

FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD

WORK SESSION MEETING

BP Energy Center
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

July 17, 2017
9:00 o'clock a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Anthony Christianson, Chairman
Charles Brower, Public Member
Rhonda Pitka, Public Member
Bud Cribley, 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

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Anchorage, Alaska - 7/19/2017)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll go ahead and get this meeting started this morning. I'm going to call this meeting to order. Welcome everybody. Thank you for being here. With that maybe we'll just do a round of introductions real quick before we get started.

MR. FROST: Bert Frost, Regional Director for the National Park Service.

MR. SHARP: Good morning. I'm Dan Sharp. I'm sitting in temporarily for Bud Cribley, who should be here shortly.

MR. BROWER: Uvlaalluataq, Charles Brower, public member.

MS. PITKA: Rhonda Pitka, public member from Beaver.

MR. PELTOLA: Quyana tailuci. Thank you for coming. Gene Peltola, Jr., Assistant Regional Director for the Office of Subsistence Management, and I am not a Board member.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Anthony Christianson, Board Chair.

MR. LORD: Ken Lord, Office of the Regional Solicitor.

MS. PENDLETON: Good morning. Beth Pendleton, Regional Forester, U.S. Forest Service.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Good morning. Greg Siekaniec, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Regional Director here in Alaska.

MR. POLACCA: Good morning. Lynn Polacca, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Acting Regional Director.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, if I may. We

1 also have the Interagency Staff Committee
2 representatives present at the meeting sitting at the
3 table adjacent to our table up front here.

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5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
6 With that we'll move on to number one on the agenda
7 here to review and adopt the agenda.

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9 MR. BROWER: Mr. Chair.

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11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Charlie.

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13 MR. BROWER: Move to approve the
14 agenda.

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16 MS. PENDLETON: Seconded.

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18 MS. PITKA: I have one change. I'd
19 like to ask that we.....

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21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: There's been a
22 motion made and seconded. You want to make an
23 amendment to the agenda?

24
25 MS. PITKA: Yeah.

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27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Rhonda.

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29 MS. PITKA: I'd like to ask that the
30 Fishery Special Action Request go after the executive
31 session. So that would be number nine on the list.

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33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Is there any
34 opposition to that?

35
36 MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chairman. I'm just
37 trying to figure out -- because the executive session
38 was for the remainder of the July 17 meeting, was noted
39 as. How would we fit that in as still part of the
40 public process?

41
42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: If we do move
43 that, we can just call for a break and call the meeting
44 back to order after the executive session.

45
46 MR. SIEKANIEC: Okay.

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48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I don't
49 anticipate a long -- I would hope not a long executive
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1 session.

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MR. SIEKANIEC: Okay.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Is there concurrence? Everybody fine with moving that?

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IN UNISON: Yes.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Thank you, guys. So noted we will move the executive session to number nine, moving the Fisheries Special Action Request to number 10. No opposition to change the agenda as presented. All in favor of the new agenda as presented say aye.

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IN UNISON: Aye.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries. At this time we'll open up the floor for information exchange. Usually at a work session we do not take public testimony, but since she's already sitting there I think I want to hear what you have to say. I appreciate you taking the time.....

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MS. STICKWAN: Oh, I was told I could come up here and speak.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, yeah, that's what I'm saying. It's a standard that we usually just -- but today I don't think we have a full agenda, so we'd like to hear from the public.

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Thank you.

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Gloria.

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MS. STICKWAN: Okay. I was asked to present this letter. It's asking for delegation of authority for Unit 11 moose and Unit 11 remainder and 13 remainder and 13 remainder for caribou. We know we don't have an MOA of the charter approved yet, but we wanted to present this before so you have a letter to work with because we know delegations of authority are coming up. This letter was emailed Friday. This is just for your consideration, to look at and to work on. Do you have any questions?

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any questions

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1 for Gloria?

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(No comments)

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Gloria, for presenting that. I appreciate it. Everybody got a copy? Yeah, this is a letter from the Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission. They're looking to distribute permits.

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MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, if I may. OSM had just received this letter and talking with Gloria this morning and confirming with you that it would probably be prudent to have a discussion with Ken Lord, yourself and OSM about this request and then we'll proceed from there.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Thank you for that. We'll have a discussion here after a bit. Any other additional information exchange. Any other public want to share something.

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(No comments)

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right. We'll move on to action on the Regional Advisory Council annual report replies. Carl Johnson.

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MR. JOHNSON: Good morning, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. For the record, my name is Carl Johnson. I'm the Council Coordination Division Chief with the Office of Subsistence Management. This annual report process is set forth in Section 805 and the Secretaries have delegated the Federal Subsistence Board to respond to the Councils on their annual reports.

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Essentially there are four points that 805 lays out for what Councils should consider including in their annual reports. Identification of current and anticipated subsistence uses of fish and wildlife populations within their region, evaluation of current and anticipated subsistence needs for fish and wildlife populations within the region, a recommended strategy for the management of fish and wildlife populations within the region to accommodate such subsistence uses and needs and recommendations concerning policies, standards, guidelines and regulations to implement the strategy.

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1 Typically we encourage the Councils
2 when they're drafting their annual reports to think of
3 things that are outside of the regulatory process to
4 bring to the Board's attention. If there's something
5 that they're concerned about being accomplished through
6 regulation, we encourage them just to submit a
7 regulatory proposal during the appropriate regulatory
8 cycle. So this method of communication is for
9 essentially non-regulatory matters.

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12 This year all 10 of the Regional
13 Advisory Councils did submit an annual report. On some
14 occasions there's one Council sometimes -- almost every
15 year there's one Council that just doesn't submit an
16 annual report. You know, a couple years ago the
17 Northwest Arctic Council didn't submit an annual report
18 because they spent a lot of their time submitting
19 regulatory proposals to deal with -- and Special Action
20 Requests to deal with some of their concerns about
21 Western Arctic Caribou management. So they were busy
22 with that and didn't submit an annual report. That was
23 their way of communicating their concerns about
24 wildlife populations.

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27 Generally speaking most of the subjects
28 that are brought up in the annual reports are concerns
29 about wildlife and fisheries populations. What is
30 being done to manage them, to monitor them, to study
31 them, what funding is being provided to research what's
32 going on with those populations, what are current
33 management efforts. Those are generally the full gamut
34 of most of the issues. Other issues that sometimes
35 come up are concerns over management or regulatory
36 actions taken by other agencies.

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38

39 As part of the Secretarial review that
40 was initiated in 2009 by Secretary Salazar, the
41 Secretary directed the Board to bring to the
42 Secretary's attention any non-Departmental rulemaking
43 which may affect subsistence. So that is one of the
44 things that sometimes comes up in these annual reports
45 and it's one of the follow-up items that the Board then
46 does after this process that we're doing here today and
47 that is to send a letter to the Secretaries calling to
48 their attention something that has been raised that's
49 outside of the Board's jurisdiction that's also non-
50 Departmental rulemaking that may affect subsistence.
We do have one of those issues that two of the Councils
brought up in this annual report cycle.

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1 Additionally, sometimes the Regional
2 Advisory Councils have issues of concern related to
3 specifically how the Office of Subsistence Management
4 provides staffing support, conducts outreach, conducts
5 tribal consultation and since the Board's role includes
6 directing the Office of Subsistence Management to do
7 things, so sometimes there are responses from the Board
8 promising increased staff support, promising to take
9 new efforts in outreach and things like that.

10

11 So what I'm going to do is I'm just
12 going to go region by region. I will provide just a
13 quick overview of what is raised in the original annual
14 report item and then also kind of a quick highlight of
15 how the Board responds. As we're going through, feel
16 free to interrupt me if there is something you want to
17 add or delete to each region's annual report reply and
18 then my suggestion will be that once I'm done with all
19 10 regions then the Board can take action on the packet
20 as a whole and with any edits that have been reported
21 in the record along the way. Of course any time as I'm
22 going along if anyone has any questions, feel free to
23 let me know.

24

25 I'll proceed first with the Southeast
26 Council. Their first issue or concern relates to poor
27 returns of sockeye salmon. Particularly they're
28 appreciating any information that may be related to the
29 effects of climate change on sockeye salmon returns.

30

31 Now as is often common a response the
32 first thing the Board will often say is we're aware of
33 this concern, we share your concern. This is kind of a
34 common sort of starting pattern. So, again, we're
35 aware of this concern, salmon normally fluctuate
36 naturally over time, but some of the -- there are
37 limited tools available. The FRMP can provide some
38 tools, but it's limited in that it can't cover research
39 in marine waters. If there are other issues that may
40 be affecting sockeye salmon returns such as commercial
41 fishing activities, those have to be dealt with through
42 the Board of Fisheries and they can't be handled by the
43 Federal Subsistence Board. That's kind of the very
44 quick snapshot of the response.

45

46 Number two. Unguided fishermen,
47 subsistence users versus other users. Now the
48 Southeast Council raises concerns about what they refer
49 to as unguided fishermen and this is related to guided

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1 lodge activities or also some sort of long-term camps
2 that are set up in areas that are permitted and they
3 want to know, you know, how many fish are these guided
4 and unguided fishermen catching and how that might
5 affect subsistence users.

6
7 So sort of the quick overview that's
8 provided here, the response is that Petersburg Park
9 Ranger District is unaware of any permits that have
10 been issued for groups camping long term. And Forest
11 Service lands in the Kake area talks about the
12 information that is available through the lodge guide
13 books and how they're submitted, how that information
14 is collected. There's a lot of good information that
15 managers can get from that particular source of
16 information, but there is not currently a good way to
17 estimate the harvest by unguided sport anglers.

18
19 One possible solution would be to
20 require a log book style sort of recordkeeping and
21 reporting requirement for those types of fishermen, but
22 that would require some additional action. There was
23 some legislation opposed in 2011 that would have
24 required that, but it failed to pass.

25
26 The next issue is kind of an update on
27 the extraterritorial jurisdiction process. The Council
28 just wanted to know what sort of avenues are available
29 to continue addressing that issue. The Board's
30 response, the Board provides an overview of the recent
31 Board of Fish actions that were taken to implement many
32 of the elements of the issues that were at the heart of
33 the extraterritorial jurisdiction process.

34
35 But the Board suggests that the Council
36 continue to monitor that issue and if they're not
37 satisfied with whether or not those issues have been
38 addressed by the Board of Fisheries actions, that
39 additional -- the Council should consider possibly
40 additional regulatory proposals that might finish
41 addressing those issues in a way that's satisfactory to
42 the Council, but essentially to kind of keep an ongoing
43 dialogue with Fish and Game staff so they can keep
44 updated on the progress of implementing those different
45 regulatory changes.

46
47 The fourth issue relates to a specific
48 request for the Yakutat Forelands to be deemed an
49 outstanding national resource water to receive an
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1 outstanding national resource water designation. That
2 issue essentially is somewhat similar to one of the
3 things I was talking about earlier and that is when the
4 Board forwards an issue of concern on to another
5 agency. Here the Board quotes a draft letter that will
6 be sent to the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture
7 responding to that specific issue. I do not know if
8 that letter has been sent though at this time.

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg.

11

12 MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chairman, thank
13 you. My question was about the letter. The letter has
14 been drafted, but has it been provided to the Board for
15 a review? I'm more inclined to think that we would
16 like to reference a letter having been sent if we can
17 get that in order to put this thing out and have it
18 more timely.

19

20 MR. JOHNSON: Through the Chair. As
21 far as I know, the letter has not been sent. I do not
22 know who drafted the letter or what the status is of
23 that letter.

24

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Do we have
26 somebody here who has that information?

27

28 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, if I may.
29 Typically a Board response is drafted by the
30 appropriate Regional Advisory Council coordinator. If
31 it's an annual report reply, then it goes through
32 leadership LT team review at OSM, then it's forwarded
33 on to the Chair for consideration.

34

35 This specific letter I know that we
36 have reviewed a few of them, but I do not recall
37 whether actually this has gone through LT review or
38 not.

39

40 MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair. I would
41 recommend if we're going to be quoting segments of this
42 letter, then we should have it go through the review
43 process prior to us sending this out to make sure that
44 we're both legally sufficient as well as it's saying
45 what the Board really wants to be saying.

46

47 MR. JOHNSON: I'm making a note.

48

49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, make a

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1 note. Is there a way we can get that letter pulled up
2 today?

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4 MR. JOHNSON: Possibly. I can go back
5 after we're done here and check.

6
7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah. I'm just
8 wondering if we can. Okay. Thanks, Carl.

9
10 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Carl.

11
12 MR. JOHNSON: The next issue is concern
13 about overpopulation of bears and increasing aggressive
14 bear activity. In response, the Board cites some
15 specific examples of five bear attacks, none of which
16 have been fatal. All of which, based on the
17 investigation of those attacks, indicated they were
18 related to bears that were stressed due to low food
19 supply.

20
21 In further detail, there's a
22 considerable amount of detail provided about unit-
23 specific bear populations, both brown and black bear,
24 and that overall there have been no notable increases
25 in brown bear activity reported since 2014.

26
27 Sixth, Central Southeast Game Unit 3
28 issues with deer population harvest limits. The
29 Council is reporting a problem with Sitka black-tailed
30 deer populations and bag limits in this particular game
31 unit. The Board responds by noticing that the deer
32 populations have historically fluctuated, that limited
33 harvest opportunities have existed for deer since the
34 1990s.

35
36 There are a variety of different
37 factors that have affected the deer population from
38 winter severity to predation by bears and wolves, poor
39 availability of habitat and increasing competition with
40 moose in the same areas. Reports various different
41 authorities that are available to the Petersburg and
42 Wrangell district rangers for handling the management
43 of the deer populations, but that they're fairly
44 limited. And if the Council believes that there are
45 additional changes that need to be made in those
46 delegations of authority, they should submit a
47 proposal.

48
49 Number seven, wolf management in Unit
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1 2. They would like to see development of a wolf
2 management plan for that unit and they would like to
3 have the Council involved in it. The response is the
4 wolf management plan is done. Here's what it provides
5 and here's where you can find it. That it's not a
6 decision document, it's merely a guidance for
7 management.

8
9 Number eight, eulachon harvest on the
10 Unuk River. Concern about closures affecting the
11 harvest on the Unuk River. They suggest also a test
12 fishery to monitor what's going on with it. The test
13 fishery would have to be instituted by the Board of
14 Fisheries not by the Board and that there has
15 increasingly been a historic trend from California
16 moving north along the Pacific Coast of declines in
17 eulachon populations.

18
19 The FRMP has previously funded a four-
20 year study of this particular population and that a
21 proposal has been submitted for continued funding that
22 is under consideration by the TRC. There's a graph
23 here showing the relative abundance of eulachon from
24 the years 2001 through 2016.

25
26 Then lastly, not really something
27 that's kind of an issue that requires response by the
28 Board, but just some issues that the Council wanted to
29 bring -- just kind of keep it at the front of the
30 Board's attention that these are issues that the
31 Council wants the Board to be aware of or be
32 considering in its decisions and in its deliberations.

33
34 The need for continued funding of the
35 FRMP; continued monitoring of transboundary mining
36 issues; there needs to be baseline water quality
37 testing in the Taku and Stikine River systems; that
38 there are concerns still about how subsistence users
39 are able to use public use cabins particularly in
40 Glacier Bay National Park; that there's an ongoing
41 discussion on how customary and traditional use
42 determinations are made; and the Council, consistent
43 with the Board's previous recommendation, has submitted
44 a proposal related to C&T in the Southeast Region for
45 this wildlife cycle; and terminal area escapement and
46 salmon and halibut interceptions.

47
48 So that's it for Southeast. Other than
49 the one comment by Mr. Siekaniec any other questions or
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1 comments about Southeast.

2

3 (No comments)

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5 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. Hearing none,
6 moving on.

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8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: One second,
9 Carl.

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11 MR. JOHNSON: Yes, sir.

12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You mentioned
14 that, I was looking through here, that it's the Board
15 of Fish to open and close the eulachon on the Unuk. I
16 thought we put in a fishery closure.

17

18 MR. JOHNSON: That was in relation to
19 the conduct of a test fishery.

20

21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, the test
22 fishery. Okay. Just wanted to clarify in my mind.

23

24 Thank you.

25

26 MR. JOHNSON: Uh-huh. So for
27 Southcentral Council. Number one issue, nonrural
28 policy implementation. The Council appreciated the
29 opportunity to be involved in developing that and
30 provide feedback. They specifically suggested that the
31 Board should consider the use of Fish and Game
32 household surveys and data when doing analysis of
33 future nonrural determination proposals.

34

35 The Board values the input and notes
36 that the anthropology staff do intend to use survey
37 data from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game when
38 conducting analyses in the future. There's also a
39 reference here to the Kenaitze Indian Tribe case about
40 when the court considered the definition of rural and
41 how you could not use Fish and Game household surveys
42 to establish an area as nonrural because it's not
43 dominated by subsistence hunting and fishing.

44

45 Kind of just an aside of, yes, we can
46 use this data, but there are certain ways in which we
47 may not use it. It would be improper under previous
48 case law to use that in an analysis.

49

50

1 Number two. Cook Inlet fishery
2 regulations. This came up and there was a bit of
3 discussion at the Council's winter meeting and how kind
4 of complicated and convoluted the Cook Inlet Federal
5 fisheries regulations are and they recommend the
6 convening of a workgroup to develop kind of a cleaning
7 up of those regulations to make them a lot more user
8 friendly and easier to understand.

9
10 So the response is that the Board has
11 directed OSM Staff to initiate a rulemaking process to
12 work on proposed rulemaking that would clean up those
13 fisheries regulations, but that we can't really provide
14 a timeline at this time just due to the kind of slow
15 nature of getting Federal Register notices going again
16 under the current administration. It lays out
17 essentially what the public process would be once that
18 rulemaking is initiated and the Council will be kept
19 informed through that process.

20
21 Number three, delegation of authority.
22 The Southcentral Council kind of has a historic concern
23 over delegation of authority letters and how the
24 managers use them. So in here they're specifically
25 wanting there to be clear guidance with very specific
26 instructions given to managers through a delegation of
27 authority.

28
29 So in response it notes that they were
30 previously given a full list of all the delegation
31 letters that are provided for wildlife management
32 within their region, then provides information how the
33 scope of the delegation is very unambiguous, very
34 clear. It gives very specific guidelines to the
35 manager on how and when they use that delegated
36 authority. Additionally, the response also provides
37 information on delegation for fisheries management in
38 the Southcentral Region.

39
40 Sterling Highway improvement. So this
41 relates to a project to reroute the Sterling Highway
42 through the Cooper Landing area and that's Forest
43 Service lands. So, as is often the case, a lot of
44 times when there is an issue that's within a specific
45 agency's rulemaking authority or their management the
46 Board will often ask that agency to provide a response.

47
48
49 So here the Board says we're aware that
50

1 the comment period for that has already closed and
2 we've forwarded your comments on to the Forest Service
3 and here's their response. The Forest Service response
4 is essentially that the Forest Service is a cooperating
5 agency in this process, that it will not make its own
6 recommendation for what its preferred alternative is
7 and provides information that the Council can get
8 updates on the project through the project website.

9
10 Number five, salmon biology and ocean
11 acidification. Again concerns about how a particular
12 aspect of the environment is affecting the particular
13 population. This is a theme you see often. The
14 Council is encouraging the Board to engage with
15 National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration and other
16 entities managing Bering Sea Gulf of Alaska fisheries
17 to fund research.

18
19 The two responses essentially are the
20 FRMP doesn't fund activities out in marine waters and
21 the State of Alaska initiated a Chinook Salmon Research
22 Initiative that received its last appropriation two
23 years ago and essentially the funding for that has been
24 exhausted.

25
26 Number six, Klutina and Gulkana River
27 chinook salmon experiencing population declines. In-
28 season managers should review the management plans for
29 chinook salmon and assess current and future returns to
30 take action to protect the chinook salmon.

31
32 In response, the Board kind of gives a
33 quick highlight of the population status of the chinook
34 salmon in those rivers and then recent management
35 actions both by the Board of Fisheries and also by the
36 Federal in-season managers for those fisheries. The
37 State and Federal managers are going to continue to
38 monitor the run and adjust harvest opportunities where
39 appropriate.

40
41 If the Council believes that more
42 action needs to be taken or a different type of action
43 needs to be taken, that the Councils should submit
44 regulatory proposals at both the State and Federal
45 level where appropriate.

46
47 Number seven, Unit 13 subsistence
48 community hunt. It has greatly benefitted the
49 community, this particular hunt, but that it's
50

1 unsustainable if left open to all Alaska residents. It
2 would be helpful to see data on what communities are
3 participating in the Unit 13 community hunt.

4
5 So one of the things that is provided
6 is in Table 1 in the response is characteristics of the
7 community subsistence hunt for Unit 13. Number of
8 groups, communities, households, individuals and notes
9 that a majority of the hunters currently participating
10 in the hunt are non-local residents who live outside of
11 Unit 13. The highlights in recent actions taken by the
12 Board of Game on modifying how that hunt is managed and
13 that the Board would like to wait and see if these
14 changes that have been made will be effective before
15 contacting the Board of Game for additional ways to
16 adjust that harvest opportunity.

17
18 That's it for the Southcentral annual
19 report reply.

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21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any questions.

22
23 Greg.

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25 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr.
26 Chairman. Carl, on the Sterling Highway improvement
27 we've forwarded a note to the U.S. Forest Service and
28 they then replied that they're not the lead agency,
29 they're a cooperating agency. Should we go ahead and
30 forward that concern then to the Department of
31 Transportation because they are the lead agency?
32 Because that's sort of what the Council was, I think,
33 getting at, that we make the appropriate contacts.

34
35 MR. JOHNSON: Yes. Essentially what
36 the Council was asking for here was for the Forest
37 Service as a cooperating agency to include their
38 concerns in any future discussions as a cooperating
39 agency. As I'm understanding that's not going to
40 happen. Yes.

41
42 MS. PENDLETON: So as cooperating
43 agency the Forest Service is responsible to identify
44 the environmental impacts of each of the alternatives
45 and that's provided to the lead agencies. What I'm
46 unclear about is the timing of it. So if this letter
47 went -- depending on when this letter came in. But if
48 would concur with Greg that that letter be provided to
49 the lead agencies in this case Department of

50

1 Transportation with the State and Fed Highways for
2 their consideration in this part of their official
3 record.

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5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg.

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

8
9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

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11 Ken.

12
13 MR. LORD: I was going to suggest that
14 along with that letter it wouldn't hurt to have a
15 gentle reminder of the requirements of Section 810 of
16 ANILCA.

17
18 MR. JOHNSON: I completely agree. Of
19 course the factors at play here will be where are they
20 at in the next stage of their process. The Draft EIS
21 public comment period ended on December 15, 2016. So a
22 lot of it will be dependent on where are those agencies
23 right now and whether or not they're going to do a
24 preliminary final or just go straight to a final EIS
25 would determine how that comment can be put into the
26 process. But, yes, I will make a note to do both.

27
28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
29 other questions or discussion on this one.

30
31 (No comments)

32
33 MR. JOHNSON: All right. Moving on to
34 Kodiak/Aleutians. Kodiak/Aleutians is a Council that's
35 very engaged in very specific issues related to refuge
36 management. So quite a few of the responses in their
37 reply come from either refuges or migratory birds
38 because Kodiak/Aleutians Council has a long time
39 engagement in Emperor Goose management. Even though
40 they've been told many times that's not part of Federal
41 Subsistence Management they still keep engaged because
42 they're engaged in subsistence issues in their region.

43
44 So, first of all, a couple of kudos
45 from the Council to the Board. First they greatly
46 appreciate the opportunity that was made for them to
47 have a meeting in the community of Unalaska. The very
48 first time that the Council in its history has met in
49 an Aleutian Island community.

50

1 As a result of that timing they were
2 also able to participate in the Aleutian Life Forum, so
3 they greatly appreciated that and the response is the
4 Board is pleased, the Council is pleased and kind of
5 remind the Council of what are the steps for any time
6 the Council would like to meet in a non-hub community
7 on how that process works.

8
9 Second kudos comes from a specific wish
10 for the Council to formally recognize its Council
11 Coordinator Karen Deatherage. So the response is the
12 Board is pleased that the Council is pleased with Ms.
13 Deatherage's performance, that her diligence and
14 efforts was really what made that meeting in Unalaska
15 happen because she found funding through another
16 program to supplement the funding for the travel for
17 the Council members to go out to Unalaska. It notes
18 that Ms. Deatherage has been recognized for her
19 extraordinary performance.

20
21 Third, National Wildlife Refuge System
22 Resource Information Technicians. I don't know if it
23 would be harder to say those out as words or as
24 acronyms together, but that's the way it goes. So one
25 of the things that this Council is obviously very
26 engaged with is with the RITs for their Refuges,
27 particularly the Kodiak Refuge. They are concerned
28 about the loss of a recent long-time RIT person who the
29 Council has interacted with.

30
31 The response is the Board is aware that
32 there is currently an effort underway to fill that
33 position through a local hire. Then also we forwarded
34 your concern to the Refuges Program and here's their
35 response.

36
37 Fourth, final rule on non-subsistence
38 take of wildlife on Alaska National Wildlife Refuges.
39 The Council was extremely disappointed that the final
40 rule passed. They were against it and they want it to
41 be reversed.

42
43 The response is it was nullified by the
44 President on April 13th when he signed House Joint
45 Resolution 69. That's the response from the Board.
46 Then they also forwarded this issue to Refuges, which
47 kind of gives a quick overview of the extensive public
48 outreach that the Refuges Program engaged with in the
49 development of that final rule and a history of when
50

1 the different stages of the rule were adopted and that,
2 yes, it's been rescinded through the Congressional
3 Review Act.

4
5 Number five, Emperor Geese update. The
6 Council is very pleased that Fish and Wildlife Service
7 and others are moving forward with the planned Emperor
8 Geese hunt the spring of 2017. They request the
9 opportunity perhaps to have that hunt open earlier so
10 it would be more beneficial to their region given the
11 timing of when the Emperor Geese move through there.

12
13 The response again forwarded to the
14 Migratory Birds program to have them respond to it on
15 behalf of the Board. So here we are quoting the
16 response from the Migratory Birds program, which kind
17 of gives an overview of how the hunt will operate and
18 then encourages the Council that if they would like to
19 develop -- modify the season dates, that they should
20 submit a proposal.

21
22 Number six, nonrural determination.
23 Again this Council was also very appreciative in the
24 Board's efforts to develop this policy that it provides
25 for flexibility; however, they don't believe that
26 there's any guidance on limiting the number of
27 proposals that are submitted to change the status of a
28 community. They want the proposal to only come from
29 somebody in that community and the Council wants
30 deference. They also were concerned that there's a
31 lack of guidance given on demonstrated change.

32
33 So a lot of the response here is
34 actually to highlight in the policy where those issues
35 are actually provided. There are limits provided in
36 how many proposals can be submitted. There is guidance
37 on what constitutes a demonstrated change in the
38 policy. Also it does specify, however -- and a lot of
39 the Councils wanted to have deference specified to the
40 Councils in this policy, but it reminds the Council
41 that the final policy says it will rely heavily on the
42 recommendations of the Council, but it explicitly says
43 that it will not provide deference in the same way that
44 deference is provided for takings recommendations under
45 Section 805.

46
47 Number seven, funding for cattle and
48 caribou removal on Alaska Maritime National Wildlife
49 Refuge. Basically the Council supports Congress's
50

1 decision to withhold funds, to not allow those
2 activities that the Refuge was engaged with to move
3 forward.

4
5 The Board responds by saying it's not
6 involved in decisions on what led to removal of those
7 invasive animals, but that the Federal Subsistence
8 Board, like the Fish and Wildlife Service, has laws it
9 has to follow and adhere to in its management
10 recommendations and decisions. Also forwarded to the
11 Refuges Program the response and the Refuge says that
12 they're not currently working on any efforts to remove
13 caribou or cattle from those particular islands.

14
15 That's it for the Kodiak/Aleutians
16 annual report and reply. Any questions, comments.

17
18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg.

19
20 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr.
21 Chairman. Just a couple. One of them is that under the
22 RIT discussion says that it will be subject to current
23 hiring restrictions. That has been taken care of.
24 There are no hiring restrictions anymore relative to
25 the Refuge Information Technician Program.

26
27 The second comment I would make is
28 under number four, the final rule on non-subsistence
29 take. The response is absolutely accurate. The
30 Refuges' final rule was nullified. I think you can
31 probably end right there. The Refuges provided quite a
32 response of simply justification of why they
33 necessarily did what they did. I think that history is
34 well known. So, to me, you could just eliminate that
35 whole next section.

36
37 The Emperor Geese update though I think
38 is very important to retain that because it's a very
39 different process and they needed to make some
40 understanding there.

41
42 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

43
44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any opposition
45 to the suggestion of Greg to strike that.

46
47 (No comments)

48
49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Thanks,

50

1 Greg.

2

3

4 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you for that, Mr.
5 Siekaniec. That's definitely one of the areas where we
6 really want to give the Board options and you decide
7 which is the best response.

8

9

10

11 Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council.
12 Number one, Meshik River salmon. Council supports
13 funding for the Meshik River priority information
14 needs. It's important to develop a monitoring program
15 to keep up on the status of the salmon populations in
16 that area that are very important to the people in the
17 region.

18

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The response notes that that priority information need was listed in the last call for proposals for the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. However, despite being listed as a priority information, no proposals were received related to that specific issue. So that priority information need can be included in their next notice of funding opportunity for projects for the next time around.

Outreach. Council expressed several different concerns about outreach and community engagement in the Regional Advisory Council process. They note that the reason why they have meetings only in Dillingham and Naknek is that within their community those are basically the two villages that can best support logistically lodging, transportation, etc., to have meetings there.

But they have concerns about outreach efforts that are made. They have some recommendations on improving outreach through email, social media, etc. They also expressed concerns about always meeting during business hours, from 8:30 to 5:30. There might be better public engagement if they had evening or weekend meetings.

So in response it's a pretty detailed recitation of the efforts that the Office of Subsistence Management does take on outreach, including email newsletters out to people who subscribe to the system, Facebook posts, display ads, radio ads, news releases. Also essentially the Chair can work with

1 their Council Coordinator to come up with a meeting
2 time that's appropriate for the Council. So if the
3 Council wants to meet later, the Chair and the Council
4 Coordinator can work that out together.

5
6 That's it for the Bristol Bay Regional
7 Advisory Council. Any questions or comments.

8
9 (No comments)

10
11 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. Next we'll move on
12 to Yukon/Kuskokwim.
13 I've been told we need to speed it up a bit. I mean
14 there's a lot of detail in these annual reports. I'm
15 hoping that your Interagency Staff members have
16 discussed them with you and gone over them quite a bit.
17 Obviously folks have been looking at them. I will see
18 if I can kind of highlight some issues that are kind of
19 beyond the normal.

20
21 One of the issues that comes up in the
22 Yukon Delta annual report that does come in in other
23 Councils annual report and that is concern about
24 increased shipping traffic as a result of climate
25 change and lesser sea ice and more shipping routes
26 becoming open. They have concerns about how that's
27 going to affect fish populations in that area. So the
28 Council wants the Board to forward these concerns to
29 relevant agencies.

30
31 So this is one of those times where you
32 as a Board have responded and said, yes, we will
33 forward your concern to the appropriate agencies.

34
35 Anything from Yukon Delta Council.

36
37 (No comments)

38
39 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. Western Interior.
40 The Western Interior Council starts with a very lengthy
41 comment, which is essentially a recitation of a written
42 comment that the Chair Jack Reakoff made in his own
43 individual capacity to the BLM during a rulemaking
44 process about their Central Yukon Resource Management
45 Plan.

46
47 So that's all that and the response
48 basically is by bringing it to our attention you've
49 brought it to the attention of the director of BLM and
50

1 he will make sure your concerns are addressed and that
2 BLM will be conducting a Section 810 analysis. So they
3 get a gold star from Ken for recognizing their 810
4 analysis responsibilities.

5
6 Some specific suggestions to Fish and
7 Game about how they improve their population counts
8 using digital photography and the response I'm sure the
9 Council will be happy to hear that they are
10 transitioning in that direction.

11
12 Want a better understanding of the
13 effect of climate change on subsistence fisheries.
14 This is one that's worthy of noting. The Council
15 requests that the Board ask the Secretary to initiate
16 rulemaking to add additional rural member seats to the
17 Board. So that will be a specific request to the
18 Secretaries that the Board, if it's going to be
19 following up with that, will be asking the Secretaries
20 to initiate rulemaking.

21
22 Also recognition. They recently had a
23 longtime member of their Council retire, Mr. Robert
24 Walker. He retired after 15 years of service. He did
25 receive a certificate of service for his 15 years
26 recently, but also the Board has sent out a special
27 recognition of his service in a letter to him.

28
29 Anything to raise with the Western
30 Interior Council.

31
32 (No comments)

33
34 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. Another concern
35 about climate change impacts on fisheries populations.
36 This is the Seward Peninsula Council. They want to see
37 that MOA process between the Board and the State
38 continue to move forward, so they'll be looking forward
39 to updates on that. They'd like to see more Alaska
40 Department of Fish and Game staff at their meetings.
41 They really appreciate those interactions.

42
43 The response is essentially if you do
44 have a particular staffing need that you want to talk
45 to them about, let them know because they look at
46 what's on the agenda and if they don't see anything on
47 the agenda that relates to fisheries, they're not going
48 to send anybody.

49
50

1 Any comments on the Seward Peninsula
2 Council's annual report reply.

3
4 (No comments)

5
6 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. Northwest Arctic
7 Council. They note their appreciation for the closure
8 in Unit 23 to the hunting of caribou by non-Federally
9 qualified users. Several comments about improvements
10 and the hunting opportunities available to people in
11 that area.

12
13 Your response basically talks about
14 recent actions that were taken and also the development
15 of the new interagency user conflict group based on the
16 discussion at your meeting in January with the State
17 about how to deal with some of these user conflict
18 issues and balance the management to allow for more
19 opportunity.

20
21 Basically a lot of issues related to
22 how do we manage resources and responsiveness of
23 managers and the rapidly changing Arctic. So this is
24 one of the themes that's showing up a lot in this
25 year's annual report replies and that is impact of
26 climate change. Whether it's warming waters to ocean
27 acidification to opening of shipping traffic on
28 subsistence resources.

29
30 The last item is related to the first
31 and that is the need to maintain the closure of Federal
32 public lands in Unit 23 to non-Federally qualified
33 hunters of caribou. This will need to be updated to
34 reflect recent action by the Board. This is referring
35 to the WSA17-03 that's been submitted, but this is
36 before action was taken on that. So we'll need to
37 update all the recent actions on caribou and probably
38 even also mention the actions for Units 26A and B just
39 as an additional aside on what other caribou management
40 decisions the Board has made recently.

41
42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg.

43
44 MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chairman, thank
45 you. Carl, that means that this letter itself would be
46 updated before it actually comes to the Board for
47 signature.

48
49 MR. JOHNSON: Yes.

50

1 MR. SIEKANIEC: Okay. That was my
2 question.

3
4 MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, we would update
5 this response to reflect recent news.

6
7 Eastern Interior Council. I'm not
8 going to cover really the first issue very much because
9 you have a presentation later coming from Katya Wessels
10 about this hunter ethics education program. This has
11 been a long-time concern of the Council and she will be
12 able to brief you on that in more detail later.

13
14 The second one. This came up during
15 discussion at the meeting the Council had in Fort
16 Yukon, which is use of traditional Gwich'in names in
17 geographic features, whether it's mountains, rivers,
18 whatever, once they have been recognized. We respond
19 that now these have been formally recognized by USGS
20 the OSM will be using those names in analyses in the
21 future when appropriate.

22
23 Here this Council is one of four
24 Councils that will regularly bring up predator
25 management as an issue. Here they say that it's a long
26 time subsistence practice and the Board should redefine
27 subsistence to include predator management. The short
28 answer is in many ways the Board has acknowledged
29 customary and traditional practices when regulation
30 proposals are submitted such as particular ways of
31 hunting bear, but when it comes to the definition of
32 subsistence, that's in ANILCA and only Congress can
33 change the definition of subsistence.

34
35 More limited subsistence opportunities
36 encourage youth engagement and resource management.
37 They want better notice to subsistence users on changes
38 in the CFR and we tell them about how our proposal
39 process works, but also when we get word of other
40 agency proposals that are submitted, those are often
41 put on the agenda for the Councils.

42
43 Opposition of both the Park Service and
44 the Refuges final rule on hunting of predators in
45 Refuge and Park Service lands. So consistent with Mr.
46 Siekaniec's earlier suggestion I will modify the
47 Refuge's response accordingly.

48
49 However, the National Park Service
50

1 response I would suggest we keep because there seems to
2 be -- because the Park Service came out with two
3 different rules and it seems like the Council is
4 conflating them. So the Park Service response explains
5 in detail how those two rules are different and wanting
6 to clarify which rule the Council had a problem with.
7 So I would suggest that one stays in as is.

8

9

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Bert.

10

11

12

MR. FROST: So they're talking about
both rules?

13

14

15

16

17

18

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22

23

MR. JOHNSON: Well, the Council talks
about one rule. They use the title of one rule, but
when they talk about it, it seems like they're talking
about the other one. When they provided their annual
report again at their winter meeting and asked are you
sure this is the one you're talking about, they said
yes. Even though the way they talk about it it doesn't
seem like they're talking about the collections rule
that Park Service passed.

24

25

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30

MR. FROST: So we may need some
clarification on the Park Service response because
there's some late breaking news that just happened last
week on the wildlife rule, not the subsistence rule.
So we'll need to get that updated before we finalize
this letter.

31

32

33

34

MR. JOHNSON: It would be great if the
Park Service could provide us some suggested language
for that.

35

36

37

MR. FROST: Clarence and Mary will get
that for you.

38

39

40

41

42

MR. JOHNSON: Great. Thank you.

43

44

MR. FROST: No, you just have to make
it up.

45

46

47

48

49

50

(Laughter)

MR. JOHNSON: Okay. Moving on to the
next one. This is one of my favorites. The Council
wants the Board to get involved in how other agencies
regulate listeria monocytogenes, which is regulated by
the FDA and ADEC when it comes to commercial food

1 products. The response is simply the Board is not
2 involved in commercial activities. Customary trade is
3 not a commercial activity and we're not going to get
4 involved essentially.

5
6 Any questions, comments on the Eastern
7 Interior's annual report reply.

8
9 (No comments)

10
11 MR. JOHNSON: Obviously I will cull the
12 enclosures to make it consistent with the responses
13 that have been edited regarding the final rule from
14 Refuges.

15
16 Last but not least we have the North
17 Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. Food
18 security, caribou, primary concern. This is the other
19 Council that had the concern about increased shipping
20 traffic, but in this case it's the Chukchi Sea, but
21 still we'll figure out who is the correct agency to
22 forward that response to.

23
24 The last remaining issue for this
25 Council is they see a connection between increased
26 Council meetings in non-hub areas, i.e. out of Barrow
27 or Utqiagvik, and into more of the rural communities
28 they see a connection between that and increased
29 applications for the Regional Advisory Council. This
30 Council, probably more among others, has historically
31 had a hard time getting sufficient number of applicants
32 to serve on their Council such that every year they do
33 not have a fully-seated Council. This year we had
34 three applicants for four vacancies.

35
36 Granted, one of those vacancies
37 wouldn't have been there if somebody hadn't been
38 elected mayor of the borough, so he had to resign. But
39 still in any normal Council we would like to see at
40 least a 2-1 ratio of applicants for vacancies. So they
41 see a correlation with that.

42
43 The response is again the policy on
44 when and how Councils can meet in non-hub communities.
45 I'll just quickly reiterate that for everybody. It
46 will be considered on approximately every two to three
47 years so long as the cost is not too exorbitant and the
48 budget is available for it, but also the Council needs
49 to provide some sort of rationale or explanation as to
50

1 why they need to meet in that particular community. In
2 a lot of cases it can be related to particular
3 management issues. Wildlife or fisheries management
4 issues is how the Councils typically will do it. But
5 that's the policy that's set forth and that's what we
6 need to remind them occasionally.

7
8 That's it for the North Slope Council.
9 Any comments, questions or additions.

10
11 (No comments)

12
13 MR. JOHNSON: All right. Thank you,
14 Mr. Chair and members of the Board. I will take
15 whatever action the Board recommends.

16
17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
18 your report and being diligent in speeding up. I guess
19 we're on a time limit here. We have all day today.
20 Thank you, Carl. A nice thorough report.

21
22 MS. PENDLETON: I think we need to take
23 up a motion to approve the reports with the
24 modifications that were identified by various Board
25 members and then move forward with those.

26
27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes. We have a
28 motion by Beth.

29
30 MR. SIEKANIEC: Second.

31
32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Seconded. Any
33 discussion on the motion to accept the reports with the
34 intended modifications by each of the prospective Board
35 members.

36
37 MR. SIEKANIEC: So will they be cleaned
38 up then and sent back again for another review, is that
39 how it would work, Gene? Or is it just now that these
40 -- if the amendments are made, they're just ready to
41 go?

42
43 MR. PELTOLA: Yeah. Once we get the
44 transcripts back, we'll go through what the specific
45 direction made by each individual Board member with
46 regard to that particular response, we'll incorporate
47 those and then we'll forward them on to Tony for his
48 consideration and signature.

49
50

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

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
4 further discussion.

5

6 (No comments)

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the
9 question.

10

11 MR. BROWER: Question.

12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All in favor
14 say aye.

15

16 IN UNISON: Aye.

17

18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All opposed
19 same sign.

20

21 (No opposing votes)

22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries
24 unanimously to accept the reports with the amendments.
25 We'll move on to a brief history of the Federal
26 Subsistence -- okay, Gene.

27

28 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, if I may. One
29 thing that -- the reason why we're giving a brief
30 summary of the Federal Subsistence Program funding
31 environment is that with regard to the administration's
32 budget request there's been several inquiries. I had
33 discussions with other concerned individuals how the
34 Federal Subsistence Program budget would be affected.

35

36 The reason that is in consideration now
37 is that if Interior follows through with the potential
38 12-13 percent reduction, if it carries over to the
39 Federal Subsistence Program, how would we address it.
40 Based on historical funding, which makes it to OSM,
41 we're looking at about a \$1.3 million reduction if we
42 get the 13 percent reduction to Interior coming down to
43 us.

44

45 In discussions with Wayne, every bureau
46 gets some level of funding with regard to subsistence.
47 This presentation with regard to what OSM receives
48 through the Fish and Wildlife Service, not necessarily
49 the Park Service, BLM, Forest Service or BIA, but we

50

1 wanted the Board to be exposed to how we have spent our
2 money, how it may affect each and every program we're
3 responsible for if we realize that 13 percent
4 reduction.

5
6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thanks, Gene.
7 With that we'll turn it over to Tom for the
8 presentation. I think a couple of us in the front here
9 have to move. We're waiting, I guess.

10
11 MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay. One thing that
12 gets everybody going in the morning and one of the most
13 exciting topics I think that we deal as managers is
14 looking at the histories of our budget. Hopefully this
15 won't put you to sleep, but really see the budget
16 history. Gene and I think it's really important for
17 the Board to understand part and parcel of our process
18 and what's happened in the last decade or so with
19 Federal Subsistence funding.

20
21 On Page 2 of your handout you'll see
22 kind of the general trickle-down of how our budgets
23 happen here at OSM. It usually comes down from the
24 President's budget after it's approved through Congress
25 to Fish and Wildlife Service headquarters. At that
26 point there's some funding that is pulled off before we
27 start to see it at the Alaska Region.

28
29 It comes through two funding pots; one
30 through Fisheries, which you'll see coded as 1335
31 money, and then through the National Wildlife Refuge
32 System funding pot, which is 1261 funds. When it gets
33 to the Alaska Region before we see a general amount of
34 funding coming to OSM and as I go through this project
35 you'll see most of the discussion is after we receive
36 it at the region. It's split off between common
37 services, which are making sure we can print papers
38 such as what we see in front of us and photocopying
39 costs and other expenses that we would see.

40
41 Some of the monies goes to our fishery
42 programs. I made sure that there's two large maps on
43 the wall for people to look at as they mill around
44 between the Yukon Drainage and the Kuskokwim Drainage,
45 but the magnitude of the Yukon Drainage for the
46 Fisheries program through Fish and Wildlife Service,
47 through our Conservation Office, really show the
48 geographic need and the challenges they have that are
49 separate from our office program at OSM.

50

1 Then also Refuges has responsibilities
2 directly on the Refuges, whether it's for RIT programs,
3 dealing with subsistence issues at the field level,
4 that is pulled off also as well as law enforcement.

5
6 By the end game you see what OSM has
7 retained. This has been a fairly traditional
8 trajectory for many of us that have looked at our
9 budgets in various agencies is that we've seen -- if
10 you ran a regression line through this, you'd see an
11 overall decline. We had some money held back in 2008
12 for program reduction that was held back by the Refuge
13 System decreasing part of that funding pot over the
14 years. We all remember the 2000 Budget Reform Act
15 relative to sequestration as it was called by slang
16 name. Then you see a bump after 2013 in 2014 and
17 essentially it's been a static budget.

18
19 What we've seen at least in the
20 appropriation so far in the President's budget and part
21 of preliminary hearings is that at least the fishery
22 budget has been maintained from the Fish and Wildlife
23 Service and then also we saw in the President's budget
24 from the Forest Service side that their funding had
25 been maintained for subsistence through Agriculture.

26
27 One of the aspects that I like to see
28 like on Page 4 is that many times the Subsistence
29 Program we're not a -- we're very different in one way
30 is that we're kind of the Washington Office, Regional
31 Office and Field Office under the umbrella of Fish and
32 Wildlife Service here in Anchorage. One of the
33 advocates for the program has been our senator from
34 Alaska and especially on her role relative to being the
35 chairman of the Senate and Energy and Natural Resources
36 Committee.

37
38 If we look on 614, next slide, you will
39 see that again there was an overview of the program,
40 both of ANCSA and ANILCA. There was a plea made
41 essentially at that time to reinstate funding for the
42 Subsistence Program and in 2014 that's what's brought
43 us up to what I call the status level of flatline
44 funding during years of consistent continuing
45 resolutions. So I think that's an important part to
46 see.

47
48 Apologies for your handout being in
49 black and white, but if you want to see the color
50

1 version the screen will show you that. If we just take
2 the 2017 line out of our 1335 fishery money to Fish and
3 Wildlife Service, essentially we see about 9.5 million
4 that was enacted. As it goes through the assessments
5 in Washington, about when we go to the far right-hand
6 side, you'll see that \$238,193 was retained out of
7 Fisheries in 2017, slightly more than 2016.

8
9 An interesting little piece of history
10 here is that you'll see 2008 through 2011 this negative
11 line. These were called uncontrollables and these were
12 actual additions to our budget. So for some years we
13 actually saw additional monies coming from Washington.
14 That is no longer the case. Now we're seeing a
15 consistent withdrawal in our programs.

16
17 In a similar fashion when we look at
18 the Washington Office and we look at the 1261 cut from
19 Refuges, we see about 2.8 million as enacted after the
20 assessments from Washington come out about 52,000 in
21 2017 was withheld. Again, a smaller amount, but
22 proportionately similar to because it's a smaller pot
23 of money. Also we used to get a lot more in what were
24 called uncontrollables in those years as you can see
25 where we see 150, 250, 2,000 that used to be additive.
26 So again the cost of what funds are retained in
27 Washington have increased over time.

28
29 If we look at the cumulative.....

30
31 MR. FROST: Can I stop you there for a
32 minute. I just want to make sure I'm reading these
33 tables right. Going back to the Fisheries on 2017, so
34 the 9.554 that's the Fisheries money for the Service
35 Service-wide.

36
37 MR. DOOLITTLE: That's correct.

38
39 MR. FROST: Okay. And then this -- I
40 assume the W is the Washington Office assessment for --
41 what does FES stand for?

42
43 MR. DOOLITTLE: That is for the
44 Fisheries and Ecological Services part of the Fish and
45 Wildlife Service.

46
47 MR. FROST: So where does that 157 go?

48
49 MR. DOOLITTLE: That is retained in

50

1 Washington and our belief is that it's paying for
2 salaries and then into administration of programs
3 relative to keeping Washington offices going.

4
5 MR. FROST: So that gives you the next
6 number and then another assessment of 81,000. So the
7 total number is 93. So the total of Washington
8 withholding was 238,197, is that correct?

9
10 MR. DOOLITTLE: That's correct. Out of
11 the Fisheries money.

12
13 MR. FROST: So how does that relate to
14 how the money gets to OSM?

15
16 MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay. What that is is
17 that's just simply just withheld before we even see it
18 at OSM. So always look at this as we're moving along
19 through these tables it's essentially that you will see
20 that there's these monies that are taken out before we
21 even get a chance to spend a dime at the regional level
22 or what we see actually monies that we can spend out of
23 our field office at OSM.

24
25 MR. FROST: So by adding the 9.5 to the
26 Fisheries and the 2.7 to the refuges that's all the
27 money at the Washington level for those two programs?

28
29 MR. DOOLITTLE: That's correct. Yeah,
30 so when you look at -- and you'll see another table as
31 we chronologically go through this you'll start to see
32 how that all adds up.

33
34 MR. SIEKANIEC: Tom. I just want to
35 make sure, Bert. What you're seeing here, from what I
36 understand, is you're seeing the amount that becomes
37 the Subsistence Office funding. Not the entire
38 Fisheries budget for the Fish and Wildlife Service.....

39
40 MR. FROST: Okay.

41
42 MR. SIEKANIEC:is what I thought
43 you were asking.

44
45 MR. FROST: Right. Because I was going
46 to say 2.7 isn't very much for your whole refuge
47 program.

48
49 MR. DOOLITTLE: Right. I'm sorry about

50

1 not making that clarification. There is a line item in
2 both the Fisheries and Refuge budget that says Alaska
3 Subsistence.

4
5 MR. FROST: So this is the pass-through
6 money essentially from these two programs that gets to
7 the OSM office.

8
9 MR. DOOLITTLE: Correct.

10
11 MR. SIEKANIEC: Correct. Although it
12 is a line item note in the appropriations, so it's not
13 just gleaned out of general appropriations. This is a
14 specific line for subsistence.

15
16 MR. FROST: For each of these two
17 offices.

18
19 MR. DOOLITTLE: Yes.

20
21 MR. FROST: I know we can't fix
22 this.....

23
24 MR. DOOLITTLE: Right.

25
26 MR. FROST:but it would seem to
27 be simpler if there was just a line item for OSM and
28 that would be done with it, right, but that's not the
29 case. All right. Got it.

30
31 MR. SIEKANIEC: Yeah, they're two
32 different accounts.

33
34 MR. DOOLITTLE: And then we have a
35 small allocation that comes from the Forest Service as
36 well, but we'll talk about that later.

37
38 So as we move through we looked at what
39 comes from Washington out of the specific allocation
40 from Fisheries and Refuges. We used to get money back
41 back in the day and now we see \$346,000 in 2016 and
42 2017 about \$290,000. When we look at 2014 also, when
43 we looked at a press release from Senator Murkowski's
44 office, we saw that there was a push again because
45 Subsistence Program monies for that line item
46 allocation was pulled out of the President's budget as
47 well as the Forest Service's budget. At that time
48 again a push through the Appropriation Committees
49 process reinstated those fundings back to their former
50

1 levels. So the message is that there's been a watchful
2 eye on subsistence funding in Washington.

3
4 When we look at our overall expenses,
5 again combine what comes through the two allocative
6 budgets from Fisheries and Refuges is about \$12
7 million. Of that we push out to partners about 989,000
8 and about 4.6 million through our FRMP project process.
9 Both are competitive grant processes. One is on a
10 four-year program schedule, the Partners Program is,
11 and the FRMP program is on a two-year cycle.

12
13 Then there is support monies that do go
14 out to Fisheries and Refuges and Law Enforcement and so
15 on. Then what's retained for paying staff and travel
16 and our basic operations, including our space cost, is
17 about \$4 million.

18
19 MR. FROST: Can I ask a couple
20 questions on this one too. Two questions. So going
21 back to your last slide you said Fish and Wildlife
22 Service gets \$12 million.....

23
24 MR. DOOLITTLE: Uh-huh (affirmative).

25
26 MR. FROST:but then there's an
27 additional \$2.5 million from the Forest Service that
28 comes?

29
30 MR. DOOLITTLE: They independently use
31 those funds. They do give, in this last year, about
32 81,000 to the Federal Subsistence Program to help us
33 out. Most of those are retained for FRMP projects in
34 Southeast and then also for providing for salary monies
35 for their subsistence staff.

36
37 MR. FROST: So above the 4.6 for the
38 FRMP there's additional Forest Service money that sort
39 of goes towards the same thing?

40
41 MR. DOOLITTLE: It does.

42
43 MR. FROST: So my second question is --
44 I may just not understand this -- is on the support.
45 So going back to your very first slide you have monies
46 coming through the Fisheries, coming through the
47 National Wildlife Refuges. It gets to OSM. You have
48 your common services, fisheries, refuges and law
49 enforcement. I guess my question is what does that

50

1 money do?

2

3

4 MR. DOOLITTLE: I can help assist with
5 that and I'll go to another slide that I think will
6 start to answer that for you, Bert. Okay. So when we
7 look at that budget that comes down from the Fisheries
8 side, \$931,000 are taken from that original pool that
9 came down to the Region. Refuges takes \$652,000 and
10 then there are two other parts of that money, \$28,000
11 to Refuges again and then again to Fisheries for about
12 \$1 million. So what OSM is left with is about \$6.6
13 million to spend on their staff and travel and general
14 operations.

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Now looking at that FES admin target, I
always like to relate those expenditures to looking at
the Yukon Drainage and one of the biggest watersheds in
North America considering all the fisheries. So the
fisheries staff in our Fisheries Office for Fish and
Wildlife Service has field staff that are in-season
managers and they work with cooperative groups in a
huge geographic area, so there's parts of that money
that come to the Service that are used for subsistence
needs and in part through treaty obligations also
considering it's a transboundary river.

Refuges again has subsistence staff,
has refuge information technicians. A good example
you'll hear a lot about the Kuskokwim River. Their
staff works a lot through the Refuge system with
subsistence issues, so they take that amount of money
off that.

Then we have a competitive grant
process, both the FRMP and Partners Program, but
Federal agencies can compete for those particular
funds, but we don't write contracts to ourselves. So
essentially when you see the \$1 million and \$28,000,
they're part of the fisheries research management
proposal process of those monies that are allocated in
a year through those grant processes. So when we take
all those monies off the top, that's what left in the
consumable budget for OSM.

If we look at the next slide on the
1261 dollars, again for photocopying and paper and
those common services that all office environments pay
for in an equitable way. Those common services are
taken out of our budget as well as some \$135,000 a year

1 recently for law enforcement activities that would be
2 related to subsistence. Again, leaving the consumable
3 budget of \$2.4 million for the Subsistence Program.

4
5 MR. PELTOLA: If I may, I'd like to
6 clarify the law enforcement aspect, that \$135,000
7 figure up there. We've given up to \$150,000 under that
8 heading. That goes to our Office of Law Enforcement
9 and it helps support one special agent who has been
10 intimately involved in the Yukon/Kuskokwim issues
11 historically and currently. That's the one aspect of
12 the law enforcement budget has so to speak. I mean
13 it's like identified in a line item going to Office of
14 Law Enforcement.

15
16 The other thing I'd like to expand upon
17 about the Forest Service money which we receive about
18 \$130,000 a year from the Forest Service to help the
19 Southeast Regional Advisory Council with regard to
20 travel, training and operating those two RAC meetings
21 in addition to some other issues that come up with
22 regard to Southeast.

23
24 Due to the transference from one
25 department, one agency to another, that's how we come
26 up with between the 80 and \$90,000 figure, the
27 administrative process. We do value that relationship
28 with the Forest Service and we do really very much
29 appreciate the funding that we receive from them and
30 help support the Southeast RAC.

31
32 MR. FROST: This is not to be too
33 critical, but it probably will be so don't take it too
34 personally, but so it seems -- again, going back to
35 your first slide you've got two funding sources that
36 come into OSM, right?

37
38 MR. DOOLITTLE: Uh-huh (affirmative).

39
40 MR. FROST: And then you have four
41 things that come out before you get your OSM -- what's
42 left in OSM. You've got your common services, which is
43 what you just explained, your fisheries, your refuges
44 and your law enforcement. So, as I understand it, and
45 I may be incorrect, the OSM budget was made primarily
46 to run the office of OSM to support the Department of
47 Interior and the Department of Agriculture for the
48 Federal Board and everything that goes on.

49
50

1 We have other responsibilities under
2 subsistence that we have to do, but we don't have the
3 luxury of charging an OSM account to cover those
4 charges. So you mentioned in terms of common services.
5 I mean we support a subsistence staff. That's just
6 part of our regional budget that we eat. There is no
7 special account and it seems to me like -- and I may be
8 incorrect, but it seems like the Region is somehow
9 using OSM's budget to help balance their books.

10

11 Again, I'm not trying to get into too
12 much of the details, but it seems like it's being
13 diluted for Refuges. I assume there's a whole
14 different Refuge pot of money in the Region that covers
15 Refuges. I assume there's a law enforcement. I mean
16 we have law enforcement responsibilities for
17 subsistence and for other things. We don't have any
18 funding pot that we can charge to that law enforcement
19 regardless of where it is.

20

21 So I just wanted to point that out that
22 it seems on the surface that Fish and Wildlife Service
23 may have -- well, from the outside it looks like
24 there's some addition -- there's money being taken out
25 of the OSM budget to support other functions that other
26 agencies don't have the luxury to do off the back of
27 the OSM budget. That's just the way I read it and I
28 may be reading it incorrectly.

29

30 MR. DOOLITTLE: I think I can speak to
31 just one example and I think Greg can speak to a
32 similar experience in his career. When I was both the
33 supervisory biologist and deputy refuge manager at
34 Yukon Delta, I would say that 80 percent of what we did
35 in a regulatory way and our actions had something to do
36 with subsistence considering the Yukon Delta population
37 was about 40 percent of the State subsistence users.

38

39 So even though at that time I wasn't
40 working for OSM but the National Wildlife Refuge
41 System, I was working on subsistence issues day in and
42 day out and we had somebody writing special actions in
43 a consistent way. When you see the amount of activity
44 coming out of certain geographic areas of the state and
45 how much energy refuges put in -- and it's not to
46 negate how much energy other agencies put in to
47 subsistence either. I think it's a reality of the
48 day-to-day job.

49

50

1 This has been, as you can see, a
2 historic process over decades, not that it was right or
3 wrong, of how monies were used. As long as they seem to
4 pass the test of scrutiny that they're used for
5 subsistence, because obviously there's a watchful eye
6 of making sure these budgets are reinstated at the
7 Washington level. I guess when I look at it from a
8 budgetary standpoint, I look at the scrutiny as long as
9 the service is to rural Alaskans under the intent of
10 ANILCA and that support of the field, must have been
11 made a decision back in the day on that that's
12 purposeful.

13
14 MR. FROST: I get all that, but you
15 make my point exactly because we have many of the same
16 responsibilities. We have superintendents, we have
17 staff, we have to support the Subsistence Resource
18 Councils in addition to the RACs, so we have an
19 additional five extra meetings that we have to support.
20 We don't have any pot to charge that money to. That
21 just comes out of the regional budget.

22
23 What you're saying is that because
24 there's so much activity at the Refuge level both for
25 staff and leadership that somewhere down the line it's
26 deemed that this could come out of the OSM budget off
27 the top before it sort of reaches the OSM staff.
28 Again, I don't know if that's true or not, but that's
29 exactly my point, is that none of the other agencies --
30 BLM has responsibilities, BIA has responsibilities. We
31 don't have any luxury of charging a different account.
32 We have our base account and that's it.

33
34 Anyway, enough said. Go ahead, Greg.

35
36 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thanks, Bert. I think
37 you're understanding it as well as you probably can
38 without looking into budgets that go beyond this as to
39 how much Refuges receive, how much Fisheries receive
40 and the relationship of how much airplane time is
41 needed for Kusko subsistence management versus regular
42 refuge management and the number of people that are
43 also engaged in subsistence type activities. So I
44 think you're getting a pretty clear picture of it.

45
46 Back when subsistence first became an
47 issue that was obviously going to become managed by a
48 Federal Board, the appropriation was decided to put it
49 in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and when those
50

1 appropriations first started, it was then looked at as
2 to what should this money actually be used for and the
3 preponderance of it was for Fisheries Resource
4 Management projects and as the funding step-down went.
5

6 So what you've seen over the years is
7 just the relationship of how much goes to projects, how
8 much goes to partners, how much goes to support from an
9 administrative standpoint. Use the LE as an example,
10 135,000. If you looked at the entire LE effort and
11 cost associated with even the Subsistence Program,
12 you'd find out that that's just a fraction of those
13 costs because we've got officers that pay is not coming
14 out of here, you've got travel expenses that are,
15 you've got special initiatives and efforts.
16

17 So it's just been a balancing of how do
18 you accomplish the most that you can under the
19 Subsistence Program with the amount of money that's
20 been appropriated and in what balance seems to make
21 that work. The special projects that we're showing up
22 there.
23

24 Heck, I can remember being a Refuge
25 Manager that said, oh, my gosh, I've got a huge caribou
26 subsistence issue on the Southern Alaska Peninsula.
27 Hey, Subsistence, can you help me accomplish some extra
28 monitoring from an aerial survey standpoint in order to
29 get the information needs, yes, and that came through a
30 special project fund. So it's got all kinds of things
31 working against it on it.
32

33 I appreciate your thinking though. I
34 think that speaks to what my interests are and that is
35 as four Interior and one representative to the
36 Subsistence Board how do we collectively build a budget
37 scenario and/or interest that supports the successful
38 implementation of subsistence in Alaska differently
39 than perhaps it has come down in the past. I guess
40 worthy of a discussion at some point.
41

42 MR. FROST: I would agree 100 percent.
43 You know, I get how budgets happen historically and I
44 know it's all mixed up, so it's probably not
45 simplistic. Again, I think you make my point for me.
46 For special projects I get that. I think that's
47 totally appropriate. But again it seems to me that
48 decisions have been made in the past to dip into the
49 OSM Subsistence Federal Board support dollars to help
50

1 manage and balance the regional budget, which none of
2 the other agencies have an opportunity to do.

3
4 I mean the law enforcement that maybe
5 supports one person, right? Well, we could use another
6 LE person. I'm sure BLM could. I'm sure everybody
7 could, but we don't have the luxury to do that. We
8 have to deal with what we have. I don't know if that's
9 the case, but that's the simplest example. Anyway, you
10 get my point. Enough said.

11
12 MR. DOOLITTLE: Yeah, I do. I think
13 the only thing I would take exception to perhaps is the
14 idea of dipping in when really what it is is how do we
15 best allocate to meet the demands between whether it be
16 a Regional Advisory Council and the conservation needs
17 that are associated with the subsistence program.

18
19 So it's more of a thought process of
20 how do we best meet all these demands and where is that
21 money best put to accomplish that than it is just --
22 it's not just to dip in to get some money out of there
23 and not use it for the purposes of subsistence. So
24 that would be the only difference.

25
26 MR. FROST: I get that. I get it for
27 subsistence. But I guess my point is if the Federal
28 Board wasn't here and we didn't exist and the State was
29 still managing subsistence, we would still all have our
30 subsistence responsibilities in terms of sort of our
31 day-to-day operations, right? Nobody would have an
32 opportunity to -- I mean so for all those opportunities
33 that you just identified you'd have to figure out how
34 to do that within your regional budget because there
35 wouldn't be an OSM budget, right?

36
37 MR. DOOLITTLE: Right.

38
39 MR. FROST: And that's my point. You
40 have an OSM budget. We don't. I'm not trying to dip
41 into the OSM budget. I just think it's -- and I
42 understand how it's done historically, so I'm not going
43 to be -- I'm being critical, but I -- and I think it's
44 just good to be transparent so people understand.
45 Again, these numbers aren't huge, so it's not overly
46 concerning.

47
48 In a perfect world, I would suggest
49 that all that stuff would somehow get moved back into
50

1 the regional budget and you keep the OSM budget just as
2 clean as possible for Federal Board activities. Again,
3 I may need more detail, but I sort of get what you're
4 -- it's a lot more complex than what we can deal with
5 here.

6

7

MR. DOOLITTLE: That might be said.

8

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MR. SIEKANIEC: Correct.

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(Laughter)

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MR. FROST: I'm done.

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MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay. On this particular slide this was just from the President's budget is to remember that we've always been in a tenuous place a bit. This is the Forest Service's budget. Since 2009 was zeroed out at the beginning and then again after it went through the Appropriations Committee was added in and I was glad to see it still in the Forest Service's budget in 2018.

So despite the political wind, which might blow one way or the other as we go through the history of budgets, it's always -- sometimes it's been a fight regardless of what administration has been in. Again, for the watchful eye of those that support subsistence have made sure that we've had consistent funding even though it's lower.

I think one of the most important showcases that we have in our program is with our Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. When we look at those allocations, if I take the 2016 numbers, because we're still allocating out of 2017, essentially the lion share, about 2.6 million, go to the State of Alaska, 1.3 million going to Federal as you can see, and then smaller proportions, 8 percent, to Alaska Native and rural organizations into the private sector.

Also realize that the State monies are many times subcontracted out to Alaska rural organizations. I think many of our weirs are done that way as many of our Federal projects also are split up among a variety of different partnerships. We see great leverage out of these funds, sometimes two to three times the amount of initial investment. So this program is definitely a showcase program that is really

1 key to foundational research and answers questions for
2 management for both in-season and post season
3 developmental models and so forth. So this is a key
4 program.

5
6 Next slide. So if we take a look at
7 all that again from our support monies, between law
8 enforcement, the common services, refuges and
9 fisheries, about \$10 million is left with OSM out of
10 the \$12 million budget. Then we take out our FRMP and
11 our Partners projects and that's what we're left for
12 salaries and space costs.

13
14 Next slide, please. Space cost. One
15 of my favorite things and I'm sure Greg's too. When we
16 were in different Federal building in 2008, we started
17 to see excessive costs. We moved into a new building
18 and now as of recent our space costs have increased
19 dramatically. So that's something that we'll look at
20 as an internal review as far as a program to try to
21 reduce our space costs. So that's something that we
22 can do something about at home. Again, on the
23 Washington side of monies that are coming out or how we
24 allocate within Fish and Wildlife Service are bigger
25 than this room, but our space costs are tremendous.

26
27 One of the things I'd like to close
28 with again was from last year. As you can see, there's
29 consistent newspaper articles relative to subsistence
30 and supporting this Board and Alaska Native communities
31 and our program coming from Senator Murkowski and her
32 roles on committee. This has been a watchful eye of
33 the expenditures of our subsistence dollars.

34
35 With that I'll field any additional
36 questions.

37
38 MS. PITKA: So with the \$1.3 million
39 cut how would that be absorbed into the program? I
40 didn't see a slide about how that kind of a cut would
41 affect the program. What would you cut? What could
42 you really cut?

43
44 MR. DOOLITTLE: I think Gene will
45 answer that.

46
47 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, if I may.

48
49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah.

50

1 MR. PELTOLA: If we do realize a 13
2 percent reduction with regard to the Federal
3 Subsistence Program, when we first heard the direction
4 the administration wanted to go, I asked staff to be
5 creative and look at every mechanism that we could.
6 With regard to space, we could reduce our footprint
7 more than we do now. We could look at potential for
8 our alternative housing. If we are efficient as we
9 could be with a couple items within the program, I mean
10 it would be simple to say if we have \$1.3 million to
11 cut, potentially take out of the FRMP and Partners, but
12 that's not the right approach.

13
14 There are numerous projects that come
15 through FRMP, which I truly feel may not be funded
16 otherwise. They are definitely a benefit to the
17 Federal Subsistence Program in addition to not only the
18 Federal bureaus but also the rural natural resource
19 departments out there. We could say we could cut our
20 personnel expenses. If we are charged with reducing
21 personnel, we'll have to do that, but one thing I'd
22 like to say, like a lot of other bureaus, divisions or
23 program that are facing potential cuts, we're in the
24 same boat. We're at saturation as it is now. So we'd
25 have to take a more broad approach such that all of our
26 aspects of our budget would share the burden of
27 reaching that threshold whatever may be.

28
29 Part of my discussion with the Forest
30 Service, like I said, this budget presentation
31 addresses the funding which OSM received for the Fish
32 and Wildlife Service. I talked to Wayne and he said
33 the Forest Service has been told they can anticipate an
34 11 percent reduction next fiscal year. So what we
35 potentially are going to face is not anything that is
36 unique just to OSM. It's across the different bureaus,
37 across the different departments and it could affect
38 all of us, so we have to take a creative approach to
39 where we're going in the future if we realize these
40 potential reductions.

41
42 One thing I would like to add is that
43 our Council Coordination Division came up with this
44 idea. A year or two ago we brought all the Regional
45 Advisory Councils into one local, which was Anchorage,
46 and the RACs really appreciated that opportunity to
47 meet together as one. Believe it or not that was due
48 to -- when we executed that meeting cycle, we actually
49 realized a savings as opposed to going to each and
50

1 every region within the state.

2
3 We have policies out there that
4 stipulate -- you know, we have approved rural hubs in
5 each region. That's where we normally hold our
6 Regional Advisory Council meetings. What we have done
7 with regard to those RAC meetings is that we have
8 conveyed to the Council Coordinators we will meet the
9 requirement to meet every two to five years at a more
10 isolated area outside of pre-approved hubs, but if we
11 can show a savings as opposed to additional expense by
12 going to the more rural locations within a region, we
13 have done that and we'll probably continue to do that.

14
15 An example would be Kiana. When we
16 went to Kiana two falls ago, we had office space and
17 bunk facilities provided by the Kiana Traditional
18 Council I believe it was and that was a significant
19 savings within the realm of thousands upon thousands of
20 dollars versus meeting in Kotzebue itself, which is the
21 rural hub for Northwest Alaska.

22
23 We will continue to see those, but one
24 option is to have a greater frequency of those combined
25 meetings or one recommendation is whether we take a
26 fall or a winter cycle of the RACs and make them a
27 telephonic meeting of the Regional Advisory Council,
28 which would not necessarily be the most ideal situation
29 for a Regional Advisory Council to meet, but it's also
30 an option.

31
32 MR. FROST: So a couple of other
33 questions. On the breakdown between the Partners
34 Program and the FRMP and the other ones, I assume those
35 aren't set in stone. Those numbers could be adjusted?

36
37 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, if I may.
38 Typically with regard to FRMP on new offerings, because
39 we're on a two-year cycle, we're usually between two to
40 two and a half million dollars on the FRMP cycle for
41 new starts because we have continuation. This
42 particular round of FRMPs are unique in the sense that
43 the last time the Board considered an FRMP funding
44 cycle the direction from the Board was to fund until
45 we're broke.

46
47 So what we did at the time was -- and
48 the last cycle we had a little bit different structure
49 with regard to how we fund projects. We had the

50

1 Technical Review Committee, which first gave a green
2 and red light. After that we had Regional Advisory
3 input and Federal Subsistence Board input. So the
4 instruction of the Board was to fund until you're
5 broke. I shouldn't say broke. Fund until we run out
6 of funding for that particular round.

7
8 So understanding that some of our FRMP
9 projects are on a four or greater year life expectancy
10 so to speak, we end up funding further down the list
11 than we would have otherwise the last time around,
12 which put us in the situation where we end up getting
13 two additional five to six projects, I believe. The
14 consequence of that is in regard to if we maintain flat
15 double funding, we may have as little as \$1.3 million
16 for new start projects this coming round, which is a
17 million to 1.2 million less than we typically may have
18 in a given round.

19
20 The good news is that once we get those
21 projects from the last funding cycle through the
22 program and they go through their life expectancy,
23 we're predicting that in two years out in the next
24 round we'll be back up to that traditional two to two
25 and a half million cycle.

26
27 Now that's a bit winded, but we do have
28 guidance with regard to not necessarily how much money
29 we spend with regard to Partners and FRMP, but we do
30 have formulas especially with FRMP on how much we will
31 spend within each region. The example being the two
32 largest system being the Kusko and the Yukon it's
33 roughly 12.5 percent per region.

34
35 MR. FROST: But these numbers, the 8
36 percent, 38 percent, 16 percent and 38 percent are not
37 set in stone.

38
39 MR. PELTOLA: No.

40
41 MR. FROST: I assume the bottom 38
42 percent is based on need in terms of actual bodies and
43 sort of the support you need for the RACs. But those
44 other things could be -- it's not set in regulation or
45 something.

46
47 MR. PELTOLA: No.

48
49 MR. FROST: Does the Board set that or
50

1 how do those numbers get established?
2

3 MR. PELTOLA: Actually the numbers you
4 see before you in the pie chart that we presented are
5 the way things transpired up to where we are now. Now
6 within the FRMP, and I wasn't around for the creation
7 of the program, but early on in the program there were
8 percentages that targeted for each specific region
9 within the State. Now some years some regions are
10 underrepresented with regard to what is particularly
11 funded or forwarded on for funding.
12

13 In that case we take those -- say
14 Southeast just for example. We kind of address
15 Southeast a little differently. So if we had say 6.5
16 percent targeted for Southeast, that equates in a given
17 year say roughly \$1.5 million but we only had \$1.2
18 million dollars of projects that were going to be
19 funded, we take that \$3 million balance, put it in a
20 pool, then we go to the next highest priority project
21 item.
22

23 So, with that being said, if we look at
24 where the majority of the concern with regard to the
25 Federal Subsistence Program, that is where we have been
26 spending our money lately.
27

28 MR. FROST: One last question. What
29 does the House mark look like for OSM? Did they get
30 down to that level of detail in terms of -- for 18?
31 Does anybody know? I mean they marked it up last week.
32 Going back to Rhonda's question.
33

34 MR. DOOLITTLE: I don't have that off
35 the top of my head, but I can find out.
36

37 MR. PELTOLA: I had heard discussion
38 that the House Committee targeted at least Bureau-wise
39 a one percent reduction at least during that committee,
40 so we'll see how that plays out.
41

42 MR. SIEKANIEC: I had heard similar,
43 Gene, in the Fisheries side from Fish and Wildlife
44 Service that we were fairly stable and then from the
45 Forest Service I presume.
46

47 MS. PENDLETON: For subsistence I
48 believe it's flat with what was proposed, but I think
49 overall we're about four percent down.
50

1 MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay. Thank you. And
2 one thing, so everybody knows, is that any time we do
3 have savings within our program is that considering we
4 have the agreements out there is that we fund forward
5 as much as we can to try to make up for any projected
6 shortfalls in budget planning in subsequent years.

7
8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Gene.

9
10 MR. PELTOLA: If I may. I mean OSM, we
11 take advantage of any time we have -- whether it be
12 salary savings or any, quote/unquote extra money on the
13 table, we try to forward fund into those FRMP and
14 Partners projects such as they impact the following
15 year as has been -- will be minimized and we've been
16 very successful.

17
18 I know there's been some concern about
19 forward funding, but an example being last year when we
20 had a little salary savings, we look down the priority
21 list and where we're at, then I call and talk to Wayne
22 and reach out to Southeast. There's an additional
23 project we could bring on board with regard to what we
24 had available that given year because we hadn't been
25 able to fill a position, so we had more or less one
26 time money to contribute towards a project, but we're
27 clear on that is one time funding.

28
29 We could get that project initiated,
30 but we couldn't make a guarantee about subsequent year
31 funding with regard to that. So, in a sense, the
32 Forest Service had to make a judgment call. We could
33 pick up another project, secure it for one year, but
34 then we can't be concerned about the sustainability of
35 that.

36
37 MR. BROWER: Just a question. On the
38 fish monitoring I noticed that 57 percent of it goes to
39 the State. Someone said there's a partnership between
40 them. Is our MOU still on? It has not been signed or
41 anything and we're still working with the State?

42
43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Gene.

44
45 MR. DOOLITTLE: I can answer. I mean I
46 believe we're still in the draft form of a new MOU, so
47 we're still operating under the old one. Please
48 remember that the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program
49 is a competitive process that is ranked in an objective
50

1 way with a panel. So people, regardless of agency or
2 individual, compete. So when Gene was referencing
3 priorities and checklists, that has been done on a
4 competitive process with an objective ranking process.

5
6 What we also look for in that
7 competitive ranking process is how those individuals
8 that are competing are partnering with other
9 individuals and many times many of the State entities
10 that are competing in the grant process are partnering
11 with Alaska Native groups and other rural
12 organizations.

13
14 MR. PELTOLA: If you look at that, I
15 mean when we came up with this the one thing I asked
16 Tom to be perfectly clear is that that slide is a bit
17 misleading in the sense that it does show 2.5, \$2.6
18 million going to the State of Alaska every year, but we
19 could take, for example, harvest monitoring on the
20 Kuskokwim or ASL data on the Kuskokwim.

21
22 The Department, yes, they're the ones
23 that receive the funding, but also they have
24 cooperative projects with whether it be ONC in Bethel
25 and the Paimiut further up the drainage where some of
26 those funds even though they're labeled for the
27 Department are making it into a difference and separate
28 entity.
29 One of the criteria for FRMP is that it provide funding
30 for Federal, State and also rural and at times
31 predominantly Native organizations and that's a
32 requirement of the program. We have criteria on each
33 request for proposals.

34
35 The one thing I can say is that via my
36 limited exposure to the FRMP process per se, the nuts
37 and bolts of day to day operation of that, is that from
38 the projects I've seen when we stipulate six areas to
39 address in a proposal, the State of Alaska consistently
40 always addresses those six areas that are asked of the
41 program. In addition to they tie it to a conservation
42 needs. Some other Bureaus, Divisions, we may ask for
43 six but only address four or five of the criteria,
44 which puts them at a competitive disadvantage when it
45 comes to a competitive process.

46
47 MR. BROWER: Thank you.

48
49 MR. DOOLITTLE: And I think that

50

1 clarity for our Partners Program is extremely important
2 because also that's building tribal capacities and
3 rural organization capacities in the field. ONC out in
4 Bethel is a great example that's been doing continuous
5 fishery monitoring. There's a good example of that.
6 Again, those monies do get spread out more than just to
7 the specific delegation between the parties that have
8 been successful in the granting process.

9
10 MS. PITKA: Yeah, I think those monies
11 are generally leveraged too. Like that wouldn't be the
12 whole cost to the program. That would be like a small
13 part of it.

14
15 MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you.

16
17 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, if I may. One
18 thing that OSM has shied away since I've arrived is
19 that throughout the history of the program we have
20 addressed and have funded direct funding requests
21 outside the competitive process. We have shied away
22 from that in recent history partly because one is that
23 we're down from historical levels especially with
24 regard to sequestration.

25
26 We're at flat level since then, so we
27 haven't had very much opportunity to direct fund when
28 requested, but more importantly we have tried to
29 maintain the competitive aspect of it such that no one
30 can say, well, the Federal program or the Fish and
31 Wildlife Service or Native entities or whoever it may
32 be had benefitted from the direct funding opportunity.

33
34
35 Am I saying that has been the case in
36 the past, absolutely not, but we've been guarded from
37 that. So when we do get those requests, we ask them to
38 consider one of the two outsourcing programs we have
39 which are FRMP or Partners.

40
41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
42 budget discussion.

43
44 (No comments)

45
46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: It looks not.
47 Thank you, Tom, for that. I think that was a good
48 discussion.

49
50

1 MR. DOOLITTLE: Very well.
2
3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'm going to
4 call for a five minute break. I seen it in Greg's
5 eyes.
6
7 (Off record)
8
9 (On record)
10
11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll call this
12 meeting back to order. Welcome, Bud. It looks like
13 what we're going to do now is get the status update on
14 a request for reconsideration on RFR15-01.
15
16 Jennifer.
17
18 MS. HARDIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For
19 the record, my name is Jennifer Hardin and I'm the
20 Acting Subsistence Policy Coordinator for the Office of
21 Subsistence Management. What Theo and I are going to
22 do this morning/afternoon is just do a brief status
23 update on request for reconsideration RFR15-01, which
24 is related to the Kenai River Community gillnet
25 fishery. This isn't an action item. It's just an
26 information exchange.
27
28 Just as a reminder, during your January
29 2017 public meeting you took multiple actions in
30 relation to the Kenai River community gillnet fishery.
31 First you adopted Fisheries Proposal 17-10 with
32 modification to adopt items included in your negotiated
33 agreement in principle between the Ninilchik
34 Traditional Council and the Federal Subsistence Board,
35 including the proposed implementation pathway for the
36 agreement.
37
38 That implementation pathway had three
39 basic paths. The first was to adopt portions of FP17-
40 10 and add the implementation pathway and the agreement
41 to 17-10.
42
43 The second path was initiation of a
44 special action request to address outstanding issues so
45 that the Kenai River community gillnet fishery could go
46 forward in the 2017 season.
47
48 The third path was initiation of
49 proposed rulemaking to revise the Cook Inlet area
50

1 Federal subsistence regulations to address outstanding
2 issues associated with the community gillnet fishery
3 and also to simplify the regulations overall for all
4 users.

5
6 The Board also voted at that meeting to
7 move forward with the full analysis of three of the
8 claims that were included in the Request For
9 Reconsideration 15-01. At that time you directed staff
10 to include in the analysis of those claims discussion
11 about whether and how each of them had been addressed
12 through either adoption of FP17-10 or implementation of
13 the negotiated agreement in principal.

14
15 So, as I stated previously, you took
16 the action on FP17-10, so that path was completed.
17 Also you adopted a special action this year that
18 allowed the Kenai River community gillnet fishery to
19 move forward for the 2017 fishing season. So that left
20 to complete the revised regulations for the Cook Inlet
21 area Federal subsistence regulations. With that I'm
22 going to turn it over to Theo to update us on that.

23
24 MR. MATUSKOWITZ: For the record, Theo
25 Matuskowitz, subsistence management and regulation
26 specialist. I had a really nice briefing set up for
27 you guys and thanks to Washington it all changed on
28 Friday. Actually that's good news. OMB, which reviews
29 all of our requests for rulemaking through our
30 Washington office contacted us and had a series of
31 questions referencing the proposed rulemaking for the
32 Cook Inlet regulations.

33
34 That's a good thing because there are
35 various positions in both DOI and I assume Fish and
36 Wildlife that have not been filled with the new
37 administration, so things have slowed down. So the
38 fact that OMB is now asking questions that means it's
39 being reviewed, so it is moving forward.

40
41 We responded to those questions.
42 Basically it was pretty short and to the point what our
43 intent was, what the regulatory conflicts were
44 originally that we would address and what we meant by
45 revising the organization of the regulations
46 themselves. So we responded to OMB. We haven't got
47 any response back. To be honest I don't expect any
48 response unless they're not happy with it, but that
49 very seldom has happened with our program.

50

1 So the good news is the rulemaking is
2 progressing. We've had various staff meetings within
3 OSM coming up with an outline of how we're going to
4 revise these regulations. Once we get the final okay
5 from OMB we can proceed with a proposed rule. This
6 will be a typical proposed rule like the Board has done
7 on various other actions outside of the normal
8 regulatory process.

9
10 We'll have a proposed rule that will be
11 reviewed by the Councils. It will be presented to you
12 and from there it will be published. We'll have a
13 public comment period again presented to the RACs and
14 after another public comment period once again you'll
15 have final say on those regulations. Keep in mind
16 these regulations are under your purview. It will not
17 be going to a Secretarial level, so you'll be the final
18 say on that. Once you approve the draft final rule it
19 will go forward for publication.

20
21 Any questions. Yes, sir.

22
23 MR. FROST: So you say we get the final
24 say, but it's still got to go through Exec Sec and all
25 that stuff, doesn't it?

26
27 MR. MATUSKOWITZ: Well, yes, obviously,
28 for clearance, but in 15 years, other than some very,
29 very minor changes, we've never had them significantly
30 change any of your final rules.

31
32 MR. FROST: I hope it stays that way.

33
34 MR. MATUSKOWITZ: I agree.

35
36 (Laughter)

37
38 MR. SIEKANIEC: It would have already
39 gone to Exec Sec on its way to OMB. Now we'd just get
40 the revision back.

41
42 MR. FROST: But it still has to go
43 through Exec Sec and things can always -- in my
44 experience things can always change.

45
46 MR. MATUSKOWITZ: Actually, depending
47 on the administration, the final clearance process
48 after you send it to Washington is between a dozen and
49 the most we've had was 23 different offices that it had
50

1 to be cleared through before actual publication. What
2 it is right now with the new administration I don't
3 know.

4
5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
6 questions.

7
8 (No comments)

9
10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
11 your presentation.

12
13 MR. MATUSKOWITZ: Thank you.

14
15 MR. PAPPAS: Mr. Chair, may I. George
16 Pappas, OSM, Fisheries Division Acting Chief. I was
17 instructed to provide the update you requested on the
18 NTC gillnet in the Kenai for harvest. Thus far as of
19 Friday between July 3rd and July 14th we've caught 315
20 sockeye of which 11 were caught on Friday, that's with
21 a gillnet, a total of 8 pink salmon thus far in the
22 Kasilof. They fished six days between June 16th and
23 the 7th of July and harvested 42 sockeye salmon thus
24 far with a gillnet.

25
26 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

27
28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any questions
29 for George and his studious report. Go ahead, Bert.

30
31 MR. FROST: Any bycatch? I mean
32 anything besides -- I mean that's what we're all
33 worried about, right?

34
35 MR. PAPPAS: Just the pink salmon has
36 been provided and the weekly summary will be published
37 here probably at 2-3:00 o'clock this afternoon and that
38 will be the information. I was not informed of
39 anything exciting. The only exciting information was
40 one dipnet salmon out of the Kasilof Federal
41 subsistence fishery so far.

42
43 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

44
45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
46 your presentation, George. Appreciate it.

47
48 Scott.

49
50

1 MR. AYERS: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
2 Members of the Board. So I'm going to be speaking to
3 you about the letters of delegation for fisheries and
4 this is on Page 31 of the supplemental material
5 sections of your books and then also there's the newly
6 revised versions that were just handed out, so I'd
7 refer to those ones instead.

8
9 Again, my name is Scott Ayers. I'm a
10 fisheries biologist with the Office of Subsistence
11 Management. My colleague George Pappas and I will be
12 presenting information to you today about updates made
13 to the fisheries delegation of authority letters. Most
14 of these letters were last updated in 2002 and are
15 overdo for review. However, the letters for Southeast
16 Alaska were all updated in 2011, which has created some
17 discrepancy between the letters.

18
19 The current review process sought to
20 make administrative changes to ensure that the contents
21 were by and large the same in all the letters and to
22 make changes in line with changes made to the wildlife
23 delegation letters during their 2015 review process.

24
25 The administrative changes to all the
26 letters are not an action item, but a process that OSM
27 carries out and the Interagency Staff Committee reviews
28 and comments on. These are then reviewed and approved
29 by you, Mr. Chair.

30
31 In addition, there were changes to
32 three of the letters at the request of the Board. This
33 includes two areas with transboundary rivers under
34 Federal jurisdiction, the Stikine and the Yukon River
35 as well as the letter for management of the Kuskokwim
36 River. The transboundary river letter changes are an
37 action item while the Kuskokwim River letter is not.

38
39 There's a single addition in the
40 transboundary river letters for your review regarding
41 the authority to open or close in response to treaty
42 obligations. That's under section three, scope of
43 delegation, on Page 2 and it's highlighted on the
44 letters. It's new language.

45
46 This was a product of the discussion
47 for special action request earlier this year FSA17-02.
48 It was brought to light that the in-season manager had
49 to request a special action each year to close the
50

1 directed chinook salmon subsistence fishery due to low
2 forecasted or observed chinook salmon numbers based on
3 obligations of the Pacific Salmon Treaty of 1985.

4
5 The authority to close the subsistence
6 fishery for this purpose was not clear in the current
7 delegated letter, so the Board instructed OSM to update
8 the letter accordingly as part of their actions on the
9 request. Additionally, the Yukon River letter was
10 identified as having obligations to this treaty as
11 well, so the new language was added to it as well.

12
13 So on these letters under Section 3,
14 delegated authority, there's a new line that states in
15 addition you may open or close Federal public waters on
16 transboundary rivers to the taking of fish for
17 subsistence or non-subsistence uses to comply with the
18 terms of the Pacific Salmon Treaty and this language
19 has been approved by solicitors for both Agriculture
20 and Interior.

21
22 For the Kuskokwim River letter there
23 are several additions to this letter made as a result
24 of Board action and comments on Fisheries Proposal
25 FP17-05 at your January 2017 meeting. The language has
26 been added to several sections, but predominantly to
27 Section 6 guidelines for delegation related to a
28 collaborative in-season management planning and
29 decision-making. The draft language was primarily
30 derived from the OSM conclusion and justification
31 provided in the analysis of FP17-05 as well as
32 commentary from the Board during discussion.

33
34 Following your review and comments
35 today, the draft revised letter of delegation authority
36 for the Kuskokwim will be submitted to the affected
37 Councils and the Kuskokwim River Intertribal Fish
38 Commission for review and comment. It will then come
39 back to you either in January or at a later meeting for
40 action.

41
42 Then the other item to bring forward on
43 these letters is -- there are some areas that are
44 highlighted in yellow. These are areas that were
45 changed from letters in the books based on comments
46 from ISC review that we had late last week. So the
47 language has been adjusted as part of the
48 administrative changes.

49
50

1 Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
4 Scott. Is there any questions or discussion for Scott
5 from the Board.

6

7 (No comments)

8

9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
10 Thank you guys for your presentation. There's no
11 questions.

12

13 Oh, Greg, did you have some comment?

14

15 MR. SIEKANIEC: I think so, but I think
16 it's more of a process question, Mr. Chairman. So
17 these were just handed to us with the most recent
18 changes, so this is the first opportunity we're getting
19 to see them. I think I noted this is an action item in
20 there, which makes it a little complicated to say,
21 yeah, I'm comfortable with the changes that were made
22 just as of this being handed out. So I guess I could
23 use at least a little bit of time to take a look at
24 these before we have an action item.

25

26 Jennifer, thank you.

27

28 MS. HARDIN: Mr. Chair, through the
29 Chair. Actually the letters that you were just handed
30 out only the portions that are highlighted in yellow is
31 new language different than what was in your Board
32 book. That new language is only administrative
33 language. The one sentence that we're asking the Board
34 to take action on is highlighted I believe in pink.

35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Purple.

37

38 MS. HARDIN: Purple. And it was in
39 your original letter that was put in your Board book.
40 That's the one change that we're asking you to take
41 action on because it's part of the scope of delegation.

42

43 Thank you.

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: And that was in
46 reference to the transboundary giving the opening and
47 closing to the area biologist, right? Go ahead, Beth.

48

49 MS. PENDLETON: I was just going to

50

1 make a comment that I believe in at least one of the
2 RAC letters there was a request for consistency in
3 language with these letters. So I see this as an
4 attempt to do that for the letters of delegation. Just
5 to clarify then, it's just the text that's in yellow
6 that's different from the previous version of the
7 letters that we used as well as the new addition to be
8 in compliance with the Pacific Salmon Treaty. That
9 language is the only new language that's being proposed
10 from a previous version on these letters.

11
12 MR. AYERS: Through the Chair. What
13 you see in yellow are the changes that have been made
14 since the Thursday ISC meeting compared to what's in
15 your book. There have been substantial other
16 administrative changes made to all the letters for that
17 consistency purpose that aren't highlighted on these
18 copies right now. Again, the item that we're asking
19 for action on today is that specific language, the new
20 language under scope of delegation.

21
22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The purple. Do
23 you need more time, Greg?

24
25 MR. SIEKANIEC: No. Thank you, Mr.
26 Chair. No, I'm good with these. Do you need a motion
27 to accept this change in scope of delegation?

28
29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

30
31 MR. SIEKANIEC: I would move that we
32 accept the recommended language that the Federal public
33 waters on transboundary rivers to the taking of fish
34 for subsistence or non-subsistence uses to comply with
35 the terms of the Pacific Salmon Treaty be added to
36 these two delegation letters to both the Yukon River
37 Subsistence Fisheries Branch Chief and the Wrangell
38 District Ranger.

39
40 MS. PENDLETON: Second that.

41
42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The motion has
43 been made and seconded to accept additional language.
44 Any discussion.

45
46 (No comments)

47
48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none.
49 Call for the question.

50

1 MS. PENDLETON: Question.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The question
4 has been called. All in favor signify by saying aye.

5

6 IN UNISON: Aye.

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All opposed
9 same sign.

10

11 (No opposing votes)

12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries
14 unanimously.

15

16 MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chairman. A
17 question was asked during the budget briefing that I've
18 got somewhat of an answer to if you'd like me to
19 provide it.

20

21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead.

22

23 MR. SIEKANIEC: Bert, you asked as to
24 whether or not the House mark. The House mark was
25 almost flat. It was within \$10,000 from what we can
26 tell.

27

28 Thank you.

29

30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We're just
31 trying to figure out what we have time for before lunch
32 because it takes time, but if we do do the presentation
33 now, we'll take a lunch break until 1:30. Give us an
34 hour and a half. So if we could just have the
35 presentation for the hunter ethics come up at this
36 time, we'll entertain Katerina Wessels. She
37 anticipates a 30-minute presentation, so we'll give
38 ourselves an hour and a half from the time she's done.
39 That will leave us with two items on the agenda.

40

41 MS. WESSELS: Good morning, Mr.
42 Chairman. Members of the Board. For the record, my
43 name is Katerina Wessels. I'm with the Office of
44 Subsistence Management. Today I'm going to give you a
45 proposal about hunter education for the Eastern
46 Interior Region, which was asked by the Eastern
47 Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Council.

48

49 What the topic of discussion is is a

50

1 development of an education outreach strategy that will
2 lay the foundation for the pilot program. The goals of
3 this strategy would be to reduce user conflict between
4 user groups, promote understanding and tolerance for
5 different cultural hunting values and encourage respect
6 in the field.

7
8 So what is the issue at stake. The
9 issue was brought up by the Eastern Interior and they
10 outlined several major problems that are going in their
11 region. You probably see that these issues are very
12 common for many other regions in Alaska. Those are
13 issues of waste, which can be accidental or deliberate.
14 Waste of edible meat, organs and bones that are very
15 valued by local communities and this waste causing lots
16 of strife with the rural users.

17
18 Then it was also noted that lots of
19 hunters have lack of knowledge of how to take care of
20 meat in both Western and traditional practice. So it's
21 not just applicable to the hunters that come into the
22 region. Sometimes it's the case with local hunters.

23
24 That issue was a lack of respect for
25 the values of local people. Not having enough
26 knowledge about those values. Then there's also
27 opportunities to donate the meat and a lot of hunters
28 would like to do it, but unfortunately they don't have
29 sufficient knowledge of how to do it, whom they need to
30 address, which parts they can share and, of course,
31 their ever present issue of land ownership awareness.

32
33 So before I will talk about the
34 strategy, the way how we're planning to proceed, I
35 would like to go a little bit into background
36 information of how it all started. Why the Eastern
37 Interior is so concerned. If you look back at the
38 meeting transcripts and the annual report replies for
39 the Eastern Interior, you can see that the issue became
40 very important to the Eastern Interior during the fall
41 2009 meeting. After this meeting they decided to add
42 this topic to their annual report.

43
44 The Council wanted the impacts to be
45 adequately identified and evaluated. They wanted OSM
46 to develop educational materials and methods of
47 outreach to rural and nonrural hunters. If you look at
48 your supplemental material that is accompanying this
49 presentation, you can see that the Board, in its annual
50

1 reply to their report, pointed out that the materials
2 already had been developed by the Alaska Department of
3 Fish and Game.

4
5 If you notice, one of the materials
6 mentioned in that reply is field care of big game.
7 That video still exists. It's still on the ADF&G
8 website. It's a 53-minute video. When I tried to
9 watch it, it took me a whole day to download the video.
10 So I kind of was wondering if anybody would want to
11 watch a video that takes a whole day to download when
12 I'm in the regional office trying to download the video
13 where we have good internet connection.

14
15 If somebody is in the field in a small
16 community, they probably wouldn't be able to watch this
17 video. But this is a side note. The instructions in
18 the video actually, after I watched it, they were very
19 useful. Unfortunately, because the video was made so
20 many years ago, the quality was pretty poor.

21
22 So the issue continues to be present in
23 2010. The Council continued the discussion about the
24 impacts of nonrural to rural users and talked about
25 public outreach during the fall 2010 meeting. They
26 questioned OSM if OSM had means for a campaign that
27 will direct people to the already existing educational
28 resources. The OSM representative replied that we do
29 have avenues for disseminating information.

30
31 So during the fall 2010 meeting the
32 Council passed a motion to write a letter to OSM
33 regarding this issue. You can see that letter as
34 supplemental 2 to this presentation. In the letter the
35 Council had identified a need for an educational
36 program designed to provide cultural sensitivity
37 education to nonrural users. Unfortunately, I was not
38 able to locate a reply to this letter in the OSM
39 archives.

40
41 The Council also included the topic of
42 impact of nonrural users into their 2010 annual report.
43 That's your supplemental 3. In their reply, the Board
44 indicated that OSM made its outreach coordinator
45 available to facilitate an informal discussion.

46
47 So then in 2011 early on the OSM
48 outreach coordinator participated in the Council's
49 spring meeting. That person informally worked with the
50

1 Council on identifying issues and developing goals and
2 messages. During this meeting a notion was formed that
3 the whole issue requires partnering with other agencies
4 and organizations.

5
6 During the fall 2011 meeting, the issue
7 of hunter education came up again after testimony of
8 the Yukon Air Service owner. Unfortunately, after
9 doing some work with the Council, the OSM outreach
10 coordinator got another job and left OSM so things did
11 not continue. In 2012 it was a bad year for Yukon
12 salmon, so all Council's attention was directed to that
13 matter and Council did not discuss hunter ethics
14 education that year.

15
16 The fall 2013 the issue of hunter
17 ethics education came up again during that meeting.
18 Suggestions were made to add hunter ethics requirements
19 to the State's hunting manual and the Federal
20 regulations handbook. It was suggested that the State
21 should require a certificate on attending hunter ethics
22 course.

23
24 A hunter ethics and education outreach
25 to generate better understanding and reduce conflict
26 between users topic was added to the 2013 annual
27 report. You can see it in your supplemental 4.
28 The Council encourages the Federal Subsistence
29 Management Program to work with the State on this
30 issue.

31
32 In 2014, during the fall meeting,
33 Council passed a motion to write a letter to OSM. The
34 ADF&G, State of Alaska, Big Game Commercial Service
35 Board and local Native tribal organization to begin a
36 process of forming a committee or a group to look into
37 some of the issues regarding hunter conflict and hunter
38 education in the Eastern Interior Region.

39
40 The issue of hunter ethics education
41 was discussed again in 2015 during the joint meeting
42 between the Eastern Interior and Western Interior
43 Councils. A lot of practical suggestions were made
44 during this meeting, including designing a formal
45 program for outreach and education, developing an
46 informational CD for general public on meat care and
47 different process techniques and distributing
48 information through various media outlets throughout
49 the state.

50

1 The Council's annual report in 2015
2 again included the topic hunter ethics and education to
3 reduce user conflict and promoting understanding. In
4 their reply, and you can see it in supplement 5, the
5 Board directed OSM to develop an outreach strategy to
6 reduce user conflict and educate local and visiting
7 hunters and carry out a pilot program in the Eastern
8 Interior region to test the strategy.

9
10 So moving on to 2016. During the
11 winter of 2016 all-Council meeting a breakout session,
12 outreach challenges, took place. It was a public
13 discussion of the best and most useful methods of
14 public outreach. One of the Eastern Interior Council
15 members, Andy Bassich, gave a very good presentation on
16 the subject.

17
18 The Council discussed the issue again
19 during the fall 2016 meeting and added hunter ethics
20 and education to reduce user conflict and promote
21 understanding topic to 2016 annual report. You can see
22 it in supplement 6. This is the topic that was present
23 in the annual report that you were discussing earlier
24 today.

25
26 So during the last meeting that the
27 Council had, that was the winter meeting of 2017, the
28 Council had a lengthy discussion on hunter ethics
29 education. Again they suggested to write a letter to
30 the State of Alaska to work on developing a hunter
31 ethics education program on cultural sensitive aspects
32 of resource use, to work together with the State of
33 Alaska, and then a small work group met informally
34 during the lunch break.

35
36 The group consisted of the
37 representatives of OSM, State and Council, so more
38 suggestions were made on how to proceed. The Council
39 felt so serious about this issue that they voted to
40 adopt hunter ethics education as a regular agenda item
41 for all of their future meetings.

42
43 So that's the pre-history. Now I just
44 want to give you a very brief overview of the state of
45 hunter education in Alaska. So the State of Alaska is
46 responsible for hunter education. Currently ADF&G
47 offers four types of certification courses; basic
48 hunter education, bow hunter education, crossbow
49 education, muzzle loader education.

50

1 What is required for the hunters. So
2 the State requirement is if you were born after January
3 1st, 1986, you are 16 years old or older, you must have
4 successfully completed a basic hunter education course
5 before you hunt in the Unit 7, 13, 14, 15 and 20. Only
6 one of these units, Unit 20, is in the Eastern Interior
7 Region.

8
9 All hunters must successfully complete
10 a basic hunter education course before hunting in Eagle
11 River, Eklutna Lake and Palmer/Wasilla management
12 areas, Unit 14C, and Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge
13 Unit 15C, Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge Unit
14 1C. None of these units, of course, are in the Eastern
15 Interior Region.

16
17 When I took a look at the materials
18 that are provided for basic hunter education online and
19 their study guide, it has a section actually on how to
20 be a responsible and ethical hunter. So it includes
21 these three topics that you see on this slide. Topic 1,
22 why do we have hunting laws. Topic 2, hunter ethics.
23 Topic 3, Alaska's Native people and their hunting
24 culture.

25
26 When you look at an actual write-up,
27 the information is very short and limited, so it does
28 not provide the adequate information and it just takes
29 a very small part of the whole course on hunter
30 education.

31
32 Now I would like to talk about the
33 proposed plan of action which is proposed by the OSM on
34 how we should proceed to satisfy the request of the
35 Eastern Interior Regional Council. One of the previous
36 slides, this slide, if you look at your supplement 5
37 you might recall that the Board already fully supported
38 these efforts and looks forward to a successful
39 program.

40
41 So this is our plan of action for how
42 we should proceed. We're hoping this year to form a
43 small brainstorming group of collaborators and then
44 through the end of this year and through next year work
45 on planning and developing an outreach strategy. Stage
46 3 would be to develop a pilot program in late
47 2018/early 2019 and then test that pilot program and
48 report.

49
50

1 So now I'll talk a little bit more
2 about all the stages. So the first stage is to form a
3 brainstorming group that will have the representatives
4 from OSM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, BLM, NPS and we would
5 like, of course, State of Alaska to participate in this
6 brainstorming working group, and two representatives
7 from the Eastern Interior RAC, Sue Entsminger, who is
8 the Chair, and Andy Bassich already volunteered to be
9 on this workgroup. We're looking to you, to the Board,
10 committing time from your employees to participate on
11 this workgroup.

12
13 The next stage will be planning,
14 developing of the outreach strategy. During this stage
15 we'll identify the target audiences and we will do the
16 scoping. We'll collect the facts and evaluate, analyze
17 them, see which areas we should pay the more direct
18 attention to. We will develop two or three consistent
19 key points and we will determine the appropriate
20 methods to reach target audiences. Then, as a result
21 of it, we'll develop a draft outreach strategy and
22 we'll identify the milestones.

23
24 The next step would be to consult and
25 through this process and when we develop the first
26 draft we would like to consult with as many as possible
27 of the main stakeholders, which list you see on this
28 slide. As you see it includes a lot of Native
29 corporations and organizations as well as hunter
30 organizations and government organizations. I think it
31 would be very important to get their feedback and get
32 their buy-in. Then after that we will be able to
33 finalize the strategy.

34
35 The next stage is performing. Based on
36 the strategy after it's finalized we will develop a
37 small pilot program that we can test. We could
38 possibly work with the U.S. military installation and
39 their hunter orientation program in Fairbanks or we can
40 see what other avenues we can use to test out the pilot
41 project. After the project is tested out we will check
42 out the indicators if anything had changed because we
43 don't want to go into a bigger project if the pilot
44 project does not work.

45
46 Now lets talk about the resources
47 because the resources are very important for
48 implementation of any projects. What resources do we
49 have now and what are possibly available to us. Of
50

1 course the staff time. That's the people who we
2 envision would be in the brainstorming group. I mean I
3 will mostly do all the work but I need other people's
4 ideas and their brain power in order to help me with
5 that.

6
7 So the next resource is, of course, we
8 always look into what is there, what kind of potential
9 funding is there. The first stage of the project would
10 require to have the workgroup getting together and
11 possibly we're hoping to get a professional facilitator
12 to help us. So there is this funding source that came
13 up, the Alaska Region's Connecting People With Nature.
14 It's a part of U.S. Fish and Wildlife funding. It's
15 year-end money.

16
17 This year they had a theme, breaking
18 new grounds with State and tribal partnerships. So OSM
19 already submitted a proposal, building partnerships
20 through understanding and trust, breaching the cultural
21 gap by promoting responsible and ethical hunting
22 practices in Alaska. We do not know if we'll get
23 funded through this avenue. They didn't make their
24 decision yet if we'll get funded, but basically we're
25 asking for just under \$5,000 to help us to facilitate
26 the initial meetings.

27
28 So then there is possibilities of other
29 funding. I'm sure there's more sources that are listed
30 here, but this is what we looked at. The Wildlife
31 Restoration Fund, Cabela's Outdoor Fund. Cabela's
32 Outdoor Fund supports education, teaching the next
33 generation of hunters, anglers, campers and
34 recreational shooters. We will look into possibilities
35 of other outside funding. The OSM funding is
36 questionable at this point, but if anything becomes
37 available Gene is fully aware of this program so I'm
38 sure he will make the decision at that time.

39
40 So what other sources are there. We
41 are hoping also to utilize and/or adapt the existing
42 resources and there are other sources that have been
43 developed already. Handouts, videos, materials that
44 were developed by the working group for Unit 23. So
45 perhaps we can take some of these materials and adapt
46 them for the needs of the Eastern Interior.

47
48 That concludes my presentation, so I
49 would be very eager to hear your questions and
50

1 suggestions.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any questions
4 from the Board. Good presentation.

5

6 MS. WESSELS: Thank you.

7

8 MS. PITKA: Thank you, Katya. I know
9 in Eastern Interior this topic of conversation has
10 practically been at every single meeting since I was
11 involved and even before I was involved. So I really
12 appreciate actually looking into this. I think maybe
13 Sue said it best when she said there's been a lot of
14 talk about it, but then no actual follow through, so I
15 feel pretty good about this.

16

17 Thank you very much.

18

19 MS. WESSELS: You're welcome.

20

21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
22 questions or comments for Katrina? Yes, Bert.

23

24 MR. FROST: So obviously this has been
25 on the minds of the Eastern Interior RAC for a long
26 time. Is this an issue with the other RACs or is this
27 just unique to the Eastern Interior?

28

29 MS. WESSELS: I can answer. Mr.
30 Chairman, members of the Board. Yes, it's been an
31 issue for other regions as well. For the Western
32 Interior RAC in particular. During the meeting that
33 they had with Eastern Interior they expressed their
34 desire to participate with any follow-ups on the
35 development of a hunter ethics education program. The
36 issue of wanton waste is a big issue for many RACs.

37

38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg.

39

40 MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chairman, thank
41 you. Thanks for the presentation. I'm trying to
42 understand. So in 2011 and '12 this sort of came up
43 and it hasn't gotten much traction according to Rhonda.
44 You've looked at the State hunter requirements as far
45 as education and those also don't meet what's needed
46 for this particular area?

47

48 MS. WESSELS: Yes.

49

50

1 MR. SIEKANIEC: Is the bottom line
2 there's just nothing that's specific enough to have an
3 educational background. So the next step I saw that
4 you had put up there that you need to engage a broader
5 community. How do you anticipate going about doing
6 that?

7
8 MS. WESSELS: Well, that's why we're
9 hoping to form a working group to develop the avenues
10 how we can engage the broader community and which
11 specific audiences, which specific user groups we want
12 to target first. That's correct that the State of
13 Alaska's hunter education note has a small component in
14 ethics. That is just not enough to reach broader
15 audiences.

16
17 Members of the Eastern Interior Council
18 they were saying perhaps there should be some kind of a
19 campaign, like a radio campaign, right before hunting
20 season that announces various things on the radio or
21 maybe the Federal Subsistence Management Program can
22 include information about hunter ethics into the
23 regulations book. Perhaps there can be a CD made that
24 will be distributed by the State of Alaska together
25 with the hunting permits.

26
27 So that's just suggestions that were
28 made, but they need -- at this stage it's still in the
29 state of flux, you know. It's just ideas. Those ideas
30 need to be formed and to be more concrete because we're
31 looking, of course, at the funding, you know. It
32 cannot cost very much money. We want to start with
33 something small and see if it works and look for other
34 funding sources.

35
36 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you.

37
38 MS. WESSELS: Thank you.

39
40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
41 Greg.

42
43 Any other questions, discussion.

44
45 MR. BROWER: Mr. Chair, I have a
46 comment to make. Thank you for the presentation. I
47 think it's a good idea in the process of trying to get
48 some basic hunter ethic hunting education. You
49 referred that Alaska only has classes for how to use
50

1 bowhead -- not bowhead, bow hunter.

2

3 (Laughter)

4

5 MR. BROWER: Crossbow and muzzle
6 loader. It doesn't refer to what kind of ethics the
7 State of Alaska has for basic hunter. You referred to
8 this for nonrural hunters coming in and wasting food.
9 That is culturally important to the local people within
10 Eastern Interior -- or in all Alaska. Every bone is
11 worth eating. I'm just curious how much of this State
12 of Alaska coming in -- I know you're trying to form a
13 working group to get support, but are they willing to
14 come in?

15

16 MS. WESSELS: Is your question if the
17 State of Alaska is willing to work with us?

18

19 MR. BROWER: Yeah.

20

21 MS. WESSELS: Well, what I can say is
22 during the Council meetings they were willing to talk
23 with us about it. We never formally talked with them.
24 Informally there were several like lunchtime meetings
25 through the course of the last 10 years where they
26 participated. They have a big hunter education
27 department. But we never got any formal response from
28 them that they're willing to work and they're willing
29 to dedicate a certain person to work with us on this
30 issue.

31

32 MR. BROWER: Thank you.

33

34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
35 Charlie.

36

37 Any other further questions.

38

39 (No comments)

40

41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
42 Katrina. Very good presentation and I wish you the
43 best in getting the workgroup together and coming out
44 with a product that works for Eastern Interior. Again
45 I know it's something we can build upon for other
46 regions as the hunting in Alaska is going to continue.

47

48 Thank you.

49

50

1 MS. WESSELS: Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Now we'll call
4 for a lunch break and we'll come back at 1:30. Oh, one
5 second. Gene.

6

7 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, just a
8 reminder. According to the agenda when we first get
9 back from the lunch break we'll have other business,
10 then followed up by the executive session of the
11 Federal Subsistence Board, then after that it will
12 Fisheries Special Action FSA17-05 submitted by Dave
13 Cannon, management of the Kusko.

14

15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

16

17 We'll recess for lunch to 1:30.

18

19 (Off record)

20

21 (On record)

22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Welcome back
24 from lunch, everybody. Operator, can you let those
25 know online.

26

27 OPERATOR: You are reconnected.

28

29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
30 We're coming out of recess from lunch. Welcome
31 everyone back here this afternoon. Before we begin our
32 business we have a presentation we'd like to make.
33 With that I'll turn it over to Gene.

34

35 MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
36 With regard to our Board members, we have one
37 particular Board member which was offered an
38 opportunity to transition professionally to the hub of
39 political -- I'll just leave it at that -- and has
40 expressed his willingness to make the move, so this
41 might be our last opportunity to have Bud Cribley, the
42 State Director for BLM, participate with the Federal
43 Subsistence Board. If that is the case, we have two
44 items for him. One, which I'll ask Tony to give to Bud
45 and then I have a personal gift for him as well.

46

47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'll dry off
48 the sweaty palms, the humidity.

49

50

1 (Laughter)
2
3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Bud.
4
5 MR. CRIBLEY: Thank you, sir.
6
7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for a
8 few years. That's from the OSM staff.
9
10 MR. CRIBLEY: Am I supposed to look at
11 it?
12
13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Well, usually
14 dance around.
15
16 (Laughter)
17
18 MR. CRIBLEY: Can I show it to
19 everybody in public?
20
21 (Laughter)
22
23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah.
24
25 MR. CRIBLEY: It is a public thing?
26 Okay. I've had those that you're not supposed to show
27 to anybody. Well, thank you very much. Appreciate
28 that. My first one. I've never gotten one. Very few
29 awards in my career.
30
31 (Laughter)
32
33 MR. CRIBLEY: It took a while, but I
34 got here.
35
36 (Applause)
37
38 MR. PELTOLA: On behalf of myself and
39 the staff at OSM, I wanted to thank you for your
40 participation in the Federal Subsistence Program
41 process. You've always had very meaningful questions,
42 been inquisitive and at times challenge us for the
43 betterment of the program. So out of my personal
44 collection I want to give you a grass basket to take
45 with you. It's at least 50 if not close to 60 years
46 old.....
47
48 MR. CRIBLEY: Excellent.
49
50

1 MR. PELTOLA:with the exception
2 of years back the knob broke off, so a little handle
3 was added to it. So thank you on behalf of myself and
4 OSM.

5
6 MR. CRIBLEY: Thank you very much.

7
8 (Applause)

9
10 MR. CRIBLEY: Whatever happens, just to
11 let you know I have not officially been reassigned.
12 We're still having some discussions back and forth, but
13 I don't think Washington is going to back off, so it's
14 just a matter of details right now. Whenever I find
15 out what the final date is I'll let you all know.

16
17 But this has been special. Of all the
18 programs I've worked in in the Bureau, this is probably
19 the coolest one just because of what it does. I think
20 what's really important, I know we worked -- the
21 Subsistence Program is focused on rural residents, but
22 obviously the Alaska Natives are the dominant rural
23 residents and just the level of relationship that the
24 Board has with those communities has been very
25 enlightening and enriching to me.

26
27 Just those opportunities to learn what
28 subsistence is on Federal lands in Alaska. There's
29 very, very few people have the opportunity to fully
30 understand and appreciate that and the role that we
31 play in there maintaining that ability to have Federal
32 subsistence.

33
34 So it's a very -- I feel very
35 privileged to have had the chance to work in the
36 program and all of the people. You know, the thousands
37 of people that are behind the scenes writing stuff and
38 analyzing stuff and then the Board meetings and the
39 Board members and everything has been really cool. I
40 apologize to Ken Lord, the solicitor, for speaking off
41 script every once in a while.....

42
43 (Laughter)

44
45 MR. CRIBLEY:and really messing
46 up the whole routine, but it was fun anyway. So thank
47 you very much. I appreciate it.

48
49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We definitely

50

1 appreciate you, Bud.

2

3 MR. CRIBLEY: Thanks.

4

5 (Applause)

6

7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll get this
8 meeting going again. Thank you, Bud, for your service
9 here on the Board. Other business at this time. Was
10 there any other business that any members of the Board
11 would like to present.

12

13 (No comments)

14

15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: If we don't
16 have any, now is the time to break and go into an
17 executive session. Do we need a motion for that?

18

19 MR. PELTOLA: No.

20

21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: No, we don't.
22 At this time we're going to go off record, so we'll ask
23 that the room be cleared except those who know that
24 they're going to be in here. Gene has the list.

25

26 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair. Typically we
27 have the ISC and the Board members at executive
28 session. The one thing I asked Tony is also to have
29 Tom Doolittle engaged in the discussion as well. He's
30 been exposed to some aspects of Kuskokwim management
31 that I have not been. So it would be the ISC and the
32 Board.

33

34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Again, this is
35 just on nominations for the RAC boards and special
36 action discussion.

37

38 (Off record)

39

40 (On record)

41

42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll come back
43 to order.

44

45 MR. PELTOLA: Operator, we're back in
46 session.

47

48 OPERATOR: Okay. The line is open.

49

50

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: With that I'll
2 turn it over to Pippa and Frank. One second. Gene
3 wants to make a quick announcement before we get
4 started.

5
6 MR. PELTOLA: Sorry, Frank and Pippa.
7 Generally the Federal Subsistence Board addresses
8 special action requests via either electronic email for
9 the Board or a teleconference unless there's situations
10 where the analysis and review has been completed before
11 a regular scheduled meeting. That is the case with the
12 work session here today. In addition to, it has been
13 the policy addressed by the Board not necessary to take
14 written or verbal comments on special actions, although
15 it is at the discretion of the Chair whether he or she
16 do so.

17
18 Thank you.

19
20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Then
21 before we do get going -- thank you for that, Gene --
22 just a general summary of executive session. We went
23 over our candidate nomination forms for the Regional
24 Advisory Council seats and then we discussed basically
25 policy or how to work on delegation of authority and
26 how that looks and the timeliness of that. So just a
27 quick synopsis of what the executive session was.

28
29 Frank, Pippa, thank you.

30
31 MR. HARRIS: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair.
32 Members of the Board. For the record, my name is Frank
33 Harris and I'm a fisheries biologist at the Office of
34 Subsistence Management. I'm here today to give you an
35 overview of the analysis for Fishery Special Action
36 FSA17-05.

37
38 FSA17-05 was submitted by Dave Cannon
39 of Aniak and was received on July 6, 2017. On July
40 7th, 2017, staff clarified the intent of the special
41 action with the proponent and he revised his request to
42 the following: Number 1, rescind the in-season
43 fisheries management authority of the Refuge Manager
44 for the remainder of 2017 season.

45
46 Number 2, immediately close Refuge
47 waters of the Kuskokwim River mainstem and salmon-
48 bearing tributaries to the harvest of chinook salmon as
49 necessary to ensure healthy populations and the

50

1 viability of chinook salmon populations in the
2 Kuskokwim River drainage. Federally qualified
3 subsistence users may take fish other than chinook
4 salmon with dipnets, beach seines, fishwheels and rod
5 and reel. The fishwheels are required to have a live
6 box with no less than 45 cubic feet of water and must
7 be checked every six hours. Fishwheels may be equipped
8 with a chute. Must be closely attended while in
9 operation. All authorized gear types must return the
10 chinook salmon to the water alive. Fishing with
11 gillnets is prohibited.

12
13 Number 3, close Refuge waters to the
14 harvest of coho salmon except by Federally qualified
15 subsistence users to ensure the continuation of
16 subsistence uses of coho salmon.

17
18 I believe during the executive session
19 there was discussion about number 1, so I will skip
20 right to the second request. The second request is to
21 close Refuge waters of the Kuskokwim River mainstem and
22 salmon-bearing tributaries to the harvest of chinook
23 salmon as necessary to ensure healthy populations and
24 the viability of chinook salmon populations in the
25 Kuskokwim River drainage. Federally qualified
26 subsistence users may take fish other than chinook
27 salmon with approved means other than gillnets and
28 chinook salmon must be returned to the water alive.

29
30 The harvest of chinook salmon in the
31 Kuskokwim River drainage has been restricted during
32 most years since 2009. The 20-year average chinook
33 salmon harvest between 1990 and 2009 is estimated to be
34 67,200 fish. Recent chinook harvests have been
35 considerably smaller due to small run sizes and/or
36 harvest restrictions. They are estimated to be 22,544
37 in 2012; 47,113 in 2013; 11,000 in 2014; 16,124 in
38 2015; and in 2016 37,676.

39
40 For 2017, in-season chinook salmon data
41 collected from the Bethel test fish and the Bethel
42 sonar project indicate the chinook salmon run size in
43 the Kuskokwim River will be one of the lowest on
44 record. As of July 15th, 2017 the estimated chinook
45 salmon run size past the Bethel area as monitored by
46 the Bethel sonar project is 58,600 chinook salmon.

47
48 This is the first year of the sonar
49 project, so great care must be taken in extrapolating
50

1 the chinook salmon run size past Bethel from this
2 project until multiple years of data are available for
3 comparison. As of July 16th, 2017 the Bethel test
4 fishery has a cumulative catch per unit effort or CPUE
5 of 347 chinook salmon, which is the second lowest
6 cumulative CPUE on record from 2008 to 2016 with only
7 2013 CPUE being lower. Additionally, the 2017 run
8 appears to be approximately two, maybe three days late.

9
10 The predicted end of cumulative CPUE of
11 Bethel test fishery appears to be between 2012 and
12 2013. If the linear relationship between a cumulative
13 end of season CPUE for chinook salmon at the Bethel
14 test fishery and chinook salmon total run size as
15 estimated by the chinook salmon run reconstruction
16 model holds true, and this is Figure 6 in the analysis
17 Page 15, the 2017 chinook salmon run size could be
18 between 90,000 and 100,000 fish. However, estimating
19 total run sizes from the Bethel test fishery should be
20 taken with extreme caution when comparing previous run
21 sizes with the current year. Substantial harvest
22 occurred on the total run below Bethel test fishery
23 during all prior chinook salmon seasons that did not
24 occur during the 2017 season and as such has likely
25 skewed the 2017 estimate based on the Bethel test
26 fishery high.

27
28 After accounting for the effects on
29 harvest in this relationship, an end of season
30 cumulative CPUE of 300 to 400 chinook salmon would
31 result in an estimated run size past Bethel of 56,000
32 to 81,243 fish, with the estimated total run size being
33 63,000 to 92,000 chinook salmon. This is on Figure 7
34 of the analysis, which is Page 16.

35
36 Again, extreme caution should be taken
37 in these run size predictions based on the relationship
38 between the end of season cumulative CPUE and total run
39 sizes of chinook salmon because of the large amounts of
40 prediction uncertainty. The escapement goal for the
41 Kuskokwim River drainage is 65,000 to 120,000 to give
42 you a frame of reference. We're looking at the run
43 could be potentially at the lower end of it. It's
44 looking pretty poor.

45
46 Escapement monitoring of chinook salmon
47 at all the weir projects in the drainages is currently
48 ongoing. Two of the weirs, Kwethluk and Tuluksak, are
49 systems within Refuge waters. As of July 16th there
50

1 have been 4,382 chinook salmon counted at the Kwethluk
2 River weir. This is slightly above the lower bounds of
3 the sustainable escapement goal of 4,100 to 7,500,
4 which was established in 2013.

5
6 There have been 315 chinook counted
7 past the Tuluksak River weir and this is 87 fish above
8 the 10-year mean for this date. During the past 10
9 years the returns to the Tuluksak River have been
10 relatively low also. Harvest of salmon in the
11 Kuskokwim River drainage is closed annually under State
12 regulation until June 12th to protect the first pulse
13 of the chinook salmon.

14
15 In 2017 through Board action on two
16 special requests, Federal public waters of the
17 Kuskokwim River drainage were closed to the harvest of
18 chinook salmon except by Federally qualified users
19 identified in a Section 804 subsistence user
20 prioritization analysis starting June 12th. On July
21 7th, the Federal in-season manager rescinded this
22 special action and reopened Refuge waters to the
23 harvest of chinook salmon.

24
25 Current State regulations allow for the
26 harvest of all salmon in mainstem waters of the
27 drainage by approved methods and means and restrict
28 gillnets to six inches or smaller mesh. Salmon-bearing
29 tributaries remain closed to the harvest of chinook
30 salmon and to the use of gillnets.

31
32 Between June 12th and July 7th four
33 opportunities were provided for the harvest of salmon
34 by the Federal in-season manager. Refuge staff
35 estimated over 87,000 salmon were harvested between
36 Tuntutuliak and Akiak of which approximately 8,600 were
37 chinook salmon. About 54,000 were chum salmon and
38 approximately 24,000 were sockeye. This is also in
39 Figure 3 in Table 1 of the analysis. I forgot to write
40 down the page numbers for that. Sorry about that.

41
42 These estimates cover the areas of the
43 river where the majority of the harvest occurs, but do
44 not include harvest by Federally qualified users that
45 live within the Refuge within Federal waters in the
46 villages of Tuluksak, Lower Kalskag, Kalskag or Aniak
47 or any of the upriver Federally qualified users.
48 Therefore these estimates are considered a minimum.

49
50

1 If the special action request was
2 approved, Refuge waters of the Kuskokwim River mainstem
3 and salmon-bearing tributaries would close to the take
4 of chinook salmon. The effect on chinook salmon would
5 be to potentially allow more chinook salmon to escape
6 into the spawning areas of the Kuskokwim River
7 drainage, thereby expanding the efforts to maintain
8 healthy populations of chinook salmon in the drainage.

9
10 Also if the special action was
11 approved, Refuge waters of the Kuskokwim River mainstem
12 and salmon-bearing tributaries would close to the take
13 of chum and sockeye salmon except by Federally
14 qualified subsistence users. Federally qualified
15 subsistence users would not be allowed to use gillnets.
16 They would be allowed to use only dip nets, beach
17 seines, fish wheels, and rod and reel to harvest fish
18 other than chinook salmon. Non-subsistence uses,
19 including commercial and sport fishing for salmon,
20 would
21 not be allowed in Refuge waters. The effect on chinook
22 salmon would be to allow more chinook salmon to escape
23 into the spawning areas of the Kuskokwim River
24 drainage, thereby expanding the
25 efforts to maintain healthy populations of chinook
26 salmon in the drainage.

27
28 Then onto the third request, which
29 we're going to be much quicker with this one here, is
30 to close Refuge waters to the harvest of coho
31 salmon except by Federally qualified subsistence users
32 to ensure the continuation of subsistence uses of coho
33 salmon. As of July 16th, the Bethel test fishery had a
34 CPUE of 5. These fish were just caught within the last
35 couple days. They just started showing up. However,
36 coho salmon have not been encountered at any of the
37 salmon monitoring projects, which is not unusual for
38 this time of year. It's pretty typical. Additionally,
39 there's no forecast made for coho salmon run sizes.

40
41 Coho salmon run size estimates from
42 2000 to 2015 have ranged from approximately 500,000 to
43 2.7 million fish with an average run size of around 1
44 million fish. The last peak in coho salmon run sizes
45 occurred in 2014 with approximately 1.4 million fish.
46 The 2016 estimates of run size has yet to be published
47 by Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

48
49 Due to the absence of a preseason
50

1 forecast for the 2017 run and little in-season
2 information as of July 16th, we have no data to
3 determine if the run will be sufficient to support both
4 subsistence and non-subsistence uses.

5
6 If the special action was approved,
7 Refuge waters of the Kuskokwim River mainstem and
8 salmon-bearing tributaries would close to the take of
9 coho salmon except by Federally qualified subsistence
10 users. Federally qualified subsistence users would be
11 allowed to use all legal gear to take salmon.
12 Conversely,
13 nonsubsistence uses, including commercial and sport
14 fishing for salmon, would not be allowed to harvest
15 salmon.

16
17 If the special action was not approved,
18 Refuge waters of the Kuskokwim River mainstem would
19 remain open to the harvest of all salmon under current
20 State regulations, including sport fisheries, and may
21 include future commercial fishing opportunities.
22 Specified salmon-bearing tributaries would remain
23 closed to the harvest of chinook salmon and also to the
24 harvest of any fish using gillnets. This may contribute
25 to missing the lower bound of the chinook salmon
26 drainage wide escapement goal, along with the
27 individual tributary goals for the Kwethluk -- I'll
28 cross that one out. The Kwethluk has made the lower
29 bound. George and Kogrukluk Rivers.

30
31 The effect on subsistence uses may be
32 decreased availability of coho salmon, and possibly
33 chum salmon, if a commercial salmon
34 fishery is permitted by the Alaska Department of Fish
35 and Game.

36
37 With this I will turn it over to
38 Jennifer Hardin, who will present the ISC
39 recommendation for the special action.

40
41 MS. HARDIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For
42 the record, my name is Jennifer Hardin and I'm the
43 acting chair of the Interagency Staff Committee. The
44 Interagency Staff Committee recommendation on Emergency
45 Special Action FSA17-05 is as follows: Support
46 Fisheries Emergency Special Action FSA17-05 with
47 modification to immediately close Refuge waters of the
48 Kuskokwim River salmon-bearing tributaries to the
49 harvest of chinook salmon by all users until August 30.

50

1 This closure may be rescinded by the in-season manager
2 before August 30 based on chinook salmon escapement
3 indices.

4
5 Despite early forecasts of a chinook
6 salmon run size within the escapement goal range, the
7 2017 run may not meet the lower bound of the escapement
8 goal and may be one of the lowest runs on
9 record. Previous in-season Federal management actions,
10 completed in consultation with the Kuskokwim River
11 Inter Tribal Fish Commission, Regional Advisory Council
12 representatives and the State of Alaska, have focused
13 on conserving chinook salmon throughout the entire
14 Kuskokwim drainage.

15
16 Currently, the ratio of chum and
17 sockeye salmon to chinook salmon is consistently high
18 in the mainstem of the Kuskokwim River at the Bethel
19 test fishery, and the majority of the chinook salmon
20 run has now passed Bethel. It is estimated that 97
21 percent of the run is complete based on historical
22 average run timing. Subsequently, chinook salmon
23 conservation should now focus on protection of the
24 species within specific tributaries where chinook
25 salmon are now staging, migrating, or already on their
26 spawning grounds.

27
28 The closure to the harvest of chinook
29 salmon by all users in salmon-bearing tributaries in
30 Federal public waters is needed to assure the continued
31 viability of Kuskokwim River chinook salmon consistent
32 with ANILCA Section 816. The 75th percentile of
33 chinook salmon passage at the Kwethluk River weir has
34 been as late as July 20, and average stream residency
35 post-weir passage is approximately four weeks,
36 suggesting that the majority of spawning will take
37 place by the end of August.

38
39 Based on this historic spawning data,
40 August 30 was subsequently identified as a potential
41 date when the chinook salmon closure could end. This
42 date may be adjusted based on the continual evaluation
43 of in-season biological data and input from
44 the Kuskokwim River Inter Tribal Fish Commission,
45 Regional Advisory Council representatives, the State of
46 Alaska, and the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management
47 Working Group.

48
49 Tributaries closed to harvest of
50

1 chinook salmon will remain open to the take of other
2 salmon species by all users by means other than
3 gillnet. Gillnet use is currently prohibited by State
4 regulations in the salmon-bearing tributaries
5 identified in this recommendation. This will allow for
6 the harvest of other species
7 using selective gear types while also protecting the
8 chinook salmon stocks. Current gillnet gear
9 restrictions for all users on the main stem of the
10 Kuskokwim River minimize chinook salmon harvest while
11 allowing for subsistence harvest of other salmon
12 species that are currently more abundant and not of
13 conservation concern.

14
15 Coho salmon have just started to enter
16 the Kuskokwim River system and should not be
17 pre-maturely regulated until biological information is
18 available to evaluate their status as pre-season
19 abundance estimates are not generated.

20
21 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

22
23 That concludes the recommendation of
24 the Interagency Staff Committee.

25
26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
27 Jennifer. Any questions for the staff.

28
29 Greg.

30
31 MR. SIEKANIEC: Just for clarity
32 purposes did you say the regulations that are in place
33 right now by the State have the mainstem and the
34 tributaries closed to the use of gillnets?

35
36 MR. HARRIS: Just the tributaries right
37 now.

38
39 MR. SIEKANIEC: So the tributaries are
40 closed to the use of gillnets.

41
42 MS. KENNER: The restrictions that
43 Jennifer was referring to in the mainstem is people can
44 only use 6-inch or less mesh size nets.

45
46 MR. SIEKANIEC: So let me make sure I
47 have it right. So in the mainstem 6-inch or less size
48 in tributaries are closed to the use of gillnets.

49
50

1 MS. KENNER: Under State regulations.

2
3 MR. SIEKANIEC: Okay. Thank you.

4
5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
6 questions for staff.

7
8 The floor is open.

9
10 (No comments)

11
12 MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chairman. Since
13 there are no other questions or discussion it seems
14 like, I would be willing at this time from the Fish and
15 Wildlife Service to make a motion to support the FSA17-
16 05 and if I do get a second I will provide the
17 justification as to why I intend to vote in opposition
18 to FSA17-05 in its entirety.

19
20 MR. BROWER: Second.

21
22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion has been
23 made and seconded. Go ahead, Greg.

24
25 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr.
26 Chairman. So we've heard a lot about the season from
27 the standpoint of the Board and how the management has
28 gone and the relationship that's been established
29 between our in-season manager, the Intertribal Fish
30 Commission and the working group.

31
32 I want to remind us a little bit that
33 last January we worked to provide the opportunity and
34 actually asked our in-season manager to work on the
35 establishment of this Phase 2, which incorporated, as
36 well as the Intertribal Fish Commission, the working
37 group into it and to try to build a consensus body out
38 there on direction that they would go for decision
39 making and the decisions that would be made through the
40 special action request or special actions taken by our
41 in-season manager.

42
43 The main concern that I really have is
44 if we take an action now that has presented as a
45 special action, which I personally believe should have
46 been more of an appeal to pass decisions that have
47 already been made, would really challenge the
48 credibility that's been established through the course
49 of this last summer here or is underway right now.

50

1 When you have an agreement between the
2 Intertribal Fish Commission, the working group and the
3 in-season manager that said it's now time and
4 appropriate to turn the management over to the State
5 for the duration of the season because the viability of
6 the chinook population is not a question at this point
7 in time and with the restrictions that the State has
8 applied to it I think really jeopardizes that ability
9 for us to maintain a relationship that would be as
10 strong and is working that we will need it next year
11 and obviously into the future.

12
13 That concerns me greatly that we would
14 start to -- you know, from the Board's standpoint say,
15 well, we wanted you to do this, but, sorry, we're not
16 willing to stand behind you now that you've made that
17 very difficult decision which took a lot of time to
18 sort of bring people to gather around. As was
19 evidenced, I believe, even by Chief Ivan who sent the
20 letter in who sort of reiterated that while we have
21 such a great process working out here now, please don't
22 sort of change our ability to make these types of
23 decisions.

24
25 I'm also, I guess, concerned a little
26 bit that some of the special action recommendations in
27 this weird way will actually reduce our ability to
28 conserve chinook populations and could end up with us
29 in a jeopardized situation where if we were to take
30 over the fishery again, the State could then change and
31 remove its closures that they have and we can't limit
32 gear type again and there we are back in a very similar
33 spot where other users then could use gear that we can
34 no longer restrict. So we have some weird dynamics
35 going on around this potential fishery.

36
37 I guess I'll stop right there. I want
38 to stay with, you know, the Board -- we asked these
39 groups to come together and do this. They very
40 successfully did. It's unfortunate they had to make
41 the struggles with the chinook run the way it is and
42 nobody wanted to see that.

43
44 At this point in time I would say that
45 the justification I would really want us to think
46 strongly about is that they worked hard to meet what
47 the Board asked them to do and they're there now and
48 they have this big agreement. I'm really concerned we
49 jeopardize that and next year we aren't going to have a
50

1 working group come together, nor an Intertribal Fish
2 Commission relationship with the Service.

3
4 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5
6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
7 Greg.

8
9 Any other discussion from the Board.

10
11 (No comments)

12
13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the
14 question.

15
16 MR. BROWER: Call for question.

17
18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The question
19 has been called. Again, the motion is in the positive.
20 The maker of the motion is going to vote to the
21 negative, which will -- just so you know your vote in
22 the positive is to support this special action. A no
23 vote means no special action. Shall we do a roll call.

24
25 MR. PELTOLA: Roll call vote on
26 Fisheries Special Action Request 17-05 as submitted by
27 Dave Cannon of Aniak. National Park Service.

28
29 MR. FROST: No.

30
31 MR. PELTOLA: Bureau of Land
32 Management.

33
34 MR. CRIBLEY: No.

35
36 MR. PELTOLA: Public Member Brower.

37
38 MR. BROWER: Yes.

39
40 MR. PELTOLA: Public Member Pitka.

41
42 MS. PITKA: No.

43
44 MR. PELTOLA: Bureau of Indian Affairs.

45
46 MR. POLACCA: No.

47
48 MR. PELTOLA: Fish and Wildlife
49 Service.

50

1 MR. SIEKANIEC: No.
2
3 MR. PELTOLA: Forest Service.
4
5 MS. PENDLETON: No.
6
7 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair.
8
9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: No.
10
11 MR. PELTOLA: Failure to adopt 17-05 on
12 a 1-7 vote.
13
14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
15 Staff, for that presentation. Thank you for the Board.
16 According to my agenda that concludes the business for
17 the day.
18
19 We thank everybody in attendance today.
20 Thanks for the Staff and your diligent work in getting
21 ready. Again, it was a trying season on the Kuskokwim
22 and still a little bit more work to go yet.
23
24 Don't forget in the morning we're
25 having a field trip. I think Gene has a couple of
26 announcements.
27
28 MR. PELTOLA: As a reminder, Board
29 Members who are participating in the trip down to
30 observe the Kenai gillnet, one, 7:15 a.m. at the Fish
31 and Wildlife Service office; two, dress appropriately
32 for a boat ride; and three, bring munchies.
33
34 (Off record)
35
36 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)
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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

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

THAT the foregoing, contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD MEETING, VOLUME III taken electronically by our firm on the 17th day of July 2017, in Anchorage, Alaska;

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

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

DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 27th day of July 2017.

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