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YUKON KUSKOKWIM DELTA SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME II

YUPIIT PICIRYARAIT CULTURAL CENTER
Bethel, Alaska
March 5, 2025

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jacqueline Cleveland, Chair
Henry Parks
Norma T. Evan
John W. Andrew
Walter A. Morgan, Sr.
Francis Prince, Jr.
Frederick P. Beans
Tiffany D. Agayar
Wassily B. Alexie
Phillip K. Peter, Sr.
Alissa Nadine Rogers

Regional Council Coordinator, Brooke McDavid

Recorded and transcribed by:

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Bethel, Alaska - 3/05/2025)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Good morning, and welcome back to the YKRAC meeting. We're gonna [sic] continue this morning with call to order at 9:02 a.m. and roll call will be done by either Alissa if she's on and if not, Brooke.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Secretary, are you online with us this morning yet?

(No response)

It doesn't look like she's had a chance to join us, so I'll go through the roll call. Henry Parks.

MR. PARKS: Present

MS. MCDAVID: Norma Evan.

MS. EVAN: Present.

MS. MCDAVID: John Andrew.

MR. ANDREW: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Walter Morgan. Walter is here. Francis Prince.

MR. PRINCE: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Frederick Beans.

(No response)

I did hear Fred a little bit ago. Okay. Tiffany Agayar.

MS. AGAYAR: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Wassily Alexie.

Mr. ALEXEI: Here.

1 MS. MCDAVID: Phillip Peter, Sr.

2

3 MR. PETER: Here.

4

5 MS. MCDAVID: Jacqueline Cleveland.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Here.

8

9 MS. MCDAVID: Alissa Nadine Rogers.

10

11 (No response)

12

13 Alissa might be joining us online a
14 little bit later and Myron is absent and excused due to
15 family. All right. Madam Chair, we do have a quorum and
16 if it's okay with you, I'll do a couple small
17 announcements before we get started. Welcome, everyone.
18 Back to day two of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence
19 Regional Advisory Council meeting. We had a really full
20 day, long day yesterday, so thanks for everyone for
21 sticking around and coming back for the evening session.
22 I did just want to remind everyone to please sign in
23 here in the room if you haven't yet. And make an
24 announcement about public comment opportunity this
25 morning. We are going to have one presentation first by
26 AVCP. They have flight to catch. So, we're going to
27 accommodate their presentation and then we'll move into
28 public comments. There are green cards on the back table.
29 If you would like to give a public comment this morning,
30 either on non-agenda items or in relation to the session
31 we had last night about chum salmon bycatch
32 alternatives. We are going to have to be a little more
33 strict today about time limits. Just because we have a
34 really full agenda, we want to make sure we hear from
35 everyone and give folks a chance to share their thoughts.
36 But we'll be sticking to a five-minute limit on comments,
37 when there's one minute left, I'll give you the one-
38 minute finger and we'll just ask for you to wrap up your
39 final thoughts at that point. And there will be a cut
40 off for sign up for comments this morning at 9:30. So
41 if you do want to comment and you're here in the room,
42 please fill out a green card and you can pass that to
43 any of the staff or to me. If you're online and you want
44 to comment you can use the raise hand feature on
45 Microsoft Teams, or you can press star five on your
46 phone, and that'll make you show up on the computer here
47 in the line, and we'll call on you at the appropriate
48 time. For folks online to please just remember to try
49 to keep yourself muted. You can do that by pressing star
50 six or using the mute button on your phone. And there

1 are meeting materials available if you're online and
2 those are at doi.gov/subsistence and then you can
3 navigate to the Regions tab and find Yukon-Kuskokwim
4 Delta. And then there'll be a Meeting Materials link
5 that you can click on. So, the agenda and some but not
6 all of the materials that we have here in the room are
7 loaded on there for you. And I can also email out any
8 copies of presentations and stuff after the meeting if
9 folks want to get in touch with me and I think that's
10 it. Oh, one more reminder. We do have our interpreter
11 here with us, Mr. Patrick Sampson. There are headsets
12 on the back table. If we do have translation happening,
13 you can put those on, turn them to channel one, and
14 you'll be able to hear the interpretation. So, thanks
15 everyone again for being here this morning and I'll turn
16 it back to Madam Chair.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
19 Brooke we're going to move on to the AVCP presentation
20 first. Jennifer, thanks.

21
22 MS. HOOPER: Good morning. Council, Madam
23 Chair, thank you very much for allowing me and my staff
24 to go this morning. Like Brooke mentioned, some of us
25 have some travel and then just as a sort of a courtesy
26 for our village staff so they are able to present to
27 you. I'm going to start sort of with my traditional
28 program update for you and then hopefully we've got our
29 staff out in Alakanuk online that will be able to
30 present. If not, I can do that for them as well. Yes.
31 So good morning, Council. My name is Jennifer Hooper. I
32 work for AVCP. I am the natural resources program
33 manager. My parents are Wassillie and Donna Chris. My
34 dad is from Nunapitchuk. Very close family connection
35 with member Parks over there. I am from Bethel here. I
36 grew up here and tribal member of ONC. So, for our
37 program updates, I apologize I did not get it completed
38 in time to share with Brooke to put in your packets. But
39 as we've been historically, our program staff capacity
40 is pretty small right now. It's myself, Ashley Johnson
41 is our program coordinator. We have some temporary
42 project staff in Tuntutuliak and Alakanuk, and we are
43 currently advertising and recruiting for a marine
44 resource specialist position. If you remember, I think
45 the last time I introduced Janessa Esquible. She was on
46 with us for about a year and then moved on. So, our --
47 as a reminder, our program within the AVCP
48 organizational structure, works with the Realty,
49 Cultural and Environmental Quality Programs in the Lands
50 and Cultural Resources Division. We work together to try

1 to identify common areas, to merge programs and efforts,
2 and then support all the other programs and services
3 that AVCP provides. A couple of years ago, AVCP, within
4 its administrative structure, created a new subsistence
5 committee and they are -- they consist of members from
6 our Executive Board and meet quarterly along with the
7 normal Executive Board schedule and they provide
8 guidance to the full Executive Board and then
9 administration. And so, we work really closely and have
10 built that process into our, I guess, daily lives in a
11 way. And so, the subsistence committee is -- has become
12 sort of the initial go to for administration discussing
13 critical issues, and developing policy, and statements
14 and hearing information shared like you heard yesterday
15 on the program that Bethel Community Services Foundation
16 is working on implementing with moose hunting. Our
17 subsistence committee structures is where information
18 like that feeds into AVCP administration.

19
20 Some of the things that I've updated on
21 in the past, we continue to track the federal fisheries
22 disasters and those requests. We are waiting on word for
23 the next rollout. If people remember last year the first
24 application process was open for the 2020 Yukon and
25 Kuskokwim and then 21 Yukon disasters and we're now
26 waiting on word for the disasters that came and were
27 approved with funds appropriated through 2022. AVCP, in
28 our offices, we do still have copies, if you recall, the
29 fisheries guidebook that we created about a year and a
30 half ago to help educate and describe the processes for
31 the North Pacific Council and Board of Fish Regulatory
32 Cycles. If people are still interested in those, we do
33 have copies available and if you remember, the guidebook
34 outlines how both of those processes work and how people
35 can engage. Some notes on the Alaska Board of Fisheries
36 and where they're at. They have a standing statewide
37 supplemental issues meeting every March, and that is on
38 track here in the next couple of weeks. If you have not
39 heard yet proposals, the cycle right now is for AYK,
40 Arctic, Yukon Kuskokwim, Bristol Bay and Alaska
41 Peninsula. Those proposals, regulatory proposals are due
42 in -- to the department by April 10th. People, the public
43 organizations, tribes, whoever is interested can develop
44 proposals to submit for our region down through the
45 Alaska Peninsula. The AYK finfish meeting is on schedule
46 to occur a little earlier this cycle. It's going to be
47 in November in Fairbanks, and then the Alaska Peninsula
48 area meeting will be in February, a year from now in
49 Anchorage. AVCP and our coalition partners continue to
50 advocate at the North Pacific Council to address salmon

1 bycatch. Our subsistence committee and CEO Vivian
2 attended the February meeting that you heard a lot about
3 yesterday, to work at, you know advocating for effective
4 change there.

5
6 AVCP continues to engage with the Arctic
7 Yukon Kuskokwim Tribal Consortium, which is another sort
8 of a coalition group to advocate for local and
9 subsistence fisheries. And I mentioned that I think the
10 last couple of meetings, it's still a relatively new
11 program and entity the Bering Intergovernmental Tribal
12 Advisory Council, that was created and developed under
13 the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area
14 Executive Order had been on track to do a lot of really
15 good, important things. A joint vision statement was
16 signed with the federal task force in Washington last
17 October and as with a lot of things with the new
18 administration, that Executive Order was revoked again.
19 And so, we're sort of waiting to see what work and what
20 progress can still be made as an entity because we --
21 they are a formal body now and have processes in place.

22
23 The regional migratory bird body that
24 is a part of the statewide Alaska marine -- Alaska
25 Migratory Bird Co-Management Council, our Waterfowl
26 Conservation Committee is going to be meeting later this
27 month. And we will once again work with the Yukon Delta
28 Refuge on scheduling the mandatory 30-day closure for
29 subsistence bird hunting later, May, potentially June.
30 One important note that the group will be receiving
31 reports on and more outreach I assume will be coming as
32 we get closer to the birds returning, is just reminding
33 everyone that emperor geese are now closed for not just
34 eggging, but for hunting as well, because their
35 population index fell below the threshold that allows
36 hunting. So, I imagine there will be a lot more outreach
37 and media on that just to remind hunters going into the
38 season this spring.

39
40 Lastly, we shared before that AVCP last
41 year received funding to develop a fisheries focus
42 project, and that's what our presentation next will be
43 discussing. We are working with Tuntutuliak and Alakanuk
44 and framing discussions and activities around salmon
45 resilience and sustainability. I will provide a few
46 updates from the Community of Tuntutuliak and then
47 hopefully our project staff from Alakanuk are online and
48 will go through their presentation. So, for Tuntutuliak,
49 our project staff are Rachel Simon, Angel Andrew and
50 Elena Simon. Staff from our program and AVCP Healthy

1 Families facilitated a Circle dialogue last summer, met
2 with the community to discuss the project and to share
3 their thoughts and ideas. Recordings were transcribed
4 from that meeting and staff identified some themes that
5 will help -- that were going to help direct future
6 activities. You'll see in the Alakanuk presentation a
7 few slides with some good visuals to kind of help explain
8 how that worked and right now, staff are working on
9 coordinating community events. The first one that they
10 have been focusing on is to bring together youth and
11 elders to share knowledge. Focused on revitalizing and
12 preserving language and culture. So, thank you Madam
13 Chair, that concludes my program report. And now I would
14 like to hand it over to, I think Vanessa Hunter, if
15 she's online.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana Jen.
18 Vanessa happens to be my stepcousin. So, cool. Vanessa
19 Hunter, are you online?

20
21 (No response)

22
23 Or anyone from Alakanuk or
24 (indiscernible) and Vanessa?

25
26 MS. MCDAVID: And Vanessa, this is
27 Brooke, the Coordinator. You might be muted. You can
28 press star six to try to unmute yourself.

29
30 (Pause)

31
32 It does look like all the phone numbers
33 are unmuted. So, I'm not sure if you guys are online if
34 you can hear us. But we can't hear you in the room.

35
36 UNIDENTIFIED: Loud and clear.

37
38 MS. MCDAVID: Thanks for that.

39
40 (Pause)

41
42 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: We don't see --
43 we found Vanessa's number and we don't see her
44 number.....

45
46 MS. HOOPER: Okay.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND:online so
49 maybe if you want to.....

50

1 MS. HOOPER: Sure, I can -- I can go
2 through quickly then their presentation. So, you'll see
3 on the first slide, and I did bring a paper copy of the
4 presentation. I apologize that the slides are pretty
5 small, but I wanted to just have less paper for you to
6 have to deal with. So, the first slide here shows two
7 of our project staff in the community of Alakanuk.
8 Vanessa Hunter, that is our tribal liaison. She's on the
9 right and Elizabeth Chikigak, she's our elder mentor on
10 the left. We also have Tanya Chikiak on as our youth
11 leader. And so, the official title of the project is
12 Intergenerational Visions Resilience Salmon
13 Sustainability. And from Vanessa, we are grateful for
14 the team and the help that they provided to this project,
15 both Elizabeth and Tanya. Next slide.

16
17 This slide shows -- is a visual of the
18 Community of Alakanuk on the Lower Yukon River and the
19 images that staff selected to share help to illustrate
20 the importance of salmon to the people in the Community
21 of Alakanuk. This project is to help the community in
22 the best way we can, by bringing the youth and elders
23 together to get the knowledge that they need before it's
24 too late, and for the whole community together as one.
25 The first event we are planning is to bring the youth
26 and elders together by speaking to them about the safety
27 of traveling by land. The image on the top left I think
28 is a good visual to show in contrast to the images on
29 the bottom, which are pictures from fish camps in the
30 past, and I don't remember - recall Catherine Agayar in
31 the bottom, I believe, was Elizabeth's -- one of her
32 family members. I'm sorry. Mom? Okay. Thanks, Tiffany.
33 So, the upper right picture is Elizabeth's smokehouse
34 today and I don't know about you, but it is 5%, maybe
35 size -- in size compared to the smokehouses portrayed
36 in the bottom pictures. And so, I think this is a good
37 contrast of how things are now to how things used to be.
38 When the communities on the lower river do get the
39 opportunity to harvest a few chums as was the case last
40 year. Next.

41
42 In this slide, you'll see the general
43 project timeline for Alakanuk. The project communication
44 with the tribe began in July. We met with the tribal
45 Council, explained our idea, got their consent to move
46 forward. The first community circle dialogue occurred
47 in August, and we had program staff from my department
48 and then the AVCP Healthy Families program to help
49 facilitate and members from the community were made up
50 of elders, youth, adults and tribal Council members. We

1 had at least 46 participants and as I described with the
2 (indiscernible) review members discussed key, sort of
3 topics and questions. And then later on, you'll see in
4 a slide how themes were developed from those
5 conversations. Next, please. Next slide please. Sorry.
6 So here, this slide is a representation of majority of
7 the themes that were identified in transcribing the
8 audio recordings of both the large group activities and
9 then breakout activities. All of the recordings were
10 transcribed and this image here is a word cloud that
11 shows the different themes that came about from the
12 discussions and the way this word cloud can be looked
13 at is the larger the word -- the font for the words, the
14 more common it was in the conversations. So, as you see
15 here, one of the largest themes is subsistence ways of
16 life and then cultural values and traditions and then
17 leadership and food sovereignty and so on. There were
18 many themes and topics brought up, as you can see. But
19 these larger themes are what the staff are using to now
20 talk with community organizations to develop community
21 activities and events. Next please.

22
23 So, this slide helps to describe the
24 kinds of project activities that the staff are looking
25 at and some of their focus in creating events. Primary
26 focus is for elder youth connection, building unity,
27 creating more job opportunities and activities,
28 strengthening youth leadership and just bringing the
29 community together overall. And the photos here help to
30 describe one of the recent events, which was to bring
31 in elders and hunters, people who are familiar with, you
32 know, the land and the ways of traveling safely and
33 sharing their knowledge and their experiences with
34 others that showed up for the event. I think that -- if
35 you'll notice, I'll just point out on the bottom right
36 the gentleman kind of in the middle is Tiffany's dad,
37 Max. So, it was -- from the description, from the staff
38 it was a really great opportunity. A lot of good
39 conversation. Even delving into sort of unexplained
40 phenomena that occurs out when, you know, people are out
41 on the land. So, it was a really good time and great
42 opportunity for people that were there. Next. And this
43 according to staff, we had several rambunctious
44 energetic youth that attended that were a bit of a
45 distraction at times, at times. And so, we're kind of
46 pulled aside to engage in, I guess, activities they might
47 have been more interested in. So, here's just some
48 pictures of the youth that were there and crafts that
49 they were able to create and partake in. Next.
50

1 So, some of the ideas that staff have
2 for planning future events. Some of these have already
3 occurred in conjunction with other entities within the
4 community. Things like (In Native) making, fish net
5 making. They plan to partner with the (In Native) and
6 opioid prevention program there in Alakanuk. They do
7 hope to plan more elder youth interaction Action
8 activities, and all of these are -- the basis and the
9 foundation is helping to provide time and space for the
10 community to continue to share their cultural and
11 traditional values and subsistence ways in the absence
12 of normal, you know, fishing for salmon. I think there's
13 one more just a general -- yeah. So again, they continue
14 to coordinate activities and events. One really great
15 idea that they've developed is working on a traditional
16 medicinal plants workshop later in the spring, in
17 conjunction with the AVCP Healthy Families program.
18 They're also interested in communicating with groups
19 within the region and who work on behalf of the region
20 on fisheries. So, I think the last slide is just a quyana
21 slide. So that is -- just hopefully gives you an idea
22 of some of the things that -- some of the ways that
23 we're trying to help communities in the absence of
24 traditional fishing to continue to pass on that
25 knowledge from the elders to the youth. This project --
26 this phase of the project with (In Native) and Alakanuk
27 is probably going to go through May before people get
28 busy with, you know, summer activities. And then our
29 plan is next summer -- this summer identify two more
30 communities to kind of repeat the process and provide
31 them that opportunity that we've been able to do here
32 in these two communities. So, (In Native), quyana and
33 thank you.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Jen.
36 Such good work. Does anyone have questions?

37
38 (No response)

39
40 And hearing none, we're going to move
41 on to public and tribal comments on non-agenda items.
42 And first, I'll let Brooke say who's first.

43
44 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. We'll do one
45 last call. If anyone wants to sign up, please turn in a
46 green card now, and as a reminder, we are going to have
47 to stick to a five-minute limit. So, I'm not trying to
48 be rude at all. We really want to hear from folks, but
49 we just have to do a little balancing so that we make
50 sure we get through our agenda today. So, I'll pass the

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1 first card to our Chair here. Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: This morning,
4 the first person is George Smith from Scammon Bay on the
5 issue of bycatch. Oh, can you turn your mic on,
6 (indiscernible)?

7

8 MR. SMITH: You can get a lot done in
9 five minutes. That much I know.

10

11 MS. MCDAVID: And please - sorry. Just a
12 reminder, everyone. Please start out by introducing
13 yourself. Thank you.

14

15 MR. SMITH: Yeah. Good morning. Thank you
16 for your time, Madam Chair, Council. Just that my name
17 is George Smith. I'm from Scammon Bay and I'm -- my
18 parents are the late Teddy and Mary Ann Sundown. I'm
19 here to, you know, just listening to the -- some of the
20 comments and the whole thing yesterday, part of the day
21 you just sort of prompted me to make time to be here and
22 speak some of my views and hopefully they make sense.
23 And one of the most common themes that I heard was
24 traditional knowledge. Those are the things that my
25 parents knew. Those were the things that your parents
26 knew. But how much has that changed? It's not the same
27 anymore. The things they grew up with doesn't apply
28 anymore. We have no more sea ice. Their traditional
29 knowledge was plenty of sea ice, plenty of seals, lots
30 of good calving for seals, (In Native). That was, mom
31 and dad traditional knowledge. But now it's different.
32 Different from what they were. We have climate change.
33 We have beaver, we have pike, where they never were. I
34 remember 20 years ago when there was a salmon -- and I
35 was a translator for AVC -- for a conference
36 (indiscernible) for Sophie (indiscernible), think for a
37 few minutes. And Bobby Gregory when it came to salmon,
38 all he said it was just go up the Kuskokwim and bomb the
39 beaver dams, and it is still a problem. Things like what
40 my parents grew up with, kayaks to set net or check nets
41 you know, up and down river, you know, very quiet
42 (indiscernible) of transportation. But now you go on the
43 river, there's boats and motors all up and down the
44 river. You know, when a hovercraft came, there was a lot
45 of comments on, you know, what's it doing to the fry,
46 the salmon fry. But yet we are all guilty of doing the
47 same thing with, you know, hundreds of boats going up
48 and down the river. I mean, those are just some of the
49 thoughts that came to mind. But -- and the latest thing,
50 at least on the Yukon, there's a dam that broke leach

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1 and whatever contaminants were in that tailing dam made
2 it to the Yukon. That wasn't traditional knowledge and
3 that's why I'm -- very easily I can say that traditional
4 knowledge does not apply as much as it did. It used to
5 be, if things were the same today as they were 50 years
6 ago, yes, it would apply. It would apply without a
7 question. But too much has changed.

8
9 One of the things that dad always told
10 me was that I cared to my heart is, you know, sometimes
11 it's okay not to know. You know, there's a lot of
12 unknowns that you know, only science can almost touch
13 of what's going out in the ocean, the rivers, the
14 ecosystem and how it affects the lifetime of our salmon
15 that we don't know. And, you know, mom and dad told many
16 stories of times of starvation where, you know, they had
17 no salmon, no food. My mom, her dad had a setnet, and
18 he'd go around daily check the net and one day there was
19 one little needlefish in a little overflow. And mom
20 boiled it over and over and over again until that broth
21 had no more taste. So, it tells me that times of
22 shortages for salmon and other species, ducks, geese,
23 birds. We've had closures for black branch, emperor
24 goose, spectabilis, you know, in my lifetime and that
25 sort of scared us. But like my dad said, sometimes it's
26 okay not to know, but I thank you for your time,
27 everyone. Quyana.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana. Nice to
30 meet you. And next, we have Patrick Sampson.

31
32 MR. SAMPSON: Good morning. My name is
33 Patrick Sampson. Sorry. My cousin was supposed to be
34 here and wanted to say his sentiments about the subject
35 that I'm approaching here. But in 2022, the State of
36 Alaska decided predator control on the Mulchatna
37 predator control program and they hired contractors,
38 state employees with helicopters to go out and shoot the
39 brown bears. And that started in 2023, and I think about
40 2023, they got 80some bears. 2024, they got 99 bears.
41 And they're going to or continue that program until 2028.
42 And that's so the Mulchatna Caribou can be on the rise.
43 And so, my cousin always says, why cannot we do like Mr.
44 Smith from Scammon Bay just said something about the
45 beaver dams that are really land locking the fish behind
46 the beaver dams. And so, if there was a beaver control
47 program right now, the State of Alaska regulations say
48 that you cannot disturb the beaver houses where the dens
49 and I think there's like a 30 day in jail if you're
50 caught missing with a beaver house or dam. And yet

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1 there's a predator control program for the Mulchatna
2 Herd. Why can't we do the same thing for the salmon out
3 here? That was the other point I wanted to make with
4 that. Oh, this year, this past summer, we had a lot of
5 high water out in the lakes, in the Turner villages, up
6 in the mountain areas. And so, after the high water,
7 during the high water, there was a lot of reports from
8 the villages that the whitefish that came out, even the
9 blackfish that came out were huge, and those were
10 landlocked during the low river times. And then the high
11 water came and that freed the whitefish and the blackfish
12 to go over the dams. And thus, there was a lot of people
13 catching nice big white, shiny fish that had been
14 landlocked for, I don't know how many years now. And so
15 that concludes my thing on the beaver dams, and I'm
16 sorry, my cousin, probably because he'd be yelling
17 anyway, so thank you.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Qu yana, Patrick.
20 Thanks for bringing that to our attention. Next, we have
21 Beverly Hoffman.

22
23 (Pause)

24
25 MS. HOFFMAN:presentation,
26 yesterday. I brought a bag of fish. I wish I had enough
27 for everyone, but mostly I wanted the North Pacific
28 Fisheries Management Council to see what fish I brought,
29 and to smell it.

30
31 (Pause)

32
33 My name is Beverly Hoffman. I'm a elder
34 from Bethel. I was born and raised on the Kuskokwim. Let
35 me just keep turning around because really, I want to
36 talk to you, the folks. And I'm really glad you came.
37 My parents were the late Jimmy Hoffman. He was one of
38 the early native bush pilots. My mom was Dorothy Hoffman.
39 So, I just want to show you this outraged fisherman
40 protest Area M fishery, 2004. Salmon bycatch gave the
41 numbers, 2006. New genetic studies, 68% of bycatch come
42 from western Alaska and they talk about the decline.
43 Area M coming in 2021, the math is clear about bycatch
44 and the high numbers. The summary of bycatch impact was
45 covered yesterday, and I was really glad to hear about
46 some of the solutions. I sat on this Council in the 90s.
47 I've been a part of the Pacific -- on the Kuskokwim
48 River Management Group, like so many of you. I sat on
49 the Pacific Marine Fishery Advisory Commission too. I
50 am so tired of hearing the same thing over again. (In

1 Native) that's our food. We have been restricted and I'm
2 so glad this Council is looking at alternatives. We had
3 the moose moratorium for five years. We have been
4 restricted on this river for so, so many years. We had
5 the goose management plan. Those things work. If we're
6 restricted, please work harder on what's happening out
7 in the Bering Sea, the Norton Sound and down by Kodiak.
8 So, my Council, for almost three decades, we on the
9 Kuskokwim and Yukon Rivers have been pleading to save
10 our salmon runs. All these years later, all these years
11 later, we're still pleading. Now the plea is not only
12 for our salmon, not just chum, all the species. Were
13 also pleading for halibut and crab, all being caught by
14 bycatch in the thousands. Yet the trawlers keep
15 trawling, raping the bottom of the ocean, destroying
16 important nutrients for the ecosystem it supports. We
17 lose our salmon in-river. What happens to our ecosystem?
18 What happens? Everything we love will be gone. The birds,
19 the berries. We lose those important nutrients from
20 spawned out salmon that support in. The trawler industry
21 lobbyist donates thousands to our congressmen and all
22 these years you know, we know in rural Alaska, this
23 fishery you manage must be regulated as strictly as we
24 are. The wasteful discard of our food source is criminal.
25 The collapse is in your hand. The industry is not
26 sustainable. Commercial fishing was not sustainable to
27 subsistence and we no longer commercial. So here we go
28 again, pleading yet not being heard. For crying out loud,
29 do something, please, before it's too late. Do your job.
30 With great sadness in my heart, quyana for listening.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana to Bev.
33 Next is Walter Jim.

34
35 MR. JIM: Madam Chair, members of
36 Council. My name is Walter Jim. I'm the tribal Council
37 president for the Orutsararmiut Native Council for the
38 Native Village of Bethel. Was born and raised here in
39 Bethel. For decades now I've been listening to these.
40 When I was like 20 years old, I started paying attention
41 to those messages that our elders back then were talking
42 about for the protections of our traditional ways of
43 life. When I think about how it was, when I was much
44 younger, and today we've all seen it. Evolution.
45 Evolution. The changing of our earth, the natural. But
46 with global warming and climate change, it fast tracks
47 everything. Fast tracks everything, changes everything
48 much quicker than natural evolution. But last year, last
49 summer, at the beginning of the summer, there were
50 reports of trawlers at the mouth of the Kuskokwim River.

1 And it's hard for me to digest a report that was
2 presented to us yesterday evening that the numbers of
3 chum salmon bycatch are very low for western Alaskan
4 rivers. It's hard for me to believe that. Very hard. I
5 seen [sic] a picture earlier from AVCP presented with a
6 smokehouse in Alakanuk. It was (In Native). I'm glad to
7 see that. But when I see that picture, there's a lot of
8 families that didn't have that opportunity or to catch
9 as many fish as I saw there. But I'm glad for them. I'm
10 glad for them. You know, I -- like I stated yesterday,
11 and that the North Pacific meetings in Anchorage last
12 month. You know, and I'll say it again, there's thousands
13 of families out there that are affected. We're very
14 heavily restricted here on the Kuskokwim River. When
15 they have their few openings, there's hundreds, hundreds
16 of boats out there on our river. Trying to survive.
17 That's -- it's like looking at Bristol Bay fishing and
18 it's ridiculous. But -- what we've come to over the last
19 few years. There's got to be a better management plan
20 of how the subsistence users of our river can be able
21 to fish. Because having 500, 600 boats out there all at
22 the same time, that's not management. But I just wanted
23 to tell you that last year, when there were reports of
24 trawlers out there at the mouth of our Kuskokwim River.
25 And, listening to a report that was presented to us
26 yesterday that chum salmon bycatch numbers are very low
27 for the rivers of the of western Alaska. That's very,
28 very hard for me to digest and believe. You know, I
29 started fishing with my grandfather when I was five years
30 old and much has changed. But today, we're still fighting
31 for that way of life that sustained our people for
32 thousands of years. You see the same messages that were
33 presented to members of Council, and other authorities
34 over 40, 50 years. That's all I have to say. Thank you.
35 Good morning.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana. Tiffany
38 has a comment.

39
40 MS. AGAYAR: Through the Chair. Thank
41 you. For the for the picture that you were talking about.
42 She's my grandma, and she passed away almost 18 years
43 ago. So that photo of the -- of her in the smokehouse
44 is 20 to 30 years old and the picture to the left is
45 actually how much fish we dry now, which is not anywhere
46 near close to what we used to do when I was a little
47 girl. Thank you.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
50 Tiffany. We're going to move. We're still in public

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1 comments on non-agenda items, but we're going to give
2 our online people a chance and online we have Martin
3 Kelly. Martin, are you on? If so, you have the floor.

4
5 MR. KELLY: Oh, hello. Good morning.
6 Trying to unmute your -- I had a question last night's
7 reporting from one of the NPFC members. I'm not sure who
8 it was, but I wanted verification on or clarification
9 on what year that 3000 kilotons of bycatch. That's
10 roughly 6 million pounds. If the salmon were let's say
11 12 pounds per salmon, that's 550,000 salmon. And I
12 noticed that -- I noted somewhere that I don't have --
13 I have him at home. I listened through 9:00 last night.
14 I noted that the bycatch limit was 550,000 or implemented
15 this past whatever. That's a lot of -- I -- when I
16 calculate -- I tried to calculate that 550,000 roughly,
17 I guess, when they stated 13% of that Yukon bound salmon.
18 When I did the calculation, I think that was 65,000
19 salmon bound for the Yukon River. That doesn't sound
20 right. I don't believe in cumulative. I don't believe
21 in using that math system when you catch, like, an
22 average. I mean, the plumes. I don't know what kind of.
23 They have different sized nets and some of them can be
24 two, you know, two miles long in a one mile deep or I
25 don't know, it could be the other way around. We haven't
26 been able to fish in Pilot Station forever. There's
27 people hurting right now for food. We don't have a solid
28 economy. Pilot Station was one of the locations where
29 the Y2 salmon were highly sought for all. Well, all on
30 the lower Yukon River. They were up to \$5. I don't know.
31 Could have been 5.50 a pound back in the early 80s when
32 that Japanese market was so high. I think we did our
33 part in bringing us to today, but we lost that commercial
34 fishery, and Dunleavy now just stated for emergency
35 disaster going back, I don't know how many years and
36 NPFC, no matter how well, NOAA and, you know, your
37 scientists and everybody that believes in calculating
38 numbers through cumulative -- you know, it's really --
39 for me, it's confusing. So, I just needed clarification.
40 I'm -- I've been -- I grew up fishing with my family
41 here. That's all I remember is waking up, you know,
42 alongside the river banks here in Pilot. My parents would
43 harvest at least you know, enough. My mother would try
44 and cut salmon along with my grandma and my sisters, and
45 we'd pack our drag -- our dried salmon in buckets so we
46 can preserve them for over the winter and use them
47 throughout the year. That was our main staple. Today,
48 you know, I can guarantee you I didn't get near 3% of
49 salmon I needed to make it up to today. You know, I
50 don't want to say I like substituting whitefish and

1 burbot and whatever, pike fish. I need my salmon. I'm a
2 little older now, and I understand the politics and if
3 I were to move out of here and go up the river between
4 here and Marshall and lived away from all civilization,
5 cut off, you know, cut off from the grid. If I needed
6 to survive, I would get my salmon on the Yukon River,
7 regardless of the restrictions and the regulations. With
8 this new administration at Washington, D.C., with the
9 tariffs and everything, you know, our villages in Alaska
10 rely on the AC company. And most of you know, they --
11 if you don't know, that's -- AC company is owned by
12 Canada. And the Canadians did -- I believe a 25% tariff
13 against the U.S, so that means -- that probably means
14 our prices are going to go up. We're -- you know, we
15 don't have too many options or alternatives, we don't
16 have four alternatives like NPFMC to move forward from
17 this day on, we have one alternative is to live. We're
18 going to get our salmon. When people are -- I'm certain
19 no one's going to starve here. Salmon is our resource.
20 If the State wants to restrict and threaten to take our
21 boats, our motors, our nets, our gear, buying us heavily,
22 do it. You know, we don't have no influence on state or
23 federal management, on trawling, on the trawling
24 industry. No matter how many years we've been talking
25 about it, it's like Bev Hoffman mentioned it's been years
26 and we're still experiencing -- our numbers are getting
27 less. Scientists blame it on global warming. What's the
28 impact that the trawling industry has had on the Yukon
29 River bound salmon. I don't believe in 13%. I don't
30 believe in 65,000 salmon. You know, out of the total
31 100% that's caught.....

32

33

34 MS. MCDAVID: Hey, Martin. I'm sorry. I
35 don't -- Martin I don't -- sorry to interrupt you. You've
36 reached your five minutes. If you could just...

37

38 MR. KELLY: We have no five-minute limit
39 last night, I -- you know, I'm kind of mad about this.

40

41 MS. MCDAVID: I understand. I'm really
42 sorry. You can have a few more moments to make any final
43 thoughts.

44

45 MR. KELLY: I -- you know, 6 million
46 pounds of chums. That's roughly 550,000 salmon. That
47 said, you know, if you calculate that at 12 pounds per
48 salmon, you know, they wiped out our kings already. We're
49 not allowed to have kings.

50

1 (Pause)

2

3 I appreciate it. Thank you. I'm just
4 really riled up. I'm just really mad. You -- if you're
5 fighting for your survival, you know, there's no limit
6 in or expressing your anger because there are a lot of
7 people that are hurting. And it's caused by what? NPFMC
8 and NOAA, those people that line their pockets. Thank
9 you.

10

11 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you for your
12 comments, Martin. We appreciate you calling in.

13

14 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Last but not
15 least, we have Evon Waska next, and there are a few more
16 comment requests. But we had a cut off of 9:30. So
17 apologies to those who turned theirs in after 9:30. If
18 we have time today, we'll get back to those after lunch.
19 But no promises. Evon.

20

21 MS. MCDAVID: And.....

22

23 MR. WASKA: Evon Waska. (In Native).
24 That's all I heard from mom and dad growing up. I'm a
25 subsistence hunter and fisherman. Gather as all my
26 people. You see on that map, Alaska. But before I begin
27 (In Native)

28

29 TRANSLATOR: When I'm talking loud is not
30 because I'm mad at you. I am mad at the policies that
31 do not (indiscernible) you have said.

32

33 I'm glad Pacific -- Northern Pacific
34 Fisheries are here. They were looking at us. We're human.
35 Anyway, Bethel's Yup'ik name is Mamterilleq. These are
36 our land and waters. Alaska. I'm glad you're here and I
37 thank the Committee on Fish and Game for bringing you
38 here. But first off, I want you to see, and this is to
39 my people. Raise your hand if subsistence, all
40 subsistence caught salmon are your food. It's for real.
41 My wife asked me yesterday, where's your people from the
42 villages? Bethel is the hub of the 56 villages you see
43 on the map and mostly that one right there. I told her
44 we were having a hard time. They're struggling.
45 Struggling, hard time. All commercial, we
46 (indiscernible) the commercial fish Yuko up in the
47 Arctic. They don't fish no more, here on the Kuskokwim
48 that was our only means of income and that's what got
49 to me and my people all the long winter months. Trapping,
50 they took that away. You're hearing it.

1

2 I still have these clippings from --
3 very important to me. Why? These trawlers bycatch has
4 to stop, today. What is it? March 5th, 2025. It has to
5 be done today. The trawlers, bycatch. And I take this
6 from a spokesperson, SalmonState Ocean Justice Program
7 Coordinator Jackie Boyer. Somebody mentioned 6 million
8 pounds. A documented 141 million pounds of marine life
9 each year, this bycatch includes king salmon, chum
10 salmon, halibut, herring, squid, whales and more. 2024,
11 3,807 51 just my brother spoke. I think that's more.
12 48,643 combined 333,000 chum salmon. 4. million pounds
13 of halibut. 3 million pounds of herring, 950,000 crabs
14 and one orca. Bycatch, trawl, dumped back in the ocean.
15 This has to stop, today. We're hurting our food source.
16 Salmon, are our food source. All salmon species. We all
17 know, it's not me and my people. We're on restrictions
18 beginning June 1st. But that means our nets are not in
19 the water. 6 to 12 hours of fishing days openness. 60ft
20 of setnet appeared the Johnson River hits about 15 Miles
21 (indiscernible) 55 of nets. Like elder, Mr. Peter up
22 above the Johnson River were strict to a half shackle,
23 150ft, six inch.

24

25 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Waska, sorry to
26 interrupt. Your five minutes have been completed. You
27 can wrap up your final comments. Thank you.

28

29 MR. WASKA: But it's for real. This
30 bycatch has to stop today. Trawlers are hurting us. You
31 could see, it's happening already. Pacific Ocean,
32 southeast canneries are closing. King Cove. All these
33 species are food source for all rural Alaska Natives.
34 We plead to you to put a cap, period, and we are
35 struggling and it's for real. And, I thank you for
36 coming.

37

38 MR. NICK: Madam Chair.

39

40 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Qu yana, Evon and
41 everybody else who commented this morning. I think I
42 hear Alex on the line. Do you have a question?

43

44 MR. NICK: Yes. I was wondering if you
45 guys have forgot about my comments. Plan for comments,
46 I've been waiting for two days now.

47

48 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Sorry, Alex. I
49 wasn't aware of that, but Brooke just said yes. You can
50 say your comments. Qu yana for the reminder.

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MR. NICK: At this time, Madam Chair?

MS. MCDAVID: Go ahead Alex.

MR. NICK: Okay. Thank you. My name is Alex Nick. I'm originally from Ohogamiut, and I'm one of the last nomad Yu'pik people from old Village of Ohogamiut. You know, I moved to Russian Mission, and I moved to Bethel, and I would like to give a little work history. I used to work as a research technician for ADF&G in early, rather late 80s and early -- rather 86. I'm sorry. Forgive me. I'll start over. I worked for Fish and Game as a research technician in the late 1960s and early 70s, and then I worked with the ANCSA Corporation, a couple of ANCSA Corporations, as a manager for the corporations, and then I was an RIT for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and I worked with OSM as a Council Coordinator. And I -- I'm not going to go into other hats that I had back then, but I'll go right into my comments.

As everyone knows, ANCSA corp -- rather Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was passed on December 18th, 1971, as amended. And we all know that ANILCA D2 -- rather, ANILCA D2, establish public lands. ANILCA was passed on December 2nd, 1980, as amended, and within these lands there are native allotments that are still pending up to date. ANILCA Title VII, section D2 created public lands and title -- I'm sorry, maybe I might have gotten that mixed up, but Title VIII established Federal Subsistence Board. It also established Regional Advisory Councils and stakeholders are flooded with all kinds of regulations, like we heard in the public comments before me. And I'm going to go into the main points of my comment this morning because there's been some problems in the Yukon River, within the private lands and within the National Wildlife Refuge System. What I am going to do is, I am going to let the Regional Advisory Council and subsistence related organizations know that this is a prime time to make some changes on the rules and regulations, and this is the prime time to establish agreements with tribal entities and ANCSA Corporations and the Native allottees on violations of access to the private lands during hunting season and none shareholders has been part of the land trespassers without permission from the local ANCSA Corporations and the Native allottees. That has been going on for several years now. And agency folks and organizations are not following up on violations

1 enforcement for this. And as a result of that, there's
2 been a lot of wanton waste out in the field. I just
3 heard from one of the folks from Yukon that even the
4 young folks are following suit. You know, they're doing
5 be doing these things because other people are doing
6 that, you know, they kill moose, and they just leave
7 them alone. These are unacceptable to folks from Yukon
8 River and what we need to do -- what we need at this
9 moment is -- I mean, this moment in time is support from
10 the Regional Advisory Council members who are the ears
11 and communicators of the Federal Subsistence Board.
12 Federal Subsistence Board has authority to change
13 regulations based on the RACs recommendations. What I
14 want to do in the near future is like, even this wildlife
15 proposal cycle, which I, you know, I begin to think it's
16 almost like a fishery cycle during this meeting because
17 we talk about fish, fish, hardly any wildlife during
18 this meeting. What I want to do is I want to propose, I
19 want Yukon River RAC members to listen to this. I want
20 to propose to restrict hunting on private lands without
21 permit from landowner, and without paying a fee to the
22 landowner so that they could check up on sites of
23 violations, if any, during, you know, the hunting
24 season.

25
26 And also, what I want to do is I want
27 to restrict non-resident aircraft, drop off and camping
28 within the private land so -- or near the private lands
29 because that one's getting a little bit out of hand and
30 people up and down the Yukon, from Russian Mission on
31 down to the mouth of the Yukon, you know, there's been
32 reports about violations. So, what we need to do is we
33 need to work with ANCSA Corporations and Tribal Councils
34 up and down the Yukon because federal government
35 established these lands and they will listen to
36 Corporations and Tribal Councils for, you know,
37 regulatory changes that has effect on stakeholders such
38 as tribal members and also the -- such as Corporation
39 shareholders that want to hunt within their own lands,
40 you know that -- on the rationale for the proposal, I
41 plan to use this as a rationale. There are problems with
42 hunters leaving so much trash out in the field without
43 cleaning up. They leave their trash on the private public
44 lands for public landowners to worry about and there are
45 some campsites that are being established elsewhere on
46 private lands without the landowner's permission. And
47 there are hunters -- local hunters going out there
48 encountering some of the non-resident hunters that tells
49 them that's their hunting area, which they have permits
50 to hunt in that area from, I assume from the State Fish

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1 and Game. But you know, they don't have any permission
2 from the local landowners. This is getting out of hand
3 right now in this day and age, and we need to do
4 something about this. So, I will try to answer if there's
5 any questions. Thank you, Mr. -- Madam Chair.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you to
8 Alex.....

9

10 (Simultaneous speech)

11

12 MR. NICK: I make my public comment very
13 short because of the time limit.

14

15 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah. Quyana.
16 Are there any questions for Alex?

17

18 (No response)

19

20 Hearing none. Are there any
21 announcements before I do my report since I didn't get
22 to do it yesterday and I'll make it short. Oh, and Norma
23 too. So, Norma, you want to go first, or should I go
24 first? Yeah. So, Norma is going first.

25

26 MS. MCDAVID: And I did want the record
27 -- this is Brooke. To reflect that member Rogers has
28 been online with us since just after roll call this
29 morning. Thanks.

30

31 MS. EVAN: Hi. My name is Norma Evan. I'm
32 from Marshall. This year in our region, we had a very
33 warm fall and winter, were hammered with warm weather
34 and rain. Finally, in February people were able to setnet
35 the ice and snow varies, 2 to 4ft thick in some areas.
36 In November we did not get eels again. I am thinking
37 with more erosion that's been going on in our region and
38 after new sandbars were formed, they are possibly
39 following a new channel in the river. There are more
40 sightings this year, again of ptarmigan and lynx. The
41 grouse numbers seem average. I have not seen any common
42 redpoll yet. Last year in our feeder we had over 30.
43 This year we're only seeing chickadees. I did not see -
44 - I did see redpoll in good numbers late summer. The
45 moose population seems to be good in our region. During
46 the early fall, we did have moose in our townsite. I
47 think the (indiscernible) mountain rock quarry displaced
48 birds and pushed them closer to our community. That
49 mountain did have bear activity before they started the
50 quarry. Also, in the fall we did have more sightings of

1 wolves, from the videos I seen, I think they were heading
2 toward chicken coop. The roosters are very loud, I can
3 hear them from outside my house in the mornings. Just a
4 few days ago, near our airport, about two miles away
5 from the end of our town, near our bridge, there was
6 about 15 to 20 moose taking sanctuary near our community.
7 Community members were talking about the rise in wolves.
8 Due to the rainy fall and dangerous river conditions,
9 trapping season was halted for some trappers. In the
10 past years, I have seen more men gathering antlers. We
11 do have a buyer come in and buy antlers. Ice fishing for
12 burbot has been picking up and the whitefish numbers and
13 the under the ice set net catches were average for this
14 time of the year. One lady just spoke about a burbot so
15 big it wasn't able to be pulled out of her auger hole.

16
17 We do have one community member that has
18 a net out, she was catching more. Whitefish, pike,
19 sheefish numbers were picking up. Our community members
20 were still worried about the number of salmon caught in
21 the ocean as bycatch. Per salmon caught in our river
22 systems for personal subsistence use, we did get a small
23 amount of chum salmon, but did not get any of the larger
24 fall chum. As we speak, no trawling started in the Bering
25 Sea Alaskan waters on the 20th of January, and the
26 bycatch has already started. Our salmon is being taken
27 away before we even start thinking of spring and summer
28 activities. I was craving salmon patties so much; I went
29 to the store and bought a can of red salmon to make some
30 salmon patties. In our community, we do have a food
31 bank, and I see products made of cod and pollock and
32 catfish. Posted online, the Alaska Food Bank is planning
33 to purchase \$50 million worth of Alaska pollock for 2025,
34 and that's my report for my region. Thank you.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Norma.
37 Always a good report. I'll go next. (In Native) quyana
38 (In Native) Jacqueline Cleveland (In Native). Hello and
39 thank you for being here. I introduced myself in Yup'ik
40 as Nalikutaar and Jacqueline, but you can call me Jackie.
41 I'm fortunate to call Quinhagak my home. Where I grew
42 up speaking Yup'ik and living the subsistence life with
43 my grandparents mostly. And I first left home in the
44 late 1900s and attended Mount Edgecumbe High School,
45 then Montana State University, where I earned my BA in
46 Media and Theater Arts and a minor in Native American
47 Studies. Now I still live in -- at home. I mean, I had
48 lived in Anchorage and here before since then. But I'm
49 back home where I live with my husband and two dogs. I
50 wear a few hats, but I don't feel like going through my

1 hats. I wanted to thank you all, though, for your votes
2 yesterday. It feels pretty undeserving to follow the
3 honorable Ray Oney, who's presence -- who's in-person
4 presence is greatly missed here. But I'm happy where he
5 has moved on to. And as Chair for the YKRAC, I will give
6 it my all to best represent our YK region and not just
7 my area. And I look forward to working with and learning
8 from you all in the year ahead.

9
10 So, for my report, I'm going to start
11 from where I left off in August when we last reported
12 and this, I thought I'd note is just about my area. We
13 had a slower silver season due to high water, but most
14 still met their needs. The same weather was had for our
15 moose hunt, but we greatly appreciated the extension
16 which allowed for more opportunity and more need was met
17 because of that extension. Unfortunately, I did not take
18 part in the fall moose or waterfowl hunt because I had
19 boat motor issues for my personal boat. But, you know,
20 luckily, we're a sharing culture, and my stepdad gave
21 us a bunch of moose meat and birds.

22
23 From reports, though, the waterfowl
24 season was reported to be not as great and maybe not
25 seen in the same areas where they usually have their
26 path. And I think it could be due to the -- just the
27 increase in storms and maybe their flight patterns
28 changed because of that. I did have success with
29 salmonberries, but not so much with blackberries, which
30 were far up in the hills this year, and for the first
31 time I went -- I got my blackberries from Anchorage or
32 around Anchorage this year, which was really weird to
33 bring home berries from the city. Mouse food hunting,
34 and I know you don't all agree, was also successful
35 until the flood happened and flooded out all their homes,
36 sadly and now we're hunting for ptarmigan and rabbit and
37 fishing for trout, but mostly catching pike more than
38 trout and char. So, it's a continuing issue of this --
39 the increase in pike and decrease in trout and char in
40 our river. About three weeks ago our (In Native) or
41 Kanektok River experienced an ice jam at the mouth of
42 the river and flooded the river basin. And since I'm one
43 of the few who live in -- on the river basin, my home
44 was an island with a few feet of water surrounding it.
45 For about three days we couldn't go anywhere until it
46 froze in place and then we had to deal with all the
47 damages and stuff. But for the community, you know, a
48 bunch of fish camps were ruined, and the biggest concern
49 was that our community water intake was completely
50 submerged, and we couldn't, you know, access it. So,

1 like many communities, Quinhagak continues to experience
2 coastal and river erosion, and permafrost melt at such
3 a fast rate. I don't know if that was five minutes, but
4 I'll keep it there. I want to say I enjoyed hearing
5 everyone else's reports and quyana. And, yeah, this
6 calls for a ten-minute break, I guess. Be back at 10:40,
7 please.

8

9

(Off record)

10

11

(On record)

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Good morning
again. It's 10:45, so we'll call the meeting back to
order. I think we have a quorum here. But first, Brooke
has some announcements.

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MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair. I
did just have some information for the Council. I wanted
to make you aware that we did receive a couple of written
comments. During the meeting, we received two comments
requesting that the Council send another letter to the
Board to forward on to the Secretaries of Interior or
to the Secretary of Interior about the need to retain
D1 land protections. And we can bring that up again
later, if that's something you guys want to act on during
the correspondence update and review. And then you
received -- Robin Masterman, who commented here
yesterday, also submitted her comments as written for
the meeting record. But we won't repeat them since she
already presented them. And then, TCC did submit their
written comments that they gave on the initial bycatch
alternative drafts -- Chum Salmon Bycatch Alternative
Draft. But those will be updated with the new
alternatives later this year. But we'll try to get you
a printed copy of that just for your information, and I
did email it out to those of you who have email. So that
was all I had. Madam Chair. Thanks.

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
Brooke. On the agenda, we're under number 12 action
items, and we did A yesterday. So now we're on B, call
for federal wildlife proposals presented by OSM Wildlife
and Anthropology. So, Pippa and Tom you have the floor.

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MR. PLANK: Thank you, Madam Chair,
members of the Council. For the record, my name is Tom
Plank. I'm a wildlife biologist with Office of
Subsistence Management. And I'm accompanied here by my
colleague Pippa Kenner, who is an anthropologist with

1 OSM. And as you just stated now is the call for wildlife
2 proposals and the Council's opportunity to submit
3 proposals to change federal subsistence wildlife harvest
4 regulations. And an informational flyer on how to submit
5 a proposal to change federal subsistence regulations can
6 be found in tab 3. And for the public, there are some
7 back there on the table. And as was mentioned during the
8 training yesterday, Councils must make a motion and vote
9 to submit a proposal. And also, the opportunity for
10 Councils to submit proposals is available during this
11 entire meeting. So, if a Council member thinks of a
12 proposal later on today or in response to another agenda
13 item, they are welcome to suggest submitting a proposal
14 at that point. And of course, anyone can submit a
15 proposal as an individual before the submission window
16 closes on April 4th. Thank you, Madam Chair. And me and
17 Pippa are here to answer any questions about proposals,
18 processes and we'll stand by while you all discuss
19 possible proposals to submit. Thank you.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: So, at this time
22 -- this Jackie Cleveland, I want to ask the Council here
23 if they -- if you wish to -- if you have any proposal
24 ideas to put forward today.

25
26 MS. MCDAVID: And this is Brooke and
27 those can be for hunting or trapping, anything related
28 to wildlife. And if you have questions or, you know, you
29 don't have a solid proposal idea yet, we can just throw
30 out any ideas and discuss them. And if it turns into a
31 proposal then we can help with that.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: And this is
34 Jackie again, if I -- oh, Francis.

35
36 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair, this is Francis
37 Prince, and I'd like to see if I could have a proposal
38 for the coyotes. Since our coyotes are starting to
39 increase on the Yukon, we're starting to see more and
40 more of the coyotes in the lower drainage areas toward
41 the coastlines of the villages where we never, ever did
42 see them, ever. And a lot of our hunters are experiencing
43 more of these catches each year. And that's kind of
44 concerning for the smaller games like the fox and the
45 hares and the ptarmigan as well.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
48 Francis. Brooke.

49
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1 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah. So, Francis, maybe
2 we could get a little more information. It looks like
3 for Unit 18, there's a two-coyote limit, and the season
4 is September 1st to April 30th. Are you suggesting that
5 the limit be increased, or what is your suggestion for
6 changing it? Thank you.

7
8 MR. PRINCE: I like to suggest an
9 increase at least by two.

10
11 MR. PLANK: Thank you. Through the Chair.
12 This.....

13
14 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Tom, first.
17 First, Tom spoke, and then we'll go to Alissa. Unless
18 you want to hear -- okay, so Alissa and then Tom.

19
20 MS. ROGERS: Thank you. Thank you, Madam
21 Chair. Alissa Rogers for the record. Through the Chair,
22 I just wanted to also make a recommendation that if we
23 have one of our wildlife biologists to also increase the
24 hunting time, can we increase -- well, of course, minus
25 the reproductive and the raising of the pups outside of
26 that, but how close can we get to increasing the hunting
27 time frame without causing biological concern on the
28 raising of the pups? Thank you.

29
30 MS. MCDAVID: Alissa. I'm sorry you were
31 cutting out a little bit. Were you talking about the
32 coyotes or another animal?

33
34 MS. ROGERS: I was talking about the
35 coyotes and the regulations. I'm sorry. Hold on. Is this
36 better? Can you hear me better? I went to a window.

37
38 MS. MCDAVID: Yes. That sounds a bit
39 better. Thank you.

40
41 MS. ROGERS: Okay. Sorry about that, I
42 apologize. Bad reception here at the trooper office. I
43 wanted to mention that if we could also increase the
44 hunting time around the rearing of the pups. Like the
45 max, the max time frame of when we can go harvesting for
46 coyotes and also increasing the bag limit like he
47 suggested. But my thought was to also increase the
48 hunting time. Thank you.

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50 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair.

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Tom.

MR. PLANK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Tom Plank, OSM. Alissa, I just want to clarify, because, you know, of course we'll do the analysis, you know, go through the analysis, figure out all the biological part on that. But is there a specific time frame that you're thinking, something that works for you or your region that you would like to see that time frame. Because currently it is September 1st through April 30th. So, I guess I just need a little more clarification on what you would like to see.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you. Through the Chair, Madame Chair. Thank you, Tom, I would like to see the increase -- when does the coyotes rear their pups? From what month to what month?

MS. EVAN: Usually, June and July.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, so can we work around June and July and increase it from August to May?

MR. PLANK: Som through the Chair. Tom Plank OSM. Member Alissa yes, so basically, what I have now is that the y'all are wanting to increase the coyote bag limit from 2 to 4, and that you're wanting to increase the season from September 1st through April 30th to August 1st through May 31st -- May 30th?

MS. ROGERS: Correct. Correct. Thank you.

MR. PLANK: Gotcha.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you, Tom and Alissa. Any more on the -- if there's not any more on the discussion of the coyote proposal. We're open for a motion to support.

MS. ROGERS: So, moved. Alissa Rogers.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Alissa moves to support the increase of coyote bag limit and times hunting. Is there a second?

MR. BEANS: You need a second? I second this. Frederick Beans.

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. Your second is noted. Is there any discussion at.

MR. ALEXIE: Question.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Question's been called by Wassily. Are we roll call voting here?

MS. MCDAVID: I didn't hear any opposition, so maybe we could do -- ask for unanimous consent. But let me restate the motion to make sure everybody's clear.

MR. ANDREW: Madam Chair, I think you need to restate the whole proposal and the number before we get into that. Thank you.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, John and I will do that. And I did want for our new Council members, just to remind you a little bit about the process. So, at this meeting, it's a chance to submit any proposals that you would like to see, any regulatory changes. And after that, our staff does a full analysis of the proposals. They bring in the biological information and the customary and traditional use information. And at our fall meetings -- at our fall meeting this year, you'll get presented the analysis of each of the proposals that will have some more information for you to think about, and then you'll get to vote to make your recommendation to the subsistence -- Federal Subsistence Board at your fall meeting, either to recommend support or opposition. You can also modify -- make a recommendation to modify the proposals at that time. If you find some new information through the analysis for things you might want to change. Like if you want to further adjust the season dates or something at your fall. But the motion on the floor right now is to submit a proposal to increase the bag limit for coyotes from 2 coyotes to 4 and to lengthen the season to be August 1st, May 31st. Any questions about the motion? Okay. You guys wanted -- are you okay with unanimous consent, or do you want to do roll call?

MR. ANDREW: Madam Chair. It's not okay with me if you go hunt them in or trap them in August. They're further ugly and skinny, and it's got to be in the starting around November when the time when the pelts are primed, not when they're scrawny and shedding.

1 MS. MCDAVID: So, do you want to vote on
2 the proposal as currently stated, or do you want to
3 suggest modifying those dates?
4

5 MR. ANDREW: My recommendation could be
6 to be in line with the state regs. I think you need to
7 bring it up to November 1st. Starting in November 1st,
8 ending in around March 31st. We don't hunt them in spring
9 and summer or fall. Thank you.
10

11 MS. ROGERS: Madame Chair.
12

13 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: So, Francis was
14 first, and then Alissa.
15

16 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair, this is Francis
17 with the coyotes, I think August 15th would be okay,
18 because these are coyotes. They're starting to fatten
19 up for the winter, and coats are practically changed by
20 the time summertime comes and when August comes around,
21 they start getting their new coats.
22

23 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
24 Francis. Alissa, did you have a comment?
25

26 MS. ROGERS: Hi. Thank you, Madam Chair.
27 Through the Chair. To comment to Joh. John, I wanted to
28 increase the time so we can have more opportunity for
29 folks to harvest coyotes. But it's a personal choice.
30 If you want to go in November through March, you can.
31 But to allow for more opportunity for other folks to go
32 out if they want to start earlier, they can. It just
33 gives more wiggle room for people to decide when they
34 want to go out harvesting coyotes. Thank you, Madam
35 Chair.
36

37 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
38 Alissa. Brooke, do you have something?
39

40 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah, I guess I would just
41 like clarification. If you want to amend that start date
42 for the proposal to be August 15th or August 1st. Keep
43 it at August 1st.
44

45 MR. PRINCE: Madam, this is Francis.
46 August 15th would be okay.
47

48 MS. MCDAVID: So, would you like to --
49 this is me helping you with the Robert's Rules. Would
50 you like to make a motion to amend the proposal that's

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1 on the floor to start August 15th.

2

3 MR. PRINCE: Correct.

4

5 MS. MCDAVID: Do we have a second?

6

7 MS. ROGERS: Second. Alissa Rogers.

8

9 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, so right now, the
10 proposal has been amended to be -- increase the bag
11 limit from 2 to 4 coyotes and lengthen the season to
12 start August 15th through May 31st for more opportunity.
13 And I think we'll do a roll call vote on that amended
14 proposal. And Madam Secretary, I'm happy to help with
15 that, if that's okay with you.

16

17 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Brooke.

18

19 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, so for the amended
20 proposal, we'll start online with Alissa Nadine Rogers.

21

22 MS. ROGERS: Support as modified.

23

24 MS. MCDAVID: Francise Prince.

25

26 MR. PRINCE: Support.

27

28 MS. MCDAVID: Online, Frederick Beans.

29

30 MR. BEANS: Yes, ma'am.

31

32 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Fred. Tiffany
33 Agayar.

34

35 MS. AGAYAR: If the dates do not get
36 modified, I could support it with the increase of coyotes
37 but if then the dates are getting modified, no.

38

39 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. The current proposal
40 is for August 15th to May 31st. So, the dates are being
41 changed. So, you're in opposition? Okay. Wassily Alexie.

42

43 MR. ALEXEI: I'll say yes.

44

45 MS. MCDAVID: John Andrew.

46

47 MR. ANDREW: No.

48

49 MS. MCDAVID: Norma Evan.

50

00032

1 MS. EVAN: Yes.

2

3 MS. MCDAVID: Henry Parks.

4

5 MR. PARKS: Yes.

6

7 MS. MCDAVID: Phillip Peter.

8

9 MR. PETER: Yes.

10

11 MS. MCDAVID: And Jacqueline Cleveland.

12

13 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

14

15 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. Motion passes 8 to
16 2. So now that you've amended the proposal, we'll vote
17 -- do a final vote to submit the proposal to the Federal
18 Subsistence Board. And again, you'll get to see this at
19 your fall meeting, and you can make your final
20 recommendation to the Board at that time. Okay. So, we'll
21 do another roll call vote, one second. Got not enough
22 space and too many papers. Okay. So, this vote again is
23 to submit the proposal and that is to increase the bag
24 limit for 2 -- from 2 to 4 coyotes and lengthen the
25 season to August 15th through May 31st. All right. We'll
26 go online again. Alissa.

27

28 MS. ROGERS: Support as amended with the
29 supported amendments. Did I say that right? Yeah, I did.

30

31

32 MS. MCDAVID: Fred Beans.

33

34 MR. BEANS: Yes.

35

36 MS. MCDAVID: Frances Prince.

37

38 MR. PRINCE: Support with that amendment.

39

40 MS. MCDAVID: Phillip Peter.

41

42 MR. PETER: Yes.

43

44 MS. MCDAVID: Phillip said yes. Henry
45 Parks.

46

47 MR. PARKS: Yes.

48

49 MS. MCDAVID: Norma Evan.

50

00033

1 MS. EVAN: Yes.

2

3 MS. MCDAVID: John Andrew.

4

5 MR. ANDREW: Yes.

6

7 MS. MCDAVID: Wassily Alexie.

8

9 MR. ALEXIE: Yes.

10

11 MS. MCDAVID: Tiffany Agayar.

12

13 MS. AGAYAR: Yes.

14

15 MS. MCDAVID: Jacqueline Cleveland.

16

17 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

18

19 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. The motion passes,
20 one, two -- 9 to 0. So, you will submit this proposal
21 to the Board and you'll hear the analysis at your fall
22 meeting. Thank you. Turn it back over to the Chair for
23 any more proposal idea discussion.

24

25 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
26 Brooke. So, we're still under action items, under B call
27 for federal wildlife proposals. Is there anyone else who
28 would -- who has an idea for a proposal they would like
29 to submit from our RAC?

30

31 MR. PARKS: Madam Chair.

32

33 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair this is
34 Frederick.

35

36 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. Henry.
37 Henry is first, sorry and then Fred. You'll go after,
38 quyana.

39

40 MR. BEANS: Okay.

41

42 MR. PARKS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

43

44 MR. BEANS: Okay.

45

46 MR. PARKS: I'm looking at the black bear
47 and the harvest limits are three. And then the open
48 seasons is from July 1 to July 30. So, in this case, in
49 my area, in our Tundra villages area, we go up hunting
50 to Johnson River and during those times when we do have

1 an opening in late July, we -- that is the best time we
2 harvest black bears because in, you know, in month of
3 July they're really skinny and during fall time they get
4 -- they fatten up and it's the best time to harvest
5 black bears during that time period. So, I would -- I
6 don't agree with this. I don't like this July 1st to
7 July 30th open season. I'd rather have it September from
8 September 10th through May 15th because like I said,
9 they fatten up during fall time and then after
10 hibernation when they come out, they're really fat and
11 they're -- it's the best time to harvest them. Does that
12 make sense? Thank you.

13

14 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair.

15

16 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Tom and yes,
17 Henry. That made sense.

18

19 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Tom
20 Plank, OSM. So, I just want to clarify. So, what you're
21 asking is to reduce the hunting season from July 1st
22 through June 30th, to be September 10th to May 15th.
23 Thank you.

24

25 MR. PARKS: I have a question.

26

27 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah. Henry.

28

29 MR. PARKS: She stated it's open all year
30 long. Is it true? Oh, okay. Okay.

31

32 MR. PLANK: No. Oh, yeah.

33

34 MR. ANDREW: So, this open season needs
35 to be fixed then, right? Because it states here on the
36 federal regulations July 1st through July 30th or...?

37

38 June 30th. Okay.

39

40 MS. MCDAVID: It would probably be
41 helpful if it said year-round instead of just the date
42 -- maybe in parentheses we could get that added for the
43 next version.

44

45 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair then.

46

47 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Tom. And
48 then we still have Fred online.

49

50

1 MR. PLANK: I just want to -- so
2 basically right now the way it works is the season ends
3 on June 30th and then on July 1st it starts again. So
4 that's the way it -- that's the way it's kind of written.
5 So, do you want to still reduce it or do you just want
6 us to clarify that it's year-round instead of with those
7 numbers?

8
9 MS. MCDAVID: We're having a -- fixing
10 some mics in the room for folks online wondering what
11 the silence is. And it did -- Henry, are you good? Okay.
12 Henry's saying that he got the clarification he needed.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: So. Henry (In
15 Native). Okay. So, we'll go on to Fred, who's waiting
16 online. Fred.

17
18 MR. BEANS: Fred Beans here, I would want
19 to know -- I don't have the moose proposal -- moose
20 regulations in front of me. What is the regulations state
21 in my area of the woods here in Mountain Village and
22 Lower Yukon. Do you have it? And what do you have it
23 there? I think it's August 1st all the way to maybe end
24 of March, I believe.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: They're looking
27 it up. (In Native).

28
29 MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair, this Wassily,
30 it states from August 1st to April 30th on remainder of
31 Unit 18.

32
33 MR. BEANS: Okay. I would like to see a
34 extension by two weeks, which is basically from July 16
35 to 31st on an open call season without calves along with
36 what they did there. You get (indiscernible) there is
37 abundance of moose. Yeah.

38
39 MS. MCDAVID: You cut out a little bit.
40 Fred, could you restate those dates for us and what you
41 were asking to extend?

42
43 MR. BEANS: Yes, yes. In conjunction with
44 the primary, with the regulations as it is now, I would
45 like to see a cow season without calves, you know, cows
46 not calves from July 16th to July 31st. You understand?
47 I think there's an abundance of moose out here. There's
48 just way too much moose out here. You copy?

00036

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Fred. We're
2 all writing.

3
4 MR. BEANS: Okay, okay. Okay. Okay.
5 Sorry.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (In native),
8 Brooke.

9
10 MR. BEANS: Okay.

11
12 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, so you would like to
13 see cow season July 15th through July 31st on the Lower
14 Yukon.

15
16 MR. BEANS: Yes.

17
18 MS. MCDAVID: Cows with no calves.

19
20 MR. BEANS: Yes. Yes, exactly.

21
22 MS. MCDAVID: Did we need to clarify the
23 regs or anything? Okay so, Fred, are you making a motion
24 to submit this proposal?

25
26 MR. BEANS: Yes, ma'am, I am. I'm making
27 a motion to submit it.

28
29 MS. ROGERS: Second, Alissa Rogers.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: There's been a
32 motion and a second. Are they noted? Okay. And we're on
33 discussion now. Tiffany.

34
35 MS. AGAYAR: Thank you. I'm -- would your
36 proposal be for all of Unit 18 or just for the Yukon
37 River or just a Kuskokwim River or I think you need to
38 clarify a little bit more.

39
40 MR. BEANS: I think it's primarily for
41 our region here, since there's quite a bit, and I have
42 no idea how the Kuskokwim areas have under the moose
43 population. So, you know, I'm just doing this for the
44 people here. You know, there's a lot of moose, too much.

45
46 MR. ALEXIE: Well, Madam Chair, this is
47 Wassily. I think he's preferring to remainder of Unit
48 18 because that's from August 1st to April 30th. So, it
49 sounds like he's preferring to remainder of Unit 18.

50

00037

1 MR. BEANS: Yes. That's what I'm
2 referring to. Thank you, Wassily.

3
4 MS. MCDAVID: Do we have a little more
5 Council discussion? Does anyone have any thoughts about
6 this proposal?

7
8 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: I would like to
9 know what the current reg is, if that's okay. This is
10 Jackie.

11
12 MR. PLANK: Madam Chair, through the
13 Chair. For moose in Unit 18 remainder, it is three moose,
14 only one of which may be antlered, and then antlered
15 bulls may be harvested from October 1st through November
16 30th. And in the open season for the three moose, which
17 one may be antlered is August 1st through April 30th.

18
19 MS. KENNER: You said maybe.

20
21 MR. PLANK: I said May not.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you, Tom.

24
25 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Alissa.

28
29 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Madam Chair.
30 Through the Chair. I have a question for Tom. Would
31 there be any biological concerns? Well, I'm only saying
32 this because I want to know if we -- for Unit 18
33 remainder, we increased that to five moose and remove
34 all the rest of the language. So, it would be in Unit
35 18 remainder five moose of any kind of moose?

36
37 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, this is Fred.

38
39 MS. ROGERS: Go ahead, Fred. I'm sorry.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Go ahead, Fred if
42 Alissa is done.

43
44 MR. BEANS: No, no, it is not. Yeah. Can
45 I say something?

46
47 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah. Fred, you
48 have the floor.

49
50

1 MR. BEANS: Okay. It is not to increase.
2 It is not to increase. It just need to -- just for
3 extending the hunting time from August -- July 16th to
4 all the way to I think March 1st, I believe, or 31st, I
5 believe that's just increase the time, not the harvest
6 limit. Okay.

7
8 MR. NICK: Madam Chair.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Alex.

11
12 MR. NICK: This is Alex. Yes. With
13 permission from the RAC member Wassily, I would like to
14 make a comment please on the harvester moose before the
15 proposal is submitted.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah, (In
18 Native) you can.

19
20 MR. ALEXIE: Go ahead Alex.

21
22 MR. NICK: Okay. Well, thank you. What I
23 would like to say is the -- I'm 81-year-old right now,
24 and the elders in the past, they used to advise us about
25 making decisions for future uses of our resources. And
26 one of the elder's advices was to be very careful not
27 to over harvest resources, even though they look like
28 they are abundant. One of the reasons they use is that
29 they say, you know, I'm just going to use moose for an
30 example. There used to be a lot of moose up in Paimiut
31 Slough in 1970s-80s and they moved down to Yukon. But
32 elders tells us is that they moved toward the sea to
33 transform into another species of animals when the
34 species are going to be declining. What I am thinking
35 about right now is that moose are going to be declining
36 in a few years from now, and then there will be more and
37 more restricted, rather restrictions up and down, like,
38 for example, in Unit 18 remainder and moose will increase
39 in some other areas of the units or subunits of the Unit
40 18 but elders are right I think because they say when
41 any species of like fur animals are going to be declining
42 in population numbers, they move toward the sea and some
43 of them would be seen swimming toward the sea. So that's
44 one of the things that I want to make a comment about
45 for Council members to use as a decision-making tool.
46 Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you, Council members.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you, Alex,
49 for your wisdom, as always.

50

1 MR. NICK: Thank you.

2

3 MR. BEANS: Thank you, Alex. Thank you,
4 Alex and this is Frederick again. Can I -- I'd like to
5 add on, you know, from the July 16th to July 31st, the
6 extension. But this is only for -- I'd like to add on
7 for 4 or 5 years only to add, you know, for 5 years to
8 do that.

9

10 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. It sounds like
11 there's a motion from Fred to put a time frame limit on
12 this for five years, where it could be revisited after
13 that. Is there a second for that amendment?

14

15 (No response)

16

17 Because you guys could also, if you
18 wanted to change it back, you know, submit a proposal
19 at any time to do that to if you didn't want to put the
20 time limit on it. Now you could see how the moose
21 population is doing and submit another proposal in the
22 future.

23

24 MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair, if I may. Fred,
25 would this include the whole state or just residents?

26

27 MR. BEANS: Residents of Unit 18 where
28 we're residing -- the remainder, I should say the
29 remainder of Unit 18.

30

31 MR. ALEXIE: Okay. I was just thinking
32 that because I had a thought in my mind, maybe we should
33 throw in something like subsistence qualified users only
34 maybe allowed to get calls from July 1st to July 30th.

35

36 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
37 Wassily. Good point. And thank you, Fred for catching
38 that.

39

40 MS. MCDAVID: Did maybe we want to verify
41 who has C&T for 18 remainder. Pippa.

42

43 MS. KENNER: I'm sorry, could you ask the
44 question again? This is Pippa Kenner with OSM.

45

46 MS. MCDAVID: Just to help the
47 discussion, could you clarify who has C&T for the
48 remainder of Unit 18 for the Council? If they only wanted
49 this to apply to that?

50

1 MS. KENNER: Yeah. The majority of the
2 lower Yukon River, what you call the remainder area for
3 the hunt area. The C&T includes residents of Unit 18 --
4 is residents of Unit 18, St. Michael, Stebbins, Upper
5 Kalskag and Lower Kalskag. They are included in the
6 customary and traditional use determination and are
7 eligible to hunt moose in the Lower Yukon under these
8 regulations.

9
10 MR. VICKERS: This is Brent Vickers OSM.
11 Just for a little bit more expanding on that. I want to
12 just clarify and remind everyone that these processes
13 are very confusing and what we're doing here, as the
14 Regional Advisory Council is we're only talking about
15 federal regulations that apply on federal lands. None
16 of the regulations we're talking about, or you are
17 talking about here, will apply to state lands. The
18 regulations, who were essentially, the seasons, the bag
19 limits. Everything we're talking about only applies to
20 federally qualified subsistence users. And when Pippa
21 is talking about who has customary and traditional use,
22 those are the specific ones with federal -- who are
23 federally qualified subsistence users for that
24 particular resource. So, all the regulations we talk
25 about as far as methods and means over the rest of the
26 day, only apply to the federally qualified subsistence
27 users, which that group can change depending on the
28 resource. In this case, like Pippa said, it was only
29 those specific communities that she read or the within
30 that bound. So not everyone throughout the Yukon
31 Kuskokwim. But regardless, none of these regulations
32 would ever apply to someone like myself, who lives in
33 Anchorage where -- as an Anchorage person who lives in
34 non-rural areas where -- we're not federally qualified
35 subsistence users, we have the we're treated much the
36 same as a non-resident. So, I just want to specify all
37 of these refer to federally qualified subsistence users.
38 And I -- only on federally managed lands which basically
39 is the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge in this here
40 in Unit 18. So, does that help? Yes, maybe not.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, it does.

43
44 MR. VICKERS: Okay.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
47 Brent.

48
49 MR. NICK: Madam Chair, this is Alex.

50

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Hi, Alex. Go
2 ahead.

3
4 MR. NICK: Yeah. I would like to ask a
5 question to OSM staff. Now that it was mentioned that
6 the regulations that RAC and the Federal Board are
7 working on or regulatory changes that the RAC are working
8 on only applies to federally qualified harvest groups,
9 which are Natives from within our region and anyone who
10 is federally qualified. My question is, is I want -- I
11 was wondering if that's one of the reasons why -- because
12 the federal regulations and the state regulations are
13 not aligned. I wonder if that's one of the reasons why
14 there are, as I commented earlier, land trespasses on
15 corporations and tribal lands because the State probably
16 gives them a permit to hunt in the area, not really
17 explaining where the private lands are. I was wondering
18 about that.

19
20 MS. MCDAVID: Alex, I think we can help
21 you out here in the room and we do have folks here from
22 the Refuge. Hunters are required under state regs to
23 know what lands they're hunting on. If they're private
24 lands, they do need to seek permission from landowners.
25 You know, if there's trespass issues, obviously that's
26 not -- may not be happening. But the private landowners
27 themselves could potentially implement, you know, some
28 sort of permitting system if it was corporation lands
29 or something. But the federal folks don't, to my
30 understanding, oversee those private lands.

31
32 MR. NICK: Through the Chair. I do know
33 that a lot of trespasses occur because the federal folks
34 are probably not explaining to those people and with a
35 little knowledge about -- some hunters with little
36 knowledge about obtaining a permission from the
37 landowner. There's been so much trespass up and down the
38 Yukon and that's one of the reasons why I included
39 earlier that in -- you know, I would like to submit a
40 proposal that addresses those trespassers because mainly
41 because in the regulatory booklet of the State of Alaska,
42 it states that first, a hunter needs to obtain a
43 permission from the landowner before the access to land.
44 But that's not happening in the Yukon River. I don't
45 know if it's happening down around Marshall, Pilot
46 Station, Saint Mary's. But I know definitely it's not
47 happening in my village. I think Wassily could agree
48 with me on that too.

49
50 (Simultaneous speech)

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MR. BEANS: Madam Chair. This is Fred.

MS. MCDAVID: Hey Alex.....

MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, this is Fred.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Fred, then
Brooke.

MR. BEANS: I'd like a point of order,
we are on a call for federal wildlife proposal.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Fred, I was just
going to say that to Alex. Alex your -- we can come back
to your issue later if we have chance for more public
comments. The Federal Subsistence Board does not have
jurisdiction over privately owned lands, so the RAC
can't make a recommendation to them about what happens
on private lands. I will let you know that another RAC
in the Yukon region has asked that the private lands be
included on the maps as separate from the state lands.
In the federal reg book. So, we're not sure if that's
going to happen yet, but that would help increase some
awareness of where those private lands are. Something
that the -- you could maybe ask the RAC to do would be
to send a letter to you know, Calista or other local
village corporations to implement some sort of
permitting system. But it wouldn't fall under the
jurisdiction of the Federal Subsistence Board. And so,
a proposal would not help to address the trespassing
issue that you're bringing up. But we do have to get
back to the proposal that is on the floor currently and
that was to extend the cow moose season in the Lower
Yukon area, Unit 18 remainder, and I just wanted to
double check the dates. July 15th through July 31st.
Fred, was that right?

MR. BEANS: July 16th, one six to July
31st.

MS. MCDAVID: Okay. One six, 16.

MR. BEANS: Yes.

MS. MCDAVID: Okay. Do we have any more
Council discussion about this proposal? And again, this
will go for a full analysis. And you'll get to hear that
at your fall meeting and make your recommendation to the
Board at that time.

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: John.

MR. ANDREW: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: John.

MR. ANDREW: The Yukon side already has a very generous moose season and the limit of three. Well, I don't really think you need a year-round open season because we're concentrating on salmon all summer. And when you see cows, moose or calves, sometimes they're separated. That's a drawback right there. If they ever come to a place, a proposal like that. And to our older hunters, it's unethical to hunt the females or the cows with young calves. It's better to leave them from spring to fall. Give them a chance to grow. That's all I got for now. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana. (In Native). Do you have more?

MR. ANDREW: (In Native). Quyana.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, John. And.....

MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair, I just got a comment on, I think this proposal what Fred requested, it would pertain to like we're not allowed to fish in the Yukon, and this would give us an opportunity for some people to get something to feed their families because we're not allowed to fish during the summer season. That's just my comment.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Wassily. Yes, Tiffany.

MS. AGAYAR: Mada Chair, thank you. I usually work on the stuff that my family brings home, and that's any kind of animals. And in the past few years, with all the fishing shutdowns, we have a lot more time on our hands to be able to work on, if the men decided to go out and hunt cows without any calves to bring home for us to work on, and there are different types of ways to be using them. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Sorry, Alissa. I just remembered you said something.

1 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Madam Chair.
2 Through the Chair. Just a quick question. It's in regards
3 to alignment with the State in regards to the tag. If
4 we do extend the season, are we going to need a federal
5 permit instead of a state green tag? Since the seasons
6 won't match the state season? Thank you.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks, Alissa.
9 Tom is going to answer you.

10
11 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair. Tom Plank,
12 OSM, and to be honest with you, member Alissa, that
13 would have to be something that would be dug into during
14 the analysis. And once we were able to dig into that and
15 get all the information, we can bring that back to the
16 fall for when y'all make your decision on it. But as
17 we're sitting now taking the proposal, I honestly can't
18 give you a yes or a no on that because I haven't had a
19 chance to sit and look at it and dig into it. Sorry.

20
21 MS. ROGERS: Thank you.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. If
24 there are no -- if there's no further discussion. Does
25 anyone want to call question?

26
27 MR. BEANS: This is Fred. Can I call a
28 question?

29
30 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes. Freds
31 called the question.

32
33 MR. BEANS: Question.

34
35
36 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Fred. I'll
37 restate the motion for the record. The motion is to
38 submit a proposal to the Federal Subsistence Board to
39 extend the cow-moose season. And that's cows with no
40 calves in the Lower Yukon area, Unit 18 remainder from
41 July 16th through July 31st. We'll do a roll call vote.
42 We'll start online. Alissa.

43
44 MS. ROGERS: Support.

45
46 MS. MCDAVID: And Fred Beans.

47
48 MR. BEANS: Yes.

49
50 MS. MCDAVID: Francis Prince.

1
2 MR. PRINCE: No.
3
4 MS. MCDAVID: Phillip Peter.
5
6 MR. PETER: No.
7
8 MS. MCDAVID: Henry Parks.
9
10 MR. PARKS: Yes.
11
12 MS. MCDAVID: Norma Evan.
13
14 MS. EVAN: Yes.
15
16 MS. MCDAVID: John Andrew.
17
18 MR. ANDREW: No.
19
20 MS. MCDAVID: Wassily Alexie.
21
22 MR. ALEXIE: Yes.
23
24 MS. MCDAVID: Tiffany Agayar.
25
26 MS. AGAYAR: Yes.
27
28 MS. MCDAVID: Jacqueline Cleveland.
29
30 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.
31
32 MS. MCDAVID: One moment while I tally.
33 The motion to submit the proposal passes 7 to 3. So,
34 you'll hear the analysis in the fall. Thank you.
35
36 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair.
37
38 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you.
39
40 MR. BEANS: This is Fred.
41
42 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Fred.
43
44 MR. BEANS: Does this include the five
45 year of it's happening. You know what I mean?
46
47 MS. MCDAVID: Fred, we didn't get a
48 second on that motion to amend it, so currently it's
49 just -- it'll -- it would just propose to change the
50 regulations without an end date. But you could submit a

1 proposal in the future or possibly modify that at your
2 fall meeting.

3
4 MR. BEANS: Okay. So, we can't do it now,
5 again?

6
7 MS. MCDAVID: Well, when you made the
8 motion no one seconded it. So, the motion to do the
9 five-year failed or died on the floor.

10
11 MR. BEANS: Okay. Thank you.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. Still
14 on the action items B, call for federal wildlife
15 proposals. And are there any more proposals or ideas on
16 the floor?

17
18 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Alissa.

21
22 MS. ROGERS: Thank you. On page 91 of
23 your wildlife regulation book, in regards to the wolf
24 population, I would like to see the number of wolves for
25 harvest limit be increased to 15 wolves. I'll put a
26 motion on the floor if anyone wants to take it up and
27 I'll explain my justification.

28
29 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. We have a motion by
30 Alissa to increase the bag limit for wolves to 15. Do
31 we have a second?

32
33 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Tiffany,
34 seconded.

35
36 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, we got a second from
37 Tiffany.

38
39 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Madam Chair.
40 Through the Chair. Thank you, Tiffany. The reason why I
41 wanted to increase the wolves is because we're still on
42 the Mulchatna Caribou predator control. This will help
43 increase the reduction of wolves and help the Mulchatna
44 Caribou population increase. It will also reduce the
45 wolves' population in the area. I've been getting word
46 up and down the Yukon and the Kuskokwim River that wolves
47 are attacking dogs that are chained up next to homes,
48 and they're eating the dogs right there next to the
49 homes. So, if we can increase the wolf intake not only
50 for personal protection, family protection, our pets

1 protection, but also protection for Mulchatna Caribou
2 Herd. Thank you, Madam Chair.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Any more
5 discussion. Pippa, were you about to say something?

6

7 MS. KENNER: Pippa. Yeah, hi. This is
8 Pippa Kenner with OSM. Proposals that are submitted
9 solely for the purpose of predator control are generally
10 not taken up by the Board. It's considered to be Fish
11 and Wildlife Service, their area of regulation. However,
12 Alissa, the proponent of this proposal, has also talked
13 about family protection. Because of the large number of
14 wolves in the area predated on family pets. So, we want
15 to make sure that we include that in any justification
16 for this proposal. Thank you.

17

18 MS. ROGERS: So, madam -- Madam Chair.

19

20 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Alissa.

21

22 MS. ROGERS: The main purpose of it is
23 to increase the opportunity for wolf hunting. For the
24 residents of those Units on the regulation book, page
25 91.

26

27 (Pause)

28

29 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: If there's no
30 further discussion. Is there a question to be called?

31

32 MS. KENNER: Madam Chair, this is Pippa
33 Kenner.

34

35 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Pippa Kenner.

36

37 MS. KENNER: Yeah, hi. So did I hear from
38 the proponent of that proposal that they would like to
39 remove the justification of increasing the wolf harvest
40 limit in order for predator control, that the proponent
41 no longer is suggesting that as a justification. So, it
42 will be removed from the justification. Is that true?

43

44 MS. ROGERS: Yes, and we can just put in
45 the line item of increase in opportunity for harvesting
46 more wolves. Thank you.

47

48 MS. KENNER: Thank you for clarifying
49 that, this is Pippa Kenner. Thanks.

50

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Francis.

2

3 MR. PRINCE: Question here. Madam, this
4 is Francis. For the wolf intakes, w here I come from in
5 the Lower Yukon and Kotlik, we barely deal with our
6 wolves. And would there be a proposal to edit it just
7 like how the moose is with Unit 18 plus the remainder,
8 like, for the upper rivers from like Mountain Village
9 on up, they deal with more of that than Russian Mission
10 and Marshall. They deal with more wolves than the lower
11 Yukon area does.

12

13 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Tom.

14

15 MR. PLANK: So current regulation -- I'm
16 sorry. Tom Plank, OSM. So current regulations for wolves
17 is for the entirety of Unit 18. So are you wanting to
18 specify a different area for this new for this regulation
19 or -- sorry, I just need a little more clarification.

20

21 MR. PRINCE: Yeah, this is Francis, and
22 I just want to be more clear that below the Nulato Hills
23 down toward Kotlik on the lower areas, I think ten wolves
24 would be okay. But for the remainder of, like, Unit 18
25 from Mountain Village on up it would be okay to increase
26 to 15.

27

28 MS. MCDAVID: So, Francis, are you
29 suggesting a modification to exclude that portion of the
30 Lower Yukon around your area below Mountain Village from
31 this proposal?

32

33 MR. PRINCE: Correct.

34

35 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Tiffany.

36

37 MS. AGAYAR: I would like our area to be
38 included into that increase because there has been
39 sightings within -- there has been increased sightings
40 of wolves in my area, Alakanuk and Emmonak, which is a
41 lot more than I've been seeing lately due to the increase
42 in other types of populations. Thank you.

43

44 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, this is Fred.

45

46 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Go ahead, Fred.

47

48 MR. BEANS: Yeah, I concur with that
49 Tiffany, about the increase in it. Increasing the take,
50 even if we increase it, you know, eventually the wolves

1 will migrate down to Kotlik area. I think we need to
2 keep that you know, the whole remainder of 18, but
3 increase it to 15.

4
5 MS. MCDAVID: So, as is, it does include
6 -- the proposal to increase the bag limit would include
7 all of Unit 18. And you could hear the analysis at the
8 fall meeting and then vote to modify it at that time if
9 you wanted to.

10
11 (Pause)

12
13 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Is there any more
14 discussion here? And if not, is there a question?

15
16 MR. BEANS: Question, this is Fred.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Hi, Fred. Fred's
19 called question.

20
21 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. Thank you. I'll
22 restate the motion. The motion is to increase the bag
23 limit for wolves to 15 in Unit 18. And again, this is
24 to submit the proposal. We'll start online with Alissa
25 Rogers.

26
27 MS. ROGERS: Support.

28
29 MS. MCDAVID: Frederick Beans.

30
31 MR. BEANS: Yes.

32
33 MS. MCDAVID: Francis Prince.

34
35 MR. PRINCE: Yes.

36
37 MS. MCDAVID: Phillip Peter.

38
39 MR. PETER: Yes.

40
41 MS. MCDAVID: Henry Parks.

42
43 MR. PARKS: Yes.

44
45 MS. MCDAVID: Norma Evan.

46
47 MS. EVAN: Yes.

48
49 MS. MCDAVID: John Andrew.

1 MR. ANDREW: Yes.

2
3 MS. MCDAVID: Wassily Alexie.

4
5 MR. ALEXIE: Yes.

6
7 MS. MCDAVID: Tiffany Agayar.

8
9 MS. AGAYAR: Yes.

10
11 MS. MCDAVID: Jacqueline Cleveland.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

14
15 MS. MCDAVID: Motion passes 10 to 0 to
16 submit the proposal.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: So, I'll ask
19 again. Are there any more proposal ideas from the RAC
20 today? (In Native) proposal (In Native). Tiffany.

21
22 MS. AGAYAR: We've heard -- thank you.
23 This is Tiffany. We've heard multiple testimonies about
24 beaver and their habitat. And I know that there's no
25 limit on how much beavers we can catch. But then what
26 about -- what are the regulations for the beavers in
27 their habitats, like their dams and their woodpile,
28 lodges? Thank you.

29
30 MS. KENNER: Yeah. My colleague Tom is
31 looking up the specific regulations, but definitely in
32 Unit 18 abandoned beaver lodges may be removed with hand
33 tools.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Does that
36 include dams? When you said lodges.

37
38 MS. KENNER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes,
39 it does. This is Pippa Kenner with OSM.

40
41 MS. MCDAVID: Could I maybe ask a
42 question to help? Maybe at what Tiffany might be getting
43 at. If the Council wanted to explore other ways of
44 removing besides with hand tools, is that something they
45 would submit a proposal on? And you said unoccupied. So
46 that could potentially be something if you wanted to
47 remove a beaver dam or lodge that had occupied beavers
48 in inside of it, that might require a proposal.

49
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1 MS. KENNER: This is Pippa Kenner with
2 OSM. I believe these regulations about the removal of
3 beaver dams are in both state and federal regulations.
4 In the past, when we've received these questions, we had
5 a hot number in Fairbanks to the Alaska Department of
6 Fish and Game with people to consult with and get the
7 permits to remove problematic dams, and I'm going to
8 leave it there. Of course, the Council can submit a
9 proposal allowing the removal of dams that are occupied
10 by beaver, and then we'll do the (indiscernible), will
11 do the analysis and come back to you so that you could
12 consider it in the fall.

13
14 MS. GREDIAGIN: Madam Chair.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes. Can you
17 please state who you are?

18
19 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah. This is Lisa
20 Grediagin, the Wildlife Division Supervisor with OSM,
21 and I just wanted to clarify that currently in federal
22 subsistence trapping regulations read, when taking
23 wildlife for subsistence purposes, trapping -- trappers
24 may not disturb or destroy any beaver house. So that's
25 currently under a trapping license. There's not that
26 similar restriction under a hunting license, but I think
27 the general intention is, you know, with these
28 regulations is that people are not destroying beaver
29 lodges.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you for the
32 clarification. Pippa.

33
34 MS. KENNER: Oh, I'm sorry, Madam Chair.
35 This is Pippa with OSM. Lisa Grediagin, who just spoke
36 is correct. I was going to add that in the past when
37 we've investigated this question, it has applied to
38 beaver lodges, dams, houses in general and that's why I
39 interpreted it that way. Thank you.

40
41 MR. NICK: Madam Chair, this is Alex.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Alex.

44
45 MR. NICK: Yes. In the past comments and
46 questions that were brought up to the Fish and Game
47 biologists. If I remember correctly, Pippa, maybe you
48 could go ahead and remind me if it's incorrect. The
49 answer was that if a beaver lodge or a dam needs to be
50 removed for a good reason, a permit is needed from Fish

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1 and Game. And I believe that question was brought up by
2 Mr. Bob (Indiscernible), which is back then.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana for that
5 information, Alex.

6

7 MR. ALEXIE: Well, Madam Chair, this is
8 Wassily.

9

10 UNIDENTIFIED: (Indiscernible).

11

12 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Wassily was
13 first.

14

15 MR. ALEXIE: And I think Tiffany brought
16 up a good point about the beaver dams. You know where
17 we had some reports that there's been a lot of pikes
18 moving down to the ocean side. Maybe that's one reason
19 why they're moving out of the sloughs. Their dam, their
20 spawning grounds are getting blocked with beaver dams.
21 And I'm from the Interior, from Russian Mission and every
22 fall we go out boating. There's a lot of new beaver dams
23 that's being built and those are blocking off our
24 whitefish spawning grounds and pike. So, maybe if we can
25 come up with a proposal to remove some beaver dams that
26 blocking the spawning grounds for fish.

27

28 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah, I did just want to
29 clarify. Even if you submit a proposal to remove that
30 restriction, to not to allow you to disturb beaver dams,
31 you would still need to harvest the beaver that are
32 inside because it's for the taking of subsistence
33 resources. If that makes sense. Is that clear to you
34 guys? Okay. We could -- you guys could consider a motion
35 to submit a proposal.

36

37 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair. How -- this is
38 Frederick. How should we word it to submit a proposal
39 of that sort?

40

41 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: We're thinking.
42 Pippa.

43

44 MS. KENNER: Thank you, Madam Chair. This
45 is Pippa Kenner with OSM. I think under federal
46 regulations you must salvage the meat. Under State of
47 Alaska trapping regulations, you need to salvage the
48 hide or the meat. So again, this is complicated. And we
49 would -- if you put in a proposal, we'll come back to
50 you with clarifying information. So, thank you.

1

2 MS. MCDAVID: And just to be clear, the
3 justification for removing dams, it couldn't be just for
4 helping protect or restore salmon habitat that would be
5 outside of the Board's jurisdiction. The regulations
6 that the Board oversees have to do with the taking of
7 wildlife for subsistence. So, I'm not sure if there would
8 be some sort of permit for habitat work, like through
9 the Refuge or if that's anything that they could maybe
10 comment on. But you could submit a proposal to remove
11 the restriction in the trapping -- federal trapping regs
12 about disturbing the beaver houses. That could be a first
13 step.

14

15 (Simultaneous speech)

16

17 MR. SHEPPARD: Madam Chair.

18

19 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Stanislaus

20 Sheppard has his -- Stanislaus.

21

22 MR. SHEPPARD: Thank you, Madam Chair.
23 This is Stanislaus speaking on my behalf. In the other
24 organizations in salmon restoration they're looking at
25 culverts in the streams, on roadways, clearing them up.
26 It never dawned on me that down here in the lower river
27 it would be the same as culverts, the beaver dams. That's
28 cutting off the fish from going up, like Board member
29 from Russian Mission said that they're cutting off the
30 pike from going into their natural spawning areas in the
31 place where they hang around, make them congregate more
32 on the Yukon River and that increases the predator for
33 the salmon. May be the fry or minnows. He stated that
34 when salmon spawns out and becomes minnows and they stay
35 up to two years in the river system to grow a little
36 bigger than when they had to protect themselves out there
37 in the ocean. So, it would make sense. Like, not really
38 take the regulations up. Not to destroy the beaver
39 houses. It's just focusing on the beaver dams. And years
40 ago, that was brought up to the Board of Game and Board
41 of Fish, but no action was taken. Only a bigger
42 restriction on the beaver dams and beaver houses were
43 put on, not addressing the problem. Thank you, Madam
44 Chair.

45

46 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Stan and this
47 is Brooke. Our Chair did step away for a moment, but I
48 heard Fred making a comment before Stan. Fred, did you
49 want to say something?

50

1 MR. BEANS: Yeah. This is Fred. Prior to
2 Stan making that statement. What -- the lady just said
3 to submit a proposal to address the dams only. Is that
4 what she was saying?

5
6 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah, and maybe we could
7 get staff, maybe Lisa, to restate what that restriction
8 that the Council might want to eliminate is, just so
9 everyone's clear.

10
11 MS. GREDIAGIN: Hi, Madam Chair, this is
12 Lisa Grediagin with OSM. Yeah, just a moment. Yeah. So,
13 the current federal regulation is when taking wildlife
14 for subsistence purposes, trappers may not disturb or
15 destroy any beaver house.

16
17 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Lisa.

18
19 MS. GREDIAGIN: I'm not sure if you're
20 only interested in lodges, how that applies -- I mean,
21 sorry to dams versus lodges.

22
23 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Lisa. And we
24 have Christopher Tulik from the Refuge who has
25 something, comment to add.

26
27 MR. TULIK: Thank you, I'm gonna [sic]
28 speak for myself and what I've learned. So, beavers were
29 pretty rare out on Nelson Island, a long time ago. But
30 then we started seeing more and more every year. Even
31 my father have never seen any beaver before a long time
32 ago, he was so surprised to see what that animal was.
33 But then it became a problem with these beaver dams.
34 Now, one of the things that I found very useful about
35 these beaver dams is that there was a beaver dam that
36 was built that covered the stream. And what happened was
37 the people that were not able to reach that part of the
38 lakes and ponds historically were able to start getting
39 to that part of the piece of land where there were a lot
40 of pike, and they were so happy with that. Until somebody
41 went up there and broke up the dam and people weren't
42 able to get their pike fish anymore, so they weren't too
43 happy with that. So well, I just want to bring this up
44 while you guys are talking about removing beaver dams.
45 So, there are some benefits to beaver dams, too. So just
46 -- I just want to point that out, quyana.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Chris.
49 Any more discussion or questions? Patrick. Yeah.

50

1 MR. SAMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair.
2 Patrick Sampson, on my behalf. Sorry if you take the
3 beaver dam away in the summertime, the beaver's just
4 going to rebuild it. So, the willows or the trees that
5 are around that beaver dam, you remove the beaver dam,
6 they're going to cut off more trees and rebuild it. And
7 so, my suggestion would be just to remove from the
8 regulation strike that you will not disturb the den or
9 the beaver house or lodge. And for landowners like my
10 allotment. Since there's no trees over there, they dig
11 under the land and make it in there. And by law, I can't
12 do that and it's really devaluing the lands that I have.
13 And real quick, about a couple of months for my -- couple
14 miles from my house, I go pick berries, salmon berries,
15 prized salmon berries. The last -- this summer I went
16 over there to pick and there was a beaver dam and a
17 beaver den there and those three plots of Tundra that
18 where the berries grow were all underwater now. And
19 that's just not my -- by my house. It's happening all
20 over the region here. Thank you, Madam Chair.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Pat. Is
23 there, Brooke, anyone online by chance?

24
25 MR. PRINCE: Yeah, this is Alex.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Oh, wait. After
28 Alex, then Francis. Alex (In Native).

29
30 MR. NICK: Yeah. (In Native). Is it still
31 on the proposed -- proposal topic?

32
33 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

34
35 MR. NICK: Yeah. (In Native).

36
37 TRANSLATOR: I do agree with what was
38 said. And that's it, Thank you.

39
40 MR. NICKS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Alex and
43 then Francis.

44
45 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair, this is
46 Francis. I just want to make a comment regarding my
47 village. When we had to deal with beaver dams in Kotlik,
48 the beaver dams were cutting off our broad whitefish
49 spawning grounds in Kotlik. And there's a couple elders
50 with younger adults that went on to destroy the -- just

1 the dams only, but not the houses. And it brought back
2 our whitefish populations back up in Kotlik.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
5 Francis. I know in my area, too, it's become an issue.
6 The dams and how the streams change and channels change,
7 and then rivers, you know, shift when there's too much
8 blockages, or that's one of the things that can happen.
9 So, we've been hearing a lot about beavers for years
10 now, and I'm actually glad it came up. And that someone
11 wants to do a proposal. We're just kind of trying to
12 figure out how to word it now. So, yeah, we're still
13 under discussion. Unless someone wants to call question.

14
15 MS. MCDAVID: Just to clarify, we don't
16 have a motion on the floor at the moment, so there's
17 been a lot of discussion. Some of this -- the details
18 of this might come out in an analysis. So, if you guys
19 do want to submit a proposal to remove the restriction
20 against disturbing beaver lodges when trapping. We could
21 consider that now.

22
23 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, I can move on
24 what the lady was saying. Removing the restrictions.
25 This is Frederick.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you, Fred,
28 noted. Is there a second?

29
30 MS. AGAYAR: Second.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Second by
33 Tiffany. And then discussion. Sorry, I was off track a
34 little bit ago.

35
36 MR. BEANS: Question.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: The question has
39 been called, and we will restate the final motion now.

40
41 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, so the Council is
42 voting to submit a proposal to remove the restrictions
43 in federal trapping regulations against disturbing
44 beaver lodges. Okay, I'm going to do a roll call vote.

45
46 MR. ANDREWS: Before we vote. I just got
47 a question that says beaver lodge. Does that include the
48 beaver dams, too?

49
50

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1 MS. MCDAVID: I'm going to defer to Tom
2 on that.

3
4 MR. BEANS: They're cut off, I believe.

5
6 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair. Member
7 Andrew. So, the restriction in regulation is just about
8 the lodges. The dam I haven't -- I don't believe there's
9 a restriction on removal of the dam, except for you have
10 to use hand tools.

11
12 MS. MCDAVID: So right now, they're not
13 restricted against removing dams with hand tools. You
14 can do it with hand tools. We might learn some more when
15 they do the analysis and continue the discussion at the
16 fall meeting. How's that sound? Okay. Do you want to go
17 on to roll call vote just to submit the proposal and
18 then -- okay, you'll do your final recommendation at the
19 fall. Okay. We'll start online. Fred Beans.

20
21 (No response)

22
23 Are you still with us, Fred? Do you
24 support submitting the proposal?

25
26 (No response)

27
28 Okay, we'll circle back. I know he made
29 the motion, so I'm assuming that's support, but I don't
30 want to take -- okay, let's go to Alissa. Are you still
31 online? Do you support this proposal?

32
33 MS. ROGERS: Support it.

34
35 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Okay. In the
36 room. Frances Prince.

37
38 MR. PRINCE: Support.

39
40 MS. MCDAVID: Phillip Peter.

41
42 MR. PETER: Yes.

43
44 MS. MCDAVID: Henry Parks.

45
46 MR. PARKS: Yes.

47
48 MS. MCDAVID: Norma Evan.

49
50 MS. EVAN: Yes.

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MS. MCDAVID: John Andrew.

MR. ANDREW: No.

MS. MCDAVID: Wassily Alexie.

MR. ALEXIE: Yes.

MS. MCDAVID: Tiffany Agayar.

MS. AGAYAR: Support.

MR. MCDAVID: Fred Beans.

MR. BEANS: Yes.

MS. MCDAVID: Jacqueline Cleveland.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

MS. MCDAVID: The motion to submit the proposal passes 9 to 1.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you for that and if there's any more proposals to be brought up, we're going to do it after lunch. And so, we're going to break now at 12 -- 12:20. Let's start back at 1:30. Quyan.

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: It's 1:37, and we're calling the meeting back to order. There was one more suggestion for a proposal, but there's been an update about that, and I'll let Brooke talk about that.

(Pause)

We're waiting on Alissa Nadine Rogers to present her proposal idea at the moment.

(Pause)

While we're waiting. This is Jackie Cleveland. I wanted to talk about the agenda really quick. We're going to -- we have a lot to go through, and I'm not sure if we can be done by five, but we will

1 try. What can help with that, though, is when we do get
2 to reports we're going to limit each presentation to
3 just two questions per Council. And then when we get to
4 the closing, member or Council member closing comments
5 will limit that to three minutes.

6
7 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, I'm not seeing Alissa
8 on yet, but perhaps we could go ahead and just -- she
9 was interested in closing hunting for snowy owls on the
10 Refuge. But upon investigation, it does not look like
11 in the federal regs there is any season for snowy owls.
12 It only exists in the state regs. And so, we're looking
13 for guidance -- the Council is looking for guidance on
14 how to close snowy owl hunting on federal lands in Unit
15 18 if it does not currently exist. Thank you.

16
17 MS. KENNER: This is Pippa Kenner. For
18 the record. So, if there is a season in harvest limit
19 and state regulations for snowy owl, then the only way
20 to close it is to close to the harvest of snowy owl. But
21 all but federally qualified subsistence users or close
22 it completely. And that way that closure would supersede
23 any state hunting season. Did that make sense? And that's
24 a pretty drastic thing to do.

25
26 MS. MCDAVID: Well, I think we should
27 definitely wait for member Rogers to rejoin us before
28 we move forward with that.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Can I point
31 something out? So, member Tiffany has found some
32 information -- oh, online under the migratory birds open
33 for harvest document, I think it's page 29. The snowy
34 owl is listed under owls.

35
36 MS. KENNER: So, it's managed under
37 Migratory Bird Act.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah. So, you may
40 harvest birds or gather eggs from the following species
41 within all included areas except where region specific
42 restrictions apply. All bird species not listed are
43 closed to hunting and egg gathering. And here -- owls,
44 there's great horned owl and snowy owl.

45
46 MS. KENNER: Thank you, Madam Chair.

47
48 (Simultaneous speech)

49
50 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: On page 29.

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MS. KENNER: This is Pippa Kenner. So, what I said earlier was incorrect. The Board -- apparently the Federal Subsistence Board does not have management authority for snowy owls in Alaska because they're listed in the Migratory Bird Act. Thank you.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. So, if the Council wanted to take action, they'd need to write a letter to the AMBCC or something with their recommendation to close hunting.

MS. KENNER: Thank you for the question. This is Pippa Kenner with a with OSM. I think they have a proposal -- I think they have a call for proposals. We can look into that and get back to you.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you, Pippa. Are there any other proposals that we should bring up before moving on to Council charter review?

(No response)

Hearing none. We'll move on to letter C under Action Items, which is Council charter review. And it says page 17.

MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, this is Brooke.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Brooke.

MS. MCDAVID: So, Council members, if you want to turn, yeah, to page 17 in your small meeting books, there's a copy of your Council's Charter, and every other year, you have to renew your charter. So, it's kind of a administrative action that we ask the Council to do. The first sections of your charter are the same for all the Regional Advisory Councils. It spells out your duties and the scope of your authority as given to you in ANILCA. And it also has some information about the things that fall under the Federal Advisory Committee Act and my role as your designated federal officer. But if you turn to page 19 and number 12 under your charter. This is where some of the specifics for your particular RAC are outlined. So, it does say you have 13 members. In the past you have -- it also spells out the terms -- three-year terms. And a couple of years ago you asked to add this non-voting young leader seat to your Council. The past

1 administration did approve that, and we're currently
2 accepting -- we just closed the application period for
3 that. We got a couple letters of interest. And so
4 hopefully by the end of the year we'll have someone to
5 fill that seat and they'll be able to join you next
6 year. A young -- young leader in a non-voting seat. You
7 also have language in here, and I know this was brought
8 up at the last meeting about making sure there's good
9 geographic representation so, that people that are
10 serving on the Council represent the various regions
11 across the Y-K Delta. So, unless there's anything that
12 really stands out to you guys, we would just be open to
13 a motion to approve the charter for another two years.
14 Could somebody get Walter a book, please? From the --
15 thank you.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: If we've all had
18 a chance to review the charter we're open to a motion
19 to approve it.

20
21 MR. PETER: Madam Chairman, I'd like to
22 -- move to accept this amendment charter we're talking
23 about.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Qu yana, Phillip.
26 There's been a motion to support the charter. Is there
27 a second?

28
29 MR. ALEXIE: This is Wassily, I'll
30 seconded.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Wassily seconds.
33 Is there discussion?

34
35 UNIDENTIFIED: Question.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Question's been
38 called. Brooke, would you like to restate the final
39 motion for the record?

40
41 MS. MCDAVID: Sure. The motion on the
42 floor is to adopt the charter again for another two
43 years. And since we didn't hear any concerns raised or
44 anything, I'll ask for unanimous consent from Council
45 members. If anyone is opposed, please state so.

46
47 (No response)

48
49 Hearing none, the motion passes and the
50 charter is adopted for another term.

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you, Brooke. And we're down to D.

MR. BEANS: Madam Chair. Madam Chair, this is Frederick.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, I'd like to suspend the rules and go B, call for federal wildlife proposal since I was going to say something put something on the table I hit the wrong button to -- I was not able to.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay so, there's been a motion to amend the agenda and to go back to B, call for federal wildlife proposals. And for the one who is speaking, can you please state your name and your proposal idea?

MR. BEANS: Hi, this is Frederick Beans, Mountain Village. And I was gonna say something on -- during that time, but I hit the wrong button to speak. But anyway there was a call yesterday from Stanislaus to lift the restrictions from -- lift the restrictions of four inch mesh to a six inch mesh on thee streams on the on the lower river, which are Brackish streams and on the -- and two of which are in (indiscernible) area, they are the Hamilton and the Anunak River, and on the other end -- and the other.....

MS. MCDAVID: Fred.

MR. BEANS:which is on Y -- in the Y2. Yes.

MS. MCDAVID: I'm sorry to -- I'm sorry to stop you, Fred. The current proposal period that's open is only for wildlife proposals. It doesn't apply to fisheries at this time next year at our winter meeting -- it alternates so, this year it's wildlife. And next year it will be fisheries.

MR. BEANS: Oh, okay. All right. Well, thank you anyway.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you for your idea. If you know, want to put that in your pocket and bring it back to the Council when that call opens, then we

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1 could talk about it then.

2

3 MR. BEANS: Okay. All right. Thank you.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you, Fred.
6 We're going. Oh, Alissa, were you on the line and had
7 something to say?

8

9 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Madam Chair.
10 Through the Chair. Sorry for trying to pull up my screen
11 again. Here we go. Okay, so I wanted to put in a proposal
12 for Unit 18 in regards to snowy owls. I see that we
13 don't have snowy owls on our.....

14

15 MS. MCDAVID: Alissa.

16

17 MS. ROGERS: (indiscernible) and -- yeah.
18 Go ahead.

19

20 MS. MCDAVID: Sorry, this is Brooke.
21 Sorry to interrupt you. I did want to let you know there
22 was some discussion before you were able to rejoin. It
23 looks like snowy owls under federal regulations fall
24 under the Migratory Bird Act. And so, the Council would
25 have to do a proposal under the Alaska Migratory Bird
26 Management Council -- their call for proposals. And
27 we're hoping to get some information about when that is.
28 But we did clarify it wouldn't be a Federal Subsistence
29 Board proposal.

30

31 MR. ROGERS: Okay.

32

33 MS. MCDAVID: So sorry to -- I think if
34 we hold if you hold on to that idea, we can find out
35 when that call for AMBCC proposals is.

36

37 MR. ROGERS: Okay, perfect. Thank you, I
38 appreciate it. Thanks for the update. I'll stand by.

39

40 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you.

41

42 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. This is
43 Jackie, again. We're back to D Review and Approve FY24
44 Annual Report. And Brooke will be presenting page 21 and
45 tab 4.

46

47 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair. And
48 before we jump into the Annual Report, just to clarify
49 for everyone on the Council that if you have ideas for
50 proposals that come up later in the meeting, as long as

1 they're wildlife proposal and fall under this call for
2 proposals we can take them up. So, if there's, you know,
3 a report later that makes you think -- from one of the
4 agencies that makes you think about a proposal you'd
5 like to put in. We could take it up at that time, but
6 for now, we're going to move on to your Annual Report
7 Review. So, for our new Council members on page 21 of
8 your meeting books, the small book is some guideline
9 information about what the Annual Report is and what
10 should be included in your Annual Report. And then on
11 tab 4, in your binders, in your supplemental materials
12 is the draft Annual Report for last year, for Fiscal
13 Year 2024 or -- yes, and so every year the Council puts
14 together an Annual Report that goes to the Federal
15 Subsistence Board. And at your fall meetings, you select
16 the topics that you want to go into your Annual Report.
17 And then I work to draft that over the winter and at
18 your winter meeting. What you're looking at on tab 4 is
19 that draft Annual Report. And so at this meeting it's
20 not a chance to add new topics, but it's a chance to
21 review and make any edits or adjustments you might like
22 to see to that in your report for the topics that you
23 voted to include at your fall meeting. So, this would
24 just be to approve the final version that will go to the
25 Federal Subsistence Board. And some of the things that
26 are often included are your topics of concern that are
27 related to your subsistence in your region that you want
28 the Board to be aware of. They can -- that can include,
29 you know, recommendations about fish and wildlife
30 management or you might, you know, have requests of the
31 Board as long as it falls in their jurisdiction, that
32 can be included, or other topics might just be
33 informational items for the Board for their awareness.
34 And so, you'll notice that the first several topics in
35 the draft Annual Report -- let me get my copy open here.
36 The first four topics, you do have some requests of the
37 Board and then the last several topics are more
38 informational items about concerns that you have. And
39 so, I'll just run through the topics real quick for
40 everyone's awareness. A lot of these topics you've
41 written to the Board about in the past, and so it's kind
42 of a continuation and letting them know that they're
43 still topics of concern, like, number one, the ongoing
44 salmon crisis, especially on the Yukon. The need for the
45 Board to take a lead on coordinating salmon management
46 across jurisdictions. A request to the Board to pursue
47 co-management on the Yukon River like there is on the
48 Kuskokwim River with the Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.
49 For four, more balanced geographic representation on the
50 Council, which we actually now that we have some more

1 members that have been appointed from the Yukon side
2 this cycle we have our three new folks from the Yukon,
3 the Council is a lot more balanced in the past, so that
4 might not be as big a concern as it was last year. But
5 I know you guys were still hoping to get some more
6 coastal representation in the future.

7
8 Other topics that were informational
9 were about the conflicts with -- between local moose
10 hunters and non-local hunters in the lower Yukon. You
11 also said that the Federal Subsistence Board needs a
12 public member from the Y-K Delta region, and that also
13 has been fulfilled since you put in this in the fall.
14 Raymond Oney that previously was on this Council was
15 appointed to the Board. So now you have someone directly
16 on the Board who is familiar with issues in your area.
17 You included the D1 lands as a topic of concern and
18 wanting to keep those protections in place. You wrote
19 about the need for a supplemental environmental impact
20 statement related to Donlin Gold because of the impacts
21 that it might have to subsistence. There were some
22 concerns about crane habitat near Marshall because of a
23 gravel quarry. Ongoing concerns about Mulchatna Caribou
24 and support for predator control. Disappearing of fish
25 camps and the cultural impacts of that, and the need for
26 more meaningful tribal involvement in decision making.

27
28 You notified the Board about the chum
29 salmon bycatch preliminary draft EIS, which we had the
30 session on about last night. You said that we -- there
31 needs to be a reduction in the total allowable catch for
32 pollock in those marine commercial fisheries. You raise
33 the concern about reductions in the size of halibut for
34 -- by subsistence users and the need to also reduce the
35 bycatch of halibut. You talked about issues with coho
36 that are harvested in area M and about needing to also
37 pay attention to coho, because a lot of attention has
38 been being paid to chum salmon and chinook salmon. And
39 then the last couple you talked about the impacts of
40 hatchery salmon releases on our wild salmon. You
41 discourage the use of the term anecdotal to describe
42 traditional ecological knowledge. And you stated a need
43 to monitor caribou on the north side of the Yukon River
44 in your region to learn more about if they're their own
45 distinct small herd or if they're stragglers from other
46 herds. So those were the 19 topics that you guys included
47 in your Annual Report. So, once you've had a time to
48 look it over, it would -- if you don't have any edits
49 we could entertain a motion to approve it, and it'll get
50 sent to the Board. And the Board reviews the annual

1 reports at all -- from all the different Regional
2 Advisory Councils, all ten across Alaska, at their
3 summer work session. And at that time, they also look
4 at some of the topics that kind of are coming from
5 multiple regions. So especially like things like the
6 salmon salmon issues and stuff like that. So that's
7 always an interesting meeting to call into, its -- and
8 hear about the different issues across Alaska.

9

10 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: John.

11

12 MR. ANDREW: Yeah, quyana. John Andrew,
13 Kwethluk Council member (indiscernible) of FY 2024
14 Annual Report of (In Native).

15

16 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: There's been a
17 motion to accept FY24 Annual Report by John Andrew. Is
18 there a second?

19

20 MR. PETER: Madam Chair. Second the
21 motion.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Phillip Peter.
24 Seconds. Discussion -- is there's discussion? We're open
25 now for discussion.

26

27 MS. MCDAVID: And I guess I would say if
28 there is something that you think is missing at this
29 point we could earmark it for your FY25 report that will
30 be developing at the fall meeting. So just again, we
31 can't add any new topics this time. I just wanted to
32 make that clear.

33

34 MR. BEANS: Fred Beans question.

35

36 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Go ahead, Fred.

37

38 MR. BEANS: I'm calling for a question.

39

40 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (In Native).
41 Question's been called. Brooke, can you please restate?

42

43 MS. MCDAVID: You bet. No problem. This
44 is Brooke. Okay. The motion on the floor is to accept
45 the draft FY 2024 Annual report and submit it to the
46 Federal Subsistence Board.

47

48 And since we didn't hear any concerns
49 expressed or anything, I would ask for unanimous
50 consent. And if anyone is opposed, please state so.

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(No response)

Hearing none. The motion passes to submit the report as written to the Board.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. This is Jackie. We're moving on to letter E under action items on the agenda, future meeting dates, and Brooke will be presenting that.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. And I would ask if one of our staff could help me pass out some calendars. So, we'll start with the calendar that's in your meeting nooks on page 23. This is for your fall meeting. Fall 2025. So, in your in your meeting book on page 23. So, the -- there's -- staff are passing out updated ones for 2026 because some of the other RACs have met before you and selected dates. But the one -- the calendar in your book on page 23 is for this coming fall, and you already selected your dates at the last meeting, and you selected October 21st through 23rd. So that would be a three-day meeting. That's generally a bit of a longer meeting because you have all the wildlife proposals to review and (distortion). Okay, I'm back on the -- you did request if you could meet up in Anchorage as -- and Bethel as your backup. But unfortunately, due to budget constraints at the moment, we're unable to fulfill the request to meet in Anchorage. So, the meeting would need to be in Bethel for next fall. Does anyone have any changes they want to suggest for the fall time? Please use your microphone.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: John.

MR. ANDREW: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair. I propose that we have a fall meeting at September 30th and October 1 in Bethel, fall -- fall meeting. Because this is an open area just at the top -- top lane, and the rest of the weeks are booked in all of them in the middle dates.

MS. MCDAVID: John, I will say it's going to be really hard for me because I have Eastern Interior the following week, but we'll do what you want because that's my -- this is my other Council it -- just really helpful to have.....

(Simultaneous speech)

00068

1 MR. ANDREW: I can amend the date to move
2 to October 7th and 8 for this date. October 14th and 15.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (In Native) 16,
5 18 -- 16, 17, 18. (In Native).

6
7 MS. MCDAVID: So.....

8
9 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (In Native) 15.

10
11 MS. MCDAVID: We can't meet during a week
12 where there's already two RAC meetings scheduled. That's
13 the only thing is -- I'm just curious. John, is there
14 an issue with the dates that you selected currently,
15 these dates? Is that not a good time for you?

16
17 MR. ANDREW: For the following week,
18 October 21st and 22. Oh, it's already in there.

19
20 MS. MCDAVID: Are you okay with the
21 current -- those dates 21 through 23.

22
23 MR. ANDREW: 21-23. So, it's okay with
24 me. Quyana. So, we could go for a winter meeting?

25
26 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (In Native). The
27 one we picked is good? Okay. Henry Parks.

28
29 MR. PARKS: Thank you, Madam Chair. So,
30 what we're looking at (In Native) 28, 29, 30. Oh. I'm
31 sorry. Okay. I'm sorry, 21, 22. 23. (In Native). So are
32 these -- my question is, will these be -- are we
33 targeting these as three day meetings? Okay. So, in that
34 case, if we are going to meet on those days, then we
35 have to be traveling on the 20th and going back home on
36 the 24th. Okay.

37
38 MS. MCDAVID: That's correct Henry.

39
40 MR. PARKS: Okay. Thank you.

41
42 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. So, it sounds like
43 everyone's okay with keeping the dates for the fall
44 meeting, October 21st, 22 and 23 here in Bethel? Just
45 checking with folks online, Fred and Alissa, that's okay
46 with you?

47
48 MR. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

49
50 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah.

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MR. ROGERS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Through the Chair. I have a question, Brooke. Would we be possibly able to have the meetings, like, on a weekend? Like, probably like Friday, Saturday, Sunday?

MS. MCDAVID: I'm hearing from the leadership team that unfortunately, that's not possible.

MR. BEANS: Hello, this is Fred.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Fred.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. Thank you. That's all.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Fred, are you still there? Hi, Fred, I thought I heard you get on the mic. Did you have something to add about the dates?

MR. BEANS: Hello.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Is -- if this is Fred, we can hear you. But maybe you can't hear us.

MR. BEANS: Well, yeah, I've had dropped calls here. Okay.

MS. MCDAVID: Okay. So, you guys confirmed your fall dates for October 21 through 23 here in Bethel. The next calendar is the winter 2026, and that was passed out to you.

(Pause)

So currently, the only week that is not available to meet is that week of February 23rd, because there's already two RACs that are meeting that week, but the rest of the calendar is open. And I would suggest that you select three days again so that if the agenda is shorter, we could shorten it. But we're often running against time for you guys, so.

MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, Fred.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Hi, Fred. Go ahead.

MR. BEANS: Mind if I suggest March 7th, 9th and 9th? You know, a year from now.

00070

1 MS. MCDAVID: Hi, Fred. I'm sorry we
2 can't meet on the weekend, is the only issue.

3
4 MR. BEANS: Yeah. March 7th is the
5 Tuesday, March 8th is a Wednesday, and March 19th is a
6 Thursday of the winter of 2026.

7
8 MS. MCDAVID: Fred, I'm really sorry. I
9 think the calendar you have in the meeting book, there
10 was an error on that calendar. The dates are off. We
11 printed off a new version in the room. I'm sorry that
12 you're not here to have a copy of that. And I guess just
13 so everyone else knows, we can't meet the week of March
14 2nd either, because that's when my other Council is
15 meeting.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Tiffany has a
18 question.

19
20 MS. AGAYAR: Thank you. Hi, Brooke. Is
21 there a way that you could share it on the Zoom link so
22 that the so that they can see it up there?

23
24 MS. MCDAVID: Fred, are you on zoom or
25 are you on the. Did you dial-in the phone number?

26
27 MR. BEANS: I'm on my phone.

28
29 MS. MCDAVID: Okay.

30
31 MR. BEANS: Sorry.

32
33 MS. MCDAVID: That's okay. No problem.

34
35 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Go ahead,
38 Alissa.

39
40 MR. ROGERS: Thank you. Through the
41 Chair. The equivalent to what his requesting is March
42 3rd, 4th and 5th, is what he's requesting. Tuesday.
43 Wednesday. Thursday.

44
45 MS. MCDAVID: Those are the same days.
46 Sorry, Alissa, as the EIRAC meeting, which is the other
47 Council that I coordinate. You could potentially do the
48 following week. If you really care about my well-being,
49 you might do the week of March 17th, 18th, and 19th. But
50 that's up to you guys.

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MR. ROGERS: I put a motion on the floor for week 17, 18, 19. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you, Alissa. There's.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. BEANS: This is Fred. I'll second that. I'll second that.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you, guys. There's been a motion to choose March 17, 18 and 19 of 2026. And Fred seconded it. Any discussion? John.

MS. MCDAVID: The question from member Andrew was for location is Bethel okay with everyone? The -- your other hub community is Saint Mary's. And last time we checked with them, they said they were unable to host us because they didn't have proper accommodations for -- or enough accommodations. I should say sorry. So, my suggestion would be for Bethel. Unless you had somewhere else you really wanted to meet in the region.

MR. ANDREW: I could amend that to location to Anchorage so you can have an access to your staff.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you for that suggestion, member Andrew. Anchorage is not on your approved list of hub communities, so you could continue to request meeting there, but if not, Bethel would need to be your backup location.

MR. ANDREW: We meet over here. I have another problem that too many relatives over here. I want to get away from them.

MS. MCDAVID: Okay. Is everyone okay with Bethel, March 17th, 18th and 19th for this time next year? Okay. And you'll get to review this again at your fall meeting in case any changes need to take place. All right. Finally, the last date you need to select is for fall 2026. You should have one more calendar in front of you. And the week of October 5th is booked up. Otherwise, the window is open. There is a holiday on Columbus Day that we need to work around. But besides that.

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MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, this is Fred.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Fred.

MR. BEANS: I think that the day after the holiday of Columbus Day on the 13th, 14th and 15th.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay, that's noted, but it is kind of putting a lot of stress on our coordinator when she has to do two RACs, two weeks in a row. So, we're just trying to be -- if we can consider it and give her, you know, another week in between her two RACs to coordinate the meeting. So, I would even, you know, there's October 19th week.

MR BEANS: So, Madam.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Go ahead, sorry.

MR. BEANS: I rescind my.....

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah. Qu yana. I am going to recommend -- actually can -- is there a way or -- I don't know if we could know the AFN 2026 date yet, but usually, you know, we might be falling into the AFN week if we go on the week of the 18th -- of October 18th. So maybe even to be the safest we can go for October 25 week. It's the last week if we can wait, is my recommendation. So, and then that may change depending on when AFN is. So, like this year they have it 16, 17 and 18. But usually it is that next to last week and the 20s. So, I guess my recommendation is 27, 28, 29. Alissa.

MR. ROGERS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Through the Chair. I agree with you. Fall time is usually tricky trying to coordinate travel because the weather is changing so much. But what I found out over the past six out of eight years that I was Chair, the last week when you suggested was always the best fit for travel and weather being good and not getting in the way of other meetings. I did want to mention that we might want to check in with the AVCP convention as well, and make sure that we're not falling on the same date as them. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks for noting that, Alissa. We can always revisit the dates again and change them. But for now, my recommendation

1 is still 27, 28, 29. In Bethel.

2

3 MS. MCDAVID: Is there any opposition
4 Council members?

5

6 (No response)

7

8 Okay. Hearing none, we will do October
9 27th, 28 and 29 for fall 2026. And you'll confirm those
10 at future meeting. Thank you.

11

12 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
13 Brooke. Is it too soon for me to move on to reports?
14 Okay, so on the agenda, we're under 14, reports and B:
15 Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and the
16 material can be found on tab 5. Terese is coming to
17 present.

18

19 MS. VICENTE: Tab 6 is in the booklet,
20 right?

21

22 MS. MCDAVID: Tab 5 is in the
23 supplemental materials, the binder.

24

25 MS. VICENTE: Okay. So, I have -- there's
26 extra copies in the back of the room as well, if the RAC
27 needs them or if anyone in the public needs them, so.

28

29 Am I good to go, Madam Chair? Okay. Oh,
30 okay. Qu yana, Jackie. Okay. For the record, my name is
31 Terese Vicente. I'm the policy and programs director
32 with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.
33 And I do want to respect your time, so I'll be pretty
34 brief, but we have a kind of a short five-page update
35 of what we've been up to since your last meeting. A lot
36 of it pretty much the same. So, I'll just flag some,
37 maybe some new things. Our Executive Council leadership
38 and staff and in-season managers and elder advisors are
39 listed on page one. And on the second page, we have a
40 section about 2025 Fish Commission Yukon Delta National
41 Wildlife Refuge Cooperative Salmon Management. So, we -
42 - we're looking forward to continuing to collaborate and
43 co-manage salmon runs on the Kuskokwim with U.S. Fish
44 and Wildlife Service at Yukon Delta Refuge this coming
45 year. It'll be the 10th year of co-management. Oh, I
46 think -- sorry. I'm looking at handouts. I think that's
47 a presentation. That's the one I gave yesterday with
48 Crystal. No, no, no. That's okay. Should I, should I
49 pause until folks have the handout? Okay, okay. No
50 worries. And so, we've been co-managing salmon with the

1 Refuge for nine years now. And what we do as a fish
2 commission is every April, our commission gathers
3 together and elects now five in-season managers to sit
4 at the table with the Yukon Delta fisheries team. They
5 go over the western science data, but also traditional
6 knowledge and local knowledge about the salmon runs and
7 make determinations for federal subsistence fisheries
8 from the mouth of the river to Aniak accordingly, and
9 our team has been in close communication with the Refuge
10 throughout the winter, preparing for the 2025 season so
11 we can get our 2025 in-season managers on Board once
12 they're elected this April. And we're planning on
13 continuing this relationship and this collaboration, as
14 we have, regardless of any uncertainties with the
15 federal government, I know that might be a question of
16 yours. So, it's a little bit too early to know any sort
17 of preseason forecasts for salmon. But we do have our
18 past joint management plans on our website, and I'm happy
19 to get copies to you all. We anticipate that our
20 management approach will be pretty similar to that in
21 tribes and the federal government working together in a
22 government to government relationship.

23
24 The next section, we have some updates
25 about advocacy and outreach we've been doing. We covered
26 the chum bycatch one pretty extensively, so I'm not going
27 to touch on that. But one thing we're really glad and
28 proud to announce is that we signed on to the Gravel-
29 to-Gravel Keystone Initiative last October after your
30 last meeting in August. So, in that it's a -- I think
31 you've you all have heard about it and received
32 presentations on it, but it's a new initiative with
33 funding from the federal government to go to tribal
34 organizations and tribes in the Arctic, Yukon, Kuskokwim
35 region to restore and care for salmon from eggs to
36 spawners, gravel to gravel. So, we signed an MoU with a
37 number of other organizations, including AVCP and TCC
38 and Kawerak and some regional tribes. And on the federal
39 side, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land
40 Management, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian
41 Affairs, and U.S. Geological Survey. So, there's a bunch
42 of tribal and federal entities there all trying to work
43 together to restore salmon. So, we're really grateful
44 to be a part of the Gravel-to-Gravel Initiative and to
45 have some funding to support some of our projects and
46 initiatives as well. And a big theme in that is our big
47 -- not even a goal, but an agreement in that MOU is
48 honoring tribal sovereignty and self-governance. So,
49 we're really glad to be a part of that.

50

1 There's a couple pages highlighting some
2 of our salmon research, monitoring and knowledge
3 documentation projects that were planning on operating
4 and organizing this coming year. And for the sake of
5 time, there's a lot of detail here, so I'll just
6 highlight them. But first is, we're building off of our
7 drone spawner assessment project last year by looking
8 at using underwater cameras to count salmon spawners in
9 some of our tributaries. And we're going to start with
10 the Kwethluk River. We've been having conversations with
11 Refuge about this, and OVK as well. We're continuing our
12 indigenous knowledge documentation project about salmon
13 and getting recommendations from knowledge holders about
14 improving ecosystem wide salmon management and
15 stewardship. We're almost wrapped up with that project.
16 We're planning on revisiting the knowledge holders we
17 worked with, the communities we worked with in the coming
18 months and finalizing our products. So, we hope that by
19 this summer, we'll have some things to share with you
20 all and the public, and definitely at your next meeting.
21 We can have some better updates.

22
23 We're planning on doing our community-
24 based harvest monitoring program again with Kuskokwim
25 communities in the lower river, and hiring local people
26 to survey folks after fishing opportunities. On the
27 Kwethluk River, we're planning to operate the smolt
28 outmigration study, where we're counting and observing
29 the juvenile salmon swimming out of the Kwethluk. So
30 that happens this spring. And then we're also hoping to
31 get the Kwethluk River weir in place. And there's some
32 questions right now. One of the refuge guys could
33 probably answer better than me, but there's some funding
34 challenges, and other challenges we're getting right now
35 because of everything going on in the federal
36 government. But we're -- our teams are in really close
37 communication right now to try to see if we can get that
38 weir in place, because it monitors a really important
39 tributary, especially for king salmon, and helps give
40 information for the annual king salmon run
41 reconstruction. So, we'd really like to see it operate.
42 Work with OVK to get it in place and hire people, local
43 people to work at it. So more to come.

44
45 Then the other three projects we have
46 are, we're continuing to monitor water temperature
47 throughout the drainage and work with Native Village
48 Napaimute, Native Village of Georgetown and Cook
49 Inletkeeper to do that. We're working with Takotna
50 Tribal Council to get the Takotna River weir in place

1 this summer as well to monitor salmon spawners up there.
2 And I'll note that that weir is, as far as we know, the
3 only fully tribally owned and operated weir in the State.
4 So, it's a really important project. It's also one of
5 the only headwaters stock assessment projects we have.
6 So, we really like to work with the community up there
7 and see that one operate. And then we also have been
8 doing this environmental DNA or eDNA project. It's kind
9 of a new technology, but we take water samples and can
10 filter out salmon DNA from those and get an estimate of
11 how many fish are in the river. Definitely can tell
12 whether salmon of different species are there. And we're
13 trying to see if it could tell us, even down to the
14 number, the ballpark, because that would allow us to
15 monitor more tributaries on the Kuskokwim without
16 needing to put weirs in or find funding for weirs. So,
17 we're continuing to do eDNA collection with Fish and
18 Game, UAF, Fish and Wildlife Service, and we're going
19 to do that again on the Kwethluk weir, Takotna weir and
20 then Fish and Game does it with their George River weir
21 crew. So that's a snapshot of what we're hoping to
22 accomplish this summer monitoring wise.

23
24 And then at the very end, I'll just call
25 your attention to some of these events that are coming
26 up. And I'll run through them. So, the first one here
27 is a note about the next North Pacific Fishery Management
28 Council meeting. It starts March 31st and runs through
29 April 7th. And there's been a change since we put this
30 report together in that they're now not going to meet
31 in Anchorage, but it's all going to be virtual because
32 of funding limitations they're having right now. There's
33 nothing specific to salmon bycatch on that agenda, but
34 there are some things about -- it says PEIS, the
35 Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. The Council
36 is looking at some new ways or I guess, updating their
37 framework for managing groundfish fisheries across the
38 North Pacific. So, they'll have some discussions there.
39 But we're happy to help you or your tribes kind of track
40 any agenda items you might be interested in. April 2nd,
41 third and fourth are fish Commission is having our annual
42 meeting and elections in Anchorage. So, we're gathering
43 our commissioners together. We'll have elections for our
44 Unit 2, 4 and 6 seats on our Council, as well as for our
45 Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary and our five in-season
46 managers. So, if you have any questions about who might
47 be representing you on our Council or on our in-season
48 management team if you're from a Kuskokwim community,
49 please reach out to me or anyone on our team, and we're
50 happy to let you know who that is. And if you have any

1 questions about our annual meeting, too.

2
3 The next thing coming up that might be
4 of interest to you is the April 10th deadline to submit
5 Board of Fisheries proposals for the next Board of
6 Fisheries cycle. And two of the areas in the next cycle
7 are for the Arctic-Yukon Kuskokwim region. That's --
8 that meeting is planning to be held November 18th through
9 22nd in Fairbanks. And then Area M is up next February
10 18th to 24th in Anchorage, is what it's scheduled for
11 right now. So, any proposals you as an individual or
12 your tribe, your city, your organization are interested
13 in submitting to be considered by the Board of Fish at
14 one of those meetings, those will need to be submitted
15 by April 10th online. And we're really happy to help you
16 put together proposals, submit proposals, talk with you
17 about, you know, what we or other partners are doing.
18 But just wanted to make sure you're aware of that date.
19 And then last big event here. This is more just an
20 opportunity that our Fish Commission has learned about
21 recently. And it's called the Marine Resources Education
22 Program, or MRAP. And it's a free program for people to
23 gather together and learn about how the Fishery
24 Management Council in your region happens. They have
25 them throughout the country, but the one in the North
26 Pacific region is happening this April 28th to May 2nd
27 in Kodiak. All you need to do is go online and submit
28 an application and explain why you're interested in
29 attending. And they -- that entity, if you're selected
30 to attend, covers the rest, they'll get your travel,
31 your lodging, per diem, all that stuff. And it's a week
32 of getting together with people in the fishing industry,
33 with the NOAA Fisheries, with North Pacific Council
34 members, advisory panel members, things like that. I
35 haven't been myself, but I've heard really good things
36 about it. So, if you or anyone in your community is
37 interested in learning more about how the North Pacific
38 Council works, how federal fishery management in the
39 oceans works. I've heard it's a really good opportunity,
40 so we can also help people apply to that too. And then
41 I've just added our contact information. And I think my
42 email and phone number are around as well, but I'm happy
43 to give those to folks. So, quyana, Madam Chair.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Terese.
46 Good report. I think I'm just going to start right away
47 with a question from the audience. I'm just kind of
48 asking from he said, do we know a forecast for the
49 allowable subsistence harvest for this coming season?
50 But out of assumption, I said, maybe after April we'll

1 know. But, if maybe you can answer that better than me.

2

3 MS. VICENTE: Yeah, thanks. This is
4 Terese, for the record. S, we don't -- I mean, Spencer
5 or Aaron could correct me if I misspeak, but we don't
6 set like, a number for how much fish to be harvested.
7 What we try to do, like for king salmon, we have a
8 escapement target of 110,000 fish getting back into our
9 tributaries. And we monitor that throughout the season
10 and try to see, you know, okay, how many fish are coming
11 in, how many are moving upriver to their tributaries.
12 And then do the math and say, okay, we think we can let
13 there be more, more fishing now, or maybe we need to tap
14 the brakes a little bit and try to let some kings swim
15 upriver to spawn or feed families in the headwaters. So,
16 our goal always is conservation of salmon, but also
17 subsistence fishing. And so, I know, like our in-season
18 managers, they don't like to be shut down. They don't
19 like restrictions. So, they're always going to advocate
20 for as much fishing as possible. And we always hope
21 people are able to get their nets in the water and take
22 fish home to put in their smokehouses. So that's what I
23 would say.

24

25 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
26 Terese.

27

28 MR. MORGAN: Madam Chair. I got a
29 question.

30

31 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Walter.

32

33 MR. MORGAN: On your genetic study. You
34 know, if you look at their report of the North Pacific
35 Management Council interception, and I'm getting all
36 those fish. You know, I was thinking about it last night,
37 and I said, man, maybe a lot of the fish there say
38 they're Asian fish, they're starting to come up our
39 river. So, I am really concerned about that because I
40 think they're mixing them with our regular salmon, all
41 the Asian. Okay. And they say on page 13 that they're
42 not on your -- they're not western Alaska bound salmon.
43 You know, that's something to think about. I think
44 they're mixing with our wild salmon, and they're going
45 they are going up our rivers. And, you know, that's one
46 thing to consider. If they go up our river, do we call
47 them western bound salmon if they're Asian? You know,
48 and you see the high numbers of catch of Asian and also,
49 you look at the Kuskokwim bound and the western Alaska
50 bound salmon in the blue, they're pretty small. You know,

1 I'm starting to think that they're mixing with the wild
2 salmon. And we got an argument here. You know, they saw
3 it on their chart. They're catching lots of it. And
4 compared to the Kuskokwim, that's, you know, something
5 to think about. I was thinking about it last night and
6 I said, you know, I think our salmon are being over run
7 by these Asian and they are going up our rivers. So,
8 I'm, you know, with the genetic study, you'll have --
9 you'll confirm it. And thank you.

10

11 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
12 Walter. Any other comments or questions, either from the
13 RAC or the audience? Hearing none. Do you have anything
14 else to add, Teresa? No, quyana.

15

16 MS. VICENTE: Quyana.

17

18 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Next under
19 reports we have Yukon River Drainage Fisheries
20 Association and that will be under tab 6 for materials.

21

22 MR. NASHOANAK: Good afternoon. I'd just
23 like to introduce myself before I get into your report.
24 My name is Jadon Nashoanak. My mom is Valerie Dahrendorf
25 from Stebbins and Saint Mary's. My dad is Shane
26 Dahrendorf from Huslia up the Koyukuk River, and I reside
27 in Anchorage now, but I was raised in Fairbanks
28 practicing our indigenous ways. So yeah, I'm honored to
29 be here. I'm honored to represent YRDFA at the YKRAC
30 here in front of you guys. So, I'll get into our report.
31 So good afternoon, Madam Chair and Council members,
32 thank you for the opportunity to present at the Yukon
33 River Delta Regional Advisory Council. I'm pleased to
34 represent the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries
35 Association. My name is Jadon Nashoanak and I am the
36 traditional ecological knowledge technician for YRDFA.
37 We would like to provide you with some brief updates on
38 our activities and key accomplishments since we last
39 met. So, starting with the Harvest Survey program. In
40 2024, the survey program was funded by the National Park
41 Service and began in 2002. We have ten communities along
42 the Yukon River with locally hired surveyors starting
43 in June, running through the last week of August.
44 Surveyors interviewed local households about their
45 experience -- experiences fishing that week, which I'll
46 get further into that. Households are kept anonymous and
47 the same survey questions are asked every week.
48 Interviews are sent to us at the beginning of the week.
49 The data collected is then analyzed and put into a report
50 that is sent out to partners and management agencies.

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This year we launched a digital app for surveyors to use. As for the 2025 season, we have applied for two sources of funding and are waiting to hear back. If no additional funding comes through, we will scale the program back and run it as a skeleton operation. Going into the Yukon River in season teleconference program, we currently do not have funding for the 2025 in-season teleconference season. We will be pursuing funds to continue and revamp the program to be moved forward -- moving with the teleconference calls if funding is available. Moving into the Yukon River Watershed Ecosystem Action Plan, or also known as WEEP. In 2023, established with funding from the Gravel to Gravel Initiative, the Steering Committees purpose is to create a publicly accessible story map tool, a resource that prioritizes assessing threats to salmon habitat and identifying the highest priority restoration actions. This tool will be open to all, fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility for the Yukon Watershed with the overall commitment to assist YRDFA in creating a Yukon River Ecosystem Action Plan.

During July and August of 2024, YRDFA's environmental specialist James Van Lanen and field technician Matthew Lohrstorfer conducted field data collection for YRDFA's WEEP project. Data collection this season consisted of water quality sampling and covert surveys in the middle Yukon River and Tanana River watersheds. Using U.S. Fish and Wildlife's GIS databases, Matthew and James collected a total of 64 culvert surveys and 50 water quality samples. Fieldwork locations this season consisted of the area surrounding Nulato and the road system accessible areas such as Minto, Manley Hot Springs, Eureka, and Tofty-Tanana Road. The field crew identified multiple additional culverts of potential concern for Yukon Salmon Fish Passage, which were not previously listed in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Database. Culvert survey data was entered into the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fish Barrier Hunter app, and water quality data was entered into the new Survey123 app, designed by YRDFA contractor Michael Baker Incorporated. This data collection will continue in 2025. Field work locations are currently being determined by the WEEP Steering Committee and YRDFA staff.

Going into the Yukon River Clearinghouse project, which I'm a part of. So, the purpose of this project is to identify data gaps along the Yukon and act

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1 as a clearinghouse for social and ecological changes
2 along the Yukon, using both physical biological data and
3 traditional ecological knowledge. YRDFA has hired myself
4 as the tech technician, and I will be conducting
5 traditional knowledge interviews to learn about -- and
6 generate a historical timeline of observed changes that
7 may affect salmon on the Yukon River. Additionally, we
8 have a physical biological science technician who this
9 season is in the field completing culvert assessments,
10 stream assessments, and collecting water quality
11 samples. With both the PBS and TEK data YRDFA will be
12 creating a platform to share that shares a holistic
13 overview of the Yukon River's historic timeline. This
14 platform will allow observers and agencies to submit
15 their data to be added to the clearinghouse project.

16
17 And then looks like we're moving on to
18 -- our last project was in YRDFA, engaging fishers in
19 chinook salmon research on the Yukon River. This project
20 funded by North Pacific Research Board, began in January
21 2023 and ends in February of 2026. We are partnering
22 with the communities of Alakanuk and Emmonak to conduct
23 interviews about the health of chinook as they enter the
24 river. We are gathering this information to help inform
25 our companion project led by Doctor Katie Howard and
26 Vanessa von Biela, which is seeking to understand the
27 drivers of chinook salmon decline, and they theorize
28 that one driver is their diet in the Bering Sea, which
29 is strongly related to their health when they enter the
30 river.

31
32 We have completed our interviews in both
33 Emmonak and Alakanuk and provided summaries of their
34 results to the participants and tribal Councils. We plan
35 to travel to Alakanuk and Emmonak in March, which is --
36 actually we're going there next week. I'm super excited
37 and then to gather feedback from their communities. And
38 then furthermore, we are also working with the
39 communities of Saint Mary's and Huslia to monitor water
40 temperatures, develop a community action plan if there
41 is another heat event that causes a salmon die off in
42 the future. And then just some internal things. We have
43 expanded a lot since I've been hired on. I was hired on
44 last June of 2024, and I believe we hired five new
45 people. So, we're expanding a lot, which is great. So,
46 I'd like to welcome the new staff of Grace Kirkey,
47 myself, Matthew Lohstorfer, Olivia Irwin, and Brian
48 McKenna. The concerns we are hearing from attending the
49 RAC meetings are on Area M bycatch, and hatchery release
50 are affecting our returns on Yukon River. Olivier Irwin,

1 our policy coordinator, has been actively participating
2 in North Pacific meetings addressing the alternatives
3 on chum bycatch. We are strategically planning to
4 present these spaces where decisions are being made. We
5 are currently a part of coalitions and groups that are
6 collectively working on the issues we are facing with
7 our salmon on the Yukon River. Serena is part of the
8 Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Communication
9 Committee on the Yukon River panel, and I believe that
10 wraps up my -- YRDFA's report. But some dates to keep
11 in mind. YRDFA's Board meeting. It will be held in
12 Fairbanks this year, April 22nd and 23rd, along with
13 YRDFA's preseason meeting in Fairbanks April 24th and
14 25th. And then we will also be having TRDFA's 35th
15 anniversary celebration, and this will be in Fairbanks
16 also during this week at Pike's Waterfront Lodge. So,
17 thank you.

18

19 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. Any
20 questions from -- okay. Wassily first.

21

22 MR. ALEXIE: This is Wassily, I have a
23 question. I'm from the Lower Yukon. Do you guys have any
24 information about -- any data or information about the
25 spawning grounds, where the salmon goes and what are
26 they doing up around Canada area with the mines to
27 protect the spawning grounds of the salmon? Is there any
28 data or information on that?

29

30 MR. NASHOANAK: If you're talking like
31 physical science. I wouldn't be able to answer that
32 accurately as part -- but I could get you in contact
33 with people within YRDFA's organization afterwards or
34 after this, if that answers, or could help lead you to
35 your answer.

36

37 MR. ALEXIE: Thank you.

38

39 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Brooke, do you?

40

41 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah. I just wanted to
42 respond quickly to Wassily, sorry. Do you remember --
43 were you on the Council when we had the Canadians do a
44 presentation? It was at our meeting in Anchorage and
45 they Zoomed in, they were on the screen. Not the All
46 Council meeting, but the one before that. They did share
47 some information about how they're protecting their
48 tributaries up there. I couldn't tell you -- I couldn't
49 tell you off the top of my head now what those are, but
50 it is something that they take into consideration, just

1 like we do here in Alaska when there's any sort of
2 proposed development. And I know that the other Councils
3 have also been concerned about the breach of one of the
4 dams in Canada, and they are doing water monitoring, or
5 they were up near the Canadian border on the Alaska side
6 at Eagle to make sure that those chemicals aren't coming
7 down and affecting our salmon. So, the other RAC that I
8 coordinate did hear an update about that. And so far,
9 they hadn't detected any level of those chemicals that
10 would affect the salmon, but it remains an ongoing
11 something to keep an eye on. Thanks.

12
13 MR. ALEXIE: Okay. Thank you, Brooke. Do
14 you have a copy of the information? If I could please
15 have one that I can look through it and bring it up to
16 our Council members. I know there's some people from the
17 community that's been asking about -- they haven't heard
18 anything from up that way. So, it would be a good thing
19 to bring up.

20
21 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah. No problem. I'll try
22 to dig up that presentation after the meeting. And if I
23 forget, just send me a text or email and we'll get that
24 to you. Thanks.

25
26 MR. BEANS: Hey, Brooke. This is Fred,
27 I'd like a copy of that too, please.

28
29 MS. MCDAVID: No problem, Fred. Thanks.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: If no one has a
32 question, I'd like to ask one. So, in summer of 23, I
33 when -- I went on a, I guess, an assignment with YR DFA
34 and SalmonState and we interviewed people from four
35 communities, one of them being Russian Mission. And
36 during that time there was an exchange with Canada. Does
37 that still -- is that program still on, the Canadian
38 exchange on the Yukon?

39
40 MR. NASHOANAK: Yeah. So, the educational
41 exchange, I believe, is what you're talking about
42 through the Yukon River panel. And the funding was
43 questioned, I believe -- I want to say, but it looks
44 like they are trying to pursue a -- another educational
45 exchange. I was actually part of 2024 educational
46 exchange to go to Canada, and we were able to go to Old
47 Crow, Whitehorse and Dawson City. So, it was a really
48 cool experience. But I believe they are trying to secure
49 some type of plan for Canadians to come back here this
50 summer.

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. I think that helped. You know, like there is people all along the Yukon who had many questions for them. So, I think it's a very useful exchange. Another thing I want to quickly point out was that I did a, you know, some, I think 11 or so on camera interviews and thousands of photos that are shared with SalmonState and YRDFA just so you know, you'd have access to that stuff if you ever needed it for anything.

MR. NASHOANAK: Of course, I'm always looking through our interviews. A lot of transcribing, but I love reading and listening to our elders speak about their traditional knowledge. So, it's a rewarding job.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks again. Any other questions or comments from us?

(No response)

Quyana. (In Native)

MR. NASHOANAK: Yeah. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Our next presenter, or our presenter is ONC, Orutsararmiut Native Council.

(Pause)

MS. HERRERA-MATTHIAS: Thank you for having us here today. I apologize that I did not -- we did not have anything to add to your packets, but I do have a copy of an important item. So, I will -- we will be presenting probably four subjects. One is the -- I'm sorry, I forgot to introduce myself. My name is Mary Herrera-Matthias. I am the natural resources director for Orutsararmiut Native Council. And with me I have Jacob Wade. He is our new fisheries biologist. I am from Bethel, originally.

So, the first item that I'm going to present on is the (indiscernible). Let me calm down. Proclamation Act -- proclamation resolution. Our ONC Council passed the -- this resolution in September during their regular monthly meeting. And their instructions on this is to share to everyone, all agencies regarding fisheries (pause) resolution number

1 2409-02, ONC proclamation. The first draft came out in
2 June 2024 and was last addressed in a meeting in Toksook
3 Bay. The resolution was discussed and explained to full
4 definition.

5
6 Self-determination. Tribes have the
7 ability and opportunity to take control and implement
8 designated fishing programs. Many tribal consultations
9 took place, and we were absent. We need to follow and
10 abide by the regulations, or we might lose our fishing
11 gear. Co-management will not work. Only the educated
12 people understand. This resolution will be sent to the
13 secretaries of fisheries, deputies and higher-level
14 workers. (Indiscernible) is not in the loop and they try
15 to push, but step back. The majority of the tribes step
16 back because a regional government appointed themselves.
17 There has been no -- there has been so much talk about
18 Alaska Native representation. The people who are running
19 for office are getting additional representation from
20 Calista. (Pause) So, the title and the language was
21 changed in September 2024 during the regular Council
22 meeting, and here is the resolution.

23
24 Resolution number 2409-02 ONC fisheries
25 resolution. Whereas the Orutsararmut Traditional Native
26 Council, tribal membership, ancestral history dates back
27 to millenniums. Harvesting fish during the summer to
28 sustain them in the winter months. And whereas the
29 membership has always respected the wishes of the
30 federal and state fishing fish management groups in
31 their efforts to sustain chinook numbers on the
32 Kuskokwim River. And whereas, the Kuskokwim River Inter-
33 Tribal Fish Commission is the decision makers on the
34 opportunities for the tribes along the Kuskokwim River.
35 And whereas Kalskag, Aniak, Crooked Creek, Georgetown,
36 Sleetmute, Stony River, McGrath, Lime Village are all
37 voting members of the coalition and have recently voted
38 no to the to lower river fishing, but can fish seven
39 days a week. And whereas the Tribal Council feels that
40 the process is totally unfair to lower river tribal
41 members who ultimately carry the burden of conservation.
42 And whereas a million red salmon have passed through the
43 weirs and the river remain closed to driftnet fishing.
44 And whereas the monthly -- the month, sorry. Whereas the
45 month of July and August are always rainy season and
46 make it challenging to dry fish, ultimately ending in
47 many fish thrown away because of spoiling. And whereas
48 the fish remains deeply rooted in the religious beliefs
49 of the Yup'ik people as a spiritual food to sustain our
50 livelihood and cultural way of life. And whereas during

1 the last three decades, the efforts of state and federal
2 management strategies, including fishing restrictions
3 have failed. And whereas there are many ONC tribal
4 members who need to harvest their food. And whereas ONC
5 successfully implemented a designating fish opportunity
6 during the 2016 closure. And now therefore, be it
7 resolved, the OTNC Council demands that the Federal
8 Management Working Group allow an emergency management
9 opening for 200 ONC tribal members for 12 hours. Be it
10 further resolved in coming years, OTNC has the option
11 to implement an emergency opening in alignment with the
12 government to government working relationship with the
13 U.S. Government and its departments.

14
15 For certification. This resolution was
16 adopted by the members of the Orutsararmiut Traditional
17 Native Council as a duty -- duly called meeting, in
18 which a quorum was present on the 20th day of September
19 2024 by a vote of five yes, zero no, zero abstain, and
20 two absent, and this was signed by Walter Jim, ONC Tribal
21 President, and Robert Hoffman, ONC Secretary, Tribal
22 Secretary. Would you like a copy?

23
24 (Pause)

25
26 The other item that I'm going to present
27 on is on the co-developing community-based water quality
28 monitoring in Alaska, listening and information
29 gathering to build on efforts in the Yukon-Kuskokwim
30 Delta. So, with our environmental program, we've started
31 a collaborations working group targeting tribal
32 communities within the Kuskokwim region and the Yukon.
33 We have invited, for the purposes of developing
34 qualified assurance project plans for studying water
35 quality samples and also monitoring. (Pause) We've
36 noticed that in rural communities where tribal
37 communities lack resources like running water, solid
38 waste infrastructure, and focusing, targeting in ways
39 to help improve water quality versus groundwater
40 contamination that affects us all in one way or the
41 other, including the subsistence foods that we gather.
42 Some communities have lacked resources, like when it
43 comes to drinking water. We know the information that
44 we gathered during the Alaska Forum on Environment is
45 that some communities still continue to drink or harvest
46 their water from the river, and knowing that there are
47 unregulated, unpermitted landfills and dump sites that
48 are not properly being maintained is affecting the
49 environment and affecting the waterways and the food
50 that we harvest.

1

2 We've noticed a lot of changes with
3 climate change. The tribal communities have witnessed
4 higher flooding events. We have witnessed higher
5 flooding occurring after spring and fall seasons. The
6 other thing I've been studying is on underserved
7 communities and neighborhoods who are more open to
8 hazardous waste exposure like fuel, abandoned rusting
9 metals, fuel tanks, fuel drums, large vehicles -- I
10 already said this one, unregulated, and it also includes
11 sewage lagoons. People, especially children and elders,
12 are more prone to get sick with flu-like symptoms due
13 to being exposed to rusting metals, also known as iron
14 oxide. Heavy metals lay abandoned in underserved
15 neighborhoods and in -- and throughout the tribal
16 communities throughout the Delta. And so, in starting
17 this collaborations group, we provide resources on grant
18 funding and also technical assistance in making sure
19 that no one gets left behind in what the community,
20 their communities and our communities aim to achieve,
21 which is a healthy environment for one and all.

22

23 So, in developing partnerships, we hope
24 that we are able to include the RAC too, in in the
25 projects that we're coming up with so that it is
26 successful and not leaving one out or leaving anyone
27 behind. So, it's important also to include our EPA Indian
28 General Assistance programs, along with the fisheries
29 arena, based on the Clean Water Act that has been
30 neglected by the State for so long.

31

32 The other item that I have also need to
33 touch on is our Swiffer Grant for the Bethel Community
34 Recycling Program Expansion. Recycling and accessibility
35 on electronic waste and reduction and community
36 composting. I've shared a little bit of this last year.
37 And it all relates to water quality -- improving water
38 quality like, taking a look at the landfills. Where
39 landfills are not properly lined to catch leachate and
40 methane gases from spreading outside the landfill. We
41 plan to recycle food -- food waste with this project,
42 the Swiffer Grant. And we plan to put out recycling
43 dumpsters throughout the community and also work with
44 the local stakeholders and businesses to help make sure
45 that, you know, all the recyclables are being recycled.
46 And we also plan to work with the City of Bethel and
47 their operations with the landfill to help reduce
48 electronic waste and other hazardous waste from
49 entering. And then we can get them all shipped out
50 through backhaul. And if you have any questions, you can

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1 ask me after Jacob's presentation. Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mary.

4 Jacob.

5

6 MR. WADE: Hi. Through the Chair. My name
7 is Jacob Wade. I am the new fisheries biologist. I
8 started this position back in January of 2025. I'm
9 originally from a small town in Oklahoma. Moved up to
10 Alaska in 2021. Pretty much fell in love with it as soon
11 as I got here. So, for my report, I just kind of got a
12 little bit of stuff together from what I read through
13 from the postseason projects that we have, and then kind
14 of give you a quick update on our 2025 projects. For the
15 postseason project for 2024 surveys were started on
16 time. We teamed up with ADF&G due to some staffing
17 issues. And ADF&G really helped get the get that project
18 finished out -- postseason project finished out. All the
19 surveys were then completed by October 1 for the
20 community of Bethel and turned in to ADF&G for that. For
21 the 2025 projects. For the in-season project, I've
22 started recruitment for our in-season fish techs and so
23 I've sort of got that process going. Because that's
24 really what we rely on a lot of the fish techs to help
25 us get a lot of the surveys at fish camps and stuff like
26 that. We really try to -- we look for ANSEP students
27 that are kind of interested in fisheries biology as,
28 like, internship opportunities for them. Specifically,
29 with UAF here in Bethel, we really try to get those
30 local students who have a, what's the word I'm looking
31 for, a stake in the community, you know, grew up here
32 and knows the language. And so those are the people that
33 we -- those are the kind of candidates we're looking
34 for, for there. We have the postseason project where we
35 collect postseason surveys. Haven't really started doing
36 anything on that one yet.

37

38 For broad whitefish project, we partner
39 with ADF&G on that one. Last couple of years, from what
40 I've gathered we've had a low number of returning on --
41 returns on the tags for the broad whitefish. So, I'm
42 hoping to get a little bit more engagement through the
43 community this year. Do some flyers and kind of do some
44 community outreach to get some more engagement on that
45 so we can get more data. And then in October, I will be
46 going up to McGrath to do some sampling along with the
47 ADF&G staff up there. We also have the science community
48 or science and culture camp this summer. We've already
49 started that planning process. The dates for that are
50 going to be July 21st to the 29th. We have 18 spots

1 available for students. And we -- the second meeting for
2 that will be happening this -- later this week. For the
3 ASL, age, sex, length project for king salmon. Flyers
4 have already been made and posted around. We had a good
5 participation here in Bethel, in the Bethel community
6 region last year. We had several people turning in lots
7 of the age, sex, length data that we needed. And that
8 really goes -- really does help kind of give us a good
9 estimate of the ages of the king salmon that are
10 returning into the river. And also, their size and
11 obviously the sex. And so that really gives us a good
12 idea of what -- what all is returning each year as far
13 as king salmon. So, hoping to get a little bit more
14 community engagement. As you can tell, my big, big push
15 this year is going to get a lot more community
16 engagement. Because we can't be everywhere pulling --
17 getting this data. So, the more help we can get through
18 the community the better. Big thing that I've been
19 working on for the past couple or this past two months
20 is that I learned that the -- we found out the Bethel
21 test fishery here in Bethel is not operating this year.
22 And that is the site that we use for our fish
23 distribution program where we take fish at -- the Bethel
24 test fishery has pulled for sampling, we take those
25 salmon and distribute them amongst the community
26 members. Particularly the elderly and disabled for their
27 subsistence needs. So that source of fish is no longer
28 available to us. So, I reached out to ADF&G to see what
29 other options we could possibly do, and they recommended
30 the sonar site that is located 20 miles upriver towards
31 Kwethluk. And so, we are going to partner with -- partner
32 with them with the sonar site to get some of the fish
33 from there. And so -- but the Billage of Kwethluk also
34 is using that site for some fish. So, we want to make
35 sure that we're not taking too many salmon away from the
36 Village of Kwethluk. So, ADF&G has offered to retain
37 more fish at the sonar site. So that way both us and
38 Kwethluk will get the salmon that we need. So, our --
39 as far as ONC, we will go up at the end of the first
40 shift and take those fish that they caught during the
41 first shift, which will end about -- between 12 and 1-
42 ish. And then the second shift, all those fish that are
43 caught on the second shift will go to Kwethluk.

44
45 Currently in talks with some other local
46 organizations like TWC, Tundra Women's Coalition and
47 BCSEF, Bethel Community Service Foundation, partnering
48 with them about some food security, since this does
49 involve that, about some partnerships with that
50 potentially getting some of the -- to have kids to teens

1 against violence kids involved in this. So, getting some
2 younger generation helping with the distribution with
3 the to the elders and stuff like that. So just some more
4 community and engagement and involvement, particularly
5 with the younger generation trying to get that -- make
6 sure that we -- that food security is still being met
7 and no one's going, going without fish this year. So --
8 and that's all I have for the Fisheries Department. Thank
9 you.

10

11 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. And
12 welcome, your kind of new so, I'll say welcome. Does
13 anyone have questions for either of them with ONC?

14

15 MR. MORGAN: Madam Chair.

16

17 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Wassily.

18

19 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

20

21 MR. MORGAN: I wanted to comment about
22 us being open 24/7. In the first openings, usually we
23 can't fish anyway because there's so much debris on the
24 river. It depends on the snow melt. If there's a lot of
25 snow up there, we wait, you know, till later. So, you
26 know, us being open 24/7 don't [sic] mean that we're out
27 there every day. We're not. The big populations up there
28 is Aniak and Kalskag. After that, you know, there's (In
29 Native) and there's like five people fishing in (In
30 Native). Then you go up to Napaimute, maybe there's 1
31 or 2, then you go up to Crooked Creek, there's at least
32 six fishermen up there. Okay. You go to Red Devil and
33 Georgetown, there's, you know, three people, and you go
34 up to Stony River or Sleetmute, there's only 5 or 6
35 people that fish and they don't go out in the early, you
36 know, we get something to eat if we are lucky to get
37 one. You know, being open 24/7 don't mean that the whole
38 communities are up and out fishing. There's nobody out
39 there. We always wait till the numbers of the reds build
40 up and they come up. What we get, you know, from down
41 here. And I wanted to bring that straight. And we also
42 work with Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. We got seven
43 Board members that decide to open the river. So, we work
44 with down river and up river, mid middle river. And it's
45 working and the front-end closure works. And I just
46 wanted to bring that point out. You know, that just
47 because we're open 24/7 don't mean we're out there. It's
48 very low impact. Thank you.

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1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Walter.
2 And if you don't mind, I wanted to maybe fill in the
3 rest of us when you -- you're speaking of the 24/7
4 fishing. You're speaking about the Aniak box, right?
5 That is under state jurisdiction. No?

6
7 MR. MORGAN: Well, they talk about the
8 Kaltag line up. You know, we're open 24/7, but there's
9 no fish out there when it's open. They -- they're running
10 deep. The first one's always run deep. They way out, and
11 like I say, if the water is high, we don't catch them.
12 So -- and I want to bring that misconception, like, you
13 know, we're open 24/7 and they're closed down here. It
14 don't mean that we're fishing. We wait till the numbers
15 build up, then we fish because we can't afford it. You
16 go to Crooked Creek, and you get a gallon of gas. It's
17 12.50 a gallon. You know, you go further up to Stony
18 River, it's, you know, \$14 a gallon of gas. So, you
19 know, it's just because we're open 24/7 don't mean that
20 we're out there fishing. Thank you.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Walter.
23 (In Native) Oh, Francis.

24
25 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair, this is
26 Francis. I just want to -- have a question, could the
27 RAC members get a copy of the ONC's resolution? That's
28 pretty interesting.

29
30 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah, I can scan a copy
31 when I get back to the office and. And mail -- email it
32 to you if that works.

33
34 MR. PRICE: Thank you.

35
36 MS. HERRERA-MATTHIAS: Through the
37 Chair, I have it in [sic] email, so I already have your
38 email and I could just send it to you and then you could
39 share it with them.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks, Mary.

42
43 MS. MCDAVID: Thanks, Mary.

44
45 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Alissa.

48
49 MR. ROGERS: Thank you. This is for the
50 ONC fisheries biologist. Within the purview, Pippa might

1 be able to help answer this question as well, is there
2 a possibility that with the two technicians that you're
3 going to be hiring, that you could hire them as ONC
4 Fisheries technicians and be able to pick up the Bethel
5 test fish process of going out fishing, collecting the
6 data needed that ADF&G needs, and then being able to
7 continue that data set and also have a copy at ONCs,
8 because we are conducting the work that we would be able
9 to take over that project per se.

10

11 MR. WADE: Through the Chair. So, one of
12 the reasons that the Bethel test fishery is not operating
13 this year is due to funding. The other reason is due to
14 the difference in the data that the Bethel test fishery
15 and the sonar site are in -- are -- they are in conflict
16 with each other. The Bethel test fishery has been showing
17 worse runs than what the sonar and other the run
18 reconstructions and stuff are showing. So that is part
19 of the reason that the Bethel test fishery was no longer
20 funded was because of the difference in the data being
21 shown. As far as ONC operating it, that is something
22 that I would have to look into the budget of the
23 different projects that I have. And, you know, talk with
24 Mary and the Council about that option. That is something
25 that I will absolutely look into. Thank you.

26

27 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you.

28

29 (Pause)

30

31 Hearing no other questions. Thank you
32 both for your presentation. It's very informative. And
33 -- hold on one second. We're going to take a ten-minute
34 break before we move on to the ADF&G presentation on
35 Coho Salmon Ratio Telemetry Project. So back at 3:37.

36

37 (Off record)

38

39 (On record)

40

41 Good afternoon. I'll call the meeting
42 back to order at 3:40. We're already a few minutes late
43 and still have quite a bit on our agenda, but I think
44 we could still do it by five. And if not, it'll be a
45 little after five. I'll just forewarn you. So next, let's
46 just go right into our ADF&G presentation on Coho Salmon
47 Ratio Telemetry Project.

48

49 MS. BORBA: Okay. Good afternoon. Can you
50 hear me?

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

Ms. BORBA: Okay. I'm sorry. Andy had to take off, and I got elected to do the presentation. My name is Bonnie Borba. I'm -- I was born in Anchorage, and I was raised in North Pole, Alaska. I'm the fall season fisheries research biologist with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries here in Fairbanks. I'm presenting on the 2022 Radio Telemetry Project conducted on the Yukon River coho salmon. This project marked the first time coho salmon were radio tagged in the Yukon River, serving as a feasibility study. Previously, ADF&G has cooperated with other agencies to conduct radio telemetry studies on chinook salmon, summer chum, and some components of the fall chum salmon in the Yukon River drainage. Funding for this project, it's been cooperative, is provided by the Office of Subsistence Management Alaska Department of Fish and Game Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Yukon River Salmon Research and Management Fund. Next slide please.

This study was developed to address the limited knowledge about coho salmon within the Yukon River drainage. Baseline information needs to be collected to assist in effective fisheries management. Coho salmon are harvested across important fisheries, including subsistence, commercial, personal use, and sport fisheries within the Yukon River drainage. As the last major salmon species to migrate up the Yukon River in the fall, studying their migration is particularly challenging due to the onset of winter. The project's objectives included mapping the distribution of the tagged coho salmon, calculating proportional contributions to five drainage groups, determining the mean migration speed between river sections, and analyzing run timing through the lower river and each drainage group. Additionally, the project aims -- aim to identify migration routes and spawning areas, assist with nominations to the Anadromous Waters Catalog, and pinpoint areas to enhance the genetic baseline. First, I'll cover some of the fieldwork conducted as part of the project, followed by preliminary results that address these objectives. Next slide please.

This map highlights the five drainage groups represented by the colored polygons. Each were chosen to define coho salmon drainage groups for this

1 study area. The groups were selected based on available
2 tower locations and limited coho salmon data. The map
3 also shows the location of the 11 remote tracking tower
4 -- tracking stations, which we call them towers a lot,
5 that are established for this project. Four towers were
6 positioned along the main stem Yukon River, while six
7 were placed on tributaries. The white area of the lower
8 Yukon, downstream from the first tower is not included
9 in the drainage groups. We know that coho salmon are
10 present in the Andraefsky River and other systems in the
11 lower Yukon River, below the tagging site. The tagging
12 location was chosen based on river morphology. It's a
13 single channel at that place, logistics with the
14 Community of Russian Mission and its position above the
15 commercial fishing districts. Next slide please.

16
17 So, in 2021, the tower sites were
18 cleared as they had not been visited since the 2015 --
19 during the previous summer chum salmon tagging project.
20 In 2022, just before tagging began, the towers were
21 revisited to upload tag frequency tables, which are
22 essential for detecting individual fish as they pass the
23 towers. The initial phase of the project involved
24 dedicating a couple of days to fishing with snag nets
25 at potential sites, and training staff on tagging
26 procedures. Tagging officially started on August 15th
27 and continued daily until September 5th. Following the
28 release of the tagged fish, fish were tracked via
29 stationary tracking towers and aerial surveys. Next
30 slide please.

31
32 This chart compares the number of coho
33 salmon tagged shown in the black line, to the coho salmon
34 daily passage estimates provided by the sonar operated
35 near Pilot Station, shown as the colored bars. The data
36 on the bottom axis is lagged to Russian Mission, which
37 is 90 miles upriver from the sonar site. The tags
38 deployed occurred during the bulk of the run and covered
39 both large pulses. 349 tags were deployed. Next slide
40 please.

41
42 This map displays the final tracked
43 locations of coho salmon throughout the drainage.
44 Additional tributaries were surveyed with no tag
45 detections. A total of 67 tagged coho salmon traveled
46 to previously undocumented areas. This resulted in 19
47 additions to the Anadromous Waters Catalogue, and it
48 provided documentation for 37 additional water bodies.
49 Next slide please.

50

1 This donut chart illustrates the
2 observed percentage of coho salmon that migrate to
3 within the four regions from the prior map, based on the
4 data from the towers and the aerial survey tracking
5 flights and the colors on the donut match the map
6 polygons. Describing clockwise, coho salmon primarily
7 migrated to the Tanana River, 53% were shown in the
8 rightmost section, the yellow section, while significant
9 portions occupied the Lower Yukon group, 34% in the
10 largest left segment, and it includes the Anvik River
11 and the one fish that went up the Innoko River. The
12 Koyukuk River drainage accounted for 7% in the dark blue
13 segment, and the middle Yukon accounted for 6%, the green
14 or teal section that's about 12:00 and included fish
15 found in the Yuki River headwaters. The upper Yukon River
16 area above the confluence of the Tanana River,
17 representing the fifth drainage group, only had one coho
18 salmon, so it constituted less than 1%. Next slide
19 please.

20
21 This chart describes the length of the
22 coho salmon that were tagged. The bottom axis of the
23 chart are the lengths in millimeters, and the left axis
24 is the number of males and females tagged. Catches
25 influenced by net selectivity and fishing locations, we
26 fish close to the shore due to the coho salmon behavior
27 and to reduce chum salmon capture. Female coho salmon
28 are usually slightly larger than males, but in 2022 the
29 male coho salmon were notably smaller than the females
30 and it [sic] consistent with our other test fishery
31 projects in the lower Yukon. Our project avoided tagging
32 some of the smaller coho salmon as we prioritize the
33 best tag fit to the size of the fish. Next slide please.

34
35 Migration speed was calculated based on
36 the date and time of release of each of the tower
37 locations. This box plot chart is based on the fish that
38 are tracked between the successive towers in kilometers
39 per day. The vertical lines represent the minimum and
40 maximums, and the shaded areas represent the 25 to 75th.
41 Horizontal lines within the box represent the median
42 speed, and the points indicate the outliers. After
43 initial tagging, the average travel speed is slowed
44 slightly or slowed, likely due to the tagging event, and
45 once they resume their migration, the average mainstem
46 migration speed was 33km per day. Migration speed slowed
47 down as coho salmon approached spawning areas, as shown
48 by the Anvik River fish that were only traveling 22
49 miles per day, and they're highlighted in the blue box
50 and fish within the Tanana River drainage also showed

1 some slowing over successive stations in that drainage.
2 As we use the blue arrow to represent that, however,
3 these towers were not located on the spawning streams
4 but, were in the main stem of the Tansna River and the
5 Kantishna Rivers, which are tributaries to the Yukon.
6 Next slide please.

7
8 The chart shows the date the fish were
9 tagged relative to where they ended up in this chart
10 series. The date is along the bottom, and the final
11 location is noted in the grey box on the right of each
12 chart. The color of the charts correspond to the
13 presentation maps shows from the top to the bottom, which
14 is downriver to upriver. The first set is below Paimuit.
15 The second one is Lower Yukon. The third one is Koyukuk
16 River. The fourth one is Middle Yukon. The next yellow
17 one is Tanana River. And the very bottom one with the
18 single fish is the one fish that went up above the on
19 the Yukon mainstem by the rapids. That was the last fish
20 we had there. The next slide, please. Okay. Based on the
21 tracking, coho salmon -- in this study, several areas
22 were identified as needing additional genetic baseline
23 coverage. These areas were determined by comparing our
24 study results with the existing lab samples. The areas
25 are listed by the Regional Advisory Council Regions. So,
26 you guys are in the first box there. Some of the systems
27 that we need, additional samples are listed there,
28 Archuelinguk, Andraefsky and the Bonasila River. Please
29 contact ADF&G Gene Conservation Lab if you're interested
30 in collaborating on sample collections for this
31 baseline. If you know of other locations where coho
32 salmon are spawning in accessible congregations of at
33 least 200 fish, please share the information and note
34 that the contact information for our geneticists is on
35 the slide for reference. Next slide please.

36
37 (Pause)

38
39 Okay, so as discussed in the previous
40 slide, the tracking fish to the spawning locations
41 within the Yukon River drainage identified key sites to
42 improve the genetic baseline for coho salmon. This
43 project marked the first time coho salmon were radio
44 tagged in the Yukon River, serving as a feasibility
45 study. To better account for natural variability, we
46 recommend conducting similar studies over three years.
47 We urge decision makers to prioritize funding for coho
48 salmon research alongside chinook and chum salmon, as
49 coho salmon are crucial to the ecosystem. The
50 observations from this project would be strengthened by

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1 additional years of tracking, which would build
2 documentation to increase nominations to the Anadromous
3 Waters Catalog. Confirming coho salmon in the same areas
4 in future studies will help list more locations in the
5 Anadromous Waters Catalog, providing greater habitat
6 protections for these critical areas. And the landing
7 zones in the tower maintenance that we established
8 during this project streamline preparation for the
9 current chinook salmon telemetry study as a cost
10 savings, and these resources are ready to support future
11 coho and chum salmon telemetry efforts. Next slide
12 please. And again, these are acknowledgements to the
13 folks involved with this project. As we mentioned at the
14 start of the presentation and our contact information
15 is there as well. If you'd like to contact Andy or I,
16 on anything related to this topic in the future, besides
17 the questions that I'll take after this, that's all I
18 have.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you for
21 that thorough report. And there is a question online.
22 Please state your name.

23
24 MS. MCDAVID: I'm going to call first on
25 Andre Simon, would you like to ask Bonnie your question
26 that you put in the chat?

27
28 MR. SIMON: Oh, yeah. Just asking where
29 was Paimiut located at? Is that -- is that right above
30 Hooper Bay, between Scammon Bay?

31
32 MS. BORBA: It's above Russian Mission.

33
34 MR. SIMON: It's above Russian Mission.
35 There's another one. Okay.

36
37 MS. BORBA: Yeah.

38
39 MR. SIMON: It's another clarification.

40
41 MS. BORBA: Yeah, yeah. No problem. It's
42 a -- it's -- and it's a tower name, but it's up at the
43 Paimiuy up there.

44
45 MR. SIMON: Okay. Got it. Thank you.

46
47 MS. BORBA: Yep.

48
49 MS. MCDAVID: And Madam Chair, we had
50 another question from Martin Kelly.

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MR. KELLY: I just have one question for the code that are tagged, is there mortality or the number of the tagged salmon that don't reach their destination?

MS. BORBA: There's a few that didn't head upriver. They could have gone back down to Andreafsky. We weren't able to get the plane that was -- we had a plane that was survey and even beyond -- below where we were at to check for that. And he wasn't able on one of his tries to make it up there when they would have been like if they were going up there to spawn, because we know there's lots of fish in that area or down below. We did have a few that were up near the tagging site downstream a little bit. And those probably either they regurgitated the tag, or they could have possibly passed away, but it was really close to the site, so they're likely regurgitations in the fish probably went up without the radio tag in it. But yeah, we do keep track of all the ones we couldn't find or locate. There's a certain number of those, but they went -- they could have gone to many other areas that we couldn't cover in our flights, and if they went into -- up a trip that our tower wasn't on, that kind of thing, but we did lots of, of quite a few flights.

MR. KELLY: One more comment I know your salmon are, you know, you could locate the salmon through genetics. So, I would think the further upstream the salmon go, those they're big plump torpedoes out here at the sonar project. So, I just want to compliment you guys on efforts to try, you know, keep track of our salmon. Those numbers on your charts are really low appreciated. Thank you very much.

MS. BORBA: Thanks for your comment.

MS. MCDAVID: Okay, Madam Chair, there's one more comment online or question. And that will be our last question for this presentation. Stanislaus Sheppard, go ahead.

MR. SHEPPARD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you. Yes. My question is apparently this is a news to me that this, you know, 19 or what was the additional streams instead of the normal spot oho swim to. How far this go back? A couple of years, five years or just the past year? Thank you.

1 MR. BORBA: The Anadromous Waters Catalog
2 has more than what is shown here. This is just where we
3 track these particular fish. And so in 2022, the dots
4 on the on slide six if they want to go back to that or
5 not, but that's where all the fish that we tracked ended
6 up going in that year. That we -- when we, when we found
7 them in their final location or all the final places we
8 looked for them, that's where they ended up.

9
10 MS. MCDAVID: Bonnie, this.....

11
12 MS. BORBA: We added -- go ahead.

13
14 MS. MCDAVID: Sorry. Bonnie, this is
15 Brooke. I just was hoping you could clarify. Some people
16 might not know what the AWC is. Maybe you could explain.
17 Thank you.

18
19 MS. BORBA: Yeah. It's the Anadromous
20 Waters Catalog is where they -- all the anadromous fish
21 that are documented go into it, and it provides habitat
22 protection. Like if somebody wants to cross the river
23 to take some mining equipment somewhere. And if we say
24 there's fish spawning in there, they have to be careful,
25 you know, they have to get a permit to make sure they
26 cross at the right place and don't hurt the eggs or the
27 salmon. And so, it's important to document where the
28 fish are spawning. And then they go into this big catalog
29 that does the whole State. We're just looking at trying
30 to fix, put them -- add them to the Yukon. So, we looked
31 at originally back in '92 and '93, we did subsistence
32 surveys, and we asked the people along the whole river
33 when we do that. The Subsistence Surveys project that
34 comes to your community every year, in '92 and '93, we
35 asked everybody where they saw fish. And we have where
36 our pilots or different people see them and where they
37 are already in the catalog. We're trying to add to it
38 by this project, and it'll protect additional areas
39 because we didn't know they were going here. Now they
40 have criteria that there has to be like enough fish to
41 be a spawning aggregate. And so, you can't just have one
42 fish, you have to have more than that. So, these 19
43 editions were where we had 19 places that they've never
44 had -- never had in that catalog. Documentation of
45 spawning aggregates. So, those got entered, there's
46 these 37 supporting ones. And then all the fish that we
47 found -- that we just found them there this one time but
48 if you do the study three years and they still go to
49 that same place in other years, that will also help
50 document them in the Anadromous Waters Catalog, because

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1 it must be a spawning area if the fish keep going to the
2 same location, whether or not, you know, if we can see
3 more of them, that to prove it's an actual aggregating
4 spawning location, it will help. So that's the purpose
5 of -- part of the study, is it helps with that and
6 getting baseline information from these -- when we find
7 these new locations. That's what's telling us, okay,
8 because of where we found the fish, we want samples from
9 these different areas that I showed on the second to
10 last slide or whatever, shows where we need -- where our
11 the genetic samples we have now don't cover all of the
12 places that we found, and we need some better
13 representation. On the actual spawning grounds is where
14 you have to get the genetic samples for baseline
15 sampling. So, if that helps.

16

17 MR. SHEPPARD: Madam Chair, one last
18 question will be short.

19

20 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Stanislaus, go
21 ahead.

22

23 MR. SHEPPARD: Thank you, Madam Chair.
24 Yes. Growing up, I would always hear this. Elders, I
25 would always would say, don't play with the fish. If you
26 if you handle them and put them back in the water,
27 they'll get disorientated, and it's been proven. There's
28 one -- take a couple tags up there in Porcupine. End up
29 going up the Nenana. I was thinking since these cohos
30 were tagged, maybe they get disorientated and go to these
31 new spawning areas, which may be, I'm guessing they're
32 all gravel bedded instead of weeds. Did you guys do a
33 survey on the spawning areas, these new streams you guys
34 look at? Thank you. End of my question.

35

36 MS. BORBA: Yeah. When an aerial surveys,
37 we can see, you know, some of them we can see to the
38 bottom of the rivers and you can see the reds that
39 they're digging. And a lot of these places, like up on
40 the Tanana River, we have lots of streams that we aerial
41 survey every year with larger populations. These are --
42 some of these are just -- there's -- we found some new
43 areas, but a lot of the Tanana River is already
44 documented on the Anadromous Waters Catalog because we
45 do a lot of surveys up this area. So, we know there's a
46 lot of fish that go on the Tanana anyway. And this thing
47 proved out pretty much what we thought as far as, like
48 a large proportion of them still went to the Tanana.
49 We'll still have to look at when we get information and
50 go out and get some more of these other samples. We're

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1 getting them clear up the rivers where they're actually
2 spawning. And so, they will be the baseline that will
3 tell us if they went somewhere else in the future.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you for the
6 question, Stanislaw. We have I know we said that was the
7 last one, but we're going to go with one more since no
8 one from our RAC asked yet. So, Wassily Alexie.

9

10 MR. ALEXIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I
11 just got a comment and a question. I know our salmon's
12 been tagged and studied for so many years. I'm from
13 Russian Mission, and I know they've been studying those
14 fish from quite a few years back, and I just saw your
15 slideshow up there that after they get tagged or radio
16 collared, they it slowed the salmon down. Do all these
17 salmon make it up to their spawning grounds in time, or
18 how many percent of those tagged fish make it up to
19 their spawning areas?

20

21 MS. BORBA These ones -- some of these
22 are -- these are all -- they're up some small streams.
23 I mean, they went clear up the headwaters of the Yuki
24 River and clear up the Koyukuk and different places. So,
25 they're making it up to the spawning grounds. And just
26 like other studies on the slide she's on now that the
27 fish tend to slow down because they're milling around
28 and deciding that which, you know, the river, they're
29 going in there waiting to ripen up if they get there
30 early or whatever, and then they go into the stream to
31 spawn. That's why they're slowing down. Their main speed
32 through the most of this chart. The center of the chart,
33 when they're just trucking up the main stem the third
34 bar and the fourth bar and the fifth one, that's just
35 the fish cruising up the main stem before they get into
36 the actual tribs. And then they slowdown in the tribs.

37

38 MS. ALEXIE: Thank you.

39

40 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. I
41 don't mean to be so sudden, but we're going to wrap up
42 this part of the agenda and move on to H, U.S. Fish and
43 Wildlife Service. And under that the first presentation
44 is Kuskokwim River Broad Whitefish study.

45

46 MS. MCDAVID: Yes. I did want to make a
47 note. The Subsistence Division project update and the
48 Arctic Beaver Observation Network update will be moved
49 to the fall meeting. There were some conflicts, so and
50 it'll just be one second while I get the broad whitefish

1 presentation pulled up, and I believe we have Frank
2 Harris online to give that.

3

4 MR. HARRIS: Good afternoon. Can
5 everybody hear me?

6

7 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

8

9 MR. HARRIS: While she's getting that
10 pulled up I'll just kind of say we're finally moving on
11 to some whitefish. I'm pretty pumped about this. For the
12 record my name is Frank Harris. I'm a fish biologist
13 with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southern Alaska
14 Fish and Wildlife Field Office stationed in Soldotna,
15 Alaska. And I'm here today to talk to you guys about
16 some whitefish and mainly broad whitefish here on this
17 project that we're operating in cooperation with ONC,
18 the Native Nillage of Napaimute, the U.S. Fish and
19 Wildlife Service, that includes my office and the Yukon
20 Delta National Wildlife Refuge. This project has been
21 funded through OSM. The fisheries resource monitoring
22 program. But prior to that, next slide please. Prior to
23 that, we're going to go through a little bit of history
24 on what we've done on whitefish work in the drainage and
25 a little bit of whitefish life history, broad whitefish.
26 Next slide please. Yep.

27

28 There we go. All right. So, the
29 fisheries office here in Soldotna has been working on
30 the with whitefish on the Kuskokwim River since 2001.
31 And it all started with local users observing a decrease
32 in size and numbers of broad whitefish at Whitefish Lake.
33 From there, we moved on to on to radio telemetry to see
34 where these fish were spawning, and after locating the
35 spawning areas for broads, humpbacks and least cisco,
36 we concentrated on spawning ground surveys. We did
37 sample the spawning humpback whitefish in the Swift and
38 (indiscernible) Rivers back in 2006, and most recently,
39 broad whitefish above McGrath in 2014 and 2015. A little
40 bit of broad whitefish life history. They typically lay
41 their eggs in the fall. They're broadcast spawners
42 meaning they lay their eggs in mass in the water column.
43 These eggs drift downstream and stick to the bottom where
44 they incubate. Once the eggs hatch, the juveniles drift
45 downstream looking for suitable habitat. And typically,
46 in the Kuskokwim, they'll end up way down river. And a
47 significant proportion of them will be at the river mouth
48 or out in the bay. They'll have a signature in their
49 otolith of this brackish water. And that's how we can
50 tell. These fish feed and grow in the lower areas until

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1 they become mature, and they embark on a spawning
2 migration back up-river. After spawning, the adults will
3 typically drop back down to overwintering wintering
4 areas in the and then in the spring, they'll start
5 seeking productive areas to feed, such as shallow lakes.
6 They've shown fidelity to these feeding locations. The
7 spawning migration has been shown to be very variable.
8 Some will leave in, say, June with tagged fish down by
9 Tuntutuliak and the (In Native) River systems. And
10 they've started heading upriver in June, late June.
11 Others don't leave until August. However, they all
12 venture upriver to spawn, and the spawning occurs in
13 late October, early November usually right at freeze up
14 or under the ice. Broad whitefish are assumed to be skip
15 year spawners, but a few of them, usually small males,
16 will spawn every year. Next slide please.

17
18 So, we operated Whitefish Lake from 2001
19 to 2003. 2002 and '3, we were actually able to count
20 fish. And we were able to get an estimate for broad
21 whitefish, close to 670 broad whitefish. We could not
22 estimate humpbacks and least cisco in this project
23 because we were unsure of proper mark identification
24 during times of high passage. There was over 25,000
25 humpbacks and 15,000 least cisco passing downstream each
26 year in 2002 and 2003. The water there is pretty, pretty
27 murky. So, they had to be netted through and counted
28 individually. And this was typically at night. So that's
29 why we couldn't provide any kind of estimate on those.
30 But broad whitefish, there wasn't really a whole lot of
31 them hanging out there in Whitefish Lake at that time.
32 Next slide.

33
34 So, this led us to wonder where these
35 fish were actually spawning. There were some
36 documentation of spawning areas from (indiscernible)
37 back in the 70s and a few others, but there wasn't a
38 whole lot of real good idea of modern day spawning
39 locations. Like if there was any more, etc. so we moved
40 on to radio telemetry in 2004 to 2008. From -- we started
41 Whitefish Lake in 2004 and 2005, and then we kind of
42 branched out from there. We tagged about 30 to 45 broad
43 whitefish per year, which isn't a whole lot, and we
44 tracked them to their spawning areas and attempt to get
45 migration timing, spawning location, overwintering
46 location, and feeding areas. So, the later years, we
47 tagged them in places near Kalskag down below Bethel in
48 the (In Native) River area, (In Native) lake area, so
49 we kind of moved around to see if we could find different
50 spawning aggregates. And this telemetry study found two

1 suspected spawning locations. But the primary location
2 being in this area, you see here, circled above the
3 graph. The second location being below Swift River by
4 (In Native) landing. We were not able to verify the
5 second location near (In Native) landing, and there
6 really wasn't a lot of tagged fish in that area. So
7 that's another thing we'd like to investigate further.
8 Unfortunately, during this study, we only had two-years
9 or we had two years of poor quality tags that didn't
10 return us much data, so we weren't able to get as much
11 knowledge on their habitat as much as, you know, we
12 could have. So, we're a little bit disappointed on that.
13 Next slide please.

14
15 From there we moved on to population
16 demographics. And this was on the broad whitefish there
17 in that same vicinity around McGrath that we just saw
18 in the previous slide. We used electrofishing to sample
19 these, these spawning broad whitefish. We sampled over
20 1200 whitefish, broad whitefish during those times. We
21 found no significant difference between the years. And
22 this is pretty important since they're skipping
23 spawners, but it shows that both your spawning groups
24 are essentially the same population. They're not having
25 differential mortality between years. Next slide please.

26
27 So, this brings us to the current
28 project. Trying to figure out how many there are in that
29 spawning aggregate around McGrath. So, project
30 objectives are to estimate subsistence harvest rates,
31 estimate population demographics and abundance, and
32 identify areas of harvest in the Kuskokwim River. This
33 map up in the upper right kind of shows you know, the
34 drainage in total. And then down below you see the upper
35 and lower limits of our sampling areas. 25 river
36 kilometers downstream and 75 river kilometers upstream
37 of McGrath. Next slide please.

38
39 And, there you go. The study is designed
40 as a mark recapture study to estimate population size.
41 Since it's suspected that they are skipping spawners,
42 it was also designed as a four-year study to ensure that
43 the whole population is being sampled twice. We're using
44 a boat mounted electrofishing unit to shock the fish
45 enough to where the crew can actually dip them with nets
46 out of the bow of the boat, put them into a holding
47 tank, and then we sample them from there. Our crew is
48 constantly adjusting the voltage, adjusting for
49 conductivity depth, and we constantly monitor the
50 condition of fish and we adjust the output

1 appropriately. So will net fish whether the humpbacks
2 or other species. And we'll put them in this holding
3 tank and observe them while we're still electrofishing,
4 to make sure that we're not using too much electricity
5 and harming the fish. Once we get them in the tank, the
6 holding tank, the broad whitefish the fish will receive
7 a Floy tag behind their dorsal fin with a unique tag
8 number and a 1-800 number to call, and you can see them
9 doing an upper picture, upper left picture. We also take
10 length, weight, sex and clip the first fin ray on the
11 left side of the pectoral fin. That's a secondary marker,
12 and we also get age from that. The fin rays are processed
13 in the lab during the winter months. This picture in the
14 middle lower, middle bottom is an example of what they
15 look like after they've been processed and ready to be
16 aged. So, you can see almost like rings in a tree. You
17 can count those just like a they work actually better
18 than a fish scale or long-lived population or fish
19 populations like whitefish. Not quite as good as
20 otoliths, but you have to sacrifice the fish for
21 otoliths. So, this is the best we can do.

22
23 So, I've heard questions in other public
24 meetings, including from ex-fish biologists asking
25 saying they don't know how electrofishing works. So,
26 we're going to go through it a little bit. It's a method
27 used to sample fish, and it basically immobilizes them
28 with an electrical field. It's pretty -- oh, sorry. Thank
29 you for forwarding the slide there. It's a common
30 sampling method in fisheries, and it's been used safely
31 and successfully on whitefish in Alaska, on the
32 Kuskokwim and Yukon rivers. The boat operator/crew lead
33 uses an electrical fishing control box. And then with
34 anodes and cathodes. Anodes are the positives. They're
35 usually on poles and stick off the bow. Cathodes are the
36 negatives that are just kind of some wires dangling off
37 the bow. And this creates a field in the water. The
38 positive anode will stimulate the fish's nervous system
39 so that it'll actually swim towards the anode. And then
40 the operators can then net them. The control box is used
41 to dial in the amount and type of current needed to
42 immobilize fish without harming them. And it's important
43 to note that the larger the fish, that the harder it
44 gets hit by the electrical field. So, it's kind of
45 opposite what people would think. The smaller fish can
46 go away unscathed. So, you're always watching how it
47 affects the bigger fish. Next slide please.

48
49 So how do fish react to electrofishing?
50 And this kind of -- I found this this picture. And it

1 kind of explains like the different stages of their
2 reaction. At first, on the outer edges of the field,
3 it's fright. They feel it. It tickles them. They swim
4 out of there. The next stage gets a little bit closer,
5 and there's a little more deeper into the field. There's
6 electric taxis. So, this is involuntary muscle
7 contraction that will actually cause the fish to swim
8 towards the anode. This helps us catch them and net
9 them. From their narcosis, which is the state of
10 electrically induced immobility with slack muscles. And
11 you'll see a picture of that on the next slide. What
12 fish look like in narcosis? Once they get a little bit
13 closer, deeper into the field, there's pseudo forced
14 swimming, which is slow swimming movement towards the
15 anode while the fish is belly up. And once they get
16 right next to the anode is tetany. And that's a state
17 of electrically induced immobility with rigid muscles.
18 Next slide please.

19
20 So, is electrofishing safe? The short
21 answer is it can be a very safe and efficient capture
22 method for fish. It temporarily stuns them, allowing
23 them to be captured. And they typically recover.
24 (Indiscernible) et al in 1997 found that abundances of
25 three trout species remained stable or increased over
26 an eight year period of electrofishing sampling. So that
27 kind of shows that it can be used safely and efficiently,
28 effectively for sampling. In these sunfish in the lower
29 left picture there in narcosis or -- yeah, they're in a
30 state of narcosis. So that's kind of what they look like
31 when we're dipping that dip net now. And to test the
32 survival of the broad whitefish that we've been sampling
33 we've set up a holding net and we've put some in there
34 and this test, the 12 to 24 hour survival of these fish.
35 And once a week we'll put them in these holding tanks
36 and leave them overnight to make sure that they're not
37 having delayed mortality from their sampling. We saw no
38 mortality from these fish sampled. Overall, we estimate
39 that less than 1% of the broad whitefish we captured
40 using electrofishing were mortality. So less -- we
41 sampled over 1000 fish this year. Only 6 or 7 were
42 mortality. The few fish that did die, we took them into
43 McGrath, and we gave them to the elders in McGrath, so
44 they were used. Next slide please.

45
46 So, I'm a little bit preliminary
47 results. This shows some stuff from 2014 and 2015 in
48 there, along with what we've been doing since '22 to
49 '24. Our sample size goal was to try to catch at least
50 600 fish per year, but the more the better. And as you

1 can see, our goal has been met in most years. In 2023,
2 the goal was not met due to a sudden end in the field
3 season due to a potential government shutdown. I'd like
4 to point out that the CPUE in 2024 was three times higher
5 than the previous year's, almost three times. We're not
6 sure why, but there's a couple of things that could be.
7 It could be that there's a large cohort of fish that
8 spawns every third year. I looked at some of the data
9 from the Kuskokwim River Sonar, and they've had large
10 numbers of broad whitefish (indiscernible) the sonar in
11 2021 and 2024. We don't have data from this project in
12 2021, but we did see large increase in catches in 2024.
13 So that's something we want to look for and maybe run
14 this study to a couple more years to try to see if that
15 maybe there is a large proponent that spawn every third
16 year. The other possibility is that the crew's become
17 more efficient because we had several crew members who
18 returned this year. Next slide please.

19
20 Looking at these graphs. They show the
21 catch per unit effort versus water temperature. And it
22 shows that as the water temperature dropped, the CPUE
23 went up. Broad whitefish generally spawn right at freeze
24 up, so it makes sense to see this increase close to
25 their spawning period. More fish were moving into the
26 area and staging to spawn. So, as later the year went
27 on. So, two of the three years had their highest CPUE
28 just before two stop fishing for the season. 2022 is an
29 outlier because the crew went up into Big River and late
30 September, and they found large numbers of fish holding
31 their. The Big River is above our sampling area, but it
32 showed some interesting data. We tried this again in
33 2024, and we didn't find nearly as many fish as we did
34 in 2022 hiding in the Big River there. Talking with Lisa
35 Study with ADF&G. She ran a sheefish sonar up the Big
36 River. Probably ten years ago, maybe. She told us that
37 they had not seen any broad whitefish in their sampling
38 at this sheefish sonar, which was just a few bins up
39 from where we were sampling in the Big River. So, we're
40 not really sure what they were doing up there, but it's
41 kind of interesting data nonetheless. Next slide please.

42
43 So, if you look at the age data across
44 years, you can see that the mean age has decreased in
45 our samples since 2014 and 2015. These age differences
46 are not considered statistically significant. But they
47 do seem to be trending downward fashion. Currently, this
48 isn't alarming, but it might be worth keeping an eye on.
49 Additionally, the difference in ages could be due to a
50 strong group of younger cohorts entering the population

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1 or difference in agers because we had a different person
2 aging in 2014 and 2015 than we do currently, or it could
3 be from other factors. This graph on the right tends to
4 show that these fish do seem to be growing faster than
5 they did in 2014 and 2015. This could indicate good
6 feeding conditions over time, or it could indicate
7 errors in aging biasing the fish age, the younger ages,
8 we're not 100% sure. And so later this year, once our
9 crew leader is done aging the 2024 fish, they're going
10 to look back into this, the 2014 and '15 data and see
11 if they're getting a different age than the original
12 agers did. So, we're going to look into that and see if
13 it's difference in aging or if there actually are
14 younger.

15
16 On to lengths. Next slide please. So,
17 on the lengths and weights, there appears to be no
18 difference between lengths between years. However, the
19 fish sampled in the project most recently tend to be a
20 little bit longer on average than the previous project.
21 This tends to agree with the previous slide, where the
22 fish were longer at age than in 2014 and 2015. The same
23 could be said about the weights. They're not
24 significantly different between years, but the current
25 project tends to be courting slightly heavier fish. This
26 also leads credence to the fish being longer at a younger
27 age. Also lets us believe that the conditions -- current
28 conditions are good for growth. Next slide please. And
29 this is a last of our results. You can see some of our
30 population estimates up in there. And these are these
31 are preliminary. We're not done with our you know,
32 keeping our model. But so far, we've tagged over 2000
33 broad whitefish in three years with over half of those
34 being caught in 2024. We've had 66 recaptures during our
35 sampling. However, only two tags returned were returned
36 from subsistence harvested. And these were both from the
37 lower river. We would have expected more to have been
38 reported due to what has been reported in the past. So,
39 like in 2014 and 2015, we had a higher reporting rate
40 than currently. We're encouraging people to report
41 finding these tags on whitefish that they're catching
42 and reporting to the phone number that is on the tag.
43 There's a little phone number on this on this tag that's
44 on there. The data is important for us to calculate
45 harvest rates, and decrease confidence bounds in our
46 total population estimates. Basically, it makes our
47 estimates more accurate. So, if you find one, please
48 report it to us. There will be a monthly drawing card,
49 drawing for a gas card, and a yearly grand prize for a
50 gas card that's in this project -- this program is

1 administered by ONC. If you do catch one, we will need
2 a tag number and we hope to get the date and location
3 where the fish was harvested, but at the very least need
4 a tag number. That needs to match up with some fish that
5 we've tagged. But I know there's been some concern about,
6 you know, reporting harvest on these whitefish, but at
7 current population estimates and population
8 demographics, it appears these broad whitefish are doing
9 real good in the Kuskokwim. We don't see any red flags.
10 Looks like current management is doing good. So, like,
11 whatever everybody's doing, they're like, keep on doing
12 it. Like, guys are doing great. Most importantly, we are
13 gathering population baseline data on a species that has
14 had very little work done to it in the drainage. This
15 information will be important in the future as climate
16 conditions change or development occurs within the
17 drainage. Next slide please. And that's all I had for
18 this. I'm available to answer any questions anybody
19 might have.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you for
22 your presentation. I'm checking to see if anybody would
23 want to ask or comment on the presentation here. (In
24 Native).

25
26 Hearing none.

27
28 MR. BEANS: Madam Chairman. This is
29 Frederick.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Hi, Fred.

32
33 MR. BEANS: I got a question. Are you --
34 is there any studies on broad whitefish here on the
35 Yukon, Lower Yukon primarily?

36
37 MR. HARRIS: Through the Chair. I'm not
38 sure. I know there's been a lot of mid river and upper
39 river studies on broad whitefish, and a lot of those
40 whitefish, at least from the Mid River, had gone down
41 into the lower Yukon for rearing and feeding. But maybe
42 if I don't know if Randy Brown's listening in or not,
43 but he's kind of the whitefish guru, particularly on the
44 Yukon. Maybe somebody else has some more information.

45
46 MR. BEANS: All right. Thank you.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Francis, do you
49 have a question? And since we said two questions per
50 presentation, this is the last question.

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MR. PRINCE: Not really a question. Just a comment regarding the cisco fish that they were tagged back in 2000, maybe 2018. I caught a couple cisco, subsistence fishing. And I reported both of them. That was -- they were tagged in on around Tanana and Fort Yukon.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Francis.

MR. PRINCE: Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: We're going to move on to Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuges presentation. Before we do that, there might be one question from the back. Are you raising your hand back there? Just really quickly. You guys can start setting up anyway.

MR. Vaughn: Hi, my name is Timmy Vaughn. I'm coming by myself. My question is Are we restricted to (indiscernible) whitefish any time during the year or no?

MR. HARRIS: I'm going to punt that to the managers. I think it's mostly open, except for certain times during the salmon season.

MR. VAUGHN: When is that?

MR. HARRIS: Typically, and Spencer or Aaron can correct me if I'm wrong, but typically there's only some restrictions, that includes that -- that happens in June. Sometimes a little bit in July. When they're conserving salmon runs. But the rest of the season, to my knowledge, the only restrictions are net lengths in Whitefish Lake. Other than that, I think it's open. But again, the managers have -- I haven't looked at the regulations at that here, refresh my memory on that and probably a year or two so I could be misspoken.

UNIDENTIFIED: What about using a dip net?

MS. KENNER: Hey, Frank, this is Pippa. You want me to help out?

MR. HARRIS: Yeah. Go -- Please, Pippa.

MS. KENNER: Hi, Frank. Nice to hear from you. (In Native).

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UNIDENTIFIED: Hi.

MS. KENNER: Hi. So, we're talking about the Kuskokwim, aren't we?

UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

MS. KENNER: No, there's no really. There's no seasons or harvest limits or restrictions. Thank you.

MR. VAUGHN: Okay. Thank you. That's all I wanted to hear. Thank you.

MR. REARDEN: Let me add to that.....

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Spencer.

MR. REARDEN:because when we are in managing the salmon in the main river and the salmon bearing tributaries, there are restrictions to nets. We don't allow gill nets at certain times, but dipnets we've been allowing all the time, along with hook and line, so you can continue to harvest those whitefish species even during our salmon closures. And those closures are namely to gillnets, drift gillnets, and set gillnets. Spencer Rearden, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you for answering those questions, and you're welcome to start any time, guys.

MR. MOSES: Okay. Thank you, guys. Madam Chair, for the record, my name is Aaron Moses. I'm the subsistence coordinator for Yukon Delta. We just handed out a table. This is just a quick overview of what happened last year between Tuntutuliak and Tuluksak. Us, along with the Fish Commission and ONC, do harvest surveys during fishing openers. This summer we had 15 fishing opportunities between June 1st and August 17th. August 17th, we relinquished management to the State. This -- on this table, the first column of the date, the second column is how long each fishing opener was. Normally there would be between 12 and 48 hours, but we had a long stretch at the end of July that was open for roughly a week. The third column, if it has NA in front of it, that meant that opportunity was a setnet opportunity only. And so, but if it has a number there, it was a drift and set net so you could see like on June

1 12th and 16th, there was estimated to be about 452 boats
2 out on the river for a 12-hour opportunity and a 505
3 boats. So, there's a lot of effort during these 12 hour
4 drift net opportunities. And at the end of the year, we
5 estimated, this is a minimum count of salmon harvested
6 because we know there was a lot more harvested in non-
7 spawning tributaries and above Tuluksak, roughly 53,000
8 salmon were harvested in the lower portion of the
9 Kuskokwim, with roughly 22,000 chinook, 14,000 chum
10 15,000 sockeye cohos on there. But that's such a small
11 number, 2700. Do you have anything to add on that?
12

13 MR. REARDEN: Yeah. Spencer Rearden
14 again, Fish and Wildlife Service. Just to add that these
15 numbers are estimates that we generate along with the
16 Fish Commission and ONC to utilize for in-season
17 management. But there are a minimum number there not a
18 total number. Especially during the days where we had
19 multiple day openers, we didn't get estimates for those.
20 This -- the program where we're doing interviews and
21 counting boats from the airplanes was more intended for
22 trying to understand the estimates for chinook, because
23 those are the ones that we restrict the most, being that
24 their numbers have been down for the longest period of
25 time. So but we've been expanding it a little bit to try
26 to understand the fishery and the harvest and the health
27 of the runs for chum and coho, too. So, thanks.
28

29 MR. MOSES: I'll just move on real quick.
30 For wildlife proposals right now, Yukon Delta is going
31 to be submitting roughly five. We already have two
32 proposals in, one to extend our winter moose hunt that
33 we have. We had bad weather this year. We thought we
34 were doing really good, but the winter was so bad and
35 we were stuck to the end of January. So, we're putting
36 in a proposal to be able to have the manager set season
37 dates for that winter moose. We gave out 137 tags and
38 eight Moose got harvested. So, we really want to be able
39 to work with the weather and try to get people to hunt
40 more. We are going to be also submitting a proposal to
41 create a antlerless moose hunt in zone two on the
42 Kuskokwim that's up in the mountains. We're still
43 fleshing that out, but we put the proposal in to get the
44 ball rolling on that. So, in the future, hopefully we'll
45 be able to harvest more moose. So, I don't know if you
46 -- there's a couple other ones.
47

48 MR. REARDEN: Yeah, we're in the process
49 of -- again, Spencer Rearden, of working on some language
50 to clarify some of the language that we have in the

1 federal regulations. There's some conflicting language
2 that we found between the federal regulations and the
3 state, namely when shooting moose or caribou under power
4 with a boat. Under the federal regulations, it says it's
5 legal under the state, it's illegal. However,
6 jurisdiction belongs to the state when we're talking
7 about navigable waterways. So federal regulations would
8 not apply and make it legal on a navigable waterway that
9 would be state. So that causes some confusion for our
10 law enforcement and our subsistence users. And we're
11 interested in trying to either take that out or provide
12 clarifying language. So that's the other one we're
13 interested in trying to fix.

14
15 MR. MOSES: And moving on to projects and
16 programs that we're doing. Last couple of weeks, the
17 four of us have been on a snow machine, 11? We've been
18 to roughly 11 villages doing in-season or preseason
19 salmon management. We still have a few more. We try to
20 get to every village along the Kuskokwim between within
21 our border from Eek to Aniak. And so, we're still in the
22 process of doing that. We're going to like Terese said,
23 we're going to have that juvenile outmigration small
24 trap here within about a month. And I believe all our
25 bird projects are going. Are they?

26
27 MR. REARDEN: We're planning on it.
28 There's all these hurdles that are being introduced that
29 we're trying to figure ways to deal with them. So, yeah,
30 the smoke project that Aaron referred to is on the
31 Kwethluk River. This is to try to help understand what's
32 happening in the river to our salmon smolt. If you
33 remember, not too long ago, well, still today we're
34 having some pretty warm summers and lo and behold, we
35 find out that it's not good for our small salmon just
36 as well as our adult salmon. So, we're trying to further
37 understand what's been going on. We're trying to
38 understand environmental factors that are affecting
39 salmon survival, particularly the smolt. So, we'll be
40 continuing that project once again. It's this big screw
41 trap. It's a big contraption. Looks kind of weird when
42 you see it, but for those of you that travel up the
43 Kwethluk River you'll know what that is. It's a
44 contraption that catches smolt that are going
45 downstream, and then they mark them. And then they
46 release them again, and then they figure out what
47 proportion of them are marked and not marked. Try to get
48 an estimate of what's going down the river. We hope to
49 have that in line with the Kwethluk weir. But we've had
50 some trouble with funding, and right now we don't have

1 funding identified that we can use for certain. There's
2 potential for some funding to come about kind of in the
3 11th hour. So, we're kind of keeping our fingers crossed
4 that we'll continue running that weir project.

5
6 The Kwethluk River is a pretty an
7 important one. It's one of the two most important weirs
8 on the whole Kuskokwim drainage, one for its low in the
9 system. And it tells us what's happening in the lower
10 part of the Kuskokwim. And the other is the number of
11 fish that go up there relative to other tributaries.
12 It's a productive river. Some of you I don't need to
13 tell that to you because you know very well. And so,
14 we're trying to estimate numbers of fish going up that
15 river and trying to meet our escapement goal and to
16 determine how we're doing managing the fishery in the
17 lower part of the river. So, thanks. And then just one
18 more. Aaron and I, -- we -- Aaron's the subsistence
19 specialist. I'm the refuge manager. And I try to boil
20 down our jobs down to something very simple to tell
21 people. And that is maximizing subsistence opportunities
22 where we can. We're in the business of feeding people
23 and ensuring that we have enough for the future, right.
24 And that happens with your help, Inter-tribal Fish
25 Commission is a big partner in trying to manage this
26 fishery. Aaron mentioned the villages we go to. We're
27 trying to get input. It's not me making the decisions.
28 It's a group of people you all have the most to gain and
29 the most to pay for, for whatever decisions happen to
30 subsistence. So that's our job. That's a big part of
31 what we do. I would say 99% of what we do. So, we often
32 look through these regulations when, when the time comes
33 and try to figure out what can we make for improvements
34 for people. Whether it's just expanding a moose hunt,
35 which we're glad to do because our moose numbers are
36 looking pretty healthy on the Kuskokwim. So, we were
37 hoping to do it. Have a higher harvest this year. But
38 these winters are unpredictable, and so we're going to
39 be asking for leeway to expand the season or extend it,
40 I should say, so that people can fill their freezers.
41 Another one that we brought -- that was brought to our
42 attention is there is a difference between the federal
43 and state regulations on ptarmigan. The state passed
44 some regulations that increase their limits to 25 per
45 day. 15 possession. I believe ours is still set at 1515
46 per day. 30in possession. We're interested in proposing
47 something to match the state, because technically you
48 can go hunting under the state regulations on federal
49 lands and shoot 25 ptarmigan already. So, it's just kind
50 of a thing we're trying to clean up and make it more

1 clear to our subsistence users. If you have comments on
2 that, we'd be interested in hearing them too. So a little
3 update for what our what we've been working on in recent
4 times.

5

6 MR. MOSES: And we have one more from
7 Chris.

8

9 MR. TULIK: Yeah. So, for the record, my
10 name is Christopher Tulik. I'm the lead refuge
11 information technician. So, this morning, you heard
12 Jennifer Hooper mentioned that the emperor goose will
13 be closed for hunting and eggging. So -- and then the
14 AVCP Waterfowl Conservation Committee will be meeting
15 later this month, followed by the Alaska Migratory Bird
16 Co-Management Council will be meeting in in Anchorage
17 and I believe they will -- you will be able to join
18 virtually listening on what they're talking about
19 migratory birds. So, emperor goose will be one of them.
20 And at the AVCP WCC meeting, they will talk about it in
21 greater detail and at MBCC meeting. So, she also
22 mentioned that there will be talking about the outreach
23 activities along with us. So, I'm not sure if his manager
24 would be able to answer that question, because we -- our
25 travel cards are in a limbo, so. But I believe Aaron has
26 some ideas how to reach out to the villages in virtually
27 or telephonically. So, there's a lot to talk about the
28 emperor goose, but I'll keep it at that. Thanks. With
29 that, I guess we're done. Yeah. You have any questions?

30

31 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: I'm sure
32 there'll be questions.

33

34 MR. MORGAN: Madam Chair. Walter Morgan,
35 Lower Kalskag. I was wondering, you know, I hear a lot
36 of things about the migratory birds coming back with
37 bird flu. What is your plan to help us? What do we do
38 when we get one and we know it's sick? We contact you
39 guys or, you know, because we do a lot of hunting up
40 there. We go to Yukon too from Kalskag. And another
41 thing I wanted to ask is there any updates in the caribou
42 herd that we have out here? Anything good? Anything
43 looking good so far, or...? That's my questions. Thank
44 you.

45

46 MR. MOSES: Through the Chair. I think
47 Togiak will be -- who's next? Will be talking about
48 caribou, I believe.

49

50

1 MR. REARDEN: But as far as your bird flu
2 question -- Spencer Rearden. So, I think the advice that
3 people are giving is when you're cleaning your birds,
4 don't be touching your face. You know, some basic things
5 washing hands, and of course, cooking your birds
6 thoroughly. And then our biologists hopefully will be
7 out in the field again. And they have collected samples
8 to get tested to understand the prevalence of bird flu
9 out here in this in this area. And so, yeah, it's
10 ongoing, do -- we don't quite have a handle on how
11 prevalent bird flu is out here. Because there's no real
12 large effort to go out there and sample. However, when
13 they're working out in the fields, and they see birds
14 that are dead or even dying because they start seeing
15 them with kind of a head bobbing going on, I mean, they
16 look sick. They do collect samples at times. So, you
17 know, I don't know if bird flu is to blame or partially
18 to blame for some of our declines in waterfowl, but all
19 goose species are down. We suspect some of the duck
20 species could be down, too. But, doesn't seem like we're
21 out of the woods yet when it comes to bird flu. It's
22 still persisting.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: I'm curious. Oh,
25 (In Native). Has anyone reported Or any humans reported
26 being sick from the bird flu in our region?

27
28 MR. REARDEN: I don't know of any. But
29 that doesn't mean it hasn't happened. But I wouldn't
30 know. I'm. I'm kind of not in that.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Chris. Sorry.

33
34 UNIDENTIFIED: Yeah, I'll expand a little
35 bit on who to contact and what to do when you see a sick
36 bird. So, Brian Daniels, he is now the supervisory
37 wildlife biologist. So, he was the bird biologist. There
38 are numbers that he provided where you can call those
39 numbers, or we have those numbers with us. And he also
40 mentioned that if you see a sick bird that you can call
41 our office directly. Our main number is 543-3151. And
42 then -- so that is part of our outreach educational
43 effort that, you know, all the advice -- when you see a
44 sick bird, you'll be able to identify or understand when
45 that bird is sick. When they're, you know they're not
46 flying away. And their head is knocking a little bit to,
47 to the right, or they're either swimming in round circles
48 or walking like that, or they're kind of wobbling. You
49 will know that they they're sick. The advice is not to
50 touch them, or if you find a bird carcass, leave it.

1 Don't touch it. But if you're concerned about bird flu
2 their advice is to cook it up to 160. We -- I know a lot
3 of people in the village don't have that thermometer,
4 but the way to know that is to boil it. I mean, get the
5 water boiling, that's when it'll be cooked. So based on
6 the -- our biologists advice, I mean, we -- it is
7 something to be concerned about, but not -- we should
8 not be overly concerned about it because he told us that
9 it's safe to eat after we cook them. And then once after
10 you have handled the bird, you know, clean, clean your,
11 your tools, your knives and pack them away and use latex
12 gloves when you're handling a bird. And then wash
13 everything off carefully so you'll be safe from there.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: I don't see any
16 hands up here in the room, but I wanted to ask if any -
17 - oh, John Andrew.

18
19 MR. ANDREW: Yeah. John Andrew from
20 Kwethluk and I represent Kwethluk. A lot of my friends
21 and younger generation up there love to hunt birds. Every
22 now and then they tell me they shot down six birds, and
23 they can tell right away they're not acting normal. And
24 when, when they're down, they'll say some of them are
25 losing their look like they're molting and they're
26 really skinny and they're erratic in movements. I was
27 telling him to leave him out in the field. Just don't
28 take them back. The other thing is that on the -- on
29 these fisheries -- family subsistence reports. On the
30 latter part of -- sometimes in the latter part of
31 October, we all see the heavy splurges of silvers coming
32 in, late runs. I tried set netting for whitefish, and I
33 got mostly silvers right there in the y area, and I just
34 pulled it out. It was getting too many of those late run
35 coho (In Native). And then I tried again up in the first
36 during moose season, I tried up in (In Native) for
37 whitefish, and I'm catching more silvers than and again,
38 late runs reds. Really rich. Really bright and it looked
39 like there were some of them were spawned out and a lot
40 of pike and just pull them out again, because I'm on --
41 some of my friends were checking, they always asked me
42 where your set net, they'll be if, I set one out there,
43 they'll take turns running up there cleaning these out.
44 So, I had to pull it out again and try Kisaralik too.
45 But (indiscernible) up Kisaralik by the (indiscernible)
46 fish camps. I tried sitting there and the next day I
47 asked my great grand nephew, can you clean that net out
48 for me? I'll give you gas. So, you stayed out there for
49 a while. You came back pretty late. He must have caught
50 well over 200punds of sheefish and pike. Is --go up

1 there and go pull it out. Give it -- give them all away
2 because a lot of them don't like to take the pike in the
3 summer or the sheefish, they are too lean in fall time.
4 We give them away to most of the dog mushers. The other
5 question I always have is that we always see a really
6 late run coho when we first set our setnets for whitefish
7 under the ice, we were catching coho all the way to
8 January or early part of November, incidentally. They
9 just they could just get caught in their teeth. You know
10 how the whitefish are small. They're not intended for
11 silvers. But we catch them, catch them on and off. I was
12 wondering, where do they go under the ice? Because I
13 know further up the river the rivers always stay open.
14 Now, this is my one big question. Bur ning question,
15 thank you.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, John.
18 (In Native)? Oh, okay. So that was a comment. Is there
19 anyone online with their hand up? No? Thanks so much,
20 guys. I'm proud that you're done before -- we're done
21 before five for this part. But we still have two
22 presentations left and it's 5 to 5, so let's just move
23 on to Togiak National Wildlife Refuge. And in the -- one
24 of the packets, that'll be page 57. And I believe it
25 will be Andy Aderman to present. Are you online, Andy?

26
27 MR. ADERMAN: Yes, Madam Chair. Can you
28 hear me?

29
30 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes. You're
31 loud. Well, you're not that loud, so maybe. Oh, we'll
32 turn it up.

33
34 MR. ADERMAN: I'll get closer.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: You can start
37 whenever.

38
39 MR. ADERMAN: Okay. Yeah. So, in your
40 workbooks or your meeting books, page 57 is the start
41 of our report. I just wanted to touch on a couple of
42 quick things. First one is Mulchatna Caribou Herd. We
43 work with Fish and Game here in in Dillingham and and
44 Bethel in monitoring the the Mulchatna Caribou Herd.
45 ADF&G in Dillingham has the primary lead on Mulchatna
46 Caribou Herd. I got the following information from them
47 earlier this year, but they had a July 2024 post-calving
48 survey that estimated the Mulchatna Caribou herd at
49 14,846 caribou, plus or minus 619. And that's a 19%
50 increase from 2023. We're still quite a ways away yet

1 from the population objective of 30 to 80,000 caribou.

2

3 Togiak refuge manager Kenton Moos under
4 the authority delegated by the Federal Subsistence
5 Board, closed caribou hunting and closed the federal
6 public lands in RC 503 hunt area for caribou hunting.
7 We envision hunting will remain closed in line with the
8 ADF&G moratorium in place for the Mulchatna Caribou
9 herd. I can stop now if you want to have questions on
10 Mulchatna Caribou. I was just going to touch basis on
11 moose, but I think caribou is probably the more
12 important. So, however you want to do that.

13

14 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks, Andy.
15 Does anyone here have a question for Mulchatna Caribou?
16 I thought there was one earlier. Walter Morgan.

17

18 MR. MORGAN: I'm Walter Morgan, lower
19 Kalskag. I was wondering, you know we had these saws and
20 freeze, and we noticed, you know, when we go out and
21 hunt, they scrape the ground and they call it roof --
22 hoof rot, you know. But we know it's from the caribou
23 scratching. Because when we get rain and it freeze, our
24 food frozen and seemed like this year it rained quite a
25 bit, and it freeze right after. And also too, I was. We
26 have a herd that's up separate from them on the north
27 side of the river, Horn Mountains. There's approximately
28 probably 3-400 of them. I was wondering if you guys know
29 anything about those? They seem to be separate. They
30 don't cross the river, they stay in the Horns. But
31 they're, you know, the herd is really small. We were
32 wondering if we can, you know, let you guys know about
33 those and if we can hunt them. You know, they don't mix
34 with the regular caribou herd. They stay up in the
35 mountains and Horn Mountains. That's all the questions
36 I got. Thank you.

37

38 MR. ADERMAN: Yes. Through the Chair
39 again. Andy Aderman with the Togiak refuge. I think your
40 best bet would be to talk to Patrick Jones, and -- with
41 ADF&G, or Philip, the supervisor. I'm sure they probably
42 know about those caribou. This was the first that I had
43 heard about a herd north of the river. I think he
44 mentioned the Horn Mountain herd. The other thing you
45 first mentioned was the rainy weather and then turning
46 cold and freezing. And we had the same stuff going on
47 down here. Where, yeah, most of the food is, is covered
48 in ice, and they got to work harder to get at it. And,
49 and that although we had an interesting thing this year
50 with our -- we have a herd of 600 caribou just south of

1 Dillingham-Manokotak area. And the last four winters
2 they've been going up in the hills where they had
3 adequate food, and they'd stay there. This year with all
4 the warmer weather, the caribou just stayed on the
5 peninsula and seemed to be doing fine, except nobody can
6 really get to them because of the lack of snow and frozen
7 rivers. So not a whole lot you can do with you know, the
8 freezing temperatures and that it's -- I've never
9 noticed any significant die offs that could be
10 associated with that in this area. I know of some lot
11 further north where they have, I think, in the range of
12 the Western Arctic Herd. Occasionally they get some of
13 these warm conditions and, and it can just be devastating
14 for the caribou. They that get in -- bulls that freeze
15 and they can't actually get out because they're so slick
16 and they die. But I don't want to get off track here.
17 But hopefully that answered your questions.

18

19 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: He's nodding.

20

21 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah. Thank you,
24 Walter. I just thought of a question myself. Andy, it's
25 -- so, I guess we got word of there was a permit hunt
26 on with Mulchatna Caribou near Dillingham. And if I'm
27 not mistaken a certain amount of caribou were able to
28 be hunted. And I guess people were asking me, how was
29 that done during, you know, during this time with the
30 low numbers of caribou.

31

32 MR. ADERMAN: Yeah. So, we don't have a
33 drawing permit hunt for caribou. And this would be on
34 the the Nushagak Peninsula Caribou Herd. A herd that was
35 established back in 1988 with caribou coming off the
36 Alaska Peninsula and let go on the Nushagak Peninsula.
37 Further east over on Park service lands, there's a
38 there's a herd over there of I've gotten varying
39 estimates from 300, to 700-800 caribou, and I think they
40 had just like 2 or 4 permits to hand out and that but
41 yeah. We haven't had any drawing permit hunts for our
42 caribou here locally.

43

44 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you, Andy.

45

46 MR. ADERMAN: Thank you.

47

48 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (In Native) from
49 us guys. Okay. Online. Are there any.....?

50

000121

1 MR ADERMAN: Quyana.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana.

4

5 MR. ADERMAN: I guess the last thing real
6 quick is we plan to do moose surveys, and it's half
7 brown and it's half white, and it isn't good conditions
8 to count in. And we've had rain and snow. A lot and
9 yeah, it just keeps on and on and again, can't do much
10 about it. So, we'll probably have a much more opportunity
11 next year. I think the caribou are doing pretty well,
12 actually, on the Nushagak Peninsula. So, it'll probably
13 be a higher harvest limit and that but we'll just see
14 what we have next year, the next season, I should say.

15

16 MR. BEANS: (In Native)

17

18 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Did you say (In
19 Native)?

20

21 MR. BEANS: (In Native). Madam Chair.
22 This is Frederick.

23

24 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. Frederick.
25 You're on.

26

27 MR. BEANS: I got a question. A quick
28 question on these wood bison that were released a number
29 of years ago up in Shageluk. Are they you have an idea
30 of how they're doing or if they're migrating Northway
31 or what?

32

33 MR. ADERMAN: I really don't have much
34 knowledge about it. I know there was one that kind of
35 came down towards Quinhagak several, several years ago.
36 And I'm thinking talk with Patrick Jones on that. And
37 he probably knows the people in Fairbanks that were
38 instrumental in, in getting that wood bison herd
39 established. And that's, that's about all I can tell.
40 And that's just kind of second hand from what I've heard,
41 so.

42

43 MR. BEANS: Okay. All right. Thank you.

44

45 MR. ADERMAN: Yep.

46

47 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks again,
48 Andy, for staying over-time with us. And if that -- does
49 that conclude your presentation first before I move on?

50

000122

1 MR. ADERMAN: Yes, Madam Chair. I'm
2 concluded with my presentation. Thank you.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks again.
5 Maybe. See you next week when I go there for the
6 trainings. We're going to move on to.....

7
8 MR. ADERMAN: Alright.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: We're going to
11 move on to Yukon River salmon management. It says Tab 8
12 and I'm not sure who is presenting. Keith is online.

13
14 MR. HERRON: Good evening. Can you hear
15 me?

16
17 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

18
19 MR. HERRON: Okay. I'll introduce myself
20 and then get into the Yukon Salmon Management
21 presentation. I also have Shane Raspberry on the call
22 with me who will be helping give a research update. But
23 first, (In Native). Hi everyone. My name is Keith Herron.
24 I'm originally from Bethel, Alaska, but grew up in a few
25 communities around the state including Wrangell, Seward,
26 Kenai and I currently live in Fairbanks. My mother is
27 Dana Rooney and my father is Buddy Herron, and my
28 father's grandparents are Bob and Margaret Herron of
29 Bethel, and I work for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
30 Service. I'm the assistant fishery manager on the Yukon
31 River and tribal liaison for Yukon Fisheries, and my
32 supervisor, Holly Carroll, I'm presenting on our team's
33 behalf, but she's the federal in-season manager for
34 Yukon Fisheries. And kind of the most interesting thing,
35 and the most important thing that we came to talk about
36 is the upcoming 2025 season. But first, I'll briefly
37 mention in your meeting materials, you'll have overviews
38 from the fall and summer seasons from 2024. Those are
39 the official ADF&G reports for Yukon Fisheries. And then
40 also you'll have our report to the Federal Subsistence
41 Board from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service side for
42 the 2024 season. You can always reach out if you have
43 any questions or any concerns, but I won't go into any
44 details on those given time. For the 2025 season, it is
45 -- we have no official outlooks yet for the salmon
46 forecasts, but I can start preparing people for what is
47 likely. So, for the 2025 season, salmon fishing
48 opportunity and closures are likely going to be similar
49 to 2024, where we expect complete closures for our
50 chinook and king salmon on the Yukon River. Given our

1 historic -- recent historically low runs, we expect
2 those to continue. For summer chum salmon selective gear
3 fishing with your dip nets, man fish wheels, those
4 selective gears that are non-lethal is likely during the
5 summer season for chum salmon, but we need to avoid
6 incidental harvest of chinook and fall chum salmon. And
7 our fall chum salmon and cohos, we also expect complete
8 closures due to historically low runs, so it's a --
9 we're likely preparing for another very devastating year
10 and we're still in our fisheries collapse, so we need
11 to be ready for that. And also, that we kind of need to
12 be a little cautious about our -- even our summer chum
13 salmon, because the parent years of this 2025 year are
14 coming off of historically low runs when the collapse
15 occurred. The five-year-olds that are going to be
16 returning this year are from 2020, and then the four-
17 year-olds are going to be from 2021. So, we just need
18 to be a little cautious about the Chum Salmon given,
19 given those historically low runs that were going to see
20 returns off of. And we've also heard growing concerns
21 about four-inch gillnets and incidental harvest of
22 salmon. And I'll get into that a little bit later when
23 I talk about a letter that the Eastern Interior RAC
24 wrote regarding the use of four-inch and some of their
25 management recommendations, but I just wanted to
26 highlight some of those things and also highlight that
27 we're going to work more with the Yukon River Inter-
28 Tribal Fish Commission. And we also are going to continue
29 our engagement with the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries
30 Association, YRDFA. And also, we're going to continue
31 our tribal consultations upon request. So today I'm just
32 giving you a kind of a general overview, but expect more
33 details to come in the future. And we really want to
34 have a management system that's influenced by Yukon
35 River voices and people who depend on these resources
36 for their way of life. And so, I'll pass it over to
37 Shane with some research updates. And then we're going
38 to go back into some of the concerns. We've also heard
39 in this meeting about foreign (indiscernible) and
40 potentially looking at more ways to increase non salmon
41 use.

42
43 MR. RANBURY: Hey, everybody. Through the
44 Chair. My name is Shane Rasnbury. I'm a fish biologist
45 for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Fairbanks. And for
46 the coming season, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service --
47 excuse me. I'm sorry. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
48 will be removing the Andreafsky weir camp, but the sonar
49 Teedriinjik Sonar will operate like normal for fall
50 chum. The ichthyophonous project finished fieldwork last

1 year, and we'll be sharing project results in fall of
2 2025. New research projects for U.S. Fish and Wildlife
3 Service in 2025 include testing a trace elements
4 approach as a means to differentiate Chum Salmon from
5 the coastal Western Alaska Reporting Group, which
6 currently lumps all ocean caught chum from Norton Sound,
7 Yukon summer stock and the Kuskokwim. The Trace Elements
8 Project is a collaboration with University of Calgary
9 and Sitka Sound Science Center. Alaska Fish and Games
10 Genetic Lab is also going to be doing a big study around
11 the same time, where they will completely genotype chum
12 salmon. So hopefully one or both of these methods will
13 work for differentiating the coastal Western Alaska
14 reporting Group. And we will finally have a method to
15 figure out exactly how many chum salmon caught in the
16 ocean were heading for the Yukon and elsewhere in that
17 reporting group. We also have a Yukon Delta
18 Environmental Conditions study in collaboration with
19 YDFDA and NMFS, which will hopefully help us better
20 understand how juvenile and adult salmon are using the
21 delta. It should also allow us to improve the juvenile
22 outmigration study that the YDFDA and NMFS conduct every
23 year.

24
25 The new environmental study will include
26 monitoring buoys that will also output data to a public
27 mobile app developed by the Alaska Eskimo Whaling
28 Commission and Alaska Ocean Observing System. Folks
29 trying to go subsistence fishing or hunting in the area
30 will be able to pull up real time wind and wave
31 information on their cell phone for the mouth of the
32 Yukon, without having to spend the gas to go out there
33 to find out the weather is bad. Because we know right
34 now a lot of people use wind and other stuff. But the
35 buoy placement is still to be determined as we apply for
36 permits. But we have four boys, and they will be in some
37 combination of north mouth, middle mouth, south mouth,
38 and the ocean. Probably right around Flat Island. And
39 then we also have a sonar feasibility project for the
40 main stem Koyukuk, which will start us down the path of
41 determining whether a single project could assess all
42 chinook and chum salmon returning to the Koyukuk. And
43 we have a request for funding out to investigate bank
44 orientation of chinook salmon near the Tanana River
45 confluence. And finally, we are also collaborating with
46 UAF on a study remote sensing fall chum habitat to
47 hopefully make it easier to notice when spawning habitat
48 deteriorates. So that's all for research, and I'll turn
49 it back over to Keith.
50

1 MR. HERRON: Thank you, Shane, and I'll
2 just finish up and be brief here to get some feedback.

3
4 MS. MCDAVID: Hey, Keith.

5
6 MR. HERRON: But I just wanted to say --
7 yes.

8
9 MS. MCDAVID: Sorry. This is Brooke. I
10 did just want to -- before you continue, let you know,
11 I passed out a copy to the Council members of Holly's
12 response to the EIRAC letter, so they have that in front
13 of them. Thanks.

14
15 MR. HERRON: Thank you, Brooke, and thank
16 you. Shane, this is Keith Herron again. So, about that
17 letter that you have in front of you. And also, the
18 information I just shared regarding the upcoming salmon
19 season, there'll be lots of more opportunity to engage
20 on the management plan. Like I was saying, we'll talk
21 through it with the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish
22 Commission and hear their recommendations for
23 management. We'll talk about the management at YRDFA.
24 And we're also going to plan on tribal consultations.
25 So, there'll be lots more to engage on. So don't feel
26 like it has to be right now. There'll be lots more
27 opportunity. But for the four-inch gear, in the last two
28 years, we have allowed -- or four-inch and selective
29 gear and -- for chum salmon in the last two years, we
30 allowed summer chum fishing for an additional ten days
31 into the traditional fall season due to the lack of fall
32 chum late in the river -- in late -- in-river and late
33 July to give people that opportunity to harvest more
34 summer chum in the times of low chinook and fall chum
35 abundance. But we have heard that people don't -- may
36 not think that is the best approach, given the
37 historically low fall chum runs and some of those fall
38 chum enter the river early in the summer season. So,
39 it's kind of like a balancing act, providing that fishing
40 opportunity, but not hurting those stocks with
41 historically low runs. And so, one thing we wanted to
42 discuss is, do people in the lower river think that's
43 reasonable to maybe shift back some of the extended chum
44 salmon fishing to our more like, say, traditional date
45 of July 16th in the lower river where fall season takes
46 over, and that's when traditionally the bulk of the fall
47 chum started to arrive? And in most recent years, we've
48 seen more summer chum during that time. So, I guess
49 that's the one of the questions is, do people think it's
50 reasonable to be more conservative and protect fall chum

1 earlier in the fall season. And then that graph that
2 you'll see on the letter that's in front of you shows
3 the small number of fall chum that actually were in the
4 river when the selective gear fishing was allowed for
5 the additional ten days. So, we do think we protected
6 the bulk of the fall chum run, but some people are
7 pushing us to be more on the conservative side and still
8 allow some of that selective fishing in the summer season
9 but really protect the fall chum in the fall season.

10
11 So that's one thing about the dip nets
12 and the selective gear. And then the second thing is
13 about the four-inch gillnet openers. Last year we were
14 the most restrictive we've been on four-inch. And in the
15 summer season we had a two-week closure during the bulk
16 of the chinook salmon run in the summer season to protect
17 those chinook. And then in the fall, we did gill nets
18 on a weekend only schedule, and we're looking for
19 feedback on the best way to provide that non salmon
20 opportunity but also, limit the incidental harvest of
21 the chinook and the fall chum so should we be more
22 concerned -- the question is should we be more
23 conservative with the four-inch say, close it in the
24 main stem of the Yukon River and allow it on maybe some
25 of the tributaries, and then also thinking about some
26 of those non salmon tributaries. We always -- we've been
27 looking into that. We have a list actually from last
28 year from some of Stanislaus comments. And we're
29 continuing to think of those ways to get people that non
30 salmon opportunity. So, I encourage all of those
31 conversations to keep coming back up at upcoming
32 meetings regarding Yukon River fisheries. And I think
33 that's it. So, I'll just open up the floor for any
34 Council comments or public comments.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you for
37 that report, Keith. Anyone -- who's here? Do you have
38 a comment or question for Keith by chance? Stanislaus,
39 online. You can speak.

40
41 MR. SHEPPARD: Quyana, Madam Chair. Yes,
42 Keith. I have two questions. One concerning the cyanide
43 spill up in Canada. Are they tracking that? Where -- how
44 far it's coming down the Yukon? And another one is going
45 on, what, three-four years now? I've been trying to get
46 the department to lift the restrictions on three
47 tradition sloughs that are used to harvest sheefish and
48 whitefish. That would be at the Hamilton River. So, the
49 slough that goes up to Three Finger Lake, (In Native)
50 and the river, it's just right at the border line and

1 it goes into Y2 -- considered Y2 area and (In Native)
2 River. And the third one is inside Thritymile in the Y2
3 district. It's way, way off the main stem, drains into
4 the Thirtymile. (In Native). Those are the three
5 traditional rivers, sloughs that that are used to
6 harvest sheefish and whitefish with five and a half or
7 six inches. So yeah, just to update on that cyanide
8 spill in those try and get those restrictions lifted for
9 those three streams. Thank you.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
12 Stanislaus. There's another question here from Francis.

13
14 MR. PRINCE: Another question. My name
15 is Francis. For Stanislaus, adding those rivers. I'd
16 like to see if they could add also the (In Native) and
17 (In Native) Rivers, which are not connected to the Yukon,
18 and they're located a few miles above Kotlik.

19
20 (Pause)

21
22 MR. SHEPPARD: Thank you, Madam Chair.
23 Thank you.

24
25 MR. HERRON: This is Keith Herron, can I
26 respond?

27
28 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Keith.

29
30 MR. HERRON: Thank you. Stanislaus and I
31 may have missed the other guy's name, but thank you. I
32 noted the river names that you're talking about, and
33 I'll bring those into our management conversations, so
34 I appreciate that. And regarding the spill, I'm not too
35 sure about that or -- but I can get back to you through
36 your through your Council Coordinator or follow up
37 directly with Stanislaus. Kind of whatever the best
38 approach you think that is. I'm sure someone's tracking
39 it, but I don't know who.

40
41 MS. MCDAVID: Hey, Keith.

42
43 MR. SHEPPARD: Madam Chair, if I may.

44
45 MS. MCDAVID: Oh, sorry. Real quick,
46 Stan. This is Brooke. We have some -- I have some
47 information from USGS who's been tracking that spill
48 that I can share with folks. Thank you. Go ahead, Stan.

1 MR. SHEPPARD: Thank you. Brooke. Thank
2 you, Madam Chair. Yes, I'd appreciate it because, you
3 know, like I mentioned as an example, you get up in the
4 morning, you grab that cup of coffee, and you drink it
5 straight out of the cup, maybe 4 or 5 times you lift
6 your hand, but using tablespoon in a place of four inches
7 the cup, six, five and a half or six inches, use that
8 tablespoon. It'll take you over 30 tablespoons to get
9 that cup empty versus you know. Four inches versus the
10 five and a half or six inches. I did it, and too much
11 to work for me to get what I usually get for the winter.
12 And it would lift up the burden on the lower river
13 coastal villages were already struggling hard enough
14 right now. We have the restrictions on the Lower Yukon.
15 Other than that, when we go out, do our subsistence
16 moose hunting, we have to deal with the sports hunters.
17 So, you know, just to lift up the burden on the Lower
18 Yukon. Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and Keith.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you again,
21 Stanislaus.

22
23 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, this is
24 Frederick.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay, Frederick.
27 This will be the last question for this presentation.

28
29 MR. BEANS: Not a question. It won't be
30 a question. Just to add on to what he's asking for those
31 three sloughs. There they are brackish water. They're
32 coming out from the Tundra. All three of those are coming
33 -- the streams coming out from the stunt Tundra. And
34 they're primarily whitefis, sheefish, and there's some
35 burbot, too. So just to let you know, just a note. Okay.
36 Thank you.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana. It's
39 noted. Really quick comment from Wassily. This is the
40 real last one.

41
42 MR. ALEXIE: Okay, this Wasilly Alexie,
43 I'm from Russian Mission. I have the same situation as
44 what Stanislaus brought up about four sloughs around our
45 area to see if that can be lifted to six inches instead
46 of four and a four inch. Thank you.

47
48 MR. HERRON: Sorry, this is Keith. Do you
49 have specific ones? You can also call me or email me if
50 you know that.

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(Pause)

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. Wassily said he will email or call you about those stream or creek names.

MR. HERRON: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: And I see there's a hand online. But, you know, I just said that's the real last one. So, I'm so sorry, but we're already half-hour over our time, so I'm just gonna ask that we move on to the next presentation. But before we do that, if there are any more questions. Brooke, do you don't mind helping them coordinate so they can ask Keith questions or something through email? Thank you. So next we have the Office of Subsistence Management.

MR. VICKERS: Thank you, Madam Chair. And members of the Council. My name is Brent Vickers. I'm the anthropology division supervisor at OSM. And on behalf of OSM, I want to thank you for your service and exceptional work that you do on behalf of your communities and user groups, we value your expertise and volunteer contribution of your knowledge.

(Pause)

Everyone all right back there.? All right. Of your knowledge, experience and time -- and time to the regulatory processes. As many of you know, Congress administratively moved OSM from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to directly to the Office of the Assistant Secretary, Policy, Management and Budget. This move became effective July 15th, 2024. The move was one of many efforts that the Department of Interior has made to strengthen the Federal Subsistence Management Program and to ensure that federally qualified subsistence users such as you all and Alaska Native peoples have the opportunity for meaningful engagement in our public process implementing the federal subsistence priority. This January, President Trump returned to the white House and with him, a new team of political appointees. Doug Burgum was sworn in as Secretary of the Interior. Shortly after that, Charlie Danker was appointed senior Advisor to the Secretary, exercising the delegated authority of the Assistant Secretary of the Office of Policy, Management and Budget, which is where OSM is now housed. OSM has been getting Charlie up to speed with

1 the Federal Subsistence Management Program and its
2 importance to rural Alaskans. Meanwhile, it's been
3 pretty much business as usual at OSM in addition to
4 working with new appointees, we continue to work with
5 many of the same people within the Office of the
6 Secretary in Washington, D.C., who helped us with our
7 transition.

8
9 In February, we welcomed new public
10 Board members Raymond Oney of Alakanuk, Benjamin Payenna
11 of Nome and Fred Woods of Dillingham, and completed
12 another successful Board meeting. We hope to have an
13 updated federal -- updated federal regulations for
14 subsistence fishing published in the final rule soon.
15 The proposed rule for the 2026 Wildlife Regulatory Cycle
16 published on February 7th, and we are accepting
17 proposals through April 4th. For some OSM staffing
18 updates in 20th -- December 2024, OSM officially
19 welcomed our new director Ciisquq Crystal Leonetti. She
20 had been acting in that role for over six months until
21 she was formally hired. Previously, Ciisquq was Alaska
22 Native Affairs Specialist at U.S. Fish and Wildlife
23 Service. Among her regular OSM director
24 responsibilities, she continues to lead OSM through its
25 administrative move and has done an excellent job. Since
26 last fall's Council meeting, several OSM staff, such as
27 myself, acted in different roles to help through the
28 transition to the Office of Secretary. Starting a few
29 weeks ago, Chris McKee came back to OSM from the BLM in
30 a temporary position -- temporarily came back to act as
31 deputy director for four months. Chris was subsistence
32 coordinator at BLM and a member of the Interagency Staff
33 Committee, or ISC. Chris was previously the Wildlife
34 Division supervisor at OSM until 2020, and before that
35 he was an OSM wildlife biologist. With Chris helping and
36 stepping back in to help other OSM staff have been able
37 to return to their permanent OSM positions.

38
39 All right. Real ID this is the final
40 reminder to our Council members that the change in
41 requirements for U.S. travelers who must be real ID
42 compliant to Board domestic flights and access certain
43 federal facilities beginning May 7th. Very soon, every
44 air traveler will need to present real ID compliant
45 identification within the U.S. even when you fly on small
46 commercial bush carriers. For our program, you will need
47 to have your Real ID in time to travel to your fall 2025
48 Council meeting. You can find out more information on
49 Real ID requirements on the State of Alaska Division of
50 Motor Vehicles website.

1

2 For correspondence, Councils received a
3 handful of responses earlier this year from the
4 Secretaries based on issues raised during individual
5 Council meetings and the All Council meeting this past
6 winter. OSM has been into -- has also integrated a
7 correspondence review standing agenda item in the
8 Federal Subsistence Board meetings to keep them
9 appraised of all ongoing and completed correspondence
10 to and from the Councils. We are aware of concerns that
11 have been raised on timely responses and are continuing
12 to work on ways to help expedite things as we move
13 forward. Litigation updates. Let me give you in the
14 Kuskokwim matter U.S. vs ADF&G, District Court found in
15 favor of the U.S. on all claims and enjoined the state
16 from taking any further actions in violation of Title
17 VII on the Kuskokwim River. The State has appealed and
18 briefing and briefing before the Court of Appeals is now
19 complete. Oral argument is scheduled for April 11th.

20

21 Federal ruling. Now this -- this is all
22 the while I'm about to share right now is brand new. I
23 know very little about it. No one at OSM knows much
24 about it, but we did our best to kind of put it into
25 some sort of intelligible words. And I'm sorry, I won't
26 really be able to ask questions, but we wanted to let
27 the Councils know that there's an interim final rule has
28 been recently published in the Federal Register related
29 to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, or
30 Nepa. The rule is seeking to remove the existing
31 implementing regulations for NEPA in response to
32 Executive Order 15154, Unleashing American Energy.
33 Moving forward, agencies will be expected to develop and
34 rely upon their own implementing regulations for NEPA.
35 There is a public comment period for this rule that is
36 open until March 27th, 2025. Anyone interested in
37 completing -- in commenting on this can go to the Federal
38 Register website and search for docket number 2025-
39 03014.

40

41 And finally, some subsistence meeting
42 updates in July 23rd through 24th of this summer. Federal
43 Subsistence Board work -- summer work session, where
44 topics included will be annual report replies, Council
45 correspondence and Council nominations. On August 12th
46 and 14th, 2025 will be tribal and ANSCA Corporation.
47 consultations on wildlife proposals and enclosure
48 reviews. Please be sure to spread the word. The times
49 for those are to be decided. We are also planning to
50 hold more consultations for tribes and ANSCA

1 Corporations following the fall RAC meeting cycle, so
2 stay tuned. In 2026, Federal Resource Monitoring program
3 work session will be in January 28th and 29th, or
4 February 4th and 5th. And then the wildlife regulatory
5 meeting will be April 6th through 10th or 13th to 17th.
6 And that's all I have to say. Please let me know if you
7 have any questions.

8
9 MS. MCDAVID: Council, I'll try to get
10 information about that comment period for that NEPA rule
11 and send that out in case you guys are interested in
12 looking at that. Thank you.

13
14 MS. KENNER: Hi. My name is Pippa Kenner
15 and I'm an anthropologist with the Office of Subsistence
16 Management, or OSM in Anchorage. And I'm going to give
17 a quick update on the Fisheries Resource Monitoring
18 Program and the Partners in Fisheries Monitoring
19 program. We are two grant programs just to remind you
20 what's going on, and I'll do it quickly, and also to
21 bring our new members in so that they understand that
22 we have these programs. This is not an action item and
23 you have no materials for this talk. So OSM, the Office
24 of Subsistence Management administers the Fisheries
25 Resource Monitoring program, which you'll sometimes hear
26 called the FRMP. And it's directed at supporting
27 meaningful involvement in fisheries management by Alaska
28 Native and rural organizations and promoting
29 collaborative -- collaboration among federal, state,
30 Alaska Native, and local organizations. We do this in
31 order to collect information needed for fisheries
32 management. Most importantly, we're expecting to publish
33 the notice of funding opportunity for -- and it hasn't
34 been published yet. It will be published in the near
35 future. We will send out announcements when it's
36 published, and then people will send us applications and
37 supporting materials to apply for grant money. And many
38 of the projects that were presented to you today are
39 these collaborations that are, at least in part, funded
40 by your monitoring program. And these projects are
41 addressing Priority Information Needs that the Council
42 developed earlier in the year. And that concludes that
43 presentation. I'm just going to move quickly to our
44 partners for fisheries monitoring program update again,
45 there will be a notice of funding opportunity -- a
46 funding opportunity will be out soon for people to
47 respond to with applications asking for funding.

48
49 The Partners Program is a competitive
50 grant for Alaska Native and rural nonprofit

1 organizations to strengthen Alaska Native and rural
2 involvement in federal subsistence management by
3 providing salaries to organizations so they can hire
4 professional biologists, social scientists, or educator
5 programs. Funding may also be used for science and
6 culture camps and paid student internships. And, thank
7 you. That's the end of that presentation.

8
9 MR. VICKERS: This is Brent Vickers from
10 OSM. You just reminded me, Pippa, and I wanted to add
11 that Karen Hyer, who has for long worked with the
12 Partners Programs for many of the organizations here has
13 just retired very recently, the other day that wasn't
14 included in our staffing updates just because it just
15 happened. And it was very quick. And we wanted to let
16 you guys know, because I know some other organizations
17 down here have worked very closely with her, and she
18 will be very much missed, but we will continue to work
19 -- other personnel particularly Pippa and Liz Williams,
20 will continue to work in that capacity. Thank you.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you for
23 that update you too. We're going to move on to -- we're
24 under other business C Federal Subsistence Board
25 regulatory meeting summary. And Brooke will be
26 presenting.

27
28 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair.
29 Real quickly, Council members in tab 9 of your
30 supplemental binders. There's a table, it's also up on
31 the screen. And this is a summary of the actions that
32 the Federal Subsistence Board took at their recent
33 fisheries regulatory meeting. And I think this is really
34 important for you guys to see because it's you know, you
35 make these recommendations in the fall, and then
36 sometimes we don't talk about what happened and we forget
37 what happened. And so, there was only one fisheries
38 proposal that was within the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta
39 Region at this Board meeting. It was for the Kuskokwim.
40 And if you remember, it was about the distance that
41 gillnets could be -- set nets could be in the
42 tributaries. And so, you got -- they wanted to increase
43 the distance and you guys didn't want that. And so, you
44 opposed, or they wanted to decrease -- make it you --
45 able to set them closer together and you all to match
46 state regulations. And you opposed it. The Board voted
47 in line with your recommendation, and so, they rejected
48 the proposal. And that was the main one I wanted to
49 point out to you. The other ones you voted on and
50 provided recommendations to the Board, but they were

1 crossover proposals that were outside of your region.
2 And the Board voted in line with the home region
3 Councils. You were trying to support those Councils, but
4 you did meet before them, so you didn't get a chance to
5 see how they voted. So, at the fall meeting, you'll get
6 a full like, written report about this, but I think the
7 table is just a helpful, quick glance for you about what
8 happened at that Board meeting. And also, at the bottom
9 you'll notice the Board did vote to send that brown bear
10 proposal back to you, and that was already taken up at
11 this meeting. So your recommendation will be forwarded
12 on to the Board, and we'll have a future report for you
13 on the Board's final action on that item. Thank you,
14 Madam Chair.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
17 Brooke. That's a great idea to give us this quick
18 overview from the work we did before. So maybe we could
19 just keep it a regular from now on. So, we're down to
20 the Alaska Board of Fisheries call for proposals, tab
21 10. But Brooke had an announcement about that.

22
23 MS. MCDAVID: Yes. Thank you, Madam
24 Chair. This isn't an action item for your Council, but
25 I did want to make sure and several other folks brought
26 it up earlier in the meeting. There is a current call
27 for Board of Fisheries proposals. And there's an AYK
28 cycle coming up, and then there's the Area M cycle coming
29 up. And you know, I know all the ACs or the State Fish
30 and Game Advisory Committees are really working on those
31 proposals. So, if you're interested in putting any in,
32 reach out to your local AC members or I know some of you
33 sit on those ACs. Also on the Yukon side a bunch of the
34 ACs are working together to put in some proposals, and
35 the Eastern Interior and Western Interior RACs are
36 interested in having a small working group of Yukon folks
37 from each of the RAC regions to maybe meet later in the
38 summer or early fall before your fall RAC meetings to
39 talk about maybe doing some joint support of some of
40 those proposals that you could write a joint letter of
41 support or something. That way it might give a stronger
42 voice, but you would -- if you wanted to participate in
43 that working group. Any of our Yukon folks you know, you
44 could have those discussions in the working group about
45 what proposals you might want to support, but you'd have
46 to bring that back to the full Rac at your fall meeting,
47 and then the rack would vote to take action on it. So,
48 it would just be kind of like a little bit of pre-work
49 to get kind of organized, to bring that back to the rack
50 at the fall. So, I did want to ask if there are any

1 folks from our, our Yukon side that might be interested
2 in, in participating in that. It would be via
3 teleconference, not you know, not in person. We don't
4 have the budget for that at the moment.

5

6 MR. ALEXIE: This is Wassily, I'd be
7 interested in participating in that.

8

9 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair, this is Francis
10 Prince. I'd like to be interested as well.

11

12 MS. EVAN: Norma, I'll call in and
13 listen. I'm still learning. Thank you.

14

15 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah. Sorry. I'm just going
16 to -- there's a question about what the working group
17 is. It would be a chance for the -- some representatives
18 from each of the RACs on the Yukon to get together and
19 have a small working group to go over the Board of Fish
20 proposals later in the summer or early fall, once they're
21 published. So you could work together to see if there's
22 any that you might want to submit a joint letter of
23 support or opposition, basically a comment letter
24 together as a 3 RACs. That way it might lend a little
25 extra oomph for lack of better words. I'm not sure how
26 they're going to transcribe oomph, but.....

27

28 Okay, sounds like Tiffany's interested
29 as well. All right. And when we have more information
30 about that we'll let you guys know. Thank you. And then
31 lastly, Madam Chair, I do have some other miscellaneous
32 updates for you guys. Before we wrap up and I might ask
33 one of our staff to help me pass something out so I
34 don't have to run around.

35

36 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair, this is Alissa
37 Rogers. I just wanted to let you know I'm back on. I got
38 kicked off.

39

40 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Hi, we heard you.

41

42 MS. MCDAVID: Thanks, Alissa. We're just
43 wrapping up with some miscellaneous updates for the
44 Council. I'm just getting started on that. Right now our
45 staff are passing out a little packet, and this is a
46 summary of all the correspondence that the RAC sent after
47 the last meeting in the fall time. And I'll just run
48 through it really quickly. You sent a letter to the
49 Board asking the Board to resend all the letters that
50 had not yet received a response. Some of those letters

1 were -- had been elevated to the Secretaries of Interior
2 and Agriculture. You sent a letter to Alaska Department
3 of Fish and Game supporting the Mulchatna predator
4 control to continue. You submitted a comment letter to
5 North Pacific Fishery Management Council about the chum
6 salmon bycatch alternatives. At your fall meeting,
7 you'll have another chance if you want to update any of
8 your recommendations on those alternatives. The draft -
9 - the Revised Environmental Impact Statement and
10 Alternative analysis should be published by that time.
11 You also commented to North Pacific Fishery Management
12 Council about halibut bycatch. You sent a letter to the
13 Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council and the AVCP
14 Waterfowl Conservation Committee expressing some
15 concerns about migratory birds in your region and
16 requesting for information. And I did reach out to the
17 executive director of AMBCC and in response to this
18 letter, and she said she'd be happy to come and present
19 to the RAC at your fall meeting, or she might not be
20 able to be here in person, but at least present
21 virtually, and tell you a little bit more about the
22 issues that they've been concerned about lately and also
23 let you know about the call for proposals for migratory
24 birds, because it did come up today about that snowy owl
25 proposal. And so, they have a call, it's every fall or
26 every the end of the year from like the 1st of November
27 to December 15th. I just found that out today. And so,
28 at that fall meeting, you could talk to -- talk to her
29 more about that. And if you guys wanted to put in that
30 snowy owl proposal, you could discuss it more at that
31 time. Finally, the last letter you sent was to a lot of
32 different people, and you sent it to -- the main folks
33 were the Federal Subsistence Board to NOAA and to the
34 Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and you requested
35 that those organizations meet to discuss salmon
36 management and how we can work across jurisdictions. And
37 you copied all the ACs in the area. A lot of the Alaska
38 Native organizations, tribal corporations or Alaska
39 Native corporations and a long list. So that just went
40 out this past week. It was hung up in review for a little
41 bit. So, we might have some responses to that at your
42 next meeting. And then I did want to draw your attention
43 -- there were four letters that were received from the
44 office of the Secretary of Interior in response to the
45 letters that you sent, you and other Councils sent
46 together after the All Council meeting. And so, this was
47 these responses were from the previous administration
48 that's no longer there. So, at the Federal Subsistence
49 Board meeting last month it was brought up that -- a
50 requested of the Board to resend some of these letters.

1 The ones that came up were the ANCSA D1 lands letters
2 and the fisheries issues. And so, the Board is planning
3 to re-forward those letters to the new administration
4 after this RAC meeting cycle, because some racks are
5 asking to, you know, submit additional letters about D1
6 lands and similar issues. So that's the update I had on
7 that. Regarding the Council member compensation it was
8 recommended that you bring that up with the new
9 administration. Since the previous administration wasn't
10 able to address that before; the turnover. So, you might
11 want to note that as something for action, if that's of
12 interest to you. And sorry, that was a lot. But you guys
13 are busy with correspondence, so I wanted to give you a
14 good overview of what was completed. Any questions?

15

16 MR. MORGAN: Walter Morgan. Would you
17 explain the compensation to these new Board members?
18 What it was? Thank you.

19

20 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah, I'd be happy to do
21 so. So to Francis, Fred and Tiffany, in the past the
22 Councils have advocated for like a stipend during the
23 meeting or something similar to, like, an honorarium.
24 Currently you receive a per diem for the days that you
25 travel and the days that you're at the meeting, and
26 that's the per diem that's received at the standard
27 federal rate. But the Council has requested additional
28 stipend or per diem because of the time you spend away
29 from your families and the expertise and local knowledge
30 that you provide to the Federal Subsistence Management
31 Program. And so that request was sent to the Federal
32 Subsistence Board. At the All Council meeting, several
33 other Councils joined in, I think pretty much all ten
34 Councils either sent a letter of their own or joined in
35 on a joint letter, and that letter was forwarded up to
36 the Secretary of Interior. They -- the secretary is the
37 one who has the authority to decide if that stipend
38 could be given. And so that would be something that
39 would need to be sent again, if you really were
40 interested in that. Thank you.

41

42 (Pause)

43

44 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
45 Brooke. Did you want to move on to the next part at all,
46 or do you want us to take some time and review this?

47

48 MS. MCDAVID: Well, I think before we
49 move on to the rest of my updates, I guess this would
50 kind of be the last call if there was any correspondence

1 you guys wanted to draft and send for this meeting. I
2 know that there was requested by some folks earlier that
3 you send another letter related to the D1 lands and the
4 importance of keeping those in protection. So, if you
5 wanted to do that, it would take a motion to write that
6 letter to the Board.

7

8 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

9

10 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

11

12 MS. ROGERS4: Thank you. Through the
13 Chair. I so move to get that letter written on the D1
14 lands with the new talking points. Hold on, I'll -- give
15 me a minute. I'm going to pull up the email so I can
16 pull up the talking points.

17

18 (Pause)

19

20 All right. Thank you for being patient
21 with me. Some of the talking points are the background
22 of the D1 lands are important to tribes, rural
23 subsistence preference, salmon, caribou. These ones are
24 Salmon River, headwaters of the Yukon River. Between
25 2023 and 2024, there was a wave of support across Alaska
26 for keeping D1 protections in place. Support for
27 retention of D1 land protection include over half of all
28 federally recognized Alaska tribes for or regional
29 Alaska Native corporations and five Subsistence RACs,
30 YKRAC, Eastern Interior, Western Interior, Seward
31 Peninsula, and the Bristol Bay. The Western Arctic
32 Caribou Herd Working Group also asked for retention of
33 the D-1 lands as it did the Yukon River Inter-Tribal
34 Fish Commission. Testimony across Alaska was unanimous
35 in support of the retention. There was 19 public
36 hearings, and there was no voice in favor of opening all
37 these lands. We celebrated when D1 were protected in
38 August of last year. The problem in January, President
39 Trump called on the new Secretary of Interior to overturn
40 and lift D1 land protection. The Delta RAC can make sure
41 that new Secretary of Interior knows how unique the
42 situation is and the vitality of our region. If these
43 lands are opened, they would be available for foreign
44 companies to stake mining claims almost immediately. The
45 State of Alaska has filed many of the D1 lands and if
46 turned over to the state, rural residents would lose
47 their rural subsistence priority and instead be subject
48 to state hunting regulations. This would impact food
49 security, our culture, our traditions, our values, and
50 our identity. The action we need to take now is to send

1 an updated letter to the Secretary as soon as possible,
2 so he does not make a mistake and open these letters to
3 industry. These lands should be prioritized for
4 subsistence and habitat, for subsistence resources like
5 salmon, caribou, moose, wildlife and our migratory
6 birds. Thank you, Madam Chair.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. And
9 all that was recorded. So, it will be noted. Oh, so
10 Alissa has made the motion to support the resending of
11 the D1 lands letter. Is there a second?

12
13 MS. AGAYAR: Second.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Tiffany seconds.

16
17 MR. BEANS: Madam Chairman, I -- I second
18 the motion.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Tiffany
21 beat you by a little bit.

22
23 MR. BEANS: Okay. Thank you.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Is there any
26 discussion? Sorry.

27
28 MR. ALEXIE: Question.

29
30 MR. BEANS: I'll call question.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Wassily beat you
33 this time. Question has been called. So, Brooke, do you
34 have the floor to restate?

35
36 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, the motion on the
37 floor is to send a D1 lands -- a letter in support of
38 retaining the D1 lands protections to the Federal
39 Subsistence Board with a request to forward that to the
40 Secretary. Do you do you want me to ask for unanimous
41 consent? Okay. Is there anyone in opposition? Please
42 state so now.

43
44 (No response)

45
46 Hearing none. The motion passes.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
49 Brooke. Do you also have the next item, Young leader
50 seat update to present? And you have the floor then.

1

2 MS. MCDAVID: Yes. So, I did quickly
3 mention earlier when we went over our charter that, you
4 know, that young leader seat was added as a seat -- a
5 non-voting seat on your Council. And we did just solicit
6 letters of interest this winter. And so, we'll be working
7 to review those and hopefully have someone set to join
8 the Council for next year. So that's the short update
9 on that one. And then the last miscellaneous business I
10 had was about the per diem for the fall meeting cycle.
11 So, this is the last meeting where you'll get the paper
12 checks. They've told us that we can no longer issue
13 those paper checks. There's a security concerns about
14 those. And so, they're going to issue everyone a debit
15 card. And that will have your per diem put on it for the
16 meeting. And you can -- it'll be just like the check,
17 you get 60% of your per diem as an advance for you to
18 use during the meeting while you're traveling. You can
19 go to the ATM and take out that cash, or you can just
20 use the debit card like you normally would your own
21 during the meeting. There is one other choice if you are
22 someone who doesn't want or need the per diem during the
23 meeting, you could vote to or elect to have a direct
24 deposit, but it wouldn't come until after the meeting,
25 so you wouldn't have the per diem during the meeting.
26 So, unless you tell me that you want direct deposit,
27 we'll sign everyone up for the debit card to be issued
28 for the fall meeting. If you want the direct deposit,
29 we'll just -- I have a form for you to fill out with
30 your bank information. And you usually get those
31 payments after the meeting about two weeks or so after
32 the meeting as long as everything's on track. So, you
33 guys can let me know privately, after the meeting I'll
34 be calling you and making sure we have your correct
35 selection for your preference for next fall. Thank you.

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MR. ANDRE: Madam Chair, I can ask for
one better. Give us a blank check and pay. Cover our
frustration all these years. I'd be happy.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: I had a question,
too. This 60% given while you're there and 40% after.
Is that done throughout all of OSM travelers or, you
know, anyone else you deal with traveling, is that normal
across the Board?

MS. MCDAVID: So, it's normal for all
what we call invitational travelers, for our volunteers
who are not official government employees. And the

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1 reason they only give you 60% as an advance is because,
2 as you guys all know, a lot of times flights get
3 canceled, you might not be traveling as many days. And
4 if they gave you all that at the beginning, then you
5 would owe money back to them. So, they want to just give
6 you a portion of it. That way you don't overspend and
7 then you don't have to deal with paying back. So, the
8 rest comes after the meeting. The remainder comes as the
9 check that you get after the meeting.

10

11 MS. KENNER: So really quickly, Madam
12 Chair, this is Pippa Kenner with OSM. It's the same with
13 us. I pay up front and then I have to apply to get
14 reimbursed. I can apply to get a -- an advance. But I
15 don't know what the rules are about that. But in general
16 we pay out of pocket and then we get reimbursed. Thanks.

17

18 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. And
19 now we're finally down to 16. Council member closing
20 comments. For this part, earlier, I had mentioned that
21 we're going to keep it to three minutes and you don't
22 mind doing the timing, or is that should we do a timer?

23

24 MS. MCDAVID: I can be a timer.

25

26 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Unless you guys
27 want to stay till 7:30, like our All RAC one last year
28 in Anchorage. Okay, so I don't want to start with the
29 closing comments. Sorry. I'm just going to maybe start
30 with Francis. (In Native) it's okay?

31

32 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair, this is Francis
33 Prince, and I just wanted to mention about what Brent
34 was mentioning just for our villagers. You know,
35 regarding the Real IDs and if your villages are having
36 issues because we don't have DMVs in our villages, I
37 recommend you to ask your tribal administrator in your
38 village to reach out to DMV, to come out to your village.

39

40 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Francis.
41 That's -- is that your closing comment?

42

43 MR. PRINCE: Yes.

44

45 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay, quyana.
46 Tiffany will go next.

47

48 MS. AGAYAR: Good end of the meeting.
49 It's been very nice to attend one of these meetings for
50 the -- sitting from a Council side for the first time,

1 and I got to learn a lot. And I'm looking forward to
2 learning more and happy to have some good people to
3 learn from here. Thank you.

4
5 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you. Good evening,
6 everybody. I'd like to congratulate our new Board
7 members, and I'm glad I made it to this meeting. I didn't
8 make to last spring meeting in Anchorage, but -- due to
9 the weather and problems that we've been having out in
10 the bush. And I'd like to thank the NPFMC for coming out
11 and doing a presentation. Finally hearing our voices.
12 And also, I'd like to, how would I put it? You know,
13 they're looking into trying to find ways to cut down on
14 bycatch. So, if we work together with them, hopefully
15 we get something done. Thank you.

16
17 MR. ANDREW: Yeah. Quyana. John Andrew
18 (In Native). I'd like to thank our staff first for
19 putting our meeting, make this meeting possible. And our
20 partners with the State of Alaska and ONC, and AVCP,
21 even on the Yukon side, we thank all the people that
22 have contributed to this meeting, and we just made a
23 historical first, we all -- our Executive Council, are
24 all young ladies and very talented, and I thank you for
25 being here. Then on our next meeting, all of us are
26 supposed to address her as Madam Chair. And you got to
27 say yes, ma'am and no, ma'am. I will tame, thank you.

28
29 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, sir. This is Brooke.
30 So, I just put something in my mouth. Bad timing. I just
31 want to say quyana cakneq to all of you Council members
32 for being here and everyone that presented during the
33 meeting, and all our members of the public who testified.
34 There was a lot of really heartfelt and important issues
35 discussed at this meeting. And it's always a pleasure
36 to be out here in Bethel with you all and to listen and
37 learn from you. Quyana.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks, Brooke.
40 I wanted to say that I think that this group, our RAC
41 needs a three-day, I guess -- sorry, I need our meetings
42 to be three days in order to get everything in there
43 smoothly. So, I'm appreciating that our next meeting
44 will be three days, especially for this group. So, I
45 gave me my report earlier, so it's still kind of feels
46 fresh and like I didn't really come up with more to say,
47 but, that I'm still so grateful, for being on this RAC
48 for one and the opportunity to learn from you all who
49 represent the whole region. I come from the edge of the
50 region where I felt like I, you know, I'm just so far

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1 from the Yukon, you know, like but I do really appreciate
2 how you represent your communities and our subsistence
3 way of life. And on top of that, you know, like, on top
4 of all that is volunteer so quyana cakneq for your
5 volunteer time to do such meaningful work here. Of
6 course, the same thanks goes out to OSM staff for
7 planning such a great meeting. After planning my forum
8 a couple of weeks ago now I realize how much work this
9 takes. So good job everybody, I enjoyed all the
10 presenters as well. Felt really special for North
11 Pacific coming out to see us too. So, this was a special
12 meeting. And looking forward to the next one. Quyana.

13

14 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you, Madam Chair.

15

16 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair.

17

18 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Hi, Fred. Sorry.
19 So, someone else's.....

20

21 MR. BEANS: Did I beat them?

22

23 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (In Native).

24

25 MR. BEANS: No. Okay.

26

27 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Oh, we'll call on
28 you.

29

30 MR. BEANS: Yeah. Okay. Call on me. Okay.

31

32 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. Sorry,
33 Fred. They said you can go.

34

35 MR. BEANS: Finally. Okay. Yeah. It's
36 been an experience I have never encountered, and I would
37 like to meet each of you and hopefully, yeah, hopefully
38 this fall. You -- and I have been -- and I have more to
39 learn. So, thank you very much for the good meeting that
40 we just had. So, it was nice talking to you guys and I
41 enjoyed it. Thank you.

42

43 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Fred.
44 (In Native).

45

46 UNIDENTIFIED: (In Native) Okay. Thank
47 you, Madam Chair. I first of all, I would like to
48 congratulate our new Council members. I know you guys
49 have a lot of things to learn, especially young men like
50 you. So, I am really thankful that you were interested

1 in this RAC here. And now you got it, you have -- you're
2 on the Board now. So anyways, I would like to thank all
3 the Council members here, and all the OSM staff. And we
4 know that we miss Ray, but he's on a big Board right
5 now, and he's going to do some good job over there for
6 us, too. I think that's it. Quyana cakneq.

7

8

UNIDENTIFIED: (In Native).

9

10 TRANSLATOR: Speaking Yup'ik. We should
11 not let our language disappear because we are Yup'ik.
12 First of all, I want to thank all of you. That we have
13 come to this day and age we our health and thank you for
14 the good meeting that we've had. And I wasn't really
15 looking forward to the North Pacific Fishery Management.
16 I thought they would not show up and, I was -- I was not
17 expecting -- I was not expecting them. But I'm very
18 thankful that they were here with us. Also, our
19 forefathers have said this before, without doing any
20 work we cannot attain what we want. But we have to work
21 together and identify what we want to succeed in, and
22 we need to identify them and work toward that goal. And
23 that's -- and we need to give credence to the creator
24 who have created our worl dand this land. And even when
25 we go home let us be in good health. And let's not get
26 tired. And when we go home, how will it be good. Thank
27 you.

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MR. MORGAN: Walter Morgan, Lower
Kalskag. It's good to have new Chairman and also the
Vice and Secretary, and all the new members here. Thank
you. One thing I -- really stands out to me is that D1
land. I'm really scared of it. Because if we get into
development and mines and stuff, we're going to get
leakage in the ocean. The way, you know, I really worry
about that. I was watching the news, and I always pay
attention, and it seemed like these President want
money. And God hope he don't open up that big -- all the
big mines. That's going to kill everything, I think. And
the North Pacific Council they keep denying, you know,
I don't like their reports on the amount of fish they're
getting out in the ocean that's bound for western Alaska.
I think there's more numbers in that than, you know. I
think we're getting mixed salmon now. You know, I'd like
to see a moratorium close for them for one year just to
see what'll come back. If they're not the cause, then
we've got to look elsewhere. But, thank everybody. I'm
sorry I got sick and I tried, I battle, I never eat for
two days. And, you know, I'm feeling better, though,
today. And thank you.

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MS. EVAN: Norma Evan, Marshall. I'd like to welcome the new staff members. And I'd like to thank Brooke, Pippa, the rest of the OSM staff for helping this meeting come together. And I was thinking about you guys in winter time and hope you guys are doing good. And I'm wishing for you guys to have a very bountiful summer with lots of berries and lots of fish. And thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you, Norma. We have one Council member left who is online. Alissa, are you still with us and do you want to give your closing comment?

(Pause)

MS. ROGERS: Is it my turn?

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes. Sorry if you didn't hear me. I was calling on you.

MS. ROGERS: Oh, sorry. First, I want to say congratulations to you, Jackie. I'm so thankful and happy that you're our Chairman for this round. It's been a long time coming so, let me know if you need help with anything. And I want to congratulate (indiscernible) our new members. I'm so happy to have you on board and have as many seats filled as possible. I remember when we were -- when I first started, we were definitely bare minimum. So, I'm very thankful that you guys are here and with us and bringing all your knowledge and wealth of experience to our table. You are a great, wonderful new resource. I wanted to thank all of our staff from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and ADF&G for everything that you do, all the research projects, all the data crunching, all the letters of writing, Ms. Brooke, thank you. All the anthropologists and all the things that you do for us for these analyses. Bless your heart. My hat's off to you all. And I did want to -- before we end the night, Madame Chair if you could do a quick moment of silence for all those that we lost since our last meeting, that would be greatly appreciative of that. Before we have our ending prayer. I'm really excited for this upcoming season and looking forward to what this new administration is going to bring us. Hopefully more good than it will bad. And I look forward to hearing the responses of all the letters we sent out. And I did have a question for you, Brooke. Are we able to create more letters that are next meeting?

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MS. MCDAVID: Hi, Alissa, this is Brooke. Yes. At your next meeting you could revisit correspondence.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. All right. Thank you. This has been a great and wonderful meeting. And again, I'm so sorry I wasn't able to be there for the full entirety of the meeting, but I was glad I was able to be there yesterday evening. I always love having these meetings because it feels like a whole family reunion. And you guys all are family to me.

Many blessings to all of you. Safe travels back home. Thank you for all your hard work and everything that you do, and taking time away from your families, jobs, and life to be here with us to talk about very important matters that are for our people, our region and our resources. Thank you. Quyana cakneq, everyone. That's that's mine. Have a great and wonderful day.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: You too, Alissa, quyana. And we weren't going to take any more comments, but there is Martin Kelly is raising his hand. So very quickly. Martin. It's.....

MR. KELLY: Very quickly I implore and applaud, everyone, Madam Chair, to include the OSM, all the Council. And you know, the efforts you make, the sacrifices you make, the commitment you make. It's especially focusing on our lifestyle -- our subsistence lifestyle. It's been a really hard-fought battle because we don't have salmon today. One of the strongest people I looked up to always told me to fight for salmon. We can go back to the 2000, Tony Knowles, subsistence priority treaty with Canada. And we could always lean back to Katie John, scientists with NOAA and NPFMC. You know, I was -- blame the I wouldn't say blame, but pushed the problem with losing our salmon towards climate change. And I express my concern because we are losing our fight. I've been doing it for at least 25 years, trying to catch on with the different entities and agencies and interest groups that work around our salmon. There's too many of them. It's got to be a collaborative effort to try and get our salmon back. So, it does mean quite a bit. Appreciated. Thank you, guys.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you, Martin, and thanks for staying with us the whole two

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1 days and participating. Is there -- and I appreciate all
2 your closing comments. They're always heartfelt, and I
3 don't mean to just move on from them like this, but is
4 there a motion to adjourn?

5
6 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Mic (In Native).

7
8 MR. PARKS: For the record, Henry. Madam
9 Chair, I shall move to adjourn our meeting.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Henry Parks
12 moves to adjourn.

13
14 MS. EVAN: Second by Norma Evan.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: And.....

17
18 MR. BEANS: Frederick, second.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Frederick Beans,
21 second.

22
23 MR. BEANS: Thank you.

24
25 (Simultaneous speech)

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27 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Norma. All in
28 favor to adjourn, aye.

29
30 IN UNISON Aye.

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32 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana.

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34 MS. MCDAVID: What if we're opposed?

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36 MS. ROGERS: That would be too funny.

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38 (Off record)

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40 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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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 147 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the YUKON KUSKOKWIM DELTA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME I recorded on the 5th day of March 2025;

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

DATED at Isabela, Puerto Rico this 18th day of March 2025.

Rafael Morel
Chief Project Manager - Transcriptions