

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38

FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD
PUBLIC REGULATORY MEETING

VOLUME I

EGAN Convention Center
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

January 10, 2017
1:30 o'clock p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Anthony Christianson, Chairman
- Charles Brower, Public Member
- Rhonda Pitka, Public Member
- Bud Cribley, Bureau of Land Management
- Karen Clark, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Deb Cooper, National Park Service
- Lynn Polacca, Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Beth Pendleton, 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
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

P R O C E E D I N G S

(Anchorage, Alaska - 1/10/2017)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'd like to go ahead and call this meeting to order this afternoon at 1:30. I'd like to thank everybody for coming and taking your time to engage in the Federal process.

Before we get started with our meeting I would again like to thank the support I received in the bid for the chairmanship and I really appreciate that, but also we would like to express our gratitude for the service of Tim Towarak. Before we get on with our business I see Tim is here today and he did a great job as a Chairman and we would like to show our appreciation as a Board and the Staff to Tim. If we could call Tim up here, we would like to make some presentations to Tim.

(Applause)

MR. PELTOLA: From the Office of Subsistence Management we appreciate the time and effort. I know it's a lot of time from your family and actually engaging in subsistence activities at home in Norton Sound, but we appreciate the time and effort you put forward and standing up for subsistence rights.

So on behalf of myself and the program, I'd like to give this to you. This is from my personal collection from 1932 from the Stebbins area. So it's as close as I could find close to home.

MR. TOWARAK: Thank you.

MR. PELTOLA: We appreciate it.

MR. TOWARAK: Thank you very much.

(Applause)

MR. TOWARAK: I'll tell you what. I could probably put all of my earnings from the Federal Subsistence Board in this basket.

(Laughter)

1 MS. PENDLETON: And on behalf of the
2 U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Forest Service I
3 want to present Tim a gift from the Forest Service. I
4 want to recognize him for his.....

5
6 (Microphones turned off)

7
8 MR. TOWARAK: Thank you.

9
10 (Applause)

11
12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
13 Welcome everybody. Welcome Regional Chairs. Thank you
14 guys for taking your time to come here today. Again,
15 thanks to Tim. In the three years I got to serve with
16 Tim as the chairman I was educated in the process by
17 him and learned a lot watching his leadership and it
18 gave me just a little bit of confidence in doing this
19 job, but bear with me. Again, I'm new and look forward
20 to serving this Board and the people that are here to
21 help create a real good atmosphere for subsistence
22 users in Alaska.

23
24 With that I'm going to open up this
25 meeting and move on to number two, review and adopt
26 agenda. Before that Gene is going to give us an
27 explanation.

28
29 MR. BROWER: Mr. Chair. Move to
30 approve the agenda.

31
32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: One second
33 there, Mr. Brower. We're going to have Gene do a
34 little explanation.

35
36 MR. PELTOLA: In addition to any
37 modifications or rearranging of the agenda based on
38 Board Members' desires, one thing I'd like to bring
39 your attention to is Section 13 under scheduling of
40 upcoming Board meetings. One thing that OSM would like
41 each and every Board member to consider when you take
42 up this agenda item is that since we do have a new
43 Chair, Rhonda a new public member, Bert is relatively
44 new to the program and we have a new Regional Director
45 Board Member for the Fish and Wildlife Service.

46
47 In recent history, OSM, at the
48 direction of the Board, has provided a Board retreat.
49 It's not necessarily a retreat, but a Board study
50 session so to speak at a given locale where we go

1 through with each and every Board Member and go through
2 policies and regulations and such that we are up to
3 date with the current regulatory changes with regards
4 to procedures and such. One thing I'd ask you is that
5 when you get to the agenda and if you'd keep that in
6 consideration.

7

8 In talking with Ken, if you look under
9 annual cycle where we have this Board meeting in
10 January, an April work session, a July work session,
11 the Board has occasionally held a work session the end
12 of October, beginning of November period. If the Board
13 chooses to direct OSM to provide for an opportunity,
14 that latter part of the year might be more appropriate
15 throughout the year depending on each and everyone's
16 individual Board Member schedules.

17

18 So I'd ask you to give that some
19 consideration.

20

21 Thank you.

22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
24 Gene.

25

26 MS. CLARK: Mr. Chair. I'd like to
27 make a motion to amend the agenda.

28

29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead.

30

31 MS. CLARK: To allow a little more time
32 and hopefully to have Greg Siekaniec, who is the new
33 Regional Director for the Fish and Wildlife Service,
34 here for the discussion, we'd like to add the
35 presentation and discussion of the agreement in
36 principle between the Federal Subsistence Board and the
37 Ninilchik Traditional Council to the agenda first thing
38 Thursday morning.

39

40 In addition to that, move the Kenai
41 River related action items to follow the discussion on
42 the agreement in principle on Thursday, which would
43 include the RFR and Proposals 6, 7, 8 and 10.

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So we have a
46 motion. Can we get a second.

47

48 MS. PENDLETON: Go ahead and second
49 that.

50

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The motion has
2 been made and seconded to add to the agenda a
3 presentation on an agreement between the Board and
4 Ninilchik and to move any of the related proposals
5 after the presentation with a time of Thursday morning.
6 So that is the motion. Any discussion.

7
8 MR. BROWER: Mr. Chair. Where would
9 that come under, the change?

10
11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: It would just
12 move it down the agenda to Thursday morning. We're
13 trying to put a specific time to it. We think there is
14 information within the agreement that merits attention,
15 so we're trying to put a time specific on it so we can
16 get the Board up to speed on all of the discussions
17 that are pertinent to that topic.

18
19 MR. BROWER: Thank you.

20
21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
22 discussion. Any opposition.

23
24 (No comments)

25
26 MR. BROWER: Question.

27
28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The question
29 has been called. All in favor of the motion to amend
30 the agenda signify by saying aye.

31
32 IN UNISON: Aye.

33
34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposed same
35 sign.

36
37 (No opposing votes)

38
39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries
40 unanimously. At this time we'll move on to Federal
41 Subsistence Board information sharing. Just so we
42 don't hand-pick anybody, I think Bud likes to go first.

43
44 (Laughter)

45
46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'm not picking
47 on you, Bud. We'll start on this end. If there's any
48 opportunity, this is the opportunity for the agencies
49 at the table to share any new information with the
50 public or with the Board Members. This is your time to

1 share.

2

3

MR. CRIBLEY: Mr. Chairman. There are
4 a few things I guess I would like to share with the
5 Board and also the audience as far as different actions
6 that are going on with the Bureau of Land Management in
7 Alaska.

8

9

This last Friday we published the
10 records of decision for the Eastern Interior RMP and
11 put that land use plan into final form. I guess for
12 Bureau of Land Management that's a very significant
13 move from the standpoint that we've been working on
14 that for eight years and we finally got to the point of
15 being able to issue those decisions.

16

17

I think the one thing we're very
18 pleased with as far as that land use plan is the fact
19 that the heavy attention and emphasis that we placed on
20 wildlife and fisheries habitat and subsistence
21 activities and the needs of the local rural residents
22 in that area. We feel like we have a good plan in
23 place that is responsible to those interests.

24

25

Building on that, the Bureau of Land
26 Management is also working on two additional resource
27 management plans for the Bering Straits, Western
28 Interior Land Use Plan and then also the Central Yukon
29 Land Use Plan, which includes the Dalton Highway
30 Corridor. With the Bering Straits Western Interior
31 Plan, we have done our public outreach, public scoping
32 on that document and we're putting together the draft
33 document and hoping to get it out by the end of this
34 year.

35

36

One of the things that came out of that
37 scoping that we did in the rural communities was the
38 heavy interest on the part of the communities of
39 subsistence activities and assuring that not only that
40 there is habitat to support species that local
41 communities depend upon, but also looking at access to
42 be able to get to those Federal lands so that they may
43 enjoy those activities.

44

45

It has become a very dominant issue
46 within that plan that we're addressing. I guess I want
47 to encourage those communities rural residents to
48 continue to participate in that plan and make their
49 voices heard so that we can consider that in our
50 adjudication and allocation of the Federal resources in

1 that plan and area.

2

3

4 For the Central Yukon Plan, this
5 spring, within the next month or so, we're going to
6 start doing public meetings to start the dialogue of
7 putting together proposed alternatives. Once again
8 it's very important for the rural residents to
9 participate in those meetings and it is our intent to
10 try to hit as many of the villages as we possibly can
11 to not only inform them of what we're trying to do as
12 far as looking at the future management of those public
13 lands, but get their input and what their needs are,
14 particularly looking at subsistence activities and
15 subsistence resources.

15

16

17 So I just wanted to put that word out
18 to folks that we are in that and also what we're doing
19 in those plans is looking to manage those habitats in
20 conjunction with the other federal lands that are in
21 those areas, particular Fish and Wildlife Service and
22 Park Service units so that we're complimentary in how
23 we're managing for those subsistence species. It's
24 very important to us.

24

25

26 The other thing that I wanted to
27 mention is that the Bureau of Land Management is
28 starting the development of the National Petroleum
29 Reserve on the North Slope. We've authorized one oil
30 and gas development pad with GMT-1, Greater Moose's
31 Tooth 1, in which we received compensatory mitigation
32 for. Particularly looking at the impacts of that
33 development on subsistence activities of the local
34 residents in the village of Nuiqsut.

34

35

36 The one thing I would like to make
37 folks aware of is those compensatory funds a portion of
38 those are -- it looks like are going to be directed
39 towards the construction of a road to the Colville
40 River, which will provide better access to the Colville
41 for subsistence activities for the residents of
42 Nuiqsut. It's a very important access route that they
43 have not had before and will hopefully provide
44 additional areas for subsistence that may be interfered
45 with because of the oil and gas activities.

45

46

47 More development is going to take place
48 in this area and this is going to continue to be a very
49 important issue for the Bureau as we're looking at the
50 development and the impacts and how we may offset or
51 mitigate that impact as far as providing for

1 subsistence opportunities to those local residents.
2 But I think we're trying to approach it by promoting
3 economic development in the NPR-A, but also making sure
4 that we're offsetting what those impacts could have on
5 the local residents and I think we're doing a very
6 balanced approach to it and I think we can look at it
7 and see where the rural residents are benefitting from
8 these authorizations that we're doing. We're feeling
9 very good about that and our relationship with not only
10 the corporation, the village and also the tribal
11 interest in Nuiqsut.

12
13 So just some of the stuff that's going
14 on. I know with the new administration we'll probably
15 have even more emphasis on development in the National
16 Petroleum Reserve and working through the Federal
17 Subsistence Board and also the NPR-A working group to
18 keep everybody engaged and active in that development
19 and how we can do that responsibly and allowing for
20 both development and continuing to provide for
21 subsistence activities in that area.

22
23 So things are a little bit busy right
24 now and it's going to get more busy.

25
26 That's for today.

27
28 Thank you.

29
30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Mr.
31 Cribley. Deb Cooper, did you have anything to share?

32
33 MS. COOPER: Nothing at this time.
34 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

35
36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: How about the
37 Fish and Wildlife.

38
39 MS. CLARK: We have, as everyone will
40 hear later on, been working on discussions with
41 Ninilchik Traditional Council. More information to
42 come on that as the agenda changed for Thursday. Also
43 the Kuskokwim River Partnership Project is something
44 that we've continued to work on. It's sort of moving
45 into phase two at this point. We'll continue to keep
46 everyone apprised of where that goes. You might
47 remember it's based off of a demonstration project that
48 Deputy Secretary Mike Connor asked us to do. So more
49 to come on that, but it's something that we've been
50 spending a lot of time on as well.

1 We have a new Regional Director, who is
2 unfortunately under the weather right now, but
3 hopefully will be here tomorrow and if not I think will
4 definitely be here on Thursday. So it's Greg Siekaniec
5 who worked in Alaska for 10 years and is back and has
6 jumped right in and been really involved in a lot of
7 things as it relates to the Federal Subsistence Board.
8 So we look forward to having him back here and to meet
9 everyone hopefully this week.

10

11 Additionally, I guess it's a pretty
12 exciting announcement on the Emperor Goose and the
13 first legal harvest in 30 years. There's been a lot of
14 work done on that and I think it's an important thing
15 for conservation and for subsistence. So I just want
16 to make sure everyone is aware of what's going on there
17 too.

18

19 Thanks.

20

21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Mr. Brower, do
22 you have anything you'd like to share.

23

24 MR. BROWER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
25 Thanks everyone for being here. The Chairs of all RACs
26 happy new year, merry Christmas and to everyone happy
27 new year, merry Christmas. Also Tim thanks for being
28 here as the Chair for all of us. We learned a lot from
29 you. Don't worry, you'll get more muktuk than ever.

30

31 Another thing my wife just advised me.
32 She said don't ever have your meeting in January. I
33 said why. Your birthday and your anniversary falls on
34 today. So they're home alone.

35

36 Thank you.

37

38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
39 Charlie. Again, he told me a couple of times, so I'd
40 like to express happy birthday and happy anniversary to
41 Charlie Brower today.

42

43 (Applause)

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: He's been
46 married longer than I've been alive.

47

48 (Laughter)

49

50 MR. BROWER: Forty-one years.

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'd also like
2 to thank and welcome aboard Rhonda Pitka.

3
4 MS. PITKA: Thank you. I was just
5 appointed the other day, so it's sort of a whirlwind.
6 I haven't had a lot of time to read through the
7 material yet. I'm really excited to get started. The
8 only thing that I kind of regret is that I have to
9 vacate my seat at my RAC and I really enjoy my RAC. So
10 unfortunately that's a little bit of a challenge, but
11 I'm really happy to be here and I'd like to say happy
12 anniversary and happy birthday to Charlie. Can
13 somebody please get him a cake by the end of the day.

14
15 Thank you.

16
17 (Laughter)

18
19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Lynn.

20
21 MR. POLACCA: The only notice that I
22 have right now is for our fee to trust process. We're
23 still waiting a record of decision for the community of
24 Craig and that's supposed to be working it's way
25 through the whole entire process and hopefully by the
26 end of this month sometime we'll get some final notice
27 and all. We're still also waiting direction also too
28 for NOAs for Tlingit and Haida.

29
30 So I'm hopeful that we can move forward
31 with that relatively fairly soon. Once we actually
32 start moving land into trust it's going to start
33 shaping a lot of new different directions on how tribes
34 and villages are going to be able to manage their own
35 lands and resources. So I'm really looking forward to
36 that. Stay tuned.

37
38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Beth.

39
40 MS. PENDLETON: Hello. My name is Beth
41 Pendleton. I'm the Regional Forester for the Forest
42 Service. We are part of the U.S. Department of
43 Agriculture and the primary public lands that are under
44 management of USDA are in Southeast Alaska, the Tongass
45 National Forest, and then Southcentral, the Chugach
46 National Forest. So essentially the Southeast RAC and
47 the Southcentral RAC a part of their work is critical
48 to subsistence management in Southeast and Southcentral
49 Alaska.

50

1 I just want to make a couple of
2 acknowledgments and introductions I think today. First
3 of all I want to recognize special assistant to
4 Department of Interior Michael Johnson. Michael, the
5 reason why I'm calling on you is you did just a yeoman
6 effort to work with the Board and communities of
7 interest, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Department
8 of Interior to get our new Chairman onboard as well as
9 Rhonda, our newest rural member, and that was quite a
10 heavy lift. So, Michael, thank you for your effort on
11 that. It's great to have Tony and Rhonda in your new
12 positions with the Federal Subsistence Board.

13

14 We have a few new folks within the U.S.
15 Department of Agriculture subsistence team as well.
16 This morning I introduced DeAnna Perry. DeAnna, if you
17 would please stand. DeAnna is the newest member of the
18 team. She's based out of Juneau. She's replacing
19 Robert Larson, who I'm not sure is here. This will be
20 his final meeting. I think we'll see him a little bit
21 this week. Who has served so well in the Federal
22 Subsistence Program.

23

24 DeAnna is the new coordinator for the
25 Southeast RAC and she'll eventually be taking on duties
26 for the Southcentral RAC as well. DeAnna has extensive
27 experience in directives and as a records manager.
28 She's done a lot of work in lands as a paralegal and
29 has already just jumped right in and is learning the
30 job and doing a terrific job. So welcome DeAnna.

31

32 I also wanted to recognize David
33 Pearson on the Chugach National Forest. This is his
34 first Federal Subsistence Board meeting. He's attended
35 a number of RAC meetings. He's a fisheries biologist
36 with emphasis on subsistence working across the
37 Chugach. So it's great to have David as part of the
38 team as well.

39

40 Then of note we've got a couple of
41 significant planning efforts. One that just wrapped up
42 in Southeast Alaska with a significant amendment on the
43 Tongass National Forest around renewable energy
44 development and young growth management. Certainly
45 that renewable energy is of very keen interest to our
46 rural communities. They are to help ease the process
47 for renewable energy projects across Southeast, so
48 that's exciting.

49

50 Then on the Chugach National Forest

1 they are in the throws of their Forest Plan revision,
2 which is similar to the BLM as far as overall
3 management in Southcentral Alaska. Terri Marceron and
4 the team will be issuing a draft new Forest Plan in
5 June of this year. They've done quite a bit of
6 engagement already with the tribes and with the public,
7 but I think folks here can look for more engagement
8 around that Forest Plan revision in the summer months
9 once that draft is out.

10

11 That's it for the Forest Service.

12

13 Thank you.

14

15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

16 Anybody else on the Board want to share anything.

17

18 (No comments)

19

20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.

21 Hearing none. We move on on the agenda now to hear
22 from our Regional Advisory Council Chairs to discuss
23 topics of concern with the Board or information
24 sharing. Maybe I'll look to start on the left over
25 here with Louis.

26

27 MR. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I

28 align myself and our Council with what Mr. Towarak
29 alluded to about the engagement of the State and the
30 Federal relationship. It's important to us. We have
31 State/Federal around us also, so it's important that
32 the two work together. I've been ranting since the
33 '90s about the idea that that needed to take place. So
34 we're very much in favor of something like that. That
35 relationship needs to take place.

36

37 At this time I have nothing else to add

38 and I appreciate the opportunity, Mr. Chair.

39

40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

41

42 Molly.

43

44 MS. CHYTHLOOK: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

45 Molly Chythlook of Bristol Bay RAC Chair. I guess one
46 of the areas that we covered -- and I think this is not
47 only our RAC concern but it's also other Advisory
48 Council concern. During our public testimony period
49 one of our public person came up and noted that the
50 majority of our presence during our RAC meeting in

1 Dillingham were agency people.

2

3

4 He noticed that he hasn't seen any
5 public hardly attending our Regional Advisory Council
6 meeting and he noted that this process is so important
7 because we're the ones that work on regulations and
8 we're the eyes and ears of this Federal Subsistence
9 Board. He wanted to know how we could increase or even
10 encourage public to attend. He happened to be chairman
11 of our regional corporation. When he got through
12 talking I said, well, you know, our regional
13 corporation has a yearly process where all the regional
14 leaders, tribal and corporation, meet together for two
15 or three days to discuss regional issues.

15

16

17 So I suggested that maybe there should
18 be a panel of RAC Federal people to talk about this
19 concern. I think each of our regions have concerns
20 about. I know that I attended even in the villages
21 Regional Advisory Councils and same thing, mainly
22 agencies and people that are on the board to be present
23 for the meeting.

23

24

25 So it was suggested that we have a
26 panel during this leadership workshop to put the
27 information out to the audience from Bristol Bay to
28 encourage attendance to not only our RAC boards but our
29 State Advisory Council meetings and then try to
30 emphasize the importance of these two different agency
31 meetings. So that happened and now I was just talking
32 to our coordinator earlier.

32

33

34 We need to do a step two to continue to
35 maybe develop a little flyer, something, to keep
36 encouraging our public people within our regions to
37 please come and attend our Regional Advisory Council
38 meetings because these affect your -- the regulations
39 that are established in these affect how your resources
40 are going to be harvested. So maybe our next Federal
41 Subsistence Board meeting I'll continue with hopefully
42 success of what we're tried to do in Bristol Bay.

42

43

44 Then I guess as Regional Advisory
45 Council people we probably hear this over and over and
46 over again and I know as a Chair I do and that's our
47 predator control. People in our regions are getting
48 frustrated because the resources they want to harvest
49 they aren't able to because the resources have
50 scattered by predators and the hunters and the user
51 groups get blamed for that. I think, as a Federal

1 Subsistence Board and the RAC system, we need to
2 consider this predator control issue that each and
3 every region has been affected by.

4
5 So there's some more that has come out
6 of our Regional Advisory Councils that affect all of
7 our resources and then just concerns and
8 misunderstandings. I don't know how we can deal with
9 this, but I told my board members that I would again
10 bring this predator control issue and maybe someday
11 that could be worked out.

12
13 That's all I have.

14
15 Thank you.

16
17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
18 Molly.

19
20 Mitch.

21
22 MR. SIMEONOFF: Thank you, Mr.
23 Chairman. Kodiak/Aleutians had a couple concerns.
24 One, I would like to read a letter from
25 Kodiak/Aleutians to the Board.

26
27 At our recent public meeting held in
28 August 15th and 16th in Unalaska the Council heard a
29 brief presentation from Orville Lind, Native Liaison
30 from the Office of Subsistence Management on the
31 proposed rural determination policy which outlines
32 administrative process for future nonrural
33 determination.

34
35 The Council appreciates the Board's
36 efforts to include flexibility in this policy; however,
37 there now appears to be no guidance on proposing a
38 status change. There are no limits on who may propose
39 a status change or how often. This lack of criteria
40 could allow for numerous frivolous arbitrary proposals,
41 which, for obvious reasons, would make a community
42 nervous. For that reason both Council and community
43 members have requested that any proposals to change the
44 status of a community come from either a member of the
45 community or the Council itself.

46
47 We are disappointed that deference for
48 this important issue will not be afforded to the
49 Council. The Council believes it is best suited to
50 make a determination on rural status for communities it

1 serves.

2

3 Finally, the Council would like to know
4 what baseline information will be used to substantiate
5 a demonstrated change in a community under limitations
6 of subsistence for proposals to change from rural to
7 nonrural. Will that demonstrate a change to the
8 community based on 2007 when nonrural communities were
9 identified or the current conditions of the community.

10

11 Thank you.

12

13 I've got one other.

14

15 This concerns migratory birds goose
16 hunt. The Council is very pleased that the U.S. Fish
17 and Wildlife Service and others are moving forward with
18 the planned Emperor Goose hunt in the spring of 2017.
19 It has been decades since any subsistence users have
20 hunted Emperor Geese. Elders and youth alike are
21 thrilled with this new opportunity. The Council will
22 continue to work with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
23 and the Department of Fish and Game on this issue.

24

25 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

26

27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
28 sharing that, Mitch.

29 Ray.

30

31 MR. STONEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
32 It is my great honor to be with the members of the
33 Board here. For the information that we got in Game
34 Unit 23 concerning the population of the caribou herd,
35 a meeting that was held in the other villages
36 concerning the population of the herd we were told by
37 the Fish and Wildlife people from 490,000 caribou about
38 seven years ago. Now today the counting has completed
39 in August of this year and the size of this herd is
40 down to 200,000. So what we've got now from counting
41 the herd we've got 270,000 unaccounted for.

42

43 The question was asked to the Fish and
44 Wildlife people what happened to this herd. The
45 condition of this herd was very healthy and they said
46 10 years ago the weather was so severe they just didn't
47 go -- their fawns and stuff just froze, just died.
48 Where did they die? They gave us information that they
49 said they were approximately 70 miles east of
50 Wainwright. The situation for that area is very severe

1 cold temperature. It's 80 to 90 degrees, snow 10 feet
2 high, and they survived.

3

4 So a number of questions was asked from
5 the villages to the Wildlife people and said I think
6 you are wrong. These caribou are more powerful than
7 you are. They just can't die off. The question is
8 from a lot of people I think the Federal Fish and
9 Wildlife people and the State and other agencies should
10 put a lot more money and make a survey of this herd,
11 what's happening to it.

12

13 Evidently now the counting as of August
14 is 200,000. So the condition of this caribou is very
15 healthy. However, the RAC had met several times in
16 other villages and stayed with the same subject. The
17 Regional Advisory Council make a strong recommendation
18 to Federal Subsistence Board to close all non-residents
19 to hunt in Game Unit 23. That's in 2015.

20

21 After surveying a number of months and
22 a year, again the Regional Advisory Council came back
23 and then report to the people of Northwest Alaska again
24 the same. We will continue to keep this caribou
25 hunting to all non-residents. That's including our
26 relatives and there's relatives all across the United
27 States. That's the condition and situation about this
28 herd.

29

30 It's not just the caribou only. Most
31 of the species are disappearing. Moose. They are
32 putting in a proposal to the Federal Subsistence Board
33 for the closure of moose because they are also
34 disappearing. We don't know what's happening. Maybe
35 just moving away.

36

37 Sheep hunting. What's recommended is
38 the Federal Subsistence Board for immediate closure
39 because they disappeared. Muskox. Muskox was
40 transplanted about 20 years ago to Northwest Alaska.
41 Most of them survived, but however the muskox again
42 disappearing. We don't know what's happening.

43

44 Now we are asking the Federal
45 Subsistence Board and the Secretary of the Interior to
46 put a lot more money and survey these species. Why are
47 they disappearing. I ask a number of questions a lot
48 of times for caribou. They won't die. They won't die.
49 There must be some way where we'll find out which
50 direction are they moving to. Some are seen

1 everywhere, different areas in eastern part of Alaska.
2 So the condition of this herd is very healthy and
3 they're disappearing.

4
5 Finally, if this herd is declining so
6 rapidly, subsistence will have to change 100 percent.
7 In our area it's five caribou a day on State land. So
8 the question was asked by the elders because this herd
9 is in our land. It worked with us. The size of this
10 herd it worked with us. That's what we lived on. If
11 this herd continues to decline, what are we going to
12 do? How are we going to feed our people? If the
13 caribou get down to 50,000, what are we going to do?

14
15 Our people way ahead of me with this
16 herd, they managed their own herd. They didn't need no
17 Fish and Wildlife people. They only get what they
18 could use. So, finally, like I said, we'd like to come
19 to the Subsistence Board and try to find out what's
20 happening to this herd because they are disappearing.

21
22 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23
24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
25 Raymond, for that topic caribou. We'll move on over
26 here to Greg. Oh, Eva.

27
28 MS. PATTON: Mr. Chair and Council.
29 For the record, Eva Patton, Council Coordinator for the
30 North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council and
31 the YK Delta Regional Advisory Council. As many of you
32 may know, longtime North Slope Regional Advisory
33 Council Chair Harry Brower, Jr. recently retired from
34 the Council this summer. He was elected mayor of the
35 North Slope Borough. He served on the Council since
36 the inception of the Federal Subsistence Program for 23
37 years, so we'd like to recognize Harry Brower's
38 longtime service to the Council and dedication to
39 subsistence in the region.

40
41 We're very grateful too the Secretary
42 of Interior did recognize his lifetime of service and
43 one of the charter members serving on the Council for
44 the Federal Subsistence Program. So the Secretary of
45 Interior did provide a letter thanking him and
46 recognition for both Harry and several other Council
47 members who've been here since the beginning.

48
49 Rosemary Ahtuanguaruak has been a
50 longtime vice chair of the Council and she is serving

1 in the capacity as Chair right now. Unfortunately she
2 wasn't able to join us for this meeting. She's helping
3 take care of her mother, so our thoughts are with her.
4 She had hoped to call in. She may be able to join us
5 on teleconference during the fisheries and rural
6 proposals at that time.

7

8 Thank you.

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Eva.

11

12 Okay, Greg.

13

14 MR. G. ENCELEWSKI: Thank you, Mr.
15 Chairman. Greg Encelewski, Southcentral Regional
16 Advisory Council. To the Federal Board, we have no
17 issues to bring forth to you at this time. We are only
18 sending you our annual report. We ask that you give it
19 your due diligence and any questions forthcoming we'll
20 take them back.

21

22 Thank you very much.

23

24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Michael.

25

26 MR. BANGS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
27 My name is Michael Bangs. I am the Southeast Alaska
28 Council Chairman and I'd like to thank Molly from
29 Bristol Bay for bringing up the topic of public
30 involvement. That's been an issue at the vast majority
31 of our meetings. For an example, you just look around.
32 The makeup of this room where you have the Board, the
33 Council Chairs, many staff, but very few public.
34 That's why we're here is to serve the subsistence
35 public.

36

37 I think it's going to take a lot of
38 work between OSM and the RACs themselves to come up
39 with some outreach that we can involve more people and
40 let them know how the program works. I think there's a
41 lot of people that don't understand how this whole
42 process works. I think that's going to be a big
43 project for us to do is involve more of the public.

44

45 That's one of the topics that I asked
46 to be on the all Chairs meeting that we're hopefully
47 going to have after this meeting. It's something I put
48 on the last year at this time. By the time the meeting
49 was over there was only three Chairs left. So I hope
50 the RAC Chairs will finish the meeting so that we're

1 able to get together and share some common concerns
2 that we may be able to help each other with things like
3 outreach.

4

5 I think another thing that has been
6 brought up by our Council is involvement with the Board
7 of Fish and Board of Game. I think it's important if we
8 can come up with proposals to the Board of Fish or
9 Board of Game that can help subsistence users, then we
10 should exercise that and attend advisory committee
11 meetings like Molly said.

12

13 I think that's a start to get more
14 involved with the public. Some of these advisory
15 committee meetings have a lot of public involved. I
16 think it's a good venue for us to involve the public
17 with our program. So I'd like to say to all the Chairs
18 to encourage your RAC to involve themselves in their
19 local advisory committees for fish and game.

20

21 The only other thing I had was the
22 State responses to our proposals. Now I noticed in
23 this book the State has a good background and a summary
24 of the reasoning behind their position. I know it's a
25 timely thing, but when we're having our RAC meeting and
26 we look through our proposal book and the State is
27 pretty good about saying whether they oppose it or
28 they're for it, but they don't explain why.

29

30 I think that our Council would like to
31 see those explanations. It would help us make better
32 decisions because there may be information the State
33 has that we don't have. I would encourage the State to
34 involve themselves a little earlier in the process so
35 that us as RACs can absorb their reasoning and make
36 better decisions.

37

38 With that, I just want to thank the
39 public that did show up. I think it's important that
40 the people in the communities understand how important
41 this is.

42

43 Thank you, Chair.

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
46 Mike. Andrew.

47

48 MR. FIRMIN: Thank you, Tony. I'm
49 Andrew Firmin, the vice Chair for the Eastern Interior
50 RAC. Sue Entsminger, since this is a fisheries-

1 directed meeting, she defers to either Rhonda or I
2 because we live on the Yukon River and she lives over
3 in another part of the state in our region. So I'm
4 here to speak on those proposals on her behalf or the
5 RACs' behalf.

6

7 I'm glad I opted to attend because if
8 not Rhonda would have been the next choice and we might
9 have had an empty seat with her recent appointment.
10 Congratulations on your appointment and yours as well,
11 Anthony.

12

13 As for our Council, we do have a few
14 concerns, but I think some of them we could probably
15 get more in depth with at our all Chairs meeting. Some
16 of the others have reflected their concerns as well.
17 Like with Molly and the public engagement and stuff. I
18 know that we have been working hard towards that in our
19 region and we have developed a course with UAF on
20 navigating the Federal subsistence management. It's an
21 interesting short class, but I think it helps a lot of
22 the public and it helps people engage on this forum.
23 They've also developed one with the State system as
24 well. That would be something for others to look into.

25

26 Another way we try to engage is having
27 the meetings in more rural areas or in the areas where
28 there's contentious issues. They certainly seem to
29 fill the room then if you've got something that's
30 contentious to everybody and you go to that area to
31 have your meeting versus having it across the region in
32 a big city where it's harder for people to get to the
33 meetings.

34

35 Predator management is not something
36 that we can clearly address, but I know it's also
37 something that we've used to have the system work for
38 us more and maybe making more liberal restrictions or
39 regulations for certain species. Recently the decision
40 to have no bear baiting on Federal land and Parks and
41 Refuges for non-subsistence uses that still directly
42 affects subsistence users.

43

44 When you take that non-subsistence use
45 aspect away, you have that many users that are less on
46 the land for certain resources, but at the same time it
47 adds their lack of not removing a certain species or
48 part of that species, not harvesting them, that throws
49 it off balance again and it makes it harder when you've
50 got twice as many predators running around as you did

1 previously. That's just something we wanted to throw
2 out there as well, how the recent regulation changes
3 have affected us.

4

5 I think some of our other --
6 information sharing is something that seems -- or lack
7 of transparency with some of our transboundary folks
8 seems to be lacking in some areas. I know one recently
9 seems to be the Porcupine Caribou Herd as one that
10 we've been asking information for and haven't really
11 got a good answer other than what do you want to know
12 or they're doing fine. Aren't they one of the most
13 popular or widely known being there in ANWR, kind of a
14 widely known herd. Then you go to ask about it and
15 there's nobody that has anything recent or has a great
16 answer or who to look to.

17

18 We've been searching and I've been
19 doing some outreach. Some of it might be a lack of
20 participation from our Canadian counterparts. Since
21 I've known from being on former Yukon River Panel
22 Advisory that it seems sometimes they hold their cards
23 close to their chest or don't share everything they may
24 have or maybe they don't have it. It's hard to get an
25 answer out of them sometimes. But I mean that's
26 something -- for us to make decisions on or when we're
27 working with transboundary species, it's good to have
28 information from both sides of the border.

29

30 I think anything else I have will come
31 up later in the meeting.

32

33 Thank you.

34

35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
36 Andrew.

37

38 Lester.

39

40 MR. WILDE: Thank you. The YK Delta
41 don't really have any concerns at this time to share
42 with the Board, but we'd like to thank the Board
43 Members and Mr. Tim Towarak for all the help that
44 you've given us in the past and helping us to pass at
45 least 98 percent of our proposals that we presented to
46 you.

47

48 Aside from that, we're going to miss
49 Tim. He and I have been friends since I was carrying
50 him on my back when he was a little boy.

1 (Laughter)

2

3 MR. WILDE: Anyway, we just wanted to
4 thank the Board Members for passing the amount of
5 proposals that were passed from our area. Thank you
6 very much.

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you very
9 much, Lester. Is there anybody online? Is Jack
10 Reakoff online maybe. If he'd like to speak, he has
11 the floor.

12

13 MR. REAKOFF: Mr. Chair. This is Jack
14 Reakoff. Can you hear me?

15

16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

17

18 MR. REAKOFF: Okay. I wanted to
19 congratulate you and Rhonda to your appointment to the
20 Board and I think you both will make excellent Board
21 Members. My main concern at this time is the Arctic
22 Caribou Herd and now the Central Arctic Caribou Herd
23 has dropped from 69,000 to 22,500. Teshekpuk, Western
24 Arctic, these herds are way down. There needs to be
25 additional management restrictions implemented. If
26 these herds continue to decline, we need to arrest
27 these declines.

28

29 I want the Board to be aware that there
30 may be the need for additional season changes and bag
31 limit changes even for subsistence use. The resource
32 needs to be looked at and for health. The caribou are
33 healthy, but they're still declining, so that's a real
34 big concern. There's a real high reliance in the
35 northern part of Western Interior on caribou. I want
36 the Board to be aware that it's a real concern of the
37 Western Interior as you're hearing from the Northwest
38 Arctic and from the North Slope.

39

40 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

41

42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
43 Jack. Is there anybody else at this time that would
44 like to share something in regards to -- Mike.

45

46 MR. BANGS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
47 just wanted to make a comment that Mr. Robert Larson,
48 who was our coordinator, is in Canada at the treaty
49 meetings at this point fighting for our
50 subsistence rights on the transboundary rivers.

1 Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
4 that update, Mike.

5

6 MR. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
7 After listening to other Chairs, I wanted to make the
8 statement that food security is an important thing for
9 Seward Peninsula RAC also. The State and Federal
10 relationship would be very very important there
11 concerning the WACH, the Western Arctic Caribou Herd,
12 situation where you've got three regions involved in
13 there utilizing the same resource and then you have two
14 management entities.

15

16 Predator control has been an issue.
17 Actually at a meeting we had Mark Valkenburg speak to
18 the public at one point in time there in Nome during
19 one of our meetings about a year or two ago. He's an
20 expert. And then public involvement is an issue for
21 us.

22

23 So I appreciate the opportunity, Mr.
24 Chair.

25

26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
27 Louis. Anybody else have any thoughts.

28

29 (No comments)

30

31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none.
32 I think that concludes information sharing from both
33 the Federal Board and Regional Advisory Council Chairs.
34 Before we move on to the public comment period I'm
35 going to call for a five-minute break. So five minutes
36 come back, please.

37

38 (Emergency alarm unit)

39

40 (Off record)

41

42 (On record)

43

44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll go ahead
45 and come back from our recess to get this meeting
46 started. Before we move on to the public comment
47 period I would also like to offer at this time for the
48 State if they have any information they would like to
49 share, we'll call on Lisa and Jill.

50

1 MS. OLSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Lisa
2 Olson. I'm with the Division of Subsistence for Alaska
3 Department of Fish and Game. Just came back from the
4 Bethel Board of Game meeting. Would like to give a
5 shout out to Karen Linnell and tell her welcome from
6 the State. I think she did a great job.

7
8 The Board of Game looked at around 50
9 proposals for the Arctic and Western Region and also
10 some region-wide and multiple region proposals. They
11 lengthened various bear seasons, they lengthened
12 various moose seasons. They reauthorized tag fee
13 exemptions for brown bear hunting. They also
14 authorized going forward with intensive management
15 plans for Mulchatna Caribou and also on Unit 15-C.

16
17 They are thinking about changing their
18 agenda change request policy. So if you're interested
19 in that, please let me know. I can help direct you to
20 the materials for that.

21
22 The bigger news, I think, is that the
23 Board of Game made a positive customary and traditional
24 use finding for Emperor Geese, which helps allow for a
25 fall hunt. They did stick to the 1,000 bird quota.
26 They did authorize a limited draw permit of 25 tags for
27 non-residents in Units 8, 9 and 10 for Emperor Geese.

28
29 They also adopted a proposal to require
30 registration permits for the Western Arctic and
31 Teshekpuk Caribou Herds with a complete understanding
32 that it will be a big undertaking for the Department to
33 ensure that all of the villages that rely on that herd
34 do have the proper permit in hand for when they go
35 hunting.

36
37 I think that was our biggest news. Mr.
38 Chair, thank you.

39
40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
41 the update.

42
43 (Emergency alarm unit)

44
45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Proceed with
46 caution. Somebody is trying to sabotage us. We're
47 working way too well together here, guys. I knew I'd
48 have a few tests today, but not like this. We do not
49 need to evacuate. Their sprinkler system is flooding
50 upstairs. So if it starts raining in here, we can run

1 for it.

2

3

4 With that, we thank the State for your
5 sharing there and we'll look to call on the public
6 comments on non-agenda items at this time. We would
7 just ask that people be respectful of other people that
8 may want to present. I don't really have a time limit
9 for it, but just that we be respectful and not put two
10 hours into a presentation or something like that.

10

11

Thank you.

12

13

14 The fire department is here if you're
15 scared of the water leak upstairs. There may be a
16 couple more alarms going off and stuff, but they are
17 addressing the issue and assure us the building is safe
18 at this time.

18

19

20 With that, if there is any public who
21 would like to testify to non-agenda items, this is your
22 time to come forward and speak to the Board.

22

23

24 MR. ASHENFELTER: Mr. Chair. Roy
25 Ashenfelter. Is the Western Arctic Caribou Herd a non-
26 agenda item?

26

27

28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: It is actually
29 listed on our agenda as a special action WSA 16-03,
30 number 11 on the agenda.

30

31

32 MR. ASHENFELTER: Okay. I assume it's
33 on Thursday, right? I don't know. Because I leave
34 Thursday.

34

35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: It will be more
37 likely we'll probably get to that tomorrow.

37

38

39 MR. ASHENFELTER: Okay. I could save
40 my comments for that tomorrow. One suggestion I would
41 have in regards to the Western Arctic Caribou Herd,
42 there is a management plan that's signed by Fish and
43 Wildlife, signed by BLM, signed by all the agencies and
44 signed by Unit 23, Unit 22 and there's a meeting every
45 year in December in regards to the Western Arctic
46 Caribou Herd Working Group right here in Anchorage in
47 December every year.

47

48

49 Hopefully the State of Alaska did the
50 census last year will be able to provide you numbers in
51 the management plan. The reason I ask this is because

1 it should be available tomorrow hopefully when you come
2 up and discuss whatever the number is for the Federal
3 Subsistence Board to consider because in it is a
4 matrix.

5
6 The matrix speaks different scenarios
7 for volumes of the caribou, when it's high, when it's
8 low, when it's medium and whether it's going up or down
9 and it looks at different management strategies within
10 that matrix. I think it's very invaluable that you
11 look at it since all the agencies that I'm looking at
12 here signed it.

13
14 One other suggestion I would have is go
15 to the working group meeting, somebody, to get an idea
16 of what the various things that happen at the Western
17 Arctic Caribou Working Group. Just to share with you a
18 little bit of the membership. The membership consists
19 of sport hunters, conservationists, tribal members, the
20 guys who fly the planes, transporters. The idea there
21 is to have everybody at the table to listen and learn
22 and understand what would be of consideration based on
23 the population of the herd.

24
25 So I'll wait for tomorrow to see what
26 else I could add if given the opportunity.

27
28 Thank you.

29
30 MS. CLARK: The Chair had to step out
31 for a second. Is there any other public comment.

32
33 (No comments)

34
35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: No other public
36 comment. I was really checking on the fire alarm. If
37 there is no more public comment at this time, we will
38 move on to the Partners Program presentation so we
39 could have them come forward and share with us the
40 information.

41
42 MS. HYER: Mr. Chairman. Board
43 Members. I was just going to introduce to you Matt
44 Piche. He works with the Native Village of Eyak and he
45 is one of our partners. OSM funds biologists and
46 social scientists and rural organizations and we have
47 six partners throughout Alaska. Matt is going to talk
48 a little bit about the work he's done on the Copper
49 River with chinook salmon. The project that he'll talk
50 about is actually funded through our Fisheries Resource

1 Monitoring Program. So I will just turn it over to
2 Matt.

3

4 MR. PICHE: Hello. My name is Matt
5 Piche. I am the Partners Program fish biologist and
6 natural resources coordinator for the Native Village of
7 Eyak in Cordova. The decade and a half of data I'm
8 here to present has been collected by Native Village of
9 Eyak biologists and fisheries technicians through the
10 Copper River Chinook Salmon Monitoring Program
11 established in 2001 and funded by U.S. Fish and
12 Wildlife Service Office of Subsistence Management
13 through their Partners Program and their Fisheries
14 Resource Monitoring Program.

15

16 Annual chinook salmon escapement goals
17 on the Copper River were established in 1999 and
18 refined in 2002 with a lower balance sustainable
19 escapement goal set at 24,000 or more chinook salmon.
20 In 2001, the Native Village of Eyak and LGL, Limited
21 received funding from Fisheries Resource Monitoring
22 Program to conduct a two year feasibility study using
23 two sample mark/recapture techniques, utilizing
24 fishwheels for capture.

25

26 The feasibility study was successful
27 and since 2003 NVE has produced the in-river abundance
28 estimate of chinook salmon resulting in 14 years of
29 escapement and total run size data for the Copper
30 River.

31

32 The chart here summarizes the past 14
33 years of Copper River chinook salmon escapement data in
34 total run size. This chart should also be in front of
35 you in your packets and was available out the front
36 door. At the top of each column is a number one
37 through seven and this is how I'll explain the data.

38

39 The data collected through this project
40 provides the in-river abundance estimates located in
41 column number four, the
42 column in bold in the center. Immediately to the right
43 in column number five is the standard error associated
44 with each of these in-river abundance estimates.
45 Column number 3 and 6 contain annual chinook salmon
46 harvest separated by location.

47

48 So in column 3 we have the saltwater
49 harvest. That's the harvest occurring at the mouth of
50 the Copper River. This is gillnet harvest, which

1 includes subsistence, educational, home pack and
2 commercial fishery harvest. Whereas column 6 is the
3 estimated in-river harvest. This includes in-river
4 subsistence, personal use and sport fish.

5
6 So all of this data allows us to
7 estimate the total returning run size as well as the
8 annual escapement. We find the total returning run
9 size by adding the value in column number 4 with the
10 value in column number 3. That gives us our run size.
11 We can also take that to find annual escapement and we
12 take the value in column number 4 and we subtract the
13 value of column number 6.

14
15 I chose to present the information this
16 way to demonstrate the importance of this in-river
17 abundance estimate and how it's used for fishery
18 managers for management of the stock. Without this
19 number the only data present is harvest data.

20
21 In 2016, the estimated in-river
22 abundance of chinook salmon on the Copper River is
23 16,009 fish with a standard error of 1,193, meaning
24 it's a relatively precise and accurate number.
25 Estimated total run size based on preliminary harvest
26 reports is about 27-28,000 chinook salmon returning in
27 2016 to the mouth of the river.

28
29 If the in-river harvest is at or near
30 the previous five-year average, then escapement should
31 be around 11-12,000 chinook salmon, which would be the
32 lowest escapement on record and half of the sustainable
33 escapement goal of 24,000 or more chinook salmon.

34
35 This figure provides a visual summary
36 of the data presented in the previous chart. The red
37 line is a sustainable escapement goal of 24,000. The
38 blue line on top is a total returning run size. The
39 black line in the middle is NVE's in-river abundance
40 estimate and the green line on the bottom is the annual
41 systemwide escapement for the Copper River chinook
42 salmon.

43
44 You can see on this chart that in 2005,
45 2010, 2014 and 2016 the sustainable escapement goal was
46 missed. Additionally, if we look at returning run size
47 in blue, we can see that the five year average from
48 2003 to 2007 was roughly double the most recent five
49 year average run size. Also, since 2009, escapement
50 has been relatively consistent remaining near within

1 5,000 fish or below the mandated escapement goal.

2

3 With continued escapement levels at or
4 near the established minimum sustainable escapement
5 goal it has become absolutely imperative to continue
6 monitoring the species. So we cannot only maintain the
7 current fishing opportunities, but in periods of high
8 abundance have the data required to increase fishing
9 opportunity.

10

11 Finally, these two charts contain a 20-
12 year harvest dataset for the Copper River chinook
13 salmon. The chart on the top left shows subsistence
14 harvest in green, sport fish harvest in red and
15 personal use harvest in blue. The chart on the bottom
16 right shows the decline in the commercial harvest as
17 well. Harvest by all Copper River user groups has
18 declined over the past 15 to 20 years, with sport fish
19 and personal use harvest showing more of a decline than
20 subsistence. These two charts represent all of the
21 chinook salmon harvest on the Copper River.

22

23 Now I'll remind you prior to 2003
24 fisheries managers were limited in their ability to
25 manage the in-river fisheries in season, but with the
26 addition of NVE's fishwheel CPUE fishwheel project the
27 CPUE and mark/recapture rates have been used as an in
28 season indice, thus making it easier to regulate the
29 sport and the personal use fisheries in times of low
30 abundance, thus providing the avenue to close those
31 fisheries while leaving the subsistence fisheries
32 intact.

33

34 The data obtained by the study is a
35 primary tool used for the overall management of the
36 chinook salmon population post season and is used as an
37 indice for in-season management of the Federal and
38 State subsistence personal use and sport fisheries.
39 In-season data is uploaded online daily. The public
40 can view a summary dataset and State and Federal
41 managers can access and download our full dataset at
42 any point throughout the season.

43

44 In 2016, our mark and recapture data
45 was one of the indices used to close king salmon
46 personal use fishery on June 20th on the Copper River,
47 restrict sport fishing to catch and release only on
48 June 18th and close catch and release for king salmon
49 on June 25th. Despite the closure of the sport and
50 personal use fisheries and restrictions placed on the

1 commercial fishery, both the State and Federal
2 subsistence fisheries remained open and unrestricted
3 through 2016.

4

5 So with all of this information in mind
6 I simply wanted to make the Council aware that FRMP
7 funding is scheduled to end after 2017. We are
8 currently funded through 2017. A new cap has been
9 placed on the FRMP program funding in 2018. Therefore,
10 if we are able to successfully secure continued FRMP
11 funding, it will only cover roughly half of the project
12 costs. Therefore, alternatives must be explored. NVE
13 is aggressively pursuing funding sources outside of the
14 FRMP process. We're hopeful that Copper River chinook
15 salmon will continue to be monitored long into the
16 future.

17

18 So what are our options moving forward
19 for the Copper River chinook salmon stock in 2018 and
20 beyond. Scenario one is Copper River chinook salmon
21 and mark/recapture study will continue and the goal
22 with that will be to work towards alternative and
23 potentially less costly methods for monitoring such as
24 sonar. The technology isn't quite there yet, but it's
25 something we're keeping a close eye on.

26

27 Scenario two. Funding would not be
28 obtained and Copper River chinook salmon would be
29 unmonitored in 2018. Under this scenario, Copper River
30 chinook salmon escapement and total run size would be
31 unknown. The sustainable escapement goal established
32 by the State Board of Fish cannot be determined and
33 based on similar occurrences throughout the state of
34 Alaska in the absence of data the chinook fisheries
35 will be managed more conservatively until data
36 suggesting otherwise can be obtained.

37

38 All of Alaska should be concerned with
39 the last scenario because currently the Copper River
40 chinook salmon stock is considered fully allocated by
41 State and Federal managers. Having a fully-allocated
42 salmon stock with no escapement or run size data is
43 unprecedented. We are hopeful funding can be obtained
44 and this critical monitoring program will continue.

45

46 I will be here all week and I'd love to
47 discuss this further with anyone that's interested.
48 Thank you for the opportunity to present and thank you
49 OSM for funding this project since 2001. Without the
50 Partners Program and FRMP program this data would not

1 exist.

2

3

Thank you.

4

5

I'm here to take any questions.

6

7

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
8 that presentation. It was a good presentation. Is
9 there any questions for him.

10

11

(No comments)

12

13

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We thank you,
14 Matt. It was a good presentation. It usually means no
15 questions.

16

17

MR. PICHE: Thank you.

18

19

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Following that
20 we have the ANSEP presentation. So if we could ask for
21 them to come forward.

22

23

MS. HYER: Mr. Chairman. Board
24 Members. For the record, I'm Karen Hyer. I'm a
25 fisheries biologist with OSM and I actually work with
26 the Partners Program and I also work with the ANSEP
27 program. In your book you'll find a flyer. It talks a
28 little bit about the students that we're working with.
29 We have partnered with ANSEP to create internships that
30 allow ANSEP students to work with our Fish and Wildlife
31 Service professionals and it gives them summer field
32 experience and then a mentor.

33

34

Our next presentation is by Clarissa
35 Zeller, who is one of the ANSEP students that worked
36 with us and she worked in our gene conservation lab
37 with Penny Crane. So I will turn the floor over to
38 them.

39

40

Thank you.

41

42

MS. CRANE: Thank you, Karen and Mr.
43 Chairman and the Board. We appreciate the opportunity
44 to have Clarissa speak here today. I'm just going to
45 give a brief introduction into the history of this
46 project and then turn it over to Clarissa to talk about
47 the work that she did this summer.

48

49

Her project was looking at the genetic
50 diversity of Dolly Varden populations in the Kobuk

1 River. Dolly Varden trout are an important subsistence
2 resource in Northwestern Alaska and communities. For
3 example, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
4 Subsistence Division did a survey in the villages of
5 Kivalina and Noatak in 2007 and estimated that
6 approximately 30,000 trout were harvested in these
7 rivers in that year. Particularly in the village of
8 Kivalina, which is located at the mouth of Wulik River.
9 There are not very many salmon in that river and trout
10 form the bulk of the fish harvested.

11
12 Tagging studies conducted by Alaska
13 Department of Fish and Game in the 1980s and 1990s have
14 shown that Dolly Varden trout move around a lot during
15 their life history. So fish tagged in these rivers it
16 was shown that juveniles rear in these rivers for
17 several years and then begin a life history strategy of
18 outmigrating to the ocean to feed during the summer and
19 then returning to freshwater to overwinter. When they
20 reach sexual maturity, they go back to their natal
21 stream to spawn, but in non-spawning areas they can
22 overwinter in rivers that are non-natal. So there's a
23 mixture of fish in any given river during the winter.

24
25 So the Fisheries Resources Monitoring
26 Program funded a study in 2004 to look at subsistence
27 catches from the Wulik River to estimate where the fish
28 were coming from and we did this using genetic data.
29 We found that the bulk of the fish originated from
30 rivers draining into Kotzebue Sound and the Chukchi
31 Sea, but about 20 percent originated from watersheds
32 farther south from Norton Sound.

33
34 To do this kind of analysis we need the
35 genetic profile of the fishery sample, but we also need
36 the genetic profile of all the populations that could
37 be potentially contributing to that mixture. For the
38 study we only had one sample from the Kobuk River, so
39 it was not well represented in the genetic database
40 that we used for these fishery estimates, so the FRMP
41 funded a small study last year to do some additional
42 sampling in the Kobuk River.

43
44 Our main questions were are Dolly
45 Varden spawning in different tributaries in the Kobuk
46 River genetically different from each other and, more
47 importantly, are they different enough from other
48 drainages in Northwestern Alaska so that we can make
49 finer scale stock composition estimates. For example,
50 breaking it down to Noatak, Kobuk and Kivalina and

1 Wulik Rivers for that Northwestern component.

2

3 So this project was done in cooperation
4 with Alaska Department of Fish and Game with James
5 Savereide and Brendan Scanlon and they did the field
6 sampling. Then Clarissa analyzed the samples in the
7 lab. So I'm going to turn it over to Clarissa
8 now.

9

10 MS. ZELLER: Hello, everybody. For the
11 next slide what I first want to show you is where all
12 the blue dots on the map shows where all Dolly Varden
13 samples have been taken. The next slide what we're
14 focusing on right now is the Kobuk River samples. The
15 two stars you can see is the Salmon River and the
16 Toksook River where we were able to successfully get
17 samples.

18 We wanted to get samples from the Hunt River, but due
19 to time constraints we were unable to.

20

21 Next slide. What I do is I work in the
22 lab and I take the fin samples from the Dolly Varden
23 and I break down the tissue and separate the DNA from
24 the tissue. The way we're able to see the specific
25 genes is we use DNA analyzers. What they do is they
26 separate the genes by size in order to find the gene
27 markers we want.

28

29 Next slide. This is what results do
30 look like. For each row is actually a fish and the two
31 slopes are where the gene markers are. One is from a
32 dad and a mother. Next slide. With the results you
33 can see that the closer the dots are they are more
34 related to each other. The gene data correlates with
35 the location of where the Dolly Vardens are.

36

37 Next slide. Right now we're focusing
38 on the Northwest Alaska in the Norton and Kotzebue
39 Sounds. With the Norton Sound, you can see that it's
40 in the blue and they're a lot more closer together,
41 meaning they are more related. You can think of it as
42 a family and siblings. If you look at the Kotzebue,
43 which is in the green, they're a lot more separated,
44 showing that they are a lot more distant. You can
45 think of it as like cousins. For the Kobuk River, the
46 last three dots, the green ones, they're the most
47 separated, showing they are more diverse than the rest
48 of the group.

49

50 Next slide. The conclusions we found

1 is that the Dolly Varden in Kobuk River are genetically
2 different, meaning they're more diverse, but we do not
3 have enough samples to tell the Kobuk River Dolly
4 Varden from the Noatak River Dolly Varden in the
5 mixtures, meaning that we can't fully profile to tell
6 them apart, the Kobuk River Dolly Varden from a DNA
7 mixture.

8

9 What we want to do next summer is
10 increase the sample size from the Hunt tributary from
11 the Kobuk River in order to profile the Kobuk River
12 Dolly Varden in a DNA mixture.

13

14 That's the end of my presentation.
15 Does anyone have any questions.

16

17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So are you
18 funded this summer to continue doing your genetic
19 sampling?

20

21 MS. CRANE: We'd like to put in a
22 proposal for the next round of funding.

23

24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

25

26 MS. ZELLER: Thank you for your time.

27

28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We're on a hold
29 for one second.

30

31 (Pause)

32

33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right. At
34 this time, we like to party here. I'm the new Chairman
35 and it's Charlie's birthday, so what we're going to do
36 is take a little minute here to sing happy birthday to
37 Charlie and we're going to give him a cake.

38

39 (Applause)

40

41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Pam is just out
42 there grabbing a cake for Charlie and we're going
43 to.....

44

45 MR. BROWER: You didn't have to do
46 that.

47

48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, I know we
49 didn't. Pam is grabbing is out there and we like to
50 celebrate life here and Charlie is full of it. Life

1 that is.

2

3 (Laughter)

4

5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: If you guys
6 don't mind, we would like to sing happy birthday to
7 Charlie. How old are you again, Charlie?

8

9 MR. BROWER: I can't tell.

10

11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Dang, I didn't
12 get that out of him. I thought I'd get it.

13

14 (Applause)

15

16 MR. BROWER: Thank you, thank you.

17 Meeting adjourned. No, joking.

18

19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Happy
20 anniversary too. At this time I would like to
21 officially recess and before I do I'll give you guys a
22 little snapshot of what we're looking at today. The
23 next thing on the agenda is to get into proposals, non-
24 Kenai proposals. What we're thinking is we're going to
25 start fresh with that in the morning. Give our staff
26 time to get all of that ready. No sense jumping into
27 that right here at the end of the day.

28

29 So what we'll do is we're going to go
30 ahead and recess here and we are going to have some
31 cake and then come back in a few minutes and recess for
32 the day.

33

34 (Off record)

35

36 (PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33

C E R T I F I C A T E

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)
)ss.
STATE OF ALASKA)

I, Salena A. Hile, Notary Public in and for the state of Alaska and reporter of Computer Matrix Court Reporters, LLC, do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing, Pages 1 through 36 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD MEETING, VOLUME I taken electronically by our firm on the 10th day of January 2017, in Anchorage, Alaska;

THAT the transcript is a true and correct transcript requested to be transcribed and thereafter transcribed by under my direction and reduced to print to the best of our knowledge and ability;

THAT I am not an employee, attorney, or party interested in any way in this action.

DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 17th day of January 2017.

Salena A. Hile
Notary Public, State of Alaska
My Commission Expires: 09/16/18