

FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD

PUBLIC REGULATORY MEETING

VOLUME II

EGAN Convention Center
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

April 11, 2018
8:30 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Anthony Christianson, Chairman
Charles Brower
Rhonda Pitka
Karen Mouritsen, Bureau of Land Management
Greg Siekaniec, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bert Frost, 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 P R O C E E D I N G S

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(Anchorage, Alaska - 4/11/2018)

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(On record)

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'm going to go ahead and let Tom run through a little bit of what the agenda will look like this morning.

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MR. DOOLITTLE: Good morning. I'd like to start with introductions with our State and RAC partners and our Board so we can introduce everybody. Yesterday we went from the consultation right into part of our agenda, so we didn't get into the formality of introductions. So it's great to have everybody here. Look forward to a productive day.

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After the introductions we will go into Regional Advisory Council comments, which I believe we have a full cadre here. We had postponed that from yesterday. We will actually have after that comments on non-agenda items from the crowd. We will look at the regulatory proposal process and one part of that will be a tribal consultation summary from Orville from the consultations that occurred on Monday of this week. We will announce the consensus agenda, which will be on Pages 1 and 2. At that time the public comments on the consensus agenda items will be done. So that will be a time for that. There will be another time for comments on the consensus agenda items also tomorrow. Then we will start the main part of the discussion on the non-consensus items after that.

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So I guess we'll start with the introductions.

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Start with Jill.

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MS. KLEIN: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Doolittle. Good morning, Chairman Christianson and members of the Board, RAC Chairs, OSM Staff and the public. My name is Jill Klein and I'm a special assistant to Commissioner Cotten at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the State of Alaska through the Alaska Department of Fish and Game is happy to be here today and to take part in the Federal Subsistence Board process as a liaison to the Board. We look forward to sharing our comments during the

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1 wildlife regulatory cycle process here and to
2 participating in discussion with Board members and RAC
3 Chairs.
4

5 To my left are staff from a couple of
6 different divisions at the Department and I'd like to
7 have them introduce themselves.
8

9 MS. OLSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm
10 Lisa Olson. I am the Deputy Director for the Division
11 of Subsistence. I'm from Anchorage and am based in
12 Anchorage.
13

14 MR. BUTLER: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
15 Members of the Board. My name is Lem Butler. I'm the
16 Assistant Director for the Division of Wildlife
17 Conservation and I'm based in Juneau. In the audience
18 we have Ryan Scott, who is our Regional Supervisor for
19 the Division of Wildlife as well. He'll be helping us
20 with the first few proposals this morning.
21

22 MR. BURCH: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
23 I'm Mark Burch. I'm the Special Projects Coordinator
24 with the Division of Wildlife Conservation for Fish and
25 Game.
26

27 MS. ROGERS: Good morning, Mr. Chair
28 and folks today. I'm Alissa Rogers. I'm the Yukon-
29 Kuskokwim Regional Chairman and this is Jackson, who is
30 a Board member in training.
31

32 MR. WOODRUFF: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
33 I'm representing the Eastern Interior RAC and I want to
34 welcome everyone and their input. Thank you.
35

36 MR. REAKOFF: Mr. Chairman. Jack
37 Reakoff. I live in Wiseman, the Central Brooks Ranges,
38 Western Interior Regional Advisory Council Chair.
39

40 MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you. I'm Don
41 Hernandez. I'm the Acting Chair for the Southeast
42 Regional Advisory Council. I live in Point Baker,
43 which is on Prince of Wales Island.
44

45 MS. CAMINER: Good morning. I'm Judy
46 Caminer, Vice Chair of the Southcentral Regional
47 Advisory Council. Chairman Encelewski will be here
48 this afternoon. Thank you.
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1 MS. PENDLETON: Good morning all. Beth
2 Pendleton. I'm the Regional Forester for the U.S.
3 Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, and based in
4 Juneau, Alaska.

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6 MR. POLACCA: Good morning everyone.
7 Lynn Polacca, Bureau of Indian Affairs. I'm the Deputy
8 Regional Director for Trust Services and sitting in for
9 the Acting Regional Director.

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11 MR. C. BROWER: (In Inupiaq) from
12 Utqiagvik, public member Charles Brower from Barrow.

13
14 MS. PITKA: Good morning. Rhonda
15 Pitka, FSB public member. I'm the chief in the village
16 of Beaver.

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18 MR. LORD: Good morning. My name is
19 Ken Lord and I work for the Solicitor's Office.

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21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Anthony
22 Christianson, Federal Board Chair. (In Haida) It's a
23 good day to be here. Charlie started it.

24
25 MR. DOOLITTLE: I'm Tom Doolittle and
26 I'm the Deputy Assistant Regional Director for OSM.

27
28 MR. PELTOLA: Gene Peltola, Jr., ARD
29 OSM.

30
31 MR. SIEKANIEC: Good morning and
32 welcome, everyone. Greg Siekaniec, Fish and Wildlife
33 Service based here in Anchorage.

34
35 MR. FROST: Good morning. My name is
36 Bert Frost. I'm the Regional Director for the National
37 Park Service also based here in Anchorage.

38
39 MS. MOURITSEN: Hello. I'm Karen
40 Mouritsen, Acting State Director for BLM, Alaska, in
41 the Anchorage Office too.

42
43 MR. G. BROWER: Good morning.
44 Uvlaalluataq (in Inupiaq). My name is Gordon Brower.
45 I represent Region 10 on the North Slope. Glad to be
46 here. It's my first time being Chairman for the RAC.
47 I had large shoes to fill in with Harry being our
48 Chairman for 20-plus years, I guess. Thank you.

49
50

1 MR. SHIEDT: Good morning. Attamuk
2 from Northwest Alaska at Kotzebue. Enoch Shiedt,
3 Chairman for the Federal at Northwest Alaska.

4
5 MS. TRUMBLE: Good morning. Della
6 Trumble and I represent the Kodiak/Aleutians.

7
8 MR. GREEN: Good morning. Louis Green,
9 Jr. I represent the Seward Peninsula RAC as the Chair.
10 I'm glad to be here. I appreciate all you folks here
11 too.

12
13 Thanks.

14
15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: With that,
16 thank you. Welcome, everybody. It's good to get those
17 introductions and put names to the faces. Now we'll
18 start with the Regional Advisory Council comments.
19 We'll start on this end with Alissa. We have a request
20 that Seward go last, so we'll start on this end.

21
22 MS. ROGERS: I was just about to ask
23 the same thing. All right, folks. Thank you, through
24 the Chair, for our regional report. We'll start with
25 the spring. Last spring was a tough spring with the
26 weird melting. Our river melted in sections and it
27 didn't go out as it usually would. It melted mid-river
28 and then it started breaking up from there. Right?
29 Yeah? Okay.

30
31 And then the lack of migrational birds.
32 We didn't have very many that usually come through our
33 area, which was really weird because we have about
34 three different areas where we set up to go hunting.
35 We didn't have very much migration come through that
36 area like we usually do. I called out to the Yukon
37 River and asked them if they seemed to have the same
38 thing and they said, yeah, they're noticing the lack of
39 migrational birds coming through their area. When they
40 went out to go egg hunting down in Black River
41 something seemed off.

42
43 For the blackfish, when we usually get
44 blackfish during springtime because they seem to flow
45 within the fall and then spring the blackfish -- there
46 wasn't very many. Usually we can pull up maybe half a
47 (in Yup'ik) or three-fourths of a (in Yup'ik) of
48 blackfish and we were only getting maybe like 10 to 12
49 at the most. Springtime for (in Yup'ik) were dry,
50

1 small and very withered. There wasn't very much to
2 pick this year or last year.

3
4 We didn't get very much sheefish
5 because the regulations for chinook this year. For
6 summertime our chinook salmon -- everyone has updates
7 on the chinook salmon. Pretty much one of our biggest
8 hoping that we could get a stock of concern if that
9 would be possible because we're running on a good
10 streak here of not meeting subsistence needs and that
11 needs to be brought out to our attention.

12
13 Whitefish was really hard to catch this
14 year. We had a lack of hook and lining. We usually
15 have a good -- every high tide we have a good ability
16 to get whitefish in our slough and this year it was
17 even hard to catch them on hook and line.

18
19 We had really low water clear and our
20 tundra was super dry this year. Berries were not very
21 plentiful this year, but we did have good amounts of
22 salmonberries, but they were super small and they
23 ripened super quick. I noticed that too. Our (in
24 Yup'ik), when we pick it during that year, they were
25 very small and they tasted different. There was a
26 different taste about them.

27
28 Our coho fall fishing was very
29 sporadic. Usually when we go out we can set and just
30 drift a certain amount and then we catch enough to
31 bring home. This time we had to go for three hours
32 straight and it was very unusual because usually we'd
33 go fishing at the peak of the time and we'd go fishing
34 and then just a short drift and we'd be done.

35
36 I asked people around for the past
37 weeks how their fishing was and every single week was a
38 different outcome, but they said the same thing too all
39 the way through till about early September. It was the
40 same exact type of fishing. They were coming in very
41 sporadic here and there and it was a lot of effort to
42 catch a coho.

43
44 And we were catching chums and a couple
45 reds during the wintertime underneath the ice. There
46 was reports in Kuskokwim River and on the Yukon that
47 there was people catching the fish in like late
48 December, which is like the third year in a row that
49 people have been reporting that happening.

50

1 Tough winter this year. We had really
2 a lack of snow, hunting, trapping. We couldn't get to
3 our trapping grounds. The lack wasn't safe and we
4 couldn't get across the lake and we didn't want to try
5 to push our way through and end up falling through. So
6 we had to find new trapping grounds.

7

8 Other than that I believe that's all of
9 the things I can think of for my area.

10

11 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
14 Alissa. Any questions for Alissa.

15

16 (No comments)

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18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
19 your presentation. Appreciate it.

20

21 Don.

22

23 MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr.
24 Chairman. Speaking with our Council Chair, I have five
25 issues that the Council has great concern over.
26 Perhaps a bookkeeping thing was how do you pull a
27 proposal once it gets into the system. It stymied the
28 Council when Fortymile asked to pull their proposal and
29 there was no means to do that until it got here and I
30 think that could be easily corrected.

31

32 Number one on the list is that the TEK
33 and how it's used by OSM to do evaluations of our
34 proposals. The Council feels that it's undervalued in
35 the proposals and we really value the elders' input.

36

37 Number two, the Fisheries Monitoring
38 Program. The Council feels that they're getting a lot
39 less input on this and I know other Councils feel that
40 way. I think this is a very important program. When I
41 went to the all-Council meeting here, we had a whole
42 workshop on the Fisheries Monitoring Program and now
43 we're just invited to discuss it online. I think
44 that's very inadequate. I think that naturally change
45 is not that appetizing, but we want to go back to the
46 old way where the full Council has input on the
47 Fisheries Monitoring Program because it's very
48 important to us.

49

50

1 Number three is the chinook
2 conservation. There are no big fish. There's no
3 seven-year-old fish in the genetic pool any longer.
4 There's very few six-year-old fish coming back. So we
5 feel that first pulse protection is critical. After
6 our Council meeting the Board of Fish opened first
7 pulse protection on Y1/Y2 and we're really unhappy with
8 that, so I put a proposal in for full pulse protection
9 throughout the river. Everyone should be able to
10 sacrifice a little bit for our generations to come, our
11 grandchildren. That's why we're here sacrificing all
12 of our time. It's for our grandchildren.
13

14 Number four, calendar of events. Our
15 Chairman said that we're overwhelmed as volunteers.
16 That we have -- me being here I'm missing two other
17 meetings. It would be really beneficial if OSM could
18 put a calendar of events out so that we can schedule
19 other meetings that we have to participate with or are
20 participating with.
21

22 And number five, the Final Rule by the
23 Refuges and the Park Service. We don't feel that we
24 have a reasonable time for input. Some of these Final
25 Rules come in and comment period come in after our
26 meetings where the whole Council can't participate. We
27 think that could be alleviated pretty easily.
28

29 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
30

31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
32 questions.
33

34 (No comments)
35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Jack.
37

38 MR. REAKOFF: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
39

40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, one second.
41 Sorry, Jack. There is just on the withdraw -- Ken
42 showed me here that once a regulatory proposal is
43 considered by the Federal Regional Advisory Council and
44 the Council recommendation is made the proposal can be
45 withdrawn by the proponent only with the approval of
46 the Federal Subsistence Board. So that's just a
47 policy.
48

49 MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you.
50

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Sorry, Jack.

2 Go ahead.

3

4 MR. REAKOFF: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
5 live in the Central Brooks Range, so we had the pretty
6 hot summer, dry and then it got real rainy and it
7 basically rained hard all the rest of the fall. Rivers
8 were really high. A lot of the spawning habitat for
9 chinook and various salmon in the upper drainages were
10 pretty much torn out by the fall rains.

11

12 We had a warm winter with quite a bit
13 of snow and the snow depths were up to 34 to 48 inches
14 of snow in the Central Brooks Range. With all of the
15 light freezing and warm weather there was very little
16 off ice. The water ran underneath the ice and I've
17 rarely seen drainages that didn't have off ice in them.
18 So the rivers are running real nice discharge for fish,
19 but we had fall rains that tore out a lot of the reds.

20

21 We didn't have any rain on the snow
22 this winter for Dall sheep and caribou, but we do have
23 deep snow. The caribou were high. We had more caribou
24 come into the Central Brooks Range from actually four
25 different caribou herds and with the deeper snow the
26 wolves are working on those caribou fairly heavily, so
27 the wolves have the advantage when they have deep snow
28 like that.

29

30 Lots of snowshoe hares were coming into
31 our snowshoe hare peak. So we can expect a higher
32 number of predators, wolves, production this summer.
33 They'll have lots of pups, they'll have lots of food to
34 feed the puppies, so there will be an increase in wolf
35 populations this coming year. There's lots of food for
36 predators. The lynx, the wolves, hawks, all of these
37 owls. They're all doing really well. The predators
38 are doing well.

39

40 The Central Brooks Range has basically
41 an 18 to 19-year cycle for snowshoe hares. We haven't
42 seen this kind of hare population since 2000, 2001. So
43 this is going to be a big boon to the predators during
44 this time.

45

46 Our Council still has concerns about
47 the caribou and sheep recovery from 2013 late spring
48 that caused a huge decline in Dall sheep and caribou.
49 A lot of biologists were calling what happened to these

50

1 caribou. It's like 2013 late spring. Basically no
2 melting right until right before they lambled or calved.
3 They didn't have any protein. They lambled into snow.
4 We lost all the calves and lambs that year. Lost all
5 the recruitment that year. All calves and lambs died
6 that year.

7
8 The next year the fecundity or the
9 productivity of those populations were really poor, so
10 we lost three cohorts. Two cohorts because they didn't
11 look at that yearling loss. It was a huge yearling
12 loss that year.

13
14 The caribou and sheep are recovering.
15 Now we have a deep snow all the way to the west. We
16 have deep snow over in the Kobuk also. A little
17 concerned about these recoveries. We're not out of the
18 woods yet. We're starting to see caribou population
19 start to come up especially with digital photography.
20 I applaud the Department on going to digital
21 photography for caribou censussing using 100 megapixel
22 cameras instead of film in like the Dark Ages. I'm
23 really happy about that.

24
25 I am still concerned about the chinook
26 recovery. We got one good really nice return here.
27 We're not out of the woods on these king salmon yet.
28 So the Yukon River king salmon and especially on the
29 Kuskokwim River those are big concerns for our Council
30 because those are a major food source for the Western
31 Interior Council constituency, our subsistence users.

32
33 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
36 Jack. Any questions for Jack.

37
38 (No comments)

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40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
41 that presentation.

42
43 Donald.

44
45 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
46 First I want to thank the Board for taking some time
47 yesterday to remember the people that had been
48 important to the Board and the Councils. Of course
49 Mike Bangs' passing was quite a blow to the Council. I
50

1 guess the most important thing to know about Mike was
2 he was just a really good friend to everybody on the
3 Council and all the staff. He was a good personal
4 friend of mine for over 30 years. So I want to thank
5 the Board for that.

6
7 As far as our report goes, I'd like to
8 report that it's been a number of years that the
9 Southeast Council has been working through the
10 Secretarial Review process and how it dealt with
11 changes to customary and traditional use
12 determinations. I'm pleased to report that we finally
13 have a proposal before the Board on the wildlife side
14 that has made it to the consensus agenda dealing with
15 deer in Southeast. The Council has submitted a
16 proposal dealing with fish for your next cycle, so
17 we're kind of pleased with that.

18
19 Also one of the things that's very
20 important to Southeast Council is the funding for the
21 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. We always like
22 to remind the Board how important that is to Southeast
23 residents, particularly the importance of the capacity
24 that's being built in the local communities with people
25 working with the Federal staff and doing these
26 projects. It's very valuable and we want to see that
27 continue.

28
29 On the wildlife side of course we have
30 some very important issues before the Board at this
31 meeting. We spent a lot of time discussing the wolf
32 situation on Prince of Wales Island. Deer on Prince of
33 Wales Island has been a topic of concern for many
34 years. I first met Chairman Christianson 15 years ago
35 when we worked together on a subcommittee dealing with
36 that issue. It is before us again.

37
38 In relation to that wildlife side,
39 right now the Forest Service is going through some
40 long-range planning efforts. They call it landscape
41 level analyses and they are in the process of doing one
42 of those analyses for Prince of Wales Island right now.
43 The Council is paying close attention to what is
44 happening there.

45
46 We want to have every opportunity to
47 weigh in on that process as far as subsistence
48 concerns. The Forest Service is about to begin
49 landscape level analysis for the Central Southeast
50

1 Region. The Council has identified that Central Region,
2 basically encompassing Unit 3, does have a lot of
3 subsistence concerns with the deer populations.
4

5 Central Southeast has always been very
6 vulnerable to large fluctuations in deer populations.
7 Presently it's got the lowest bag limits and some of
8 the shortest seasons for the Southeast District area.
9 So through the course of this landscape level analysis,
10 which talks about many topics, access, timber harvest,
11 recreation, subsistence, we want to be informed and
12 involved in that process.
13

14 We also get a lot of comments at all
15 our meetings about sea otters. It continues to be an
16 issue with people on the effects of the growing sea
17 otter population on mostly our shellfish. I think the
18 Council would like to see some efforts made to make it
19 more possible for increased harvest by eligible natives
20 on the sea otters. We look forward to that and
21 hopefully it can happen.
22

23 I think probably our last meeting, even
24 though it was a wildlife meeting, I think an awful lot
25 of concern here on what's happening in our marine
26 environment. We had a lot of direct discussions on
27 water quality issues at our last meeting. Mining being
28 a particular concern. We are waiting to see what will
29 happen with these transboundary mines or mines on
30 transboundary rivers. The mining is going to be taking
31 place in Canada that is in the drainages of some of our
32 major fish-producing rivers. People are very
33 apprehensive about that.
34

35 We also had people that had concerns
36 about mines that are taking place in the local area.
37 We have one mine in particular that has shown to be
38 maybe a cause of mercury pollution in local waters.
39 That was of great concern. So mining is kind of an
40 issue now.
41

42 But we're also experiencing some very
43 concerning failures in our fisheries. Right now the
44 king salmon to all the local Southeast systems are in
45 serious decline. Managers, mostly Fish and Game, have
46 had to make some severe restrictions on this coming
47 sport fishing, commercial fishing and the Board is
48 probably going to have to have some emergency actions
49 on subsistence fishing as well. Places like the
50

1 Stikine River.

2

3

4 We also have other runs that are in
5 jeopardy. We're continuing to see basically a failure
6 of some of our major eulachon runs to rivers. Unuk
7 River in particular is of concern, but it's kind of a
8 region-wide problem. A lot of these failures are not
9 necessarily attributable to what's happening in the
10 river systems themselves. They're relation to ocean
11 conditions. I think that causes the people affected
12 just a particular feeling of unease because it's
13 something that we don't really know that much about and
14 really don't have much control over easily and that's
15 an unsettling feeling to a lot of people, I think.
16 It's not something you can necessarily have a
17 regulatory fix for. We can only react to the situation
18 and not really solve it with regulation. It's a bigger
19 problem than that.

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Also I kind of want to report that
along those same lines, this is kind of new
information. A very important subsistence fishery and
commercial fishery takes place every year in Sitka that
harvest the herring roe. It has been a very poor
fishery on the commercial side. They had an 11,000 ton
quota harvest guideline. They left 8,300 tons uncaught
because the quality of the roe was just poor.

The subsistence harvest, which is very
important to many communities in Southeast, is going on
right now. I can't say what the results will be, but
talking to people from Sitka it does not sound very
good. So that's also very unsettling.

I think that pretty much sums up my
report.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Don.
Any questions for Don.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
that report.

Judith.

1 MS. CAMINER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
2 Southcentral Regional Advisory Council. First of all
3 we would like to thank Board Member Pendleton for her
4 years of dedication here on the Board. Since Southeast
5 and Southcentral comprise most of your area of
6 oversight we really appreciate your diligence and your
7 staff's dedication as well to upholding Title VIII.
8 That's really been very meaningful to us, so thank you
9 so much.

10
11 Our Council has a special action.
12 There's going to be public hearing on this -- excuse
13 me, a Council meeting on this on the 17th and this has
14 to do with fisheries in the Kenai River. So we're
15 looking forward to participating in that and we're glad
16 we have that opportunity so we can provide comments to
17 the Board ahead of your decision on it.

18
19 Our RAC is always concerned with
20 delegations of authority and we see that that's going
21 to be a discussion later on in this meeting on
22 wildlife, but we look forward to that similar
23 discussion on fisheries also.

24
25 Another item that we're concerned about
26 or maybe confused about, and hopefully this meeting may
27 solve part of it, is our relationship with the Ahtna
28 Intertribal Resources Commission. We've worked very
29 closely with them for several years now. Several of
30 the proposals involve AITRC and I hope that today's
31 meeting will provide a little bit more clarification
32 for both of us on how we'll proceed to continue working
33 together.

34
35 One comment perhaps for Eastern
36 Interior on the Fisheries Monitoring Plan. One thing
37 our Council was encouraged to do by OSM a few years ago
38 was to form a subcommittee and there was about four of
39 us on a priority information needs subcommittee to the
40 RAC and we tried to determine, with the RAC's approval,
41 what information needs we would look to from the
42 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. So I think
43 that's helped focus some of the proposals coming in.
44 It may not help get more funding or better proposals,
45 but it does help refine exactly what the region is
46 looking for.

47
48 Some of the topics I think we'd like to
49 see more information on as we have future meetings
50

1 would include climate change and contaminants. Also
2 most recently discussed has been this bacterial disease
3 that seems to be affecting wild goats and sheep. So
4 that's going to be a concern probably to all of the
5 RACs and I hope that all the RACs might get some
6 additional information on that as we meet.

7
8 We too have concerns over chinook and
9 Upper Cook Inlet particularly will be asked to make
10 some sacrifices this year as will others because of the
11 declining populations.

12
13 Lastly, it looks like we're going to be
14 involved with a rural determination. We had some
15 discussion of a request from a community at our last
16 meeting, so that will be an ongoing discussion with the
17 Board and others.

18
19 Thank you very much.

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21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
22 Judith. Any questions for Judy.

23
24 (No comments)

25
26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none.
27 Thank you. Appreciate that.

28
29 We'll go on to Gordon.

30
31 MR. G. BROWER: Thank you, Mr. Chair
32 and members of the Federal Subsistence Board. I'd like
33 to also thank our representative from the North Slope,
34 Charlie Brower, for being a long-time member here. Me
35 being really new to this at this level, I'm usually
36 very, very active and have been very active the last
37 20-plus years with the RAC. It was a recommendation
38 from our leadership back in the mid 1990s that we
39 should try to do what we can to help our people.

40
41 I stay very involved and I was taking
42 notes because some of those guys on that side of the
43 aisle prompted a lot of the same issues and concerns
44 that come from our constituency, our villages. It's
45 important for I think the Board to hear these things
46 because your makeup is very important to hear and how
47 you're going to deliberate and how you're going to act
48 on some of the things that are important to each
49 region.

50

1 I would like to just start off by --
2 you know, we're, I think, nine communities on the North
3 Slope from Kaktovik to Point Hope. Many of the
4 communities are dependant on the ocean and that land.
5 There are a couple of communities that are exclusively
6 dependant on land.

7
8 I'd like to start off by saying our
9 communities -- we go through a census within our North
10 Slope and internally with our own home rule borough do
11 a lot of work to look at the growth and the state of
12 our villages and what's going on with them. So I try
13 to stay keenly aware with those kind of concerns.
14 About 80 percent of our villages are highly
15 subsistence-dependant or supplement all of their needs
16 through subsistence resources.

17
18 A lot of our data that's collected into
19 our plan suggests that the economics in our villages we
20 are a very highly economically depressed area. Even
21 though we're a North Slope Borough, the economic
22 engines just does not exist within our communities. In
23 a community of four or five hundred people you're going
24 to probably have maybe 60 and possibly 70 jobs.

25
26 What are the rest of the 400 people
27 doing with their children? Well, they're being
28 supplemented by these people that have some jobs and
29 those people are subsisting. They're living off of the
30 land. They're providing clothing, food on the table.
31 This is something that really needs to be grasped and
32 taken into account. It's not like if we were blocked
33 off we could come to the Walmart over here with our
34 community and block everybody off from Walmart.

35
36 Those are the same concepts that really
37 can impact villages when we're looking to make sure
38 food security issues and availability of these
39 resources -- reasonable availability of these resources
40 are maintained for communities to make sure their food
41 security issues are taken care of.

42
43 Some other of these things I wrote down
44 as I was listening. The very high cost of doing
45 anything on the North Slope, to build a house often
46 families are juggling resources. Should I go and hunt
47 for my family or should I put those resources to pay
48 the electricity bill or my \$2,000 diesel home heating
49 fuel bill. Those kinds of things. It makes it all the
50

1 more the need to recognize these types of issues
2 because people are struggling to put food on the table
3 a lot of times when you have to make those kinds of
4 decisions.

5
6 Other things that -- just a little bit
7 more on that high cost. Families pool resources
8 together and because of the high cost of fuels and
9 doing things -- mind you we put away our dog teams a
10 long time ago. Maybe if I had a dog team it would be a
11 little different, but my dog team requires motor gas,
12 it requires new skis, it requires a spring, requires
13 motor oil. That's my dog team nowadays.

14
15 So it's all of these things coming
16 together that we need to express these things very
17 loudly and clearly because that's what we're juggling
18 to deal with as representatives of our region. I hear
19 these things from Kaktovik, from Anaktuvuk, from Point
20 Hope, from our communities. To get the message across
21 clearly to those that will either make a difference or
22 make the changes necessary to make a difference. These
23 are those kinds of things.

24
25 It's all the more need for these folks
26 when they're pooling resources, the high cost of
27 things, to have a higher success rate. If you don't
28 have a high success rate to bring food on the table and
29 you expend those resources in a very depressed local
30 economy in villages, those resources are going to be
31 either coming to you later again or you're going to
32 have to find other means to do these things. So the
33 success rate is very important to communities and I've
34 heard that quite a bit.

35
36 Climate issues. I think there's issues
37 here that we're dealing with. I deal with them. I'm a
38 fisherman. I fish for my community. The style of
39 fishing I do is for community. I fish for myself, but
40 I fish for the entire community. That's the kind of
41 fishing I do. There's a few of us that do these things
42 and I hope more of the young people do these things and
43 pass it on.

44
45 The climate and food security issues
46 that come with fishing like this or harvesting in this
47 manner is we use the climate as a natural refrigerant
48 to preserve our food. The climate is struggling to do
49 these things. Often, when I have my fish, I have 70 to
50

1 90 sacks of fish that I fish just on the onset of
2 winter and I store it with the intent to haul all those
3 resources back to our community for our people when
4 it's the dead of winter. When I get back, often some
5 of those food resources are spoiled and beyond
6 consumption. So those are the types of issues climate
7 change brings.

8
9 This year alone the sea ice conditions
10 were so dramatically different that the Barrow Whaling
11 Captains Association are in heavy deliberation as I was
12 part of that because I'm a whaling captain. I have my
13 own crew to whale. The ice conditions, even the
14 scientists that are up there looking at these things
15 and other science that's going on say this is probably
16 a record well above record warm year in the Arctic.
17 Those kind of things are plaguing us and the need to do
18 something about these.

19
20 Not in terms of being like
21 environmentalists. I think we're already naturally
22 environmentalists in the way we do things, but being
23 adaptive. We need the help of adaptation. Those food
24 resources are still going to be used, but we need a new
25 method of freezing them right away so they don't spoil
26 so that when it's in the dead of winter we can haul
27 them and they're still in a good consumption state.

28
29 Caribou issues. Distribution of
30 caribou. You know, we heard about the new digital way
31 of counting things. Why hasn't that been done?
32 Digital counting and those kind of instrumentation have
33 been around for a decade or so. We have been using
34 these film and using these little magnifying glass to
35 look at dots for years and suddenly we have 50,000 new
36 caribou that came up on a digital view. To me that's
37 highly suspect. It's not a trend.

38
39 That should not be -- when we have had
40 a decade of serious decline -- Central and Teshekpuk
41 and Western Arctic Herd was 490,000 with the archaic
42 way of counting things. Just until a few years ago we
43 had just about down to 200,000. All the while every
44 community has been growing. You can't tell me there's
45 no children born between here and there. Our
46 communities are growing.

47
48 Thirty-eight communities depend on the
49 Western Arctic Herd between the Northwest Arctic
50

1 Borough, Seward Peninsula area, the Arctic Slope.
2 Thirty-eight communities consume the harvestable
3 surplus of these caribou. Grasp that in your mind.
4 The harvestable surplus has been eaten by the villages
5 that these animals serve. Be very careful about what
6 you do to affect.

7
8 One of the more alarming things that
9 when we had our Regional Council at the request of
10 Anaktuvuk Pass to have it in Anaktuvuk was the
11 condition of caribou. It was getting to a point where
12 the size of the herd had shrunk so much that it was --
13 the outer periphery seems like was the -- that touched
14 Anaktuvuk Pass. When it got smaller, that periphery
15 got smaller and the caribou weren't coming. That sums
16 maybe limited understanding of maybe the availability
17 of those resources for Anaktuvuk Pass.

18
19 But during a presentation I was made to
20 understand by the State biologist who count these
21 things knowing all the while that the decline was
22 imminent and going down, they combined to us and
23 revealed in these meetings that -- the State called it
24 the ANS, the amount necessary for subsistence, much
25 like derived out of the harvestable surplus --
26 combining the Teshekpuk Herd and the Western Arctic
27 Herd as one herd.

28
29 Then the area biologist has distinct
30 markers of where these herds differentiate each other.
31 They're distinct different herds. Doing things and
32 manipulating harvestable surplus to allow for other
33 competitors of the use of those resources was alarming.
34 So keep in mind some of these things as we hear this.
35 We look at this and hear these things. Very alarming
36 and concerning.

37
38 This year I had nephews that brought me
39 caribou and I always get blessed because I'm a whaling
40 captain. They like their captain to have good food and
41 all that. Besides they're just kind-hearted, my
42 nephews when they hunt. But they brought me caribou
43 and they didn't take a good look at it. In the '70s,
44 '80s, you didn't care. There was nothing wrong with
45 our caribou. The caribou that came to my house it had
46 live worms inside the meat. Live worms inside the
47 meat. Not the intestines where you would see these
48 things. So something is going on and I brought that
49 stuff to the wildlife department to take a look at
50

1 those.

2

3 So climate change I think is having
4 some impact to the health. The wildlife biologist said
5 this is getting to be a little bit more common.

6

7 Whales. The climate issues on our
8 whaling. Last year I think 90 percent of the fall
9 whale harvested also were infected with kidney worms.
10 Usually we don't see this. The whale is a very healthy
11 animal and every part of that, especially like the
12 kidneys are delicacies in our tradition. We like to
13 just barely cook them and they're red and it's very
14 fantastic to go along with muktuk. But we couldn't
15 consume those because they were riddled with these
16 worms that were about a foot or so long. One kidney
17 had as much as 100 worms in it.

18

19 So I think climate change issues and
20 things like this are starting to be impactful to
21 resources in the North Slope and through.

22

23 I think Jack alluded to some of the
24 things that we're seeing. A lot of our hunters are
25 being successful with predators. We have caribou. I
26 think it's Teshekpuk Herds on the North Slope. We have
27 a herd that stays around year round on top of some of
28 the reindeer that run away from here. They've been up
29 there and we noticed there's reindeer up there.

30

31 Some of these caribou are hanging
32 around villages. I see people talking about, hey,
33 there's caribou inside the village on this street or
34 so. When you start to see something like that, I think
35 it's enjoyable, but it makes you think a little bit too
36 because predators are out there in abundance moving and
37 pushing these animals around as well. I've heard from
38 hunters and their success rate on wolverines and wolves
39 are up there. Harvesting is pretty good for that
40 stuff.

41

42 Some of the other issues that we deal
43 with is oil and gas issues. In the Regional RACs we
44 get presentations from BLM for proposals on oil and gas
45 issues and some of the subsistence related impacts and
46 issues that surface out of these things. So we deal
47 with those kinds.

48

49 It's important to recognize that when

50

1 we're dealing with oil and gas issues on the North
2 Slope, we're also working to find a way how we could
3 minimize those impacts locally through the
4 municipality, like the North Slope Borough, through
5 rezoning, those kind of things that we have developed
6 like mitigation, fund advisory committee by the
7 assemblies to address so that we can offset the cost of
8 doing subsistence in some of the more impacted
9 communities.

10

11 Community needs and the cost to
12 villages. The community planning initiatives there's
13 been in these meetings, even at the RAC, the concerns
14 about the military cleanup issues that are needing to
15 be done that are very alarming. The Umiat site was a
16 formerly used military site. It is under super fund
17 clean-up type stuff. The amount of debris from the old
18 landfill that's impacting the river and the local fish
19 population and the perception by communities that their
20 food resources are being impacted by contaminants such
21 as PCBs and others.

22

23 You never know what the military did in
24 the '40s and '50s during that period of time and what's
25 buried in the landfill now that the Colville has
26 reached it and the need to pick that up. I've heard
27 estimates of \$900 million to fly all the debris out.
28 Dig it up and take it out. \$400 million to put a road
29 in, dig it up and drive it all out. Those kinds of
30 things that alarm the communities up there in terms of
31 protecting subsistence resources.

32

33 The other things that's been going on
34 and I think it should be keenly aware of the Board and
35 how some of the North Slope expresses its view in terms
36 of available resources, food security issues and stuff.
37 The North Slope is also served by the North Slope
38 Borough. It is the home rule borough to the extent
39 that law exempts the Federal and the State from abiding
40 by these home rule laws. They must abide by the home
41 rule of the borough as well. The need to work together
42 and develop a working relationship seriously exist.

43

44 Zoning laws. We had an oil and gas
45 forum where we expressed concern to the Federal and
46 State agencies work with us. We're willing to work
47 with you and we've developed a memorandum of understand
48 between DNR and the Borough or Commissioner Mack's
49 office in hoping to have a better working relationship
50

1 and I think there needs to be one with the DOI with the
2 Borough or the BLM for that matter for Federal lands
3 affected and to develop a better working relationship
4 with the home rule borough in the Arctic.

5
6 I think we must find time to make
7 changes that warrant community food security issues.
8 If we're looking at community plans that are mandated
9 by State law and required by home rule borough code of
10 ordinances that you must develop these plans for your
11 communities that include 90 percent of the policies of
12 the North Slope Borough are geared to protect
13 subsistence, subsistence resources and the availability
14 of those resources for the subsistence users.

15
16 A lot of them are geared to say
17 reasonable and where there's impacts a preponderance of
18 the evidence must exist. The dependency of these
19 resources for communities where we can't deflect them.
20 We can't make them unreasonable for them to harvest
21 them. We can do that by introducing competing users in
22 village area of influences that are derived from these
23 plans. I think it's a very important concept.

24
25 There may be -- the time might be right
26 to make these more understood so that necessary changes
27 between the Federal government agencies and how you all
28 do business, work with the local municipalities, home
29 rule boroughs, to making sure that we do not complicate
30 things any more than we need to for the reasonable
31 availability of subsistence resources to the
32 communities.

33
34 Lastly, I would like to just say that
35 it may be time to look at models such as the AEWC.
36 Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission was created from
37 tribes. I think the Inupiat Community of Arctic Slope
38 to help manage when the Federal government had made an
39 edict that bowhead whales -- there was going to be a
40 moratorium on hunting whales in the '70s and the
41 creation of the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission to
42 look at this.

43
44 It's ingrained in North Slope Borough
45 policy for any offshore activity that is oil and gas
46 related to be coordinated with the Alaska Eskimo
47 Whaling Commission for fear of deflecting bowhead
48 whales out of the normal and reasonable approach of
49 subsistence users. These are the mechanisms that are
50

1 created.

2

3 Maybe it's time to look at ways where
4 we could have co-management of resources on the North
5 Slope for our people to manage in a way that it's
6 successful for communities to harvest. That was done
7 in either late '70s and early '80s to develop
8 co-management of a resource that is a preponderance of
9 the evidence. Dependency of the villages and their
10 needs. We need to look at these things.

11

12 With that I'm going to conclude. I
13 probably could go on for days if I wanted to on
14 concerns. These are just some of the highlights and
15 concerns that I am inundated with from our Regional
16 Council on the North Slope.

17

18 Thank you very much.

19

20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
21 that presentation, Gordon. Any questions for him.

22

23 (No comments)

24

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I think your
26 point was well taken.

27

28 MR. GREEN: Mr. Chair.

29

30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, Louis, yes.

31

32 MR. GREEN: Just one question, Mr.
33 Chair, for Mr. Brower. There's been talk about gas and
34 oil exploration in the Bering Sea and the Bering
35 Straits. There's groups that are against it. I'm just
36 wondering how you handle that up on the North Slope.
37 How do the people work together on that? That's a
38 concern of some of us. I've been in the industry.
39 I've worked out in the Norton Sound when they brought
40 rigs there. Worked up on the North Slope for Piquiniq
41 Management Corporation and the ice with oil rigs, so
42 I'm familiar with. I just wanted to hear your opinion.

43

44 Thank you.

45

46 MR. G. BROWER: Through the Chair. I
47 didn't quite get your name again.

48

49 MR. GREEN: Louis Green. Thank you.

50

1 MR. G. BROWER: All right, Mr. Louis.
2 Oil and gas have been on the North Slope -- in fact, I
3 think it was an issue that helped create the argument
4 to form the North Slope Borough. The very issue that
5 created that.

6
7 It is a very, very hard and difficult
8 topic to balance the approach of oil and gas
9 development in an area where subsistence is the
10 mainstay. Oil and gas doesn't really provide the jobs
11 necessary for communities because it is so far removed,
12 but it is a necessary component in the Arctic because
13 it provides for the schools, the public safety, the
14 sanitary and waste management systems. Many of the
15 public facilities that are served in our communities
16 are funded through oil and gas. We're highly
17 dependent, otherwise we'd probably be wards of the
18 Federal government or something like that.

19
20 It does provide opportunities for
21 regional and village corporations and some jobs in that
22 way, but the contractual climate in that arena is a
23 fundamental part of corporate village initiatives to
24 make sure that they have a piece of the pie and be able
25 to work.

26
27 The balancing is another thing in
28 making sure that the communities are heard well and the
29 projects have mitigation measures in place that allow
30 for subsistence to adequately be balanced so that the
31 subsistence activities can occur with limited impact or
32 with mitigation measures that assist with the impact.

33
34 It's a fine line that we've got to play
35 in a serious balancing act in terms of making sure
36 subsistence activities are not impacted or challenged
37 by the infrastructure that is placed on the land. I
38 hope that helps.

39
40 MR. GREEN: Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr.
41 Brower, for that.

42
43 MR. SHIEDT: Mr. Chair.

44
45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, guys.
46 Enoch.

47
48 Mr. Brower.

49
50

1 MR. C. BROWER: I just want to say
2 something about what Gordon stated about the kidney
3 worms. You can imagine what the size of a whale, a
4 small size, about that big, the kidney about that long.
5 I think once you harvest a whale and the blood quits
6 flowing they coil themselves and you can't see them
7 until you cut through the veins and through the meat,
8 but once you start boiling them they start jumping out.
9 Because I'm a cook, I cook those things. Put them in
10 hot water and they start going (shooting sound). I
11 said holy -- excuse my language.

12

13 (Laughter)

14

15 MR. C. BROWER: But, you know, you can
16 imagine what they can do. They can jump up. They look
17 small, but once you pull them out, like he said,
18 they're about that long. I was devastated when I first
19 seen them. I said, oh, my God, and I'm going to eat
20 that. I was going to make a story, but I won't tell
21 it. I was going to make chow mein whale meat out of
22 those long noodles and had a new delicacy.

23

24 (Laughter)

25

26 Thank you.

27

28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Chuck chow
29 mein. All right.

30

31 Mr. Enoch, it's your turn.

32

33 MR. SHIEDT: Attamuk here from
34 Northwest Alaska. I'll start off with a simple one of
35 berries. Salmonberries were hardly any due to our
36 summer was cold and we knew that they were going to
37 freeze, but the others were plentiful. No matter where
38 you go there was blueberries and other salmonberries up
39 the river I'm talking about, but at the coastal
40 nothing.

41

42 Go back to in season with salmon. We
43 had a lot of salmon again. Our salmon for the chum was
44 so big that the heaviest that I get last summer I
45 weighed it, 28 pounds. That's the biggest we get and I
46 did not put rocks in his stomach either.

47

48 Our fall hunting at Noatak was
49 plentiful. It was good due to the closure, but it

50

1 warmed up and the caribou just turned around and headed
2 back north and we didn't get any caribou at Onion
3 Portage. They told me only about two, three hundred
4 crossed at Onion Portage. After that no more caribou.
5 The state trooper told me that all the caribou he get
6 -- what he see from flying at Noatak and Upper Kobuk
7 they were all heading back up north in August due to
8 warming.

9
10 To tell you the truth, no matter what
11 resources we have here temperature have a lot to do
12 with it, not only caribou, berries and birds also.
13 This is what I'm worried about.

14
15 Our coastal erosion is getting so bad
16 that we can't even hardly park our boats when it was
17 rough like we could. We could follow a wave all the
18 way to the beach. They're breaking so out that you're
19 scared you're going to sink. The erosion is getting so
20 bad that at the coast of Kotzebue last fall a camper
21 said, Enoch, it was blowing north, but the waves were
22 going over the land from the coast side and at the
23 widest is about only a mile with water. That's really
24 unusual.

25
26 Sure we worry about the coastal bluff
27 hitting toward the beach, but we get a lot of high
28 water last summer that campers were at their camp with
29 waders and they tied their boats right to their cabin
30 in case they have to go somewhere.

31
32 The other is where our migratory -- the
33 rock birds I call them, the ones that lay at the
34 cliffs. The shores are so eroded now it's pitiful.
35 It's really different. I mean we were there last
36 summer. Before we used to have to have a rock climber.
37 This year, for an old man over 70 years old, I could go
38 up with no problem. That's how much it's eroded really
39 bad.

40
41 Also beavers are so plentiful and it's
42 hurting us that they're blocking the creeks where the
43 fish are going to migrate. Thank God last year it saved
44 us because we get so much high water that the fish were
45 going over. If it didn't have that much snow and had
46 so much flooding, I think we would have had a lot of
47 dead whitefish mainly. Even up at Noatak, even there
48 at Point Hope, there's no trees at Point Hope, only
49 brushes. That's how far north they go.

50

1 Our river this year is thin. Believe
2 it or not it's two and a half feet at the most in some
3 places and it's getting scary. Even our ocean, our
4 bay, where we hunt and harvest oogruks, is really thin
5 this year. We had open water not too long ago.

6
7 Our sea fish this year is so plentiful
8 that we're getting them right in front of town, but a
9 lot of fins on our sea fish was missing. The middle
10 fin, the back fin, and some of them at the front fin
11 right under the gills there, which I think vitamin
12 deficiency is starting to hurt them. Sure, some of our
13 sea fish are healthy this year. Don't get me wrong.
14 Sometimes, a couple times, our auger hole is too small.
15 You can't pull it through they're so huge, but yet
16 their fins are missing. They're trying to tell us
17 something, but we are not listening and seeing what our
18 resources are telling us.

19
20 The main problem is we want to preserve
21 the way we put our fish and other stuff away, but we
22 have to deal with global warming. We natives have to
23 learn how to live with global warming. We need to
24 learn how to go around it. When we get trout to age it
25 for our frozen, we can't do that. We're scared because
26 when we get some last fall, sure it started getting
27 cold. Hopefully it stay cold. No, it warmed up that it
28 was raining in December and we have to throw them away
29 and we are wasting but we're not doing it on purpose.

30
31 Mother Nature is just doing it for us.
32 When they call, I said if you've got a freezer, you've
33 got to throw it in the freezer. If you're full, send
34 it to your friends and relatives. They'll throw it in
35 their freezer. I mean that's the only way we could
36 survive now. Thank God for the people and their
37 freezers.

38
39 The other one is we are lucky in
40 Northwest Alaska that we have Maniilaq Hunters Program.
41 It helped the harvesters on gas. In the villages we
42 give them up to half a drum to go harvest for the
43 elders and their families. Kotzebue we get a little
44 bit more because we've got to go further out. That's a
45 big difference. They do it twice a year, fall and
46 spring. That's when our diet starts is springtime and
47 also falltime because we preserve and put it away.

48
49 On our caribou we have some. They come
50

1 in but they migrate. They come in late due to global
2 warming, but that digital photo that was used this year
3 I've got a question. Do you have any backup to go back
4 in it? What I'm trying to tell them is compare your
5 photo counting versus the new. See what the
6 difference. After three years you could make me
7 believe if it's really working.

8
9 That's what my main concern is because
10 our caribou crashed from 490 to 200,000. Yet last
11 summer when I went up the Noatak I could tell the
12 difference between Teshekpuk Herd and the Western
13 Arctic Caribou Herd because I was taught by elders.
14 The Teshekpuk Herd is a little bit smaller and their
15 fur is a little bit darker. That's the way I see the
16 difference. We're getting Teshekpuk Herd and I tried
17 to tell the Fish and Game maybe you are counting
18 Teshekpuk Herd with the Western Arctic Caribou Herd.
19 That's why we extended the closure for another few
20 years.

21
22 Sure, when we first closed the Western
23 Arctic Caribou Herd I had a lot of people, transporters
24 and outfitters, were mad at me and one guy said I'm
25 losing close to half a million dollars because of you.
26 I said you're going to lose more if you keep taking it
27 and you don't have a chance for the caribou to
28 reproduce. Believe it or not the same guy went to me
29 July and said thank you. We see few caribou out there,
30 but they're coming back. I said I'm not going to open
31 it this year. I'm going to try to keep it closed.
32 Hopefully you could have your business open. I'm
33 trying to be fair with everybody.

34
35 Our resources are there for us natives
36 to live on because on my surveys -- I used to do
37 surveys in Northwest Alaska. Caribou surveys, how much
38 caribou we take, in Northwest Alaska alone. Average
39 per family is 14. Yet the number of 14 might be high
40 for the Outside people. No, not the way the meat is
41 because we take it bone and all. We take everything
42 else. Transporters and outfitters they're just worried
43 about the antlers. I don't know what kind of teeth
44 they got, but I don't eat them because I don't eat
45 antlers.

46
47 (Laughter)

48
49 MR. SHIEDT: And we talk to them. If

50

1 you get caribou, can you take it to Kotzebue or the
2 villages. That way we could give it out to the elders.
3 Yes, it's a good thing, yet due to global warming when
4 they brought meat we had to dispose of it because it
5 was already spoiled. It's a good idea. In later fall
6 it's good. Last summer when they were getting caribou
7 right around my camp the bulls were already in rut. We
8 don't like to hunt them in rut because you're wasting
9 them. You're not going to eat them anyhow.

10

11 It's a big concern we have because our
12 main diet is caribou. Sure, we eat a lot of char, but
13 we have a lot of char this year like before. We put it
14 away, but we had to be careful of the spoilage. Like I
15 already stated, we natives got to learn to live with
16 the global warming. We have no choice.

17

18 So on our regulations we're trying to
19 make it in place, but we can't change it too much
20 because we try to follow the global warming and if we
21 keep it open right at rut, we're going to waste the
22 caribou, the resources. That's why I'm scared to
23 change our regulations any more. Why change it if you
24 can't eat it to make it better for the community to
25 take. You have to look at the resources, how they
26 survive.

27

28 Our people are happy that they get
29 caribou this year, but now they're heading up north.
30 There's hardly any caribou at Upper Kobuk. They see
31 some. They said less than 2,000 herd. At Deering and
32 Buckland they have to go way toward Koyuk to get the
33 caribou. So they're going south a lot further. Western
34 Arctic Caribou Herd migrate all the way to Unalakleet
35 from our neighbor here at North Slope. That's why we
36 have to involve the community and I don't like to make
37 regulations without contacting the others.

38

39 Thank you.

40

41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
42 Enoch. Any questions for Enoch, discussion.

43

44 Gordon.

45

46 MR. G. BROWER: A question for Attamuk.
47 About five years ago we had a big initiative along
48 with our wildlife department to go and visit villages
49 to try to be part of the solution in reducing harvest

50

1 levels that were locally driven to make what we did
2 traditionally into law as the regulation. I'm
3 wondering if those same kind of initiatives took place.
4 Like we don't hunt the rutted bulls from about October
5 5 or 10. In our region they get good again after they
6 drop their antlers about December 5 and you can hunt
7 the bulls again. They're good for meat.

8
9 We made that as part of our regulatory
10 proposals and had it changed and then aligned it with
11 State regs. I think the State likes to take credit for
12 it, but I think it was the local folks that wanted to
13 be part of the solution to limit the harvest and I'm
14 wondering if that was something that maybe occurred in
15 your guys' region as well.

16
17 MR. SHIEDT: Yeah, we -- through the
18 Chair. That's into consideration. We use when we try
19 to put in regulation when we could close and open. The
20 rutting time is right around October 10 to mid October.
21 Ours is a little bit different. They take a little bit
22 longer to get better. We wait until January for our
23 bulls to be edible, yet they get more fat in their
24 stomachs at March. They're better off at the time.

25
26 But we consider and we take input from
27 all the villages and what they think of the closure.
28 When we put the closure, we don't just do it being the
29 Federal Board. I contacted every village and I went to
30 every village to say what do you think of the closure.
31 The closure did not come from me. Basically it came
32 from the communities. I went to every community and
33 see if it's okay with you guys and that's why I'm
34 comfortable with the closing and opening dates for our
35 caribou.

36
37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
38 Enoch. Any other questions.

39
40 (No comments)

41
42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
43 Thank you.

44
45 Della, your turn.

46
47 MS. TRUMBLE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
48 I've been elected the Chair for the Kodiak/Aleutians,
49 but I've been a part of this process probably 10 years

50

1 ago, so it will take me a little bit to refresh my
2 memory on the process. We'd like to thank Speridon for
3 covering for us for the past 10 years. We wish him
4 well as he moves forward.

5
6 We've had a mild winter this past
7 winter. Very little snow and most of the snow that we
8 did have was in the mountains. The temperatures were
9 pretty warm, whereas the year before we had extremely
10 cold temperatures for long periods. I want to say like
11 three to four months, which is unheard of because our
12 weather changes in both regions fairly fast from warm
13 to cold. So we're hopeful that it has a better impact
14 or a positive impact on berries because we did not have
15 any berries this last year.

16
17 We have a concern I think at this point
18 with sea otters in Kodiak on the Kodiak side. The
19 issue is the high population of sea otters. On the
20 Aleutian side I think there was a large die-off of sea
21 otters in Nelson Lagoon, Port Moller recently. I've
22 heard numbers of up to possibly 100. There's a
23 possibility that it was a strep virus; however, the
24 autopsies are still being done and we wait to hear what
25 that report is.

26
27 Caribou, as you well know I think and
28 are familiar with the caribou in 90 and 10, the Alaska
29 Peninsula and Unimak, I think that herd seems to be
30 doing well on the 90 side and looks to be growing on
31 Unimak, which is 10. We hope to not only increase the
32 harvest on the 90 side, but to allow for subsistence
33 hunts in False Pass on Unimak on 10.

34
35 We've had the hunt for Emperors this
36 past year on both Kodiak and Aleutians for the
37 subsistence and also kind of curious to see those
38 survey numbers after they're all put together. I
39 believe it was one goose per resident or household. We
40 did however see an increase of the sport guides in Cold
41 Bay with a lot of hunters going in to get their one
42 Emperor because a lot of their collections are missing
43 that one Emperor Goose. So it was interesting to see
44 the influx and the increased influx of that activity.

45
46 The caribou and the birds with the
47 guides in Cold Bay and up north towards Nelson Lagoon
48 have been very good about sharing their subsistence
49 harvest, whether it be caribou or birds, with the

50

1 communities of Nelson Lagoon, Cold Bay, False Pass and
2 King Cove with us to share and give it to elders.
3 We're thankful for that because it's pretty spendy to
4 be moving around in our region or traveling around
5 within our region.
6

7 From the side of the Kodiak/Aleutian
8 Council it continues to be concerned and we realize
9 it's an issue of funding and being cut back. I mean
10 there are things that are out of our control. We
11 understand that, but we also are concerned and
12 recognize that we really are two regions. That Kodiak
13 is a region and Aleutians is another region. To make
14 Kodiak our hub and saying that our meetings need to be
15 in Kodiak is a major concern for our Council because if
16 you can't, like I said yesterday, be on the ground or
17 closer to the people you represent, it makes your job
18 hard to do.
19

20 I think the other issue was process on
21 proposals. We had a lengthy discussion of this at our
22 last meeting and I think we've asked to have it on our
23 next meeting as a workshop to not only educate
24 ourselves on the beginning to the end of this process.
25 One of the other concerns is how they're being rated
26 without some input from the Council. They were
27 confused when we felt like we walked away from a
28 meeting thinking it was going to be this way and then
29 come back the next meeting and the report is different.
30 So we asked to have a workshop on that at our next
31 meeting so we understand the process.
32

33 Other than that I'm thankful to be here
34 again. It's been a long time.
35

36 Thank you.
37

38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
39 Della. Any questions for Della.
40

41 (No comments)
42

43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
44 that presentation.
45

46 Louis.
47

48 MR. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My
49 name is Louis Green. I represent the Sitna -- excuse
50

1 me. I've got a lot of hats.

2

3 (Laughter)

4

5 MR. GREEN: Seward Peninsula RAC out of
6 Nome. So in discussions with RAC members at the last
7 meeting there was the concern that we don't have a lot
8 of Federal lands especially around the Nome area, but
9 there are some up on the north end like in Shishmaref
10 and Wales. Our issues are spread out. Unalakleet and
11 then down in Stebbins/St. Michael we reach out into
12 Unit 18 out of 22 there. So we're kind of spread
13 across the spectrum there.

14

15 As far as the hunting reports, I know
16 that people up in Shishmaref had to deal with the lack
17 of ice up there when they're oogrük hunting in the
18 springtime. The same thing happens out in the Bering
19 Strait with people from St. Lawrence Island, Gambell
20 and Savoonga. They have their issues. We all know
21 that the climate's changed. The water temperature has
22 warmed up in the Bering Sea and it's caused shifts in
23 timeframes of hunting. That doesn't say that there's
24 not success but it's a whole different arena out there
25 now.

26

27 I can recall hunting in the springtime
28 for walrus and oogrük and I was going out the first
29 week or two of May. Now you can just about get out
30 there in the early part of April. For instance the
31 bears are out early this year. They were out in March
32 in the Nome area.

33

34 Looking back at the interests of the
35 RAC, one of the things that we've -- we're all here
36 about food security, so one of the things is our salmon
37 migrations. We don't have any migration patterns and
38 there never has been I don't think. There's been small
39 studies but nothing to really steer us to where these
40 fish are running.

41

42 The times are changing now and our
43 waters are warming up. It's creating different times
44 of runs. The salmon may be expanding farther up north
45 as other species are doing. It would seem to me that
46 the Federal government and the State government would
47 get together. We talk about co-management. Would get
48 together and try to do some of this type of work. Our
49 RAC has asked for that more than once to try to get

50

1 some kind of migration study because it is important to
2 all of us to know what our salmon runs are doing.

3
4 Around the Nome area there on the road
5 system we have an over-abundance of pink salmon that
6 seem to be plugging our rivers every year. Chum
7 salmon, that's another issue I have. I don't think our
8 runs have ever been back to what they were in the '60s
9 and '70s as I was growing up. Fish and Game has the
10 thought that the last 30 years we're breaking records,
11 we're having record runs, but that's only new data.

12
13 Some of us talk about that we think
14 there are issues with things in management there that
15 could probably lean more on like tech. I'm almost 60
16 years old and I've been around at the time that the
17 State managed all this. Again, it would seem to me
18 that would be really important on our salmon runs
19 because salmon is so important to the Pacific Rim that
20 our Federal government and the State government would
21 be together on doing some kind of studies on there that
22 were specific to migration and whatnot.

23
24 As far as herring goes, I heard
25 somebody speak about herring. We have some of the best
26 herring, but we don't have a fishery anymore. It's
27 kind of faded away. I know that the subsistence use of
28 herring and roe is pretty good.

29
30 In the Nome area, the Salmon Lake red
31 run seems to be doing well. They've been fertilizing
32 that lake there for several years now, but I've been
33 told that they're warning people of a crash coming. So
34 I don't know how they've determined it, but that could
35 be a problem there because a lot of people depend on
36 those sockeye.

37
38 It takes a lot of money to go out and
39 get these sockeye because it's a distant run of 65
40 miles out on the highway there to get to the fishing
41 grounds where they seine, but a lot of folks have
42 become dependent on that run now because the quality of
43 that fish is a lot better than pink salmon I'll tell
44 you. The Nome River I think last year I said
45 overabundance. The pink run was like 1.6 million into
46 that little river. You choke them up with pinks and
47 everything else has a problem.

48
49 The comments on wildlife, you know,

50

1 I've heard of predation. Our predation is high on the
2 Seward Peninsula. We have plenty of wolves. When the
3 Western Arctic Caribou Herd ran over and came into our
4 section over there back in 1997, I think they brought
5 their four-legged brothers, the wolves, along with them
6 and they've decided to stay. We have a big decline in
7 our reindeer herds. We have a big decline in our
8 muskox. We're down to Tier II hunts.

9
10 Our moose hunt this year was set for
11 two weeks, which has been going on for a while. It's a
12 registered hunt. It only lasted seven days. At our
13 last RAC meeting I asked Fish and Game if they had
14 considered anything like Tier II hunting there and they
15 hadn't had any plans on that yet. It kind of worries
16 me and others that they're not taking the seriousness
17 of the decline of our animals.

18
19 Like I said, the muskox went down and
20 now it's a Tier II hunt again. They were at one point
21 healthy enough to be a Tier I hunt.

22
23 Beavers are plenty. I've heard other
24 reports of beavers. We've got so many beaver over
25 there. Like Enoch said, they plug the systems up. The
26 only thing I know that has been done is our people have
27 taken it upon themselves to actually try to wipe them
28 out a little bit. They are a pretty healthy animal.

29
30 We've got healthy populations of
31 ptarmigan and snowshoe hares I've been noticing, which
32 gives people opportunity to get small game.

33
34 Again, talking about marine mammals.
35 The earlier ice breakups has caused a problem. Not so
36 much -- they're not there -- the fact is, is those
37 animals I think are passing through the Bering Straits
38 earlier in the season than people are able to go out
39 and get them now. When we flew out of Nome -- last
40 week when I flew out of Nome I looked out on that whole
41 area out there all the way down through Unalakleet and
42 St. Michael and Stebbins and there was just all big
43 pans of ice all broke up, looked really thin.

44
45 So when you're preparing to hunt you
46 almost got to prepare in February to possibly go out in
47 March sometimes it seems. Again, learning how to adapt
48 to those different conditions are things that are
49 coming around that people are picking up on now.

50

1 Our hunting -- you know, I went out on
2 a caribou hunt. I had to go hunt over 100 miles in one
3 direction. That's very expensive. I've heard other
4 Chairs report the expense of fuel and whatnot to get
5 out to the hunting grounds. It's just as taxing in
6 Nome, Alaska as it is in Shishmaref. It's not cheap.

7
8 So when you go out you need to -- I've
9 heard how people -- it's set up in Shishmaref they do
10 get their caribou, but I seen in Nome it's starting to
11 pick up a little bit. The idea that you have to go
12 out, you have to recoup your losses by making sure you
13 have enough hunters to take enough animals back with
14 you when you go back. So you're looking at -- you want
15 to see 10 to 15 animals in two or three sleds, you
16 know.

17
18 It's felt where I'm from too as far as
19 the cost of taking part in subsistence. There's talk
20 of gas and oil. That's why I asked Mr. Brower how they
21 deal with it up on the North Slope because there's
22 people that are against gas and oil. President Obama
23 had a special order that closed it and then it got
24 reversed with Trump in office, but there's still people
25 that are against the idea that gas and oil exploration
26 shouldn't be taking place because it's detrimental to
27 our subsistence lifestyles.

28
29 I see both sides of it and the delicate
30 balance of it is -- it goes without saying it isn't
31 easy to deal with. Hearing how North Slope is, I guess
32 it's no different in my area.

33
34 I was going to follow up on something
35 else, but having said that I appreciate my time to make
36 my report, Mr. Chair.

37
38 Thank you.

39
40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
41 Louis. Any questions, comments for Louis.

42
43 (No comments)

44
45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
46 Donald, you had something.

47
48 MR. MIKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
49 Members of the Federal Subsistence Board and

50

1 representatives of the 10 Regional Advisory Councils.
2 I just want to apologize for our current sitting Chair
3 for Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council, Ms. Molly
4 Chythlook. She had a previous engagement and couldn't
5 make it and our designee had to cancel out at the last
6 minute to attend this meeting.

7
8 At its last winter meeting in Naknek
9 the Council brought up the issue of WP18-24 and they
10 requested that to be removed from the consensus agenda
11 being an important item for the Bristol Bay Region
12 based on the recent action of the Board of Game. I'll
13 be prepared to read a summary statement as to their
14 rationale requesting to be removed from the consensus
15 agenda.

16
17 The fall meeting the Council had
18 concerns about populations of ptarmigan declining and
19 that will be addressed through the annual report
20 process.

21
22 Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the
23 10 Regional Council Chairs, thank you.

24
25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
26 that quick update, Donald. Any questions for Donald.

27
28 (No comments)

29
30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
31 Thank you to the RAC Chairs for all of your
32 presentation and information. Like I said, it's very
33 valuable.

34
35 Della.

36
37 MS. TRUMBLE: Just one comment. The
38 Kodiak/Aleutians would like to thank Karen for being
39 our coordinator for the past number of years. She's
40 been a great coordinator and we are going to miss her.
41 I'd also like to note that you're going to mess up our
42 whole alignment since I'm the Chair, we have another
43 lady as a Vice Chair, another lady as the
44 Secretary/Treasurer and we did have our coordinator is
45 a lady, but it sounds like you're going to mess up how
46 we have it set up, but thank you.

47
48 I just wanted to share that.

49
50

1 (Laughter)

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Girl power.
4 Thanks for that. Again, thank you for your
5 presentations. At this time we're going to take a 10-
6 minute break. When we come back we're going to do
7 public comment on non-agenda items. Aniak, we'll have
8 you come up first in 10 minutes, after the break.
9 Don't forget to vote on the artwork.

10

11 (Off record)

12

13 (On record)

14

15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Welcome back,
16 everybody. Like I said yesterday we start every
17 morning with comments from the public on non-agenda
18 items and so with that I'm going to open the floor up
19 for that. First I'm going to call on Ivan from Akiak.
20 Mr. Williams, yeah, you guys come on up. You guys are
21 first.

22

23 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you very much, Mr.
24 Chairman. My name is Michael Williams. I'm on the
25 tribal council of Akiak Native Community for over 40
26 years and also currently serving as vice chairman for
27 the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and
28 also serving on several other capacities and counseling
29 in my community trying to help our young people and
30 people with issues of health.

31

32 This morning I'm going to briefly talk
33 about what we've been witnessing out there in Y-K
34 Delta. We had the concern for migratory birds in the
35 past and we negotiated and came up with an agreement,
36 the Hooper Bay Agreement, to conserve our migratory
37 birds. Lo and behold, they flourished.

38

39 We also had that moose moratorium and
40 we made sacrifices in the past and, lo and behold, they
41 flourished in the Yukon. Right now we have had
42 moratoriums in my area on the moose population and they
43 are coming back, but there are some opportunities for
44 harvest.

45

46 Particularly I wanted to mention the
47 historical management of our Kuskokwim fishery, which
48 are chinook, chum, reds and coho. We have historically
49 managed ourselves conservatively for many, many years.

50

1 In recent times we were hit with the low returns of
2 chinook like everybody else is talking about. It
3 happened in the Yukon. It happened in Norton Sound.
4 We are just paying a heavy price for being in a
5 terminal area.

6
7 We're taking a look at the bays, the
8 issues in the high seas on some of those issues that
9 have affected our take. I'm sure that spending a lot
10 of time with the elders, as you have heard in the
11 public testimony on our Refuge Manager's special action
12 request, the elders have made those comments on the
13 record about the importance of eating fish early on and
14 to have the sheefish, the whitefish that we
15 historically took early on. The taste of that chinook
16 early on.

17
18 So we have heard those concerns because
19 we have been closed from May 20th until June 12th. It
20 has been a long haul. When people want to eat, you
21 know, I just look at my elders and community members
22 sitting on the beach wanting to have that fish. It's
23 just very hard and I'd like to applaud my people for
24 making those sacrifices. We are paying a heavy price
25 for that.

26
27 I think with the current issue I think
28 what we've been able to do was that the healthy fish,
29 healthy people. I think we can get it done without
30 that much sacrifice because we, like Gordon said,
31 conservationalists too and we have been conserving all
32 of our resources to survive up to this date.

33
34 But I think on the Kuskokwim River with
35 the return numbers and harvest rates that we had last
36 year I think it would help in getting those 40,000
37 kings that we set but we took only to 15,000 kings last
38 summer because of the climate that hit us really hard
39 later on when we were going after the tail end of the
40 chinook and also the chums and reds. There was plenty
41 of them but the rains hit and there was a lot of
42 spoilage on the river and people quit fishing. So that
43 is one major reason why that was happening there.

44
45 When I fish in Akiak, that's above
46 Kwethluk River and Kisaralik River. In mid June it
47 seems to me those chinook are bigger and with lots of
48 roe on them and those are the spawners that I think --
49 the first ones are the ones that are mostly male and
50

1 blue back, but I think with the kind of climate change
2 that we had it has been -- you know, we experienced low
3 water in the beginning but we were lucky to have the
4 water level rise and then the chinook shot up the river
5 last year.

6
7 Hopefully with the snow that we have
8 had in the Alaska Range and recent snow that we had in
9 our area hopefully that will help with the levels of
10 water we had last spring. Again, later on during the
11 summer we had been hit very hard with high water in the
12 tributaries. That has been a little problem.

13
14 I just wanted to say Akiak Native
15 Community has issued a special action request, which
16 the public hearing is going to be on April 19th and the
17 formal tribal consultation is going to happen after
18 that. We just appreciate you hearing everyone on the
19 river, including our elders that are going to be
20 testifying during those times.

21
22 I really appreciate that opportunity
23 and that opportunity of our request in the past were
24 approved by the Federal Subsistence Board. When you do
25 that, it helps us and we have met all of the escapement
26 goals on the river and chinook ever since our sacrifice
27 that we made, but I think it's time and I'm glad that
28 Yukon is having a little bit better returns.

29
30 I was able to travel to Tanana when the
31 Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission was
32 established and I witnessed that event in Tanana with
33 the Yukon River tribes. There shortly after we
34 established the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish
35 Commission, which I really appreciate the tribes need
36 to be on the table like the Federal government is and
37 the State government is.

38
39 So all of us working together in one
40 river. We can make that difference. The goal that we
41 have is having the best managed fishery in the world on
42 the Kuskokwim River. That's the goal.

43
44 Thank you.

45
46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
47 Mike.

48
49 Ivan.

50

1 MR. IVAN: Thank you for this
2 opportunity. I just came in late afternoon yesterday.
3 Thank you for allowing me to speak. I'll be short. I
4 just want to touch on the history of our people. We've
5 been conserving for thousands of years. We take --
6 families take what they need. No matter how heavy a
7 run it is they quit.

8
9 Some years -- my elders tell me not all
10 the fish go into the river at one time. It depends on
11 the weather conditions. Some years a lot of them come
12 and some years not so many come in. A lot of them pass
13 by different age groups. That's the knowledge that our
14 elders tell us when we get concerned. They always look
15 to the weather as a forecast for what the fishing will
16 be. In the years past they know what fish is.

17
18 I think we should be concerned when we
19 get concerned. We're so close to them. That's the
20 only food that we can depend on and easier to get than
21 moose. They run away, caribou, they run away, but the
22 fish goes on one route. They used to use sinews before
23 the modern nets came in.

24
25 One thing that I'd like to bring to
26 your attention is I was born in 1945 and Secretary
27 Warner helped us to develop a constitution and bylaw
28 that is intended to look out for the welfare and social
29 well-being of our tribal citizens within a community.
30 With that constitution we call upon the trust
31 obligations and responsibilities of the U.S.
32 government. Our elders talked with Secretary Warner
33 one on one and that's called consultation.

34
35 Thank you for this opportunity. As Mr.
36 Williams mentioned, the federalized river helped us
37 when we got confused. There's so many regimes above
38 us. State of Alaska and everybody else that could come
39 in and be in charge. It got confusing. But when it
40 was federalized our voice was brought into play and
41 that got a little better. We still look for more to be
42 your partner in managing this fish, but we need help
43 especially out in the high seas whenever possible. I'm
44 not blaming anybody, but we need to go forward.

45
46 The most responsibility that I look at
47 is the trust obligation responsibility to hear us. I
48 speak for Akiak elders only. The other villages may be
49 similar. But they're hungry for salmon. They're
50

1 suffering. I've heard of the words food security.
2 They are hurting. I'm one of the people that are
3 hurting. We feel like outlaws in that river sometimes.
4 It's not a good feeling.

5
6 I'm not here to offend anybody, but to
7 bring our case to you. I hear the gentleman from up
8 north. Please, let's take a look at how we can improve
9 this process to include tribal government. We're not
10 governments for nothing. Our elders say the good Lord
11 put us to have some government in a community's
12 control.

13
14 Elders are the conservationists. If
15 they see a lot of blood on our cutting table, they'll
16 bawl us out and say you better treat that fish good and
17 we do that. We try not to spoil. With these on and
18 off fishing it gets us into rainy season. That's when
19 we work hard to run them in, run them out, try to dry
20 them good.

21
22 If we go fishing earlier, like Mr.
23 Williams said, when we're done it takes a couple days
24 to dry it and then smoke it all summer. We're done,
25 but go after chums and reds and a lot of cohos.
26 Sometimes I feel I could walk across Kisaralik River on
27 top of them, but they go up a lot.

28
29 It's very confusing even for me and the
30 elders to speak to somebody about this issue, but back
31 to the government. We work with them. Mr. Williams
32 mentioned Hooper Bay agreement. I was president of ACP
33 when I asked U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service -- they
34 told us to close migratory birds and I said you close
35 them first in California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho.
36 You know what, in four months he came and said they're
37 closed and I couldn't say nothing because that was our
38 agreement. So we did that. We worked it out. The
39 tribal councils were in charge in each community. We
40 look forward to that.

41
42 Thank you for this short opportunity
43 and I hope I didn't take your important time away from
44 other business. Thank God there's trust responsibility
45 yet. It was confusing when ANCSA came in. They threw
46 us aside and hard to get recognized. When I walked
47 into Secretary of Interior here in Anchorage, they
48 closed the door on me and said go across and listen to
49 what they have to say. That's not consultation, but
50

1 those are past. Let's go forward and get us involved.
2 We can do the job. We know what it is. We tell our
3 young people. We teach them how to do that and take
4 care of good food for the wintertime. Now is the
5 season when we need it the most with almost 24 hours of
6 daylight.

7

8 Thank you very much and God bless this
9 Board and the people here in this room.

10

11 Thank you.

12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
14 that Ivan. I've definitely been impressed at the buy-
15 in from all the villages along the Kuskokwim and
16 knowing it is a tough issue to make those decisions
17 here as a Board to limit opportunity for subsistence.
18 When we did a site visit to see how much that ownership
19 is taken on that river and conserving that stock is
20 just to be commended. So really thanks to all the
21 villages and the people out there that take that extra
22 effort. For myself it was hard to be there watching a
23 fishery closed when there's all kinds of other fish
24 going by at the same time. It's really a testament to
25 how much I believe that the people on the landscape are
26 as much involved in the process as the Board in the
27 decisions that are made. So thank you for your
28 testimony today.

29

30 Next we have Shirley Smelcer.

31

32 MS. SMELCER: Good morning, Mr. Chair
33 and the Board. My name is Tursy Shirley Smelcer. I'm
34 from the Native Village of Kluti-Kaah. My late
35 grandfather Tony Jackson was the Copper River Four. My
36 parents is the late Jake Miller and my mother is still
37 with me, Shirley Miller.

38

39 I grew up with my grandparents teaching
40 me my culture of the berry picking, the hunting, the
41 fishing, fish camp. Everything that I know I teach my
42 children and my grandchildren. They come and visit
43 with me every summer and it goes from 21 to 2, so the
44 youngest one I've got to start teaching.

45

46 I'm very nervous right now, so I'm
47 trying to do the best I can. What I'm really stressing
48 about is -- it's called the super abundance of our
49 caribou and our wildlife and our salmon and stuff. I'm

50

1 just wanting to have my grandkids teach their grandkids
2 what I taught them and to teach them how to hunt and
3 prepare their salmon and have winter dinners and, you
4 know, put them away. Live off the land and have a
5 connection.

6
7 I know there's a few things I want to
8 remind the Board. Title VIII of ANILCA, 801, and this
9 is part (3) continuation of the opportunity for
10 subsistence uses of resources on public and other lands
11 in Alaska is threatened by the increasing population of
12 Alaska, with resultant pressure on subsistence
13 resources, by sudden decline in the populations of some
14 wildlife species which are crucial subsistence
15 resources, by increased accessibility of remote areas
16 containing subsistence resources, and by taking of fish
17 and wildlife in a manner inconsistent with recognized
18 principles of fish and wildlife management;

19
20 And (4) in order to fulfill the
21 policies and purposes of the Alaska Native Claims
22 Settlement Act and as a matter of equity, it is
23 necessary for the Congress to invoke its constitutional
24 authority over Native affairs.

25
26 My next one is on 809. I know you guys
27 know what that is. I'm just going to read it again.
28 The Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements or
29 otherwise cooperate with other Federal agencies, the
30 State, Native Corporations, other appropriate persons
31 and organizations, and acting through the Secretary of
32 State, other nations to effectuate the purposes and
33 policies of this title.

34
35 Last, but not least, I have something
36 here that our late Roy S. Ewan -- when I first got into
37 wildlife, he said know your constitutional rights. So
38 I carry this book around with me, the Constitution of
39 Alaska. The one he told me to memorize was -- I left
40 the book over there -- was Article 8, Section 4 and
41 it's sustained yield. What that is is to replenish our
42 food security, our wildlife, our fish if it goes low
43 and we need to make sure that's happening.

44
45 I believe with our co-management of
46 AITRC we can do this and we can live another hundreds
47 and thousands of years if we keep this traditional and
48 cultural way of life that we were taught from our
49 elders. We learned to read the land. We learned to
50

1 read the animals and the weather. The climate change
2 is changing. We have to go through that. I'm not a
3 pro at any of this at all. I'm not saying I am, but I
4 know what I've been taught and now it's kind of like
5 changing a little bit because we've got to deal with
6 the climate change.

7
8 What I'm trying to get at is if you let
9 us manage our own land and teach our kids the way we
10 were taught and my grandfathers before them, we may be
11 able to keep the food plentiful and keep our food.
12 Once you lose that food you'll always be hungry.
13 You'll never be the same. You'll always crave that
14 food. You'll never lose that food taste, that hunger
15 that you want in the wintertime. Sometimes we don't
16 get salmon put away in time for winter and so we've got
17 to go and ask our neighbor you got any frozen fish.
18 Well, sometimes they do and sometimes they don't.

19
20 Thank you guys.

21
22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
23 Tursy. Appreciate that testimony. Any questions for
24 her.

25
26 (No comments)

27
28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
29 That finishes up the public testimony. Next on the
30 agenda is Orville. He's going to do a tribal
31 consultation summary for us.

32
33 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For
34 the record, Orville Lind, Native Liaison for the Office
35 of Subsistence Management. Our consultation happened
36 prior to this Board meeting. I took notes and so did
37 our Staff and we'll try to touch as many key talking
38 points from the tribes and the corporation that had
39 called in during the consultation.

40
41 I'm a little excited about this because
42 it seems to be our room is filling up and I'm seeing
43 more tribes arrive, so I love that. I think they're
44 catching on. We may have to rent bigger rooms in the
45 future.

46
47 So at the beginning of the consultation
48 I know we had a member from Northway talk about the
49 concerns of Wildlife Proposal 18-55. She talked about
50

1 increased hunters that were harvesting moose and they
2 were out-of-area hunters. Not only that they were
3 utilizing local area hunting areas, but they were also
4 leaving trash and they were leaving a mess behind.

5
6 They also have a little concern about
7 Wildlife Proposal 18-54 relative to the Mentasta
8 Caribou Herd. Many of the out-of-town hunters -- are
9 complaining about people shooting toward the houses.
10 That's a huge concern. There's also a huge push for
11 possibly a plan for increased enforcement in that
12 region.

13
14 We also heard from Sealaska
15 Corporation. They support the rural harvest, support
16 increase of the harvest of wolves. They talked about
17 the herring biomass not coming back. This is a huge
18 concern for their region. They also had a recent
19 consultation with BLM. They understand some land
20 selected but not conveyed is under State management and
21 that seems to be a concern.

22
23 Before I read more, please, folks, you
24 are here and you were here during the consultation, if
25 there is something that I may have missed and you think
26 is an issue of importance, please stop me and let me
27 know. Quyana.

28
29 We had some folks from the Curyung
30 Tribe over in Dillingham. They voted in support to move
31 Wildlife Proposal 18-24 to the non-consensus agenda.
32 Wildlife Proposal 18-24 is supported. They indicated
33 that this proposal is very challenging. The State
34 supported the same proposal. They oppose WP18-22 for
35 caribou. Some history, over 300 caribou harvested last
36 year from the Nushagak Caribou Herd.

37
38 They also indicated that some native
39 voices are being heard, but they must be listened to.
40 They want to increase and encourage and also allow for
41 co-management opportunities. This needs to happen.
42 They're also indicating a lot of non-local hunters come
43 to hunt on State lands. A lot of local resident people
44 don't get the opportunity because of that.

45
46 They're in support of WP18-23. Also
47 Units 9C and 9D where the caribou comes from they need
48 more current data for that area. They're also
49 concerned about the Pebble Mine. As you heard many
50

1 tribes talk about, their way of life is very valuable
2 and they must protect their way of life. Pebble Mine
3 would affect their subsistence opportunities. The
4 question was asked to the Federal Subsistence Board,
5 what is the Board doing about Pebble Mine, which Fish
6 and Wildlife Service replied they have to engage. I
7 didn't write what the Fish and Wildlife Service
8 replied, but I believe it was Mr. Siekaniec that
9 responded.

10

11 MR. SIEKANIEC: Cooperating.

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MR. LIND: Cooperating. Thank you.
Also we heard from Noatak in support of WP18-46. It's
a caribou issue. They also implied that they should
take no action on WP18-47. They have real local
concerns about the high density of nonrural hunters,
non-Federal qualified rural hunters.
The local people there have to hunt by
boat, but all the other outside hunters fly in by
aircraft. He talked about the traditional values of
roots of Noatak and the long history of caribou
traditional uses, providing for their families. Their
health is critical to obtaining the caribou meat. It's
very healthy for their people. Difficulty of
harvesting caribou in that area is a huge issue. He
does mention that the closure is necessary, very
critical to that area.

We also heard from Gulkana up on Copper
River. They are in support of WP18-17, 18 and 19 as
proposed. They also support Ahtna's request. They
indicated also that we really need to work together
more. The food is very important to the people. The
wildlife seems to be further away from the density of a
lot of hunters in the area and is harder for local
people to harvest.

People come in from the Outside. They
have the equipment to go further. He has seen a lot of
Outside hunters who hunt basically for their own
families whereas the native hunters hunt for the whole
village or their tribes. They share with the elders
who can't hunt for themselves. He also stated that the
tribes themselves can be a huge assistance in many ways
and look forward to partnering and managing their fish
and game. In the end he says tribes are truly
connected to the resource.

1 We then had Alissa from the Y-K Delta
2 give us a little background. They indicated that the
3 population of ptarmigan are in decline. They said it's
4 a much needed resource for their people and they've
5 seen in the recent years the fluctuations in the
6 populations. Also the fluctuation in the blackfish,
7 whitefish and sheefish.

8
9 Their people are also concerned about
10 the Donlin Gold Mine and the subsistence people
11 especially are concerned and they're fearing for their
12 own children because of the possible leakage from the
13 mine. It needs to be continued monitoring closely and
14 the need for more surveys.

15
16 Mr. Chair, Board members, that's what I
17 have for the brief summary of our consultation held
18 before the Board meeting.

19
20 I'll entertain any questions,
21 suggestions, comments.

22
23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
24 that report there, Orville. Any questions for Orville,
25 comments.

26
27 (No comments)

28
29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

30
31 MR. LIND: Quyana.

32
33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Now we'd like
34 to move on to announce the consensus agenda. We'd open
35 up the floor at this time for public comment on the
36 consensus agenda items. We do have one to speak to
37 WP18-10. Harold Robbins.

38
39 MR. ROBBINS: Thank you. I've lived in
40 Yakutat for quite a while, since about '71, and hunted
41 there quite a bit. My concern with the change in the
42 moose hunt is it takes it away from what we've
43 traditionally done there. It was open the 8th of
44 October for a specific reason, because that was
45 basically the end of the salmon season so the
46 subsistence qualified hunters didn't have to decide
47 whether they were going to go commercial fish cohos at
48 that time of the year, which constitutes a good
49 percentage of their annual income.

50

1 Moving this ahead, as it's suggested
2 here on Page 110, to the 16th of September for half of
3 the area east of the Dangerous River, that would really
4 cut into my commercial fishing time, just like it would
5 the others on the other side of the boundary.

6
7 To kind of clarify, the area is divided
8 up -- the Dangerous River is a boundary between east
9 and west and they usually run about 30 head of bulls
10 each side. The contention is that we haven't come
11 close to completing the 30 head on the east side due to
12 access and other weather issues and on down the line in
13 the last several years. So it's trying to move it to
14 get more hunters to go to the east side of the
15 Dangerous River. The habitat there once you cross just
16 the Dangerous is really good and it's a real productive
17 area to hunt.

18
19 Moving this to the 16th there and
20 allowing a head start on that area would take a big
21 percentage of those bulls out of an area right adjacent
22 to where they'd been making -- the hunt was only
23 running about three or four days because of the
24 availability of the animals. Consequently, if you
25 shoot off a good percentage of the bulls right next
26 door, they're not going to get much of a chance to
27 cross the river.

28
29 The other issue is that this is right
30 during the time when it's the most prime rut season.
31 To hunt on the 16th, that last two weeks of September
32 is going to generate a lot of rut-flavored moose that I
33 don't like at all and I don't prefer to hunt there
34 personally at that time. You know, we've consistently
35 waited until about the 15th of October or later.

36
37 One other issue involved is there's an
38 existing State regulation that reads for 5A one bull by
39 permit available in person in Douglas or Yakutat
40 beginning August 15th. Well, several of the people
41 that commercial fish east of the Dangerous in that area
42 leave about the first of May to commercial fish for the
43 summer and that means a hardship of coming back into
44 town or the cost of flying back and forth to get this
45 special permit instead of being able to get that
46 online.

47
48 So it's just some of those concerns.
49 Personally, it's not a very positive move as far as I'm
50

1 concerned.

2

3 Thank you.

4

5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
6 that. I'm just looking at some notes here on the times
7 and how they were moved. So I definitely appreciate
8 your testimony here. We'll take it into consideration
9 as we look at those. I know that one is on the
10 consensus agenda and that the Southeast RAC had
11 modified the date. So maybe -- Don, do you have an
12 understanding of where those dates came from and why
13 they were moved?

14

15 MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr.
16 Chairman. We did have considerable discussion about
17 this proposal. There were two sides to the question.
18 Yeah, I could get into that later if you want.

19

20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thanks, Don.
21 So I guess we'll get you an answer later.

22

23 MR. ROBBINS: Okay. Thank you.

24

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thanks for your
26 testimony. Is there somebody on the phone that would
27 like to testify?

28

29 OPERATOR: As a reminder, if you would
30 like to ask a question from the phone, please press
31 star-one. We do have a comment from Casey Mapes. Your
32 line is open.

33

34 MR. MAPES: My name is Casey Mapes.
35 I'm the advisory chair for Yakutat and we put the
36 proposal in that has now turned in to WP18-10. We've
37 recently met and accepted the changes that the RAC
38 committee made to our proposal to go from September 1st
39 to September 16th for an opening date for the
40 subsistence hunt on the east side of the Dangerous.

41

42 I just wanted to extend the offer for
43 questions if anybody had any and throw out a few
44 further comments. The main reason, of course, we chose
45 to put this proposal in, for a little background
46 history, we've had the hunt on the west side of the
47 Dangerous go from being typically around a two-week
48 hunt down to four to five days per year and it's made
49 it very hard for families that want to harvest a bull

50

1 for subsistence.

2

3

4 So we're looking to change things
5 around to try to make that a better hunt. That's where
6 the vast majority of the subsistence hunting currently
7 occurs. So what we're trying to do is allow for better
8 access on the east side of the Dangerous.

8

9

10 Some of the concerns we'd heard was,
11 well, you might harvest too many bulls out of one area.
12 Well, currently we're doing that on other river systems
13 throughout the region. That's how we harvest moose on
14 Situk corridor. That's how we harvest moose on the
15 Ahrnklin River corridor and it hasn't hurt them at all
16 historically to do so in that manner.

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Some of the other concerns we heard was
you're going to shoot them during the rut season.
Well, we do that on the west side of Yakutat Bay. It
opens historically on September 1st. Has for many,
many years. We haven't harmed the herd on that side by
having a harvest at that time. That's when moose is
typically hunted throughout most of the state, so that
really didn't fly for us.

Another concern that we'd heard was,
well, you know, it was about the quality of the meat.
It's warmer weather that time of year. Again, we point
to the moose hunt that goes on on September 1st in Unit
5B on the west side of Yakutat Bay. That meat turns
out fine. So that didn't work for us either.

Really what it comes down to is the
vast majority of the hunters in this region support
this concept and there's only a handful of people that
don't. Really, the reason comes down to those who have
an airplane and have access and those who don't. What's
unfortunate is is when the commercial fishery closes
and the sport fishery there isn't enough business left
in the area for the local air taxis to stay open so
they close around the 1st of October.

So there is no means for anybody
currently to fly out to other areas beyond the small
area on the east side of the Dangerous River Bridge to
access that whole area. So we're hoping that by moving
it back we're going to be able to allow people if
they're inclined to rent a charter and fly out and
utilize that place better than what we have been.

1 Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
4 questions. Any conversation.

5

6 Go ahead, Don.

7

8 MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr.
9 Chairman. I don't know if it would be helpful to the
10 Board, but I could kind of review what the Council's
11 action was on this proposal. It has been on the
12 consensus agenda. We weren't really prepared to
13 discuss it, but if you would like me to I do have that.

14

15 MR. MAPES: Would it be possible to
16 move it to the non-consensus agenda, please.

17

18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: If I can get a
19 Board member here to support your request, we can
20 probably entertain it. It seems like it's an issue
21 that has further discussion and explanation, so it
22 might merit.

23

24 MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair.

25

26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg.

27

28 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
29 I would think based on the comments that were made it
30 would be appropriate for us to have maybe a little more
31 dialogue amongst the Board members before we take
32 action on it. I think it would be appropriate to move
33 it to the non-consensus agenda.

34

35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Sounds good.
36 Anybody oppose that?

37

38 (No comments)

39

40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Right on.
41 That's why we have the Board meetings and you show up.
42 We'll move it to non-consensus and have further
43 discussion on this.

44

45 MR. MAPES: Thank you.

46

47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: And then, I
48 guess, Don, that will give you a little time to pull
49 together your summary and give us a little more detail

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1 on what the RAC decision process was.

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Thank you.

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All right. That concludes the presentation of the consensus agenda and the public comment that goes with that. At this time we're going to take time now to hand out a distinguished award. So if I can get the people here that are in charge of the award process to come forward. Come on down.

So at this time what we're going to do is take a moment to go ahead and recognize one of the long-standing Board members here. Beth Pendleton will retire on April 20th after serving eight years as a Regional Forester for the USDA Forest Service in Alaska Region.

Beth has spent the majority of her career in Alaska. First working on the Tongass National Forest Plan Revision in the '90s, then as Regional Director of the Recreation Lands and Mineral, and eventually as Regional Forester. She has recently served as the Acting Associate Chief for the Forest Service, the number two leadership position in the agency, during a transition, most recent change of Administration.

In retirement, she plans to stay in Juneau with her husband, spend more time with family and become more engaged in the community through volunteerism and hopefully get her strawberry patch in better shape.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I look forward to some jam. So I'll have Tom here present to Beth. If you could come up here, Beth. Somebody probably wants to take a nice photo.

(Pause)

MS. PENDLETON: So I will just say two things. This has been really one of the choicest parts of my service, thank you, in Alaska, serving on this Board. There's been just a tremendous opportunity for growth and really, in all humility, to hear from the communities, the users. Many of these proposals that

1 we take on are very difficult. Given the multiplicity
2 of uses and desires for use of the resources in a world
3 that's changing and knowing that our climate continues
4 to change and the impacts of those resources.

5
6 So I just want to give really my
7 appreciation to all of those who take the time to be
8 here and to share and to help inform and enlighten this
9 Board as we take on the work that we have. So it's
10 been a joy and an honor to serve on this Board and I
11 thank you all for your participation.

12
13 In particular we've got a number of
14 young people here, students here, and I think if I
15 could impart anything is to continue to stay engaged
16 and to continue to learn because these resources are
17 important to all and in particular for conserving an
18 important way of life, the subsistence way of life.

19
20 So thank you for that.

21
22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
23 Beth. I'll definitely miss your leadership here and in
24 Southeast. A very good advocate for our lifestyle down
25 there and a very good proponent for all the things that
26 we bring forward in our region. So very much will be
27 missed.

28
29 Just before we enjoy our cake here we
30 need to do a little Board business. We need a time
31 certain activity this afternoon. We have Proposal 17,
32 18 and 19 with Ahtna which affects an agreement and we
33 have some people from the Solicitor's Office who want
34 to be here. So can I do a time certain today with the
35 Board's approval of 2:30 today for those proposals so
36 that we can entertain the people who want to be here.
37 Can I get a motion for that, I guess, just to make --
38 because it is a change to the agenda.

39
40 MR. C. BROWER: Do you need a motion?

41
42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, I'll
43 entertain a motion to do that time certain 2:30 today
44 for those proposals.

45
46 MR. C. BROWER: So moved.

47
48 MS. PENDLETON: I'll second that.

49
50

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. The
2 motion has been made by Charlie, second by Beth to do
3 that at 2:30 today so that we can inform people. Thank
4 you for that.

5
6 Another thing that we do have, while we
7 enjoy our cake 20 minutes, a dance group that is coming
8 in at 12:00 o'clock for entertainment, so that will be
9 the next thing on the agenda. So about 15 minutes,
10 enjoy cake, coffee and the dance group. About 15
11 minutes. They're getting dressed, so appreciate the
12 patience with us. It seems like we just like to have a
13 good time, take a break, have coffee, tell a couple
14 stories, come back and lets do it again.

15
16 (Off record)

17
18 (On record)

19
20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Are you here?
21 Gene wanted to make one more presentation of a gift to
22 Beth. So, Beth, if you could come up, Gene would like
23 to make a presentation to you as a memento for your
24 party today.

25
26 And I told them, as is custom in
27 Southeast, we dance our gifts.

28
29 (Laughter)

30
31 (Mr. Peltola presents a gift to Ms.
32 Pendleton off record)

33
34 MR. LIND: And now, ladies and
35 gentlemen, I'd like just to say this is probably my
36 favorite part of the whole session. I've known Loren
37 for some time. I'm going to let him introduce himself
38 and his dancers to you folks. Please welcome Imamsuat
39 Dancers.

40
41 (Applause)

42
43 MR. ANDERSON: Pretty close. Close
44 enough. Thank you, sir. Thanks, Orville. Close
45 enough. I am actually from Kodiak and my native
46 language (in Alutiiq). I was born in Kodiak, but my
47 mom is from island of Afognak and my dad is from
48 Kodiak. We picked the name Imamsuat because it means
49 people of the sea. You'll see all our villages are
50

1 located on the coast.

2

3 The first song we'll do for you is --
4 we do it as an entrance song. I met Dr. John Pingayak.
5 I'm sure a lot of you know who that is. I asked him,
6 John, how do you create so many songs because we don't
7 have any old songs from Kodiak and he said he just goes
8 out into the environment and listens and the song comes
9 to him.

10

11 So I did what he said and I went down
12 to Fort Abercrombie down there in Kodiak and the big
13 waves were rolling in and just at the perfect time
14 there was whales breaching and going through Whale
15 Pass. This song is just about the whales coming back
16 to Kodiak. Again, we were traditionally whale hunters
17 but today we are not. Again, it's always good to teach
18 our youth the way our ancestors did things and do
19 things today too.

20

21 So we'll just get right to it.

22

23 (Off record)

24

25 (On record)

26

27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you very
28 much for that presentation. Always enlightening to
29 share our cultures and enjoy the dance and hear our
30 stories. We'll reconvene the meeting at 2:00 o'clock.

31

32 (Off record)

33

34 (On record)

35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We're going to
37 start this afternoon with the non-consensus agenda
38 items. We'll start with Region 1, Southeast Alaska.
39 Bear in mind we do have again on the agenda a time
40 certain 2:30 to deal with 17, 18 and 19. With that
41 we'll call on Southeast.

42

43 Terry.

44

45 MR. SUMINSKI: Good afternoon, Mr.
46 Chairman. Members of the Board, Council Chairs. My
47 name is Terry Suminski and I'm with the United States
48 Forest Service and manage the Subsistence Program for
49 the Tongass National Forest. The executive summary for
50

1 WP18-01 can be found on Page 607 of your books and the
2 analysis begins on Page 610.

3
4 Proposal WP18-01, submitted by the
5 Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council,
6 requests that non-Federally-qualified users be limited
7 to the harvest of two deer from Federal public lands in
8 Unit 2 and that the season for non-Federally-qualified
9 subsistence users be reduced by one week or more.

10
11 The Council submitted this proposal
12 after hearing testimony during the winter 2017 meeting
13 in Craig, where Federally-qualified subsistence users
14 testified that they had a harder time harvesting deer
15 during the 2016 season. The Council did not
16 identify a specific closure date for non-Federally-
17 qualified users in their proposal. During clarification
18 the Council chair suggested using December 24 as a
19 starting point.

20
21 The Council has submitted Proposal
22 WP18-02 requesting the customary and traditional use
23 determination for deer in Units 1-5 be changed to all
24 rural residents of Units 1-5. If this change is
25 approved, the number of qualifying hunters for Unit 2
26 would increase.

27
28 The Alaska Board of Game in fall 2000
29 established a harvest objective of 2,700 deer for Unit
30 2. The estimated annual harvest has averaged 3,467
31 deer, with an average of 100 females taken during this
32 period. Harvests have been at or above ADF&G's Unit 2
33 harvest objective since 2005.

34
35 Federally-qualified subsistence users
36 harvest the most deer in the unit, up to 72 percent of
37 the total harvest. The average number of deer
38 harvested per hunter has remained stable for Unit 2
39 residents since 2005. The average number of days it
40 takes to harvest a deer also appears to be stable for
41 Unit 2 residents and is currently half what it was
42 during the late 1990s. Recent harvest data and
43 pellet-group data suggests that deer population in Unit
44 2 is healthy.

45
46 Hunters from Unit 2 had a higher
47 success rate than other hunters with an average success
48 rate of 83 percent during this period, with 73 percent
49 of the successful hunters harvesting between one to
50

1 three deer. Hunters residing in Unit 1A averaged a 74
2 percent success rate during this same period and
3 accounted for an average of 37.8 percent of the total
4 Unit 2 harvest.

5
6 Effort by those with other Alaskan
7 residency, communities outside of Units 1A, 2 or 3, has
8 increased from 119 hunters in 2005 to 430 hunters
9 during 2014. Non-resident activity in the unit has
10 increased from 148 hunters in 2006 to 333 in 2015.

11
12 Road closures may concentrate hunters
13 into smaller areas creating a perception of crowded
14 hunting conditions. As clearcuts advance past early
15 seral stages, deer are less visible from the road.
16 Milder weather patterns over the past several years may
17 be affecting deer hunter success. With less snow at
18 higher elevations later in the season, deer may not be
19 concentrated in the lower elevation areas as they have
20 in past years.

21
22 Another possibility affecting hunter
23 success during the 2016 season was what appeared to be
24 an earlier rut in 2016, which peaked about a week and a
25 half earlier than typical timing for the unit.
26 Shortening the season in December may not benefit
27 subsistence users as harvest data indicates very few
28 deer are harvested during this time frame by both user
29 groups. The proposal would not change the harvest
30 limit under State hunting regulations or affect harvest
31 occurring on State or private lands.

32
33 The OSM conclusion is to oppose
34 Proposal WP18-01 with the following justification.
35 Although Title VIII of ANILCA could allow the Board to
36 restrict non-Federally-qualified user harvest limits on
37 Federal public lands, reducing the harvest limit for
38 non-Federally-qualified users in Unit 2 is not
39 necessary at this time for conservation or to meet
40 subsistence needs.

41
42 Deer harvest in Unit 2 has been on the
43 increase and Federally-qualified subsistence users
44 harvest the majority of the deer in Unit 2. Unit 2
45 hunters have averaged 2.3 deer per hunter during the
46 period of 2005-2015, which is higher than the 1.9 deer
47 per hunter average for non-Federally-qualified users.
48 Harvest data also show a decrease in hunt days per deer
49 for Federally-qualified subsistence users, which is
50

1 almost half of the time needed for non-Federally-
2 qualified users to harvest a deer.

3
4 Hunt performance data suggests the deer
5 population in Unit 2 is currently stable. Harvest data
6 for non-Federally-qualified users suggest that the
7 majority of this user group harvest two deer or less
8 per hunter. The data does not support that the needs
9 of Federally-qualified users are not being met.

10
11 The Unit 2 Federal season currently
12 provides Federally-qualified subsistence users the
13 following priorities: eight additional hunting days in
14 July prior to the start of the State season, a closure
15 to non-Federally-qualified users for 15 days in August
16 on the majority of the Federal public lands on Prince
17 of
18 Wales Island, a more liberal harvest limit of five
19 deer, opportunity to harvest a female deer after
20 October 15 and 31 additional hunting days in January.
21 Current harvest data suggest these priorities are
22 benefitting Federally-qualified subsistence users. A
23 reduction to non-qualified subsistence users is not
24 necessary at this time.

25
26 That concludes my presentation.

27
28 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

29
30 I'd welcome any questions.

31
32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any of the
33 Board have questions for Terry.

34
35 (No comments)

36
37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I do. Terry,
38 do you guys take into consideration this year's
39 information? Was that from this year's permitting or
40 was that from the prior year?

41
42 MR. SUMINSKI: Mr. Chair. I do not
43 believe it included the latest year. I was just
44 looking at that. I believe it's in the State comments,
45 the latest year's harvest data.

46
47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Does the State
48 have an answer to that?

49
50

1 MR. BUTLER: Mr. Chair. The harvest
2 data provided is current up to 2016, so it does not
3 include this winter season.

4
5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. I'm
6 just asking because I'm personally a Unit 2 deer
7 hunter. Obviously when you're the Chairman of the
8 Subsistence Board you become a giant ear and everybody
9 feels it's time to stop and talk. This year was a very
10 tough year on Prince of Wales Island for hunting. One
11 of the toughest years I've ever seen as far as
12 subsistence user.

13
14 A lot of the testimony and talk I heard
15 on the island itself was that most residents had a hard
16 time after the August hunt of meeting their needs. A
17 lot of it had to do with a perceived predator issue. I
18 know that's on our Board here as well. I even had the
19 State Fish and Game trooper when he seen me -- I had
20 finally got a deer in mid-December and he stopped me
21 and asked me how I was successful. He had hunted every
22 weekend, two days every weekend trying to fill his need
23 and he was yet to be successful.

24
25 So there was kind of an unfolding issue
26 on the landscape this year with just a lack of deer
27 available both on the beach fringe and in the lowlands.
28 That's what I was trying to tease out of this, if there
29 was some information from this current year on hunter
30 success and what that permit and harvest level looked
31 like. Most even in my neighborhood didn't get the
32 deer that they needed, so I was just wondering how
33 current that information was.

34
35 Thanks.

36
37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Don.

38
39 MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
40 Members of the Board. Council's comments for this
41 proposal are on Page 623 of your meeting book. As
42 Terry mentioned, this proposal was initially put
43 forward with two provisions to it. The Council did not
44 support shortening of the dates of the season, but we
45 did support reducing the bag limit for non-qualified
46 hunters from four deer to two deer.

47
48 I think what's important for you to
49 know about this proposal is that it was submitted by
50

1 the Regional Advisory Council and it was in response to
2 extensive public comments at our Craig meeting last
3 winter. Harvesters with many years of experience were
4 telling us it was getting harder to meet their needs.
5 This was at a time when we had been experiencing some
6 mild winters and people were expecting that the hunting
7 would be better as a result.

8
9 Local harvesters were citing
10 competition from off island, mostly Ketchikan hunters,
11 as one factor in their lack of success. Some
12 harvesters were able to meet their needs, but they were
13 able to do this by hunting harder and moving to areas
14 that they had not traditionally used in the past.
15 Primarily they were starting to hunt in areas on the
16 surrounding islands to Prince of Wales that were not
17 accessible to people coming on the road system.

18
19
20 There were also other hunters who said
21 they were not able to meet their needs. The Council
22 viewed this as a warning sign that conservation
23 measures might be necessary in order to prevent some
24 future, more severe restrictions.

25
26 The Staff analysis and Fish and Game
27 comments do not support this proposal. The Council
28 believes that your decision on this proposal will be
29 decided based primarily on whether or not you find that
30 our recommendation is supported by substantial
31 evidence. The Council believes that extensive
32 testimony of very knowledgeable and experienced local
33 hunters is substantial evidence.

34
35 Council also spent a lot of time at our
36 previous winter meeting examining the scientific
37 evidence that was presented. We believe that we can
38 find some plausible reasons as to why this type of
39 evidence is not a reliable indicator of whether or not
40 subsistence needs are being met. In particular, how
41 that relates to this hunter effort that was mentioned
42 and also how it relates to the effects of competition.
43 We did spend quite a bit of time discussing the
44 presented scientific information and I think we have a
45 pretty good record on what we find to be problems with
46 that information.

47
48 I'd also like to say that this proposal
49 has generated a lot of public comments that have come
50

1 in. The Council really appreciates receiving all these
2 comments. We got a lot of comments from local hunters
3 as well as Ketchikan hunters. I have to say that some
4 of their comments brought out some really important
5 issues that need to be considered.

6
7 I guess I should also mention that, as
8 well as Tony, I think I told you all that I am a Prince
9 of Wales resident and have hunted successfully for many
10 years on Prince of Wales. I have never had a season
11 where I've not been able to fill my freezer with all
12 the venison I've needed for the year, but I also have
13 to say in the previous two years I have not taken a
14 deer off of Prince of Wales Island. I have gone
15 elsewhere to meet my needs.

16
17 I know that my community -- a lot of
18 the people are in the same situation. They would agree
19 with all the local testimony and I have advised them to
20 go elsewhere if they need to and some of them have as
21 well and they've been very successful. So we're
22 definitely seeing a problem here and we hope maybe that
23 we can take some action that would, as we say, maybe
24 prevent some more severe actions being necessary in the
25 future.

26
27 Thank you.

28
29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Don.
30 Any questions for Don.

31
32 (No comments)

33
34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I had one, Don.
35 As I looked at this and as I was looking at the
36 testimony and inconsideration if there was support to
37 reduce that non-qualified user to two and you brought
38 up the subcommittee work we had done years ago.

39
40 Under that work we had developed a map
41 and had identified and recognized the Ketchikan users
42 utilizing the eastern side of Prince of Wales Island
43 and that the proposal back then when we were reducing
44 it wasn't for the entire island but that we had
45 recognized Ketchikan's general trend of using the
46 eastern portion of Prince of Wales Island and it was a
47 substantial area.

48
49 It was, I believe, almost all of south
50

1 to Cape Chacon and then all of the bays in between
2 Chomly. They access all of those bays and hunt from
3 that side. I didn't know if that was included in the
4 proposal. I didn't see a map or if the proposal was
5 just all of Prince of Wales Island or if they still had
6 in mind -- because one of the proposals the opponent
7 was saying that we would restrict their access to the
8 eastern side where they traditionally go.

9
10 I know that our work had tried to
11 alleviate that concern from the Ketchikan residents.
12 Was that incorporated into this decision?

13
14 MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr.
15 Chairman. No. In our discussions, that was not part
16 of the discussion. You are correct that -- I guess it
17 was almost 15 years ago when the Council made initial
18 priority recommendations that were enacted. We
19 provided priority by giving subsistence hunters earlier
20 opportunity and allowing a doe hunt.

21
22 Under those regulations we closed Unit
23 2 to non-subsistence hunters between August 1st and
24 August 15th, so that was a closure for Unit 2, but it
25 did not apply to that area that you talk about on the
26 southern eastern end of Prince of Wales where we did
27 hear a lot of testimony that there is no road access
28 there for the most part.

29
30 It is used extensively by Ketchikan
31 hunters who do come by boat and it's fairly close to
32 Ketchikan and not as extensively used by Prince of
33 Wales hunters. In that portion of the island, and we
34 established a specific line to delineate that, we left
35 that season open on August 1st, whereas the rest of the
36 island is not open until August 15th.

37
38 I have to say that in our discussions
39 about this proposal we did not specifically talk about
40 that southeastern portion and make that delineation.
41 It was brought out in letters of testimony we received
42 after our meetings, but at the time we did not really
43 consider that. I think you, as the Board, with new
44 information before you could possibly consider that at
45 this time, but we did not, no.

46
47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thanks, Don. I
48 just wanted to get a feel for what the Board was going
49 through and their process.

50

1 Thanks.

2

3

Any other questions for Don.

4

5

(No comments)

6

7

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: With that, I
8 thank you, Don, for that presentation. I did skip over
9 summary of public comment. If I could call on you,
10 DeAnna. Sorry about that.

11

12

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MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Members of the Board. My name is DeAnna Perry. I'm
the coordinator for the Southeast Subsistence Regional
Advisory Council. A total of 20 written comments were
received on this proposal. Three in favor and 17
opposed. Beginning on Page 630 of your meeting book
one general public comment was given from Curtis Donald
Thomas of Ketchikan. His comment addressed all
Southeast proposals, 18-01 through 18-13.

I'll share a summary of that comment
now and then refer to it in the future only by the
commentor's name. Mr. Thomas's key viewpoints were
that someone in the organization is promoting
restricting Sitka blacktail harvest for some residents
and granting others more rights and the Constitution
says we are all equal under the law.

He also has concerns regarding recent
actions that have already restricted access to our
hunting grounds. Attempts are being made to fix a
problem that does not exist. New classes of citizens
with special hunting rights are being created and that
many Federal groups in Washington are trying to
determine what is best for rural residents. He also
mentioned his concern about fisheries policies and the
ability of some Alaskans to harvest 20 halibut a day.

Another comment in support was from
Barnet Freedman of Thorne Bay, Prince of Wales Island.
Key viewpoints included a reduction in harvest is
needed as competition from Outside hunters continues to
be an issue and a doe season does not make sense for
the health of the herd.

Additionally, 14 written comments were
received recently and are included in your supplemental
materials starting on Page 7-1 through 7-16 of the

1 supplemental section 7. Of these, all were in
2 opposition of this proposal save one. Comments in
3 opposition were received by Ketchikan residents Darlene
4 Breitreutz, B-R-E-I-T-K-R-E-U-T-Z, just in case I
5 mispronounced that, Chris Foster, Kris Williams, Tor
6 Jorgensen, Sam Dalin, Heather Dalin, Drew Mathews, Rick
7 Collins and Marvin McCloud III, along with comments
8 from Jeff Sperry, Jeff Reese, Matt W. Allen and
9 Territorial Sportsmen.

10

11 A summary of these comments include the
12 following key viewpoints. The limit on non-Unit 2
13 residents to two deer is detrimental as it would limit
14 the harvest opportunity. The proposal is not science-
15 based but more politically-based. Nothing about this
16 proposal is about helping the deer population as both
17 the State and Federal biologists oppose this proposal.
18 It's all about greed and entitlement. We urge you not
19 to take away a valuable resource from all Alaskans that
20 depend on it just because a few feel entitled to it.

21

22 Other folks need to provide for their
23 families also and the deer population is sufficient
24 enough to allow a harvest quantity of two deer per
25 individual. The proposal is divisive and pits user
26 groups against each other. It discriminates against
27 people and covers too large of an area. A person who
28 could have recently moved to Craig from the Lower 48
29 would have more rights to deer on the southeast shore
30 of Prince of Wales Island than a lifelong Ketchikan
31 resident.

32

33 Data presented by the State indicate
34 that deer populations in Unit 2 are high and number of
35 deer taken by Federally-qualified hunters has increased
36 over the past decade. Federally-qualified hunters
37 already have substantially more opportunity than other
38 hunters to harvest deer under current regulations.
39 There's no indication that hunting by non-Federally-
40 qualified hunters has precipitated any biological
41 concern.

42

43 There seems to be a fair amount of deer
44 available to hunt as hunters average about two days per
45 deer harvested, which is a good success rate. The
46 current science and survey data indicate that harvest
47 is occurring with a preference towards subsistence
48 users resulting in harvest consistent with historical
49 numbers and levels of effort.

50

1 Many of the Ketchikan residents share
2 that they hunt in the more remote locations, mostly
3 east or southeast coast on Prince of Wales Island, by
4 boat and it is more accessible to Ketchikan residents
5 than is geographically feasible for Prince of Wales
6 residents.

7
8 Harvesting does that are near the road
9 and easy to shoot are leaving the bucks no reason to
10 come near the road during the rut. If anything should
11 be done, stopping the taking of does should be a first.

12
13 There's no evidence the deer population
14 is declining on the island and personal observation is
15 that there are plenty of deer around for all of us,
16 many more than 10 years ago. You just have to get off
17 the road to find most of them. The population is fine
18 and people who put in effort are very successful.

19
20 Non-subsistence hunters spend a lot of
21 money hunting Prince of Wales each year and this
22 supports locally-owned businesses. Deer, if valued as
23 a resource by all, will better ensure adequate funding,
24 research and protection. If the opportunity is lost,
25 the resource may be valued less and could directly
26 affect the deer in a negative way.

27
28 A comment in support was received by
29 Klawock resident Everett Athorp. His comment was I am
30 all for decreasing the bag limit for nonrural hunters
31 on POW. We need the deer for subsistence here on the
32 island. Meat is too expensive here. I see the ferry
33 full of hunters all winter long leaving with truckloads
34 of deer. Some come over on the evening ferry, hunt all
35 night and catch the ferry the next morning, never to
36 see the light of day. I would even like to see it
37 stopped to one.

38
39 Since mid-Friday we also received some
40 additional comments and you will find those, Board
41 members, on your tables as last-minute handouts. They
42 do not have a page designation. I'll summarize those
43 as well.

44
45 We received one in support by Rob
46 Steward and key viewpoints are the 2016 numbers showed
47 a reduction number of deer harvested for the area.
48 There is significantly less deer in Unit 2 during the
49 past two years. I have seen much fewer deer during
50

1 these outings and in the past. I spent much more time
2 hunting in order to do so and I saw fewer deer. I also
3 harvested younger bucks this year.

4
5 My many hunting friends and
6 acquaintances also report seeing fewer deer. I believe
7 the reduction in wolf harvest numbers has led to more
8 deer being killed by wolves so fewer deer are
9 available. I also believe the reduction in bear
10 harvest numbers has also led to a higher bear
11 population and thus more deer, especially newborn
12 fawns, are being killed.

13
14 Another comment in support was received
15 by Sam Sawyer recently. His key viewpoints, Unit 2
16 residents pay higher prices for everything at grocery
17 stores. We see those coming to the island waste a
18 large amount of deer. This year was probably the worst
19 year in my 25 years of living in Unit 2 for seeing
20 deer. I also have 15 game trail cameras that have been
21 recording wolves that I have never seen the numbers in
22 25 years. I personally saw 19 wolves this past year.

23
24 I believe that allowing others to come
25 here and harvest the same amount of deer as we do,
26 which we do for survival, is just plain wrong. I
27 believe if they want to take four deer a year, they
28 should have to live here and get price-gouged like we
29 do at every grocery store we have here.

30
31 Deer is an important resource to us. I
32 personally think the deer population should be able to
33 rebound before letting non-Unit 2 residents be able to
34 take the same amount. I want my kids to be able to
35 appreciate where we get our food and have respect for
36 these animals that provide for us.

37
38 An additional two recent comments in
39 opposition were received. One from Nicholas Orr, who
40 mentions if this proposal passes, then the Board is
41 saying there is no role for professional science-based
42 wildlife management on Federal lands in Alaska.

43
44 The last comment in opposition was
45 received Darell Welk of Ketchikan. He comments, I have
46 filled my family's freezer with four deer from the
47 island of Prince of Wales. We live a subsistence
48 lifestyle. We should have the same opportunities as
49 any other resident of the state. The island of Prince
50

1 of Wales is used by the people of Ketchikan as a deer
2 resource because of the abundant population of deer.

3
4 So to take away our opportunity to
5 harvest deer on POW will make life for my family
6 extremely difficult. This trend on POW of limiting
7 opportunities to Alaskan residents on public land has
8 gotten completely out of control. It has created
9 animosity. We even have better access to the eastern
10 shore of the island than do the residents of POW.

11
12 That concludes the known comments that
13 I have received on Proposal 18-01.

14
15 Thank you.

16
17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
18 that. Next we'll open the floor to any questions or
19 comments.

20
21 (No comments)

22
23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: No questions.
24 We will open the floor to public testimony. Anyone in
25 the public who wants to testify.

26
27 (No comments)

28
29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: No public
30 testimony. We move on to tribal, Alaska Native corp
31 comments. Native Liaison.

32
33 MR. LIND: Thank you, Chairman. Board
34 members. Orville Lind, Native Liaison for OSM. We did
35 have Mr. Kitka from Sitka Tribe join us in the
36 conference room during the consultation, which was held
37 September 14th.

38
39 Right off the bat Mr. Kitka shared with
40 us that he didn't really care for the word subsistence.
41 It didn't do what he called traditional foods justice.
42 Mr. Kitka did mention that in his outdoor adventures
43 that he determined that there were very low densities
44 of deer populations around his region and he believed
45 that there were wolves and black bears, a predation
46 issue.

47
48 That's all I have.

49
50

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
2 Orville. And then just for a matter of process I would
3 check on the line. Is there anybody on the line who
4 wanted to provide any public testimony.

5
6 (No comments)

7
8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none.
9 We'll call on Alaska Department of Fish and Game, State
10 liaison.

11
12 MR. BUTLER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
13 This is Lem Butler, Assistant Director for the Division
14 of Wildlife. We are under the impression there is one
15 person on the phone by the way who wants to comment, so
16 you might try that again after we get done with our
17 comments.

18
19 Our comments are found on Page 623 of
20 your meeting booklet. The Department recommendation is
21 to oppose this proposal because it places unnecessary
22 restrictions on non-Federally-qualified users,
23 Ketchikan in particular. As has been noted, the deer
24 population is high and stable. We've had a series of
25 mild winters. No indication that it's declined. We do
26 understand that people have seen fewer deer.

27
28 We suggest that more information should
29 be gathered before any decisions are made based on
30 that. It could just be a change in distribution or
31 some other anomaly. So we'd like more time to evaluate
32 the status of the deer population, but, again, it has
33 been high and stable.

34
35 In addition, Federally-qualified users
36 have a much more liberal season and bag limit. They
37 can take five deer including a doe. State season is
38 restrictive to four bucks. Non-Federally-qualified
39 users have an additional 54 days to take deer as well
40 and recorded harvests have been high over the last five
41 or six years.

42
43 Again, based on the provisions in
44 ANILCA, there really isn't a reason to justify limiting
45 non-Federally-qualified users based on the biological
46 conservation of the population or to provide for
47 subsistence uses. We'd suggest that in this case where
48 you have a high harvest and high deer population,
49 reducing the State season without going through the
50

1 Board of Game process would be unprecedented and we
2 believe it would not be a valid use of the
3 authorizations provided to this Board. We think it
4 undermines State authority.

5

6 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
9 that. Was that part B of that proposal to change the
10 timeframe of it? I didn't see where reducing the time
11 for them was included.

12

13 MR. BUTLER: Mr. Chair. I may have
14 misspoke. I didn't mean to reference a change in time.
15 I was just trying to point out that Federally-qualified
16 users already have a much more liberal season than the
17 State users. I believe we're just addressing the
18 change in bag limit, the reduction in the bag limit for
19 State non-Federally-qualified users from four bucks to
20 two bucks.

21

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Thanks
23 for that clarification.

24

25 Go ahead, Greg.

26

27 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
28 Greg Siekaniec, Fish and Wildlife Service. Thanks,
29 Lem. Lem, you had mentioned that maybe we should just
30 allow more time for additional evaluation. What would
31 additional evaluation consist of?

32

33 MR. BUTLER: Through the Chair. Just
34 additional -- again, currently our reported harvest and
35 information that we're collecting from the unit
36 suggests that the harvest has been high and stable.
37 Given that we just went through a deer season, our
38 current harvest information would be considered
39 preliminary at this point, so it would give us more
40 time to actually document if there was a change this
41 season.

42

43 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you.

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Rhonda.

46

47 MS. PITKA: So under your analysis the
48 literature cited was from 1998 and from 2006. I see
49 the harvest. That study was from 1998. So is this

50

1 analysis based on those two studies from '98 and 2006?

2

3 MR. SCOTT: Through the Chair. Ms.
4 Pitka. For the record, my name is Ryan Scott. I'm the
5 Wildlife Regional Supervisor for Southeast Alaska. If
6 you have the State comments available starting on Page
7 623. The analysis we refer to is the harvest data
8 begins in 1997. We went all the way through the most
9 current years' information 2016. Presently, as we
10 speak, we're collecting harvest data for the 2017
11 hunting season as well.

12

13 I'd also like to add, to follow up with
14 Member Siekaniec, we will be fielding pellet survey
15 crews on Prince of Wales as well this spring and it's
16 been a few years since we've done that, but we'll be
17 there for seven or ten days doing a multitude of
18 watersheds.

19

20 Thank you.

21

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
23 questions for the State liaison.

24

25 (No comments)

26

27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Beth, go ahead.

28

29 MS. PENDLETON: Through the Chair.
30 Just a question. Do we have any information whether
31 hunters are getting their deer at lower elevations,
32 higher elevations? Has there been any change in
33 pattern of where the animals are being harvested say
34 over the last decade?

35

36 MR. BUTLER: Through the Chair, Member
37 Pendleton. I would defer to the Chair and Mr.
38 Hernandez. That's not the information that we collect
39 in the harvest data. We ask for fairly general
40 locations.

41

42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Well, I know
43 just from personal observation and then listening to
44 what's happening on Prince of Wales Island from
45 numerous residents that the deer seemed to be staying
46 in higher elevations and not coming down into the
47 lowlands. I don't know if that was the mild winters
48 and stuff and might lend to some of the less deer seen,
49 you know, to lean towards the State in their comments.

50

1 But a second part of the hunting is the
2 beach hunt and identifying animals from a boat and then
3 pursuing them and hunting them. This was probably the
4 worst year ever on record on Prince of Wales Island for
5 beach hunting for deer. Usually that's how Prince of
6 Wales Island meet their need because of the competition
7 on the road system, which is very extensive.
8

9 Again, noted there was road closures in
10 the last few years that really has bottle-necked a lot
11 of that pressure and units growing up into second
12 growth and getting into that stem exclusion stage. So
13 there's some factors that play into that, but I don't
14 know how to explain no deer on the beach. That's a
15 whole other can of worms in Southeast Alaska to
16 constantly go out on your boat and not to be successful
17 in harvesting a deer.
18

19 That's where I think my concern as a
20 local resident and also a Board member comes from, is
21 that the residents are really having a hard time
22 meeting their need on our fallback plan, which is to go
23 out on the boat and to cruise the beaches and the
24 fringes there and try to get successful that way.
25 That's been one of the things that have come up this
26 year.
27

28 Another part of that is the residents
29 started to note a lot of kills on the beach of bigger
30 bucks. So not seeing a whole lot of does and smaller
31 fawns but actually coming across large animals that
32 usually defend themselves. So we're also thinking
33 there's a predator issue going on.
34

35 So that's what we're experiencing on
36 Prince of Wales Island this year is a hard time meeting
37 their needs, not a lot of deer in the usual and
38 customary areas and then just coming across a lot of
39 kill sites and a lot of predation events. You'll see
40 in some of the testimony more wolves than they've ever
41 seen in their history of hunting on Prince of Wales
42 Island.
43

44 So it's not to say there isn't a lot of
45 deer. I think deer are pretty resilient and they find
46 ways to protect themselves. My personal observation is
47 they stay on hillsides basically so they can run from
48 the animals that are chasing them, whether it's us or
49 the bear or the wolf.
50

1 So that's been my observation and from
2 a summarization of POW residents and their concerns.

3
4 MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
5 I'm not all that familiar with the procedure. Do I get
6 to ask questions of the State or is that only for the
7 Board?

8
9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Sure.

10
11 MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Ryan, you
12 might be able to answer this. Since our winter meeting
13 that we had is there any new information that the State
14 got concerning hunting effort on Prince of Wales since
15 we've had that meeting that you can share with us? I
16 think we had some reports that there might have been
17 some new information available. That there was
18 essentially 700 fewer deer harvested between the two
19 previous seasons. Do you have that?

20
21 MR. SCOTT: Through the Chair, Mr.
22 Hernandez. You know, at this point I'm not aware of
23 that primarily because we're truly receiving -- we're
24 still getting lots of deer harvest reports. In Unit 2
25 the season runs through January 31, so there's an
26 additional delay there where harvest reports come in
27 quite a bit later frankly than other places that end
28 December 31st. So that information probably we won't
29 have that ready to go until mid summer.

30
31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
32 other questions.

33
34 MR. C. BROWER: Mr. Chair. I notice
35 that when I was reading through this that the non-
36 Federally recognized hunters have increased almost
37 twofold from '06 to '15, is that right?

38
39 MR. SCOTT: Through the Chair, Member
40 Brower. I don't have hard numbers for you, but if you
41 look -- I'm going to make an assumption you're looking
42 at the graphic on maybe Page 625. Is that accurate?
43 So under the State's comments on Page 625 there's a
44 graph that illustrates the number of Unit 2 deer
45 hunters both Federally-qualified as well as non-
46 Federally-qualified.

47
48 MR. C. BROWER: Thank you.

49
50

1 MR. POLACCA: Through the Chair.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Lynn.

4

5 MR. POLACCA: Yes, do you have any
6 analysis or any suggestions as to why there was a
7 decrease on both the Federal qualified users and non-
8 Federal qualified users since 2015, a decrease in
9 harvest rates?

10

11 MR. SCOTT: Through the Chair, Member
12 Polacca. No. Everybody is experiencing somewhat of a
13 downturn in the total number of deer being harvested,
14 but if we look back over time, and generally speaking
15 we look at harvest information over like a 10-year
16 period and try to look at it in a longer term, it's
17 still relatively high. Peaked likely in 2015, but in
18 the long term it does stay -- it's still very high and
19 well above what -- you know, if we average that out,
20 well above what that would be.

21

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
23 questions.

24

25 (No comments)

26

27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Then the State
28 mentioned somebody may be online, so I'm going to call
29 one more time to see if that commentor is still online.
30 Proposal 18-01, is there somebody on?

31

32 OPERATOR: We still have no one in cue
33 to ask a question.

34

35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
36 Thank you for that, Operator. If there's no further
37 questions here, we'll call on the Interagency Staff
38 Committee.

39

40 MS. HARDIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
41 Members of the Board. My name is Jennifer Hardin and I
42 am the OSM subsistence policy coordinator and I serve
43 as the chair of the Interagency Staff Committee.

44

45 For the purposes of this meeting the
46 Interagency Staff Committee has a standard comment. It
47 reads as follows: The Interagency Staff Committee
48 found the staff analysis to be a thorough and accurate
49 evaluation of the proposal and that it provides

50

1 sufficient basis for the Regional Advisory Council
2 recommendation and Federal Subsistence Board action on
3 the proposal.

4
5 The ISC or Interagency Staff Committee
6 provided the standard comment on Wildlife Proposal
7 WP18-01 and, as we move forward through the non-
8 consensus proposals, if only the standard comment
9 applies, for the record that is what I will state.

10

11 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
14 Jennifer. That opens up the floor for Board discussion
15 with the State liaison or Council Chairs. I think
16 we've had a pretty good discussion. Any other further
17 questions or discussions.

18

19 Gordon.

20

21 MR. G. BROWER: I know I'm not from the
22 region, but it seems to be a common problem throughout
23 the program about the needs of residents versus those
24 that are coming from the Outside. I think we're a very
25 generous population in sharing, but when the
26 communities are struggling to make their needs it's
27 important to recognize that. I feel what's going on in
28 Prince of Wales is an issue that's prevalent throughout
29 the program where there needs to be a way to look at
30 the rural subsistence priority issue and make that in a
31 way that really works.

32

33 I heard you a little bit ago, Mr.
34 Chairman, about submitting a map and working on
35 something like that. If you are to look at these
36 preferences for communities, rural subsistence priority
37 for communities, it needs to include areas that are
38 defined as an area of influence for communities where
39 the residents should not have to go hungry, not have to
40 struggle, especially their -- I don't know what the
41 terms to use, but it hurts me that our State is this
42 way when there is an impasse with rural subsistence,
43 subsistence issues in the state.

44

45 I think it was 1994 or 1990 somewhere.
46 The State could make a determination to come in and use
47 rural subsistence priority and managed the resources
48 for everybody, which makes it almost a -- I don't know
49 how you'd say it, but first come first serve no matter
50

1 who you are. It's like a western cowboy mentality type
2 approach to these resources when communities need to be
3 thought about as their needs. The traditional hunting
4 practices that we can pass down that are good, not
5 arguments to pass down to our families.

6

7 Thank you.

8

9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
10 Gordon.

11

12 I've got Charlie and then Donald.

13

14 MR. C. BROWER: I'm kind of in a daze
15 here with this 18-01. It's only one proposal, but at
16 the same time Southeast is trying to change it to A and
17 B, is that right? You have 18-01 A and 18-01 B.
18 There's two subsets to this one proposal.

19

20 MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr. Brower,
21 through the Chair. Yes, when the Southeast Council was
22 putting together proposals to deal with this situation,
23 we did have two ideas that we wanted to put forward.
24 One was shortening the length of the season for
25 non-subsistence users and the other was decreasing the
26 bag limit. Through the course of our deliberations we
27 had decided that -- well, first of all, since we had
28 two -- it's kind of written as one proposal, but we
29 kind of broke it down to an A and a B portion to deal
30 with those two different concepts.

31

32 During the course of the deliberations
33 we did decide that it would not be worthwhile to
34 shorten the season. We were instead going to recommend
35 that the bag limit be reduced, so there is an A and B,
36 but the Council's recommendation was to not support the
37 B portion of it and to support the primary one, which
38 was decreasing the bag limit instead of the shortening
39 of the season.

40

41 So two ideas put forward. One was not
42 supported and one was, but it was originally kind of as
43 one proposal, but we did separate the two and voted on
44 them separately. Hope that helps.

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Don.

46

47 Greg.

48

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

50

1 Greg Siekaniec, Fish and Wildlife Service. This is
2 just an observation. It seems like we're kind of
3 inches our way towards maybe a population sort of
4 discussion whether there are enough deer or whether
5 there aren't enough deer.

6
7 So I'm a little bit surprised if it is
8 a population level discussion why there wouldn't be
9 some consideration given to decreasing the mortality on
10 the production side of it by reducing the doe harvest.
11 You know, maintaining the Federally-qualified users
12 opportunity to have additional days in there, but
13 reducing the doe harvest to help address, if it really
14 is a population level concern, so you keep the
15 production part of the herd there.

16
17 It's just probably more of an
18 observation.

19
20 It probably hasn't been given any
21 consideration certainly analysis-wise on that.

22
23 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

24
25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Duly noted.

26
27 Don.

28
29 I think Don raised his hand there.

30
31 MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
32 The doe harvest is always part of our discussions
33 because we do recognize that conventional management
34 practices would call for elimination of a doe season
35 probably as one of the first alternatives. The doe
36 season was implemented a good number of years ago.
37 That has always been kind of considered to be an
38 important practice for traditional hunters is to be
39 able to take a doe and it's always been controversial.
40 We do talk about it quite often.

41
42 We have kind of been satisfied with the
43 fact that despite there is an opportunity to take a
44 doe, many people who are eligible to take a doe do not
45 choose to do so. I personally know very few people who
46 will shoot a doe. It's kind of a last resort. All the
47 evidence shows that the doe harvest has remained very
48 low. I think with 4,000 deer approximately taken,
49 there might only be about 100 does taken. We're
50

1 satisfied that we can continue to have a doe hunt
2 without seriously impacting the deer populations.

3
4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Don.
5 Oh, he was not finished.

6
7 MR. HERNANDEZ: I did want to know if
8 this was an opportunity for the Chairs to kind of weigh
9 in a little more on this proposal. Could I do that?

10
11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: This is the
12 time.

13
14 MR. HERNANDEZ: This is the time.
15 Okay. Well, I think the big issue here and it's
16 probably something that is kind of of interest on a
17 statewide basis and kind of key to the whole program.
18 That is we have opposition to this proposal that is
19 kind of based on the scientific evidence that's been
20 presented. The Council, of course, is relying on the
21 traditional ecological knowledge that has been
22 presented. There's a definite conflict there. It's up
23 to you as the Board to kind of decide which prevails, I
24 guess.

25
26 In our meeting we did have quite a
27 discussion on why is there such a discrepancy between
28 the scientific evidence and what people are seeing on
29 the ground. I think it's a very important topic. In
30 this particular case and this particular area, I think
31 it's important that you know that most of what you see
32 in all these charts and graphs comes from a hunter
33 survey. I think it's also important that you know that
34 this hunter survey is a postcard. Six lines on a
35 postcard.

36
37 So trying to gather this amount of
38 information from that postcard is quite a challenge. I
39 mean the Department does the surveys and with hunters
40 from different user groups it's kind of important that
41 you have kind of a standardized form for everybody to
42 use, but yet that form in our view, the Council's view,
43 works far better in collecting information from non-
44 subsistence hunters than it does from subsistence
45 hunters.

46
47 The reason being subsistence hunters,
48 the local hunters, it's about a three to four month
49 season. They engage in that activity through quite a
50

1 length of time in conjunction with many other
2 activities that they're doing. They're going out
3 fishing, they're maybe spending an afternoon or a
4 weather day off hunting one of their favorite spots,
5 they're out gathering firewood, they take a couple
6 hours to go check out one of their favorite hunting
7 spots, berry picking, all kinds of activities over a
8 long period of time. You cannot put that kind of
9 information on six lines of a postcard. It's just not
10 possible to collect that detail of information in that
11 manner.

12
13 I'll kind of contrast that to what the
14 typical non-subsistence hunter or somebody from
15 Ketchikan does. They kind of plan a trip to Prince of
16 Wales Island. They more typically might have a job.
17 They take a few days off of a week. They get loaded up.
18 They head over to the island on the ferry. They come
19 at the best time of the year when the bucks are in
20 their prime rut. They know they're going to have good
21 success. They hunt from sunup till sundown and then
22 they go home. Very easy to catalogue that one trip,
23 hunted so many days, shot so many bucks.

24
25 This proposal kind of focuses on the
26 competition aspect of it. A lot of those statistics
27 have to do with how many days it took to get your deer
28 and has that continued over time. You can't gain that
29 kind of information from somebody who's going out many,
30 many days doing all kinds of different activities.
31 They're still going to the places that they know where
32 they've had really good success over the years and
33 they're not having success in these places. It's just
34 hard to put that on a postcard.

35
36 So it's kind of a big issue and it's
37 something I think you really seriously need to
38 consider. It just kind of has to do with how people go
39 about doing what they do. Thank you for giving me the
40 opportunity to present that.

41
42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Don.
43 And I do know that that's one of our considerations
44 here, is impacts to subsistence and the ability for the
45 user to access the resource. So there are multiple
46 layers for us to consider as a Board in our
47 deliberation and thought process as we think about
48 these issues. So I'm glad you brought that up.

49
50

1 Gordon.

2

3 MR. G. BROWER: Just a supporting
4 dialogue having worked with issues like this on
5 development-related issues and subsistence. In the
6 same light as competing users, oil and gas become a
7 competing user of the land because of its impacts to
8 subsistence almost always removes subsistence because
9 of the prominency of oilfield security matters that go
10 on with development like that.

11

12 So the Borough in the Arctic has had to
13 make a determination that even in times of abundance
14 where the population is stable, the management scheme
15 is liberal and make a determination by the mere fact of
16 introduction of competing users that you deplete the
17 resource from the area. That is a big issue when
18 you're having competing users with those that are
19 residents dependant on those resources to put food on
20 the table.

21

22 I just want to make sure that -- I
23 think these kind of issues are very -- need to be
24 understood that you can make these decisions in a way
25 that you give preference to the communities that are
26 looking at the issue themselves.

27

28 Thank you.

29

30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
31 other questions from the Board here.

32

33 MR. C. BROWER: One more, Mr. Chair.

34

35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: One more.
36 Charlie.

37

38 MR. C. BROWER: Just to the State. So
39 if this is adopted, there will be no change in their
40 regulations. They'll be still allowed to hunt four
41 deers on private land and State land, is that right?

42

43 MR. SCOTT: Through the Chair, Member
44 Brower. That's correct. The State seasons and bag
45 limits would remain and they'd be applicable to State
46 land and private land.

47

48 MR. C. BROWER: So all they have to do
49 is step over one line and get four.

50

1 MR. SCOTT: Through the Chair, Member
2 Brower. That's a fair point, right. You know, it's a
3 challenge. But there's differences in both the Federal
4 regulations and the State regulations now in Unit 2.
5 This Board has seen that in a lot of places. So that's
6 a challenge that potentially will continue.

7
8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. All
9 right. It looks like we're kind of winding this up.
10 Greg, you have one more?

11
12 MR. SIEKANIEC: Maybe. I'm just trying
13 to again still get my head wrapped around this, whether
14 it's a population thinking or consideration going on.
15 In looking at the Unit 2, and I apologize, I'm not that
16 familiar with how that all looks in my head, but it
17 looks like you had about an eight or ten year running
18 of significant harvest above the harvest objective on
19 deer that are being reported.

20
21 From the State's planning side of that,
22 Lem, how do you begin to think about that or Ryan? Is
23 there adjustments that start to come into your thinking
24 then on how long a population can run at the this over
25 the objective harvest level before something else
26 changes?

27
28 MR. BUTLER: Through the Chair. That's
29 our objective. We shoot for that as a minimum harvest
30 so it really isn't a problem that we're above the
31 objective.

32
33 MR. SIEKANIEC: Because the graph
34 doesn't look that way. It just looks like it's
35 significantly above it.

36
37 MR. BUTLER: And to elaborate on the
38 question relative to harvest, the fact that people are
39 taking a significant number of deer and over shorter
40 and shorter period of time the number of days to
41 harvest deer is decreased. We see that as a reflection
42 of the deer population being at a high population size.
43 So we'd use that as an index of the population size and
44 conclude that the deer population is large.

45
46 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you.

47
48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right. Any
49 other questions. Beth, are you good? Everybody is
50

1 good. Sounds good.

2

3 All right. It's time for Federal Board
4 action.

5

6 MS. PENDLETON: Through the Chair.
7 This has been great discussion and this is a difficult
8 proposal, but I move -- and this is really consistent
9 with the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory
10 Council, but I move to split Proposal WP18-01 with the
11 harvest limit issue being designated as WP18-01a and
12 the harvest season issue designated as WP18-01b
13 consistent with the action of the RAC.

14

15 The original proposal is shown on Page
16 607 of the Board book and the Council's action
17 splitting the proposal is found on Page 623. Following
18 a second I'll explain my rationale for dividing the
19 question into two components.

20

21 MS. PITKA: Second. This is Rhonda
22 Pitka.

23

24 MS. PENDLETON: Through the Chair. So
25 I move to adopt WP18-01a and that's reducing the non-
26 Federally-qualified annual harvest limit from four deer
27 to two deer in Unit 2. After a second I'll offer my
28 justification for supporting WP18-01a.

29

30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: She has two
31 motions. She's motioned one to split them out and now
32 she needs a second on her motion so she can.....

33

34 MS. PITKA: I'll second again then.

35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. I'm
37 getting direction here. We should vote on the first one
38 to split them into two. Is there any disagreement here
39 from the Board on that?

40

41 (No comments)

42

43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: No. So all in
44 favor of splitting the proposal into two, one deals
45 with the harvest limit and one with harvest dates.

46

47 (No opposing votes)

48

49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: No opposition

50

1 from the Board here. Motion carries to split that into
2 two. Now Beth has a motion on the floor and seconded
3 by Rhonda.

4
5 MS. PENDLETON: Through the Chair. So
6 I move -- for a second motion I move to adopt WP18-01a
7 that would reduce the non-Federally-qualified annual
8 harvest limit from four deer to two deer in Unit 2.
9 After a second I'll offer my justification for
10 supporting WP18-01a.

11
12 MR. FROST: Second.

13
14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion has been
15 made and seconded.

16
17 Go ahead, Beth.

18
19 MS. PENDLETON: So in consideration of
20 the extensive deliberation of the Regional Advisory
21 Council, the public testimony that has been presented
22 and tribal consultation as well as the traditional
23 ecological knowledge that has been brought forward,
24 there does appear to be substantial evidence that
25 subsistence needs are not being met. I believe that
26 this proposal could increase harvest opportunity for
27 the Federally-qualified users hunting deer on Federal
28 public lands in Unit 2.

29
30 As we've also heard, the proposal would
31 not change the harvest limit under State hunting
32 regulation or affect harvest occurring off the Federal
33 lands.

34
35 Finally, between 2005 and 2015 non-
36 Federally-qualified hunters in Unit 2 average less than
37 two deer per season, 1.9 deer per hunter, which implies
38 that most non-Federally-qualified hunters would not be
39 adversely impacted by the proposal.

40
41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any further
42 discussion.

43
44 (No comments)

45
46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: No. Call for
47 the question.

48
49 MR. FROST: Question.

50

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The question
2 has been called. Do a roll call.
3
4 MR. DOOLITTLE: Roll call vote on 18-
5 01a. Herbert Frost, National Park Service.
6
7 MR. FROST: Support.
8
9 MR. DOOLITTLE: BLM, Karen Mouritsen.
10
11 MS. MOURITSEN: Support.
12
13 MR. DOOLITTLE: U.S. Fish and Wildlife
14 Service, Greg Siekaniec.
15
16 MR. SIEKANIEC: I'll support.
17
18 MR. DOOLITTLE: Beth Pendleton, U.S.
19 Forest Service.
20
21 MS. PENDLETON: Support.
22
23 MR. DOOLITTLE: BIA, Lynn Polacca.
24
25 MR. POLACCA: Support.
26
27 MR. DOOLITTLE: Public member, Rhonda
28 Pitka.
29
30 MS. PITKA: Support.
31
32 MR. DOOLITTLE: Public member, Charlie
33 Brower.
34
35 MR. C. BROWER: Support.
36
37 MR. DOOLITTLE: Chairman Anthony
38 Christianson.
39
40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support with
41 deference to the RAC.
42
43 MR. DOOLITTLE: Motion carried.
44 Unanimous.
45
46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
47 that. And then we have one more order of business with
48 this.
49
50

1 MS. PENDLETON: So through the Chair,
2 there is a second piece as was presented by the RAC
3 with regard to the season length. So I have a motion
4 with regard to that as well. So I'd move to adopt
5 WP18-01b changing the season ending date for deer in
6 Unit 2 for non-Federally-qualified hunters from
7 December 31st to December 24th. After a second I'll
8 offer my justification for opposing WP18-01b.
9

10 MS. PITKA: I'll second.
11

12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The motion has
13 been made and seconded.
14

15 Go ahead, Beth.
16

17 MS. PENDLETON: So shortening the
18 season in December may not benefit subsistence users as
19 harvest data indicates very few deer are actually being
20 harvested during this timeframe by both user groups.
21 Finally, the Unit 2 Federal season currently provides
22 Federally-qualified subsistence users the following
23 priorities. Eight additional hunting days in July
24 prior to the start of the State season. A closure to
25 non-Federally-qualified users for 15 days in August on
26 the majority of the Federal public lands on Prince of
27 Wales Island. A more liberal harvest limit of five
28 deer, an opportunity to harvest a female deer after
29 October 15th and then finally 31 additional days in
30 January.
31

32 Thank you.
33

34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any discussion.
35

36 (No comments)
37

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

41 MR. FROST: Question.
42

43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The question
44 has been called. Do roll call again.
45

46 MR. DOOLITTLE: This is for motion on
47 the floor WP18-01b, adopt Proposal WP18-01b changing
48 the season ending date for deer in Unit 2 for non-
49 Federally-qualified hunters from December 31 to
50

1 December 24th.
2
3 Roll call vote.
4
5 National Park Service, Herbert Frost.
6
7 MR. FROST: Oppose.
8
9 MR. DOOLITTLE: BLM, Karen Mouritsen.
10
11 MS. MOURITSEN: Oppose.
12
13 MR. DOOLITTLE: U.S. Fish and Wildlife
14 Service, Greg Siekaniec.
15
16 MR. SIEKANIEC: I'll oppose.
17
18 MR. DOOLITTLE: U.S. Forest Service,
19 Beth Pendleton.
20
21 MS. PENDLETON: Oppose.
22
23 MR. DOOLITTLE: BIA, Lynn Polacca.
24
25 MR. POLACCA: Oppose.
26
27 MR. DOOLITTLE: Public member, Rhonda
28 Pitka.
29
30 MS. PITKA: Oppose.
31
32 MR. DOOLITTLE: Public member, Charlie
33 Brower.
34
35 MR. C. BROWER: Oppose.
36
37 MR. DOOLITTLE: Tony Christianson.
38
39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oppose.
40
41 MR. DOOLITTLE: Motion failed.
42
43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
44 that, guys. Now I'd like to apologize for the time
45 certain 2:30 folks. That one took a little bit longer
46 than anticipated. Again, I think that was one of the
47 bigger issues we had on the table today. Thanks
48 everyone for their input and time and clarification on
49 that issue. Now we'll look to move 17, 18 and 19 up.
50

1 We'll give Staff a couple of minutes to
2 get set in and get some water. Five minutes, guys.
3 We'll give them five minutes to get ready.

4
5 (Off record)

6
7 (On record)

8
9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: It looks like
10 we'll go ahead and get started. Again, we're here for
11 Proposal 17, 18 and 19 on the non-consensus agenda.
12 I'll open the floor for analysis.

13
14 Thank you.

15
16 MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
17 Members of the Board. My name is Tom Evans and I work
18 as a wildlife biologist with OSM. I'll start off with
19 Proposal WP18-17. I will not address the permit
20 portion of this proposal in this discussion on 18.
21 Proposal WP18-17 can be found on Page 232 of your Board
22 book. It was submitted by the Ahtna Intertribal
23 Resource Commission (AITRC). So if you hear me refer
24 to AITRC, that's who I'm referring to. Requests that
25 the moose season on Federal public lands in Unit 11,
26 that portion draining into the east bank of the Copper
27 River upstream from and including the Slana River
28 drainage, and Unit 11 remainder be changed from August
29 20th to September 20th to August 20th to March 31st.
30 It's an addition of about six months.

31
32 The proponent stated this proposal
33 would provide more opportunity for Ahtna Tribal members
34 to harvest a moose during the fall and winter months
35 according to their customary and traditional practices.
36 There are three main survey areas that are routinely
37 conducted in Unit 11 and they are the Upper Copper
38 River analysis area, the Mt. Drum analysis area and the
39 Crystalline Hills analysis area.

40
41 Moose populations within these areas
42 have remained stable to slightly increasing through
43 2012 and '13. Although moose in Unit 11 have remained
44 relatively stable to slightly increasing, they occur at
45 relatively low densities. Densities have typically
46 remained below or at one moose per square mile. One
47 moose per square mile is considered low density for
48 moose populations.

49
50

1 Bull cow ratios have generally been
2 above the State management goals of a post-hunt ratio
3 of 30 bulls to 100 cows and there's no State harvest
4 goal for moose within Unit 11. Hunting pressure is
5 typically low in Unit 11 due in part to greater
6 accessibility and higher moose densities in the
7 adjacent area of Unit 13. A majority of the moose are
8 taken on Federal land in Unit 11.

9
10 The mean annual moose harvest under the
11 Federal and State regulations from 2000 to 2013 was 21
12 for the Federal side and 28 for the State side. The
13 total harvest ranged from 50 to 70. The harvest of
14 antlered bulls under the Federal subsistence
15 regulations could significantly increase with a five-
16 month extension.

17
18 Up to 60 bulls with a six-month
19 extension to the harvest season, assuming a harvest
20 rate of 40 percent of the fall harvest rate for an
21 additional five months could be possible. Under the
22 joint State/Federal permit from 2012 to 2016, the
23 annual harvest was 59 moose. So relatively few moose
24 are taken from this population.

25
26 If this proposal is adopted, it would
27 lengthen the moose season on Federal public lands by
28 approximately 6 months and would give Federally-
29 qualified subsistence users more opportunity to harvest
30 moose according to their customary and traditional
31 practices. Moose populations in Unit 11 occur at low
32 densities and are subject to population fluctuations
33 due to severe winters and predation.

34
35 Although moose in Unit 11 have remained
36 relatively stable to slightly increasing, they still
37 occur at relatively low densities. Increasing the
38 season by six months will likely drastically increase
39 the moose harvest on this low density moose population.
40 Most of the moose harvest is on Federal public lands
41 and increasing the moose harvest by six months will
42 significantly increase the bull harvest on Federal
43 public lands and may have population level effects.

44
45 OSM's conclusion is to oppose this
46 proposal WP18-17.

47
48 Thank you.

49
50

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
2 questions for Tom.

3
4 (No comments)

5
6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none.
7 We'll move on to summary of public comments. Regional
8 Council Coordinator.

9
10 MR. MIKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We
11 received three written public comments in support of
12 Proposal WP18-17. The Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resource
13 Commission is in support of the proposal, stating that
14 establishing a tribal moose hunt will not result in an
15 increase of moose harvest on Federal public lands.

16
17 The Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence
18 Resource Commission stated they'll take no action on
19 WP18-17 based on actions taken on 18-19.

20
21 Mr. Jerry Sperry states he's opposed to
22 extending the season which will greatly increase the
23 chance that the bull moose population will be
24 decimated.

25
26 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

27
28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
29 Next we open the floor to public testimony. Any public
30 testimony here in the building or on the phone.

31
32 (No comments)

33
34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll also
35 check with the online operator. Is there anybody
36 wanting to speak to this 18-17?

37
38 OPERATOR: We have no one in cue at the
39 moment. As a reminder people on the phones, you can
40 press star-one to ask a question or make a comment.

41
42 (No comments)

43
44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Not hearing or
45 seeing any, we'll move on to our Regional Council
46 Coordinator recommendation.

47
48 OPERATOR: Excuse me, sir. We do have
49 someone that popped in on the phone line.

50

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. There we
2 go. We have somebody on the phone line for public
3 testimony. The floor is yours.

4
5 OPERATOR: We have Nick Jackson. Your
6 line is open.

7
8 MS. MARTIN: Sorry, Nick Jackson left,
9 but Susie Martin is here and wants to testify.

10
11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The floor is
12 yours.

13
14 MS. MARTIN: Good afternoon. Thank
15 you, Mr. Chair, Vice Chair and the rest of the Board
16 for allowing me to speak today. My name is Susie
17 Martin. I'm from Mentasta Lake, Alaska and I am from
18 the (indiscernible). I have hunted, fished and
19 gathered my whole life and I continue to live this way.
20 I am the great-granddaughter of Katie John, Jeannie
21 Henry and Doris Charles of Batzulnetas.

22
23 When my grandparents were growing up
24 they didn't need a piece of paper to give them
25 permission on when to hunt, fish and gather traditional
26 food. In our culture, we have seasons that we know
27 when to hunt, fish and gather food and this knowledge
28 has been passed down from generation to generation.
29 All we want is to continue this way of life.

30
31 I saw that an 8th grade class from
32 Anchorage made a snow sculpture titled We The People.
33 The sculpture featured Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther
34 King, Jr., Gandhi and my great-grandma Katie John. The
35 inscription on the sculpture read: Be the change that
36 you wish to see in the world. I hope that you want to
37 be that change and support our proposals so that we can
38 continue living our traditional culture.

39
40 Thank you for giving me the time to
41 speak today.

42
43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. I
44 appreciate you taking the time to call in.

45
46 Anybody else on the phone.

47
48 MS. MARTIN: Not at this time, sir.

49
50

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you very
2 much. Seeing no other public testimony we'll move on
3 to the Regional Council recommendation Chair designee.
4

5 MR. ENCELEWSKI: Through the Chair.
6 Greg Encelewski, Southcentral RAC Chair. Our Council
7 voted to take no action on the permit portion of this.
8 We had quite a deliberation because we figured that
9 permit portion is covered in 18-19. The Council
10 opposed the season change. The reason the Council
11 opposed the season change was the extension due to low
12 moose densities and there was some conservation
13 concerns, so they opposed it. We did have a great
14 debate on it down in Homer.
15

16 Thank you, Mr. Chair.
17

18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
19 Greg. Tribal or Alaska Native Corp comments, Native
20 Liaison.
21

22 MR. LIND: Thank you.
23

24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hold on.
25 Sorry. There's one more affected RAC. I'm sorry about
26 that.
27

28 Donald.
29

30 MR. WOODRUFF: The Eastern Interior
31 RAC. I'm speaking for the Chairman. We took the same
32 action as Southcentral. We took no action on the
33 permit and we oppose the season change on WP18-17 for
34 the reason that Southcentral used as well. It's a low
35 moose population.
36

37 Thank you.
38

39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
40 Donald. Apologize again for that oversight. Okay. We
41 move on to the liaison.
42

43 MR. LIND: Thank you, Chairman.
44 Members of the Board. During the consultation on
45 September 14 we had no discussion on this wildlife
46 proposal through tribes or corporations.
47

48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
49 With that we move on to Alaska Department of Fish and
50

1 Game comments, State Liaison.

2

3 MR. BUTLER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
4 Members of the Board. The State concurs with the
5 testimony that you've heard thus far. It's a low
6 density moose population. We believe that the addition
7 of six months hunting opportunity could result in an
8 unsustainable harvest by increasing the harvest
9 considerably. So again we recommend that you oppose
10 it.

11

12 We're neutral on how the permit is
13 handled if it's a Federal permit, but we noted that if
14 there were any interest in trying to have a joint
15 State/Federal permit, we wouldn't be able to do that if
16 Ahtna or AITRC were issuing the permit. It's in our
17 regulations that hunts have to be administered by the
18 State, so that would be a splitting point for us if
19 Ahtna were able to issue the Federal permits.

20

21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
22 We'll take a pause and take one step back. I did
23 announce it several times, so I apologize if you didn't
24 hear me, Karen, but we will allow you this time to come
25 forward.

26

27 MS. LINNELL: Sorry, Mr. Chair. You
28 were asking for public comment off the phone and I
29 thought -- and then you briefly said other
30 organizations and ANCs and I was waiting for you --
31 because somebody came on the phone. So I apologize as
32 well.

33

34 My name is Karen Linnell. I'm the
35 executive director of the Ahtna Intertribal Resource
36 Commission. We support Wildlife Proposals 18-17, 18-18
37 and 18-19 as proposed. You can find them on Pages 232,
38 700 and 736. These proposals move to implement the
39 terms of our 2016 memorandum of agreement with the
40 Department of Interior.

41

42 There seems to be some misunderstanding
43 regarding the goals and objectives of this MOA. This
44 agreement formalizes our wildlife management
45 partnership and seeks to resolve the disappearance of a
46 reasonable opportunity to practice our customary and
47 traditional moose and caribou hunting patterns.

48

49 According to our MOA we agreed the

50

1 Department will immediately commence rulemaking to
2 allow the issuance of an AITRC managed community
3 harvest permit. Such permits may be for the benefit of
4 AITRC member tribal communities only and will allow
5 AITRC to establish harvest limits, quotas, season dates
6 and methods and means. Passing proposals WP18-17, 18
7 and 19 is a step towards implementing that MOA with the
8 Department of Interior.

9
10 Increasing pressure for moose and
11 caribou since 2011 drove us to begin negotiations with
12 the Department of Interior on this MOA. Challenges
13 stemming from increased participation in hunts in our
14 traditional use territory continue to intensify.
15 Roadside pull-offs are plugged with trucks, trailers
16 and four-wheelers. Some report that they're unable to
17 bring their children out hunting or berry picking due
18 to the growing prevalence of unsafe hunting practices
19 observed throughout the Copper River Basin.

20
21 We have a non-tribal member that
22 participates in the community hunt under the State and
23 took his boys out. They were wearing hunter orange and
24 he could hear people talking off in the distance and a
25 couple small caribou came running across behind him.
26 They saw them with their hunter orange and they
27 continued to shoot over their heads.

28
29 My grandson and I the same thing. We
30 saw one lone cow caribou out there and we thought, oh,
31 she can't be by herself, she's got to be looking for
32 something, so we went around the back side of this hill
33 to look for her and we came up the back side and
34 looking down and we seen six people coming up the hill
35 pointing their guns at that one little lone cow
36 caribou. So we hightailed it out of there because we
37 didn't want to be in their line of fire.

38
39 There's nothing respectful or customary
40 and traditional about that intensive hunting that we've
41 been observing on our ancestral lands today. AITRC's
42 vision is to manage our traditional lands to ensure
43 that our lands, water, air and fish and wildlife and
44 our people remain healthy. We look to regain a
45 meaningful role in the management of our traditional
46 lands through this MOA.

47
48 The opportunity to work together as
49 negotiating partners is a welcome change. Building a
50

1 strong partnership will help us accomplish our mutual
2 goals and prepare our young people to respond
3 responsibly to our changing world.

4
5 We do have concerns about the process.
6 The Federal Subsistence Board meeting materials were
7 only made available on March 16th, giving us three
8 weeks to formulate a response to the analysis provided
9 by the OSM, comments made by the Alaska Department of
10 Fish and Game and the Interagency Staff Committee.

11
12 The opportunity to participate in all
13 future ISC meetings would provide us with a more
14 meaningful role in the Federal Subsistence Management
15 Program. I've got to say that I was able to attend the
16 meeting personally. It was a bit of a shock, I
17 believe, to them that I showed up, but I thought that
18 the MOA puts us into that government-to-government
19 relationship, so I attended that meeting.

20
21 AITRC defines a meaningful role as a
22 decision-making role engaged in all levels of
23 management including planning, negotiation and
24 implementation. Western Alaskans interviewed in 2013
25 share a similar understanding of what a meaningful role
26 is.

27
28 Our input at this table will
29 undoubtedly improve the recommendations before the
30 Board. Participating in ISC meetings will also present
31 opportunities to learn about each other's concerns and
32 discuss a pragmatic and mutually beneficial solution.
33 Certainly there could be no harm from working together,
34 a goal all stakeholders seem to share.

35
36 Acting on these proposals will ensure
37 that agency and AITRC staff move quickly to develop an
38 alternative permit process. Any wildlife management or
39 permit framework developed should adhere to the terms
40 of our MOA. We recognize and support the practice of
41 subsistence hunting and fishing by all Federally-
42 qualified users. We see no reason why we cannot
43 fulfill the terms of our MOA and satisfy the rural
44 priority mandated by ANILCA.

45
46 Reaching a mutually beneficial solution
47 is achievable. If you defer these proposals, it will
48 further delay the process and will continue imposing
49 physical, cultural and spiritual hardship on the Ahtna
50

1 people.

2

3 I've heard comments to confidentiality.

4 I want to say that tribes are well-versed on
5 confidentiality. We maintain tribal membership roles,
6 manage health clinics while maintaining HIPAA
7 compliance. ANCSA corporations maintain their
8 shareholder records and tribes have had long-held
9 contracts with the government at many levels and adhere
10 to the privacy act.

11

12 I've also heard concerns that we would
13 not be able to handle the issuing of these permits or
14 managing this hunt. Ahtna's C&T coordinator currently
15 manages the State's community subsistence hunt for the
16 Ahtna group and has successfully since 2009.

17

18 The Board has the authority to act
19 according to 50 CFR Part 100.10(d)(4)(xvi) and (xvii).
20 Enter into cooperative agreements or otherwise
21 cooperate with Federal agencies, the State, Native
22 organizations, local governmental entities, and other
23 persons and organizations, including international
24 entities to effectuate the purposes and policies of the
25 Federal subsistence management program. Also Develop
26 alternative permitting processes relating to the
27 subsistence taking of fish and wildlife to ensure
28 continued opportunities for subsistence.

29

30 Our Ahtna elder Roy S. Ewan spoke to a
31 group of young people just days before his passing and
32 his message was focused on the unfinished business
33 pertaining to Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. He
34 recalled the promise made by the Federal congressional
35 leaders and the governor of the state of Alaska at the
36 time. The quote that I've included in this is from the
37 Congressional Conference Committee report.

38

39 The Conference Committee believes that
40 all Alaska Native interests in subsistence resource
41 lands can and will be protected by the Secretary
42 through the exercise of his existing withdrawal
43 authority. The Secretary could, for example, withdraw
44 appropriate lands and classify them in a manner that
45 would protect Native subsistence needs and requirements
46 by closing appropriate lands to entry by nonresidents.
47 The Conference Committee expects both the Secretary and
48 the State to take any action necessary to protect the
49 subsistence needs of the Natives.

50

1 Mr. Ewan said we took that promise. We
2 believed them to be honorable men. And here we are 40-
3 something years later still fighting for our ability to
4 provide for our people. Many Alaska Native peoples
5 believes the promise to protect their subsistence needs
6 and has been largely unrealized. We view this MOA as
7 an opportunity for the Ahtna people to exercise our
8 right to negotiate as sovereign nations with the United
9 States government to protect our subsistence needs,
10 culture and way of life.

11
12 We sincerely thank and respect the DOI
13 for their recognition and support. I also want to
14 thank you, Mr. Chair and Board, for considering our
15 proposals.

16
17 I just want to add that, you know, we
18 have a pretty good working relationship out there in
19 Glennallen with our State biologist, with Wrangell-St.
20 Elias National Park. We have that same relationship
21 over there with Denali National Park as part of that
22 Park is in our traditional use territory as well. And
23 with BLM. Our issues aren't with our local folks. I
24 just want you to know that.

25
26 Our issues are at a higher level here
27 in the regional office and moving things forward. You
28 folks had passed our charter last year about this time
29 and it hasn't gone to D.C. yet and that's something I
30 wanted to put on the record that there's a stall. I
31 think that if you guys take some action on these
32 proposals, we can eliminate that stall and start moving
33 forward.

34
35 So I just want to thank you for your
36 time and the ability to comment.

37
38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
39 Karen. Any questions for Karen, comments from the
40 Board.

41
42 Bert.

43
44 MR. FROST: Thanks, Karen. So I'm
45 trying to sort of still figure this thing out in my
46 mind. As you were reading your comments, which I think
47 you made a lot of great points, I'm trying to rectify
48 how do we -- so we have two RACs that are opposing the
49 increase in season length and we have AITRC, which is
50

1 supporting it. How do we sort of rectify that? I mean
2 in your mind under the paradigm you're trying to get
3 to, how would the Federal Board sort of rectify that
4 sort of discrepancy that we're facing literally here
5 this afternoon?
6

7 MS. LINNELL: Thank you for the
8 question, Bert. I appreciate it. You know, in order
9 to move things along, we'd stay with the same seasons
10 right now. Just the ability to issue permits and be a
11 part of the system is the first step. Other changes
12 can happen in a future date. It doesn't have to happen
13 all at once.
14

15 So I appreciate that question.
16

17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
18 questions.
19

20 Ken.
21

22 MR. LORD: Thanks, Karen. You're
23 correct that the MOA did anticipate that there would be
24 -- that AITRC would have the ability to set hunting
25 dates within sideboards set by this Board. I heard I
26 think from the Staff Committee and others a concern
27 about allowing the season to extend beyond after the
28 time that bull moose drop their antlers because then
29 there would be increased bull moose harvested by
30 accident. I'm sure AITRC thought about that when
31 proposing to extend the season into March and included
32 that it wasn't a problem, but I'd like to hear more
33 about that.
34

35 MS. LINNELL: So our seasoned hunters
36 aren't anxious people. They know how to wait and they
37 don't shoot the first thing that -- they're not trophy
38 hunters by any means, but they're patient people. It's
39 been said and I think studies have been done that 30
40 percent of the hunting done -- or 30 percent of those
41 that hunt provide for the other 70 percent of our
42 people. We have designated hunters.
43

44 In our culture we have people who keep
45 track of family trees and our lineage and our clans.
46 We have people who keep track of our stories, our (in
47 Athabaskan), our way of keeping our history alive. We
48 have people that are designated to be their
49 spokespersons and we have people who teach our young
50

1 and work with them. It's not like Western society or
2 others where you have one person does it all. It's not
3 that way.

4
5 When we have a potlatch, there's
6 certain individuals that you go to to talk about plans
7 and who's got right. So we continue that practice.
8 That's why the designated hunter piece is such an
9 important piece to our ability to hunt. It's not just
10 so that we have one person that likes to go out and
11 shoot all kinds of things, but they do it in a manner
12 that is respectful and treated properly and he treats
13 it properly because if he doesn't, he will lose his
14 luck. He will not be successful. So it's an important
15 part to this. That knowing and that ability to single
16 out the right animal for a hunt, that's part of their
17 training as well.

18
19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
20 other questions, comments.

21
22 Greg.

23
24 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
25 Thank you, Karen, for your input and comments. I'm
26 trying to understand a little bit more about how you
27 currently manage the State community harvest hunt for
28 the Ahtna group and how that would then relate to what
29 you're asking from the OSM Federally permitting side.
30 I'm thinking back to Lem's comment about there seems to
31 be something that would split us apart in regards to
32 that. So I was surprised when I actually heard you and
33 you have it on your paper that you currently manage
34 that. Could you help me understand that a little bit
35 more.

36
37 MS. LINNELL: So there's a report that
38 needs to be done, a collection of data, the insurance
39 that all of the members of the Ahtna group in that
40 community subsistence hunt turn in their reports. We
41 collect information from them, more than what gets
42 turned in to the State because it's proprietary in
43 those methods. We take that information and bring it
44 back to the State. If our hunt coordinator fails to do
45 so, we will all be knowledgeable to participate in the
46 next hunt.

47
48 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you. That's
49 actually reporting, but not issuing the permits. The
50

1 State is still issuing the permits. Okay. My
2 misunderstanding.

3
4 MS. LINNELL: Up until this coming
5 season we had to -- we got one locking tag for every
6 three households and those were distributed. We had X
7 number of households participating and it was up to our
8 hunt coordinator to disperse those and making sure, so
9 that was our part of the management process.

10

11 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you.

12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
14 question.

15

16 Rhonda and Bert after.

17

18 MS. PITKA: Okay. So you weren't
19 actually issuing permits. The State of Alaska issues
20 permits. You just disperse them to eligible community
21 members?

22

23 MS. LINNELL: Under the State process,
24 yeah, the State issues the permits. We issued the
25 locking tags.

26

27 MR. FROST: So I was just going to ask
28 Lem if you could sort of expound on that if you could
29 to sort of help us, but I think I got it but maybe not.

30

31 MR. BUTLER: Through the Chair. It's
32 one of our more complicated hunts, so it's
33 understandable that it's not entirely clear. As Karen
34 has indicated, the State administers the hunt. We issue
35 the permits. As part of the bag limit people who
36 participate in the program were allowed to harvest up
37 to one bull for every three households they had in
38 their group that participated. That's the portion that
39 Ahtna was administering within their group.

40

41 So you have a group coordinator for the
42 Ahtna group and they were able to allocate their bag
43 limit that was prescribed by the Board of Game in any
44 manner that they wanted, but again the State
45 administered the hunt. We issued the permits. We
46 collected the reports and enforced any failure to
47 report requirements.

48

49 MR. FROST: So who do you issue the

50

1 permits to. Do you issue them to Ahtna or do you issue
2 them to the suite of three house -- I mean how does
3 that work? When you say you issue the permits, who
4 actually gets those or who do you give them to?
5

6 MR. BUTLER: In this particular hunt
7 structure there are two permits. There's a group
8 coordinator permit and that's the person that's
9 designated to administer the group permit. The State
10 administers and distributes that. We keep track of
11 that. And then we issue individual permits to the
12 hunters themselves within each group. What Karen is
13 referring to is a locking tag that just allows Ahtna to
14 distribute the bag limit of one bull moose per every
15 three households. We're issuing the permit to the
16 individual hunter.
17

18 MR. FROST: Does Ahtna identify who
19 those hunters are? Is that what your role is, Karen?
20

21 MS. LINNELL: That is what Gloria does
22 working with the tribes. It's 100 any bulls that those
23 tags are for and that's amongst 4,000 hunters. So we
24 get designated and I think we got maybe 100 tags and we
25 disburse those between all eight villages.
26

27 MR. FROST: Again, I'm just probably
28 getting way too far in the weeds, but I'm just trying
29 to understand it. So they identify who is going to
30 actually get the permit and then you issue those
31 permits to those individuals. Is that how it works?
32

33 MR. BUTLER: Okay. So backing up. The
34 hunters -- okay. The first thing that happens is a
35 group coordinator has to apply.
36

37 MR. FROST: Got that.
38

39 MR. BUTLER: They describe who the
40 group is. Then we have the individual hunters apply to
41 the State to be a part of that group. So we keep track
42 and make sure that they have at least 25 people who
43 apply for a hunt. It takes at least 25 to qualify as a
44 group. So we verify that the group qualifies and then
45 issue the permits.
46

47 The primary role of the group
48 coordinator is to keep track of the group activities,
49 how the hunt is participated in, how much sharing
50

1 occurs and things like that. They report for the group
2 back to the State and to the Board of Game. So the
3 hunters are identifying themselves to us. They're
4 working with the group coordinator to say that we want
5 to be a part of your group. Then they apply to us, we
6 issue the permit directly to the hunter. So, again,
7 we're keeping track of what the group is.

8
9 MR. FROST: I'm assuming you have more
10 hunters than you have permits, so who makes that
11 determination on who gets a permit and who doesn't?

12
13 MR. BUTLER: So there's two components.
14 This happens for caribou and moose. The permits are
15 issued directly to the participant and that participant
16 for the moose -- there's an any bull component to the
17 bag limit. In the past you were allowed to harvest one
18 any bull for every three households that participated.
19 That was the locking tag and that was what Ahtna was
20 given the locking tags to distribute amongst their
21 group.

22
23 Anyone who didn't have a locking tag
24 could still hunt. They had to adhere to the general
25 season antler restriction. So Ahtna was administering
26 again the allocation of the any bull component. They
27 could shoot any moose. We were still issuing a permit
28 that was good for one moose. Again, it has to be spike
29 fork or 50 inch to the individual hunter.

30
31 Does that help at all? It's a really
32 complicated hunt.

33
34 MR. FROST: I don't know that we need
35 to solve it here today.

36
37 MR. BUTLER: Okay.

38
39 MR. FROST: I mean it's better. I
40 still don't understand it 100 percent.

41
42 MS. LINNELL: If I might add to that.
43 Now you understand why we have to have a lawyer and a
44 surveyor out with us when we go hunting.

45
46 (Laughter)

47
48 MS. LINNELL: It is a complicated
49 system and the dispersal of the 100 or so any bull tags
50

1 that we get to our tribal members or participants of
2 the Ahtna hunt group, we have many non-tribal members
3 that choose to participate with Ahtna and participate
4 in our sharing activities. That dispersal comes from
5 Ahtna. Ahtna's hunt coordinator disperses to the
6 villages. We work with our tribes on that on who gets
7 those locking tags.

8
9 MR. FROST: I don't want to hog the
10 table here, but so you have one tag for three
11 households. Can anyone in those three households hunt
12 until that one moose is taken and then you just tag
13 that moose and that group of three households is done?

14
15 MS. LINNELL: No, sir. That just means
16 that the limit for the any bull portion is complete and
17 filled. They're still allowed to hunt under a spike
18 fork 50 inch four brow tine trophy bull.

19
20 MR. FROST: Okay. But for the locking
21 tag piece is there -- so you give the locking tag to
22 the three households, but anybody in those three
23 households can hunt until that one moose under that one
24 program is taken. Is that correct?

25
26 MS. LINNELL: The individual, if
27 they're going to go shoot a smaller bull than the 50
28 inches or spike fork or less than four brow tine better
29 have that tag on their body, their person, and attach
30 it to that horn immediately. You can't bring it out
31 and then attach it. You have to have it with you. So
32 usually it's only one person can have it at a time.

33
34 MR. FROST: But they can move it around
35 within the family.

36
37 MS. LINNELL: They can move it around.
38 It's not assigned to a name.

39
40 MR. FROST: It's very helpful. Thank
41 you.

42
43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg.

44
45 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
46 Greg Siekaniec, Fish and Wildlife Service. Thank you
47 both Karen and Lem. This helps me a lot. I'm probably
48 sort of jumping ahead to what's going to be another
49 discussion. This question may come up and be repeated.

50

1 Is this the same type of permitting that you want to do
2 relative to the Federal permits that OSM generally
3 distributes?
4

5 MS. LINNELL: So this is what I
6 envision. Under your authority you give a hunt
7 coordinator or AITRC the permit to issue identification
8 to its tribal members or folks from our eight
9 communities that would like to participate in our hunt.
10 If they choose not to participate in our hunt, they can
11 go to the BLM or the National Park Service to get the
12 appropriate tags based on whichever game management
13 unit they want to hunt in. If it's in Unit 13, it
14 would be the BLM Glennallen Field Office. If it's Unit
15 11, they would go to the Wrangell-St. Elias National
16 Park Service to get one or over on the other side
17 they'd go to the Denali office.
18

19 With this tribal identification card,
20 we have them on our list, we'll still be able to issue
21 it. It would be acceptable and recognizable by the
22 State. All of these details and everything else I
23 believe can be worked out prior to this fall's hunting
24 season. I think we're making it a little more
25 complicated than it needs to be.
26

27 We'll have a list of who is
28 participating in our hunt and you'll know it, the
29 enforcement will know it. All they've got to do is
30 look at that list whether they have this identification
31 with them or not. So I think it's totally possible to
32 get this done by this fall.
33

34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Karen.
35

36 MS. MOURITSEN: Thank you, Mr.
37 Chairman. Thank you, Karen. This is a good discussion.
38 I have a question I'm wondering about now. The way I
39 understand it the State community harvest program can
40 operate on Federal land. So are you thinking that
41 there'd be some kind of reciprocity between a Federal
42 and a State community harvest program? Could you go
43 back and forth? If you are thinking that, what were
44 your thoughts on how it would mesh? What are your
45 thoughts on that?
46

47 MS. LINNELL: No, ma'am. We have dual
48 jurisdiction here. We have dual management. This
49 permit will only go on Federal lands within our area.
50

1 I've got to say in Unit 13 about 10 percent of the land
2 is Federal. Out of the 1,000 or so moose taken out of
3 Unit 13 only 100 or so are taken from Federal land.
4 We're not speaking about a large number there in Unit
5 13. Unit 11 has access issues. We have to cross the
6 Copper River to get to it and there's only two roads,
7 one on either end. So we're not talking a huge number
8 here.

9
10 MS. MOURITSEN: So the quota, setting
11 the quotas and the participation it would still all be
12 separate under this. I think I'm getting that.

13
14 MS. LINNELL: We'll be living within
15 the confines set by this Board. Right now the quota
16 for moose is one per person statewide basically almost.
17 I think there's one area where you might be able to get
18 two, but we're not asking for any more than that. The
19 seasons and bag limits is to allow for us to tell our
20 own people, okay, that's enough now. We need to let
21 them go by.

22
23 We look at that Nelchina Caribou Herd.
24 We see the health of the population. Listening to our
25 elders and talking to them, we don't shoot the first
26 one that comes through. They've got to follow. That's
27 the lead. You let the first little bunch go through so
28 that the rest will follow. They know their migration
29 pattern.

30
31 Right now we're in a huge competition
32 with folks that don't have that understanding. When
33 you have an influx of 10-20,000 people coming into your
34 area, it's hard to manage traditionally. What we're
35 asking for is the ability to sit at this table and
36 participate and help to write those regulations so that
37 we can manage in a traditional manner.

38
39 Shirley Smelcer spoke earlier about
40 recognizing management systems. In there nowhere does
41 it say the BLM management system or the National Park
42 Service management system and there's no recognition of
43 tribal management systems. We have ways to manage our
44 fish, our caribou, our sheep, our moose. We have those
45 methods. Just because it's not written in a rule book
46 like this doesn't mean it doesn't exist.

47
48 I had to hire a social scientist over
49 here so that he can write it down for you guys so that
50

1 you can understand that we have these management
2 systems. So that's what we're looking at is just to
3 get mail going here. We need to look at all the
4 management systems.

5

6 Thank you.

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg.

9

10 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
11 Greg Siekaniec again. Maybe this is a good time --
12 and, Mr. Chair, you can decide whether it is or not,
13 but since we've been talking about this community
14 harvest, I think we've had a recommendation from OSM
15 that there is a community harvest permitting or
16 distribution system that could possibly put in place.
17 Maybe we could get Theo to give us sort of a -- this is
18 how this one might look since we're now sort of fresh
19 and have just heard on how the State is in a
20 relationship with the Ahtna in regards to their
21 community harvest. Could we do that?

22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Come on up,
24 Theo.

25

26 MR. SIEKANIEC: Sorry, Theo, there was
27 no warning on that one.

28

29 MR. MATUSKOWITZ: Through the Chair.
30 This is Theo Matuskowitz, Regulation Specialist for
31 Office of Subsistence Management.

32

33 Currently in regulations there -- we
34 have regulations that you can establish a community
35 harvest system. They are not in great detail, so
36 basically what you have done in the past is when you
37 have established community harvest systems it's very
38 similar to the take that you've had on -- well,
39 basically you develop one for each part of the state or
40 each community that you've done it in the past. It's
41 not like one size fits all for the state.

42

43 So basically what would need to be done
44 is we'd get the interested parties together, come up
45 with an agreement, a solution as to how we want this
46 community harvest system to look, how it would
47 function. Obviously you would approve that and we'd
48 move on from there.

49

50

1 Now obviously I'm not a subject matter
2 expert on how the State does it, but I guarantee you
3 the way you have established community harvest systems
4 in the past it's not that complex. First off, the
5 whole idea about the permit. There's no permit
6 involved. It would basically be a letter from the
7 Board to an entity saying we are giving you authority
8 to have this community harvest system. Here are the
9 guidelines, here are the rules.

10

11 For example, whichever land manager is
12 responsible for the certain area, if they have an
13 already established quota for those animals or seasons,
14 that can be included in there. You have that
15 flexibility. So once that organization would get that
16 authorization from you, these are the rules they have
17 to follow, this is when they have to report, this is
18 the information they have to report, then how they
19 execute it within their community is up to them unless
20 you decide that you want additional restrictions,
21 guidelines or something like that. But there will be
22 no Federal permit issued, okay. At this point I see no
23 way it can be done through the Federal permitting
24 system.

25

26 Again, similar to what we do with
27 cultural education hunts or fisheries. Some of them,
28 yes, there's been a request for a specific permit to be
29 made that the individual can carry, but generally
30 speaking it is a letter to that organization saying you
31 can harvest two moose, three deer, 20 salmon, here are
32 the dates you can do it on. You have to report this
33 way by this date to this person.

34

35 That, as just generally speaking, could
36 be very similar to how you do this community harvest
37 system. You write down what your guidelines are, what
38 the requirements are and then we move on from there.
39 In this case, if the communities decide they want to
40 initiate their own internal permit, something like
41 that, that's up to them. If you don't require that,
42 we're not going to do it.

43

44 Quite frankly, you can't require it
45 because we have to have OMB permission to gather that
46 sort of information in a permit form. I promise you
47 that will take at least a year to get approval. That
48 was with the previous administration. With this
49 administration I don't have a timeline to give you for
50

1 that. There is information that you can require that
2 we already have approval for, but if it would go beyond
3 that, it sure as heck isn't going to happen this fall,
4 that's for sure.

5

6 So that's kind of it in a nutshell.

7

8 If you have questions, I'll do my best
9 to answer them.

10

11 Sorry for kind of jumbled around, I was
12 just winging it off the top.

13

14 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
15 Thank you, Theo. Karen, are we describing a community
16 permit system through Theo that works for you? Is that
17 what you're speaking of when you want to have a permit
18 system associated with your proposal?

19

20 MS. LINNELL: That's a start, yeah. I
21 think if we can get this to work so that we have the
22 ability to do something this fall, we're on it. Coming
23 up with the parameters that go along with that letter
24 we can work on that. We're not asking for any more
25 than what's already available or out there for other
26 Federally-qualified subsistence users. We just want to
27 be able to allow for our people to set those sideboards
28 for us and we definitely don't want any less than
29 anyone else. Set the sideboards so that we can manage
30 our own subsistence take and use.

31

32 MR. MATUSKOWITZ: I just want to throw
33 this out there. Keep in mind that when you vote on a
34 new regulation it has to be published in the Federal
35 Register. I just want to be totally open and honest to
36 make sure everyone understands that the regulatory
37 process has been significantly slowed down at this
38 time. If you remember our fishing regulations, which
39 you took action on in January of 2017, did not become
40 final until about a month and a half ago.

41

42 It's nothing that's being done by any
43 of the agencies here. It's simply the process has
44 changed and there are factors that are beyond our
45 ability to control. I just wanted to be honest. If we
46 make this change, there's no way I can promise this
47 will be published by fall. I can't give you a date
48 like I could in the past.

49

50

1 So just be aware of that so everybody
2 understands.

3
4 MR. FROST: So, Karen, I think you said
5 this yesterday, but I just want to make sure that we're
6 still on the same page. You're primarily interested in
7 issuing permits for tribal members, but you would be
8 willing, if we did something like Theo described, to
9 work under a community harvest permit system and manage
10 that for all rural qualified Federal users, is that
11 correct?

12
13 MS. LINNELL: Not all Federally-
14 qualified users. The Federally-qualified users that
15 live within our eight communities or what we have in
16 this MOA and if they so choose to participate in what
17 we do. We're not going to force anybody to participate
18 in our program. I'm not sure permit is the correct
19 word or this delegation letter or what the process is.

20
21
22 There are means and methods to make
23 this happen. A delegation letter doesn't change the
24 regulation. We have to live within that regulation.
25 So changing the season dates, if we don't change the
26 season dates, then that's fine. We're living within
27 that confine and your ability to delegate our ability
28 to issue or manage those individuals.

29
30 MS. PITKA: I had a question for Karen.
31 So the State is opposed because it says it will
32 increase the harvest considerably. Will extending
33 those dates increase the harvest considerably or will
34 it just lead to the moose that were already allocated
35 to those communities?

36
37 MS. LINNELL: It will allow for a
38 taking. The extension though when I was at the
39 Southcentral RAC and Eastern Interior RAC, they talked
40 about that being open to all Federally-qualified users
41 and I've got to remind myself because I thought it was
42 specific to the community hunt, but if it's for all
43 Federally-qualified users that includes a large
44 community outside of our traditional use territory that
45 is roughly around 2,500 people or so.

46
47 They are avid hunters and a good
48 portion of those 100 taken in that little strip of
49 land, if you've seen the map it's a narrow corridor
50

1 that we have there in Unit 13B, is taken by those
2 folks. I bet about 10 of the 100 taken there are from
3 tribal members or folks from south of Summit Lake area.

4

5 MS. PITKA: Thank you.

6

7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Theo.

8

9 MR. MATUSKOWITZ: A couple points to
10 bring up. There would be no problem with limiting the
11 individuals who would be allowed in this community
12 harvest as long as they are a resident of the listed
13 communities and they are a Federally-qualified user.
14 If they live outside the community, they're not part of
15 that community hunt. It's that simple. But we could
16 not say it can only be tribal members. It would have
17 to be members of that community regardless of their
18 tribal affiliation.

19

20 As long as they're a Federally-
21 qualified user and they are in one of the listed
22 communities, they would have to be eligible to
23 participate in this hunt if they so desired. For any
24 individual or any member of that community who decides
25 not to participate, they can continue to get a permit,
26 hunt under the standard existing regulations, but you
27 cannot do both. You already have existing regulations
28 that state you can do one or the other but you can't do
29 both.

30

31 One small point on the delegation.
32 There's no delegation. You're not giving up any of your
33 authority as a Board. You're simply allowing something
34 to happen. You're giving them authority to do this
35 under the guidelines that you set up. You're not
36 delegating something like you would to an in-season or
37 a land manager for a specific hunt or fishery.

38

39 Thank you.

40

41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg.

42

43 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
44 Greg Siekaniec, Fish and Wildlife Service. Thank you
45 very much. Mr. Chairman, I think I probably distracted
46 us from the item that we're actually trying to deal
47 with, number 17. Although this discussion is going to
48 be extremely important when we get to the 19, so I do
49 appreciate that, but if we want to get back to 17 we

50

1 probably should. I'm looking at a clock and seeing we
2 have a long ways to go.

3
4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I agree, but I
5 also think the discussion is pertinent to where we've
6 got to get to satisfy somebody somewhere here today. I
7 think there's a lot of work going on up here to figure
8 out how we could support Ahtna's position here.

9
10 Go ahead, Rhonda.

11
12 MS. PITKA: First I wanted to mention
13 that it's not tribal affiliation, it's tribal
14 citizenship. You're a citizen of a tribal nation.

15
16 Number two, when the take is that much,
17 I mean it just seems to me that the State's position
18 then becomes rather -- I'm not sure how to say this,
19 but rather difficult to take because the take is
20 already so high, so talking about increased harvest for
21 subsistence users when you have to already provide that
22 priority seems like a difficult argument to make I
23 suppose.

24
25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Karen.

26
27 MS. LINNELL: I just wanted to speak to
28 Theo's comment whether based on residency of the tribal
29 members. The MOA says tribal membership and/or
30 community members that live within that community. So
31 it's there. That piece has been talked about. They
32 still have to be Federally-qualified. They have to be
33 a rural resident.

34
35 I don't live in my home community, but
36 I'm a tribal citizen of that home of Cheesh'na and I
37 live in a rural area. So, therefore, I would still be
38 eligible to qualify for this as we move forward. I
39 just wanted to make that clear.

40
41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Do you live in
42 one of the eight communities?

43
44 MS. LINNELL: No, sir.

45
46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So under my
47 understanding what you just said is you would have to
48 live in those eight communities to qualify for that
49 hunt.

50

1 MS. LINNELL: The non-tribal members
2 would have to live in one of those eight communities.
3 Tribal members would still be eligible.
4

5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. I see
6 what you're getting at then. So you would basically
7 say somebody on tribal rolls would be eligible to apply
8 for that hunt as long as they maintain rural residency
9 somewhere else.
10

11 MS. LINNELL: Yes.
12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: But then the
14 qualified users, which may be non-tribal, must live
15 within those communities, would be eligible as well.
16

17 MS. LINNELL: So I'm Federally-
18 qualified through my rural residency for both BLM and
19 the National Park Service for Wrangell-St. Elias. I am
20 not eligible for Denali. I don't live in my home
21 community of Chistochina, but I am a tribal member of
22 Cheesh'na Tribe and they are eligible through this
23 process.
24

25 We have many tribal members that moved
26 closer to work, because I was commuting 98 miles one
27 way to go to work. I've since moved closer and still
28 Federally-qualified for both the BLM and the National
29 Park Service permits. I'm no longer commuting 100
30 miles to get to work and back. I'm living in the urban
31 setting of Glennallen, the big metropolis of 400
32 people.
33

34 I just wanted to say also thank you for
35 letting me talk to this because all 17, 18 and 19 are
36 tied together and I think that we're hashing out a lot
37 of this and so the others will go faster. So thank you.
38

39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: That was what
40 we were banking on.
41

42 (Laughter)
43

44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: State.
45

46 MR. BUTLER: Since we are kind of
47 talking generally about 17, 18 and 19, I wanted to
48 remind the Board that 17 refers to Unit 11. This
49 relates back to what Member Pitka was referring to.
50

1 Unit 11 in Proposal 17 has a low density moose
2 population, approximately 49 moose are taken every
3 year. So when we discussed high harvest, that was
4 relative to Unit 13 in Proposal 18.

5
6 We do through the State regulatory
7 process identify how many moose are needed for
8 subsistence purposes and we're exceeding that. The
9 Board of Game has establish an ANS of 30 to 40 moose
10 and again we're averaging 49, so we feel like we are
11 providing subsistence needs through our State
12 regulatory process as well.

13
14 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

15
16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
17 discussion. It seems like we're kind of winding down
18 here now. We got the permitting part almost figure
19 out. Della.

20
21 MS. TRUMBLE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
22 This is new to me a little bit, so I'm just trying to
23 understand it and being new back on this Board. A
24 Federal permit for a qualified Federal user is a
25 resident of a community within a specific area. I
26 guess I'm having a hard time understanding if she's
27 enrolled in this tribe but she lives over here, is it
28 because she's within that region that the permit is
29 allowable? I know when we do the caribou you have to
30 specifically be from that community whether you're
31 Native or non-Native. I'm trying to understand that a
32 little better.

33
34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I think where
35 the language comes from is they have an agreement right
36 now with us. The Board Ahtna does and it spells out
37 some of those specifics within that framework of how
38 they would perceive themselves to issue or distribute
39 permits is the word we're using here now.

40
41 MS. LINNELL: Just for your
42 clarification as well. Yeah, where I live now is still
43 within that Federally-qualified boundary and that's key
44 to this, is that we still have to be within that
45 Federally-qualified boundary.

46
47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I think that we
48 had already done Native Liaison comments. Did we do
49 the Fish and Game comments? Yes, we did. We had to
50

1 jump back. Interagency Staff Committee.

2

3 MS. HARDIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For
4 the record my name is Jennifer Hardin. The Interagency
5 Staff Committee provided the standard comment for
6 Wildlife Proposal 18-17. Thank you.

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
9 reminding us what proposal we're on. Board discussion
10 with Council Chairs, State Liaison.

11

12 (No comments)

13

14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none.
15 Federal Board action.

16

17 MR. FROST: Mr. Chair. I move that we
18 adopt WP18-17 with modification to only include the
19 season extension for portions of Unit 11 as shown on
20 Page 232 of the meeting book. After a second I will
21 speak to my motion.

22

23 MR. SIEKANIEC: Second. Greg
24 Siekaniec, Fish and Wildlife Service.

25

26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion has been
27 made and second.

28

29 Bert.

30

31 MR. FROST: I intend to vote against my
32 motion. As discussed in the OSM analysis, extending
33 the season dates for the moose hunt in two areas of
34 Unit 11 by six months to present some potentially
35 serious conservation concerns based on the most recent
36 moose survey in Unit 11 in 2013.

37

38 Moose populations in the surveyed areas
39 of the Unit are relatively stable to slightly
40 increasing; however, moose densities are relatively
41 low. Under the current harvest regime, moose
42 populations in Unit 11 have been able to grow slowly.
43 However, calf recruitment is less than 20 calves per
44 100 cows, which is below that necessary for sustained
45 population growth. Increasing the harvest would
46 reverse the current population trend.

47

48 The question of permit issuance by the
49 Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission is evaluated in

50

1 the addendum to the OSM analysis of WP18-19, which
2 starts on Page 749. So I would propose that discussion
3 of issuing Unit 11 moose permits by AITRC take place
4 when we take up that proposal.

5
6 My motion is also consistent with the
7 recommendations of the Southcentral and Eastern
8 Interior Regional Advisory Councils.

9
10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any further
11 discussion from the Board.

12
13 (No comments)

14
15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none.
16 I'll call for the question.

17
18 MR. SIEKANIEC: Question.

19
20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The question
21 has been called. Do roll call.

22
23 MR. DOOLITTLE: The motion on the floor
24 is WP18-17. The motion is adopt Proposal WP18 with
25 modification to only include the season extension for
26 the portions of Unit 11 as found on Page 232 of the
27 meeting book.

28
29 National Park Service, Herbert Frost.

30
31 MR. C. BROWER: 17?

32
33 MR. DOOLITTLE: 17. WP18-17.

34
35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I think it's
36 just 17.

37
38 MR. FROST: It's just 17.

39
40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: For
41 clarification, for the record, 17.

42
43 MR. DOOLITTLE: 17. Sorry. National
44 Park Service, Herbert Frost.

45
46 MR. FROST: Can I make a clarification.
47 So we're just doing the season length.

48
49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Season length

50

1 on 17.
2
3 MR. FROST: Right. I oppose.
4
5 MR. DOOLITTLE: BLM, Karen Mouritsen.
6
7 MS. MOURITSEN: Oppose.
8
9 MR. DOOLITTLE: U.S. Fish and Wildlife
10 Service, Greg Siekaniec.
11
12 MR. SIEKANIEC: I oppose.
13
14 MR. DOOLITTLE: U.S. Forest Service,
15 Beth Pendleton.
16
17 MS. PENDLETON: Oppose.
18
19 MR. DOOLITTLE: BIA, Lynn Polacca.
20
21 MR. POLACCA: Oppose. I guess
22 conforming also with the RAC's recommendation.
23
24 MR. DOOLITTLE: Public member, Rhonda
25 Pitka.
26
27 MS. PITKA: I support and not in
28 deference to the RAC because it would be detrimental to
29 the satisfaction of subsistence needs.
30
31 MR. DOOLITTLE: Public member, Charlie
32 Brower.
33
34 MR. C. BROWER: I support it for the
35 same reason. Thank you.
36
37 MR. DOOLITTLE: Chairman Christianson.
38
39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I oppose.
40
41 MR. DOOLITTLE: Motion fails.
42
43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'm just
44 getting food for thought here. I think we'll try to
45 get through this one more here on 18 and then see where
46 we're at.
47
48 MR. C. BROWER: Mr. Chair, just a
49 question. Was there two components to this proposal or
50

1 just one for a permit and -- okay, thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Just one. This
4 last one we voted on only had to do with the season
5 dates.

6

7 MR. FROST: We deferred the other one
8 to 19.

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right. Now
11 we're on WP18-18. We'll ask for the analysis.

12

13 MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
14 Members of the Board. Again, my name is Tom Evans and
15 I work as a wildlife biologist for OSM. I'm going to
16 do the presentation on WP18-18.

17

18 This proposal was submitted by the
19 Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission and it can be
20 found on Page 700 of your Board book. It requests that
21 the moose season on Federal public lands in Unit 13E
22 and Unit 13-remainder be changed from August 1st to
23 September 20th to August 1st to March 31st.

24

25 The proponent states that this
26 extension of the moose season would provide opportunity
27 for the Ahtna tribal members to harvest a moose during
28 the fall and winter months according to their customary
29 and traditional practices.

30

31 Map 1 on Page 708 shows the areas
32 customarily and traditionally used by the Ahtna people.
33 In 2015 moose populations were stable or increasing
34 slightly in all subunits within Unit 13, except for
35 Unit 13D. The 2015 population was 16,547, which is
36 slightly less than the State's minimum management goal
37 of 17,600.

38

39 In 2012 and 2015 the bull:cow ratios
40 were at or above State management goals in all
41 subunits, which is 25 per 100 cows. In 2016 the
42 bull:cow ratios were above the State goals in all units
43 except Unit 13A.

44

45 Bulls are vulnerable during the rut and
46 during the early winter aggregations of bulls and cows.
47 Since 2001, moose harvest and population levels have
48 continued to increase throughout Unit 13, although
49 calf:cow ratios have remained below State management

50

1 objectives.

2

3 During the last two years the combined
4 annual harvest has exceeded 1,000 bulls, which is close
5 to the 1,050, the State's minimum harvest objective.

6

7 A majority of the moose harvest on
8 Federal public lands occurs in Unit 13B, which in 2016
9 was approximately 75 percent. The current moose harvest
10 on Federal public lands by local residents hunting
11 under Federal subsistence regulations in Unit 13 ranges
12 from 6-8 percent and the annual harvest averaged 69
13 animals from 2006 to 2016.

14

15 A community subsistence hunt was
16 established in 2009 under the State regulations and a
17 majority of the hunters participating are non-local
18 residents (i.e., not in Unit 13). From 2008 to 2012
19 residents of Unit 13 averaged 49 moose whereas
20 non-locals averaged 541 moose. So you can see there's
21 a big discrepancy between the number that are taken by
22 non-locals versus locals.

23

24 The six-month extension would give
25 Federally-qualified subsistence users more opportunity
26 to harvest antlered bulls according to their customary
27 and traditional practices. Harvesting bull moose
28 during the rut or when cows are aggregating during the
29 early winter could disrupt breeding and lead to
30 excessive harvest. Providing a break during the rut
31 and early winter period for bulls is recommended to
32 prevent herd disruption during breeding and to protect
33 bulls when they're most vulnerable.

34

35 Harvest by local users is likely
36 sustainable if distributed between the five subunits.
37 However, if the total harvest occurs in only one or a
38 few units, this may result in a population decline in
39 those units. For example, 70 percent of the bull
40 harvest has historically occurred in Unit 13. Based on
41 a cow density of one cow per square mile, there are
42 approximately 688 cows and 248 bulls. Seventy percent
43 of the 200 bulls would equal 140 in Unit 13.

44

45 So if that number of bull moose were
46 harvested during the six-month extension, then this
47 would end up with a bull:cow ratio of about 15.6
48 percent. So a significant take of bulls during the
49 season extension could result in a very skewed bull:cow

50

1 ratio.

2

3 OSM's conclusion, which starts on Page
4 718, is to support WP18-18 with modification to
5 establish a winter moose season from December 1st to
6 December 31st in Unit 13. The BLM Glennallen Field
7 Office Manager would be given authority to set the
8 harvest quota, and set opening and closing dates for
9 the proposed winter season, which is December 1st to
10 December 31st, on Federal public lands in Unit 13 via a
11 delegation of authority letter.

12

13 Conservation concern. So the
14 justification for this. The conservation concern is
15 that the projected harvest of antlered bulls during an
16 eight-month season would be unsustainable and could
17 result in local population declines on Federal public
18 lands and adjacent State lands. This also could lead
19 to declines in the bull moose:cow ratios to
20 unsustainable levels.

21

22 Now remember that the Federal public
23 lands in Unit 13 only makes about 12 percent of that
24 area, so it's very different than Unit 11 where Federal
25 public lands make up a majority of the Unit.

26

27 There is also concern that because bull
28 moose will begin dropping their antlers in December, it
29 will likely increase the accidental harvest of cows,
30 increase the harvest of young bulls because they
31 typically retain their antlers longer into the winter
32 season.

33

34 The Southcentral Regional Advisory
35 Council and the Denali National Park Subsistence
36 Resource Commission supported to have the break between
37 the fall hunt and the winter hunt, including the rut
38 and the early winter aggregations, as well as for the
39 shortened winter moose season.

40

41 Following the fall meetings, OSM
42 modified its preliminary conclusion to extend the break
43 in the moose season following the rut and supported the
44 Southcentral Regional Advisory Council recommendation
45 for the December hunt. Delegating authority to the
46 Glennallen Field Office Manager would increase
47 management flexibility when moose are most vulnerable
48 and the harvest can be controlled through quotas and
49 season restrictions.

50

1 Thank you.

2

3 I'm open for questions.

4

5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any questions
6 for Tom.

7

8 MR. C. BROWER: Mr. Chair.

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Charlie.

11

12 MR. C. BROWER: Tom, so Unit 13 is what
13 we're talking about, but at the same time there's a
14 concern with B and D. Do they integrate the same moose
15 back and forth or is it another -- or the density of
16 the moose goes from 13 to 13B and D or what?

17

18 MR. EVANS: So there's several moose
19 populations in Unit 13 and Unit 13 has been divided up
20 into sort of five subunits, 13A, B, C, D and E. So
21 there are different moose populations. So if all the
22 harvest occurred in one location within Unit 13, that
23 could have a severe repercussion for that unit.

24

25 Does that answer your question?

26

27 MR. C. BROWER: Thank you. I was just
28 trying to figure out if they go from 13 to 13B and D,
29 mate, their cow ratio is different.

30

31 MR. EVANS: They're more separate
32 populations. The A, B, C, D and E are big regions, so
33 the moose populations stay sort of within those
34 regions. It's not to say that moose don't migrate
35 between the subunits to some degree, but generally
36 they're kind of considered as separate moose
37 populations within Unit 13.

38

39 Lem can correct me if that's not right.

40

41 MR. C. BROWER: One more question. So
42 on Unit 13 the moose population is pretty stable and
43 growing a little bit.

44

45 MR. EVANS: Yes.

46

47 MR. C. BROWER: But the other two units
48 are declining or whatever?

49

50

1 MR. EVANS: Unit 11 the moose are
2 stable to slightly increasing but occur at really low
3 density. So Unit 13 is a different situation than Unit
4 11. Unit 13 moose are doing well, so it's not really a
5 population issue. The season extension there's just
6 concern that there would be overharvest if the season
7 extension occurred.

8
9 Right now we're harvesting
10 approximately at the sustained yield that the State
11 recommends, near 1,000 animals, though it's very skewed
12 in terms of who gets the harvest. Most of the non-
13 locals are getting a majority of the harvest and the
14 locals are getting only like 6-8 percent of the
15 harvest.

16
17 MR. C. BROWER: Thank you, Tom. Thank
18 you, Mr. Chair.

19
20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
21 questions. Discussion.

22
23 (No comments)

24
25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'll give you
26 your time in a minute. We're going to move on to
27 summary of public comment.

28
29 MR. MIKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We
30 received four written public comments on WP18-18 and
31 one of them begins on Page 731 in your meeting material
32 book. The remaining public comments can be found in
33 the supplement section 7.

34
35 The four written comments, one in
36 support, one in support with a modified version, one
37 opposing the proposal and one is neutral. The Ahtna
38 Intertribal Resource Commission stated that
39 establishing a tribal moose hunt will not result in the
40 increase of moose harvest on Federal public lands or
41 result in overharvest.

42
43 The Denali Subsistence Resource
44 Commission supports a modified version of WP18-18. The
45 SRC recommends amending the proposal to extend the
46 harvest of bull antlered moose to September 25 and not
47 beyond.

48
49 Mr. Jeff Sperry opposed the proposal
50

1 stating that extending the season will greatly increase
2 the chance that the bull moose population will be
3 decimated. This will greatly decrease the future
4 opportunity for any qualified users to hunt bull moose.
5

6 Finally, the Wrangell-St. Elias
7 Subsistence Resource Commission voted to take no action
8 on WP18-18 based on its action taken on Proposal 18-19.
9

10 Thank you, Mr. Chair.
11

12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
13 Donald. Any questions on public comment.
14

15 (No comments)
16

17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none.
18 We open up the floor for public testimony.
19

20 MS. LINNELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
21 For the record, I'm Karen Linnell. When we put this
22 forward and we're looking at and talking with
23 Southcentral RAC and we thought this was going to be
24 specific to the permit that would go to AITRC, not to
25 all Federally-qualified users. Again, setting those
26 sidebars.
27

28 An extension of this type could hurt
29 the population because there's over 5,000 people that
30 get a permit through the BLM office and Units 13B and D
31 -- 13B would get hit the hardest with folks that live
32 outside of the Ahtna Traditional Use Territory that
33 come from the north there, Delta area. And they're
34 avid hunters. Like I said, if they have a permit,
35 they'll fill it. Unlike our traditional methods of we
36 take what we need and no more.
37

38 So I'm not for this extension. There
39 was talk of an extension for Unit 13E only and I don't
40 know if that's in here. I thought it was from the
41 Southcentral RAC. But if this is going to be open to
42 all Federally-qualified users, that's 5,000 people.
43 Much more than the folks that we had talked about. I
44 don't want to hurt the population to that effect. If
45 it's going to be for all Federally-qualified users,
46 then we're going to oppose it.
47

48 And can withdraw the proposal. Is that
49 how, I don't know.
50

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So are you
2 stating that you no longer want to support your
3 proposal?
4

5 MS. LINNELL: Again, the proposal was
6 for issuing of a permit and for -- we thought that this
7 was going forward to set the sidebars for our ability
8 to manage within that permit that we were asking for.
9 Since then we've heard that this is going to the
10 extension of the season wouldn't go with our permit, it
11 would go just to all Federally-qualified users and,
12 therefore, I can't rightfully condone it because of the
13 number of folks that we're talking about.
14

15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So just to get
16 it straight then, you put this proposal in with the
17 understanding that you would manage this within the
18 eight communities. This would be an allocation to the
19 eight communities that you would manage via the permit
20 that you're requesting in the next proposal for a
21 specific hunt for those eight communities and the
22 qualifying people within those eight communities
23 whether they're tribal citizens on their roll or
24 actually live within that eight community subset,
25 correct?
26

27 So this here, the way it was counter-
28 proposed by OSM is what you said it opens it up to the
29 general population and that's why you see us trying to
30 look at it from how -- well, they can answer, I guess.
31

32 MR. MCKEE: A couple of things. I hate
33 to complicate matters at the end of a very long day for
34 you folks, but if you do take some action on this
35 proposal, either adopting this modification to season
36 as OSM has discussed, it would directly affect any
37 action you might take on 18-19 as well because --
38 especially if you start discussing the modification
39 that we're recommending in 18-19 and the modification
40 that was proposed by both the Southcentral and Eastern
41 Interior RACs because it would involve both moose and
42 caribou in Unit 13. That's number one.
43

44 Number two, even if you pass some type
45 of community harvest system for the species in this
46 area, you would still be changing this regulation. So
47 a Federally-qualified user who wasn't in the -- who had
48 a customary and traditional use determination for this
49 species in this unit and wasn't a resident of an Ahtna
50

1 traditional use territory could still hunt under these
2 regulations. Just not as a member of the community
3 harvest system.

4
5 So I just wanted to point that out.

6
7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So basically
8 your proposal lost its intent.

9
10 MS. LINNELL: Yes, sir.

11
12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'm speaking to
13 Karen, not to the staff. Sorry.

14
15 MS. LINNELL: Yes, sir.

16
17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. We're
18 here to try to figure out a process to get Ahtna into
19 where Ahtna wants to get. I've got to chew on this one
20 for a second.

21
22 So would you at this time --
23 understanding that at this time the Board is not in a
24 position to basically create an exclusive hunt in
25 regards to how it is proposed by the Staff having
26 changed it. It clearly doesn't fit what you were
27 proposing. So I would entertain at this time -- if you
28 want to withdraw your proposal, you can do that.

29
30 MS. LINNELL: Yes, I would. The
31 extension -- I know Southcentral RAC had talked about
32 an extension for Unit 13E, I think it was Southcentral
33 RAC, around the Cantwell area. It's a much smaller
34 area, fewer Federally-qualified users. I would say
35 that I'm okay with that amendment to make it for Unit
36 13E only. It's a smaller Federal land base. It's a
37 smaller Federally-qualified user base and it would
38 provide subsistence needs for those folks on that side
39 of the Ahtna Traditional Use Territory.

40
41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Is that the
42 following proposal?

43
44 MR. EVANS: This is Tom Evans again,
45 through the Chair. So just to ask a clarifying
46 question to Karen. Do you mean just for the December
47 portion of the extension or the full extension?

48
49 MS. LINNELL: Just for the December
50

1 portion.

2

3 MR. FROST: Can I ask a point of
4 clarification on Robert's Rules?

5

6 MR. LORD: It's probably the Board's
7 policies, but go ahead.

8

9 MR. FROST: Well, whatever. Maybe it's
10 to Carl too. Who knows. I don't know. So we have a
11 proposal. It has morphed where I think the proposer is
12 uncomfortable with what was originally proposed. The
13 Chair asked the proposer if they would like to withdraw
14 that. They said yes with qualifications, but do they
15 have the ability to qualify? Is it either a full
16 withdrawal or a non-withdrawal.

17

18 MR. LORD: That is not a question we've
19 ever faced before.

20

21 (Laughter)

22

23 MR. LORD: So the Board's policy.....

24

25 MR. FROST: I don't want to speak for
26 Karen. I want to make sure I'm interpreting what you
27 said.

28

29 MS. LINNELL: No, I wasn't -- I was
30 saying that I thought I read somewhere that there was a
31 modification that was submitted by the Southcentral RAC
32 that said that they wanted a hunt for Unit 13E, an
33 extension for December 1 to December 31 for 13E only.
34 The rest of Unit 13 was excluded from that extension.
35 I can't remember where I saw it because these proposals
36 have been modified so much and this packet is so thick,
37 I can't cite where I saw it. And I can't remember if
38 it was on this proposal or if it was on 19.

39

40 So if it's on 19, then that's where the
41 action should be taken. If it's on this one, then this
42 is where it should be taken. Again, they've gotten --
43 there's this much paper to read. I know, sir. I know.
44 So if it's on 19, then that's where I think you should
45 take your action and I can withdraw my proposal.

46

47 MR. EVANS: So I was at the
48 Southcentral RAC meeting and anyone can correct me if
49 I'm wrong, but I don't remember the Southcentral RAC

50

1 specifying 13E at any particular point. I know at the
2 meeting we ended up from the Southcentral RAC that they
3 supported the December extension, but for all of Unit
4 13, 13E as well as the remainder.

5

6 So I'm not sure -- I'd have to go back
7 through the transcripts to see if there was any.....

8

9 MS. PENDLETON: It's right here.

10

11 MR. EVANS:clarification on that
12 if anyone can correct me. But that's what I remember
13 from the meeting.

14

15 Thank you.

16

17 MR. ENCELEWSKI: Through the Chair.
18 Maybe I could help clarify something here.

19

20 First of all, what we wanted to do was
21 support Ahtna's request, but clearly on 18 we supported
22 the modification with the season to be modified
23 December 1 to 31. That's what the Southcentral RAC
24 acted on. We did not get into the unit -- when we went
25 into 13 to split, that is actually mentioned in 19. So
26 it's not mentioned in 18. I could read you our
27 conclusion of 18 if you want.

28

29 MS. LINNELL: With that then, if they
30 made that recommendation in 19, then I'd withdraw my
31 proposal if that's all right with you folks.

32

33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Well, I think
34 for Board process though -- we appreciate that and
35 that's why we have these discussions -- I think we'll
36 still have to vote on it just as a matter of record
37 here today, but understanding that the proponent of the
38 proposal no longer wants to support it as written and
39 would hope that we would vote down the proposal.

40

41 We can just vote to withdraw. As per
42 policy of the book here, we can vote either way. We
43 can vote to support her withdrawal of the proposal or
44 we can vote the proposal down.

45

46 MS. PITKA: I move to withdraw Wildlife
47 Proposal 18-18.

48

49 MR. FROST: Second it.

50

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The motion has
2 been made and seconded to withdraw this proposal. Any
3 more discussion.

4
5 (No comments)

6
7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none.
8 The question has been called. All in favor of the
9 motion signify by saying aye.

10
11 IN UNISON: Aye.

12
13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposed same
14 sign.

15
16 (No opposing votes)

17
18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries
19 unanimously. You're going to be here tomorrow, Karen,
20 aren't you?

21
22 MS. LINNELL: Yes.

23
24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay.

25
26 MS. LINNELL: I'll be here at 8:00
27 o'clock sharp.

28
29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Sharp. All
30 right. Thank you. Then we're going to recess today.
31 8:30 a.m.

32
33 (Off record)

34
35 (PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)

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