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SEWARD PENINSULA SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME II

EDUCATION CENTER ROOM 102
Nome, Alaska
October 25, 2024

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Louis Green, Chair
Tom Gray
Mary Freytag
Martin Aukongak
Elmer Seetot
Robert Moses
Raymond Hunt

Regional Council Coordinator, Gisela Chapa

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Nome, Alaska - 10/25/24)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Good morning, y'all. Sorry I missed you yesterday. It's a little rough. I think we call it the AFN flu bug. Kind of over it today. My name is Louis Green, by the way. So, I would like to call roll call here this morning. Get to start off here.

MS. CHAPA: Louis Green.

CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Here.

MS. CHAPA: Thomas Gray.

MR. GRAY: Yes, ma'am.

MS. CHAPA: Into the mic, please.

MR. GRAY Yes, ma'am.

MS. CHAPA: Thank you. Mary Freytag.

MS. FREYTAG: Present.

MS. CHAPA: Robert Moses.

MR. MOSES: Here.

MS. CHAPA: Elmer Seetot.

MR. SEETOT: Here.

MS. CHAPA: Raymond Hunt.

MR. HUNT: Here.

MS. CHAPA: Martin Aukongak.

MR. AUKONGAK: Good morning.

MS. CHAPA: And Mr. Kirk has an excused absence. He was impacted by the most recent storm in the region. And, Mr. Chair, we have a quorum.

CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Gisela. So, that brings us to welcome and introductions. Of

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1 course, I'm Louis Green from Nome. So, we have --
2 possibly have some people online. If there's anybody new
3 that was on -- that's online today that was not
4 yesterday.

5
6 MS. KLEIN: Good morning.

7
8 (Simultaneous speech)

9
10 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Sounds like we got
11 two people, a lady and a man there. Lady first.

12
13 MS. KLEIN: Hi, good morning. This is
14 Jill Klein. I'm the regional subsistence coordinator
15 with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. So, joining in
16 this morning.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Jill.

19
20 MR. GUSSEY: Good morning. This is Walker
21 Gussey with the Bureau of Land Management. Sorry I wasn't
22 available yesterday.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you for calling
25 in.....

26
27 MS. LAVINE: Good morning. This is Robin
28 LaVine, subsistence policy coordinator with OSM calling
29 in today. Good to hear your voices. Sorry I'm not with
30 you.

31
32 MR. MCKEE: Good morning. This is Chris
33 McKee, subsistence coordinator for the Bureau of Land
34 Management, out of Anchorage.

35
36 MS. KOELSCH: Morning, This is Jeanette
37 Koelsch, superintendent of Bering Land Bridge National
38 Preserve. I am still sick, so I will be attending via
39 Teams.

40
41 MS. MCDAVID: Good morning. This is
42 Brooke McDavid. I'm currently the Acting Council
43 Coordination Division Supervisor with OSM. In my regular
44 role, I am the Council Coordinator for Eastern Interior
45 and YK-Delta RACs.

46
47 MR. BLIHOVDE: Good morning. I'm Boyd
48 Blihovde and I work for the Fish and Wildlife Service
49 based in Anchorage.

50

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1 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Well, it sounds like
2 everybody's introduced themselves it's online, so that
3 moves us into a public comment, non-agenda item, and
4 also the tribal. I'm sorry, I forgot, anybody in the
5 room here that's new from yesterday?

6
7 UNIDENTIFIED: Well, Frank
8 (indiscernible), Sr., Native Village of Koyuk, citizen
9 of Nome. And thank you all, appreciate this. You need
10 pilot bird for your fish spread.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thanks. We got fish,
13 but no crackers. Thanks, Frank. Is there anybody else,
14 I don't see anybody else in the crowd here. Thank you.

15
16 The Vice Chair says Raymond has to give
17 a speech today cause he wasn't here. Okay, so are there
18 any tribal comments?

19
20 (No comment)

21
22 I need to turn this off. Seeing none,
23 hearing none. We'll move on to the next part of our
24 agenda here. And that's under 13 of the reports. There's
25 a limit of 15 minutes for these reports, unless otherwise
26 approved in advance, as it's noted here. So, under item
27 A, tribal governments, are there any tribal governments
28 online or -- I'll start with online first.

29
30 (No response)

31
32 Hearing none. Ask in the room.

33
34 (No response)

35
36 No one in the room. That moves us on to
37 item B, Native organizations online?

38
39 (No response)

40
41 Hearing none online. Anybody in the
42 room?

43
44 (No response)

45
46 Hearing and seeing none. We'll move on
47 to the National Park Service, under item C. I think we
48 have some action there. And here she is. She has the
49 floor.

50

1 MS. PATTON: Good morning, Mr. Chair and
2 members of the Council. Good to see everyone again this
3 morning. For the record, Eva Patton with the National
4 Park Service Subsistence Program, the regional office
5 in Anchorage. I'm happy to be here in Nome. My report
6 is super quick, an update on the National Park Service's
7 Wildlife Rule. So, we come before you last year with a
8 proposed Wildlife Rule that was seeking to restrict
9 certain practices under State hunting regulations on
10 national preserves in Alaska. Two of those were passed,
11 one has no bearing on Bering Land Bridge, and that is
12 the prohibition of bear baiting. So, that's not in
13 regulation -- State regulations for this region. But
14 that was prohibited in National Park Service
15 regulations, some other parks within Alaska are
16 preserves within Alaska. There were concerns about
17 public safety with bear baiting, with bears getting
18 habituated to human food or defending bear bait
19 stations. So, that is now prohibited under National Park
20 Service regulations on National Preserves in Alaska for
21 State hunting regulations. The second part of the
22 proposed Wildlife Rule that did pass was just a
23 clarification of trapping regulations to clarify that a
24 firearm can indeed be used for safe and quick killing
25 of an animal that is in a trap or has become unanchored
26 from a trap -- is still in the trap, but become
27 unanchored or has escaped from the trap and is injured.
28 So, it just clarifies that indeed a firearm can be used
29 under a trapping license to kill an animal quickly and
30 safely. And those were the only two elements of the
31 proposed rule that were enacted. So, if there's any
32 questions, I'd be happy to.....

33
34 MS. FREYTAG: Mr. Chair, this is Mary
35 Freytag. Just for reference, it's on page 117, what she's
36 talking about.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Any Council members
39 have any questions?

40
41 (No response)

42
43 I don't see any or hear any. Eva, thank
44 you for your presentation.

45
46 MS. PATTON: Thanks, and then you will
47 have the actual Bering Land Bridge folks for National
48 Park Service report. Thanks.

49
50 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you.

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MS. HUGHES: Good morning.

CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Good morning, Letty.

MS. HUGHES: For the record, I'm Letty Hughes. I'm Acting Integrated Resource Program Manager, generally wildlife biologist for Bering Land Bridge National Preserve, based here in Nome. Then our superintendent Jeanette is on the call. I guess I'll pull up the supplemental material that's in your -- it's gonna be in your supplemental booklet and on page 16. If it is okay with you, Chair, to have the Fish and Game counterpart come up. So, we can give you a quick briefing on Seward Peninsula muskox.

CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Sure. Thank you.

MS. HENSLEE: Good morning. This is Sara Henslee with Fish and Game, wildlife area biologist.

CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Good morning, Sara.

MS. HUGHES: So, this past spring, Fish and Game, National Park Service, BLM and Fish and Wildlife Service completed the Seward Peninsula Muskox Population Survey. And this is hot off the press so, you know, we just got this a few days ago, I believe. And so, for the population estimate for the entire Seward Peninsula and the midpoint being 1,900 animals, well, 1,932, to be exact, is the midpoint.

CHAIRPERSON GREEN: What does midpoint mean?

MS. HENSLEE: Through the Chair, this is Sara Henslee. It just is the point estimate. So, how many muskox we think are in this population. So, last time I think our estimate was 2,030 or something like that. Now the estimates gone to 1,930, but at the end of the day we have what are called confidence intervals around that number. And it basically indicates stability since we last counted in 2021. So, yeah, the point estimates one thing, but we're pretty much assuming the population's been stable.

MS. HUGHES: And to, you know, back that up in terms of, you know, the Seward Peninsula population being stable. We also -- the survey was -- in addition to the Seward Peninsula muskox survey was also the sex,

1 age composition. So, we get, you know, we can determine
2 age class of bulls, cows, short yearlings. And so, for
3 that, you know, the proportion of the sex, age
4 composition results of mature bulls was 19%, which is
5 what it has been, you know, these last three, four or
6 so surveys, you know. It's been stable for a while now.
7 And then the range-wide recruitment of short yearlings,
8 you know, we're talking about short yearlings, about,
9 you know, nine, ten months of age is 18%, I think was
10 just like a very slight bump from past surveys.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: So, what was the
13 total number, again, for the estimated whole Seward
14 Peninsula.

15
16 MS. HUGHES: 1,932 with the range of it
17 like what, you know, and Sara was talking about the
18 range being 1,470 to 2,500.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you. So, I
21 guess, do you have more to add to that? So, I remember
22 when the herd was a lot bigger than it is today. So, I
23 just had a question. Is there any determination on what
24 is causing the herd to be continually going down? Is
25 there any.....

26
27 MS. HENSLEE: Yeah. Mr. Chair, this is
28 Sara again. I think it's an interesting question, and
29 we have a muskox research biologist, Brinn Parr, that's
30 looking into that, and she has been doing or she
31 concluded a seven-year study now looking at neonates.
32 So, newborn muskox calves, she's been collaring them and
33 looking at their survival and what she's found is
34 actually pretty moderate survival. So, originally we
35 were assuming that those calf deaths were what were
36 limiting the population so, preventing it from
37 increasing to that 2,000, gosh, I'm trying to think of
38 the number back in the day. It was like, gosh, close to
39 3,000, wasn't it? So, we thought it was that and it
40 doesn't appear that that's like the main reason. And I
41 guess, I would say if you wanna [sic] hear more about
42 her research, maybe we could invite her to come give a
43 presentation next time, because, yeah, seven years of
44 that calf study, she's been looking, now, she's been
45 collaring yearlings, maybe a year and a half year olds
46 looking at survival from that point on. And we also have
47 been looking at adult survival so, that's muskox cows
48 that are three years and older. We've got decades of
49 studies on that, so. She's kinda [sic] the lead on that,
50 and I think if you're interested to learn more and kind

1 of explore this, like, why isn't the population
2 increasing, I'd suggest inviting her to the next meeting
3 in April.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Sara. I
6 think that would be a good idea to have that, since
7 there's a seven year on there and of course, we got
8 decades of information, going back to the -- probably
9 the 70s when they were released. I got to watch that
10 happen when I was a kid. So, yeah, I'm interested in
11 finding out why, I don't believe it's just calf survival.
12 You're saying that it's pretty moderate, being that it's
13 kind of in a good range, not jumping out of the box, but
14 still enough to carry on the herd. Okay, thank you.

15
16 MS. HENSLEE: Mr. Chair, that is correct.
17

18 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Mr. Gray.

19
20 MR. GRAY: So, I'm a little curious.
21 We've been around this 2,000 mark for a while. How long
22 have we been there?

23
24 MS. HENSLEE: Through the Chair. It's
25 been since 2012. That was when we saw that peak of
26 2,900.....

27
28 MR. GRAY: So, 12 years.

29
30 MS. HENSLEE: Mhm.

31
32 MR. GRAY: And, you know, I just crunched
33 some numbers, and if we have a 19% bull percentage in
34 this herd, that's 366 bulls, and we're killing 50-100
35 bulls a year. So, we're killing a third of our stock
36 off, and our recruitment is 18%, of which 50% of that
37 I'm assuming is bulls. I just -- in my head something's
38 wrong here, and we need to be cautious. We went through
39 this before and Tony Goran was you guys, the biologist
40 back then. And we had a lot of numbers and animals and
41 all of a sudden, all the bulls were gone and it crashed,
42 and I hate to see that happen again. You know, I think
43 the part for standing up and standing by the permit
44 system -- and I remember a day in this meeting, we argued
45 for hours because the Park wanted to give the State the
46 management of the Federal permits and thank God that
47 didn't happen. You know, it gives us a whole different
48 opportunity in -- and I'll give you an example, the
49 Park, we never had to cut the horns, the State finally
50 passed a rule to come in line with the Park's attitude

1 on not cutting horns. It took a long time. If that had
2 been transferred, those permits, we would've never had
3 this no cutting horns. It would still be there. But
4 anyway, I -- it would be good to -- I would be more
5 inclined to look at some paper, something that kinda
6 reflects what's going on because you know, if it's
7 predators that are -- 18% is a very small recruitment
8 number and it's, you know, you may gain 5 or 10% by
9 eliminating bears or wolves or whatever it is. But
10 anyway, if we could get something in paper that reflects
11 some of this stuff, it'd be awesome. You know, it's --
12 we're all programmed to go hunt muskox now and I mean,
13 their prized permits and in all of Nome is very
14 competitive after it, in the region. I mean, people out
15 in the villages are competitive. We can't let this
16 resource fall apart on us again. Thank you.

17

18 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you,
19 Councilman Gray. Did you have something to add?

20

21 MS. HENSLEE: Yeah, through the Chair. I
22 think you raised some excellent points and I just want
23 to clarify that our harvest rates, we do have a paper.
24 I can print it out, I can email it to you. I'll bring
25 it next time. It was from a Park Service and a Fish and
26 Game collaboration from Tony and our biometrician, or
27 Park Service biometrician, Josh Schmidt, and they worked
28 together to kind of explore what caused that crash back
29 in 2012. And what they came up with basically was they
30 thought that the mature bulls were what were perhaps
31 causing that decline because we were harvesting way too
32 many back in 2012 alongside cows, you know the story.
33 So, now the management objectives are -- we are only
34 trying to harvest 10% of the mature bulls so, we cannot
35 harvest more than 10% of what we believe is available
36 for mature bulls or I believe it's 2% of the population.
37 And we have been harvesting within those, you know, those
38 boundaries for a long time, up until we recently
39 increased the harvest quota in 22C to see, as you
40 remember, we went up to 30 and we've been monitoring the
41 effects of that since, I guess two years now, and one
42 of the things you'll see in this supplement here -- the
43 bull cow ratio is actually -- the number of mature bulls
44 per 100 cows is the metric we kind of look at in addition
45 to that proportion that Letty mentioned. And we've got
46 46 mature bulls per 100 cows. Our management objective
47 is 40. So, basically that means we're doing really well
48 as far as like the mature bulls that are available. So,
49 I interpret that as the harvest rates are doing well.
50 We're doing okay as far as what we're harvesting, and

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1 we are harvesting kind of what's available. So, just
2 wanted to expand on that. I'll bring that paper about
3 the mature bulls next time, Brinn will give a
4 presentation, she's been collecting all these survival
5 rates and the recruitment rates she's been finding in
6 the last couple of years. The survival has been as high
7 as, like, 60% of those young calves, which is incredible.
8 So, really, we're used to seeing, like, with the moose,
9 different story, the survival rate of those calves is
10 like 18%, whereas muskox are surviving at 60%, which
11 basically to me that says that perhaps there's something
12 else going on with the survival of those older classes
13 and that's what Brinn looking into now. So, I'll let her
14 know to come to the next meeting, and we'll try to make
15 a point to get that on the agenda next time. Thank you.

16

17 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Sara. So,
18 the harvest rate is just like -- just a -- just below
19 what's coming back every year. So, when does management
20 consider bringing the harvest rate down?

21

22 MS. HENSLEE: Yeah, through the Chair.
23 We -- as we monitor all of these metrics that we've got
24 and I think something that would make me want to
25 reconsider the harvest rate is seeing a drop in that
26 mature bull to cow ratio. So, like I said our objectives
27 is 40 per 100, but we've got 46 per 100. So, to me, I'm
28 not really seeing a need to drop that harvest rate at
29 this time. And then, yeah, even the short yearlings --
30 43 short yearlings per 100 cows, these things are just
31 kind of collectively telling me that the population is
32 doing well, so.

33

34 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Okay. Thank you,
35 Sara. Hearing the increase in the 22C, what prompted the
36 increase? The availability or political pressure or...?
37 Go ahead.

38

39 MS. HENSLEE: Yeah. Through the a
40 combination of both overwhelming demand from the local
41 Advisory Committee to see more increased harvest near
42 Nome was the impetus behind that and politics was the
43 major thing, but biologically it was there and it was
44 available. So, we allow up to 10 cows to be harvested
45 from 22C now. And yeah, we increased the rates for mature
46 bulls and I won't get too much into subunit specific
47 metrics, but the mature bull to cow ratio in 22C when
48 we did this composition survey was 55 mature bulls per
49 100 cows. So, and even in the last survey it was high
50 as well. So, there was definitely additional bulls

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1 available for harvest and this was kind of an
2 experimental thing for us to see if we do harvest this
3 kinda local increased rate, what it would do to the
4 population. And so far it kinda seems like it's been
5 okay.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Okay. Thank you for
8 that, Sara. I know I'm asking a lot of questions. There's
9 -- there was talk with Tony -- I know that he considered
10 that the bear pressure, the predation pressure was so
11 much that was pushing animals towards town. So, what
12 have we done in the State side to back that pressure
13 off? There's -- I'm a hunter, so, anyway, there's bears,
14 there's wolves in there in the area. So, what is the
15 State done about that? Just trying to catch up.

16
17 MS. HENSLEE: Yeah. Through the Chair. I
18 think we -- we've learned a lot more about the things
19 that are moving muskox around. And again, Brinn, I really
20 encourage us to try to get her here to the next RAC
21 meeting because she has studied this extensively and
22 we're putting GPS collars on muskox now. So, every day
23 we get a point of where they are. So, what we're finding
24 is these muskox, they don't really just come into town
25 and stay like a lot of folks used to think like, these
26 muskox aren't coming into town in the summer, staying
27 all summer long because of bears, perhaps, which is what
28 kind of Tony and my predecessors kind of thought before.
29 And Bill, when he was the area biologist, a lot of work
30 he did was observing and seeing bears were pushing muskox
31 into town. So, that was one of the theories, but now it
32 seems like with these GPS collars, we're seeing the
33 muskox come into town and then leave sometimes. They
34 just kinda seems like there's three different groups
35 where they're coming and going, like it's a revolving
36 door where it's not the same individual. Perhaps from
37 day to day, week to week, these muskox come, they go.
38 And just exploring why that's happening has been Brinn's
39 focus of her research with these GPS collars and it's
40 been pretty interesting, these muskox, they might come
41 and stay for a day, they might come and stay for a week,
42 or they're just passing through. But the ones you see
43 in your back yard are maybe not the same that you saw a
44 few days earlier.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: That's interesting,
47 I was wondering about that. I know we only have so many
48 around us in the local area. So, going back to the
49 political side of things, I know that at one point in
50 time, there was one that was a defense of life and

1 property taken in the (indiscernible) area about two
2 weeks before that. That's probably the same one I was
3 beating away from my dogs with a stick. So, it was
4 handled one way, and then two weeks later it was handled
5 with the final end. Then we had this young man get gored
6 to death so, I see the political side of things. What
7 I'm worried about is herd health and when you remove the
8 leaders out of there, there's, you know, you're taking
9 bulls out. So, what have you figured on when bulls are
10 removed from the herd, does that tend to create this
11 wandering in through the communities? I mean, are we
12 having young leaders so to speak or do you have any kind
13 of a concept there on that? Any thoughts?

14
15 MS. HENSLEE: Yeah, sure. Through the
16 Chair. I think there are so many mature bulls that I've
17 seen in groups, at least in the springtime. Like you'll
18 see bachelor groups, I'm sure you've seen out in the in
19 the winter in April, where there's only mature bulls.
20 So, to me, I think there's plenty of mature bulls.
21 Usually in these groups I see multiple mature bulls. So,
22 that to me says if we remove one, there's still plenty
23 to take the place of that one that was removed. But most
24 of the harvest is happening in the winter months anyway,
25 when there's not necessarily that movement into town.
26 And I can't say that I believe the mature bulls are
27 what's leading them in, I think it's a mixed bag of, it
28 could be mature cows, the calves kind of straying and
29 the herd following them, mature bulls maybe. But we don't
30 know enough about who's kinda leading the cavalry there
31 in the summer months to say. But from what I've seen,
32 it's kind of a mixed bag of whatever muskox kinda gets
33 a wild hair and they all follow. So, yeah.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Okay. Thank you,
36 Sara. Councilman Gray, I think you were.....

37
38 MR. GRAY: Tom Gray. You know I've been
39 hunting these things for -- since the beginning of the
40 hunt, and I've seen the good, bad, and ugly. I mean, I
41 -- one time I left here to go hunt animals by Crater
42 Creek, and they had wiped out the whole herd and the
43 word was go to Golden Gate. So, I went to Golden Gate
44 and we were shooting cows and bulls at that time. I went
45 to Golden Gate and the whole herd had been wiped out. I
46 went to Kuzitrin and we got our three bulls, but you
47 know, we're a killing machine. We're just as bad as
48 bears and whatever. The concern that I have is, you
49 know, I've hunted a lot, I'm a hunting guide, I've seen
50 a lot of animals. White Mountain -- I hang out in White

1 Mountain and people are hunting and I get word, yeah,
2 there's two bulls down there in that herd, let's go get
3 mine. And by the time it's over with, there's no bulls
4 left, adult bulls. And I've seen that time and time
5 again where the adult bulls are wiped out. And maybe
6 this is part of the problem, you know, we all assume,
7 yep, bulls get kicked out of the herd, and there's
8 satellite bulls that will move in and take over. But is
9 that reality? I just -- I -- you know, I think we need
10 to know, yes, that is -- it works. But what I've seen,
11 I -- there's a gray area here that needs to be worked
12 on or -- and the reason I bring this out is we're at a
13 standstill. I mean, we've been 2,000 animals since
14 whenever there's -- it's probably a barrage of a bunch
15 of reasons for that being. And it's already been proven
16 that if you take the bulls out of the herd, you got --
17 a lot of damage gonna happen. So, anyway, I'm trying to
18 plant seeds and see where it goes.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Tom.

21
22 MS. FREYTAG: Mr. Chairman, this is Mary
23 Freytag.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Mary, go ahead.

26
27 MS. FREYTAG: Yes. Just based on the
28 population surveys that you do, I see every two years,
29 is that correct? Or is it every year? The data here just
30 shows every two years on the graph. Is that based --
31 these numbers are based on the population survey? Okay.
32 And then from the population survey the State issues the
33 license to the residents that apply for these hunts.
34 Based on the population, is there like a scientific
35 formula that you guys use to determine the number of
36 license that you issue? Like he was saying, even in a
37 decline, you're still handing out license to go hunt,
38 and then that was my first question. And then my other
39 question would be Leo, he mentioned the predators. I
40 mean, we as human are predators for the muskox, and so
41 are the wolves, and so are the bears. Have you guys
42 looked at their population because they do impact the
43 population of the muskox. Thank you.

44
45 MS. HUGHES: Yeah. Through the Chair to
46 member Mary Freytag. So, you are correct so, in you
47 know, you're looking here at from 2012 to 2024, the
48 surveys are, you know, about every two years, sometimes
49 three years depending of weather or stuff, you know,
50 hinders it. So, the second question you were asking is

1 like, you know, how are the number of permits, you know,
2 issued? So, that's -- so they are actually the Federal
3 permits that BLM, National Park Service hand out and
4 then the tier two permits of the State. That is a you
5 know, it's a dual, you know, quota. So, we all work
6 together that it's just one, you know, it's a quota for
7 everything that we all just kinda divvied out, that we
8 talk about. So, these surveys that we get for sex, age,
9 composition, population survey, you know, that's, you
10 know, where we look at the, you know, 2% of the overall
11 herd that Sara has mentioned, 10% of the mature bulls.
12 So, that's how you know, it's determined how many permits
13 that we're actually gonna be handing out, we look at
14 that harvest bull surplus, how many animals are
15 available. And then your third question that you had
16 asked about looking at population of like predators. So,
17 National Park Service and Fish and Game and BLM have
18 conducted a couple brown bear surveys out here on the
19 Seward Peninsula. The last one was, I think 2021 and
20 compared that to 20 -- boy, I think it was like 2016,
21 was it 15? So, enough time starting to pass, 2015. And
22 comparing that to the 2021 survey and the results that
23 they showed, it was at, you know, the brown bear
24 population was stable. Now, I know there's lots of
25 opinions on that, but that is, you know, what we've
26 looked at, in terms of brown bears out here on the Seward
27 Peninsula.

28
29 MS. FREYTAG: Any surveys on the wolves?

30
31 MS. HUGHES: Through the Chair to member
32 Mary, not through the Park Service side at this point.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Mary, for
35 the questions. And move on over to Councilman Seetot,
36 go ahead.

37
38 MR. SEETOT: (In Native) Elmer Seetot,
39 Brevig Mission. Alaska Department of Fish and Game has
40 management over muskox and most of the time we just talk
41 about harvest take and regulatory stuff. Has top
42 management in ADF&G have a policy on muskox that come
43 into town and then be in and around human population
44 because they had some gorings [sic] over the past years.
45 I'm not too sure if you guys -- I do have policies, do
46 not harass the animals, period. What is that -- what
47 their -- what any wildlife harvest, do not harass
48 animals. You go walk to the places, I think that you --
49 Nome has a wide variety of people, some are hunters, and
50 many, I think are, you know, photographers, you know,

1 nature lovers. But in our communities, for any animal
2 to become used to our area, our elders used to say that,
3 remember, you're the top predator. Top predator of all
4 the animals you can think, you can do whatever. But
5 always remember who you are and then these -- the
6 gentleman over here, we're talking about removal of
7 mature bulls from the herd. I think with any herd, the
8 caribou, the reindeer, the marine mammals, you know,
9 they have hierarchy that they kind of go to. Right now,
10 Mr. Chair is our, you know, top leader in our group. So,
11 that's what I would kinda compare it to. And then I'm
12 not really too sure, state of Alaska does not have
13 anything about harassing the animals. Only way to let
14 them know that you're top king is get them off there --
15 get them off your property. Even though we know that
16 they like certain plants in certain times of the spring
17 or certain times of the season, that's what they kind
18 of go for. There -- no smelling is, you know, with all
19 the ungulates, their smelling is a lot better than we
20 do, you know, ours. So, they know where the food is at,
21 they pretty much go with the seasons. And then to think
22 that, you know, they just have only one source of food,
23 the lichen, I don't think so. I see them throughout my
24 range or I seen caribou having berries, maybe they taste
25 good, you know. You know, they have all different kinds
26 of plants to promote their growth in each part of their
27 season. So, if ADF&G or whoever's in charge of management
28 of animals would go out into the communities and say we
29 do have a problem animal. What do we do? What do we do
30 with it? I think ADF&G, and those in charge need to be
31 more proactive in scaring away the animals instead of
32 bowing into peer pressure. Oh, don't bother them, we're
33 animal lovers. You know, each of them have their own
34 place. We praise our ushak, our walrus, fermented walrus
35 that we had dug pits to put our koukan, our meat in last
36 spring.

37
38 One bear so far, I think it's a yearling
39 that -- we do not pretty much care about grizzlies or
40 bears in our area. We just talk about them. How many
41 tickets have ADF&G have seen from the village of Brevig?
42 Very few. Teller, maybe. I think that same bear, I have
43 a walrus pit that is outside the airport. I was excited,
44 oh, the bear just dug out my pit, took out a slab, and
45 I mentioned that to the other person's pit. They said,
46 oh, they already dug mine three times. On the other side
47 of the creek, maybe that bear went to the person's larder
48 and got maybe about seven or eight times he's been there.
49 So, we're not really proactive about bear harvest in our
50 area because we're not very accustomed to, you know,

1 having either, like, fat up Kotzebue area or bear steaks
2 when I was growing up, that went by in the way of
3 microwaves and freezer food, you know. But the situation
4 with these predators is that they're out there right now
5 -- our committee members went out to a well known place,
6 and they said, poor wolf tracks and two wolverine tracks
7 so far. They talk about wildlife resources, birds,
8 shearwaters, stuff like that. I seen them, like a
9 gentleman said yesterday that, you know, they're dying
10 from starvation, and they are. You can see that in the
11 way that the birds act, the way they are not really
12 flying around away from you. So, everything that we try
13 to deal with, oh, I think we need to put it out that AF
14 [sic] or the managing agents need to be more proactive
15 in trying to deter muskox from you know, another tragedy.
16 I know what an encounter with muskox will do. My hair
17 went up, I was right there, he was ready to get me. I
18 just took off, took a quick about face and got out of
19 there and ran to the boat. Where is that muskox now? So,
20 they're dangerous, they're natural. You don't -- you
21 seen people, you know, try to get within close range you
22 know, taking pictures, stuff like that. Leave nature to
23 naturing, but all these gorings [sic] that you talk about
24 or that a person Nome Nugget it's happening. But I think
25 the managing agencies need to be more assertive in how
26 they deter these animals from coming in.

27
28 They -- I think they have to kinda tweak
29 their own regulations in order for man to be in above
30 all creatures, not the creatures. Like we're supposed
31 to be in charge of the animals, not the animals in charge
32 of us. So, we got the capability to think the right way
33 instead of trying -- oh, our hundred year old regulations
34 said do not disturb the animals. This is contrary to
35 what was taught to us at a young age. If you want to be
36 a successful hunter, respect the animal, respect the
37 environment, but always know -- let them know your top
38 predator or else they will recognize your weakness. I've
39 seen that with marine mammals, I've seen that with
40 walrus. When you're -- they smell this -- they smell the
41 fear factor from you. I know they'll go after you,
42 period. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Elmer. Mr.
45 Moses, Council Moses.

46
47 MR. MOSES: Robert Moses. I had a
48 question. Are you saying that decline in the young muskox
49 a few years ago I read in the Nome Nugget, maybe it was
50 your guys' study, for you guys radio collared them and

1 you guys found the dead ones on the ridge. That was
2 pretty interesting. And maybe during that time, too,
3 maybe the weather played a big factor in that part,
4 during those years where the muskox crashed, maybe.
5 Cause a few years ago in our region Golovin, White
6 Mountain we got a lot of rain and there was like that
7 much water in the river going to White Mountain. We had
8 to drive through from Golovin to get to White Mountain,
9 had to go through that much water on the ice to get to
10 White Mountain. And another question I had was during
11 your lottery muskox where you draw people to hunt, is
12 it only for the people in our region or are other people
13 like from Anchorage or Kotzebue or Bethel area coming
14 here to muskox hunt?

15

16 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thanks for the
17 question, Mr. Moses. Go ahead, Letty.

18

19 MS. HUGHES: Through the Chair to Robert
20 Moses. So, for Federal permits, it is, you know, the
21 Federal public lands are closed to non-federally
22 qualified users. So, all of you sitting here at the
23 table are federally qualified users. And so, would be
24 able to apply for Park Service or a BLM permit and then
25 I'll let Sara answer for the State side.

26

27 MS. HENSLEE: Yeah. Through the Chair,
28 this is Sara. The State permits are through what's called
29 the Tier 2 system, which is pretty much restricted to
30 just subsistence use only. So, without getting into the
31 boring details of how the scoring works, our permits end
32 up going to all basically Unit 22 residents. So, on that
33 note, we do have an application period starting on
34 November 1st. So, if you're interested or you know, folks
35 in Golovin that might be, I'd encourage them to call us
36 or apply online. You could do mail in permits, too.
37 We'll send flyers out to the villages, and we try to
38 visit as many villages as we can during that November
39 1st through December 16th period. But yeah, come find
40 myself or Alicia and we'll write your number down or
41 anyone that's interested, and we'll call you and get the
42 application squared away. Usually, the folks in the
43 villages that apply, I've seen they end up getting
44 permits, kind of what sets you apart from others is how
45 many days you've spent hunting or fishing in an area.
46 So, as long as you've gone out for 30 plus days, which
47 seems to be the majority of folks in the villages,
48 chances are pretty good of getting a permit.

49

50

1 MS. FREYTAG: Mr. Chair, this is Mary
2 Freytag. Based on the amount of applicants that do apply
3 for these permits -- muskox permit to hunt them. I know
4 that because my oldest daughter many decades ago applied
5 and was given a muskox hunt. But the -- do you guys do,
6 like, a lottery? You pick out of the hat all of the ones
7 that qualify that applied for these permits. Are you
8 guys picking out of a hat, or is there a point system
9 that you guys rate?

10
11 MS. HENSLEE: Yeah, through the Chair.
12 So, on the Federal side, it's a pulling out of a hat
13 according to the local residents that apply, and for the
14 State side it is more of a scored system. So, it depends
15 on what -- where you live. So, for example like,
16 Unalakleet is gonna score higher on what we score for
17 cost of gas and food for an area rather than someone in
18 Nome. So, I'm just talking about Unalakleet muskox
19 permits right now. They will score -- Unalakleet
20 residents will score higher there and then it'll also
21 give you points for how many days you spent hunting and
22 fishing in an area. So, the highest you can get for that
23 score is 70 plus days -- is the highest point system.
24 And then if someone in your household is also applied
25 for the hunt, they get points as well, and you get points
26 for how many years you've applied for that permit. So,
27 ours you put in all these numbers. It's a quick
28 application. Usually, it takes five minutes to complete
29 and Fish and Game is available to help anyone who's
30 trying to apply for the first time or just wants help
31 with getting -- if they haven't gotten a permit and they
32 don't know why, we can help with all of that. And at the
33 end of your application, we will get scores according
34 to like who's got the highest score and we'll issue
35 permits accordingly to the highest score per area. So,
36 if that makes sense.

37
38 MS. FREYTAG: Yes, that does actually.
39 So, there's a twofold there where you pick out of a hat
40 and then you distribute the harvest tickets for the ones
41 that -- with the most points. So, okay, thank you.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you for the
44 question. I think we got Martin. Did you want to speak
45 too Tommy in a minute?

46
47 (Simultaneous speech)

48
49 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: You're first.
50

1 MR. AUKONGAK: Oh! So, Martin from
2 Golovin. So, we're playing basketball with every
3 village, basically?

4
5 MS. HENSLEE: Yeah, through the Chair.
6 So no and yes, I guess. So, it's according to the Unit
7 that you're applying for the permit in, right. So, for
8 you, you're applying for the TX105 permit, that's for
9 Golovin, White Mountain, Koyuk, Elim area. So, you are
10 playing basketball with Koyuk, Golovin, Elim, White
11 Mountain, and basically everybody's gonna score the same
12 for the food and gas cost for those villages. But what
13 sets folks apart is how much time they spent hunting and
14 fishing and how many years they've applied for the permit
15 or you also get points the same -- tou either apply for
16 the permit or you eat muskox meat also counts. So, that's
17 what sets folks apart. So, yeah, I encourage if you
18 wanna apply, you should absolutely call us and we can
19 walk you through the process, and I -- at least in my
20 experience, I think a lot of folks are claiming as many
21 points as they deserve. So, when they call us and we go
22 through the application, usually they're like, oh, I
23 didn't realize I do get 70 plus days and I haven't been
24 claiming three years of application time, even though I
25 was eating muskox meat at potlucks and things like that.
26 So, I'd encourage you to reach out to Fish and Game.
27 We'd love to help folks get the applications figured out
28 so.

29
30 MR. AUKONGAK: And until the herd crash
31 or get better, then you guys change your basketball game.
32 Is that what you're saying?

33
34 MS. HENSLEE: Yeah. Through the Chair.
35 The harvestable surplus would have to go up to 100 muskox
36 to go to the Tier 1 system. And that's getting back into
37 the -- what Tom was describing, is like everybody going
38 out on January 1st and you just line up and shoot muskox
39 like -- not that that's what would happen again, but
40 that's what did happen historically. So, that would be
41 Tier 1, and we're in Tier 2 right now. So, right now the
42 harvestable surplus for our area is 60 overall, it's
43 gonna [sic] take a whole lot to get to that 100, and I
44 don't see it in the future. And then our next survey is
45 planned for 2028. So, for the time being, this is what
46 we've got.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you for your
49 questions, Martin. Thank you, Sara. Mr. Gray.

50

1 MR. GRAY: So, sometimes I read things a
2 little different and this is for your person that's gonna
3 come in and talk about the muskox at the next meeting
4 or whatever. I hear status quo, status quo, we're at
5 2,000 animals status quo in, you know, I guess in my
6 mind, there is no status quo. 2,000 animals at one point,
7 we were in a decline, we're still in a decline. I -- you
8 know, status quo is -- makes things all cushy and warm,
9 and all that. But if you look at the Seward Peninsula,
10 you can probably put 50,000 animals on there. And, you
11 know, I know we can put a lot of reindeer on there, and
12 we're kinda in the same game in a sense. But, you know,
13 the challenge I'm throwing out is, no, we're not in
14 status quo, we're in decline and that's why we have a
15 Tier 2 system. That's why things are the way they are.
16 And how can we work on making this better? You know, I
17 struggle with, we just leave it up to the elements,
18 we'll leave it up to the wolves, and the bears, and the
19 whatever's [sic] and roll the dice and whatever it is we
20 go on in life. Well, you know it -- there's times that
21 -- and there's times you have to manage the players in
22 there. And I understand you've done everything you can
23 to take the predators out of the system. But, you know,
24 I threw out the idea of the bulls, I mean, we can have
25 a moratorium if that's what it takes to help the animals
26 increase, whatever it is. You know, I think something
27 different needs to be in the game plan sort of speak.
28 But again, my feeling is we're not in status quo, we're
29 in a decline and we've had 3,000 animals before. There's
30 no reason we can't get back there.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you for your
33 comments, Mr. Gray. Do you have anything, Sara? Okay.
34 Elmer is.....

35
36 (Simultaneous speech)

37
38 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: I was gonna let her
39 respond first. Yeah.

40
41 MS. HENSLEE: Okay, through the Chair.
42 Yeah, I don't really like status quo either. I think it
43 implies that we, you know, get this number and hang our
44 hats up and don't think about it again for another year
45 or several years. And I -- we are doing a whole lot
46 outside of these surveys. It just -- it doesn't end with
47 the spring surveys we do once every few years. And I
48 really wish Brinn could talk before all of you and
49 present all of the research that's going on. And she was
50 hired with the intent to help us figure out what's going

1 on with the muskox, because it's been 14 years, 12 years
2 at this point, and we've seen no change in our
3 population, even though we're harvesting at this 2% of
4 the population, 10% of the mature bulls, it's -- so why
5 isn't it working? Like we have a lot of questions right
6 now as -- and you know, hunters want muskox, like you
7 said, like why are we harvesting so few if it's not
8 changing the population? And she's got a lot of projects
9 up in the air, and she's been finishing up the calf
10 project and finding a lot of interesting things, and it
11 -- just the numbers don't really match with what we're
12 seeing in the population data. So, I think it's really
13 interesting to kinda delve into that more with like, our
14 survival is pretty good, the adults usually with adult
15 females, anything below 80% survival, you're looking at
16 a decline in the population and she's finding 90%
17 survival and up which is incredible. You really want
18 your adult females to be doing well and they seem to be,
19 and our calves seem to be doing well. So, it's
20 perplexing, it's kind of a contradictory information
21 there to see our survival data of her collars doing as
22 well as they are. But yet the population seems to be
23 stable, and it raises a lot of questions about things
24 such as like, are they moving out of the area? As we
25 keep seeing the muskox that are moving towards
26 Unalakleet now we have that hunt open in that area. We
27 keep expanding our survey area. It used to end at Koyuk
28 basically, and now we're going all the way down to --
29 gosh, we're almost near the Golsovia now with how far
30 south we're on and we're finding muskox there. So, I
31 think with this population data, it doesn't end there,
32 there's a lot of research we've got going on, and it
33 seems like we keep getting new questions every day. So,
34 yeah, again, I hope Brinn can come talk to you next time
35 because it seems like everybody has a lot of really good
36 questions that she could answer.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Sara. We
39 -- at one point in time, we had a muskox expert sitting
40 at this table named Tim Smith, and one of the things
41 that I remember him talking to me about was the health
42 of the herd. And there was the 70s transplant original,
43 and then I think it was in the early 80s there was a
44 second, he said, when that second batch came in here,
45 it really pumped up the herd. So, here we are. Tommy is
46 tired of status quo and so am I. Not throwing any nasties
47 at anybody, but, you know, as transplants, any -- is
48 that even in the air with the Department or the Parks?
49 I mean, why not? It worked. You said that everything's
50 kinda moved that way, and you're going all the way to

1 Golsovia. So, you got critters going and moving on their
2 own. Why? We don't know, maybe predation. I don't know
3 if it's -- I don't think it's food, because I think that
4 they had a excellent abundance amount of food in the
5 range that -- when they started here on this part of the
6 country here. They're migrating the other way. Why not
7 put some more in this area here and see what they do?
8 Instead of waiting for something to change, make the
9 change. It's already done -- it's been done twice now.
10 They were here, they weren't here, they were planted
11 here, they were -- there was an additional transplant
12 here that seemed to work really well. Why not look into
13 that again to build the herd back up?

14
15 What's interesting is that he, Tim
16 Smith, had a master's degree in game biology, and he
17 learned how to run a hatchery through, you know, working
18 with Fish and Game. Did a lot of extensive bear tags.
19 People didn't know a lot of what he did, he did quite a
20 bit of stuff. So, when he talked about the muskox herd,
21 it kind of, you know, that kind of comes back to me
22 like, shouldn't we look into that if we're not seeing
23 anything indicating there's a reason why they're going
24 down? How about putting some more new animals in the
25 system to see what that does? And I'll go back to what
26 he told me about the Lower Yukon. He tried to get Fish
27 and Game to transplant moose down there. He said it was
28 excellent habitat. Excellent. Guess what? Louie, the
29 moose did it all by themselves, I tried to get Fish and
30 Game to do this. And I've flown over there in 2012, I
31 know what was happening over there then. Now you're
32 trying to get you to shoot three, you know, for a hunter,
33 he was right. So, I'm going back on his expertise of the
34 muskox. Shouldn't we think something like on those
35 lines, maybe what he said to me makes sense. Maybe we
36 should be trying something like that to build a herd
37 back instead of waiting to see what happens. And so, I
38 thought I'd bring that to the table. I know Elmer has
39 something. I'm -- I guess the question is, and I --
40 seems like you added it, you know, answered it by saying
41 there's no talk of transplants. So, thank you. And Elmer,
42 go ahead.

43
44 MR. SEETOT: Elmer from Brevig Mission.
45 These two gentlemen on the left talk about decline in
46 muskox. I have a different point of view, I live close
47 to the village, I've been raised from diapers on up,
48 cotton diapers to in fact, all the way up and I seen all
49 kinds of activities that were even told to me that I
50 experienced, that I witnessed. Muskox were transplanted

1 or they were offloaded at Port Clarence, Coast Guard
2 Station there and then the people with snowmachine they
3 transplanted the -- I mean, they brought the first muskox
4 west of California Creek. And that was a -- being a
5 youngster, I didn't know, you know, state of Alaska did
6 that without our -- without consulting. I'm not talking
7 about the present managers, but during their time, they
8 were pretty strict when State, you know, when Alaska
9 became a State because the biologists at that time were
10 trying to go -- do what their regulations. And I keep
11 hearing that question, why? Why? Come to the villages
12 and ask these people why? Why are they declining? They
13 got eyes, they got information right out front -- right
14 out their front door.

15
16 Mr. Green, our Chairman, said that
17 they're on decline. They -- everything moves forever.
18 They don't just stay in one place. If you get harassed
19 in one place, you're not gonna stay there. You can move
20 out there because of the bear and the wolf predation up
21 and around our area. I seen them -- I seen dozens of
22 moose kill just by a pack of roaming wolves, just by
23 following their tracks. So, they're kinda destructive
24 in that way, other than that, you know, they have --
25 they need to eat. And Mr. Moses here said that ground
26 saturation from water, that changes the feeding patterns
27 of the animals. If you -- we -- I know we don't like wet
28 sandwiches, you know, we try get [sic] the best of food
29 that is available during the time of the season. That's
30 what these animals are doing. When they drop them off,
31 that area doesn't have all the food necessary for them
32 to go through their life cycle. They don't just eat in
33 one place and have, well, lichen all day, I mean, all
34 year. They have to have other nutrients in order for
35 them to be able to build to a, you know, good herd. And
36 like Mr. Gray was saying about the removal of bulls, I
37 think those are the driving factors, you know, in every
38 species because with big herds -- at least with marine
39 mammals, I don't know of -- if any of you have heard
40 this, but I heard from an elder saying with a walrus
41 with big herd, they have a ice master or something like
42 a large shell that barks like a dog. I never heard of
43 that, but you know, these things happen that you -- we
44 need to be aware of and some of the things that they
45 tell me, you know, it's surprising. But from my point
46 of view, I don't think they're declining, they're just
47 moving, moving on to better pastures away from
48 predation, and maybe human interaction. Why -- I seen
49 the natural side of the muskox so, I wouldn't -- kinda
50 welcome them back. We talk trash about them, they eat

1 our sourdock, they eat our plants. But the thing is, the
2 more you use the resources, the more it will be for you,
3 that's TEK. It's not in your computers, but some
4 something that we carry along. And it's not only for my
5 region, I heard from another region, in a different way,
6 but the same thing that was passed on. And for you to
7 answer your questions of why, try to talk to some of the
8 hunters, try to talk to some of the elders, they know
9 what's in there. I don't know even know how to operate
10 a computer. I say, help me -- my son, help me with my
11 phone. Oh, I know how to call that pretty much basic.
12 But to get into something so complex, you know, as to
13 how the animals react, you just kinda pretty much say,
14 oh, this is what I would do if I was kicked out. So,
15 interaction between animals and I mean, the prey and the
16 predator, you know, they have an instinct to survive,
17 they know what to do. And here we talk about these
18 animals to death and then that (indiscernible) more you
19 talk about animals, the more they won't be there for you
20 in that sense. So, that's okay.

21
22 I tried to speak carefully, but sometime
23 my words just kinda explode in a way that it's not being
24 nice to anyone, but for you to be a successful animal -
25 - respect the animal and respect the environment, and
26 whatever you're trying to get. But like Mr. Green was
27 saying most -- or -- and Mr. Gray was saying, we've been
28 talking about these issues for a long, long time. Pretty
29 soon we're gonna have a little, you know, little cloud
30 burst every time we talk about it. But I need to get
31 action done, you know, quit asking the question, why?
32 Go to the root of the problem and we can move on. Thank
33 you, Mr. Chair.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you,
36 Councilman Seetot. Anyone else? Mary.

37
38 MS. FREYTAG: Mary Freytag, Unalakleet.
39 Just a suggestion, maybe to the muskox lady. We humans
40 are the top predator, and then, like, they're talking
41 about the other predators, the wolf packs and the bears.
42 It would be great to see numbers and that sort of thing.
43 How much predation -- results from these other
44 predators? I mean, we as humans were being regulated on
45 when we can go hunt them and how many, because we are a
46 predator. Okay, what about the wolves? And what about
47 the bear? We need to, you know, like he has saying, we
48 all got to be on the same page. So, that was just a
49 suggestion. Thank you.

50

1 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Mary.
2 We've got Chuck out there. I did have a question about
3 food sources for muskox and reindeer. How similar are
4 they?

5
6 MS. HENSLEE: Through the Chair. We have
7 to get Brinn here next time, but she has the best analogy
8 about how muskox, like everything pizza, were caribou
9 and reindeer, like pepperoni pizza. So, where caribou
10 are very specialist with their lichen and, you know,
11 forbs in the summertime. The muskox are pretty
12 generalist with what they eat, I mean, we'll do browse
13 surveys for moose in the wintertime, and we'll know a
14 muskox tasted these weird musk willows because they'll
15 try to strip the bark off the willows, and it's like a
16 little child trying to eat a willow branch. It's the
17 weirdest thing I've ever seen, but muskox will try
18 anything from my experience, and it seems like they don't
19 have a particular preference necessarily. But again,
20 Brinn is the one that would be able to speak to this
21 best, and I've got this mental list going of the
22 presentation I've gotta give to her and that she can
23 give you guys, which includes the predation causes for
24 like bears, wolves. She's got all of that data, on
25 calves, yearlings, two year olds, three year olds, she's
26 got it all.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: So, she's jumping,
29 she's jumping up and down, Louis?!

30
31 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Yeah so, the reason
32 why I was asking about food sources, I guess I can bring
33 that to her. But you know this -- at one point in time,
34 I wanted to point out that this Seward Peninsula
35 supported 600,000 reindeer when the Lomen Brothers had
36 their thing going on, and there was plenty of food back
37 there for reindeer. So, that brings back to mind that I
38 always hear that muskox are eating reindeer food, and
39 I'm thinking it can't be that bad. People have
40 interactions with them. Like I said, I had an interaction
41 with a muskox in my yard, and the stick was all I needed
42 to get rid of it, but the idea that they're competing
43 for food kinda doesn't sit right. And you just open the
44 page for me that says, Louis, your mother raised goats,
45 they ate plastic bags, they ate flowers in the yard,
46 they ate buds off of cottonwood trees in the springtime.
47 They ate whatever they could eat and of course, I had a
48 younger brother of mine that ate everything the goats
49 ate when he was two or three years old at Pilgrim
50 Springs. That brought my, you know, that picture up there

1 brought that to mind. So, I don't see the muskox being
2 such a nuisance when it comes to a food source. So, you
3 know, you just turn my light on, they're, you know,
4 they're a giant goat. That's all they are so, thank you
5 for that. And we will get her up to the table when --
6 but right now, Chuck had something to add there, and
7 thank you. Mr. Menadelokk. Thank you, Sara.

8
9 MR. MENADELOOK: Thank you, Chuck
10 Menadelook. I just wanted to say, does public opinion
11 play any factor in your decision? Because I have family
12 in Teller, I have family in Brevig, I have family in
13 Wales, and they all complain about muskox. They all been
14 chased by them, you know. I have a sister that got chased
15 almost ten miles. She was in her car, and that muskox
16 followed her, it maybe not have chased her, but it --
17 she couldn't go picking around those things, you know
18 they're dangerous. I'm just saying I have no problem
19 with, you know, growing the population or doing better
20 than status quo but, you know. People need to go picking,
21 do a lot of them and go picking (indiscernible), you'll
22 see it in August, I've been out in the tundra and the
23 coast all summer long and you see muskox all over,
24 grizzlies too. And before we start thinking about
25 introducing more, maybe we should say, well, whatever
26 they gonna do to ladies picking, you know. One of these
27 days, one of them could get gored, just like that guy
28 that, you know, and he was armed. So, that's just a
29 question I had. Thank you.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Chuck, for
32 bringing that to the table. I -- it's not that I don't
33 know that I -- for myself and the others here, you know,
34 we all are on that page. It brings to light that
35 something you just made me think about an elder that we
36 had named Jobe (indiscernible). He told me that back in
37 the day that if there was anything that was close to the
38 communities, like bears -- I remember when there was
39 hardly any bears on the Seward Peninsula. I grew up --
40 shoot, I got in a rowboat when I was eight years old and
41 rode up the Kuzitrin River to go hunting by myself. That
42 -- in that day was -- there was no problem. You know, I
43 was gone a longways away from everybody. Today we have
44 the idea that you just brought to the table was the
45 muskox being dangerous and I -- I've dealt with them
46 myself so, I know what you're saying. But what Jobe told
47 me was, they went after whatever it was to remove it
48 from the area. And maybe that's what we need to do. Like
49 Elmer says, we need to move these things, we can go out
50 there and move them, and Fish and Game needs to

1 understand that if that's what we're doing in our
2 communities, it's because of the safety of our families
3 and animals, whatever that case may be, cause [sic]
4 there's already been that defense of life and property
5 here in Nome. That was a big issue. It got taken care
6 of through the courts. So, how do we manage it? It's a
7 good point, there's two sides to the story.

8
9 What this Council does is it's about
10 food resource. So, there -- my thinking is about what
11 to get and make it abundant enough for people to have.
12 Because we're really in a tough position here right now
13 in the Seward Peninsula. We don't have any caribou, we
14 don't have -- our muskox herd is down. These are all our
15 sources of protein. Moose, I mean, we're down to a three-
16 day hunt, my goodness, I'd never thought I'd see that
17 in a day. I mean, I -- before, it use to be months. We
18 had -- we could go out there and select what we wanted,
19 when we wanted, everybody was on step with that. That
20 was a, you know, good time. Area 18 down there, they're
21 experiencing that, they got more than they need. So,
22 they're trying to have people come and get your three,
23 you know, any time. I would like to see a moose -- the
24 abundance of moose be like that. So, then we don't --
25 so much have to have like muskox. But at this point, the
26 reindeer, they're gone. I mean, we're down to nothing,
27 and it costs a lot of money to get out there and do
28 that, and then experiencing what happened in 22C his
29 year with mus [sic] -- with the moose jumping up and,
30 it was a 40? I mean, you're -- that tells me the gas is
31 killing people. They're gonna put gas in their rig or
32 whatever it is and go just a little ways over the hill
33 to go hunting. So, that's what this Council is about,
34 is about subsistence resources and so, I guess that's
35 where I'm thinking. I know the -- what the muskox is
36 like. So, I got people waving at me. Was that you and
37 Tom? Go ahead.

38
39 MR. AUKONGAK: So -- Martin. So, what do
40 you pay attention to more, a lot of the right wording
41 or the price of fuel?

42
43 MS. HUGHES: Through the Chair to
44 Council Martin, could you clarify? Are you talking about
45 the scoring process? Okay, I'm gonna let Sara talk to
46 that on the State side.

47
48 MS. HENSLEE: Yeah, through the Chair.
49 Sara, again. They are scored equally. So, price of food
50 and price of gas. You can get a maximum of 30 points for

1 each. So, they score the same but then the prices will
2 vary by community, but essentially from the scores I've
3 seen, you can get the highest score everywhere except
4 for Nome. Nome is gonna score half as good as Golovin,
5 which is why a Nome resident is gonna have a lot harder
6 time getting a muskox permit in 22B, compared to Golovin
7 who's there, and they would score higher on food and
8 gas, and they'd have a higher score for how long they've
9 hunted to fish that year.

10
11 MR. AUKONGAK: Until the Renda comes.
12

13 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: He's talking about
14 the Russian fuel tanker that showed up in 2012, that I
15 went out there and chopped all the ice, all the way out
16 there to -- anyway. A little humor is always good,
17 especially when everybody's like.....
18

19 (People laughing)
20

21 Thank you, Martin. Okay. Who's next?
22 Tommy or Elmer?
23

24 MR. GRAY: I want to touch on a couple
25 of things. You know, these guys have brought up the
26 village outlook on muskox and I have to agree. Villagers
27 don't like muskox, they don't want them around their
28 towns. And Nome loves muskox, they have a policy that
29 we want muskox around our towns for the tourism and
30 people to go look at them. So, somehow that needs to be
31 addressed and dealt with. The other side of the coin,
32 you know, we talk about this permit system and hunting
33 and la-ta-da . My son -- I hunted with my son this fall,
34 moose hunting. He never did get a moose. When you go
35 muskox hunting, you might burn five or ten gallons of
36 gas. My son burned on this moose hunt, this last fall
37 2,000 dollars worth of gas and never got a moose. And
38 the majority of the people in White Mountain that moose
39 hunted burned between 1,000 and 2,000. A lot of people
40 spend a lot of money so, there's gonna be a lot of appeal
41 for this 10 dollar or ten gallon of gas hunt. Just
42 saying, you know, it's -- but the biggest thing is the
43 contrast between Nome and the villages. Villages don't
44 want muskox around their towns. I mean, I saw on Facebook
45 they had a bear at the dump just after this last snow.
46 And you know, White Mountains attitude is, if it's at
47 the dump, we're gonna kill it. And that's the way it
48 should be. I have no problem with that, but I do have a
49 problem with people wounding them and not following up
50 on 'em [sic].

1

2

CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Gray. That brings to light about what I was mentioning earlier, that Fish and Game and any regulatory system needs to consider that to be, you know, it's our domain. It doesn't belong to the animals. Mr. Seetot talks about what the elders say, I bring to the table what Jobe (indiscernible) talked about. You just -- you have to remove them and there has to be some kind of mechanism that makes it safe for somebody to pull a trigger. And like Tommy says, he doesn't like seeing them wounded, and a lot of people will do that. They'll shoot them in the -- a bear in the stomach just to get it to run and go hide and die somewhere. Well, I'm above that myself, just like he is. Pull the trigger, put it down, and report it. So, like I said, there was at one point in time here with the Northern Norton Sound Advisory Committee back in early 2000s. Elmer asked a question; I was Chairing [sic] the meeting at the time. What's gonna happen if there's too many bears? And my answer was, unfortunately, people are gonna take the law into their own hands, and break the law, and do away with the bears, and we've seen that. So, how do we deal with that through the system? The elders said this way. That's the way most of us think. We understand that cause that's where we've brought up from. What is the department and the Federal Government gonna do about it to make it where we could do something like that and manage our domain. I shouldn't have to get up early in the morning at two o'clock cause my dogs are barking and there's a young bull muskox across the yard, I run down in my slippers and grab a stick to fight off an animal, understanding that animals do come and go. But how do we manage? Elmer talks about the villages, they don't like muskox. Well, rather than calling it harassment, call it herding. We're gonna herd these animals away from the community without any repercussions from the government, protect ourselves. So, I think I have Elmer and then Martin. But before we -- before I wanna move this along, because these ladies have a couple more reports. But go ahead and do what you're gonna do here. We got a couple more reports from you or not? I just wanted to make sure.

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

MS. HUGHES: Through the Chair. I just need to mention some IRA funding that's Bering Land Bridge is doing with some of the communities. That's the last -- the only thing I need to mention.

00030

1 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Okay. Thank you,
2 Letty. How about you, Sara, did you have more?

3
4 MS. HENSLEE: Fish and Game is on the
5 online agenda, but not the paper one so, I'm not sure
6 that we have time to give a report. If invited, we will,
7 but.....

8
9 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Okay, thank you for
10 your answer. Yes, and there is an invitation for you to
11 give a report so, all right. I said, Tommy didn't say
12 yet, but I said, we have somebody from the North Pacific
13 Fisheries Management Council Advisory panel also coming
14 up. So, that would be Mellisa Johnson. So, let's go
15 briefly. Elmer.

16
17 MR. SEETOT: Elmer from Brevig Mission.
18 I -- you mentioned briefly about the declining numbers
19 of caribou, moose, muskox, stuff like that, and then on
20 the back page of their report, they say they [sic] gonna
21 participate in International Beaver Day, which was held
22 April 7th, 2023. We do have a lot of beaver in the
23 northern Imuruk Basin in Goose Green River, I would think
24 to Pilgrim River. So, that's another food source that
25 we're not very familiar with, but I would assume or
26 think that the -- point National Park Service to that
27 idea that, you know, they would have that Beaver as a
28 mascot, even though it's, you know, it's doing wonders
29 for the waterways. But I don't think, you know, it's
30 something very new for us to see beavers in and around.
31 Now we can't even drink the water, we got to carry our
32 own water, this and that. So, they're -- something new
33 species that you mentioned were declining food sources,
34 we got to start, you know, like the muskox was
35 introduced. They were able to use that. I know interior
36 villagers use beaver, not so much our coastal
37 communities because we do have other land or marine
38 mammals that we depend on. That was what I was commenting
39 on. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Elmer.
42 That brings to mind of a potlatch I went to for the
43 folks in port -- Prince William Sound. There was beaver,
44 moose, and everything, so, I got a -- I'll taste this
45 beaver but I'm a moose guy. When I got done eating, I
46 went back for the beaver, it was that good.

47
48 So anyway, and to talk about, reflect
49 back on what Jobe (indiscernible) said. He said that
50 they removed the beaver from the system because they

1 thought they were competitive -- causing problems for
2 their salmon. And there's an area on the Fish River, I
3 think was the last stand of the beaver, I don't remember
4 the name. So, it actually -- beavers at one point in
5 time were starting to populate, and the people removed
6 them way back when -- I thought when I saw him in the
7 mid-70s down below the Pilgrim Springs down there, I
8 thought, oh good, we'll be able to trap beaver. But now
9 they're everywhere, so. Martin.

10
11 MR. AUKONGAK: Real quick. So, it's 2024
12 both of you know that there's problem if you -- I go
13 home tomorrow. I gotta get oil for my house, but if
14 there's a muskox outside of my house, I get it. I have
15 no time to call anybody, I wanna keep my home heated.
16 So, on paper, finding a solution, you know, it's
17 Saturday, you don't wanna be bothered. What have we got
18 to put on paper right now or what are we gonna do, you
19 know?

20
21 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Go ahead, Sara.

22
23 MS. HENSLEE: Through the Chair. Yeah, I
24 think one of the themes I've been hearing from a lot of
25 this conversation, is questions about what's called
26 defense of life and property. And I think in your
27 situation, I would get a hold of the VPSO in Golovin.
28 Is it Carlos? No.

29
30 Oh, I see what you're saying.....

31
32 (Simultaneous speech)

33
34 MR. AUKONGAK: I'm just saying, I mean,
35 I'm saying, yeah, I mean, where you got a gun, but like,
36 boom. And then, you know, I'm -- I already got my oil
37 right there. I have no time for anybody.

38
39 MS. HENSLEE: Okay.

40
41 MR. AUKONGAK: I mean, you're not gonna
42 keep my house heated.

43
44 MS. HENSLEE: Yeah, so, that is defense
45 of life and property. So, if a muskox is causing you
46 just imminent threat to your public, or safety, or your
47 property, you are absolutely justified in taking an
48 animal, muskox, bear, moose in defense of life and
49 property. So, yes, absolutely. If an animal is
50 threatening you or your property, damaging property, you

1 can shoot that muskox. So, I was talking with the --
2 where the VPSO comes in is, if after the fact, like if
3 you're wanting to report it and we are on call on the
4 weekends, you call Nome PD, not that that's really
5 available for you, but that's just like reporting it.
6 With DLP regulations, you are required to report as soon
7 as possible, and yeah, the VPSO could help in that
8 situation, but yes, absolutely. If in the moment, if a
9 muskox is, you know, threatening you, attacking
10 property, damaging property, threatening a dog, you,
11 family, you can take that muskox. Keep yourself safe,
12 by all means, so.

13

14 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Okay. Is that good?

15

16 MR. AUKONGAK: Yep, and then you got
17 Facebook, and then you guys didn't hear it all over
18 before even me.

19

20 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Okay. Sara, Letty
21 anymore?

22

23 MS. HUGHES: Through the Chair. I just
24 have one last item that is actually not on this paper,
25 but I'll just verbally mention it. And this was a
26 reminder as it came by way of Janette our superintendent.
27 So, Bering Land Bridge received some, we call it IRA
28 funding, but it's Inflation Reduction Act funding that
29 we receive that's used for subsistence purposes. And so,
30 we have done, like tribal consultation with Shishmaref,
31 Deering, Brevig. We haven't been able to meet with
32 Kotzebue or Wales as of yet, to see like for the
33 subsistence food security funding sources, you know,
34 what would they like to put it towards. So, like Brevig
35 for example, said that they would like some of those
36 subsistence funds to go towards culture camps, like with
37 the youth. You know, that was a big discussion like
38 yesterday. Some of the other ones was like food
39 preservation in terms of maybe not so much drying because
40 the way that our weather has been going into canning.
41 So, having the supplies to, you know, to start doing
42 some of the canning. So, we are actually gearing up to
43 send out tribal consultation letters to communities
44 again. And we're picking the discussions back up then.
45 So, how we can start getting the funding to them for
46 culture camps and food security. Thank you.

47

48 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you. Is there
49 any questions for Letty on this from Council?

50

00033

1 (No response)

2

3 Do we have Council on the phone?

4

5 MS. CHAPA: No.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: No, okay. Thank you,
8 Gisela. Well, that sums it up there for you. Thank you,
9 Letty, for your report, and thank you too Sara.

10

11 MS. HENSLEE: Thank you.

12

13 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: For answering all the
14 questions, both of you ladies, thanks. We're moving on
15 to -- we have Mellisa Johnson on the line with North
16 Pacific Fisheries Management Council. She's on the
17 Advisory Panel, she has something to report to us. Are
18 you there, Melissa?

19

20 MS. JOHNSON: I am, can you hear me okay?

21

22 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: You're coming in five
23 by five. Go ahead, you have the floor.

24

25 MS. JOHNSON: Okay. I don't know if you
26 want my video. But first, (In Native) Maktuayak (in
27 Native). So, my Inupiaq name is Maktuayak. My English
28 name is Mellisa Johnson, I'm originally from the
29 community of Nome. I am a Nome Eskimo Community tribal
30 member. I'm also a descendant of Johnson and others, you
31 know, in the region. I work for the Arctic Yukon-
32 Kuskokwim Tribal Consortium as policy director, and I
33 am in my second term on the North Pacific Fishery
34 Management Council Advisory Panel in a regular public
35 holding seat. And I had emailed to your Coordinators
36 yesterday evening or early this morning, combination of
37 the two -- a few items so, I'm not sure if they will
38 hopefully share that information with you. The first
39 thing in the email that I included is the draft, North
40 Pacific Fishery Management Council schedule for February
41 2025, and this is related to the special meeting related
42 to chum bycatch. And so, the second link that I included
43 was the Council motion that was carried through this
44 past April 2024, and then a Power Point that was
45 presented to the SSC, the Science and Statistical
46 Committee, the Advisory Panel, and to the main Council
47 body on their outreach and engagement. And then the word
48 documents that I included were -- the first one is a one
49 pager and hopefully your staff have access to the
50 document, but it's a one pager to share with your

1 community members. And I'm not sure the extent of the
2 outreach to, you know, to our home region. Is that this
3 special meeting that's being held here in February, it's
4 scheduled for the 3rd through the 10th at the Egan Center
5 and it's to review the second initial draft of the Chum
6 Bycatch Environmental Impact Statement. And it's a in-
7 person meeting as well as a hybrid opportunity if you're
8 not able to travel in. At our last meeting, we had
9 roughly 100 testifiers, and then last April 2023, we
10 had, I think close to 300. But during this meeting, the
11 Council will focus on reviewing the chum bycatch EIS,
12 and it's a crucial document assessing the environmental
13 impact of bycatch management measures. And the Council
14 may further develop alternatives and address key
15 management strategies. And in still speaking to this one
16 pager, I put the meeting dates for the SSC, they are
17 scheduled February 3rd, 4th, and 5th. The advisory
18 panel, we are scheduled for the 4th, 5th and 6th -- 4th,
19 5th, 6th, and 7th and then the main Council body is
20 scheduled for February 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th. And I
21 just wanted to put, you know, like in -- cause I'm a
22 visual learner and I do better sharing visually to help
23 members of the public see the overlap between the SSC,
24 the AP and the Council. So, it's hard to, you know, to
25 split us all up and to participate in each area.

26
27 And again, the summary of the recent
28 action from the April 2024 motion is that the Council
29 received the initial analysis and modified the
30 alternatives. Any additional analysis will be reviewed
31 at this special meeting. A key date to pay attention to
32 is that the updated analysis is expected to be posted
33 by December 20th, 2024, to give members of the public
34 an opportunity to thoroughly review this document prior
35 to the special meeting. The previous document is about
36 175 pages. So, if you do -- if your community would like
37 to see, you know, like a hard copy, you could probably
38 request it from Council staff or reach out to me. I'll
39 put my email and contact information there. But I think
40 it's important you know, to see the iterations, you know,
41 of the changes that the Council has presented. And again,
42 the Council may identify a preliminary preferred
43 alternative although it's not required. And, you know,
44 I've been listening to your conversation regarding
45 status quo. So, their concept of, you know, they may
46 just stick with their previous, you know, status quo
47 options. But then again, the Council may revise
48 alternatives and or recommend the agency so, NOAA NMFS,
49 to publish the draft Environmental Impact Statement. And
50 the tentative timeline of this after the special meeting

1 in February is they're looking to maybe send out, you
2 know, information in October 2025 or December 2025. And
3 at that time, final action by the Council to publish
4 that the DEIS comment and report and then Council staff
5 that are working on the chum bycatch issue are Kate
6 Haapala and Diana Stram. And again, that's listed on the
7 bottom of that one pager, and then the second attachment
8 that I had included to your staff -- if you look on the
9 Council's website regarding the chum bycatch motion that
10 was passed on April 8th, 2024 under Charlie 2, there are
11 -- any additions are in bold and underline and then
12 deletions are in strikeout. So, I took the PDF document
13 and converted it to a word document. The first four
14 pages are all of what the Council had listed under their
15 PDF. I just used, you know, the bold and underline for
16 the additions and then the red for the strikethrough.
17 But then if you go to -- starting on page five of the
18 document that I created this morning, I have it listed
19 on the top heading version, removing deletions. And so,
20 for me as an advisory panel member, it makes it easier
21 to follow without all of the, you know, the different
22 strikethroughs going on. And just one final thing in
23 regards to -- where is my other document here? Sorry, I
24 have too many screens or too many things going on here.

25
26 So, and Mr. Chair and other Council
27 members, you know, I am speaking not on behalf of the
28 Nome Eskimo Community Tribe, nor on behalf of the Arctic-
29 Yukon-Kuskokwim Tribal Consortium, of which I am
30 employed by. But I am speaking as a -- and definitely
31 not a staff, you know, or representation of the North
32 Pacific Fishery Management Council. I am speaking as a
33 individual tribal member who has participated in this
34 process for about five years. You know, as the salmon -
35 - all the salmon species are important, you know, as a
36 tribal indigenous person. So, just -- and I don't know
37 how much time you all have, but I was just gonna go,
38 just real quickly under the alternatives to that
39 document or its alternatives, one through five, just
40 again, through my understanding and moving forward with
41 the alternatives, how it could impact our tribal sector
42 and also our subsistence users for chum. And so, under
43 alternative one where it says status quo, the -- there's
44 limited progress in reducing bycatch, meaning that our
45 western Alaska chum salmon populations may not see
46 additional protection. Potentially affecting
47 subsistence harvests and cultural practices. Under
48 alternative two, which is the overall bycatch, or the
49 PSC limit for chum salmon. By limiting the total chum
50 bycatch, this alternative could help protect the western

1 Alaska chum stocks vital to our tribal communities --
2 our tribal and subsistence communities, I should reword
3 that. It could provide flexibility with options for
4 setting bycatch limits based on different historical
5 data periods, allowing tailoring of those limits to
6 address conservation needs. And then sector specific
7 caps might reduce bycatch by certain groups. But since
8 bycatch can transfer among sectors, its effectiveness
9 depends on compliance across all participants. Under
10 alternative three, related to the bycatch limit for chum
11 salmon triggered by western Alaska chum abundance index.
12 The impact to our subsistence and tribal sector is that
13 this alternative directly ties bycatch limits to local
14 salmon abundance, potentially creating a more responsive
15 management system that aligns with tribal conservation
16 goals. Higher chum salmon population in rivers would
17 result in no bycatch limit, while lower population would
18 lead or could lead to stricter caps. And adaptable
19 approach could enhance protection during low abundance
20 years, aligning with tribal and subsistence priorities
21 to protect our resource. Under alternative four
22 regarding the additional regulatory requirements for the
23 Incentive Plan Agreements or otherwise known as IPAs.
24 There could be increased transparency through weekly
25 reports provided to our Western and Interior Alaska
26 salmon users. And that could help, you know, with better
27 data on bycatch levels, possibly provisions to restrict
28 fishing in high bycatch areas would help address our
29 concerns regarding local depletion of salmon stocks, and
30 regular monitoring and avoidance measures coupled with
31 salmon excluder technology may reduce bycatch and
32 provide protection mechanisms for salmon stocks,
33 significant to tribal communities. And then the fifth
34 alternative related to in-season corridor cap, in-season
35 closures in specific areas could prevent the depletion
36 of salmon stocks in critical migration corridors,
37 allowing for more salmon to reach spawning areas in
38 Western Alaska rivers. The corridor-based approach
39 provides a targeted mechanism to protect our specific
40 habitats and fish passages aligning with our subsistence
41 and tribal priorities to ensure salmon survival. And
42 finally, the fifth alternative, how it could impact our
43 user groups is options for portioning caps among sectors
44 ensure that the burden of bycatch reduction is spread
45 across the fishery. And yeah so, there was a couple of
46 other things that I wanted to, you know share, and all
47 of this information is on the Council website and I'm
48 happy to also provide further information via email or
49 phone conversation. But the other part is, The North
50 Pacific Fishery Management Council at our October,

1 meeting a couple of weeks ago here in Anchorage, is that
2 the Council was committed to winter 2024 meetings for
3 the Eastern Interior, the Western Interior, and the
4 Yukon Delta RACs. And they may participate in the Kodiak
5 Aleutian RAC. But again, it's dependent on staff -- on
6 Council staff's availability. And there was a invitation
7 from Tanana Chiefs Conference to a fall special
8 convention related to this agenda item. That was sent
9 out to staff to participate, and there's like a whole
10 lot more information related to that. And it's been a
11 continuous work in progress.

12
13 But one of the key areas that I wanted
14 to also share, Mr. Chair and Council members, is that
15 if your community members are not aware of this
16 management process, that it's important that we as
17 tribal and subsistence communities be either engaged in
18 person or if travel is not, you know, like if we're not
19 able to travel, to participate virtually in this
20 decision making and that -- I -- and I don't know if any
21 Council staff are on, you know, on our call today, but
22 or -- and or Council members. But as a -- as an advisory
23 panel member, and then, you know, in my role with AYKTC
24 I really feel like members from the Council body should
25 have been -- should have made time to participate in
26 this meeting as you know, the -- our communities in this
27 region are closest to the Bering Sea when it comes to
28 salmon. And you know, that more emphasis should have
29 been placed on, you know, on the coastal communities as
30 well as, you know, the nursery grounds for our salmon
31 species. And so, with that, you know, I really appreciate
32 you all taking the time to listen. And in the chat, I
33 will put my contact information for my email and my
34 phone number. And if any of your tribal communities there
35 in the Seward Peninsula would like for me to come out
36 and share more information, just send me an email
37 invitation, and I'm happy to work with my leadership on
38 continuing to engage, you know, with our subsistence and
39 tribal communities especially being from and of the
40 region. So, with that Mr. Chair and members of the
41 Council, I'm happy to take any questions.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Well, thank you for
44 that, Melissa. I'm looking out here in the -- on --
45 while I should ask if there's anybody online that would
46 have any questions for Melissa?

47
48 (No response)

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1 Sounds like there's no one on the line.
2 Anybody in the room here?

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4 MS. FREYTAG: Mr. Chairman.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Okay, I forgot to ask
7 this young lady sitting over here so quiet and paying
8 attention. Can you introduce yourself cause you're new
9 in the room, yes, we do that with everybody. You're not
10 the only one.

11
12 MS. JOHNSON: Good morning, I'm Allison
13 Johnson with Nome Eskimo Community. I am the current
14 president, and I am here observing. Thank you.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: And thank you for
17 doing that for us and letting people know who you are,
18 and who you represent. And we have another -- hh, Tom.
19 We got a guy over here just quietly. It's Tom Sparks,
20 BLM, Nome. He kind of quietly came in here during all
21 the discussion. Oh, Mr. -- is that Mr. Ashenfelter?
22 Those two guys have been together so long, they kind of
23 blend together and you just never -- thank you. And for
24 the record, Roy, who are you here under?

25
26 MR. ASHENFELTER: I'm just representing
27 myself. Thank you.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: All right, thank you.
30 Okay. So, Mary Freytag, I think you had something.

31
32 MS. FREYTAG: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair.
33 This is Mary Freytag, Unalakleet. Just a very quick
34 question. You're talking about the five alternatives at
35 addressing the decline of the chum. And I was just
36 curious on how your agency comes up with these
37 alternatives and what comprises -- do you guys get all
38 of the information from the other agencies to make a
39 determination on what the alternatives include? Cause
40 it's -- a lot of the alternatives are really good
41 information wise and to address that decline. I guess
42 my question is, who makes the decisions on these
43 alternatives and what they comprise of? Thank you.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Mary.

46
47 MS. JOHNSON: Through the Chair, Ms.
48 Freytag, thank you for your question. So, I -- again, I
49 do not work for the North Pacific Fishery Management
50 Council. I serve as a advisory panel member. But the

1 components of the motion that were carried through in
2 April 2024. Those figures more than likely came up with
3 a collab [sic] -- from a collaborative effort through
4 the state of Alaska and the National Marine Fisheries
5 Service and probably members of the industry. So, the
6 dynamics between the Advisory Panel and the Council are
7 very unique within all fishery management Councils in
8 the United States. But for this one, the -- any pre-
9 conversations that may have had occurred may not have
10 included some of the advisory panel members. So, I'm not
11 entirely sure how to answer your question in full. But
12 reaching out to Rachel Baker and John Kurland, you know,
13 those are the two key individuals that have been working
14 with our subsistence sector -- subsistence tribal
15 sector. And then, I think -- I see Boyd is on as well,
16 he also sits on the Council, but that having different
17 meetings -- and there was also a salmon bycatch committee
18 through the Council where some of these figures may have
19 been, you know, worked on as well as what the Alaska
20 Salmon Bycatch Committee -- some of their
21 recommendations, you know, from the state of Alaska to
22 this Federal fishery management body. And yeah, in --
23 again in that one pager, hopefully your staff are able
24 to print, at least for you all or send via email. Kate
25 Haapala is -- and Diana Stram are staff members with the
26 Council, and they can provide more in-depth detail on
27 how those numbers came about. And they can also explain
28 more what they mean, you know, as far as like from a
29 Western side, scientific lens.

30
31 MS. FREYTAG: Mr. Chairman, Mary Freytag
32 I just wanted to thank you for all of the information.
33 But I just want to point out a very important suggestion
34 that Councilman Seetot mentioned yesterday about our
35 knowledge as a Council and as residents of our areas,
36 we don't have all of the information down on paper. It's
37 up here and in our hearts. So, I'm really happy to see
38 tribal seat open or tribal seats opening up, you know,
39 to come to the table because it is very important. The
40 locals and the residents of the areas that are impacted
41 by these declines -- they have that knowledge, and it's
42 not down on paper. It's up here. So, I really do
43 appreciate all the efforts that you guys are doing. Thank
44 you.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Mary. Is
47 there any other Council have any questions of Mellisa?
48 She's easily -- you could reach out to her. She was --
49 did you give a, like, a phone number, Mellisa, and an
50 email address so people would have that?

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MS. JOHNSON: Through the Chair, yes sir.

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CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Mellisa. We really appreciate it. And I think that this Council needs to introduce people such as yourself that are

1 involved in this process that the North Pacific
2 Fisheries Management Council, because that opens the
3 door to -- and people's eyes to what's happening out
4 there on the Federal side of things. Above and beyond
5 what we actually do here. I think it's an important fact
6 that people like you that are serving in the positions
7 you're serving in at that level, to be able to talk to
8 people like us, your relatives, basically. And people
9 from your region it's important. So, I heard you
10 mention...

11
12 MS. JOHNSON: Mr. Chair.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Okay, go ahead.
15 Sorry, go ahead.

16
17 MS. JOHNSON: Just, I apologize for
18 interrupting. I just wanted to mention also on the
19 Council website that there's the marine resource
20 education program. They are scheduled to have an in-
21 person training the third week, I think the third week
22 in April in Kodiak. And if you apply, they will cover
23 all of your travel, lodging, you know, and food expenses
24 for that and I participated, you know, as you all were
25 mentioning curriculum development to our youth.
26 Definitely, I would highly encourage folks to
27 participate, you know, apply for that training.
28 Hopefully you get in because you get to like -- you may
29 get to go on a vessel, you know, on a trial vessel to
30 actually see what in the world it is, what they do. They
31 are a Fishery Science Center and just learn more about
32 the North Pacific Fishery Management Council process.
33 So, yeah, I just and I'll email your staff that
34 information to share with you. So, I apologize for
35 interrupting, Mr. Chair.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Nope. The floor was
38 yours. I had plenty of time to talk otherwise, joke,
39 just to share something that's. You know, I like a little
40 humor, a little entertainment during these meetings and
41 because we're all about we buried ourselves in a lot of
42 stuff here this morning. Knowing that we have this day
43 to finish up. But I wanted to share you. You brought up
44 a couple of names, Louis and Daisy Jake, which became
45 Jack along the way. Were very good friends of my
46 grandmother's, Elsie Nelson Ball. She is from the
47 (indiscernible) family. Her grandmother -- her mother
48 excuse me, was from the (indiscernible) family. Born on
49 the banks of the Tubutulik River, during the time the
50 salmon berries were ripe. So, a little trivia history

1 there. So, I talked about a rowboat ride when I was
2 eight years old. While I was going around the corner,
3 Louis came out of his cabin and saw me fighting my
4 oarlocks. And he, you know, he had this real gruff old
5 voice, you wait there. I'll be right back, you know, and
6 so I sat there. I am going to listen to this guy. He
7 comes back with some pieces of line or rope, and he
8 proceeds to take the old metal oarlocks out, and he does
9 everything with her -- with this rope and ties it. And
10 he said, now there you can't -- they can't fall in the
11 water. You won't lose your oars. And away I went, and I
12 remember hearing him chuckle, you know, as I went up the
13 river, I went up, you know, 2 or 3 miles up the river
14 and about my business and so, that was the little story
15 about Louis. The other one is about Daisy and my
16 grandmother, Elsie. And they'd be in the 60s, probably
17 mid-60s. There's a guy named Peter Kakarak down at Mary's
18 Igloo. On a spring day he could hear this airplane
19 coming, and he's out walking around in his yard wondering
20 where this airplane is coming from. And he can't see it,
21 but he can hear it. So, it took a little bit for those
22 -- for this to take place. But the little airplane came
23 around the corner, it was a little red snow traveler and
24 the -- it was my grandmother. And as they came around,
25 she came around the corner. Behind her was a dog team
26 and it was Daisy and they had to go down -- they wanted
27 to go visit their neighbor down there. And so those
28 times are pretty cool. And you just brought that back
29 to mind, and I appreciate it Mellisa, thank you for your
30 time here. I think people in the room here get a little
31 bit more knowledge about the process and I appreciate
32 your ability to reach out to us. And of course, it was
33 a no brainer to allow you to speak because people need
34 to hear what's going on at the Federal level. That's
35 what -- that's who we are. And it's about our subsistence
36 and our food security. So, it's really important. And
37 with that, if anybody has any questions of her any more
38 in the public here? I don't see anybody. Anybody on the
39 line?

40

41 (No response)

42

43 No. Not hearing any. Thank you for your
44 time, Mellisa. It's important. Thanks.

45

46 MS. JOHNSON: Quyana.

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48 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Wait a minute.

49 Somebody is raising their hand. Oh, okay

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1 (Pause)

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I think we can have this five-minute, ten-minute break right now. That's Tommy Gray calls it, the five minute break is the ten minute break. It is now 11:18. Come back by 23.

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Okay folks. I think everybody's in the room or close to the door on the way in, and we're going to get back on here. Lunch is getting close. See what we can get done before lunch.

(Pause)

Okay, so we're back online here. I don't know what time it is again. 11:30-4. 11:34. I'm going to call Mr. Tom Sparks up for BLM. Okay. This is a little bit out of order, but I think the man needs to have his say.

MR. SPARKS: Get me home for my lunch hour. My wife will appreciate that, Mr. Chair. Yeah. Tom Sparks, I'm with the Bureau of Land Management stationed here in Nome. Been with BLM a couple of decades. Looking at retirement pretty soon so, you may not see my face around much longer, but just wanted to mention a couple things. You know, last meeting, there was some spirited debate about the public land orders, the D1 withdrawals from the Native Claims Settlement Act. So, the Secretary of Interior did the status quo, which I know there was a resolution here from the Board. So, I want to thank you all for that.

So, just want to reemphasize, I was trying to explain it -- a lot of the meetings that I attended that there are areas that are currently open to metalliferous minerals, that's the gold and silver in that type of thing. So, you got to do your homework as far as what areas are open, and that really will not be affected by the Secretary's decision. But there are a lot of acreages involved as far as that PLO. So, the other thing I want to mention, as far as a big departmental things, is there's a new initiative to have a conservation easements available, and that's very new to the Bureau of Land Management. And I think the future is going to have more and more of those. So, stand by

1 for that. The other thing is the Veterans Native
2 Allotment program. This is the second one that we're
3 involved with now that's going to end next year. So,
4 we've been doing pretty good as far as outreach and
5 getting people to apply that are eligible. But, you know,
6 please pass that word around that it is -- it at
7 daylights, it has an ending point. So, you have to get
8 your application in. Next, this 25 end of 25. So, it's
9 coming up soon. Yep. And then just the muskox we do a
10 small random draw and it's been going pretty good this
11 year. We -- I don't for some reason the numbers were
12 quite low. I've been doing this a long time in the office
13 here, and I think maybe there was some confusion because
14 Letty was out of town, and we put a box out in front of
15 my office for the National Park Service because they
16 give out a few tags and her numbers were tremendous. And
17 I think just people were in the post office and just
18 kind of threw things in the box and maybe thought it was
19 the BLM one. I'm not too sure. But anyway, we'll continue
20 that, to do that. And I think Bruce Seppi is on the
21 line, too. He's our subsistence biologist so, I want to
22 recognize him. We haven't had too much staff changes.
23 As far as the Anchorage field office, I'm part of the
24 Anchorage field office. Have been for quite a number of
25 years. I originally started with the Fairbanks district.
26 But we did hire a recreation planner for the head of our
27 resource branch. Scott Justin is his name. So, other
28 than that, that's probably the only change we've had
29 since the last time we met. So, just wanted to, again
30 be available for any questions that anybody may have.
31 And met your new Coordinator, so.

32
33 MS. CHAPA: I would like to refer to
34 myself as your neighborhood friendly coordinator.

35
36 MR. SPARKS: Very good, very good. But
37 anyway, I just want to make myself available if there's
38 any questions that anybody has as far as what BLM is up
39 to or any rumors you hear or whatever I can talk about
40 or dispel rumors or whatever you need, Mr. Chair. Thank
41 you.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Sparks
44 of BLM. I think Mr. Gray of the Council has something
45 to ask.

46
47 MR. GRAY: A couple of things. Number
48 one, conservation easements. What's that mean to us?
49 Number two, when's the advertisement going to go out for
50 your replacement so, we have a warm body here in Nome?

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MR. SPARKS: Both good questions.

MR. GRAY: I wanted Bruce Seppi to hear that.

MR. SPARKS: Very good. With the first one, BLM is a multiple-use agency. So, a lot of people kind of have a hard time understanding that and I like to kind of put it in terms of we can authorize anything that's not illegal under Federal law. So, you think about that. That's a lot of things we do. We do mining, we do grazing, we do rights-of-way, you know, all kinds of things. But we have never had a situation where an entity could go to the public lands and get a authorization for a conservation easement. So, this is a new thing with BLM, and it took a lot of political will. And so, time will tell how this is going to turn out. But in theory it would be another opportunity as far as multiple use. And generally, its conservation has not really been in that sphere. So, it's very new. So, time will tell Mr. Gray, how that comes to play. As far as my replacement, I have been trying my best to keep this field station alive. We're one of the last ones left in this State, and I think it's really important to have a rural connection. I've been in Nome over four decades and know many of you personally for a very long time, and I think it really helps agencies when they have a connection to the people and the land. So, I'll do my best, Mr. Gray. But as far as when the announcement goes, stay tuned. So, thank you for those questions.

MR. GRAY: Well, and I thank you for your partnership to this region. You know, I think it's really important that we have players involved, whether you're State, BLM, Park, whoever that come from this area and understand the people. You know, I've got my hand in big game guiding reindeer industry you name it. And Tom has always been there for us, for this region. So, it's super important that we get a replacement that is willing to stay here and stand by us. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you for those questions and comments, Tommy Gray, and thank you for being here. I think Chuck wants to -- you have a question for Mr. -- Thank you.

MR. MENADELOOK: Yeah. Chuck Menadelook. I just wanted to ask about the conservation easement.

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1 Does -- is that only land that BLM controls, or is it
2 all Federal land?

3

4 MR. SPARKS: It's BLM.

5

6 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you. Thank you
7 for the question, Chuck Menadelook. Elmer, Council.

8

9 MR. SEETOT: Elmer, Brevig Mission.
10 Comment -- or do you still have the ranger plot of
11 studies in and around Cape Douglas? I did remember seeing
12 a fence up and around certain areas. Are they still up?
13 And then BLM gives out permits for the ranger herds,
14 even though most of the ranger herds are went with
15 caribou. But they are still valid for Seward Peninsula.
16 As far as I know, there was at least 15 grazing permits
17 throughout the Seward Peninsula.

18

19 MR. SPARKS: Yeah. Mr. Seetot. Through
20 the Chair. Yes. We still have a number of structures out
21 that we were trying to do some collaborative work with
22 the University of Alaska. We're having a difficult time
23 because that reindeer program at the university has been
24 unfunded. So, we're struggling with some of those
25 structures and getting them read, but we're continuing
26 to do that work. We have continued to issue reindeer
27 grazing permits. We have a cooperative agreement,
28 memorandum of agreement with the Park Service and the
29 state of Alaska, and also with the Natural Resource
30 Conservation Service. And the reason why the agencies
31 got together initially, we didn't have a NRCS as part
32 of it. It was land managing agencies. So, it was the
33 Department of Natural Resources, the National Park
34 Service, and BLM. And the reason we did that is because
35 some of the ranges are so large, they have different
36 ownerships. And so, the idea was that whoever had the
37 most land of the land managing agencies, they would issue
38 the permit to the individual herders so. a herder
39 wouldn't have to potentially go get three different
40 permits or two different permits. So, that continues.
41 We've had pretty good success. The reindeer herders are
42 going to have a meeting next week, which I'll be going
43 to on Monday. So, but they've had a difficult time, as
44 you all know, with the Western Arctic Caribou Herd came
45 in and, you know, basically took the reindeer away. But
46 they haven't been on the Peninsula for quite a while.
47 And I know there's efforts being made to revitalize that
48 industry. And so, we're -- I mean, I'm personally very
49 happy to see that take place. I think it's got a bright
50 future. So -- but yes, in short, is your answer.

1

2 MR. SEETOT: Thank you then, and one last
3 comment. Mr. Gray, Mr. Sparks, I see them up at Mount
4 Bedeleben. I'm from Brevig. He's from White Mountain.
5 They're from Nome. We never make no arrangements to meet
6 up there. But sometimes circumstances happen, and one
7 thing about it is that Mr. Sparks knew that Brevig
8 Mission hunters wear parkees, not jackets, when they go
9 out hunting, so. So, that that's a known fact. But that's
10 something, you know you kind of encounter over the years.
11 I met Mr. -- when I first met him, he was at Mount
12 Bendeleben. You were at Davidson Landing. And so, that
13 is a good, important area for wildlife or natural
14 resource to be had, whether it be from the land, whether
15 it be from the waters or, you know, just flying through.
16 So, that's a good, important place. Kuzitrin River or
17 the lava bed flats is a huge place. I went around it
18 more than once. So, it's very huge and it's a good place
19 for reindeer, caribou to be there and not, not let people
20 know that, you know, they're around. But I just want to
21 put that out. We've seen people, you know, oh, where do
22 you meet them? Oh, out in the country. Do you make a
23 phone call? No. You know, just by chance that, you know,
24 we happen to be hunting on the same day, but you meet
25 all kinds of people in and out that are looking for
26 these animals, not from the area, but in the central
27 place. I thought, I just put that out. Thank you.

28

29 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you for your
30 comments there, Elmer. Martin.

31

32 MR. AUKONGAK: No, you mentioned mining
33 and is there -- with Mr. Chair and this Board and any
34 recommendation, this this Board could help appeal that
35 IPOP mine, you know, because people right down the road
36 here, it's hard to believe that's going to go through.
37 It's going to affect, you know, the people that camp
38 there. But is there any way this Board could join in on
39 that just to stop it?

40

41 MR. SPARKS: You know, that's located on
42 State land. So, you know, I'm not in a position to, you
43 know, really make a comment on that. But I think
44 generally this Board, if you're concerned about resource
45 that is affecting subsistence, I think, you know, you
46 should engage. And I've seen you do that in the past,
47 and I think that'd be very good. But I know the -- you
48 know, as a local person, I've seen the controversy
49 involved there and there is some concern. But again,
50 that's on State land. It's nothing on BLM land. So, but

1 -- I did want to mention something about mining that has
2 come up in the past. And we have -- someone stakes a
3 Federal mining claim. The field offices really aren't
4 engaged in that because nothing's happening on the land.
5 Somebody's just staking a claim. But when they do that,
6 they acquire a right, a mineral right that they have.
7 And it's under an old law, you know, 1872 the mining law
8 is very old in this country. And when a miner goes to
9 potentially see what's there. They do it under either a
10 notice level we call it, or a plan level. And a plan is
11 where it's like we're actually going mining, you know,
12 a notice level. They're doing some exploratory work or,
13 you know, drilling things like this or some bulk sampling
14 and so forth. And we as an agency, when it's a notice
15 level, we really don't authorize that. The miners still
16 have to -- or the companies involved, they still have
17 to get their Clean Water Act, Clean Air act. There's a
18 lot of permits that they have to get, but they don't get
19 a particular one from BLM. And sometimes that causes
20 some confusion out there in the communities. But when
21 things go to a plan level, that's where we as an agency,
22 we do a review under the National Environmental Policy
23 Act, where we'll do like an environmental assessment or
24 an environmental impact statement, and there's a lot of
25 interaction with the public and communities involved.
26 But there's been some exploratory stuff going on the
27 Peninsula, north of Elim that you might have seen in the
28 newspaper and so forth. That particular prospect has
29 been known for decades. And there has been exploratory
30 work out there in the past. But you know, people do get
31 -- think that we have a decision at this point and we
32 don't as an agency. And -- but I just wanted to mention
33 that that so and it's also good I think, to understand,
34 you know, I've been around long enough now. I've seen a
35 lot of changes in the land status over the last 20 years
36 in particular. And so, a lot of lands that used to be
37 in Federal ownership are not anymore. And it really does
38 make a difference in terms of the management of the
39 lands. So, yeah.

40
41 MR. AUKONGAK: Right and just to add to
42 that, you know, they got away with the State and being
43 the Federal you know they're going to oh we got away
44 with this. And now we're going to go to Federal. That's
45 you know that's what I'm saying. You know they already
46 went that far.

47
48 MR. SPARKS: Thank you very much for that
49 comment. Any other questions? I -- yep.
50

1 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Mr. Moses.

2
3 MR. MOSES: Robert Moses, I had a
4 question. You say you deal with mining. Maybe because
5 of the -- we all know people mine outside of Nome. You
6 see all those big boats out there, metal boats, mining
7 and fish are very sensitive to oils. You know, it doesn't
8 matter whether it's motor oil, grease or any kind of oil
9 that has to do with lubricant. Maybe some of them miners
10 out there that are using them dredgers are -- maybe oil
11 is coming off of them. Maybe that's what's making the
12 fish stock crash around our region. And also, like Tom
13 said, there's no coho in Fish River and there's a road
14 to Council and a lot of people go there from here to
15 Council to go fish. And I know it, and we see it and we
16 hear about it along with moose hunting, maybe because
17 of the traffic that's going across from this side to
18 Council, maybe they're still going across with their
19 trucks, and maybe that's where some oil -- or some oils
20 are getting off them, trucks going into the river and
21 killing off some of the fish. Maybe that has something
22 to do with it. And another question is how far down the
23 road, like, say, five years from now, do you know if
24 there's permits coming in our region or around this whole
25 region. How far can you tell down the road that another
26 mine is going to be up? And if you let the other
27 communities around the region know about them?

28
29 MR. SPARKS: Well, a lot of good
30 questions there, Robert. Thank you. Through the Chair
31 of the offshore stuff is on State land. So, BLM is --
32 it's not a Federal undertaking as far as it's not Federal
33 public lands. I remember when that first started and I
34 was getting calls from Florida to California, and I was
35 wondering what was going on because my answer was, well,
36 it's not it's not BLM, it's State. You got to call DNR
37 in Fairbanks. And then I poked around on the internet,
38 and I found that the City of Nome had listed me as a
39 contact for status information. So, I had to go down and
40 talk to my city and tell them to get my name off there,
41 because we didn't have nothing to do with it. But so
42 yeah, I think some of the changes that we've seen you
43 know, it's hard to have a crystal ball. Okay. But when
44 I worked with the regional Native corporation and some
45 of the mineral exploration was going on and did that for
46 many years mines are hard to get going. You know, if you
47 can kind of look around especially a big one. So, I my
48 crystal ball, I don't see much on the Federal lands as
49 far as that goes. There's a couple of prospects, but
50 they've been out there for decades and not much has gone

1 on. But time will tell. There are a number of prospects
2 fairly well advanced on the Seward Peninsula, that's for
3 sure. Some of them fairly close to Nome, too. So, but
4 nothing on the Federal land portion. Most are on the
5 Native lands and on the State land. So, hope that helps
6 a little bit, Robert. But thank you very much for those
7 comments.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Robert.
10 Thank you, Tom. I think I'm starting to think about him.
11 I almost called you Roy. That's just a little joke. Is
12 there anyone else? Mary.

13
14 MS. FREYTAG: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
15 Mary Freytag, Unalakleet. Just a quick question on the
16 final no action alternative decision that was based
17 after the final EIS for the opening of the Special Areas
18 of Protection under you guys, BLM. How long is that no
19 action alternative going to last before -- is that
20 through each Presidency, or does does that carry over
21 into the next Presidency? Because I know the President
22 does want to change things up. So, I just wanted to see
23 how long the final EIS no action is good for?

24
25 MR. SPARKS: Mary, thank you for the
26 question. And through the Chair some of these decisions
27 are political. I'm not going to, you know, state
28 otherwise, you're all educated enough to know that and
29 been around enough to know that as well. So, the public
30 land orders are done at the Secretarial level. They're
31 not done by the State Office of BLM or little old Nome
32 office of BLM. They're done on the secretarial level.
33 So, when you get a new Secretary in there and those are
34 appointed positions, they work for the President of the
35 United States and changes that occur and new Secretaries
36 have new ideas and things can change. But so, how long
37 that stays in place, you know, your guess is as good as
38 mine. But I think having gone through this a couple of
39 times through the Trump administration, when one of the
40 areas was on the Seward Peninsula, it was sued the Kobuk
41 Seward land use plan, which is the entire Seward
42 Peninsula and all of the Nulato Hills and far north as
43 Kotzebue and the Secretary of Interior at that time did
44 sign an order to open those lands. So, I've seen it in
45 quite recent history flop both ways. So, I think it's
46 something that you know, this body was certainly engaged
47 in that effort. And I think we, as an agency, tried to
48 get out and put the word out. So, I think it's something
49 to look out in the future, but yeah, those are decisions
50 that are made at the Secretary level. And when a

1 Secretary changes, it may change that as well. And
2 there's also the possibility of lawsuits that change
3 things where, you know, someone will sue, and then the
4 court will say, well, you -- Secretary didn't have that
5 power or whatnot. I haven't heard any rumblings of that
6 yet. But that's also a possibility. So, thank you, Mary,
7 for that question.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you,
10 Councilwoman Freytag and Mr. Sparks for BLM. Is there
11 any other Council with any questions? Comments?
12 Concerns? Hearing none. Thank you, Mr. Sparks. We'd like
13 to keep you around a little bit longer because we know
14 who you are, but.....

15
16 MR. SPARKS: Well, I'll still be around
17 I definitely you know, if there's a situation where you
18 can't get through to somebody, get ahold of me. I can
19 definitely help. So, my contact down at the still on the
20 Federal building now. So, our post office locally,
21 whatnot. So, my numbers in the phone book under the blue
22 one, but it's (907) 443-2177 and email is
23 tsparks@blm.gov and thank you, Mr. Chair and Council
24 members for giving me the opportunity today. Appreciate
25 it.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you for coming
28 in and waiting. And now we got you done. But I do want
29 to say I remember this guy who talks about all the
30 decades. I kind of remember him being out there with the
31 mining company coated with mud I think, probably wearing
32 a yellow rain suit. What do they call you guys?
33 Troglodytes?

34
35 MR. SPARKS: Troglodytes. There's not
36 many of us left, but there's a few.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: And here you are
39 today. Thank you. Thank you for being here for us.

40
41 MR. SPARKS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Okay, so it's 12
44 noon, pretty much. Maybe we ought to take a lunch break.
45 We eat on the run. So, Yeah. What was the -- sas it an
46 hour yesterday or what? What did you do? Hour and 15.
47 Okay. Well, we could be here till midnight. Let's do it
48 till -- let's do it. An hour and 15.

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50 (Off record)

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(On record)

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CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Okay, folks, we're at 1:29. We said 1:15. We're doing pretty good, considering. If you're not here, raise your hand. Just checking to see how many people are awake. There's a few. So, alright. So, that's where we're at. We've got Raymond. Oh, there he is, he's seated. Tommy, we know he's on his mission to take care of business. Yeah. Mary's over in the corner making sure the coffee machine works. So, right now, we are at the point of calling Fish and Wildlife. Boyd Blihovde to the mic and give us an oral update on the gravel to gravel.

MR. BLIHOVDE: Hey, Mr. Chairman, can you hear me? Okay.

CHAIRPERSON GREEN: You're loud and clear.

MR. BLIHOVDE: All right. Thank you. Yeah. My name is for the record -- yeah. Boyd Blihovde. I work for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service based in Anchorage on the homeland of the Dena'ina people and really happy to be here. Thanks for allowing me to speak. I'll be quick. Thank you to yourself, Chairman and to other RAC members and to the staff from OSM. Appreciate what you do. I would also just like to say thanks to Mellisa Johnson, who I think she may not be on any longer, but I didn't want to speak out of order, but I do want to just share really quickly some more information about the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. So, if I could just quickly share my screen, I'll just share the website for North Pacific Fishery Management Council. And like Mellisa said, there's a lot coming up in the near future. Important meetings that I agree with her -- her summary that there's a meeting in December and in February that are going to be very important for subsistence users and those that depend on salmon. And at the website here, you see there's a lot of information. But over on the left-hand side of the website, there's the meetings tab. And I would just recommend for anyone that might be interested in these future meetings to go there. There's a lot of links to other information like Mellisa shared. And so, I was going to speak up when she was talking, but I think that's all I really wanted to share was there's a lot of information on the website and it can be very complicated. I'm new to the North Pacific Fishery

1 Management Council sitting in the seat that's really
2 assigned to the regional director from Fish and Wildlife
3 Service, Sara Boario, and I've attended my first Council
4 meeting at that seat in just the last month. And, and I
5 can attest to it being very confusing and kind of
6 complicated, but anybody on the Council here could reach
7 out to me or Mellisa, like she said, if there's questions
8 or you'd like any help on that process. But I am here
9 to talk about gravel to gravel. And I think that Gisela
10 can share my slides that I had. And if that's okay, I
11 can wait till those come up. I'm mainly going to talk
12 about gravel-to-gravel relationships and the gravel-to-
13 gravel funding that has recently come available. And
14 I'll be quick because I know you're trying to get through
15 the day, but I see the slides there. I don't know if it
16 could be put in presentation mode or slideshow view.

17

18 MS. CHAPA: Hey, Boyd, this is Gisela
19 Chapa, and we are seeing the slides on our end. There
20 might just be a slight delay with the screen share.

21

22 MR. BLIHOVDE: Okay, great. Well, you can
23 go to the second slide and just what you see in the
24 second slide if it's up, just is a brief overview of
25 what gravel to gravel is. If you've never heard of gravel
26 and gravel, then I'm sorry for that. And this may not
27 be that helpful, but I will give a little brief
28 background about gravel and gravel's, you know, the
29 summary of what it is and then where it sits within the
30 Department of Interior. It is -- a are we on the second
31 slide now?

32

33 MS. CHAPA: Yes, we are. And maybe you
34 want to give us a couple of minutes so that we figure
35 out why we're seeing this slide show on our end and not
36 through Teams. Give me just a second.

37

38 MR. BLIHOVDE: You know, at least on my
39 end I'm seeing the slide show, but it's at the first --
40 it was on the first slide still.

41

42 MS. CHAPA: Boyd, do you want to go ahead
43 and just share your screen might be easier.

44

45 MR. BLIHOVDE: Sure. We'll see if that
46 that works any better. We'll see. And can you see it?

47

48 MS. CHAPA: Yes, we can see it.

49

50

1 MR. BLIHOVDE: Okay. No, it's not in
2 slide or presentation mode on my end either. One second.
3 All right. I'll be quick here because I know -- all
4 right. So, it's like the end of the presentation there.
5 Here we are on the slide I was trying to get to. This
6 is the second slide that I was mentioning. And, and this
7 is, I know, hard to kind of understand and to go through,
8 but I'll try to explain it. The very top of the slide
9 shows the goals for all keystone initiatives, and there
10 are nine of them from DOI, Department of Interior, and
11 it shows the goals for all of them is to build climate
12 change resilience, restore healthy land and waters, and
13 then to enhance communities' quality of life. And I think
14 that's where really gravel and gravel excels is to work
15 in co stewardship with local communities and RAC
16 Councils, everything else like we're doing here today
17 is to really communicate well and to talk to especially
18 subsistence users. And so, gravel to gravel, if you can
19 see my pointer here is that sort of the middle of the
20 slide. You see resilient freshwater systems. That's the
21 main goal that DOI use for gravel and gravel. But there
22 are more goals for gravel to gravel that you may have
23 heard of. For our Keystone initiative it's really about
24 food security in the face of climate change and then
25 specifically salmon like we've been talking about
26 recently with the North Pacific Fish Management Council
27 and then finally, it's about people and building those
28 relationships in gravel to gravel. The landscape of
29 gravel to gravel includes the Seward Peninsula or the
30 northern Bering Sea region that we're calling it, and
31 the Kuskokwim and the Yukon River drainages. So, that's
32 where we're talking about working together. And I talked
33 about relationship building. That's what we're really
34 focusing on first is to build the relationships and to
35 improve them. There's many good partnerships that have
36 already been established through this process, like RAC
37 meetings and there are other partnerships that are
38 developed across the State. But this is really an effort
39 to try to bring the agencies under Department of Interior
40 and Tribes together to really work hand in hand with
41 tribes taking the lead in this effort to really restore
42 ecosystems and specifically salmon. And so, on October
43 16th, a memorandum of understanding was signed and it
44 kind of marks the start of us really formally working
45 together. And the folks that are shown on this slide
46 here were the entities that signed that MOU and in
47 particular, interest to this region might be that Nome
48 Eskimo Community was there to sign as well as Kawerak.
49 Now, just because it's been signed, doesn't mean it's
50 done. Anyone, any tribal entity that's within gravel or

1 gravel can sign on to the MOU, and we'd be glad to work
2 with you on that in the future. The MOU objectives is
3 just a lot to read if you see this slide. I bold -- I've
4 got in bold the kind of main points of the objectives
5 of the MOU and I don't have time. I don't think we want
6 to spend a lot of time talking about it, but you can see
7 there that it's about restoration of the health and
8 ecosystem health, especially in the face of climate
9 change, increasing capacity of both tribes and agencies
10 in this effort. Tribal stewardship in this effort and
11 especially tribal leadership, and then working in
12 partnership throughout this whole process in resilience
13 and salmon conservation. So, and finally, just the MOU
14 parties that signed made a mutual agreement to stay
15 engaged in this process in the restoration of Pacific
16 salmon cultural and ecosystem improvement especially as
17 it relates to food security. That's what we've heard
18 from tribes as a main and of main importance. So, that
19 is our goal is to work on those together and so that's
20 what I wanted to share about the MOU really briefly. As
21 I mentioned, it was signed on October 16th. So, it was
22 just last week. And so, we still have a long-ways to go
23 to get to improvement in the regions, especially out in
24 the communities like Nome but it's a step in the right
25 direction. And as I said, anyone could sign on that is
26 a tribal entity or an agency that's in the gravel to
27 gravel region. One thing that we hope to have happen is
28 that the state of Alaska and NOAA or NMFS, National
29 Marine Fisheries Service would maybe sign on one day.
30 They are engaged in gravel to gravel, but they haven't
31 signed the MOU. And that's what gravel to gravel is
32 really all about, is breaking down jurisdictional
33 boundaries to work together. And that's where gravel to
34 gravel comes from, is working on the whole life cycle
35 of salmon.

36
37 So, to really quickly transition, just
38 wanted to talk about funding now. And that's what a lot
39 of people are interested in this effort. When money is
40 available that that gets people interested. So, the
41 funding has mostly come from what's been called BIL, and
42 that's the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. And so, for
43 the past two years, we've gotten about \$37 million to
44 the agencies. And then that's what this slide shows here.
45 I hope you can see that there's different colored bars.
46 It basically just shows what each of the bureaus or
47 agencies have gotten, including BLM, Fish and Wildlife
48 Service and the Park Service there at the bottom. And
49 then you can see the phases. The phase of funding doesn't
50 matter as much. It's essentially early in the process

1 is phase one and then more recently, phase three just
2 occurred. And we have gotten those funds and it totals
3 about 37 million. And I'll go into a little more detail.
4 There's going to be a lot of information, but I just
5 want to share with you the projects that we're actually
6 working on. You can see the agency that received the
7 funds and this slide shows BLM primarily, and then the
8 total amount of money that has been allocated to
9 different projects. And I think Gisela or myself, we
10 could share this with you if you want to take this home
11 and look at it and decipher it a little bit in more
12 detail. But there are about 40 projects. And the BLM and
13 the Fish and Wildlife Service have received probably the
14 majority of the funds for projects and have more projects
15 that they've been working on. But the Park service, too,
16 has gotten a fair share of money. And most of the
17 projects have focused on mine restoration, which I'll
18 show in a different way here in a second. But this is
19 the Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service on
20 this next slide. The Fish and Wildlife Service up at the
21 top, we have ten projects that the Fish and Wildlife
22 Service and you see the dollar amount there on the right
23 hand side. And the Park service has roughly about ten
24 projects as well and one thing that may surprise you is
25 that the Park Service is working on a great deal of mine
26 restoration as well, in its historic mining that
27 occurred before lands were protected for National Parks
28 and Preserves. And so, claims that were made before 1980
29 and when ANCSA was enacted, is why they have so much
30 mine restoration going on, on their lands, like Cole
31 Creek Mine, which is in Yukon-Charley Preserve, that's
32 an example.

33
34 And finally, this is an easier way to
35 maybe look at it is this graph, that shows the different
36 projects broken up by category. I know it's a lot still
37 to decipher here quickly, but the bureaus or the agencies
38 are down at the bottom and then you see the number of
39 projects, they're highlighted in each category. And I
40 just want to highlight quickly these that are circled
41 in red. For each of the bureaus, the Bipartisan
42 Infrastructure Law requires us to focus on restoration,
43 physical restoration of headwater streams for salmon and
44 other species that have been impacted by humans through
45 mining and other efforts. And so, because we're required
46 by Congress to do that, that's why you see more projects
47 highlighting restoration effort. There are other
48 categories that the funds fall into, including invasive
49 species control, Native seed restoration or Native plant
50 restoration. And then finally, one thing that I'm proud

1 of for the Fish and Wildlife Service, through the
2 direction of our Regional Director, Sara Boario, we've
3 placed an emphasis on tribal capacity building, and
4 we're the only bureau that has really focused on that
5 so far and so with \$5 million going directly to tribal
6 entities, we've really spearheaded an effort to increase
7 capacity for tribes to both assess salmon, conduct
8 restoration and research and monitoring efforts and
9 work, and then to also even advocate for salmon at
10 meetings like what Mellisa referred to the North Pacific
11 Fishery Management Council, Board of Fish, and other
12 management and planning meetings such as those. So,
13 that's been the direction for the Fish and Wildlife
14 Service. And that's partly why I'm here today, is to
15 kind of update all of you so that we can start more of
16 the discussions and get more details about the concerns
17 that you all have.

18
19 And through these discussions, we
20 understand that there will probably be requests for more
21 funding and so luckily, we have just received more money.
22 This is probably the last phase of funding from the
23 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, we at the gravel-to-
24 gravel initiative will get \$4.5 million. That has been
25 confirmed just recently through a press release that
26 you're seeing here. And so those funds should get to us
27 within the next couple of months. We don't have them
28 yet. But it's good news and the BLM shared this slide.
29 I should have mentioned that the BLM and the Fish and
30 Wildlife Service work in coordination together on gravel
31 and gravel. And Becky Shaftel is my counterpart at BLM.
32 She couldn't be here, she's out of town this week, but
33 she put together this slide and just wanted to share
34 that there is funding available right now from BLM
35 through the Good Neighbor Authority. So, you could
36 contact us if you want more information about how to
37 find those funds, but there's \$1 million that was
38 allocated for 2024. And then in this new round of money,
39 2025 funds, there's going to be another million that
40 gets to us soon. And these funds will have a rolling
41 deadline. So, it'll be fairly easy and flexible for
42 tribes and other communities to apply for the funds. And
43 the type of work that they're trying to focus on is,
44 like I said, restoration of impacted streams, collection
45 of data to just determine what the impacts are and trying
46 to assess streams to determine the level or priority of
47 restoration that's needed in in the area. And I know
48 that through the discussions with BLM earlier, there
49 have been significant impacts from mining in this area
50 and there's future impacts that are coming, which is

1 unfortunate, but we hope that this money will at least
2 help get some baseline information to determine what
3 these streams are like before any impacts may happen so,
4 that one day they can be restored. And, you know, maybe
5 there is a chance that some of these mines won't come
6 in and impact your area. That's the hope. But these
7 funds will help conduct assessment on the streams, which
8 also could be used -- the information could be used to
9 help justify why a mine should not be started in a
10 certain area.

11
12 So, Fish and Wildlife Service also has
13 the funds coming to us in the next couple of months. Out
14 of the 4.5 million, 3.5 million will be administered by
15 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. And as I've stated
16 earlier, our main goal is to build tribal capacity and
17 have the tribes take the lead on much of this salmon
18 restoration and assessment and advocacy effort. So, 2.24
19 million is going to go directly to tribes and then 1.1
20 million we hope will have a competitive process to --
21 essentially a mini grant process for those funds. And
22 then \$100,000 is not much, but we'll go to invasive
23 species treatments. And so, I know there might be some
24 interest in funding and, and how to get that and would
25 be glad to answer questions or to have my contact
26 available for anyone that wants to contact either Becky
27 or myself in the future, because we know that times are
28 tough, generally speaking, there's not enough money to
29 go around. And so, this money will probably be very
30 competitive. But we're glad that it's available and I
31 think that's all I needed to share. So, I'll stop sharing
32 my screen. Thanks for the chance to present.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Well, thank you,
35 Boyd. Questions and answers, is there anybody? Roy
36 Ashenfelter.

37
38 MR. ASHENFELTER: Yeah. Thank you, Mr.
39 Chair and members of the Council. You know, our region
40 experienced their first salmon crash over 35 years ago.

41
42 MS. TELEMAQUE: Can you speak into the
43 mic, please?

44
45 MR. ASHENFELTER: Yeah. Our region had
46 experienced a chum crash over 30 years ago or 35 years
47 ago now, or in the early 80s. Because of that, we've had
48 a lot of restoration. We've had a huge amount of work
49 done by biologists to understand our river systems that
50 were impacted by the salmon crash. Several things have

1 happened since then. The improvement and restoration of
2 Salmon Lake for red salmon has occurred. There was a
3 fish study that done there. Just make it simple, at the
4 end of the day the dilemma was that Salmon Lake itself
5 didn't have enough nutrition. So, what they ended up
6 doing after a number of different things, finding out
7 about whether the Pilgrim River was a problem, whether
8 the Imuruk Basin all the connected waterways between
9 Salmon Lake and all the way to the ocean was kind of
10 studied. At the end of the day, the red salmon
11 determination and restoration occurred through restoring
12 nutrition into the lake. That has resulted in excellent
13 return of reds in the kind of varies depending on what
14 year. But at the end of the day, the volume of reds has
15 increased, the volume of red salmon fisherman has
16 quadrupled. And the reason I know is because my wife and
17 I and my family live on Pilgrim River. When we were
18 there in the 80s, we were allowed 20 red salmon for the
19 whole year. That has all changed within -- the point I'm
20 trying to make, is that there has been a lot of
21 restoration work in the region. Unalakleet River, on
22 many different streams. The data is there, it's
23 available and it should be reviewed to make sure you're
24 not spending money on the same things that the work has
25 already accomplished, at least in our region. It's
26 excellent that these moneys [sic] are there, but try and
27 enhance ones where there are specific salmon that needs
28 to be restored. Unalakleet is one of those. There used
29 to be a commercial fishery at one point in time in
30 Unalakleet, but there hasn't been a targeted commercial
31 fishery for king salmon that I know of in Unalakleet for
32 a long time. Fish River had -- has a small king salmon
33 run that could use help in restoration. I think the
34 other thing that's really prevalent in Seward Peninsula
35 is the amount of mining that has occurred historically
36 in our region. I think of all the different regions, AYK
37 are part of the world, has had the most extensive mining
38 operations throughout the whole Seward Peninsula. So,
39 the idea that that mining is a -- could be a problem,
40 yes, maybe on Solomon River, because they dredged that
41 and they rechanneled the whole river to where it can't
42 sustain any fish because the debris in there all cleaned
43 out. But there is work there that I think and the point
44 I'm trying to make is this. A lot of money has been
45 spent in restoration and rebuilding our salmon stocks
46 and Seward Peninsula. Don't ignore that information,
47 please. It's there. It's available. You don't need to
48 reinvent the wheel to do this work. It's important work
49 to do. It's helpful. But you know, I heard Fish and Game
50 and another organization didn't sign on. That's okay,

1 as long as they show up. And as long as you accept the
2 biological fishery work, the fish biologists that had
3 spent their career here, some of them, and understanding
4 our streams. That's really important and so, tag on to
5 the known data, point I'm trying to make, tag on to the
6 known fishery efforts to restore all the different
7 salmon species and use that data because those people
8 are still around. Some of them may have retired, but
9 they're still available to help enhance the funding
10 needs that would be helpful to restore salmon. But there
11 is this known data and work that has existed in our
12 region for quite a few years. So, thank you.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Roy. I
15 have a Councilman Aukongak. Go ahead, Martin.

16
17 MR. AUKONGAK: You have your contact
18 info? I think I like your checkbook, and I'm competitive
19 too.

20
21 MR. BLIHOVDE: Through the Chair. Yes,
22 sir. I can put that in the chat. And then through Gisela
23 Chapa, she could forward it on to you -- to all the
24 Council members. Would be great to talk more in the in
25 the coming days and weeks. Thanks.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you.

28
29 MS. FREYTAG: Mr. Chairman, this is Mary
30 Freytag. One quick question on the funding availability.
31 Can any tribe apply for these funding, or do they have
32 to be impacted by the salmon decline or use these funds
33 as a preventive measure to prevent the decline of salmon?
34 That was my first question. And then I'll have another
35 question concerning the investigation on -- or the work
36 being done on the rivers. Has your agency went [sic] all
37 the way to the spawning grounds on the Yukon River for
38 our Yukon fish? I know it might be in Canada. I don't
39 know where they go spawn, but do you guys work alongside
40 with -- or does the work end right at the border? Thank
41 you.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Mary.

44
45 MR. BLIHOVDE: Thank you.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Go ahead, Boyd.
48 Sorry.

49
50

1 MR. BLIHOVDE: Yeah. Through the -- yeah,
2 through the Chair. Thank you, sir. If it's okay, I'll
3 just quickly, maybe highlight the back behind me there.
4 If you can see it is the gravel-to-gravel boundary and
5 it does go over into Canada but it -- I will admit that
6 it is a challenge for Federal agencies in the U.S. to
7 work across that international boundary. But that's what
8 tribes have requested us to do is, you know, break down
9 silos. The salmon have no boundaries. They don't care
10 about those boundaries. So, the tribes want us to
11 essentially view this the same way. And so, I hope that
12 helps answer your question. It is a challenge, but we
13 are trying to work across the border on, especially the
14 Yukon. When it comes to the funding, yes. Any federally
15 recognized tribe can apply for these funds as long as
16 you're either within the boundary or close to the
17 boundary that you see behind me. And so please reach
18 out. I put my email in the chat if you would like to
19 find out how to be more involved. Thanks.

20
21 MS. FREYTAG: Thank you.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Okay, thank you. I'm
24 looking at it at another direction here. I don't see it
25 in there because the green only goes up halfway through
26 the Seward Peninsula, but the Baldwin Peninsula up
27 there, and the Noatak and Kobuk River, I want to say
28 Koyuk, excuse me. In 1980 through 94, there was a chum
29 salmon hatchery. Fish and Game conducted enhancement and
30 restoration from 80 -- 1980 to 1994. And this place
31 called Sikusuilaq. I insist that you look that up because
32 under that 14-year time -- span of time, there was a
33 successful operation that went on there. And talking to
34 the people up there, some of the elders -- their elders,
35 now that they said they wished they'd had other species
36 introduced other than the chum besides the chum, they
37 wish they would have done more work. It was a success,
38 but you never hear about it and that's above the Arctic
39 Circle. There needs to be some of that kind of type of
40 stuff done in our region. And the Nome subdistrict, which
41 failed first started in the 70s and worked -- and then
42 by 80s the commercial fishery was shut down and then we
43 lost -- completely, started losing our chum runs. I
44 attended many, many Board of Fish meetings into the 90s,
45 into the 2000s. People asking for their chums back, and
46 there was some attempt by the Fish and Game to operate
47 a low tech.

48
49 MR. YASKA: (Distortion) lost your audio.
50

00062

1 CHAIRPEROSN GREEN: I'm sorry. Who's
2 talking?

3
4 MR. BLIHOVE: I can't hear him either.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Okay. Are you hearing
7 me? Boyd, can you hear me? There's a mute on this side
8 here. According to the recorder.

9
10 MS. TELEMAQUE: Can -- this is a test.
11 Can you guys hear me online?

12
13 MR. BLIHOVDE: Yeah, I can hear you.

14
15 MS. TELEMAQUE: Okay, great. Thank you.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: I don't know how long
18 I've been talking and you haven't been hearing, so
19 probably from the beginning. So, we'll rewind the tapes.
20 There we go. All right, so I'm just -- I'm troubled
21 because I only see that green line going up to a certain
22 part on the Seward Peninsula. And the reason why I'm
23 concerned is that it's somewhere that you're not going
24 to know anything about, maybe. Maybe you do, I don't
25 know, but the Baldwin Peninsula was Kotzebue, and
26 outside of there was a river called the Noatak, and
27 there was a very successful operation for salmon
28 enhancement, where they operated a hatchery from 1980
29 to 1994. It's called the Sikusuilaq Spring Hatchery. The
30 folks up there wish they'd introduce other species, but
31 the chum salmon did quite well. And what was interesting
32 about it, and I want to point it out, is that the last
33 release of chum salmon and it is either 10 to 20 million
34 fry they release a year. The return in 95, all the salmon
35 came back from the sea and found their way to the spring
36 but had nowhere to go. So, instead of just staying there
37 and milling around and keeling over, I guess becoming
38 bear bait they took to finding places on the river to
39 spawn. They naturally spawn there. They -- one river
40 down below there. It's a nickname of called the Agie
41 River, below the Sikusuilaq was a trout river, and the
42 Environmental Impact Study, I think called it that. I
43 know the guy that actually worked on it. His name was
44 Tim Smith. Anyway, that River became a chum run, and it
45 only happened because that hatchery, that hatchery --
46 all those fish went out and spawned on their own. So,
47 you could imagine maybe a five-year cycle where the fish
48 were coming up to the -- nosing into the creek and then
49 going back out and then going and doing their own thing.
50 They pioneered new spawning grounds, I imagine, is what

1 a person would say. So, that's an important fact that
2 needs to be considered when we talk about enhancement
3 in our region. It worked above the Arctic Circle. We
4 have that ability to do that right there in Nome. There's
5 a facility that was being worked on by the Fish and Game
6 called the Hobson Creek facility. So, I just wanted to
7 point that out, because you might want to include that
8 data from that Sikusuilaq facility. Fish and Game ran
9 it for 14 years and it worked.

10
11 MR. BLIHOVDE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
12 will look up more details about that. I knew a little
13 bit about it, but not as much details as you have. So,
14 thank you.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Yes, thank you. A
17 friend of mine lived there and was actually a young man
18 growing up helping, and it was something to behold, he
19 said, it was his grandfather's native allotment. Is
20 there anybody in here that -- there you go. Robert Moses,
21 Council.

22
23 MR. MOSES: I had a question or comment.
24 You say you need to restore our rivers and our region
25 with fish and stuff. In the past, Charlie Lean has been
26 -- worked for Fish and Game here out of Nome. A lot of
27 people knew him because he was good with fish and he
28 restored -- correct me if I'm wrong, he restored Fish
29 River, White Mountain River with king salmon and they
30 came back for a while. Now they're starting to deplete
31 again. And I don't know if you did that with the coho
32 salmon, but Charlie Lean, his name comes up with ADF& -
33 - Alaska Department of Fish and Game. He's done a lot
34 of rehabilitation with the salmon projects down towards
35 White Mountain area, and maybe we could get him here and
36 ask him how he's done it before. And he could give us
37 some pointers on how to restock the -- or look into the
38 one where Louis said up north. There should be data like
39 that too, around here or up there, and we could look
40 into that and get how it needs to be done or ask them
41 to come here and help us and show NSEDC, the main fishing
42 company out of here in our region, would be good if they
43 had a representative here, too, and they could speak on
44 their behalf also. Thank you.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you,
47 Councilman Moses. Do you have anything to add to that,
48 Boyd?

1 MR. BLIHOVDE: I -- no other than thanks,
2 I appreciate it. Just like the information that you
3 shared, Mr. Chairman, I think that's it's really helpful
4 to get more information about folks to contact, and I
5 will. I'll -- I wrote his name down. Thank you.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you.
8 Interesting fact here, too and I'll call on you here in
9 a minute, Elmer. I see you're waving your finger there.
10 It's interesting to note that the red salmon restoration
11 project that became into being. I seen a letter in 1997,
12 I want to say it's around February 97th. From the Federal
13 government to Tim Smith about fertilizing Salmon Lake.
14 Tim found out you didn't need a permit to do such an
15 act, and so he took part into actually starting to do
16 it. And then Fish and Game approached him. And it is
17 what it is today. Is there anybody on? Elmer.

18
19 MR. SEETOT: Elmer, Brevig Mission. I
20 noticed that there was invasive -- invasive species
21 treatment. Can you elaborate on that a little bit?
22 Because we do have a lot of ships going up and down the
23 Bering Straits. And that's pretty much the important
24 migration route for pretty much all the marine mammals,
25 everything that that goes through the water. And I was
26 just curious about the invasive species treatment that
27 was mentioned on your thing there. Thank you very much.

28
29 MR. BLIHOVDE: Thank you, through the
30 Chair, I really appreciate that question, because that
31 has been brought up by staff at Kawerak in our meetings,
32 which is something that we do biweekly. We meet as a
33 group, about 70, 80 people are invited, and we invite
34 any of you if you'd like to join us. But we discuss
35 issues like that. And one thing that Kawerak has brought
36 up numerous times is how ships are coming in to Nome
37 like never before because of ice melt and the passage
38 that is now open to get there and they brought up those
39 invasive species issues. And so, I'm no expert on it.
40 But that is something that those funds could address is
41 either studies to help identify the species that are
42 coming in off of ships or being introduced to the area.
43 Currently the projects that have come forward are
44 concerns over things like elodea, which is more in the
45 freshwater environment. And something that does impact
46 salmon is when elodea takes over, you know, mostly lakes,
47 but it can be in river systems as well and sloughs. When
48 it gets -- when it gets in there, as you probably all
49 know, it really takes over. And then there's really no
50 place for salmon to spawn. There's no free open gravel

1 beds and things like that that they need. So, that's
2 primarily what has been the focus with the invasive
3 species funds for gravel to gravel. But there's also a
4 lot of work being done on prevention. You know, people
5 come in across the Canadian border. They're bringing in
6 things with them from the Lower 48 and other areas. One
7 of the big concerns is zebra mussels. We definitely do
8 not want to get zebra mussels in Alaska. It's not really
9 close to us yet, but it is moving up this way. You know,
10 in the upper, you know, Lower 48 States. And with climate
11 change, the concern is that with warming waters and
12 things of that nature, it could get here and could take
13 over. So, it's another major concern as well. And so,
14 it's examples of projects like that that we're working
15 on in gravel to gravel so far.

16
17 MR. SEETOT: Thank you very much for the
18 information. I'll look forward to working with Kawerak.
19 And these are some of the things that even though we're
20 not part of the governing body in each village, at least
21 we're aware of what the non-profit associations,
22 organizations are doing in our region. Thank you.

23
24 MR. BLIHOVDE: Thank you.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Elmer.
27 I'll make another comment about something that, you
28 know, we talk about TEK, T, E, K. Well, I'm 66 years
29 old, and I've lived on the Pilgrim and the Kuzitrin and
30 the Flambeau and the El Dorado systems, and also down
31 in the Imuruk Basin area. And what I've seen since --
32 what I've seen and witnessed in my lifetime is the chum
33 salmon having a problem. Once the chum salmon started
34 failing, the other salmon species started failing. And
35 so that gives me the impression that the chum salmon is
36 a keystone species to all the other -- the other four.
37 I know that pinks are essential with chum salmon in a
38 healthy numbe in a river system and when they're healthy
39 numbers, then the coho salmon reflect those healthy
40 numbers. And so, there's an imbalance right now in our
41 rivers here in Nome -- in the Nome subdistrict, where
42 there's more pinks than there are chum salmon. You barely
43 see any chums anymore you know. The king salmon failed,
44 you know, went away. The Nome River had kings in it. The
45 Pilgrim River had a good run of kings in it. They say
46 that you only -- you need 200 pairs to make a run at,
47 you know, biologically. So, they were higher than that
48 in the Pilgrim. The Kuzitrin had the huge kings in there
49 back in the 60s and 70s growing up on that river, seeing
50 them carcasses, laying on the beach at different times.

00066

1 So, to me, it makes sense to look into that for data on
2 the chum and then to compare. Am I -- what I witnessed
3 and what I think happened is that, you know, is it --
4 it's not just my opinion is it - it's actually got
5 science behind it. So, that's just one of the things I
6 would point for you to be looking for when you're putting
7 that money out. And I hope Nome Eskimo gets a bunch of
8 it. Thank you. Anybody else in here?

9

10 MR. BLIHOVDE: Thank you.

11

12 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Anybody, you want to
13 ask him any questions? Madam president. Dip your toe in
14 the water. There's the guy right there. But, yeah, I'm
15 not trying to make you feel bad. I'm trying to make you
16 ready to go. Yeah. So, anyway, Boyd, do you have anything
17 else to offer folks here? Are there any questions?

18

19 MR. BLIHOVDE: No. Just thank you, Mr.
20 Chairman, and thanks for everything you do and that the
21 RAC does really appreciate all your work. And we're here
22 if you need anything from me, my info is there in the
23 chat so, please reach out.

24

25 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Okay. Thank you. I
26 hope Nome Eskimo gets a big chunk.

27

28 MR. BLIHOVDE: Yes, sir.

29

30 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: I'm putting the word
31 in.

32

33 MR. BLIHOVDE: All right.

34

35 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Okay. It sounds like
36 we got.....

37

38 MR. BLIHOVDE: Thank you.

39

40 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: You're welcome. And
41 thanks for your presentation. I think it's important for
42 everybody to see this. With that, I guess we're going
43 to move on to the next -- yeah, the next group is the
44 ADF&G with Sara.

45

46 (Pause)

47

48 MS. HENSLEE: Okay. Through the Chair.
49 This is Sara Henslee, the area wildlife biologist for
50 Alaska Department of Fish and Game, joined by Alicia

1 Carson, the assistant area biologist. We've already
2 talked about muskox so, I'm not going to get into that
3 again. Unless you really want to, but I think mostly I
4 want to focus on moose today and just give you an update
5 of kind of what we've been looking at with moose and
6 what we've got planned coming down the pipe between now
7 and the next meeting in April. And then maybe answer a
8 question or two from comments that I've heard from
9 members of the Council during this meeting the last
10 couple of days.

11
12 So, I'll start with Unalakleet moose.
13 So, just to kind of give an overview of the surveys that
14 we've done or got planned coming up, we were able to do
15 a spring browse survey in Unalakleet, last spring. I
16 don't know that I mentioned it last meeting or not, but
17 either way, we -- basically you're looking at the habitat
18 for moose and the Unalakleet drainage and trying to see
19 for the willows -- I don't have a handout for this.
20 Sorry, just my personal one. You're looking at the
21 willows and how much of the willows the moose seem to
22 be browsing on to give us a index of, like, winter
23 habitat for moose. And we ended up finding browse removal
24 rate of 19%, which, just to put that into context,
25 anything above 35% is what's considered bad in the sense
26 that there's too many moose in an area. So, 19% is pretty
27 good. We saw a lot of burned areas that will become more
28 moose habitat, -- prime moose habitat in the years to
29 come. So, we're feeling pretty good about the moose
30 population in the Unalakleet drainage. I know there's a
31 lot of questions about are there too many moose there
32 or can there be more moose? And I think the answer is
33 yes, we can absolutely take more moose in that drainage.

34
35 So, I know there is some conversations
36 about the harvest of bulls in the fall. We have been
37 kind of opening the doors for harvest in Unalakleet the
38 last several years because there are very high numbers
39 of bulls in the Unalakleet drainage that we believe are
40 probably coming in from the Yukon. Whether it's Unit 18,
41 21, there's just seems to be tons of bulls in the area.
42 And so, we kind of opened things up the last several
43 years to just give residents more opportunity and just
44 most recently, this fall season, we have a reported
45 harvest of 55 bulls. So, really nice to see Unalakleet
46 residents seem to be getting all the moose they need.
47 And we also have a winter season opening, starting on
48 December 1st through February 28th, and that's a newly
49 expanded season. So, just to rewind the fall season opens
50 up August 1st and now runs through September 30th at the

1 request of the southern Norton Sound Advisory Committee
2 to see a longer fall season. It used to start September
3 1st, now it's open August 1st. We've had a lot of
4 positive feedback with that August season so far, and
5 yeah, we'll open it back up again December 1st and it'll
6 run through the last day of February, and we don't have
7 a quota necessarily on that season either. So, a lot of
8 opportunity in Unalakleet, it's gotten nice to see. 55
9 bulls was the number of moose back in 2004 and that
10 whole drainage. So, really good to see like a positive
11 increase with moose. And we're going to reassess how
12 that increased harvest rate is affecting the number of
13 bulls in the area. This fall, we're hoping to fly into
14 the Unalakleet drainage for 2 or 3 days and count the
15 number of bulls again. And that's going to happen as
16 soon as it starts snowing and we get a couple of nice
17 days. So, fingers crossed, snow -- seems like there's a
18 couple storms in the forecast, maybe early mid-November
19 we'll get that done. If not, we'll get it done the first
20 week of December.

21
22 So, then in the spring we'll get in
23 there and get an abundance estimate. So, the last couple
24 of surveys that we've done have indicated stability and
25 I think that's probably related to the fact that we're
26 harvesting more bulls now, just like it seems to be
27 doing good. And with that lack of quota, we'll just take
28 that fall information together with the spring abundance
29 estimate and kind of reassess the Unalakleet population.
30 I don't have any reason to believe we won't see anything
31 -- I don't think we'll see a decline, necessarily. I
32 think it'll be stability again. But time will tell, I
33 guess. And we should have those numbers by the April
34 survey to report. So, I think that's it. The spring
35 survey. We're hoping to bring in a couple of local
36 volunteers from Unalakleet. We've got a couple of young
37 high school kids that we've been talking to, trying to
38 get them signed on as volunteers. So, I'm pretty excited
39 to get some local youth involvement with that survey.
40 And we'll also be working with BLM since a lot of 22A
41 is BLM land. So, that survey should take a week. We've
42 got it tentatively planned for the first week of March,
43 I guess, we'll try to get in right before the Iditarod
44 mushers come through, because we don't want to be flying
45 when all those super cubs are going through the area.
46 So, I think that kind of sums things up with 22A we'll
47 have a lot more information for you in April, as long
48 as weather lets us get out and fly.

49
50

1 MS. FREYTAG: Mr. Chairman, this is Mary
2 Freytag. Can I just share some information with the
3 Unalakleet moose. I just wanted to -- I know I mentioned
4 it yesterday about the self-imposed five-year moratorium
5 that the residents of Unalakleet imposed on ourselves
6 because of the moose decline. And, you know, we did that
7 on ourselves as a community and the area. And it just
8 goes to show, you know, when you take steps like that,
9 you know, the moose increased immensely. So, I just
10 wanted to point that out. Thank you.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: You know, what was
13 interesting, Mary, is that what you folks did there
14 helped the moose population that was actually local. But
15 at the same time or following that, the Lower Yukon,
16 Unit 18 started expanding so much that they started
17 coming over and helping, I think is what they talked
18 about. So, if I'm correct. Yes, Sara, go ahead.

19
20 MS. HENSLEE: Yeah, absolutely. Are there
21 any other questions with the 22A moose? That's all I've
22 got for now, but I'll just pause for a second if anybody
23 else has questions, and then I can move on to kind of
24 our RM840, moose management.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: anybody online have
27 any questions on 22A moose? Hearing none. Sara, go ahead.

28
29 MS. HENSLEE: Okay. So, yeah I'll talk
30 next about the RM840 hunt. So, that's moose hunting
31 anywhere in Units 22D, 22C and then 22B west of the
32 Darby Mountains so, that White Mountain-Golovin area.
33 All those hunts are managed to -- according to a harvest
34 quota. And just to kind of wrap up the fall season and
35 what we saw, all of the subunits ended up meeting the
36 quota or coming right next to it, except for 22C. Louis,
37 you talked about it yesterday, I think how the quota was
38 40. I mean, the quota was 25 bulls, and the harvest was
39 40 and two days. So, that's pretty interesting to see.
40 We haven't seen 40 bulls get harvested since 2004, when
41 the season lasted two weeks. So, we -- it's kind of
42 interesting. And we are going to plan a composition
43 survey to go count the number of bulls, because it could
44 mean a couple of different things. On one hand, it could
45 mean yeah, like you were saying, the price of gas, maybe
46 it's too expensive, more local hunters in the area.
47 Alternatively, it could mean more bulls. 22C has been
48 seeing increased numbers of bulls for the last several
49 years now and it's possible that along with the
50 population increase that we've been seeing in the area

1 with the increased number of bulls, there's just more
2 bulls available in 22C, which is a positive thing. And
3 given that hunters now seem to be able to get pretty
4 much anywhere in 22C, it just could be representative
5 of more bulls and hunters can find them faster, they can
6 access them better, and the hunt is just going to levels
7 that we haven't seen before, that 40 bulls or that we
8 haven't seen in a couple decades now. So, we're going
9 to go do a fall survey and we'll figure out if it's like
10 a hunter issue or a biological more bulls on the
11 landscape kind of thing and then we'll reassess how we
12 want to respond to this in the future. And I think
13 that'll be especially important, especially as we see
14 like 22C has been a two-day season for ten years now,
15 since 2012 -- what did I say? A two-day season for ten
16 years. And now 22D-Kuzitrin seems to be getting into
17 this three-day season. Used to be two weeks. It's just
18 getting shorter and shorter, it seems like every year
19 now. I would have made it a two-day season if I -- you
20 know, the last two years it just seems like things are
21 going so fast and it's getting harder for us to manage
22 the season the way that it's set up right now. It's in
23 any bull bag limit. So, which is pretty much the same
24 story across the whole Unit. So, you could harvest any
25 bull that you find, but which in the past was just kind
26 of a user preference thing, folks didn't want to have
27 to leaf through whether a moose was a 50-inch antler
28 spread or a spike fork, they wanted to be able to harvest
29 any moose. And in the past, I think that was just user
30 preference. They'd rather have any bull bag limit, and
31 they didn't mind the two-day season necessarily. But as
32 we get on with this 40-bull harvest, if it doesn't seem
33 like there's more bulls from this fall survey we're about
34 to do, I think it's going to be time to reassess that
35 any bull bag limit and the advisory committee -- if Tom
36 was here, I'm sure he'd be able to speak to how there's
37 been some grumblings from the Northern Norton Sound
38 Advisory Committee about moving at least the 22C bag
39 limit, but possibly 22D-Kuzitrin as well to an antler
40 restriction. So, that would look like something where
41 you could only harvest a bull that was a spike fork. So,
42 those yearling bulls, half of them we expect to be spike
43 fork configuration with the antlers. So, they'd be
44 available for harvest or 50 or more inches. So, those
45 mature bulls or four or more brow tines would be the
46 limit on the higher end. And Alicia and I have been
47 running a lot of numbers on that, and it seems like
48 probably every other bull you find could meet that legal
49 definition of that antler restriction. We've been doing
50 a lot of work getting ready to discuss this with the

1 Northern Norton Sound. So, just a couple of things we've
2 been thinking about and we'll discuss with the Advisory
3 Committees. It's obviously not something we're going to
4 just do and is coming in the -- this next September, but
5 just wanted to bring it to your attention, since I know
6 we've been talking about these 2- or 3-day seasons and
7 what we can do about it that's kind of the idea, I think
8 would be probably best to move forward and we have had
9 discussions with the Advisory Committee where there are
10 a lot of folks that want to retain that any bull limit.
11 And I think a compromise could be this general season
12 antler restriction, but also having sort of a limited
13 first come, first serve, any bull permit so, you could
14 reserve ten of the bulls we decide are available for
15 harvest. And then the first, I don't know, 15 people
16 that come by the Nome office can get this permit and
17 they can still hunt any bull. So, we've discussed a lot
18 of these options with the local Advisory Committee.
19 We're expecting to have another meeting the first week
20 of December to discuss it more. None of this is going
21 to happen right away, but just wanted to bring it to
22 your attention. Just in case, just to consider and again,
23 this isn't going to be something that's affecting the
24 entire RM840 for the area right now. The two areas with
25 the most restricted season is 22C by Nome and 22D-
26 Kuzitrin, which it seems like the vast majority of
27 hunters in that area are Nome residents. And then there's
28 a handful that are from Teller and even fewer from Brevig
29 from our numbers. So, kind of a Nome issue for the most
30 part. So, just something that's coming down the pipe,
31 and I think I will just stop there for comments and
32 discussion for now.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: One question from me
35 and then Chuck Menadelook. I didn't hear anything
36 talking about Tier 2. There's no discussion about Tier
37 2 at the committee level or biology side?

38
39 MS. HENSLEE: Yeah. Through the Chair.
40 So, that's a great question. And we actually just had a
41 discussion before the statewide Board of Game about
42 that, because Kawerak -- Chuck can probably speak to
43 this as well. They submitted a proposal to reassess that
44 ANS, consider if we are in the parameters of Tier 2. It
45 was a great discussion. We worked with subsistence and
46 essentially the things that we came up with is with our
47 reported harvest in our estimated unreported harvest
48 that we have in Unit 22, because our amount necessary
49 for subsistence, it's a number that we decide kind of
50 puts us in that Tier 2 criterion. The, the harvest that

1 we think is occurring is above that amount necessary for
2 subsistence. So, until that number drops, that's kind
3 of the impetus that would put us into Tier 2. We're not
4 there yet. So, I think I'll just leave it at that. Tier
5 2 was not really being considered at this time, but it
6 was a huge discussion that just happened at the Board
7 of Game, as if we needed to do some sort of ANS
8 reconsideration. And I believe the Kawerak proposal in
9 particular did address that two-day season. But from
10 what I have seen, thinking about this every day for the
11 last two years now, I think the two-day season is more
12 just an artifact of the any bull bag limit and hunters
13 just being able to get pretty much anywhere. I -- side
14 by sides nowadays, I've seen videos of them just driving
15 over alders like it's no-thing and they can just get
16 anywhere in these drainages in 22C. It just doesn't seem
17 like anything's holding back hunters these days and I
18 think that access is really enabling harvest to just
19 happen at this really high rate. in those two days.
20 There's not any more hunters than there were before.
21 It's just hunters are used to this two day season, and
22 they're just getting good at harvesting on that two day
23 season that they've got. So, just kind of my thoughts
24 on that.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, sir. I'm
27 a lifetime -- well, I've hunted in all areas, but the
28 22D is my basically bread and butter. It's been a
29 lifetime there living at Pilgrim Springs, living at
30 Kuzitrin. Yeah. My whole life's been there. I watched
31 the moose herd show up, and then I watched the bear herd
32 show up after. So, and the Beaver. So. Anyway, thank you
33 for that. Any questions or comments? Mr. Moses.

34
35 MR. MOSES: Yeah. My question is, I'm
36 from Golovin, and right across the Knik side is the
37 village of Elim. They have a hunt like Unalakleet in
38 some ways, but the border line, there's a line right
39 there on Darby Ridge. It's that point going straight up
40 between the N and the E. Yeah right there. Darby Ridge
41 going straight up, where Louis pointing. Now on Elim
42 side there, moose hunting. There's an imaginary line
43 right there. They say west of the Darby Mountains for
44 Elim side and that's their border line. And then look
45 at 22C, 22D now there's -- you could see they're parted.
46 But when moose hunting season comes in September there's
47 lots of Nome people that go towards 22D, 22C and some
48 go to 22B. Who has the authority to draw the line on the
49 Darby Mountains for west of Elim for their hunt and why?
50 I don't know how to say it but, say a 22C gets a permit

1 to hunt moose that fall and he gets it in Nome that's
2 where they get it in Nome are online. Then you go to 22B
3 and go moose hunting, shouldn't there -- wouldn't it be
4 restricted if they were only to get one permit to stay
5 in 22C or 22B or 22D or it's all for the whole thing?
6

7 MS. HENSLEE: Yeah. So, through the
8 Chair. Thank you for that question. And you actually
9 just made me remember another thing I wanted to mention.
10 So, first off it seemed like your question was -- your
11 first question was about the difference between kind of
12 hunt management between 22B East and West and who has
13 authority to make the different hunts between the two,
14 because one is a general season and one's a registration.
15 So, that is established in cooperation between, you know
16 like Alaska Department of Fish and Game. We -- our job
17 is to say like there's this many bowls available. So,
18 in 22B west we say there's 40 and then one of the
19 considerations with 22B west versus east is the road
20 access. So, we're 22B east a lot of the hunting pressure
21 is kind of limited by access And as such you know Elim
22 and Koyuk are the vast majority of hunters participating
23 in that area. So, there's a lot less potential harvest
24 in east compared to west where you've got that road Nome
25 hunters can access it. So, because of that, we have this
26 quota, because if we were to have a general season, the
27 harvest would go way over what's sustainable. Because
28 yeah, between Nome, White Mountain, Elim, they're just
29 -- I mean, Nome, White Mountain, Golovin there'd be tons
30 of harvest and then we would have no bulls after a year
31 or two. So, that's kind of a lot of that goes into
32 consideration. Fish and Game's role is to just say
33 basically what's sustainable to be harvested so that we
34 can continue to have this hunt year after year and then
35 the public -- so, with the RAC, they work on the Federal
36 land and with our local Advisory Committees, they create
37 these hunt, you know, strategies according to what local
38 residents out of Golovin, White Mountain and Nome want.
39 So, this 22B west season, we've got, for example, the
40 fall RM840 season, September 1st to the 14th. And then
41 there's also that winter season, RM843, that was
42 developed from the Northern Norton Sound Advisory
43 Committee because residents of Golovin and White
44 Mountain wanted to see a winter season, and those permits
45 are only available in White Mountain and Golovin to kind
46 of give those residents a chance to harvest in the
47 winter, because that's what local -- the members of the
48 public wanted to do. So, that's a public kind of informed
49 process there and your second question was about how our
50 RM840, you asked if someone picks up a permit, if they

1 have to choose which subunit of RM840 they can hunt in.
2 And currently there's nothing stopping an RM840 permit
3 holder from participating in all four of our management
4 areas. So, that's 22D remainder that opens on August
5 10th. There's 22D-Kuzitrin September 1st and 22C, 22 B
6 West all open on September 1st. So, in theory someone
7 could start hunting up in D remainder and then when the
8 September season starts, they could go to D. They can
9 hunt 22C for two days till it closes and move so on and
10 so forth. But the City of White Mountain and maybe you've
11 heard about it. They are currently considering what's
12 called an agenda change request, and they would like to
13 require an RM840 permit holder to choose which of those
14 four units they're going to hunt in. So, like I as a
15 Nome resident, I pick up my permit and I say I want to
16 hunt in 22C and I can no longer participate in 22B west,
17 22D Kuzitrin or 22D remainder. So, that's something
18 that's being developed by the City of White Mountain. I
19 met with them last month. They're planning to submit
20 that as an agenda change request, which I'm not sure will
21 get accepted to get into this Board cycle. But if it
22 doesn't get accepted, it will be considered the next
23 time the Board of Game meets for our region, which is
24 going to be in 2027. So, that's something that's coming
25 down the pipe. And if that's something that the -- you're
26 interested in or Golovin residents are interested in,
27 I'd encourage them to like go through the City, go
28 through the local Golovin representative who I want to
29 say is Jack Fagerstrom. I'm trying to think of the --
30 yeah. So, I would encourage you to speak with him about
31 that, because if this agenda change request gets
32 submitted or if it gets submitted as a proposal through
33 the regular cycle, the Advisory Committees are going to
34 have a lot of discussion about it. And because it's not
35 a biological issue, it's a -- what's called allocative,
36 which is something where it's kind of the public's choice
37 on whether we change it because there's no biology
38 related to whether someone's hunting in only one unit.
39 The Advisory Committees usually have a lot of sway with
40 the Board of Game on whether it gets accepted or not.
41 So, that is something coming down the pipe with the City
42 of White Mountain. And another thing that they've
43 considered while I'm talking about this 22B west area,
44 they're also submitting an agenda change request to move
45 the 22B west season to begin on September 6th. Right
46 now, I believe is the date. So, 10th? Okay, a week to
47 10 days later, perhaps September 10th, and run it through
48 the 20th and they're doing that because -- Tom had
49 mentioned during his public comments how a lot of White
50 Mountain residents struggled to get moose this year

1 because the moose had not moved down from the mountains
2 onto the river. So, that's another thing that they're
3 considering, is moving only the 22B west season to begin
4 September 10th, is the latest draft we've been working
5 on. And then that -- there's one more thing I'm trying
6 to think of. I believe the last thing they wanted to do
7 was restrict RM840 to only allow one permit per
8 household. And that's another thing that was just in
9 line with only having individuals hunt in one specific
10 area because as if they were to restrict it to where you
11 choose one unit people in the same household could choose
12 different units, and then they could still hunt, and B
13 and C, for example. So, those three things are all being
14 submitted as agenda change requests. I think the one
15 that might get accepted is the season date change to
16 September 10th. But I guess I'll leave it at that right
17 now. What -- the due date is November 1st, and then
18 we'll see if they accept it. They'll have a meeting here
19 in a month or two and discuss it then. So, just a couple
20 updates.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Sara.
23 Martin and Chuck after.

24
25 MR. AUKONGAK: Sorry, Chuck. Go ahead.

26
27 MR. MENADELOOK: Thank you. Chuck
28 Menadelook. I just wanted to ask since we had a 27 --
29 was it 27 and quarter and 44 count?

30
31 MS. HENSLEE: Yes.

32
33 MR. MENADELOOK: Has anybody thought of
34 all of the impact that all of the chopper traffic to
35 Graphite One? I'm not saying that's a bad thing, but,
36 you know, I've hunted Imuruk Basin for, you know, 30
37 years with my brother. And we always went up there and
38 one year, you know, there was four bears on the line
39 that were going from 22 -- the corner of 22C to Imuruk
40 Basin and there were 40 moose came out of the willows
41 right around where Graphite One is being built. Okay.
42 Now my question is, has anybody thought that -- or
43 thought about the effect that all of the chopper traffic
44 is having on that area? Because it seems like to me
45 anyway, and I have nothing to base it on. But it seemed
46 like to me that all the bulls are going from 22D to 22C,
47 and it has -- it might not have anything to do with the
48 amount of gas or people going out to go moose hunting.
49 Its just that the moose is nothing for them to move 30
50 miles in a day, you know, they're like horses they have.

1 They'll run like horses. They move, they walk. I've
2 watched a moose walk five miles in ten minutes, you
3 know. So, has anybody thought of that, that all of the
4 chopper traffic going to Graphite One because since I've
5 been working this job every summer, there's been a
6 chopper -- there's been chopper traffic to Graphite One,
7 you know, almost all day long. From Nome to Graphite
8 One, Nome to Graphite One. Does that have anything to
9 do with why we're catching a lot of moose in 22C? You
10 know, I don't have anything. Basically, it's just a
11 question. Thank you.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Chuck.
14 Good question.

15
16 MS. HENSLEE: Yeah. Through the Chair, I
17 think. Definitely an a great question. And we aren't --
18 I believe there's some university studies that are
19 assessing the impact of Graphite One through harvest,
20 but no active project on moose movement with that
21 question in mind specifically. We do have over 100
22 collared female moose on the Seward Peninsula right now
23 that we try to take a look at least twice a year. We do
24 calving surveys of those collared moose every spring.
25 And just anecdotally, from what I've found, these cows
26 have no problem twinning at the base of Graphite One.
27 They don't seem to have any difference in whether their
28 calves survive or not. Bears will find in Graphite One.
29 Bears will find them in the Sinuk. No differences from
30 just what I've seen. And when I've tried to do kind of
31 spatial like differences between survival there. So, the
32 cows seem to be doing fine. They -- we have a maybe 15
33 GPS collared females now, and they'll move through that
34 corridor, Mosquito Pass and it's incredible. They just
35 -- they'll go pop up. They'll come back down. They
36 whether it's helicopter use making a move or they just
37 feel like going into the Pilgrim, maybe near the Hot
38 Springs for a nice day out on the park, I don't know.
39 But, yeah, we -- we're watching them. I -- and then I
40 think it'll be interesting with this fall composition
41 survey in 22C. That'll give us an idea of what the number
42 of bulls is looking like in that area. And we can compare
43 that with like locations from past years to see like,
44 are there still a lot of bulls in the Sinuk? Are they
45 moving away? And just questions to kind of like get at
46 that for sure. So, yeah.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you. Thank you
49 for the question, Chuck. And thank you, Sara. We'll put
50 this out there about the Mosquito Pass. It's a flyway

1 for aircraft. It's been like that. I started flying over
2 40 years ago, and that's the tunnel. And when you --
3 let's say you're going west and you're going to Imuruk
4 -- towards Imuruk this side of that -- right at the
5 outset -- the cobblestone there right there. That was a
6 big breeding ground right there. Just it's hard to get
7 to, nobody hunts it. You know, it's a fall-time moose
8 catch. They're all in there just stacked up. You see
9 them all around there. And I just was wondering if that's
10 kind of the same effect on the south side of the Imuruk,
11 where you're talking about. Maybe another site like that
12 that I never really paid attention to because I was over
13 the other way.

14

15 (Pause)

16

17 Okay, well. Thank you. What do you got,
18 Martin?

19

20 MR. AUKONGAK: It's -- I'm real quick.
21 It's -- anyway. It's cool. It's once you pick, I caution
22 you. You know, I want you to get your moose. Don't get
23 me wrong, but if you did pick in my Unit, you can't go
24 -- you cannot go in corporate land. So, there's
25 guidelines right there. That's kind of a question of
26 maybe Bering Straits. I'm not trying to step on toes or
27 anything. What are their guidelines of letting you know
28 non-shareholder go hunt on their land? Because these
29 bylaws have been around forever since 1971. So, that's
30 something to think about.

31

32 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: And that's come into
33 play with certain village corporations that advertise
34 in the newspaper, the Nugget. I don't recall all of
35 them, but I know that they're in there. Not sure about
36 Bering Straits, but there may be something in there.
37 Anybody else? Mary.

38

39 MS. FREYTAG: Mr. Chairman, Mary Freytag,
40 Unalakleet. Just -- I was just curious on the harvest
41 quota numbers for -- are they based on the surveys
42 numbers that you guys -- is that a yearly population
43 survey you guys do, or is it staggered? And then I --
44 he touched -- Louis touched on Tier 1 and Tier 2. I have
45 no clue what he's talking about so, I'm ignorant on
46 that. Yeah, I, and then my other thing was days of
47 harvest. Where is that? You mentioned there's two days
48 to harvest moose. And I was wondering why it's only two
49 days open. And is there a quota to that? And why it's
50 only two days?

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CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you for the questions. They're good ones. Sara.

MS. HENSLEE: Yeah. Thank you. Mary, I think it's a good reminder for us with our acronyms and Tier 2 and statewide jargon to explain to folks. But first, I'll answer your question about the quotas. We bring in a whole slew of data. So, we do these fall composition surveys, which is when Alicia and I will go out with a couple pilots and we'll fly all the drainages that we can as soon as the snow sets up and we will look at the bulls, we'll look at the size of the bulls. So, we'll see who are our big mature breeding bulls, who are the ones that are subadults and those yearling bulls that are smaller than 30 inches or spike fork, but we'll kind of bring that fall data together with a spring survey, which is when we'll go out with a lot more pilots, will fly study areas that are in a grid format. And it -- just there's some boring statistics which I won't mention, but we'll fly this grid and it'll allow us to get an estimate of how many moose are in an area. And we do that in 22C and 22B west. We'll do it in 22A in the Unalakleet drainage and then we'll get into 22D and E. And those are completed every 3 or 4 years now along -- as long as we get the weather for it. There's times where we just get storm after storm and maybe like four years ago, we weren't able to get a survey done because it was just like 20 storms in February. It was just -- we couldn't get it done. But anyway, we've got -- 22A's coming up next. That's what we're going to be doing this fall and spring and then after that we are going to get back into 22C by Nome and we'll count 22B do the same thing fall and spring survey. And then finally 22D and E to see how the moose are doing up there. And we'll bring the number of bulls in an area. We'll consider how many bulls there are relative to how many cows, which gives us an idea of are there enough bulls to breed with cows. And there's certain numbers that we shoot for. So, in 22C, historically we've only wanted 20 bulls per 100 cows is what the metric is. But lately I've been shooting for a larger number. I want more bulls in the area, which I think has really come in handy as we -- our harvest keeps going up. I just want more of a savings account of bulls. I want to make sure all those cows get breed, because that's what's going to increase the population, which everybody wants more moose. So, things like that, I'm looking for -- I just want to make sure there's enough bulls that are available for hunters to harvest, but there's still

1 enough bowls after the hunting season that they can breed
2 with cows. So, that's kind of a long way of saying, I
3 look at fall and spring surveys to tell me how many
4 bulls I think are available to be harvested in the fall,
5 or in the example of Unalakleet they have that winter
6 season. And in some situations, like by Unalakleet,
7 there's more bulls than cows available. We don't need a
8 quota there. There's just so many bulls. We can't just
9 harvest as many as you can, because at some point the
10 bulls are just eating resources that are available for
11 calves and cows and we got to prioritize the calves and
12 cows. So, we don't need that many bulls on the landscape
13 as -- sorry men, not as important as the females and
14 moose populations. So, Unalaklets got a ton of bulls.
15 We have no concerns about that. That's why there's no
16 quota, whereas in 22C, there's a lot more to think about.
17 There's 3,500 people in Nome and a lot of interested
18 hunters. We keep getting -- I think 550 hunters apply
19 for an RM840 permit. The local Advisory Committee has
20 worked hard to restrict that. It's an in-person only
21 permit, but there's just so much interest in hunting
22 moose and we've talked about it. There's just not much
23 else meat wise in this area, moose is king here and a
24 lot of interest in hunting moose. So, that is why we
25 have kind of a quota in place and it gets hit in two
26 days, because when you have 550 hunters that are going
27 out there, there's a road system, you got hunters and
28 groups of 4 or 5 side by sides, six wheelers. And then
29 there's me hiking into rivers, thinking I can find
30 something while there's people buzzing about and it's
31 just so much hunting pressure in a couple of days. Yeah,
32 just a lot of interested hunters getting better and
33 better at harvesting moose in the tundra, it seems like.
34 And yeah, I hope it means there's more bulls on the
35 landscape in 2020. But that's why we're going to go out
36 this fall and make sure that there are because otherwise,
37 if hunters can keep shooting 40 bulls every year in 22C,
38 the worry is that, you know, they aren't -- there aren't
39 going to be very many bulls for that much longer. And
40 then we go back to where there's no hunting in a
41 moratorium and nobody wants to see that. So, we have
42 these quotas set in place to give us a little bit of
43 wiggle room to make sure that there's enough breeding
44 bulls in the area for those cows in the rut. And these
45 numbers, there is a little bit of give to it, where if
46 we do go above the quota, it doesn't mean that we've
47 wiped out all the bulls and it's the end of the world.
48 Like there's a couple of these Kuzitrin area, the quota
49 was 27, we harvested 33. Like that's okay. So, we'll set
50 a little bit lower of a number so we can issue that

1 closure to close the season. And by the time we get all
2 the reports in, it's kind of where we want it to be. And
3 Alicia and I spend a lot of time looking at our crystal
4 ball, looking at weather, guessing when the season's
5 going to close. But hunters have learned there's a 24-
6 hour reporting requirement, and they'll call right at
7 the end of that 24-hours, because their buddies might
8 get a moose if they have the season open a day longer
9 and sometimes, they get me. But it's a circus, so.

10

11 Oh, yeah, Tier 1 and Tier 2, just to see
12 how I can kind of make this simple. Basically, tier two.
13 Are you familiar with the muskox hunting? We've
14 discussed the application system earlier in this meeting
15 this morning. That is when in order to get a moose
16 permit, everyone in Unit 22 would have to apply in
17 November and December and kind of do the whole program
18 of, like, how many days you spent hunting and fishing
19 and that's that ranked thing we talked about, where you
20 get scored according to how many days you've hunted or
21 fished, how many years you've applied, and the cost of
22 gas and groceries gets fed into that too. So, some of
23 the shortcomings of Tier 2 is, for example, Nome has a
24 lot more demand than we have moose available. But in
25 Unalakleet, there's no quota and there's tons of moose
26 available. But you would also be restricted to Tier 2,
27 even though that might not be what Unalakleet wants
28 necessarily. Because right now you have -- a let's see,
29 it's five-month season. So, is it appropriate to assign
30 a Tier 2 structure to the entire unit 22? I think folks
31 in the villages might say otherwise. So, it's a difficult
32 conversation and yeah, and it may be -- it's not
33 necessarily in everyone's best interest. And the issue
34 with Nome as well is we don't score as high on food and
35 gas. So, the folks from the villages could potentially
36 get our Nome permits and Nome could be blocked out of
37 the moose hunt completely. Just the way that the scoring
38 works, which maybe some folks would be happy about that,
39 but just Tier 2 is a little complicated. And the thing
40 above Tier 2 is Tier 1, where there's it's a complicated
41 system. Basically, we're about as close as Tier 1 as you
42 can get without saying you're in Tier 1. So, the fact
43 that we have these permits that are only available in
44 person at Unit 22 locations. So, the RM840 is only
45 available in Nome, White Mountain, Golovin, Teller and
46 Brevig. That's pretty restrictive for the State to do
47 because we often don't discriminate against -- we
48 consider all Alaska residents subsistence users. So, to
49 do that sort of restriction to only be in person is --
50 it's kind of getting towards Tier 1 where it starts to

1 discriminate according to certain groups of residents.
2 And then that's the same thing with the winter RM843
3 hunting Golovin and White Mountain. You can only get it
4 -- they're very restrictive, where only two villages get
5 it. So, I think we're quietly in Tier 1. I guess you
6 could say, or now that I'm putting this on the record,
7 but we do what we can and Tier 2 it would be -- I think
8 it would not really -- it's not really a situation that
9 would apply to all of Unit 22. And there'd be some
10 unhappy people if we were to go to that point. And I
11 don't know that we're there necessarily. So, yeah,
12 thanks for the question. Sorry for the long-winded
13 answer.

14

15 MS. FREYTAG: Thank you so much. That
16 answered my question very much.

17

18 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Mary, for
19 the question. Thank you, Sara, for the answers.
20 Something jumped out there on the Tier 2. The Tier 2
21 salmon that -- salmon Tier 2 that was put on the
22 residents of Nome subdistrict, I think it was '99 by the
23 Board of Fish. They came actually came to Nome and did
24 it, which lasted about close to 20 years. I don't recall
25 the date it was taken out, but it was only directed to
26 take place in 22 Nome subdistrict. And it didn't go
27 outside of that. So, I'm kind of thinking that if it was
28 to do with the game, it might be the same. So, it
29 wouldn't apply to the whole unit. But I could be wrong.
30 It might be a little different than what the salmon
31 were. But anyway, anybody. So, Elmer.

32

33 MR. SEETOT: Elmer from Brevig Mission.
34 Mr. Menadelook touched on Graphite One. I was there in
35 Agiapuk last month, and I'm going to the main river of
36 Agiapuk or going into Imuruk Basin from the Toksook side.
37 From the west side, at least there were some seagulls,
38 some ducks showing along the shoreline. Once you get
39 into main Imuruk Basin. Up, up towards Agiapuk I would
40 assume that the thump, thump, thump, thump of the
41 helicopter blades throughout the summer. When you're
42 near them, you can like, hear the vibration coming from
43 there. And I assume that that's where most of the geese
44 that that usually stay around there and pick on berries
45 and whatever around there. They were pretty much non-
46 existent from the Agiapuk River qll the way maybe to
47 Cobblestone. There was some from Cobblestone to maybe
48 Windy Cove, where Graphite One is you never see no, no
49 flying ducks around. What -- they were there even though
50 I'm on the substance -- not the Board or Council or

1 whatever. Advisory Council for Graphite One, I kind of
2 mentioned, you know, you're going to with that kind of
3 noise, you're going to drive all the animals out. Last
4 year. I was hearing that they were seeing snowshoe
5 rabbits up and around Sunset Creek. That's what? 40 miles
6 away. That's on the north side of Grantley Harbor. And
7 you don't see that very much snowshoe rabbits, you know,
8 up and around that area. You can see a lot of hares, you
9 know, the regular, the big -- I get my description of
10 both kind of mixed up, but I know, you know, the snowshoe
11 hare and rabbits, you know, they're -- they were pretty
12 much up and around. And like Mr. Menadelook said, he
13 said four bears came out, you know, and all the moose
14 came out. I've been in that situation before. You try
15 to look for a moose, you get -- you can walk right by
16 it two feet away without even seeing it. If the
17 underbrush is thick, that's their specialty. That's how
18 they survive. That's the one thing that we don't quite
19 understand on our side. We think that they act like
20 humans. I don't think so. They got -- they don't come
21 together and convenience. Oh, let's get away from the
22 herders. Let's go up to the high mountain. Stay away
23 from them. Because I know that they don't like -- ice
24 breaking up so, they stay in the hills until after the
25 ice freeze up in our area anyway. But what I've been
26 also hearing speak lately of the animals that you're
27 going to hunt, like you're not -- oh, I'm going to go
28 get me a moose or just, you know, something, something
29 specific like that. I was taught not to, you know, say
30 it out loud in a way that would offend the spirit, the
31 creature, or whatever. But then people that regulate
32 these animals sometimes, you know, they say words, you
33 know, that that are not descriptive of the animals that
34 we rely on. Moose are new species. I didn't hear moose
35 when I was growing up. They say they saw a big reindeer
36 somewhere up the river. And that was before my -- before
37 I started hearing of moose coming in from the Interior.
38 So, like Mr. Green was probably saying the activity or
39 whoever was saying that activity from Graphite One can
40 drive animals away because you can hear the -- you can
41 hear the vibration when they're close in your ears. Would
42 you stay there to sleep? I don't think so. I mean, the
43 animals that are incapable of escaping that area, you
44 know, they got other dangers too you know, predators and
45 such. So, animals like this that we subsist on it there
46 -- the assumption is that from the last meeting, they're
47 still there. They're always on the move. Their food is
48 not in one place or they're -- their predators are not
49 cooperating today so, they leave you alone. So, there's
50 a lot of -- one thing I kind of mentioned quite a few,

1 maybe quite a few years back, I went along one river
2 system and then melting the two, I counted over 20 moose
3 kills within a one month period. So, you know how bad
4 the predators are when, when you're out in the country.
5 You that that are with the notebooks. You're okay. I
6 don't think you hear about that episode. You hear about
7 that experience by the hunters. The only way you can get
8 true, meaningful regulation that is meaningful to the
9 people is go to the people. We wait for our time. We
10 wait for seasons to come around. Moose harvest is pretty
11 much already gone now. Most of the people hunt for their
12 moose, the first, you know, first opening because
13 they're fat and they're not stressed out in a way. But
14 then to answer you -- I would say to answer your
15 question, not to say why a two-day hunt in Nome if you
16 make your own observation, there's too many people in
17 Nome. There's too many nationalities, too many different
18 people. They got the modern toys, they got the truck,
19 whatever. You know, like I say, they got this one right
20 there. This is my international signal for iPhone. But
21 that's what they rely on quite a bit and for us to say
22 -- and for us to -- oh, moose season is already closed
23 in Nome, why doesn't it happen in the villages? Because
24 we in the villages, we have equipment that are not, you
25 know, not the fastest boat, not the -- not a truck. We
26 have to do things way, you know, beforehand -- planned
27 beforehand if you want to have a successful hunt in the
28 villages. We got the weather, we got south winds.
29 However, any other factor that comes into being, to
30 prevent you from a successful hunt. It's right in the
31 villages. No, might, you know, they got TVs, radio. Oh,
32 the moose just passed by me. But I know that around the
33 base of the Kigluaik Mountains were Graphite One is
34 trying to mine there is a record antler moose that that
35 was taken a long time. So, I know that the moose like
36 to be there, but when they're -- think that they're
37 going to be -- they're being hunted. Then they'll stay
38 low even though, you know, they're right side you
39 walking. I did that a couple times. Wow. Then my hair
40 raised up. Oh, no. What if it attack me? You know, you
41 know, without any knowledge. That things we have to kind
42 of consider and it's not the same in all regions, but
43 at least we have a season for our moose, our caribou at
44 certain times of the year, you know, certain times we
45 wait for the seasons and then, okay, we have to see what
46 went wrong that last time. But like, no more saying why
47 no two days. There's too many people here, that's what
48 my own thinking. And they got all the modern toys that
49 we don't have out in the country. I would, I would like
50 to catch a moose at the right time. But travel was so

1 bad this past season. Lots of rain. Like Mr. Gray was
2 saying, they had to consume a lot of gas just to ride
3 around and look around for moose sometime without seeing
4 any. Same way -- it was the same way up around 20 -- in
5 around Brevig because of all the high water of all the
6 rain. So, they were just playing hide and seek, even
7 though even though -- the moose are there, not
8 (indiscernible) are there. It's just that they react in,
9 you know, a certain way in different kinds of weather.
10 And that's what I just want to put out. Thank you.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Elmer. I'm
13 going to allow one more and then we're going to move on.
14 You haven't asked a question yet. So, I want to hear you
15 talk.

16
17 MR. HUNT: Good, good. Raymond Hunt here
18 from Shaktoolik. Earlier you mentioned tags on the
19 moose. So, I get, you know, that you're tracking some
20 moose right here. I'm wondering where does the tagging
21 take place. And you know, tracking the movement of them,
22 and then, if possible, you know, I'd like to know if in
23 the future, you know, be fair to have track, you know,
24 each site. Not -- probably not drainage, but somewhere,
25 somewhere in each village, you know, to try to track
26 where the moose go, migrate where they come from and
27 all. But it's not to check and ask, how much are we --
28 where does the tracking takes place at first, and how
29 many has been tagged so far? And if so, you know you
30 know, try to tag each site. So, that way it gives the
31 rest of us kind of an idea of the movement in each
32 village.

33
34 MS. HENSLEE: Yeah. Through the Chair.
35 Great question. So, we have two types of collars on our
36 moose right now. And the first one, it's called VHF. I
37 won't do the acronym. It's just basically you have to
38 fly in a fixed wing plane to go find that moose, and you
39 can triangulate or, I mean, you can locate where that
40 moose is by, you know, we fly at 10,000ft. You get these
41 beeps from the plane through a receiver, and eventually
42 you can hone in on where that moose is and get right on
43 top of them, and that -- we generally look at those
44 collars for calving rates. I was saying, and they've
45 collared gosh, I think it was 100 moose from 2017 through
46 2022. We collared short yearlings. So, those are moose
47 that are 10 or 11 months old. They're just short of a
48 year and weighed them. That was a project Warren Hanson
49 did. If anybody remembers his name, he left a couple of
50 years ago. He was our moose researcher, and he was doing

1 that project to understand better what was limiting our
2 population in 22C and 22D in the Kuzitrin. As you know,
3 there used to be double the number of moose back in the
4 80s. People said they could ride across the Kuzitrin on
5 the backs of moose. Just so lots of questions on why
6 aren't we getting back to that point and how can we --
7 what's holding us back? So, he initiated that project
8 back in 2017 and initially he did those VHF callers. And
9 then we do the calving surveys. We've done them since
10 2020. We've got five years of calving surveys on that.
11 And then in 2021, he started putting GPS collars on
12 moose and he put out 19, I believe. And those GPS collars
13 are a little different to where every day we can log
14 into the computer and we know where these moose are. So,
15 that's what we're putting on muskox nowadays. It's what
16 we're putting on moose. They're a little more expensive,
17 but they give us way better resolution of what the moose
18 is doing. And I really like these GPS collars because,
19 for example, we have this moose right now. She's a
20 female, she's three years old, and she was collared in
21 the Moon Mountains, which is right next to Sledge Island
22 on the map there. Alicia will point it out and we
23 collared her when she was a short yearling, and Alicia
24 will now show you where she's moved since May 2024. So,
25 over the last five months, she's traveled 700 miles and
26 she is now by St. Michael. **I don't know** why she's doing
27 that. I have, yeah -- so, she just decided she was sick
28 of Nome and wanted to go for a greener pasture. She's
29 now going where there's a way higher density of moose.
30 I don't get it. Usually, cows stay in the same area.
31 They like to just, you know, remain in the same small
32 area their whole life. There's been some big movements
33 of, like, 300 miles that researchers documented in the
34 90s in the Interior. But to see a moose move 700 miles,
35 a female moose moved move 700 miles. She actually stopped
36 by Shaktoolik for couple weeks, you might have seen her
37 while you were moose hunting. She was by Unalakleet. She
38 decided she didn't like Unalakleet either and now she's
39 by St. Michael. I don't know where she is these days. I
40 haven't run the numbers, but she's moving like 30 miles
41 a day. Like you were saying. Like, what the heck is she
42 doing? But anyway, my point is, these GPS collars, they
43 let us see a lot more information on what moose are
44 doing in our neck of the woods. So, in the past, you
45 know, you kind of think moose are hanging out in the
46 same area. But now what we're seeing is it's just no-
47 thing for a moose to just pop up into the Kuzitrin.
48 Maybe they're going to go to the lava beds. Oh, never
49 mind. We're going to come back to Nome, and they'll do
50 these seasonal migrations where they'll go to the lava

1 beds for the wintertime, and they'll come back to calve.
2 They usually like to calve in the same area year after
3 year. But anyway so, that -- you have one moose in 22A
4 that has a collar on it right now, but that might not
5 last very long because who knows where she's going to
6 end up. So, yeah, the collaring project at this time is
7 done, and the majority of our collars are still in 22C,
8 22D, and a lot of those females from D have moved into
9 E. I'm sure Elmer could corroborate this, but it seems
10 like moose kind of move up and down the mountains on the
11 other side, fall habitat they like to move into -- from
12 the Agiapuk kind of into the Nuluk drainage and then
13 they come back and forth is the movement that we're
14 seeing. So, a lot of movement between subunits, but not
15 so much easterly. There are a few, but they don't seem
16 to be going east as much. I wonder if it's just like
17 higher density or usually in a low-density area there's
18 not a lot of incentive for a moose to move, because why
19 move away from where there's unlimited pizzas to
20 somewhere where there's not? So, I still don't know what
21 that three-year-old is doing down by -- it doesn't make
22 any sense to me, but anyway so, done with collaring for
23 now. But of course, public interest is gonna weigh into
24 what inspires future research projects. We have a new
25 research biologist starting on December 1st. We're very
26 excited about him. And you know, public comment like
27 this. We -- I've got an email drafted to our research
28 coordinator about a lot of questions about moose
29 movement near Unalakleet because as we've been saying,
30 there's more bulls than cows there. Why is that? And are
31 they coming to stay? Are they leaving after we do our
32 full composition survey? What is the nature of these
33 bulls? Are they up in Shaktoolik? Are there tons of
34 bulls there? There's just -- there are some questions.
35 And that research biologist will be tasked with
36 investigating that, as long as there's a lot of public
37 interest. And I have been hearing it from Unalakleet,
38 Shaktoolik. This is the first time I've heard interest
39 in that kind of movement project from there. But we let
40 our research staff know and we kind of prioritize
41 projects according to public interest in like a
42 biological need. And I think at this point, 22C and D,
43 we know what's going on with our moose population there.
44 And its perhaps time to expand. So, that was a really
45 good question. Thank you.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Raymond.
48 Thank you, Sara.

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50 MS. FREYTAG: Mr. Chairman.

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CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Last one.

MS. FREYTAG: Mary Freytag I just wanted to point out when you were talking about the collared female and why they went all the way down to where they went. Several -- well, a couple decades ago, I had the privilege of being on the Golsovia with me and my husband, and we took our three wheelers and just took a little ride from the mouth, and we went over this hump and boom, there was 40 some bulls. I was like, oh my gosh, we didn't have to go anywhere. I mean, we didn't even hunt them. We watched them because we knew they were in a rut, you know, not good to take them when they're in rut because meat's no good. But it was just amazing. I just wanted to share that the bull moose, like St. Michael area. I wonder if they go through Pikmiktalik River from the Yukon. Like, how Louis was saying that, you know, maybe they came up from the Yukon area to that way, the bull moose, anyway. But the females, they know where the males are. So, yeah, I just wanted to point that out.

CHAIRPERSON GREEN: So, you just said there she was running away from up there, down there. Okay. All right. All right so, we're done with that, I think Sara has done their job answering these questions, and we need to move on. Yeah, we gave it a lot. So, that brings us to a the Ocean conservancy -- Conservancy, excuse me. Oh, hey. Okay. I guess I missed it in here somewhere. Come on in. We do want to.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. HENSLEE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My name is Luke Henslee. I'm the assistant area management biologist for Norton Sound and Kotzebue Fisheries and I'll just give you a quick update, and I'm going to focus on subsistence. Specifically, in Unalakleet, since that's where OSM is mainly focused on. So, this year we had a commercial fishing and subsistence fishing restrictions in the Unalakleet subdistrict. And we didn't allow any marine fishing from June 15th to July 1 to try to allow chinook salmon to escape into the river and get to spawning grounds. On July 1, we opened up subsistence fishing in freshwater using beach seines with no retention of chinook. So, basically, between June 15th on, we didn't really allow any harvest of chinook salmon trying to protect them and let them get up to their spawning grounds at Unalakleet.

1
2 We had a lot of difficulty monitoring
3 escapement this season. So, we get our funding for the
4 Unalakleet weir through OSM specifically to monitor
5 chinook salmon escapement. The river was huge this year.
6 Putting the weir in was -- we have a really experienced
7 team. I don't think it would have happened unless we had
8 the people that we had. And then taking it out in mid-
9 August, I was afraid we might have to let that thing
10 freeze in because that's the tallest I've ever seen the
11 Unalakleet River, it was over the banks, and we were
12 able to get that out. And we were able to get a pretty
13 good estimate of chinook salmon escapement this year.
14 But unfortunately, the Shaktoolik tower in the North
15 River tower suffered a lot of missed passage days just
16 due to those high rivers. The last several years we've
17 been conducting aerial surveys with NSEDC biologists.
18 And again, those high rivers have really made that a
19 challenge to see those fish on their spawning beds. So,
20 we've been trying to investigate other methods. It seems
21 like the last 5 or 6 seasons have just been so difficult
22 to keep our projects in the water. We're kind of looking
23 at alternative monitoring methods. One thing that we've
24 tried for the first time this year was using a sonar
25 specifically to count coho salmon in the Unalakleet
26 River. That was really hard again, since the river was
27 so huge this year. But it's something we're hoping to
28 maybe be able to monitor early season chinook salmon
29 escapement on the Unalakleet in the future. Anecdotally,
30 we heard from residents in Shaktoolik and Unalakleet
31 that they were able to get their subsistence salmon
32 fairly well. We talked to several people that use beach
33 seines to get chum and pinks. And then Shaktoolik and
34 Unalakleet, I've never seen communities that use silver
35 salmon so much, and I heard that they were able to get
36 their silver salmon pretty well this year, even later
37 in the season when the water was high. But when it came
38 back down, we heard reports that people were still able
39 to put away their silvers. And then I was interested to
40 hear about the new priority interest need, I think,
41 introduced by member Freytag for subsistence surveys and
42 Unalakleet to talk about fisheries resources there,
43 because that's one thing that we struggled with in recent
44 years, is to get a good idea of the kind of fish that
45 people are harvesting in Unalakleet. We do a household
46 subsistence surveys in that community, and we only get
47 about a 20% response rate. So, we've been looking into
48 ways where we can get a better idea of if folks are
49 getting the salmon that they need. But anecdotally,
50 we've been hearing good reports from Unalakleet and

1 Shaktoolik. And that is really all I have for subsistence
2 fisheries for this last year. Happy to take any
3 questions.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you. Council
6 Moses.

7

8 MR. MOSES: I got a question. It relates
9 to commercial fishing this summer and our village with
10 NSEDC. We had two openings that I know of, the first one
11 was 24 hours and during that 24-hour period, there was
12 like seven commercial fishermen, 5 to 7. During that 24-
13 hour period and it was silver salmon fishing in one
14 period, one fisherman caught -- that whole 24 hours, he
15 only caught five fish, my son subsistence fish that time
16 two during that time. Whole one day one Silver Salmon.
17 And then a week later, after the 24-hour opened and
18 closed about a week later, there was another opening.
19 And it made the same run and there was like only seven
20 fish in a 48-hour period opening was the most about --
21 my question is, why did they let them open again when
22 the first run of the numbers of the commercial fishermen
23 with the fish were so low? And why did they open it
24 again after, even if the numbers were so low like that?

25

26 MR. HENSLEE: Yeah. Thank you. Thank you,
27 member Moses. And through the Chair. Yeah, we were
28 generally fairly conservative with our openings this
29 year, and we went into the season knowing and letting
30 fishermen know that we would be managing conservatively,
31 especially for chum. And we had good hopes that we might
32 be able to be a little bit more liberal with our openings
33 during the silver part of the run. And with the high
34 waters, it was such a challenge for us to get a good
35 estimate of the number of fish in the river, the Niukluk
36 River tower, which usually we would rely on for our
37 escapement estimates for that system for coho. I think
38 it only counted maybe seven days this entire season, the
39 river was so high. And we actually did the most aerial
40 surveys we've ever done in one season on the Fish,
41 Niukluk, Casadepaga and the Ophir mainly for silver
42 salmon abundance estimates. And so, I think that one of
43 the reasons that we chose to do another opener was partly
44 to test the waters, almost literally try to see what
45 kind of presence there was of coho salmon by allowing a
46 limited opener. And we use that data to advise whether
47 or not we're going to have future openers. And we also
48 flew surveys that indicated that there might be some
49 escapement that had been missed. And we also get some
50 of those abundance estimates from reports from

1 subsistence fishermen. And we were just hearing that
2 people were having such a hard time capturing fish
3 because the river is so high. So, sometimes that means
4 that there are fish in the river, just we're not able
5 to see them in our escapements. Subsistence fishermen
6 sometimes are unable to capture them in nets. And so
7 sometimes, yeah, we'll open we'll do a short commercial
8 opener to try to see what kind of offshore presence
9 there is for silver salmon.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you. Question
12 back here from Roy Ashenfelter, public.
13

14 MR. ASHENFELTER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
15 Council members. Roy Ashenfelter, born and raised over
16 on Fish River. In your data on the Fish River, I'll just
17 let you know that the salmon run -- I could see that the
18 river was high, that you were unable to count. But those
19 of us that made an effort to cut and hang fish through
20 staining, the volume of salmon was numerous. It was
21 really, you know, we just had to make a minimal effort
22 to catch them on the fish we cut and hang, which is 500
23 for us and I think down around the bend they're doing
24 like a thousand. And they are just, you know, just
25 catching that much in one day. So, you know, maybe some
26 visits with some of us that fish on the rivers would
27 help acknowledge or share with what's going on that we
28 could see. And the other thing is, you know, pinks more
29 than chum seem to what we call (In Native). They show
30 their fins a lot. So, you know, we're able to, you know,
31 sometimes where we see them, we're unable to say. But
32 other places, we know they're there without --
33 understanding it this year, you're right. The difficulty
34 of counting salmon in the rivers because of the high
35 runoff is significant. So, I just want to make that
36 suggestion and point out that the opportunity, at least
37 on the Fish River, was successful.
38

39 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Roy. We'll
40 start with you. You're quiet. Raymond was yelling over
41 there. No, I'm kidding.
42

43 DR. VORHEES: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
44 Hannah Voorhees, for the record. Luke, you mentioned the
45 (indiscernible) surveys for Unalakleet for the harvest.
46 And when Mary Freytag and Jarred and I met to discuss
47 the PINs, there was a little bit of uncertainty about
48 whether those are the post-season surveys are still
49 going on, and it sounds like they are. I just wanted to
50 confirm that.

1

2 MR. HENSLEE: Yeah. Thank you for that
3 question. Through the Chair. Yeah, it is a little
4 confusing. Because normally, these kind of surveys are
5 conducted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
6 Subsistence Division. But it's a little interesting
7 here. We kind of take that upon ourselves, the Commercial
8 Fisheries Division, because that's data that we need in
9 a really timely manner. And so, we've actually been
10 conducting those surveys for at least the last ten years.
11 So, when you see those in the subsistence -- the Fish
12 and Game Subsistence reports, those are data that was
13 actually collected by Commercial Fisheries. And that's
14 one of the reasons that I would -- I'm really interested
15 to see this new PIN, because I would love to talk to
16 Fish and Game Subsistence Division. I think the last
17 time there was a comprehensive survey of Unalakleet was
18 2012? 2012, 2009. I feel like it'd be -- this is a really
19 good opportunity to perhaps get a better picture of the
20 kind of subsistence use and need in that community. But
21 yes, we still do annual subsistence surveys in
22 Unalakleet, Shaktoolik and Koyuk.

23

24 DR. VORHEES: Thanks for that.

25

26 MR. HENSLEE: And if I could just speak
27 to Roy's comment really quick, we love to hear from
28 subsistence users in in the communities. That is a really
29 valuable source of information for us and I do have a
30 few contacts in different places where people will call
31 me and let me know what they're seeing in the rivers and
32 what they're catching. And that is really, really useful
33 information, especially in a year like this where we're
34 unable to count, unable to see fish and aerial surveys.
35 We really put a lot of value in reports from local
36 harvesters.

37

38 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Okay. Thank you. Mr.
39 Hunt, you're on.

40

41 MR. HUNT: Okay, I got a few questions
42 and a little -- few concerns. Well one was even though
43 the -- we had high waters, you know no one reported it.
44 But, you know, we -- our fish subsistence was good, you
45 know, numerous like Mr. Ashenfelter said. You know, I
46 wish this is a little touchy subject right here, but I
47 wish Tyler and Charlie were here as well or one of those.
48 But you know, this summer with the river being record
49 high, you know, and we had the -- they had the weir out,
50 you know in the river and, you know, the river got

1 flooded. And then next thing you know, the weir fell
2 apart and we didn't know. Nobody knew about it, but, you
3 know, it involved -- I had to go and rescue three of my
4 family members, you know luckily, they were in service,
5 and got the -- was able to make a call out to me, but
6 you know, they, you know, they ended up into a bad, bad
7 boating accident, you know, passing the weir where it
8 was, you know, got hit by one of the posts and all three
9 of them fell out. You know, it was record high water,
10 you know fast, strong current. Just like, I don't know,
11 a surprise that they made it to the shore with that, you
12 know, strong current. But, you know, as soon as I got
13 the call, I just up and go and took off and saw, you
14 know, the boat -- their boat was up on the
15 (indiscernible), and I was like, what happened? And
16 ended up being one of the posts, you know, with bad
17 accident like this, you know and whatnot, you know,
18 seemed like they should find a better way to try to
19 count the fish or you know, before the -- before floods
20 like this, take it out. You know, I'm sure it's a lot
21 of work, but, you know, it could save a life. You know,
22 it could have almost lost, you know, three of my family
23 members had to go and help out. But yeah, it's just --
24 hope that something like this can be prevented and just
25 you know, honestly, I'm -- I would be better off without
26 the, you know, I'm a both subsistence and commercial
27 fisherman. And, you know, I'd go off with just the sonar
28 and not count, you know, in my opinion because the
29 counting tower is just a hazard, you know, for the --
30 for us all. You know, everyone passes through that river
31 and all, and, you know, it happened this year. I knew
32 it was just about a matter of time, of some kind of
33 accident like this that happens. And I just hope that,
34 you know, everyone takes it seriously and that, you know,
35 consider trying to take, you know, take out the weir,
36 you know, and just go off with the sonar. And because,
37 you know, we get more and more water each year and, you
38 know, that tower wasn't even -- not even half the season,
39 you know, count it for, you know Mother Nature. But it's
40 not to point that out that I hope you know, something
41 like this can be prevented and hopefully no more you
42 know, weir, you know, in my opinion, just the hazard.

43

44 And then also on the chum part, you know
45 we miss out every year, you know for the -- we have
46 numerous chums, you know, and when our -- you know, the
47 fish conning tower is up and active, you know, we already
48 lose more than half the you know, the chums that went
49 up the river, you know, because you know, wasn't active
50 yet. And, you know, we miss out, you know a lot of good

1 chum openings. And when they try to open up chums and
2 we get that 1 or 2 days a week, you know, they think
3 that our chum numbers are low. And honestly, it's just
4 that we miss the run. And that happens every single
5 year, for the past how many years we've been trying to
6 point that out, that, you know, we don't have low numbers
7 of chums. It's just the timing of when they open for
8 chums and the timing of the towers. It's -- like to
9 point that out on that, too. And thank you.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Hunt.
12 Anything from you on that?

13
14 MR. HENSLEE: Yeah. I just -- thank you
15 for those comments. And, yeah, these high-water years
16 are really posing a challenge, and we're learning a lot.
17 And we're looking into being able to be flexible and,
18 and kind of pivot with these new seasons that we're
19 experiencing. So, for example, you know, the Kuinerrak
20 River tower, which we've run since the 60s, I've heard,
21 about back in the day, being able to install that entire
22 project wearing extra tufts. And now I have to wear a
23 dry suit, and I'm a pretty tall guy and it's up to my
24 neck. So, yeah, thanks for those comments and definitely
25 duly noted and appreciate that.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Okay. Okay. Go ahead,
28 Elmer.

29
30 MR. SEETOT: Elmer Seetot, Brevig
31 Mission. You mentioned something about the counting
32 towers or the weirs, you know, being on high water. I
33 know that 20 years ago or so, ten years ago, in fact,
34 or something like that in our area, Port Clarence
35 district, for trying to get some herring for bait. They
36 were doing some test fisheries. I'm not too sure. How
37 come they're not doing any test fishery? You don't need
38 to go to that place to see how much fish are there. They
39 go right to Port Clarence Bay. They go right through
40 Grantley Harbor. That's what I'm talking about. They're
41 sockeye, the chum, the pink salmon. They go right, right
42 near through Teller. Teller is a hot spot if you want
43 to count fish. If you want to know the amount that are
44 going through there, go by Teller. If you go in front
45 of Brevig Mission to get a count for red salmon. You
46 need to be there when there's westerly winds. Westerly
47 winds. Nome Nugget. Nome Nugget put out a paper June 3
48 about the cold temperatures that were coming in and
49 around our area. And two weeks later, or Fish -- Alaska
50 Department of Fish and Game went up there to kind of

1 issue or talk about the seasoning talk a little bit
2 about, about the opening that was going to be and that
3 it was going to be you know, closed for a couple of
4 weeks, I mean, a couple of days at a time. What we know
5 in the villages is that -- I think they need to do their
6 homework more. One, they come in five, six year cycles.
7 You need to go before that time. Before last year, 2024
8 to maybe 2019, 2018, 2020. How was the fall storms? Did
9 it wipe out the eggs from that time? That's a major
10 thing that I think that -- I kind of counterpoint is the
11 counting towers are not there. You can make an
12 assumption. Once the fish start running in and around
13 our area, then you know they will continue. Reason we
14 don't catch very much fish in front of Brevig is that
15 they're channel 1 or 2 miles out of Brevig. And then
16 when south wind comes, you'll see an influx. You'll see
17 it from zero to a couple thousand in just two days, up
18 at past the counting tower. That's the main thing that
19 I think gives a false reading for Teller, at least for
20 Brevig Mission, is that we're in a cove, but majority
21 of fish pass two miles out. Only time we really catch
22 them is when southwest -- is southwest westerly winds.
23 Toksook channel, catch them quite a bit. Oh. We got no
24 more counting tower. Try the test fishery like they did
25 for herring. When they were trying to open it up and
26 around our area.

27
28 I'm not really too sure about the silver
29 salmon. We forget about the silver salmon when we're up
30 there, because why? Our number one fish we have got in
31 the freezer. Chinook, if we're lucky to get one, the
32 pink salmon for the dry fish, and then the red salmon
33 for the freezer or half dry. Those are the three main
34 ones. No, chum show up this year too much. No humpies
35 hardly show up. But for the run for the spring, the
36 count for the reds. I got more red this year than chum
37 or pink salmon combined for this season. So, I'm not too
38 sure what happened to the chum run. I'm not too sure
39 what happened to the pink salmon run, but they're there.
40 And sometimes, you know, I think you got to go backwards
41 using proven techniques to count salmon using modern
42 technology. You know, there's -- just because you can't
43 count the salmon doesn't mean it's the end of the game.
44 You got to look for new ways, look for new ways that
45 have helped regulators in the past. And then I think
46 just relying on calculator create confusion. Get off
47 your rocking chair and then the computer screen to get
48 real life results. Were the ones -- were the front-line
49 people that see it. You give us the data of what's out
50 there. We'll show you what they're doing in and around

1 their region. That's the best way. And I think, that's
2 what we're lacking, is that there there's no
3 coordination between local governments and especially
4 with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. I've been
5 having a lot of beef with the Department of Fish and
6 Game, but, you know, you keep it private to yourself.
7 So, you're not disturb the natural resources way that
8 they go. But that's what I just want to point out. Our
9 salmon are there. The salmon are there. Why do you think
10 there's no salmon? Because we can't see them. We're just
11 assuming. But if you do your research before that time.
12 How is the fall weather? How is this and that? Are they
13 being eaten by predators or other fish that, the small
14 fry eaten by other fish eating fish? So, many factors
15 after they spawn. But I think two things that are
16 happening in around (indiscernible) River watershed is
17 that a lot of beavers and a lot of pike. Imuruk Basin
18 and around the tributaries, lots of pike because you see
19 the stain of eggs long and small. Our Kawerak people,
20 people that have long gone, they used to fish springtime
21 and then eat the eggs, you know, the roll or whatever
22 they call them, you know, right now. Fancy name sushi
23 or whatever. We've been doing that for many years. You
24 know, the. I think that's what kept the population check,
25 was that people from Teller, mostly Kawerak, Marrys
26 igloo area, they were the ones that were doing most of
27 the fishing in and around Pilgrim (indiscernible) River
28 areas. And when I used to see them up there, you know,
29 get a fresh fish, cut open the belly and then eat the
30 eggs. So, that was their practice of fishing for that
31 time. But now everything has skyrocketed. And then
32 around these areas, even around town in Brevig, even in
33 your places, beavers are there. So, I think they were -
34 - National Park Service were saying International Beaver
35 Day, something some kind of curriculum for beavers for
36 the National Park Service in our area, something like
37 that. Something specific like Seward -- I mean, Selawik
38 National Preserve [sic]. They're dealing with caribou
39 out there. We could deal with beaver, you know, brand
40 new hats, you know, stuff like that. But that's what I
41 want to put out. I think be more proactive. What
42 residents, especially Teller, Brevig, were the stewards
43 of the fish that do come in, but were not really the
44 stewards of you know, dirty, you know, filthy areas,
45 stuff like that. We do try to keep track and clean up,
46 but everything is outside that we really can't control.
47 Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you. Council
50 Seetot. Anything to add?

1

2 MR. HENSLEE: Nope. Just I really
3 appreciate all these comments. And yeah, I would invite
4 anyone to feel free to call, give me a call at the
5 department and let me know what you're seeing out there.
6 I really appreciate that.

7

8

9 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: You're a biologist.
10 I had one question about biology. How deep do chum salmon
11 bury their eggs?

11

12

13 MR. HENSLEE: They'll generally, and this
14 is true for all species, bury them as deep as they can.
15 So, that's why you see a lot of pink salmon lower in the
16 river. They're smaller fish. They can't move around
17 bigger gravel. And then you get further up in the river,
18 you start to see bigger fish. So, generally it'll be as
19 deep as they can. And we know that they look for
20 upwelling sites. That is kind of been proven time again.
21 It's kind of recently been shown and I've noticed, you
22 know, in the winter time you can really see those
23 upwelling sites when you get up in the headwaters because
24 they don't freeze. And it seems like it's been shown a
25 lot on the Yukon, especially like it's why do chum love
26 to spawn right here? And it looks like it's upwelling.
27 But yeah, they can generally dig as deep as they can.

27

28

29 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Would you say 8 to
30 12inches just...?

30

31

32 MR. HENSLEE: I mean I'm not -- yeah. I'm
33 not an expert on that but I wouldn't be shocked if it
34 was something like that. But I mean I assume you're --
35 I mean that's one thing that we worry about is yeah,
36 these big precipitation events and washing out eggs. I
37 would not be shocked to hear that that was influencing
38 populations, but I can check on that too and get back
39 to you with a better answer.

39

40

41 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Okay. Thank you for
42 that. Upwellings. I've known about that for a long time,
43 so that's why I say that this chum salmon is kind of
44 like a keystone species, because it's got a place where
45 it won't freeze out. Guaranteed that if the water is
46 high and there's silt coming down there and that
47 upwelling is coming up, that's fresh water. You're not
48 talking about dirty water. Okay. The other question --
49 the other comment I would make is that locating and
50 counting salmon on these high-water years. To me,
getting up to the spawning beds, cataloging the spawning

1 beds all the way through when it's real easy to tell and
2 then utilizing that by counting those fish, you can do
3 it with a camera and then go back to the office and
4 count. I know there was one study in the Nome over there
5 where biologists went and did all that actually mapped
6 out spawning beds and whatnot. So, there is data for
7 that.

8
9 So, anyway, thank you very much. We've
10 gone a long ways here with this one, and I think we're
11 done with it and we need to move on. Thank you. Thank
12 you very much for standing up and sitting down and
13 letting us know you're here. You weren't on here for
14 some reason. What was your name again? Luke. All right.
15 Hensley. Here you go. Thank you, Luke. Okay, so do we
16 need a break or do we want to keep going you guys? We
17 got some more stuff to do. No, I've heard it's not very
18 long. Oh, let's go to the Ocean Conservancy and let them
19 have their moment here.

20
21 MS. TIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
22 members of the Council. My name is Kristina Tirman. Can
23 you guys hear me okay?

24
25 MS. CHAPA: Yes, Christina, we can hear
26 you.

27
28 MS. TIRMAN: Okay, great. Yes, I will
29 have just a brief presentation. I am going to share my
30 screen so, just one moment. Are you guys able to see the
31 screen?

32
33 MS. FREYTAG: Page 120 of your book.

34
35 MS. CHAPA: And yes, we can see your
36 screen.

37
38 MS. TIRMAN: Okay. Great. Thank you. So,
39 like I said, my name is Kristina Tirman, and I work for
40 Ocean Conservancy as the Arctic Marine Debris manager.
41 I am based in Southeast Alaska, in Sitka, and it's really
42 great to be able to join you guys virtually today. I'll
43 be sharing just a little bit of information about the
44 organization, Ocean Conservancy, and about some of our
45 work that we do related to marine debris in Alaska. And
46 I'll share a little bit about a project we have coming
47 up. And I'm hopeful that there might be some
48 opportunities for collaboration with some of you in the
49 future. So, in my role with Ocean Conservancy, I get to
50 work with communities and organizations and tribes

1 throughout the State and the Arctic region to support
2 their marine debris efforts. And it's been really
3 interesting listening to you guys over the last day and
4 a half or so. And I'm very curious to know if and how
5 marine debris impacts your subsistence hunting and
6 harvesting practices and as -- especially as there is
7 more and more plastic in the ocean and washing up on our
8 shores, it's not only impacting wildlife, but it's of
9 course also impacting those of us who rely on those
10 wildlife for food. And I think it was maybe Chuck that
11 mentioned yesterday about monitoring of marine mammal
12 and seabird deaths in your community. And I'd be really
13 curious to know if any of those animals had microplastics
14 in their stomach or tissue samples, or if any of them
15 had signs of entanglement. And I know someone else also
16 mentioned that microplastics in flesh was also a concern
17 for them as well. So, I'm definitely curious to hear
18 from you all about what your concerns are and how marine
19 debris impacts you and your communities, and if there
20 are opportunities for us to collaborate. But I'll start
21 by telling you just a little bit about Ocean Conservancy.
22 For those who aren't familiar we're a nonprofit
23 organization that is headquartered in Washington, D.C.,
24 and we do a lot of ocean policy and advocacy work at
25 both the National and International level, and we have
26 an Arctic team that's based here in Alaska with about
27 13 staff members. Our Arctic team focuses on a number
28 of different ocean related issues, but my focus is on
29 marine debris and plastic pollution. And for those who
30 aren't familiar with marine debris, it is defined as any
31 manufactured solid material that ends up in the ocean.
32 And the most common type and most harmful type of marine
33 debris is, of course, plastic. And Ocean Conservancy has
34 been involved in marine debris removal for 40 years
35 through the International Coastal Cleanup, which uses a
36 network model to rally hundreds of thousands of
37 participants each year to get out and clean beaches and
38 waterways in their local communities around the world.
39 And to date, it has involved over 18 million people from
40 450 organizations and over 350 million pounds of trash
41 has been removed. And we do have a global database that
42 lives on our website that tracks all of this information,
43 and it's used to inform research and advocate for policy
44 change.

45
46 And my work is primarily focused on
47 Alaska and the Arctic region. And so, I'm involved with
48 the Alaskan Arctic Cleanup project and the goal of that
49 is to create a more regionally focused network of groups
50 that are involved in cleanups here in Alaska and the

1 Arctic region. We know that there are a lot of
2 communities that are impacted by marine debris or are
3 concerned about it or also involved in addressing it,
4 but because everyone is so spread out and we're
5 geographically isolated, it's really hard to connect and
6 collaborate and share that information. But as we know,
7 being able to share that information and share
8 strategies is really important and really valuable. And
9 so, one of the things that we have done is we have a
10 Alaskan Arctic Marine Debris Facebook page, and we host
11 quarterly calls for people to share information about
12 their work. And they can ask questions of the group or
13 share upcoming funding opportunities or research
14 projects or questions that they have. And we found that
15 many of us face similar challenges and share similar
16 concerns. So, being able to talk about these and connect
17 is really valuable. And our next call is on November
18 13th so, if anyone is interested in joining my contact
19 info will be on the last slide and I'll also type it in
20 the chat. So, feel free to get in touch and I can let
21 you know more details about that.

22
23 And right now we work with about 15
24 organizations in Alaska on marine debris. And we know
25 that there are many more organizations and communities
26 that are involved in marine debris. These are just the
27 ones that we have directly worked with and have supported
28 on various projects, and we always want to make sure
29 that the type of support that we're offering is tailored
30 to the wants and the needs of the communities, which
31 means that the type of support that we offer really is
32 dependent on what the community needs. So, for some
33 communities, we offer small grants for cleanups, and our
34 grant process is very simple, and it can go towards
35 pretty much anything that you need. It can go towards
36 equipment or staff time materials. It can go towards
37 snacks for volunteers or prizes. We can also help with
38 logistics for actually planning a cleanup. So, in some
39 communities, putting on a cleanup can be quite simple
40 and just getting people out to the beach together. But
41 for some, there can be a lot more logistics that go into
42 it and it can be quite challenging. And so, we're always
43 happy to help with the planning side of things. We also
44 have some place based educational materials and
45 curriculum that we can share. And we've also traveled
46 to communities to help community members sort of go over
47 how to do this curriculum and education programs
48 themselves. And we also have data collection protocols
49 and can offer support with data management. We can ship
50 clean up materials to you. We have gloves and bags. We

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1 can also offer in-kind support through staff time and
2 resources. So, many of the Federal grants require a
3 match, and some require a 1 to 1 match, which can be
4 challenging to meet sometimes. And so, we can help
5 support that in grant applications by offering funding
6 in-kind support through match. We also have a large
7 global platform and reach. And so, we can help elevate
8 local community stories to help drive more funding and
9 help raise awareness. And then one of our newer projects
10 that we've been helping support is disposal and backhaul
11 of marine debris.

12
13 So, disposal and backhaul is definitely
14 one of the most challenging parts of cleanups. So, this
15 is kind of what we typically find during cleanups and
16 I'm sure many of you are familiar with these sites,
17 seeing large amounts of fishing net and line and buoys
18 washing up on shores, which of course these are all
19 entanglement hazards. And these can also break down into
20 smaller and smaller plastics, which then become
21 ingestion hazards for wildlife. But one of the problems
22 we continue to face, and we continue to hear from
23 communities is that they, you know, they can do these
24 cleanups, they know how to do these cleanups and can
25 hire local people to help with that. But then they just
26 don't know what to do with the garbage, and it just sits
27 in their communities with no realistic opportunity for
28 disposal. And this -- these are photos. This is an
29 example from Yakutat, the Yakutat landfill, they did a
30 large cleanup over the past couple of years and are now
31 in the process of figuring out how to recycle all of
32 this debris so that it doesn't end up in their landfill.
33 Because most of this debris, if not all of it, didn't
34 actually originate locally, and so they don't want it
35 taking up space in their landfill, which is completely
36 understandable. And so, one of the things that we're
37 really excited about is marine debris backhaul project
38 that we're going to be starting this fall. So, we'll be
39 receiving \$1.7 million from the EPA to develop a pilot
40 program to transport and recycle marine debris from
41 communities around Alaska to various facilities where
42 there are recycling centers for marine debris and those
43 exist in Anchorage, Kodiak and Seattle. And then at the
44 end of the project, we'll be putting together a report
45 outlining what worked and how we can create a sustainable
46 marine debris backhaul program in the future. So, we'll
47 be starting this fall with projects in Nome, Port Heiden
48 and on St. Paul Island, and Nome will be working with
49 the Kawerak Environmental Department to sort and stage
50 marine debris that was collected and shipped from St.

1 Lawrence Island earlier this fall. And in Port Heiden
2 will be working with the native village of Port Heiden
3 to transport 30,000 pounds of debris to Kodiak, where
4 it will be recycled. And in Saint Paul, we'll be working
5 with the Aleut community of Saint Paul Island to
6 transport marine debris from islands to Unalaska, where
7 it will be temporarily stored and then eventually
8 shipped back to Seattle for recycling. And starting in
9 2025, we'll be supporting more communities, with the
10 goal at the end of the three years to be able to secure
11 more funding to keep this project going. And we also
12 received additional grant funds through the NOAA Marine
13 Debris Program to support cleanups in Sitka, Yakutat,
14 Wales, and Brevig Mission starting next year in 2025,
15 and the projects in Wales and Brevig are in partnership
16 with NSEDC. So, we applied for the funding through Ocean
17 Conservancy and NSEDC was written in as a sole source
18 partner on that. And so, we'll be giving them funds and
19 then those funds will be going to Brevig and Wales to
20 hire locals and train locals on marine debris removal
21 protocols and sorting protocols. And then we'll also be
22 helping support the backhaul of that debris so that it
23 doesn't end up in the local communities, and instead,
24 it will be shipped to one of those hubs where it can be
25 recycled.

26
27 So, we're really excited about that
28 project. And it is still in the early stages and we're
29 looking for more communities who are interested in
30 joining. So, if you have -- if you are doing cleanups
31 or you're interested in doing cleanups, please reach
32 out. I would love to connect with you and if you have
33 done cleanups and have debris that is still in your
34 community that you're looking for support to get rid of.
35 This backhaul opportunity would be a great way to partner
36 with us as well. So, with that, that's all I have for
37 today. But again, I would love to hear from you. If you
38 have ideas or specific areas of interest for study,
39 please let me know. We would really love to work with
40 you and thank you again for having me. I appreciate your
41 time. So, Mr. Chair, I'll turn it back to you.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Well, thank you very
44 much, Kristina. Anybody have any questions? One from
45 Councilman Aukongak.

46
47 MR. AUKONGAK: I guess we're going to
48 have a lot more military activity up here. It'd be great
49 to have them be part of it, too. So, you know, we could
50

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1 always have a backup, and we all pay our taxes so, we
2 might as well see it go to work.

3

4 MS. TIRMAN: Yeah, that's a great idea.
5 Thank you.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: They have
8 Blackhawks.

9

10 MS. TIRMAN: Yes. We'll take any mode of
11 transport we can get.

12

13 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Yes. Thank you. I
14 don't see anybody else in sight -- Jarred. He's taken
15 one step past the starting line already. So, again
16 Katrina, thank you very much -- Kristina. Excuse me.
17 Appreciate you. I think Kawerak already got their feet
18 in the water with you there, so that's good. Thanks.
19 Okay, Jarred. Okay well, he's going to help you. He's
20 going to push the button.

21

22 (Simultaneous speech)

23

24 MS. GREDIAGIN: This is the moment you
25 guys have all been waiting for, all meeting. The OSM
26 report. So, Lisa Grediagin, wildlife Division Supervisor
27 with OSM. So, on behalf of OSM, I would like to extend
28 our sincerest thanks and appreciation for all the work
29 you all do as Council members on behalf of your
30 communities and subsistence users, and the resources to
31 give up several days of your time volunteering to sit
32 at these meetings and share your knowledge and expertise
33 and make our program work as well as it does. So, thank
34 you very much. So, at the -- as many of you know, OSM
35 has moved out of the Fish and Wildlife Service and into
36 the Interior Office of the Secretary. And so, at the
37 request of many stakeholders made during listening
38 sessions and tribal consultations across the State,
39 Congress has administratively moved OSM from the U.S.
40 Fish and Wildlife Service directly to the Office of the
41 Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget.
42 This move became effective July 15th, 2024. This move
43 is one of the many efforts that the Department of the
44 Interior is making to strengthen Federal subsistence
45 policies and structure, and to ensure that federally
46 qualified subsistence users and Alaska Native people
47 have an opportunity for meaningful engagement in the
48 Federal Subsistence Management Program implementation.
49 This move is a response to the concerns and input of
50 Alaska Native communities and people, many of whom rely

1 on subsistence use and to the need to enhance program
2 operations for all federally qualified subsistence
3 users, particularly in the face of a changing climate.
4 OSM responsibilities and functions of administrative
5 support to the Federal Subsistence Board and Subsistence
6 Regional Advisory Councils remain the same following
7 this move to the office of the Secretary. Federal
8 Subsistence Management Program operations continue
9 seamlessly, and the regulatory cycle is going on without
10 any interruptions. If you need to reach out to OSM staff,
11 we now have new email addresses that have been updated
12 on our website. The main contact phone number remains
13 the same (907) 786-3888 and our main email address is
14 subsistence@ios.doi.gov. That's subsistence at Interior
15 Office Secretary dot Department of Interior.gov. So, an
16 update on the Wildlife Final Rule and Regulations
17 booklet. The final rule for the Federal Assistance
18 Management Regulation for the harvest of wildlife on
19 federal public lands in Alaska for the regulatory years
20 2024 to 2026 have been published in the federal register
21 and went into effect on August 29th, 2024. The
22 regulations booklets are available online or we have
23 hard copies available for anyone here in person and also
24 hard copies could be mailed to you upon request.

25
26 An update on the regulations regarding
27 the Federal Subsistence Board composition, and this is
28 what Gayla was mentioning yesterday, is that based on
29 requests during joint consultations, the Departments of
30 the Interior and Agriculture or Departments are in the
31 process of revising regulations concerning the
32 composition of the Federal Subsistence Board. In the
33 proposed rule, the departments proposed to add three
34 public members to the Board. These members -- so, I
35 realize this probably should have been updated like this
36 rule actually was published, which I think these talking
37 points were written right before the rule was published,
38 but now it's actually out there. So, the Departments
39 will add three public members to the Board, and the
40 members will be nominated or recommended by federally
41 recognized tribal governments in Alaska, and will be
42 required to possess personal knowledge of and direct
43 experience with subsistence uses in rural Alaska,
44 including Alaska Native subsistence uses. The final rule
45 also defines requirements used to select the Board Chair
46 and affirm the Secretary's authority to replace Board
47 members in the Secretary's responsibility and oversight
48 regarding Board decisions. The final rule regarding
49 these proposed revisions has been published. It was
50 announced at AFN last week, and will become effective

1 30 days after its publication. Tribes are welcome to
2 nominate or recommend public Board members for these
3 three new seats, and you can direct any questions and
4 nominations or recommendations to Raina Thiele and Sara
5 Taylor. Their email addresses are
6 raina_thiele@ios.doi.gov and sara_taylor@ios.doi.gov.
7

8 An update on the deferred wildlife
9 proposal, WP24-04, which was a request to be able to
10 sell brown bear hide statewide. At its public meeting
11 on April 3rd, 2024, the Board deferred its Action on
12 Wildlife proposal WP 2401, a request to allow the sale
13 of a brown bear hide taken under Federal regulations.
14 The Board's justification for deferring the proposal was
15 one, to allow time to explore options for a fully
16 qualified subsistence user to obtain a permit allowing
17 the sale of a hide from a Federal agency, and two to
18 potentially establish a work group to negotiate with the
19 Alaska Department of Fish and Game concerning the use
20 of its permit to sell a brown or grizzly bear, hide and
21 skull. Our update is that ADF&G is not able to permit
22 the sale of brown bears on behalf of the Federal
23 Subsistence Management Program if the proposal is passed
24 as submitted. In other words, ADF&G cannot permit sale
25 of brown bear hides taken in units with one bear -- one
26 brown bear harvest limits under Federal regulations. OSM
27 is therefore exploring opportunities for fully qualified
28 subsistence users to obtain a permit from a Federal
29 agency. We will update the Board on this option at the
30 Fisheries Regulatory Meeting in February 2025.
31

32 And now some OSM staffing updates. Since
33 the All Council meeting held in March of this year, OSM
34 welcomed our new Acting Director, Crystal Leonetti. She
35 will be in this acting role until the end of November.
36 In her permanent position, Crystal is Alaska Native
37 Affairs Specialist at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
38 Service. Among regular OSM director responsibilities,
39 Crystal has been leading OSM through its administrative
40 move and is doing a wonderful job. The OSM director's
41 position was advertised on September 5th and closed on
42 October 2nd. OSM also had some staff departures. Theo
43 Matuskowitz, OSM supervisory regulatory specialist,
44 retired in July after over 20 years of faithful service
45 and OSM staff will greatly miss his in-depth knowledge
46 of regulations, his kind advice and wonderful sense of
47 humor. Justin Kohler, OSM fisheries biologist, has been
48 acting as a supervisory regulatory specialist in the
49 interim and was able to jump right in to ensure that
50 OSM's final and proposed rules, as well as meeting

1 announcements, are seamlessly moving through the
2 Approval and Federal Register publication process. This
3 position was just advertised, and I forget when it
4 closes, I think it's still open. So, if anyone knows
5 anyone that might be interested in applying for their
6 regular -- regulation specialist at OSM, please let them
7 know it's open and encourage them to submit an
8 application. Kayla McKinney, OSM Subsistence Outreach
9 Coordinator, left OSM due to a move to another state.
10 Leigh Honig and Sherry Goldfarb are covering some of
11 this position duties in the interim while performing the
12 regular duties, and they are doing a superb job. The
13 vacant positions of the Subsistence Outreach Coordinator
14 and the Records Management Specialist will be advertised
15 in the near future, and we encourage all individuals
16 with diverse outreach skills and records management
17 skills, and interest in working with subsistence issues
18 and rural communities to apply. In August, we are also
19 saddened to learn about the departure of OSM Deputy
20 Director Amy Howard. She left Federal service for a new
21 job with the Aleut Corporation as the Director of Lands
22 and Natural Resources. Her last day with OSM was August
23 30th. While congratulating Amy on her new job, we will
24 sorely miss her inclusive and fair management style, her
25 great support for the entire OSM team and her smile.
26 Katya Wessels Council Coordination Division Supervisor
27 is serving as the Acting Deputy Director until the end
28 of October, and then Brent Vickers, Anthropology
29 Division Supervisor, will serve as the Acting Deputy
30 Director for the next two months so, during November and
31 December.

32
33 A detailed litigation update was
34 provided to the Councils at the March 2024 All Council
35 meeting. Since then, in the Kake Emergency Hunt matter,
36 briefing is now in progress before the Ninth Circuit
37 Court. In the Kuskokwim matter, the district court found
38 in favor of the U.S. on all claims and enjoined the
39 State from taking any further actions in violation of
40 Title 8 on the Kuskokwim River. The State has appealed,
41 and briefing has just recently commenced before the
42 Ninth Circuit Court and a few more updates on a
43 correspondence which you might find useful. I know,
44 correspondences. Another agenda item on -- another item
45 on the agenda. So, the Secretary's office is reviewing
46 the Council's letters that were forwarded by the Board.
47 The letters cover a broad array of issues, such as
48 financial compensation for Council members, salmon
49 fisheries and transboundary mining issues, among others.
50 Some of the issues are straightforward and will be

1 resolved more quickly, while others are more complicated
2 and will take more time to address. Some cover multiple
3 regions, and others are specific to 1 or 2 regions. The
4 Secretary and her team are working on responses to these
5 letters and the next steps forward for all of these
6 issues. As these issues are resolved, the Secretary or
7 her staff will provide responses to the Council's
8 including next steps forward where appropriate. The
9 Secretary thanks the Councils for their diligence and
10 thoughtfulness in discussing these issues and continuing
11 to elevate them. With the elevation of OSM to the office
12 of the Secretary, the Secretary looks forward to
13 continuing active engagement on these and other issues
14 affecting subsistence users. So, thank you, Mr. Chair.
15 That concludes my OSM report.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Okay, I have about
18 ten questions. No kidding. I was just throwing that at
19 Jarred. He's over there like what? All right. Well, Lisa,
20 I appreciate your read. Anybody have any questions,
21 comments or concerns? Mr. Martin.

22
23 MR. AUKONGAK: When you -- I understand
24 you wanted the bear skull, but where does that go? Like
25 with Mystery Vault you got or something or...? The skull
26 of a bear.

27
28 MS. GREDIAGIN: So, in reference to the
29 deferred proposal and sorry, what's your question about
30 it? You can keep it. The proposal is to sell it. All
31 right. Yeah. So, if you...

32
33 MR. AUKONGAK: All right, I thought I
34 heard you said you send it, to send it to you or whoever.
35 No?

36
37 MS. CHAPA: For the record, this Gisela
38 Chapa. I think what Lisa was talking about is that during
39 the wildlife proposal cycle, there was a proposal from
40 -- I'm not sure which Council to sell the hide of a
41 brown bear.

42
43 MR. AUKONGAK: But they wanted the skull.

44
45 MS. CHAPA: With the -- with the skull.
46 Right? Yeah. Start from the beginning.

47
48 MS. GREDIAGIN: The proposal was to allow
49 the sale of a brown bear hide and/or the skull, so as
50 to allow the sale of the hide and skull.

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CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Is that good enough?
All right. Thank you. Thank you, Lisa. So, we have Jarred
up next.

MR. STONE: All right. I'm going to
be.....

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON GREEN Can you hurry up? No,
I'm kidding.

MR. STONE: I'm going to be very brief.
This is going to be the shortest presentation. Thank
you, Mr. Chair. Members of the Council. Again, for the
record, my name is Jarred Stone, fish biologist with OSM
and I'm going to be giving a quick update on our Partners
for Fisheries Resource Monitoring program. This is
different than what we talked about yesterday where we
talked about the Priority Information Needs and that was
for the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program we
sometimes call the FRMP. This is our partners program.
The Office of Subsistence Management will soon post a
notice of funding opportunity for the Partners for
Fisheries Monitoring program later this year or possibly
early winter. This is a competitive grant for Alaska
Native tribes, tribal organizations, or rural nonprofit
organizations. The intent of the program is to
strengthen Alaskan Native and rural involvement in
Federal subsistence management by providing salary funds
to organizations so that they can hire a professional
biologist, social scientist, or a educator. The grant
also provides funds for science and culture camps and
paid student internships. More information on this
funding opportunity is available on grants.gov or
grantsolutions.gov. And the key person in our office --
the key point of contact is Karen Hyer who used to work
in this region. You likely know Karen. Karen's contact
information can be found on OSM partner's web page and
if anyone here is interested to learn more about the
program, feel free to come find me and I'll give you the
lowdown as to how the program works, what's involved,
how to apply. And I guess with that, I'll conclude my
presentation. But maybe real quickly just show you where
you can find that information on our website. I'll take
any questions if you have any.

000108

1 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: You're smiling.
2 Thank you, Jarred. Nobody else. Looks like there's no
3 questions. Let's go.

4
5 MR. STONE: Through the Chair. Thank you.
6 Thank you for your time. And just real quick. So, here's
7 our web page. And this is our home screen. And when you
8 scroll down here, you'll see both the Fisheries Resource
9 Monitoring Program and then you'll right below it,
10 you'll see the Partners for Fisheries Monitoring
11 Program. And when you click on this if you're interested
12 in applying for funding, keep an eye on this page right
13 here and sometime, I'm guessing maybe December, maybe
14 January you'll likely see this be updated with the with
15 the updated NOFO. So, that's the notice of funding
16 opportunity. And that's the opportunity that you apply
17 and get that money. So, you're allowed to apply if this
18 is for four years of funding, and you're allowed to
19 apply for up to 167,000 per year, and that's capped at
20 668,000 for each tribal organization.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Looks like you got a
23 fan over here. Of course, we're fans too. All right,
24 well, thank you.

25
26 MR. STONE: Thank you.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: More money. Okay,
29 Gisela, it's her turn. She's been waiting and waiting
30 and waiting. Okay.

31
32 MS. CHAPA: Okay.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: 805.

35
36 MS. CHAPA: Yes. Good afternoon, Council
37 members and my name is Gisela Chapa. And we're on agenda
38 item 14B. I'm just going to give you a very quick
39 overview of the 805C report. The report can be found on
40 page 135 of your book, and I want to remind the Council
41 this is not an action item. Basically, what you see in
42 this report is the action taken by the Board on all the
43 proposals affecting the residents of the Seward
44 Peninsula region, and the Board agreed with the Council
45 on the Council's recommendations, in whole or with
46 modifications on 11 of the 12 wildlife proposals and
47 closure reviews considered by this Council. The only
48 proposal that the Board did not take action was on
49 Wildlife Proposal 24-01 because it was deferred. Does
50 the Council have any questions?

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CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Hearing none.
Continue. Thank you.

MS. CHAPA: Excellent. I'm going to move on to item 14C, which is the 2025 Council application and nomination open season. And I basically want to remind the Council that for this cycle, the Seward Peninsula RAC has two vacant seats that I believe we're going to try to backfill with this previous cycle. But we have three seats that are expiring within this cycle. Oh.

MS. FREYTAG: Sorry. You said we're on agenda item 14C National Park Service?

MS. CHAPA: No member Freytag. This is under other business. I apologize, 15. 15C, under other business. Thank you for the correction. And I want to remind the Council that we have three expiring seats within this cycle. And those are the seats for Chair Green, Vice Chair Gray and Mr. Hunt. And technically, the seats expired on December 2nd of 2025. But if you want to continue serving on the Council, you'll need to reapply within this period. And the application period will open in January. So, it's not open yet. I can give you applications if you're interested in just filling those. And you can send those back to me, and I will hold it until the application period opens.

CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Airdrop it. Okay, I'm not that technical. I looked at him when I said it, like him. Okay, so is that.....

MS. CHAPA: That is it on 15C Council application nomination open season.

CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Okay. So, thank you for that. And we're on D?

MS. CHAPA: Yes. Next, I'm going to provide an overview to the Council on all of the correspondence that was sent or produced since our last meeting. If you all recall, the Council met in Anchorage for the winter meeting during the All Council meeting, and we're going to start reviewing all of the correspondence which starred on page 137 of your meeting book. The first update is a letter that the -- it was a Joint Council letter that was sent on behalf of the Bristol Bay, YK Delta, Western Interior Alaska, Seward

000110

1 Peninsula, Northwest Arctic, Eastern Interior Alaska,
2 and North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils
3 to the Board, and this was regarding concerns over
4 bycatch. This letter was sent to the Board on March
5 28th, 2024 and what you will see on page 137 is that the
6 Board actually sent a letter elevating the concerns to
7 the Secretary's as requested by the Councils, and that
8 was sent on July 29th, 2024. And there is a lot of
9 enclosures included with this letter that was elevated
10 to the Secretary's. And you will see -- that you will
11 see in all the way to page 166.

12
13 I'm sorry. I apologize. I'm pausing here
14 just to give the Council members time to look at the
15 correspondence and see if there are any questions.

16
17 (Pause)

18
19 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: The newspaper lady,
20 she might want to get these, like, these names. And who
21 signed from what RAC? It'd be good for the newspaper.
22 There's seven of us that wrote that went along with that
23 letter.

24
25 MS. CHAPA: Okay, Mr. Chair, if there are
26 no questions, I can keep going.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Any questions?
29 Hearing none. Seeing none. Okay. Mr. Moses, you got any
30 questions about this letter on bycatch? Thank you. Okay.

31
32 MS. CHAPA: Okay. The second update is
33 another Joint Council letter. Again, as a result of the
34 All Council meeting. It was in regard to Council member
35 compensation. And there is more traction on the subject,
36 like, there's all the requests sent to the Board, I
37 think have been elevated. The Joint Council letter was
38 sent to the Board on April 3rd, and the Board elevated
39 the concerns to the Secretaries on July 29th, 2024 and
40 they start on page 167 of your book.

41
42 (Pause)

43
44 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: If I had a pin, I'd
45 drop it.

46
47 MS. CHAPA: If there are no questions on
48 the -- on this update, I can move on. The next is a
49 Joint Council letter to the Board to address issues in
50 Council correspondence. And that starts on page 192 of

000111

1 your book and this has been forwarded to -- I don't have
2 the date. Okay. Yeah. The letter was sent to the Board
3 on April 3rd and the Board elevated the concern to the
4 Secretaries on in July. And I think, as Lisa mentioned
5 earlier today, since OSM has moved from under Fish and
6 Wildlife Service to the Office of the Secretary, they're
7 actively trying to find for efficient ways to route
8 Council correspondence.

9

10 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Meaning, we wanted to
11 hear back when we wrote something, sent it uphill. We
12 wanted it to come back downhill so we'd -- in a timely
13 manner. Thank you.

14

15 MS. CHAPA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll
16 move on. The next update was a joint letter requesting
17 the issue of the ANCSA 17D1 lands withdrawals to the
18 Secretary of the Interior and you heard from Tom Sparks,
19 I believe, from BLM, who also shared that there was an
20 actual record of decision on the ANCSA 17D1 land
21 withdrawals that was issued on August 27th, 2024,
22 retaining the protections. And I included a copy of the
23 press release by the BLM. And it's in page 118 of your
24 books.

25

26 (Pause)

27

28 And if it's okay, Mr. Chair, I will move
29 on.

30

31 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Yes, please.

32

33 MS. CHAPA: Okay. The next update is on
34 a joint Council letter sent regarding caribou concern
35 statewide. If you look at page 210, you will find this
36 Joint Council letter to the Board, and more
37 specifically, it included concerns over issues affecting
38 caribou herds across the State and their recovery, and
39 requested action from the Board to address these
40 concerns. The letter was sent in July 12th, 2024, and
41 so far we've received no response and I have not seen
42 any other action on this.

43

44 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thus, the request of
45 the last thing she just mentioned. We want to hear an
46 answer in a timely manner.

47

48 MS. CHAPA: Okay. And the next is again,
49 during the All Council meeting, the Seward Peninsula
50 Council had an opportunity to meet with three other

1 Councils to discuss wildlife proposals 24, 28, 29 or 24-
2 28, 29 regarding Western Arctic Caribou Herd and as a
3 result of the joint meeting, the four Councils wanted
4 to send a letter to the Board, the Alaska Department of
5 Fish and Game Commissioner, and the Alaska Board of Game
6 with these concerns or regarding these concerns. This
7 joint letter was sent on July 12th, 2024, and it
8 basically asked for all of the -- these entities to work
9 collaboratively to address the concerns about the
10 continuing decline of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd
11 through regulatory changes and increased funding for
12 additional herd monitoring. There's been a little bit
13 more development of this on this. I received a response
14 from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Commissioner
15 regarding the letter that was sent, and you will see a
16 copy of the letter that I placed at your spot so that
17 you will also have a chance to review it. And this was
18 sent to OSM last week, October 17th, 2024.

19

20 (Pause)

21

22 Okay. And I have a couple more updates.
23 These are not necessarily letters requested by this
24 Council, but that might be of interest to the Council.
25 The YK Delta and the Eastern Interior RAC submitted a
26 letter requesting urgent revisions to the Magnuson-
27 Stevens Fishery and Conservation Management Act, and a
28 copy of this request is included in your supplemental
29 materials. So, that is the packet that is stapled right
30 here. Yeah, and it's on page 18. And it -- in this
31 letter, the Council's request the Board to urge the
32 Secretaries to liaise with the Department of Commerce
33 and National Marine Fisheries Service to publish the
34 proposed rule with updates to the MSA and the national
35 standards. And I also wanted to share that during the
36 Eastern Interior RAC meeting, the Council requested that
37 this letter be shared with other Councils. And that's
38 why you are looking at it. And suggested if perhaps this
39 Council could consider submitting a letter on the
40 subject if so desired.

41

42 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Are we wanting to
43 sign on to their letter or create one?

44

45 MS. CHAPA: Yeah. This letter was already
46 sent in July of this year, so it would be a new letter,
47 basically restating the need for revisions to the MSA.

48

49

50

000113

1 MS. FREYTAG: Mr. Chairman, this is Mary
2 Freytag. Do you need a motion for that letter or just
3 will be...?

4
5 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: I think it's an
6 action item.

7
8 MS. FREYTAG: Okay.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: So, it would be a
11 motion, but then we'd have to have the verbiage in there,
12 too. How would we do that. Gisela?

13
14 MS. CHAPA: Yeah, I think if the Council
15 and I'm looking at my computer because Brooke McDavid,
16 who is the Council Coordinator for the Eastern Interior
17 RAC is online and she could help address or provide a
18 little summary of what the letter entails. But if the
19 Council has reviewed this letter and is in agreement
20 with what is in the letter, and you -- we might be able
21 to generate some of that content from that.

22
23 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Go ahead. Thank you.

26
27 MS. MCDAVID: Hi, good afternoon. This
28 is Brooke McDavid. As Gisela mentioned, I also
29 Coordinate for the Eastern Interior and YK Delta RACs
30 who submitted this letter to the Board asking them to
31 elevate this issue to the Secretaries. This topic was
32 discussed during the All Council meeting. Because there
33 was so much going on at that meeting, there wasn't a
34 chance to get a draft letter before all of the Council's
35 to get the opportunity to ask everyone to sign on to it
36 at that time. And so, the Eastern Interior and YK Delta
37 Councils went ahead and signed -- drafted and sent this
38 letter. And so, you could kind of go about it in in two
39 ways. It's up to you. You could basically just send a
40 letter to the Board saying that you support the ask of
41 the YK Delta, Eastern Interior Councils, as you know,
42 written in this letter or you could write your own letter
43 on subject if you desired.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: I guess, since we
46 just received it as a supplement here to this booklet.
47 I think we'd probably prefer to read over it, but is
48 there any way we can take action on it to fall in line
49 with this at this point in time? How would we do that?
50 So, I mean.....

1

2 MS. CHAPA: Yeah, I think it would just
3 require a motion from the Council if you want to take
4 one of the two options, as Brooke suggested, just
5 basically take action on sending a letter to the Board
6 supporting the -- what the Eastern Interior and the Yukon
7 Delta RACs submitted or if the Council wants to take
8 some time to look at the letter and develop our own
9 content, it would also require action from the Council.

10

11 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Considering that the
12 folks did it -- oh. Go ahead. Is that Brenda? Brooke.
13 Excuse me.

14

15 MS. MCDAVID: This is -- yeah, this is
16 Brooke, Mr. Chair, sorry. I just wanted to add to I
17 mean, if you don't want to take action at this meeting,
18 that's okay as well. Don't really anticipate this you
19 know, this is going to be a big ask. And so, it might
20 take a little bit of time to see action on this at a
21 higher level. So, if you wanted to, you know, postpone
22 action on this till your winter meeting. It doesn't have
23 like a really tight deadline necessarily.

24

25 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Anybody on Council
26 think otherwise? We're -- I'm thinking that we are able
27 to read, digest and decide that either we're going to
28 back it or do our own letter. Is there anybody opposed
29 to that? Seeing none. I think that's what we'll do.
30 We'll either back the one that's there or we'll put
31 together our own. Appreciate your coming to the table
32 there, Brooke.

33

34

MS. MCDAVID: You're welcome, Mr Chair.

35

36

MS. CHAPA: Okay. Thank you. And again,
37 this is Gisela Chapa. And then the last update is also
38 a topic of interest to the Council. This is information
39 that is included in your supplemental materials on page
40 21. Mostly for your information. So, in the October
41 meeting, the National Pacific Fishery Management Council
42 discussed an outreach and engagement plan on chum salmon
43 bycatch. And it was also briefly mentioned by Mellisa
44 earlier today, and on this issue or on this topic OSM
45 had an opportunity to submit a written comment and that
46 is what you see on page 21 of your supplemental materials
47 for reference. On page 23 of the packet, you have a copy
48 of the Outreach and Engagement plan that OSM submitted
49 comments on. And I wanted to point out that the -- in
50 this outreach plan, the North Pacific Fishery Management

000115

1 Council plans, excuse me, identified RAC meetings as a
2 form of outreach and engagement on the topic and more
3 specifically, attending the Winter 2025 meetings for the
4 Western Interior, Yukon Delta, Eastern Interior RAC
5 meetings as part of these outreach efforts. And that is
6 it. An update to the Council.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Okay. Anybody got any
9 questions, comments or concerns off the Council?

10

11 (No response)

12

13 Seeing none. Hearing none. Thank you.
14 You got one more? You went like that.

15

16 MS. CHAPA: I went, oh, wait a minute.
17 Well, this is -- these are all of the updates on Council
18 correspondence. And if there's no other comments, I just
19 have one more item to go over. And again, it's just for
20 information to the Council.

21

22 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Please do.

23

24 MS. CHAPA: All right. This is in regards
25 to declining balance cards. And I can provide as much
26 detail as the Council wishes, but again, as you know,
27 OSM has moved from under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
28 Service to the office of the Secretary of Interior. And
29 this transition is giving us an opportunity to revise
30 some of the administrative processes that we do, such
31 as the way that we process travel for Council members
32 on official travel. And we're simply trying to consider
33 ways to make the process more efficient and more user
34 friendly. And we wanted to solicit your feedback on this
35 issue. Not an issue, excuse me on this matter. And
36 basically, the way that we process travel right now,
37 Council members receive about 60% of your estimated per
38 diem in the form of a check. And that's what I handed
39 earlier, at the beginning of the meeting. And it's in
40 the form of a travel advance and then the remainder of
41 the per diem is mailed to you in a second check once we
42 travel all of -- once we process all of the travel
43 vouchers after the meeting. And so, one way we thought
44 we might make this process a little bit more efficient
45 is if we issued declining -- what's called what are
46 called declining balance card to Council members. So,
47 rather than giving you a check, we would issue one of
48 these cards and we would deposit the or -- yeah, I guess
49 the funds for travel. And if we do this it would be the
50 responsibility of each Council member to make sure that

1 you keep your declining balance card in a safe place and
2 bring it to each meeting and if the card is lost, we can
3 always replace it. But of course, it would take a couple
4 of days to get a new one in the mail. And so, it shifts
5 a little bit how we do business. You could use this card
6 while on travel status or use it to withdraw funds from
7 an ATM. And we -- our coordinator -- your coordinators
8 would tell you how much per diem has been deposited to
9 the card, and the cards can be used to pay for expenses
10 like meals, cabs, groceries, etc. and we might still
11 need some receipts for some of those expenses. And we -
12 - OSM would continue to book the flights and continue
13 to make arrangements for your lodging, but you would use
14 the declining balance card to check into a hotel or your
15 accommodation, and then the remaining per diem owed to
16 Council members after the meeting would be sent directly
17 to your bank account. And basically, the reason why I'm
18 sharing all of this information on declining balance
19 card is that if the Council would be interested in
20 pursuing this type of option to get reimbursed for
21 travel, we just need you to submit some forms with some
22 personal identifiable information. And also, maybe get
23 some forms with your bank account so, that we'd be able
24 to do a direct deposit. And again, there's no decision
25 that has been made. And we're just sharing this to hear
26 your feedback and see if you -- and to see if you have
27 any questions on that potential new process.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Gisela. I
30 don't have any questions right at the moment. Does
31 anybody else have any questions of this? I guess we got
32 time to approach you with it, down the road. So,
33 everybody's good with that? Looks good. Okay. Well,
34 thanks for the info. And we'll individually, I guess we
35 can reach out to you if that's the case. Okay. I suppose
36 you'll shoot somebody an email, like all of us. And then
37 we will react to that about it. Would that help?

38
39 MS. CHAPA: Well, I mean, if you just
40 want to share, you know, if there would be an issue, if
41 it's something that the Council would be -- or Council
42 members would be interested in considering, you know,
43 it might make the process a little bit more efficient
44 for you all. Instead of handing out paper checks and
45 having to go cash them.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: I don't have a
48 problem either way myself. It's probably -- would
49 expedite things a little quicker. You'd have a cash card,
50 basically, is what it sounds like to me, and work off

000117

1 of that in the beginning and then the balance, whatever's
2 left over or whatever is due at the end, gets mailed to
3 you in a paper check, or is it -- oh, no, excuse me.
4 Direct deposit. So, banking information would be needed
5 for that. Okay. Sounds streamlining to me. Anybody else
6 feel the same way or different -- or actually different?
7 I guess we'll deal with it that way then. Okay. Thank
8 you.

9
10 MS. CHAPA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Those
11 were all of my items.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: And that brings us
14 to the end, right. Okay, so before -- I guess we're
15 going to do a closing comments, but I wanted to highlight
16 individual here in the room. Maybe, I think it's
17 appropriate to do it right now. So, what I want to do
18 is I want to -- I see that Tommy Gray has, you know, has
19 21 years in here, that he's the Cice Chair. He's been
20 around for a long time. And then we have Mr. Elmer
21 Seetot, who's been around for 30 years. I'd like to say
22 thank you to them both, but the one individual that
23 stands out in my mind is Ken Adkisson. He's been here
24 forever, almost. How many years is that, Ken? Yeah, well,
25 if it's 95 since the world was invented. Yeah. I mean,
26 he's been here from day one, I think. And so, I wanted
27 people to recognize this man for his time and didn't
28 want to miss a chance to be the one to at least bring
29 it up. Thank you, Ken, for your time here. You have a
30 lot.

31
32 (Pause)

33
34 Somebody's on the -- go ahead.

35
36 (Distortion - simultaneous speech)

37
38 MS. KOELSCH: Hi, Louis. This is Jeanette
39 on the phone. Still sick, but just wanted to thank you
40 for calling out Ken's service. He's still an employee
41 of the Park. This last summer we celebrated his 50 years
42 of service to the Park. His combined service to the
43 Federal government is, I think, 55 years of service. So,
44 just thank you so much for recognizing Ken. He still
45 works for us. He's not going anywhere. But I really
46 appreciate you thinking about him and all of the great
47 things he's done during his career. Thank you.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Park
50 Superintendent Jeanette for saying that. Anyway, it

1 can't be said any other way. Thank you, Ken. It's
2 amazing. I've worked so many different places in the
3 last 45 years. I commend you for doing it in one spot
4 for so long, and you are a resource that is something
5 to behold because we can talk to you about a lot of
6 things and a lot of decades. So, thank you for your time
7 and your service.

8

9 (Pause)

10

11 MR. ADKISSON: Mr. Chair. Ken Adkisson.
12 I can't tell you how much I greatly appreciate that
13 recognition. And like I said earlier, it's -- I can't
14 say it's been an entirely pleasurable experience, but
15 personally, I find it extremely rewarding, and I really
16 cherish the relationships and the working relationships
17 that have been established. And I think overall, you
18 know, we've made a lot of progress. But I think there's
19 also very clear that there's a lot of things remaining
20 to, I think, trying to fulfill the government's
21 obligations under Title 8 of ANILCA. And, and I might
22 have a few more years to throw at it and try to see if
23 we can continue to make some progress. But there's still
24 there's still stuff that needs to be done. Thank you.

25

26 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you again, Ken.
27 And I'm sure anybody knows how to pick up a phone or
28 send an email and has anything that they want to know.
29 You're probably a good resource, probably excellent in
30 other words, thank you. 55 years, I think you started
31 it --

32

33 MR. ADKISSON: Yep.

34

35 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Did you start at the
36 Grand Canyon? No.

37

38 MR. ADKISSON: With the Park service?
39 Yeah. Oh, no. No, I put several years in the American
40 Southwest and places like Chaco Canyon, Hubbell Trading
41 Post. I did a tour of duty at -- in northern Texas at
42 Alibates Flint quarries and Lake Meredith Recreation
43 area, and about eight years, I think, at in Idaho at Nez
44 Perce National Historical Park. You know, I've seen a
45 lot in the Park Service related to especially Native
46 American activities. Oh, I didn't mention four years at
47 Sitka, too.

48

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000119

1 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Again, I'd say thank
2 you for serving so long and still continuing to serve
3 for us here. It's a great thing.

4
5 MR. ADKISSON: Like I said, I greatly
6 appreciate it. And you're welcome. I'd like to give it
7 a little more. Yeah.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thanks, Ken. We got
10 closing comments. Mr. Seetot, you're first. It's a good
11 thing Tommy ain't here.

12
13 MR. SEETOT: Brevig Mission. It's been a
14 great meeting, I think, without the rigid agenda that
15 is before us, I think we're able to put out some of the
16 issues that are very important or pertinent to our area.
17 We see so many changes, I see so many changes over the
18 years land-wise and natural resources-wise. So, it's --
19 we have had real low water, I mean, how many weeks ago?
20 And then we had real high water a couple days ago.
21 Whether it's changing very fast, be sure to kind of
22 remember that what is happening at the present time,
23 probably many of you receive comments from warnings, you
24 know, from community members saying these things would
25 happen. And now we're in the age that these things are
26 happening. Many of the things that have gone on, you
27 know that was already in the works for them. But anyway,
28 I thank everyone for their time. I thank the good
29 information that that kind of came out under two Chairs,
30 one after another. But that's very good. Continue to
31 work what you believe in. And then and then hopefully,
32 you know, some results will come out after that. You are
33 going to -- we are going to continue to struggle with
34 wildlife issues and, and especially, extreme weather
35 events are coming in and around our area, which was
36 pretty much mostly continental USA. Now, now it's --
37 when I listen to weather report, it's pretty much Nome
38 area -- Nome Norton Sound area here. First is the north
39 side. But we still do get the weather so many miles
40 away. But still. Remember you're working for your
41 community members, you're working for your
42 grandchildren, and especially hopefully our animals, you
43 know, will be for us to manage for a while. Thank you
44 very much, Mr. Chair.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you,
47 Councilman Seetot. Let's see. I think we'll take Mary.

48
49 MS. FREYTAG: Thank you, Councilman
50 Green, and quyana for everyone service. I really

1 appreciate everyone's knowledge that they share both on
2 the Council and the agencies that come here and work
3 with us directly. We're all at the same table. We're all
4 on the same page, which is how it should be. And I just
5 want to thank everyone. This is my last Council meeting
6 here, and I just -- it's been a pleasure serving on this
7 Council. Excuse me if I get feelings, but I just --
8 they're good feelings. I just wanted to be thankful and
9 thank everyone for this opportunity to share my
10 knowledge and to ask the hard questions for the
11 betterment of everyone. So, I know this is going to keep
12 going, and I really appreciate your long service. You
13 know, that just goes to show there's others that are
14 working up towards that. And it just all of you share
15 from your hearts and that's what it takes, you know, the
16 love of our land, our subsistence and our people. I --
17 it's been a pleasure and I thank you. Quyana.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Council
20 member Mary Freytag. I will remark about the All
21 Council's meeting when we were shy of one vote to be
22 having a quorum. Even though she was feeling really sick,
23 she was able to get on there and help us get through
24 that and give us the opportunity to vote when we finally
25 got her on the phone. So, having said that, really
26 appreciate the fact that you've been here the time that
27 you have been here with us. I really respected your side
28 of the story when you brought it to the table, and I
29 will miss that myself. So, thank you for your service,
30 Mary. And so, we'll go next. How about Mr. Moses?

31
32 MR. MOSES: Robert Moses. Like to thank
33 everybody here for everything and all their information.
34 Everything takes time to get from here to there. Even
35 when you go hunting, you plan way ahead. You plan a day
36 ahead to go moose hunting, duck hunting, any kind of
37 hunt, you plan ahead, know where you're going and pay
38 attention to the weather. I do a lot of weather reading
39 because I'm a hunter. Everybody knows a sun dog when
40 there's a -- like a rainbow around the sun, you know,
41 everybody knows that the weather is coming. There's
42 little signs like that that are passed on from generation
43 to generation and coming together and share this
44 knowledge to save our land and save our wildlife for the
45 food that we live off. It's different from living here
46 in Nome and in a village. And then where you come from,
47 Anchorage and the road system. There's going to be lots
48 of hurdles along the way, but everything takes time and
49 everybody can work together and by then, over time it'll
50 get solved one way or another. But subsistence won't

1 stop for us that live in a village that have lived off
2 our land for a long time, and from our elders passed
3 down to generation to generation. It's still happening
4 today, and it will until I go, I hope for our kids and
5 everybody else's kids that live off the land and the
6 other people too.

7
8 There's lots of different information
9 being passed which is good and knowledgeable for future
10 use, and I learned some stuff every time I go to this
11 meeting from everyone that says something, and hopefully
12 I'll continue to work together with everybody else and
13 all the entities and the other people that are having
14 meetings in the state of Alaska. Alaska is a great
15 country we live in and we subsist off it. It's a land
16 of plenty, they say, which brings in, not to say the
17 least, but money by hunters that sustain and provide
18 other things for programs in Alaska. Like buying a moose
19 ticket or a fishing ticket. But some things come up like
20 we're losing our fish and our resources that like mining
21 and coming in. And we have to deal with those things
22 along with the weather, along with the tides and the
23 climate change. Climate change has the biggest player
24 in all of Alaska because like these boys said, we live
25 by the seasons. When the time is right, we come and go
26 and harvest and take what we can and then we go to
27 spring, summer, fall, winter, every season has its food,
28 where we take from the land where we could try and live
29 a healthy life. That's what Alaska is all about. All
30 different kinds of cultures and all different things
31 happen in Alaska, all the way from hunting to mining to
32 tourism, which is good in some parts and some not so
33 good. But with subsistence, it's a big role in life in
34 Alaska. Growing up in a village passed down from our
35 grandparents, and I hope we still can do that to pass
36 down to future generations. Thank you.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you,
39 Councilman Moses. That brings me to Councilman Aukongak.

40
41 MR. AUKONGAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
42 Thank you. Everybody in here for volunteering to come
43 here and being here. Great to meet new people. I love
44 our food chain. You know, it's hard to believe, you
45 know, growing up, you didn't need a piece of paper to
46 regulate what you eat. And it's hard to believe, you
47 know. Oh, you can't go get that salmon or you can't go
48 get that caribou. And, you know, that's our menu and
49 it's like Robert said, it's the best food. Very healthy.
50 And nowadays we -- hard to believe if you get in trouble

000122

1 they're going to take your livelihood away, which is
2 very wrong. And right now, I feel bad for Kotzebue. You
3 know, they got flooded. And keep them in your prayer.
4 Appreciate it.

5

6 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you. Mr.
7 Aukongak. Mr. Hunt, Councilman hunt.

8

9 MR. HUNT: Please. Raymond Hunt here. I'd
10 like to thank you for having me here. And every person
11 that came and, you know, presented a lot of knowledge
12 and wisdom to be learned, you know, at these meetings.
13 And I see it, you know, and can't take you know, each
14 presentation or, you know, each -- somebody who speaks,
15 you know, I gotta take -- don't take that for granted.
16 You know, a lot of knowledge be gained on that. And you
17 know, I'm still learning and I, you know for the subjects
18 that, you know, that mean a lot to us, you know, hunting
19 and fishing and whatnot. You know, we hunt and we fish
20 all year round, and we depend on that and think about
21 the future. And, you know, going to these meetings sure
22 helped out a lot. You know, learning about you know,
23 basically everything. And I think everyone that come and
24 presents, you know, like I said, you learn a lot from
25 these presenters and, you know, the amount of time and
26 effort that they put into, you know, the slideshows and
27 the presentations, you know, thank them for that. You
28 know, kind of imagine, you know not only that, but it's
29 very helpful and very informational that needs to be
30 said, you know, during these meetings, and I thank each
31 presenter that came and presented and thank you for
32 having me here.

33

34 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you,
35 Councilman Hunt. I suppose we don't have Tommy here, so
36 that gives me lots of extra time to talk. I'm not sure
37 who talks more or him or I. Yeah. Cut from the same
38 stone or something like that. I think, you know, our
39 grandmothers raised us on the same river systems like
40 the Pilgrim and the Kuzitrin and whatnot. But you know,
41 I -- my grandmother did a good job instilling in me how
42 important the lifestyle was because she dragged me
43 everywhere. Her grandmother was actually from Kotzebue.
44 (In Native) was her name. My great, great grandmother
45 who took a dog team all the way over to St. Michael's
46 to marry (indiscernible). And that last name
47 (indiscernible). Everybody knows around here around the
48 Sound. That's part of the people I come from. My father
49 was from Mississippi, the great State of Mississippi.
50 And he came from some hard, tough people from down there

1 between Louisiana and the Mississippi. I was fortunate
2 and when we talk about -- where -- he talks about hunting
3 and fishing and everything, I was raised and brought
4 through there by my grandmother, Elsie. Her last name,
5 Ball. All the way back 1964. And I recall all the people
6 that lived out there and how they lived, you know,
7 because that's what we did. We were right next to them.
8 My grandmother tended next to (indiscernible). Joe
9 Garnie's grandmother. And so those of us that were raised
10 by our grandmothers, you know, we kind of -- we got a
11 real connection to the land and it was always important
12 to me.

13
14 In high school, I jumped on a trip to
15 Glacial Lake in 1974 and did the first lake study that
16 was ever done there. Fish and Game hadn't even taken the
17 time. 1993, I got on the Northern Norton Sound Advisory
18 Committee, served some time there. Through, I think 13
19 years, part of it as Vice Chair. 1994 I was looked at
20 by the region as a candidate for the Board of Fish and
21 by golly here I am with Seward Peninsula RAC serving
22 with the folks here since 2010. I never thought I'd be
23 here that long, but, you know, it's I know I'm saying a
24 lot about me, but that's what I'm saying. It's important
25 we talk about the importance of our food and our food
26 security, our people and our families. And you know,
27 Tommy's talked about it and it is important. That's why
28 we're still here taking a part in this thing is because
29 it's part of our life. And it's sometimes gets pretty
30 difficult defending it and Robert Wright, he was on the
31 subsistence committee for AFN, spoke out, and he said,
32 you know, this is a really tough. Gayla (indiscernible)
33 another one, it's tough to be in these positions because
34 very few of us step up to the point of actually taking
35 part in these Councils, and committees and whatnot about
36 our resources. And it takes a lot out of us. I -- you
37 know, it takes a lot out of us to, to take a part in
38 this. So, I recognize all the folks here at the table
39 with me and other committees that I've served on and
40 trying to instill that in the younger generation is our
41 job now, along with continuing where we're at this point.
42 So, having said that, I'd like to say thank you for
43 everybody. Thanks for the staff. Thanks for the public
44 that took part in this, and we'll see you at the next
45 meeting because I'm not done. So, thank you. Gisela,
46 thank you. Want to say something?

47
48 MS. CHAPA: My closing comments. Gisela
49 Chapa. I wanted to well, say thank you to all of you for
50 your time and your dedication to the Seward Peninsula

1 RAC. I know this is my first time meeting some of you,
2 and It's been a pleasure, Ms. Freytag, it was great to
3 at least get to know you for a small window. I hope that
4 we continue to stay connected, and that you can continue
5 to stay engaged on the issues in the Seward Peninsula
6 region. And thanks to everyone for attending and
7 providing important information for this RAC to make
8 decisions on extremely important matters. And yeah,
9 we'll see you in the winter.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: It's snowing
12 outside. How about springtime? That sounds a little bit
13 better. Yeah. Thank you. Okay, well, is there a motion
14 for adjournment?

15
16 MS. FREYTAG: This is Mary Freytag. I'd
17 like to motion for adjourn the meeting.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Thank you, Mary.

20
21 MR. SEETOT: Elmer. Second.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Elmer, second.

24
25 MS. FREYTAG: Question.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON GREEN: Question has been
28 called. All those in favor?

29
30 IN UNISON: Aye.

31
32 Thank you for that, Mary. Thank you.

33
34 (Off record)

35
36 (END OF PROCEEDING)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 1 through 124 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the SEWARD PENINSULA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME II recorded on the 25th 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 19th day of November 2024.

Rafael Morel
Chief Project Manager