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1 EASTERN INTERIOR ALASKA SUBSISTENCE
2 REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

3
4 PUBLIC MEETING

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7 VOLUME I

8
9 PYKE'S WATERFRONT LODGE

10 Fairbanks, Alaska

11 October 8, 2024

12 9:00 am
13
14
15

16 COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

17 Robert Wright, Sr., Chair

18 Susan Entsminger

19 Amanda Pope

20 Eva Burk

21 Andrew Bassich

22 Donald Woodruff

23 Dorothy Shockley
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28 Regional Council Coordinator, Brooke McDavid
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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Fairbanks, Alaska - 10/08/24)

(On record)

MS. MCDAVID: Good morning, everyone online and in the room. We're going to get started in about five minutes. So, if you guys could just start thinking about taking your seats, you have a few more minutes. And then we'll get started with the Eastern Interior Subsistence Advisory Council meeting. Thank you.

(Pause)

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Sue, can you please do an invocation for us, please?

MS. ENTSMINGER: We thank you, Father God, for all the blessings you give us, and we thank you for all the folks that show up and keep everybody safe and help us to make good decisions and be very respectful of each other. And we thank you for everything that you do for us in Jesus' name, Amen.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. We're going to call the meeting to order. It is 9:07. Next is roll-call, Secretary.

MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Charlie. Welcome, everyone. I'll start at the top of the list in our book. Sue Entsminger.

MS. ENTSMINGER: Here.

MR. WOODRUFF: Amanda Pope.

MS. POPE: Here.

MR. WOODRUFF: Linda Evans.

MS. MCDAVID: Linda is absent today. She will be joining us tomorrow.

MS. EVANS: Did you get it? Oh, here.

MR. WOODRUFF: Andrew Bassich.

MR. BASSICH: Present.

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MR. WOODRUFF: Charlie Wright

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Here.

MR. WOODRUFF: Charlie Jagow.

(No response)

Charlie, if you're online star six, I think.

MR. WOODRUFF: Donald Woodruff is here. Dorothy Shockley.

MS. SHOCKLEY: I'm here. Can you hear me?

MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Dorothy. Welcome.

MS. SHOCKLEY: Thank you.

MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair. We have seven of nine members present. We have a quorum.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Wonderful. I guess we move on to your announcements.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And good morning to everyone in the room and joining us online today. Welcome to the Eastern Interior Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting. My name is Brooke McDavid and I'm the Council Coordinator for the Eastern Interior RAC. And I'm also the designated federal officer for this meeting. I do have a number of housekeeping announcements before we get started. Just so we're set up to have a good meeting and the newer folks that might be joining us understand the process that we're going to go through. So, this is a public meeting, and it is being recorded and transcribed. The Council is set to meet for three days or until the conclusion of business. For those attending our meeting in person, please make sure to sign in each day of the meeting. And for those of you joining us via distance, you can find the agenda and meeting materials on the Federal Subsistence Management Program website. That internet address is www.doi.gov/subsistence. And under the regions tab you'll choose Eastern Interior and then meeting materials. The most recent draft of the agenda is posted on the EIRAC web page. It differs just very slightly from the one that went out previously by email.

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1 And if you're in the room, this pink copy that's on the
2 info table is the most recent draft. A reminder for
3 folks online to please keep yourself muted to minimize
4 disruptions to the meeting, you can press star six or
5 use the mute button on your phone. And if you would like
6 to speak during the meeting and you're online, you can
7 press star five on your phone or use the Raise Hand
8 feature on Microsoft Teams. And this will get our
9 attention in the room and we'll let the Chair know. For
10 anyone helping us moderate the meeting on Teams, please
11 do not click on the mute all button because that will
12 mute us here in the room as well and you won't be able
13 to hear the meeting online anymore. All right. A friendly
14 reminder about conduct and ethics during the meeting,
15 we will be conducting this meeting using Robert's Rules
16 of Orders -- Robert's Rules of Order and the meeting
17 will be led by Chair Wright, with assistance from myself
18 and others as needed. We ask that you please don't speak
19 out of turn, please wait to be called on by the Chair.
20 There will be no name calling or profanity permitted
21 during the meeting and point of order can be called if
22 any misconducts happen. We're all here because we care
23 about subsistence, and we want to foster an environment
24 that's respectful and inclusive of everyone. Council
25 members, if there are any action items where you feel
26 like you might have a conflict of interest, please state
27 so for the record and excuse yourself from voting. Absent
28 a conflict of interest, Council members are expected to
29 vote on all action items. We are in a Federal fisheries
30 regulatory cycle this year, and at this meeting, the
31 council will be making recommendations on Federal
32 fisheries proposals and closure reviews. We also have
33 one Wildlife proposal about Nelchina caribou. When the
34 Council takes up proposals and closure reviews, there
35 are set procedures that we use to move through them, and
36 these procedures can be found on page 43 of your meeting
37 books. And there's also some flyers on the back table.
38 They're also printed on the back of Council member name
39 cards for ease of reference. And, I did also add a new
40 reference to the table Council members. This little
41 yellow card is just helpful reference for motions,
42 especially for closure reviews. The motions are a little
43 bit different than for proposals, so I thought that might
44 be handy for you to have to refer to. There will be
45 several opportunities for public comment throughout the
46 meeting. If you're here in the room, you can fill out
47 one of these blue comment cards, and you can pass it to
48 any staff or pass it to myself, and we'll give that to
49 the Chair to call on you at the appropriate time. If you
50 do want to comment on a specific agenda item, please

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1 note that on the card and we'll take comments on agenda
2 items when that agenda item comes up. There will also
3 be comment opportunities on non-agenda items related to
4 subsistence each day of the meeting. Typically, this
5 happens first thing in the morning after roll-call. But
6 today it'll be a little bit later on the first day after
7 Council member reports. Once again, if you would like
8 to comment and you're online, you can press star five
9 to raise your hand to comment. You can also submit
10 written comments to me in person in the room or email
11 them to subsistence@ios.doi.gov. And lastly, for
12 everyone's information, the Office of Subsistence
13 Management has a new contractor who's helping us record
14 our Council meetings. Today we have Tanya with us from
15 Talking Circle Media. And under this new contract the
16 audio recording of the meeting is going to be sent
17 afterwards to a separate transcription company. And so,
18 it'll be really important to remember to please identify
19 yourself for the record throughout the meeting. That
20 way, the folks transcribing can properly record who's
21 speaking. So, thanks for bearing with me through those
22 housekeeping announcements. Thank you all again for
23 being here. And a special thank you to our Council
24 members who contribute so much to the Federal
25 Subsistence Management Program. Back to you, Mr. Chair.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.
28 Now we'll do Council introductions here, and then we'll
29 go around the room. We'll always follow the sun. Thank
30 you.

31
32 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. My name is Andy
33 Bassich. I live on the Yukon River at a place called
34 Calico Bluff, a little bit downstream from Eagle,
35 Alaska. And I serve as the AC Chair for Eagle. I serve
36 on the Yukon River panel and on that in their Yukon
37 River panel. I also serve as the co-chair for the
38 Communications Committee for the Yukon River panel. And
39 I've been working with the Eastern RAC now for 20
40 something years. I don't know, I lost track of time. Too
41 much gray hair. Can't remember that far back. But yeah.
42 That's me.

43
44 MR. WOODRUFF: Welcome, everyone. My name
45 is Don Woodruff and I'm from Eagle. And I've been on the
46 Council for 20 years, and it's been a pleasure to work
47 with all these people. I think that one of the most
48 outstanding parts of this program is that we are
49 ambassadors of the resources and for our people. And I
50 would like to make that clear that we're a little bit

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1 past the stewardship. I think that ambassadors is a good
2 word for what we're trying to accomplish here. Thank
3 you.

4
5 MS. ENTSMINGER: Press hard. Sue
6 Entsminger, I live about 16 miles east of Mentasta
7 Village on the Tok Cutoff, and I've been there almost
8 50 years now. I serve on the Subsistence Resource
9 Commission for the Wrangell Park, and I've been on this
10 Eastern Interior maybe just one year longer than Andy.
11 So, yeah, it's I appreciate your comments there, Don.
12 Yeah, that's truly what we all need to be doing. Thank
13 you.

14
15 MS. BURK: Good morning. Eva Dawn Burk.
16 I'm from Nenana and Manley Hot Springs, right along the
17 Tanana River, just downriver from here. I -- this is --
18 just been on the RAC now for a couple of years. Like
19 Andy, I also like to wear multiple hats and serve on the
20 Minto-Nenana Fish and Game Advisory Committee, also sit
21 on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council Advisory
22 Panel. And I'm currently working for the Yukon River
23 Inter-Tribal Fish Commission as a science and policy
24 consultant. So, good morning, everyone, and thank you
25 for joining us.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. At this time,
28 we let go online on the phone. Amanda Pope.

29
30 MS. POPE: Hello, Mr. Chair. Thank you.
31 My name is Amanda Pope. I am from the Yukon Flats region
32 in the community of Circle. I sit on multiple Boards and
33 currently am located in Delta Junction for the winter,
34 for trapping. But I would like to say to everyone, thank
35 you for coming today and my time being on EIRAC has
36 definitely been a learning curve. But unfortunately, my
37 time is very limited, and this will be my last meeting
38 for EIRAC. I will be attending tomorrow and the next day
39 if the if the meeting continues. But I'll be attending
40 in person tomorrow morning. But I wanted to state on the
41 record that I would like to step down from my seat and
42 let my seat be available for the next person. I wish you
43 all well, and I hope to talk to you guys' tomorrow
44 morning. Thank you.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,
47 Amanda, and we really appreciate your service, you've
48 done for your people. We appreciate that so much. Thanks.
49 How about Linda Evans, can you introduce yourself,
50

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1 please? I forgot, she's not on. She's flying today. Okay.
2 Dorothy Shockley, are you on?

3
4 MS. SHOCKLEY: Yes, good morning. Thank
5 you for this opportunity to call in from Manley Hot
6 Springs. I'm home for a few days, so it's wonderful to
7 be here, but yeah, this been my, I think, third meeting.
8 Yeah, definitely a learning curve. And I appreciate, you
9 know, this opportunity as well, but I -- just a brief
10 introduction I'm upper Koyukon Athabascan from the
11 Tanana, Rampart, Stevens Village area, my ancestors. I
12 grew up in Manley Hot Springs. Right now I live in
13 Fairbanks and part time in Manley. So, thank you.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,
16 Dorothy. And last but myself, I'm Charlie Wright. I grew
17 up on the Yukon River between Tanana and Rampart. I --
18 since we've lost our salmon and our ability to -- or
19 since we started losing it, I started getting on these
20 Boards and trying to do as much as I can for the
21 resources that we all rely on so heavily. So, I've really
22 put myself out there. I'm on many, many Boards and
23 commissions. I take a while half a page long, but I
24 can't say no when I know that my people are hungry, and
25 I work as hard as I can to do the best I can. So, I'm
26 on many Boards, so it's a learning curve for me also.
27 This will be my second year as the Chair, and I really
28 appreciate the confidence that this Council has given
29 to me to sit here in this seat. So, big shoes to fill.
30 I thank you all for being here and good morning to you.

31
32 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Council members
33 and Mr. Chair, if we could have folks in the audience,
34 please come up to the mic and introduce yourselves. Thank
35 you.

36
37 MR. GRAHAM: Good morning. My name is
38 Cory Graham, and I'm a fisheries biologist with the
39 Office of Subsistence Management.

40
41 MR. VICKERS: Good morning. I'm Brent
42 Vickers. I am the division supervisor for -- the
43 anthropology division supervisor, Office of Subsistence
44 Management. And this meeting I'll be representing the
45 leadership team of the Office of Subsistence Management.
46 So, thanks a lot. I'm really looking forward to this
47 meeting.

48
49 MR. LIND: Good morning, Chairman,
50 Council members. Those online, good morning. My name is

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1 Orville Lind. I'm the Native liaison for the Office of
2 Substance Management. And it's great to see you all and
3 great to be here. Quyana.

4

5 MR. CHEN: Aloha, Mr. Chair and Council
6 members. My name is Glenn Chen and the subsistence branch
7 chief for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Always a pleasure
8 to attend your meetings.

9

10 MR. YAKSA: Good morning, George Yaska,
11 indigenous knowledge liaison with science affairs. U.S.
12 Fish and Wildlife Service. Thank you.

13

14 MR. MAY: Hi, I'm Emmanuel May. I'm the
15 fish biologist for the Eastern Interior BLM.

16

17 MS. YEMMA: I'm Angela Yemma. I'm a newer
18 assistant field manager at BLM with Emmanuel and Jim
19 Herriges.

20

21 MR. RANSBURY: Good morning. I'm Shane
22 Ransbury. I'm a fisheries biologist with U.S. Fish and
23 Wildlife Service in Fairbanks.

24

25 MR. MERRILL: Good morning. I'm Clayton
26 Merrill. I'm the new subsistence coordinator for Arctic,
27 Kanuti, and Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuges, U.S.
28 Fish and Wildlife.

29

30 MS. CELLARIUS: Good morning. My name is
31 Barbara Cellarius. I'm the Cultural Anthropologist and
32 Subsistence Coordinator for Wrangell-St. Elias National
33 Park and Preserve, based in Copper Center.

34

35 MS. ABOUELEZZ: Good morning. My name is
36 Hanem Abouelezz, I'm a wildlife ecologist with the
37 Natural Resource Stewardship and Science Directorate of
38 the National Park Service. So, NPS headquarters and I'm
39 visiting all of you this week from northern Colorado.
40 So, excited for this meeting. And you can tell I'm new
41 because I don't know how to turn on the microphone.

42

43 MR. DOWDLE: Good morning. I'm Mark
44 Dowdle with the National Park Service. I'm
45 superintendent of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve
46 and also, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve.

47

48 MS. LYONS: Good morning. I'm Ellen
49 Lyons. I'm the relatively new Integrated Resources

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1 Manager for Yukon-charley Rivers National Preserve and
2 gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve.

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4 MR. PISTER: Good morning, everybody. My
5 name is Benjamin Pister. I'm the Team Lead for Resource
6 Stewardship and Science at Wrangell-St. Elias National
7 Park and Preserve.

8

9 MR. HERRON: Good morning. My name is
10 Keith Herron. I'm the U.S. -- I work for the U.S. Fish
11 and Wildlife Service. I'm the assistant fishery manager
12 on the Yukon and tribal liaison.

13

14 MS. GLEASON: And good morning. I'm
15 Christy Gleason. I'm the Yukon area policies manager
16 with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and it's
17 great to see you guys in person.

18

19 MS. STUBY: Good morning, everyone. I'm
20 Lisa Stuby. I'm with the Alaska Department of Fish and
21 Game Division of Sport fish. I'm the Yukon area Sportfish
22 division management biologist. Great to see everyone.

23

24 MS. JALLEN: Good morning. Good to see
25 everyone as well. I'm Deena Jallen with the Alaska
26 Department of Fish and Game, the Yukon River summer
27 season manager. So, I manage the chinook and summer chum
28 runs, and I'm based out of the Fairbanks office and good
29 to see everyone in person.

30

31 MR. OLSON: Good morning. Matt Olson,
32 Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Yukon River Fall
33 season assistant manager.

34

35 MR. FOX: Good morning, everyone. My name
36 is Jimmy Fox, and I'm the manager at Yukon Flats National
37 Wildlife Refuge. Great to be here.

38

39 MS. OKADA: Good morning. My name is
40 Marcy Okada. I'm the subsistence coordinator for Yukon-
41 Charley Rivers National Preserve and also Gates of the
42 Arctic National Park and Preserve. Good morning.

43

44 MS. WILLIAMS: Good morning. I'm Liz
45 Williams. I'm the cultural anthropologist for this
46 Council and also the Western Interior Council through
47 OSM.

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49 MS. SORUM: Good morning I'm Mat Sorum,
50 I'm the wildlife biologist for Yukon-Charley Rivers

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1 National preserve and Gates of the Arctic National Park
2 Preserve and Park.

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4 MR. HERRIGES: Good morning, Jim Herriges
5 with the Bureau of Land management, Eastern Interior
6 field office, wildlife biologist.

7

8 MR. CEBRIAN: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
9 Merben Cebrian, Refuge Manager for Arctic National
10 Wildlife Refuge.

11

12 MR. KNUDSON: Good morning, Tim Knudson,
13 Arctic National Wildlife Refuge biologist.

14

15 MS. CADZOW: Good morning, my name is
16 Cheryl Cadzow. I'm from Fort Yukon. My mother is Alma,
17 the late Alma Williams. She was a single mother, and I
18 was born and raised in Fort Yukon. I now live in
19 Fairbanks, and I'm representing Doyon. Thank you.

20

21 MR. SIMON: Good morning. I'm Jim Simon.
22 I'm a consultant with Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resources
23 Commission and the Tanana Chiefs Conference Tribal
24 Stewardship -- Tribal Resource Stewardship Division.
25 Sorry, new name. Thank you.

26

27 MS. PITKA: Good morning. I'm Rhonda
28 Pitka. I'm Chief of the Village of Beaver and a Federal
29 Subsistence Board member. I'm listening in to at least
30 2 or 3 RAC meetings this year. It was pretty interesting
31 at the RAC meeting, so I wanted to join in. Thank you.
32 Have a good day.

33

34 MR. RICHARDS: Good morning, Mr.
35 Chairman, and members of the Council. My name is Mark
36 Richards. I'm here representing resident Hunters of
37 Alaska. Prior to moving to Fairbanks in 2015, I lived
38 for over 30 years in the remote bush of the Eastern
39 Interior. And I want to thank everybody here on the
40 Council for taking the time out of your lives to
41 represent your region and the subsistence interests of
42 your people. Thank you.

43

44 MS. MCDAVID: I think we might have just
45 had two more people walk in. If you could please come
46 up to the mic and introduce yourselves. Thank you.

47

48 MS. LAPP: Good morning. I'm Krystal
49 Lapp. I am the natural Resource Policy analyst for Tanana
50 Chiefs Tribal Resource Stewardship Division.

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MR. MARTIN: Hi everyone. My name is Ross Martin. I'm a PhD student at the Yale School of the Environment.

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MS. MCDAVID: Thank you everyone in the room. We'll now move online, and we'll start with any tribal representatives or ANCSA corporation representatives. And as a reminder.....

10

11

MS. FREMIN: Hello, this is Cary Fremin.

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MS. MCDAVID: Go ahead, Cary. Sorry to cut you off.

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16

MS. FREMIN: That's okay, this is Cary Fremin. I sit on the tribal (distortion). I also sit on the upper Tanana Fortymile AC and I'm from (distortion)

19

20

MS. MCDAVID: You were cutting out there a little bit, Cary. Could you repeat what tribe you represent and your community? Thank you.

23

24

MS. FREMIN: (Distortion) Lake and Dot Lake Village.

26

27

MS. MCDAVID: Did we hear? Sorry, Healy Lake and Dot Lake?

29

30

MS. FREMIN: No, I'm from Dot Lake. And I also sit on the Dot Lake Tribal Council.

32

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MS. MCDAVID: We got you that time. Thank you so much. Any other tribal representatives or corporations?

35

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37

(No response)

38

39

Okay, we'll move on to agency folks. We'll start with the Office of Subsistence Management.

41

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MS. MONCRIEFF: Excuse me, Brooke, this is Catherine Moncrieff with YRDFA. Can you hear me?

44

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MS. MCDAVID: We can hear you. Thank you, Catherine.

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MS. MONCRIEFF: Okay. Thank you. Yeah, I meant to say that I didn't know if that was our section to introduce ourselves, but this is Catherine Moncrieff

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1 with the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association and
2 myself and two other staff members of ours, Grace and
3 Jadon will be arriving tonight and attending in person
4 your meeting tomorrow, and we're really looking forward
5 to it.

6

7 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Catherine.
8 Anyone from the Office of Subsistence Management online?

9

10 MR. PLANK: Good morning, everybody. This
11 is Tom Plank, wildlife biologist. Office of Subsistence
12 Management.

13

14 MS. GREDIAGIN: Hi, this is Lisa
15 Grediagin.

16

17 (Simultaneous speech)

18

19 MS. GREDIAGINN: Wildlife Division
20 Supervisor with OSM.

21

22 MS. VORHEES: This is Hannah Voorhees,
23 anthropologist with OSM.

24

25 MS. LAVINE: Hello, everyone. This is
26 Robin LaVine. This is a subsistence policy coordinator
27 for OSM. I will be attending as much as possible in
28 between meetings. Thank you.

29

30 MS. MORROW: Good morning. This is
31 Kristen Morrow, Anthropology Pathways intern with OSM.

32

33 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you all. Do we have
34 anyone joining us from Department of Interior Office of
35 the Secretary?

36

37 MS. WERWA: Hi, this is Eric Werwa. I'm
38 a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy And
39 Environmental Management. Here in the office of the
40 secretary in Washington, D.C. And I am so excited to be
41 here. I wish I could be there in person, but you'll hear
42 more about the relationship of OSM and me later on in
43 the meeting in the OSM report. But just glad to be here
44 and learn more about the issues that are important to
45 all of you.

46

47 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you so much for
48 joining our meeting today, Eric. We appreciate it.
49 Anyone else on from Office of the Secretary? If not,
50 we'll move on to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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MS. KLEIN: Good morning. This is Jill Klein. I'm the Regional Subsistence Coordinator with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and I'm also currently acting as our Deputy Assistant Regional Director for Fisheries and Aquatic Conservation. And I'm happy to join you online.

MR. STEVENS: Hello. My name is Curtis Stevens. I am the Refuge Law Enforcement North Zone patrol captain for the Fish and Wildlife Service.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you all. Anyone else from Fish and Wildlife? Okay, hearing none will move to National Park Service.

MS. JOCHUM: Good morning. This is Kim Jochum. I work at the regional office in the Regional Subsistence Program.

MS. CRAVER: Amy Craver, Subsistence coordinator for Denali National Park and Preserve.

MS. FLOREY: Victoria Florey, National Park Service regional office. I'm also in the Subsistence Program.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you all.

MS. COHEN: Good morning. This is Amber Cohen, cultural anthropologist from Wrangell-St. Elias calling in from Copper Center.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Amber. Moving on to Bureau of Land Management.

MR. MCKEE: Good morning. This is Chris McKee.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. KETRON: Good morning. Caroline Ketron, I'm the anthropologist and subsistence coordinator at the Bureau of Land Glennallen Field Office.

MR. MCKEE: Good morning. This is Chris McKee. I'm the statewide subsistence coordinator for the Bureau of Land Management and also interagency staff committee member.

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MS. MCDAVID: Thank you all. Do we have anyone online from BIA?

(No response)

Hearing none. What about Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

(No response)

Okay. We'll move on to any other non-governmental organizations or tribal organizations that we might have missed or any members of the public.

MR. REAKOFF: Jack Reakoff and Wiseman, WIRAC Chair.

(Pause)

MS. MCDAVID: Good to hear you, Jack. Thanks for calling in. Last call for introductions online. If you haven't introduced yourself, please do so now. Thank you.

(No response)

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. At this time we're going to review and adopt the agenda. Have you all had a chance to look at it? And everybody happy, anything to add? Go ahead.

MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Maybe -- I've reviewed it. I'd like maybe a little bit more direction on where we shall be discussing a lot of our fisheries issues. I'm seeing a lot of fisheries scientists in the room, which I'm really grateful to hear. And that's a huge topic for this RAC, given the conditions of salmon on the Yukon River. So, if we could have a little bit more clarification, I think there's going to be a lot more discussion on fisheries during this meeting. And my suggestion might be under 12D and 12E. There'll be quite a bit of discussion of fisheries topics there. And maybe we can extend that portion of the agenda. But I just want -- I guess what I'm asking for is a little bit more clarification on exactly where we want to extend some of that so that people who might be wanting to call in or attend would know when to address the Council. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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1 MS. ENTSMINGER: I second the motion. I
2 second the motion. And I think it's really important to
3 outline what Andy's saying time wise, when these come
4 up. So, people can be here.

5
6 MS. BURK: I'll be -- these mics are
7 touchy.

8
9 UNIDENTIFIED: I think you can only be
10 one person pressing it at a time.

11
12 MS. BURK: That makes sense.

13
14 UNIDENTIFIED: So, if somebody else is
15 pressing it is stopping you from talking.

16
17 MS. BURK: Okay.

18
19 UNIDENTIFIED: No interruptions.

20
21 MS. BURK: I'll just say it on the
22 record. Thank you. I -- my understanding that the Western
23 Interior RAC has a proposal. And I was wondering if when
24 we talk about these fishery things, Andy are you thinking
25 that there might be letters of support for proposals
26 that are out there from other RAC or say, we find out a
27 report from one of our groups and we're like, we want
28 to support something that they're doing, is that what
29 you're thinking?

30
31 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, through the Chair. I
32 guess from my -- my feeling is there's going to be a lot
33 of discussion on multiple topics regarding the fisheries
34 given, you know, all of the different aspects of
35 fisheries that are being worked on. And I just want to
36 identify clear time frames that we could maybe focus our
37 fisheries discussions at instead of spreading it out
38 through the meeting. I think we'd be -- we'd probably
39 serve the public and the people who want to bring their
40 expertise. If we can kind of consolidate, I guess, is
41 what I'm looking for. However, I am aware that you will
42 be leaving the meeting early and you are a very important
43 person to have in that discussion. So, that's why I
44 wanted to bring it up at the beginning, so that if we
45 have to move things around on the agenda to accommodate
46 your time here, that's really valuable to me. Thank you.

47
48 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair, if I might weigh
49 in a little bit just to build on what Andy said. Thank
50 you. Yes. So, we have several -- under reports there are

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1 going to be several folks presenting about fisheries.
2 We have Eva, representing Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish
3 Commission. We'll have Gale Vick reprement [sic] --
4 representing BBAYK Coalition and the Fairbanks Advisory
5 Committee. We also have our Yukon River salmon
6 management team giving a presentation, if you would like
7 to group those together in order. We could certainly do
8 that. It's kind of hard to predict exactly when we'll
9 get to reports. It could be at the end of the day today,
10 or it could be early tomorrow, depending on how quick
11 we get through proposals, because we do need to do our
12 action items first. And I can reach out and see if we
13 can get a copy of that proposal too that was discussed.
14 Thanks.

15

16 MR. BASSICH: Okay, then I guess what I
17 would like to do is just make a motion that we adopt the
18 agenda as presented but leave flexibility in to
19 rearrange the order of the agenda in meeting.

20

21

22 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: All right, I'll ask
23 -- all right. Thank you, Andy. Well I'll ask for
24 unanimous consent then to approve the agenda.

25

26 Any objections? Hearing none. Then --
27 I'm lost here.

28

29 MS. MCDAVID: Motion passes.

30

31 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yeah, the motion
32 passes, going forward.

33

34 (Pause)

35

36 Okay. Now, at this time, we're going to
37 review and approve previous meeting minutes. And we'll
38 wait till we go through A and B and then we'll just vote
39 one time. So, winter to 2024 EIRAC meeting minutes first.
40 Anything, any changes? Any objections? People online.

41

42 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just
43 to help with procedure a little bit. We could entertain
44 a motion to adopt the minutes and then it would open the
45 floor for discussion.

46

47 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Let's
48 entertain a motion to approve -- review and approve
49 previous meeting minutes.

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MR. WOODRUFF: This is Donald Woodruff,
I approve. Second, sorry.

MS. MCDAVID: (Distortion) Sorry, Mr.
Chair, I was just going to point out to Council members
there are two sets of minutes. Page five, in your
meeting, books are the minutes from our individual RAC
meeting that we had this past winter. During the All
Council meeting and then the joint Council meeting
minutes begin on page 14.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Well, give you a
minute to review if you want. I'll wait for you to come
back in. Unless everybody's happy.

MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Mr. Chair, I've
reviewed the minutes, and I don't see any changes, so
I'm ready for a vote.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: At this time, we'll
ask for unanimous consent to approve both sets of meeting
minutes. All those in favor. Okay, any objections? Any
objections, Eva? Okay, passes. At this time, we'll move
to Council member reports. Want to start Andy?

MR. BASSICH: Boy, you're asking for it.
I actually have a lot that I want to talk about, but I
think I'm going to save a lot of my comments for when
we are on topic of discussion so, I'll keep my comments
pretty general. One of the top priorities for me and our
area around Eagle is to get a Fortymile Caribou Coalition
meeting together. The Fortymile Caribou Herd is
struggling. It's a major food source for people in Eagle.
And so, I just want to emphasize, and I will in further
discussion during this meeting, that the Fortymile
Caribou Coalition hasn't met for quite a few years, and
it is past due for us to sit down and work out some
solutions to the problems that we're having with the
Caribou Herd, Fortymile Caribou Herd. So, that's super
important. We need some resolution on that, and we need
some action on that. Locally my -- some of my
observations. Beavers are moving into our area in
greater numbers. Now they're beginning to change some
of the ecosystems around the Yukon River and sloughs and
some of the mouths of some of the rivers. And we know
that -- I think people have seen that happening with
climate change, but I just wanted to report that I'm
seeing it firsthand now. And I'm not necessarily saying
it's a bad thing because it's a food source for

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1 subsistence people and for people like myself that dog
2 mush, it's going to be an upcoming important resource,
3 but it will impact fisheries in some parts of the State
4 and some of the drainages with blocking off access for
5 spawning. So, something to pay attention to statewide
6 and locally for us. The other thing that I'm observing
7 is a real lack of songbirds in our area. I've noticed
8 this for the last two years or so, but it's been pretty
9 dramatic this year. And to me, as a person who's lived
10 on the land for a lot of years, these may not seem like
11 really big, important observations, but they're
12 oftentimes the beginning or a signaling that there's a
13 problem. I've recently been in contact with a number of
14 people that studied the peregrine falcons and the falcon
15 -- peregrine falcons along the Yukon River, which is one
16 of the greater densities in the State is close to an
17 all-time low other than when the DDT was impacting them.
18 So, again, it's an apex predator feeding on infected --
19 they believe it's because of bird flu. There's no
20 scientific proof of that. But again, it's something
21 that's impacting a lot of the ecosystems. Everything's
22 connected and the loss of that is going to have a
23 rippling effect throughout the ecosystem. So, again,
24 something to really pay attention to. And I would
25 strongly recommend that Park Service and other entities
26 that are working with these scientists dedicate funds
27 to try and understand what's happening. It's a great
28 early warning sign.

29
30 I've got a lot to talk about on the
31 fisheries. As I stated earlier, I think it's really
32 important we have a lot of fisheries people here at this
33 meeting. And I guess the opening comment I would like
34 to make is we need your help. We need everyone's help,
35 from all the agencies, from all the managers, from all
36 the indigenous people. We got to work on this together.
37 We got to start really doing some meaningful actions.
38 We need to start doing some really meaningful
39 collaboration. We need to change the systems before it
40 collapses completely. It is the most important resource
41 in the Interior of Alaska, to all the people there. And
42 so, this is a top priority. And I just -- I want to try
43 and stay positive. And I just want to ask for everyone's
44 help. And agencies need to put down their shields.
45 Agencies need to start cooperating, sharing. I think the
46 system is very fragmented and we need to bring that
47 system together so that we're working together. We need
48 to change the way we're doing it, because we've been
49 doing it for 30 years and it's not working. So, we need
50 to break down barriers and collaborate. And I'm not

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1 asking for people to give up their authoritate [sic] --
2 their authority for management. I think we need to
3 clearly identify who's responsible for what area in the
4 fisheries, that's in the fisheries life -- fishers'
5 life, I'm sorry, the fish's life, and we need to work
6 together. But the most important thing is meaningful
7 change. We don't have five more years to study these
8 fish anymore. We've been studying them and studying them
9 for 20 years. I started speaking about hatcheries in
10 2002, and we still have not made much pract [sic], you
11 know, change in that area. So, science is important.
12 Studies are important, but most important right now is
13 action. That has to begin to happen and it has to happen
14 soon. So, the rest of my comments on fisheries. I think
15 I'll just leave until we discuss them. I had to go to
16 another page here, Mr. Chair.

17
18 The only other thing I wanted to bring
19 up and this will come up during some of the fisheries
20 discussion. But one thing that's really been concerning
21 me for a lot of years is we get a lot of Federal funds
22 on disaster relief. Those funds don't -- aren't making
23 it to the people. The disaster relief should be set up
24 to make it to the people who are impacted by it. And
25 disaster relief in the past was always set up for
26 commercial entities, but we're far beyond that now. This
27 is impacting subsistence people, and so, the formulas
28 for funding and the allocation of those funds have to
29 change. That's probably going to have to happen at the
30 Federal level. But I just want to bring that topic up
31 because it's going to be incredibly important moving
32 into the future that we get food replacement programs
33 put in place during these non-chinook salmon fishing
34 times. We have seven years of no fishing for chinook,
35 and our chum salmon are in pretty bad shape too. So, I
36 just want to bring that up, put it on the radar. I
37 realize it's not going to change overnight, but that's
38 really important. And the second thing that I want to
39 bring up at the Federal level, it's really important
40 that we start having international discussions on
41 hatchery productions around the Pacific Rim and the
42 Gulf. So, US, Canada, Russia, Japan, Korea, we need some
43 meaningful change. I know that's going to take a long
44 time, but we need to start that dialogue right now
45 because it is going to take so long. There's very clear
46 evidence that hatchery production is impacting not only
47 salmon, but a lot of the other ecosystems and species
48 that people depend on, not only here on the Yukon River,
49 but in coastal communities. So, that needs to happen and
50 that needs to happen as soon as we can. So, all of the

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1 agencies need to apply pressure to make sure that that
2 begins to happen. That's all. Mr. Co-Chair. Thank you.

3
4 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
5 is Don Woodruff. I, like Andy, took some notes and on
6 the drive in, I saw 62 grouse within 100 miles of Eagle,
7 which is quite a few more than I've ever seen before.
8 And to reiterate what Andy said about the peregrines,
9 is there 50% down, according to Skip Ambrose, who's the
10 peregrine biologist. We had a very good barrier. The
11 moose harvest was low. Three caribou were harvested on
12 the Taylor Highway this season. I've seen very few bear
13 tracks and very few harvests of bears, and from my
14 perspective, the salmon season was a total bust. And as
15 a result of that, I see more cultural and spiritual
16 degradation of our community. And we are the people of
17 the river. And so, that's my report. Thank you.

18
19 MS. ENTSMINGER: First, when I introduced
20 myself, I thought, gee, Sue, you didn't tell him all the
21 hats you used to wear after serving on the Board of
22 Game, the Big Game Commercial Services Board and an AC
23 and a couple other local things. We wear these hats for
24 a good many years, and I started in 78, 46 years ago and
25 I'm still serving now. But in my area is the bottom
26 portion or mid portion of western Unit 12. And we have
27 -- it's interesting, I had gone out to check my garden
28 in the morning, and there's a wolf standing there staring
29 at me, and it allowed me to walk back up in the house
30 before it turned and moved. And then again, a month
31 later, another wolf is seen in my yard. And then I see
32 another one when I'm walking down our old road. But I'm
33 also seeing a lot of grouse. There's more grouse right
34 now. People are -- around my area, they have been some
35 success in moose hunting. One of the local kids, of a
36 14-year-old girl in the village got a moose. And their
37 tradition is to share their first animal, give it away.
38 And I was a recipient of some of that meat, and they
39 know how much I love tongues. So, they gave me the tongue
40 and some meat, and I felt pretty honored by that. I know
41 there's a lot of bears in our area. I do some bear
42 hunting in the spring as a guide and ended up getting
43 two enormous 9ft and 8.5ft grizzlies right by our home.
44 So, I feel like the actual -- the trappers around the
45 area and this type of hunting around the area does help
46 the moose population. I've also noticed in just glassing
47 the mountains that there's actually a few more lambs out
48 in the woods than there has been in the last couple of
49 years. Locally, we have had a poor blueberry crop. It's
50 very unsettling to some people. I think we might have

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1 to go up to Eagle if you have blueberries. But there's
2 a concern about the Nelchina Caribou because of the
3 decline so quickly in four years. And I -- the weather
4 has been a little bit warmer in the fall this year with
5 lots of rain, tons and tons of rain. But I remember
6 winters or falls like this in the past, so I feel like
7 it's more of a cyclic thing. And then I do have concern
8 about the Copper River fish. There might be signs of it
9 not doing as well as it had in the past, and I -- it's
10 a concern. Yeah, I think that's it for me. Some of the
11 people north of me in that Tok area, there are some that
12 report that it had a good fall and some not. So, it's a
13 mixed bag. Thank you.

14
15 MS. BURK: Good morning. This is Eva. I
16 share a lot of similar concerns, and I -- that many of
17 you have already expressed. And I do like the idea of,
18 like, doing something about the Fortymile working group
19 or committee or whatever. I think we do need to do that.
20 I think we need to get out there and trap some beaver
21 as well. And then thinking about what I'm seeing in my
22 area, too. I think also there might be indicators of a
23 new cycle. We heard in the ocean from some of the
24 fishermen that they seen an uptick in forage fish. And
25 that's not like anything that's on like an official
26 science report, but it's just something that fishermen
27 have noted this year. So, maybe we are seeing an up
28 cycle. We have the -- not as much heat conditions as we
29 had in previous years, which is good for salmon, but the
30 chance of another like warm blob in the ocean is always
31 there. If we looked at some of the temperatures and the
32 -- off the west coast of the United States this past
33 summer, they were quite high. So, we always got to be
34 thinking about -- we're just always a few minutes away
35 from another disaster that's going to make this crisis
36 worse so, we need to really stay on top of it. I think
37 what I'm hearing in some of the places that I sit, also
38 in the All RAC meeting and what resulted after the All
39 RAC meeting is there seems to be a lot of interest in a
40 migration corridor out in the ocean, like a conservation
41 corridor. This concept was used for Cook Inlet by the
42 Board of Fish. Seems to be successful. Also, I heard
43 some talk of this being done on the East Coast. I did
44 hear NOAA mentioned that they were interested in
45 identifying these areas. We do need to identify those
46 areas in the ocean where salmon need to feed to grow big
47 enough to make it home, so that is something that we're
48 working on. I also agree that we need to take action on
49 hatchery. There -- studies show that the salmon are
50 coming in with more empty stomachs. So, they might, you

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1 know, being smaller, having emptier stomachs. They're
2 not having the gas that they need to get up the river.
3 So, and I get really frustrated, like thinking about
4 where we are with fisheries sometimes, and like, people
5 refer to this crisis as, like a new one. It's not a new
6 one. It's -- I was -- my family was pushed off the river,
7 we grew up commercial fishing on the Tanana River, and
8 nobody has ever really done that there much since, you
9 know, after the early 2000s. And so, this crisis has
10 been in the making for a long time. And one thing that
11 I see is like when we look at the Alaska Salmon Research
12 Task Force report or Fish and Games Chinook Gravel-to-
13 Gravel research report, it seems to be a lot of things
14 recycled from the last time we had a crisis in the early
15 2000s. And what is not in that report is mention of
16 fisheries induced evolution. And how have we fished the
17 river in the past, and how has that affected us today?
18 How have we fished in the ocean in the past and
19 intercepted salmon, and how does that affect us today?
20 How does drifting with unrestricted mesh size affect why
21 we don't have any large females today? Like we haven't
22 gone back and done a full analysis of our history of
23 management actions on the Yukon. And so, at the Fish
24 Commission, I have been pulling a little bit of that
25 history together. And it's really like, we've been
26 talking about how commercial fishing has affected us for
27 over a hundred years. It's been documented. So, we -- I
28 think we need to look into some of that and acknowledge,
29 like, if we're going to get out of there -- we get out
30 of this, we need to really acknowledge where we've been
31 and really think about where we want to go. And it takes
32 working across all jurisdictions. We're working on a
33 Gravel-to-Gravel approach with the Fish Commission and
34 several agencies, all the different Federal agencies
35 along the Yukon River and National Park Service, DOI,
36 BLM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. We'll be having a
37 meeting so, that's why I have to leave early, the 10th
38 and 11th we're signing this Gravel-to-Gravel MOU, and
39 it's really in response to the major declines that we're
40 seeing in the Arctic/Norton Sound, Yukon Kuskokwim
41 regions. So, there will be a subsistence workshop on
42 October 16th, that's the tribal unity meeting. It's my
43 understanding that this is open to folks public and that
44 you can register online for it. So, that would be a good
45 thing for people if they want to learn more about the
46 Gravel-to-Gravel approach and what organizations,
47 agencies and tribes -- what each person is trying to
48 work on. And then in thinking about staying positive and
49 like, what can we do? I really think we need to focus
50 on community-based monitoring and really uplift our

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1 people. And like myself, who might have a science degree
2 and unfortunately are stuck in the city but would rather
3 be working for their tribe and doing some really cool
4 community-based monitoring projects back home. And so,
5 I look forward to some of the stuff that Tanana Chiefs
6 Conference and the Fish Commission, YRDFA, others are
7 working on. So, and then also like thinking about food
8 security and cultural revitalization. I think a lot of
9 tribes -- I just dropped off some frozen fish. Yes, it's
10 frozen. Yes, it's sockeye from Bristol Bay, but we're
11 still -- they're still going to get to cut fish together
12 and that's important. And Tanana Chiefs Conference is
13 having traditional healing gathering at the same time
14 as this meeting. So, it's really nice to see that people
15 are actively working on maintaining that. And so, I have
16 a -- while I have a lot of concerns, I have a lot of
17 hope for the direction that we're trying to go and try
18 to encourage us to stay positive and always like, always
19 lead with love and hope. So, thank you.

20

21 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: What she said. Thank
22 you, Eva. Very well. I'd like to say that I got out on
23 the river, on a land this summer, and some things are
24 doing good, like what Eva stated. The cycle started two
25 years ago with the gnats and mosquitoes coming back. As
26 a young man I was fortunate enough to live with a full-
27 blooded Native that grew up in the woods. His parents
28 hid him from the schools. When the airplane would be
29 coming, they'd run in the woods. So, it made him the
30 professor of the land, in my mind. And I learned so much
31 from him. And he taught me cycles and about every ten
32 years in the Interior, we get a new cycle of small
33 animals and start with the bugs, because of course, the
34 bigger things eat the little things. But we're seeing a
35 lot of rabbits and grouse this year like was said,
36 they're all over in the yard every morning, they startle
37 me on the way to the bathroom. Anyway, I'd like to say
38 that a new cycle is really good to see. Because like I
39 said, big things eat little things. And of course, our
40 fisheries was a bust this summer. We're still having to
41 buy fish. I did get a few whitefish this fall in the
42 last few days, and a four-inch mesh this past weekend.
43 My mom was really happy for that. There's around the
44 middle of September, there was a kind of a little cold
45 spell that put some moose into rut in my area. And I
46 seen a couple more moose than I did last year coming
47 into the village. But it's still not enough having to
48 share that moose. I didn't get back with near half of
49 my moose that I shot because I shared it all the way
50 home, and that was a couple hundred miles, so I lost

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1 more than half of it. But I was very thankful to be able
2 to share this year. I didn't get a moose last year and
3 it was hard. And seeing Martin running around in town
4 chasing those rabbits and grouse around. So, I think I'm
5 hoping that, like Eva said, hope, I hope, hope, hope
6 that things get better for us and everybody that uses
7 the resources out there on the land. I thank you all for
8 coming. I think I look forward to all the reports and
9 look forward to sitting here and talking with you guys
10 on breaks and having a good meeting the next 2 or 3
11 days, and that's about all I have. I didn't have a lot
12 of time to put together anything. I just got here the
13 other night at midnight and off the land. So, I'm here
14 to try to do the best I can today, and I appreciate
15 everybody's help. I'm a little rusty with the Robert's
16 Rules of Order, even though that's my name. Good morning
17 to you all. Thank you. And online we have Amanda. Do you
18 want to go next? Please.

19
20 MS. POPE: Hi, Mr. Chair. Thank you.
21 Everyone kind of already heard the concerns that I have
22 seen and I have heard from the region. It's been a very
23 busy year for folks. The Fish and Game numbers are the
24 are the same in most areas and are still scarce. This
25 leaves a lot of people all over the region without meat.
26 I'm concerned for the animals we have around us and
27 their longevity, due to the fact that most aren't able
28 to harvest them anymore, and because of how they're being
29 managed and how those numbers keep dropping, it seems
30 every year it's been the same. Many folks have seen the
31 healthy numbers of animals and fish around them drop
32 dramatically due to many factors. So, it's putting a red
33 flag up for me. I'm continuing to keep those people in
34 my thoughts and prayers and hope folks on the ground are
35 able to harvest something for the winter. I believe there
36 needs to be more of an effort to get locals out who are
37 out on the land, on the ground, to help with monitoring
38 and helping to manage the animals. There needs to be not
39 only a joint effort to help those who live in and around
40 the communities with less regulations to manage the
41 footprint of the agencies. On the -- on the agency side,
42 sorry, I know there has been a big effort this year to
43 get people on the ground involved. And I also know there
44 has been some really good work that have been done and
45 are in progress already by many folks in the region. I
46 want to commend the locals who are helping others get
47 involved. I appreciate your hard work to get the locals
48 who are on the ground involved to help manage the Fish
49 and Game we all share. I don't want to spend much time
50 on this, on myself, but I would like to just say thank

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1 you to those who are who are helping in the advocacy
2 realm of the Fish and Game. It's very important. So,
3 thank you.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Amanda.
6 How about you, Dorothy, you on?

7
8 MS. SHOCKLEY: Yes. Thank you. I hope you
9 can hear me okay.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: We can.

12
13 MS. SHOCKLEY: Yes. Well things are, you
14 know, probably the same as they've been for the past few
15 years here in Manley. There was more sign of moose,
16 which was good. On my drive down, there were a lot of
17 chickens so, that was good as well. But, you know, like
18 everybody said, you know, the -- our fish and game and
19 our ability to feed ourselves is still a major concern.
20 And, you know, as I looked over our meeting notes for
21 the All Council meeting, you know, everybody reported
22 the same thing in regards to our ability, again, to feed
23 ourselves and the resources, the fish and game, you know,
24 just everything is low, you know (distortion) all our
25 numbers are low. And I remember, you know, after all the
26 reports were done at the meeting at Anchorage, I mean,
27 the air was pretty much sucked out of the room, you know
28 -- I mean, the, you know, the -- it was just such a
29 telling situation that we're in and I think about, you
30 know, the just transition from our current system,
31 current situation to where, you know, our system truly
32 works for the people who totally rely on the resources.
33 And, you know, think about you know, what our ancestors
34 have taught us, you know, like Charlie was stating, you
35 know, he learned from one of the best. And, you know
36 how, you know, as indigenous people, our beliefs, our
37 spiritual beliefs are, you know, what I believe is going
38 to get us through this. You know, everything I believe
39 has a spirit. And, you know, the Fish and Game, I was
40 told to watch them. You know, they will tell us what is
41 happening. And so, we need to pay attention to that. And
42 we really, you know, need to adapt, adapt what we're
43 doing to what is happening on the ground. You know, and
44 I believe that the fish and the animals will adapt as
45 well. And they are adapting, we just have to pay
46 attention to it. And I also believe, you know, there is
47 hope. We have great hope. I see our young people really
48 getting involved in the climate change. You know, I think
49 everybody last, you know, March mentioned that, you
50 know, the changes that we're seeing. So, we really need

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1 to, you know, watch and adapt like I said. And so, you
2 know, we have a lot of young people who are very
3 conscious of this. And, you know, I also want to thank
4 people, you know, the people in the different agencies,
5 those who truly understand, you know, where we've come
6 from, our history and how we work with nature instead
7 of trying to, you know, do or where we try to force our
8 system or the Western system or the book learning system
9 onto a natural system. I really appreciate those who
10 understand, you know, our natural system and the way
11 everything is connected. I truly appreciate that. And
12 to those who are, you know, are new to the system, you
13 know, I just really encourage you to pay attention. Pay
14 attention to nature instead of, you know, what I guess
15 you've learned, you know, in the Western system. But
16 again, thank you for this opportunity. And, you know,
17 just thinking about this meeting and thinking about the
18 other two meetings, maybe three meetings that I've
19 attended. So, I, you know, attended meetings over the
20 past, you know, 30, 40 years or so. How frustrating it
21 is. And I appreciate those who, you know, are still
22 working, still trying to make the changes. And, you know,
23 like I said, you know, how do we get from here to where
24 we want to be? You know, that transition and, you know,
25 kind of make a roadmap to go back or, well, to go
26 forward. But at the same time, you know, going back to
27 where we need to be in regards to working with the with
28 nature and our animals and our fish. So, thank you.

29

(Pause)

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Dorothy.

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MS. SHOCKLEY: Hello?

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Thank
you. I want -- this is Charlie. I want to add a little
bit more after hearing. I forgot to talk about moose,
just really fast. And when I was in Rampart for two
weeks during September, early September, and then the end
of September and first part of October here and first
week I was there, there was a little herd of a family
of moose that moved into town, and they were hiding in
between homes, that there were some old broke down homes
there, but the full trees there, and they were hiding
right in the middle of the town. And it was because of
the wolves. The wolves are going up and down the beach,
steady. Coming up the slips. They're seen on the roads.
I got a report from Yukon Flats where they're snatching
them off the chains right in the village again. And you

1 hear a little bit about a little bit better, moose. But
2 it's if the wolves are coming into town and snatching
3 dogs off the chain still, that's a sign to me that
4 there's not nothing else for them to eat. And up there
5 in Venetie and Arctic Village area, these animals rely
6 on caribou and not as many moose. From my understanding
7 and my understanding, the caribou, big caribou herd
8 didn't come this year and concerns about it being steered
9 the other way back into Canada, and a lot of people
10 depend on that. So, I'm looking forward to reports on
11 that. Now another thing is they offering five black bears
12 in the Interior to people, and I ain't seen no black
13 bears. So, maybe it's better on this side of the hill
14 than it is on the other side and on the Yukon. But that's
15 becoming a concern of mine also, that we're going to
16 overkill the bears, too. So, that's all I got. Thank
17 you.

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19 MS. EAGLES: Charlie. This is Carmen
20 Eagles. If I could get on the list to testify, please.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. We'll add you
23 when we get to public comments. Thank you.

24
25 MS. BURK: Yes, thank you. I started to
26 talk about the cycle and then didn't mention some of the
27 issues that we're having with moose, but in Nenana which
28 is where we try to hunt sometimes, we're mostly in State
29 land and on or mostly on in State land. And one thing
30 that's really concerning to me is after they put that
31 bridge in across Nenana River, and I understand that my
32 Tribe of Nenana, you know, essentially built the bridge,
33 but it was something that now a lot of our folks are
34 really concerned about and expressing a lot of concern
35 about too many people over hunting in Unit 20C, Fish and
36 Game unit 20C and what we learned is that -- and then
37 also thinking about like all these different projects
38 that were happening around Nenana at the same time as
39 they built that bridge, they extended a road that was
40 actually going to get extended all the way to the
41 Kantishna but through some advocacy that got paused to
42 just do the land sale. So, there's the bridge, the
43 extended road, the land sale, the bison reintroduction,
44 and nobody counted the moose before all of these things
45 happened. There has never been a moose count in Unit 20C
46 since 2011. And now we have this influx of people and
47 no baseline data. So, that's really concerning to me
48 because we did hear from folks, not everybody was
49 successful with their hunt in Nenana this year. I think
50 we saw more success last fall than this fall. There was

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1 just an incredible amount of traffic and pressure out
2 there. We were out there for the youth hunt at the end
3 of August. So, it's just something that I wanted to
4 flag, that it's really hard for people in our region,
5 like in the Nenana, Minto, Manley, Rampart, Tanana, the
6 Fortymile Herd is down, our moose counts are down.
7 There's increased pressure. We're shut down for salmon
8 like, salmon for our community is probably 50 to 60% of
9 our diet, and now we have a hard time with getting the
10 other resources too. So, I just wanted to put that on
11 the record that. And what Charlie said about the black
12 bear hunts is very concerning, because in the regulation
13 it says three bears. But then when you go online and get
14 your permit, you actually get five -- a permit for five
15 bears. And again, there's no biological studies on
16 bears, the only people who are actually trying to count
17 the number of bears, for my understanding right now is
18 Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resources Commission. So, once again,
19 here we go, being liberal about hunting, not really
20 having a lot of information. And that's very concerning
21 to me. So, while I recognize that this is in State land,
22 we are adjacent to Denali National Park. And so, it's
23 just something to flag and consider. So, I wanted to add
24 that. Thank you.

25

26 MS. ENTSMINGER: I just wanted to
27 mention, Eva, that the reason that there's five tags
28 coming is there are areas that there are five bear
29 limits, and it might not be in your region.

30

31 MS. BURK: Okay.

32

33 (Pause)

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35 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: At this time, we're
36 going to move to public and tribal comments on non-
37 agenda items. And this will be available each morning.

38

39 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just
40 a reminder if you would like to give a comment on any
41 non-agenda items, you can fill out a blue card if you're
42 here in the room or if you're online, you can press star
43 five to raise your hand or use the raise hand feature.
44 And we do have one commenter that already signed up.
45 Thank you.

46

47 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. We'll start
48 with Karma Ulvi from Eagle.

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50

1 MS. ULVI: Good morning, everyone. My
2 name is Chief Karma Ulvi and (distortion) the Native
3 Village of Eagle. And I'm also the (distortion) Yukon
4 River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. Thank you for
5 listening to us today. I just -- I wanted to really talk
6 also about the low numbers in pretty much everything
7 here at home. Our ducks and the spring, we had a lot
8 fewer ducks this spring. Of course, the fish numbers are
9 way down still. And but even for us in Eagle, we're
10 seeing way lower numbers for moose. I know we used to
11 drive out to Tok and see several moose along the way and
12 be like, oh, we've seen 6 or 7 moose or something, and
13 that's pretty rare now. Like we don't see that many
14 moose even driving to Fairbanks. And we always ask when
15 somebody comes in if they have and we're not seeing that
16 as much. I'm also very, very concerned about the
17 Fortymile Caribou Herd and those numbers and in support
18 of the caribou -- Fortymile Caribou Herd working group.
19 So, I also sit -- I have been the Chair of the AC and
20 now I am on the AC, I'm not the Chair anymore, but I
21 work closely with our AC here in the Eagle. So, I just
22 -- I see the lower numbers of all of our subsistence
23 foods that we eat and traditional foods and very
24 concerned of what direction that we're traveling right
25 now. With management. As the Chair of the Fish
26 Commission, I know that we are training advocates and
27 sending advocates to meetings. And we're -- actually for
28 the Fish Commission, we're in the process right now of
29 filing 501C3 and moving out of Tanana Chiefs Conference
30 and forming our own organization. Eva does tremendous
31 work on the Fish Commission for policy, working with the
32 North Pacific Florida Fish Upper Yukon panel. And really
33 happy to have her on board there. We -- so I just have
34 so many concerns for all of our animals right now. I
35 feel like we really need to do something to conserve and
36 try to bring them back. And, you know, we've advocated
37 a lot with the Commissioner, and I don't feel that, you
38 know, I just, I really -- I don't know where that's
39 headed here. But I - so, we're for the Fish Commission,
40 we're working on building capacity. We're looking for
41 an admin assistant and an executive director to run the
42 Fish Commission. And so, really excited about that. And
43 we did receive a Gravel-to-Gravel grant. And I also will
44 be traveling to Anchorage next week to sign an MOU with
45 the Federal Government so, that's really exciting.
46 Hoping that a lot more tribes will sign up for that. And
47 then, yeah but willing to work anywhere we can to try
48 to advocate and help, you know, our animals come back.
49 It's harder and harder to get food out here. TCC does
50 send out fish. And so, we've been cutting fish with

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1 elders and canning fish and doing that, even our berries
2 numbers were low. So, just some really concern for all
3 of our hunting and gathering and resources. So, I just
4 wanted to -- yeah. Just see what -- let you all know
5 what we're seeing up here. And thank you for letting me
6 testify today.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: We got a question
9 for you, Karma.

10

11 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Karma, shis is Andy
12 Bassich. I wanted to know if you have any preliminary
13 reports on successful harvest of moose or caribou from
14 your village? So, I guess, in short, I'm asking were any
15 moose or caribou harvested from Eagle Village this year?

16

17 MS. ULVI: We had two, two moose that
18 were harvested and two people from the village, but one
19 was like, way down the river. And then we also had
20 someone harvested a moose down river and gave it to the
21 village. No caribou yet. So, yeah. So, two, I think got
22 lost or three with the one that was given to the village.

23

24 MR. BASSICH: Thank you. And what is the
25 current size of the village population?

26

27 MS. ULVI: 25, here in the village.

28

29 MR. BASSICH: Thank you. I just wanted
30 to get that on the record. I think what I'm trying to
31 demonstrate here, Mr. Chair, is that moose populations
32 are very low in the area and people are struggling. And
33 the fact that caribou normally at this time of year, I
34 think if you look back over time, there probably would
35 have been 10 or 12, maybe even 15 caribou harvested at
36 this time of the year in our region. So, I just wanted
37 to get on the record how bleak it is right now.

38

39 MS. ULVI: Hey, Charlie. Also.....

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41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Karma.

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43 MS. ULVI: Yeah. I also really wanted to
44 back up Eva's point on the conservation a corridor out
45 in the ocean. I really, I think that's really what we
46 need right now. Eva has done a lot of work on the North
47 Pacific, and I think that would be the way to really cut
48 down on the numbers of our fish being intercepted. Also,
49 we are working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife with two
50 other regions and getting a small grant to start doing

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1 planning for community-based monitoring. And so, we, you
2 know, like, we really need to try to put something in
3 place where each region is doing a project that's similar
4 to each other. And we're collecting data that across all
5 regions will be uniform. And so, that you know, we can
6 share that information with say, ADF&G or U.S. Fish and
7 Wildlife and what we're seeing in our communities. So,
8 I just wanted to back up what Eva said about the
9 conservation corridor and really supporting that. Thank
10 you.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Karma.
13 Next blue card we have is Mr. Jim Simon.

14
15 MR. SIMON: Thank you. For the record,
16 Jim Simon with Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resources Commission.
17 I just wanted to express my disappointment that some of
18 the Copper River Salmon Board of Fish proposals aren't
19 on your agenda. Given that there are many federally
20 qualified rural residents living in the Eastern interior
21 RAC that have customary and traditional use of the copper
22 -- of Copper River salmon. You know, you have customary
23 and traditional use determinations for you know, a
24 community on the Glenn Highway on your agenda. And just
25 the members of the Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resources
26 Commission, which are the eight federally recognized
27 tribes and the Ahtna Incorporated and the Chulitna
28 Native village corporation are -- have been monitoring
29 in large part due to the efforts of Sue Entsminger, you
30 know, the tragic story on the Yukon. And they're very
31 concerned that the Copper River is headed in the same
32 direction because of how it is being managed and the
33 actual lack of monitoring that you all have on the Yukon.
34 You know, there's one sonar there that for example, in
35 2023, that objective was -- the numbers of fish that
36 passed that sonar were 71% above the management
37 objective. And yet the two uppermost portions of the
38 Glennallen subdistrict, where the only place where
39 subsistence fishing is allowed, the ANS -- the amount
40 necessary for subsistence findings. There's three for
41 those three reaches of the river for the area like where
42 from Sue is from, you know the ANS has not been met
43 since 2015 and despite the numbers of fish passing the
44 Miles Lake Sonar being 71% above management objective
45 in 2023, it is the smallest subsistence harvest ever of
46 just over 2,000 fish for the -- from the Gakona mouth
47 of the Gakona River up to Slana, including Batzulnetas,
48 which is why you even have Federal subsistence fisheries
49 topics on your agendas at all is because of the efforts
50 of the late Katie John.

1

2

3 Also, the -- from downriver from the
4 mouth of the Gakona to Tonsina, the ANS has not been met
5 there since 2018 and another good example is this season
6 the -- after it was determined that it was unlikely for
7 the Copper River king salmon escapement goal to be
8 reached. The State shut down all retention of king salmon
9 in all fisheries, sport, subsistence and personal use
10 dip netting in Chitina and yet commercial fisheries
11 continued to harvest and sell chinook salmon at the
12 Copper River district at the mouth of the river. And so,
13 this is of concern that I hope that your friends and
14 relatives in the Ahtna region could really use this
15 Council's support. Again, I failed to mention that the
16 worst history, you know, of 2023 for that section from
17 Gakona to Slana was just over 2,000 fish. The lower end
18 of the ANS is 12,000 salmon there, so that's 10,000
19 basically less fish than the lowest range of the ANS.
20 So, just wanted to share that it's not on your agenda.
21 I wish it was. And then you wouldn't have had to listen
22 to me. Thank you. On non-agenda items.

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MS. BURK: Thank you, Dr. Simon, for your
testimony. I've been following the Copper River issue.
Charlie and I went to AITRC annual meeting this spring.
And so, I heard things from locals about the Batzulnetas
fish and that even the sockeye, when they were getting
the fish upriver, like in Chistochina, the headwaters
people, they said that the meat was in really poor
condition and that the salmon was actually sliding right
off the skin, like when they would hang it in the
smokehouse. So, my question is like, and then in thinking
about the Yukon and then thinking about the ability to
manage a river with just one escapement goal and one,
one sonar site, how -- do you have any recommendations
for how we might be thinking about, looking at our
different escapement goals, how we're monitoring for
escapement and how we're updating those escapement goals
to reflect our current situation, the current health of
the fish? Thanks.

MR. SIMON: Yeah. Thank you, Eva, for
that question. It's a very good question and a very
important topic that Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resources
Commission, as well as some of its partners like
Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve have been
discussing. You know, a lot of information, as I
mentioned, there's a lot of attention paid to the issues
on the Yukon and ideas. You know, one issue is that the
monitoring of the uppermost portions of the Copper River

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1 is really one weir and then aerial escapement goals, and
2 they assess -- they estimate the escapement based on
3 taking the sonar way downriver and subtracting the
4 harvest. And they then presume that all of those fish
5 are reaching the spawning grounds, and that any
6 mortality in river is the same through time. So, you can
7 imagine that I have told them Yukon stories quite
8 frequently. There is a -- you know, it was four years
9 ago that Cheesh-Na Tribe Council asked for Ahtna
10 Intertribal Resources Commission assistance in
11 requesting a government to government consultation with
12 the superintendent of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park
13 and Preserve, and since that time, the park staff have
14 done an outstanding job of researching and better
15 appreciating the concerns expressed by AITRC member
16 tribes such that -- that's what I'm really complaining
17 about is that you don't have the National Park Service's
18 Proposal 51 that would delay any additional commercial
19 fishing openers by the Cordova fleet after the first
20 two, because that's the only real biological information
21 we get, right. But until some of those management goals
22 are reached at the Sonar, because, you know, Copper River
23 king salmon and sockeye salmon end up on plates in
24 restaurants in Seattle before those fish reach the
25 Sonar, you know. So, that's -- and we need to remember
26 what subsistence priority means. And so, in looking at
27 the escapement -- escapement monitoring simply through
28 a subtraction exercise is risky in my opinion. Even the
29 -- and those of you who were on the Fairbanks AC
30 Fisheries subcommittee meeting last night have already
31 heard me complain about this; but if you look at the
32 stock of concern designation for the upcoming Prince
33 William Sound out in areas not affecting the Copper
34 River, they have aerial based escapement goals and the
35 lack of meeting those aerial escapement goals suggested
36 that a stock of concern designation should be
37 established for some of those stocks, but the department
38 explained away why they weren't going to make a stock
39 of concern designation despite those goals not being
40 met. The other issue is that three years ago, the
41 department decreased the escapement goal for Copper
42 River chinook salmon from 24,000 or more to a range of
43 21,000 to 31,000. So, Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resources
44 Commission, as well as projects funded by our partners,
45 the National Park Service, have been conducting health
46 assessments on salmon. They're looking for ichthyophonous
47 also just because of what they've learned from the Yukon
48 River and from all of you. The Park Service has worked
49 with someone from the Pacific Science Center, I think
50 is -- where Pete Rand is from, who has actually

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1 documented in river mortality occurring on the Copper
2 River. And so, some of the great partnerships that exist
3 between Federal agencies and the Ahtna Inter-Tribal
4 Resources Commission, and its members are helping to
5 address these concerns. But the problem is there is no
6 public process in setting escapement goals. The only
7 choice that we have in regulation is to develop a
8 proposal to establish an optimal escapement goal that
9 the Board of Fish adopts. And three years ago, there was
10 a proposal to do that which would increase the escapement
11 goal because of declining fish size. Everything you guys
12 already know, right about the quality and quantity of
13 eggs in the gravel. And, and the Commissioner clarified
14 that just because the Board of Fish might adopt an
15 optimal escapement goal that would affect management,
16 that doesn't change the department's policy decision
17 about what is the escapement goal is. So, Ahtna Inter-
18 Tribal Resources Commission really wants to preserve
19 genetic diversity. And how we do that we need feet on
20 the ground and working with the elders who can identify
21 these different salmon stocks, and to be able to help
22 the geneticist develop those markers. And fortunately,
23 the department is doing some of that work on the Copper
24 River. Thank you.

25
26 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, I just want to
27 help here. In the past, we -- Oh, I have to say my name.
28 Sorry. And this is Sue Entsminger. In the past, we've
29 taken up Board of Fish proposals and Board of Game
30 proposals, and we left our agenda a little bit floating
31 so we could do things like this. And I know a lot of
32 times they were [sic] a lot of interest. We should be
33 looking at those proposals and say, hey, I want to take
34 this up. And I apologize that it wasn't on my radar. I'm
35 a busy person as a volunteer. There's a lot of things
36 going on, a lot of health issues in my family. So, I
37 would like us to, you know, we took this up the
38 Subsistence Resource Commission, and I feel like we
39 should be open to be able to take up some of these
40 proposals. And I would request that we do take up some
41 of the proposals that we took up at that meeting. I can
42 talk to you at break about which ones I would be, and
43 then I would encourage all of the RAC members to look
44 at the Board of Game proposals, look at the Board of
45 Fish proposals, and see if there's something we want to
46 comment on because this is the time to do it. So, thank
47 you.

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1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I agree, Sue. Thank
2 you. Jack, I hear that you have something to say. Go
3 ahead, Jack.

4
5 MR. REAKOFF: Yes, Mr. Chair. This is
6 Jack Reakoff. Western Chair Regional Advisory Council
7 has submitted an agenda change request to the board of
8 Fish. That's supposed to -- the Board of Fish is going
9 to review the agenda change, ACR in late October. And
10 so, but I don't have the number. But our proposal is to
11 restrict the length and depth of seine gear and gillnet
12 in the South Alaska Peninsula, Shumagin Island, Area M
13 and but the Board of Fish would have to act on that ACR
14 to address that issue. But a lot of the problems is how
15 deep they're fishing, they're actually impacting --
16 there's also other methods that could be done to remove
17 the fleet away from the passes and move them on the
18 north side of the Alaska Peninsula. So, their intention
19 is to catch sockeye, and but they let them fish right
20 in the pass as the fish move right through, going on the
21 vector straight up to the Yukon and Kuskokwim River. So,
22 we're trying to avoid this chum harvest with this ACR
23 to one degree. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for that,
26 Jack. At this time, we're going to stand down for a
27 break. I'll say ten minutes because I know it's going
28 to be 15.

29
30 (Off record)

31
32 (On record)

33
34 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Hello, hello! Our
35 ten minutes turned into 20. We need to find our chairs,
36 please.

37
38 (Pause)

39
40 Okay, I'm going to give one more chance
41 and call for non-agenda items from the people on the
42 phone at this time. As we get started up here again.
43 Thank you.

44
45 MS. STEVENS: Good morning. Are you able
46 to hear me?

47
48 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I can hear you fine,
49 Carrie.

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1 MS. STEVENS: Is it okay if I speak,
2 Chair?

3
4 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Please do.

5
6 MS. STEVENS: Thank you very much.
7 Apologies that I am not there in the room. I'm actually
8 -- was trying to make it to all of you, so thank you to
9 the Chair. Thank you, Charlie. And thank you to the RAC.
10 I appreciate all of your public service. I just wanted
11 to take a moment individually as myself. My name is
12 Carrie Stevens. To put some of my concerns on record
13 speaking as myself. I know many of you in the room. My
14 husband and his family are -- their traditional
15 territory -- their area of use is above Stevens Village.
16 In between Stevens Village and Beaver on the Yukon River.
17 And including the area of Lost Creek where family members
18 were born. And this is their ancestral homelands and
19 their traditional use areas. And over the course of the
20 last several months since last time I saw all of you at
21 the All RAC and Anchorage, I just wanted to report on
22 what we're seeing and experiencing out there. My husband
23 is currently out on the land and the water as it's
24 snowing here. I think I'll just start with salmon and
25 fisheries, of course. As we all know, salmon was closed
26 this season. We didn't harvest, we didn't put any nets
27 in, not even four-inch. Again, I'm speaking as myself.
28 We support all conservation measures. We have nothing
29 left to give of ourselves, of our large extended family
30 that really defines itself as salmon people. And so, I
31 really applaud and support the work of all of you in
32 pushing on salmon conservation and restoration on the
33 Yukon. This is not a new issue for us. I always like to
34 put on -- it's been over 25 years coming the collapse
35 of both chum and chinook salmon in the upper Yukon. And
36 I very much want to applaud and support your efforts,
37 for full conservation corridors that are desperately
38 needed throughout both the ocean environment, the marine
39 environment, all the way through to the headwaters in
40 Canada. We're gravely concerned, of course, about the
41 continued overfishing in the Gulf of Alaska and the
42 Bering Sea, and the numbers were seen of bycatch. They
43 say that, you know, this is really infinitesimal amount
44 that would make it to the upper Yukon and Canada. Well,
45 we will never rebuild if we don't get that infinitesimal,
46 I can't even say that word. To them, a very small
47 statistical number is everything to us. And if we don't
48 get those fish to the spawning grounds, we will never
49 rebuild. So, I just really want to support and applaud
50 all the efforts of the RAC to push those efforts through

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1 your work, both at the Board of Fish and the North
2 Pacific Fisheries Management Council, as well as the
3 Yukon River Panel. I'm obviously like all of us, even
4 more concerned about mining and dams in Canada being
5 upper Yukon gal. Those impacts are also great. We saw
6 the breach that occurred this summer in mining. We have
7 no margin for error anymore, or for bycatch or for
8 incidental catch. So, again we stand as solid
9 conservationists. And I want to applaud, I'm not there,
10 but Charlie and Eva in all of these spaces. And for
11 really being a voice of conservation I really want this
12 for my children and their children. And this is the only
13 way forward. And I just believe we have to hold the
14 marine and the headwaters environments accountable. Us
15 along the middle and upper Yukon, I mean, we've given
16 everything. We have nothing left to give. We don't put
17 our nets in so, no nets. Saw people drying flown in fish
18 from Bristol Bay, ourselves, we had fish given by Bristol
19 Bay. And that is what native people do. They share, our
20 trading networks are vast, and I'm very grateful for
21 that.

22
23 Along with the salmon, I just want to
24 comment that you know, this is a keystone species missing
25 from our environment. We see a real change in both
26 predator birds; eagles and falcons, and as well as
27 seagull and other migratory birds. Camp used to be loud,
28 now it's quiet. And I think there's a great impact to
29 birds. Let alone other wildlife that are hungry. We're
30 lucky that it was a big bear year, but I just want to
31 say that our subsistence needs, my husband's whole
32 extended family, and in Stevens Village, Beaver, their
33 subsistence needs are not being met. Our subsistence
34 needs are not being met. On the case of moose -- and I
35 want to thank you all for supporting the special action
36 requests, supporting the closures and supporting
37 conservation for Yukon River salmon, chum and chinook.
38 So, I wanted to thank you for that. There's no room for
39 any commercial in-river fisheries. There's really no
40 room for ocean commercial fisheries at this point.

41
42 Moose; I don't know how to emphasize
43 this or say this enough. It was quite disturbing, the
44 influx of non-local hunters above Stevens Village this
45 year. My husband commented he's never really seen it
46 like that in his lifetime. And with no fish it hurts.
47 It's devastating our area. I want to thank you all. We
48 fight and fight to maintain the closure in 25B west. And
49 I want to thank you for maintaining that. But we are a
50 Tier 2, and I don't know if that's where they're coming

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1 from, but Tier 2, they can't go on above the high-water
2 mark. And we know they're all going above the high-water
3 mark. And trespassing on Doyon lands, on village
4 corporation lands. We have a great deal of trespass going
5 on, which is not new to the area, but it's increased
6 tenfold and I think there's a Doyon rep there. Hopefully
7 she's still there. And I really appreciate that, if
8 Cheryl Cadzow is there. They're clearly going above the
9 high-water mark. And it is devastating to drive past
10 areas where my husband and his whole extended family
11 harvest and see them sitting on the beach with their
12 moose camp. It's just devastating. And what I was
13 thinking about is -- I see you have Hunter Ethics, you
14 know, back on the agenda, but there is no information
15 or education that I can see at the Yukon River boat
16 launch, the bridge, I think if Jimmy is there, like,
17 again, I was trying to get there, I'm sorry. Jimmy Fox,
18 the Refuge Manager. We need maybe in partnership with
19 Stevens Village Tribal Council and Beaver Village Tribal
20 Council, really educational materials. And with Doyon
21 on those lands above the bridge. We need to be giving
22 all of these individuals no excuse for their trespass.
23 And really making sure that the lands are marked [sic].
24 Maybe we need, like when you're driving down the highway,
25 it says entering 25, you know, D west subsistence,
26 closure area, etc. Even signage on the river. I don't
27 know if that's possible, but they need some dissuasion
28 from just straight trespass. And also, I would really
29 encourage the Refuge and the RAC to really launch a Tier
30 2 campaign that is for local users by State statute. I
31 know it's a State hunt, and I know you're all the feds,
32 but we're all here to protect subsistence. There were
33 even terrifying rumors across social media that you
34 know, former EIRAC members and others were saying that
35 the area was you know, full of moose, which is, you
36 know, we have one of the lowest moose populations in the
37 State. So, it's just very upsetting with moose. And we
38 all know in the Yukon Flats we have a crazy, really
39 predator ratio and imbalance. We're seeing that
40 throughout trapping season. Wolves everywhere, big
41 animals everywhere. So, we still, even though our guys
42 out there are busy we have that. So, we really need help
43 with the moose situation. I wanted to mention that. And
44 again, I want to thank you to the RAC for maintaining
45 that closure. If we don't have that it'll be just --
46 it'll be a zoo, a mess. Really, subsistence needs are
47 again not being met. It'll just get worse. And lastly,
48 I just wanted to share that, you know, there's this
49 growing great concern about oil and gas activity in the
50 Yukon Flats. I don't know if the EIRAC has taken this

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1 up. There's posts that Hilcorp and Doyon abandoned, you
2 know, equipment in Birch Creek. I don't know if it's
3 stuck there or barged with equipment, all kinds of rumors
4 etc. running wild about the barges, the equipment, the
5 planes, the helicopters. While we have no fish and you
6 know, staving off a lot of outside hunter impact right
7 now. So, it's of grave concern to everyone. And I don't
8 know if Jimmy's there in the room. I can try to stop by,
9 but I know that the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge
10 takes up compatibility determinations. I don't know if
11 the EIRAC has made recommendations. I know several
12 compatibility determinations have been completed, such
13 as subsistence and wildlife viewing and waterfowl, blah,
14 bleh, blah, etc. But it's my understanding, last I
15 checked in that the oil and gas development
16 compatibility determination has not been made. And I
17 urge all of you on the RAC and anybody listening, to
18 please make sure that it is found to be incompatible
19 with the purposes of the Yukon Flats National Wildlife
20 Refuge. Oil and gas development is incompatible with the
21 purposes of the Refuge full stop. I really do, again, I
22 thank the RAC. I thank you all for being there. Sorry I
23 pulled over. Trying to get to you.....

24
25 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Are you still with
26 us Carrie?

27
28 MS. STEVENS: I'm here.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Are you done?

31
32 MS. STEVENS: I'm done. Thank you.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. I had to make
35 sure because I didn't hear you, no more. We thought we
36 lost you.

37
38 MS. STEVENS: No, I appreciate the
39 opportunity. Thank you, Chair.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: You're welcome. Did
42 we have anybody else waiting?

43
44 MR. THOMAS: Mr. Chair.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Hello. You have the
47 floor, please state your name.

48
49
50

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1 MR. THOMAS: Charlie. Brooke -- This is
2 Bruce Thomas, CATG Natural Resource Director in Yukon
3 Flats. And we have -- Charlie, can you hear me?

4
5 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: We can hear you,
6 Bruce. You got the floor.

7
8 MR. THOMAS: Okay. We have the same
9 concerns that Carrie Stevens just expressed. We had --
10 we had a heck of a fall. I hunted for three weeks this
11 fall before I finally got a moose. And this is the first
12 time in my life I've seen the influx of hunters on the
13 Yukon Flats. They had planes, they had boats, canoes,
14 and they had total disrespect for our country here. They
15 were they had two 206s and a float plane, and they had
16 a gas depot at Curtis Slough and the mouth of Coleen
17 River. And they were pounding the rivers. They were
18 keeping the moose off the rivers. And we had a heck of
19 a time competing with these people. And yeah, but this
20 it was it was really sickening, man. It was hard for us
21 to get meat due to all that activity. So, I just wanted
22 to express my concerns about that. We're very concerned
23 about this influx of hunters because as we all know, the
24 Yukon Flats has the lowest moose population in the State,
25 and we can't afford any more pressure on these moose.
26 Thank you, for letting me testify.

27
28 MS. MCDAVID: Hi, Bruce, this is Brooke
29 McDavid. Thank you so much for those comments. I do want
30 to remind you and all the folks from the Flats that next
31 year in the spring, it will be a Wildlife Regulatory
32 Cycle. And you could start thinking about any proposals
33 you might like to put in to address some of these issues
34 for next spring. So, thanks so much.

35
36 MR. THOMAS: Thank you.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,
39 Bruce. Any others? Anybody else online or on the phone
40 that want to comment?

41
42 (No response)

43
44 MS. BURK: Thank you. In listening to the
45 public testimony, I have a lot of concerns. And so, I
46 would like to get some letters going, if that's okay
47 with other Council members. Specifically addressing some
48 of the comments about Doyon and the Yukon Flats and
49 looking for that compatibility determination. I think
50 that is important to have that process and not have that

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1 documented. And -- I need a second. I'd like to make a
2 motion. Well, I guess I wanted to make a motion. Then I
3 started explaining it without getting a second.
4 Apologies. I want to make a motion to write letters to
5 Doyon and then a compatibility determination.

6

7

MR. WOODRUFF: I'll second that.

8

9

10 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I you know, something
11 that I've been bringing up for about 5 or 6 RAC meetings
12 now is how Alaska is changing, how we're going to see
13 more and more people moving into the State, some of it
14 due to climate change globally. But the State is growing
15 and the desire for people to come and live in Alaska and
16 live, quote, the Alaska dream and go out and hunt and
17 fish. There's a lot -- that's what was born of the
18 education of the Hunter Ethics initiative, the
19 recognition that more and more people are going to be
20 coming in and that there's going to be more user conflict
21 or competition, I should say, which leads to conflict
22 for the resources. And so, I think it's incumbent upon
23 all agencies, Federal and State, to start having some
24 discussions on how we're going to address that, because
25 it's an issue that's just going to continue to grow over
26 time. And, you know, people have rights to go out and
27 hunt. But speaking from, and this is my personal view,
28 but speaking for a person who lives out on the land,
29 it's pretty tough when you live out there full time to
30 watch \$100,000 jet boats and a lot of people coming to
31 compete with you for a resource that you have to have
32 and that they just would like to have. And that's the
33 difference. And I understand the rights of people, and
34 those are the issues that we have to work on. So, that
35 we can resolve that so there isn't bad conflict. The
36 bottom line for people who live out on the land is you
37 build your life around the resources that are there, and
38 you learn to live within those means. And when those
39 resources go away, you have nothing to turn to. And you
40 oftentimes don't have the resources to do other things.
41 So, the most important thing to subsistence people is
42 consistent access to a reliable resource. That's what
43 it boils down to. And that's what we need to continue
44 to work and have collaboration. Like in my opening
45 statement between State and Federal agencies so that we
46 can develop rules and conduct that work the best for
47 both user groups. I just wanted to put that on the
48 record, because I think that's kind of the crux of the
49 problem, and it's not going to go away. So, we need to
take our heads out of the sand, acknowledge that it's

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1 an issue, and we need to address that issue moving
2 forward. Thank you, Mr. Co-Chair.

3
4 MS. BURK: Yes. Thank you Andy and I
5 agree. In the letter to Doyon, I think it's important
6 to highlight those things that we need, like the
7 compatibility determination from them is also a lot of
8 people weren't aware of the planned activities. And so,
9 having some type of stakeholder engagement when you have
10 a resource development. I'm a Doyon shareholder and I
11 don't even know about this. That's what's really
12 concerning. The fact that you're -- that equipment is
13 out there we need to verify if there's a plan to get
14 that equipment demobilized and out of the area. And then
15 as far as the -- excuse me one second.

16
17 MS. MCDAVID: Eva, just a follow up. I
18 think we need to be clear on the record what the RACs
19 position is for continued exploration or whatnot. Just
20 so you could add that in the letter if you want to,
21 because we heard Carrie's comments, but it would be good
22 to hear directly from the RAC.

23
24 MS. BURK: Then we probably have -- need
25 to have a little discussion and let everybody speak to
26 their mind. So, I'll start. I used to work in oil and
27 gas. I'm actually -- I used to be a senior project
28 engineer for ASRC Energy Services. And one of the
29 projects that I worked on was Chukchi Sea Oil and Gas
30 Development, and whether or not it was even feasible to
31 build a pipeline in the Chukchi Sea. And I can tell you
32 it is most definitely not feasible. And that's why we
33 do not see that project out there today. It was my job
34 to sit there and argue with scientists and engineers,
35 all the reasons why we could not build this pipeline and
36 the risk that we were putting to the environment. So, I
37 have a lot of concerns. And also working with oil and
38 gas, there is a right way to go about a project. And I
39 was part of stakeholder engagement for ASRC and even
40 visited many of our own communities in the Interior
41 region when we were trying to work on different pipelines
42 and oil and gas. So, while I know in this State that oil
43 and gas is very important, there is a place and a time
44 for it, and there's a process with the public that needs
45 to be followed. And so, my position at this time is we
46 need more information. We need to know short-term and
47 long-term exploration and development plans and where
48 we are at in the decision making. Because first you
49 analyze the resource, you determine if it is feasible
50 to develop that resource, and then you begin the

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1 permitting to develop that resource. So, I would like
2 to know where we're at in that process with Doyon. And
3 then finally and just thinking about Alaska as a whole
4 and kind of in response to some of what Andy's saying,
5 climate migration to Alaska is real. And I think in
6 Hunter Ethics education, we teach people about all the
7 values of stuff, but are we giving them some actual
8 snapshots of where Alaska's resources are today because
9 they're in the tank. In my region, there is no fish --
10 salmon, moose or caribou. It's in the tank. So, why are
11 we continuing to position ourselves as a State with all
12 these resources? We need to have information out there
13 about what is the actual present state of our resources,
14 and it would be really nice to actually have that by
15 Game Management Unit or by the RAC, you know, having
16 like these regional snapshots of what is happening to
17 each thing. Because I did sit through and listen to
18 Ahtna folks and the Nelchina Caribou Herd, and it was
19 heartbreaking. It was heartbreaking to hear the words
20 of their people that sounded very similar to the words
21 of my people, and we need to do something about that,
22 because this is not just the Yukon. We are talking a
23 statewide ecosystem collapse. And where is our response
24 to that and where -- and what we need to identify and
25 what I know from resource development. And there's, you
26 know, some of the people like ASRC and Inuit Circumpolar
27 Council clearly state in their documents there is a limit
28 to resource development and that's on public lands. We
29 have this issue of like; you can have public lands and
30 it can have multiple uses. You can have a piece of land
31 that allows for oil, gas and mining, but is also somehow
32 supposed to be Fish and Wildlife habitat. And so, we
33 really need to be developing with the communities like
34 what our land relationship plans are, not land use plans
35 or managed resource management plans. But how do we as
36 people want to live in relationship to these resources?
37 And what are the threats long term and short term to
38 those resources? So, that's a little bit above what we're
39 doing here today. But just some thought about how we can
40 start to prepare in -- ourselves and our communities for
41 what's coming down the pipeline. And I wanted to add one
42 more thing for you, because I really want to hear what
43 other people feel about this topic, but what I'm seeing
44 and hearing more clearly from everybody that has to spend
45 more gas, that has to compete with \$100,000 boats. This
46 is gentrification of our food resources. We can't even
47 access them anymore. And that is really concerning.
48 That's not -- we need to be prioritizing and uplifting
49 subsistence and really recognizing that we need to be
50 really careful in the way that we manage and really

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1 start we're seeing like, huge declines overnight. And I
2 think in some ways we kind of expected them when we
3 didn't act accordingly and in time. And we're catching
4 up in some ways. So, I just wanted to add that. Thanks.

5
6 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yes. Thank you, Charlie.
7 This is Sue, and actually, I feel a tiny bit lost. Can
8 I ask? The letter goes to just Doyon or is it -- is this
9 -- is the attempt to have this statewide or exactly
10 what? So, if you could help me out.

11
12 MS. BURK: Thank you, Sue. This is Eva.
13 We would have one letter to Doyon and then one letter
14 to the Yukon Flats Refuge Manager.

15
16 MS. ENTSMINGER: Just pertaining to that
17 area? Okay, that's the intent. Thank you.

18
19 MR. BASSICH: I guess I can speak. I'll
20 just throw in my \$0.02 here. I've been living off grid
21 for 25 years in a very sustainable way. So, I'm not a
22 big fan of petroleum exploration. I think as I often
23 tell people, I like to think 20 years from now, all the
24 time on every topic. And if in 20 years we're still
25 trying to decide on where we're going to do oil and gas
26 development, then we failed because there are so many
27 other methods to provide for electricity and other needs
28 from people. And I would much prefer to see that energy
29 put into that because it's a lot more eco-friendly. It
30 doesn't have the footprint and the conflict with the
31 natural world as much. I understand our dependence on
32 it. I understand that it's a really important part of
33 our State's economy. But I think if we had some good
34 leaders in our State, we would start investing more in
35 renewable resources. We have so many resources available
36 through wind and tidal and solar, especially solar, in
37 our region. There's no reason why we shouldn't be
38 producing hydrogen gas and conversion towards that, and
39 there's just so many options. So, from my perspective,
40 I never have any support for oil and gas at this point
41 in time. We need to be shifting over, in my view. I'll
42 leave it at that. Thank you.

43
44 MS. ENTSMINGER: I was off grid for close
45 to 35 years, and I told my husband, if they ever bring
46 power poles in here, I'm never going to hook up. You can
47 hook up your half, but I'm not going to hook up my half.
48 But when it came, the whole house got hooked up. And I'm
49 telling you, all of that work and hard work to with
50 solar and starting generators and changing oil and

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1 generators and all this stuff that you deal with that
2 there was no solar. I had solar panels. We had no solar
3 in the winter. Good six months usually that you couldn't
4 depend on it. So, you know, I think there is wise use
5 of the land. And I appreciate your comments there. It's
6 very important to have the wise use and don't close our
7 minds totally, because I really enjoy not having to deal
8 with the generator anymore. And I wouldn't have said
9 that to you 30 years ago, but I understand as I get
10 older, it's a little easier. So, I think it's very
11 important, if that's the intent of the letter, to have
12 wise use and people working together. I'm in favor of
13 that. Thank you.

14

15 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any council members
16 on online want to say anything at this time?

17

18 (No response)

19

20 Hearing no comments from online, Dorothy
21 or Amanda. I will make one myself. People tend to blame,
22 point fingers here and there, but the managers see what's
23 going on. They see the numbers; they know the weather.
24 We've got to start thinking sustainability. People need
25 to eat. At the Board of Game last year, I told them, you
26 guys are working yourself out of a job. Nobody's going
27 to have nothing to eat, and you're not going to have no
28 way to make money pretty soon if you don't start thinking
29 sustainably. This State can only provide for so many
30 people and the numbers are going down rapidly, so we
31 really need to start paying attention to that. And I
32 hollered last year about climate uncertainty, that needs
33 to be added to if you can lose a 60% of a caribou herd
34 in one year, then you better start paying attention. And
35 we need to start holding these managers' feet to the
36 fire, I think. Because that starts -- it needs to start
37 being managed sustainably. It can't be no more mistakes.
38 We're losing too much. So, I support the letters. Thank
39 you.

40

41 MR. BASSICH: Thank you. I think those
42 were really good words. And I just wanted to add
43 something from my perspective to clarify, I think
44 managers generally try and do the right thing. I think
45 where we have a real consistent problem is at the high
46 level at the Governor, at the Commissioner's level. It's
47 a very top-down system. And I just wanted to say that
48 I, you know, my experience with the managers that I've
49 worked with for 30 years, I think they're trying to do
50 the best they can. And I oftentimes feel like if they

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1 could speak freely or do what they feel they want to do,
2 as opposed to being told by their superiors what they're
3 going to do, we might be in a little different situation.
4 So, I just wanted to speak up for some of those people
5 that are managers because they're on the land, they see
6 it, there with the people, the people in Juneau and
7 higher up oftentimes are so disconnected. And I think
8 that's part of the problem that we have, Charlie.

9

10 MS. BURK: Thank you. Andy, in response
11 to that, do you think it's important to maybe also send
12 a letter to the Governor, maybe Secretary of Interior,
13 that we're concerned about these things and bring it to
14 a higher level?

15

16 MR. BASSICH: Absolutely. I think that's
17 the crux of the problem. And I think, you know, certainly
18 as we approach election years coming up in the state of
19 Alaska, those are topics that we need to bring up because
20 unfortunately, biology in Alaska is often controlled by
21 politics, not biology. And that's the unfortunate
22 situation we're in. But I think a lot of these problems
23 are going to end up, sadly, having to be fixed through
24 politics -- the politics, not through the biological
25 science, because the biological science in almost all
26 these issues that we're dealing with is pretty clear and
27 evident.

28

29 MS. MCDAVID: I just wanted to chime in.
30 This is Brooke, for the record. About process stuff, if
31 we want to add another letter. Especially if you're
32 talking about issues, you might want to elevate to the
33 Board and to the Secretaries. Maybe we'll hold those
34 types of issues till we start talking about the Annual
35 Report and the correspondence that you want to go to the
36 Board. But right now, yeah, the motion is for two
37 letters, one to Doyon and another to Yukon Flats about
38 oil and gas exploration and compatibility.

39

40 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Unless anybody has
41 more to say about what she just said, then we're moving
42 forward. Yep.

43

44 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Mr. Chair, if there's
45 no further comment by our Council members, I'd like to
46 call question.

47

48 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Andy. And
49 so, I'll ask for unanimous consent. Didn't you call the
50 question? Yeah so, we'll ask for unanimous consent from

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1 the Council at this time. And if there's any objections
2 let us know now. If not, passes. Thank you.

3

4

(Pause)

5

6 MS. BURK: I just -- this is Eva. I wanted
7 to kind of address the trespass thing, and I don't know
8 if that really is our job, our issue here, but I just
9 wanted to flag something for folks in response to what
10 we're seeing on the Yukon Flats is like, you can go to
11 the state ADNR Mapper and other apps in the state of
12 Alaska use the GIS files on here. And while I see some
13 allotments, I don't see any of the Native corporation
14 lands on the hunt planning map that state of Alaska
15 creates. This would be Division of Natural Resources.
16 So, I just wanted to flag that for folks. Maybe that's
17 something people can write to DNR about whoever
18 maintains this database. I think in my work, we've
19 brought this up to them before and we still haven't seen
20 it resolved. But I don't even see Doyon lands in here
21 or any of the village corporation lands in this hunt
22 planning map. So, that's a little bit concerning for me,
23 and I just wanted to bring that to the attention of
24 other people in the room since it was commented on.
25 Thank you.

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MS. BURK: Do you want me to comment on
it?

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead.

MS. BURK: Thank you. Thank you. Thank
you, Sue. That was the -- that was the app. I was,

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1 actually couldn't remember the name of X Hunt because
2 somebody did tell me that, so.

3

4 MS. ENTSMINGER: onX.

5

6 MS. BURK: Yeah, and then I was just
7 informed that one of our other Council members, Dorothy,
8 brought up that the Native corporation lands are not on
9 the federal regulatory map books either. So, if you
10 look.....

11

12 MS. ENTSMINGER: They're not on.

13

14 MS. BURK: They're not on there. So,
15 these little updates are needed, and I just wanted to
16 flag that. Thank you. Do we want to address that one?

17

18 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. I'm wondering if
19 maybe some of this discussion could happen when we start
20 talking about Hunter Ethics, because that's where we do
21 a lot of outreach and things like that. So, that might
22 be the appropriate time on the agenda to flush this out
23 a little bit more. Just trying to save a little bit of
24 time for you right now, Mr. Chair.

25

26 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for that,
27 Andy. Thank you, Andy. Okay, at this time, I'm going to
28 give an opportunity for Karen Linnell to come up and
29 make some comments. Good to see you, Karen.

30

31 MS. ENTSMINGER: Non-agenda item
32 comments. Right?

33

34 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Non agenda. Yeah.

35

36 MS. LINNELL: Thank you. Yes, this is a
37 non-agenda item. Last year I had won the right or gotten
38 the Federal Subsistence Board to reconsider an action
39 taken on Cordova dipnet fishery. And at that time, they
40 said that it was not in Eastern Interior RACs
41 jurisdiction, OSM staff had done that because it was
42 south in Cordova area. But every salmon that comes into
43 the Copper River is your jurisdiction. Those arbitrary
44 lines that get drawn on the river and tell us whether
45 it's a State fish, a Federal fish, a Yukon fish, it's
46 still one fish coming up in the river. And so, those
47 fish that those people could be catching are the ones
48 that could be going to feed the people that you guys
49 represent. From Tanacross, Tetlin Northway, Dot Lake.
50 And so, I just wanted to raise that and have you guys

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1 put that also in your letter to the Secretary and OSM
2 staff that you're just jurisdiction is for the entire
3 river because that salmon comes from the mouth all the
4 way up to the headwaters. The other thing in regards to
5 onX maps, sometimes they're not accurate. And Ahtna
6 Incorporated has developed their own app on -- for the
7 Ahtna lands, but also there's no trespass enforcement.
8 And so, that's something for you guys to consider as
9 well. We, as you know, we -- the Ahtna country, or Ahtna
10 territory is the most road connected region and we are
11 connected to Fairbanks, Mat-Su, Anchorage, Kenai, even
12 Juneau and Haines through the Alaska Highway. So, we see
13 a lot of traffic with folks coming to hunt and fish in
14 our area and -- but even blatant trespass often ends up
15 in civil court rather than in criminal court for
16 trespass. So, it is a concern and it's a policy issue,
17 I think, with the State. The levels of documentation
18 that we have to go through to document that trespass is
19 pretty, pretty stringent. And so, those are just a couple
20 of things that I wanted to bring up. Because I, you
21 know, it really bothered me when they all of a sudden
22 said that there was no jurisdiction for you folks, and
23 they had asked you guys to come up with a compromise,
24 if you remember. And then they removed your
25 jurisdiction. And I feel that was wrong and is something
26 that needs to be elevated. I do want to thank you for
27 taking the time to allow me to speak. Thank you.

28

29 MR. WOODRUFF: Karen. Does that app, is
30 that available for everyone?

31

32 MS. LINNELL: Yes, it's on Ahtna's
33 website.

34

35 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you. And could you
36 state your name and full name for the record?

37

38 MS. LINNELL: Sorry, I thought I'd Karen
39 Linnell, Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resources Commission. Thank
40 you.

41

42 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much
43 for being here.

44

45 (Pause)

46

47 So, at this time we're going to call
48 lunch. So, everybody go and fill your belly. One hour,
49 1:05.

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MS. MCDAVID: For those online, we'll be standing down for lunch for one hour. We'll be back around 1:05.

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, Cory. Got the floor when you're ready. I guess we're calling the meeting back to order, please take your seats, thank you. All yours, Cory.

MR. GRAHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, members of the Council, my name is Cory Graham, and I'm a fisheries biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management. So, I'm here to present the delegation of authority training. Moving forward, OSM plans to hold one training session at each Council meeting. We feel this will help new Council members become more familiar with the Federal Subsistence Management Program and serve as a refresher for some of the more seasoned members. Today, we'll go over the basics of delegation of authority. This training is meant to be informational and is not an action item. And with that, let's get started. Next slide please.

The objectives of this training are to provide information about delegated authority, show the Councils where to find information about delegated authority and discuss the Council's role in delegated authority. This training is meant to be a broad overview of delegated authority, but there will be time for Q&A at the end of the training. To get into any region-specific issues you may want to discuss. Next slide. So, here is the regulation that allows the Board to delegate their authority to agency field officials. The regulation describes what kind of actions can be delegated. For example, setting harvest and possession limits, open or closing seasons, etc. So, we'll try and use plain language in the next few slides to define and describe delegation of authority. Next slide.

So, what is delegation of authority? In the broadest sense, delegation of authority is the transfer of limited decision-making power from the Federal Subsistence Board to Federal managers. Delegated authority is what gives Federal managers the legal

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1 authority to make in-season decisions to manage fish and
2 wildlife populations. Next slide. As mentioned in the
3 previous slide, the Board transfers the decision-making
4 authority to Federal managers. For example, this may be
5 National Park Service superintendents, Forest Service
6 district rangers, or Fish and Wildlife Service Refuge
7 managers. Local Federal managers often have a greater
8 connection to and understanding of the resource than
9 anyone in Anchorage. And beyond giving decision making
10 authority to Federal managers who have boots on the
11 ground. Why is delegation of authority important? Next
12 slide please. Delegation of authority is important for
13 multiple reasons, it allows Federal managers to make
14 quick management decisions as data and local knowledge
15 become available in-season. So, for example, maybe the
16 preseason forecast for fish population is strong, but
17 in-season data and local observations indicate the run
18 is really weak and will not meet escapement goals. The
19 Federal managers delegated authority allows quick action
20 to close the fishery to all users, to protect the
21 population, or close the fishery to non-federally
22 qualified users to protect and continue subsistence
23 uses. It also allows for input from the locals when
24 there is a close relationship between management --
25 managers and subsistence users. Next slide.

26
27 So, authority can be delegated to
28 managers in two places. One is in unit specific
29 regulations and this is what's listed in here, these
30 regulation books. Currently, only wildlife regulations
31 have delegated authority and unit specific regulations,
32 mainly because Wildlife has a lot of routine management
33 actions. So, for example, a Federal manager has
34 delegated authority to announce the harvest quota for a
35 moose hunt each year before the season opens. This
36 optimizes harvest opportunity and conservation.
37 Authority may also be delegated through delegation of
38 authority letters, and these letters allow Federal
39 managers to issue special actions. And we'll discuss
40 these letters a little more - more in a little bit. Next
41 slide. So, how the Board delegates authority depends on
42 if the authority is delegated in a letter or unit
43 specific regulations. So, for delegation of authority
44 letters, the Board may delegate authority at any time.
45 This is done through an administrative action. And these
46 actions require the Board to vote either by email, poll
47 or during a Board meeting, but they don't have to go
48 through the regulatory process. This allows for quick
49 action by the Board and for the Board to be responsive
50 to changing conditions. This method does not require

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1 public input. However, the Board understands public
2 feedback is critical -- is a critical component of the
3 Federal Subsistence Management Program, and often asks
4 for feedback from the Councils before creating or
5 modifying delegation of authority letters. Delegation
6 of authority in unit specific regulations may only
7 happen through the public regulatory process. So, in
8 other words, it requires a proposal to change existing
9 fish or wildlife regulations during the regulatory
10 cycle. And while the public input is at the Board's
11 discretion for the delegation of authority letters,
12 public and Council input is required through the public
13 regulatory process. Next slide.

14
15 So, okay, we're on the same place,
16 that's good. Here's an example of authority that is
17 delegated to a manager and unit specific regulations.
18 Again, these are only for wildlife regulations for now
19 -- right now and are for routine annual management
20 decisions. The authority is more limited in scope than
21 delegation of authority letters. And this example
22 authority only pertains to setting permit conditions and
23 announcing closures for winter hunt. If anyone, the
24 Councils or the public want to change or modify this
25 authority, they would need to submit a regulatory
26 proposal. Next slide. So, in contrast to authority
27 outlined in regulation, managers again may also be
28 delegated authority through delegation authority
29 letters. Eva.

30
31 MS. BURK: Thank you, through the Chair,
32 this is Eva. Can you go back a slide, please? You're
33 going a little fast for me.

34
35 MR. GRAHAM: I'm sorry.

36
37 MS. BURK: Yeah, that's okay. So, in the
38 highlighted part, you're saying that the RAC and the
39 Advisory Committees can work together on something. Can
40 you explain that more?

41
42 MR. GRAHAM: So, if, for example, you
43 wanted this to be changed, you could work through the
44 public regulatory process, submit a proposal to change
45 that. Otherwise, the manager is gonna have that
46 authority to do that each season.

47
48 MS. MCDAVID: But just to add on the
49 manager is supposed to consult with the area biologist
50 and the Chairs of the Council, that's why, yeah.

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MR. GRAHAM: Yeah, we'll get to that more in a little bit, but yeah, there is supposed to be discussion with the Councils.

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Again, so, now we're gonna [sic] be talking about delegated authority, delegation of authority letters and these letters give managers authority to issue special actions. The special actions issued by Federal managers are subject to regulatory requirements. So, for example, public hearings are required for temporary special actions which are special actions that last more than 60 days. And public hearings are encouraged for emergency special actions, which are actions that may not exceed 60 days. The managers must also seek Council recommendation when the timing of Council meetings allows. Delegation of authority letters can be issued by -- issued or rescinded by the Board at anytime. Issuing or rescinding the letters does not need to take place at a Board meeting or during the regulatory cycle. And again, this gives the Board flexibility to adapt to changing conditions and make sure that managers have the tools they need to manage and protect populations, as well as optimize subsistence opportunity. Changes to delegation of authority letters may be requested by the Councils or the public, by letter or during a Board meeting. Delegation of authority letters are not currently published online, but if the Council or the public ever wants a copy of a delegation of authority letter, contact your local in-season manager or OSM and we'd be happy to get that to you. Next slide.

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So, even though delegation authorities are -- delegation of authority letters are issued for specific areas and species, all delegation of authority letters contain the same general language and requirements. So, for example, all letters require communication with affected parties such as the Council Chairs and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Tribal consultations must be conducted practicable. Managers may also defer decisions to the Board with very controversial issues if immediate action is not needed. Next slide. So, again, the Federal program has, as you all know, fisheries regulations and wildlife regulations and Fisheries and Wildlife delegation of authority are issued in separate letters. So, for Fisheries, the scope of the letters is broad and consistent across all letters. They cover all fish species in an area. A list of Federal fisheries managers with delegated authority

1 by area can be found on page 98 of the handy dandy. And
2 if you can't find it, I can help you find it later. And
3 this contrasts with wildlife delegations, which tend to
4 cover specific hunts, species and management actions.
5 Most wildlife actions are routine and occur again every
6 year. In the unit specific regulations of the Federal
7 Wildlife Harvest Regulations, the handy dandy a white
8 exclamation mark inside of a red triangle indicates that
9 additional management actions may be taken by the
10 Federal in-season manager, and you should consult the
11 delegation of authority table on the -- on page 152 of
12 the regulation book.

13
14 All the authority delegated through
15 letters are listed in this table and they are organized
16 by Federal manager and list the area, species and
17 authority delegated. So, for example, on page 154, the
18 Izembek National Wildlife Refuge manager has the
19 authority to close the moose season in unit 9D when ten
20 bulls have been harvested. Next slide. So, in summary
21 again, we have delegated authority, which means the
22 Board transfers limited decision making ability to
23 Federal managers. This authority may be in unit specific
24 regulations or delegation of authority letters. For unit
25 specific regulations, delegation of authority can only
26 be added or modified during the public regulatory
27 process. The delegation tends to be for routine annual
28 management actions. They are currently only in wildlife
29 regulations because Wildlife has more routine management
30 actions, such as closing seasons when harvest quotas are
31 met. Next slide. The Council's role in delegation of
32 authority in unit specific regulations is submitting
33 proposals to change the delegated authority in
34 regulation, making recommendations to the Board on the
35 associated regulatory proposals and consulting with
36 managers before they take action. Next slide. Delegation
37 of authority letters are easier for the Board to change
38 or resend, giving the Board more flexibility to act
39 quickly and respond to changing conditions.

40
41 Again, changes to letters can happen
42 outside the regulatory cycle. Delegation of authority
43 letters give Federal managers the ability to issue
44 special actions. The letters are generally broader in
45 scope but subject to more requirements such as public
46 hearings. But -- and both Fisheries and Wildlife
47 regulations have delegation of authority letters. Next
48 slide. The Council also has a role in delegation of
49 authority letters, the Councils may request to add or
50 modify them through the -- through letters or at Board

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1 meetings. The Board may ask Councils for feedback on
2 proposed changes to a delegation of authority letter
3 when time allows. The letters also require that managers
4 consult with Council Chairs before issuing special
5 actions, and the Chair is encouraged to seek feedback
6 from other Council members. Next slide.

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8 So, again, delegation of authority
9 allows for quick in-season management actions. This
10 allows the Federal managers to protect fish and wildlife
11 populations and continue subsistence uses. Managers are
12 required to consult with affected parties before taking
13 action. This commonly includes the Councils, ADF&G,
14 tribes and OSM. Council Chairs are encouraged to bring
15 in other Council members when consulting with managers,
16 and please contact in-season managers or OSM if you have
17 any questions. Next slide. And so, thank you so much for
18 your time and attention today, I'd be happy to try and
19 answer any questions you may have.

20
21 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chair, Andy
22 Bassich. I have a question. I really like the fact that
23 we're maybe moving this direction so that we can be more
24 responsive in our management. I think that's a really
25 good step and I applaud this initiative to make this
26 happen. The question I have is how is it gonna work if
27 the state of Alaska does not recognize a conservation
28 concern, but a Federal manager, whether it be Fish or
29 Wildlife, does recognize a conservation concern, wants
30 to impose a restriction which would then be more
31 restrictive to subsistence users than State users.

32
33 MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair. So, within
34 delegation of authority letters, they have the ability
35 to close to non-federally qualified users. So, if the
36 Federal manager thought that there was a conservation
37 concern and all users needed to be restricted, or to
38 only restrict to non-Federally qualified users, they
39 would have that authority in the letters.

40
41 MR. BASSICH: Okay, so they would have
42 that authority. But in many years past, I've always heard
43 it said that Federal regulatory or Federal bag limits
44 or harvest should not be more restrictive than State. I
45 mean, we've always worked in that when we've dealt with
46 proposals. So, moving forward, given the situation that
47 both Fish and Game are in -- in our State for subsistence
48 users, if the State does not want to recognize there
49 being a conservation concern, but it's very clear that
50 there is one. I can see where they would have the

1 authority to do that, but let's look at the reality of
2 it. Is there going to be a lot of pushback? Are they
3 going to be willing to restrict subsistence users,
4 federally qualified subsistence users, more than regular
5 State, say hunts? So, for an example, let's just say the
6 caribou, Forty-Mile Caribou Herd is not doing well. The
7 State keeps the open hunting season. And then the Federal
8 manager realizes that the Fortymile Herd is in bad shape,
9 and they need to restrict harvest. Can you see, can you
10 see what I'm trying to get at here? If the Federal
11 manager wants to close the season but the State doesn't,
12 that kind of goes against everything that we've done for
13 the last 20 years, as far as trying to make Federal
14 qualified subsistence users have a greater opportunity
15 for harvest before the State users do. If I'm being
16 clear, I'm not sure I'm being clear, but that's a
17 scenario I can see very clearly taking place in the
18 future. And so, I'm trying to wrap my head around how a
19 Federal manager, either Fish or Wildlife, will deal with
20 that issue.

21
22 MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair, so, I think in
23 terms of fish, I'm not a wildlife biologist and I don't
24 know the regulations as well. But for example, on the
25 Yukon say there's not enough fish for all harvest. The
26 Federal manager again can close to non-Federally
27 qualified users allow harvest opportunities by Federally
28 qualified users for subsistence users if there is a
29 surplus or close to all users. If they close to all
30 users, that's fine. If the State was to restrict the
31 Federal -- Federally qualified subsistence, users could
32 still harvest under Federal regulations. So, I don't
33 know if we're speaking the same language or not, but.

34
35 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, okay. So, let's just
36 go back. Sorry for this, but I think it's really
37 important to understand this moving forward because
38 speaking towards fish let's just put up a scenario that
39 that the fish run is coming up the Yukon River. The
40 Federal manager does not feel that the fish run can
41 support harvest. However, State managers feel that there
42 is a certain amount of harvest that is available. The
43 Federal manager would not have the authority to close
44 down State waters, only Federal waters, correct?

45
46 MR. GRAHAM: That's correct.

47
48 MR. BASSICH: Okay. But the vast -- there
49 are many places on the Yukon River that are State waters.
50 And so therefore, if the Federal manager was to close

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1 down Federal waters, those Federal subsistence users in
2 that area would be actually closed down when the rest
3 of the Yukon River would be completely open for State
4 harvest. That's a problem for conservation. Do you see
5 what I'm getting at? This is a huge problem, and this
6 is part of the problem that's contributed to the
7 situation we're in now. And so, if we're going to move
8 forward and the agencies don't want to cooperate or
9 coordinate together, we have a problem with
10 conservation, meaningful conservation. And that's what
11 I'm getting at. We need to do meaningful conservation
12 in the future. And it has to apply to -- we have to
13 protect species at this point in time, not worry about
14 who gets what. We're at that stage in many people's
15 minds, so I can see that scenario coming up. And I'm
16 just really confused about how we're going to protect a
17 species if we don't have that cooperation across
18 agencies. That's what I'm trying to get at.

19
20 MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair. No, I hear you
21 loud and clear. You know, federally delegated authority
22 applies only in Federal waters, it doesn't apply on State
23 waters. That's why coordinated management is so
24 important on the Yukon when there's a patchwork. I would
25 like to see maybe if Holly Carroll is on, she can speak
26 to this a little bit more clearly and, like, kind of
27 what you're talking about and kind of like strategies
28 moving forward. But beyond that, I think, you know, I
29 see, I hear what you're saying.

30
31 MR. BASSICH: I -- Mr. Chair, I just want
32 to kind of get that on the record, because that is a
33 high potential for that happening in the future. And I
34 think we have to have some discussions between the
35 agencies. And it goes back to my opening Statement that
36 we need everybody working together here, right? That's
37 really important moving forward. More than anything
38 else. That's the most important thing we need to do.
39 Thank you. Thank you, Mr. co -- Mr. Chair.

40
41 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair. Thanks. This is
42 Brooke for the record. I did want to point out to the
43 Council that we do have two example delegated authority
44 letters for the Eastern Interior region in your meeting
45 book and the fisheries one for the Yukon starts on page
46 33. And then we also have the one for caribou in units
47 20E, 20F and 25C, which is Fortymile caribou. And just
48 to circle back to what you were saying about caribou in
49 the delegation of authority letter to the Eastern
50 Interior BLM field office manager. It does -- the scope

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1 of the delegation does include closing Federal lands to
2 non-subsistence hunting. But it only applies to Federal
3 lands if that were the case. So, just wanted to point
4 that out.

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(Pause)

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8 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: So, I'll say at this
9 time, that as the Chair I've been consulted with on
10 fisheries but never any game. So, I just wanted to put
11 that on the record. Thank you.

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MS. ENTSMINGER: Since you're Chair.....

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Sue.

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MS. ENTSMINGER: Since you're Chair, you

haven't had any one contact -- I will say that as the

Chair, when there was seasons for, say, a moose season

and the Tetlin Wildlife Refuge, and there's to be

announced, I was always contacted. It could be that

nothing has occurred. And that's why. I just want to let

you know that it does happen.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I do agree, I've

just been here for a little while, so hopefully we'll

look forward to that in the future. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Mr. Tom Plank in the

room? Briefing on proposed changes to wildlife

delegation and authority. Tom Plank, OSM wildlife

biologist.

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MR. PLANK: Hello, Mr. Chair. Again, for

the record, my name is Tom Plank, and I'm the wildlife

biologist with the Office of Assistance Management. And

I'm going to go -- I'm going to provide a brief overview

of proposed changes to the wildlife delegated authority.

Now, this is just meant to be a brief introduction to

the effort and the Councils will have additional

opportunities at future meetings to further review and

comment on this. The Office of Subsistence Management

is proposing to move the authority and the existing

delegation of authority letters back into the wildlife

unit specific regulations. While staff have not

thoroughly reviewed every single wildlife delegation

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1 authority letter, the vast majority of them are for
2 routine management actions that happen every year, such
3 as announcing harvest quotas. Having a delegation, the
4 delegated authority for these routine decisions and unit
5 specific regulations is more appropriate than issuing
6 special actions year after year. This also provides a
7 clear public process for changing delegation delegated
8 authority through regular -- regulatory proposals and
9 decreases the administrative burden on Federal managers
10 by eliminating all the regulatory requirements
11 associated with special actions and the delegation of
12 authority letters. Now, the timeline for this proposed
13 change is as followed; in March of 2025 during the next
14 open window to submit wildlife regulatory proposals, the
15 Office of Assistance Management will submit a proposal
16 to move wildlife delegated authority into unit specific
17 regulations and to rescind many of the existing letters.
18 In the fall of 2025 or a year from now, at your next
19 fall meeting, the Council will consider and make
20 recommendations on this proposal. And then in April
21 2026, the Board will take final action on the proposal
22 at the next Wildlife regulatory meeting. Thank you, Mr.
23 Chair. That completes my brief overview of the proposed
24 changes to wildlife delegated authority, and I'd be
25 happy to address any questions or receive feedback on
26 this topic. Although again, this is just meant to be an
27 introduction to this idea, and the Councils will have
28 additional opportunities to consider this at future
29 meetings. Thank you.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you very much.
32 Is there any questions? Questions from online? Hearing
33 none. I guess we'll move on. Thank you so much.

34
35 MR. BASSICH: Okay. Yeah. I have a --
36 member Bassich here. I have a process, and maybe this
37 is a question more for you, Sue. In the past, when you
38 were contacted, I feel very confident in our Chairs to
39 represent us, but I'm wondering if in the future, it
40 might be really good to have the Chairs contact people
41 in the in the affected area. You know, the Eastern RAC
42 is pretty large area, and it might be really good to
43 reach out to Council members in those regions to get
44 their take on what these closures or openings or harvest
45 quotas or whatever might be. Just a suggestion for
46 process moving forward to keep us -- because I'm -- I
47 saw the wording no public involvement in some of this,
48 but we're here to represent the public. So, in a way,
49 by going to Council members in that affected area, you
50 are kind of reaching out to the public and the people

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1 that are going to be impacted by whatever that manager's
2 decision is, I guess. So, I just wanted to get that on
3 the record as maybe a suggestion moving forward
4 certainly wouldn't be regulatory, but it might be just
5 a good way to move forward. Mr. Chair.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Andy. Go
8 ahead, Sue.

9

10 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, well I do
11 appreciate the suggestion. When it -- when I would get
12 a call, it wasn't very often. It was, for example, the
13 Fortymile Caribou might be opened a little longer or
14 something like that, or it's going to be closed to
15 Federal qualified subsistence users. And those were
16 calls that I would get out of the blue. And if I was not
17 doing a good job letting other people know, I apologize.
18 But as the Chair, it just seemed that it was all the
19 managers speaking to it, and they were just getting the
20 okay from the Chairs. You know, this is what we're going
21 to do. They're telling us. And then that does end up
22 going out through the -- it's a quick decision that has
23 to be made by the Chair. So, and then that information
24 does get out to the Council through the coordinator. So,
25 it does happen. Just, you know, it might not feel like
26 it's happening, but I believe it was happening. Thank
27 you.

28

29 MR. BASSICH: No, I understand that and
30 I don't feel like there's been any problem in the past.
31 I'm more speaking about the future, but I guess, I would
32 hope that if managers are going to make some pretty
33 important changes to harvest, whether it's opening or
34 in particular closing, that they would hopefully make
35 that announcement to our Chair as early as possible so
36 that that can be discussed a little bit, too. I don't
37 know, you know, I don't know if you were to say they
38 want to say close down caribou for Forty-mile Herd and
39 you said, absolutely not, is that going to change their
40 decision? Do they have to listen to you or are you just
41 an advisor, right? That I guess what I'm kind of trying
42 to understand is what authority would you recommend or
43 how much weight would your recommendation be in making
44 that decision? I'm not saying that the bad things have
45 happened. I think it's been going fairly well as far as
46 this goes, but things change.

47

48 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Andy. And
49 I think we're all picked from our places because we're
50 on the ground there. And what you said is perfectly

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1 right. I think that the Council members in those areas
2 should be contacted for the best available knowledge
3 that we can get to make those decisions going forward.
4 So, I appreciate you. Thank you.

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(Pause)

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Floor is yours.

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MS. CEELLARIUS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
11 My name is Barbara Cellarius. I'm the cultural
12 anthropologist and subsistence coordinator for Wrangell-
13 St. Elias National Park and Preserve, and we do have a
14 few of these delegations of authority, including one for
15 the Chisana Caribou Herd to set the quota to close the
16 season when the quota is met. And we do our best to
17 reach out to you or if we can't reach out to you, we'll
18 check in with Brooke and see if there's somebody else
19 we can check in with. The main thing we do is we set a
20 quota, the quota comes out of the plan. One thing in
21 response to member Bassich's, I think Andy said this,
22 occasionally when we've had a Copper River proposal and
23 the Chair is not in the region, the Chair will sometimes
24 say, have you checked in with this RAC member who is
25 from the Copper River? You know, and that that sort of
26 the Chair sort of does that, like, you know, maybe
27 there's somebody else you should check in with. Just,
28 you know, like, has this member, you know, how does this
29 member feel about it? So, you know, that's just an idea
30 that has been happened in the past with when we've done
31 consultation in South Central. Anyway, I just wanted to
32 let you know we do have a delegation of authority that
33 does involve contacting now you, used to be Sue. And we
34 do our best. We make a phone call because sometimes
35 that's the best way to have a conversation.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for that.
And I might have been reached out for this summer. And
I was out on the land where my cell phone doesn't work.
So, that could have happened. Thank you so much.

Okay, anymore, to be said? Any more
comments before we move on? Go ahead, Sue.

MS. ENTSMINGER: The only other comment
I would have is, sometimes it, you're -- you might get
called and you don't know anything about that area. And
I think that would be a wise decision to talk to someone
on the Council that does. Thank you.

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1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you all. Going
2 forward I think now -- find myself here. Wildlife
3 proposals. Oh, boy. Crossover proposals, south central.
4 WP-2501 Nelchina Caribou Herd season hunt management and
5 804 user prioritization analysis. Hannah.

6
7 MS. VOORHEES: Thank you, Mr. Chair, this
8 is Hannah Voorhees anthropologist with OSM. I'm just
9 checking that you can hear me okay?

10
11 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: We can. You got the
12 floor.

13
14 MS. MCDAVID: Just really quick. If you
15 could speak into your phone microphone a little bit
16 closer, that would probably be good.

17
18 MS. VOORHEES: Okay. Just interrupt if
19 you can't hear at any point. And also feel free to
20 interrupt with questions during this presentation. The
21 proposal will be discussing is WP25-01 and it was
22 submitted by the Office of Subsistence Management. The
23 analysis begins on page 44 in your meeting books. And I
24 just want to note that if you're following online, the
25 page numbers are a little different. But later in the
26 presentation, I'll refer to both sets of page numbers.
27 And if you're in the room there, you may also have a
28 handout, which is a summary of the OSM preliminary
29 conclusion recommendation for which communities should
30 be prioritized in each hunt area. And I'll discuss that
31 more a little later in the presentation. This proposal
32 requested that an ANILCA Section 804 user prioritization
33 be conducted for the Nelchina Caribou Herd, and the
34 request also asked that all Nelchina Caribou Herd hunts
35 in Units 11, 12 remainder and 13 be changed to may be
36 announced seasons and that authority be delegated to
37 Federal in-season managers. First, I want to give you a
38 little background information on the Section 804
39 process. We also call this the user prioritization
40 process. Section 804 of ANILCA says that when it is
41 necessary to restrict some, but not all subsistence
42 users, for example, if there are not enough caribou,
43 those with a priority to harvest should be identified
44 by considering three criteria, and they are: number one,
45 customary and direct dependence upon the populations as
46 the mainstay of livelihood; two, local residency and
47 three the availability of alternative resources. When a
48 section user or sorry -- when a Section 804
49 prioritization is in place, some Federally qualified
50 users will be able to continue hunting caribou on Federal

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1 public lands in the hunt area, but other Federally
2 qualified users will not be able to hunt until the
3 Section 804 is lifted. And it's important to note that
4 these analyses are not conducted for an entire herd per
5 se, but for caribou in each individual hunt area. So,
6 in this case within Unit 11, 12 remainder and 13. When
7 we start a Section 804 analysis, we take all the
8 communities that are Federally qualified, meaning they
9 have a customary and traditional use determination for
10 caribou in a hunt area, and then evaluate the three
11 criteria for each community in each area. As you know,
12 there is currently no hunting opportunity for the
13 Nelchina Caribou Herd. However, if this proposal or
14 sorry -- this proposal would identify communities to be
15 prioritized ahead of time so that the framework is ready
16 when the herd begins to recover enough to support a
17 small hunt.

18
19 It's important to the Board that this
20 proposal go through the full regulatory process, and the
21 Council undoubtedly has important feedback, especially
22 on the preliminary conclusion, which lists the
23 communities that OSM proposes be prioritized in each
24 hunt area, and I'll present that at the end. I do want
25 to note that this analysis was conducted based on the
26 information that we have available, which in some cases
27 is quite limited, and it really is a first draft. And
28 the next step is for you, the Council, to give feedback
29 which will certainly be important to the outcome of this
30 analysis and the Board's decision.

31
32 So, this presentation is a bit lengthy.
33 There are, let's see, about 30, 35 to 36 communities and
34 7 different customary and traditional use determination
35 areas. So, the analysis itself is quite lengthy, but I
36 will just be giving a broad overview and then we can
37 address any questions that may come up. On page 52 of
38 your meeting book or page eight online, you can find the
39 customary and traditional use determinations for each
40 community. That is -- so each community is Federally
41 qualified only in areas where it has C&T for caribou.
42 The biological background and harvest history in this
43 analysis are virtually identical to that presented for
44 WUSA24-02-03, which closed Nelchina caribou hunts for
45 the 2024 to 2025 regulatory year. The most recent
46 population estimate for the Nelchina Herd was 6,983. The
47 Section 804 analysis itself begins on page 64 Of your
48 meeting books or page 20 online where the three criteria
49 are listed. Consideration of criteria number one
50

1 customary and direct dependence begins on the next page.

2

3 Data from subsistence surveys, as well
4 as harvest data are included here. And that's harvest
5 data under both State and Federal opportunities. You'll
6 find tables summarizing different measures of caribou
7 use for each community, averaged over every year in which
8 a survey was conducted. And then continuing criterion
9 one. Next, you'll see community profiles starting on
10 page 75 or 31 online, which give more detailed
11 information on caribou use by each community, including
12 where the harvest has been documented in subsistence
13 surveys and harvest reports. And these profiles also
14 contain information on the top five most important
15 species for each community, which will also be relevant
16 for considering alternative resources later on. Analysis
17 of criterion two, local residency begins on page 1 --
18 129, or 85 online. You'll see a map for each customary
19 and traditional use area, and for each, a list of
20 communities located within or close to the area. One
21 thing I want to note on criterion two, in many cases,
22 OSM doesn't have much information on how communities may
23 be accessing different areas so, your feedback on what
24 constitutes a reasonable definition of local residency
25 and local access may be important here. Criterion three,
26 availability of alternative resources begins on page 136
27 or 92 online. There's a discussion here about which
28 communities have greater access to store bought foods,
29 and a table showing the top five resources harvested by
30 each community during their last survey year. We also
31 included some information about moose and salmon
32 populations, since these are important alternative
33 resources, potentially depending on their status.

34

35 Next, alternatives considered, One
36 alternative considered was to exclude Unit 11 from the
37 Section 804 analysis, because there are no recent
38 harvest records, since there's no State hunt, and the
39 Federal season has never been announced. However, a
40 prioritization will likely be needed and feedback from
41 the regulatory process, for example from the Councils
42 and the tribes can help fill this gap. Another
43 alternative considered was to extend this analysis to
44 Unit 20E because a significant portion of the Nelchina
45 Caribou Herd overwinters there in some years. However,
46 this was considered beyond the scope of this analysis.
47 The other two alternatives have to do with how the Board
48 delegates authority, and we can discuss that further if
49 needed. Although you probably have the information you
50 need to review those alternatives based on the

1 presentation that was just given on delegated authority.
2 OSMS preliminary conclusion is to support the proposal
3 with modification to specify which communities are
4 eligible to hunt caribou in each hunt area, and the
5 Wrangell-St. Elias, and Denali National Park and
6 Preserve superintendents to the entities consulted in
7 Unit 13 remainder and move existing delegated authority
8 to unit specific regulations. You can find the modified
9 regulation on page 141 or 97 online. And next I will
10 read out the communities that OSM recommends for
11 prioritization in each area. And you also do have a
12 handout which attempts to summarize this more from the
13 perspective of each community. There's a table and then
14 written text about -- for each community where they would
15 have -- where they have first, a customary and
16 traditional use determination, which is going to be
17 broader, and then the more narrow section determination,
18 at least according to this initial OSM preliminary
19 conclusion.

20
21 The modified regulation reads, Federal
22 public lands in Unit 11, north of the Sanford River are
23 closed to caribou hunting except by residents of
24 Chistochina, Gakona, Glennallen, Gulkana, Mentasta Lake
25 and Slana/Nabesna Road hunting under these regulations.
26 For Unit 11 remainder the communities are Chitina,
27 Copper Center/Silver Springs, Kenny Lake, Willow Creek,
28 Gakona, Glennallen, Gulkana, McCarthy, McCarthy Road,
29 Tazlina and Tonsina. I guess I would like to pause at
30 this point and see if you'd like me to read everything
31 out or if you'd rather go over each one by one. And we
32 could do we could, you know, have some comments and
33 questions. I could, you know, you could let me know
34 whether there are communities that are not on the list
35 that should be or if there are communities that are on
36 the list that should be removed. But -- and I do have
37 justification to share with you too. But let me just
38 pause and ask, Mr. Chair how you'd like to go through
39 these. Thank you.

40
41 ACTING CHAIRPERSON BURK: Yes, Sue.

42
43 MS. ENTSMINGER: Eva has was taken over
44 for a minute. Charlie's having a bite. I wanted to just
45 let the Council know. I just spent a two-day meeting
46 with -- in the Glennallen area with the Park Service,
47 the subsistence resource Commission. And this is pretty
48 involved and I'm all for the short version, but I would
49 like to -- she said something early on in this
50 presentation that isn't -- what I heard you say was that

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1 this season is now closed. While it's closed right now
2 but next year, when it comes up the season that's on the
3 book, on the Federal handy dandy would be open. So,
4 we're talking about the future, not now. And I feel
5 that's misleading a bit because this proposal, in my
6 understanding, would actually close this season that's
7 on the books now. Yhat would still have everybody
8 qualified to hunt, but now it's -- it was actually the
9 Citizens Resource Commission that asked for an 804. And
10 so, I just want it clear that it's -- it might be closed
11 right now, but the next season it would be open as it
12 is read in the book, and this proposal would close it
13 and move it to delegation of authority. So, that's my
14 understanding. Did I get it wrong?

15

16 MS. VOORHEES: Thanks for that question.
17 So, it's currently closed for the 2024 regulatory year.
18 And so, this would change to maybe announced seasons.
19 So, I mean, I think the reality is -- I don't -- through
20 whatever avenue you know, there will be a proposal to
21 close this hunt. It's likely not opening anytime soon.
22 This has been a significant decline, and it may be quite
23 a while before this hunt opens. There may be announced
24 season was actually intended to create flexibility so
25 that when there is a harvestable surplus, it can be
26 opened quickly to those identified in the Section 804
27 determination. But it wouldn't close the season per se,
28 but it would change it to maybe announced. So, I hope
29 that clarifies it.

30

31 MS. ENTSMINGER: Not really. Yeah. Thank
32 you for the time. This is a very involved issue, and I
33 just wanted to just clarify that the season -- I don't
34 know, this is a layman's terms right here. Not a manager,
35 and how you all look at it. We look at it how it affects
36 us. And right now, how it affects us is if this proposal
37 would actually end up closing the season and making it
38 more restrictive to and give 804 for different people.
39 And I think that makes it to me that understands more
40 than these long definitions. So, but I will tell you
41 this was really hard for us as the SRC to go through
42 this because we weren't ready to go through all of these
43 communities like, we're just being asked right now. And
44 so, how to proceed is I think I heard a whisper from
45 Andy. Let's keep it a little bit on the short side,
46 because I think once we go through this process that we
47 have to go through and you hear from the community where
48 our area, where we come from. You'll see what we did,
49 and I think it will be helpful. Thank you.

50

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1 MS. VOORHEES: Yeah.....

2

3 (Simultaneous speech)

4

5 MS. VOORHEES: Through the Chair. I --
6 if it's okay with you, I can continue presenting and
7 wrap up the initial presentation. And then at your
8 discretion, we could go through each potential
9 prioritization.

10

11 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Go for
12 it.

13

14 (Pause)

15

16 MS. VOORHEES: All right. So, in
17 justification, based on the information provided in the
18 analysis, the communities listed in the modified
19 regulation do meet the three criteria for Section 804
20 prioritization, delegating authority and changing to
21 maybe announce seasons would allow for maximum
22 flexibility to open a hunt when a harvestable surplus
23 becomes available. Rescinding the existing delegation
24 of authority letters and moving the delegated authority
25 into unit specific regulations is a programmatic
26 initiative, because it is more appropriate than issuing
27 special actions for routine annual management actions.
28 Denali and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve
29 have lands in Unit 13 remainder so, they should also be
30 consulted prior to any in-season management actions in
31 that area. Thank you and that concludes my presentation.
32 Except for, of course, going through the OSM preliminary
33 conclusion for each area. And just let me know when
34 you'd like me to start that.

35

36 MS. ENTSMINGER: I know how difficult
37 this is because this is not -- we all aren't from that
38 area. And I'm the only one on the Council that has
39 information. And it was really uncomfortable to make
40 decisions like that. And the only thing that really made
41 us make a decision is when the managers at Park Service
42 explained that there will be a -- if you don't do
43 anything, there will be a season on the books. But if
44 you do this proposal, it would close the season and go
45 into these 804. So, that made it a little more sensible
46 for us to work on. So, I know I'm going into a
47 discussion, but I apologize. I just want -- I know that
48 what was uncomfortable was going through all of this in
49 a short time. And so, what we, you know, ended up doing
50 is we said, okay, the season gets closed, we're in favor

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1 of that. But we were going to create a working group to
2 work on this. That was what we voted on to do. So, just
3 just -- I'm telling you that now because it might save
4 us a lot of time, but it will come up again whenever SRC
5 speaks. I hope that's helpful.

6

7

MS. VOORHEES: Thank you for that.

8

9 MS. BURK: This is Eva. I am with Sue on
10 this one. I need time to digest these numbers. And I
11 know there are people in this room, from this region
12 with more information on these communities so, I'm
13 looking forward to hearing other comments, public
14 testimony. Please sign up, right. Can I say that? So,
15 I'm with that. Thank you.

16

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MS. GREDIAGIN: Madam Chair.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes?

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MS. VOORHEES: Mr. Chair. This is Hannah.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Hannah.

1 MS. VOORHEES: I know that it, you know,
2 it would be good to hear from South Central Council, but
3 unfortunately, they're not meeting until later this
4 week. But this proposal does affect communities in your
5 region as well. You know, many of them, many of your
6 communities have C&T in the areas under consideration.
7 So, yeah, I understand it's a -- it is a very, very long
8 and complicated analysis and there's a lot of
9 contingencies, but I do hope that you'll feel
10 comfortable at least looking at the prioritizations and
11 weighing in and thinking -- letting us know at OSM if
12 you think they sound reasonable and reflect, you know
13 these three criteria, especially you know, which
14 communities are customarily and directly dependent on
15 these populations of caribou. Thank you.

16
17 And I also appreciate that, you know,
18 it's a little harder to go back and forth with the
19 analyst not being in the room there. So, thank you for
20 working with me, over the phone on this one. And I'll
21 turn it back over to you, and I'll just stand by until
22 you'd like to go over the preliminary conclusion.

23
24 MS. MCDAVID: Hannah do you need to --
25 sorry, this is Brooke, just for clarification, for our
26 process. I assume you need to give the preliminary
27 conclusion before we move on to comments. So, I think
28 we're ready for that if you are.

29
30 MS. VOORHEES: Okay. Thank you, Brooke.
31 All right. So, I'll go back to the first area. And
32 actually, I want to make sure that you are looking at a
33 map which maybe gives some clarity on these different
34 hunt areas. So, for local residency again, there's some
35 maps there. And that begins on page 129 or page 85
36 online. The first area that we'll discuss is Unit 11,
37 north of the Sanford River. And the communities
38 recommended for prioritization are Chistochina, Gakona,
39 Glennallen, Gulkana, Mentasta Lake and Slana/Nabesna
40 Road. So, I'll pause and just see if there's any
41 discussion on this list. If there are any communities
42 that you'd like to change.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Hold on one second,
45 please.

46
47 MS. ENTSMINGER: Ready to do this.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Eva?

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1 MS. BURK: I wanted to hear those
2 communities again. I wanted to hear those communities
3 again. Thank you. This is Eva.

4
5 MS. VOORHEES: Sure. Okay. They are
6 Chistochina, Gakona, Glennallen, Gulkana, Mentasta Lake
7 and Slana/Nabesna Road.

8
9 MS. MCDAVID: Hannah, could you please
10 repeat the page that we're supposed to be looking at
11 right now? Thank you.

12
13 MS. VOORHEES: No problem. So, the
14 modified regulation begins on page 149 or page 97 online.
15 But I also did want to let you know that there's --
16 there are some maps of these areas, if that's helpful.
17 And they begin on page 129 or page 85 online.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: This is the --
20 Charlie. I think in the future a PowerPoint will be
21 really helpful. Thank you.

22
23 MS. VOORHEES: Duly noted. And you can
24 also look at the table if you'd like to know which
25 communities that -- the table that was handed out to
26 you, if you want to just look up, you know, a particular
27 community and see where they would be prioritized. I'm
28 getting some feedback that it might be better to just
29 read through the entire preliminary conclusion. It's a
30 lot, but I can take that track, too. I'm just -- whatever
31 you'd like me to do, let me know.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Why don't you go
34 ahead and read it so we can better understand. Thank
35 you.

36
37 MS. VOORHEES: Okay. So, for Unit 11
38 remainder, the communities would be Chitina, Copper
39 Center/Silver Springs, Kenny Lake/Willow Creek, Gakona,
40 Glennallen, Gulkana, McCarthy, McCarthy Road, Tazlina
41 and Tonsina. This is for Unit 11 remainder, which is
42 south of the Unit 11, north of the Sanford River area,
43 which we just discussed. Then for Unit 12 remainder the
44 communities are Alcan Border, Dot Lake, Mentasta Pass,
45 Northway, Tanacross, Tetlin and Tok. For Unit 13A
46 Chickaloon, Chitina, Copper Center, Silver Springs,
47 Glacier View, Glennallen, Gulkana, Lake Louise, Tazlina
48 and Tolsona. For 13B Chitina, Chickaloon, Chistochina,
49 Copper Center/Silver Springs, Gakona, Glacier View,
50 Glennallen, Gulkana, Kenny Lake/Willow Creek, Lake

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1 Louise, McCarthy, Nelchina, Paxson, Sheep Mountain,
2 Slana, Tazlina, Tolsona and Tonsina. For 13C
3 Chistochina, Gakona, Glennallen, Mentasta Lake, Mentasta
4 Pass, Slana/Nabesna Road, Tazlina and Tolsona. For 13D,
5 Chitina, Copper Center, Glennallen, Kenny Lake/Willow
6 Creek, Tazlina, Tolsona and Tonsina. For 13E, Cantwell,
7 Chase, Denali Village, formerly McKinley Village and the
8 area between milepost 216 to 239 of the Parks Highway,
9 excluding residents of Denali Park headquarters.

10

11 And also of note, Kevin and Blaine Mayo
12 and their households have individual C&T qualifying them
13 to hunt caribou in Unit 13, in areas managed by the
14 National Park Service, where subsistence uses are
15 allowed and their names do not appear in regulation, but
16 they're on a list maintained by Denali National Park and
17 Preserve and its OSM's intent that these individuals
18 remain eligible to hunt caribou in these areas. So, this
19 would also be the Council's opportunity to make any
20 comments or recommendations on this element of the
21 analysis pertaining to Kevin and Blaine Mayo. Thank you.

22

23 I guess two potential edits that have
24 been suggested by reviewers, field staff reviewers, just
25 prior to your meeting. Specifically so, looking at 13A,
26 it was suggested that since Gulkana is on that list,
27 Gakona should be on that list. And then for 13C,
28 similarly, because Gakona is on the list, it was
29 recommended that Gulkana be added as well, so you may
30 want to take that into consideration.

31

32 And that concludes what I've prepared
33 for you at this point. So, I'll turn discussion back
34 over to the Council.

35

36 (Pause)

37

38 MS. ENTSMINGER: I think it's important
39 to review our process right now. I would really
40 appreciate -- everybody understands where we're at,
41 because all we're doing right now is getting the analysis
42 and this is time for questions. Okay. So, let's -- what
43 is the process? Just review it so we're clear where
44 we're at because I'm not sure we are because it's out
45 of our region and it's a lot of information. So, over
46 100 pages on our book. That's a lot for us to make a
47 decision on. And if we're asked to make decisions on
48 communities, how in the world would we even know when
49 some of them, I don't know, and I'm living in the region.

50

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1 So, I just let's be clear how -- this process I would
2 really helpful. Thank you.

3

4 (Simultaneous speech)

5

6 MS. VOORHEES: This is Hannah. I just
7 want to say that yes, it is a lot. And I guess the
8 Council may want to consider for the communities in your
9 region, just making sure that the areas that are most
10 important to your communities are represented, that
11 there's nowhere, for example, that Northway you know,
12 hunts caribou regularly, that's vitally important in
13 terms of a hunt area that that's been inadvertently left
14 off. So, I think that's all we can ask. Thank you.

15

16 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair. This is Brooke.
17 I just wanted to circle back to Sue's comment about
18 making sure we all understand the process we're going
19 through for this proposal. And so, this applies to all
20 proposals and closure reviews that will be going
21 through. We -- the first thing is we always hear the
22 analysis from our analysts and, and we give the Council
23 an opportunity to ask questions. Not really the time to
24 do your discussion yet. That will come. And then after
25 that we're going to move through to hear about any
26 feedback we have. First, from tribal consultations that
27 were recently held, then agency and tribal comments and
28 then other comments from other Councils and committees
29 and the SRC and then public. And after that we hear from
30 everyone, then the Council makes a motion to -- if it's
31 a proposal to support the proposal to get it on the
32 floor for discussion. You always make a motion in the
33 positive, and then you could always if you didn't want
34 to support it, you could vote to oppose it. So, but once
35 that motion is on the floor, then it's opened up for
36 justification or for the Council discussion and
37 justification. And at that time, we don't take any more
38 public comments unless you all have a specific question
39 that you need answered. And once that's done, you can
40 vote, and you can vote to take no action. You can vote
41 to defer it, to take no action and defer it to the home
42 region. But this, I just do want to point out that there
43 are this doesn't just apply to South Central region.
44 There are several communities in Unit 12 and 20 that are
45 in the Eastern Interior region that are impacted by this
46 proposal. So, that might be more of the focus because
47 it is within your region for your discussion. But that's
48 up to you. And then, yeah, you would vote on the
49 proposal. I hope that helps clear up the process side
50 of things.

1

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Thank you so much for that. So, we're on WP25-01. Be the proposal today. And we are now looking for reports and Board consultation from tribes and ANCSA corporations. Mr. Orville, please.

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MR. LIND: Good afternoon, Chairman, Council members. Orville Lind, Native liaison for the Office of Subsistence Management. I am happy to be here and happy to give you a report. We conducted consultation September 24th at the request from folks from Ahtna the region. And as you heard OSM staff, Hannah, give a previous report on WP25-01. I won't go over that process. However, I will go over the involvement we had from the tribes and corporation members. Beginning there was a ask that the OSM conclusion listing prioritized communities by hunt area be stated for the record, there was a tribal member from Mentasta asked for meaningful and clarification on the 804 prioritization process, where some Federally qualified subsistence users would be able to hunt and others not. OSM staff explained that 804 process. Another participant who previously asked about that same clarification, provided testimony on the history and progress of the proposal and asked for more information to assist with the upcoming meetings with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and with the Federal Subsistence Board. They are asked to prioritization that is now being analyzed as much appreciated was much appreciated. Although it took a long time to get to this point as tribes were asking for an 804 for years. Getting assistance to help the process was appreciated as well. Again, participants shared the ways of hunting in the area and resident dependency on the resource was explained to the audience for better understanding. Also voiced was support for rescinding the delegation of authority letters and putting the delegated authority into unit specific regulations. Again -- hang on.

A Mentasta Traditional Tribal Council member expressed support for the proposal and provided testimony expressing that the authority of the herd management should be carried out by people who are actually there on the ground, and that the 804 process or analysis should -- would be good for the area. Also expressed concern over the concerned and concurrent decline in the caribou populations, and how that might impact their ability to provide resources and subsistence foods for their families, the tribes, along

1 with preserving cultural ways. A speaker from the
2 Village of Cantwell presented a question regarding the
3 Nelchina Caribou Herd hunting season being closed. He
4 was looking for a clarification on the state of Alaska
5 issuing two special Governor Hunt permits. OSM staff
6 responded that this is a State issue and as OSM Federal
7 is outside the scope of Federal regulations. He also
8 provided a testimony in line with the previous speakers.
9 There was another person from Village of Tazlina who
10 spoke up in agreement with the testimony provided by the
11 two previous speakers and shared her experience of
12 having beef for the first time compared to the moose she
13 ate growing up. She thought the beef tasted like spoiled
14 meat. She talked about how the decline in the population
15 of many resources affects communities and families, and
16 about wanting to continue the traditional way of life
17 for children and future of others.

18
19 One of the previous speakers again
20 testified about their daughter's first experience eating
21 steak, how tasteless it was, and how moose is a part of
22 their regular diet. Another participant presented
23 provided testimony about herds of caribou in the street
24 and the Highway in the past that it was such a great
25 loss not seeing this anymore. And in closing comments,
26 we were -- there were some Statements of very emotional,
27 impactful testimonies from the tribes and other members.
28 The Board members appreciate it. I said thank you to
29 them. Fish and Wildlife Service appreciated their
30 stories and how important it was for everyone to hear
31 those testimonies. Some provided testimony about
32 cultural significance and practices, cultural revival.
33 I mean, including the clothes and tools that came from
34 the resources, women's part and hunting and subsistence
35 again. Another Board member thanked everyone, and he was
36 recently at a Tetlin Lakes visit and thanked everyone
37 of the reminder of options for two types of permits that
38 were allowed. And that, Mr. Chair, concludes the
39 consultation we had on September 24th. Thank you.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Orville,
42 I got one question. Did any of the Eastern Interior
43 tribes participate in consultation with you?

44
45 MR. LIND: Let me back up to the listing.
46 There were from Mentasta, Cantwell, Ahtna region,
47 Cheesh'na Tribal Councils. Name directly, I could not
48 tell you from this point.

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1 MS. ENTSMINGER: Orville, those are all
2 in Unit 13 that you mentioned. He was asking about Unit
3 our region, which would be Unit 12. Was there anybody
4 from Unit 12 that commented?

5
6 MR. LIND: I don't have them listed on
7 here, if they did.

8
9 MS. ENTMINGER: Okay. Thank you.

10
11 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair. I was listening
12 too, and I didn't hear anyone. So, yeah.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any questions for
15 Orville? Any online?

16
17 MS. VOORHEES: Mr. Chair, this is Hannah
18 Voorhees. I just wanted to -- thank you. I just wanted
19 to say that there actually was an earlier consultation
20 on this proposal, and I believe Northway did participate
21 in that. And I think they if my memory serves me right,
22 they primarily -- oh, here it is. Okay. He described how
23 village residents hunt caribou and how difficult it can
24 be, depending on whether the caribou are on State or
25 Federal public lands. He mentioned that harvest of
26 caribou has always been secondary to moose in importance
27 of harvest to locals, and caribou are currently used
28 less than in the past, although he was not sure why.
29 Moose are very important to Northway Village, and
30 caribou are usually taken when people are unable to
31 harvest enough moose so, certainly an important species
32 after moose to fill in that niche. Thanks.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I agree. And I heard
35 you say earlier, I think it was you that said that
36 Northway don't normally take much caribou at all. So,
37 that seems like a consultation that didn't work too good.
38 If you're not talking to the people who are usually
39 taking the meat and taking the animals more than others,
40 I just that's I just want to get that on the record.
41 Thank you. Go ahead, Sue.

42
43 MS. ENTSMINGER: I just wanted to add
44 that there is a to be announced season on the Nelchina
45 is when they hit the Tetlin Wildlife Refuge. And that
46 is an opportunity that they have. Thank you. But now
47 then Nelchina probably won't be open for many years. So,
48 thank you.

49
50

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1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for that,
2 Sue. Any more questions? Anybody online or in the room?
3 Hearing none. Thank you, Orville.

4
5 MR. LIND: Thank you.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Now we'll move
8 on to agency comments. And ADF&G is first. Anybody from
9 ADF&G here to comment. How about online, any AF&G?

10
11 MR. NELSON: Chairman Wright. This is
12 Mark Nelson with Fish and Game and Fairbanks here. I was
13 planning to do a Porcupine Caribou update. Sounds like
14 you guys are interested in that, on Thursday morning,
15 if that still works?

16
17 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, thank you.
18 Okay, I guess we work -- we'll move on to Federal
19 agencies. Any Federal agencies in the room or online
20 that want to report?

21
22 (No response)

23
24 Okay, moving on. Tribal entities,
25 Native, tribal, village, other. Anybody online or in the
26 room? Oh, here we go. We have a blue card, and it says
27 Karen Linnell on there. Come on down, Karen.

28
29 MS. LINNELL: Hi. The next contestant on
30 the Price is Right. Number one, please.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: We appreciate you
33 being here today, Karen. Thank you.

34
35 MS. LINNELL: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
36 Chair and members of the Council. My name is Karen
37 Linnell. I'm the executive director for Ahtna Inter-
38 Tribal Resources Commission. That is comprised of eight
39 Federally recognized tribes and two ANCSA corporations.
40 Our traditional territory consists of portions of Unit
41 20, 12, 11 and 13. AITRC is in support of this proposal.
42 As you might recall a few years ago when they were
43 talking about the closure, and we're sitting at a Federal
44 Subsistence Board meeting, we had requested that an 804
45 analysis be done. It shouldn't be an all or nothing
46 hunt, that -- it shouldn't be that we all hunt or nobody
47 hunts, and that there needs to be a prioritization. And
48 it should have been done with the first year that there
49 was a decline when the caribou herd was at 21,000. It's
50 a shame that it had to wait till they were less than

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1 8,000 animals to for -- for this to get done. And I
2 appreciate that the BLM heard our comments at the SRC
3 and submitted the, the request for this proposal to move
4 forward. The delegation of authority to the BLM area
5 manager for the Nelchina Caribou Herd is also an
6 important factor in this. And to be able to be more
7 reactive when there are -- there's a need for closure
8 or the ability to open a hunt. Had this been in place,
9 you know, taking the time for Federal Subsistence Board
10 to react, you have to have something put in the Federal
11 Register. They have to have a meeting. There's all this
12 public input process, and they're not able to react in
13 a more timely fashion when things are happening on the
14 ground. And so, that was what we felt, why we felt an
15 804 analysis needed to be done. It should never be all
16 or nothing. We all hunt or nobody hunts. And there should
17 have been a slowly ratcheting down. And then now, with
18 the 804 analysis, there can be a slowly opening the hunt
19 up. And I appreciate the work that went into this
20 analysis by OSM. And I agree with the addition of Gakona
21 and Gulkana getting added to those subunits. They are
22 within five miles of each other, and they do hunt in the
23 same areas. And so, adding them to 13A and 13C is
24 agreeable with us. And you know this is not changing
25 anything -- that right now they don't have a preliminary
26 or the preliminary count is not done. They've not done
27 a photographic count yet, photographic census. We're
28 still waiting on that. And last year it was like 7,800
29 animals. And there's --they're thinking they might have
30 30% recruitment. We've not heard anything official yet
31 from the department. The Copper Basin advisory count --
32 Fish and Game Advisory Committee, which I am now the
33 Chair of, because the Chair resigned last week because
34 she's now our BLM area manager -- field manager. We've
35 got a meeting set up for middle of November to where we
36 are -- early November, where we hope we'll hear some
37 numbers. But this process and being able to ratchet down
38 the hunts when necessary and to slowly open them back
39 up again is an important part to reactive and management
40 looking at sustainability. And I do appreciate your time
41 and your consideration on this proposal is -- yes, our
42 Nelchina Caribou Herd do mingle and go into the Tetlin
43 Wildlife Refuge. They also go into Unit 14, which wasn't
44 on the list. We've asked for closure for all of the
45 Nelchina rangelands on the State proposals as well. So,
46 that we can address this. We recently heard that the
47 Governor did some tags for Nelchina this year and gave
48 it to nonprofit for their fundraising so, in the
49 Talkeetna Mountains. So, that was rather disappointing
50 when there's no subsistence hunting. And so anyway, I

00078

1 just want to thank you again for your time and your
2 consideration. I appreciate all the dialogue and the
3 work that's going on and in your commitment to
4 subsistence and subsistence resources. Thank you.

5

6 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Don and
7 then Eva.

8

9 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Charlie. From
10 everything that I've studied about caribou recruitment,
11 25% is pretty high. 15 to 20 seems about the average.
12 And most of the recruitment is for two-year-olds. One-
13 year olds don't seem to make it too far. Thank you.

14

15 MS. LINNELL: Thank you for that, Mr.
16 Woodford. I -- that was a rumor that I heard, and I've
17 not heard anything official from the department or from
18 BLM because as you know, the department does a monitoring
19 and reports back to the Federal managers. So, we're
20 hoping to as our -- we build our Wildlife department,
21 be able to do some capturing of our own. We did
22 participate this last month, within the last month on
23 collaring of the Mentasta Caribou Herd, which also
24 ranges into Unit 12 and looking at their range and
25 distribution in their co-mingling with the Nelchina's
26 and trying to see where they're at and maybe if there's
27 any recruitment from them into the Nelchina's. So, we
28 are looking at that as well. Thank you.

29

30 MS. BURK: Thank you. This is Eva. And
31 looking at the communities and the units that they have.
32 Are you satisfied with the listing that the preliminary
33 and review and all the communities, the way that they're
34 listed?

35

36 MS. LINNELL: Through the Chair, yes.
37 We're -- with the addition of Gakona and Gulkana to
38 those units because they're within five miles of each
39 other. Those communities that they should be in the same
40 subunits. Thank you.

41

42 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any other questions
43 for Karen in the room or online?

44

45 MS. LINNELL: I -- if I might, Mr. Chair,
46 I did want to say that Chistochina, Mentasta both have
47 C&T for Unit 12, portions of Unit 12 as well. So, which
48 again falls within your guys' jurisdiction. So, thank
49 you.

50

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1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,
2 Karen. I'm hearing no other people wanting to comment
3 or any questions. So, we'll be moving down the line to
4 advisory group comments. Other Regional Councils. Any
5 other regional Councils want to chime in or say anything
6 at this time? Oh.

7
8 MS. MCDAVID: For public comments? We'll
9 get there in just a second.

10
11 MS. ENTSMINGER: Charlie, the South
12 Central hasn't met yet. That's probably why we're not
13 hearing from them.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Fish and Game
16 Advisory Committees? Subsistence Resource Commissions?

17
18 MS. ENTSMINGER: I'm here. I do that
19 every time. Oh -- is that -- oh, you got that ability.
20 Thank you, Charlie. The Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence
21 Resource Commission met Friday and Saturday on a
22 weekend. Anyway, we took this up, and I think Lee --
23 Lisa did a really good job of trying to say what I was
24 trying or saying, what I was trying to say about what
25 this all means. But the Wrangell SRC unanimously
26 supported this proposal as modified by OSM, replacing
27 the current seasons and harvest limits with a may be
28 announced season and delegation of authority to the
29 Federal managers, which would ensure that the Nelchina
30 caribou herds remain closed until the herd has a chance
31 to recover. While the Commission supported the
32 preliminary conclusion regarding the 804 analyses, it
33 expressed concern about the amount of information in
34 this analysis and created a working group to go over it,
35 so we don't miss other people in these 804 analyses. So,
36 yeah, we weren't ready to say, okay, we just know what's
37 going on. And so, that's how we're dealing with it.
38 We're going to take have a working group and then report
39 back to OSM. Thank you.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,
42 Sue. Okay. We're down to summary of written public
43 comments.

44
45 (Simultaneous speech)

46
47 MS. VOORHEES: This is Hannah Voorhees
48 and there were no written public comments on this
49 proposal.

50

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1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Okay.
2 We'll be moving on to public testimony. Mr. Jim Simon.

3
4 MR. SIMON: Thank you for the record, Jim
5 Simon. I'm a consultant with Ahtna Inter-Tribal
6 Resources Commission, but I'm just speaking as a member
7 of the public on this particular issue. I am Nelchina
8 Simon, my dad was known by many as Nelchina Herb, and
9 my extended family ranged, once upon a time ranged from
10 Mendeltna to Glacier View, including Sheep Mountain and
11 Nelchina in between. And I am familiar with 804
12 Subsistence User Prioritizations from the Kuskokwim
13 River, etc. I really appreciate Hanna's analysis. It's
14 a complicated, difficult process to go through. You
15 know, none of my extended family have maintained our
16 Federal qualified use status because either family
17 members have passed on or the rest of us have moved into
18 non-rural areas for work purposes, such that if that was
19 different and I was still Federally qualified, I might
20 ask some questions about the time depth of the
21 information used in the analysis. But I recognize also
22 that there's not a lot of data and studies that were
23 done back in the 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s, you know, such
24 that some of those uses aren't represented in the
25 analysis, and that many of us with that long
26 intergenerational history have -- are no longer
27 Federally qualified. And, you know, someone who actually
28 lives in Wasilla now purchased my family home, you know,
29 and doesn't have that extensive uses, you know, that
30 wouldn't have shown up in a 2013 study. So, all of this
31 is to say that while, you know, if my family was still
32 present there as Federally qualified users, I would say
33 it's -- it would be silly that Nelchina wouldn't have a
34 priority use where Nelchina is located, but right now
35 it's up in 13B. My family never went up to the Denali
36 Highway because we couldn't afford that trip all the
37 time to go, so we just hunted on State lands, and there's
38 not a whole lot of State -- Federal lands in some of
39 these Game management units, which I think is accurately
40 represented in the analysis as to why some communities
41 have 804 priority and in certain places and some don't.
42 That's the unfortunate circumstance of depleted
43 resources, right? It seems, you know, really unfortunate
44 that not all community, rural permanent residents whose
45 communities have customary and traditional use can no
46 longer all participate in Nelchina caribou hunting once
47 it resumes. But just as has already been said, you know,
48 the intent of Congress 43 years ago when ANILCA Title 8
49 was passed, was that an 804 subsistence user
50 prioritization would occur in times of shortage so that

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1 those most customarily and dependent on that resource,
2 with lack of options for -- of alternative resources
3 like Fortymile caribou, for example, you know, get the
4 first shot at any limited Federal subsistence hunt. And
5 I think this analysis with the amendments that have been
6 discussed for the community, tribal communities of
7 Gakona and Gulkana, I think this analysis with those
8 amendments does a good job with the limited information
9 available, and I encourage you to support this. I think
10 that getting the rescinding the delegation of authority
11 letters and putting that may be announced season in place
12 with the authority of those Federal agencies and
13 managers through all of the appropriate consultations,
14 including Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resources Commission in
15 Unit 13, you know, will do a good job of ensuring that
16 local people with the most on the ground perspectives
17 are making the decisions and can resume Federal
18 customary and traditional uses as soon as possible when
19 there is a limited harvestable surplus available. You
20 know, there were calls from various Federally qualified
21 users for a hunting moratorium when the Nelchina Caribou
22 Herd numbered half of what the management population
23 objective was. The department didn't think that was
24 necessary, the Board of Game didn't think that was
25 necessary and now we have 10,000 less animals than we
26 did when we asked for that moratorium. So, I don't think
27 that this is going to result in some big rush to open a
28 limited Federal subsistence opportunity that will
29 compromise rebuilding this herd. But the continuation
30 of Federal subsistence uses must occur and must have a
31 priority over all other uses to be able to provide a
32 meaningful Federal priority, as ANILCA intended. Thank
33 you.

34

35 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any questions for
36 Jim in the room or online? Thank you. Jim, do you have
37 a question? Any more public testimony. Go ahead, Eva.

38

39 MS. BURK: Thank you. Thank you. Through
40 the Chair. Dr. Simon, I do have a question for you. When
41 they were at 50%, what year was that?

42

43 MR. SIMON: Two years ago.

44

45 Three? The time -- time is flying. Yeah.
46 I thought the proposal was before the Board of Game at
47 the Soldotna meeting in 2023, but maybe it was 2022.
48 It's just a short time ago, and the herd just has kept
49 plummeting. We don't know, you know, caribou are pesky,
50 right? So, we don't know if you know, they that if there

00082

1 are these numbers and I try not to put my uncle in a bad
2 spot because he's the one who flies the biologist to
3 count the herds. So, sometimes I get a preview, but I
4 don't want him to get in trouble. So, I have not called
5 my uncle to find out actually how many caribou there
6 are, but we shouldn't have to use familial relationships
7 anyhow. The State works for us. These animals are owned
8 by the citizens of Alaska and that information should
9 be freely shared with the public. So, we'll find out
10 eventually. Maybe.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Did I see
13 a hand go up in the back of the room? Maybe he was just
14 stretching. Okay, any more public testimony in a room
15 or online? Seeing none. Thank you.

16
17 (Pause)

18
19 MR. BASSICH: Member Bassich, I'd like
20 to make a motion. I'd like to make a motion that the
21 Eastern Interior RAC support proposal WP25-01. With the
22 modifications specified by the OSM preliminary
23 conclusion.

24
25 MR. WOODRUFF: This is Don. I'll second.

26
27 MR. BASSICH: Okay. I'm going to just
28 briefly speak to the motion. I think OSM has done a
29 really good job in this analysis. I understand what
30 you're saying, Sue. I agree, it's a very complicated
31 issue. But I also want to highlight what we just heard
32 from Mr. Jim Simon. The reason the 804 were put into
33 place is exactly -- they had the fortuitous foresight
34 to be prepared for the situations that we're in right
35 now when fish or game resources decline to the point
36 where there must be some sort of hierarchy in who gets
37 first crack at the animals if there is any kind of a
38 surplus. So, I applaud, I think this is a good example
39 of the system that's been well thought out. It's a
40 difficult time, unfortunately, in my mind, we're
41 probably going to start seeing a little bit more of the
42 use of the 804 in other regions of the State and other
43 resources in the State. So, I think the recommendations
44 are good. This handout that we got, I think, is very
45 clear in, in how they will select communities. And I'm
46 going to be in support of this motion, Mr. Chair. Thank
47 you.

48
49 MS. MCDAVID: I just have one
50 clarification for the motion before we get a second or

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1 move on. There weren't modifications specified by OSM.
2 It was just in the comments that we heard today to add
3 Gakona and Gulkana. So, I just wanted to correct that
4 for the record, before we move on. Thanks.

5

6 MR. BASSICH: Yes, that would be -- I'm
7 sorry. That should have been in my motion. But that was
8 also to add those two communities as per our discussions
9 earlier in this deliberation.

10

11 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Eva.

12

13 MS. BURK: Thank you. And then, Andy, can
14 we add Chistochina to Unit 12? Because that's what I
15 thought I heard too, right? I don't see it. We are
16 missing it.

17

18 MS. MCDAVID: Eva, I can help with that.
19 I think I heard Karen say that Chistochina has C&T in
20 Unit 12. Is that correct? But it's not in the proposed
21 804. It would no longer be for Unit 12. Just in the
22 yellow areas on the on the table if you're looking.

23

24 MR. BASSICH: This is member Bassich in
25 agreement to that addition to the motion. Christochina
26 shall be - should - Chistochina, sorry, should be added
27 to the C&T, sorry.

28

29 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you. Charlie. This
30 is Don Woodruff. I would like the Council to look on
31 page 63 at the bottom. Harvested females, in 2020 it was
32 112 and 2021 it was 71, and 2022 it was 51. And if
33 they're going to build a herd, they can't be shooting
34 females. And it distresses me to highlight that area.
35 But we don't shoot cows on the Fortymile. So, there you
36 go.

37

38 MS. ENTSMINGER: Just procedurally I
39 would say Donald has to concur with Chistochina added
40 that motion. That's part of the motion.

41

42 MR. WOODRUFF: Yeah.

43

44 Yeah. Okay. And I just want to speak in
45 favor of the motion. But I still feel really strongly
46 that there's -- it was explained to us at the SRC meeting
47 that in the future, this still can come up on these
48 C&Ts. We can talk about them and make proposals if
49 somebody's been left out. But I really would like to see
50 us -- OSM and you know, work with like, people like

00084

1 myself. I'm the only one from this area and I depend on
2 the information and maybe they could come up with like,
3 let's talk, let's get together. Let's have a working
4 group meet with some of the people in our region that
5 are qualifiers of this herd. So, I would like to, you
6 know, propose that we do more work like that. And I
7 would be happy to be more informed with people that I'm
8 not familiar with -- bring to the Council. Thank you.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Sue.
11 Andy, could you reinstate the -- go ahead.

12
13 MS. MCDAVID: Before we do that, I think
14 we should clarify, and maybe Karen could help us out
15 with this about Chistochina. Because they do have C&T
16 recognized already. So, what you guys would be asking
17 if you do add them is for them to be added to the 804
18 for Unit 12, which currently isn't on there. So, we'll
19 -- I think we could.

20
21 MS. LINNELL: Yes. Thank you. Both
22 Chistochina and Mentasta have customary and traditional
23 use of Unit 12, and I would ask that that be added as
24 communities eligible for those portions of Unit 12
25 within the Ahtna territory.

26
27 MS. MCDAVID: Under the 804?

28
29 MS. LINNELL: Yes, under the 804
30 analyses.

31
32 MS. BURK: Thank you. I missed that one,
33 Karen, because it's. It calls out Mentasta Lake and then
34 Mentasta Pass.

35
36 MS. LINNELL: Mentasta Lake is the
37 village.

38
39 MS. BURK: Okay.

40
41 MS. LINNELL: And she's Mentasta Pass,
42 and she's cut C&T in Unit 12 as well. I'm serious. You
43 can talk about her C&T, thank you.

44
45 MS. BURK: Thank you for the
46 clarification. That's why I overlooked that one. So,
47 thank you.

48
49 (Pause)

50

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1 MS. ENTSMINGER: Just a point of
2 clarification. I think it was suggested that Gulkana and
3 Gakona be added to which one? That's not what -- that's
4 not clear. Go, ahead. I'm sorry.

5
6 MS. LINNELL: I believe she was saying
7 that Gulkana has 13A and B and Gakona does not. And then
8 Gakona has 13C and Gulkana does not, and that they should
9 be the same.

10
11 (Pause)

12
13 MS. BURK: Thank you.

14
15 (Pause)

16
17 ACTING CHAIRPERSON BURK: I'm going to
18 take over the Chair for a second because Charlie's not
19 here. I don't -- I'm not sure where he went. So, we're
20 okay with those additions Andy, to your motion?

21
22 MR. BASSICH: Yes, Madam Chair, those
23 additions, as pointed out after my motion, would be added
24 to the motion.

25
26 MS. MCDAVID: And I could restate -- I
27 could restate the motion for the Council. So, the motion
28 on the table is, support WP25-01 with modifications to
29 add Gakona to 13A and Gulkana to 13C. They do both --
30 they are both already in for 13B, so you don't have to
31 add that and then add Chistochina and Mentasta Lake to
32 12 -- Unit 12 remainder under the 804.

33
34 (Pause)

35
36 MS. BURK: Yeah, I concur. Charlie,
37 you're the Chair again.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay.

40
41 MS. ENTSMINGER: I just would like to add
42 something. This is Sue. You know that argument that was
43 just given about these two communities are so close, I
44 could do the same thing -- I'm not going to -- but for
45 Mentasta Pass and Mentasta people, for some reason, I -
46 - might be unit boundaries. Because Mentasta is 16 miles
47 from my home and it's in Unit 13, and I'm across the
48 border and I'm in Unit 12, and there's a -- some of
49 this, I could say, oh, yeah, you know what, we should
50 be the same as Mentasta and we're not. But at this point

00086

1 in history, I would prefer going through the work session
2 and see where we belong, I guess, because I'm often --
3 I'm not going to go into a lot of detail. I just wanted
4 to point it out that there's probably a lot of that in
5 this proposal that might need fixed -- a little more
6 work.

7
8 And I am in favor of it to help you out,
9 Brooke, because I think this herd is so low and I don't
10 see this -- I don't see this 804 going in place for
11 several years. So, I'm -- that's why I can feel a little
12 more comfortable about voting for this and that it does
13 not -- it gives the man -- it doesn't make that season
14 available. It's more restrictive. So, if that's helpful.
15 Thank you.

16
17 MR. BASSICH: This is member Bassich. I
18 just wanted to support this proposal with some of the
19 justifications on our handy dandy; question is, is there
20 a conservation concern? Yes. Obviously, there is a
21 conservation concern for this resource, and an 804 has
22 been asked for and the analysis has been done to try and
23 address the concerns and create some sort of allocation.
24 If there's a harvestable surplus, small harvestable
25 surplus into the future. Is the recommendation supported
26 by substantial evidence such as biological or
27 traditional ecological knowledge? Yes. Both biological
28 and traditional knowledge shows very clearly that this
29 herd is in major decline and protection is needed. Will
30 this recommendation be beneficial or detrimental to
31 subsistence users? Yes, it will, but that's absolutely
32 necessary. Some people will benefit from this and some
33 people won't, and that's part of the 804 process. So, I
34 don't see -- I see question number three is basically a
35 plus and a minus. But the biggest plus is this
36 recommendation, this proposal will protect the resource.
37 And that's the goal long term. And finally, will this
38 recommendation unnecessarily restrict other users? Well,
39 I think for some people they'll feel like it's -- it is
40 unnecessary. But for the -- for the thinking in terms
41 of the resource that's the critical aspect of what we
42 have -- we're here to protect, so that in the future,
43 future generations will have access to that resource.
44 So, that's the part of conservation that nobody likes
45 to pay, is the unnecessary burden, I hear it all the
46 time, the burden of conservation. But that's the
47 responsible thing you have to do when resources are low.
48 So, that's my justifications, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

49
50

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1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Very good, Andy.
2 Thank you.

3
4 MS. SHOCKLEY: Hi, this is Dorothy, I
5 have a question.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Dorothy.

8
9 MS. SHOCKLEY: Hello? This is --

10
11 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Hello

12
13 MS. SHOCKLEY: Hi.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Hi. Go ahead, you
16 have the floor.

17
18 MS. SHOCKLEY: Thank you. Thank you. I
19 have a question on something that Sue mentioned, that
20 this is not going to go into effect for several years.
21 I would like to know why. But also, you know, we just
22 had a training on delegation of authority, and it sounds
23 like, you know, they can do things pretty quickly. So,
24 yeah, my question is, why would it take so long? Thank
25 you.

26
27 MS. ENTSMINGER: I said -- I hope I said
28 and if I didn't, I meant it's likely because of the
29 population being so low.

30
31 MR. BASSICH: So, Dorothy, to clarify the
32 -- if this was adopted, it would immediately be adopted.
33 But because the herd is so low, the chances of there
34 being a harvest of -- harvestable surplus may not happen
35 for a number of years. I think that's what Sue was trying
36 to iterate in her comments. Is that clear?

37
38 MS. SHOCKLEY: Oh, I see, I see. Thank
39 you. That clarifies that.

40
41 MS. MCDAVID: Dorothy, this is Brooke.
42 I'll just add as a reminder right now, there was a
43 special action put in to close this until a proposal
44 could get put in because the numbers are so low. So,
45 this proposal will be taken up by the Federal Subsistence
46 Board at their meeting in February, and then it would
47 go into regulations after that.

48
49 MS. SHOCKLEY: Okay. Thank you.

50

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1 MS. ENTSMINGER: I call for the question.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Eva.

4

5 MS. BURK: Thank you. This is Eva. In
6 response to what Don said, and I was thinking about it,
7 too, is -- and I don't know if this is anything that we
8 need to mention now. But what about the female hunting
9 of caribou? Like, is that something that we add here?
10 Is it something to work on later? That's my question.

11

12 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: We always -- lately,
13 when the with the loss of so many caribou and certain
14 herds, we have been recommending lack of -- not to kill
15 cows because the herd can't build without cows. What did
16 you?

17

18 MS. MCDAVID: Maybe Hannah or someone
19 from Wildlife Division could help answer Eva's question
20 about potential cow harvest for Nelchina.

21

22 MS. VOORHEES: Thanks, Brooke. I guess I
23 would say, I mean, it's I don't know, to be honest. Let
24 me think about that for a couple of minutes. Maybe
25 there's a biologist who's on the phone who might be able
26 to address it.

27

28 MR. UBELAKER: Mr. Chair.

29

30 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes, Go ahead.

31

32 MR. UBELAKER: Hi. For the record, my
33 name is Brian Ubelaker, wildlife biologist with OSM. I'm
34 the one that authored the special action analysis
35 closing the hunt for this year. And there was also a
36 proposal put in by BLM last wildlife cycle to take the
37 delegated authority out of unit specific regulations,
38 put it into a delegated authority letter regarding the
39 Nelchina hunt. And they have the ability in there to
40 determine sex of harvest each and every year. And if we
41 do carry through with taking the delegated authority and
42 putting it back into unit specific regulations, that was
43 always in there previously. So, that will once again
44 wind up in there along with determining bag limit of 1
45 to 2 -- harvest limit of 1 or 2 caribou per year. So,
46 that will all be taken care of by delegated authority.
47 Thank you.

48

49

50

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1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.
2 Okay. I'm going to ask for a unanimous vote. All those
3 in favor signify by saying aye.

4
5 MS. SHOCKELY: Aye.
6

7 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. I can't hear
8 you. Oh, okay. All those against signify by saying aye.
9 Just the same as before. Hearing -- thank you. Hearing
10 no.....

11
12 MS. MCDAVID: Do you want to clarify?
13 Dorothy is in a opposition.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I thought she said
16 aye.

17
18 MS. MCDAVID: No, she's against it.
19

20 MS. ENTSMINGER: Reclarify it.
21 Suggestions would be all unanimous support and then
22 follow it with, are there any objections?

23
24 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, we're just
25 going to start over. How about asking for unanimous
26 consent to support. All those in favor signify by saying
27 aye. Okay. Nice and short and sweet. I'm asking for
28 unanimous support. Who's on there?

29
30 MS. MCDAVID: Amanda

31
32 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Oh, go ahead,
33 Amanda.

34
35 MS. POPE: Mr. Chair, this is Amanda
36 Pope. I would like to abstain. Even though I think it's
37 a good idea. Thank you.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you.

40
41 (Pause)

42
43 Was there any objections? Hearing none,
44 passed. Thank you. Take a ten-minute break. Thank you.

45
46 (Off record)

47
48 (On record)

49
50

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1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, let's try to
2 find our places and get started again.

3
4 (Pause)

5
6 Again. We're on wildlife -- are on B,
7 Fisheries Proposals and Closure Reviews. FP25-17 Delta
8 River rescinds closure and add rod and reel with limits
9 matching State. Cory Graham.

10
11 MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair, members of the
12 Council, this is Cory Graham fisheries biologist with
13 OSM. So, I'll start by presenting fisheries proposal FP
14 25-17, which can be found on page 158 of your Council
15 book. This proposal was submitted by your Council and
16 requests the Board rescind the closure to the harvest
17 of all fish in the Delta River. Modify regulations to
18 allow rod and reel gear only in the drainage and mirror
19 State sport fish harvest and possession limits. Your
20 Council stated in the proposal it's unfair to the Delta
21 River is currently open to sport fishing but closed to
22 Federal subsistence fishing. Your Council wants to
23 remove the closure and put harvest limits and gear
24 restrictions in place to prevent conservation concerns
25 from increased opportunity. Your Council also believes
26 Federal limits should mirror State sport fishing limits
27 to simplify regulations. So, this is a companion
28 proposal to the Delta River closure review that's next
29 on the agenda.

30
31 So, where is the Delta River? The Delta
32 River is a tributary of the Tanana River and is located
33 near Delta Junction. The Tangle Lakes system is also
34 part of the Delta River drainage. There are road access
35 points from the Richardson Highway. What's currently
36 allowed in the Federal public waters of the Delta River?
37 Well, it depends on which part of the drainage you're
38 in and it matters what which part of the drainage you're
39 in, because Federal and State regulations only say the
40 Delta River is closed, not the drainage. So, that's
41 important. And the main stem of the Delta River Federal
42 Subsistence Board, State subsistence and State personal
43 use are closed. Sport fishing is allowed, but salmon
44 fishing is prohibited. In the tributaries of the Delta
45 River and in the Tangle Lakes system, Federal
46 subsistence fishing is open, so are State subsistence,
47 personal use, and sport fishing.

48
49 I'll now discuss some important
50 regulatory history. So, the main stem of the Delta River

00091

1 has been closed to Federal subsistence fishing since the
2 beginning of the Federal program so, for over 20 years.
3 And the closure was carried over from State Regulations.
4 The Federal closure was reviewed last fisheries cycle
5 but was deferred to hear from local residents and due
6 to conservation concerns with removing the closure, with
7 no regulations in place to limit harvest.

8
9 What fish are in the Delta River
10 drainage? Salmon are found in the lower portion of the
11 river, but not the closure area. The drainage includes
12 burbot, grayling, round whitefish, humpback whitefish,
13 longnose sucker, and lake trout. The Delta River
14 mainstem has been found to support a large population
15 of grayling, with one of the highest recorded densities
16 in the State. However, a few population estimates exist
17 for fish in the Tangle Lakes system. Previous reports
18 indicate the Tangle Lakes system supports a large
19 population of grayling, but the status of the population
20 is unknown. The abundance of lake trout is also largely
21 unknown in the Tangle Lakes system. A density estimate
22 from the upper Tangle Lakes in the late 1980s was low,
23 relative to other populations in the Alaska Range.
24 However, there are a couple of ongoing research projects
25 focusing on lake trout movements and abundance in the
26 Tangle Lakes system, but their results are not yet
27 available. So, who can fish here? All residents of the
28 Yukon northern area can harvest non salmon fish in the
29 drainage. The closest rural communities are Delta
30 Junction and Big Delta. What's the harvest history in
31 the area? We don't have any subsistence harvest data
32 from the Delta River mainstem because it's closed under
33 both State and Federal regulations. In the upper Delta
34 River tributaries, State subsistence fishing is allowed
35 under the State's Upper Tanana River Drainage
36 Subsistence Permit, but the permit also includes other
37 areas, and harvest data are not available for only the
38 Delta River. Sport fishing harvest estimates are
39 provided by the Alaska Sport Fishing Survey and are
40 reported for the Delta River downstream of Wild Horse
41 Creek and for the Tangle Lakes system, so those are
42 available separately. In the Delta River downstream of
43 Wild Horse Creek, sport fishing effort is pretty low,
44 and there haven't been enough responses to estimate
45 harvests since 2006. The Tangle Lakes system is a popular
46 sport fishing area with high effort catches and harvest.
47 for grayling, the ten-year average from 2009 to 2018,
48 catch and harvest were among the highest for any water
49 body within the Tanana River Management Area. The Tangle
50 Lakes system also accounts for the highest effort, catch

1 and harvest rates of any lake trout fishery in the Tanana
2 River Management Area.

3
4 So, what are the effects of this
5 proposal? Currently, subsistence harvest is prohibited
6 in the Delta River mainstem, again under both Federal
7 and State regulations, but sport fish is allowed ---
8 sport fishing is allowed, but salmon fishing again is
9 closed. Adopting this proposal will remove the Federal
10 subsistence closure and limit subsistence harvest to rod
11 and reel only throughout the drainage. Federal harvest
12 limits will match State sportfish limits. So, compared
13 with the status quo, this proposal will increase Federal
14 subsistence opportunity in the Delta River main stem.
15 There are no associated conservation concerns as Federal
16 harvest limits will match State sportfishing harvest
17 limits. Existing harvest pressure is low, and federally
18 qualified subsistence users may already harvest fish in
19 the Delta River mainstem under State sport fishing
20 regulations. Currently, Federal subsistence harvest is
21 allowed in the Delta River tributaries and the Tangle
22 Lakes system, and both State -- Federal, and State
23 subsistence regulations currently allow for unrestricted
24 subsistence harvest using a variety of gear types in
25 these areas. So, compared with the status quo, this
26 proposal will decrease Federal subsistence opportunity
27 in the Tangle Lakes and the tributaries of the Delta
28 River. If the proposal is adopted, Federal regulations
29 will change to allow rod and reel only, which will
30 decrease subsistence opportunity and misalign Federal
31 and State regulations in these areas to make Federal
32 regulations more restrictive than State regulations.
33 However, allowing rod and reel only may help conserve
34 fish populations in the Delta River tributaries that may
35 be vulnerable to overharvest given their small size and
36 easy accessibility from the Richardson Highway.

37
38 OSM's preliminary conclusion is to
39 support proposal FP25-17, with modification to rescind
40 the closure to the harvest of all fish in the Delta
41 River and limit harvest to rod and reel in the entire
42 Delta River drainage, excluding the Tangle Lakes system.
43 So, the Delta River mainstem again is currently closed
44 to Federal subsistence fishing, but sport fishing is
45 allowed, allowing a limited subsistence harvest using
46 rod and reel only would provide subsistence opportunity
47 in an area that is currently closed, and protect
48 populations from overharvest. In contrast, the other
49 waters of the upper Delta River drainage are currently
50 open to subsistence fishing under both State and Federal

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1 regulations. Limiting Federally qualified subsistence
2 users to rod and reel only in these areas would make
3 Federal regulations more restrictive than State
4 regulations. However, the tributaries of the Delta River
5 are generally vulnerable to overharvest due to their
6 small size and easy accessibility so, OSM recommends
7 they be limited to rod and reel only. The Tangle Lakes
8 system currently has a Federal subsistence and State
9 subsistence fishery. Therefore, OSM's modification
10 excludes the Tangle Lakes system from the rod and reel
11 gear restriction to maintain Federal subsistence
12 opportunity and minimize regulatory complexity. So, that
13 concludes my presentation. I'll stand by for questions
14 I'm sure you'll have.

15

16 MR. BASSICH: Thank you. Member Bassich
17 here. Can you elaborate a little bit more on the Tangle
18 Lakes area? So, in this proposal, we're excluding that.
19 And there is a State and Federal fisheries there. And
20 I'm assuming then that you are allowed to use certain -
21 - other gear types other than rod and reel, such as nets
22 and other things in that area. I'm a little bit confused
23 as to why we're excluding the Tangle Lakes system in
24 this proposal. So, are there other gear that you're
25 allowed to use in Tangle Lakes, or is that rod reel only
26 as well?

27

28 MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair, through the
29 Chair. Currently, it's open to support our, excuse me,
30 to subsistence fishing under both State and Federal
31 regulations. There are a variety of gear types that are
32 allowed, and harvest is currently unrestricted in that
33 area.

34

35 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any other questions
36 from Council members? Go ahead.

37

38 MS. ENTSMINGER: This is Sue. I hope it's
39 not -- I should probably know this, but I just want to
40 make sure all of that military land -- the Department
41 of Defense, that's all under State or Federal
42 subsistence?

43

44 MR. GRAHAM: Correct, yeah. This actually
45 -- Mr. Chair, through the Chair. This actually just came
46 up during one of the reviews. People pointed it out. So,
47 Federal subsistence regulations apply on non-navigable
48 waters within the military installation. You need a
49 permit. A special like -- I don't remember what it's
50 called, but you need a permit to access those lands, and

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1 you need to call in before you access those lands. But
2 again, these regulations would apply in non-navigable
3 waters of there.

4

5 MS. ENTSMINGER: Thank you.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any other
8 questions? Hearing none. Do we go over the list now?

9

10 MS. MCDAVID: Yep.

11

12 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, report --
13 we're down to report on Board consultation, tribes and
14 ANCSA corporations.

15

16 MR. LIND: Good afternoon. Chairman,
17 Board members. During our consultation held on July 9th,
18 we had no questions or comments on that proposal. Thank
19 you, Mr. Chair.

20

21 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Thank
22 you, Orville. Okay. Moving down, agency comments ADF&G.
23 No comments. Federal agencies?

24

25 (No comments)

26

27 Tribal entities. Native, tribal,
28 village, other. Oh, Karen Linnell. I see you got a card
29 in here.

30

31 MS. LINNELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Karen
32 Linnell. Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resources Commission. I just
33 wanted to say that customary and traditional use
34 determinations, it says that there wasn't really a lot
35 there for that. But the Ahtna people have fished in the
36 Tangle Lakes and headwaters of the Delta River for
37 millennia. It's in the heart of our traditional
38 territory. And that's not recognized in this
39 analyzation. We do rod and reel fish for burbot, trout,
40 grayling; the Ahtna people from Cantwell over to Gulkana
41 and Gakona are so closely related, I took my Auntie
42 Frieda Sanford to go berry picking around Tangle Lakes,
43 and we ended up driving all the way to Cantwell to visit
44 with her uncle, Henry Peters. And so, the villages that
45 we have now are not where we used to be. And so, the
46 nomadic lifestyle that we had, but that use of that fish
47 is still there. We still go there. We actually had bird
48 camp, our migratory bird camp there in August and had
49 over 50 participants. We were fishing in the lakes. We
50 were duck hunting. We were looking for (In Native) or

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1 our ground squirrel, porcupine, moose. We were hunting
2 and fishing that area and just know that it's still very
3 much in the heart of the Ahtna people and the use of
4 that land and just not having it recognized in this, it
5 might not be the upper Tanana tribes that are doing rod
6 and reel fishing there, but the Ahtna people are rod and
7 reel fishing and participating in subsistence activities
8 in that area. I just wanted to put that on the record.
9 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,
12 makes the difference. Thank you for your comments --
13 testify -- testimony. Any other tribal entities. Native,
14 tribal village, other? Online?

15
16 (No response)

17
18 Hearing none, moved down to advisory
19 group comments. Other regional Councils?

20
21 MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair. So, North Slope
22 RAC and Western Interior RAC deferred to home region.
23 So, they deferred to your Council.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Cory.

26
27 MR. GRAHAM: And YKDRAC supported the
28 proposal. So, the Council noted the importance of
29 providing subsistence opportunity by Federally qualified
30 subsistence users in a system where sport fishing is
31 currently allowed. Further, the Council affirmed, if
32 sport fishing is allowed in a system, then there should
33 also be subsistence harvest by Federally qualified
34 subsistence users. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any others? We'll be
37 moving down to subsistence resource commissions. (Pause)
38 Summary of written public comment.

39
40 MS. MCDAVID: Cory, do you know if we had
41 any written public comments for this one?

42
43 MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair, there were no
44 written public comments that were received. Thank you.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Public
47 testimony. (Pause) Any online? Okay, moving down to
48 seven Regional Council recommendations.

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1 MR. WOODRUFF: I moved to adopt WP 25 oh
2 25-17, FP25-17.

3
4 MS. BURK: I second Eva.

5
6 (Pause)

7
8 MR. BASSICH: I want to just ask Don, do
9 you want the modifications that were in the preliminary
10 conclusion from OSM, excluding Tangle Lakes systems and
11 it'd be the Delta River rescinding of it for the Delta
12 River to rod and reel in the Delta River drainage,
13 excluding the Tangle Lakes system. So, I'm just -- sorry.
14 I'm asking for clarification. This is member Bassich,
15 did you want to include the recommended modifications
16 by OSM?

17
18 MR. WOODRUFF: Yes, the OSM modification
19 of excluding the Tangle Lakes.

20
21 MS. MCDAVID: You second?

22
23 MS. BURK: Yeah. This is Eva, I did
24 second. Yeah.

25
26 MR. BASSICH: So, maybe to avoid more
27 confusion as we get closer to voting, it might be good
28 to restate the motion. Mr. Chair.

29
30 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. I moved to adopt FP
31 25-17 to rescind the closure on the Delta River, to
32 include rod and reel fishing and to exclude the Tangle
33 Lakes system.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, since
36 everybody seems like they're for this, we'll ask for
37 unanimous consent. Oh.....

38
39 MS. MCDAVID: Justification.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Oh, okay. I was
42 going to skip.

43
44 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Member Bassich here.
45 I just wanted to, again, build a little bit of the record
46 for the decision. Was there a conservation concern? Not
47 really a conservation concern, but an inequity. It was
48 excluding federally qualified subsistence users to the
49 use of this area. Is there a recommendation supported
50 by substantial evidence, such as biological or

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1 traditional ecological knowledge? Again, it's a
2 restriction placed upon federally qualified subsistence
3 users. And it has been identified that on some of these
4 non-salmon species can potentially be overharvested if
5 use of gear and -- such as nets and things like that
6 take place. So, it is a, I'm going to call it a minor
7 conservation concern. Will the recommendation be
8 beneficial or detrimental to subsistence users and
9 needs? Absolutely, it will benefit them by allowing them
10 to participate in harvest of those species with rod and
11 reel. And will the recommendation unnecessarily restrict
12 other users? No, it's actually going to increase the
13 ability for all users to utilize those resources. Thank
14 you, Mr. Chair.

15

16 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. So, we'll
17 go to a.....

18

19 MS. BURK: This is Eva. You know, I've
20 been listening all day, and there's a common theme of
21 overharvesting of salmon, caribou, and in what I know
22 about whitefish is they're declining all over the world
23 right now. And I don't understand how -- I don't think
24 we're exempt from that. I think that is part-- could be
25 part of our reality here in Alaska, too, as more and
26 more studies come out. So, I just wanted to say, for the
27 record, I have concerns about overharvest in this area.
28 I'm not against this. I'm -- I support this, but I am
29 concerned in the future and I'm not sure where to address
30 it, because it sounds like it's really like a State
31 issue where we'd have to bring this up. And again, the
32 same theme is occurring, mismanagement or let's say
33 mismanagement, but like differences in the way that
34 State and Federal are going about managing that there's
35 a mismatch between those two systems. And that mismatch
36 is becoming more and more apparent in these rapid
37 declines of things that we're seeing, especially salmon
38 and caribou. And so, just for the record I support this,
39 but I do I have a little more than minor conservation
40 concerns at this point. And just an area to keep an eye
41 on. And I would -- as more research becomes available,
42 I would like to have it presented here. Thank you.

43

44 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Donald.

45

46 MR. WOODRUFF: I'd like to point out that
47 the Salcha and the Delta River are the largest producing
48 streams on the Tanana. And the reason there are so many
49 grayling is because their salmon are spawning there.

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MS. BURK: And that's -- thank you. Because that's kind of where I was going with this is like, are we seeing that with the salmon decline, we have more potential for whitefish decline with this -- with more salmon declining we have more reliance -- I'm sorry, reliance on whitefish right now. So, just wanted to flag my conservation concerns and I think somebody wants to address some stuff.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Please state your name.

MS. GLEASON: Hi, this is Christy Gleason. I'm the Yukon Area fall season manager, so I manage the fall chum. And we also have the chinook salmon manager in the room as well. So, on the Delta River, that is particularly a fall chum salmon river. The chinook salmon, as far as I know, don't go up that system. It's a really important fall chum salmon river. It's the only river we have an escapement goal on the Tanana River -- in the Tanana River drainage for fall chum. And we've studied that river for probably about 40 years. We do weekly foot surveys from the beginning of October through the first week of December. And what we've learned from that is that the fall chum primarily spawn in the lower two miles of that section of river, and so we have it closed to salmon for that reason. And I believe this proposal is probably focused more on non-salmon for rod and reel. But maybe you can talk about what would happen in the lower two miles.

MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair the lower two miles are State land. So, they're not part of this proposal. The Federal waters are upstream and there aren't many if any, salmon in those waters. It's predominantly, I believe you said that lower two miles. Correct? Yeah. So, this proposal is upstream of that location. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. BASSICH: Yeah. So, I guess that begs the question. Under State regulations, sport regulations, are people currently allowed to fish for salmon in the lower region with -- of this Delta River with rod and reel? Someone from ADF&G Sport could answer that or Christy.

MS. GLEASON: Yeah. This is Christy Gleason again. Sorry, we don't have our sport fish manager here, but I think Cory has the sport fish

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2 regulations for the State and his very detailed OSM staff
3 comments.

4

5

6 MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair, so on page 163,
7 it says in the Delta -- this is Alaska sport fishing
8 regulations in the Delta River and its tributaries.
9 Sport fishing for salmon is closed.

10

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more questions?

11

12

13 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, I call
14 question.

15

16

17 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. I'm going
18 to ask for unanimous consent. Oh, okay. We'll reinstate
19 the motion first, then.

20

21

22 MS. MCDAVID: Just to have it on the
23 record again right before the vote. The motion on the
24 floor is to support FP25-17 with the OSM modification.

25

26

27 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. We're going to
28 ask for unanimous vote. Anybody against it? Hearing
29 none, passes. Thank you.

30

31

(Pause)

32

33

34 Okay, moving on FCR25-02, Nome Creek
35 closer to harvest of Arctic grayling. Cory Graham.
36 That's on page 197.

37

38

39

40

41 MR. GRAHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Cory
42 Graham, fisheries biologist with the OSM. I'm going to
43 continue with the Nome Creek closure review, also
44 referred to as a FCR25-02. As the Chair pointed out, the
45 analysis can be found on page 197 of your Council book.
46 The Nome Creek closure is a Federal subsistence closure
47 that only applies to grayling. This is a Board directed
48 review so, no proposals were submitted. The Board is
49 having us review this closure to see if it's still
50 necessary. This closure was reviewed during the 2021 to
2023 fisheries regulatory cycle. Nome Creek is about 50
miles north of Fairbanks. It is road accessible with a
couple of campsites along the creek. So, what is
currently allowed in Nome Creek? Under Federal
regulations, harvest of grayling is not allowed. Under
State regulations, subsistence fishing is also not
allowed because Nome Creek is within the Fairbanks non-
subsistence area. State sport fishing regulations allow

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1 only the catch and release of grayling in Nome Creek.
2 So, what do we know about Grayling in Nome Creek? Well,
3 not a lot. We currently don't have a lot -- many good
4 population estimates, but there is ongoing research by
5 ADF&G and BLM, and I believe that some of those results
6 will be shared with your Council after, by the State
7 when I'm finished with my presentation. If the closure
8 is rescinded, who will be able to fish here? All
9 residents of the Yukon northern area will be able to
10 harvest grayling in Nome Creek. Closest rural
11 communities are Central and Circle, but available data
12 suggests subsistence harvests from these communities
13 would likely not be substantial. If the closure is
14 removed, what would be allowed? The Federal regulations
15 that cover the entire Yukon northern area would apply.
16 These are generally liberal regulations. Harvest would
17 be unrestricted when using any other legal gear than rod
18 and reel. So, for example, there wouldn't be harvest
19 limits for gillnets. Harvest using rod and reel would
20 not be allowed because Federal subsistence rod and reel
21 limits match State sport fishing limits, but State sport
22 fishing is currently limited to catch and release only.

23
24 So, in summary, harvest of grayling is
25 prohibited under Federal regulations. State sport fish
26 regulations allow only catch and release of grayling.
27 This is a Board directed review to see if the closure
28 is still necessary. The OSM preliminary conclusion is
29 to resend the closure, so rescinding the closure would
30 establish a Federal subsistence priority in the area.
31 Graylings are susceptible to overexploitation, and Nome
32 Creek is road accessible, allowing for easy access and
33 harvest of fish. Allowing unrestricted harvest for gear
34 types other than rod and reel may lead to over harvest,
35 although most of the data or most data suggests most
36 subsistence harvests -- subsistence harvest, excuse me,
37 of grayling in nearby communities is with rod and reel.
38 Grayling populations may be protected by limiting
39 subsistence harvest to rod and reel only, and or
40 establishing harvest limits like you did for the Delta
41 River. But unfortunately, these modifications require
42 Fisheries proposal and can't be done through the closure
43 review process because we need public input, and that
44 wouldn't happen. Until a proposal can be submitted, the
45 Federal manager has the tools they need to protect
46 populations using their delegated authority. The
47 training that we had earlier. So, for instance, if there
48 is over harvest, the Federal manager could limit gear
49 types until a future proposal could be submitted that
50 would, you know, again allow rod and reel only or

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1 whatever the Council would choose. And before I conclude
2 my presentation, I have one quick reminder about the
3 motions for the closure reviews. As you see on your
4 little yellow cards, they're different than for
5 proposals, so just keep that in mind when making your
6 motion, and I'll stand by for any questions you may
7 have. Thank you.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Cory. Any
10 questions? Go ahead.

11

12 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I guess I'm a little
13 confused at the very beginning of your presentation
14 here. You said that there's very little known about the
15 populations on this creek for Grayling, and yet we're
16 trying to open it up. And I see that there's no
17 retention, but there is mortality to hook and -- to
18 catch and release. And so, is that being taken into
19 consideration? And it seems, putting the cart in front
20 of the horse to rescind this, allow activities for catch
21 and release, which may create mortality on a population
22 that we have no understanding of -- clear understanding
23 of what it can support, as far as mortality, kind of
24 gets back to the question that Eva was bringing up
25 earlier. So, I guess I'm just a little confused. What's
26 the difference between just leaving this closure in
27 place and then creating a proposal in the future that
28 would address those concerns of either mortality or
29 create a harvest plan for that stream? Does that make
30 sense? Thank you.

31

32 MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair. Through the
33 Chair. So, this closure has been on the books for a long
34 time. If the Council wants to wait, you can do that and
35 then do essentially what you did for the Delta River
36 this cycle to both at once and eliminate any need for
37 potential special actions. I will note that there is
38 ongoing research, or there is research that has just
39 been concluded by ADF&G and BLM, and they will present
40 those results to you. They were -- that data was on
41 track to be available like during this process. So,
42 that's kind of one of the reasons. And if the data came
43 back to be just really abysmal, then OSM could have
44 amended our conclusion or preliminary conclusion to say
45 like, you know, at this time it's just not like harvest
46 is not viable. There is catch and release. Overall, the
47 data that I've -- the research I've seen is that catch
48 and release mortality is low. There still is some. But
49 I believe that and the State can speak more to this, so
50 I don't want to speak too much about it, but essentially,

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1 you need a certain amount of responses to the sport fish
2 harvest survey to estimate effort. And my understanding
3 is they haven't gotten that for a long time, so it
4 appears to be low. But again, if the State has something
5 contrary to that, I would ask them to speak more about
6 it.

7
8 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I guess that also for
9 me, in my mind begs the question, you know, most
10 subsistence harvesters are pretty busy people trying to
11 take care of themselves. And maybe people go out and
12 just sport fish for catch and release, but certainly not
13 in my area. You know, if I'm going to go spend my time
14 out on the land, it's usually to collect resources so
15 that I can survive out there or thrive, hopefully thrive,
16 not survive. But I don't know, I guess we'll get to that
17 when we get to the discussion. Thank you. Thank you for
18 your comments. So, and I just -- I'm wondering when we
19 get to ADF&G if they have any information, they'll be
20 able to add. That would help a lot. Thank you.

21
22 MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair. If I could say
23 one more thing. So, we did review this again in the 2021
24 to 20, 2023. And I believe it was Council member Glanz,
25 was closest to that area. So, you kind of asked him what
26 you think, and he had mentioned something about there
27 were a lot of creeks loaded with grayling, so he didn't
28 actually foresee there being a ton of harvest here too.
29 And that kind of went into our conclusion is that from
30 what we've heard and the data that we've seen that we
31 don't expect there to be a ton of subsistence harvest.
32 I mean, there still may be, but I just wanted to point
33 that out what your Council had said in the past. Thank
34 you.

35
36 MR. BASSICH: But just for clarification,
37 if we rescind this, there still would not be subsistence
38 harvest because it's catch and release only. Is that
39 correct?

40
41 MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair, through the
42 Chair. So, that would be correct for rod and reel only.
43 You would be able to harvest grayling using the other
44 gear types that are legal for in the Yukon northern
45 area. So, nets and whatever other legal gear types are
46 available.

47
48 MS. ENTSMINGER: Because in my area,
49 there's spear fishing, spear for whitefish.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: If there's no more questions, we're going to move on to report on Board consultation, tribes and ANCSA corporations.

MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Board members. During the consultation held on fish -- closure review 25-02, we had no questions or comments, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Next is agency comments, ADF&G.

MS. STUBY: Good afternoon, members of the Council. Lisa Stuby, Alaska Department of Fish and Game Division of Sportfish. Comments, yes. Just completed and we just handed out -- my apologies. I had a few people come up to me and go, what were you talking about? So, I want to walk through this just a bit of a cheat sheet. We just finished up a three-year project. When this Federal Subsistence Board closure was discussed back in 2020, and then the Federal Subsistence Board in 2021, there was support to learn more about Arctic grayling within the Beaver Creek, Aschinjik River drainage as well as its major tributary, Nome Creek, which is road accessible. And so, we did a three-year radio telemetry study to look at life history strategies of Arctic grayling. And you know, it was a two-phase project took place during 2021, 2023. Describe seasonal movements, immigration, outmigration, timing between Beaver and Nome Creek. And also, we identified spawning overwintering, summer feeding areas. And then the second phase took place last summer 2023, where we conducted a mark recapture study on a section of Beaver Creek as well as Nome Creek to get an estimate of abundance for 2023, to also compare with 2000, which was the last year of the abundance estimate was done. I'm going to, you know, kind of just breeze through this. I put together just a sheet of information that people could look at while I was going through and talking a little bit. And just mostly -- I'm just mostly getting to some points that are pertinent to this FCR. I've got lots more. Also did some habitat stuff too and water quality. Always curious to know what makes fish tick and I'm a bit late for this Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council meeting, but the next meeting I would be more than happy to get in on the later in the meeting for the presentations to just give a 15 minute overview of the entire project and a PowerPoint presentation, either the next meeting or the meeting after, wherever it's appropriate and there's room for me to talk. So, anyway,

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1 just talking a little bit about it. Arctic grayling are
2 definitely ubiquitous throughout the Beaver Creek
3 drainage. And the one thing I wanted to point out, as
4 far as I'll talk a little bit, the radio telemetry
5 project, and I'll give the abundance estimates, as there
6 was a concern back in 2020 about -- is there much of an
7 exchange between Nome Creek and Beaver Creek? And the
8 answer is yes, definitely. Nome Creek and that's what
9 this this graph shows is -- Arctic grayling will spend
10 their winters in nice deep back eddies, mostly kind of
11 calm water areas. They get along because, you know,
12 habitat shrinks when the flow shrinks because of an ice
13 build, you know, you have a lot shrinking of habitat.
14 So, they, you know, get along, yt's a long seven, eight
15 months and they'll spot -- and they'll spawn soon after
16 ice out. So, spawning period up in Beaver, Nome creeks
17 was we flew radio telemetry mid-May and a little bit
18 later in May, and we also had a stationary tracking
19 station at the very mouth of Nome Creek to record
20 immigration too. So, pretty much we saw immigration like
21 between May 1st and to July. Some of those fish were
22 actually spawning in Lower Nome Creek. There's
23 definitely spawning areas. And some were spawning in
24 Beaver Creek and spending the summer in -- we call it
25 over summering, over summering in Nome Creek.
26 Outmigration for those fish that were going to spend the
27 winter down in Beaver Creek, and some of them spent the
28 winter -- for those who know the white -- this this
29 area, there's a beautiful trail called Tabletop
30 Mountain. And it's like if you get up on top of tabletop,
31 it looks straight ahead, that's an overwintering area.
32 And if you're down there, you look up, you see tabletop.
33 It's pretty cool. And so anyway, we saw outmigration for
34 those that were going to out-migrate down to Beaver Creek
35 between September 1st and November 23rd. And so, anyway,
36 I'm just going to, like I said, be a little bit brief
37 here, and oh, and oh, and it'll be a little bit brief
38 here with this.

39
40 So, people were concerned about you
41 know, immigration, outmigration and because I -- most
42 people I've talked to and we see one typical thing about
43 Arctic grayling is they are very -- usually very fidel
44 [sic] to over summering areas to various degrees. I mean,
45 is there going to be fish if a fish is caught in Nome
46 Creek and it's, you know, harvested or it dies, will
47 that fish be replaced by other fish down in Beaver Creek?
48 And the answer is absolutely. And I saw this too, with
49 the radio telemetry we tagged in 2021, tagged fish, about
50 300mm -- oh by 12inch -- no maybe 13inches and had

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1 smallish but relatively largest radio transmitters
2 because I wanted to get at least two years out of them.
3 We tagged in July, which is during the summer, and was
4 able to track a lot of these fish both July 2021, 22,
5 23. So, I was able to look at over, you know, where they
6 spent the summer three years in a row. And some fish,
7 yeah, they went right back to the same place we tagged
8 them. Like one fish, I keep in mind code 151 on Quartz
9 Creek trail, other fish, maybe they went back in 2022
10 and then they went someplace different in 2023 or maybe
11 some fish in 2021 went someplace else in 2022, decide
12 they liked it better, and that's where they were in
13 2023.

14

15 During the summer months Arctic grayling
16 tend to be very, very competitive, very different than
17 the winter they get in their back eddies and you know
18 summers are short. They've got seven, eight months of
19 winter. They got to feed and put on fat because they've
20 got a long winter ahead, followed by spring spawning.
21 And if you get a king or queen of the back eddy and, you
22 know, they are no longer - yeah, other grayling move in
23 and I was actually just on Nome Creek, I was just hiking
24 Quartz Creek trail two Sundays ago, and I was checking
25 out BLM's handywork. They did some stream restoration,
26 and it's -- and you see a lot of nice pools. And last
27 summer, when I looked at some of their stream
28 restoration, I noticed Arctic grayling moved in within
29 a day. So, yeah, they definitely do -- there is
30 definitely exchange between -- and I put a little graph
31 here just to show that, some of the fish that survived
32 tagging and that we detected, we didn't detect them
33 during every single flight. And that's a long story, but
34 we didn't detect him for every single flight. But you
35 can see, we did detect a proportion of them. And we saw
36 just what I just described. I just for grins and again,
37 I can -- I'll explain this further, you know, at the
38 next meeting or two. I went ahead and just in case people
39 are curious, put down some overwintering areas, both,
40 you know, overwintering, we just have two years of data
41 in 2022 and 2023, and most of the fish definitely
42 overwintered. And we did go up the drainages too, up the
43 tributaries. And we always went up Quartz and Bear and
44 Champion, Little Champion even though in the dead of
45 winter the fish - yeah, if they were up there, they
46 probably, you know, were mortalities. But yeah, you can
47 see a couple fish did spend the winter in Lower Nome
48 Creek and one around Moose Creek. It's a really big back
49 eddy there. And Trail Creek, yeah but not the Trail
50 Creek trail, that's a real hot spot. And lots of big

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1 deep back eddies there. Very cool. And then, you know,
2 we go to spring spawning. The only thing I can say about
3 spring spawning is they do spawn in lower Nome Creek. I
4 was down Lower Nome Creek on May 24th doing some water
5 quality. And yeah, I mean, they spawn at night, so I
6 really didn't see him spawning. But they were there. The
7 radio tags had long, you know, went dead, but I could
8 literally stand around one place, say, okay, here's some
9 deep back eddies for them to overwinter. Here's some
10 nice cut banks for them to over summer. And here's some
11 nice habitat for them to spawn. So, it's like everything
12 a fish -- so, you do get cradle to grave fish too that
13 don't necessarily migrate. Again, lots to talk about. I
14 won't go there right now.

15
16 So, anyway, but one thing that did
17 surprise me on this map was one little hot spot. I mean,
18 they're ubiquitous. They're spawning all up and down --
19 was on Wickersham Creek, which yeah, that was fun to see
20 that happen. And that Trail Creek's also like a lower
21 Nome, near Trail Creek, lots of activity. And then over
22 summering, you can see the map, you can see the fish
23 start moving up further, like up, up into Quarts, off
24 the Quarts Creek Trail, into Quarts and beer -- and Bear
25 and Champion. And we did see fish move up into
26 tributaries. Although we didn't tag in those
27 tributaries, we did see a move up in the tributaries.

28
29 And okay, now the mark recapture. So,
30 in 2023 we tagged Arctic grayling that were greater than
31 or equal to 250mm in size, as this is what's most
32 reliably recruited to hook and line gear. In 2000, pretty
33 much tagged all fish. We kind of learned from, you know,
34 the 23 years that -- yeah, it's -- you definitely want
35 to tag adult fish, you can kind of bias your samples.
36 However -- oops, sorry. However, Fish and Game, which
37 kind of led the charge on Beaver Creek, and then BLM did
38 the Nome Creek did report and did break out 250 from the
39 other sizes. So, I can compare. Just -- and back in
40 2000, there were some issues with personnel and also
41 ensuring a closed system and low number of recaptures.
42 So, there was a section that was tagged on Nome Creek
43 for Moose Creek to the BLM airstrip. And in a minute,
44 when I talk about Nome Creek and the population, I'll
45 also give you the estimate of abundance back in 2000
46 just for this section. Below the airstrip, they were
47 unable to get a reliable estimate. So, in the year 2000,
48 from the mouth of Beaver -- we couldn't mark recapture
49 the whole river. I mean, that would have -- oh, my gosh,
50 that would have been something. But anyway, so, we

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1 focused on a section. We caught fish every two kilometers
2 -- crew of six and in the year 2000, from the mouth of
3 Nome Creek down to Wickersham Creek, they had a
4 population estimate of 8,539 fish. Of course, all of our
5 estimates do incur a standard error, which was 959. And
6 2023 -- I just literally just got these numbers a week
7 ago. The population estimate for the same fish greater
8 than or equal to 250mm was 15,117 with a standard error
9 of about 2,146. So, basically, the population was very
10 similar in 2023 as to the year 2000, which made me very
11 happy, especially you know, since definitely Beaver
12 Creek, like other great Yukon River drainages aren't
13 getting the salmon runs like they -- like it used to be.
14 So, I was -- I was quite glad to see that the grayling
15 population is still doing well.

16
17 Now for Nome Creek. Again, we have to
18 just -- to compare with 2000 and 2000, there was an
19 estimate of 419. Standard error of 81 for Moose Creek
20 to the airstrip. But that -- I asked our biometrician
21 just for comparison's sake and we came up with 1,082
22 with the standard error of 97. It is a bit of a hotspot,
23 Moose Creek to airstrip. And that was just calculated
24 to compare with 2000. For the entire Nome Creek drainage,
25 the population estimate was 1,631 with a standard error
26 of 143. I mean, we -- we put a lot of effort. I pretty
27 much -- yeah, I'm persistent. I got -- I got a lot of
28 people helping me out with this two summers ago. So,
29 yeah, 1,631 for the total Nome Creek. And as far as a
30 recommendation, we don't have a position because this
31 is just up for discussion, but we just have a couple
32 recommendations. One thing we do kind of endeavor is to
33 maintain a total harvest below 10% to ensure a healthy
34 population. So, with us, we have this thing called the
35 Statewide Harvest Survey and, you know, if I start seeing
36 them harvest, you know, a, you know, above 10%, then
37 it's, you know, it's time to do something. And so, just
38 food for thought. For a population of 1,600, you know,
39 you may not want to harvest more than 160 fish and just
40 recommend, you know, a relatively low daily harvest
41 limit and also recommend hook and line gear, although I
42 really can't see how you can put any other gear in there.
43 It's not -- Nome Creek is not a very big, wide creek. I
44 zigzag across it. And Christie is going to speak on
45 other ways and means of recording.

46
47 MS. GLEASON: Good afternoon. Christy
48 Gleason, Yukon area fall season manager with Alaska
49 Department of Fish and Game, and I oversee the
50 subsistence and the personal use permits that we issue

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1 for the Yukon River drainage and the Tanana River
2 drainage. And I know Cory probably spoke to this in the
3 OSM comments, but under the State side, this area is
4 closed to subsistence. It's under the non-subsistence
5 area. And so, we wouldn't have a permit to track harvest
6 or effort in this area.

7
8 MS. STUBY: And I know I've talked rather
9 fast, so I'll be glad to answer any questions.

10
11 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you. Charlie, I have
12 a question. This is Donald Woodruff. Are there
13 subsistence use cabins there or public use cabins?
14

15 MS. STUBY: There are. However, the
16 public use cabins are primarily for the winter. So, on
17 Nome Creek itself, there are two campgrounds, but, I
18 mean, I can let Bureau of Land Management manages the
19 White Mountains National Recreation Area. I would say
20 with the winter cabins, there's little to no fishing.
21

22 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you.

23
24 MS. STUBY: Lots of snow machining,
25 though.
26

27 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I got a question.
28 You said that with the low salmon numbers, they're down
29 in that area. So, there is salmon spawning grounds, and
30 those waters are nearby?
31

32 MS. STUBY: Yes. Yes, salmon do spawn up
33 in Beaver Creek. And that was one thing I was kind of
34 wondering when we did this project was, because, you
35 know, salmon numbers have been down, but it looks like
36 happily, that has not affected the grayling populations
37 because we're revisiting this after 23 years. Although
38 the year 2000 from memory actually was a low salmon
39 year.
40

41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Any
42 questions? Go ahead.
43

44 MS. BURK: Thank you. I have to laugh
45 because I'm like, why are we always collecting data when
46 there's low salmon? I have a question about your harvest
47 because you said 10% and your whole estimate for Nome
48 Creek total is 1631. And then it says average sport fish
49 harvest in Beaver Creek, but it specifies Nome Creek
50 catch and release only as 148 or 143. So, it looks like

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1 you have an effort of 10% even though you can't keep it.
2 So, is that correct?

3
4 MS. STUBY: Again, my apologies I --
5 yeah, the person who was asked - I -- you asked me the
6 same question of somebody else and I said, okay, next
7 time I do a handout, I'm going to have you look through
8 it first and ask me questions. So, my apologies on that.
9 No, this is -- our statewide Harvest Survey records --
10 combines because Nome is a tributary of Beaver Creek.
11 So, our statewide Harvest Survey combines both Beaver
12 and Nome Creek together as one and, you know right now
13 they're kind of doing an updo of the Statewide harvest
14 survey and modernizing it, because right now it's a mail
15 out survey. And I'm kind of glad I'm getting this
16 question because I'm going to pass on to the folks who
17 are redoing this, that I think it would be a good idea
18 to break these two apart. I -- very good idea. So, I'm
19 going to rec -- definitely recommend that. But yeah, no,
20 these are harvest numbers for Beaver Creek excluding
21 Nome. Yeah, excluding Nome because Nome is catch and
22 release only.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: It seems to me that
25 that's a spawning ground. I think if I remember right,
26 that might have been one of the things we talked about
27 last time this came up. The way things are, I have a
28 hard time supporting fisheries in spawning ground
29 because the action in there and however they're getting
30 around and walking back and forth, I don't know. I don't
31 think there's any motorized vehicles allowed in there,
32 is there?

33
34 MS. STUBY: In Nome Creek people can
35 drive on you know, you come off a U.S. Creek Road mile
36 56 of the Steese Highway and then you come to the Nome
37 Creek Road. Most of it's not accessible well unless you
38 want to hike up and down some steep hills. So, yeah,
39 most people, if they do fish it'll be mounted around
40 Mount Prindle Campground over the Offer Creek
41 campground. So, as far as during the time of spawning
42 they're -- they spawn at night and during the day,
43 they're pretty much resting and staying out of the
44 current and under, you know, bank overhangs and as I
45 said, you know, if you look at the map, I mean, they do
46 spawn in the lower Nome Creek, but they pretty much
47 spawn throughout the entire Beaver Creek drainage too.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more questions?
50 In the room, online? Thank you. Federal agencies.

000110

1
2 MR. HERRIGES: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
3 Council. I am Jim Herriges, I'm a wildlife biologist and
4 our subsistence representative for the Eastern Interior
5 field office. So, I'm just going to say a word, provide
6 a little background. And I'll start out by saying that
7 the Nome Creek area is kind of the primary recreational
8 area in the White Mountains National Recreation in terms
9 of allowing access. In fact, BLM built a 18-mile road
10 along up and down Nome Creek and two campgrounds to
11 provide more recreational opportunities in the
12 recreation area with highway funding. But the -- and so,
13 it's yeah, the primary use area, the primary -- it
14 provides access to Beaver Creek as well as ORV trails
15 north of that area and camping at the two developed
16 campgrounds, as well as camping at undeveloped areas all
17 up and down Nome Creek. So, it's yeah, it's fairly
18 important to our recreation program, I'd say. And so,
19 in association with the development of that recreational
20 access Fish and Game implemented those catch and release
21 only regulations to maintain that -- what was recognized
22 then as a healthy grayling population. So, then in the
23 last round, which was in 2020 and 2021, where we --
24 where there was well, the first round, I guess, of
25 considering the closure review the -- I believe that
26 Eastern Interior RAC voted to rescind the closure for
27 various reasons. The Federal Subsistence Board ended up
28 not lifting the closure and we talked about it some more
29 at this subsequent Eastern Interior RAC meeting and
30 explained that this study was just beginning, and we
31 would have some data at that time to or at a later time
32 to make an informed decision. And so, you guys, you
33 folks agreed to -- supported that decision, basically.
34 And so, now we've got the data. We've just seen -- BLM
35 has just seen it ourselves. It's that hot off the press.
36 And but we're in kind of the same boat that we were
37 then, except we've got some information, but we're
38 forced -- you are forced with making a recommendation
39 to lift or keep a closure without a formal proposal in
40 place to replace it, to create some reasonable
41 regulations. And so, I think there was a question earlier
42 about what the regulations would be, and if you wanted
43 to look it up, you could -- OSM has got it summarized
44 on page 200 and they can correct me if I'm
45 misinterpreting this, but basically it appears that if
46 the closure is released -- is lifted then at the top of
47 200, you'd be able to take fish other than salmon by set
48 gillnet, drift gillnet, beach seine, fish wheel, long
49 line, fyke net, dip net, jigging gear, spear lead or rod
50 and reel, subject to the following restrictions. And one

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1 of those is you can't obstruct more than half the width
2 of the stream. And the other is that you couldn't use
3 rod and reel because it's kind of technical, but the
4 State doesn't allow rod and reel fishing there, which
5 is what the regs [sic] would revert to. Am I getting
6 that close, Cory? Yeah. So, so anyway, that's what we'd
7 be faced with if we lifted the closure without any other
8 recommendations. Just kind of for your awareness and we
9 have not developed a -- our agency or an Eastern Interior
10 field office, a formal recommendation on this or formal
11 position on lifting the closure, but we do have concerns
12 about the effects of, you know, a largely unrestricted
13 harvest methods would be on that population.

14
15 And so, we -- so, we would support a
16 recommendation at least, you know, however you decide
17 on the lifting, the closure, we would support a
18 recommendation by the Eastern Interior RAC to implement
19 special actions that would ensure a robust grayling
20 population in Nome Creek until a future proposal can be
21 formally enacted. And that could be done -- yeah, by the
22 Federal fisheries manager, but I -- I'm guessing that
23 they would appreciate support before from Eastern
24 Interior RAC and putting that in place. And any questions
25 you guys might have? Oh, question about salmon, salmon
26 spawning has -- salmon have been observed in lower Nome
27 Creek near the mouth, but aren't at all -- typically
28 spawn there. But it is -- yeah -- a good grayling
29 spawning habitat.

30
31 MS. BURK: Okay, this is Eva. So, what
32 you're saying is there is salmon present, and we would
33 be allowed to fish with a net if we rescinded this
34 closure. Is that correct? But we'd be allowed to fish
35 with a net amongst other gear types. Right?

36
37 MR. HERRIGES: Well, salmon are not
38 really an issue there.

39
40 MS. BURK: But if you're fishing --
41 excuse me. If you're fishing for grayling with these
42 other gear types, like a net, you have the potential of
43 interfering with salmon that may be trying to spawn,
44 correct? It would be an incidental catch defined in the
45 State.

46
47 MR. HERRIGES: Possibly, but it would be
48 very rare. I don't think Nome Creek is listed as an
49 anadromous stream. That was just an anecdotal thing.

50

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1 MS. BURK: Sir, we're -- from -- when --
2 there are a lot of times where you have salmon Grayling
3 spawning, there's also salmon spawning. And, Charlie,
4 you could probably add more to that than I can, but
5 that's my basic understanding.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yeah, that's it.
8 Grayling love salmon eggs. That's how they get big. So,
9 all those fish -- fishing gear that you -- I'm sorry.
10 Go ahead and till you're done there, I'll wait.

11
12 MR. HERRIGES: Go ahead, thanks.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, well, I have
15 a problem with all the types of gear you just said and
16 the amount of fish that's in there. If you start putting
17 in 60-foot nets and there's the place in 1,600 fish are
18 spawning in there, and you have a whole bunch of people
19 in there using different kind of gear. That population
20 is not going to remain, in my mind. So, that's really
21 hard to -- if there is some modifications to gear type
22 and stuff, I could see this going forward. But with the
23 gear that you suggested that's going to be used there,
24 it's just not going to sustain in my mind. I just want
25 to know what you thought of that. We're putting in nets
26 and everything in it, and there's just a few fish in
27 there, and you get a bunch of people up there knowing
28 that the fishing is open up there. Now people are going
29 to pour in there. And if they were able to put dip nets,
30 set nets and all those kind of gears that you just told
31 us, then there's going to be a problem, in the very
32 short time, in my mind. I've been a fisherman all my
33 life, and then I've seen fish come and go. So, if you -
34 - when you open up a fishery, people come. When you
35 build something, people come and they're going to come
36 there and they're going to come there in great numbers.
37 And if you're able to set a net, 60-foot net in a stream
38 and the grayling are migrating, it's going to be
39 devastating. Thank you.

40
41 MR. HERRIGES: Yeah, with the caveat that
42 Lisa pointed out that it's fairly small and not really
43 amenable to some of those techniques. But yeah, it could
44 have unintended -- yeah -- consequences.

45
46 MS. SHOCKLEY: Mr. Chair, this is Dorothy
47 Shockley. Can I make a statement, please?

48
49 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead.

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000113

1 MS. SHOCKLEY: Hi. You know, with the
2 situation in the State with, you know, decline in most
3 all species of fish -- of fish and game, I think we need
4 to be conservative in all of our actions. You know, we
5 -- just like Charlie said, you know, people are just
6 going to go where, wherever and fish things out. I mean,
7 that's been the history of so-called management in the
8 State. And, you know, we have to be on the conservative
9 side of everything. So, thank you, appreciate it.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Dorothy,
12 I think did you have a comment on what she said or we'll
13 move on to -- you have a question? Okay, go ahead, Sue.

14
15 MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay. All of these gear
16 types, I used the beach seine in Norton Sound, and I
17 mean, and this Fish wheel and long line, like net -- dip
18 net, jigging gear and spear lead. Where are the
19 definitions for the whatever each of these would come
20 under? You know, like are we -- is that the net that you
21 said 60feet, is that in regulation? Yeah, is that in
22 regulation? Is all this stuff defined in in regulation
23 so somebody would know what they're doing if they decide
24 if there's a past -- how big of a Fish wheel and all of
25 that stuff? Because I think there's a lot of these things
26 in regulation now that people don't even realize are
27 happening. Are there other places in Alaska where these
28 type of fishery for subsistence is open? And, you know,
29 I -- so I don't know. I think this is important. I need
30 an answer for that. Thank you.

31
32 MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair. Through the
33 Chair. So, these regulations are the general area
34 regulations for the entire Yukon northern area, you
35 know, like subsistence regulations for the entire area.
36 So, yeah, like all unless there are further restrictions
37 listed in here, like, you know, like you were saying or
38 like we were saying you can't block more than one half
39 of a stream, so you can't put a 60 foot gill net in
40 there because it's not the stream is not wide enough.
41 Right? The other thing to point out, too, is that a lot
42 of our subsistence harvest like data that we looked at,
43 grayling are primarily targeted with rod and reel. So,
44 just because these gear types are available doesn't mean
45 that they would be used. And then, Council Member Burk
46 was also saying earlier, kind of salmon like nets and
47 stuff. So, when the Federal manager is closing
48 everything and closing gill nets, this wouldn't be a
49 loophole like those regulations would also cover this
50 area. So, it's not like it's -- they're always like

000114

1 this. It's like if there are actions that are closing,
2 restricting the use of gill nets in the Yukon River,
3 then they would also apply here. So, I just wanted to
4 make that clear. And then it just sounds like you all
5 are very conservation minded. So, like there is no
6 problem with not rescinding and doing what you did with
7 the Delta River, you know, like it's really important
8 to you. And if that's what you decide, that's great. And
9 next cycle you can put in a proposal. So, thank you.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Thank you.
12 Where are we? Oh yeah, I see I got it written down here.
13 Tribal -- okay, we're moving down to tribal entities,
14 Native, tribal village and other. Okay. Moving on.
15 Advisory group comment. Okay. Sorry, sir. Go right
16 ahead.

17
18 MR. LIND: Good afternoon, Chairman and
19 Council members. During the consultation, there were no
20 questions or comments on this proposal. Thank you, Mr.
21 Chair.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Moving down to
24 number four. Oh, no I'm not -- okay. Advisory group
25 comments. Other regional Councils.

26
27 MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair, through the
28 Chair. So, North Slope RAC took no action to defer to
29 home region, as did Western Interior RAC. YK Delta
30 recommended rescinding the closure because the Council
31 recognized the importance of establishing a subsistence
32 priority for Federally qualified subsistence users in
33 the area. Thank you.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: That's good. They
36 want to question him?

37
38 MS. ENTSMINGER: It's hard to come back,
39 yeah.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any questions for
42 him on that? Okay. Well, we'll move on then. Fish and
43 Game Advisory Committees. Subsistence Resource
44 Commissions. Summary of written public comments.

45
46 MS. MCDAVID: Mister Chair, there were
47 none.

48
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000115

1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Public testimony.
2 Hearing none, moving on to Council recommendations. Go
3 ahead, Andy.

4
5 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
6 Member Bassich here. I'd like to make a motion that the
7 Eastern Interior RAC retain the closures regarded in SCR
8 25-02.

9
10 MS. ENTSMINGER: Second.

11
12 MR. BASSICH: I'm going to speak to the
13 motion. It's very clear that it would be premature at
14 this time to rescind the closure. I think the proper
15 thing to do based on conservation would be able to get
16 -- give a little bit more time to understand the
17 population dynamics, also understand possible and
18 potential impacts to spawning salmon that may be
19 impacted. To develop proposals, if this was to be
20 rescinded, to develop proposals that would have very
21 conservation-minded harvest, if there was going to be
22 harvest and also identify what gear would be allowed in
23 the stream for any subsistence harvest, either by
24 Federal or State. So, in -- I guess, to summarize my
25 feelings on this, it would be very premature to rescind
26 this. I think we it's -- been in place for a long time.
27 The population of fish is still there. That says
28 something. And I think to remove or rescind this at this
29 point in time, could put those populations of grayling
30 and potentially have negative impacts on salmon in the
31 area, because much of this is not understood at this
32 time. So, I think it is a conservation concern. I don't
33 think it's a burden to anyone because people are still
34 able to go and do catch and release, which seems to be
35 the attraction in the area without harming the resource.
36 And those are my comments, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any other comments
39 from around the table? Go ahead, Eva.

40
41 MS. BURK: Okay, thank you. This is Eva.
42 Yes, thank you for the motion, I agree, I've seen
43 grayling collapse in multiple streams across Alaska and
44 in my neck of the woods, and they take a while to
45 recover. And so, I really like that you pointed out
46 that, yeah, we've got stability in this population so,
47 let's not change anything radically until we can get a
48 better proposal forward that outlines what fishing gear
49 we want to see in there. So, that's -- I'm just thinking
50

000116

1 about, you know, looks like it's doing good. Let's not
2 change anything yet.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Sue.

5

6 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. Based on all the
7 information that we did have, though, I would say that,
8 you know, if I saw this rescinded and it was just a rod
9 and reel, I would favor it. So, I think that's something
10 they should be working on. Thank you.

11

12 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: It was stated
13 earlier that a lot of these grayling go and come back
14 to this area. And I fished rod and reel my whole life,
15 and there is some mortality and that needs to be looked
16 into. And also, in my mind, if you got a lot of people
17 coming and fishing these same grayling and going in and
18 out of there, there's going to be some mortality. So,
19 I'd like to even see something, see them, look at that
20 and see if we can get a number for that. I think that's
21 a big part of the management going forward on how many
22 they can take, if they do open it, and it might support
23 keeping it closed if there is a large amount of
24 mortality. Which I know there is, I'm not a large amount,
25 but I know there's mortality, period. From tearing hooks
26 out of fish's mouth, it just happens sometimes, they get
27 hooked good. And you know, I try to -- I fished with a
28 net most of the time. I like to fish for 20 fish, not
29 one, you know, with a big net. And -- but I do
30 occasionally bring the kids out to, to do a little sport
31 fishing and early in the spring. So, it happens. And so,
32 it's just a concern. Thank you. And Mr. Bassich, if you
33 could restate the final motion, please.

34

35 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
36 Bassich -- Member Bassich, Chair. The motion was to
37 retain the closures in regards to FCR25-02.

38

39 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, after
40 hearing everything and testimony and all, I would ask
41 for a unanimous vote. Any objections? Hearing none,
42 passes.

43

44 (Pause)

45

46 MS. BURK: Before we close, I'd like to
47 make a motion. We talked about it earlier but could we
48 -- I'd like to make a motion to add the Board of Fish
49 proposals to our agenda. The ACR13, that's up for the

50

000117

1 Board of Fish work session. And then I think the other
2 one was 51. Yeah, we need to see 51 as well.

3

4 MS. ENTSMINGER: I'll second that. If you
5 consider looking at what the SRC did for the other two,
6 that we did it together 1 to - 51, 52 and 53. 51 is --
7 does one thing and has all the data that was very well
8 documented and put in place. But then there was two
9 other ones that we also favored. Okay, thank you. And
10 I'll second it.

11

12 MS. BURK: Yeah. We just wanted to be
13 responsive and support, and what Jack Reakoff was
14 testifying to today as well as our other testifiers. So,
15 I think it's important to address those. And also, we
16 heard some of our Council members say that they would
17 like to see action. And so, I think it's important to
18 find those areas and push the levers where we can take
19 action. And so, that's the reason. Thank you.

20

21 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair. Thank you. I
22 just wanted to let the Council know. At lunch today, I
23 was able to print a copy of the ACR13 and proposal 51.
24 I don't have written copies of 52 and 53, but I could
25 email you a copy tonight if you wanted to look over the
26 digital copy. I just wanted to let you know that.

27

28 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. I want
29 to say a little bit about the proposals too. Losing my
30 train of thought now. So, we're in a -- we're in
31 agreement on Yukon River for king salmon. And I think
32 that not only the people along the river should carry
33 the burden of conservation in this one where, like we
34 talked earlier today, it was said about a protection
35 corridor going through Area M and the trawl over to the
36 AYK. And this was implicated by the -- Canada and America
37 and Department of Fish and Game. So, I think we need to
38 do -- like we need action. So, that's why I support this
39 and these proposals. If we're going to make a difference
40 in this life cycle, we need to do it now. So, when seven
41 years is up, there's a difference. Otherwise, it's going
42 to just continue on. So, we really need to have action,
43 not words. No more no more studies. We need action.
44 That's going to make a difference. Thank you.

45

46 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you, Mr.
47 Chairman. I'd just like to add one word to that. And
48 that is meaningful. We need meaningful actions with no
49 more delays. We can't afford to delay. We have been
50 speaking -- many people have been speaking on these

000118

1 conservation issues for over 20 years, and we cannot
2 wait any longer.

3

4 MS. BURK: Actually, for the record,
5 Andy, I've been seeing probably closer to a hundred
6 years, but just wanted to add that.

7

8

9 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair, I would just ask
10 while you're on this discussion, if you could just note
11 for the record where you would like to add these on the
12 agenda? would you like to take up the Board of Fish
13 proposals after the Federal proposals?

14

15 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes.

16

17 MS. MCDAVID: So, before Item C, the
18 Fisheries Resource monitoring program PINS.

19

20 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes.

21

22 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. Well, thank you.

23

24 MS. ENTSMINGER: Mr. Chair.

25

26 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead. Oh.

27

28 MS. ENTSMINGER: Sorry. I would also
29 recommend the Council members to look at the Board of
30 Game proposals and see if there's anything that you want
31 to take up. Thank you.

32

33 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Did we
34 reinstate the final motion for the record? Yeah, we did.
35 So, I think I ask for unanimous vote. Anybody, any
36 objections? Passes. Thank you. And we're going to call
37 it. Call it an evening. Call it. Call it for the day. I
38 can't even get words out no more, so. So, what time in
39 the morning?

40

41 MS. MCDAVID: 9 o'clock.

42

43 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: 9 o'clock in the
44 morning. See you all then. Thank you for coming. Thank
45 you for your patience.

46

47 (Off record)

48

49 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 1 through 118 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the EASTERN INTERIOR ALASKA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME I recorded on the 8th 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