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1 FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD

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3 WORK SESSION

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7 U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE BUILDING

8

 Anchorage, Alaska

9

 February 5, 2026

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 MEMBERS PRESENT:

16

17 Anthony Christianson

18 Rhonda Pitka, Public Member

19 Charles Brower, Public Member

20 Benjamin Payenna, Public Member

21 Frank Woods, Public Member

22 Sara Boario, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

23 Don Striker, National Park Service

24 Kevin Pendergast, Bureau of Land Management

25 Jolene John, Bureau of Indian Affairs

26 Jeremiah Ingersoll, U.S. Forest Service

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1 (No response)

2

3 MS. LEONETTI: Ray is excused for a
4 family emergency.

5

6 Jolene John, BIA.

7

8 MS. JOHN: BIA present.

9

10 MS. LEONETTI: BLM.

11

12 MR. VARNER: BLM present. Matt Varner
13 acting for BLM State Director Kevin Pendergast, who
14 will be joining us shortly.

15

16 MS. LEONETTI: Great. Thank you, Matt.
17 Forest Service, Jeremiah Ingersoll.

18

19 MR. INGERSOLL: Here.

20

21 MS. LEONETTI: Thanks, Jerry. Fish and
22 Wildlife Service, Sara Boario.

23

24 MS. BOARIO: Here.

25

26 MS. LEONETTI: Thanks, Sara. And
27 National Park Service, Don Striker.

28

29 MR. STRIKER: Park Service present.

30

31 MS. LEONETTI: Thanks, Don. Mr. Chair,
32 we have a quorum.

33

34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
35 First order of business and good morning and welcome
36 everyone to the Work Session. Again appreciate you in
37 attendance and leading up to the day. Appreciate all
38 the support we've seen for this program the last couple
39 of days. So it truly was overwhelming. Before we move
40 on we have first to review and adopt the agenda.

41

42 MR. BROWER: Mr. Chair.

43

44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

45

46 MR. BROWER: Move to adopt the agenda
47 as presented.

48

49 MR. WOODS: Second.

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1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion has been
2 made and seconded to adopt the agenda as presented by
3 Staff. Any comments?

4

5 MR. WOODS: Can I ask to have an open
6 agenda? Recommendations from Staff members that we
7 have an open agenda.

8

9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, we have a
10 guest coming in today. Are we trying to -- yes, you're
11 jogging our memory. Did we have that time certain
12 today? Was it 11:30?

13

14 MS. LEONETTI: We don't have a time
15 certain, so it would be good to have the agenda open so
16 that we can adjust it as she arrives.

17

18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Is there
19 any objection to the open agenda?

20

21 MS. LEONETTI: No.

22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Thank
24 you for that reminder, Frank. Any opposition to the
25 motion as presented?

26

27 (No opposing votes)

28

29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none.
30 Motion carries unanimous to accept the agenda. At this
31 time in the morning we also offer an opportunity for
32 our Board members to exchange information and share a
33 little bit about their program and what updates they
34 have. So we'll go ahead and call on our managers. It
35 looks like first up is Ollie.

36

37 MS. LEONETTI: The Board members first.

38

39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Board member I
40 mean, yeah.

41

42 MS. LEONETTI: You can start with Don
43 and just go around.

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, I'll just
46 start with Don. Sorry, Don. You're first.

47

48 MR. STRIKER: Good morning. Thank you,
49 Mr. Chair. National Park Service is well positioned to
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1 continue our business this year. We've got an
2 outstanding appropriation. Looking forward to another
3 busy year. I am here in the acting capacity as the
4 Regional Director. Some of you remember me from when I
5 was acting in 2020. I'm not here without experience.
6 It feels like a little bit of Groundhog Day. Many of
7 the issues that I face are the same things that we
8 faced five years ago.

9

10 I'm excited to be back and we're
11 excited to have another really strong year in the
12 National Park Service. Nothing else really new to
13 report. Thank you.

14

15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Ms. Jolene
16 John.

17

18 MS. JOHN: Good morning. I'm from the
19 Bureau of Indian Affairs. Just a very short overview.
20 Some of you know who Rosalie Debenham is, who is our
21 biologist based in Juneau. She has graciously accepted
22 our offer to do a temporary detail to the Fairbanks
23 Agency superintendent position, which she just started
24 last week and will last for 120 days. But she
25 continues to work alongside Dr. Glenn Chen on the
26 subsistence matters.

27

28 The Bureau of Indian Affairs under the
29 current Administration is really focusing on probate
30 cases, so our energy at this time is anticipating the
31 arrival of our principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
32 next week and the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs
33 in March as they come to meet with both the Tribal
34 Service Providers, the regional nonprofits who do the
35 actual probate work, as well as a couple ANCSA
36 Corporations whose shareholders are impacted by these
37 probate matters.

38

39 So I've been very busy working to make
40 sure that they will hear from our tribes that have the
41 -- both the important backlog records as well as large
42 tribes. And with the number of employees that have
43 departed in the last year the Alaska Region is doing
44 its best to ensure tribal finding moves out the door as
45 soon as they're able. It's great that we're being
46 funded through the rest of this fiscal year so we can
47 continue to serve our tribes across Alaska.

48

49 Quyana.
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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Next we'll come around the corner to Sara. You have the floor. Oh, I skipped right over Matt. Sorry, Matt.

MR. VARNER: Good morning. Thank you. Much like National Park Service our allocations are looking very -- very good, very strong. Similar to past years, like the other Federal agencies, we're continuing to evaluate our staffing losses, retirements, et cetera, to leverage partners more with the funding that we have to continue the good work we're doing related to Fish and Wildlife management.

Thank you.

MS. JOHN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As my colleagues have already noted we're pleased our appropriations bill has passed this year as well and would note that we're also -- we're really pleased that with the support of our Director Brian Nesvick earlier this fall when there was the lapse in appropriations we were able to continue working and focusing on hunting, fishing and subsistence needs, priorities and access.

Able to continue forward with things like trapping orientations in various refuges, aerial moose surveys that are really important for subsistence as well across a number of our refuges and providing and ensuring subsistence fishing permits are still going out the door as well. So that work continued on.

I'd also note that the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council and the Pacific Flyway Council have both supported a second year of closure for Emperor goose and egg harvest for the spring/summer subsistence and fall/winter harvest respectively. AMBCC is working to collaboratively identify conservation measures that would help maintain the population at levels that allow harvest. The spring meeting is going to be held this April. April 9 and 10 in Fairbanks.

Finally I'd note that nationally the Director has asked us to do a review of our National Wildlife Refuge System and hatchery systems. It's a formal review with the intent of identifying practical opportunities to better align resources, structures and processes to further the mission of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

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1 In January a survey was sent out to all
2 Alaska tribes, Alaska Native Corporations and ANOs to
3 provide opportunities for input of tribal ideas of how
4 we might improve the National Wildlife Refuge system.
5 I know there are no Fish and Wildlife Service
6 hatcheries up here, but that is also going on at the
7 same time.

8

9 I'll pass around for the members of the
10 Board the Director's orders and the letter that went
11 out when we sent ours out recognizing just how many --
12 how much that everyone is asked to review and provide
13 comment on so many things that we also noted we'll be
14 sending up to our leadership feedback we've already
15 received over the most recent years including from
16 co-stewardship talking circles with tribes and input
17 from tribes, corporations and ANOs on the Alaska Native
18 Relations Policy so that our leadership knows exactly
19 what this is for.

20

21 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
24 We'll come around to Rhonda.

25

26 MS. PITKA: I don't really have a lot
27 to say. Thanks.

28

29 MR. BROWER: None, thank you. There
30 was a question once asked to the Federal Subsistence
31 Board to go around Alaska to meet in rural areas. I
32 said I have no idea.

33

34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We need to take
35 a trip, Charlie.

36

37 MR. WOODS: Since our last meeting we
38 opened up the Federal caribou hunt on Nushagak
39 Peninsula. It was before the wildlife proposal
40 process, the last cycle. Just as this week we had a
41 bunch of hunters run down and -- the first time in four
42 years, probably 10 years on the State side, but it gave
43 opportunity for the locals to harvest caribou.

44

45 The last proposal, last expansion cycle
46 -- so the peninsula is shaped in a big U and on the
47 north end you opened up about 100 square miles of
48 migratory area in Togiak Refuge. So this week I'm
49 getting four or five reports that the caribou are no
50

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1 longer present on the Lower Peninsula where exactly
2 where you opened up. Like one report is saying I
3 tracked them all the way to the base of the mountains.
4 Now they're in the open area. We just made leave. The
5 second part of that is, you know, people are real
6 appreciative because right now red meat is real -- and
7 caribou is a prized choice right now.

8

9 And then, since the last time we met,
10 our local wildlife biologist John Landsiedel, he was
11 ADF&G but he worked real closely in the whole region
12 between the Togiak Refuge and the State of Alaska and
13 our Councils. And was real active in -- real active
14 and proactive in all the surveys. Real active in
15 intensive management program. I worked with him in
16 March at the Board of Game to allow what we talk about
17 is access to resource for locals. Opening up hunts and
18 making it real liberal. Especially in 17-A right now.

19

20 He was 33 years old and was a pillar
21 member of the management team because he actively
22 engaged and did what needed to get done. Age class
23 compositions to predator/prey ratios, shared all the
24 survey reports and collaring. The big one was the
25 collaring of calves in that region in the spring of
26 2023 to '24. There was zero recruitment.

27

28 I'm just giving you an update in our
29 region because it's real important. The work that --
30 at least I'm seeing it here. I was on that side
31 before. When I'm here sitting I realize the fruit of
32 our work and their labor is actually coming. Thank
33 you.

34

35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
36 Frank. Next one up.

37

38 MR. PAYENNA: I don't have any updates
39 at this time.

40

41 MR. INGERSOLL: Jerry Ingersoll for
42 Forest Service. I am acting in the role of Regional
43 Forester so, like some of the others -- I'm sorry. I'm
44 not being heard. Apologies. Jerry Ingersoll for the
45 Forest Service. Acting Regional Forester.

46

47 Appreciate the opportunity to be here
48 along with my colleagues on the Federal Subsistence
49 Board and especially from the Department of Interior.

50

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1 This program is interdepartmental and appreciate the
2 welcome and the inclusion and the opportunity to work
3 together.

4

5 Actually in the interdepartmental
6 nature our new undersecretary, Mr. Boren, just came to
7 us from the Department of Interior. So I think there
8 is opportunity to share and learn across departments
9 and to work together.

10

11 Like the other Federal agencies we are
12 still working in interim operations to -- we have fewer
13 staff today than we did a year ago and we're working to
14 make sure that the staff we have are working on the
15 most important priorities of the agency. We're also
16 going through a departmental level reorganization that
17 may affect where our headquarters staff work and how we
18 work at the level of the regional organizations.
19 There's a focus on making sure that our best resources
20 are concentrated to the field level and we eliminate
21 redundancy and layers of management in between.

22

23 Thank you.

24

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
26 that. I know Southeast took a hit with that one just
27 in partnership and across the board as far as having
28 someone to pick up the phone. So hats off to you guys
29 for juggling that and stuff because it's close to home.
30 So appreciate that.

31

32 Anthony Christianson, information
33 share. I'd just like to thank the public for their
34 showing at the hearing the other day. What a showing.
35 So truly appreciate that. That was good to see the
36 roomful. I, as the Chair, you know, usually have to
37 stare down, you know, my cousin right there and
38 sometimes it's always like that way, right. You know,
39 so the last meeting we had together was, you know,
40 pretty contentious and then you come in and see the
41 same contentious people sitting in the front row here
42 supporting us and in unity.

43

44 So that speaks volumes to the program
45 and I think the outreach and effectiveness of our Staff
46 and the decisions we make, like Frank saying here to
47 have on-the-ground impact with the rural residents that
48 we serve. So to get that kind of feedback, to see that
49 kind of public involvement in the system, you know, it
50

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1 just was overwhelming and heartfelt. So we truly
2 appreciate that.

3

4 Yesterday we did a pretty cool exercise
5 I thought broke down little barriers between us as just
6 people and humans. I truly appreciate it. I told
7 Crystal this morning that yesterday's training was a
8 little more tearing down the walls between us and
9 showing us that we're all here because of a common
10 cause and a value system that's based around resource
11 management and to help people, right? So I think that
12 was a really good exercise and also in our own history.

13

14

15 So I was like, oh, I need to learn how
16 to train myself to do that little exercise because it
17 was pretty cool and applicable and impressionable. I'm
18 still learning. So I appreciate that and the fun game
19 they played, Jeopardy. Jerry is our winner. I thought
20 he would have brought his trophy today and set it up
21 right there, but, you know, he's a modest guy. So we
22 appreciate modesty.

23

24 Anyway, just again thank you guys for
25 your attendance and appreciate all the work that the
26 Staff does to just keep abreast of all the information
27 and up to date in these times when the sky is falling,
28 but really it's not. Thank you, guys.

29

30 Crystal, you have the floor.

31

32 MS. LEONETTI: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
33 Just a couple updates from the OSM team. Everyone
34 knows in October of last year we experienced a lapse in
35 appropriations and had a more than six week government
36 shutdown, which interrupted our fall Regional Advisory
37 Council meeting cycle. The two Councils that had
38 already met were the North Slope and the
39 Kodiak-Aleutians Councils, which meant that during the
40 shutdown several staff had to work without any
41 assurance that they were going to get paid for that
42 work.

43

44 So I wanted to do a shout-out to those
45 Staff right now. I'm sure many of them are listening
46 on the phone. So Council Coordinators Brooke McDavid,
47 Nissa Pilcher, Gisela Chapa, Leigh Honig and Deanna
48 Perry all worked to reschedule or postpone those
49 meetings. They had to call all the Council Members and
50

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1 they had to make sure the venues were notified and that
2 we weren't going to get charged. They had to do a lot
3 of work.

4

5 Our admin team additionally had to
6 cancel their travel. It makes a lot of phone calls.
7 They had to do a lot of work. So I want to thank our
8 admin professionals Becky Brown, Sherri Gould-Fehrs and
9 Glenn Westdahl. They did a lot of work during the
10 shutdown. I just really appreciate them.

11

12 And I'm also proud of our wildlife and
13 anthropology teams for being willing to pull off the
14 rescheduling of these meetings very quickly after the
15 shutdown ended so that we could carry out the business
16 of those meetings, what those meetings would have done
17 in December and January.

18

19 As a result we are in a very condensed
20 meeting schedule right now starting from December until
21 the end of March. Our staff are working extra and
22 doing extra -- wearing extra hats as well. So I just
23 want to say that I'm really proud of our OSM team and
24 having good attitudes through it all.

25

26 Yesterday, as Tony mentioned, we did
27 the Board training and for the public's information
28 what we did is we experienced the Alaska Blanket
29 Exercise. Look it up if you've never heard of it.
30 Look it up. It's a program put on by Alaska Native
31 Tribal Health Consortium in which they get to
32 physically experience Alaska's history during pre and
33 post contact leading up to the present time. So it's a
34 little bit emotional, but it also helps us understand a
35 little bit in a different way how the history has
36 progressed here from the Alaska Native perspective.

37

38 Then they got overviews of ANILCA Title
39 VIII, court cases and the regulations that instruct
40 their roles and responsibilities. We had a nice
41 discussion about our forward-looking relationship with
42 the State of Alaska. So I got some great advice from
43 them and I think we're moving in a positive way there.

44

45 And then if we have more time at the
46 end of today if the meeting ends early, we'll continue
47 their training and we'll talk about parliamentary
48 procedure, how to move difficult topics forward as a
49 Board and relationship with the Regional Advisory

50

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1 Councils. So all of that said OSM is doing well and
2 we're happy to be here supporting the Board.

3

4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, we're also
5 going to hear from our Staff. So we're going to do
6 fishery reports updates and it looks like Scott is
7 going to be first.

8

9 MR. AYERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
10 members of the Board. Good to see you all again this
11 morning. I feel like we spent a fair bit of time
12 together here lately.

13

14 As we head into this fishery cycle and
15 we are dealing with all the FRMP stuff that's on
16 today's agenda we thought it would be a good idea to
17 reach out to the fisheries managers and see if any of
18 them had some time to provide an update to you on
19 either how their last year went or issues in their
20 regions. They are using authority to make these
21 decisions that has been delegated from you as a Board.
22 So we thought this was a great opportunity for a little
23 back and forth. So we've asked folks to volunteer and
24 provide some quick updates to you all.

25

26 Robbin has a list of folks that -- and
27 Tony's got a list too. All right. Perfect. So we've
28 got a couple of folks in the room and we also have some
29 folks online. I will just step back and let you have
30 at it.

31

32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
33 Scott. We appreciate that they're willing to share
34 that report. I think fisheries is probably one of our
35 bigger issues that we face mostly in action and
36 emergency action and by delegation. First we'll call
37 on Rob Cross who's here in the room.

38

39 MR. CROSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For
40 the record my name is Robert Cross and I'm the
41 subsistence program manager for the Tongass National
42 Forest and I'll be presenting the Tongass National
43 Forest Fisheries In-Season Management Report on behalf
44 of our in-season managers.

45

46 So the responsibility for in-season
47 management of Federal subsistence fisheries within the
48 Tongass National Forest has been delegated from the
49 Federal Subsistence Board to the U.S. Forest Service

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1 District Rangers. In 2025 one temporary and three
2 emergency fisheries special actions were taken by the
3 Ketchikan Misty Fjords, Juneau, Wrangell and Yakutat
4 District Rangers.

5

6 On February 24th, 2025 after
7 consultation with the Alaska Department of Fish and
8 Game Ketchikan Misty Fjords District Ranger Cathy Tighe
9 issued Emergency Special Action FSA13EU0125 closing the
10 District 1 eulachon harvest from March 1 through April
11 15 except by Federally qualified subsistence users on
12 the Unuk River Drainage.

13

14 The Emergency Special Action also
15 limited subsistence methods and means to cast net
16 and/or dipnet and set the annual harvest limit of a
17 five-gallon bucket of full eulachon per household.

18

19 This action was taken for reasons of
20 conservation concern due to a district-wide collapse of
21 eulachon in 2005 and continuing reduced annual
22 population returns. The Ketchikan Indian Community,
23 Organized Village of Saxman and the Chair of the
24 Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
25 were notified prior to the public closure announcement.

26

27 Though eulachon have returned to the
28 Unuk River regularly since 2011, the stock size within
29 District 1 remains at levels lower than those seen
30 prior to the 2005 population collapse. Efforts to
31 monitor populations within District 1 have proven
32 difficult despite intensive onsite survey efforts.

33

34 Because monitoring efforts have
35 documented eulachon returning consistently since 2011
36 the Federal fishery was opened on the Unuk River in
37 2021 for the first time since 2005 with harvest limited
38 to one five-gallon bucket by Federally qualified
39 subsistence users with gear restrictions. The 2025
40 season continued with limited opening on the Unuk River
41 and the 2026 season will do the same.

42

43 So monitoring is conducted through
44 qualitative visual surveys and recently quantitative
45 EDNA sampling. The 2025 Unuk River eulachon run was
46 sufficient to continue allowing limited harvest on the
47 Unuk River with gear restrictions.

48

49 Because of the life cycle of Unuk River
50

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1 eulachon averages five years the in-season manager
2 would like to see an abundant return of eulachon for
3 five consecutive years before removing or reducing
4 restrictions. If we continue to see future run sizes
5 of the scale of 2024 and 2025 seasons, we will consider
6 relaxing restrictions to allow increased harvest under
7 continued monitoring.

8

9 On April 24th, 2025 after consultation
10 with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game staff,
11 Wrangell District Ranger Victoria Houser issued
12 Emergency Special Action FSA-13-KS-02-25 which closed
13 the May 15 to June 20 Federal Subsistence Chinook
14 Salmon Fishery in the Stikine River.

15

16 The 2025 preseason forecast for the
17 Stikine River was 10,000 large chinook salmon that's
18 greater than 28 inches in total length, which was well
19 below the escapement goal range of 14,000 to 28,000
20 large chinook salmon set by the Pacific Salmon
21 Commission.

22

23 The Alaska Department of Fish and Game
24 also took actions in the State-managed fisheries to
25 reduce the harvest of Stikine River chinook salmon.
26 The closure of the chinook salmon fishery did not
27 affect the Stikine River Federal subsistence sockeye or
28 coho fisheries that started on June 21st.

29

30 Wrangell Cooperative Association,
31 Petersburg Indian Association and the Chair of the
32 Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
33 were notified prior to the public closure announcement.
34 And Stikine River chinook population estimates are
35 calculated by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
36 with data from the State, Federal and Canadian
37 fisheries.

38

39 The In-Season Manager's intent is to
40 open the Stikine River chinook season in consultation
41 with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game when the
42 pre-season chinook estimate meets or exceeds the
43 escapement goal.

44

45 On May 16, 2025, after consultation
46 with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the
47 Transboundary River Panel and the Pacific Salmon
48 Commission Juneau District Ranger Michael Downs issued
49 temporary special action FSA-13-SA-03-25, which

50

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1 established the Taku River Federal sockeye salmon
2 season dates as July 15 to August 14. The Temporary
3 Special Action also set harvest limits and methods and
4 means restrictions to match the State Personal Use
5 Fishery.

6

7 A virtual public hearing was held on
8 June 12th from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. to discuss the Taku
9 River Federal salmon fishery season prior to issuing
10 the Temporary Special Action to adjust the season
11 length, methods and means in order to meet the terms of
12 the Pacific Salmon Commission.

13

14 In 2022 the Federal Subsistence Board
15 voted to rescind the closure to Federal subsistence on
16 the Taku River. This action resulted in the Taku River
17 salmon fishery falling under the general Southeast
18 salmon restrictions or regulations. The Taku River is
19 a U.S./Canadian Transboundary River subject to the
20 Pacific Salmon Treaty and, as a highly allocated
21 fishery, the general southeast salmon regulations do
22 not meet the management intent of this fishery.

23

24 Numerous pre-season coordination
25 efforts were undertaken with the Alaska Department of
26 Fish and Game, the Office of Subsistence Management,
27 the Transboundary River Panel and the Pacific Salmon
28 Commission to determine the in-season management of the
29 Federal salmon fishery.

30

31 The proposed 2025 Federal Taku River
32 Salmon Fishery Management Plan was presented by the
33 U.S. Forest Service and the Office of Subsistence
34 Management to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
35 and the Transboundary River Panel on January 14th.

36

37 The 2025 Federal Taku River Salmon
38 Management Plan was approved by the Pacific Salmon
39 Commission on the week of February 10th and the Federal
40 Subsistence Board deferred Fisheries Proposal 25-01,
41 which was seeking to set Taku River specific salmon
42 regulations until consultation with the Pacific Salmon
43 Commission is complete.

44

45 The Taku River salmon population
46 estimates are calculated by the Alaska Department of
47 Fish and Game with data from the State Fishwheel Survey
48 and data from the State, Federal and Canadian
49 fisheries. The in-season manager's intent is to match
50

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1 the State Personal Use Fishery regulation until the
2 Board passes the Taku River specific salmon
3 regulations.

4

5 On May 16, 2025, after consultation
6 with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Yakutat
7 District Ranger Nate Catterson issued Emergency Special
8 Action FSA-12-KS-01-25, which closed the Situk River
9 chinook salmon fishery from June 1 through July 30.
10 Subsistence fishing for other species in the Situk
11 River did not allow for the use of gillnets or rod and
12 reel with bait in order to minimize the incidental
13 mortality of chinook salmon.

14

15 All chinook salmon incidentally caught
16 were not to be removed from the water and released
17 immediately. This Emergency Special Action followed
18 similar actions taken by the Alaska Department of Fish
19 and Game to conserve Situk River chinook salmon.
20 Effective from May 12 until further notice Alaska
21 Department of Fish and Game prohibited the retention of
22 chinook salmon when subsistence and commercial fishing
23 in the Situk-Ahrnklein Inlet.

24

25 The Alaska Department of Fish and Game
26 closed waters near the mouth of the Situk River and
27 Johnson Slough to subsistence and commercial gillnet
28 fishing. And closed sportfishing for chinook in the
29 Situk River effective May 1. The Yakutat Tlingit Tribe
30 and Chair of the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional
31 Advisory Council were notified prior to the Federal
32 public closure announcement.

33

34 The Alaska Department of Fish and Game
35 has set escapement goal range for the Situk River
36 chinook salmon at 450 to 1,050 large chinook salmon.
37 Returns to the Situk River have been below goals in
38 some recent years and achieved them in others after
39 restrictive management measures were implemented.

40

41 In the years 2008, '10 through '12, and
42 again in 2015, 2016, 2018 and 2023 the Situk River
43 chinook salmon failed to achieve their escapement goal.
44 And 2013, '14, '17, '19 through 2022 and 2024 the goal
45 was achieved after restrictive management measures were
46 implemented in the sport, commercial and subsistence
47 fisheries.

48

49 The 2025 preseason forecast estimated a
50

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1 total run of 750 large chinook salmon. Due to recent
2 low escapement and harvest trends a conservative
3 management approach was warranted to provide for
4 returning spawners. Situk River population estimates
5 are calculated by the Alaska Department of Fish and
6 Game with data from the State fish weir. In-season
7 manager's intent is to work cooperatively with State
8 managers to ensure the conservation of Situk River
9 chinook salmon stock.

10

11 Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's my
12 report.

13

14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any questions
15 from the Board?

16

17 (No response)

18

19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Rob, thank you.
20 Good report.

21

22 MR. CROSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

23

24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Good job too.
25 You're getting kudos out there. Next we'll call
26 (feedback) -- oh, yeah, we're getting loud now. Sorry,
27 Tina. It has a mind of its own. I didn't say nothing,
28 I just moved. See that. We're charged up this
29 morning. Feeling it. Steven Namitz online.

30

31 MR. NAMITZ: Yeah, good morning to the
32 Chair and the Board. For the record my name is Steve
33 Namitz and I'm the Cordova District Ranger for the
34 Chugach National Forest. I'm one of the delegated
35 fisheries in-season managers for parts of Area 12,
36 which encompasses all of Prince William Sound and the
37 Copper River Delta. My delegation covers everything in
38 Area 12 with the exception of the Copper River proper
39 and its tributaries, which have been delegated to the
40 Park Superintendent for Wrangell-St. Elias.

41

42 So under my delegation there are
43 approximately six areas within Area 12 that have
44 customary and traditional use designations. So in 2025
45 there were no special actions taken within my
46 delegation. We issued approximately 70 to 150 permits
47 depending on the year and that number seems to be
48 trending up.

49

50

0018

1 The harvest is typically coho and that
2 ranges from 100 to 500 fish a season with some
3 additional sockeye that range maybe 50 to 100 fish a
4 season. Most anglers are utilizing rod and reel, but
5 people also report using dipnets and spears.

6

7 And that's it for me. End of report.
8 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
11 Steve. Any questions from Council?

12

13 (No questions)

14

15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing, seeing
16 none. Thank you for the report. Daniel Fujido online.
17 You're next. Danielle. Sorry.

18

19 Mr. Chair, she indicated that she may
20 not be available due to overlapping meetings this
21 morning. So if she's not responding, then I think we
22 can just move on to the next one.

23

24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
25 Scott. We'll just go on to Spencer Reardon online.
26 You have the floor.

27

28 MR. REARDON: Good morning. I stepped
29 out for a moment and it was my turn quite so fast.
30 Good morning. My name is Spencer Reardon. I'm the
31 Refuge Manager here at Yukon Delta National Wildlife
32 Refuge in Bethel. I will briefly describe the 2025
33 Kuskokwim River salmon management season details and
34 what is planned for the upcoming 2026 season.

35

36 The summary of 2025, during the 2025
37 season, the Refuge here and the team that we have here
38 in Bethel, closely work with the Kuskokwim River
39 Intertribal Fish Commission, Alaska Department of Fish
40 and Game to manage chinook, chum and coho salmon on the
41 Kuskokwim River.

42

43 The Refuge and the Fish Commission
44 jointly develop the 2025 Kuskokwim Management Salmon
45 Management Strategy, which is similar to strategies
46 used since 2021. These strategies are developed
47 according to the following guiding principles.

48

49 Use a precautionary approach by
50

0019

1 utilizing in-season information rather than just
2 preseason forecasts to avoid overharvest, integrate
3 meaningful local traditional knowledge into the
4 fisheries management, strive for continued customary
5 and traditional subsistence harvest opportunities while
6 balancing the need for adequate escapement, uphold
7 Federal fisheries conservation and stock diversity
8 mandates.

9

10 We were able to provide more fishing
11 opportunities in 2025 than in recent years largely due
12 to abundant sockeye salmon, a better understanding of
13 subsistence fishing behavior and needs from prior
14 years. With restrictions we were able to escape an
15 estimated 105,000 chinook salmon. Chum salmon numbers
16 remained well below historic returns, but we still met
17 the only established escapement goal at the Kogrukuk River.
18 Salmon numbers also met escapement at the
19 Kogrukuk River.

20

21 Early in August precautionary measures
22 were used and restrictions were in place for coho
23 salmon. Both the Refuge and the Fish Commission
24 determined that the 2025 coho salmon run was likely to
25 meet conservation goals. Management on the Kuskokwim
26 River was relinquished which occurred on August 7th.

27

28 Although we were successful in meeting
29 escapement goals, the amounts reasonably necessary for
30 subsistence, also referred as ANS, for chinook and
31 chum, was likely not met based on in-season harvest
32 data. This was due to low abundance and the need for
33 restrictions.

34

35 Just to give you an overview of what
36 does in-season management look like. Continuous
37 coordination primarily with the Kuskokwim River
38 Intertribal Fish Commission to help make decisions on
39 day-to-day fishing closures and opportunities. We also
40 coordinate with the Office of Subsistence Management,
41 the RAC Chairs, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
42 and the State Kuskokwim River Working Group.

43

44 We conduct continuous outreach and
45 discussions with the public over the radio and the
46 weekly call-in opportunity hosted by the Kuskokwim
47 River Intertribal Fish Commission. During periods of
48 uncertainty of salmon abundance we use the following
49 in-season stock assessment tools.

50

0020

Local and traditional knowledge. That included run timing, abundance and health of salmon. For chinook salmon we've been targeting 110,000 escapement number, which is the upper end of the escapement goal. I'd like to also add that the Fish Commission are the ones that asked for this upper end of an escapement goal and they also represent the main fishers on the entire Kuskokwim River. So they help us do our job a little easier by asking for more conservation for their benefit as a user group.

19 We believe this helps ensure equitable
20 harvest opportunities for upriver communities and we
21 take into account that chinook salmon are smaller and
22 produce fewer eggs than in the past. For chum and coho
23 salmon we aim for minimally meeting established
24 escapement goals at the Kogrukuk River weir.

26 Due to similar run timing of chum and
27 sockeye salmon we have been challenged in trying to
28 preserve chum salmon while trying to allow for
29 opportunities for abundant sockeye salmon. We believe
30 that setnet opportunities rather than driftnet
31 opportunities allows fishers to harvest sockeye while
32 reducing catches of chum salmon as sockeye salmon are
33 bank oriented.

What is next for the Kuskokwim River management? Village meetings and tribal consultations to provide information and obtain feedback on Kuskokwim River management pre and post season. These efforts are currently underway. In fact today we have our first meeting of the year with one of the villages.

Coordinate and discuss what conservation measures may be needed for this next summer with Regional Advisory Council members, the Kuskokwim River Intertribal Fish Commission, the Office of Subsistence Management and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

These discussions will help determine

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1 if Federal management should be considered and for
2 which salmon species. If conditions warrant Federal
3 management of subsistence fishing on the Kuskokwim
4 River I will announce intentions to issue a Temporary
5 Special Action by March 15. These intentions will be
6 shared with all entities previously mentioned.

7

8 Before finalizing any decision to issue
9 a Temporary Special Action to manage Kuskokwim salmon
10 we'll first have a public hearing. After the hearing
11 we will then finalize the decision on issuing the
12 Special Action. This is the process that's been used
13 in previous years when considering Federal management
14 and are the steps stated in a Delegation of Authority
15 letter issued from the Federal Subsistence Board.

16

17 So for projects we are working closely
18 with the Fish Commission naturally. We are partners in
19 conservation and projects. We're going to try to run
20 the challenging Kwethluk River Weir. This is a project
21 that is viewed as highly important that will help
22 determine escapement goals in lower river salmon
23 health.

24

25 The Fish Commission I'll add will be
26 funding most of these efforts. We'll also be
27 continuing to work with the Fish Commission and ONC,
28 the Bethel Native corporation here, on community-based
29 harvest monitoring despite that these efforts are no
30 longer funded. Fully funded I should say. The data
31 from these efforts have proven integral to sound
32 decision-making in season.

33

34 That's what I have for my summary. I
35 hope this summary helps in understanding Kuskokwim
36 River salmon management. Thank you.

37

38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
39 that report and your work out there, Spencer. I know
40 you're right out on the front line in everything we do.
41 So we appreciate your work.

42

43 Next we have Holly Carroll in the room.

44

45 MS. CARROLL: Good morning members of
46 the Board. My name is Holly Carroll. I'm the Yukon
47 River In-season Subsistence Fishery Manager for the
48 U.S. Fish and Wildlife. We meant to send you this
49 lovely little one-pager summary of our fishery, so you
50

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1 will be receiving that today by email and it gives you
2 an update of how our season went last year, what
3 research we're working on and also our contact
4 information.

5

6 So the research and management team on
7 the Yukon consists of myself, we've got an Assistant
8 Manager Keith Herron. He's a tribal liaison as well
9 for us. And then we have our research biologist Shane
10 Ransbury. All of us work for you. So if you ever have
11 questions about the Yukon fishery, we hope you'll reach
12 out to us.

13

14 I'm not going to read any numbers for
15 you, but I will just give you a brief overview of the
16 Yukon River. As many of you know most of our salmon
17 stocks are in terrible decline. We have really poor
18 productivity for the last four and five seasons. We've
19 had to close all fishing in-river and that's been the
20 case for four and five years for our species.

21

22 So our biggest issue is that we have
23 over 55 Federally recognized tribes on the river, we
24 have 45 villages living on that river and relying on
25 what's now missing from their diet, is about 180,000
26 salmon per year. So that is a huge hardship to our
27 communities. It's creating a lot of loss of culture
28 and tradition and also major food insecurity. So our
29 job of managing this river unfortunately consists
30 largely of closing most species all season.

31

32 Our one bright spot is that our coho
33 run, which comes in quite late in the season, is
34 sometimes fishable. So we can go fishing for those
35 with selective gears on our river. Selective gears
36 include dipnets and beach seines where they can capture
37 the fish and then release chum and chinook alive.

38

39 We also have a very abundant non-salmon
40 suite of species that people can fish on.
41 Unfortunately in the summer the best way to catch those
42 is with gillnets and all gillnets are non-discriminate.
43 So what we do try to do is allow four inch and smaller
44 mesh gillnets in the river. We offer those for fishing
45 all the non-salmon species that are present. We have a
46 lot of whitefish, broad whitefish, pike. We get cisco,
47 Bering cisco.

48

49 The problem with fishing though is that
50

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1 you will incidently harvest chinook and chum. It
2 happens less frequently because we've limited those
3 nets to be shore-based setnets and 60 feet long.
4 That's mostly just where the resident fish are
5 swimming. So we are balancing the need to close all
6 fishing and all means of harvesting salmon with the
7 need to allow that non-salmon harvest so that some
8 traditions, some food fishing can continue.
9

10 So, as many of you know, we have been
11 providing pretty liberal access to the four-inch
12 gillnets, but what we started in the last couple years
13 is during the chinook run, which is compressed into a
14 four-week period on the Yukon, we do limit those
15 gillnets. We close them for two weeks entirely. So we
16 pull them all out of the river so that there's no
17 chance of interception during the peak of the chinook
18 run.
19

20 The other thing that we do in fall,
21 since the fall chum run is pretty prolonged, instead of
22 closing those four-inch nets for long periods we put
23 them on kind of a weekend schedule. So they can go
24 fishing for their non-salmon on the weekends and then
25 the gillnets are pulled out during the week. We also
26 listen to a lot of the local knowledge for those
27 non-salmon targeting folks. A lot of them like to fish
28 for those in fall because that's when they're tastier,
29 they're in better quality because they're coming out of
30 feeding in the lakes.
31

32 So based on a lot of different meetings
33 and interactions and consultations with tribal and
34 local knowledge-holders we found a lot of areas in
35 every single district where we can allow six-inch
36 fishing for the non-salmon in the fall. We identified
37 a bunch of areas that don't have any salmon in them and
38 so some areas have more than others, but we were able
39 to allow some pretty liberal six-inch fishing last year
40 starting in August and we're going to continue that.
41

42 So, in general, how we manage is
43 similar to what Spencer was talking about. We have the
44 Yukon River Intertribal Fish Commission. We also have
45 the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association. It has
46 Board members from every community. We work with those
47 entities as well as the State of Alaska to create our
48 management strategy.
49
50

0024

1 Because the Federal land in the Yukon
2 River Watershed is more of a patchwork we want to work
3 really closely with the State to make sure that we
4 totally come to consensus on what management is going
5 to occur in the season. So we do that by having a lot
6 of preseason meetings. We will hold Federal public
7 hearings when we have our management strategy to allow
8 the public to weigh in on our proposed actions.
9

10 Then we finalize our outlook and we
11 mail it to all households so they know what to expect
12 for fishing. We do that so that our management with
13 the State is perfectly aligned as we go upriver. The
14 differences in Federal waters. Any fishing that is
15 allowed for salmon is limited to the
16 Federally-qualified users in that area.
17

18 So it's pretty straightforward. We
19 have an added component though where we do have a
20 transboundary river and we have a treaty with Canada.
21 So for the fall chum and the chinook we work very
22 closely with the Yukon River Panel. They are a body
23 that helps set escapement goals at the border and we
24 work with that group to manage our fisheries. Also
25 bilaterally we have a scientific body that helps us to
26 set those escapement goals, determine research areas
27 and now we're working on a rebuilding plan for these
28 salmon stocks.
29

30 So all that is to say we are doing our
31 best to figure out how to get people fishing again.
32 But, sadly, in the short term we won't be fishing
33 anytime soon for chinook and chum salmon, but we will
34 do our best to find these pockets of opportunity where
35 we can.
36

37 And just another thing to point out is
38 that our team -- you know, we don't have a lot of
39 project dollars and the State of Alaska does receive
40 some great funding through us from the Yukon River
41 Treaty that keeps really important research going.
42 Over a million and a half dollars a year every year.
43 Most of that goes out the door to those agencies.
44

45 So what our team has really been
46 focused on and we're going to expand upon is doing a
47 lot more outreach in the communities. Getting on the
48 ground in community. We're going to culture camps.
49 We're going to training camps. We're going to
50

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1 re-invigorate a Salmon in the Schools Program because
2 we need to find ways to connect people with salmon in
3 the absence of salmon. So how can we keep that love
4 alive and those traditions alive. So that's something
5 our team is working on.

6

7 With that I'll just end there and see
8 if anyone has questions.

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any questions?
11 Rhonda.

12

13 MS. PITKA: You're invited to Beaver's
14 Culture Camp.

15

16 MS. CARROLL: I would love to go.
17 Thank you.

18

19 MS. PITKA: So is Keith. I'll email
20 you the dates.

21

22 MS. CARROLL: Thank you.

23

24 MR. WOODS: Holly, thank you for your
25 report. One of the things that really struck me is all
26 the different agencies you're dealing with. The last
27 report, I believe it was Spencer, just
28 announced that the fisheries commission they work with
29 helped manage their elder runs. He was talking about
30 sockeye, chums, cohos, chinook.

31

32 We have a big topic before us. It's
33 called meaningful consultation. What you're doing is
34 meaningful and I believe OSM and OSG should be funding
35 those types of engagement with the community. Not just
36 all the tribal community, but the commercial. What you
37 listed was -- I forgot what term.

38

39 Basically I'm asking -- I appreciate
40 your stuff, but for the public and the Board is that we
41 look at this meaningful consultation topic and
42 utilizing the Fisheries Commission and your work that
43 you're doing with outlining the community engagement
44 process as part of that is a model that we can use here
45 to help us.

46

47 Because the last couple days I've heard
48 that topic and come up time and time again that we're
49 not doing a good job of consulting everybody and we're
50

1 not getting everybody on the same page. And I'm
2 walking through your job all the way from Lower Yukon
3 Delta, majority Federal patchwork, all the way through
4 the whole drainage system all the way up into Canada,
5 right. So that meaningful consultation becomes really
6 important.

7

8 And then the second thing is engaging
9 with the tribal communities is really appreciated I
10 think on our end. How can we outside your region help
11 you. I'm in Bristol Bay. We have abundance of
12 sockeye. We don't have abundance of king salmon and
13 king salmon statewide is a problem. But what you're
14 doing -- I'm going to refer back to our Bristol Bay
15 Regional RAC committee. When we start engaging in
16 absence of resource, we want to start working on those
17 things that you already have done.

18

19 So I appreciate your report and keep up
20 the good work. I can't even imagine having to tell
21 people not to set their nets or not to catch a fish to
22 eat themselves. That's a disgrace to the whole
23 process, not to you or this Board, but the whole
24 picture of the biggest king salmon run in the world has
25 failed, right? That should be alarms going off all the
26 way up to the President's desk, right? There should be
27 an active alarm in every agency that's sitting on this
28 Committee how to not let that happen again.

29

30 So thank you and I appreciate your
31 work. If you could -- when you share your letter or
32 report does it list all the agencies you deal with?
33 The meetings like we were talking about?

34

35 MS. CARROLL: You know, we submitted an
36 annual report to the Federal Subsistence Board. That
37 one is more detailed and talks about who all we consult
38 with and that's pretty detailed in there. The short
39 one maybe doesn't list all that, but it would be pretty
40 easy for us to get that to you, sure.

41

42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. I
43 just wanted to echo what Frank said. That was
44 something that keyed me off with our Refuge Manager.
45 We delegate the duty to you guys and you guys take it
46 dutiful and we appreciate that. And in that I think
47 you guys have managed to create a framework that the
48 Board can look at and use. Like Frank saying as a tool
49 with some of these different changes we got from D.C.,
50

0027

1 right? So I'm hearing a framework drafted by the very
2 people we give delegation to.

3

4 So we appreciate that because we feel
5 like we're being diligent and you're doing it on our
6 behalf. So we appreciate that from all you guys who
7 just reported this morning. We appreciate it because
8 that's front line work and you have to face the people.
9 And that you have more investment than just the fish,
10 but the people themselves. Hats off to you guys out
11 there.

12

13 Any other Board members like to add
14 anything? And Kevin did come in a little -- Matt did
15 you justice, but if you wanted to say anything you have
16 the floor. No? Okay.

17

18 MR. STRIKER: Mr. Chair.

19

20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, go ahead,
21 Don.

22

23 MR. STRIKER: If it pleases the Board,
24 I could have -- put Eva on the spot to give an update
25 for the National Park Service. I should have thought
26 about this earlier.

27

28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Eva has the
29 floor anytime here.

30

31 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and
32 members of the Board. For the record, Eva Patton,
33 Subsistence Program Manager for the National Park
34 Service, our Regional Office here in Anchorage. We
35 work with all our subsistence parks across the state.

36

37 I'm here on behalf of our Federal
38 in-season manager for the Upper Copper River within the
39 Prince William Sound area and Wrangell-St. Elias
40 National Park and Preserve have Federal waters that
41 they manage. Park Superintendent, Acting
42 Superintendent Joshua Scott and their Integrated
43 Resources Program Manager Benjamin Pister were not able
44 to attend today so I have the report to provide for you
45 on their behalf.

46

47 There were several retirements that
48 happened this year. Previous Park Superintendent Ben
49 Bobowski many of you know retired. Our longtime
50

0028

1 fisheries biologist Dave Sarafin retired. Both of them
2 in the spring. Also Mark Miller who was lead ecologist
3 for quite some time at Wrangell-St. Elias also
4 department last year for another position.

5

6 So the Park is still working very hard
7 to uphold their Federal management obligations in
8 research and monitoring and tribal consultation and
9 communication with subsistence communities and the
10 State and other Federal managers that collaborate with
11 the Forest Service in the Lower River.

12

13 In the preseason management
14 coordination efforts they work very closely with the
15 Department of Fish and Game to discuss preseason
16 coordination efforts and they had discussed the 2024
17 season State and Federal fisheries review, those
18 communications, and they discussed permit issues, both
19 subsistence permit issues, communications and research
20 and monitoring studies both on the State and the
21 Federal side.

22

23 So in May the Park Staff met with the
24 Department of Fish and Game to discuss preseason and
25 throughout the season. There were no fisheries
26 management actions that were made in the 2025 season,
27 but Park Staff had wanted to let the Board know that
28 that doesn't mean there wasn't a lot of work going on.
29 That it takes both a lot of data gathering and
30 communications with all of the stakeholders on the
31 river to come up with a decision to take no action.

32

33 There are great concern about the
34 chinook population on the Copper River. It is still
35 open to all fishing on the Copper River. There's quite
36 a bit of pressure that comes in from other areas of the
37 state to the Copper River. So there was some concern
38 both in terms of pressure on those resources and
39 ensuring a subsistence opportunity, but no actions were
40 taken to close the fishery or restrict fishing.

41

42 In the post-season evaluation Park
43 Staff are working and receiving harvest reports from
44 permittees and they're reaching out via email and
45 letters and phone calls. As of January 2026 over 80
46 percent of the harvest reports have been returned.
47 These are the subsistence harvest reports returned for
48 the Glennallen and Chitina subdistricts. Park Staff
49 are working with increasing the return percentage rate.

50

0029

1 Some of the projects that the Park
2 works on in terms of in-season monitoring many of you
3 know the Tanada Creek Weir, which is just below Katie
4 John's fish camp at Batzulnetas. That has been a
5 really important escapement monitoring project on the
6 Upper Copper River. One of the very few in the Upper
7 Copper River.

8

9 Park Service has managed that for many,
10 many years, but they are now in partnership with the
11 Ahtna River Intertribal Fish Commission -- Resources
12 Commission rather, and AITRC is in the process of
13 taking over full management of that weir and they've
14 been doing an amazing job.

15

16 So this 2025 Tanada Creek Salmon Weir
17 Season ended with a minimum count passage of 11,067
18 sockeye and one chinook salmon. Daily counts were made
19 from June 19th to December 26th and this is the
20 historical counting period with an exception of some
21 down time due to extreme high water events.

22

23 AITRC is working to design a new video
24 review software, so that's a video-monitored weir. And
25 also may be able to staff the weir longer. The Park
26 has relied on seasonal staff that have to depart within
27 a timeframe. They have a limited work schedule. So
28 AITRC may be able to extend the season to continue to
29 monitor the weir as there are some late runs.

30

31 Reports from subsistence fishers this
32 summer is that fishing on the river with both dipnet
33 and fishwheel was that fishing was low and especially
34 during the early season in May and June. Based off of
35 the harvest reports fishing success increased later in
36 the season throughout July and August, but also a low
37 percentage of people who applied for a subsistence
38 fishing permit who did not end up fishing in the
39 Glennallen and Chitina subdistrict.

40

41 Wrangell-St. Elias has started
42 in-season fisheries teleconferences to help facilitate
43 the communications in season with subsistence fishers
44 and also sharing data and management from both ADF&G
45 and the Federal in-season managers.

46

47 So this summer 12 teleconferences were
48 held during the 2025 season and agency staff presented
49 on sonar counts, opening counts and harvest numbers

50

0030

1 from commercial, sport, personal use, run times and
2 Federal subsistence users and subsistence users shared
3 observations including harvests, high water, water
4 temperature, conditions of the fish, the size and
5 health and also erosion along the river in particular
6 affecting some of the fishwheel site locations.

7

8 These teleconferences led to enhanced
9 understanding of fish health and run timing and
10 provided future reference for research that's needed.
11 I want to highlight too that a huge part of that work
12 is actually the cultural anthropologist and subsistence
13 coordinators for the Park, Barbara Cellarius is going
14 to be retiring after 23 years of service with the Park.
15

16 Amber Cohen has been there for several
17 years now and mentored by Barbara, so much of that
18 outreach and coordination with the subsistence
19 communities and tribal consultation and conducting the
20 in-season fisheries teleconferences is the great work
21 of Amber and I think she's online.

22

23 That's all I have unless there's any
24 questions.

25

26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any questions?

27

28 (No questions)

29

30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate the
31 work out there, Eva. Like Frank said, you're probably
32 in a proactive approach to not get to where the last
33 two spoke about, right? So their job is harder to face
34 the music and your job is you've still got the violin.
35 So I'm glad you're out there listening to the tune and
36 frequency of our people and trying to stay dialed in on
37 the pulse of the fish. No pun intended.

38

39 (Laughter)

40

41 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

42

43 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair.

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead.

46

47 MS. BOARIO: If I may, the Fish and
48 Wildlife Service does have one more in-season manager
49 present, John Gerken. Our in-season manager for

50

0031

1 Chignik, Bristol Bay, Aleutian Islands and Alaska
2 Peninsula. If you don't mind him giving a brief report
3 as well.

4

5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We appreciate
6 your work. Thank you.

7

8 MR. GERKEN: Good morning. My name is
9 Jonathon Gerken. I'm a fisheries biologist here in
10 Anchorage. I guess I'll thank the Park Service for
11 putting people on the spot.....

12

13 (Laughter)

14

15 MR. GERKEN:and following suit
16 here. I guess I'll do it a little differently than
17 everybody else, but I think what you've been kind of
18 hearing is in-season management isn't really -- there's
19 not a method to it. It differs by geography, it
20 differs by where you're at, it differs by what species
21 are present. So everyone is kind of trying to do their
22 own thing. When you guys have your conversations later
23 about, you know, meaningful conversations, keep in mind
24 that no area is the same.

25

26 So within our office I'm located here
27 in Anchorage. I have a staff of five people; two here
28 in Anchorage, three in Soldotna. We also have
29 delegated authority for Upper Cook Inlet, which
30 includes the Kenai River and the Kasilof River. That
31 management is completely different than the stuff that
32 I'm delegated with in Bristol Bay, the Peninsula and
33 the Aleutian Islands. So I'll focus a little bit on
34 the stuff we do on the Kenai.

35

36 That is a permit-driven Federal
37 management system. We put out about 400 permits a
38 year. We do about eight to ten village visits every
39 year where we go to individual towns and issue permits
40 directly on the road system. We have a very strong
41 partnership with the Ninilchik Tribe. These sort of
42 outreach and sort of consultations are -- I think
43 Spencer said it well. They're continuous. They're
44 year round. They're at Board of Fish meetings, Federal
45 Subsistence Board meetings, RAC meetings, AC meetings.

46

47 So I think at least from the Fish and
48 Wildlife Service perspective, knowing Spencer and
49 Holly, we're kind of old school. We still like to do
50

0032

1 handshakes and see people face to face as opposed to,
2 you know, kind of being a digital green dot online.
3 That's how I was taught on the Yukon and I think that's
4 kind of how we currently still do it, handshakes and
5 building trust in all these communities.

6

7 Switching over into the area that I
8 have delegated authority. Typically in the past our
9 biggest area has been Chignik. They've had more
10 problems than others with respect to reaching
11 escapement goals primarily in chinook. We did meet the
12 goal last year in '25 by 90 fish, but there was some
13 pretty drastic measures taken.

14

15 I did do a special action to close it
16 to all users as well -- or in consultation with the
17 State, who also closed State subsistence, moved
18 commercial periods way out of the lagoon, and then also
19 restricted all sport fish. Within the last -- we've
20 made it one time in the last 10 years on the goal.
21 That goal is pretty small, 1,300 fish. So any small
22 take can make a big difference with recruitment.

23

24 Sockeye has been pretty good in that
25 area, but there has been issues in 2018 and 2019, so
26 not everything is the same. When we have -- probably
27 the biggest challenge for me living in Anchorage but
28 having delegated authority in the Peninsula is getting
29 there and then making those relationships. It does
30 take a lot of work.

31

32 I regularly consult with about nine
33 different ADF&G managers that have different spaces out
34 there. So even though we are beholden with our
35 relationships to the State and to the subsistence users
36 it is difficult to move around and make those
37 relationships and continue them. But that's completely
38 different than in the other area, with real contrast to
39 the Kenai where we can drive everywhere and make those
40 consultations.

41

42 Of those five biologists we have two
43 managers and we have three assessment biologists, so we
44 do also operate assessment projects on many spots.
45 We've got a couple on the Kenai. We have actually done
46 some on the Copper River with AHTNA. We've done some
47 in those different refuges. We've also worked with
48 Yukon Delta. So within those range of five biologists
49 there's a big area outside of the in-season management
50

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1 that we do provide assessment projects for other
2 managers.

3

4 I think that's all I've got off the top
5 of my head. I'm definitely open for new questions.
6 Don't go on leave and then come back to a meeting and
7 then get put on the spot. Maybe that's.....

8

9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: There you go.
10 Frank got you first.

11

12 MS. BOARIO: Thanks for being willing,
13 Jon. I appreciate it.

14

15 MR. GERKEN: Yeah, no problem.

16

17 MR. WOODS: Jonathon, thank you. Where
18 was I going to start? Every area is different. I like
19 that because it is. Alaska is such a big state and you
20 have five staff that manage Southwest, Bristol Bay and
21 the Peninsula, right?

22

23 MR. GERKEN: Yes.

24

25 MR. WOODS: That's a luxury that some
26 people and some agencies -- most agencies in Bristol
27 Bay we cover -- I work for BBNA and I worked in Natural
28 Resources before I got here. Love my job and love
29 working with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

30

31 I say that because, number one, I work
32 with Cody. He's part of Chignik, I believe. Cody
33 Larson, biologist. Great team to be teamed up with. I
34 would love to see the presence of Federal process and
35 the whole -- like Bristol Bay fin fish just finished.
36 George Pappas did a great job sitting in the meetings,
37 helping represent us, I guess.

38

39 But we're limited in how we say
40 things. We forgot how to communicate. We forgot how
41 important their job is to connect all the dots. We, as
42 users, and beneficiaries, all your science
43 implementation of all the information become diluted at
44 the Board level, State of Alaska Board of Fish level,
45 because of processes within their system to stop
46 communicating. And that's where I think the last we
47 talked about meaningful consultation. We have our
48 hands tied because we can't say anything like George
49 weigh in on State and old bureaucracy and State policy.

50

1 I'm going to say something that's going
2 to not offend you, but it will open your eyes. Area M
3 is coming up. I cringe when there's only seven coho
4 returning to a spawning stream in that region. In the
5 Chignik Lake, Chignik Black -- Black Lake. Chignik
6 tributaries there. Chinook is even worse.
7

8 The people in those villages -- and I'm
9 going to say this because, number one, those people
10 that live in Chignik depended on a resource that are
11 depleted and now the villages are dying. Not only they
12 don't have access to resources, they can't sustain
13 themselves. That's what's happening statewide.
14

15 When we use bureaucracy in two
16 different pillars to manage resource -- and I'm going
17 to refer to the Yukon meaningful consultation -- is
18 that we've got to find a better way to communicate
19 between the State and the Feds.
20

21 Your job has been real important. I
22 can't commend you enough for having five staff and
23 money to do it. Imagine in Bristol Bay we have -- I
24 think we have almost -- we have two staff and almost
25 zero dollars to operate.
26

27 So that meaningful consultation with
28 you along with Cody, along with the fishery biologist,
29 become real important on managing resource. More
30 importantly protecting and conserving what we're trying
31 to preserve.
32

33 So I'd love to see you more at the
34 Bristol Bay Board of Fish. I don't think we've met
35 before. And I know your jurisdiction isn't king salmon
36 on the Nushagak. Right? I talked to Cody about that.
37 I'll stop.
38

39 MR. GERKEN: Yeah, not any meaningful
40 Federal land for sort of any special actions on the
41 Nushagak, yeah. It's all State land.
42

43 MR. WOODS: The only thing I can think
44 of is Togiak Refuge and that process -- they used to
45 have a telemetry and that was a great study, you know.
46 And I'm walking through it because I need information
47 from you and your office to help the return of Bristol
48 Bay kings. I don't want to see what happened and get
49 to the point where we're not fishing anymore.
50

1 So I appreciate that, number one --
2 before I got here in this meeting I was trying to find
3 a way to put some of those fisheries projects into the
4 studies that would help resource and I'm limited,
5 right? I'm limited to Federal waters. I'm limited to
6 jurisdiction, I'm limited to a bureaucracy that pillars
7 the same resource.

8

9 So with that, you know, I'd love to see
10 your face. Cody actually started working for the
11 Refuge. He moved from biology and a biologist at BBNA
12 and got a Federal job. I'm happy for him. But what a
13 loss of a lot of information. A lot of coordination
14 because that is very, very important. Especially on
15 our end.

16

17 So I'd love to keep working with you.
18 I finally get to meet you, I guess. And through Sara
19 appreciate your help too. It's meaningful. It is. We
20 can only address that. So thanks.

21

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other Board
23 questions? Go ahead.

24

25 MR. GERKEN: Oh, I was going to say,
26 yeah, we do a lot of work with Cody, so we know him
27 well. We've hopefully got a project coming up here
28 this next summer that we'll be working with. Yeah, we
29 can give you more details if needed.

30

31 I guess the only other thing I would
32 say is, you know, at my level we have very good
33 relationships with the State and when I first started
34 in management that was on the Yukon there were
35 assessment projects all the way up and down the Yukon.
36 I mean there was probably 10 to 12 weirs that were
37 being operated and now we have maybe one, you know. So
38 those collaborative efforts are still ongoing between
39 the Fish and Wildlife Service and the State to get
40 certain projects.

41

42 As you all know, dollars don't go
43 nearly as far as they used to. So, yeah, we are trying
44 to be creative and work with either BBNA, Tribe
45 Unlimited is now becoming a partner in some of this
46 stuff. Ahtna, who is outside of our geographic area,
47 but we still do stuff. So, yeah, we're trying to be
48 creative and trying to keep up with all the
49 collaborative efforts.

50

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1 Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

4 We're going to call on Orville at this time. Thank
5 you.

7 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair, Board
8 members. Orville Lind, Native Liaison for OSM.
9 Brother Jon. I just wanted to point out a great, great
10 topic as far as communications, working together.
11 Before our director Crystal came on board we had Former
12 Director Sue Detwiler.

21 And I just love the fact that OSM does
22 that stuff. Of course when we have a lot of funding.
23 But still now we have contacts. We can talk to each
24 other. Tells me he's going to go down. You know, we
25 can organize something if we're available. So, yeah,
26 we're definitely working together to make things
27 better.

29 Thank you.

31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
32 Thank you, Orville. Any other questions or comments
33 from the Board?

35 (No comments)

37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate it.
38 Thank you guys for your work. Delegating you guys our
39 job is one of our best easiest jobs.

41 (Laughter)

43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Imagine if we
44 had to do all of that stuff. We'd have to have
45 three-week meetings like the State. I mean right? I
46 mean that's a lot of work that you guys take the burden
47 off of this Board and then funnel it up to us. So we
48 appreciate all that effort.

49

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1 Is that it? Anybody else? We got
2 anybody else want to jump up in here? Feels compelled
3 to just speak their mind?

4

5 (Laughter)

6

7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
8 Let's take a five-minute break.

9

10 (Off record)

11

12 (On record)

13

14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: At this time
15 we're going to present recommendations on the 2026
16 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Plan and our Staff will
17 introduce and present the FRMP 2026 Plan.

18

19 MR. AYERS: Again, Mr. Chair, Members
20 of the Board, my name is Scott Ayers. I am OSM's
21 Deputy Director for Sciences and with me is Brent
22 Vickers. Brent, introduce yourself.

23

24 MR. VICKERS: Just like he said I'm
25 Brent Vickers. I'm the Anthropology Division
26 Supervisor at OSM and I am the co-Chair of the
27 Technical Review Committee for the FRMP.

28

29 MR. AYERS: All right. So just before
30 we get started on this I wanted to jump back to the
31 last topic for just a second related to the manager
32 reports and the work that they do. First thank them
33 all for providing those reports. I reached out kind of
34 last minute and lots of folks jumped in and said they
35 would agree to do that and I really, really appreciate
36 that.

37

38 Then I also wanted to reiterate, if I
39 didn't earlier, that Annual Reports -- hello? How
40 about now? We can share. Testing.
41 As I was saying the delegation letters to the Federal
42 In-Season Fisheries Managers all require an annual
43 report that's submitted and those are forwarded on to
44 you. Those were sent in January, late January of this
45 year, so you should have received the reports that we
46 had.

47

48 They outline many of the actions that
49 were discussed today, but like kind of the specifics of
50

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1 the in-season, the pre-season coordination, the
2 in-season discussions and conversations and those are
3 great to have. Again, just wonderful to have the
4 in-person dialogue back and forth.

5

6 All right. So we're going to talk
7 about the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program and
8 today the Monitoring Plan for 2026. I've got a whole
9 bunch of slides for us to go through. We presented
10 some of this stuff earlier or I provided copies of the
11 slides. However, what I'd like to just kind of say on
12 the front end here is please don't save questions until
13 the end. If you have questions along the way, let me
14 know and we'll jump into it and work through things.

15

16 FRMP has a mission here and ultimately
17 this program started at the beginning of Federal
18 management of fisheries. The Secretaries made a
19 commitment to increase the quantity and quality of data
20 available for management of the subsistence fisheries.
21 That kind of was the genesis of this program to get
22 everything going and make sure there was funding and
23 opportunity available to collect that data.

24

25 The FRMP is divided into six regions
26 across the state as you can see on the map here and
27 there is also a seventh region that is a multi-regional
28 category that covers projects that -- we occasionally
29 get projects submitted that cover multiple different
30 regions and we'll get kind of into a little more why
31 it's important that we have the regions a little later
32 on.

33

34 So we have a Monitoring Plan that's
35 developed every two years that covers -- the plan
36 itself covers kind of the whole process from start to
37 finish. It talks about our development of the needs
38 that are discussed across the landscape for the moment.

39

40 It talks about the request for
41 proposals all the way through and in the final plan,
42 which gets published on our website, it actually
43 provides the list of projects that were funded through
44 that particular call for proposals. Right now we're
45 working on the 2026 plan for projects that would
46 normally start sometime between April and July of this
47 year.

48

49 So our process for this plan in
50

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1 particular is that we have a -- we solicit proposals,
2 we have a technical review committee that we'll talk
3 about a little bit more in a minute. They are the
4 Merit Review Panel. It's a competitive process.
5 They're the only ones that see all of the materials
6 apart from Staff that kind of goes through and
7 evaluates all aspects of those; the budgets, the
8 proposed work and everything.
9

10 The plan then gets kind of developed
11 into a written format. There's discussions with the ISC
12 about this and we talk about the projects that were
13 submitted with the Regional Advisory Councils. We come
14 and present to you. And then in the end, based on all
15 of that input and the available funding that OSM has in
16 our budget, which sometimes we know and sometimes we
17 don't at the time we get to this meeting. The Director
18 makes a decision on how far down the project list we
19 can fund.
20

21 So, as I said, the Technical Review
22 Committee is this panel that comes together. They meet
23 every other year to have a long discussion. We send
24 them all of the proposal packages and it's a lot for
25 them to go through. But they are senior experts from
26 the Federal agencies that are part of the program as
27 well as the State. We have a mix of biological and
28 social scientist experts on this.
29

30 The whole process really is to ensure
31 scientific integrity as we go through this. These
32 members are appointed by the OSM Director and currently
33 we had for this cycle someone from Bureau of Indian
34 Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, the National Park
35 Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest
36 Service, Alaska Department of Fish and Game and then we
37 have two co-chairs for the Technical Review Committee
38 and that's Brent and I from OSM.
39

40 So really the Technical Review
41 Committee has two responsibilities. The first one is
42 obviously to go through and evaluate all of these
43 projects and make sure that everything fits within the
44 criteria when we have our call for proposals and to
45 gauge where these projects are at as far as like the
46 technical quality and whether they're sound and they're
47 a good value.
48

49 We also when we are able to try to have
50

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1 a meeting on the off year as well to talk about process
2 and issues that come up as we work through this to try
3 to make this better every time, so we're trying to grow
4 a little bit as we go through this because it seems
5 like every time we meet and evaluate projects there are
6 things that come up that no one has a good answer to or
7 we flag for later conversation.

8

9 Importantly, the Regional Advisory
10 Councils have a critical role in this as well and that
11 is that we solicit from them at the start of every
12 cycle what they feel are the priority needs in their
13 region related to subsistence fisheries. So we send
14 out our team across the landscape at the meetings and
15 we have conversations sometimes even over the summer
16 with folks that volunteer from the Councils to kind of
17 pull together what their list of highest priority items
18 that they feel need to be researched are.

19

20 Those Priority Information Needs are
21 compiled and they are part of the Request for
22 Proposals. Any proposals that are submitted need to
23 address at least one of those and that's really -- like
24 so the Councils are driving that process. They're
25 driving the research that's happening on the ground by
26 doing that.

27

28 The Councils also do see a small
29 portion of information from the Monitoring Plan as
30 well. We've taken this information to them in the
31 meetings that just happened during the fall cycle and
32 just kind of solicited input from them if they have any
33 on the projects that were submitted as part of the call
34 for proposals. That information is in the Monitoring
35 Plan that's in the book for this meeting.

36

37 As I said earlier we kind of have a bit
38 of a bifurcated process in some way. If we know what
39 our budget is when we are coming to this meeting here,
40 we like to provide you all with a list and say, okay,
41 here's our list, this is where we think we can fund
42 down to, this is the process that we've gone to to get
43 to that point in time, do you all agree with this and
44 the process in whole.

45

46 There are other times such as now where
47 either we're on a CR or we have not yet gotten our
48 allocation where we come to you as a Board and we say,
49 okay, here's our process, this is how we step-wise work
50

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1 through all of these things and we really are looking
2 for effectively your blessing on that process and
3 getting to the next step. That's where we find
4 ourselves today. We'll get more to that at the back
5 end of this presentation here.

6

7 Just for some guidelines on this there
8 are basic things. Projects can be up to four years in
9 duration although sometimes folks submit proposals that
10 will only be one, two or three years. We ask that
11 people not duplicate existing work. We're trying to
12 not be duplicative and kind of get the best value for
13 the government out of the work that's happening.

14

15 A really big part of this is promoting
16 meaningful partnerships and capacity building with
17 entities. So there's a whole criteria as part of the
18 review that looks at the type of partnerships that are
19 happening or being proposed. Really trying to build up
20 other entities across the state to meaningfully
21 participate in this process of collecting data and just
22 being involved in management.

23

24 There's also a list of items that were
25 determined not eligible for FRMP funding. We're really
26 trying to target the type of research that we are
27 funding for those things specific to management. So
28 things such as habitat restoration and enhancement or
29 hatchery propagation, contaminants. At the time the
30 program was started it was kind of understood that
31 there were other entities or agencies that had more
32 direct line on these types of things. So, again,
33 trying not to be duplicative.

34

35 There are five criteria that are listed
36 when we do our call for proposals. Again, the
37 strategic priority is looking at Federal nexus. There
38 needs to be some sort of nexus to a Federal subsistence
39 fishery or the fish need to pass through Federal public
40 waters or things of that nature and then also
41 addressing the priority information needs.

42

43 Obviously the team that we compile for
44 the Technical Review Committee is looking at the merit,
45 the technical and scientific merit of the projects.
46 Are they valuable to the managers. Are they sound
47 projects. We do a deep dive into the investigator's
48 abilities and the resources that they have available to
49 make sure that they are going to be successful to the
50

0042

1 extent that we can.

2
3 Again, as I mentioned earlier, the
4 partnership and capacity building component and then
5 we're trying to get best value. So we do look at the
6 budgets and we try to make sure there aren't any items
7 in there that are not allowable or that are double
8 counted or all of those sorts of things. There's a
9 whole lot of background work that happens on that end.

10

11 For this cycle we received 34 project
12 proposals requesting nearly 20 million dollars worth of
13 funding. Of those we found that one project was not
14 eligible, so we're down to 33. Then the Technical
15 Review Committee often will set kind of a score level
16 at which they think projects that fall below that score
17 perhaps are not ready this time around.

18

19 There's something about them that just
20 doesn't quite score high enough for them to think that
21 even if funding was available and we had all the money
22 in the world perhaps these are not ready for funding
23 yet. So we do on the back end reach out to the
24 proponents and provide additional information about
25 kind of how things went through the process to
26 hopefully bring those ones back around for another
27 cycle and kind of build them up into a better way.

28

29 At this point in time I'm just going to
30 semi-quickly walk through those projects that were
31 submitted and these are by region. So for the northern
32 region, just the North Slope kind of portion of the
33 state, we had six projects. These are listed not in
34 any particular order beyond just we had to put numbers
35 with everything when we bring them in.

36

37 So there's an assessment of life
38 history patterns and hypoxic stress of northwest Alaska
39 whitefish and arctic grayling. The second one is beaver
40 expansion into the arctic current impacts of future
41 implications for fishes in northwest Alaska.
42 The third one is Selawik northern pike population
43 dynamics, movement and habitat use. The fourth one is
44 Kobuk River sheefish spawning abundance. The fifth one
45 is harvest and use of sheefish and other non-salmon
46 fishes in Hotham Inlet. The last one for this region
47 is Kawerak Tribal Fishery Stewardship Program and
48 system monitoring project.

49

50

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1 For the Yukon Region we received five
2 projects. The first is Chena River chinook and summer
3 chum salmon enumeration. The second one is application
4 of mixed stock analysis for Yukon River chum salmon.
5 The third is feasibility of sonar estimation of adult
6 salmon passage in the Middle Yukon River near Ruby.
7 The next one is traditional ecological knowledge and
8 life histories of salmon in the tributaries of the
9 Yukon Coastal District. The final one for the Yukon
10 Region is in-season Yukon River Subsistence Salmon
11 Survey Program.

12

13 I haven't mentioned earlier, but we
14 received proposals from a variety of different entities
15 across the state and almost every one of them has
16 partnerships, but we certainly get things from State
17 agencies and Federal agencies, but we also have local
18 entities and non-profits and tribal entities and the
19 whole mix of folks. University, everything in the mix.

20

21 We received eight proposals from the
22 Kuskokwim Region. The Goodnews River salmon escapement
23 monitoring. Second, Kuskokwim River whitefish and coho
24 sonar. Third, Salmon River of the Pitka Fork Chinook
25 Salmon Escapement Monitoring. Fourth, implementing
26 artificial intelligence for rural Alaska salmon counts.
27 Fifth, George River salmon weir. Sixth, Bethel
28 subsistence harvest surveys. Next one is the Kuskokwim
29 Management Area Post-Season Subsistence Harvest Survey.

30

31 The last one for the Kuskokwim is local
32 and indigenous knowledge of non-salmon fisheries,
33 including whitefishes, sheefish and northern pike in a
34 changing climate.

35

36 Additionally to this, while we haven't
37 indicated on here, a number of these projects have been
38 funded previously if they're long-term monitoring
39 projects such as weirs through this program. So we have
40 seen -- if any of these sound familiar, we have seen
41 some of these before in the past and have funded them.

42

43 For the Southwest Region we have five
44 projects. Buskin River sockeye salmon stock assessment
45 and monitoring. Chignik River In-Season Subsistence
46 Harvest Surveys. Estimation of sockeye salmon
47 escapement into McLees Lake. Addressing priority
48 subsistence salmon concerns in the Buskin Watershed to
49 enhance ecological strength and food security of
50

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1 Kodiak. And, finally, understanding the importance of
2 resource networks in Alaska and documenting subsistence
3 fish sharing networks in select Bristol Bay
4 communities.

5

6 For the Southcentral Region we received
7 three projects. The Klutina River Salmon Monitoring
8 Program estimating spawning escapement on a major
9 salmon producing drainage in the Copper River,
10 abundance and run timing of adult salmon in Tanada
11 Creek and in-river abundance of Copper River chinook
12 salmon.

13

14 In Southeast Alaska we received seven
15 different projects. Advancing EDNA for Northern
16 Southeast Alaska Eulachon Population Monitoring;
17 Hoktaheen Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment; Redoubt Bay
18 Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment; Neva Lake Sockeye
19 Salmon Stock Assessment; Klag Bay Sockeye Salmon Stock
20 Assessment; Documenting Salmon and Non-Salmon Fish
21 Harvest and Use Patterns in four Central Prince of
22 Wales Island communities; and Understanding Sockeye
23 Salmon Harvest Location Through Traditional Ecological
24 Knowledge.

25

26 And I haven't mentioned this earlier.
27 There were no projects submitted under the multi-region
28 project category this time around, but we do receive
29 projects in three different types. Harvest monitoring,
30 traditional ecological knowledge type projects and then
31 stock, status and trends. So that's kind of the three
32 different categories of projects that we look at.

33

34 Because we have this call for proposals
35 every two years we have traditionally had overlapping
36 projects. So we have a call for proposals right now.
37 In theory we would still have projects from the 2024
38 cycle that had two years of project remaining on them,
39 so we kind of carry this like overlapping selection of
40 projects.

41

42 For the 2022 cycle, so four years ago,
43 there were 30 projects funded. Of those about, I
44 think, 16 currently remain active in that they are
45 wrapping up the final components of their projects
46 through reporting. I think we have only one currently
47 that is still kind of in the process of doing some
48 work.

49

50

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1 However, we're not able to fund any
2 projects during the 2024 cycle. I came before this
3 Board at that point in time to kind of express the
4 situation with OSM moving and a lot of other things
5 happening with our budget and we just did not have
6 money at that point in time in order to fund any
7 projects.

8

9 So we're in an unusual spot where we
10 have projects that are ending and no kind of carryover
11 projects save for perhaps one here. So we're trying to
12 keep that in mind as we look at this cycle and how much
13 money we may have with the thought that in two years we
14 are going to need to start another cycle hopefully of
15 new projects.

16

17 So where we're at right now, as I said
18 before, a budget for the Department of Interior has
19 been approved and signed off on and so we're excited
20 about that. However, the allocation to our office has
21 yet to happen, so we are still waiting on our budget.
22 We will take into account once we get that the regional
23 allocations, the continuing projects and that 2028
24 cycle that I just spoke to.

25

26 The regional allocation for this
27 program we have kind of a guideline that was developed
28 because we're receiving money both from Department of
29 Interior coming through OSM and also USDA coming
30 through the Forest Service.

31

32 There's a guideline allocation that's
33 been set up based on a lot of work that was done at the
34 front end of the program for kind of which areas were
35 in need of the most research dollars and this is
36 something that we have discussed kind of possibly
37 having the TRC and others come back and re-evaluate
38 since it's been in place for a long time, but
39 ultimately for DOI funds it funds projects from the
40 northern part of the state all the way down into
41 Southcentral.

42

43 And then when the Forest Service lands
44 kick in in Southcentral and Southeast, the USDA funds
45 have kind of flowed that way. It's a guideline. It
46 doesn't always match up exactly how we fund things, but
47 ultimately, you know, like the Yukon and Kuskokwim in
48 theory gets somewhere around this 30 percent of the
49 funds from the DOI side. And in recent years Southeast
50

0046

1 has been getting closer to more or all of the
2 Department of Agriculture funds. It's variable from
3 year to year.

4

5 So how do we do it? Ultimately what we
6 look at we have this great spreadsheet that we put
7 together. We look at the projects. In this example
8 here we're looking at, say, having a 17 percent
9 allocation for this region we think we have \$1.5
10 million to spend in the example. That would give this
11 region an allocation of \$255,000 for that first year.

12

13 What we would look at is ordered by
14 score, how far can we get down to supporting under that
15 \$255,000 allocation level. So in this case the top
16 three projects would get funded or selected for funding
17 and then we would move on to the next region. We would
18 go through region by region by region.

19

20 By doing it this way we are making sure
21 that we are allocating resources across the state to
22 the top projects that were submitted by those regions.
23 It also -- like in this case there would be, you know,
24 a chunk of money left over because we're stopping at
25 that running total of \$240,000.

26

27 We would then take that amount of money
28 that's left and look at the next highest scored project
29 across the state and we would allocate to that. And if
30 there's still money remaining after that, then we would
31 do the next thing and so on and so forth so that we
32 could kind of allocate down to our end point.

33

34 I have provided you all with some
35 materials that list not the scores per se, but by
36 region those projects that were founded to be fundable
37 by the Technical Review Committee and that they had a
38 high enough score this time around and they were
39 eligible. So you have that as background information
40 to kind of understand those are ordered by their score.
41 We will look at that material when we get to the point
42 of having our budget and jump through this process.

43

44 And I've also provided a table that
45 shows both the annual cost of the project and the
46 running total by year. And a really important thing to
47 note is that these projects do not cost the same from
48 year to year. The request that they are asking for can
49 be highly variable. So there's a lot of things to take
50

0047

1 into account, you know.

2

Sometimes in year one the overall request is a fair amount lower than the request for year two might be. So we fund them incrementally on an annual basis. Meaning that we fund project one on this list year one this year. Then next year we would fund year two of that project because we don't have enough money to fund all four years of the project at one point in time.

11

12 So there's a lot of little
13 considerations that we try to take into account and
14 make sure that we are, I guess, not over-allocating our
15 resources. Go ahead.

16

17 MR. INGERSOLL: Just a quick question
18 to make sure I understand that. We will know at some
19 point how much monies we have available for allocation
20 this year, but the totals for how much the project
21 costs over its full life cycle isn't going to subtract
22 from the amount of money. It's going to be -- we're
23 going to fund the first year of the project in the
24 first year.

25

26 MR. AYERS: (Nods affirmatively).

27

28 MR. INGERSOLL: Okay. Thank you. Now
29 that actually helps with me understanding what I'm
30 doing here.

31

32 MR. AYERS: Yeah. And, again, as I
33 said, usually we're in a circumstance where we already
34 have a whole suite of other projects that are still
35 ongoing. So we can say, for instance, that we have --
36 okay, we have \$800,000 that we're going to spend in
37 this region. That would be a wonderful thing.

38

46

47 So next steps and ultimately we're at
48 the end of this here. We're having a little technical
49 difficulty, but that's all right. The next step really

0048

1 is for you all as a Board to work through any questions
2 that you have with me and then we need a motion from
3 you if you support this in the way that it's going to
4 support our process and our plans moving forward.

5

6 Thank you.

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. I
9 appreciate that presentation. I was telling Crystal
10 this is the first time I don't see my project on there.
11 So it's like oh. Can you imagine sitting here in this
12 room for 20-something years and it's not there.

13

14 No, we appreciate that good work. I
15 was also looking at it as you start to say multi-agency
16 and five percent allocation across for regional
17 multi-agency, you know, and nobody applied. So I'm
18 sitting here with Jonathon and I'm like, well, when do
19 we put ourselves into the process as something we heard
20 here today that's happening on the ground in real time
21 out in our -- up and down these rivers called Culture
22 Camps, Outreach, Recruitment, Education. I mean all
23 things well within that purview, right? Like that's
24 what the funding is for.

25

26 So if we're shorthanded out there with
27 that opportunity and nobody is applying for it, but we
28 need that information to grow our program because it's
29 shrinking. Nobody is applying for a RAC seat.
30 Information out on the ground needs to be TEK
31 recruited. You know, we need to have personnel out in
32 the field to document this stuff. I mean it's
33 happening in multiple regions. Some of them where you
34 see these projects are documenting just keeping a
35 lifestyle alive and some of them are actual
36 on-the-ground sonars.

37

38 I heard today through that testimony
39 earlier from our delegated authority people that
40 there's that part of it which is being hard to fund or
41 unfunded and we're pulling from local partners. So
42 what do we do? Something with our Fish Commissions on
43 each of these rivers to maybe get a multi-agency
44 regional proposal together.

45

46 Maybe it isn't this funding, but I'm
47 thinking that our job is to recognize the shortfall and
48 then to look at how we're going to apply some of that
49 funding to some of the -- maybe a priority that's been
50

0049

1 brought up by Board members before. Like do we have a
2 priority that we see that can fix a flow of info to the
3 Board that helps us construct some of the questions or
4 support some of the things we heard out there.

5

6 So I was just putting out that as a
7 comment of what I -- because I love the FRMP process,
8 the project, the funding, the work. Most of those
9 on-the-ground relationships are State/Federal people.
10 You know, they get along all the way up until they sit
11 across the table like us pretty much. That's where it
12 ends, right. You get outside the room and everybody's
13 doing okay, you know, and they all -- you know, all in
14 the same field and in alignment.

15

16 So I see that as maybe something we can
17 do for alignment, but I don't know who is that person.
18 So I would like to see that maybe as an option or
19 maybe, you know, next cycle or something. But just in
20 clear recognition of what it is that we hear from our
21 people what they need and how we can support those
22 efforts to keep this going.

23

24 MR. AYERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
25 will say that -- I'm taking notes as you're talking
26 here. One of the restrictions on this particular
27 program is that the funds can't be used specifically
28 like as a primary for educational purposes.

29

30 However, we also do have another
31 funding program that our office does called the
32 Partners for Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program
33 where we have had between six and seven partners across
34 the state that we fund by providing money specifically
35 for salaries with the intent of building that capacity
36 within local rural type organizations or tribes to be
37 more participatory in this process.

38

39 That's been -- I know Cody's name was
40 brought up for BBNA, Cody Larson. We have a number of
41 folks that have just been real stellar folks that I
42 think are considering a lot of those things that you're
43 talking about there and trying to figure out how to do
44 it locally, but it would be nice to see something that
45 is broader, as you said, across the state to try to
46 figure out that engagement process. So I definitely
47 take that to heart.

48

49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I almost think
50

0050

1 that's it right there. You just said it. How do those
2 isolated blanket people, like our thing yesterday,
3 connect the dots between each other and create that
4 which they can develop exactly what you just said. Is
5 that framework for that. And then get them to a
6 situation where they're up-ticking their skill set
7 basically, right? Like that's kind of where I'm
8 getting to with it. I'm just trying to see how we push
9 somebody in that direction maybe. Yeah, somebody is
10 listening.

11

12 MR. BROWER: Mr. Chair. There's 26
13 proposals at least for four years, right?

14

15 MR. AYERS: Yes, that's correct.

16

17 MR. BROWER: Approximately \$20 million?

18

19 MR. AYERS: The total submission
20 package that came in was -- yeah, it covered that whole
21 thing. It's a little bit less based on the projects
22 that were narrowed down into those that are ready at
23 this point in time. But overall that was what was
24 submitted to us, yes, correct.

25

26 MR. BROWER: Thank you.

27

28 MR. PENDERGAST: I have a question, Mr.
29 Chair. We're going to be called upon to vote and
30 approve this?

31

32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

33

34 MR. PENDERGAST: Okay. So then I do
35 have a question. So I'm trying to understand what to
36 make of Technical Review Committee justifications.
37 Specifically when I see a comment like it's not clear
38 how this study would support fisheries management in
39 the region, how persuasive is that? So that's 26-10,
40 right? I see something like that and that causes a
41 major question in my mind. So I'm trying to understand
42 that.

43

44 MR. AYERS: Yeah. Through the Chair,
45 Mr. Pendergast. I really appreciate that. What we put
46 in for those justifications in these books is a
47 culmination of -- it's like a summary of the larger
48 process that the Technical Review Committee provides.
49 They do an investigation plan review and it breaks it
50

0051

1 out into those various different categories and this is
2 kind of a summary of that material that we make public.

3

4

5 Through the plan and these books
6 obviously doesn't contain all of that and those are the
7 discussions that are had during that meeting when we
8 are evaluating those projects and looking at, you know,
9 is this helpful or useful to the managers or not.

10

11 Ultimately the score that comes out of
12 that process by all of the folks on that committee
13 determine whether or not in the end they felt that it
14 was appropriate to fund at this point in time and that
15 it was meaningful enough that there's getting enough
16 information for management purposes that that project
17 should move forward.

18

19 MR. PENDERGAST: That's helpful. Just
20 a quick follow up. I don't want to put you on the
21 spot, so if you need me to reframe the question,
22 please. This is my first time reviewing one of these
23 sets of proposals. Is the Technical Review Committee
24 confident that the process is set up so that if a
25 project really didn't quite meet that bar, it won't get
26 funded. It's not -- there's a process for a project to
27 not be funded if those concerns aren't direct enough.

28

29 MR. AYERS: Through the Chair. That is
30 correct. They're very thorough. The conversation is
31 sometimes over multiple days to get us from start to
32 finish. I really appreciate everyone that volunteers
33 their time to participate that. So thanks to all of
34 your staff for those agency folks here who do dedicate
35 their time to that because they really do dig in to the
36 minutia of these projects. If something -- if folks
37 feel that something is just not ready, then it just --
38 it just doesn't go.

39

40 So I talked about there being a level
41 at which the Review Committee is comfortable with a
42 project moving forward and that's not a set number.
43 Say we're working on a 1 to 100 scale. It's not as
44 though it's static from cycle to cycle. It's a
45 conversation that's had kind of looking at the projects
46 that were submitted and the quality and just making a
47 determination during that meeting that, yeah, we're
48 comfortable here.

49

50

1 It seems like everything kind of above
2 this point is good to go and anything below this point
3 just really -- it's not there yet or it has some flaw
4 or concern that we don't think should be funded.

5

6 MR. PENDERGAST: Thank you.

7

8 MR. INGERSOLL: So a follow up along
9 the same lines. My understanding then is the number of
10 proposals received is greater than the number that were
11 forwarded to the Board for consideration. The
12 Technical Review Committee both did a ranking of
13 proposals and provided a cut-off line and said these
14 particular proposals aren't quite ready yet or don't
15 fully meet the criteria. So that we're looking at
16 approval only of the top-ranked proposals if that make
17 sense. Is that more or less right?

18

19 MR. AYERS: Through the Chair. Yeah,
20 that's correct. What we've provided you is that subset
21 that have made it through the process to found both
22 eligible for the program as a whole and then those --
23 within those the ones that the Technical Review
24 Committee has said, again, if there's enough money any
25 of these projects could be funded and be, we believe,
ultimately successful.

27

28 They are cooperative agreements. That
29 means that we are working back and forth with the folks
30 that are running these projects. We know that not
31 every project is successful every time, but we think
32 that they look like they have a solid plan for how to
33 conduct the work.

34

35 MR. INGERSOLL: And then you've ranked
36 them essentially in order according to a scoring system
37 too. Yeah.

38

39 MR. AYERS: Correct. And then within
40 that looked at those scores by region.

41

42 MR. INGERSOLL: Thank you.

43

44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
45 floor, Frank.

46

47 MR. WOODS: Just to wrap my head around
48 the process, I guess. My understanding is that this
49 formula has worked for a long time it looks like.

50

0053

1 We're kind of burp, reading it for the last time, or we
2 have like a four-year break. Is that my understanding?

3
4 MR. AYERS: So this process -- through
5 the Chair -- has been in place for a number of years.
6 Yes, that's correct. And we encountered a unique
7 situation during our last call for proposals in 2024
8 where, due to a variety of reasons, OSM just did not
9 have money to put forward. So we just -- we funded
10 zero projects two years ago and that's just how it
11 worked. Brent.

12

13 MR. VICKERS: Thank you. This is Brent
14 Vickers, OSM. Just for clarification. We still went
15 through the ranking process two years ago. The Notice
16 for Funding came out. There were proposals submitted.
17 We went through everything and then when we came to
18 this -- past this point of having recommended projects
19 for funding and received the budget. When we saw the
20 budget and for various factors we just didn't have
21 enough money to go through.

22

23 So we haven't -- as far as this process
24 is concerned we haven't had like a four-year break. We
25 just weren't able to actually fund any of the projects
26 that were proposed for funding or even recommended for
27 funding in the last cycle.

28

29 MR. WOODS: Cycle, yeah. Okay. You
30 answered my question. Then rolling over all the 2026
31 proposals we're just giving you the blessing to keep
32 moving forward. Is that my understanding of the
33 question?

34

35 MR. AYERS: Yeah. Through the Chair.
36 We're looking for -- this is an action item for the
37 Board. We're looking for -- effectively, because we
38 don't have our final funding allocation, just kind of
39 an approval of process to continue us moving forward.
40 Once we do have our funding the Director will make that
41 determination on, again, how much we can fund down that
42 list. How far down the list we can go.

43

44 (No comments)

45

46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I see no more
47 questions. I see no more comments. I will ask the
48 Board to make a motion at this time.

49

50

1 MR. BROWER: Move to accept the -- this
2 is the FRMP project list in proposal format or what are
3 we doing officially? How do we approve your process, I
4 guess? So we accept the.....

5

6 MR. AYERS: Through the Chair. I think
7 if we -- to approve the Draft Monitoring Plan and
8 process.

9

10 MR. WOODS: So as a Federal Subsistence
11 Board I recommend a move that we approve the process
12 and the Plan. Thank you.

13

14 MR. BROWER: Second.

15

16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We have a
17 motion on the floor and a second to accept the 2026
18 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Plan and processes
19 described by the Staff here today. Any other questions
20 or clarification from the Council, discussions at this
21 time?

22

23 Rhonda.

24

25 MS. PITKA: Frank Woods made the motion
26 and Charlie Brower seconded it.

27

28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
29 Thank you for that, Rhonda, too. Our court reporter
30 would probably appreciate it if we do present ourselves
31 at the mic that we state our name before we do start
32 speaking. So I try to call you out as we see it, but I
33 bet she'd be happy if we said my name is, my name is,
34 my name -- that's a different song. Sorry.

35

36 (Laughter)

37

38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So we have a
39 first and a second. Any further discussion, comments.

40

41 (No comments)

42

43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the
44 question.

45

46 MR. BROWER: Question.

47

48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
49 Charlie. Do you want to do a roll call on this one?

50

0055

1 How about anyone opposed to this plan raise your hand.
2 I'm just teasing. No opposition. Motion carries
3 unanimously to accept the 2026 Resource Monitoring
4 Plan. Thank you guys for your work and presentation
5 and answering questions.

6

7 Next we have an update from the Senior
8 Advisor to the Secretary.

9

10 MS. PITKA: She's isn't here.

11

12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, she's not
13 here yet. That's the one where we're having an open
14 agenda. Thank you. We'll move on to regulatory items
15 update, the RFR status. Brent Vickers to present the
16 RFR status to the Board. You almost got away.

17

18 MR. VICKERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
19 Members of the Board. Once again my name is Brent
20 Vickers. I am the Anthropology Division Supervisor at
21 OSM. I just have an update today for the request for
22 consideration for the Ketchikan Non-Rural Determination
23 Proposal NDP 25-01.

24

25 The Craig Tribal Association and
26 Shaan-Seet, Incorporated submitted identical requests
27 for the Federal Subsistence Board to reconsider its
28 decision on the Ketchikan Area Non-rural Determination
29 Proposal NDP 25-01 that was made last February 5th,
30 exactly one year ago today in 2025.

31

32 As most of you remember, the effect of
33 that decision was to rescind the non-rural
34 determination of Ketchikan area, thereby changing its
35 status under Federal subsistence regulations in making
36 it a rural community.

37

38 The request for considerations that we
39 received are now called RFR 25-01 and 02. They were
40 received just after the publication that came fairly
41 late. It came in mid-July. So after the publication
42 in the Federal Register July 18th these requests were
43 submitted.

44

45 OSM Staff has been working on the
46 threshold analysis of the claims made in the request
47 for consideration. However, the work was interrupted
48 during the government shutdown in October -- last
49 October 2025, extending into November 2025. Taking
50

0056

1 that with having to -- that really delayed the process
2 taking six weeks out of the -- we were getting to the
3 tail end of the writing with the review and then once
4 we got back to work we had to do the -- as our Director
5 Crystal Leonetti talked about earlier, the Council
6 meeting schedule and everything, also over the
7 holidays.

8

9 So, unfortunately, it just got delayed
10 to the extent that we are moving the decision-making on
11 the threshold analysis for the RFR 25-01, 25-02, to the
12 Federal Subsistence Board meeting on April 20th-24th,
13 2026.

14

24

25 That concludes my update. Please let
26 me know if you have any questions.

27

28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: And questions
29 from the Board for Brent?

30

31 (No questions)

32

33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate the
34 update. Thank you, Brent. Next we're at Wildlife
35 Meeting, status of consensus/non-consensus agenda.
36 We'll have Robbin.

37

38 MS. LAVINE: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
39 Members of the Board. This is Robbin LaVine,
40 Subsistence Policy Coordinator. Similar to the update
41 that Brent just gave you and Crystal during information
42 sharing, the wildlife regulatory cycle has experienced
43 some delays. One of the most important parts of -- one
44 of the things we or you rely upon the Regional Advisory
45 Councils most is their recommendations on regulatory
46 proposals and closure reviews and that happens in the
47 fall. But, of course, the majority of those meetings
48 were cancelled due to the shutdown.

49

50

0058

1 Supervisor with OSM. It will be a very brief update.
2 We received the new approved Charters that were signed
3 by the Secretary of the Interior.

4

5 So now Councils are legal under FACA
6 and can continue their operations. So we can check
7 that box off. That's it regarding the Charters. I
8 mean the other thing I could add about the Charters is
9 nothing got changed in the Charters. They are the same
10 as they were before, which is great for the Councils'
11 operation.

12

13 The other update on the nomination
14 packet is we are still waiting for the results of the
15 vetting from the White House Liaison with the
16 Department of Interior to get the appointments by the
17 Secretary. So that had not moved too much forward
18 unfortunately, so we don't know if we're going to get
19 the new appointments for the 2025 cycle before the
20 winter 2026 Council meetings.

21

22 We are doing everything we can, you
23 know, in order to get this moving, but so far we were
24 unable to move it forward anymore. So that's all I
25 have. Do you have any questions?

26

27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Rhonda.

28

29 MS. PITKA: You may not know, but do
30 you know where it's at in the process? Is it with the
31 Secretary's Office or just straight with the White
32 House Liaison? Because I know there's two different
33 processes there, right?

34

35 MS. WESSELS: Well, White House Liaison
36 she's a part of the process. She's basically within
37 the Secretary's Office and she's doing the vetting.
38 After that we still will have to submit the packets
39 through the tracking system and a few other people will
40 have to review it before the Secretary actually issues
41 the appointment letters. We submitted the names that
42 the Board recommended for appointment in August of last
43 year.

44

45 MS. PITKA: Thank you, Katya. I
46 appreciate it.

47

48 MS. WESSELS: You're welcome.

49

50

0059

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
2 questions?

4 (No questions)

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
7 Katya. Next we have correspondence update. Robbin.

9 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
10 Members of the Board. I have some letters for you that
11 have just been completed for your review. I just need
12 to collect the last of them from Staff. So I'm
13 wondering if we can have like a five-minute break.

15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Five-minute
16 break.

18 (Off record)

20 (On record)

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Up
23 next is Robbin going to present us with the three
24 submittal packages for the FSB approval? Usually I
25 just get this and sign it, but this is kind of a cool
26 way to engage the Council. And I was just talking with
27 Crystal. We used to get all the way to this point and
28 then make sure that our agency heads were in approval.
29 I was just trying to jog my memory as process. I know
30 that's not part of today, but I'm just making sure I
31 note that.

33 Thank you. You have the floor Robbin.

35 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
36 Members of the Board. So if you recall we have added
37 Council correspondence update as a standing agenda item
38 whenever the Board gets together so that you can kind
39 of be personally aware as you were with the in-season
40 manager reports of what the Councils are communicating
41 to or through you.

49

50

0060

1 These three transmittal packages were
2 approved by the Board to be forwarded on to the new
3 Administration Secretary of the Interior and
4 Agriculture because these are long-standing issues of
5 importance to the Councils.

6

7 When we had the correspondence agenda
8 item during the fisheries regulatory meeting, at that
9 time we were reviewing response from the former
10 Administration to these packages. You had received a
11 lot of comments from the public and the Councils during
12 that time and because of that decided to resubmit them.

13

14 So before you you'll see three cover
15 letters. I did not want to print out the entire
16 package. Tony has the first one. The first package is
17 the transmittal letter, the cover letter for Council
18 comments and concerns on ANCSA D-1 lands if you recall.
19 The second is ongoing concerns about fisheries
20 management. The third transmittal letter is about
21 Council compensation. And while you weren't asked
22 during that meeting to forward this on, it was
23 something the Board elected to do because you think
24 it's really important.

25

26 I'm sorry that they're late, but what
27 that allowed us to do was to gather more correspondence
28 from the Councils and attach them to these packages so
29 that not only were they tracking all of the
30 communications in the last recent years, but they added
31 new correspondences from the Councils for the
32 Secretaries' notice.

33

34 So if you have -- you have the cover
35 letters before you. They are just -- it's a
36 transmittal, like a discussion of what the issues are.
37 The first is ANCSA D-1 lands. There are six Councils
38 writing with their concerns about the withdrawal of
39 ANCSA D-1 lands from Federal jurisdiction.

40

41 The six Councils for this one are
42 Bristol Bay, Y-K Delta, Western Interior, Seward Pen,
43 Northwest Arctic and Eastern Interior, Alaska.

44

45 The second transmittal letter addresses
46 concerns regarding the interjurisdictional salmon
47 management issues, bycatch of subsistence resources and
48 the need to revise the Magnuson-Stevenson Fisheries
49 Management Conservation Act. The nine Councils

50

0061

1 represented by this transmittal package are the Bristol
2 Bay, Eastern Interior, Kodiak Aleutians, North Slope,
3 Northwest Arctic, Western Interior, Seward Pen,
4 Southeast and Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Councils.

5

6 The final transmittal letter is to
7 forward on the concerns of both the Councils and the
8 Board about compensation for Council members' expertise
9 and time. Just to demonstrate their tremendous value
10 to this program and that your decision-making really
11 can't precede without them. So that is the final
12 transmittal letter.

13

14 If you all approve, then Tony can sign
15 and these will be in the mail to the Secretaries
16 perhaps by end of day tomorrow or, if not, then Monday
17 next week.

18

19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
20 Robbin. Appreciate the Staff and their time to put
21 these together and pulling together the top priority
22 concerns. Is there any comments by the Board?

23

24 MR. PENDERGAST: Kevin Pendergast with
25 BLM. You asked for comments. Are we seeking Board
26 approval to send these letters? There's one in
27 particular that's of concern to me.

28

29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: If you have a
30 concern, this is your time to state it.

31

32 MR. PENDERGAST: Okay. The one that
33 jumps out is the one in reference to ANCSA 17 D-1
34 lands. The letters in question that I think this
35 letter is sort of amplifying or resubmitting are part
36 of the public record for ongoing processes the BLM is
37 working on. Has been for years now. They've made it to
38 the Secretary's Office. They've been briefed in
39 numerous formats.

40

41 BLM has received Executive Level
42 direction to pursue certain actions with respect to
43 ANCSA 17 D-1's. So it's a little -- the timing is kind
44 of awkward to sort of take these concerns from a year
45 and a half ago under a prior Administration and sort of
46 re-forward them.

47

48 There are some just mild, unintended,
49 but some misstatements in the letter that kind of
50

0062

1 perpetuates some inaccuracies around what these
2 withdrawals actually do. They're referred to here as
3 protections. That's actually not what they are under
4 the law. They were withdrawn for other reasons.

5

6 So it's just, you know, some kind of
7 factual concerns and some process concerns. If now is
8 the appropriate time, I'd be happy to make a motion
9 relative to this particular letter or if there's other
10 discussion.

11

12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: This is the
13 time to have information changes. That's why I present
14 it at this -- you know, so we can make sure it's
15 accurate and if there is ongoing work that steps things
16 up, right? The last thing you want to do is step back.
17 But, at the same time, we've got to make sure we
18 present the public because their presentation probably
19 still feels the same. So education is probably -- but,
20 yeah, this is the opportunity to speak to it.

21

22 MR. PENDERGAST: Maybe an underlying
23 question. Again, Kevin Pendergast, BLM. The
24 underlying question is are there -- and I wasn't sure
25 from the letter are there new concerns from these RACs
26 since those 2024 letters and where are those -- were
27 those letters sent to us or.....

28

29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Just us.

30

31 MR. PENDERGAST: Ahh. Thank you.

32

33 MS. LAVINE: Through the Chair. The
34 whole package encompasses the last couple of years of
35 communications, including a description of concerns
36 reiterated at the last fisheries regulatory meeting,
37 which was a year ago. And, of course, there was a lot
38 of new concerns regarding the change of status that
39 occurred or the change in direction as you noted
40 between one Administration and the other. Therefore
41 people's concerns about the new direction from the
42 Administration are still applicable.

43

44 Thank you.

45

46 MR. PENDERGAST: Okay. Kevin
47 Pendergast, BLM. I think just -- I have no particular
48 concerns with the RACs being heard on this issue
49 obviously. I think I just want to make sure that if we
50

0063

1 send such a letter it's purely conveying that
2 information upward. So maybe just with some small
3 targeted wording changes I think that's going to
4 accomplish that.

5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah. Jerry.
7

8 MR. INGERSOLL: Thank you. Jerry
9 Ingersoll, Forest Service. Not with that particular
10 letter, but just with the whole concept of -- you know,
11 I, as a Federal employee, writing a letter or approving
12 sending a letter to my bosses telling them advocacy for
13 something, it feels like it's a little bit of an
14 awkward situation.

15

16 So, yeah. If we're only ministerially
17 forwarding concerns that we've heard from the public, I
18 don't have any concern, but I want to make sure that
19 I'm not characterized as advocating for any particular
20 policy of my bosses in public.

21

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead. Sara
23 and then Robbin.

24

25 MS. BOARIO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
26 Thank you, Fish and Wildlife Service for the record.
27 Jerry, I was thinking that at least two of them are not
28 position papers. They are the latter of what you
29 described. They're just -- we're recognizing what the
30 Board has heard from the RACs and elevating that
31 forward.

32

33 I think the third letter on the
34 compensation in some ways as speaking to the
35 administrative challenges that -- I mean it is both
36 uplifting what we've heard from the RACs, but I think
37 it's an area where we have administrative expertise too
38 to note the challenges of a lack of compensation in the
39 process. So that one maybe is the rare one that has a
40 little bit of a slightly different tone.

41

42 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

43

44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Robbin? No?
45 Go ahead.

46

47 MR. PENDERGAST: A quick question then.
48 Kevin Pendergast, BLM. How do we get these edits made
49 and does that need to happen before we can vote or can
50

0064

1 it happen separately?

2

3 MS. LAVINE: Thank you. Through the
4 Chair. So the body of Staff responsible for finalizing
5 these letters is the Interagency Staff Committee and
6 they do so in contact with their Board members just to
7 kind of let them know, keep them abreast of what is
8 happening. We meet monthly.

9

10 So what I might suggest is that if
11 there are two packages that you all are really
12 comfortable with sending forward as they are, so one is
13 just transmitting the continued concerns about
14 fisheries management from your Councils who are also
15 responsible for communicating and sharing their reports
16 to the Secretaries, often through you and this is part
17 of that.

18

19 If you feel comfortable with 002 and
20 003, which is the discussion about compensation for the
21 Councils, you can vote to approve those now and then
22 you can suggest changes for the first one and OSM will
23 make those changes happen. Usually through the ISC
24 member, but right now that could be directly through
25 you. You can review those changes before the whole
26 Board approves.

27

28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Frank.

29

30 MR. WOODS: I would entertain a motion
31 to pass in concept, you know, basically the letters of
32 transmittal with minor changes that would recommend the
33 Interdepartmental Staff for the Interagency meeting
34 just to provide -- because it's been a while. I've
35 read these letters and I know that the RACs have gone
36 through Proposal 2. And then we heard last cycle that,
37 you know, letter 3 is directed to not only having a
38 hard time getting people committed, but also to the RAC
39 process.

40

41 So I think in concept we can just -- I
42 would make a motion that we approve all the transmittal
43 letters with corrections or minor changes with
44 Interagency Committee that we, as the Board, approve
45 these letters and move forward. So move.

46

47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So right now we
48 have a motion on the floor to accept the letters as is
49 with a minor tweak working with the ISC to reflect

50

0065

1 Kevin's request and ISC.

2

3 Jolene.

4

5 MS. JOHN: Yes, BIA here. I just had
6 some friendly suggested edits to the one we're
7 referring to, the compensation, that I can just hand it
8 to the Staff for consideration.

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. So
11 we do have a motion on the floor.

12

13 MR. PAYENNA: This is Ben. I'll second
14 the motion.

15

16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We do have a
17 second. Any further discussion? I think this is when
18 we can just discuss that we're directing our Staff with
19 these with some minor changes to reflect our agency
20 views, that we don't hand them something that can
21 complicate the working relationships that are happening
22 on the ground. So that's why we convene and I say now
23 we've all got to review these, which is why we do this,
24 right? It's why we're doing it, so that we can make
25 sure that things are in line and not tossing somebody
26 an issue.

27

28 MR. PENDERGAST: Mr. Chair.

29

30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead,
31 Kevin.

32

33 MR. PENDERGAST: Kevin Pendergast, BLM.
34 I move to amend the motion simply to just add a little
35 specificity. Specific to the ANCSA 17 D-1 withdrawals
36 letter. Certainly we can work the technical edits, you
37 know, at a Staff level. I just wanted to put in the
38 record kind of the specifics of what the edits are that
39 I would propose.

40

41 So I amend the motion just to add a
42 little detail to that editing process such that we make
43 this purely a transmittal letter and not seek to
44 characterize the concerns that were expressed other
45 than say there were concerns expressed and here they
46 are. That would be the target that I would like to
47 reach.

48

49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Can I get a
50

0066

1 second?

2

3 MR. WOODS: Second to the amendment or
4 approve.

5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: From Frank.
7 Okay. Now we can open up on the amendment discussion.
8 Robbin.

9

10 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Madame Chair.
11 So I would just like to confirm -- often with the
12 transmittal letters we also have a note to reviewer,
13 which you may actually see, where we describe the
14 concerns and the issues. I want to clarify that, you
15 know, an objective describing of those issues can be
16 included in the cover letter and the note to reviewer.

17

18 Just clarifying again that we are
19 transmitting the concerns of your Councils and these
20 concerns summarized, you know, very generally are
21 these. Here are the letters, right? So is that
22 acceptable? Thank you.

23

24 MR. PENDERGAST: Kevin Pendergast, BLM.
25 I don't think it's for me individually to say whether
26 that's acceptable, but I will note my concerns are not
27 with the note to reviewer that accompanies the DTS
28 package. It's strictly with the letter which is
29 touching on an issue which has very wide notice across
30 the state and people interpret it in different ways.

31

32 So I'm just seeking to make that letter
33 purely transmittal and actually to confirm not seek to
34 try to characterize what those concerns are. Just
35 transmit them upward. That would be my goal and the
36 purpose of my motion to amend.

37

38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Frank.

39

40 MR. WOODS: So my motion is -- first
41 original motion is we approve the transmittal letters
42 and I think we can define the transmittal letters in
43 detail with what you're saying. It's not an
44 interagency overreach or stepping boundaries and
45 management of witnesses a lot and where like dual
46 membership -- you represent forestry, I work for
47 forestry. We live on BLM lands.

48

49 I don't want to overstep bounds, but we
50

0067

1 have transmittal letters coming from the RACs through
2 this process and that's where I was looking -- in the
3 beginning of this meeting two days ago I was walking
4 through a matrix of a flow chart on how this process
5 works and we're addressing the process. It's a
6 learning experience to walk through but I'd like to
7 support and call the question, Mr. Chair, on our
8 original and our amendment to this. So I'll call the
9 question.

10

11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The question
12 has been called. We're voting on the amendment to the
13 original motion. Is there any opposition to the motion
14 to amend the original motion for what we just heard
15 stated on the record?

16

17 (No opposing votes)

18

19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing or
20 seeing no opposition to the amendment to the motion,
21 we'll go back to the original motion to include the
22 amendment language. The original motion is to accept
23 these transmittal letters with the caveat that we will
24 have our ISC tweak the language so that they look like
25 they're neutral in presenting what the public presented
26 than handing out something that doesn't feel like it
27 has favor.

28

29 Any opposition to that motion on the
30 floor here speak your mind.

31

32 (No opposing votes)

33

34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none.
35 Motion carries unanimous. Thank you. Thank you,
36 Robbin. Thank you, guys. This is part of why we built
37 this into our program I think was so that we can do
38 this so that we can give confidence and then once we do
39 hand something up we're not getting kicked back. So
40 appreciate the Staff and the Board members here
41 catching things that are in their line and giving
42 feedback so that we can support you guys as well.
43 Thank you.

44

45 Next we'll move on to Federal
46 Subsistence Permit Data Update.

47

48 MR. KOLLER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
49 Members of the Board. This is Justin Koller,
50

0068

1 Regulations Division Supervisor. I just wanted to give
2 you a quick update on our Federal Subsistence
3 Permitting Modernization Project. We've been working
4 for quite a while on moving our permitting functions
5 and harvest data to a new platform.

6

7 We've been using a permitting system
8 that was outdated and no longer met DOI security
9 requirements, so that old system has been
10 decommissioned as of September 30th and we're working
11 real hard to bring that new system online.

12

13 Since we were required to move that old
14 permitting application to a new platform we also wanted
15 to create a public portal for the express purpose of
16 having users go online to this public portal to be able
17 to request and print permits by themselves. Now this
18 would be in addition to being able to go into an
19 issuing office and getting a permit the old-fashioned
20 way. So we wanted an online option in this day and
21 age.

22

23 There were two positions that were
24 assigned to this modernization project. One person was
25 reassigned to other DOI business. The other retired in
26 April of 2025 last year. So we simply, quite honestly,
27 have not had the people or the expertise to make this
28 modernization go smoothly or timely. It looks like we
29 may be unlikely to regain that expertise at least any
30 time in the near future. So we've kind of had to
31 prioritize how we go about regaining this functionality
32 and bringing the system online.

33

34 So our first priority is to regain the
35 basic permitting functions, of course. We're making
36 slow but steady progress to regain those basic
37 functions of the old system so field offices can issue
38 permits through the application instead of pen and
39 paper, which in many cases is what's happening right
40 now unfortunately.

41

42 So our second priority is to simplify
43 the data recall functions so we can quickly and easily
44 recall our permit and harvest data that we need so
45 sorely for our regulatory analyses and to share with
46 our partners at the State. Those requests are coming
47 in as we speak and we just simply don't have the data
48 cleaned up and where it needs to be to confidently
49 recall it and spread it out and put it in our reports.

50

0069

1 So that's the second thing.

2

3 Our third priority unfortunately is
4 this public portal. The idea of making it easier for
5 people to get permits that have the means to do so
6 through the internet. So that is being held back right
7 now for lack of a better word until we can get our
8 priority one and two straightened out.

9

10 Once we get that public portal online
11 and it's functioning we're going to broadcast that
12 statewide. We're going to have a link on our website
13 and we'll hopefully have some informational
14 instructions and so forth on the website on how to
15 operate and get and request permits through that online
16 portal.

17

18 So that's kind of where we're at right
19 now and I'd be happy to answer any questions. Thank
20 you.

21

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
23 questions from the Board?

24

25 (No comments)

26

27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Good luck with
28 finding staff.

29

30 MR. KOLLER: Thanks.

31

32 MR. PENDERGAST: I wasn't quite quick
33 enough getting to the podium.

34

35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, sorry.
36 Kevin had a question.

37

38 MR. PENDERGAST: Just a comment. Kevin
39 Pendergast, BLM. I'm very supportive of this effort.
40 Our Glennallen Field Office in particular handles -- I
41 believe this is true -- more than any other part of the
42 state for subsistence permits. It's a huge workload
43 for them. It's a huge burden on folks needing to come
44 into that office or maybe they go to Delta Junction or
45 whatever and hold kind of field locations. But it's
46 high time that there's an electronic portal in this day
47 and age. So thank you for your efforts there.

48

49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
50

1 Kevin.

2

3 MR. KOLLER: Thank you. Mr. Chair or
4 through the Chair. I did want to also say that we've
5 had a lot of help from those field staff, particularly
6 those at BLM and Park Service and others, Forest
7 Service, at sort of testing the system and trying to
8 point out flaws and, you know, just let us know where
9 there's weaknesses in the system and how to get it back
10 online.

11

12 So we really appreciate those people
13 out in the field that are issuing permits and dealing
14 with the data, reaching out to us on a regular basis to
15 let us know what they're seeing. So just thanks again
16 to all those as well that were involved. Thanks.

17

18 MR. WOODS: Just a comment.

19

20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Frank.

21

22 MR. WOODS: Thank you for your work
23 because at least in the rural areas, especially under
24 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works really well on
25 hard to get all those permits out.

26

27 At one time I came before this
28 committee and it was eight -- I had eight licenses,
29 permits to go to one hunt. Digitalizing this process
30 will make it real convenient but also an onboarding
31 process because there's certain levels of -- like in
32 our -- I'm just speaking -- I'll speak for Bristol Bay.
33 Our tribal offices are real important. If that becomes
34 available, it will be a lot easier to issue subsistence
35 permits digitally and more effectively.

36

37 When I came off a caribou hunt two
38 weeks ago -- last week everybody heard I went, so they
39 all went to the tribal office. They ran out of
40 permits. They had to order them from the refuge. They
41 were about three days late. Some reason, somehow, you
42 know, so it took a couple days of waiting for those and
43 for access to go out hunting. At least that was my
44 experience in the office that I work, which is not a
45 problem until the weather hits, right? So there's
46 hindrances and in that process we can only get better.

47

48 I could only imagine the data recall
49 and you're collecting all those statewide. Is that my
50

0071

1 understanding? My hat's off to you. Like the Chairman
2 said, you know, hope we find somebody in the field that
3 we need to conveniently package this to make it
4 worthwhile. People might not recognize it, but it is
5 well appreciated at least on the user end. So thank
6 you.

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
9 more comments from the Board?

10

11 (No comments)

12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
14 that. Robbin, you have the floor.

15

16 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
17 Through the Chair to the Board. I want to note that in
18 our -- if you recall yesterday when we were doing our
19 training and we were describing the org chart for OSM
20 and all the different positions that make up this
21 amazing team there were a number that are vacant.
22 Because of that there's one person that should be
23 responsible for the entire database, it's functioning
24 and oversight, and that person is gone.

25

26 So not only is our regulatory
27 specialist doing his one person job of pushing through
28 all of the proposed rules and final rules and
29 regulatory changes and reviewing all of our documents
30 for consistency and clarity and alignment with existing
31 regulations, he's doing two other jobs, right, because
32 we also don't have the records -- the records
33 specialist. So there's a lot on his plate. I know you
34 all have just expressed your gratitude to him and I'm
35 reiterating our gratitude from OSM to everything that
36 he's doing.

37

38 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

39

40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
41 that. Appreciate it. The workload the Staff has gone
42 through is truly appreciated because you can see, you
43 know, just what you've heard through the course of the
44 last couple of days. Our big uncle could shut us down
45 and then people still show up to do what needs to be
46 done. So we appreciate that effort in keeping the
47 public trust from eroding. That's a big job, so thank
48 you guys.

49

50

1 I think next we're on future FSB
2 meeting dates. We do have somebody on the list here.
3 So if they're not here by then, we're just going to
4 take a break until they are. She should be here any
5 minute. So with that we'll just talk future FSB
6 meeting dates.

7

8 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
9 First off just a heads up on those meeting dates that
10 you have already confirmed and are listed on our
11 website for public notice. Future meeting dates that
12 involve the Board are February 17th and 18th, tribal
13 and ANCSA Corporation consultations on wildlife
14 proposals and closure reviews.

15

16 This typically happens immediately
17 following the fall Regional Advisory meetings. It's
18 the second opportunity for tribes and ANCSA
19 corporations to consult with members of the Board on
20 the fisheries or wildlife proposals and closure
21 reviews. It's a wildlife cycle, so these would be
22 wildlife proposals and closure reviews.

23

24 Of course, because we delayed
25 everything, this consultation has been delayed as well.
26 So anyone listening online interested in providing
27 comments on the wildlife proposals and closure reviews
28 for this cycle that the Board will be taking up in
29 April please reach out to Orville Lind about how to
30 participate.

31

32 Then, of course, we have our wildlife
33 regulatory meeting April 20th to 24th. Again, there's
34 a third opportunity for consultation with the Board
35 that happens immediately preceding our regulatory
36 meeting. So in this particular case it's going to be
37 held -- the entire meeting will be held at the Egan
38 Center. We begin the afternoon of April 20th with
39 consultations and begin the regulatory meeting the
40 morning of the 21st through the 24th.

41

42 We've also confirmed the summer work
43 session. So like this session, this was the winter
44 work session and primarily focuses on the FRMP. The
45 summer work session is always an opportunity to catch
46 up on what the Councils are reporting to you. You
47 review their annual reports and you confirm the Board
48 replies and you also have an Executive Session where
49 you forward Council nominations.

50

0073

6

14

15 We have sent out -- we sent out a lot
16 of emails trying to figure out where there might be
17 conflicts. Not all of the important meetings have been
18 scheduled yet, so we know that at some point we have to
19 stick a fork in it and choose a date well in advance so
20 that our public can prepare.

21

22 In this particular case I would note
23 that between Board of Fish, Board of Game, the Yukon
24 River Panel, which hasn't announced meeting dates, but
25 usually is in January, the end of January. And the
26 Council winter meeting window, which hasn't been
27 announced but usually starts second week of February,
28 we're looking at perhaps the very first week of
29 February as being ideal.

30

31 So I want to confirm with you all. I
32 want you to check your schedules, but if you give me a
33 thumbs up then we can announce to the public, put it on
34 our website and everyone can get prepared. We hold our
35 fisheries regulatory meeting February 1st through 5th
36 in 2027.

37

38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: (Microphone
39 off).

40

41 MS. PITKA: Yeah, that works for me
42 too. Usually Yukon River Panel is the last week in
43 January. Thank you.

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: And if you look
46 there's nothing going on in February to April currently
47 on the other meeting. So we'd be picking a time that's
48 not in conflict except for Robbin's birthday. Oh,
49 Rhonda's birthday. We could throw a party for her.

0074

1 MS. PITKA: It's not Costa Rica, but I
2 guess it will do.
3

4 (Laughter)
5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Now I know I've
7 got to bring her more herring eggs. Any other dates?
8 Any comments? We're going to take a five-minute break.
9 We're not leaving because we have a guest coming in to
10 speak here in a minute to give us an update on the
11 senior advisor secretary on Indian Affairs -- Alaskan
12 Affairs. So she's going to be here in a few minutes,
13 so we'll convene until she comes in. Stretch your
14 legs.
15

16 (Off record)
17

18 (On record)
19

20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'll welcome
21 everybody back. We just took a little break there for
22 a minute so we can invite up the senior advisor to the
23 Secretary on Alaskan Affairs to give an update.
24 Welcome.
25

26 MS. MORIARTY: Good afternoon,
27 Chairman. Thank you for the invitation and to all the
28 members of the Federal Subsistence Board and others in
29 the room. I appreciate the opportunity for an update.
30 The main focus of my update I just really want to start
31 with a thank you to Crystal and her entire staff for
32 doing an amazing job setting up and facilitating what
33 was, from my perspective, a successful listening
34 session on Tuesday night.
35

36 I've seen many faces were in the room.
37 A couple of the Board members. Some I got a chance to
38 say hi to, some I did not get a chance to say hi to
39 during the meeting. I know many of them stayed late,
40 way late, and was above and beyond the call of duty.
41 So I just want to start my update with a thank you and
42 appreciation for the Staff.
43

44 Additionally, just as an update on the
45 Subsistence Program Review, again we're under no
46 timeline. There's been no decisions made whether
47 they're going to be any changes at all. Comment period
48 ends the 13th of February.
49
50

1 I have shared with leadership the
2 requests that we've received in writing as well as -- I
3 don't know, there were eight, ten maybe, folks that
4 commented during the comment period on Tuesday night to
5 extend the comment period. So that is being considered,
6 but no decisions have been made as of 12:30 on February
7 4th. So we'll see what happens there.

8

9 The other thing that I would just want
10 to make sure that you're all aware of is that hopefully
11 you saw the notice that we are going to do statewide
12 tribal consultations. We'll do two of them. One on
13 March 17th right here in this room and has a virtual
14 option statewide from 1:30 to 3:30 and then another one
15 on March 17th. So there are two Tuesdays and it is not
16 a coincidence that it's the day before State Basketball
17 Tournaments start.

18

19 (Laughter)

20

21 MS. PITKA: March 10th and March 17th.

22

23 MS. MORIARTY: Did I say February?

24

25 MS. PITKA: You said March 17th and
26 March 17th.

27

28 MS. MORIARTY: Oh. It's been a long
29 week. Sorry. So March 10th and March 17th. So, yes,
30 it's not a coincidence that there might be a basketball
31 tournament happening at the Alaska Airlines Center
32 starting on March 11th and March 18th. Anyway, I'm a
33 basketball fan.

34

35 So, with that, that's really the update
36 that I have at this point. I'm happy to answer any
37 questions, feedback, anything else that's on your mind.
38 I do know that -- one final thing before questions.
39 There is likely to have a senior leadership from the
40 Department in Alaska at some time during 2026. No
41 dates are confirmed. I know that your Board meeting in
42 April is in pencil on some calendars, but no
43 commitments yet. I know that they're aware of it.

44

45 I've encouraged leadership both at
46 Interior and USDA to try to be here in person for your
47 April meeting. I'm supposed to be in D.C. for a
48 portion of that week, so I'm still trying to juggle
49 calendars of how I can try to split my time that week

50

0076

1 in April between the two locations. So that's yet to
2 come even for myself. There is a desire but not
3 commitments at this point.

4

5 With that, Mr. Chairman, I'm happy to
6 answer any questions.

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We just
9 appreciate the way you handled the pressure the other
10 night and the gratitude you have for the Staff and
11 being able to handle that, you know. And to see the
12 outpouring just from the people, you know, and have to
13 kick 30 of us out of the room. I apologize I was part
14 of the 30 because, you know, I was so hot and bothered
15 by then. So I couldn't imagine what you guys felt in
16 the corner there.

17

18 I was grateful I wasn't chairing that
19 one. So thank you guys for all that you're doing to
20 keep us afloat and informed and making sure the public
21 has adequate access to you guys. So we appreciate
22 that.

23

24 Any other Board comments or questions?

25

26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Rhonda, yes.

27

28 MS. PITKA: Is there a registration
29 process for the Statewide Tribal and Corporation
30 Consultations?

31

32 MS. MORIARTY: I will look to Orville
33 and Crystal to answer that question. Registration for
34 the Statewide Tribal Consultation?

35

36 MS. PITKA: No, just -- it's open so
37 you can call in to one or the other or both.

38

39 MS. MORIARTY: Yeah. Thank you.

40

41 MR. WOODS: Kara, good to see you.

42

43 MS. MORIARTY: Nice to see you, sir.

44

45 MR. WOODS: I commend you on your
46 openly just announced and took on the challenge of
47 listening to everybody. Not just in the room a couple
48 days ago but everybody online.

49

50

1 MS. MORIARTY: Oh, thanks.
2

3 MR. WOODS: And that's well welcomed
4 especially in the arenas that we work in. One thing
5 I'd like to quantify is when we go back to DC, the
6 pillars that we work in -- and this is -- I spoke on
7 it earlier. We all work in different pillars of
8 government. This Board helps kind of delineate that
9 and break all the barriers down because we all live
10 here in Alaska. It's a beautiful place to live.

11

12 In the region of Bristol Bay I'll
13 announce that, number one, we're 7,300 people in
14 Bristol Bay. I'll remove the emotional
15 aspect of it. So under this Board and a Federal
16 provision for barter and trade we're allowed 4,000 per
17 person. Multiply that times 73. I'll send Washington
18 a bill \$29.2 million a year for the traditional use of
19 our foods.

20

21 I'm jokingly announcing that we, as
22 people, since we're on a Federal Subsistence Board
23 haven't put a price on subsistence and we haven't put a
24 price because it's unquantifiable, but it is. The
25 amount necessary for subsistence in a State level. And
26 I mentioned this earlier, we need to coordinate with
27 the State of Alaska in those arenas for providing
28 resource to people. Thank you for going to D.C. and
29 advocating for us to quantify all these numbers and
30 justify our seats here.

31

32 It is so important that we -- you've
33 seen the public outcry. There is not enough people in
34 Alaska to pay attention. We live in the big -- back
35 home we call Anchorage a big village. Go back home to
36 the RACs. Almost zero attendance except for people who
37 have to be there.

38

39 The State of Alaska -- I was chairman
40 of the A.C. Nushagak Advisory Committee for the Board
41 of Fish/Board of Game. It's a challenge to get people
42 engaged, especially after Covid. Not just before Covid
43 it was a problem. Now there's like an Exodus and that
44 Exodus has to be addressed because, number one,
45 people's perception. I'll tell you how important it
46 is.

47

48 We have elders back home who are scared
49 to hunt because they're afraid of getting in trouble
50

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1 with the law. Last year I went hunting with an elder.
2 He's probably five years -- I'm getting old. He's
3 probably five years older than me. He did not want to
4 hunt because he didn't want to lose -- he was scared of
5 getting in trouble for moose hunting with me and we got
6 met by Refuge Managers checking licenses at 8:00
7 o'clock at night going back to the village. He was
8 scared to hunt because he didn't want to get in trouble
9 to lose those rights to feed his family.

10

11 To quantify subsistence monetarily
12 there's a socioeconomic impact on that. I have to work
13 in order to subsist at \$10 a gallon of gas to go out
14 and subsist. I have to work to buy that snowmachine to
15 go out and access a resource or a skiff. It used to be
16 airplanes. Airplanes are getting too expensive.

17

18 So thank you, Kara. I really
19 appreciate not only your input but your passion for
20 this. It's welcomed and recognized. So thank you.

21

22 MS. MORIARTY: Thank you, Mr. Woods.
23 As the quote/unquote owner of two airplanes I know how
24 expensive those are. Points well taken and I
25 appreciate that.

26

27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'm always
28 looking for hunting partners.

29

30 (Laughter)

31

32 MS. MORIARTY: We're not float rated.

33

34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I can hike in
35 the tundra, I think. I haven't yet and I'm Federal
36 Board Chair for over 12 years. As I'm looking at work
37 schedules here and some of them that I would recommend
38 we need to go out and play out there.

39

40 MS. LEONETTI: I heard a challenge.

41

42 (Laughter)

43

44 MS. MORIARTY: Before I let you get on
45 with your business I also wanted to say thank you to
46 the OSM Staff that have put together the RAC meetings.
47 I haven't been able to attend as many in person as I
48 had hoped because of the shutdown and then the
49 rescheduling it conflicted with a bunch. Between Sara
50

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1 Taylor and I in our office we are trying to get to as
2 many in person and that will be the goal regardless of
3 a subsistence review or not.

4

5 I enjoyed meeting a few folks that are
6 in the audience in Wrangell and going up to Nome and
7 just wanted to acknowledge, you know, the death of Tom
8 Gray up there. He had promised to give me a briefing
9 on reindeer herding. We were going to have dinner in
10 Nome and I was -- you know, anyway, I just wanted to
11 say that as well on the record.

12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: That's why
14 Frank probably complemented you so well. We value
15 those out there that give us value to what we do,
16 right, and so I want to recognize him at this moment.

17

18 (Moment of silence)

19

20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
21 other questions from the Board, comments?

22

23 (No comments)

24

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We truly
26 appreciate it. I think you got the message loud and
27 clear in the war party the other night. So I'm glad
28 they were here. She's waving her fist right behind you
29 there. Sometimes my car.....

30

31 MS. MORIARTY: I can only imagine who
32 that is. I don't even think I need to turn around. I
33 think I got it. I think I got it.

34

35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: If you didn't
36 feel the energy there, I've got your back.

37

38 (Laughter)

39

40 MS. MORIARTY: Yeah, yeah.

41

42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: And they have
43 ours. So that was a really cool cycle to see.

44

45 MS. MORIARTY: Yeah, and I appreciated
46 the civil discourse. It's an important issue and we're
47 all Alaskans. So with that, speaking of all Alaskans,
48 I'm headed to a North Slope Borough meeting this
49 afternoon, so off I go, but you all know how to get

50

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1 ahold of me. Safe travels to all of you that came to
2 the big village for the meeting.

3

4 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you and
7 safe travels to you as well. At this time that
8 concludes the business we have on the agenda that we
9 adopted and approved. So we'll probably take a break
10 until 2:00 o'clock for the Board members. That
11 concludes the work session of it. What we do have is a
12 little more training to sharpen our skill sets. I
13 don't know if the Board forgot that, but we are still
14 on the call today.

15

16 So we'll take until a 2:00 o'clock
17 break. That way we can shake it all off. We'll ask
18 for a motion to adjourn the regular work session.

19

20 MR. INGERSOLL: So moved.

21

22 MR. WOODS: Second.

23

24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion to
25 adjourn. Second. Any opposition?

26

27 (No opposition)

28

29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none.
30 Motion to adjourn accepted. Thank you all for your
31 good work.

32

33 (Off record)

34

35 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)
STATE OF ALASKA) ss.
)

I, Salena A. Hile, Notary Public in and for the state of Alaska and reporter of Computer Matrix Court Reporters, LLC, do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing, contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD MEETING taken electronically by our firm on the 5th day of February 2024;

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 Anchorage, Alaska, this 15th day of February 2026.

Salena A. Hile
Notary Public, State of Alaska
My Commission Expires: 09/16/26

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