KODIA/ALEUTIANS SUSBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME II

COLD BAY COMMUNITY CENTER
Cold Bay, Alaska
September 18, 2025

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:
Rebecca Skinner, Chair
Jeff Wasley
Patrick Holmes
Coral Chernoff
Daniel Smith
Natasha Hayden
Brett Richardson

Regional Council Coordinator, Leigh Honig

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Cold Bay, Alaska – 9/18/2025)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. We're gonna [sic] go ahead and get started. Good on audio. All right. This is Rebecca Skinner. We're back for the second day of the KARAC meeting here in Cold Bay. Let's go ahead and start with a roll call just to make sure on the record, we know who is who's present in the meeting. And then I have a few other comments before we jump in. Leigh.

MS. HONIG: All right. Good morning. Leigh Honig, for the record. I'll start off with Jeff Wasley.

MR. WASLEY: Jeff Wasley, here.

MS. HONIG: Pat Holmes.

MR. HOLMES: Here.

MS. HONIG: Sam Rohrer, were you able to call in?

MS: HONIG: Coral Chernoff.

MS. CHERNOFF: Here.

MS. HONIG: Rebecca Skinner.

MS. SKINNER: Here.

MS. HONIG: Daniel Smith.

MR. SMITH: Here.

MS. HONIG: Natasha Hayden.

MS. HAYDEN: Here.

MS. HONIG: And Brent Richardson.

MR. RICHARDSON: Here.

MS. HONIG: We have seven out of nine seated. We have a quorum.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great, thank you. So, just for order. Order of the day, here. I'll start with public and tribal comments on non-agenda items. In general, today we're going to go until we're done. So, if we finish everything, we'll end at five. But, if we need to go later, since we're not trying to catch flights today, we'll stay here until we're done. I do plan to do lunch again from around 12 to noon, if we have a good -- when we have a good breaking point. We are going to start with proposal WP26-33. This is when we tabled yesterday. I think we'll probably get through the proposals this morning, if we don't and we have to start prioritizing or potentially reordering agenda items, my plan is that, either after lunch or at the end of the proposals, I'm going to move up Jackie Keating from Fish and Game to make sure we get her report. I want to make sure to have our annual report items discussion and then the program review discussion. So, I'm prioritizing those. And once we get through those to fall back into the agenda as written. So, then after that, we would be on the future meeting dates, followed by the FRMP proposal review, and then reports after that. But yeah. So, because the RAC is here until tomorrow. We can go as late as we want tonight. Okay, so, we will go ahead and start with WP26-33. We did not have a motion on the floor for this one so, I'll look for a motion to approve the proposal. Go ahead, Coral.

MS. CHERNOFF: Thank you, Madam Chair. Move to adopt wildlife proposal WP26-33. Requesting up to 4 brown bear permits by federal registration, issued by the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge Manager.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Is there a second?

MR. RICHARDSON: Second.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great, thank you. Is there discussion or justification or questions to the maker of the motion. Go ahead, Brett.

MR. RICHARDSON: Brett Richardson. Just a comment. I would support the proposal as stands. Not sure if it needs to be amended to have either registration or draw put in but I support registration, as that would be kind of in line with other areas on the island, I think. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: And then just for clarity, I see Kendra at the table, if it is not specified. So, if we don't say anything about the methodology, draw versus registration, the default is it will be registration. Is that correct?

MS. HOLMAN: Madam Chair, this is Kendra Holman. Yes, as it is written right now, it is -- would be a your registration.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, thank you. Further comments, questions, discussion? Daniel.

MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair. This is Daniel Smith. I would be in support of the proposal as written. Using a registration permit of up to four permits. Personally, I don't think the demand would be that high, you know, compared to state hunts -- registration hunts and I think this would be a pretty solid starting point, just to see how many harvesters apply for this hunt. And then it could be amended as needed, you know, in future proposal cycles.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Further comment or discussion. Coral, I'm going to take Jeff first because he hasn't spoken yet. Go ahead, Jeff.

MR. WASLEY: Jeff Wasley. I agree with what Daniel said. I think this is a great starting point and it could be tweaked down the road if need be. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Coral.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yes, this is Coral. I'm in support of this and we had discussion about making it a draw or a registration permit. I am always in favor of making things uncomplicated and easy. And I think by having it be the same system that it is in all the villages, I think that makes sense for all the users. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, do you have your hand up?

MR. HOLMES: Yeah. Yes, ma'am. I have to agree with everybody. It's unfortunate that this wasn't explored earlier. And I have to commend Coral for raising the question. And I think it's most appropriate for Road System folks to have a registration access for

subsistence bears, as in the villages. So, thanks a lot Coral, bye.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Further comments or discussion.

MS. HAYDEN: Madam Chair, this is Natasha.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Go ahead, Natasha.

MS. HAYDEN: So, Natasha Hayden, for the record. I'm also supportive of this proposal so, I just wanted to put that out there on the record and yeah, agree with everybody else's comments. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. All right, I'll go ahead and make my comments for the record. I'll also reference back to the comments I made on the C&T determination. That was kind of the companion proposal to this proposal. I think that I am in support of this. I think it brings Kodiak in line with the other -- the villages that are on Kodiak Island and recognizes the historical and long-standing use of subsistence use of bears by people who live in what is now the Kodiak Road System. I think that the registration hunt approach is -- it is fine. I think draw would have been fine as well. I think they both have pros and cons. But, since the villages currently operate on a registration system, I support that implementing this in Kodiak that we follow the same kind of a model. Referencing the analysis, I don't perceive any conservation concerns. We're talking at most about adding 4 additional bears harvested per year. My assumption, looking at the other harvest levels for the villages, is that it probably won't even reach 4 bears. But the analysis is clear that even with the 4 bear or four permit level that there's no conservation concern. And those are my comments. Are we ready to vote? Okay. Since I -- what I heard was everyone's in support of this, I will ask if there's any objection to this proposal.

(No response)

Okay. Seeing and hearing none, noting this proposal passes unanimously. Okay. Yesterday, we already did, WP26-34. So, the next item on our agenda is WP26-35, Unit 9D caribou, modify fall season dates. And Kendra is at the table.

MS. HOLMAN: Good morning, Madam Chair, members of the Council. Kendra Holman for the record, wildlife biologist with OSM. So, this morning we're going to start with WP26-35. So, this is the summary of the analysis for that starting on page 93 of your meeting books. This was submitted by the Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council in requesting to extend the fall season for caribou in Unit 9D, to October 21. This proposal requests the Federal Subsistence Board lengthen the caribou season for federally qualified subsistence users in Unit 9D. This hunt is for the Southern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd. The Alaska Board of Game extended the state caribou season in October 9th -- in unit 9D to October 21st via the adoption of proposal seven at their January 2020 meeting, effective for the -- starting July 1st of 2025. This proposed change would maintain alignments between state and federal seasons. Since the 1980s, regulations have fluctuated as the herd has grown and reduced in population. In 2018, the Board delegated authority to Izembek National Wildlife Refuge Manager as the in-season manager to set quotas, harvest limits, sex restrictions and any needed closures on federal public lands in Unit 9D. In January, the State Board of Game, as you heard earlier, extended their season in Unit 9D for residents and non-residents. The herd has fluctuated from a high of more than 10,000 to a low of 500 caribou. Currently management objectives for the population are 1500 to 4000. From 1996 to 2002, the population grew to about 4100 caribou and then declined to approximately 770 by 2006. Since 2006, the post calving counts have steadily increased to a minimum count of 3,408 caribou in July of 2024. Your minimum counts can be found on the table 1, which is on page 100 of your meeting book. This minimum count gave a population estimate of 3800 to 4000. Under normal circumstances the caribou population -- in a caribou population, approximately 25 calves per 100 cows are necessary to offset adult mortality. Ratios for the SAP have averaged 31 calves per 100 cows since 2011. Since 2011 also bull cow ratios have averaged 46 per 100, which is above the management objective of 35 per 100 recommended for this herd in the operational plan. This herd has a history of precipitously declining after reaching the upper limits of this population objective. The herd annual harvest reached its peak in the 1980s. From 2013 to 2024, reported harvest averaged 40 caribou. Harvest information can be found in table 2, on page 103 of your meeting books. Since 2018, a majority of the harvest taken by residents in unit 9D are from Cold Bay and King Cove. Non-residents harvest has surpassed

resident harvest, accounting for 88% of the total reported harvest in 2023. No harvest occurred under federal permit under the federal regulations since 2005. This herd would need a harvest of approximately 300 caribou to maintain the upper end of the population objective. In 2023, there were only 80 bulls taken, harvested. In regulatory year 24-25, there were 75 bulls and 3 females. An alternative considered was to eliminate the federal permit requirement. The state caribou hunt in unit 9D requires -- only requires a harvest ticket. The federal permit was implemented when the hunt was just reopening after a population decline. However, very little harvest occurs under the federal permit, which may not be necessary -- which may now be an unnecessary administrative burden for both federally qualified users and federal managers. However, the federal permit provides the in-season manager the flexibility to announce federal seasons and specific harvest limits, which may be needed in the future. This would provide additional opportunity to federally qualified subsistence users -- this proposal would provide additional opportunity for federally qualified subsistence users hunting under federal regulations. However, all users already able to hunt in Unit 9D under state regulations until October 21st. Adopting this proposal would also decrease regulatory complexity and confusion by maintaining alignment between both state and federal regulations. There are no conservation concerns for the herd at the time. Rather, additional harvest is recommended to prevent a population crash. OSM's preliminary conclusion is to support this proposal. Thank you, Madam Chair, members of the Council. I'd be happy to address any questions.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Kendra. Are there any clarifying questions from Council members?

(No response)

Okay. Seeing and hearing none. We'll go on to the second step, which is report on Board consultation with tribes and ANCSA Corporations.

MS. HONIG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Leigh Honig, for the record. There was one comment that was received from the Director of the Aleutian Islands Association. She echoed support for WP26-35, which was submitted by the BBRAC and requested that any feedback on impacts this may have on folks in the area be shared with the Kodiak Aleutians Council. And OSM provided

information that it was a mistake that this was submitted on behalf of the Bristol Bay Council and that Kodiak Aleutians would be bringing this up at their meeting. That's the end of the consultation comment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thanks. Moving on to the next step. Agency comments. This includes Fish and Game, federal agencies and tribal entities. Are there any comments from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game?

MR. POETTER: Yeah. Good morning, Madam Chair. Aaron Poetter with Alaska Department of Fish and Game. As these -- as this proposal would seek to align federal regs with state regs, we don't have any conservation concerns. So, neutral to -- supportive of that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank you. Are there any comments from federal agencies?

(No response)

Okay. Seeing and hearing none. Are there any comments from tribal entities, including native, tribal, village and other?

(No response)

Okay. Seeing and hearing none. We'll move on to the next step, which is advisory group comments. This includes other Regional Councils, Fish and Game Advisory Committees and Subsistence Resource Commissions. Are there any comments from advisory groups?

MS. HOLMAN: Madam Chair, this is Kendra Holman. So, you are the first Regional Advisory Council to hear this proposal and we've not received any written comments from anyone else, any other groups.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, thank you. Next up, summary of written public comments.

MS. HOLMAN: Madam Chair, Kendra again, there were no written public comments received on this proposal.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Next up is public testimony. Is there anyone in the audience here

in the room or online, that wishes to give public testimony on this proposal?

(No response)

Okay. Seeing and hearing none. We are up to the Regional Council recommendation. And here I'd be looking for a motion to support the proposal, and we can vote that up or down. Does anyone wish to make a motion? Brett, go ahead.

MR. RICHARDSON: I move to support this proposal.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Is there a second?

MR. SMITH: Second.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, so, there's a motion and a second to support proposal WP26-35, Unit 9D caribou, modifying the fall season dates. Is there discussion or, Brett, would you like to speak more to your motion?

MR. RICHARDSON: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair, the.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair

MR. RICHARDSON: .....I would support this basically to increase opportunity for qualified users to have extended time to harvest as well as, you know, hopefully avoiding a crash in the stock. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Pat, were you trying to make a comment?

MR. HOLMES: Yes, ma'am. I think this is a good thing. Our -- members of our community out on the Alaska Peninsula, it's particularly important to them, folks that work seasonally at Port Moller. Folks from Nelson Lagoon. And I've known even some Kodiak folks that spend most of their season up in Bristol Bay in the past, stopping on their way home to hunt there. So, I think it's a really important opportunity to expand on. And I'll heartily support the motion to adopt. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Pat. Further comment or discussion. Coral, go ahead.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, I would just like to say I do support this. And in particular I want to speak to, not supporting to align with what Alaska Department of Fish and Game is doing because I'm always -- I think there are two separate things. You know, one is a season that provides food for people and the other includes commercial entities that hunt for sport. So, I guess I'm in support, you know, if we're going to increase and there are animals available, increasing the time that people can have an opportunity to gather their food is always a good thing because time is always an issue when you're living out in the wild. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Is there a further comment or discussion? Daniel, go ahead.

MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair. This is Daniel Smith. I would be in support of this proposal as well. Especially since the population objective, additional harvest appears to be warranted. And looking at just the history of this population with the fluctuations, allowing more subsistence opportunity for federally qualified users to harvest these caribou. I think is a great opportunity.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Further comment or discussion? Go ahead, Jeff.

MR. WASLEY: Jeff Wasley, here. I'm in support of this. On with what Daniel said. I would hope that the state would have more harvest as well, as with subsistence, because it doesn't look like there's much subsistence harvest due to the difficult access to this herd. But, preventing them from crashing, I think, is in everyone's interest, as these are animals on, you know, public land. And I think everyone should have access to this resource. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. I'll make my comments. I do plan to support this proposal. It sounds like additional harvest opportunity would be beneficial to the herd. And I think expanding the season dates for subsistence -- the federal subsistence hunt does recognize a subsistence priority. And given that, I think we are ready to vote, it sounded like everyone was in support of it. So, we'll try, is there any

objection to this proposal, to proposal WP26-35.

(No response)

Okay. Seeing and hearing none. Proposal WP26-35, passes unanimously. Okay. The next section of proposals are crossover proposals. Generally, these are proposals that -- for activity that occurs outside of the KARAC region. But residents in our region do have a C&T in these areas and that's why they're there on the agenda. So, we'll go ahead to the next proposal, which is, WP26-15, Unit 6 deer, close Hawkins and Hinchinbrook Islands to non-federally qualified users. And Jason Roberts is at the table.

DR. ROBERTS: Yes, good morning, Madam Chair, members of the Council. I'm Jason Roberts, Anthropologist with OSM. So, this is a crossover proposal coming before you because there has been no specific customary and traditional use determination made for deer in Unit 6. So, all rural residents have customary and traditional use for deer in this area in this circumstance. Wildlife proposal WP26-15 was submitted by the Native Village of Eyak and request that federal public lands on Hawkins and Hinchinbrook Islands in Unit 6D be closed to deer hunting by non-federally qualified users. The Native Village -- this proposal analysis begins on page 113 of your meeting book. The Native Village of Eyak states that increased harvest pressure on deer in eastern Prince William Sound by non-federally qualified users, and declining deer density on Hawkins and Hinchinbrook Islands have resulted in federally qualified users being unable to meet their subsistence needs. This competition issue has occurred for many seasons but an additional conservation concern arising during the 2024-25 hunting season, prompted this proposal. So, Sitka blacktail deer were introduced to Unit 6 between 1916 and 1923. Following their introduction, deer became an important subsistence species in the area. And the state population management objective for Unit 6 is 24,000 to 28,000 deer. As there are no estimates of deer abundance in the unit, the deer pellet survey is used as an index of the deer population. Deer experience more extreme population fluctuations in this area than in their native range and during severe winters, snow concentrates dear on the beaches where they can experience high harvest rates. The winter of 2024 and 25 was warm and mild. However, snowy winters in the previous five years correlate with modest declines in the deer pellet index taken in these areas.

In 2025, only Hawkins, Hinchinbrook and the north end of Montague were surveyed. The island wide density estimate for Hawkins Island was estimated to be low and the island wide estimate for Hinchinbrook Island was found to be moderate. Three of the four survey zones showed decreases in deer pellet indices from 2024. Hawkins and Hinchinbrook Island are located near Cordova, in the traditional territory of the Eyak, adjacent to the Chugach Alutiiq of the Prince William Sound. During the most recent subsistence survey of Cordova in 2014, dear were the second most used large land mammal after moose, making up about 7% of Cordova total estimated wild food harvest. The community harvested about 8 pounds of deer per person on average and households noted that they searched for deer on Hinchinbrook and Hawkins Island -- islands. Residents of Prince William Sound more widely have reported that when faced with increased competition for deer, they have had to either increase their hunting effort to compensate or have opted out of hunting to avoid competition.

Within Unit 6D most deer are harvested off the major islands of Hawkins, Hinchinbrook, and Montague which support the most extensive winter habitat. From 2015 to 2024, reported deer harvest on these islands ranged from 267 to 807 a year. Most deer harvest on those two islands is by federally qualified users. Between 2015 and 2024, about 73% of all deer harvested on the two islands were taken by federally qualified users and 70% of all deer were harvested by residents of Cordova specifically. So, the OSM preliminary conclusion is to oppose this proposal because it does not appear there's a significant conservation concern or substantial threat to the continuation of subsistence uses of deer in the area. The pellet count index does indicate that the population of deer on these islands is low to moderate. However, the deer population in Prince William Sound is prone to short term fluctuations in response to winter conditions and is expected to rebound after the most recent mild winter. Relatively few deer are harvested on these islands by non-federally qualified users and the percentage of deer harvested by non-federally qualified users has been trending downward over the last decade. Harvest data also suggests that federally qualified users are generally successful on Hawkins and Hinchinbrook. And so, OSM believes that closing the land to non-federally qualified users would not be expected

to substantially improve federally qualified users harvest opportunity but would be an unnecessary restriction on non-federally qualified users.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Are there any clarifying questions from Council members?

MS. HAYDEN: Madam Chair, this [sic] Natasha.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, we'll take Natasha and then go down to Jeff. Go ahead, Natasha.

MS. HAYDEN: Thank you. Thanks, Dr. Roberts. The -- I had a question about the downward trend over the last ten years. In the analysis on page 122, it's got the chart showing the trend and it looks or sorry, yeah, so figure #3 has got the use of. Non-rural Alaskans going up between '23 and '24. And if you were to draw a straight line between 2015 and 2024 that looks pretty flat. Is that the data that you're referring to when you're saying that it's gone down over the last ten years? Hello?

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Sorry.

DR. ROBERTS: Sorry, through the Chair. I'm trying to wrap my head around which figure you're looking at. I'm -- I apologize this -- so, this proposal analysis was written not by me.

MS. HAYDEN: Okay.

DR. ROBERTS: So, yeah, there are some things that I'm not super familiar with myself on this one. Yeah. So, figure 4, it looks like that's just total all. Let's see.

MS. HAYDEN: Oh, sorry. Figure 4, yeah, I was.....

DR. ROBERTS: Yeah, figure four. Other rule users. Yeah, there is a little, let's see, increase between 2023 and 2024. But I think on average from 2015 what they're saying is it's exhibiting a somewhat downward trend from 2015 to 2024.

MS. HAYDEN: Okay. And it's hard to see what that number was in 2015. So, I mean, that's -- it's pretty minimal. If it is indeed lower in 2024 than 20 -

- 2015. Is that -- am I looking that correctly?

(Simultaneous speech)

DR. ROBERTS: Yeah, I think it's just if you were to do an average of all the points on that line. And then compare 2015 to the average -- the point they're trying to make is that it's gone down a bit during that time.

MS. HAYDEN: Okay. Thank you.

DR. ROBERTS: Yep.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, Jeff.

MR. WASLEY: Jeff Wellesley here. So, the non-rural Alaskans that basically be like, Anchorage? Okay. And on the last point, the trend to me looks like a slight decline for other Alaskans. And generally, the Cordova has been a steady increase. Yes, one -- the last year had a little bump in the other directions, but -- so, like people from Valdez is where are they in this? Are they other, other rural users?

DR. ROBERTS: I believe Valdez is a non-rural. Correct me if I'm wrong.

MR. WASLEY: Oh, thank you.

DR. ROBERTS: Give me one second to make sure that's correct. Yeah. Valdez is non-rural. Yeah, yeah.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Go ahead, Brett.

MR. RICHARDSON: Brett Richardson. I have a question. Maybe you said it and I'm sorry I missed it. The state management objectives for deer -- objectives include a population of 24,000 to 28,000. Now, what is -- do we have an idea of what the actual population is rather than just an objective?

DR. ROBERTS: So, that's a complicated question. I believe they use the deer pellet indices as an index. But the actual numbers I don't think so.

MR. RICHARDSON: Follow up. So, if the pellets look good, we feel we're at objective.

DR. ROBERTS: That would be a question that I don't know that I want to answer for the state of Alaska.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Go ahead, Daniel.

MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair. This is Daniel Smith. I just had a clarifying question regarding proposed regulation. So, on page 113, comparing to 115, August 1st through January 31st, is that the hunting season? And then it doesn't specifically address August 1st through January or August 1st through January 31st on page 113.

(Pause)

DR. ROBERTS: Yeah. Through the Chair. Yeah. Are you talking about the -- in the executive summary, on 113? Yes. Okay. Yeah, that's a little confusing. I would refer to the regulations that are shown on 115. So, those are the current federal regulations and the proposed federal regulations, and those are accurate. Yeah, I think that's a mistake in 113. So, yeah. Yeah, the season runs from August 1st to January 31st.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, go ahead.

MR. HOLMES: Yes. Excuse me, Madam Chair. Little allergies this morning. I would think that we probably -- from our Council meetings on things that are happening in other regions, we've generally abstained. Myself, I think we should not even.....

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat right now, Pat, I'm sorry, Pat, right now, we're just on clarifying questions. So, if you have questions on the analysis, we're not at Board discussion yet.

MR. HOLMES: Okey doke [sic]. I guess my question is, IS it apparent that most of the harvest comes from folks that live in the eastern portion of Prince William Sound? Is that correct?

DR. ROBERTS: Through the Chair, yeah, about 70% of the average harvest is coming out of Cordova.

MR. HOLMES: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Are there any further clarifying questions before we move on to report on Board consultation?

(No response)

Okay. Let's move on to the next step, report on Board consultation from tribes and ANCSA corporations.

MS. HONIG: Madam Chair, Leigh Honig for the record, there were no comments received on this one.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Next up, agency comments. This includes Fish and Game, federal agencies and tribal entities. Are there any comments from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game?

MR. POETTER: Yeah. Madam Chair, Aaron Poetter, for the record. We're in the process of drafting comments for this proposal, so we don't have a position that we're ready to provide. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Are there any comments from federal agencies?

(No response)

Okay. Seeing and hearing none. Are there any comments from tribal entities, including native, tribal, village or other?

(No response)

Okay. Seeing and hearing none. Moving on to the next step. Advisory Group comments. This includes other Regional Councils, Fish and Game Advisory Committees, and Subsistence Resource Commissions. Are there any comments from advisory groups?

(No response)

Okay. Seeing and hearing none. Next step, summary of written public comments.

DR. ROBERTS: Through the Chair, there were no written public comments submitted on this proposal.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, next up is public testimony. Is there any public in the room or online who wishes to give public testimony on this proposal?

(No response)

Okay. We are up to Regional Council recommendations, so I'd be looking for a motion from the Council. You can move to support or since this is for activity not occurring in our region, you could also move to take no action and defer to the home region. So, is there any Council action on WP26-15?

MR. HOLMES: Move to take no action.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Pat. Is there a second?

MS. CHERNOFF: Second.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Pat, would you like to speak to your motion?

MR. HOLMES: Yes, ma'am. You know, through the 25 years or so I've been on the Council, we have usually not commented on other regions unless it was something that overlapped with us. The decline on the harvest is about 10%, and the change for other users is about 10%. I think this would be equivalent to folks up in Cordova, Valdez, taking -- making a recommendation on how we would change our harvest on Raspberry Island. And so, it's nitpicking against what we really -- it really doesn't matter to us because we don't have folks up there and I think we should just let it go and see what the folks up there want to do. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Carol. Go ahead.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, I guess I'm sitting right now at this point, that I would not be in favor of taking no action, just because I think these are federal public lands and I just don't feel that according to the data, it would be necessary to shut down lands to non-federally qualified users. And I guess, like, I think the data doesn't show us that that's necessary.

And I feel like federal public lands -- we need to allow people to access federally public lands -- federal public lands. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Further comments or discussion. Go ahead, Jeff.

MR. WASLEY: Jeff Wasley here. I strongly oppose this thing. But as Pat said, it's not really, I think, in our purview out here. And like his point of them, like, why would we want them weighing in on something local for us? But, overall, if the data doesn't show the need for it, I can't see like, why people in especially in like, Valdez, why they couldn't go down there and hunt deer on public land for a resource that, you know, is not really hurting at the time. And I'm sure they have a traditional use of it too. And I would say the same for folks from Anchorage and Whittier, Girdwood, etc. I'm sure plenty of people go out on Prince William Sound to get their resources. So, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, further comments or discussion.

MS. HAYDEN: Madam Chair, this Natasha

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Go ahead, Natasha.

MS. HAYDEN: So, for the record, Natasha Hayden. I think my comments are going to -- well, my comment, I have a different perspective of this. I see that this proposal was submitted by the Native Village of Eyak and their people have inhabited Prince William Sound for thousands of years. And I think that in recognition of the indigenous knowledge and traditional knowledge that their people hold, that I would not support this proposal. And I also don't see it the same as that if somebody from a different region were to be trying to impose their perspective or their desires onto our region, I think that it is -- the way that I see it is, is that this was submitted by the indigenous people of that region for very good reasons. And that there's -- my experience as a tribal Council person, is that our tribes are swimming upstream in Alaska and that they have been working to pull all of the levers available to them to try to make sure that their people are able to get their needs met and that this is one of them. And I should ask this question earlier but I think that only about 50% of the land on those islands is federal land. So, I'm assuming that the rest of the land on those

islands is probably state-owned land which would then -- so, it wouldn't be limiting access to the entire populations. And so, those are my comments. I'm not supportive of this proposal but maybe it would be good to get some clarifying -- clarification on how much of those -- the landmass is actually included in federal lands.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thank you, Natasha. So, just a reminder that the motion on the floor is to take no action. So, if Council members could focus their comments on the motion on the floor, if we or when we vote on the motion, if the motion fails. Somebody can make a different motion and then we will focus on that. I see Jason back at the table. Did you have something you want to share?

DR. ROBERTS: I was just going to answer Natasha's question.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Go ahead.

DR. ROBERTS: Through the Chair, Jason Roberts. So, if you look on page 115 under the heading Extent of Federal Public Lands, it shows that Unit 6D is about 75% federal public lands. And then Hawkins and Hinchinbrook Islands, which are what we're focused on in this proposal. That's about 93% federal public lands almost entirely managed by the U.S. Forest Service.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great, thank you. Coral, go ahead.

MS. CHERNOFF: And I forgot to add that I feel like since the current state regulations is non-resident hunters can get up to four deer, which seems like a lot. That is another avenue that they could go down too, if they feel like they're not getting enough deer in their area. And I feel like that avenue is there for them to approach rather than cutting off non-federal users.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. I'll go ahead and make my comments. I do intend to support the motion, to take no action and defer to the home region. To my knowledge, I don't know of any people from the KARAC region that go up and hunt in unit -- for Unit 6D deer. I do think it was appropriate to include this crossover proposal on our agenda, because people that live in our region can go there to hunt. I'm just not aware of any

people that do go there to hunt. So, I'm comfortable deferring to the home region to whatever decision the home region makes. So, I do plan to support the motion on the floor, which is to take no action and defer to the -- well, Pat didn't say defer to the home region, but in essence, that's what taking no action is going to do. Is there a further comments or discussion before we vote?

(No response)

Okay. Let's go ahead and do a roll call on this one. And I'm sorry. Again, the motion is to take no action on proposal WP26-15.

MS. HONIG: Leigh Honig, for the record, I will start off with Jeff Wasley. How do you vote?

MR. WASLEY: Yes.

MS. HONIG: Pat Holmes.

MR. HOLMES: Yes, to defer.

MS. HONIG: Coral Chernoff.

MS. CHERNOFF: No.

MS. HONIG: Rebecca Skinner.

MS. SKINNER: Yes.

MS. HONIG: Daniel Smith.

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MS. HONIG: Natasha Hayden.

MS. HAYDEN: No.

MS. HONIG: Brett Richardson.

MR. RICHARDSON: Yes.

MS. HONIG: Madam. Chair, the vote passes with 5 yays to 2 nays

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thank you. Moving on to the next item, WP26-16, Unit 6 beaver. Increase possession limit and extend hunting season. And

we have Kendra Holman at the table.

MS. HOLMAN: Good morning, Madam Chair, members of the Council. Kendra Holman, for the record. So, this will be a summary of wildlife proposal WP 26-16, regarding Beaver and Unit 6. This proposal was submitted by the Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, requesting to change the two federal beaver hunting regulations in Unit 6. First, to increase the possession limit from 1 beaver to 3. And second, to extend the season from the current May through October, to a year-round season. This intent is to better align with traditional subsistence practices, which is more opportunistic in nature. This would allow hunters to take beavers whenever they are encountered and give flexibility to those on multi-day trips who may not be able to process their harvest immediately. The last regulatory change for beavers was in 2001. Currently, the federal harvest limit is 1 beaver per day, with 1 in possession from May through October. Federal trapping regulations allow unlimited harvest from December through April. There is no state season in Unit 6 but there is no trapping limit from -- during the November to April season. Beavers are not rigorously surveyed in Unit 6 and most information comes from incidental observations. Based on this information, beavers are considered abundant in Unit 6, especially in Sub-Units 6A through 6C. Harvest is assessed as sustainable, averaging about 60 beavers per year since 2002, with over 90% being taken by trapping. Very few are harvested by firearms and there are no indications of population decline. On page 131 you can find table 1, which includes harvest and method information.

If adopted, this proposal would allow federally qualified subsistence users to hunt beaver year-round and keep up to 3 in possession at a time. Because trapping only allowed -- because trapping already allows unlimited harvest and very few beaver taken under hunting regulations, only a minimal increase in harvest is expected. No conservation concerns have been identified, as Unit 6 is about 75% federal public lands. These changes would benefit a wide range of subsistence users. OSM's preliminary conclusion is to support this proposal as it increases subsistence opportunity, supports traditional practices and poses no conservation concern.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Are there any clarifying questions from Council members about

the report on the analysis or the analysis?

(No response)

Okay seeing and hearing none. We will go on to step two, which is report on Board consultation with tribes and ANCSA Corporations.

MS. HONIG: Madam Chair, Leigh Honig for the record, there were no comments received.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, step 3 agency comments. This includes Fish and Game, federal agencies and tribal entities. Are there any comments from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game?

MR. POETTER: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair. Aaron Poetter for the record, we're again still in the process of drafting comments for this particular proposal. So, no comments at this time. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. All right. All right. Are there any comments from federal agencies.

(No response)

Seeing and hearing none. Are there any comments from tribal entities including Native, tribal, village and other.

(No response)

Seeing and hearing none. Next Step Advisory Group comments. This includes other Regional Councils, Fish and Game Advisory Committees, and Subsistence Resource Commissions. Are there any comments from advisory groups?

MS. HOLMAN: Madam Chair, Kendra Holman through the record, there -- you are the first RAC to hear this proposal. So, there is no comments from any other Councils. And I do not believe we've received any comments from any other organizations or groups.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thank you. Next up, summary of written public comments.

MS. HOLMAN: I don't think there are. Madam Chair, there were no written public comments received on this one, to my knowledge.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Next up, public testimony. Are there any people in the room or online who wish to give public testimony on proposal WP26-16 Unit 6 beaver.

(No response)

Okay. Seeing and hearing none. We're at the point for Regional Council recommendations. I would look for either a motion to support the proposal or a motion to take no action and defer to the home region. Does the Council wish to take action on this proposal? Oh, Pat, go ahead.

MR. HOLMES: Oh, I move that we take no action on this. With the same logic that we discussed on the previous one. It's basically not our turf. I empathize completely with them, but I think it should be up to the folks that live in that region. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Is there a second?

MR. SMITH: Second.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, we have a motion and a second. The motion is to take no action on proposal WP26-16. Discussion and comments.

(No response)

Okay. If there's no discussion and comments, I will say for the record, I would -- the same reasons I gave for the last proposal. I am not aware of people from the KARAC region that participate in the Unit 6 beaver harvest. So, I am comfortable not taking action at the KARAC level and deferring to the home region. For the record, is there any other comments or discussions?

(No response)

Okay. Seeing and hearing none. Is there any objection to the motion?

(No response)

Seeing and hearing none. That motion passes unanimously.

(Pause)

Okay. That takes us to proposal WP26-36 Unit 9 wolverine, modify hunting season dates and we have Kendra Holman at the table.

MS. HOLMAN: Good morning, Madam Chair. Again, for the record, this is Kendra Holman, wildlife biologist with OSM. This is the presentation for summary of wildlife analysis WP26-36, can be found starting on page 135 of your meeting book. WP26-36 was submissive -- submitted by the Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, requesting to shorten the wolverine season in Unit 9 to match the state season of September 1st to the last day of February. The proponent states that the Alaska Board of Game adopted proposal 22 at their January 2025 meeting to shorten the Unit 9 wolverine season to close the last day of February, effective July 21st, 2025. Federal regulations for wolverine hunting in Unit 9 transferred from the state regulations in 1990, when the federal subsistence program began. The hunting season and harvest limit have remained the same since that time. In 2023, the Board adopted a proposal allowing snowmachines to be used to approach and pursue a wolf or wolverine, provided that the snow machine does not contact a live animal in Units 9B, 9C and 17. In January 2025, the Board of Game adopt proposal 22, shortening the wolverine season and all of Unit 9 by changing the end date from March 31st to the last day of February. The Board of Game supported protecting the wolverines during the denning season and aligning the close of Unit 9 hunting season, to the close of the wolverine trapping season and four of the Unit 9 subunits. Wolverines are present throughout Unit 9, although no population estimates have ever been conducted. Wolverine abundance remains unquantified due to the impracticality of formal assessment. Low densities appear to be confirmed by trappers who report wolverines in Units 9 and 17 are scarce, but stable. Female wolverines have 2 to 3 kits per litter in their den. And maybe nursing at the end of February and into March. Due to their low reproductive rates, wolverines can be susceptible to overharvest and heavily trapped areas with no neighboring refugia for a source protection -- population. Across Alaska, both wolves and wolverines are highly prized for their fur, which is used to trim locally made parkas and other items for clothing and handicrafts. While not as prominent an activity in the past, rural residents still participate

in trapping as a source of income in the Bristol Bay region, particularly for wolverine. A common pattern described in most reports is that a smaller percentage of households in each community report harvest or attempted harvest and use of fur bears than those reporting harvest and use of salmon and large land mammals like caribou and moose. In most cases, only a few households reported are responsible for the majority of the harvest and use of furbearers, likely in association with keeping a trap line.

Wolverine harvest and trapper numbers have declined over the last decade. In Unit 9, harvest averaged 60 wolverines per year in the mid-90s and is now declined to 17 wolverines per three year rolling average in recent years. Figure 1, which can be found on one page 139 of your meeting book, includes some information about -- some harvest information. So, from 2019 to 2023, March was the third highest reported harvest, as well as 40% of the harvest being comprised of females. Between regulatory years 2012 and 2021, 10% of the wolverine harvest in Unit 9 occurred in March on average. This can be found in figure 2 on page 140 of your meeting book. Wolverine harvest can vary from year to year, reflecting trapper effort and the very -- that varies with travel conditions. Well, this proposal decreases subsistence opportunity for federally qualified subsistence users by shortening the federal season for wolverines in Unit 9 by one month, there is no apparent conservation concern for Unit 9 wolverines, shortening the season could protect denning females and potentially entire litters. Adopting this proposal would also decrease regulatory complexity and confusion for hunters. The OSM preliminary conclusion on this proposal is neutral. And again so, this would affect Unit 9D within this region. So, thank you Madam Chair, members of the Council, I'll be happy to address any questions.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Are there any clarifying questions? I do have one. This proposal is specific to hunting and the wolverine trapping would continue as is. So, there's no change to the trapping regulations. Is that...?

MS. HOLMAN: Through the -- yes, Madam Chair, that is correct. Is just the wolverine hunting.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Are there any other clarifying questions? Okay. And then to note that this particular proposal is -- it does include Unit 9D,

which is within the KARAC region. So, we probably should comment, but I'll leave that up to the Council. Okay. If there's no -- you do have a clarifying question? Go ahead, Daniel.

MR. SMITH: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. This is Daniel Smith. So, for Unit 9, was there any data specific with Unit 9D, since that is in our region? And I guess how does that compare with, like, you know, 9E, 9B, 9A?

MS. HOLMAN: Through the Chair member Smith, there is no data breaking -- in fact, most of the data that we were able to find is actually based on the State's regions, which is significantly larger. And so, there is really very -- we didn't find anything in Unit 9D. I don't know if for any reason the refuge might have any information or knowledge, but they may not as well. That would be the closest that we could maybe have.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Are there any other clarifying questions from Council members?

(No response)

Okay. Moving on to the next step. Report on Board consultation with tribes and ANCSA Corporations.

MS. HONIG: Madam Chair, Leigh Honig for the record, no comments were received.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Next up, agency comments. This includes Fish and Game, federal agencies and tribal entities. Are there any comments from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game?

MR. POETTER: Yeah, Madam Chair, Aarron Poetter with the Department of Fish and Game. As this proposal seeks to align opportunity that the State's already providing. We don't have any conservation concerns. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Are there any comments from federal agencies?

(No response)

Seeing and hearing none. Are there any comments from tribal entities including Native, tribal

village, and other.

(No response)

Seeing and hearing none. Next step advisory group comments. This includes other regional Councils, Fish and Game advisory committees and subsistence resource commissions. Are there any comments from advisory groups?

MS. HOLMAN: Kendra Harmon through the record. Madam Chair, there have been none received at this point.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Next up, summary of written public comments.

MS. HOLMAN: Again, Madam Chair, Kenra Holman, through the record -- for the record. There were no written public comments received on this proposal.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Next up is public testimony. Is there anyone in the room or online who wishes to give public testimony on WP26-36, Unit 9 wolverine.

(No response)

Okay seeing or hearing none. We are up to Regional Council recommendation. Here I would look for a motion to support or a motion to take no action. Coral, go ahead.

MS. CHERNOFF: Move to support wildlife proposal WP26-36.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Is there a second?

MR. HOLMES: Second.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, we have -- okay, we have a motion and a second. Coral, do you want to speak to your motion?

MS. CHERNOFF: Yes. I am seeking to oppose this motion for a couple reasons. There's no biological reason or conservation concern. And the trapping season for both federal and state is -- has no limit on wolverines, so I don't see any reason to shorten

the season which decreases opportunity for federal subsistence users.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Is there additional comment and discussion?

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Go ahead, Pat.

MR. HOLMES: I would support this in chatting with some of their members of the Bristol Bay RAC this fall. Their concerns are that there's been a shift in harvesting more females and that the harvest of wolverines fur is you know, a very, very, very important item for their handicraft folks. I can remember back at statehood getting to where somebody's (indiscernible) up in North Pole and they had the wolverine rough on the inside, and it didn't frost up even at 60 below. And so, that's a really important thing for local folks and their local handicrafts. And I think that we should support their Council. And I imagine there's occasionally a few folks from Gulf of Alaska Kodiak that are working up in there in the winter. But I think it's primarily a concern for the folks in Dillingham, Naknek, Kwiguk. And I think it's really important to them. And they've supported us on some of our requests for FRMPs and other things. So, I feel that we should give them our hearty support and urge adoption of that proposal. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Further comments and discussion. Okay, I will make some comments. I do plan to vote in favor of the motion. I -- the things I'm considering is that there seems to be rather, I guess I'll use the word sparse data on the wolverine. This is not a very dense species, and I do find the concerns around the denning season and giving the wolverine a break during denning season to be compelling. I also think that the changes around use of snow machines to hunt wolverine so hunting versus trapping is a huge technological advantage to the hunter. So, I am also taking that into account in supporting this proposal, which it does reduce the hunting season for wolverine but it gives the wolverine a break during denning season. And I do give weight to the fact that the Bristol Bay RAC, in which the rest of Unit 9 occurs within their territory that they actually put this forward. So, those are my comments. Are there additional comments or discussion from Council members?

(No response)

Okay. Let's do a vote on this. Oh, sorry. Go ahead, Jeff.

MR. WASLEY: Jeff here. Just clarification on exactly what stance we're voting on.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: I'm sorry, what was your question?

MR. WASLEY: Are we supporting the motion or...?

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Oh, sorry. Yes, the motion was to support the proposal.

MR. WASLEY: Okay. Thank you.

MS. HONIG: Leigh Honig, for the record. To start off the voice vote, Jeff Wasley, how do you vote?

MR. WASLEY: Yes, thanks.

MS. HONIG: Pat Holmes.

MR. HOLMES: Yes.

MS. HONIG: Coral Chernoff.

MS. CHERNOFF: No.

MS. HONIG: Rebecca Skinner.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yes.

MS. HONIG: Daniel Smith.

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MS. HONIG: Natasha Hayden.

MS. HAYDEN: Yes.

MS. HONIG: And Brett Richardson.

MR. RICHARDSON: Yes.

MS. HONIG: Madam Chair, the vote carries with 6 yays to 1 nay.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Moving on to the next proposal. And I think after this proposal, unless it goes super, super quick, we'll -- actually, we are going to take a break after this next proposal. Okay. So, moving on to proposal WP26-37, Units 9 and 17 beaver, modified trapping season dates and method and means. And we have Kendra Holman at the table.

MS. HOLMAN: Good morning again through the Chair, members of the Council. For the record, this is Kendra Holman, wildlife biologist with OSM. So, this is a summary of the analysis for wildlife proposal WP26-37, can be found starting on page 143 of your meeting books. This proposal was submitted by the Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council, requesting to remove the firearms restriction for beaver trapping in Unit 9 and 17. This proposal is a simplification of regulations and aligns with the recent changes to state regulations through the adoption of state proposals W -- excuse me, state proposals 21 and 37, in January of 2025. The simplification would be easier for users by matching state and federal regulations, as well as removing unclear regulations regarding beaver and Unit 9. So, federal subsistence trapping regulations for beaver in Units 9 and 17 were adopted from state trapping regulations in 1990, the federal subsistence management -- when the program Federal Subsistence Program began. Since 1990 seasons and harvest limits and methods and means have been extanded [sic] -- expanded to accommodate the need of subsistence users and expanding beaver populations in the Bristol Bay area. In 1997, the Board of Game modified beaver trapping regulations in Unit 17. Sorry, I'm gonna [sic] skip the Unit 17 here. Unless you would like to hear it, but -- so, in 2023, the Federal Subsistence Board adopted a proposal with modification to increase beaver trapping limit to no limit in Units 9 and 17. The two beaver per day firearm restriction also then applied in Unit 9.

Biologic information for Unit 9. The most productive beaver habitat in the Unit has a dependable water supply with little fluctuation in stream flows and is adjacent to abundant and easily accessible willows, aspen, cottonwood, and birch vegetation. Beavers are found at sea level up to elevations of about 2000ft. Biological information for beavers in Unit 9 is sparse. However, local residents,

as well as federal and state biologists have noticed the beaver population has been increasing within the Unit. ADFG considers beaver populations in Unit 9 to be healthy with no conservation concerns. Season closures in Unit 17 have occurred since the 1900s to allow -- sorry, that's a weird note in there. I'm not sure what I put. Sorry. So, Okay. Unit 9 harvest has declined 80% from an annual harvest of 460 in the 1970s to 90 in the 2010s, and 73 annually from 2012 to 2023. This information can be found in figure 1 on page 149 of your meeting book. Harvest reductions in the 1990s and preliminary -- was preliminarily attributed to reduced prices in pelts, high costs in both effort and expenses, and diminished trapping interest among village residents. Poor trapping and travel conditions likely contribute to recent reductions in harvest.

One alternative considered was to eliminate the statewide prohibition on taking a beavers by firearm under a trapping license. So, if you look at page 145, there are some additional relevant federal regulations regarding this proposal that made us think a little bit. Current federal regulations are more restrictive than state regulations, which allow beaver to be taken by firearm under a trapping license statewide pursuant to Unit specific seasons and harvest limits. Removing this prohibition would increase federally qualified subsistence user opportunities statewide and reduce regulatory complexity. However, this is outside the scope of the analysis, and a proposal would need to be submitted in the future. Since federal regulations prohibit the take of firearm under a trapping license except as provided in Unit specific regulations. Another alternative was considered, to allow the take of beaver by firearm consistent with the trapping season and harvest limits within Units 9 and 17 Unit specific regulations. This alternative would meet the intent of the proponent by increasing opportunity for federally qualified subsistence users. So, if proposal WP26-37 is adopted as proposed, Units 9 and 17 would revert to the General Regulation, which completely prohibits the take of fire the take of beaver by firearm under trapping license. This does not meet intent of the proponent and increases -- intent of the proponent to increase opportunity and align state and federal regulations. However, users may already harvest an unlimited number of beaver by firearm during the entire trapping season on most federal lands under state regulations. No impacts to the beaver population are expected. There are no conservation concerns for beaver in either Unit and

the vast majority of beaver are harvested via trap and snare, not firearm. This can be found in figures 2 and 3 on page 150 of your meeting book.

Any regulations affect changing -- any regulation change affecting the take of furbearers by firearm under trapping license would not apply to National Park Service lands within Units 9 and 17, so, this would be Lake Clark, Katmai, Aniakchak. Regulation references to this can be found in your meeting book. This proposal is to increase subsistence opportunity and decrease regulatory complexity. And there are no conservation concerns. So, because of this relevant regulation that we have, OSM conclude -- preliminary conclusion is to support WP26-37 with modification to allow the take of beavers by firearm under a trapping license in the Unit specific provisions for Units 9 and 17. This modification is what is required to meet the proponent's intent of increasing opportunity and aligning the state and federal regulations. Thank you, Madam Chair, members of the Council. I'll be happy to address any questions.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thank you. I am having a hard time wrapping my mind around what this proposal is doing. Is it more restrictive? Is it more conservative? And I think your discussion about the OSM modification kind of helped. But I want to understand as written, is the proposal -- it would result in being more restrictive. Am I understanding that correctly?

MS. HOLMAN: Yes, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, but the intent of the proposers was to be less restrictive.

MS. HOLMAN: Correct, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, all right. Are there other clarifying questions from Council members before we move on to the next step? Go ahead, Jeff.

MR. WASLEY: Jeff Wasley here. I don't believe in 9D that we have beavers. So, if this isn't applicable to our region, can we pass on it?

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Did you ask if we can take no action? Yeah. Yes. When we get to that point, that will be an option that we can do. Okay. Go ahead, Brett.

MR. RICHARDSON: Brett Richardson. Maybe this is a silly question but (distortion) what is the definition of trapping versus hunting?

MS. HOLMAN: So, Member Richardson through the Chair. So, the definition of trapping is meaning the take of furbearers within established trapping seasons with a required trapping license. And hunting means the taking of wildlife within an established hunting season, with archery equipment or firearm as authorized by the required hunting license.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: As a follow up to that, and I'm pretty sure you just said this, but just to clarify, under federal regs, can you use a firearm with trap in a -- does it say a trapping hunt? That's not correct while you're trapping.

MS. HOLMAN: So, Madam Chair, the relevant regulation makes it so that under general regulations, you cannot. If there is a provision within Unit specific regulations, you can use a firearm with your trapping license.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. And then just generally because I really appreciate that question on the state side in Kodiak, when the AC talked about changes last year, we were talking about trapping, but people kept talking about firearms. And I was like, why are you talking about firearms with trapping? But, apparently on the state side, at least the ones we were talking about, you can use a firearm while you're trapping. So, there was -- I was having a hard time drawing a distinction between the trapping and the hunting. So, I appreciate your question because that is exactly where I was confused last year. Okay. Are there additional clarifying questions before we move on to the next step? Oh, sorry Pat, you have your hand up. Go ahead, Pat.

MR. HOLMES: I just would like to as far as firearms and trapping again, way back in my youth it's actually more humane if you have a beaver in the trap to take it with a weapon. Because basically trapping you have to -- they drowned. And so, it's heartbreaking if you have empathy for the critters to have one in your trap and have a 30 pounder and you know, you can't very well choke them. You'd either let them drown or pop them with a .22. And so, anyway, when we get a little further

along the line, I just wanted to clarify that quite often the firearm is a humane way to take care of the critter and rather than let them drown.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Are there any clarifying questions from Council members before we move on to the next step?

(No response)

Okay. Seeing and hearing none. Next step, report on Board consultation with tribes and ANCSA Corporation.

MS. HONIG: Madam Chair, Leigh Honig, no comments were received.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Next up, agency comments. This includes Fish and Game, federal agencies and tribal entities. Are there any comments from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game?

MR. POETTER: Yeah, through the Chair. Aarron Poetter for the record, as this proposal seeks to align state and federal regs with opportunity states already providing we don't have any conservation concerns. And I did want to mention that we do have various staff available to speak to this if need be. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you for that. Yeah, when we get to Council discussion, if people have questions for Alaska Department of Fish and Game staff, I think that would be the appropriate time to get that information. Are there any comments from federal agencies?

(No response)

Seeing and hearing none. Are there any comments from tribal entities including Native, tribal village and other?

(No response)

Seeing and hearing none. Are there any comments from advisory groups which includes other Regional Councils, Fish and Game Advisory Committees and Subsistence Resource Commissions?

MS. HOLMAN: All right. Kendra Holman through the record -- for the record, Madam Chair there have been no other regional advisory Councils who have heard this proposal and we've not received anything from any other organizations or entities.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Next step. Summary of written public comments.

MS. HOLMAN: Again, Kendra Holman, for the record. There were no written public comments received.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Next up, public testimony. Do we have any public, either in the room or online, that wish to give public testimony on this proposal?

(No response)

All right. Next step. Regional Council recommendation. I would look for a motion to support the proposal or a motion to take no action. Oh, okay. Pat, go ahead.

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair, I move that we support the proposal as the suggested modification from OSM.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Is there a second?

MR. RICHARDSON: I'll second.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. We have a motion, a second. Pat, would you like to speak to your motion?

MR. HOLMES: Yes, ma'am. There -- Jeff made the comment there weren't any beaver in Unit 9, most of it there isn't. But up in the northeastern portion of it there are. My rationale in supporting this would be the same as supporting the Bristol Bay RAC on the previous issue and I think it would be a humane and certain way to do harvest. One of the things that was mentioned in the discussion is that beaver dams can -- it provides habitat, but it also, inhibits the upstream migration of larger salmon like kings that really can't go and flop over a dam or make their way past like silvers can. And so, I think that this overall would be

a positive thing for their region. And anyway, so that that would be my rationale in supporting the motion as proposed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Further comments and discussion. Go ahead, Jeff.

MR. WASLEY: Jeff Wasley, was just clarifying that in 9D, we do not have beavers. So, that's why I said if we had no comment. But I support Pat's what he just said, and supporting our neighbors in Bristol Bay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, further comments and discussion. Go ahead, Coral.

MS. CHERNOFF: I guess I will not be voting for this. I guess for reasons that people talked about in previous proposals where it's their area and I guess that's why.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Further comment and discussion?

(No response)

So, I'll make my comments. I think that this does provide -- with the OSM modification, it does provide more options and more opportunity for subsistence beaver hunt in Unit 9. I guess I'm a little unclear if we actually have beaver in the KARAC region or not. But because this proposal includes all of Unit 9, I'm comfortable supporting the motion. Coral, go ahead.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah. I just want to clarify, was the motion with the modification or was the motion the motion the proposal?

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yes, the motion was to support the proposal with OSM modification. Okay. Are there any other -- go ahead, Brett.

MR. RICHARDSON: Brett Richardson. Yeah, I would support the motion if it increases opportunity for qualified users.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Further discussion or comments. Go ahead, Daniel.

MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair, this is Daniel Smith. I would also be supportive and for the reasons as mentioned.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Further comment and discussion.

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yes. Go ahead, Pat.

MR. HOLMES: Pat. just wanted to add beaver trapping and the whole discussion. One other item that is important to people that do it on a regular basis is not only taking the fur but taking the beaver for food. And there's -- they're downright yummy, they're just as good as muskrats. And I've got a couple recipes in my old cookbook for beaver tail and it's quite a desirable food item for folks that go after an on a regular basis. So, I'm just a little support in that angle. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Is there any final comments and discussion before we take a vote?

(No response)

Okay. Seeing and hearing none. Leigh, can you walk us through the vote? Oh, let me restate the motion. So, the motion was to support the proposal with the OSM modification.

MS. HONIG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Leigh Honig, for the record. Jeff Wasley, how do you vote?

MR. WASLEY: Yes.

MS. HONIG: Pat Holmes.

MR. HOLMES: Yes.

MS. HONIG: Coral Chernoff.

MS. CHERNOFF: No.

MS. HONIG: Rebecca Skinner.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yes.

MS. HONIG: Daniel Smith.

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MS. HONIG: Natasha Hayden.

MS. HAYDEN: Yes.

MS. HONIG: And Brett Richardson.

MR. RICHARDSON: Yes.

MS. HONIG: Madam Chair, the vote carries with 6 yays to 1 nay.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Okay. So, we're going to take -- let's take a ten minute break until quarter 'til so, we'll come back at 10:45. Thank you.

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. We will go ahead and resume our meeting. We are up to statewide proposals. And we're at WP26-01, move authority delegated through letters into unit specific regulations. And I think this might be Kendra Holman.

MS. HOLMAN: All right, Madam Chair, members of the Council, this is Kendra Holman for the record. This will be the presentation for the summary of the analysis for WP26-01. So, the -- what we have called the master analysis, which is kind of the big overview, it starts on page 155 of your meeting book. So, this proposal is from the Office of Subsistence Management, seeks to move the authority for managing federal hunts out of delegation of authority letters, also known as DALs into unit specific regulations. If adopted, 61 delegation of authority letters currently in use across Alaska would be rescinded. These letters were originally meant to provide flex -- management flexibility, but over time they've created inefficiencies. Any action taken under a delegation of authority letter counts as a special action which triggers requirements for public hearings, tribal consultations, regulatory advisory council recommendations. These processes are important for unusual or emergency situations. But they add unnecessary burden when applied to routine in-season

management actions, like closing a hunt when a quota is met. As a result, federal in-season managers and OSM staff spend significant time on protocol requirements for decisions that are already expected every year. High staff turnover makes consistency difficult. On top of that, OSM must maintain all 61 delegation of authority letters, some of which overlap, conflict or contain outdated guidance. By moving these authorities into regulation, in-season management actions would no longer trigger that special action process. Appropriately, four pages of boilerplate delegation of authority letter requirements would be replaced with one clear paragraph in regulations. Public transparency improves, since changes to delegated authority would go through the standard regulatory process. And oversight becomes simpler, with clearer responsibilities and reduced administrative workload. Importantly, the Board retains authority over emergency closures and broader decisions, but in-season managers still have the ability to act quick and within the parameters set by the Board. This proposal is not expected to affect wildlife populations or subsistence opportunity. It's primarily administrative, streamlining how reoccurring decisions are made. It increases efficiency, strengthens coordination with state and local users, and makes the process more transparent to the public.

One alternative considered was replacing the phrase coordinating -- coordination with in regulation to seeking input and considering feedback from. This clarifies the expectation for in-season managers to communicate their actions and consider feedback without adding confusion that has developed around the word coordinate. The OSM preliminary conclusion is to adopt WP26-01 with modification to replace the word coordination, with the words seek input and consider feedback from. And to modify WP26- -- 26-01A and 26-01B, which are region specific ones and not -- do not apply to this region, with some region specific language, adopting these changes would reduce administrative burden, resolving inconsistencies, and improve efficiencies while maintaining transparency and accountability in federal subsistence management. So, WP26-01C is the part of the analysis that is specifically regarding the Kodiak Aleutians region. That starts on page 166 of your meeting book. In there, you can see there are three delegation of authority letters, currently. And you can see the proposed regulation. Of course, it -- the proposed regulation does not include that modification. So, it still says coordination. But

there are two for Izembek for caribou and there is one for moose. So, for -- regarding 26-01C, OSM's preliminary conclusion is to support, of course, with that modification to change the word coordination as I stated just a minute ago. So, if you have any questions, also, if you wanted to see a delegation of authority letter, there is one in your meeting book, and it can be found on page 109? Yeah, 109 of your meeting book. So, we'll take -- we'll get rid of those letters. And it'll go to just the dark bolded language that you see at the bottom in the regulations on pages 166 and 167. So, thank you, Madam Chair, members of the Council. If you have any questions, let me know.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Are there clarifying questions about the presentation or the analysis? Daniel, go ahead. Or maybe hold on until we have the attention of the -- are you ready, you want you want a second or are you ready for a question? Okay. Go ahead, Daniel.

MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair. This is Daniel Smith. Had a clarifying question about the three, are these the -- in the -- so, WP26-01C the Kodak Aleutians one, are there only those three regulations that would be affected in our region by the master analysis or the proposal?

MS. HOLMAN: Through the Chair, member Smith. Yes, that is correct. It is only those three that would be affected for this region.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Coral, go ahead.

MS. CHERNOFF: I guess to piggyback on that, does this have effect for fishing?

MS. HOLMAN: Through the Chair, member Chernoff. No, this is only -- we are only going -- only proposing this for the wildlife letters.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Right. Are there any further clarifying questions? Coral.

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. We'll go with Pat and then go to Coral. Go ahead, Pat.

MR. HOLMES: Yes. Kendra I was wondering if this would cause any changes quite often in our region or we've had some questions solved by having what is called a study group in which the Fish and Wildlife Service staff at whichever refuge the Fish and Game folks, and then members of the Fish and Game Advisory Committee and then Council members that aren't necessarily speaking for the Council, but will get together and discuss problems. And I -- let's say the increase in the goat harvest and providing for subsistence goat harvest. The study groups get together and try to find the quickest way to solve things and then let the respective parties go back to their own group for further discussion. And so often, we can save a year or two on developing a solution. And I just -- I would assume that this change would just not interfere with that but it would make it more flexible and easier to accomplish without having to go through a whole lot of hoops. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MS. HOLMAN: Mr. Holmes, through the Chair. This is Kendra Holman, for the record. So, this actually has nothing to do with that process that you're discussing right now. So, this would only affect -- so, currently within the Kodiak Aleutians region there are three delegation of authority letters to Izembek. So, the first one is for caribou and Unit 9D. The second one is for caribou and Unit 10 and the last -- the third one is for moose and Unit 9D. So, this just takes their in-season actions that they make every year for determining harvest limits, number of permits, the seasons already set so they don't determine season, these harvest quotas, sex limits, things like that. That the Board has given them the authority to determine and puts it in the regulations and in the regulatory language instead of in a long letter that's confusing and causes a lot more work. So, by removing that special action trigger that it currently has, where they have to have the public hearings and tribal consultation and all of that that they're supposed to do. And so, hopefully that clarifies it for you.

MR. HOLMES: Thanks for your clarification. Yes, ma'am. Yes, ma'am.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, you may have spoken to this. How does -- how do these changes -- so, putting this into regulation that the -- say the refuge managers., set harvest quotas, harvest limits, etc., that does not change the process where right now KARAC

considers like annual harvest limits. So, for certain areas, if we're being asked to look at increasing caribou from 2 to 4, it doesn't change that part of the process, we would still have a say in that that still ends up in regulation. Really what this is addressing is that in-season management component. Do I understand that correctly? And then if that is the case, how do we know that's the case?

MS. HOLMAN: So, Madam Chair, yes. So, if you look on page 109, you can see the delegation of authority letter that's currently in place. for the South Alaska Peninsula caribou, so we currently have this letter if you turn to page 110, it says -- it shows what the Board has given the authority to for the refuge. And then it also lists within this this letter actually on the page prior on page 109, who all that they're supposed to be in contact with when they're making this decision. Who they are supposed to be in communication with and seek input from, as well as what they're authorized to do out of this letter, and it puts it into regulation. As far as anything else beyond that, it would all still go through the regulatory process, and it would still come before the RAC, as it normally does. With the delegation of authority letter, currently they -- the refuge is supposed to go through a special action process in order to make any of these decisions that the Board has authorized them to do, but putting it into regulation removes that special action aspect of it. It reduces the workload for them. They still have to be in communication with other managers. So, you look at the proposed regulatory language, they're still supposed to be in communication with ADFG, with OSM and the Chair of the affected Councils. So, you will still know about it. You should still hear about it, but it doesn't trigger all the additional work that's required, because this is an annual thing. It happens every year. It's nothing abnormal. And so, we're just looking to streamline the process.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Coral, Go ahead.

MS. CHERNOFF: So, could you expand and clearly explain what all the extra additional work is? That you just mentioned.

MS. HOLMAN: So, member Chernoff, through the Chair. So, currently if the refuge wants to issue the permits and make the decision of sex restrictions for any of those three, you know, so we'll stick with

this South Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd. If they're making these decisions, they've been given the authority to do it. Currently they are -- it's under a special action which triggers public hearings. It triggers tribal consultations, Regulatory Advisory Council, recommendations as possible, just because of when the meetings happen. But it should still be in consultation and at least letting the RAC Chair know. And so, these processes of adding this additional notification of the hearing, of having the hearing and it happening every year are supposed to be for these special things happening. But, you know, and not something that happens every year. And so, if it's an annual action that takes place all the time, we're trying to remove some of that extra process, but it is still being done as we're putting it into regulatory language. So, like we're still going through that process right now where we've had tribal consultations. We'll have a second consultation this fall. It's going through the public process before it's being put into regulatory language. So, it's just going to happen the one time when we put it in there, unless it gets changed at a later date instead of it being put on the in-season manager to have to happen every year for routine actions.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Coral.

MS. CHERNOFF: So, what I'm getting out of that is then it takes away that requirement to meet with the public and tribes. So, it's taken away basically that public -- meaningful consultation with the public. Is that kind of what comes out of that?

MS. HOLMAN: So, through the Chair. It makes it so, it doesn't have to happen every year. It's -- that's what we're doing right now. We're working through this process. We're getting the input from people, we're getting public comment. It just makes it so, it doesn't have to happen every year for things that take place every year and aren't out of the normal. There is still that requirement for them to be in contact with specific people. But it just removes it from being something that takes place every year for that annual repetitive action that they've been given authority to do.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Additional clarifying questions?

(No response)

Okay. I'm not seeing or hearing any. We'll go on to -- well, I guess I'll ask this here. On the agenda. This is shown as WP26-01. But, in our book we have W26-01C. So, when we're going to make a motion to do something, should it reference 26-01 or 26-01C. If it references -01C, there is no OSM modification for 01C the OSM modification is for -01. So, if you could just clarify what's the best way to capture that at the motion stage.

MS. HOLMAN: So, Madam Chair, Kendra for the record. So, we want to make sure we caption that if you choose to do the OSM modification that you are doing 26-01 with modification -- with the OSM modification, to apply to 21-0C as well. So, you can do both -- you can do two motions, or you can do one. You can do one motion with both numbers, to include that OSM modification on both of them. Or you can -- so, you can do it one motion with both numbers, OSM modification to apply or two separate motions one for each number.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, but we do need one motion -- the motion has to reference both -- In a motion, we need to reference 20 -- or 26-01, and we also have to reference 26-01C, whether it's one motion or two motion that's fine, but we do have to reference both. And then we have the option of the OSM modification add on.

MS. HOLMAN: Yes, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. All right I'm still not seeing or hearing additional questions. So, we'll move on to step 2, which is report on Board consultation with tribes and ANCSA Corporations.

MS. HONIG: Madam Chair, Leigh Honig for the record, we did receive one comment on this from the Director of the Aleutian Islands Association, in support of this proposal. Thank you.

MS. HOLMAN: Madam Chair, so we received 2, during the tribal and ANCSA Consultation, from the AHTNA to support 26-01 during the ANCSA consultation and then during tribal consultation. We received also from Karen Linnell for the Ahtna, and it's eight tribes to support the move of the delegation of authority letters to limit specific regulations giving the BLM delegation of authority to open and close caribou hunts, move --

including moose in Units 11 and 12. So, that's more the region that they cover. But those are the two comments we received during consultation.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thank you. Moving on to the next step. Agency comments. This includes Fish and Game, federal agencies and tribal entities. Are there any comments from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game?

MR. POETTER: Yeah, through the Chair, Aaron Poetter for the record, we don't have any comments at this time. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Are there any comments from federal agencies?

(No response)

Are there any comments from tribal entities including Native, tribal village and other.

(No response)

Okay. Seeing and hearing none. Next step advisory group comments. This includes other Regional Councils, Fish and Game Advisory Committees, and Subsistence Resource Commissions. Are there any comments from advisory groups?

MS. HOLMAN: Madam Chair, Kendra Holman, through the record. So, the North Slope Regional Advisory Council has already heard this proposal, they support with the OSM modification. It simplifies the process and they agree with OSM conclusion and justification that it won't affect subsistence uses.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, next step. Summary of written public comments.

MS. HOLMAN: Kendra Holman, for the record. There was one written public comment received in support from the Ahtna Intertribal Resources Commission. That written public comment can be found starting on page 170 of your book. And then specific comments addressing WP26-01 can be found starting on page 171.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, next step, public testimony. Is there anyone in the room or online

that wishes to give public testimony?

(No response)

Seeing and hearing none. We are up to the Regional Council recommendation. So, here I would be looking for a motion to support and keep in mind you can either do one motion for each proposal, WP 26-01 and WP26-01C. Or you can do, you can do one motion including both or you can do a separate motion for each. And please address whether the motion will include the OSM modification or not. Is there any action from the Council? Go ahead, Jeff.

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: We have Jeff right now. And then I'll go to you, Pat.

MR. WASLEY: I'll make a motion to support both WP26-01 and WP26-01C, both with the OSM modifications. I'm in favor of both. Thank you.

MR. RICHARDSON: Second.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, okay, we have a motion and a second. Jeff, I'm going to see if you have comments to your motion and then I'll go to Pat.

MR. WASLEY: Thank you. Jeff Wesley. I think it basically, it is going to streamline the process, make it simpler for everyone involved. And I think that's a good thing and more transparent for everybody. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Pat.

MR. HOLMES: I think that it all got covered. You got a second. And I agree with Jeff 100%. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Additional comments or discussion. Go ahead, Brett.

MR. RICHARDSON: Thank you. I would support this. Seems to cut red tape and might speed action from managers. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Daniel, go ahead.

MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair. This is Daniel Smith. I'm a little bit hesitant to support as written or the modification due to, seems like to me, an apparent lack of public comment or tribal consultation, even though they are routine regulations. And with that in mind, I think even though, you know, these don't really change, having the opportunity to provide, you know, more input through the feedback, through the delegation of authority letters, I would in fact support at this time. So, I would probably be opposed to this change right now.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Additional comment and discussion? Coral, Go ahead.

MS. CHERNOFF: I also am opposed to this because to me, with my understanding, there's going to be less public input, tribal consultation. I think that's an issue. I think that goes against what this program is about. I think if there's issues that need to be streamlined in the Office, I think that needs to perhaps happen in the Office. But I think as far as being part of, I think part of having The Federal Subsistence Board and these Advisory Boards. It is important and these were put together because it is important to have public input, tribal input. All these things have been put into place for that reason. Is it a pain to have to consult with people? Probably is [sic]. But, for the public and the people who rely on these, I think it's important to keep those things in. So, I am not in support of this.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Additional comment and discussion. Okay, I'll make my comment. I.....

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Go ahead, Pat.

(Pause)

Pat, are you still on.

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair, I was thinking that from the comments from the OSM staff that the points of consultation have occurred previously and that they

already have the guidelines and have already done the interactions with the respective parties. And so, this would just simplify things in-season for where they already have the guidelines to work from. And so, I think that if we vote against it then it will end up making things take a whole lot longer to solve when they should just already have. They've already got the outline, and they already have the opinion on things. And I'm sure that if there's something that requires further contacts, that that's already implicit in the regulations that they would reach out and do that. So, I'm inclined to go with the proposal to accept these with modifications recommended from OSM. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Kendra, can I ask you, this is along the lines of my last question. Can I ask you to walk through kind of a scenario of how this works? Or I can state my understanding of the scenario, and you can comment on that. So, let's say we're dealing with deer harvest or deer -- the deer regulations in Kodiak. The regulations are what they are. So, it's -- I'm going to make up numbers, you know, 4 deer from a certain area, so we already know what the overall limit is. Changes to those would still go through this -- the regulatory change process in that the RAC would get to see it, there's public comment, if you're changing what's in the regulation. What this proposal focuses on is that in-season component, so if something happens in the summer, let's say there's a huge wildfire and it burns all of Kodiak and the managers are like, oh my goodness, we need to have no more harvest of deer because something has happened and an immediate decision needs to be made to stop harvest because there's a concern. In that case, the in-season manager, which is the refuge manager, would get to make that call, which in past RAC discussions we have supported that the in-season manager having the ability to make those calls. What this proposal does is it relieves the requirement, I'm going to call it the bureaucratic requirement, of the publishing notice. Your -- you have a 60-day limit. So, whatever you do, if it's over 60 days, you're going to have to do it again. And that these things are -- they're basically annual/seasonal. So, the proposal that's on the table it's just allowing the in-season manager to make decisions on essentially a temporary basis, right because it's on an annual/seasonal? But go ahead because I see facial expressions.

MS. HOLMAN: So, Madam Chair, this is Kendra. So, I'm going to try to not be too literal here with this answer. So, the regular regulatory stuff -- the dear example, as far as those regulations, has to go through the regulatory process exactly the same way it is now. Delegation of authority that has been given to an in-season manager is only going to apply to the things that are in the regulatory language. So, if that is set harvest quotas, set harvest limits and sex restrictions. That is all the in-season manager can do without going through the regulatory process. So, if there is, like the fire example that you're discussing would be an emergency or a special action that would still go through the OSM process. So, it would still have to go through a special action process where we go through the whole public process. The only things that this -- that this allows is, the in-season manager to do, will be written in regulations. So, for caribou in Unit 9D it'll be to set harvest quotas, harvest limits and set sex restrictions. For Unit 10, it is to set harvest quotas, close the season, open and close federal public lands to non-federally qualified users annually, based on the current population status. For Unit 9D moose, this is to set -- to -- the harvest of moose, to announce -- closing -- announce the close -- closure, sorry. Public lands will be closed by announcement to the harvest of moose when a total of 10 bulls have been harvested under state and federal hunts. So, those specific items are the only things that would not go through the public process.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, that does include establishing how many animals can be taken in in a year or a season.

MS. HOLMAN: If it is written in the regulatory language that they are delegated, yes.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: And currently generally, I'm trying to remember where the RAC isn't usually seeing those special actions anyway, unless the timing lines up.

MS. HOLMAN: Yeah, Madam Chair, that's correct. If the timing lines up for the RAC to be able to see them, then yes, we present them to the RACs. If the timing does not line up, which unfortunately happens quite often, the RACs don't get to see them in the presentation.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. And then the analysis noted that there is, I think, that there's little actual public involvement in the public process. Can you confirm that that's my under -- that my understanding is correct on that.

MS. HOLMAN: Madam Chair, yes. There tends to be very little public involvement in this -- these processes, especially these annual ones.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yes. Go ahead, Jeff.

MR. WASLEY: Thank you. Jeff Wesley. Allison or Maria, could you tell me if anyone of those 3 have been triggered in the last 10 or 20 years, of the 9D caribou, 10 caribou or the moose? Like, have any of these limits been reached where you had to do an emergency closure? Thank you.

MS. FOSADO: Good morning, Madam Chair, members of the Council. For the record, my name is Maria Fosado, Izembek Refuge Manager. Can you repeat your question, Jeff? Or Council member Wasley?

MR. WASLEY: Thank you. Jeff Wasley, I'm just curious if any of these limits on the 9D or 10 caribou or Unit 9D moose have been reached and you've had to do an emergency closure in the past 10 or 20 years. Thank you.

MS. FOSADO: Thank you for your question. Through the Chair. I can't speak to the last 20 years. But I can certainly provide that information, shortly here, let me look at our records. I've been here since 2020, and we have not done any special actions to close the seasons. We've generally mimicked the state regulations. So, we've -- the staff has been doing well. We've mirrored the state on those regulations. There has been a change to Unimak. So, Unit 10 and I do believe that that was discussed at one of the Regional Advisory Council meetings.

MR. WASLEY: Yeah. And I've just I don't know of many people harvesting moose, and I don't really remember ever hearing that being closed. And it sounds like the Sapsuk doing well. And it’s actually, the State would like more harvest. In the Unimak, has there been any subsistence take? Thanks.

MS. FOSADO: Through the Chair. We have issued federal subsistence permits every year that I've been here, 2020 to current year, for both Unit 9D and 10 and generally speaking, we see more subsistence harvest in 9D than 10. But I don't have all the numbers off the top of my head, but that's less than a handful. I mean, a couple caribou through our federal subsistence permits are taken, in 9D specifically.

MR. WASLEY: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: I do have a question for I think it's for the side of the table with Jeff, mostly, Jeff. Brett, you're welcome to jump in. The three delegation of authority letters right now, two are for Izembek, is -- and one is for 9D. So, I consider that to be kind of the -- that subregion of the KARAC. So, not the Kodiak part. I think I'm recalling correctly, you made the motion on this, right? Okay. You made the motion. You clearly support those. On an annual basis with under the delegation of authority with the -- when the notice of these are published and the public involvement, what is your -- what have you seen with -- does the like does the public engage a lot and or have you heard any concerns from people kind of in this area about going to this -- changing it as proposed versus doing the delegation of authority process because, you know, that does allow more public involvement. So, like does the public want to be more involved? Have they been involved or do they -- is your sense that they support going this direction?

MR. WASLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Jeff Wasley. I would say there's very little public input. In general, caribou do not come down to be like readily accessible areas like they used to. You know, 20 years ago, it was very common to have caribou all around the Road System here. Now, I mean, I can go a whole season and not see caribou. So, I think there's way less interest because you need some specialized equipment to access these animals and get out quite a ways. And there's not -- a lot of people don't have that. I mean, mostly to get to the main herd, you need airplanes, right. So, there's a few scattered little groups. So, I don't think there's a ton of interest in caribou like there used to be. But just because they're not really coming down as much. And as far as the public's interest in going this direction on these proposals, I've heard nothing from, basically nothing from anybody in town here on anything to do with the with the RAC, you know,

much less the specific caribou issue. So, thank you.

MS. FOSADO: Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Coral, go ahead.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, I guess that -- it sounds like in the last ten years this hasn't happened, which indicates to me that it's not really a problem in the office as far as extra paperwork and you know, just having an extra process. I think it's been brought up, or sort of, you know, how much the public, you know, we get this -- how much the public has been involved. Has anyone stated that this is an issue? I know I get this, and it was hard for me to understand. So, and I'm involved in, you know, reading a lot of this regulatory stuff and have questions. And even after having many questions, it's hard. A lot of people just want to be left alone. They want to hunt, they want to do their thing. They assume it's going to happen. So, to me, I don't consider whether we have public input or not necessarily because people show up, like when we were going to lose our rural status. Then lots of people show up right when something really bad is going to happen. Otherwise, they're expecting us to sort of delve into this and do the thing. And I think having nobody make public comment or not knowing what people think is not a reason to take away the right to have that process, which I've stated before, and I feel that very strongly that we should have the right to this process. It was put in place. So, the public has a process. So, tribal has a process. And I don't think that confusing language and difficulty in the Office doing this work. I don't think that streamlining it on the public side is the way to go. So, yeah, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Further comments and discussion.

MS. HAYDEN: Madam Chair, this Natasha.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yep. Go ahead, Natasha.

MS. HAYDEN: So, Natasha Hayden, for the record. I do have a question about setting the -- setting the harvest goals, which is my understanding what Kendra was explaining and then the sex of the animals that are available for take. Those currently have to be set on an annual basis and do have -- they do have to go through

this public process to make those determinations. Or is it only when they're making changes to what's already like, you know what their annual targets are.

MS. HOLMAN: So, through the Chair. This is Kendra. So, they have to go through that process every year. So, every year when they set their hardest -- harvest quotas, they have to go through a full public process. Every year when they set their harvest limits. Same thing. So, we're only addressing these things that are done annually, and every year, anything outside of what's already in the delegation of authority letter will still have to go through the outside public process. By putting it in the regulatory language at this point, we are covering that public process. At this point in time, that's what we're here for.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So I', going to ask.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. HAYDEN: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Oh, go ahead, Natasha.

MS. HAYDEN: Just a follow up. I -- unfortunately that didn't clear it up for me at all, Kendra. Would -- does -- do they already have public hearings to set harvest goals every year? And if they do, would that no longer occur if this were passed?

MS. HOLMAN: That is correct. Currently they have to do it. If this is to go through, they will not have to do that public process every year.

MS. HAYDEN: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: And then to follow up on that I think this might answer my question. So, for 9D caribou, in the regulations, the harvest limit says 1 to 4 caribou by federal registration permit. So, it's 1 to 4. Am I understanding correctly that and that limit was like set by us or the RAC did get to have a say in that. What we're talking about is that range of 1 to 4. That's what the -- we're kind of delegating to the in-season manager. So, we're setting that kind of lower bound and upper bound of 1 to 4. And we're letting the in -- the refuge manager pick what seems to be an

appropriate number between 1 and 4, and that's where we're giving up the public hearing. But what is set and what's always going to get a public hearing is whether that 1 to 4 range is correct, or if it should be 2 to 5. That's always going to come back through the regulatory process to the RAC. Is that correct?

MS. HOLMAN: Madam Chair so, that's correct. The 1 to 4 caribou by federal registration permit was adopted by the Board. And it went through the public process, through the RACs to get to the Board for them to make that decision. If that number is to change, then it would have to go back through -- at this -- and that leaves the flexibility for the in-season manager. So, yeah. Anything outside that 1 to 4 or changes to that in any way, shape or form would have to go back through the public process.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Coral, go ahead.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, I guess I just want to comment because bringing up 1 to 4 that has been set can seem like, you know, it's a low number 1 to 4, right. Seems like no big deal. But I've sat in on these meetings where we've talked about raising the deer season limit one or reducing, you know, through Fish and Game the season by one, and it's a big deal. And I feel very strongly that -- and I like, so I'm -- as I'm hearing this, I can picture many years of Della having differences of opinion from refuge managers or Fish and Game, you know, what they're seeing, how they're doing it. So Della, and all those years of listening to Della and Rick Koso, I think are in my head going, you know, 1 to 4 is a big deal. And so, not having consultation in those numbers to me is still a big deal. And I feel like it should go through the public process.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, go ahead.

MR. HOLMES: I Madam Chair, I'd have to disagree with Coral. I know that -- for many years I've known Della probably 30, 40 years, longer than I've been on this Council they -- when something is amuck or they think that populations are shifting or the refuge surveys or the Fish and Game surveys have shown the change or they're not getting -- people quit requesting permits through the corporation which is where it's handled out on the peninsula, if the flag is raised, then the different agencies will bring it up to our RAC, or they'll bring it up to the local advisory committee.

They chat with the local tribal folks and say, gee, do we need to address this? I don't see that the proposal will change that because it's established. And any rational manager, whether it's federal or state, will interact with the public. And so, I do not think that this is going to exclude the public in any way. It's really not going to change anything. What it means anyway -- that's my perspective. And you might want to even have the Coordinator call up Della and get her input. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Jeff, go ahead.

MR. WASLEY: Thank you. Jeff Wasley. Yeah, I -- all of these hunts, in my knowledge, are vastly underutilized. I don't know how many caribou have been registered for subsistence on Unimak, but it's 1 or 2 in the last ten, 20 years. I don't know. It's -- and then we just heard on the 9D that the state and feds want more harvest. So, I think I trust Maria and the staff at Izembek to manage this resource and with their cuts, they have three people. They have a lot more on their plate than just this. Any way to help them streamline and make their jobs easier to manage the refuge as a whole. I'm all for helping them, not having unnecessary burden. So, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Further -- any further comments and discussion?

(No response)

So, I do plan to support this proposal. I very much support having the language and regulation versus being in a delegation of authority letter. I think that's easier for people to find. You just have to go to one place and you can find it. The other thing is, it's going to be in regulation so we can propose to change it. So, if it turns out that the appropriate -- if this passed and it went into effect, that it was apparent that there needed to be a more -- that -- I was going to say a more robust public process. If it was a problem and we had concerns with the refuge manager making these decisions, we can propose to change the regulation. But one thing that I really do like about this proposal is it's take -- it's putting everything in one place. So, instead of having to, you know, figure out or go find a delegation of authority letter, you can just go to the regulations and everything is right there. To me it is -- I'll use the word compelling, that with

these ongoing processes that I understand are done every year so, for these hunts and Izembek, the limits are set every year. And there is this required process currently for public notice. And all of the consultations that there hasn't involvement. So, I do find that piece of information compelling. But I think mostly I like the way this will -- I think it will lend more clarity because everything will be in regulation. And like I said, if this is a problem, if it does turn out that this is problematic, it can be changed. And I think that those are all of my comments on this. All right. I think we're ready to proceed to a vote. Leigh, if you could take us through a vote.

MS. HONIG: Yes, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Sorry, should I restate the motion?

MS. HONIG: Yes, please.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. The motion is to support WP26-01 and WP26-01C, with the OSM modifications that are shown in relation to WP26-01.

MS. HONIG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Leigh Honig, for the record. We'll start off again with Jeff Wasley. How do you vote?

MR. WASLEY: Yes.

MS. HONIG: Pat Holmes.

(No response)

Pat, are you still online? Okay, I'll circle back around. Coral Chernoff, how do you vote?

MS. CHERNOFF: No.

MS. HONIG: Rebecca Skinner.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yes.

MS. HONIG: Daniel Smith.

MR. SMITH: No.

MS. HONIG: Natasha Hayden.

MS. HAYDEN: Yes.

MS. HONIG: Brett Richardson.

MR. RICHARDSON: Yes.

MS. HONIG: And Pat, are you online and what is your vote?

(Pause)

Pat, I can see you're online. Can you unmute your phone or from your computer?

(No response)

Okay. Well, we still have a quorum without Pat's vote. And so, the motion carries, as amended, with 4 yays to 2 nays.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. So, it is quarter to noon. I think what I'd like to do, Leigh, is if you can give us the -- we'll move on to the next agenda item, which is the summary of the Federal Subsistence Board replies. We'll do that before lunch and then we'll break for lunch.

MS. HONIG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Leigh Honig, for the record. So, the Board's reply to the Council's annual report can be found in your supplemental -- the thinner meeting book, on page 17. And a brief summary of the topics that the Council brought before the Board and the responses are, topic 1 was the need for online access to federal subsistence harvest permits. And the Board responded that in 2024, OSM has initiated the modernization of the permitting application system that will help make permits more readily available. The new permit allocation application system should be operational soon. Topic 2, the Council shared its concern over the loss of the Fisheries Resource Research Monitoring funding in 2024 and 2025 for the McLees River Weir, and as a result, essential data was not collected. There was a need for improved communication about FRMP funding availability and greater RAC involvement in the FRMP application review and evaluation process. The Board responded that they recognize how vital the project area is and the Board explained that in 2022, all projects were fully funded due to cost savings from the virtual -- from the Council meetings that were held virtually during Covid.

Operational expenses since then have increased with a stagnant budget, making it difficult to cover both ongoing and new project needs. In addition, the modernization of the permitting database also impacted OSM's budget. The Board wanted to emphasize that they are deeply committed to ensuring that high priority research and monitoring efforts continue to be supported in the future cycles. And the Board values the input of the Council during the development of the priority information needs and the formal recommendation on proposed projects. However, current legal framework limit direct Council participation in the Technical Review Committee.

Topic three. The Council requested dedicated funding for weirs on a 5 to 10 year basis. The Board agreed that the continuity and data collection is essential, but due to current statutory authority, they are unable to set up new funding streams. The Board did encourage the Council to collaborate with federal, state and academic partners to explore alternative funding. Topic number four. The Council expressed concerns over a lack of enforcement in the region. The Board provided an update on Fish and Wildlife Service current enforcement operations in the region, which are currently in the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, they do not have an LEO on-site. However, LEO support has been assigned in King Salmon to assist. The Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge no longer has an LEO station in Kodiak, they are stationed out of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. And lastly, the Alaska maritime National Wildlife Refuge does not have an LEO in all responses will be out of officers from the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge Office. Topic five noted the challenges in ensuring subsistence access to resources arising from fragmented management approaches. The Council gave an example of the fragmented jurisdiction over salmon management between the FSB, State authorities and NOAA. The Board responded that each agency has different mandates that generally can only be changed by legislative bodies and the Board does not have the authority to lobby Congress to change mandates. However, they are committed to providing a subsistence priority outlined in an ANILCA title VIII. Additionally, under the Executive Order 14153: Unleashing Alaska's Extraordinary Resource Potential, the Board directed OSM to work towards consistency and alignment between state and federal hunting and fishing regulations. The Board is also planning to meet with the new administration to discuss critical subsistence issues, including inter-

jurisdictional salmon management. The Board has also requested that OSM find opportunities to promote cross-regional dialogue and understanding about salmon fisheries and their management within -- with the Northern Councils. Lastly, topic six was the importance of funding for statewide salmon research. The Board responded that many other Councils have raised this topic as well. The FRMP is organized into six regions, with an additional multi-region category for projects that cross regional boundaries. The Board commended the Council's efforts in shaping priority information needs and encourage continued engagement. Thank you, Madam Chair. That is all I have for this agenda item.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thanks. I guess are there questions for Leigh? Put her in the awkward position of answering what the Board meant by what? But we're on this agenda item. If there's any comments or questions on this particular item, we'll go ahead and take those now.

(No response)

Okay. Seeing and hearing none. Let's go ahead and break for lunch until 1 p.m. and I'm just going to continue in order through the agenda. I think we made pretty good time this morning. I think we're back on track. I was a little worried yesterday, but I think we're doing good. So, after lunch we will start with, identifying issues for the FY 2025 Annual Report. Oh, sorry. We will actually start with -- still under the you know what? Let's just do this now. Let's not break. What's that? Okay, I'm going to finish what I'm saying there. So, under the annual report replies, there is a number 1, which is working group with Northern Councils on salmon issues. And so, you heard and you can see in the replies that the Federal Subsistence Board is encouraging dialogue between the different regions on the salmon issues. And at the work session over the summer, the Federal Subsistence Board recommended that specific RACS and Leigh's going to have to remind me which they are. I keep calling them the Northern RACs and KARAC have some discussion altogether. My understanding was they didn't mean the entire RACs so, it's not 50 or 60 people. It would be a subset of people from each RAC. I'm assuming these would not be in-person meetings, but I'm not sure that there wasn't a lot of detail. So, I think the direction or intent is, that this is -- I'm raising it at this meeting so, that people are aware and between now and the winter meeting cycle,

OSM and the different RACs because other northern RACs haven't met yet, will have time to think about what does this mean? How many people from each RAC? What's the timeline? And then what are the specific goals or objectives we want to achieve? So, nothing's actually going to happen until the Winter meetings. But I did want to note this because this is kind of a new thing. We haven't been encouraged by the Federal Subsistence Board to have such a collaborative meeting with these other RACs in the past. So, I did want to make sure to highlight that. And Leigh, is there anything else on this item that I didn't cover?

MS. HONIG: No, Madam Chair, I think you covered everything. And I'll just reiterate that at this time, you know, it can be a brainstorming session on what the Council would like to have happen. And if you feel in-person meetings are more appropriate, definitely state that on the record. And then, like you said at the winter meeting, there will be a more formalized approach for this. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. And Pat, I'll go to you.

MR. HOLMES: When we come back, I'd like to just make a mention on the law enforcement issue on how one of the State Fish and Game folks coordinated things at Unalaska and Cold Bay after the question was raised. So, I'll highlight that then, if you'd like, because it was a case where our RAC and reaching out and found some coordination to help a bit. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thank you. Alright, we will break until 1:00 pm. Thank you.

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: We're gonna go ahead and get started again. We're going to do a quick roll call just to make sure we have on record who -- what Council members we have here. And I will hand that over to Leigh.

MS. HONIG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Leigh Honig, for the record, we have Jeff Wasley.

MR. WASLEY: Here.

MS. HONIG: Pat Holmes.

MR. HOLMES: Here.

MS. HONIG: Coral Chernoff.

MS. CHERNOFF: Here.

MS. HONIG: Rebecca Skinner.

CHAAIRPERSON SKINNER: Here.

MS. HONIG: Daniel Smith.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Here.

MS. HONIG: Natasha Hayden.

MS. HAYDEN: Here.

MS. HONIG: And Brett Richardson.

MR. RICHARDSON: Here.

MS. HONIG: We have seven out of nine seated Council members and have a quorum.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Okay, so, I wanted to go back briefly to the working group with salmon and just do a couple minutes on that. Then we'll go on to the annual report topics. Then I plan to go into the Federal Subsistence Program review, and we'll continue on the agenda from there. But I do want to do a time certain for Jackie Keating at 2 pm. Trying to be respectful of, as I said, the RAC members in the room, we can stay here as late as we need to but for other people, I'm trying to be respectful of their schedules, so we might do Jackie Keating and then Izembek if Izembek is actually planning to present. Okay. All right. So, just backtracking a little bit to the working group with Northern Councils on salmon issues. Leigh had asked if we -- the Council, could have a little bit of discussion to get ideas for what that process could look like. I will read again in our reply from the Federal Subsistence Board -- sorry, I scrolled to a different place on here. So, the reply from the Board says the Board will request OSM find an opportunity to promote cross-regional dialogue and understanding about salmon fisheries and their management between representatives

of your Council and the other Councils who rely on salmon that migrate between the Alaska Peninsula region and western Alaska river systems, in particular the Yukon. So, I read this to mean that OSM is really coordinating this. So, my thought is we can give some feedback to OSM. I -- I'll throw out some ideas. I guess I'm not looking at this as necessarily a Council motion, but if people have thoughts, I think they can be captured and OSM can figure out how best to utilize those. So, my suggestion as far as composition is that it be 2 to 3 people from each RAC. I think that will give a reasonable total of people on the working group overall, and particularly for our RAC, we do have three subregions, so three people seems to make sense. So, thoughts on that particular issue? Are there any other suggestions about the number of people that each RAC should send to this working group or have participate in the working group?

(No response)

Okay. So, there's that. The second thing is overall timeline. If the working group composition isn't finalized until after the winter meetings, my thought is that the final report or recommendations, or whatever it is, would probably be shared at the next winter meeting. Just because if we try to get that done for the fall meeting, I am not confident that we would have time to really finish the process. So, my suggestion is, since this working group won't be formed until after the winter set of meetings, that then it get and like one annual cycle to come up with whatever it is, a report or recommendation, notes from discussions, etc. So, are there other thoughts on that? And OSM if I'm saying things that you think are completely off base, please, please jump in. But that's like understanding how the meetings kind of occur, that was my thought. Okay so, that's -- that can be included in the kind of commentary. As far as goals and objectives, I don't know what to do with this one. On the one hand, I feel like once the working group first gets together, I think it will become more apparent what reasonable goals and objectives are. From my personal perspective, I mainly just want to see the meeting happen. I think that having a meeting that includes KARAC plus these other acts will be a huge step forward. So, I'm going to be honest that if that happens, I would be mostly satisfied. I do not think, I mean, we're not going to, you know, fix the salmon issue. I -- that's -- I do not think that this group is going to be able to do that. But, if there's other things that

RAC members think would be good to identify as an outcome of this, you know, discussion or dialogue. I think that could be helpful and then also, you know, I would expect again that OSM would also be having conversations and then hearing from the other RACs through the fall meeting cycle as well. And I apologize, I realize that this is very kind of vague and not very defined, but that's what we have. Okay, so I covered.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yes. Go ahead Pat, and then I'll go to Brett. Go ahead Pat.

MR. HOLMES: When you put this group together looking for volunteers, I'd strongly suggest that you get someone or at least one or more from the Alaska Peninsula that's familiar with the fisheries and on both the Gulf side and on the north side and Bristol Bay. I think that would be very pertinent for your discussions to have someone that has that experience, the knowledge of -- because the intersection issues have been coming to the table for 30 years or more. And anyway, it would be good to get somebody from there. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Brett, go ahead.

MR. RICHARDSON: Thank you. Just kind of reminiscing back to the All-RAC meeting winter 2024. I remember a lot of commentary that was anecdotal in the beginning. Which was valuable in its own way and then we received more scientific based reports on salmon and studies to that effect, and I like that balance. So, I think if this goes forward, I'd like to see some more of that. I would assume we would have the former by having people from all ranks present, or at least some of them. But I would like some science involved in that as well. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Yeah. And kind of following up on that or adding on to that, I do think it -- I don't expect everyone to have the same perspective or agree on either outcomes or even what the problem is, and I'm okay with that. What I do think would be really helpful is having a common place to start and I think your point about the -- like the

scientific studies or having common information that whether I guess you agree it's completely accurate or not, at least that's a starting point where at least we're all talking about the same thing. So, however, that is kind of defined for OSM to think about, I think that would be really helpful to have a common kind of starting place or I guess starting place is the best way to say it, because otherwise I'm afraid that it's going to be really hard to have a good discussion because there's -- because you can go in so many different directions on this. Okay. Are there any other -- go ahead, Pat.

MR. HOLMES: Miss Chairman, I would strongly agree with that and in recent years, the genetic studies that have been done in Bristol Bay, I think are very pertinent and I think they would shine quite a bit of light on what are perceived as very poignant perceptions. But you need to kind of look and see what is there and what the real indications are and I agree with the OSM staff that, you know, you need to be looking at the high-seas science things because that plus the in-river studies those are going to be very, very pertinent as to what's happening up in the Northwest. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Okay. Are there any other comments? I'm not seeing anything. Leigh, from your perspective on what you know of this issue, are there any other things that it would be useful to hear KARAC comments on before we move on from this topic?

MS. HONIG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Leigh Honig, for the record. No, I think there was some you know, it's just a brainstorming session just to kick it off and so, I think that we received some good feedback. We have an idea of how many members that we might want to have volunteer and some of the topics to kind of narrow down the scope of that. So, thank you for that.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, let's go ahead and move on to the C, small -- having a heck of a time identifying the little I, double I. Identify issues for FY 2025 annual report to the Federal Subsistence Board, and we have Katya Wessels.

MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just going to give a small intro before the Council actually works on developing the topics. And this is not

a new thing for the Council to develop the topics for the annual report. So, the Title VIII of ANILCA gives the Council's authority to submit annual report, and it is also written in the 43 CFR part 51. Like if you go to page 181 of your Council meeting book, the main book. There is like an annual report, little information leaflet. We have not changed the CFR to the correct CFR on that leaflet yet, because the regulations just got moved into that new CFR. But there you can see in, under report content, you see the quotation from ANILCA. It identifies the subject matter, what ANILCA was envisioning the Councils put in the annual report. And basically, in simple words, the Council's report should contain subsistence trends and issues from the region to summarize these four bullet points. And the Council's recommendations on regulatory proposals, together with these annual reports, they're meant to prepare the Board ward to make important decisions in an informed way on various regulatory matters. So, in ANILCA, it also, says that these reports are to the Secretary. But the Secretary established the Board and delegated that authority to the Board so your report is actually to the Board, and while you can certainly discuss issues outside of the program's authority, items under purview of the Board are the issues of take of fish and wildlife. Just kind of keep that in mind, on federal public lands and those issues outside of subsistence Fish and wildlife regulations on federal lands may be beyond the Board's authority to take any kind of action. Although Board always strives to provide, as you know, full of an answer to the issues that the Council identified, sometimes it's very challenging. And if you requested an action from the Board, make sure that the issue you identify in the report and the request, what you actually want the Board to do, to be very clear, clearly define it, which will make your communication with the Board more effective. You also want to, like if you have a lot of various concerns, you might want to look at prioritizing them, because sometimes, you know, there's like a lot of issues brought up in the report and Board is having a hard time figuring out, you know, what is the main Council's priority and what they should pay more attention to. And also, it would help if you bring up an issue and you can figure out, is it better to put an annual report? Or maybe it's better to write a letter to the agency? Really, you know, if you have a question, maybe it's a letter to Park Service or Fish and Wildlife or one of the other federal agencies. It doesn't need specifically maybe go into the annual report or maybe doesn't need to know about it.

So, the other question -- the other request that we have as the program, please try not to duplicate issues in your annual report and in the letters, that is ineffective. And the other thing to remember that topics that you identified today, they will be, you know, drafted by Leigh based on your discussion. So, it's important to have a robust discussion so Leigh has some essence to put under each topic. And when you meet again during the winter 2026, you will have that draft in front of you. It will be included in the meeting materials. So, you'll actually have it a little bit before the meeting. But just remember, you can change anything in that draft in terms of like the language of the way it's worded. But please do not add any new topics because this is topics that came up in Fiscal Year 2025, which ends, you know, just a few days here. The issues that come up next year, they will go on FY-26 Report. If there is some burning issue that comes during the wintertime, write a separate letter to the Board instead of adding this topic to the annual report. So, that concludes my presentation, and you know, are there any questions?

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Daniel, go ahead.

MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair. This is Daniel Smith. I had a quick question about the content that should be like in the annual report versus a letter addressed. Is there, like, a distinguishing substance that should be part of the annual report as opposed to a letter?

MS. WESSELS: Well, whatever you think will bring you closer to the achieving what you want to achieve really. There's not like, specific guidelines. I mean, there's guidelines in ANILCA, but they’re pretty broad, you know, these four bullet points. So, if you think you will get more action out of the letter, lets maybe better do the letter. But because the annual reports the way they work so, after they finalized during the winter meetings these topics are distributed between, you know, various OSM staff and agencies like Glenn he is on ISC. So, ISC takes some of the topics, then he distributes it to the people who work for the agencies to write some of the replies. We, OSM staff write replies, then they all combined, then it just, it's a huge production, so maybe not as much attention is given to a specific topic because we like I think we had, you know, close to 90 topics this year from various

Councils to -- and, you know, like most of them wanted a reply to the topics. And the time is, you know, kind of short between the winter meetings and the time we need to draft the replies in -- the draft needs to be ready by June. So, you just need to be judicial and think, you know, if it would work better one way or the other. I'm here to help you as much as I can, or if I have a question, I can ask my colleagues to help me to answer them. Some issues can be addressed directly at the meeting like that the Council might have.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. All right. Katya, was that the entirety of your presentation?

MS. WESSELS: Mm-hmm.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. All right. We will launch into Council discussion. Are there suggestions for items to include in our 2025 annual report? Jeff, go ahead.

MR. WASLEY: Jeff Walsey, Cold Bay. I think overall, like our area here, experiencing lower goose populations with the emperors, the brant and the cacklers, I think it's a problem that's not going to go away. It's just low production on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta mostly affecting this, but I think for our locals here, it's an issue and it's just -- I think it's going to get worse. So, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thanks, Jeff. And I -- so, as Katya said, it's helpful for the staff and Board to understand what's an action item and what's informational. I'm interpreting this as informational. So, you're not expecting the Board to fix anything. You're just letting them know it's an issue. Go ahead.

MR. WASLEY: I think informational, as you know, right now, the fall hunters are bearing the brunt of management actions, as we have no brant hunting this September. Emperor goose hunting is closed. Our cacklers limit was reduced. On the subsistence side of things, they also had a closed emperor season, but their brant season was still wide open and cacklers with no restrictions on limit of take. So, I think it affects us more as more people here are hunting in the fall under sport regulations, whether it's considered sport or subsistence by them, individuals. I think I'd leave it up to them, but the management actions so far have

affected us in the fall, where there has been limited impacts on the spring hunters. Thanks. Okay.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Additional topics. Pat, go ahead.

MR. HOLMES: Oh. Yes, ma'am. I was thinking we might wanna, while folks are discussing things, take a look at our last letter and see whether or not we consider the response as to what we were hoping for. One item I would like to consider is when we -- several things we've gone through, and you look at the population studies and there's years of blanks where they couldn't get caribou surveys or the last gentleman was talking about bird surveys. And, you know, the whole thing revolves around what critters are there and what amounts. And several years back, we did have a commitment from the Deputy Director of Fish and Wildlife Service for Alaska that they would assure that the top priority for the refuges would be at Izembek, that they would have adequate ability to do their surveys in terms of when they had service for their airplanes, available pilots. And that seemed to have fallen through the cracks. I just wonder, as far as the staff for the different refuges, if there are some problem areas where they would need support from our Council so that they can achieve these really crucial bits of investigation and that spins over into our discussions we had earlier on the for FRMPs and particularly for species that are having difficulties like king salmon. I think in our region, the only system that had decent returns of king salmon this year was Chignik and it was great, but the other areas were poor. So, we need (distortion) looking at the answers we got, we need to kind of think about some things that we could add to the list that would be general but would overlap multiple species. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Oh, and the other item was on the discussions on enforcement, and I was wondering for the refuge folks and other agencies, do they cross train at all, or do they rely on only having one enforcement officer? I know ADF&G has cross training for their field staff and I recall Tyler Lawson did a marvelous job on kind of calming things down at Unalaska and soliciting support from the city police department. He also did quite a bit of work at Cold Bay to try and coordinate things, including remote cameras and getting people to talk to each other. So, that's another question. If you don't have a ranger does anybody on staff have that

extra training? And the basic thing I recall from trooper school is the most important tool you got is your camera. Anyway, sorry to ramble, but that's some general thoughts. Madam Chair, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay so, just to kind of recap, I'm looking at the bulleted items of what the annual report should contain. And I think Jeff's comment around the lower goose -- well, the brant and cackler populations to me relates to probably the -- an evaluation of current and anticipated subsistence needs. So, in my -- what I heard is he's noting there's -- it's low right now. Probably anticipated being low in the future. It would fit there. The comments about the population studies and the law enforcement, I don't think it's a strategy we're recommending. It could be, actually, let's dump it under strategy. So, recommended strategy for the management of fish and wildlife populations within the region to accommodate such subsistence uses and needs. One is we need consistent and adequate population studies and the second is we need consistent and adequate enforcement. And we have previously commented on how the lack of enforcement or the current situation with enforcement is inhibiting subsistence in our region. Okay, further suggestions.....

MR. HOLMES: Spot on, excellent summary. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yep. Any further suggestions for topics in the annual report? Go ahead, Brett.

MR. RICHARDSON: Brett Richardson, Unalaska. So, in the response to last year's report, number two is lack of fisheries research monitoring program funding for weir projects, which directly looks at the McLees Lake Weir, which hasn't been in effect for two years and then number three was dedicated funding for weirs. I've -- I feel like these two topics, these two brought the attention to the Boards -- to the Board. However, I don't know if I -- we received a satisfactory response. I feel maybe they need to be more directed in terms of where will the funding come from and when will we receive a report that funding has been received. Because I still don't know if 2026 will have a weir in McLees. And it appears that the funding has come from ADF&G and the Q Tribe more recently, kind of in a co-partnership. Will that continue? Do we know? I'm not sure

who to reach out to for those items.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. And I think we may be hearing more about that under FRMP, although I may be misstating what one of the proposed projects are. But if we could add the weir. So, I said population studies you do for wildlife. So, that would include your ungulates and whatnot and your birds. And then the weirs would directly apply to population studies for fish, which we don't call population studies. But basically, it's accomplishing the same thing. It's the scientific kind of count or surveyed to see how much of a resource there is. Yeah, and I don't think it's inappropriate to re-include an issue. I mean, I know I think the Board gives the best response they can, but a lot of times the response is not satisfactory. Okay. Are there -- Daniel, go ahead.

MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair. This is Daniel Smith. I guess one of the concerns that I've had that we could potentially raise in this annual report is looking at a more thorough assessment of the composition of sockeye that are escaping in Buskin, specifically designating jack sockeye from adult salmon like they do in Fraser on the southwest side of the Kodiak Island. And I mentioned this in the Council report yesterday. There seems to be an increase in jack sockeye. And, you know, with jack sockeye, their smaller individuals are mostly male and, you know, they're very small. And this could have, you know, sometimes big implications for returning salmon, you know, even with commercial fisheries and then subsistence. And so, maybe it's an action item that we can say to, I believe Fish and Game has an FRMP with the Buskin Weir if it's -- if this is the proper place to present that to the Board or in a letter to Fish and Game, that they should make that determination with the assessments, rather than just saying there's sockeye and jack and adult would be much more preferred. If that makes sense.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah. So, I'm always thinking through, oh, how's the Board likely to respond and I think the Board is likely to say that's great. Thank you for sharing that. Please include that in your priority information needs for the FRMP. So, definitely remember to include that when we do the FRMP PINs so that it's in there. I mean, I think we could ask if Fish and Game could change their protocol, but I don't know if they're -- since they're in the middle of, I assume, of a grant program right now, I'm not sure

what their flexibility is. So, this could go to the Board, or we could generate a letter to Fish and Game, but it may be more streamlined to go straight to fish and game because the Board can't do anything. But if we can ask Fish and Game, hey, can you make this? I don't know how slight of an adjustment it is, so, that may be a more appropriate place for a letter if you want to do that.

MR. SMITH: Yeah. If we could generate a letter to Fish and Game, I'd be -- on responding to that. That would be. That would be good.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. I know we're in annual reports. I feel like I just want to address or deal with the letter issue right now. Is there any objection to the RAC generating a letter with the specific ask that Daniel just outlined?

(No response)

Okay. And then, Leigh, are you clear enough on what -- and you can work with Daniel to get more specific information. But are you clear on what it is? Okay.

MS. WESSELS: Yeah. Madam Chair, you'll need to have a vote if you're going to send a letter, a motion and a vote to send a letter.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Do you want to do you want to make sure -- Daniel.

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: We’re going to hear from Daniel and then we'll go to you, Pat.

MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to make a motion to send a letter from the KARAC voicing this concern and our thoughts about getting a more thorough assessment on the increase in jack sockeye that are coming or apparent increase in sockeye that are coming to the Buskin River.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Is there a second?

MS. CHERNOFF: Second

Thank you. And just to clarify, is part of the letter -- are you asking if Fish and Game can adjust their operations to actually start counting or documenting?

MR. SMITH: Yeah, it would be just a pretty simple adjustment.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Yeah. As long as that's in the letter, because I think that's a key. Okay. Is there any discussion on this motion, the motion to generate a letter to Fish and Game about tracking the sockeye jacks and the Kodiak area. Coral, go ahead.

(Off record conversation)

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Go ahead, Coral. Now I'm thrown off.

MS. CHERNOFF: Oh. Included in that letter, will there come up to be kind of like, a justification for that ask, like justification of why we're asking for that to happen?

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: I would expect that Daniel would be working with Leigh to provide a little more context. Yeah. Pat, I think I skipped over you. Did you want to speak?

MR. HOLMES: Oh, am I on, again? Sorry. Hard to learn to drive a new machine. Okay. I was wondering if on these studies or biological needs, if we can -- Is it possible, I guess this is a question to the OSM people. Is it possible for us to address some of our thoughts on support of different FRMPs because I understand that Chignik Tribe is hoping to also, as far as Buskin sockeye goes as a multiple step proposal ,but one of the steps of that that is looking at the limnology of the lake and what's going on and what's happening, and it's a small lake, but that’s something that's very important and probably might even apply to McLees Lake. I'm sure it would. The way the old biologist out there used to evaluate returns to McLees was getting a ballpark of age of the fish from somebody that was gillnetting, and then when they did the flies for the escapement survey sites, if the lake was all mucky and green, then they'd say, well, it's going to be a good year for years from now or five. But anyway.....

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Hey, Pat. That's actually.....

MR. HOLMES:.....that's a different focus on our letters.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah.....

MR. HOLMES: Sorry.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: We have a motion on the floor. So, I think you're mostly speaking to FRMP, which will be the next agenda item.

MR. HOLMES: Yes, ma'am.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. So, as far as the letter are there any other questions or clarifications before we vote? Okay. Is there any objection to the letter?

(No response)

Okay. Seeing no objection, the motion passes. KARAC will generate a letter to Fish and Game.

MR. HOLMES: I guess my point was to explore other agencies as well.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: The -- I'm sorry. The motion was just to send a letter to Fish and Game. So, that's what we just voted on. Okay. Are there other suggestions for topics for the annual report? We've touched on the current lower goose population and anticipation that that will continue in the Izembek-ish area. The importance of consistent and adequate population studies, which I, in my head, interpreted as wildlife related associated with that is the importance of consistent and adequate weirs to keep track of the salmon returns, kind of similar to these wildlife population studies. And then Daniel had a point, but we took care of that with a letter. Oh, and then also, with the population studies the enforcement issue as well. Go ahead, Jeff.

MR. WASLEY: Thank you, Jeff Wasley, Cold Bay. I think just a note. I don't think it has to be any more than that of just, the Mortenson sockeye return is still not as abundant as it used to be, say eight, ten

years ago. It had some more come back this year, but it's still a lot less than it used to be. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thank you. And that'll be kind of in the -- I keep moving my screens around the resource issue. Thanks. Okay. Are there more suggested topics for the annual report?

MR. HOLMES: On Mortenson. That's going to become increasingly important because over at King Cove, with the closing of the processor they used to -- folks get a lot of their reds from the commercial fishery, and there's going to be a whole lot less access to it there. And so, people that aren't, will have to be traveling over to Mortenson. So, they'll be probably increasing desires to fish there and so, that's going to gain a lot more critical use. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Pat. Yeah. If we can note that as a separate, however, we're doing this topic or paragraph. I do think for our region, the closing of that King Cove processor is a big deal, and I think it continues and is going to continue to have ripple effects, such as those that Pat just identified. The fact that in our region, a lot of people do take their -- they meet their fishery needs a lot of times by taking it out of their commercial catch rather than having a whole separate subsistence fishing activity. So, when we have reduced commercial fishing activity that has the impact of -- that's just less household fish, that's available through the through that channel. Okay. Are there additional suggestions for topics?

(No response)

Okay. I think then -- so, Leigh, from your perspective, are we wrapped up on this or do you need anything else?

MS. WESSELS: Madam Chair, I have a few things that I would like to say.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Go ahead.

MS. WESSELS: So, Katya Wessels, for the record. So, if we go to the top topic that you have, the lower goose populations. Are you thinking that as an information item for the Board? And if it's not an informational item, what do you want the Board to do about it? And the other thing is like, would you consider

a letter to the migratory birds on this issue? Do you think that will address it better? Like, I mean, if it's informational item that won't, you know, hurt. The Board will learn about it that that's an issue in the region. But, if you want the Board to do something about it, what do you want the Board to do about it? Or maybe you want to inform the Board but send a letter to the migratory birds and Fish and Wildlife, so like.....

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, I had already clarified that this was informational at the time we discussed it. And Jeff, if you'd like to propose a letter to the AMBCC, we can consider that. He's -- Jeff is thinking, you can continue thinking and we can come back to it. Okay? All right. Katya, did you have other questions?

MS. WESSELS: Okay. Yeah. So, the law enforcement issue, I mean, it was in your previous annual report. If you're going to put these again in the report, what do you want the Board to do about it? Because that's the current situation. The Board reached out to the agencies, got the information they reported to you on what's happening right now. You know, currently there's a federal hiring freeze that might not be lifted for a while. It's supposed to be lifted in October, but we don't know. It might be extended. So, it's not like the law enforcement situation is really going to be changing. So, again, is this just informational item or do you want the Board to do something about it? And what do you propose the Board to do?

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, go ahead.

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair, I would suggest that we approach this in terms of, they gave us a thing that they only have, like three rangers for the whole western region or something. But if the main problem on the Peninsula is during the waterfowl hunting season, well, then we should have one of the -- those folks be out there to take care of it. I don't think that it would hurt at all to have separate letters to the -- on each of these critter issues, fish and critter issues. A letter to the Alaska State Troopers, even though they're going to send most of their people during July to Bristol Bay there certainly are other times where you're going to have a crush of people at Cold Bay or crush at Unalaska or Chignik or wherever. Even though it's not our -- in our particular area, but that we asked them to consider using their resources at peak

times for these different critters and different areas. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Pat. So, from my perspective, this is an important issue. It is appropriate to include it in this year's annual report. I personally am not willing to just let the Board off by making this an informational item. Through ANILCA, we are asked to recommend strategies for the management of fish and wildlife populations, and then do recommendations that kind of narrow down how to actually implement that. I am not sure this rises to the level of an entire strategy, but it certainly is an important component in management, and it is continuing to have an impact on subsistence users. So, to me, do I believe the Board can fix this all by itself? I do not, but it doesn't mean that it's not something that is impacting subsistence management and impacting subsistence users. Go ahead, Jeff.

MR. RICHARDSON: Thank you. Jeff Wasley. So, the crush of people in Cold Bay, I'm not aware of like -- there are some people out here and as far as impacting subsistence, there are no subsistence seasons open now, it's all be sport. So, I'm curious on just what you said, like impacting subsistence. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah. And I'm actually thinking specifically of fisheries, because the last annual report, it came up in relation where -- there was a lot of discussion in relation to fisheries in the Unalaska area. And I don't think those have resolved or haven't heard the resolved. If they have resolved, I can withdraw my strenuous support of this issue.

MR. RICHARDSON: Brett Richardson. There's no known commercial fisheries violation in subsistence areas during subsistence dates this year that I know of. There were last year, and I don't know that -- the result of that necessarily. I wouldn't say just because it didn't happen one year. It's resolved though, so.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Katya, did you have further.....

MS. WESSELS: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: .....questions?

MS. WESSELS: I have I have further the questions. So, on the next bullet point, the population surveys and that was mentioned, I think, by Pat, that there was previous commitment by Fish and Wildlife, you know, for funding and, you know, resources from the refuges. Again, you know, if you can formulate for the Board what is -- what do you want the Board to do and also, consider, is that better just writing to the regional director of Fish and Wildlife a letter instead of putting it in a report? Just, you know, want the Council to think about it?

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, let me clarify with the Council all the topics we've gone through so far. Is everyone comfortable with those being in the annual report, or are we considering pulling some of them out? If everyone is comfortable with these being in the annual report, then we don't need to keep coming back to that question. So, for me, I'm comfortable with all of those topics being in the annual report. Coral, go ahead.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, I guess I'm not as comfortable with leaving enforcement in there again. You know, we did get an answer back. We have got an answer back several times. And then, yeah, I guess that's it. I guess, really, my main thing is the management really depends a lot of times on knowing what the population is. And so, I just think weirs are important and that's that would be my main ask is how do we get weirs funded.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Let's take the enforcement bullet. I am comfortable doing this on kind of nod of heads, or if we need to vote, that's fine. So, I've said I'm comfortable leaving it in. Coral wants it taken out. Can we hear comments from other Council members whether this should stay in or should come out, and its enforcement in general. It's both -- I mean, it can be both wildlife and fisheries. I was making my comments specifically in regards to fish. Jeff, go ahead.

MR. RICHARDSON: I mean, I think enforcement is important everywhere. And to single out Cold Bay and Unalaska, I mean, I don't.....

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, I did not, I don't think I -- I did not intend that the comment would be specific to Cold Bay and Unalaska. It can just say our

region. So, yeah, I was not intending.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. RICHARDSON: Okay. If it's a regional item, I'm fine with it.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah. Go ahead, Coral.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah. And I do just want to add, I think instead of sending something to the Board again about enforcement. They did recommend that we invite refuge managers, federal fisheries managers in the state to your meetings. And it says to learn more about their management and enforcement. And I think that is something that they've given us to do. And I think to do that would be appropriate. And then if nothing happens there, then we go back and send them another letter and say we've done this.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, go ahead. Are you still there?

MR. HOLMES: Oh, I was just -- yes, ma'am. Sorry. I was scribbling down some notes here. I think that I still believe that it would be important to express the concerns on the enforcement to all the agencies and the ones that do not have adequate personnel to have an entire season to request them to provide some coverage during the peak for the individual species by area.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you.

MS. WESSELS: I'm getting a note here from one of the OSM staff that the Board like, just so, Council, understands that the Board cannot direct funding under the law towards the enforcement. So, just so you be aware that if anything is going to happen, that's the agencies that will need to do something.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, I've heard from four people about the enforcement issue. Are there further comments on whether it should be left in or taken out? So, at this point I've heard more people speak in favor of leaving it in than taking it out. So, if you disagree that it should be left in, now would be the time to speak up.

MS. HAYDEN: Madam Chair, this is Natasha.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Go ahead.

MS. HAYDEN: I'm fine with leaving it in.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thank you. And then this is not in the annual report, but yes, for our next meeting, we should invite the agencies to talk about enforcement. Just as a side note. Okay. Katya, if you have more questions, go ahead.

MS. WESSELS: Well, I guess from this discussion, you know, my understanding is the only informational item is the number one, first bullet. And the rest are your requesting the Board to reply. Is that correct or are there is other items that are more informational?

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. And just for clarity, I think the assessment of the apparent increase in jack sockeye I that that's a letter. So, that's not in the report, that's a letter, okay. Yes.....

MR. HOLMES: That would be the limnology, limnology as well.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Yep, and so, number six is similar to number one. So, those both go to the -- what I'm going to call an evaluation of the current and anticipated subsistence needs. So, if we're noting that there's that our resource is low. To me that relates to what the current need is or will be if we think it's low or going to be low. So, one and six would be informational.

MS. WESSELS: So, is in the King Cove processor closing, is that a separate topic or is it a part of the Mortensen’s Lagoon topic?

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: For our region, I think that the processor closing in King Cove significantly impacts that community. To me, it raises to the level of having its own paragraph. I guess honestly, I don't really -- I can't really distinguish that one if it's just informational or for if there's a response. But I think it's very important that the Board understand that and keep it in mind. So, I guess I feel like if you make it informational, like it, oh, it

doesn't really matter. That's not -- this is important. It does matter, so.

MS. WESSELS: If it's not informational. What would you like the Board to do about it?

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: I -- my understanding was when you're asking informational or not, is if they're going to respond. I can't tell the Board what to do. The Board can respond how it wants to respond. Do I expect it to fix that problem? No, I do not. But it'll they can respond how they like.

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yep, go ahead, Pat.

MR. HOLMES: On the closing of King Cove, I think that that is one of the things that they need to be thinking about is that there's traditionally the place where most of their subsistence comes from, is on the Cold Bay-Izembek side. And so, if they no longer have an income, then they're going to be a lot more of them coming in skiffs across to the Cold Bay side to do their harvesting, particularly increasing pressure on waterfowl the limited sockeye over there limited little clusters of caribou. It's the whole arguments that we've made for years on the King Cove Road, that losing the plant over there is going to change the economics and subsistence dynamics of the -- that whole part of the Alaska Peninsula.....

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Jeff, go ahead.

MR. HOLMES: .....and they should be aware that that's going to be a consequence.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thanks, Pat. Jeff, go ahead.

MR. RICHARDSON: Jeff Wasley, Cold Bay. Yeah, and it's tragic with the cannery. And, you know, the community is going to continue to just get smaller. It's already -- I was talking to a friend of mine from King Cove, and she said it's down to about 320 people now. So, I think regardless of what happens, that community is going to continue to decrease in size. High cost of living out here and losing their main economic resource. I just -- I've seen the same thing on St. Paul when they lost the crab processing plant and in a matter

of years, the population, folks are just leaving. It's just too expensive. So, Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Okay. Alright. And I'm seeing nods from Leigh that she has enough to draft her report. Or at least you've noted who said what. So, if you need more info. Okay, so, if we can wrap this one, we'll be at 2:00 and just in time to hear from Jackie Keating.

MS. HONIG: Madam Chair, this is an action item. So, if you could vote on all these, yes.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yes. Can we vote on all of these topics. Is there any object -- oh, we need a motion. Would someone like to make a motion that our annual report include the topics as discussed?

MR. HOLMES: Move to adopt.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Pat. Is there a second?

MR. RICHARDSON: Second.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Is there any further discussion?

(No response)

Okay. Seeing and hearing none. Is there any objection to the motion?

(No response)

Okay. Noting that passed unanimously. Okay. We are done with the annual report topic. We're going to see if Jackie Keating is available to do the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Division of Subsistence Report.

MS. KEATING: Good afternoon. This is Jackie. Can you hear me okay?

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Excellent. Yes, you're coming in good. Go ahead.

MS. KEATING: Great. Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the Council. It's nice to hear everybody and I apologize that I can't be there in person

or there longer for this meeting but appreciate the opportunity to give our standard subsistence update. And I believe in your supplemental materials. It looks like it might be page 25. And as usual, just wanted to give you an update of where we are on all of our current FRMP funded projects for the region. Currently we've got FRMP 2022-454, which is the Comprehensive subsistence survey update for Ouzinkie and Port Lions. We went over and were able to do the community review meetings and both of those communities last fall and as we speak, the report is in internal review. We're looking forward to getting that out to both Ouzinkie and Port Lions in the next month so they have an opportunity to review the final technical paper, and then we're hoping to have that one fully published and online in December. So, we look forward to sharing the final results with that and it'll be fully available online.

And our other project for the region is FRMP 2022-452. That's the False Pass and Nelson Lagoon comprehensive surveys. We conducted that household survey research and then this summer we had staff go out and do some additional ethnographic interviews in Nelson Lagoon that took place in July. And we're also working on that final report. That one's going to be submitted this coming June in 2026. And we have a few other projects I wanted to update you on that are from other funding sources, but very relevant to this region. We've got the AKSSF Unalaska salmon surveys. So, that was a collaborative project with the Q Tribe and with the Division of Commercial Fisheries to do a combination of household harvest surveys specific to salmon and those were also, the aerial drone surveys with Andy Dietrich and the Q Tribe. So, we're currently also writing that final technical paper. That one should be out and available for everyone this coming December.

And then we're working with the Kodiak Area Native Association to produce some really cool summaries of existing data that we have from previous research and all the Kodiak communities. It's an effort to make all of this more accessible so that we'll have some summaries of what marine mammal survey data looks like over time for subsistence uses as well as salmon. We're doing one for vegetation, and then we're doing kind of a general handout on where folks can find this kind of household survey data and how to access it. And then one other update as far as staffing, we've had Maddie Christensen listening on to this meeting yesterday and today. Maddie's our subsistence resource

specialist, currently one of the Southwest region. So, we're really excited to have her. She's been with us for about a year and I also, wanted to introduce Greg Russell. He is our new subsistence resource specialist III for the southwest region. So, for us that means the Chignik out to Bristol Bay and including the Aleutians and he just started about two weeks ago. He's starting with us part-time and will be on full-time next month. So, I imagine he'll be at your winter meeting and available for anything in that region. And that's all I have. Wanted to keep it brief, but I'm happy to answer any questions if there are some. And thank you very much for your time.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank you, Jackie. Are there questions for Jackie? Or comments?

(No response)

All right. Well, I'm not seeing or hearing any questions so.....

MR. HOLMES: (Indiscernible). Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Go ahead, Pat.

MR. HOLMES: Yeah. Jackie, I was wondering, you folks had done some work or are doing work on the folks on the Coast Guard Base on their utilization of resources. And you know, traditionally they are quite a different culture and more sport related in their utilization. Are you identifying things that are taken with, let's say, sports fishing gear versus, gill nets or what methodology that they use to get their resources? And it's of concern because of -- several years back when we had the rural/non-rural, I believe we got a determination from the Federal Board that you know, they were a separate community from the folks in Kodiak. And so, it'd be interesting knowing what they're taking, but I think most locals wouldn't really include them as part of our normal subsistence culture. So, I'm looking forward to reading your report when it comes out. Thank you.

MS. KEATING: Through the Chair. Member Holmes, thanks for the question. And I know I probably missed some important discussion yesterday about characterizing the Coast Guard Base. I believe I can

give a pretty specific answer for you. I'm just kind of pulling up the information. But I think as most members of this body know, we were able to update subsistence harvest information for the Kodiak Road System in 2022 for the 2021 study year. That included looking at the Coast Guard Kodiak Station Census Area, and I'm pulling up to see if I can look at salmon harvests by gear type here. And it does look like for all species for the Coast Guard Station strata that it was all through road and rail harvest. And for reference, that is technical paper, let's see, number five -- five of six, that was recently published last year. I've presented some draft findings to this body previously, but that is all available online, and if there's any specific figures I can provide, please do let me know.

MR. HOLMES: Roger. Thank you. That's kind of what I had expected. Maybe folks could email me the paper. I appreciate it a lot. Thank you. Bye.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Are there further questions for Jackie?

(No response)

Okay. All right. Jackie, I'm not seeing or hearing any questions. Thank you for your concise and excellent report.

MS. KEATING: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Okay. After our -- sorry after lunch, I did say we take Izembek after Jackie. So, if Izembek is ready to present then we won't keep you the rest of the day if you'd like to go do your regular jobs.

(Pause)

MR. KALIN: Good afternoon, Madam Chair and Council members. My name is Jeff Kalin, Deputy Refuge Manager here at National Wildlife Refuge. Okay, better? And I am joined by my -- by our Wildlife Biologist Allison Williams. We'll give you a quick report on the subsistence hunt on Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. For Unit 9D, the southern Alaska Peninsula, the '24-'25 federal subsistence caribou hunt ran from November 15th, 2024, through March 31st, 2025. The current federal subsistence hunt has run through -- started August 1st and will run through September 30th. After consultation

with ADF&G supporting -- supported maintaining harvest regulations at the same level as prior years of federal subsistence caribou hunts, with the harvest limit at three. To date, I do not have any reports from either of those two hunts. For Unimak Unit 10, the federal subsistence caribou hunt on Unit 10 ran from August 1st through September 30th, 2025. The harvest limit is one bull per federal regulation registered permit. Unimak Unit 10 is open to residents of Akutan and Cold Bay, False Pass, King Cove, Nelson Lagoon, and Sand Point and also no reported harvest from that hunt.

MS. WILLIAMS: All right. Yeah. Good afternoon, Madam Chair, and members of the Council. For the record again, my name is Allison Williams, and I'm the Wildlife Biologist at Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. And I'm just going to run through a couple of the biological projects we've had going on since we last met, and this is on page 211 of the meeting book. I'll start with some of the avian projects that we've worked on. This year we again conducted the Alaska Landbird Monitoring Survey, which is designed to monitor trends in breeding bird populations on the refuge over time. For the survey, we have a grid of 25 points, each point we visit for ten minutes and record everything we hear or see during that period, and we conducted this on June 25th through 27th. A highlight of the survey was observing multiple breeding pairs of the Pacific golden plover, which is a species that prior to 2024, we did not have documentation of them breeding on the refuge, but we did find evidence in 2024. So, it appears that they are now breeding in this area and there is a photograph of one of them on the next page in your reading booklet.

Another breeding bird survey we conducted was the Breeding Bird Survey, is a multi-international survey that follows the Road System (indiscernible) with 25 -- actually, pardon 25 miles of survey route and 50 points to survey. We conducted this on June 30th and then due to weather had to pause for a couple of days and continued and completed on July 4th. During this survey, we detected 39 unique species, including multiple pairs, breeding pairs of the Pacific golden plover. Another thing that we're continuing to do is monitor the active walrus haul out in Izembek Refuge on Unimak Island. There is an active haulout in Izembek Lagoon, where we've seen up to about 500 animals hauled out and resting between foraging trips, out to the Bering Sea. And we are monitoring this because the

use of the haul out and then the levels of disturbance to walruses is important to keep track of as these disturbance events can result in stampeding injuries and mortality.

I have multiple things that we can report on our work on invasive species. Invasive species compete with native plant and wildlife species and disrupt ecosystems that subsistence users rely on. So, the Fish and Wildlife Service is continually working to limit the spread of invasive species in Alaska. So, we had staff from the Fish and Wildlife Service's Invasive Species Program visit Izembek throughout the month of July. While they were here, they conducted a number of surveys for invasive species on Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, as well as in the town of Cold Bay. They continued some treatments on invasive species already present here, including creeping thistle, orange hawkweed, oxeye daisy, creeping buttercup, and European mountain ash. While in Cold Bay, the Invasive Species Team did identify a couple new infestations of invasive plants, including creeping buttercup, tall buttercup, meadow hawkweed, and creeping thistle. The photo on this page, you'll see a new infestation that was found on an island within Izembek Lagoon, and so discussions are ongoing on how to effectively address these infestations.

The invasive species staff also set traps for crabs here in Cold Bay, as well as in King Cove to survey for invasive European green crab, which can have significant and destructive effects on Native aquatic plants and crustaceans, and this was first found in Alaska in 2022. Fortunately, there was no evidence of European green crab found here or in King Cove. Refuge staff also joined some staff from Alaska Maritime Refuge and hosted a slug off event in the community of King Cove. The non-Native European black slug is established in the community, and this event was aimed at attempting to limit the slug’s population spread and will help to protect subsistence resources such as plants and berries. During the slug-off event, community members collected slugs and competed for prizes, and over the course of 24 hours, they collected a total of 3,940 slugs that weighed 50.8lb.

I have one additional thing I'll report, that happened recently. Last week, biologists from the Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as the USDA Wildlife Services, visited False Pass after receiving reports of

possible rat sightings earlier this year. Invasive rat species rank among some of the most destructive invasive species globally and inflict billions of dollars in economic losses annually and disrupt critical habits -- habitats. Preventing invasive rats from reaching islands is especially important because their presence can devastate Native ecosystems, spread disease, and cause impact to communities that are reliant on fisheries and subsistence resources. The goal of this trip was to find out whether rats were established or present in False Pass, and to provide recommendations to the community to prevent rats from becoming established. During a variety of different assessment methods, no rats were detected, so False Pass is very likely rat free, but does remain at risk from shipping cargo traffic from other communities in the state. The community engagement experience there was very strong on this issue and moving forward, Fish and Wildlife Service and USDA will be working with the community to establish rat prevention plans. In addition, the Aleutian-Pribilof Islands Association is looking to pursue an invasive species component of their EPA IGAP grant in the coming fiscal year to support rat prevention efforts.

Izembek did conduct our annual eelgrass survey of Izembek and Kinzarof lagoons. This long-term monitoring study is designed to assess changes in the status and trends and distribution and abundance of eelgrass. This year we had staff from the USGS Alaska Science Center, as well as other eelgrass experts from the East Coast and Washington State come and help us on this survey. During this survey, we visited about 175 points in the lagoons and recorded information on eelgrass cover and length, seaweed cover, water temperature, water salinity, water depth and then presence of invertebrates. Based on the preliminary observations from the survey this year, this was a year of high productivity for eelgrass. We did also conduct our annual bear stream survey in late August. This survey is designed to estimate -- understand population trends in the area along the Lower Alaska Peninsula, and specifically in high use corridors such as anadromous streams. The report from the survey is still being completed, but this survey yielded low counts of bears along the stream corridors, which likely reflects a shift in resource availability and subsequent distribution change of bears.

We do currently also have USGS staff here collecting samples for avian influenza research and

monitoring. And so, they are collecting these from hunter harvested birds and then fecal material at roost sites just to detect and monitor presence of avian influenza. Some upcoming work we have going on, is the brant age ratio or productivity survey is scheduled for the first couple weeks of October. The accurate estimates of age composition can help us inform past reproductive success and future population trajectories. This productivity index that can be obtained here at Izembek for the entire Pacific brant population, is generated from ground and boat-based count ratios of adult to juvenile birds and then these data are shared with USGS and managers. And one additional thing I'll share is we're also piloting a new survey effort monitoring the behavior of (indiscernible) brant and the rates of disturbance to brant during their migratory stopover here at Izembek. This survey aims to replicate a similar effort conducted during the 1980s, when recreational use of the refuge was lower than it is currently. During the fall staging period, disruptions to foraging and resting birds can have impacts to brant body condition, migration and then possibly future reproductive success. So, our hope with this is to understand the changes in the level of disturbance and use of the refuge over the past four decades and any subsequent changes in brant access to food and rest while here. That concludes my report and we're happy to take any questions.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. I had a question related to the European green crab and then the rats. How did -- or why did you decide to set the traps for crabs? And I guess I'm wondering, is this part of, like, a statewide effort and you're kind of linked into a network doing that? And then with crab -- or the rats, why did you go to False Pass like you talked about ships, but are there a lot of big ships that go through False Pass, or why did you pick that there to go check if there were rats? And then how do you decide if you're going to go to other places? Thanks.

MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah, through the Chair. For the record, this is Alison Williams, again. Thank you both, great questions. The crab trap effort is something that's been ongoing here in Cold Bay and for multiple years over in King Cove over the past five years or so. So, it's a continual monitoring effort just to see what is currently present and get some data on the Native crab species here and in the event that the invasive does show up, we understand what might be

changing with those Native species as well. And this is a similar effort to -- that's been being conducted across the state since. We know that there are European green crabs in Southeast Alaska, and they may spread further. And so, we have been setting those traps in areas that are likely to have those introduced or where they might show up first. So, places like docks and harbors or eelgrass beds that crabs are drawn to. And the question on the rat also, a great question. And the reason False Pass was deemed to be something of high importance was because the community reached out to us and asked for assistance in evaluating presence of rats and how to prevent or deal with rats if they were present and so that that was one reason. Another is because False Pass is located on the island, and historically, islands are more sensitive ecosystems where rats can have really large impacts to the Native wildlife.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thanks. Jeff, Go ahead.

MR. WASLEY: Thanks. Jeff Wasley. Just curious if you're seeing a few more gyrfalcons coming back or if they're slowly recovering? And on a side note, I'd just like to thank the three of you for all your work out here. And gee guys I can see they are doing a lot. And there's a lot more stuff they haven't listed here that they're three folks that do a lot to keep an eye on the resource and do a great job. So, thank you.

MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah. Through the Chair. This is Allison Williams. Thank you, Councilman Wesley. Appreciate the shout out and I have noticed a number of gyrfalcons this year, so that is promising. It -- in 2021, the ADF&G had come out and done some work on gyrfalcons, and in 2022 did notice fewer and seemed to think that might have been tied to the avian influenza outbreak. And in subsequent years, I also noticed fewer. But there's not any formal survey to point to what they're doing out here. But the sign that there's been a number of sightings this fall already is a good sign.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Daniel, go ahead.

MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair. This is Daniel Smith. Yeah. Thank you for your report. It's very impressive with how much work you've just three people are doing here in Izembek. I had one question

about the eelgrass surveys. And -- how is this the start of a long-term monitoring effort, or has it been like, does it date back to however long? And then second question if it has dated back, is there an increase in the amount of eelgrass, and has it been more productive? And has that kind of one of the reasons why it's suspected that brant are coming back and overwintering here? Thank you.

MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah. Through the Chair. This is Alison Williams, thank you for your questions. The eelgrass monitoring effort was started back in 2007 as a repeated survey for this area. And so, it has been going on since then. And in that time, we've seen some shifts in the eelgrass, not necessarily big declines or increases. It's been fairly stable, but we have seen shifts in the extent of the eelgrass beds. There's some areas where some of them eroded away and then areas where they grew. And so, overall, it's a relatively stable trend just as far as total coverage. And I believe your other question was directed to why brant might be overwintering here more. And I don't know that we have a conclusive answer on that, but probably the main idea is that the lagoon appears to freeze over less in the winter. And so, that -- those eelgrass beds are now accessible year-round to birds, whereas in the past they were covered by sea ice.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Sounds like Pat has his hand up.

MR. HOLMES: Yes, ma'am. A few questions there. Thank you for your report. I guess one of the things that I always curious about is, are you getting support from headquarters for your aerial surveys, particularly on caribou? One time we went all the way to the top to get that for you but seemed like it only lasted a few years. Some of the tables that we saw on populations for the Peninsula look variable and some gaps in the surveys for there and on Unit 10. So, is that something that we could help try to get you some more support, or are things working out okay for keeping your planes and pilots available for when you need them?

MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah. Through the Chair. This is Allison Williams. Thank you for your question. We still run into some logistical issues that do make it challenging to get surveys done out here, including weather. Our pilots are currently based in Anchorage, and so they do have to travel quite a ways to get down

here. And so, there's often points along that path that prevent them from getting down. And so, we do tend to experience delays in getting some of these surveys done. But it -- I -- yeah, we have been getting good support from the program to try and get things done that are high priority. So, this year we were able to do the bear survey this summer. And we also were able to do that caribou survey this winter.

MR. HOLMES: Oh, that is splendid. I have a couple of more questions on the -- your discussion there on the subsistence hunt on Unimak Island. I think a couple of years ago you folks or Fish and Game noted that during the calving season that the females had moved west up into the northwest part of the island, up in the mountains to probably keep away from predators. Is that still the case that a lot of your breeding population is moved up to that part of the island?

MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah, through the Chair. This is Allison Williams. So, the state did come out and conduct some caribou surveys this summer trying to get a good population estimate. And then we also conducted our survey earlier in the winter. And in both of those, we actually did see caribou spread throughout the island and in good numbers. And so, it seems like this past year they were more widely distributed over the island.

MR. HOLMES: Oh, that's splendid. That's excellent good news. Has the wolf population dropped a bit or any notion on that?

MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah, through the Chair. This is Alison Williams. We don't have any current, like survey efforts specifically aimed at wolves. They are pretty hard to detect from the air, which is sometimes surprising. I think they are good at hiding and so we don't often see them from the air. I would say on a typical aerial survey, I might see anywhere from four to a dozen. And so, I don't really have a good finger on the pulse of what's happening with that population.

MR. HOLMES: Okay. Roger that. Yeah, they are pretty difficult to keep track of. I know a couple of seasons that we had to camp on the east and west Anchor Cove there was somewhat bothersome having them walk through the camp during the middle of the day when we were trying to sleep. But, and anyway, I would like to thank you for all your hard work. General trends on the brant and your migratory waterfowl are positive?

MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah, through the Chair. This is Allison Williams. Most surveys of the migratory waterfowl have shown drops in populations over the last couple years. And that, I believe, is why some of the geese species experienced closures or bag limit reductions or harvest reductions. And so, it does appear to be a slight population decline in the past couple seasons.

MR. HOLMES: What critters are those that seem to be...?

MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. This is Allison Williams. I guess I was specifically speaking to emperor geese, who are now experiencing hunting closures. Cackling geese, which in this region did experience a reduction in bag limit and then brant, which this year experienced a reduced hunting season.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. We're going to give you a chance.

MR. HOLMES: Okay, well thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Pat. Alright, let's see if there's any other questions for our Izembek folks here.

(No response)

Okay. I am not hearing or seeing any. Thank you. Great job answering all those questions.

(Pause)

Okay. So, that completes the two items that we took completely out of order. I did say that after we finished annual report, we would go back to the federal subsistence program, program review discussion and this is where we would identify items to include in a comment letter, if we want to submit a letter. And we have to identify those things on the record today if we want to do a letter for -- reminder that the notice for this opportunity to comment on the scoping has not published yet so we are operating off of some fairly basic information. But this meeting is our opportunity to formulate comments. So, my plan for going through this is to go through the bullet points that we heard. I am not anticipating or I'm not going to try to get --

what I'm most interested in, or what I think would be most useful is to get comments on the record about each of the bullets. And so, if different people have slightly different takes on each bullet, I consider that to be okay. I think all of this feedback will be helpful. And of course, individuals can submit their own comments once the notice gets published. In addition to the points we were already provided, we have an opportunity to suggest other things that should be covered during a program review if a program review is to occur. So, there -- you're free to suggest completely new things as well.

So, I'm going to start by going through the bullets that we received. So, the first one was move of the Office of Subsistence Management to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget. My observation is that, I mean, number one, this just happened. So, it seems like it's fair to give it some time to see how it really works, but also, I would have concerns about moving it anywhere else in the near future, because it seems like a highly disruptive thing to happen. Moving a department, I'm going to call it a department, completely between two different kind of operating branches and I would be very concerned if an outcome was that in two years OSM got moved somewhere else. I think that would be really, really hard on the staff. So, those are my observations or my thoughts, and I guess the change hasn't been in place. I mean, I've heard it's working well, I don't -- for me, it hasn't even been in place long enough to really see yet. I think the regulations just got transferred over, so it feels like it just barely maybe finish the transition process very, very recently. But does anyone else have comments that they would like to make on the record and note down for this point, which is the move of OSM?

MS. HAYDEN: Madam Chair, this is Natasha.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Go ahead, Natasha.

MS. HAYDEN: Yes. I would like to state on the record that I think that when OSM has had an opportunity to fully adjust to the change, that we will find that it is going to be extremely beneficial that the move had been made. I think that the Office of Subsistence Management is -- having it moved does remove that layer of bureaucracy from how it is able to do its work, and that I just think that it would be really

disruptive for the Secretaries to consider to move it again in -- for any reason and that it is very -- what is the word premature. So, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Natasha. Are there any further comments or observations on this point? Coral, go ahead.

MR. HOLMES: I'm still unclear.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, we're going to go to Coral, and then we'll go to Pat.

MS. CHERNOFF: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is Coral. Yeah, I think also, it has been too little time, and the move has barely happened to see what the effect of it is.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Pat, go ahead.

MR. HOLMES: I -- it's been done. It's done. I hope it gets -- able to stay there. I'm sorry that we didn't have any -- weren't solicited for any input on when that whole big upheaval occurred, but that's life. So, I just hope they leave it alone and let things get functional. Thank you, ma'am.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Any further comments?

(No comments)

Okay. The next point is criteria for Regional Advisory Council membership in -- so if you apply for the RAC, there's a kind of box on the application that goes over criteria for who qualifies. In my mind, it's also related to this would be the whole process of the nomination and appointment. So, comments on that I think might be helpful as well. But the qualifications or the criteria that are -- that you have to be a resident of the region that you're going to represent. You have to have resource knowledge so knowledge of the region's fish and wildlife resources, you have to have knowledge of the region's subsistence uses, customs and traditions. And when I say have to, I guess, I mean, your kind of graded on a curve. So, the more of these you have the better, knowledge of the region, sport, commercial and other uses, leadership and experience with local and regional organizations,

communication skills, ability to communicate effectively and then availability, which is willingness to travel to attend two or more RAC meetings each year and occasionally attend the Federal Subsistence Board. And then on the process side, the nomination process is public, so anybody in the region can nominate themselves. Public notices are posted or issued letting people know when the nomination period is open. I think we heard yesterday that in the process, when names are sent up to the Secretary, the Secretaries do see the list of every nominee who meets the kind of the minimum qualifications and the appointments are made by the Secretaries. So, are there any comments on the criteria or process for RAC membership? If not, one comment I have, I don't know if it's fixable, but it is a very long process. So, you submit your nomination or application paperwork and then it feels like a long time before you find out if you were appointed or not. And in the meantime, you know, maybe when you applied, you had the time to do it. But a lot can happen in, you know, 10 or 11 months. So, the long time period can be really challenging. I understand that may just be how it is because it's the federal government. But that's one observation that I have. Coral, go ahead.

MS. CHERNOFF: So, I guess I will say this. Yesterday we learned about the -- and -- well -- so, yesterday -- I don't know if this is something that is under this comment, but yesterday we learned that the makeup of this Council is -- has to be 70% subsistence user, 30% commercial sport, which I always felt to be interesting. I would expect that a subsistence Board would be a full Board of subsistence. I often see some votes that are in -- that go in direct opposition to subsistence, which is -- feels like you know, when the Board looks at things, it -- the recommendation they can go against -- well, section 805(c), that's what we're here for. Provides that the Board will accept the recommendations unless the recognized principles of fish and wildlife management are gone against, or if it's detrimental to the satisfaction of subsistence needs, or if the recommendation is not supported by substantial evidence. And I find it difficult when, like sport or commercial entities are in direct opposition to subsistence sometimes. And then when I look at Fisheries Boards, fisheries Boards have fisheries people seated on them. Other Boards have, you know, the state Department of Fish and Game has, people who are eligible for sport. And I feel like the Subsistence Board should just be filled with people who are knowledgeable and use

subsistence. So, I've always just felt that to be an awkward kind of a criteria for the makeup of our Board, which -- I guess that's all on that.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Brett, go ahead.

MR. RICHARDSON: Brett Richardson. I would agree with the Chair's previous comment in that once the application is submitted and that process starts and the interview and the reference checks and all that goes on, there doesn't seem to be a midterm update at all, which would be nice. Maybe halfway through. What is it, a ten-month process? It'd be great to get a, hey, you're still, you know, under consideration, email from whomever. Just simply to plan for the future. And another point is, I don't know if there is room for this in here. Maybe federal regulations and state regulations. Sorry to jump ahead a little bit, but if we're looking at the insurance of meeting the needs of subsistence users, I would still emphasize the need for an online portal to sign up for permits, which is -- I don't know when that would be happening. We heard about that a little bit, but no concrete update. And, and I've been looking online this entire meeting about how to get a permit and there's nothing, absolutely nothing. Not even a link to a PDF or call this number or email this person and I mean, that would seem to me to be a part of that process somewhere. So, I'm not sure if that fits in here, but thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: I think Pat has his hand up.

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair, question or thought. I emotionally agree strongly with Coral, but I believe 20, 25 years back, I don't know, the staff might have to look it up, but at one point, we were all subsistence, and then there was some type of a federal lawsuit or case or something, and then they came back and said, well, you need to have a portion of your group the commercial sport. So, I think that's kind of a tied down thing that came in from some legal decision, but I really don't know.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Are there other comments on the membership? Because otherwise I'm going to piggyback on Brett's last comment about online permits.

MS. HAYDEN: Madam Chair, this is Natasha.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. We'll hear from Jeff first and then Natasha.

MS. HAYDEN: Okay.

MR. WASLEY: Thank you. Jeff Wasley. I think the 70/30 is fair. Like, have a little balance and perspectives, and the subsistence still have the vast majority, and it does -- it's going to create some tension. But, like, I think that's a good thing to have, like a different perspectives, and then come together and figure it out. So, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Natasha, go ahead.

MS. HAYDEN: Thanks, Madam Chair. Natasha Hayden. I am in agreement about the ten-month process. Someplace in a midpoint update just to let applicants know if they are still in consideration would be really nice. And I am also not -- or let me put it in the affirmative, I would be supportive of the ratio of subsistence to sport and commercial users to be even bigger. I think that, you know, 80/20 would be more appropriate. I think that it is good to be able to hear from sport and commercial users about the needs and activities of what's happening, but ANILCA clearly has got in Section 8, that is a preference for subsistence -- the subsistence priority and that I think that it is having too many voices, having a voting say in recommendations is a huge potential for deviating away from making recommendations that then are going to provide for subsistence priority harvesting for federally qualified users. So, I mean, I think that, you know, at the very most 70/30, preferably it would be more like 80/20 or even 90/10. So, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. So, my comment, piggybacking on Brett's comment about the online permits. I agree that having more access online or more things available online is important. My sense is that with the subsistence program and I'm assuming this kind of grew up -- this kind of grew -- this was how it was in the beginning. I think my sense is there was a focus on, you know, person to person or in person contact and that -- that's how -- maybe that's how people preferred it to be, or that's what people thought the,

you know, the program should be. So, you need to show up and talk to someone face to face to get something or get your questions answered. I think that we're in a different time now with -- I mean, everyone is constantly on their iPhone and computer and social media, and I think especially with younger generations, they're just going to be -- they're going to be expecting to see it online or use their phone to get to it or not have to I mean, even use a telephone. Young people don't even make phone calls. It's all like text or chat or whatever. So, I do think having online like access and online interfaces, I would prefer it. But I also think as we move forward, that's just the direction things are going and that the program needs to keep up with that, or it's going to just get left behind because younger people aren't going to bother trying to interface with a program that doesn't allow them to do it via electronic methodology. So, on that point, are there other comments on if you want to call it online permits or online access or online interface?

(No response)

Okay. I'm going to go back to.....

MR. HOLMES: Madam.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yep. Go ahead, Pat.

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair, I don't know how it's particularly done now, but I, you know, on the state side, you can just phone them up and they'll just mail it to you. They used to have a designated permit folks, and the villages at the VSO office, and, you know, that's having contact in your community where you can just do it was certainly simpler and online, that would be fine, too. But I think it's good to have a -- multiple access and the easy way like that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Okay, the next bullet point on the list we had is membership of the Federal Subsistence Board and so, what we heard in the presentation, I think, was that originally the Federal Subsistence Board was the five federal agency heads and then one non-government chair. Over time, more public members were added. So, the current balance is six public members and then five -- the five agency heads and I guess I'll open that up to comment. Does that seem to work? Not work? Comments? No -- sorry. Coral like kind of moves her hands and she doesn't,

like, raise her hand. So, I'm trying to guess, is she raising her hand or not raising her hand? Because your hand going like this is the same as when you raise your hand. Okay, Coral.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah. I think it was great to increase the membership of the Federal Subsistence Board, adding more public members. It definitely, you know, when you get to voting and balancing it out, it definitely feels more balanced than it did previously, so. And I guess I don't necessarily, like I don't predict or wouldn't ask, you know, probably for more public members. But I think where it sits now is kind of a perfect balance when you look at balancing for voting.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Further comments?

MS. HAYDEN: Madam Chair, this is Natasha.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Go ahead, Natasha.

MS. HAYDEN: Yes. I am also really appreciative of the additional public members on the Federal Subsistence Board, and I am particularly supportive of the mechanism of which those members are identified. I've seen -- I wish I could recall their names right off the bat, but there's really highly qualified individuals that were appointed to the Federal Subsistence Board that were nominated by tribes, tribal organizations, or Alaska Native people from around the state. And they represent a vast variety of subsistence needs, practices, traditions and customs. And, you know, I think it was a huge step in the right direction that had been missing for pretty much the entire history of the Federal Subsistence Board since the passage of ANILCA. So, yeah, I'm really appreciative of those developments. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, we'll take Pat and then Coral.

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair, I, yeah, it's good to have those extra members. And I agree with Natasha, and I think that's really swell. I can't remember exactly, its foggy brain, but I think that there should be in the future some consideration on geographic differential, because I just really don't recall that we've got somebody on there from that looks at our neck of the woods in the northern Gulf and Alaska Peninsula.

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Coral.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yes, Pat. I will just say I agree with Pat. That was going to be my comment. I know there was -- so if there's not already -- there was talk about it -- if it was -- if those members that were nominated were going to change geographical areas from nomination to nomination period. And so, if that's not happening already, I would like to suggest that that be on the list of something that needs some improvement. I don't know right now who is the closest area that might be representing our area that's on the Board. But, yeah, I think having regular, consistent representation from the different geographic areas is necessary.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Go ahead, Jeff.

MR. WASLEY: Thank you. Jeff Wasley. I think it's a little early. Like to see how it works out. So, like, this just happened, right. I mean, so, we'll see how it goes and hopefully it'll lead to a better management. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, I will make my comment. So, one observation I have after attending, I think at the July meeting they had all the new public members, and it is a real thing. And I'm not saying it’s a bad thing, but it is a real thing that in the past, the federal agency heads had the majority of the members on the Board. One advantage of that is if the Board voted to do something, you could be pretty sure that they could and would be able to carry out whatever the vote was. Currently, because there's more public members, there is a potential that the public members will vote in one direction, and there's six of them. So, they could vote for something that the federal agency heads can't or don't want to do and they're not going to say no outright, necessarily. It's just never going to happen. So, that is a change in dynamic. I'm not, again, I'm not saying if that's maybe that is a good thing, maybe it's not. But it definitely change -- in my opinion, definitely changes the dynamics of -- and I think what happens after a Board vote. As far as the public seats, I do think it's important -- so, currently there's three that are recommended by federally recognized tribes, and the other three don't have that tribal recommendation component. I do think it's

important to maintain public seats that are not recommended by tribes, primarily because ANILCA is for rural residents and there are rural residents who are not affiliated with tribes, and I do think it's important -- because they are part of ANILCA it's important for them to have a pathway to if they wanted to be on Iraq or wanted to be on the Federal Subsistence Board that they could try to do that if they wanted. And I think those were all the comments I had on that one.

Okay. Next bullet point is federal regulations and state regulations for duplication and inconsistency. This one I think the example when we got the presentation was, is it helpful to have the federal regulation -- to have like a complete set of federal regulations that can be published in the book so, that the handy dandy, or does it make sense if the basis is state regulation and then federal regulations are just kind of exceptions to that or changes from that. Does it make sense to maintain kind of these two separate systems where the Federal Subsistence Board regulations are just, you know, bits and pieces that are overlaid where they're different. My view is as a -- someone trying to use regulations, it's very handy to have everything in one place. I think it would be, I mean, for me, even given my background, it is a pain in the butt to try to go compare two completely different sets of regulations and then try to figure out where the gaps are, where they align, where they don't. And if I just want to go hunting it, like, why do I even want to go through that. So, for me as a user, I do think there's value in having the federal regulations all in one place. Even if they do -- they are identical. Some parts are identical to the state regulations. So, that's my thought. But additional thoughts and comments.

MS. HAYDEN: It's Madam Chair, this is Natasha.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Go ahead, Natasha.

MS. HAYDEN: I'm just going to ask you to clarify. Are you saying that you would prefer that the federal subsistence regulations continue to be published the way that they are?

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah. So, if the -- like if what we're being asked to comment on is should we do away with all of the duplicative federal regulations and only keep the ones that are different

and then the state regulations would be the basis? I don't agree with that because I think as a user of those regulations, it's just harder to navigate in my opinion. So, yeah, I think that what you characterized was correct.

MS. HAYDEN: Okay. Thank you for that. And then if, if you don't mind, Madam Chair, I'll go ahead and make my comments on this.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yep. Go ahead.

MS. HAYDEN: So, Natasha Hayden, I agree with you. I think that it is important for the federal Assistance Regulations to be able to be published and that they are available to eligible users in one place. And, you know, there may not be many occasions or instances where the federal subsistence regulations differ from the states, but that may not always be the case. And I think it's really important for the integrity of the system for it to continue to be published by the OSM. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Any further comment? Coral, go ahead.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yes. I believe strongly that federal regulations and rules should be definitely separate from Alaska's state regulations and rules. There are two different agencies. The upper under -- they operate under different ideals about the taking of wild game and fish. The federal is very specific to ANILCA and rural areas, they just have a lot of basic structure that doesn't align and different means of taking. And so, I think for clarity and just they should remain separate.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Further comments. The -- I just wanted to address the inconsistency. The word inconsistency is in here. I think there should not be an inconsistency. Hopefully it would be clear what set of regulations apply and if federal applies, then it doesn't matter what state says. If state applies, then it doesn't matter what federal says. I realize that's not actually true, that sometimes there is argument over who has jurisdiction, but any inconsistencies if they truly are just kind of leftover stuff that needs to be fixed, it should be fixed. If inconsistencies are related to arguments over jurisdiction, that's a whole different issue.

Okay. The next bullet is regulations governing special actions. We did hear earlier about the, you know WP26-01 that related to certain kinds of special actions, the in-season management, special actions. But I think -- I'm thinking that this particular one relates to actual special actions, which are big changes or things that arise due to special circumstances. So, they're not things you see every year. These really are special, unusual kinds of actions. In our region, we haven't had any of those types of actions in over 20 years. But, if people have thoughts on this particular point, this would be the time to share those.

MS. HAYDEN: Madam Chair, this is Natasha.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Go ahead, Natasha.

MS. HAYDEN: I just have a clarifying question. I'm not sure if anybody in the room might be able to answer this. Would the action taken by, I think it was the organized village of Kake when they issued an emergency moose permits during Covid. Is that an example of a special action that this would be referring to?

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: That’s probably the exact example of what this is referring to, yes.

MS. HAYDEN: Okay. Great, I am -- great. Thank you. I am in support of the Federal Subsistence Board continuing to have the authority to issue special actions. I think that the -- what has transpired in the last few years is a demonstration of why it's necessary and really, the system, you know, at work. And it worked for the communities for the -- that community in particular and I believe there's also the special action for salmon fishing on the Kuskokwim. And I think that, you know, the need for these special actions is probably not going to diminish in the near future. I think it's probably going to just become more important as time goes by with such dramatic changes in the climate and with the availability of resources. So, yeah, I think that it is necessary and am supportive of that continuing to be available to the Federal Subsistence Board. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Not seeing any other hands. I am supportive of maintaining the ability of the Board to do special actions. My one comment would be, especially with things that are different, like special actions. It's important to have a clear process and structure and to follow that process and structure. So, if special actions have a certain time limit, they can't exceed 60 days. So, in my mind that means it's 60 days and then after 60 days you're back in status quo. And if you want to do something else or change the permanent regulation, you should go through that process. If something other than that is happening, I think that's destined to lead to conflict and frustration and potentially lack of transparency. So, I think it's important to have this mechanism, but I also think it's important that everybody understand what the rules are, how the rules work, and that the rules are actually carried out the way they're written. And if they don't make sense as written, then they need to be changed so that they do make sense. But, other than that, I don't have specific suggestions of any changes.

Okay, the next bullet point is the role of the state and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in the Federal Subsistence Management Program. For -- I think this -- you could read this a lot of different ways. My first thought was in our region, we are very dependent and appreciative of the Fish and Game biologists, because they're the ones a lot of times who are providing the data on the stocks, fish stocks or wildlife stocks, whatever it is. And without them, we wouldn't have enough data a lot of times to make good management recommendations. So, I think that that's imperative to maintain or, you know, even increase the participation and strength of that relationship. If we're talking about at a higher level. So, if like, if this is an argument about who's controlling the decision making, I feel like under ANILCA there's a real preference. The state literally cannot do that and that's why we have federal management. So, I have a hard time understanding how would you increase the role of the state in that, because the state literally cannot do what ANILCA calls for. But absolutely the -- even in our area, which is not as checkerboarded as other areas, it does require both state and federal resources given the way the system is to understand what's happening with the resources and manage them well. So, I mean, you can't exclude one party or the other. But it is a Federal Subsistence Management Program and so, it makes sense

to me that the federal side would be controlling in the system, but those are those are my thoughts. Are there other comments or observations? Daniel, go ahead.

MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair. This is Daniel Smith. You know, I believe the role of the State Fish and Game, they provide pretty great technical expertise especially in relevant proposals. I think, just making them a little bit more engaged in that process. With the reviews and being present like you were mentioning, Rebecca is something that I think they could do better at, maybe.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Go ahead, Brett.

MR. RICHARDSON: Thank you. I agree with both of your comments. I think it's crucial that we all work together for the technical aspect of it, without which we wouldn't have as much necessary information. That said, at a higher level, the politics comes into it. I mean, isn't there a case going to the Supreme Court right now? State trying to, what, undo ANILCA? I don't know how that's going to work out, but the constant battle seems to be present to preserve the rights of federally qualified users. And I think that's a very important, you know, vigilance in that regard and while still maintaining good relationships across the board, and I hope that's possible. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Go ahead, Jeff.

MR. RICHARDSON: Thank you. Jeff Wasley. Yeah. It's the duplicity. You know, ultimately, a lot of these resources are shared by different user groups. And the state has a different mandate than ANILCA. And I think ultimately, the more people involved, and the more other people can understand different points of views. And I think especially for like migratory birds that are shared by so many people within our country and beyond that, I think the Fish and Game are kind of lacking in the management of migratory birds in this state and a lot of people are left without a voice. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Coral.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah. I'll just echo, like the -- I guess the data that the -- I think that's a good, shared use, and a good role for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game is to share that data with

the Federal Subsistence Management Program. I think also, you know, you might be able to pull in, you know, the idea of shared enforcement too and I guess the reason for that is we all have there's so, many places where there's state land next to federal land, and all of the state and federal users use federal lands and state lands. So, in that sense, we're all using the same resources and so, it only makes sense to share that data for sure. So, there would be -- yeah. And so, I just was thinking the same idea of just moving that into the enforcement area because I think about how, you know, you could have troopers out here. But how could we make it so they could enforce for federal, also? I mean, they're all trained enforcement. So, that was my comment.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah. And I'll just comment that on the commercial fishing side, there's definitely collaboration between the state troopers, the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement and the Coast Guard. So, in other arenas, enforcement does collaborate and kind of share enforcement activities.

MS. HAYDEN: Madam Chair.

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah. We'll hear Natasha and then Pat. Go ahead, Natasha.

MS. HAYDEN: I was just going to draw attention to that Pat's got his hand up so, I could go after him. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Go ahead, Pat.

MR. HOLMES: Oh. Thank you, Natasha. You're always a gracious lady. You know, I think the points that were raised here are very good. And it all -- because of resources overlap different state and federal lands. And so, you need to have the respective party who is in relation to that land responsibility. And, you know, I've been both on the Fish and Game Advisory Committee and also on the federal one and generally sit in on the state meetings when they show up in Kodiak. And I think basically people really do try to give a fair distribution on subsistence use and you know, really try to prioritize it as much as they can within the restrictions that they have. And so, I don't

know that we're going to really accomplish change. I think that at least in our communities, they really do try to find a way to work it out. And sometimes and like in the case of mountain goats, we're able to do things, deer you know, and you know, there's no reason why we can't get along, and it works. So, Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Natasha, go ahead.

MS. HAYDEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Natasha Hayden. I just wanted to put a finer point on a couple of things that were said already. The one about the dual management systems that ANILCA has the rural preference. The state of Alaska doesn't have a rural preference because it is in violation of the state of Alaska's Constitution. So, that is a real -- that's just a real just a discrepancy or discontinuity between how those two jurisdictions are able to manage the resources. Another one is that the state of Alaska is currently petitioning the Supreme Court to overturn the -- I'm not sure the exact details, but I believe the special action for sure is part of what is they're asking to be overturned, which goes back, I think what, you know, 30-40 years to the Katy John precedent. And so, that is a real concern that the governing body in Alaska is actively trying to undermine the rural preference that ANILCA has a mandate for. And then the third point is that the state of Alaska has got a mandate for maximum sustained yield. Is that what it's called? Maximum sustained yield in -- for all users of all of the natural resources, which is a very different mandate than providing for the subsistence needs of rural residents. And so, they're not -- sometimes they can go along in parallel. But, a lot of times, especially in times of scarcity, they are at odds of each other. And so, I -- I'm just wanting to highlight some of these points regarding how we communicate back on this question. And then I -- the -- I guess the final thing would be about the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's ability to conduct good observational science data collection and whatnot, and that that information is critical for all resource management. And so, I would look forward to continued cooperation between ADF&G and the Office of Subsistence Management into the future regarding how the information is collected and then is able to be used for the benefit of the resource. So, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. I had one other comment related to this issue. I think it's unfortunate that our communication and relationship with

Fish and Game at our more local levels in this process, in my opinion, does get negatively impacted by what's happening at these higher power struggle levels between the federal and the state governments. I think a lot of times, especially with Fish and Game staff who live in our region and work directly with the resources, my impression is they very much appreciate participating and being able to share information and be part of the discussion and at a like system-to-system level so, the Office of Subsistence Management to Fish and Game, if communications have to be funneled through a certain channel, that relationship really gets lost or impaired. And my encouragement would be, I don't know if this is, you know, part of the bigger program review question or if it's a -- could be addressed at a lower level. But, I mean, I remember in the past we were able to reach directly out to, you know, the Kodiak wildlife biologist and say, hey, here's the meetings coming up, can we get this, that and the other, hey, we want to talk about this, that or the other and that's how it was. And it doesn't work that way anymore. And I do think that that stilted communication is having a negative impact and that it would be nice if it could be addressed. And I say that recognizing that there is this higher-level power struggle between the federal and the state systems and maybe we can't ever get back to where we were, but I wish we could.

Okay so, the next bullet is Board procedures for non-rural determinations. There is a -- an Board policy document that's on the OSM website. I sent it around earlier this week, but it outlines the factors that are considered in a non-rural determination. In the past there were more specific factors that maybe were in regulation, but population was one. So, in the old days, population was a determining factor for whether something was determined to be rural or non-rural that was eliminated and instead, the way I would characterize it is that the evaluation became much more qualitative and flexible. So, there's certain things that the Board and the RAC, because the RAC does get to weigh in on these decisions. So, there are certain criteria or factors that the RACs and the Board consider, but I think we heard, or I heard that these things are not in regulation. And I have heard from, I think it was particularly the southeast RAC because there was a recent decision to -- for that Ketchikan was determined to be rural after many, many years of being non-rural. What I heard was that the southeast RAC was really frustrated that it didn't have

more concrete kind of characteristics to consider when looking at that determination. So, that could be partly what's leading to this is once it had to be -- once the new system had to be applied, maybe people were pretty either at sea or frustrated that there wasn't more concrete black and white characteristics to look at. So, are there any comments on Board procedures for non-rural determinations? The other thing I'd say is it would be nice, I mean, there's this kind of policy document, but if those policies are meant to be procedures that it be retitled procedures or, you know, just to make it clear that this is the official thing that is used and that there be consistent like that -- like consistent naming or nomenclature for what it is. Are there any comments on this particular bullet?

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, go ahead.

MR. HOLMES: I don't particularly have any comment on it. I haven't studied it in depth. I know that we -- when we had the rural/non-rural before, I testified for our Council on support of the, oh shucks, what's the name of the village? It's, you know, just outside of Ketchikan as being part of it and agreed with the folks there that the city itself was quite urban but I think there's a whole lot of folks there that are really long term Alaskans and a lot of the Native folks from the village now live in town and it's practically one continuous community. But, as far as having any input on making that a smoother process, I don't have anything to say, Madam. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Further comments?

(No response)

Okay. So, that was the last bullet point that we had. I have two other things and then if other people have other things they want to bring up. So, I don't have a good sentence for this, but I think that the topic of subsistence priority, is -- while it sounds clear, sometimes it's not clear what that means or it's not clear what is required to achieve it or it's not clear if it can be achieved, or different people define it differently. And so, I think at a program review level, if somebody can come up with a better way in this process of characterizing this topic, I -- in my opinion, this is one of -- this is a thing that is creating a lot of conflict because particularly with

salmon, there isn't one management body that is -- that completely manages salmon. Salmon goes from NOAA fisheries management through state management, through federal subsistence management, depending on where it is, if it's out in the ocean or within three miles in the ocean or in a river. And, in some areas, it's easy to understand what a -- how a subsistence priority works, in other areas, geographic areas or circumstances, it is not clear at all. And my sense is that for, you know, the end user, they're like, but there's a subsistence priority fix this. The problem is they're -- not one entity can fix it and not everybody has the same, you know, subsistence priority or understanding of what that is. So, I don't have a suggestion as to how to fix it. I just see this as a kind of a pain point in the system. The other one is my pain point over the last couple years, are these annual reports that we do. So, they are addressed in ANILCA. It says we do an annual report. It's not a lot of direction on what that means, not a lot of direction on what happens to those annual reports. And I feel like that's leading to a lot of frustration about how this works, what's required? What's required at each stage? What should be done with these annual reports? How are they beneficial to the system? I don't know if in the beginning when ANILCA was first written, I don't know what the idea was that would happen with these annual reports but I feel like over time because we have now these more robust regulatory cycles for fish and for wildlife, a lot of the resource specific things are addressed there, which means annual reports have kind of become the place to talk about everything else, that doesn't fall within the regular -- the topics that fall under the regulatory process. So, that is also a pain point, because if this is the catch all for everything else, it's everything this Federal Subsistence Board can't fix. So, in this program review, it may be useful to look at -- to go back and revisit what are these annual reports? What is done with them? Are they useful? What are they for? How do they work? What should be in them? And then what is the Board's responsibility? Does the Board have to respond or is that just something that they prefer to do as a kind of as a courtesy and sign of respect that they're respondin? But in reality, they can't do anything about most of the stuff that's in these annual reports. So, those are my two extra suggestions. Do other people have anything else that they would like to note down?

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, Pat, go ahead.

MR. HOLMES: Just a footnote on the earlier topics on rural/non-rural and whose regs apply to which land, state or federal lands. I do believe, and it's been a few years since I studied the land claim settlements and the transfer of lands to the tribes and native corporations. But I think with the exception of one village in Southeast, all of that property that was transferred to the corporations and tribes is considered private property. And unfortunately, or fortunately, depending on what your perspective is, falls underneath the state regs. And so, that's another complicated and the whole thing. And I think a lot of it comes down to not necessarily what the governor's office is trying to do, and all the court cases. That all depends on how people in local communities get along and how they try to solve problems. I found out yesterday at 1:00 in the afternoon that the Game Division folks, Nate, had not even received a notice of our meeting, and I called him up, he was in the middle of another meeting. And so, communications are vital at all levels and particularly when we're having our sessions, we should assure that the respective state folks can participate. And yes, sometimes they do have to send the positions through another level. But, if they had gotten notice three months ago of the meeting, or even sooner, that allows them to follow through whatever extended process they have to have. But I think once you get out in the field and that basically both the state and the fed biologists really try to make it work for everybody. So, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Are there any other -- Coral, go ahead.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, I guess in this review, I would really like for this priority to be dove into. Like Rebecca said, what does that mean? How do we get there? We very -- are, you know, it's like we're always at the end of the line, commercial sport, it's like, here's two fish, here's two fish, oh, there's not enough for you. You know, we're up the rivers or like, even trying to request bears in those proposals that we did, and you see how much is accessed by other user groups and we have to beg and beg for a little bit. That just over the years gets frustrating. I know we've also had times so -- the refuge managers having, you know, having those in-season ability to shut things down. And then now some of those things without consultation,

that's bothersome. I think we've taken a step back there. Yeah. I think we have to figure out how we're last on the list. But how do we uphold that we're supposed to have priority? And many times, we're shut down at the same time as sport so that doesn't give us priority.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Jeff, go ahead.

MR. WASLEY: Thank you. Jeff Wasley. So, on migratory birds, I just gonna to point out that subsistence gets extra seasons in the spring and summer, and they can also hunt during the fall season. And when it comes to management decisions so take brant, for example. Subsistence is already taking 90% of the take and the sport hunt or fall or recreation or whatever you want to call it is 10%. So, the population or index was down, triggered a restrictive season. So, our hunters here don't even get a season until October. But there was no reduction in take on the spring season. So, I don't think it's always you know, where subsistence are getting the short end. I think with migratory birds, you know, we are sharing these birds with a lot of people outside of our country, definitely with outside of our State and to them they don't recognize -- they're not from Alaska and they shoot a bird, say in Mexico, and they're going to eat it. They don't see any difference between someone shooting a bird in Alaska and eating it. So, I just want to point out with migratory birds that subsistence you can still hunt during a sports season just like anyone else. And they also get a spring and summer season. So, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. So, are there any other points to add to this. And then because we were talking about putting this into a letter, we're going to need a motion to accept the -- these points as being included in the letter. And I would literally characterize them as, you know, considerations. They're not necessarily like directive and this letter is in response to what should be -- this is the scoping process of what should be considered in the program review. There -- if there is a program review, there will be another opportunity to comment on specific things that are identified as part of the program review. So, right now we're really just advising on, hey, here's things that maybe should be considered as part of the scoping process. So, are there additional things to add to this list?

MR. HOLMES: Well, Madam Chair, I know if I might back up just a moment, and reflection of Coral's comments. I don't happen to agree with all of it. I think that in the case of Kodiak, they manage Buskin sockeye that is never opened for commercial. It's all subsistence. They do manage it locally for subsistence. And also, another case in the past when the Vancouver Canadian geese were introduced to Kodiak, it was the state staff on the Migratory Bird Council that was able to get that implemented. And it has made a great difference to the folks down in Old Harbor. So, it's a mixed bag all the way around and I can understand how a person can have different perspectives. And so, I don't know that you can definitely say that the state is against subsistence. Some of those things just come out of the governor's office and they never get anywhere. So, one step at a time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. And just to double check, we didn't actually note anywhere that the state is against subsistence, did we? Okay. I'm not, I guess.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. HOLMES: Coral did.

.....in the back of Ken -- Kendra's head. No, I'm. I was looking at the comments. Never mind. We'll just move on. Okay. If there's nothing else to add to this, can I get a motion, I'll just call it a motion to accept these as things to add into a letter. The letter will be submitted into the public comment process once it opens and it hasn't opened yet. Not a motion.

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. HAYDEN: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, Natasha and then Pat. Go ahead, Natasha.

MS. HAYDEN: I apologize, I had meant to include a statement about the timing of how we received notification that this process was going to get started. You know, basically, right on -- right, you know, the eve of our meeting, our fall meeting and us not having the opportunity to meet again together to even gather any public input from our region on this scoping process.

So, I would like for that to be included about the timing of how this process is getting started and relative to when we're able to meet and have robust discussion about it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Natasha. Yeah. If that could be at the beginning in the opening paragraph, when we say we appreciate the opportunity to comment, but we'd like to note the unfortunate aspect of the timing. But, also, considering that the RACs are mentioned in ANILCA. So, we are integral to this entire federal subsistence program. And, and so, it's even more unfortunate that our schedule -- our annual schedule of how and when we convene was not considered in regards to the setting of this whole comment timeline for the scoping. Because we're an integral part, it seems like we should at least we should have been thought about in the timing of it. So -- and I would just consider that to be two sentences at the beginning. Okay. Pat, go ahead.

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair, Amen to Natasha's comments and yours. And I wonder if I might even ask the Board to consider trying to get an extension on it so that we can get input from our communities. And then that said, unless somebody else wants to go there, I'd like to back up about five minutes on your request for a motion to accept these points and allow our Chair to summarize it in a draft letter. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Is that a motion?

MR. HOLMES: Yes, ma'am. Yes, I can.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, great. Is there a second?

MR. RICHARDSON: Second.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Alright. Thank you. We have a motion and a second. Is there any further discussion on this item?

(No response)

I do have a question. So, Pat's suggestion, he said we could get the Board to ask for an extension. I think the concept of asking for an extension is a good one. Is that -- that's obviously not

best accomplished through a letter that we're waiting to send until after the comment period opens. Well, let's resolve this motion, if we need to talk about an additional letter or something to someone asking them to talk about an extension, we can do that. So, is there any further discussion on accepting these points as being included in a comment letter from the KARAC.

(No response)

Okay. Is there any objection to the motion?

(No response)

Okay. Seeing and hearing none. That motion passes unanimously. Going to the issue of asking for an extension or asking for a different timeline. Who should that be? Like, is that a letter? And I don't even know who I'm talking to. Is that a KARAC letter? Are we asking the Board to send a letter? Katya.

MS. WESSELS: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair. Katya Wessels. This review process has been initiated by the Secretary of the Interior. But according to the Board's correspondence policy for this Council, the Council cannot send a letter directly to the Secretary. So, you will have to send the letter to the Board, asking the Board to forward it to the Secretary and requesting that extension.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thank you. So, my thought on this is that there's really no point in even initiating that because I think by the time the Board meets this -- the process will have been kicked off already. So, I -- we can do that. I'm just letting everyone know that I don't think that by the time our letter gets written and sent to the Board and then the Board has an opportunity to meet and vote and then forward it, we're -- that we're probably already going to be in the middle of the comment process. Coral, go ahead.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, I recommend sending it just because it's just like being on the record and that process has happened.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Is that a motion?

MS. CHERNOFF: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. And the motion is to ask the Federal Subsistence Board to communicate to the secretaries that we would like an extended timeline to respond? Okay.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Is there a second?

MR. HOLMES: Second. Could we do that as a separate letter as well, as the main letter? Because that might have a chance of getting through the system quicker.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yes. This is a separate letter. This letter is directed to the Federal Subsistence Board. The last letter that we approved is a letter directed to whoever is identified when the notice comes out for comment but the -- so, the first letter is not going to the Board. This letter is going to the Board. Katya, go ahead.

MS. WESSELS: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair. And I just want to comment that, you know, this letter can be produced really quickly on behalf of the Council. We don't need to wait for transcript. Just can be like one simple paragraph so we can send it pretty quickly.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Is there any additional comment?

(No comment)

Sorry, I made the bad decision of eating a caramel in that moment. Okay. So, we have a motion on the floor. I see no further discussion. Is there an objection? Any objection to the motion, which is to send a letter from KARAC to the Federal Subsistence Board asking the Federal Subsistence Board to ask the secretaries for either, you know, more time to respond to the scoping process. Is there any objection?

(No response)

Okay. Seeing and hearing none. That motion passes unanimously. And I think we'll go ahead and take a break before we move on to our next topic. So,

let's reconvene at 4:00.

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. We have all the Council members back in their seats here. So, we will go ahead and continue on with our meeting. So, on the agenda, we are at future meeting dates, which is under item 12, action items, and it's 12d. And I'll turn it over to Leigh.

MS. HONIG: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. So, for -- we'll start off with the winter 2026 meeting dates and locations and that is available on page 183 in your meeting booklet. Let me go there real quick. And so, this is -- we'll have to have a -- this is an action item. So, the Council will have to vote on confirming the date and location. And for the winter meeting, we have it as March 4th and 5th in Kodiak.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. So, if March 4th and 5th still sounds good, I'd look for a motion to confirm KARAC meeting dates for March 4th and 5th, 2026, in Kodiak.

MR. HOLMES: So moved.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Pat.

MR. SMITH: I'll second that.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, thanks. All right. Is there any further discussion on this item?

(No response)

Okay, that one is done. And I'm just adding it to my calendar to make sure that I will be there. Alright, go-ahead Leigh.

MS. HONIG: Thank you. That's very important. Okay so, the next meeting date is going to be the fall, 2026 and this is on page 184. And we have it scheduled as October 1st and 2nd in Cold Bay and that is a Thursday, Friday.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thanks, Leigh. On this one, I did want to note a few things that

-- I just want to make sure that we've fully discussed and thought about before approving these particular dates. One is, as I think we all know, the farther you get into the fall, the -- you run into more bad weather, more inclement weather and chances that we won't be able to make it to the Cold Bay destination, so bad weather. The Thursday - Friday schedule, and I'm not sure if there's a way around this, but this week, because the way the flight schedules work, the planes come in, Monday, Wednesday, Friday. So, we all had to come in on Monday and then we're leaving Friday, even though we're only meeting, Wednesday and Thursday. So, with the Thursday - Friday flight meeting schedule, that may mean we cannot leave or can't arrive for 1 or 2 days before or after that. So, but honestly, we may or may not know what that schedule is. And then probably the big one is that October 1st is obviously the beginning of the new federal fiscal year. And you know, I think over recent years we've seen with -- problems with funding in new fiscal years. And a lot of times, things that are scheduled to start on October 1, can't start or federal staff can't show up because the budgets have not actually been approved. So, an option there is to try to get our meeting in a little bit earlier in the month of September so that we'll have better weather and then we can avoid this you know start of the federal fiscal year problem. That being said, I honestly, I can't remember why we picked October 1 and 2. There may be very good reasons for why we did that but I will open it up for either a motion or if people want to make comments. Go ahead, Jeff.

MR. WASLEY: I -- Any problem with, like, the 17th and the 18th of September? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Does anyone have an inability to commit to a September 17th and 18th? Okay. Go ahead, Brett.

MR. RICHARDSON: Well, I think maybe we need a little bit more information on optimizing flights in and out, because I left Sunday night for this, and I wouldn't get back until Saturday. So, that's time away from my family and obviously I'm taking vacation to do this. So, it's substantial for me. I don't know, maybe there isn't a better window to come. Like, is Wednesday Thursday the best or is it Thursday, Friday?

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah. Let me ask Jeff, I know you just suggested the 17th and 18th. Does

it matter to you if it's the 16th and 17th, does that -- so, Wednesday and Thursday instead of Thursday and Friday? Does that make any difference? Go ahead Jeff.

MR. WASLEY: I'm going to be here regardless. So, it does make a difference because Friday is our change out day, so it'd be easier for me to skip that. But that being said, if it's a deal breaker, I mean, I'm going to be here regardless. So, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Coral, go ahead.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, I guess I was going to recommend that we meet in Kodiak again in the spring and the fall. Just -- it's easier. We have a lot more flights. The date to me does not matter. Or if it's preferable, I think there's more flights to Dutch Harbor, I might make that recommendation. We found out yesterday that I think is a hub of ours now, which I don't think it was before. Is that what we decided? So, maybe you can confirm that, and if it's a hub. I just might suggest one of those other two places, because there's a lot more places to stay and there's a lot more flights getting in and out.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Daniel, go ahead.

MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair. This is Daniel Smith. I would also, like to make the recommendation that the fall 2026 meeting be in Dutch Harbor on September 16th and September 17th.

MS. WESSELS: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Go ahead, Katya.

MS. WESSELS: I just want to say in terms of airline schedule, I believe there is a flight here on Saturday to Cold Bay. Is that correct, Jeff? Yeah. Just for your consideration. And you know, if you move the meeting to Kodiak or Dutch Harbor, just maybe find out if or, you know, majority of the members of the Council can travel there at that time.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. So, we have three different location options. We've had a suggestion for Cold Bay September 17th and 18th. Dutch Harbor September 16th and 17th or Kodiak at any time in in September. So, I don't mind some informal discussion before we actually make a motion. I -- yeah, we're just

now at this point we're balancing who can fly where, when, and I think where we can get the most people to show up at one time. Go ahead, Jeff.

MR. WASLEY: If it's not in Cold Bay, I won't be there. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. I am interested to hear or to have more discussion about this idea of having it in Kodiak. So, I assume because our winter meetings have tended to be in Kodiak, I think because maybe it's easier. There's more people -- there's more members in Kodiak. So, if weather's a holdup, there's more members. I do realize that means people from the chain and the peninsula have had to fly in. It doesn't mean we have to meet in Kodiak. That's just how we have been doing it. So, if we hold a fall meeting in Kodiak, that means we're going to have three meetings in a row in Kodiak. And so, I would like to have some discussion on that. Does that seem like that's okay? Does that seem concerning or are people comfortable trying a winter meeting not in the Kodiak area? Go ahead, Coral.

MS. CHERNOFF: Oh, yeah, that's fine with me. I'm not concerned where we are during our winter meeting, and I do want to say I'm very open to Dutch Harbor, too. I think for me, it has been a very long haul to get here and take a lot of time. As Brett has suggested, people have jobs, and a lack of flights is -- it's a task for people. And I would like to lend my support to that being less of a task for people.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Yeah. And I just want to make sure that I am cognizant that if it's somewhere else, we're asking the people that live on the chain in the peninsula to do that exact thing but come to Kodiak because they're also stuck with the flight schedule getting out of their home communities. Okay. Well, let's try this. Is there any other just general discussion and then I think we'll just try a motion and see if we can get consensus around a location and a date. Go ahead, Jeff.

MR. WASLEY: If it's not here so, then Sam and I both won't be there. So, the sport and commercial side will be down to one member. Thank you.

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Go ahead, Pat.

MR. HOLMES: Our two colleagues are Jeff, and I'm sorry, I forgot the other chap. I wonder, in this whole thing, if they're there because of the waterfowl season? I would be good, maybe if we could ask the staff to just see over that two-week time period what the options would be on planes. It would be lovely to go out to Dutch Harbor, but if we ended up having to spend 8 or 10 days to get there and back, you know, just to see what the options are getting to places and back. First of all, just availability of folks and then because this is -- we'll have another chance to update it. So, let's see what the travel options are as far as available planes. Because if there's a flight on Saturday, it goes in, maybe what we could do is go out on the 13th, meet 14th and 15th and leave on the 16th, and that would tighten it up and get us home by Thursday. So, anyway, that's just my thoughts. I'll go with the flow.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Pat. Go ahead, Brett.

MR. RICHARDSON: Hi. Just throwing this out there. I don't know that we should have meetings in any one place, kind of back-to-back to back. I think it's good to kind of rotate the hub communities, whatever those would be. If I'm not mistaken, it's Kodiak, Unalaska and Cold Bay. Okay. So, I think, yeah, Kodiak makes sense in the winter. You don't really want to try to get into Dutch Harbor in March. Maybe Cold Bay too, right. So, maybe Unalaska, it does make sense in the fall, because we came here this fall. We're going to rotate through those throughout the year. I don't want to set something up where it's the next ten years are set in stone, but it makes sense that way, aybe.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, I agree with that. I feel really uncomfortable with having three meetings in a row in Kodiak. I think what I'm sitting here struggling with is, it does feel like we should go to Unalaska, but if we go to Unalaska, we definitely will not have, it sounds like Jeff and Sam in person. Jeff, are you -- can you participate virtually, telephonically? Okay, so, I -- anyway, that's what I'm struggling with. There's obviously not a super simple, easy solution here. We're going to have to pick and somebody's going to have to -- go ahead, Coral.

MS. CHERNOFF: I'd like to make a motion to have that meeting, September 16th 17th in Cold Bay for fall 2026.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Is there a second?

MR. WASLEY: I'll second.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay we have a motion and a second. This is to hold our meeting September 16th and 17th, which is Wednesday and Thursday in Cold Bay, in 2026. Oh, sorry. Not Cold Bay, Unalaska. You said Cold Bay. Okay, now we need. Can we -- can you please restate the motion?

MS. WESSELS: She needs to withdraw the motion with the agreement of the second.

MS. CHERNOFF: I withdraw my motion to hold the meeting in Cold Bay 2026.

MS. WESSELS: Ask the second for an agreement.

MR. WASLEY: I'll second that.

MS. WESSELS: No, no, you need to ask your second, was Jeff, for an agreement that he agrees to withdraw the motion.

MR. WASLEY: I agree, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Do you want to try that again or....? Okay.

MS. CHERNOFF: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is Coral. I'd like to move that we have a fall 2026 regional advisory meeting in Dutch Harbor, September 15th September 16th, 2025.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, now, you switched to the dates.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. CHERNOFF: 2026.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: .....Okay, so, we're now at, oh, is there a second?

MR. RICHARDSON: Second.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. We have a motion a second. The motion is to hold our fall 2026 meeting Tuesday and Wednesday, September 15th and 16th in Unalaska. Is there discussion?

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Go ahead, Pat.

MR. HOLMES: That seems pretty reasonable. Seems pretty reasonable. Although, if that doesn't seem to work out, we still want to go to Dutch Harbor, the following week would also be good for me, because then I can maybe make a trip to see the grandkids earlier. So, I'd kind of go for that second week, but the first week is fine and we'll make the best shot we can. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Pat.

MS. HAYDEN: Madam Chair, this Natasha.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Go ahead, Natasha.

MS. HAYDEN: I'm supportive of having the fall meeting of 2026 in Unalaska. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Okay, I don't see further discussion. I'll try it this way. Is there any objection to the motion which is to hold our fall 2026 RAC meeting in Unalaska on Tuesday, September 15th and Wednesday, September 16th.

MR. RICHARDSON: Just to point. Was it Tuesday - Wednesday? Or was it Wednesday and Thursday? I'm sorry.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Coral said the 15th and 16th, which is a Tuesday and a Wednesday. Oaky, is there any objection?

(No response)

Okay. I'm not seeing or hearing any objection. That motion passes unanimously.

(Pause)

And I am just adding this as well to my calendar so that I can plan around it. Okay, all right. So, that takes care of our future meeting dates, agenda item. We are now on to agenda item 13, which is the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program and partners for fisheries monitoring program. And we have Dr. Jason Roberts at the table.

DR. ROBERTS: Yes. Good afternoon, Madam Chair, members of the Council. So, I'm going to provide you with a brief update of the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program, and our process and where we're at in that process right now. And so, in the course of providing this update, I'm going to pause and hope to get some comments from your Council on the proposals that have been submitted for the FRMP program for the 2026 funding opportunity. As you know, the goal of the monitoring program is to fund research on federal subsistence fisheries and enhance management and work with rural Alaskans to sustain these fisheries. So, the monitoring program funding materials overview starts on page 185 of your meeting books. So, this whole process starts with Councils identifying information gaps and developing priority information needs for their regions. And some of you on your Council volunteered to work with volunteers from the Bristol Bay Council last fall to create a list of priority information needs for that combined Southwest region. So, these priority information needs are shown on page 194 of your meeting books.

So, we took that list and requested projects to address those priorities and we ended up receiving five proposals for the Southwest region submitted based on those priority information needs. And those are listed initially in table 1 on page 195. So, we've started going through that internal review process now. The technical review Committee has met to assess the projects. And some of the summaries you see on there are the results of that technical review committee process. The review criteria that we use examines whether the project fulfils a strategic priority or multiple priorities noted by the Regional Advisory Council. If the project possesses strong scientific merit, if the proposed investigators are qualified to conduct the project and possess sufficient resources to do so, and if the project promotes partnership and capacity building with rural organizations as well as a cost benefit analysis. And so, today I want to get some feedback from the Council on these projects,

specifically looking at if you have any questions about the projects, things about them that may not make sense to you. Your just general thoughts about the proposed projects that we have in there. And you don't really need to rank these projects per se, but if there are any that you would definitely like to see funded, that would be helpful. So, that's the kind of feedback I'm -- we're looking for here. And so, we will take that feedback back to -- in OSM, as part of the whole very long review process. And finally, the final selection of projects will be determined by the Director of OSM based on the technical review committee, their reviews, your comments, interagency staff committee comments and recommendations and projects are funded, you know, based on that kind of holistic analysis and how much money we actually end up getting. And so, at this time, if you want to, I can provide a brief summary or give you all a second just to read over those summaries that start on page 196, I believe, of your -- 195, I mean of your book, the five proposals.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Does the Council want to hear Jason, give a summary, or has everyone had a chance to review the proposals and we can jump right in? So, the option is hear a summary or jump right in. I guess.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. HOLMES: Jump right.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Oh, nope. We'll jump right in. Does anyone really want to hear a summary of each? Okay, we'll jump right in. Thanks. But you're still going to talk, right?

DR. ROBERTS: Oh. I was not thinking that was part of the jumping right in but yeah. So, if you want to just start with project 26-400, that's the Buskin River sockeye salmon escapement project, the weir project. And that's -- executive summary starts on page 196 that was submitted by ADF&G. This is stock status and trends proposal type. Just working on the weir to collect an accurate idea of escapement. So, any thoughts or questions you have on that one?

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: I do have a high-level question. Can you either remind me and you may not know, like, about how much money there is in the pot to

split up. And if you don't know that, is it fair to say that not all of these projects can be funded, so maybe only two out of this list or any sort of sense of how -- what you think or how that's worked in the past.

DR. ROBERTS: Through the Chair. We do not yet know how much funding will be available, but I think it's safe to assume that not all of these projects will be capable of being funded.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you.

(Pause)

All right, so, now you're looking for us to give you feedback on that first proposal? Feedback or comments or questions? Daniel, go ahead.

MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair. This is Daniel Smith. I just want to say, for the record that I have a potential conflict of interest in reviewing these FRMP proposals as they played a significant role in my position as the Sun'aq Tribe Biologist in project number 26-403. And this is addressing priority subsistence salmon concerns and the Buskin River watershed to enhance ecological strength and food security of Kodiak. And I personally would like to recuse myself from these discussions on these proposals. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thank you, Daniel. And it sounds like you're fine just sitting there. Okay. Are there comments on the first -- comments, observations? Jason did say if there were questions. Looks like Pat has his hand up.

MR. HOLMES: Yes, Madam Chair. Question for Dan. That project there, I mean, you know, I'm going to go for the Buskin and the McLees's weir as priorities. But your project here for the Buskin is that a multiple layer thing? And is there some component of that that's -- would be more important if it were to enhance your potential of getting funded.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, Daniel has recused himself, so he's not participating. He's not available to speak to that.

MR. HOLMES: Okay. Because I was wondering because I had heard through the gossip network

that they had a limnology work that they wanted to do. But, if I can't ask that question, I guess I won't. And so, I'd say I'd just stick with the Buskin River sockeye assessment and with McLee's Lake, those are the two priorities. And then I know that the folks in our chat with Bristol Bay, they're -- they -- they'd like support on the Chignik being part of their region. But, anyway, I'll stick with 400 and 402 as my priorities. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, thanks. We're still going to go through each of these projects, and if anyone has comments and whatnot. And also, Daniel's not available to answer questions, but I'm pretty sure we have someone from the Sun'aq Tribe that is available when we get to that proposal. We are not there yet. But they could be available too, to answer questions. And if there's anybody else who participated in preparing any of the other proposals, who's online, you can let us know. And if people have questions for you, I want to make sure that we're being fair across all the proposals.

Okay so, we are still on the first proposal which is the bus -- it's project number 26-400 Buskin River sockeye salmon stock assessment and monitoring. I do have a comment that I want to make on the record, which is that in the technical review committee comments, they note that partnering with local tribes could further strengthen project delivery and build tribal capacity. And I just -- I want to highlight that. I take that as a recommendation that's coming out of the review process, telling the applicant that, hey, if you added this other component, your project would be even more awesome and more likely to be funded. Also, I do think that partnering between different entities is -- we have to do that. I think it's most effective and we can leverage resources within our region. So, I just want to highlight that I place a lot of weight on that. And so, if this -- even if this gets funded next year or this year, if it comes through again, I would highly, highly encourage the applicant to really consider partnering with local tribes on their proposal, their next proposal. And then the other comment I'll make at a high level, you know, I see that the weir projects and monitoring projects are -- they do tend to be pretty expensive so I just, I want to note that the more expensive projects you do, the less projects we're going to -- are going to get funded overall, probably. So, it's a tradeoff and -- but I do think weir as a monitoring are important. And generally, that's probably

what I'm going to tend toward supporting. And this particular -- the total project request for this project, I think, falls kind of in the middle of the range of funding being requested. So, it is kind of expensive but it's definitely not the most expensive. And then for Kodiak, obviously, I've said this before, the Buskin River is one of our primary sources of federal subsistence salmon. So, this is an important fishery and having the weirs and the ability to track escapement is really important for being able to manage the fishery and also, open it as liberally as possible. Because when there isn't data, you have to manage more conservatively, which means it's less likely to open or it's more likely to close because you just don't have as fine a level of detail. So, in general I will note that this -- what this project is funding and this particular fishery is very important for Kodiak. And I'll keep talking. Go ahead, Coral.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, I have a question. I don't know if you can answer this for me, but this particular project, as opposed to the other ones has vastly different amounts during the years. And seeing that it's a weir project tracking salmon escapement, I don't know if you can -- you have any idea why one year they have 270 -- 207,600 for one year and then 67,000 for another year, and 142,000, like each of their years, seems vastly different than others.

DR. ROBERTS: Through the Chair. I can't remember off the top of my head exactly, you know, the breakdown of that -- those costs. But I would imagine it's related to different levels of staffing. In those years, the costs associated with setting things up and getting things going versus things have started and maybe they're not requiring as much staffing to keep it going. But, yeah, it's only speculation.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: And you have a phone a friend on the line, Jarred, is available to give maybe a more specific answer.

DR. ROBERTS: Yes.

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. STONE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you. Can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yes, you're coming in. Go ahead.

MR. STONE: Perfect. For the record, Jarred Stone, Fish Biologist with OSM, to speak to that discrepancy for the different costs through the years. It's a minor discrepancy and it's just, it has to do with how the state is requesting the money to start at their fiscal year start. And so, it's -- I think part of that, the way that it's laid out in their budget. There's extra money needed for that first year because they're requesting it in July. And so, I think they're -- I'm just speculating, but I -- I'm guessing that they're just trying to kind of catch themselves up because they're having to back pay themselves prior to that July 1st date. That's just speculation on my part.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you.

MR. STONE: I hope that makes sense.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yep. All right. Is there any additional comments, feedback, anything that we want to be considered as these proposals continue to go through the review process? Coral, go ahead.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah. As Rebecca noted -- this is Coral thank you for the Chair -- through the Chair. As Rebecca pointed out before, part of the technical committee review said that partnering with local tribes could further strengthen project delivery and build tribal capacity. Is that something that's already past them addressing, or is there still an opportunity for them to address that tribal partnership?

DR. ROBERTS: Through the Chair, that's a bit of a complicated answer. So, as far as for the technical review committee and their scoring of the project, it is past that point. But, you know, in the course of doing the project, they could always, you know, reach out and potentially develop some partnerships during that time period. But I don't know how likely that is.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, question but if that were to happen, the technical review and like scoring and evaluation has already occurred. So, even if something happens in the near-term future, it doesn't really change kind of how they're -- where they're at right now.

DR. ROBERTS: No.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. All right. And then -- so, Jason, you've heard some feedback. Is this kind of the nature of what you're looking for? Okay. All right. Is there any further comment on the first proposal -- the first project? Project 26-400 Buskin River Sockeye salmon stock assessment and monitoring? Okay. Well, let's go ahead and.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Go ahead, Pat.

MR. HOLMES: I would note that the project there at the Buskin has an outreach program and a mentoring program for Kodiak High School students and that something like 85 or 90% of those students that have gone through that mentoring program have gone on into professional positions with the Department of Fish and Game and with Fish and Wildlife Service or other entities. And it's a strong stimulus for those students regardless of ethnicity, to have -- get a sound training in biological sciences and so, that's a very integral part of their program. They've been doing it for many, many, many years and the -- even the regional sportfish management biologists for our whole region, he -- that's where he got his start, was working in high school as part of their mentoring program for the Buskin weir. So, it's a significant outreach over significant time period and a real partnership there with the community.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, so, moving on to the next project. Project number 26-401. This is Chignik River in season subsistence harvest survey.

(Simultaneous speech)

DR. ROBERTS: Oh. Go ahead.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Oh, no. Were you going to -- because if you wanted to give a mini summary, I don't think we would disagree. Go ahead.

DR. ROBERTS: Yes. So, project -- as the Chair stated, this is Jason Roberts. Project 26-401. The

title is Chignik River In-Season Subsistence Harvest Survey. This is a harvest monitoring project. Principal investigator is a Fish and Wildlife Service employee partnering with George Anderson from Chignik Inter-Tribal Coalition. And so, the project focuses on the need to gather reliable estimates of chinook salmon escapement, demographics, along with evaluation of escapement quality. This includes assessing egg deposition, sex and size, composition of spawners and spawning habitat quality and harvest monitoring. So, yeah, the overall goal of the project is to obtain timely subsistence harvest information for sockeye and chinook salmon for federally qualified users fishing in the Chignik area. And so, they intend to do this primarily by collecting in-season federal subsistence harvest data from users in the Chignik area and working with Chignik Inter-Tribal coalition to expand future harvest monitoring projects.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, well, I'll go ahead and jump in. For -- in general, I tend to be more supportive of monitoring projects. So, things like weirs or other projects that are trying to monitor escapement or abundance of the resource because there is a -- to me, there's a much more direct benefit to the subsistence user from those kinds of projects. If we don't have the weirs, it can literally preclude a fishery altogether. So, in general, I do tend to prioritize the monitoring projects. However, with this project, I do like that for not a lot of money requested there's this ability to gather data. There's the partnership between the federal agency and the tribal organization and the fact that both organizations are contributing toward the project, I give that a lot of weight. I think that's great. And then I think I already mentioned the expanding the technical capacity of the Chignik Inter-Tribal Coalition. I think that's an important aspect because the more we build capacity in, within our region and within our communities we're going to be -- we're just positioning ourselves better for the future. So, does anyone else have comments on this proposal? Coral, go ahead.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah. One thing I really like about this -- well, a couple things. I think harvest -- we don't do actual, like, harvest data. We do like, overall surveys and then extrapolate. This seems to be more actual harvest. And I also like that this is -- this has been previously funded so, I always like continuing, you know, things that are continuing. Same

program data is collected in the same way. It happens in the same way. So, it's easy. It's great to have data that is continuous.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Are there further comments on this project?

(No response)

Okay. We'll go ahead and move on to the next project, which is project number 26-402 estimation of sockeye salmon escapement into McLee’s Lake, Unalaska.

DR. ROBERTS: Yep. This project, I have a feeling you're all familiar with. This is the weir project at McLee’s Lake. It's a stock status and trends project, submitted by the Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska. It addresses two priority information needs, providing reliable abundance estimates of McLee’s Lake Sockeye salmon and using scale analysis of fresh and saltwater growth patterns to examine recent changes in the ocean and how those affect growth and survival of sockeye salmon into the McLee’s Lake drainage.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Brett, go ahead.

MR. RICHARDSON: Oh, this looks good. It's good to see a four-year plan, hopefully put in place. I guess a question would be at what point do you begin to plan beyond this? Like, is it a two-year time period before you begin the next four-year cycle? So, we don't get another two-year drop off or no funding and lack reliable data.

DR. ROBERTS: Through the Chair. Yeah. So, the FRMP kind -- this proposal process repeats every two years, and then projects can be funded for up to four years.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. I'll add some comments. I do like that there, there was a -- that the tribe has been working in partnership on this and now they're taking the lead. To me, that shows progression. I feel like, oh, our system is working. So, that's really exciting. I do have a question, Jason, about the -- it is unclear from the proposal if the tribe could successfully run the project, if they are not also successful in their proposal to the Partners

for Fisheries Monitoring Program. What's the timing on that?

DR. ROBERTS: Through the Chair, I'm going to ask my friend Jarred Stone to answer that question.

MR. STONE: Thank you, Jason, for the record, Jarred Stone here, Fish Biologist with OSM. The timing between the two programs, the Partners Program and the FRMP, is about the same. However, by the time that we announced the FRMP awards sometime early this winter, sometime in January, maybe February, we'll have likely a pretty clear idea as to which partners we would be funding for that same cycle. And so, the guidance that we gave the Qawalangin Tribe is to submit their partners proposal as if they -- as a standalone proposal, so that if they did not get FRMP funding, the Partners proposal would be strong enough to stand alone and vice versa. They also submitted this FRMP proposal with additional funding to support the biologist. And so, in the event that if both the Partners and the FRMP funding were to be funded, then they would revise their budgets, and the overall cost of both of those projects would be reduced and so, I hope that makes sense. But it was just an attempt to try and preserve and protect that position and make sure they have salary money to uphold that position. And it was just a strategy that we offered to combat the instance if only one were to be funded. I hope that makes sense.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah. It actually raised another question. So, what I thought I heard you just say is that they were advised to develop each proposal to stand independently. So, if the other one didn't get funded, they could still carry out the proposed work. So, that makes me even more concerned about the sentence that says, it is unclear from the proposal package, that they could successfully run this project if they don't get funding under Partners. So, if their proposal, their FRMP proposal was an attempt to have a standalone project, and it wasn't strong enough to convince the Technical Review Committee that they could successfully deliver the project. That concerns me. If you have anything else to add, or if I missed or misunderstood what you said, Jarred, feel free to jump in.

MR. STONE: I've got nothing else to add. But I'll just -- well, I guess one last thing I'll add

is that their FRMP proposal as it sits right now, and from how the TRC has reviewed it, it's a complete proposal. And so, if it was to be funded, the budget that they've supplied appears to have everything necessary for them to complete the work without the necessary -- without the Partners' funding.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, thanks. And, Pat, I know your hand is up, but I guess I'll just confirm then that I -- my comment is I am concerned with the technical review feedback, that there is concern that they're able -- they would be able to deliver this this project, since they wrote this to be a standalone proposal. Pat, we'll go with you.

MR. HOLMES: Yes, ma'am. I would think that what they have it would be a standalone program. But if it were not funded in the -- in that program, you know, if it's funded under the -- if it's not funded in the Partners, then the FRMP could cover it. And if that were to occur, then they could still keep their program going, have all their interactions. And perhaps those funds would be available to strengthen the proposal for the Buskin and the Sun'aq Tribe. And so, I don't know how we can say a, what if, phrase in support of these because they're both really, really, really important. And I think McLee's obviously would have a very high standing in either of the funding categories. And I think some of the major components in the Buskin, particularly the limnology work in the lake, that's also really darned important. But I don't know. I guess I'll be quiet at that point.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Is there further comment? Okay. I guess my final comment is just a recognition that the ability to estimate sockeye salmon escapement into McLee's Lake, noting how important that is, our RAC has talked about how important it is for Unalaska. So, I'm just noting that for the record. Okay. The next project is project number 26-403, which is addressing priority subsistence salmon concerns in the Buskin watershed to enhance ecological strength and food security of Kodiak.

DR. ROBERTS: Yes, Madam Chair. Jason Roberts. So, this is a stock status and trends and traditional ecological knowledge project. And you'll see there it is a partnership between the Sun'aq Tribe and ADF&G. So, kind of combining methods here both biological science methods and then social scientific

methods. And if you'll look down there, on page 202, you have the issue statement as well as the project is responding to a number of priority information needs articulated for the Southwest region. And so, particularly looking at the impact of invasive signal crayfish on wild salmon stocks.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. And I'll note, we have Matt Van Daele from the Sun'aq tribe online and he's prepared to answer questions about the project. And I was waiting for Pat's hand to go up. I'm just going to call on Pat. Pat, if you have.....

MR. HOLMES: I beg your pardon, Madam. I was -- well, I think that these projects really have a lot of merit. The -- I don't quite understand, the abundance of salmon. Does that mean that they would be running the weir, or the Fish and Game is going to be running the weir and then they'll be doing the ecological evaluations based on the abundance, Mr. Van Daele?

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, and let's make sure that we have Matt Van Daele with audio.

MR. VAN DAELE: Good morning, Can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: You're coming through. Thank you.

MR. VAN DAELE: Okay, I will be waiting for you. Madam Chairperson, to call on me.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Yeah. Feel free, Pat has stated or partially stated one question. So, as he asks a question, feel free to respond to it.

MR. VAN DAELE: Thank you. Yeah.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. VAN DAELE: Sorry, Pat. Go ahead.

MR. HOLMES: No. Go ahead.

MR. VAN DAELE: Yeah. Cama'i, Matt Van Daele, Natural Resources Director for the Sun'aq Tribe here. And no, the way that our proposal is written, we would not be conducting the weir counts. We actually formed this in collaboration with sport fish and comm

fish biologist and limnologist to attempt to be a complementary project for their weir counts and especially their scale assessment counts, to try to get real world information, as they're doing those scale counts of the limnological factors that might be playing into salmon returns, recruitment, survival and escapement.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, did you have additional questions?

MR. HOLMES: Okay. So, basically the department would still continue to be running the weir and then what you'd be doing is supplemental evaluations of things, particularly the ecological evaluation of the lake rearing habitats. And you're going to do a small program and then the rest of it would be related to subsistence survey with Department of Subsistence. Is that correct?

MR. VAN DAELE: That's partially correct. I would like to go back real-quick to a comment that you made about the proposal, 26-400 in the Buskin outreach mentoring program that Fish and Game is proposing and has proposed to make a plug for that, because I was also one of the first crop of high school interns. And that's definitely set me on the road that I'm on right now. This is not specifically a smolt project. That is something that we're hoping to start in the future, potentially with a Partners Program. The main goal of this project is to address several of the priority information needs, namely the limnological factors that are going on in the Buskin, because, you know, the Buskin has been so important for the last 3500 to 4000 years. It's had so much change in use and challenges really in the last 80 years since the military showed up in Kodiak. And with it being such a important subsistence sockeye salmon fishery in our region, multiple biologists feel that having these baseline limnological assessments is critical and especially if we're going to have concerns going into the future of, you know, run, closures, but also potentially over escapement if our runs are doing really well. And so, this would be a very effective means to track those changes and have those [sic] data for managers going forward but also serve as a litmus about the successes of our continued crayfish suppression. And then finally, Jackie Keating is available to answer questions about the subsistence survey, which is another one of your priority information needs.

MR. HOLMES: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Are there -- I think what we'll try to do is if there's any questions for Matt Van Daele or Jackie Keating, we'll take those -- we'll try to take those now and then go to any additional comments on the proposal. So, are there any other questions?

(No response)

Okay. I'm not seeing any questions. Yeah. Thank you, Matt, for joining us and Jackie as well. All right. Are there any additional questions from -- or not questions, comments from Council members or feedback on this proposal?

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair, I guess.....

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Go ahead.

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair, this is Pat. I just think that this is a pretty fantastic project on its own and certainly would blend and support the basic stock assessment program. I hope that there be some way that we could cover funding that as well as the Buskin and as well as McLee's. Those are just, could accomplish some tremendous things and I guess for Mr. Van Daele, are you also, trying to get fishery monitoring funding? I guess this whole thing is awkward with them if it's both types of grants that you're going for.

MR. VAN DAELE: Through the Chair, Councilman Holmes. We were under the understanding that we would have to get an FRMP before we could pursue the Partners Program. But as you noted earlier, this is basically three different proposals that we melded into one. And we felt it was important to try to lump three proposals into one to illustrate the interconnectedness of the Buskin. But, yeah, I mean, we, you know, we completely understand the difficulties in funding these days, especially being a tribe with -- dependent on federal funding. So, you know, any sort of assistance or even technical guidance and wisdom of the elders would be very much appreciated about how we can make this, this project a go, because we feel very strongly that this is an important project and understand that there

are many other important projects out there. So, quyana for your time and consideration.

MR. HOLMES: Yeah, that's a fantastic expression. I was wondering, our concepts that you're going for, if you had to modify things or what objectives you think are the most important, if they could be blended into the funding of the weir assessment program?

MR. VAN DAELE: In terms of that. It's very difficult to say, but for one, we've had incredible success at suppressing the crayfish population and our tribal biologist who recused himself, he's in the final stages of his PhD looking at the ecological impacts of crayfish. But the main -- I feel glaring data gap right now with the Buskin, in our understanding of the Buskin ecosystem is the basic limnology, that is very, very critical aspect. The second is absolutely the change in subsistence use for both the Buskin and also when times that the Buskin runs are failing and increase subsistence pressure on other systems in our region. And particularly the difficulty that users have of having to go farther afield to fill their freezers and get their food. Finally, you know, I don't want to put crayfish at the very end of it, but I kind of have to because, you know, I understand that maybe that's outside the purview of your Council, but if we had to prioritize, from my perspective, it would be the limnological assessments followed by the subsistence surveys and if Jackie's online I would be happy to hear her thoughts about that. And then finally, you know, any sort of funds potentially left over for, you know, continuing our successes with the crayfish because we really do not want to lose our momentum with this because it has been so difficult to get to this point, but we're finally having a positive in demonstrable impact at getting rid of them. Thank you.

MS. KEATING: Good afternoon. I am online if you would like me to chime in, Madam Chair.

MR. HOLMES: That'd be great.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, do you have any specific questions?

MR. HOLMES: I -- would just be really interesting to hear Jackie's perspective on this.

MS. KEATING: Sure. For the record, this is Jackie Keating with the Division of Subsistence, Alaska Department of Fish and Game. And Matt did a really good job summarizing the interconnectedness of this proposal. I want to thank Sun'aq for inviting us to be involved. Of course, when we look at the ecological components of a system, the human factors are a big part of that and I guess if I was going to point out one thing, what I would say about the subsistence survey component of this work is that, it is a direct result of the recent 2021 comprehensive survey update that we did also with FRMP finding -- funding, excuse me. And one of the findings from that project was doing ethnographic interviews with knowledge holders and hearing about not just the effects of the Buskin being closed in terms of the number of fish that folks could harvest but really digging into some of those social factors that come out of that as well. Things like if folks don't have the ability to travel further to participate in those activities, they might lose that exposure. And what kind of effects does that have on people learning how to fish in this way or adopting those traditions? So, that's something we've talked about a lot with Sun'aq, is how do we document that additional component of effects when folks aren't able to fish on the Buskin. So, the survey component would be two pieces. It would be doing more of those ethnographic interviews to help document some of that local knowledge. And then the additional piece is a survey component to help quantify, how do people adapt when the Buskin is closed? What do those things look like? And in a worst-case scenario, if folks not being able to fish there, what are some of those adaptive measures and how can we help manage those in a good way.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Are there any.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. HOLMES: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: .....other questions? Go ahead, Coral.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, I had a question. Maybe for OSM. It says here a considerable portion of the funding is for the suppression of invasive signal crayfish, which might be outside the scope of the monitoring program. Can someone explain what that means?

Like it seems like it either is or isn't.

DR. ROBERTS: Jarred, do you have a specific stance on that?

MR. STONE: Jarred Stone here, through the Chair. I'm getting a little bit of feedback. I'm wondering if maybe someone's mic is still on. I'm going to try and -- okay. So, my understanding of that. Coral, would you mind repeating that? Sorry.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah. I guess I was just under.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: I can summarize, since you're getting bad feedback there. I think she wants to know, is the suppression of signal crayfish inside or outside the scope of FRMP because.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. STONE: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: .....it's not completely clear. Thank you.

MR. STONE: Yeah, that makes sense. Okay, so, during the, I guess, review of the proposal, the connection between signal crayfish and the return of adult salmon was sort of, for lack of better words, poorly demonstrated or I guess the connection with signal crayfish effect on the abundance of adult salmon was maybe poorly demonstrated. And so, I think that's where the discussion from the TRC came in. As to, you know, what, if we spend this money on suppression of signal crayfish and it has no effect possibly and just hypothetically speaking, if it has no effect on salmon abundance. And so, I think with that comment from the TRC, they were speaking directly to, there just currently being the lack of information, really, with the connection, the tie between signal crayfish and abundance of salmon. Does that answer your question?

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: It looks like it did. Thanks. Yeah, I guess I'll go with no, it didn't answer it. So, in looking at the kinds of things that FRMP can fund, there's the three broad categories the harvest monitoring, the traditional ecological knowledge and then stock status and trends. So, from those three broad categories, it seems apparent that the crayfish

doesn't fit into any of those. But is there a is there a question? So, could it fit, or the problem is they just didn't do a good enough job explaining how it fit. Or does it just not fit because it's not in one of those broad categories?

MR. STONE: Oh, thank you for the question. Through the Chair. You know, that's a great question. We've never had a proposal like this that is requesting to do like a suppression effort. You know, a lot of our proposals are directly monitoring the abundance of salmon or they're doing harvest subsistence surveys. And so, this was a unique proposal in that we just haven't seen one like this before. And so, I need to likely get with some of our leadership and just confirm that, yes or no, is this outside of the scope of the FRMP, because I don't know that I can answer that right here, right now for you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Yeah, I think that would be helpful. All right. Are there further comments on this project? Go ahead, Coral.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah. I guess I just would like to say I would probably put this at the top of my list, I think, for the information that it gives us and what it does. And for the amount of money, I think it's really important for our area.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. And then my -- this is Rebecca. I do want to comment that it is awkward and unfortunate that we are in the same FRMP category as Bristol Bay. So, that's number one. Number two is if, I am not unaware that if both Buskin River projects were funded and the McLee's project was funded. I am not at all sure that either of the Bristol Bay projects could be funded. So, you know we're here, I view it, we're here to advocate for KARAC projects. Bristol Bay is going to advocate for Bristol Bay projects, but it is awkward because our region has three specific -- our area has three specific subregions the Aleutian Islands, the Peninsula and Kodiak and we're sharing FRMP funding with Bristol Bay. So, it's hard to achieve that balance within our own region, let alone also, you know, making sure or considering that the Bristol Bay should have a fair shot at their projects being funded as well. Okay. Are there additional comments on this project? And then I think we have one more after this. Okay. Not seeing any additional questions. The next project is 26-451.

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, go ahead.

MR. HOLMES: Hello? Yeah. I don't know. And I would like to ask staff, would there be some way where we could take a look at this last proposal with Sun'aq and see what would be acceptable for them preparing it down. Because it seemed to me that the limnology work would be really important as well as the first subsistence thing on how things have changed. Those are important things to document, but I don't know, I think, like you said, I'd go for the Buskin and McLee's and then funding the whole thing if we could. Or if we can't, then the parts of it that would have the most biological significance with the tab on the end of the subsistence. But I don't know if that can be separated out at this point. I guess that's a question for staff.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Do we have an answer on whether that's possible at this stage of the process?

DR. ROBERTS: So, I've just received some more guidance here. Invasive species control is not currently within the bounds of our FRMP program.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, but in regards to what Pat just said that, can this project be pared down into something smaller or parsed out into the separate components? Is that possible at this stage in the process?

DR. ROBERTS: I'm honestly not sure.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Yeah. I mean, my comment and observation is that this project has a lot of different pieces. As someone who's reviewed grants for almost three decades, I find that really concerning. It seems like it's trying to do too much all at once. I haven't read the whole proposal. I'm only reading the summary of it. But I do think there's really -- there's clearly parts of it that are a higher priority than other parts. And I question whether it was a good idea to try to combine, kind of, unrelated work into one project. I did hear the explanation of why that was done. I think where we are though and particularly given our region and sharing with the Bristol Bay in the FRMP, I think that that has -- that creates some challenges.

Okay. So, we do not have an answer about breaking the project up. We did get an answer that invasive species suppression is not part of the FRMP process. I guess I'm assuming that that was taken into account at the Technical Review Committee or -- we don't need to say anything about else about that, because it's just going to be sorted out as this goes through. Okay. All right. Okay. Moving on to the last project. Project number 26-451, understanding the importance of resource networks in Alaska. Documenting subsistence fish sharing networks in select Bristol Bay communities.

DR. ROBERTS: Yeah. So, through the Chair this is a harvest and monitoring -- harvest monitoring and traditional ecological knowledge project. So, social-scientific methods are being used here. It's a partnership between ADF&G and the Bristol Bay Native Association. The project intends to examine subsistence sharing networks in four Bristol Bay communities which are dependent upon salmon and have high rates of sharing or have previously exhibited high rates of sharing subsistence resources. So, the project has four objectives, producing reliable estimates of the harvest and use of salmon and non-salmon fish in 2026 by residents of four Bristol Bay communities. Recording the geographic extent of search and harvest areas for salmon and non-salmon fish in these four communities. Quantitatively describing the characteristics of exchange networks involving salmon and non-salmon fish. And then documenting qualitative information about exchange practices in these communities and how these practices may be changing and why.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. All right. Are there comments on this proposal?

(No response)

Okay. I am not.....

MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: .....hearing any. Go ahead, Pat.

MR. HOLMES: I guess I feel like we had mentioned earlier. All these programs are great. I think that this one for Bristol Bay, it would be really important to them as well as the Chignik one for the Chignik folks as part of that other region. But I'm

afraid that I'd have to vote or give my expression for the projects in our region first and it kind of breaks my heart not to be able to have funding for all of them. I wish Bill Gates was my uncle or something and have him write a check. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Go ahead, Brett.

MR. RICHARDSON: Yeah, I would have to agree with Pat on that one. I think we would need to prioritize the weirs in the Buskin and McLee's Lake areas and, not sure what the full budget is, and then prioritize the remaining projects after that. As possible as can be by the, you know, if the project qualifies, I guess so.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, just a reminder, we're specifically not prioritizing these projects. We're just giving feedback that Jason's going to carry back into the ongoing review process for these. And I do fully expect that Bristol Bay will give a lot of feedback on their proposals and probably prioritize those, even though that's not what we're doing. Okay. Well, I'm not seeing any additional comment or feedback on the last project so, I think that's it. Do you have everything you need or is there anything else on this?

DR. ROBERTS: No, thank you, Madam Chair. That's -- that was a good feedback.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. And then are you also going to be -- are you doing the Partners presentation?

DR. ROBERTS: Yes. That's correct, I almost forgot. Okay. Jason Roberts again with OSM. Just providing a more brief update on the Partners for Fisheries Resource monitoring program. So, OSM posted a notice of funding opportunity for the Partners for Fisheries Monitoring last spring. This is a competitive grant for Alaska Native and rural nonprofit organizations. The intent of the program is to strengthen Alaska Native and rural involvement in federal subsistence management by providing salary funds to organizations so they can hire biologists, social scientists, or educators as examples. The grant also provides funds for science and culture camps and paid student internships. There are a total of eight applications received from across the state during this past call for funding, requesting new funding to begin

in 2026. This funding lasts for up to four years like the FRMP program. The Partners Program Review Panel made up of subject matter experts across various DOI agencies have reviewed the proposals and we expect a funding decision later this year and those details will be shared at your winter Council meetings. The next fund -- notice of funding opportunity for the Partners Program will be made in the spring of 2027, for funding to start in 2028. And if you'd like more information about this program, you can contact Jarred Stone or Liz Williams via email or phone, which I can share with you. Their contact information can also be found on the Partners' web page at www.doi.gov/subsistance/partners. And then of course anyone at the meeting I can give you more information on that.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Okay, I think we're done with this agenda item. All right. So, we have a choice. We have a few agenda items left and I'll read through those. I'm going to ask if people want to take another ten-minute break before we do the last few items or not. So, those items are the OSM general update, the 805(c) report. I expect both of those will be fairly brief. And then I do want to provide the opportunity for closing comments. And that's what I'm wondering, if having a break, just to get up, clear your head and then think about any closing comments you want to make. So, we can either do a 5- or 10-minute break, or we can just keep going. Break? Okay. Sounds like we're going to take a break. Let's take a break until half past. So, that's six minutes.

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Alright. If we can have Council members head back to their seats, we'll go ahead and get started again momentarily.

(Pause)

Okay. We've got all our Council members up here now. We'll go ahead and continue on with our meeting. We are on agenda item 14E, Office of Subsistence Management, OSM general update.

MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Madam Chair. For the record, Katya Wessels. So, it's a -- actually not a very short update, but there's a lot of things have been

happening since we reported to you during the winter of 2025. But OSM continued to work on making sure that the subsistence rural users, you know, have an opportunity to engage in the regulatory process under Title VIII. We also been in continuous contact with the leadership -- new leadership at the Office of Policy, Management and Budget, updating them on the program and the current issues that are facing the regions and require attention of the upper leadership. So, in February 7th, 2025, the Board called for new proposals to change federal wildlife regulations. So, the Board -- as a result of that call, the Board received 78 wildlife proposals across the whole state and OSM staff develop analysis that you've been using here. So, additionally we had 17 wildlife closure reviews across the state, that different Councils are -- reviewed or going to review. And in July, the regulations that -- for the Federal Subsistence Management Program that were previously placed in 50 CFR part 100, they've been moved to a new location, since we've been moved to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget. And now they reside in 43 CFR part 51. This is our main regulations. But the regulations themselves, though they were moved, did not change. So, that same day in July, OSM published the final regulations for the fish and shellfish -- take of fish and shellfish for the 25-27 regulatory years. And this rule also removed Ketchikan from the list of non-rural areas. And updated subsistence regulations on caribou in Units 11, 12 and 13, and corrected some errors from a recent final rule regarding the take of wolf and wolverine in Unit 17.

The Federal Subsistence Board held their summer work session on July 23rd-24th, and their Board reviewed your annual reports and their draft replies. And they also adopted wildlife proposal WP24-01 as modified by OSM, to allow the sale of brown bear hides harvested by federally qualified users, which was supported by more than one Council. And the Board also approved the implementation of regulation -- sorry. So, implementation of this regulation will proceed once OSM is able to get approved customary trade permit from the Office of Management and Budget. And additionally, the Board reviewed Council's recommendations on charter changes and received briefings on recent Council correspondence.

So, now I'm going to talk about Council appointments. During 25 appointment cycle, the Board received 50 applications from incumbents and new

applicants to fill 48 seats that are vacant or for which the terms are expiring. Board also received 8 letters of interest from young leaders that are interested in non-voting position on the Council's. Your region specifically, Kodiak Aleutians regions received 4 applications for vacant or expiring seats and 0 applications for non-voting leader seats. And here I'm just going to request that the Council would help us going forward. There's going to be the new application period for regular seats and for non-voting young leader seats. It will open on January 2nd and close on February 16th, 2026. So, we are requesting your help in soliciting the applications and letters of interest for young leader non-voting seat. Because it would be really great if your Council has all the seats filled and also have a person that you know from a younger generation learning all the innuendos of serving on the Council about the dual management and Federal Subsistence Management Program specifically.

So, the next topic is the permit database, permit app. So, in 2024, OSM initiated modernization of the federal subsistence permit application. Part of this modernization was to make permits more readily available to users through an option to obtain permits online. The new system maybe will be able to release -- we might be able to release it as soon as September 30th and users will be able to request profiles and permits through the online portal. September 30th is the target date. It's not for sure because there are some various technical difficulties and other, you know, things that interfere. Users will not be required to use the online portal and still can obtain permits by contacting local issuing office. A link to the online permit portal will appear on the program's website when it is available to use. And please check with your local Federal Land Management Office if you have questions about either using the new online option or obtaining Federal Subsistence Board permits. If you have more questions about the permit database, Kendra might be able to answer some of them as she being actively involved in the developing this online permit application.

The next topic is OSM staffing update. Roughly 30 to 35% of OSM positions are vacant and many employees are doing double and triple duties to cover these vacancies. And there's currently a government wide hiring freeze that was set to end on July 15th but was extended to October 15th, and we do not know if it will

be extended again or not. Several employees chose to retire this year through the deferred retirement program offered by federal government. This includes OSM Fisheries Biologist Karen Hyer, who was a specialist in the Northwest Arctic region for many years and was heavily involved in the partners program. The other person who retired was your Council Coordinator, Lisa Hutchinson. She coordinated your Council and Northwest Arctic Council. Another person who retired was Cultural Anthropologist Pippa Kenner, who covered Bristol Bay and Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta regions, and OSM permit specialist Derek Hildreth, who was responsible for permitting database, also retired. That was one of the delays that delayed the developing of the online permit application. You worked with some of these retired employees and I'm sure you will miss them as much as we do. But we have a little bit of good news here. So, we though -- although there is a hiring freeze, we were able to secure some lateral movements, you know, between other DOI agencies and OSM. So, Karen McKee, she used to be our Subsistence Outreach Coordinator. She left a few years ago, and now she is coming back to the same position, Subsistence Outreach Specialist Coordinator. Anna Senecal is coming to OSM Fisheries division to fill one of the three vacant positions in that division, and we are very happy to have them both. We are very grateful that we're able to get them laterally moved. And additionally, I -- my official appointment as the Acting Deputy Director for Operations was approved recently as well, though I've been doing that work now probably for six months.

So, the next topic is strengthening collaboration with the state of Alaska. The OSM Director and Deputy Director have been conducting monthly in-person meetings with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Deputy Commissioner and the Federal Subsistence Board Liaison. These meetings are improving communications and enhancing collaborative efforts around data sharing and analysis reviews. In addition, OSM and the Interagency Staff Committee held a workshop earlier this year to identify opportunities for strengthening the agency's relationship with the state, which has produced several action-oriented results. We're trying to improve these relations and moving forward with them. A few upcoming meeting dates. So, there was one set of tribal consultations before the full Council meetings. There's going to be another set of tribal consultations that will happen after the Council meetings. On the same topic, the regulatory proposals and closure reviews, and they're slated to be

held on November 12th and 13th. Then after that, there will be another opportunity for the tribes and corporations to consult with the Board, the day right before the Board meeting and Council Chairs are welcomed and encouraged to attend tribal consultations. And please share the dates of November 12th and 13th with the tribes in your region. It's on our website. We're going to be sending invitations and agendas soon, but it's just the wider we spread the word, the better because we would like more comments for the benefit of the Board.

Okay, and Federal Subsistence Board will hold FRMP work session on February 4th and 5th to review the Draft Fisheries Resource Monitoring Plan and to accept oral comments and to make recommendations to the selecting official and the selected official is OSM director. So, and the Board will have wildlife regulatory meeting, the dates were set for April 20th through 24th, 2026, and they will consider wildlife proposals and closure reviews.

Alright, and the last topic is the litigation update and I'm going to read that verbatim since that was provided by Solicitor. So, the first litigation is United States versus Alaska 9th Circuit. In 2022, the U.S. brought this action against the state of Alaska to resolve a dispute over the regulation of subsistence fishing on the Kuskokwim River within Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. In March 2024, the court granted summary judgment to the U.S. and issued a permanent injunction against the state. The state appealed. On August 20th, 2025, a 9th Circuit panel ruled in favor of the United States. The court upheld its previous holdings, that ANILCA defines public lands to include navigable waters, in which the United States holds reserved water rights based on three previous 9th Circuit Court decisions, commonly referred to as the Katie John cases. The court rejected the State's argument that the Katie John cases were clearly irreconcilable with the Sturgeon v. Frost or known as Sturgeon II, and second versus Environmental Protection Agency. The state of Alaska has indicated it will petition the Supreme Court to take up the case. So, that's -- and as you know, that it went to the Supreme Court as of late.

So, the State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game v. Federal Subsistence Board. That's another litigation. On June 2nd, 2025, a 9th Circuit

panel ruled in favor of the United States in this lawsuit filed by the state of Alaska after the Board authorized an emergency subsistence hunt in 2020 for moose and deer on federal public lands in the vicinity of Kake, Alaska. The court's basis for upholding the Board's decision was twofold. First, the Alaska -- the ANILCA provides the Board with authority to provide access to subsistence resources on federal lands. And second, the Board has the authority to authorize an emergency subsistence hunt to ensure that rural residents of Alaska have a reasonable opportunity to reach and use subsistence resources found on federal lands in Alaska. The panel also concluded that the State's claims that the Board improperly delegated the administration of the Ketchikan to a tribe, who are not proper -- not properly before the court.

And in conclusion, I would like to thank all of you for your service on this Council on behalf of the Office of Subsistence Management. You serve here on behalf of your communities and groups, and your service is exceptional. You work overtime on this. You take time away from your jobs, from your families, and we really recognize your effort and your contribution to the program. It's extremely important. So, thank you for contributing your knowledge and experience and time to the regulatory process. That concludes my presentation, and I'll try to answer questions if there is any.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Are there any questions on the OSM update?

(No response)

Okay. I'm not seeing or hearing any questions. Thank you for that very thorough review. Okay. That takes us on to agenda Item 15, other business. And there is no correspondence update. So, we're not going to be doing Item B. But Item A is 805(c) report. And I'll hand it over to Leigh.

MS. HONIG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Leigh Honig. For the record, the 805C report can be found on page 215 of your meeting booklet. It includes the 805(c) letter report and the table of FSB actions. So, the Council provided a total of five recommendations on fisheries proposals and one recommendation on the deferred wildlife proposal. The Board acted on five proposals that were consistent with the Council's

recommendation. The Board differed from the Council's recommendation on one proposal, which was WP24-01, which sought to allow the sale of brown bear hides. So, the Board decided to adopt deferred WP24-01 as modified by OSM. As a reminder, the modification was that the hides of brown bears, with or without claws attached, may be purchased within the U.S. for personal use only, and may not be sold resold. The hunter must request an OSM customary trade permit. The modification also eliminated regulation -- the regulation that required the skin of the skull and claws of hides be retained at the time of sealing in certain areas. The regulation cannot be implemented, however, until the Office of Management and Budget approves the creation of -- and use of the OSM customary trade permit. And that is all I have for this agenda item. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Alright, thank you. Are there any questions on the 805(c) report?

(No response)

Okay. Seeing and hearing none. That takes us to Item 16, closing comments. And I'm going to start as usual over to my left with Daniel.

MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair. This is Daniel Smith. Yeah. I really enjoyed the meeting. This is my second meeting. And just getting to know all the Council members has been a very great experience. And learning the system bit by bit. Also, appreciate all the staff that worked on drafting the analysis of the proposals. And I also appreciate Jeff and his crew taking us out to Izembek and seeing just the most brant I've ever seen in my life. Which was quite a spectacle to see. And all the eelgrass, I think that was another thing. If we had all that eelgrass in Kodiak, I can't imagine how many geese we'd have. So, the -- yeah and looking forward to being on this Council for the future and yeah appreciate all the support. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, I just want to comment that we went out in the boat, and we saw walruses but Daniel's appreciative of seeing the eelgrass that shows he's just dedicated to eelgrass. Alright, Coral.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, just thank everyone for the meeting. Thank -- want to thank Jeff for his hospitality, inviting us down, taking us out in the boat,

inviting us over to have a meal. And thank you, staff, for all your work with the proposals, presenting us with proposals, all the work we do -- you do, all the questions you answer for us. We're really appreciative of that. That's it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. We'll go next to Brett.

MR. RICHARDSON: Thank you. Yeah, I'd like to show gratitude for being a part of the Board and having an opportunity to come to Cold Bay. It's a really remote place, very difficult to get to and it seems like we've had a great little bit of weather here to get out and explore everything. This is -- you know, you live in one Aleutian Island or island and you think you've seen them all, but you haven't. It's similar, but totally different at the same time. And it's been great to see, get out to different places, see all the wildlife, get on the water. Talk about berries and birds and different mammals and yeah, show appreciation to Jeff for guiding us and inviting us over and being a good host, definitely appreciate that. Staff has been awesome, as usual. Without which we would be slightly maimed without all this useful information and clarification, and to my fellow Board Council members thanks for coming. It's good to see everybody and have good in-depth conversations and try to help subsistence users use, look forward to next meeting. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. We'll go next to Jeff.

MR. WASLEY: Thank you. Yeah, just I'd like to thank Rebecca for her leadership, thank the staff for all the work they do. Thank the refuge out here for participating and taking care of the resource. I'm glad folks got to see Cold Bay. I'm glad I got to show you a little more. And it's, like, definitely a special place for me. I plan on hanging around here as long as I can keep going. And I really thank the members of the Board and hearing your different perspectives, as we're all very different. But we also all have a similar interest in wildlife and fish and people utilizing it. And it's really great to hear everyone's perspective. So, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Jeff. We'll go online to Natasha.

MS. HAYDEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, I just would like to echo everybody else's comments other than I apologize for not being able to be there in person, and I do -- it sounds like I've missed out on some pretty amazing experiences. So, hopefully next time we have a meeting in Cold Bay, I'll be able to join us in person. One other thing I'd like to add, since I'm not there in person, is I really appreciate the tech support. I think that using this Team's platform has been very successful. I've been able to hear everybody loud and clear, which has been really great considering how remote Cold Bay is and Kodiak is. But, yeah, thank you, Madam Chair, you've done a great job this meeting. I think we've had some really great discussions, and I feel really good about what we accomplished last couple of days, so thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. We'll go next to Pat.

MR. HOLMES: Thank you. I just can't say how much I miss being out there with you folks. I really appreciate your skills, Becky, to be able to do three, four, five, six things at a time and still keep us moving in the right direction. I think we had a lot of really wonderful, good philosophical discussions and made some good progress. I'd sure like to thank the whole OSM staff, if that's still what you're called, for all your hard work and background on that. And I'd like to appreciate Leigh for all her ability and coordinating things and helping this happen. And I'd like to say in closing, that my normal geezer ramble, 1963 is my first trip out there with Reeves, and one of the things that I did and always did when I was out there, is to step outside the building, face the wind, and take a really deep breath with your eyes closed, and appreciate what a unique place Cold Bay is, and how wonderful it's been for folks for thousands of years. So, anyway, thank you very much and for allowing me to still participate. Have a good day. Bye.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Pat. I just wanted to thank everyone who came out here in person. I know it's quite a haul and with the flight schedules it means you are staying a little bit of extra time here. Particularly, thank you, Sara Taylor, for coming out here. I know the -- now when did you arrive? So, the day before yesterday. You were up at the North Slope meeting and then you flew out here. So, appreciate the effort you're making to show up in person and listen to our

words. And thank you to staff. Welcome to Leigh. Thank you for all your work. And thanks to all the rest of the OSM staff. And, Glenn, thank you for coming here and catching silver salmon for us to eat. And Jeff, thank you for hosting. You have set the bar high for host communities or hosts who are in the communities. So, yes and when I told Brett, when we go to Unalaska, we're expecting some great things. Luckily, he's got a year to prepare, so that's good. Other than that, I thought that our work in our discussions, this meeting were good. I think we got some good comments for the program review process and had -- worked productively. I never expect us all to agree. I do expect us to be able to have good discussions. And I think that that happened. So, with that do we need a motion to adjourn? All right. Can we get a motion to adjourn?

MR. RICHARDSON: Move to adjourn.

MR. HOLMES: So, moved.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, we'll do move by Brett. Seconded by Pat. Is there any objection?

(No response)

All right. Hearing and seeing none. This meeting is adjourned.

(Off record)

(END OF PROCEEDINGS)

C E R T I F I C A T E

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

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 1 through 154 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the KODIA/ALEUTIANS SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME I recorded on the 17th day of September;

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

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

DATED at Isabela, Puerto Rico this 19th day of November 2025.

_____
Rafael Morel
Chief Project Manager