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NORTHWEST ARTIC SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME I

NORTHEAST ARTIC HERITAGE CENTER
Kotzebue, Alaska
January 7, 2026

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Thomas Baker, Chair
Michael Kramer
Karmen Monigold
Clyde Ramoth, Sr.
Elmer Armstrong, Jr.
Verne Cleveland, Sr.

Regional Council Coordinator, Nissa Pilcher

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

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(Kotzebue, Alaska - 1/07/25)

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(On record)

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8 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you
9 everyone. It is now 1:03. This is Chair Thomas Baker.
10 We're going to get started with the Northwest Arctic
11 Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting. Today is
12 January 7th, it's 1:04. Would anyone like to give an
13 invocation to get us started? Hearing none will take a
14 moment -- mic.

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MR. RAMOTH: In memory of Pete, I think
we should have a moment of silence. Hats off.

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CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Member
Ramoth. We will have a moment of silence.

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(Moment of silence)

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Thank you. So, with that, it is 1:04.
Again, this is Thomas Baker, Chair of the Northwest
Arctic RAC. I'm going to call this meeting to order at
1:05. Nissa can we please have a roll call to establish
quorum?

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MS. PILCHER: You sure can. For the
record, this is Nissa Pilcher Council Coordinator for
the Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Council. Roll
call. Karmen Monigold.

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MS. MONIGOLD: Present.

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MS. PILCHER: Thank you. Thomas Baker.

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CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Here.

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MS. PILCHER: Tristan Pattee. He should
be calling in tomorrow. He got stuck somewhere. Micheal
Kramer

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MR. KRAMER: Here.

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MS. PILCHER: Enoch Attamuk Shiedt. He is
not present. But I believe he is expected. Will update
when he does come. Wilbur is also not expected. Although
hopefully he will call in later. Clyde is it, Ramoth?
Ramothe.

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MR. RAMOTH: Present.

MS. PILCHER: Elmer Armstrong.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Here.

MS. PILCHER: And Verne Cleveland.

(No response)

He is present. He just happened to step out of the room. Currently in the room and on the phone. We do have five out of nine members present, so there is quorum and we will have six when Verne comes in.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, with Karmen, we actually have six present. So, we do have a quorum to conduct business. Do we have any meeting announcements, Nissa?

MS. PILCHER: I do. I will try to be as brief as possible. So just as a reminder this is the Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Council. So, you can find the agenda and all the meeting materials online and both in the back corner -- or the front corner of the room. If you're online, you can go to www.doi.gov/subsistence and under the Regions tab choose Northwest Arctic and then the Meeting Materials tile. So, for participants on the phone and online, do please remember to mute yourself when you are not speaking. You can do that by pressing star six. That will both mute and unmute your phone. You can also use the mute button on your phone as well. If you would like to speak, please press star five to raise your hand. It'll notify us on our Teams app that you're trying to speak, or you can also try to speak up and say, Mr. Chair, to be addressed to find out when you can speak, when it is appropriate to speak. So again, this meeting is a public meeting, and it is being recorded and it will be transcribed. For those attending the meeting in person, if you could please make sure to sign in. There is a sign in sheet back there. Hopefully there's a pen. If it goes walking away, please let me know and we'll find another one. This Council meeting is scheduled to meet for, well, two days. We are now down to a day and a half. We will see how things go.

So, throughout the meeting, there will be opportunities for folks to public comment. If you are

1 in the room, you can fill out a blue card, which I can
2 guarantee is not currently on that back table, but it
3 will be very shortly. And turn in to either me or any
4 of the OSM staff in the back of the room. If you're
5 online do the raise the hand option or like speak out
6 to get our attention, if that raise hand option doesn't
7 seem to be working on your end. Just be aware that if a
8 line is not muted and it creates a distraction in the
9 room, we will mute it. If you -- public testimony will
10 be taken for every applicable agenda item, and there
11 will be a call for public testimony on non-agenda items,
12 both beginning -- at some point in time during today as
13 well as tomorrow morning. We're kind of on a truncated
14 schedule due to all of the hiccups we had. You can also
15 submit written comments if you'd like to do that instead
16 of or in addition to oral comment, you can hand those
17 to me in hard copy, or you can also email them to
18 subsistence@ios.doi.gov. Do be sure to include your name
19 and affiliation that you're representing in those
20 comments on those comments. So, for all those Speaking
21 please remember to state your name for the record, to
22 ensure that the transcripts are correct. The
23 transcriptionist that actually creates the transcripts
24 are actually present in the room and they're still
25 learning everybody. So, it's really important that we
26 do say our names so they know who is actually speaking.
27

28 And just a quick word on conduct and
29 ethics before I am allowed to stop talking. So as a
30 friendly reminder the meeting will be conducted using
31 Robert's Rules of Order and the meeting will be led by
32 the Chair with help from the Coordinator. Please don't
33 speak out of turn and do wait to be called on by the
34 Chair. Please do not use name calling or profanity. A
35 point of order can be called by anyone if misconduct
36 does happen. Just remember, we're all here because we
37 care about subsistence and subsistence activities. And
38 although it is okay to be very passionate about the
39 subject, we do want to foster an environment where
40 everyone is respected, and we can all work together. If
41 any topic will be discussed during the meeting where a
42 Council member feels you may have a conflict of interest,
43 please state a conflict-of-interest statement online and
44 then recuse yourself from the discussion and voting. And
45 I am hoping that sums up -- yeah, that sums up what I've
46 got to do at this point. Thank you.
47

48 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
49 Nissa. With that, we'll move into our next order of
50 business, which is Welcome and Introductions. At this

1 time, I'd like to ask for anyone in the room that is
2 representing a tribal organization or an ANCSA
3 corporation to come up to the table and state their name
4 and who they're with.

5
6 MR. SMITH: Timothy Smith, on behalf of
7 Maniilaq Association.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Tim.
10 Welcome. Folks with OSM, if you could introduce yourself
11 in the room, OSM. And if you'd like to have one person
12 introduce everybody for OSM just to get names on the
13 record. We'll do that for all agencies just to speed
14 things along.

15
16 MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and
17 members of the Council. My name is Katya Wessels and I'm
18 Council Coordination Division supervisor with OSM. Also,
19 I have with me Tom Baker -- I'm sorry. (Indiscernible).
20 Thomas Plank, who is the Wildlife Biologist with OSM,
21 and I have Grace Cochon, who is a detailee with the
22 Council Coordination Division. And she's helping Nissa
23 Pilcher, our Council Coordinator, with this Council.
24 Thank you.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Katya. And
27 anyone with OSM on the call.

28
29 DR. VOORHEES: Good afternoon. This is
30 Hannah Voorhees. I'm an Anthropologist with OSM.

31
32 MR. FOLEY: Good afternoon, Chairman
33 Baker, this is Kevin Foley, Fisheries Biologist with
34 OSM.

35
36 MS. LA VINE: Good afternoon, Chairman
37 Baker and the Northwest Regional Advisory Council. This
38 is Robbin La Vine, Subsistence Policy Coordinator
39 calling in from Anchorage.

40
41 MR. LIND: Good morning, Chairman Baker
42 and Council members. This is Orville Lind, Native
43 Liaison for the Office of Subsistence Management. Good
44 to hear you on. I'm calling in from Wasilla.

45
46 MS. SENECA: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair,
47 members of the Council. My name is Anna Senecal. I'm a
48 Fisheries Biologist with OSM here in Anchorage.

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: And hearing no one
2 else from OSM on the call. Will move back to the room
3 with Fish and Wildlife Service.

4
5 MR. WIESE: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair,
6 members of the Council, this is Wil Wiese, Refuge Manager
7 for Selawik National Wildlife Refuge. And I'm joined
8 here today by Thomas Baker. And for Selawik National
9 Wildlife Refuge as well, Brittany Sweeney and Bill
10 Carter.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: We will all be joined
13 by Thomas Baker today. Thank you, Wil. Is there anyone
14 from the Fish and Wildlife Service on the phone?

15
16 MS. KLEIN: Hi, yeah. This is Jill Klein.
17 I'm the Regional Subsistence Coordinator based in
18 Anchorage, and I'll be listening in. Thank you.

19
20 MR. HANDER: Hi, this is Ray Hander --
21 Oh, good afternoon, Chairman Baker and committee
22 members. Fisheries Biologist with the Northern Alaska
23 Fish and Wildlife Field Office in Fairbanks. Thank you.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: We'll move back to
26 the room with National Park Service.

27
28 MS. KOELSCH: Sorry, I forget -- I am
29 Jeanette Koelsch. I'm the Acting Superintendent for
30 Western Arctic National Parklands. And here with me is
31 Annie Carlson, the Integrated Resource Program Manager.
32 Thank You.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Jeanette.
35 And anyone from the National Park Service on the call?

36
37 MS. CREEK: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair,
38 and members of the Council. This is Emily Creek,
39 Subsistence Coordinator at Western Arctic, National
40 Parklands in Kotzebue. I'm the Coordinator for Cape
41 Krusenstern and Kobuk Valley Subsistence Resource
42 Commissions. And sorry, I'm not there in person, but
43 good to hear you all.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: We'll come back to
46 the room. Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

47
48 MS. OSBURN: Yeah. Good afternoon. This
49 is Christie Osburn with the Alaska Department of Fish
50 and Game. I'm the Unit 23 Area Biologist with me in the

1 room. Also from Kotzebue is Alex Hansen Western Arctic
2 Caribou Herd Biologist.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Christie.
5 Anyone from Fish and Game on the phone?

6
7 MS. MALLORY: Hi. Good afternoon. I'm
8 calling in from Fairbanks. This is Marianna Mallory. I
9 work in the Arctic, and I do subsistence social science
10 research. I'm the Subsistence Resource Specialist.

11
12 MS. COLD: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair,
13 members of the Council. My name is Helen Cold, and I
14 also work for the Division of Subsistence with Marianna
15 and coordinate subsistence research in the Northwest
16 Arctic and North Slope.

17
18 MR. SCANLON: Good afternoon.

19
20 (Simultaneous speech)

21
22 This is Brendan Scanlon. I'm the
23 Fisheries Biologist for Sportfish Division out of
24 Fairbanks.

25
26 MR. HENSLEE: Hey, everyone, this is Luke
27 Henslee. I'm the Assistant Area Management Biologist for
28 commercial fisheries in Kotzebue. I'm based out of Nome.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Do we have anyone
31 from any other federal agencies?

32
33 MR. RISDAHL: Yeah. Hi.....

34
35 (Simultaneous speech)

36
37 MS. PATTON: Yeah, good afternoon.....

38
39 MR. RISDAHL:Mr. Chairman. This is
40 Greg Risdahl in Anchorage, Alaska. I'm the Subsistence
41 Program Leader for the U.S. Forest Service, and I'll be
42 joining you today and tomorrow. Thank you very much.

43
44 MS. PATTON: Good afternoon. This is Eva
45 Patton, Subsistence Program Manager with the National
46 Park Service Regional Office in Anchorage. Good to hear
47 you all on this afternoon. And I think there's a few
48 other Park Service staff online to let them introduce
49 themselves. Thank you.

50

1 MS. OKADA: Hi. Good afternoon. This is
2 Marcy Okada, Subsistence Coordinator for Gates of the
3 Arctic National Park and Preserve. Thank you.

4
5 MS. TAYLOR: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair,
6 members of the Council. This is Sara Taylor. I am with
7 the Secretary of the Interior, Doug Burgum's office in
8 Anchorage, Alaska, where I am based. I am very privileged
9 and grateful to be calling you today from Marana,
10 Arizona. And I'm proud to be here to present today on
11 the Secretary's Review.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Anyone else from any
14 federal agencies, either in the room or on the phone?

15
16 (No response)

17
18 Anyone from any other state agencies on
19 the phone?

20
21 (No response)

22
23 In the room?

24
25 (No response)

26
27 Members of other Regional Advisory
28 Councils.

29
30 MR. BARGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
31 Leonard Barger from the North Slope Regional Advisory
32 Council committee representing Point Hope.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr.
35 Barger. We appreciate your presence from another RAC.
36 Any members of the public in the room?

37
38 MR. HENRY: Hello, Lennie Henry.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any members of the
41 public in the room?

42
43 MS. PETROWSKI: My name is Lori
44 Petrowski. I work for the Native American Fish and
45 Wildlife Society, and I am based in Fairbanks.

46
47 MS. LUBY: Hello. My name is Caitlin
48 Luby, and I'm a master's student at University of Alaska
49 Fairbanks. And I'm joined with Dr. Todd Brinkman.

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any members of the
2 public on the phone?

3
4 MS. GOLDEN: Hey there. My name is
5 (distortion). I'm from the Native American Fish and
6 Wildlife Society as well. The fish and wildlife
7 biologist, and I'm currently calling in from Huntsville,
8 Alabama. So, I might head out early, but very honored
9 to be here.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Would you repeat your
12 name, please? We had some feedback in the room.

13
14 MS. GOLDEN: Yes. Hannah, Golden.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Hannah.
17 Any other members of the public on the call?

18
19 MS. DEMOSKI: Hi. Good afternoon. My name
20 is Kaitlyn Demoski, and I'm another fish and wildlife
21 biologist with the Native American Fish and Wildlife
22 Society calling in from Palmer. Thanks.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Anyone that I have
25 missed, any other agencies? Anyone else on the call or
26 in the room?

27
28 (No response)

29
30 Hearing none. We will move on. Thank you
31 everyone. Again, welcome to the January 7th and 8th
32 Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Council meeting. We
33 were delayed from last fall when we were supposed to
34 have met due to the government shutdown. So, it's a good
35 thing to have everybody in person and online today.
36 Moving on we will go on to Review and Adoption of the
37 Agenda. There is one short presentation by Ms. Annie
38 Carlson that I would like to propose we move after item
39 10B under Action Items so it would follow -- excuse 10B.
40 So, it would be after Developing recommendations on
41 wildlife proposals and wildlife closures. Is there any
42 other additions or changes we'd like to make to the
43 agenda today? Nissa.

44
45 MS. PILCHER: Nissa Pilcher or the
46 record, I did realize when Marcy introduced herself that
47 she did request to give you guys a brief update in the
48 agency report part that I did not put on the agenda.

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1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Where in the agency
2 reports would that fall, just so we can make a note of
3 it?

4
5 MS. PILCHER: Under National Park
6 Service. You could either put it at the very top or the
7 very bottom.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Okay. So, we can
10 pencil -- you said that was Marcy Okada.

11
12 MS. PILCHER: With Gates of the Arctic.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Gates of the Arctic.
15 We will put her as item f6, f.vi under the National Park
16 Service agency report. Any other changes to the agenda?

17
18 (No response)

19
20 Can I get a motion to amend and approve
21 the agenda as amended?

22
23 MR. RAMOTH: Mr. Chair, I'll make a
24 motion to approve the agenda with the addition of 6 --
25 vi and any other I might have missed.

26
27 MR. KRAMER: Second.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, motion made to
30 amend the agenda by Clyde Ramoth. Seconded by Mike
31 Kramer. Any discussion

32
33 MR. CLEVELAND: Question.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Question has been
36 called for. All those in favor, please signify by saying
37 aye.

38
39 IN UNISON: Aye.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: And those opposed,
42 same sign.

43
44 (No response)

45
46 Hearing none. We have amended and
47 adopted the amended agenda. We'll move on to the Review
48 and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes. Everyone
49 should have gotten a copy electronically and we have
50 hard copy in the room. Are there any questions? Any

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1 amendments to be made to the minutes from our last
2 meeting?

3
4 MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa. Those are
5 on page seven of your meeting books, which is that black
6 comb bound book.

7
8 MR. RAMOTH: Mr. Chair, under attendees.
9 There's a typo. Brittany Sweeney's last name was
10 misspelled, just for the record.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: That has been noted
13 in today's record, so we'll get that amended. Any other
14 changes that we would like to make to the minutes?

15
16 (No response)

17
18 If none. Would anyone like to make a
19 motion to approve the amended minutes with Clyde's.....

20
21 (Simultaneous speech)

22
23 MR. RAMOTH: I so move.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Moved by Clyde. Is
26 there a second?

27
28 MR. CLEVELAND: Second.

29
30 (Simultaneous speech)

31
32 UNIDENTIFIED: Second it.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Verne.
35 Thank you. Seconded by Verne Cleveland. All those in
36 favor, please signify by saying aye.

37
38 IN UNISON: Aye.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: And those opposed,
41 same sign.

42
43 (No response)

44
45 So, hearing none, we will go ahead and
46 approve the previous meeting minutes. We'll move into
47 Regional Subsistence Reports. For those not familiar
48 with this process, this is where the members of the
49 Council, we go around and give our report on what is
50 happening in subsistence in our parts of the region that

1 we live in or in the region as a whole. We'll go ahead
2 and start with Verne.

3
4 MR. CLEVELAND: Good morning. My name is
5 Verne Cleveland, Noorvik. Seems like our climate change
6 is really affecting everybody. Caribou, everything is
7 being changed. Like with an early breakups around May
8 and during the summertime were high waters -- that big
9 storm. That was very unusual. During our caribou hunting
10 season, I got stuck in camp for seven days due to that
11 weather. But it was all good. It was all fun. But other
12 than that, we had a lot of high water, a lot of fish, a
13 lot of salmon. No caribou 'till right before freeze-up
14 at Onion Portage. I was up there day [sic] before freeze-
15 up and got some caribou, but I think they're already
16 rutty. Some of them. And I wanted to go back up but it
17 was already frozen to go back up so I didn't make the
18 second trip. I made three times to Onion Portage but the
19 last time it was -- well, ice was already on the river,
20 so it didn't make -- didn't get a chance to go back up.

21
22 But caribou migration is getting later
23 and later. Right now, there are swinging by Noorvik and
24 Kiana, some place between Kiana and Noorvik. Caribou are
25 moving. And from what I heard they're very healthy
26 caribou. And I didn't get a chance to go out. I think
27 I'm getting old. Getting colder, too cold to be going
28 out. But other than that, the fish were good.
29 Salmonberries, a lot of berries. Spent a lot of time
30 hunting moose, didn't see a moose. Went all over the
31 creation, everywhere. From all the way from Onion
32 Portage, all the way down to the mouth and everywhere.
33 But I didn't see a moose. I didn't get one, so. Tried
34 for caribou, hardly get any caribou, locked out on the
35 last trip. And lot of erosion on the river, because of
36 high water. A lot of mud. See mud down the river, trees,
37 everything on -- when you have water with high, so. In
38 the channel, the river channel changed again because of
39 high water, so.

40
41 Anything else I missed? And we had our
42 Western Arctic Caribou Herd caribou meeting last month
43 in Anchorage. We probably hear more reports on that
44 during our meeting. And it felt pretty same to what we
45 went through. Other than that, we're getting early
46 breakups and late freeze ups. Climate is changing, and
47 we can't do anything. We just gotta [sic] adapt to it
48 and live with it the way it is. Thank you. Good
49 afternoon.

50

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Verne. We
2 will move on to Elmer Armstrong.

3
4 MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
5 Elmer Armstrong from Noorvik. I know when I started
6 putting my net out early July, they were very slow for
7 the salmon. As you seen, they had to cancel the salmon
8 fishery here in Kotzebue and I had to keep my net out
9 longer than expected to fill our freezers. We had high
10 water in different months from the remnants of typhoons
11 that came up, and it made it difficult to have our net
12 out. I went out to Hunt River, and I didn't see no [sic]
13 caribou. I went moose hunting to the lower Nazuruk area
14 and was able to catch one moose. And I was going to go
15 out one more time before it froze up but I had to come
16 back home for a family emergency. I was kind of hoping
17 that the caribou -- because the temperatures were
18 cooling off, I was kind of hoping we'd start seeing some
19 caribou move through, but nothing. No caribou all fall.
20 And I think just last week we started seeing maybe a
21 small bunch go through Noorvik. One of my boys was able
22 to harvest one.

23
24 In October, I put out my net under the
25 ice for whitefish. And I think I made the mistake of not
26 putting my net before freeze-up because I missed the --
27 missed out on a bunch of them with eggs, but I did put
28 some away. Let's see what else. Yeah, that's all I have.
29 Well, there's another report. You know, through media
30 people have been going up the Noatak, some were
31 successful and some weren't. So, it just goes to show
32 that we're starting to have harder time on getting
33 caribou through the seasons. The weather has been
34 changing a lot, high water, and it's just making it more
35 difficult to adapt to the changes. Like the salmon were
36 really late. I noticed my cousin, he had a net under the
37 ice too, and I think he caught a couple really spawned-
38 out salmon under the ice with his net. So, it just goes
39 to show that they werereally late. That's all I have.
40 Thank you.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Elmer.
43 We'll move on to Clyde.

44
45 MR. RAMOTH: (In Native) You know me, I'm
46 Clyde Ramoth. I represent Selawik, but I have a long
47 history from Kobuk and Kiana background. My mom's side
48 is from the Selawik area, but -- we've had our freeze-
49 up about October 18-19. But of course, during the course
50 of the summer, we had a lot of good berry picking, edible

1 plants. Thanks for Fish Wildlife Service for always
2 consulting with our tribe and others to have our annual
3 -- help me Brittany -- culture camp, elder camp. So,
4 with the highwater Verne was talking about and other
5 issues like low caribou numbers, low moose, probably
6 high numbers in beaver, but with the highwaters it's
7 been -- we have a lot of less people harvesting now. We
8 don't even have people -- we tried, but we haven't
9 succeeded to get our kids to trap beaver. Of course,
10 with the climate change and other stuff (In Native). I
11 never had a chance to, but our kids did, and I was able
12 to have some raw eggs. What do you call it? The Russians
13 call it something. There's a word for it, Will? Anyways
14 -- caviar, yeah. I want to welcome Tim, because it's
15 good to see someone like Tim Smith here. You know, the
16 longtime that Mr. Harris or Cyrus for Maniilaq and having
17 our gas -- elders gas were able to -- and supplemented
18 probably Maniilaq, NANA or whatever. But people were
19 able to catch fish, berries, 1 or 2 caribou, maybe a
20 moose for elders. And that's been always a big, big
21 thing for all of our communities, I think and -- but no
22 sign of rabbits. Of course, the lynx, they have their
23 seven-year cycle. I'm excited as a school council
24 president to get our kids involved with more traditional
25 stuff. I think we could babble on, but I'm just here to
26 talk about low numbers in caribou.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Clyde.
29 Micheal Kramer.

30
31 MR. KRAMER: This is Councilman Kramer.
32 The year was pretty slow. You know, as Verne mentioned,
33 climate change has been pretty tough on us. As many of
34 you may know, we lost two very well knowledgeable
35 subsistence users this fall. You know, the ever-changing
36 weather is changing what we used to know to, you know
37 what it is now. Thinner ice, more dangerous conditions,
38 warm spells, you know, the rivers and the ocean not only
39 melts on top but it melts underneath also. You know, I
40 was brought up back in the day with my grandparents and
41 going out searching with a lot of elders. It was
42 different back then. I used to follow them, going out
43 on searches and out there on the thin ice and I was
44 taught a lot back then. But to this day, I don't feel
45 comfortable with my judgment anymore. I'm looking at not
46 taking much [sic] risks anymore. And, you know, I would
47 encourage a lot of the younger generations to also start
48 looking at that, too, because of the warming, and the,
49 you know, the ever-changing conditions. But condolences
50 to the families Brown's and Nelson's. You know, they

1 were very knowledgeable subsistence users, harvesters.
2 But condolences to the families.

3
4 You know, not many caribou have come
5 through. I kind of hit it right on the money before, you
6 know, Alex and them came out with the numbers probably
7 about 120-125,000. She was -- went public, they like
8 that thing right on the money. Our caribou herd is
9 dropping. You know, we still got a lot of people out
10 there on, you know, in social media self-incriminating
11 themselves with pictures of them with a bunch of cows.
12 We set forth these regulations for us to follow, to
13 protect our longevity and having this resource available
14 to everybody, especially with now, you know, all the
15 tariffs and all this other stuff. It's wise that we
16 start -- our caribou could mean more to us now than they
17 ever have.

18
19 Moose, I didn't get out anywhere, I
20 still got my moose harvest ticket, caribou harvest
21 ticket still on my refrigerator. I haven't even gone
22 out. My brother and got some salmon. Everything was
23 pretty slow this year. Berry picking. I saw a lot of
24 people out harvesting berries and stuff, and it looked
25 pretty good. Other than that, that's all I have. Thank
26 you.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
29 Mike. Karmen Monigold. Do you have anything to report?

30
31 MS. MONIGOLD: Hi. Yes, this is Karmen
32 Monigold from Kotzebue. So, we had fire season in July
33 near our camp in -- across the Kobuk Lake. And this was
34 the first time we had, like, a pack of wolves come near
35 Ivik in the summer. That was interesting. We barely got
36 any salmon. And during hunting season for moose, the
37 water was so extremely high, it was like when you pull
38 up, you couldn't jump off the boat because you were in
39 bushes, and there's still a lot of water. We really had
40 to pick your places. It went down pretty quick, but for
41 a while there, it was really, really high. And, you
42 know, I saw a lot of people getting moose. I saw, you
43 know, no caribou. And of course, we had the two deaths
44 in Kotzebue that were just devastating for our
45 community. And, you know, a real eye opener, because
46 those are really experienced hunters and providers for
47 the community. So that was a really great loss. But, you
48 know, it's just been -- I mean, no snow right now. It's
49 been a cold snap for a while, finally. But not enough
50 snow to really get out there. I know the caribou are

1 around. They're still migrating through, and from what
2 I've seen with people that are getting caribou, they are
3 healthy. So that's all I got. Thank you.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Karmen.
6 And I'd just like to check, do we have any other members
7 of the Northwest Arctic RAC on the call at this time?

8

9 (No response)

10

11 Hearing none, I will go ahead and move
12 into the Chair's report. A lot of the things that I was
13 hoping to speak of have been touched on already. And one
14 of the things that I'd like to really remind everyone
15 as we talk about every time this body meets is the
16 critical state of the caribou herd. The Western Arctic
17 Caribou Herd is constantly -- it's dwindling, it's
18 diminishing. And it's time that we continue to look into
19 other avenues to do what we can to protect the herd.
20 We've done closures. We've done the wildlife special
21 actions. Before the meeting, we were talking about what
22 can we do to -- to begin the conversation, what can we
23 do regarding predator control and all of these different
24 factors. Climate change is real and we recognize as a
25 people that it's happening, and that is taking its toll
26 on our herd and their migration route. But it's really
27 important that if people in the villages are
28 experiencing predators coming into the village, we're
29 seeing videos of wolves being caught in snares right on
30 the bank near Shungnak. People are reporting wolves in
31 Selawik, in different villages in the region. So, report
32 those things. Make it known when predators are coming
33 into the community, when they typically haven't. And
34 even if -- it is when they normally do, report it, let
35 people know so that we can show that there is an ongoing
36 issue. I'll keep it fairly short. And just restate again
37 we need to, through this process and all the processes
38 were involved and make sure that we're doing everything
39 we can to protect the caribou herd, which is really the
40 lifeline for our region. So that is what I have for the
41 Chair's report.

42

43 With that, we'll move into item number
44 9, which again is Public and Tribal Comment on Non-
45 Agenda Items. This is an opportunity each day where
46 members of the public or members of tribal entity can
47 come get on the record and make a comment on something
48 that is not on the agenda. Do we have anyone in the room
49 who was hoping to make a public or tribal comment on
50 something that is not currently on the agenda?

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(No response)

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No one in the room. Do we have anyone on the phone that was hoping to make a public or tribal comment?

MR. RAMOTH: I was hoping -- excuse me. Clyde Ramoth, for the record. I serve as Secretary for a tribal -- Native Village of Selawik Tribal Council, and I was hoping someone would call in. But the predators with the wolves and bears -- of course, bears damage a lot of our camps. The wolves in high numbers in the community right now. And of course, social media talks a lot. But is there any recommendation from the state, feds or how could we improve on predator control in the village itself? As a tribal Council member, I'm speaking, that question.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Do we have any biologists that may have a comment or know who we can direct these questions to, so we can get a written answer to this kind of question? And the wildlife trooper just walked in. So, we're going to call on him next.

MR. CANTINE: Perfect. For the record, through the Chair to member Ramoth. For your question about predator control, there's several layers to that. And we'll talk about some of this as we talk about what happened to -- the Western Arctic Herd working group meeting, you know, later in the agenda. So, we can get into that a little bit deeper. But one thing we mostly talk about with predator control is what we call intensive management, which is a state action. And that's in state act -- state statute. So, you know, the state could make it legal to operate out the outside of the normal bounds for removal. You know, currently our recommendation is that you know, anybody in the community, Selawik included, can harvest up to 20 wolves a year by shooting, or if they have a trapping license, there's no harvest limit. So, they can harvest as many wolves as they want, plus two bears per person per year. So, we have, you know, very liberal bag limits. So, within the communities you have the ability to harvest a lot of predators. The next step, the IM would have to take action through the Board of Game. As I mentioned, we'll talk a little bit more about that at the working group discussion level, because there was a proposal that was going to come out of that meeting, and Verne can jump in when we get to that point too. But then it

1 pushes it over to IM or intensive management, where the
2 state can take action, or we can, you know, have other
3 individuals operate outside the normal harvest
4 practices. So, it's possible the wheels are turning.
5 Things can happen. But you know, support and ideas from
6 this body and others are valuable in that process.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Alex.
9 Before you respond, Clyde, I'd just like to, for the
10 record and for your awareness Trooper Cantine, the
11 question was regarding predator control and what can
12 folks in the villages do as far as predator control.
13 Clyde might be able to repeat the question just so you
14 can hear it. Clyde.

15
16 MR. RAMOTH: So, thank you. You walked
17 in just in time, sir. So part of that question, I think,
18 and the other villages could relate to it too is -- so
19 maybe -- of course, I got my license somewhere in my
20 backpack, but there might be this for self-defense or
21 like a Karmen that might be at camp or Leonard at Point
22 Hope or Ma' and Pa' that don't have their license. They
23 harvest the wolves without maybe not having their
24 license and not and get away with it just for self-
25 defense. That was a question that was brought up through
26 our tribe and social media.

27
28 MR. CANTINE: Hey, good afternoon and
29 thank you for asking the question, Clyde. There's a
30 couple different avenues -- oh, for the record, my name
31 is Steve Cantine. I'm the Alaska Wildlife Trooper
32 positioned here in Kotzebue. Been here about -- coming
33 up on six years now. So still the new guy on the block.
34 But -- so there's a couple avenues for success for folks
35 that want to take game. There's the normal hunting or
36 trapping where you have to have a license and sometimes
37 a permit, and that means you get to keep the critter,
38 whether that's the meat or the hide or both. If we have
39 what's called a defense of life and property, then none
40 of that applies. And the normal methods and means don't
41 apply. So normally I can't use artificial light to take
42 a wolf or a bear, right. But if I'm getting attacked by
43 a bear in the middle of the night, I can use a
44 flashlight. It's fine. But with a defensive life and
45 property, if I don't have the license or tags, or I go
46 outside the normal what we call methods and means the
47 ways I can harvest this critter legally, then the
48 processes it goes to the state to Fish and Game and
49 depending on which kind of animal it is, the harvest
50 requirements differ. For bear, it's the hide with the

1 skull and the claws. For a moose or a caribou would be
2 the meat or what we define as the edible meat. So,
3 quarters, backstrap, ribs, neck and so on. So, if it
4 ends up being a DLP and you didn't have the license, but
5 you're protecting yourself or property, that's fine. But
6 you don't get to keep the critter. So ideally you would
7 have the license and permit ahead of time. For example,
8 I just went down to Sitka, and I went on a one-day deer
9 hunt. I paid 25 bucks for a locking tag for a bear in
10 the event I saw a bear, because that way if I shot it,
11 I was good to harvest that bear. Otherwise, if it charged
12 me, I shot it. I'd have to go through all the trouble
13 of skinning the bear, bringing the hide out with the
14 skull, and then the state would keep it. So, if you want
15 to keep whatever parts of the animal are capable, you
16 have to have the license and permit.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Trooper
19 Cantine. So, with that, just to clarify, if there is a
20 defense of life and property in a village, you shoot a
21 wolf, you shoot a bear, whatever it might be. What is
22 the next step? Do you call Fish and Game here in
23 Kotzebue? Do we call you? What should someone do if they
24 have a defense of life and property moment?

25
26 MR. CANTINE: Yes, sir. So, you've got
27 15 days to call either Fish and Game or the Alaska
28 Wildlife Troopers, whichever one's easier. And then you
29 have to conduct the required salvage. So, we give you
30 that time in case you're out of camp. It takes a while,
31 but it's basically as soon as practical, with a maximum
32 of 15 days to notify Fish and Game or the Wildlife
33 Troopers.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. Vern.

36
37 MR. CLEVELAND: Oh, okay. What if its
38 self-defense? I mean and you don't have nothing. And
39 you're attacked and you have no license, no nothing. And
40 it's self-defense. What would you call that?

41
42 MR. CANTINE: I would still call that a,
43 what we call defense of life or property. So, if you're
44 protecting yourself or somebody else or your property,
45 with the exception of let's say you shoot a caribou and
46 a grizzly comes along, wants to eat that caribou. And
47 this happens to some of the non-resident hunters every
48 year, they'll wack a caribou and grizzly bears right on
49 it. They can't DLP or defense of life and property shoot
50 that bear. But anything else, you're good to go. You

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1 just -- if you didn't have the license and the tag, you
2 can't keep it. Is the only difference.

3

4 MR. CLEVELAND: Right now, I think we got
5 wolves right in town and we got kids walking around and
6 if it attacks one of those kids. Then what? Oh. You
7 gotta have a license to get this. I mean, let's make
8 sense out of this.

9

10 MR. CANTINE: No, sir. You can.....

11

12 MR. CLEVELAND: I mean, let's look at it
13 in a sensible way of saying if it's self-defense and we
14 got kids walking and they're attacked during school,
15 going to school, what do we call it?

16

17 MR. CANTINE: That would be.....

18

19 (Simultaneous speech)

20

21 MR. CLEVELAND: Where would you go?

22

23 MR. CANTINE: That would be defense, sir.
24 The only difference is, do you get to keep it after the
25 fact or not? If you had the license and the permit, if
26 a permit is required, you get to keep it if you desire.
27 You don't have to, though. But know anybody, you see
28 little Timmy walking through the village and he gets
29 attacked, or you see a wolf that looks like it's going
30 to attack him. You can smoke the wolf, no problem. It's
31 just if you wanted to keep the thing, get a license
32 ahead of time. That's the only difference.

33

34 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, in English, we
35 can take the wolf if it's defending life or property in
36 our communities?

37

38 MR. CANTINE: Take in the sense of kill
39 it. Yes.

40

41 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

42

43 MR. CANTINE: They just -- after the fact
44 you don't keep that critter, it goes to the state. If
45 you didn't have the right paperwork at a time.

46

47 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that.

48

49 MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you. Theres a
50 couple bears roaming around here in Kotzebue this fall.

1 And you know that that's pretty dangerous for a hungry
2 bear to be roaming around in the village. You know that
3 -- gotta [sic] get rid of it right away. I mean, you
4 can't just let it run around, roam around until you get
5 someone, and we gotta do it right away. Can't just let
6 it run around.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Mike, do you have
9 your hand up?

10

11 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. This is a Council
12 member Kramer. I mentioned many, many times, you know,
13 over the years new communities who have problems with
14 bears, you know, the IRA or the village corporation
15 should be able to pay for roughly about 20 to 30, you
16 know, hunters' licenses. Because if you got bears in
17 your villages, these guys got hunting licenses. They
18 could drive over there and shoot a bear, have it sealed,
19 and then use it for a doormat if they want. They don't
20 even have to salvage the meat. You know, at our AC --
21 Kotzebue Sound AC meeting, we put no holds barred. We
22 could use artificial light. We're going to put -- we put
23 it in proposal for artificial light, baiting. I've been
24 thinking about putting in a proposal for shooting sows
25 with cubs. Shooting from the road. Anything. Because,
26 you know, this fall, there's only one Trooper Cantine.
27 So now there's probably about 20 or 30 of us guys who
28 are going to start taking this matter in our own hands.
29 Because he's there 8 to 5. We could go at any time we
30 want and we're going to have hunting licenses. We don't
31 have to turn this over to him. So, we could just drag
32 that carcass, you know, after we skinned it and get the
33 hide and skull, drag that carcass out into the ocean and
34 go get it sealed. And I could use it for a doormat if I
35 want to and the skull has a decoration.

36

37 You know, it needs to start -- it's
38 getting critical, man. Somebody's going to get killed.
39 You know, there's only one Fish and Wildlife Officer in
40 this whole region. State's liable because they ain't
41 [sic] taking action. You know, the people in the public
42 have to. That's why I mentioned so many times, get your
43 good hunters. You know, all your hunters. Village
44 hunters. You have the local villages, IRAs or village
45 corporations, buy your hunters some licenses every year.
46 That way they don't have to worry about handing it over.
47 If it's a good bear, harvest the meat if you like -- you
48 know a lot of people like bear. You don't have to leave
49 it behind. But, you know, if you think the meat is good
50 enough to eat, then take it. But that's why I pressure

1 so many people in the villages. I know a couple of
2 villages right now, some people are driving kids to
3 school with rifles cause [sic] they got wolves in their
4 villages. It's gotta happen. and before the end of this
5 meeting tomorrow, I expect us to have a, you know,
6 predator control working group, the whole process
7 starting. Because with this working group, we might look
8 at having an additional group of people here in the
9 community of Kotzebue, will go get our hunting licenses
10 and when Cantine's too busy. We'll go out and take care
11 of the matter ourselves. That's all.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any other questions
14 or discussion on this topic? Trooper Cantine.

15
16 MR. CANTINE: Thank you, through the
17 Chair. Trooper Cantine and I don't know if it was
18 mentioned earlier, but just to throw it out there were
19 a two bear a year area. So, we can frame this as a
20 problem or an opportunity. A two bear a year area in
21 this state means that you can get a free permit from
22 your friendly Fish and Game representative to sell your
23 bear hide. Which is a significant -- that's 3 to 4
24 figures potentially in your pocket just for a green hide.
25 So, for folks that especially are income challenged,
26 which is most of us in this region, I think, this is a
27 significant opportunity to cull a population of concern
28 and provide income in areas where it's needed. I would
29 ask that we do it the right way with at least a \$5 low-
30 income license, which many, many people in this region
31 qualify for. But that's a pack of Cheetos, so most folks
32 can manage that, the low-income license. And many folks
33 up here do qualify for that. So, and if there's further
34 questions from folks in your villages, either I or Alex
35 or Christie, any of us would be happy to field further
36 questions on how to set folks up for success.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Clyde.

39
40 MR. RAMOTH: Just a follow up and more
41 like a comment, but I think Fish and Wildlife Service
42 does a great job for us for Selawik and Noorvik, for the
43 boundaries and stuff for PSA, but I think the state and
44 other agencies could improve, like with radio or the
45 Arctic Sounder, how and, you know, for predator control.
46 We're talking about, you know something how we could
47 improve to get our keep our community safe.
48 Communication is always key, and I think we could
49 improve. I don't know what's the answer Mr. Chair, but
50 that's my comment.

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CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Clyde.
Trooper Cantine.

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MR. CANTINE: Thank you, sir. You bring up an excellent point, Clyde. And to follow up on that, one of the things when we look at communication, when Alex or Christie, somebody from Fish and Game goes to the Board of Game and says, hey, here's a proposal for predator control in this case, their ammunition essentially is data, right. And so, this is my little plug for why we have licenses and permits. At the end of the day, people have been killing bears for thousands of years without a piece of paper. We all know you don't need a piece of paper to kill a bear and to harvest it properly. The reason we have those is that's a data point so that when the biologist says, gee, our caribou herd is in the toilet, we think predators are an issue, if they don't have any sort of like harvest data or population data, they have a really hard time going to the Board of Game and saying, this is what we need because they don't have the data backing to do it. So, one of the ways you can help them help you is with those permits, those licenses that -- reporting and sealing, because it gives them the ability to say, hey, look, this is a quantifiable problem. Here's a tool we'd like to use, in this case predator control. And this is why we think this is required in this instance.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Further questions?
Discussion?

(No response)

Hearing none. Thank you, gentlemen, for your feedback. Is there any other public or tribal comments on non-agenda items?

(No comment)

Anyone on the phone for public or tribal comment on a non-agenda item?

(No comment)

And again, this is available each day when we open things up. So, at this time it is 2:01. We will move on to our Action Items. We'll start with the Secretarial Review discussion. Ms. Taylor, are you still on the line with us?

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MS. TAYLOR: Yes, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Nissa, what page or would it be in our folder for the handout?

MS. PILCHER: Yes, it would be in that blue folder I handed you. It should be right after the agenda, which is that pink sheet for you. There's several documents, one that's got seven bullet points. The -- yep, what's in Chairman Baker's hand. The next one is the actual Federal Register, which looks almost like a blank piece of paper with a little bit of writing on it. And what is the next piece? Nope. That's it. So those two documents is what Sara will be talking about. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, with that, Ms. Taylor, if you would like to begin, the floor is yours.

MS. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And through the Chair. This is Sara Taylor with the Secretary of the Interior's Office in Anchorage, Alaska. And I am calling in today to discuss an open scoping period that we are in right now, for a review of the Federal Subsistence Management Program. So, I hear that you have a copy of the Federal Register, or if you do not, a simple search through the Federal Register will bring you to a scoping announcement that provides a lot more information. But I will go through some of it today, and I will try to be very efficient with our time knowing that the meeting has been shortened. So, some of this may be -- some of you may be very familiar with this and some of you may not. So, I'll go through briefly, just a quick history of the program. So, the Federal Subsistence Management Program has been active for just over 30 years. And that began with a 1992 joint record of decision that the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture signed to establish the Federal Subsistence Board. And the Regional Advisory Committees then were to advise the Board, and the Board advises the Secretaries on making the regulations, and that I'm sure all of you know. also, we are in -- we've received a lot of requests over the past few years to take a look at some aspects of the program. And this is -- having a review of the program is something that we've done before, in October 2009, which was about ten years after the regulatory expansion that included waters within an adjacent to federal land. Ten years after that expansion of the regulations we initiated a very comprehensive

1 review of the Federal Subsistence Program. Both
2 Secretaries led that through the Alaska Affairs Office.
3 And that included a considerable amount of outreach
4 consultation very large public -- very long public
5 comment period. And we received a number of recommended
6 changes through that 2009 review and made several
7 changes. We received recommendations to change the
8 membership of the Federal Subsistence Board the initial
9 Federal Subsistence Board Was the managers of the
10 federal lands that are affected by the program, as well
11 as a Chair. And after the 2009 review, we increased that
12 to add two public members to the Board to advise. And
13 we also received some recommendations regarding revising
14 regulations where necessary, or deferring
15 recommendations from -- and we were able to really
16 capture a lot of kind of things that we didn't realize
17 would be an issue, but then we were able to resolve
18 that. So, I think with this review, we are trying to
19 accomplish something very similarly, which is as this
20 program goes on, which it goes on all the time. There's
21 no end to the Federal Subsistence Management program.
22 As you know, this is a program that's essential for
23 subsistence. And so as we go about our duties here in
24 the program we want to make sure that we're always
25 keeping touch with the users to make sure that the
26 program itself is adequately functioning and making sure
27 that subsistence needs are being met, that rural
28 residents are able to participate in the development of
29 these regulations and that your expertise is front
30 center in the programs operation. And so that is a big
31 part of where this review is coming from. We're trying
32 to make sure that the program is always adapted to the
33 needs of the subsistence users. This is a requirement
34 in ANILCA.

35
36 And so, when we received a -- we
37 received several comments. You can read about these on
38 the Office of Subsistence Management website. We
39 received several comments from user groups asking us to
40 look at particular aspects of the program. And that is
41 a lot of where this review is focused. We had a
42 regulation last year that expanded the membership of the
43 Board again, and that was following a public process as
44 well. And we were able to put more public members on the
45 Board. That is something we were able to do by
46 regulation. If we make any changes as a result of this
47 review, those will also be done through a regulation.
48 So that's not what we're doing right now. We're not
49 making any regulated changes to the Board at this time
50 or to the program. But what we are doing is scoping, and

1 scoping means that we are trying to get feedback from
2 the public and especially from subsistence users. Is the
3 program functioning? Are subsistence needs being met?
4 Are there things that we can be doing to make it easier
5 on the subsistence users? Things we can do to make it
6 easier for those who are doing the difficult work that
7 you do here, and then the difficult work on the ground
8 harvesting the resources. Is there something we can do
9 to make that easier for all of you? So, this public
10 scoping process began on December 15th, and it is a 60-
11 day public scoping process. So, this will end on February
12 13th when your comments will be due. They can be
13 postmarked on February 13th, or they can be transmitted
14 through the regulations.gov website. On February 13th
15 we will be able to address those comments with a follow
16 up, and if there are any changes that will be proposed
17 for the program as a result of what we find, those will
18 be separate -- that -- those will be in a separate
19 rulemaking process.

20
21 So, the -- we're -- the things that were
22 brought to our attention and which we are focusing this
23 review on are listed there in the handout that you have.
24 I'll just briefly walk through them. The -- one of the
25 changes that we made last year, in addition to increasing
26 the membership of the Board, was to move the Office of
27 Subsistence management from where it had been in the
28 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to the Office of the
29 Secretary. And we specifically moved it to the Office
30 of the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and
31 Budget. This was also directed in legislation. So, this
32 was not just a consequence of the review. And we were -
33 - we are now officially moved. So, everyone is officially
34 moved into the Office of the Secretary.

35
36 The second topic that we are interested
37 in feedback on is the criteria for Regional Advisory
38 Council membership. Have -- is that -- do we need more
39 criteria? Is the criteria that's there sufficient? Are
40 there different things that we should be looking at in
41 terms of improving recruitment for the Regional Advisory
42 Councils? So, any kind of feedback that you may have on
43 the membership of the Councils or the membership of the
44 Federal Subsistence Board, we would be very interested
45 in hearing that feedback.

46
47 A fourth topic is the federal
48 regulations and state regulations. So, there are federal
49 regulations and there are state regulations and they
50 apply in the same areas. So, we're very interested in

1 the interplay of that. You as the users know much more
2 about how those regulations work together. And so, we
3 would be interested in your insight as to what we can
4 do, perhaps to improve that. The fifth thing -- the
5 fifth topic that we are interested in are the regulations
6 that apply to special actions. I know that this RAC is
7 very familiar with the special actions process. And
8 we're -- we would love to know more about your
9 experiences with the special action process and your
10 expertise to make sure that the special actions process
11 is a tool that functions well for you on the ground. And
12 we were also very interested in the role of the state
13 of Alaska and the Department of Fish and Game in the
14 program. That is something that has changed over time.
15 And we would like to make sure that the state is involved
16 in -- to the extent that it is meaningful for users.

17
18 And lastly, we're very interested in
19 learning more about the Board's policies and procedures
20 for making rural determinations. So, these would be
21 determinations as to whether a community is rural or
22 non-rural, and that has implications for whether the
23 residents of that community are considered federally
24 qualified subsistence users. So, we are requesting input
25 on these topics and on any other topics that you think
26 might benefit from a deeper look on our part. And it is
27 really your expertise that will help guide our ability
28 to make this a very meaningful check in on the program.
29 And I would like to open up to any questions that anyone
30 might have about this process. I look forward to being
31 able to report out what we learn from the scoping process
32 at a future meeting. And I'm happy to answer any
33 questions that folks might have about the process or
34 provide more detail or get back to you with more detail.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Ms.
37 Taylor. Do we have any questions from members of the
38 Council at this time? Seeing none in the room. Elmer.

39
40 MR. ARMSTRONG: So, I see number one is
41 Move the Office of Subsistence Management from U.S. Fish
42 and Wildlife Service to the Office of the Assistant
43 Secretary for Policy. Has that been pushed by membership
44 from -- how do you want to say that? Has it been pushed
45 from maybe a outside....?

46
47 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: If I may. For the
48 record, that was member Armstrong. And I think your
49 question is, whose decision was it to move OSM from Fish
50 and Wildlife to the office of the Secretary? Was it.....

1
2 MR. ARMSTRONG: Because somebody has
3 to.....

4
5 CHAIRPERSON BAKER:was it
6 something pushed from a more local point of view, such
7 as from Alaska and the RACs and the Federal Subsistence
8 Board, or was this from within the federal
9 administration itself? Is that...? Push your button.

10
11 MR. ARMSTRONG: Maybe like a private club
12 or something, you know.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: If that makes
15 sense.....

16
17 (Simultaneous speech)

18
19 MR. ARMSTRONG: I was thinking somebody
20 wants to change something, so that's why that is up
21 there. And they want to change it to have more decision
22 making that will change outcomes.

23
24 MS. TAYLOR: Through the Chair. This is
25 Sara Taylor with the Office of the Secretary. So, the
26 move of the Office of Subsistence management -- I can
27 tell you what I know from the history of the program.
28 When we did the review in 2009 to 2011, when we did that
29 first initial review of the Federal Subsistence
30 Management program, this was actually a comment that we
31 received from Alaskans. Several Alaskans had reached out
32 and pointed out in the context of that review that they
33 felt that the office being in the -- one of the bureaus,
34 right, which -- one of the land managers. So having the
35 Office of Subsistence Management in U.S. Fish and
36 Wildlife Service was I remember someone said it was odd
37 because the Fish and Wildlife Service director was also
38 a member of the Board. We had a few comments about there
39 being interference with information reaching the
40 Secretary because there wasn't a direct line of
41 communication between the program and the Secretary's
42 Office. But there were no changes that were made at the
43 time. So, this came up again several times when we
44 reached out to tribal members and Alaska Native
45 communities. In 2022, this came up again. The desire to
46 have the Office of Subsistence Management have a more
47 direct line to the Secretaries, and this was one of the
48 solutions that people had mentioned. But really, what
49 ultimately drove the move of Office of Subsistence
50 Management was language that we got from Congress.

1 Congress directed us to move the Office of Subsistence
2 management in this way. And so, we did execute that last
3 year in line with that direction. So, I guess the answer
4 is it's kind of both. It came from the federal
5 government, but it also came from Alaskans.

6

7 MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any other questions?

10 Mike.

11

12 MR. KRAMER: Is Councilman Kramer. You
13 know, I've been on this Council for roughly about 20
14 years. You know, I've seen it bounce around a couple of
15 times, but you know, it's wise that we try and make
16 everything a priority. Especially with you know,
17 reporting in us -- reporting to OSM, you know, in special
18 actions and other stuff to protect our subsistence
19 resources. That is the whole reason why we're here. We're
20 advisors, and the Subsistence Board makes the policies
21 and regulations along with scientific data. You know,
22 we've always -- over the years, we've always tried to
23 ensure that federal regulations and state regulations
24 mimic each other so we aren't making our Native people,
25 our indigenous people of this region criminals. And the
26 reason why I'm saying that is if I was on state land and
27 I shot a caribou, well, I was supposed to be on federal
28 land to shoot that caribou. I can get in trouble for it
29 and so that's one of the reasons why we've always tried
30 to mimic each other's regulations and proposals that
31 we've submitted to ensure that we don't make our people
32 criminals. And we are -- I encourage everyone out there,
33 you know, that are listening on the radio, you know, our
34 resources are getting very critical. The saving of cows
35 has to come. It's going to hit hard -- hit us hard. I
36 wouldn't be surprised, you know by the end of this
37 meeting, we're already looking at five per year per
38 person and no cows. You know, it's getting pretty
39 critical now.

40

41 Regulations, you know, applicable to
42 special actions. That's kind of always been our buffer
43 to protect these resources until we could get it in a
44 proposal submitted into regulation. And it's wise that
45 we continue to be able to have quick and easy access to
46 you know, the Department of Interior, Assistant
47 Secretary, you know, any of those entities that we report
48 to and OSM reports too. We need to make sure that we
49 have a direct line to all of them or whoever is going
50 to be covering OSM just to ensure that our Subsistence

1 resources are being conserved for the people. You know,
2 I can't say it more now that we need -- these caribou
3 mean more to us now than they ever will. And as they
4 continue to decline, it's going to get worse. Our moose
5 population is dropping, sheep are gone. You know there's
6 sheep, but they're just nothing harvestable. Our bears
7 are going, you know, out of whack, our wolves are out
8 of whack. Nobody's harvesting them. But we need to make
9 sure we can try and push these proposals in to be able
10 to continue to subsist on our lands and our resources.
11 Thank you.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mike. Any
14 further discussion? Questions from members of the
15 Council?

16
17 (No response)

18
19 Karmen, do you have any questions? Just
20 want to make sure you have a chance to speak since you're
21 on the phone.

22
23 MS. MONIGOLD: Thank you. I guess you
24 know, one of the things that I want to point out is that
25 the -- when it comes to the federal regulations and the
26 state regulations for duplications and inconsistencies.
27 You know, we have separate regulations because, you
28 know, they have separate laws like, you know, rural
29 preference and separate wording for federal government
30 to government relations than the state does, because the
31 state doesn't have certain regulations that protect
32 rural preference. So that's a big one that I see, and I
33 just wanted to point that out. So, it might be important
34 to give feedback on some of these because if we don't
35 then they get taken away. Then there goes our rural
36 preference, which you know, that that would be crazy.
37 And that's just the -- just off the top of my head.
38 Thank you, Chair.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Karmen. I
41 guess a question that comes out of that Ms. Taylor, can
42 you clarify if through this review the rural priority
43 granted by ANILCA is that at stake? Is that something
44 that people should be sending in comments to protect,
45 or is that not necessarily in the line of fire so to
46 speak, with this review?

47
48 MS. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
49 Through the Chair. This is Sara Taylor. The rural
50 preference is not at stake. The rural preference is

1 outlined very clearly in ANILCA Title VIII. As is our
2 responsibilities. Some of the things in Title VIII have
3 been invalidated by the courts and that has led to a
4 change in the program that is not necessarily reflected
5 in ANILCA Title VIII, but the rural preference is very
6 clearly laid out in Title VIII and that has not changed.
7 And we have no ability to change that in executing the
8 law. But we do want to make sure that it is effective -
9 - that we are providing through the Federal Subsistence
10 Management program is a rural preference, that is
11 meaningful for subsistence users and the tools that
12 we've provided through the Federal Subsistence
13 Management program, we're very interested in making sure
14 that those tools are effective.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that
17 reassurance, Ms. Taylor. Any further questions or
18 discussion from members of the RAC?

19
20 MS. MONIGOLD: Through the Chair. This
21 is Karmen.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, please. You're
24 on -- the floor is yours, Karmen.

25
26 MS. MONIGOLD: Thank you. So why would
27 those questions be in there, then, about state and
28 federal agencies? Thank you.

29
30 MS. TAYLOR: Thank you. Through the
31 Chair. This is Sara Taylor. This particular topic, I can
32 tell you some of the feedback that we've received over
33 the years about the federal regulations and the state
34 regulations. I know the federal regulations are
35 developed here through this process. And the state
36 regulations are developed through their own process with
37 the ACs and the Board of Game and the Board of Fish. And
38 that those processes are separate and that they do need
39 to stay separate, as you noted, because the legal
40 authorities that underpin those regulations are very
41 different and have different criteria. So, we do know
42 that there's going to have to be both federal regulations
43 and state regulations in order to give effect to the
44 rural preference, which the state cannot provide through
45 its regulations. But what we're -- what we want to make
46 sure is, is that the way that we do that, the approach
47 that we take for making sure that federal regulations
48 and state regulations match as much as possible, that
49 when users are out on the ground, they can be focused
50 on the harvest and not necessarily as one of the other

1 members noted wondering if they're going to be able to
2 harvest, right. We want them to know they can harvest,
3 and we want them to know which regulations to look at
4 to make sure that they have the advantage, right. And
5 that subsistence users have the advantage that's
6 provided for them (distortion). And so, the way that we
7 have it now with the two separate booklets, right, you
8 have the Federal booklet, you have the State booklet if
9 that is working for everybody, then we wouldn't need to
10 change anything. But if there's an easier way that we
11 could do it we as regulators would have a hard time
12 knowing what that is. But you as harvesters, as
13 subsistence users, you would be able to give us the best
14 insight about how we could make those regulations work
15 together. Is there more conversation that we need to
16 have with the state? Is there more alignment that we can
17 have with the state? Would it be easier to have a booklet
18 that tells you what the state regulations are for the
19 Game Management Unit that you're in, and then have a
20 separate section at the end, for example, that talks
21 about what the federal regulations are for that Game
22 Management Unit. We as regulators, we don't want to put
23 the burden on the user to have to figure these things
24 out. So, if there's a better way that we could be giving
25 folks the regulations to take with them out in the field,
26 or if you're out in the field and you don't know which
27 regulations apply, we want to address that. And we would
28 love to put in effort and work to make sure that it's
29 as easy for you as possible and so that there's no
30 confusion about what the rules are, wherever you are.
31 So, if there's anything that we can do to make
32 improvements, we'd be very willing to do that. But this
33 is not a -- something that we have to change if it is
34 working.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Mike.

37
38 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. This is Councilman
39 Kramer. With the Federal Subsistence Board, I know that
40 they recently added three more indigenous seats. I think
41 if I had to say so, I think we would have 2 to 3 Council
42 members that sat on the Federal Subsistence Board from
43 each region. That way we have more say so in our
44 subsistence resource and then management. Also, you
45 know, to be able to protect future subsistence resources
46 within our Game Management Units. I haven't heard if
47 those three seats were filled or are they going to
48 continue to have these three seats or are they -- you
49 know what's the plan? You know, I kind of wish, you
50 know, the state would kind of wake up and smell the

1 roses and start having their meetings every year. The
2 Board of Game meetings. Because statewide, it's starting
3 to get critical. Every region has experienced a decline.
4 And with the Board of Game having their meetings every
5 three years, that is -- that's just plain ignorant, you
6 know. In other words, we may end up -- that's why we
7 have special actions. We don't know what the, you know,
8 the local Fish and Game's power is to shut down caribou
9 hunting tomorrow, in an emergency shutdown. But, you
10 know, without having any kind of backlash from the higher
11 powers in Anchorage or wherever they may be. And I think
12 that the state of Alaska needs to have more of a
13 subsistence program to be able to mimic and align with
14 the federal agencies and the Federal Subsistence Board
15 and Council members. Thank you.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mike. Any
18 other questions or discussion from members of the RAC?
19 Yes, Clyde.

20
21 MR. RAMOTH: Just a general comment. I
22 know when we talk about the state and federal regulations
23 and stuff and duplicating in the inconsistencies, where
24 and how is the traditional ecological knowledge put in
25 like with surveys, are they still consistent? Do the
26 State and federal Subsistence Boards take them into
27 serious considerations when there's our traditional
28 knowledge of like climate change? We talk about it all
29 the time. We need to change the caribou. We need to
30 change the other regulations. I know Vern's really
31 adamant about that kind of stuff. And where -- does TEK
32 still come into play, Mr. Chair?

33
34 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that.
35 Clyde. Yes, it does. And it's through our involvement
36 in this process at this level where we take comments.
37 We take under consideration what's going on in the region
38 to make our recommendations to the Federal Subsistence
39 Board. So, it's through these meetings that we're able
40 to implement that outside of the studies done by Fish
41 and Game, Fish and Wildlife, Park Service, so on and so
42 forth. Do you have anything else, Clyde?

43
44 MR. RAMOTH: Member Ramoth again. So,
45 with -- Mike might be able to answer, but Nissa, Thomas,
46 somebody. That the special action, they were to discuss
47 further about the caribou regulations. I mean, the
48 fifteen to 1. I mean the cow, I don't know, it seems
49 like we needed more urgency to give our advice for
50 numbers. I don't know if we keep rocking and rolling,

1 the roller coaster. But the numbers, I don't know. I
2 know Mike's probably thinking about it or other Council
3 members might had discussions like that. Maybe Karmen.
4 Maybe I'm lost about it. But it seems like we need an
5 urgency to take more studies, maybe. I don't know.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, part of the
8 process that we are able to implement is making the
9 recommendations to the different agencies and saying,
10 please focus on caribou migration, focus on wolf
11 population, predator interactions, all of that good
12 stuff. So that's from these meetings, from our
13 discussions, That's where we're able to send things to
14 Selawik National Wildlife Refuge and the rest of the
15 Fish and Wildlife Service to say, can your agency focus
16 on this so that we are able to better understand this
17 aspect of whatever's going on. Nissa.

18
19 MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa Pilcher for
20 the record. So, there's two parts to your question that
21 I'd like to answer. So first off, one of the things that
22 you're asking about is the special actions. So, there's
23 two layers to special actions. There's an emergency
24 special action and then I guess there's what you'd call
25 a regular special action. An emergency special action
26 is -- and I don't have it in front of me because every
27 time I touch my computer, the screen goes wonky, so I
28 can't pull it up. So, I'm going to just do this from
29 memory. So, if anybody -- if I'm incorrect, please jump
30 in. Emergency special actions are something that needs
31 to happen right now and they're only for a very limited
32 small amount of time. But the process in which they are
33 submitted and then enacted is much more condensed.
34 There's not -- in a normal special action the Council
35 or at least the Chair and other entities involved in the
36 region are consulted. Tribal corporations and other
37 things that are affected are consulted. There's a public
38 hearing process. So, it takes a little longer, but you
39 can get action out of a regular wildlife cycle in the
40 case of caribou. Emergency Special Actions, that's very
41 much shortened. There's not as much consultation. It's
42 just this needs to happen now. So, there's those two
43 options for changing regulations out of cycle.

44
45 And then -- I should have written it
46 down. The next layer of your question was funding for
47 more research and that sort of thing. And one thing you
48 -- when we get there, I'll be prompting you guys to
49 hopefully if you're interested to submit written
50 comments on at least some of these topics, if not all.

1 And one of these topics is number eight, which is other
2 topics. So one of the ideas that got floated when we
3 were -- when OSM was being removed out of Fish Wildlife
4 Service and put under the broader umbrella of DOI was
5 the possibility of having -- so currently we have
6 Fisheries research -- Resource Monitoring Program, was
7 also having a Wildlife research monitoring program so
8 that a similar program could be enacted when there are
9 areas of concern. So, monies or grants can be directed
10 at those topics. And that hasn't happened yet, but in
11 your guys' -- in this Councils comments that could
12 definitely be something that you add that you'd really
13 like to see that program get enacted and funded.

14
15 MR. RAMOTH: Just a little follow up. I
16 think what I'm trying to lead to is the enforcement of
17 the caribou the hunting, the no flying zone areas. The
18 -- because our animals are really sensitive now,
19 especially with lower numbers. I mean, it's like -- how
20 could I do it? Like, if you're challenging a community
21 with war and you have less people, if you have less
22 caribou, then you're going (In Native), you're going to
23 turn to a different direction. And that affects a lot
24 of things. I mean, I've always thought about when my dad
25 used to talk about -- my late dad used to talk about how
26 not enough enforcement going on, not enough adequate
27 count with our caribou. Bettles used to be a hot spot
28 right there between federal and state boundaries. And
29 enforcement was always an issue, like what we see with
30 all these colored stuffs.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Verne. Then, Mike.

33
34 MR. CLEVELAND: Yeah. What do we need
35 more right now is we need more advisors. We need -- we
36 know it got 18 from a lower and upper Kobuk. We need
37 advisors ASAP, because we can't do this on our own
38 without these advisors. And there's 18 of them. Upper
39 Kobuk, there's no advisors. Lower Kobuk, haven't seen
40 them since the Jim Dau days. So, to make note of it,
41 make a decision when these guys get together, get some
42 advisors from each village and get it on it right away,
43 and we need more advice ASAP from our area. Really badly,
44 because we can't just do it from the Kotzebue advisor
45 and regional advice. We need to Lower Kobuk and Upper
46 Kobuk advisory as soon as possible. Thank you.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Christie Osburn.

49
50

1 MS. OSBURN: Yeah. Through the Chair to
2 member Cleveland. So, I think maybe you're also
3 referring to the state's system of Advisory Committees.
4 So, to get back to member Ramoths question, the way that
5 the community can be involved, like Mr. Baker said, is
6 through these meetings. So, this Federal process, the
7 state also has a similar process, which would be the
8 Advisory Committee meetings. And we've really struggled
9 with getting those to be active. So, part of the way a
10 community can be engaged is to reach out to us. We have
11 a member of staff who's dedicated as a Board support and
12 they're the person who can be reached to get these
13 meetings going again. Like for example, if you know of
14 anybody in these communities who are interested in being
15 involved in this process, they're essentially the --
16 yeah, the representatives of the community. So that is
17 how we get TEK involved in these processes. And this is
18 how we get information for what's going on at a local
19 level. And the Board of Game is a public process. So,
20 what you're doing here, we have an equivalent on the
21 state side. And so, anyone that you know, I encourage
22 you, you're welcome to reach out to us. We'll get you
23 in contact. Sam Kirby is actually the Board support
24 person for the Department for our region, and we'd love
25 to see the Advisory Committees get active again. But
26 that -- we've got to get people who are interested in
27 being involved.

28
29 MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you. Because I
30 brought this up in our last meeting in Noorvik, that we
31 needed advisors from our village. Three from Kiana,
32 three from Norway, three from Selawik, three from Kobuk,
33 three from Shungnak, three from Ambler. We need
34 advisors. Thank you.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Just a quick
37 question. Who should -- if it's Verne or someone else
38 from these communities, who should they call here
39 locally to get that support?

40
41 MS. OSBURN: So again, Christie Osburn
42 with the Fish and Game Office here in Kotzebue. Call us
43 is a great place to start. We'll put you in contact with
44 -- Sam Kirby, is the board support for this region. And
45 so Sam Kirby is the one who would -- you would then
46 coordinate with. But for that initial contact, you're
47 welcome to reach us just in the local Kotzebue office,
48 and we'll get you pointed out in the right direction.

49
50

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: And what's the phone
2 number for the Kotzebue office?

3
4 MS. OSBURN: Yes.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: For all those
7 listening on the radio.

8
9 MS. OSBURN: For all those itching to
10 give us a call. We are (907) 442-3420. And that's our
11 local Kotzebue office number.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Christie.
14 Mike, did you have something?

15
16 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, for the lady that was
17 on the phone. You know, I know that rural preference was
18 always you know, priority. You know, they had population
19 thresholds. My question is like, if Ambler and Shungnak
20 and Kobuk, their group population was to increase to --
21 I believe our threshold was 12,500 for us not to be on
22 rural preference for subsistence. If somebody can
23 correct me on that but -- and it would change and it
24 would impact the rest of the Game Management Unit I
25 believe, if one of OSM people can let me know. Because
26 I know that -- that, you know, if the Ambler Road was
27 to go in -- what if Ambler population went up to like
28 13- to 15,000, will it affect the rest of us in the
29 region? Because their population took a hike and went
30 up real high as for rural preference and then one other
31 question is you know, Nissa mentioned that we have an
32 emergency special action. Then we have a regular special
33 action. Who's the decision maker on the emergency
34 special action? Is it us as Council members or is it
35 Chairman Christiansen of the Federal Subsistence Board?

36
37 MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa Pilcher, for
38 the record. So, I'll tackle the second part of member
39 Kramer's question. So, yes, it would be the Federal
40 Subsistence Board. That would -- takes the final action
41 on both emergency and regular special actions, and
42 Hannah Voorhees is on the phone and will address the
43 population question that you also asked. Thanks.

44
45 DR. VOORHEES: Thank you Nissa and
46 Council member Kramer. So, the Board's rural policy is
47 not hinged on any population threshold. That was the
48 case in the more distant past. But the policy right now
49 is much more holistic and considers a series of factors
50 and parameters. And is really meant to give room for

1 Council input. So, there's no danger of, you know,
2 crossing a certain threshold and just automatically
3 being designated non-rural. Thanks.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, is there any
6 further questions or discussion for Ms. Taylor with the
7 Office of the Secretary regarding the Secretarial
8 Review? I think we've had some really good discussion.
9 This is listed as an action item.

10

11 MS. MANIGOLD: (Indiscernible).

12

13 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Who was that?

14

15 MS. MONIGOLD: This is Karmen.

16

17 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Go ahead, Karmen.

18

19 MS. MONIGOLD: Through the Chair. When
20 was the last time a scoping was done? I'm sorry, I didn't
21 get the handout. I'm home today, so I'm -- I just wanted
22 to know when the last time the scoping was and the last
23 time it was updated. Thank you.

24

25 MS. TAYLOR: Through the Chair. This is
26 Sara Taylor with the Office of the Secretary. There was
27 a scoping process that was done in for the initial review
28 in October of 2009. It included a series of stakeholder
29 consultation meetings. I believe we had about just over
30 40 meetings in 13 different communities, and we had an
31 extensive public comment period. So that was the last
32 time that a scoping process was done for making changes
33 to the program. And we also had an extensive tribal
34 consultation and community outreach that we did in 2022
35 on various aspects of the program. So, both of those
36 scoping processes resulted in changes being made to the
37 regulations based on the comments and feedback that we
38 received. And in this scoping process once it culminates
39 on February 13th, we will have those comments, and we
40 will be able to assess whether further changes are made.

41

42 MS. MONIGOLD: Through the Chair,
43 (distortion).

44

45 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes. Please, Karmen.

46

47 MS. MONIGOLD: Thank you. And what's
48 pushing another review since you've already done it in
49 2022? Thank you.

50

1 MS. TAYLOR: Through the Chair. This is
2 Sara Taylor. The 2022 review is specific to the Alaska
3 Native population. And we were targeting views from
4 tribes and tribal communities through that process, and
5 it was not necessarily open to the public. It was not a
6 public scoping process. But that's where we started this
7 conversation. And so, this now would be the public
8 scoping process that can continue that conversation.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Anything else,
11 Karmen?

12
13 MS. MONIGOLD: No. Thank you so much.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
16 Carmen. Elmer.

17
18 MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you. You know,
19 these are a lot of changes that are happening, or moving
20 forward to happen. Do we have any response from the
21 agencies that can say something on these changes?
22 Because I heard earlier that through this review, these
23 changes were talked about. And is it going to make it
24 easier for you guys or it's just what it is? Thank you.

25
26 MR. WIESE: Wil Wiese, U.S. Fish and
27 Wildlife, Selawik National Wildlife Refuge. Thanks for
28 the question. I think you know, I don't have a comment
29 on any changes because right now this is just scoping,
30 right. And gathering information for potential changes.
31 But certainly, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and
32 we'll look at, you know, how we feel like the program
33 is working and provide input into the scoping process
34 as well.

35
36 (Pause)

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38 MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and
39 members of the Council for the record Katya Wessels with
40 OSM. So, what you see on the screen here, these are the
41 topics that the Secretary of the Interior wants your
42 input on. That's not the proposed changes. They want
43 you, as the Council to talk about these topics, see if
44 you want to see something change. If you think that some
45 of these things are not working, or maybe they're working
46 just great and nothing needs to be changed. And what I
47 propose to you as a Council to talk about each of these
48 topics separately. So, we have your discussion on the
49 record, and we can put together the Council comment to
50 the Secretary of the Interior on this. Thank you.

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MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Katya. That first one. You know, I'm trying to get around why would they want to move OSM from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to Department of Interior? That's what I want to understand.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Katya.

MS. WESSELS: Okay. Thank you. Katya Wessels. We already been moved. We are -- we've been a part of the Fish and Wildlife Service. Now we are within the Office of the Secretary of Interior. I think the question is here, if you, as a Council, think that that was the right move, do you think, like, our work improved, or is it worse that now -- that since we've been moved, I think that's what they're looking at.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Okay. Thank you, Katya. Elmer Armstrong, again. You know, that's why we need your feedback, too, because we're talking about this topic. And is it working for you guys? Has -- have you guys seen changes that are affecting your work with the regulations that -- and also the special action request that Advisory Council gives.

MS. WESSELS: I think overall OSM welcomed this move because now we were able to cover, you know, layers of bureaucracy that we had to go through when we're a part of Fish and Wildlife Service in order to process, you know, even like regulation publications. There are several steps that we have to go through in order to publish the regulations when the Federal Subsistence Board approves them. We're also able to have a more direct communications with the Office of the Secretary to resolve some of the issues that come along the way. The special actions that something the Federal Subsistence Board deals with. So, it's not like we need to go -- the bureaucracy was not cut there, special action you know, when they're submitted, they're reviewed by the Federal Subsistence Board. Federal Subsistence Board makes decision and then it's implemented.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Mike, then Nissa.

MR. KRAMER: The one question I have on number two, I know that, you know, I've been here a long

1 time, and I've always noticed that trying to get regional
2 memberships you know applicants approved would always
3 took moons. You know, we had to wait till another full
4 moon to get another person. And it was always the fear
5 that we were never going to have quorum. I know that
6 we've alternated the years to where we always made sure,
7 we had quorum either way. If we didn't have enough, if
8 we had at least enough 1 or 2 on the phone and then 2
9 or 3 in person. I'd like to see that become a little bit
10 of a quicker process, especially with the incumbents.
11 Because with incumbents, you know that guarantees you'll
12 never -- you'll always have quorum at meetings. Because
13 you know, they're already there. They're already up to
14 speed. And I, you know, I know on our Fish and Game
15 Advisory Council, Kotzebue Sound you know, we're allowed
16 up to 15 members, I believe. You know, is there ever a
17 possibility for us to grow more than what we have now?
18 What do we have? Ten. And increase our seats by a couple
19 more on our Regional Advisory Councils on the federal
20 side. I'm not too sure exactly what the limit, but I'd
21 like to see that when it comes down to incumbents and
22 applicants you know, I think the Department of Interior
23 can do the background check, you know, and do the overall
24 judgment and then maybe hand it over to us to you know,
25 or to make the process quicker to try and see if we
26 could select more Council Members sooner than later.
27 Thank you.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Nissa, did you have
30 something?

31
32 MS. PILCHER: Well, actually, now I can
33 answer Member Kramer's question. So, you can request
34 increases to how many sit on the Council. That's through
35 the approval of the charter. So, it actually lines out
36 in your charter how many members are on the Council,
37 with a maximum. Of course, you guys, the maximum right
38 now is ten, but you only have nine because we're down a
39 member. So that's an avenue for you. And I did have an
40 additional question for you. You've referenced AC
41 membership as, member Cleveland how many of you guys are
42 on your local advisory committees? I think Adam is as
43 well or he has been in the past. Okay, okay. Because
44 that was a question. Because it at least with other
45 Councils that I coordinate, there is a rather large
46 overlap between AC members and Regional Advisory Council
47 members. Generally, the people that participate in those
48 where a lot of hats and you guys keep having to stack
49 them up. So that was a question I was going to have. And
50 that's definitely something that could be included in

1 your comments that there are already -- that you guys
2 do have membership on the Advisory Committee, since you
3 guys do wear multiple hats. Why I originally raised my
4 hand is when we do get to the end of the -- because
5 we're still kind of in the question-and-answer period.
6 If we could open it up to public comment that is
7 explicitly written into the agenda. But if we could make
8 time for that, that'd be great. If anybody in the public
9 has comments and then after we get to that point, what
10 we could do is we could go down each topic. I have been
11 writing down everything you said. You've actually
12 commented on most of them already. I can attempt to
13 summarize what you said if there's additional things
14 you'd like to add. Once we get to the -- that part, like
15 I said, we're still on the question and answer just to
16 kind of draw everybody back into a process, even though
17 this is kind of a new process, new (distortion).

18
19 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
20 Nissa. It is 2:57. And Mike, you had mentioned you would
21 have to leave at three. Is -- just in the interest of
22 time. Do you have any other comments on any of these
23 topics so we can get those on the record? Just Mike
24 specifically since he has to leave in a minute.

25
26 MR. KRAMER: No, I don't. But as soon as
27 I get home, I'll jump back on and teleconference. I'll
28 take my materials with me and then bring them back in
29 the morning when I come back in the morning. But yeah,
30 I pretty much touched whatever I needed on these that
31 concerned me.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
34 Mike. Clyde.

35
36 MR. RAMOTH: For the record, Clyde
37 Ramoth, Selawik. One of the issues I have with the number
38 two, Regional Advisory Council membership, because it's
39 an application process. I mean, no offense for Noorvik.
40 There's three members. There's somebody from Kotzebue.
41 There's one -- because I applied there's one from Ambler.
42 When we talk about the state part of it, I don't know
43 how fast we can get all these -- what Verne was alluding
44 to. Like what -- how many members, three from each
45 community on the state level. But the Federal where we're
46 sitting at today, the membership process, I have a
47 problem with it because when we talk about needing more
48 representation from each community, how can we fix it?
49 And how, like Mike was mentioning, it takes a whole
50 nother [sic] moon move to fill in a seat. I think there's

1 got to be a way we could improve that part. Whether it's
2 getting to the state part of it, where there's three
3 from each community back on in a timely manner or fix
4 this Federal one because we all applied, right
5 (indiscernible). My comment.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes. Thank you for
8 that, Clyde. So yeah, we -- everyone that is on the RAC
9 applied to be on, and that's part of the push that we
10 try to make every year, is asking OSM staff to send the
11 application materials to all of our tribes, all of our
12 IRA offices, to all of the communities in the region.
13 But if we don't have someone applying from that
14 community, we're not going to have someone from that
15 community. So, through having this meeting on the radio,
16 through reaching out to the different communities,
17 that's how we can build our membership. And one of the
18 issues that we would need to keep an eye on if we grow
19 the Council, is if we make it to where we have more
20 people on the Council, we need to have more people there
21 to meet a quorum. So, like today, we are just at the
22 limit. But if we had three more people on, we wouldn't
23 be able to conduct any business or take any votes today.
24 So that's the thing to be cautionary of when talking
25 about growing the Council. It can be good. It can be
26 bad. It has its pros and cons. I hope that answered your
27 question. Did...?

28
29 (Simultaneous speech)

30
31 MR. RAMOTH: No, Mr. Chair. The
32 membership, the way we applied and get, of course, to
33 background check and stuff. But I think the state part
34 of it need to get started again where Verne was talking
35 about three from each community. But for this process
36 where anybody could just grab a pen and paper and apply
37 and not be represented. I'm not saying grow our RAC, but
38 how could we get -- speed up the process for the state
39 to get started again? Because I remember seeing an email
40 some time ago, I don't know if one of the ladies here,
41 but I get an email like, how could we get those started
42 again? I remember we -- I was one of three from Selawik.
43 There was three from like, what Vern saying three from
44 Kiana three from, you know, Noorvik, Kotzebue upriver.
45 That way everybody has an equal say as far as reporting
46 regulations, proposed changes, give advisory
47 recommendations of how things could change as far as --
48 especially when we talk about climate change or the
49 number of caribous, this kind of stuff. It just bugs me
50 how this number two has a different process compared to

1 what the state has. If that makes any sense.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Brittany Sweeney,
4 would you like to put yourself on record?

5

6 MS. SWEENEY: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
7 This is Brittany Sweeney with the Selawik Wildlife
8 Refuge. Just wanted to offer some recollections because
9 I've been attending these Council meetings for a number
10 of years now, and I remember that in the past, this was
11 an issue that the Council discussed at some length was
12 the makeup of the Council and the seats and how they
13 were distributed. And my recollection from that point
14 is that it's not part of the federal process to designate
15 seats as far as belonging to certain communities or
16 something. And so that differentiates it from the state
17 process, right. They have a separate thing that they do.
18 But if I -- my recollection serves, one of the things
19 that the Council did suggest at that time in which you
20 could potentially suggest again during this review, if
21 you wished, would be to consider the distribution of the
22 membership as part of the process when they're looking
23 at appointments. Because sometimes there -- they have
24 more applicants than they have seats. Not always. But
25 in that instance, if they're -- they go through different
26 factors to try to decide, they could look at distribution
27 as one of the considerations, right. So, you mentioned
28 the example of Noorvik. And so, if we already have three
29 seats from Noorvik maybe, we look we raise up someone
30 from another community. I'm not sure, but that might be
31 the type of feedback you could offer in the scoping. I
32 just wanted to share that that was my memory of the
33 discussion you had a few years ago. Thank you.

34

35 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Brittany.
36 Mike.

37

38 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. One thing I would like
39 to try and see if we could try, you know, since we have
40 a vacant seat, why can't we get 1 or 2 alternates where
41 if we ever do have a vacant seat and they could drop
42 right into that seat. You know, I know that back in the
43 past, it used to be pretty strong in the villages where,
44 you know, like Clyde was saying, you know, that they
45 always had those Advisory Council -- Fish and Game
46 Advisory Council meetings in the villages, and they were
47 pretty active. You know, I haven't seen much activity
48 in the last several years. I know in Noatak it was, you
49 know, Enoch Mitchell that, you know was with the Noatak
50 Advisory Council and but I'd like to see that you know,

1 the priority on that start rising again, so we can start
2 making sure and ensure that a lot of these villages have
3 say. You know, like on ours you know, there's two
4 Kotzebue people, I believe three. You know, you could
5 just say, hey Mike, you are you willing to pick up, you
6 know Noatak. You know, Noatak and Kotzebue or you know,
7 one of the guys from Noorvik say, hey, we don't have a
8 representative for Kiana. One of you Noorvik guys can
9 jump in and be a representative of Kiana and Noorvik.
10 That way, we're being able to get advice from you know,
11 other subsistence uses and villages that aren't
12 represented.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Verne. Did you have
15 your hand up?

16
17 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes. When I was saying
18 we need more representation from these villages. We need
19 them bad because they're heard right now, they know
20 what's going on. We get the advisors from like, what Sam
21 Kirby said he needed three from Kobuk, three from
22 Shungnak, three from Ambler, three from Noorkiv -- and
23 we need advisors. We just can't do it alone. We need
24 more input from other folks that are subsistence wise
25 hunters and stuff like that. That's what we need. We
26 need more advisors, need more people to come in. Because
27 right now we're in a critical stage of -- our caribou
28 is very, very low. And with the rulings we make I hope
29 we just leave them alone right now. So can -- because
30 of migration change to -- they're moving now to -- and
31 in -- they both have rutted, and they had no choice but
32 to get females as of right now, we have no choice because
33 they're healthy caribou right now are females and the
34 process didn't go through yet. I mean, it -- we didn't
35 say -- nobody said you can't hunt females, right. It's
36 just it's just the word they said. It's gonna -- it will
37 happen. But it never happened yet. So, if our hunters
38 out there are mixed up and say, hey, I can't do this.
39 The regulations haven't been implemented yet, so other
40 than that, what I would say I need we need more advisors
41 from the villages. Thank you very much.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Verne.
44 Nissa, did you have something?

45
46 MS. PILCHER: I did want to -- I am not
47 as familiar with your guys' charter as I -- as a newer
48 coordinator for this region, but you -- I probably do
49 to what Brittany is remembering you guys do have in your
50 charter a specific request for a geographic balance

1 across the region. And what that means is when -- so --
2 and it was alluded to earlier, we can only put on the
3 count -- we can only take in those that apply. So, what
4 we need to do is we need to get more -- OSM needs to get
5 more applications across the region in order to be able
6 to have that proper distribution geographically across
7 the region. So, we can -- the Council can get all the
8 voices it can and in your guys' charter, it does
9 specifically say you want -- you do want it spread
10 across. The part that we run into is that it depends on
11 who applies in order for who we can put on the Council.
12 So, I mean, as an example, if for the next three years,
13 if the only people that apply to be on the Council reside
14 in Kotzebue, that's the only pool that we'll have to get
15 on the Council. So that being said I -- you guys had
16 some -- Member Kramer had a point about including
17 alternates. That can certainly be in the comments
18 because right now, like we are down a couple folks,
19 there was some work issues, there was a sickness. Things
20 happened. So that can definitely be something that you
21 guys could see -- that could be an improvement of how
22 regional -- the Council membership could be improved.
23 So, we can certainly include that in your comment.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Nissa.
26 Verne.

27
28 MR. CLEVELAND: Yeah. Well, please do
29 contact the tribal offices or the city offices. We do
30 have city offices in that region. And do it ASAP to
31 start getting these people organized. Thank you.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Mike.

34
35 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. The reason why I'd
36 like to see things move a lot quicker is because I know
37 that, you know, with the one seat that we have out there
38 vacant, I know that there's been several applicants.
39 And, you know, due to the government shutdown, that's
40 kind of -- I don't know if that's put a halt on it or
41 they've already selected these individuals, but it would
42 be good to try and always ensure that we have no vacant
43 seats.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
46 Mike. Katya.

47
48 MS. WESSELS: I can really quickly give
49 you the update on the application status from 2025. So,
50 the Federal Subsistence Board recommended the

1 appointments to the Secretary of the Interior and these
2 recommendations are currently with the Secretary. We are
3 expecting the new appointments to be made very quickly,
4 hopefully before the end of January, and then we'll start
5 the new application period for 2026. So that's actually
6 the best time for everyone on the Council and everyone
7 in the region who is listening on the radio to consider
8 applying to serve on the Northwest Arctic Federal
9 Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. And you can get
10 the applications from the Council Coordinator, on our
11 website, and we can mail it to you. We are going to be
12 mailing the applications across the region and emailing
13 them as well. So and please, you know, consider applying
14 to serve on the Council. We are trying to shorten the
15 whole appointment cycle as much as possible, but there
16 are just many stages to that appointment process. So
17 sometimes it's very difficult to get through it quickly.
18 Thank you.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Katya.
21 With that being said, will our Selawik National Wildlife
22 Refuge and National Park Service offices have physical
23 applications on hand when the application period opens?
24 Heads are shaking. So, yes. So, if folks are interested,
25 whether you're here in Kotzebue or passing through, you
26 can pick up a physical copy of that application to apply
27 to serve on the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional
28 Advisory Council from those places here in Kotzebue. Any
29 further discussion on these topics while we have Ms.
30 Sara Taylor from Department of Interior on the phone?
31 Clyde and then Elmer.

32
33 MR. RAMOTH: Okay, I'll -- I don't know
34 how else to answer my question for the Regional Advisory
35 Council membership, because it's not stating
36 specifically how many for geographical areas, right. But
37 when we talk about the Kotzebue has their own Sound RAC,
38 but our villages don't. I mean, the representation from
39 each geographical area. How could we fix it? I know
40 Verne, we could argue all day, but how could we -- how
41 could we change it to where and do -- is there monies
42 to add more? Do we need to by motion? Is it going to
43 have to go to the Board?

44
45 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So.....

46
47 (Simultaneous speech)

48
49 MR. RAMOTH: State -- our Federal
50 Subsistence Board for approval -- do those kinds of

1 recommendations?

2

3 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Can you clarify,
4 please, is your question seats for this Board or for on
5 the state level? We, as this body, can't really do
6 anything for the state side. And what Vern is kind of
7 talking about and what has been talked about with Fish
8 and Game and Sam Kirby, which I think we can all agree
9 needs to happen. For a different set of bodies, the ACs,
10 the Advisory Councils to be stood up and have
11 representation from the other villages. But as far as
12 this, what Nissa mentioned is we have talked about it
13 before of having geographical limits. So, we have
14 discussed it, it's been submitted and it's under review
15 by the Office of the Secretary. So, we have talked about
16 it. It's just not in action right now because it's under
17 review of how they could do that to keep it fair. Just
18 because we have an odd number of villages, we have
19 geographical population requirements in -- of saying, I
20 live in this village, there are this many people here
21 and how to fairly represent the entire region. So, it's
22 under review. So, there's nothing at this time that we
23 can do to necessarily speed it along, because it's being
24 worked on by the Department of the Interior folks. I
25 hope that answers your question.

26

27 MR. RAMOTH: It does. Thank you.

28

29 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Elmer.

30

31 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah, thank you for the
32 discussion. Elmer Armstrong, Noorvik. I know we talked
33 about just filling the seats and then we talked about,
34 we need representation from Upper Kobuk. We had one from
35 Shungnak and then we had one from Deering, which was
36 good. It gave you a variety on representation on the
37 RAC. The only reason I got on was it was recommended
38 that I get on. So, I tried and here I am today
39 representing. I'm not -- even though we have three that
40 are on board, I think one was through tribal and then
41 me, I got -- because there was another lady from Selawik
42 too. She used to be on here. She's the one that suggested
43 I run for the RAC. That's why I'm here today. And I'm a
44 subsistence user. And I think just sitting on this RAC,
45 you know, as subsistence users, we are the policy and
46 regulation makers that we care for our people. Thank
47 you.

48

49 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Further the
50 discussion? Verne.

1
2 MR. CLEVELAND: No, I don't have a
3 question. I just -- we need -- all we need is more
4 adviser. That's all I -- we need more implement [sic]
5 from our villages, that's all. I'm just saying, we need
6 more voices from our religious. Thank you.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Verne.
9 Last chance from members of the RAC for discussion on
10 the Secretarial Review and the topics on the screen.
11 Karmen, do you have anything else at this time?

12
13 MS. MONIGOLD: Hi. I think I will just
14 go down them real quick. So, moving the Office of
15 Subsistence Management back to Fish and Wildlife. I
16 don't think that's a good idea. Criteria for Regional
17 Advisory Council membership. You know, it's already been
18 stated that the process is long, but, you know, that's
19 federal government for you. Membership of the Federal
20 Subsistence Board. I'm assuming this is because they
21 added the -- I think, you know, that doesn't need to be
22 changed. And then federal regulations and state
23 regulations for duplication and inconsistencies. You
24 know, there's a lot of us that are on both, and we do
25 try our best to make sure that the dates coincide. A lot
26 of times, you know, it takes a little bit for it to
27 catch up, but we do try. So, I'm not sure what they're
28 suggesting to do there. But, you know, they are different
29 entities. Regulations applicable for special actions.
30 For this RAC, I'm still new, so I don't think I have
31 enough experience to speak on that. The role of the
32 state of Alaska and its Department of Fish and Game in
33 the Federal Subsistence Management Program. You know,
34 we have people from the State Board of Game and Board
35 of Fish and we hear from them. But I don't think they
36 need like a you know, a space within the Federal
37 Subsistence RAC. So, I'm not quite sure what that
38 question is. And then Rural Policy and Procedures for
39 Rural Determination. You know, we need rural preference.
40 And that should be the number one thing because of
41 ANILCA. So, and that is my opinion on each one, I guess,
42 if I understood those correctly. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
45 Karmen. I'm going to allow Mr. Leonard Barger, who is a
46 member of the North Slope RAC, to put himself on record
47 for this discussion. Leonard.

48
49 MR. BARGER: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
50 I'm glad this meeting is aired on KOTZ radio. Everybody

1 out there in the villages and the Northwest Arctic
2 Borough. This is really important. You guys need to
3 enforce your -- each village and all over. Kobuk,
4 Shungnak, Ambler, Selawik, Kiana, Noorvik, Noatak,
5 Buckland, Deering. You know all these villages,
6 Kotzebue. You guys are the important [sic] in your
7 villages. You guys are working for your animals. You
8 guys -- put you guys' own concerns and just in your
9 community. I don't live in Kotzebue. I was born and
10 raised in Kotzebue, but I live in Point Hope, and my
11 North Slope RAC asked me to come in to attend this
12 meeting here because Unit 23, it concerns our hunting
13 in Point Hope. That's our station. We all have to work
14 together. And I just want to thank you. But I encourage
15 all you hunters out there in those villages, I'm happy
16 all these guys that are here right now, Clyde, Elmer,
17 Verne, Thomas, all these guys, they're working for you
18 people in the villages, your concerns. I learned a lot
19 from a lot of those elders that passed on. They have
20 gone. They are the backbone of this, you know, our
21 communities. But now we have to work for them, that you
22 guys learn. And I thank you, Thomas. Thanks.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
25 Leonard. We appreciate your participation. If there's
26 no further discussion. Christie, did you have something?
27

28 MS. OSBURN: Yeah. Mr. Chair, this is
29 Christie Osburn again with the Alaska Department of Fish
30 and Game. We've had a lot of discussion on membership,
31 so I just wanted to give you a phone number for anybody
32 who's listening online who is interested in representing
33 their community or their village. That the best person
34 to contact to get involved with the Advisory Committee
35 Meetings on the state side, which can be a qualifier to
36 become a member of the RAC, is to contact Sam Kirby and
37 her phone number is (907)269-6977. So, I'll read that
38 one more time for anyone who's listening on the radio.
39 That's (907)269-6977 So that's Sam Kirby. She's the
40 Board Support position for the Alaska Department of Fish
41 and Game. So, if you want to speak about your village's
42 needs and concerns and want to be involved with wildlife
43 regulation on both the state or the federal side I
44 definitely encourage you to reach out to Sam at that
45 number. Thanks.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
48 Christie. Any final comments or questions from members
49 of the RAC on the Secretarial Review?

1 (No response)

2
3 Hearing none. Thank you again, Ms.
4 Taylor, for coming in and being available for this
5 discussion. Nissa has been taking notes of this whole
6 discussion as well as the record, that we are recording
7 all of this so that we can kind of gather all of this
8 information to submit to the Office and make sure that
9 things are translated appropriately of what the concerns
10 are, what our focuses are, as far as it comes to the
11 Secretarial Review. So, again, thank you. If you have
12 any final comments or anything to add, Ms. Taylor, the
13 floor is yours.

14
15 MS. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
16 would just like to add that I'm so grateful to all of
17 you for the incredibly hard work you put into this
18 process, and the way in which you care for your
19 communities and all of the communities of life that
20 surround you. It's incredibly meaningful to me as an
21 Alaskan to be able to rely on your expertise and the
22 work that you put into this process. But also, just
23 thank you for your time today and for every opportunity
24 that we will have in the future to speak more about
25 these topics. Thank you so much.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you again, Ms.
28 Taylor. We really appreciate you and the work of the
29 folks at the Department of the Interior. It is 3:26.
30 Katya.

31
32 MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If
33 the Council can make a motion to submit your comments
34 in the form of a letter, that would be wonderful.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
37 Katya. Nissa, did you have something else?

38
39 MS. PILCHER: Yeah, I was actually --
40 Katya beat me to it. I was going to suggest -- you were
41 coming to a conclusion. Then we were going to -- do
42 public comments. And then I was going to suggest one of
43 two options for you guys. So, one option was to do what
44 -- Katya suggested to make a motion. I can put this in
45 a letter and get it -- it would run by you before it
46 would go anywhere, or depending on when we end tonight,
47 I can attempt to assemble this into a very rough draft
48 for you guys to take out a look tomorrow. Because the
49 conversation did go a couple different areas to make
50 sure that I did capture everything. And also make sure

1 that you didn't have any additional comments. And then
2 we could take -- you guys could take action on it
3 tomorrow. It's up to you what you would like to do,
4 though.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Nissa. I
7 think what I would like to do in that case is if someone
8 would like to make a motion to capture everything into
9 a letter for the RAC, and then we'll have public comments
10 since it is separate of a RACs discussion versus an
11 individual. Clyde.

12
13 MR. RAMOTH: Yeah. Mr. Chair. Clyde
14 Ramoth for the record, I'd like to make a motion to
15 capture all of our discussions for these local topics,
16 especially with the membership and all these OSM going
17 from Fish Wildlife to DOI, the Federal Subsistence Board
18 and all these discussions we've been talking about,
19 because Leonard Barger just talked about Point Hope. I
20 mean, there's the park reserve and there's the boundary
21 right there, but there's always issues about the caribou
22 right. So that's my motion. I think we could discuss
23 them more in the morning, but that's my motion.

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

27
28 MR. CLEVELAND: Second.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Seconded by Verne to
31 capture these into a letter to be submitted. All those
32 in favor, please signify by saying aye.

33
34 IN UNISON: Aye.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: And those opposed,
37 same sign.

38
39 (No response)

40
41 So, hearing no opposition, it is passed
42 that we will capture these. Thank you, Nissa, for
43 collecting everything. With that, I'd like to turn it
44 over. Is there anyone in the room who would like to make
45 a public comment on the Secretarial Review that we have
46 been discussing for the last hour and 27 minutes?

47
48 (No comment)

49
50

00053

1 Do we have anyone on the phone who would
2 like to make a public comment?

3
4 (No comment)

5
6 One last chance. Anyone in the room for
7 a public comment?

8
9 (No comment)

10
11 Hearing none. We are going to take a
12 break. It is 3:29. I'd like to suggest we take a 15-
13 minute break. When we do come back, it'll be about 3:45.
14 We'll be going on to developing recommendations on
15 wildlife proposals and wildlife closures. Thank you.

16
17 (Off record)

18
19 (On record)

20
21 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Alright. It is now
22 3:48. This is Chair Thomas Baker. We are here at the
23 Northwest Arctic Heritage Center for the Northwest
24 Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting.
25 We are going to move on to item b under Action Items.
26 Developing recommendations on wildlife proposals and
27 wildlife closures. Who from OSM will be speaking on that?
28 Mr. Plank, the floor is yours. If you could put yourself
29 on record.

30
31 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members
32 of the Council. For record, Tom Plank, Wildlife
33 Biologist for Office Subsistence Management. And
34 basically, this is where we start getting into all the
35 different proposals that we have with the statewide,
36 regional and crossover. Did you want to go ahead and let
37 Annie go first with her brief on Park service, or do you
38 want me to go ahead and start in on 26-01?

39
40 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Before we get into
41 the proposals, since it's relevant to proposals, if Ann,
42 you wouldn't mind coming on up.

43
44 MS. CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
45 Council members. Thanks for having me. My name is Ann
46 Carlson. I work here in Kotzebue with the National Park
47 Service with what we call the Western Arctic National
48 Parklands, which is really an administrative grouping
49 of three different park units, being Kobuk Valley
50 National Park, Cape Krusenstern National Monument, and

1 Noatak National Preserve. And Nissa is just pulling up
2 the slides now so you can see those three park units on
3 this map. It's about 9 million acres of land here in
4 Northwest Alaska. And this is a fairly brief
5 presentation. I just want to sort of get us all as you
6 are moving into these different options for proposals
7 with harvest limits or seasons or closures to give you
8 some kind of report back with real world examples of
9 what happens. In this instance, I'll be talking about
10 closure implementation and how that kind of affects
11 boots on the ground movement of people and hunting in
12 particular. Next slide please.

13
14 And excuse me, my throat's a little sore
15 today, so bear with me. So, a bit of background, the
16 information I'm going to show you, these three graphs
17 are showing numbers that are reported to the Park Service
18 by people that make a living bringing other people into
19 the park unit. So, in order to do that, to guide people,
20 you need to get what we call a commercial use
21 authorization or a concessions contract. So, if you can
22 imagine with very few roads or trails to get into the
23 parklands, anybody from outside the region who doesn't
24 have their own snowmobile or doesn't have their own
25 boats, something like that has to pay a guide or a
26 transporter to bring them into these large areas. Next
27 please. So, the main activities that people will do once
28 they're here. Can you hit the next Nissa?

29
30 No worries. Technical difficulties. So,
31 the main activities that people want to do when they get
32 to the Northwest Arctic, if they're visiting and they
33 want to guide our transporter to bring them here, they'll
34 typically be fishing, hunting, hiking, perhaps rafting,
35 boating, flightseeing, like sightseeing from a plane.
36 They might be conducting research or pretty popular is
37 to visit the Great Kobuk Sand Dunes. A lot of people
38 from outside the region, that's like their number one
39 place that they want to get to or to see as they visit.
40 But for this presentation, we're going to focus on
41 hunting as the activity of interest for the RAC. Next
42 slide. One more back. Thank you.

43
44 So, in particular, a lot of concern that
45 we talk about year after year is the decline of the
46 caribou herd. So, in response to the work of this group
47 and other advisory groups the Federal Subsistence Board
48 implemented two actions in recent years that impacted
49 hunting in the Preserve and other federal lands in Game
50 Management Unit 23. So, the first was a wildlife special

1 action in 2022 and 2023. Noatak National Preserve and
2 some BLM lands in Game Management Unit 23 were closed
3 to caribou and to moose hunting in August and September
4 by non-federally qualified subsistence users. And then
5 following those two seasons in 2024, the Federal
6 Subsistence Board -- sorry, Tom. Would you mind? I can't
7 quite see it. Thank you. The Federal Subsistence Board
8 closed at federal public lands. All federal public
9 lands, not just the Preserve in Unit 23 to caribou
10 hunting by non-federally qualified subsistence users
11 from August 1st to October 31, unless the Western Arctic
12 Caribou Herd population estimate exceeds 200,000. So
13 that's the threshold that's been set. As many of us
14 know, the population continues to decline, so we're not
15 moving in the correct direction for that closure to be
16 overturned unless the Federal Subsistence Board makes a
17 new action. Next slide please.

18
19 So, this is a map of the current closure
20 that we just talked about implemented in 2024. The yellow
21 lands are BLM, pink lands are Fish and Wildlife Service
22 and purple lands are National Park Service. And one more
23 click, please. The numbers that I'm about to show you
24 are just relevant to those lands circled in purple and
25 really mostly relevant to Noatak National Preserve
26 because the monument and the national park are already
27 closed all the time to non-federally qualified
28 subsistence users. So, for our first graph the
29 information I just want to convey is a fairly drastic
30 change in visitor use and behavior following the
31 closures. So, this particular graph is showing, the
32 residency of the hunters, and again, these are just
33 hunters that are being brought by the guides and
34 transporters. It doesn't include local people who might
35 like boat up from Noatak village. So, in 2020 there were
36 430 hunters, in 2021 417. And then you can see with the
37 implementation of the closure that those dropped quite
38 a bit. And those are non-residents, people who aren't
39 from Alaska coming to the state to hunt. And you might
40 wonder about the 22, -3, -4, those hunters are targeting
41 primarily grizzly bears that there are, you know, with
42 the closure to moose and caribou and some of those years
43 grizzly bears are the target species. So next graph
44 please. This shows that the caribou hunt, in particular
45 the orange bars, dropped drastically from 261, 302 to
46 none after the closure. And you'll see the green there,
47 grizzly bears are continuing to be hunted and then fairly
48 low levels for moose and wolves. Yeah. During and after
49 the closure.

1 And final slide, please. This is looking
2 at the flights into Noatak Preserve, like what the people
3 are doing. So, the orange bars being hunting as their
4 main activity going very low and then people are still
5 flying in. So that's important to consider is that people
6 can still fly into the parks, they can land planes. They
7 just can't be dropping off hunters for caribou at this
8 time. But they could be doing other types of touring,
9 rafting, research. So, flights aren't banned. It's just
10 the closure to the non-federally qualified hunters
11 that's banned. So fairly brief but just wanted to show
12 you, it's kind of follow up and show you what happens
13 after the closure was implemented. I'm not showing
14 information about other lands in this area, including
15 26A, so that's all up for discussion. Just wanted to
16 finish there and if you have any questions, please let
17 me know.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Annie.
20 Does anybody have any questions? Clyde.

21
22 MR. RAMOTH: For the record, Clyde Ramoth
23 Selawik. Just a quick question. I recall there was about
24 five of us, and I was asked years ago that when we went
25 to Bethel to testify on a no tag/no fly zone, is that
26 somewhere -- are those numbers reflect [sic] or do they
27 still have the no-fly zone in federal or state regs in
28 place?

29
30 MS. CARLSON: Those closures, but you
31 might be thinking of a controlled use area that the
32 state has implemented along the Noatak River. That's
33 still in place. It's less relevant now that it's closed
34 to non-federally qualified hunters, but that is still
35 in place. And the Park Service has a somewhat similar
36 regulation sort of west of the Kougarok River for
37 commercial use as well.

38
39 MR. RAMOTH: And is it well enforced?

40
41 MS. CARLSON: Enforcement is always an
42 issue up here. That's a great question. But with -- you
43 know, right now we don't have law enforcement living in
44 Kotzebue. Joe Dallemolle, this year moved to Anchorage
45 with his family, and we have Trooper Cantine. But our
46 enforcement is one of the limiting factors. So, a lot
47 of what we hear is from people in Noatak or other areas
48 reporting to us.

49
50

1 MR. RAMOTH: So, in other words, you feel
2 comfortable with the numbers that you presented.

3
4 MS. CARLSON: These numbers about hunting
5 in particular I think are really accurate, that the
6 guides and the people coming especially out of state to
7 get that permit are reporting, I think, in a very
8 accurate way, that our numbers match really well what's
9 reported to the state for the hunting. That's pretty
10 well regulated.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: On federal lands.

13
14 MS. CARLSON: On federal lands.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: In this circled area.
17 That is what this presentation is focusing on, correct?
18 Is just what we see circled. That's where those numbers
19 are reflected.

20
21 MS. CARLSON: Exactly. It's only
22 reporting statistics for National Park Service lands
23 that are circled here. Just those three units. But I do
24 think that they're well reported to the Park Service by
25 the guides and transporters. And the hunters themselves
26 are also reporting their hunt to the state. And I do
27 think that those numbers are easier for us to track and
28 report this way. And as we talk about quite a bit, it's
29 harder for subsistence users or federally qualified
30 users. We don't always have the same type of reporting.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Katya, do you have -
33 - okay. Anything else from the Council? Questions?

34
35 (No response)

36
37 Hearing none. Do you have anything.....

38
39 (Simultaneous speech)

40
41 MS. SCHAEFFER: I don't know if you're
42 going to ask the public, but I'm Margaret Schaeffer
43 listening in, and I'm calling in from Wasilla. I'm an
44 elder from the Northwest Arctic Borough region. I'm 76
45 years old.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Did you want to make
48 a comment, Ms. Schaeffer?

49
50

1 MS. SCHAEFFER: What -- I missed out on
2 the main comment part that I wanted to say something on,
3 but then I would like to ask you what was your question
4 regarding your own -- hello?

5
6 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: I'm not sure. Do you
7 have something you'd like to comment on, Ms. Schaeffer?

8
9 MS. SCHAEFFER: Yeah, I would -- I have
10 several comments since I've been listening, I think I
11 caught in -- I started around 3:30 listening in. I must
12 have missed out on quite a few there. I just would like
13 to let you know that our region has been specifically
14 split in -- the cause of the split is because of mining,
15 and mining is the main reason fish and game numbers are
16 depleting within our region. And if you have a Chairman
17 like Thomas Baker from Kotzebue probably representing
18 their Native whatever and everything that has to do with
19 Kotzebue. He is more informed with the GOP political
20 party, and the villages are more informed with the
21 Democrat political that shows how far apart we are in
22 information regarding both the federal and the state
23 agencies in fish, Federal Fish and Game. I would like
24 you to, if you can try to play someone where the caribou
25 mainly are migrants and not to Upper Kobuk. I don't
26 think Thomas Baker is a good person to Chair that if
27 he's mostly focused on Kotzebue, which most Kotzebue
28 people are. And when you write out that letter to invite
29 people, you need to make sure that they're not going to
30 be fired from their Red Dog positions with Cominco
31 Mining.

32
33 MS. PILCHER: Hello, Ms. Schaeffer, this
34 is Nissa Pilcher with the Office of Subsistence
35 management. Is there any comments.....

36
37 (Simultaneous speech)

38
39 MS. SCHAEFFER: What office are you in?
40 Excuse me, Nissa. Where are you? Where is your office
41 located?

42
43 MS. PILCHER: I work out of the Fairbanks
44 office.

45
46 MS. SCHAEFFER: Okay.

47
48 MS. PILCHER: Okay. And I am not -- I
49 coordinate the Council. I in no way, shape or form claim
50 to be a subsistence user. I just help facilitate the

1 meetings. I just wanted to ask if you had any questions
2 to Annie or the Park Service about any of the information
3 that was just shared about the Noatak National Preserve
4 and the hunting pressure results that they have found
5 with that -- the closure that's going on. Thank you.
6

7 MS. SCHAEFFER: I didn't get the closure
8 part you're talking about. Is there a closure on the
9 caribou hunt or what?
10

11 MS. CARLSON: Ms. Schaeffer, this is
12 Annie Carlson with the Park service. I was discussing a
13 closure of federal lands and Game management 23 for
14 caribou that is currently in place. Set until -- unless
15 really, the closure is in place unless the caribou
16 population rebounds to at least 200,000 animals. And
17 this is for non.....
18

19 (Simultaneous speech)
20

21 MS. SCHAEFFER: And your office is in
22 Kotzebue again too? Excuse me, are you from that
23 Kotzebue, Alaska?
24

25 MS. CARLSON: I live here right now. I've
26 been here for about three years, but I grew up in
27 Wisconsin.
28

29 MS. SCHAEFFER: Oh, no. Okay.
30

31 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Ms.
32 Schaeffer. We're going to move on now. Thank you.
33

34 MS. SCHAEFFER: Yes, I have a Native
35 allotment within the Kobuk Valley National Park. And I
36 heard you say there's a lot of tourists going over to
37 the sand dunes that is part of the Kobuk Valley National
38 Park. And the Bakers in the Fergusons have Native
39 allotments.....
40

41 (Simultaneous speech)
42

43 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Ms. Schaeffer.
44

45 MS. SCHAEFFER: That they should not
46 be.....
47

48 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Were going to move
49 on now.
50

1 MS. SCHAEFFER: Okay. I'll stop by your
2 office sometime.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you.

5
6 MS. SCHAEFFER: I'm listening. Bye.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. We
9 appreciate you listening in. We're going to move on to
10 statewide proposals. Mr. Plank, if you would like to get
11 us started on WP26-01.

12
13 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members
14 of the Council. And again, for the record, my name is
15 Tom Plank Wildlife Biologist with the Office of
16 Subsistence management, and I will be presenting a
17 summary of the Wildlife Proposal WP26-01 regarding
18 delegation of authority letters statewide. And this
19 starts on page 27 in your books. This proposal from the
20 Office of Subsistence Management seeks to move authority
21 of managing federal hunt out of delegation of authority
22 letters and into unit specific regulations. If adopted,
23 the 61 delegation of authority letters currently in use
24 across Alaska would be rescinded. An example of a
25 delegation of authority that will be discussing later
26 on in this meeting is on page 103 to kind of familiar
27 yourselves with those. Delegation of authority letters
28 were originally meant to provide management flexibility,
29 but over time they've created inefficiencies. Any action
30 taken under a delegation of authority letter counts as
31 a special action which triggers requirements for public
32 hearings, tribal consultation -- consultations, and
33 Regional Advisory Council recommendations. These
34 processes are important for unusual or emergency
35 situations, but they add unnecessary burden when applied
36 to routine in-season management actions like closing a
37 hunt when a quota is met. As a result, Federal in-season
38 managers and OSM staff spend significant time on
39 procedural requirements for decisions that are already
40 expected every year. High staff turnover also makes
41 consistency difficult. And on top of that, OSM must
42 maintain 61 delegation of authority letters, which --
43 some of which overlap, conflict or contain outdated
44 guidance. By moving these authorities into regulations
45 and in season management actions would no longer trigger
46 the special action process. Approximately four pages of
47 boilerplate delegation of authority letter requirements
48 would be replaced with one clear paragraph in
49 regulation. Public transparency improved -- improves
50 since changes to delegated authority would go through

1 to standard regulatory process -- proposal process.
2 Oversight becoming simpler with clear responsibilities
3 and reduced administrative workload. Importantly, the
4 Board retains authority over emergency closures and
5 broader decisions, but in-season managers would be able
6 to act quickly within the parameters set by the Board.

7
8 This proposal is not expected to affect
9 wildlife populations or subsistence opportunity, is
10 primarily administrative, streamlining how reoccurring
11 decisions are made. It increases efficiency, strengthens
12 coordination with the state and local users, and makes
13 the process more transparent for the public. And one
14 alternative to consider is replacing the phrase
15 "coordination with" in regulation with "seeking input"
16 and "considering feedback from". This clarifies the
17 expectations for in-season managers to communicate their
18 actions and consider feedback, without adding confusion
19 that develops around the word "coordinate".

20
21 The OSM's preliminary conclusion is to
22 adopt WP26-01 with modification to replace
23 "coordination" with "seeking input" and "considering
24 feedback from", and to modify WP26-01a and -01b with
25 unit region specific regulations. Adopting these changes
26 would reduce administrative burden, resolve
27 inconsistencies, and improve efficiencies while
28 maintaining transparency and accountability and Federal
29 Subsistence Management. And to kind of guide you all
30 over the delegation of authorities that are specific to
31 your region. Start on page 38, in your books. Thank you,
32 Mr. Chair, members of the Council. I'd be happy to answer
33 any questions.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
36 Is there any questions? I think first question I'd like
37 to put out there on behalf of the Council is to clarify
38 if this were approved, currently the closures we have
39 that Annie presented, those are not affected. Those are
40 set in stone, so to say, until they reach their
41 parameters, we wouldn't need to put something new in to
42 say this person that is -- the person that is able to
43 write the delegation of authority letter, we don't have
44 to start the process over for these closures. For all
45 of the stuff that we've worked on over the years, this
46 is just moving forward. This is the new process of rather
47 than waiting for the full Board to meet and review these
48 special closure requests, it can be at the discretion
49 of the folks locally in these offices. Correct?

1 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tom
2 Plank with OSM. You are correct. Nissa, can you pull up
3 those slides that I sent you? So, to kind of use an
4 example. If you looked on page 103, I believe it was
5 103. Let me double check. Yeah, page 103. In your books.
6 You'll see a particular delegation of authority that
7 we'll be talking about later. And this one is pertaining
8 to the sheep here in Unit 23 and the Baird Mountains.
9 And this multiple page delegation of authority letter
10 gives the authority to the Western Arctic Park Service
11 to close the hunt or what have you. You know things of
12 that sort. And then once we get the slides up, I'll kind
13 of show you how that looks in regulations right now.
14 Bear with us.

15
16 (Pause)

17
18 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, while we work on
19 these technical difficulties, any questions? Clyde.

20
21 MS. RAMOTH: For the record, Clyde
22 Ramoth. With these delegation of authority, DAL, like
23 you stated in in these different geographic -- WP26-01,
24 (indiscernible), Western, Kodiak, South Central. The
25 only -- I know you talk about efficiency and improved
26 coordination and stuff, but if it's going to be
27 eliminating the need for public hearing and tribal
28 consultation, I have an issue with that tribal --
29 consulting with the tribes. I mean, are those just for
30 like emergency closures just to...? Help me understand
31 that better.

32
33 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair. Thank you,
34 member Clyde. Tom Plank, OSM.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Mr. Plank. One
37 second.

38
39 MR. PLANK: Oh, sorry.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, we're hearing
42 some feedback. Somebody is not muted. If you're not Tom
43 Plank, please mute at this time.

44
45 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tom
46 Plank again. So, those are still required in -- with the
47 closures and special actions and things of this sort.
48 This is more pertaining to items such as if a quota has
49 been met the season -- the in-season manager would close
50 that hunt because the quota has been met and that's

1 something that they've been doing anyhow through these
2 delegation of authority letters. And basically, instead
3 of them having to go through the whole process of, you
4 know, like we do with a special action, that will keep
5 special actions for what we use special actions for.
6 Because this is something they're doing every year. If
7 something meets a quota, they close it to make sure that
8 they can manage on the spot. And that's really what
9 these are in place for. Does that answer your question?

10
11 MR. RAMOTH: I think about, you know,
12 with like what Tim is doing with Maniilaq, what others
13 are doing when we talk about the numbers for any kind
14 of game. But if you said you guys are doing it anyway,
15 I'm just saying without consulting with the tribes or
16 public hearing, as long as it doesn't affect open
17 communication where we can stir up some bubbles.

18
19 MR. PLANK: Tom Plank. Thank you, member
20 Clyde. They're still required to communicate, even as
21 in-season managers are still required to communicate and
22 that will not stop.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: And we have the
25 slides on the screen now.

26
27 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Nissa. Again, Tom
28 Plank, OSM. So currently right now, that particular
29 delegation of authority that I was talking about that's
30 on page 103, if you were to go into regulations -- no
31 worries. You would look into where you see the sheep
32 with the exclamation point and the box around that. If
33 you look in Unit 23 regulations, that signifies that
34 there's -- that you need to go to the back of the book
35 and look at delegation of authorities. And then you go
36 to the back of the book, and that's where you'll see
37 that the Western Arctic National Parklands
38 Superintendent has a delegation of authority to close
39 the season, determined quotas and number of permits to
40 be issued for that sheep population. Go ahead and go to
41 the next slide.

42
43 With this proposal all that will go away
44 and instead in the actual -- in the regulation under
45 Unit 23 sheep, there will be a big box that will point
46 out what the Western Arctic National Parklands
47 Superintendent has. And I'll have everything there shown
48 that they also need to coordinate with the different
49 stakeholders in that particular hunt. So instead of it
50 being multiple pages in a book, we're trying to put it

1 all where it's easy to read, quick to get to. So hopefully
2 that helps clarify a little bit.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any questions for any
5 members of the RAC? Mike or Karmen, do you have any
6 questions?

7

8 (No response)

9

10 Do you have anything else for this
11 portion, Mr. Plank?

12

13 MR. PLANK: Tom Plank, OSM. No, sir, I
14 do not. Thank you.

15

16 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Alright, so we have
17 had the presentation of the analysis. Well, we've had
18 the presentation of this proposal. So, we will go through
19 our standard procedure. It's on the back of everybody's
20 nameplates. We will go ahead and get started with
21 presentation of analysis and public comments received
22 during the open comment period. Or am I speaking out of
23 turn?

24

25 MR. PLANK: No, Mr. Chair, you're
26 speaking in turn. I'm just trying to find that right
27 quick, give me just a second. If Lisa Grediagin is
28 online, she can answer that real quick. That'd be
29 helpful.

30

31 (Pause)

32

33 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, for those
34 listening over the radio and on the call, we are waiting
35 for some information to be brought up so we can continue
36 the proposal review process.

37

38 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah. Mr. Chair, this is
39 Lisa Grediagin. The Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resource
40 Commission submitted comments in support of 26-01, but
41 I don't have details of what, you know, like the summary
42 right in front of me of their comment.

43

44 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
45 Lisa. Do you know if there is any public comments other
46 than Ahtna's, I believe that would classify as an ANCSA
47 corporation consultation, or was that sent in as a public
48 comment?

49

50

1 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah, it was sent in --
2 I mean, we have like the official written public comment
3 period during the summer. And so, it was submitted as
4 part of the official public comment period, but that was
5 the only one submitted for 26-01.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Understood. Thank
8 you, Lisa. So, with that, we can move on. Were there any
9 tribal or ANCSA corporation consultations to report on?

10
11 MR. LIND: Good afternoon. Mr. Chair,
12 this is Orville Lind, Native Liaison. During the
13 consultation process, there were no comments made. Thank
14 you, Mr. Chair.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lind.
17 For agency and tribal comments, were there any comments
18 from the Department of Fish and Game?

19
20 (No comment)

21
22 Any federal agencies?

23
24 (No comment)

25
26 Any tribes or anchor corporation ANCSA
27 corporations besides Ahtna's public?

28
29 (No comment)

30
31 Advisory group comments, anything from
32 other RACs?

33
34 (No comment)

35
36 Anything from any Fish and Game Advisory
37 Councils?

38
39 (No comment)

40
41 Any questions, comments, concerns from
42 Subsistence Resource Commissions?

43
44 (No comment)

45
46 Were there any other written comments?

47
48 (No comment)

49
50

1 Any public testimony from the open
2 comment period?

3
4 (No comment)

5
6 So, hearing none at this point I would
7 entertain a motion from the Council. Do we want to have
8 any discussion? Would anyone like to make a motion
9 regarding Wildlife Proposal 26-01?

10
11 (No response)

12
13 I believe, based on the information
14 presented as well as reviewing the proposal, this is
15 something that our Council would be able to support. So,
16 any discussion, any ideas, questions?

17
18 MR. CLEVELAND: I shall move.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Move to support?

21
22 MR. CLEVELAND: Move to support.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Motion made by a
25 member Cleveland. Is there a second?

26
27 MR. ARMSTRONG: Second. Elmer Armstrong.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Seconded by Elmer. At
30 this time, we would have our Council discussion and
31 justification. Clyde.

32
33 MR. RAMOTH: For the record, Clyde
34 Ramoth. So, part of the -- of discussion, are these
35 thoroughly been studied and I mean seem like we're it
36 doesn't really hurt to speed up this without -- I'm
37 saying that without really fully understanding the
38 details, Mr. Chair.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
41 Clyde. And before I let someone from OSM speak, I --
42 from the information presented for this, as well as the
43 discussions we've had on other topics today of how
44 important it is for us as the local people to say we
45 need to have this action happen. This is a faster way
46 to make sure if we need to close the caribou season to
47 this hunter group, to outside hunters, whatever it might
48 be, this can speed the process so that we're not waiting.
49 When everything that we've been talking about is. This
50 is a critical time; we need to move quickly and not be

1 slowed down by red tape.

2

3 MR. RAMOTH: Okay, so I'll trust the
4 process and end of discussion. Thank you.

5

6 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Clyde.

7

8 MR. KRAMER: Hello, Thomas.

9

10 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Was that Mike?

11

12 MR. KRAMER: Yep.

13

14 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Go ahead, Mike, if
15 you want to put yourself on record.

16

17 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, I was trying to get
18 on. I was trying to speak on the last couple topics,
19 like, you know, about the sheep. And I think that the
20 real wise idea to have everything, you know, instead of
21 having to flip from one side of the book to the other
22 like, for instance, you know, the Ambler, Shungnak and
23 Kobuk sheep hunt that they have there in Gates of the
24 Arctic. You know, an individual came here to Kotzebue,
25 and he wanted to -- he was wondering if he has to go to
26 Fish and Game or Park Service to go get a Dall sheep
27 permit for that one section of the Gates of the Arctic.
28 Man, it was pretty unclear for quite a while until Alex
29 finally you know, made it to where these permits were
30 available here in Kotzebue to hunt in that specific area.
31 You know, and the other thing is, is I think they need
32 to make sure that when they hand out these permits, that
33 they show exactly where they're allowed to hunt these
34 sheep. That way, there's no confusion. Nobody's getting
35 busted for something. And, and I agree with that, having
36 everything in one specific spot in, you know, when it
37 comes down to sheep within Game Management Unit 23.

38

39 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Clyde, do you have
40 something?

41

42 MR. RAMOTH: Just to follow up. I
43 remember last time I made a motion about the muskox for
44 Selawik drainage area or Selawik area, and this one,
45 about Unit 23, just talks about the Buckland River
46 drainage for muskox.

47

48 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: We'll get to that
49 one.

50

1 MR. RAMOTH: Okay.

2
3 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, for right now
4 we're just discussing 26-01 about the delegation of
5 authority letters. And then we'll go through each of the
6 other proposals in order. So, at this time, we just need
7 to have a brief discussion if there is any more
8 discussion, just showing our justification of why we
9 support it. I believe that -- this is Thomas Baker Chair
10 of the Northwest Arctic RAC. I believe that we can
11 justify our support for this in that we're trying to
12 make it easier for us, as the people that are subsisting
13 for the people in the region, to go out and hunt and to
14 make sure that we're making things easier and not waiting
15 longer and longer just for some bureaucracy to happen.
16 Is there any further discussion?

17
18 MR. RAMOTH: End of discussion.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, with that, to
21 restate the final motion, the motion was made by Verne
22 to support Wildlife Proposal 26-01. Mr. Plank.

23
24 Mr. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tom
25 Plank, OSM, is this support with the OSM modification
26 or just straight support? Just for clarification on the
27 record.

28
29 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: With the
32 modification.

33
34 MR. CLEVELAND: Yeah, with modification.
35 Thank you.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that
38 request for clarification. So, at this time I'd like to
39 request a roll call vote Nissa.

40
41 MS. PILCHER: All right. We'll start
42 online. Karmen.

43
44 (No response)

45
46 I can see you're still on Karmen. We'll
47 move to Micheal. Micheal.

48
49 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

50

00069

1 MS. PILCHER: And I'll round back to you,
2 Karmen. And then.....

3
4 MS. MONIGOLD: Can you hear me yet?

5
6 MS. PILCHER: Oh. Thanks, Karmen. Clyde,
7 and I do apologize. I know your first names. Your last
8 names are still coming to me, so I apologize for being
9 so familiar with you. Clyde, your vote.

10
11 MR. RAMOTH: Yes.

12
13 MS. PILCHER: Member Cleveland.

14
15 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes.

16
17 MS. PILCHER: Member Elmer.

18
19 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

20
21 MS. PILCHER: And Chair Baker.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

24
25 MS. PILCHER: All right. So, with six
26 yays, no nays. It would carry as motion.

27
28 MS. MONIGOLD: Can you hear me?

29
30 MS. PILCHER: Is that Karmen?

31
32 MS. MONIGOLD: Yes. Sorry, I got stuck
33 on mute.

34
35 MS. PILCHER: I think we did hear you.
36 You voted in the affirmative?

37
38 MS. MONIGOLD: Yes. Thank you.

39
40 MS. PILCHER: Thank you.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Ms. Carlson. Real,
43 real quick. If you could come up to the microphone just
44 so that there's not a bunch of dead air.

45
46 MR. NICHOLSON: Interpretive in
47 education program manager here for the National Park
48 Service. Quick housekeeping announcement for this
49 building. I know we've already encountered some
50 logistical challenges. We're just going to add another

1 one. The public restrooms and the water for this building
2 are now inoperable until further notice, as we have had
3 a freeze up. Let that inform your decision.
4 Unfortunately, we cannot use the bathrooms in this
5 building and/or put water down the drain until further
6 notice. We checked with North Star, and Sulianich, their
7 bathrooms are also experiencing similar challenges. So,
8 the closest bathrooms would be Bering Air or Alaska
9 Airlines. Thank you.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that.
12 So, for those considering coming to the meeting in
13 person, keep that in mind. At this time, I believe we
14 can move on. Mr. Plank.

15
16 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members
17 of the Council. Again, for the record, Tom Plank OSM.
18 And now I'll be presenting a summary of Wildlife Proposal
19 WP26-65. And this is regarding muskox and Unit 23 and
20 this starts on page 41 in your books. Okay. This proposal
21 is submitted by this RAC. It requests establishing a
22 muskox hunt around Selawik and Unit 23 remainder. The
23 intent is to provide a Federal Subsistence opportunity
24 for Selawik residents and residents of Selawik have seen
25 more muskox near the community but unlike other areas
26 in Unit 23, there is no open season there. With declining
27 caribou and salmon and the high cost of food, muskox
28 would -- are seen as an important potential source of
29 meat. Currently, other areas in Unit 23 do allow muskox
30 hunts, but those hunts are difficult for Selawik
31 residents to access, and the proposed regulations would
32 open Unit 23 remainder to one bull muskox by Federal
33 drawing permit or state permit from August 1st to March
34 15th, which would mirror the existing hunts elsewhere
35 in Unit 23.

36
37 Cooperative management of muskox on the
38 Seward Peninsula began in 1993 with the Muskox
39 Cooperators Group, which created the first management
40 plan in 1994, and then in '95, the Federal Subsistence
41 Board established the first federal muskox hunt with
42 strict quotas, recognizing customary and traditional use
43 for local villages. Through the late 1990s and early
44 2000 harvest limits were relaxed, seasons were extended,
45 quotas shared between state and federal agencies, and
46 permit systems combined to increase access. Managers
47 were also given authority to adjust quotas in season and
48 designate hunter permits were added. As population
49 started to decline in early 2010s, regulations
50 tightened. By 2014, cow harvest was eliminated and

1 federal closures implemented. Federal hunts were managed
2 under a drawing permit system to ensure sustainability,
3 and the state also implemented a Tier II permit system
4 to equity distributed their permits. Currently, little
5 is known about the muskox population in Unit 23
6 Remainder. No official surveys have been conducted
7 there, so we don't know whether these muskox are
8 residents or transients. There is also no data showing
9 which populations these muskoxen belong to, in the
10 Seward Peninsula or Cape Thompson population. And
11 without that information, it's impossible to determine
12 a sustainable hunt level because muskox populations are
13 small and highly vulnerable to overharvest. This lack
14 of data presents a serious risk. Muskox harvested in
15 Unit 23 Southwest currently occurs by federal and state
16 permit since 2008. Four muskoxen have been reported
17 harvested by federal permits in Unit 23 Southwest since
18 2012, over half the muskox harvested Unit 23 Southwest
19 has been Kotzebue and Noorvik residents hunting under
20 state permits. Harvest within Cape Krusenstern National
21 Monument occurs by federal registration permit, no more
22 than two permits have been issued per year since the
23 hunt was established in 2005. Harvest has ranged from 0
24 to 2 muskoxen per year between 2005 and 2022. Harvest
25 from the Cape Thompson muskox population within the Unit
26 23 Northwest hunt area occurs under federal and state
27 permits. Between 2005 and 2019, State harvest averaged
28 3.7 muskox. In 2016, one muskox was harvested by federal
29 permit. Several alternatives were considered, including
30 limiting the hunt only to Selawik River drainage.
31 Delegated authority to the Selawik Refuge Manager or
32 extending the season closure date to March 31st. None
33 of these alternatives were considered further, because
34 they all depend on having solid biological data with
35 which to manage to hunt.

36
37 The Office Subsistence Management
38 preliminary conclusion is to oppose proposal WP26-65.
39 Without population surveys herd composition data or
40 recruitment information a hunt and Unit 23 remainder
41 could damage the muskox population. OSM recommends that
42 surveys be expanded into this area so that in the future,
43 if data supports it, a sustainable hunt can be
44 responsibly opened to meet subsistence needs. Thank you,
45 Mr. Chair, members of the Council. Be happy to answer
46 any questions.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
49 Any questions? Clyde, did you have something? Any questions?
50 Concerns from the RAC?

1
2 MR. RAMOTH: Since it's pertaining to
3 Selawik. And we discussed it, how many months ago? Maybe
4 almost a year ago, Tom. So, without significant data
5 about the Selawik area, and I know we have vast country
6 right, we got all that, (In Native), you know, (In
7 Native), Selawik River which is 156 miles long. We got
8 all that open country, and without significant data,
9 I'll trust your recommendation. Not -- with numbers
10 unknown.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
13 Clyde. Any other discussion? Verne.

14
15 MR. CLEVELAND: With our caribou count
16 lower, we might have to start hunting muskox. And if we
17 implement the regulations now, put them in now, then
18 later down the years and we have to -- I mean, we have
19 to hunt and there's nothing else to hunt, just muskox.
20 They'll be implemented. It'll all be there for us
21 hunters. So, it's better to be prepared than not to be
22 prepared. So, what I would love to hunt muskox one day,
23 but these regulations and boundaries, and -- I can't
24 hunt in Ambler, Shungnak, Kobuk or anywhere else for
25 sheep or stuff like that. And muskox are roaming
26 everywhere now. I mean, they're going everywhere. We get
27 the regulation going now, you'll be implemented and
28 we'll be hunting muskoxen in a few years. Thank you.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Verne. Any
31 other discussion questions for Mr. Plank? Elmer.

32
33 MR. ARMSTRONG: So, the OSM preliminary
34 conclusion to oppose, and I heard it was mostly
35 insufficient data?

36
37 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair. Thank you,
38 Member Armstrong. Tom Plank, OSM. That's correct. The --
39 with -- right, without population surveys or herd
40 composition data or recruitment information, we just --
41 we have no clue what's going on with this population or
42 if they are a population or if they're coming from one
43 of the other populations around the area. And so, without
44 that information, it's hard to set a sustainable level.
45 I mean, could you hunt them and without hurting the --
46 is it a, you know, we don't know if it's if it's a
47 resident population. I mean, without knowing how many
48 there are or where they're at, we can't really say what's
49 sustainable, what we can do. And so that's why that's
50 our preliminary conclusion at this time. But we do

1 request that more data is collected and surveys are
2 extended into that area.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Tom.
5 Clyde, Did you have something?

6

7 MR. RAMOTH: Yeah. Clyde Ramoth, for the
8 record. So, with the drawing permit, is that still not
9 sufficient? I mean, very low percentage, might get -- I
10 mean it's -- my question part. I know there's studies
11 to be done, but with the drawing permit process, is it
12 still a concern?

13

14 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair. Thank you,
15 member Clyde. It would still be a concern because we --
16 there's -- we don't know. I mean. It could -- it's hard
17 to make a judgment on that when you don't know what the
18 numbers are. And so, I mean, there could be 5000 out
19 there. It could be 3. I mean, one out of 5000 is not a
20 bad deal. But 1 out of 3 would be. So, it's -- that's
21 kind of -- that's why without the data, it makes it very
22 difficult to figure out a sustainable even with a draw.

23

24 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Tom. That
25 was -- I'm kind of in the same line of thinking as Clyde
26 of, a) it's a very small hunt annually. It could be --
27 I guess my question would be what is the data for the
28 other populations that already have hunts on them? Is
29 that something readily available where we could see,
30 this is an established population in the
31 Deering/Buckland area. This is an established Cape
32 Krusenstern population or whatever it might be. And if
33 there is any information on, if they wonder if they know
34 what the range of these populations are. Because we have
35 hunts in the region. So, we have some baseline
36 information, just not specifically the ones in that
37 Selawik area. If anyone in the room or online can take
38 a stab at that, I'd be interested to know. Given you
39 guys the fun questions.

40

41 MS. OSBURN: Yeah, through the Chair.
42 This is Christie Osburn with the Alaska Department of
43 Fish and Game. As Tom kind of addressed, partly -- and
44 it probably be most helpful if I stand by a map, but
45 right now we have two main populations within Unit 23.
46 So, the Seward Peninsula population is essentially what
47 resides in that Buckland River drainage. And most likely
48 animals that you're seeing in Selawik are coming from
49 the Seward Pen population into the drainage. Currently,
50 like you can see on the map here, we really only survey

1 to those Selawik Hills. We don't survey anything in the
2 Selawik drainage itself right now. The assumption is
3 these animals are likely from that Seward Peninsula
4 population, but we don't know. Typically, in other
5 places, we like to see a minimum of 300 animals before
6 a hunt is even considered on a population. So, there's
7 lots of room for further discussion on this. But at this
8 point, we're -- we don't think we're there yet.
9 Realistically, this is probably a couple lone animals
10 that wander north. The other benefit to just kind of
11 letting this population be for now is if we do want to
12 encourage expansion of muskox into the region for a more
13 consistent long-term harvest option, whether harvesting
14 these animals that are kind of the explorers into the
15 region is beneficial long-term or not.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
18 Christie. Any questions, discussion? Clyde.

19
20 MR. RAMOTH: Real briefly, I know I'm
21 hungry for muskox. Hopefully someday, Tom. But we know
22 summertime, they gotta be out in the flatlands, and
23 Selawik got a lot of flatlands. But, you know, the
24 drainages, we got a lot of trees, too. So is it like
25 plans to get counts numbers during the hot summer months.
26 So, because they're gonna -- they gotta be out in the
27 open, right? Is that a good question?

28
29 MS. OSBURN: I am Christie Osburn through
30 the Chair. It's member Clyde. We do most of our counts
31 in the winter. It's easiest for us to look at muskox
32 when we're looking for a black object on a white
33 background. So, we typically don't do surveys in the
34 summer. Most of our -- well, all of our surveys currently
35 occur in the spring when we've got good winter coverage.
36 How much they move or where they move to in the summer
37 is something that we could explore further. There are
38 collared muskox in other portions of the Seward
39 Peninsula. Currently, we don't have any collars in that
40 kind of northeastern corner of the Seward Peninsula
41 population. So generally, you will see some movements
42 down into river corridors in the summer. More up to
43 windblown ridge tops in the winter. Whether they're
44 going so far as from the Selawik Hills all the way down
45 into the river corridors along the main stem of the
46 Selawik in the summer, I don't know a good answer for
47 that.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Mr. Wiese.

50

1 MR. WIESE: Sure. So, Wil Wiese, Selawik
2 Refuge Manager. I do have quite a few thoughts on this
3 proposal. You know, as proposal is written, I think the
4 Refuge has to oppose the proposal as written. And for a
5 couple reasons. One, the proposal doesn't fit what I
6 think the intent was of the RAC last spring when this
7 proposal was put in, and the conversation's been all
8 about around Selawik, and as written, it was Unit 23
9 remainder. So, it's a really big area. All of the Kobuk
10 River drainage, Squirrel River drainage, the Baldwin
11 Peninsula. And so, OSM did a good job of putting together
12 some alternatives which you see on the screen here, an
13 alternative. So that that's one reason we oppose it,
14 because it doesn't get at the intent. I do agree with
15 Christie in that our best guess is what we can call it
16 is that these muskox that we're seeing in Selawik, and
17 we know they've -- they're there, we know they've been
18 there year in -- well, maybe not every year, but we know
19 we know they're seen and -- but our best guess is they're
20 coming from the South and they're not their own
21 population. We're not hearing about people seeing big
22 groups or young ones. So, we're seeing adults, lone ones
23 or pairs. So, I don't think we can justify establishing
24 a hunt that manages this as a separate population.

25
26 That said, you know, we don't have a
27 population objective for muskox Selawik Refuge. You
28 know, quite frankly, I don't expect that we're going to
29 have a thriving muskox population reproducing on the
30 refuge anytime in the foreseeable future. So, although
31 I do agree with Christie, you know, there's this chance
32 of colonization and there's a chance of range expansion,
33 it doesn't seem really likely to me. So, I wouldn't say
34 the Refuge is going to manage for that possibility at
35 this point. And so, from that aspect, does it matter if
36 we take a muskox or two out of that population? Maybe
37 not as much, as long as we're managing -- as long as
38 those managed as part of the larger group that it's
39 from. And so, I guess my point is if the RAC supports
40 this and this goes forward, it would have to be done in
41 a way that really looks at the population as a whole.
42 It could have effects, right? Like if people in Selawik
43 or near Selawik were harvesting one of those animals,
44 it might mean that less animals could be harvested from
45 the south to maintain, you know, a healthy population
46 that's sustainable.

47
48 So those are some of my comments on
49 this. The other, you know, bit of nuance here is that
50 when this was talked about last year was talked a lot

1 about providing opportunity to people in Selawik and
2 because it's further away from where some of those muskox
3 hunts are it's not easy for people from Kotzebue to get
4 to the North hunts. I'm not saying that, but it's, you
5 know, another 80 miles for folks from Selawik who are
6 kind of in the middle. The way this is written, you
7 know, it would open it up to anybody in the Unit
8 essentially applying for that hunt. And so, I don't know
9 that that really gets at the intent either, that somebody
10 from as far away as, you know, Kivalina or Point Hope
11 could apply and then come down and snowmachine down and
12 I think that'd be a problem that would need to be
13 addressed as well. That could create more conflict than
14 actually solutions. So those are some of my thoughts.
15 I'm happy to take any questions about it.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Wil. Any
18 questions, discussion?

19
20 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. This is Michael.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Go ahead, Mike.

23
24 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. You know, regarding
25 the muskox. I know the other year, you know, I apologize
26 to the one guy I believe it was Selawik -- or Wildlife
27 Refuge that had two permits that people applied for or
28 was a Tier II or something, and there was never any
29 muskox on there, so those permits were never used. You
30 know, in my mind those two permits should be open to be
31 able to be hunted somewhere else. Because opening and
32 handing out and whether it's Tier II or drying or
33 whatever it is you know, trying to give two people
34 harvest tickets when there's no muskox within 50ft, you
35 know, 50 miles of that area. That's just a waste, you
36 know. These people want to be able to fill their tag and
37 fill their freezer and not be able to just specifically
38 hunt in that one place. I can't remember if it was a
39 gentleman from Buckland or the gentleman from Deering.
40 You know, that had a permit and it was, I believe it was
41 in -- I believe Sweeney was the one that answered my
42 question at that time. But, you know, I know the guy was
43 kind of mad, but I was like, why are we handing out
44 permits when there ain't no muskox in that area. You
45 know, they should be able to open up and broaden that
46 area to you know, whether it be on state lands or other
47 federal lands. That way we're allowing people to harvest
48 the muskox to fill their freezer and not just have a
49 piece of paper stuck to their refrigerator. Thank you.
50

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
2 Mike. Any other questions or discussion on this
3 presentation of a proposal?

4
5 (No response)

6
7 Hearing none. We'll go ahead and go
8 through the steps for this proposal. Presentation of
9 analysis and public comments received during the opening
10 comment period.

11
12 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tom
13 Plank, OSM. There were no written public comments
14 submitted during the open time period.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
17 What about tribal and ANCSA Corporation consultation
18 report?

19
20 MR. LIND: Afternoon. Chairman and
21 Council members. Orville Lind, Native Liaison for OSM.
22 During the consultation sessions, there were no
23 questions or comments made. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lind.
26 Were there any agency and tribal comments, such as from
27 the Department of Fish and Game any federal agencies,
28 tribes or ANCSA corporations? Wil.

29
30 MR. WIESE: Again, Wil Wiese Selawik
31 Refuge. And again, I'll reiterate, you know, as written,
32 we -- Selawik Refuge wouldn't support this proposal. You
33 know, however, if the Council wants to push forward with
34 it, we would highly recommend that they suggest
35 modifications. Limiting the area to a smaller area like
36 OSM had analyzed or include as an alternative. And also,
37 I didn't mention another alternative that we would
38 appreciate if the Council goes forward is to ask that
39 it be a delegated authority hunt, like the other muskox
40 hunts, are in this Unit so that we could work with the
41 other management agencies to set a quota, yearly quota
42 and work together and sort of how to do this on a more
43 holistic scale.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
46 Wil. Any other agency or tribal comments?

47
48 (No comment)

1 Any advisory group comments from other
2 RACs, Fish and Game Advisory Councils or Subsistence
3 Resource Commissions? Nissa. Nissa.

4
5 MS. PILCHER: Okay. The North Slope
6 Council was in support. Council believes that it's
7 important to support subsistence users in the adjacent
8 regions presented by other Regional Advisory Councils,
9 and since the Western Arctic Caribou Herd has declined
10 in population size and this opportunity would provide
11 supplemental meet to Unit 23 residents. Additionally,
12 the Council stated that population estimates are needed
13 since there is no data available since 2009.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Nissa. Was
16 that the only advisory group comment?

17
18 MS. PILCHER: At this time, yes.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. Were there
21 any other written public comments? Could you say it on
22 record, please?

23
24 MS. PILCHER: No. There was no other
25 written comments received by other Regional Advisory
26 Councils or advisory committees, Fish and Game Advisory
27 Committees and the Subsistence Resource Commissions in
28 the area have not met as I am aware of.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Nissa. Was
31 there any public testimony?

32
33 MS. PILCHER: None received.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you.

36
37 MS. PILCHER: Oh, actually, you can call
38 for public testimony.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Is there any public
41 testimony at this time?

42
43 (No response)

44
45 Hearing none, we will move into the
46 Council Motion. Would anyone like to make a motion?

47
48 (No response)

1 So, for the record, this is Chair Thomas
2 Baker. Just to clarify, even though it is opposed by OSM
3 at this time, as has been stated, we can support it. We
4 can make modifications. This is a proposal that came
5 from our group. We've gotten some feedback. We can change
6 it. We can oppose it. We can support it. We can modify
7 it. It is up to the Council on what we would like to do.

8
9 MR. RAMOTH: For the record, Clyde. I
10 think I'll make a motion to oppose it, because -- for
11 the record, I mean, I could say supported, but I think
12 there's a hand for comments. I'll wait for more comments
13 before I make that motion, I think.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Katya.

16
17 MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So,
18 all of the motions need to be in the positive. Even the
19 Council plans to oppose the proposal, you are -- need
20 to make a motion to support and then voted down. Like
21 if you don't want this proposal to pass, you say I make
22 a motion to support proposal such and such and somebody
23 seconds. Then you discuss it. Why you don't want to
24 support it. And then when Nissa asks you to vote, you
25 say no. That's where you oppose it. Thank you.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that
28 clarification, Katya. Verne, did you have your hand up?

29
30 MR. CLEVELAND: I'll make a motion to
31 support. Thank you.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Motion made to
34 support Wildlife Proposal 26-65. Discussion.

35
36 MR. CLEVELAND: Call for question.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Excuse me. We need a
39 second to the motion.

40
41 MR. ARMSTRONG: Second.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Second by Elmer. Any
44 discussion and justification?

45
46 MR. RAMOTH: Part of the discussion to
47 oppose it is because of the data not being sufficient.
48 It's a sensitive numbers that we're pondering with all
49 this vast country we're dealing with, especially with
50 the River Drainages being a few hundred miles. It's part

00080

1 of my opposition to the motion.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Clyde.

4

5 MR. RAMOTH: Not enough data to support
6 it.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that.
9 Any other discussion or justification?

10

11 (No response)

12

13 Hearing none. So, the final motion was
14 made by Verne and seconded by Elmer to support Wildlife
15 Proposal 26-65. Can I please get a roll call vote?

16

17 MS. PILCHER: Yes. Nissa Pilcher, for the
18 record. I'll start on the phone. Member Monigold.

19

20 (No response)

21

22 And don't forget, it's star six to mute
23 and unmute. Member Kramer.

24

25 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

26

27 MS. PILCHER: Member Ramoth, Ramoth.

28

29 MR. RAMOTH: Member Ramoth, vote no.

30

31 MS. PILCHER: And just to circle back to
32 Member Kramer. Did you mean to vote in the affirmative?

33

34 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

35

36 MS. PILCHER: 10-4. Member Cleveland.

37

38 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes.

39

40 MS. PILCHER: Member Armstrong.

41

42 MR. ARMSTRONG: No.

43

44 MS. PILCHER: Member Baker.

45

46 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: No.

47

48 MS. PILCHER: And it looks like Karmen;
49 your mic is now unmuted. Your vote. Yes or no?

50

1 MS. MONIGOLD: No. Did you hear me?

2

3 MS. PILCHER: Sure did. Hold on one
4 second. I'm not used to split votes.

5

6 MS. MONIGOLD: Thank you.

7

8 MS. PILCHER: So, I believe with a vote
9 of four yays -- excuse me, four nays and two yays, the
10 motion fails. Thank you.

11

12 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. We will
13 move on to Wildlife Proposal 26-66, Mr. Plank.

14

15 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members
16 of the Council. Again, for the record, my name is Tom
17 Plank, Wildlife Biologist, Office Subsistence
18 Management. And I will be presenting the summary of
19 analysis of Wildlife Proposal WP26-66, and this starts
20 on page 53 of your books. Wildlife Proposal WP26-66 was
21 submitted by this Council. A request to increase the
22 harvest limit and extend the season for wolf hunting and
23 Unit 23 to match state regulations. The proponent states
24 said aligning the federal wolf hunting regulations to
25 match the state hunt will help reduce confusion and
26 increase opportunity. Hunters have indicated an
27 increased wolf population in Unit 23. Unit 23 federal
28 wolf hunting season and harvest limits were adopted from
29 the state regulations when the Federal Subsistence
30 Program began in 1990. The Unit 23 wolf hunt regulation
31 -- federal wolf hunting regulations changed to the
32 current regulations in 2005. The state liberalized wolf
33 hunting harvest limits for the 2002-2003 season, and
34 then to the current 20 wolves for the 2004-2005 season.
35 In 2007, the Board of Game increased the Unit 23 wolf
36 hunting season opened in August 1st instead of August
37 10th. Wolves occur throughout Unit 23 although
38 biological information is extremely sparse. Their
39 current status and abundance are unknown.

40

41 While there have been no unit-wide
42 surveys for wolf populations in Unit 23, testimony
43 provided during the Northwest Arctic Council meetings
44 attest that the local abundance of wolves in Unit 23 is
45 high, including in areas close to communities. In 2020,
46 the National Park Service began a pilot study within the
47 Noatak National Preserve title: Evaluating the
48 feasibility of mixed DNA sampling to obtain wolf
49 population Demographics in Northwest Alaska. The purpose
50 of the study is to try and gain more knowledge about

1 local wolf demographics and behaviors using genetics and
2 observational methods. Spring aerial den surveys
3 conducted from 2020 to 2022, estimated at 4 to 5 active
4 wolf groups within the Noatak National Preserve. Wolves
5 are required to be sealed and although compliance with
6 the state fur sealing program is low in Unit 23, the
7 harvest levels reported should be viewed as minimal --
8 minimum estimates of harvest. In Unit 23 wolves are
9 primarily harvested by local residents with firearms and
10 by snowmachine, and local hunters are opportunistic and
11 will harvest wolves incidentally to travel between
12 villages or while hunting caribou, typically taking as
13 many wolves as possible during these opportunities. From
14 2018 to 2022, most reported wolf harvest occurred in
15 September and March. Few wolves were reported harvested
16 in August, October, or November.

17
18 One alternative considered was to
19 exclude Kobuk Valley National Park and Cape Krusenstern
20 National Monuments from the harvest limit increase and
21 season extensions. These areas are closed to anyone
22 hunting or trapping under state regulations. Excluding
23 these areas from the harvest limit increase and season
24 extensions could provide refuge and would represent a
25 conservative approach as the status of the Unit 23 wolf
26 populations and their harvest is essentially unknown.
27 This alternative would result in federal regulations
28 remaining more restrictive than state regulations. If
29 proposal WP26-66 is adopted, the federal wolf hunting
30 season would be extended by two months, and a harvest
31 limit would increase by five wolves. As 20 wolves can
32 already be harvested on most federal public lands in
33 Unit 23 from August 1st to April 30th under state
34 regulations, the impact of the wolf population is
35 expected to be minimal but ultimately uncertain due to
36 the unknown status of the wolf population and harvest
37 in Unit 23. However, the trapping limit is no limit, and
38 local area residents indicate that wolf population is
39 increasing and there are no conservation concerns.
40 Harvest in September is primarily by non-residents and
41 non-local hunters who are in the unit for caribou, bear
42 or moose. However, state regulations do not apply in
43 Cape Krusenstern National Monument and the Kobuk Valley
44 National Park. Therefore, additional wolves may be
45 harvested from these areas by resident zone communities
46 during August and September if this proposal is adopted.

47
48 Additionally, National Park Service
49 lands prohibit the take of free range and fur bearers
50 with a firearm under the trapping license, while few

1 users likely harvest more than 15 wolves by firearm each
2 year. Adopting proposal WP26-66 would allow resident
3 zone communities to harvest an additional five wolves
4 from Kobuk Valley National Park and Cape Krusenstern
5 National Monument by firearm each year. Adopting this
6 proposal would also decrease regulatory complexity and
7 confusion by aligning state and federal regulations.

8
9 The preliminary conclusion -- OSM
10 conclusion is to support proposal WP26-66 with
11 modifications to exclude Cape Krusenstern National
12 Monument and Kobuk Valley National Park. Adoption of
13 this proposal would increase subsistence opportunity and
14 would benefit federally qualified subsistence users.
15 Impacts to the wolf population are expected to be
16 minimal, as users may already harvest 20 wolves from
17 August 1st to April 30th Under state hunting regulations
18 on most federal public lands in Unit 23. Local users
19 reported an abundant and increased the wolf population
20 and additionally federal and state regulations for
21 wolves in the portion of Unit 23 where state regulations
22 apply would be aligned, reducing regulatory complexity.
23 State regulations do not apply on national park lands,
24 including Cape Krusenstern National Monument, Kobuk
25 Valley National Park and Unit 23. Excluding National
26 Park Service Managed lands would retain the current
27 federal regulations as a conservative approach to
28 provide refuge to Unit 23 wolf populations, as their
29 population status and harvest is unknown. Thank you, Mr.
30 Chair, members of Council, I'd be happy to answer any
31 questions.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
34 Any questions? Mike or Karmen? Any questions from the
35 phone?

36
37 (No response)

38
39 Clyde, and then Elmer.

40
41 MR. RAMOTH: Yeah. Not a question but
42 hearing and Tom doing your homework and stuff. Make a
43 motion to support Wildlife Proposal 26-66 with the
44 modification to exclude Cape Krusenstern National
45 Monument and Kobuk Valley National Park.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Clyde.
48 Really appreciate it. We just need to follow the process
49 and then when we get to it, we'll just note that you
50 made the motion and then we'll get into that. Elmer and

1 then Mike.

2

3 MR. ARMSTRONG: So, Elmer Armstrong. Tom
4 Plank, did you -- did I read in there that this
5 regulation was going to mimic state?

6

7 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair. Thank you,
8 member Armstrong. Tom Plank, OSM. So you're talking
9 about, are you asking about the preliminary conclusion
10 for OSM, as in excluding the Park Service?

11

12 MR. ARMSTRONG: Oh, no, I was just asking
13 if it was going to mimic state regulation?

14

15 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Increasing the limit
16 to match, not mimic, I would say. But that was what our
17 -- yeah, our initial proposal from last year is what it
18 was for -- and just for the record, this is Chair Thomas
19 Baker. Pretty much all of these in this string of
20 regional proposals, these are what we came up with for
21 proposals last spring. So, these are from our body, from
22 us at this table. So, yes, this is from when we had the
23 long discussion about making everything match so that
24 we're not 15 on one side of the river and 20 on the
25 other side. So yes, this proposal as written would make
26 it so that the federal and the state match harvest
27 limits. Mike Kramer, did you have something?

28

29 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, I was just kind of
30 confused. You know, when I heard that you know, it was
31 the state said that the Kobuk Valley National Park and
32 Cape Krusenstern was closed, but it got clarified. But
33 yeah, I mean, it, you know, it should be open anywhere
34 because these predators are out of control. There should
35 be no limit as to where and who and when can harvest
36 these animals. And so, we could get them down to a
37 reasonable population to be able to, you know, help
38 manage -- or increase the caribou and moose populations.
39 And also, you know, to align with both state and federal.

40

41 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
42 Mike. Any other questions or discussion before we get
43 into the presentation of analysis and public comments?

44

45 (No response)

46

47 Hearing none. As far as presentation of
48 analysis and public comments received during the open
49 comment period. Mr. Plank.

50

1 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tom
2 Plank, OSM. There are no comments submitted during the
3 open period. Thank you.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
6 Mr. Orville Lind, were there any tribal and/or ANCSA
7 Corporation consultations to report?

8
9 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is
10 Orville Lind, Native Liaison. There were no questions
11 or comments made. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lind.
14 Were there any agency or tribal comments? Wil.

15
16 MR. WIESE: Sure. Again, Wil Wiese,
17 Selawik Refuge. Again, part of my role is to try and
18 support subsistence in any way we can. It's one of our
19 core purposes at Selawik Refuge. And one of the ways I
20 can try and support it is by ensuring, trying to provide
21 opportunity where we can on the Refuge but also trying
22 to provide as much information as Councils I can. On
23 this proposal, you know, as the Refuge we support it as
24 written originally without the modification. And we do
25 that because I think the intent here last year, what I
26 heard strongly was an intent to align regulations as
27 closely as possible with the state regulations to avoid
28 confusion and to make sure that the federal limits were
29 at least as, you know, large as liberal, however, you
30 want to put it, as the state regulations in this case,
31 the federal limit is lower than the state limit. I don't
32 see a -- you know, Tom laid out some of the concerns
33 about potentially more wolves being taken if this was
34 adopted in Kobuk Valley National Park. You know,
35 specifically there in August, September that's a
36 possibility or that the limit, you know, going from 15
37 to 20 could lead to the harvest of more wolves. You
38 know, anecdotally, from what I hear from hunters in this
39 region, I don't expect a big increase in harvest from
40 this going to place if it was adopted as written. We
41 just -- we don't have reports of many hunters shooting
42 15 wolves a year. So, I don't expect that there would
43 be an increase there. Maybe some increase earlier in the
44 year when people are boating the river and picking up a
45 few wolves there. But again, the access is so limited
46 that I wouldn't have a conservation concern over
47 increased harvest there. So that that's why I'd support
48 it as written originally. And you know, again, we do
49 want to see subsistence be as easy for people as
50 possible. Regulations to align as closely as possible.

1 And this would make it so you could step across the
2 border from Selawik Refuge into Kobuk Valley National
3 Park and maintain the same bag limit and season. Thank
4 you.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Wil.
7 Verne, did you have something?

8
9 MR. CLEVELAND: And you're saying that
10 the wolves are on bounty, now?

11
12 MR. PLANK: Tom Plank, OSM. And no sir,
13 I'm not.

14
15 MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any other questions
18 or comments at this time?

19
20 MR. KRAMER: Yes, this Micheal.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Go ahead, Mike.

23
24 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. You know, one thing
25 I'd like to see and run it across the Councils lap is
26 let's just say that you know, I'm -- let's just say I'm
27 in at my camp up there below Ambler and I got 20 wolves,
28 you know, on the federal side, but the state side is
29 more. Am I only going to get 20 throughout that year,
30 that season, Or...? You know, it should be allowed to
31 go with the greater amount you know, because we're trying
32 to take down some of these predator numbers. You know,
33 I have a fishing license -- I mean, a trapping license,
34 hunting license that's by the state, you know, and I
35 trap and I -- you know, in the Kobuk Valley National
36 Park. And let's just say that, you know, the limit is
37 20 wolves. I get my 20 wolves, but there's like 200 more
38 wolves around. Just far too many wolves. Well, can I go
39 to the greater number with the state's harvest limit?
40 You know, I think it should automatically, once you hit
41 the federal limit, you could fall into the state limits
42 so you could harvest more wolves, because that would be
43 kind of, you know not worth it to only get 20 wolves and
44 you run into 10 extra a day, you know, and you can't
45 shoot them because you're trying to help, you know, the
46 moose population and the caribou population. We should
47 make it to where if I catch my 20 wolves under the
48 federal and I have a state license, trapping license,
49 hunting license, and if the state limit is 25, 30 wolves.
50 Well, I could go ahead and get another 10 more wolves

1 to help the population decline in the population would
2 also help out the resources such as caribou and moose.
3 I think we should put that modification in there because
4 you know, at least that way we're not completely limiting
5 somebody, you know, that would really be screwed up if
6 you went up there and got, you know, 20 wolves in one
7 week, and then you're spending the whole rest of the
8 trapping and hunting season not being able to harvest
9 anymore and you run into them every day. That's it.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mike. So
12 again, this is -- this proposal came from us last spring
13 where we said that we wanted to increase the federal
14 limit to 20 wolves because the state limit is 20 wolves.
15 Is that still accurate? If someone could say it on
16 record, please, instead of nodding at me.

17
18 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair. Tom Plank,
19 OSM. That's correct. We're -- currently in federal
20 regulation is 15 wolves and state regulation is 20, and
21 this proposal is to increase the federal regulations to
22 match the state regulations for hunting wolves.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. Will, did
25 you have something? Before you do, I feel like we're on
26 the same wavelength. My question is, if I'm a hunter and
27 I get 20 wolves on federal land, can I get 20 more on
28 state land in the same season?

29
30 MR. WIESE: The answer is no. It's not
31 additive. Now, what I wanted to point out here is that
32 this is the hunting regulations and Member Kramer was
33 talking about both hunting and trapping. And so, the --
34 there is no limit for wolves under the trapping
35 regulations. So, if you're trapping you don't have a
36 limit. If you're hunting, you have a limit. And there's
37 some nuance about the methods and means you can use to
38 trap. So, in most areas in the state, you can trap under
39 your trapping license with a rifle. On the National Park
40 Service lands, you can't trap with a rifle, but that's
41 a bit of a different issue. But yeah, there is no limit
42 on wolves under a trapping license.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for both
45 of those clarifications. Any other questions at this
46 time?

47
48 (No response)

1 Hearing none. So, we had agency and
2 tribal comments. Do we have any advisory comments such
3 as from other RACs, Fish and Game Advisory Councils or
4 Subsistence Resource Commissions?

5
6 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tom
7 Plank OSM. The North Slope did take up this proposal,
8 and they supported it as modified by OSM. And their
9 justification was the Council supports this proposal due
10 to the decline in Western Arctic Caribou Herd. Thank
11 you, Mr. Chair.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
14 What about other written public comments? Have we
15 received any?

16
17 MS. PILCHER: No, we have not.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Nissa.
20 public testimony. Is there any public testimony at this
21 time.

22
23 MS. SCHAEFFER: On air? Are you talking
24 about the air? Could you hear me?

25
26 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Please state your
27 name.

28
29 MS. SCHAEFFER: Hello? Margarett
30 Schaeffer.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Margaret.
33 You'll have two minutes for your public testimony.

34
35 MS. SCHAEFFER: Yeah, I'm concerned about
36 all the activity during August and September in the Kobuk
37 Valley National Park. Apparently, that's the time when
38 there's caribou migration within all the way from Kiana
39 to Kobuk during that time. And the disturbance from wolf
40 hunting and bear hunting, especially in the Noatak area,
41 bear hunting where there's caribou is not good because
42 that will interfere with their migration. That's all I
43 have and thank you.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Ms.
46 Schaeffer. Is there any other public testimony, either
47 on the phone or in the room?

48
49 (No response)

1 Hearing none. Member Ramoth, would you
2 like to restate a motion?

3
4 MR. RAMOTH: Okay. Member Ramoth here.
5 I'll make a motion to support Wildlife Proposal 26-66,
6 with modification to exclude Cape Krusenstern National
7 Monument and Kobuk Valley National Park.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Motion made by Clyde.
10 Do we have a second?

11
12 MR. ARMSTRONG: Second, Elmer Armstrong.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Seconded by Elmer.
15 Discussion at this time for justification. I think it's
16 safe to say that, as this came from our RAC, that our
17 justification is that it matches the federal to the state
18 harvest limit for hunting of wolves. And just make sure
19 that we're doing everything we can as hunters to address
20 the issues with the caribou population, moose
21 population, whatnot, by making it a little bit easier
22 to know what the rules are for harvesting wolves. Any
23 other discussion?

24
25 MR. CLEVELAND: Call for question.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Question has been
28 called for. So, with that, the final motion made by
29 Member Ramoth is to support Wildlife Proposal 26-66 as
30 modified to exclude Cape Krusenstern National Monument
31 and the Kobuk Valley Park. Can I please get a roll call
32 vote, Nissa?

33
34 MS. PILCHER: You sure can. Nissa
35 Pilcher, for the record. Member Monigold?

36
37 MS. MONIGOLD: Yes.

38
39 MS. PILCHER: Member Kramer.

40
41 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

42
43 MS. PILCHER: Member Ramoth.

44
45 MR. RAMOTH: Yes.

46
47 MS. PILCHER: Member Cleveland.

48
49 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes.

50

1 MS. PILCHER: Member Armstrong.

2
3 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

4
5 MS. PILCHER: Chair Baker.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

8
9 MS. PILCHER: With a tally of six yays,
10 zero nays, the motion carries.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Nissa.
13 With that, we will move on to Wildlife Proposal 26-67.
14 Mr. Plank.

15
16 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members
17 of Council. Again for the record, Tom Plank with OSM.
18 And I will be presenting the summary of the analysis for
19 Wildlife Proposal WP26-67, and this starts on page 65
20 in your books. Wildlife Proposal WP26-67 was submitted
21 by this Council as requested to extend the trapping
22 season for muskrat to you -- year-round in Unit 23 to
23 match state regulations. The proponent states that
24 aligning the federal muskrat season to match the state
25 season will help reduce confusion and increase
26 opportunity. Trappers have indicated an increased
27 muskrat population in Unit 23. The regulations for
28 muskrat are a little different in Unit 23, the federal
29 regulations have both hunting and trapping regulations,
30 whereas the state only has a trapping season with a
31 method to means restriction that states in Unit 23 from
32 June 11th to October 31st, taking muskrat by any means
33 other than firearms is prohibited. While not explicit
34 in their submitted proposal, the Chair of this Council
35 did clarify that they wish to align federal and state
36 trapping seasons, but do not want the methods and means
37 restrictions occurring in state regulations from June
38 11th to October 31st to apply to the proposed federal
39 regulations.

40
41 Federal subsistence trapping
42 regulations for muskrats in Unit 23 have not changed
43 since 1990, when the Federal Subsistence Program began,
44 and at that time the current regulation was adopted from
45 state regulations. In 2003 the Board of Game extended
46 the muskrat trapping season in Unit 23 to the current
47 season of year-round, including the amendment to
48 restrict the take of muskrats from June 11th to October
49 31st to firearms only. Population dynamics of muskrats
50 in Unit 23 are not well documented. Muskrats occur

1 throughout Unit 23, but there is no quantitative
2 information regarding their abundance, population
3 trends, or harvest levels. The harvest -- the highest
4 population of muskrats are in the broad floodplains and
5 deltas of major rivers, and in marshy areas dotted with
6 small lakes. Muskrat relative abundance in Region 5,
7 which includes Units 18 22, 23 and 26A was reported as
8 scarce prior to 2017-2018, when muskrats were reported
9 as common. No presence in 2021-2022 and then notated as
10 common since 2022 and '23. However, the number of
11 trappers reporting was low, ranged from 4 to 30 each
12 year across the entire region. Harvest of muskrats is
13 not well documented for Unit 23, sealing is not required
14 for Unit 23, and the only information obtained is through
15 voluntary trapper questionnaires and subsistence
16 surveys. Data from the most recent subsistence survey
17 for each Unit 23 community shows that muskrat harvest
18 varies widely between communities.

19
20 An alternative considered is to add the
21 restriction to take by firearms only from June 11th to
22 October 31st, to match the state regulations. Trapping
23 is an indiscriminate harvest method which could result
24 in harvest of juvenile muskrats during the summer,
25 whereas shooting allows the target of specific
26 individuals. However, the proponent clarified that the
27 intent of this proposal is for an unlimited, no closed
28 trapping season for muskrats in Unit 23. So, this
29 alternative was not further considered because it would
30 not meet the proponent's intent and would restrict
31 subsistence opportunity. Another alternative considered
32 was to exclude the Cape Krusenstern and Kobuk Valley
33 from the season extension. These areas are closed to
34 anyone hunting or trapping under state regulations.
35 Excluding these areas from the season an extension could
36 provide refuge and would represent a conservative
37 approach as the status of the Unit 23 muskrat populations
38 and their harvest is essentially unknown. These areas
39 appear to contain excellent habitat for muskrats, and
40 this alternative would result in federal regulations
41 remaining more restrictive than state regulations.

42
43 If this proposal is adopted, the muskrat
44 trapping season in Unit 23 would be extended to year-
45 round. This would increase subsistence opportunity by
46 allowing federally qualified subsistence users to
47 harvest muskrats using traps year-round, including from
48 June 11th to October 31st on all federal lands in Unit
49 23 under federal regulations. Currently, the use of
50 traps for the harvest of muskrats is not allowed under

1 federal or state regulations from June 11th to October
2 31st. Opportunity for year-round harvest of muskrats
3 using firearms or bow and arrow, would continue on all
4 federal lands in Unit 23 under federal hunting
5 regulations and most federal lands excluding Kobuk
6 Valley and Cape Krusenstern under state trapping
7 regulations. Impacts to the muskrat populations are
8 unknown, but expected to be minimal, as few users are
9 likely -- will likely trap muskrats during the summer.
10 However, while users can target specific individuals for
11 harvest when using firearms, traps are indiscriminate
12 harvest method. Trapping during the summer may lead to
13 increase of juveniles being harvested during normal
14 breeding and offspring rearing times. While harvest
15 pressure is assumed to be low unit-wide muskrat
16 populations are localized with relatively small home
17 ranges suggesting impacts would be localized depending
18 on harvest pressure in specific areas.

19
20 Adopting this proposal would align State
21 and Federal seasons dates for muskrat trapping in Unit
22 23 to year-round. However, as state trapping regulations
23 only allow muskrat harvest by firearms from June 11th
24 to October 31st, adopting this proposal may increase
25 regulatory complexity and confusion by misaligning and
26 allow method means under state and federal regulations.
27 The preliminary conclusion is to support proposal WP26-
28 67. Adopting this proposal would provide federally
29 qualified subsistence users with additional harvest
30 opportunities under federal regulations, which may be
31 increasingly important now due to declines in other
32 subsistence resources. While there are no conservation
33 concerns for muskrats unit-wide localized impacts due
34 to increased traffic pressure in certain areas may
35 occur. Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of Council. I'll
36 be happy to answer any questions.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
39 Any questions at this time from the Council? Verne.

40
41 MR. CLEVELAND: You said there's no limit
42 on muskrat hunting, or is there a limit?

43
44 MR. PLANK: Thank you. Through the Chair.
45 Thank you, member Cleveland. Sorry. It took me a second
46 to double check. Make sure I didn't misquote. That is
47 correct under hunting regulations there's no limit as
48 from July 1st to June 30th.

49
50 MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Verne. Any
3 other questions at this time?

4
5 (No response)

6
7 Hearing none. Can we please move into
8 the presentation of analysis and public comments?

9
10 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tom
11 Plank, OSM. There are no written comments submitted
12 during the open period. Thank you.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
15 Mr. Orville Lind, do you have any tribal or ANCSA
16 corporation consultations to report?

17
18 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There
19 were no questions or comments on WP26-67. Thank you.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lind.
22 Do we have any agency or tribal comments? Mr. Wiese.

23
24 MR. WIESE: Sure, why not? Wil Wiese.
25 Selawik Refuge. We agree with OSM's conclusions on this
26 one and support it.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Wil. Any
29 advisory group comments?

30
31 MR. PLANK: Tom Plank, OSM. The North
32 Slope Regional Advisory Council did take up this
33 proposal and they supported it. The Councils supports
34 extending the season, which would provide federally
35 qualified subsistence users with increased harvest
36 opportunities.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
39 Were there any other written public comments?

40
41 MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa Pilcher. No
42 there were not.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. Any public
45 testimony at this time? Anyone in the room or on the
46 phone have any public testimony for this proposal?

47
48 MS. SCHAEFFER: Margaret Schaeffer.
49
50

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Ms. Schaeffer,
2 you'll have two minutes for your testimony.

3
4 MS. SCHAEFFER: Yes. I would like to know
5 what other predators are there for the muskrat. I know
6 with the increased population of large pike within the
7 Kobuk Valley, I'm -- excuse me, within the Kobuk River
8 and possibly in the Kobuk Lake. There is a large
9 population of large pike and that was the year -- the
10 ten years that the population for muskrat went down. We
11 had no muskrat to make parky or eat. I'm wondering if
12 the population went up in the muskrat department, or did
13 the pike population go down either way? It -- there's a
14 balance there in the -- within that one 10-year frame,
15 we did not hunt muskrats because there wasn't any on the
16 Kobuk Lake near Kiana. That's all my testimony on
17 muskrat. Thank you.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Ms.
20 Schaeffer. Does anyone have a guess-estimate? It doesn't
21 -- I'm seeing some eyebrows raising on what the pike
22 population would be from any recent studies. Oh, yes.
23 The ologist is coming.

24
25 MR. WIESE: Wil Wiese, Selawik Refuge,
26 again. Bills behind me, he's our fish biologist, so he
27 can probably back me up on this. We don't have good
28 numbers on the pike population. We are actually trying
29 to get a study going to get more information on pike,
30 but we think they're doing quite well. But other than
31 that, we don't have numbers.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Will, as
34 being the voice of Mr. Bill Carter today. Look forward
35 to seeing the results of that study. Is there any other
36 public testimony at this time?

37
38 (No response)

39
40 Hearing none. Would anyone on the
41 Council like to make a motion?

42
43 MR. RAMOTH: Mr. Chair, I'll make a
44 motion to adopt Wildlife Proposal 26-67 for Unit 23
45 Muskrat extended trapping season, no limit.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Motion made by Clyde
48 Ramoth. Do we have a second?

49
50 MR. CLEVELAND: Second.

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CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Seconded by Verne. Any discussion? I believe our justification is increase the opportunity for harvest by subsistence users. Any further discussion? Elmer.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Question.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Question has been called for. So again, the final motion is to support Wildlife Proposal 26-67. Can I please get a roll call vote?

MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa Pilcher, you sure can. Member Monigold.

MS. MONIGOLD: Yes.

MS. PILCHER: Member Kramer.

MR. KRAMER: Yes.

MS. PILCHER: Member Ramoth.

MR. RAMOTH: Yes.

MS. PILCHER: Member Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Yes.

MS. PILCHER: Member Armstrong.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

MS. PILCHER: Chairman Baker.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

MS. PILCHER: With six yays and nays, the motion carries.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Nissa. How is everyone feeling? The time is now 5:36 here in Kotzebue. We do have one, two, three, four regional proposals, a couple of crossover proposals. Would we like to do a couple more before taking a recess for the evening? What is the wish of the Council? Two more that sound good to everybody? Yeah, talk fast Mr. Plank. Will go through -- just so people following the agenda will go through the next two proposals, which are Wildlife

1 proposals 26-68 and 26-69. Mr. Plank, the floor is yours
2 for 15 minutes.

3
4 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members
5 of the Council. For the record, Tom Plank OSM. And I am
6 presenting the summary of analysis for Wildlife Proposal
7 WP26-68, and this is starting on page 73 of your books.
8 Wildlife Proposal WP26-68 was submitted by this Council
9 and requests to increase the harvest limit and extend
10 the season for ptarmigan in Unit 23 to match state
11 regulations. Proponent states that with the loss of
12 caribou and salmon, users have needed to depend on other
13 species to meet their subsistence needs. Aligning the
14 federal ptarmigan hunt to match state hunt will help
15 reduce confusion and increase opportunity. Hunters have
16 indicated an increased ptarmigan population in Unit 23.
17 The federal subsistence regulations for ptarmigan and
18 Unit 23 have not changed since 1990, when the Federal
19 Subsistence Management Program began, and at that time
20 the current regulation was adopted from the state
21 regulation. In 1999 the Board of Game increased the
22 season and harvest limit for ptarmigan in Unit 23 to the
23 current regulation. The Cape Krusenstern Subsistence
24 Regional Committee met during the winter of 2025 and
25 drafted a proposal to align federal ptarmigan Lake
26 regulations with state regulations in Unit 23 to reduce
27 regulatory complexity and confusion. However, the Cape
28 Krusenstern SRC did not have a quorum to officially vote
29 to submit the proposal. In February 2025, the Kobuk
30 Valley SRC voted to submit a proposal to align federal
31 ptarmigan regulations with state regulations and Unit
32 23 to reduce regulatory complexity and confusion, and
33 this proposal was considered by the Northwest Arctic
34 Council during their Winter 2025 meeting before the
35 Council voted to submit this proposal.

36
37 There are three species of ptarmigan
38 found in Alaska. White tailed ptarmigan range is
39 primarily in the mountain ranges of Southcentral and
40 Southeastern Alaska. Rock and willow ptarmigan are found
41 in Unit 23. Population dynamics of ptarmigan Unit 23 are
42 not well documented, although testimony provided during
43 the Northwest Arctic Council meetings suggests that
44 ptarmigan are abundant and in at least one community of
45 Ambler. Unit 23 is part of the western rural region,
46 which includes Units 18 -- 17, 18, 22, 23 and 26A, and
47 currently no spring breeding surveys occurred in this
48 region for rock ptarmigan, while surveys for willow
49 ptarmigan have only occurred along the Nome Road System
50 in Unit 22.

1
2 Rock and willow ptarmigan are an
3 important subsistence resource for many hunters in the
4 western rural region, which include Unit 23 and harvest
5 data for ptarmigan in Unit 23 is extremely sparse. Based
6 on previous hunter surveys, ADF&G staff observations,
7 and communications with western rural regional hunters,
8 the vast majority of ptarmigan harvested in this region
9 are willow ptarmigan. Although rock ptarmigan are
10 present and often at high densities in localized areas,
11 their habitat often remains far less accessible than
12 willow ptarmigan habitat. ADF&G Division Subsistence has
13 periodically conducted surveys of household subsistence
14 use of species over a single study year, and between
15 2007 and 2018 fluctuating ptarmigan populations and
16 local abundance are reflected in fluctuating ptarmigan
17 harvest by communities from year to year. An average of
18 23% of surveyed households harvested ptarmigan across
19 the region, and an average of 34% of households used
20 ptarmigan.

21
22 One alternative considered was an
23 increase in ptarmigan harvest limit, but not to season
24 Unit 23. Willow ptarmigan have a single clutch per year,
25 extending the hunting season into June has a potential
26 to disrupt breeding and chick rearing, negatively
27 affecting recruitment and ultimately ptarmigan
28 abundance. This alternative would result in federal
29 regulation, remaining more restricted and state
30 regulations, but may prevent mortality of young chicks
31 or entire ptarmigan families. However, users have been
32 able to harvest ptarmigan on most federal public lands
33 in Unit 23 until June 15th under the more liberal state
34 regulations since 2000, with no resultant conservation
35 concerns. Therefore, this conservative approach does not
36 seem necessary and was not further considered. If this
37 proposal is adopted, Unit 23 ptarmigan season will be
38 extended and the harvest limit increased, increasing
39 opportunity for federally qualified subsistence users
40 under federal regulations. No impact to the ptarmigan
41 population or user groups are expected because federally
42 qualified subsistence users have already been able to
43 harvest under the more liberal state regulations on most
44 federal lands in Unit 23 since 2000. However, the Cape
45 Krusenstern and Kobuk Valley are only open to resident
46 zone communities of those areas of hunting under the
47 more restrictive federal subsistence regulations for
48 ptarmigan.

49
50

1 If this proposal is adopted, these
2 residents would be able to harvest under the more liberal
3 harvest limits and seasons. Additionally, adopting this
4 proposal would decrease regulatory complexity and
5 confusion by aligning state and federal regulations.
6 OSM's preliminary Conclusions support Proposal WP26-68.
7 This proposal increases subsistence opportunity under
8 federal regulations, and there are no conservation
9 concerns as its federally qualified subsistence users
10 are already able to hunt ptarmigan on most federal public
11 lands and Unit 23 under the more liberal state
12 regulations. State regulations have been liberalized
13 since 2000, with no resultant or apparent conservation
14 concerns. Additionally, federal and state regulations
15 for ptarmigan Unit 23 would be aligned, reducing
16 regulatory complexity. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members
17 of Council. Be happy to answer any questions.
18

19 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
20 Any questions at this time?

21
22 (No response)

23
24 Hearing none. Mr. Plank, floor is yours.
25

26 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tom
27 Plank OSM. There are no written comments provided during
28 the open period. Thank you.
29

30 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
31 Mr. Lind, did we have any tribal or ANCSA corporation
32 consultations to report?
33

34 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There
35 were no questions or comments on WP26-69. Thank you.
36

37 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lind.
38 Agency and tribal comments.
39

40 MR. WIESE: Wil Wiese, Selawik Refuge.
41 We agree with OSM's justification for supporting this
42 proposal.
43

44 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Wil.
45 Advisory group comments.
46

47 MR. PLANK: Tom Plank, OSM. North Slope
48 Regional Advisory Council did take up this proposal.
49 They supported it. The Council shared their desire to
50 assist their neighboring regions with harvesting more

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1 subsistence foods as they're facing food insecurity is
2 due to the decline in Western Arctic Caribou Herd
3 population.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
6 Were there any other written public comments?

7

8 MR. PLANK: Tom Plank, OSM. No, sir,
9 there was not.

10

11 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. Any public
12 testimony in the room or on the phone at this time?

13

14 MS. SCHAEFFER: Margaret Schaeffer.

15

16 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Ms. Schaeffer, you
17 will have two minutes.

18

19 MS. SCHAEFFER: Cape Krusenstern, I don't
20 know how many animals or birds, anything populate that
21 area, including the Kotzebue Sound. We need more animals
22 in the Kotzebue Sound area because there's not too many
23 hunting areas for the Kotzebue people, we would like to
24 have Kotzebue Sound in Cape Krusenstern more available
25 for more animals and birds, with more animals and birds
26 and including muskox, ptarmigan and other animals. Thank
27 you.

28

29 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Ms.
30 Schaeffer. Any other public testimony?

31

32 (No response)

33

34 Hearing none. Would anyone on the
35 Council like to make a motion at this time?

36

37 MR. RAMOTH: Mr. Chair, I'll make a
38 motion to adopt Wildlife Proposal 26-68, from the
39 harvest limits 20 to 50 per day and 40 to 100 in position
40 and extended period, August 10th to June 15th.

41

42 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Motion made by Clyde.
43 Do we have a second.

44

45 MR. ARMSTRONG: Second, Elmer Armstrong.

46

47 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Seconded by Elmer.
48 For discussion and justification, again, this one came
49 from the Northwest Arctic RAC. So, our justification is
50 it increases the subsistence opportunity for those

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1 hunting under federal regulations, and it matches us up
2 with the state limits. Any further discussion?

3
4 MR. ARMSTRONG: Question.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Question has been
7 called for again. The final motion is to support Wildlife
8 Proposal 26-68. May I please get a roll call vote?

9
10 MS. PILCHER: Nissa Pilcher, for the
11 record. Member Monigold.

12
13 MS. MONIGOLD: Yes.

14
15 MS. PILCHER: Member Kramer.

16
17 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

18
19 MS. PILCHER: Member Ramoth.

20
21 MR. RAMOTH: Member Ramoth, yes.

22
23 MS. PILCHER: Member Cleveland.

24
25 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes.

26
27 MS. PILCHER: Member Armstrong.

28
29 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

30
31 MS. PILCHER: Chairman Baker.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

34
35 MS. PILCHER: With six yays and zero
36 nays, the motion carries.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
39 Nissa. We will move on to our final proposal of the day,
40 which is going to be Wildlife Proposal 26-69. Mr. Plank,
41 the floor is yours.

42
43 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members
44 of the Council. For the record Tom Plank, OSM. And I
45 will be presenting a summary of analysis for Wildlife
46 Proposal WP 26-69, starting on page 81 in your books.
47 Wildlife Proposal WP26-69 was submitted by this Council
48 and requests extending the trapping season for mink and
49 weasel to close April 15th in Unit 23. The proponent
50 states that aligning the federal season to match the

1 state season will allow reduced confusion and increased
2 opportunity. Trappers have indicated increased mink and
3 weasel populations in Unit 23. Federal subsistence
4 regulations for mink and weasel and Unit 23 have not
5 been changed since 1990, when the federal management
6 programs began and the current regulation was adopted
7 from the state regulation. In 2003 the Board of Game
8 extended to trapping season for mink and weasel and Unit
9 23 to close April 15th. Population dynamics of mink and
10 weasel in Unit 23 are not well documented. Mink occur
11 throughout Unit 23, but little is known about their
12 abundance or population trends. Mink numbers fluctuate
13 locally, making it difficult to monitor their population
14 trends. Snow and spruce forests in the Upper Kobuk
15 drainage are generally suitable for mink, while the hard
16 pack snow conditions in the remainder of Unit 23rd May
17 limit the distribution of mink. From 2013-14 season to
18 2023-24 according to the voluntary trapper
19 questionnaires, mink was reported as common, with no
20 change in abundance trends -- population trends in
21 Region 5, which includes Units 18, 22, 23 and 26A.

22
23 Two species of weasels can be found in
24 forested, brushy and open country in Alaska. However,
25 weasels are not included in the most recent ADF&G
26 Furbearer management report for Unit 23 or indicated to
27 occur there according to voluntary trapper reports.
28 Ermine were reported as common, with no change in
29 population trends in Region 5. Harvest of mink and
30 weasels are not well documented for Unit 23, sealing is
31 not required in Unit 23, and the only harvest information
32 available is from the voluntary trapper questionnaires,
33 and there were no responses to the questionnaires for
34 Unit 23 in recent years.

35
36 One alternative to consider is to
37 exclude the Cape Krusenstern and the Kobuk Valley from
38 the season extensions. These areas are closed to anyone
39 hunting or trapping under state regulations. Excluding
40 these areas from the season extension could provide
41 refuge and would represent a conservative approach as
42 the status of the Unit 23 mink and weasel populations
43 and their harvest is essentially unknown. These areas
44 appear to contain excellent habitat for mink and weasel,
45 and this alternative would result in federal regulations
46 remaining more restrictive than state regulations. If
47 this is adopted -- if this proposal is adopted, the mink
48 and weasel trapping season in Unit 23 would be extended
49 to April 15th. This would increase opportunity for
50 federally qualified subsistence users under federal

1 regulations. Although users may already trap on most
2 federal lands until April 15th under state regulations.
3 However, this proposal would allow users to trap until
4 April 15th and the Kobuk Valley and Cape Krusenstern,
5 which are closed to anyone trapping under state
6 regulations. No impacts to the mink or weasel
7 populations are expected, as users can already trap
8 until April 15th on most federal lands in Unit 23 under
9 state regulations while undocumented harvest pressure
10 on mink and weasel populations throughout Unit 23 is
11 likely low. Adopting this proposal would also decrease
12 regulatory complexity and confusion by aligning state
13 and federal regulations.

14
15 OSM's preliminary conclusions support
16 proposal WP26-69, with the modification to exclude Cape
17 Krusenstern National Monument and Kobuk Valley National
18 Park. This proposal increases opportunity for federally
19 qualified subsistence users and there are no
20 conservation concerns as users are already able to trap
21 under -- until April 15th on most federal public lands
22 in Unit 23 under state regulations. State regulations
23 do not apply on national park lands, including Cape
24 Krusenstern National Monument and Kobuk Valley National
25 Park in Unit 23. Excluding National Park Service managed
26 lands would retain the current federal regulations as a
27 conservative approach to providing refuge to Unit 23
28 mink and weasel populations, as their population status
29 and harvest is unknown. Thank you, Mr. Chair, members
30 of the Council. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
33 Do we have any questions at this time?

34
35 DR. VOORHEES: Mr. Chair. This is Hannah
36 Voorhees.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes. Go ahead,
39 Hannah.

40
41 DR. VOORHEES: Can I jump in quickly?
42 Thank you. I was co-analyst on this analysis, and there's
43 a little bit of information that didn't make it into
44 this version but will be in the version that goes to the
45 Board eventually so, I just wanted to make sure you're
46 aware. There is a little bit of information about harvest
47 that comes from the comprehensive subsistence surveys
48 done by Division of Subsistence. And based on that, four
49 communities in Unit 23 and the most recent survey year,
50 about 1 to 3% of surveyed households harvested and used

1 weasels or mink. And there was an average estimated
2 harvest of three weasels and four mink per community for
3 the entire community per study year. Just wanted to throw
4 that in there. Thank you.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
7 Dr. Voorhees. Clyde, did you have something?

8
9 MR. RAMOTH: Yeah, and I was just looking
10 at the survey, too, because being from Selawik and I
11 know from my generation mink is really a mystery for us.
12 And I was just curious if they do they have a, like, a
13 cycle or just a hard to get a hard data on population
14 wise?

15
16 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair. Tom Plank,
17 OSM. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to get any data on
18 that, that basically -- it's -- I can't say yes or no
19 because I do not know. And I apologize for that. I dug
20 as deep as I could, but I couldn't get it.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Further questions at
23 this time?

24
25 (No response)

26
27 Hearing none. We'll move into the
28 presentation of analysis and public comments. Mr. Plank.

29
30 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tom
31 Plank, OSM. There are no written public comments
32 submitted during the open period. Thank you.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
35 Mr. Lind, were there any tribal and ANCSA Corporation
36 consultations to report?

37
38 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There
39 were no questions or comments on WP26-69. Thank you.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lind.
42 Any agency and tribal comments? Will Wiese.

43
44 MR. WIESE: Me again. Wil Wiese, Selawik
45 Refuge. For this one, you know, we support the proposal
46 as written for much of the same reasons we've talked
47 about before, the original proposal was written. I don't
48 -- we don't support the OSM modification. The reasons
49 here are that the original proposal does streamline
50 regulations, aligns federal and state regulations as

1 best possible which, you know from our view, supports
2 subsistence users and our subsistence purpose. We don't
3 have any concerns over the mink or weasel population.
4 And, you know, we just got a handout saying three, four,
5 five per community per year is we have no reason to
6 expect that if this were to go into effect, we'd see a
7 jump in harvest that would endanger a population. Also,
8 keeping in mind that other trapping seasons for all the
9 other species basically people trap in this region
10 closes April 15th. So, this is kind of the odd one out
11 to be closing January 31st. So, if a trapper did want
12 to go out and set a trap for a mink or weasel on Kobuk
13 Valley National Park right now, they wouldn't be able
14 to do that beyond January 31st. And you know, I -- the
15 trappers I know really like to trap February, March,
16 April. Not that they target mink and weasel necessarily,
17 but if they wanted to in those areas, that'd be the time
18 they'd be doing it. And so again our view is that the
19 best way to support subsistence here would be to go
20 forth with the proposal, the original proposal as
21 written without the modification.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
24 Wil. Any other agency or tribal comments?

25
26 (No response)

27
28 Hearing none. Advisory group comments.

29
30 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tom
31 Plank, OSM. The North Slope Regional Advisory Council
32 did take up this proposal. They supported it as modified
33 by OSM. Council indicated that the proposal would align
34 state and federal regulations and provide more
35 subsistence opportunities in unit -- to Unit 23
36 residents. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
39 Any other written public comments?

40
41 MS. PILCHER: Nissa Pilcher for the
42 record. There were no comments received after that
43 comment deadline. Thank you.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Nissa. Any
46 public testimony? Anyone in the room or on the phone
47 with public testimony on Wildlife Proposal 26-69
48 regarding Unit 23 mink and weasel season extension.

49
50 MS. SCHAEFFER: Margaret Schaeffer.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Ms. Schaeffer, you
3 will have two minutes for your testimony.
4

5 MS. SCHAEFFER: I have a Native allotment
6 in Cape Krusenstern and I'm a doll maker. I use the mink
7 for my doll making. In the area that wild mink is caught
8 is in the Kotzebue Sound and the Cape Krusenstern area.
9 I've not been able to find any in the Kobuk Valley
10 National Park. But then where I get my fur from is from
11 the Kotzebue Sound and the Cape Krusenstern. They're
12 rare, but then they're really, really good for doll
13 making and good for economic development. If we can not
14 disturb the mink area where the population needs to grow
15 in the Kotzebue Sound and Cape Krusenstern area, we would
16 have lots of doll making material, not only for doll
17 making, for clothing, winter clothing also. So, I
18 recommend the Kotzebue Sound and Cape Krusenstern do not
19 be disturbed year-round because of the low population
20 of the mink. Thank you. Margaret Schaeffer.
21

22 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Ms.
23 Schaeffer. Any other public testimony at this time?
24

25 (No response)
26

27 Hearing none. Would anyone like to make
28 a motion? We have the OSM preliminary conclusion is to
29 support with modification. What we've heard through this
30 brief discussion is maybe just support as written
31 originally. Is there anyone that would like to make a
32 motion?
33

34 MR. RAMOTH: Mr. Chair, Clyde Ramoth
35 here. I'll make a motion to recommend due pass for
36 Wildlife Proposal 26-69, with extension -- extended
37 season as listed.
38

39 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: As originally
40 written?
41

42 MR. RAMOTH: As originally written. Yep.
43

44 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr.
45 Ramoth. So, it's a motion made by member Ramoth, do we
46 have a second?
47

48 MR. ARMSTRONG: Second, Elmer Armstrong.
49
50

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Second by member
2 Armstrong. For justification and discussion, again,
3 we're lining up our seasons. We're making it easier to
4 access the resource for subsistence users. Any further
5 discussion justification.

6
7 MR. CLEVELAND: Call for question.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Question has been
10 called for. Can I please get a roll call vote?

11
12 MS. PILCHER: Member Monigold.

13
14 MS. MONIGOLD: Yes.

15
16 MS. PILCHER: Member Kramer.

17
18 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

19
20 MS. PILCHER: Member Ramoth.

21
22 MR. RAMOTH: Yes.

23
24 MS. PILCHER: Cleveland.

25
26 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes.

27
28 MS. PILCHER: Member Armstrong.

29
30 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

31
32 MS. PILCHER: Chairman Baker.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

35
36 MS. PILCHER: With six yays and nays,
37 motion passes.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Alright. Thank you,
40 Nissa. Thank you everyone for joining us today. It is
41 now 6:02 here in Kotzebue. Tomorrow morning, we will
42 reconvene at 9:00 once we get through introductions and
43 non-agenda items, public and tribal comments, we will
44 pick back up with the next item on our agenda, Wildlife
45 Closure Review 26-18. Again, we are going to take a
46 recess for the night and come back tomorrow morning at
47 9:00 here in Kotzebue. Thank you everyone.

48
49 (Off record)

C E R T I F I C A T E

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

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 1 through 106 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the NORTHWEST ARTIC SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME I recorded on the 7th day of January;

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

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

DATED at Isabela, Puerto Rico this 12th day of February 2026.

Rafael Morel
Chief Project Manager