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EASTERN INTERIOR ALASKA SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME III

PYKE'S WATERFRONT LODGE
Fairbanks, Alaska
October 10, 2024
9:00 am

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Robert Wright, Sr., Chair
Donald Woodruff
Susan Entsminger
Linda Evans
Andrew Bassich
Amanda Pope

Regional Council Coordinator, Brooke McDavid

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Fairbanks, Alaska - 10/10/24)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Let's find a seat.
Give you a couple of minutes. Thank you.

(Pause)

Good morning, everybody. Thanks for coming. First on the list this morning is Fish and Game. Porcupine Caribou Herd update, Jordan. Oh, yeah. We better start the other way. We gotta do the roll call first. I was trying to jump right in and save time.

MS. MCDAVID: I blame Andy. He was distracting me.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yeah. Yeah, let's blame Andy. Who's going to do the invocation for us this morning? Any volunteers?

MS. ENTSMINGER: Please help, Lord.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yeah. Okay, we'll call that invocation then. And we'll call the meeting to order at 9:07. Good morning, everybody. We need a roll call please, Donald.

MR. WOODRUFF: Start at the top. Sue Entsminger.

MS. ENTSMINGER: Here.

MR. WOODRUFF: Amanda Pope.

MS. POPE: Here.

MR. WOODRUFF: Linda Evans.

MS. EVANS: Here.

MR. WOODRUFF: Eva Burk.

MS. MCDAVID: Eva is absent today and excused.

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MR. WOODRUFF: Andrew Bassich.

MR. BASSICH: Here.

MR. WOODRUFF: Charlie Wright.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Here.

MR. WOODRUFF: Charlie Jagow, not here. Don Woodruff is here. Dorothy Shockley, are you out there?

(No response)

MS. MCDAVID: I don't see Dorothy online yet this morning. She might be joining us later. Mr. Chair, with six of nine Council members present, we have quorum.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much. Okay. You have any meeting announcements this morning?

MS. MCDAVID: I do, I've lost my agenda in the mix, but I will let folks know we're going to start out with public comments on non-agenda items this morning. If you would like to provide a comment about anything related to subsistence, if you're in the room, you can fill out a blue card. If you're online, you can press star five or raise your hand and we'll call on you. After public comments, we're going to have a couple of presentations from Alaska Department of Fish and Game. And then following that, we will move back into our action items on the agenda, starting with the Yukon River Priority Information Needs and the Annual Report. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Welcome, good morning, everybody again. Anybody in the room that wasn't here for the last couple days that wants to introduce themselves that's -- this is the time to do that. Thank you. You can come up to the mic or not, one way or the other.

Okay. We'll be moving into public testimony at this time. You got cards? Oh, okay. So, what do you want to go to the Fish and Game first?

MS. MCDAVID: Is there anyone online that would like to give a public testimony this morning? You

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can say, Mr. Chair or press star five on your phone and we'll call on you.

(No response)

I don't see anyone online indicating they'd like to comment. We did have a couple people call in, I was wondering if either of those phone numbers are [sic] Council member Dorothy Shockley? If so, if you could identify yourself. Thank you.

(No response)

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Not hearing nothing.

(Pause)

This morning we'll start with the -- moving on we'll start with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the Porcupine Herd report, please.

(Pause)

MR. NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record, my name is Mark Nelson. The area biologist for the Northeast Alaska and that's Game management Units 25A, B, D, and 26B and C on the north side. Before I get into the Porcupine Herd, I just wanted to address a couple of things that I've been hearing over the last couple of days. The first one is with 25D, the trespass issues that that folks have talked about. That area, as you guys all well know is very complicated moose hunting. There's two permit systems in place, a Federal permit and a State permit. The State is a tier two permit, which means you have to apply for it. This has been in place for a long time. The difference this year is that for the first time ever, all 75 tier two permits were given out. Normally there's 75 available and 40 to maybe 50 people actually get them.

When we noticed that this happened, that we actually gave out all the permits, we realized that there might be some issues coming down the road. So, Fish and Game worked with Yukon Flats Refuge, who deals with the Federal permit and we came up with some language to send to every permit holder. This was put into a letter, and I have a copy of it here and I'd be happy to leave that with Brooke and distribute to you guys.

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1 But the letter lays out very clearly. And this is
2 language that again, we worked with the Yukon Flats
3 Refuge on. It lays out very clearly where each permit
4 is valid. And just so you guys know, if it's corporation
5 land or Native land or anything like that, it's
6 considered private land as far as hunting goes, that
7 means the Federal permit is not valid on those private
8 lands, corporation lands, anything like that. You have
9 to use the State permit. On Federal land, the State
10 permit is not valid. If you're on State land, which is
11 basically all Refuge lands in that area, you have to use
12 the Federal permit. So, it's very complicated. But we
13 wrote this letter, we gave links to land ownership maps.
14 We gave links to Federal regulations, to State
15 regulations, and really tried to outline for people what
16 they can and can't do. And the biggest thing we tried
17 to say was, if you are not -- if you're hunting with
18 this State permit on anything besides State land, of
19 which there's very, very little there's very little
20 State land in this whole area. If you're hunting on any
21 of those lands that are considered private, you have to
22 have permission. So, if it's corporation land, you have
23 to have permission from the corporation. If it's a Native
24 allotment, you have to have permission from whoever owns
25 that Native allotment. We really tried to make sure
26 everybody was aware of this. And I did talk to a lot of
27 people, I had my contact information on here, and a lot
28 of these permit holders called me and said, geez, I
29 didn't realize that, you know and by talking through
30 this, I think we curbed some of that. We will continue
31 this in the future. If you guys have suggestions for
32 ways to make that outreach better, I'd be happy to hear
33 it. And like I said, my contact information is on this
34 letter. So, I just wanted to kind of let you know that,
35 you know, Fish and Game and the Refuge realizes that
36 that's an issue out there, and we're trying to do what
37 we can to curb those, those issues. So, any questions
38 on that before I go on to the next thing?

39
40 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any questions for
41 the man? Anybody, public? Okay. Hearing none. Thank you.

42
43 MR. NELSON: Okay. So, the next thing I
44 wanted to talk about which is related to Porcupine
45 Caribou, before I get into the update itself, we heard
46 from Tonya from Arctic Village the other day yesterday.
47 And I think we really need to commend and applaud her
48 for -- and other folks in Arctic for taking that
49 concerned they had, getting tail numbers of airplanes,
50 getting names of airplane operators that they thought

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1 were an issue, and forwarding those on to enforcement
2 folks. We often hear, you know, stories, we hear people
3 like, I saw this, you know, I saw wanton waste. Unless
4 we do that, unless folks are willing to do that and take
5 those things to enforcement, there's really nothing
6 anybody can do about it. And so, I really think that
7 effort on the part of Arctic Village this year is, is
8 awesome. And I hope we see more of that in the future.
9

10 So, moving into the Porcupine Herd
11 management. As you know, this is a herd that is jointly
12 managed between state of Alaska and Canada. We meet a
13 couple times a year with the Canadians. Everything we
14 do is a combined effort from purchasing collars to
15 deploying collars to monitoring movements to doing any
16 kind of actual you know, monitoring of that herd. This
17 actually allows us to combine resources, and oftentimes
18 it allows us to do more work than maybe we could do if
19 we didn't have that cooperation. The gold standard,
20 basically for managing caribou is figuring out how many
21 there are. We do that through our photo census method.
22 This herd has been really hard to photo census. The last
23 census was in 2017. We've tried every year. We had the
24 Beaver up there two years ago, we took some photos of
25 one group and hoped the other group would come together.
26 They never did. But this -- I just want you guys to know
27 we are -- this is probably one of the top priorities in
28 our region, is to try and get this photo census done.
29 We'll be working again this year to try and get that,
30 but we haven't gotten one since 2017. So, as far as the
31 actual number of caribou out there, we don't know right
32 now. In 2017, the estimate was between 202,000 and
33 234,000. That was the highest number of caribou that we
34 had counted in that herd. And so, for decades, basically,
35 that herd has been growing and growing and growing. At
36 some point, it's going to stop growing. And like I said,
37 we don't know how many there are. We might be there now,
38 we might not be. We really don't know. We look at a lot
39 of other things when we can't get a number. We look at
40 things like adult survival, parturition rates. How many,
41 how often they're calving, how many calves are being
42 produced each year. And things like that.

43
44 So, to go through just a couple of
45 those, adult female survival is very, very important for
46 caribou, right? When adult female survival declines,
47 oftentimes there's a decline in the population. Our
48 average over the last ten years has been about 88%
49 survival. That should be enough to at least hold that
50 population stable. Typically, once we get below about

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1 85, 86 somewhere in there and lower, that's when we
2 start seeing declines become more imminent. In 2022, the
3 survival was 83%. So, it did drop a little bit below
4 that.

5
6 We do -- we have a little bit of data
7 on yearling and adult bull survival. Our sample sizes
8 for those are pretty low. But I'll just share that
9 information with you. Adult male survival over the last
10 ten years has been about 70%. In 2022, it was 75%. We
11 expect a lower survival on bulls, they work hard in the
12 rut, and they go right into winter, and they have a
13 pretty tough life. And so, survival on bulls is always
14 lower in every herd. Yearling survival. Now, this is
15 calculated from when we catch them in March is about ten
16 months old. We then look at them, how many of those
17 survive a full year. A yearling survival, you know, is
18 important. Again, we don't capture that many each year.
19 So, our, our sample sizes are still fairly low. But it
20 does give us an idea of that kind of early survival once
21 they've reached about a year to make it to two years.
22 Over the last ten years, that's been about 83%. And in
23 2022, it was still at 83%. So, that's doesn't seem to
24 be changing all that much. If you'll notice, all those
25 survival estimates are from 2022. We haven't calculated
26 the 2023, which actually goes into 2024. We do these
27 calculations by caribou year. So, starting in June and
28 ending in May. We should have that -- those results from
29 this last year out here pretty soon. But I don't have
30 those today.

31
32 Parturition. We look at a few different
33 things. We look at the age of the cow because we're
34 collaring them as yearlings, we then can follow them
35 throughout the years and know how old each cow -- adult
36 cow is that we have on air. Four-year-old and older
37 parturition over the last ten years has been about 76%.
38 In 2024, so this last year it was at 86%. So, it seems
39 like it's, you know, hanging in there and we have no
40 concerns there. Three-year-old and older or -- that's
41 so three year old only, okay so, these are cows that are
42 three-year-old, this is always going to be a lower
43 percentage because that's the first year that they may
44 or may not even have a calf. When the nutrition is really
45 good, we would expect a few more of those to have calves.
46 The long-term average for three-year-olds is about 69-
47 70%. The last couple of years, we've seen that decline
48 down into the -- it was even into 33% this year. So,
49 there's definitely something happening there. Typically,
50 that's an indication of habitat and nutrition. So, that

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2 is a sign that potentially we're seeing at least a
3 topping out of the growth of this herd.

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7 We look at another once the calves are
8 born, we don't spend -- we don't actually go catch them
9 or anything like that right now. There are ways that we
10 could do that, but they're super expensive. And we're
11 not we're not putting the effort into that early calf
12 survival. However, we look at those cows that had calves
13 in June, and then we go and fly in three weeks later.
14 And if they still have a calf, then we can use that as
15 a proxy for early calf survival. And in this last year,
16 that early calf survival is at 79%. The long-term average
17 is 86%. So, we're still kind of in that ballpark. And
18 typically, in these North Slope herds, once those calves
19 lived 3 or 4 weeks their survival is much higher. It's
20 those first three, four weeks that are real tough for
21 these calves. So, with that, with everything there are
22 signs in some of these metrics that we're probably not
23 still growing. I don't know, and nobody frankly knows
24 if we were in a decline or if we're kind of right at the
25 top or where we are. But since the last photo census
26 again was in 2017 at over 200,000, that's the highest
27 again that we've ever counted in that herd. Yeah, that's
28 where we are with the Porcupine Herd. Any questions?

27

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30 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you. Thank you
31 for that report. I'm just curious. I was thinking back
32 many, many years. There was a period, I believe it was
33 right around the beginning of the 2000, maybe the late
34 90s, where Canada was doing a lot of sterilization of
35 wolves to help foster better production of caribou. I'm
36 wondering if that was done on that herd in those areas
37 and if there's been any attempt to try and measure the
38 success or failure of that. Do you have any information
39 on that?

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40 MR. NELSON: I have no idea on that.

41 MR. BASSICH: I mean, I can remember that
42 was a I'm not going to say controversial, but it was
43 talked about a lot. And I think it came up at 40-mile
44 coalition meetings because at the time we were trying
45 to rebuild the herd, and we're trying to come up with
46 methodologies for doing that. Well, if you get any
47 information or if you could look into that, that would
48 have been done purely on the Canadian side. And I know
49 they did it more in central Canada, but I don't know if
50 they ever did it for the Porcupine Herd. But I'd be

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1 really interested if there's any information from the
2 Canadians on how successful that is, as compared to
3 trapping and hunting predators for predator control. And
4 if you could, maybe if you do find anything, get it to
5 our Coordinator, because we're hoping we're going to be
6 able to get a Fortymile coalition meeting together. And
7 that might be really useful information for us moving
8 forward. Thank you. And by the way, just tell the
9 Canadians to push a few more of those over the hills to
10 Eagle. I know they do come down some years. They come
11 down the Nation River and we'll see them down on the
12 Yukon River, sometimes mixing with the Fortymile Herd.
13 And then in the Ogilvie Mountains there are times they
14 kind of come down into the Yukon Valley from there. It's
15 less accessible for people from Eagle. But I do know
16 that that does happen occasionally, and it seems like
17 when there's a pretty good growth of the herd, they seem
18 to push out a little bit more. So, I don't know if we're
19 going to see that, but thank you. Appreciate your report.

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21 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Any more
22 -- any more questions?

23

24 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Charlie. Thank
25 you, Mark, for that report. I wanted to get on the record
26 that Eagle has, over the years harvested not a lot, but
27 some caribou from the Porcupine Herd. And I think that
28 it's important that we communicate with the people of
29 Eagle about what's happening with the population and
30 these metrics that you gave us. So, I'll relate that to
31 them. Thank you.

32

33 MR. NELSON: Thank you. Thanks for that.
34 Yep.

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36 MS. ENTSMINGER: I think I got -- this
37 is Sue. This question might not be for you, but I think
38 there's some black bear areas in your area that's five.
39 Do you have any data or can you give me data on the five
40 black bear areas that -- does anyone ever take five
41 black bears? They now have to do a harvest report. So,
42 I would hope that there is some data out there. Thank
43 you.

44

45 MR. NELSON: Yeah. So, in my area, 25B
46 and 25D are both five black bear areas. And neither of
47 those do you actually have to have a harvest ticket. So,
48 there's essentially no actual harvest data associated
49 with those.

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MS. ENTSMINGER: Because it's north of the Yukon?

MR. NELSON: I don't know if it's that exactly, but they're both areas where there has never been a black bear concern. In fact, in 25-Delta there's a lot of black bears. And when we've done -- we did a survey for black bears back in the somewhere around 2010, I think it might have been 2008, and we did like a mark recapture for black bears in that area. And there's more black bears than there are moose. And so, that's -- when those regulations kind of came into play, that there is no shortage of black bears. And so, let's open this up and provide maximum opportunity. I really doubt very many people take advantage of that. Most people get one bear, and that's enough for making sausage and all that kind of stuff that they want. But there's probably a few folks that that do take more than that, you know? But I don't think it's very many just in talking to hunters that go up there and stuff like that, there's not that many people who really try to get like five bears every year.

MS. ENTSMINGER: I wish I knew the answer, and I probably did once, but I forgot. Why is it that they don't need harvest tickets and other places in the State does.

MR. NELSON: Harvest tickets? I don't believe were ever for black bears. There's only been a few places where harvest tickets are now required. Some places now do. Yep, that's a newer thing though. That's a newer regulation.

MS. ENTSMINGER: You might ask and let me know. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Donald.

MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Charlie. This is Donald Woodruff. I just want to point out to the Council and the audience that now that we have very little access to fish, that the black bears are going to become more targeted. And I don't see that as a conservation concern, but I do see that as a realistic food source, as a substitute for the Fortymile caribou that's in decline. And it would help if we harvested more black bears. It would help the ungulates quite a bit. Thank you.

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(Pause)

MR. NELSON: Yeah, thanks for that. And I do want to mention that at the last Board of Game meeting, there was actually a proposal that talked to that, that talked about folks wanting to take more black bears for meat and tried to figure out a way to allow snaring of bears. And so, that was something that was discussed at the Board of Game. It wasn't passed, but those issues have been brought up to the Board. And they're taking note of that I believe so, yep.

MS. BASSICH: Yeah. Just additional information, you know, I'm a heavy harvester of black bears. That's pretty much all I have now is black bears, beavers and muskrats. It's about what we're down to. Pretty sad actually. There are a few moose around, and sometimes you get lucky. But I do want to report that I live very close to Calico Bluff, Unit 25B is just the other side of the river. The banks and the riverbeds are just trampled with black bear and grizzly. The very high population there right now I think it's always been fairly high, but it just seems like in the last two years or so, it's been quite a bit more than I've seen in the past. And I also wanted to just put on the record that culturally, the indigenous people in our region don't eat black bear. So, as far as the indigenous people and their food needs, that's a taboo harvest for them. I just wanted to put that on the record, because a lot of people don't recognize that. And the other -- the last thing I wanted to point out is, it's pretty sparsely populated country. So, as far as human impacts into it there aren't any large communities really in a lot of these areas, at least, you know, in our area we have a pretty small population and Circle is pretty small population. And that's really about the only population bordering. So, like Don said, I think harvest impacts are always going to be pretty minimal. I think animals are going to stay well ahead of the harvest pressure put on them as far as black bears go. And quite frankly, grizzlies. I'm seeing way more grizzly now than I did even two years ago. They're doing really well for some reason. Maybe that's why the moose are down, but whatever. I just want to put that on the record as informational for that region. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Sue.

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1 MS. ENTSMINGER: Just one more. For the
2 record, it's a mixed bag with the indigenous people where
3 I live. There's some that eat black bear and some that
4 don't. And in the last ten years, we're eating a lot
5 more bear. And people -- I just -- people come to the
6 house, I feed them bear meat, whatever I'm making. And
7 man, that's really good, Sue. That's delicious. So, then
8 do I tell them or do I not tell them? Most of the time
9 I tell them. And then a lot of the hunters that we have,
10 they'll take it home when they didn't even want it. So,
11 it's really interesting. It is a mixed bag with
12 indigenous people.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I'd like to say a
15 little bit, too. In Rampart area, we're kind of corralled
16 by the highways, and four-wheeler trails are coming all
17 around us into the Garnett Creek valley. And it's really
18 hard to even find a black bear track, and we love to eat
19 them. That's kind of the reason, probably why, too, is
20 all the guys in the neighborhood eat them all the way
21 down Rampart, down. And I can't speak for in the Flats,
22 but I know the guys along the Yukon below me enjoy a
23 nice fat black bear meat. And we do and I know in with
24 the new regulations and permits coming out in certain
25 areas that you guys are watching and hopefully pay
26 attention to them. You have no way of knowing. So, I
27 guess people with boots on the ground will have to say
28 and try to help you out as much as we can, but there are
29 some areas that I have concern with, and maybe we can
30 talk after or something. But some people, a lot of areas
31 are different, as we know. Thank you.

32
33 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you. I'm going
34 to speak for her. She's -- Amanda puts up a lot of time
35 with the Indigenous Sentinel Network. And this might be
36 one of those things that would be really good to begin
37 to utilize that system in various areas. And it might
38 be something. I don't know if ADF&A is a part of any of
39 that, but I think that reporting from local people might
40 fill some of these gaps, and it's about what it's going
41 to take, is just getting some people in a few communities
42 to get started doing it. And then, you know, it'll grow
43 from there, I think. But it's a pretty amazing system
44 for monitoring. Very intuitive. Maybe you ought to speak
45 to it. You speak to it way better than I do.

46
47 MS. POPE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is
48 Amanda Pope for the record. I encourage the communities
49 to reach out and use the system. It won't be anything
50 unless they're involved. So, I encourage the folks in

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1 the region to reach out and to be involved with trying
2 to get not only people on the ground and on -- and out
3 on the land, but to document and observe the animals
4 around them is very important, especially for food
5 security issues. As far as the bear, I would like to see
6 another survey done. Just so that will give folks in the
7 region a better idea of what's available to them. A lot
8 of folks are -- I've heard already mentioned that the
9 consumption of black bear is against some religions and
10 most religions in the interior. A lot of men in those
11 religions eat the bear and it's kind of taboo for women
12 to eat it. But when times are scarce, people will harvest
13 anything, and it's hard to get food out in the villages.
14

15 I like -- myself, like Andy, I harvest
16 bear, and that's really my favorite food off the land.
17 I also eat beaver, muskrat, my children harvest
18 waterfowl and grouse so, we eat that. It's very rare to
19 see a moose in the area where I'm from, it's kind of
20 like seeing bigfoot. It's sad, the caribou numbers have
21 dropped dramatically for a number of reasons, and bear
22 I see in the future will be harvested more. It's a type
23 of a protein that people need. And I just encourage
24 people to step up and be involved with the monitoring
25 efforts, not only because I work for ISN I just think
26 it's important because of the food security issues that
27 we have, thank you.
28

29 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much
30 for that, Amanda. Any more questions?
31

32 (No comment)
33

34 Hearing none, you may move on.
35

36 MR. NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
37

38 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I think you're next
39 again. Unit 20F moose update, Tony. Yeah, Tony.
40

41 (Pause)
42

43 MR. HOLLIS: Mr. Chairman, member of the
44 Council, thank you. My name is Tony Hollis, I'm the area
45 biologist for the Fairbanks area for the Alaska
46 Department of Fish and Game. That includes units 20A,
47 20B, 20C, 20F and 25C. For reference, that area is about
48 the size of Maine. Today I'm here to give a report on
49 Unit 20F as (indiscernible) or asked by this Council.
50 20F is kind of a unique unit compared to some of the

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1 other units around Fairbanks that lies northwest of
2 Fairbanks. It's about 6287mi². The moose population is
3 a low-density moose population. We have no survey data
4 in that unit at this time, but we estimate there's
5 between point two and point seven moose per square mile.
6 If you extrapolate that out to the 6000mi², that's
7 somewhere between 1,257 moose and a little over 4,000.
8 It's likely that unit is on the lower end of that cause
9 it is low density. The moose population in 20F is mostly
10 limited by habitat, a good portion of Unit 20F is very
11 poor moose habitat. Lots of black spruce forests. There
12 are some pockets of moose habitat throughout the area,
13 but they're small and not great. The population of moose
14 is probably also limited in those areas where there is
15 good habitat by predation. We do know there's quite a
16 few bears such as -- just like in the Yukon Flats, Unit
17 20F has quite a few bears and there is a healthy wolf
18 population. Also to note, the Board of Game has a
19 negative finding for intensive management for Unit 20F,
20 so unlike some units that have a positive finding, Unit
21 20F does have a negative finding.

22
23 I'd also like to note that at this time,
24 and for over the last 25 years there is no non-resident
25 harvest of moose in that unit, it's been -- there's been
26 -- Unit 20F is closed to non-resident taking a moose and
27 has been for over 25 years. Some of the numbers for
28 moose hunting in Unit 20F on average over the last ten
29 years, there's about 183 people that hunt Unit 20F, and
30 that ranges everywhere from along the Dalton Highway and
31 Hess Creek, all the way down the Yukon River to near
32 Tanana and then up the Tanana River, kinda to almost the
33 Manley area. So, about 183 hunters per year. And the
34 average harvest in the Unit is 35 moose. So, we don't
35 have a large take of moose in Unit 20F. A couple of
36 things about Unit 20F also, and kind of the surrounding
37 areas. This past spring, the Board of Game passed a
38 regulation that changed all of the Fairbanks units.
39 Instead of general season moose harvest ticket, we
40 changed it to a registration permit, RM781 the purpose
41 of this registration permit was for better reporting and
42 accounting for the number of hunters and moose taken in
43 all the Fairbanks units, including Unit 20F, when we
44 went through this process prior to the Board of Game,
45 we had approval from every AC in the area that supported
46 going to a registration permit from a general season
47 harvest ticket to a registration permit.

48
49 One thing for the Council to note some
50 of the units, such as 25C that have longer Federal

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1 subsistence moose seasons, in the regulations it still
2 states that a harvest ticket is needed. However, the
3 state-side is using a registration permit. And so there
4 has been some confusion this fall amongst subsistence
5 hunters and amongst agencies on which permit hunters
6 should get, so it might be something the Council would
7 like -- may want to address at some point in the future
8 to alleviate some of the confusion amongst the
9 subsistence hunters on which tag to get. Because we have
10 this registration permit, reporting is more immediate,
11 and we get data quicker. So far, for the 2024 season in
12 Unit 20F, we've had 127 hunters report hunting there and
13 a harvest of 31 moose so far. Because of the regulations
14 in 20F, there is still a winter hunt and a portion of
15 Unit 20F that goes from December 1st to December 15th.
16 So likely, more harvest reports will be reported on or
17 more registration permits. And also, there will be some
18 participation in a winter hunt that will be occurring.
19 Other than the data I've shared with you. We do not have
20 a lot of other data on Unit 20F, since we do not conduct
21 and have not conducted moose surveys in that area. But
22 I'd be happy to answer any questions the Council may
23 have regarding this topic, thank you.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I, for one,
26 appreciate your report. Thank you so much, really good.
27 I don't know if anybody else has any more questions. Go
28 ahead. I appreciate that, Tony.

29
30 MR. HOLLIS: Yep.

31
32 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Charlie, this
33 is Don. Can you explain to me how you came up with the
34 4000 moose in that population? If most of the habitat
35 is not moose popular.

36
37 MR. HOLLIS: So, that was an
38 extrapolation. We know from other units around the State
39 with similar habitat types that on a low-density moose
40 population, it's somewhere between 0.2 moose per square
41 mile and 0.7 moose per square mile. So, that's basically
42 just an extrapolation of -- Unit 20F is a little over
43 6000mi² so, if you multiply 0.2 times 6000mi², you have
44 a little over 1,200 moose, up to a potential of 0.7
45 times 6,000 would be 4,400 moose. I think based on
46 anecdotal information, our harvest we're probably closer
47 to that 0.2, 0.3, 0.4 moose per square mile, so very low
48 density.

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MR. BASSICH: Yeah, this is member Bassich, I was just wondering, you said that there hasn't been any surveys. Are there any plans to try and survey that Unit -- subunit in the future?

MR. HOLLIS: For the Fairbanks area it's difficult. So, we have Unit 20A and 20B, and between the two we have about 6,000 hunters that hunt those two units alone and harvest somewhere on the order of, you know, somewhere on the order of 800 to 1,200 moose annually. So, generally, a lot of our efforts go into those two units based on the sheer number of people hunting them. The Fairbanks area in general has about 8,000 hunter -- moose hunters a year. So, priority-wise, a lot of times 20F falls off because there's low number of hunters that hunt it, low harvest. But on the other side of that too is it's a low density moose population with a lot of poor habitat. And we know the population likely isn't going to change much in that country.

MR. BASSICH: With the -- excuse me member BASSICH with the caveat that if hunting pressure begins to shift, then the potential for a conservation issue is much greater. That's the point I'm trying to make, and that's why, you know, at some point in time it might not be a bad idea to do a moose survey in the area. So, you have a baseline for later on, because as you've heard us speak throughout this meeting, there's a lot of concerns about the growth of Alaska and the competition that will come with that. So, I just wanted to point that out, thank you.

MR. HOLLIS: Through the Chair, member Bassich. That's exactly right and that's why harvest data is very critical, especially in these units. And that's why we went to a registration permit. So, we get better harvest data because not only the number of moose harvested, but the effort. And those two metrics are very important, particularly on a unit like this, it's low density. We start seeing, you know, really, you know, below average harvest and increasing effort than we know. That we should probably look at it. On the flip side to that, when you survey a low-density units, something that maybe only has 0.2, 0.3 moose per square mile. Our survey techniques aren't quite as accurate because you have to -- it's a random sample of country you fly, and if you hit all the black spruce and don't hit, you know, fish lake, that's going to change your

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1 number and it's gonna look lower, vice versa, if you hit
2 all fish lake type country or Hess Creek, then we're
3 gonna see a bigger number and probably not
4 representative of the whole Unit.

5

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Amanda.

7

8 MS. POPE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just
9 wanted to apologize for earlier. The amount of animals
10 that you see are very different from what people see on
11 the ground. And I would like to encourage your department
12 to reach out to the folks in the region and offer for
13 their participation in the survey (distortion) efforts.
14 I know a lot of folks would like to get involved. And
15 there's a good chance that all agencies can work together
16 with the locals to try and get better numbers to help
17 everybody. And I know some of these game units that you
18 are managing are not being surveyed as well as it should
19 be, and that may not be your fault. So, I just encourage
20 you to reach out to locals to try and get them involved.

21

22 As far as the people coming in to the
23 area and hunting. I'm very concerned because of
24 trespassing issues that have been going on for years and
25 not only with moose, with bear as well. There's a lot
26 of folks let's say south of the Steese Highway who come
27 up into 25C and -- on bear bait, and a lot of them are
28 trespassing on Native corporation land. And it'll be
29 nice if, like this colored sheet of paper is on, like
30 the Federal and the State regs. It's very hard for people
31 to know where land is at. And nothing's perfect with
32 finding out which checkerboard you're in while you're
33 on the land. And as far as people coming into the land,
34 they're very not respectful towards the people in the
35 area who live there. And the competition for harvesting
36 a large game animal is very high and has been for a
37 while. So, I just wanted to share that and encourage
38 your department to reach out to locals to try and get
39 involved, thank you.

40

41 MR. HOLLIS: Through the Chair, member
42 Pope, thank you.

43

44 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I just have a
45 question on the low density and why. The question is why
46 is no intensive management done on low density area? Why
47 was their -- what was their decision or driver of their
48 decision to not do intensive management on that low
49 density? Thank you.

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1 MR. HOLLIS: Mr. Chairman. I don't know
2 why that was -- you know, that determination was years
3 ago. I mean, years ago, probably 30 years ago. And I
4 don't know that it's ever been revisited, but I'm
5 guessing some of it was, you know, even back then, there
6 was probably even fewer hunters hunting it. It was
7 probably somewhat had to do -- I mean, fewer overall
8 hunters maybe not, you know, in -- from local areas. But
9 overall numbers, I'm guessing, were lower back when that
10 determination was made. But the other part of that is
11 probably the quality of habitat in that unit and what
12 may be very unsuccessful at trying to, you know, use
13 tactics such as predator control to, you know, raise the
14 moose population due to the habitat. And you know what
15 the carrying capacity could be of moose in there. That's
16 my guess.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: And, you know, the
19 villages have shrunk tremendously. And I used to have
20 1,100 people there 30 years ago in Rampart, you know,
21 one time had 10,000 people. There wasn't much left after
22 they left and for a while, but even Manley Hot Springs
23 and Tanana is 140 people now, and Rampart has only got
24 50-60 people in there. You know, I just wanted to let
25 you know that I think there was probably a lot more
26 hunters back then and or maybe not as much reporting.
27 You know, I don't know what the difference was, but I
28 just had that question and I think maybe might be
29 something for a proposal for the future or something
30 more -- to look at more in depth. I appreciate your
31 report, thank you. Any more questions for this good man?

32
33 (No response)

34
35 Thank you, sir.

36
37 MR. HOLLIS: Thank you for the
38 opportunity, appreciate it.

39
40 (Pause)

41
42 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Mr. Thomas Eaton,
43 you got the floor, thank you.

44
45 (Pause)

46
47 MR. SEATON: All right, everybody, hear
48 me now. Should I wait for a Chair, or should I? Okay,
49 so, I'm Tom Seaton, the Wood Bison Project biologist.
50 Thank you for the invitation to talk to you today. Luke

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1 Rogers is the assistant Wood Bison Project biologist,
2 and he's on a Cold River trip from -- down at the holding
3 pen to Nenana today. So, we've got the easier work. So,
4 what I wanted to do was update you a little bit. I know
5 that the Federal Subsistence Board and thus this RAC
6 doesn't have the authority on non-Federal lands, but
7 it's important to us to continue to communicate any kind
8 of updates and keep you up on what's going on with the
9 Wood Bison Project. I'll start with the amount of
10 outreach and education that we've done. Over the last
11 ten years, we've had nine wood bison planning team
12 meetings, which were three days each with as much as 30
13 interest groups attending. And the interest groups that
14 attend are associated local communities regional
15 Advisory Councils, the ACs, tribes, Native corporations,
16 wildlife conservation interests, NGOs, government
17 agencies, and regional population centers and industry.
18 So, those --all of those groups come in and they say
19 what they'd like there and provide input. And just recent
20 years, we had three day meeting for the Innoko Herd, and
21 we've had three different meetings totaling nine days
22 for the lower Tanana area in 2023 and 2024. And the
23 resulting recommendations are being worked up in a plan
24 for decision making bodies such as the Board of Game and
25 Fish and Game and other agencies and landowners
26 regarding wood bison restoration.

27
28 In addition to those planning team
29 meetings in 2023, we spent 54 days in villages along the
30 Tanana and Yukon drainage talking about wood bison with
31 people. Then some of you attended and are familiar with
32 the planning team meetings that we had for the Lower
33 Tanana. The area where we've been discussing things is
34 the Minto Flats State Game Refuge. And this summer, in
35 June, we started a soft release pen there, built that
36 with the help of people from Minto, Nenana, Manley,
37 Fairbanks, and there was even a guy from Tetlin there,
38 and we built that in about six weeks with a crew of 6
39 to 12 people, people coming in and out and fenced off
40 about 100-acre meadow there. That's about a half mile
41 off the river. Let's see, and then -- where it is, is
42 about three miles up from the mouth of Kantishna, along
43 the south bank of the Tanana, kinda halfway between the
44 mouth of the Tolovana and the mouth of Kantishna. And
45 in that area, there's the wet meadows that bison like
46 for their winter feed, you know, the wet sedge meadows
47 and in between that, there's these old pleistocene sand
48 dunes and between those meadows where bison have a really
49 broad array of habitats to choose from so they can be
50 in those drier old sand dunes. When I say sand dunes,

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1 we all know they're vegetated, they're just, you know,
2 if you dig into them, you see, they're just sand that
3 was deposited there about 10,000 years ago. But it
4 provides this diversity habitat that's really good for
5 bison there.

6
7 And let's see, we -- first how we did
8 it? To do that is we go around a meadow of that really
9 good habitat and we flag trees that are gonna be fence
10 posts, and we cut a four wheeler path around there and
11 just with hand tools, then we take rolls of wire and,
12 and connect them to the trees and it's eight foot tall
13 wire to keep the bison in and we don't use any spikes
14 or staples or anything like that so that when we're
15 done, we can just take the tie wire off and the wire
16 comes down and there's no metal in the trees that
17 somebody might encounter with a chainsaw in years to
18 come or anything like that. Then we set up camp out
19 there. We got a bunch of supplemental feed grown at
20 Delta Junction this summer, it was a great hay summer,
21 for the first half of the summer it was very dry as
22 opposed to the last half of the summer, which was crazy
23 wet. But we asked farmers in Delta last year to produce
24 certified weed-free hay so that we could use it for the
25 wood bison projects so that we wouldn't be moving any
26 weeds around. And they did a really good job of that.
27 We got 180 bales, round bales that are like 1,200 pounds
28 each and got them out there with the barge. We also
29 brought a bunch of pelletized supplemental feeds from
30 the Alaska Mill and Feed in Anchorage.

31
32 So, in July and August, we shipped bison
33 from the Large Animal Research Station and the Wildlife
34 Conservation Center south of Anchorage, and for a total
35 of 58 bison. Most of those are young animals so,
36 yearlings and two-year-olds, but there are some three-
37 year-olds in there also. And there should be about 7 or
38 8 females that could potentially give birth in the
39 spring, which is an important thing for the release. The
40 shipment from LARS was about an hour by truck and eight
41 hours by barge, and the shipment from A to BCC south to
42 Anchorage, excuse me, was about six hours by truck and
43 eight hours by barge.

44
45 So, what we're doing now with the 58
46 bison in this pen? The pen is about 100 acres, and that's
47 about two and a half miles of fencing around it. The
48 bison are out there, they're eating you know, wild feeds
49 that are -- that they're used to in a wild setting. And
50 they're also eating the captive feeds that we brought

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1 them, it's kind of a transition, a little bit of
2 rewilding going on there. And they've been doing that
3 since they arrived in July and August. What we plan to
4 do is continue with the best care we can throughout
5 October through April, and that includes a weekly body-
6 condition assessments, daily fence inspections, you
7 know, the fence kinda goes through the forest. So,
8 whenever there's a wind, there's often a tree down, you
9 know, on the forest or something like that. So, first
10 thing in the morning we'll go walk the fence and get rid
11 of any of that. The fence is pretty strong. So, even
12 when, some of those big spruce come down on it, it only,
13 you know, goes down to 4 or 5ft. The other thing, too,
14 is the bison are pretty happy where they're at. So,
15 they're not interested in trying to find a hole through
16 the fence or something. Then of course, the daily
17 feedings, the supplements, and then training bison to
18 be tractable is important. So, when we give our
19 supplements, which is like the pelletized feed they
20 notice that we're giving it to them. And so, they're
21 interested in approaching us and are, you know,
22 following what we do and so, that we can use that as a
23 training tool for when we do open the gates and let them
24 out, we can kinda guide them out to out the gate.

25
26 So, later on this winter and towards
27 spring, we'll try to assess pregnancy and the potential
28 adult cows that could be giving birth. And we'll look
29 at their feces and urine that they leave in the snow for
30 that. And then when we have an understanding of who's
31 pregnant, we'll watch them and wait for them to calve.
32 And then after calving, when there's a flush of green,
33 we can release them into the Refuge. The effort is to
34 anchor them to this area and there's several ways that
35 this effort is doing that. They'll spend a long time in
36 the pen, there's good habitat all around the pen, cows
37 are likely to calve in the pen. And so, one of the nice
38 things about that is if you look at any kind of wild
39 ungulate, wherever they calve, the cow is likely to
40 include that in her annual home range every year and so,
41 that'll help anchor them to the area. Another one is
42 that the cows will have calves that heel when they're
43 released. So, with a small calve at heel a cow can't
44 travel a long distance. And the cool thing is that those
45 cows that have calves are leading the whole group. So,
46 it kind of affects everybody there, and that'll slow
47 everybody down. And then of course, the flush of green
48 right at green up, if we release them right then, is
49 gonna help with the minimum amount of searching for
50 really good food, you know when things first turn green,

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1 almost anything is edible at that time. There's not a
2 lot of defense compounds or fiber in the diet. So, they
3 don't have to look far for food. And then another thing
4 that's not about anchoring, but just about survival is
5 that when these animals go out the youngest cohort, other
6 than the brand-new young calves will be two years old.
7 So, by the time they get to the following winter, they'll
8 be past that kinda young and vulnerable stage for
9 overwintering.

10
11 There is opportunities to participate.
12 If anybody here or anybody listening to this today would
13 like to participate. Just contact me and Luke and we can
14 potentially get you out there to the pen to spend a
15 little time if you'd like. The post release monitoring
16 plan is to -- we've got all the bison collared right
17 now, and we plan to observe their locations daily after
18 release. And then we'll have intensive monitoring, just
19 like we did in Innoko Herd, where we try to understand
20 births and deaths, the number every year, what they're
21 eating, what their health is like, that sort of thing.
22 And we are prepared to train bison away from
23 infrastructure like highway and railroad and things like
24 that.

25
26 We're working on the implementation and
27 management plan for the lower Tanana drainage. The plan
28 includes input from 29 planning team interest groups.
29 The draft plan has made it through a review with the
30 Fish and Wildlife Service since back in the hands of
31 Fish and Game, where we're addressing those that review.
32 My intent today, of course, is to keep you aware of the
33 progress. And the draft plan we're working on has all
34 those nine full days of planning team meetings included
35 in it. Are you -- through the Chair, are you interested
36 in Innoko Herd update today, or am I running out of
37 time? Okay.

38
39 So, the Innoko population, if I had a
40 screen, I could show you a graph but essentially, it's
41 had its ups and downs over the years. And after a really
42 difficult winter, in the spring of 2023, we were down
43 to about 75 animals. We went out and looked at them this
44 year and on top of those 70 some animals there, they had
45 about 21 calves, is what we could find and so, that we
46 expect it to be growing back. We -- a lot of the bison
47 were in the trees this summer or when we went to go
48 inventory them and we couldn't get a really good count.
49 So, we're waiting for a good snow layer. So, that's a
50 white background to give it a try again. But I expect

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1 that population to have jumped up into the 90s or high
2 80s or something like that and hopefully we'll be working
3 our way up. Since then, we've been looking at weather
4 data a little bit and the -- we got some weather data
5 from western Alaska. It looks like late winter snows
6 really matter to bison. And it does for, you know,
7 caribou, moose and sheep and everything else too,
8 because animals that are out there are kind of getting
9 -- they're using up their body reserves all winter and
10 then they're kind of at their last of their reserves and
11 then late winter snows can really affect mortality. And
12 when we look at Western Alaska snows over the last 100
13 years, this last ten years the bison have been in the
14 Innoko is more than double the average in late winter
15 snow, than any of the last 100 years. So, it's -- we're
16 just kind of got some bad luck in the Innoko as far as
17 crappy weather, but we can see that as all of you, I'm
18 sure know, you know, we've lost a lot of our sheep, a
19 lot of our caribou, a lot of our moose in interior Alaska
20 from that same sort of weather in the last ten years.
21 And it's just kind of a difficult time. So, hopefully
22 things will go back to normal fairly soon. And that
23 concludes what I've got, if you have any questions I'd
24 be happy.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any questions?
27 Donald.

28
29 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Tom, for that
30 report. What is the average survival rate for calves?
31 The percentage.

32
33 MR. SEATON: It depends on the herd. So,
34 if you look at Delta Junction Plains Bison Herd that's
35 been there about 96 years now, they -- it's often close
36 to 100%, it's like 95%, it's really interesting. And one
37 of the things that occurred for decades in the Delta
38 area, you can go out as a manager you could go look at
39 the number of calves that were born that year and
40 consider that to be the amount that you could set up for
41 harvest, you know. And that's very unique when it comes
42 to animal populations. With moose, for example, of 100
43 calves that are born, you know, maybe ten will make it
44 to adulthood, you know, maybe 15 something like that
45 depends on where they're at. So, survival is generally
46 really high with bison, but it depends if you have a
47 really productive population or not. So, what I just
48 said was Delta was a productive population. If you look
49 at, for example, the Chitina Herd, that's not very
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1 productive that -- I would say, you know, mortality is
2 fairly high on calves.

3

4 MR. WOODRUFF: I got one question to go.
5 And so, what is the snow depth that they can tolerate?
6 The most snow depth they can tolerate.

7

8 MR. SEATON: Through the Chair. Yeah, the
9 -- that depends on the conditions of the snow. So, when
10 snow is soft bison can handle snow up to a meter deep,
11 you know. So, three feet deep or more. And there's plenty
12 of evidence where they do just fine when that's soft,
13 which is a lot like Interior conditions. But in recent
14 years we've had rain on snow events and melting events
15 that settle that snow, make ice layers, make things hard
16 and then that's much more difficult for bison to get
17 through that. And it's kind of a fine line because if
18 you're really cold the snow stays soft. If you warm up
19 some to near freezing, then the snow can set up those
20 ice layers and be hard. But if you warm up a little more
21 to where the snow melts, then you've got open forage and
22 that's what happened in '21, '22 when -- I think I'm
23 saying the right year, when we had the December rain on
24 snow event here in town and in Delta Junction, that just
25 wreaked havoc on ungulates all over the Interior. In the
26 Innoko at that same time, that storm was a little bit
27 warmer, and so it was 45 degrees for like nine days, and
28 it melted all the snow out. Mortality was almost zero
29 that winter. Bison had this big break in the middle of
30 winter where there was no snow at all and they did great.
31 You know, the -- all the yearlings survived, and the
32 calves survived, and everything was good while here in
33 the Interior it was going really bad. Now that difference
34 in temperature was like less than ten degrees between
35 what it was here and what it was in the Innoko. And so,
36 you know, as the climate warms, if we believe that it's
37 warming you know, we're just kind of like, right on that
38 bad edge right now to where we have, you know, chinooks
39 that melt stuff out versus just these icing events right
40 in the middle. But they can handle a lot of snow, they're
41 designed for, you know, snow and northern climates.
42 That's one of the things about wood bison that's
43 different than plains bison is that, that shape of that
44 hump and the bigger head and all that is designed for
45 sweeping snow, that's what it's for.

46

47 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any other
48 questions? We appreciate your report, thank you so much.

49

50 MR. SEATON: Welcome.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I've been told that you have a report for the Fortymile Herd, Jeff and Jason. Thank you, guys, for being here.

MR. GROSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record, my name is Jeff Gross. I'm the Alaska Department of Fish and Game area biologist based out of Tok. I do manage the Fortymile Caribou Herd. My supervisor Jason Caikoski is online as well, may be able to answer a few questions if I'm unable to. Apologize I don't have a formal report I'm actually in town doing Fortymile caribou captures this week, and we got enough staff today that they were able to go out without me and so I can certainly answer some questions. I know there's some specific questions some folks have for us. Just in general, kinda 10,000-foot view of the Fortymile Herd. We -- the Herd's been in decline since about 2018, it peaked out in 2017 at about 80 -- 80,000 caribou or a little better. Right now, the best estimate we have is about 30,000 give or take is in the Herd right now. We did get a photo census this summer, and photographs are being counted as we speak here. Hopefully we'll have that done in the next week or so. I did get the composition survey done on Tuesday this week, which is good, we didn't get one last year.

Obviously, the harvest quotas on the Herd have gone way down. And we're gonna be faced with some various challenges as time goes on here. We did have some harvest on the Steese Highway and in the fly-in areas. This fall, there was almost no harvest over on the Taylor Highway side. I doubt anybody in Eagle took caribou this fall. But there will be a winter hunt, depending on the number of caribou close to highways we could see a couple of different management strategies to try to still provide opportunity. We do have a targeted hunt that we've been accepting applications for, which is kind of like a draw hunt, basically a draw hunt. If need be, we'll utilize that but it's kind of a last resort to provide opportunity if we just can't open the normal registration hunt because it's just too many caribou available. I would anticipate that would probably only occur on the Steese Highway. I doubt it will happen on the Taylor Highway, the Taylor Highway should still see a registration hunt, best guess. There are caribou though so, who knows. But otherwise, I'm happy to answer questions. Anybody has any?

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1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much
2 for taking your day to come over here and talk with us.
3 We really appreciate you being here. It makes a world
4 of difference to have you guys in the room so we can
5 look at you, and listen to you, and talk with you. So,
6 I really appreciate, any questions. Thank you. Oh, go
7 ahead, Andy.

8
9 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you for the
10 record, member Bassich. Jeff, we've been talking a lot
11 about the Fortymile Caribou Herd and the need for the
12 Coalition meeting. So, can you update us on any plans
13 for another Fortymile Coalition meeting this coming
14 winter?

15
16 MR. GROSS: We have been working toward
17 that. Jason is on the line, I might let him address this
18 further, but right now there is an effort to send some
19 information out to members to work toward having those
20 meetings this winter. I don't know, Jason, are you
21 online?

22
23 MR. CAIKOSKI: Yeah, I'm here. Chairman
24 Wright, members of the Council, this is Jason Caikoski,
25 the Management Coordinator for Department of Fish and
26 Game here in Fairbanks, sitting at my desk. Can you guys
27 hear me okay?

28
29 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes, sir. Go ahead.

30
31 MR. CAIKOSKI: All right, thank you.
32 Yeah, thanks for having me. We've gotten several
33 requests over the last several months from the State ACs
34 as well as obviously an inquiry here from this Council
35 to get the Coalition back together and revise and or
36 update that Harvest Management Plan. The department is
37 very close to sending out a letter to past Coalition
38 members to work on convening a meeting or a series of
39 meetings to start maybe as early as late winter or
40 possibly spring. The department is currently exploring
41 financial options to pay for this meeting, both in terms
42 of venue and travel for Coalition members and we'll be
43 working on that with -- some of those aspects anyways,
44 with our other agency, you know, cooperators, BLM,
45 National Park Service etc. Obviously, this Council was
46 a member of the Coalition in the past. You guys will be
47 getting a letter to participate and be a part of that
48 coalition again this go around. And with that, I don't
49 really have any more specific updates other than you
50 guys will be receiving a letter, and we're gonna get

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1 that group together. I heard possibly through -- I can't
2 remember, there might be interest in you guys electing,
3 if that's the right word, a member of this Council and
4 then possibly an alternate for those meetings. Again,
5 you all have opportunity to do that in the future, but
6 if that's something you want to take advantage of now
7 at the will of the Chair and this Council, you're welcome
8 to do that at this meeting if that's a good use of your
9 time. Otherwise, there'll be opportunity for that in the
10 future.

11
12 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, member Bassich here.
13 Thank you very much. I just want to really emphasize the
14 importance of this. I've spoken with a number of the AC
15 Chairs in the region that are on that Council, and
16 everyone feels the same, that it's really critical for
17 us to meet and discuss harvest management plans and
18 strategies. So, yeah, we'll be waiting for information
19 with bated breath right now. Thank you very much for
20 that.

21
22 And Jeff, I have one question for you.
23 The closing down -- I saw the announcements for the
24 registration for the draw hunt and I was not real clear
25 on how that is gonna impact people in our region as far
26 as a hunt. So, is it gonna be an open winter hunt or do
27 people have to register for that hunt, and then people
28 in different regions will be selected to be able to
29 hunt? It was kind of confusing to me, thank you.

30
31 MR. GROSS: Member Bassich, through the
32 Chair. The preference, of course, is to just open the
33 registration hunt like normal on October 27th, and
34 that's what we'll do if we can. But with the quota being
35 so low as a backup option we are accepting these
36 applications so we could draw some participants to hunt
37 this targeted hunt. If we're unable to open the
38 registration hunt and that wouldn't occur until at least
39 December. So, the first strategy would be to delay an
40 opener, a registration hunt opener, and see if the
41 caribou move around enough to open it. And then if not
42 by December, we'd be looking at the targeted hunt as a
43 potential opportunity. Again, I think on the Eagle side,
44 on Zone 3, it's just not as much of an issue in the
45 winter especially with the highway not being maintained.
46 So, I doubt, I'm not saying 100%, but I doubt we will -
47 - we would need to use the targeted hunt there. I'm
48 hoping we can just open the registration hunt. The
49 caribou are kinda moving through the middle of their
50 range as they go through the rut right now. The head of

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1 the herds kind of in Yukon-Charlie and they've thinned
2 out on the Steese Highway considerably over the last
3 week -- ten days. And so, I'm hoping we're gonna be able
4 to open the registration hunt in all zones. But I do
5 think there is a possibility on the Steese Highway side,
6 Zones 1 and 4, that we would have to delay it initially.
7 But again, caribou or caribou, so, does that answer your
8 question or?
9

10 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, yeah it does. You
11 know, I know in the harvest plan, there's also that
12 special hunt allocated to Eagle. I believe it's towards
13 the end of this month or middle of this month. And I'm
14 wondering if -- I mean I've driven the Highway a couple
15 times in the last few weeks, and zero caribou trails and
16 tracks anywhere, and zero moose tracks anywhere. A lot
17 of ptarmigan. Don can testify to that, and I'll confirm
18 it. So, I don't, you know, it's obvious they're not in
19 the area, but maybe the opportunity to open up that hunt
20 for local people to go out and maybe get lucky would be
21 really advantageous with the loss of salmon and the low
22 moose populations people in Eagle are pretty desperate
23 right now so, please keep that in mind. I know we worked
24 long and hard to get that hunt put into place for years
25 like this, and we just need the caribou to cooperate.
26 But thank you, I think that answered my question.
27

28 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Now I just want to
29 say really quick that at the last meeting Mr. Donald
30 Woodruff was selected to be the Eastern Interior's
31 representative on the Fortymile Coalition. Just so that
32 you guys know and it's on the record, and we really
33 appreciate your -- you coming and giving a report today
34 and it means a lot. Go ahead, Don.
35

36 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Charlie, this
37 is Don. You don't have any metrics to share with us
38 today?
39

40 MR. GROSS: Mr. Wood -- member Woodruff
41 through the Chair. I can answer individual questions if
42 you want, I don't have any handouts or anything specific
43 right now. Did you have anything you're wondering about?
44

45 MR. WOODRUFF: I'm, yeah, I'm curious
46 about the three-year-old parturition rate. And if it's
47 going up or down or stable or what direction we're going
48 with that?
49

50

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1 MR. GROSS: Yeah, I'll just kinda try to
2 work through some metrics here. The three-year-old
3 parturition rate, it's continued to stay low. It's come
4 up a little bit, but nothing significant. In addition
5 to that, our survival rates have remained low. Even
6 though when you look at the animals in the fall and even
7 last spring the body condition wise they look much better
8 than when they were at peak. But the actual monitored
9 survival rates haven't improved. In fact, this past
10 winter we saw the lowest adult cow survival rates that
11 we've ever documented in the Herd, which was very
12 honestly, very surprising. But, I mean, it is
13 surprising, but it's not because we know with caribou
14 herds, when they decline, they decline. And obvious
15 [sic] that means lower survival. So, we'll continue to
16 monitor those right now, you know, now that we got the
17 composition survey done this week, we'll be able to take
18 a look at our bull-cow ratio. That's obviously something
19 that is pretty important when we have a bulls only
20 season, we're trying to maximize harvest. We obviously
21 want to maintain a certain bull-cow ratio. But that will
22 be something we'll be discussing at the Coalition
23 meetings. Reproduction, even though the -- in addition
24 to the three-year old's not performing very well yet
25 overall, the reproduction is [sic] continued to stay
26 fairly low for all age classes. So, low production, high
27 mortality. We're not out of the woods yet. I don't
28 anticipate that we're gonna stabilize just yet. I don't
29 think we're at the bottom yet. So, wish I had better
30 news, but that's the facts.

31
32 MR. WOODRUFF: And one more comment, I
33 was able in August to listen to the Federal Subsistence
34 Board meeting, and there was some discussion about the
35 tribes in Canada requesting the Harvest Coalition meet.
36 And so, I think that they're very integral in the Harvest
37 Management Plan, and I think we should invite them back,
38 thank you.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,
41 any more questions? Okay, go ahead, Amanda.

42
43 MS. POPE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just
44 had a quick question. How many non-residents are
45 participating in that -- in the hunt in the past year,
46 like how many have been harvested by non-residents?

47
48 MR. GROSS: Amanda Pope, through the
49 Chair. I don't have exact numbers, but kinda going back
50 to some data I put together for a presentation to the

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1 Board of Game last spring to address a proposal to
2 eliminate non-resident -- to eliminate non-residents
3 from the road accessible zones. That was submitted by
4 the RAC or the Resident Hunters of Alaska Organization.
5 We did -- we have seen increased participation by non-
6 residents along the Road System in the past 4 or 5 years.
7 There was a year or two where we were -- where we saw
8 in recent years, over the last few years as the quotas
9 has declined. Around 20% of the harvest was taken by
10 non-residents along the Steese Highway in a year or two
11 or a couple of years there. Whether or not that will
12 continue, we don't know. But we did present that to the
13 Board, the Board chose to continue allowing non-resident
14 hunting. And so, that's kind of where we're at right
15 now. I haven't crunched the numbers, I guess this -- for
16 this fall, so.

17
18 MS. POPE: A follow up question, thank
19 you, Mr. Chair. I am very -- for the record, my name is
20 Amanda Pope. I am very concerned for this herd, and I'm
21 glad that the Coalition meeting is gonna continue. I
22 really support that, and getting the locals involved
23 with the management efforts for that herd. As far as my
24 concerns go for the numbers that we have now, and
25 continuing for it to be open for non-residents is very
26 concerning cause a lot of people obviously within the
27 region are not being able to harvest anything. And even
28 with subsistence, it's very hard for people to even see
29 a caribou anymore. Even when the hunting isn't going on,
30 it's very hard to fathom that there's not really much
31 caribou anymore. I wouldn't want any other areas within
32 the region or any part of the State to have the numbers
33 that we have. But unfortunately, it had happened in the
34 past where the harvest numbers are -- from non-residents
35 are pretty high and the numbers for the quota have been
36 going -- it had been contributing to the lack of animals
37 that we have, and it's just concerning. But I'm glad the
38 Coalition meeting is gonna continue, thank you.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more questions?

41
42 (No response)

43
44 I think in times of low numbers and
45 hearing people talking lately about the low success for
46 the qualified users I think that something needs to be
47 done, and I too am really happy to hear about the
48 Coalition coming back so we can talk about these things
49 and adjust maybe in the future. People are having a hard
50 time, people in the villages and people who rely on that

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1 meat. So, we need to start thinking and trying to take
2 care of them first. The people that -- Alaskans that
3 really survive off of this resource, the lack of fish
4 in the Yukon River is taking a huge percentage of their,
5 their livelihood I'd say, their food, the way they
6 survive, so. I look forward to your report. I look
7 forward to maybe being at this next Coalition meeting
8 to talk. And I really appreciate you coming here today.
9 It means a lot, thank you very much.

10

11 MR. GROSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

12

13 (Pause)

14

15 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: We're gonna give you
16 guys a two-minute break, cause [sic] I know that'll be
17 ten.

18

19 (Off record)

20

21 (On record)

22

23 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: We have a really big
24 agenda. So, let's try to find our seats, please. Thank
25 you.

26

27 (Pause)

28

29 Okay, getting started again with
30 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. Cory Graham got
31 the floor, sir.

32

33 MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair, members of the
34 Council. My name is Cory Graham. I'm a Fisheries
35 Biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management.
36 Materials relevant to this presentation can be found on
37 page 260 of your Council book. This is an action item,
38 at the end of my presentation, I'll ask the Council to
39 approve the list of Priority Information Needs for the
40 Yukon Region. But before we dive into the Priority
41 Information Needs discussion, I'll briefly introduce the
42 Monitoring Program. So, the Office of Subsistence
43 Management administers the Monitoring Program, which
44 funds research and monitoring projects that help manage
45 subsistence fisheries in Federal public waters of
46 Alaska. The Monitoring Program is also directed at
47 supporting meaningful involvement in fisheries
48 management by Alaska native and rural organizations, and
49 promoting collaboration among Federal, State, and Alaska
50 Native and rural organizations. I really want to

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1 highlight this point because yesterday Andy had
2 mentioned how collaboration and partnerships would be
3 necessary for the PIN meta or the meta-analysis PIN. But
4 as far as the Monitoring Program goes, we believe
5 partnerships are necessary and important for all
6 projects. The Office of Subsistence Management will
7 announce the 2026 Notice of Funding Opportunity for the
8 Monitoring Program later this winter. So, the first step
9 in the funding process is for Regional Advisory Councils
10 to identify Priority Information Needs for each region
11 and Priority Information Needs identify issues of local
12 concern and knowledge gaps related to subsistence
13 fisheries. In addition, they guide the Monitoring
14 Program by determining the type of projects that are
15 submitted for funding and providing a framework for
16 evaluating and selecting project proposals. In August,
17 volunteer members from the Eastern Interior, Western
18 Interior and Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Councils met to
19 develop a draft list of Priority Information Needs for
20 the Yukon region.

21
22 We had really great turnout from this
23 Council so, members from our - volunteers from your
24 Council included Andy, Charlie, Eva and Dorothy. So,
25 that's the brief intro to the Monitoring Program. The
26 draft Priority Information Needs for the Yukon Region
27 again, are listed on page 260 of your book, and note
28 that the bold language represents changes or additions
29 to last year's -- or last cycle's Priority Information
30 Needs. So, I'll go through -- I'll read the draft list
31 and then ask the Council if they have any comments on
32 or just to approve the list. So, the list of Priority
33 Information Needs developed by the volunteer group for
34 the Yukon Region included impacts of climate change to
35 the harvest and use of fish, and impacts of climate
36 change on fish for example, impacts to fish migration,
37 spawning, and life cycle. Knowledge of population,
38 reproduction, and health of spawning habitat for Bering
39 cisco and humpback whitefish. Estimates of chinook,
40 summer chum, fall chum, and coho salmon escapements and
41 or harvests. Distribution, abundance, condition and
42 survival of juvenile and out-migrating salmon in the
43 Yukon River drainage. Increased understanding of the
44 abundance, distribution, migration patterns, and
45 spawning locations of chinook and chum salmon in the
46 Innoko River. Non-lethal estimates of quality of
47 escapement for chinook salmon for example potential egg
48 deposition, age, sex and size composition of spawners,
49 weight and girth of spawners, percentage of females,
50 percentage of jacks and spawning habitat usage with an

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1 emphasis on Canadian origin stocks. Community-based
2 monitoring of salmon and resident species presence,
3 abundance, life history patterns, harvests, genetics and
4 age, sex, length composition, incidental and delayed
5 mortality from entanglements and dropouts, habitat
6 restoration needs, and or environmental variables in
7 tributaries to better understand fish and keep users
8 engaged during years of limited fishing opportunities.
9 In-season estimates of genetic, stock composition of
10 chinook, summer chum and fall chum salmon runs.
11 Traditional Ecological Knowledge of fishes, for example,
12 to identify salmon spawning and or rearing locations to
13 expand -- and expand the waters, Anadromous Waters
14 Catalog, excuse me. Advanced genetic baselines for
15 chinook, summer chum, fall chum and coho salmon by
16 screening additional populations and novel genetic
17 markers to improve the accuracy, precision, and scale
18 of stock composition estimates to inform stock
19 assessment for Yukon River fisheries at the tributary
20 level. Funding to facilitate interagency, tribal, and
21 stakeholder forums for gathering and sharing input on
22 fishery management issues, including cross
23 jurisdictional and co-management of salmon. Seasonal
24 salmon life stage usage of tidal tributaries draining
25 the Yukon Coastal District through an interdisciplinary
26 approach documenting Traditional Ecological Knowledge
27 and biological surveys in order to update the Anadromous
28 Waters Catalog and improve management's understanding
29 of salmon in these streams. And finally, meta-analysis
30 of existing information and research examining the
31 relative importance of freshwater e.g. predation,
32 stranding, heat stress, reduction in marine drive
33 nutrients; and marine e.g. environmental conditions,
34 bycatch, interception, migration routes, hatchery
35 production and competition factors in causing declines
36 of Yukon River chinook and chum salmon and or resident
37 species to present at relevant Regional Advisory Council
38 meetings. So, that concludes the draft list. Again, this
39 is an action item we're requesting the Council to comment
40 on and approve the list of Priority Information Needs
41 for the Yukon Region. The Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and
42 Western Interior RACs met and approved the list as
43 presented to you. So, that concludes my presentation.
44 I'll stand by for any questions you may have, thank you.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Go ahead,
47 Andy.

48
49 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you. I'm
50 wondering -- I'd like to make a motion, but before we

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1 do -- well maybe -- do you want me to make a motion for
2 passing it right now to take -- get it on the table for
3 discussion or? Sorry.

4

5 MS. MCDAVID: Before motion, we do have
6 one written comment from the SRC so, I think it would
7 be appropriate to read that now. So, the SRC did review
8 the draft priority information needs for the Yukon and
9 suggested adding an additional one to study the effects
10 of in-river predation on salmon as they migrate up-
11 river. It is important to have information about factors
12 that can impact whether fish are getting to the spawning
13 grounds. Thank you.

14

15 (Pause)

16

17 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Andy, you're first.

18

19 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Mr. Chair, would you
20 like a motion just to get this on the table for
21 discussion, or, how do you want?

22

23 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yeah.

24

25 MR. BASSICH: Okay. I make a motion that
26 the Eastern Interior RAC adopt the 2026 Draft Yukon
27 Priority Information Needs with the addition to -- from
28 the SRC as given to us. Thank you.

29

30 MS. ENTSMINGER: Second.

31

32 MR. BASSICH: Thank you. Speaking to the
33 motion. I think I'd really -- if it's appropriate for
34 the OSM office and the people working on this, I would
35 like to add to our motion and to our approval,
36 highlighting maybe the top three or four that we would
37 like to see. So, doing a little bit of a priority. Yeah,
38 go ahead, thank you.

39

40 MR. GRAHAM: Member Bassich, through the
41 Chair. So, you can do that. However, how the scoring
42 occurs, there's no mechanism in place to really consider
43 that. So, it won't have a lot of weight during the
44 scoring process. If you want to do that and to highlight
45 what you think is really important, you can do it. It
46 just might not come through when it's being scored. So,
47 thank you.

48

49 MR. BASSICH: Thank you for that
50 clarification, that's completely understood. But I think

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1 it's really important to get on the record some of the
2 top priorities that this RAC has in regards to that. I
3 mean, this covers a pretty broad spectrum. And so, I
4 think narrowing it down specifically to some of the needs
5 that we feel in our region is maybe good to get on the
6 record, and it may carry some weight in the decision
7 making. So, that being said, I've gone through some of
8 these, and I would just like to pick out the top four
9 that I think are super important. The first one is the
10 very last bullet, meta-analysis of existing information.
11 My second highest ranking would be estimates of chinook,
12 summer chum, fall chum, and coho salmon escapements, but
13 I'd also like to add the wording of discrete stocks for
14 chum salmon to that. I think we missed that in our
15 discussions when we were in a group formulating that,
16 but it's become very apparent that we need to have a
17 better understanding of the discrete summer chum and
18 fall chum stocks and their productivity. I think we have
19 pretty good information on chinook salmon.

20
21 Pardon, Mr. Chair. I think we really
22 need to start understanding the discrete stocks
23 productivity. My number three would be non-lethal
24 estimates of quality escapement and that paragraph and
25 in particular highlighting weight and girth. We have
26 baseline from that through the Yukon River Panel
27 projects. I can't remember the year, early, mid 2000,
28 somewhere around there. And I think it's appropriate at
29 this point in time with the phenotypic change in fish
30 to get another reading on that. I think that's super
31 important right now to understand the condition of our
32 fish right now and how it's impacting their productivity
33 under current management strategies. And then the final
34 one is funding to facilitate interagency, tribal and
35 stakeholder forum for gathering and sharing input and
36 information including cross-jurisdictional and co-
37 management of salmon. That's been a big topic at this
38 meeting, and I think that's -- as I spoke earlier, that's
39 one of the foundations of how we're gonna have to build
40 for success. So, I think that's super critical. That
41 concludes my priorities, Mr. Chair, thank you.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I really appreciate
44 that, Andy. Because we're in an agreement right now and
45 we're not fishing and people are hungry. So, I think we
46 need to try to prioritize and figure out the best way
47 going forward to get more fish on the spawning ground
48 and onto people's tables. So, whether or not it means
49 anything, we're gonna put it on the record. I appreciate

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1 you, Andy, for that. Thank you. Anybody else? Go ahead,
2 Donald.

3
4 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you Chair, this is
5 Don. I know I don't want to throw a wrench in the fire,
6 but we can't keep doing things the same way, is what I'm
7 -- where I'm coming from. And what you said is, it won't
8 carry much weight. But like Charlie said, we're
9 desperate, we're beyond desperate, we're hungry and when
10 people are hungry, they get angry. And they won't follow
11 any kind of rules or regulations. And so, we need to do
12 better. And everyone in the room realizes that we can
13 do a better job if we just have the will, thank you.

14
15 MR. GRAHAM: So, I would like to respond,
16 through the Chair. So, I probably shouldn't said have
17 much weight. The important part -- that would just be
18 during the scoring process but it is important to get
19 this on the record because people are listening in,
20 people that are gonna be developing projects so, it will
21 hold weight with them. So, I probably didn't say it as
22 I should, but it is important because people are
23 listening, they're gonna develop projects, they know
24 what's important to you, so, thank you for putting it
25 on the record.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much
28 for that. And anybody else have any more questions? Okay,
29 go ahead, Linda.

30
31 MS. EVANS: I don't have any question,
32 but I think it's really important to put on this document
33 that the local peoples need to be included on this,
34 traditional knowledge. Thank you.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: And I agree that the
37 -- and I think the community-based monitoring is gonna
38 be a big part going forward on what people are doing and
39 the good counts, we need that cause without the
40 community-based monitoring there's not a lot of other
41 ways to keep count and a good count. So, I think we can
42 add that to number five and what Linda said.

43
44 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I have a question.
45 When you -- can you do a very brief overview of the
46 process now that you have this document. The process
47 that takes place within OSM for selecting projects, is
48 this just a call that's gonna go out for proponents to
49 then put in for proposals and funding? Okay. So, maybe
50 that said thank you very much for the shake of the head

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1 in the affirmative. I guess in my view, there's also
2 been a lot of discussion, thank you for bringing that
3 up, Linda, that community-based monitoring is an
4 essential part of how we want to move forward. So, in
5 your call for proposals, if there could be some language
6 in that to highly encourage any proposals coming in to
7 show how they are gonna work with local communities where
8 possible. And I don't know if that language is in there,
9 but I think -- I would assume it probably is, but I want
10 to highlight that that's super important moving forward
11 on all projects, whether there through OSM or ADF&G,
12 U.S. Fish and Wildlife. That's what the people want and
13 what the people need. Thank you.

14

15 MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair. I would just like
16 to point out all proposals are scored on like rural
17 capacity building, working with local communities,
18 partnerships. It's a fundamental aspect of the
19 Monitoring Program. So, thank you.

20

21 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more questions?
22 Go ahead.

23

24 MS. MCDAVID: I just have a process
25 weigh-in here cause [sic] I know you guys love when I
26 get in the mix with Robert's Rules of Order. But since
27 the motion was to adopt the -- with the addition from
28 the SRC, and we have since discussed one addition that
29 we want to make to one of the bullets and then the
30 highlighting of the most important topics for this RAC,
31 you might want to amend the motion, thanks.

32

33 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, I'd like to
34 amend my motion with the approval of the second.

35

36 MS. ENTSMINGER: You have the approval.

37

38 MR. BASSICH: Okay, thank you. I'd like
39 to amend the motion that the Eastern Interior RAC approve
40 or support the 2026 Draft Yukon Priority Information
41 needs. That would -- it would also include a prioritized
42 ranking from the Eastern RAC and include the additions
43 of -- can you speak to the effects? Thank you.

44

45 MS. MCDAVID: Sure. So, there was an
46 addition to the third bullet down to add discrete, the
47 wording discrete stocks for chum salmon.

48

49 MR. BASSICH: Correct, thank you.

50

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1 Discrete stocks and that community-
2 based monitoring be highlighted in any call or any --
3 in the call for proposals for proponents on these topics.
4 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

5
6 MS. ENTSMINGER: Had concurred, okay. But
7 it's not really an amendment, it's just the motion,
8 right?

9
10 MR. BASSICH: Yeah.

11
12 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, thank you.

13
14 MR. BASSICH: Do you want me to support
15 that, I guess I'll just reference the earlier comments
16 in our discussion for support of this motion, Mr. Chair
17 and look forward to seeing some of these projects done.
18 And I'm really hoping that funding can be increased to
19 do more, thank you.

20
21 MS. ENTSMINGER: Call for the question.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Oh, excuse me. This
24 is Charlie, seeing how we all agree here I'm gonna ask
25 for unanimous consent. Anybody against that?

26
27 (No response)

28
29 Passes, thank you.

30
31 (Pause)

32
33 We are now at -- on the agenda, the
34 annual report and the Council Coordinator will take over
35 now.

36
37 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you very much, Mr.
38 Chair. So, your Annual Report Reply from the Federal
39 Subsistence Board for your last year's Annual Report is
40 included in your binders under tab one. And if you
41 remember, I think you guys won the award for longest
42 Annual Report. Thank you for that work you made me do.
43 But before we get started, I did wanna [sic] -- cause I
44 think when we talk about last year's Annual Report, some
45 ideas might come up for this year's Annual Report. So,
46 before we get into further discussion of the Annual
47 Report we do have some recommendations from the OSM
48 leadership team and the Board about how to make the
49 Annual Report process a little more efficient. And by
50 that, I mean, it's a lot of work on the back end to get

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1 those replies to you. And so, I know at our meetings in
2 the past, we've also kind of weighed sometimes what is
3 more appropriate to send as correspondence versus what
4 is appropriate to include in the Annual Report and
5 sometimes you've done both. And so now we're being asked
6 to maybe not do both because then it creates the need
7 for two replies. And so, some of the direction we've
8 gotten is, if there are issues that you want the Board
9 to elevate to the Secretary of Interior and the Secretary
10 of Agriculture and or, do those as correspondence. You
11 can mention them in your annual report that you're
12 sending correspondence on that topic, but there's
13 currently not an avenue to elevate the topics in the
14 annual report to the Secretary. So, for the meantime,
15 sending those things that you wish to be elevated as
16 correspondence would be great. The other main thing that
17 has been asked is, if it is something that is outside
18 the Board's jurisdiction but could be perhaps addressed
19 by one of the agencies represented on the Board that we
20 send correspondence directly to that agency. We can let
21 the Board know that we're doing that in the Annual
22 Report, make them aware of the issue but it would be
23 more of an informational item for the Board. I guess on
24 that note too, there's -- the request is too to be very
25 clear about -- within the topics that we include, which
26 ones are informational for the Board. We're letting
27 them, you know, become aware of your concerns and issues.
28 But if there are requests for specific action from the
29 Board to be very specific about what we want, and I know
30 we've been trying to do that, but this -- just wanted
31 to reiterate those points in requests we got from the
32 leadership team, so.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I want to also add
35 that we have an extra day here, but still there's a lot
36 more work to do. Our agenda is huge and we've been very
37 lenient with letting people come and talk. But right
38 now, we need to get to action items first, and if there's
39 time after that, we'll let people talk for sure. But
40 we're running out of time, so we need to push it a little
41 bit. And we appreciate your patience with us, thank you.

42
43 MS. MCDONALD: Thanks for saying that, Mr.
44 Chair. We do have one request for a public comment on
45 the Annual Report. But I'll leave that up to you if you
46 would like to allow that before or maybe after you guys
47 talk through some of this stuff. The first thing we were
48 gonna do is look through the replies from the Board,
49 from last year's report and then following that, talk
50 about topics for this year's report. And I know you guys

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1 have all gotten to see the report in the binder, would
2 you like me to, like, quickly read through these? Do you
3 want to talk about some of them? I'll take direction
4 from you about how you'd like to review the replies from
5 the Board, thank you.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I'm gonna leave it
8 up to you, Council members.

9

10 MS. ENTSMINGER: I think we could take
11 two hours on this, and I don't think that's real
12 productive. I believe it was -- it's important for anyone
13 of these subjects, if there's a question about the
14 response, that would be the way I think we should handle
15 it.

16

17 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Sounds good to me.

18

19 (Pause)

20

21 MS. ENTSMINGER: I do have a question.
22 Brooke, did I mishear you? Did you say you were gonna
23 describe how we could do it better?

24

25 MS. MCDAVID: I don't have a suggestion
26 other than the guidance we've gotten from leadership
27 about how to choose correspondence, including topics of
28 concern as correspondence versus in the Annual Report.
29 So, if we would like to address directly to agencies
30 that are represented on the Board, like say there was
31 something we wanted to work with Fish and Wildlife on,
32 we could write to Fish and Wildlife Service but just let
33 the Board know, informationally that we did that in the
34 annual report so the Board wouldn't be the one replying
35 to your concern. If it's a concern that's directly
36 related, like with the wildlife refuge or something like
37 that, thanks.

38

39 MS. ENTSMINGER: So, I'm gonna interpret
40 that means maybe we should be writing more letters. Okay,
41 thank you. I think we all need to remember that cause
42 [sic] when -- I've been on this thing, what? 23 years
43 and the -- it is a little confusing what they're looking
44 for on this Annual Report. So, if we need to write
45 letters, then we should need to write letters, so, what
46 should be in the Annual Report then, exactly. Is there
47 a little report on that?

48

49 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, there is, Sue. I
50 believe in your books, there's actually the meeting

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1 report guideline or the Annual Report guidelines, we
2 always include those. And let me find what page those
3 are on. So, you can also reference those. I'm sorry, I
4 should have -- 201. Oh, 261. Yeah, close, very close.
5 Yeah so, 261 in the book. There are guidelines in ANILCA
6 that establish the authorities of the Council and the
7 Annual Report. What -- guidelines for what to include
8 in the Annual Report. And so, the Secretary did delegate
9 to the Board the responsibility to consider the report
10 and recommendations of the Regional Advisory Councils.
11 And that middle section under report content, there's
12 some bullets there about Annual Reports should contain
13 an identification of current and anticipated subsistence
14 uses of fish and wildlife populations within the region,
15 and evaluation of current and anticipated subsistence
16 needs for fish and wildlife populations within the
17 region. A recommended strategy for the management of
18 fish and wildlife populations within the region to
19 accommodate such subsistence uses and needs. And lastly,
20 recommendations concerning policies, standards,
21 guidelines and regulations to implement this strategy
22 and those -- that can be found in ANILCA Title 9, section
23 805A.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Sure, Andy.

26
27 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you. Member
28 Bassich. I guess I need a little bit of clarification.
29 So, are we at the point where we want to discuss the
30 responses or are we at the point where we want to develop
31 additional or next year's Annual Report? I'm a little
32 bit lost here.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Me too, but.....

35
36 MS. MCDAVID: Well, first on the agenda
37 was reviewing the replies from the Board from last year.
38 And so, if there's any updates on any of those you guys
39 would like. I do have one thing that's happened since
40 this reply was written, and it's about the subsistence
41 uses of cabins that you guys included last year. The
42 Board -- the Federal Subsistence Board, discussed that
43 during their work session this past August and the
44 interagency staff committee is working -- is creating a
45 small working group to further discuss about how the
46 different agencies can look at all the varying
47 regulations about cabin use and maybe come up with some
48 paths forward to make use of cabins easier for
49 subsistence users. But that's still in very early

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1 stages, I would expect we would hear more back in the
2 future once they've had time to have more discussions.

3
4 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you. Member
5 Bassich. I guess from my perspective as far as the Annual
6 Reports go, these are ongoing. Most of the ones that I
7 see here are ongoing concerns, especially in regards to
8 the fisheries and the Fortymile Caribou Herd. And I don't
9 see in the report, I mean, obviously they're concerned
10 they're gonna do everything they can, but these are just
11 ongoing issues that we want to keep highlighted for the
12 Federal Board. So, I guess I'm a little bit confused
13 because the Federal -- I -- it seems to me like the
14 Annual Report is something to alert the Federal
15 Subsistence Board of our concerns and then, where they
16 can take action, hopefully they will. But oftentimes
17 these topics are so big and so broad and involve so many
18 different entities that there's no definitive action
19 ever really taken. And I think that's -- in the past
20 we've had a lot of discussions about what's being done,
21 and I think that's the reason why it's not their purview
22 a lot of times to say, this is what we're gonna do. So,
23 just recognizing that I -- other than reading their
24 response and saying, okay, they're working on it, I don't
25 know there's much more response that we have to in other
26 than acknowledging that they have acknowledged it for
27 lack of better terms. So, I just wanted to get that on
28 the table because I, like Sue said, we could spend two
29 or three hours talking about all these and get into the
30 weeds about every single one, and then be right back to
31 where we're starting from. It is an ongoing concern. So,
32 maybe a better use of time would be to think about if
33 there are any additional things that we want to add in
34 next year's or this year's, I'm sorry, Annual Report or
35 maybe some recommendations or asking for definitive
36 action. That's -- as far as the fisheries goes that's
37 where my mind is that I wanna see some definitive actions
38 by managers and -- on some of these topics impacting
39 salmon, both in stream and marine. So, and I think we
40 have some suggestions. So, I'll leave it up to the Chair.
41 But that's kind of my take on where we're at right now,
42 thank you.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I do what you ask
45 Andy, I agree. It's -- we're a Council here, and we work
46 together. And I agree that we weren't getting any
47 response, and before and this is not the real response
48 that I wanted, was to be limited. But we'll do what it
49 takes to do the best we can. And I agree with you in
50 your comments.

1

2 MS. ENTSMINGER: So, right now, Brooke
3 said the things that we should try to keep it to and I'm
4 -- now correct me if I'm wrong, I feel like I have a
5 logical, sensible brain, but if we are to write letters,
6 maybe we need to go through these 14 topics and see
7 where a letter could be written. And we don't have to
8 do that at this meeting, I don't think we have the Annual
9 Report and the Annual Report is on the agenda next
10 meeting, correct?

11

12 MS. MCDAVID: Yes. So, this is the
13 meeting where you have to select your topics that you
14 want in your annual report for next year, at the winter
15 meeting, this winter will draft the Annual Report and
16 you'll review it at your winter meeting next year. So,
17 in the spring you won't be able to add additional topics
18 at that meeting. It'll just be editing.....

19

20 MS. ENTSMINGER: So, the topic for this
21 meeting.

22

23 MS. MCDAVID: Yes. So, the topics are --
24 this meeting, Sue. I actually like your suggestion. I
25 think we can go through a list of topics of concerns.
26 You guys can bring them up, we can decide, okay, does
27 that go in the Annual Report? Do we want to do a letter?
28 And just go through it like that, I think it would be
29 fine to do it that way.

30

31 MS. ENTSMINGER: Well, I guess that's
32 what I'm hearing and that could take some time, so.

33

34 MR. BASSICH: So, in my previous
35 statement, I just said that all of these are ongoing
36 concerns. So, if we're just identifying and we're gonna
37 select our final draft in the spring meeting. Is it
38 quite possible for us to just say we would like all of
39 these topics to stay on because they are ongoing and
40 then spend some time right now discussing a few
41 additional things that we may want to put on that we can
42 discuss and refine for our final letter in the spring,
43 is that an acceptable option?

44

45 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair member
46 Bassich. I think it's absolutely fine if there are topics
47 that are ongoing. As you point out, that you want to
48 include again, but we do need some discussion about --
49 I mean, what.....

50

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1 MR. BASSICH: Why?

2

3 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, why again -- like what
4 has if anything, has changed. If you have a new -- if
5 you're asking the Board to do something or if again,
6 you're letting them know this is an ongoing concern.

7

8 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, forgive me. I guess
9 the point I'm making right now though -- that those
10 refinements will happen in the springtime. That has to
11 happen now? Okay, that's where I was a little bit
12 confused, thank you.

13

14 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: At least a short
15 note. This is Charlie. Thank you, Andy.

16

17 MS. ENTSMINGER: And Amanda had her hand
18 up. So, excuse me, Amanda. I can see a benefit of a
19 group -- three or four of us getting together at lunch
20 and going through each one of these, say, hey we could
21 write a letter on this one to such and such. But if you
22 want to just do it, what you're saying. I mean, that's
23 a suggestion. Cause I do see some letters that could be
24 written.

25

26 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Amanda.
27 You were next.

28

29 MS. POPE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am
30 very happy that -- I believe it was the top agencies
31 with underneath the secretary of interior who are gonna
32 be looking at this cabin permit issue. I'm glad there's
33 some action there and hopefully there's some success for
34 the subsistence users and also the other State users as
35 well. I just wanted to share that cause that's something
36 that not only I have been dealing with, but multiple
37 folks from other agencies in the Interior have been dealt
38 with as well and it's been hard for people to try and
39 go out on the land and have the okay to do so when a lot
40 of their ancestors have been doing it for many years
41 without that permission. Thank you.

42

43 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Amanda.
44 So, we need to make a decision, are we gonna run through
45 them right now or are we gonna do it at lunch?

46

47 MS. ENTSMINGER: I think we should just
48 run through them now. I mean, it's -- we gotta do it,
49 so.....

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(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, let's get it done then.

MS. ENTSMINGER:during lunch or not it's gotta get done.

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Let's do it. Yeah, let's do it. I agree.

MR. BASSICH: So, maybe as a format for doing this would be to just look at each topic and then decide if there is a letter that needs to be drafted into what entity that would be. And then if there is an action we would like OSM to do, identify that quickly for each one. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Very good, thank you.

MS. MCDAVID: I can help walk you guys through if you'd like. The first topic was sheep population declines and the need for coordinated survey efforts. As I read to you earlier -- also in your report guidance for content, it does say you can have recommended strategies for management. And this will come up after your Annual Report, but Don did help draft some sheep management strategies for the Eastern Interior Region that you could attach to your Annual Report under this topic, if you're interested in doing that. So, I would just ask for a little guidance, if there's anything you would like to say about sheep or write any letters about sheep, thanks.

MS. ENTSMINGER: I wasn't at the meeting, I apologize -- the last meeting. So, everyone's concerned about sheep that knows anything about sheep. So, and this is pretty lengthy what you wrote about sheep, pretty good job there. So, in short, you know how I am with the KISS principle, you want to have a management plan. Was that the intent of bringing sheep up? Okay. And I believe that we could write a letter on this one because this has to be -- you know, opening meetings, we talked about how we want to work together, everybody has to work together, in the State and the Federal managers have to work together. And this is a

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1 place where it has to be all people working together.
2 And I'll give you an example, my husband was on the AC
3 at Upper Tanana Fortymile Advisory Committee when the
4 caribou herd -- the Fortymile Caribou Herd, was down to
5 6,000 or less and he, through Canada, got that coalition
6 started. It took years to build the herd and it did get
7 built up to 80,000, and now it's coming back down. So,
8 those are -- I think we need some kind of a coalition.
9 So, I think we need to write a letter to someone and say
10 we'd like to see a coalition on sheep.

11
12 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you. I agree
13 with you, Sue. I guess maybe in my mind, the first thing
14 to do is identify the parties that would need to be
15 involved in that. So, National Park Service would be a
16 part of that. I would assume some of these lands are BLM
17 lands and then ADF&G, are there other any other entities?

18
19 (Distortion)
20
21 Fish and Wildlife Service and then TCC
22 in the -- in our range anyway, so.....

23
24 MS. ENTSMINGER: All the players.

25
26 MR. BASSICH: Right, that's really
27 important. That's what we have to start doing, is
28 bringing in all these people and ask them.

29
30 MS. ENTSMINGER: And we might miss
31 somebody, so.....

32
33 MR. BASSICH: Yeah.

34
35 MS. ENTSMINGER: But it has to be the
36 users too, all players.

37
38 MR. BASSICH: So, maybe drafting a letter
39 with the topic of -- a letter to go to all these
40 different entities -- agencies, and entities that given
41 the sheep declines throughout the State, we would like
42 to form a coalition of agencies to work on sheep
43 management -- long-term sheep management strategies for
44 management.....

45
46 MS. ENTSMINGER: And users.

47
48 MR. BASSICH: Pardon?

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50 MS. ENTSMINGER: And users.

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MR. BAASICH: And users, yeah. I'm sorry.
We could say ACs, would that work?

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. ENTSMINGER: Acs and different
entities.

MR. BASSICH: To work on strategies for
long term sheep management strategies. In -- within our
region. So, within the Eastern RAC Region. Does that
sound -- I'm sure we can modify that, but that would put
the notice out and get a response and then start the
process, maybe.

(Distortion)

MS. MCDAVID: So, we can do one motion
at the end if that's suitable for everyone. So, next up
is management of Fortymile Caribou Herd. After the last
meeting, you guys did send a letter about the need for
the coalition to meet and we heard some great response
today from Fish and Game about the progress on that. So,
that was a very positive action that's come out of your
efforts and the efforts of, you know, other folks on the
ACs and such. So, is there anything in your Annual Report
you would like the Board to know about Fortymile, or are
there any letters you would like to write about
Fortymile?

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I think maybe
identifying some of the concerns that Amanda brought up
about non-resident hunters being allowed to hunt during
low periods of productivity, low abundance, might be
appropriate just to alert the Federal Subsistence Board
of that concern and then maybe letter -- along the same
regards, a letter to ADF&G, because they're the ones
that are permitting that correct?

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: And our concerns
going forward, should we add sustainable management, I
think because that's important going forward to keep
saying that over and over, I think. Thank you.

MS. ENTSMINGER: Just regarding the non-
resident hunting of the Fortymile Caribou and some of
the places and -- this is ADF&Gs thing, they could

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1 actually do a draw for that instead an open, just like
2 for residents. They do that on other herds, you know,
3 like even in sheep there's 10% draws in these management
4 areas like the Tok management area and the Delta Control
5 Use Area, it's down to 10%. So, there's ways they can
6 do it.

7
8 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, so, I guess my
9 suggestion would be a letter to ADF&G in regards to that
10 on this topic and an alert to the Federal Subsistence
11 Board of our concerns of that topic. And I think that
12 would cover what I've heard in the meeting from testimony
13 from people as far as our own concerns.

14
15 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair, just a
16 clarifying question. So, for the letter to Fish and Game,
17 we would like to let them know that due to low numbers,
18 we're concerned about non-resident hunters and you all
19 feel there's a need to either reduce their harvest
20 through a draw hunt or other options.

21
22 MR. BASSICH: Excuse me. It's mainly in
23 reference to non-resident hunters hunting on a
24 (distortion). Yeah, so.

25
26 MS. MCDAVID: Sorry, I did not mean non-
27 rural, I meant non-resident. Thanks.

28
29 MR. BASSICH: Yeah.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Linda.

32
33 MS. EVANS: I think it would be important
34 to put in there to get the community-based input too,
35 you know, like Arctic Village. They need to hear from
36 them or people in Eagle.

37
38 MS. MCDAVID: And is that specific for
39 Fortymile Caribou or do you mean in general.

40
41 MS. EVANS: In general, or, yeah, in
42 general.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: In (distortion),
45 the communities nearest those herds would be kinda the
46 way we do that. Porcupine is Arctic Village and no
47 Fortymile is a little bit more out, right? How does that
48 work? You guys are the ones on the ground over there.
49 So, you tell me.

50

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1 MR. BASSICH: So, Mr. Chair, I think one
2 of the things that's always been really great about the
3 Fortymile coalition is that a lot of these more detailed
4 things are things that we flush out in the management
5 plans and strategies. So, I don't think we need to get
6 into the weeds too -- in too much detail, because I
7 think all these topics will come up in discussion with
8 the coalition. So, that would -- my suggestion is just
9 highlighting our concern, thank you.

10
11 MS. MCDAVID: All right, moving on. This
12 is a big one, the ongoing Yukon River chinook and fall
13 chum salmon crisis.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

16
17 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you. I'm
18 beginning to think I ought to just leave my mic on all
19 the time. And I apologize, I don't mean to dominate the
20 conversation, but I just want to keep us moving, thank
21 you. So, on this -- looking at the report content
22 requirements, bullet three says a recommendation --
23 recommended strategy for management of fish and wildlife
24 populations within the region to accommodate such
25 subsistence uses and needs. In regards to fall chum
26 salmon, I would like to see our federally -- our Federal
27 manager begin to be more protective of fall chum. We've
28 heard we only had 16,000 pass Eagle into Canada this
29 year and only one drainage may make escapements. So, I
30 think the protection of fall chum, and I stated earlier
31 in some of our deliberations that I believe that fall
32 chum should be protected as soon as they're detected
33 genetically in the mixed stock of summer and fall chum.
34 So, that's a strategy, a recommendation to our Federal
35 manager to enforce a more conservation-minded management
36 strategy. And moving forward, I think it is quite
37 appropriate for both the State and the Federal managers
38 to begin to develop a strategy for using summer chum to
39 feed the people in the Lower Yukon in the middle GASH
40 region, where those fish are still viable for human
41 consumption, and to shut fisheries down for salmon and
42 make all conservation measures for fall chum to rebuild.
43 And then once they are rebuild, to create windows so
44 that fall chum can be dedicated more for the upper river
45 communities. That's gonna take some time to do that.
46 We're obviously not there for fall chum right now, but
47 I think that is a sound, long-term strategy for meeting
48 the needs of subsistence users in the different regions
49 in regards to the resource that is most abundant or the
50 only resource in their areas. So, that's a strategy and

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1 -- so I guess, I don't know if we should be putting that
2 in a letter or whether we should be doing that as a
3 topic, but I think that needs to be included in bullet
4 three here moving forward. Thank you.

5
6 MS. MCDAVID: I -- Mr. Chair, I have a
7 suggestion. Andy, I think it should be both. You can let
8 the Board know informationally that you're recommending
9 these strategies, but really, it's gonna be Holly and
10 the Federal, you know, team -- management team that will
11 be making the decision. So, sending that letter to her,
12 I think she's looking for feedback from, you know, the
13 Council. And I'd also heard you guys bring up a lot
14 about four-inch mesh earlier. So, if you'd want to
15 include anything about that in your recommended
16 strategy, you could bring that up again or reference
17 that.

18
19 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you. I'm
20 actually working on some language for proposals for
21 four-inch mesh net, but I -- understanding the
22 management capabilities I'm not sure if they'll accept
23 your proposal on a specific regulatory gear change,
24 because managers have a pretty high level of latitude
25 in how they manage the fisheries with gear and time. So,
26 I'm not sure how well that would be expected. But during
27 this seven-year closure, I think we need to get some
28 hard regulations or some hard management. My one concern
29 is with this delegation of authority to the manager. I
30 guess maybe that's what I want to highlight. If our
31 manager is not willing to do some of the measures that
32 I just outlined, I would like to see the Federal Board
33 step in and make sure that those conservation practices
34 happen. I really value the delegation of authority
35 because I think it will meet the needs of making quick
36 changes. But then again, it also leaves most of that
37 authority to one person who maybe has different views
38 on how management should go. So, that's my one concern
39 with that but I do applaud that delegation of authority,
40 I think it will benefit us. Thank you.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: (Distortion -
43 indiscernible)

44
45 MR. WOODRUFF: In reference to the --
46 this is Don, to the four-inch mesh. I really don't want
47 to see us go back to the old process of like eight and
48 a half, seven and a half, six and a half, five and a
49 half, three and a half. Because it's a hardship on the
50 fishermen, and I can't see a significant difference

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1 whether we're catching chinook in a three and a half,
2 or a four and a half, or four or three, they're being
3 intercepted. And so, we need to get that wording a little
4 bit straight in the proposal, thank you.

5
6 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, that's exactly what
7 I'm trying to do, it's more where you can fish. And then
8 you only limit it to four-inch mesh or smaller. So,
9 there are techniques and there are places where people
10 can fish without intercepting salmon. And we've heard
11 many people testify in all the RACs that going for non-
12 salmon is the only choice now, and so, that's what we
13 have to focus on, is educating people and creating
14 regulations that allow people to still maintain active
15 participation in the fisheries without doing harm to the
16 salmon we're trying to protect. So, that's the goal. And
17 I think that's achievable with the help of managers.

18
19 MS. MCDAVID: So, I also heard, I mean,
20 in our past reports and letters on this topic, there's
21 also been a lot of talk about the need for ecosystem-
22 based management across jurisdictions, including in the
23 marine environment. And is that something you would like
24 to continue to stress in this year's topic?

25
26 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
27 Well, you know, I'm gonna reference all the comments
28 that we had yesterday in regards to our discussions on
29 fisheries. The major concern for marine bycatches, both
30 in the Pollock industry and Area M and I really, at the
31 Federal level I want to stress hatchery production. We
32 have to begin to address that. That is the foundation
33 that is necessary for forage to be out there for fish
34 to grow, and not just from our region. That is, in my
35 opinion, the most important thing we can do. And that's
36 gonna be one of the hardest, because there's nobody other
37 than the Board of Fish saying you can't take so many
38 eggs. There's nobody that can say hatcheries have to
39 shut down, and the State doesn't want the hatcheries to
40 shut down. In fact, they even talk about trying to build
41 more of them. So, you know, we need to go to the Federal
42 level, and we need to begin to work on international
43 dialogue. And we're gonna continue to work on that in
44 State. So, yes, those are topics of marine environment,
45 life stages of salmon are really important, I'm not
46 really sure writing the letter or you know what the
47 process is. But especially with hatcheries, I think with
48 Eva on Board here addressing a lot of these bycatch
49 issues, she'll be on top of it and she'll be able to
50 keep us informed and do the right -- the things that we

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1 need to do, she's brilliant in that. The -- my biggest
2 concern is a strategy for trying to get hatchery
3 production under control. That's gonna be our biggest
4 challenge. So, I'll leave it up to those who understand
5 the process, who we need to write that to and what entity
6 but my understanding is, the Board of Fish and the take
7 of eggs is about the only control we have on hatcheries
8 within the State, unless the Governor and the
9 Commissioner want to take action. That's my
10 understanding.

11
12 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. So, you
13 did include hatchery as -- hatchery salmon as a separate
14 topic of concern, separate but related. And so, my
15 suggestion would be, like you mentioned, with the
16 international hatchery dialogues that need to happen,
17 writing a letter to the Board and asking them to elevate
18 that to the Department of State. Because that's out of
19 the Board's jurisdiction and I think that would be the
20 best avenue.

21
22 MR. BASSICH: So, member Bassich again.
23 So, yes, on hatcheries, and we were gonna get to that,
24 I brought it up. But as far as the fall chum and chinook
25 salmon on marine bycatches a letter to the North Pacific
26 Management Council is -- with our concerns on that which
27 we have been doing, it's ongoing. And I think a letter
28 to the State Department along those same lines, because
29 I think it needs to be elevated to Washington, D.C. I
30 mean, these are -- the things that are the fundamental
31 problems for our salmon management. And the State has
32 some jurisdiction, and some say we're not getting a lot
33 of cooperation in some areas, some areas we are. But I
34 think Washington needs to be very much aware of what
35 we're dealing with so that at the Federal level with
36 NOAA and with North Pacific Fish Commission -- Council,
37 sorry. Maybe we can get a little bit more pressure and
38 a little bit more action to take place, but, you know,
39 it's all things we're working on. I guess all we're
40 doing is throwing another stick on the fire here, you
41 know, trying to keep it burning. I don't know what else
42 to say.

43
44 MR. WOODDRUFF: Thank you, Brooke. I
45 think in that letter as far as chinook and bycatch go,
46 I think that we should emphasize this conservation
47 corridor that we were hearing about. I think that's a
48 step for the future. Thank you.

49
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1 MR. BASSICH: So, member Bassich. The
2 other thing -- thank you, John, for bringing that up.
3 The other thing, maybe the direct ask is for more funding
4 and collection of genetics in Area M. Area M chinook and
5 Area M chum, we need much better genetic analysis on
6 that. And there was a lot of talk earlier in the year
7 during the Board of Fish meetings, we need a lot more
8 observer coverage.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Last spring, the
11 commissioner said that they were moving a mobile DNA
12 center over there to the Area M. So, I'm very interested
13 in what that outcome was of those tests and looking
14 forward to seeing them. So, I don't know how in-depth
15 they went, but that's gonna be interesting to see that
16 report.

17
18 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, but we heard in
19 testimony during this meeting that a lot of genetics --
20 no genetic sampling really took place on chinook and
21 it's ongoing somewhat with chum, mostly summer chum. But
22 I think from my perspective, what I'm interested in is
23 we're -- what's happening to the fall, chum. I've asked
24 many scientists, I've talked to people at the
25 university, and it just seems like it's a giant bubble
26 of invisibility. Nobody really knows where the fall,
27 chum -- what's happening to them, why they're not coming
28 back and whether they're being intercepted, or whether
29 they're just not being productive in the spawning, we
30 don't know. But in the marine environment, nobody seems
31 to be able to give me any way a good answer of where
32 they are, if they are being intercepted, where they're
33 being intercepted. And that's where we need much finer
34 resolution and genetic testing in some of these bycatch
35 areas, especially Area M.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I think that's gonna
38 be pretty tough cause they don't know where the summer
39 chum went in-river, and the Bering Sea is quite a bit
40 bigger the ocean, so it's gonna be an uphill battle for
41 sure.

42
43 MS. MCDAVID: I just wanna make a
44 clarifying question, make sure got everything in order
45 here. So, I've heard we want a letter to the State
46 Department about hatcheries, international hatcheries.
47 And then, was there anyone else you wanted to write to
48 about hatchery or just letting the Board know
49 you're.....

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1 MR. BASSICH: The Department of Fish and
2 Game in Alaska, because they're ultimately the ones that
3 will be the players to make it happen. Oh, I'm sorry,
4 the Board of Fish. That's super important cause what we
5 want is a reduction in egg take for the hatcheries. And
6 I've heard the number 25%, but I've also speaking with
7 Virgil, and he's been on this for two decades or more,
8 three decades. His initial proposals, which I think was
9 in proposal 46 last year that the Board of Fish meeting,
10 I think that was going back to pre-19 or pre 2000 numbers
11 for hatchery production and egg take. So, I think in
12 terms of what we're asking for, we need to go low and
13 hope that we hit the middle somewhere.

14
15 MS. MCDAVID: Thanks for that
16 clarification. And you have sent as a Council previous
17 letter to Fish and Game about the -- to emphasize the
18 need for funding for the collecting genetics. Would you
19 like to send a letter to them again to reemphasize that.

20
21 MR. BASSICH: Member Bassich.
22 Absolutely.

23
24 (Pause)

25
26 MS. MCDAVID: And I don't know -- I did
27 want to let you guys know that Fish and Wildlife Service
28 in regards to this topic -- salmon and the North Pacific
29 Fishery Management Council and your requests in the
30 joint Council letter that you wrote to the Board about
31 all of these issues after the all Council meeting in the
32 spring, Fish and wild -- you know, we heard from Eva
33 that they did hear your concerns and they are working
34 to have a person staffed on to fill the seat on the
35 North Pacific Fishery Management Council. And that's
36 gonna continue to help elevate the voices of the Councils
37 and subsistence users. So, that was one -- a very
38 positive thing that came out of -- of you all's actions
39 and requests. Anything else about salmon before we move
40 on? You all did have topic number four, about OSM
41 comments to Board of Fish and OSM said that they -- that
42 -- I'll just read a sentence. OSM Board comment practices
43 are consistent with Federal subsistence management
44 program authorities, and that the comment in question
45 contained a sentence that was phrased incorrectly. They
46 did apologize for that inaccurate characterization they
47 made in the comment that you guys raised concern about
48 in the past. So, I don't know if you want to say anything
49 more about that.

50

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1 MR. WOODRUFF: Since OSM sort of shot us
2 in the foot with this issue, I think that they got the
3 message loud and clear that we need to communicate a
4 little bit better. And one way to do that would be if
5 they have a position that they wanna take to the Board
6 of Fish, they should run it by our Council Chairman. So
7 that there is no miscommunication.

8
9 MS. MCDAVID: Thanks for that feedback,
10 Don. Anyone else?

11
12 (No response)

13
14 Okay, not hearing any. Moving on, topic
15 six was the need for updated moose counts in 20F. We did
16 hear a report from Tony Hollis today about moose in 20F,
17 but he did say that surveys had not been done. So, I
18 don't know if you wanna say anything else about that?

19
20 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Seeing how the moose
21 count is really old, it would be nice for them to try
22 to get an aerial -- a little bit better count or average.
23 People there are really struggling to find a moose.
24 Rampart two moose again this fall for the community and
25 I know Tanana might have got just a couple more than
26 that, but it's tough out there. So, I think it's really
27 important to have a count. It's been a long time since
28 they've done an actual or if they have, I don't know, I
29 didn't hear that. So, I appreciate the effort so far,
30 and I think we should keep it up and do a little better.
31 Try to get an aerial count, but that would be my
32 suggestion. Thank you.

33
34 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I'm gonna build on
35 that, you know, in science you always want baselines and
36 then you want to follow up a number of years. Sometimes
37 it's a few years, sometimes it's ten years. But you
38 always -- what's the point of taking a baseline if you
39 don't follow up on it. And it's the same thing with the
40 changing size of fish. So, I think it's a pretty
41 important thing. I think that what I heard from the
42 manager was that it been -- hadn't been done in decades,
43 30 years. I think it's time, and I think that should be
44 made a priority, even if it's not as accurate maybe as
45 they would like. It's gonna get you a ballpark and at
46 least it's gonna give you another data set. And that's
47 super important in wildlife management.

48
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1 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. I think
2 it would be good since this is something that's outside
3 of the Board 's jurisdiction to send a letter to Fish
4
5 and Game, let the Board know that you're doing that and
6 encourage those aerial counts to be done.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I agree, thank you
9 so much.

10
11 MS. MCDAVID: All right, moving on. The
12 next topic was about food security (distortion).

13
14 MR. BASSICH: Just very quickly glancing
15 at the map, and it also looks like there is BLM land
16 within 20F. Is that correct? So, the letter should go
17 to ADF&G and BLM, excuse me.

18
19 MS. MCDAVID: Thanks for noting that Andy
20 appreciate it. So, the next topic was about food
21 insecurity and the need for food sovereignty. This is
22 kinda one of those big topics that doesn't really fall
23 with completely, you know, within the jurisdiction of
24 the Federal Subsistence Board, you guys did provide a
25 lot of good information to them about your experiences.

26
27 MS. POPE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the
28 record, this is Amanda Pope. This kind of goes with 20F
29 as well. Just to say again on record that it's very
30 important to get the locals perspective when doing these
31 surveys and trying to get them -- at least offer the
32 chance for them to be involved and try to get their
33 perspective of maybe conducting these surveys in a
34 different manner. Just to collaborate with the locals
35 more is very important with not only getting better
36 numbers for multiple species all over the region, but
37 to provide that chance for food security to be present
38 for the people of the region. Thanks.

39
40 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you for that,
41 Amanda. I just kinda -- something popped in my head, you
42 know, I think it's appropriate maybe to address salmon
43 replacement programs. That's part of what we're gonna
44 have to do in Gravel-to-Gravel and I wish Gale was here.
45 Maybe we can check back with her, and Eva has been very
46 instrumental in this, developing some fish replacement
47 programs on the Yukon River. It's -- we heard TCC has
48 been donating a lot of money, but I think going to the
49 Federal -- at least alerting the Federal Subsistence
50 Board that this is a top priority during the seven-year

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1 agreement to get some salmon replacement. And I think
2 we'd have to check with a few other people about what
3 agencies might have funding for that. But I think those
4 are gonna be really important programs temporarily for
5 the next seven years. Maybe only five years, who knows
6 where we'll be. But I think that's a topic that -- the
7 biggest problem in most of these issues is funding. As
8 we know, it's funding to either bring people together
9 or funding to transport. Last year there were some
10 donations that were offered, but it still cost money to
11 get there, get it here and get it distributed. So, maybe
12 alerting the Federal Subsistence Board that this is a
13 top priority on the Yukon River and that within those
14 agencies that make up the Federal Subsistence Board, any
15 funding that could be delegated collaboratively, maybe
16 is the way to do it would be to -- would be a great
17 assistance for food security during the seven year
18 closure.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I agree with you,
21 Andy. There's -- the places that have low density and
22 scarce animals, natural resources is -- they're
23 struggling. So, I agree with that very much, thank you.
24

25 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you all very much.
26 The next topic, number eight last year's topic was the
27 need for more co-stewardship and co-management. And I
28 think that also goes in line with what Amanda just said
29 about the need to collaborate with communities and
30 tribes and folks that are out there on the land to do
31 some of this management and monitoring work.
32

33 MR. BASSICH: I think here again, a
34 letter to the Department of Fish and Game in regards to
35 the co-management that happens on the Kuskokwim River.
36 We need to -- that has been incredibly successful, and
37 we need to bring that to the Yukon River. And I think
38 it starts with co-stewardship but I just want to point
39 out that the program and the Kuskokwim has been very,
40 very successful. The tribal collaboration with U.S. Fish
41 and Wildlife on Federal lands, unfortunately on the
42 Yukon we have a patchwork. So, we also need to get ADF&G,
43 so, a letter to the Federals to fish -- U.S. Fish and
44 Wildlife Service. I know people are working on this,
45 that's what the Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, a lot of
46 people are working on it. But I think a letter coming
47 from the RAC just in support of that would be -- go a
48 long ways [sic] to hopefully bring that to the Yukon a
49 little bit faster.

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1 MS. MCDAVID: One suggestion might be,
2 so you had said previously you want to write a letter
3 to the Yukon Fishery Federal manager. I would suggest
4 maybe writing it to both the Federal manager and the
5 State management team, including your recommendations
6 that you previously mentioned, and also this one.

7
8 Anything else you want to say about co-
9 stewardship or co-management, in your report last year
10 you did specify the need for co-management or co-
11 stewardship regarding the Arctic Village Sheep
12 Management Area. And I didn't know if you want to re-
13 emphasize that again?

14
15 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Linda.

16
17 MS. EVANS: On the first one that we did
18 for dall sheep, didn't we talk about coalition?

19
20 MS. MCDAVID: We did, Linda.

21
22 (Simultaneous speech)

23
24 MS. EVANS:for this one.

25
26 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah, we could add to that
27 since it's specific to sheep, that's a good idea, thank
28 you. Okay, moving along. Topic nine was about Hunter
29 Ethics Education.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I think it's very
32 important that we join up with other entities on this
33 as one -- main one would be Tanana Chiefs. And like what
34 Andy said earlier, it's always something about funding.
35 So, I think that we need to look in other ways, try to
36 help each other, and maybe Amanda might be able to help
37 us with that also in the future with her program. I
38 don't know if it goes into that but thank you.

39
40 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I think the main
41 message I'd like to get back to the Federal Subsistence
42 Board is our appreciation for their support in
43 developing -- helping us to develop Hunter Ethics and
44 asking for continuous support, that we are in a position
45 to start making some progress and refining. I think we're
46 gonna be having some discussion a little bit later in
47 the meeting today, maybe, on this briefly. So, basically
48 just thanking them for their support and letting them
49 know we're continuing to seek their support cause we're
50 gonna need some financing for meetings and things like

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1 that in the future, probably, or maybe some of these
2 programs. So, just giving them a heads up more than
3 anything, and thank you.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I'd like to say that
6 going forward, all of our natural resources are
7 dwindling, and I think that this could be added into all
8 of our letters, the Hunter Ethics part of it, just to
9 keep poking awareness, adding it and letting it be seen
10 more and more times you hit something that'll bend, you
11 know.

12
13 MR. BASSICH: Member Bassich again. I
14 hate to bring this up, but I'm beginning to think we
15 need a fisher's ethics too. You know, we've heard a lot
16 of testimony, and people are doing well, and we're trying
17 to do outreach and communications, but we're at the point
18 where when you're doing this much conservation, you need
19 to also encourage the ethical taking of fish and that
20 goes to the bycatch out in the ocean. It's unethical
21 what's happening out there. It's happening in Area M,
22 and it's happening to small extents on the Yukon River
23 still. And so, I know we have our hands full internally
24 or region wide with hunter ethics, but it may not be a
25 bad topic to include in fisheries letters or
26 correspondence. Thank you.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Amanda.

29
30 MS. POPE: Thank you, Mister Chair. This
31 is Amanda Pope, for the record. I just want to emphasize
32 that Hunter Ethics is an ongoing thing, and the topic
33 of getting the educational efforts out there is to have
34 people from the region involved and to educate the folks
35 who are coming into the area, such as the hunter liaison
36 efforts that CATG has been doing over the years in
37 partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I
38 think that program is a really positive program that can
39 be -- that can help all of the region. And I just wanna
40 encourage folks to look at the way CATG had approached
41 it because they have made a difference. And I think it
42 helps to the education -- educational efforts that a lot
43 of folks don't know about Alaska in general, but the
44 private lands that we have in conjunction around the
45 Federal and State lands trespassing and the need for the
46 regulations to be done in efficient manner is very
47 important. The Federal regulations come out way too
48 late. And I feel like it should -- like there's a
49 timeline on the Federal regs, and it should be -- it
50 shouldn't go past the timeline that people share. And I

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1 know that the previous regulations go -- that are in
2 effect until the next book come out. But a lot of folks
3 don't know when that book comes out and sometimes it's
4 a half a year later. I just would hope that timeline is
5 done in a better timeline for the people who rely on the
6 Federal regulations.

7
8 And I think just in general the need for
9 hunter ethics is very important because it helps with a
10 lot of the issues that have been brought up. Not only
11 in this meeting, but in previous meetings as well. And
12 just educating, educating, I can't harp on that too much.
13 It's just so important to educate not only the people
14 who come into the area from outside the State, but the
15 people who come in within the State, within an area as
16 well. So, thank you.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Hey, I had problem
19 on my private property in the Nowitna Wildlife Refuge
20 with guides. When I go to my camp, one particular time,
21 there was a guide service set up in my cabin, their
22 four-wheelers were parked right under my no trespass
23 sign. I'm not kidding. And they moved into my cabin. So,
24 when somebody doesn't report, they don't get to hunt the
25 next year. So, I think that something needs to happen
26 with the trespass, like if they're caught trespassing,
27 parking their four-wheeler under my no trespass sign
28 that they should lose their ability to guide and hunt
29 the next year, this is hunter ethics. They know where
30 they're at, they can read. So, that's -- trespass is
31 serious and they laugh at us when we tell them, you
32 know, I don't want you coming back here again. Now, they
33 made a trail around my property that's legal but moving
34 in, and that's just terrible and nothing's -- I could've
35 taken pictures, I could've done more. I asked them not
36 to come back again, and he hasn't, as far as I
37 understand. But it's serious thing, trespassing. And it
38 has an effect -- he's back behind my cabin hunting in
39 my lake where I hunt every year. Took the couple big
40 moose out of there before I got there. I wait cause of
41 work, I had to go later in the season. So, then I had
42 to go somewhere else to hunt because I was trespassed
43 on. That's a hardship. I have the means to go somewhere
44 else, thank God and I did, but not a lot of people do.
45 Thank you.

46
47 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair. I'm glad you
48 brought up the trespass thing again and something that
49 came up earlier. Dorothy brought this up in previous
50 meetings, and it was mentioned earlier. Was the need to

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1 have on the maps Native allotment and Corporation land.
2 It's currently just whited out and lumped into nebulous,
3 non-Federal lands. So, I would suggest that you also add
4 that as a note in your report.

5
6 MR. BASSICH: I didn't really want to get
7 into too much detailed discussion on Hunter Ethics right
8 now, cause I know we'll be talking about it, but I think
9 maybe in the letter, you know, when we're thanking the
10 Federal Subsistence Board and the agencies, it's very
11 apparent to me that probably the most effective hunter
12 ethics that we've done so far is a community liaison.
13 And so, it might be time to look at hiring a position
14 for the bridge at the Yukon where a lot of people are
15 putting in. If they're heading upriver into private
16 lands, like we heard in the testimony yesterday. So,
17 I'll bring that up again. But just a heads up, I think
18 that's gonna be one of the solutions asked for by TCC
19 and some of the members.

20
21 MS. MCDAVID: All right, thank you all
22 for your discussion about Hunter Ethics. Topic ten was
23 about climate change. And in the Board response they did
24 note some of the ways that several agencies are
25 monitoring climate change.

26
27 (Pause)

28
29 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Climate change is
30 not going away right away for sure. So, we have to keep
31 that on the list and keep pushing on that. It's got
32 effect -- I was really happy to see a little colder
33 summer this year. Sure, it helped with the salmon and
34 making things a little more normal like they used to be.
35 Some places moose were actually in rut now. First time
36 I seen that in a while during the season in my area, so
37 I think that's a -- but the impacts are still there, the
38 storms are stronger, the rain is harder, rains more,
39 places are flooded. That really makes it hard to travel
40 in the wintertime on lake systems that fall in on you
41 in the winter. So, it's -- things are definitely
42 changing. We can harp on it all day long, but I think
43 that it just needs to be kept in mind and online. Thank
44 you.

45
46 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, Member Bassich.
47 My biggest concern moving forward with climate change
48 is the melting of permafrost, the release of heavy
49 metals, mercury and other contaminants into the waters,
50 a lot of documentation of that. I think for the

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1 priorities needs that we just saw. There were some topics
2 there on -- under the salmon or where they travel and
3 habitat and I think some studies or some baseline
4 information on some of our spawning streams for both
5 chinook and primarily chum salmon within the Yukon
6 Drainage would be really valuable in the future to get
7 some of that baseline data. So, I would suggest that
8 that be elevated in our Priority Information Needs. And
9 I'm also worried about -- I mentioned it earlier, the
10 changing permafrost effects, melting permafrost effects
11 on substrate of spawning habitat, in particular chum
12 salmon because they need such specific types of spawning
13 habitat. So, I guess that's both to the Federal
14 Subsistence Board but also to OSM. When they start
15 putting out their call for Priority Information Needs.
16 Thank you.

17

18 MS. MCDAVID: And through the Chair
19 member Bassich. One thing we could do is, I can look and
20 see if folks are doing sort of some of that water
21 monitoring currently or already, and we could always try
22 to have someone come and report on that at a future
23 meeting if so.

24

25 And you have iterated to the Board in
26 the past recommendations for Fish and Wildlife
27 management because of climate change, noting that
28 populations must be managed on a long term plan and not
29 a year, to year harvest plan, a management needs to stop
30 being based on maximum sustained yield. And because the
31 impacts of climate change are largely unknown and
32 evolving, management must be a lot more cautious now
33 than ever before. So, something you might want to
34 reiterate.

35

36 MR. BASSICH: I agree with that. Thank
37 you.

38

39 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you all. Topic 11,
40 support needed for subsistence education in culture
41 camps. And the Board did reply and I believe we have one
42 of our authors for this reply in the room. If you guys
43 have other questions that -- the Fisheries Resource
44 Monitoring Program, it can only be used for fisheries
45 monitoring projects. However, the partners for Fisheries
46 Monitoring Program, which I know, those names are very
47 similar, I get them confused a lot too but we also --
48 we call it the Partners Program. That is a potential
49 vehicle for youth -- funding youth and -- youth science
50 in culture camps. So, I'll just read a little bit about

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1 the Partners Program because I know some of you are very
2 interested in this. The Partners Program was designed
3 to strengthen Alaska native and rural involvement in
4 Federal subsistence management. Funds from the program
5 can be used to support locally developed opportunities
6 for students to connect with subsistence resources
7 through science and culture camps and paid internships.
8 These science and culture camps are not required to be
9 tied to a research project, but they must be somehow
10 tied to Federal subsistence fisheries, so there will be
11 an opportunity to apply for funding through this program
12 either later this fall or early in 2025. And we'll make
13 sure that the Council members get information about
14 that, and I believe they send it out to -- the
15 information out to tribes and rural residents as well.

16
17 MR. BASSICH: Sure. Yeah, I'm very
18 interested in that. I'm working at the Yukon River panel
19 level and then speaking with YRDFA staff yesterday. This
20 is something that we really want to develop long-term
21 on the Yukon River. So, even if we can use some of this
22 funding to get programs started. So, yeah, please stay
23 in contact with me on those, is really important. It's
24 a strong direction we're trying to move in. Thank you.
25 I'm encouraged to hear that there's some funding for
26 this. I know sometimes it's hard to allocate for that
27 type of funding, but this is really, super important for
28 the younger people. Thank you.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I've been running
31 culture camps for quite a while, and they have a great
32 effect on the youth that had no opportunity at home or
33 -- I stated that yesterday when Chief Ridley was here.
34 Tanana Chiefs is also offering funding for culture camps
35 and they just started that up again, that's really
36 wonderful. The people and grownups even, that didn't
37 have a chance to grow up in fish camp are even coming
38 in it has a great effect on the youth. So, I think it's
39 very important going forward like Andy said. Thank you.

40
41 MR. VICKERS: For the record, Brent
42 Vickers, OSM. I just wanted to note that Liz Williams
43 and -- OSM anthropologist Liz Williams is one of the
44 leads for the Partners Program and does have a brief
45 presentation on the Partners Program if given the time.
46 If you have questions about it, she is definitely the
47 person to speak to. Thank you.

48
49 MS. MCDAVID3: Thanks for that reminder,
50 Brent. Yes, we do have Liz to give us a brief update on

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1 that later in the meeting. So, moving on to number 12,
2 use of cabins on Federal public lands for subsistence
3 activities. I did let you guys know about that, for lack
4 of a better word, working group that the ISC has formed
5 to address this. My suggestion, obviously it's up to you
6 guys, would just let the Board know that you'd like to
7 receive updates as that effort moves forward and perhaps
8 give an update that we can work with to get an update
9 at your winter meeting too.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for that.
12 I know Amanda was looking forward to this part of the
13 report. You have anything to say or any questions or
14 anything? Okay, no problem. Okay, Donald.

15
16 MR. WOODRUFF: I know that BLM gets a lot
17 of requests, and they mention that at their Board meeting
18 from trapper organizations. And it kinda disturbed me a
19 little bit because we were talking about subsistence use
20 of cabins, and then they're talking about a commercial
21 process of the Fairbanks Trappers Association requesting
22 permits to use, you know, abandoned cabins. And there's
23 a distinction between that, that I think is being missed.
24 Thank you.

25
26 MS. POPE: Thank you, this is Amanda Pope
27 for the record. I'll just share my experience. That my
28 process within the National Park Service, they had
29 offered the opportunities for a cabin permit to
30 subsistence users before they had offered the
31 opportunity to all residents of Alaska, which I thought
32 was awesome. Because I believe the subsistence priority
33 should be the priority when doing these permits before
34 it's offered to people who come into the area. Because
35 the people who are within the area obviously, they use
36 it more than people who have not really been there most
37 of the year. I just wanted to thank the Park Service for
38 that effort, I would hope other agencies, State and
39 Federal, would follow that lead. Yeah, I just wanted to
40 share that.

41
42 MS. MCDAVID: Thanks to Don and Amanda
43 for those additions, and we'll be sure that gets included
44 in in this next draft. If there's nothing else about the
45 cabins at this time. Moving on to topic 13 was about the
46 impacts to wildlife by the increase in trucking. Because
47 of the Kinross Mine near Tetlin. So, I did reach out to
48 the wildlife troopers about this, and they actually just
49 got in touch with me during this meeting. That's -- that
50 one day I had to walk out and take their call. The trucks

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1 haven't been running for very long right now. But they
2 do monitor all collisions, including wildlife
3 collisions. They weren't able to give me numbers of --
4 they didn't give me the actual numbers of total wildlife
5 collisions for the year. But they did say there was --
6 there's only one incident involving a Kinross truck that
7 they're aware of, but that collisions with passenger
8 vehicles are way more common than semis in general. And
9 so, there's -- I just wanted to pass on there's been one
10 incident so far, thanks.

11
12 MS. ENTSMINGER: Question, was it with
13 the animal or -- it was with an animal?

14
15 MS. MCDAVID: Well, there has been an
16 incident with -- there was a crash recently involving
17 another vehicle, but your request was specific to the
18 impacts to wildlife. So, they did say there was one
19 wildlife collision. They were aware of.....

20
21 MS. ENTSMINGER: Moose.

22
23 MS. MCDAVID: And they didn't tell me
24 what species so, I would assume moose, but.....

25
26 MS. ENTSMINGER: Well, I just wanted to
27 report because of some -- my husband's health issues,
28 we've had to run back and forth to Fairbanks a lot in
29 the last several months. And our stuff to keep awake for
30 driving is to count how many trucks we passed and it's
31 been as low as eight or, I don't know, maybe even a
32 little lower than that, but as high as 12 or 13. And
33 it's interesting cause, you know, we like to drive a
34 little quickly to Fairbanks and we're not really zooming
35 around passing very many of them. And it just the impact
36 that I'm seeing isn't much different than other traffic.
37 So, it -- I just wanted to report it, it is interesting
38 that it's -- and you know, and then the trucks have all
39 their tires down when they're going in, and then they
40 bring a bunch of them up when they're coming back out.
41 Yeah so, thank you.

42
43 MR. BASSICH: I can build on that, I've
44 been driving a fair amount too this year and I was
45 actually pleasantly surprised at how courteous they are,
46 how safe they're driving. I know they're probably being
47 told no mistakes cause there's a lot of zoom lenses on
48 them right now, but I've experienced the same thing too.
49 I thought it was pretty courteous, they're good at
50 turning their lights down when they see you coming in

00066

1 the nighttime. And I tend to like to drive at night
2 cause usually there's less traffic. But yeah, I don't
3 see it as an issue, my biggest issue is I'm just
4 wondering how the roads are gonna hold up to the weight.
5 But I guess what's happening is it looks like they're
6 just rebuilding the highway, you know, slowly they're
7 just improving things and so, maybe in the long run, it
8 might be good for us, thank you.

9
10 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, and I just wanted
11 to add to that, that the amount of tires to carry that
12 weight is a lot less than a semi. So, you know and I.....

13
14 (Distortion)

15
16 Yeah so, you got your entertainment by
17 counting tires. Good, thank you.

18
19 MR. WOODRUFF: I don't think that that
20 should be a topic in our annual letter, we can reduce
21 that.

22
23 MS. MCDAVID: Thanks, Don. I was gonna
24 ask that next, if you felt it needed to still be
25 included. We can always -- because it's something that
26 the Board doesn't deal with. If you guys, you know, in
27 another year or two after the trucks have been running,
28 if you would like me to reach out again to the troopers
29 and see if you know, any more collision incidents or
30 whatever, we can definitely do that. So, the last topic
31 in last year's report was request for updated technology
32 to be used at Council meetings.

33
34 MR. BASSICH: You know, I think I said
35 it at the Venetie. I was attending via remote at the
36 Venetie meeting, and there were a lot of problems. And
37 thank God we had a great communications person there.
38 But, you know, as a person who's had Starlink now for
39 over a year or whatever, I just don't see why the
40 investment isn't being made. You can take my -- I can
41 pack up my Starlink, it goes into a pelican case, and I
42 can take it anywhere in the State, start up a little
43 generator or plug it in and I have communications. And
44 I don't understand why we don't have that for every RAC
45 meeting. It's that simple, it could be set out right
46 there, right now and we wouldn't even have the problems
47 with communications that we're having during this
48 meeting. So, anyway, I know the Federal government moves
49 slow, but there's no excuse for any community or anybody
50 in the state of Alaska not to have good comms now,

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1 through the internet. It's been my experience, my --
2 when I communicate through that and I spent -- that's
3 basically what I use my Starlink for, is just phone
4 calls and meetings, and such, and it's like I'm in the
5 room. So, whatever I -- you know, I know the Federal
6 Government moves in slow and -- you know, slow, painful
7 moves at times. But that's a pretty simple solution in
8 my mind.

9
10 MS. POPE: Thank you, sorry. This is
11 Amanda Pope for the record. Using Owl, like, the little
12 video, little device, that kinda -- it's a sensor that
13 detects voices, sound so, I think that's also, like, a
14 good resource as well. I've been to meetings that some
15 folks have used those and it worked great. So, just to
16 share that.

17
18 MS. MCDAVID: Thanks for that additional
19 suggestion, Amanda. And we did for Andy's knowledge at
20 the OSM leadership team on Monday, they did discuss
21 purchasing Starlink and moving forward with that. And
22 so, the team is looking into it and hopefully by this
23 winter next cycle, we'll have at least one portable unit,
24 maybe two, that we can start using.

25
26 MS. ENTSMINGER: So also, the Microsoft
27 Teams or Zoom is -- do you plan to use it?

28
29 MS. MCDAVID: So, we do use that now in
30 addition to -- so, we send out the teleconference number
31 and the Teams link for folks that -- so, they can choose
32 to join either way cause it's all part of one -- it's
33 all tied into Microsoft Teams, the phone number and the
34 link so, folks can join online. We haven't moved forward
35 with the video capabilities yet because of -- typically
36 we have bandwidth issues even with just the audio. So,
37 if we do move forward with the Starlink, that's something
38 we might be able to test out once we have that.

39
40 MR. BASSICH: You will definitely be able
41 to, and I guess, I don't know, I'm assuming is there a
42 new contractor for who is doing our minutes and
43 recording? So, it just seems to me like that should be
44 a part of the contract that they provide the Zoom or the
45 Starlink connection because if we're gonna go to remote
46 villages, it's gonna have to -- it's gonna have to happen
47 there, right? And so, if they're going -- if they're
48 serving the Federal program, it should just be something
49 that they purchase and as -- put in as part of their
50 contract to provide that service -- video. In this day

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1 and age, there's no reason why you shouldn't be able to
2 link up Zoom anywhere in the world, in my view. But my
3 view is sometimes jaded. And no, I don't get residuals
4 from Elon Musk for promoting Starlink right now. I do
5 say I have a little bit of concern that one guy has got
6 that much control over communications in the world, but
7 I'm not getting residuals, sorry.

8
9 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, Council members, that
10 was the last topic from last year's report. And so, I
11 guess the question now is if there are additional topics
12 that you want to add. We also, yeah, you can always add
13 later in the meeting if something comes up an additional
14 topic as well. So, okay. So, if you want to move on, I
15 hear lunch might be in order. We would -- you probably
16 would want to make a motion to -- I don't know, what
17 would -- to accept the annual report topics that were
18 discussed, and to send the letters that were discussed.
19 Do it as one motion to make it easy.

20
21 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, Mr. Chair, Andy
22 Bassich. I'd like to make a motion that the Eastern
23 Interior RAC acknowledges the responses of the annual
24 report from the Federal Subsistence Board, and that we
25 would like to forward the -- another annual support to
26 the Federal Subsistence Board for containing the topics
27 that we discussed in this previous dialogue. That work?
28 And the letters to agencies identified in our
29 discussions.

30
31 MR. WOODRUFF: I'll second.

32
33 MR. BASSICH: I'm gonna call a question,
34 unless there's.....

35
36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for all
37 the hard work, Andy. We're asking for unanimous consent.
38 Anybody don't -- disagree with that?

39
40 (No response)
41
42 Passes. Lunch time. Is 12:30 so, 1:30
43 people. Thank you.

44
45 (Off record)

46
47 (On record)

48
49 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Call the meeting
50 back to order at 1:38. And this is -- meeting is all

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1 about the people. So, we have to allow a couple more
2 people to testify. And the first one would be Jim Simon.
3 Good afternoon, everybody.

4
5 MR. SIMON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And
6 members of the Council. For the record, my name is Jim
7 Simon, and I'm providing public testimony on behalf of
8 the Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resources Commission with a
9 request for the Council's consideration for including
10 something in your Annual Report. And Brooke earlier
11 mentioned, you know, from title 805 of ANILCA, you know,
12 the four items that are to be addressed in the RACs
13 Annual Report to the Secretary, it's also in your
14 charter. And the identification of current and
15 anticipated subsistence uses, then an evaluation of
16 subsistence needs and a recommended strategy to
17 accommodate those subsistence uses and needs, and then
18 recommendations concerning policy standards, guidelines
19 and regulations to implement the strategy. And the Ahtna
20 Inter-Tribal Resources Commission, hopefully, Karen and
21 I have provided you a lot of information with respect
22 to Copper River Salmon management. And what I failed to
23 mention is that you also have communities and unit --
24 game management Unit 20D that have customary and
25 traditional uses of Copper River Salmon. And so, what
26 we would like to suggest you consider is including in
27 your Annual Report an identification of the current and
28 anticipated subsistence uses of salmon of the Copper
29 River, as well as the fact that those needs have not
30 been met based on the ANS evaluations that that we
31 provided you, I believe yesterday, maybe the day before
32 and in the absence of the Federal Subsistence Management
33 Program establishing Federal subsistence use amounts
34 that Executive Director Karen mentioned briefly, we
35 would like you to consider establishing an interim
36 Federal subsistence use amount for Copper River salmon,
37 at least for that portion from Gakona up-river,
38 including Batzulnetas being in the interim, the States
39 amount necessary for subsistence finding while -- and
40 then under D4 in your charter recommended Concerning
41 policy standards and guidelines and regulations to
42 implement these -- this subsistence needs issue to then
43 also request that the Federal Subsistence Management
44 Program begin developing a process by which Federal
45 subsistence use amounts for Copper River Salmon could
46 be established.

47
48 So, again, just as a reminder the --
49 since the Board of Fish adopted an amount necessary for
50 subsistence finding in 2006 for Copper River salmon from

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1 the mouth of the Gakona River, up-river of 12,000 at the
2 lower end to 12,500 salmon that has been reached only
3 twice since 2006. And again, as a reminder, in 2023
4 there was just above 2,000 salmon harvested, despite the
5 fact that in 2003 the sonar passage was 71% above their
6 management objective. So, you know, how do we solve this
7 issue? You know, that's going to be a process to try to
8 figure that out. But I think a good first step from the
9 Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resources Commission perspective is
10 to adopt for the Federal subsistence use amount, the
11 States amount necessary for subsistence finding as an
12 interim objective metric as the Federal program
13 develops, the Federal subsistence use amounts.

14
15 I know this is something that dates back
16 to the beginning of the Federal Subsistence Management
17 Program, I had the benefit of being trained when I went
18 to the Department of Fish and Game Division of
19 Subsistence 22 years ago by Terry Haines, who actually
20 used to live in Tok and then Fairbanks and actually did
21 all the customer and traditional use determination
22 background research for all of those upper Tanana game
23 management Unit 12 and 20D communities to establish
24 their Federal customary and traditional use of Copper
25 River salmon. And what he told me at that time is that
26 there was a sort of informal gentleman's agreement
27 between the State and the Federal Subsistence Management
28 Program that the Fish and Wildlife Service would not
29 establish Federal subsistence use amounts and just rely
30 on the ANS, because at that time there was still an
31 expectation that the State would eventually implement
32 ANILCA Title 8 themselves. I think we've known now for
33 10-15 years that at least when I was still at the
34 department that there -- because of ninth Circuit Court
35 decisions, etc., that the State had has no intention of
36 trying to implement ANILCA Title 8. I don't know what
37 the current policy perspective is, but I think after 43
38 years of of ANILCA being on the books and as Brooke put
39 on the record that this is identified specifically in
40 the law as well as your charter -- your renewed charter,
41 that it's probably time to get this part of the Federal
42 Subsistence Management Program started and and you
43 establishing an interim Federal subsistence use amount
44 for that portion of the Copper River might help get this
45 ball rolling. Thank you very much. Happy to answer any
46 questions.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any questions for
49 Jim? Seeing none. Appreciate you. Thank you. So, I want
50 to I want to say we're making room for testimony right

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1 now and we'd appreciate it if it's done fast, because
2 we have we're going to try to finish today and we have
3 a lot more on the agenda.

4
5 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
6 Christopher, if you are still online, we would welcome
7 your testimony next. You can press star six to unmute
8 your phone.

9
10 MR. SHERRY: Thank you, Tanya. Good
11 afternoon, guys. I just want to comment that there's 58
12 wood bison at Paul Esau Slough just south of Kantishna
13 River. They're awaiting release pending Board of Game
14 approval of a site-specific management plan that was
15 drafted by the Wood Bison Planning Team. And Chairman
16 Wright, if you remember, I was able to get the group to
17 adopt language that asked for an expedited C&T finding
18 and ceremonial use upon the events of a harvestable
19 amount of bison. And I would just appreciate your
20 consideration and communicating to the Board of Game
21 that it's important that they adopt those with
22 everything in the plan drafted.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. But first, I
25 want you to state your full name and affiliation, please.

26
27 MR. SHERRY: Yeah. Christopher Sherry. I
28 belong to Minto.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. This for
31 the record. I appreciate you. And thank you for calling
32 in and testifying. And we appreciate you. Thank you.

33
34 MR. SHERRY: Thank you.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: We have a -- we have
37 a question for you, Chris. Hold on.

38
39 MR. WOODRUFF: This is Donald Woodruff.
40 Do you have a traditional use for this resource?

41
42 MR. SHERRY: Well, that's just it. It was
43 an unusual to request an expedited C&T finding, which I
44 don't think is probably been done before. I've spent
45 vast time researching the history of the animal in this
46 State. It all comes from the people in Wildlife of
47 northern North America. Published by UAF and Craig
48 Gerlach, professor of anthropology at UAF. He collected
49 testimony from elders. We produced a documentary film
50 about the oral history in the region. It's based on this

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1 history that's been lost on most people that are people
2 depended on this animal for probably millennia since the
3 last glacial maxim. And so, I think that that's the
4 basis for the traditional use finding.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.
7 Any more questions? Thank you so much for your testimony.
8 It means a lot. Good information. Thank you.

9
10 MR. SHERRY: Thank you.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Chris, are you still
13 there?

14
15 MR. SHERRY: I am.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Can you restate your
18 ask just one more time so it's clear here?

19
20 MR. SHERRY: I'm a little bit new to the
21 comment process, but it's my understanding that you guys
22 have lines of communication with the Board of Game and
23 all appropriate parties that were to approve this plan.
24 It's my understanding that the draft is -- has to go
25 through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure 10J
26 compliance. You can include those communications to
27 them, I suppose, as well as the Board of Game.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: All right. Thank you
30 so much for clarifying.

31
32 (Pause)

33
34 MR. BASSICH: Can I get a little bit more
35 information on the timelines that this would be
36 necessary? Is that something necessary to do at this
37 meeting, or is that something that that we could push
38 to our spring meeting so we have more time to digest it
39 and come up with a.....

40
41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Think there's ample
42 time before the -- any hunts will be done on these
43 animals. So, I think coming getting it on the record and
44 working on it on our next meeting will be real good.
45 Thank you.

46
47 MR. SHERRY: If I may, if I may, Charlie.
48 It's my understanding these -- yeah, it's my
49 understanding that these animals will be released within
50 a roughly eight-month time period. And it's just I think

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1 it's important that you know, we do need to consider
2 this historical event and all that it all that it entail.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. We have a
5 question.

6

7 MR. BASSICH: I guess my question is,
8 when would the Board of Game be taking this up? Because
9 that's he's asking for us to make a statement to the
10 Board of Game as my understanding of the ask. So, do we
11 know when the Board of Game will be taking this up? My
12 preference, Mr. Chair, would be to take this up at our
13 next meeting if there fits the timeline so, we have more
14 time to understand the situation. Thank you.

15

16 MR. SHERRY: If I may.

17

18 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: You may.

19

20 MR. SHERRY: I had a -- okay. I had a
21 discussion with Darren Bruning, the Region 3 Manager.
22 This was maybe a month and a half ago. I asked him for
23 an update on where the plan was at and the process for
24 approval, and he explained that it was with the Fish and
25 Wildlife Service for 10J compliance. And I'd imagine
26 once that everything seems good with them, that the Board
27 of Game will receive their plan.

28

29 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, thank you.

30

31 MS. MCDAVID: So, council members, I
32 guess if you wanted to take action at this meeting, you
33 could write to the Fish and Wildlife Service and
34 recommend they include this as a customary and
35 traditional use based on some of the info that Chris
36 shared with us or you can always at future meetings take
37 this up again.

38

39 MR. BASSICH: I guess from my perspective
40 maybe I'm not fully informed, but just because they
41 release doesn't mean there's a harvestable surplus. So,
42 there's going to be a number of years before there's a
43 harvestable surplus. And that's why I would at this time,
44 probably like, to just push it to another meeting. So,
45 we have better understanding and maybe a little bit more
46 reporting from those in Fish and Wildlife. But I don't
47 understand why there's such a quick need for a C&T
48 determination on this particular resource, I guess, is
49 what I'm concerned about.

50

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1 MR. SHERRY: One more thing I didn't take
2 note of, everything I'm hearing is that the State has
3 an interest in developing this as a resource and has it
4 -- is amongst their priorities to do so.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Donald.
7 Another question, Chris.

8
9 MR. WOODRUFF: No, this is for the
10 Council. Perhaps we can elevate this to an Annual Report
11 concern in our future Annual Reports. That way, the
12 Federal Subsistence Board will have it on their radar
13 that this is coming down the pike. Thank you.

14
15 (Pause)

16
17 MR. BASSICH: Just for the record, I
18 guess I would like to see this table to a future meeting
19 and put on the agenda for the future meeting. Thank you.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, Chris. You've
22 been heard, and everybody here is not informed enough
23 with the conversation I'm hearing. But we have it on our
24 list, and we'll put it on the next meeting's agenda.
25 Thank you.

26
27 MR. SHERRY: I appreciate -- I appreciate
28 you, Chairman Wright. You guys have a great day.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: You, too. Thank you.
31 Hey, Chris. Please reach out to us with more info as it
32 comes.

33
34 MR. SHERRY: Okay.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: That way we can
37 stack it up for you. Thank you.

38
39 MR. SHERRY: Will do. Thank you.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.
42 And right now, we're going to let Elder Sarah James come
43 up and testify and be mindful of time for us. Please,
44 Sarah. Thank you.

45
46 (Pause)

47
48 MS. JAMES: Okay. I'm sorry I was late.
49 I was here a couple of times, the first day and the
50 second day, but I was just kind of feeling when the

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1 issue would come up that I want to talk about. But
2 finally I got to speak and you got to understand that
3 English is my second language. And I'm now an elder of
4 80 years old, and I'm really a story teller. And what I
5 want to bring up is part three different things. I hope
6 I don't take too much time because so, much has been
7 covered, I see that. And I saw that last meeting and
8 also a meeting before that. So, I'll try to -- well,
9 anyway I'm kind of watch on news on what's going on. Oh,
10 yeah. My name is Sarah James, and I'm a spokesperson on
11 Arctic Refuge for my tribe which is Native Village of
12 Venetie Tribal Government. And I am a tribal member to
13 Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government and Arctic
14 Village Council so, I do -- and Arctic -- and Venetie
15 so, village of Venetie and that's who I represent on
16 Arctic Refuge. As a spokesperson, as an elder. So, that's
17 where I'm coming from. And I speak all over the place
18 because some people just make me do it sometime because
19 -- and or they don't do it. So, that's with the one of
20 the reason I'm here today again. I've been listening to
21 news. I've been follow Facebook mainly and news and I
22 don't know. They blame in climate change, but I think
23 the way I see it, I'm 80 now, I can remember very clear
24 from 1950, and I was taught in a traditional way. I live
25 along the Yukon because my father is from the Yukon
26 Flats Birch Creek and we fish out in the land out in the
27 Yukon River, maybe three years in a row down there,
28 because we had to go to Fort Yukon to go to school, or
29 else they'll take us away.

30
31 So, and then we did trapping for three
32 years or more out in the land up at Salmon River. So, I
33 do have allotment in Yukon Flat. And so, I do have lots
34 of relatives. The whole Birch Creek is my relatives and
35 Fort Yukon all along the Gwich'in villages, I got a lot
36 of relatives. So, and most of them, you know, they call
37 me or they see me and they say, why don't you bring this
38 up and that kind of stuff. So, this year I guess earlier
39 Tonya and RaeAnne came, are my leaders from Arctic
40 Village mentioned plane has been flying low. It's not
41 only from Arctic Village, it's not only the whole Yukon
42 Flats complain the spring as soon as over, even before
43 sport hunting open hunting season open. Plane has been
44 flying all over the place low. I don't know where all
45 the patroller are at, but I've been getting a lot of
46 complaints about that. So, I checked at the airport. All
47 the floatplane and all the small planes are not out
48 there. There's lots out there in Fairbanks. I see they're
49 not out there, so they're out there on the land. And I
50 seen that, and that's what I heard. And about 30 years

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1 ago or 40 years ago, we had a complaint about that in
2 Arctic Village because they were buzzing the Porcupine
3 Caribou Herd. And it's not only Fish and Wildlife or
4 other people, hunters -- sport hunters. It's also people
5 that study the caribou. There's people a whole lot of
6 people other country, oil company, state, other state.
7 They study these animals our animal that's out in the
8 land. And they got permit to do that. And these are some
9 of them because we had a huge meeting in Arctic Village
10 at that time. A local hunter came in with broken legs
11 and broken antlers and you name it. There was a lot of
12 broken bones that they find from the animal that they
13 hunted. And I know it's going to be like that soon
14 because they're not out there to be afraid and run and
15 run for the safety. And I think there's more and more
16 is happening now because it is here in Yukon Flat. And
17 so, I just want to report on that.

18
19 The action of sport hunting is getting
20 to be more problem. They leave meat behind because hind
21 quarter they can bring home as an edible part, they
22 don't even have to bring that meat. I mean, they don't
23 even have to bring the bone. They could bring the meat
24 because the edible part and that's a State regulation
25 and nobody talks about it. I bring it up and people just
26 ignore me. And I don't think that's even fair at all,
27 because the way I grew up, traditionally, I learned how
28 to use every part of our Porcupine Caribou Herd. When
29 we get the caribou, we use every part of it with the
30 only thing maybe we throw away is a bone. I said this
31 before the cleanup bone from chewing up on it, or the
32 dog chew up on it. When we leave the camp, we put that
33 in the pond or lake or creek, because it doesn't give
34 out scent, but it's good for fish. That's how carefully
35 we are. We -- I grew up with no trash. I -- we don't
36 have trash. I don't -- we don't have that brown paper
37 bag. But I know how it sounds because we live in Fort
38 Yukon before an Arctic Village, I see. And this one
39 plant where they grow and they go dry and wind blows it,
40 it sounds like paper. And I look at it and there's
41 civilization to me hearing that. That's how I grew up.
42 And we use every part of it. And that's our traditional
43 way of life. We call it (In Native). And (In Native)
44 means mean way of life, subsistence. We don't say
45 subsistence. We say that's our way of life (In Native).
46 So, those are very important to me. And there is a pack
47 of wolves out there. They always said, oh, the wolves
48 have to eat. They leave all this meat behind and that's
49 why there was a lot of pack of wolves out there. And I
50 think how they made these regulations is through Fish

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1 and Game. And it's an old, old regulation from back when
2 Fortymile Herd was healthy up to 800,000. Now today is
3 40,000. They fed it to the steamboat self-serve as a
4 delegate and or turf. And also, they have first class
5 on those steamboats too. And the wood cutter, they feed
6 caribou to them and they rushed to build a highway. So,
7 they -- Alaska highway. They fed them caribou and
8 railroad. That's where Fortymile went to maybe 18 or
9 more than 20 villages depend on that Forymile Herd in
10 those days. My dad is from there, and my mom said she
11 spent the first year over there with him, and she was
12 scared when she heard those Fortymile hurt on stampede.
13 It's just like even the earth is shaking. And that's a
14 law that they use to shoot down -- the military shoot
15 down with -- Sandy Roberts when he was alive, he was
16 telling me what went on then and Circle that they come
17 up at Eagle Summit and they shoot them down with machine
18 gun and take them outside before another batch come in
19 because sometime in between stampede 10 or 15 minutes
20 and there's no stampede nowadays, even though Arctic
21 Village Porcupine Caribou Herd is increasing pretty
22 fast, healthy, and the rest of the caribou is going
23 down, some of them are going down fast now.

24
25 And killing the caribou, there's so much
26 angry through that Facebook, through the people talking
27 to me about what these hunters leave behind. The whole
28 moose and I say, I'll do what I can say. It's a bag
29 limit that we can all can work on it as a tribe, and
30 that's the only way we can change it. It's not a law
31 anymore. It's just some to feed people in those days.
32 We don't have to feed those people anymore. So, I just
33 want to bring that up, that bag limit that goes for the
34 sheep and that goes for the moose, and that goes for the
35 caribou. And then this fall, there's I think it's about
36 6 or 5 hunters went up to Red Sheep Creek. They came
37 back. They didn't get anything. Neither they'd been to
38 where they were before, and they followed the sheep
39 track. And I just want to think that we're going to Red
40 Sheep Creek sheep is safe for maybe another four years
41 until they bring up again and I understand the rest of
42 the dall sheep is going down, most of them are going
43 down and most of them are not there and they're --
44 they're talking about sheep coalition, which is cool to
45 do and to bring back these sheeps. But Red Sheep Creek
46 is unique and different. It got red streaked in the back
47 of the coat, and there's no other sheep like that. It's
48 going to be protected for four more years. But what --
49 how do we gather with these hunters going? They're all
50 good those hunters, they went up there. They've been

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1 there to some of them. Been there three times or four
2 times. So, they know what they're doing. But they didn't
3 get sheep. There was a lot of sign of sheep, but they're
4 not there. We figured that they must have been harass,
5 you know, buy the plane or however to get them to the
6 other area so they can get to shoot them. I -- we don't
7 know because we're not there. We're -- we don't get a
8 report from the whoever patrol those places. So, those
9 are my concerns. And sheep is sacred to us, sacred enough
10 that we bring it in from the back door of -- the back
11 door, never be used unless for emergency. And a caribou
12 skin hut where we used to live in that during the when
13 we were nomadic people. To honor it, they bring it in
14 from the back door and they go. That goes for the same
15 thing for the king Salmon. And they also do it for old
16 John Lake -- lake trout. These fish takes a long time.
17 They be big and huge and yummy and they honor that.
18 That's our way of honoring and not to overharvest. That's
19 how we honor these animals. That's our way of life.
20 That's our subsistence. That's our -- (In Native). So,
21 I just want to mention all that. That coalition sounds
22 good, but Red Sheep Creek is unique and need to be
23 protected. And that's all I can gather from the -- Red
24 Sheep Creek that I want to talk about. And then I want
25 to talk about helicort. Helicorp? Helicopter yeah, it's
26 an oil company. They don't they're kind of not a very
27 good. They're not like other oil companies that they
28 just about do what they want out on the land. And now
29 they're in Alaska. They're all over Alaska. And just
30 yesterday, I heard a news and the news that EPA got
31 after them. I was wondering who is watching them, who
32 is going to make sure they, you live up to protect the
33 environment, protect the locals and the traditional way
34 and all that, because we got to have our own expertise
35 to deal with that.

36
37 And so, I was glad that EPA got after
38 them. It was on the news yesterday on some of the stuff
39 they did already in Alaska, but they are out there. They
40 are in Yukon Flat and the Yukon Flat Fort Yukon I know
41 they're very concerned about the oil. They're going to
42 do oil development with Doyon and it'll be around Birch
43 Creek area, all that kind of stuff, and they're very
44 concerned. I just want to let you know that this is what
45 I know, and this is what I want to say. And climate
46 change is real. It's a science. It's not something we
47 made up. It's a science. So, and then a lot of times
48 it's due to climate change things have been changing a
49 lot. But this buzzing animal out there with the airplane.
50 That's not a climate change. So, we have to -- I think

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1 we need to have more people be concerned about that. And
2 Porcupine Caribou Herd we're not only talking about
3 protecting the Porcupine Caribou Herd. I see that many
4 times to -- even the coastline is like one tenth of the
5 coastline will be protected once coastal plain, the
6 Arctic National Wildlife Refuge protect and the rest is
7 into development already or will be with that will or
8 will be so those are very important part of my life
9 because like I say we did fishing in Yukon. My father
10 did in the summertime. We lived out with a fishwheel the
11 whole family along the coast. And my mother, you know,
12 experienced Birch Creek. And I heard all that story. And
13 then into Salmon River, we lived just us family 50 miles
14 from the nearest neighbor. We were out there. That's
15 where I grew up most of the time. And then we had to go
16 back to Arctic Village because again, because of school
17 or also as kids going there, going to take the kids
18 away. So, since then we've been in Arctic Village and
19 my family, if we could do it, we go out sheep hunting.
20 Maybe sometime we'd be out into the mountains three
21 months, then we come back and get some more for winter
22 and make it back to Arctic Village before school starts.
23 And we share what we did and along with the sheep. It's
24 very hard to get. So, we had we that's why that's how
25 we share our sheep, Red Sheep Creek. So, I just want to
26 share all this again. Many times I explain these things
27 and there's hunters that went out. They didn't just get
28 up and go. They got to have supply. They got to have
29 engine. They're racking up their engine. They walk, they
30 pack. It's not an easy trip, but they do it so they can
31 get into the land and get some sheep and share with the
32 elders.

33
34 And I'm just more concerned, even though
35 it's protected now, I think. Thank you to the sport. And
36 so, I see they put pictures on Facebook. About how --
37 what they took from that moose or what they took from
38 caribou. Just a hindquarter a lot of times I'm at out
39 in the land, I see them come in with just, you know,
40 that bag from Safeway or a Fred Meyer? They get four
41 bags of that, that's it. That's all the meat they come
42 back with. It fits just right in those three-four bags
43 a hind quarters, two hind quarters and two bags. And
44 that's all they come back plus trophy and I, we saw on
45 the on Facebook everybody comments and very angry about
46 how many trophy came back into Delta Airport and no
47 meat. And it was in the picture. It's in the picture
48 here. So, I just want to bring out those three. And I
49 said, I will and I hope I don't take too much. And then
50 I put you guys' meeting in the, in the Facebook so people

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1 would show up and do public comments and so, I can get
2 people to say what they need to say. But I hope they
3 did, because I'm not here all the time so I -- so, that's
4 what I want to really -- these are the things that I
5 really want to talk about.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Well, we appreciate
8 you coming. We really appreciate you coming and sharing
9 that with us. So, and it's duly noted.

10

11 MS. JAMES: If there's any question I can
12 try to answer the question.

13

14 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any questions for
15 her right now from anybody? No, we appreciate you coming.
16 And they got you all noted. Oh, go ahead.

17

18 MS. JAMES: Okay. Thank you for giving
19 me this time.

20

21 MS. POPE: Oh, I just had a comment. This
22 is Amanda Pope, for the record. Thank you for testifying.
23 I really appreciate your insights and the information
24 you shared. Last year, I put in a proposal for the State
25 -- for the caribou for 25 -- unit 25, for caribou, for
26 the front quarters, hind quarters and ribs to be taken
27 out on the bone prior to October 1st. And it was passed
28 last year. So, hopefully that will help alleviate some
29 wanton waste.

30

31 MS. JAMES: Yes.

32

33 MS. POPE: I just wanted to share that
34 with you.

35

36 MS. JAMES: Exactly.

37

38 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: We really
39 appreciate your testimony and your time today and we're
40 sorry we had to make you wait so long. We had.....

41

42 MS. JAMES: Oh, yeah. I know because I
43 have a busy schedule too.

44

45 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Well, we appreciate
46 your time and we heard you and we have you all your good
47 points written down over here recorded. But thank you
48 for your testimony today.

49

50 MS. JAMES: Thank you.

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MS. POPE: Thank you, Sarah.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much. Hey, we're down to agenda to -- oh, where did I where was I? Right here. Wrangell-St. Elias National Park SRC, Barbara Cellarius.

MS. CELLARIUS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There is a handout in your meeting book for this agenda item. It is an action item. It's on page 262 and it has a photograph of our SRC on the bottom. We had nine members that are in -- which is our full complement of members at our meeting that we held in the spring. So, that's a picture from that meeting. I put together the handout for folks who are new to what the SRC is. So, I just want to run through that really quickly. And I'm actually going to be presenting on both the Wrangell-St. Elias SRC appointment and the Denali SRC appointment. Amy Craver has a conflict and wasn't able to be here. So, the SRC, the Subsistence Resource Commission provides a venue for local subsistence users to have input into the management of subsistence resources in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. It also has been making recommendations to the Federal Subsistence Management Program, the Federal Board, and the Regional Advisory Council since the Federal program was created. Regional Advisory Councils appoint three members to the SRC, these members provide an important link between the SRC and the Federal Subsistence Program. Regional Advisory Councils that address issues in Wrangell-St. Elias are Southcentral, Southeast, and Eastern Interior so, each of those three racks appoints one member.

And then there are also members who are appointed to the SRC, three by the Governor of Alaska and three by the Secretary of the Interior. Sue Entsminger of Mentasta Pass is currently the Eastern Interior RAC appointee to the Wrangell-St. Elias SRC. Her term expires in November of 2024. So, at this meeting, you have an opportunity to take action on this appointment according to ANILCA section 808, RAC appointees must either be a member of RAC or a local AC and have a history of subsistence uses in the parks. So, there's kind of a small pool of candidates. And -- yeah. So, since Sue was interested in reappointment, I didn't look for other candidates. We can talk about who else might be eligible if you're interested, but I think Sue -- Sue's been -- done a really good job. She is currently

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1 also serves as our Chair for the SRC. So, like I said,
2 this is an action item for the RAC. It would, it would
3 be a three-year appointment. So, I'll turn it over to
4 you unless there's questions.

5

6

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any questions?

7

8

MS. EVANS: Yeah.

9

10

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: You have a comment?

11

12

MS. EVANS: No, I'll make a motion.

13

14

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay.

15

16

MS. EVANS: I like to make a motion to
17 reappoint Sue to this Wrangell -- this position.

18

19

MR. WOODRUFF: I'll second.

20

21

MR. BASSICH: The only thing I wanted to
22 offer is Sue has done an amazing job for us in this
23 position. Ever since I've been on the RAC. And I have
24 the utmost confidence that she will continue to do that.
25 So, thank you, Sue, for the service. You really do a
26 great job with that.

27

28

MS. ENTSMINGER: Thank you guys, I
29 appreciate it.

30

31

MR. BASSICH: I call question.

32

33

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Knowing
34 that Sue does a great job and hearing other comments in
35 the room here. We'll ask for unanimous decision. And if
36 anybody is against that, please speak up now.

37

38

(No response)

39

40

Seeing and hearing none. Passes Alright,
41 Sue.

42

43

MS. CELLARIAS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And
44 I can't remember for the court reporter whether I
45 introduced myself as being Barbara Cellarius from
46 Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. So, just
47 so we have that on the record. And so, the next one is
48 the Denali SRC appointment from the Eastern Interior
49 RAC. And Charlie Wright is the current appointee. His
50 term on the Denali SRC has expired. And so, the Denali

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1 National Park would like to request that the Eastern
2 Interior RAC reappoint Charlie to serve three more years
3 on the Denali SRC. Again, this is an action item and so
4 you'll need to have a motion to take action on this.

5

6 MS. ENTSMINGER: I make a motion that we
7 appoint Charlie to continue to serve on the Denali SRC.

8

9 MR. BASSICH: I'll second.

10

11 MS. ENTSMINGER: He does an outstanding
12 job.

13

14 MR. BASSICH: Only comment I'd add is
15 just how many hats can you wear? You only have one head.

16

17 (Simultaneous speech)

18

19 Okay, we're going to get you a hat that
20 has a patch on every sector. And you can just kind of
21 turn it. I call question, Mr. Chair.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: All right. Do I have
24 to -- can I do my own vote? Okay, well, we'll go with
25 what we heard. We'll go with another unanimous vote. And
26 if anybody is against that, please speak up now. Seeing
27 or hearing none. Passes. Thank you so much.

28

29 (Simultaneous speech)

30

31 MS. CELLARUIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
32 Council members.

33

34 (Pause)

35

36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Draft Eastern
37 Interior Dall Sheep Management Strategies. Council
38 Coordinator and Donald Woodruff.

39

40 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll
41 get us started off, and then I'll turn it over to Don
42 so he can speak more to this. So, as was mentioned
43 earlier when we went over Annual Reports, it is the
44 Council's -- within the Council's authority to recommend
45 management strategies to the Federal Subsistence Board
46 and the agencies in the region. Don put together this
47 first draft for us to look at and to get everyone's
48 feedback on. And I believe you're we're -- he would be
49 interested in hearing feedback from any agencies or any
50 folks. So, this is the initial draft. There's potential

1 to talk about this more this winter, if a little working
2 group wants to get together or something, we could come
3 back at the winter meeting and finalize it along with
4 your Annual Report so that could be attached. But I --
5 and Western Interior is doing a similar process for their
6 region. And just to let you know our fall meeting last
7 year, Jack had brought up the idea of wanting to do a
8 statewide working group and then kind of backtracked a
9 little bit and decided focusing on regional efforts
10 might be a little more effective in a -- not as big of
11 a coordination effort. So, that's where we're at now.
12 And I'll let Don speak to the draft strategies. Thanks.
13

14 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Brooke. For the
15 record, this is Donald Woodruff. My prime -- excuse me.
16 My primary inspiration for putting an Eastern Interior
17 Sheet Management Plan together was because statewide,
18 the sheep are in decline on most every population. And
19 I want to throw something back at Brooke, and that at
20 the All Council meeting she said, you know, how can we
21 be more effective Council members? And so, I went home
22 and I thought about it quite a bit. And then I remember
23 my discussion with George Pappas, it says -- I asked
24 him, how can we help the State work together with us for
25 wildlife and fish management? And he had no clue how to
26 get the State to help us or us help the State. And so,
27 this is a tiny little step towards co-stewardship. And
28 with Andy's help, the AC passed this and we incorporated
29 it into our whatever you call it -- our lexicon. And
30 this is a draft. And I'm not saying that there's not
31 mistakes in this, but I think we can work out a usable
32 format that we can go forward with, But everyone's help,
33 Sue's help, Andy's help, Wrangell-St. Elias help, Upper
34 Yukon Charlie's help. And I've gotten a lot of feedback,
35 and I think that this is just a small step forward. And
36 I think we can do this. Thank you.

37
38 MS. ENTSMINGER: I have a quick question.
39 I think I heard you say, Brooke earlier at a break that
40 you can't do management plans, you just have to have
41 strategy.? We, the Council.
42

43 MS. MCDAVID: Through the chair. That's
44 correct, Sue. I'm -- we can't have a management plan.
45 And I keep using the word strategy and recommendations,
46 but it does say -- well, it's a recommended strategy for
47 management of fish and wildlife is -- what is in the
48 wording in ANILCA and your Council charter. So, yeah,
49 strategies I guess for management is the best way to
50 phrase it.

1

2

MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay, thank you. Well, as a lot of you know that each of us bring different things to the Council and for me, my love, my life, is to be in the mountains. That's probably why we live in the mountains. And I have the -- and I've spent a great deal of time in the mountains hunting sheep and viewing sheep. And actually, I can -- in the spring when the sheep come down low, I can set up my spotting scope and look out the window and start watching sheep. And I will say that the numbers are way down from what they were 50 years ago. But you know, and even some -- we've watched them rut, not every time, only a couple times in those years have they rutted that low down. And we're able to see a little bit of what's happening when the young ram tries to sneak in on a ewe and the old ram gets rid of it, fighting. And also, things that I've done over the years is back in the 70s, the Department of Fish and Game built an observatory cabin on a sheep lick, a natural sheep lick, and they started netting sheep instead of darting them. They had a 4-points with nets on top, and then when a bunch of them would get in there, they dropped it and they were able to go and collar a bunch of sheep. They'd collar all the different like young rams, young ewes and -- ewes and older rams so they could watch them.

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And that that continued for many years. And I was asked to help and eventually they shut down that -- the whole research that they were doing. But it was really interesting to see you could, you know, go and count the lamb crop. And it was interesting how when the moms came in with their lambs, the lambs would all lay in one area, and then the moms would go to the lick and eat. And then and then they would when the lambs got a little rowdy, they'd get up and start butting heads. It was just the cutest thing to watch them. But over the years, you could just see these collared animals and how it was doing. And eventually I think the Department took shut down that research because they thought full curl would solve it. And so then, they don't have all this research of what's going on. And you know, my observation was one of the things missing in this information is predation. They're those lambs -- those golden eagles would swoop down on them and (indiscernible) them and then come back and pick them up because they -- just like a shot through the lungs for your moose. They kill (indiscernible). And they didn't weigh that much at really tiny, they said 7 pounds, 7 to 10pounds. So -- and I think now this is probably anecdotal data, but I

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1 believe now when the sheep block populations get low and
2 I'm talking to other people across, you know, like
3 Wrangell mountains and south Wrangell, north Wrangell,
4 there's a lot more golden eagles out there taking sheep.

5
6 So, I think it's it could be
7 exasperated. And I witnessed black bear killing a ewe
8 on the old road bed where we live, and we went up and
9 checked out the ewe, and the bear had eaten the whole
10 gut area out of it. So, it was in the spring, and it was
11 probably a lamb in there that that might have been its
12 nutritional value is just to eat that lamb out of that
13 ewe. We knew that ewe; she had a crooked horn and we
14 called her crooked horn ewe and -- but she didn't have
15 a lamb that year. It was an old sheep, I will say. And
16 then there's wolves will chase sheep off cliffs and
17 stuff. And we've had many people -- I mean, I found one
18 right on this old road bed right where we live, where
19 the wolves chase the sheep off the hill and was taking
20 it. And those are -- these are things there's a lot of
21 information missing here I can see. And then I -- one
22 of the things that was said is that -- their sheep rarely
23 move over 6 to 12 linear miles. Well, when those collared
24 animals at the lick, they've had them come in as far as
25 50 miles to come to the lick.

26
27 There are certain places where they do
28 move and then big open valleys they move huge distances
29 from there where they are in the summer and when they
30 go down to the new green feed, they it's probably more
31 than 6 to 12 miles. So, I think there's a lot of things
32 here that we -- there's a lot of additional information
33 that could be added. And I think it's important to work
34 with all of the groups like we mentioned earlier, this
35 has to be everybody working together, all the groups
36 working together. And so, I get there's a lot of things
37 here that I feel like I have more to say. But so, the
38 intent is to have groups work together and come up with
39 a recommended strategy. How soon do you think you want
40 to get this done?

41
42 And actually, we already kind of voted
43 for a to push a letter with a coalition which might be
44 -- get a lot done. Except I will tell you when we had
45 that sheep -- remember when we had the sheep working
46 group together and the State put it together and the
47 fellow that coordinated it, he touted that he can get
48 people to compromise. They never compromise. So, the
49 sheep working together -- with sheep is going to be a
50 challenge because it ended with nobody coming up with a

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1 solution. No, we can't quit trying. But I'm just saying
2 it's a little bit tougher. So, yeah. There's a lot of
3 things that could be added to it so, I don't know how
4 to work with it, Don.

5
6 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Can I get just a
7 little bit of clarification on what the ask is then? Are
8 we asking to try and form a coalition amongst these
9 groups and agencies? Is it -- is that the ask here? I'm
10 not really sure. No, I'm just from the document here and
11 everything, we're here talking about it. What is the ask
12 or what is the action item that we're trying to do? I'm
13 a little bit unclear. I hear that, you know, a coalition,
14 but and I I'm all in favor of that. I'm not sure the
15 process of getting that started may be the letters to
16 the particular agencies informing them that we'd like
17 to form this informally maybe, just to have some
18 dialogue. It doesn't take a lot of money nowadays with
19 zoom and other things to get a few people together and
20 do a little brainstorming. That seems like maybe the
21 first step. Try and set up a time and a date for agency
22 and concern public to have a discussion. So, if that's
23 the case I'll make a motion. The motion would be that
24 the Eastern Interior RAC is very interested and
25 concerned with declining sheep populations. As such, we
26 would like to write a letter to the Department of Fish
27 and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, BLM, and other entities
28 who are -- have regulatory authority over sheep in our
29 area and inform the public to try and form a
30 brainstorming group to develop strategies for long term
31 management of sheep. That's kind of long-winded,
32 but.....

33
34 MR. WOODRUFF: I will second that. Thank
35 you.

36
37 MR. BASSICH: And just to support that
38 motion, I'll just reference the comments we just heard.
39 Thank you.

40
41 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. This is Brooke.
42 So, we did have a very similar motion earlier, and I
43 guess it would be good to get clarification if we're
44 doing something different this time around, or if we
45 want to just ensure that when we send out that letter
46 about the coalition, that there is a draft that's just
47 a starting point to help people get talking about these
48
49 management strategies and issues, and we could always
50 include that in an invite to a meeting.

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MS. ENTSMINGER: I see it as two. I see a letter going out, and then I see working with this motion that was just made.

MS. MCDAVID: So, is the coalition that we talked about earlier going to be reviewing -- helping review this and make edits to a draft management strategy or do you all want this to be -- this is an Eastern Interior RAC strategy and you can get feedback not just not from the coalition, but just by asking for feedback on this document? That's what I'm trying to sort out. Thanks.

MS. EVANS: Who's making up the coalition or bodies.

MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke again. What was noted earlier was all the management agencies. Well, I mean, it will be voluntary. So, if folks agree to join -- you're inviting them, Park Service, BLM, Fish and Game, Fish and Wildlife, TCC, ACs, RAC -- yeah, the RAC and the region. Okay, so that's the -- so, maybe let's step back. So, we the coalition that came up earlier as far as review and moving forward with this draft management strategies, that's in the book. How do you want to do you also want to do like a coalition type thing for this or is this more a RAC document that you're looking for feedback on before you finalize it?

MR. BASSICH: If I may. My preferred way to work on that is use the draft that has been put before us here for review as a starting document for a coalition to work on developing that -- those strategies and management actions. So, it's as Don said, it's a good start. It needs some polish, it needs some editing, it needs some input from the various user groups and agencies. It's always good to come to a meeting with something in hand to start from, rather than trying to create from scratch at the meeting. So, for whatever that's worth. I think I'd defer to Don and Sue, they are the people here that are really working on this and are passionate about it, so.

MS. ENTSMINGER: What I'd like to add is, you know, I think this did come from Jack Reakoff and his concern about the sheep. And we all have it, of course, but I think one of the things that has to happen is I think we need the State managers, they manage the whole State for everything except the Subsistence Board.

00089

1 And we need to know what they have on the books right
2 now for management of sheep. I don't -- I think that was
3 one of Jack's complaints that there isn't much out there.
4 And I think it needs in that letter, I think I would
5 push the State to find their management plans for sheep.
6

7 MR. WOODRUFF: I can help you with that,
8 Sue. When the Federal Subsistence Board discusses or has
9 discussed the sheep management strategies, whether it
10 be Western Interior or Eastern Interior. Their fallback
11 discussion is that we manage for full curl harvest. Yes,
12 the State's talking at this point because at a Federal
13 Subsistence Board meeting the State gets to weigh in
14 every time. Okay, and to me, that's an antiquated method
15 of management. There has to be more organized effort to
16 communicate a step forward for the 21st century
17 management of these sheep. Because climate change is a
18 big issue now. It's a big issue on sheep. And it hasn't
19 been in the 50s and the 60s and the 70s. And that's very
20 important to me. And I want to point out that I got this
21 folder from Park Service today, and it's full of
22 management strategies and ideas. And so, this is another
23 step in communicating this whole issue about the sheet
24 management in the State and especially the Eastern
25 Interior. And.....

26
27 MS. ENTSMINGER: Is those all sheep start
28 -- strategies?
29

30 MR. WOODRUFF: Yeah, and some
31 publications that they wanted me to review or look at.
32 And I appreciate any feedback I get from anyone about
33 this and especially about my spelling because I wrote
34 it out -- I hand wrote it out and I gave it to Brooke
35 and she had the Wildlife Division type it up. And I'm
36 so grateful because I didn't have the means to do that
37 at home. But I have a lot of ink in my pen. Thank you.
38

39 MS. ENTSMINGER: Well, I have a lot of
40 ideas, but I think it has to go to the motion. It has
41 to be worked on.
42

43 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I guess I'll just
44 reiterate. I really think the starting point is a letter
45 communication. And what we need is a lead -- asking
46 these agencies to take the lead on getting a meeting
47 together -- brainstorming meeting. That's all we really
48 need to start with. And then let the ball start rolling
49 from there. So, I don't think it's that big of an ask,
50 but it's a matter of whether it be Park Service or BLM

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1 or Fish and Wildlife Service just to take the lead to
2 organize a meeting, get it started and try and develop
3 some strategies or roadmap for moving forward. And I
4 guess if there's no more commentary, I guess I would
5 just ask question on the motion, Mr. Chair.

6

7

Vote on the motion.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. We all
10 know that sheep in bad shape, and sounds like everybody
11 has the same idea that we need to help them as much as
12 we can and work on this. So, I ask for unanimous --
13 unanimous consent. Anybody against it, please signify.

14

15 MS. MCDAVID: I think the gist of the
16 motion was that we're going to convene the similar group
17 as the coalition to review and make edits to the draft
18 management strategy.

19

20 MS. ENTSMINGER: Do you need...?

21

22 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: After all that?
23 That's it. So, we'll do it again. No. I'm -- are you
24 satisfied? Did you get your answer? Okay, okay. Okay,
25 we'll ask for unanimous consent. Anybody against it,
26 please signify now. Hearing and seeing none; passes.
27 Thank you.

28

29 MS. ENTSMINGER: So, do we need
30 volunteers or just start the letter process?

31

32 MS. MCDAVID: I think anyone that's on
33 the Council that wants to be involved, we can -- you can
34 be.....

35

36 MS. ENTSMINGER: Well, there's two of us
37 right now. Okay.

38

39 MR. WOODRUFF: I think -- excuse me, this
40 is Don. I think that at our Wildlife -- next two sessions
41 will be able to hash out a bunch of stuff about sheep.

42

43 MS. ENTSMINGER: But Don, we need to zoom
44 each other or something because I'd like to talk more
45 about this. Yeah.

46

47 ACTING CHAIRPERSON ENTSMINGER: So -- oh,
48 this is Sue. I'm filling in for Charlie. Important phone
49 call. Next is the future meeting dates. Page 269 and 70.

50

00091

1 MS. MCDAVID: So, Council members you
2 previously selected for your winter meeting. That's
3 coming up next February 19th and 20th here in Fairbanks.
4 And that is a winter meeting since you won't be -- you'll
5 be developing wildlife proposals at that meeting, you
6 won't be making recommendations. So, it typically takes
7 the meeting can be a little bit shorter. So, that's why
8 it's two days on the calendar. But how do folks feel
9 about those dates of February 19th and 20th?

10
11 MR. BASSICH: I'm fine with that. I'll
12 be flexible.

13
14 ACTING CHAIRPERSON ENTSMINGER: I'm fine
15 too. Yeah, let's see -- there's five of us here, we have
16 a quorum. Yeah, is there any objection?

17
18 (No response)

19
20 Okay. In Fairbanks? Okay. Brooke, next
21 is the.....

22
23 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah, and next is -- next
24 year at this time in the fall you previously selected
25 your dates as October 7th, 8th and 9th in to be decided
26 Manley Hot Springs or Tok. Since Charlie and Eva are not
27 in the room with us currently, I will say they were
28 discussing this a bit off the record and suggested that
29 maybe Tok would be a good location because of the
30 Fortymile Caribou issues that have been coming up. And
31 they were also curious if we might want to shift our
32 meeting towards the end of that week to not overlap as
33 much with the Western Interior meeting but that's up to
34 you guys.

35
36 MS. ENTSMINGER: Probably a good idea,
37 huh? Because of the.....

38
39 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. I guess from my
40 perspective, I'm probably okay with that. If the road's
41 open, that'd be great. If it's not, it kind of is not
42 so great for Don and I. But again, I'll stay flexible
43 and neutral and work with whatever works for other
44 Council members, and we'll figure it out as we go.

45
46 MS. ENTSMINGER: Anyone else? Tok.

47
48 MS. MCDAVID: So, it sounds like
49 everyone's in agreement for Tok. Are you also in
50 agreement about shifting it one day, starting on October

00092

1 8th instead of the 7th? Okay, I'm seeing nods of
2 agreement.

3

4 MS. ENTSMINGER: Anyone opposed?

5

6 MS. EVANS: The reason for not keeping
7 it as we had already planned?

8

9 MS. MCDAVID: Thanks for the question,
10 Linda. Because it completely overlaps with the Western
11 Interior RAC meeting at the same time, the little green
12 box on 7 -- October 7 and 8, that's the Western Interior
13 meeting. And the Eastern Interior meeting is the blue
14 box below. So, a lot of our staff will need to be at
15 both of those meetings. And also, some of the issues
16 that that you guys might be discussing might overlap
17 regions. So, you might want to listen-in to their meeting
18 and they might want to listen-in to yours.

19

20 MS. ENTSMINGER: Everyone in agreement?
21 Okay. Yeah, to -- yeah. We're moving it to 8, 9, 10 and
22 Tok. Everyone in agreement? Thank you. All right, I feel
23 like we have that all taken care of on this page, Brooke.
24 Because the last two are already testified or gave
25 reports to us.

26

27 MS. MCDAVID: Yes. So, next up on the
28 agenda, the next report that we have not yet gotten to
29 is Wildlife Conservation Society report about the
30 Wrangell-St. Elias bison. And I did just see Martin step
31 out, and I might need a second to get the projector
32 warmed up for his presentation, so.

33

34 MS. ENTSMINGER: So, let's take a ten-
35 minute break.

36

37 MS. MCDAVID: Sounds good.

38

39 ACTING CHAIRPERSON ENTSMINGER: And
40 we'll keep it ten. Thank you.

41

42 (Off record)

43

44 (On record)

45

46 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: All right. Wildlife
47 Conservation Society. (Indiscernible) Yeah, you have the
48 floor.

49

50

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1 MR. ROBARDS: My name is Martin Robards.
2 I work, as you said, for a Wildlife Conservation Society.
3 We're an organization that's science based. And we spend
4 a lot of time working in the co-management or co-
5 stewardship space. Much of my experience over the last
6 20 years has been with marine mammal hunting
7 organizations like the Eskimo Walrus Commission or the
8 Whaling Commission providing science capacity and some
9 engagement with policy. And I'd like to introduce my co-
10 presenter here, Dr. Taylor Stinchcombe.

11
12 DR. STINCHCOMB: Yes. Hello, Mr. Chair,
13 members of the Council. And my name is Taylor Stinchcomb
14 and I am a social scientist and co-production specialist
15 with the Wildlife Conservation Society. We're based here
16 in Fairbanks and so, I work a lot in weaving together
17 local and indigenous knowledge with Western science
18 data. So, a lot of community engagement work as well.
19 And I'm here for support today.

20
21 MR. ROBARDS: I'm going to talk about a
22 project that we've been ramping up with National Park
23 Service on bison in the upper Tanana. So, next slide.
24 So, just to get familiar with where we're working, and
25 the right hand of those two circles is sort of our area
26 of interest. It covers three bison herds that are in
27 existence; the Aishikik Herd across in the Yukon. That's
28 on the side of the Alcan around Kluane Lake area. And
29 then the two plains bison herds, the Chitina and the
30 Copper River Herd. We're also through support from BLM
31 doing some work in the Innoko, Tom Seaton was in this
32 morning talking about snow and we'll get into that a
33 little bit about why that's useful to this project in
34 the upper Tanana.

35
36 Don't have to read all of this, the
37 justification for this project was -- there's been a
38 variety of interest in bison in the Wrangell-St. Elias
39 area. Those include the herd -- the Aishihik Herd that
40 I just showed in Canada is about 2,000 animals now. And
41 as the habitat changes, you know, there could be a
42 situation where they move over to the Alaska border into
43 Alaska. There's been individual animals coming in, but
44 what would be the likelihood of larger movements of
45 animals into the Wrangell-St. Elias-Tetlin area and what
46 would that mean, you know, for habitat and subsistence.
47 There's also interest from people like AITRC in the
48 plain's bison herds and how's climate change going to
49 affect their habitat, are they going to expand and do
50 less well, better and things like that. And so, Park

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1 Service wanted us to look at sort of the ecological
2 conditions moving forward. How is that going to change?
3 What does that mean for bison plains and wood bison? And
4 then more importantly, to talk with communities in the
5 Wrangell-St. Elias, upper Tanana area and get their
6 perspectives, you know, is bison a good thing or a bad
7 thing? Is it something that they would be interested in
8 working more with? Is it something that would be a
9 benefit to food security? Things like that. So, we're
10 coming in basically putting information on the table on
11 these topics. Next slide.

12
13 So, just to reiterate the two things and
14 Tom talked about this a bit this morning. Vegetation and
15 snow are driving bison distribution and their ability
16 to -- ability to survive. And I'll show that in a sec
17 with the snow. The landscape is changing, and what does
18 that mean for food security and conservation in the upper
19 Tanana. And you'll see in the area that I pointed out
20 that included Wrangell-St. Elias and into the Yukon,
21 it's an area where there's numerous things going on.
22 This isn't just affecting bison, caribou, the Nelchina
23 Herd, the Chisana Herd have habitat conditions that are
24 changing in that area. Sheep as well, and we were just
25 talking about sheep. And certainly, the Yukon is
26 reporting the same declines in sheep populations. So,
27 the information we get on this project is focused on
28 bison but will have relevance to other species as well.

29
30 And then finally, in our role we work
31 with State like, Fish and Game. We work with the southern
32 Yukon wildlife biologists. We're working with Federal
33 and with indigenous partners so we can sort of bridge
34 across that and provide a sort of a one stop, you know,
35 here's a synthesis of what everybody is thinking and how
36 we can move forward productively.

37
38 So, quickly on the Innoko. Tom talked
39 about these winter die offs. And you see there in 17 to
40 18 and 22 to 23, these large reductions in the Innoko
41 population that really is driven by snow conditions, you
42 know, and he talked about that -- those icy layers coming
43 in the snow. And so, what we want to do is get at across
44 these broad landscapes, what snow conditions are causing
45 these mortalities, you know, bison, caribou and the
46 likes. And I'll talk a little bit about the modeling on
47 that. Of course, when we look across at the Aishihik
48 Herd, that's the numbers on the y axis, you know, and
49 the years since 1997 to present and the blue line there
50 is the population, and you don't see that variability

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1 that you see in the Innoko population. You see a
2 population that's gone from about 500 animals to close
3 to 2,000 now. Pretty big increase. The orange line is
4 pretty hard to see on there, but you've gone from
5 basically no harvest to about 300 animals a year being
6 taken out of that population, and the population
7 continues to grow. So, you know, again, you know, that
8 environment is clearly a good one for bison to thrive
9 in and actually looks a little bit similar to what we're
10 seeing for those Chitina and Copper River Herds, which
11 aren't thriving right now but the conditions in the for
12 the Aishihik Herd are somewhat similar.

13
14 So, what are we going to bring to the
15 table on this? Now I'll talk a little bit about the
16 ecology and then to the social engagement piece. We're
17 working with Colorado State University who have a
18 program called Snow Model. We're going to do work right
19 now, this is the BLM funded part of the work. For the
20 Innoko herd. And what you see there in black is all the
21 bison locations. And they'll be basically modeling for
22 us at 100-meter resolution snow conditions that will
23 include those icing layers. It'll include depth of snow.
24 And then we can take that and look at those mortality
25 events and go, when we have these snow conditions, this
26 is what's causing mortality for these animals. We can
27 then go to the Wrangell-St. Elias or the upper Tanana
28 area, and we can lay that across that landscape and go,
29 which areas are going to continue to kill wildlife like
30 bison, and which areas will be sort of safe havens if
31 you like. And that would be something that we'd want to
32 pass on as sort of management relevant information.

33
34 The vegetation piece is we're working
35 with University of Alaska Anchorage with Tim Nawrocki.
36 I think some of you probably know him. I'll go through
37 these a little quickly because I know we're short on
38 time. They have upgraded their foliage cover work. This
39 is basically a much greater resolution of the plants
40 that are on the landscape, and it's sort of verified
41 through aerial surveys and on the ground surveys that
42 allows us to look at the plants that the animals are
43 actually eating. This just gives a basically an overview
44 of where the data is really good. And you see in your
45 area in the Eastern Interior, it's pretty well covered.
46 All of those red dots are aerial surveys and all the
47 blue dots are on the ground surveys. There's work going
48 on in Tetlin right now to fill in some gaps. And then
49 that yellow area is an area that we're proposing to have
50 money come in to, to work on in the Yukon. Again, getting

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1 those transboundary species like caribou, sheep and
2 bison. To show you what this looks like -- good job. I
3 haven't told them to change the slide. On the left there,
4 you can just see a satellite or an aerial picture of a
5 riparian area in the Kuskokwim. And on the right, using
6 that vegetation, you can model where a moose with calves
7 are being. So, the red is where the moose are tending
8 to want to be. Next slide. By doing some of the modeling
9 on this -- we can get a which types of species and which
10 -- together that foster good moose habitat. And so, this
11 is work that's being published by Tim and colleagues,
12 showing that willows greater than 50cm tall is what the
13 moose are looking for. They like areas where there's
14 different species of willow to browse on, and they avoid
15 all of those other areas. So, this is kind of what we'll
16 be doing for bison. So, we'll have a better understanding
17 of where bison are going on the landscape. And then with
18 snow, which areas are -- cause mortalities.

19
20 We have a pretty ambitious community and
21 partnership outreach, and there's two parts of this one
22 in the Wrangell-St. Elias people have lived with plains
23 bison for a long, long time. You know, they've been out
24 on the ground for five decades now. And so, talking to
25 people, getting a better understanding of where they've
26 seen mortalities of bison, whether that's crossing
27 rivers or struggling with deep snow. We're also
28 piggybacking off what Barbara Cellarius has been doing
29 on a food security project, and going back to villages
30 that have expressed an interest in talking more about
31 bison. The ones that are in red here are places that
32 we've gone out to already, and slowly working through
33 the other organizations that you see on the screen. And
34 I do want to put a big thank you to AITRC's Sterling
35 Spilinek and Kelsey Stanbro who've given us a lot of
36 help as we start to look at this, you know, they're
37 wanting to do the same work for the Copper River Herd
38 and look at habitat selection and potentially habitat
39 improvement for that herd. This has a lot of relevance
40 to what they're doing and how can we partner and come
41 out with sort of a mutual win on this. From outcomes --
42 from the projects, I think we'll put new knowledge about
43 how snow and vegetation drive distribution of large
44 mammals in this area, particularly bison. We'll have a
45 better understanding about how these wildlife species
46 are going to change through time, and we'll have some
47 guidance and visioning for managers and for communities
48 looking at their long-term food security. So, with that,
49 I shall wrap up. Thank you.

50

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1 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you. Charlie, this
2 is Don. I have one question and that is are you using
3 remote sensing for your snow and why don't we use that
4 for sheep?

5
6 MR. ROBARDS: To be really honest, I
7 mean, I think the stuff that's coming out from snow
8 model is pretty new. They've been using it a lot in the
9 North Slope for a polar bear denning and identifying
10 those areas. This is something that is only developed
11 over the last -- last 5 or 10 years. It's super exciting.
12 And I think for something like sheep, it's going to
13 require going -- what are sheep looking for with snow
14 conditions? And then working with that Colorado State
15 University team to put that model of that out as a layer.
16 Yes. And yes, they are using satellite imagery to get
17 at that but also ground truthing of those snow
18 conditions.

19
20 MR. WOODRUFF: For sheep and caribou the
21 spring green up is a critical time for calving, and
22 remote sensing could be very effective for that.

23
24 MR. ROBARDS: Absolutely. And I think
25 this stuff I mean, I'm sure you guys have talked to
26 Brent Jamison out of Tetlin. He's doing a lot of work
27 with the snow model and the vegetation folks to kind of
28 test some of this because that green up, what they're
29 looking to get at is to take the density of those plants
30 on the ground which will give you a carrying capacity
31 for wildlife in those areas, you'll not only be looking
32 at snow that kills animals but also, you know, how many
33 animals can you keep on the environment? So, it's super
34 exciting. Yeah.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more questions?
37 Seeing none. Appreciate you. Thank you.

38
39 MR. ROBARDS: Thank you, Chair.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Next is Tetlin
42 National Wildlife Refuge, Brent.

43
44 (Pause)

45
46 Are they online or are they supposed to
47 be in person? Brent Jamison. We can move on to.....

48
49
50

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1 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair, I don't see them
2 online. They did give a report for -- that's in your
3 meeting books on page 283 for your reference.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, then we'll
6 move on down the line to Yukon River Salmon Management
7 update with -- oh, we already done that. Okay, moving
8 down to here then. We jumped around so, much on this
9 agenda, it's kind of hard to figure out where we're at.
10 So, bear with me. Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Thank
11 you. Here I thought I was on Mars.

12
13 MR. MERRILL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
14 Council members. This is Clayton Merrill, the
15 Subsistence Coordinator for Arctic Kanuti and Yukon
16 Flats National Wildlife Refuges, for the record.

17
18 MR. SMITH: And my name is -- oh, there
19 we go. Thank you. Cody Smith, law enforcement officer
20 for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service based here in
21 Fairbanks.

22
23 MR. MERRILL: I wanted mostly to take
24 this opportunity to introduce myself to the Council. I
25 hope to work closely with all of you in the future. I'm
26 the new subsistence coordinator at Arctic Kanuti and
27 Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuges. This is Vince
28 Mathews old position, if you were familiar with him.
29 Brooke has some of my cards to hopefully hand out to all
30 of you. So, if you have any needs or need to contact the
31 Refuges over subsistence, feel free to reach out to me.
32 We just have a brief update on Arctic and the activities
33 on Arctic. Merben, the Refuge Manager met with Arctic
34 Village on September 27th to listen to concerns about
35 air traffic -- aircraft traffic, transporters
36 overflights and operations at low elevations, there are
37 scaring the animals away from Arctic Village, which
38 we've heard about a couple times already. I don't know
39 if Cody wants to elaborate some more on.

40
41 MR. SMITH: I have heard from members of
42 the communities that there -- I believe this has come
43 up the last couple days here, I wasn't able to make it
44 in person. This is a big issue, and I was up there in
45 person -- well, some of the reports were coming in from
46 Arctic Village I was in a tent not too far away from
47 there dealing with some of what was related to these
48 reports. So, the only thing I can really say at this
49 point is that I'm working on it, and it is a very big
50 issue that I'm dealing with. And I would hope by the

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1 next meeting that I'd be able to provide more detail to
2 the Council. But that's about all I can say at this
3 point. Thank you.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

6

7 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you. I'm not
8 really familiar with air taxis and the process for
9 becoming a transporter. I'm assuming most of these
10 complaints are more air traffic rather than guiding
11 operations or whatever -- air taxis, I should say. But
12 I'm just wondering what the process is for air taxi
13 operation to get permitting to do that. And what kind
14 of what kind of communications or what kind of outreach
15 could be given to those entities to maybe encourage them
16 to be on the guard, not to do these types of things, you
17 know, it just seems -- I can remember talking a lot
18 about this ten years ago or 15 years ago, there were a
19 lot of issues along this line and it just seemed like
20 there were a lot of cowboys out there kind of doing
21 their thing. And I'm just wondering if that's still the
22 case or whether things are being reined in, regulatorily
23 or yeah -- maybe the process. Because it just seems like
24 that's something we need to address, maybe not this RAC
25 directly, but the state needs to address that. And I'm
26 just trying to figure out how we can do that in the most
27 efficient manner, you know?

28

29 MR. SMITH: Yeah, absolutely and thank
30 you for that. I think it is a cooperative effort to make
31 sure that these issues don't continue to happen. We're
32 Arctic Refuge management law enforcement, we're going
33 to be collaborating over the winter to talk about steps
34 forward and things we may be able to tweak and special
35 use permits and that sort of thing to help this down the
36 road. The -- to speak to the first part of your question,
37 there is a pretty extensive process for these folks to
38 gain a special use permit to be able to do operations
39 up there on the Refuge. And so, there is a vetting
40 process. There's a pretty extensive list of permit
41 conditions they're supposed to adhere to. One of the
42 problems, I think is, as everybody in the room probably
43 knows, is a lot of people when they get away from town
44 and away from the paperwork, it's easy to feel like you
45 can do whatever you want up there, so.

46

47 MR. BASSICH: But I would think that
48 there's only a few places to get fuel.

49

50 MR. SMITH: Correct.

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MR. BASSICH: So, those might be areas to focus on. Personal contact or personal -- yeah, personal contact with those people, whether it be through law enforcement or some sort of a liaison like we had with Hunter Ethics Program or something like that, that can't fly without fuel. And none of those planes can fly very long without getting fuel. So, that might be a really good place to start.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more questions? Go ahead, Donald.

MR. WOODRUFF: I'd just like to point out that we had two individuals testify about harassment by airplanes in Arctic Village, and one was during a funeral. And I would appreciate it if you would communicate with those folks and tell them what you can do to help with that process. Thank you.

MR. SMITH: Yes, sir. And just for the record too, I did actually travel to Arctic Village and interviewed people regarding that specific issue. And so, I get to hear firsthand what happened on that day. And the -- was able to get a photo and a tail number of the plane that actually flew over the funeral that day. So, it is -- those are the types of issues I do take great interest in. And even if that specific part of it may end up falling under jurisdiction of folks like the FAA, that -- the pilot and operation that's doing things like that is probably something I need to be interested in as well, you know. That's all. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more questions? Thank you so much.

MR. MERRILL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Next is Yukon Flats.

MR. FOX: Mr. Chair, members of the Council. Jimmy Fox, Refuge Manager Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge for the record. We provided an Annual Report should be in your packet. I'm essentially here to answer any questions you may have, but I was asked to come and speak to public comments from yesterday regarding a compatibility determination for oil and gas exploration on Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge. So, I can speak to that. And so, I've got some notes here just to keep me on track but essentially there's a law

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1 that requires that any public uses of National Wildlife
2 Refuges be reviewed for their compatibility. And
3 essentially the question is, would this activity
4 materially detract or interfere with the achievement of
5 the Refuge purposes and the mission of the Refuge system.
6 And I've communicated with the Council in the past few
7 years that we at Yukon Flats reviewed a number of
8 existing uses because we're required to review existing
9 uses for compatibility every 10 or 15 years.

10
11 In 2021, we were approached by Hilcorp
12 and they had an agreement with Doyon to potentially
13 explore for oil and gas within the boundaries of the
14 Refuge, but on corporation lands within the exterior
15 boundaries of the Refuge. And at that time, they asked
16 us what the process would be if they requested a permit
17 to conduct those exploration activities on the Refuge.
18 And I explained the compatibility determination process.
19 And so, as a part of our review of these other existing
20 uses, we went ahead and began a draft process to review
21 oil and gas exploration on the Refuge in anticipation
22 of a permit request from Hilcorp. That request has not
23 come to us. And so, what I understand their activities
24 are exclusively on Alaska native corporation lands on
25 the Yukon Flats. So, due to a lack of a request again,
26 it's been a number of years ago and also a lack of staff
27 in the regional office and also at Yukon Flats staff.
28 We've postponed going through with that review, that
29 compatibility determination to answer that question if
30 oil and gas exploration is compatible on the Refuge. So,
31 I hope that addresses the comment from a member of the
32 public yesterday.

33
34 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you for all your
35 research on the climate change, and for the past say,
36 six years, I've been reviewing that and it is so much
37 like what's happening up in Eagle that I think that we
38 can use that data for our environment up there. And I
39 appreciate your work on that.

40
41 MR. FOX: You're welcome.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more questions?
44 Seeing none. Thank you.

45
46 MR. FOX: Thank you.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Next is BLM.
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000102

1 MR. HERRIGES: Mr. Chair and Council
2 members. I'm Jim Herriges, Wildlife Biologist with the
3 Eastern Interior Field Office at BLM. And I'll Take just
4 one second to introduce our new assistant field office
5 manager, Angela Yemma here, who's been soaking all of
6 this stuff up for the last three days. And I'll just go
7 through some stuff to highlight real quickly. The -- we
8 did have a written report that's in the supplementary
9 materials for more details. And I'll just kind of
10 summarize some information about the Fortymile Caribou
11 hunt. Last regulatory year that a total of 935 caribou
12 were harvested, mostly bulls and that included 45 taken
13 under the State's draw hunt. And in looking at the
14 harvest records for the registration permit, 54 bulls
15 were harvested by people who listed their residences as
16 rural in both hunts. And so, this ended up this amounts
17 to basically 6% of the overall harvest that year of 935
18 caribou. So, a fairly small proportion which is likely
19 to increase as the quotas inch downward. And so, in
20 comparison, the quota set by Fish and Game this year was
21 425 compared to 935. So, you can see which direction
22 we're heading. And as the Federal hunt has been the last
23 few seasons limit of -- harvest limit of two bulls. And
24 that was done to limit the harvest of the productive cow
25 segment, but also provide for greater opportunity for
26 subsistence users to harvest caribou. This last fall
27 season, this summer, the Federal season opened August
28 1st and the State season August 11th. The State harvest
29 occurred primarily in the first, I think, four days of
30 the fall season in the Steese Highway Zones 1 and 4,
31 after which that season was or that season was closed
32 for the rest of the season. Meanwhile, the subsistence
33 harvest, the subsistence season remained open for the
34 duration all of August and September. And most of the
35 harvest occurred in the Steese Highway area.

36
37 Some next actions. We're going to be
38 having a consultation meeting to discuss the Federal
39 winter season, primarily the harvest limit soon. And
40 we'll be including Charlie in that discussion, but we're
41 always open for input on those management decisions. You
42 can reach out to me if you have any. And we're also
43 looking forward to hopefully helping Fish and Game in
44 the process of crafting the new Harvest Management
45 Coalition plan.

46
47 I'll mention our -- because of your
48 interest in the Hunter Ethics and enforcement during the
49 Fortymile hunt. I'll just give an update briefly. Our
50 office again applied for and received funding for

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1 additional law enforcement. And that basically
2 facilitated a substantial cooperation between BLM and
3 Fish and Wildlife Service. They provided extra staff as
4 also [sic] equipment and materials for our enforcement
5 effort this fall. And in which four officers were
6 patrolling for -- during the first ten days of the youth
7 and Federal seasons And in the early period of the State
8 season, there were six Federal enforcement officers out
9 and about.

10
11 And then the dall sheep our input into
12 the -- into the response to your -- to the Council's
13 letter about various issues didn't get included. So, I'm
14 just going to mention it really briefly that Eastern
15 Interior field office has been collaborating with ADF&G
16 since like 1983 with telemetry study in the White
17 Mountains for that population. And BLM has also begun
18 supporting or conducting nearly the annual minimum
19 counts of White Mountain sheep. Since then and or since
20 the early 90s, I should say and then that has become a
21 collaboration between Fish and Game, BLM and U.S. Fish
22 and Wildlife Service on annual surveys. So, we have
23 pretty good collaboration. We also did a GPS telemetry
24 study of White Mountain sheep that involved BLM, Fish
25 and Wildlife Service, Fish and Game and the Park Service.
26 And then also to mention Glacier Mountain, on recent
27 years Fish and Game has been long surveying that
28 population. And in recent years we've BLM has provided
29 funding to help support that and ensure that it happens
30 on an annual basis. This year at Glacier Mountain the -
31 - not much change in the count. A total of 13 sheep
32 observed, which is similar to the 14 and 12 seen in the
33 previous two years. Three lambs to the seven years. And
34 interestingly, two sublegal rams were observed that
35 weren't observed last -- the previous year indicating
36 that there were either a couple rams missed or they
37 immigrated from outside of the of the survey area. In
38 the White Mountains, dall sheep, the total count was 167
39 sheep which is a whole13 more than the 154 observed the
40 previous year. So, that's just a quick summary.

41
42 And lastly, I have heard several
43 mentions at the meeting of the Gravel-to-Gravel
44 Initiative. And so, I thought I'd mention our field
45 office's contribution to this initiative, which has been
46 a pretty large effort the last two years. And it is
47 focused on the active rehabilitation of aquatic habitats
48 and placer mine streams, including the Wade Creek and
49 the Fortyile drainage and Nome Creek. And this work
50 includes developing and implementing techniques and also

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1 evaluating and monitoring success of that
2 rehabilitation. In 2023, the work focused on using heavy
3 equipment to reform the stream channels, create
4 structures using large logs and rocks to create pool
5 habitats and transplanting planning chunks of rooted
6 shrubs to basically create instant stream banks, which
7 is pretty amazingly effective how fast that can have an
8 effect. And then this last year, the work focused more
9 on smaller scale efforts that can be done by hand, which
10 is more designed to begin the process of natural
11 recovery. And also, this year, there was a large effort
12 focused on evaluating success by inventorying and
13 monitoring the aquatic habitat quality and the
14 vegetation. And that will be a long-term effort. So,
15 basically the whole process is kind of a method -- a
16 rigorous method to do work and also evaluate it and
17 improve that work with the idea that it could be expanded
18 elsewhere. And that's all I have.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: (Indiscernible)
21 Andy.

22
23 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thanks for that
24 report. Look forward to working with you guys on the
25 caribou issues. I'm just wondering, in some of the stream
26 rehabilitation are you taking water samples, looking for
27 heavy metals or any other effects of permafrost melt?
28 I'm just curious if that's being done. If it's not, it
29 might be something again, to get a baseline on some of
30 these streams as we move forward in climate change. So,
31 I don't know if that's within your purview to do that,
32 but if you're working in those streams doing habitat
33 reconstruction or whatever that might be a really
34 valuable data set to have, if that makes any sense.

35
36 MR. HERRIGES: Yes, it does. I'm not sure
37 if we're actually doing any water quality monitoring
38 other than just probably turbidity. And -- but I know
39 that there has been discussion about the melting
40 permafrost issue and so, that may be something we'll
41 consider in the future.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Donald.

44
45 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Charlie. This
46 is Don. Did I hear you right and you said that Wade
47 Creek is an anadromous stream?

48
49 MR. HERRIGES: No, I didn't say that.

50

000105

1 MR. WOODRUFF: It's just a stream that
2 you're rehabbing.

3
4 MR. HERRIGES: Yes, yes.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more questions?

7
8 MR. BASSICH: Point of clarification. You
9 know, the comment was made in kind of talking about
10 salmon and salmon rehabilitation or the salmon issues
11 on the Yukon. But I just want to point out that there
12 is evidence -- historical evidence that salmon traveled
13 up the Fortymile River and spawned up there. It's been
14 decades and decades, but back at the turn of the century,
15 there were salmon -- it's well documented there were
16 salmon traveling up the Fortymile River, and it was a
17 spawning environment up there. But there also was an
18 awful lot of mining that took place during that time,
19 that may have been it. I also think that now salmon are
20 so small, they would have a difficult time getting past
21 what they call the rapids or the falls, which is about
22 ten miles up from the mouth. It's a class five heavy
23 drop in the river. And quite frankly, I don't know how
24 a small salmon would get through there anymore compared
25 to the big 80 pounders we used to have. So, just that's
26 more informational.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more questions?
29 Seeing none. Appreciate you. Thank you. Okay, National
30 Park Service.

31
32 MS. FLEURY: Hello, this is Victoria. The
33 National Park Service. Can you all hear me?

34
35 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes. Go ahead.

36
37 MS. FLEURY: Okay, great. Thank you, Mr.
38 Chair. Yes so, my name is Victoria Fleury, and I will
39 be providing you all with a short update on the NPS
40 Wildlife Rule that became effective on August 2nd of
41 this year. The National Park Service amended its
42 regulations for sport hunting and trapping in national
43 preserves in Alaska. The harvest practices at issue in
44 this final rule are specific to harvest on National
45 preserve land only, and to harvest under the
46 authorization for sport hunting and trapping in ANILCA.
47 Just want to emphasize that none of these rules address
48 subsistence harvest by rural residents under Title 8 of
49 ANILCA. The public was invited to comment on the draft
50 environmental assessment and on the proposed rule that

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1 published on January 9th of 2023 over the past two years.
2 The National Park Service staff presented on the draft
3 Wildlife Rule at all NPS Subsistence Resource Commission
4 meetings and all NPS Nexus Federal Subsistence Regional
5 Advisory Council meetings and solicited your feedback.
6 All comments were reviewed and informed this final
7 decision, and I'll just go over like what was finalized.
8 So, the first one is the 2024 Final Wildlife Rule,
9 explicitly addressed two topics on national preserve
10 lands in Alaska, so it's prohibited -- prohibits bear
11 baiting for sport hunters on national preserve lands in
12 Alaska, and it clarifies how a firearm can be used in
13 conjunction with trapping. So, bear baiting is
14 prohibited for public safety reasons. The concerns are
15 both immediate relative to bears defending a bait
16 station and more long-term relative to food
17 conditioning.

18
19 Further, this Rule will lower the risk
20 that bears will associate food at bait stations with
21 humans and become conditioned to eating human produced
22 foods, thereby creating a public safety concern. And
23 then the trapping portion of the Rule applies both to
24 those trapping under State regulations and national
25 preserves, and to federally qualified subsistence users.
26 Trapping in national preserves as well as in national
27 parks and monuments open to subsistence. So, it -- the
28 trapping portion clarifies existing regulations. So,
29 that is that individuals may harvest a furbearer with a
30 firearm under a trapping license only if the furbearer
31 is one ensnared in an intact trap. Two ensnared in a
32 trap that is no longer anchored so, like dragging a trap
33 that has become unanchored. And three is mortally
34 wounded by a trap, but the animal has broken free from
35 that trap. So, free ranging furbearers may not be
36 harvested with a firearm under a State trapping license
37 on NPS managed lands. Rather, an open hunting season and
38 hunting license would be required. And that's everything
39 that we want to inform you of. And yeah, thank you for
40 your time. Do you all have any questions?

41
42 (Simultaneous speech)

43
44
45 ACTING CHAIRPERSON ENTSMINGER: This is
46 Sue taking over for Charlie. Did -- question? Don.

47
48 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you. When I read
49 your report on the final rule, I saw that this final
50

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1 rule does not affect federally qualified subsistence
2 users. Is that correct?

3

4 MS. FLEURY: Let's see. And Barbara, if
5 you're in the room, can you maybe assist me since you're
6 much more expert on the subject than I am? Is Barbara
7 Cellarius still there?

8

9 MS. CELLARIUS: Yep. For the record, it's
10 Barbara Cellarius with Wrangell-St. Elias National Park
11 and Preserve. And so, there's two basically two changes
12 were made in the final rule and the provisions regarding
13 the harvest of bears over bait only applies to non-
14 subsistence user hunting under State regulations, the
15 clarification about when a firearm can be used under a
16 trapping license applies to both people hunting under
17 state of Alaska regulations and federally Qualified
18 Subsistence Users hunting under Federal subsistence
19 regulations.

20

21 ACTING CHAIRPERSON ENTSMINGER: Thank
22 you, Barbara. Does that -- any other questions? No
23 questions. But as a bear baiter, I would like to say I
24 don't agree with the some of the reasoning here about
25 conditioning because I do it and I don't see a lot of
26 this, but we fought that long and hard, and we lost.
27 Thank you. Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve.

28

29 (Pause)

30

31 MS. OKADA: Good afternoon, Madam Chair
32 and Council members. And my name is Marcy Okada. I am
33 the Subsistence Coordinator for Yukon-Charley Rivers
34 National Preserve. I have my colleagues here which will
35 -- they will introduce themselves later. I'd like to
36 refer you to your supplemental packet, tab four. That's
37 where our update is. And I'm just going to briefly share
38 information about our Gravel-to-Gravel project to
39 restore Coal Creek within the preserve unit. This is
40 this project is in the very early stages of development
41 -- developmental phase. And currently we're doing we're
42 performing baseline data collection. But we hope to
43 share more information with you in the future as the
44 project progresses. And then we have staff here that can
45 share other updates. So, thank you.

46

47 ACTING CHAIRPERSON ENTSMINGER: Andy has
48 a quick question.

49

50

000108

1 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you, Marcy. I
2 was just wondering if there's been any work done on
3 monitoring the Charley River for chinook salmon or --
4 and or chum. I don't think any chum go up there, but
5 there have been reports in the past of chinook so, I'm
6 just wondering if there are any updated information or
7 observations from people that are floating it, or those
8 of you that are up there during the hunting season? I
9 think it'd be really interesting to keep an eye on some
10 of that, because we're trying to figure out where some
11 of these salmon are going. And there's a preliminary
12 theory that a lot of these fish are starting to run out
13 of gas, and they're starting to seek other spawning sites
14 prior to their natal streams. So, anyway, if there isn't,
15 that's fine; if there is maybe keep an eye on it or
16 inform us. And as a Yukon River panel member, I'd love
17 to have that information if you ever have those
18 observations. Thank you.

19
20 MR. SORUM: Yeah, I can jump on that. For
21 the record, I'm Mat Sorum, the wildlife biologist at
22 Yukon-Charley Rivers. We did a -- we collaborated with
23 ADF&G on a fish survey study in 2018 that surveyed the
24 entire Yukon-Charley Preserve. And I can provide the
25 results from that to the committee. Yeah.

26
27 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you. If you
28 could.....

29
30 MR. SORUM: And they do go up to Charlie.

31
32 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you. I appreciate
33 that and look forward to seeing that.

34
35 MR. SORUM: Sure. So, I'm going to I'll
36 touch on sheep right away because that was one of our
37 more prominent subsistence issues over the last couple
38 of years. So, we've been studying sheep since or we've
39 been monitoring sheep since the initiation of or the
40 development of the preserve. Last year we did a survey
41 and found that we had a 78% decline in sheep population.
42 So, that led to the FSB closing the sheep hunting,
43 hunting within the preserve last year. And that was voted
44 up this year to close it for the rest of the cycle, I
45 believe and so that'd be this last year and then 2025.
46 And then it'll be voted on depending on where the
47 population looks after that. We secured funding to
48 survey the Preserve in the summers of '26 or 2026, 2027,
49 2028 and so, that data will use that to help kind of
50 guide when the season opens back up. Okay. A little side

000109

1 note here, I did a float survey this summer on the
2 Charlie because I had easy access to get there and was
3 able to count 54, 52, 54 sheep, which was higher than
4 what we counted last year along the Charlie, which was
5 great. And then the ewe -- lamb ewe ratio was 52 over
6 100. So, I think we had really good lambing recruitment
7 this year. Looking at surveys across the Park Service,
8 across Wrangell, Denali and Gates of the Arctic, we also
9 saw increases in lamb production across all those areas
10 as well this year. So, I think this was a good winner
11 for us.

12
13 ACTING CHAIRPERSON ENTSMINGER: I have a
14 question on sheep and looking at your surveys there it
15 was every year 97, 98, 99 and one year missed to 2001
16 and then again every year. And then it went to seven
17 years, six years, three years and five years. Why these
18 huge gaps in data?

19
20 MR. SORUM: Yeah, great question. This
21 preceded my time. So, I'm not going to take ownership
22 on that.

23
24 ACTING CHAIRPERSON ENTSMINGER: You
25 don't have to but why?

26
27 MR. SORUM: No, no, for sure. We did --
28 there was a collaring study with ADF&G and BLM in that
29 area in the late 90s, early 2000. And so, during that
30 period, they did a bunch of surveys. And I think after
31 that they somewhat said, wow, the sheep are pretty stable
32 there maybe we don't have to survey them as often. And
33 so, we kind of took surveys when we were able to secure
34 funding -- when there was opportunities for funding. And
35 then in 2015 we saw that crash and we monitored it. And
36 then our plan was to actually survey it in 2021 like a
37 three-year cycle. But then Covid and those years were
38 just kind of -- it just kind of like threw everything
39 in a mix so.

40
41 ACTING CHAIRPERSON ENTSMINGER: You got
42 Covid, huh?

43
44 MR. SORUM: Yeah. So, yeah.....

45
46
47 ACTING CHAIRPERSON ENTSMINGER: What are
48 the years that you plan '25, '26 and '27.

49
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000110

1 MR. SORUM: '26, '27, '28 and the closure
2 goes through '25 at this point.

3
4 ACTING CHAIRPERSON ENTSMINGER: Thank
5 you.

6
7 MR. SORUM: Yep.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more questions
10 for them? Thank you so much.

11
12 MR. SORUM: So -- oh, sorry. That was on
13 sheep. Sorry. Okay, and then wolves, I mean so, I have
14 -- I don't know if you guys see this, but I have the
15 wolf update here. So, we've been monitoring wolves for
16 30 plus years in Yukon-Charley, which is pretty amazing.
17 If you look at the bottom of the update -- the Wolf
18 update, we have a graph there and that shows all the
19 years we've been monitoring. And the black line is
20 reproduction, the number of wolves added to each pack
21 on average. And then the hashed line is the total number
22 of wolves are monitored. That's somewhat of a proxy for
23 how many wolves we have in our study area. Not all of
24 the Preserve we study so, that doesn't represent the
25 whole Preserve, but that's our study area. If you move
26 kind of to the 2017, that's when we re-initiated the
27 study after we kind of closed it down during predator
28 control era. And what you can see is initially we had
29 really high reproduction and a really low population
30 size. And so, as the population has increased, you can
31 see the reproduction has dropped and continues to drop.
32 And so, in 2020 the population hit kind of a peak. And
33 then now has continued to drop and our reproduction
34 actually has continued to remain low. I think this kind
35 of points somewhat towards carrying capacity -- the wolf
36 population is that carrying capacity within the Preserve
37 and is actually going down. So, we are looking at a
38 study with collaboration with ADF&G, and we're trying
39 to look at factors that are driving wolf population
40 dynamics so, reproduction and survival.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Most of the time
43 that's probably due to food.

44
45 MR. SORUM: Yeah I would imagine.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yeah. Lack of causes
48 that downhill thrust.

49
50

000111

1 MR. SORUM: Yeah. And so, we're really
2 curious about the population, you know, the Fortymile
3 Caribou Herd decreasing. And so, we're also watching the
4 wolf population decrease at the same time. So, we're --
5 our eyes are on that with this next study. So, we're
6 excited to collaborate with ADF&G and have that
7 opportunity. Yeah. So, just last year we had -- just
8 some of the notes from last year we have 22 collared
9 caribou or caribou -- 22 collared wolves. Let -- 10 of
10 those wolves died and 1 left, 4 of them died naturally
11 and then 6 died from trapping or hunting. So, we -- it
12 feels like an unusually high mortality rate for wolves.
13 And so, it just it felt like there maybe were a bit
14 hungry this last year looking for food. So, we also --
15 we had fewer packs. A lot of our packs didn't make it.
16 And so, we have fewer packs and it actually increased
17 our pack -- the big packs lived with the small packs
18 kind of did not is what we were seeing. So, those that
19 are still in good habitat seem to kind of still be able
20 to make it, although they still lost a few wolves. So,
21 yeah. And then that ended up being about a 20% decline
22 in population size over the long-term average, so.

23
24 Just a side note, we're doing we're
25 continuing our GPS collar -- our video collar study and
26 Chair -- member Sue, I think I'm hoping to answer some
27 of the questions about predator and the influence on
28 sheep with this study. We were able to get pretty good
29 kill rate estimates from video collars. We get a 32nd
30 clip every hour, 24 hours a day over the summer, and
31 then over the winter. It's just during daylight --
32 daylight hours. But it gives us a pretty good rate.
33 Allows us to identify kills pretty readily so far is
34 what we've noticed. And so, we're hoping to take that
35 information and kind of assess how wolves are
36 influencing the sheep population among other populations
37 out there. Yeah. So, I don't do eagles.

38
39 MR. BASSICH: Thank you. Member Bassich
40 here, have a question for you. You were saying that some
41 of the smaller packs have disappeared. Do you mean that
42 they have assimilated now with other packs, or they
43 simply are gone? Do you have any idea?

44
45 MR. SORUM: Yeah. So, often we collar or
46 both -- when we get a pair, we collar or it both
47 individuals if we can. And so, the last year we had
48 three pairs; one individual -- two individuals were
49 killed during hunting season. And so, that both those
50 packs -- those pups didn't -- they denned, they had pups

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1 and they raised them into the fall. And then they were
2 both -- two of them were shot. One of the breeders were
3 shot in each pack. And then the pups and pack just
4 disappeared, right. They weren't able to make it after
5 that. So, we know that. And then another one just ended
6 up dying naturally.

7
8 MR. BASSICH: Okay. I just sharing an
9 observation from myself. I spoke earlier in the meeting,
10 you know, the bear population has grown quite a bit in
11 my area there. But I'm also seeing a lot of single wolf
12 tracks around. I'm not seeing pack tracks. And it could
13 be just their hunting strategies in the area or whatever,
14 but I'm just noticing more and more singles than I ever
15 have before. So, I'm, you know, when you mentioned that,
16 it kind of perked me up, like, I'm wondering if these
17 guys are either joining up with other groups or if
18 they're just learning to live on their own.

19
20 MR. SORUM: You know, when you see
21 dispersers, it usually means there's not enough food in
22 that pack or that wolf has gotten old enough where it
23 wants to go breed on its own. And -- but when you see
24 higher than normal dispersals, at least from what I've
25 been able to gather, it means usually there's not enough
26 food and it's time to go see if you can make it on your
27 own.

28
29 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, that's why I live
30 alone.

31
32 MR. SORUM: Yeah, exactly. So, I --
33 that's just anecdotal, though. So, I -- yeah.

34
35 MR. CAMERON: Hello, Mr. Chair, members
36 of the Council. My name is Matt Cameron, Wildlife
37 Biologist with the National Park Service presenting on
38 our moose update which is the opposite page there. Our
39 last moose survey was in the fall of 2022, and you'll
40 see the last 20 years of survey data there on the graph
41 on the bottom. And we're planning our next survey for
42 the fall of 2025. So, next fall. This is the fifth year
43 of our Collaring Project. We have 24 active collars on
44 female moose in and around the Preserve. This year we
45 had an 80% parturition rate. 80% of our females had
46 calves and that's up from the long-term average over the
47 last five years. And we had a 56% twinning rate, which
48 was also above the average. So, it seemed like seemed
49 like they were doing good this spring. Adult survival
50 was right around average over the last year. And we had

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1 our lowest calf survival from last year yet, which was
2 15%. So, we plan to finish monitoring for this winter
3 of the calves, and then begin removing collars and
4 wrapping up the project next year and 2026 with analysis
5 and which we'll share with you as they come out. And
6 I'll hand it off for a peregrine update.

7
8 MR. CASH: Hi. Good afternoon, Mr. Chair.
9 And the council. My name is James Cash. I'm a wildlife
10 biologist at Yukon-Charley. This summer, I was out with
11 my supervisor Melanie Flamme, and others helping with
12 the peregrine falcon survey out there. This is a
13 continuation of a long-term monitoring project. We were
14 out there for about five weeks, split between two
15 different trips. So, we traveled from Circle to Eagle
16 twice and we saw 35 occupied territories, which is a
17 decline from where they were at following their recovery
18 from DDT. So, we are concerned about that. And we're
19 going to be seeking to build some collaborations and
20 some additional funding to look into that decline
21 further and see if we can understand what's going on.

22
23 MR. WOODRUFF: Mr. Cameron, I'm curious
24 about the twinning rate of those moose.

25
26 MR. CAMERON: What can I help with, Don?

27
28 MR. WOODRUFF: What is the twinning rate
29 for the Yukon-Charley moose just in the past few years?

30
31 MR. CAMERON: We have an we've had an
32 average over the last five years of 46%, and that has
33 ranged from as low as 22% which we saw in the spring of
34 2021 to a high of 63% which was last year. So, pretty
35 notable variability.

36
37 MR. WOODRUFF: And the twinning survival
38 rate past the first year. Do you have any data on that?

39
40 MR. CAMERON: For the survival of calves
41 in the first year?

42
43 MR. WOODRUFF: Yep.

44
45 MR. CAMERON: Our average is -- I missed,
46 I didn't write that one down, but it's been between 15%
47 and 42% so, hovering right around 25%.

48
49 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. We're going to skip
50 all over the place. I'm more interested in the peregrine

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1 falcon right now actually. I opened -- you weren't here
2 probably during our opening comments, but I'm in an area
3 where peregrine falcons are fairly -- used to be fairly
4 prolific. And I am concerned, I brought up the concern
5 in my opening comments because peregrine falcons are
6 heavy predator, and they are an indicator of other drops
7 in species and or the prevalence of disease in those
8 species. So, I'm going to be really interested to hear
9 what you're able to find. And I'm wondering if there
10 isn't some collaboration, I'm sure there's a whole
11 network of people that are working on peregrine falcon
12 throughout their migrations. I think it'd be really
13 interesting if you can update us or keep us updated on
14 what you're finding as far as bird flu influences on
15 killing them. Those sort of impacts there, because I do
16 think that that's a flare going off.

17

18 MR. CASH: Yes, sir, I agree. Definitely
19 interested in reaching out to researchers both here in
20 the State and also down south where they're going to be
21 migrating through and in their wintering range, and
22 trying to get better understanding of how potentially
23 Avian Flu and some other factors could be influencing
24 them along that route.

25

26 MR. BASICH: Yeah. And I you know, I've
27 been thinking about this a lot. I -- my own personal
28 thoughts are I believe avian flu is probably playing the
29 largest role, but I often am beginning to wonder if
30 these severe fire seasons in their migration routes
31 moving south is setting them up for not making it through
32 their migrations due to lack of prey as they fly through
33 these areas. I don't know if they avoid them or if they
34 have to fly through them. I don't know that much about
35 how they migrate, but it seems to me they're burning a
36 lot of calories on those migrations. And if they can't
37 replenish, there could be mortality due to that as well.
38 So anyway, I'm really interested in what you're doing,
39 and you can stop by anytime and inform me. Really, it
40 was nice having people stop by and talk about things,
41 and those of us that live in the bush were -- how should
42 I say it, were multi-pronged scientists many of us, and
43 were really fascinated by how everything works and the
44 interrelationships and oftentimes things like birds and
45 bees and songbirds don't -- they're not a very sexy
46 animal for studies, but they're super important because
47 they tell us a lot about what's going on ahead of time.
48 So, appreciate the work you're doing, all of you
49 actually. It's really important, especially because
50 you're in our backyard. It's really nice to take our

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1 thoughts, our observations, and then hear your
2 scientific observations and analysis and try and draw
3 those connections. So, appreciate it. Thank you.

4
5 MR. CASH: Yes, absolutely. And we
6 appreciate your input as well. I mean, you're being out
7 there all the time and getting to see that country
8 firsthand. And just the amount of time you get to see
9 that is super useful. The information you shared with
10 us. So, I enjoyed stopping and chatting with you this
11 summer, and definitely plan on doing that again next
12 summer when we're out there.

13
14 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, and I guess what I'd
15 like to get at. You haven't been in the meeting the
16 whole time, but we're really trying to develop
17 community-based monitoring. And so as always, I'm going
18 to encourage agencies and those of you in the field, if
19 there's observations that you would like to see to add
20 to your data that you may not see during the time you're
21 out there or you want us to be looking for. I'm happy
22 to provide that. And I think most people out in the bush
23 would be. So, it's just a matter of reaching out and
24 giving them your laundry list of things that are
25 important for you or for us to look out for. So, just I
26 think that's a really good way to build partnerships.
27 And I think we have a lot that we can offer, and it's
28 free.

29
30 MR. CASH: Yes, absolutely I agree, thank
31 you.

32
33 MS. ENTSMINGER: I'm curious. There's
34 four wildlife biologists in the Yukon-Charley with this
35 Melanie -- how do you say that, how many fisheries
36 biologists are there?

37
38 MR. SORUM: We don't have a specific
39 fisheries biologist. Oh, sorry, this is Mat Sorum. We
40 don't have -- sorry, we don't have a fisheries biologist.
41 We have freshwater -- freshwater, we have a limnologist.
42 And then we have a Tray, and a shallow lakes biologist.
43 So -- and we do have, yeah, we have four biologists,
44 actually five. We have at the moment, we have five.

45
46 MS. ENTSMINGER: That's a lot of
47 salaries.

48
49 MR. SORUM: Yeah. You know, we do. We
50 expand beyond Yukon-Charley Rivers will be working Gates

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1 of the Arctic Yukon Charley. And then we work with the
2 networks where the networks work beyond so, across
3 Arctic network so, Western Arctic Park lands. And then
4 we actually dip down into the Wrangell sometime.

5

6 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Charlie. This
7 is Don. I'm curious if you have remote sensing on
8 peregrine falcons like they did on Eagle Bluffs for a
9 long time and the visitor center.

10

11 MR. CASH: I don't think that we have any
12 cameras in operation right now. There was one that was
13 upstream of Eagle that is no longer operable. But I know
14 that there is some really interesting footage from that
15 when it was working. And I look forward to looking into
16 that in the future.

17

18 MR. WOODRUFF: One of the most remarkable
19 video for me was that when the male peregrine landed on
20 the nest edge, he would sit there and bow to the female
21 over and over and over again before he came into the
22 nesting area with yellowlegs. And so, my comment is, how
23 are the yellowlegs doing? That's the primary food for
24 Peregrine.

25

26 MR. CASH: You know, I don't have a
27 specific answer to that. They're not part of our
28 monitoring program. I do know that, like Andy and others
29 have mentioned that generally it felt like the bird
30 populations were down around the river. But we don't
31 have a way to specifically quantify that right now. But
32 I also agree with your observation about how interesting
33 their behavior is. I really enjoyed watching that this
34 summer as well, and how the males and females interact.
35 It's pretty interesting.

36

37 MR. WOODRUFF: And one of the other
38 features of that remote sensing was that you could see
39 the females spreading their arms out and shielding the
40 chicks from the sun. That was awesome. Thank you.

41

42 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more questions?
43 You done now? Okay. Thank you so much. It was a wonderful
44 report. Next is Wrangell-St. Elias.

45

46 MR. PISTER: Good afternoon. This is
47 Benjamin Pister team lead -- well, my name is Benjamin
48 and the team lead for resource stewardship and science
49 at Wrangell-St. Elias. And I'm going to be giving the
50 wildlife report today, which is on tab five. And

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1 actually, our wildlife biologist Kyle Cutting is the --
2 also the coach for the little dribblers in Glennallen.
3 And that is where he is at the moment. So, he typed
4 something up and I'm going to be reading it to him,
5 which is a little bit more informal. But as full report
6 said tab -- tab five.

7
8 So, okay my name is Benjamin Pister but
9 he said introduces himself as Kyle Cutting as a wildlife
10 biologist at Wrangell-St. Elias, this is about a page -
11 - but a little more than a page, by the way; wildlife
12 biologists at Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and
13 Preserve. He's been the wildlife biologist for the last
14 two years and feels very grateful to have been exposed
15 to many wildlife species in different areas across the
16 park. And he wants to give a brief update on long term
17 monitoring efforts on important subsistence wildlife
18 species including Mentasta and Chisana caribou, moose
19 and dall sheep. These long-term monitoring projects are
20 described in formalized monitoring protocols that have
21 been developed by the NPS Inventory Monitoring Program,
22 in conjunction with individual park units. All these
23 surveys are collaborative in nature with different
24 people and groups who are focused on wildlife
25 conservation efforts. So, caribou, we'll start with
26 caribou. Wrangell-St. Elias has two caribou herds,
27 including the Mentasta and the Chisana Herds. Both
28 caribou herds are small herds and subject to long term
29 monitoring where population surveys, composition,
30 surveys of age and gender ratios, and radio collaring
31 of animals occur on a short-term basis. Both herds have
32 different partners. For instance, the Mentasta Herd has
33 been a long-term collaboration among Wrangell-saint
34 Elias and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and
35 recently the Ahtna -- excuse me, Ahtna Inter-Tribal
36 Resources Commission. The Chisana Herd as international
37 collaboration including the Government of Yukon's
38 Department of Environment, Kluane First Nation, White
39 River First Nation, Alaska Department of Fish and Game,
40 Tetlin Refuge and of course, Wrangell-saint Elias
41 National Park. This past year, the Mentasta Caribou Herd
42 was recorded at a population low since 2017. A total of
43 189 adult caribou were surveyed in June. Calf numbers
44 were similar to the previous four surveys, with bull
45 numbers decreasing this past year and collaborative --
46 collaboration with AITRC and ADF&G, 10 additional
47 Mentasta caribou were collared last week, with GPS
48 collars bringing the total number of collared animals
49 in the Herd to 29. The Chisana Caribou Herd is considered
50 stable with slightly less than 600 animals. A

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1 composition survey will occur tomorrow, Friday, on the
2 Alaska side of the Herd's range, and this Sunday for the
3 Yukon side of the Herd's range. Last week, a total of
4 15 new GPS collar -- collars were deployed on the Chisana
5 Caribou Herd, bringing the total number of. Collared
6 animals to 27. Kyle was involved as a darter, and both
7 of those missions and Wrangell-St. Elias, along with our
8 partners, received some funding. We received it -- we
9 got word of it in 2024, but it will come in 2026 to
10 evaluate historic changes in herd overlap across the
11 three decades among the Mentasta, Chisana and the larger
12 Nelchina Caribou Herds. This work will help inform
13 future harvest management and conservation-based
14 decision making that occur within Wrangell-saint Elias
15 and adjacent lands.

16
17 Going to move on to moose. I'm excited
18 to report that a population survey of moose was conducted
19 during the fall of 2023. This was the first survey that
20 occurred since 2013. The survey occurred across a 2.5-
21 million-acre landscape, all within Wrangell-saint Elias,
22 including Units 11 and Units 12, downslope of the north,
23 west and southern flanks of the Wrangell Mountains to
24 the Mentasta Mountains to the north, Copper River to the
25 west, and Chitina River to the south. The objective of
26 the moose survey was to evaluate spatial-temporal
27 patterns, it's a big word, spatial-temporal patterns in
28 moose and determine age and gender composition. The
29 estimated population size in 2023 was at a record low,
30 nearly 40% lower than the previous survey in 2013 and
31 slightly lower than 2007 and 2010 population estimates.
32 We also documented changes in the spatial distribution
33 of total moose with pronounced declines on the north
34 side of Wrangell Mountains with the west and south sides
35 of the Wrangell Mountains showing less decline. So,
36 there's more moves to the south than there is to the
37 north. We are currently summarizing these data in a
38 scientific paper that creates a decision-making tool to
39 inform fixed versus recurring management decisions,
40 using the changes in moose numbers.

41
42 Moving on to sheep, we are excited to
43 report that Wrangell-St. Elias and the Inventory
44 Monitoring Program in support with the -- from the NPS
45 Subsistence Advisory Council, surveyed sheep populations
46 across a 2.5-million-acre landscape in the northeast
47 side of Wrangell-St. Elias. Using a distance sampling
48 strategy, we surveyed three distinct geographies
49 including the long-term monitoring area south of
50 Nabesna, along with the road accessible Mentasta

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1 Mountain -- Mountains area and the roadless Nitosen
2 Mountains area to the east. A total of nearly 1500 miles
3 of survey transects were surveyed at elevations where
4 distance sampling was used to estimate the sheep
5 population. Preliminary results indicate that for the
6 long-term monitoring area of the Nabesna, the adult
7 sheep populations may remain at an all-time low,
8 approximately 900 adult sheep. But the good news is that
9 it appears to have stabilized, as adult sheep are at a
10 similar low level that was observed in 2023.
11 Interestingly, sheep numbers are similar between the
12 long term Nabesna area and the adjacent -- adjacent
13 remote Nitosen Mountains has approximately 950 adult
14 sheep to the east, while the Mentasta Mountains have
15 with approximately 550 adults, is roughly 60% of the
16 population estimate of the other two areas. Encouraging
17 news is that all three have similar lamb to ewe like
18 ratios of 0.35, which is above the average for the long
19 term Nabesna side of 0.3. And that concludes Kyle's
20 report.

21
22 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Charlie. This
23 is Don. Would you say that the Chisana Herd is that
24 carrying capacity and that's why they're stabilized?

25
26 MR. PISTER: I don't know enough myself
27 personally, to answer that question. I would probably
28 have to defer it to Kyle.

29
30 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you. Member
31 Bassich. In regards to the community outreach and the
32 funding that you receive for food security, can you
33 elaborate a little bit more on where the where that
34 moneys [sic] went, how it was spent, or what your plans
35 are for that? Yeah. I guess what I'm getting at is I,
36 you know, I see it was dedicated towards enhancing
37 community subsistence, food security, resilience. Was
38 that in the form of providing food or was that money
39 then spent to try and shore up subsistence resources?

40
41 MS. CELLARIUS: Mr. Chair, Andy. I'll
42 cover that in the Subsistence and Anthropology report.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more questions?

45
46 MR. WOODRUFF: Sue and I were just having
47 a discussion about Chisana caribou, and she informed me
48 that the Herd was much bigger in the 90s. So, is it
49 predation or is it the habitat?

50

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1 MR. PISTER: I simply couldn't tell you.
2 I've, you know, been working at the park for a year and,
3 I don't know the history of that herd. I have seen those
4 numbers, so I know it was bigger in the past. I do know
5 that, and I kind of have the same question. I think this
6 coming year part of our work plan will be to dig into
7 some of the data that we do have to start answering
8 those questions. I couldn't tell you if we can answer
9 that question, but it's on our minds.

10
11 MS. CELLARIUS: I'm going to introduce
12 myself and maybe say a couple of things about the Chisana
13 Herd before I jump into the other reports from Wrangell-
14 St. Elias. So, for the record, it's Barbara Cellarius
15 with Wrangell-saint Elias National Park and Preserve.
16 I'm the cultural anthropologist and subsistence
17 coordinator, but I've been around longer than Benjamin.
18 So, what wasn't mentioned and I don't think really
19 anybody mentioned it today. We're getting very, very
20 close to finalizing an updated version of the Chisana
21 Caribou Herd Management Plan. Thanks to our colleagues
22 in Yukon Environment, we finally got us together and did
23 an updated version of the plan. And it does identify a
24 number of research topics. And I think once we sort of
25 get the signatures on it, which I think is going to
26 happen in the next month or so, there's a variety of
27 kinds of monitoring identified, I mean, you're right,
28 the Herd was larger in the past. Exactly how much larger,
29 I think there's some -- I've heard a range of numbers.
30 But it was definitely larger in the past. But it does
31 seem to be stable compared -- especially compared to the
32 other caribou herds around. We did we do have a small
33 hunt on that Herd. It was the only hunt, the caribou
34 hunting that took place in the park this year. And we
35 had a couple caribou harvested. It has a quota of six
36 so, we don't expect to have a lot of caribou harvested.

37
38 MR. WOODRUFF: This is Don, again. I
39 would be real interested in hearing more about this at
40 our next Council meeting. Thank you.

41
42 MS CELLARIUS: Yep. We can do that. And
43 we can take the questions you've brought back to the
44 biologists. So, I'm going to jump into a couple of other
45 reports. So, our fisheries report is on -- you can find
46 that on page 319. It focuses on activities on the Copper
47 River. I'm mostly going to let you take a look at that
48 yourself. If you have questions, get ahold of us and we
49 can get answers to the questions. We did operate the
50 Chenega Creek Fish Weir this year, which is the one sort

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1 of headwaters area monitoring that we do of the Copper
2 salmon stocks. It's located adjacent to Katie John's
3 fish camp. And so, we had a local crew this summer
4 counting fish. I'm sure that there were more than 12,000.
5 In the end of the season, there would have been more
6 than the 12,000. There's a late run that comes in as
7 well. But -- okay. So, turn you on your microphone.

8
9 MR. PISTER: This is Benjamin Pister. I
10 just happen to know that they were up over 14,000 by the
11 day, they end up having to take the weir out.

12
13 MS. CELLARIUS: And that's this is, you
14 know, a small stream at the headwaters of the Copper
15 River. But it gives us a sense of how many fish are
16 getting at that farthest upstream. So, I'm going to just
17 briefly and like I said, in the interest of time, I'm
18 not going to go through Dave's report, but if there's
19 any questions, we can answer them. And then I just want
20 to give you a few highlights from the Subsistence and
21 Anthropology report, which is also in tab five. And just
22 a few things in part in response to concerns about food
23 security. We're doing a lot of things. In addition to
24 today's fisheries report, there's a lot of in various
25 kinds of projects going on on the Copper River looking
26 at health -- health of salmon, looking at salmon genetics
27 to try to have a better sense of which stocks of --
28 stock groups of fish are being harvested at different
29 times. And one of the things we've done is harvesting
30 the -- or harvesting surveying the communities of
31 Chistochina, Mentasta and Slana about their harvest and
32 use of subsistence resources. So, we're -- we've
33 completed all the survey work and are doing a community
34 review meeting with of the Slana data later this month.
35 And then we'll be putting together a technical report
36 that's a cooperative project with the Alaska Department
37 of Fish and Game and the Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resources
38 Commission.

39
40 And then to the food security funding.
41 So, as part of the Inflation Reduction Act, the National
42 Park Service in Alaska has gotten about \$6 million to
43 address food security resilience and sort of changing
44 environmental conditions. And some of that money went
45 to some sort of biological projects. And then we've --
46 the -- Benjamin and Amber, who's our other
47 anthropologist, and I went on the road this spring and
48 summer and we visited a lot of communities. I had it
49 written down here. We met with 11 Tribal Councils in six
50 communities to introduce the funding opportunity. And

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1 we've gotten 12 project proposals. And the kinds of --
2 so, we're looking for projects that support, that
3 benefit a community of subsistence users that relate in
4 some way to subsistence resources on -- found on Federal
5 public land and then have a nexus in some fashion with
6 environmental changes -- food security concerns that are
7 related to environmental changes. And I think we talked
8 -- we've talked a lot at this meeting about what some
9 of those things are. So, we're trying to support
10 community food security resilience. So, we're not
11 necessarily purchasing food to put in a food bank. We're
12 trying to help communities build capacity. So, one of
13 the things that has come up from several communities is
14 they have trouble, you know, we don't have caribou open
15 for harvest right now, moose are harder to get. People
16 are more dependent on salmon. Can we improve their
17 ability to harvest salmon through things like community
18 fish wheels? Some of the communities have identified
19 having a community food processing facility. In one
20 case, it was specifically mentioned -- a couple of places
21 specifically like increasing capacity to efficiently use
22 roadkill. So, you know, we -- we're on the Road System,
23 people get phone calls like, can you come get this moose?
24 Well, what do you do with it if it's in the middle of
25 the summer? If there's a place you can take it, if
26 there's a trailer you can borrow to help move it. So,
27 it's more helping build capacity in that fashion rather
28 than -- rather than necessarily just putting food in
29 people's freezers or pantries. We've also gotten
30 projects that have wanted to build capacity -- so, the
31 kind of culture camps that you guys were talking about
32 earlier, that was another kind of project. If they have
33 a subsistence related culture camp to help teach kids
34 subsistence activities, maybe even subsistence
35 activities that they haven't, like they haven't heard
36 about before but might help build resilience within the
37 community. Those are the kinds of projects that we've
38 gotten proposals for. I'll stop there because see if
39 Andy has a.....

40
41 MR. BASSICH: No, I guess thank you for
42 that, thank you for clarifying that. And I guess the
43 bottom line is if the resource goes away so, does the
44 resilience. So, you know, putting the money towards
45 trying to make sure that those fish make it up to those
46 subsistence users is a really good use for the money.
47 Yeah. I'm just trying to understand because, you know,
48 I know there's funding. It goes different ways. And I'm
49 just trying to understand who's doing what, where and

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1 and what's working. So, every place has very unique
2 challenges.

3
4 MS. CELLARIUS: And I would add that, you
5 know, these we basically went to the communities and
6 said we have approximately this much money per
7 community. Is there something that we can do to help you
8 that sort of fits these three criteria that help us pass
9 the red face test with where the money is from? You
10 know, we talked earlier about the Board of Fish Proposal
11 #51. So, the person who took the lead on developing that
12 proposal was funded with an IRA funded position. So, the
13 -- we're doing like we have a bunch of things that we're
14 doing that are sort of all trying to help support food
15 security, resilience, you know, the what we've described
16 in the Subsistence and Anthropology report is just a
17 little piece of that. And I did want to mention a couple
18 of other things. At long last, the ethnographic overview
19 and assessment that looks at the Ahtna people and
20 Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve is
21 complete. We've just sent it to the printer. So, by your
22 midwinter meeting, we'll have copies and probably within
23 the month we'll have a virtual copy that can be
24 downloaded from our website. There is a link in the
25 handout for where you can download that, it's just not
26 there yet. And then I wanted to mention the Copper River
27 in-season teleconferences, which is a project that we're
28 doing in collaboration with Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resources
29 Commission, and it's modeled after the project on the
30 the Yukon River that you folks are really familiar with.
31 And so, that's the what -- we've got funding for four
32 years to see how this goes. We got a little bit of a
33 late start, but we had some really successful calls.
34 It's an opportunity for people up and down the river to
35 call in and talk about how fishing is going,
36 environmental changes they might be seeing is, you know,
37 is there high water, what are the fish look like? We
38 also have had the biologists call in and give reports.
39 So, it's been a pretty popular project this summer and
40 will be continuing the next couple of years. And I'm
41 just going to stop there, but we're happy to answer any
42 questions.

43
44 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Charlie. his
45 is Don. I see that on page 321 and the bottom of the
46 first paragraph, it says that all State users are
47 required to closely attend fish wheels being operated
48 so chinook salmon can be immediately released. On the
49 Yukon, fish wheels have to be manned, which means if
50 you're operating, you're standing on the wheel or

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1 someone standing on the wheel to catch those kinks or
2 divert those kinks back into the river. So, what does
3 it mean to be closely monitored? That's kind of a
4 confusing statement.

5
6 MS. CELLARIUS: That was a restriction
7 that was put in place by the state of Alaska on the
8 state subsistence fishery. That wasn't a that didn't
9 apply to the federally qualified subsistence users. So,
10 I don't know that I have a response to that question,
11 although maybe Benjamin does.

12
13 MR. PISTER: I think it well, I don't
14 want to speak for the State. But I think what their
15 intention was closely monitored enough to return chinook
16 salmon back to the water if you caught them, whatever
17 that took.

18
19 MS. ENTSMINGER: I might add, they were
20 in -- there was requirements that there be some water,
21 I don't know if it was a requirement, but people were
22 having water in -- or they came so they could.

23
24 MR. WOODRUFF: And they're holding back.

25
26 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: On the Yukon we were
29 required to have a slide -- live boxes are not good for
30 fishing. So, you have to sit in there and when you see
31 a king coming to basket you push the slide over and it
32 slides right back in the river without landing in the
33 box.

34
35 MR. WOODRUFF: That's a diverter, right?

36
37 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Right.

38
39 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: And the fish wheel
42 also have to be built friendly. We use a crab pot mesh
43 that's flexible and we hang it away. We don't nail it
44 to the actual fish wheel, we hang it around. So, it's
45 like a net and they hit it and they bounce. And in the
46 shoot, there's a foam. We take the sleeping pad -- half
47 inch foam pad and we cut them to fit. So, when they hit
48 that shoot it doesn't damage them. They get a little
49 cushion and they slide on down. So, we have no mortality.
50 And so, if you're protecting and fish that's the way to

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1 do it all the way. And you can't put dead fish back in
2 the river. Thank you.

3

4 MS. CELLARIUS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

5

6 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Subsistence
7 Management, Brent.

8

9 MR. VICKERS: Mr. Chair, members of the
10 Council, behalf of OSM. I want to thank you for your
11 service and exceptional work that you do on behalf of
12 your communities and user groups. This is Brent Vicker,
13 OSM for the record. We value your expertise and volunteer
14 contributions -- volunteer contribution of your
15 knowledge, experience and time to regulatory process.
16 Okay, first, the OSM administrative move at the request
17 of many stakeholders made during listening sessions and
18 tribal consultations across the State, Congress has
19 administratively moved OSM from the U.S. Fish and
20 Wildlife Service directly to the Office of the Assistant
21 Secretary Policy, Management and Budget. This move
22 became effective on July 15th of 2024. It is one of many
23 efforts that the Department of Interior is making to
24 strengthen Alaska -- strengthen Federal subsistence
25 policies and structure to ensure that federally
26 qualified subsistence users and Alaska native peoples
27 have an opportunity to meaningfully engage in the
28 Federal Subsistence Management Program implementation.
29 Let's see. Our responsibilities, administrative support
30 remain the same, programs continue seamlessly, and the
31 regulatory cycle is going on without any interruption.
32 If you need to reach out to OSM staff, we now have new
33 email addresses that have been updated on our website.
34 The main contact phone number remains the same (907)
35 786-3888, and our main email address is now
36 subsistence@ios.doi.gov. Update on the Wildlife Final
37 Rule and the 2024 to 2026 regulations booklet. The Final
38 Rule of the regulations -- for the Federal Subsistence
39 Management Regulation the harvest of wildlife on
40 Federal-Public Lands in Alaska have been published in
41 the Federal Register and went into effect August 29th,
42 2024. I know Council member Pope brought this up. Just
43 in how slow these things can come out and how subsistence
44 users don't know what's going on. I -- and this is one
45 thing we really hope is improved with our administrative
46 move on our side. We take care of these things, get the
47 Final Rule to get published and send it to D.C. as quick
48 as we can. We always have. And then it's just been a
49 waiting game and quite often just a black box for us.
50 And that's one of the things that we actually, in just

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1 a short time of seeing some great work on, is cutting
2 down on the levels that these things have to go through,
3 and we hope to make these things a lot quicker in the
4 future. It's been very frustrating on our side, knowing
5 how frustrating it must be to subsistence users that
6 these things get delayed. So, hopefully that does get
7 improved. I just wanted to make that comment. Thank you.

8
9 Let's see. Update on the regulations
10 regarding the Federal Subsistence Board composition.
11 Based on requests during the joint consultations, the
12 Department of Interior and Agriculture are in the
13 process of revising regulations concerning the
14 composition of the Federal Subsistence Board. In the
15 proposed rule, the departments proposed to add three
16 public members to the Board. Members would be nominated
17 or recommended by federally recognized tribes -- tribal
18 governments in Alaska and would be required to possess
19 personal knowledge and direct experience with
20 subsistence uses in rural Alaska, including Alaska
21 native subsistence uses. The proposed rule also defines
22 requirements used to select the Board Chair and affirm
23 the Secretary's authority to play, to replace Board
24 members and the Secretary's responsibilities and
25 oversights regarding Board decisions.

26
27 The Final Rule regarding these proposed
28 revisions is expected to be published in the Federal
29 Register soon and would become -- will become effective
30 30 days after publication. Tribes are welcome to
31 nominate or recommend public board members for these
32 three new seats anticipated in the Final Rule. Please
33 direct any questions and nominations or recommendations
34 to Raina Thiele at raina_thiele@ios.doi.gov, and Sara
35 Taylor at sara_taylor@ios.doi.gov. Okay. An update more
36 or less on Deferred Wildlife Proposal WP24-01, which was
37 the proposal to sell the hides of brown bears. At its
38 public meeting on April 3rd, 2024, the Board deferred
39 its action on Wildlife Proposal 24-01 request to allow
40 the sale of brown bear hides taken under Federal
41 regulations. To make a long story short, our update is
42 at ADF&G is not able to permit the sale of brown bears
43 on behalf of the Federal Subsistence Management Program.
44 If the proposal is based -- is passed as submitted as
45 discussed by the Board. In other words, ADF&G cannot
46 permit the sale of brown bears taken in units with one
47 brown bear limits under Federal regulations. Therefore,
48 OSM is exploring opportunities for federally qualified
49 subsistence users to obtain permits from a Federal
50 agency. We will update the board on this option at the

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1 Fisheries Regulatory Meeting in February 2025. Yes,
2 Council member Donald Woodruff.

3
4 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you. The way I read
5 that -- that Fish and Game could not allow the sale of
6 blackbirds where there was two black, I mean, grizzly
7 bears where there was two bears on the harvest.

8
9 MR. VICKERS: Thank you. So, let me
10 clarify that the issue -- the main issue is that you can
11 own -- the ADF&G who is in control of the, basically the
12 sale of brown hair is only permits the sale for from
13 units with two brown bear limits, two brown bear limits,
14 which is, you know, says that there's basically enough
15 brown bears there. And ultimately, this proponent wants
16 to be able to sell the hides from the brown bears he
17 harvests, where there's a one brown bear limit on Federal
18 lands. And after consulting with ADF&G, they said that
19 they're not going to be able to do that. So, basically
20 we have to find a new way of allowing for the permit
21 sales where there is a one brown bear limit. And we're
22 hoping to be able to do that through a Federal agency.
23 But we wanted to take the easier route first. And where
24 there was already a system. So, now we're trying to
25 develop a system under a Federal agency. Is that makes
26 sense?

27
28 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you. That clears it
29 up.

30
31 MR. VICKERS: Thank you. Okay. OSM
32 staffing updates. I would like to provide some of the
33 more -- most recent OSM staff updates since the All
34 Council meeting in March. OSM welcomed our new acting
35 or temporary director, Crystal Cissquq Leonetti. She
36 will be an acting role until the end of November. In her
37 permanent position, Crystal is Alaska Native Affairs
38 Specialist at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Among
39 her regular OSM director responsibilities, she's been
40 leading OSM through the administrative move and has been
41 doing an excellent job. OSM's director position was
42 advertised on September 5th and will close on October
43 2nd, 2024. OSM had some departures including Theo
44 Matuskowitz, who was our supervisor regulatory
45 specialist for -- since the beginning, for over two
46 decades. It's a big loss for us. We greatly miss his
47 humor and in-depth knowledge. OSM Fisheries Biologist
48 Justin Kohler has been acting in his place in the interim
49 and has also been doing an excellent job of learning
50 that and implementing things very quickly. The position

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1 -- this position will be advertised for permanent hire
2 very soon. Kayla McKinney, who was the OSM Subsistence
3 Outreach Coordinator, had to leave for a job in another
4 State. A vacant position for the Subsistence Outreach
5 Coordinator and the Records Management Specialist will
6 be advertised in the near future and we encourage all
7 individuals with diverse outreach skills and record
8 management skills and interest in work -- and an interest
9 in working with the subsistence issues in rural
10 communities to apply. And I guess we are also saddened
11 to learn the departure of OSM's Deputy Director Amy
12 Howard. She left the Federal service with a new job in
13 Aleut Corporation as Director of Lands and National --
14 Natural Resources. We greatly miss her. I personally
15 miss her very much. It's a great loss. And Katya Wessels,
16 who is a Council Coordination Division Supervisor, is
17 serving as the acting so temporarily in her place as
18 deputy director until the end of October. After that I'm
19 going to act in that place for the next two months.
20 Hopefully there's an advertisement for that hire
21 relatively soon.

22
23 Correspondence. Like I said, we're
24 really hoping to get that improved. That's one of the
25 big things we're hoping to see out of our administrative
26 move, cutting through some of the red tape and getting
27 to things quicker. And we've seen a lot of improvement.
28 The Secretary's Office is reviewing the Council's
29 letters and that were forwarded by the Board. The letters
30 cover a broad array of issues such as financial
31 compensation for Council members, salmon fisheries and
32 transboundary mining, among others. Some of the issues
33 are straightforward and will be resolved more quickly,
34 while others are more complicated and will take some
35 more time to address. Some cover multiple regions, and
36 others are specific to 1 or 2 regions. The Secretary and
37 her team are working on responses to these letters and
38 the next steps forward for all these issues. As these
39 issues are resolved the Secretary or her staff will
40 provide responses to the Councils, including the next
41 steps forward where appropriate. The Secretary thanks
42 the Councils for their diligence and thoughtfulness in
43 discussing these issues and continuing to elevate them.
44 The elevation of OSM to the Office of Secretary,
45 Secretary looks forward to continuing active engagement
46
47 on these and other issues affecting subsistence users.
48 That's all I have. Let me know if you have any questions.
49
50 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Donald.

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MR. WOODRUFF: I just want to state that I'm happy that we've made this move into the Department of the Interior and that we get a little quicker response from some of our serious concerns. And I'm glad that the transfer was somewhat seamless.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more questions? Thank you so much.

MR. VIKERS: Yeah. Thank you. I just want to add that the Office of Secretary, they have been extremely receptive. They've-- we've been having a weekly meetings with them. They've been helping in every way. When I say somewhat seamless, just little technical issues to work out. But as you know, it's been business as usual. We've been doing everything we can. Yeah. It's just been business as usual. Just figuring out little things with our networks and stuff like that. But they've been great. I'm very happy with the move as well. Thank you.

(Pause)

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Next on the agenda is Hunter Ethics Education and Outreach Initiative Working Group. Coordinator and group members.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think we've had a lot of discussion about Hunter Ethics in this meeting already, especially when it came up during the Annual Report. This Hunter Ethics Working Group for the EIRAC hasn't been able to meet since before the All Council meeting. When we did meet last time, we did identify a couple of actions some shorter and longer term goals that we would like to see. And I look forward to reconvening this winter to talk more about some of those things before our winter meeting. And I also look forward to sitting down with TCC and talking about some of the ways we might collaborate. So, yeah, if folks want to recommit to working on some of some of those efforts this winter, that would be wonderful. And I'll turn it over to any group members who want to say anything.

MR. BASSICH: Yeah. This is member Bassich. Yeah. I think this is very important to keep adding sticks to the fire on. I think we were starting to get a little bit of momentum again after the long Covid issues. This meeting, we heard testimony from TCC

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1 Chief Brian Ridley on some requests for Hunter Ethics.
2 And I would recommend that we make a letter inviting TCC
3 to a group meeting to happen sometime this meeting. And
4 I'll leave that up to our Coordinator to maybe find a
5 time where people interested can participate. I don't -
6 - we don't need a motion or anything for that. So, in
7 short, very important, let's keep the ball rolling.
8 There's still a lot of great ideas, and there definitely
9 is a lot of interest in this so, let's keep it rolling.
10 Thank you.

11
12 MR. WOODRUFF: I have a question of you,
13 Andy. Are you still pursuing the icon, hunt like an
14 Alaskan?

15
16 MR. BASSICH: I think that was discussed
17 at our last meeting. So, yes, I think that's still kind
18 of a theme. Let's put it that way. There's so many
19 aspects of hunter education to delve into. There's a lot
20 of different envelopes that we need to address and a lot
21 of different envelopes that we need to develop projects
22 and methods. So, yeah. Short answer, Yes. I guess that's
23 still kind of a theme. Thank you.

24
25 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Don
26 -- this is Brooke, for the record. At -- after our last
27 meeting that came up and we recognized the need for some
28 outreach materials, like about what is Hunter Ethics and
29 what does it mean to hunt like an Alaskan. And we were
30 hoping to develop, you know, some like a one page like
31 nice graphic or something that's easy to share, easy for
32 people to digest. And there were some drafts shared
33 around, we need to sit back down and talk about that.
34 We will also need some help from like, someone that
35 actually has a publication and communication specialties
36 that knows how to use InDesign and all that stuff that
37 I have no idea how to do. So, those are opportunities
38 to collaborate with other agencies or organizations who
39 might have folks that do more of that type of stuff. And
40 so, yes, is the answer to that.

41
42 MR. WOODRUFF: In response to that I
43 think that this handy dandy handout would be very
44 beneficial for the Hunter liaison folks.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Nothing more to say?
47 Moving on down to B, 805C Report Summary. Council
48 Coordinator. On page 330.

49
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1 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The
2 full report -- your -- the cover letter and the report
3 starts on page 330 of your book. But I passed out this
4 summary table to you guys that I made because I think
5 it's a lot easier to digest than reading through the
6 whole report. And really what the 805C report is, it
7 just tells you how the Board voted compared to how you
8 all voted for the proposals at their last regulatory
9 meeting. So, just very quickly, as a reminder, because
10 these are all important actions that happened within the
11 Eastern Interior Region. You all had put in a proposal
12 to extend the marten season. That ended up getting
13 modified to only apply in Units 20E and 25B so that
14 season is extended now to March 15th in those units. The
15 Board adopted it with your modification. You also put
16 in a proposal to extend the moose season to October 15th
17 in Units 25B, 25C and 25D remainder or actually, I think
18 that was Amanda's proposal. So, we thank you for helping
19 us with that. That was adopted by the Board. That C&T -
20 - the proposal that someone put in from Kaktovik to
21 remove the C&T for dall sheep in 25A for Kaktovik
22 residents. You all took no action on that, and the Board
23 ended up rejecting that so that C&T determination still
24 remains.

25
26 And then there were three closure
27 reviews that you voted on to keep all of them. So, those
28 were the Arctic Village Sheep, the Chisana Caribou and
29 the Mentasta Caribou. And then Brent just went over the
30 statewide sale of brown bear proposal with you guys.
31 That's -- we'll hear more back after the Board meets
32 again. You guys did vote to support that with a
33 modification to also allow the sale of black bear hides.
34 I don't think that's really being discussed much at the
35 Board level. So, if you're interested in still doing
36 that, you could put in a proposal during the wildlife
37 cycle next year. And I have that noted. I can help bring
38 that back to you guys next spring and you can decide if
39 you want to want to do that.

40
41 And then the last thing on the list was
42 that the Western Arctic Caribou Herd, you guys voted to
43 support that reduction in harvest and only allowing one
44 of the four caribou to be a cow. At the All Council
45 meeting, the four RACs, Western Interior, Seward
46 Peninsula, Northwest Arctic and North Slope all met
47 together to really hash out exactly how they wanted to
48 make a joint recommendation to the Board, and the Board
49 ended up adopting their modifications. So, that's a
50 summary of all the hard work you did last year related

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1 to proposals. And if you like this table form, let me
2 know and we'll continue moving forward with that in the
3 future.

4

5 MR. BASSICH: I formally request that you
6 continue that format. Thank you.

7

8 MR. WOODRUFF: I like it a lot too.

9

10 MR. BASSICH: And I'd just like to add
11 really quickly there are a lot of wins there for us, and
12 I really appreciate that from the Federal Subsistence
13 Board in OSM and all the people who put in the work for
14 all these analyses and everything. When you come to these
15 meetings, especially Federal meetings, we know
16 everything takes a long, long time. And sometimes it's
17 pretty frustrating to visit these things year in and
18 year out. But when we get wins like this, it makes you
19 go home feeling like, okay, that was worthwhile. And
20 when we have discussions like we had yesterday with
21 fisheries, it's the same feeling. So, anyway, thank you
22 to the staff. I know it's a lot of work, a lot of times
23 to do all these analysis and carry the water for us. But
24 I very much appreciate it. I'm sure I'm speaking for the
25 rest of the Council. Thank you.

26

27 MS. MCDAVID: And, Mr. Chair, I just did
28 want to note for the record, the table that I had
29 included -- I included this table in your meeting books.
30 There were -- there was an error on that table. That's
31 why I printed this new handout, and the new table also
32 got posted to our website so if folks online ever go to
33 look for that. Yes, occasionally I make mistakes, Andy.
34 I'm just kidding. More often than you think. I hide them
35 well. If it's okay with you, Mr. Chair, we'll move on.
36 The next couple items are for me. So, the next thing I
37 wanted to let you guys know about is the call for
38 applications or nominations for Council seats. There
39 hasn't been a formal announcement or call put out yet.
40 They're working with DOI to think about that whole
41 process. But you can turn in applications -- just so
42 everybody knows, if you ever want to apply to be on the
43 Council, you can fill out an application, get that to
44 me and I'll hold I can hold that for you until the the
45 window opens to apply. So, we want to make that as easy
46 as possible and encourage as many people to apply to be
47 on the Council as would like.

48

49 I did want to note we had -- we have
50 three terms that are of Council members that are expiring

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1 this year, Charles Jagow, Donald Woodruff and Dorothy
2 Shockley. Charles Jagow decided not to reapply so his
3 seat will be filled with the pool of applicants that's
4 currently being considered by the Secretary. And then
5 we'll wait to hear about Don and Dorothy -- the
6 reappointment. And then next year, as a reminder for
7 Council members Sue, Amanda, Linda and Eva's terms
8 expire at the end of next year. And I did send all of
9 you incumbent application. It's a little shorter
10 application. So, if you can just remember (distortion)
11 get those back to me at some point if you want to
12 reapply. And you know, Amanda, we did hear that, that
13 you are going to step down. But we also want to let you
14 know how much we've appreciated the time that you've put
15 in to this Council and all the expertise that you've
16 shared with us, and especially taking the initiative to
17 bring proposals to the Board during your first or your
18 first term. That's really commendable. So, thanks.

19
20 MR. BASSICH: Good Job. I'd like to echo
21 that. You came on to this Council in a charge. You lead
22 -- you led the charge on a lot of things, and contributed
23 a great deal and made a lot of really great observations
24 and actions, and that's really much greatly appreciated.
25 And I personally am really going to miss you from not -
26 - from being on this Council. I've, I've always thought
27 our Council was a pretty dynamic Council with a lot of
28 different viewpoints, when that's what makes us a good
29 Council, in my view. And you brought some really great
30 perspective to our Council. So.....

31
32 MS. POPE: Appreciate that.

33
34 MR. BASSICH:thank that. Thank you
35 and good luck in whatever you -- well, I know you're
36 working a lot on the Sentinel Programs, right. And I
37 think that's maybe where we're going to see or continue
38 into the future. Thank you.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: You're always
41 welcome to reapply in the future, you know, it might
42 happen. Yeah. Just had to put that out there. We
43 appreciate you. And thank you for your service.

44
45
46 MS. ENTSMINGER: I just wanted to say you
47 should feel good because you came with your heart. And
48 that's what means everything is you're here with the
49 heart and for the best use for the user and the resource.
50 Thank you.

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MR. WOODRUFF: I was interviewed by BLM for my reappointment seat, and I was very pleased with the process. It was very efficient and thorough. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Moving on.

MS. MCDAVID: All right. Thank you, Mr. Chair. The next item on the agenda is a Council Correspondence update. I did put together another summary table for you guys. It's on page 337. And I'll just remind you about the letters that you sent or -- since the last meeting your Council individually sent in two letters, one was comments on the proposed rule for the Federal Subsistence Board membership. Brent just gave you an update on that. We should be hearing more about that in the future. And you can definitely encourage folks to submit applications or nominations for that. And you also wrote to the Board about the Fortymile Caribou Harvest Management Coalition, and it looks like there's some good traction there. So, two -- two more wins to note. And then there were a number of joint Council letters, six of them that came out of the All Council meeting. Those all went to the Board. Pretty much all of them had requests to be elevated to the Secretaries. And those were about bycatch and salmon management, Council member compensation, correspondence issues, the ANCSA D1 land withdrawals. On that one the record of decision did come out from BLM and they -- they're keeping them -- maintaining the status quo was the decision. So, the no action alternative. So, those protections still remain in place -- the subsistence protections on those lands. Your Council and YK Delta together elevated an issue about the need to revise the Magnuson-Stevens act. And then there was a letter sent about statewide caribou concerns. We haven't gotten [sic] responses back on these other letters, but as Brent mentioned, there are discussions happening now that we have moved into the Office of the Secretary. So, we hope for more updates in the near future and definitely by the next Council meeting. Any questions about correspondence?

MR. BASSICH: Yes, on point five the Magnuson-Stevens act. Is there any kind of a follow up we can do with that or is -- is that -- do you know the status of where that's at or?

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1 MS. MCDAVID: I do not know. I know
2 there's been a lot of talk about the need to revise
3 that, but I haven't heard -- there hasn't been like a
4 public comment period or anything about that yet.
5 Something that this Council could do because -- to my
6 knowledge only -- so you and YK Delta signed on to this
7 letter. I am not aware of other Councils that have
8 recently sent letters requesting for this. You could
9 potentially, you know, write to the other RACs and or,
10 you know, just have me, have the other Coordinators share
11 your letter with them and informally asking them if they
12 would also, you know, send a letter of the of similar
13 topic.

14
15 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. This member Bassich.
16 I think that would be a good idea. I think the reason
17 this came up is that as we're looking forward into the
18 future for Gravel-to-Gravel development, revising that
19 is going to be pretty important for us to make some
20 headways in certain areas in the marine environment. So,
21 I think maybe if the Council Coordinator could just reach
22 out and share our letter and ask that any other RACs are
23 interested in signing on to that, and it might be good
24 to revisit Western Alaska as well -- Western interior,
25 sorry, Western Interior. So, I do think that's another
26 one of those fundamental building blocks that we need
27 to begin to address. And it's probably going to take a
28 long time. It's like the marine hatchery issues with
29 foreign countries. Things are going to really move slow
30 on things like that, but they're pretty critical in my
31 view. And I think a lot of other people's view that are
32 working on these fish issues.

33
34 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Andy. We can
35 definitely work as a coordination team group and get
36 that letter in front of the other Councils to take a
37 look at, at their winter meetings. Any other questions
38 about correspondence since the last meeting? I'll have
39 another long update on correspondence at the next time.
40 So, it seems like we might have covered our bases there.
41 Okay, I'm not seeing any -- anything else. There's also
42 a -- there were a number of special actions that applied
43 to your region this year. There's copies of all of them
44 in your book. But I did put together another summary
45 table for you. This one is on page 365, and I'll just
46 highlight a couple of the big ones for you, and I'll
47 switch my screen here folks listening online. So, FSA24-
48 01 that closed the Yukon River to the harvest of chinook,
49 summer and fall chum and coho, except by federally
50 qualified subsistence users. Don helped put in a WSA24-

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1 01 to close sheep in Yukon-Charley. And you guys modified
2 that at your meeting to also include the Glacier Mountain
3 controlled use area, which the Board did approve that
4 with a slight modification. That closure goes through
5 the 2025 season next year. So, you could consider a
6 proposal in the spring if you wanted to see that closure
7 remain in place longer so, you wouldn't have to put in
8 another special action request.

9
10 There was the -- there were a special
11 action to close Nelchina caribou also to all users. WSA
12 24-05 was just a kind of administrative special action
13 about the regulatory changes because we didn't get the
14 regulations published in time, it let them go into effect
15 before they were published. And then, 24-04 -- sorry,
16 those are a little out of order, was to extend the Unit
17 12 moose season by ten days in a portion of Tetlin Refuge
18 in Wrangell-St. Elias National Preserve. That was
19 approved. And then lastly, WSA24-06 was to close moose
20 hunting to non-federally qualified subsistence users in
21 Unit 13. The Board approved that with a modification to
22 only close to non-federally qualified users in 13B. So,
23 that's an update on the special actions if anyone has
24 any questions or comments, we do have analysts here that
25 can help address those.

26
27 (No comments)

28
29 Not hearing any. So, that's it for the
30 special actions. I believe we have a quick update from
31 Liz next about Partners Fishery Monitoring Program
32 update.

33
34 MS. WILLIMAS: Good afternoon, members.
35 Mr. Chair and members of the Council, I'm Liz Williams,
36 Cultural Anthropologist at The Office of Subsistence
37 Management. and Brooke spoke earlier about the partners
38 for fisheries monitoring program, And we're not just
39 about culture camps. That's one dimension of what the
40 partners does. And Brooke highlighted that because you
41 asked about it in your Annual Report letter. The Partners
42 Program is unique, and it meets a lot of the requests
43 that you've made throughout this meeting about co-
44 stewardship and even co-management as well as growing
45 our own. There's a lot of turnover in government
46 positions in Alaska. And one of the good things about
47 the partners program is that it allows a rural
48 organization or an Alaska native organization to
49 competitively apply for Partners funds which can pay for
50 the full time salary of a biologist, a fisheries

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1 biologist, a cultural anthropologist, or an education
2 and outreach specialist. And so, this allows rural and
3 Alaska native organizations to work on their own data
4 collection, their own people doing the surveys in their
5 area. We have six partners right now. Two are in
6 southeast; there's Yakutat Tlingit Tribe, there's Hoonah
7 Indian Association, Bristol Bay Native Association or
8 Sataqmute Native Council in Bethel, Native Village of
9 Napaimute, which is Aniak, Native Village of Eyak and
10 Qawalagin Tribe in the Aleutian Islands. And so, this
11 is a great way for people to get experience and maybe
12 work in their home community. So, here in Hyer and I are
13 the coordinators of this program, the notice of funding
14 opportunity should come out in November, and we'll make
15 sure you get that. It is very competitive, but one of
16 the biggest dimensions of this proposal is capacity
17 building. And we don't just look at capacity building -
18 - is increasing the capacity of rural people and native
19 organizations, but also the capacity of federal
20 employees to work better in rural Alaska and learn from
21 rural Alaskans and Alaskan natives and understand the
22 worldview that is so different from the one we work from
23 most of the time. So, unless you have questions, that's
24 the end of my presentation.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any questions?
27 Thank you. Thank you so much.

28
29 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
30 have just a real quick something to bring to your
31 attention and maybe get a little Council member feedback
32 on. So, since moving to the Office of the Secretary, we
33 have the opportunity to kind of reevaluate the way we
34 do certain things and maybe try to make things more
35 efficient. And one thing that we've been looking at is
36 how we pay you guys your per diem for being at council
37 meetings. And, you know, we've always done paper checks
38 in the past, and then you have to wait around after the
39 meeting to get another one in the mail. That is the
40 remaining balance of your per diem after the meeting.
41 And so, something that a lot of government agencies do
42 now that work with volunteer Councils like yourself is
43 council members are issued a debit card and your per
44 diem for while you're here during the meeting is put on
45 that card. You can go to the ATM and take out cash if
46 you want, you can spend that at the store, at a
47 restaurant, for a taxi however you'd like, and then
48 following the meeting the remaining balance would just
49 be directly deposited into your bank account. This would
50 require you filling out some forms which I know you all

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1 love to do with your banking information. But it would,
2 yeah, potentially make it a lot more efficient, both on
3 our end and maybe also on your end for you to receive
4 your payments, your per diem more quickly. So, we wanted
5 to get your feedback on that. It's not a hard set in
6 stone decision yet. We're bringing this to all the
7 councils to see what you think.

8
9 MS. ENTSMINGER: Well, I personally don't
10 like debit cards. Just put it in my account and then I
11 deal with it. That's how -- that keeps it way simple.

12
13 MR. BASSICH: I'd like mining gold.

14
15 MS. ENTSMINGER: Be very big.

16
17 MS. MCDAVID: You get one flake.

18
19 MR. WOODRUFF: I don't -- Gold's getting
20 pretty, pretty -- gold's getting pretty valuable now. I
21 don't care. It's still -- it doesn't matter if it's big
22 or small, it still means the same. From my perspective,
23 I'm just wondering if there's a possibility for OSM to
24 have options for people or are they looking for an all
25 or nothing type of solution?

26
27 MS. MCDAVID: I think in general they
28 would prefer more everyone do -- be on the same system
29 because otherwise it just makes it complicated keeping
30 track of who needs who needs what. But -- and to Sue's
31 point about the deposits. So, Sue, it might be that you
32 could if they move to the debit cards, you could just
33 wait and not use your per diem during the meeting, and
34 then the full amount would be deposited after the meeting
35 into your account. But you know, not everyone we're, you
36 know, very cognizant that coming to town or traveling
37 is expensive for people. And so, if you, you know, need
38 to use those funds, they would be available on your
39 debit card.

40
41 MS. ENTSMINGER: So, you're going to mail
42 them so I can buy gas on the way in? I mean, that's when
43 you need it.

44
45 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, so this would be a
46 card that we would give to you. You would keep it with
47 you at all times even after the meeting. It would be
48 like a few days after the meeting is my understanding,
49 like, kind of shut off until the next meeting. So,
50 whatever balance was left on there that you didn't use

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1 during the meeting would just get deposited into your
2 account along with whatever remaining per diem that you
3 were owed.

4

5 MS. ENTSMINGER: Just to be clear. So,
6 you would be mailing them out before the meeting.

7

8 MS. MCDAVID: If we do go to this new
9 system you would get -- initially, we would probably
10 give you a debit card at the meeting or mail them in
11 advance. I'm really not sure. That's a good question.
12 Like, this is why we're hoping to get feedback, to think
13 through all of these things because -- but once you had
14 it at whenever you would get your debit card for before
15 the next meeting, you would still have your debit card
16 with you because you would take it home after the
17 meeting. And then it would -- that deposit would get put
18 on there before you had to come to the meeting so, it
19 would be available for your travel into town.

20

21 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: It seems
22 Complicated, like how come you can't just use my existing
23 account and send the money in there? And I could use my
24 own debit card. Doesn't that seem like it would be a lot
25 easier?

26

27 MS. MCDAVID: That sounds very simple to
28 me, Charlie, but I'm not the maker of the system. I
29 don't know if, you know, that's something we can note
30 down to see if that is an option. And I don't know that
31 we have anyone from our admin team -- would be the folks
32 that would be helping with this. So, I don't think
33 anyone's online that could answer this. We're going to
34 note down all the concerns and questions and we're going
35 to -- we can talk about this more at the winter meeting
36 and try to answer some of those questions. And it might
37 be that some people could opt-in if they wanted and some
38 could still get a check if needed.

39

40 MR. BASSICH: But my guest, Mr. Chair,
41 is there are quite a few members in other RACs that may
42 be in a position in villages and maybe don't have the
43 steady -- a steady income of any kind. And so that option
44 probably works really well for them, what's being
45 described. From my perspective, I'm pretty flexible. So,
46 whatever goes, I'm fine with it. I still think we should
47 do it in gold, though. Gold -- cold cards. How's that
48 sound, Sue? Yeah. Gold cards.

49

50

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1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Well, I guess they
2 got here for some reason. And so, whatever you come up
3 with, I'm happy with to also. Thank you.

4
5 MS. EVANS: Hi, this is Linda. I'd rather
6 just have the money put into my account because I already
7 have a debit card and, you know, two debit cards. Just
8 put the money directly into my account.

9
10 MS. MCDAVID: Sound like that's a common
11 sentiment among folks. So, we'll definitely ask what the
12 options are about that and find out more. So, thanks for
13 all your feedback on that. Mr. Chair, there -- was before
14 we move into closing comments, there was one kind of on
15 the table thing that I wanted to make sure you guys get
16 the opportunity to make a decision about. And that was
17 -- it was brought to us in public comment earlier. If
18 you wanted to add an additional topic to your Annual
19 Report about Copper River Salmon and you know, that was
20 discussed a lot here, we do include a lot of the Yukon
21 salmon issues in the report. And currently, we didn't
22 have a topic for Copper River Salmon. And in addition
23 to the copper River salmon, it was also brought up about
24 the need for a Federal for lack of better terms, ANS
25 equivalent. And so, I'll turn that over to you guys to
26 decide if you would like to make one last addition to
27 your Annual Report.

28
29 MR. BASSICH: It's getting late in the
30 day so, forgive me. Yeah. So, I guess I'll make a motion
31 that the Eastern Interior RAC add the topic of Copper
32 River salmon issues to the Annual Report highlighting
33 the need to develop the equivalent of a ANS which the
34 State uses but translated into the Federal program. So,
35 the amounts necessary for subsistence in that fisheries
36 for the federally qualified subsistence users. And in
37 addition to that, it would be good to try to develop
38 that for federally qualified subsistence users on the
39 Yukon River as well.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON WIRHGT: I'll second.

42
43 MR. BASSICH: And I'm just going to
44 reference the testimony from Mr. -- Dr. Jim Simon on
45 this topic. I think in thinking about his suggestion, I
46 think it's a wise decision. I think it may in the future
47 give RACs and Federal Subsistence Board qualified users
48 a little bit more leverage in demonstrating lack of
49 resources and the impacts to the -- to those people.
50 I'll leave it at that, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay.

MR. BASSICH: Question.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: All right. We're going to vote. No, no other comments? Seeing none, then we can have unanimous vote on this then. All those against by saying no. Seeing and hearing nothing. Passes. Thank you.

We're finally here, closing comments. I guess we go with the sun. And Andy, your first.

MR. BASSICH: Closing comments. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good meeting. Thank you, OSM, for allowing us three days. Sometimes it's a little bit hard for people to give up their time but quite frankly, I think this was one of the more productive meetings that we've had, especially on fisheries issues, which is really near and dear to me. And oftentimes that just takes time to have dialogue. And so, having a three-day meeting facilitated that in a great way in my mind. And as I mentioned earlier, it's nice to leave a meeting feeling like you didn't get beat up, you know, being able to hold your shoulders up high and feel good about the progress we're making is really important for kind of the morale. And I want to just express that I really, I know Charlie's not here, Charles Jagow, but I'm kind of sorry to see him go. I really, really value when some of the younger people are getting involved in the RAC process. And I've said this before, there's a lot of gray hair at this table and we need to get a little bit more darker -- black hair at this table. But I just want to on the record say thank you to Charlie for his years of service here. And I always really valued his perspectives, and I hope at some point maybe he'll come back on when -- it might be when he starts getting gray hair, you never know what happens. But I really do value that and I value all of the comments and perspectives from the people on our Council. I also, want to thank all the people that very, very patiently sat through our meeting. I know we spent a lot of time talking about fisheries, and a lot of you folks aren't fisheries people, but we cover such a wide range, I do want to thank you. I know it's hard to just sit and listen to something that may not be your field, but hopefully we can keep it a little bit entertaining from you for you from time to time. But I do value everybody, and there's so much work that goes on in your worlds to bring the

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1 information to us so that we can hopefully make an
2 informed recommendation to the Federal Subsistence
3 Board. So, that's really key in us being able to perform
4 what we're being asked to do here. So, thank you all for
5 that. And thank you all for the OSM staff as always.
6 Good job. Thank you.

7
8 MS. POPE: Hello everyone. Amanda Pope
9 for the record. I just want to say thank you for the
10 people that supported me for -- in this first term
11 (distortion) in the EIRAC. I'm glad to see OSM doing
12 some training to the Board, and I hope that would
13 continue further, especially if younger people are
14 wanting to be on the Board. And, and going forward with
15 that, I hope more training is done before meetings are
16 conducted. It would really help the younger generation
17 be educated. Thank you to everyone that's supported me.
18 And for all the wisdom that I've learned from the folks
19 on the Board. So, thank you. I think it was a good
20 experience, very eye opener on multiple levels. And
21 unfortunately, on some things it's still coming back
22 into other areas of my life. So, I wish those who are
23 still hurting from that experience that I'm continuing
24 to as well. I wish you good luck. And I hope people can
25 move forward. So, thank you.

26
27 MS. MCDAVID: And, Linda, if you could
28 please give a little Council member report to you since
29 you weren't here the first day, we do need that for the
30 record. Thank you.

31
32 MS. EVANS: Okay. Thank you. I really
33 appreciate everyone here at the meeting and the
34 audience, the presenters, the reports, I think, and the
35 presentations really give us good information and having
36 the Board packets with all the reports and information
37 and everything in it ahead of time is really helpful
38 also for me, it is and I really appreciate that. I
39 appreciate Coordinator very efficient and just ready to
40 do whatever it takes to get us to the meeting. I
41 appreciate that. For my report on the -- since the last
42 meeting my home area, Rampart, is still no fish, no
43 berries, you know, it's just it's still no birds. I was
44 there, just got back from there, I was there for a week.
45 And able to just enjoy, enjoy the nice fall weather. I
46 did -- was able to hunt some grouse, and that seemed
47 like it'd been a long time since I had grouse in in
48 Rampart so, I don't know if that's a things are coming
49 back. I don't know, but I still feel really bad about
50 the no fish, you know, because it's our way of life. And

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1 I was -- this summer I was just fortunate to bring my
2 grandson, grandson, youngest one home to Rampart and he
3 loved it. I mean, he -- it just the freedom, you know.
4 And I just told him that, gee, that's the way the kids
5 grew up here, you know, they we -- it used to be a big
6 community, 75 to 80 people. I think maybe more. Yeah,
7 more than that in the summer, I think just everybody
8 come around in the summertime. And the school was bigger,
9 you know, they had two teachers and just kind of sad for
10 me to learn that, you know, there's not many students
11 there now. And you know, they the State gives them two
12 years to get their population back up, but they're down
13 to six kids so, you know, that might have more effect
14 on our community in Rampart. But anyway, it was good to
15 be home. It was good to be at this meeting and I
16 appreciate everyone's wisdom and sharing of it. It's
17 very helpful especially to hear from elders like Sara,
18 you know, who really lives her way of life no matter
19 where she's at, if she's in the city, you know, she
20 still carries that way of life with her. And I -- it
21 just really makes me think as that's what we need to do.
22 That's it. Thank you.

23
24 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you. Charlie. I know
25 that sometimes we get a little excited about the
26 fisheries issues because we're so passionate about them,
27 but I have hope, maybe that's all I've got for the
28 fisheries, but I want to say that it's a real honor to
29 work with the Council and everyone's perspective. And I
30 think that we've made some big steps and little steps.
31 And one of the little steps was the sheep management for
32 Eastern Interior, and that's a working document. And we
33 can keep working on it. And I appreciate the staff and
34 all the work that they do. The 804 analysis was just
35 awesome reading. It took me several readings of it to
36 comprehend it. Copper River is pretty confusing when you
37 just first go through it, because it's such a long
38 system. The wildlife biologist, I hope that they have a
39 really good season in the future and that we get some
40 good reports. And, yeah, I sincerely appreciate our
41 reaching out to elders and getting their testimony. I
42 think that they have some insights that we don't and a
43 perspective that we probably will never have. And yeah,
44 I appreciate everyone here that contributes and
45 respectful to each other. Thank you.

46
47 MS. ENTSMINGER: This is Sue Entsminger.
48 I'm pretty bad about introducing myself every time. We
49 didn't used to have to do that. So, I guess, is that
50 something we have to do in the future? Anyway, I first

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1 want to commend Brooke for how she organized this
2 meeting. Oh, my goodness, the -- these great little notes
3 here to how to make motions. That's just perfect. And
4 all of that, how you put it all together, those graphs
5 or whatever you call it, you know, you can just see how
6 we voted and how they passed. That's really, really
7 helpful because it's quick and easy to absorb in the
8 brain. And then I deeply appreciate all the Council
9 members. We're volunteers, and it's a lot of commitment
10 on our parts, and I'm going to be missing you, Amanda
11 and Charlie and Bill's seat was never filled so, we're
12 going to likely have three new members. And I hope that
13 we can get those young people we keep talking about.
14 It's there -- that's the next generation to be on here
15 and make decisions for the future. So, yeah. Yeah, you're
16 pointing at young people right now. So, yeah. And thank
17 the staff for all the work and appreciate all of you
18 guys. And I really appreciate you, Charlie. You're
19 getting it. It's doing a good job. Thank you. And I'm
20 really appreciate Eva. She completely blows me away how
21 organized and how she -- she gets it together and she
22 knows what's going on, and she must wear the same kind
23 of hats. You do multiple hats, man. Great -- great for
24 this RAC and I thank you all.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you much so
27 much, Sue. You've been a great mentor to me and I
28 appreciate that. All your service. I want to thank
29 Brooke. I can't do it without her. I wouldn't be able
30 to, I don't think I could try. I thank you so much for
31 all your hard work. I thank OSM, everybody that hangs
32 out with us all the time. All through the meeting, I see
33 a few faces that have been here the whole time and I
34 really appreciate you all. I really appreciate the
35 three-day meeting. We get to go more in depth and we get
36 to cover more. We don't have to go as fast. We did have
37 a jam session, but still that third day made it all
38 happen and come together. And I like that part of it.
39 I'm really proud of being a part of this Council.
40 Definitely a well-oiled machine. Everybody does their
41 part and has a part in there, and I'm proud of that.
42 That's really good. Good working atmosphere and great
43 people. Thank you all for taking time out of your lives
44 to be here. This is so important work to all of our
45 people and all of our places where we live. I wish
46 everybody a safe trip home, a good fall and a good
47 winter. I just really want to commend everybody for their
48 hard work and dedication to the people. Thank you so
49 much for being here. Thank you.
50

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1 MS. ENTSMINGER: I make a motion to
2 adjourn. Did I miss something?

3
4 MS. EVANS: I second the motion.

5
6 MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay. She seconded. Oh,
7 question.

8
9 MR. WOODRUFF: Question.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Should I ask for a
12 roll call vote?

13
14 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, that's a great
15 idea.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Seeing everybody
18 wants to get out of here. I think we vote -- have a
19 unanimous vote. This meeting is over at 5:36pm.

20
21 MS. MCDAVID: Do you want to oppose?

22
23 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Anyone oppose us
24 going home? Yeah. Thank you, guys. Meeting is adjourned.
25 Thank you so much.

26
27 (Off record)

28
29 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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I, Rafael Morel, for Lighthouse Integrated Services Corp, do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 1 through 145 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the EASTERN INTERIOR ALASKA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME III recorded on the 9th day of October;

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 Isabela, Puerto Rico this 28th day of October 2024.

Rafael Morel
Chief Project Manager