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FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD

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WORK SESSION

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VOLUME I

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U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE BUILDING

11

Anchorage, Alaska

12

July 23, 2025

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MEMBERS PRESENT:

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Anthony Christianson, Chairman

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Charles Brower, Public Member

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Rhonda Pitka, Public Member

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Benjamin Payenna, Public Member

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Raymond Oney, Public Member

25

Frank Woods, Public Member

26

Sara Boario, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

27

David Alberg, National Park Service

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Kevin Pendergast, Bureau of Land Management

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Jolene John, Bureau of Indian Affairs

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Greg Risdahl, U.S. Forest Service

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Lisa Doehl, Solicitor's Office

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Anchorage, Alaska - 7/23/2025)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Good morning.
If everybody would like to find a place of comfort,
we're going to go ahead and get started this morning.
First order of business before we do get started is to
establish a roll call. So we'll just call on the Staff
to establish roll call.

We do have a few new members here.
We'd like you just to introduce yourself as we do the
roll call and then there will be an opportunity in the
information sharing to get a little more into your
personal self and information exchanging. So we'll go
ahead and start the meeting this morning with roll
call.

MS. LEONETTI: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
For the record Crystal Leonetti, Director of the Office
of Subsistence Management.

MS. LEONETTI: Tony Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Present.

MS. LEONETTI: Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: Here.

MS. LEONETTI: Charles Brower.

MR. BROWER: Here.

MS. LEONETTI: Ben Payenna.

MR. PAYENNA: Here.

MS. LEONETTI: Frank Woods.

MR. WOODS: Here.

MS. LEONETTI: Ray Oney.

(No response)

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1 MS. LEONETTI: I believe Ray is calling
2 in. I don't know if he's on the line yet. Ray, if
3 you're there, press star, six to unmute.

4
5 (No response)

6
7 MS. LEONETTI: Okay. We'll check back
8 with Ray's attendance in a little bit.

9
10 MS. LEONETTI: BIA, Jolene John.

11
12 MS. JOHN: Good morning. Wagga.

13
14 MS. LEONETTI: BLM, Kevin Pendergrass
15 [sic].

16
17 MR. PENDERGAST: Pendergast. Good
18 morning.

19
20 MS. LEONETTI: Thank you. I will get
21 it right someday. Forest Service, Greg Risdahl.

22
23 MR. RISDAHL: Good morning, Crystal.
24 I'm here.

25
26 MS. LEONETTI: Thank you. Fish and
27 Wildlife Service, Sara Boario.

28
29 MS. BOARIO: Good morning. Present.

30
31 MS. LEONETTI: And National Park
32 Service, Dave Alberg.

33
34 MR. ALBERG: Good morning. Present.

35
36 MS. LEONETTI: We do have some special
37 guests present today too. We will have the Vice Chair
38 for the Southcentral Regional Advisory Council, Judy
39 Caminer, coming in as well as the Chair for Kodiak
40 Aleutians, Rebecca Skinner. The Vice Chair for Bristol
41 Bay, Dan Dunaway. The Chair for Yukon-Delta Jackie
42 Cleveland, she's here. The Deputy Commissioner for
43 Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Ben Mulligan, is
44 here. Welcome, Ben.

45
46 And then we also have present, in
47 person, the Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Alaska
48 Kara Moriarty, as well as the Deputy Assistant
49 Secretary for Policy Environmental Management, Eva
50

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1 Vrana, who is calling in, and I will pause there, Mr.
2 Chair, if Kara and Eva want to say hello.

3

4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
5 floor.

6

7 MS. MORIARTY: Good morning, Mr.
8 Chairman. Thank you, Crystal, for the introduction.
9 For those I have not met my name is Kara Moriarty. I'm
10 eight weeks in as the Senior Advisor for Alaskan
11 Affairs for the Secretary.

12

13 Crystal asked me to introduce myself,
14 so a little bit about my background. I did not grow up
15 in rural Alaska, but I grew up in rural South Dakota on
16 a cattle ranch in the middle of nowhere or you can see
17 it from there as they would say. I grew up on my
18 great-grandfather's homestead and went to the same
19 one-room country school, K through 8, that my
20 grandfather went to. Same building as my grandfather
21 and father.

22

23 I came to Alaska as a schoolteacher 28
24 -- 9 years ago, 29 years ago and I taught in Atkasuk in
25 the North Slope Borough and taught first and second
26 grade. I left and married a Cape Smyth bush pilot 26
27 years ago and we have three children, two airplanes,
28 two cats and a dog, in about that order. I did say the
29 kids before the airplanes, right? He's now an Alaska
30 Airlines pilot.

31

32 I've spent the last -- we spent seven
33 years in Fairbanks. Jerry lived five years on the Slope
34 and then we spent seven years in Fairbanks. I spent
35 some time as a legislative staffer in Juneau a lifetime
36 ago. And I spent the last 20 years working for the oil
37 and gas industry. So this is a new opportunity for me
38 to learn more about Alaska and serve the state that
39 I've grown to love and raise my family in.

40

41 I had the opportunity to visit and be a
42 guest, an honored guest, at Karen Linnell's fish camp
43 on Sunday night and Monday. It was not the first time I
44 had seen a fishwheel on the Copper River. We are
45 friends with an Ahtna shareholder who has a fishwheel
46 that we've helped several years in the past more near
47 Chitina, but it was my first time in Chistochina. It
48 was a beautiful opportunity. I was really humbled to
49 have Karen share so much of her background, her family.

50

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1 Jolene was an amazing teacher for a
2 young woman who got to process her first salmon with
3 Jolene's father's -- I'm going to say this wrong --
4 ulu. So that was -- it was really, really special.
5 And I really was humbled that Karen would share so much
6 of her family's background, especially taking us to the
7 family cemetery. That was especially moving to me to
8 see her grandfather and where her mom and nephew and
9 uncle are.

10

11 So when it comes in terms of
12 subsistence, we know that the Office of Subsistence
13 Management has now moved within the Office of the
14 Secretary right before we all started with this
15 administration. So I think Eva, who is also I think on
16 the phone, and I have spent a lot of time together
17 already in my eight short weeks and have met a lot of
18 time with Crystal and others.

19

20 I'll just leave it with I'm looking
21 forward to getting to know each of you and learning and
22 communicating back to the Secretary the importance of
23 subsistence and the management of resources for
24 Alaskans.

25

26 I'll leave it at that. I'll be in and
27 out today and will be back tomorrow for your executive
28 session. It's an honor to be here and thank you very
29 much for the invitation to do an introduction.

30

31 MS. LEONETTI: Quyana, Kara. Mr.
32 Chair, if it's okay I'd like to have Eva Vrana also
33 introduce herself. She'll be on the screen here. One
34 second, Eva. You can unmute, Eva, and turn your camera
35 on. We see you and we hear you.

36

37 MS. VRANA: Can you hear me?

38

39 MS. LEONETTI: Yes, we can hear you.

40 Go for it.

41

42 MS. VRANA: Awesome. Well, thank you,
43 Crystal. My name is Eva and I am the Deputy Assistant
44 Secretary for policy and environmental management. I
45 am based here in Washington, D.C. at the main Interior
46 building. I hail from the great state of Michigan,
47 specifically the western Upper Peninsula, and even more
48 specifically the Keweenaw Peninsula.

49

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1 My background is in forestry and
2 natural resources. In growing up I spent quite a bit
3 of time out in the woods. I am happy to be here today.
4 A few items. Obviously the Office of Subsistence
5 Management, like Kara had mentioned, has moved within
6 the Assistant Secretary for policy management and
7 budget in the Office of the Secretary. So the Office
8 of Subsistence Management falls within the Deputy
9 Assistant Secretary position that I am in. The titles
10 are very long out here obviously.

11

12

13 The other item that I just want to
14 point out that I'm sure a few of you have been involved
15 in, is the DOI strategic plan that sets the goals and
16 the objectives for the Department for the next four
17 years is in progress currently. We do plan on rolling
18 it out in October.

18

19

20 While I have been here, I've been here
21 since about March, and I am getting my footing still,
22 still working to get organized, but looking forward to
23 working with everybody to increase efficiencies and
24 improve the timeline on publishing regs. I know
25 everybody here is hard at work to get those changes out
26 and we want to make sure we're working with you.

26

27

28 Additionally I'm still getting up to
29 speed on some high level issues. I personally have
30 never been to Alaska, but I'm looking forward to my
31 first trip someday. But, again, the team, including
32 Kara and Crystal as well as the OSM team more broadly
33 have been getting me up to speed. We stay in constant
34 contact. Almost every day I would say we're in touch
35 with each other on different issues.

35

36

37 So I want to just thank you guys. It's
38 an important job that everyone here has and I
39 appreciate your time and service on the Board. Thank
40 you.

40

41

42 MS. LEONETTI: Thank you, Eva. Thank
43 you, Mr. Chair. We do have a quorum.

43

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. At
46 this time we review and adopt the agenda.

46

47

48

49

50

50

MR. BROWER: I so move, Mr. Chair.

MR. WOODS: Second.

0007

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: There's been a
2 motion on the floor by Charlie Brower and a second by
3 Frank to accept the agenda as presented. Is there any
4 discussion or questions?

5
6 (No comments)

7
8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none.
9 We'll call for the question.

10
11 MS. PITKA: Question.

12
13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The question
14 has been called. All in favor to adopt the agenda as
15 presented by staff signify by saying aye.

16
17 IN UNISON: Aye.

18
19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposed, same
20 sign.

21
22 (No opposing votes)

23
24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries
25 unanimously to accept the agenda. At this time we'll
26 do information exchange and this is that opportunity we
27 discussed earlier to share what your agency has or
28 yourself has new to share with the crowd here that
29 affects our subsistence way of life or just to let us
30 know a little bit more about yourself. We'll let
31 Crystal call on people in the order she has them
32 listed.

33
34 Thank you.

35
36 MS. LEONETTI: All right. We'll start
37 with Ms. Rhonda Pitka.

38
39 MS. PITKA: Oh, okay. I usually like
40 go seventh in line. My name is Rhonda Pitka. I'm chief
41 of the village of Beaver. We have some new Board
42 members. Benjamin Payenna, it's his first meeting
43 today. I'm super excited about that.

44
45 So we just got back from Karen
46 Linnell's fish camp in Chistochina. I brought my kids
47 with me and my goddaughter learned how to cut fish from
48 our Regional Director of the BIA. I never thought that
49 I would say that my children had to go to the Copper
50

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1 River to go learn how to cut fish. The disaster on the
2 Yukon has been devastating for us. It's been horrible.

3

4

5 The last time we fished was 2019 and,
6 you know, my kids were like eight. So it's been a real
7 challenge to try to maintain that cultural connection
8 in a time of incredible salmon crashes. We've had a
9 seven-year moratorium between the State of Alaska and
10 the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in Canada.
11 That's been devastating for our people and our way of
12 life.

12

13

14 Our Canadian relatives haven't had
15 fishing opportunity for about 20 years now. It's been
16 horrifying to see the levels that climate change have
17 wreaked on our region. We were doing some temperature
18 water testing at camp with -- we have some of the
19 science instructors from Caltech coming into our
20 culture camp.

20

21

22 So we did testing this summer and the
23 water was 71 degrees. You know, with those water
24 temperatures that high it's become so difficult for the
25 salmon to survive past our area. I'm not 100 percent
26 sure that we'll have salmon again.

26

27

28 Probably about -- I don't know. When I
29 first started here I would have never imagined that
30 this would be the case, you know, within my lifetime.
31 Actually we were talking at home and since probably
32 2008 we've had -- we've never had -- we've never met
33 our subsistence needs in our area of the Yukon River in
34 the Upper Yukon.

34

35

36 I was kind of a little bit worried
37 about the fishwheel because I've never really fished
38 with a fishwheel. We have set gillnets at home and I
39 was like good God, what if we get a whole bunch and I
40 have to cut all these fish. Like, Lord, I don't even
41 know if I know how anymore. I don't think those
42 muscles still work.

42

43

44 Every year we try to maintain cultural
45 connection by having a culture camp. My dad retired
46 from the fire service and his dream was to go and live
47 on the Yukon River in our fish camp. So we built a
48 cabin there for him. I don't know what we were going
49 to do, just drop him off and leave him there all
50 summer. That was his big plan, you know. He spent 30

50

0009

1 years with the Fire Service every summer, not being
2 able to fish. Now in his retirement he's definitely
3 not able to fish.

4
5 So to maintain that cultural connection
6 we started culture camps in our area. We were always
7 too busy to have culture camps because we had our
8 culture to live out in our everyday life. So we never
9 had those camps in our area. We were too busy fishing.

10
11 So it's definitely a big change in our
12 lives and in my children's lives right now. This time
13 of year I probably would have made some big excuse to
14 not come over because I've got to watch fish dry. Now
15 that there's no fish to dry, you know, we have to
16 maintain those connections when we can.

17
18 So we've done things that we never
19 thought that we would do. Like inviting the Fish and
20 Wildlife Service Refuge Managers to our camp. I would
21 have never done that five years ago. Not even three
22 years ago.

23
24 But maintaining those connections and
25 making sure that our children have an opportunity to
26 learn these things has been so critical. I hope and
27 pray that these declines don't happen in other regions
28 in the state of Alaska because this is truly
29 devastating.

30
31 Thank you.

32
33 MS. LEONETTI: Thank you, Rhonda.
34 We're just going to go around the table this way with
35 the Board members and then we'll go to the Council
36 Chairs next. So Sara Boario.

37
38 MS. BOARIO: Thank you, Ciisquq. Thank
39 you, Chief Pitka. Maybe just building on your remarks
40 earlier. This summer had the pleasure of working with
41 Kara and hosting the Secretary up here in Alaska
42 primarily on the Kenai refuge, but I was really
43 heartened and pleased at his interest in the western
44 Alaska salmon crisis that we spend a great deal of time
45 talking about that. I know we're going to have an
46 opportunity to continue working on that with Kara's
47 help as well.

48
49 Looking to my left and looking over
50

0010

1 here at Charlie too reminds me we just recently had a
2 really good meeting with the Alaska Nannut
3 Co-Management Council up in Nome and thank you for
4 hosting Charlie. I was really pleased to join you for
5 that. In January we signed a new co-management
6 agreement with the Council. We're now working on
7 harvest management strategy.

8
9 Also in the co-management realm we've
10 been -- I think our spring meeting -- what do we call
11 it? It's not -- it's our statewide fall meeting. I'm
12 like which time of the year is that. Our fall meeting
13 for the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council
14 with the State of Alaska and the Alaska Native Caucus
15 will be August 20th to 21st. We're looking forward to
16 that one as well.

17
18 We'll be focusing on the status and
19 trends obviously primarily of waterfowl and presenting
20 on preliminary results of aerial surveys alongside with
21 ADF&G. So looking forward to that meeting as well.

22
23 We are, probably like many people
24 around the table, we're awaiting confirmation of our
25 new director for the Fish and Wildlife Service, Brian
26 Nesvik, who is the former head of the kind of
27 equivalent of Fish and Game in Wyoming and we're really
28 hoping to see him soon and have that leadership in
29 place.

30
31 We also have a number of leadership
32 transitions around the state as well as primarily on
33 the National Wildlife Refuge System. So we have a lot
34 of acting managers and we're grateful for their support
35 and helping everyone's patience as we kind of go
36 through a number of staff transitions as well right
37 now.

38
39 I think we have around 50 staff
40 transitions in the state right now, so we're really
41 working hard to cover the land and work with everybody
42 and keep things moving. I appreciate your patience and
43 support. Thanks, Ciisquq.

44
45 MS. LEONETTI: Thank you, Sara. Can I
46 ask can the people in the back of the room hear?

47
48 (Indiscernible audience speaking)

49
50

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1 MS. LEONETTI: Okay. So if we talk
2 closer to the mic? Okay. So that's the ticket. Let's
3 get our mouth close to the mic when we do our updates.
4 Thank you. Okay. Go for it, Mr. Brower.

5

6 MR. BROWER: Thank you. That's it.
7 No, joking.

8

9 (Laughter)

10

11 MR. BROWER: Uvlaalluataq. (In
12 Inupiaq). Good morning. My name is Charles Brower. My
13 Eskimo name is Maasak. I was named after some famous
14 people, Native people, back home when I was growing up.
15 So that's who I go by, Maasak.

16

17 But I'm a retired Wildlife Director for
18 the North Slope Borough. I started working for the
19 North Slope Borough Wildlife Department as a
20 subsistence specialist in '82 and then worked myself up
21 to the Director of Wildlife for the North Slope Borough
22 and retired after 25 years.

23

24 At that same time I've been engaged in
25 quite a bit of wildlife issues. I started the Ice Seal
26 Formation -- Ice Seal Committee, the Migratory Bird
27 Treaty. I was one of the instigators on getting that
28 thing going to get our hunting rights available in the
29 spring. So that was one of the jobs.

30

31 Also IPCoMM, the Nanook Commission.
32 I've been there almost 30 years. Then also the
33 Chairman of the Walrus Commission. I've been there
34 almost 30 years, I think. So I haven't left any issues
35 regarding wildlife. So I'm pretty keen on what's
36 happening throughout the state.

37

38 Yesterday you guys probably heard me.
39 Somehow my phone got unmuted while I was skinning a
40 bearded seal. I was telling my grandkids what to do
41 and stuff like that and I heard somebody, Charlie, got
42 to mute it. (Laughter)

43

44 So we got a couple of bearded seals the
45 day before, so I got up about 4:00 o'clock in the
46 morning to start on one and got one done before 10:00
47 o'clock. Then the other -- that's when you guys heard
48 me when all my grandkids woke up and came over to help
49 him try to teach them what to do. Then I said, oh,

50

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1 shit. Excuse my language. I said I think you guys
2 heard me yelling at them.

3
4 But I've been here -- how many years
5 now? Seven? Yeah, 14 years. Our summer has been
6 cold. The highest temperature we got so far is about
7 45 and it's been 30 to 35 every day with the wind
8 blowing from the west. Even down to 19. So that's
9 pretty warm for me.

10
11 The ice finally left after all spring
12 so it's time to go boating. I said, oh, my God, how am
13 I going to go to a meeting in the middle of subsistence
14 hunting. Then I said, oh, my God, I've got to make it.
15 So everyone is out boating. There's about 80, 90 boats
16 out hunting in the ocean. So everybody is looking for
17 bearded seals, seals and walruses right now. Hopefully
18 we'll get something.

19
20 But I enjoy being here. Welcome,
21 everyone. I've got a long ways -- I can go on and on
22 and one, but it would be all day.

23
24 Thank you, Mr. Chair. Crystal.

25
26 MS. LEONETTI: Quyana. Forest Service,
27 Mr. Risdahl.

28
29 MR. RISDAHL: Thank you. Most of you
30 know me by now. I've been around this office many
31 years in various hats, but today I'm sitting in for
32 Nicole Grewe. She is officially the Deputy Regional
33 Forester, but she has been just given the acting
34 position for the next 120 days. She apologizes she
35 cannot be here. She is in constant contact with the
36 chief, Thomas Schultz, up in Washington. We have a lot
37 going on with the Forest Service.

38
39 I don't want to talk too much doom and
40 gloom, but we're having a hard time too, struggling.
41 We've lost a lot of staff out of our Juneau office.
42 That's our Regional Office. We had 120 permanent staff
43 and we will be down to about 20 in the next couple
44 weeks.

45
46 The Chugach and Tongass Forest here in
47 town and then down in Southeast we've lost about 35
48 people -- excuse me, 35 percent of our staff. There's
49 been a lot of folks moving to lower level positions
50

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1 just to keep jobs as they move them from the Regional
2 Office to the Forest. So we're struggling with that.
3 Everybody is doing three or four jobs, but the folks
4 that have stuck around are doing a good job. They're
5 working hard.

6
7 Other than that it's been a nice summer
8 here in Alaska and we've been trying to do a little
9 fishing too. The Kenai is different than the Yukon,
10 right. The sockeye are running, going great
11 gang-busters. We did go down this weekend and after
12 one look at the Kasilof -- it's extremely busy down
13 there and one look at the dipnetters there I said we're
14 not fishing here.

15
16 It was like Woodstock. There were so
17 many people. Tents, ATVs, people driving all over
18 between the tents. So we found a place out on the
19 Kenai and just hook, line and sinker. Very successful.
20 There's tons of fish coming up the river right now, the
21 sockeye. It's just a very busy place. It doesn't feel
22 like subsistence fishing.

23
24 Anyway, I don't have a whole lot else
25 to report. We're working through things. Like the
26 Department of Interior and other agencies we are
27 actually developing an Interim Operating Plan, but
28 that's subject to change pretty much on a daily basis.

29
30 The regions -- there are nine regions
31 in the Forest Service and we're subjected to having to
32 work with one another, which isn't too bad, but when
33 we're missing planners or biologists or whatever, then
34 we borrow from one another. So a lot of help from one
35 another coming up with ways to get things done. Meet
36 the mission of the Service and the changing missions
37 that we have.

38
39 Anyway, we are happy to be here and
40 participating in this. This is really important for the
41 Forest Service and that's why we're still here. Thank
42 you.

43
44 MS. LEONETTI: Welcome, Mr. Payenna, to
45 your first in-person Board meeting. Go ahead.

46
47 MR. PAYENNA: Thank you. My name is
48 Ben Payenna. I was born and raised in Nome. Descend
49 from King Island. My father was born and raised on
50

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1 King Island in the Bering Strait, so I have a lot of
2 history in that aspect with the hunting and fishing.

3

4 I've got six kids and a few
5 step-children now with my wife. I've served on my
6 tribal council for probably almost the last 20 years
7 now. I served as the chief for about 10 years of it.
8 I've worked fairly closely with Charlie on the Alaska
9 Nannut Co-Management Council and the Eskimo Walrus
10 Commission.

11

12 I've also served on the Kawerak Board
13 of Directors for a number of years. Currently I'm
14 working as the Kawerak Transportation Director, so that
15 job keeps me fairly busy throughout the year. We've got
16 15 different communities that we do road projects and
17 trail projects. A lot of travel, a lot of community
18 meetings.

19

20 This year it's been a pretty nice year
21 in Nome this year. We did have a very early ice
22 breakup. Typically our shore ice sets in December.
23 Sometimes as late as January and we get to crab off the
24 shore ice. But we had a breakup in February and it
25 broke all the way to shore, which was surprising. That
26 was the first time I can remember it breaking off that
27 early. So our winter crab season was shortened up a
28 little bit and we had very limited areas we could set
29 crab pots.

30

31 However our spring harvest was pretty
32 good up there this year. I got a few oogruk out there.
33 I finished my commercial summer crabbing season. I'm
34 just finishing up putting sockeye away. We've got
35 Pilgrim River over there. Not quite like the Kenai
36 river, but we do have decent runs in there. When we
37 have met our escapement goals they waived the limit on
38 how much we can catch. I think my family has probably
39 put away a couple hundred reds by now. So it's been a
40 busy summer.

41

42 It's nice to be here and nice to meet
43 you all and get to know you as the meetings progress.

44

45 MS. LEONETTI: All right. Bureau of
46 Land Management, Mr. Pendergast. I did it!

47

48 MR. PENDERGAST: Thank you, Crystal.
49 Well done. Can folks hear me okay? I think you really

50

0015

1 have to get intimate with this thing. Kevin
2 Pendergast, Bureau of Land Management. I'm the recently
3 appointed State Director for this bureau, but I've been
4 with the Bureau for six years prior to that as Deputy
5 State Director for Resources.

6
7 I'll share some biographical details
8 because I think I'm a relatively unknown entity to a
9 lot of folks in the room. So just to give you a sense
10 of who you're talking to. I grew up in Portland,
11 Oregon of all places long ago and never gave Alaska
12 much of a thought until I came up here on a lark in
13 2000, 25 years ago. I would say this is where I found
14 my home. I've been here ever since.

15
16 I met my wife here. She grew up in
17 Alaska on a former homestead. I have four children,
18 which I'm continuing to raise here. They're starting
19 to go off to college, but they say they want to come
20 back here, which I'm really glad to hear. So this is
21 my home and I'm really glad to be able to take on this
22 role. I'm very cognizant, I am and the Bureau is here,
23 the team here, cognizant of just the size and scope of
24 the Federal footprint in Alaska and what that means for
25 folks, for subsistence and many other issues.

26
27 Speaking about the Bureau and what
28 we're focused on, what we have been focused on in
29 recent years since I took the job with BLM. There's no
30 path for us to be successful in what we do without
31 considering subsistence at every step. We consult
32 widely and as comprehensively as we can with tribes
33 across the state.

34
35 Because of the scope and scale of our
36 land footprint that's 229 Federally recognized tribes
37 and hundreds more village corporations and other ANCs.
38 So it's a big body of work, but we take it really
39 seriously. Many of you have heard from us in those
40 sort of project outreach type dialogs and you'll
41 continue to do so.

42
43 A few of the things I thought I'd just
44 highlight listening to the remarks here is BLM and the
45 Department of the Interior -- well, I'll say BLM in
46 particular, within the Department of the Interior, we
47 have an enormous focus coming from the top right now.
48 Alaska has an enormous focus and that's a really great
49 opportunity for us to educate folks on the issues here.
50

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1 If you want to know what we're focused
2 on as a Bureau, you can see some of our priorities
3 listed right there in the Executive Order we've got.
4 That's our mandate for what we need to get done in this
5 administration. But it's just kind of the top level.
6 There's lots of layers of work below that and lots of
7 outreach happening.

8
9 So I want to emphasize that even though
10 we've got a lot of priorities and a lot of schedule
11 expectations we're going to keep dialoguing with folks
12 and keep that outreach going.

13
14 We are continuing the work that we
15 started in recent years to do our part in addressing
16 the salmon crisis. That, for us, looks like assessing
17 habitat conditions across various regions. It looks
18 like targeted stream restoration to improve fish
19 habitat.

20
21 So those are just some of the kind of
22 highlights from BLM's world. I'm very glad to be here
23 for my first in-person meeting and looking forward to
24 the proceedings. Thank you.

25
26 MS. LEONETTI: Yeah, welcome. Dave,
27 Park Service.

28
29 MR. ALBERG: Good morning, everybody.
30 My name is Dave Alberg. I am the -- in my day job the
31 Deputy Regional Director for the National Park Service
32 here in Alaska. I've served in that capacity for about
33 three years now, but since January have been serving as
34 the Acting Regional Director for the Park Service
35 following the retirement of Sarah Creachbaum, which
36 many of you know very well.

37
38 In that capacity I will be serving on
39 the Federal Subsistence Board until a permanent
40 Director is appointed. I'm not sure when that will be.
41 It is sort of a moving target with things going on in
42 Washington, but for now I'm certainly honored and happy
43 to be here amongst this group and serving the people of
44 Alaska in this capacity.

45
46 My first trip to Alaska was actually
47 back -- I grew up out west in Washington state,
48 Colorado, and went to high school just outside of
49 Seattle and came up to Alaska working on commercial
50

0017

1 fishing boats out of Dutch Harbor back -- my hair is a
2 little grayer now, but back in 1984 and then the late
3 '80s.

4

5 Fell in love with the state, but my
6 life took me different directions. I ended up on the
7 East Coast in the United States and ultimately ended up
8 working for NOAA, for the National Oceanic and
9 Atmospheric Administration, for about 15 years managing
10 a National Marine Sanctuary off the coast of North
11 Carolina.

12

13 And then had an opportunity to join the
14 Park Service about five years ago. So I moved back
15 west with my family, packed them up and we moved just
16 outside of Las Vegas where I served with the Lake Mead
17 National Recreation Area as the chief of resource
18 management and compliance.

19

20 Before Sarah Creachbaum reached out to
21 me and expressed -- sought my interest in coming to
22 Alaska to serve as her deputy, which I jumped at the
23 opportunity and here we are. The rest is sort of
24 history.

25

26 The past three years has been an
27 amazing journey. Getting to know more about the state
28 and its people and the resources. It has been a real
29 joy watching my family who had not left more than a few
30 miles outside of Poquoson, Virginia and Tidewater,
31 Virginia see this incredible landscape and the
32 incredible people that we live with and watching them
33 become Alaskans.

34

35 When we talk about where -- if anywhere
36 we want to be in the future the answer now is very
37 different than it was three years ago, which is I never
38 want to leave Alaska and I agree with them completely.

39

40 Oldest daughter is in her junior year
41 at UAA. I have two kids in high school. One in Eagle
42 River and one in Chugiak High School. And my wife is a
43 school teacher at Gruening Middle School in Eagle
44 River. So we are here and very happy to be here.

45

46 For the Park Service I've got just a
47 few updates to share with you. Like many of the other
48 Federal agencies this last six months has been a period
49 of transition. We are realigning ourselves to make

50

0018

1 sure that we are continuing to support the mission of
2 the Park Service and continue to support the Executive
3 Orders and the orders of the Secretary of Interior to
4 assure that our Parks are accessible and open to our
5 visitors.

6
7 It's requiring maybe a different
8 approach. We've lost roughly 15 percent of the NPS
9 workforce in Alaska and at the Regional Office level
10 we've lost closer to 20 percent. Through voluntary
11 retirements through deferred resignations and a number
12 of other mechanisms that were offered to employees that
13 voluntarily took those abilities.

14
15 Some of those positions have been
16 significant leadership positions. We've lost a couple
17 of superintendents. Ben Babowski from Wrangell/St.
18 Elias took an early retirement opportunity. The
19 superintendent at Lake Clark National Park and Preserve
20 retired. We lost the superintendent of Kenai Fjords,
21 who also did a voluntary retirement.

22
23 So we have been moving people around
24 again to make sure that we are keeping our doors open
25 and our visitor centers open and making sure that we
26 are doing the work that the American taxpayer asks of
27 us. But it's kept us busy and I suspect in the coming
28 months, like other Federal agencies, we'll continue the
29 work of stabilizing and realigning with the new
30 directives and realities that we all face.

31
32 One of the bright notes that I want to
33 make sure we share is that we were able to hire a
34 superintendent for Western Arctic Parklands. A lady
35 named Siikauraq Whiting, who is the mayor of Kotzebue,
36 prior to coming to the Park Service. Lifelong resident
37 and community leader.

38
39 She brings with her not just her
40 personal experiences with Federal government and with
41 the resources and lands of Western Alaska, but, to be
42 blunt, thousands of years of traditional knowledge as
43 well and understanding of the people and the lands,
44 which was one of the reasons that I made that
45 selection.

46
47 Because we felt that that Park and the
48 units that it manages are too important to not have
49 that input and that perspective. So she has been doing
50

0019

1 a phenomenal job as a great natural leader, learning
2 the unique culture of the Park Service and we are proud
3 to have her on board.

4

5 We continue to support all of our
6 subsistence parks. The seven National Parks and
7 Monuments that have Subsistence Resource Commissions
8 that were created under .808 of ANILCA. Similar to the
9 RACs the SRCs meet twice a year in the vicinity of the
10 Parks and inform and make recommendations to the
11 Superintendents on subsistence in the Park as well as
12 make recommendations to the Federal Subsistence Board
13 or State Board of Fish and Game on relevant proposals.

14

15 I will say, and I mean this with
16 genuine sincerity, the importance that the Park Service
17 puts on subsistence as a component of our work cannot
18 be understated, whether it's from the Superintendents
19 to the people throughout the organization, whether it
20 is biologists, archaeologists. Everyone in some
21 capacity or another is touched by subsistence even if
22 that's not their primary focus and we will continue to
23 take that very seriously.

24

25 We've also been grateful to continue to
26 support our National Park subsistence communities
27 through annual-based funding, opportunities to the
28 Regional Office to conduct subsistence research and
29 monitoring projects across the state.

30

31 Current and ongoing projects such as
32 documenting local and indigenous knowledge of sheep and
33 caribou, subsistence place names, mapping and
34 environmental observations, partnerships with Alaska
35 Department of Fish and Game Subsistence Division on
36 comprehensive community harvest surveys in the Upper
37 Kobuk and Chigniks biological studies to monitor sheep
38 populations and radio collar and track caribou
39 populations and movements and many other ways.

40

41 Park Service Alaska Subsistence Program
42 also received funding through the Inflation Reduction
43 Act which allowed us to enter into cooperative
44 agreements and contracts with 72 subsistence park
45 communities across the state to support their
46 community-based food security efforts and collaborative
47 subsistence research and monitoring to help inform
48 management.

49

50

0020

1 Some of those funds have already been
2 moved into cooperative agreements have been -- that
3 were initially frozen have been unfrozen and include
4 timely efforts such as support for the Yukon River
5 Drainage Fisheries Association, in-season salmon
6 monitoring for Fiscal Year '24 and '25, and Copper
7 River in-season teleconference partnerships with
8 Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve and the
9 Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission.

10

11 We're still hopeful that the remaining
12 Inflation Reduction Act funds, which are still tied up,
13 approximately \$1.9 million, will be released soon in
14 order to follow up on this critical work and are
15 working with our colleagues in Washington and within
16 the department and, of course, the tribal communities
17 and partnerships we have to help with that.

18

19 I'll also say that for the Park Service
20 here in Alaska -- and we say it throughout government
21 and throughout all levels of Alaska that things are a
22 little different here than they are in other parts of
23 the United States. So part of our focus is helping the
24 new team in Washington, the new Administration, the new
25 faces that have -- like Eva, who was on the call a few
26 minutes ago, who has never been to Alaska, understand
27 the unique and special nature of the resources of
28 people here.

29

30 So we are -- Kara told you before and
31 will continue to say it, if there are opportunities to
32 get DOI folks out here, we welcome it and encourage it
33 as a way to help them understand the challenges we face
34 and the work that we're all involved in.

35

36 With that, again, thank you for the
37 opportunity to speak and look forward to working with
38 all of you.

39

40 MR. WOODS: Introductions, I guess. My
41 name is Frank Woods. I live in Dillingham. Born and
42 raised in Dillingham. I currently work for BBNA. Been
43 working for them for 18 years. I was a natural
44 resources subsistence coordinator for about 10 years.
45 Worked with Charlie and everybody in this room on an
46 annual basis. I'm pretty familiar with the process.

47

48 I took on the forestry position -- I'm
49 the Forestry Division Director and that's of 29 tribes,
50

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1 29 villages the size of Ohio. So we're writing forest
2 policy, forest management. We rewrote our Forest Fire
3 Management Plan. We're in the process of having each
4 village have their own community well and protection
5 plan.

6
7 We also are developing a workforce
8 because we cannot operate -- everybody in this room I
9 heard so far talked about employee problems. If we
10 don't recruit, that youngest person in the back room is
11 the most important person in the room. You are the
12 most important person in the room. Because I'm not
13 doing this for myself. We're doing this for you. When
14 we understand this process I'll talk to you about how
15 important it is.

16
17 Three years ago I was only on two
18 boards. Now I'm on like seven. The reason why I
19 joined the tribe is because we have an alcohol --
20 highest domestic violence, alcoholism, drug abuse and
21 sexual assault in the country if not the world. I
22 watched too many young people die. Every day we have
23 suicides. Every day. I never imagined having to come
24 to this Board and keep begging for resources.

25
26 I'm a commercial fisherman. I just
27 celebrated 40 years of owning and operating my own
28 boat. I work in the most dangerous occupation. I'm
29 also in the forestry field, which I operate and train
30 forest fighters, which is the second probably most
31 dangerous occupation. That doesn't scare me. What
32 scares me is happening in these rooms every day.

33
34 When I got the Forestry report we had a
35 63-page document. We have now a 276-page operating
36 document to help not only manage forests. It addresses
37 subsistence use, land use policy and land use
38 protection. I know how important it is to write
39 policy. Me and Crystal sit on the Choggiung Limited
40 Board. We helped write the first land use policy for
41 our village corporation. They formed a stewardship
42 plan. And I sat on the AMBCC, which is a great program
43 when they first founded.

44
45 We were hand writing with Liliana and
46 we were hand writing Emperor Goose Policy. They didn't
47 have a policy to implement the regulations. So, you
48 know, we live in America where I believe in honesty.
49 If the law isn't working, then each individual has a
50

0022

1 right to help change it. That's for the young people.
2 You don't like what you see? You have the right to
3 step up to the plate and help change that rule.
4 Whether it's a wildlife rule, a land use policy or
5 anything that helps us move forward.

6
7 The other thing too is -- you know, I
8 joined a tribe because we need social services. When
9 you go to the corporate world and you go to the
10 corporations and their profit and their main goal is to
11 provide resources and money for their shareholders. We
12 address it, but we give it lip service in just about
13 every arena. State side, Federal side and even in our
14 own tribe.

15
16 Our own tribes should be taking
17 responsibility of feeding their own people. That means
18 partnering with the village corporation. We just
19 passed -- it took me -- I put in a letter every year
20 since 2009 to have a shareholder-only hunt. We do have
21 a shareholder-only hunt.

22
23 Public Law 280 says that if we develop
24 policy and ordinances within our tribe and our village
25 corporations that we can adopt those rules that the
26 State and the Feds operate off of and have our own
27 hunting seasons.

28
29 Why am I trying to kill a September 15
30 bull moose that's stinky and rotten and a male and it's
31 male only to help feed my family when I should be able
32 to hunt when my freezer is empty in February and March.
33 Those things are real.

34
35 My grandmother raised me. I was really
36 fortunate to -- you know, I look at the -- I look at
37 the world just a little bit different than everybody
38 else, which is okay, right? Everybody would be happy
39 the same.

40
41 My grandmother was born and raised
42 traditionally. She seen the first sailing ship come
43 into Bristol Bay and set up the first school and she
44 taught me how to live off the land. There was no
45 freezers. There was no running water. There was no
46 electricity.

47
48 So that was real important growing up
49 and watching how our people -- what I see now is our
50

0023

1 people getting fractioned and that's not a problem
2 because we grow. We're in a state of like 750,000
3 people or 760. At Statehood we had 140,000 people. We
4 now have 140,000 Natives that we have to feed.

5
6 We're competing against a guide
7 industry and recreational users, the sports industry
8 and it is hard to compete against all the amenities
9 that are well-funded. Well, I mean they are organized.
10 I go to every State meeting and Board of Fish and Board
11 of Game and them people are organized. It's like a
12 bunch of bees, right?

13
14 Man, I look at it as an individual in a
15 different light because we all come here for the piece
16 of the pie. I want to start teaching the young people
17 the recipe. Instead of coming for the piece, I want to
18 help feed the future generation from here on out.
19 That's my goal. Because I'm done fighting. I'm done
20 arguing.

21
22 The State of Alaska -- I was a Nushagak
23 Advisory Chairman for about 10 years. I sat here and
24 argued and fight and whatever we do in those meetings
25 and have to lobby and bicker. You win some, you lose
26 some. But the State of Alaska has got to recognize
27 that Native corporation lands have a huge, huge
28 footprint.

29
30 There's a land grab happening right now
31 in the state of Alaska. I attended an April meeting
32 for the Board of Game. The guide industry is so well
33 funded and so well organized they ran out of resource.
34 The majority of them people aren't residents.

35
36 There's a bunch of residents that still
37 guide and operate here, but the majority of those --
38 not only fishing guides, but hunting guides and
39 operating guides. The land grab is happening right
40 now. The State wants to jump in and operate on Federal
41 land because they have no more place to put people.
42 You stop and think and look around. They have nowhere
43 to put people.

44
45 And I commercial fish. I just got off
46 the boat three days ago. Commercial fishing changed.
47 The whole world is changing. And if we don't teach our
48 young people what the changes are and how impacting it
49 is, that's -- you know.....
50

0024

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You need him to
2 speak into it?

3
4 MR. WOODS: Oh, I've got to talk into
5 the mic. I'm almost done. Okay. Thank you. Well,
6 you know, the Qayassiq Walrus Commission -- I'm the
7 chairman of the Qayassiq Walrus Commission and there
8 was the first co-management agreement between the State
9 -- I better not look that way, talk to the State.

10
11 (Laughter)

12
13 MR. WOODS: I love the State because
14 they help manage our Qayassiq Walrus Commission and
15 then the Feds. This is the first co-management
16 agreement in the country with Native populations, the
17 State and Feds operate. The Walrus Commission, we
18 copied them because that whole thing -- I mean in order
19 to feed our people we have to abide by the rules. The
20 Magnuson-Stevens Act I think was the worst thing that
21 ever happened to rural Alaska because it takes a
22 resource that we don't have any idea what it -- where
23 it's going and what it's doing.

24
25 I also sit on the Bristol Bay Economic
26 Development Board which separates all that. I'll shut
27 up after this. I'm excited to be here. I mean I've
28 been on the water for four weeks straight.

29
30 (Laughter)

31
32 MR. WOODS: So it's like a cultural
33 shock. I'll shut up. It's great to be here. I'm
34 wanting to learn about what we're going to be faced
35 with the next couple days. Thank you.

36
37 MS. LEONETTI: Quyana and welcome back
38 from the water, Frank. BIA, Ms. Jolene John.

39
40 MS. JOHN: Quyana. (In Yup'ik) I'm
41 Jolene John. I am a tribal member of the
42 Nunakauyarmiut Tribe. My late parents are Kangrilnguq
43 Paul John and Anguyaluk Martina John. They produced 10
44 children. I'm the youngest. I am the 10th of those.
45 So we have a very large family. Some of them continue
46 to live in Toksook Bay, some in Bethel, a lot here and
47 Juneau. I, myself, have three daughters. My last one
48 just turned an adult yesterday, but she still lives
49 with me like most Native families allow their adult
50

0025

1 children to be home.

2

3 I do have my life partner, Chuck
4 Murphy, from Dillingham. Member of the Curyung Tribal
5 Council. Through him I have five step-children and
6 seven grandchildren as well.

7

8 So at work just on July 17 there was a
9 confirmation hearing that held under the Indian Affairs
10 Committee for the person being considered for the
11 Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs, William (Billy)
12 Kirkland. Those decisions we will learn more about the
13 permanency of that.

14

15 Also with the current senior leaders of
16 the Department of Interior Scott Davis, Kenneth
17 Belmark, Bryan Mercier. They're great to work with. I
18 love that we can have direct line communication with
19 them. They even call me personally out of the blue.

20

21 There's been a lot of briefings and
22 data calls that we've been producing that are specific
23 to Alaska, like the Alaska Native Allotment, Alaska
24 Native Claims Settlement Act, probate issues,
25 conveyances that occur in the state. So we've been
26 quite busy with that type of work considering we have
27 to be the educators to tell the true story of how
28 Alaska, Alaska tribes, ANCSA corporations are designed
29 here.

30

31 BIA has also fallen -- I don't want to
32 use the word victim. The deferred resignation program
33 we've had a total of 17 employees accept the DRP both
34 in round one and round two. That meant that out of the
35 already stressed staffing levels, BIA Alaska Region
36 technically has 131 full time equivalent positions.

37

38 At the beginning of the year we did
39 have 37 vacancies. On top of that lost 17 and there
40 were some self-declared retirements that have occurred
41 along the way, so there's only 74 in the state now
42 working out of Anchorage for the majority. A good bit
43 in Fairbanks and just four in Juneau.

44

45 So we're also finding ways to make sure
46 that we're delivering on our federal responsibilities
47 to tribes and individual Native allottees. At this
48 moment we have an open opportunity to consider
49 reopening realty positions. So there are 10 of them

50

0026

1 that are vacant at this time. That should be helpful.

2

3

4 BIA is currently actively monitoring
5 the fire activity along with the other DOI agencies.
6 We're preparing to attend the Tribal Interior Budget
7 Council meeting in Tulsa, Oklahoma the week of August 4
8 monitoring actions that may be associated with
9 Executive orders or Secretarial orders. The way BIA
10 would be involved in a lot of times is through the
11 environmental assessment side.

12

13 The new NEPA rulings. I know our staff
14 are trying to ensure we continue to protect cultural
15 places, subsistence activities and Native allotments
16 regardless of what the proposals are.

17

18 You may have been aware that we had
19 tribal consultations around workforce efficiency in May
20 and June. They're currently preparing the report and
21 we shall see what the outcome is pretty soon here.

22

23 BIA is also responding to tribes who
24 are concerned about their Tribal Community Resilience
25 Grants that have been frozen through the BIL and IRA
26 programs. BIA has been successful in unfreezing a
27 number of those but we have quite a few that are not
28 accessible at this time.

29

30 I was fortunate to join the Tanana
31 Chiefs Conference boat tour. Got to visit tribes along
32 the river that I've never been to before. Evansville,
33 Alatna, Allakaket, Hughes and Huslia. It was wonderful
34 to be exposed. But their story of no fish really is
35 very pretty sad. I heard firsthand from their elders,
36 their type of leadership, presidents and staff,
37 community residents.

38

39 So it was very nice for at least the
40 experience we had with Karen Linnell's fish camp and
41 fish wheel. I was very honored to be part of that
42 group. I, like other people, have been busy processing
43 fish. I have brothers that commercial fish out of
44 Dillingham, so I was fortunate to process reds from
45 Bristol Bay, reds from Kenai so far and looking forward
46 to the berry season.

47

48 That's it for me at BIA. Quyana.

49

50 MS. LEONETTI: Quyana, Jolene. Mr.

0027

1 Chair, Tony, do you want to give an update?

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I want to say
4 what Frank said.

5

6 (Laughter)

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: That sounds
9 like my house. So we've got a big job ahead of us,
10 Frank. Power to you. I'm Anthony Christianson for the
11 record. I've been on the Board, I guess, how long now?

12

13 MS. LEONETTI: Fourteen?

14

15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Fourteen years.
16 I was telling people 12. So we've got some thinking to
17 do there, Charlie.

18

19 MR. BROWER: Yeah.

20

21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah. But good
22 years. You know, a lot of transition, change over
23 those years relationship-wise, both with agencies and,
24 you know, within our communities out on the rivers and
25 tribal communities. So I've seen the program grow and
26 I think the trust has grown as the program has grown.
27 That's my own assessment.

28

29 I talk so loud I probably don't need
30 it, but that's all right. I live with a mic in my
31 hand. That's my job. I'm an M.C. where I'm at from
32 home. That comes with the trust of the people, right.

33

34 So, again, about building trust. This
35 whole program is that the people trust us to make sure
36 that they can have access to their food and their
37 needs. That's really the basic of it. They say what
38 do you guys do there. I say well we listen to the
39 people who live on the landscape and we take into
40 account their livelihood and what it is that they're
41 telling us and we try to adjust the regulations so they
42 can meet their needs. There's not much more to this
43 program than to make sure the people can get their
44 food.

45

46 Frank did a pretty good job there of
47 describing all of the intricacies and things that
48 affect our way of life and it's growing. I mean I was
49 just talking yesterday about Prince of Wales and the

50

0028

1 expansion it's taken this year. During the pandemic
2 Prince of Wales was the first place to open for fishing
3 in Alaska and the secret is out. Oh, they stopped.
4 They didn't stop coming and it's starting to look like
5 the Kenai down there. That's just within the last
6 couple of years a drastic change.

7

8 You know, you heard it last week with
9 the Federal deer stuff, you know. Economics are going
10 to be affected if we do some kind of regulatory change.
11 I would be the first to tell you right now a positive
12 thing is that we worked with the State on the deer, the
13 wolf management proposal several years ago, and we came
14 to consensus on a harvest threshold on Prince of Wales
15 Island.

16

17 I'd be first to report there's a large
18 abundance of deer this year. That's something we have
19 to speak to, the things that do work inside of our
20 agencies and where we can touch points of where we
21 collaborated and there's a positive outcome, you know,
22 even though we're still down there dealing with rural
23 and nonrural situations and what problems that created.

24

25 I think the just of the program is
26 making sure we conserve the resource for the people to
27 use. And then the rest of that is working the
28 political landscape and trying to get people to see the
29 value of the program.

30

31 I, myself, personally, have been a
32 mayor of Hydaburg. I'm from Hydaburg, Alaska. I've
33 been the mayor for 19 years. Currently, traditional
34 food security. Senior coordinator for Tlingit and
35 Haida, the regional tribe there. I think we have
36 36,000 tribal members.

37

38 Last year we did a large distribution.
39 This year we're just like every other agency affected
40 by funding and cut all of that local area purchasing
41 funds, which we were using to buy commercial-caught
42 fish, helping our tribal citizens get a little boost in
43 there pocket and then distributing it to our tribal
44 citizens, but that got cut this year.

45

46 So we've redirected our program to
47 doing what you hear here. Frank saying the importance
48 of educating youth and what it is. I think I've been
49 to five culture camps this summer like Rhonda said, you
50

0029

1 know. But we're not in a conservation concern in
2 Southeast in most rivers. Most rivers are really not
3 doing too bad.

4
5 What we have is a societal change in
6 cell phones and couch boys, you know, and people who
7 just ain't engaging it, you know. So you come up here
8 and you see the drastic change. Rhonda's kids haven't
9 seen a fish in their life practically and these kids
10 down there got so many flowing down the river.

11
12 So trying to educate our youth in
13 different areas about the importance of engagement
14 because it is going to change and it is drastically
15 changing about who and what and how are access to our
16 resources being managed. It could be scary right now.
17 I see a huge influx again on Prince of Wales with the
18 sport industry, the lodge industry, guiding and
19 outfitting.

20
21 You know, we've run out of groceries in
22 the summer. Let's not talk about the fish and the deer
23 and all the other stuff. The grocery store doesn't
24 have eggs anywhere, so that's kind of a misnomer to
25 talk about here. But everything else is gone on the
26 shelves. So you go to the grocery store in this
27 economic boom. Well, it takes all the food off the
28 shelf and they don't put more food there, you know.

29
30 The good thing is that I live in
31 Hydaburg, Alaska. I step out my door, I step on my
32 boat and I fill it up. You know, that's something that
33 as I sit here also creates a level of guilt as I watch
34 other areas struggle with that resource and not feeding
35 their demands and their needs for their family and it
36 creates a really hardship for leaders to look at
37 because the loss of purpose in providing creates social
38 problems for our communities and we see that uptick in
39 drug abuse and alcohol abuse and all the stuff that
40 comes with it.

41
42 So that's a prevalent problem and I
43 think a lot of it has to do with our access in our
44 place of being and feeling like we're scared to do what
45 we do and I hope we're changing that dynamic with
46 empowering our youth to step into these roles like
47 Frank's talking about. See that they can change it.
48 One day I was a kid in the audience screaming about I
49 want a (indiscernible) and the next day you're up here
50

0030

1 chairman.

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I say also, Frank, watch out because now you've got seven boards and you don't know where to go and you show up and your mind's full and you've got to dump it. That's where I just came. It took me two days to unwind from fish camp. And I'm like, holy, 40 days. I couldn't imagine that. I had to literally isolate because you start to feel like a wild animal with eyeballs.

You know, it's something else. You get a different -- that's why people come to Alaska, is to get that what you felt when you get there and you start to provide for yourself and create a relationship with those species that provide themselves for us and culturally we respect them in song and dance and story and celebration, pride. Whoa, I got a fish today.

Well, if you didn't get one today and you didn't get one last year and you didn't get one the year before, that's what we're here for is to try to look forward. How do we create those opportunities for our rural communities to step into the arena of management and us listen to them in an effective manner that can have an impact on what they can harvest and in the future hopefully conservation measures that can return harvestable surpluses.

We've seen that in our area where we've decimated some runs and made some changes, albeit we have multiple small rivers, not one big one with one channel. But social change and then working with managers resulted in systems that rebounded and responded. So we can hope that that can be a reality in the future.

Other than that I just caught a few sockeye this week. I'm a father of three daughters. Two of them live at my house. They're both in their 20's. Yes, we're indigenous. Yes, my family could stay with me forever and that's what I tell them. I've got three dollars in the bank account. My granddaughter just had a birthday party yesterday. Cost me about a couple thousand bucks and I'm not even kidding. This is on the record. I want you guys to feel my pain.

(Laughter)

0031

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We had
2 McDonald's last night. No, that's just a joke for the
3 record. But what a blessing to have family living in
4 rural Alaska because you can afford to do that, right,
5 if you have access to that resource. You know, if you
6 have access to family, a strong network that works
7 together and has that relationship with the land and
8 sea, you become rich and wealthy, you know. And that's
9 what we're trying to reestablish for each of our
10 communities, is that generational wealth in the
11 relationship.

12
13 So that's where my heart is. I live
14 and breathe and hunt. That's all I do for a living now
15 because I'm a traditional food security guy. That's
16 like what a job to get, right? So a lot of restoration
17 in the time that I lost building this career to end up
18 here. But, man, I spend a lot of time out there and in
19 doing that to get that introspective about why we're
20 here, what's important about it and who we are as
21 people.

22
23 And it isn't just the color of skin.
24 It's people like Dave who's moved here and felt that
25 vibe and, you know, wants Alaska and he wants to
26 improve it. You know, there's a million people out on
27 the landscape that choose that lifestyle and create a
28 relationship that this program supports.

29
30 So I like to listen to all aspects of
31 Alaska and incorporate that into it because that's who
32 we are as Alaskans. It's a very diverse place with a
33 lot of interest and we have to be a balancing Board
34 with very little authority.

35
36 So we hope that we can listen to what
37 -- over here, why I called on Dave, because it's kind
38 of odd. Dave is Park Service and Steve is Park
39 Service and the recommendation was made that we
40 entertain a thought that we invite the Department of
41 Interior to a meeting with us and it worked last time.

42
43 We sent a letter forward and we got an
44 audience and it was effective to have a sit-down face
45 to face like we have our counterparts here to listen
46 and hear and engage. So I think that's a really good
47 suggestion and I think with the concurrence of the
48 Board I'd make a suggestion that we make a request like
49 that.

50

0032

1 We were looking at a time that would be
2 probably concurrent with something already happening.
3 Like what was it, AFN or something, they might be here.
4 That's what we did last time was tagged on. So a soft
5 suggestion that there's concurrence by the Board that
6 we request an audience and be able to sit like this. I
7 think it was impactful last time when we sat with the
8 last Interior Chief and then try it again.

9
10 And so that would be my suggestion. I
11 appreciate everybody here. The Board members, the new
12 Board members, welcome. It's good to see everybody
13 here. With that I'll stop.

14
15 Thank you.

16
17 MS. LEONETTI: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
18 I'm going to check online and see if we have Ray Oney
19 joining us. Ray, can you speak?

20
21 MR. ONEY: Yes. Good morning. Can you
22 hear me?

23
24 MS. LEONETTI: Yes. Go ahead.

25
26 MR. ONEY: Yeah, thank you. Raymond
27 Oney here. I'm sorry I'm not there. Last minute the
28 weather closed in, so I'll be able to fly out tomorrow
29 to attend this morning's work session.

30
31 Raymond Oney here from the village of
32 Alakanuk on the mouth of the Yukon River that spills
33 out into the Bering Sea. My first year being a public
34 Board Member.

35
36 Thank you.

37
38 MS. LEONETTI: Thank you, Mr. Oney.
39 We're glad you are safe and we're glad you can join us
40 online. Thank you.

41
42 Next we'll go to the Council Chairs and
43 I'll start with Ms. Jackie Cleveland from Yukon Delta
44 and then we'll go this way to Dan and Judy.

45
46 MS. CLEVELAND: Waqaa. (In Yup'ik)
47 So, hi, my Yup'ik name is Nalikutaar. I'm from
48 Quinhagak and thanks for inviting me here is what I
49 just said.

50

0033

1 A little on my background. I grew up
2 in Quinhagak and attended Mt. Edgumbe High School and
3 then Montana State University where I got my bachelor's
4 in media, theater arts and a minor in Native American
5 studies.

6
7 Since then I've returned home and
8 preferred to live there because when I tried living
9 outside of Quinhagak I just longed for, you know, the
10 food, the language and everything. So that kind of
11 surpassed my, you know, wants for a career and stuff.
12 So I moved home but it's working. I'm happy that I can
13 be based out of a village and still try to make a
14 difference and make a living.

15
16 So I live with my husband now and we
17 have two dogs. I always forget I'm a step-mom to two
18 adult kids too. So, yeah, I'm a film-making -- or
19 documentary film-maker, photographer by trade, but
20 subsistence advocate by heart I would say. I've often
21 worked my life schedule around salmon seasons, moose
22 hunts and things like that and that's why living at
23 home works out for me.

24
25 During this time while we're waiting
26 for silvers and berries people are collecting medicinal
27 and edible plants, which is the first thing on my list
28 when I go home. We haven't had a caribou hunt since
29 2019 as a lot of you know. We're still very hopeful,
30 but on the flip side our moose population is increasing
31 and our hunt was extended another two weeks. So we had
32 our first month and a half season last year. So
33 looking forward to that.

34
35 Some of the recent work that's been
36 happening at home is there's a Salmon Harvest Survey
37 and sampling done with a NFWF grant that the Native
38 Village of Quinhagak and Alaska Venture Fund partnered
39 on. Just recently we got word by Kuskokwim River
40 Intertribal Fish Commission that they received money to
41 do this pilot study on a few rivers within the region.
42 Kanektok River, our river, was added to that list.

43
44 So for the first time since 2015 next
45 year we're going to have more accurate escapement
46 numbers for salmon besides aerial. But I do want to
47 mention smaller projects that are happening for data
48 collection on salmon besides that NFWF harvest survey I
49 just mentioned. Our Native corporation sister, which
50

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1 is called Nalaquq, they are also doing a drone project
2 on the Kanektok River for salmon escapement.
3

4 So we strive for, you know, a healthy
5 and self-determined community and communities if you
6 talk about the region, of course. And the next things
7 that we're, I guess, going to be focusing on under my
8 work is traditional territorial mapping and then
9 resurfacing the Leave No Trace Initiative through an
10 education video to show. We're hoping that this video
11 would have to be watched by all refuge users before
12 floating or before sport fishing there.
13

14 There's some other things I forgot.
15 Oh, so I guess some other things I do at home I wear a
16 few hats. I'll mention some of my volunteer work. I'm
17 on the Tribal Council for my second term. It's the end
18 of my second term. I'm not sure if I'm going to rerun.
19 And I'm here as the Y-K RAC Chair obviously and then
20 I'm also co-Chair for Central Bering Sea Advisory
21 Council.
22

23 That's all I have with my notes because
24 I made notes right before you called on me. Quyana.
25

26 MS. LEONETTI: Quyana, Jackie. Bristol
27 Bay Council, Dan Dunaway.
28

29 MR. DUNAWAY: Thank you. I'm Vice
30 Chair of Bristol Bay RAC. I also served on the
31 Nushagak Advisory Committee for years as secretary. I
32 finally stepped down. I went elbow to elbow with Frank
33 for years and with Hans Nicholson prior to that. I'd
34 pause for a moment in memory of Hans. He was a fine
35 man.
36

37 Let's see. Where to start. I wasn't
38 sure what all to do. I'm a lifelong Alaskan born and
39 raised. Grew up right here in Anchorage. Went to
40 school in Fairbanks. I grew up here with my dad's
41 surveying from all over the Aleutians and all the west
42 coast on all those DEW Line and White Alice stations in
43 his village time and the people he knew and met in
44 those places.
45

46 Unlike the villagers that want to move
47 to the bright lights, man, I wanted to go find out what
48 it was like out some. The way I could do that was get a
49 fisheries degree and work for Fish and Game. I retired
50

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1 from that in 2002, but I worked from Susitna River,
2 mostly Bristol Bay, down the Aleutians in the Bering
3 Sea.

4

5 I retired as an area sport fish
6 biologist out of Dillingham, but my area was from Aniak
7 to Bethel to Goodnews to Port Heiden. A pretty big
8 area. I just love the country out there and the
9 people. And partly involved with these Councils to try
10 to help out since.

11

12 One of the things I'll mention people
13 talking berries. We didn't have any snow last winter.
14 The two short walks I've taken on the tundra I haven't
15 seen any berries. Even salmonberries. They often come
16 through. I'm kind of concerned what that's going to
17 mean.

18

19 Other things I was just trying to find
20 out, I got contacted last night about the Nushagak
21 Peninsula Caribou Herd. The Togiak Refuge has I think a
22 great program working with the local folks on planning
23 the caribou hunt. I think they're supposed to have a
24 meeting here soon, but haven't heard. Frank and I
25 usually sit in that too.

26

27 Because of that no snow we couldn't
28 even go down and catch any caribou this last winter and
29 they're concerned of excessive browsing on the tundra.
30 We have only been able to get down there every few
31 years to keep the herd knocked down. When it's good,
32 we do.

33

34 Other things of interest in our area we
35 were concerned about. We have had good red runs.
36 Fantastic red runs. Like all-time record red runs.
37 Kings are another thing that we're very concerned.
38 They haven't done so well though. It seems like we did
39 slightly better this year on the Nushagak. I even
40 caught two kings for the first time in three or four
41 years.

42

43 Chums. A relief is the chum run in the
44 Nushagak because it has met goals recently. There for
45 a while we were looking at a double whammy of stocks of
46 concern for kings and chums. Probably Frank, a whole
47 lot more than me, worrying about what that means for
48 commercial fishery.

49

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1 There's a new land use policy in the
2 Dillingham area that's going to affect the non-tribal
3 members or members of non-Bristol Bay tribal members.
4 My sons are members of Kashunamiut out of Chevak. It
5 seems like they're working to accommodate use. We'll
6 have to figure it out. It's a new wrinkle.

7
8 The other thing I'm really excited
9 about is the Park Service seemed to speed up. In the
10 past they've been -- I'll just say it -- notoriously
11 slow to the point of real deep frustration on
12 accommodating subsistence use. But there's been a
13 small herd of caribou south of Kokhanok and Igiugig
14 that folks were saying they ought to be able to harvest
15 and I think this last winter they allowed it.

16
17 That happened quicker than we thought
18 it would. Five, six caribou in Igiugig and a similar
19 number in Kokhanok. That makes a difference in the
20 winter. Friends of mind had their young children get
21 their first caribou from Igiugig. There's nothing
22 better in the world.

23
24
25 So I think we'll discuss some of that
26 in the future, but thank you for allowing me to be
27 here.

28
29 Doi.

30
31 MS. LEONETTI: Quyana. Ms. Caminer
32 from the Southcentral RAC.

33
34 MS. CAMINER: Good morning. Thank you
35 very much. I have to say I'm very pleasantly surprised
36 to see so many familiar faces here. I didn't know what
37 to expect, so I'm glad to see the program will have
38 some consistency.

39
40 My Federal career here began in 1976
41 and it probably wasn't long after that that I met
42 Charlie in Barrow or what used to be called Barrow,
43 excuse me. During that time for Minerals Management
44 Service I was responsible for doing a downsizing of the
45 region. That was a very, very tough thing to do. For
46 the Regional Directors and others you have my empathy
47 for what's going on right now. It's very difficult,
48 very challenging.

49
50

0037

1 I then moved to the National Park
2 Service where I became involved in the subsistence
3 program as the representative. So that's certainly
4 continued my interest in subsistence activities and
5 subsistence management, which then continued in my
6 retirement by volunteering and/or perhaps being
7 recruited to be on the Southcentral Regional Advisory
8 Council.

9
10 We had a good meeting recently in the
11 spring. We've had some new members and it's a great
12 new diversity. Not only in geographic distribution of
13 folks but also in their background. So I thought it was
14 a particularly productive meeting. People learned very
15 quickly.

16
17 Greg, our Chair, is not able to be here
18 today. I'm the Vice-Chair. However, you all know how
19 summer is and I had previously made arrangements for
20 the whole of this afternoon for another volunteer group
21 that I'm heavily involved in. So I won't be able to
22 stay very long, but it's been very good to see you all.
23 I hope you have a productive meeting as well and I'm
24 sure you will.

25
26 I will check carefully afterwards on
27 updates of your decisions and I think Brooke will be
28 here to give the Southcentral position as needed then.
29 Thanks very much. Good to see you.

30
31 MS. LEONETTI: Quiana, Judy. I'm going
32 to give some updates from OSM, Mr. Chair, if that's
33 okay. I'm going to share the mic with Mr. Mulligan
34 from Alaska Department of Fish and Game. So if you can
35 come up.

36
37 I'm going to start with a little
38 summary of the fish camp that some of us attended this
39 week. It was really beautiful. The weather was great.
40 The mosquitos were in force. Yes, plentiful. So it
41 was a fantastic experience where the ancestral
42 indigenous homelands and the Ahtna people are
43 intrinsically woven with the land and the animals there
44 since time immemorial. It is a true genetic memory
45 that lives in the soil and the trees and the water. It
46 was almost palpable.

47
48 Karen Linnell generously opened her
49 arms and welcomed us to her generational fish camp.
50

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1 Kara Moriarty, Dave Alberg, Jolene John, Rhonda Pitka
2 and I, along with OSM staff, Katya Wessels and Brian
3 Ubelaker, joined Karen and Jim Simon and Deanna Kosbruk
4 and five young ladies, which was really cool.

5

6 We were near the confluence of the Chistochina
7 and Copper Rivers and the fishwheels were set off the
8 bank of the Copper. We got to be in the shadow of Mt.
9 Drum. In the watchful eye of Mt. Drum. It was
10 beautiful. There were birds. Obviously there were
11 fish.

12

13 We got to share and eat subsistence
14 foods, herring eggs, beluga, muktuk, Copper River king
15 salmon, Akutaq, blueberry pudding and sulunaq. Did I
16 say it right? Okay. And we picked some chythluk (ph)
17 for medicine and Jolene fixed my hand with it. And we
18 saw the fishwheel in action. So it was an amazing
19 experience.

20

21 Subsistence is for the people of
22 Alaska. It is deeply spiritual and cultural. We have
23 our own personal reasons for being here as you all
24 spoke to, each of you, here. Your families who have
25 lived on the lands for generations spanning thousands
26 -- not decades or hundreds but thousands of years --
27 have culminated in your presence and leadership here
28 today and we heard you speak those words.

29

30 Mine too. My grandpa told me that we
31 know our moose and our salmon best and we should be the
32 ones helping them, not someone in Anchorage or D.C.
33 That's exactly how this program works. It's from the
34 ground up.

35

36 Those of you representing agencies are
37 upholding Congress's intent and vision to protect a
38 sacred way of life that is more and more precious
39 across this planet. So kudos to all of you for your
40 job, the experience and the leadership that you're
41 bringing to the table.

42

43 I have some OSM staffing updates and
44 then Mr. Mulligan and I have some updates on the
45 Executive Order for Alaska. OSM is currently at 65
46 percent staffed. Fully staffed we would have 43
47 employees and currently we have 29. George Pappas, who
48 most of you know, I think, moved to the State of
49 Alaska, Department of Fish and Game as the Director of
50

0039

1 the Subsistence Division.

2

3 And long-time fisheries biologist Karen
4 Hyer and long-time anthropologist Pippa Kenner took the
5 deferred resignation program opportunity as did council
6 coordinator Lisa Hutchinson and Permit Specialist Derek
7 Hildreth.

8

9 We're still learning in our new home in
10 the Office of the Secretary all kinds of things. Like
11 the budget process, which is very different from Fish
12 and Wildlife Service. While we continue to have some
13 challenges, like learning those new systems, we're
14 generally happy with the move and are settling in.
15 You'll have a chance to talk with Eva. She's going to
16 attend the whole meeting. She's listening online. As
17 well as with Kara. So it's nice that you're both here.

18

19 An update on the provision regarding
20 ANILCA Title VIII within the Executive Order on
21 unleashing Alaska's extraordinary resource potential,
22 subsection XXII, which reads -- in case some of you may
23 have not seen it yet it reads:

24

25 To direct all Bureaus of the Department
26 of the Interior to consider the Alaskan cultural
27 significance of hunting and fishing and the statutory
28 priority of subsistence management required by the
29 ANILCA to conduct meaningful consultation with the
30 State Fish and Wildlife management agencies prior to
31 enacting land management plans or other regulations
32 that affect the ability of Alaskans to hunt and fish on
33 public lands and to ensure to the greatest extent
34 possible that hunting and fishing opportunities on
35 Federal lands are consistent with similar opportunities
36 on State lands.

37

38 So I'm going to give a brief update on
39 our progress and invite Mr. Mulligan to give an update
40 from the State's perspective.

41

42 OSM and the InterAgency Staff Committee
43 had a two-day workshop on improving our relationship
44 with the State of Alaska. Out of that workshop
45 workgroups were formed to work on actions related to
46 communications, data sharing and training. These
47 groups have already taken measures and have improved
48 our data sharing guidelines with the State specifically
49 working with Mr. Mulligan, who has been very helpful in
50

0040

1 that process.

2

3

4 I've been meeting with Mr. Mulligan
5 regularly to share updates with each other and
6 determine any sticking points where we can make
7 progress. And OSM has developed a regulation tracker
8 whereby we identify all new regulations approved by the
9 Federal Subsistence Board and the Board of Fish and
10 Board of Game to determine whether the Federal program
11 can make our regulations match theirs so that we can
12 encourage proposals to do so.

12

13

14 So I think we're making good steps in
15 that progress and I will turn it over to you.

15

16

17 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Director
18 Leonetti. Thank you, Mr. Chair. You know, that is an
19 accurate description. I have now met with Director
20 Leonetti more than I have any other OSM director to
21 date in the six years that I've been here since the
22 Executive Order went into place and that is
23 appreciated. More so when I do have an issue that
24 comes up it is addressed quickly.

24

25

26 The most recent I will say is when we
27 submit comments, for example, on the special actions
28 that we just took up, we had submitted those over a
29 month before the actual meeting. Now unless we
30 ourselves share those, it was found nowhere on OSM site
31 until the packet comes out. You know, it was a little
32 late in this process, but right after we had that
33 conversation our comments were actually separated out.

33

34

35 You know, a perfect example that I gave
36 was for our boards. As things and materials come into
37 our board process that is posted and separated. It
38 isn't included in a giant packet. So if you want to
39 see a certain individual or groups -- so, for example,
40 RAC comments, OSM comments on any Board proposal on our
41 side, you can find those under PCs or if during the
42 meeting RCs.

42

43

44 So when I brought that up I said it's
45 been done. I've had additional conversations with OSM
46 staff that I haven't in the past, which is greatly
47 appreciated. As I'm sure you Board members are aware,
48 the upcoming wildlife cycle is going to be heavy. I
49 guess is a polite way to put it. And the challenges
50 that Crystal and her staff are experiencing, in

50

0041

1 transference, given the amount of information that we
2 hold that you all need for that process becomes our
3 burden as well.

4
5 So good communication and also
6 understanding and having I would say a sense of mutual
7 respect in regard to what the State does for this
8 system and this process is vital. I will just say
9 this. It's been a struggle. When I first came on
10 board I felt like our folks were taken for granted.
11 That the information was always there and it was their
12 right to have it.

13
14 Now I feel like over the years with
15 better communication and now with the Executive Order
16 kind of boosting that, I feel like we're in a better
17 place. It's not always a communication that Crystal
18 and I have. I've sat down with OSM staff to just hash
19 things out ahead of time. As I tell folks that I
20 manage, assumptions are dangerous. I'd rather have
21 someone come up to me that isn't quite sure and just be
22 like, hey, how should we proceed instead of saying,
23 hey, I just thought that this would be the best way to
24 do it.

25
26 So I like that approach. I don't mind
27 it at all and actually would prefer it. I hope the
28 staff who have reached out early feel that they can
29 still do that because I'd never want them not to. Now
30 I will say there are some things that I do take a firm
31 approach on. It's not because I don't like the person.
32 Nothing like that. There's just going to be some of
33 those situations between the State and Federal
34 agencies.

35
36 One thing I will mention just in
37 closing is that communication is improving, but we are
38 waiting to see if any other actions are taken because
39 of the Executive and Secretarial Orders, you know, as
40 far as alignment of regulations and any other actions.
41 So we're waiting to see those, but I will say this.
42 Crystal is doing her part from her seat to make sure
43 that our relationship is getting better.

44
45 Thank you.

46
47 MS. LEONETTI: Thank you, Mr. Mulligan.
48 Yeah, I agree. We have a symbiotic relationship and we
49 need to work together and communication is paramount.
50

0042

1 So thank you for those comments. I really appreciate
2 it. Do you have any other updates, information sharing
3 from the State?

4

5 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you. As I
6 listened to everybody.....

7

8 (Zoom dropped out)

9

10 MS. LEONETTI: Can anyone online hear
11 me? I'll just ask verbally? Okay. We're back. Thank
12 you. Go ahead.

13

14 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you. Just to
15 continue. As I listened to everybody -- you know, I
16 don't know where I was going to start. I had kind of
17 an idea in my head and then it just went everywhere.

18

19 Like, for example, when Tony was
20 talking about Prince of Wales and habitat and deer, my
21 first thought was I know that the Forest Service has
22 worked well with the Black-Tail Foundation who obtained
23 funding from the Forest Service to do habitat
24 restoration work for the sake of improving deer numbers
25 on Prince of Wales. There's that.

26

27 Member John, I'm assuming the tour that
28 you were mentioning I think my boss was on. So I had
29 that thought. I mean there's just a lot going on. But
30 I will just, I think, come back to what I originally
31 thought I would do, which is just give a Department
32 update.

33

34 It's July. We are up to our eyeballs
35 in work. This time of year we have roughly 1,300
36 employees. We add about five or six hundred seasonal
37 to help us out this time of year. Whether it's salmon
38 management, whether it's aerial surveys on caribou,
39 moose. I mean you name it. We are out on the
40 landscape doing that work and collecting that data.

41

42 Our Subsistence Division is doing
43 surveys. Little known, but our habitat folks are out
44 making sure that fish habitat and fish passage is
45 adhered to from anywhere from a culvert that a village
46 may need to put in to one of our large mines is
47 adhering to the stipulations that they agreed to at the
48 time they went into production. So our folks are all
49 over the place doing a lot of things. I will say, yes,

50

0043

1 we did steal George.

2

3 (Laughter)

4

5 MR. MULLIGAN: I mean I've known George
6 for a very long time and he is a friend as well as a
7 colleague. It was good to get him, but I will say I
8 don't know about OSM, but the man brings too many
9 snacks.

10

11 (Laughter)

12

13 MR. MULLIGAN: And those are not
14 healthy snacks. But I appreciate George ever so much.
15 Other than that, you know, you heard the Federal
16 agencies talk about, you know, they're down in filled
17 positions. We're having the same challenge. You know
18 even before, as you may have heard, the governor put in
19 both a hiring and travel freeze. We're having a hard
20 time hiring especially administrative staff.

21

22 We have one division. I think they
23 said they were down almost 40 percent on their admin
24 stuff, which makes it really hard to get the paperwork
25 done that makes it so our biologist can go do what they
26 need to do because behind every survey, behind every
27 counting tower, is administrative paperwork that needs
28 to be done. Those staff are vital to do that. So
29 things kind of slow down.

30

31 The travel ban put a real wrinkle
32 because it happened right when we were looking at
33 getting folks out and doing some things, but I think we
34 got it figured out. But as that scrutiny happens we
35 may not be able to get out to places that we thought we
36 could.

37

38 I will preface this. The bans were not
39 just because. As probably most everybody who keeps an
40 eye on things noticed the price of oil took a little
41 dip. Well, that means that the budget that was based
42 off of a price X is now down here. So we really didn't
43 have the money. So I mean it was a necessary action,
44 but it will impact how often we get out to places.

45

46 Other than that, I guess for the new
47 members -- I should have done this first. My name is
48 Ben Mulligan. I'm the Deputy Commissioner for the
49 Alaska Department of Fish and Game. I was born and
50

0044

1 raised in Palmer. Anyone who kicks around Southcentral
2 knows where Palmer is.

3

4 You know, I was born and raised there.
5 My mom was born and raised there. My grandma was born
6 and raised there. My great-grandpa and his brother
7 brought my family here because of hunting and fishing.
8 Not because of a job. Not because of an agricultural
9 project. They came for the fish and wildlife resource
10 that everybody enjoys today.

11

12 And then it just happened to be they
13 found jobs as coal miners because that's what they were
14 back in Pennsylvania. So they got kind of lucky. From
15 there -- so I was raised -- I mean we always had -- we
16 had what was called a meat room and it was always
17 hanging. It was cool enough you didn't need a freezer.
18 You just came in and grabbed it.

19

20 My favorite thing to this day is --
21 well, we've made it out of several things, but it
22 always was moose hotdogs. Love 'em. It's the best
23 thing ever. I can't find a better thing that I loved
24 as a kid. To this day I still do. But we also -- we
25 had gardens. Even out in Palmer back in the day
26 grocery stores weren't something that was just -- you
27 could take for granted. So my family had a garden. We
28 canned, we preserved.

29

30 A funny story. I was talking to
31 someone who said, oh, you can just freeze that
32 broccoli. It will be fine. And I looked at him and I'm
33 like, no, you can't. I'm like you have to blanch it
34 first. They looked at me and they thought I was crazy.
35 They're like I don't even know what that is and I just
36 shook my head.

37

38 But that's a moment in my adult life
39 where I realized that the way I grew up I was lucky. I
40 was lucky to know what that was. I was lucky to know
41 what that was. I was lucky to know how to do those
42 things because that's what my mom, my dad, my
43 grandparents, my aunts and uncles, my great aunts and
44 uncles all taught us growing up. So, you know, that's
45 where I come from and recognize everybody else has that
46 great history, loves Alaska. I don't think anybody
47 would be sitting here if we didn't.

48

49 Now with all that said and knowing my

50

0045

1 background there's going to be some points where we're
2 going to disagree and that's okay. It just comes from
3 the nature of what our two missions are and sometimes
4 there's going to be that fundamental difference. But I
5 don't take it personally. It's the nature of the work.

6
7 So at the end of the day I will -- I'll
8 have just as good a conversation about anything that
9 anybody wants to talk about regardless of the decisions
10 that are made here. I enjoy that with some of the -- I
11 don't want to make light of it -- with some of the OSM
12 Staff that is still here. For example I -- I guess
13 it's been a few years. I shared a bread pudding recipe
14 with Robbin that she still makes and still tells me
15 that her family enjoys. That makes me feel good. It
16 brings a warm feeling to my heart that I can share
17 something from my family to somebody else's.

18
19 So, with that, I'll let you guys get
20 along with your meeting. I'll be in and out too just
21 to let you know, but I just wanted to make sure that I
22 was here for this part. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

23
24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Mr.
25 Mulligan. We've appreciated you and your staff the
26 last few years. It's been a good working -- I've even
27 leaned on him when we're doing the rural stuff. Just
28 as a point of, hey, how does this look from the State
29 view and the implications and just some feedback. He
30 was open and shared his point of view, so I appreciate
31 that stuff.

32
33 Also on the way in was talking about
34 the wolf stuff and how we -- you know, this Board
35 appreciated the work the State put into the harvest
36 thresholds and stuff and adopted the State's policy.
37 Again, now that policy is working on the landscape for
38 the Prince of Wales residents and the deer population.

39
40 Also all of that prompted a bunch of
41 wolf people to get back into trapping and stuff, right.
42 So just outreach, education and stuff created a whole
43 new zone of people that didn't even exist before. So,
44 you know, landscape managers. I'm not a wolfer, but the
45 people that do we communicate like this. Prior it was
46 who are you coming around here hunting, you know.

47
48 All of a sudden there's nothing to
49 hunt. It's like, oh, okay, wait a second. I think
50

0046

1 we're partners since you're the wolf guy. Let's share
2 and here's where I see them and then, you know, a few
3 years later your partnership results in abundance for
4 all of us. So sharing the landscape across all
5 demographics is the only way to manage landscape
6 because we're all here. So I appreciate the comment.

7
8 I also was thinking that I appreciate
9 the context and the conversation between our staff and
10 yourself and that it's increasing under the new
11 pressure we have. We're looking, I guess, to be kind
12 of looking to align ourselves is what the mandate says.
13 So I've always been maybe it's a time that we might
14 want to restructure or even consider.

15
16 I know everybody is overburdened, but
17 the discussion of what that shared information looks
18 like -- and I know we operate on the old MOU or just
19 whatever that old thing used to be. But it could be
20 also a good time to toss something back out there that
21 maybe might look maybe a little slimmer or something
22 that maybe discusses what we're discussing here so it
23 doesn't have so much critical teeth to it that it bogs
24 down staff and the flow of information and can kind of
25 strengthen what we heard going on between Ben and
26 Crystal.

27
28 So appreciate that from you, Mr.
29 Mulligan, and Crystal, and I appreciate the good job by
30 the Staff. I think right now we did have another
31 person join the table, so I'll ask Rebecca to introduce
32 herself.

33
34 MS. SKINNER: Hi. My name is Rebecca
35 Skinner. I'm Chair of the Kodiak Aleutians RAC. That
36 includes Kodiak, the Alaska Peninsula and then out on
37 the Chain. Generally I'll just call it the Southwest
38 Alaska Region is very heavily dependant on commercial
39 fisheries. In addition to sonar communities we need
40 strong economies and stable economics in our
41 communities in addition to the consistent access to
42 subsistence resources.

43
44 I'm not sure what other people shared,
45 but happy to have conversations or answer any questions
46 people might have. Thanks.

47
48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
49 Rebecca. Welcome. With that I think we've done all
50

0047

1 our introductions around the table for Regional
2 Advisory Council and Council Chairs. We'll go ahead at
3 this time to introduce and announce Lisa Doehl, the SOL
4 at the table.

5

6 MS. DOEHL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
7 Board members. It's a pleasure to be here with you
8 although it is a bit sad because this seat used to be
9 occupied by Ken Lord, who unfortunately passed away. I
10 am an attorney in the Office of the Regional Solicitor
11 for the Department of the Interior.

12

13 I began working on these issues in late
14 January, but I have over 25 years with the Solicitor's
15 Office Interior and I've lived in Alaska for 26 years
16 now. I have two children. Now young adults.
17 Obviously I'm in Alaska because I love it. I guess
18 came here a little bit of my husband convincing me, but
19 the hunting and fishing was definitely a part of why
20 we're here. I look forward to assisting the Board and
21 learning more.

22

23 So thank you.

24

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you and
26 welcome, Lisa. That just brought up a moment of
27 silence for me for Ken Lord. If we can just -- I'll
28 take that moment before I break down crying.

29

30 (Moment of silence)

31

32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Haw'aa. We'd
33 like to just send condolence and prayers and strength
34 to the family. I know he had kids. With that we'll
35 take a five-minute break and we'll come back and do
36 Council -- replies to the Council Chair.

37

38 And before you go, just so you're all
39 aware, time to be certain we did on the agenda. We
40 switched some things up. Tomorrow we're going to do
41 time certain for the wildlife proposal at 1:30. So I
42 hope that doesn't complicate anything. We just thought
43 we'd do it earlier in the day and make it time certain
44 1:30. WP24-01. So we'll do time certain tomorrow at
45 1:30. Just for the record.

46

47 (Off record)

48

49 (On record)

50

0048

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Starr, you have
2 the floor. You and your crew. Thank you.

3

4 MS. NIGHTEN: Chin'an, Mr. Chair. My
5 name is Mercedes Nighten from Ahtna, Incorporated. I
6 work for workforce development at Ahtna and do our
7 shareholder development programs. So we are blessed to
8 do an internship at Ahtna, Incorporated as a corporate
9 internship. And then with funding from the Federal
10 government through the Park Service we were able -- the
11 Youth Initiates was able to do the National Park
12 Service internship.

13

14 So we manage the Ahtna Cultural Center,
15 which is housed at the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park
16 and Preserve. The interns behind me and myself do
17 interpretation for tourists at the Cultural Center.
18 And then we have additionally gotten other funding to
19 update our displays and make new displays.

20

21 Through reappropriations we just
22 accepted a collection that's been gone out of our hands
23 since 1940. So we also have a new set of collection
24 that we can put out in our cultural center. My title
25 doesn't exactly match what I do for the summertime, but
26 my title is Shareholder Advocate for Ahtna,
27 Incorporated.

28

29 So I'm going to go ahead and do my
30 Ahtna introduction. (In Athabaskan). So I just want
31 to say good day. My name is Starr Nighten. I'm from
32 Copper Center and my clan is Udzisyu. The interns are
33 going to introduce themselves. Iliana here is a
34 corporate intern. The others are the Park Service
35 interns. She's already in college going to school --
36 or getting a major in biology and eventually will be a
37 surgeon. So we're really happy to have her onboard.

38

39 We have two new college students this
40 semester in the group and then one high school student.
41 So we're all different ages. And then Tilly and I are
42 supervisors. The both of us are taking Alaska Native
43 Studies. She'll have her Associates in Alaska Native
44 Studies. I've been taking Occupational Endorsement
45 Certifications and Ahtna Language, Ahtna Instruction
46 and then we'll additionally be getting an Alaska Native
47 Studies Associates also.

48

49 So we also really encourage formal

50

0049

1 education besides our traditional knowledge and
2 education that we are able to provide.

3

4 MS. VOLLEMA: My name is Elisa Vollema.
5 I'm from Tazlina. My clan is Naltsiine. My parents are
6 Elizabeth Vollema and the late Michael Vollema. I work
7 with Ahtna, as she said, at the Cultural Center just
8 doing interpretations and answering tourist questions.
9 I'm also going into college, yeah. It will be my first
10 semester this August, which I'm really excited for.

11

12 (Applause)

13

14 MS. DEBLER: My name is Ileana Debler.
15 My mother is Stephanie Debler and my father is Nolan
16 Debler. Ramona Nicolai is my grandmother and CVP is my
17 grandfather. I am part of the Sky Clan and I come from
18 the Mentasta Village. I work at Ahtna as a college
19 intern, as she said, and I enjoy getting the work
20 experience but I also like being able to support my
21 community in some way and learn more about my culture.
22 Chin'an.

23

24 (Applause)

25

26 MR. NEELEY: Hello. My name is Jaysen
27 Neeley. I'm from Gakona. I'm in the Udzisyu Clan. My
28 parents are Roselyn Neeley, formerly known as Roselyn
29 Jean. My dad is Bob Neeley. I'm still in high school.

30

31 (Applause)

32

33 MR. SEGERQUIST: Hi. My name is James
34 Segerquist. My mom is Jeanette Tyone. My dad is Roger
35 Albert. My grandpa and grandma are Linda Pete,
36 formerly known as Linda Tyone, and James Segerquist,
37 Sr. or the late James Segerquist. My clan is Udzisyu
38 Caribou Clan. I live in Copper Center. I come from
39 Kluti-Kaah Village. I enjoy working with Ahtna and
40 just supporting and learning things. It's always a
41 school day. Just nice to gain more knowledge as I
42 work. It's nice to be here. Thank you for having me.

43

44 MS. PATRICK: Hi. I'm Taliyah Patrick.
45 I am the National Park Service intern supervisor. So I
46 work closely with Starr and she's kind of like a mentor
47 to me. She's helping me get used to supervising
48 because I used to be an intern just like them. So this
49 is my first year. I grew up in Anchorage, but my

50

0050

1 family is from the Copper Center area and the Mentasta
2 area.

3
4 I am so happy to do this job this
5 summer because originally I worked in construction for
6 many years as a project assistant. You know,
7 construction season is really busy, so this is my first
8 summer I'm able to -- well, my first summer in a long
9 time that I'm actually able to be out in the land
10 working in Copper Center and working with my grandma at
11 her fish camp and going to cultural camps and stuff.

12
13 So I'm really happy to be out in the
14 region and learning because I missed it so much. I
15 didn't realize how much I missed it until I was
16 actually there. Chin'an and thank you for listening.

17
18 (Applause)

19
20 MS. NIGHTEN: Okay. We were going to
21 try to present our slides but I'm just going to make a
22 list or give you the list of activities that we do. I
23 just thought you guys wanted to get out of here at
24 11:30. Okay. It's connecting.

25
26 One thing we've also done is this is a
27 new logo for the Ahtna Cultural Center. So we
28 incorporated our houses that we made that were
29 partially in the ground and the sticks would stick out
30 the top for the frame and then our moieties are the
31 Raven and the Sea Gull. So that is our new logo.

32
33 As I said we work for Wrangell-St.
34 Elias National Park and Preserve. We have funding from
35 them to manage this program. These are the visitors
36 that we've had for the summer. So we get roughly 100
37 or more visitors a day. We're only open Monday through
38 Friday because we're run like a business and not run
39 like the Park Service where they're able to have seven
40 days a week.

41
42 So this is a list on the left of
43 activities and then the pictures are of -- each
44 activity is highlighted so you can see the pictures of
45 what we're doing for those activities. At the
46 beginning is the Ahtna Cultural Center. So these are
47 pictures of the Cultural Center and of our interns
48 working in the Cultural Center.

49
50

0051

1 We had one intern who has already moved
2 on for the summer. She took another opportunity. So
3 that's her beading. That was Ally Fields. She's
4 another member from Copper Center Village, but she was
5 able to join Alaska Military Youth Academy this last
6 round, so she left us for a different opportunity.
7

8 So this is some of her beadwork here on
9 the top corner and we have the interns. If they do
10 have skills, like beadwork or sewing or making any
11 traditional activities, we let them do that in the
12 cultural center so that they can show that to the
13 visitors.
14

15 This is our outdoor leadership program.
16 We teach them how to hike. The safety around hiking
17 and being outdoors and camping. Everything down to how
18 to pack your backpack and put up your tent. It's a
19 four-day program and we help them increase their
20 endurance by starting on small trails and then hiking
21 up a mountain at the end. So in the middle they're at
22 the top of Willow Mountain and then that is our
23 Wrangell Mountains in the background.
24

25 We had our collection viewing, as I
26 said, so there's a picture of a salmon skin bag, which
27 we had just this winter found out how it was made and
28 that we used to make them and then it came back in the
29 collection, so we get to see one. And then the interns
30 assisted with setting up and putting the tables out and
31 getting this viewing for our board and staff and then
32 the Park Service.
33

34 We skipped over annual meeting. Ahtna
35 had their annual meeting June 7th and we don't have
36 pictures because we're so busy. We also have the
37 interns. Their first week they go to the Ahtna annual
38 meeting and learn what Ahtna, Incorporated is all
39 about.
40

41 We do provide college courses in our
42 program, so we have a biotic college course. The first
43 day we focus on ethnobotany and medicinal plant use of
44 the Ahtna people. Then the second day is focused on
45 salmon and the identifying salmon parts and then
46 discussing what research is being done on salmon and
47 how we can assist with the research with Ahtna
48 Intertribal Resource Commission and with Fish and Game
49 and with anyone so that we're teaching the interns the
50

0052

1 proper ways to -- we teach them how to fillet, we get
2 to feed them fish, and then Fish and Game comes in and
3 talks about rules and regulations and the things they
4 should know.

5

6 We get to do several career talks.
7 It's part of our program for them to be exposed to
8 careers so they got to talk to forestry and wildlife
9 careers. This is pictures of that. Camp Yetti Tenenaw
10 (ph) is in Cantwell. It was their first -- very first
11 ever cultural camp and we were able to go and take our
12 interns. They were just really happy to be able to put
13 on a cultural camp. They got some funding.

14

15 Cantwell is not on the Copper River.
16 It is our one village that is not on the Copper River.
17 They came from Valdez Creek Mine and were moved to
18 Cantwell. So our people live over in Cantwell, but
19 they live off the river.

20

21 We get to teach them things because
22 we're on the Copper River and fortunate enough to still
23 have salmon. Smoking and canning. As I said we teach
24 them how to fillet fish, how to cook fish and how to
25 put fish away and jarring or freezing them.

26

27 This year we were able to incorporate
28 data sovereignty into our college courses and learn
29 about how important it is to protect our data, our
30 personal data, but even our traditional and cultural
31 data, and making sure that when we are having these
32 classes and talking about our indigenous use of any
33 resource that other people are not able to take that
34 information and produce it themselves and make money
35 from that.

36

37 This was a really great course for the
38 youth to be able to take. They really went over
39 privacy statements that are on apps that you accept and
40 what that means. It really opened the eyes of the
41 youth on how much data they are actually putting out
42 there about themselves and then how much data is out
43 there on different sites.

44

45 So we do job shadowing at the Ahtna
46 Land and Resource Department so our interns get to go
47 with the Natural Resource Technicians and our land
48 patrol officers and go out on the land and watch them
49 and assist them with their jobs on checking if people

50

0053

1 need permits or if they need to know where to go or
2 maybe they're possibly doing something wrong and then
3 they need to let them know how to fix -- maybe they're
4 in the wrong place or don't have their permit.

5

6 So we get to go to several cultural
7 camps. Batzulnetas Cultural Camp is in the Park
8 Service within Wrangell St. Elias National Park and
9 Preserve. The interns were all able to go to that and
10 then this year I went in just for one day with Barbara
11 Cellarius and a few people here from the Regional
12 Office. We all hiked in except for one person who was
13 smart enough to take a ride. I forget who it was that
14 came, but if you talk to her it was very, very
15 interesting.

16

17 Copper River Native Association is our
18 regional health services and BIA programs. Indian
19 Health and BIA programs and behavioral health
20 departments. So they have an Elders and Youth
21 Conference. So we were also able to attend the Elders
22 and Youth Conference. The Elders and Youth Conference
23 separates the people by male and female, so the women
24 learn from the women and the men learn from the men.
25 So we were able to attend that.

26

27 What we didn't get on the slides was we
28 also -- Chistochina had a culture camp, so we got to go
29 to the place that everybody has been talking about. It
30 was our first time going to that camp. Even my first
31 time going to that Chistochina Camp. So that was
32 really nice to be able to go to.

33

34 We're closing out the year at Migratory
35 Bird Camp on Denali Road at Mile 7. It's another
36 three-day camp. We get to do things like berry
37 picking, fishing. It won't be hunting season. We try
38 to have them later some years so we could do some
39 hunting.

40

41 Then this week we're in Anchorage to
42 learn from our corporate office and we are just very
43 pleased that we could come to this meeting so I could
44 teach them about how Federal subsistence works.

45

46 I believe that's it.

47

48 Chin'an.

49

50

0054

1 (Applause)

2

3

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
4 that wonderful presentation. Good job, kids, interns,
5 the school, getting educated and finding yourself here.
6 What a good thing to do. Any questions from the Board
7 for our students? Any engagement? It's now your time.
8 Again, we always love this opportunity to share the
9 floor with the up and coming especially if you're here
10 to listen and learn. Coming from the region you come
11 from I'm sure Auntie Karen will make sure you stay
12 diligent.....

13

14 (Laughter)

15

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON:in your
16 endeavors and be successful. So we just continue to
17 hope to see you guys here in this arena and into the
18 future. Good luck, guys. Thank you for your
19 presentation.
20

21

22 (Applause)

23

MS. NIGHTEN: I also just wanted to
24 mention I am on the Wrangell-St. Elias Advisory --
25 Subsistence Resource Commission -- ahh. Anyway, I
26 think you guys know what I'm trying to say. And then I
27 also reside on the Copper Basin Advisory Committee. So
28 all the issues that we're hearing about from everyone
29 else is just really important to us too.
30

31

MR. ALBERG: Mr. Chair, can I have the
32 floor for a second?
33

34

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, you have
35 the floor, Dave.
36

37

MR. ALBERG: I want to just thank these
38 kids for the work they do here in Alaska. All of us
39 were at your age at some point. The fact that you're
40 actively looking for things that will lead to careers
41 and supporting your communities and supporting the Park
42 Service and the people close to you is really
43 important. So I just want to give each of you a coin
44 on behalf of the Park Service if I could.
45

46

47 (Applause)

48

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I think it's
49

50

0055

1 Ahtna tradition to dance your gifts.

2

3 (Laughter)

4

5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We just
6 appreciate that. Thank you, Dave, for that
7 presentation. Thank you, students, for your
8 presentation and hard work. Keep it up out there.
9 We'll come back at 1:00 o'clock. Lunch break.

10

11 (Off record)

12

13 (On record)

14

15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Good afternoon,
16 everybody. Welcome back after lunch. We'll reconvene
17 the meeting here. This is Anthony Christianson, Board
18 Chair. I'll call our meeting back into session a
19 little after -- 10 after 1:00 here. Before we turn over
20 the floor to Katya for the next order of business we'll
21 welcome Craig to introduce himself and tell us a long
22 personal history about everything he knows.

23

24 (Laughter)

25

26 MR. PERHAM: My name is Craig Perham.
27 My day job is the State Lead for Wildlife over at the
28 Bureau of Land Management. I am sitting in -- Chris
29 McKee took a deferred retirement earlier this year, so
30 I'm helping Kevin kind of cross this -- keep it up and
31 running until we get a permanent person here.

32

33 For background, I was born and raised
34 here in Alaska. To be honest I found myself back up
35 here after a long time. Just kind of moving around and
36 seeing the sights along the world, but have a
37 background in wildlife up in Interior Alaska with
38 furbearers and then for the majority of my career I
39 worked here at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in
40 marine mammals management as one of their polar bear
41 biologists. My main position was human/bear conflicts.
42 So I worked a lot with the oil and gas groups up on the
43 North Slope, but I also worked with the communities up
44 on the North Slope helping them with the bear conflicts
45 as well.

46

47 And then I had a stint with the Bureau
48 of Ocean Energy Management as one of their marine
49 mammal biologists and then got detailed into BLM about
50

0056

1 five years ago and have been helping them with their
2 marine mammal issues, basically polar bears and then
3 the NOAA species as well.

4

5 I appreciate the time and allowing me
6 to -- moving me up to the proper dinner table. Thanks
7 again.

8

9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Welcome. Thank
10 you, Craig. With that we'll go ahead and get started
11 with this afternoon, number four agenda item.

12

13 Katya, you have the floor.

14

15 MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
16 Can you hear me okay? For the record my name is Katya
17 Wessels and I'm Supervisory Program Analyst and the
18 lead for the Council Coordination Division, OSM.
19 That's my regular position but also I'm currently
20 acting as the Deputy Director for Operations for OSM.

21

22 Today I'm going to present to you the
23 Subsistence Regional Advisory Council's fiscal year
24 2024 annual reports and your, the Board's, replies to
25 these reports. Please remember that these replies that
26 you have in your meeting books and online are a draft.
27 They can be changed with -- you know, these Board's
28 decision if you want to change anything in these
29 reports, add/remove. You can do it before you take the
30 vote on approving the reports. The goal is at the end
31 of this meeting for you to take a vote to approve these
32 reports -- replies.

33

34 So ANILCA Section .805 mandates the
35 Councils to submit annual reports to the Secretary of
36 the Interior. Section .805 states that Regional
37 Advisory Council in each subsistence region shall have
38 an authority to prepare an annual report to the
39 Secretary and then it enumerates what it shall contain.
40 I'm not going to read it. You see it on the slide.
41 It's language from ANILCA and that's what the Councils
42 strive to put in their reports.

43

44 Section .805(c) also states that the
45 Secretary shall consider the report and recommendations
46 of the Regional Advisory Councils concerning taking of
47 fish and wildlife on the public lands within their
48 respective regions for subsistence use.

49

50

0057

1 So the Annual Report is an excellent
2 avenue for the Councils to share with this Board the
3 issues and subsistence concerns that typically cannot
4 be resolved through the regular authority process.
5 Sometimes some of these issues that come through these
6 reports are asked to be elevated to the level of the
7 Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture.

8
9 So why is it Fiscal Year 2024. We are
10 in 2025. Because usually the Councils meet in the fall
11 and then they develop the topics of their annual
12 reports. The topics include the issues that were in
13 the previous fiscal year. That's why it's '24.

14
15 So in Fiscal Year '24 all of the 10
16 Regional Advisory Councils have prepared annual
17 reports. They all had issues that they wanted to share
18 with the Board. Altogether, across 10 Councils, there
19 are 78 various topics of concern that are communicated
20 to this Board. Out of these 78 topics they requested
21 the Board to reply to 39 topics. The other 39 topics
22 -- amazingly it's the same number of topics -- the
23 Councils just shared for your information purposes
24 only.

25
26 These are still the issues that are
27 important to the Councils, but they know that one
28 reason or the other the Board might not be able to
29 reply or might have replied to the same issue in the
30 previous reply because some issues come over and over
31 again, year after year. A lot of times the Board
32 cannot do anything about it, but the Councils still
33 want the Board to be aware of what's going on.

34
35 So I started talking about the
36 development of the Annual Reports. The Councils
37 usually meet for the full meeting September/November
38 and they develop topics of concern. Then the Staff of
39 OSM they accept discussion, looks at transcripts and
40 developed a draft. So then the upper leadership staff
41 reviews those drafts and then those drafts go back to
42 the Councils during their winter meetings. The
43 Councils review them and approve these reports at that
44 time.

45
46 You all probably had a chance to look
47 at these reports. They were mailed out and emailed out
48 in April of this year. But in case you didn't or you
49 want to refer to somebody, there's a lot of printouts
50

0058

1 in front of you. Those are just the Councils and your
2 reports. What you have in the bound books these are
3 the replies.

4
5 We usually quote the topic of the
6 report in the reply. I'm just saying that mainly for
7 the benefit of the new Board members. So whatever is
8 in italics in the Annual Report replies. This is the
9 quote from the Councils' Annual Report. The rest,
10 after it says response, that's the Board's draft
11 response to the topic of concern.

12
13 So a lot of work goes in the
14 preparation of these replies. OSM Staff and Board
15 Agency Staff and ISC work on developing the draft
16 replies. Then replies are all combined. OSM
17 leadership reviews them and then it goes back to ISC
18 reviews it. There's ISC members here. They had a
19 chance to review these replies but perhaps they still
20 have more comments at this meeting. Then the draft
21 replies. The final drafts go over to the Board for
22 your review and approval.

23
24 So one other thing that I wanted to
25 highlight that the 2010 Secretarial Review said for the
26 directive specifically to ensure that the Secretaries
27 are informed when non-departmental rule-making entities
28 develop regulations that may adversely affect
29 subsistence users. This is kind of the foundation why
30 the Board can forward some of the Council's concerns
31 that you consider important up to the Secretaries.

32
33 So the table. You have also a printout
34 of the table. It's on a large sheet. There's a lot of
35 subject matter in this report so I tried to compile
36 that in a way that you can see the topics that go from
37 one Council to another to another. These also help the
38 Board to see if there's a developing trend, an issue of
39 concern that is more important to more than one
40 Council, that's cross-regional or maybe cross-state
41 even, issue.

42
43 I'm not going to stay on this slide.
44 You have the printout. That's the same table. I just
45 wanted to let you know what this table is. I'm going
46 to pause before I actually start talking about the
47 topics and see if there's any questions about what I
48 said before or anybody else wants to add anything.

49
50

0059

1 (Pause)

2

3 MS. WESSELS: Okay. One thing that I'm
4 really hoping that it's not just going to be me
5 presenting the topics of concerns of the Councils and
6 the draft replies, but I'm also hoping that it will
7 generate some discussion among the Board members. At
8 any point we have the three representatives from the
9 Councils, Kodiak/Aleutian Chair, Bristol Bay Chair and
10 YKDelta Chair.

11

12 So I also encourage you to jump in at
13 any moment and add whatever I missed maybe in my
14 presentation because you live in the regions and you
15 know issues much better than me. I'm just here to try
16 to voice Councils' concerns on your behalf.

17

18 The Board members also, please, if you
19 have any questions, you can stop me and ask questions
20 or any thoughts. I'm going to pause at different
21 moments to see if there's anything else anybody wants
22 to add.

23

24 All right. I'm going to talk about the
25 biggest overarching issue is salmon. You see in the
26 table the salmon column is actually divided into four
27 columns because this issue is so complex and
28 multi-faceted.

29

30 On each of these slides you'll see this
31 map and the stars indicate the Councils that brought up
32 these issues. I kind of had the framework for this
33 PowerPoint, but when I started updating specifically
34 salmon concerns they're pretty much the same. They've
35 been in the annual reports the year before and the year
36 before.

37

38 As you can see for the fifth year in a
39 row dismal returns. Salmon populations have been
40 plummeting over the last 20 years. Subsistence fishing
41 is often closed and subsistence needs are not met.
42 ANILCA Title VIII subsistence priority is not met.
43 Disappearing fish camps and loss of salmon culture.
44 Escapement and border passage goals are not met.
45 Specific treaty obligations are not met.

46

47 Commercial fisheries continue unabated.
48 Bycatch is discarded or sold. Habitat loss is
49 detrimental to the marine ecosystem health.

50

0060

1 Destruction of ocean floors. Concerns with Federal
2 management of Bering Strait/Aleutian Islands fisheries.
3 Concern with the State management of Area M fisheries.
4 And Councils, many Councils sent numerous letters of
5 concern but did not receive a response.

6
7 The Councils, they also have -- besides
8 those were concerns, but here the next slide shows the
9 continuation of the same topics. Salmon crisis bycatch
10 and commercial fisheries. They also provide
11 recommendations or they're requesting something from
12 the Board.

13
14 So the Councils usually -- that's quite
15 a few Councils asking to elevate concerns to the
16 Secretaries. The Councils are asking to pursue
17 meaningful actions to the new Administration. The
18 Councils are asking to remind the applicable Federal
19 agency of their ANILCA mandate prioritize subsistence.

20
21 The Councils are also asking to have
22 the Solicitor's opinion on these issues of salmon.
23 Several Councils report that they engage with the North
24 Pacific Fishery Management Council in various ways.
25 They either write in letters of recommendation, they
26 have engagement sessions with the North Pacific Fishery
27 Management Council. They're also participating in
28 writing comments on draft EIS on chum bycatch
29 management.

30
31 The Councils also has a strong opinion
32 that the hard cap on chum bycatch in pollock fishery
33 needs to be implemented. They also recommend to lower
34 limits of chinook hard cap in Bering Strait Aleutian
35 Islands fisheries.

36
37 The Councils strongly feel that the
38 stock assessment of Area M commercial local harvest
39 should be performed. All Councils are in support of
40 100 observer coverage on commercial fishing boats.
41 They recommend to modify trawl timing and gear and do
42 not allow operations on the ocean floor.

43
44 I'm going to talk a little bit about
45 what I said in more detail. For example the
46 Southcentral Council in their Topic No. 5 they are
47 talking about their concern of combination of PCP,
48 ocean acidification and commercial trawl operations
49 impact to ocean resources. Trawling results in
50

0061

1 targeted and incidental biomass removed as well is a
2 physical damage to the sea floor. This change to
3 marine food webs are having profound impacts on the
4 species and subsistence users.

5

6 And Bristol Bay, in their topic No. 2,
7 they exhibit concern about salmon returns and bycatch.
8 Bristol Bay wants to know more about research findings
9 and how bycatch affects salmon population returns. The
10 Council informs the Board that they've been engaged
11 with the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and
12 they talk about their newly released outreach and
13 engagement plan focused specifically on chum bycatch.

14

15 So Councils are really in the know.
16 They're in the midst of it. They are engaged and they
17 are committed to work with the North Pacific Fishery
18 Management Council and other stakeholders.

19

20 YKDelta in Topic 13 they're informing
21 the Board that -- they're sending a letter to the North
22 Pacific Fishery Management Council on importance of
23 chum to YKD subsistence users and encouraging them to
24 implement a hard cap on chum bycatch in pollock
25 fishery. This Council also is very engaged with the
26 North Pacific Fishery Management Council. They engaged
27 into commenting on the draft EIS.

28

29 YKDelta, they're also concerned about
30 low returns of Arctic Yukon-Kuskokwim salmon. Coho
31 salmon that is harvested in Area M. They opine that
32 large and early interception of coho salmon in Area M
33 commercial fisheries have low returns in the Kusko and
34 Yukon Drainages.

35

36 So this is just some of the examples of
37 what the Council is saying. I'm not going to, of
38 course, reiterate everything what each Council said
39 because we will be here otherwise for three days if I
40 talk about that in more details.

41

42 So I'm going to pause before I start
43 talking about hatchery salmon concerns and see if the
44 representative from the Regional Advisory Councils
45 would like to add anything besides what I already
46 mentioned.

47

48 MR. DUNAWAY: Through the Chair.
49 Looking at this table here, we have No. 2 chum bycatch
50

0062

1 support MPFMC outreach. I would think we might want to
2 add king salmon stocks for Bristol Bay are still pretty
3 high level of concern.

4

5 Thank you.

6

7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: When we testify
8 -- this is Anthony Christianson -- can we state our
9 name for the record. Thank you.

10

11 MR. DUNAWAY: That was Dan Dunaway who
12 just spoke a moment ago about the Bristol Bay RAC.
13 Thank you.

14

15 MS. SKINNER: This is Rebecca Skinner,
16 the Kodiak Aleutians RAC. So we did have a concern
17 that's related to salmon and I think what we see as the
18 biggest problem is listed as fragmented management. So
19 you have State management and Federal management of
20 salmon and on the Federal side you have subsistence
21 Federal management and then commercial Federal
22 management.

23

24 I've said this before in speaking to
25 the Board, but I'll say it again because I think it is
26 really important and it's having a huge impact. The
27 different regulatory and management systems don't seem
28 to really -- they don't work together. They don't talk
29 to each other. That results in a lot of frustration on
30 all sides and it results in stakeholders feeling like
31 nothing is happening because literally nobody is in a
32 business to fix the problem because of the fragmented
33 management.

34

35 For the Kodiak Aleutians region it's
36 hard because as a region we have the Area M commercial
37 fishery and we have all the trawl fisheries in the
38 state within our KARAC region. At a community level
39 the ability to continue these commercial fisheries --
40 and it's not to say that there can't be changes in
41 management, but the ability to continue the commercial
42 fisheries is really important to our communities.

43

44 So I know that at a Board level the
45 focus is on subsistence, but I will say at the
46 community level for us it's also about the existence
47 and ability of our communities to continue and we can't
48 do that if we don't have healthy economies.

49

50

0063

1 So thinking about King Cove in our
2 region, they lost their processing plant and that's had
3 -- it's not operating. The plant is still there, it's
4 just not operating. It's had a huge impact on the
5 community. That impacts the ability of people to live
6 in the community. It impacts the ability of people
7 with kids to stay in the community. Then it impacts
8 the ability of the community to support schools. All
9 of these things tie together.

10

11 I guess I just have to speak from a --
12 at my own personal level. It's hard because it feels
13 like some of the things going on in our region are
14 getting blamed for problems that are happening in other
15 regions that may not -- even if you stopped commercial
16 fishing there's still some basic environmental things
17 going on with salmon that we don't fully understand.

18

19 It's not going to fix the salmon
20 problem, but if you shut down -- if what happened is
21 the fisheries in our region got shut down, it would
22 have a really devastating impact. I say that knowing
23 that other regions right now that don't have the salmon
24 it's devastating to them. But, at the same time, it
25 doesn't feel like the right solution is then to
26 devastate other areas if it's not going to fix the
27 underlying problem.

28

29 The issue of salmon is really
30 complicated. So I've spoken to the regulatory
31 complexity. I think biologically it's complex.
32 There's different species of salmon. Different species
33 are behaving differently right now. So in 2022 you had
34 a huge run of red salmon in Bristol Bay. Like a
35 record-setting run. So the red salmon in Bristol Bay
36 are doing really well.

37

38 That's not the same case with chum and
39 chinook. Those have been declining. It seems like in
40 general pink salmon have been doing well. So different
41 salmon species are responding differently to what's
42 going on in the environment. That's complicated. And
43 then, of course, we haven't gotten to the hatchery
44 issue yet, but we've got the hatchery salmon. That's
45 another level of complication.

46

47 So Katya captured on the spreadsheet
48 for us that our comment was fragmented management
49 approach. I understand that's not the Federal
50

0064

1 Subsistence Board's job to fix that, but if all of the
2 regulatory bodies just continue going forward in a
3 silo, each in a silo, the salmon issue is not going to
4 be completely understood and resolved. I don't even
5 know if we did understand it if we could resolve it.

6
7 But the silo is -- right now they're
8 really not helping and they're creating a lot of
9 frustration and I understand the frustration. I've
10 been in meetings. I come here. The response -- the
11 Annual Report says, well, we can only do so much with
12 subsistence salmon. You need to go to the Council or
13 you need to go to the Board of Fish. Going to Council
14 meetings they can only do so much. They're not
15 primarily regulating the salmon fisheries. That's the
16 State Board of Fish. If you go to the State Board of
17 Fish meetings, you hear something else.

18
19 Again, because nobody is in control of
20 the entire salmon life cycle and where they are, I
21 understand why we have a fragmented system and that
22 really nobody is in charge of fixing it. Again,
23 understand it's not the Board's responsibility to fix
24 it, but we can't keep going forward with the silos
25 because that's not working.

26
27 Just checking my notes to make sure I
28 hit on everything. I guess the other thing I would ask
29 is that because the salmon issue is so complex, it has
30 a lot of different parts, if this is something that it
31 seems like it's appropriate for the Board to want to do
32 more, I think it would be really helpful to have maybe
33 a dedicated session bringing in definitely biologists,
34 probably representatives from the different management
35 systems, so that we can all start with a common set of
36 information.

37
38 Because in each of the different forums
39 that I'm in I'm even looking at the list up there, I
40 see stuff up there and I think, wow, that's not
41 accurate or that's really giving the wrong impression.
42 If we're not starting on the same page with the same
43 information, we can still disagree about what that
44 information means, but at least we're starting with the
45 same information.

46
47 It's clear to me right now, in all the
48 different regulatory meetings I go to, that we are not
49 all starting at the same information place. So that is
50

0065

1 also leading to misunderstandings at a community level.
2 I feel like communities are getting pitted against each
3 other. It's intensifying the frustration that everyone
4 is feeling.

5

6 Thank you.

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
9 Rebecca. Again, I think this is our opportunity to do
10 that and express that. I think earlier we heard with
11 Ben a little more connection, conversation and topics
12 and information sharing, that they've been trying to
13 tie that up here a bit because of these issues,
14 emergent issues, and then mandates coming down and lack
15 of staff. So we're hoping that that improves and that
16 definitely is the problem right there. So ditto.

17

18 Any other conversation or questions.

19

20 Frank.

21

22 MR. WOODS: Other than exploring
23 litigation or suing National Pacific Fisheries
24 Management Council for bycatch or State of Alaska for
25 Area M mismanagement, whatever it looks like, you're
26 absolutely correct. We have no tools to deal with
27 everything that's up there on that page other than
28 maybe asking as a Board that Department of Interior or
29 Secretary, whoever is in charge of Department of
30 Commerce under Magnuson-Stevens Act, to re-appropriate
31 that Board to somewhere where it should be -- could be
32 regulated a lot more efficiently. Right now we have no
33 say at all.

34

35 So if you go to the North Pacific
36 Fisheries Management Council and you're not fully
37 engaged, it doesn't matter if you're a subsistence
38 user, a commercial fisherman, it's the money that comes
39 in -- it's the Department of Commerce for goodness
40 sake, right? That's what they're focused on, is the
41 industrialization of a resource that needs to be
42 harvested. That's their goal.

43

44 So if you ask the government -- and it
45 could be a senator or could be a president -- we could
46 lobby our representatives to change the direction of
47 this whole thing. If that's what it takes, if that's
48 what it's going to take, then that's what it might have
49 to take. Like you said, there's things that are

50

0066

1 happening now that we cannot fix. If we don't come up
2 with answers, at least alternative answers, I like your
3 idea of coming together and it gives us a better idea.

4

5 I think me and Robbin did that about 20
6 years ago. We gathered all the biologists together and
7 said, okay, how are we going to fix this caribou and
8 moose problems. Caribou, moose and antler project,
9 right? Losing all the caribou. They still haven't
10 fixed the problem but they at least got issues
11 addressed. The moose population increased, but your
12 answer to that was maybe do it legally. If you can't
13 get anybody to address the bycatch issue, then let's
14 change management arenas.

15

16 So I think that's an explore for a
17 later date. The same thing as you, I've been going
18 around and around on how to fix this. You know, the
19 (indiscernible) your answer, 10 percent of whatever it
20 is. They'll give you five reds off of bycatch from the
21 Bering Sea. By law they're obligated to save 10
22 percent of the bycatch, but they throw the rest away.

23

24 So I'll shut up. We already know all
25 the answers. An alternative answer would be change
26 management regimes. Put it back into Crystal's office.

27

28 (Laughter)

29

30 MS. WESSELS: Okay. I'm going to move
31 on with talking about Council's concerns. They're
32 still all related about salmon. That will be part of
33 my presentation. Also talking about there is
34 management suggestions that Councils have. This is the
35 issue also being on several Councils' radar now for
36 several Annual Report cycles. That's the concern about
37 hatchery salmon.

38

39 This time around three Councils,
40 YKDelta, Western and Eastern Interior, brought up the
41 concerns about the hatchery salmon and, as you know,
42 all three Councils are located along the Yukon River.
43 Their concerns are about the competition between wild
44 and hatchery salmon. Their concerns is competition for
45 food. They claim that research shows that they compete
46 for food. Then they're also concerned about the
47 international hatchery releases.

48

49 Western Interior says that Federal and

50

0067

1 State governments hinder Native salmon stock recovery
2 by not acting regarding international hatcheries and
3 State release hatchery salmon in Alaskan waters. What
4 they recommend in regards to hatcheries is to address
5 this issue on the statewide and international scale.

6
7 They recommend the State needs to
8 reduce their hatchery releases. Also they recommend
9 that United States needs to negotiate with other
10 countries. The Pacific arena, Canada, Russia, Japan,
11 Korea and make an agreement with them that they
12 severely reduce their hatchery releases.

13
14 Eastern Interior plans on sending a
15 letter to staff at the Department of State requesting
16 information if anything is being done in regards to the
17 international hatchery releases. The Councils are
18 actually asking the Board to formulate how an
19 international discussion can start over capping
20 international hatchery production.

21
22 So that is all about the hatchery
23 salmon. Again, like if there's any questions or
24 additional comments. I'm going to pause before I move
25 on to management suggestions from the Council. Go
26 ahead.

27
28 MS. CLEVELAND: Jacqueline Cleveland,
29 YKDelta RAC. I just wanted to ask of the international
30 countries is Canada not mentioned for a reason?

31
32 MS. WESSELS: No, I mentioned Canada.

33
34 MS. CLEVELAND: Okay. Sorry.
35 Disregard.

36
37 MS. WESSELS: No, I mentioned Canada.
38 Maybe I didn't say it loud enough. It is even on the
39 slide right there.

40
41 MS. CLEVELAND: Okay.

42
43 MS. WESSELS: Sorry.

44
45 MR. WOODS: I'm a pessimist. I can look
46 both sides. This Council, have we looked at putting
47 their own hatcheries and competing about the existing
48 hatcheries that are out there? I mean the other answer
49 is to -- if you can't beat them, join them. Yeah.
50

0068

1 I mean then you'll get their attention,
2 right? I mean what else is there? I'm not joking, but
3 the only way to save a species is to make sure there's
4 a return. If we're not gaining the return on our
5 natural stocks, how are we going to enhance that?

6
7 If you can't have a natural return
8 stock that's going to regain itself, there's absolutely
9 no way we're going to ever recover from this. I'm not
10 trying to be facetious, but there's some positive and
11 -- we had a hatchery on Snake River to recover the
12 sockeye salmon that went up a small stream.

13
14 There's a big return now. There's
15 nothing against temporary hatcheries to regain a stock
16 of concern. The other answer is -- I mean if you push
17 that agenda all the way forward and you're competing
18 against those big entities, there's a lot of science
19 behind what we're talking about. We already know about
20 the devastation of the hatchery.

21
22 If our king salmon cannot return at
23 55,000 spawners going past the tower and if we're never
24 meeting that 55,000, we got 38, I think, 35,000, those
25 stocks will never build up to return to the natural
26 levels they're supposed to. My answer would be put in
27 a hatchery at the Yukon-Kuskokwim and a Nushagak
28 district. That's my honest recommendation.

29
30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'm going to
31 speak before Rhonda does. This is Anthony
32 Christianson. I'm not being contentious here but we
33 went south to look at stuff similar, right, and we
34 looked at the (indiscernible) that had a similar
35 situation. They overfished their stocks all the way
36 down to 5,000 sockeye and they took brood stock out of
37 the wild stock.

38
39 Hydaburg did that back in the 1930s and
40 '40s to keep their commercial stock going because they
41 overharvested it. But they took their eggs from the
42 brood stock and got 100 percent survival on them and
43 stick them back in their natural habitat and protect
44 them from predation and watch the environment and do
45 the best to protect it and that's how they rebuilt
46 their stock. So I think Frank is speaking to those
47 places where they didn't want to break tradition.

48
49 But if you go far back into tradition,
50

0069

1 you'll find we were seeding streams, putting them
2 stocks there and making sure that they had that
3 habitat. So culturally we were doing it. We created
4 geeleyes (ph) in Southeast. We put streams in, created
5 water barriers and we documented it traditionally. We
6 created habitat. We're like beavers, you know. We
7 managed the landscape for thousands of years. We did
8 this and we did that to make sure these stocks came
9 back.

10

11 So I think we're at that point where
12 Rebecca is at. You know, there needs to be probably a
13 statewide salmon symposium where all of us that have a
14 stake in it are sitting there trying to elevate these
15 concerns to affected bodies and then throw a dart at
16 what we can effectively do based off of all the same
17 information like Rebecca is suggesting and I like that.

18

19 Thank you.

20

21 MS. LAVINE: Hello, Mr. Chair. Members
22 of the Council. This is Robbin LaVine. I just want to
23 tell you how much we value all of your conversation,
24 right. So if there are things that you're sitting on,
25 please share. You are the Board and your conversation
26 will help us as the Federal Subsistence Management
27 Program, your staff, OSM and the ISC responds in your
28 voice. So the Annual Reports and then later the
29 correspondence.

30

31 What we're doing here is the Councils
32 are sharing their information with you, they're sharing
33 their concerns with you. You need to be informed on
34 these issues so that you make informed decisions in the
35 arena in which you can act, which is regulations,
36 right? Fish and Wildlife regulations.

37

38 You all are incredibly busy and you
39 have your ISC members that support the agency board
40 members and OSM that support our public members. When
41 we hear you talk, it helps us capture your voice. It
42 helps us as we are drafting these responses in your
43 name because you guys can't do it. We're the
44 administrative arm of the Board.

45

46 So I just wanted to share that we are
47 all delighted when you talk. Even when you have a hard
48 time talking, please do. Please share. We will do our
49 very best to capture your intent -- well, I mean I
50

0070

1 can't speak of your intent, but just capture some of
2 your words for future efforts.

3
4 Thanks.

5
6 MS. NAVES: Thank you, Robbin. The
7 next part of the presentation is also salmon and it's
8 related to various management suggestions that the
9 Councils have for the Board. We are actually going to
10 be on this topic, I think, for a while because there is
11 a variety of management issues that the Council is
12 speaking about and a lot of suggestions.

13
14 Rebecca already eloquently spoke about
15 -- you know, the State and Federal agency operate often
16 in silos and that's a big part of the issue and it's a
17 fractured system, which is frustrating subsistence
18 users to no end.

19
20 The Councils -- I'm just going to speak
21 kind of topic by topic what each Council is bringing
22 up. Kodiak Aleutians we just -- you know, I just
23 mentioned that fragmented management. The Council is
24 requesting the Board to bridge divisions and improve
25 coordination among parties to ensure effective
26 management and subsistence access.

27
28 YKDelta Council, they refer to all the
29 previous letters they sent to the Board and all the
30 previous times they brought this topic up in the Annual
31 Report. They refer to the joint letter from all of the
32 Councils from the All-Council Meeting that happened in
33 March of 2024. For you to go back to those letters and
34 read them because they didn't want to repeat the same
35 thing. The same thing happening over and over again.

36
37 What they're requesting from this
38 Board, they're requesting responses to those letters
39 because they did not receive responses and they're
40 still waiting for them. They're also requesting that
41 the Board briefs the new Administration on what is
42 happening with salmon and its management and the salmon
43 crisis in Alaska. All the various issues with bycatch
44 and hatcheries. They want the new Administration to
45 know, even if this Board maybe doesn't have authority
46 to take care of these issues, but at least they would
47 like the Administration to know.

48
49 Again, YKDelta Council they're
50

0071

1 requesting the Board to take the lead on coordinating
2 of interjurisdictional management of salmon. They want
3 the Board to take the lead and facilitate a meeting
4 between Federal subsistence fisheries management, ADF&G
5 and National Marine Fisheries Services, to develop and
6 implement the framework for interjurisdictional
7 management of salmon across the entire habitat.

8
9 The same Council, YKDelta. Salmon is a
10 big, big thing in YKDelta. They request the Board to
11 take steps to initiate a co-management agreement with
12 the Yukon Intertribal Fish Commission and prioritize
13 capacity building for tribes and Alaska Native
14 organizations.

15
16 Western Interior Council. Their
17 representative is not here today, but almost entire
18 Annual Report is salmon concerns with a few other.
19 They're requesting that the Office of Subsistence
20 Management assist with creation of a joint Yukon and
21 Kuskokwim Fish Commission.

22
23 Again, Western Interior, they're
24 requesting the Board to work with the Secretaries of
25 Interior, Agriculture and Department of Commerce
26 together and discuss establishing an MOU concerning the
27 protection of salmon bound for Arctic, Yukon and
28 Kuskokwim area.

29
30 Seward Peninsula. Also one of the
31 Yukon Councils. They have C&T for Yukon. They're
32 encouraging InterAgency dialogue, planning a
33 collaboration to ensure the sustainability of
34 subsistence resources in Alaska. They think that the
35 Board is uniquely positioned to promote increased
36 collaboration. The Board agency can provide funding
37 and staff to host workshops and other opportunities for
38 dialogue and establishing objectives and strategies to
39 prevent more severe issues. They say that things can
40 get much worse than they already are.

41
42 Eastern Interior. Asking the Board to
43 pursue meaningful action on these topics with new
44 leadership as soon as possible. They say that
45 Department of Interior, Department of Commerce and
46 State must work together to rebuild salmon stocks and
47 manage salmon on an interjurisdictional and ecosystem
48 scale.

49
50

0072

1 Eastern Interior is also asking this
2 Board to submit comments on the upcoming North Pacific
3 Fishery Management Council chum salmon bycatch draft
4 EIS. They're also asking the Board to submit comments
5 in support of a coalition of Arctic Yukon Kuskokwim
6 stakeholders to again address the interception of the
7 salmon bound to this area from Area M during the
8 upcoming Board of Fisheries cycle.

9
10 They're encouraging the Board to
11 actively weigh in on the matters that directly affect
12 Federally-qualified subsistence users.

13
14 Also Eastern Interior is advocating for
15 more conservative management for fall chum, which is
16 important for upper river because the upper river
17 doesn't get any of that even if there's any returns.

18
19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, we have a
20 question on the floor, Katya. Frank, you have the
21 floor.

22
23 MR. WOODS: Eastern Interior villages
24 are requesting that this Board represent their
25 Federally-qualified subsistence users that aren't
26 meeting their needs or are meeting their needs?

27
28 MS. NAVES: That are not meeting their
29 needs.

30
31 MR. WOODS: Okay. So, with that said,
32 all those stars up there are meeting their needs or
33 those are not meeting their needs?

34
35 MS. NAVES: No, they're not.

36
37 MR. WOODS: Okay. So we, as a Board --
38 and that's a good question. We, as a Board, to address
39 that is a problem. As a Board member, I've been doing
40 what our representative Rebecca has been doing for a
41 long time. Changing how we do business we could go
42 right to the Governor and say you're in charge of State
43 fisheries. You have the power and you have the right
44 to change how business is being done on State waters.
45 If you can't, we'll ask North Pacific like they did
46 Kenai and they killed the Kenai.

47
48 We can ask whatever it is as a
49 committee and a board to go directly to the
50

0073

1 Commissioner, to the Governor, and recommend levels of
2 engagement. I'm just recommending as a Board member
3 what I would be looking at. Not to -- you know, I mean
4 I would directly -- I'll step out of the Board cycle.
5 But as a resident and a Federally-qualified subsistence
6 user we haven't used up any of our resources to tackle
7 this problem.

8
9 What have we as a Board been able to --
10 we've helped them address the issues. We put science
11 behind it, but what actions do we have. I'm
12 challenging the Chairman as a Board Member what is our
13 purview? Are we just recommend -- or advisory? And
14 how do we write regulation law? How do we write
15 regulation law as a Board to help those issues? It
16 might come from Bristol Bay. It might come from Y-K.
17 It might come from Kodiak. It might come from Nome.

18
19 But we've got to start tackling these
20 things together because it's everybody's resource. I
21 just wanted to address that when you brought that up
22 that we are here to protect the Federally-qualified
23 subsistence user and how do we do that. So thank you.

24
25 MR. DUNAWAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
26 Dan Dunaway, Bristol Bay. This is kind of a historical
27 comment. Back in around 2007 I remember as a Bristol
28 Bay RAC and several of the other coastal RACs up the
29 coast we all got together. We had meetings in
30 Anchorage like almost simultaneous with the North
31 Pacific Council and we kind of hashed out an approach
32 among several of us. There was some compromises made
33 because some of the RACs also have CDQ groups that
34 didn't want to be totally wiped out.

35
36 We went as a force to the Council and
37 said we want to see bycatch greatly reduced. My memory
38 was it was. Now I feel a little frustrated that
39 bycatch has been slowly sneaking back up through --
40 some people said end runs on the regulations and so on.
41 I also think that there's other factors besides just
42 bycatch. Seventy-one degree water up in the Yukon.
43 Horrible.

44
45 Anyway, as an example if we did get
46 together and I believe had an impact for a while, so we
47 have a precedent. So I encourage us to have
48 confidence. Thank you.

49
50

0074

1 MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Dan. So I'm
2 going to continue with the same thing with what the
3 Councils are requesting and the comments they're making
4 in regards to management. So some of the Councils are
5 being really bold in their statements that they put in
6 the annual reports.

7
8 Like Eastern Interior says: The Board
9 and OSM continue to refuse to comment on important
10 regulatory matters taken up by the Board of Fish and
11 North Pacific Fishery Management Council. Actions taken
12 place outside of the Board's immediate jurisdiction
13 have undeniable and significant impacts on the
14 abilities of Federally qualified subsistence users to
15 meet their needs.

16
17 So the Eastern Interior again is asking
18 the Board to take advocacy role in other regulatory
19 arenas to protect salmon and lessen the impacts to
20 Federally qualified subsistence users. They're also
21 asking to allow Council Chairs to review OSM's comments
22 on Board of Fish and Board of Game proposals.

23
24 This kind of sums up in terms of, you
25 know, management and strategies that the Councils are
26 suggesting. I was going to talk how this Board -- what
27 does this Board say in the draft replies to these
28 requests and concerns.

29
30 So basically the reports that were
31 drafted for this Board it acknowledges that agencies
32 have different mandates and these mandates often
33 specified in statute. That can only be changed by the
34 relevant legislative bodies.

35
36 The Board acknowledges that its
37 authority is limited. It doesn't extend to lobbying
38 Congress. Per Executive Order 14.153 the Board directs
39 salmon councils to work towards aligning State and
40 Federal regulations where physical. OSM and ADF&G
41 currently establishing a tracking system when new
42 regulations adopted by the Board of Fish, Board of Game
43 and this Board with a goal to identify whether
44 regulations are different and can be made consistent.

45
46 The Board in their replies encourage
47 the Councils to engage with appropriate decision-making
48 processes with the Board of Fish, Board of Game, North
49 Pacific Fisheries Management Councils to affect the
50

0075

1 changes outside of the Board's jurisdiction.

2

3 The Board also informs the Councils
4 that the letters that were sent to the Board were asked
5 to be elevated or shared with the Secretaries via
6 transmittals and in person.

7

8 The Board also informs the Councils
9 that the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council is
10 often invited to speak at the Board's meeting and at
11 the Council's meetings as well to keep the Councils
12 updated. This Board promises that the Board will
13 relate the Council's concern to the Secretaries as we
14 await for their direction.

15

16 The Board says the joint effort of
17 different managers would be beneficial and gives an
18 example of Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council
19 as a successful example of co-management.

20

21 The Board's authority is limited and do
22 not extend on taking a leap on coordination of
23 interjurisdictional management of salmon unfortunately.

24

25 So the Board also in some of their
26 replies they're talking about the history and
27 successful partnership with the Kuskokwim River
28 Intertribal Fish Commission and U.S. Fish and Wildlife
29 Service and the MOU that is guiding that partnership.

30

31 The Board reached out to the U.S. Fish
32 and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
33 Service is ready to work with Yukon River Intertribal
34 Fish Commission. That was already shared with the
35 Council at their winter meeting actually. That is with
36 the YKDelta Council.

37

38 The Yukon River Federal in-season
39 manager with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife met with the
40 Executive Council of the Yukon River Intertribal Fish
41 Commission to discuss next steps to meet the
42 relationship and trust and develop what's already
43 there, establish regular information-sharing sessions,
44 and develop decision-making processes. This Board
45 supports these efforts that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
46 is putting into that relation.

47

48 The Board also in their replies
49 highlighting the work that is done by Kuskokwim River

50

0076

1 Intertribal Fish Commission and TCC as cooperating
2 agencies in the development of the preliminary draft
3 EIS for proposed amendment to the Fishery Management
4 Plan for groundfish for the Bering Sea, Aleutian
5 Islands management area and Bering Sea chum salmon
6 bycatch management.
7

8 The Board also suggests that the
9 Kuskokwim River Intertribal Fish Commission and Yukon
10 River Intertribal Fish Commission are the best agency
11 to determine the ways they can work together.
12

13 The Board also in their replies say
14 that -- sorry, I lost my train of thought. So that's
15 actually advised to the Seward Peninsula to have
16 workshops between various agencies. They're suggesting
17 that the Seward Peninsula Council needs to form a
18 working group to provide direction and recommendations
19 to organize this workshop and invite Federal management
20 agencies, State and Tribal to participate.
21

22 Additionally the Board points out that
23 a lot of these issues that maybe the Federal
24 Subsistence Management Program would have taken a more
25 active role, but unfortunately at the moment there are
26 constraints of staff time and funding.
27

28 Also the Board points out that the
29 Federal in-season manager with the U.S. Fish and
30 Wildlife received the Eastern Interior Council's
31 recommendation in a letter and developed additional
32 preliminary management actions that could reduce
33 incidental catch of fall chum.
34

35 MR. WOODS: The Interior villages are
36 asking for -- like the Yukon Fisheries Commission, TCC,
37 Federal Subsistence Board and DNR to get together. I'm
38 thinking under the Federal Subsistence -- or Office of
39 Subsistence Management has some sort of authority to
40 coordinate a meeting and coordinate the user group.
41 I'm thinking we're missing the boat here because as a
42 tribal chief and a tribal member we have
43 government-to-government relation we don't even
44 address.
45

46 I mean when we have a meeting nobody
47 shows up or there are very few. I'm saying that
48 because we need to get engaged as tribal members to
49 engage with the government, the Federal government and
50

0077

1 managers to say exactly what all the tribes are saying
2 separately.

3
4 We're saying the same things. We've
5 got a whole problem but we're doing the same thing they
6 are. The Yukon Kuskokwim, the group that you talked
7 about are doing, is trying to do it collectively
8 together.

9
10 As an agency -- I'm looking at Orville
11 being a government-to-government relations specialist.
12 Just sit down and all these answers -- we're doing it
13 -- we're taking on piecemeal. Just like you were
14 saying we have this problem that we had to try to
15 attack with all these different -- but we're doing the
16 same -- addressing the same problems the same way if
17 you stop and think about it.

18
19 This just might be an AFN deal. This
20 might be a corporate level deal. This might be
21 activated by Southeast. If everybody we're talking
22 about got together and did a fisheries commission and
23 took care of the issues at hand, including the
24 Governor's Office. I don't want to point the finger
25 too hard. But he has the authority to basically
26 initiate law that would help solve all these problems.

27
28 Our Governor has fisheries management
29 under his regime. He could invite -- I remember during
30 the herring fishery the swipe of the governor's pen we
31 had foreign processors processing our herring in Togiak
32 in the early '70s. At the swipe of a pen he had
33 foreign buyers come in and take over some of the
34 processing.

35
36 The swipe of a pen he could eliminate
37 the limited entry position. The swipe of a pen he can
38 actually solve the problems that you're helping --
39 trying to help solve. If you eliminate the limited
40 entry, eliminate the State waters and you have a joint
41 commission and a co-management policy set up to manage
42 what you're talking about or what you're asking, if the
43 Feds, the State and this Board got together and started
44 managing in a co-management like the Qayassiq Walrus
45 Commission, think about that.

46
47 If it takes that drastic action, I mean
48 it's to that point where things -- whatever come up may
49 sound crazy, but we might come up with something that's
50

0078

1 going to actually help this process. I've been
2 listening to this for 20 years now.

3

4 Like you said, Dan, we went in '07 --
5 we went down to North Pacific Fishery for chums and
6 kings and we went through this process 20 years ago.
7 We're still in the same boat, but worse. You guys are
8 lucky. I mean holy cow. I mean in the Yukon people --
9 I just got off the boat. My buddy that I send them
10 fish they cry. I mean they are literally in tears
11 because they cannot feed their families.

12

13 So thank you for reading that. I'll let
14 you finish, but those are things that are coming up
15 that I think we should do in our purview. Not to point
16 the finger at Sarah, but I love that office. That one,
17 yeah, I do.

18

19 (Laughter)

20

21 (Indiscernible comment)

22

23 MR. WOODS: Well, we've got to blame it
24 on somebody, so it might as well be you.

25

26 (Laughter)

27

28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'll let the
29 record reflect that was Mr. Frank Woods.....

30

31 MR. WOODS: Thank you.

32

33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON:speaking.
34 Again, I'll just remind the Board members for the
35 record that we do state our name, but I'd also just
36 like to support what he's saying in the concept that --
37 that's what we ask our -- the people we're here for to
38 do. Go back and work it out at the local level.
39 Create a management plan. Come back to us when all you
40 guys touch bases and then we'll endorse it, right?

41

42 I think that's what we're hearing our
43 Board members and our RAC Chairs say. What works down
44 needs to be the same method coming back to us. We've
45 created systems that work. We've just got to make them
46 work for us.

47

48 Hopefully, again, we had suggestions
49 this morning to get an audience again from the

50

0079

1 Department of Interior and make those requests known
2 and sit down maybe with a contingency of us and get
3 these expressed but also maybe make some hard
4 recommendations, but I don't know if that's pulling
5 maybe somebody else out of the woodwork like AFN or
6 somebody else as part of that committee of discussion.
7

8 So if it is something that isn't within
9 our framework but needs to be voiced by people, that we
10 see who those people are, they're sitting in the room
11 with us because that's who we're representing and
12 sometimes, you know, get out of the way and not be the
13 barrier but allow the fresh people to say it.
14

15 MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
16 There's also another section that talks about other
17 kind of more localized salmon issues, but I just want
18 to know if from -- I know that I didn't mention
19 everything that was in the draft replies, but are there
20 any ideas on behalf of the Board members if you want to
21 change anything or add anything in these draft replies?
22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Maybe an
24 apology for not responding.
25

26 MS. WESSELS: I think that's already
27 there, but we'll make sure. We're taking notes and
28 we'll make sure it's there.
29

30 MS. PITKA: A lot of the ideas
31 mentioned, a lot of the issues brought up are things
32 that have been brought up before. That's why I really
33 like this spreadsheet, is we're able to track those
34 issues and those ideas because they're recurring. They
35 keep on happening.
36

37 You know, within the purview of the
38 Board, you know, we listen to all of those
39 recommendations, but at the same time there are other
40 entities in play here. Like Area M fisheries. They
41 don't want to give up their fishing, so the Yukon River
42 has to bear the brunt of that conservation.
43

44 Canada has to bear the brunt of that
45 conservation. Those fishermen on the river that
46 haven't had one season opener in five years as part of
47 the seven-year moratorium with the State of Alaska.
48 And the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in Canada.
49
50

0080

1 Those people are tired. They're not --
2 I mean there's going to be more and more enforcement
3 issues. There's going to be more and more people who
4 are just not going to conserve anymore. You know,
5 people need to feed their families wherever they're
6 from.

7
8 What I've heard a lot of is a lot of
9 the economic impacts of the commercial fisheries, which
10 are very important to the state of Alaska. What we
11 don't hear a lot about are how many international
12 companies actually dominate that space. So we're
13 basically giving up an Alaskan resource to
14 international companies and companies that are based
15 out of Seattle. So the guys on the ground get trampled
16 constantly.

17
18 There used to be a commercial fishery
19 on the Yukon River, which is now since stopped and that
20 provided economy. Those CDQs were so important to the
21 people that I feel like we could have 20 years ago done
22 a lot of this groundwork, but we were so busy fighting
23 each other and getting mad at each other and that's why
24 I choose not to speak.

25
26 And I think about things before I say
27 them because I don't want to be engaged with fighting
28 local communities when the issue is much bigger than
29 that when the issue is those international fish
30 processors that took thousands and thousands of pounds
31 of salmon back into the river and they destroy the
32 ocean. That trawl fishery is what's killing the
33 resource.

34
35 The environmental degradation of 70
36 degree water cannot be understated. Climate change has
37 hit every single region in the state in such a manner
38 that we're seeing changes so quickly that we can't keep
39 up with them. I mean right now it's 80 degrees down in
40 Ketchikan. That's pretty much unheard of and it hasn't
41 rained for, what, 11 days? God. Eleven days and no
42 rain in Ketchikan. It almost makes you want to move
43 there.

44
45 (Laughter)

46
47 MS. PITKA: But I mean these local
48 issues that people continually bring up to us we really
49 -- it's our job as Board members and, you know, agency
50

0081

1 heads to keep elevating those issues in whatever arena
2 we're in, you know. A lot of the stuff that you hear
3 from Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council it's
4 because we've become so adept at managing the Canadian
5 portion of the run that that's what a lot of people
6 see. Well, our Canadian relatives don't get any fish.
7 But, you know, also now we're in the same boat that
8 they were in 20 years ago.

9

10 I think sometimes we did our heels in
11 and we start fighting over the wrong things. When it
12 isn't the Native people on the ground fishing. It's
13 not the local communities in the state of Alaska that
14 are fishing, that are commercial fishing. None of
15 those people, you know, allowed this degradation to
16 happen.

17

18 So I definitely support a lot of the
19 co-management work that was listed in these things.
20 Was Charlie Wright really serious when he said he
21 wanted to review comments?

22

23 MS. WESSELS: That's a part of the
24 reply that we actually can, you know, if time allows
25 and it's the right time, the Chairs can review the
26 comments, but a lot of the times, you know, we need to
27 send the comments on the Board of Fish and Board of
28 Game proposals and Chairs are not available at that
29 time.

30

31 MS. PITKA: Yeah, exactly. We might
32 have got here at this moment, so it's very difficult,
33 you know. I'm like really, are you sure? But I get a
34 lot of the frustration. You know, I work with a lot of
35 these people in the Regional Advisory Councils in
36 different forums and I understand where they're coming
37 from.

38

39 We've been working on, I think, the
40 salmon issue probably since 2007, since I moved back
41 home. That was pretty much the last year that we were
42 able to fish pretty unrestricted on the Yukon River in
43 my area. I live in the Upper Yukon closest to the
44 Canadian boarder, so we've constantly been shut down
45 year after year after year. Everybody's smokehouses
46 would be filled along the Yukon until it hit our region
47 and then fishing would be shut off.

48

49 So I mean the lack of cultural

50

0082

1 continuity with that in addition to those climate
2 change impacts make it so difficult to work together.
3 I'm just going to say it right now. Turnover with
4 administration and what it does to the continuity of
5 management of the resource has been detrimental.
6 Losing all of the Staff that we have lost in the last
7 year, nobody is going to get a response. Like, yeah,
8 you want a response. I mean no kidding. So does
9 everybody else.

10

11 But how are the 19 people lost going to
12 be able to formulate that response. How are the
13 communications departments going to get the word out on
14 conservation when there is no communication department.
15 When every single agency has lost their tribal liaisons
16 how are you going to contact tribes? I mean that's
17 crazy.

18

19 You know, we still -- this Board is so
20 important to regulations in the state of Alaska that we
21 need to maintain some of those staffing goals. I
22 understand everybody wants to be as efficient as
23 possible, but I've worked with a lot of agencies. I've
24 worked with a lot of State agencies, a lot of Federal
25 agencies, and every single one of them every single
26 year has had cuts.

27

28 I mean they don't have the capacity to
29 keep up with what they're doing. How can they have
30 commercial fisheries when they don't have accurate
31 numbers and accurate surveys. How can we maintain
32 caribou hunting when we don't have an accurate survey
33 of those numbers. When we don't know what industry is
34 doing to those resources when we don't have accurate
35 numbers for that.

36

37 That's doing a disservice and I feel
38 like we should throw that little thing in there, but
39 I'm pretty sure probably won't happen. We'll never
40 actually acknowledge the real impact of an
41 Administration change. This happens every single
42 Administration. I feel like I've been through 25
43 Administrations here. You know, the people that are
44 still here are long-time staffers and this particular
45 Board was always supposed to be -- I know I'm saying it
46 wrong, non-denominational. Wait. Non-partisan.
47 That's it. Non-partisan.

48

49 (Laughter)

50

0083

1 MS. PITKA: Yeah, we're
2 non-denominational. No, I mean non-partisan, you know.
3 It was meant to be not political, so it's changed
4 through the years. That influence has been seen in the
5 last six years of this government Administration. The
6 first Trump Administration, the Obama Administration.
7 We've seen every single change through time. This one
8 feels a lot more severe. It feels like the people that
9 live their lives daily on these resources are going to
10 be affected the worst.

11

12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I just want to
13 thank Rhonda for those words. I think she did a good
14 job of expressing I think what the public frustration
15 is and then who we represent. Being from where she
16 lives and living out the very essence of what it is
17 we're protecting. Thank you for that, Rhonda.
18 Appreciate that perspective. I had something to say,
19 but I forgot.

20

21 MS. CLEVELAND: Jacqueline Cleveland,
22 YKDelta RAC. Eva, I just wanted to say something
23 before we move on from salmon just because I know we
24 had 19 topics and one of our letters, but I'll just
25 maybe briefly -- even going back to the beginning of
26 the conversation.

27

28 First I wanted to note that the YKDelta
29 RAC is a pretty big RAC encompassing a lot of geography
30 and a lot of varied views and even different resources
31 if you compare the most northern, which is Yukon, and
32 then I'm from the most southern. I guess I'm still
33 learning about the rest of the region, but Quinhagak is
34 pretty isolated. Like both the hubs are really far
35 from us. So I would say we're pretty isolated.

36

37 So, yeah, my point being is that I'm
38 still learning about the Yukon. I am aware of their
39 ongoing concerns, but in the beginning after taking the
40 chairmanship I felt kind of undeserving because I feel
41 like I need to, you know, more more about the Yukon,
42 which feels like a whole other region sometimes it's so
43 far from us.

44

45 That being said, Rhonda, I
46 wholeheartedly agree with everything you said about --
47 and then the Aleutian RAC -- about not blaming each
48 other as Native people. I think in 2022 or before this
49 became big at AFN. I kind of saw it coming and having

50

0084

1 been to Mt. Edgecumbe High School where like all the
2 tribes and villages are like brothers and sisters.

3

4 It was especially hard for me and as
5 well as Quinhagak being subsistence first but also we
6 used to have a commercial fishery and people are
7 wanting to get it back for just the sockeye fishery.
8 So understanding there as well as the need for that
9 supplemental income and how it does kind of become
10 culture to some long-time commercial fishermen because
11 obviously it's not for the money.

12

13 Oh, yeah, I wanted to bring up the
14 Kuskokwim Intertribal Fish Commission, which I served
15 on as a commissioner for about three and a half years
16 and I was an in-season manager for two and a half years
17 I believe. To this day I see it as one of the best
18 examples of moving forward in terms of co-management as
19 well as elevating local indigenous knowledge and making
20 it so relevant.

21

22 Sometimes, you know, it would take
23 president over the Western science when I was a
24 commissioner and sometimes we would prove ourselves by
25 going with the elders' local knowledge. Like, for
26 example, we predicted about 110,000 to go through the
27 weir, one of the weirs on the Kusko and -- sorry, but
28 the State had said their number was over 200,000, so
29 that year they were like 100,000 off.

30

31 Yeah, I just wholeheartedly believe in
32 Natives working together for the bigger fight and not
33 against each other. Qu yana.

34

35 MS. BOARIO: Thank you, Jackie. Mr.
36 Chair. Yeah, I guess one last comment before we move
37 on. I guess I mean just recapping some of the things
38 I've heard too and starting with Rebecca's comments
39 about addressing the fragmentation agree there's just
40 this larger systemic challenge that is bigger than any
41 one board or bigger than anyone bureau. I'm pondering
42 what's within our control to create better alignment
43 and sometimes reconciliation those things that are
44 within our control.

45

46 I definitely think that co-management,
47 thanks to the good work of Charlie and others, Frank,
48 who have built so many of these structures around the
49 state over 30, 40 years provides a big opportunity to

50

0085

1 maybe from the ground up create those
2 interjurisdictional alignment. I think AMBCC is an
3 incredible model because you do have the three
4 sovereigns together.

5
6 I'd be curious what is possible with
7 the State and others when it comes to fisheries around
8 that. I mean I think about the Yukon River. That's a
9 patchwork of ownership. It's one thing to have a
10 relationship with the Fish and Wildlife Service on that
11 river, but does that really fundamentally get to the
12 bottom of the issue if we don't have all three
13 sovereigns at the table together, like what's possible
14 in that space.

15
16 I think about what seems to be a little
17 bit of the kind of conversation in this room about some
18 of the maybe different understanding or information
19 between the RACs even when we talk about, I think, the
20 really concrete idea -- I mean concrete issue like
21 around Area M. How can the RACs get together and
22 convene and have their own conversation and build their
23 own common understanding around that.

24
25 What is the space of the Board -- I
26 mean, Frank, to your words whether it's OSM. I mean,
27 Crystal, the conversations you guys are having with Ben
28 and the opportunity there. What comes next to convene
29 something, a larger conversation or what is the ability
30 of the Board to do that and take a leadership role. I
31 do think there are these things.

32
33 There's good foundation to build from
34 while we think about how are those bigger systemic
35 issues addressed. The reality is those are bigger than
36 the Board. I don't know. You know, there are some
37 places for us to start. I don't want to lose sight of
38 that.

39
40 MS. NAVES: Thank you. That's a great
41 conversation. It brought to mind that the animal
42 species don't know any borders artificially created by
43 humans, whatever it is, administrative or
44 international. But we are actually still on salmon
45 because there's -- so this is maybe not such global
46 issues compared to the other ones, but there were also
47 other salmon issues mentioned in several reports.

48
49 Like, for example, Southcentral
50

0086

1 Council. They're having some Copper River concerns.
2 They want to ensure their runs returning to Copper
3 River remain strong and are concerned about signs of
4 discord between the upper and lower river Federally
5 qualified subsistence users.

6
7 These concerns came up to light when
8 the Federal dipnet season was created at the mouth of
9 the Copper River, but the Council is also concerned
10 about the effects of growing Chitina's personal use
11 fishery and what effects it has on subsistence
12 opportunities.

13
14 So the Council is actually requesting
15 for this Board to be briefed by the State on Chitina
16 personal use salmon fishery. They are requesting to
17 mitigate the impacts on the Federally qualified
18 subsistence users on the long-term viability of salmon.

19
20 So in their reply the Board talks about
21 the Board of Fisheries adoption of Proposal 51, which
22 was submitted by the Park Service. They adopted with
23 amendment that delayed opening of Copper River
24 commercial fishery at the earliest till May 22nd. The
25 Chitina personal use dipnet fishery until June 10th or
26 later and it prohibits the retention of chinook salmon
27 in this fishery until after June 30th.

28
29 So this action protects early salmon
30 runs bound for the upper stream -- uppermost spawning
31 tributaries. That's what the Board writes in their
32 reply. The Board also provides information about
33 salmon workshop led by UIF and Prince William Sound
34 Science Center that was held at the NPS Wrangell-St.
35 Elias visitor's center in Copper Center. A lot of
36 centers. And fall workshop to be held in the fall of
37 2025 in Cordova. So there's some things being done in
38 regards to Copper.

39
40 Also the Board says that it will reach
41 out to ADF&G and request briefing to the Board and the
42 Councils of the Chitina personal use fishery. That's
43 what the Board says in regards to that topic.

44
45 Actually the Eastern Interior also has,
46 you know, some concerns about Copper River. They say
47 the subsistence needs for chinook salmon are not being
48 met in the Upper River, Gakona to Slana portion of the
49 drainage. Since 2006 these needs have been met only
50

0087

1 two times.

2

3 Commercial fisheries fish out chinook
4 before it's counted by the sonar at the Miles Lake
5 which results in subsistence opportunities being either
6 restricted or closed. This is against the subsistence
7 priority in ANILCA.

8

9 Eastern Interior they exhibited also
10 their support for the Proposal 51 that I just spoke
11 about which seeks to reduce commercial fishing in the
12 early season.

13

14 So then Southcentral Council also bring
15 up chinook listing. That's another topic of salmon.
16 They are saying that chinook runs in the Southcentral
17 Region are struggling or absent. They would like to
18 know more about the listing process under the
19 Endangered Species Act.

20

21 The implications that if it's listed
22 what it might have on subsistence activities,
23 recreation and resource development, but they didn't
24 request a reply from the Board but this topic is in
25 their report.

26

27 Another more localized issue is the
28 Bristol Bay/Chignik sockeye issue. In Bristol Bay they
29 have concerns about changes to the ADF&G management
30 strategy for Chignik River sockeye salmon as a result
31 of the Board of Fish designating the early run as a
32 stock of concern.

33

34 ADF&G proposed combining the early and
35 late runs escapement goals. The new strategy doesn't
36 consider historic management practices and impacts on
37 subsistence users.

38

39 Again, Bristol Bay put it in their
40 report more for the Board's awareness. It doesn't
41 request a reply. It's not the first time they've put
42 in this concern in the annual report.

43

44 There's also various requests from the
45 Councils on salmon studies needed and genetic
46 monitoring for all commercial fisheries, Federal and
47 State commercial fisheries, that information they
48 collected in those studies need to be made public.
49 There needs to be a database that has all of this

50

0088

1 information input there.

2

3 They are requesting the Councils to
4 encourage collaborative -- you know, sharing of
5 information of genetics of this stock. Statewide
6 salmon studies, Area M data of genetic stock
7 composition is needed.

8

9 They are also sending letters of
10 request to ADF&G to prioritize funding for Area M
11 genetic sampling. The Councils that bring up these
12 topics are Western Interior, Northwest Arctic and
13 Eastern Interior.

14

15 So that concludes my part of the
16 presentation on salmon. Do you want me to continue or
17 do people need a break?

18

19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll take a 10
20 minute break.

21

22 MS. WESSELS: Okay. Thank you.

23

24 (Off record)

25

26 (On record)

27

28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
29 We'll welcome back Katya with our whistle here. You
30 have the floor.

31

32 MS. WESSELS: Thank you. Moving on to
33 the next subject I think we will probably start moving
34 a little bit quicker now because salmon was a huge
35 topic that took the majority of the reports.

36

37 Next topic is caribou. Caribou has
38 always been present on many Councils' Annual Reports.
39 It is of concern to many Councils this year. Five
40 Councils brought up this issue in their reports. Their
41 concerns are not about one herd but about various herds
42 in their region.

43

44 For example YKDelta talking about
45 Mulchatna Caribou Herd that its population continues to
46 fall below management objective.

47

48 (Internet dropped off)

49

50

0089

1 MS. WESSELS: Okay. Hopefully
2 everything is okay. Back to the report. YKDelta is
3 concerned about Mulchatna Caribou Herd population that
4 it continues to fall below management objectives. The
5 herd is currently closed to all hunting, including by
6 Federally qualified subsistence users. The Council
7 supports Board of Game three-year hunting moratorium on
8 the herd in Unit 18.

9
10 Council even advocates for a longer
11 moratorium if still no harvestable surplus and Council
12 supports ADF&G intensive management of the herd because
13 a reduction in predators might help the herd to
14 recover. They're not asking for a reply from the
15 Board. This is just for the Board's information.

16
17 Also YKDelta Council asking with
18 another topic for caribou monitoring, radio-collaring
19 and genetic testing near and north of the Yukon River
20 in Unit 18 and southern Unit 22. They think that will
21 help to determine if these caribou are part of the WACH
22 Herd or distinct resident caribou. Again, this is just
23 for the Board's information only. No reply is
24 requested.

25
26 Another topic brought up by Western
27 Interior, which also doesn't ask for a reply but
28 they're talking that many caribou herds in Alaska are
29 in decline. Nelchina 40-Mile WACH the Council is
30 highly concerned over the Board of Game liberalization
31 of the harvest limit for caribou in Unit 26-B where the
32 Central Arctic Caribou Herd migrates through. This
33 they think will result in greater hunting pressure.

34
35 Another caribou topic is brought up by
36 the Northwest Arctic that's addressing the impact of
37 non-resident hunters on Unit 22 caribou populations.
38 They also bring up WACH decline. The State still
39 permits non-resident hunters to have caribou on
40 State-managed lands in Unit 23. Council intends to
41 submit further proposals to address the impact of
42 non-resident hunting on caribou in Unit 23. Again,
43 information only topic.

44
45 Eastern Interior brings up Forty-Mile
46 Caribou Herd and its management. They're thankful to
47 the Board and particularly to BLM for engaging in a
48 discussion with ADF&G to plan for harvest management
49 coalition meeting to revise outdated Harvest Management
50

0090

1 Plan. They think that Canadian tribes and government
2 should continue being involved in the coalition work.

3
4 Circle and Central representatives
5 should be on this coalition as well. Council sent a
6 letter to ADF&G outlining some preliminary management
7 recommendations. The Council says it will keep the
8 Board informed about their continuing efforts in that
9 area, but does not request a reply from the Board.

10
11 The other Councils that brings up
12 caribou issues is North Slope Council. What they're
13 saying is the Federal management fails to integrate
14 traditional knowledge into management decisions and the
15 Council's objective is to create a North Slope Caribou
16 Commission to promote the conversation and management
17 of caribou herds that supports subsistence needs and
18 encourages research that addresses local concerns and
19 traditional knowledge.

20
21 The Council plans to introduce this
22 topic to the North Slope Borough Fish and Game
23 Management Committee to identify next steps on how to
24 proceed. Again, this is just for the Board's
25 information only. No reply requested.

26
27 There's only one caribou topic that
28 requested a reply. That was brought up by Northwest
29 Arctic Council. Their concerns are that hunters are
30 still affecting caribou migration on State-managed
31 lands. They're thankful to this Board for taking
32 proactive measure on taking care of this on Federal
33 managed lands.

34
35 That's again here managing across
36 jurisdiction and they're saying that not managing
37 across jurisdiction creates ineffective management.
38 They bring up the same point as some other Councils
39 that WACH is below the State's population objectives,
40 but State is not taking sufficient measures to curb the
41 impact of hunting.

42
43 Those are their concerns. Their
44 request for the Board to work with the States on
45 implementing stronger regulations and closures on
46 State-managed lands. They say that the Board needs to
47 help with a comprehensive coordinated action to prevent
48 that from happening.

49
50

0091

1 In the reply this Board highlights that
2 the Council themselves submitted Proposal 38 to the
3 Board of Game, which was adopted with amendment to
4 establish a non-resident drawing hunt with up to 300
5 permits available for Unit 23 effective in regulatory
6 year 2025. This is a substantial step towards reducing
7 the impact of non-resident hunters on the WACH.

8
9 The Board also points out that the
10 Council can submit other proposals to the Board of Game
11 in the spring of 2026 and they can invite ADF&G staff
12 to their meetings to receive information from the State
13 and to discuss management of WACH. The Board promises
14 that will work to engage in a dialogue with the Board
15 of Game to build their relationship statewide.

16
17 So that's all in regards to caribou and
18 I'm going to pause to see if there's any comments,
19 additions, changes. Well, there's only one reply to
20 change, but if anybody had any comments in regards to a
21 variety of caribou issues across the State.

22
23 MR. DUNAWAY: Dan Dunaway. Thank you,
24 Katya. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm looking at this and
25 kind of wondering why we didn't have the Mulchatna
26 Caribou listed as maybe a non-reply, but a list of
27 concern on here. I think sometimes our meetings get
28 focused on other things. Safe to say that we certainly
29 share the concerns with the Unit 18 and 19 folks on the
30 Mulchatna Caribou. We wrote a letter of support a
31 couple years ago for the bear removal program.

32
33 Two weeks ago on my own I came in to
34 participate in a Board of Game meeting about the bear
35 program as well. I had informal permission from some
36 of the other RAC members to speak for the RAC, but
37 since we never voted I didn't dare really say more than
38 point out what we had done as a Council in the past.

39
40 So there's strong desire, especially --
41 well, I think my neighbor here from Quinhagak shares
42 the same concern. Especially we're concerned to share
43 the concerns with the Kuskokwim being cut off from a
44 lot of their salmon and caribou.

45
46 So I just wanted to add that. It
47 doesn't require a reply, but we're very interested.
48 Thank you.

49
50

0092

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
2 that statement, Dan. Anthony Christianson, Board Chair,
3 for the record. It brings up to my mind about as we
4 look at these issues and there is those, even though
5 there may not be conservation concerns having
6 alternative resource available in the conservation
7 times of salmon is something we really need to look at
8 as a Board.

9
10 You know, when we look at maybe
11 wildlife and stuff and what activity is happening on
12 the landscape in those communities especially like on
13 the Yukon where there's hardship and no salmon but
14 increased competition for sport hunting, you know, that
15 we start looking at the carrying capacity of the
16 landscape for the community and then letting users have
17 access. So I appreciate your statement.

18
19 MS. WESSELS: Thank you. If there is
20 nothing else in regards to caribou, I'm going to move
21 on to the next topic, Council support needs. This
22 topic is always present on the Councils' Annual Reports
23 in one way or the other. This year there's not so many
24 concerns. Just to remind this Board that ANILCA says
25 that the Council is supposed to have the adequate
26 qualified staff supporting their activity.

27
28 The Councils that brought up some of
29 the topics in regards to supporting the Councils is
30 Bristol Bay is one of the Councils and they're talking
31 about that there is currently, for their Council at
32 least, limited public and tribal participation in the
33 meetings and Council meetings.

34
35 A lot of times they encounter that
36 people in the communities are unaware of the Federal
37 Subsistence Management Program and of the Councils and
38 unaware that public can play a very significant role in
39 the regulatory process and that's one of the biggest
40 intent why the Councils were established, to allow the
41 public to take a very active role in the regulatory
42 aspect of the management.

43
44 The Bristol Bay Council says that there
45 is a real need for targeted outreach and education and
46 they request the Board to increase funding to OSM to
47 enhance its outreach efforts in the communities in
48 Bristol Bay region and across the state to increase
49 meaningful collaboration between Council, Federal
50

0093

1 agencies and local stakeholders. I think somebody
2 already on this Board mentioned earlier that outreach
3 is very important.
4

5 So in their reply to Bristol Bay the
6 Board says one of the goals of moving OSM to the Office
7 of the Secretary of the Interior was to provide
8 additional resources to the Federal Subsistence
9 Management Program.
10

11 Planning for FY 26 budget is underway.
12 There may be some reassignment of the government
13 priorities so we don't know at this point how much
14 funding we're going to have for outreach. The Board
15 also shares with the Council that OSM outreach
16 coordinator position has been vacant for probably close
17 to two years now. That's a priority for us to fill,
18 but at this time it has not been filled. So that's the
19 reply to the Bristol Bay concern.
20

21 The Bristol Bay also brings in another
22 topic that's been on the Council's reports quite a few
23 times. The expediting of Council appointments. The
24 Board is going to discuss tomorrow their
25 recommendations to the Secretaries on the appointments.
26

27
28 So the appointments have been delayed
29 many times in the past the Council's pointed out and
30 they are just requesting you to urge the Secretaries to
31 provide the timely appointments. They're not
32 requesting any replies.
33

34 Just from myself I'm going to add that
35 last year was probably the first year in about 10 years
36 that I've been working for OSM when appointments were
37 made on time actually.
38

39 So in the Bristol Bay.....
40

41 MR. WOODS: On that recommendation so
42 you're asking each Council member to donate \$800 for an
43 owl and upgraded town system?
44

45 (Laughter)
46

47 MR. WOODS: Have you ever seen those
48 owls?
49
50

0094

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

2

3 MR. WOODS: Oh, my gosh. It solves all
4 our problems, right? It's like ahh.

5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Frank, I'm
7 going to add to that for the record. I think if all
8 these kids keep coming in they could do a Tik-Tok for
9 us.

10

11 (Laughter)

12

13 MS. WESSELS: Also can we be funding
14 Federal Subsistence Management Program with Tik-Tok
15 proceedings?

16

17 (Laughter)

18

19 MS. WESSELS: Okay. So Bristol Bay
20 also brings a third topic, is the compensation for
21 Council members. That topic has also been on the
22 Councils' reports for many years, but this year Bristol
23 Bay kind of just wants to keep it within the, you know,
24 memory board so that this has not gone away and that
25 Council members are volunteers.

26

27 They volunteer their time and expertise
28 and they would like to get reimbursed because some
29 Council members are working and they need to take time
30 off of work or take time out of their subsistence
31 activities to feed their families to provide their time
32 and their service to the Federal Subsistence Management
33 Program.

34

35 Also Bristol Bay highlighting the high
36 cost of living in rural Alaska, which is very
37 important. So they're just advocating for a fair daily
38 rate when the Council members attend. Just when they
39 attend the meetings.

40

41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Sorry, Katya.
42 This might not be an appropriate question, but if we're
43 budgeting for stuff and we're short-staffed, that seems
44 like that's quite a bit of money. Are we placing it
45 somewhere else?

46

47 MS. LEONETTI: In the future, maybe
48 this year, the people who took the deferred resignation
49 program are still on the books. They're still getting

50

0095

1 paid through the end of September and some of them
2 through the end of December. So those salaries don't
3 make up for lost.....

4
5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Maybe I didn't
6 state the question right. I know we put this forward
7 for consideration. Was there a reply back on where
8 that might be in the budget system for the OSM? We did
9 forward a letter to the Secretary. Was there a
10 response?

11
12 MS. LEONETTI: We were allowed to be a
13 part of the budget request process last year for FY-26,
14 but that did not materialize in anything. We did put
15 it in there as a suggestion, as a request, but we will
16 continue to advocate for that as we can.

17
18 MS. WESSELS: If I may add as an answer
19 to your question, Mr. Chair, that the request from the
20 Board being forwarded to the previous administration
21 and they were supportive in general, but that was at
22 the end of their term. The Secretary of the Interior
23 needs to make that decision and per FACA the head of
24 the agency, which is the Secretary in this situation,
25 needs to make that decision. If they allow it, then
26 we're going to worry about money at that point.

27
28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So I guess that
29 could be a discussion for us because we do work for our
30 RACs and I know that that's the most important aspect
31 of this program. So I was just hoping to touch base
32 and see where that is so that we have a report out at
33 the next meeting. So I appreciate that and that
34 answered some of my concerns.

35
36 Thank you. Like I said, that would be
37 -- if we did get an audience, probably top tier next to
38 salmon.

39
40 MS. WESSELS: Okay. The other Council
41 support topic was brought up by YKDelta Council and
42 they're asking about more balanced geographic
43 representation of their Council. They were saying that
44 the fall of 2024 Council membership was heavily skewed
45 towards the members from Kuskokwim River and they're
46 requesting more representatives to the Yukon River as
47 well as Makaruk and Nelson Island communities. Asking
48 the Board to keep considering the balanced geographic
49 representation, the language that they have in their
50

0096

1 charters.

2

3

4 The Board in their reply mentions that
5 they need to have the applications from all part of the
6 region to uphold that balanced geographic
7 representations without sufficient number of
8 obligations from all the way across the region they
9 cannot do it.

10

11 Actually good news the Board points out
12 that in 2025 the composition of the Council is pretty
13 well balanced. There are six members from Kuskokwim
14 and four from Yukon and two from Yukon-Delta coastal
15 communities with one vacant seat due to the Council
16 member passing.

17

18 The Board is asking the Council to help
19 with outreach in the communities in Makaruk and Nelson
20 Island to hopefully get some applications from those
21 communities.

22

23 The last topic on the Council support
24 is to acknowledge at the Council meetings and Eastern
25 Interior brings it up. Technology, right? That's the
26 word of the day here. So the Eastern Interior Council
27 is asking for OSM to purchase Starlink to improve
28 connectivity in rural locations and to have a contract
29 for audio/visual.

30

31 In their reply the Board says that we
32 currently have the contractor who is working on our
33 audio/visual needs at the Council meetings. They're
34 doing a great job. We can also rent Starlink from
35 them. That is a much more budget-friendly option than
36 buying a Starlink. Also the contractor can
37 troubleshoot using it.

38

39 The Council is also asking about
40 videoconferencing capabilities. As you know we already
41 have it through Teams, but the Board in their replies
42 is actually questioning the practicality of using this
43 option because sometimes in the rural communities
44 people just call in on a regular landline the video
45 capability is not something that I would want to use.

46

47 So that concludes the Council support
48 needs section of this presentation. Are there any
49 questions, comments, additions?

50

0097

1 MS. LEONETTI: Katya, I think I heard
2 in the discussion between the Council Chairs and the
3 Board members a suggestion for there to be some more
4 communication between the three Yukon and Kuskokwim
5 River Councils and the Kodiak Aleutians Council
6 regarding impacts of trawl fishing, specifically Area
7 M. So I think just to throw an idea out there for the
8 Board to consider encouraging those four Councils to
9 meet.

10
11 Frank, I think you initially was the
12 one who suggested that. OSM could potentially support
13 something like a couple representatives from each of
14 the Councils meeting in person to workshop that topic.
15 So that's just a suggestion for the Board to consider
16 and include in their reply.

17
18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Anthony
19 Christianson. I think I support that. I think it
20 shows action here by the Board and it's stepping
21 forward with the request from our Regional Advisory
22 Councils. It's putting them in the driver's seat of
23 the recommendations that we would receive as a Board
24 and then we can take it from there.

25
26 So I think that's where we would be
27 best investing our money and we take it back to our
28 people, the rural people who are using and then they
29 kick us up something that we can help navigate through
30 the system. So I support that.

31
32 MS. SKINNER: Mr. Chair. This is
33 Rebecca Skinner. If you're going to include the
34 specific language, it's trawl fisheries and Area M.
35 Area M is a salmon fishery. Trawl fisheries are
36 different.

37
38 MS. PITKA: I was just going to make
39 sure to clarify the same thing but also say I
40 absolutely support the idea.

41
42 MS. LEONETTI: I also support that idea
43 and I think we need to do something like that. Thank
44 you.

45
46 MR. DUNAWAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
47 Dan Dunaway, Bristol Bay RAC. I kind of wanted to add
48 a little more clarity to Bristol Bay's concerns listed
49 on here. Yeah, a lot of us kind of rack our brains on
50

0098

1 how to get the word out on how this whole process
2 works. I think in Bristol Bay we're a huge, big family
3 in a lot of ways. We talk among ourselves across the
4 Bay all over, but somehow this still hasn't taken root.
5 I find myself explaining it. I think we try, but I
6 don't know if there's ways to get on TV or radio that
7 would explain it better. We try.

8
9 I'm involved with working with young
10 folks teaching local kids how to be fly-fishing guides.
11 We often explain the process to both Board of Fish and
12 RACs to them. The lead instructor is our Chairman and
13 I'm another instructor. So I try to get the word out
14 so I wanted to add that to it.

15
16 The expedited Council appointments I
17 think was adequately covered. Council member
18 compensation there's a few things there. One of our
19 current members his income is pretty intermittent and
20 he's also one of our most remote members, but also
21 partly because of that he's really critical. He's off
22 in a corner of our area that a lot of the rest of us
23 don't get to.

24
25 Even if he stays home, which happens
26 too often for weather and planes, it still costs him to
27 take a day or two to participate online. He doesn't
28 have a good internet option for free or anything. So
29 in his case and I think for others that if there's a
30 way to kind of compensate him for the cost to
31 participate, he's been asking for some sort of help for
32 several -- a couple, three years now.

33
34 What also pops into my mind is we have
35 other remote villages with other people in really
36 modest circumstances who could be really valuable
37 members but maybe hesitate to apply because it would be
38 too expensive and that's a real concern.

39
40 This one guy too, he's the most remote.
41 He's got to go all the way through Anchorage to come
42 back to King Salmon or Dillingham. It can be a real
43 burden. He's missing maybe four or five days instead
44 of just two. So I wanted to add that background as you
45 go through it. It isn't like they want to line their
46 pockets on government money. It does become an
47 obstacle for them.

48
49 Thank you.
50

0099

1 MR. WOODS: So early on you brought up
2 a lot of concerns and you finished up with a summary of
3 what the requests were. I'd like to entertain a motion
4 before we close at some point in time that we make an
5 official letter of apology for non-response for some of
6 these concerns. You know, in the past not only Staff
7 turnover but all the issues that are in front of us.
8 Because you listed off like a whole list of them. I
9 read through some of them and I got tired of reading.
10 That's not an excuse.

11

12 What I'm saying is I'd like to
13 eventually, before we close at the end of the day,
14 draft a letter of apology for not having that in place.

15

16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Rebecca.

17

18 MS. SKINNER: Thanks. Rebecca Skinner.
19 So I think if there is going to be some kind of a
20 statement of apology for not responding to the RACs
21 correspondence, it would be helpful to also include
22 what is the timing or the process to respond and to
23 separate it out from responses from the Board versus
24 responses from agencies.

25

26 I'm thinking back to last summer when I
27 attended the work session there was a presentation on
28 the correspondence policy. I'm not sure what that
29 policy ended up being. I didn't hear what the outcome
30 was, but my impression back then was that was part of
31 what was causing the delay, is in fact there wasn't
32 really guidance or clear process on how to respond to
33 some of these bigger issues that the correspondence
34 addressed.

35

36 So I think an apology is fine, but my
37 feeling is don't apologize if you're going to keep
38 doing it. So if there's a plan to not do it, that
39 would be great to outline, sorry we didn't respond.
40 Here's how we're going to do it differently or here is
41 what to expect so people don't have unrealistic
42 expectations.

43

44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: If I'm clear,
45 so we did kind of draft a policy last year, right?

46

47 MS. LEONETTI: I'll ask Katya to
48 respond to that.

49

50

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1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Thank
2 you.

3
4 MS. WESSELS: Well, there is no -- this
5 Board has the correspondence policy for the Councils,
6 but there's no policy for the Board on how to respond
7 and how to deal with correspondence.

8
9 With the previous Administration,
10 finally by the end of that Administration we were able
11 -- the Office of Subsistence Management was able to
12 work with the Office of the Secretary and figure out
13 all the steps on how to advance the Councils' requests
14 and we were able to figure out that process.

15
16 Now the new Administration is in the office and
17 we did not have a chance to figure out all the steps on
18 how we're going to advance in writing Council's letters
19 that this Board decides to advance. Because the Board
20 also has the prerogative of not to advance some
21 concerns. You are decision-makers. You also figure
22 out which concerns you advance and which to not.

23
24 If this Board wants to create a policy
25 for their own correspondence, that would be great, but
26 it will take some time.

27
28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I kind of think
29 we did it in the last couple of meetings -- Anthony
30 Christianson for the record -- if it's outside of our
31 purview I think we moved that -- you know, some of our
32 elevating it was heard by our boss, so they realigned
33 us into a different office so they could be more
34 responsive.

35
36 I mean there's things we can do and
37 that kind of outlined that there is things that did
38 happen in response to the concerns raised by the
39 Regional Advisory Councils. At the same time there is
40 work to do considering all the bells and whistles here
41 that aren't ringing and dinging, which is a concern,
42 but we heard that.

43
44 I think as the last two times we put an
45 invitation to our boss to come and sit with us. So we
46 can take that bullet point and have a discussion. If
47 that don't happen, then we're stamping letterheads and
48 pushing them off to the appropriate agencies. That's a
49 pretty good policy.

50

0101

1 MS. WESSELS: Robbin is our policy
2 coordinator. She might have something that she would
3 like to add.
4

5 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
6 Members of the Board. Chair Christianson, you're
7 correct. This has been an ongoing issue and while we
8 have been reviewing and updating and then approving --
9 the Board approved in February -- the Council
10 correspondence policy we were also talking about the
11 challenges faced by this program in regards to
12 responses when we forward correspondence from the
13 Councils onto the Secretaries.
14

15 That was dealt with over the course of
16 the last three years. Inviting the Secretary of the
17 Interior, the transition from OSM from Fish and
18 Wildlife Service to the Office of the Secretary. To
19 confirming that we would always have a standing agenda
20 item at every Board meeting for a correspondence
21 update.
22

23 So that correspondence is a little
24 different from Annual Report replies and we're trying
25 to tease those two processes apart so we are not
26 duplicating efforts and that's still part of our
27 challenge now. In some cases we find that the Board
28 responds to an issue in the Annual Reports. They don't
29 respond to a letter. Then people say why haven't you
30 responded yet, but it actually came in an annual
31 report.
32

33 So trying to develop a better system
34 for tracking issues either through correspondence or
35 through annual reports is one of the things we're
36 dialing in. Then another is just trying to keep up
37 with it all. So you're going to hear a little bit more
38 when we get to the correspondence update. So if you
39 want to hold your fire, I'll be in the hot seat soon.
40

41 Thank you, Mr. Chair.
42

43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
44 that update, Robbin. Any other questions in regard to
45 Regional Council's Annual Reports?
46

47 Katya, from the Board, she presented
48 everything and we've discussed it.
49
50

0102

1 MS. WESSELS: It's not everything.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Not everything
4 yet? Oh, okay. Here we go.

5

6 MS. WESSELS: I'm sorry. I just also
7 wanted to mention in regards to the idea of the letter
8 of apology if the Board plans on writing this letter
9 that you'll need to have a motion and vote on it at
10 some point before the work session ends. It doesn't
11 need to happen right now.

12

13 So we'll just move along to the next
14 topic and that's FRMP. There's a variety of FRMP
15 topics and one comes from the Southcentral Council that
16 says that northern ecosystems are changing at an
17 accelerated rate as well as the number of subsistence
18 issues and concerns and user conflicts.

19

20 We grounded water contaminants from
21 developing an industry and leaching into the ecosystem.
22 They become part of the food web. Food security is
23 becoming an issue because the food might be
24 contaminated. They recommend that FRMP should evolve
25 to meet these new challenges. They're asking the Board
26 to direct OSM to review current FRMP requirements to
27 meet current subsistence needs across all regions.

28

29 They also say that FRMP should fund
30 research on marine resources and contaminants. That's
31 especially important to Southcentral Council because of
32 where they're located.

33

34 So in its reply the Board just points
35 out the history of FRMP was developed after Section 812
36 of ANILCA. So they're saying that currently some
37 research is not eligible for funding under FRMP,
38 including contaminants, habitat and hatcheries. That
39 is done to prevent duplicated issues because some of
40 this research is done by the agencies.

41

42 The Board says that it's going to ask
43 OSM to review FRMP guidelines and share the results of
44 their review with the Council.

45

46 So the next topic brought up by -- two
47 topics actually -- no, three topics brought up by
48 Kodiak Aleutians. They are concerned about the loss of
49 FRMP funding for McLees and Buskin River weirs.

50

0103

1 They're concerned about loss of
2 essential salmon escapement data that supports
3 effective management and subsistence opportunity.
4 They're requesting that there needs to be improved
5 communication about FRMP funding availability.
6

7 They're also saying that there needs to
8 be greater Council improvement in the FRMP application
9 review and evaluation to ensure the importance of
10 community projects is considered during the review
11 process.
12

13 So in their reply the Board explains
14 why the funding was unavailable in 2024. Additionally
15 the reply says that OSM operations expenses increased
16 and grew proportionately. Some funding was used to
17 order a permit database. Some of the funding that was
18 used towards FRMP previously.
19

20 They also explained that FACA, Federal
21 Advisory Committee Act limits Council participation in
22 the Technical Review Committee that reviews FRMP
23 projects. But the Councils greater participation comes
24 when they develop the priority information needs and
25 form recommendations on proposed projects.
26

27 The second FRMP project from Kodiak
28 Aleutians. They are asking to create a special fund
29 for funding weir projects. Not just for their region
30 but in general. It will be operating on a five to ten
31 year basis. They're saying that this funding can come
32 from an FRMP, but it also comes from outside funding
33 sources. They're requesting the Board to take the lead
34 on creating this fund.
35

36 The Board highlights that continuation
37 of data collection is critical, but the Board has no
38 statutory authority to establish this type of funding.
39 The Board is committed to strengthening and modernizing
40 FRMP. You encouraged the Council to collaborate with
41 Federal, State and academic partners to explore
42 alternative funding.
43

44 The other topic that Kodiak Aleutian
45 also brings is the importance of FRMP funding for
46 statewide salmon research projects because chinook is
47 struggling, chum is in crisis, coho in the Gulf of
48 Alaska is showing signs of trouble. So their
49 recommendation is to focus resources of statewide
50

0104

1 salmon research rather than funded projects at a
2 fragmented regional level.

3

4 Amazingly, the other council that's
5 located pretty far away from Kodiak Aleutian, which is
6 Northwest Arctic, also suggesting kind of the same
7 thing, to have the statewide salmon study. They're
8 saying the need for comprehensive scientific studies of
9 salmon and continue scientific monitoring, research and
10 proactive measures. They request FRMP to fund
11 statewide salmon research projects.

12

13 So these two concerns brought by Kodiak
14 Aleutian and Northwest Arctic their reply is that the
15 statewide salmon research can be conducted under FRMP
16 and the project needs to be in the multi-region
17 category, which is for cross-regional projects to
18 accommodate cross-ecosystem or species-wide research.

19

20 Before I proceed talking about other
21 topics in the FRMP category, Rebecca, do you have
22 anything to add to the FRMP projects?

23

24 MS. SKINNER: No.

25

26 MS. WESSELS: Okay. The other FRMP
27 topic brought up by Western Interior. What they're
28 saying is that Federally qualified subsistence users
29 currently heavily rely on non-salmon species due to
30 poor salmon returns. Very little is known about the
31 non-salmon populations and harvest thresholds.

32

33 They're concerned about unintentionally
34 overharvesting these non-salmon species. So they are
35 asking to review how many projects have been funded by
36 FRMP on non-salmon species. In the reply the Board says
37 that OSM reviewed the research that has been done and
38 the Board is including the results of these reviewed
39 with the reply.

40

41 A few studies have been done during
42 recent salmon declines on the non-salmon species, but
43 the foundation research has been done since the
44 beginning of FRMP in the year 2000.

45

46 Then Northwest Arctic also is talking
47 about including local observation and traditional
48 knowledge in FRMP projects. They're concerned how
49 rivers and ecosystems change through time and what

50

0105

1 influences these changes is crucial they're saying.
2 Including local observations can guide more effective
3 resource management and decision-making.
4

5 They're asking the Board to continue to
6 support FRMP projects to incorporate local traditional
7 knowledge and encourage Board agencies to do the same.
8

9 In the reply the Board says that ANILCA
10 Section 812 states the Secretary shall seek data from
11 and consult with and make use of the special knowledge
12 of local residents engaged in subsistence uses.
13 Councils are already submitting Priority Information
14 Needs asking to incorporate this knowledge.
15

16 So that concludes my presentation on
17 FRMP. I'm going to pause to see if there's any
18 questions, additions.
19

20 MS. PITKA: So how is local knowledge
21 being incorporated right now into the FRMP application
22 process? It's been a while since I've seen the
23 application. We don't usually go through them here.
24

25 MS. WESSELS: I would need to ask some
26 of my colleagues. Scott is gone. He would know more.
27 I'm not involved in the FRMP process at all.
28

29 MR. FOLEY: Thank you. For the record
30 this is Kevin Foley, Fisheries with OSM. Traditional
31 knowledge is often incorporated into the process in how
32 we rate and grade individual proposals. There's a
33 specific category and it's also announcing the notice
34 of funding opportunity. It's a very specific category
35 within those proposals.
36

37 It's also a topic in and of itself.
38 There's often species status assessments, harvest
39 monitoring, traditional ecological knowledge proposal
40 types that are sought for through the FRMP. Those are
41 rated out through the anthropology and the fisheries
42 programs in general.
43

44 Did that answer the question?
45

46 MS. PITKA: Yeah. Yeah, it does.
47 Thank you. I just wanted to make sure that there was
48 some process for incorporating local traditional
49 knowledge into the FRMP process.
50

0106

1 MS. LAVINE: Mr. Chair. For the record
2 this is Robbin LaVine. I would also add that it is --
3 the Regional Advisory Councils have a very important
4 role in developing the Priority Information Needs and
5 their knowledge and understanding of their regions and
6 what's going on drives those Priority Information
7 Needs.

8
9 So I would say that the local and
10 traditional knowledge is shared often at these Council
11 meetings by the Council members and the public. So
12 that's another way in which the lens of the FRMP is
13 directed towards traditional knowledge and
14 incorporating -- requesting research that incorporates
15 that to help meet those needs.

16
17 MS. WESSELS: Okay. If there's no more
18 questions I'm moving on to the next topic in the table.
19 The other survey and monitoring needs. We already
20 talked some about there is surveys and monitoring, but
21 this is more kind of like -- Councils are always
22 looking for data basically because it helps them to
23 make a more informed decision.

24
25 So they're asking for various
26 monitoring projects to happen because there is concerns
27 in regards to them not happening. What they're asking
28 is are there going to be any other surveys or other
29 monitoring done in addition to just reviewing the
30 closures. The closures will need to be lifted if they
31 are no longer needed for the policy.

32
33 They're also asking the Board to review
34 ways to fund any monitoring. Of course funding is
35 always an issue. So in the Board's reply the Board
36 talks about Hoonah Indian Association several
37 monitoring goals that are listed in the reply itself.
38 There's a working group and these participants also
39 include ADF&G, OSM and U.S. Forest Service.

40
41 The community surveys for Hoonah, who
42 are developed and expected to be expanded to Angoon and
43 Pelican. Again, the Board points out that the Board's
44 authority doesn't allow us to explore additional
45 funding in streams.

46
47 The second topic about Unit 4 deer
48 surveys the Council is requesting the Board to support
49 efforts to secure funding for Unit 4 deer surveys. And
50

0107

1 they're asking about creation of wildlife resource
2 monitoring program, which has also been on the
3 Council's Annual Report requests many, many years.
4

5 In the Board reply the Board says that
6 the funding for wildlife resource monitoring program is
7 unlikely in the near future. If funding is available
8 Forest Service will assess future funding for Unit 4
9 deer monitoring on a project by project basis.
10

11 The third topic in Southeast in regards
12 to surveys is not related to Unit 4 deer. It's related
13 to moose surveys in Yakutat. The last survey was
14 conducted six years ago. Again, they're hoping that
15 WRMP is established and the reply is basically the
16 same. No funding for WRMP in the near future. So
17 that's how it's going to go.
18

19 The other topics on the monitoring.
20 Three of them brought up by Eastern Interior. They're
21 talking about the sheep population is a major concern.
22 Council is advocating for collaboration between
23 Federal, State and Tribal partners to prioritize sheep
24 surveys. Council's draft recommendations on Dall sheep
25 management strategies in the region and that's a part
26 of their obligation under ANILCA actually.
27

28 Council also informing the Board that
29 they're sending letters to Eastern Interior land
30 managers and stakeholders to form Eastern Interior Dall
31 Sheep Management Coalition. So this is just an
32 information only topic. No reply requested.
33

34 There are a couple of other topics that
35 they didn't request a reply. Just want the Board to
36 know. They are concerned that there's no robust
37 dataset showing annual stock composition of harvest in
38 Area M over time so it's impossible to track trends.
39

40 Council will be sending a letter to
41 ADF&G to prioritize for ongoing genetic sampling in
42 Area M commercial fishing. The Council is primarily
43 interested in the fall chum datasets.
44

45 Eastern Interior Council has also been
46 requesting surveys, moose surveys, in Unit 20-F to be
47 completed because currently the monitoring solely
48 relies on harvest permits. They're saying there's lack
49 of baseline survey and it's a major data gap. So the
50

0108

1 Council sent letters to ADF&G and BLM asking to
2 prioritize funding for aerial surveys of moose in Unit
3 20F.

4
5 The last Council that brought up the
6 monitoring needs is North Slope. They are concerned
7 that ADF&G survey of muskoxen in Unit 26A was in '22.
8 The last Fish and Wildlife survey in Unit 26C was in
9 2016. Existing harvest limits based on incomplete or
10 outdated data they claim. So they are also asking for
11 establishing of WRMP and to make funding available for
12 these surveys through WRMP.

13
14 So the Board's reply again saying WRMP
15 funding is unlikely. Arctic Refuge staff shared
16 observations that might suggest that the herd that the
17 Council is talking about moose between Unit 26B and C.
18 So potentially all muskoxen have been counted in the
19 ADF&G survey.

20
21 Arctic, in partnership with ADF&G,
22 exploring ways to extend the survey into Unit 26C in
23 2025 or 2026. The Council is actually during this
24 season is going to provide recommendations on Wildlife
25 Closure Review WCR-26/25 in Unit 26C to muskoxen
26 hunting. That's closed for muskoxen hunting except by
27 Kaktovik residents.

28
29 So the last topic that North Slope
30 brings up is funding to study the effects of transport
31 and guided hunters on subsistence and caribou in the
32 North Slope region. They're saying it's a great
33 concern that the impacts that transporters and guided
34 hunters have on caribou. There's increased user
35 conflict during the fall hunting season and a lot of
36 wanton waste of caribou.

37
38 They are asking to fund a study of the
39 impacts of guided hunters and transporter companies on
40 caribou in subsistence practices. Also asking for
41 creation of WRMP.

42
43 The Board says in their reply that
44 NPRA, BLM have limited law enforcement on the land in
45 Unit 26C. NPS have done some research on this topic in
46 the past but it's dated. Then the Board provides
47 various published sources on this topic to the Council
48 for their information and suggesting that the Council
49 invite State and Federal agencies and Arctic Slope
50

0109

1 Regional Corporation and North Slope Borough to their
2 meetings to discuss this topic.

3

4 So that concludes my presentation on
5 the various monitoring on subsistence survey needs.
6 Are there any questions, concerns? Yes.

7

8 MS. CLEVELAND: Maybe not a question or
9 a concern but something that I know I've brought up to
10 our RAC since I've been gone is the pike fish that are
11 in our river, the Kanektok River, and they're invasive
12 species to our trout and grayling and char.

13

14 So it's been ongoing for at least 10
15 years that I know of and we've been bringing it up.
16 The community has even talked about like donating gas
17 to boat operators/fishers and focus on these oxbows and
18 eddies where they are the most populated and fish them
19 out. I mean that was one idea.

20

21 I guess last year or the year before
22 our RAC included the pike as an invasive species.
23 Yeah, a study would be nice on invasive species in our
24 region. I know the State is actively doing an invasive
25 species study on just the aquatic plants for now. So
26 they were planning to go to Quinhagak in a month or two
27 to start that study.

28

29 That's it. Thanks. Oh, I'm Jacqueline
30 Cleveland by the way.

31

32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
33 Katya. Is there any questions or further comments for
34 Katya on the presentation? We've had a good
35 discussion. Talked about topics as we go through the
36 report. She was clear, articulate. Appreciate the
37 table is consistent across years. So I like the format
38 and appreciate that presentation. Any further
39 questions?

40

41 MS. LEONETTI: She has one more.

42

43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, she has one
44 more.

45

46 MS. WESSELS: Well, I actually have
47 many more, but.....

48

49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. You've

50

0110

1 got the floor, Katya.

2

3

MS. WESSELS: The last column in the
4 table is permits. A couple Councils brought up various
5 permit concerns. One of them is Kodiak Aleutians.
6 They're saying there's difficulty involved in obtaining
7 Federal subsistence harvest permits in Kodiak Aleutian
8 regions and it takes quite a bit of time. So they
9 would like to implement the online system of getting
10 the permits as quickly as possible. Hopefully within
11 two years they say. And ensure online access works
12 effectively in remote areas with limited internet.

13

14

In the Board reply this Board says that
15 in 2024 OSM initiated the modernization of the Federal
16 subsistence permit application. There will be
17 availability to obtain permits via online portal.
18 Hopefully will be available soon-ish. Local Federal
19 land managers can help with other options.

20

21

The other permit issue that came up not
22 related to Federal subsistence harvest permits, but
23 rather ceremonial harvest permits for Prince William
24 Sound. This issue was brought up by Southcentral.
25 They got reports that tribal members have difficulty
26 navigating the process of obtaining permits to harvest
27 ceremonial shrimp for important potlatches in the
28 Prince William Sound.

29

30

While they understand that marine
31 waters are not a part of the Federal Subsistence
32 Management Program it is concerning and the Council
33 wanted to bring it to the Board's attention. They did
34 not request any replies.

35

36

I'm not going to pause right now. I'm
37 just going to jump really quickly into the rest of the
38 thing. So we covered pretty much almost all the
39 topics. There's still some topics on the Council's
40 Annual Reports that were not covered. I'm not going to
41 specifically cover them right now because the Board had
42 a chance to get acquainted with the topics and the
43 replies.

44

45

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We have a Board
46 question for you.

47

48

MS. BOARIO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
49 was just curious, Rebecca, the other options as the

50

0111

1 region awaits the online portal. What would that look
2 like to you? What would be helpful? If you have any
3 additional feedback, I'd love to hear it. Thanks.

4

5 Fish and Wildlife Service. Sorry.

6

7 MS. SKINNER: Thanks. This is Rebecca
8 Skinner. I think Katya brought up the option of the
9 other options in lieu of this online portal. So I'm
10 not sure what those other options would be.

11

12 The challenge that we heard about in
13 the Kodiak Aleutians Region is that we're pretty spread
14 out and that it's not always easy to get to a physical
15 location to get a physical permit. That's why the
16 online option was very attractive.

17

18 I'm not sure, other than having that
19 online portal or -- I mean I was going to say mailing
20 it. I think mailing is probably a worse option. I'm
21 not sure what those other alternatives would be. I
22 thought Katya brought up the possibility of other
23 alternatives, but maybe I'm incorrect.

24

25 MS. WESSELS: Yeah, that's what the
26 Kodiak Aleutians reply says, that the Federal managers
27 can help with other options but it doesn't specify what
28 options.

29

30 MR. WOODS: When we have a Federal hunt
31 sometimes the tribe takes over and you get them from
32 the tribal office and they will print and then monitor
33 and that helps in the community or area that you're in.
34 Then people identify where to go and how to get it.

35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Rhonda.

37

38 MS. PITKA: Yeah, that's what I was
39 going to say too, is the Refuge Manager will give our
40 tribal offices -- delegate the permits to the tribal
41 office. I mean you still have to follow the whole
42 list. Vince Mathews set up really nice little folders
43 for us. I usually sit there with people so it takes a
44 while, but it's worth it. So it's one of the things
45 that our tribal offices do.

46

47 MS. BOARIO: Thank you. That's really
48 helpful to hear.

49

50

0112

1 MR. ALBERG: Mr. Chair. Question. Do
2 we have an estimate on when the online permit system
3 will be up and available?
4

5 MS. LEONETTI: Crystal Leonetti. How
6 do I say this? No. We currently don't have a permit
7 specialist and that is a very unique skill set and it's
8 really hard to kind of farm that out to other staff,
9 although we do have other staff working on it. Cory in
10 the back of the room is one of them. Cory, I don't
11 know if you have any further information. Okay. But
12 basically we are trying to get over some hurdles with
13 making the online app available.
14

15 MR. ALBERG: Thank you.
16

17 MS. LEONETTI: You're welcome.
18

19 MS WESSELS: Okay. So I'm just going
20 to go really quickly through all the Councils and
21 display on the screen in the white the topics that were
22 not covered under general things.
23

24 Southeast kind of stands out this year
25 because they have like four topics that were not
26 covered in general themes. They were not exactly in
27 sync with other Councils. Just because of things that
28 are happening in that region. They heard complaints
29 about the Federal Board meeting was scheduled at the
30 same time as North Pacific Fishery Management Council
31 and they had problems with that.
32

33 Then they also had issues because of
34 the Ketchikan nonrural proposal. They wanted
35 guidelines on what is rural community. They also were
36 talking about how is the Board using the data or Fish
37 and Wildlife status reports. If somebody is interested
38 there's these reports that are right there on the
39 public table. So if you want to see what they're
40 talking about, that's there and that's an enclosure to
41 their Annual Report.
42

43 They're just informing the Board
44 they're going to continue Tongass National Forest Plan
45 involvement with this process of supervision. They
46 don't want to reply to that.
47

48 So moving on to the next Council, South
49 Central Council. I'm including the pictures so you can
50

0113

1 actually see the people that are on the Councils. So
2 Southcentral actually just one topic was not covered
3 under general topic discussion. That's just the last
4 one, number 6. That's information of depletion of
5 Southcentral Region's subsistence resources.

6

7 Kodiak Aleutian Council is next.

8 Kodiak Aleutian Council's couple of topics were not
9 covered. Number four is like a law enforcement officer
10 monitoring subsistence, sport and commercial fishing
11 violations. That's a topic that is often brought up by
12 Kodiak Aleutian Council. You can look at it at their
13 report and see the draft reply in your packet.

14

15 Also the other topic that was also
16 brought up for information purposes is funding to
17 eradicate invasive signal crayfish.

18

19 Bristol Bay Council one topic was not
20 covered. They just want the Board to remember that
21 they would like to request a solicitor's opinion to be
22 included in Staff analysis to ensure compliance with
23 Title VIII.

24

25 MR. WOODS: So, Dan, does it include
26 the NEPA documents and all the action items and the
27 money spent on refuges and parks? Who would know?

28

29 MR. DUNAWAY: Through the Chair. I
30 don't think we need all the details.

31

32 MS. WESSELS: Ms. Cleveland, if you
33 want this photo, I can send it to you. Okay. And YKD
34 Council. Again, also a 13 member Council, but not
35 everybody here in this photo. So we covered all the
36 topics that requested actual reply. The only topics
37 that were not covered is the ones that were for
38 information purposes only. Conflict, user conflict.

39

40 There's one of them for moose hunting.
41 The need for a public member on the Board. Now we know
42 that Mr. Ray Oney is on the Board. One of the Board
43 members they are still concerned about the D1 land
44 withdrawals. They are concerned about Donlin Gold as
45 EIS and mining impacts to subsistence and environment.
46 They're also concerned about crane habitat near
47 Marshall.

48

49 They would like to see meaningful

50

0114

1 tribal involvement in decision making and capacity
2 buildings. And they would like to reduce total of
3 allowable catch for pollock in commercial fisheries.
4 Additionally they just advocating for reductions and
5 halibut sizes and need to reduce bycatch of Pacific
6 halibut.

7

8 Moving on to the next one is Western
9 Interior Council. Western Interior two topics that the
10 Board prepared their reply were not covered during this
11 discussion. Concerns for transporter operating in the
12 Innoko Wildlife Refuge. That specific response was
13 provided by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service so it's very
14 detailed.

15

16 And the continued effort to finalize
17 the Council sheep management strategy guidelines.
18 There will be more of that later for this Board. Not
19 during this meeting but in the future because this
20 strategy is being reviewed by SRC. So there are some
21 changes that's going to be made to the strategy.

22

23 The next one is Seward Peninsula
24 Council. Seward Peninsula Council a couple of topics
25 didn't get covered. One is youth engagement,
26 subsistence practices. Basically this topic is about
27 that they want a similar program that was created in
28 Southeast. They learned about it during the
29 All-Council meeting and they would like it to be
30 expanded to Seward Peninsula Region. The Board is
31 advising them to work with the corporation on that
32 because the Board cannot fund this effort.

33

34 Their topic for the Board's information
35 they're concerned about the impacts of micro plastic
36 and pollution on the Arctic marine environment.

37

38 Okay. Northwest Arctic Council we
39 covered every single topic they brought up during the
40 general discussion. Eastern Interior Council a few
41 topics didn't get covered. Native lands to maps and
42 availability of regulation books. I think OSM can help
43 them with that in the probably 2026. Have those maps
44 available for them.

45

46 Cabin uses for subsistence activities.
47 That's an ongoing topic. The Board discussed that in
48 the past. Then the one development of Federal
49 subsistence use amounts. The Board also provides a

50

0115

1 detailed information of how this was considered in the
2 past and how it was determined that it was not a good
3 idea to have that. So that's in the reply.

4
5 There are three topics that for
6 information purposes that were not covered. Hunter
7 ethics education. That's a standing topic on the
8 Eastern Interior annual report. Then they're talking
9 about climate change impacts and they're talking about
10 importance of co-management and co-stewardship.

11
12 The last but not least, North Slope
13 Council. The North Slope we covered all of the topics
14 for that Council, what they have in their Annual
15 Report.

16
17 I'm just going to say a few thank-yous
18 very quickly. In the end I would like to acknowledge
19 the incredible amount of work that goes into
20 development of these replies. The majority of OSM
21 staff contributed to drafting and leadership team
22 review in their replies. Then the Staff from Forest
23 Service, BLM, BIA, NPS, U.S. Fish and Wildlife. They
24 contributed tremendously with drafting some of the
25 replies.

26
27 The timing is challenging when they're
28 developing their replies because OSM staff is working
29 on the development of the wildlife analysis. So
30 there's a lot of pressure.

31
32 And I would like to acknowledge the
33 substantial involvement of the InterAgency Staff
34 Committee. Especially Greg Risdahl who did an
35 extensive editing on these replies. So they're
36 grammatically correct. And OSM really appreciates
37 working with the InterAgency Staff Committee because
38 you guys have an incredible amount of knowledge,
39 institutional knowledge and also knowledge of the
40 issues and resources all the way across Alaska.

41
42 Of course every year we try to prepare
43 more meaningful replies. Of course there's always room
44 for improvement, but I think we've done pretty well
45 this year. At this juncture I would like to remind the
46 Board that this reply is a draft, still draft, until
47 you have a motion and vote to approve them, so anything
48 can be changed.

49
50

0116

1 What I heard from discussion so far
2 that we would like to include in some of the replies
3 the language that the Board will direct OSM to have a
4 small workshop organized for the Yukon River councils
5 that are four Councils; the YKD, Western/Eastern
6 Interior and Seward Peninsula and Kodiak Aleutians to
7 talk about salmon issues. We will add this language to
8 the replies.

9

10 Is there anything else that you would
11 like to add to the replies?

12

13 MS. BOARIO: Yeah, thank you for the
14 question. Fish and Wildlife Service. I think it would
15 be great in the reply to the KARAC on the permits to
16 just use that example of -- for example in other
17 regions of the state the permits can be delegated to
18 tribes. So we have it in the record and Jill and I are
19 going to follow up on that and see what else is
20 possible for that region.

21

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other Board
23 questions, comments, presentations? I think Staff did
24 a diligent job. I'll try one more time. This is
25 Anthony Christianson, Board Chair for the record. The
26 floor is open if there's any additional comments or
27 feedback from the Board. If not, I open up the floor
28 for Board action.

29

30 MS. PITKA: Oh, sorry. I just wanted
31 to thank all the Regional Advisory Council Chairs for
32 their attendance today and for your really diligent and
33 hard work as volunteers. I really beat everybody over
34 the head with the Regional Advisory Council reports.
35 I'm like you have to read these. It's really
36 important. You know, you have to give them the time
37 needed.

38

39 I told Tony yesterday. He's like we
40 could do this quick and I was like no, no. This is a
41 public process and we're going to take our time and do
42 it right and make sure that they're all heard. So
43 thank you very much for your incredible patience today,
44 Tony, and your diligence. And thank you to all the
45 Regional Advisory Council members.

46

47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Frank, one more
48 comment?

49

50

0117

1 MR. WOODS: Yeah, I was going to echo
2 Rhonda's appreciation for the RACs. I did one little
3 stint on the RAC and they're a lot of work, a lot of
4 stuff, but what I got out of the reports was that the
5 FSB answers to OSM with the FMP and the EAs end up in a
6 DA and we forgot about the IA because when you end up
7 -- in the last two years if IA technology has not
8 caught up to this Board.

9
10 I really appreciate all the detail
11 because as an old RAC member and I appreciate all your
12 input because that's who we work for, but it makes a
13 big difference on our end because I don't understand
14 Kodiak. We have the same issues. I don't understand
15 the YK and I don't know what the actual action need to
16 be taken.

17
18 I'll go back to if we don't control the
19 science we don't have anything to work on. The
20 Fisheries Monitoring Program has opened up doors that
21 were never going to be opened unless we applied for
22 them. Literally. Because if we didn't have the
23 science to back what we're talking about, we won't be
24 able to make that change.

25
26 So I'm focusing on AI at the next
27 meeting because there is technology involved in every
28 recommendation from every Council. AI within two years
29 -- let's say three years. I wrote a grant that took me
30 two years to write. You can now write that grant in
31 one hour.

32
33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You sound smart
34 too.

35
36 MR. WOODS: You sound smart too.
37 Because all this information that we're disseminating
38 now there's a record of decision, records that are
39 getting made right now from all the work from doing
40 from the National Marine Fisheries agencies to NOAA to
41 all those -- all that information is at our fingertips
42 now. That's insane if you think about how much
43 information and power that can bring.

44
45 So, Mr. Chair, I'd like to thank the
46 RACs and your report. I'd make a motion that we accept
47 that report after everybody's comments.

48
49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The motion has
50

0118

1 been made to accept the report as drafted by the staff
2 with the recommended changes and added language.

3

4 MR. BROWER: Second.

5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The second has
7 been made. Any further discussion, comments,
8 questions, deliberations -- I'm just teasing. Call for
9 the question.

10

11 MR. BROWER: Question.

12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Question has
14 been called. Maybe I'll do roll call.

15

16 MS. LEONETTI: Rhonda Pitka.

17

18 MS. PITKA: Yes.

19

20 MS. LEONETTI: Charlie Brower.

21

22 MR. BROWER: Yes.

23

24 MS. LEONETTI: Greg Risdahl.

25

26 MR. RISDAHL: Yes, I support. I also
27 want to mention the same -- more or less what Katya
28 said. I recognize the amount of time that goes into
29 these. I wasn't thinking of myself because I know the
30 Staff puts in a ton of time as well as OSM and the ISC
31 as a general rule. It's really truly a group effort
32 and people do take it to heart and try to do a good
33 job. So thank you to everybody.

34

35 MS. LEONETTI: Ben Payenna.

36

37 MR. PAYENNA: Yes.

38

39 MS. LEONETTI: Craig Perham.

40

41 MR. PERHAM: Yes.

42

43 MS. LEONETTI: Dave Alberg.

44

45 MR. ALBERG: Yes.

46

47 MS. LEONETTI: Frank Woods.

48

49 MR. WOODS: Yes.

50

0119

1 MS. LEONETTI: Glenn Chen.

2

3 MR. CHEN: BIA votes yes.

4

5 MS. LEONETTI: Ray Oney.

6

7 MR. ONEY: Yes.

8

9 MS. LEONETTI: Sara Boario.

10

11 MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service
12 votes yes and also just to reiterate my thanks. Every
13 time I read these I learn so much more and there's just
14 like tendrils of future collaboration and work
15 together. So please know, as others have said, we take
16 your work to heart and really appreciate it so much.
17 Thank you.

18

19 MS. LEONETTI: And lastly Chair Tony
20 Christianson.

21

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes. I just
23 appreciate all the work from the RACs in putting
24 forward these issues for us. And also coming in here
25 and waiving your expectations of our Board. We
26 appreciate that. That's what we need to hear. You
27 know, we're not here to just pussy foot around all the
28 time. I make jokes about stuff, but this is a serious
29 matter. So I appreciate that you guys bring that forth
30 in a candid way and I appreciate all your service.

31

32 Thank you.

33

34 MS. LEONETTI: Mr. Chair, the motion
35 passes.

36

37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. I
38 think we may have time for one more agenda item today.
39 We'll move on down to Council Charter change requests.

40

41 MS. NAVES: Just a second, Mr. Chair.
42 I'll stop sharing the screen here. Maybe we're going
43 to pause for a second to figure out the technical
44 difficulties.

45

46 (Pause)

47

48 MS. NAVES: Okay. Just also to add
49 about the annual reports that they didn't use AI to

50

0120

1 write them and replies were not written by AI either.
2 By real human people.

3
4 Okay. So in regards to the Charter
5 changes. All the Regional Advisory Councils they're
6 Federal Advisory Committees. Because they're Federal
7 Advisory Committees they have been chartered under
8 FACA. FACA is short for Federal Advisory Committee
9 Act.

10
11 So the Charters are renewed on the
12 two-year basis on the odd number of years. They've
13 been established first -- the Council has been
14 established first in 1993. So it's 2025. The current
15 Charters will expire in December of this year. The
16 Secretary of the Interior will need to renew the
17 Charters. Without the Charters the Councils cannot
18 operate if there's no active Charter.

19
20 So the Councils are per FACA. Councils
21 are given opportunity to look at the Charters to
22 propose changes. Over the last few years, few Charter
23 renewals, we were able to actually add a lot of
24 positive language to the Charter that are useful to the
25 Councils. Like, for example, such things as carryover
26 terms.

27
28 When the appointments are not made on
29 time, the members can continue to serve until the
30 appointments are made. The language was added all the
31 alternates, which allows the program to ask a Secretary
32 to appoint a person out of cycle if they've been vetted
33 originally and went through the whole process if
34 they're sitting in the wings as an alternate and if
35 somebody vacates a seat during the middle of their
36 term, like let's say they went to a winter meeting but
37 not able to attend the rest of the meetings because
38 they moved out of the region or unfortunately passed
39 away, then we can use this language to appoint an
40 alternate if there is one.

41
42 During the mid-cycle -- the last change
43 to the Charter was when this Board voted to support the
44 language to add one non-voting young leader seat to all
45 of the Councils. That change was done during the last
46 Charter change. So it was added in 2023.

47
48 This year was the first year when we
49 had the call for young leaders to apply for this
50

0121

1 non-voting seat and the Board will be discussing that
2 during Executive Session tomorrow. This year we also
3 had the Charters reviewed by the Council. There's only
4 one Council. Proposed two Charter changes and that was
5 Kodiak Aleutians.

6
7 So the first request was to add the
8 language that will say that the Councils will meet at
9 least twice per year. Current Charter language says
10 the Council will meet one to two times per year. The
11 Council's justification for this request was that it's
12 important for them to meet at least twice per year in
13 order to have sufficient capacity to provide
14 recommendations on proposed changes to Federal fishing
15 and hunting regulations.

16
17 The Council also noted they have limit
18 twice per year and formalizing these in the Charter
19 would more accurately reflect the Council's work. Per
20 usual we brought this request to the InterAgency Staff
21 Committee for discussion. So the InterAgency Staff
22 Committee reviewed their request and discussed it and
23 they made the full recommendation. You have it in
24 front of you on paper that was passed around, but I'll
25 read it into the record.

26
27 The ISC recommended rejecting the
28 Council's request to change the Charter language to
29 indicate that the Council will meet at least twice per
30 year because the Council did not provide a sufficient
31 justification to their request. FACA stipulates to
32 include in the Charter the estimated number and
33 frequency of the Advisory Committee meetings and does
34 not require to provide the minimum number of meetings.
35 Replacing the existing Charter language with a proposed
36 one will put a limiting stipulation on the Council and
37 on the designated Federal officer in their ability to
38 schedule the meetings.

39
40 The Council primarily meet to develop
41 recommendations to the Board on various regulatory
42 matters and to provide a public forum to discuss
43 subsistence issues. Council correctly points out that
44 they historically met twice a year and that is not
45 about to change. However, it is possible that in the
46 future a Council would not have any actionable business
47 to attend to and therefore would not have a reason to
48 meet at least twice a year.

49
50

0122

1 So that was the ISC recommendation.
2 I'm going to pause and I'm looking for the Board's
3 discussion, opinion, if you have different opinion or
4 if you agree with the ISC's recommendation.

5

6 I also want to add from myself, just a
7 thought that I had, that if this language -- this is
8 the same language in all Council Charters. The Council
9 will meet one to two times per year. This will put the
10 Charter out of alignment with all other Charters.

11

12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I guess I have
13 a question for process. This is Chairman Christianson.
14 The timeline for the Secretary to sign the Charter.
15 That one clicked in my ear just under the new
16 transition here. It seemed like a concern for me. I
17 was just wondering when that usually happens.

18

19 MS. WESSELS: It usually happens in
20 December.

21

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay.

23

24 MS. WESSELS: We send the Charter
25 language to the Secretary with a packet on the
26 appointments. They usually -- there's a bunch of other
27 offices that are going to review the Charters and the
28 Solicitor's Office and the Secretary's Office will
29 review the Charters. They also can make additional
30 changes there that we're not aware of. They
31 theoretically should sign the Charters by sometime in
32 December because otherwise Councils cannot function if
33 the Charters are not signed.

34

35 So that's kind of the schedule, you
36 know, because after this meeting we're going to put all
37 the packets together and send them on for further
38 review and approval.

39

40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The reason I'm
41 just stating it is for the record as we build a request
42 to our boss and an audience. I think that comes in
43 number two under the top two where number one is a need
44 by this Board to support our Regional Advisory Council
45 FACA committees and the urgency of signing those before
46 December and the cost of it not happening because then
47 we're delaying and delaying is delaying everything, so
48 we don't have to go there with that discussion.

49

50

0123

1 But just the urgency probably -- not
2 the urgency but the importance, I guess, that weighs on
3 this program to get that signed because who knows in
4 this climate. So I'm just putting that on the record
5 that I would hope that that's one of the requests we
6 put in to our Department of Interior.

7

8 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair. Fish and
9 Wildlife Service. I have a quick question. The last
10 part, Katya, that you said, it puts it out of
11 compliance with all the other Charters. How do all the
12 other Charters move?

13

14 MS. WESSELS: Well, you know, maybe
15 compliance is not the right word, but it just makes
16 this one an odd one out because it's the same language.
17 That language came from the Department. In fact
18 Department really doesn't like us changing their
19 charters, but we still, you know, did it in the past.
20 I'm just concerned that like Chair Christianson said in
21 the current climate it can just make it worse.

22

23 MS. BOARIO: Thank you.

24

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Dave.

26

27 MR. ALBERG: Dave Alberg with NPS. A
28 little vague as to what -- so what are the options
29 moving forward? If we want to stay on track by
30 December and ISC has made a recommendation, can we make
31 modifications and run it back through ISC? Is there
32 time to do that?

33

34 For instance the comment about that you
35 may not have enough stuff on the agenda to warrant a
36 second meeting. Can the language be changed to will
37 schedule or plan two meetings a year, based on work
38 before the Council or has the ability to cancel if
39 there are no agenda items. So you adopt the
40 recommendation but with an adjustment.

41

42 Is there a route to run that back
43 through ISC or as of today where do we stand in terms
44 of what -- how much room do you have to navigate? Does
45 that make sense?

46

47 MS. WESSELS: Yeah, the matter of, you
48 know, our procedure is the Board just will make a
49 recommendation and your recommendation goes on to the
50

0124

1 Secretary. It doesn't go back to ISC.

2

3 You know, ISC reviewed it and they
4 provided their recommendation. So that's just like
5 with any proposals. They provide their recommendation
6 but then the Board can decide anything else.

7

8 MR. ALBERG: So if the Board makes a
9 recommendation, you could certainly reference this
10 determination by ISC and explain why you made a
11 modification to the language or chose to ignore it
12 completely, I suppose, correct?

13

14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll let
15 Robbin have the floor. Robbin, go ahead.

16

17 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
18 Members of the Council. The ISC's language will not be
19 included in the Charter. The language proposed by the
20 Council to change their Charter has been presented.
21 There are some small modifications. The ISC recommends
22 not changing. They have two recommendations to change
23 their Charter and the ISC recommends not doing that at
24 this time for different reasons.

25

26 One, for the fact that you're saying at
27 least two times a year means we must do two times a
28 year. Considering that we love to do these meetings
29 like three times a year or more sometimes, we'd like to
30 have more All-Council meetings, Katya, yeah, let's go.

31

32 (Laughter)

33

34 MS. LAVINE: But the thing is is that
35 any language like that, any change like that could
36 potentially limit our ability to be flexible,
37 especially in regards to what we can afford in budge
38 and Staff time.

39

40 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

41

42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

43

44 MS. WESSELS: Yeah, I would like to add
45 something to it because Councils meet only if they have
46 actionable business because all other things that come
47 along, reports, you know, other things, they're, you
48 know, there because the Council is already meeting, but
49 they need to discuss something and vote on it, like

50

0125

1 proposals or developing a report or whatever. If in
2 some situation, you know, there's nothing for them to
3 act on, but the Charter says they need to meet at least
4 twice a year, then we are in kind of a Catch-22
5 situation. Like what do we do? Just have a meeting
6 for the sake of having a meeting?

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, and I
9 guess that's what I was just trying to tease out of
10 this, you know, the timeline and then why we're getting
11 this recommendation. You know, making sure we
12 understand the climate, what our Staff is facing. We
13 hear all that today.

14

15 So as we look at these things and we weigh our
16 decisions, we're looking at everything on the table,
17 and then it could either lag or something there, my
18 concern there -- you know, because it operates now, you
19 know, and we can have the two meetings a year. That's
20 what I'm looking at as a Board Chair, you know,
21 supporting ISC putting forward.

22

23 Thank you. Frank.

24

25 MR. WOODS: I'd make a motion to table
26 this topic until the next meeting.

27

28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: No, the reason
29 we need to get this passed is they need to sign this
30 Charter so that our RACs can operate.

31

32 MR. WOODS: So opposite then.

33

34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposite of
35 that, yeah. What we're trying to do is make this
36 happen today so that we can forward it to our
37 Solicitor's Office.....

38

39 MR. WOODS: Oh, okay. Okay.

40

41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON:so that we
42 can have that process, you know, start going down the
43 line so they have it and see that we've passed that
44 Charter forward so they can sign it by December. Or
45 else after that, if it's lagged, then we're holding up.

46

47 MR. WOODS: Oh, yep, I've got it.

48

49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay.

50

0126

1 MR. WOODS: I make a motion we adopt the
2 changes before us in the meeting regulations or
3 Charter.

4

5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah.

6

7 MR. WOODS: As presented.

8

9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'm going to
10 have Robbin explain it one more time.

11

12 MS. WESSELS: We just discussed one
13 change request or a second one after that.

14

15 MS. LAVINE: Mr. Chair. Robbin with
16 the ISC. So all Councils can request changes to their
17 Charters every other year. This year only one Council
18 requested some changes. They requested two. One was
19 to put in the words at least twice a year, which we
20 find limiting for financial and Staff costs.

21

22 Then the other request to change was to
23 lower the young leader nominations, which was a change
24 to the Charters like I think the last two years.

25

26 MS. WESSELS: Yeah, we did not discuss
27 it, yeah.

28

29 MS. LAVINE: Yeah. But that change --
30 they wanted to lower the age to potential high school
31 students, which our program is not set up to guarantee
32 oversight of minors. So for those two reasons -- and
33 you've got a little bit of the discussion before. The
34 ISC recommends opposing any changes to the Charter. So
35 if you vote right now, you could say I vote to support
36 the changes and I'm going to vote to oppose, right?

37

38 So we put a motion before the
39 Board.....

40

41 MR. BROWER: To change.

42

43 MS. LAVINE:to support to change
44 and then everyone says no or they say yes and this is
45 why.

46

47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
48 that, Robbin. Again, just for Robert's Rules all
49 motions will be to the positive and then you just

50

0127

1 justify, you know, up or down how you vote for it. So
2 thank you for that, Robbin.

3

4 So there is going to be a motion. The
5 floor will be open.

6

7 MR. WOODS: I'll withdraw my motion.

8

9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
10 Frank. I appreciate that withdrawal. So now the floor
11 is open now that we have clarification on the process.
12 The floor is open now that we.....

13

14 MS. LAVINE: Katya may have more
15 information.

16

17 MS. WESSELS: Should I introduce the
18 second change request?

19

20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, let's
21 finish the process.

22

23 MS. WESSELS: And so it's just one
24 motion then. Okay. So the Kodiak Aleutians also have
25 the second request. They are requesting to change the
26 language in the section on membership and designation
27 of the Charter. What they're requesting is to change
28 the language that is there. The one non-voting young
29 leader member. Change it to youth member. And they're
30 also requesting to change the language from age of 18
31 to 25 to age of 14 and 18.

32

33 They are suggesting that these youth
34 member, ages between 14 and 18, to be appointed in
35 non-traveling, non-compensated position. Cross out all
36 the other language that is in the Charter right now
37 that this member must participate in subsistence
38 activities, be otherwise knowledgeable in matters
39 related to subsistence use of fish and wildlife, or be
40 engaged in resource management-related field studies.
41 So they're suggesting crossing that out.

42

43 The Council's justification for this
44 request the Council felt it was important to allow
45 youth younger than age 18 to apply for the opportunity
46 to join the Council as a youth non-voting member.
47 Several Council members expressed that youth ages 14 to
48 18 often have extensive experience in subsistence and
49 that youth ages 18 to 25 are already able to apply to
50

0128

1 be voting Council members.

2

3

4 The Council discussed potential
5 concerns related to travel for minors and potential
6 conflicts with school schedules, but noted that
7 opportunities for more participation or flexible
8 expectations could allow younger community members to
9 apply for this opportunity.

10

11 So the InterAgency Staff Committee also
12 discussed that request and made the following
13 recommendation. The ISC recommended rejecting the
14 Council request to change the young leaders seat to
15 youth seat, to lower the qualifying age and to make
16 this seat a non-traveling, non-compensated position.

17

18 During the last Charter renewal in 2023
19 the ISC recommended to the Board to support adding one
20 non-voting young leader seat to each of the 10
21 Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils. The ISC's
22 intent was to engage and train the next generation of
23 young leaders and provide for the next advisors to the
24 Board.

25

26 The intent was to have appointed
27 non-voting young leaders to attend the meeting in
28 person, participate in regulatory decisions and learn
29 about complex dual management at a meeting while being
30 mentored by the voting Council members and engage in
31 conversations and networking with Federal and State
32 agency staff, tribal organization representatives and
33 public during meeting breaks.

34

35 This kind of engagement would be
36 impossible to achieve if a youth ages 18/14 attends the
37 meetings strictly via teleconference. All Council
38 meetings are open to the public and a virtual option is
39 always available. Therefore, nothing prevents an
40 interested youth to call into the meeting and it does
41 not require Secretarial appointment to the Council to
42 call into a meeting and listen.

43

44 Additionally, even if a Council meeting
45 takes place in an appointed youth age 14/18 home
46 community, it might provide to be legally complicated
47 to arrange for supervision of a minor and make
48 arrangements to mitigate conflicting school schedules
49 to achieve adequate participation.

50

0129

1 OSM's Council Coordination Division
2 Staff always puts special efforts to invite students
3 from local schools to the Council meetings and, when
4 possible, they come and sometimes even testify to the
5 Councils. ISC commends Council Coordinators for their
6 efforts and encourages them to continue these
7 practices.

8
9 This is a pretty lengthy ISC
10 recommendation, but here we are. So two change
11 requests to the language. Are there any questions?
12 And then for the Robert's Rules you probably should put
13 a motion on the floor before discussing anything.

14
15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I just want to
16 maybe at this time offer the floor to Rebecca if she
17 had anything. You know, seeing that the ISC did
18 recommend something different than the Board, your RAC
19 Board. So I'll just give you an opportunity at this
20 time.

21
22 MS. SKINNER: Yeah, thanks. This is
23 Rebecca Skinner. I think you asked if I had any
24 comments now that I've heard the ISC recommendation.
25 So the first recommendation to change the language to
26 meet at least twice a year I think that the Council
27 really wanted to drive home the importance of the RAC
28 meetings. I think we did talk about the general annual
29 cycle.

30
31 So at a March meeting is usually when
32 we would approve the Annual Report and then the fall
33 meeting is when we would usually take action on
34 proposals. So it seemed like there was a reason --
35 like I assume there's always going to be proposals,
36 fish or wildlife proposals, and we're always going to
37 have an Annual Report. So it seemed like there would
38 always be a need to meet.

39
40 I have a sense that maybe part of this
41 is also related to the change in administration. So it
42 was really just to signal this is really important that
43 these RACs continue to meet. It wasn't asking for more
44 meetings. It was just asking for the number of
45 meetings that we have now.

46
47 Hearing the ISC recommendation, I do
48 understand that sometimes when you're trying to ensure
49 that you have two meetings, so it feels like you're
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1 trying to ensure that you have more, you're actually
2 putting limits on because you're being very specific.
3 When you're specific in this kind of a situation, it
4 does limit discretion.

5

6 So I do understand that point, but it
7 certainly doesn't change what our RAC was trying to
8 convey, was the importance of having these two meetings
9 in order to do the work that we need to do and have
10 continuity. I think if we did end up having one
11 meeting a year, there would be a real break in
12 continuity that would affect our ability to be
13 effective.

14

15 With a youth seat I think it just came
16 down to our Council felt like it was important to
17 provide an opportunity for younger people -- and we did
18 have at least one of our RAC members said when he first
19 got appointed he would have qualified for the youth
20 leader seat. I think he was maybe 23 at the time.

21

22 And so I think everyone looked around
23 the table at each other and it really did carry weight
24 that if you're 18 you can apply for a full seat. So
25 having the young leader seat didn't seem like it was
26 offering as much extra opportunity as if you had the
27 ability for younger people to participate.

28

29 We did talk a lot about the fact that
30 if you're under 18, you're a minor. There's challenges
31 and restrictions that come with that, so I can't
32 disagree with what the ISC said. There are challenges.
33 However, I think involving youth at a younger age is
34 helpful.

35

36 I think if you can get them pulled in
37 when they're in high school, especially if they have
38 strong subsistence backgrounds, there's a greater
39 chance that they're going to participate as an adult or
40 participate more as an adult or once they're exposed to
41 the system and they see how it works and that you can
42 make a difference -- you might not get what you're
43 asking for, but you actually can make a difference just
44 by showing up. And that learning that and seeing that
45 at a younger age was going to be more impactful than
46 waiting until somebody is 18. However, we definitely
47 acknowledge the challenges with having minors involved
48 in the process.

49

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1 That's it. Thanks.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Ms.
4 Skinner. Frank.

5

6 MR. WOODS: Listening to all the
7 information, I guess I'm going to make a motion to
8 adopt the Charter with no change, understanding that
9 both meeting times and any differences were fully
10 vetted and that we have information that would -- it
11 will vote itself. Make a motion to adopt the Charter
12 with no change, Mr. Chair.

13

14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion has been
15 made by a Board member.

16

17 MR. BROWER: Second.

18

19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion has been
20 made and a second. Further discussion.

21

22 MS. DOEHL: I'm sorry. I may not have
23 heard right. Is this a motion to adopt the Charter or
24 a motion to make a recommendation because I understood
25 that what was before was to make a recommendation to
26 the Secretary on whether to adopt the change proposed
27 by the Council?

28

29 MR. WOODS: We adopt our Charter with
30 no change in the beginning.....

31

32 REPORTER: Please use your mic.

33

34 MR. WOODS: Oh. For information I
35 gather is that we're adopting our old Charter with --
36 we had proposed changes. Age I understand would
37 include youth and then we also want to clarify that we
38 have a meeting and then reporting meeting and that
39 makes sense. If we're adopting a Charter with no
40 change, it's the year to do it, right? And then we can
41 always adjust or make amendments later. So I'm a
42 little bit confused. Not that I'm confused about what
43 I want to do.

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I got what you
46 want to do.

47

48 MR. WOODS: Yeah. Yep, yep. And I
49 want to streamline the process and that would keep it

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0132

1 that simple. So, yeah.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I think what
4 they're trying to get to is that we're not adopting it,
5 we're adopting the recommendation. So I think for the
6 record of clarification we're looking at this and we're
7 adopting ISC.....

8

9 MS. DOEHL: Amend to adopt.

10

11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Recommending to
12 adopt?

13

14 MS. WESSELS: I believe that the motion
15 really in this situation that the Board is deciding in
16 this concrete situation. Are you going to forward this
17 change request to the Secretaries or not? So if you're
18 not forwarding this request, you're not forwarding. If
19 you're forwarding, you're forwarding. So the motion
20 really should be I motion to.....

21

22 MS. DOEHL: Take no action.

23

24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Here's what I'm
25 going to do. Can I request the maker of the motion to
26 withdraw his motion so that we can clarify on the
27 record that we're not accepting -- we're accepting the
28 recommendation to not accept the RAC recommendations so
29 that we can clarify for the record that we're going to
30 move forward with our original charters and no changes
31 so that we can reflect that on the record, please.

32

33 Frank, could you retract your motion,
34 please.

35

36 MS. WESSELS: With the agreement or the
37 second?

38

39 MR. WOODS: For the record I withdraw
40 my motion.

41

42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Concurrence
43 from the second?

44

45 MR. BROWER: Concurring with the
46 second. So you're withdrawing the whole motion.

47

48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So we could do
49 it right on the record. Thank you.

50

0133

1 MR. BROWER: Mr. Chair, just a
2 question.

3
4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, go ahead,
5 Charlie.

6
7 MR. BROWER: You're withdrawing it, so
8 you're -- there's no motion, but the recommendation is
9 to act.....

10
11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So now that --
12 you concur with the withdrawal?

13
14 MR. BROWER: Yeah.

15
16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: He concurs. So
17 now the floor is open for a motion so that we can move
18 on the ISC recommendation to make no change. To not
19 forward Charter changes.

20
21 MR. BROWER: I so move.

22
23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Charlie so
24 changes that we accept ISC recommendation to make no
25 change. Can I get a second?

26
27 MR. BROWER: Second, Mr. Chair.

28
29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
30 Charlie and Frank. Now that we have a motion made and
31 seconded and clarified that we're here now accepting
32 ISC recommendation to make no change to the Charter.
33 We appreciate the work of the RAC, but at this time
34 we're recommending to move forward with the Charters
35 with no changes that the RAC is recommending. That's
36 where we're at on the record. So that's the
37 clarification. Any further discussion or discussion by
38 the Board here?

39
40 (No comments)

41
42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay.
43 Appreciate it. Okay, Dave.

44
45 MR. ALBERG: Not a discussion topic,
46 just a comment. I will say that in the -- and this is
47 Dave Alberg with NPS. In the three years I've sat on
48 the sidelines I've always been very impressed with the
49 involvement of youth at every meeting I've attended in
50

0134

1 one capacity or another. So regardless of this
2 recommendation, however the vote goes, I think that the
3 work of the FSB and the team to make sure that youth
4 are involved continues and has been exemplary to date.

5

6 MR. BROWER: Mr. Chair.

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, go ahead,
9 Charlie.

10

11 MR. BROWER: Also in the future when
12 the time comes around there will be some better
13 justification for the recommendation to change the
14 Charter with -- I mean looking at their recommendations
15 for their intent, I just couldn't understand why ISC
16 didn't approve a motion like that. It's going to come
17 around again, right?

18

19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: This is just
20 part of our process we've got to do when we get the
21 suggested changes from our RACs going through the
22 Charter process and then moving it forward. Again,
23 yes, we will have more opportunities in two years to
24 revisit this again. So it's an ongoing process.

25

26 Any further -- and I do have food for
27 thought about that in reaching out to some of our youth
28 counterparts that are part of the university. You've
29 seen a whole line of them here and some south. I'll
30 probably be calling Heather myself to say, hey, can you
31 connect these groups. Maybe it's part of their college
32 course to do it.

33

34 When they call you every other week to
35 sit in and do interviews and be a part of their team,
36 then that's the kind of recommendations you can make to
37 these young and impressionable people that move
38 mountains with the technology while we sit here in this
39 annotated system. We're 84 BIA, so I'm sorry, but this
40 is how our offices operate in the villages too.

41

42 It's not a pick on you. It's an
43 acknowledgment of the tough systems that we have to
44 work through, you know, and trying to grind out change
45 in our bureaucracies. It's a tough job, you know, and
46 I take my hat off to my constituents about the tough
47 job they have and especially in this transition time.
48 You know, it's hard to sit here and do this job and
49 then feel like you don't even know if you're going to

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0135

1 be here.

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MR. BROWER: I call the question.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We have one more comment over here by Greg.

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Thank you.

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MR. RISDAHL: Mr. Chair, Greg Risdahl with the Forest Service. I also wanted to say the same basic thing. We appreciate the fact that Kodiak Aleutians RAC really does take this to the next level. Bring the next generation of young people learning and participating in Alaska subsistence to learn about our culture and traditions so we don't lose it. So thank you very much.

27

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MS. BOARIO: Just one final comment on the youth component, Fish and Wildlife Service. It seems like if -- I guess the next time these are coming before us is two years. That's ample time to maybe look at other models where there are youth involved in Federal programs and systems and find a way forward. Maybe it's not 14. Maybe it's 16.

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I don't know, but I feel like there's got to be a solution to this especially since they're non-voting, non-traveling positions and figuring out a way with parental, you know, guardian consent or participations there's got to be a model out there that exists that we can figure this out. I just don't want to lose sight of it that we might continue to figure this out.

44

45

46

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All in favor say aye.

47

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IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposed same

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1 sign.

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(No opposing votes)

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries
6 unanimous. Thank you. With that I think we'll recess
7 for the day. Oh, wait. One more point of information.

8

9

MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For
10 the record this is Robbin LaVine, Subsistence Policy
11 Coordinator. I just want to remind everyone who was
12 listening online that while we recess our public
13 meeting we will be reconvening at 1:30 tomorrow. The
14 public portion of our meeting. And we will have a time
15 certain to take up Wildlife Proposal 24-01 and then we
16 will complete the remainder of our agenda.

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22

For all of our Board members and
leadership staff that will be in attendance we are
having an Executive Session here. Not in this room,
but just down the hall tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m.

23

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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(Off record)

(PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)

0137

1 C E R T I F I C A T E

2

3 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)

4) ss.

5 STATE OF ALASKA)

6

7 I, Salena A. Hile, Notary Public in and for the
8 state of Alaska and reporter of Computer Matrix Court
9 Reporters, LLC, do hereby certify:

10

11 THAT the foregoing, contain a full, true and
12 correct Transcript of the FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD
13 MEETING, WORK SESSION taken electronically by our firm
14 on the 23rd day of July 2025;

15

16 THAT the transcript is a true and correct
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21 THAT I am not an employee, attorney, or party
22 interested in any way in this action.

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25 August 2025.

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29

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31 Salena A. Hile
32 Notary Public, State of Alaska
33 My Commission Expires: 09/16/26

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