

0001

KODIA/ALEUTIANS SUSBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME II

KODIAC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
VISITOR CENTER
Kodiak, Alaska
March 7, 2025

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Rebecca L. Skinner, Chair
Brett J. Richardson
Christopher L. Price
Coral A. Chernoff
Daniel J. Smith
Jeffrey L. Wasley
Karen A. Kamaloff
Patrick B Holmes
Natasha M. Hayden
Samuel I. Rohrer

Regional Council Coordinator, Lisa Hutchinson

Recorded and transcribed by:

Lighthouse Integrated Services Corp
877-261-2495
info@lighthouseonline.com

P R O C E E D I N G S

(Kodiak, Alaska - 3/7/2025)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, good morning. It's 9:00 a.m., so we'll go ahead and call the meeting back to order. The first thing we're going to take up this morning is going back to action item 13D, call for federal -- yes, ma'am.

UNIDENTIFIED: Yeah. Can we do roll call, please? (Distortion) who's online, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER Okay, we need to do roll call and find out who's online first. So, Lisa, if you could do roll call.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Good morning, everybody. This is the Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Advisory Council. The second day that we're meeting here in Kodiak. And welcome everybody in the room and those online. I'm going to do the roll call for our Council members. We'll start with Jeffrey, Jeff Wasley.

MR. WASLEY: Here.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Patrick Holmes.

MR. HOLMES: Here.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Sam Rohrer.

MR. ROHRER: Here.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Christopher Price.

MR. PRICE: Here.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Coral Chernoff.

MS. CHERNOFF: Here.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Daniel Smith.

MR. SMITH: Here.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Natasha Hayden.

0003

1 MS. HAYDEN: Here.

2
3 MS. HUTCHINSON: Brett Richardson.

4
5 MR. RICHARDSON: Here.

6
7 MS. HUTCHINSON: Karen Kalmakoff.

8
9 MS. KALMAKOFF: Here.

10
11 MS. HUTCHINSON: Rebecca Skinner.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Here.

14
15 MS. HUTCHINSON: Madam Chair, we have ten
16 seated Council members that are all present, so we do
17 have a quorum. Thank you.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great, thanks. And
20 if we can go through to see who is online. So, if you're
21 online, please let us know you're there.

22
23 MR. STONE: Good morning, this is Jarred
24 Stone, fish biologist with the Office of Subsistence
25 Management.

26
27 MR. CHEN: Good morning, Madam Chair and
28 Council members, this is Glenn Chen from the Bureau of
29 Indian Affairs.

30
31 MS. KRUEGER: Good morning, this is Kelly
32 Krueger with the Division of Sport Fish for the
33 Department of Fish and Game.

34
35 MR. WITTEVEEN: Good morning, Mark
36 Witteveen. Sport Fish, Fish and Game in Kodiak.

37
38 MS. WILLIAMS: Good morning, this is
39 Alison Williams, wildlife biologist with Izembek
40 National Wildlife Refuge.

41
42 MS. KLEIN: Hi and this is Jill Klein,
43 Regional Subsistence Coordinator from the Anchorage
44 regional office of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Good
45 morning.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great, do we have
48 anyone else online who hasn't introduced themselves yet?

49
50

0004

1 MS. ERLENBACH: Hi, everyone. Joy
2 Erlenbach, biologist for Kodiak Refuge.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER All right, is there
5 anyone else?

6
7 (No response)

8
9 Okay. Oh, sorry. Introductions in the
10 room, too. If people in the audience could come up to
11 the testimony table.

12
13 MS. LA VINE: Good morning, everyone.
14 This is Robbin La Vine, Subsistence Policy Coordinator.

15
16 UNIDENTIFIED: (Indiscernible) local
17 guide.

18
19 MS. HOLMAN: Kendra Holman, wildlife
20 biologist with OSM.

21
22 MS. KEATING: Good morning, Jackie
23 Keating, Division of Subsistence, Fish and Game.

24
25 MR. ROBERTS: Good morning, members of
26 the Council. I'm Jason Roberts, anthropologist with OSM.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, so that
29 was all of our introductions. Before we jump into the
30 action item, I just wanted to remind people that we have
31 a time-certain presentation at 1:15 p.m. That's the chum
32 salmon bycatch, update on status of chum salmon action
33 with Dr. Kate Haapala. So, going back to action item 13D
34 call for Federal Wildlife Proposals. We have a proposal
35 from Coral Chernoff, two proposals. So, I'll turn it
36 over to Coral to make motions. If you wanna do motion -
37 - one motion for each proposal, so do them one at a
38 time. Thanks. So, motion one at a time. Yep.

39
40 MS. CHERNOFF: Thank you, Madam Chair.
41 So, I would like to make a motion -- would it be for the
42 subsistence -- for the Council to adopt or to -- I'd
43 like to make a motion. I'd just like.....

44
45 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, I think it
46 would be for the Council to initiate a Federal Wildlife
47 Proposal.

48
49 MS. CHERNOFF: I appreciate that. Okay,
50 I'd like to make a motion for our Council to initiate a

1 proposal for the Kodiak region, Unit 8, to request to
2 change the customary and traditional use determination
3 for the Community of Kodiak. Defining the Community of
4 Kodiak would be the Kodiak Road System. So, in Kodiak,
5 we have a community and a borough. So, I just wanted to
6 define that to include all of that Monashka, the City
7 of Kodiak, Bell's Flats, all the way to Chiniak,
8 Pasagshak and Anton Larsen Bay and not including Nemetz
9 and the Coast Guard Base residents and Rocket Launch
10 facility residents. And I'll just read my explanation
11 and.....

12
13 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Let's get a second
14 first, and then you can speak to the motion. Is there a
15 second?

16
17 MS. HAYDEN: Second, this is Natasha.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thanks,
20 Natasha. Go ahead, and speak to your motion.

21
22 MS. CHERNOFF: Okay. The explanation is
23 the finding for C&T should include the Community of
24 Kodiak. All communities on Kodiak Island have a long
25 history of customary and traditional harvesting of brown
26 bear for food and traditional handicraft. In the
27 published journal Two Voyages to Russian America, 1802
28 to 1807 by Davydov, he writes on Kodiak, sometimes two
29 or three people in a group creep up on an animal and
30 fire arrows at it, and if it attacks them, they fight
31 it off with spears. Davydov also notes that kamleikas,
32 or rain parkas, are made from the intestines of whales,
33 seals, and bears, and of the gut kamleikas, the best are
34 from the bears. The Alutiiq Museum, and local -- both
35 the Alutiiq Museum and local author and Kodiak Brown
36 Bear expert Larry Van Daele also have produced
37 publications about the importance of traditional bear
38 harvesting on Kodiak Island. In addition, many museums
39 across the world hold collections of art that both depict
40 bears and articles of clothing that today we would
41 recognize as Native handicraft. The importance of
42 accessing bear for food and other needs is well
43 documented in Kodiak. The residents of the villages
44 around the island have a traditional use finding, and
45 the residents of Kodiak, who have the same history of
46 use, should not be excluded from a customary and
47 traditional use finding.

48
49
50

1 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Are
2 there any questions for Coral? Go ahead, Natasha and
3 then Pat.

4
5 MS. HAYDEN: My question is kind of about
6 the way that you described the Nemetz and Coast --
7 residents of the Coast Guard Base. And just making --
8 my thought is a suggestion of that it may -- it might
9 be cleaner if it were to be a Coast Guard Base and Coast
10 Guard housing, because there's also Aviation Hill,
11 there's Nemetz, and there's the potential for future
12 expansion outside of those areas. So, just a suggestion
13 of how that might be described as Coast Guard housing.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. So, before
16 I go to Pat, it would -- Jason, would you have any
17 suggest -- and you can think about it while Pat goes,
18 but do you have any suggested language relating to other
19 C&T findings that would accomplish what Natasha just
20 outlined? If there's some special words or, you know,
21 CDPs or that kind of thing, or, yeah, you can go now.

22
23 MR. ROBERTS: Through the Chair. I would
24 say probably what Natasha just described, off the top
25 of my head would work the best.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Okay,
28 Pat.

29
30 MR. HOLMES: Two questions. Yesterday
31 you're talking about having a four-bear subsistence
32 harvest. That's gonna be a separate proposal? And then
33 with that, how would that be implemented? A drawing or
34 how would people be able to engage in that from -- on
35 the Road System?

36
37 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Coral.

38
39 MS. CHERNOFF: Thank you, Pat. Through
40 the Chair. I guess that's something that I don't know
41 is under what this Board decides. And also, I guess I
42 would just maybe wait to comment on that when we get to
43 that proposal.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right: Kendra,
46 did you have something you wanted to add?

47
48
49 MS. HOLMAN: I was just gonna help answer
50 that question, but if we wanted to wait and make that

0007

1 more applicable answer to that proposal, we can do that
2 as well.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yes, let's wait
5 because the question really relates to the permitting
6 issue, which is not under this particular proposal. Pat,
7 go ahead.

8
9 MR. HOLMES: One more question. On your
10 definition of the Coast Guard Base, would that be
11 including the Fish and Wildlife Service? They have a
12 housing area up there that was base property, and now
13 it's a Fish and Wildlife Service residence. Would that
14 be part of your proposal or as far as not being included?

15
16 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Jason, go ahead.

17
18 MR. ROBERTS: So, if my memory serves me
19 correctly, this was part of the issue that we ran into
20 with the well-known Kodiak Coast Guard C&T application
21 for salmon. Is that Kodiak Station actually includes
22 some holdings that are not technically Coast Guard Base
23 residences. So, yeah, like I said, as Natasha mentioned,
24 it would probably work better if you just use her wording
25 instead of saying Kodiak Station.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, thank you.
28 Coral.

29
30 MS. CHERNOFF: So, I'm wondering and
31 maybe this is a question for Jason too, is that, is this
32 something that we would just work through, through the
33 process? So, we don't have to figure it out right now.
34 But we understand the intent and the direction that we're
35 going.

36
37 MR. ROBERTS: Through the Chair. Yes, I
38 mean, you can always submit the proposal any way you
39 like. And then, I mean, it's your proposal, so you could
40 modify it when it comes before you later to determine
41 your support or opposition towards.....

42
43 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Natasha,
44 go ahead.

45
46 MS. HAYDEN: Thank you. Is the -- is
47 there a residency requirement as far as how long somebody
48 needs to live in the area designated C&T. So, for
49 example, like, you know, do they need to live in that
50 community for a 12-month period prior to being eligible

1 to participate in one of these hunts?

2

3 MR. ROBERTS: So, through the Chair. The
4 requirement is they have to have been in Alaska --
5 acquire Alaska residency. So, they have to have lived
6 in Alaska for a year. But as soon as you move into a
7 rural area with C&T, you would become -- you would have
8 that C&T.

9

10 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Go ahead, Natasha.

11

12 MS. HAYDEN: So, is it possible to build
13 in, like, a 12-month minimum requirement in a community
14 for that to be eligible to participate in a particular
15 region's harvesting opportunities?

16

17 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: And also, if you
18 could distinguish C&T and harvesting cause [sic] I
19 think, like those are two different -- there's a nuance
20 there. Maybe he could speak to that.

21

22 (Pause)

23

24 MR. ROBERTS: Kendra has reminded me that
25 the person has to claim the rural area as their permanent
26 residence. Yeah. So, I'm not entirely sure what you're
27 asking related to the harvesting. Like, if you're
28 recognized as having C&T for the resource, that would
29 put you in the pool of eligible harvesters, but it does
30 not necessarily mean you would get one of the four
31 permits.

32

33 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: I think what I'm
34 trying to kinda distinguish is that C&T applies to
35 certain areas. So, it's an area, it's not a person, it's
36 an area. So, if I'm a person who has that Alaska
37 residency and I go to that area, I have C&T. When we're
38 talking about can I go get a permit to hunt if I haven't
39 been there, if I haven't established residency,
40 technically I shouldn't be able to do it right. So, that
41 there's kind of a nuance between what C&T is and then
42 me as an individual. I may live in a C&T area, but if I
43 don't have residency, I'm not supposed to be able to
44 hunt. Okay. We'll go Coral, Brett, and then Chris.

45

46 MS. CHERNOFF: I guess this would be for
47 Jason, this question. This is Coral. I seem to recall
48 when we were talking about that -- some talk about
49 there's more than -- there was more to that Coast Guard
50 -- in that Coast Guard discussion than just being able

1 to subsistence. There was something -- some other things
2 attached for subsistence that was like customary and
3 traditional use. Did it include having a need too, cause
4 I remember we talked about them having a grocery store
5 with cheaper prices and them having a bunch of other
6 facilities. But I can't quite recall what those -- was
7 there more criteria to that?

8
9 MR. ROBERTS: Through the Chair. So, what
10 you're referencing are the eight factors that go into
11 determining or providing a basis for determining
12 customary and traditional use determinations. And so,
13 that was part of your deliberations on whether the Coast
14 Guard should have that proposed C&T for salmon. But yeah,
15 that would something -- that would be something you would
16 deliberate on when this proposal came up.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, Brett
19 and then Chris.

20
21 MR. RICHARSON: Brett Richardson,
22 Unalaska. I would support this, I think the only thing
23 that may need to be cleaned up is the -- this language,
24 the not included zone. I don't know the -- you know, if
25 you can figure out kind of a revision to that. Because
26 I think there'd be problems with that at some point but
27 otherwise you know, I would agree with it.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, we'll go to
30 Chris and then I see there's multiple people waiting,
31 staff members that wanna jump in. So, Chris, go ahead.

32
33 MR. PRICE: For those of us that don't
34 know, I'm just curious why is it the current regulation
35 does not include the Community of Kodiak for subsistence
36 bear permits. That part of -- that background.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Jason, go ahead.

39
40 MR. ROBERTS: So, this precedes me by
41 quite a few years, but from what we could tell is, this
42 was carried over from state regulations and just hasn't
43 been brought up for change. Oh, nope.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Should we hear from
46 Kendra?

47
48 MS. HOLMAN: So, Kendra, OSM. So, through
49 the Chair here. I was able to do a little bit of digging
50 the other night, back in 1996 is when this permit system

1 that we currently have was established. At that point
2 in time, it was not thought to be possible to do any
3 kind of drawing permits for -- under the federal system.
4 It was still new; they were still kinda [sic] working
5 through things. So, what it was decided was they came
6 up with this other system, there was a working group
7 involved as well, or I'm sorry, not a working group,
8 like a bear management Council. I'd have -- don't quote
9 me on exactly what it was. And so, through this group,
10 they came up with this system that we have now for the
11 communities. The thoughts that I could find in the
12 analysis were essentially some pretty high concerns
13 about conservation issues. If everyone on the Road
14 System in Kodiak were able to get a subsistence permit
15 every year. So, if you look at the state system like
16 there is one every four years. And so, and they didn't
17 know or believe at that time that they could do drawing
18 permits, especially like in the way the State system
19 does them for four permits. So, it was decided not to
20 include Kodiak because of the number of people. At this
21 point in time, I do know we have draw-type systems
22 running in other areas of the State. But at that point
23 in time, they said that it wasn't believed that it would
24 be legal. So, they left Kodiak out and they went off of
25 those other communities with C&T partially due to some
26 historical use of those communities.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, it sounds like
29 then draw permits are possible. So, if we do get to the
30 point of talking about how this would actually work which
31 I'm not sure if we need to do that today or not but draw
32 permits would be an option. Is that correct?

33
34 MS. HOLMAN: Correct. It is a potential
35 option that we can look at and see if that type of system
36 would work.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, Jackie
39 and then Natasha.

40
41 MS. KEATING: Thank you, Madam Chair.
42 Again, for the record, Jackie Keating, Division of
43 Subsistence with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.
44 I'm hearing some really good discussion on defining the
45 Coast Guard Base, and I just wanted to add to the record
46 for -- especially for RAC members that are newer and
47 might not have been around to remind and introduce to
48 folks that several years ago, this RAC directed us at
49 division to conduct a study of comprehensive subsistence
50 uses for the Kodiak Road System, which hadn't been done

00011

1 in 30 years. We specifically did a geographically
2 stratified sample with that, so that we could look at
3 differences between the U.S. Coast Guard Base and other
4 parts of the Road System. That technical paper has
5 finally been published, its Technical Paper 506. I'm
6 gonna talk about it in my agency update, too. But there
7 are data in there that looks at patterns of use for
8 Coast Guard based households, including harvests of
9 large land mammals compared to other parts of the Road
10 System. I just wanted to add that to the discussion.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Would it be
13 possible for you to forward like a PDF of that paper to
14 Lisa so she can send it to us? Cause it's easier that
15 way.

16
17 MS. KEATING: Absolutely.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, are you
20 trying to jump in, Robbin, or do you wanna think about
21 it? Okay, we'll go to Robbin and then -- I'm sorry, I
22 had well, yeah Natasha and Chris, do you wanna wait, do
23 you wanna go before Robbin or wait? Okay, so we'll take
24 Robbin, and then Natasha and then Chris.

25
26 MS. LA VINE: Thank you, Madam Chair,
27 members of the Council. Robin La Vine, subsistence
28 policy coordinator. I wanted to talk about the proposal
29 that you are considering right now. And it's a customary
30 and traditional use determination proposal. And what
31 you're asking first is, does this particular area have
32 a pattern of customary and traditional use for bear. And
33 defining the community that it -- that -- of Kodiak will
34 be part of the discovery of the analysis itself. So, you
35 can express your interest in defining the community as
36 permanent residents, who, if they have recently moved
37 here, are interested in learning from their community
38 members what is customary and traditional for this area,
39 right. So, you'll determine who is inclusive of this
40 community in the C&T analysis and your review of it. And
41 it's separate than from opportunity. So, I just wanted
42 to put that out there and bring us back to the C&T
43 proposal as you consider forwarding it, thanks.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Robbin.
46 Natasha.

47
48 MS. HAYDEN: Thanks, Madam Chair. The
49 intent of the language that Coral put forward is to
50 exclude transient residents or short-term residents. And

1 so, in that spirit, it seems appropriate to keep that
2 in there. But so, I just want to clarify, and question
3 is what you're saying is if the motion said a C&T
4 designation for the Kodiak Road System, that then the
5 analysis would take a look at all of the different
6 demographics across the entire Road System. And then we
7 would be able to -- or we -- at that point we would
8 review that analysis of everybody inclusive and then
9 revise our proposal or recommendations based on the
10 analysis. Is that what I heard?

11
12 MR. ROBERTS: Through the Chair. Yeah,
13 that's correct, member Hayden. You can submit it the way
14 you have it worded right now. But in the analysis, I'm
15 gonna end up providing you information about the Coast
16 Guard Base. And, you know, any other community along the
17 Road System. And then based on that, you can decide, you
18 know, who, which community, which area you consider
19 worthy of customary and traditional use determination.

20
21 MS. HAYDEN: So, I'm gonna make a motion
22 to amend a friendly amendment to -- of the wording of
23 the motion to read the Coast Guard Base and housing.
24 Versus what Coral had said was calling out specific
25 neighborhoods. So, Coast Guard Base and housing.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Let's see. Yeah, so
28 that's kind of been proposed as friendly. I guess Coral,
29 you have your hand up, so I'll call on you. If you
30 consider that to be friendly, you can say. Yeah, that
31 sounds friendly.

32
33 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, I guess I'm just
34 thinking, as Natasha said that. We in town refer to it
35 as the Coast Guard Base. I'm wondering if we would, if
36 we should refer to it as the land holdings of the Coast
37 Guard and the residents or something like that, because
38 we refer to the Base, but -- and we kind of know what
39 we mean. But when you get down to defining it, you know.

40
41 UNIDENTIFIED: So, based on.....

42
43 MS. CHERNOFF: And that would include
44 future, you know, if they build future housing
45 somewhere. So, maybe residents of -- that live on the
46 land holdings of the Coast Guard or something like that.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, so based on
49 discussion previously, I think that wording would be a
50 little problematic because you get into this Coast Guard

1 land that has refuge people living on it. Whereas if you
2 say Coast Guard Base and associated Coast Guard housing,
3 that's going to include your Aviation Hill, your Nemetz,
4 your -- like anything that a community level we would
5 understand to be Coast Guard housing. But it's your
6 motion so, you can accept that as a friendly or not.

7
8 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, I don't -- I'm not
9 sure, I think that this definition is, you know,
10 something to work through and I'm not sure if we need
11 to work through it here or work through it -- through
12 this. And that's why I'm just hoping to kinda [sic]
13 capture this conversation and then we can work from that,
14 maybe.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, generally my
17 thought is the more specific we can be now, the better
18 it is. But I think we've had really good discussion. And
19 I'm -- for me, I think it is clear in the discussion
20 what we mean. We mean people who live on the base so
21 that's within the perimeter. As well as people who live
22 outside of the fence but are on -- like in Coast Guard
23 provided housing. So, I think the analysis could help
24 us figure out how best to word that, to be clear that
25 that's what we mean. But I -- like from what I've heard,
26 that's -- everyone seems to be on the same page. We'll
27 go to Jackie and then I have Chris, Sam and Coral.

28
29 MS. KEATING: Thank you, Madam Chair.
30 Jackie Keating, Division of Subsistence. Just a quick
31 note to talk about our survey methodology. We considered
32 that strata, it was called the Kodiak Station in line
33 with the census designated place. But so, everybody is
34 aware for us that included the actual base and then the
35 two housing units across the road there on the other
36 side of the highway. So, when you're looking at that
37 data, that's what -- that's the population that we
38 captured there, just for the record.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, Chris.

41
42 MR. PRICE: So, you can hunt right in the
43 City of Kodiak. Is that what I'm hearing? Isn't that.....

44
45 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: When you say in the
46 City, not in city limits? And keep in mind we're talking
47 about, you know, federal subsistence. So, it's gotta be
48 on federal land, so not so much. I think you're not
49 gonna be able to just go hunt bears in a -- on federal
50 land off of the Road System, like.....

1 (Pause)

2

3 Yeah so, let's go to Sam.

4

5 MR. ROHRER: Thank you, Madam Chair. So,
6 I'm struggling a little bit with how to format my
7 comments because they're -- it's hard to talk about the
8 two proposals separately. So, I'm trying to do that.
9 That's why I've waited to weigh in. But the -- I guess
10 the first thing just so -- the first part is for the C&T
11 use determination. If we propose making a C&T use
12 determination and it passes and if we don't then pass a
13 harvest limit for that C&T determination, in theory what
14 will have to come up that -- the next -- that'll add the
15 city of -- or the residents of Kodiak under the -- as
16 you look in the regs, under who has a C&T use
17 determination for the brown bear, and then we have to
18 try to figure out if they're gonna pull from -- if
19 they'll be eligible under those different village
20 community permits or not. And so, here's the reason I
21 bring that up. My question that ties into the second
22 proposal, which we haven't heard yet, but it's tied to
23 this one is, is there anyone on Kodiak, in the town of
24 Kodiak who wants to harvest a brown bear that can't
25 harvest a brown bear? So, this goes to Chris's question.
26 Currently, the Road System is wide open during the open
27 season, so April 1st to May 15th in the spring and
28 October 25th to November 30th in the fall.

29

30 That's a wide-open registration hunt,
31 anyone can go pick up a tag, they can go hunt, they can
32 use that bear, they can eat the meat. So, we have lots
33 and lots of opportunity on the Road System. Residents,
34 non-residents, anyone can participate in that. Now, the
35 State's limit of one bear every four years does apply
36 there. But it's still wide-open opportunity. So, I guess
37 my question is, why do we even need this? Because we
38 have -- we already currently have wide open opportunity.
39 And then in addition to that, there is an opportunity
40 to put in for drawing tags on all the federal land for
41 -- that's also wide open to everyone. And so, presumably
42 if we pass this and if we have a four bear limit, you're
43 still gonna be going through drawing tags for that. So,
44 I kind of don't understand what's the additional
45 opportunity we're allowing? It really doesn't seem like
46 there's opportunity needed. And it doesn't seem like
47 we'll actually be providing more opportunity. We'll
48 still have a drawing on federal lands when we're done.
49 Thank you.

50

1 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. So, I'm
2 gonna go to Kendra and then Coral. So, Coral will have
3 a chance to respond to that. I suspect it has something
4 to do with recognizing that there is a customary and
5 traditional use in Kodiak. So, opportunity is one thing,
6 recognizing that the people that lived in Kodiak did
7 have that customary and traditional use is a distinct
8 issue. But Kendra, it look like you're ready to respond
9 to some of Sam's questions.

10
11 MS. HOLMAN: So, Kendra through the
12 Chair. So, just to kinda clarify some of what you said,
13 even if the C&T were to pass, that does not necessarily
14 mean that it would change how the permits -- because
15 that issuance of the permits is written in codified
16 regulations. So, unless that is changed with the second
17 proposal, that does not mean that will change. So, the
18 people of Kodiak can be given that recognition with the
19 C&T and not necessarily have the permits issued or take
20 from the other communities. Just to help address that
21 one as well. So, the other thing would be, depending on
22 how the permits are issued and spread out. Because there
23 is that one bear every four years, if there wasn't a
24 need if -- it does recognize that customary and
25 traditional use as was mentioned, by giving that but
26 also the need for food for subsistence, if it's there,
27 you know, the one every four years maybe isn't enough
28 for some subsistence users, maybe it is, if they can get
29 one. So, that additional opportunity for subsistence
30 users whether it's for a cultural need or for a food
31 need. And so -- but that -- we can talk about that a
32 little bit more with the next thing. But just -- I guess
33 the biggest clarification was just because there is a
34 C&T does not mean that it will be taking from the permits
35 that are already issued to those other communities.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Jason, did you -
38 okay, go ahead, Jason and then Coral and then Natasha.

39
40 MR. ROBERTS: Yeah, and I was just gonna
41 say, so this gets more into the second proposal, but the
42 other idea is that by creating this you would be giving
43 subsistence users a better chance of getting, you know,
44 a harvest permit, whereas under the State, right,
45 they're competing against the larger pool of available
46 users.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, so Robbin is
49 coming up. And I really appreciate the trying to keep
50 these bright lines between the C&T and the harvest

1 permits, cause we haven't gotten to the harvest permits
2 yet. Go ahead, Robbin.

3
4 MS. LA VINE: I would just want to say
5 that we're a body that looks at federal regulations with
6 a Federal Subsistence Priority. And that should be our
7 concern, not what is happening necessarily under state
8 regulations, unless we're looking for, you know, we're
9 looking for, how do we demonstrate a meaningful priority
10 or an opportunity above and beyond. But imagine that on
11 our federal public lands, there may come a time when we
12 need to close to other uses in order to prioritize
13 federal -- federally qualified subsistence users. If
14 Kodiak, which is a rural community, has C&T in that time
15 when we must close to State residents and other uses,
16 they will not be shut out of that determination. So, I
17 wanna [sic] make that point. So, it's more like a -- you
18 know, they have various different opportunities now, but
19 it's more like imagining a future. Thanks.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, Coral
22 and then Natasha.

23
24 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, my comment was
25 already covered by your comment and Robbin's comment.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, thanks.
28 Natasha.

29
30 MS. HAYDEN: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah,
31 similarly, I think that it is important to -- or for me,
32 I'm focusing on that customary and traditional use
33 designation, and it is potential -- or it would be
34 applied to individuals living in that area. But for
35 future harvest opportunities that would be prosecuted
36 on federal lands or federal refuge or -- not to -- you
37 know. Which is none of the area of where the residents
38 that would be living under that designation are located.
39 It's for harvest opportunities that are way far away
40 from the community. And I am supportive of this.

41
42 I have been around when the registration
43 bear season starts, and it is startling how many people
44 are out driving the Road System looking for bears to
45 harvest under the registration of the State. And so,
46 knowing that the refuge system and the Federal
47 Subsistence Priority is what it is and why it is in
48 place is to ensure that subsistence has a priority, then
49 I think that that's the most important aspect of this
50 designation and consideration. So, thank you for all of

00017

1 those clarifying comments.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thanks.
4 I feel like -- I do see Coral's hand -- we've had a
5 pretty robust conversation. So, after I go to Coral, I'm
6 gonna take last call for comments. And then I think we
7 should go ahead and move to a vote. Coral, go ahead.

8

9 MS. CHERNOFF: Thank you, Madam Chair. I
10 just wanted to note that we haven't taken up the
11 conversation about Rocket Launch facility rest [sic] --
12 residence. So, we may call for comments on that. What
13 our Council thinks about that in the exclusion.

14

15 MS. HAYDEN: Just clarifying -- Madam
16 Chair, this is Natasha. Was that included in the motion
17 to include the.....

18

19 MS. CHERNOFF: Exclude.

20

21 MS. HAYDEN: To include the Rocket Launch
22 as being excluded from the consideration, that was part
23 of the motion?

24

25 MS. CHERNOFF: Yes.

26

27 MS. HAYDEN: Okay.

28

29 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, my sense from
30 the conversation, it seemed like there wasn't really an
31 interest in wordsmithing the actual geographic areas and
32 that that might -- that will come out in the analysis,
33 and we'll have a crack at it when we take -- when we
34 actually review the proposal in the fall. And I'm not
35 seeing any hands on that issue. Okay so, are there any
36 last comments before we move to a vote?

37

38 (No response)

39

40 Okay. Lisa, if we could do a voice vote
41 on this one.

42

43 (Pause)

44

45 And I guess just to remind people that
46 what we're voting on is putting a proposal forward. The
47 RAC will have a chance to review the proposal and decide
48 whether they support or oppose the proposal at the fall
49 meeting, and then it has to go to the Federal Subsistence
50 Board. So, we're not -- even if you vote yes today, this

00018

1 is not the final yes to the whole thing. Lisa, are you
2 ready?

3
4 MS. HUTCHINSON: We'll do a roll call
5 vote. I'll start with Jeff Wasley.

6
7 MR. WASLEY: Yes.

8
9 MS. HUTCHINSON: Patrick Holmes.

10
11 MR. HOLMES: I move from negative to not
12 wanting to take a position. I talked to several -- caught
13 me now? Okay, I moved away from being against this, I
14 think it does have merits. I spent some time last night
15 and this morning talking to folks in town. Some Native
16 folks and some of them are now inclined that weren't.
17 And some of them that weren't are not in [sic] keen on
18 it, but I think it would be worth getting it up for
19 community discussion. So, I'll vote yes.

20
21 MS. HUTCHINSON: Okay, we'll go with
22 Daniel Smith.

23
24 MR. SMITH: Yes.

25
26 MS. HUTCHINSON: Christopher Price.

27
28 MR. PRICE: Yes.

29
30 MS. HUTCHINSON: Karen Kalmakoff.

31
32 MS. KALMAKOFF: Yes.

33
34 MS. HUTCHINSON: Sam Rohrer.

35
36 MR. ROHRER: Yes.

37
38 MS. HUTCHINSON: Brett Richardson.

39
40 MR. RICHARDSON: Yes.

41
42 MS. HUTCHINSON: Natasha Hayden.

43
44 MS. HAYDEN: Yes.

45
46 MS. HUTCHINSON: Coral Chernoff.

47
48 MS. CHERNOFF: Yes.

49
50 MS. HUTCHINSON: Rebecca Skinner.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yes.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Okay, we had ten for moving the proposal forward. So, that was -- the motion passed, thank you. Unanimously.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Lisa. Coral, your next proposal.

MS. CHERNOFF: Thank you, Madam Chair. Coral Chernoff. My motion is for this Council to initiate a proposal to request up to four brown bear permits for harvest in the Community of Kodiak, Unit 8. The community of Kodiak includes -- would include residents on the Kodiak Road System, Monashka, City of Kodiak, Bells Flat to Chiniak and to Pasagsshak and including Anton Larsen Bay. Not included would be the Nemetz and Coast Guard Base residents and Rocket Launch Facility residents. So, the current regulation does not include the Community of Kodiak or subsistence bear hunts. And I am requesting, or I would like us to request, that the Community of Kodiak be included in the issuing of subsistence permits for the harvest of brown bear, and following the current listed season dates for villages around the island, which is open season December 1st to December 15th and April 1st to May 15th. The language we would like to add to the regulation is the harvest limits for Kodiak community, four permits. Oh, can I make a note that should say up to four permits?

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, is there a second to the motion to have four permits for Kodiak area residents? What's that? Up to four permits. Is there a second to the motion?

MS. HAYDEN: Second, this is Natasha.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thanks. Coral, did you have anything further you wanted to say in support of your motion?

MS. CHERNOFF: Yes, I written a little explanation. The communities around Kodiak Island have a long history of customary and traditional harvesting of brown bear for food and traditional handicraft. In the published journal Two Voyages to Russian America, 1802 to 1807, Davydov writes in his journals, on Kodiak sometimes two or three people in a group creep up on an animal and fire arrows at it, and if it attacks them,

1 they fight it off with spears. Davydov also notes that
2 kamleikas, or rain parkas, are made from intestines of
3 whales, seals, and bears, and of the gut kamleikas, the
4 best are from the bears. The Alutiiq Museum, and local
5 author and brown bear expert Larry Van Daele also have
6 produced publications about the importance of
7 traditional bear harvesting on Kodiak Island. In
8 addition, many museums across the world hold collections
9 of art that both depict bears and are articles of
10 clothing that today we would recognize as Native
11 handicraft.

12
13 The importance of accessing bear for
14 food and other needs is well documented in Kodiak. The
15 residents of the villages around the island have access
16 to harvest one, two or three bear and the village
17 populations range from about 30 to 300 residents per
18 village. The Community of Kodiak -- and I'm not sure we
19 can correct this number -- the Community of Kodiak has
20 about 9,000 residents, and we feel that four permits is
21 a reasonable number of permits to request. The Community
22 of Kodiak has the same history of customary and
23 traditional use as the villages that currently receive
24 permits and we request permits for the harvesting of
25 brown bear. We don't feel this will place a burden on
26 the population of bears. About 200 bears are killed each
27 year by hunters on Kodiak Island. This includes
28 residents and non-residents, as well as international
29 hunters. The bear populations and their habitats are
30 healthy, and we don't foresee this causing any issues
31 with the conservation or management of the bears.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, Chris.

34
35 MR. PRICE: I support this, but is there
36 -- was there -- did you think about trying to combine
37 the two into one for resolution? Is there -- it has to
38 be two, not one.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Kendra.

41
42 MS. HOLMAN: So, through the Chair to
43 help answer that. Chris, I would say we would recommend
44 it being two just because like what I was addressing
45 earlier that establishing that C&T does not necessarily
46 mean that the permits can or would be issued. So, having
47 the two -- Jason and I would of course work together.
48 So, the -- like the C&T part of my analysis, if there's
49 anything applicable from his can be brought over to it,
50 things like that. So, it is good to keep them separate

1 since they are two different items. But we will be
2 working together through both of them to make sure that
3 everything matches and if there's something applicable
4 from one to the other, it will be addressed.

5

6 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Natasha.

7

8 MS. HAYDEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just
9 a little bit more clarification on that. Is that the C&T
10 designation is required to be able to issue permits to
11 harvest under a C&T designation for the subsistence,
12 correct?

13

14 MS. HOLMAN: Through the Chair. Yes, that
15 is correct.

16

17 MS. HAYDEN: Okay, thank you. And then
18 so, let's say, this were to be approved by the Federal
19 Subsistence Board of up to four permits and then, you
20 know, some -- at some point in the future, there's some
21 real concerns about the health of the bear population.
22 It could be reduced to, say, up to two without having
23 to make any changes to the C&T designation. So that --
24 the permit potential to either increase or decrease or
25 even eliminate permits can then happen in the future
26 without having to mess around with the C&T designation.

27

28 MS. HOLMAN: So, through the Chair.
29 Correct, and the up to four permits is actually really
30 great language because that also addresses if there is
31 potential conservation concerns in the future that up
32 to, offers the ability to address the numbers as
33 populations. So, that verbiage is actually preferred,
34 so that if something happens there is that flexibility
35 in the management and issue of permits. So, the C&T
36 would not have to be addressed as well as that also
37 helps with that flexibility based on population.

38

39 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Alright, are there
40 additional questions? Pat, go ahead.

41

42 MR. HOLMES: I think this is worthy of
43 examination, but one of the things that will be real
44 important when we get to fall is knowing or I guess my
45 question to Coral is, if this is implemented and it
46 seems to have good merit, where are people gonna hunt
47 on the Road System? Because the -- basically the federal
48 lands are associated with the Coast Guard Base and with
49 the maritimes and all the rest of the land belongs to,
50 the majority of it, to the Native corporations and

1 private individuals. And, you know, I guess where's the
2 -- it's a great concept, but where are folks gonna hunt,
3 are they gonna go on to the refuge and to the turf from
4 the other villages, or where would the hunting take
5 place?
6

7 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, I can -- I
8 think Kendra is ready to go. But again, just to clarify
9 that, with the C&T -- if you're a person living in the
10 area where there's a C&T, then you have the ability to
11 go hunt on federal land. So, we're not really talking
12 about hunting on the Road System. We're talking about
13 people who live on the Road System, who have a customary
14 and traditional use of bears, then would have access to
15 go get the bears on federal lands. And then Kendra, if
16 you have more to add or clarify, that would be great.
17

18 MS. HOLMAN: So, Kendra through the
19 Chair. So, Mr. Holmes, so open federal public lands is
20 the key to this. So, your Coast Guard based lands are
21 not federal public lands. So, there's a couple of key
22 words in there so, that open and public kinda cut some
23 of that up. So, our regulations are -- that's where
24 they're gonna be applicable to, is those lands as far
25 as the exact specific ones, tiny little chunks of
26 anything like that, that is something we can address
27 through that. So, but at this point in general, the
28 refuge would be the area where they would be hunting.
29

30 MR. HOLMES: Yeah, thank you for your
31 clarification. And Becky, thank you for putting me on
32 the right mental track. Thank you.
33

34 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, are
35 there -- Sam, go ahead or not Sam, I'm sorry, was your
36 hand up?
37

38 MR. ROHRER: Yes, it was. Sorry, I
39 thought Coral was in front of me. Thank you, Madam Chair.
40 So, I think the reason why the talk of the Road System
41 keeps coming up is because we're talking about
42 opportunity. So, opportunity to harvest bears,
43 opportunity to put food on your table. And so, I guess
44 I come back to -- I understand the reason we voted to
45 have the C&T determination, that was a good point that
46 you brought up in your testimony for future issues. As
47 I look at this right now, we have -- again, we have
48 unlimited opportunity close to where people on the Road
49 System live. So, one of the RAC members commented
50 earlier, they said, this is talking about harvest

1 opportunities that are farther away and that's correct,
2 it is. We -- but we have harvest opportunities that are
3 close on the Road System now that is under the state
4 program. But the food we're eating really doesn't care
5 if it was killed under federal management or state
6 management. It's still food we killed we're eating.

7
8 My thoughts are if we really wanna
9 create more opportunity for folks (distortion) on the
10 road (distortion) to have better bear harvest
11 opportunities. Working within the State system, you
12 could extend the Road System season 15 days like this
13 fall season set up and make that a resident only season.
14 And you'd have phenomenal opportunity for locals to have
15 harvest opportunities right where they live, right
16 close. Instead of having to get in a boat and go travel,
17 in December to go travel down, you know, 40, 50 miles
18 away down the side of the island. So, that actually --
19 that works within the State system, but it'd be easy to
20 make that proposal but that gives you -- that gives a
21 lot better opportunity to locals and kind of gets more
22 at what we're trying to do here. So, thank you.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Coral.

25
26 MS. CHERNOFF: Thank you, Madam Chair. I
27 just want to address that opportunity; I think one
28 person's opportunity is not another. And with this, what
29 I was trying to address is what was expressed before is
30 that there is no opportunity currently under federal
31 subsistence for this. For myself, like I said,
32 opportunity is not necessarily on the Road System, also.
33 If I were to bear hunt, I would be, you know, people
34 have places on Afognak, people have places on the other
35 side of the island. That is where my opportunity would
36 be produced, not on the Road System. For me, it would
37 be difficult to go on the Road System, shoot a 1,000-
38 pound bear, get it back, I have no garage. You know,
39 there's lots of other issues. So, my opportunity would
40 take place at a remote cabin, where I have space to
41 process, hang that and take care of it. So, I just wanted
42 to address those two things. The opportunity does not
43 currently exist under the federal program and then
44 opportunity is different for different people. Thank
45 you.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thanks.
48 Are there further questions or comments? Natasha.

49
50

1 MS. HAYDEN: Thanks, Madam Chair. I have
2 a question and then I have some comments. My question
3 is, would at this stage in the analysis, provide an
4 overlap of bear subunits and what those opportunities
5 are under the State program? So that -- I mean, there's
6 a huge, huge area of the island and I'm familiar enough
7 with the state bear hunting management to know that
8 there's subunits and then permits, you know, are issued
9 in -- by subunit. And so, if an individual were to get
10 a draw permit, because there are no registration permits
11 in the State program for -- that are in those -- that
12 are issued in those subunits. So, right now it's -- so
13 my question is, is this -- would that be teased out in
14 the analysis? I don't know how many subunits there are
15 just on Kodiak Island refuge land, there's probably, you
16 know, five, eight, ten, something like that. I mean,
17 there's quite a few. And so, would we get information
18 on those subunits and then how many permits are issued
19 in each of those subunits?

20
21 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Kendra.

22
23 MS. HOLMAN: So, through the Chair, to
24 help answer that question. That is information that I
25 will look into, or I would be looking into. I would be
26 trying to get it's -- I have to send a request through
27 the State to get any of that kinda data and any
28 information. So, that type of information is stuff that
29 I would be looking into, and I would be requesting the
30 information about. I cannot tell you 100% that it would
31 be in the analysis, but it is -- that kind of thing is
32 part of what we try to include to make sure we have the
33 most information available for decisions.

34
35 MS. HAYDEN: Thank you for that. So yeah,
36 I would request as part of this discussion, if this
37 proposal passes, that we get that included in the
38 analysis, so that we have got the information on how
39 refuge lands are managed for bear hunting opportunities
40 by the State. And I know that that's not your -- you
41 know, you would have to request that information from
42 the State to do that. But I think that that's important.
43 And then my comment about that is that there are no
44 registration hunting opportunities on refuge land right
45 now, and that this proposal would -- for, you know, for
46 those RAC members that are either new or not familiar
47 with the way that these hunting regulations work, is
48 that this proposal through the Federal Subsistence Board
49 has a Subsistence Priority. And so, it's more than just
50 having an opportunity to harvest a bear as a resident

1 of Alaska in the Road System, it is ensuring that there's
2 opportunity for customary and traditional use harvesting
3 opportunities on refuge land that does not exist right
4 now, and that there's a -- you know, thousands of years
5 of history of engaging in those harvesting opportunities
6 in those areas.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER Thanks. Are there
9 further -- Kendra, go ahead.

10

11 MS. HOLMAN: Sorry, through the Chair.
12 Let me just give a little bit more clarifying
13 information. There was some mix up -- things of how it
14 works and what you said. So, I just wanna make sure that
15 everybody's clear on this. So, currently the refuge
16 lands are open. So, because they are open, the state
17 registration permits that are issued can be used on the
18 refuge. So, currently that's where the opportunity is,
19 is if you're getting one of those other tickets through
20 the State. So, because the refuge is open, it's not
21 closed. There's a drawing and then there's a one every
22 four-year resident hunt. So, as a resident, you can get
23 one bear up to four years on refuge land under state
24 regulations. But there is no federal subsistence permits
25 for the federal public lands.

26

27 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thank
28 you. Further questions or comments? So, I have a
29 question. The issue of how the permit distribution
30 system could work. Is that something we need to talk
31 about today, or is that something that would be talked
32 about in the fall, or is it -- would we get kind of a
33 menu of options of what's available at some point in the
34 future? So basically, do we need to talk about today or
35 not?

36

37 MS. HOLMAN: So, Madam Chair, this is, I
38 guess, Kendra, for the record again. So, there -- if we
39 leave it the way it is for the submittal, as we're going
40 through this and I'm writing it, there will be a couple
41 of things happening in the background. I will be reaching
42 out to the refuge and talking with them to help kind of
43 come up with different options for what would be the
44 best way to issue these permits. So, it would be kind
45 of a collaborative thing to make sure that we have all
46 of the options listed out available, pro and con type
47 list with each of the options, and that would come before
48 the RAC in the fall. So, anything we decide won't work
49 will be in there. Like if it can't work, it won't be in
50 there, but maybe we decide it's not the best option. So,

1 all of those would be listed as alternatives and so, but
2 again, I would be working with the refuge to make sure
3 that it's what would work best for out here.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. All right,
6 that helps. So, we don't need to get into the details
7 or choose an actual distribution method today. Coral,
8 go ahead.

9
10 MS. CHERNOFF: I just have a question for
11 Kendra. What is the distribution method for -- currently
12 for the village permits? And that's question one and
13 question two, I believe you said that was done through
14 Amy Peterson and I know her job. My second question is
15 what happens when her job is not there? I know she was
16 originally hired; it was under a three-year contract,
17 and I don't know if that's continued, but in the event
18 that that position is not there, how does that work?

19
20 MS. HOLMAN: So, through the Chair. My
21 understanding and Danielle can correct me here if I'm
22 wrong is they work through Amy and Amy, communicates
23 with the communities themselves and get names of the
24 people within the communities that will be issued those
25 permits. She brings those names back to the refuge and
26 they issue the permits to those people. As far as Amy's
27 position and how that will work beyond that, I have no
28 information on that.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Coral.

31
32 MS. CHERNOFF: So, just to -- follow up
33 question, so she works with those communities. Do you
34 know if she works through their tribes or their city
35 Councils?

36
37 (Pause)

38
39 MS. FUJII-DOE: This is Danielle Fujii-
40 Doe the deputy refuge manager for Kodiak National
41 Wildlife Refuge. I think Amy is on the phone, so she
42 might be able to jump in, but Amy will work with the
43 tribes and their agency administrator. And the agency
44 administrator will tell Amy the people that are
45 selected, and then Amy will let me know, and then I will
46 issue permits.

47
48 MS. CHERNOFF: All right, thanks. Okay,
49 are there any further comments or questions before we
50 go to a vote?

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

(No response)

Okay. Lisa, can we do a roll call vote?
And I think good practice, I'm supposed to restate the
motion. So, the motion is that the RAC initiate a
proposal to provide for up to four permits for Kodiak
residents in a federal subsistence hunt for bear.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Okay, we'll start with
Natasha Hayden.

MS. HAYDEN: Yes.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Brett Richardson.

MR. RICHARDSON: Yes.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Sam Rohrer.

MR. ROHRER: No.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Patrick Holmes.

MR. HOLMES: I'll abstain.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Miss -- we -- since you
are on the Council, we really would prefer you to not
abstain, because we're -- you're here to provide your
opinion. If you could please do that, thank you.

MR. HOLMES: Yes.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Thank you. Jeff Wasley.

MR. WASLEY: No.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Daniel Smith.

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Christopher Price.

MR. PRICE: Yes.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Coral Chernoff.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yes.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Karen Kalmakoff.

00028

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

MS. KALMAKOFF: Yes.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Rebecca Skinner.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yes.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Okay, we had eight for
and two against. So, the motion carried.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thank
you. Okay, does anyone have any other Federal Wildlife
Proposals to bring forward?

(No response)

Okay, seeing none. I did neglect at the
beginning of the meeting to offer the opportunity for
public and tribal comment on non-agenda items. So, that
opportunity is now available. Are there any public or
tribal representatives that wish to make comment?

(Pause)

UNIDENTIFIED: (Indiscernible),
resident of Kodiak and big game guide. Just as I listened
to the previous discussion and some of the questions. I
want to point out that these current subsistence harvest
in the villages is scattered all the way around the
island. So, there's several here, several here, several
there, here and here. I think there's -- as this moves
forward, if there are four additional permits from
Kodiak that that harvest will take place here close to
town, not at Akiak, not at Karluk. We need to expect
that to be Port Lions, Coral said Afognak, but I think
that's realistically where the harvest would take place.
So, then my concern would be, there was never a concern
with its spread out. But if you add more to one of these
existing areas, then it may be a concern. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. All
right. And is there any further public or tribal comment?

(No response)

Okay. Seeing and hearing none, we have
now completed action item 13D so we've completed all of
our action items. Yesterday -- so moving down to agenda
item 14 yesterday we did hear the Chinook ESA listing
update. And the next agenda item is 14.a.ii and that

00029

1 would be Jackie Keating regional subsistence studies
2 update. Natasha, go ahead.

3
4 MS. HAYDEN: Just a bathroom break. If -
5 - I don't know if anybody else needs to go.

6
7 (Simultaneous speech)

8
9 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: I did look at the
10 clock and I was like, we've only been meeting for an
11 hour. Okay, we'll do a bathroom break now and then that
12 will be our morning break.

13
14 MS. HAYDEN: Thank you.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yep. So, come back
17 -- I think it's 10:08 a.m. so, come back at 10:20 a.m.

18
19 (Off record)

20
21 (On record)

22
23 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, it's
24 10:28 a.m. I apologize, I started talking and lost track
25 of time there. So, if we can have Council members come
26 back to the table, we'll resume the meeting.

27
28 (Pause)

29
30 Okay let's go ahead and resume. We are
31 on agenda item 14.a.ii Regional Subsistence Studies
32 Update with Jackie Keating. I'm sorry, I also forgot,
33 Kendra wanted to make a clarification from the last
34 discussion about the bear seasons.

35
36 MS. HOLMAN: So, Kendra Holman through -
37 - for the record, through the Chair. So, I had some
38 questions during the break. So, I wanted to clarify a
39 couple of things on the record that I was asked to. So,
40 the state registration hunt is the -- is within the Road
41 System of Kodiak, not on the refuge. The draw hunts are
42 the ones that take place on different areas of the
43 refuge. And then there was a question regarding where
44 people are going to be going to hunt. Again, that's not
45 something we know exactly, that's not something that we
46 can control. Typically, though, from my experiences,
47 people are gonna hunt close to their home. And when I'm
48 saying home, I'm not saying where they live, but where
49 is their home that they hunt? Do they have a field camp
50 that they always set up? Do they have a cabin that they

1 go to? However, that works for them, unless, you know,
2 we're talking about somebody who's hired a guide or
3 whatnot. But typically, my experience says that they
4 have that general area. So, who knows where exactly that
5 could end up being.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah. So, I think
8 for purposes of the analysis, if you had a map that
9 showed -- of the island that showed, like color coding,
10 federal lands, and then some narrative about how you
11 would get there. So, either you could go by boat cause
12 people then can kinda think, oh, okay, well, am I likely
13 to go a shorter trip in a boat or a longer trip in a
14 boat, or if you're gonna fly out, are there kind of
15 standard places? So, I don't know with your analysis if
16 you normally have conversations with people to get kind
17 of a qualitative sense, but if you -- if that is
18 something you can normally do, having a little bit of
19 that just to get people thinking about where that might
20 happen. But yes, I understand and agree that you can't
21 predict where everyone's going to go because you don't
22 know where they have traditional areas, or a hunting
23 lodge, or a hunting cabin, or where they have friends
24 or family that have that. But I do think having that
25 visual particularly and then showing the federal lands,
26 we can probably get a lot of that out on the record from
27 Council discussion if we have a visual to help us.

28
29 MS. HOLMAN: Yeah. So, through the Chair.
30 That -- we will definitely have a map with all of the
31 federal lands. We'll try and get a map as well with the
32 specific hunting units that -- the subunits that Ms.
33 Hayden was discussing earlier. And then Jason and I will
34 also be able to kinda take a look at some of the other
35 aspects of what you just asked as well.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thank
38 you. Okay, Jackie.

39
40 MS. KEATING: Thank you, Madam Chair and
41 members of the Council. Again, for the record, I'm Jackie
42 Keating with the Division of Subsistence at the Alaska
43 Department of Fish and Game, and I will be providing our
44 usual one-page update, which I think is tab 11 in your
45 materials. And there's a couple parts to this and then
46 I'm gonna add a third part. So, first I wanna give a
47 brief update on all of the projects we're currently
48 working on that are funded by the Fisheries Resource
49 Monitoring Program. Second, I'll give some other updates
50 about projects that we are working on from other funding

1 sources in your region. And then third, I'm gonna add
2 just a few brief updates about the regulatory process
3 and things that are coming up on the state side that
4 might be relevant to you and your communities.

5
6 So, for our FRMP project updates, the
7 first one is one I already mentioned today it's FRMP
8 2024-50, the Subsistence Harvest study on the Road
9 System. It looks like Lisa just sent this out to the
10 whole Council, so everyone has access to it and a minor
11 clarification there, it's a comprehensive study, so it
12 looks at harvest and use of all resources on the Road
13 System. Again, a geographic stratification there so, we
14 can look at differences between the Kodiak Coast Guard
15 Base and other parts of the Road System community. This
16 study was a partnership with the Kodiak National
17 Wildlife Refuge, as well as the Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak.
18 So, I wanna extend my thanks to both of those
19 organizations for helping us make that possible. I think
20 the technical paper comes in just under 500 pages, so
21 it's very comprehensive.

22
23 The second is FRMP 2022-454, this is a
24 comprehensive subsistence study for Ouzinkie and Port
25 Lions. We are going to have this published within this
26 year. We got to go over to Ouzinkie in September for a
27 community data review meeting, we did the same in Port
28 Lions in November. This was also a partnership with the
29 Kodiak Refuge and extend our thanks, particularly to Amy
30 Peterson, was a huge help in this project and helping
31 us do the surveys and organize meetings. And while we
32 were there, one of the main concerns we heard from folks
33 in Port Lions was about traffic with people coming in
34 on the ferry hunting deer. So, we actually did a
35 additional study component to that with some life
36 history mapping of people that have hunted deer there
37 throughout their lifetime and documenting areas that
38 were changing due to increased competition. This data
39 will be available for communities to use, especially in
40 light of the upcoming Board of Game meeting for Unit 8
41 this coming winter.

42
43 And then the third project for FRMP
44 2022-452 for False Pass in Nelson Lagoon. We have
45 completed surveys in both of those communities, we have
46 research staff preparing to go back to those communities
47 this summer and fall for participant observation,
48 ethnographic interviews, and then conducting those
49 community data review meetings as well.

1 Some other projects we have happening,
2 we worked on a Alaska Sustainable Salmon Fund. A salmon
3 survey in Unalaska in partnership with various
4 organizations out there and including Aleutian Aerial.
5 This is a study that looks at both drone surveys and
6 household harvest surveys to get reliable estimates of
7 salmon escapement. And we're co-writing that with the
8 area management biologist out there, that will be
9 published by December 2025.

10
11 And then we're also involved in a
12 project with Kodiak Area Native Association in their
13 Food System Vulnerability Assessment Project. Our role
14 in that is to look at all the longitudinal subsistence
15 data that we have available and produce some long-term
16 analysis for them to look at changes over time and
17 identify some of the vulnerable areas. And I mentioned
18 I wanted to talk briefly about the upcoming Board cycle
19 that is already on all of your radars, you know Board
20 of Game for Unit 8 will be happening here in Kodiak just
21 about a year exactly from now. And then Board of Fish
22 for the Alaska Peninsula, Aleutians and Chignik will be
23 happening next year as well. I wanted to speak to two
24 things related to those. One is that I just wanted to
25 remind folks that even though we, as a division of
26 subsistence, often go out to communities to help collect
27 information on subsistence harvests and uses, it's
28 really meant to be information for the communities to
29 use. So, when you or other community members are starting
30 to think about either proposals or responses to
31 proposals, we are here to help supply and interpret that
32 information when folks are interested to speak to the
33 importance of these resources in the community, both on
34 a harvest level but also on a sharing and this more
35 contextual information level.

36
37 And the second part I wanted to mention
38 is, this is the second year, now that the Board of Fish
39 has started incorporating a traditional knowledge
40 testimony component. So, this coming year for the
41 Aleutian Area will be the first year in that region that
42 it will be offered. There are two Council members that
43 gave testimony when the Board of Fish was here last
44 winter. And so, I just wanted to put that on folks radar,
45 because it's a great opportunity to give a longer
46 testimony than public testimony. It's meant to be where
47 communities nominate a representative to speak on their
48 behalf. They get ten minutes to speak as opposed to the
49 three for public comment. And this directly follows
50 staff reports before public testimony in an attempt by

00033

1 the Board to recognize that there are other ways of
2 knowing -- other ways of scientific knowing beyond our
3 long, boring staff presentations. And that's all I have,
4 I'd be happy to take questions, but thank you for your
5 time.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Alright, thank
8 you. Are there any questions? Pat, go ahead.

9

10 MR. HOLMES: I know you have definitive
11 protocols on subsistence division, but would it be
12 possible to look at any of these things that are in
13 draft report, label draft just to try to get a better
14 understanding. Because, I remember last time you did
15 Kodiak and the Road System, and I bet there's been some
16 considerable changes, and it's just something I'm very
17 personally interested in as well as other folks are on
18 what's happening. And anyway, I just recall after I did
19 my work in the Aleutians for Fish and Game in the 80s
20 and early 90s, and that was about the time that Lisa
21 started the left -- and subsistence. And so, you know,
22 there's a little bit of informal exchange of information
23 that's very helpful. And anyway, if it's possible, let
24 me know.

25

26 MS. KEATING: Through the Chair. Member
27 Holmes, is there a specific draft data that you're
28 referring to?

29

30 MR. HOLMES: The Road System right now,
31 I'd like to see if you're near the end of that, I
32 believe.

33

34 MS. KEATING: Thank you for the
35 clarification. So, the Road System data is no longer in
36 draft form, it's fully published. That's the link that
37 Lisa just sent out about 15 minutes ago. So, all of that
38 is available for you to look at.

39

40 MR. HOLMES: Thank you.

41

42 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Are there further
43 questions? Daniel.

44

45 MR. SMITH: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair.
46 I had one question, Jackie. You mentioned that during
47 your time in Ouzinkie and Port Lions, that there was
48 some concern about decreased deer due to people coming
49 in ferries. Was that both in Ouzinkie and Port Lions
50 that they mentioned that?

1
2 MS. KEATING: Through the Chair, member
3 Smith. That was primarily Port Lions. Just because of
4 the ferry access and also, I believe it's a regulatory
5 component as well, because that's part of the Road System
6 hunt area, as I understand, in Port Lions. And so, there
7 are folks that there -- I think so -- I -- don't quote
8 me on that. But there are -- there is a large increase
9 that local residents are seeing in people that are able
10 to take the state ferry and hunt deer in Port Lions. And
11 so, they're noting habitat changes, having to travel
12 further from their community to find the same amount of
13 deer, those types of issues.

14
15 MR. SMITH: Okay, thank you.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Are there further
18 questions?

19
20 (No response)

21
22 Okay, I'm not seeing any further
23 questions. Thank you so much for your report. Okay, that
24 concludes agenda item 14.a.ii next item, any reports
25 from tribal governments?

26
27 (No response)

28
29 Okay, if there aren't any in the room
30 and I'm not hearing any from -- online. Are there any
31 reports from Native organizations?

32
33 (No response)

34
35 And we are connected online right? Just
36 double checking, okay. All right. I'm not seeing any in
37 the room or hearing any online. The next item, the North
38 Pacific Chum Salmon bycatch item. We'll be doing that
39 right after lunch, that'll be the first one after lunch.
40 So, we are up to Izembek National Wildlife Refuge
41 Activity report and Jeff Kalin or -- and or Alison
42 Williams are listed. So, Jeff or Alison, are you online
43 and ready to give the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge
44 Activity report?

45
46 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes, Madam Chair, this is
47 Alison Williams. I am online and Jeff is joining. I am
48 actually -- I see Jeff just joined and I will actually
49 have Jeff start us out today.

50

1 MR. KALIN: Good morning, everyone. I'm
2 Jeff Kalin, I am the new deputy refuge manager here at
3 Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. I started here, middle
4 of -- or middle of September, so not quite six months
5 yet. Quick background on myself, I started with Natural
6 Resource Conservation Service with -- as part of the
7 USDA. Moved over to Forest Service as a wildlife
8 biologist and back to the NRCS as a state wildlife
9 biologist, before coming up here and joining Fish and
10 Wildlife Service as the deputy refuge manager. So, yeah,
11 that -- been all over the country, lived in a bunch of
12 different places, but kind of an update of what we've
13 got going on in the Refuge itself. Working on staffing,
14 we were unable to hire our replacement maintenance
15 position.

16
17 Our -- okay. We had a final offer out,
18 and it was rescinded at the last minute due to changes
19 with the administration. We are currently trying to
20 figure out if we can do a seasonal hire at the wage
21 grade we were looking at, wage grade nine. Waiting for
22 some confirmation back from leadership on that. If that
23 does not work out, we also have a list of applicants for
24 the seasonal bioscience tech position. So, we have some
25 things in the works just kind of working through the
26 process as we go. We have recently started talking about
27 our annual work plan, trying to prioritize with the
28 existing staff we have, whether it's feasible to do the
29 projects we have listed, with or without additional
30 funding or assistance through volunteers. And we are
31 still working through that process, we got kinda cut
32 short this week due to things going on here. Our GAOA,
33 Great American Outdoors Act project on site for the
34 remodeling of all facilities here at Izembek is starting
35 to wrap up. Should have everything done here on site
36 with new buildings and updated facilities starting June,
37 mid-June. That's quick down and dirty of what's going
38 on here. Quick introduction of myself as well and I can
39 hand it back over to Alison.

40
41 MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah. Thank you, Jeff.
42 Yeah, for the record again, my name is Alison Williams.
43 I am going to be running us through the activity report
44 we submitted that will discuss a few of the things we've
45 done since September through February. And this is tab
46 12 in your booklet, so feel free to follow along. The
47 first item I was gonna talk about was the highly
48 pathogenic avian influenza monitoring that has been
49 ongoing at Izembek for multiple years. So, we had USGS
50 staff come out and they were present in Cold Bay from

1 August through October of 2024 to sample for avian
2 influenza. These samples are taken from hunter harvested
3 birds, as well as the environment, to test for the
4 presence and strains of avian influenza. And these
5 samples are currently still being processed, their --
6 the lab with all that's going on with avian influenza
7 is a bit backed up. And so, we don't have results from
8 this yet, but preliminary results indicate that there
9 were likely detections of avian influenza in 2024.

10
11 The next thing I was gonna discuss was
12 our brant age ratio surveys, these are ongoing for 60
13 plus years on annual basis. The 2024 survey was conducted
14 September 30th to October 10th and throughout the course
15 of this survey, we had observers count about 54,106
16 different birds from 131 different flocks, and this was
17 used to model an estimate of nesting success for 2024.
18 This productivity estimate indicated that approximately
19 34% of the fall staging populations of brant here at
20 Izembek were first year birds. This is slightly below
21 the 2023 estimate of 39%, but it is still above the
22 long-term average of 25%. And so, it appears that this
23 was a fairly productive year for brant. I was next gonna
24 dive into caribou in the area, first with the federal
25 subsistence hunt for Unit 9D. We do have two different
26 hunting periods for federal subsistence hunting in Unit
27 9D. The first is August 1st through September 30th in
28 '24 and the second half is open November 15th through
29 March 31st, 2025. As of now, we have received reports
30 of three caribou being harvested in Unit 9D. We also
31 have a federal subsistence hunt on Unimak, Unit 10. This
32 hunt period is August 1st through September 30th, 2024,
33 and as of now, we have not received any reports of
34 harvested caribou from the participating communities.

35
36 And the last thing I wanted to discuss
37 here is our annual Winter Caribou Population survey.
38 This survey of the Southern Alaska Peninsula Herd and
39 the Unimak Caribou Herd was conducted February 11th
40 through 14th of 2025. These counts are important to kinda
41 understand general population trends over time, as well
42 as distribution of animals during the winter. This year,
43 during the survey, we counted 2,151 caribou within the
44 range of the Southern Alaska Peninsula, and then 412
45 were observed on Unimak Island within the Unimak Island
46 Herd. That concludes the report we've prepared. And at
47 this point, Jeff and I would be happy to answer any
48 questions you have.

1 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you both. Are
2 there questions? Pat, go ahead.

3
4 MR. HOLMES: Oh, yeah. Thank you for your
5 report. I'm deaf as a post and I miss your survey
6 information. How does Unimak Island look on the caribou?
7 Because in previous years, we've gotten assurances when
8 you've had difficulties getting planes and pilots. We
9 actually asked the director of Fish and Wildlife for
10 Alaska, and then also the deputy director, to assure us
11 that that would maintain as a priority on being able to
12 get there. It sounds like you got there this year. What
13 are the caribou? What do they look like? And are the doe
14 still going high to avoid the bears? Just very curious
15 about their population and what its status is. Thank
16 you.

17
18 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes. Thank you, Council
19 member Holmes. Through the Chair, we were able to survey
20 Unimak Island this year, which was great. We got a window
21 of really good weather and so, we were able to do a lot
22 of flying. We did two separate flights over on Unimak
23 Island. So, we had one complete replica and a partial
24 replicate on that or not, I apologies, I got that wrong.
25 We did get a -- one full replicate and no partials, So,
26 over that replicate, we counted 412 caribou on Unimak
27 Island, which is higher than we've seen the last several
28 years. I believe this -- the estimate currently is
29 between 400 and 800 animals somewhere in there. We don't
30 have a lot of information on Unimak, and that is
31 generally along the lines of what we would like to see
32 on Unimak is about that many. So, this is good news for
33 Unimak. The caribou were also pretty spread out across
34 the island. In the past we've seen them really isolated
35 on the western side, but we saw them throughout the
36 island, which is also good news for access, for
37 subsistence, as well as just general presence and
38 caribou on the island. When we were flying, everything
39 below about 2,500ft in altitude was clear of snow, and
40 everything above was 100% snow cover, and we did not
41 observe any caribou up high in the snow cover. They were
42 all down low and so, we did not see them going high like
43 you mentioned.

44
45 MR. HOLMES: You know, thank you very
46 much. You know, I retired Fish and Game so, flying around
47 that island looking at salmon is difficult even getting
48 around the island. So, I really appreciate you folks
49 doing that hard work on the caribou. And I enjoyed -- I
50 wanted to thank you on behalf of our Council for when

1 we were at King Cove and got caught, not -- no place to
2 stay. I thought your facilities were wonderful, and I -
3 - just made me think back to my first trip out to Cold
4 Bay in '63 and staying in the Flying Tigers Inn, where
5 you'd pull your bed away from the table and make sure
6 your sheets didn't -- blankets didn't hit the floor
7 because of all the rats running around in the room and
8 the attic. And also, brought back thoughts of my work
9 out at Atka, which you go out at night with a flashlight
10 to -- when the facilities weren't working, and shine
11 them and see 10,000 pairs of eyes looking back at you
12 from the hill, it's just some of the islands are just
13 covered with rats. And I also, thought that it was good
14 for you to be exploring methods on the impact on non-
15 target species, because the methods used to kill the
16 rats on Kiska, I reported to -- I can't remember the
17 refuge manager at the time, but that was Larry with the
18 highest population of fox we saw. And I understand from
19 talking to the staff that when they went back and dropped
20 the fox, then of course the rat population increased.
21 And I believe, I might be incorrect, but I think that
22 you did do some rat control there, but then had some
23 difficulties with some of the critters that naturally
24 eat the rats. Some of the birds I heard from fishermen
25 were showing up dead on the beach. And anyway, so I
26 think that's really good to figure out the best way to
27 get rid of those little buggers with the minimum impact
28 on other critters. So, my hat's off to you folks and all
29 the hard work you do, because just getting to where you
30 want to go is half the job. Thank you.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Pat. Are
33 there further questions?

34
35 (No response)

36
37 So, I have a question and it's more, I
38 think, to do with maybe formatting and augmenting the
39 report. I'm wondering if it's possible with future
40 iterations of the activity report, particularly with the
41 survey data, to add a -- to put in a little table that
42 shows current year results and then prior year results,
43 so that it's easier for us to see if something -- a
44 population is going up or survey results are going up
45 or down. I'm not sure how feasible that is, but if that's
46 something that can be, you know, fairly easily
47 accomplished it -- I -- it would really help me to have
48 that, you know, slightly historical view included. Are
49 there any other questions or comments? Go ahead, Jeff.
50

1 MR. WASLEY: Hi. Thanks, Jeff and Alison.
2 Just wondering if we had any info from bear surveys at
3 all. Thank you.

4
5 MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah, through the Chair,
6 thank you. We -- yeah, we did conduct a bear survey, a
7 bear stream survey this past fall. I believe we reported
8 on that on the last meeting. And so, I don't recall the
9 exact numbers of what we saw. They -- the last time we
10 were able to conduct that survey was in 2021. We've just
11 had difficulties the last several years with pilot
12 availability and weather and so, it had been a few years.
13 In 2024 the numbers that we saw, were just a couple
14 bears lower than that 2021 survey but nothing concerning
15 just not -- nothing outside of what you would expect
16 from annual variability. So, if you would like more
17 details, I can work out how to get some more to the
18 Council.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great, thank you.
21 Are there any further questions? Pat, go ahead.

22
23 MR. HOLMES: Yes, Chairman. I think your
24 comments, it would be nice to have some comparative data
25 on your surveys of the different creators, as Becky
26 mentioned. And so, if you could possibly supply those.
27 I know in previous reports you've had more extensive
28 graphical information in that manner. And if you could
29 forward that to our Council Coordinator, who would be -
30 - plan to take a look at that before our next meeting.
31 Thank you very much.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Are there
34 further questions?

35
36 (No response)

37
38 Okay, I'm not seeing any. Alison and
39 Jeff, thank you very much for your report. Okay, so the
40 next item is Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge Federal
41 Subsistence Board activity report.

42
43 MS. FUJIII-DOE: Hello, for the record,
44 my name is Danielle Fujiii-Doe. I'm the deputy refuge
45 manager for Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, and I'm
46 gonna be giving you the report. I also have Joy
47 Erlenbach, who is our wildlife biologist, online for any
48 questions as well.

49
50

1 So, for brown bear, in 2024, we
2 conducted stream surveys on our standard suite of nine
3 stream complexes. I'm sorry, this is on page 49.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: And it's the small
6 book with the bears on the front of it.

7
8 MS. FUJII-DOE: So, in 2024, we conducted
9 stream surveys on our standard suite of nine stream
10 complexes, three times weekly for six weeks between July
11 16th and August 21st. Our goal each year is three surveys
12 per week over seven weeks, approximately July 1st to
13 August 20th. And just a review or a summary on that is
14 single bears made up 60% of all bears counted, maternal
15 bears 12%, and cubs of the year 12% and older cubs 10%.
16 The percent of maternal bears was lower than the long-
17 term average and short-term average, and the percent of
18 cubs was lower than the long-term average and the short-
19 term average. We also conducted berry monitoring
20 throughout the refuge, we measured berry abundance at
21 25 sites. 2024 will complete the ten-year study on the
22 berry abundance, and we're hoping to have that data
23 analyzed soon.

24
25 For invasive species Kodiak worked with
26 the Kodiak Soil and Water District to conduct
27 terrestrial invasive plant management on and adjacent
28 to the refuge at eight sites, including Camp Island and
29 Uganik Lake public use cabins. We are planning for 2025
30 to work with Kodiak Soil and Water District and Koniag
31 to conduct the same work.

32
33 For visitor services, we just finished
34 up our Migratory Bird Calendar contest. We had our
35 regional director, Sara Boario here and she did the
36 regional director pick, which is normally the refuge
37 manager pick. Those will be sent out and put for
38 statewide judging. Something of note, for the Kodiak
39 Refuge Summer Science Camp and Salmon Camp. In 2025, we
40 will be offering this in rural communities, we will not
41 be offering Salmon Camp along the Road System due to
42 staffing capacity. The refuge works closely with Koniag,
43 and Amy Peterson, who is our community affairs liaison.
44 She will be hosting the Village Salmon Camp days. And
45 just an update on personnel so, on the last bullet I
46 have that Isabel Justino started on January 10th.
47 However, due to the mandated workforce reduction across
48 the Federal government, she is no longer with the Fish
49 and Wildlife Service. So, we do not have a visitor center
50 manager. In addition, we had an employee take the

1 deferred resignation offer, also known as the fork in
2 the road, and his last day was on Monday. And for the
3 Kodiak refuge manager, that position, along with Kenai,
4 Alaska maritime and Koyukuk, Nowitna, Innoko, Kanuti,
5 those four refuge managers were slated to be filled, but
6 they were frozen as well during -- due to the new
7 incoming administration, and we do not have any timeline
8 on when they will be refilled. Joy and I are happy to
9 take questions, and Kevin Van Hatten is also here.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thank
12 you. Are there questions or comments? Pat, go ahead.
13

14 MR. HOLMES: Thank you for your report.
15 I noticed you're mentioning of the decline in the
16 maternal females on your bears and percentage of cubs
17 and et. And I was wondering was [sic] could that possibly
18 be connected with the decline in the return of chums and
19 sturgeon and then also the reduced abundance of salmon
20 into Karluk. Because I can recall years ago when things
21 would change between one place or another, you'd
22 literally see the bears lined up hiking over to Frazer
23 from the Karluk side, or vice versa. And I was wondering
24 if that might be a possible reason for the -- those
25 changes in population and reproductive structure.

26
27 (Simultaneous speech)
28

29 MS. ERLBACH: Hey. Yeah, this is Joy,
30 I'll respond to that. Just wanted to mention a couple
31 of things that we consider when I'm interpreting results
32 like this. One, that the area that we're surveying is a
33 small area, so it's in Southwest Kodiak. And so, it
34 doesn't necessarily represent the whole island, and
35 we'll also use these information alongside other forms
36 of data, like our Spring Survey that we do, alongside
37 with Fish and Game, information that we get from hunters
38 and guides and we'll discuss these results with Fish and
39 Game, of course. So, the decrease that I mentioned that
40 we saw this year doesn't represent anything of major
41 concern at this point. Because we will be couching it
42 in the context of all that other information. But it
43 certainly is possible, like you mentioned, that it could
44 be a result of some decreases in salmon abundance that
45 have been noted.

46
47 (Simultaneous speech)
48

49 MR. HOLMES: And that's really swell that
50 you folks are being able to continue to do that work

00042

1 with all -- I hope you have the blessings on all this
2 administrative change. Anyway, thanks a lot.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Are there further
5 questions?

6
7 (No response)

8
9 All right, I'm not seeing any further
10 questions, but thank you so much. Okay, the next agenda
11 item is a report from the Alaska Maritime National
12 Wildlife Refuge from Jeff Williams, acting refuge
13 manager. Is Jeff online?

14
15 MS. HUTCHINSON: Madam Chair, I believe
16 he might be at a meeting, but I'm trying to reach him,
17 so we might want to move on to another agenda until we
18 can get him online.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, thank you.
21 All right and then the Region 7 updated National Wetlands
22 Inventory. That person isn't available until after
23 lunch, so we'll probably take that around 1:45 p.m. or
24 2:00. We already heard from Alaska Sea Grant Marine
25 Advisory Program yesterday. So, the next agenda item is
26 G, Office of Subsistence Management. Robbin La Vine,
27 policy coordinator.

28
29 MS. LA VINE: Thank you, Madam Chair,
30 members of the Council. I have -- I'm working from an
31 older agenda item. I just wanna confirm that we did have
32 our FRMP update and our Partners for fisheries
33 monitoring update, did we do that?

34
35 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: No, it's.....

36
37 MS. LA VINE: It's coming after, okay.
38 All right, so let me get to my notes. All right, well,
39 this is the OSM report. And for the record, again, my
40 name is Robbin La Vine, subsistence policy coordinator.
41 And this is my first time here in Kodiak, not my first
42 time with your Council, but my first time in Kodiak and
43 it's been wonderful. And of course, I'm always gonna
44 have the very first impression of Kodiak as being
45 beautiful and sunny and full of eagles and breeze and
46 it's absolutely stunning. So, I wanted to express my
47 gratitude for you all, your knowledge, your expertise.
48 Some of you are new, some of you have been with this
49 Council for a very long time, and it is your knowledge
50 that makes our work both thrilling and valuable. And

1 it's incredibly important to help inform the Board and
2 they -- so that they can make decisions that represent
3 your region. And it is all due to your knowledge and
4 what you bring here today. So again, a great thank you
5 to you all. So, I'd like to start by providing you with
6 a most important OSM staffing update.

7
8 In December 2024, OSM officially
9 welcomed our new director, Ciisquq Crystal Leonetti.
10 She'd been acting in that role for over six months until
11 she was formally hired. Previously, Ciisquq was the
12 Alaska Native Affairs Specialist at U.S. Fish and
13 Wildlife Service. Among regular OSM director
14 responsibilities, Ciisquq continues to lead OSM through
15 its administrative move and has done a wonderful job,
16 and we're grateful for her leadership. As many of you
17 know, Congress administratively moved OSM from the U.S.
18 Fish and Wildlife Service directly into the Office of
19 the Assistant Secretary Policy, Management and Budget
20 or PMB. This move became effective July 15th, 2024, and
21 was one of many efforts that the Department of Interior
22 has made to strengthen the Federal Subsistence
23 Management Program and to ensure that federally
24 qualified subsistence users and Alaska Native people
25 have an opportunity for meaningful engagement in our
26 public process implementing the Federal Subsistence
27 priority. This January, President Trump returned to the
28 White House and with him a new team of political
29 appointees. Doug Burgum was sworn in as the Secretary
30 of the Interior, and shortly after that, Charlie Dankert
31 was appointed Senior Advisor to the Secretary,
32 exercising the delegated authority of the Assistant
33 Secretary for PMB. OSM has been getting Charlie up to
34 speed with the Federal Subsistence Management Program
35 and its importance to rural Alaskans. Meanwhile, it's
36 been business as usual at OSM, we continue to work with
37 many of the same people in the Office of the Secretary
38 in Washington, D.C., who helped us with our transition
39 as well as the new political appointees.

40
41 In February, we welcomed new public
42 members Raymond Oney of Alakanuk, Benjamin Payenna of
43 Nome and Frank Woods of Dillingham, and completed
44 another successful Board meeting, which your Chair
45 Skinner has given you the update on. We hope to have
46 updated Federal regulations for subsistence fishing
47 published in the final rule soon. The proposed rule for
48 the 2026 Wildlife Regulatory Cycle published on the 7th
49 and as you know, we are accepting proposals through April
50 4th and thank you for your two submissions. Since last

1 fall's Council meetings, several OSM staff acted in
2 different roles to help through the transition to office
3 of the Secretary. Starting in February, Chris McKee,
4 subsistence coordinator at BLM and a member of the
5 Interagency Staff Committee, came over to OSM from BLM
6 to act as deputy director for four months. That was a
7 position formerly held last by Amy, Amy, our wonderful
8 Amy Howard, thank you, who has -- who left us the end
9 of last year. So, we've had a lot of folks in that
10 position to help. And at this point in time, Chris is a
11 former OSM staff member and so it's so good to have him
12 back, even if briefly. And with Chris stepping in to
13 help other OSM staff have been able to return to their
14 permanent OSM positions.

15
16 We go into this new administration with,
17 I believe, at least five vacancies. We've had two recent
18 departures of staff, one retirement by Karen Hyer who I
19 know supported your Council quite a bit and our George
20 Pappas who has actually taken a position with the
21 Division of Subsistence at the Alaska Department of Fish
22 and Game as their program manager -- director, director.
23 Thank you. All right, we continue to remind Council
24 members about the change in requirements for U.S.
25 travelers who must be Real ID compliant to board domestic
26 flights and access certain federal facilities. Beginning
27 May 7th of 2025, every air traveler will need to present
28 a Real ID compliant identification to fly within the
29 United States. For our program, you will need to have
30 your Real ID in time to travel to your fall 2025 Council
31 meetings. So, continued heads up. We are aware of
32 concerns that have been raised on timely responses and
33 are continuing to work on ways to help expedite things
34 as we move forward in regards to Council correspondence.
35 Councils received a handful of responses earlier this
36 year from the Secretaries, based on issues raised during
37 individual Council meetings and at the All Council
38 meeting past winter. OSM has also integrated a
39 correspondence review standing agenda item in the
40 Federal Subsistence Boards public meetings to keep them
41 appraised of all the ongoing and completed
42 correspondence to and from the Councils.

43
44 So, meeting updates, the Federal
45 Subsistence Board will hold a summer work session on
46 July 23rd and 24th of this year to discuss annual report
47 replies, Council correspondence and to review an
48 executive session, Council nominations. You're all
49 invited to listen in because that is where they really
50 pick up and discuss your annual report issues and any

1 correspondences that come before them. We have tribal
2 and ANCSA consultations on the wildlife regulatory
3 proposals and closure reviews scheduled for August 23rd
4 and 24th. Times for these consultations are still to be
5 determined, and you can discuss or contact OSM, our
6 tribal liaison, Orville Lind, for more information, or
7 you can reach out to Lisa, who will have things as they
8 are determined -- be updated. For next year, we're
9 looking at the weeks of January 28th and -- or the days
10 of January 28th and 29th or February 4th and 5th for the
11 Board's FRMP work session. So, our schedule, our
12 regulatory cycle is pretty much set. And I can kinda
13 tell you when meetings will be held by the Board in any
14 given year, unless it's for special actions. And because
15 of that, we know in advance, around about when our
16 meetings are gonna be held or the Board meetings are
17 gonna be held. Conflicts as Rebecca noted are -- we try
18 to avoid them, but we don't have much wiggle room. So,
19 the FRMP work session is typically held the end of
20 January, beginning of February. We've got the wildlife
21 regulatory meeting, which is typically held around the
22 first two weeks of April. This year we're looking at the
23 weeks of April 6th through 10th or April 13th through
24 17th and those for 2026 for the next wildlife regulatory
25 meeting. All of our meetings will be posted on our
26 website. And these windows will be up well in advance,
27 hopefully. Just so that people can kinda track where
28 their conflicts might exist.

29
30 Finally, a brief litigation update was
31 provided to the Councils during the fall 2024 Council
32 meeting cycle. Since then, in the Kake Emergency Hunt
33 Matter, Alaska Department of Fish and Game versus
34 Federal Subsistence Board, briefing has been completed
35 before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, and a three-
36 judge appellate panel heard oral argument on February
37 7th. We expect a decision sometime this summer. In the
38 Kuskokwim matter U.S. versus ADF&G, the district court
39 found in favor of the U.S. on all claims and enjoined
40 the State from taking any further actions in violation
41 of Title VII on the Kuskokwim River. The state has
42 appealed and briefing before the Court of Appeals is now
43 complete, oral argument is scheduled for April 11th.
44 With that, I'm done with my update. Thank you, Madam
45 Chair.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great, thank you.
48 Are there any questions? Go ahead, Brett.

49
50

00046

1 MR. RICHARDSON: I thank you for the
2 report, good information. Quickly, about the Real ID.
3 Are passports viable still?

4
5 MS. LA VINE: Thank you. Yes, I believe
6 they are.

7
8 MR. RICHARDSON: Thanks.

9
10 MS. LA VINE: Everyone is nodding.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Are there any
13 additional questions for Robbin?

14
15 (No response)

16
17 Okay, I am not seeing any further
18 questions. Thank you. Okay, just checking to see if Jeff
19 Williams is available yet. Not available yet, okay.

20
21 (Pause)

22
23 Oh, if Jeff Williams is available, then
24 we can take the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
25 activity report.

26
27 MS. HUTCHINSON: That's a red dot,
28 though. He might be in the meetings.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, so maybe not
31 available. All right. We'll go on to agenda item under
32 other business. So, 15.a Fisheries Resource Monitoring
33 Program update. This is OSM Jarred Stone and Dr. Jason
34 Roberts.

35
36 DR. ROBERTS: Good morning, Madam Chair,
37 members of the Council. This is Jason Roberts,
38 anthropologist at OSM. And I'm joined remotely from the
39 home office by prodigal son of KARAC Council Jarred
40 Stone. He's coming back to us after a few years away as
41 our regional fisheries biologist. Now that Justin has
42 taken over as sort of the permanent regulation
43 specialist. And so, I'm just gonna give a brief update
44 on the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. There
45 aren't any materials in your books on this. As you know,
46 the Office of Subsistence Management administers the
47 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program to gather
48 information for the management and conservation of
49 subsistence fishery resources in federal public waters.
50 The monitoring program is also directed at supporting

1 meaningful involvement in fisheries management by Alaska
2 Native and rural organizations, and promoting
3 collaboration among federal, state, Alaska Native, and
4 local organizations.

5
6 OSM is expecting to publish the notice
7 of funding opportunity for the 2026 Fisheries Resource
8 Monitoring Program in the very near future.
9 Unfortunately, we do not have any more definite
10 information than that at this time. Once we do publish
11 that application, information and supporting materials
12 will be available on the OSM website at
13 doi.gov/subsistence/frmp. And of course, we're always
14 seeking applications for projects that address priority
15 needs as developed by your Council and the Bristol Bay
16 Council, working in collaboration for the southwest
17 region. Applications will be reviewed by the Technical
18 Review Committee and summaries of project proposals
19 submitted for your region, as well as possible statewide
20 proposals will be presented to you at your next meeting
21 for your input, and I will try to answer any questions.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Coral, go ahead.

24
25 MS. CHERNOFF: I don't have a question
26 for you necessarily, but I believe we have a committee
27 for that here, an FRMP committee of our Council that.....

28
29 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, so in -- we
30 usually work in collaboration with the Bristol Bay
31 Council. So, there's a like kind of a committee of this
32 RAC and a committee of the Bristol Bay RAC that meets
33 together in a big working group committee. So, we do
34 have the list of people who did that the last time.

35
36 MS. CHERNOFF: Okay. That's what I wanted
37 to see if we were going to readdress that list because
38 we have new Council members.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: When do we need to
41 have the PINs, we don't need the PINs for the fall
42 meeting. Would that be like a next March meeting?

43
44 MR. ROBERTS: I am going to request that
45 Jarred, if he's online, answer that question.

46
47 MR. STONE: Thank you, Madam Chair. For
48 the record, Jarred Stone here, fish biologist with the
49 Office of Subsistence Management. Currently, as the PINs
50 sit right now, they've been finalized at your last

1 meeting and they're moving forward. They're going to be
2 published in what we call the notice of funding
3 opportunity here shortly. We don't really have a date
4 for that just yet, we're waiting on a few things, process
5 wise, to happen first, but we're expecting that call for
6 proposals to happen here in the near future. So, to
7 answer your question, the PINs that you've worked with
8 Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council on -- are at their
9 final stage and finished for the year. The new PINs for
10 the 2028 cycle wouldn't happen until -- I've got exercise
11 my brain here, I think the early parts of 2027.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, thank you.
14 So, we would have time to revisit the composition of the
15 committee either at the next meeting -- probably the
16 next meeting, all right.

17
18 MR. STONE: Yes.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Are there any
21 further questions? Oh, sorry, Jason was nodding in the
22 room. Are there any further questions? Yeah, I feel like
23 Jason. Sorry, Dr. Roberts, you -- I'm not sure if you
24 stole Robbin's thunder, but she didn't let us know that
25 Jason was, or Jarred was coming back to us. So, thank
26 you for that staffing update. Maybe it's not quite --
27 it's not a hiring or something like that, but. Pat, go
28 ahead.

29
30 MR. HOLMES: I just would like that if
31 there's some draft information or reports that are gonna
32 be processed before our meeting, if you could forward
33 those to Lisa so that we could get it and review it as
34 soon as it comes out. Thank you.

35
36 DR. ROBERTS: Yeah, through the Chair. I
37 believe, you know the 2026 PINs that were developed were
38 previously circulated, but we can send those out again,
39 certainly.

40
41 MR. HOLMES: Thank you.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, are
44 there any further comments or questions?

45
46 (No response)

47
48 Okay, seeing none, thank you. And you
49 guys can probably stay right there because the next
50 agenda item is Partners for Fisheries Monitoring program

1
2 update OSM Jarred Stone and Dr. Jason Roberts.
3

4 DR. ROBERTS: Thank you. This is Jason
5 Roberts, again. So, this will be a brief update, again.
6 The Partners Program is a competitive grant for Alaska
7 Native and rural nonprofit organizations aimed at
8 strengthening Alaska Native and rural involvement in
9 federal subsistence management by providing salary funds
10 to organizations so they can hire professional
11 biologists, social scientists, or educators. Program
12 funds may also be used for science and culture camps and
13 paid student internships. So, like the Fisheries
14 Resource Monitoring Program, OSM is expecting to publish
15 the notice of funding opportunity for the 2026 Partners
16 Program in the very near future. When that comes out,
17 application and information -- application, information
18 and supporting materials will be available on the OSM
19 website at doi.gov/subsistence/partners. And so, kind
20 of the two primary OSM people who are point on this now
21 that Karen Hyer has retired our Jarred Stone and
22 anthropologist Liz Williams, you can contact them for
23 more information about the program. And I can get that
24 -- your -- their contact information to you at this
25 meeting.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great, thank you.
28 Are there any questions or comments? Pat, go ahead.
29

30 MR. HOLMES: I was wondering on this
31 tribal funding because of course, our concerns still
32 focus on McLeese Lake and the Buskin. And funding for
33 that sometimes gets amuck as we've communicated. And I
34 was wondering if part of the -- this tribal interaction
35 or funding might be able to be combined with the
36 acknowledgement of Shungnak and the Quinhagak tribe. Is
37 there any possibility of blending those things or maybe
38 I misunderstood.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Like wait, is
41 phone-a-friend coming? Oh, no, she's not. Okay. Go
42 ahead, Jason?
43

44 MR. ROBERTS: Yeah, I'm not sure I'm
45 totally understanding your question, Member Holmes, I
46 know that the Q Tribe is currently one of our six
47 partners participating in the Partners Program. But as
48 you know, this is kind of a competitive grant program
49 that people have to reapply for on a regular basis.
50

00050

1 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, are
2 there any further questions, comments?

3
4 (No response)

5
6 All right, not seeing any. Thank you.

7
8 (Pause)

9
10 Okay, so I have a question a little bit
11 for Sam, a little bit for Lisa. Yesterday we talked
12 about generating some letters in regard to the Chinook
13 ESA listing, which I intended to take up today. Does it
14 make sense to take that up under, kind of this Council
15 correspondence update agenda item, or should it --
16 should we just do it at the end like later in the
17 afternoon? And then the question part for Sam is, if
18 you're -- are you prepared to propose what letters you
19 want to do, but you don't have to do right this minute,
20 but maybe just think about that. So, I guess first with
21 Lisa, does it matter where we do that?

22
23 MS. HUTCHINSON: Yeah. Madam Chair, it's
24 up to the Council. My report on the correspondence is
25 just kinda to update you on the letters that have already
26 been received, and so we can take that up whenever you
27 would like. Thank you.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. So, Sam.

30
31 MR. ROHRER: My one comment would be, if
32 we do it like, right at the end of the meeting, I just
33 don't want us to, like, not leave us enough time to have
34 the discussion we need too, not just try to cram
35 something through. So, we should maybe leave ourselves
36 enough time to have a good discussion on it.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, what I might
39 do then is after -- we'll have our 1:15 p.m. time-certain
40 presentation, and then maybe we'll do the ESA chinook
41 letters, because I think that's an important issue for
42 the Council. And then we'll do the updated National
43 Wetlands Inventory because that person should be
44 available after lunch. So, we won't do it at the very,
45 very end. Okay so, we are on agenda item 15C Council
46 correspondence update.

47
48 MS. HUTCHINSON: Again, this is Lisa,
49 again, for the record. Yeah, it's just kind of a little
50 bit of a short update, but let me find where I am. So,

1 on page -- starting on page -- in your book with the
2 bear on it on page 59 -- around 64 of your meeting book.
3 So, I've included the current Council correspondence
4 that has been received in response to the letters that
5 the Council has sent out after the Joint Council meeting,
6 which was the one that we all had in Anchorage with
7 everybody. And, you know, some of your Council -- your
8 Council submitted some independent letters, but then
9 there were some that were joined with other Councils.
10 And these two -- these responses can be found in your
11 meeting book, as I just pointed out. So, the Department
12 of Interior provided responses to letters that were
13 received from the Council regarding fisheries management
14 concerns as well, and also the request for member
15 compensation and the request for adequate response from
16 the Secretaries for letters elevated. And there was one
17 letter I had left out of your packet that I put on top
18 of that. But essentially the only one that I -- is not
19 included was the individual one that you wrote on subsis
20 [sic] fisheries management -- we didn't get a specific
21 response to that. It was a general response with all of
22 the letters of concern. But anyway, I'm not gonna go
23 into detail about them, but they're in there. If you
24 have any questions, I can take those now, thank you.
25 Madam Chair.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, it seemed
28 like the responses were basically thank you for your
29 correspondence. We don't have anything further [sic],
30 more, more specific to share. Are there any questions
31 or comments on the correspondence update?

32
33 (No response)

34
35 Okay and this may be partially a Robbin
36 question, partially a Lisa question. At the August work
37 session last year, there was a lot of discussion about
38 how the Federal Subsistence Board -- these are my words,
39 isn't really set up to deal with correspondence. So,
40 when the RACs write into the Federal Subsistence Board
41 and they say we want x, y, or z that's outside of the
42 annual reports, the Federal Subsistence Board didn't
43 really have a mechanism, or a protocol, or a process,
44 or a timeline to handle, you know, when should those be
45 responded to and what should the responses be. At that
46 work session, it seemed like there was a desire to kind
47 of figure out what the protocol should be or -- and or
48 what's the expectation as far as the timeliness of
49 responses. Is there any specific update about that or
50 is that still kind of in process being worked out?

1

2

3 MS. LA VINE: Thank you, Madam Chair. You
4 really captured, I think, the discussion at the last
5 work session. And there's discussion within the program
6 itself and among the existing Board members that are
7 familiar with their obligations under Title VII. There
8 are gonna be new Board members coming in, and they need
9 to be brought up to speed. And the first thing that
10 everyone is aware of is that we all come together -- you
11 to inform the Board and then the board to take action
12 in their arena of delegated authority and that's
13 regulations. And everything outside of that helps inform
14 the Board. It's a lot of context going on that feeds
15 into making an informed discussion. But in general, a
16 lot of the correspondences, the letters, the requests,
17 the asks are beyond what the Board as a unit can do.
18 Better directed potentially to directors or community
19 members and all of that kinda stuff and it can be an
20 ongoing dialogue. But all of that to say, that we are
21 still kinda stuck with what do we do with all of the
22 Council's great concerns about the impacts to their
23 subsistence way of life?

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

We are here for that but our tools only
are regulatory in nature. That's what's been delegated
to us by the Secretaries. The Board -- you have used the
Board, and the Board understands its role in passing
your concerns from the Board or through the Board to out
to the Secretaries. The last Secretaries that we had
became quite engaged, Secretary of the Interior and
Agriculture. They were very interested in what was
happening with this program. We have new Secretaries
now, and they will need to have a team, get up to speed
and it could be a different, you know, they -- a
different direction that this group of people wants to
take this program. I know this is not a solid answer,
but it's where we're at now. It's an issue that OSM
tracks, as I said in our LT report, we understand
correspondence is an issue. And you guys wanna do more
with all of your knowledge and expertise about the
impacts to your subsistence way of life, you wanna do
more than just regulations and this program, in its
limited function, really only focuses on that. Thank
you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thank
you for that. Are there any further questions or
comments?

(No response)

1

2

All right, thank you, Robbin. Okay, the next agenda item is 15D the young leader seat update, which you kind of gave us a little bit earlier. But maybe you can tell us more now.

6

7

MS. HUTCHINSON: Yes, Madam Chair, Council members. Yes, yesterday we did have a pretty good discussion about the youth seat. I gave a little bit of an update, and then there was some concern that the age was almost too old. I mean, from 18 to 24, they're essentially adults and so, I think the Council had decided that they would like to lower that age and then make the require -- remove the requirement of them being in person, because -- so, I did ask last night, I asked one of my other colleagues about kinda to remind me of on the youth seats how we came up kind of with why that age range. And part of the reason that we didn't -- that we wanted the youth seat starting -- well the age was 18 was cause you're officially an adult and so you can travel or, you know, be like that. So, that was the main reason that the 18 was picked. But also, the purpose of that is oftentimes if you're an 18-year-old, you don't have a whole lot of experience. And so, if you're competing with people like all of you have all this experience, there's only ten seats, right. And there's not -- not every year there's ten seats available. So, there's a really good chance that they're gonna interview and do well, but they may not get a seat. So, if they have -- this is an opportunity for them to experience -- get experience. And then so, when they could -- they don't -- that doesn't mean they have to be in that seat until they're 24. I mean, they could apply as a regular seat as -- when they're, you know, after a year of being a youth. So, that was why we kinda came up with that. Just to give you a little bit more background on that. But anyway, as I mentioned yesterday, that the Board advertised the open period for the non-voting youth -- Young Leader Membership is, I guess, what we're calling it. It's not youth anymore, they're young adults. On the Councils and at recently closed on February 16th, which was the same date that the applications for the regular seats closed for -- that would be for any seats opening for -- starting next calendar year. And staff are reviewing the letters right now of interest from the applicants, and we will be evaluating them this summer, and we will hopefully have an announcement before the next winter meeting.

49

50

Unfortunately, there were not very many

1 youth applicants for this area that -- I don't think we
2 had any, but we're hoping that we -- the word will get
3 out and we will get more to apply next year. So, at this
4 point, I might wanna see if the Council wants to still
5 move forward with what your suggestion was yesterday to
6 just remove maybe that require -- lower the age and then
7 remove the requirement of actually having to be in person
8 or.....
9

10 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Well, I mean, we
11 did take action as far as our charter. I guess we could
12 initiate another kinda comment letter or something like
13 that. But I did have a question. How many total youth
14 applicants were there, across the State, do we know?
15

16 MS. LA VINE: I think there were seven,
17 wasn't there? There were two or three in a couple of
18 different regions. There are regions that are -- sorry,
19 Madam Chair, this is Robbin La Vine, for the record. But
20 we had a very short amount of time to make this work.
21 And so, we hope that in the future we will have more
22 time and more opportunity to get the word out. And I did
23 just wanna make one other point in regards to your desire
24 to see a youth seat, like a high school student as
25 opposed to someone 18 to 24, because a person 18 and 24
26 is an adult could just apply. But sitting on the Council
27 nomination -- within the Council nomination executive
28 sessions where people -- applicants are discussed, I
29 want you to all take a look at yourselves and know how
30 competitive you are. And a 20-year-old who's got tons
31 of interest and very limited experience won't be able
32 to compete with you all. So, those people who have a lot
33 of interest, the bar is a little different in regards
34 to competing with you all, it's about gaining
35 experience. And I think their experience for those
36 people 18 to 24 as a -- you know, young adult seat would
37 make them more competitive. So, I just wanted to make
38 that point. Thank you, Madam Chair.
39

40 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, I -- maybe
41 you could talk a little bit more about when you say
42 experience, because I think an 18-year-old could have
43 ten years of experience with subsistence, more than ten
44 years of experience with subsistence activity. I am
45 assuming that may not be exactly what you mean by
46 experience. Maybe you mean leadership, connection, like
47 their, you know, ability to sit in this kind of a -- you
48 know, demonstrated ability to effectively sit and
49 interact in this kind of a forum. Am I kind of
50 translating that correctly?

1

2

MS. LA VINE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

Yeah, the -- when they develop the panels to review the applicants, they are looking at experience either in, you know, subsistence or, you know, with commercial activities and how that person may demonstrate their experience. And they could be they could have ten years; they could be at fish camp from the time they were four, you know or accompanying their families on hunting trips. But then they're also looking at leadership qualities and how they tap into resources in their community and also communications. So, there are other elements that are addressed when forwarding nominations of some of the most qualified applicants. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thank you. There any -- Pat, go ahead.

MR. HOLMES: Quick comment. You haven't met the kids here. There's some in here that, I remember in high school debating with the Chairman of the schoolboard, the principals, and arguing with them into a corner. And our paper now has a weekly little publication of opinion pieces from the high school kids. And I read them three or four times because I'm just amazed at their ability to communicate and understand. And I think that out of these eight that you've got, even if they were younger kids are just as passionate and they might not have the experience in meetings, but some of them have really got the intellect to pound their way through.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thank you. Any further -- Sam and then Coral.

MR. ROHRER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good description of that kinda work. I appreciate that, helps us understand how you guys came with that age deal. So, yesterday my recommendation was like, I think we -- and we end up voting on was like 14 or 14 to 18, I think. But I see where you're coming from and it seems like sometimes the interest in these things just kinda comes and goes. Like sometimes there's lots of people interested, other times you have not as many people applying. And I wonder if maybe the solution isn't just to say 18 to 25 or 14 to 20 -- you know, 25 seems too old to me, but 14 to 20 or some -- so, it accomplishes your guys' goals where there's times maybe someone who's -- maybe there's no youth in my mind what I'm thinking

1 of applied but there's other people who aren't making
2 it through the process, but would do a good job. Then
3 it gives you a little bit more flexibility. So, just my
4 thought you could -- we could expand that in the one
5 direction and have some more opportunity and -- anyways
6 that's all.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: I feel like Sam has
9 just kinda pigeonholed himself as old man Rohrer,
10 sitting at the end, 25 to old.

11
12 MR. ROHRER: But I used to be young man
13 Rohrer sitting up here.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: True. Coral, go
16 ahead.

17
18 MS. CHERNOFF: So, I don't wanna
19 embarrass Daniel here, but Daniel is 24. He's in a PhD
20 program, he's worked for Shungnak in their biology
21 department for a while. So, we're looking at a 24-year-
22 old here. Thank you for joining us.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: And, yes, thank you
25 for calling him out and embarrassing him. Pat, are you
26 trying to talk?

27
28 MR. HOLMES: I would agree with Sam and
29 maybe we don't have to focus on the narrow bracket that
30 we had before but maybe opening it up on the early side.
31 And I think that definitely has merit and we've got down
32 and I recall one lady that got her Master's in Business
33 Administration, and a legal degree before I could even
34 imagine. And so, there's spunky people here, spunky out
35 in Sand Point and so, maybe just having a broader scope
36 and we can use that to bring them into the process so
37 that they would want to join the Council. Thank you.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Robbin.

40
41 MS. LA VINE: Thank you, Madam Chair. If
42 my colleague Katya Wessels is on the line, she might be
43 able to speak to this. And while I'm seeing if she
44 responds, one of my thoughts is that if you truly open
45 or, you know, create a range for a youth/young adult
46 seat, you know that depending on the applicants, if it
47 is a person that is underage, then of course there --
48 they -- everyone needs to recognize the constraints in
49 regards to their ability to travel or other things,
50 correct. So that they can still participate virtually

1 or when the Council comes to their community. And if
2 it's over, then they have more leeway to travel and be
3 supported by the program. So, you know, you can forward
4 this idea, you know, or this recommendation to change
5 and expand the scope of the youth seat. And our program
6 can look at ways in which we can support you legally
7 within, you know, the systems that we have. Thank you,
8 Madam Chair.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Robbin.
11 All right, I'm not seeing any additional comments or
12 questions on this item. Thank you. I think the last one
13 we'll take before lunch is Council member stipend cards
14 update.

15
16 MS. HUTCHINSON: Okay, Madam Chair,
17 members of Council. Again, this is Lisa, the Council
18 Coordinator. So, on item 14B on your agenda, there's --
19 no 14C that we're calling it a member stipend card. And
20 so, right now is regarding your per diem when you travel.
21 So right now, the system has been that you get a travel
22 advance when you -- those of you that travel, all of you
23 in Kodiak didn't get it this time but if you're a hosting
24 community, you don't get them. But if you're traveling,
25 you get a per diem for your meals and your incidentals,
26 and we give you a travel advance when you get here. And
27 then when we complete your travel authorization, you get
28 the remaining amount. And so, what they're changing the
29 system because I think it's kind of more secure and it's
30 gonna be easier with -- for administration to do this,
31 but there's gonna be two options that you can have. And
32 it'll start in the fall meeting, and it was discussed
33 that the way the Council members receive compensation
34 will be -- it's gonna be changing. So, there will be two
35 options, and one is called a stipend card with -- you'll
36 get your advance payment, it's like a little credit card
37 thing or a debit card and you get your advance payment
38 and final payment on that card. And so, that -- and the
39 other is you could do a direct deposit of your entire
40 trip at the end of your travel on a voucher.

41
42 So basically, that's a -- that would be
43 -- you would have to provide your credit card -- your
44 bank account information. Sort of like if you get a
45 direct deposit on a paycheck or something with your
46 company it would just go directly into your account. So,
47 before the end of the meeting, I have a little form, if
48 you can -- we can talk about it more on the side, not
49 online if you want to just what the difference is there.
50 But the stipend card would really just be, you'd get

1 this -- you'd have one card and you'd just kinda keep
2 it and we -- I guess it's uploaded for the amount of
3 money and so, you can use it to go to the restaurant,
4 you can go to your ATM and withdraw the money if you
5 want. And then -- so it's a little bit easier, you don't
6 have to wait around for a per diem check for two months
7 to show up. So, in some ways that would be handy. And
8 then the direct deposit would be just -- it would just
9 go right into your bank account, and you can use that
10 however you want. So, if you have any -- can answer any
11 questions if you have them right now. Thank you.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah. So,
14 question. I think it was -- somebody came around with a
15 sign-up sheet yesterday and asked me -- Robbin to write
16 down stipend or direct deposit, I did not understand. I
17 was choosing stipend card; I do not want a stipend card.
18 Your guys' travel cards have been cut off, I don't wanna
19 -- like sounds like a good idea, but you just never
20 know. So, I'm gonna update mine, now that I understand.
21 Stipend means stipend card; direct deposit means direct
22 deposit after the fact. So, are there any other questions
23 or clarifications that people would like to ask or make?

24
25 MS. HUTCHINSON: Can -- I can explain a
26 little bit more. I'm reading my cheat sheet, which might
27 be a little bit better than I just described it, but if
28 you have any more questions. So, essentially the per
29 diem card or the travel card is similar just to a regular
30 debit card. And if the Council member selects to get
31 this, you will have their travel advance deposited into
32 the card and after the travel is completed, you will
33 have the remaining portion of your per diem deposited
34 into the same card. And Council members get to keep this
35 card and use it over and over again each time you're --
36 as long as you're on the Council. I guess they just
37 uploaded the new money each time you travel, and you
38 will not need to fill out any forms or provide any
39 additional personal information in order for the card
40 to be issued. The only thing that our admin -- or travel
41 administrator, Kerry said was sure about, if a Council
42 member can draw cash with this per diem card, which I
43 think she said, you can take out your ATM and use it,
44 but if there's like an ATM fee that will come out of
45 your deposit. The direct deposit as Rebecca said she
46 would prefer is if the Council members likes this, you
47 may want to have your per diem deposited into your
48 personal banking account. And to do that, I have a form
49 here that I can have you fill out with your banking
50 information, and it will not get a travel -- you will

1 not get a travel advance, and you will need to pay for
2 your food and incidentals with your own funds, but will
3 get reimbursed later after your travel is completed and
4 all expenses are vouchered with and will get a full per
5 diem directly deposited to your banking account,
6 regardless of how much you spend on food and incidentals.
7 So, that may be a little clearer, thank you. Any
8 questions?

9
10 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, did you have
11 your hand up? Go ahead.

12
13 MR. HOLMES: Oh, I guess I'll continue
14 being the old fogey and I got too many cards in my
15 wallet. And direct deposit, I don't want anybody to have
16 my account number in, particularly in the federal
17 government, because things slip up and I don't mind
18 getting a check. A month later, it all bounces off and
19 I can use my existing credit card. And to me, it might
20 make things simpler for the administrators, and I hate
21 to bother things for them and for Lisa, but I like the
22 way that we've done in the past, so thank you.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Pat.

25
26 (Simultaneous speech)

27
28 MS. CHERNOFF: I guess Pat's comment
29 makes me wonder now. So, is the check option gone? Okay,
30 there is no check option.

31
32 MS. HUTCHINSON: Yeah, what we were
33 informed is that the check option is going away. It's
34 not gonna be an option at all. I'm sorry about that, but
35 I hear you, it's -- and the thing is, if you do have the
36 card and you lose it's -- you just let me know and we
37 get -- issue another one, and we can just stop the
38 payment cause you'll probably have like a code to --
39 that you use. So, it's works but yeah, I'm sorry about
40 that.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right are there
43 further questions or comments? Okay so, I guess just
44 everyone make sure you have -- whoever has the sign-up
45 sheet, Robbin. Well, wherever it is, make sure that
46 you've noted on the sign-up sheet which methodology you
47 prefer to use.

48
49 MS. HUTCHINSON: (Indiscernible) Robbin
50 has it and I have the forms, if you wanna do direct

00060

1 deposit so we can -- yes, yeah, or you can give it to
2 me.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, Robbin.

5
6 MS. LA VINE: I just wanna clarify
7 because I realize I wasn't fully aware. I think I missed
8 the memo on this one. So, what I think we need to do is
9 that we need -- on the form that I have, we need the
10 Council members to confirm whether they want a stipend
11 or direct deposit. And, Lisa, if they want a direct
12 deposit, you have the paperwork that takes all their
13 information.

14
15 MS. HUTCHINSON: That's correct.

16
17 MS. LA VINE: Okay, so let's redo that
18 when we get a chance. And we'll get your request for a
19 stipend or direct deposit here and if it's direct
20 deposit, connect with Lisa. Thanks.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, are
23 there any other questions or comments?

24
25 (No response)

26
27 Okay, well, thank you for that very
28 disturbing news. It's almost as disturbing as the creepy
29 crunching of the sea otters eating the urchins. Okay,
30 so before we break for lunch, I just wanna give a heads
31 up for the flow of this afternoon. We'll -- I'm gonna
32 do lunch till about 1:15 p.m. Then when we come back,
33 we'll have the chum bycatch item first, then we'll get
34 into the chinook ESA letters. And I keep looking down
35 the table at Sam so, if you could just come prepared to
36 make motions for whatever letters you want us to look
37 at. And then following that, we'll do the wetlands
38 inventory agenda item and then sometime in there, if the
39 maritime -- if we get merit time back on, they can do
40 their report. If -- that is all the rest of our agenda
41 items and then Council closing comments and I was hoping
42 to wrap up sometime around 3:30 p.m. give or take. I'm
43 hoping that everybody, all the Council members, can then
44 help pitch-in to get the room broken down so that OSM
45 can be completely out of the room. And then we would
46 head out to Buskin Lake, and after lunch, I think I'll
47 have Daniel make any announcements about like where to
48 meet for the bus, or are you gonna pull the bus up out
49 front. I know that we do have -- people did bring extra
50 boots and whatnot, but we can address that at the end

00061

1 of the meeting as we're breaking down for the day. So,
2 we'll go on lunch until 1:15 p.m. Thanks.

3
4 (Off record)

5
6 (On record)

7
8 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, so it's
9 1:15 p.m. We'll go ahead and get started here in just a
10 minute. We're pulling up the next presentation, which
11 is chum salmon bycatch. And this will be Dr. Kate Haapala
12 and we'll be getting started here in another minute or
13 so.

14
15 (Pause)

16
17 Okay, do we have Kate Haapala online?

18
19 MS. HAAPALA: Good afternoon, Madam
20 Chair. I'll just make sure you can hear me, okay?

21
22 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, you're
23 coming through just fine. And I think we've got your
24 presentation pulled up here for screen sharing. And so,
25 if you can just indicate as you want the slides advanced,
26 as you're speaking, and we'll advance the slides. And
27 you can go ahead and start whenever you're ready.

28
29 MS. HAAPALA: Okay, that sounds good.
30 Well, thank you, Madam Chair and members of the
31 Kodiak/Aleutians RAC for inviting me to your meeting
32 today. My name is Kate Haapala, and I'm a fishery analyst
33 working for the North Pacific Fishery Management
34 Council. I've been in my role for just over five years,
35 and I'm based in Anchorage. For the last couple of years,
36 I've been a lead for the Bering Sea chum salmon bycatch
37 action, and I was asked to provide the RAC with an
38 overview of the current action that's being considered
39 by the Council. And I'll put that action into broader
40 context with the Council's process as I move through the
41 presentation today. And hopefully the presentation gives
42 the RAC some information about the action, as well as
43 how to be involved in the process, should you wish to
44 do so. And then finally, I would just note that my
45 colleague Sarah Marrinan, who also works on this action
46 and for Council staff, is available online and may also
47 be available for questions. Next slide, please.

48
49 So, very briefly and just to provide the
50 RAC with some important background information, the

1 North Pacific Fishery Management Council or the Council
2 and the National Marine Fisheries Service, NMFS, manage
3 U.S. fisheries in federal waters off Alaska. And federal
4 waters are those that are 3 to 200 nautical miles from
5 shore. The Council is not a federal agency, but the
6 Council makes management recommendations to NMFS and the
7 U.S. Secretary of Commerce and its NMFS responsibility
8 to write, approve, implement and enforce regulations.
9 Next slide, please.

10
11 The Council's authority to make
12 management recommendations covers four different regions
13 and those are displayed for you here. They are the
14 Arctic, the Bering Sea, the Aleutian Islands and the
15 Gulf of Alaska. While the Arctic region does fall within
16 the Council's authority, there are no commercial
17 fisheries being prosecuted in U.S. federal waters.
18 Within the Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and Gulf of
19 Alaska, the Council primarily manages groundfish, and
20 this includes the management of bycatch within those
21 groundfish fisheries. Next slide, please.

22
23 So right now, the Council is considering
24 new ways to manage chum salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea
25 Pollock Fishery. The vast majority of chum salmon that
26 are caught as bycatch in all groundfish fisheries
27 operating within the Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands region
28 is attributed to the Pollock Fishery, which is why this
29 action is focused on it. The Council adopted a purpose
30 and need statement for this action in April 2023, and a
31 purpose and need statement is required by federal law,
32 and it states the underlying reason that the proposed
33 action is being considered, as well as the need for
34 considering it. So, the main goal or the purpose for
35 this particular action is to minimize chum salmon
36 bycatch from current levels, but a particular emphasis
37 has been placed on reducing Western Alaska chum salmon
38 bycatch. This action is being considered in light of
39 recent and ongoing declines in Western Alaska chum
40 salmon abundance. And I'll speak to that a little bit
41 later on in the presentation. So, next slide, please.

42
43 So, while the goal of the action that
44 is currently being considered by the Council is to
45 minimize Western Alaska chum salmon bycatch, not all
46 chum salmon that are caught as bycatch originate from
47 Western Alaska, nor are these fish contributing the
48 majority of the bycatch. So, just focusing on the left-
49 hand side of this slide first, the chum salmon that are
50 caught as bycatch are able to be genetically identified

1 and then organized into six different regional
2 groupings. And those are shown here in the top portion
3 of this figure in panel A, and then below that, are the
4 different regional breakouts. What you see are the
5 circles which represent different individual populations
6 within the regional baseline reporting groups. And then
7 for Western Alaska chum salmon, we're focused on panel
8 C, which shows the Coastal Western Alaska Reporting
9 Group and the distribution of those populations based
10 on the yellow dots. And then the Upper Middle Yukon
11 Reporting Group, which is aligned with the Yukon fall
12 chum salmon run shown by the distribution of the blue
13 dots. Perhaps of interest to this RAC is the Southwest
14 Alaska Reporting Group, which encompasses Kodiak and
15 other waters near the Alaska or in the Alaska Peninsula
16 and you can see those with those purple dots there. And
17 then focusing on the right-hand side of the slide. So,
18 since 2011, Western Alaska chum salmon bycatch has
19 accounted for about 19% of the total bycatch on average
20 but each year is a little bit different. So, the pie
21 chart on the bottom part of your slide here, is showing
22 you the genetic composition of the 2024 bycatch. And in
23 2024, approximately 32,000 chum salmon were caught as
24 bycatch in the Bering Sea Pollock Fishery. And of that,
25 about 13% were estimated to be of Western Alaska origin.
26 Next slide, please.

27
28 So, this timeline provides milestones of
29 the current action that is focused on minimizing Western
30 Alaska chum salmon bycatch in the Pollock Fishery. And
31 I briefly spoke to the Council adopting a purpose and
32 need statement that is directing this current action
33 being considered. And as I stated before, that was
34 adopted in April of 2023. But it's worth noting that the
35 impetus or the beginning of considering this action and
36 changing these regulations came from tribal
37 representatives and subsistence fishers that
38 participated in the Council's October 2021 meeting. And
39 at that meeting, the Council received public testimony
40 on chum and chinook salmon run crashes across Western
41 and Interior Alaska, which for chum salmon also
42 coincided with the high bycatch year in the Pollock
43 Fishery as well. So, following that October 2021
44 meeting, in June 2022, the Council received the
45 requested information, including bycatch reports,
46 genetic information and an updated impact analysis. And
47 in June 2022, the Council also initiated the Salmon
48 Bycatch Committee.

1 That committee was formed of
2 representatives of tribes and tribal organizations
3 across Western Alaska, as well as representatives of the
4 pollock industry. And that committee made
5 recommendations to the Council for the purpose and need
6 statement that I already spoke to, as well as the set
7 of alternatives that are being considered to satisfy or
8 meet that purpose and need statement. And I'll talk about
9 the alternatives next. But since then, the Council has
10 received and reviewed three different iterations of an
11 analysis, most recently in February 2025. And those
12 analyses are characterizing and trying to understand and
13 convey, for decision makers and the public, the
14 potential impacts of changing these regulations. And
15 I'll speak to the upcoming actions at the end of this
16 presentation in terms of where we're headed next. Next
17 slide, please.

18
19 So, this slide shows the proposed range
20 of alternatives. And the alternatives are really just
21 different ways to meet the purpose and need statement
22 of the action. And in this sense, it's important to
23 always keep that in mind because the purpose and need
24 statement is what drives the different options or the
25 different alternatives that are being considered. The
26 Council is required by law to consider a no action
27 alternative and this is alternative one. And so, if
28 alternative one were selected, it would retain the
29 existing chum salmon bycatch regulations for the Bering
30 Sea Pollock Fishery. And then the Council's considering
31 four different action alternatives, which are just
32 different ways to modify these regulations. The current
33 changes largely include bycatch caps that would close
34 all or part of the Bering Sea to pollock fishing if
35 those bycatch caps are met. With a few exceptions,
36 alternatives two, three, four, and five could be
37 implemented in combination with one another. So, more
38 than one alternative or new management tool could be
39 selected here. And all of the regulatory changes would
40 only apply to the B season fishery, which is also
41 referred to as the summer fishery. Because the Pollock
42 Fishery encounters over 99% of the chum salmon caught
43 as bycatch during that fishing season. And just for
44 reference, the B season fishery has regulatory dates of
45 June 10th to November 1. And next, I'm gonna walk through
46 the alternatives in just a bit more detail. Next slide,
47 please.

48
49 So, if alternative one were to be
50 selected, the existing chum salmon bycatch management

1 regulations would continue to be in effect and no changes
2 would be made. So, the current regulations include two
3 primary components, and this slide captures them both
4 in written form, as well as giving you two different
5 figures that depict how the management programs work.
6 So, one is what's called the Rolling Hotspot Program,
7 and this program identifies areas on the pollock fishing
8 grounds where chum salmon encounters are high. And these
9 areas, which are called hotspots, are closed for three
10 to seven days typically. And vessels are required to
11 move out of those areas and continue pollock fishing
12 elsewhere. The program is managed by a third-party
13 entity and that figure on the top left corner is a
14 composite so, it shows all of the different hotspot
15 closures from 2017 to 2023. And on the left-hand side
16 of the slide, of that figure is the offshore sectors and
17 the right-hand side is the inshore sector.

18
19 The second component to the existing
20 regulations is the chum salmon savings area, which is
21 shown in pink in the bottom panel on the left-hand corner
22 of this slide. The chum salmon savings area is a time
23 area closure, so its boundaries are fixed, and it's
24 triggered by a bycatch cap of 42,000 chum salmon. And
25 the savings area continues to exist in regulations, but
26 it really functions just as a backstop measure should
27 vessels choose not to participate in the hotspot program
28 but this hasn't happened. So, next slide, please.

29
30 Alternative two would modify the
31 existing bycatch regulations by including an overall
32 hard cap during that B season summer fishery. So, if the
33 hard cap is met, fishing must immediately stop, and all
34 chum salmon that are caught as bycatch would count
35 towards that limit. The range of caps being considered
36 is 100,000 to 550,000 chum salmon, and that range is
37 based off of bycatch history. There's four different
38 options that are being considered to divide the cap among
39 the pollock fishing sectors, and the approaches are also
40 based on bycatch history or the sector's pollock
41 allocation. Next slide, please.

42
43 So, alternative three is similar to
44 alternative two in that it includes a hard cap. But the
45 hard cap would only be in place during years of low
46 Western Alaska chum salmon abundance. And there are two
47 options for indices being considered, but only one could
48 ultimately be selected for use. Option one is the three-
49 area index, which includes the Yukon, Kuskokwim, and
50 Norton Sound areas and option two is the Yukon area

1 index, and these two indices are how abundance would be
2 measured to determine whether that hard cap would be in
3 effect. Next slide, please.

4
5 Alternative four would add six
6 provisions to existing regulations for salmon bycatch
7 incentive plan agreements. The incentive plans are legal
8 contracts among members of the pollock industry. Federal
9 regulations hold specific goals for salmon bycatch
10 avoidance that the contract must design measures to
11 meet. The incentive plans are approved by NMFS, and the
12 Council receives annual reports on performance as an
13 accountability measure. The proposed changes under
14 alternative four would require these incentive plans or
15 these contracts to use historical genetic data more
16 rigorously, evaluating catch and bycatch data to inform
17 hotspot closures more frequently, to ensure that
18 encounters of chum salmon bycatch are not increasing on
19 the pollock fishing grounds without vessels responding
20 to that and moving away, as well as closing larger areas
21 of the fishing grounds under that hotspot program when
22 encounters are high as well.

23
24 The incentive plans have been
25 voluntarily amended in recent years to include measures
26 that largely respond to these six provisions that would
27 be added. And there has been a decrease in bycatch since
28 these provisions have been in effect for the sectors.
29 But we can't only attribute the bycatch reductions to
30 these provisions under alternative four. They could be
31 due to changes in abundance, other fishing behavior and
32 changes as well as some other environmental factors. So,
33 next slide, please.

34
35 This slide speaks to alternative five
36 as it was written and analyzed prior to the Council's
37 most recent meeting in February of this year. And
38 alternative five included three different in-season
39 corridors and the corridor would close to fishing if the
40 chum salmon bycatch limit is met. And this is not an
41 overall hard cap, this is rather a bycatch cap that is
42 specific to the in-season corridor. The in-season
43 corridors are shown in the bottom portion of this slide
44 in gray. And so, there were -- there are three separate
45 ones, and the cap ranges are unique to each corridor and
46 shown in the corresponding orange text. The location and
47 the timing of the closure window, that closure window,
48 being June 10th to August 31st, are based on historical
49 genetic information indicating when and where Western
50 Alaska chum salmon make up a higher proportion of the

1 total bycatch, which is closer to the Alaska Peninsula
2 and from June to mid-August. Next slide, please.

3
4 So, this slide reflects the changes the
5 Council made to alternative five in February. The
6 alternative still includes the concept of in-season
7 corridors or that time area closure. And it also includes
8 three different options. But the main things to call
9 attention to today are that, compared to what was
10 analyzed for the February 2025 Council meeting and shown
11 on that prior slide, is that the corridor area is larger
12 and the upper bound of the cap range was also increased.
13 So, depending on the option that would be selected, the
14 actual area inside the boundary that would close varies
15 by option. On the left-hand side of this slide is option
16 one for the in-season corridor, and under this option,
17 that entire area that you see in orange would close from
18 the date that the bycatch cap was met until September
19 1st. So, it's the same closure window and date range as
20 the old alternative five. And then just to the right is
21 option 1.1 and under this option, the areas in blue
22 would close if the cap was met and the areas that are
23 gray would remain open to fishing. Option 2 is not
24 depicted because while the corridor footprint is the
25 same so, if you just think of the outer edge of the
26 boundaries, the smaller areas within it that would close
27 if the cap is met could change over time. And so, there's
28 some different flexibility there with this option, which
29 limits our ability as staff to provide a figure of that
30 option for you. Next slide, please.

31
32 So, this is really just intended to be
33 a reference for the RAC. It provides an overview of the
34 other changes that the Council made to the alternative
35 set in its February 2025 meeting. I'm not gonna walk
36 through them all in detail, but I have provided the link
37 to the motion from the February 2025 Council meeting for
38 you at the top in that blue bullet. And of course, I'd
39 be happy to answer any additional questions if you --
40 if the RAC has any. Next slide.

41
42 So, this slide provides the tentative
43 timeline for moving the action forward. In February, in
44 addition to changing the set of alternatives, the
45 Council also recommended that the analysts revise the
46 document based off of the changes and the input that was
47 provided at that meeting. And then for NMFS, the federal
48 agency responsible for preparing the draft EIS to
49 publish the revised document as the draft EIS. So right
50 now, that document is tentatively being planned for

1 publication in mid-August, and after the document has
2 been released and is published, there would be a 60-day
3 public comment period, and that would be the first or
4 the next opportunity for written public testimony or
5 public comment to be provided on this analysis. And the
6 August publication date reflects the time that's needed
7 in order to accommodate the Council taking final action
8 and making a final recommendation at its December 2025
9 Council meeting. And there will be an additional
10 opportunity for public testimony, be it in written form
11 as well as then -- oral comments that can be provided
12 in person or virtually to the Council to help inform its
13 decision making at that December 2025 meeting as well.
14 Next slide.

15
16 And I was also asked to just speak a
17 little bit about the recent and ongoing outreach and
18 engagement efforts for this action. So, one thing that
19 is important to note, and I just spoke to a little bit
20 on the prior slide, is that the Council meetings are an
21 opportunity for public input but just to be even more
22 clear, all of the Council meetings are open to the public
23 and so are any of the Council's advisory body meetings.
24 You can provide written or oral testimony to the Council
25 and its advisory bodies at every meeting that is held.
26 So, in addition to these regularly occurring Council and
27 advisory body meetings, Council members and staff have
28 been engaging in different forums over the last six
29 months on this chum salmon bycatch issue, and the
30 different forms are shown here for you on this slide,
31 as well as the location or the format for which
32 participation has been held. So, most recently, outreach
33 and engagement efforts have focused heavily on the
34 different RAC meetings during the winter 2025 cycle.
35 Staff have been involved with the Western and Interior
36 and Norton Sound RACs for several years, extending back
37 to 2009 and maybe even a little bit earlier when the
38 Council had previously worked on the chinook salmon
39 bycatch hard caps for the Bering Sea Pollock Fishery.
40 So, the Council is not responsible for leading formal
41 tribal consultation, that falls under NMFS authority as
42 a federal agency. And NMFS regularly hosts tribal
43 consultations and engagement sessions prior to every
44 Council meeting and those sessions are an opportunity
45 to focus on the upcoming meeting agenda and what will
46 be addressed and then answer any questions and have some
47 dialogue. But the agency, NMFS, will also host or lead
48 consultations on specific issues like this chum salmon
49 bycatch action, in addition to the other consultations
50 focused more broadly on Council meeting agenda items.

1 And I'd be happy to provide any additional information
2 if folks have some questions on that. And then next
3 slide, please.

4
5 So that's the end of my presentation,
6 at least formally speaking to you. And of course, as
7 I've stated before, I'm happy to answer any questions.
8 I just wanna note that there are several extra slides
9 that are available for the RAC, as well as the public
10 that are intended to just be reference material for you,
11 so that they're available after the presentation and our
12 time with you today is done. So, thank you, Madam Chair.
13 That concludes the presentation that I had prepared for
14 you all this afternoon.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great, thank you so
17 much. Are there any questions? Pat, go ahead.

18
19 MR. HOLMES: Yeah, that was a wonderful
20 report, really complicated and fantastic. In 1983-84 I
21 was involved on similar arguments on chum interception
22 on Alaska Peninsula. And I went back and looked at the
23 IMPFC [sic] tagging studies that were done by Japan and
24 some other countries. That's interesting that your
25 hotspot there, on the edge -- southern edge of the Bering
26 Sea shelf, north of False Pass, that was an area of very
27 high concentration of chums that they tagged and
28 released and recaptured in other places. And so, I don't
29 know if that's gonna be a key to the solution, terribly
30 complicated, but I have to applaud your presentation,
31 it was excellent.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Alright, thanks,
34 Pat. Are there any other questions or comments? Natasha.

35
36 MS. HAYDEN: Thanks, Madam Chair. Thank
37 you for the presentation, Dr. Haapala. My first question
38 is, the -- do you have a sense of the run timing in
39 Western Alaska systems. So, that -- there's -- how is
40 it coordinated -- salmon counts coordinated with
41 hotspots or the -- one of the in-season management
42 options?

43
44 MS. HAAPALA: Thanks, Ms. Hayden, for the
45 question. So, I think this is some input that we
46 received, staff, that is at this most recent Council
47 meeting in terms of a way that the analysis could be
48 improved upon for the next iteration, for final action,
49 when the Council will make its recommendation. But to
50 answer your question, what we have in the document is

1 really just a high level and qualitative description
2 about the different chum salmon run timings for the
3 different regions of Western Alaska. And I believe they
4 vary a little bit and certainly for the Yukon summer and
5 fall chum salmon runs, there's some different timing.
6 But in terms of bycatch encounters for the Pollock
7 Fishery, within a given year, there can be kind of a
8 mismatch in timing. So, for instance, if the chum salmon
9 runs are picking up in, let's say, the Yukon summer chum
10 run in June and July, and then transitioning over in
11 mid-July to the fall chum management plan. Bycatch in
12 the Pollock Fishery typically peaks in that first week
13 or second week of August. So, there's other aspects that
14 are a little bit more complicated that we dive into in
15 our impact analysis in terms of the ages of the fish and
16 timing and whatnot but hopefully that speaks a little
17 bit. The hotspot system is really designed just to focus
18 about [sic] the encounters on the ground and so, that
19 works all B season long and not just, I guess based off
20 of the run timing. So, let me know if I answered your
21 question or if I can be more specific and follow up.

22
23 MS. HAYDEN: Thank you for that, Dr.
24 Haapala, that helps. I can't -- one of the slides had a
25 bullet point that said there was going to be closures
26 if the escapement wasn't met. And I think it was around
27 the option one -- there running through the slides so I
28 can see. Maybe go forward one. That's all overall cap.
29 Right, it was in escapement, it was -- anyways, I'll
30 think about it and take a look. So, I was just wondering
31 with the dates of the B season being the identifiers
32 that if -- how it would be possible to correlate the
33 bycatch numbers with the stock index, the returns in
34 those three rivers but that's okay. I'm not able to ask
35 the question in a good way. But I do have another
36 question about the rolling hotspots. You had in one of
37 the graphics that showed the difference between the
38 offshore and the inshore sectors and -- yeah, that's the
39 one, the composite map showing the hotspot closures. And
40 could you just elaborate a little bit more on what is
41 distinct about those two categories and why?

42
43 MS. HAAPALA: Sure, I think that question
44 is probably speaking to some of the differences between
45 the sectors themselves. So, I didn't have a chance to
46 speak to this much in the presentation but the Pollock
47 Fishery is really composed of four different sectors.
48 We have the inshore catcher vessel sector, which is shown
49 on the right. These are vessels that catch pollock at
50 sea, and then they deliver into shoreside processing

1 facilities in Akutan, Unalaska, formerly King Cove and
2 Sand Point. In the B season, it's really just all three
3 except for Sand Point. And then on the left-hand side,
4 when you're looking at the offshore sectors, that
5 includes the catcher processors or CPs, as well as
6 mothership. And then the CDQ Program or the CDQ sector
7 has in recent years put their pollock onto catcher
8 processors, but we wouldn't necessarily consider them
9 an offshore component. But catcher processors are
10 harvesting pollock and then processing it onboard the
11 vessel and their factory out at sea, and the motherships
12 act as a processor out at sea, and they take deliveries
13 from catcher vessels, mothership catcher vessels that
14 actually deliver their (indiscernible) to the mothership
15 while at sea. And so those are some of the operating
16 differences. And then, I guess, probably one thing that
17 would help, when you're looking at the slide here and
18 the two different panels and you see the distribution
19 of these hotspot areas, you can see that the offshore
20 component has quite a bit wider distribution. So, it
21 extends further north and west. And that really reflects
22 the different operational types and flexibilities among
23 these kinds of vessels. So, inshore sector vessels that
24 are delivering to shoreside processors are typically a
25 little bit smaller and they have different safety
26 considerations and whatnot, but also their processors
27 have delivery requirements to ensure fresh products. So,
28 they're just a little bit more constrained in where they
29 can go. Let me know if there's something else I could
30 add that would be helpful for you.

31
32 MS. HAYDEN: No, thank you very much.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Brett.

35
36 MR. RICHARDSON: Brett Richardson,
37 Unalaska. Quick question about -- more about the hotspot
38 system. It says if vessels participate, apparently, it's
39 not mandatory. Is that correct? And then what percentage
40 of vessels are participating? And then how are the
41 hotspots triggered; how do you find out that the bycatch
42 has been caught? Thanks.

43
44 MS. HAAPALA: Sure. So, okay, I wanna
45 make sure I get all of these -- there's three parts. So,
46 the 'if' then statement is just to reflect that vessels
47 and CDQ groups are not required to participate in the
48 incentive plan agreements. Those legal contracts that I
49 spoke to, but all vessels and all CDQ groups have since
50 those plans came into effect in 2010, and they were

1 implemented alongside the chinook salmon bycatch hard
2 cap. So, it's 100% in terms of the vessels across all
3 sectors that are participating in the hotspot program.
4 But the Council chose and NMFS chose to leave that chum
5 salmon savings area -- the pink polygon, back on the
6 hotspot closure side, slide in the bottom left hand
7 corner -- in case there was a scenario where a vessel
8 decided not to be governed by the incentive plan
9 agreement, that there would still be a binding measure
10 that would affect their avoidance behavior. So that's
11 why it's the 'if' language but in terms of participation,
12 it would be 100%.

13
14 And then how are those hotspots
15 triggered? That's -- it's complicated but basically,
16 it's a program that works off of different bycatch rates
17 at different levels and scales. So, across the B season
18 in that summer month period and duration, the bycatch
19 rate is evaluated on a weekly basis for those sectors,
20 the whole fleet and then also for individual vessels.
21 And that's compared to facial bycatching counters, so
22 the number of chum that are encountered or caught per
23 metric ton of pollock at ADF&G groundfish statistical
24 areas. And then there are -- the hotspots are triggered
25 and sort of the simplest way, when a stat area or a area
26 at a smaller location, smaller than that, meaning more
27 discrete, have bycatch rates that are higher than the
28 rolling weekly average, and then vessels performance is
29 what excludes them from those areas. Sorry, that's a
30 complicated answer. The program gets a little sticky and
31 hard to explain the more nuanced that you get with it,
32 but I am definitely happy to answer any more questions
33 about it.

34
35 And then how do you know the bycatch?
36 The bycatch is -- there are observers onboard these
37 vessels or located at shoreside processing facilities.
38 And then all vessels, regardless of their operating
39 type, carry different camera systems. And the observers,
40 be they on the vessels or at the shoreside processing
41 facilities, are counting all of the salmon that are
42 caught in the Pollock Fishery in the Bering Sea. And so,
43 that's the -- we typically refer to that as the census
44 count. But that's reported by the National Marine
45 Fisheries Service through that observer program. And
46 there's a variety of different ways that even the public
47 can access those data on the agency's website and the
48 in-season management. So, it's not just specific to the
49 hotspot program, but just the fleet's performance and
50 then down to the vessel level more broadly, so.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thank
3 you. Chris.

4
5 MR. PRICE: Can you go to the genetic
6 slide? One of the first ones. Alright, thanks for your
7 report today. I had a question on the genetic slide that
8 you had. Yeah, that one -- back. Yeah, that one.
9 Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia seem to compose the
10 largest amount of the genetic composition of the Western
11 chum bycatch. Are all these fish swimming around
12 together, same time and they get caught equally, like
13 and counted? I mean, how do you -- how do we make sense
14 of this genetic information like of the bycatch that's
15 coming out? Do you understand my question?

16
17 MS. HAAPALA: I think so. So yes, they
18 are -- like all -- they are just all swimming around
19 together to some extent. So, we have genetic analyses
20 that come forward every year from geneticists with Auke
21 Bay labs and the Alaska Fisheries Science Center, those
22 folks are based out of Juneau. And so, the way that
23 those reports have been provided and set up in the way
24 that they're designed to be run, is to provide a sense
25 or an estimate of the proportion or the amount of the
26 total bycatch that these different six reporting groups
27 represent each year. And then they do different spatial
28 breakouts and temporal breakouts. So, in terms of
29 temporal, we look at the early part or the late part of
30 the B season when you add in the different reporting
31 groups. So, for instance, if you wanted to focus in on
32 the Coastal Western Alaska, that distribution of yellow
33 dots in June to mid-August compared to mid-August to
34 November 1, that's one way to look at those data. And
35 then also, spatially so, there are different groupings
36 of areas, they're called cluster areas in our process,
37 and they're basically looking at a sequencing of
38 different breakouts from closest to the Alaska Peninsula
39 further northwest. And so, the genetic stock composition
40 or the mixtures of these fish in the bycatch do vary
41 over space and time, but depending on which reporting
42 group is of interest, you would see different trends.
43 And the larger, more aggregate trends so, Western Alaska
44 chum salmon, be the Coastal Western Alaska, Upper Middle
45 Yukon, those yellow and blue dots are more -- they
46 contribute a higher proportion of the total bycatch
47 earlier in the B season and then closer to the Alaska
48 Peninsula compared to later aspects. So, mid-August to
49 November or when you move further west onto the fishing
50 grounds. But if you were to look even at a smaller scale,

1 when there are sufficient samples for the geneticists
2 to do that, the mixtures really stay pretty similar. So,
3 sometimes I guess the takeaway from that is that the
4 trends at the larger, at the aggregate are not always
5 so different from the really small scales. Does that
6 help to answer your question?

7
8 MR.PRICE: Yeah, and one just real quick
9 follow up. So, can they interbreed these different
10 stocks?

11
12 MS. HAAPALA: Inter -- I don't.....

13
14 MR.PRICE: Can they -- can an Asian fish
15 go in Alaskan waters, and they breed with Alaskan fish,
16 or they're totally separate though?

17
18 MS. HAAPALA: I would think there's
19 totally separate in terms of where they returned to
20 but.....

21
22 MR.PRICE: Just curious, okay.

23
24 MS. HAAPALA: Yeah, I don't think I would
25 have a solid answer for you on that if there's a
26 possibility for it to be different.

27
28 MR. PRICE: Cause they're genetically
29 separate, so they can't -- they shouldn't be able to
30 interbreed.

31
32 MS. HAAPALA: Right.

33
34 MR. PRICE: I think.....

35
36 MS. HAAPALA: Right. So, this is just
37 when they're, like, mixed in the ocean in their time at
38 sea is -- yeah. So, how does the bycatch not.....

39
40 MR.PRICE: Okay.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thank
43 you. Brett, go ahead.

44
45 MR. RICHARDSON: Hi, again. Sorry, maybe
46 you don't know the answer to this, but it seems as if,
47 what, 56% are East Asian chum. Do we have any idea of
48 the bycatch in Asia of Western Alaskan salmon at all,
49 do you have any numbers on that or rough guess?

1 MS. HAAPALA: I don't have any numbers
2 on that, and I don't think I would feel confident about
3 a rough guess, but if it's of interest to the RAC, I am
4 happy to get in touch with the geneticists down at Auke
5 Bay and then providing the answer to the Chair and the
6 Coordinator as a follow up.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, yeah,
9 that would be great. Coral, go ahead.

10
11 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, thank you Thank you
12 for this information. And I was just wondering, are these
13 wild stock or are they hatchery fish or a combination?

14
15 MS. HAAPALA: It's a combination. For --
16 I guess those that are applicable. So, for instance if
17 we're focused on Southeast and Northeast Asia, the
18 Southeast Asia component is largely hatchery fish, and
19 then the Northeast Asia component is both hatchery and
20 wild. So, it just depends. There's a mixture among the
21 populations.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, are
24 there additional questions?

25
26 (No response)

27
28 Okay, I do have a question for the
29 Council. Was this sufficiently useful that we would like
30 update so, we'd wanna invite Dr. Haapala back as there's
31 kind of significant happenings at the Council or
32 significant decision points to invite her back either
33 immediately before or immediately after? Okay, I'm
34 getting nods around the head that this was -- even if
35 you didn't get, you know, 50 questions, I think this is
36 definitely of interest to people in the room. So, we'll
37 just keep in touch and extend an invitation as it seems
38 appropriate for our meeting cycle. And then if you do
39 have time to come and present again that would be great.
40 And thank you very much for coming and presenting today
41 and tailoring the presentation. I think -- is a lot of
42 information to fit in as few slides as you showed. So,
43 I really appreciate your -- the way you were able to
44 kinda condense that down and summarize, like I said, a
45 lot of information in a short amount of space. All right,
46 well, we don't have any more questions or comments here.
47 So, thank you again so much for joining today.

48
49 MS. HAAPALA: Yeah, thank you.

1 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, so our
2 next agenda item we're gonna deal with is chinook ESA
3 letters. Sam, do you have any motions?
4

5 MR. ROHRER: Madam Chair, thank you. So,
6 before I make a motion, my thought was, since we don't
7 know what the ESA -- what the results of that process
8 are going to be and we probably -- the comment period
9 will probably come and go. They'll release a decision
10 in the comment period will come and go before we get to
11 have another meeting and write comments. My thought was
12 if we put enough comments on the record, we could then
13 vote to allow our Chairwoman to write a letter, one way
14 or the other, with Lisa, yeah, yeah. The two of you to
15 write a letter. So, that was -- so it's not -- I guess
16 I'm not -- I don't have a motion yet, or that could be
17 a motion, is that we put enough on the record, and then
18 the motion would be that we give Lisa and Rebecca the
19 authority to write the letter on our behalf.
20

21 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, and another
22 idea -- so, this would be a separate letter is a separate
23 letter that asks to have the public comment available
24 into the fall. So, and we could send that immediately,
25 like, as a preemptive, hey, we know you're not gonna
26 give us enough time. So please, you know, when you're
27 setting the public comment period, please consider that.
28 So, that could be trying to extend the public comment.
29 And then option two would be having this -- the ability
30 to try to respond.
31

32 MR. ROHRER: Yes, although I don't know
33 that I would preemptively send that letter, it almost
34 feels like we're better off to wait and see what the
35 results are, cause we might find we're happy with what
36 they come back with, and we don't want to extend the
37 comment period. So, I would say, don't -- I mean, we -
38 - you never know, you never know. But I would say don't
39 -- and also, I'd be a little afraid it would just get
40 it, would get lost in the -- when you send comments in
41 an open comment period, I mean, they have to record
42 them, they got to document them, you know, so on and so
43 forth. Not necessarily if we send it outta [sic] cycle,
44 so.
45

46 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Well I'm not
47 seeing more hands up. Coral, do you wanna -- go ahead?
48
49
50

1 MS. CHERNOFF: No, I was just waiting for
2 Sam to see what our action is or if we need to take an
3 action.

4
5 MR. ROHRER: I propose that we write one
6 letter asking that the comment period be extended, and
7 then we hold that letter and don't send it until our
8 Chairperson decides if it's appropriate to send. And
9 then -- so, that's my first motion.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Alright, is there
12 a second?

13
14 MS. CHERNOFF: Second.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, is there
17 questions or comment? I guess I have a question. If the
18 motion passes, can we -- the letter doesn't need to have
19 a date on it, does it? So, we can like generate a letter
20 with the right substance and then if we need to use it
21 in like July, can we put a July date on it as long as
22 it was passed through the Council? Is that problematic
23 at all?

24
25 MS. HUTCHINSON: I might defer this.
26 Robbin, would you know the answer? I believe that as
27 long as the Council is on the record that you passed it,
28 I don't think that it has to be sent right away. Correct,
29 Robbin, thank you.

30
31 MS. LA VINE: Madam Chair, members of the
32 Council. You can have a discussion on the record. The
33 Council can make a number of points. Either, you know,
34 both to request an extension of the comment period if
35 you think that actually there may be value in speaking
36 directly to them as a body at that time, or you can --
37 and so, have two letters, but you can capture the content
38 of the letter on record make sure that you have covered
39 the points you wish. And then OSM working with our Chair
40 can finish producing them and sending them on, in a
41 timely manner. And the Chair can put their confidence
42 in you, Rebecca, thank you.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, so what I got
45 out of that is we can, like, post-date it or date it
46 later. Okay, so the motion on the floor right now is to
47 if -- I guess, approve developing a letter asking for
48 an extension of the public comment deadline. But the
49 letter wouldn't be used until they come out with a
50 deadline that's actually too short. So, that is the

1 motion on the floor. Is -- are there questions or
2 comments on that? Sam.

3
4 MR. ROHRER: So, I'll just speak to it
5 briefly. It would -- it would be appropriate in that
6 letter to note that's king salmon report and subsistence
7 fishery that rural communities should have a chance to
8 weigh in, that all the RACs should have a chance to
9 weigh in. That this affects livelihood, how we feed our
10 families, so on and so forth. And that we request the
11 opportunity to participate in the process. Thank you.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thank
14 you. Okay, I'll try this. Is there any objection to this
15 motion?

16
17 (No response)

18
19 Okay, seeing and hearing none. That
20 motion passes unanimously.

21
22 Is there another motion or proposed
23 correspondence, or no?

24
25 MR. ROHRER: Yes, I'll make another
26 motion. They might -- the -- they might not extend the
27 comment period, in which case we wanna make comments, I
28 would think substantive comments and so, I would propose
29 that we authorize the Chair and staff to write a second
30 letter and that we put on record the things that we want
31 in that letter in case they don't extend the comment
32 period for us.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, is there a
35 second? And then I expect we'll have more discussion to
36 flesh out this idea. Is there a second? All right,
37 thanks. So, just as a starting point, I'm assuming that
38 our starting point for the letter is we do not think
39 that the chinook should be listed either as threatened
40 or endangered under the ESA. So really, the details then
41 would be kind of identifying some main points that would
42 kind of back up that position. Okay, is there additional
43 -- Coral, go ahead.

44
45 MS. CHERNOFF: I guess we would need to
46 confirm that that's our position.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, and that's
49 what I was kind of attempting to bring out or clarifying
50 that that - sorry, I was told not to speak so close to

1 the microphone. That, that is underlying Sam's motion.
2 So, if there is disagreement with that starting point,
3 then this would be the time to bring that up.

4
5 Coral, go ahead, right now. Natasha, go
6 ahead.

7
8 MS. HAYDEN: Thanks, Madam Chair. I don't
9 necessarily disagree with that, but I am -- I think it's
10 just a very blunt tool. Similarly to doing a ESA listing
11 is a very blunt tool. And the -- I mean, I just at
12 lunchtime today on the local radio is talking about how
13 the entire southwest districts of Kodiak are not --
14 there's not gonna be salmon fishing because there --
15 haven't had chinook returns in the Karluk and Ayakulik
16 for one of them five 5, and the other 10 years. And so,
17 I agree that the ESA listing is not the best approach.
18 But I would qualify it with there's opportunity for
19 Alaska Native exemption similar to what is included in
20 the MMPA. And so, if we were gonna be advocating for no
21 listing, I agree with that. But I also want there to be
22 some inclusion for, you know, if it is determined that
23 they indeed warrant to be listed as threatened or
24 endangered, that that be included as part of the process.
25 So, I know what I just said was two different things.
26 But, you know, I am also interested in hearing some of
27 the other members of this body contribute to the
28 discussion, because it is such a blunt tool. And it --
29 for us to just say, you know, we -- absolutely need to
30 know about it -- chinook not being listed that there's
31 a lot more to it than that, that what is actually
32 happening in our salmon resources.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, go ahead.

35
36 MR. HOLMES: Some good points raised
37 there. I believe that, myself, I totally against that.
38 And it's in the large part in my mind, a bit of emotional
39 and misjudged. And having looked at the data that was
40 presented and this original request for the endangered
41 species, I think they fudged it a bit. And I think that
42 there's plenty of -- we can go back to the lady that's
43 putting the comments together for the State because they
44 have a very -- they've got a good bit of soundbites and
45 specific points that relate to the whole question. And
46 I think right now, I think the southwest closure is a
47 good example because the State is taking action to deal
48 with those stocks but there are other king stocks that
49 aren't boogered up. And so, to close them all down is -
50 - not to me is this isn't logical. So, I think that when

00080

1 you go to work on the letter, Becky, I think we've got
2 a lot of really good information already presented to
3 us that we can get and put in our perspective on the
4 arguments. Thank you.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Coral, and then
7 Sam.

8
9 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, I guess right up
10 front, I'm gonna say I don't know enough about this and
11 the process. And then second of all, I will say, and
12 maybe this is just my idea that comes out of it, out of
13 ignorance and not knowing enough. But I think a lot of
14 people have not had king salmon, they've tried to get
15 things closed. It's unfortunate that this has come to
16 the process because they cannot close down the
17 commercial fisheries, which a lot of people think, you
18 know, that can have an effect on it. I think it's not
19 the best solution. But again, I will say, I don't know
20 -- I don't personally think I know enough to generate
21 any sort of letter about it.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Sam.

24
25 MR. ROHRER: Thank you, Madam Chair. A
26 couple comments I would have is number one, it's too
27 much of a blunt force tool, it's too large of an area.
28 I think that's one of the biggest concerns is if we need
29 to look at it, at a location by location, that's one
30 thing. But to say all of what is it, South Coast or
31 South -- all of South Central. I mean, we're talking a
32 massive area. They've -- I don't know that they've ever
33 done something on that scale. So, to evaluate every
34 single district, I mean, that's just -- it's too large
35 of an area. And then the other point would be the State
36 is taking steps to address this, let's let that process
37 work out and see how it goes. So, they just -- maybe
38 everyone hasn't seen this yet, but all of us guys who
39 do any sport fishing, we just received a letter from
40 local ADF&G office saying that island wide, it's gonna
41 be reduced to one king salmon per day limit. And the
42 west side is gonna be closed down April and May to try
43 to give time for the Karluk return. So -- and then in
44 addition, I think they're talking about some -- I think
45 the State -- I don't know if the State's released it,
46 but the word on the street is the State is gonna release
47 something for all of South Central as well. So, the
48 State's taking efforts, let's see if those make a change,
49 if those make a difference before we do something as
50 drastic as the EA [sic], so. I think those would all be

00081

1 good points to include. Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Further comment --
4 sorry, I can't help it -- further comments or questions?

5

6 (No response)

7

8 Okay, so to be clear, the motion is to
9 -- so, there's kinda two parts to it. One is that the
10 RAC is taking a position opposing the -- the ESA listing
11 of Gulf chinook salmon. That's kind of the underlying
12 starting point. And then more specifically, it's
13 delegating the ability to the Chair into the Coordinator
14 to draft a letter that would have more detailed points,
15 but those points would be in support of the RAC opposing
16 the listing of chinook salmon. And the reason for doing
17 this is because we anticipate the timing is gonna be
18 such that we won't be able to meet again before comments
19 on this are due, but I just -- I do wanna be clear it
20 is taking a position opposing the listing of chinook.

21

22 MR. ROHRER: That is my.....

23

24 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Sam, go ahead.

25

26 MR. ROHRER: Yes, that was my motion and
27 the things I was just speaking to are just to put some
28 of my ideas on the record that you could use.

29

30 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thank
31 you. All right, are there any additional comments or
32 questions? Natasha, go ahead.

33

34 MS. HAYDEN: Thanks, Madam Chair. That
35 with the position of opposing the listing include some
36 of these other nuances that we've brought up, like the
37 -- you know, we're opposed to it because we are not
38 supportive of an entire Gulf of Alaska from the Alaska
39 Peninsula all the way down to British Columbia in one
40 fell swoop. And that there's other things that need to
41 be taken into consideration, like the subsistence needs
42 of the Alaskan Native people and the -- I don't know if
43 anybody else heard -- said this, but I was saying it in
44 my head was the -- it's gonna draw a correlation to the
45 chum salmon bycatch. And what -- I think one of the
46 things that I heard Coral say was, is that there has
47 been -- there has -- forgive me if I'm putting words in
48 your mouth, but I'm just sort of like drawing some
49 comparisons is there's been salmon management. The State
50 has had salmon management. In some areas it hasn't been

1 working in particular for chinook salmon in Western
2 Kodiak Island like the salmon management at this time
3 is -- has failed. So, the State is taking steps now to
4 try to remedy that. But if it doesn't remedy that, then
5 what is the recourse? And there's a federal system in
6 place that is available to navigate if -- to -- for
7 some people, in particular subsistence users, if the
8 State system continues to fail. And so, I think that --
9 I mean, I would like to see some of those nuances and
10 details brought out in that being it -- objecting to a
11 ESA listing from, you know, Unimak Pass to British
12 Columbia, but still being, you know, cognizant or
13 appreciative of two different approaches for -- or two
14 different avenues for us to be able to -- and I don't
15 mean us as in our RAC, but, you know, people,
16 stakeholders to pursue, to achieve something that is not
17 being met at this point.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Could I summarize
20 that by saying it's at a high level, it's, you know, too
21 blunt of an instrument, it's too big of an area, and
22 that there's other options that could be more fully
23 explored, that would be an alternative to an ESA listing.
24 Is that kind of -- is that what you're saying?

25
26 MS. HAYDEN: Yes, and that we're not
27 opposed to the ESA listing process, but just them having
28 this species across this broad of a range being listed
29 in this manner.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, so just to
32 be clear, it was -- wasn't my intent -- I'm assuming it
33 wasn't Sam's intent to object to the entire concept of
34 ESA process. But for this particular petition, I mean,
35 I don't know, I'd get into how it was proposed or who
36 proposed it, but I mean, that's kinda part of it. And
37 it's the area, it's all the different streams, it's the
38 uncertainty, cause we don't know how the -- like the
39 little population areas are gonna be broken up. But yeah,
40 I mean, I think that that's -- if what you meant was
41 this is too blunt like you said, it's too blunt of a
42 tool. There's other alternatives to addressing the
43 concerns that we haven't fully tried or implemented, if
44 that's what you're saying, that seems like a fair thing
45 to include.

46
47 MS. HAYDEN: Yes, thank you.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, go ahead.

50

1 MR. HOLMES: I would disagree that the
2 department's management has failed because the
3 populations are down. If you go back to pre-statehood
4 during the territorial days, escapements in our area
5 were in bad shape, in a lot of Alaska, they were bad
6 shape. And even in recent years, in recent decades, we've
7 had king runs diminish at Chignik. And they did their
8 best to try to encourage like we're doing now, you
9 selective closures and then you will get see what the
10 response will be and that has worked before. And right
11 now, the big question is why are they down? And I
12 received notes on the fish -- American Fisheries Society
13 Alaska chapter had about five years ago on all different
14 spots around the State, and there has been a significant
15 change, but it is probably due to environmental change.
16 And that's not necessarily a reflection of how the
17 fisheries are management [sic] -- are managed, and the
18 places that are having great difficulties are being shut
19 down, have been shut down in the past, and some places
20 they've had some response. But right now, it's a huge
21 question. I mean, like -- it's like, I don't know, I'm
22 getting off on comparisons, but that's the gist of it
23 is that there are things -- programs being done, there
24 can be things being done to enhance it. And that's the
25 objective of the State and the federal government. This
26 ESA listing is coming from an environmental group that
27 is, granted has a different perspective on life than
28 those of us that subsist or have made our living
29 commercial fishing. It's just a whole different bunch
30 of folks saying, hey, you in Alaska, you in the Gulf of
31 Alaska have to do it our way, way we visit [sic]. If you
32 look at the way the Environmental Species Act was
33 written, it's about a species in specific places. And
34 if it's all over the nation, yes, that's a crisis but
35 things -- I think we'll see some improvement, just like
36 we seen in other areas in Kodiak. And I think back like
37 to statehood and things were in terrible shape. They --
38 there was really hardly any management justification to
39 open anything because of all the damage from the fish
40 traps. But the department, when they implemented after
41 statehood, went in and did little incremental changes.
42 Close it down for a bit, close it down for a little
43 less, close down a little less to get more escapement
44 and on all species and this is a change that's come on
45 quite rapidly and it's not a failure of management. It's
46 something entirely different and we need to determine
47 what that is. And we'll try to enhance the escapement
48 the best we can and you know, who knows, maybe it's two
49 of the major systems in the Gulf of Alaska or the Taku
50 and the Stikine in southeast. They come out of British

1 Columbia. The studies that we've had done here in Kodiak
2 on the sport fishing two or three time -- every time
3 they've done it's 60-65% of the fish are coming from
4 hatcheries in British Columbia. Is that what's driving
5 everything down, or has the environment changed? Big
6 questions. And just shutting down this and the whole
7 Gulf of Alaska and shutting it down in our area is a
8 fallacious assumption, and I really -- I just don't like
9 this at all, the whole ESA listing. Thank you.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thanks,
12 Pat. Okay, are there any further comments or questions
13 before we move to a vote? Go ahead, Karen.

14
15 MS. KALMAKOFF: Hi, I'm from Sand Point.
16 And last summer when we had a set netter, he was fishing
17 up by Korovin Island and he had his setnet out and
18 everybody in the community was talking about what
19 happened. He had 30 salmon sharks in his net, his whole
20 net got trashed and he's never seen that before. And
21 since my husband, he's been jigging last spring, he said,
22 I cannot believe how many salmon sharks were on my hooks.
23 He'd never seen that before, all the years we've been
24 jigging since 2004. So, there definitely has been a, you
25 know, a different -- something unbalanced with these
26 salmon sharks, and I think that might have something to
27 do with it too. I don't know, just never seen it before
28 like that. Just a comment.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thank
31 you, Karen. Sam, go ahead.

32
33 MR. ROHRER: Thank you, through the
34 Chair. Yeah, trolling this fall and in September, we had
35 great king fishing on the west side. It was a lot of fun
36 and then all of a sudden, in September, we started losing
37 them to salmon shark. Catch it -- as soon as you catch
38 a king salmon shark would come and cut your line and
39 take them off, it was crazy. So, yeah, so that was a
40 bummer. But yeah, I can't imagine 30 of them in a
41 subsistence net, that'd be a mess. But I do just express
42 agreement with what Pat was saying. I certainly don't
43 want our letter to express that we think the State's
44 failed in management of king salmon. I think that --
45 frankly, well I don't think that's the case. I don't
46 think that's true. But also saying that in a letter
47 asking to not have an ESAs, you know decision is gonna
48 kinda shoot us in the foot. So, I think, you know, making
49 the point that the State's taking steps we have to give
50 it time to work is important. So, thank you.

1

2

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, and I think also just alluding to we don't know what's driving the problem. So, it's clear there's a problem, the problem is continuing. I guess you could say, well, State management hasn't been effective at arresting the problem, but when you don't know what the problem is, it's hard to directly combat the problem. So, I think that's a little bit more nuanced way of saying -- I wouldn't say management has failed, but I think it's very much the case that this is happening, we see it happening, we don't like it. We want to change it. We just -- we have been so far unable to do that, we the bigger we. Okay, are there other additional comments and questions?

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

(No response)

Okay, I think can we do a roll call vote on this one. And again, to summarize this is number one, the RAC taking a position opposing this particular petition to list Gulf of Alaska chinook under ESA and delegating the ability to draft a more detailed letter. That would be the main kind of headline of the letter, but the details underneath it would be delegated to the Chair and the Coordinator, and that would be after the 12-month review is done. And this is only assuming the timing doesn't line up for us to speak as RAC before the deadline. So, if it looks like the deadline is gonna be after our next meeting, we wouldn't be trying to draft a letter, we would just wait and have it addressed by the RAC. So, that is the motion on the floor. Pat, are you trying to talk? Go ahead.

MR. HOLMES: I just wanted to say that if you needed help from a retired biologist, I'd be glad to help on some of the biological phraseology.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Okay, sorry, go ahead, Lisa.

MS. HUTCHINSON: (Indiscernible) roll call vote. I will start with Coral Chernoff. (Indiscernible).

MS. CHERNOFF: No.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Okay, that was a no? Okay, thank you. Karen Kalmakoff.

00086

1 MS. KALMAKOFF: Yes.

2

3 MS. HUTCHINSON: Natasha Hayden.

4

5 MS. HAYDEN: Yes.

6

7 MS. HUTCHINSON: Brett Richardson.

8

9 MR. RICHARDSON: Yes.

10

11 MS. HUTCHINSON: Jeff Wasley.

12

13 MR. WASLEY: Yes.

14

15 MS. HUTCHINSON: Patrick Holmes.

16

17 MR. HOLMES: Yes.

18

19 MS. HUTCHINSON: Daniel Smith.

20

21 MR. SMITH: Yes.

22

23 MS. HUTCHINSON: Sam Rohrer.

24

25 MR. ROHRER: Yes.

26

27 MS. HUTCHINSON: Christopher Price.

28

29 MR. PRICE: Yes.

30

31 MS. HUTCHINSON: Rebecca Skinner.

32

33 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yes.

34

35 MS. HUTCHINSON: Okay, we have nine for
36 and one against. So, the motion carried.

37

38 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, thank you.
39 That concludes -- well -- so that concludes the chinook
40 ESA letters. I guess we'll -- are there any other letters
41 that the RAC wants to produce? One thought that comes
42 to mind is, we did have discussion about the young leader
43 seat. So, we addressed it in our charter, but we could
44 also send a letter to the Federal Subsistence Board, I
45 think, is that who approved the young leader seat? We
46 could generate a letter to whomever the decision makers
47 were to express our, you know, some of what we've talked
48 about. So, I'm not suggesting we do that, I'm just saying
49 that's an option because we did spend a bit of time
50 talking about the young leader, the young -- the seat.

1 Young leader, okay. So, does anyone wish to propose
2 writing such a letter or are we good, cause the other
3 thing is, everything we said on the record, I mean, it
4 is gonna -- we've got OSM staff in the room, people
5 online I think are, you know, what we've said is, gonna
6 trickle up the chain. Okay, I'm not seeing any more
7 action there. So, is the wetlands inventory person,
8 Sydney?
9

10 MS. THIELKE: Yes, I am on the line.
11

12 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, great. So,
13 Sydney, if you would like to share your screen, we can
14 get that pulled up or get you -- perfect. Okay, you can
15 take it away.
16

17 MS. THIELKE: All right, thank you, Madam
18 Chair. And thank you, everyone, for the opportunity to
19 give an update on the National Wetlands Inventory
20 Program work on Kodiak and the Aleutian Islands. I'm
21 Sydney Thielke, I'm the regional wetlands coordinator
22 for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, working for the
23 regional office based out of Homer. And I have been
24 coordinating national wetlands inventory projects across
25 Alaska for the better part of the last six years. And
26 I'm excited to give you an update on what the data set
27 is, some information on how it is used, and then hope
28 that folks can take that information and pass it along
29 into the future.
30

31 So, the National Wetlands Inventory
32 Program. We exist under a mandate from the Emergency
33 Wetland Resources Act of 1986 to create a wetland map
34 across the entire country, including Alaska. And the
35 idea is to create a geospatial data set or a map using
36 aerial photos or satellite imagery to document the
37 location and type of wetlands on the landscape. So, we
38 are a very small program spread out across the country.
39 Most of our mapping work is done through partners, and
40 we kind of collaborate amongst various groups in order
41 to raise funds to put these projects together. And we
42 do use a very standard classification system for wetland
43 type, for the way that we go through the wetland mapping
44 process so that we can have a unified data set across
45 the country. Then we share that information out to the
46 public so that folks can integrate best available
47 wetlands information into their decision-making process.
48

49 On top of using satellite imagery and
50 aerial photography, we do fieldwork out on the ground.

1 So, our process and what we have done in Kodiak and
2 across the Aleutians over the last couple of years has
3 been, we first identified our project areas and our
4 cooperators or contractors. We did some pre-mapping
5 work, we conducted field inventories on Kodiak in 2021,
6 out on the Cold Bay and Aleutians or in Adak in 2023.
7 And then our contractors take that information that we
8 collect on the ground and use that to complete their
9 imagery analysis and their interpretation and the line
10 work for where the wetlands actually exist. It goes
11 through a quality control and assurance process, both
12 here at the local State level as well as through our
13 national program, which is based out of Madison,
14 Wisconsin. And then we distribute the data out to the
15 public.

16
17 One distinction I always like to make
18 when we're talking about the National Wetlands Inventory
19 is we are not a regulatory designation, we do not make
20 a determination if wetlands are considered regulatory
21 or not. We're very much a biologically focused system
22 to just to know where do landscapes, or where do wetlands
23 exist on the landscape. We map marine palustrine, or
24 groundwater-fed systems, riverine systems, lacustrine
25 systems as well as estuaries. So, we do go all the way
26 from the headwaters out to the ocean in order to put
27 together this whole picture of what does the hydrologic
28 system look like.

29
30 As I said, our data is available on an
31 online distribution system that is called The Wetlands
32 Mapper. So, in this particular system, which you can
33 access with the QR code in the lower left, you can create
34 professional looking maps like the one available here.
35 You can also just view data, get information about each
36 one of those individual polygons, you can download data
37 for use in a local geographic information system, and
38 also get links to the web services that can be
39 incorporated into a geographic information system. So,
40 this is specially exciting for us because up until the
41 last few months, areas like the Aleutian Islands have
42 never had wetland information, National Wetlands
43 Inventory information available and so, this is kind of
44 a new product that we're excited to be sharing with the
45 public.

46
47 On a statewide basis, we're still a
48 long-ways from being complete, but we've received
49 extensive funding from Department of Interior agencies
50 and then a host of other entities. The specific project

1 or the specific funders for Kodiak and the Aleutians
2 include the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council, as
3 well as the Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S.
4 Geographical Survey.

5
6 Just to touch on a couple of the
7 applications and why is this information important -- I
8 am trying to move quickly, I know you all have a long
9 day, and you have plenty of other things to cover. So,
10 just the application of the National Wetland Inventory
11 Data is really -- we have a lot of documentation that
12 showcases this kind of landscape level information can
13 really help community planning, infrastructure planning,
14 first phases of climate modeling, etc. And so, one of
15 the things that we've been working to do, where data was
16 recently produced on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, is
17 producing maps that showcase wetlands in relation to the
18 community and then trying to make that connection to
19 what are the different types of wetlands on the
20 landscape, because Alaska does have quite a variety,
21 places and plant communities that vary from wetland to
22 upland. And it's really kind of the underlying soils
23 that are driving that wetland distinction. And so, it
24 can be difficult to really know how broad your wetland
25 extent is within a community. So, trying to share and
26 do a lot of outreach information about what our wetlands
27 and why are they important, everything from habitat to
28 water retention purposes. And then I'm trying to make
29 that information as accessible as possible to
30 communities. So, these are an example of a project we
31 completed with the Corps of Engineers and Calista
32 Corporation to actually produce large poster maps with
33 a Yup'ik translation in order to be posted at like city
34 and tribal offices across that particular region. We're
35 doing similar work in the Bristol Bay region and are
36 always open to requests from other parts of the State
37 to do something similar.

38
39 From more the science and the modeling
40 side of things. Applications of the National Wetlands
41 Inventory, when we integrate our wetland information
42 with products like the National Hydrography Dataset or
43 the Surface Flow Network, we can really start to think
44 about how interactions occur on the landscape. This can
45 help with things like spill response, invasive species,
46 trajectories and things like contaminant transport on
47 the landscape, so both an upstream system and a
48 downstream system. But thinking about how does water
49 move across the landscape, not only in our rivers and
50 streams, but also through these interconnected systems

1 of wetlands on the landscape. So, we're really excited
2 for the data to become available and for folks to start
3 thinking about how we can use what data wasn't available
4 before, to answer questions that we might have not been
5 able to quickly automate in the past. We are looking to
6 do that in the future.

7
8 Lastly you know, this is an initial data
9 set for the National Wetlands Inventory. Our work is
10 never done. This -- the Aleutians and Kodiak were
11 completed at what we call a 1 to 24,000 scale. So again,
12 we're not a regulatory data set. This is not ground --
13 pin flags in the ground wetland delineations, but this
14 is a high-level approach to trying to get the best
15 information possible out into the hands of people to
16 make decisions right now. So, we're always looking to
17 advance projects and hope in the future to add additional
18 soil and vegetation plot data, and apply new
19 technologies to further advance and refine the wetland
20 delineations that we have in the National Wetlands
21 Inventory into the future. So, really just kind of
22 advancing these statewide mapping priorities
23 opportunistically as funds become available.

24
25 So that was a very quick rundown of the
26 NWI product. Really excited to have this data available
27 on our wetlands mapper for Kodiak and the Aleutian
28 Islands going forward. And with that, I can take any
29 questions, or my email address is available there. And
30 if anybody has really community or local based questions
31 about the NWI data and what we are distributing on the
32 landscape, please feel free to reach out and shoot me
33 an email.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great. Thanks,
36 Sydney. First question, can you share this PowerPoint
37 with Lisa so that she can distribute it to the Council?

38
39 MS. THIELKE: Yes, absolutely. And my
40 apologies for not getting that out there further, but I
41 just hit send. I actually thought I did that an hour ago
42 and I didn't.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Perfect,
45 thank you. Are there -- sorry, are there questions?

46
47 (No response)

48
49 So, I'm not seeing questions in the
50 room. I guess I had a question, And I don't know what,

00091

1 if there's a very specific scientific definition of a
2 wetland, but I'm thinking in Kodiak wetlands can change
3 quite dramatically even over the space of a few years.
4 How does NWI like track that or like how often do you
5 update your geospatial data sets aka maps?

6
7 MS. THIELKE: Yeah. So, thus far the 40
8 years is between, I believe the original Kodiak
9 inventory and the current one. We don't have a mandate
10 to update at any particular schedule, and parts of Alaska
11 have been waiting 50 years to even get a first round of
12 mapping. We do use a specific definition for wetlands,
13 which is based on the prevalence of hydric soils.
14 Hydrography and evidence of hydrography, and the
15 prevalence of hydrophytic vegetation on the landscape.
16 So, it's a very similar definition to what the U.S. Army
17 Corps of Engineers uses. But just because we're mapping
18 at a landscape scale, there are -- there will always be
19 differences between the linework of what somebody
20 delineates on the ground and what somebody delineates
21 from the air photo. But so, with very fast changing
22 plant communities, especially the -- that can -- that's
23 where you see the most rapid change. The hydric soils
24 do tend to be more static on the landscape, and so, we
25 do try to work very closely with the NRCS in terms of
26 their soil surveys getting out in the field together to
27 make sure we're kind of complementing one another's
28 information. But from kind of the definition that we're
29 using is wetlands may vary how wet they are each year,
30 but the actual kind of geographic feature does not vary
31 quickly.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, thank you.
34 Are there any other questions or comments? Okay. I'm not
35 seeing any questions or comments but thank you so much
36 for presenting today and sending your PowerPoint. This
37 sounds like -- well, number one, just being aware of
38 this going on is really helpful. And so, thank you again.

39
40 MS. THIELKE: Yeah, I appreciate the
41 opportunity to speak today. Have a good one.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thank
44 you. All right, do we have Jeff Williams from the Alaska
45 Maritime National Wildlife Refuge on?

46
47 (No response)

48
49 Okay, so maybe it sounds like he's not
50 on. I will note, he provided or the National -- the

1 Maritime Refuge provided a report and it's on page 53
2 of the skinny book with the bears on the front. So, we
3 do have information from them. Okay, and that was --
4 that takes care of everything up to Council member
5 closing comments. I did want to note or remind people
6 that the chum salmon PowerPoint was emailed to us
7 Wednesday night. So, if the -- you know, what we saw on
8 the screen, you should have that in your email for
9 reference. Okay. Well, we have completed everything on
10 our agenda except for Council member closing comments.
11 So, let's go ahead and start with that. I'm going to go
12 ahead and start with Sam.

13
14 MR. ROHRER: Madam Chair. Thank you. I
15 think you started with opening comments with me.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Would you like me
18 to start with someone else?

19
20 MR. ROHRER: No, it's okay. No, it's all
21 right. I probably said enough in the last two days, so
22 I don't -- I don't really have anything else to add.
23 Just welcome to our new members. Appreciated everyone's
24 input and their point of view. And I do have to say, I
25 know typically, when you vote, you just say you vote
26 yes, or you vote no. But it is -- sometimes we kind of
27 struggle with how we want to vote, and we feel compelled
28 to say why we're voting. And I -- may maybe it's
29 incorrect to say why you're voting at that exact moment,
30 but sometimes people discuss things, and they talk, and
31 they listen, and then they change your mind in the vote.
32 And I for one, enjoy here -- I appreciate hearing someone
33 say why they decided to vote the way they did,
34 particularly if they've talked -- maybe if it seemed
35 like they were going to go another way. So that's always
36 interesting to me and maybe not the proper way to do
37 things, but I do appreciate it. And with that, I
38 appreciate all the great presentations. Thank you for
39 all the staff for coming down and taking time out of
40 your busy schedules. And thank you for leading a good
41 meeting as well. So, thank you.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Coral.

44
45 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, what Sam said, and
46 in addition -- I had something else to say.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Yeah. Okay.
49 Daniel.

50

1 MR. SMITH: Yeah. I just like to thank
2 you all for allowing me to represent Kodiak as a
3 subsistence user. And yeah, I really enjoyed this
4 meeting. It was a little bit of a learning process, but
5 it was very good to be with you all. And I appreciate
6 everyone else coming from Unalaska, Dutch Harbor, Sand
7 Point. And I'm excited to go to Cold Bay in the fall and
8 talk about the upcoming proposals. And that's all I got.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: I feel like we need
11 to thank you for bringing our average age down. All
12 right, Karen.

13
14 MS. KALMAKOFF: I'm new, first time been
15 here. I learned a lot, and I had a little bit input. I'm
16 a subsistent user and a commercial fisherwoman. And born
17 and raised in Sand Point, so it's been pretty
18 interesting. I learned a lot just by listening, so thanks
19 for letting me be here.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Sorry, Chris. Go
22 ahead.

23
24 MR. PRICE: Thanks to the new members.
25 And yes, welcome. I do want to thank the staff, and I
26 would like to say that I think the work you do is
27 important. And we do need federal and state management
28 of our resources, and we need good staffing. And I know
29 it can be challenging times, but thank you guys for the
30 work you do. And we will get through this together. As
31 far as you know, the issues with the king salmon ESA, I
32 think it's a big issue for our state and that, you know,
33 thinking about the future, our grandkids, will they be
34 able to get king salmon and will we get healthy returns,
35 I think, Pat kind of mentioned that we've been through
36 these cycles and there are cyclical nature. I don't
37 understand very well why the -- seems like the chums and
38 the kings are struggling and in other salmon species
39 seem to be doing pretty good. I still haven't quite got
40 an understanding of all that. And so, it's it is a
41 concern. But also, the one other thing that didn't quite
42 make sense to me this week was why just in Kodiak you
43 -- the bear products, you couldn't sell statewide? It
44 seems a little confusing, but I don't know a lot about
45 Kodiak. So, the other one was I didn't understand why
46 the goats were non-federal subsistence, and that's
47 something I could figure out, maybe offline from
48 somebody here this week. We run out of time. A lot of
49 things going on here, but the reports are really good.
50 And again, thank you, staff and Council members for all

1 the work you do. Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great, thanks.

4 Jeff.

5

6 MR. WASLEY: Well, thank you all. I echo
7 the previous comments. The staff and all the folks that
8 shared their presentations. And I appreciate the
9 different perspectives. I'm a fairly new member, and it
10 feels like this was my first real meeting. With last
11 year being a statewide, it felt like we didn't get to
12 have the time together like this time. And last fall, I
13 was able to join one day online. So, I appreciate like,
14 everyone's perspective. I think we have a great group
15 of folks here. And it was really nice. Daniel took me
16 out and showed me the local area last night and like,
17 have not really spent a lot of time in Kodiak before it
18 really opened my eyes and like, helped me understand the
19 local areas a little better. I still don't know very
20 much about it. But again, just thanks and look forward
21 to this fall. Thank you.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Natasha.

24

25 MS. HAYDEN: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah.
26 Echoing everything everybody said, especially like to
27 highlight the -- my appreciation for staff and
28 everything that goes into hosting these meetings and all
29 of my fellow RAC members who traveled to come to Kodiak.
30 I do think that there's something that you gain by going
31 into the communities that you can't get by not -- by
32 doing anything else. And then Daniel, Daniel's studies,
33 you know, getting up to speed. I've been doing this for
34 six years, still getting up to speed. So, it's always,
35 always learning so much. One of the things that I find
36 -- that I'm feeling a lot more comfortable and confident
37 about is really where and how I fit into this process.
38 And, you know, in particular when we're having these
39 conversations about you know, big decisions and big
40 changes like such as an ESA listing for a salmon species
41 or chum bycatch and you know, that are very, very big
42 issues. And then, you know, looking back to I really
43 appreciate Pat's comments about you know, statehood and,
44 and you know, how things were different then and I think
45 what comes to my mind in about my role and how and why
46 I fit into this is that I feel like I have an opportunity
47 to either remind people or to inform people about things
48 like fish traps that have been a method of harvesting
49 for thousands of years here, and that the fish trap
50 itself isn't what led to the collapse in salmon

1 resources, it was how they were used. And that certain
2 management, you know, systems that had been put in place,
3 starting with statehood and then continuing on, have
4 done harm to a lot of indigenous people and very severe
5 harm to indigenous people of this region and probably
6 most of the regions around Alaska. And so I appreciate
7 having an opportunity to have a conversation about the
8 different management systems and the perspectives on how
9 a -- how we as a body develop a position, you know, on
10 those proposals and am just very appreciative that I
11 have an opportunity to share that in this situation,
12 that that's what I can bring is either a reminder or as
13 you know, an educator in if you go, if you take a look
14 at those things that have led us to where we are now,
15 there's large disparities in the impacts on the people
16 who have, you know, had dependence and management of
17 those resources for going back thousands of years. So,
18 I didn't want to like, make any comments about that
19 earlier in this way, but I just want to take an
20 opportunity to say that because I sometimes I think
21 that's why I'm here and I appreciate it. And I'm really
22 glad that we had this time to meet. Thanks.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Brett.

25
26 MR. RICHARDSON: Thank you, Madam Chair.
27 Thank you to the fellow Council members. Thank you to
28 staff in the room and online. I appreciate everybody's
29 hard work putting together all of this information, all
30 of the reports boiling down your years of work into a
31 few minutes. It's hard work. And it's not lost on us, I
32 don't think. I appreciate the information. I know that
33 there's a lot of things we don't know. Especially a lot
34 of things I don't know. And there's a lot of things that
35 we can't control. And so, what we can control or think
36 we can control is what we need to focus on. And I think
37 putting us in this framework together and giving us a
38 couple days in the same room to hash out these things
39 is productive. And I'm fortunate enough to be included
40 here and look forward to continuing it. Thank you.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Pat.

43
44 MR. HOLMES: Well, Madam Chair, I
45 particularly enjoy renewing old acquaintances and having
46 a nice chat with Karen about folks in Sand Point because
47 I haven't been there in 25 years. And also, our new
48 members that come in having more input and discussions
49 with folks from out West. And there's an old phrase out
50 in Alaska that the real world starts there and goes east

1 and west. But I think we've had some really interesting
2 dialogue. I really appreciate the folks that are giving
3 us the presentations on the internet and this federal
4 staff, and it's just so fun to sit here and -- thanks
5 for the earmuff so I could hear what was going on. And
6 it's just a really good experience to try to bring
7 together everyone's points of view and make progress
8 ahead. And I'm just very proud to still be your mossback
9 of the Council. And before we adjourn, Madam Chair, I
10 have one award. That's a traditional thing that we've
11 done on our Council here at different times. So, I'll
12 take a break here, and I'll just talk loud and hope it
13 picks up.

14
15 One time I put some flowers at his place
16 at the meeting while we were all out, and I had one of
17 the other ladies write on there, you're so hot. And it
18 was big because he loved to tease everybody. And so, it
19 was just a joke that he and I had going back and forth
20 for years and spun off another awards. But this one
21 here, old friend. I-- my daughter in law is from Juneau
22 and we went to visit one time and there's a Ford
23 dealership that went out of business but was there for
24 years and years, probably back to Model A's and their
25 little license plate thing, said Skinner -- Skinner
26 Motors and Service. Unfortunately, there were none at
27 the dump that still said had motors and service, but it
28 has sales and service, so you can stand out whichever
29 you want because Becky does so much for so many people.
30 Commercial fishing, things in our town. When we had that
31 big (audible expression), what? 20 years ago. About
32 Kodiak being rural or not? If she hadn't been on there
33 Ivor (indiscernible) and I were co-chairs, but she's the
34 one that got things done. She's the organizer. She can
35 think in so many different ways and just move ahead. So,
36 I wanted to present this to you.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Pat, I
39 love this.

40
41 (Pause)

42
43 Yeah, no, I really, really do love this,
44 and I appreciate that. A few comments that I wanted to
45 make before we close out. I appreciated Sam's comment
46 about getting on the record kind of a justification for
47 why you're voting, how you are, so it's not required.
48 I'm not going to make people do it, but it is one, it's
49 really helpful for reporting purposes. So, whoever has
50 to come out of this meeting and go to the Federal

1 Subsistence Board, the more that said on the record, the
2 better that person can represent the views and
3 perspectives of this RAC when they're going to the
4 Federal Subsistence Board and the same thing when
5 letters or other written things need to be generated. I
6 know that staff goes back and reads the transcript. So,
7 the more that said on the record, the better our message
8 can be, you know, written up and articulated and
9 conveyed. And also, I'm a big believer in discussion.
10 So, my preference is that people say their
11 justifications during the discussion phase because then
12 you can have more dialogue. But again, I mean, I'm not
13 going to make people do it, but I just want to highlight
14 that it is really helpful and it's really useful to the
15 process.

16
17 If people have ideas for agenda items
18 that they'd like at future meetings. So, two things came
19 up or were mentioned to me this meeting. One was the
20 halibut issue; the other was migratory bird. So,
21 inviting some of the migratory bird people to come back,
22 I think they were at our March 2023 meeting. We had
23 about seven different migratory bird agenda items. So
24 those are two ideas. If people have other ideas, feel
25 free to send them to Lisa or send them to me. We're
26 happy to try to get people invited or request information
27 that can be included in the packets, and also for field
28 trips. So, I was talking to -- well, Jeff had mentioned
29 that Daniel was able to take him out yesterday to show
30 him a bit of the Kodiak Road System. And one of Jeff's
31 comments was, I mean, he didn't say exactly this, but
32 he didn't realize like it was so big. So, for people in
33 Kodiak, we're used to driving out the road for people
34 who are new to the RAC and haven't been to Kodiak, when
35 we talk about the Kodiak Road System, if you haven't
36 driven it, you don't -- it's hard to conceptualize, oh,
37 this is what you're talking about. So, when we do travel
38 to communities, it is really helpful to get out into the
39 community and the area around the community. So, if you
40 have ideas for what I call field trips when we go to
41 different places, definitely suggest those because I
42 think they're not just a nice to have thing. They
43 actually really help ground our understanding of these
44 communities that we're, you know, on whose behalf we're
45 meeting and who we're representing in this process. So
46 those were the comments I had. Thank you to staff. It
47 seemed a little like craziness going on behind all the
48 scenes this week. But thank you to staff and thank you
49 to all the RAC members. And I'm super excited that we
50 have ten seated people in the room. That's really

1 exciting. So, with that, is there anything else for the
2 good of the order, Lisa?

3
4 MS. HUTCHINSON: I mean, not for the good
5 of the order, but I just wanted to echo a thanks that
6 everybody had said. To all the Council members, you guys
7 are really wonderful to work with, and you helped me a
8 lot. And I think anything I can do to help -- but
9 Rebecca, you are just amazing to work with. And I just
10 echo what Pat said. It's like she's -- you just make my
11 job so much easier. She reviews -- She is a -- she
12 reviews everything that I write, which is amazingly
13 helpful. But it's also she's making sure that what you're
14 saying and what you want is conveyed. I also want to
15 thank people that did provide reports, because I do know
16 -- I've been on that side of the fence. I know it takes
17 a lot of time to put together a report and to take time
18 off of your work and to present to the Council. That's
19 really important. And to, you know, both the federal and
20 state and independent and state of Alaska, and anyway,
21 those reports are super important. And so, we'd like --
22 I know the Council likes to hear those. And we'll see,
23 I guess finally, I just wanted to thank the Kodiak
24 National Wildlife Refuge for providing this venue for
25 us. It's a beautiful facility and nice to work with, and
26 they did not charge us a penny to stay here. And Danielle
27 has been amazingly helpful. She's loaned us vehicles and
28 been here the entire time and helped us. So, I just
29 really want to thank you, and it really helps that
30 cooperation. So, thanks again.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, well, I
33 think that's it. We'll go ahead and do we need a motion
34 to adjourn? A motion is there -- oh, sorry, Pat, go
35 ahead.

36
37 MR. HOLMES: I was going to make a motion
38 to adjourn, but in preference to that and going on Dan's
39 downs excursion to the Buskin. I've got six pair of hip
40 boots, having had two sons and myself. Always had to
41 have spares when they get wet. And I got my wife's Honda
42 Accord so I could take a couple people if you don't have
43 enough vehicles to go there. And so little red Honda
44 behind the building.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Is there
47 a second to the motion to adjourn?

48
49 UNIDENTIFIED: Yeah, I'll second.

00099

1 UNIDENTIFIED: Second.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great. Is there any

4 objection?

5

6 (No response)

7

8 Okay, hearing and seeing none. That
9 passes unanimously, the meeting is adjourned.

10

11 (Off record)

12

13 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

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 99 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the KODIA/ALEUTIANS SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME II recorded on the 7th day of March;

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

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

DATED at Isabela, Puerto Rico this 20th day of March 2025.

Rafael Morel
Chief Project Manager