

FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD

WORK SESSION MEETING

TELECONFERENCE - ALASKA
JULY 16, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Anthony Christianson, Chairman
Rhonda Pitka, Public Member
Chad Padgett, Bureau of Land Management
Greg Siekaniec, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Donald Striker, National Park Service
Gene Peltola, Bureau of Indian Affairs
David Schmid, U.S. Forest Service

Ken Lord, Solicitor's Office

Recorded and transcribed by:
Computer Matrix Court Reporters, LLC
135 Christensen Drive, Second Floor
Anchorage, AK 99501
907-243-0668; sahile@gci.net

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

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(Teleconference - 7/16/2020)

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(On record)

6

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(Operator instructions)

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
10 Operator. Welcome everybody to this Thursday, July
11 16th work session for the Federal Subsistence Board,
12 and I thank everybody for taking their time to call in
13 and work on these special actions that we have before
14 us today.

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With that, you know, we, prior to the
meeting had executive session and just were looking at,
you know, just getting a brief overview of some legal
issues that -- to brief us and give us a short update
because some of us are all new Board members and just
to make sure that we're all on the same page as we look
at our agenda before us and start to make actions, and
so I appreciated that session there.

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So with that I'm going to go ahead and
open up the floor to review and adopt the agenda.

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MS. DETWILER: Mr. Chair, this is Sue.
Do you want me to quickly go over what's in the agenda?

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, Sue, if
you wouldn't mind, you can go ahead and just review the
agenda and then after we do review the agenda there we
can entertain a motion to adopt.

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MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you. So
today's agenda we have five special actions and the
order that they're currently on the agenda, I will go
-- just briefly touch on each of those.

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The first one is Wildlife Special
Action 20-05 pertaining to moose in Unit 18.

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Next agenda item is Wildlife Special
Action 20-04 pertaining to caribou in Units 9, 17, 18
and 19.

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Next is Wildlife Special Action 20-01
pertaining to caribou in Unit 13.

1 Next is Wildlife Special Action 20-03
2 pertaining to moose and caribou in Unit 13.

3
4 And, finally, Wildlife Special Action
5 20-02 pertaining to moose and caribou in Unit 12.

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7 Followed by adjournment after those
8 five actions -- after those five items.

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10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Sue.
11 Any Board discussion or questions about the agenda we
12 have before us today?

13
14 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

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16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: BIA, you have
17 the floor.

18
19 MR. PELTOLA: Move to adopt.

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21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion on the
22 floor to adopt.

23
24 MR. STRIKER: Second, NPS.

25
26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. A
27 motion's been made and seconded. Any discussion.

28
29 (No comments)

30
31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none
32 we'll call for the question.

33
34 MR. PELTOLA: Question.

35
36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Question's been
37 called. Any opposition to the agenda as presented by
38 the Staff.

39
40 (No opposition)

41
42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing no
43 opposition motion passes unanimously to adopt the
44 agenda as presented for the July 16th, 2020 Federal
45 Subsistence Board work session.

46
47 So we'll go ahead and move on to number
48 2. And, before we do, just a little brief summary
49 today about, you know, to run through the process here,

50

1 and having limited time today, this afternoon. When we
2 look at each of these specific agenda items and as we
3 go down the list some have been through the Regional
4 Advisory Council process and some haven't and some have
5 some public feedback and some don't and so if you look
6 at it, I'm hoping to do specific public testimony on
7 each agenda so I will be allowing some public testimony
8 but it must be specific and limited in time to 10
9 minutes. And so on each of these special actions I'm
10 going to go through the process and open up the floor
11 for public testimony but, again, the testimony must be
12 specific to the agenda items that we are speaking to.
13 And then I'd also like to open up the floor for the
14 counterparts, you know, the State to, and the office
15 Staff so that we can have open dialogue and discussion
16 to help the Board make a decision in our deliberations
17 today. And so that's how we're going to look at moving
18 forward with the process of the agenda and so just
19 wanted to put that out there as we look at getting
20 started here and moving forward with the agenda.

21
22 Just so everyone's aware of the process
23 today, that's how we look at moving forward.

24
25 Thank you.

26
27 And so with that I'm going to call on
28 the Staff to do the analysis and presentation of WSA20-
29 04 [sic], Unit 18 moose.

30
31 MS. MAAS: All right, thank you, Mr.
32 Chair, members of the Board. For the record my name's
33 Lisa Maas and I'm a wildlife biologist and acting
34 policy coordinator in the Office of Subsistence
35 Management. I'll be presenting a summary of the
36 analysis for Wildlife Emergency Special Action WSA20-
37 05.

38
39 WSA20-05 was submitted by the Yukon
40 Delta National Wildlife Refuge and it requests that the
41 fall moose season in the Kuskokwim hunt area of Unit 18
42 be extended one week from September 1st to 30th to
43 September 1st to October 7th for the 2020/21 regulatory
44 year. The proponent states that the moose harvest
45 within Zone 2 of the Kuskokwim hunt area has been well
46 below quota since 2017. They further state that
47 extending the season in Zone 2 will allow for
48 additional hunting opportunity for Federally-qualified
49 subsistence users while also allowing the Federal

1 manager to assess how much harvest increases during a
2 requested week long extension.

3
4 Federal public lands in the Kuskokwim
5 hunt area have been closed to non-Federally-qualified
6 users since 1991. Between 2004 and 2008 the Board and
7 State Board of Game enacted a harvest moratorium to
8 promote growth of the Unit 18 moose population. Since
9 2009 moose harvest in the Kuskokwim hunt area has been
10 managed by quotas and in 2017 ADF&G and the Yukon Delta
11 Refuge began managing this hunt area in two zones.
12 Zone 1 is primarily non-Federal lands and quotas are
13 set by ADF&G. Users can easily access Zone 1 by boat
14 along the mainstem of the Kuskokwim River and quotas
15 are quickly met. Zone 2 is primarily Federal lands and
16 the Yukon Delta Refuge sets quotas. Zone 2 is much
17 more difficult to access and quotas are not usually
18 met. Of note, the Alaska Board of Game extended the
19 State season in Zone 2 until October 7th at their
20 January 2020 meeting through adoption of Proposal 7 as
21 amended. So, again, the State season in Zone 2 now
22 closes on October 7th.

23
24 During the 1990s moose densities in the
25 Kuskokwim River drainage were low and hunting pressure
26 limited growth of the population. The 2004 to 2008
27 moratorium was effective in establishing a harvestable
28 population and since then the moose population has
29 continued to grow. Currently, ADF&G estimates 2,500
30 moose in the Kuskokwim hunt area, which exceeds
31 population effectiveness. Bull/cow ratios are high as are
32 calf/cow ratios which indicate a growing moose
33 population. Since 2009 reported harvest has averaged
34 159 moose per year although harvest has increased as
35 the moose population and, therefore, harvest quotas
36 have increased. Federally-qualified subsistence users
37 account for 95 percent of the moose harvest and demand
38 far exceeds moose availability. As previously
39 mentioned, ADF&G and the Yukon Delta Refuge
40 cooperatively manage the Kuskokwim hunt area in two
41 zones. Quotas in Zone 1 are quickly met and seasons
42 close early by State emergency order. However, since
43 2017, average harvest in Zone 2 has only been 74 moose
44 which is well below the quota of 110 moose. Zone 2
45 consists of tributaries to the Kuskokwim River and
46 requires specialized boats to access as well as longer
47 travel times and more fuel. The unmet quota in Zone 2
48 is likely a function of difficulties in access rather
49 than lack of need for moose meat.

1 Approval of WSA20-05 would increase
2 hunting opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence
3 users in Zone 2 under Federal regulations. Approval of
4 this request would align State and Federal regulations
5 in Zone 2 for the 2020/21 regulatory year.
6

7 While Federal users can already hunt
8 until October 7th on State managed lands in Zone 2
9 under State regulations, approval of this request would
10 allow them to also hunt on Federal managed lands until
11 October 7th since Federal lands are closed to non-
12 Federally-qualified users. No conservation concerns
13 exist as this hunt is managed through quotas, which are
14 not being met, and the seasons would close if quotas
15 are met.
16

17 The OSM conclusion is to support
18 Proposal WSA20-05.
19

20 Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd be happy to
21 answer any questions.
22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
24 Lisa. Any questions from the Board for Lisa on this
25 special action request.
26

27 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.
28

29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
30 floor.
31

32 MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
33 So, Lisa, in the presentation you reported that we have
34 not, we, meaning State and Federal harvest, have not
35 met harvest quota -- I think the quota was 110 within
36 Zone 2, I think you also mentioned that the harvest was
37 at 74 moose, and currently the harvest is limited to
38 Federally-qualified users only on Federal lands in Zone
39 2; is that correct?
40

41 MS. MAAS: Well, Zone 2 is like 82
42 percent Federal public lands.
43

44 MR. PELTOLA: Uh-huh.
45

46 MS. MAAS: And so access is difficult
47 so I mean hypothetically someone from Anchorage could
48 go harvest a moose in Zone 2 on that, you know, 18
49 percent is not Federal land but access is difficult,
50

1 and, yeah, Federally-qualified subsistence users
2 account for 95 percent of the moose harvest in this
3 Kuskokwim hunt area. So between the vast majority of
4 Federal public lands in Zone 2 and just the difficulty
5 in access, you know, functionally, it's, you know,
6 local subsistence users that are going to be accessing
7 and hunting in this area.

8
9 MR. PELTOLA: Okay, and a followup
10 question if I may, Mr. Chair.

11
12 Is the limitation to Federally-
13 qualified users only implemented on Zone 2 of the
14 Kuskokwim area via Board action or delegation of
15 authority to a local in-season manager?

16
17 MS. MAAS: No. That closure applies to
18 the whole Kuskokwim River hunt area. So both Zone 1
19 and Zone 2. And to be, I guess, I was trying to be
20 concise but it's actually limited -- there's actually
21 more of an .804 restriction so it's -- well, actually
22 I'd -- it's limited to residents of several
23 communities, which I'd have to -- sorry, just a moment.
24 Yeah, so it's limited to residents of Tuntutuliak, Eek,
25 Napakiak, Napaskiak, Kasigluk, Nunapitchuk, Atmautlauk,
26 Oscarville, Bethel, Kwethluk, Akiakchak, Akiak,
27 Tuluksak, Lower Kalskag and Kalskag. So those are the
28 eligible communities that can currently hunt in this
29 Kuskokwim River hunt area. And the reason is just even
30 though the moose population's doing really well demand
31 far exceeds the availability of moose in this area.

32
33 MR. PELTOLA: Okay, appreciate that.
34 Because I was looking at -- I know that Zone 1 in the
35 mainstem maxes out in regard to quota in three to four
36 days in some years and then Zone 2 is opened up a
37 little longer so I was wondering how the Program got to
38 it.

39
40 Thank you much, appreciate it.

41
42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
43 other questions for Lisa from the Board.

44
45 (No comments)

46
47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Alrighty, thank
48 you.

1 MR. DOOLITTLE: Hey, I'm going to
2 interject, this is Tom, could somebody make sure
3 people, unless they're talking, mute their phones, it
4 sounds like a submarine on some of our phones.

5
6 Thank you.

7
8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank
9 you. Yeah, please, watch your phones. Thank you.

10
11 Okay. Well, hearing no other questions
12 from the Board, so, thank you, Lisa.

13
14 I'm going to ask Orville, did you
15 receive any comment from tribes or corporations.

16
17 MR. LIND: No comment -- or no concerns
18 that I can see.

19
20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank
21 you, Orville. Was there any public on line.

22
23 OPERATOR: At this time if you have
24 a.....

25
26 MS. MAAS: This is Lisa, and I think
27 the next step is for the InterAgency Staff Committee
28 recommendation, since there wasn't a RAC recommendation
29 on this and then public comment is next.

30
31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, that's
32 how it goes, sorry, Lisa. I had my written agenda here
33 and.....

34
35 MS. MAAS: Yeah, no worries.

36
37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, ISC
38 recommendation and then I'll go to Orville and then
39 public next, so thank you.

40
41 MS. MAAS: Okay. And just an FYI, this
42 is an emergency special action so with emergency
43 special actions there's not a public hearing
44 requirement and we don't do as much, you know, tribal
45 consultations necessarily with emergency special
46 actions. The rest of the ones are temporary so there
47 are public hearings, but this one -- since it's an
48 emergency there aren't quite as many public testimony
49 requirements.

1 But the InterAgency Staff Committee
2 recommendation is to approve temporary special action
3 request WSA20-05 to extend the fall moose season in the
4 Kuskokwim hunt area of Unit 18 from September 1st to
5 30th to September 1st to October 7th for the 2020/21
6 regulatory year.
7

8 The InterAgency Staff Committee concurs
9 with the OSM Staff analysis that there is no
10 conservation concern for this moose population. The
11 population had an annual growth rate of 20 percent
12 between 2011 and 2015. The most recent bull/cow ratio
13 are above State objectives and recent calf/cow ratios
14 and twinning rates indicate a generally stable to
15 increasing moose population within the unit. Approving
16 this request to extend the season by seven days would
17 increase hunting opportunity for Federally-qualified
18 subsistence users and could increase total moose
19 harvest in Zone 2 of this unit where moose are more
20 difficult to access and recent harvest quotas have not
21 been met. The quota for Zone 2 has been 110 moose
22 since 2017, however, on average, only 74 moose have
23 been reported harvested. This conservative season
24 extension will allow the manager to evaluate if the
25 action effectively improves harvest opportunity.
26 Extending the season and opportunity for moose harvest
27 may also serve to reduce food security concerns
28 associated with the Covid19 pandemic.
29

30 Thank you, Mr. Chair.
31

32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
33 Lisa. Any questions for the ISC.
34

35 (No comments)
36

37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
38 hearing none. We'll move on to the State, comment?
39

40 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
41 For the record my name is Ben Mulligan, Alaska
42 Department of Fish and Game.
43

44 The Department does not oppose WSA20-
45 05, you know, we recognize that the harvest objective
46 in Zone 2 has not been met and that when -- with this
47 extension the proposed regs will align State and Feds.
48

49 Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
2 questions from the Board.

3
4 (No comments)

5
6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
7 hearing none we'll move on. I believe, Lisa, we are at
8 the Board discussion.

9
10 MS. MAAS: Unless you wanted to open it
11 up for any public testimony on this.

12
13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, I did, I
14 asked if there was anyone on line but I didn't hear a
15 response yet.

16
17 MS. MAAS: Okay, sorry.

18
19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, anybody
20 on line who wanted to testify to this, please, feel
21 free to testify specifically to this agenda item, you
22 are free to do so at this time.

23
24 Operator.

25
26 OPERATOR: Thank you. At this time if
27 you would like to provide comment, please, press star
28 then 1, you will be prompted to record your first and
29 last name and to withdraw you may press star and then
30 2. Once, again, to comment, please press star then 1
31 and record your first and last name at this time.

32
33 One moment.

34
35 (Pause)

36
37 OPERATOR: At this time, Sir, I'm
38 showing no public comment.

39
40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. All
41 right, now we'll open the floor for Board deliberation
42 and discussion.

43
44 (No comments)

45
46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
47 hearing none, we'll open up the floor for Board action.

48
49 MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, Greg

50

1 Siekaniec, Fish and Wildlife Service.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
4 floor, Greg.

5

6 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair
7 and Board members. I'd like to move to approve WSA20-
8 05. If I get a second I will provide my justification
9 to support this motion.

10

11 MR. PELTOLA: BIA seconds.

12

13 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Gene.
14 Hearing that there is no conservation concern for moose
15 in Unit 18 as indicated in the OSM analysis, this
16 action will provide Federally-qualified users a longer
17 season in Zone 2 and increase moose harvest opportunity
18 by Federally-qualified users. Harvest is managed by
19 quotas and, therefore, seasons can be closed when
20 quotas are met minimizing the potential for
21 overharvest. Approving this extended season may be
22 especially important if Federally-qualified users have
23 food security concerns due to the ongoing Covid19
24 pandemic. Additional opportunity is afforded.

25

26 Furthermore, this will temporarily
27 align the Federal and State seasons for Zone 2,
28 reducing regulatory confusion and ensuring Federal
29 harvest opportunities are aligned with State
30 opportunities.

31

32 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

33

34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
35 Greg. Any Board discussion.

36

37 (No comments)

38

39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none
40 I'll call for the question.

41

42 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA, I have a
43 quick question if I may.

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have
46 the floor.

47

48 MR. PELTOLA: So just for
49 clarification, by this motion, it would extend the

50

1 season but if we still run into a scenario where we
2 have approximately 30 percent of the harvest in Zone 2
3 going unharvested by Federally-qualified users, what
4 would be the process to expand the hunt opportunity to
5 all State residents?
6

7 Thank you, Mr. Chair.
8

9 (Pause)

10 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, I guess that
11 was a question for OSM and policy.
12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay.
14

15 MS. MAAS: Yeah, Mr. Chair, this is
16 Lisa. And, Gene, I think I'm understanding that if the
17 quota's not met in Zone 2 via this special action by
18 October 7th, how could the opportunity be opened up for
19 all users and not just.....
20

21 MR. PELTOLA: Not necessarily -- yeah,
22 Lisa, thank you, for the clarification question. Not
23 necessarily to an individual season results, up to this
24 date we have gone to 30 percent of the quota not being
25 obtained within Zone 2, this motion, if adopted by the
26 Board, would extend the season from the end of
27 September to the end of the first week of October, and
28 increase opportunity for Federally-qualified users, if
29 that is the case, since we had a C&T limiting the
30 harvest to particular residents that reside within a
31 community, what actions would the Board have to take,
32 if they choose to do so, to open up those opportunities
33 for other State residents involved?
34

35 MS. MAAS: Oh, okay. So if we wanted
36 to open it up to all Federally-qualified users versus
37 just the current, you know, communities under, I guess,
38 an .804 restriction, my understanding is that they
39 would have to submit another special action if they
40 wanted to do it for this year and this season,
41 otherwise, in the future it would be through a proposal
42 process to open up that hunt to all Federally-qualified
43 users.
44

45 MR. PELTOLA: Yeah, Lisa, Gene again.
46 Not just only Federally-qualified users, but non-
47 Federally-qualified users as well. So if I
48 understand.....
49

1 MS. MAAS: Okay.

2

3 MR. PELTOLA:your presentation, I
4 thought there was a C&T in place so -- as opposed to
5 .804 in place which limited the harvest to residents of
6 those communities on the Kuskokwim and the tundra
7 villages from, you know, Kalskags on down, so if the
8 quota is not being obtained, now, into the future, what
9 process would the Board have to go through if there's
10 still part of the quota in Zone 2 which is not
11 attained.

12

13 MS. MAAS: Yeah, either way to open it
14 up to everyone, to completely remove that Federal lands
15 closure, that would either be another special action
16 request for, you know, this season or next year, or it
17 would be a proposal that would be submitted in January
18 that wouldn't become effective until July of 2022.

19

20 MR. PELTOLA: So, followup, Mr. Chair.
21 So if I understand, whether it be with regard to this
22 particular season or any subsequent seasons then a
23 special action would have to take place for the Board
24 to act upon, correct?

25

26 MS. MAAS: That's my understanding.
27 And I guess I don't -- Ray Born might be on line to
28 maybe speak to his delegated authority on this. I'm
29 sorry I'm not -- I can't remember all the details of
30 his delegation of authority letter because sometimes
31 those delegated authority letters, you know, do allow
32 the manager to close to other users. But that's
33 something I can't answer right now I'd have to do a
34 little more digging on that.

35

36 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA. This may
37 be a point of interest in the future so could I ask for
38 guidance from the Solicitor's office?

39

40 MR. LORD: Mr. Chair, this is Ken.

41

42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You've got a
43 question to Ken.

44

45 MR. BORN: Mr. Chair, this is Ray Born.

46

47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, go ahead,
48 Ray.

49

50

1 MR. BORN: Yeah, the delegation of
2 authority letter is not -- I guess maybe Theo would be
3 a better person to interpret that for us. He has the
4 expertise in that area, and I don't know, is Theo on
5 the line?

6
7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

8
9 MR. BORN: Theo, can you answer that
10 question, a technical question that Gene had?

11
12 (No comments)

13
14 MR. DOOLITTLE: Hey, this is Tom, you
15 guys. I could take a quick look here, we can look up
16 the letter of delegation and see what it says and
17 that's to clarify that. And whether a season extension
18 could continue to try to reach, you know, a goal, other
19 special actions like Lisa has suggested is a route, or
20 essentially a modification of this, you know, to
21 actually take away the .804 determination is another
22 possibility, as a step to open it up to more users
23 because it sounds like the conservation concern issue
24 is defining; is that correct, Ray; this is Tom just
25 interjecting?

26
27 MR. BORN: Tom, this is Ray, through
28 the Chair. That is correct. The conservation concern
29 is decreasing as the population is increasing in that
30 area and as was articulated in the analysis, is Zone 2
31 is extremely difficult to reach. And as I'm looking at
32 the delegation of authority letter, I don't see any
33 authorization to extend anything, as I'm looking at the
34 letter right now, so I don't see any authority to do
35 that. So I guess it would need to come in as a special
36 action request to the Board then.

37
38 Thank you.

39
40 MS. MAAS: Yeah, Mr. Chair, this is
41 Lisa.

42
43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Excuse me,
44 sorry, I got lost there, was that you Lisa?

45
46 MS. MAAS: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair.
47 So I was able to, I guess, the benefit of doing this at
48 home is I was able to open that delegation of authority
49 letter up and, yes, I mean the season dates are bound

1 in regulation so in order to extend the season that
2 would have to be another special action but the
3 language in the delegation of authority letter states
4 that it also permits you to close and reopen Federal
5 public lands to non-subsistence hunting.
6

7 So if, Ray, as the in-season manager,
8 wanted to open up the hunt to non-subsistence users he
9 could do that through his delegation of authority but
10 if he wanted to further extend the season, that would
11 require another special action.
12

13 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, thank you,
14 this is BIA. My question has been answered.
15

16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
17 other questions for Staff.
18

19 (No comments)
20

21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So we're in
22 Board deliberation, the motion's been made and seconded
23 to support, any other discussion.
24

25 (No comments)
26

27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the
28 question.
29

30 MR. SCHMID: Question, Forest Service.
31

32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Roll call,
33 please, Sue.
34

35 (Pause)
36

37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Well, I believe
38 Sue may have stepped away, Tom, are you on line?
39

40 MS. DETWILER: Oh, yes, sorry, this is
41 Sue, I'm sorry, I had my phone on mute.
42

43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay.
44

45 MS. DETWILER: Sorry. So yes so.....
46

47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Could you do
48 roll call please.
49

1 MS. DETWILER: Yep, okay, so the motion
2 is to support Wildlife Special Action 20-05 to extend
3 the fall moose season in the Kuskokwim hunt area of
4 Unit 18 from September 1 to 30 to September 1 to
5 October 7, for the 2020/21 regulatory year.

6
7 So the motion is to support that and we
8 will start out roll call with Greg Siekaniec.

9
10 MR. SIEKANIEC: I support as stated,
11 thank you.

12
13 MS. DETWILER: Dave Schmid.

14
15 MR. SCHMID: I support WSA20-05 with
16 the justification provided by the Fish and Wildlife
17 Service.

18
19 MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

20
21 BIA, Gene Peltola.

22
23 MR. PELTOLA: BIA supports as
24 articulated in the original motion.

25
26 MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

27
28 Park Service, Don Striker.

29
30 MR. STRIKER: NPS supports the motion
31 for the reasons summarized by Director Siekaniec.
32 Thank you, Sue.

33
34 MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

35
36 BLM, Chad Padgett.

37
38 MR. PADGETT: I support.

39
40 MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

41
42 Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

43
44 MS. PITKA: I support the motion as
45 stated by the Park Service [sic].

46
47 MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Rhonda.

48
49 Did Charlie Brower join us.

50

1 (No comments)

2

3

MS. DETWILER: No, okay.

4

5

Finally, Chairman Anthony Christianson.

6

7

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support.

8

9

MS. DETWILER: Great, thank you. The
10 vote is seven zero -- or seven with one not present so
11 motion passes and the proposal is adopted.

12

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17

Mr. Chair, I think that would bring us
to our next agenda item, which is Special Action
Request 20- -- Wildlife Special Action Request 20-04
and that, again, is Lisa.

18

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20

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yep, and we'll
call on Lisa at this time to present us with the
analysis.

21

22

Thank you.

23

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MS. MAAS: All right, thank you, Mr.
Chair. Again, for the record this is Lisa Maas and
I'll be presenting a summary of the analysis for
Temporary Wildlife Special Action WSA20-04.

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WSA20-04 was submitted by Togiak
National Wildlife Refuge and Yukon Delta Refuge and
requests that the Federal in-season manager be
delegated authority to open and close seasons, announce
harvest limits and set sex restrictions for caribou in
all or portions of Units 9A, B and C, 17A, B and C, 18
and 19A and B for the 2020 to 2022 regulatory cycle.

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The proponents state that the summer
2019 population estimate for the Mulchatna Caribou Herd
was 13,500 caribou which represents a 50 percent
decline from the previous five years and is well below
the State's minimum population objective of 30,000
caribou. The proponents note that 2019/20 Federal and
State seasons were shortened due to conservation
concerns and that the herd is not expected to recover
within the next year. The proponents state that this
request will help conserve and recover the Mulchatna
Caribou Herd and provide the flexibility needed to make
harvest management decisions in a timely manner.

50

1 Between 2006 and 2014 State and Federal
2 regulations for Mulchatna caribou became increasingly
3 more restrictive including shortening seasons, reducing
4 harvest limits, eliminating non-resident seasons and
5 requiring the RC503 registration permit. These
6 restrictions coincide with declines in the Mulchatna
7 Caribou Herd population and low bull/cow ratios.

8
9 Beginning in 2015 the Alaska Board of
10 Game and the Federal Subsistence Board began
11 liberalizing Mulchatna caribou regulations in response
12 to improve bull/cow ratios and signs that the herd was
13 stable to increasing. In August 2019 the Alaska
14 Department of Fish and Game decreased the harvest limit
15 of the Mulchatna caribou hunt from two caribou to one
16 caribou by emergency order due to conservation concerns
17 from the low 2019 population estimate. In November
18 2019 the Board approved WSA19-07 with modification to
19 decrease the Federal harvest limit for Mulchatna
20 caribou to one caribou, close Federal lands in Units
21 18, 19A and 19B to non-Federally-qualified users and
22 delegate authority to the Togiak Refuge manager to open
23 and close seasons throughout the range of the herd for
24 the 2019/20 regulatory year. The Togiak Refuge manager
25 exercised the delegated authority to close caribou
26 hunting on Federal lands across the range of the herd
27 on December 31st because agency Staff determined no
28 additional harvestable surplus existed that would allow
29 for herd growth and recovery. ADF&G closed the RC503
30 caribou hunt by emergency order on January 31st, 2020
31 because of conservation concerns.

32
33 A public hearing and tribal
34 consultation were held for WSA20-04. During the public
35 hearing seven people testified in support of the
36 request in conservation of the Mulchatna herd. The
37 Curyung Tribal Council expressed support for the
38 request and the Lake Clark National Park Subsistence
39 Resource Commission submitted a letter of support for
40 WSA20-04. Of note, all three effected Regional
41 Advisory Councils, Bristol Bay, Yukon Kuskokwim Delta,
42 and Western Interior also voted to support WSA20-04 at
43 their spring 2020 meeting.

44
45 The population size and distribution of
46 the Mulchatna Caribou Herd has changed dramatically
47 over the past 40 years. The current range of the
48 Mulchatna Herd is depicted on Figure 1 on Page 5 of the
49 analysis. The herd primarily occurs in two distinct

1 populations, an eastern segment and a western segment.
2 Based on radio collared animals, mixing between these
3 two subpopulations is low. The herd peaked at 200,000
4 in 1996 declining steadily to 18,000 caribou in 2013.
5 Between 2014 and 2016 the herd stabilized around 28,000
6 caribou. In the most recent 2019 population estimate
7 indicated the herd declined to 13,500 caribou, which is
8 well below the State's minimum population objective of
9 30,000 caribou. The western segment's population has
10 declined appreciably since 2012 while the eastern
11 segment's population increased between 2014 and 2016
12 and then declined back to 2012 levels in 2019.
13 Bull/cow ratios in the Mulchatna Herd have been
14 depressed since 2001. While ratios have improved in
15 recent years they are still below the State management
16 objective of 35 bulls per 100 cows and continue to be a
17 conservation concern. Calf/cow ratios have also been
18 low and below State objectives. While the cause of the
19 decline is unknown, decreased range quality, predation,
20 particularly by brown bears on the calving ground,
21 icing events, deep snows and harvest pressure may all
22 have contributed to the decline. Reported caribou
23 harvest has declined in correlation with the caribou
24 population from almost 4,000 caribou in 2000 to 238
25 caribou in 2018. Since 2009 local users have accounted
26 for 84 percent of the reported harvest. However, ADF&G
27 suspects actual harvest is substantially higher than
28 reported harvest. Household harvest surveys also
29 indicate actual harvest is much higher than reported
30 harvest, although the magnitude of unreported harvest
31 is unknown. 81 percent of reported harvest has
32 occurred between December and March when local users
33 have easier access to caribou via snowmachines. 54
34 percent of reported harvest by local users occurs in
35 Unit 18, while 53 percent of non-local harvest occurs
36 in Unit 17B. During the 2019/20 season over 2,000
37 RC503 permits were issued and 1040 permits had been
38 returned as of March 16th, 2020. From the returned
39 permits 113 caribou were reported harvested, however,
40 information and observation from law enforcement
41 personnel indicated the actual harvest well exceeded
42 reported harvest.

43
44 Approving WSA20-04 would delegate
45 authority to the Federal in-season manager to open and
46 close seasons, announce harvest limits and set sex
47 restrictions across the range of the Mulchatna Herd for
48 the 2020/21 and 2021/22 regulatory years. While this
49 change would decrease harvest opportunity for

1 Federally-qualified subsistence users, it could also
2 help conserve the herd and ensure future harvest
3 opportunities. While the impacts of harvest on the
4 population decline are unclear conservation measures
5 are warranted due to the substantial population decline
6 and poor composition metrics. Delegating authority to
7 an in-season manager provides management flexibility
8 which is critical in responding to changing herd
9 conditions in a timely manner.

10
11 The OSM conclusion is to support
12 Special Action Request WSA20-04 with modification to
13 clarify the regulatory language and to delegate
14 authority to the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge
15 manager to open and close seasons, announce harvest
16 limits and set sex restrictions via delegation of
17 authority letter only.

18
19 Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd be happy to
20 answer any questions.

21
22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
23 Lisa. Any questions for Lisa pertaining to this
24 proposal.

25
26 (No comments)

27
28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
29 hearing none, we'll move on to what the ISC
30 recommendation is.

31
32 MS. MAAS: All right, thanks, Mr.
33 Chair. So this special action had Regional Advisory
34 Council recommendations so that means it's just an
35 InterAgency Staff Committee comment so I'm going to
36 read the comment and then you can go to the RAC
37 recommendations.

38
39 The InterAgency Staff Committee concurs
40 with the OSM Staff analysis that conservation measures
41 are warranted for the Mulchatna Caribou Herd. The 2019
42 population estimate of 13,500 caribou is substantially
43 below the State objective of 30,000. The poor
44 population estimate is coupled with cow/calf and
45 bull/cow metrics that are below State objectives. As
46 indicated by the proponent this population will likely
47 not recover in the next year. Changing the regulation
48 to a may be announced season with a harvest limit of
49 two caribou will reduce harvest opportunity in the

1 short-term, however, conserving the Mulchatna Caribou
2 Herd now will increase harvest opportunity in the
3 future. To offset the loss of caribou, harvest of
4 other resources such as moose may increase in response
5 to this request. There is uncertainty about why the
6 herd has declined and providing this conservative
7 framework to control harvest while also evaluating
8 other factors will likely improve the potential
9 recovery of the herd. This actually allow the manager
10 to coordinate with State actions in response to
11 changing conditions.

12
13 The ISC supports the Yukon Kuskokwim
14 Delta, Bristol Bay and Western Interior Regional
15 Advisory Council recommendations in support of this
16 request to take management actions necessary to
17 conserve the Mulchatna Herd.

18
19 Approval of this request allows
20 consideration of actions to be taken at the local level
21 which was supported by the State at the public hearing.

22
23 The ISC also supports the desire of the
24 Yukon Kuskokwim Delta RAC to develop a Mulchatna
25 working group to discuss Mulchatna caribou issues with
26 the public, tribal and agency representatives.
27 Development of such a working group may improve
28 communication and information sharing among users that
29 ultimately could aid in the herd's recovery.

30
31 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

32
33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
34 Lisa. Questions from the Board.

35
36 (No comments)

37
38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, Orville,
39 is there any public comment that you are aware of?

40
41 MR. LIND: Yes, thank you, Mr.
42 Chairman. Orville Lind, Native Liaison for OSM.

43
44 On May 25th we conducted tribal
45 consultations and ANCSA consultations. In the morning
46 session we had Curyung Tribal Council out of
47 Dillingham, Gayla and Courtenay and they supported the
48 concept of the special action.

49

50

1 In the afternoon we had Western
2 Interior RAC Chair stated that he was very concerned
3 because trying to get conservation very -- appre --
4 very appreciative of the action taken by the Federal
5 Subsistence Board and the in-season manager for
6 conservation of that herd. Moving into the calving
7 season, every one of those cows, he stated, would not
8 have a calf and predator load is really high. His
9 observation of numerous brown bears in the region, seen
10 bears chase caribou calves down and also have caribou
11 -- needed to have caribou large enough population
12 sustain against predation. The caribou he seen is --
13 usually are having only one calf instead of -- he's
14 never seen caribou calves -- or caribou cows having
15 twins. And so it takes a lot of calves on ground to
16 get beyond predation threshold and need to get herd
17 turned around and once below a certain level harder to
18 build back up. So he was very appreciative of what the
19 State and Feds are doing to close the season and
20 conserve the herd.

21
22 And that's all I have, Mr. Chair.

23
24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
25 Orville. Any questions for Orville.

26
27 (No comments)

28
29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
30 hearing none, call on the State, any comments from the
31 State.

32
33 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
34 Ben Mulligan, Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

35
36 The Department is supportive of the
37 Board giving the authority to the Refuge manager so
38 they can take swift action, if needed in cooperation
39 with our managers for that herd.

40
41 So thank you very much, appreciate the
42 opportunity.

43
44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
45 Operator, is there any public on line that would like
46 to speak specific to this.

47
48 MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, this is
49 Greg.

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Greg.
2
3 MR. SIEKANIEC: Could I just ask Ben a
4 question?
5
6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, definitely,
7 yep, the floor is open.
8
9 MR. SIEKANIEC: Yeah, thank you.
10 Thanks, Ben, for that statement. Is there any -- have
11 you guys completed any population work this summer or
12 spring that will become available before too long, do
13 you know?
14
15 MR. MULLIGAN: Through the Chair.
16 Board Member Siekaniec. I'd have to ask our local
17 manager. The last time I had asked was when this
18 special action had its public meeting and I hadn't had
19 a chance to followup with them but I will certainly do
20 so and if they have anything I can send it your way.
21
22 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, that would
23 be appreciated. And I do appreciate your encouragement
24 that everybody working together out there to try and,
25 you know, do the right things for conservation of this
26 herd.
27
28 Thank you, Ben.
29
30 MR. MULLIGAN: Oh, sure thing.
31
32 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
33
34 MS. MAAS: Mr. Chair.
35
36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, go ahead,
37 Lisa, you have the floor.
38
39 MS. MAAS: Thanks. Yeah, we also still
40 need to hear the Regional Advisory Council
41 recommendations.
42
43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, correct.
44 Yes, please, we'll take those now too, Lisa, thank you.
45
46 MS. MAAS: Okay, thanks. I'll start
47 off with the Bristol Bay and then we can go to Yukon
48 Kuskokwim Delta and Western Interior.

49
50

1 So the Bristol Bay Regional Advisory
2 Council voted to support WSA20-04. The Bristol Bay
3 Council supported the request with the recognition that
4 research is needed to determine if caribou in the
5 Kokhanok area are part of a separate herd that may need
6 to be managed independently of the Mulchatna Herd. The
7 Council discussed the benefits of having one Federal
8 in-season manager across the range of the herd but
9 recognized the need for input and concurrence from
10 other involved organizations and Federal agencies. The
11 Council hopes Federal and State managers will work
12 together and coordinate their management actions.

13
14 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

15
16 And the YK Delta and Western Interior
17 Councils will also have recommendations.

18
19 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
20 This is Eva Patton, Council Coordinator for the Yukon
21 Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils.

22
23 The YK-Delta RAC supports WSA20-04.
24 The Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Council supported the request
25 because of substantial conservation concerns for the
26 Mulchatna Caribou Herd. The Council supports actions
27 that help rebuild the herd and reduced harvests at this
28 time. The Chair also -- and Council members also asked
29 for a creation of a Mulchatna Caribou Herd working
30 group to discuss the status of the herd and management
31 actions, both between all three affected Regional
32 Advisory Councils, but also with the public and tribal
33 entities and the State and Federal management and
34 biologists. Their hope is to keep communications
35 going, receive updates on the herd's status and also
36 outreach in the region on conservation efforts.

37
38 And a Council member had also
39 expressed, due to concern with food security,
40 opportunity for, you know, discussion with the Federal
41 in-season manager, if there's any opportunity for
42 limited harvest for Federally-qualified subsistence
43 users and had suggested the fall season as a little
44 less efficient time, that that might be an opportunity
45 for some limited harvest without risk of overharvest.
46 The Council supports the conservation concerns and
47 supports the Federal in-season manager to help initiate
48 that.

49

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1 Thank you.

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MR. REAKOFF: So this would be Jack Reakoff, Western Interior Regional Council.

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The Council met in Fairbanks on March 2 and 3. We reviewed this WSA20-04 Mulchatna Caribou Herd in-season management proposal. The Western Interior was very concerned at our fall meeting in McGrath to find out that the herd was at 13,500. We're very supportive of the request and we stressed that the Mulchatna Herd needs to be protected until the next regulatory cycle. The Council noted that the herd's pregnancy and productivity rates have been high, yet the herd population is substantially declined. The Council is concerned with brown bear predation of calves on the calving grounds and unreported harvest. The Council hopes that the State and Federal managers will continue to work together to protect this herd and recognize the need for a Federal in-season manager. The Council had testimony during our fall meeting in October that there was substantially more unreported harvest, that's why the Council was so concerned, the only real deduction is if the herd is productive yet is declining, that there's too much harvest.

The Council was appreciative to the Federal Subsistence Board with developing the in-season manager and we would like you to continue to do so.

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Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Jack. Any questions.

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(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, hearing none, any other Regional Advisory Councils to be recognized.

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(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: It looks like we have four total?

46

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MS. MAAS: Mr. Chair, this is Lisa, and yep, those were all three of the Councils that voted on this request.

50

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
2 Lisa, appreciate that.

3
4 Okay, I think that brings us to, I
5 believe, Board deliberation.

6
7 (No comments)

8
9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Discussion.

10
11 (No comments)

12
13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
14 hearing none, we'll open the floor for Board action.

15
16 MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, Greg
17 Siekaniec, Fish and Wildlife Service.

18
19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
20 floor, Greg.

21
22 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair
23 and Board Members. I would like to move that we
24 approve WSA20-04 as modified by OSM. If I get a second
25 I will provide my justification for supporting the
26 motion.

27
28 MR. PELTOLA: BIA, second.....

29
30 MS. PITKA: This is Rhonda, I second
31 that motion.

32
33 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you for the
34 second. Well, as has been noted previously in our
35 deliberations of some time ago and, again, in this
36 analysis, there's an obvious conservation concern for
37 the Mulchatna Caribou Herd as identified in the OSM
38 analysis and echoed in the public and tribal testimony.
39 Although it is not clear what combination of factors
40 have resulted in this decline, we have heard,
41 certainly, some good analysis by RAC Chair, harvest is
42 something we can directly and immediately control to
43 slow the decline and hopefully expedite the herd's
44 future recovery.

45
46 Providing a delegation of authority
47 letter to one Federal manager who can engage
48 cooperatively, local interests, and the State, this
49 delegation will provide the management flexibility

50

1 needed to make timely decisions and respond to changing
2 conditions. Clarifying the language as modified by OSM
3 further increases the management flexibility by
4 allowing for a complete closure of the season, if
5 warranted, for conservation.
6

7 This action also supports the Yukon
8 Kuskokwim Delta, Bristol Bay, and Western Interior
9 Regional Advisory Council recommendation to take
10 management actions necessary to conserve the Mulchatna
11 Caribou Herd.
12

13 I would also encourage Council, tribes
14 and other local users to coordinate and communicate
15 often with Federal and State managers regarding any
16 information they have that could aid in the herd's
17 recovery.
18

19 Thank you, Mr. Chair.
20

21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
22 that.
23

24 Any questions, comments, discussion.
25

26 (No comments)
27

28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
29 hearing none, we will call on Sue to do roll call, call
30 for the question.
31

32 MR. PELTOLA: Question.
33

34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
35 Gene.
36

37 Roll call, Sue, please.
38

39 MS. DETWILER: Okay. This is to do
40 with Wildlife Special Action 20-04, which requests that
41 the Federal in-season manager be delegated authority to
42 open and close seasons, announce harvest limits and set
43 sex restrictions for caribou in all portions of Unit
44 9A, 9B, 9C, 17A, 17B, 17C, 18, 19A and 19B for the
45 2020/2022 regulatory cycle. The motion is to approve
46 as modified by the OSM to clarify the regulatory
47 language and to delegate authority to the Togiak
48 National Wildlife Refuge manager to open, close -- open
49 and close seasons, announce harvest limits and set sex

1 restrictions via delegation of authority letter only.

2

3 So moving to the vote, start with Greg
4 Siekaniec, a yes vote is to support the motion, Greg.

5

6 MR. SIEKANIEC: Yes, I support as
7 stated in my justification.

8

9 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Dave Schmid.

10

11 MR. SCHMID: Yeah, I also support the
12 WSA20-04 with the OSM modification with the
13 justification provided by Fish and Wildlife Service, as
14 well as support from the three RACs and the State of
15 Alaska.

16

17 MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

18

19 BIA, Gene Peltola.

20

21 MR. PELTOLA: BIA votes to support as
22 presented in addition to with recognition of the
23 Bristol Bay, Yukon Kuskokwim Delta, and Western
24 Interior Regional Advisory Council's support of the
25 Board's administrative action in regard to take.

26

27 MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

28

29 BLM, Chad Padgett.

30

31 MR. PADGETT: I support.

32

33 MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

34

35 Park Service, Don Striker.

36

37 MR. STRIKER: Park Service supports the
38 motion in deference to the three RACs and for the
39 reasons so thoroughly articulated by Mr. Siekaniec.

40

41 MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

42

43 Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

44

45 MS. PITKA: I support based on the
46 support of the three Regional Advisory Councils, Yukon
47 Kuskokwim Delta, Bristol Bay, and Western Interior
48 Regional Advisory Council recommendation. And the --
49 with the understanding that the conservation measures

50

1 are warranted for the Mulchatna Caribou Herd.

2

3

Thank you.

4

5

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

6

7

Has Charlie Brower joined us?

8

9

(No comments)

10

11

12

MS. DETWILER: And finally, Chairman
Tony Christianson.

13

14

15

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I support
as stated.

16

17

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19

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. So motion
passes seven with one absent, so the request is
approved as amended.

20

21

22

23

So that brings us up to, Mr. Chair,
Special Action -- let's see, Wildlife Special Action
20-01 pertaining to caribou in Unit 13.

24

25

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, thank you,
Sue. We'll call on Lisa to present the analysis.

28

29

30

31

MS. MAAS: All right, thank you, Mr.
Chair. For the record my name is Lisa Maas and I'll
be presenting a summary of the analysis for Temporary
Wildlife Special Action Request WSA20-01.

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WSA20-01 was submitted by William
Amberg of Copper Center and requests a continuous
caribou season in Unit 13 from August 1st through March
31st and that the caribou harvest limit in Unit 13
remainder be changed to two caribou for the 2020/2022
regulatory cycle.

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The proponent notes that the State fall
season has been extended in recent years to September
30th which matches the Federal subsistence season. The
proponent is concerned with the high number of hunters
along the Richardson Highway, which creates a public
safety concern and states that this request would help
alleviate some of that harvest pressure. The proponent
also notes that in three of the past five years
Nelchina caribou have migrated through Federal lands
during October when the season is closed precluding

50

1 subsistence harvest. He also states that this request
2 will help reduce the size of the Nelchina Herd, which
3 is above population objections and is at risk of
4 overgrazing its habitat.

5
6 In 2016 the Board approved emergency
7 special action WSA16-05 to delegate authority to the
8 BLM Glennallen Field Office manager to open a 10 day
9 caribou season between October 1st and 20th to
10 increase harvest of the Nelchina Herd and to provide
11 additional hunting opportunity because caribou were
12 inaccessible during the regular season due to delayed
13 migration. In 2019 the Alaska Department of Fish and
14 Game extended the closing dates for all State caribou
15 hunts in Unit 13 by 10 days to September 30th to help
16 reduce the size of the Nelchina Herd population. This
17 closing date corresponds with the closing date of the
18 Federal season.

19
20 Temporary Special Action WSA20-03 also
21 concerns Unit 13 caribou and requests closure of moose
22 and caribou hunting in Unit 13 to non-Federally-
23 qualified users for the 2020/21 regulatory year. The
24 Board will consider WSA20-03 next, but may want to keep
25 this special action in mind during its deliberations on
26 20-01.

27
28 The Wrangell-St.Elias National Park
29 Subsistence Resource Commission submitted written
30 comments in support of the change in harvest limit to
31 provide additional subsistence opportunity and
32 opposition to the change in season due to concerns over
33 harvesting rutting bulls when they are unpalatable
34 resulting in wasted meat. The Resident Hunters of
35 Alaska, ADF&G, the Executive Director of the Ahtna
36 InterTribal Resource Commission and four members of the
37 public also opposed the continuous season because of
38 concerns over harvesting rutting bulls, wasting meat
39 and disturbing breeding caribou. The Resident Hunters
40 of Alaska also opposed the change in harvest limit
41 while three testifiers expressed support of the harvest
42 limit change during the public hearing.

43
44 Of note, both the Southcentral and
45 Eastern Interior Councils voted to support WSA20-01
46 with modification to only change the harvest limit in
47 Unit 13 remainder during their spring 2020 meeting.
48 However, the Councils were not presented with the full
49 OSM analysis or OSM's conclusions before they made

1 their recommendation.

2

3

4 The Nelchina Herd primarily occupies
5 Unit 13 throughout the summer migrating east during the
6 fall to overwinter in Units 12 and 20E. The Nelchina
7 Herd's population has fluctuated over time influenced
8 primarily by harvest. From 2010 to 2017 and in 2019
9 the herd's population has exceeded the State's
10 management objectives of 35,000 to 40,000 caribou. In
11 October 2019 the herd's population estimate was 46,528
12 caribou. From 2008 to 2012 low parturition rates of
13 three year old cows suggests nutritional stress raising
14 concerns over the health and long-term stability of the
15 Nelchina Herd.

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The Mentasta Caribou Herd primarily ranges within Units 11, 12 and 20E, however, Mentasta caribou may occasionally travel into Unit 13. The Mentasta Herd is a small herd with low recruitment and conservation concerns.

The Nelchina Herd experiences heavy harvest pressure due to its road accessibility. ADF&G manages the herd on a sustained yield basis through adjustments of annual harvest quotas. Over 95 percent of the Nelchina caribou harvest occurs in Unit 13.

Between 2001 and 2018 total Unit 13 caribou harvest averaged 2,744 caribou per year with harvest under Federal regulations accounting for 17 percent of total harvest on average. In 2016, 2018, and 2019 caribou were largely unavailable on Federal public lands during open seasons. In 2019 101 caribou have been reported harvested as of May 2020. While this Federal harvest is lower than in recent years it is likely because caribou migrated through Federal lands during October when the season is closed.

If WSA20-01 is approved, the Unit 13 caribou season would be open continuously from August 1st to March 31st and the harvest limit for Unit 13 remainder would change to two caribou for the 2020/21 and 2021/22 seasons. This request would increase hunting opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users.

Caribou have migrated through accessible Federal public lands during October in recent years when the season is closed. Approving this

50

1 request may increase harvest success by allowing
2 hunting when caribou are available. An October season
3 may also provide cooler hunting conditions facilitating
4 proper meat care.

5
6 While Nelchina caribou rut in October
7 and mature bulls are unpalatable during this time,
8 subsistence users could harvest cows and young bulls
9 instead. No conservation concerns exist for this
10 request as the current management goal is herd
11 reduction. Rather, this request could benefit the
12 Nelchina Herd by helping to reduce its size and prevent
13 the herd from overgrazing its habitat.

14
15 Incidental harvest of Mentasta caribou
16 is a possible conservation concern. Monitoring of
17 radio collared Mentasta caribou would help determine
18 whether Mentasta caribou are present in Unit 13 during
19 the hunting season.

20
21 The OSM conclusion is to support
22 Temporary Special Action WSA20-01 with modification to
23 delegate authority to the BLM Glennallen Field Office
24 manager to open and close a may be announced October 1
25 to 20th season for caribou in Unit 13 and to set any
26 needed sex restrictions in Unit 13 remainder for the
27 2020/21 and 2021/22 regulatory year. Delegating
28 authority to an in-season manager provides the
29 flexibility and safeguards needed to manage this hunt
30 in response to changing herd and environmental
31 conditions. Additionally, the in-season manager will
32 consult with the superintendent of Wrangell-St. Elias
33 National Park before taking any management actions
34 which will help to ensure protection of the Mentasta
35 Herd.

36
37 (Teleconference interruption -
38 participants not muted)

39
40 MS. MAAS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

41
42 I'd be happy to answer any questions.

43
44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Excuse me,
45 somebody has their line open, could you please mute it.

46
47 (Pause)

48
49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hello.

1 MS. MAAS: All right, thanks, Mr.
2 Chair, that concludes my presentation and I'd be happy
3 to answer any questions.

4
5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
6 that, Lisa, I appreciate you working through that. Any
7 questions from the Board for Lisa.

8
9 MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, this Greg.

10
11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg, go ahead.

12
13 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
14 Hey, Lisa, thanks for the analysis.

15
16 Would you clarify for me on what you
17 said about the Southcentral and Eastern Interior
18 Regional Advisory Committee recommendations, what, that
19 they did not agree that there should be a continuous
20 season, they wanted to maintain that break in there,
21 but then you said something about that was before -- so
22 they didn't have the analysis?

23
24 MS. MAAS: Yeah, thanks for that
25 question, Greg. So, yeah, you'll hear the full Council
26 recommendations shortly but I think it is important to
27 note that when this special action came before the
28 Councils, all they really had was the request. It was
29 early enough in the process that OSM hadn't finalized
30 the analysis or their conclusions, so it's unclear
31 whether or not the Councils would have supported the
32 OSM modification to delegate authority or not.

33
34 MR. SIEKANIEC: Okay. Followup
35 question, Mr. Chair.

36
37 (Teleconference interruption -
38 participants not muted)

39
40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have
41 the floor.

42
43 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you. Lisa, could
44 you also help again understand, you had mentioned that
45 there's a potential for the Mentasta Herd to mix with
46 the Nelchina Herd, does that happen to be a window of
47 time during that October 1st through the 21st, do we
48 know?

49
50

1 MS. MAAS: Yeah, the likelihood of the
2 Mentasta caribou being in Unit 13 is really really low
3 especially because the time they mix with the Nelchina
4 Herd is usually in Unit 12 when they're going up to
5 their wintering grounds. They don't generally go into
6 Unit 13 but there is that likelihood and I mean this
7 special action would apply to all Federal public lands
8 in Unit 13 but the reality is most people are hunting
9 in Units 13A and B along the Richardson Highway and the
10 place that the Mentasta caribou are most likely to be
11 is that tiny little piece of Wrangell-St. Elias lands
12 in Unit 13C, and that's not generally where people are
13 harvesting the Nelchina caribou in October, it's that
14 BLM lands along the Richardson Highway in Units 13A and
15 B. So the risk to the Mentasta Caribou Herd is pretty
16 negligible but -- and I mean there is a winter hunt in
17 Unit 12 for the Nelchina Herd that is typically open,
18 and the good news is that they have been able to collar
19 Mentasta caribou, that was an issue in the past, they
20 just didn't have the radio collars on them to really do
21 the monitoring but now they have at least 20 collars
22 out so they're able to monitor where the Mentasta
23 caribou are.

24
25 MR. SIEKANIEC: And in monitoring where
26 they are is how they decide whether or not to open a
27 season at any given time, is that what I'm hearing you
28 kind of allude to?

29
30 MS. MAAS: Yeah, and, again, I mean the
31 risk in Unit 13 is pretty darn low because they don't
32 -- you know, they usually -- the issue with Unit 12
33 during the winter season and the rule of thumb is 20
34 Nelchina caribou per 1 Mentasta caribou and if that
35 ratio goes below that then they would close the hunt
36 because the risk of incidental harvest is too high but
37 in past years that hasn't been an issue. But, again,
38 that's usually Unit 12 winter hunt that's the most
39 concern for incidental harvest of Mentasta caribou.

40
41 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you. Thank you,
42 Mr. Chair.

43
44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yep. Any other
45 further discussion or questions for Lisa on the
46 analysis.

47
48 (Teleconference interruption -
49 participants not muted)

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
2 hearing none, we'll move on to the ISC recommendation.

3
4 MS. MAAS: All right, thank you, Mr.
5 Chair. And, again, since the Regional Advisory
6 Councils voted on this request, it's just an
7 InterAgency Staff comment.

8
9 And the comment were just the standard
10 comments that the ISC found the Staff analysis to be a
11 thorough and accurate evaluation of the proposal and
12 that it provides sufficient basis for the Regional
13 Advisory Council recommendation and Federal Subsistence
14 Board action on the proposal.

15
16 So thank you, Mr. Chair, and now we can
17 go to the Southcentral and Eastern Interior Council
18 recommendations.

19
20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. And
21 it sounds like that potentially is Rhonda's phone,
22 could somebody reach out to Rhonda, please.

23
24 (Pause)

25
26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We will call on
27 the Regional Advisory Council Chair.

28
29 MS. STICKWAN: Are you referring to
30 Southcentral or Eastern Interior?

31
32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
33 floor.

34
35 MS. STICKWAN: Southcentral Alaska
36 Subsistence Regional Advisory Council supports WSA20-01
37 with modification to change -- only change the harvest
38 limit in Unit 13 remainder to two caribou. The Council
39 concurred with the recommendation of Wrangell-St. Elias
40 Subsistence Resource Commission to change the harvest
41 season -- to change the harvest limit, but not the
42 season. The Council stated that changing the harvest
43 limit would increase opportunity for Federally-
44 qualified subsistence users but was concerned that the
45 addition of an October season would allow for harvest
46 during the rut, which would lead to wanton waste as
47 rutting bulls are inedible during this time period.

48
49 Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
2 questions from the Board.

3
4 (No comments)

5
6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate
7 that. Moving on to the next Regional Advisory Council
8 Chair.

9
10 MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
11 Members of the Board. For the record this is Katya
12 Wessels, the Eastern Interior Council Coordinator.

13
14 And the Eastern Interior Council voted
15 to support WSA20-01 with modification to only change
16 the harvest limits in Unit 13 remainder for two bulls
17 to two caribou. The Council agreed with the
18 recommendation from the Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence
19 Resource Commission to support the change in harvest
20 limit, but not the change in season. The Council
21 stated that changing the harvest limit would provide
22 increased harvest opportunity for Federally-qualified
23 subsistence users and could benefit the Nelchina Herd
24 by helping to reduce its population.

25
26 The Council did not support the October
27 season as it would occur during the rut when bulls are
28 inedible. The Council was concerned about potential
29 wanton waste issues from users harvesting rutting
30 bulls.

31
32 Thank you.

33
34 That concludes my presentation of the
35 Eastern Interior vote.

36
37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
38 Katya. Any questions for Katya from the Board.

39
40 (No comments)

41
42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
43 hearing none we'll move on. Was there one more
44 Regional Advisory Council for this one?

45
46 MS. MAAS: Mr. Chair. That was all the
47 Regional Advisory Councils.

48
49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for

1 that Lisa. We'll now move on to Orville, did you have
2 anything?

3
4 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
5 Orville Lind, Native Liaison for OSM.

6
7 During the consultation session we had
8 no one have any questions or comments.

9
10 Thank you.

11
12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
13 thank you for that Orville. State, any comments.

14
15 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
16 For the record, Ben Mulligan, Alaska Department of Fish
17 and Game.

18
19 There's two parts to this proposal.

20
21 On the portion that has to do with
22 hunting during the rut, the Department opposes that
23 aspect of the proposal as has been said before, you
24 know, during the rut often times it could potentially
25 interrupt breeding and the meat at that time tends to
26 be inedible.

27
28 For the portion of the proposal that
29 seeks to change the bag limit to two caribou, outside
30 the Federal manager, we don't see a justification to
31 change the manager's discretion but we're not opposed
32 to this portion.

33
34 I will urge, as we just discussed in
35 another proposal, and, you know, seemed appreciated,
36 that the Federal in-season managers and our State
37 managers continue to consult with each other on
38 management actions for this herd as well.

39
40 Thank you.

41
42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Ben.
43 Any questions for the State.

44
45 (No comments)

46
47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
48 is there any public, Operator, any public on line that
49 would like to speak to this.

1 OPERATOR: Thank you. If you would
2 like to speak please, press star then 1 at this time.

3
4 William Amberg, your line is open.

5
6 MR. AMBERG: Thank you. I would like
7 to speak to 01. I understand that there is great
8 concerns of wanton waste and I would like to bring it
9 to your attention that there are many laws that prevent
10 that. I also would like to bring it to your attention
11 that we just heard that the moose season in 18 has been
12 extended into October 7th and I would be very curious
13 on how that does not include the rut.

14
15 My second concern I'd like to bring to
16 you is that subsistence hunters are not interested in
17 the antlers, they're interested in the cows and young
18 bulls. It is sad to say that many of the residents in
19 this area were unable to harvest caribou for a few
20 years only because the caribou crossed early.

21
22 So I just wanted to -- I would like to
23 know the answer on the Unit 18 rut issue, why that is
24 not as important as it is here in Unit 13.

25
26 And, again, this is about the
27 subsistence users and they don't care about the
28 antlers.

29
30 REPORTER: Hi, excuse me, Tony, this is
31 Tina, the court reporter. Could I get the last
32 gentleman's name please.

33
34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, I was
35 going to ask him to state his name for the record
36 please. Thank you, Tina, for that.

37
38 REPORTER: Thank you.

39
40 MR. AMBERG: William Amberg.

41
42 REPORTER: Thank you.

43
44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: William Amberg,
45 yeah, thank you. Thank you for calling in. Any
46 questions for William.

47
48 (No comments)

49

50

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
2 Well, I'm glad you took the time to call in and provide
3 your testimony.

4
5 MR. AMBERG: All right, thank you, Mr.
6 Chairman.

7
8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
9 comments.

10
11 OPERATOR: The next comment comes from
12 Karen Linnell, your line is open.

13
14 MS. LINNELL: Thank you. Thank you,
15 Mr. Chair. This is Karen Linnell with the Ahtna
16 InterTribal Resource Commission.

17
18 We actually agree with the ISC's
19 analysis in what they've put forward. I think there's
20 some opportunity here for -- to change that cow only
21 hunt in Unit 13C to two caribou and then on the
22 permits, as they're issued out, they're usually issued
23 out by the BLM and they tell us whether it's bull only
24 or cow only, or if it's any caribou. So -- I'm sorry,
25 it's bull only right now in 13C. But we agree with
26 that portion of that making it the same as the rest of
27 the unit and that can be distinguished by the in-season
28 manager. And I like the fact that they've added
29 language in there that if warranted the in-season
30 manager can open the season.

31
32 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

33
34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
35 Karen. Any questions from the Board.

36
37 (No comments)

38
39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Thank
40 you for taking the time to call in Karen.

41
42 Any other public on the line.

43
44 OPERATOR: At this time, Sir, I'm
45 showing no further public comment.

46
47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
48 Operator. Appreciate you guys taking the time to call
49 in.

1 All right, we'll move to Board
2 deliberation and discussion.

3
4 (No comments)

5
6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll open up
7 the floor for Board action.

8
9 MR. PADGETT: Mr. Chair, Chad Padgett
10 with BLM.

11
12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
13 floor, Chad.

14
15 MR. PADGETT: Thank you, Sir. Mr.
16 Chair, I move to approve Temporary Wildlife Special
17 Action WSA20-01 and if I receive a second I'll explain
18 my reasoning for voting to approve this special action
19 with modification to approve the change in harvest
20 limit in Unit 13 remainder from two bulls to two
21 caribou, but not the request for a continuous season.

22
23 MR. PELTOLA: BIA seconds.

24
25 MR. PADGETT: Thank you, Gene. As
26 described in the OSM analysis, approval of his request
27 increases harvest opportunity for Federally-qualified
28 subsistence users and could benefit the Nelchina
29 Caribou Herd by helping to reduce it within management
30 objectives. However, expanding the existing season to
31 include dates between October 1st and 21st would allow
32 for hunting during the rut. This could result in the
33 harvest of bull caribou during a time when their meat
34 may not be edible and could lead to waste of the
35 caribou resource as well as disruption of the breeding
36 season.

37
38 This modification of the request is
39 consistent with recommendations from the Southcentral
40 Alaska and the Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence
41 Regional Advisory Councils, the Wrangell-St. Elias
42 Subsistence Resource Commission, ADF&G and with
43 comments received during the public hearing held to
44 discuss this request.

45
46 Thank you.

47
48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
49 Chad. Any questions, discussion.

1 (No comments)

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
4 we'll call for the question.

5

6 MR. SIEKANIEC: Question.

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Question's been
9 called. Roll call, Sue, please.

10

11 MS. DETWILER: Sure. The motion is to
12 approve WSA20-01 with modification to approve the
13 change in caribou harvest limits in Unit 13 remainder
14 from two bulls to two caribou, but not the request for
15 a continuous season.

16

17 And we will start the roll call with
18 Chad Padgett, BLM.

19

20 MR. PADGETT: I support for the reasons
21 as stated.

22

23 MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Chad.

24

25 Fish and Wildlife Service, Greg
26 Siekaniec.

27

28 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Sue. I
29 support the motion as modified by the Bureau of Land
30 Management to approve WSA20-01 and as modified by OSM
31 for the reasons outlined in the justifications.

32

33 The modified regulation provides the
34 manager the flexibility to respond to the changing
35 conditions in consultation with tribes, Federal
36 agencies and the State. I also support this action in
37 deference to the Southcentral and Eastern Interior
38 Regional Advisory Committee recommendations and the
39 Subsistence Resource Commission regarding the addition
40 of caribou harvest opportunity but not the extended
41 season in the October window of October 1st through the
42 21.

43

44 Thank you.

45

46 MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Greg.

47

48 Forest Service, Dave Schmid.

49

50

1 MR. SCHMID: Yeah, I also support the
2 WSA20-01 with the justification provided by the BLM
3 that included the OSM modification to not provide a
4 continuous season, and also in deference to the RACs.
5

6 Thank you.
7

8 MS. DETWILER: Thank you.
9

10 BIA, Gene Peltola.
11

12 MR. PELTOLA: BIA votes to support
13 Temporary Special Action WSA20-01 with modification and
14 recognizing deference to the Regional Advisory Councils
15 involved with regard to take and the change from two
16 bulls to two caribou, in addition to the modification
17 -- the additional justification provided by BLM.
18

19 Thank you.
20

21 MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you, Gene.
22

23 Park Service, Don Striker.
24

25 MR. STRIKER: NPS supports WSA20-01 as
26 modified by Director Padgett and in deference to the
27 RACs and the Wrangell-St. Elias SRC.
28

29 We'd like to also echo the State's
30 concern that we emphasize coordinated approach to in-
31 season management with this herd, too, I just think
32 that's a good practice and thanks for those comments.
33

34 MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you.
35

36 Public Member Rhonda Pitka.
37

38 MS. PITKA: I support with the OSM
39 modification in deference to the Regional Advisory
40 Councils and with the justification as stated.
41

42 Thank you.
43

44 MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you.
45

46 Has Charlie Brower joined us?
47

48 (No comments)
49
50

1 MS. DETWILER: Okay.

2
3 Anthony Christianson, Chair.

4
5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I support
6 as stated.

7
8 MS. DETWILER: Okay. Motion passes
9 seven to zero.

10
11 And that will bring us to Wildlife
12 Special Action 20-03 pertaining to moose and caribou in
13 Unit 13 and, again, that's Lisa Maas.

14
15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll call on
16 Lisa to provide the analysis, thank you.

17
18 MS. MAAS: All right, thank you, Mr.
19 Chair. Again, for the record my name is Lisa Maas and
20 I'll be presenting a summary of the analysis for
21 Temporary Wildlife Special Action WSA20-03.

22
23 WSA20-03 was submitted by Kirk Wilson
24 of Glennallen and requests that the Federal Subsistence
25 Board close Federal public lands in Unit 13 to the
26 hunting of moose and caribou by non-Federally-qualified
27 users for the 2020/21 season.

28
29 The proponent states that this closures
30 is necessary due to extreme hunting competition from
31 high numbers of non-Federally-qualified users which
32 precludes a rural subsistence priority and results in
33 low harvest success by Federally-qualified subsistence
34 users. Because of this, the proponent states: action
35 is necessary to ensure the continuation of Federal
36 subsistence uses of moose and caribou in Unit 13 and
37 for reasons of public safety because there are too many
38 non-Federally-qualified users to safely hunt and pass
39 on customary and traditional harvest practices.

40
41 The proponent further states that this
42 request could serve as an experiment to evaluate the
43 potential of a Federal lands closure as a long-term
44 solution to increasing harvest success rates and
45 providing for the subsistence uses of Federally-
46 qualified subsistence users.

47
48 In 2002 the Board rejected Proposal
49 WP02-17 which requested closure of Federal lands in

1 Units 13A and 13B to moose and caribou hunting by non-
2 Federally-qualified users. The Board, Southcentral
3 Regional Advisory Council, InterAgency Staff Committee
4 and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game all opposed
5 this closure because it would not result in
6 conservation benefit due to the limited amount of
7 Federal public land in Unit 13 because additional
8 opportunity existed for Federal subsistence users to
9 hunt on Federal public lands after the State season
10 closed and because of the more liberal Federal harvest
11 limit and longer season.

12
13 In 2019 the Board rejected Temporary
14 Wildlife Special Action WSA19-03 which requested
15 closure of the Federal public land in Unit 13 to
16 caribou and moose hunting by non-Federally-qualified
17 users for the 2019/20 season. The Board determined the
18 requested closure was not warranted for conservation,
19 continuation of subsistence uses or safety reasons.
20 Federally-qualified subsistence users annual harvest
21 rates have remained fairly consistent in comparison to
22 the annual harvest rates by non-Federally-qualified
23 users. In addition the closure would not have
24 alleviated public safety concerns as non-Federally-
25 qualified users would still have been able to cross
26 Federal public lands to access State and private lands.

27
28 In September of 2019, ADF&G issued an
29 emergency order to extend the closing date for all
30 State caribou hunts in Unit 13 by 10 days to September
31 30th to help reduce the size of the Nelchina Herd.

32
33 Resident Hunters of Alaska submitted
34 written comments in opposition of WSA20-03 stating the
35 closure is not needed because the Nelchina is above
36 population objectives, additional harvest is needed and
37 ample opportunity exists for all hunters. A member of
38 the public also submitted written comments in
39 opposition to the request stating that public lands are
40 for all members of the public, not just some, and
41 plenty of hunting opportunity already exists. ADF&G
42 submitted written comments on WSA20-03 stating no
43 conservation concerns exists for either moose or
44 caribou in Unit 13 and hunting pressure has not been
45 shown to displace moose or caribou from traditional
46 migration corridors. ADF&G further commented that a
47 closure would not likely affect hunting success of
48 Federally-qualified users or address public safety
49 concerns.

1 During the public hearing for WSA20-03
2 13 people testified, five in opposition, and seven in
3 support. Opposition to the request included a lack of
4 need because no conservation concerns exist and that
5 public lands should be open to everyone. Several
6 supporters of the request referenced Title VIII of
7 ANILCA calling for a rural subsistence priority. One
8 testifier pointed out that ADF&G has extended the
9 State's fall caribou season in recent years precluding
10 a rural priority from a longer fall season. Other
11 testifiers mentioned that Federal lands in Unit 13 only
12 compromise a small portion of the unit and State
13 hunters have plenty of other areas to hunt while other
14 Federal lands in the area are difficult to access.
15 Another testifier stated that law enforcement was a
16 major reason the Board rejected WSA19-03, however,
17 enforcement is an agency issue and not a reason for the
18 Board to reject or approve a request under ANILCA.

19
20 The proponent of this request testified
21 that the influx of caribou hunters during moose season
22 takes away moose hunting opportunity from Federally-
23 qualified subsistence users. He further stated that
24 the area is too crowded to safely hunt as people aim
25 guns at one another and shoot over people's heads.

26
27 Several other testifiers echoed these
28 safety and overcrowding concerns. One stated he no
29 longer hunts in the area because of the terrible
30 overcrowding.

31
32 The relevant caribou biology was just
33 presented as part of WSA20-01 so I will move on to
34 moose.

35
36 Moose populations in Unit 13 have grown
37 since 2001. Since 2008 the Unit 13 moose population
38 has been within State management objectives. In 2019
39 the unit-wide population estimate was 19,000 moose.
40 However, the Unit 13 moose population dropped below
41 subunit population objectives in 2013 where it has
42 remained. Fall bull/cow ratios have been above State
43 management objectives since 2004, however, the lowest
44 bull/cow ratios have been found in the most accessible
45 portions of each subunit. Calf/cow ratios have been
46 below State management objectives since 2001 only
47 averaging 20 calves per 100 cows, however, despite
48 these low ratios population estimates demonstrate a
49 gradually increasing population trend.

1 Conflicts between local and non-local
2 hunters has been a longstanding issue in Unit 13.

3
4 In 2009 to 2013 household surveys,
5 almost every Unit 13 community noted concern over non-
6 local hunters stating that non-local hunters who have
7 lots of expensive equipment were out competing local
8 hunters and driving game away. Public testimony in
9 support of WSA19-03 included many concerns over intense
10 hunting pressure, unsafe hunting conditions, over
11 crowding, deflection of game and increased difficulty
12 for Federally-qualified subsistence users to harvest
13 both moose and caribou in Unit 13. Testimony in
14 opposition to WSA19-03 also noted safety concerns but
15 included solutions other than closures, such as
16 limiting permit numbers, restricting shooting within a
17 quarter mile of the road, increased law enforcement and
18 public education.

19
20 During the Board's deliberation on
21 WSA19-03 five people testified in support of the
22 request and all testimony focused comments on the BLM
23 lands on the Richardson Highway around Paxon describing
24 this area as a combat hunting zone.

25
26 Most of the relevant caribou harvest
27 was just shared during WSA20-01 presentation, however,
28 I will also add that between 2001 and 2018 harvest
29 success rates for the Federal caribou hunt showed
30 substantial annual variation but only a very slight
31 decreasing trend. Between 2001 and 2009 success rates
32 averaged 31 percent, while between 2010 and 2018
33 success rates averaged 28 percent. Federally-qualified
34 subsistence users can also hunt under State
35 regulations. According to ADF&G success rates for
36 Federally-qualified users hunting under State
37 regulations from 2001 to 2016 averaged 38 percent
38 compared with a 58 percent success rate for non-
39 Federally-qualified users during this time period.

40
41 Moving on to moose harvest.

42
43 Similar to caribou, Unit 13 is a
44 popular place to moose hunt due to its road
45 accessibility. While Federal seasons open August 1st,
46 whereas State seasons open September 1st, most moose
47 are harvested in mid-September when bulls are more
48 susceptible to harvest. Between 2006 and 2018 an
49 average of 930 moose were reported harvested each year.

1 Over the same time period an average of 4,700 people
2 hunted under State regulations each year with a 17
3 percent success rate, while an average of 600 people
4 hunted under Federal regulations each year with an 11
5 percent success rate. Most moose harvest on Federal
6 lands occurs in Unit 13B.
7

8 If this request is approved, Federal
9 public lands in Unit 13 will be closed to moose and
10 caribou hunting by non-Federally-qualified users for
11 the 2020/21 regulatory year. While Federal public
12 lands compromise 12.4 percent of Unit 13, the BLM lands
13 in Units 13A and 13B, which only comprise 2.7 percent
14 of the unit are the focus of the immense hunting
15 competition, overcrowding, user conflict and safety
16 concerns. Therefore, the effects of this request will
17 focus on these BLM lands. According to ANILCA, Section
18 .815(3) Federal public lands may be closed to non-
19 subsistence uses only when necessary for the
20 conservation of healthy wildlife populations, to
21 continue subsistence uses of such population or for
22 reasons set forth in Section .816, which includes for
23 reasons of public safety.
24

25 Closures for conservation is not
26 warranted as moose and caribou populations are within
27 or above management objectives. The effectiveness of
28 the closure for the continuation of subsistence uses of
29 caribou is uncertain as caribou harvest is primarily
30 related to availability and caribou have not been
31 available on Federal public lands in recent years.
32 However, as most caribou harvest occurs under State
33 regulations and caribou in Unit 13 experience extremely
34 heavy hunting pressure, a closure may reduce
35 competition and limit disruption to caribou movements
36 which may increase hunting opportunity and harvest
37 success by Federally-qualified subsistence users.
38

39 Closure for continuation of subsistence
40 uses of moose may be warranted. Harvest success rates
41 are lower under Federal regulations than under State
42 regulations. A closure may reduce competition from
43 non-Federally-qualified users, increasing hunting
44 opportunity and harvest success of Federally-qualified
45 subsistence users.
46

47 Closure for reasons of public safety
48 may be warranted. Safety concerns resulting from
49 intense hunting pressure, overcrowding, disruption of

1 hunts, and unsafe shooting practices have been
2 repeatedly stated by all user groups. While these
3 concerns may be better addressed through increased law
4 enforcement or restrictions along road sides, these
5 options have not been implemented and are outside of
6 the Board's authority. These safety concerns have been
7 an issue for decades and have resulted in displacement
8 of Federally-qualified subsistence users who do not
9 feel safe hunting in the area.

10
11 The OSM conclusion is to support
12 Temporary Special Action WSA20-03 with modification to
13 close Federal public lands to moose and caribou hunting
14 by non-Federally-qualified users in Units 13A and 13B
15 only for the 2020/22 regulatory cycle. Extending this
16 request to the 2021/22 regulatory year will reduce the
17 administrative burden associated with processing
18 special action requests. A proposal for this closure
19 could not take effect until July 1st, 2022, and that
20 this has been an issue for decades, no change in the
21 situation are expected between this year and next year.

22
23 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

24
25 I'd be happy to answer any questions.

26
27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
28 the analysis, Lisa. Any questions for Lisa.

29
30 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

31
32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
33 floor.

34
35 MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
36 So, Lisa, I was looking back through the analysis for
37 our previous special action that the Board addressed
38 and going to this one and I couldn't find anything in
39 the analysis for this so I was wondering if you could
40 answer some questions for me.

41
42 With regard to caribou harvest in GMU
43 23, if I look at the State reg books it says we have
44 RC561, RC562, we have a community harvest system CC001
45 permit that we have a drawing, VC485, could you tell me
46 how many permits have been issued for caribou under
47 those various scenarios?

48
49 MS. MAAS: Gene, I don't think I --

1 hold on, I don't think I have that information offhand,
2 like just by permit, so under Federal -- I mean Federal
3 harvest is by FC1302.

4

5 MR. PELTOLA: Correct.

6

7 MS. MAAS: And so I can give you
8 numbers for Federal harvest under FC1302 and then I can
9 give you numbers for like total state harvest, but I
10 don't have numbers, you know, offhand for different
11 State hunts.

12

13 MR. PELTOLA: So what I was looking at
14 was that so during the analysis you gave the history
15 about -- I'm sorry, you gave the history of GMU13,
16 sorry about that, and then part of that history was the
17 Board addressed a similar proposal 19-03 which was
18 rejected by the Board, so over the years the Board has
19 been exposed to heavy competition, and heavy
20 competition can be reflective of then, because this is
21 a regular -- a permit hunt in different capacities, the
22 competition could be regulated or addressed via permit
23 issuance, if there is a perception of, or realized
24 heavy competition, then a reduction of permits could be
25 utilized to reduce that potential competition. Safety
26 per the terms, the place is flooded, a lot of
27 competition, people aren't hunting there because
28 there's so many people, a safety aspect could be
29 addressed by a reduction in permits. So what I'm
30 trying to get at is there are permits issued for this
31 hunt in GMU13 from the Federal program and the State
32 program, so I was trying to find something with regard
33 to how many permits are issued in the Federal program
34 and the State program to see if there's actually been a
35 reduction in permits, therefore, a potential reduction
36 in the competition or safety concern. And the reason I
37 ask that is in the State's correspondence in the
38 previous, in the May 20th letter from the Department,
39 under Unit 13 caribou hunt structure for regulatory 18
40 -- RC561 had 4,586 permits, a quota of 500; RC562 had
41 4,181 permits, a quota of 500, CC01 had 838 permits for
42 a quota of 400, VC45 had 5,000 permits for a quota of
43 250.

44

45 And so I was, you know, quickly adding
46 up, that's eight, nine, 14, 17 -- roughly 17,000
47 permits issued so I was just trying to see if the trend
48 had been increasing, decreasing, or remaining the same
49 with regard to those permit issuances.

50

1 Thank you much.

2

3

Mr. Chair.

4

5

6 MS. MAAS: Through the Chair. I can
7 give you numbers of hunters, which is kind of a
8 reflection on numbers of permits and, I mean, you may
9 be aware that the RC permits, I mean they are a
10 registration permit but there's some limitations on
11 there like if you get that permit through the State you
12 can only hunt caribou in Unit 13 and nowhere else in
13 the state, whereas, if you get that draw permit you can
14 hunt caribou in Unit 13 and anywhere else. So it's
15 just, you know, kind of a benefit, you know, if people
16 are able to get that draw permit, it gives them more
17 flexibility and opportunity.

17

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So for the Federal caribou hunt, hunter
numbers has only slightly increased. Between 2001 and
2009, the number of hunters under Federal regulations
was 1,322 and between 2010 and 2018 hunter numbers
averaged 1,469 hunters. So that was just a slight
increase under Federal regulations.

25

26

27

28

And then, again, I mean State -- yeah,
I could probably get you the State hunter numbers but
it's going to take me a moment.

29

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MR. PELTOLA: Yeah, Mr. Chair, if I
may, BIA again. Under that same letter dated May 20th,
2020, under GMU13, at least regard to regulatory 18,
for those hunts I cited a number of permits issued,
they also have number of hunted permits and that's kind
of reflective of, you know, those that received a
permit, did not hunt, so RC561 is 1,7(indiscernible)
hunted, RC562 is 2,080 hunted, CC001 was 376 hunted,
VC45 was 1,233 and so that comes up with a total just
shy of 5,500 hunters.

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Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
questions for the Staff.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, this is
Greg.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg, go ahead.

1 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you. Lisa,
2 thanks for the analysis and the reminder on kind of
3 this necessary portion of it and unnecessary
4 restrictions on non-subsistence users. So I think,
5 like Gene has been doing, I'm looking for, well, we
6 said in '19, no, we didn't think it was appropriate to
7 close this so -- and I think I heard you say that
8 earlier we had -- the Board had passed an additional
9 window of time, I think September 21 to the 30th, for
10 Federally-qualified users but that has been since
11 matched by the State, probably because of what caribou
12 are doing and probably additional opportunity due to
13 the herd, is that, in your opinion, another option that
14 if we limited to Federally-qualified -- or we closed it
15 to non-Federally-qualified users during September 21 to
16 the 30th, would that provide that additional
17 opportunity that people are looking for in this
18 particular area of 13A and B?

19

20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Lisa.

21

22 MS. MAAS: Yes, thanks for that
23 question. Sorry, I'm just finding that spot in the
24 analysis. So, yeah, Member Siekaniec pointed out
25 another alternative considered was to close Federal
26 public lands in Unit 13 to non-Federally-qualified
27 users only from September 21st to 30th, the State
28 caribou season usually ends on September 20th, whereas
29 the Federal caribou season ends September 30th; however
30 in recent years ADF&G has extended the State caribou
31 season until September 30th precluding the Federal
32 subsistence priority from that longer season. Closing
33 Federal public lands during this time period would help
34 preserve a Federal subsistence priority even if the
35 State extends its season, however, this alternative
36 would not address the immense competition and safety
37 concerns occurring earlier in the season for both moose
38 and caribou. So, yeah, I think that would probably
39 help the issue but it wouldn't be a complete solution
40 addressing the local subsistence users concern for that
41 immense competition and safety. And, again, I mean
42 that's only considering the caribou season and the
43 moose season, which also experiences a lot of
44 overcrowding competition ends September 20th, so that
45 alternative would not really address the moose hunt at
46 all, it would just partially address the caribou hunt.

47

48 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Lisa. Other
49 than, you know, the moose season as I think I've been

50

1 told by many of our managers is that, you know, the
2 real key time window, though, a lot of people like to
3 be hunting moose is about the September 19th through
4 the end of the month, so I think there is some
5 consideration that would be significant overlap there
6 that could take some of the pressure off of this
7 particular area.

8
9 My concern, Lisa, as I'm -- you know,
10 I'm not hearing anything being recommended different
11 than what we had dealt with in '19, other than maybe we
12 reduce size of the units to just A and B.

13
14 So, anyway, thank you, Mr. Chair and
15 Lisa for your comments.

16
17 MS. MAAS: Through the Chair, if I
18 could respond to that.

19
20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Lisa.

21
22 MS. MAAS: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair.
23 So just a clarification Member Siekaniec. Both the
24 Federal and State moose seasons in Unit 13 end
25 September 20th.

26
27 MR. SIEKANIEC: Oh, they do, okay,
28 thank you.

29
30 MS. MAAS: yeah, and just in Unit -- in
31 2019 the OSM recommendation was to close the entire
32 unit, whereas this year we really honed in to the
33 problem area and so instead of closing all of Unit 13,
34 we're recommending closing, you know, only the BLM
35 lands in Units 13A and 13B where most of the conflicts
36 occur. So that's one difference between 2019 and 2020.
37 And during the Board's deliberation in 2019 there were
38 some questions from Board Members about the possibility
39 of a targeted closure and so that helped, you know,
40 lead or define the OSM analysis this time around, was
41 that thought or desire for, you know, a possible
42 targeted closure when it might not be necessary to
43 close the entire unit.

44
45 Thank you.

46
47 MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, this is Greg
48 again.

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Greg,
2 you have the floor.

3
4 MR. SIEKANIEC: Yeah. Lisa, thanks for
5 that clarification especially on moose.

6
7 And while you're doing your analysis,
8 are you also thinking of how you would measure success
9 in this regard? Is there any thought been put into
10 that or is it just you recommend a closure and whatever
11 happens, happens, we don't have any sort of metrics
12 coming out of this?

13
14 MS. MAAS: Yeah, through the Chair, I
15 mean that's a good question and I don't know if I can
16 give you, you know, a really solid answer on that. But
17 usually our metrics for things like this, since it's
18 not a conservation concern, of course, you know, then
19 we look at numbers, is, a lot of feedback we get from
20 the local users and, you know, from the Regional
21 Advisory Councils. You know, for example with the Unit
22 23 caribou closure, we evaluated the effectiveness of
23 that closure in part by a lot of positive feedback we
24 got from the users, you know, from Noatak residents and
25 school children and Council members, that, you know,
26 were saying how much better their hunting experience
27 and hunting successes were because of that closure.
28 And given the amount of public testimony we've received
29 on, you know, local users about the overcrowding
30 concerns, I would expect to hear a lot of feedback from
31 the local users on whether this -- you know if this
32 closure was implemented, whether it helped their
33 hunting experience and just feeling safe hunting in
34 that area or not.

35
36 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
37 Could I have one more followup, a short one?

38
39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Greg.

40
41 MR. SIEKANIEC: Lisa. When you guys
42 were looking at this and we made this decision in '19,
43 did you look at like -- because I think we also heard
44 some testimony that this changes kind of the caribou
45 movements and migrations, do we know when the caribou
46 moved through this area in 2019 or have we looked at it
47 is there a trend that can actually be pointed to that,
48 yes, this is influencing the movement of caribou at the
49 timing of which people are out there expecting to be

1 able to harvest?

2

3 MS. MAAS: From my experience I can't
4 tell you. I mean for this hunt in general it seems
5 like caribou are -- have frequently been unavailable on
6 the Federal public lands during when the season's open,
7 that's one reason we had that previous special action,
8 20-01, is that, in the past, you know, three out of the
9 past five years the caribou have migrated through those
10 accessible Federal public lands in October when the
11 season's closed, and the exact -- and, again, I can't
12 say explicitly for this hunt, but just in general
13 experience from other caribou hunts, certainly caribou
14 -- short-term caribou movements are influenced by
15 hunters, you know, like whether they're going to go
16 around a lake or cross the road in a certain area is
17 definitely influenced by -- could be influenced by
18 people. I mean their long-term migration doesn't seem
19 to be influenced. A lot of this information came from
20 my experience of the Unit 23 caribou closure and
21 they've done studies on this with the caribou migration
22 through Noatak National Preserve, that they found, yes,
23 short-term movements are impacted by, you know, human
24 activity, but, you know, going from Unit 13 to Unit 12
25 and 20E, you know, that's not going to be too impacted.
26 So when you talk on the hunt level I would say
27 certainly, you know, caribou movements could be
28 influenced by other hunters.

29

30 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Lisa. So
31 let me make sure I understood that. So localized you
32 could have a little bit of a change but the caribou are
33 still going to get to where they want to go from a
34 migration standpoint?

35

36 MS. MAAS: Yes, correct. Thank you,
37 good summary.

38

39 MR. SIEKANIEC: All right, thank you.
40 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

41

42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yep.

43

44 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

45

46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: BIA, you have
47 it.

48

49 MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

50

1 So, Lisa, when I'm going through this, if I understand
2 this correctly, the general request was that the
3 Federal Subsistence Board close Federal public lands in
4 GMU 13 to the hunting of moose and caribou by non-
5 Federally-qualified users for the 20/21 season...and
6 the OSM recommendation is to close Federal public lands
7 to the hunting of caribou and moose, as opposed to the
8 whole unit, if I read that correctly then can you
9 articulate what is the difference with regard to
10 percentile of Federal lands in comparison to the whole
11 GMU?

12
13 MS. MAAS: Yeah, thanks Member Peltola.
14 So the BLM lands in Unit -- or sorry, Federal public
15 lands comprise 12.4 percent of Unit 13, although six
16 percent of these are part of Denali National Park so
17 they're already essentially closed to non-Federally-
18 qualified users, so we're talking about 6.4 percent of
19 Unit 13 that would be closed if this special action was
20 approved as submitted. And the OSM modification is
21 talking about closing 2.7 percent of the land so that's
22 a difference of, you know, 3.5 percent, you know, from
23 6.4 to 3 -- to 2.7 percent.

24
25 So we're not closing any lands in Units
26 13E, 13C, or 13C.

27
28 MR. PELTOLA: Okay, thank you. And,
29 Mr. Chair, if I may for a followup.

30
31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Gene.

32
33 MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
34 So, Lisa, if -- and I'm saying this just to make sure
35 that I am thinking properly, so if the Board was to act
36 upon this, there'd be roughly three to six percent of
37 the lands within the Game Management Unit, which would
38 not be available to Federally-qualified users, although
39 those are the most accessible lands, and then with that
40 being said, a closure to all but Federally-qualified
41 users would not preclude a non-Federally-qualified user
42 from camping on that land, transitioning to that land,
43 through that land, similar to like Haul Road on the
44 Slope, there's a five mile buffer on each side, there's
45 nothing that precludes you from camping it,
46 transitioning through it, going to non-Federal lands,
47 and in this case with the proposal we're looking at, an
48 individual would have to transition through those lands
49 to get to lands which are open, so there still would be

1 some presence, although if my understanding is correct,
2 only the Federally-qualified user could hunt within
3 that corridor, so potentially there would be, if we
4 look at regulatory year '18 numbers, almost 14,000
5 people which would be precluded -- granted if the
6 permit counts were similar today as they were in '18,
7 there'd be 17,000-plus users who would not be able to
8 hunt on those lands although they could still camp on
9 and transition through it to adjacent lands which would
10 not have that restriction; is that correct?

11

12 MS. MAAS: That is correct.

13

14 MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Lisa and thank
15 you, Mr. Chair.

16

17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank
18 you. Any other questions for Lisa.

19

20 (No comments)

21

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. I
23 believe that brings us to ISC recommendation.

24

25 MS. MAAS: Okay, just a moment, Mr.
26 Chair, let me find my -- okay, so the InterAgency Staff
27 Committee recommendation is to approve Temporary
28 Special Action Request WSA20-03 as modified by OSM to
29 close Federal public lands in Unit 13A and 13B to the
30 hunting of moose and caribou by non-Federally-qualified
31 users for the 2020/2022 regulatory cycle.

32

33 The InterAgency Staff Committee concurs
34 with the OSM Staff analysis that the request is not
35 valid for experimental purposes but is justifiable to
36 improve safety and reduce user conflicts while
37 continuing and potentially increasing the opportunity
38 for subsistence uses of moose and caribou in Units 13A
39 and 13B. The scope of this closure, as modified by
40 OSM, is reduced from a full unit closure and,
41 therefore, potentially easier to implement. As
42 described in the analysis, spacial and temporal
43 concentration of hunters along the highway on Federal
44 lands has the potential to lead to serious safety
45 issues and has already led some subsistence users to
46 avoid the area thus reducing opportunity. Of the
47 options within the regulatory authority of the Board
48 this special action may increase safety and allow for
49 the continuation of subsistence uses of the resource

50

1 and provide for a meaningful subsistence priority.
2 Modifying the request to extend the closure for the
3 entire 2020/2022 regulatory cycle will help to reduce
4 the administrative burden associated with repeated
5 requests.
6

7 The Board may want to consider adding
8 some criteria that should be measured to determine if
9 the closure is successful. Examples might include
10 harvest success of Federally-qualified users,
11 congestion at parking areas, and along roads, et
12 cetera. Issues related to unsafe shooting practices
13 and other user conflicts may be alleviated by this
14 closure when coupled with law enforcement efforts.
15 However, it is unclear how effective a closure may be
16 in the area. Such a closure would not prevent non-
17 Federally-qualified users from accessing BLM lands in
18 order to travel from the road to State managed lands in
19 order to attempt to harvest moose and caribou.
20 Additionally boundaries between State and Federal lands
21 in Unit 13 are ill-defined, which makes navigating such
22 a closure potentially difficult.
23

24 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

25
26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
27 Lisa. Any questions for the ISC.
28

29 (No comments)
30

31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
32 hearing none, we'll move on. RAC discussions.
33

34 MS. MAAS: Yeah, Mr. Chair, there were
35 no Council recommendations for this special action.
36

37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
38 Orville.
39

40 MS. DETWILER: Yeah, Mr. Chair, my
41 understanding is they may not -- the Councils may not
42 have had a chance to comment on these, I could be
43 wrong, but I just didn't want to get past that stage of
44 our review without making sure that they -- even though
45 they didn't have a recommendation, that they have
46 subsequently reviewed it and may have something to say.
47

48 MS. STICKWAN: May I say something, Mr.
49 Chair, this is Gloria.

1 REPORTER: Wait, Tony, hold on a
2 second.
3
4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Gloria, go
5 ahead.
6
7 MS. STICKWAN: We did not get to review
8 this, so we had no recommendation. It was after our
9 Council meeting so we didn't get a chance to look at
10 this, so we don't have a recommendation because of that
11 reason.
12
13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
14 Gloria. Tina, did you have something.
15
16 REPORTER: Yes, Tony, this is Tina, the
17 court reporter.
18
19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Tina.
20
21 REPORTER: So the person that spoke
22 just before you -- or before Gloria, was that Sue
23 Detwiler?
24
25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, that was
26 Sue Detwiler.
27
28 REPORTER: Thank you. Thank you.
29
30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Was there any
31 other Regional Advisory Council Chairs who wanted to
32 add a statement.
33
34 (No comments)
35
36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
37 hearing none, Orville did you receive any comments?
38
39 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
40 Orville Lind, Native Liaison for OSM. I did not have
41 any comments -- did not receive any.
42
43 Thank you.
44
45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
46 Orville. Is there any public, Operator, any public on
47 line?
48
49 OPERATOR: If you would like to make a

1 public comment at this time, please press star and then
2 one. One moment.

3

4 (Pause)

5

6 OPERATOR: Karen Linnell, your line is
7 open.

8

9 MS. LINNELL: Thank you. Thank you,
10 Mr. Chair. This is Karen Linnell with the Ahtna
11 InterTribal Resource Commission.

12

13 While it is not what was asked for by
14 Mr. Kirk Wilson, we're in support of this proposal --
15 or with the modifications and at this time it's a small
16 step to see if there's a change. Reducing this from
17 the -- even including Unit D -- or GMU13D, making it
18 even a smaller portion, six percent of the land in Unit
19 13 isn't much. And having the State permittees to have
20 the other 94 percent to hunt on, you know, isn't going
21 to impact them greatly. And to Mr. Siekaniec's
22 question regarding the September 21 to September 30 for
23 the caribou season, the last couple years the State has
24 extended by emergency order the hunt and so the
25 competition was throughout the whole season. But we
26 will support the ISC's recommendation at this point.

27

28 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

29

30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
31 questions for Karen.

32

33 (No comments)

34

35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
36 Karen, for calling in.

37

38 OPERATOR: The next comment comes from
39 Jim Simon, your line is open.

40

41 MR. SIMON: Thank you very much. Thank
42 you very much, Mr. Chair. My name is Jim Simon. I'm a
43 consultant with the Ahtna InterTribal Resource
44 Commission but today I'm testifying just on behalf of
45 myself. I'm a former Federally-qualified user from
46 Unit 13. My family still has property there. I'm
47 actually getting ready to head there right after this
48 meeting.

49

50

1 I want to testify to my support to this
2 proposal as modified by the Office of Subsistence
3 Management to limit the closure to the two subunits and
4 to put this into place throughout the rest of the
5 regulatory year through 2022. My concern is dealing
6 simply with the public safety issues because I do
7 travel the Richardson Highway through these two
8 subunits regularly because of my family connections and
9 my work in the area. I have had numerous very
10 dangerous situations with road hunting in the area and
11 just the amount of traffic on the highway does present
12 a significant public hazard to me, personally. And I
13 think this would be a good step in the right direction.
14 I recognize that some of that traffic may still
15 continue by non-Federally-qualified residents, you
16 know, accessing other non-Federal lands. Myself, I'm
17 no longer Federally-qualified because of where I now
18 live, but there is -- the vast majority of Unit 13
19 still remains available to me to hunt moose or caribou
20 if I chose to.

21
22 So thank you very much, that concludes
23 my testimony.

24
25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
26 Thank you, Jim, for taking the time to call in today.
27 Any questions for Jim.

28
29 (No comments)

30
31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
32 well, you have a good day and good luck.

33
34 Operator, is there anybody else on line
35 that would like to be recognized?

36
37 OPERATOR: At this time, Sir, I'm
38 showing no further public comment.

39
40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
41 State, we'll provide the State with an opportunity.

42
43 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
44 For the record, Ben Mulligan, Alaska Department of Fish
45 and Game.

46
47 In reviewing WSA20-03, you know, the
48 actions that you take may not, you know, solve the
49 issue that the proposer has brought out. In looking at

1 the data, historically we do see trends when there is
2 an increase even in the number of State hunters, we see
3 an increase in the success rate of Federally-qualified
4 hunters also.

5
6 And then the safety issue, you know, it
7 may clear out the non-Federally-qualified users from
8 those lands but as was previously stated, people will
9 still be able to transition through there, camp there,
10 they just can't hunt there. They may still see a good
11 level of traffic through those Federal lands also.

12
13 Thank you.

14
15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
16 questions.

17
18 (No comments)

19
20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
21 that. All right, I think that concludes our testimony
22 for the day, we'll move on to Board discussion and
23 deliberation.

24
25 (No comments)

26
27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The floor is
28 open for Board action.

29
30 MR. PADGETT: Mr. Chair, Chad Padgett
31 with BLM.

32
33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The floor is
34 yours Chad.

35
36 MR. PADGETT: Thank you. Mr. Chair, I
37 move to approve Temporary Wildlife Special Action
38 WSA20-03, and if I receive a second I'll explain my
39 reasoning for voting against my motion.

40
41 MR. PELTOLA: Second, BIA.

42
43 MS. PITKA: This is Rhonda, I.....

44
45 MR. PADGETT: Thanks, Gene.

46
47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
48 floor Chad.

49
50

1 MR. PADGETT: The proponents primary
2 rationale for submitting this request was for
3 experimental reasons to evaluate if harvest success
4 rates of Federally-qualified subsistence users would
5 improve, which is outside of the scope of this Board's
6 regulatory authority. The closure was not shown to be
7 necessary for the continuation of subsistence uses of
8 moose and caribou populations. Annual harvest rates of
9 Federally-qualified subsistence users have remained
10 fairly consistent and the low Federal harvest in 2019
11 was more a function of lack of availability of caribou
12 during the harvest period, rather than the interference
13 from non-Federally-qualified users, however, many
14 Federally-qualified subsistence users do feel displaced
15 by the influx of non-local hunters into the area.

16
17 The closure is also not necessary for
18 reasons of public safety. Such a closure would only
19 serve to shift where non-local hunters would go to
20 harvest animals. The OSM analysis indicates that such
21 a shift may, in fact, serve to further disrupt hunting
22 by Federally-qualified subsistence users and such a
23 closure would not prevent non-Federally-qualified users
24 from accessing BLM lands in order to travel from the
25 road to State-managed lands. It could also concentrate
26 non-local hunters along road accessible, State-managed
27 lands, which may increase safety concerns in those
28 areas. This, coupled with the complex and ill-defined
29 boundaries between State and Federal lands in Unit 13
30 make navigating such a closure difficult at best.

31
32 Additionally, issues related to unsafe
33 shooting practices and other user conflicts are best
34 addressed by law enforcement.

35
36 As indicated in the OSM analysis, this
37 closure is also not necessary for the conservation of
38 healthy populations of moose or caribou in Unit 13 as
39 population estimates for both species meet State
40 management objectives. While bull, cow and calf/cow
41 ratios for caribou have fluctuated over time, long-term
42 averages for both indicate that the Nelchina Caribou
43 Herd is healthy and can sustain the current level of
44 harvest. In addition, both caribou and moose
45 populations are routinely monitored and the data
46 gathered is used to inform management plans and
47 establish sustainable harvest guidelines.

48
49 Last year this Board opposed a similar

1 special action request, no new data have been brought
2 forth in the OSM analysis to indicate that anything has
3 changed since that time.

4
5 With that, I will conclude my motion.

6
7 Thank you.

8
9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
10 thank you, Chad, for your motion, appreciate that.

11
12 MR. STRIKER: Mr. Chair, Park Service.

13
14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yep, you have
15 the floor, Park Service.

16
17 MR. STRIKER: Yeah, Chad, I just wanted
18 to clarify that your motion was to approve it as
19 written, not as modified?

20
21 MR. PADGETT: Sorry. It was to approve
22 it as modified and then voting -- and then why I was
23 voting against my motion.

24
25 MR. STRIKER: Got it.

26
27 MR. PADGETT: Sorry about that.

28
29 MR. STRIKER: It would have put me in a
30 difficult position because I would have had to agree to
31 not support it if it weren't modified.

32
33 Thank you.

34
35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
36 questions.

37
38 (No comments)

39
40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Discussion.

41
42 (No comments)

43
44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
45 we'll call for the question.

46
47 MR. STRIKER: Question.

48
49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Roll call,
50

1 please, Sue.

2

3 MS. DETWILER: Okay. So the motion is
4 to approve WSA20-03 as modified so a yes vote is to
5 support. And we'll start, again, with Mr. Padgett,
6 BLM.

7

8 MR. PADGETT: I do not support as
9 stated in my justification. Thank you.

10

11 MS. DETWILER: Okay.

12

13 Greg Siekaniec.

14

15 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Sue. I'm
16 going to support this motion made by the Bureau of Land
17 Management for WSA20-03 as modified by OSM.

18

19 I do agree that there's limited
20 information -- new information has been brought before,
21 however, we have reduced the units to 13A and B. And I
22 also am somewhat concerned that we could have taken an
23 intermediate step that would have opened the September
24 window from the 21st to the 30th by excluding non-
25 Federally-qualified users during that window of time.
26 But I would expect that we would work hard to get some
27 measurable information out of this and that it's a
28 temporary action in nature so we will be revisiting
29 this again.

30

31 Thank you.

32

33 MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Greg.

34

35 Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

36

37 MR. SCHMID: The Forest Service is also
38 going to support this motion as well for much of the
39 reasons that the Fish and Wildlife Service just stated.

40

41 We've got to try something, this is
42 temporary here at this point in time. Having visited
43 the area last fall and met with folks on site, I think
44 we're talking about a postage stamp of land area and I
45 think it's time that we try to take some action here
46 and, again, measure and evaluate and see if we can make
47 a bit of a difference there.

48

49 Thank you.

50

1 MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

2

3

BIA, Gene Peltola.

4

5 MR. PELTOLA: Bureau of Indian Affairs
6 votes to support WSA20-03 with modification to close
7 Federal public lands to moose and caribou hunting by
8 non-Federally-qualified users as we feel it is
9 necessary to provide for the continued subsistence use
10 of those two species, in addition to within Federal
11 lands which are under the purview of the Federal
12 Subsistence Board, the reduction in density of hunters
13 which would be majority on Federal lands could lead
14 towards addressing the safety concerns as well.

15

16

Thank you.

17

18

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

19

20

Park Service, Don Striker.

21

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49

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

50

1 Next, Rhonda Pitka.
2
3 MS. PITKA: I vote to support as
4 modified.....
5
6 MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you.
7
8 Did Charlie.....
9
10 MS. PITKA:and agree with the
11 justification by.....
12
13 MS. DETWILER:Brower join.....
14
15 MS. PITKA:(indiscernible) and
16 public safety concern.
17
18 Thank you.
19
20 MS. DETWILER: Yes, thank you, Rhonda,
21 sorry about that.
22
23 Charlie Brower, any chance you've
24 joined us.
25
26 (No comments)
27
28 MS. DETWILER: Okay.
29
30 Mr. Chair, Anthony Christianson.
31
32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I support
33 as modified.
34
35 MS. DETWILER: Great. Okay, so the
36 motion passes six yes, one no, and so Special Action
37 Request WSA20-03 as modified by OSM is approved.
38
39 And with that I believe that brings us
40 to our last special action today, which is Wildlife
41 Special Action 20-02 pertaining to moose and caribou in
42 Unit 12 and, again, that's Lisa Maas.
43
44 MS. MAAS: All right, thank you, Mr.
45 Chair. And, again, for the record my name is Lisa Maas
46 and I'll be presenting a summary of the analysis for
47 Temporary Wildlife Special Action WSA20-02.
48
49 Temporary Special Action Request WSA20-

50

1 02 was submitted by the Ahtna InterTribal Resource
2 Commission, or AITRC, and requests the development of
3 an AITRC administered community harvest system for
4 moose and caribou in Units 11, 12 and 13 for the eight
5 Ahtna tribal communities for the 2020/21 regulatory
6 year. The eight Ahtna tribal communities are Cantwell,
7 Chistochina, Chitina, Copper Center, Gakona, Gulkana,
8 Mentasta Lake and Tazlina.

9
10 The proponent states that the intent of
11 this request is to increase harvest success rates of
12 Federally-qualified subsistence users; to provide a
13 meaningful rural preference and to ensure the transfer
14 of customary and traditional harvest practices to the
15 next generation. The proponent also states this
16 request will provide necessary administrative
17 information such as the number of participants, harvest
18 success rates and numbers of harvested animals that
19 will inform the development of a regulatory proposal,
20 which would include community hunt quotas, seasons and
21 harvest limits. However, the current request is not
22 asking for any quotas or changes to existing seasons or
23 harvest limits.

24
25 The proponent stipulates that all
26 Federally-qualified subsistence users of moose and
27 caribou residing in the eight Ahtna tribal communities
28 will be eligible to participate in the AITRC
29 administered community hunt.

30
31 The proponent also requests that
32 designated hunting be allowed as part of the community
33 hunt.

34
35 While not explicit in the request, the
36 proponent clarified that AITRC only intends to
37 administer hunts in the portion of Unit 12 that
38 overlaps with the Ahtna traditional use territory,
39 which includes the Nabesna Road and Tok cutoff to the
40 Tok River.

41
42 During the 2018/20 regulatory cycle
43 AITRC submitted Proposals WP18-17, 18-18 and 18-19.
44 These proposals requested changes to moose and caribou
45 seasons in Units 11 and 13, as well as authorization
46 for AITRC to issue Federal permits to Ahtna tribal
47 members only. During analysis of these proposals legal
48 concerns arose due to the tribal only eligibility
49 requirement. At their fall 2017 meeting, the

1 Southcentral Council adopted these proposals with
2 modification to establish a community harvest system
3 for moose and caribou in Units 11 and 13 that would be
4 administered by AITRC and open to all Federally-
5 qualified subsistence users living within the Ahtna
6 traditional use territory. In an effort to consolidate
7 the three proposals, the community harvest system for
8 moose and caribou in Units 11 and 13 were lumped into
9 WP18-19. During their April 2018 meeting the Board
10 voted to defer WP18-19 pending development of a
11 framework for a community harvest system. This
12 framework were developed and presented to the Board at
13 its April 2020 meeting, the Board adopted to defer
14 Proposal 18-19 with modification. The modification was
15 to name individual communities within the Ahtna
16 traditional use territory authorized to harvest caribou
17 and moose in Unit 13 and moose in Unit 11 as part of a
18 community harvest system subject to a framework
19 established by the Board. The special action request
20 was submitted prior to the Board's April 2020 meeting,
21 therefore, at the request for Units 11 and 13 were
22 resolved by Board action on deferred Proposal 18-19,
23 the OSM analysis only considered the request regarding
24 moose and caribou in Unit 12.

25
26 Four written comments were received on
27 this request. Resident Hunters of Alaska opposed the
28 request stating that the current State community system
29 hunt already gives preference to rural residents and
30 ample opportunity already exists. A member of the
31 public wrote that he opposed the request if it would
32 allow the same rules as the current State community
33 harvest in Unit 13. ADF&G wrote that they do not take
34 positions on administrative procedures for Federal
35 hunts. The Native Village of Tetlin opposed the
36 request due to lack of information on impacts to
37 village residents and tribal members. Tetlin requested
38 that WSA20-02 is not approved until consultation occurs
39 and more information is provided to them. They
40 compared the request to the State's community hunt
41 identifying several concerns. During a public hearing
42 of WSA20-02 four people testified. The Native Village
43 of Tetlin and Northway opposed the request. And the
44 Executive Director of AITRC and a member of the public
45 supported the request.

46
47 If WSA20-02 is approved, an AITRC
48 administered community harvest system for moose and
49 caribou in Unit 12 would be established for the 2020/21

1 regulatory year. As no changes to harvest limits or
2 seasons are requested, no effects on moose or caribou
3 populations are expected. While this request is for
4 the eight Ahtna tribal communities, customary and
5 traditional use determinations would still apply. For
6 example, Cantwell does not have a customary and
7 traditional use determination for either moose or
8 caribou in Unit 12 so Cantwell residents would not be
9 able to participate in any community hunts in Unit 12.

10
11 While details of the community harvest
12 system will be developed between Federal managers, OSM
13 and AITRC, the intent is for AITRC to provide a single
14 permit to participants that would be good for all moose
15 and caribou hunts within the Ahtna traditional use
16 territory within the limitations of customary and
17 traditional use determination. AITRC would register
18 all interested and eligible participants in the
19 community hunt and collect confidential harvest reports
20 for submission to local Federal managers. While AITRC
21 only intends to administer community hunts in the
22 portions of Unit 12 that overlap with the Ahtna
23 traditional use territory, this distinction is not
24 necessary from a regulatory standpoint. This
25 distinction could also substantially complicate
26 regulations since portions of those hunt areas in Unit
27 12 are both within and outside of the Ahtna territory.

28
29 If WSA20-02 is approved, AITRC could
30 decide which Unit 12 hunts it would like to administer
31 as community hunts in cooperation with OSM and Federal
32 managers.

33
34 AITRC requested that designated hunters
35 be allowed under this community harvest system.
36 However, according to 50 CFR 100.25(e) you may
37 designate another Federally-qualified subsistence user
38 to take moose or caribou on your behalf unless you are
39 a member of a community operating under a community
40 harvest system or unless unit-specific regulations
41 preclude or modify the use of the designated hunter
42 system. Therefore, the Board would need to
43 specifically allow designated hunting under a community
44 harvest system as existing regulations prohibit it.

45
46 The OSM conclusion is to support
47 Temporary Special Action WSA20-02 with modification to
48 name individual communities authorized to participate
49 in the community harvest system in Unit 12 by species

1 and by customary and traditional use area and remove
2 the broader definition of Ahtna traditional use
3 territory.

4
5 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

6
7 I'd be happy to answer questions.

8
9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
10 Lisa. Appreciate the analysis. Any questions from the
11 Board for Lisa.

12
13 (No comments)

14
15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
16 hearing no questions we'll move on to ISC
17 recommendation.

18
19 MS. MAAS: All right, thank you, Mr.
20 Chair. And this is a pretty long recommendation so
21 bear with me here.

22
23 The ISC supports the Staff
24 recommendation with the following clarifications to be
25 considered by the Board.

26
27 To establish participant eligibility
28 within the individual communities authorized in the
29 community harvest system. The Board may wish to define
30 the geographic boundaries of these communities. If the
31 request is adopted as modified by OSM, eight
32 communities in the region will be eligible to
33 participate in the community harvest system and it is
34 therefore important to clearly define or identify the
35 boundaries between the eight Ahtna villages and other
36 communities, such as Kenny Lake, Glennallen and Slana.
37 For example, where does Tazlina stop and Glennallen
38 start, or where does Glennallen stop and Gulkana start.
39 Many Copper basin communities are adjacent to one
40 another along the road system and lack clearly
41 identifiable boundaries. The ISC suggests that the
42 Board consider use of the most recent census designated
43 place boundaries established by the United States
44 Census Bureau.

45
46 The Board may also wish to consider
47 authorizing issuance of a single permit to AITRC for
48 the community harvest system because Federal
49 registration and designated hunter permits may only be

1 issued by Federal Staff. This will limit the burden on
2 both AITRC and Federal land managers in coordinating
3 in-season permit issuance.

4
5 For law enforcement purposes, the Board
6 may consider asking AITRC to issue an identification
7 document to be carried by community harvest system
8 participants while hunting. This would allow law
9 enforcement to distinguish those hunting under the
10 community harvest system from those hunting under the
11 general Federal hunt structure.

12
13 It is important to reiterate that
14 participants in the community harvest system are still
15 bound to the existing customary and traditional use
16 determinations for the species to be harvested so
17 eligibility for a hunt within the community harvest
18 system requires that the participant be a Federally-
19 qualified user, or resident of a community authorized
20 by the Board to participate in the community harvest
21 system and that they live in a community or area with
22 an existing customary and traditional use determination
23 for the species to be harvested.

24
25 It should be clarified that individuals
26 option to participate in the community harvest system
27 may not also participate in the general Federal hunt
28 structure during the same season for the same species.
29 To track eligibility for the general Federal hunt and
30 harvest success within the community harvest system,
31 AITRC should provide Federal land managers in the
32 affected units with a weekly in-season list of users
33 opting to participate and cumulative harvest amounts
34 for each species authorized in the system. This will
35 allow Federal land managers to issue Federal
36 registration permits to only those individuals opting
37 not to participate in the community harvest system. It
38 will also allow in-season management strategies to be
39 developed using the best available harvest data.

40
41 Designated hunters are not currently
42 allowed for community harvest systems under existing
43 regulations and the ISC recommends authorizing these
44 for all three units, 11, 12 and 13, to align with
45 traditional hunting practices as requested by the
46 proponent. These practices frequently include harvest
47 primarily by the most skilled hunters within a
48 community and subsequent sharing of the harvest among
49 the community's members. Authorizing designated

1 hunters would allow for aggregation of harvest limits
2 within the pool of participating community members.
3 Additionally regardless of this authorization for
4 participants in a community harvest system the Board
5 may also wish to clarify that residents of the eight
6 Ahtna villages who choose not to participate in the
7 community harvest system may still identify a
8 designated hunter under the general Federal hunt
9 structure. Applicable regulations include 100.25(A),
10 designated hunter or fisherman means a Federally-
11 qualified hunter or fisherman, who may take all of a
12 portion of another Federally-qualified hunter's or
13 fisherman's harvest limit only under situations
14 approved by the Board. 100.25(e), hunting by
15 designated harvest permit, if you are a Federally-
16 qualified subsistence user, you may designate another
17 Federally-qualified subsistence user to take deer or
18 moose and caribou and in Units 1 through 5, does, on
19 your behalf unless you are a member of a community
20 operating under a community harvest system or unless
21 unit-specific regulations in Section 100.26 preclude or
22 modify the use of a designated hunter system or allow
23 the harvest of additional species by a designated
24 hunter. The designated hunter must obtain a designated
25 hunter permit and must return a completed harvest
26 report. The designated hunter may hunt for any number
27 of recipients but may have no more than two harvest
28 limits in his or her possession at any one time except
29 for goats where designated hunters may have no more
30 than one harvest limit in possession at any one time,
31 and unless other specified in unit-specific regulations
32 in Section 100.26.

33
34 The ISC recognizes that the 2020/2021
35 season will be a trial run of the newly implemented
36 community harvest system established by the Board's
37 previous decision on Wildlife Proposal WP18-19. If
38 Wildlife Special Action WSA20-02 is also adopted, the
39 community harvest system will be expanded to include
40 moose and caribou in Unit 12. We recommend that the
41 Board's action on WSA20-02 include Unit 11 and Unit 13
42 even though the community harvest system was addressed
43 in WP18-19 to ensure that the system is in place prior
44 to the 2020/2021 season. This will allow
45 implementation of the community harvest system prior to
46 publication of the final rule and includes the
47 regulatory language for the Board's decision on WP18-
48 19. Furthermore, regulatory language clarifying
49 geographic boundaries and authorizing designated

1 hunters to be included for all three units as described
2 in the modified regulatory language offered below.

3
4 The ISC respectfully requests that the
5 Board direct OSM and the ISC to jointly develop
6 community harvest system framework guidelines to assist
7 land managers in implementing future requests for
8 community harvest systems. It seems prudent for land
9 managers that are expected to implement community
10 harvest systems to know the basic elements that make up
11 a community harvest framework and the parameters that
12 they must operate within. Such guidance would provide
13 some level of continuity in approaching these systems
14 in other areas of the state. We understand that there
15 needs to be flexibility in relation to local
16 conditions, but also that sidebars will allow for
17 improved coordination and implementation.

18
19 The ISC hopes that this first season
20 will provide additional insight on successes and
21 challenges that can be addressed in the subsequently
22 anticipated regulatory proposals for continuation of
23 this system in future regulatory years, for better
24 meeting the needs of all parties and for working
25 towards greater implementation of the Department of
26 Interior's Memorandum of Agreement with AITRC.

27
28 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

29
30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
31 Lisa. Any questions for Lisa on that analysis -- ISC
32 recommendation, sorry.

33
34 (No comments)

35
36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
37 hearing none, was there any RAC feedback on this
38 proposal.

39
40 MS. MAAS: Yeah, Mr. Chair, similar to
41 the previous request, this special action did not come
42 before any of the Councils because it was submitted
43 after their meetings.

44
45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

46
47 MS. STICKWAN: This is Gloria.....

48
49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, Orville

1 was there any tribal comments received by you?

2

3 MR. LIND: I think Gloria had a
4 question for you.

5

6 MS. STICKWAN: I just wanted to say
7 that.....

8

9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Who did?

10

11 MS. STICKWAN: I just want to put on
12 record that we did not discuss this at our meeting on
13 March 4th and 5th, it came after the meeting so
14 therefore we have no recommendations on WSA20-02.

15

16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank
17 you, Gloria. Thank you, Orville, for recognizing that.

18

19 MR. LIND: And for tribal and ANCSA
20 consultations, Chair, we did not have any questions or
21 concerns during the consultation.

22

23 Thank you.

24

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
26 Call on any public on line.

27

28 OPERATOR: Once again if you would like
29 to have public comment, please press star then one at
30 this time. One moment.

31

32 (Pause)

33

34 OPERATOR: We do have public comment
35 from Karen Linnell, your line is open.

36

37 MS. LINNELL: Thank you. Thank you,
38 Mr. Chair and Members of the Board. My name is Karen
39 Linnell. I'm the Executive Director for the Ahtna
40 InterTribal Resource Commission.

41

42 The Commission is comprised of eight
43 Federally-recognized tribes and two ANCSA corporations.
44 We have been working toward a cooperative management
45 since the signing of the MOA with the Department of
46 Interior in 2016 building capacity and looking to fill
47 information gaps. To that end, we wish to share our
48 thoughts on the special action request before you.

49

50

1 First, I'd like to say that it's
2 extraordinary and welcome that we should have agreement
3 with the InterAgency Staff Committee, Office of
4 Subsistence and AITRC on this important special action
5 request. This is a result of a lot of hard work by a
6 lot of truly committed public servants and compromise
7 and acceptance by AITRC and others. Agency Staff have
8 evaluated what is possible within the existing
9 regulatory and policy frameworks and what is practical
10 given the administrative realities of the Federal
11 subsistence in the Ahtna traditional territory.
12

13 The compromise we have reached is what
14 is best at this moment to take the process forward.
15

16 AITRC looks forward to continuing to
17 work with the professionals in each of their supporting
18 Federal agencies and appreciates their hard work.
19

20 In this spirit, AITRC also looks
21 forward to continuing to work directly with the Federal
22 Subsistence Board. At the last Board meeting, the
23 National Park Service indicated that it would work to
24 codify the Ahtna traditional territory boundaries in
25 regulation. This is incredibly important work and
26 sends an equally important signal of the willingness of
27 the National Park Service and the FSB to more broadly
28 meet the needs of subsistence users.
29

30 As the Board knows, AITRC disagrees
31 that reliance on geographic boundaries is legally
32 required, but to the degree it is required or
33 simplifies administration, the use of the boundaries
34 developed through the study of patterns and community
35 use, tradition and culture should be preferred over
36 arbitrary political or economic lines.
37

38 In its comments on WSA20-02, the ISC
39 states that it hopes that this is the first season --
40 or hopes that this first season will provide additional
41 insight on successes and challenges that could be
42 addressed in the subsequently anticipated regulatory
43 proposals for continuation of the system in future
44 regulatory years for better meeting the needs of all
45 parties and for working towards greater implementation
46 of the DOI's Memorandum of Agreement with AITRC. AITRC
47 could not be in firmer agreement with the ISC in
48 recognition of the importance of these goals.

49

50

1 (Teleconference interference -
2 participants not muted)
3

4 MS. LINNELL:in continuity of a
5 healthy system that continuously improves and works
6 toward greater implementation of AITRC's MOA with the
7 Federal government, we look forward to continuing to
8 build in this direction and are grateful to the
9 InterAgency Staff Committee, the Office of Subsistence
10 Management and the Federal Subsistence Board for its
11 support on WSA20-02 in accordance with Staff
12 recommendations, AITRC urges the FSB to adopt these
13 actions.
14

15 I do want to stress, while they want to
16 remove the Ahtna traditional territory for this, I
17 recognize that it was the eight communities that were
18 accepted in the regulatory action in the April meeting,
19 but we still look forward to having the traditional
20 territory codified, put in regulation.
21

22 Thank you, Mr. Chair.
23

24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
25 questions for Karen.
26

27 (No comments)
28

29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
30 thank you for that. Any other people on line that wish
31 to testify.
32

33 OPERATOR: At this time I'm showing no
34 further public comment.
35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: And I really
37 appreciate your call and recognition of all the hard
38 work, Karen, so thank you for that. I know it's been a
39 long process and every step seems like it might be one
40 step closer to getting to the end goal so just keep --
41 be diligent. Okay, call on Board deliberation I
42 believe at this time.
43

44 MS. DETWILER: Mr. Chair. Do we want
45 to -- I'm not sure that the State has had a chance to
46 speak.
47

48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, State,
49 sorry, yeah, the State -- I recognize the State at this

1 time.

2

3 MR. MULLIGAN: For the record, Ben
4 Mulligan, Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

5

6 As Lisa stated, the State does not take
7 a position on how the Feds administrate their hunt.

8

9 I will make one note, just because our
10 area and regional folks brought it up, is the Chisana
11 Herd and its status, we haven't had a State hunt on the
12 books since 1992 on it. I'm not making any illusions
13 to how they're going to manage it, but it's just a real
14 concern of ours and I just wanted to make comment of it
15 because of how our Staff relayed that to us.

16

17 So, thank you very much.

18

19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, thank
20 you, State, and thank you for reminding me of the
21 agenda there. All right, any questions for the State.

22

23 (No comments)

24

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
26 hearing none, we'll go ahead and open up the floor for
27 Board discussion and deliberation.

28

29 MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, this is
30 Greg.

31

32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Greg, go
33 ahead.

34

35 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
36 So, you know, in looking at all of this there's --
37 obviously there's a lot of moving parts so one of my
38 questions is simply is there confidence -- and maybe
39 this is directed to the Park Service, Regional Director
40 Striker, do you have confidence that this framework is
41 going to be able to be put in place. I believe we
42 have, what, a month and a week or so before this would
43 need to be in place before the season would be open.
44 That's certainly one. And does this represent the
45 framework that you believe the Board was kind of
46 referencing when we left this -- when we approved this
47 the last time, which I believe we do need to have
48 movement on, and I guess this is good work, so I don't
49 know, Don, do you have any thoughts on that?

50

1 MR. STRIKER: Yes, thanks for the
2 question. Being generally optimistic and knowing how
3 important this is, I'm confident that this is a good
4 starting point. I'll be proposing a few modifications
5 that I think make sense for technical reasons that we
6 can talk about after I outline them, if that makes
7 sense to you.

8
9 MR. SIEKANIEC: Okay. Yeah.

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other Board
11 discussion.

12
13 (No comments)

14
15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
16 we'll open up the floor for Board action.

17
18 MR. STRIKER: Mr. Chair, Don Striker,
19 Park Service.

20
21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
22 floor Don.

23
24 MR. STRIKER: Thank you. I'm moving to
25 adopt Temporary Wildlife Special Action WSA20-02 with
26 the following modifications.

27
28
29 1. To name individual communities
30 authorized to participate in the community harvest
31 system on Federal public lands in Units 11, 12 and 13.
32 Specifically the eight Ahtna traditional communities of
33 Cantwell, Chistochina, Chitina, Copper Center, Gakona,
34 Gulkana, Mentasta Lake and Tazlina.

35
36 2. To define the geographic boundaries
37 of eligible communities as the most recent census
38 designated places established by the United States
39 Census Bureau including the Silver Springs CDP as part
40 of Copper Center.

41
42 3. To extend this action through the
43 end of the wildlife regulatory cycle June 30th, 2022.

44
45 4. To specify that harvest reporting
46 will take the form of reports collected from hunters by
47 AITRC and submitted directly to the land managers and
48 to the Office of Subsistence Management, rather than
49 through the Federal registration permits joint

50

1 State/Federal registration permits or State harvest
2 tickets.

3
4 5. To set the harvest quota for the
5 species and units authorized in the community harvest
6 system as the sum of the individual harvest limits for
7 those opting to participate in this system.

8
9 The regulatory language for this
10 modification is reflected, hopefully, on the screen, or
11 will be.

12
13 In any event, if I get a second, I will
14 ask for your permission, Mr. Chair, to have Joshua Ream
15 provide the very complex reasons that I will be
16 supporting this motion.

17
18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, Don's
19 requesting a second.

20
21 MR. SIEKANIEC: Second.

22
23 MR. PELTOLA: BIA seconds.

24
25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, you
26 have the floor Don -- Joshua.

27
28 MR. STRIKER: Okay, Josh, you got the
29 floor.

30
31 MS. MAAS: Yeah, Mr. Chair, I think the
32 Operator is opening Josh's line right now.

33
34 MR. STRIKER: Well, I was going to say,
35 he just pulled a trick out of my book and his battery
36 went dead.

37
38 (Laughter)

39
40 MS. MAAS: All right, his line's open
41 now.

42
43 MR. REAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can
44 everyone hear me okay?

45
46 MR. STRIKER: Yes.

47
48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Josh.

49
50

1 MR. REAM: For the record this is
2 Joshua Ream. I'm the Subsistence Program Manager for
3 the National Park Service.

4
5 And so the justification for this
6 motion is as follows:

7
8 Community harvest systems provide a
9 means for communities to administer their own hunt,
10 engage closely with rural stakeholders and integrate
11 local and traditional practices into the harvest
12 structure. We are excited to support a community
13 harvest system to be implemented by the Ahtna
14 InterTribal Resource Commission, AITRC, through the
15 Board's decision on Wildlife Proposal WP18-19, and,
16 now, to expand and further define that system through
17 this temporary special action request.

18
19 The upcoming first season for this
20 harvest system will serve as a trial run and we fully
21 anticipate that there will be successes and challenges.
22 We encourage the Federal agencies and AITRC personnel
23 to be as flexible and understanding as possible within
24 the parameters of existing law in this initial
25 implementation of the community harvest system in Units
26 11, 12 and 13.

27
28 We are including all three units in the
29 motion, consistent with the special action request,
30 because the Federal Register Notice formalizing the
31 Board's decision on WP18-19 has not yet been published.
32 This will allow the community hunt to move forward this
33 season, even if that notice is not published before the
34 hunting season starts.

35
36 Many components of the community
37 harvest system's framework are being developed by
38 Federal Staff in coordination with AITRC. Still, we
39 believe the Board should weigh in on some of these
40 components now, especially as it applies to the
41 eligibility of hunt participants and the spacial extent
42 of this action.

43
44 Concerning eligibility, it is important
45 to note that hunt participants must be Federally-
46 qualified subsistence users and have an existing
47 customary and traditional use determination for the
48 species and area in which they intend to hunt. This is
49 no different from the eligibility for participation in

1 the regular Federal subsistence hunt structure.
2 However, individuals opting to participate in this
3 community harvest system must also be residents of
4 communities authorized by the Board to participate.
5 This necessitates that the geographic boundaries of
6 those communities be defined. Census designated places
7 are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau and provide a
8 system of established geographic boundaries, these
9 boundaries are used in determining eligibility for the
10 Ninilchik community harvest system for salmon on the
11 Kenai River. They are also the boundary system used by
12 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of
13 Subsistence in conducting research in communities on
14 the harvest and use of wild resources. In some cases,
15 one or more CDP's may be used to define a community's
16 geographic boundaries. While there may be other
17 options available for future consideration by the
18 Board, we believe that the CDP boundaries are an
19 appropriate starting point for the initial
20 implementation of this community harvest system.

21
22 The National Park Service invites AITRC
23 to review the use of these boundaries throughout the
24 hunting season and to subsequently offer
25 recommendations to the Board regarding changes that may
26 better align with stakeholder needs.

27
28 Extending the spacial extent of our
29 former action on WP18-19 to include Federal public
30 lands in Unit 12 is reasonable given existing customary
31 and traditional use determination and overlap with the
32 Ahtna traditional territory. We, however, recognize,
33 that portions of Unit 12 are outside the boundaries of
34 Ahtna's traditional use territory. Representatives of
35 both Native Village of Tetlin and Northway Village
36 Council expressed concern about this at the public
37 hearing on this special action. The Native Village of
38 Tetlin, additionally, supplied a letter in opposition
39 to the request. We are encouraged that AITRC has
40 indicated that they have no intention of implementing
41 this hunt within the traditional territories of others
42 and we encourage AITRC to work closely with these
43 communities moving forward.

44
45 The National Park Service also
46 recommends that Federal Staff explore this topic
47 further for future consideration by the Board.

48
49 The harvest quota for the species in

1 units authorize for the community harvest system shall
2 be the sum of the individual harvest limits of those
3 opting to participate in the system. This is a dynamic
4 quota that will change as individuals opt into the
5 system throughout the season. Importantly, individuals
6 may not participate in both the community harvest
7 system and the regular Federal hunt structure for a
8 given species and hunts. And, such, the harvest for
9 one's self may not be additive between both systems.
10 This first system of the community harvest system will
11 give us an idea of the level of expected participation
12 which will be valuable to evaluate the subsequent
13 proposals for modified harvest quotas are received.

14
15 The National Park Service recognizes
16 that the request by AITRC included provisions for
17 allowing the use of designated hunters. This will need
18 to occur through a change in regulation including the
19 normal public process to address the language in 50 CFR
20 100.25(e). By its very nature though, a community
21 harvest system allows for participants to pool
22 harvests, to share, and to utilize the most skilled
23 hunters in a community.

24
25 As with Wildlife Proposal WP18-19, we
26 also feel that it is important to reiterate that all
27 Federally-qualified subsistence users residing within
28 the authorized communities are eligible to participate
29 in this community harvest system. Title VIII of ANILCA
30 clearly provides a rural priority, not a priority for a
31 subset of this group. That being said, we do hope that
32 these actions allow AITRC to engage in more traditional
33 hunting practices with its own stakeholders, and that
34 it provides additional opportunity to manage hunting
35 opportunities within its traditional territory.

36
37 With that long-winded justification on
38 the record, I'll conclude by saying, that the Park
39 Service is both excited and encouraged by these
40 discussions and we look forward to hearing about the
41 successes and challenges experienced during the
42 upcoming harvest season.

43
44 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

45
46 (Pause)

47
48 MR. STRIKER: To rouse you from
49 slumber.

1 (Laughter)

2

3 MR. STRIKER: Now you see why I had
4 Josh do the complicated part, uh.

5

6 (Laughter)

7

8 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

9

10 (Pause)

11

12 MR. STRIKER: I think maybe we lost
13 him.

14

15 MR. PELTOLA: We may have lost him.

16

17 (Pause)

18

19 MR. DOOLITTLE: Hey, do we have
20 everybody on line, this is Tom, excuse my interjection.
21 Just there was a big, you know, drop off.....

22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'm back on.

24

25 MR. STRIKER: Tony, where did we lose
26 you, we can have Josh restart it.

27

28 (Laughter)

29

30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, I lost
31 you somewhere in there, just as soon as Josh started I
32 got dropped so no big deal.

33

34 (Laughter)

35

36 MR. STRIKER: Okay.

37

38 MR. SCHMID: Process, Mr. Chair.

39

40 (Laughter)

41

42 MR. SIEKANIEC: That would be cruel and
43 unusual.

44

45 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA. I have a
46 couple clarifying questions for Josh on behalf of Don.

47

48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead.

49

50

1 MR. PELTOLA: Did I put that
2 appropriately Don.

3
4 MR. STRIKER: Yes, you did, thank you,
5 for the recognition.

6
7 (Laughter)

8
9 MR. STRIKER: Josh will be happy to
10 answer your questions.

11
12 (Laughter)

13
14 MR. PELTOLA: Okay, thank you, Mr.
15 Chair and Don.

16
17 So earlier on we heard AITRC testify
18 that they're in lock and step in concurrence with the
19 ISC and the Park Service, so with regard to your
20 modifications, one, have you run those by AITRC?

21
22 2. And granted my exposure to the
23 census designated place, or CDPs is limited, and the
24 question being that with regard to those, I understand
25 that Silver Springs is a totally separate -- is
26 separate in regard to census area? And then if you're
27 going to include Silver Springs, why did we not, via
28 your recommendation, consider say a place like
29 Copperville, or Tazlina and such, and could you
30 elaborate on that for my benefit and potentially
31 others.

32
33 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

34
35 MR. REAM: Mr. Chair, this is Josh.

36
37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Josh, you
38 have the floor.

39
40 MR. REAM: Through the Chair, thank you
41 for those questions, Gene. Some components of this
42 motion and justification have been shared with AITRC
43 and discussed with them, and several others have not
44 and I can tell you that the reason for that is that up
45 until very close to this meeting we have been engaged
46 in discussions with the Solicitor's Office about what
47 can happen and what can't happen for this season, and
48 so largely our motion reflects the results of those
49 discussions, particularly as it relates to the

1 designated hunter question.

2

3 In terms of Silver Springs, we had
4 Staff and others that were involved in these
5 discussions that had indicated that Silver Springs is a
6 subdivision of Copper Center. That they recently had a
7 school close, I guess, in Copper Center, that was
8 located in Silver Springs, and that many consider it,
9 for all intents and purposes to be a part of Copper
10 Center. Other communities weren't considered just
11 because they were not on our radar and that's what we
12 had to work with.

13

14 I hope that answers some of your
15 questions and I can elaborate further if needed.

16

17 Thank you.

18

19 MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Josh. I'm
20 trying to absorb that at the moment.

21

22 Thank you.

23

24 MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, Chad Padgett
25 with BLM.

26

27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You got the
28 floor, Chad.

29

30 MR. PADGETT: Thank you. So as I
31 understand it then, AITRC has not had an opportunity to
32 really digest the fact that we do not have a clear
33 Solicitor's opinion in reference to designated
34 Federally-qualified subsistence users, right, and how
35 they will be viewed, participate in the harvest system;
36 is that correct?

37

38 MR. REAM: Through the Chair, thank you
39 for that question, Chad.

40

41 So the designated hunter question is a
42 very complicated one. 100.25(e) -- 50 CFR 100.25(e)
43 refers to members of a community, and the way it was
44 interpreted by the Solicitor's Office is that member
45 does indicate a residence of that community, regardless
46 of whether they opt in or out of the system, and
47 there's no language in regulation though that speaks to
48 opting in or out of the system. But as written,
49 someone that is living in a community and opting out of

50

1 the community harvest system could still serve as a
2 designated hunter for someone living outside of those
3 communities eligible, they just can't designate someone
4 -- they can't designate another household from outside
5 of the system, or even within the system unless they're
6 participating. So that does create a little bit of a
7 regulatory challenge that we're hoping to be able to
8 work out in a subsequent proposal. There was the
9 Solicitor's Office guidance that this should be done
10 through the regular proposal process with, you know,
11 the normal public participation.
12

13 And so within the community harvest
14 system, though, it is the very nature of a community
15 harvest system, you know, we don't use the regulatory
16 language, designated hunter, but everyone can sort of
17 assist in a pooling of the harvest limit, and the
18 sharing of wild food harvest.
19

20 MR. PADGETT: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
21 Chad again.
22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, Chad, you
24 have the floor.
25

26 MR. PADGETT: So as a secondary
27 followup to that, so as I read this, if I'm a member in
28 -- if I'm living in a community, however, I'm not a
29 tribal member, am I eligible to participate in the
30 community harvest?
31

32 MR. REAM: Through the Chair, thank
33 you, Chad. Yes, so eligibility would be defined on
34 this geographic basis for the communities authorized by
35 the Board so all Federally-qualified users residing
36 permanently within those boundaries qualify to
37 participate but would need to opt in, it's not
38 automatic.
39

40 MR. PADGETT: Okay, which still brings
41 us back to that same question. So what you're asking
42 us to do is to go ahead with this action, but not have
43 clarity in how that would comply with the regulation;
44 am I clear on that?
45

46 MR. REAM: Through the Chair. I think
47 that the regulation is clear, according to, you know,
48 the Solicitor, in the interpretation that I relayed,
49 but in order to provide for a resident living in an

1 authorized community to be able to designate a
2 household from outside of the community, we will have
3 to tweak the regulatory language through a future
4 proposal.
5

6 MR. STRIKER: So we're doing as much as
7 we can with what we have right now, understanding that
8 we'll want to adjust it down the road.
9

10 MR. PADGETT: Okay. But we are going
11 to make distinction between rural communities, correct?
12

13 MR. REAM: Through the Chair.
14

15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, go ahead,
16 Josh.
17

18 MR. REAM: So, yes, the community
19 harvest system eligibility would only be for those
20 communities in which we authorize and those are the
21 ones that were included in the Board's action on WP18-
22 19 as well.
23

24 MR. PADGETT: Okay. So just so I'm
25 clear on that piece of it, I would not -- if I, for
26 instance, live in Glennallen, I could not participate
27 in any of these, correct?
28

29 MR. REAM: Through the Chair. That is
30 correct.
31

32 MR. PADGETT: Okay.
33

34 MR. REAM: If you are not a member of
35 an authorized community, you cannot participate in the
36 community harvest system, you know, the Board can
37 consider proposals in the future to include or exclude
38 additional communities but as it stands, it would be
39 the same communities that were authorized in WP18-19.
40

41 MR. PADGETT: Okay. But we'd be making
42 a distinction on what -- what I'm getting at is,
43 wouldn't we be, in that case, making a distinction on
44 what a rural community is? So I'm confused on how we
45 can exclude a rural preference by community, that
46 confuses me?
47

48 MR. REAM: Through the Chair. The
49 harvest limits and the seasons will be the same and so

1 at this point in the development of the community
2 harvest system, the opportunities are the same whether
3 you choose to participate in the community harvest
4 system or just the regular Federal hunt structure.
5

6 MR. PADGETT: Okay. But, again, if I
7 can't participate in one hunt, we are making a
8 distinction, correct?
9

10 MS. MAAS: Mr. Chair.
11

12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Lisa.
13

14 MS. MAAS: Yeah, thanks. Just in
15 response to Chad's question, we're just responding to
16 the request and so this request only includes those
17 eight communities, but there's nothing to stop someone
18 in Glennallen for submitting another proposal or
19 request to establish a community hunt in that
20 community. So we're just -- I mean, every community in
21 the state theoretically could submit a proposal or a
22 request to have a community hunt, but we're just
23 responding to the request as submitted by the
24 proponent.
25

26 MR. PADGETT: Okay.
27

28 MR. STRIKER: And all qualified users
29 still have their opportunity, just may not have the
30 opportunity as part of the community hunt.
31

32 MR. PADGETT: Right. So it's an
33 exclusive hunt.
34

35 MS. MAAS: Well, you have to be a
36 member of that community, or a resident of that
37 community to participate in the community hunt.
38

39 MR. STRIKER: It's exclusive or it's
40 inclusive, it's inclusive of the eight communities.
41

42 MR. PADGETT: Okay, thank you for the
43 clarification.
44

45 MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, this is
46 Greg.
47

48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
49 floor, Greg.

1 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you. Now, I
2 think I'm a little bit confused, so the question that
3 Chad was asking about a person living in Glennallen,
4 they would not be able to hunt under the community hunt
5 structure, but they would be able to hunt, would they
6 be able to hunt in the same area as designated by the
7 census designated place?

8
9 MR. REAM: Mr. Chair, this is Josh.

10
11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Josh.

12
13 MR. REAM: So in the case of the
14 regular Federal hunt structure, it doesn't necessarily
15 matter what census designated place you live in, it's
16 more appropriate to consider the customary and
17 traditional use determination.....

18
19 MR. SIEKANIEC: Right.

20
21 MR. REAM:for that community and
22 that will still continue to apply for any hunters
23 participating in the community harvest system.

24
25 MR. SIEKANIEC: Okay, that helps me a
26 bunch. And then a followup question, Mr. Chair.

27
28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Greg.

29
30 MR. SIEKANIEC: You heard from Northway
31 and Tok that they're very concerned, and I think I
32 heard in the justification that you had an assurance
33 from AITRC that they would not extend the community
34 hunt into their traditional areas, I think was the way
35 you may have described it, or close, but wouldn't the
36 census designated place effectively keep hunters from
37 going into those areas that Tok and Northway are
38 concerned of, or are they large enough that they do
39 extend in there?

40
41 MR. REAM: Mr. Chair, this is Josh and
42 I can try to respond to Greg.

43
44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Josh.

45
46 MR. REAM: Thank you for the question.
47 So the census designated place is only being used to
48 describe the geographic boundaries of the communities
49 eligible.....

1 MR. SIEKANIEC: Okay.

2

3 MR. REAM:but it doesn't in any
4 way affect the sort of the normal hunt structure, or
5 the existing customary and traditional use
6 determination. So just because an area and hunt is
7 outside of a census designated place really doesn't
8 necessarily relate to the CDP in that sense.

9

10 MR. SIEKANIEC: Okay. Okay, thank you.
11 Hence, why I find this confusing in many ways. And,
12 Don, where I kind of started was, are you comfortable
13 with this framework represents, you know, the best we
14 can do to move forward with this and are you confident
15 you can get this put in place, you know, within the
16 next five, six weeks?

17

18 MR. STRIKER: This is as much as we
19 thought we could get accomplished this year with all of
20 these complicated restrictions.

21

22 MR. SIEKANIEC: And do you have the
23 resources and the personnel needed to be able to
24 continue to push this forward?

25

26 MR. STRIKER: Yeah, and Josh has been
27 getting a ton of support.

28

29 MR. SIEKANIEC: Okay. So you're
30 getting the help you need from whether it be OSM, or
31 the ISC, and folks?

32

33 MR. STRIKER: Yes and yes.

34

35 MR. SIEKANIEC: Okay, all right, thank
36 you, Mr. Chair.

37

38 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

39

40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Gene.

41

42 MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So
43 I am still a little dumbfounded between the
44 communities, the census designated places inclusion of
45 Silver Springs as part of Copper Center and such, and
46 it's not based on Josh's explanation of it, I think
47 it's just my lack of absorbing it because I am not as
48 familiar with the Copper River Valley as other areas of
49 the state, so would it be appropriate at this time to

50

1 ask for a little clarification input from AITRC and
2 Karen Linnell who is, you know, very familiar with the
3 area? Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the consideration.

4
5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Karen, do you
6 mind answering Gene's question.

7
8 MS. LINNELL: Hello, can you hear me?

9
10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Karen, go
11 ahead.

12
13 MS. LINNELL: Thank you. Thank you,
14 Mr. Chair. Years ago the Silver Springs area and the
15 Copper Center were all one, anything pretty much
16 between the Loop Roads were included in one census
17 area, and the Silver Springs folks decided to file a
18 separation because of political differences and that's
19 why they have their own census designated area so that
20 they could get community revenue sharing money and so
21 they are a separate community. They're separate from
22 Copper Center.

23
24 And the same with Copperville and
25 Tazlina, if you include Silver Springs, you're
26 connecting Copper Center and Tazlina into one big long
27 community and you're cutting out just a little bit of
28 Copperville. So there's -- and what's going to stop it
29 from spreading to, well, all the kids go to Glennallen
30 school, from Chistochina all the way down to Chitina,
31 are we going to say that that's why they are the same,
32 my -- we lived in Kenny Lake, we went to Kenny Lake,
33 but so did Chitina students. I lived in Chistochina,
34 personally, and had to ride the bus for an hour and a
35 half to get to Glennallen school, does that make
36 Glennallen, you know, part of Chistochina, no. It's a
37 very different community and that's why they have their
38 own census area. They asked for that. They asked for
39 that separation.

40
41 So if we're going to start melding
42 these things, then we could have drawn our own
43 designated areas. And in light of -- and our community
44 did, which was our -- our Board did, which is a little
45 more inclusive but because of timing and trying to get
46 this hunt on the books for this year, I'm not in favor
47 of expanding to include Silver Springs as part of
48 Copper Center, and just to say there are Park Staff
49 that live there and maybe that's why they wanted to

1 include Silver Springs in there.

2

3

MR. STRIKER: Mr. Chair.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Don,
you have the floor.

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MR. STRIKER: Yeah, I just wanted to
say, these are some of the details that are incredibly
complicated to work out. I don't have any particular
ego in the motion or in the inclusion of Silver
Springs, I was just trying to come up with what I
thought was sort of the path of least resistance to
actually getting something in place that was legally
solid this year. I'm fine if people think it's
important to modify this to remove Silver Springs if
that's what we want to do.

18

19

20

21

I just -- as a point of order, I'm not
sure what the process is to go by to sort of make this
-- outside of the motion that's on the table.

22

23

24

25

And I'm more ignorant than most of you
about this area, which is why I'm deferring to people
who know it.

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MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, this is
Greg.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Greg.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thanks. Obviously I
find this one, again, as I said, quite confusing, but I
think that, one, we need to consider that the Board
agreed to these eight communities, and now we're
looking at a way to sort of define those, so I think we
need to be a little bit careful of straying outside of
that right now. But what I'm really -- another little
thing I'm trying to figure out, is after the discussion
with Josh, and maybe you could help clear this up for
me, is so what is the advantage for someone to engage
in the community harvest versus someone living in
Glennallen given that the customary and traditional use
area is still there and available? Is there an easy
way to frame that for me?

46

47

48

49

MS. LINNELL: I might be able to answer
that, Mr. Chair.

50

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead,
2 Karen.

3
4 MS. LINNELL: So right now somebody
5 from Chistochina, if they would like to hunt in the
6 Nabesna Road has to get a permit from the National Park
7 Service, one from Bureau of Land Management, or
8 anywhere -- the Bureau of Land Management, we have to
9 go to the National Park Service, there's two separate
10 ones for the Park, one for Unit 12 and one for Unit 11,
11 there's also a State permit that is kind of blended in
12 with the Federal permit, it's -- now the number's
13 skipping my mind, but there's that permit. If we're
14 hunting in Unit 11 we have to go to the National Park
15 Service, if we're hunting in Unit 13 we have to go to
16 the Bureau of Land Management, so we're kind of cutting
17 back down to getting one permit to cover all of those
18 areas.

19
20 And in regards to the Chisana Herd, we
21 had talked about that and not to confuse things, and
22 while -- while we're trying to get things going here,
23 on our permit, or our registration or whatever you
24 folks want to call it to fit your language, the permit
25 is issued to AITRC for a community harvest permit, we
26 will, in turn, register folks and give them a tag or
27 license or an identification document that says
28 Nelchina caribou on it, not -- so that we're not
29 looking at the Mentasta or the Chisana at this point.

30
31 MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, this is
32 Greg.

33
34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Greg, go
35 ahead.

36
37 MR. SIEKANIEC: Karen, thank you very
38 much for providing that perspective. You know leave it
39 to the Park Service to make it really complicated.

40
41 (Laughter)

42
43 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you very much for
44 clarifying that.

45
46 (Laughter)

47
48 MS. LINNELL: We can share the love on
49 those.

1 MR. SIEKANIEC: I'm sure you can, thank
2 you.

3
4 (Laughter)

5
6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, the
7 floor's still open for discussion, anybody else have
8 any questions of clarification.

9
10 MR. PADGETT: Just one more
11 clarification, this is Chad, Mr. Chair.

12
13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Chad.

14
15 (Pause)

16
17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
18 floor, Chad.

19
20 MR. PADGETT: Okay, thank you. I just
21 one -- I want to make sure that I ask this question in
22 the right context, so, earlier I had asked if I needed
23 to be a tribal member to participate, can a non-Native
24 participate in one of these community hunts if I live
25 in the community?

26
27 MS. LINNELL: Yes.

28
29 MR. STRIKER: Yes.

30
31 MR. PADGETT: Okay. I just thought
32 there might be a legal distinction there so thank you.

33
34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Any
35 other questions or discussion.

36
37 MR. STRIKER: Well, there's still an
38 open question in my mind if somebody wants to make a
39 motion to amend the motion.

40
41 (Laughter)

42
43 MR. STRIKER: Make it either more
44 simple or more.....

45
46 (Laughter)

47
48 MR. SIEKANIEC: I wouldn't touch that
49 one Don.

50

1 MR. STRIKER: Yeah, I don't think
2 anybody's jumping up and down for joy.

3
4 MR. SCHMID: You're on your own man.

5
6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I mean I think
7 we needed a bathroom break.

8
9 MR. PELTOLA: Or, Don, we could
10 recommend that with concurrence of your second you
11 could do it on your own, a removal.

12
13 MR. STRIKER: Yeah. Yep.

14
15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So the floor is
16 open.

17
18 (Pause)

19
20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: If not, we can
21 vote on the original motion.

22
23 (Pause)

24
25 MR. DOOLITTLE: Just a housekeeping
26 note, Mr. Chair, this is Tom.

27
28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Tom.

29
30 MR. DOOLITTLE: Yeah, just -- so Don
31 can, you know, ask the Board, the second, to remove the
32 motion then you guys agree to do it and then you start
33 all over with a new motion that sounds like maybe the
34 possibility is to remove Silver Springs from that, you
35 know, and then you just create a new motion; is that
36 correct?

37
38 MR. STRIKER: If that's important -- if
39 it's important to cut Silver Springs out then they
40 would make that motion, right, and I'd just second it
41 and then we'd go back.

42
43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yep, that would
44 be the process, so if somebody wants to just make the
45 motion to amend the original motion Don made, to just
46 drop from that motion Silver Springs, then we would
47 vote on that and then we would go back on the main
48 motion to vote.

49

50

1 MR. STRIKER: Just strike item 2 from
2 the comma through Copper Center, so moved, so I will
3 second, so let me restate -- yeah, I'm just
4 mumbling.....

5
6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Somebody needs
7 to make a motion.

8
9 MR. STRIKER: Somebody needs to make
10 the amendment.

11
12 MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, this is
13 Greg.

14
15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg, go ahead.

16
17 MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, I'd like to
18 make an amendment to the motion, that we strike from
19 the comma on, including the Sliver Springs CDP as part
20 of the Copper Center, because that will help us retain
21 to what I think the original Board action was on 18-19.

22
23 MR. STRIKER: And I second.

24
25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, we got a
26 motion and we got a second, we're going to call for the
27 question on this motion.....

28
29 MR. STRIKER: And everybody can see it
30 on the screen now.....

31
32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON:for a.....
33 MR. STRIKER:right, so it's
34 clear.

35
36 MR. SIEKANIEC: Yes, I can see it on
37 the screen now.

38
39 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA, call for
40 question on the amendment.

41
42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yep, question's
43 been called, so is there any opposition by anybody on
44 the amendment to the original motion.

45
46 (No opposition)

47
48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing no
49 opposition to the amendment to the original motion, to

1 strike the language you see there on the board, motion
2 carries unanimously. Now we'll go back to the original
3 motion, which will read as it shows with the amendment,
4 and call for the question on the original motion with
5 the amendment.
6

7 MR. PELTOLA: BIA, question.
8

9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Question's been
10 called. You'll do roll call, Sue, please.
11

12 MS. DETWILER: Okay. So the motion is
13 to approve with modification as originally specified by
14 Park Service when they originally introduced the motion
15 and as subsequently amended as shown on the screen to
16 delete the section involving Silver Springs CDP.
17

18 And I'll go through the roll call, so
19 start with Don Striker.
20

21 MR. STRIKER: National Park Service
22 will support our motion for the reasons so well laid
23 out by Josh, thank you for that Josh. And with just
24 the additional comment that this has already been sort
25 of a slow process and I'm just really excited to be
26 moving it forward, so thank you.
27

28 MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you.
29

30 BLM, Chad Padgett.
31

32 MR. PADGETT: Thank you, Sue. I will
33 not be voting to approve Temporary Special Action
34 WSA20-02. I'm concerned that this request as well as
35 Proposal WP18-19 are not consistent with the intent of
36 Title VIII of ANILCA, and that it seeks to exclude some
37 rural communities who should be eligible to participate
38 in the community harvest system in the area of
39 interest.
40

41 Section .801 of ANILCA states that
42 continuation of the opportunity for subsistence uses of
43 rural residents of Alaska, both Native and non-Native,
44 and that such uses are essential to the physical,
45 economic and traditional existence of all rural
46 residents.
47

48 Some communities clearly identified as
49 being within the Ahtna traditional territory are

1 excluded from participating in the community hunts the
2 Board has been considering, while still other rural
3 communities with a customary and traditional use
4 determination for caribou and moose under Federal
5 regulation are also excluded from this community hunt.

6
7 For this reason I cannot support the
8 request.

9
10 Thank you.

11
12 MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

13
14 Fish and Wildlife Service, Greg
15 Siekaniec.

16
17 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Sue. Yeah,
18 I support the motion to adopt WSA20-02, Temporary
19 Special Action request as modified and amended by the
20 National Park Service for the reasons outlined by both
21 Mr. Striker and Joshua in their justification.

22
23 I think adopting the regulatory
24 language and framework proposed by the National Park
25 Service will help ensure Unit 11, 12 and 13 moose and
26 caribou State community harvest systems are implemented
27 with a similar framework, to track participation and
28 harvest.

29
30 I also agree that there is opportunity
31 for this potentially to be expanded through a community
32 harvest, in addition, to include other communities
33 within the area but I also have heard that other
34 hunters in the area have their customary and
35 traditional area and hunt opportunities as well, and
36 that there is no exclusivity to this.

37
38 The modified regulation supports
39 AITRC's desire to administer a community harvest
40 program for users within the Ahtna traditional
41 territory and we've been having these discussions and
42 dialogues for the four years that I've been here and
43 familiar with and I'm glad, Don, that you've picked
44 this up for the Park Service and moved this forward.

45
46 Thank you.

47
48 MS. DETWILER: Yeah, thank you.

49
50

1 Forest Service, Dave Schmid.

2

3 MR. SCHMID: Yeah, thank you, Sue. I'm
4 going to support WSA20-02. While there are still some
5 challenges and hurdles, I do believe, and appreciate
6 the Park Service trying to move this off center and
7 forward.

8

9 Thank you.

10

11 MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you, Dave.

12

13 BIA, Gene Peltola.

14

15 MR. PELTOLA: The Bureau of Indian
16 Affairs supports to adopt this regulation. And I'd
17 like to provide comment that community harvest systems
18 have been integral to the Federal Subsistence Program
19 since the Federal Subsistence Program has addressed
20 Federal harvest. And it's also included in 50 CFR
21 100.6, 110, .110.25 and .26, so it is very well
22 established within the program and utilized
23 historically.

24

25 Thank you.

26

27 MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Gene.

28

29 Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

30

31 MS. PITKA: Hello, can you hear me now?

32

33 MS. DETWILER: Yes.

34

35 MS. PITKA: Okay. I support. Thank
36 you.

37

38 MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you.

39

40 Charlie Brower.

41

42 (No comments)

43

44 MS. DETWILER: Na, not present.

45

46 Finally, Chair Anthony Christianson.

47

48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support.

49

50

1 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. So that
2 leaves us with six yes votes to support and one no
3 vote, so the motion as amended passes -- Special Action
4 Request as amended is adopted.

5
6 So I believe that is the last action
7 item on the agenda other than adjournment.

8
9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, I'd
10 like to thank all the Board members, thank you to the
11 Staff in providing all of the analysis and a good
12 thorough discussion today, I appreciate all your time.

13
14 Anybody else who wants to make any
15 closing statements I'll open up the floor, but if not,
16 the floor is open for adjournment.

17
18 MR. PELTOLA: So moved.

19
20 MR. SIEKANIEC: So moved.

21
22 MR. PELTOLA: Second.

23
24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion's been
25 made and seconded. Any opposition.

26
27 (No opposition)

28
29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
30 you guys have a good day and happy harvesting.

31
32 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thanks everyone for all
33 the hard work.

34
35 MR. SCHMID: Thank you.

36
37 MR. STRIKER: Great hearing from you
38 all.

39
40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Adjourned.

41
42 (Off record)

43
44 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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46
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