a bear sterile, I figure
42 if we do 20 a year, in three years we'll have 60 bears
43 that cannot produce. I talked to a friend of mine who
44 was flying a plane up from Fairbanks to Kotzebue, he
45 said he saw a sow with four cubs just about the same
46 size as mom. Now, tell me that's got to be a super mom
47 right there, man to raise four cubs from little to --
48 just about being on their own this fall, I'm pretty
49 sure they're on their own already, but four cubs that's
50

0085

1 pretty good survival rate. And he said he saw several
2 with three. He didn't really see any with two cubs,
3 but, you know, the bears are starting to get out of
4 control, the wolves are starting to get out of control,
5 we just don't have the people going out and harvesting
6 them. You know I think the wolves and the bears need
7 to be a no closed season, it needs to be open for
8 harvest with no closed season and they could harvest as
9 many as they want.

10

11 But we got to start looking at taking
12 drastic measures to protect our caribou herd, to
13 protect our subsistence resources that we're so
14 dependent on on a yearly basis.

15

16 Okay, thank you.

17

18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Mike. Any
19 other RAC members on the phone have any questions or
20 comments for Alex.

21

22 (No comments)

23

24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: I don't have anything
25 at this time but I'm sure at some point we'll have some
26 question if you'll be available and don't mind, we'll
27 probably need to call you back up for something, Alex.
28 Thank you for your report.

29

30 MR. HANSON: Absolutely. Thank you.
31 And thank you for the comments. Attamuk, your comments
32 have been heard.

33

34 MR. ARMSTRONG: Real quick, Alex, I
35 know we talked about finding out what made the decline,
36 have we come up with a definite answer on that. What
37 made the decline, predators, natural death, or they
38 just migrated somewhere else?

39

40 MR. HANSON: Yeah, good question,
41 Elmer. And I can -- I'll start with the back of that
42 question. So I can say with certainty that they didn't
43 migrate somewhere else, we got a pretty good
44 understanding of where they go based on our collars
45 that are out there. And then also just to point out,
46 that when we shoot a census we typically try to shoot
47 censuses of neighboring herds in the same year so we
48 shot a census of the Teshekpuk and the Western Arctic
49 herd in the same year so we're not, you know,
50

0086

1 misrepresenting one herd to another. And, you know,
2 when we shoot those censuses, it's post calving,
3 calving grounds kind of delineate what the definition
4 of the herd is and where it goes, so they're in
5 distinctly different places.

6
7 But as far as understanding cause and
8 mortality, I would say lots of things. You know one
9 thing to consider and has been brought up, you know,
10 certainly predation is a thing. That's a thing that we
11 can detect when we pick up collars we can see that it
12 was a bear or a wolf or whatever. And as Mike alluded
13 to, you know, there's a lot of predators out on the
14 landscape that's certainly taking a component of the
15 population. One thing to think about is, you know,
16 predator/prey relationships are very complex, very
17 complicated to understand but as this population is
18 declining, you know, it's a big population, there's
19 going to be a big population of prey species that are
20 relying on them so it might take a while for that to
21 come back into balance. And as far as looking at
22 regulations to deal with that, there may be some things
23 that could be considered but it's all very challenging
24 and complex. Weather's another big factor. You know
25 we've had changing weather patterns, warmer falls,
26 sometimes the caribou end up stuck in the mountains
27 because they stay up there in the fall and then they
28 just stay there, heavy snows come. But I'm not
29 detecting, at least recently, any mass mortality
30 events. I would just say that it is many things that
31 are causing mortality to take place. I'm doing my best
32 to understand it but it's pretty challenging based on,
33 you know, the logistics of it and the fact that we --
34 we only have a very small sub-sample of the population
35 collared so that we can monitor. You know I can't be
36 out there all day every day looking at 160,000 animals
37 but we're doing our best and if folks come up with
38 ideas and, you know, detect disease or injury or
39 something, please share that information with us and
40 we'll put it into our database and try to understand
41 better.

42
43 MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you.

44
45 MR. HANSON: Thank you.

46
47 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Alex. So
48 next on the agenda we will go.....

49
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0087

1 MR. SHIEDT: Just a minute. I would
2 like him back on the table, please. Yeah, like I said
3 before, in order for us to take an effective reduction
4 we need the State on the table, not the State saying we
5 will follow next year, we need to take a reduction if
6 we have to, together. Like I said it won't be
7 effective if the State never take a reduction. We need
8 to do it together and we need the State at this table.
9 And like I said, I think all from the Federal Board
10 should be at the Western Arctic Caribou Herd meeting
11 because we represent different villages like they do
12 but we need to stress to the Western Arctic Caribou
13 Herd working group that now we're in a level to take a
14 reduction. As much as we hate to say it, like I said,
15 our survival rate, to survive we need caribou, yet our
16 population of people is growing and we're taking more.
17 I hate to say that but it's the truth. Our people need
18 to live off the caribou, we live off the caribou and I
19 will say it like a broken record, over and over, in
20 order for us to make it we need the State level people
21 here at the table.

22
23 Let's call our Governor, we got an
24 advantage over him now, to have the people, State
25 level, here. Family's from Noorvik. They live off
26 caribou. We need to take -- they play dirty things at
27 the State. it's our turn because we got to preserve the
28 caribou for the future. What good is caribou
29 management plan if the Western Arctic Caribou Herd
30 working group is not going to take the level, they put
31 it on paper but they're not going to enforce it, what
32 good is that. Politics talking again.

33
34 Thank you.

35
36 MR. HANSON: If I may respond through
37 the Chair to Mr. Attamuk. Yeah, I totally agree with
38 you, you know, and we've kind of had a history of that,
39 State regulations mirroring Federal regulations and
40 we're just kind of hopscotching as we catch up through
41 our different regulatory cycles. This next regulatory
42 cycle for the State, the Board of Game, that will be
43 next year, if we really got after it we could probably
44 put something in through an ACR but that would have to
45 be a proposal that was ready to tomorrow. So that's
46 kind of the timeframe we're looking at. So my
47 recommendation is, as you mentioned, Member Shiedt, you
48 know, take this to the working group, we have a good
49 discussion, we work together, try to understand what we
50

0088

1 can do wholly as, you know, these 40 communities that
2 rely on this population at times to make sensible
3 regulations that, you know, work for all folks within
4 the system, you know, both Federal and State.

5

6 Lance here Chairs the State AC so we're
7 trying to get the ACs together to start having those
8 discussions on the State side so that we can bring all
9 that information together with all the agencies and
10 come up with some good recommendations. I'm not just
11 going to come out and start making recommendations
12 because I don't think that's the way to do it, I want
13 that to come from the people who understand what's
14 going on. So I'm happy to inform, I have the
15 information and I'm happy to help wherever I can, and I
16 appreciate your comments.

17

18 MR. KRAMER: Mr. Chairman, this is
19 Kramer.

20

21 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, go ahead, Mike.

22

23 MR. KRAMER: I had a question, Alex.
24 You know I know our caribou herd has been dropping
25 pretty significantly, what about the rest of the herds
26 within the state. I know I seen somewhere on a State
27 website whereit showed, you know, current amounts of --
28 you know the current counts of caribou within the
29 State of Alaska. I can't remember whether there was 39
30 herds but what I was wondering, you know, are they
31 still harvesting, what are their limits and what are
32 their levels because we need to start taking some
33 pretty severe management here, you know, on our caribou
34 herd. But we are so dependent on them that, you know,
35 we start to look at harvesting moose more, even that's
36 on a decline, but we got to start looking at avenues to
37 where we could go ahead and start protecting, you know,
38 our caribou herd.

39

40 I know that there is -- if I remember
41 right according to that graph that I was looking at,
42 that we still had the largest herd in the state and the
43 next one, I can't remember whether it was the Porcupine
44 Herd was the second largest, but we need to start
45 taking measures to start, you know, protecting our
46 caribou.

47

48 The other question I had was, you know,
49 since we're taking major cuts, you know, is North Slope

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1 following our same status of taking cuts on animals,
2 how about down there -- I know that down there in Nome,
3 I believe they harvest some of our caribou also. You
4 know are we all on the same page or are we the only
5 ones taking cuts. That's my question is, you know,
6 just to make sure that because if we're taking drastic
7 cuts are these two other game management units doing
8 the same? Are they following suit with us or are they
9 still at their, you know, whatever numbers they're
10 allowed to harvest?

11

12 That's all I have for Alex.

13

14 MR. HANSON: Through the Chair, I'll
15 respond to Member Kramer. Thank you, Mike, for your
16 questions, hopefully I can remember them all. But I
17 guess starting toward the back there, Unit 22, kind of
18 that Nome area, I mean they've kind of been taking cuts
19 by and large because the caribou aren't really present
20 there. You know there's a few individuals that are
21 really motivated out of Unalakleet or other areas that
22 are traveling up, but by and large they're just not
23 harvesting very many caribou because they're not going
24 there.

25

26 On the North Slope it's a little tricky
27 there because, you know, we have the Western Arctic
28 Herd, the Teshekpuk Herd and occasionally, you know,
29 even over on the Eastern side especially around
30 Anaktuvuk they get Central Arctic Caribou so, you know,
31 those populations are doing fairly well right now and
32 harvest out of those, you know, is okay. The Teshekpuk
33 Herd seems to be growing at the moment. Kind of took
34 it pretty hard this last winter but they could probably
35 withstand some more harvest. The challenging part is
36 understanding what herd that harvest comes from and
37 we'd have to work very closely with all the villages on
38 the North Slope and with other herd managers to
39 understand that and what that influence might be.

40

41 Remind me, Mike, what was your other
42 question, I know there was another one and I just
43 missed it. Population. I think I remember now.

44

45 So your question was which herds were
46 censused and what populations are. So as far as the
47 census goes, I believe the Fortymile was done this
48 year, Central Arctic, Teshekpuk, Western Arctic and I
49 think they did a -- on the Mulchatna. The Mulchatna's

50

0090

1 gone down considerably, it's hardly hunted now.
2 Teshekpuk, that count is pending. They made an effort
3 on the Porcupine, which is the next largest herd in the
4 state, that hasn't been shot or census done since 2017.
5 They were unable to do it this year. They got into the
6 mountains under cover and then over into Canada so
7 that's a challenging one. And then the Fortymile, I
8 think they had to do kind of a combined photo shoot and
9 hand-held shoot, kind of an estimate thing. But that
10 population they're still trying to bring down. They're
11 trying to bring that into appropriate management
12 levels. So I don't know the specifics on all that
13 harvest, I'd have to look that up. If you want we can
14 chat about that later. But definitely a lot of
15 different harvest strategies out there and things that
16 we can learn from and rely on as we think about
17 crafting regulations moving forward.

18
19 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you for the
20 questions, Mike, and for the answers, Alex. Alex,
21 would it be something that you could get prepared for
22 the winter meeting to see if there's any trends in the
23 other herds across the state just so that we have a big
24 picture idea of what caribou on the whole are doing and
25 then maybe that might be something we could use to, not
26 necessarily guide how our management practices need to
27 go, but just give us an idea of what other factors are
28 having an affect on other herds in the state.

29
30 MR. HANSON: Yeah, I could put
31 something together. There's 31 recognized herds in the
32 state, some of them are very small, only a thousand
33 individuals or something. But I can put that together
34 with the most up to date information. I will say that
35 kind of circumpolarly where caribou exist, you know,
36 it's kind of a declining trend currently, you know,
37 across Canada and the U.S. And that's just kind of
38 where we're at for various reasons but we'll try to
39 understand better as we move forward.

40
41 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, the other question I
42 have for Alex is their calving grounds, you said the
43 last time they had moved farther east. In their
44 calving grounds in the past, you know, where they had
45 calved, has anybody got on the ground and go check just
46 to make sure that they didn't eat themselves out of
47 house and home or was it predators pushing them farther
48 east?

49
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0091

1 MR. HANSON: Through the Chair. Member
2 Kramer. I guess -- well, what we've been looking at
3 and I don't know that I would say that the calving
4 ground necessarily went further east, there was a time
5 period when we were studying calf mortality, that was
6 2017, '18 and '19 and what I saw was kind of a shift to
7 the north between a couple of those years. And when
8 they shifted north we saw less predation from the brown
9 bears on the calving grounds. So we saw in one of
10 those three years high predation from brown bears, the
11 other two years almost no predation. So as far as the
12 vegetation, I mean this is an area that is the size of
13 New Jersey, I mean it's huge. I don't know what it is
14 but, you know, 10, 15,000 square miles and it sounds
15 like, you know, when we talk about the calving grounds
16 that it's a small place, right, but it's this huge area
17 which they occupy some spot within that area and we
18 have what we call the core. So that's where the bulk
19 of the animals are. But on the fringes, you know,
20 there's animals out there too that are calving. And,
21 you know, when we go into it, it's not like it's super
22 dense, you know, when we were catching calves. You
23 know there'll be pockets of animals and then they're
24 just kind of spread out across the landscape. But the
25 vegetation, to answer that question, this vegetation
26 comes up and they're primarily relying on those early
27 summer grasses, the cottongrass and stuff, which is --
28 and some of the willow sedges that are very, you know,
29 vital to replenishing those resources that they've
30 expended to put the calves on the ground and then
31 produce, you know, milk for the calves. So that, in
32 every year that I've been up there appears to be, you
33 know, in good shape and good order. You know I
34 wouldn't say that the calving ground is a limited
35 resource -- or a limiting resource in any way, it seems
36 to be in good health currently. We might see huge
37 disturbances if there was big fire or something. We
38 occasionally see fires but, you know, they're small and
39 that's just a normal part of the cycle. But it's a
40 good question. The calving ground is a very important
41 component to herd survival.

42
43 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Did you have anything
44 else, Mike.

45
46 MR. KRAMER: No, nothing else right at
47 the moment. Are we going to have our moose population
48 with Alex also pretty soon?

49
50

0092

1 MR. HANSON: I think Ramie's going to
2 handle the moose and other wildlife report.

3
4 MR. KRAMER: Oh, okay. Okay, thank
5 you, Alex for your answers.

6
7 MR. HANSON: Thank you, Mike. Thanks
8 from hearing from you.

9
10 MR. KRAMER: Yep.

11
12 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any other questions
13 from the Council for Alex. I acknowledge your hand
14 Seth, it's just that we have to get through the Council
15 members first and then we can take a brief question if
16 there's not too many. Anybody else with anything for
17 Alex.

18
19 MR. SHIEDT: I don't have anything for
20 Alex but I see -- I know we have public comment at
21 certain times and that needs to change. So right now I
22 give my say so to Walter since he walk in, if he want
23 to say anything out of respect. I know our protocol is
24 they got to have public meeting -- I mean public
25 comment at certain time. Later on in the day I'm going
26 to ask to make a change to that, that the public
27 comment should be time and issue, as important as this
28 topic, not only caribou will come up but probably fish
29 will come up later in the years because we're going to
30 take more because we have a reduction in caribou.

31
32 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Attamuk.
33 So if someone raised their hand and had something they
34 wanted to share we can add them in so that they can
35 give a public comment. And I appreciate what you're
36 saying, it's just he was the only one that raised a
37 hand.

38
39 MR. SHIEDT: Thank you.

40
41 MR. SAMPSON: Don't you have that every
42 morning, a session.

43
44 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes. For non-agenda
45 items there is public comment time each morning but we
46 do have a little wiggle room if there are questions
47 specifically to an agenda item. There are little blue
48 forms in the back at the table that Seth is actually
49 sitting at. If anybody does want to make a public
50

0093

1 comment, it just lets us know that you have something
2 specific that you'd like to speak about and you can
3 give them to Lisa. But we didn't really go over that
4 today so because of that we can take questions and
5 brief comments relating specifically to these agenda
6 items.

7

8 So Seth you had your hand up, if you
9 wouldn't mind coming up to this table, pressing the
10 button and the red light comes on and then you could
11 introduce yourself and if anyone else had a specific
12 question to this agenda item you can come up after
13 Seth.

14

15 MR. KANTNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
16 Alex, I really appreciate that you're out there in the
17 world.

18

19 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Seth, could you
20 introduce yourself for the record.

21

22 MR. KANTNER: My name's Seth Kantner,
23 just public, I'm not on the Board. Alex, I appreciate
24 you out there everyday thinking about caribou. It's
25 great to know that somebody spends their energy on this
26 issue that matters so much to us.

27

28 I wondered, when I was driving over
29 here I missed some of your presentation when I was
30 coming in, but wondered if you had looked at the
31 effects of boat traffic on the Kobuk, and how that
32 affects the actual migration. And I guess my question
33 would be, you know, how much do, say, cows, remember
34 about arduous experiences along their previous
35 migrations.

36

37 The other question I had for you, sorry
38 to pile them up here, but I just have three.

39

40 The other question I had was
41 vegetation. It's getting tougher and tougher for us
42 hunters getting around, dwarf birch over your head now
43 and alders and all that. What I see in the spring time
44 is pretty tough for caribou to move through. Kind of
45 wondered your opinion on, you know, how that affects
46 their decision to migrate.

47

48 And then very separate, I wondered your
49 attempts -- I noticed in the previous year, to get
50

0094

1 accurate harvest numbers from local hunters, I wondered
2 how that was coming along?

3

4 MR. HANSON: Yeah, that was broad.

5

6 (Laughter)

7

8 MR. HANSON: Yeah, we talked quite a
9 bit about harvest numbers and, you know, how to get
10 that on track. Right now, currently, through the RC907
11 I estimate we get about 10 percent of the total local
12 harvest and we've had a lot of talks about that. I was
13 very pleased to hear Vern, you know, speak out for that
14 effort and, you know, we're going to have to think
15 outside of the box, I think. We're given this tool,
16 which is a permit, which is kind of new to this region
17 and it's not working that well. I shouldn't say that
18 on the record but that's the tool that we have been
19 given and we need to come up with a better way to
20 understand harvest. We're continuing to work on that
21 and always looking for better ways.

22

23 As far as vegetation, I think, you
24 know, you make a very good point. Caribou, you know,
25 they go everywhere, right, you've been out there on the
26 landscape. You know the highest peak I've taken people
27 flying through the Brooks Range and seeing trails up
28 there and they're saying well those have got to be
29 sheep trails but they're caribou trails and, you know,
30 they cover every square foot of this land but they do
31 have struggles getting through that vegetation with the
32 changing climates, warming stuff. We're starting to
33 see a lot of that dwarf birch come in and take in, you
34 know, some of that, what was more open landscape. If
35 you look at Onion Portage, for example, it's a prime
36 example, you're starting to see a lot of encroachment
37 from these shrub species. And if you look at a
38 topographic map, you know, I did this to my wife one
39 day, I just said, look at this map and tell me where
40 you think caribou might come through and you just look
41 at the landscape and the lay of the land and it's
42 pretty obvious that they're going to come through,
43 they're going to go behind your camp, they're going to
44 move through and they're going to get out on this point
45 of land there on the Kobuk River and then they got
46 nothing to do but cross. And so topographically
47 they're kind of hearded in that direction, or funneled
48 in that direction. But when they run into the dwarf
49 birch and the other shrubs it gets harder for them to
50

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1 get through that. So it's really a concern. I don't
2 know that there's a real answer for it unless if we
3 talk about introducing fire or mechanical treatments.

4

5 What was your other question?

6

7 MR. KANTNER: My question was just
8 concerning, you know, the amount of boat traffic now on
9 -- I see it on the Kobuk, I have no idea what's on the
10 Noatak, I'm not there, but just your understanding of
11 caribou and their -- I guess their memory of past
12 difficulties, does that seem to affect what happens,
13 you know, if you put the years together?

14

15 MR. HANSON: Going out on a limb if we
16 talk about caribou and their memories because I know
17 nothing about that. But I actually can't say for sure.
18 I will say, you know, this herd has demonstrated to
19 have very low fidelity to wintering areas. So from one
20 year to the next, you know, having that -- and maybe
21 that's an influencing factor that they had a bad
22 experience so they decided to go somewhere else the
23 next year, and I don't know what that might be. We
24 could take and, you know, point, for example, Red Dog
25 Road last year, we had about 10 percent of the
26 population, based on collars, came down to the road
27 bounced, bounced, bounced, only a couple crossed, most
28 of them turned back. This year they stacked up there
29 for a minute and then they all just left. So we could,
30 if we wanted to speculate, say they didn't like it last
31 year, they decided not to attempt it this year. I
32 don't know that that's the case. They have very low
33 individual fidelity to specific areas. But I will say
34 that I would like to understand the influences of all
35 kinds of traffic, right.

36

37 From my experience, if I'm out flying
38 near a village in the wintertime, those caribou that
39 are close to the village, are much more prone to run
40 because they've been or potentially harassed by
41 snowmachines. They hear a noise and, you know, they
42 respond to that. I've seen it on the Kobuk. You know
43 lots of boats, I've seen boats push them back to the
44 north side. That happens, we watch it on the map
45 occasionally. And then there's also, you know, the
46 question of the aircraft.

47

48 So I would love to understand that --
49 holistically I'd like to understand how snowmachines,
50

0096

1 fourwheelers, boats and airplanes affect caribou
2 movements, I just haven't been able to design that
3 study yet. I'm working on it. I don't think it'll
4 ever happen but I would love to know.

5

6 MR. KANTNER: Okay, thank you, I
7 appreciate it. The thing that concerns me is being up
8 there and the sporthunters were banned or barred or
9 whatever your terminology would be, this year, while it
10 was exciting to wait for caribou but they never came,
11 which was disappointing but as far as looking ahead in
12 the future, I'm concerned that, you know, studies might
13 show that, you know, blocking those hunters didn't
14 change the migration and so that was where my question
15 about vegetation and motors came. And the reason I'm
16 concerned is, if in fact it's turned back on, locally,
17 then our actions come to bear in the next decision. I
18 realize it's handy right now the way the Feds are kind
19 of protecting us locally but I feel like, you know, we
20 need to think ahead before they, you know, stop doing
21 that because we're not doing our part.

22

23 I thank you very much, Alex.

24

25 Thank you, Thomas.

26

27 MR. HANSON: One quick response is, you
28 know, oddly enough, and I mentioned this earlier, but,
29 you know, closing that 8 million acres or whatever it
30 was in the Preserve, the hunters didn't go there, the
31 caribou didn't go there this year so I mean moving
32 stuff around like that I don't think has much impact on
33 the movement of the caribou. It's a lot more tied to
34 weather and other things.

35

36 MR. KANTNER: I agree.

37

38 MR. HANSON: And I would say caribou do
39 what they want, when they want and we can't really
40 control it. Believe me, I've tried.

41

42 MR. KANTNER: Thank you, Alex.

43

44 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Seth.
45 Lance, I know you brought one up but Walter did you
46 have something, since you grabbed a sheet first we'll
47 go with Walter. If you could please just introduce
48 yourself for the record.

49

50

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1 MR. SAMPSON: Thank you, very much, Mr.
2 Chairman. I apologize for not making it in this
3 morning, I was in Kiana for a funeral. So I just got
4 off the airplane and came over.

5
6 It's good to listen to some of the
7 discussions that are occurring. If you really listen
8 to people in regards to try to understand exactly what
9 management is and how management operates versus how
10 people utilize resources, in the past, you can really
11 look at a picture completely different.

12
13 Since 2000 the Western Arctic Herd we
14 knew was going to reach its peak of 500,000 and it did.
15 Over a period of time, we knew at some time there would
16 be some decline and even though with that large number
17 of caribou started to decline we asked the Department
18 of Fish and Game and the Federal system in regards to
19 -- with the questions in regards to what will that do
20 to the numbers of caribou as we continue to lose
21 percentage of them on an annual basis and the response
22 has always been, no, they're healthy, they're good,
23 it's not going to impact the caribou herd. About 2011
24 they really started to decline and that same question
25 applied to Fish and Game and the response was they're
26 still healthy, they're okay. And the question came
27 out, then at what point of the decline will be an
28 impact to user groups, at that point they didn't know
29 exactly what number that would be. And never really
30 gotten a clear number in regards to when that herd
31 would be impacted.

32
33 The issue in regards to the migration,
34 certainly is one of the issues that we all need to look
35 at. Boat traffic, to me, is not an issue. It's just
36 like how many cars drove down the highway as caribou,
37 the Porcupine Herd tried to move out through the road
38 system. Kobuk River, I wouldn't worry about boat
39 traffic. Boat traffic doesn't really have an impact on
40 a migration pattern. Drop off hunters up on the north
41 where migration pattern occurs affects the caribou herd
42 more. Every time you drop people certain places they
43 deflect the migration pattern so they move further
44 north and east and that's what really impacts the
45 migration of the caribou herd. And boat traffic on the
46 Kobuk River, I wouldn't really worry about that.

47
48 But I think the management scheme
49 that's in place certainly is something that needs to be
50

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1 looked at, or relooked at with Federal system in place.

2

3

4 The issue in regards to the Kobuk
5 River, the State of Alaska certainly challenges the
6 Federal system in regards to the navigability issue of
7 the Kobuk River. If it's navigable the State will say
8 it belongs to them. The Feds will say, no, it belongs
9 to the Federal system. At what point then will the
10 determination be made in regards to who owns the Kobuk
11 River. Ownership then becomes a big question. The
12 State and the Federal system, both. If you take a look
13 at the people who live there, they're part of the State
14 system, they're part of the Federal system. Where do
15 we fit in in the management scheme. It is always a
16 fight against us and them when it comes to allocation
17 of resources, and it's always been that way. Even the
18 fight between the State of Alaska and the Federal
19 system. Over time, certainly something will change,
20 and it is changing.

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Today's world, the family who live off
the herd are most impacted by restrictions of take.
Recognizing that this region has the highest cost of
living than anywhere in the state. Price of fuel is
up. Price of food is up. Price of other products is
up. So people have to double what they usually take
when out. In some instances there's family members
with friends that go out to share the cost of things to
hunt, and that continues. On top of that, with modern
technology you see people coming in with drones now
utilizing drones for hunting moose and caribou. Last
fall I know the boat that was on the Kobuk Delta, was a
brand new boat I've never seen, didn't recognize the
people, they were using a drone to hunt moose. Just as
I was aiming at the drone, that drone got pulled down.
These are the things that management also needs to
critically look at on how these things are being used.
It's illegal to do that. If I get caught with it I'd
be in jail. No question about it. And that's exactly
how the State system is set up. Every time the State
started to enforce its regulations it concentrates on
the village folks first. People who put food on the
table. And village people can tell you that. And I
think management schemes has to change to where it'll
fit for everybody.

There's such word as co-management.
Maybe co-management would work, than just the State
managing resources. Have some dialogues, some

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1 discussions in regards to that. The Western Arctic
2 Herd now reaches Kobuk River about latter part of
3 October. About a week ago the herd finally reached the
4 Kobuk River right before freeze-up. So it changed its
5 patterns of migration as well. But, yet, we get
6 targeted at the village level sometimes with the thing
7 as too many boats on the river stopping the migration
8 of caribou. I don't think so. I think that has to
9 change. Federal system has to change on how it manages
10 resources.

11
12 And I think the issue in regards to the
13 allocation and looking at the numbers of caribou on an
14 annual basis, if the village folks agree to a cut it
15 has to be across the board for everybody. The take of
16 resources or how you take resources has to be looked at
17 in that fashion as well too. I think what Attamuk try
18 to argue sometimes certainly makes some sense in
19 regards to how the State system is set up and how the
20 Federal system is set up. I think it can be redone to
21 make sure that if it's going to affect one group of
22 people then it has to be across the board.

23
24 The other thing that is utilized is the
25 tagging of caribou. It's illegal to utilize the
26 State's tagging system, by that I mean monitoring where
27 the caribou herd is by the tagged caribou. Somebody
28 down south can do that and I've heard it before, that
29 once they see that the caribou starting to migrate
30 they'll say time to go and that's something that the
31 State of Alaska also need to look at on how the tagged
32 caribou are monitoring, or other resources as well.

33
34 I think we all can sit down put
35 everything on the table and say what can we do better
36 to manage resources so we could benefit as well. The
37 ones that really need to benefit are the family groups
38 that utilize that resource more than some of us.

39
40 I appreciate -- I know I went off your
41 agenda a little bit but I wanted to raise some of those
42 things.

43
44 Thank you.

45
46 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Walter.
47 You can leave your sheet on the table and we'll pick it
48 up when we're done.

49
50

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1 MR. SAMPSON: Uh?

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: You could leave your
4 blue sheet on the table.

5

6 MR. SAMPSON: This is a Republican
7 paper so I can't fill it out.

8

9 (Laughter)

10

11 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Okay.

12

13 MR. SAMPSON: No, go ahead.

14

15 (Laughter)

16

17 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Okay, Lance, since
18 we're still on the topic of caribou. If you could
19 introduce yourself for the record please.

20

21 MR. KRAMER: Lance Kramer, resident of
22 Kotzebue. The question is for Alex regarding calf
23 collaring studies. I know that Elmer had asked a
24 question earlier as to why the herd is declining. I
25 had talked to Jim Dau years ago about that and he
26 mentioned two things, Alex, he mentioned the low calf
27 recruitment and he mentioned also the cow mortality
28 rate, a high cow mortality rate. Now we can attribute
29 that, of course, to -- and I think one thing in
30 particular and that's probably climate change. Because
31 this situation with caribou kind of started all
32 throughout the circumpolar north, almost at the same
33 time. And it's not just a coincidence, I think, I
34 think that Canada is also facing climate change issues.
35 So I think that it has a big effect on it.

36

37 Years ago I was up in Copter Peak in
38 the summer doing some work with some archeologist
39 there, there was a film crew and so I got to be in the
40 summer range of these caribou and right near Copter
41 Peak area and it amazed me because I had never been up
42 there in July and it amazed me how much these caribou
43 are thinking about bugs. The warble flies, the
44 botflies, the mosquitos, at night, at 1:00 in the
45 morning, these caribou don't care about human beings,
46 they can walk right next to you but all they're
47 thinking about is bugs, they're just shaking and
48 snorting and shaking and what they were doing is they
49 were going ice pack to ice pack in those mountains at
50

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1 night and trying to hide, you know, throughout the day
2 on these cold ice packs in the mountains and it was
3 between 1 in the morning and 6 in the morning that they
4 would run and switch places all the time, you know, and
5 it amazed me because I never had seen that before. My
6 theory at the time was that with climate change there
7 are less and less ice packs for them to go and find
8 relief and shelter from and therefore you got these
9 bigger groups, aggregate groups of caribou and to hide
10 from the bugs since there's less ice packs. And so I
11 had offered a while back that there should be some
12 studies on the decline of these annual, these year-long
13 ice packs in the mountains, right, through satellite
14 image. Somebody always says, oh, we could do that, I
15 haven't heard of anybody come up with it yet but it
16 shouldn't be rocket science since we have satellite
17 images now for the last 10 years. But it would be nice
18 to see if there is such a major decline in those multi-
19 year ice packs in those mountains, in the DeLongs, even
20 in the Bairds, but mostly in the DeLongs. But also,
21 getting to my theory, is that, because of climate
22 change, because it's warmer, and there's less ice for
23 these caribou to hide on that they get in the big
24 groups and when they do the mothers lose their calves
25 and, of course, calves sit down and wait for their mom
26 to come back and often times the mom don't come back
27 because she's in the big group and then you got -- we
28 blame it no the bears or the moose or the eagles for
29 predator issue when it's really -- it's probably a
30 climate change issue is my guess. So we encouraged a
31 calf study. And fortunately Fish and Game collaborated
32 with the National Park Service. There was a study for
33 three years, if I remember right, because we were
34 trying to find out if these calves, number 1, if
35 they're dropping good at the calving grounds and
36 they're producing enough calves and they're fine, those
37 numbers were great, but the problem was is they just
38 weren't making it to the winter ground. And so the
39 question was is are they dying at that summer range
40 where it's warm and hot. And so I think, and I don't
41 know what the final result of those calf mortality rate
42 studies were, if that was -- if that -- you think is
43 the situation because the other thing that I would have
44 liked to have seen is once calves are collared, is to
45 really follow them in those mountains in July some how,
46 some way to see really what is the cause of death
47 because that's a really big issue when you don't have a
48 good recruitment of calves you're going to miss some
49 major cohorts in the group later on in the years to
50

0102

1 come and I think we're kind of facing that now.

2

3 So that's my question, is what was the
4 result of those calf collaring studies so far.

5

6 And then my second question is, is will
7 there be more calf collaring studies to kind of help
8 prove that. And then like I said, it'd be nice to,
9 Alex, to really follow up and get some people in the
10 mountains to follow these calves and really see what's
11 going on, not just guess or say, calf 13 dies last
12 week, it looks like an eagle ate it. But, really,
13 watching and, you know, studying them. Because if we
14 want this herd to come back we have to do the research.
15 Research is the key to find out what's going on. Now
16 maybe if it -- if it is climate change that's the issue
17 then there's nothing we can do about it but at least we
18 won't be pointing fingers to other things, predators or
19 human beings or non-locals or whatever. I really think
20 that research, especially in that summer range needs to
21 be increased.

22

23 MR. HANSON: Yeah, good question,
24 through the Chair to Lance Kramer. So I guess I'm
25 digging back into the recesses of my mind for data here
26 that I don't have in front of me, but my recollection
27 is the annual survival, on average, was about 42
28 percent for those calves, so that was three years of a
29 study, '17, '18 and '19. And we did our best, we were
30 catching about two day old calves, they were still --
31 we were able to move pretty quick, jumped out of the
32 helicopter slapped a collar on, weighed them and sent
33 them on their way and then we followed the calves for a
34 year and we looked at survival. We were following them
35 obviously from aircraft. Initially we were there for
36 about 10 days, two weeks, monitoring daily survival and
37 so we had a really good understanding of what happened
38 on the calving grounds. At that point, you know, they
39 left the calving grounds, went into kind of the post-
40 calving areas, Lisburne Peninsula, we were trying to
41 monitor as much as possible, this requires aircraft
42 flights through telemetry because these were VHF
43 collars, so we didn't have real-time data through GPS
44 collars, to do that, I mean we could probably do that
45 it would just be more expensive to put those collars
46 out. They're very expensive. But the problem that we
47 ran into is we lost them into the mountains, like you
48 say, they go into the mountains and they disperse, you
49 know, in the late summer, early fall. We got most of
50

0103

1 that information back but we did lose a few animals.
2 It's just not possible to radiotrack enough with the
3 weather we have here and, you know, the resources that
4 we have. I could be out flying every day and we'd still
5 lose some. Every good weather day, right, which is
6 like 70 days in Kotzebue, and we'd still lose some.

7

8 So we did our best.

9

10 What we found is on the calving ground,
11 predation was not a major factor except in one year and
12 that was 2018, they calved a little bit more southern
13 of their calving grounds. We saw quite a bit of bear
14 predation that year. But as they left the calving
15 grounds a lot of what we saw in mortality was predation
16 from bears and wolves. But no wolf predation on the
17 calving grounds, the earliest one I detected was post-
18 calving. Some eagle predation on the calving grounds.
19 But if we wanted to target bears or other predators
20 specifically on the calving grounds to help this herd,
21 I don't think it would do any good. So it's predation
22 that's taking place after they leave the calving
23 grounds.

24

25 Does that make sense?

26

27 MR. KRAMER: Yeah.

28

29 MR. HANSON: Does that cover your
30 questions?

31

32 MR. KRAMER: Somewhat. Do you believe
33 though that it's perhaps the climate change and the
34 large aggregate groups in the summer that's causing a
35 lot of the decline in those calves?

36

37 MR. HANSON: Like you mentioned, you
38 know, this is circumpolar blossom caribou, right,
39 throughout the whole polar region and so that is more
40 likely tied to weather than anything else in my mind.
41 It certainly isn't, you know, folks on boats, or folks
42 in airplanes that are causing that to happen throughout
43 the world. So as far as, you know, those specific
44 points, you know, post-calving aggregations and losing
45 calves I can't speak to that necessarily. I will say
46 that, you know, every year that I'm up there doing
47 calving work or census work we see a variation in sizes
48 and placement of those ice packs or snow packs, those
49 snow fields, and I suspect it's probably diminished
50

0104

1 over the years. And as you pointed out, you know,
2 there's satellite data out there that we could look at
3 that, NDBS, and stuff like that, but probably Matt
4 Cameron, Kyle Joly with the Park Service have better
5 tabs on that than I do and we could ask them that
6 question.

7

8 But it's a good observation.

9

10 MR. JOLY: Mr. Chair.

11

12 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, who's that on the
13 phone?

14

15 MR. JOLY: Hello, Mr. Chair. My name
16 is Kyle Joly. I just wanted to followup with what Alex
17 said there. We heard that comment a few years ago and
18 we took it to heart and we actually supported a
19 graduate student to take a look at perennial snow
20 fields, those snow fields that kind of linger on into
21 the year and the grad student was Molly Kedeski and she
22 published a paper back in 2019 and, yeah, Alex is
23 correct snow fields are getting smaller and
24 disappearing altogether in the Brooks Range. And I'd
25 be happy to share that paper with the Council through
26 the Coordinator.

27

28 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, if you can
29 distribute that to Lisa we can get it distributed to
30 those that are interested in it. Thank you, Kyle.

31

32 MR. KRAMER: So one more question, Mr.
33 Chair. So I know that the three years have passed, are
34 there still going to be more calf collaring studies?

35

36 MR. HANSON: Nothing on the books
37 currently. I mean if we saw a real solid need for it
38 then we could. Really what we've established is
39 something on the record if we go to intensive
40 management. So if I have to put together an intensive
41 report for the Board of Game we have this piece of
42 information. I can say that predation on the calving
43 ground, probably not that big of a deal, however, if we
44 want to dig into it a little more in-depth and
45 understand what happens post-calving, that's a
46 component of that study that we weren't able to
47 understand as you pointed out. we need to understand
48 that -- we could understand that better with more work
49 and another study. Currently it's not on the books but
50

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1 we could put the idea out there. We would just have to
2 pursue the funding and the time to do it.

3

4 MR. KRAMER: Thank you.

5

6 MR. HANSON: Thank you.

7

8 MR. KRAMER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

9

10 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you for your
11 questions, Lance. So with that, thank you Alex for
12 your extended time at the mic.

13

14 (Laughter)

15

16 CHAIRMAN BAKER: We'll go ahead and
17 take a 10 minute break and reconvene at 2:50. Thank
18 you, everyone.

19

20 (Off record)

21

22 (On record)

23

24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, everyone,
25 we had a little bit longer of a break than we expected,
26 but if we could migrate back to our seats we'll get
27 started.

28

29 (Pause)

30

31 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, so the
32 local time is 2:59 and next on the agenda we have the
33 update on the Western Arctic Caribou Herd working
34 group. And Brittany Sweeny from the Selawik National
35 Wildlife Refuge will give a brief overview and then
36 we'll turn it over to Vern Cleveland, if he has
37 anything to say. Brittany, the floor is yours.

38

39 MS. SWEENEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
40 Members of the Council. So I was just going to give
41 information on what the Western Arctic Caribou Herd
42 working group is. So it's a group made up of all the
43 different stakeholders that are involved with the
44 Western Arctic Herd. And that group has an annual
45 meeting every December, and that's the group that put
46 together the caribou management plan that Alex was
47 referring to. It's a good meeting because it's one of
48 the only times when we have North Slope people and
49 village members and Northwest Arctic people and Seward

50

0106

1 Peninsula people all together in the same room talking
2 together about the herd, which spans all those regions.
3

4 The group came into being, I think, as
5 a recognition that we needed a way -- the agencies
6 needed a way to get more local input and more
7 subsistence users input into the process and so the
8 agencies are -- they all support the working group but
9 they're not voting members of the working group. The
10 working group consists of subsistence users from
11 communities. There's also representatives of
12 transporters, guides and conservation groups.
13

14 But, anyway, the next meeting coming up
15 will be in Anchorage December 14 and 15 and that will
16 be a good time that the working group will talk about
17 what level, what management level the herd is at with
18 the new number and what steps need to be taken. Now
19 the way that that working group combines with this
20 Council is that that working group makes
21 recommendations but they don't play a role in actually
22 changing regulations, right, whereas this Council plays
23 its role with the Federal regulations. So the working
24 group will talk about what they think are some needed
25 actions and often times they'll comment or make
26 proposals but it actually comes down to the State
27 Councils and this Federal Council to enact regulation
28 changes.
29

30 So I just wanted to give an overview
31 about that group, who will be there and what they do
32 and what they don't do. And I'll turn it back to you,
33 Mr. Chair, or to Member Cleveland.
34

35 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you for that,
36 Brittany. Vern Cleveland, are you back online with us.
37

38 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes, Mr. Chair, I am.
39

40 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Vern. As
41 the Chair of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd working
42 group, would you be able to give us a brief update on
43 what the working group has had going on the last few
44 meetings and what's coming up for the group.
45

46 MR. CLEVELAND: Well, our meeting will
47 be on December 14 and 15, like Brittany said, and we
48 got an agenda for a two day packed meeting 8:30 to 5,
49 it's going to be the same like this, but on Federal
50

0107

1 side.

2

3

4 Like some of you guys were saying, that
5 the working group, and we work as a group, not as
6 individuals because I am the Chair and there shouldn't
7 be accusations of pointing fingers to me and my Co-
8 Chair, they shouldn't be there, they should be directed
9 towards Western Arctic Caribou Herd working group
10 members that's created from the North Slope and on the
11 Bering Sea side, Alatna, Huslia, everywhere.

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We gather to get information on why
this is happening. Because the herd went down again
and who's fault it is, we don't know, I mean that's a
good question. It might be climate change. For sure
climate change is a big factor and you guys know it
because the weather's changing big time. What we don't
know who, what or how, you know, because we just have
to work together, put our feet down and say, hey, we
got to work together as one and see what the outcome
will be. We'll have a meeting on December 14, 15 and
you all are welcome.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Vern. At
this time do we have any questions or comments for the
working group, and I'd ask that we direct them to
Brittany just because Vern is a member of both
organizations and Brittany might have some more
administrative knowledge.

Any questions from the RAC.

(No comments)

MS. SWEENEY: Mr. Chair, if I could.
This is Brittany again. Just to mention that the
meeting dates and agenda and packet, everything is
available on the group's website, which is
WesternArcticCaribou.net. So you can find the
information on there, anyone who's looking for what
will be on the agenda.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Brittany.
Any questions from any RAC members on the phone.

0108

1 (No comments)

2

3

CHAIRMAN BAKER: And this is from the
4 recorder, please make sure if you're going to speak to
5 unmute yourselves by pressing star, six -- was that
6 Mike Kramer with something.

7

8 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

9

10 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Mike.

11

12 MR. KRAMER: Sorry, I got cut out for a
13 little while and I had to recall back in. But I want
14 to check with Member Cleveland, you know, what his, or,
15 you know, what their next recommendation on our daily
16 harvest and/or yearly harvest.....

17

18 (Teleconference interference -
19 participants not muted - echo)

20

21 MR. KRAMER:of cows, it'll be
22 kind of interesting to see what's their next plan of
23 the caribou herd.

24

25 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So Vern would you like
26 to answer that.

27

28 MR. CLEVELAND: Well, because the
29 caribou herd went down from 188 to 164 I'm pretty sure
30 there's going to be some drastic changes on harvest and
31 female harvest. That's going to be pretty much the
32 biggest changes, for sure, because of the way the count
33 is. It's going to be on the top of the agenda for sure
34 because if we don't do anything about it it's going to
35 keep going down. If we try and do something about, you
36 know, then at least if we try, you know. But keep our
37 fingers crossed and say, yeah, I hope it happens.

38

39 Thank you.

40

41 Thank you, Michael.

42

43 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, thank you.

44

45 MR. CLEVELAND: And I'm not sure what
46 your other question was.

47

48 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, Brittany.

49

50

0109

1 MS. SWEENEY: This is Brittany Sweeny
2 speaking again. Mr. Kramer I don't know if you were on
3 for all of Alex Hanson's report but when Alex
4 mentioned, you know, where we're at in the management
5 level he was referring to the working group's
6 management plan level. So some of the things he read
7 off on the level that we're at currently with this new
8 count might include looking at a way to reduce cow
9 harvest and also more closely tracking bull harvest in
10 order to keep the desired bull to cow ratio. So I do
11 think that that would probably be something that would
12 be discussed at the upcoming meeting, would be how
13 would -- what would be a possible mechanism to reduce
14 the cow harvest and what would work for communities,
15 you know, across that broad geographic area. But,
16 again, that's still probably yet to be discussed,
17 depending on what the working group members thoughts
18 and concerns are.

19
20 Thank you.

21
22 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Brittany.
23 Any other questions regarding the update on the caribou
24 herd working group.

25
26 (No comments)

27
28 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, thank
29 you Brittany and thank you, Vern, for speaking on that.
30 We will move on to the next item under new business
31 which is the Joint Meeting North American Caribou
32 WorkShop and Arctic Ungulate Conference in May 2023.
33 Dr. Hannah Voorhees, the floor is yours.

34
35 MS. VOORHEES: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
36 members of the Council. Good afternoon. For the
37 record, this is Hannah Voorhees, I am an Anthropologist
38 with the Office of Subsistence Management. And today I
39 am presenting an announcement about a caribou and
40 ungulate conference next year that will hopefully be of
41 interest to this Council. I'll be seeking your input
42 on a couple matters related to the conference and an
43 informational flier about this meeting, it can be found
44 in your book on Page 45.

45
46 A joint meeting of the North American
47 Caribou work shop and the Arctic Ungulate Conference
48 will be held in Anchorage from May 8th through 12th,
49 2023. The meeting will bring together an international
50

0110

1 group of managers, researchers and indigenous and local
2 knowledge holders who want to share their knowledge of
3 caribou, muskoxen, dall sheep, moose and reindeer.

4

5 The theme for the meeting is crossing
6 boundaries. Arctic ungulates regularly cross landscape
7 boundaries connecting ecological processes between
8 different systems. This necessitates collaboration
9 across geographical boundaries as well as between
10 Western science and local and indigenous knowledge for
11 managing ungulates. The conference will include
12 sessions on co-management, the status of caribou
13 globally, integrating Western science and indigenous
14 knowledge and the effects of climate change on caribou.
15 Field trips, workshops, research talks, and a poster
16 session will also be part of the conference. The web
17 address for the conference is on the flier in your
18 book and I encourage you to visit that website for more
19 information.

20

21 For those listening in, not in the
22 room, or who don't have access to this flier,
23 www.nacw/auc/2023.org.

24

25 And you can also find information on
26 the website about submission of abstracts, which are
27 due by December 15th.

28

29 So next I'd like your input as a
30 Council. One of the events that will take place during
31 the conference is a facilitated discussion on Alaska
32 State and Federal ungulate management. This session is
33 intended to be a neutral forum for Council members such
34 as yourselves, State Fish and Game Advisory Committee
35 members, Federal and State agency Staff and other
36 interested partners to discuss ungulate management in
37 Alaska and specifically regarding harvest regulations.

38

39 So my question for you today is are
40 there topics and issues that you would like to see
41 discussed during this session, how would you like to
42 see this session taking place. The topics could be
43 anything of concern related to harvest regulations and
44 ungulate management.

45

46 So, Mr. Chair, if that is a question
47 that you and Council members are able to address, I
48 turn the mic back to you. Thank you.

49

50

0111

1 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any RAC members that
2 would like to address that.

3
4 (No comments)

5
6 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any RAC members on the
7 phone that would like to address this issue.

8
9 (No comments)

10

11 MS. VOORHEES: Through the Chair. I
12 would like to ask, there are other colleagues on the
13 line, most likely, who have been involved in organizing
14 this session and I am just wondering if anyone would
15 like to jump in and maybe give a few more details so
16 Council members can have a better idea of what we're
17 seeking from them at this time.

18

19 Thank you.

20

21 MR. SHIEDT: I have a question. Where
22 is from the Arctic conference people from?

23

24 MS. VOORHEES: Through the Chair.
25 Member Shiedt. If you're asking where people will be
26 coming when they're attending this conference?

27

28 MR. SHIEDT: No, which group out of the
29 Arctic, ungulate conference people? Which villages do
30 they represent?

31

32 MS. VOORHEES: Ah. This is -- it's an
33 academic conference that occurs biannually and it's not
34 -- there's no affiliation with particular
35 organizations. This year -- so sometimes it's org --
36 it's organized in a different location every year.
37 This year, since it's being held in Alaska, multiple
38 Federal agencies, academics and non-profits are coming
39 together. So if you look on the flier, the Wilderness
40 Society has been involved, ADF&G, National Park
41 Service, Audubon Alaska, among others. But it's --
42 there's not a permanent organization that sets this
43 meeting up every year.

44

45 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So, insofar as village
46 representation, this is where we, as the RAC and other
47 organizations come in to send someone to it to help
48 represent the actual boots on the ground hunters and
49 people working with the animals, correct, Hannah?

50

0112

1 MS. VOORHEES: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
2 Yes. I mean with this year's conference particular,
3 we, as organizers really want to support as many people
4 who depend on caribou and other Arctic ungulates and
5 who have local knowledge about these species to come
6 and attend the conference. So we've been working hard
7 on that. And the Office of Subsistence Management is
8 able to support one member of your Council to come to
9 the meeting in Anchorage in May so OSM is able to cover
10 all the costs associated with travel and attendance.
11 And so my next question will be whether you'd like to
12 nominate someone from this Council, perhaps a primary
13 nominee and then someone as a secondary backup nominee.
14 And, Kyle Joly, may be on the line and he may have
15 suggestions for maybe even creating a larger list if
16 more funds become available beyond OSM. But OSM is
17 able to support one person to attend.

18
19 So I guess I just.....

20
21 MR. JOLY: This is Kyle Joly, I'm
22 available.

23
24 MS. VOORHEES: Oh, go ahead, if it's
25 okay with the Chair. Go ahead.

26
27 MR. JOLY: Oh, thank you, yes. This is
28 Kyle Joly, I'm with the National Park Service. I'm
29 also the lead organizer for this year's conference. It
30 hasn't been in Alaska for 18 years so we're really
31 excited to have it here. My recommendation to the
32 Council is to provide a list in priority order of
33 participants who might like to come. We are working to
34 secure more funding to get travel dollars to have
35 additional RAC or SRC members attend the conference.
36 We really want to get local people involved.
37 Traditionally it's been more of a scientific academic
38 conference but we are looking to bring in local
39 knowledge, indigenous knowledge, Native knowledge, and
40 also have those people share their concerns. So we're
41 in the process of trying to secure more travel dollars
42 so if you have a list of additional people besides the
43 one that OSM will be able to send, we will look at that
44 and try and get as many people off that list down to
45 the conference.

46
47 Thank you.

48
49 MR. SHIEDT: Okay, I hear what you're
50

0113

1 saying. We need to nominate someone. I would say I
2 nominate our Chairman to attend this meeting.

3

4 MR. HOWARTH: And I'll second that.

5

6 (Laughter)

7

8 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, gentlemen,
9 I'll accept that nomination. Any other nominations for
10 an alternate.

11

12 MR. SHIEDT: Do you want to go?

13

14 MR. HOWARTH: No.

15

16 (Laughter)

17

18 MR. SHIEDT: You want to go Elmer. You
19 got your light on.

20

21 MR. HOWARTH: Okay, I'll nominate Elmer
22 Armstrong as a secondary.

23

24 MR. SHIEDT: I'll second it.

25

26 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Did you get that.

27

28 MS. VOORHEES: Yes, thank you, Mr.
29 Chair. I do want to mention -- I should have mentioned
30 this before, that one hope is that whoever does attend,
31 is that, that person also participate in the State and
32 Federal ungulate management symposium, which I
33 previously described briefly.

34

35 Thank you very much. I'm really
36 looking forward to this conference. I think it'll be a
37 great neutral forum and thank you for your interest.

38

39 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Hannah.
40 Will representatives from the Western Arctic Caribou
41 Herd working group also be attending, or will that be
42 something that's brought up at their December meeting
43 to follow this same kind of process?

44

45 MS. VOORHEES: I am unsure. But,
46 clearly -- I do know that members of the working group
47 have been invited to participate and speak in panels.
48 And my understanding is that there is a great deal of
49 interest in supporting them to attend so I think that
50

0114

1 will happen and we'll make sure it's on the radar for
2 that group at their December meeting.

3

4 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, thank you,
5 Hannah. Was there anything else or does that cover it
6 for you had for this portion?

7

8 MS. VOORHEES: That's what I have,
9 although, if any Council members do think about this
10 Alaska State and Federal Ungulate Management Symposium
11 and there is anything that you would like to have on
12 the docket for discussion please feel free to reach out
13 to me.

14

15 Thank you.

16

17 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Great, thank you,
18 Hannah. With that we will move on to the next item
19 under new business with Ray McPadden from Western
20 Arctic ParkLands for the harvest of wildlife for sport
21 purposes in National Preserves. And, Ray, the floor is
22 yours, if you could introduce yourself for the record.

23

24 MR. MCPADDEN: Thanks, Mr. Chair.
25 Thanks, members of the Council. Ray McPadden,
26 Superintendent Western Arctic National ParkLands. I
27 live here in Kotzebue. This is my first time getting
28 to come to a RAC meeting and thanks for giving us time
29 on the agenda for this particular topic. This is not
30 in the packet. The handout that Joe's passing out
31 right now was still in development last week so we
32 weren't able to get it in the packet. So each member
33 of the Council should now have a hard copy and then for
34 others in attendance, we've got additional hard copies
35 on the table for reference.

36

37 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Before you get to into
38 it, Ray, is there an electronic copy of that Lisa could
39 send out to those attending telephonically.

40

41 MR. MCPADDEN: Yes. We can get that
42 out here after the meeting. We've got -- yeah, we've
43 got a version on digits.

44

45 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Will you be referring
46 -- I know it's just one sheet, but just for the sake of
47 those that don't have a copy, is this going to be easy
48 enough to follow along?

49

50

0115

1 MR. MCPADDEN: Yeah, I think so.

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Okay.

4

5 MR. MCPADDEN: Mr. Chair. We'll try to
6 narrate as best we can for those who don't have a copy
7 in front of them.

8

9 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Perfect.

10

11 MR. MCPADDEN: Okay. So I want to
12 discuss an important issue that will affect how the
13 National Park Service manages sporthunting in National
14 Preserve lands here in Alaska. So two points up front.
15 None of what we're going to talk about today, me and
16 Joe, will affect subsistence activities or will -- or
17 nothing will restrict Federal subsistence activities,
18 and, you know, second, a lot of the practices that
19 we'll be discussing, we don't think were commonly
20 occurring here in the region. This will be a statewide
21 rulemaking process so we want to expose you to it here
22 today, get feedback from you and we'll leave you with
23 some points about next steps.

24

25 So last winter the Park Service was
26 directed by the Department of the Interior to issue --
27 or to initiate new rulemaking to reconsider the
28 factual, legal and policy conclusions that underline a
29 rule that we, the Park Service, issued in 2020. That
30 rule addressed sporthunting and trapping in National
31 Preserves. So just one definition up front is
32 rulemaking, and what rulemaking is is it's the process
33 by which Federal agencies develop and issue
34 regulations.

35

36 So the 2020 rule applies to all
37 National Preserves in the state, so Noatak National
38 Preserve, obviously, you know, the big one here in the
39 region, but Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve,
40 Wrangell-St. Elias National Preserve, Bering LandBridge
41 National Preserve, there's a number across the state,
42 this issue -- the substance that was at the heart of
43 the 2020 rule, there's a long history around it and
44 there was significant public interest in the rule from
45 a couple of years ago. That process generated about
46 200,000 public comments, which, for a Park Service
47 action is pretty heavy volume, and most commenters, the
48 majority of commenters were against, or strongly
49 objected to the 2020 rule. So that rule, in
50

0116

1 particular, it allowed people hunting under State
2 regulations, or sporthunters to do certain things that
3 were previously banned in National Preserves.
4

5 So I'm going to hand it over to Joe,
6 he's going to talk a little bit about those particular
7 activities that were allowed in the 2020 rule.
8

9 MR. DALLE-MOLLE: Thank you. Again,
10 Joe Dalle-Molle, the District Law Enforcement Ranger
11 for the National Park Service in Kotzebue.
12

13 Again, as Ray said, I just wanted to
14 reemphasize that nothing that we're talking about in
15 this proposal would affect subsistence practices, just
16 for non-Federally-qualified subsistence users, and this
17 would only apply to National Preserves, so it doesn't
18 apply to National Monuments, like Cape Krusenstern or
19 National Parks like Kobuk Valley. In addition, just,
20 again, to reemphasize, most of these practices we don't
21 believe are really occurring much here as well. So
22 there's a bit of a longer list but I'm not going to go
23 into a lot of that because it's just not pertinent at
24 all to our part of the state. There are four hunting
25 practices that I wanted to bring to your attention and
26 as we think about these practices just, I guess, my ask
27 would be to realize that practices might be different
28 in other parts of the state and, thus, the Park Service
29 is considering this as a whole. Even if some changes
30 occur they might not affect the Preserve up here in our
31 area.
32

33 So one of these would be -- well, one
34 of the current practices is allowed under the 2020 rule
35 is taking black bears, including cubs and sows with
36 cubs at den sites. And I just wanted to make clear
37 that already the State prohibits that practice up here
38 in our part of the state. So, again, it doesn't really
39 apply but this is one of the things to consider for
40 other parts of the state. It does allow that practice
41 in only certain areas of the state so the State of
42 Alaska, again, it's against their regulations for the
43 most part to allow that practice except for in a few
44 places.
45

46 The hunting of black and brown bears
47 over bait is another practice that this 2020 rule
48 allowed and is being considered possibly to be
49 prohibited under the rule change. And so State
50

0117

1 regulations only allow this up here in Unit 23 between
2 April 15th to June 30th. And, again, this is only for
3 those sporthunters, those non-Federally-qualified
4 users. It's a pretty limited time frame up in our part
5 of the state to begin with and because it is a
6 Preserve, any of those types of users would be hunting
7 under State regulations.

8

9 The hunting and trapping of wolves and
10 coyotes, including pups during the denning season
11 between May 1st and August 9th is currently allowed,
12 kind of at-large in the state. Again, this practice is
13 only allowed August 1st through April.....

14

15 (Teleconference interference -
16 participants not muted)

17

18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Could you please mute
19 yourselves if your name isn't Joe Dalle-Molle.

20

21 (Teleconference interference -
22 participants not muted)

23

24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Please make sure and
25 all mute our phones if we're calling in over the phone.

26

27 MR. DALLE-MOLLE: So, again, that
28 hunting and trapping of wolves and coyotes during the
29 denning season is currently allowed May 1st through
30 August 9th. This proposal will consider closing that.
31 In this part of the state, the State of Alaska already --
32 it only allows it between August 1st to April 30th, so
33 really, if there's any change up here that change would
34 only extend the current State closure for those
35 practices by a few days.

36

37 This one of kind of particular note to
38 our area, the current 2020 rule allows the shooting of
39 caribou while swimming in National Preserves by non-
40 Federally-qualified users. The State of Alaska allows
41 that only in Unit 23, 26 in Alaska, our part of the
42 state, they allow that on State lands. What this would
43 do, if this proposal were changed, would prohibit that
44 practice on the National Preserves. It still wouldn't
45 affect any navigable waterways that have been
46 determined to belong to the state. So non-Federally-
47 qualified users could still potentially hunt caribou
48 within those navigable waters but other areas that
49 would not be navigable that would fall within the

50

0118

1 Preserve could possibly be changed and not allowed
2 again. It would not affect subsistence users at all.

3

4 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Real quick. Would you
5 mind just defining that difference of navigable waters
6 and what this would mean, does that mean a caribou
7 swimming in a lake that isn't connected to a navigable
8 body of water, just out of curiosity?

9

10 MR. DALLE-MOLLE: Right. So a little
11 difficult to answer at this time but how the navigable
12 water determination works, right. So any waters
13 determined to be navigable by the -- and the Bureau of
14 Land Management is the only agency that does that or
15 through the Corps, it's -- once determined, it's clear
16 and obvious that that then would belong to the State up
17 to the mean high water mark. That may include a lake,
18 that may include rivers or creeks. There's a much
19 longer definition of what actually qualifies as
20 navigable or not and there is some interpretation
21 involved in that. It's a fairly long and complicated
22 process in order to make that determination.

23

24 As I mentioned earlier to the Council,
25 the only navigable waterways within the National Park
26 Service lands up here in this part of the state that
27 have been determined are Noatak Nation -- Noatak River
28 up to the Aniak so pretty far up there, a little past
29 the Cutler. Beyond that it just has not been
30 determined either way, right. And then the Kobuk River
31 all through Kobuk Valley National Park is determined
32 navigable. The big question becomes what is -- what if
33 it's not determined either way, right, it's not
34 navigable, or it is navigable, we don't know, on all
35 the rest, no bodies of water have been specifically
36 determined by the BLM, that I'm aware of that they have
37 determined are not navigable thus, for sure, belong to
38 the National Park Service within those units.

39

40 So I know it's a bit confusing.
41 There's a lot more detail and a lot more that goes into
42 those determinations. But where it would be considered
43 would be up to the high -- mean high water mark on
44 those rivers and the way that we think about that is
45 basically gravel bars. You know, a good rule is sort
46 of if it has trees and other permanent vegetation then
47 generally it likely is not below that mean high water
48 mark.

49

50

0119

1 Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you.

4

5 MR. ARMSTRONG: Real quick. I know
6 there was discussion in Juneau, I don't know if it was
7 about one of the glaciers there that they were talking
8 about the water, is that the same meaning?

9

10 MR. MCPADDEN: I don't think so, Elmer.
11 You know I'm not sure whether, you know, glaciers fall
12 into the navigable versus non-navigable debate but I
13 don't think so.

14

15 MR. ARMSTRONG: Because I know there
16 was an issue regarding who owned the water, the State
17 or the Park but I think that was a few months ago that
18 that issue came up and the Governor was talking about
19 it.

20

21 MR. MCPADDEN: Yeah, thanks for
22 bringing that up. I'm not intimately familiar with
23 that one but at least for this case and this proposed
24 rule, I think the key points are we do have a
25 navigability determination for the Noatak River up to
26 basically the Aniak confluence and so a large part of
27 the Noatak through the Preserve is essentially under
28 State management.

29

30 So I want to just close with a couple
31 notes on process of rulemaking, it involves several
32 procedural steps. So we have not actually put a rule
33 in the Federal Register yet so this is an early head's
34 up, an opportunity to hear from the RAC about this
35 topic. So several procedural steps.

36

37 First is we publish, we, Park Service,
38 publish a rule in the Federal Register that opens it up
39 for public comment. As part of this process the Park
40 Service will also be conducting consultation with
41 tribes so that's an important step. And also
42 engagement with other agencies, State of Alaska, in
43 particular, and some of those conversations have been
44 started. And then after considering all of the
45 comments and what we've heard during consultation the
46 Park Service will then issue a final rule with written
47 responses to comments received. There will also be an
48 environmental assessment run in parallel with the
49 rulemaking process so there will be opportunities for
50

0120

1 public comment on this, there will be tribal
2 consultation on this and agency engagement as well. So
3 the bottom line is you'll hear from the Park Service
4 about this topic again. I imagine it will receive some
5 media attention when those public comment periods begin
6 and there will be other opportunities to comment. So
7 today is really a chance for us to introduce the topic
8 to you and hear your thoughts and ideas, any feedback,
9 questions you have for us we'd love to take at this
10 time.

11
12 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Ray. Thank
13 you, Joe. Any questions from members of the RAC.

14
15 MR. SHIEDT: I have a question. You
16 said coyotes when they have their young, are they able
17 to harvest them when they have their young?

18
19 MR. MCPADDEN: So currently, yes, they
20 -- you can -- yes, you can, yeah. During --
21 essentially during what we've said is the denning
22 season so May -- early May until I think -- I think May
23 1st to August 9th, right in that window.

24
25 MR. SHIEDT: I always have a problem
26 with -- I know bears, coyotes, and wolves, we don't
27 like them, yet, when they have their young I think we
28 need to respect them because they got to rear their
29 young, as much as don't like them. And I think that's
30 wrong. Because as growing up, as a Native at Noatak I
31 always been told to respect no matter what resources,
32 even they're hurting us as bears because Natives didn't
33 like bears from the beginning when I was young. They
34 would harvest them when they were bothering our fish
35 racks, they would go out -- but, still, they would say
36 don't bother them when they were rearing their young.
37 Wait until they get older. Wait until they get edible
38 to eat. I'm talking about the bears. And I think it
39 should be all the same, with wolves, and coyotes, we
40 don't have much coyotes but still, I hope you hear what
41 I am saying. They're young, they got to grow up, yet
42 we don't want them around up to a point but that's the
43 cycle of nature and I think we need to respect, even
44 the beavers because we hate them, but when they have
45 their young, leave them alone, give a chance to rear
46 their young. We'd be better for the fur in the future
47 but we don't harvest them -- thank you, I mean that's
48 my feeling.

49
50

0121

1 MR. MCPADDEN: Thank you.

2

3 MR. DALLE-MOLLE: Through the Chair, if

4 I may also clarify. The State of Alaska, under State
5 regulations prohibited the practice during the denning
6 season for wolves, for taking their pups. This -- what
7 this does, just kind of at a broader State level, the
8 proposed rule change maybe just -- it's going to make
9 that -- turn that basically into affecting all
10 Preserves. So other parts of the state they may allow
11 that, the State of Alaska may allow that, where they
12 would allow that during the denning season, the
13 National Park Service would then not in Preserves.
14 Where they do currently allow that, the National Park
15 Service allows that just the same as the State. So,
16 again, not really something that would affect us up
17 here in this area of the state if this change were to
18 go through. Again, it wouldn't make any changes to
19 subsistence practices but we don't believe that's
20 really occurring and the State of Alaska's already said
21 that's an unaccepted practice up here in this part of
22 the state so we'll just be looking to maybe bring that
23 in line across the state on Preserves.

24

25 MR. SHIEDT: Thank you for the answer.

26

27 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any other questions or
28 comments for Ray and Joe at this time from members of
29 the RAC.

30

31 MR. KRAMER: Yes, Mr. Chair, this is
32 Kramer.

33

34 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Mr. Kramer.

35

36 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, I know that, you
37 know, there's always been somewhat of a conflict
38 regarding navigable waterway, you know, high flood
39 marks. I know quite a few years ago, you know, I knew
40 a gentleman and his son were going to go up and try and
41 hunt sheep way up the Aggi, but he ended up leaving his
42 fourwheeler at the border of the Park and walked up,
43 hiked up about two and a half, three miles to where
44 they were able to see sheep, I know that, you know,
45 they were told not to drive fourwheelers on gravel bars
46 and every case I hear, you know, they said oh yeah
47 below the high tide mark is State but then again, you
48 know, they were still saying, no, no, no, we still
49 monitor those waters and I'm like all right, what's
50

0122

1 going on here because if airplanes can land on these
2 gravel bars I think it shouldn't make a difference
3 regarding whether a fourwheeler can drive up the river
4 to go see if they can try and find some caribou, you
5 know, because planes are able to land wherever, gravel
6 bars and, you know, other spits and stuff like that but
7 people aren't allowed to use fourwheelers on these
8 navigable waterways, you know, to get from one place to
9 another to be able to harvest animals.

10

11 That's all I have for that right now.

12

13 MR. MCPADDEN: You want to take that
14 on.

15

16 MR. DALLE-MOLLE: Okay, if I understand
17 Mr. Kramer correctly he's advocating for fourwheeler
18 use on gravel bars, again, if the State of Alaska
19 allows that on their lands within navigable water ways
20 or other State owned lands within National Park Service
21 units then the Park Service has no authority to
22 prohibit that. The National Park Service will continue
23 to enforce the Federal laws and regulations on National
24 Park Service lands and waters. So, again, the question
25 of navigability sort of becomes an issue. It can often
26 be a confusing answer. Right now, again, we know
27 what's been determined, we don't know what might be
28 determined in the future but everything's a case by
29 case basis.

30

31 To airplanes, airplanes are allowed to
32 land by anybody in the public anywhere within the
33 Preserve or on National Park Service lands for the most
34 part with few exceptions, and that is established under
35 ANILCA as a practice that is allowed. Fourwheelers was
36 never an allowed practice, just across the board like
37 that, there are certain areas where fourwheelers may be
38 allowed on National Park Service lands but we don't
39 have any specific routes up here within, say, the
40 Preserve, the Park or the Monument that specifically do
41 allow fourwheelers. And, yeah, I hope that answers or
42 clarify kind of that stance on it.

43

44 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Joe. Any
45 other questions or comments.

46

47 (No comments)

48

49 CHAIRMAN BAKER: If not, thank you,

50

0123

1 gentlemen. We'll be sure to direct any questions in
2 the future if this comes up again, or if anyone is
3 curious back at you two. So with that we will move on
4 to Item N, and Mr. Young, if you would like to discuss
5 Council appointments to Kobuk Valley and Cape
6 Krusenstern Subsistence Resource Commissions, the floor
7 is yours.

8
9 MR. YOUNG: Thank you. I am Justin
10 Young. I am the acting Resources Manager for Western
11 Arctic National ParkLands here in Kotzebue and I am
12 currently acting in stead of Hannah Atkinson who left
13 to go to grad school this last year. Thank you, Mr.
14 Chair.

15
16 I would like to review the current
17 standing of the Cape Krusenstern and Kobuk Valley
18 Subsistence Resource Commissions and those that were
19 appointed by the RAC. Currently the Cape Krusenstern
20 SRC members who have been appointed, that is Alex
21 Whiting of Kotzebue, Attamuk Shiedt of Kotzebue and
22 Enoch Adams of Kivalina are all in active standing and
23 their terms will be expiring next November so November
24 23 so we will likely put this again on the fall topic
25 to be discussed about those appointments.

26
27 For Kobuk Valley, we have Rosa Horner
28 who -- of Kobuk, who is currently still active and will
29 also expire in November of '23, Merele Custer who is
30 expiring this month and we have one vacancy. So I
31 would be bringing it to the Council to see about
32 appointing or reappointing members for the Kobuk
33 Valley. Merele Custer has indicated he would be
34 interested in continuing in his position but I'd turn
35 it over to the Council for potential nominations and
36 elections.

37
38 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So Merele Custer said
39 he is interested in being reappointed and what was the
40 third one on the Kobuk Valley?

41
42 MR. YOUNG: Yes, Merele Custer is
43 interested in being reappointed. We have one vacancy.
44 And Rosa Horner is still active. So really the
45 potential reappointment of Merele, and if there are any
46 nominations for a third person.

47
48 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Just for some
49 background information, Justin, what are the
50

0124

1 qualifications that need to be kept in mind for that
2 SRC.

3

4 MR. YOUNG: For these nominations, the
5 individual will need to be sitting on another Advisory
6 Council. All of them currently sit on the State
7 Advisory Councils for the upper Kobuk. So for this
8 other individual, as long as they are a member of an
9 Advisory Council they are available to be appointed for
10 this position.

11

12 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you. Any
13 feedback from the RAC.

14

15 MR. SHIEDT: Yeah, Attamuk here. Who
16 the other ones you said, the other two names again?

17

18 MR. YOUNG: Rosa Horner of Kobuk and
19 Merele Custer of Shungnak.

20

21 MR. SHIEDT: So I'd like them to be
22 nominated to the SRC.

23

24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Say that again.

25

26 MR. SHIEDT: The two names that was
27 given, go ahead.

28

29 MR. YOUNG: Rosa Horner does not need
30 to be renominated yet, but Merele Custer would be open
31 for renomination.

32

33 MR. SHIEDT: Merele Custer to be
34 nominated.

35

36 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Attamuk.
37 So a nomination to reappoint Merele Custer by Attamuk.

38

39 MR. HOWARTH: And I'll second that.

40

41 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Seconded by Wilbur.
42 If there's no further discussion for that appointment,
43 any questions or comments from the RAC.

44

45 (No comments)

46

47 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So with that we'll go
48 ahead and take.....

49

50

0125

1 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Mr. Chair.
2 I believe you have to take that to a vote.

3
4 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So if there is no
5 other
6 discussion we can take that to a vote. Does it have to
7 be a roll call vote or can it just be.....

8
9 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Majority,
10 whatever, however you can do it, majority or.

11
12 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So all those in favor
13 of appointing Merele Custer to the SRC please signify
14 by saying aye.

15
16 IN UNISON: Aye.

17
18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any opposed.....

19
20 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Okay, the
21 motion carried, thank you.

22
23 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So the majority has
24 it. We'll go ahead and reappoint Merele to the SRC.
25 And then for the vacant seat, what is the typical
26 process for a vacant seat, if you don't mind?

27
28 MR. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do
29 not know the full typical process but one would assume
30 that the individual who would be nominated would be
31 interested so it may need to be a process until taking
32 until the winter meeting for people to pool from the
33 communities to see who would be interested to open it
34 up for election at the next meeting unless someone
35 already knew someone who was interested and open.

36
37 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Justin. So
38 is there any suggestions at this time or do we want to
39 kind of table this until the winter meeting in February
40 until we have, hopefully, some names that we can go
41 over, a name, at least.

42
43 MR. SHIEDT: I think we.....

44
45 MS. PATTON: Mr. Chair, this is Eva.

46
47 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, Eva.

48
49 MS. PATTON: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair.

50

0126

1 Just a little bit more background for the RAC
2 appointments to the SRC. The appointees either need to
3 be a RAC member from one of the resident zone
4 communities for that SRC or they can be a currently
5 serving ADF&G Subsistence Advisory Committee member
6 from one of the resident zone communities for that SRC.
7 And we did have, at your spring meeting there was an
8 interest from an AC member serving in the Kotzebue
9 Sound region AC that was eligible and interested and
10 unfortunately their AC seat expired just this past
11 year, and so a good process would be to -- we're still
12 waiting on RAC appointments to fill the current vacant
13 seats on the Northwest Arctic RAC and hopefully there
14 will be appointments from resident zone communities to
15 the RAC to fill the Kobuk River region communities.
16 Another opportunity, too, is to look into the current
17 AC membership where representatives are from those
18 resident zone communities and reach out to them if they
19 may be interested to serve in the future so that you
20 would be able to have a list for you at the next
21 meeting. But currently the person that has expressed
22 interest before, their seat expired on the AC so
23 they're no longer eligible at this time. But all the
24 others are moving forward that would be.

25

26 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

27

28 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Eva.
29 Attamuk, did you have something.

30

31 MR. SHIEDT: No, but I think I hear
32 that maybe we should wait for the next winter meeting.

33

34 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yeah, I think given
35 that the ACs, the Fish and Game side are hopefully
36 going to start being more active, that way we can kind
37 of generate names of who's available so I believe at
38 this time it would be best to hold this one until the
39 winter RAC meeting in February, or whenever we pick the
40 next meeting.

41

42 MR. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We
43 will produce a list and make sure that's in the packet
44 for the next meeting.

45

46 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Justin.
47 Anything else.

48

49 MR. YOUNG: Not at this time about

50

0127

1 appointments.

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you. So with
4 that we can move on to Item O, telephonic/internet
5 expenses related to the Council teleconference
6 meetings, Jessica Gill the floor is yours.

7

8 MS. GILL: Great, thank you. For the
9 record my name is Jessica Gill. I'm the -- I'm one of
10 the Council Coordinators with the Office of Subsistence
11 Management. I'd like to thank you for allowing me to
12 be here with you guys today. I'm going to present you
13 information on how you can get reimbursed if you had
14 any telephone or internet expenses associated with your
15 participation in the Council meetings over the last two
16 and a half years. The materials for this agenda item
17 are in your meeting material books on Page 47.

18

19 This issue was brought to the Board's
20 attention by the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Council during
21 their winter 2022 meeting. OSM reviewed the policies
22 regarding reimbursement and I would like to provide you
23 with information on the types of expenses that may be
24 reimbursed and the documentation necessary for -- to
25 receive reimbursement. For the time period when the
26 Council meetings were held teleconference, you can be
27 reimbursed for the internet and phone charges that are
28 in excess of your normal bill. Council members who
29 have internet or cell phone plans that charge a flat
30 monthly fee regardless of Council meetings cannot be
31 reimbursed for their normal charges. In order for
32 Council members to receive reimbursement for excess
33 charges they need to submit a copy of their bill that
34 covers the time period during which the virtual Council
35 meetings took place and indicate the excess charges for
36 attending the virtual meetings. Council can submit
37 this information to their Council Coordinator or mail
38 it to -- or mail their bills to the Office of
39 Subsistence Management at 1011 East Tudor Road, Mail
40 Stop 121, Anchorage Alaska 99503.

41

42 This concludes my presentation and I'm
43 happy to answer any questions you might have.

44

45 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Jessica.

46

47 MR. SHIEDT: So what you're telling me
48 is you could pay my long distance calls and everything
49 because that's what it really is on the teleconference
50

0128

1 and you could -- so should I give you my problem on
2 billing?

3

4 (Laughter)

5

6 MR. SHIEDT: That's the way I
7 understand you, teleconference that you could pay any
8 expenses related to the Council because we serve the
9 Council 12 months out of the year.

10

11 MS. GILL: Mr. Chair. Thank you for
12 that question. I think it's related specifically to
13 Council meetings so let's say if we had a Council
14 meeting on October 15th it would only be expenses
15 related to that day. My apologies.

16

17 MR. SHIEDT: I have to figure that out,
18 okay, thank you.

19

20 (Laughter)

21

22 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any other questions or
23 comments from members of the RAC.

24

25 (No comments)

26

27 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, thank
28 you Karen -- or, sorry, Jessica. And we will now go to
29 the very top of the agenda under new business and head
30 back to the fisheries stuff that we delayed from this
31 morning so we'll go ahead and start with the 2024
32 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program with Karen Hyer
33 and Dr. Hannah Voorhees.

34

35 MS. VOORHEES: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
36 Members of the Council. This is Hannah Voorhees,
37 Anthropologist with OSM. And my Fisheries Biologist
38 colleague Karen Hyer is also here. The materials for
39 this discussion on the Fisheries Resource Monitoring
40 Program begin on Page 34 of your meeting books.

41

42 First I'm going to give you a quick
43 overview of the whole Fisheries Resource Monitoring
44 Program cycle, or FRMP cycle. The Office of
45 Subsistence Management implements the FRMP funding
46 research and monitoring projects that provide
47 information for Federal subsistence fisheries
48 management. This funding occurs on two year cycles.
49 Research focuses on harvest monitoring, traditional
50

0129

1 ecological knowledge and stock status and trends. The
2 cycle starts when we hear from you, the Council, about
3 what you see as important fisheries research topics.
4 Next, OSM Staff meet with volunteers from your Council
5 to determine the priority information needs of your
6 region and we call these the priority information
7 needs, or PINs, apologies for the acronyms. And this
8 summer we did meet with Bobby Schaeffer and draft your
9 priority information needs, which you can revise and
10 finalize as needed. The priority information needs are
11 very important because this is the Council's
12 opportunity to direct the research on subsistence
13 fisheries on Federal waters in your region.

14
15 And this is -- so, again, this is the
16 beginning of the cycle and it really starts with the
17 Council and your concerns.

18
19 So later today or tomorrow, depending
20 on how we get through the next couple items on the
21 agenda, we'll be asking you to review and finalize your
22 priority information needs. Those will then be
23 combined with the PINs that were finalized by the North
24 Slope region and the Seward Peninsula region and
25 altogether these three regions form what we call the
26 Northern Region for the Fisheries Resource Monitoring
27 Program. So then there will be a list of priority
28 information needs for the northern region that are
29 released with a notice of funding opportunity. That
30 notice of funding opportunity for the Monitoring
31 Program will be announced later this winter and then
32 researchers will develop proposals based on your list
33 of research needs. Proposals from researchers are
34 reviewed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Staff
35 Technical Review Committee and your Council. All the
36 input generated from the proposal reviews is presented
37 to the Federal Subsistence Board and they make a
38 recommendation on which projects to fund. OSM then
39 funds as many projects as possible based on their
40 budget and those projects will begin in 2024.

41
42 I also wanted to just give you a little
43 update on the 2022 Fisheries Resource Monitoring cycle.
44 The most recent round of projects selection and funded
45 was finalized this spring and these projects responded
46 to priority information needs that you identified along
47 with Seward Peninsula and North Slope.

48
49 (Teleconference interference -
50

0130

1 participants not muted)

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Please mute your
4 phones. Everyone online please mute your phone.

5

6 (Teleconference interference -
7 participants not muted)

8

9 CHAIRMAN BAKER: That's the radio
10 station, so now that the radio is done, please go
11 ahead.

12

13 MS. VOORHEES: Would the Council like
14 me to redo the titles of the four projects that were
15 funded for the northern region in the most recent
16 cycle. Would that be of interest?

17

18 MR. SHIEDT: Yeah, refresh our memory
19 please.

20

21 MS. VOORHEES: All right. So of the
22 four projects that were funded, three represent your
23 region, the Northwest Arctic region.

24

25 The first project is titled Kotzebue
26 Sound Sheefish Describing Coastal Movement, Temperature
27 Preference and Potential Range Expansion.

28

29 Then we have Selawik River Inconnu
30 Spawning Population, Age Structure Evaluation and
31 Spawner Recruitment Response to a 2004 Permafrost Thaw
32 Slump.

33

34 And, finally, Traditional Ecological
35 Knowledge of Salmon in the River Drainages of Kotzebue
36 Sound.

37

38 And then, additionally, for the Seward
39 Peninsula region there is a funded project entitled
40 Unalakleet River Chinook Salmon Escapement Assessment,
41 which is a continuation project.

42

43 And most of these projects are now in
44 various stages of starting up.

45

46 So now I'll -- I think I'll turn the
47 mic over to Karen because we have some investigators
48 who have done work under the FRMP who are here to give
49 you updates and presentations and I think it'll be a
50

0131

1 good chance to see what these projects really are
2 looking like on the ground.

3

4 Thank you.

5

6 MS. HYER: Mr. Chairman. Council
7 members. So we have a couple investigators online and
8 a couple in the room and we're going to go ahead and do
9 the presentations and then it will be your chance to
10 actually understand what is currently going on in the
11 region and then also we had talked earlier about the
12 pretty water, and Joe's here and he can talk about
13 that. But it's your opportunity to actually ask some
14 questions too. And then once we've finished that and
15 they can tell you about their research and kind of what
16 they think the next steps are then we'll reconvene --
17 well, not reconvene but Hannah and I will come back up
18 here and we'll help you work through the priority
19 information needs. So then we're going to leave with a
20 list of what you think we should be studying, and that
21 actually is an action item. So once we get that
22 established we'll ask for you to make a motion and vote
23 on it. But in the mean -- right now I'm going to go
24 ahead and move to the back of the room and get the
25 computer set up. I think the first person on your list
26 is Morgan, is that correct, we don't have the most
27 recent agenda with us up here -- who's the first
28 investigator.

29

30 MR. SHIEDT: Joe.

31

32 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Is it Joe?

33

34 MR. SHIEDT: Yeah.

35

36 MS. HYER: All right. I'm going to go
37 ahead and set up the computer and I'm going to ask Joe
38 to come to the mic and he's going to present his work.
39 So Joe Spencer's up next.

40

41 (Pause)

42

43 CHAIRMAN BAKER: As everyone's getting
44 kind of set up, what page and what book should we be
45 looking at or are we just going to rely on the screen.

46

47 MR. SPENCER: This is Joe Spencer. It
48 looks like it's in Supplemental Tab 2 is going to be
49 the first presentation here titled: Dolly Varden Life

50

0132

1 History and Mixed Stock Analysis.

2

3

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Joe.

4

5

(Pause)

6

7

MR. SPENCER: Hello everybody. My name
8 is Joe Spencer. I'm a Fisheries Biologist with the
9 Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of
10 Sportfish in Fairbanks and I'm also a graduate student
11 in the Fisheries Department at the University of
12 Alaska-Fairbanks. I'm here to talk about a joint
13 project that we're doing between the Alaska Department
14 of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
15 and the University of Alaska-Fairbanks. And we're
16 going to be looking at the life history, migrations and
17 stock mixing habits of Dolly varden populations in
18 Northwestern Alaska. This project is being funded by
19 the Office of Subsistence Management. And please feel
20 free to stop me at any point in this presentation if
21 something is unclear.

22

23

24

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The priority information need that we
are addressing with this project is the need to
document changes in species compositions, abundance and
migration timing especially of Dolly Varden and
whitefish species in the Northwest Arctic to address
changing availability of subsistence fishery resources.
Dolly Varden are one of the most important subsistence
fish resources in the region but there's still
considerable knowledge gaps about the general life
history characteristics and migratory habits of these
fish and that's what we are going to be addressing.

So our objectives for this specific
project are to characterize the age at length, age at
seaward migration, frequency of seaward migration and
the overwintering location and fidelity of Dolly Varden
in Northwestern Alaska. We were specifically focusing
on the Dolly Varden that spawned in the Noatak, Wulik
and Kivalina drainages, which is where we believe most
of the Dolly Varden in Northwestern Alaska originate
from.

I'll start us off by giving a brief
overview of what we know about Dolly Varden life
history in this region. Dolly Varden rear for two to
four years in rivers after which they begin yearly
feeding migrations to the ocean. We believe that once

0133

1 they begin migrating to the ocean they will do so every
2 year with the exception that spawning adults will not
3 migrate to the ocean to feed during the year that
4 they're going to spawn. So the ocean around here is
5 too cold in the winter for Dolly Varden to survive in
6 saltwater so they return every fall to one of several
7 large rivers to overwinter. Dolly Varden from across
8 the region congregate to overwinter in several large
9 rivers. They're thought to have strong homing
10 abilities and spawn in the same river that they were
11 born in but fish returning from their ocean feeding
12 migrations will often overwinter in a different river
13 than the one that they were born in. We do not know if
14 they have fidelity to particular overwinter areas but
15 previous tagging studies have shown that there may be
16 considerable interchange between rivers among years.
17 So these overwintering habits create a situation where
18 fishers are fishing to mixed stocked aggregations of
19 Dolly Varden. How often Dolly Varden migrate to the
20 ocean as well as which river they overwinter in each
21 year determines how often they're encountered in
22 fisheries and which fisheries they're encountered in.

23

24 So that brings me to what we don't know
25 about these fish and what this project is trying to
26 address.

27

28 The last comprehensive work done on the
29 life histories of these Dolly Varden populations was
30 done in the early 1980s and the climate has changed a
31 lot since then and our techniques and study have come a
32 long way since then. So in this study we plan to
33 investigate basic life history characteristics such as
34 what age fish make their first ocean migrations, how
35 often they skip those migrations. We also want to know
36 whether different spawning populations tend to
37 overwinter in different areas and whether there have
38 been changes since the original observations in the
39 1980s. And this baseline data is important to
40 establish so we can see changes going forward with
41 climate change, and with the longer summer growing
42 seasons that these fish are experiencing with climate
43 change.

44

45 So this map shows major overwintering
46 and spawning areas for Dolly Varden in Northwestern
47 Alaska. Spawning areas are highlighted in purple and
48 overwintering areas are highlighted in yellow here.
49 They spawn in mountainous tributaries of the Noatak
50

0134

1 River as well as headwater sections of the Wulik and
2 Kivalina Rivers. They also spawn in quite a few rivers
3 around the region such as some tributaries of the Kobuk
4 but we believe that the areas on this map are the major
5 spawning populations. Overwintering is thought to take
6 place primarily in the lower sections of the Noatak,
7 Wulik and Kivalina Rivers. Like I mentioned earlier,
8 these overwintering aggregations are composed of a
9 mixture of different spawning stocks from around the
10 region and fish may overwinter in one river in one year
11 and then a different river the next year.

12

13 For this project we're collecting Dolly
14 Varden genetics and otoliths, or ear bones from the
15 major spawning areas in the region as well as from
16 subsistence and commercial fisheries in Kivalina,
17 Noatak and Kotzebue. From these samples we'll be able
18 to determine if certain spawning stocks or life history
19 strategies are.....

20

21 (Teleconference interference -
22 participants not muted)

23

24 MR. SPENCER:in these fisheries
25 more often than others. So far we've successfully
26 collected samples from seven major spawning areas and
27 from subsistence harvest in Kivalina and Noatak. We
28 traveled to Noatak in April of this year and we were
29 able to sample people's ice fishing catches and we were
30 able to be provided some samples from a subsistence
31 harvester in Kivalina in June as well.

32

33 This is a picture of the otolith, which
34 is the work that I'm doing for my Master's thesis.
35 It's an ear -- it's also known as an ear bone, they're
36 tiny bone like structures inside the head of the fish,
37 they're only about two millimeters long. As you can
38 see they're pretty small on my pinkie nail there. But
39 the cool thing about otoliths is as the fish grows the
40 otolith also grows and we can read otoliths like the
41 rings of a tree and see how old they are and how fast
42 they grow, among other things.

43

44 So here's a picture of a thin sectioned
45 Dolly Varden otolith. You can see on the left side of
46 this otolith there are rings that form as the fish
47 grows. The darker bands are overwintering growth
48 periods which I've numbered in this photo. This
49 particular fish has overwintered five times. Otoliths

50

0135

1 also provide additional information about a fishes life
2 because as an otolith grows in the fish, the chemical
3 structure of the otolith incorporates minerals and
4 elements that are found in the water and we can use
5 these to track the movements of the fish over the
6 course of their lifetimes. So because ocean water and
7 freshwater have different chemistries, the elements
8 incorporated in the otolith can be used to understand
9 when they go to the ocean. So this is a picture of a
10 Dolly Varden otolith from Northern Canada and the red
11 line that's superimposed on it is the concentration of
12 striatum, which is an element that's found in much
13 higher concentrations in the ocean than the freshwater,
14 and the changes in water chemistry reflected in the
15 otolith is reflected when the fish moves between these
16 two water masses. So in this picture the white
17 vertical lines correspond to overwinter growth so in
18 this particular case we can see this fish went to the
19 ocean for the first time in year four of its life and
20 then it went again in the fifth and seventh summers of
21 its life but it remained in freshwater during its sixth
22 and eighth summer which are indicated by those circled
23 arrows in the upper right hand corner. We know that
24 because the stranchium did not increase in those growth
25 periods and that probably means that the fish spawned
26 in those years.

27
28 Additionally we hope to compare the
29 stranchium isotope ratios within the winter growth
30 zones of otoliths to the water chemistry in the major
31 overwintering rivers, the Noatak, the Kivalina and
32 Wulik with the goal of reconstructing year by year
33 overwintering histories of individual fish.

34
35 This map shows our sample collection
36 efforts so far. We've collected 50 otolith samples
37 from the subsistence fisheries in Noatak and Kivalina
38 and we'll continue to collect samples from those
39 harvests over the next two seasons. Dolly Varden
40 bycatch in the commercial chum fishery has been lower
41 than normal over the past couple of years but we have
42 collected 39 samples from that fishery so far. We've
43 also sampled nine spawning areas and have been able to
44 collect our sample goals in most places and we intend
45 to collect samples from the remaining spawning areas
46 that we haven't visited in the summer of 2023.

47
48 So sampling efforts this year were
49 impeded by the presence of mineral rich seeps, it
50

0136

1 sounds like you guys may have talked about them earlier
2 today. These seeps have been over the past 10 or so
3 years been observed in many of the rivers across the
4 Brooks Range and they produce this colorful, often
5 turbid water. So this is an aerial image of the Ingnig
6 River which is a tributary of the far upper Noatak in
7 the National Park. You can see in this photo that
8 those tributaries flowing into the left side of the
9 river have these mineral seeps that are discoloring the
10 water.

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In the 1980s aerial surveys indicated that this river and the river next to it, the Kogorak River contained several hundred spawning Dolly Varden. when we sampled the rivers this summer water clarity was impeded downstream of the seeps and the areas that fish were historically documented spawning in were compromised by these seeps. You can see that these mineral seeps have stained the rocks red and left behind in many places like an orange sludgy precipitated on the bottom of the river. These photos were taken about 13 miles up the Igning River, which is the top end of the historical spawning distribution. And this river and the Kogorak River we were not able to sample any adult Dolly Varden. Now, that doesn't mean they weren't there but we didn't see evidence of spawning aggregations like we're historically seen counted by airplanes in the '80s.

So the next step for this project is to collect more otoliths and genetic samples from the subsistence fisheries and remaining spawning areas. The genetic samples will allow Penny Crane with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct a mixed stock analysis and determine the stock origin of fish harvested in the subsistence fisheries. The samples -- the otolith samples that we have already collected are in Fairbanks and I'm waiting for my turn on the micro-chemistry instruments at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks to get the data from them and we hope to come sample subsistence harvest in Noatak and Kivalina again in the spring.

If anybody has any questions or thoughts or suggestions about collections samples in these places we would be happy to hear them.

I'm going to switch gears really quick and give some updates on fish counts and commercial

0137

1 fisheries from this summer and fall.

2

3

4 Every fall, Fish and Game, in
5 conjunction with the Red Dog Mine conducts aerial
6 surveys of overwintering Dolly Varden on the Wulik
7 River. This photo shows an overwintering aggregation
8 on the lower Wulik River in the fall. This year counts
9 were conducted on October 2nd and 3rd and the minimum
10 estimate from these counts was 74,482 overwintering
11 Dolly Varden in the Wulik and 11,803 in the Kivalina
12 River. This graph shows the Wulik River counts over
13 the past 40 years. So this year's count was about
14 average. These should be considered minimum counts
15 because fish are still entering the river right up
16 until freeze-up and these were taken on October 2nd and
17 3rd. There are also several sections of the Wulik that
18 are affected by these mineral seeps that I mentioned
19 earlier and those have impeded full aerial censuses in
20 the past few years.

20

21

22 This is a picture of the seep in the
23 Wulik River. You can see in the left image the seep is
24 entering on the right side of the Wulik River and
25 everything down stream of that is a little bit
26 discolored so they get good aerial counts but they're
27 not full counts.

27

28

29 These seeps are located throughout the
30 Igalukruk Creek drainage and you can see this map on
31 the right, they don't -- they're not associated with
32 the Red Dog Mine specifically, they're kind of popping
33 up everywhere in the drainage and it's also happening
34 across the Brooks Range in places that are far away
35 from any mines so it seems to be not associated with
36 human activity -- direct human activity at least, maybe
37 something with permafrost melt or something of that
38 nature. And the degree of turbidity in Igalukruk Creek
39 has varied over the past several years and then this
40 year it was not as turbid as it has been in the
41 previous few years and really, in -- in bad turbidity
42 years like 2019 and 2020 it appears that more fish
43 would tend to overwinter up stream in the Wulik of this
44 turbid seep in the clear water of the Wuliks than would
45 historically -- than they had done.

45

46

47 One thing that we don't know about the
48 overwintering habits of Dolly Varden in this region is
49 how many Dolly Varden overwinter in the lower Noatak
50 River itself. So here's a map from a radiotelemetry

50

0138

1 study that was funded by the Office of Subsistence
2 Management back in 2012 and 2013, which shows the
3 overwintering locations of radiotagged Dolly Varden
4 throughout the lower 60 miles of the Noatak River. We
5 know that there's many thousands of Dolly Varden that
6 overwinter here but unlike the Wulik and Kivalina
7 Rivers this -- the stretch of river is much too large
8 to survey from the air, aerial surveys are just not
9 really possible here. So to address that knowledge
10 gap, we would like to try to conduct a count of out-
11 migrating Dolly Varden during the spring using sonars.
12 Previous Fish and Game projects funded by OSM include a
13 project to count migrating sheefish in the Kobuk which
14 was able to successfully enumerate the spawning
15 population. This video shows an image of migrating
16 fish on a sonar so this is approximately what you would
17 see in the Noatak or similar to that during the out-
18 migration. And collecting this information would give
19 us a much better handle on the overall size of the
20 population of Dolly Varden in Northwestern Alaska,
21 which we're currently only able to glean from the
22 aerial surveys on the Wulik and the Kivalina Rivers
23 which we know are only a portion of the overall
24 population but we don't know what proportion they are.
25 And we feel that it is particularly important to keep
26 close tabs on these populations of Dolly Varden
27 especially now with these mineral seeps popping up
28 everywhere, we do not know how they are affecting the
29 overall numbers of fish and how other climate change
30 impacts might be affecting these populations.

31
32 And I'll finish off with a -- just an
33 update on the summary of the Kotzebue commercial chum
34 salmon fishery. The 2022 forecast of 100 to 200,000
35 chums was greatly exceeded with an overall harvest of
36 475,752 chums. This translates to an ex vessel value
37 of over \$200 million which is the first time this
38 fishery has exceeded \$1 million in several years. It's
39 the 8th highest harvest in the 61 year history of the
40 fishery. The Kotzebue Sound chum run fared much better
41 than those of Norton Sound and the Yukon and Kuskokwim
42 Rivers, which all had pretty poor returns this season
43 and a forecast has not yet been released for the 2023
44 season.

45
46 So I want to thank everybody for their
47 time and I welcome any questions or comments.

48
49 MR. SHIEDT: I have a question on your
50

0139

1 amount of dollars you said you put in there. The years
2 I fished we were over a dollar a pound, but today it's
3 only 50 cents a pound, you know, and what I'm trying to
4 say is compare that versus they did on my time when I
5 was young, you know, when we catch a lot of salmon at
6 the time -- at the time when I was fishing we get over
7 \$1 a pound, but today it's only 50 cents a pound and
8 compare that, versus what they were worth, you know, 40
9 years ago.

10

11 MR. SPENCER: Yeah, I know that this
12 year the average size of the chums was one of the
13 lowest on record so that translates to 448-ish-thousand
14 chums translates to a lot fewer pounds than it may have
15 historically.

16

17 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any other questions
18 from members of the RAC for Joe.

19

20 MR. SHIEDT: So on the otoliths, what
21 was the oldest year old fish that -- I'm talking about
22 the char that you get. I know when me and Susan, I
23 think it was Susan that did it, we had 14 to 17 year
24 old trout.

25

26 MR. SPENCER: So the oldest one in my
27 sample so far has been 13 but I know fish at 16 and 17
28 year old have been taken previously. My sample size is
29 not huge because I'm doing micro-chemistry on them
30 which is fairly expensive so I have a sample size of
31 like 300 fish but in the 80s when they did it, they had
32 sample sizes in the thousands, they had some fish in
33 the 16, 17 year old range. The vast majority of them
34 are between six and nine.

35

36 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair. Would you be
37 able to -- or are you guys planning on doing this study
38 in the Kobuk River?

39

40 MR. SPENCER: So there are spawning
41 Dolly Varden in the Kobuk tributaries for sure,
42 definitely not like numerically as many fish as in the
43 Noatak. This project doesn't involve fish there
44 specifically but we definitely would be open to doing
45 that in the future if that's something that people want
46 us to investigate. Because there certainly are many
47 tributaries that get anadromous Dolly Varden in the
48 Kobuk.

49

50

0140

1 MR. HOWARTH: Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any other questions
4 from RAC members for Joe on this one.

5

6 (No comments)

7

8 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Anyone on the phone
9 from the RAC.

10

11 (No comments)

12

13 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, I
14 believe the floor is still yours for as long as you
15 want, Joe.

16

17 MR. SPENCER: Oh, well, I'm done.

18

19 MR. KRAMER: Mr. Chairman, this is
20 Kramer.

21

22 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Oh, yes, Mike.

23

24 MR. KRAMER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
25 Yeah, I know over the past several years we've had a
26 lot of warmer river water up in the Kobuk where we had
27 thousands of them washed up on the beach due to the
28 warm weather -- or warm water in the Kobuk River for
29 their spawning, do you think that's going to have any
30 kind of an affect on their future runs?

31

32 MR. SPENCER: I think that that
33 certainly could. I might defer that to Brendan Scanlon
34 who's the Area Management Biologist who is probably on
35 the phone right now, but, yeah, I think that similar
36 things have also been observed in the Yukon and
37 Kuskokwim drainages with large die-offs of fish due to
38 high water temperatures and that's certainly something
39 that we would be concerned about with climate change
40 and warming water temperatures.

41

42 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, because I know last
43 -- not last -- maybe it was in the last couple years I
44 know that there was thousands of them piled up right
45 here in front of Kiana and around Kiana because the
46 water up stream was too warm for them to go spawn. You
47 know the one year when we had a lot of them wash up on
48 the beach, that's the most salmon I've ever seen just
49 washed up along the edge of the -- the river edges that
50

0141

1 were dead, unsure if they were spawned out or not. But
2 I was just wondering if that was going to have a future
3 impact on the Kobuk Valley -- or Kobuk River run in the
4 next couple years.

5
6 MR. SPENCER: Yeah, I don't -- I'm
7 not.....

8
9 MR. SCANLON: Mr. Chairman, this is
10 Brendan Scanlon with Fish and Game, could I.....

11
12 MR. SPENCER: Go for it Brendan.

13
14 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, Mr. Scanlon.

15
16 MR. SCANLON: Hey Joe. Thank you.
17 This is Brendan Scanlon with Fish and Game. Hey, Mike,
18 the really big chum salmon die-off we had, I think it
19 was 2014. It was up and down the Kobuk and it was in
20 the Squirrel River, too, didn't seem to affect the
21 Noatak but, yeah, it was pretty dramatic, we had never
22 seen anything like that, we were kind of unprepared.
23 But we did find out that the brood year that we would
24 have expected from those spawners would have been five
25 years later, in 2019, there was a whole bunch of chum
26 so it didn't have a population level effect on chum
27 salmon, that great big die-off, even though it did look
28 terrible. But one thing we have noticed is as the
29 Kobuk warms up, sheefish which spawn in the main stem,
30 up above the village of Kobuk and near the Paw, like a
31 40 mile stretch, when it's really hot in July they seem
32 to pile into some of the tributaries to cool off, like
33 the Hunt and the Tututsuk and the Salmon River, we
34 could see them up river sometimes when we're doing
35 other work and they don't spawn there, we know this
36 from our radiotelemetry work, they're probably not
37 feeding it's just that the water is so much colder
38 coming out of those tribs so that's their solution so
39 far to this real hot water. But, yeah, so from that
40 great big die-off in 2014 we did not see any affect on
41 the chum salmon populations five years later when we
42 thought we might.

43
44 Thanks.

45
46 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, the other question I
47 had was I know that, you know, sheefish usually don't
48 spawn until their 11th year, I was wondering if, you
49 know, that slump up there in the Selawik had any affect
50

0142

1 -- because it's been quite a few years since that slump
2 occurred and I just wanted to check to see if there was
3 any kind of -- you know a certain year hatching or
4 whatever you want to call them, young sheefish, you
5 know, the number had dropped, or the population had
6 dropped due to that.

7

8 MR. SCANLON: Thanks, Mike. If Bill
9 Carter is there from the Selawik Refuge or Ray Hander
10 from Fish and Wildlife Service is on the phone they
11 could speak to that a little better than I could but I
12 think that the news is good.

13

14 CHAIRMAN BAKER: I was just about to
15 ask the Selawik biologist to approach the bench.

16

17 (Laughter)

18

19 MR. CARTER: Hi, Mike, this is Bill
20 Carter, Fish and Wildlife, I'm the Fish Biologist
21 there. We concluded the major part of that study, it
22 was an eight year study and the report came out in 2019
23 and we didn't get any conclusive evidence on that,
24 whether the slump had had any major effect. But the
25 OSM has funded another project that we're going to go
26 out and do more work on that in '23 and '24. I can get
27 you that report if you want, it's somewhat difficult to
28 find just because it's not .508 compliant so -- which
29 means accessible to everybody but, yeah, I can get that
30 report for the whole RAC or, you know, if you just want
31 it Mike, we can get that to you.

32

33 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, I'm just trying to
34 keep up with it because, you know, we can't -- you know
35 the sheefish are a very valuable subsistence resource
36 for the people in our region and, you know, we don't
37 want that population to start taking a downward fall.

38

39 MR. CARTER: The overall population
40 seems to be pretty stable and we're looking at the age
41 structure mostly in this next study whereas in the last
42 study we used a similar sonar to what Joe here was
43 talking about with the Dolly Varden and the popu -- the
44 actual spawning population on the spawning grounds year
45 to year varies quite a bit but some of the work that
46 Brendan did in the Kobuk showed that maybe only a third
47 of the population is spawning in any one year from
48 their radiotelemetry work. Those tags didn't come back
49 every single year, some of the females especially

50

0143

1 skipped as many as three years in between spawning. So
2 they have a very unique strategy when it comes to
3 spawning, all whitefish are kind of that same way.

4

5 MR. KRAMER: Okay, thank you.

6

7 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you for the
8 questions, Mike, and thanks for that Bill. Any other
9 questions for Joe Spencer?

10

11 MR. ARMSTRONG: Are we going to talk
12 about shellfish or could I do that now.

13

14 CHAIRMAN BAKER: I don't know if we're
15 going to talk about shellfish is it involved.....

16

17 MR. ARMSTRONG: Well, in recent
18 months.....

19

20 CHAIRMAN BAKER:with the
21 Fisheries stuff at all.

22

23 MR. ARMSTRONG: In the recent months I
24 saw on the news, I think it was down south that they
25 were having -- people were getting poisoned from
26 shellfish and.....

27

28 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Come on. Come on man.

29

30 MR. ARMSTRONG:I think it might
31 have come from algae blooms that was transferred, does
32 that -- is that right?

33

34 MR. CARTER: Yes, this is Bill Carter
35 again. So what you're talking about is PSP, or
36 paralytic shellfish poisoning and we did have a bloom
37 that they just noticed out here in Kotzebue Sound this
38 year for the first time and it was picked up on some of
39 the marine surveys that are farther out but then when
40 they came in closure to Kotzebue they found that the
41 counts were still pretty high. And I am working on a
42 project that's not an OSM derived but with Alex Whiting
43 and a researcher from the -- from Columbia University
44 on toxic algae blooms, bluegreen algae and other toxic
45 algae bloom so we are starting to sample for that but
46 we don't have -- we're just getting started with that.
47 So I can talk to you directly later or anybody because
48 I can direct you to people who know a lot more about it
49 than I do because I'm just kind of on the periphery and
50

0144

1 collecting the samples and then they go out to a
2 different lab.

3

4 MR. ARMSTRONG: Okay, thank you. So
5 other agencies can use your data or do they need to get
6 their own funding to do their own research?

7

8 MR. CARTER: So any data that goes
9 through the Fish and Wildlife Service has to be public
10 and if they give money to -- if any -- it's my
11 understanding if any government agency gives money to
12 researchers at universities or anything, that data has
13 to be public. It has to be publicly accessible so
14 there's -- there's a -- the Alaska Ocean Observing, I
15 think, it's Program, anyhow, they have a harmful algae
16 bloom section that that's all they deal with is just
17 those things and they have a monthly meeting and they
18 just deal with harmful algae bloom issues.

19

20 MR. ARMSTRONG: So it can happen up
21 here to the other fish, right, the fish in our area or
22 is it just the clams or something like that?

23

24 MR. CARTER: Well, it's probably too
25 involved to go into in this sort of a meeting but it
26 can move up the food chain. But I'm not an expert in
27 it, I just am kind of on the periphery of it and
28 collecting samples and I can get somebody to talk to
29 the Council if they're really interested in it because
30 I have those connections but I can't speak to it
31 personally.

32

33 MR. ARMSTRONG: All right, thank you.

34

35 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Don't run away, he was
36 in that chair for like three hours.

37

38 (Laughter)

39

40 CHAIRMAN BAKER: But, no, thank you,
41 Bill. Any other questions from members of the RAC for
42 Joe on his presentations.

43

44 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair. I think the
45 sheefish are pretty strong fish and they grow to the
46 age of 40 so they're going to be around for awhile.
47 Because we studied the 17 year old and those were
48 healthy. So I like what you guys are doing.

49

50

0145

1 Thank you.

2

3 MR. HOWARTH: At 40 they get prime.

4

5 (Laughter)

6

7 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur. So
8 with that, thank you, Joe. Thank you, Bill. We'll go
9 ahead and move on. Next on the agenda is the update on
10 traditional and ecological knowledge of fisheries in
11 Arctic Alaska, FRMP funded projects with Helen Cold and
12 Morgan Urquia.

13

14 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: And this on
15 page -- on the Tab 3 of your supplemental folders.

16

17 MS. URQUIA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
18 Members of the Council. My name is Morgan Urquia and
19 I'm with the Division of Subsistence with the Alaska
20 Department of Fish and Game. And also joining me on
21 the phone is Helen Cold who is the Arctic Region
22 Research Director also at Division of Subsistence.

23

24 So we have two projects that are funded
25 under the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program to talk
26 about today. One is almost in completion and one is
27 just beginning so we'll be able to share different
28 things about those, and we also have other projects in
29 the region that I'll talk about during our agency
30 report tomorrow.

31

32 So on that second slide introducing the
33 project is -- this first one is on Traditional
34 Ecological Knowledge of Dolly Varden and Whitefish
35 Species in Northwest Alaska. And the research
36 trajectory for this project was set by the needs
37 identified in the PIN. This project specifically
38 addresses the need for information on changes in
39 species composition and migration timing of Dolly
40 Varden and whitefish species in the Northwest Arctic.
41 Our goal was to address any changes to availability of
42 non-salmon fish subsistence resources through
43 ethnographic interviews and observation. So this
44 project's been underway since April 2020 and most of
45 the data collection was completed in 2022, this year.
46 Our focus communities are Deering, Kotzebue and Noatak.
47 I want to express my gratitude to all three of those
48 communities for welcoming us this year and sharing a
49 lot of time and knowledge while we were there.

50

0146

1 So on the next slide I get to go into a
2 little bit of the findings that we had from this
3 project. We're coming to an end but right now we're
4 waiting to review with each of the communities that
5 were involved so I'm just going to give you just kind
6 of a bird's eye view of our findings until we have
7 approval from the communities to share more. But to-
8 date we've conducted 21 total interviews with a mix of
9 elders, fishers and other folks in communities of
10 Deering, Noatak and Kotzebue and we're ready to begin
11 reviewing those results with the communities hopefully
12 either this winter or in spring 2023.

13
14 You can see there on that slide I've
15 outlined a few of the preliminary conclusions that
16 we've had. First you'll see that we -- it was very
17 clear in all three communities the overall importance
18 of Dolly Varden and whitefish species as reliable and
19 preferred subsistence resource even foundational to
20 yearly harvests. We heard about local migration
21 patterns, fish behavior and traditional harvesting
22 methods that we think will support any future
23 comparison of changes in the use of non-salmon fish
24 resources. All three communities were very different.
25 At times people fished in different ways, different
26 seasons, different -- had different preferences and we
27 also had some different local classification systems
28 for fish that we documented.

29
30 And all respondents spoke to changes
31 they've seen in the environment over their lifetimes.
32 Most mentioned, as I have there, are warmer water
33 temperatures, changes to break up, and freeze-up timing
34 and shoreline erosion. And depending on the area those
35 changes affected harvest timing most commonly or even
36 negatively affected the abundance of fish in any given
37 area.

38
39 The last conclusion you'll see on that
40 page is about how interconnected the non-salmon fish
41 are with other resources, as you know. All of our
42 respondents described successful non-salmon fish
43 harvest as being deeply intertwined with successful
44 harvest of other subsistence resources, seal, salmon,
45 caribou and respondents did find the success of
46 fishing, that was the enjoyment of fish or the actual
47 harvest numbers on the success of those other resources
48 as well.

49
50

0147

1 And our next project on the next page
2 you have is on the Traditional Ecological Knowledge of
3 Salmon in the River Drainages of the Kotzebue Sound.
4 Before taking questions on Dolly Varden, I'll give a
5 quick overview of that one just because it's just
6 beginning. It has a really similar research trajectory
7 using ethnographic interviews and observation, and that
8 is addressing the priority information need that you
9 identified regarding changing salmon distribution,
10 abundance, migration and timing in those river
11 drainages. And, you know, like I said we'll go through
12 -- that will involve ethnographic interviews, going out
13 fishing with local experts and that will focus in
14 Noorvik, Ambler and Kotzebue. So I was excited to meet
15 local experts from Noorvik who we could hopefully talk
16 to. That project was slated to start in July of 2020
17 and we received an extension to start in July of 2023
18 to conclude in 2025 so we'll have more updates on that
19 project at future meetings.

20
21 But if you have questions on the
22 results of that Dolly Varden and whitefish species
23 study I'd be happy to take them or anything on the
24 future of the salmon project as well.

25
26 MR. HOWARTH: I'm excited for you to
27 come over to Noorvik so I'll be more than happy to help
28 you out.

29
30 MS. URQUIA: Thank you.

31
32 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So any questions from
33 anyone on the phone about traditional ecological
34 knowledge of Dolly Varden and whitefish studies.

35
36 (No comments)

37
38 (Teleconference interference -
39 participants not muted)

40
41 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any comments or
42 questions and please remember to mute your phone.

43
44 (No comments)

45
46 CHAIRMAN BAKER: It doesn't appear that
47 we have any questions at this time but if anything
48 comes up we'll be sure to relay them to you. Thank you
49 for presenting on both of those Morgan.

50

0148

1 MS. URQUIA: Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So with that we will
4 move to the next item which is the Kotzebue Sound
5 Sheefish with Dr. Kevin Fraley.

6

7 MS. HYER: Mr. Chairman. Council.....

8

9 MR. FRALEY: Good afternoon
10 everybody.....

11

12 MS. HYER:members.....

13

14 MR. FRALEY:hopefully everybody
15 can hear me okay.

16

17 MS. HYER: Kevin, so this is Karen can
18 you.....

19

20 MR. FRALEY: So I'd like to thank the
21 Chair and the Council for the opportunity to give an
22 update today. My name is Kevin Fraley, I'm a Fisheries
23 Ecologist for the Wildlife Conservation Society based
24 in Fairbanks. And while the Conservation Society, or
25 WCS has been going out to the Cape Krusenstern area
26 lagoon and studying fish ecology and what's going on
27 out there since about 2012 but this last year we got
28 funded to do a sheefish coastal movements project
29 through the FRMP Program and so there should be some
30 slides in the meeting material. It looks like it's
31 under Supplemental Tab 10, but those are my slides
32 there if people want to follow along, if they made it
33 into the.....

34

35 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Excuse us,
36 Kevin.

37

38 MR. FRALEY:meeting materials.

39

40 So going to the second slide -- sorry,
41 go ahead.

42

43 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Yeah, we're
44 having trouble with our video, if you could just hold
45 on just a second, please and then we'll -- we don't
46 have quite your slides up yet. Thank you. We'll let
47 you know here.

48

49 MR. FRALEY: Okay.

50

0149

1 (Pause)

2

3 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Okay, she's
4 in, you're good to go. Thank you.

5

6 MR. FRALEY: All right. And hopefully
7 you guys can hear me okay, I'm coming through loud and
8 clear.

9

10 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Yes, you
11 are, thank you.

12

13 MR. FRALEY: Okay, cool. So the
14 sheefish coastal movements project, so WCS has been
15 going out to Aukulak, Krusenstern and Kotlik Lagoons
16 for quite some time now doing fish abundance and
17 diversity monitoring. And we got funded to put some
18 pop-up satellite tags on sheefish that we catch out in
19 these lagoons to get an idea of their coastal
20 movements. Kind of what they're doing during different
21 seasons, how far up the coast they're going, if there's
22 any areas where they spend time that we don't know
23 about. And so that was kind of the priority
24 information need that this project filled, was to look
25 at maybe changing distributions in sheefish movements
26 along the coast and new habitats and that sort of
27 thing.

28

29 So you can see in this slide those are
30 the p-sat tags, the pop-up satellite archival tags.
31 Those record water temperature, depths and light and
32 they're attached to the back of the fish and they'll
33 ride on the back of the fish for, it can be up to two
34 years, but we're doing shorter deployments of that.
35 And you can see on the bottom picture there is a
36 sheefish we tagged, I guess, was at Anigaaq this last
37 year in August. You can see that tag is pretty big for
38 that size of sheefish so -- we have 19 more tags to put
39 out in the next year and we're going to try to tag
40 larger fish, of course, just so there's not as much of
41 a, you know, drag on them with those tags. And we're
42 going to try to go out to Kotzebue in May and catch
43 some fish through the ice to tag and then also we'll be
44 going back out to those Cape Krusenstern Lagoons in
45 June and August of 2023 and hopefully tagging more fish
46 there. But besides the fish tagging we've also been
47 looking through, you know, scientific reports,
48 traditional ecological knowledge, like Bob Ules (ph)
49 journals to get information on the changes in abundance
50

0150

1 and distribution of sheefish and also we're going to be
2 conducting some interviews with subsistence fishers and
3 biologists. But so far we've picked up some info that,
4 you know, sometimes sheefish are found as far north as
5 Kivalina and Point Hope, which is really interesting.
6 We catch them, quite often at Kotlik Lagoon, which is
7 fairly far north and then also as far down as
8 IkpekLagoon, near Shishmaref, but it's quite
9 interesting to hear that people have maybe caught them
10 up in Point Hope, which is super cool.

11

12 So, yeah, that's kind of where we're at
13 in this project, it just got going but we're planning
14 to tag more fish next summer.

15

16 And then the third slide, this goes
17 over just for the information of the Council some of
18 our other activities that we do out in the lagoons and
19 some photos from that. But basically we just sample
20 those Cape Krusenstern lagoons for fish diversity and
21 abundance and also do a lot of water quality
22 measurements. We usually do two trips each year. Some
23 new stuff we've been doing. We are collecting mysid
24 shrimp out of the lagoons to look at their diversity
25 and abundance. Those shrimp are really important food
26 items for all those fish that live in the lagoons and
27 doing some other activities there.

28

29 Just a couple of quick things,
30 additional projects. So the next slide, we're working
31 on this project collecting observations of hybrid
32 whitefish and working with Alex Whiting with the Native
33 Village of Kotzebue and Bill Carter with the Selawik
34 Refuge to interview Northwest Alaska biologists and
35 subsistence fishers, it's kind of happening now and
36 seeing if we can collect observations about these
37 hybrid whitefish which appear from time to time. Like
38 in the Bob Ules(ph) journals he noted finding the
39 humpback whitefish and sheefish hybrids pretty often.
40 So we're trying to see how often these hybrids show up,
41 if their abundance is changing over time and we're
42 hoping to conduct interviews in a bunch of different
43 communities around Northwest Alaska there, to the list
44 there, so if anybody that you know or if you have
45 observed a hybrid whitefish or know of someone we could
46 interview, definitely contact me or Alex Whiting. We'd
47 love to hear about your sightings and maybe talking to
48 you guys soon about that.

49

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0151

1 So final project on the last slide.
2 Joe Spencer went over kind of the otolith fish ear bone
3 chemistry, what he was doing with his Dolly Varden.
4 We're doing a pretty similar project where we're
5 looking at over 60 sheefish, humpback whitefish, broad
6 whitefish, least cisco, Bering cisco, even a couple of
7 grayling and herring that we've collected over the
8 years in Krusenstern Lagoon, Kotlik Lagoon, even
9 Aknovikniq*Lagoon up near Cape Thompson, and so what
10 we're doing with this chemistry is, like Joe mentioned,
11 you can tell when the fish move in between different
12 water or different chemistry so between like a lagoon
13 and the ocean or fresh water river and the lagoon. We
14 don't really know much about -- at last us scientists
15 don't know too much about the movements between these
16 different water types that some of these whitefish do
17 so we'll be doing this micro-chemistry work this fall.
18 I think we're just in the cue in front of Joe to get
19 our samples run but it'll be very interesting to see,
20 you know, what these -- you know, what these sheefish,
21 how often they go in and out of brackish and fresh
22 waters along with those other species. That photo
23 shows there one of our sheefish otoliths, that one was
24 about 17 years old but that's one included in the data
25 set.

26

27 And I won't take up any more of your
28 time but I appreciate you letting me give an update and
29 happy to take any questions and thanks for letting me
30 participate.

31

32 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Kevin. Do
33 we have any questions from members of the RAC.

34

35 (No comments)

36

37 CHAIRMAN BAKER: I know one question
38 that I have, Kevin, when it comes to -- when you get
39 around to getting fish through the ice, I'm just
40 curious what kind of auger you're going to use because
41 anyone that's ice fished for sheefish in Kotzebue knows
42 sometimes the fish is bigger than the hole you're
43 pulling it through. So I don't know if that will
44 affect your sample size and how that's going to work.
45 But just curious on that one?

46

47 MR. FRALEY: Yeah, I'll have to talk
48 more to local contacts there like Alex Whiting and make
49 sure we're all set up to get those larger fish through

50

0152

1 the ice there. But definitely looking forward to
2 getting out there and tagging some fish maybe in May of
3 next year so.

4

5 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any other questions
6 from the RAC.

7

8 MR. SHIEDT: Susan Georgette and I did
9 a study on the ciscos, the whitefish a few years ago
10 and the sheefish, are you going to compare data that
11 was done maybe 20 years ago to now to see if there's
12 any difference?

13

14 MR. FRALEY: I'm not sure if I'm
15 familiar with the study but, you know, if somebody can
16 provide that to me we definitely will take in any
17 information we can and happy to compare because we want
18 to see what's happening over time, you know, people
19 talk about sheefish not showing up very often in the
20 lagoons, you know, up near Cape Krusenstern maybe a
21 decade ago and now we catch them pretty regularly
22 there. So any past data and that sort of thing, we're
23 happy to take in and try to compare with what's going
24 on now.

25

26 MR. SHIEDT: For your information on
27 the whitefish, every village in the Northwest Alaska
28 except Deering get whitefish. And we did this, we even
29 put a book together on Susan because the Federal at the
30 time was trying to stop our people from harvesting in
31 the creek, trying to stop us from putting a net in the
32 little creeks, that's why we put it together, that's
33 why Susan and I get funding to do the study. It was
34 done -- and the main goal is their spawning areas,
35 where do they go spawn -- we know they have a lot of
36 eggs, whitefish got a lot eggs late fall. They're the
37 best. Because there was a market for them at one time.

38

39 MR. FRALEY: Okay. I think I know
40 which report you're talking about now then, yes,
41 excellent report there and we've already taken -- you
42 know perused that report and got some information out
43 of there about hybrid whitefish and where whitefish
44 move and where they spawn, so, thank you.

45

46 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any other questions or
47 comments from the RAC members.

48

49 (No comments)

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0153

1 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Anyone on the phone
2 from the RAC with any questions or comments.

3
4 (No comments)

5
6 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, thank
7 you, Kevin, for that presentation. Hope to see the
8 results once you get up here and get some more fish
9 tagged. With that we'll move on to Item G, priority
10 information needs with Karen and Hannah.

11
12 MS. VOORHEES: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
13 members of the Council. I did want to note this
14 discussion may take awhile so I was wondering if it
15 would be preferential to continue or if you would like
16 to pick it up in the morning.

17
18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Can you define
19 awhile.....

20
21 (Laughter)

22
23 CHAIRMAN BAKER: With that said thank
24 you for that. If it's amenable to all those present we
25 can recess for the day and then tomorrow morning we'll
26 start with Item G and then move into agency reports
27 from there, unless you want to just tackle it right
28 now.

29
30 MS. HYER: Mr. Chairman. Council
31 members. It's really what you would like to do. We're
32 going to go over the list, the draft list we have,
33 we're going to talk a little bit about what we've seen
34 and we're going to try to finalize that list. Because
35 that list will drive the next set of researchers that
36 will be up here doing the work. So it is important
37 that the list reflects what you feel is important for
38 subsistence fisheries. I think that when we did this
39 process with North Slope RAC it probably took maybe an
40 hour, Hannah, about an hour's discussion. So that's
41 about the best parameters I can give you.

42
43 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Karen. If
44 there's no objection from the other members of the RAC,
45 I think we'll just wait until tomorrow morning since
46 it's two minutes from 5:00 now, and to keep people --
47 try to keep people from staying too late. Sound good.

48
49 MR. SHIEDT: So tomorrow morning.

50

0154

1 MR. ARMSTRONG: Sounds good, Mr. Chair,
2 and thank you ladies.

3

4 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So with that I'll just
5 call a recess until 8:30 tomorrow morning. Do we have
6 any housekeeping things, Lisa.

7

8 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: I think the
9 only thing is for those in the audience if you have not
10 signed in the sign-in sheet, please do that for us so
11 we can keep track of who is here and also know how to
12 spell your name if you presented, and I think that's
13 all. But, yeah, 8:30 tomorrow morning. And if anybody
14 wants to finish up the snacks that would be great, too.

15

16 Thanks.

17

18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, thank you
19 everyone. And, once, again, 8:30 tomorrow morning.
20 See you all then.

21

22 (Off record)

23

24 (PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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) ss.
STATE OF ALASKA)

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