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NORTHWEST ARTIC SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME I

VIRTUAL-TELECONFERENCE
November 8, 2024

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Thomas Baker, Acting Chair
Enoch Shiedt
Wilbur Howarth
Clyde Ramoth
Elmer Armstrong
Verne Cleveland
Michael Kramer

Regional Council Coordinator, Leigh Honig

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Virtual-Teleconference - 11/08/24)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Good morning, everybody. This is Chair Thomas Baker in Kotzebue. It's now 9:00. Just some housekeeping before we get started. Lisa, if you could go over some of the phone etiquette reminding everybody how we need to introduce ourselves, how to mute, how to unmute and all that.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Okay. Thank you. Chair Baker and members of the Council and members of the public and staff. I wanted to welcome everybody to the fall meeting of the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting. My name for the record is Lisa Hutchinson-Scarborough, and I am the Council Coordinator for the Council. I am also the Federal designated officer for this meeting. I have a few housekeeping items to go over. Before we all get started and introduce our introductions, this public meeting is being recorded and transcribed. It is being held virtually and by teleconference, as we're aware. This meeting was originally scheduled for October 28th and 29th in Kotzebue. It was postponed due to the severe storm that caused flooding and damage in the community. While we couldn't reschedule an in-person two-day meeting, we appreciate everybody's flexibility and arranging to call in telephonically and to participate. On behalf of the Office of Subsistence Management and the Federal Subsistence Board, we extend our sincere hopes for a swift recovery for the Kotzebue and other communities that were affected by the storm.

The Council members should already have received your meeting books and supplemental materials. But if not, and for others joining this meeting, the current agenda and meeting materials can be found online at our website doi.gov/subsistence. You can also just Google the Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Council, and it will bring that up for you. It's also the materials are under the Northwest Arctic Regional Meeting Materials tab. The Council members should also have a current copy of the agenda that I emailed you. But for others, again, it can be found online on the date November 3rd on top. So, make sure you see the November 3rd on top for the current agenda, which we had

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1 to revise because we've shortened our meeting. I will
2 also try to drop a link to that I believe in this chat
3 if I can. Please note that because the meeting needed
4 to be reduced from a two-day meeting to a one-day
5 meeting, several of the reports that were originally
6 scheduled to be given will be rescheduled for your winter
7 meeting in March wherever possible. These rescheduled
8 reports are listed at the end of the current agenda and
9 time depending today, the Council may or may not be able
10 to hear some or all of the agency reports. So, I
11 appreciate everybody's patience and understanding.
12 Everybody needs to remember to mute yourselves when you
13 are not addressing the Council. If you are calling on
14 your telephone, you may press a star six to mute
15 yourself. But if you're connected via the join the
16 meetings link, it is connected to the Microsoft Teams,
17 and you can mute or unmute at the top right of your
18 screen using that little microphone symbol. Please try
19 to keep it muted unless you want to address the Council.
20 If you would like to speak and you are on the phone, you
21 can press star five on your phone and that will or should
22 trigger a raise your hand feature on our end so, it'll
23 indicate that you would like to speak. And when the
24 Chair recognizes you, you will want to press a star six
25 if you are on the phone to unmute yourself. And then the
26 same thing for people who are on Teams. It will raise a
27 hand feature for the platform at the top of the screen,
28 and you will have a mic toggle on and off switch. Thank
29 you, Mr. Chair.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
32 for that, Lisa. With that, we will get on to the agenda.
33 First, we have an invocation. Before we go into that,
34 I'd like to just have a recognition and a moment of
35 silence for the family of Jim Magdanz who recently passed
36 and was very instrumental in the recording and really
37 just all of the work regarding subsistence in the
38 Northwest Arctic for decades. So, if we could just have
39 a brief moment of silence first before the invocation.

40
41 (Pause)

42
43 Thank you for that. Do any Council
44 members wish to give an invocation?

45
46 (No response)

47
48 Hearing none. We will have that moment
49 of silence as our invocation and at this time, it is
50 9:05 a.m. on Friday, November 8th. And I will now call

1 this fall meeting of the Northwest Arctic Regional
2 Advisory Council to the Federal Subsistence Board to
3 order. Again, for the record, this is Chair Thomas Baker.
4 Please make sure as we go forward today to state your
5 name when you start speaking. We do have a new court
6 reporter. Tina was pretty good at recognizing
7 everybody's voices over the years, but we do have someone
8 new so, please just make sure to introduce yourself for
9 the record when you speak and who you're representing
10 if you're not a member of the Council. So, with that,
11 Lisa, can we please get a roll call of Council members?

12

13 UNIDENTIFIED: Good morning.

14

15 MS. HUTCHINSON: Good morning. Okay,
16 we'll do a roll call for Council members. Tristen Pattee.

17

18 (No response)

19

20 And Tristen is going to be calling in
21 occasionally. He is a -- he's trying to juggle work
22 responsibilities and also the meetings. So, we will have
23 him on and off. But apparently, he's not on right now.
24 I -- Enoch Shiedt. Attamuk Shiedt.

25

26 (No response)

27

28 Wilbur Howarth.

29

30 MS. HOWARTH: Here.

31

32 MS. HUTCHINSON: Morning, Wilbur.
33 Clyde Ramoth...

34

35 MS. HOWARTH: Morning...

36

37 MS. HUTCHINSON: Good morning. Clyde
38 Ramoth.

39

40 MR. RAMOTH: Clyde Ramoth is here.

41

42 MS. HUTCHINSON: Good morning, Clyde.

43

44 MR. RAMOTH: Good morning.

45

46 MS. HUTCHINSON: Elmer Armstrong.

47

48 MR. ARMSTRONG: Present.

49

50

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1 MS. HUTCHINSON: Morning, Elmer. Vern
2 Cleveland. Vern Cleveland, have you been able to join
3 us yet?

4
5 (No response)

6
7 Raymond Woods.

8
9 (No response)

10
11 Raymond, are you able to join us?

12
13 (No response)

14
15 Michael Kramer. Michael Kramer.

16
17 (No response)

18
19 And just -- and Thomas Baker, yes. For
20 the information, Robert Schaeffer resigned from the
21 Council. So, we are now, instead of ten seats on the
22 Council, we have nine. And currently there are 3 members
23 out of 9 that are present. So, we currently do not have
24 a quorum. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Do we have 3 or 4? I
27 thought I heard Wilbur, Clyde, Elmer and myself.

28
29 MS. HUTCHINSON: I'm sorry. That's
30 correct. Yes, there is four. Thank you.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right, thank you.

33
34 MS. HUTCHINSON: So, we need five -- we
35 need five for a quorum. So, thanks.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: At this time.....

38
39 (Simultaneous speech)

40
41 MR. RAMOTH: Micheal Kramer was on.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Okay. Thank you,
44 Clyde. Mike.....

45
46 MR. RAMOTH: Michael Kramer on. Oh, I'm
47 sorry, I'll press mute.

48
49
50

1 MS. HUTCHINSON: Well good morning,
2 Michael. Thank you. Okay, so with (distortion) we do
3 have a quorum.

4
5 MR. RAMOTH: I was going to say Michael
6 had medical. I don't know if he called in. That was me.
7 Okay.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you.
10 Clyde. So, Mike, if you are on the line, if you could
11 introduce yourself. And if he's not on the line, he will
12 introduce himself when he is able to make it. So, at
13 this point in time, if Mike is not on the line, we have
14 four members present. We are one short of a quorum.
15 Tristan will try to make it on when we do require action
16 items to be voted on. At this time, I'll just go ahead
17 and move into meeting announcements. Lisa.

18
19 MS. HUTCHINSON: Yes. Sorry I had to do
20 that -- microphone. Okay. So, just some meeting
21 announcements. This region did not have any fisheries
22 proposals, even though this is a regulatory cycle for
23 fisheries, but because this region didn't have fisheries
24 proposals the Council will not be needing to discuss any
25 of those as an action item. But I'd also like to remind
26 folks that there will also be time for tribal and public
27 comments on the non-agenda items. Chair Baker will
28 announce this meeting after the Council reports when
29 there will be an opportunity for anybody to speak on
30 non-agenda items. We would like to ask you to hold any
31 comments on agenda items until such time as they come
32 up. The Council will hear all pertinent information at
33 the time they are working on that item. However, the
34 Chair can make exceptions. A reminder to (distortion)
35 by Robert's Rules, which help us provide structure and
36 maintain order throughout the meeting. All participants,
37 Council staff and public members are expected to be
38 courteous and respectful in all interactions as a matter
39 of meeting etiquette. As members have discussion, listen
40 to staff, present information and possible hear public
41 testimony, Council members should remember to address
42 the subject matter when they commit on the record. They
43 are bound to be differing opinions, and it would be
44 inappropriate for a Council member to personally rebut
45 -- rebut another person's comment. It is more productive
46 and in line with Robert (distortion) member to simply
47 express their perspective on the subject matter without
48 specifically referencing another's comment, whether as
49 a fellow Council member, staff or member of the public.
50

1 And absence a conflict of interest, all
2 Council members are expected to vote on action items.
3 I'd also like to bring to everybody's attention that
4 they are -- that we -- as Mike, Mr. Chair said, that
5 we're capturing a recording of this meeting a bit
6 differently this time, or -- in our previous court
7 reporter for the program who really knew Council members
8 voices everywhere well and their name and voice. So,
9 while we are -- they're no longer covering our meeting.
10 We do have an exceptionally new court reporter and court
11 recorder and Jonathan Butzke -- if I'm pronouncing your
12 name wrong with the Talking Circle Media is here to
13 serve as our recorder. And he's going to be handing out
14 the transcriptions to the (distortion) corporation. So,
15 anyway, the actual transcriber won't have the benefit
16 of putting voices to faces and nameplates so, it would
17 be helpful, very tremendously so every time you speak,
18 if you would just identify your name please. So, that
19 will be helping with our transcriptions. And thank you
20 for allowing me this time to share this information with
21 your Council and Chair. Thank you.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
24 for that, Lisa. With that, we'll move on to our next
25 agenda item, which is welcome and introductions. If we
26 could go ahead and start, if we have any Native
27 corporations on the line, go ahead and introduce
28 yourself.

29
30 (No comments)

31
32 Hearing no Native corporations, we have
33 any tribes or tribal entities calling in this morning?
34 I believe I saw Mr. Cyrus Harris. Are you calling in on
35 behalf of Maniilaq this morning, Cy?

36
37 MR. HARRIS: Yeah. Good morning. Both
38 Maniilaq and the tribe -- I'm in between both so, I'm
39 just here listening for a short while. I got other
40 obligations to take care of here shortly.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
43 for that, Cy. I will note that the tribe and Maniilaq
44 Association, the regional tribal nonprofit are both
45 represented this morning. Any other tribes, Native
46 corporations?

47
48 (No response)

49
50

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1 We have any state agencies represented
2 this morning? Any Alaska state agencies?

3
4 MR. CLARK: Yeah, this is Kevin Clark.
5 I'm the area manager for Fish and Game.

6
7 MR. HANSEN: And Alex Hansen here. Alaska
8 Department of Fish and Game Kotzebue, caribou biologist.

9
10 MR. SCANLON: Brendan Scanlon. Fisheries
11 biologist, Alaska Department of Fish and Game based out
12 of Fairbanks.

13
14 MS. BELLS: And Jen Bells, Fish and Game
15 research down in Nome.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right, thank you.
18 Anyone else from the state of Alaska this morning?

19
20 (No response)

21
22 Hearing none. Do we have any Federal
23 agencies represented this morning?

24
25 MR. YASKA: Good morning. This is George
26 Yaska, indigenous knowledge liaison with the U.S. Fish
27 and Wildlife Service, Alaska region. And I'll give an
28 abbreviated introduction in our way along from Huslia,
29 which is where I'm from, part of the Tleeyegge Hutaan
30 and my mom -- parents are George Yaska and Marie Yaska.
31 My mom's parents were George Attla and Eliza Attla. Eliza
32 Attla's mom was -- Ned Reagan and her grandma -- her mom
33 Madeline, and my mom's grandpa, old man (indiscernible)
34 was raised at Tikigaaq up ahead of Pah River and he was
35 raised by Tutuksuk. So, I'm familiar with the country
36 on the south side of the Huslia mountains near Selawik,
37 near Dakli mountain, near the Hot Springs. But no doubt
38 seeing some of you in the past and as to my professional
39 experience at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, I'm a
40 subject matter expert in indigenous knowledge in Alaska
41 and am highly familiar with climatological events and
42 northern and western Alaska. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

43
44 MS. KOELSCH: Hi, this is Jeanette
45 Koelsch, superintendent of Bering Land Bridge National
46 Preserve, the Shared Beringian Heritage Program, and the
47 Alaska affiliated areas. And I'm in Nome.

48
49 MR. WIESE: Good morning, (In Native).
50 This is Wil Wiese, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services,

1 Selawik National Wildlife refuge manager in Kotzebue.

2

3 UNIDENTIFIED: Good morning.

4

5 MS. HANDER: Ray Hander for the U.S. Fish
6 and Wildlife Service fishery biologist out of the
7 Northern Alaska Field Office. Thank you.

8

9 MS. DEPUE: Good morning, this is
10 Deanna.....

11

12 (Simultaneous speech)

13

14 MR. GUSSE: Good morning, this is Walker.
15 Go ahead, Deanna.

16

17 MS. DEPUE: Oh, no problem. Thank you.
18 I'm just calling in from the Bureau of Land Management,
19 listening in and happy to be here. Thanks.

20

21 MR. GUSSE: Hey, good morning. This is
22 Walker Gusse with the Bureau of Land Management in
23 Anchorage.

24

25 MS. DOCKEN: Lisa Docken, Coastal
26 (distortion) Ocean Program coordinator, National Park
27 service regional office of Anchorage.

28

29 MR. CAMERON: Good morning, everyone.
30 This is Matt Cameron, wildlife biologist with National
31 Park Service, calling in from Fairbanks.

32

33 MS. JOCHUM: Good morning. This is Kim
34 Jochum, I work at the National Park Service, at the
35 Regional Subsistence Program, and I'm an interagency
36 staff committee member. Good morning.

37

38

39 MR. MCKEE: Good morning, this is Chris
40 McKee, statewide subsistence coordinator for the Bureau
41 of Land Management and Interagency Staff Committee
42 member.

43

44 MS. PATTON: Good morning. This is Eva
45 Patton with the National Park Service Subsistence
46 Program and also Interagency Staff Committee members.
47 Good morning.

48

49

50

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1 MR. PATTERSON: Good morning. This is
2 Dillon Patterson with the National Park Service
3 Subsistence Program in Anchorage. Good morning.
4

5 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you.
6 Anyone else from Federal agencies this morning?
7

8 MS. OKADA: Good morning. This is Marcy
9 Okada subsistence coordinator for Gates of the Arctic
10 National Park and Preserve, based out of Fairbanks. Good
11 morning.
12

13 MR. WERWA: Hi. Good morning...
14

15 (Simultaneous speech)
16

17 MS. SWEENEY: Good morning. Go ahead.
18

19 MR. WERWA: Go ahead.
20

21 MS. SWEENEY: This is Brittany Sweeny,
22 Assistant Refuge Manager at Selawik Wildlife Refuge in
23 Kotzebue.
24

25 MR. WERWA: Hi, good morning. This is
26 Eric Werwa. I'm Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy
27 and Environmental Management in the Office of the
28 Secretary of the Interior. You'll hear a little bit later
29 in the meeting about the fact that the OSM has moved
30 within the office of the Secretary. And so, I am -- as
31 part of my portfolio I'm glad to be here and to learn
32 about the issues that are important in the Northwest.
33 Thanks.
34

35 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Anyone
36 else from Federal agencies?
37

38 MR. LIND: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
39 Council members, this is Orville Lind with the Office
40 of Secretary, Native Liaison. Good morning, everyone.
41

42 MR. PLANK: Good morning, Mr. Chair and
43 everybody else. Is Tom Plank wildlife biologist Office
44 of Subsistence Management.
45

46 MS. HYER: Good morning, Mr. Chair and
47 Council members, this is Karen Hyer, fisheries biologist
48 with the Office of Subsistence Management.
49
50

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1 MS. LEVINE: Good morning, everyone. This
2 is Robin LeVine. I'm the subsistence policy coordinator
3 and our LT for this meeting and I am with the Office of
4 Subsistence Management. I was so looking forward to
5 having this meeting in Kotzebue and seeing you all, but
6 I did have a chance to travel to your region. Oh, gosh,
7 in 2016, I think for a meeting in Buckland, and it was
8 beautiful. I look for an opportunity to meet you all in
9 person in the future. Thank you.

10
11 UNIDENTIFIED: Good (distortion)
12 anthropologist with OSM.
13

14 MS. MCDAVID: Good morning. This is
15 Brooke McDavid. I'm currently the Acting Council
16 Coordination Division Supervisor.
17

18 MS. HUTCHINSON: Good morning. This is -
19 - I guess I will just go since I've already introduced
20 myself. But I'm the Council Coordinator for this
21 meeting. And I work for Office of Subsistence Management
22 under the Secretary of Interior. Thank you, everybody,
23 for joining this meeting.
24

25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. Anyone
26 else from Federal agencies?
27

28 (No response)
29

30 Hearing none. Do we have anyone else on
31 the line that is not a member of a Council or that hasn't
32 been called -- an agency been called at this time?
33

34 (No response)
35

36 Hearing none. We will move on. The time
37 is now 9:23. Our next item on the agenda is review and
38 adopt the agenda. We do not at this time have a quorum
39 unless another member of the Council has joined us. So,
40 we will go ahead and review the agenda. Lisa, if you
41 could just briefly go over our revised agenda. We can't
42 vote on it at this time, but at such time that we do
43 have a quorum, then we will go on to all of our action
44 items that will have to kind of glaze over. So, if you
45 wouldn't mind, Lisa, just briefly review the updated
46 agenda.
47

48 MS. HUTCHINSON: Yes. So, if everybody
49 has had a chance to look at the agenda and if anybody
50 needs me to add a link to this meeting chat, I can

1 certainly do that again. You can also, if you have a
2 computer, you can go on the website under doi- --
3 /subsistence under the Northwest Arctic Regional
4 Advisory Council Meetings tab line. And again, the
5 agenda is on the number -- November 4th, 2024. The only
6 -- how we have structured this is we're going to go
7 through the -- after this, we're going to be -- after
8 you adopt the agenda, we're going to be going over the
9 meeting minutes, and then we will have our Council member
10 reports and then public tribal comments. Then we're
11 going to (distortion) do a couple of reports for -- Alex
12 is going to be presenting the Western Arctic Caribou
13 Herd update, and we've asked Raime Fronstin to talk about
14 the Western Arctic Parklands Wildlife Caribou report.
15 And then we're going to have George Yaska, who's
16 introduced himself a bit ago, to talk about the Climate
17 Action presentation and climate program through Fish and
18 Wildlife Service. Then we were going to move on to action
19 items. We want to try to get through all the action
20 items together just because we only have one day. And
21 the main action items again are going to be our Annual
22 Report reply and our Priority Information Needs
23 assessment for the Fisheries Resource Management
24 program. Then we're going to have a Subsistence Resource
25 Commission update with confirmed (distortion) comment
26 for Kobuk Valley Council seat and approve your meeting
27 agenda. Then we're going to go on to the 805C report
28 review and your correspondence updates, and we will
29 eventually end with -- but as time allows, we will go
30 into our agency reports and anybody that's -- so, I
31 think that's pretty much it. So, if you have any
32 questions, the Council or Mr. Chair, please let me know.
33 Thank you.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
36 for that Lisa. Do we have any questions about the updated
37 agenda at this time? And due to us not having a quorum
38 at this time, we'll have to be a little fluid with
39 things. So, as members join in, we'll probably go back,
40 vote on several action items, give brief updates on what
41 was missed, and continue on. So, with that Lisa will
42 review and approve previous meeting minutes. Also, an
43 action item. If you could just briefly go over the three
44 sets of meeting minutes that will need to be approved
45 once we have a quorum.

46
47 MS. HUTCHINSON: Having trouble finding
48 my little mic. Yeah. So, on the meeting -- you will have
49 three different meeting minutes this (indiscernible)
50 usually, we just have our Council minutes from the

1 previous meeting, which had been your winter meeting.
2 So, you'll approve those. As you recall, the meeting
3 this year was in Anchorage. It was an All Council
4 meeting. And all 10 Councils were able to meet together,
5 which was a great opportunity. We don't get to do that
6 very often. Then -- so, there's meeting minutes for the
7 All Council meeting that you need to approve. And that's
8 also in your -- that would be found in the meeting book
9 that was sent to you and your meeting materials. Also,
10 there was -- your Council met with three other Councils.
11 We call it the Quad Council to talk about the Western
12 Arctic Caribou Herd proposal. So, there's the meeting
13 minutes for that and then your individual Council
14 meeting minutes. And those are all found in your meeting
15 book. But we will need to approve those when we get a
16 quorum. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you,
19 Lisa. Any questions about the sets of meeting minutes
20 that will be approving later today?

21
22 (No response)

23
24 Hearing none. We'll go ahead and move
25 on to our next item, which is member reports. So, at
26 this time, I'll just call on members to give an update
27 on subsistence activities in their community in the
28 region. We don't have any new members so, we should all
29 be fairly familiar. This is our opportunity to get things
30 on the record of how subsistence has been going
31 (distortion) around our communities, maybe changing what
32 we're observing -- what our communities are observing.
33 So, with that, we'll go ahead and start. Mr. Wilbur
34 Howarth, would you mind giving a report on subsistence
35 over the last six months or so in your community?

36
37 MR. HOWARTH: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
38 Wilbur Howarth. Noorvik. Well, we had a long fall, and
39 it's still warm so, we're still about 20 something
40 degrees warm here in Noorvik and haven't seen any caribou
41 myself, but a few went by a couple of weeks ago on the
42 back side of Noorvik on their way to Selawik and probably
43 Buckland area. And fishing (distortion), Elmer should
44 have a good update on fishing. I guess he set a net soon
45 as it (indiscernible) enough. And this fall I saw a lot
46 of moose. So, I think the moose are healthy. In one day,
47 just traveling for three hours maybe, I ran across seven
48 moose so, that was a good sign. Otherwise, I (distortion)
49 I don't know what happened out there in the ocean. My
50 son was the one that went out and got oogruk. So, I was

1 busy at work with (indiscernible). So, otherwise, that's
2 about all (distortion). Thank you, Mr. Chair.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
5 Wilmer. Next, Mr. Clyde Ramoth, would you like to give
6 an update on subsistence and the environment in Selawik?

7
8 MR. RAMOTH: Yeah. Good morning, Clyde
9 Ramoth here again. It's good to hear familiar names like
10 Orville Lind (distortion - indiscernible) Selawik, since
11 our last meeting spring fishing was abundant with -- at
12 the lake under the fish with jigger. So, people got
13 their sea fish. We had a relatively warm spring. Bird
14 hunting was normal, I would say. We saw lot of birds
15 just flying over and sometimes it depends on when the
16 river ice goes out, they -- people notice eggs laying
17 out early. So, maybe it's just due to their migration
18 or climate change. So, there is some caribou caught
19 during the springtime, and then my sister went out fish
20 seining at the Fish River and caught a hundred, about a
21 hundred and that was the onetime thing. But I've heard
22 only two people that had the fish seining. Salmon
23 berries, blueberries were a good -- was a good year for
24 us despite some of the rain, a lot of rain last year.
25 But I want to say it was not as much as last year, I
26 think. A few moose were caught because (distortion) as
27 I see it on social media and people brought us some
28 moose because my mom is 86 years old. And cranberry is
29 normal. A lot of cranberries and the plants -- edible
30 plants people were able to pick. So, the fall fishing,
31 people set nets and some caribou were caught. I think
32 it was a different year. We all hear about the migration
33 of the caribou were late going from up north until they
34 were definitely late, because I keep an eye to social
35 media, mainly. Our river froze, about October 18, 19.
36 So -- and it got warmer. At that time, some people caught
37 caribou, and now people set nets under the ice we call
38 (In Native). I wasn't able to do that this year, but
39 they're catching good suvaich. That means a fish with
40 eggs. So, we're always cautious about the global
41 warming. I don't know if there's a difference between
42 global warming and climate change. Maybe that's all
43 political words, but there's one bear that was caught
44 upriver and by self-defense. So, I don't know if they
45 report it, but they let the town know. Everybody's always
46 sharing their catch and we're still pretty much
47 traditional. Not one hungry family here in town. And
48 people set muskox traps because a few of them were
49 delivered for my mom. And yesterday, I (distortion) kind
50 of bird, it looked like a (indiscernible) robin. I don't

1 know what's the bird name of it in dictionary, with a
2 bird books. But overall, we're having a good, safe winter
3 and that's my report. Thank you.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
6 for that, Clyde. Next. Mr. Elmer Armstrong, would you
7 like to give an update?

8

9 MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
10 Elmer Armstrong, Jr. from Noorvik. Maybe about July, I
11 put a net out, salmon. It was pretty slow this year. As
12 you heard, one of the fisheries down in Kotzebue closed
13 down early. We caught some and put some away. I noticed
14 there was some other people that had their nets out to
15 for the salmon. I didn't catch a moose this year. We had
16 high water when the season opened. Other people caught
17 their moose, which is good. Look like duck hunting was
18 pretty good, too. A lot of people went out for snow
19 geese and other birds. And September, I think I put my
20 net out too and I was able to catch some whitefish. Due
21 the travel, I pulled my net and after the ice froze up,
22 I put my net out again under the ice. That first day I
23 caught lots of sheefish in my net with some whitefish,
24 but more whitefish -- sheefish in it. And then the next
25 day it was just more Whitefish with suvaich, eggs. Also,
26 I had one burbot mud shark in my net. Then we got warm
27 weather, and I guess due to safety my wife felt it was
28 unsafe so, I pulled it out but we were able to catch
29 whitefish with suvaich and males to. Caribou started
30 coming by, maybe since last week or so, they've been
31 heading towards (indiscernible) Peak. I went out
32 yesterday with my son, and there's snow on the ground,
33 but not much. So, it's still rough going on the tundra.
34 People were catching some -- it was good to see younger
35 ones being taught how to catch caribou and cut them up,
36 butcher them. That's all I have.

37

38 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
39 for that, Elmer. Do we have any other members of the
40 Council that have joined that haven't given a report
41 yet?

42

43 MR. KRAMER: Morning, this is Michael.

44

45 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Good morning, Mike.
46 For the record, our member, Mike Kramer, has joined.
47 Mike, would you like to give a update for Kotzebue
48 subsistence?

49

50

1 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, I can. Good morning,
2 everybody. Yeah, this spring was pretty good. A lot of
3 people got their bearded seal. A lot -- the good ice
4 conditions. A lot of -- plenty of bearded seals. A lot
5 of people did a lot of bird hunting. All that seemed to
6 go pretty well. You know, throughout the summer, the
7 salmon season was pretty poor. I believe they sent out
8 53,000 pounds of salmon. I got that kind of a rough
9 number from a guy. You know, it's starting to be a
10 concern because, you know, with all this trawling out
11 in the ocean is, you know, affecting everybody's
12 subsistence resources, especially ours. You know, my
13 brother Lance had a salmon net set up at the mouth and
14 I believe, for a week, and I think he only got maybe 10-
15 15 salmon and that was about a half a shackle. Pretty
16 slow. You know, I -- my concern regarding the salmon run
17 is, you know, are we -- with the Fish and Game, are we
18 getting enough returns to be able to have a good, you
19 know, salmon run 5 -- 4 or 5 years from now, we'll find
20 out. But other than that, you know, the caribou started
21 coming through Paatitaaq. I could see it on social media
22 through Noatak. I know there were some people concerned
23 about some, you know, them not allowing them to come
24 through, but they did. I'm not too sure where the
25 commercial service this year was held. Were they hunted
26 out of -- I haven't heard if they hunted out of the
27 (indiscernible) lake or anything, but I know that they
28 were operating out of Kotzebue pretty heavy this summer
29 and this fall.

30
31 Moose, I see a lot of people doing some,
32 you know, getting quite a few moose filling their
33 freezers with supplemental besides caribou. You know, I
34 did get a lot of concerns about it, you know, a lot of
35 concern and questions about caribou, you know. They're
36 like, man, are they going to come through this year?
37 It's like, right, I don't know. I then spoke to somebody,
38 and they said that they were unable to get the census
39 due to weather and the caribou spread out. So, I just
40 kind of based it as to what I seen out there. You know
41 that -- a lot of people reporting. A lot of people
42 reported to me that they were having a lot of concerns
43 regarding bears and wolves harassing them while they're
44 in their tents. I mean, tugging at your tent and growling
45 outside their tent. You know, there's some -- I talked
46 to this one group of guys, and they said, man, we got
47 harassed 24 hours a day by a pack of wolves. You know,
48 it's going to be a serious concern here pretty quick. I
49 did see some people get some bears this spring. Not too
50 many. I'm glad that the people got out and got some

1 grizzly bears. I haven't heard too much about, you know,
2 how they did this fall. Other than that, you know, I've
3 just been hearing a lot of concerns about the caribou.
4 Especially when these hunters started coming into
5 Kotzebue. And I just said, you know what? It's on State
6 lands, it's up to them. That's pretty much all I have
7 for now.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
10 for that, Mike. I'll go ahead and give a brief Chair's
11 report. So, a lot of what I observed has been mentioned
12 already. One of the big concerning things that was
13 mentioned was the amount of salmon coming through, both
14 commercially and on a subsistence level. Estimates of
15 an average or the Kotzebue fishery -- commercial salmon
16 fishery, typically, Kotzebue fishermen send between 1.5
17 and 3 million pounds of chum salmon out of Kotzebue in
18 the two month fishing season. This season, it was
19 abbreviated because there weren't enough fish being
20 brought in. Not enough fishermen out on the water because
21 of the lack of fish. The high cost of fuel. So, estimates
22 for this season were between 30,000 and 50,000 pounds
23 of salmon. So, just a totally detrimental year for
24 commercial fishing, which in turn means that most folks
25 were not able to also get their subsistence catch. There
26 were some observations of salmon runs coming in as late
27 as September and still being healthy and ready to spawn.
28 So, there's some questions as to the temperature of the
29 water, factors going on out in the open ocean. What was
30 the return like several years ago, making it -- figuring
31 out how many fish came back from 5 -- 3 to 5 years ago.
32 So, that was a big concern for the community. Not many
33 folks from Kotzebue were able to harvest caribou this
34 fall just because of their scarcity reports of
35 (distortion). Lots of outfitters, not so many guides,
36 but more outfitters and transporters flying clients out
37 of Kotzebue far up onto the North Slope. Further than
38 usual, as has been observed for the last 6 to 8 years.
39 One of the big things with that is people were waiting,
40 waiting, waiting. There would be some caribou way up on
41 the Noatak River, but nothing really crossing. No big
42 movement, just small bunches here and there. Now that
43 things have cooled down and the weather has turned and
44 the non-resident season has ended, people are seeing
45 more caribou, people are seeing movement. But this has
46 continued to be one of the biggest concerns, if not the
47 biggest concern for this region of Alaska is the amount
48 of transporters bringing hunters out of caribou -- out
49 of Kotzebue, through Kotzebue to harvest caribou, and
50 affecting the migration of the herd. There are other

1 factors, obviously, but this is something that has
2 continued to where every time there is a closure, every
3 time there is some restriction, these transporters look
4 at it and laugh and go further north, closer to the
5 calving grounds, really preventing caribou from coming
6 down any further. So, this has been and continues to be
7 one of the biggest concerns for our community. Folks
8 have had some luck getting moose this fall and are now
9 able to start going and finding some reindeer and caribou
10 now that the tundra's freezing up and able to travel
11 somewhat over land and over some frozen sections of
12 water. With that I will close my Chair's report as lot's
13 already been discussed on this really low harvest year
14 for most animals and fish resources. Now that we do have
15 a quorum, we're going to go back up the agenda to take
16 care of the two action items that we weren't able to
17 vote on. So, with that for the review and adoption of
18 the agenda. Do we have any questions on the updated
19 agenda before we vote to approve and adopt the agenda?

20
21 (No response)

22
23 Hearing none.

24
25 MR. RAMOTH: Hearing none. Mr. Chair,
26 I'll make a motion to approve the agenda as presented
27 on our paper and online.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. So, a
30 motion has been made to review and adopt the agenda by
31 Clyde. Do we have a second?

32
33 MR. ARMSTRONG: This is Elmer
34 Armstrong.....

35
36 (Simultaneous speech)

37
38 MR. ARMSTRONG: I'll make a motion
39 for a second.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you.
42 I heard Elmer for a second. So, Motion made by Clyde.
43 Seconded by Elmer to adopt the updated agenda. Lisa, can
44 I please get a roll call vote?

45
46 MS. HUTCHINSON: Yes. Okay, Wilbur
47 Howarth.

48
49 MR. HOWARTH: Yes.

50

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1 MS. HUTCHINSON: Clyde Ramoth.

2
3 MR. RAMOTH: Yes.

4
5 MS. HUTCHINSON: Elmer Armstrong.

6
7 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

8
9 MS. HUTCHINSON: Michael Kramer.

10
11 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

12
13 MS. HUTCHINSON: Tristen Pattee, were you
14 able to join us yet? I know he was going to try to call
15 in, but -- Okay. And Thomas -- Mr. Chair Baker.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

18
19 MS. HUTCHINSON: Yes. It passed.....

20
21 (Simultaneous speech)

22
23 MR. RAMOTH: (Indiscernible) sitting
24 down. All the -- guys, you got to call their names. I'm
25 here listening, this is Vern. Thank you.

26
27 MS. HUTCHINSON: Hi, Vern. Thank you for
28 joining us. Okay, Vern Cleveland, do you approve the
29 agenda? Thank you.

30
31 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes, I will. And
32 yesterday we walked five miles out. I need to fill up
33 my freezer. Thank you. Yes, I will.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that.
36 Lisa, could you just go through all of the names just
37 in case anybody else has joined?

38
39 MS. HUTCHINSON: Thank you. Enoch
40 Scheidt, have you joined us yet Enoch?

41
42 (No response)

43
44 Raymond Woods.

45
46 (No response)

47
48 Tristen Pattee.

49
50 (No response)

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1
2 Okay, well, we have 6 that approved the
3 agenda and that's our quorum so that the agenda has
4 passed. Thank you.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Lisa and
7 for the record, can we please note that Mr. Vern
8 Cleveland of Noorvik, a member of the Council, has
9 joined. So, our next action item that we'll go ahead and
10 take care of, review and approval of previous meeting
11 minutes. Do we have any discussion before we get a motion
12 to approve our previous meeting minutes, preferably as
13 a block?

14
15 MR. CLEVELAND: I shall move, this is
16 Vern.

17
18 MR. RAMOTH: I'll second. This is Clyde
19 Ramoth.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you.
22 So, motion to approve the previous meeting minutes of
23 the Winter '24 RAC meeting, the Winter 2024 Quad Council
24 meeting and the Winter 2024 Joint Council meeting as a
25 block moved by Vern, seconded by Clyde. Lisa, can I
26 please get a roll call vote?

27
28 MS. HUTCHINSON: Yes. Roll call vote to
29 approve the previous meeting minutes. Do we have Attamuk
30 Shiedt?

31
32 (No response)

33
34 Wilbur Howarth.

35
36 MR. HOWARTH: Yes.

37
38 MS. HUTCHINSON: (Distortion)

39
40 MR. RAMOTH: Yes.

41
42 MS. HUTCHINSON: Elmer Armstrong.

43
44 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

45
46 MS. HUTCHINSON: Vern Cleveland.

47
48 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes.

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50 MS. HUTCHINSON: Michael Kramer.

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MR. KRAMER: Yes.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Raymond Woods.

(No response)

Thomas Baker.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

MS. HUTCHINSON: And, Tristan, have you been able to join us?

(No response)

Okay. Member -- 6 approved of the meeting minutes. So, it approved. Thank you. Sorry, I'm sort of losing my focus here. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you for that Lisa and Vern, thank you for joining us. We'll go back into member reports. Would you like to give an update on subsistence and the environment over the last six months, as you've seen it?

MR. CLEVELAND: Yeah. It's been a pretty hard summer. We had high water all summer. Pretty hard to get fish and hard to get moose cause of the high water. And hunting caribou since they opened up August and nothing till yesterday. There was a bunch of caribou moving about five miles west or east of Noorvik. There's a whole bunch moving as we speak right now (distortion) cause I'm really anxious to go out there right now. I can't sit here and wait. I got to fill my freezer. I want to go out and take some more caribou. I got a few, but not enough. So, with high cost of living in our area, we have to you know, get what we can catch. Like, right now, the caribou are -- instead of buying a \$20 a pound meat, you go out there and get some caribou they are there. Right there, right behind us. And if there's anyone that needs caribou to try and get caribou, while they are close. Otherwise, you'll get further and further away. And I gather there was a bear out yesterday up on the mountain. It must have been chasing caribou. So, no, we didn't get it. We had no (distortion) way of chasing it on Tundra. No snow, hardly any snow. Caribou are really moving fast on the tundra cause [sic] of no snow. And there's abundance of them, I counted 325,000. So, there's a lot of them. No. Yeah. They put -- we got

1 to go out there and get caribou while we can. With this
2 high cost of living, I think it's not going to change.
3 With the high cost of fuel, high cost of living and
4 everything have to gather what we can gather while we
5 can. And there are people that are -- have no boats, no
6 snow machines to try and help them out, too. Thank you.
7 Have a good day. I don't know how long will last on this
8 meeting. If I'm not here, I'll call in from up the hill.
9 Thank you.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
12 for that, Vern. And if you do have to take off to go out
13 and get some caribou, just let us know before you leave.
14 So, we'll move back on if there are no other members
15 that have joined us, which right now we are missing
16 Raymond, Tristan and Attamuk. If none of you have joined,
17 we'll continue on.

18
19 So, our next agenda item is public and
20 tribal comments on non-agenda items. Do we have any
21 members of the public or any tribal entities that were
22 wishing to make comments on non-agenda items at this
23 time? And I will give an opportunity for this again
24 after our lunch break, just in case anybody calls in
25 after lunch.

26
27 MR. RAMOTH: Mr. Chair, can I speak on
28 behalf of our tribal government for Selawik?

29
30 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, and if this is
31 Clyde, just make sure to state your name for the record.

32
33 MR. RAMOTH: Okay yeah, this is Clyde
34 Ramoth, for the record. I serve on the tribal council,
35 and we had our five-hour meeting yesterday. And -- but
36 we do annually have our, our science culture camp, which
37 fish and wildlife are a large part of. And with the
38 (distortion) the school, it's a partnership. And so, the
39 funding I know gets questionable. But I wanted to mention
40 that our -- like Vern said, the one thing the tribe
41 wanted me to mention was the high cost of living. I'm
42 not trying to echo what I heard from Vern, but due to
43 the high cost of living and luckily, we've had -- we
44 wanted to thank people like Wil and others from Fish and
45 wildlife like Brittany to come in and (indiscernible)
46 out. And the local worker Adam for hunting license and
47 understanding the limits of caribou that we can catch
48 because of the lower numbers of moose. But they're able
49 to catch some and we're doing partnerships for beaver
50 trapping. So, with the school tribe and some locals.

1 That's update [sic] I wanted to just give, besides the
2 big concern with the climate action plan that we
3 discussed back in Anchorage and something that's always
4 in our agenda is the climate change. And what kind of
5 plan is going to be discussed with Traditional
6 Ecological Knowledge. Thank you.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
9 for that, Clyde. Any other public or tribal comments on
10 non-agenda items?

11
12 MR. HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair, if I
13 may.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes. If you could put
16 your name on the record Cy?

17
18 MR. HARRIS: Okay. Cyrus Harris, Maniilaq
19 Association and a Native Village of Kotzebue. And I
20 pretty much echo all the other tribal -- all the other
21 reports that got submitted from throughout the region
22 here. And I'd also like to add you know, climate change
23 is a big issue, and I hear it from many other
24 (indiscernible) meetings that I have attend. And as a
25 result, I didn't really spend any time out in the
26 country. But I do have some reports from family members
27 that did go out. They did have a successful oogruk hunt.
28 But then not very much after that. We had prevailing
29 winds and rain pretty much the whole summer here, which
30 caused a lot of high water which affect our salmon
31 fisheries big time. And that's the one that I'd like to
32 echo on that one. This is the lowest I ever saw a salmon
33 run. I'm a retired commercial fishery fisherman. We did
34 -- we do encounter low fishing seasons, but this one was
35 practically next to nothing at an alarming rate. So,
36 with that said, they were next to no beluga sightings
37 except for the Deering and Shishmaref area, and probably
38 Riley wreck. I pretty much echo and I appreciate climate
39 change being a part of this discussion here. But anyway,
40 thanks for the opportunity. I gotta leave, I got other
41 stuff I need to take care of here but have a good meeting
42 for the rest of the day.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
45 for that Cy. (Distortion) your input on behalf of the
46 Native Village of Kotzebue as well as the Maniilaq
47 Association, do we have any other public or tribal
48 comments on non-agenda items at this time?

49
50 (No comments)

1
2 Hearing none again, we'll have another
3 opportunity for this after our lunch break. If anyone
4 calls in that wasn't able to make it this morning. So,
5 the time is now 10 a.m., our next item on the agenda is
6 the Western Arctic Caribou Herd updates. Alex, would you
7 like to give an update on that?

8
9 MR. HANSEN: Yeah, sure thing. So, if you
10 have the packet, maybe someone can go ahead -- maybe
11 Lisa can tell us where we're at -- but I'm going to go
12 ahead and get started with a page that says WAH metrics.

13
14 MS. HUTCHINSON: Yes, it's on page 27 of
15 your meeting book. If you guys have a copy of that.
16 Thank you, Alex.

17
18 MR. HANSEN: Okay. Thank you, Lisa. And
19 through the Chair, for the record, my name is Alex
20 Hansen, Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Western
21 Arctic Caribou Herd biologist here in Kotzebue. So, this
22 is going to be a fairly short and sweet presentation.
23 We'll go ahead and get started with some metrics here.
24 You can see kind of a cartoon drawing of a cow and a
25 calf. So, WAH health stats. So, population size 152,000.
26 As member Kramer mentioned, we were unable to get a
27 census this year unfortunately, we worked very hard
28 toward getting a census. So, we had them -- we thought
29 we had them in a good spot at the end of June, and we're
30 planning on shooting a census 1st of July. However, the
31 weather intervened and then went down for a couple of
32 weeks, and then we attempted again to get a census about
33 the 13th of July. But by that time, they had moved about
34 200 miles to the east, north of the range. So,
35 unfortunately, when we brought in the crews to radio
36 track and to photograph the caribou, at that time, the
37 weather intervened again, and the caribou scattered
38 throughout the range and then into the north slopes. So,
39 that was unfortunate. No new number this year will work
40 hard to get a number next year.

41
42 So, as we move forward, we still
43 consider the population trend to be declining even
44 without the new data. There's nothing to indicate that
45 anything has changed there. Our calving rate from this
46 most recent survey that we conducted in June was 71% of
47 the collared cows had calves, which is good. Calf
48 recruitment, 22 calves to 100 adults. Our long-term
49 average is about 17 calves to 100 adults. So, it's pretty
50 good there. Cow survival rate, which is lower than we

1 like, 75%, but not as low as we've seen in past years.
2 So, we've seen that as low as, I believe, 69%. So, what
3 we want to see is 85% or above, really if we want to see
4 some growth in this population. So, you know, kind of
5 the big take home there is, we're still seeing more cows
6 die than, than what this herd can support if we expect
7 to see growth. The bull to cow ratio this is from 2023,
8 was 50 bulls to 100 cows. We did do a bull to cow -- or
9 sorry, a fall composition survey this year. I wrapped
10 that up on 12th. We went out the last time on the 26th
11 and you know, we kind of struggled to get through this
12 survey this year with weather that came in. We started
13 on the 18th of October, and we were down for several
14 days. We got a couple good days in and, you know, it
15 didn't turn out to be as good a survey as we'd hoped.
16 You know, the caribou started to segregate toward the
17 end of that so, we had to call it off. But the
18 preliminary estimate on that was 44 bulls to 100 cows,
19 and then 44 calves to 100 cows as well. So, no major
20 concerns there. As I mentioned, if we jump to the next
21 page talking a little bit more about adult survival, our
22 long-term average there on that second line is 80%. The
23 most recent average is 75%. So, if we look back in time,
24 it's like we went as low as 65% and anything in the --
25 you know, above that average kind of in those green
26 bubbles, there is what we would expect to see growth
27 periods or, you know, stability at least. So, in the
28 most recent years, most of those survival estimates have
29 been below average in the red bubbles, which is cause
30 for concern.

31
32 And as we've talked -- for many years
33 now, we've talked about the importance of cows to the
34 population and how limiting cow harvest is about the
35 only tool that we have. You know, there's so many -- so
36 few things that we can do to effect change in this
37 population. We see some of the big drivers of movements,
38 patterns and changes, you know, come from weather and
39 other things. And, you know, those are just not things
40 that we can do anything about. But one of the few things
41 that we control is, you know, the actual take of the
42 animals that we take ourselves. So, if you can see in
43 that graph there, if we go through time, we basically
44 comparing the harvestable surplus, which is based on the
45 population size. And we would say that, you know,
46 harvestable surplus is -- we used to say about 6% of the
47 population and we've started to drill that down quite a
48 bit further as we move forward and trying to break out
49 the cows and the bulls, just to emphasize the importance
50 of cows in the population. So, the most recent estimate

1 of harvestable surplus based on the 2023 census was 7,300
2 animals. And, you know, we -- long-term estimates
3 suggest the harvest is -- harvests within the Western
4 Arctic can, you know, be 12,000 or above annually. We
5 certainly recognize that that has gone down as caribou
6 made themselves less available in the fall time, are not
7 near communities like they had been in the past, but we
8 just don't know by what level that harvest has been
9 reduced. Our current estimate based on the 2023 census,
10 is likely lower now, is the harvestable surplus around
11 7,300 animals. And to take that a little -- one step
12 further, we also estimate that the harvestable estimate
13 -- or harvestable surplus of cows is somewhere between
14 zero cows and 750 cows. You know, ideally, if we take
15 no cows at all, we'll be doing better as we -- in the
16 future find ourselves with conditions that allow this
17 population to rebound and grow, which has demonstrated
18 in the past that this population can grow very rapidly
19 if we have more cows.

20
21 And jumping on to the next page. Here
22 again, I'm just driving home the importance of cows and
23 why cows matter. So, if we think about the reproductive
24 potential of one cow, this is a little bit -- we're not
25 taking into all accounts or into account all of the
26 variables that come into play. But in a perfect world,
27 if a cow were to have a calf and that calf never died
28 and that calf had another calf, and so on and so forth,
29 you know, and, you know, these cows are having multiple
30 calves. One cow that, let's just say lived live 12 years
31 could potentially contribute 53 animals to the
32 population. Now, we do see some caribou living longer
33 than 12 years in the Western Arctic Herd. But, you know,
34 oftentimes, as I pointed out, you know, our cow survival
35 rate is low right now. We're seeing cows that don't live
36 that long, right. So, we certainly see a big variation
37 in, you know, contribution by an individual cow. But if
38 we look at that, on the flip side, you know, one bull,
39 you know, can produce many, many, many animals with
40 multiple cows. So, there as far as the reproductive
41 potential, they're far less important than the cows in
42 the grand scheme of things.

43
44 So, let's talk a little bit about where
45 we went last year. So, at this meeting last year, we
46 talked about some of the actions coming forward to the
47 Board of Game, to the Federal Subsistence Board. As you
48 probably recall, we had a proposal out there to limit
49 the harvest of caribou within this population
50 (distortion) to four animals total, only one of which

1 could be a cow. Now, at the Board Game, we kind of
2 adapted some things on the fly. We worked with some of
3 our friends on the North Slope and we made some changes
4 at that Board Game meeting. We changed that bag limit
5 to 15 caribou per year. However, we did maintain the one
6 cow and that is the most important part of that
7 regulation change is just recognizing the need to reduce
8 harvest of cows. I think I've talked about that plenty,
9 but as you can see there, we worked in -- worked with
10 the folks on North Slope -- North Slope Wildlife Life
11 Department, individuals living in Point Hope,
12 Wainwright, Point (distortion) and talked about, you
13 know, what we could do to reduce harvest there and, you
14 know, bring it into a more manageable, a reasonable
15 number. And so, we took that section there at the Board
16 of Game and kind of that western portion of 26A adopted
17 the same regulations that we have in 23. So, we kind of
18 moved that through 26A West, 23 and 22 and incorporated
19 that into a 15 caribou per year, only one cow on
20 strategy. And hopefully, you know, that'll improve our
21 odds of saving cows. So, we might be able to rebound
22 more quickly when the opportunity allows itself.

23
24 All right. Jumping on a couple more
25 Board actions. Other actions that took place was a non-
26 resident reduction or I guess we wouldn't say a reduction
27 at this point. We would say that the non-resident draw
28 hunt was instituted for Unit 23. So, that will have up
29 to 300 draw permits to be taken in Unit 23. I guess
30 early estimates indicate that, you know, there's
31 probably not going to be very popular hunt, given that
32 the Federal lands are close to 23 anyway. So, I kind of
33 doubt we'll see much happen with that. But next we saw
34 an increased bear harvest opportunity in Unit 23. We
35 used to have a closure in the summer months for bear
36 harvest. That has now been changed to a year-round bear
37 season which was to accommodate, you know, traditional
38 use and, you know, normal practices out in the landscape
39 when folks were out, you know, doing summer distance
40 activities and counter bears. Now, this allows them to
41 harvest them without having to go through the DLP
42 process. And also, we did increase the non-resident bear
43 harvest to two per year, which was, you know, up from
44 one.

45
46 And the final thing that we saw in this
47 region was the institution of a muskox -- a Tier 2 muskox
48 in Sisualik to help address some of the issues that
49 residents of Sisualik or seasonal residents of Sisualik
50 are experiencing out there, the muskox. So, the Tier 2

1 application is now open. It will be open until December
2 16th at 5 p.m. so, feel free to encourage folks to apply
3 for those muskox (distortion) if they are interested.
4 And with that, I have some time for questions, but I
5 have nothing else to provide at this point.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
8 for that Alex. Do we have any questions or comments for
9 Alex's update report?

10

11 MR. RAMOTH: Yeah, it's Clyde Ramoth of
12 Selawik. Good report. Thank you and I just got a question
13 from one of our locals here at Selawik, is about -- are
14 there any indication or reports of any kind of like
15 parasites or bugs found in caribou meat? Possibly from
16 the wolf species that end up on the tundra on the lichen.
17 Is there any changes or reports this year? Thank you.

18

19 MR. HANSEN: Thank you, Clyde. And
20 through the Chair. This is again Alex Hansen. You know,
21 we're not seeing anything new. I mean, there's always,
22 you know, stuff that exists within natural populations
23 of wildlife, right. You know, these are not, you know,
24 livestock animals that are, you know, given a range of
25 antibiotics. So, they're going to have things within the
26 meat, within their systems. So, one thing we often see
27 is within the meat, those little white balls, you know,
28 kind of a sac around them, fluid filled sac. But, you
29 know, those are normal. Those are common. Those are
30 tapeworm cysts. There's a lot of, you know, other
31 potential things that can be in those animals. But one
32 thing to consider is that if you take the meat and you
33 know, you take good care of it and you cook it
34 thoroughly, then there shouldn't be any issue. We also
35 have those wildlife disease pamphlets out there, one
36 specifically for caribou, one that covers moose and
37 other wildlife, and we're happy to provide those to you
38 if you'd like them there. Also, I believe, available
39 online, but they'll walk you through, you know, any of
40 those concerns that you might, have got good pictures
41 and descriptions and talk about potential diseases. So,
42 one thing I would point out here is to be very cautious.
43 Often, we get reports about individuals who harvest
44 animals and they see something funny or the animal looks
45 skinny. Now is not the time to leave that animal on the
46 tundra. We don't have enough animals to spare to do
47 that. So, at this point, if you find an animal that
48 looks a little bit different or you find something in
49 your meat, you are still required to salvage that animal.
50 Bring it home. If you have concerns send us pictures,

1 call us. You can send samples in to us. We're happy to
2 look into it and see if there's anything to be aware of.
3 You know, you obviously have a better grasp of what's
4 out there. I put my hands on, you know, 50 or 60 animals
5 a year. We do captures and collaring work but, you know,
6 with everybody out on the landscape, a lot more animals
7 are handled, a lot more animals are looked at than what
8 we could ever look at. So, if you see something
9 interesting, please share it with us. Please don't leave
10 it on the ground. You know, that's not what we need to
11 be doing right now. So, kind of my plug there is to
12 share and send us some photos, send us some information
13 and we'll investigate. Thank you, Clyde.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any other questions,
16 comments for Alex's report?

17
18 MR. KRAMER: Hello, this is Kramer.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Go ahead, Mike.

21
22 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. Hi, Alex. You know,
23 it was brought to my attention to, you know, with the
24 census not being completed, you know, that we might as
25 well go ahead (distortion) comment that, you know, we -
26 - minus 10-20,000 animals that were at probably 133,000,
27 you know, and we need to go by with the Western Arctic
28 Caribou Herd working groups population estimates and
29 their -- I can't remember that graph that they had. So,
30 you know, with that being said, we might as well say
31 that we do have minus 10-20,000 animals -- caribou. We
32 might as well go with that number. You know, there's a
33 lot of concerns. People said, well, we want to shut down
34 to non-resident hunters, you know, and then there's, you
35 know, if we can't get that one done, that proposal put
36 in, and if it gets declined by the Board of Game, then
37 our next one should be make it to where, you know, it's
38 like there RM880 where there's somebody from Texas wants
39 to come up to get a caribou and Northwest Arctic. He's
40 got to come up here in June -- between June 1st and June
41 15th and get a harvest ticket for one caribou and then
42 come back that fall to go hunt the caribou that he got
43 the harvest ticket. Because it's starting to get very
44 critical, you know, as I said again, you know, as to why
45 it's still being open, you know, it's our region harvests
46 a lot of caribou. That's pretty much their daily staple
47 of meat that is consumed within the region. You know,
48 with that being said that, you know, we have no more
49 sheep or sheep populations are -- probably hit the floor.
50 You know, moose numbers in certain areas are down. Bear

1 numbers are high, wolf numbers are high. You know, and
2 other people are starting to you know, starting to get
3 maybe like, muskox. It's getting pretty desperate and
4 it's going to get worse before it gets better, you know.
5 So, we need to start looking at considerations as to
6 what's going to be the next step, you know to -- in the
7 proposal into the Board of Game via the -- our Advisory
8 Council. And I leave it up to the other Council members.
9 If we want to go to the registered caribou hunt or just
10 put it in, you know, our secondary one would be to shut
11 down the caribou hunting to non-residents. But I think
12 that needs to be implemented very soon. Because I sure
13 would hate for it to be too late and we have nothing.
14 You know, we might as well just go with what minus 10-
15 20,000 animals, be on the safe side. If next year we get
16 130,000, 140,000. Well, at least we're pretty close. So,
17 we should try and look at, you know, a contingency plan
18 to prevent the crash of our caribou herd, beforehand.
19 You know, since you say that a lot of the cows, how many
20 cows do we have that are collared at this moment?

21
22 MR. HANSEN: Yeah, through the Chair,
23 member Kramer. We have about 110, I think, collars out
24 on the landscape, and we aim to have 100 going into the
25 census season. So, we, you know, we build that up as we
26 catch animals in the springtime. So, we usually start
27 our spring with 120, 130. Somewhere around there, kind
28 of depends on capture success.

29
30 MR. KRAMER: Okay so, that's good. And
31 then when do you guys do these capture -- or captures?
32 Do you do it after you guys get the census photos or...?

33
34 MR. HANSEN: So, when we used to do
35 captures, as you know, I think most folks are aware, we
36 used to do captures on the Kobuk River, you know,
37 September sometimes even into October. But we haven't
38 had a successful capture on the Kobuk since 2019. We've
39 now switched to spring captures. This is usually first
40 part of April sometimes the end of March. This is
41 helicopter net gunning captures. So, springtime.

42
43 MR. KRAMER: Okay. Yeah. I just wanted
44 to check. You know, I just want to make sure that you
45 guys are pushing them further east or causing them to
46 be spread out, but you know, it's getting pretty serious.
47 And I know that the other Council members will probably
48 agree with me. We need to start working on a contingency
49 plan, and we need to stick with it with subsistence
50 priority over commercial services. And it needs to be

1 started during this meeting. And it needs to be pushed
2 into Fish and Game, you know, Board of Game. But it's
3 pretty critical, and I sure do not want to see us not
4 be able to harvest the caribou in about ten years, maybe
5 less. But that should be -- that's all I have for now.

6
7 MR. HANSEN: Yeah, and through the Chair,
8 if I may respond briefly to member Kramer's other
9 comments. Yeah, as you mentioned member Kramer, you know
10 I think you're on the money. You know, we need to think
11 about this population as still declining. And we need
12 to think about the implications of that. You know, I
13 guess I don't know, I dare go out on a limb and, you
14 know, put a number out there, but it's certainly less
15 than what it was last year. And until we see other
16 indications of positive change, I think it's safe to go
17 with that idea, that assumption. I will point out that,
18 you know, given the great concern over non-resident
19 hunter traffic, we did see some big changes this year.
20 Of the two operators that operate out of Kotzebue, one
21 (distortion) left late August. That was Arctic Air. Used
22 to be Mike Spisak's operation. Sold it out. They had so
23 much trouble with weather that they just pulled up and
24 left late August and moved over to Fairbanks to do some
25 other stuff. So, basically, we were left with one
26 operator through the month of September and speaking
27 with them, trying to figure out what the harvest was,
28 that one operator harvested about 80-82 somewhere around
29 there, bull caribou. So, our harvest from non-residents
30 went down considerably. Not saying that they weren't out
31 there, but also speaking to some other comments, most
32 of that traffic was pushed up in the north. I guess I
33 would say the southwest portion of 26A since 23 was
34 closed. So, that's where most of that activity took
35 place. Anyway, just a quick update there and I appreciate
36 your concerns member Kramer. Yes, we need to prepare for
37 (distortion) tightening our belts. But let me also point
38 out that you know, this population is still one of the
39 largest in the world, one of the largest in the State,
40 still the second largest in the State, as far as we
41 know. Second to the Porcupine. Huge potential for
42 growth. So, as long as we, you know, tighten our belts
43 for a bit and allow those conditions that will allow
44 growth within caribou herds, we could probably expect
45 to see a turnaround. There's no guarantee of that. You
46 know, there's certainly some good examples of caribou
47 herds you know, Canada, for instance, we think of the
48 George River (distortion) which I believe was at one
49 point in time near 800,000, and I think the last count
50 was closer to 8,000. So, you know, throughout the range

1 of caribou within the world, we've seen some drastic
2 declines in caribou herds, some almost going away, some
3 going away entirely. So, I think it's certainly -- to
4 be cautious and nervous that we might see some scary
5 things happen. So, I appreciate your comments and happy
6 to entertain any more questions if there are any.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you,
9 Alex. Any other questions comments for Alex on this
10 report?

11
12 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, go ahead,
15 Wilbur.

16
17 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah. Wilbur Howarth,
18 Noorvik. Alex did you guys do any counting? I think you
19 guys did this fall up here at the lower Kobuk on the
20 moose. How did that go?

21
22 MR. HANSEN: Yeah, through the Chair. To
23 Wilbur Howarth. Yeah, we did not do a moose count this
24 fall so, we attempted to do a moose count in the spring.
25 Well, you probably experienced a weird spring that we
26 did, but it warmed up very quickly and we were marginally
27 successful on the moose count. But what we came up with
28 is a minimum count instead of a, you know, a good census.
29 And that was the upper Kobuk areas, survey area that
30 year or sorry, last spring. So, unfortunately, we don't
31 have a good number. But all indicators for the most
32 recent moose surveys indicate that we're kind of leveled
33 off. We don't feel like we're still declining, but, you
34 know, still kind of at the lower end of the population
35 threshold for the moose in the area.

36
37 MR. HOWARTH: Okay, cause see, myself and
38 Eric (indiscernible) close, and I would ask him once in
39 a while when he's flying, how's the moose? And he said
40 it was -- there was a lot of moose down here in the
41 lower Kobuk. So, we are seeing cows with two -- almost
42 every cow I saw had two calves. So, I hope we're not
43 losing too much moose. Thank you, Alex. Thank you, Mr.
44 Chair.

45
46 MR. HANSEN: Thank you, Wilbur.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you.
49 Any other questions, comments for Alex?

50

1 (No response)

2

3

4 Hearing none at this time. Alex, thank
5 you for your report and for taking the questions and
6 comments so far. It's always good to hear the updates
7 and look forward to our next meeting when we'll hear
8 some more about collaring and whatnot. So, thank you for
9 that. At this time, we would like to ask the Council,
10 would we rather take a ten-minute break or we'd like to
11 move directly into the Climate Action Plan report?

12

13 MR. RAMOTH: I would say we move on.
14 Clyde Ramoth.

15

16 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: If there's no
17 opposition to that, we'll continue on to the Climate
18 Action Plan report. Was that Mr. Bosca?

19

20 MR. YASKA: Good morning. Yeah. George
21 Yaska.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Excuse me, Yaska.

24

25 MR. YASKA: Thank you. Again, my job
26 title, indigenous knowledges liaison with science
27 applications. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska
28 region and I telework out of Fairbanks. And so, I grew
29 up in Huslia, as I was saying, and spent at least half
30 of my life up in the Huslia mountains and the Dakli
31 Mountains and around the Huslia area. I heard a great
32 deal of indigenous knowledge in my early life, from my
33 late uncle Steven Attla, from my dad, who is 91 now,
34 George Yaska, Sr. and told -- or rather heard what he
35 was told by old people before him. So, proud to carry
36 on that traditional knowledge of the Tleeyegue Hutaan
37 people on the Koyokuk River. And we're always learning
38 from people around us. So, I thank you for speaking to
39 your traditional knowledge and allowing me to learn
40 something from that. Thank you. I could speak briefly
41 on (distortion) our climate action plan that we've been
42 developing for the past year and a half, in response to
43 the Department of the Interior's Climate Action Plan and
44 then our own individual bureau, the Fish and Wildlife
45 Service Climate Action Plan. It's been taking us a long
46 time to develop it. A lot of details and a lot of action-
47 oriented issues and so, this is only the second month
48 that it's been available to the public. And Mr. Chair,
49 do you have a -- do you have a copy? I don't actually
50 have a copy myself. I -- the regional office has the
copy, and it's going out according to their Office of

1 Communication plan and so hoping to release that up on
2 a more wider scale. We're focused on collaboration with
3 our partners, as to our mission, if you're familiar with
4 the mission, Mr. Chair, of the Fish and Wildlife Service
5 is to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife,
6 plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of
7 the American (distortion) people. And that is by
8 providing national leadership in the recovery and
9 conservation of imperiled species. Working with experts
10 to identify species on the verge of extinction and build
11 a road to recovery. And through partnerships, they
12 develop community driven conservation solutions that
13 benefit fish, wildlife and people. And Mr. Chair, these
14 are also my personal conservation goals. Having grown
15 up in Huslia, my dad is a conservator and so I'm a
16 conservator, and we've always spoken for those species
17 around us that don't speak for themselves. So, in
18 speaking for caribou, I certainly hear issues up in the
19 Northwest Arctic regards to the Western Arctic Caribou
20 Herd, there's great concern for the early disruption in
21 the migration of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd. We're
22 also, from the Fish and Wildlife Service side, concerned
23 about the health of the habitat. We are seeing concerns
24 from the United States Geological Service about the
25 habitat up in northwest Alaska. There is some work being
26 done now, and you may hear some from the National Park
27 Service in conjunction with the U.S. Geological Service
28 about the habitat increase in permafrost melt, the
29 increase in -- I think they describe it as nitric oxides
30 but rusting rivers and then finally an explanation of
31 the health of the caribou food. We don't know that.
32 There's some discussion about it and a great
33 (distortion) discussion going forward depends partially
34 on this Regional Advisory Council and the working group.
35 So, look forward to hearing more about that.

36
37 Our climate action plan depends on
38 collab (distortion). It depends on partnerships with
39 tribes. It depends on seeking out from tribes their
40 (distortion) indigenous knowledge about what they are
41 seeing in relation to the changes in climate. And with
42 that, Mr. Chair, I'll speak about the climatological
43 events that I am seeing through my discussions with NOAA,
44 through the research that we have, through our research
45 with the Eskimo Walrus Commission and the discussion
46 points being considered at the Seward Peninsula Regional
47 Advisory Council, of the Yukon Delta Regional Advisory
48 Council and the Western Arctic Regional Advisory
49 Council. The -- I begin with going way back that our
50 climate has seen, of course much change over time. It's

1 been very warm, it's been very cold and for the past few
2 hundred years, we're going to see a small shrinking of
3 the polar ice cap. And then about 40 years ago, dramatic
4 increase in the shrinking of the polar ice cap. And in
5 the past six years, that polar ice cap is very small.
6 This has resulted in a loosening of the polar ice caps
7 hold on the polar jet stream, and further information
8 can be found in NOAA and the National Weather Service
9 about the jet stream activity itself. What I have been
10 seeing, though, is the jet stream moving further south,
11 further south below the Brooks Range, well into the west
12 over near Russia and Kamchatka, and pulling in the
13 winter, sometimes cold weather east over to Alaska. In
14 Fairbanks we saw 70 below and 65 below for seven weeks
15 this winter, first time in 35 years and in the summer
16 we see that same polar jet stream pulling much moisture
17 over the Bering Sea and the southern Chukchi Sea over
18 to the east and affecting the coasts of their -- Kotzebue
19 near the Seward Peninsula, further south, in the Yukon
20 Delta. We see in the early fall and through the winter,
21 much less ice freeze and so much more open water. And
22 this has increased precipitation in western Alaska and
23 northwestern Alaska, and through waters coming down from
24 the Brooks Range to the Kobuk River into the Koyukuk
25 River drainage and to the Hodzana drainage into the
26 Yukon. And much more freshwater flow now, both in the
27 springtime and in the fall time. So, the freshwater flow
28 is increased greatly into the Bering Sea. Into perhaps
29 the Chukchi Sea but I don't really know that particular
30 element. This has changed the ecosystem -- aquatic
31 ecosystem and the Bering Sea. So, with this change in
32 additional freshwater there -- it's changed the type of
33 species in the water. And you, Mr. Chairman, can speak
34 much more directly to that than I can. I'm not familiar
35 with sculpin, with the various small fishes. An
36 additional element, of course, as you related is the
37 element of the additional trawler pressure in the Bering
38 Sea, on pollock and on other species, and on forage
39 fish, disruption on the sea floor.

40
41 I heard an allusion to the hatchery
42 salmon production in Russia and dropping rather --
43 discussion about the tremendous amounts of hatchery pink
44 and hatchery chum that are being dumped from Russia into
45 the Bering Sea. This is very likely affecting also the
46 production of the Bering Sea. I did hear a bright point
47 from Senator Murkowski and that she's encouraging the
48 countries of Taiwan, of China, of Japan, of Korea to
49 purchase -- stop purchasing Russian salmon and she may
50 be having an effect. I'm hoping she does. This may have

1 a greater effect than any prohibition or Department of
2 State prohibition or discussion from the -- I think a
3 market driven solution may have a great effect on this
4 particular component of the disruption in the Bering
5 Sea. So, this increased precipitation perhaps warmer
6 weather, the relative lack of sea floor, disruptive
7 elements, natural breaks and so on are, of course, having
8 a direct effect on the coasts of western and northwestern
9 Alaska, as of course, we saw last month. We're not
10 certain where and how often this change in the polar jet
11 stream will occur. But it seems that as long as the
12 polar ice cap is continuing to shrink, that this effect
13 will remain. Mr. Chair, we -- that's about all that I
14 have. I'm happy to entertain questions and thank you.

15

16 Through the Chair. Mr. Armstrong.

17

18 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes. Thank you for your
19 presentation. Yeah. I just want to make comments. We're
20 seeing more remnants of typhoons head up the Bering Sea
21 and up into the Arctic Circle. Like others said, we had
22 really high water in July, even into August. My concern
23 too, is with all that rainfall, is the release of
24 naturally occurring minerals that flow through the
25 hills, the sloughs and the creeks, that are going to
26 affect the fish and other species. I know there's been
27 talk about the temperatures in the seas affecting the
28 arrival of the salmon. The people in this region really
29 rely on salmon in the summertime. And we're just seeing
30 those events occur more often, even right at the end of
31 fall we had a big storm that came up this way, and it
32 affected the Kotzebue with really high water. Thank you.

33

34 MR. YASKA: Thank you, Mr. Armstrong.

35

36 MR. RAMOTH: Through the Chair, Clyde
37 Ramoth here.

38

39 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes. Go ahead, Clyde.

40

41 MR. RAMOTH: Thank you, Mr. Yaska. You
42 grew up around my neighborhood. I'm from Selawik, and I
43 could see the hills that way and thanks for the report
44 there. And when we talk about Traditional Ecological
45 Knowledge, that language been there for a long time. But
46 to see and in our fall outcomes from our last our Council
47 meeting, I know it was mentioned that how our Federal
48 and State and others tribes work together to include
49 Traditional Ecological Knowledge, because when we
50 consult with others and let them know openly and feeling

1 comfortable, not people feeling like they're going to
2 break the law or whatever that could (distortion) that's
3 really helpful to -- for State and Federal agencies that
4 are listening. And I just want to echo what we always
5 say, because with the warmer temperatures now in the
6 waters, like what Armstrong is saying, I try to keep up
7 with the news, how the seas are changing and the winds.
8 And of course, we're affected here. So, we could -- even
9 on the flood zone, look at what [sic] Kotzebue happened
10 recently. A lot of our grounds are dropping. We see that
11 on social media. So, I always thought Traditional
12 Ecological Knowledge is always important and for us to
13 learn more of how to do more partnerships and help make
14 some recommended advisory type regulation changes.
15 Because my late dad used to say that, he said the
16 weathers are only going to get hotter so, work with
17 agencies and others and let them hear you out, meaning
18 TEK. So, thank you for the good report. Thank you.

19
20 MR. YASKA: Through the Chair. Thank you.
21 I can speak a little bit about the land dropping. It's
22 occurring throughout the interior, certainly around
23 Huslia and I believe NANA, the University of Alaska
24 Fairbanks and I'm -- I think it's UAF and NANA doing a
25 remote sensing effort in the northwest to actually
26 measure how much land is dropped. And from my
27 understanding, it's between 2 and 17ft that the remote
28 sensing satellites have actually measured. They've been
29 on the ground this summer, I think checking that out.
30 The USGS and the National Park Service have also measured
31 to some extent some of the minerals coming out of the
32 upper headwaters. So, really looking forward to hearing
33 that report. There's also the airborne contaminants
34 issues. It's not necessarily a climate change issue, but
35 one that we've been following closely. And that is the
36 45 -- 45,000 tons of nitric oxides coming from Prudhoe
37 and Kuparuk heading west and southwest from Prudhoe-
38 Kuparuk. How this affects caribou food, lichem, is not
39 known that -- hasn't been measured, but some attention
40 now being paid to that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. Any other
43 questions or comments for Mr. Yaska?

44
45 MR. KRAMER: Yes. Through Council Chair,
46 this is Micheal.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yep. Go ahead, Mike.

49
50

1 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. You know, we -- a few
2 months ago, we were going through an issue with about
3 the extension of Red Dog another ten miles east. You
4 know, that's another thing we're going to have to start
5 looking into and considering, because I don't know if
6 it'll ever go through, but we need to start you know --
7 I mean, not only going to affect our caribou herd, it
8 will affect their migration. I don't know if it'll ever
9 be put into, you know, if it'll ever go through, but I
10 know that, you know, with climate change and all this
11 other stuff that's going on, we want to make sure that
12 our caribou can migrate, you know, unhindered. Because
13 we already know to this moment that Red Dog has an impact
14 on some of our caribou migration. I'm not too sure. I
15 haven't heard of any really -- you know how much has
16 crossed the Red Dog Road in the last couple of weeks.
17 But I sure hope NANA would -- NANA or somebody from Red
18 Dog would be able to, you know, update us on that one.
19 But that's all I have for right now. Thank you.

20
21 MR. YASKA: Mr. Chair, we do pay a lot
22 of attention to habitat, to conservation of species,
23 particularly caribou, in Alaska. And the use of animal
24 overpasses is sometimes useful. Although I don't
25 personally know the primary or whether there are primary
26 transportation corridors for caribou. When there are
27 known points of migration, then animal overpasses are
28 generally fairly successful. If they are not well known
29 or they are not well established and they are less
30 successful. I suspect there may be a great deal of
31 attention paid in the next two years to road building
32 and with this comes appropriation from Congress to do
33 so. And (distortion) the overpass might become
34 considerably less difficult. I'm not saying that very
35 well, but I can't say very much about that. Thank you,
36 Mr. Chairman.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yaska
39 and maybe, Lisa, if we can make a note for our winter
40 meeting to try and have someone from TEK, Red Dog be
41 available to give any updates on their operations. And
42 I know that they have some subsistence monitoring and
43 whatnot that goes on at the mine. They work closely with
44 the communities around the mine. So, if we could make
45 that note to try and get someone invited to our winter
46 meeting. Any other questions or comments on the Climate
47 Action Plan report at this time?

48
49 MR. RAMOTH: I just got a question, Mr.
50 Chair. Thank you, Mr. Yaska.....

1
2 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Clyde, could you let
3 us know (indiscernible) please.
4

5 MR. RAMOTH: Excuse me?
6

7 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Could you state your
8 name?
9

10 MR. RAMOTH: Oh, Clyde Ramoth, Selawik.
11 Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Yaska, for traditional
12 ecological knowledge in anything of your findings and
13 reports for the climate change plan. Is there any website
14 you could share with us that we could do some homework
15 prior to the winter meeting? Thank you.
16

17 MR. YASKA: Through the Chair, Mr.
18 Ramoth. We don't have one where -- we began developing
19 a SharePoint site on the indigenous knowledge in Alaska,
20 and I'm not sure where that is going to go now. Speaking
21 to the potential changes and disruptions in the
22 President Elect's administration here moving forward in
23 the next 2 or 3 years. We had developed a draft of the
24 SharePoint site on indigenous knowledge. We have
25 developed case studies and research notes. A
26 considerable library of it and that maybe on the back
27 burner. I'm not sure now, but certainly I'm always here
28 at this office and available for further discussion,
29 either through your Coordinator or directly. Thank you,
30 Mr. Chair, Mr. Ramoth.
31

32 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. Any other
33 questions, comments for Mr. Yaska?
34

35 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair. Wilbur Howarth,
36 Noorvik.
37

38 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes. Go ahead,
39 Wilbur.
40

41 MR. RAMOTH: Mr. George Yaska, the last
42 climate change meeting I went to was in the Lower 48,
43 and they were wanting to have a climate change meeting
44 in Anchorage as soon as possible. And (distortion)
45 because they never did have one here yet in Alaska and
46 met with hundreds and hundreds of folks from around the
47 world. So, hopefully we as a Board maybe listen out for
48 this upcoming meeting hopefully, that will be here in
49 Alaska on climate change and hearing and being there,
50 this weather we're having in the water change

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1 temperatures is really affecting our fish. They're
2 moving out to colder waters. So, thank you, Mr. Chair
3 and George.

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MR. YASKA: Through the Chair. Yes, sir.
Looking forward to additional discussions in Alaska, and
particularly with tribes and members of the Regional
Advisory Councils and yourself. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. Any more
questions, comments at this time?

(No comments)

Hearing none. Thank you, Mr. Yaska, for
your report. We're going to move on. I apologize, I
think I overlooked Raime Fronstin, Dr. Raime Fronstin
and the Western Arctic Parklands report. Raime, are you
on the line?

(No response)

Does anyone know if Raimi is going to
be calling in or was able to call in this morning?

MS. HUTCHINSON: Yeah. Mr. Chair, this
is Lisa, the Council Coordinator. I -- Raime, did have
a medical appointment that might have conflicted with
his time, so I believe that might be where he is. Maybe
we can get him on later. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
for that, Lisa. So, at this time it is 10:55. Before we
move on to our next item, which is item number 11, action
items, I'd like to recommend a ten-minute break and come
back at 11:05 if there's no objections.

(No objections)

All right. With that, we will come back
at 11:05.

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Alright, it is now
11:05. Thank you, everyone, for that 10-minute break.
Next on the agenda we have item number 11, which is

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1 action items. First, we have the 2026 Fisheries Resource
2 Monitoring Program and PINs development. Karen and Dr.
3 Hannah Voorhees, would you like to take the floor on
4 that?

5
6 DR. VOORHEES: This is Hannah Voorhees,
7 the Anthropologist with OSM. I believe Karen Hyer is
8 taking the lead on this item.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Are you on, Karen?

11
12 MS. HYER: I -- can you hear me?

13
14 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: We can hear you now.

15
16 MS. HYER: Okay.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: The floor is yours,
19 if you could put yourself on record.

20
21 MS. HYER: Yeah, hang on just a sec, I'm
22 gonna plug in my headset. Alright, can you hear me now?
23 Is this better?

24
25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, we can hear you.
26 The floor is yours.

27
28 MS. HYER: Okay, perfect. My name -- for
29 the record, my name is Karen Hyer and I'm a Fisheries
30 Biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management.
31 And, Hannah, have you introduced yourself?

32
33 DR. VOORHEES: I have, thank you, Karen.

34
35 MS. HYER: Okay. Alright so, today we're
36 going to talk about the Priority Information Needs for
37 the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Plan. Just as a
38 reminder, the Fisheries Resources Monitoring Plan
39 provides funds for fisheries research and monitoring
40 projects throughout Alaska, and these projects are
41 chosen through a competitive process, and they're funded
42 through the Office of Subsistence Management. So, every
43 two years we meet with the Councils, and we ask for
44 projects -- for direction as to what the priorities are
45 for the Council and that -- those priorities are used
46 to direct the research -- the researchers when they
47 submit the proposals. And so today we're meeting to
48 develop the Priority Information Needs for the 2026
49 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Plan and because of
50 funding issues, OSM was not able to fund any new projects

1 in 2024. So, we're going to start today with that list
2 and then we have talked to several individuals and so,
3 we have some new items that we're adding to the list.
4 So, before we actually go through the Priority
5 Information Need list. Are there any questions for
6 Hannah or I?
7

8 (No response)
9

10 Okay. I'm not hearing any questions. So,
11 I'm just going to go through this list one by one and
12 then pause and let the Council give us feedback as to
13 whether they think this prior -- this is still a regional
14 priority and should stay on the list if we should modify
15 it or if they feel like it -- the issue is no longer a
16 priority, and it should be removed from the list. And
17 when we go over these as we pause, if the Council has -
18 - the Council members have any information, it's a really
19 great time to add it to the transcripts, because I often
20 refer when investigators call me and they ask me about
21 priorities or what the Council's interested in, I often
22 refer them to the transcripts. So, any reports we have
23 and any concerns we have, it's a great time to bring
24 them up in this meeting because then they'll be on the
25 record and then people go back and look at that record,
26 so.
27

28 Okay so, these PINs aren't in any
29 specific order and I'm just going to go ahead and read
30 the first one and pause and let the Council provide any
31 input they might have. So, the first one is inventory
32 and baseline data of fish and major rivers tied to
33 subsistence use in northwest Alaska. Investigators
34 should consult with local subsistence users and draw on
35 Traditional Ecological Knowledge literature in design
36 and -- in designing and carrying out the research. When
37 possible, applicants are encouraged to include fisheries
38 proximal to the communities of Shishmaref, Buckland,
39 Deering, Selawik, Kivalina, Point Hope, and villages
40 along the Kobuk and Noatak Rivers.
41

42 DR. VOORHEES: And this is Hannah
43 Voorhees. I'll just jump in and ask the Council if you
44 have any thoughts about the communities that are
45 included on this list, if you'd like to change that
46 either, I guess it would probably be by narrowing the
47 list or if you'd like to keep it the same. Thanks.
48

49 MS. HYER: So, are there any comments on
50 this particular PIN?

1
2 DR. VOORHEES: And for anyone who --
3 sorry, Karen. For anyone who can't see the slide that
4 we're sharing in Teams. Again, the communities are
5 Shishmaref, Buckland, Deering, Selawik, Kivalina, Point
6 Hope and villages along the Kobuk and Noatak rivers.
7

8 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yeah. Thank you. This
9 is Chair Thomas Baker. I think just adding Kotzebue as
10 one of the places listed here would be beneficial. Just
11 because you -- it is good to have the information
12 specific to the rivers that we're talking about. But
13 considering the fish come through Kotzebue on their way
14 up the Kobuk and Noatak Rivers, you'd be able to get a
15 a more complete sense of when the fish are coming versus
16 when they're just getting to the river.
17

18 MS. HYER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
19

20 MR. RAMOTH: This is Clyde Ramoth,
21 Selawik. I had to take care of other stuff, but I heard
22 the question, but I'm not too sure where we're at on the
23 agenda. I called in late, sorry.
24

25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, at this time,
26 Lisa, what page should we be on in our books so that
27 people are able to follow along if they're not on Teams?
28

29 MS. HUTCHINSON: Yes. Thank you, Mr.
30 Chair. Okay, so we are on agenda item 11A, which is the
31 second page of your agenda. It's for the 2026 Fisheries
32 Research Monitoring Program in the Priority Information
33 Needs development. Karen Hyer, she's the fisheries
34 biologist for the Office of Subsistence Management and
35 Dr. Hannah Voorhees. She's the anthropologist for Office
36 of Subsistence Management are presenting this. Thank
37 you, Mr. Chair, members of the Council.
38

39 MS. HYER: Mr. Chairman, members of the
40 Council, you will not find this draft list in your book
41 because it is something that is a working document and
42 when we leave this meeting today -- this is an action
43 item, and you'll make a motion to approve this list
44 after we go over it. And then that is the list that
45 we'll publish. And that's why there's not -- it's not
46 listed in the book. But let me reread the first PIN to
47 you. It's inventory and.....
48

49 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Hold on so, for the
50 record, this is Chair Thomas Baker to answer the question

1 for Clyde. So, we are on the portion of the agenda where
2 we are reviewing these Priority Information Needs. And
3 basically, their going to read them out, discuss them,
4 say should we keep it? Is this still a priority or should
5 we take it off of the list? So, Karen is going to read
6 this one again. If you have any questions, if you would
7 like to take something out, add something in. This is
8 the time to do that. And then at the end of this section
9 we will vote to approve this list after we discuss it
10 all. So, if you would Karen, continue.

11
12 MS. HYER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
13 Inventory and baseline data of fish in major rivers tied
14 to subsistence use in northwest Alaska. Investigators
15 should consult with local subsistence users and draw on
16 Traditional Ecological Knowledge literature in designing
17 and carrying out the research. When possible, applicants
18 are encouraged to include fisheries proximal to the
19 communities of Shishmaref, Buckland, Deering, Selawik,
20 Kivalina, Point Hope, and villages along the Kobuk and
21 Noatak River, and we're also adding the community of
22 Kotzebue to that list. So, any further comments?

23
24 MR. RAMOTH: So, with the question --
25 Clyde Ramoth of Selawik. Here in our community and
26 Selawik being named after one of the five whitefish --
27 sheefish. We don't have no problem with any further
28 studies or anything going on with counts for our fish
29 here, as we depend on them 365 days a year. Thank you.

30
31 MS. HYER: Thank you for that comment,
32 Clyde.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Well, if there are
35 no other comments, we'll move on to the next PIN.

36
37 MS. HYER: Great. The next one refers to
38 the rusty rivers that we've been seeing and that was
39 kind of the catalyst for putting this on the list. But
40 evaluate changes in water levels, discoloration and
41 mineral deposits, water temperature and reduced oxygen
42 in major river systems associated with subsistence
43 fisheries resources in the Northwest Arctic Region and
44 how these changes will affect fish vital for
45 subsistence. Investigators should consult with local
46 subsistence users and draw on their knowledge of
47 historic and recent water conditions in designing and
48 carrying out research. Any questions, comments?

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50 MR. KRAMER: Mr. Chair, this is Michael.

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CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes. Go ahead, Mike.

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MR. KRAMER: Yeah hi, Karen. I was wondering what current studies do we have? I know that we are monitoring the sheefish for a few years since that major slough on the Selawik River. Are we still monitoring those sheefish? And I believe we had several trout studies going on. Correct?

MS. HYER: Mr. Chairman, Council members. Mike, you're -- you are correct. And the sheefish project is coming to an end and there will be a final report coming out. And Ray Hander, if you have any specific questions about that, I heard about -- I heard Ray was on the line. And also, at that point they'll come and they'll present their work. And we also had -- we have had trout work going on in the area and Brendan -- before this meeting turned into a one-day meeting who is also on the line, was going to present his work. And we've pushed that back to the winter meeting also. And so yes, and then we have a couple other proposals that were submitted in 2024 that weren't funded. And they will go back into the queue too. And we're hoping that in the winter meeting, we'll be able to have people present what is actually happening in the region.

MR. KRAMER: Okay.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. HYER: We just ran out of time.

MR. KRAMER: Yeah -- okay. Yeah. I just wanted to make sure that, you know, that we're going to keep studying the Selawik run of sheefish because of the sloughing. I haven't heard any updates as the sloughing gotten worse, or is it stabilized or anything like that? I think since last year, maybe.

MS. HYER: Yeah, that that is correct and unfortunately, because this turned into a one-day meeting, we don't have -- we haven't had time to give -- or we won't have time to give updates during this meeting. So, I could have the investigators follow up with you in person or they are on the schedule to present during the winter meeting.

MR. KRAMER: Okay.

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, I see Hannah
2 Voorhees, do you have your hand raised? And then after
3 you, Lisa.

4
5 DR. VOORHEES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
6 is Hannah Voorhees. I know that this doesn't speak
7 directly to the topic that Michael is concerned with,
8 but just for -- in the interest of giving a complete
9 overview of the FRMP research that's currently going on
10 in the Northwest Arctic region, there is also a
11 Traditional Ecological Knowledge project going on and
12 that's for salmon. So, it's titled TEK of Salmon and the
13 River Drainages of Kotzebue Sound and that's being
14 conducted by ADF&G Division of Subsistence.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
17 for that, Hannah. Lisa, did you have something?

18
19 MS. HUTCHINSON: Yes. Thank you. Thank
20 you, Hanna I wanted to mention that as well. And we have
21 asked them, Division of Subsistence to provide a report
22 of this meeting which was put forth in the future. But
23 they do some incredible work and look forward to their
24 report. And also, I wanted to mention that the National
25 Park Service and USGS was also scheduled to give a report
26 on the thawing river's effects on the aquatic ecosystems
27 that some of the work that they're doing in your region.
28 And so, we have postponed their report till the winter
29 meeting as well. So, thank you.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
32 for that, Lisa. Do we have any questions on -- going
33 back to the PINs, if we could try to keep our questions
34 related to specific item as Karen brings them up. Just
35 because some people aren't able to see this. So, PIN
36 number two is evaluate changes in water levels,
37 discoloration and mineral deposits, water temperature
38 and reduced oxygen in major river systems in the
39 Northwest Arctic region associated with subsistence
40 fishery resources and how these will change. How these
41 changes will affect fish vital for subsistence. I think
42 we can all agree that we can keep this as a PIN just
43 because it's an ongoing issue and most likely isn't going
44 to stop being an issue anytime soon. So, with that, we
45 can move on to number three, Karen.

46
47 MS. HYER: Great. Okay. Study the effects
48 of expanding beaver populations and range on subsistence
49 fisheries, including whitefish and Northwest Arctic
50 region. Include effects of dams on fish migration and

1 effects of changes to water quality on fish health.
2 Investigators should consult with local subsistence
3 users and draw on their knowledge of historic and
4 changing beaver impacts in designing and carrying out
5 research. Researchers should also consider the impacts
6 of these changes on subsistence users themselves. Any
7 questions or comments?

8
9 MR. RAMOTH: Clyde Ramoth here, Selawik.
10 I got a comment through the Chair. So, with our abundance
11 of fish in all of our the -- Kobuk River, Noatak River,
12 Kobuk Lake, Selawik Lak, the South Lake rivers, Buckland
13 area, all those were all impacted and but with the high
14 population of beaver, I know my brother went to a meeting
15 in Fairbanks about beaver, and I think he's going to
16 Canada at some point. But is there inter -- subject
17 between the high numbers of beaver population, lack of
18 people hunting, trapping? We're going to start one here
19 locally for trapping. But is that something that ongoing
20 high priority subject?

21
22 MS. HYER: Mr. Chairman, Council members,
23 I think the effects of beaver in your area has been on
24 -- has been a issue of interest for some time. And so
25 yes, I would consider it still a -- unless the Council
26 has something different, I would consider it still a
27 topic of interest. And I know some work has been done
28 in the region, but there's probably room for more work
29 to be done.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: I think it's safe to
32 say that we can keep this PIN in the list.

33
34 MS. HYER: Yes. Okay. All right. Hannah,
35 did you have anything else to add about beavers?

36
37 DR. VOORHEES: I don't. Thanks, Karen.

38
39 MS. HYER: Okay so, PIN number four is
40 document herring abundance, seasonal movement and health
41 and investigate causes of large herring mortality events
42 in Northwest Arctic. Investigators should consult with
43 local subsistence users and draw on their knowledge in
44 designing and carrying out research. And this PIN was
45 added in 2024 and I'm wondering -- so I -- I'd like to
46 hear any comments or questions from the Council. And I'm
47 wondering if the Council could articulate a little bit
48 on the record where exactly they're interested in having
49 this research done, just because that makes it much
50 much easier for the investigators when they refer to the

1 record.

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CHAIRPERSON BAKER: This is Chair Thomas Baker. Karen, do we have notes on who would have brought this up? It was added in 2024. I believe this was a Kotzebue member that brought it up. So, most likely herring abundance would have been focused -- that focus would have been Kotzebue Sound, Kotzebue area herring. If I recall correctly.

MS. HYER: I'm going to defer to Hannah. Do you have any more accurate information on this PIN?

DR. VOORHEES: Hi, Karen. I don't remember off the top of my head, but I'm happy to you know, take a minute and look into that. But I don't know right now.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: I believe -- Chair Thomas Baker, for the record. I believe this was a Kotzebue member who brought this up. But there were also some news articles last year, if not last year, last winter, regarding herring mortality and large die offs of herring just washing up on shore. So, I think for now it would be safe to say, kind of focusing on Kotzebue just so that we can have that in the record and then we can move on to the next PIN if there's no discussion.

DR. VOORHEES: Mr. Chair, this is Hannah Voorhees, and I just wanted to ask. So, you'd like to see the community of Kotzebue specified in the language of the PIN? Is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

DR. VOORHEES: Okay, thanks.

MS. HYER: So, if there are no other questions or comments -- okay, we'll move on to PIN five, great. Okay, document the effects of changing river and tributary conditions on salmon spawning in the Noatak and Kobuk River drainage, with a focus on potential effects of factors such as erosion, discolorization [sic] and mineral deposit, and changing precipitation on spawning viability. Investigators should consult with local subsistence users and draw on their knowledge in designing and carrying out a study. Any comments, questions?

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Chair Thomas Baker
2 here. I think we can keep this one on the list. Elmer,
3 did you have something to add?

4
5 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes. I just want to make
6 a comment. I know we're seeing the changes when the
7 temperatures are high. And I know there was talk about
8 oxygen levels. I think it's important to continue
9 studying the changes and noting them. Thank you.

10
11 MS. HYER: Mr. Chairman, Council members,
12 it sounds like we'll keep this one on the list, and I'm
13 ready to move on to number six if the Council is ready?

14
15 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, please.

16
17 MS. HYER: Okay, Mr. Chairman and Council
18 members, this is actually a new PIN that's being added
19 this year. It is not a carryover from past years and
20 it's based on the discussion that I was hearing about
21 the salmon situation in the area. And also, the Council
22 spoke to this earlier in their reports, which is very
23 helpful. So, I'll go ahead and read it and if there's
24 anything else the Council members want to add, we'd love
25 to hear from them. Document abundance and migration
26 timing of salmon in the Noatak and Kobuk River drainages
27 to address changing availability of subsistence
28 fisheries resources. Investigators should consult with
29 local subsistence users and draw on their knowledge in
30 designing and carrying out research.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Sounds like a good
33 one so, we can keep that in and move on.

34
35 MS. HYER: Yes, okay. And then this is
36 the final PIN. Document abundance and migration timing,
37 especially of dolly varden, Arctic char, lake trout and
38 whitefish species in northwest Arctic to address
39 changing availability of subsistence fisheries
40 resources. Investigators should consult with local
41 subsistence users and draw on their knowledge in
42 designing and carrying out research. And I just want to
43 point out to the Council that this PIN was added in
44 2020, but for this particular 2026 meeting, excuse me
45 not meeting call for proposals, we have added Arctic
46 char to that list from what we've heard from Council
47 members in the area. So, any comments on this particular
48 PIN?

49
50

1 MR. RAMOTH: Through the Chair. Clyde
2 Ramoth, Selawik. Karen when you say the species of
3 whitefish, I got a little excited there because we've
4 identified five different species, of course, but
5 there's the -- and I looking forward for Fish and
6 Wildlife Service and the fishery biologists to come to
7 Selawik some time. But we got the Fish River, we called
8 them (In Native) so kind of identify these. I know
9 they've developed books, but to do more studies. I
10 certainly would like to see that continue. Thank you,
11 Mr. Chair and Karen.

12
13 (Pause)

14
15 MS. HYER: Mister Chairman, Council
16 member members, in addition to these seven Priority
17 Information Needs, is there anything else that you think
18 should be added to the list? I know that it sounds like
19 everything we have here, the Council's interested in
20 keeping and Hannah, do you have something to add?

21
22 DR. VOORHEES: Hi Karen, there's actually
23 one more PIN.

24
25 MS. HYER: Oh, I'm sorry.....

26
27 DR. VOORHEES: Since we added one.....

28
29 MS. HYER: Okay.

30
31 DR. VOORHEES: I'll go to that slide now.

32
33 MS. HYER: Okay. Thank you, Hannah. Okay,
34 this is the last PIN. Identify the spawning areas,
35 critical habitat and range expansion in major rivers
36 tied to the subsistence -- tied to subsistence for
37 whitefish, Northern pike, salmon, grayling, and dolly
38 varden in northwest Alaska. Investigators should consult
39 with local subsistence users and draw on their knowledge
40 in designing and carrying out research. Any comments or
41 any comments on anything that was not included in the
42 list that would be important to include?

43
44 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair. Wilbur, Noorvik.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yep. Go ahead,
47 Wilbur.

48
49 MR. HOWARTH: Karen going back to five
50 like on the salmon, the research -- research study should

1 be expanded more out like, for instance, the salmon out
2 in the ocean that we've seen or heard most of our salmon
3 going over toward the Russian side. Maybe that's why
4 they've been coming in so late during their migration
5 towards the upriver.

6
7 MS. HYER: Mr. Chairman, Council members,
8 I think that's a -- it's a very important issue. There's
9 a lot we don't know about what happens in the ocean, and
10 that certainly has an effect on the salmon returning.
11 Unfortunately, we don't have jurisdiction out there and
12 so our funds can only be used to do research where we
13 have jurisdiction, and our jurisdiction is actually in
14 the freshwater drainages and that's why we've limited
15 our salmon research to those drainages. There is ongoing
16 research in the ocean. It's just funded through a
17 different organization because that is where they have
18 their jurisdiction, which I know is incredibly
19 frustrating because the fish don't care where Federal
20 jurisdiction is. But unfortunately, we're confined to
21 where we have jurisdiction.

22
23 MR. HOWARTH: Okay. Thank you. That
24 answered my question. Thank you.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any final comments or
27 questions on these Priority Information Needs from the
28 Council?

29
30 (No response)

31
32 Hearing none. So, just to clarify, we
33 will need to vote to approve these PINs, correct Hannah?
34 What should the motion sound like? Just that we're
35 getting it correct for the record.

36
37 DR. VOORHEES: Mr. Chair, this is Hannah.
38 Yes. We'd like the Council to act on a motion to approve
39 the priority -- the 2026 Northwest Arctic RAC Priority
40 Information Needs with the edits discussed.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you,
43 Hannah. Would anyone like to make that motion to approve
44 the draft 2026 Northwest Arctic RAC Priority Information
45 Needs with edits as discussed?

46
47 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair, Wilbur.

48
49 (Simultaneous speech)

1 UNIDENTIFIED:make a motion.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right, so I heard
4 Wilbur first, and then Elmer, I see your hand is up.

5

6 MR. ARMSTRONG: No, I was going to make
7 a comment before the motion. Thank you.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Would you like to
10 make your comment, Elmer?

11

12 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes, I know when we had
13 our 10 RAC meeting in Anchorage, there was discussion
14 on the information from NOAA that pertained to salmon.
15 Would we be able to add that as another PIN to where
16 these agencies can get information from NOAA that we can
17 hear from? Thank you.

18

19 MS. HYER: Mr. Chairman. Council members,
20 that probably wouldn't be a PIN because these are to
21 refund - these are to fund research projects, but that
22 can be noted by Lisa. And in our winter meeting, we can
23 look to encourage those investigators to come and
24 present their work to us. We certainly can make efforts
25 to get them here.

26

27 MR. ARMSTRONG: Through the Chair. Thank
28 you.

29

30 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
31 for that, Elmer. So, Wilbur made a motion. Would anyone
32 like to second it?

33

34 MR. RAMOTH: This is Clyde Ramoth. I'll
35 second that motion.

36

37 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you,
38 Clyde. Seconded by Clyde. Lisa, can I please get a roll
39 call vote?

40

41 MS. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Chair and members
42 of the Council are going to be voting on the Council --
43 on the motion to approve the 2026 Northwest Arctic
44 Priority Information Needs. There were seven of them
45 that were presented and discussed. We will start with
46 Wilbur Howarth -- oh eight.

47

48 MR. HOWARTH: Yes.

49

50

00053

1 MS. HUTCHINSON: It's 8 numbers. Member
2 Howarth.
3
4 MR. HOWARTH: Yes.
5
6 MS. HUTCHINSON: Okay, Clyde Ramoth.
7
8 MR. RAMOTH: Yes.
9
10 MS. HUTCHINSON: Elmer Armstrong.
11
12 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.
13
14 MS. HUTCHINSON: Vern Cleveland.
15
16 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes.
17
18 MS. HUTCHINSON: Michael Kramer.
19
20 (No response)
21
22 Micheal, you still on?
23
24 (No response)
25
26 Thomas Baker.
27
28 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.
29
30 MS. HUTCHINSON: And then we'll just see
31 if Tristen Pattee joined us. Tristen Pattee.
32
33 (No response)
34
35 Enoch Shiedt, did you join us Enoch?
36
37 (No response)
38
39 Raymond Woods, did you join us?
40
41 (No response)
42
43 Okay, Mr. Chair, we have five that
44 approved the seven -- the eight PINs and that is a
45 quorum. Thank you. We passed -- the motion passed. Thank
46 you.
47
48 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
49 Lisa. We will move on to action item, which will be as
50 I look Partner for Fisheries Monitoring Program, Karen.

1
2 MS. HYER: Mr. Chairman, Council members
3 again, for the record, this is Karen Hyer. This is just
4 an informational, but this is very -- it's a very quick
5 announcement. So, in addition to my duties as a fisheries
6 biologist, I'm also the Coordinator for the Partners for
7 Fisheries Monitoring program with the Office of
8 Subsistence Management. And I apologize for the names
9 we use, because I find them terribly confusing because
10 they all sound like the same program. But what we just
11 spent time working on was developing direction for
12 researchers to submit proposals for fisheries research.
13 This is a grant, it's a competitive grant, and it
14 actually is intended to help Alaska Native and rural
15 organizations engage in Federal subsistence management.
16 So, if there's an organization out there that would like
17 to apply for funding to do research, this is a way to
18 get salary money so to possibly bring on a biologist.
19 And this money can be used to hire a biologist, a social
20 scientist, an educator or an outreach specialist. And
21 that -- the grant -- or excuse me, the funding will be
22 able to be used by an organization to employ an
23 individual to help that organization engage in Federal
24 subsistence management at a higher level and in addition
25 to money for -- to hire a professional within the
26 organization, the -- this grant can also be used for
27 science or culture camps, or to pay for student
28 internships to allow youth to also engage in our program.
29 And I just wanted to point out that if there's any
30 organization, you know they'd be interested, please have
31 them get in contact with me. This information will also
32 be posted on our web, but I'd love to talk to anybody
33 from your region, because we have yet to have a partner
34 in the Northern region and Lisa can provide my
35 information to anybody. So, please, after this meeting,
36 reach out to her. So, again, it's a call that's coming
37 out in November. The funding can be used for salaries
38 in rural Alaska and Native organizations -- Alaska
39 Native organizations and rural nonprofits to hire a
40 biologist, a social science and educator, or an outreach
41 specialist. And that can also be used for science and
42 culture camps and paid student internships. Are there
43 any questions?

44
45 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Karen.
46 This is Chair Thomas Baker. I think this sounds like a
47 really good opportunity for some of our tribes to get
48 involved. And I know we have at least a couple of Council
49 members who are also affiliated work for or are on the
50 Councils for some of the tribes in the region. So, if

1 we could just make sure that when this comes out that
2 all the tribes in the northwest Arctic, all the tribal
3 organizations get a copy as well as the members of this
4 Council, so that we're able to spread the word on what's
5 available and what can be done. As Clyde mentioned, some
6 of our villages have their own culture camps, science
7 camps, and the summer months and throughout the years.
8 So, this sounds like a great opportunity. Any questions
9 or comments from the Council?

10
11 MR. RAMOTH: Yeah. Clyde Ramoth, Selawik.
12 Mr. Chair and thank you for that, Karen. For the Partner
13 for Fisheries Monitoring Program, it sounds like
14 exciting if we haven't had any partnerships from
15 Northern region. We can -- I know folks with the Fish
16 and Wildlife Service are listening. So, if, like you
17 say, Mr. Chair, if you can shoot some information to our
18 tribal organizations, like for Native Village of Selawik
19 we certainly can look into that competitive grant, as
20 you say. So, thank you for that information.

21
22 MS. HYER: Mr. Chairman, Council members,
23 I'll work with Lisa to make sure that we canvass your
24 region. Because it is the region I spend the most time
25 in. And I would love to have a partner in the region
26 because we haven't had one yet.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Great. Any other
29 questions or comments from the Council?

30
31 (No comments)

32
33 Hearing none. Thank you. Did you have
34 anything else at this time, Karen?

35
36 MS. HYER: No, that is it. Thank you for
37 your time.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you,
40 Karen. With that, we'll move on to our next item on the
41 agenda, which is item C, the Annual Report. Lisa, if you
42 could go over a brief summary of the Annual Report
43 replies, which can be found on page 49 in our big book.

44
45 MS. HUTCHINSON: Yes. Thank you, Mr.
46 Chairman, and members of the Council. So, for the record,
47 again, this is Lisa Hutchinson, I'm the Council
48 Coordinator. Moving on to the Board's replies for the
49 FY23 Annual Report. So, as Mr. Baker said, it starts on
50 page 49 through 56. And then there's enclosures to the

1 Annual Report on page 57 through 78 in your meeting
2 booklet. And again, you can find all those online if you
3 need to on our website. So, anyway, I trust that the
4 Council members have received this report. I emailed it
5 to them, and it was also mailed to them, I believe. And
6 it's also in your meeting book so, you should have had
7 a chance to review it. But I am going to just kind of
8 go over it as quickly as I possible -- just to review
9 what your annual report concerns were last year and what
10 the Board's replies were to you.

11
12 So, topic one, you had -- your concern
13 was the first item was addressing the impact of hunter
14 placement by transport services on caribou migration.
15 The Board's response is that the Board approved the
16 wildlife regulatory proposals 20 -- Wildlife Proposal
17 24-30/31 closing Federal public lands on Unit -- in Unit
18 23 to caribou hunting by non-federally qualified users
19 from August 1st, August -- October 31st unless Western
20 Arctic Caribou Herd population exceeds 200,000.
21 Northwest Arctic communities interested in monitoring
22 caribou migrations and behavior can seek funding from
23 the National Park Service, with resources also available
24 through the Indigenous Sentinels Network and the local
25 Environmental Observation Network. Additionally, the
26 Caribou Hunters Success Working Group offers the
27 educational outreach on traditional hunting practices
28 and can -- and more information can be obtained by
29 contacting Emily Creek with the National Park Service
30 there in Kotzebue. She's a subsistence coordinator
31 there. Topic two the local observation and monitoring
32 of climate change. So, the Board acknowledges the
33 Council's concern about climate change and supports
34 involving local subsistence users in climate monitoring
35 efforts. Recognizing climate change as a significant
36 threat to Alaska's culture, the Board encourages
37 collaboration with Federal initiatives like the
38 Department of Interior's Climate Action Plan and the
39 value of traditional knowledge. Agencies that we just
40 got a report on from Mr. Yaska. Agencies such as the
41 United States Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service
42 have active climate monitoring projects in Alaska,
43 including the Selawik National Wildlife Refuge worked
44 with researchers to study ecosystem shifts. So, the
45 Board does recommend that we continue to invite agency
46 representatives to the next Council meeting to discuss
47 and collaborate more on monitoring opportunities and
48 further details are also available in this Annual
49 Report. Topic three was support for local hunters to aid
50 in their capacity to harvest resources for their

1 communities. And the Board did -- response said recent
2 regulation changes allow for more uses to hunt muskox
3 in the Northwest Alaska, as hunters with the state tier
4 two permit, can also access Federal lands in Unit 23.
5 The Council can propose extending eligibility by
6 adjusting the customary and traditional use
7 determinations of muskox. Additionally, proposal 24-27
8 establishes drop in permits for muskox. Also, the
9 Federal Subsistence Program offers for adjusting
10 regulations quickly, including special actions and
11 delegated authority, and invites the Council's feedback
12 to improve response times to environmental changes.
13

14 Topic four was concerns of rising beaver
15 populations, which we've discussed a little bit a little
16 bit ago, but the Board acknowledges the importance of
17 traditional E -- TEK in addressing the impacts of
18 increased beaver activity. They did say that there's
19 Federal partners, including Selawik Refuge, that
20 continue supporting Beaver studies in the region.
21 February 2024 the Board helped some subsistence users
22 attend the Arctic Beaver Observation Network meeting in
23 Fairbanks. Lead researchers from the study will present
24 an update to the Council in the future, as we discussed
25 earlier. The study incorporates local and traditional
26 knowledge with engagement of the communities of
27 Kotzebue, Noatak and Shungnak and then there's links of
28 those studies in your report. Topic five was again
29 increasing muskox presence. The Federal agencies do not
30 engage in wildlife harassment and oversee only Federal
31 lands, usually far from communities. So, the concern was
32 that there increase -- the Council had increased
33 presence in muskox within the communities along the
34 runways and that but that is not managed by the Federal
35 -- that land is not managed by the feds, Federal lands.
36 But they did say that expanding muskox hunting for the
37 Alaska Board of Game approved a new subsistence hunt for
38 in the Sisualik Peninsula in Unit 23 from June 1st to
39 October 31st offering for permits. Topic six, the
40 concern of increasing predator populations that are
41 contributing to the declines of game populations and
42 need for dietary composition surveys of wolves. The
43 Board again acknowledges the Council's concern over the
44 rising predator populations impacting game and one of
45 the suggestions they made was contacting regional land
46 management agencies for updates on research and to
47 request wolf dietary surveys. Topic seven was your
48 concern about bycatch and depletion of resources in the
49 Bering Sea. The Board's response -- the Board
50 acknowledges the negative impact of commercial fishing

1 on fish populations and the Bering Sea ecosystem.
2 Councils have raised similar concerns, which were shared
3 with the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture. In a
4 joint letter from the multiple Councils that you were
5 all part of, requesting action on bycatch was sent to
6 the Secretaries in July 2024. The Board's plan to enhance
7 communication with the Secretaries office and continue
8 addressing subsistence issues like bycatch. And that
9 concludes your summary from your Annual Report for last
10 year. Do you have any questions, Mr. Chair, members of
11 the Council?

12
13 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any questions on the
14 responses to last year's report before we move into
15 identifying issues for this year's Annual Report?

16
17 (No response)

18
19 Hearing none. Lisa, if we can move into
20 identify issues for FY2024 Annual Report.

21
22 MS. HUTCHINSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
23 members of the Council. So, for your information, the
24 guidelines, if you do have your book available for the
25 annual report, can be found on page 132 in your meeting
26 book and reminder this is an action item. So, just to
27 review, ANILCA established the Annual Reports as a way
28 to inform the Federal Subsistence Board of regional
29 subsistence uses and needs, and to provide
30 recommendations for regional fish and Wildlife
31 management strategies, policies, standards, guidelines
32 and proposed regulations. So, your Annual Report ensures
33 the Board has the most up to date awareness of issues
34 and concerns, and current events that impact your
35 subsistence way of life. With your report and
36 recommendations, the Board can make informed decisions
37 on regulatory and policy actions. So, this is the time
38 for the Council members to share items or information
39 that you would like to see raised to the Board's
40 attention in your Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Report, and
41 have a discussion on what you would like the Office of
42 Subsistence Management to include under these topics.
43 And after the meeting is over, your Council Coordinator
44 will draft the topics of your Annual Report based on the
45 information provided in your discussion today and then
46 at your winter meeting, which will be in March. It should
47 be in March as you have currently approved. The Council
48 will not be able to add any new topics, but you will
49 have the chance to review and provide any edits on the
50 topics that are discussed at this meeting. So, OSM has

1 some recommendations on how the Council may best utilize
2 the Annual Report process. It is requested that the
3 Council please clearly indicate what a topic is,
4 informational or if you would like a response or action
5 from the Board. So, some of these things the Board can
6 actually comment on and make a response, and some you
7 just want them to know about. So, if you can kind of
8 maybe separate that out, we'll see how that works out.
9 If a response is requested, the Council should
10 articulate what it is that you are asking for. If you
11 want a response from the Board where it's an action or
12 an information, if the Council would like a specific
13 response from the Board, it is suggested that the Council
14 write directly to that agency and notify the Board of
15 this action. Additionally, if there is a recommendation
16 to have a topic elevated to the Secretaries, it is also
17 suggested that the Council send this via correspondence
18 via like a letter, and can once again notify the Board
19 of the Council's action. So, that might be a little bit
20 confusing, but we can kind of work through this as we
21 work through the Annual Report topics. But at this time,
22 Mr. Chair, I will turn it back to you. But we would like
23 to just maybe start taking some ideas that any of the
24 council members might have for your annual report this
25 year.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Lisa. And
28 again, for the record, Chair Thomas Baker. I think our
29 top issue has been for several years and I believe
30 continues to be the number one issue that was put into
31 our 2023 Annual Report, which was addressing the impact
32 of hunter placement by transport services on caribou
33 migration. I think continuing to keep this in our Annual
34 Report as we continue to see an ongoing issue year after
35 year after year. The actions that have been taken by the
36 Board so far, based upon our Council's recommendations,
37 other Regions Council's recommendations are phenomenal.
38 However, we continue to see issues on the State side of
39 things. So, my input is that the topic be addressing the
40 impact of hunter placement by transport services on
41 caribou migration. And we ask that the Federal
42 Subsistence Board take some form of action to work with
43 the state of Alaska on State lands, State regulations.
44 It -- it's wonderful when we're able to get closures on
45 Federal lands, when our voices are heard, but when these
46 people are able to just go 12 feet over and they're
47 going on to state land, it almost feels as if we're
48 running around in circles. So, I feel like there needs
49 to be something done by the State side of things, making
50 sure that with regards to closures, with regards to

1 recommendations and regulations, there needs to be some
2 kind of parody coming from the state of Alaska, making
3 sure that we are protecting our subsistence resources
4 as best we can on all lands, State, Federal or otherwise.
5 Are there any questions or comments from other members
6 of the Council? Elmer, go ahead.

7
8 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah, I just want to add
9 on to your comments. You know, the State put a threshold
10 of 200,000, I think. That should be part of it too,
11 because right now the caribou count is -- the last we
12 heard it was 152 and the State not doing anything. I
13 know the -- not closing public lands was not done. I
14 know they did put a limit per year, per person to 15
15 caribou, and one could be a male -- female. I think we
16 need to always have that on with your comments. Thank
17 you.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Elmer. Any
20 other questions or comments?

21
22 MR. KRAMER: Through the Chair. This is
23 Michael.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes. Go ahead, Mike.

26
27 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. I think we should you
28 know, either if we could enter a proposal to the Board
29 of Game. You know, the first recommendation or proposal
30 would be to shut down non-resident hunting in Unit --
31 Management Unit 23 to non-resident hunters and our
32 follow up proposal, if they deny proposal number one,
33 then we'll go to proposal number two. And that is to
34 suggest to the State Board of Game that we make it a
35 registration hunt to where if someone wants to get -- a
36 non-resident wants to get a caribou, they have to come
37 up between June 1st to June 15th to get their harvest
38 ticket. And they only have that window to come in and
39 get it. So, that way we can you know, if we're making
40 an effort to try and see if we can get this State lands
41 closed because, you know, with it being said, in a sense,
42 it's not being done. We've been kind of averaging between
43 10 to 20,000 caribou a year minus, you know, so I mean,
44 like I was saying, right now, we can probably say that
45 we're at 133,000 plus or minus. Just to be on the safe
46 side you know, I think that should be -- the Board --
47 the Bouncil members agree, you know to (distortion)
48 registration until where they have to come up between
49 June 1st and June 15th to get their harvest tickets.
50 It'll kind of deter some of them, you know, to come up

1 twice to go get one caribou in the fall. You know, it
2 might help. It might not help. But we should at least
3 do that number one proposal would be for to close it.
4 Recommendations to the State to close it. Number two,
5 it would be the registration man and if the Council
6 agrees and see if we could add that in there. Thank you.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
9 Mike. Any questions or comments?

10
11 MS. HUTCHINSON: Yes, Mr. Chair, members
12 of the Council. Just to get a little clarity on that.
13 So, Michael, this is an interesting topic. I'm wondering
14 if maybe staff could advise if this is something that
15 could go into the Annual Report or if it would be better
16 to issue a letter to the Board and also the Board of
17 game or if we wanted -- if the Council is wanting to
18 submit a proposal to the Board of Game during their next
19 cycle when they take up the northwest region. Michael,
20 could you clarify maybe what you're thinking? Thank you.

21
22 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, either putting in a
23 recommendation and a proposal, you know, are -- both
24 proposals. Because I want to make sure that, you know,
25 we protect our caribou resource, the resource of our
26 caribou. You know, to see if the state of Alaska is
27 willing to work with us and say, hey, you know, if this
28 can't pass, then can we do this one? You know, proposal.
29 I think they'd be better off with these proposals if the
30 Council approves.

31
32 MS. HUTCHINSON: Okay. We could include
33 -- we could do the submitting a proposal, but we could
34 also include this in your Annual Report, if you would
35 like, is not something that the -- you know is an
36 information item that you want the Board to know about.
37 That's a thought anyway, if that's what the Council like.

38
39 MR. KRAMER: I'd like to see it put in
40 there.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any other thoughts
43 questions comments from members of the Council?

44
45 MR. RAMOTH: Mr. Chair, this is Clyde.
46 May I?

47
48 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, go ahead Clyde.

1 MR. RAMOTH: Okay. I know we saw of six
2 major topics which we talked about here on page 49 on
3 up. And those are all important, especially with the
4 caribou than anything else. But enlighten me, someone,
5 because I'm still trying to find out. Is there a
6 Waterfowl Committee Board? Where does that come in?
7 Because that could be something we could add on in future
8 subjects or agenda item for that might be later. But
9 with our warmer temperatures, our water polluting, the
10 air pollution. Is there studies? Is there a waterfowl
11 group that we could hear from at a later time? Thank
12 you.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any staff from any
15 agency able to speak to that?

16
17 (No response)

18
19 Fish and Game, OSM, anyone able to speak
20 on Mr. Ramoth question regarding waterfowl?

21
22 MS. LEVINE: Hello, Mr. Baker. This is
23 Robin LeVine.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes. Please go ahead,
26 Robin.

27
28 MS. LEVINE: Thank you, Mr. Baker. So,
29 the Federal Subsistence Management program addresses
30 fish and wildlife and you know, actions on migratory or
31 for migratory waterfowl or the management of migratory
32 waterfowl happens under a different program. And so
33 that's something I can't fully speak to. But if you're
34 thinking about topics for your Annual Report, anything
35 that impacts your subsistence way of life can be really
36 important to include as an informational item, even if
37 the Board doesn't manage migratory waterfowl. Your
38 concerns about the quality of the habitat, climate
39 change and its impacts on the fish, wildlife, birds, sea
40 mammals that you rely on, you can definitely let the
41 Board know of your concerns and include it as an
42 informational item. Your reports are presented to the
43 Board, and the Board can keep your reports in mind when
44 they take action on regulations that our program does
45 encompass. So, if I could be brief, now that was a long
46 chat, but if I could be brief. For your Annual Report,
47 you could include informational items, such as your
48 concern about what's happening on State lands with the
49 caribou and then you can -- you can draft a proposal to
50 the Alaska Board of Game on that issue. And for your

1 concerns of migratory waterfowl, you can put that as a
2 topic, an informational topic in your Annual Report and
3 you can invite the Migratory Bird program through Fish
4 and Wildlife to present on this issue at your next
5 meeting. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Robin. For
8 the members of the Council, is that sound clear? And if
9 -- I'll get to you in a moment, Mr. Wiese any questions
10 or any objections to using the language that Robin just
11 gave for the purpose of identifying issues for the annual
12 report, and just some further items that the council
13 would like to see done. I feel like that was pretty
14 succinct. It was a good way of summarizing what's just
15 been discussed. Any questions or opposition to that, or
16 would we like to add those to our list for the 2024
17 Annual Report?

18
19 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes. Go ahead,
22 Wilbur.

23
24 MR. RAMOTH: Yeah Wilbur Howarth,
25 Noorvik. Clyde brought up something that I guess the
26 rest of the Board should hear on the migratory bird.
27 Because nowadays, with this climate change and global
28 warming. We're seeing all kinds of different types of
29 birds coming this way, and we do subsist in the
30 springtime. So, I agree with Clyde and if we could
31 invite, I don't know if Cyrus Harris is still the Chair
32 for that migratory bird deal they have meetings on. I
33 used to be on that one, but it would be nice to listen
34 to them at least one time in the -- or our next meeting.
35 Thank you.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
38 Wilbur. Any other Council questions or comments?

39
40 (No comments)

41
42 So, for the record, if we can make sure
43 to have those things identified as issues -- identified
44 as issues, and then the drafting of a proposal for the
45 appropriate cycle, as well as inviting someone to speak
46 at our next meeting regarding waterfowl. I think that
47 would be a good plan. Mr. Wil Wiese, did you have
48 something?

1 MR. WIESE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah.
2 I just wanted to point out that Cyrus Harris does
3 represent this region to the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-
4 management Council, and he typically has a sort of
5 regional meeting for representatives from communities
6 to help inform him so that he can best represent the
7 region. I know he was hoping to have one this fall, and
8 it didn't work out, and so it's been postponed until in
9 early 25. I don't know exactly when, but they are meeting
10 and they are working on migratory bird issues. That's
11 all. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Wil. Do
14 you know who a good point of contact would be? So, that
15 we could get that disseminated? If anybody has questions
16 about waterfall either whether it's Cyrus' contact
17 information or someone from that organization, from a
18 staff position or whatever it may be who folks could
19 talk to, and if we could get it just noted to go over
20 the outcome of that meeting, if it happens before our
21 winter meeting or just make a note that we would like
22 to have someone there discussing waterfowl issues for
23 the winter meeting next year.

24
25 MR. WIESE: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
26 So, Cyrus, is that point of contact. Myself and Brittany
27 Sweeny and Selawik Refuge often help facilitate and help
28 Cyrus with some logistics for putting things together.
29 But he is the point of contact.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Great, thank you Wil.
32 So, Lisa, if we could just make a note to invite Mr.
33 Cyrus Harris in that capacity to our winter meeting so
34 we could speak on that with him. Outside of all of that,
35 are there any other issues that we would like to have
36 incorporated into the Annual Report for fiscal year
37 2024? So, far, we've mentioned caribou, waterfowl,
38 anything else that we would like identified, carried
39 over from last year's report? Any thoughts from Council
40 members?

41
42 (No response)

43
44 Any other issues we would like to have
45 identified?

46
47 (No response)

48
49
50

1 MS. HUTCHINSON: One of the things that
2 -- Mr. Chair, this is Lisa again. It was something I
3 think said earlier, you know, about salmon being
4 essential, that the runs this year seem to be diminished
5 within Kotzebue Sound and of the rivers and then concerns
6 over, you know, the (indiscernible) rivers and drainages
7 that are happening. So, there are studies going on. But
8 all this, I know that there has been concerns voiced
9 many times about how you know the (indiscernible) of the
10 rivers, the salmon runs, how it might be affecting the
11 local streams for obtaining whitefish or anything. Is
12 this something that should be -- that the Council might
13 find is an important topic for the end report? Or I'm
14 just kind of trying to brainstorm a little bit about
15 thinking of some ideas. I'm trying to put it in your
16 thoughts. It's just a thought I have. Thank you.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
19 Lisa. I think that would be a good issue to include in
20 the report. I believe it was Mr. Kramer that mentioned,
21 you know, their concerns over, are we getting the --
22 enough returns now in salmon to ensure that we'll have
23 good runs in the future? And just kind of looking at
24 previous runs and what the return and escapement was in
25 previous years. And if that's part of why we're having
26 low returns this year and in the last couple of years.
27 So, I think that would be a pretty big issue to have
28 included, just because it's something that has been
29 ongoing and with the nature of fish returns and
30 escapement and specifically salmon, it is something that
31 we rely on pretty heavily in this region. So, if we
32 could include that, I think that'd be strong topic. Any
33 other thoughts, concerns that we'd like brought up for
34 the Annual Report?

35
36 MR. KRAMER: Excuse me. Chair, this is
37 Michael.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, go ahead, Mike.

40
41 MR. RAMOTH: One thing I'd like -- that
42 I see that the reoccurring thing throughout our region
43 and that's you know, global warming. One thing I'd like
44 to see as a study to be done up all of our major
45 drainages, is that you know, the sloughing of banks and
46 bluffs throughout our drainages, Noatak Kobuk, Selawik,
47 you know, and all the rivers. Because I did notice, you
48 know, a lot of places up to Noatak, lower Noatak where
49 he'd be going on. And you can just see all hillsides,
50 the willows just go right down into the river. You know,

1 is that is that sediment impacting any kind of a fish
2 return or spawning or -- because that's another big
3 concern with you know, with it being warming up and
4 everything. I think that would be a viable thing to
5 study, and that would be a good thing to try and see if
6 we can you know, whether it be a geological study or to
7 see if we could try and get that funded to have to have
8 it happen. Because I think that's going to start being
9 more of a concern in our future also.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
12 Mike. Any thoughts or comments on that? I think that
13 would be a good issue to kind of bring forward from last
14 year. Number two on last year's report was local
15 observation and monitoring of climate change. But really
16 expanding on that and bringing it forward into seeing
17 the need for not just local observation, but
18 concentrated studies and efforts to understand the
19 effects of this climate change. So, if we could add that
20 in, that would be good. Any other thoughts, comments for
21 the Annual Report?

22
23 MR. RAMOTH: Mr. Chair, Clyde Ramoth.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes. Go ahead, Clyde.

26
27 MR. RAMOTH: Yeah. I agree with Mr.
28 Kramer there because, number two, local observation and
29 monitoring of climate change, I think they're always
30 going to be in the forefront because it does affect any
31 type of migration or population or even just, I mean,
32 from the waters to the sea to the air, you know, I mean,
33 to the ground it does affect all the population of
34 everything that we subsist on. I fully agree we could
35 find out more studies that's being done and give us
36 maybe some reports of how a lot of these things can
37 affect our rivers. I know there's a lot of questions
38 every community has in our region, and I know these
39 agencies have a lot of good study that's already been
40 done. But even just pictures that shows before and after
41 really does help. I know our area here so, I just wanted
42 to echo that. Thank you.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Clyde. Any
45 other issues we would like identified for the Annual
46 Report?

47
48 (No response)

1 If there are no other issues I would
2 like to ask Lisa, what do we have identified so far? I
3 believe we should have 4 or 5 topics that have been
4 identified, as well as a few items for drafting of
5 proposals, requests for attendance at future meetings
6 and stuff like that.

7
8 MS. HUTCHINSON: Yes. Thank you and you
9 guys, please anybody that -- if you're paying attention,
10 I'm trying to make notes, but just make sure that I'm
11 getting this correctly. So, please help me with this.
12 So, we do have the first topic was talked about -- let's
13 see.

14
15 Lost track of my notes here. Okay. So,
16 Mr. Baker, you suggested to address -- continue to
17 address the -- which was one of the Annual Report topics
18 for last year on addressing the impact of hunter
19 placement on caribou migration and that we should
20 continue to keep that on the report because it continues
21 to be a problem that you are seeing. And that would be,
22 as I would suggest, it would be an action or an item
23 that you would like the Council -- I mean, the Board to
24 reply to?

25
26 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

27
28 MS. HUTCHINSON: And -- okay. And then
29 then we were talking about -- Elmer had an issue to talk
30 about one of the caribou counts and the -- would like
31 the Board to -- basically just concerns about the caribou
32 counts. And then there was kind of a double issue about
33 how the -- that Mr. Baker, you brought up about how the
34 Federal Subsistence Board is able to listen to the RAC's
35 and the regions to try to maintain certain closures for
36 caribou hunting, to try to help protect the herd, that
37 the State you feel kind of contradicts that. And so, you
38 have, you know, you can be protecting caribou on one
39 side of the land, but in the State land is not. And so
40 you kind of feel like you're going in a circle. So, that
41 was, I guess, another topic that I think would be an
42 action item that you'd like the Board to respond to, to
43 try to reach out more with the State, Board of the Game
44 to try to work with the Federal Subsistence Board and
45 get the -- to see your -- to try to represent what --
46 anyway, I guess you're doing the same kind of management
47 on both sides. So, you're protecting the resources. You
48 see is that -- I didn't put that very articulately, but
49 is that how you were thinking for a second item?

50

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

2
3 MS. HUTCHINSON: Caribou concerns. Okay.
4 Then we had issues that we wanted -- Mr. Kramer, we
5 brought up the issue of just wanting to let the Board
6 know about, first of all, to submit a proposal to the
7 Board of Game during their next cycle for the region to
8 to -- about -- to dealing with resident hunting permits
9 and then also provide those -- this information to the
10 Board so they're aware that this is what the Council
11 would like to do. That's not necessarily an action item
12 or an item that the Board could necessarily respond to,
13 but it's just an information item. Is that how you, Mr.
14 Kramer or Mr. -- any other Council members feel that
15 that would be presented? And if I'm not explaining this
16 well somebody can kind of help me here.

17
18 MR. KRAMER: Yes. This is Michael. I see
19 it as a suggestion or a request for a proposal. You
20 know, from us to them to try and help us. Clearly the
21 hunting to non-resident hunters -- you know, because I
22 think now is very critical that we start looking into
23 protecting the caribou herd. I don't know -- I didn't
24 really get to hear very much as to where -- more majority
25 of the commercial activity was in our region this year.
26 I believe Alex said, North Slope, I'm not sure as to
27 where most of the commercial activity was, but you know,
28 I think it would be as a recommendation and possibly put
29 in a proposal for those two items that I spoke about
30 earlier about the caribou.

31
32 MS. HUTCHINSON: Okay. Thank you for
33 clarifying that. We had a suggestion for information for
34 the Board, that Clyde Ramoth suggested just to talk about
35 -- to kind of bring more light to the water quality
36 issue and waterfowl. So, you know, we -- as we said that
37 just because the Federal Subsistence Board doesn't
38 manage wildlife, it doesn't mean it's not an important
39 subsistence resource. And it's really important and
40 vital, that this is a concern the Council has to bring
41 to the attention of the Board. And also, you suggested
42 we could write -- invite the like, you know, for our
43 future meeting I will certainly reach out to the Alaska
44 Migratory Bird Council and -- to try to get a report
45 from Mr. Cyrus about that program. So, there's kind of
46 two requests there, but we can bring it to the attention
47 to the Board that this is an issue and also get the
48 report from the for the next Council meeting. Wilbur
49 suggested that and then, I think we talked about the
50 salmon returns for the future and getting a little bit

1 more -- looking kind of more just -- I think because you
2 guys have concerns about the escapement of salmon,
3 because it's a very vital resource in the region. This
4 year the escapement runs were less and it's affecting -
5 - potentially affecting your returns, your ability to
6 harvest fish. So, that's especially a concern that the
7 Board should know about. I'm wondering if this is
8 something that you would like the Board also to provide
9 a response to?

10
11 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Lisa. Any
12 other issues we'd like to have brought up? Any questions,
13 comments on what's been discussed so far?

14
15 MS. HUTCHINSON: And then we also, did
16 talk about the warming of the tundra, thawing of the
17 tundra, the effects of drainages that are going into the
18 stream, and just continuing on similar -- your proposal
19 -- your concern last year on item number two about the
20 local observation of climate change. But just to expand
21 that into -- to really encouraging more concentrated
22 studies to understand the effects of climate change on
23 your rivers and resources. And I think that's all I had
24 noted.

25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Lisa.

26
27 MS. HUTCHINSON: That's kind of what the
28 council would like. Thank you.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: I think it sounds
31 like we -- you summed up everything pretty well. Are
32 there any final issues that we would like to have added
33 or discussed at this time? If there are none, then we
34 would need a motion to approve these issues for the
35 Annual Report. And Lisa, can you remind us on this
36 process? I believe it's we approved to identify these
37 issues and then post meeting, we would -- staff would
38 work on articulating them, writing it out to then be
39 emailed for final review before submittal. And that
40 would be at the winter meeting, where we review the
41 issues and make sure that it's what we would like to
42 convey. Correct?

43
44 MS. HUTCHINSON: Yes, Mr. Chair, that is
45 that is correct. So, that is the process. I will draft
46 these up and I'm going to run them by Mr. Baker first
47 to -- before and probably Mr. Kramer and some of the
48 other Council members just to ensure that we're getting
49 this drafted. Well, then we will -- I'll come up with
50 the list and then once it gets kind of go through the

1 review, then it will be brought up again to the Council.
2 So, today you're going to have to vote if you want to
3 move these forward. And then in the winter meeting --
4 then I will bring it in front of you all of your topics
5 and all of the Council will need to do is approve them
6 or not. And then if they get approved, they will be sent
7 off to the Board to respond to. So, that's essentially
8 the process. Any questions, Mr. Chair?

9
10 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Lisa. Any
11 questions, comments? If there are no questions or
12 comments, would anyone like to make a motion to approve
13 the issues identified for the FY 2024 Annual report?

14
15 MR. RAMOTH: Mr. Chair, this is Clyde
16 Ramoth, Selawik. I'll make that motion.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. Motion
19 made by Clyde. Anyone like to second that?

20
21 MR. HOWARTH: Wilbur Howarth, Noorvik.
22 I'll second that.

23
24 (Simultaneous speech)

25
26 MR. ARMSTRONG: This is Elmer... go ahead
27 Wilbur.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Wilbur Howarth
30 seconds. With that, can I please get a roll call vote.
31 Lisa.

32
33 MS. HUTCHINSON: Okay, we're doing a roll
34 call vote to approve the issues identified for the Annual
35 Report that we just discussed. Wilbur Howarth.

36
37 MR. HOWARTH: Yes.

38
39 MS. HUTCHINSON: Elmer Armstrong.

40
41 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

42
43 MS. HUTCHINSON: Clyde Ramoth.

44
45 MR. RAMOTH: Yes.

46
47 MS. HUTCHINSON: Michael Kramer.

48
49 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

00071

1 MS. HUTCHINSON: Vern Cleveland.

2
3 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes.

4
5 MS. HUTCHINSON: Thank you, Vern. Thomas
6 Baker.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

9
10 MS. HUTCHINSON: And I'll just see if the
11 other council members might have joined on. Tristen
12 Pattee.

13
14 (No response)

15
16 Attamuk Shiedt.

17
18 (No response)

19
20 Raymond Woods.

21
22 (No response)

23
24 Mr. Chair, we have six that approved the
25 report. That's a quorum. So, the motion passed. Thank
26 you.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
29 Lisa. And just so folks know, because we started at 9
30 a.m. I would like to continue through the next couple
31 issues on the agenda, which are action items while we
32 still have a quorum. And then we'll take a lunch break,
33 and after -- we'll get through future meeting dates on
34 the agenda and then lunch break. And then once we come
35 back from lunch, we'll have another opportunity for
36 public and tribal comments on non-agenda items. And from
37 there we will pick up with other business, starting with
38 the 805C report. So, with that do we have Dr. Kim Jochum?

39
40 DR. JOCHUM: Yeah. Hello Mr. Chair. This
41 is Kim Jochum. I know my last name was a little
42
43 challenging sometimes. I appreciate it. I'm ready when
44 you are.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Dr.
47 Jochum. So, the floor is yours. If you would like to go
48 over the Subsistence Resource Commission's updates.

49
50

1 MS. JOCHUM: Great. Thank you, Mr. Chair
2 and members of the Council. My name is Kim Jochum for
3 the record, I work for the Regional Office Subsistence
4 Program at the National Park Service. I am here today
5 sharing this update on behalf of the Cape Krusenstern
6 and Kobuk Valley Subsistence Resource Commissions
7 Coordinator from the Western Arctic Parklands based in
8 Kotzebue, Esmailik Creek. The Cape Krusenstern and Kobuk
9 Valley Subsistence Resource Commissions provide local
10 subsistence users an opportunity to inform the
11 management of subsistence resources in National
12 Parklands and the surrounding areas. So, since the
13 establishment of the Federal Subsistence Program in
14 1990, each nine-member commission has made
15 recommendations on Fish and Wildlife proposals directly
16 to Regional Advisory Councils and the Federal
17 Subsistence Board. Both commissions met in early October
18 this year at the Heritage Center in Kotzebue. The Cape
19 Krusenstern Subsistence Resource Commission discussed
20 its vacant seats, the changes to caribou regulations,
21 and update on Tier 2 Sisualik muskox hunt that was
22 approved by the Board of Game last January and they
23 heard many presentations about research in Parklands.
24 Members also watched a short Park Service film about
25 Cape Krusenstern and provided feedback to our staff. The
26 Kobuk Valley Subsistence Resource Commission discussed
27 similar topics. Members also viewed a newly digitized
28 film from the 1964 Giddings' archaeological dig at Onion
29 Portage. The footage includes birchbark basket making,
30 canoe building, fishing, and the building of Giddings'
31 Cabin so, excitingly, this footage includes many local
32 people. Members further provided feedback on outreach
33 in communities. The Kobuk Valley Subsistence Resource
34 Commission is asking you to address one action item today
35 to fill an expired and inactive Subsistence Resource
36 Commission seat. You can find the letter requesting this
37 action in your supplemental materials. I don't have the
38 exact page. I'm sorry, I don't have that, but this is
39 labeled Kobuk Valley Subsistence Resource Commission
40 appointment request. And as a reminder, the Northwest
41 Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council appoints
42 three members to the Kobuk Valley Subsistence Resource
43 Commission. These members provide an important link
44 between the Subsistence Resource Commission and the
45 Federal Subsistence Management Program. In addition to
46 the Regional Advisory Council appointments, three
47 members of each Subsistence Resource Commission are
48 appointed by the Governor of Alaska, and three members
49 are appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. So, one
50 current RAC member, Elmer Armstrong, is seeking

1 appointment to the Kobuk Valley Subsistence Resource
2 Commission to take the place of an expired and inactive
3 seat. I'm here to ask if the Regional Advisory Council
4 is interested in appointing Elmer Armstrong to the Kobuk
5 Valley Subsistence Resource Commission. Thank you, Mr.
6 Chair, and members of the Council. That is my request
7 and update.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Dr.
10 Jochum. So, at this time, I would just like to ask Elmer
11 to confirm that you would like to be appointed to the
12 Kobuk Valley SRC?

13
14 MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
15 Yes, I would like to.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
18 for that, Elmer. So, with that, would anyone like to
19 make a motion to appoint Elmer Armstrong as a member of
20 the RAC to hold a seat on the Kobuk Valley SRC?

21
22 MR. RAMOTH: Mr. Chair. Clyde Ramoth, I
23 so move.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Moved by Clyde. Do
26 we have a second?

27
28 MR. HOWARTH: I'll second that, Mr.
29 Chair. Wilbur Howarth, Noorvik.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur,
32 for the second. So, move by Clyde, seconded by Wilbur
33 to appoint Elmer Armstrong of the Northwest Arctic RAC
34 to the Kobuk Valley SRC. Lisa, can I please get a roll
35 call? Vote.

36
37 MS. HUTCHINSON: Yes. We will do a roll
38 call vote. We'll start with Michael Kramer.

39
40 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

41
42 MS. HUTCHINSON: Verne Cleveland.

43
44 (No response)

45
46 You're there Verne?

47
48 (No response)

49
50

1 Come back to Verne. Elmer Armstrong,
2 would you approve that?

3
4 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

5
6 MS. HUTCHINSON: Clyde Ramoth.

7
8 (No response)

9
10 You there, Clyde?

11
12 (No response)

13
14 Wilbur Howarth.

15
16 MR. HOWARTH: Yes.

17
18 MS. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Baker.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

21
22 MS. HUTCHINSON: Coming back, Verne
23 Cleveland. Can you -- are you on?

24
25 MR. RAMOTH: Well, this Clyde. You guys
26 lost me for a while. Sorry.

27
28 MS. HUTCHINSON: Okay. Do you approve the
29 nomination? Did you hear what the -- you're voting on?

30
31 MR. RAMOTH: Yes, I made that motion, and
32 I'll see.....

33
34 (Simultaneous speech)

35
36 MS. HUTCHINSON: Okay so, you approved
37 that, okay.

38
39 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes, this is Verne. I'm
40 back on. I lost you guys for a while.

41
42 MS. HUTCHINSON: Okay, Verne. So, we were
43 just voting, there was a motion to accept Elmer Armstrong
44 to the Kobuk Valley SRC, and we were wondering if you
45 wanted to vote to accept that or not.

46
47
48 MR. CLEVELAND: Is that question for me?
49 Verne.

50

1 MS. HUTCHINSON: Yes, Verne. Yeah, we
2 were going to I'm sorry -- we're going through a vote
3 that motion was to accept -- to nominate Elmer Armstrong
4 as your representative with the Kobuk Valley SRC. And
5 so, we were just going through the voting to see if you
6 -- the Council accepted that. And would you approve that?

7
8 MR. CLEVELAND: I would, yes.

9
10 MS. HUTCHINSON: Okay. And then -- okay
11 so, we have all six of you that said yes, and so that a
12 quorum is passed, and so the motion passed.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
15 for that, Lisa. So, with that congratulations, Mr.
16 Armstrong, you are hereby appointed as a RAC member
17 serving on the Kobuk Valley SRC. We will move on to item
18 two, under Subsistence Resource Commissions, Cape
19 Krusenstern update. Dr. Jochum.

20
21 MR. JOCHUM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I did
22 provide both updates together in one update so, I don't
23 have anything additional to add at this time. Except of
24 you have questions for me.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. Thank you,
27 Dr. Jochum. Any questions, comments, concerns for the
28 Subsistence Resource Commission's at this time from the
29 Council?

30
31 (No response)

32
33 Hearing none. Thank you for your updates
34 and we will move on to item E, future meeting dates. So,
35 at this time, if we go to our big books on page 133, we
36 have to confirm the Winter 2025 meeting date and
37 location. Currently we are scheduled for -- when are we
38 scheduled for? March 28th in Kotzebue. Any discussion?
39 Would we like to keep that date? And if so, we would
40 just need a motion to keep that time and place for an
41 in-person meeting. March 27th, 28th in Kotzebue.

42
43 (Simultaneous speech)

44
45 MR. CLEVELAND: I'll make the motion
46 (indiscernible).

47
48 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Would you say that
49 again, Verne?

50

1 MR. RAMOTH: I'll make a motion to have
2 that meeting on that date.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Verne and
5 then was that Clyde speaking at the same time?

6
7 MR. RAMOTH: Yeah, Mr. Chair. I'll second
8 that motion.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right, thank you.
11 So, motion made by Verne, seconded by Clyde for
12 confirming the Winter 2025 meeting date and location of
13 March 27th, 28th in Kotzebue. Lisa, can I please get a
14 roll call vote?

15
16 MS. HUTCHINSON: Yes. Okay, so we will
17 start with Wilbur Howarth.

18
19 MR. HOWARTH Yes.

20
21 MS. HUTCHINSON: Clyde Ramoth.

22
23 MR. RAMOTH: Yes.

24
25 MS. HUTCHINSON: Elmer Armstrong.

26
27 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

28
29 MS. HUTCHINSON: And Verne Cleveland.

30
31 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes.

32
33 MS. HUTCHINSON: Michael Kramer.

34
35 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

36
37 MS. HUTCHINSON: And Mr. Baker.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

40
41 MS. HUTCHINSON: Okay. We have the 6
42 members that voted yes for 9. And so the motion did pass
43 to have the meeting date for the winter 2025 meeting on
44 March 27th and 28th as current -- previously scheduled.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
47 Lisa. And we will move right into confirming the fall
48 2025 meeting date and location on page 134. We have that
49 scheduled for October 27th, 28th in Kotzebue, in person.
50 Would anyone like to make a motion to confirm that?

1
2 MR. RAMOTH: Clyde Ramoth, I shall move.
3
4 MR. CLEVELAND: Second. This is Verne.
5
6 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Moved by Clyde,
7 seconded by Verne. For an in-person meeting in Kotzebue
8 for the fall 2025 meeting. To be held on October 27th,
9 28th, 2025. Lisa, can I please get a roll call vote?
10
11 MS. HUTCHINSON: Okay. Michael Kramer.
12
13 MR. KRAMER: Yes.
14
15 MS. HUTCHINSON: Verne Cleveland.
16
17 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes.
18
19 MS. HUTCHINSON: Elmer Armstrong.
20
21 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.
22
23 MS. HUTCHINSON: Clyde Ramoth.
24
25 MR. RAMOTH: Yes.
26
27 MS. HUTCHINSON: Wilbur Howarth.
28
29 (No response)
30
31 You there, Wilbur?
32
33 (No response)
34
35 Thomas Baker.
36
37 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.
38
39 MS. HUTCHINSON: I think Wilbur might
40 have dropped off, but we do have 5 that voted for that,
41 so that would be a quorum. So, that would pass. Meeting
42 will be held October 27th and 28th in the fall of 2025.
43 Thank you.
44
45 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
46 everyone for that. And it appears we have covered all
47 of our action items. There may be one or two later, but
48 at this time we'll go ahead and take a recess. It is
49 12:43 p.m. If we can plan to be back on record at 2:00
50 p.m. We will continue from there.

1
2 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, Wilbur.

5
6 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah, is Wilbur. I was
7 gonna vote, yes, but I lost you guys.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
10 for that, Wilbur. We did have enough quorum to pass that
11 confirmation date. But we will put it in the record that
12 you voted yes, for confirming the fall meeting next year.
13 Is everyone all right with taking a lunch break until
14 2:00 p.m.

15
16 MR. RAMOTH: Mr. Chair, Clyde Ramoth. So,
17 this morning, I got a text that we are gonna have a
18 emergency special meeting at the City Office. As part
19 of the tribal council I'm gonna be attending, just in
20 case I don't call in at 2:00 p.m. At least we've got the
21 action items done and thank you.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
24 for that, Clyde. And we will just call your name if
25 there's anything else needed. So, if you are able to
26 call back in or you're still on, we'll reach out for
27 you. Any other issues with coming back at 2:00 p.m.?

28
29 (Simultaneous speech)

30
31 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Verne first and then
32 Mike.

33
34 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes. I'm about six miles
35 behind Noorvik. If I don't call back somebody could text
36 me and I'll call back.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
39 for that, Verne. Mike, did you have something?

40
41 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, I have an appointment
42 at 2:30 p.m. I'll be calling back -- I'll be calling in
43 right after my appointment. So, I'm down here in
44 Anchorage, so I'll call in with -- soon as I get done
45 with my appointments.

46
47
48 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Okay. Thank you for
49 that, Mike. Anybody else? Anything for coming back at 2
50 p.m.?

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(No response)

Hearing none, it is now 12:45 p.m. We will go ahead and recess until 2:00 p.m. Thank you, everyone.

(Off record)

(On record)

It is now 2 p.m. This is Chair Thomas Baker. When we last left off, we were finishing the action items under item 11. Before we get started, Lisa, would you mind doing a roll (distortion) from the Council?

MS. HUTCHINSON: Good afternoon, everybody. Again, this is the afternoon session of the Northwest Regional Subsistence Advisory Council. And I'm going to do -- and my name is Lisa Hutchinson, for the record, the Council coordinator. I would like to do a roll call for members that are attending this afternoon. Do we have Wilbur Howarth?

(No response)

Verne Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Yeah, here.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Elmer Armstrong.

MR. CLEVELAND: Here.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Clyde Ramoth.

MR. ARMSTRONG: This is Elmer, I'm here.

MS. HUTCHINSON: Hey, Elmer. Elmer, Verne, Clyde Ramoth. Back on yet, Clyde? No. Do we say Wilbur Howarth?

(No response)

Michael Kramer.

(No response)

00080

1 And we'll just check the others. Raymond
2 Woods.

3
4 (No response)

5
6 Enoch Shiedt.

7
8 (No response)

9
10 Tristen Pattee.

11
12 (No response)

13
14 And Chair Baker.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Here.

17
18 MS. HUTCHINSON: Looks like we currently
19 have just three members present. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
22 for that, Lisa. So, at this time, I will again offer an
23 opportunity for public and tribal comments on non-agenda
24 items. If we had anyone who wasn't able to call in this
25 morning and would like to make a comment from a tribal
26 organization or a member of the public on any items not
27 on the agenda.

28
29 MS. MONIGOLD: Good afternoon. This is
30 Karmen Monigold.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Hi, Karmen, go ahead.

33
34 MS. MONIGOLD: Hi, I'm from Kotzebue. I'm
35 speaking on behalf of myself. I wish I had spoken earlier
36 when you had a quorum. But I just wanted the RAC to know
37 that the Ambler Access road that the Department of
38 Interior had denied and went with the no-action
39 alternative, has now been attached to the Department of
40 the Defense bill. They have not voted on it yet in the
41 legislature. Is there any way you could submit a letter
42 against the road that you voted on? Against -- being
43 against the road, last meeting? All the subsistence
44 concerns voiced here would also be affected by this
45 proposed road. And I just -- man, I wish I had spoken
46 up earlier. I just didn't have my thoughts together so,
47 I do apologize. Thank you.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
50 for that, Carmen. The Council has submitted a letter in

1 the past in opposition to the road. I don't recall what
2 the date of that would have been. But we will add your
3 comment into the record. Unfortunately, we don't have a
4 quorum right now so, we're not really able to do that,
5 but it's something that we can definitely discuss at our
6 next meeting, when we should have more folks attending
7 as it will be in-person. So, thank you for your comment.
8 Do we have anyone else from the public or a tribal
9 organization or entity wishing to make a comment on non-
10 agenda items at this time?

11
12 (No response)

13
14 Hearing none, we will move on to item
15 number 12 in the agenda, which is other business. We
16 will start with the 805C report summary. Lisa.

17
18 MS. HUTCHINSON: Yes. Thank you, Mr.
19 Chair, members of the Council. Again okay, again, for
20 the record, my name is Lisa Hutchinson. I'm the Council
21 Coordinator, and the Federal Subsistence Board met and
22 took action this past April. The former 805C report is
23 in your meeting book. It starts with the cover letter,
24 which is on page 139 of the meeting book. So, the 805
25 report, 805C report is a document generated from the
26 Board meeting. It provides details to each Regional
27 Advisory Council on the Board 's action with respect to
28 the region-specific proposals and closure reviews.
29 Report attached to the 805C cover letter details any
30 actions taken by the Board that differed from the
31 Council's recommendations. So, the Council provided a
32 total of eight recommendations on wildlife proposals and
33 closure reviews, which included six regional proposals,
34 one regional closure review, and one statewide proposal.
35 Of those proposals, the Board acted on four proposals
36 that were consistent with the Council's recommendations.
37 These proposals were Wildlife Proposal 22-27, which
38 changed the Federal muskox permit system in Unit 22 and
39 23 from a Federal registration permit to a Federal
40 drawing permit. It also standardized the language in the
41 eight delegation of authority letters, and it changed
42 the in-season manager for the muskox hunt and a portion
43 of Unit 23. The Board rescinded WCR22-19, which
44 rescinded the closure to hunting of muskox by non-
45 federally-qualified users south of Kotzebue Sound and
46 west, and including the Buckland River drainage in Unit
47 23. Both of these.....

48
49 (Simultaneous speech)
50

1 MR. HOWARTH: Hello. Sorry. It's Wilbur,
2 sorry.

3
4 MS. HUTCHINSON: Hello, Wilbur. We're
5 just going over the 805C report right now. Anyway so,
6 (indiscernible) the -- both of these proposals were on
7 the consensus agenda, meaning all the agencies approved
8 of the -- they didn't have to deliberate on those because
9 they all were in consensus. The remaining proposals
10 affecting the Northwest Arctic Region appeared on the
11 non-consensus agenda. Two of these proposals, the Board
12 took action consistent with the Council's
13 recommendations. The Board adopted and with modification
14 Wildlife Proposal 24-28/29. This one reduced the caribou
15 harvest limit across the range of the Western Arctic
16 Caribou Herd, excluding the eastern portion of unit 26A
17 to 15 caribou per year, only one of which may be a cow.
18 The Board's action differed from the Northwest Arctic
19 Council's recommendation on three proposals on the non-
20 consensus agenda, which was WP24-30/31 and Wildlife
21 Proposal 24-01. So, the Board's action on these
22 proposals are explained in detail in the enclosed
23 report, which starts on page 141 of your meeting book.

24 So, you'll see that this report, the
25 Board's reasoning for not following the Council's
26 recommendation on Wildlife Proposal 24-30-31, which
27 requested the closing of Federal public lands in Unit
28 23 to caribou hunting by non-federally qualified users
29 from August 1st to October 31st. The Council recommended
30 supporting the proposal, and the Board supported the
31 proposal as modified by OSM to include a population
32 threshold that would remove the closure once the Western
33 Arctic Caribou Herd Management Plan recommendation,
34 which is to manage the herd at a conservative management
35 and harvest level, if the population is equal or larger
36 than 200,000 animals with a stable or increased
37 population trend. The Board also differed from the
38 Council's recommendation on Wildlife Proposal 24-01. So,
39 if you recall, this was a statewide proposal allowing
40 the sale of brown bear hide statewide. And although the
41 Council supported this proposal, the Board decided to
42 defer action on that because adopting the proposed
43 regulation might conflict with the convention on
44 International Trade in Endangered Species International
45 Treaty, and we have some wildlife staff here, if you
46 have more questions about that, that might be able to
47 answer that. So, that concludes my summary of your 805C
48 report. Mr. Chair, are there any questions?

49
50

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
2 Lisa. Do we have any questions from the Council?

3
4 (No response)

5
6 Hearing none, we will move on to item
7 B, in other business which is rule in Alaska National
8 Preserve. Dr. Jochum.

9
10 MS. JOCHUM: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
11 For the record again, my name is Kim Jochum. I work for
12 the National Park Service, Regional Subsistence Program
13 out of Anchorage. I just want to provide you -- the
14 Council with a short update on the National Park Service
15 Wildlife Rule that became effective on August 2nd of
16 this year. The National Park Service amended its
17 regulations for sport hunting and trapping in national
18 preserves in Alaska. So, the harvest practices at issue
19 in this final rule are specific to harvest on national
20 preserve land only, and to harvest under the
21 authorization for sport hunting and trapping in ANILCA.
22 So, none of these rule -- the rule addresses subsistence
23 harvest by rural residents under Title 8 of ANILCA. Just
24 want to make sure that that's clear. So, the public was
25 invited to comment on the draft environmental assessment
26 and on the proposed rule over the past two years.
27 National Park Service staff presented on the draft
28 Wildlife Rule at all Parks Subsistence Resources
29 Commission as well as Federal Subsistence Regional
30 Advisory Council meetings. And solicited, you know, your
31 feedback so all comments were reviewed and formed the
32 final decision that was made. So, the 2024 Final Wildlife
33 Rule explicitly addresses two topics on National
34 Preserve Lands in Alaska. It first prohibits bear
35 baiting for sport hunters on National Preserve Lands in
36 Alaska, and it clarifies how a firearm can be used in
37 conjunction with trapping. So, give a little more detail
38 on these two points just to make sure it's clear, and
39 that is my update.

40
41 So, bear baiting is prohibited for
42 public safety reasons. The concerns are both immediate
43 relative to bears defending a bait station and more long
44 term relative to food conditioning. So, that was the
45 reason listed in the rule. And then regarding trapping
46 portion of the rule, it applies to both to those trapping
47 under State regulations in National preserves and to
48 federally qualified subsistence uses, trapping in
49 National preserves, as well as the National Parks and
50 Monuments that are open to subsistence. So, this part

1 clarifies the existing regulations so, it's nothing new,
2 it just clarifies the language, that individuals may
3 harvest a furbearer with a firearm under a trapping
4 license only if the furbearer is either ensnared in an
5 intact trap and snared in a trap that is no longer
6 anchored. So, for example, the animal is dragging a trap
7 or has, you know, that has become unanchored, or it is
8 mortally wounded -- or the animal is mortally wounded
9 by a trap, but the animal has broken free of the trap.
10 So therefore, free-ranging furbearers may not be
11 harvested with a firearm under a State trapping license
12 on Park Service managed lands. Rather, an open hunting
13 season and hunting license would be required. Thank you
14 for your time. That concludes my update and I'm happy
15 to answer questions if there are any.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that.
18 Do we have any questions from the Council?

19
20 (No response)

21
22 Hearing none. We will move on to item C
23 under other business which is statewide sheep
24 discussion. Lisa.

25
26 MS. HUTCHINSON: Yes. Thank you, Mr.
27 Chair, members of the Board. Now this action item --
28 this might be an action item, I guess it depends really
29 what the Council would like to do is, really if -- it
30 just kinda to see if you wanna be part of the sheep
31 management kind of a working group. But I will -- if we
32 wanted -- do we want to delay this to see if we can get
33 another Council member to call in, and we can skip over
34 to other correspondence, or I can -- you know, I think
35 we may not need a full vote for this, but we do want to
36 see if the Council wants to be part of that, so. I can
37 explain further what it is if you need to.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: I think if you could
40 just explain what it is, and I -- based on the brief
41 discussion you and I had over lunch about this issue,
42 this is most likely something the Council will want to
43 stay involved with. As I know we have at least one member
44 who's usually pretty tuned into and concerned about
45 sheep issues statewide and in the region. So, if we
46 don't need a vote on it, I think it'd just be safe to
47 say yes, keep our Council involved, moving forward. So,
48 if you could just go into this one, please.

49
50

1 MS. HUTCHINSON: Okay, let me just kind
2 of give you a little bit of the background about it. And
3 Brooke, if Brooke McDavid is online, she might be able
4 to provide more information. Anyway, the Western
5 Interior Alaska Regional Advisory Council would like to
6 share a document that they have drafted and titled the
7 Dall Sheep Management Strategy Guidelines. So, if you're
8 -- if you have your book available, it's on page 144 of
9 your meeting book. So, the management strategies such
10 as these are authorized in the ANILCA as part of an
11 Annual Report and are limited to within the Council's
12 home region. The Council drafted this document after
13 becoming increasingly concerned with the decline of
14 sheep in the Western Interior Region, and the lack of
15 any action to attempt to reverse this trend. The Western
16 Interior Council request that the Council review this
17 document and consider using it as a template to fit into
18 your region's need for sheep conservation management.
19 And the Western Interior Council has taken steps to help
20 sheep in their region by requesting a closure along the
21 Dalton Highway in the Brooks Range to all hunting for
22 sheep on Federal land, foregoing the opportunity to be
23 able to harvest sheep themselves so that the sheep
24 population has a chance to rebound. They suggest all
25 regions look into this option if the downward trend
26 across the State continues. So, as we discussed, I guess
27 formal action would not be needed at this time. But if
28 your Council really wishes to review and tailor the
29 guidelines further for your region in the future, we may
30 depend on what your intentions are for sheep harvest
31 management strategies in your region may be. So, I think
32 this is just more of an informative thing. At one point
33 we were talking about a sheep working group, but that
34 may not be formally established at this point. So, thank
35 you. Any questions?

36
37 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Lisa. Any
38 questions from members of the Council?

39
40 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair. Wilbur.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, go ahead Wilbur.

43
44 MR. HOWARTH: Noorvik. Yeah. What is the
45 sheep count right now in the Brooks Range and maybe
46 (indiscernible). Do anybody have a specific number or
47 something on the population?

48
49 (Pause)

50

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Anyone from Fish and
2 Game or maybe the Park Service able to address that?

3
4 (No response)

5
6 If no one's able to address that, I
7 think based on this, Lisa, can we just make a note for
8 the winter meeting to add and this sheep topic in general
9 to the agenda for the winter meeting. And also, make a
10 note to just reach out to somebody on if there's any
11 recent count that we can just share with the Council
12 once the meeting is over so, that folks are able to look
13 over any information.

14
15 MS. HUTCHINSON: Okay. I'll be happy to
16 do that, thank you.

17
18 MR. HOWARTH: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: No problem. Thank you
21 for that, Wilbur. Any other questions or comments at
22 this time on the statewide sheep discussion?

23
24 (No response)

25
26 Hearing none. We will move on to
27 correspondence policy and correspondence update. Lisa.

28
29 MS. HUTCHINSON: Yes. Thank you
30 everybody, Mr. Chair, Council members, I wanted to just
31 give you an update of -- kind of -- these aren't action
32 items, but just for you to be aware of the correspondence
33 that your Council has written or been part of. So,
34 starting on page 151, in your meeting book is a copy of
35 the Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Correspondence
36 Policy for your reference. And following that on page -
37 - starting on page 153 through 206 in your meeting book,
38 begins the Council correspondence from the previous
39 year. As a reminder, the Council wrote five letters that
40 included Joint Council letters and All Council meeting
41 letters that most of you -- that mostly occurred from
42 this All Council meeting this last winter. In addition,
43 the Council wrote four letters of reappointment of
44 members to the Cape Krusenstern and Kobuk Valley
45 Subsistence Resource Commission. And you can find -- so,
46 these letters included one signing a -- the Quad Council
47 letter to the Federal Subsistence Board regarding the
48 Western Arctic Caribou Herd concerns, that's on page
49 153. The second letter was a Joint Council letter to the
50 Board regarding caribou concerns statewide, that's on

1 page 159. And then there was a joint Council letter to
2 the Board regarding concerns over bycatch and salmon
3 management, that's on page 164. And there was -- the
4 fourth letter was a Joint Council letter to the Board
5 regarding Council members compensation when attending
6 meetings, that's on page 206.

7
8 And these -- there are bycatch letters
9 on page 1 -- these and the bycatch letter on page 169,
10 and the Council Compensation Letter were forwarded to
11 the Secretary of Interior for comment, which we have --
12 I'm not sure if we've heard back from them on that yet.
13 Brooke might be able to update us. Anyway, as -- also,
14 as reminder, the addition of the three tribal seats on
15 the Board were finalized and the final rule is in -- is
16 available in your Supplemental Materials Packet, which
17 is under tab five. So, the announcement and also, the
18 full rule is back there if you wanna look at it. It's
19 also available on our website under the Office of
20 Subsistence Management, under the Northwest Regional
21 Arctic Council, under Meeting Materials tab five. So,
22 just a reminder, the Office of Secretary sent to all
23 Alaska tribes a letter on October 17th announcing the
24 new rule and welcome tribes to nominate or recommend
25 public Board members for these three seats, and each
26 nomination will be considered upon their receipt. So,
27 if any of the tribe, tribal representatives or tribal
28 have any questions, you can comment and contact Raine
29 Thiele and she's at r, a, l, e, _ , t, h, i, e, l, e,
30 @ios.doi.gov. Anyway, that concludes the correspondence
31 update, if you have any questions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Lisa. Do
34 we have any questions or comments from the Council?

35
36 (No response)

37
38 Hearing none. We will move on to the
39 next item which is, 2025 Council application nomination
40 open season, Lisa.

41
42 MS. HUTCHINSON: Yes, I may -- I did skip
43 a couple of letters if I could go back. I apologize for
44 that. Before we go on to that. So, would that be okay,
45 Mr. Chair?

46
47 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, please
48 continue.

1 MS. HUTCHINSON: Okay, so it's under
2 agenda item 12 D3. It said, the Office of subsis [sic]
3 -- so, there's a letter which would be under -- on page
4 193, let's see, no wait on page 2, tab 3. Sorry about
5 that, tab 3 in your meeting, the supplemental meeting
6 materials. So, there's a letter that's been drafted that
7 was -- so, OSM -- basically it's entitled that Office
8 of Subsistence Management supports outreach and
9 engagement with the Regional Advisory Councils regarding
10 chum salmon bycatch. And it's a letter within your
11 supplemental materials and so, if you -- the letter was
12 written by Crystal Leonetti, she is our current Acting
13 Director for the Office of Subsistence Management. She
14 wrote the letter to the Chair of the North Pacific
15 Management Council. I previously emailed each of you a
16 copy of this letter so that you should be familiar with
17 it, but I'm just reminding you that this letter informs
18 North Pacific Fisheries Management Council that the
19 Office of Subsistence Management fully supports the
20 outreach and engagement on chum salmon bycatch with the
21 affected subsistence Regional Advisory Councils. The
22 letter is encouraging that -- the North Pacific
23 Management Council to reach out to the interested
24 Councils at their winter meetings to engage fully --
25 more fully with the Councils and part of the National
26 NPRB Engagement plan. So, Mr. Chair, would it be of the
27 Council's interest and desire to be included in the North
28 Pacific NPRB's outreach plan regarding chum salmon
29 bycatch? And if so, we could -- you could request -- let
30 us know and I could request to coordinate with their
31 Chair to coordinate with your Council so, you could have
32 a presentation and some information at your winter meet.
33 So, it's not an action item. It's just to see if --
34 however, the Council would like to notify that the
35 Council to be included or not. I hope that explained
36 things, thank you.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, it does. And
39 based on some of the issues brought up for Annual Report
40 I think it would be wise to keep us in the loop on this.
41 So, yes, please add us to that for the winter meeting.

42
43 MS. HUTCHINSON: Okay, thank you. And
44 then there is one other letter item. So, is under agenda
45 item 12 5 -- 4. You will find in your Supplemental
46 Materials Packet under tab four. So, this is another
47 letter. It's a letter from the Eastern Interior and the
48 Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Advisory Councils, and
49 it is a letter that they wrote to the Board requesting
50 revision of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery and

1 Conservation Management Act. They requested that the
2 Magnuson-Stevens Act be amended so that it considers and
3 protects subsistence uses more equally, or equitably,
4 and prioritizes conservation over economic uses in
5 situations where affected fish populations are in dire
6 straits, dire shape. These certain Council recently met
7 and requested that other Councils review this letter and
8 can use this letter as a template, or the Council is
9 urged to amend the letter as it suits the Council. Again,
10 this is not an action item, at this time. However, if
11 the Council would like to write a letter, a motion will
12 need to be made. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Lisa. Any
15 questions or comments from members of the Council?

16
17 (No response)

18
19 MS. HUTCHINSON: And if the Council has
20 any further questions, Brooke McDavid, I believe, is
21 online. She is the Council Coordinator for those
22 Councils, and she can provide more information. Thank
23 you.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
26 Lisa. Wil Wiese, did you have something?

27
28 (No response)

29
30 MR. ARMSTRONG: This is Elmer.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Go ahead, Elmer.

33
34 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah. Just as long as we
35 make sure that, that moratorium line is in place. To
36 where -- just as long as it's in place. Thank you.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
39 Elmer. Was that Wil Wiese that had your hand up, or
40 someone else have your hand up besides Elmer?

41
42 (No response)

43
44 So, at this time, we still don't have a
45 quorum unless more members of the Council have joined
46 us. So, I believe for the moment, let's just make a note
47 of this, add it to the agenda for the winter meeting,
48 and we'll try to bring it back around if we're able to
49 today. Barring that, we can go ahead and move on to item
50 E 2025 Council application/nomination open season. Lisa.

1
2 MS. HUTCHINSON: You guys are gonna get
3 tired of hearing me talk. Okay. So, I don't have any
4 materials for this agenda item, but I did want to notify
5 the Council that there will be a call for applications
6 for Council members for -- starting for -- so that you're
7 familiar that it takes a year to fill seats. So, these
8 will be for people whose seats will be expiring for the
9 end of next year. But we're starting the applications
10 soon. So, the call should be coming out relatively soon.
11 I do have applications here. Well, online we have some
12 applications that are -- that you can get that aren't
13 exactly the right date, but they're still -- if you want
14 to fill them out, you can still submit them to us, but
15 the new ones will be published pretty soon online. And
16 I'll certainly -- you can reach out to me, and I will
17 be sharing those with the Park Service and the Refuge
18 staff to that you can also obtain, if you wanna get a
19 copy and fill it up, but you can also get them online.
20 So, we're working to make this process more efficient
21 than we have in recent years. The move to the Department
22 of the Interior has given us an opportunity to reevaluate
23 some of the processes that we're doing. So, if folks are
24 interested, they can reach out to me and I can send them
25 an application or again, you can apply early if you
26 would like, with what's available online. The Council
27 does currently have five Council members whose seats are
28 coming up for renewal. And if interested in serving
29 again, we will need to submit an incumbent application
30 for you Council members whose terms are coming up for
31 renewal. So, I will notify you Council members
32 independently and send you reapplications if you're
33 interested in reapplying. And also, I'll let the
34 regional context know about when the application period
35 opens. So, I think that's all I have, and also, I wanted
36 to just say, for those who applied for open seats that
37 we have -- we currently have -- with Bobby Schaeffer
38 stepping down, we hopefully will have -- we will have
39 three expiring seats available for next year. So, the
40 reappointment or appointment letters have not been --
41 we have been not notified by the Secretary yet, but
42 usually they let us know by the end of December, early
43 January so, you should be hearing pretty soon. And that's
44 my update on that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Lisa. Any
47 questions or comments from members of the Council?

48
49 (No comments)
50

1 Hearing none. We'll move on to DOI,
2 declining balance cards for Council members.

3
4 MS. HUTCHINSON: Okay. That's me, again.
5 Again, Office of Subsistence Management is considering
6 ways to make the way we process Council member travel
7 more efficient. So, this is really specifically for you
8 Council members in dealing when we do travel, is just
9 to try to make it a little bit more user friendly, and
10 we really want, mostly just wanna get your feedback at
11 this point. Currently the Council members, if you are
12 traveling to a meeting, you will get about 60% of your
13 estimated total per diem in the form of a check, at the
14 start of each meeting. This is called a travel advance,
15 and the remainder of the per diem is mailed to you in a
16 second check once the travel vouchers are processed
17 after the meeting. Rather than continuing to issue and
18 mail checks, we are considering switching to declining
19 balance cards. These are like, kind of like a debit
20 card, and they would be loaded with funds for you to use
21 for your meals and incidental expenses during Council
22 meetings. Instead of having to deposit or cash a paper
23 check. If the Office of Subsistence Management proceeds
24 to use declining balance cards, each Council member
25 would be issued a card that will be their responsibility
26 to keep safe and bring to each meeting. If a card is
27 lost, it can be replaced, but it may take several days
28 to get a new card once in the mail. Council members
29 would be able to use their card while in travel status
30 or to withdraw cash from their ATM. Your Coordinator
31 will be able to tell how much per diem has been deposited
32 in the card, and the cards will be used to pay for
33 expenses such as your meals, your taxi fares, groceries,
34 etc. Taxi and parking receipts would still need to be
35 turned into the Coordinator. OSM will continue to book
36 flights and lodging. Council members would use their
37 declining balance card when they check in to the hotel
38 or other accommodations, and the remaining per diem owed
39 Council members after the meeting would be direct
40 deposited into your bank account. So, any ATM fees would
41 be reimbursed as part of the direct deposit, as well as
42 any unused portion of the Council advance funds on the
43 card. The card will be turned off between meetings and
44 so it cannot be accidentally used. So, anyway, if OSM
45 decides to proceed with using these declining balance
46 cards, then in order to set them up, we would require
47 Council members to submit forms to use that contain
48 personal information -- identifiable information such
49 as your date of birth and your banking information. So,
50 please know that we respect your privacy and this

1 information would be confidential. So, it's not
2 something that's set in stone. They haven't decided if
3 we're gonna do this. So, we really want to get the
4 Council's input of how comfortable you are with it, if
5 you like the idea and there's a lot of flexibility within
6 that, I understand. But they are a potential new tool
7 and no final decisions been made. We're just trying to
8 hope to kind of make it easier for you, most likely. I
9 know sometimes it takes weeks before you even get your
10 per diem check after a completed meeting and the like.
11 So, anyway, at this time I could just open this up if
12 you -- for any comments about that, concerns, thoughts,
13 if you like it, if you don't, if you worried about it.
14 And we're gonna be assembling all the Councils that have
15 been their comments, and then we'll get back with you
16 in the winter to talk about this further. That's all.
17 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you,
20 Lisa. Any questions or comments on that? Elmer.

21
22 MR. ARMSTRONG: Through the Chair. Thank
23 you. I think the idea of the card is good. I think
24 that'll work for me. Thank you.

25
26 MS. HUTCHINSON: Thank you, Elmer.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: I think I saw another
29 hand up. Was that Wil Wiese again, or was that someone
30 else?

31
32 (No response)

33
34 Any other questions, comments?

35
36 (No comments)

37
38 Hearing none. We will move on to item G
39 under other business. Update for Office of Subsistence
40 Management, Robin LeVine.

41
42 MS. LEVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
43 members of the Council. For the record, this is Robin
44 LeVine, Subsistence Policy Coordinator for the Office
45 of Subsistence Management. And on behalf of our program,
46 I of course, want to start expressing my gratitude to
47 all of you. In the face of so much change, your patience
48 and your dedication to continuing to do this important
49 work is tremendously important, and we are always
50 grateful for the time you spend with us and the knowledge

1 you share with us. Again, I'm really sorry we're not in
2 person. It makes such a difference when I can see all
3 your faces. But, hearing your voice and knowing you're
4 there, is second best, I suppose.

5
6 At the request of many stakeholders,
7 during listening sessions and tribal consultations
8 across the State, Congress has administratively moved
9 OSM from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service directly to
10 the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Policy,
11 Management and Budget. This move became effective July
12 15th of 2024, and it's one of many efforts the Department
13 of the Interior is making to strengthen Federal
14 subsistence policies and structure, and to ensure that
15 federally qualified subsistence users and Alaska Native
16 peoples have an opportunity for meaningful engagement
17 in the Federal subsistence management program
18 implementation. This move is in response to the concerns
19 and input of Alaska Native communities and people, many
20 of whom rely on subsistence, use and to the need to
21 enhance program operations for all federally qualified
22 subsistence users, particularly in the face of changing
23 climate.

24
25 OSM responsibilities and functions of
26 administrative support to the Board and the subsistence
27 Regional Advisory Councils remain the same following
28 this move to the Office of the Secretary. Our programs
29 operations continue as they always have, and our
30 regulatory cycles are proceeding without interruption.
31 If you need to reach out to OSM staff, we now have new
32 email addresses that have been updated on our website.
33 The main contact phone number remains the same 907-786-
34 3888 and our main email address is
35 subsistence@ios.doi.gov.

36
37 The final rule for the Federal
38 Subsistence Management regulation for the harvest of
39 wildlife on Federal public lands in Alaska, for the
40 regulatory years 2024 through 2026, has been published
41 in the Federal Register, and it went into effect August
42 29th of this year. The regulations booklets are
43 available online at our Federal Subsistence Management
44 Program website, and hopefully hard copies have been
45 mailed to you or can be mailed to you upon request.
46 Earlier this month, the Departments of Interior and
47 Agriculture announced a final rule to strengthen Alaska
48 tribal representation on the Federal Subsistence Board.
49 The final rule adds three new public members to the
50 Federal Subsistence Board, all nominated by federally

1 recognized tribal governments in Alaska. These members
2 will have personal knowledge of and direct experience
3 with subsistence practices in rural Alaska, including
4 Alaska Native subsistence uses, and will be appointed
5 by the Secretary of the Interior with the concurrence
6 of the Secretary of Agriculture. The Federal Subsistence
7 Board Chair will also be required to have expertise in
8 rural subsistence. Tribes are welcome to nominate or
9 recommend public Board members for these three new
10 seats, and you would direct your questions and
11 nominations or recommendations to Raina Thiele and Sara
12 Taylor and I would just suggest that you reach out to
13 staff for their contact information if you do not already
14 have it, I believe this has been mentioned earlier in
15 the meeting. We'd be happy to share their contact
16 information with you.

17
18 I wanna give you an update on Deferred
19 Wildlife Proposal 24-01. It's a proposal -- it's a
20 statewide proposal to sell the hides of brown bears. At
21 its public meeting, April 3rd, 2024, the Board deferred
22 its action on Wildlife Proposal WP24-01, and it's a
23 request to allow the sale of a brown bear hide taken
24 under Federal regulations. The Board's justification for
25 deferring the proposal was twofold. One, it was to allow
26 time to explore options for a federally qualified
27 subsistence user to obtain a permit allowing the sale
28 of a hide from a Federal agency, and two, to potentially
29 establish a work group to negotiate with Alaska
30 Department of Fish and Game concerning the use of its
31 permit to sell a brown bear, grizzly bear, hide, and/or
32 skull. Our update is that ADF&G is not able to permit
33 the sale of brown bears on behalf of the Federal
34 Subsistence Management Program. If the proposal is
35 passed as submitted, as discussed by the Board. In other
36 words, ADF&G cannot permit sale of brown bear hides taken
37 in Units with one brown bear limits under Federal
38 regulations. OSM is therefore exploring opportunities
39 for federally qualified subsistence users to obtain a
40 permit from a Federal agency, and will update the Board
41 on this option at our fisheries regulatory meeting in
42 February of 2025.

43
44 So, I have some OSM staff updates.
45 There's been a lot of change at OSM, since the All
46 Council meeting held in March of this year. OSM welcomed
47 our new acting director Crystal Ciisquq Leonetti. She's
48 been acting in this role for a number of months now and
49 will be acting until the end of November, at which time
50 our Fisheries Division lead Scott Ayers will assume the

1 acting role for the next two months. Crystal Leonetti
2 in her permanent position is Alaska Native Affairs
3 Specialist at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Among
4 regular OSM director responsibilities, Crystal has been
5 leading OSM to its administrative move and is doing a
6 tremendously wonderful job. OSM director's position has
7 been advertised and it closed October -- I think actually
8 mid-October. And we do hope to hear some announcement
9 before the end of the year that that position has been
10 filled.

11
12 OSM also had some staff departures Theo
13 Matuskowitz, our supervisory regulatory specialist
14 retired in July after 20 years and OSM has missed him
15 terribly. His in-depth knowledge and time in the Federal
16 Subsistence Management Program just cannot be replaced.
17 Justin Koller, OSM fisheries biologist, has been acting
18 as the supervisory regulatory specialist in the interim.
19 He was able to jump right in to assure the OSM final and
20 proposed rules, as well as meeting announcements, are
21 seamlessly moving through the approval and Federal
22 Register publication process. We couldn't have done it
23 without Justin. This position will also be advertised
24 for permanent hire fairly soon, it may actually -- and
25 it may have been announced or will be announced any day
26 now. Kayla McKinney, OSM subsistence outreach
27 coordinator left OSM for move to another State. We have
28 OSM staff Leigh Honig and Sherri Gould-Fehrs who are
29 covering some of the duties in the interim while
30 performing their regular duties. They're doing great.
31 The vacant positions of the Subsistence Outreach
32 Coordinator and the Records Management Specialist will
33 be advertised, hopefully also by the end of this year.
34 And we encourage all individuals with diverse outreach
35 skills, and records management skills, and interests in
36 working with subsistence users, to apply.

37
38 In August, we were also saddened to
39 learn about the departure of OSM's Deputy Director Amy
40 Howard. She left Federal service for a new job with the
41 Aleut Corporation as the Director of Lands and Natural
42 Resources. Her last day with OSM was August 30th. While
43 congratulating Amy on her new job, we will sorely miss
44 her inclusive and fair management style, she is a great
45 support -- was a great support for the entire OSM team.
46 Katya Wessels Council Coordination Division supervisor
47 is serving as Acting Deputy Director or was until just
48 the end of last week, I believe. And starting this week,
49 Brent Vickers, anthropology division supervisor, is
50 acting deputy director for the next two months. So, lots

1 of change here at OSM. Lots of openings and
2 opportunities. And the people that we do have, we do
3 retain on staff have been tremendously valuable in
4 stepping up and expanding their -- the work that they
5 have on their desks.

6
7 One Last update, litigation update. A
8 detailed litigation update was provided to the Councils
9 at the March 2024 all Council meeting. Since then, in
10 the Kake Emergency Hunt matter, Alaska Department of
11 Fish and Game versus Federal Subsistence Board. The
12 briefing is now in progress before the Ninth Circuit
13 Court. In the Kuskokwim matter U.S. versus ADF&G. The
14 district court found in favor of the U.S. on all claims
15 and enjoined the State from taking any further actions
16 in violation of Title 8 on the Kuskokwim River. The
17 State has appealed, and briefing has just recently
18 commenced before the Ninth Court 4:20:21. And that Mr
19 Chair and members of the Council is our OSM report,
20 thank you very much.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
23 Robin. Do we have any questions or comments from members
24 of the Council?

25
26 (No comments)

27
28 Hearing none. Appreciate the update and
29 we will move on as we have some time to agency updates.
30 U.S. Fish and Wildlife, do we have Wil or Brittany on
31 the line for Selawik National Wildlife Refuge?

32
33 MR. WIESE: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair.
34 This is Will Wiese manager for Selawik Wildlife Refuge.
35 (Distortion) report from us. First, staffing wise, I'm
36 the manager. Brittany Sweeney is deputy. We've got Bill
37 Carter fish biologist who's not on the call today, but
38 it hoped to be. And our maintenance team of Sean Nelson
39 in Kotzebue, Sonny Berry in Selawik. We've also excited
40 to have Adam Ramoth on board in Selawik as a refuge
41 information technician, and we were able to hire a
42 maintenance intern this year, which we're excited to
43 have on John (indiscernible) from Kotzebue. Upcoming,
44 expect will be hiring some outreach staff and hopefully
45 admin staff. And we're really excited and dedicated to
46 try and hire local people. So, expect to see
47 announcements in the coming month or two for those
48 positions.

1 Management updates, the OTZ Towers
2 project that's for bringing broadband internet to the
3 region. A system of towers starting at the Dalton Highway
4 stretching to this region and towers in each community.
5 That project, we're working with Bureau of Land
6 Management on a environmental assessment for that. That
7 assessment went out for public comment this fall, and
8 we're working on addressing comments and moving forward
9 with that. No timeline right now as to when a final
10 environmental assessment will be available for that.

11
12 Other permitting updates. We permitted
13 two air operators this past summer to fly into Selawik
14 Refuge. Only one of those operators actually took
15 anybody into the Refuge, and I haven't got the final
16 report for the year yet because the deadline is until
17 December for that. But my understanding is that only one
18 group was flown into the refuge by a commercial operator.
19 As a reminder, we don't regulate small airplanes for
20 private use so, somebody with their own personal plane
21 can fly to the Refuge to, say, go hunting. But anybody
22 who's doing it commercially, bringing in a hunter or
23 bringing in a recreational floater or something like
24 that, needs to get a permit from us. And like I said,
25 to my knowledge, there was one group that was flown in
26 this year.

27
28 Biological projects. Since we last met,
29 I had a lot going on this past summer, a lot of projects
30 looking at water and fish. We helped out Ray Hander,
31 who's on the call with his sheefish work on the upper
32 Selawik. But more excited to even talk about kinda
33 upcoming things and things we're planning for next year.
34 We're helping on a project looking at contaminants in
35 fish around Selawik, and right now fish collections are
36 starting up to do some testing there. We started into
37 discussions with NANA Regional Corporation on a joint
38 project looking at predator and caribou interactions in
39 the region. And we're just getting started in
40 conversations about that and hope to have a pilot project
41 going in 2025 to start getting at some of that. I'm
42 really excited about that one. We'll also be doing some
43 more whitefish work in and around Selawik next year and
44 continuing a lot of the studies that we've had going on
45 for a while. I think that's the very quick version of
46 my report. If there's any questions, I'd be happy to
47 take them.

48
49
50

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
2 Will. Any questions or comments from members of the
3 Council for Selawik National Wildlife Refuge?

4
5 (No response)

6
7 Hearing none. Thank you, Will, for your
8 update. We'll move on.....

9
10 (Simultaneous speech)

11
12 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, go ahead,
15 Wilbur.

16
17 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair. Wilbur Howarth,
18 Noorvik. Hey, Will, on these studies, sheefish, is it -
19 - you can do the same with the salmon, like, cut and get
20 their age and stuff, is that the same? You could tell
21 the age by that? How we did sheefish.

22
23 MR. WIESE: Through the Chair. This is
24 Wil Wiese. Not being a fish biologist, I don't know much
25 about salmon. Perhaps Ray Hander or one of the other
26 fish specialists on the call could answer your question
27 about how we age salmon. Of course, understanding that
28 sheefish are really interesting in that, you know, they
29 don't die after they spawn. So, that's why it's really
30 important for us to do these age studies as we can see
31 fish that come back every couple of years and spawn.

32
33 MR. HOWARTH: Okay, thank you.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. Any more
36 questions, comments for Wil and Selawik National?

37
38 (No response)

39
40 Hearing none. We'll move on to the
41 National Park Service and United States Geological
42 Services. First, update for the Western Arctic
43 Parklands. Do we have anybody on with Western Arctic
44 National Parklands?

45
46 (No response)

47
48 Hearing none, we'll move on to Gates of
49 the Arctic. Marcy Okada, are you online?

1 MS. OKADA: Yeah (distortion), good
2 afternoon, Mr. Chair and Council members. My name is
3 Marcy Okada. I am the subsistence coordinator for Gates
4 of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. I'd like to
5 refer you to tab one in your Supplemental Meeting Packet.
6 Just have a quick update for the Council members. So,
7 just like Kobuk Valley National Park and Cape
8 Krusenstern National Monument, we have a Subsistence
9 Resource Commission for Gates of the Arctic National
10 Park. Our last meeting was in April in Anaktuvuk Pass
11 and similar to your Council meetings, we discussed the
12 Western Arctic Caribou Herd and commercial use
13 operations in our Park and Preserve. Due to a lack of
14 quorum at our April meeting, no action was taken on
15 specific meeting items. But our next SRC meeting is
16 scheduled for next week in Fairbanks, and we'll continue
17 to have discussion on the Western Arctic Caribou Herd
18 as well as dall sheep management within the Park and
19 Preserve. And then also, I'd like to note that we have
20 two commission members on our SRC from the upper Kobuk
21 area. And (distortion)it's Tristen Pattee and Raymond
22 Woods, who are also on your Regional Advisory Council.

23
24 Just to touch quickly on the Western
25 Arctic Caribou Herd, it's probably old news now, but the
26 Caribou Herd was in various places last winter. They
27 made it further south than was seen in past -- in the
28 past few years. Quite a few of them went into the Nulato
29 Hills, and some were up on the North Slope area between
30 Atqasuk and Nuiqsut, and some of them wintered in the
31 western portion of Gates of the Arctic as well.

32
33 Last year was a fairly hard winter, and
34 there were a number of mortalities. But it wasn't as bad
35 as the winter of 2022 to 2023. Alex Hansen has already
36 mentioned, but 50 satellite collars were deployed this
37 past spring based out of Kotzebue. So, there were 46
38 collars deployed on cow caribou and four collars
39 deployed on bull caribou. And then lastly one of your
40 Council members had asked about -- what the current
41 population of dall sheep is in the area around Anaktuvuk
42 Pass. We have a new dall sheep ecologist Zack Delile,
43 who started earlier this year in March. And surveys were
44 completed for dall sheep from June 28th to July 8th in
45 Gates of the Arctic and areas were flown around Anaktuvuk
46 Pass as well as the northeast portion (distortion) of
47 the Park, which would be considered Itkillic Preserve.
48 And so, population estimates are still being worked on
49 but hope to share that information with the Council
50 members at your next meeting. So, that's just a quick

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1 update from Gates of the Arctic, if there's any
2 questions.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
5 for that update. Elmer.

6
7 MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you through the
8 Chair. How many permits were issued? And if so, were
9 there a lot of permits issued to Gates of the Arctic?

10
11 MS. OKADA: Mr. Armstrong, are you asking
12 for permits that were for a specific species or just in
13 general, just overall permits?

14
15 MR. ARMSTRONG: For caribou, like
16 transporters.

17
18 MS. OKADA: So, in the park portion of
19 Gates of the Arctic, hunting is only for subsistence.
20 So, it's just the communities in and around Gates of the
21 Arctic, and then I don't have the information for how
22 many permits have been issued for the two preserve units
23 of Gates of the Arctic. The Itkillik Preserve in the
24 northeast area, and then what we call the Kobuk boot,
25 which is a Southeastern Preserve Unit -- or Southwestern
26 Preserve Unit. I can try and get that information to the
27 Council at your next meeting.

28
29 MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Any other
32 questions or comments for Gates of the Arctic at this
33 time?

34
35 (No response)

36
37 Hearing none. Do we have someone who
38 will be speaking to item three, final rule to strengthen
39 Alaska tribal representation to Federal Subsistence
40 Board under tab five in the supplemental book.

41
42 MS. HUTCHINSON: And Mr. Chair, this is
43 Lisa Scarborough-Hutchinson -- the Coordinator. And I
44 did give a little bit of an overview about that when I
45 was giving the correspondence update, but I could go
46 back over that again if you would like.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: I think we covered
49 it pretty well, unless anybody has any questions. Are
50 there any questions regarding the addition of seats for

1 tribal members to the Federal Subsistence Boar?

2

3 (No response)

4

5 Hearing none. We'll move on to Item C.
6 OSM proposed changes to wildlife delegate authority. Mr.
7 Tom Plank.

8

9 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
10 members of the Council. Again, for the record, my name
11 is Tom Plank and I'm a wildlife biologist with the Office
12 of Subsistence Management. And this is going to be a
13 brief overview of proposed changes to wildlife delegated
14 authority. And this is just meant to be a brief
15 introduction to the effort, and the Councils will have
16 additional opportunities at future meetings to further
17 review and comment on this. The Office of Citizens
18 Management is proposing to move the authority and the
19 existing delegation of authority letters back into
20 wildlife unit specific regulations. While staff have not
21 thoroughly reviewed every single wildlife delegation of
22 authority letter, the vast majority of them are for
23 routine management actions that happen every year, such
24 as announcing harvest quotas. Having a delegated
25 authority for these routine decisions is unit specific
26 regulations is more appropriate than issuing special
27 actions year after year. This also provides a clear
28 public process for changing delegated authority through
29 regulatory processes -- proposals, and decreases the
30 administrative burden on Federal managers by eliminating
31 all the regulatory requirements associated with special
32 actions and the delegated authority letters. The
33 timeline for this proposed change is as followed. In
34 March of 2025, during the next open window to submit
35 wildlife regulatory proposals, OSM will submit a
36 proposal to move wildlife delegated authority into unit
37 specific regulations and to rescind many of the existing
38 letters. And then in the fall of 2025 so, a year from
39 now, at your next fall meeting, the Councils will
40 consider that and make recommendations on this proposal.
41 And then in April 2026, the Board will take final action
42 on your proposals at the next wildlife regulatory
43 meeting. Thank you, Mr. Chair. That completes my brief
44 overview of the proposed changes to wildlife delegated
45 authority, and I'd be happy to address any questions or
46 receive feedback on this topic. Although again, this is
47 just to be an introduction to the idea, kinda give you
48 a heads up and the Councils will have additional
49 opportunities to consider this at future meetings. Thank
50 you.

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CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that, Mr. Plank. Do we have any questions or comments from members of the Council?

(No response)

Hearing none. Thank you for that update, Mr. Plank. We'll move on to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Would anyone from the DF&G [sic] like to give an update at this time?

MR. CLARK: Yeah. Mr. Chair, this is Kevin Clark with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. I don't know exactly what kinda update you guys want. I don't have anything -- any kind of real regimented thing prepared. But I could give you a quick overview of what we saw this last summer.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clark. Typically, when we have agency updates, it's things new going on. Maybe something updating from the last time that we had a meeting. We don't -- we didn't plan to have too much structured updates this time, just because we had to shift to and over the phone meeting, and there was a concern for time. So, if you wanted to go over anything new and anything coming down the pipe from here moving forward, the floor is yours.

MR. CLARK: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, basically, the department is planning on trying to increase our presence there in the Kotzebue area and to beef up our research efforts in the area. We are in the project -- in the process of trying to cure [sic] funding for updating you know, getting a little more research in the area. We're looking at potentially doing -- looking at studies to see if we can revitalize Noatak Sonar. And we're also looking at whether or not we can get the Kobuk Test Fishery back and running again. That was a victim -- like most of you probably know, that was a victim of budget restraints here this last season. So, that's about the only new thing we -- like I said, we -- there -- we are looking into depending on potential funding ramping up our research in the Kotzebue area to kind of address some of the issues that we've been seeing lately.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that, Mr. Clark. Do we have any questions or comments from members of the Council for Fish and Game?

1

2

(No response)

3

4

5

Hearing none. Thank you for your update, Mr. Clark. We'll go ahead and circle back around to Western Arctic Parklands. Is anybody online for Western Arctic Parklands to give a brief agency update?

8

9

10

MS. JOCHUM: Mr. Chair. This is Kim Jochum or Lisa do you want to go? That's fine.

11

12

13

MS. HUTCHINSON: No, you go ahead, Kim. Thank you.

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MS. JOCHUM: Okay. Yeah. I can just provide some information shortly. I did reach out to our staff. This is for the record again, this is Kim Jochum, Regional Subsistence Program for the Park Service. So, they were in other meetings today, that's why they couldn't attend. And I think they weren't counting on getting to agency reports so, I didn't -- they didn't provide me with information, but they did say they put everything into your meeting book so, including natural resources report so, if there are questions feel free to reach out to them, please any time. And they are sorry they weren't able to be here today to attend.

28

29

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32

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that, Dr. Jochum. Any questions, comments on the information that was provided in our books from Western Arctic Parklands, for members of the Council?

33

34

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MS. HUTCHINSON: And to remind the Council that their Parkland report is on page 135 of your meeting book. Thank you.

37

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Hearing none. That brings us to item 14, which is closing comments. I'm going to start. Wilbur Howarth, do you have any closing comments?

46

47

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49

50

MR. HOWARTH: Yes, Mr. Chair, and thank you all for giving us updates in your reports. A lot of good information. The only thing I wanna really see, or hear to the Council on our next meeting is that we get some kinda update on our salmon, you know, traveling

1 along the Russian side. I see Barrow Hook was doing good
2 with salmon this year. But anyways, this been a real
3 good meeting, I got my answers. The sheep, and there is
4 a lot of wolf, a lot of bears in our area. Yesterday,
5 my daughter traveling to Selawik with snow machine, her
6 and her boyfriend, and they caught a wolf right outside
7 of Selawik, just a little ways from town. So, I wanted
8 to get on the VHF, that was yesterday, and try to remind
9 these folks here to be careful when they go out between
10 Noorvik and Selawik with snow machines. Otherwise, a
11 real good meeting. I thank you, Mr. Chair, and hopefully
12 we'll all sit down around the table at our next meeting,
13 and I would like that. Thank you very much.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur.
16 Elmer Armstrong, do you have any closing comments?

17
18 MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
19 Pretty good meeting. I know if we were there in person,
20 we'd have a lot of questions concerning caribou and
21 salmon. Other than that, I think -- got most of the
22 information from the agencies. I know we wanted to hear
23 that we had a caribou count done but due to the weather,
24 they weren't able to do that. That's all I had, thank
25 you.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Elmer.
28 I'll just go down the list. Clyde, are you back on with
29 us?

30
31 (No response)

32
33 Vern are you on the line? Verne
34 Cleveland.

35
36 MR. CLEVELAND: Yeah, I am. Thanks for a
37 good meeting. Maybe we'll have to change our meetings
38 again cause of tuttu traveling right now, and I'm a
39 tuttu hunter, so I'm out about five miles out behind
40 Noorvik and there's caribou moving right now. We are
41 headed south as I speak to be cutting caribou here in a
42 minute. Otherwise, pretty hard getting on the phone --
43 listening on phone, but I hope we get together and meet
44 in person, that'd be a lot better. Thank you, and good
45 luck to everyone. Have a safe holiday and have a good
46 one, thank you.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you,
49 Verne. Good luck out there. Going down the list. Raymond
50 Woods, were you able to join us?

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2

(No response)

3

4

Mike Kramer, are you back online?

5

6

(No response)

7

8

Tristen Pattee, are you online?

9

10

(No response)

11

12

Attamuk Shiedt, are you online?

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So, with that for myself, I'd just like to thank all the staff, everybody, for joining us. I know it's been a hectic change over the last few weeks. So, I appreciate the flexibility and those that were able to call in. This is not my preferred way to do things either. So, I'm very grateful that we have the opportunity to have this meeting and take care of what business we needed to. I look forward to our winter meeting to have everybody in person in Kotzebue. We had some good conversation today, and I look forward to following up with staff and the rest of the Council as we move forward with some of the other issues that were identified today. So, again, thank you everyone. At this time it is 3:13 p.m. and I will entertain a motion to adjourn.

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MR. AMRSTRONG: This is Elmer.....

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(Simultaneous speech)

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CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Move by Vern. Seconded by Wilbur. All those in favor, please signify by saying aye.

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IN UNISON: Aye.

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CHAIRPERSON BAKER: And those opposed sign.

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MR. RAMOTH: I guess the second was by Verne. Verne, did you second that? It wasn't me.

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MR. CLEVELAND: Yeah.

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CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you for that. So, the ayes have it. We will go ahead and adjourn. Is now 3:14 p.m. on Friday, November 8th. Thank

000106

1 you everyone for your participation, and I look forward
2 to our winter meeting.

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4 (Off record)

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6 (END OF PROCEEDING)

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

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 1 through 106 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the NORTHWEST ARTIC SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME I recorded on the 8th day of November;

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 2nd day of December 2024.

Rafael Morel
Chief Project Manager