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KODIAC/ALEUTIANS SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME I

KODIAK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
VISITOR CENTER
Kodiak, Alaska
March 4, 2026

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Rebecca Skinner, Chair
- Jeffrey Wasley
- Patrick Holmes
- Samuel Rohrer
- Coral Chernoff
- Daniel Smith
- Natasha Hayde
- Brett Richardson

Regional Council Coordinator, Leigh Honig

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Cold Bay, Alaska - 3/4/2026)

(On record)

MS. HONIG: Good morning and welcome to the Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Advisory Council meeting. Thank you all for joining us today and thank you for those who are calling on the phone. We're going to get started off here really quickly.

Okay. So, my name is Leigh Honig, for the record. I am Council Coordinator. I'm just going to take care of a few housekeeping announcements really quickly before we get started on the agenda. For those attending our meeting in person, please make sure to sign in on this front desk out there every day that you come to the meeting. And if you would like to address the Council, we do have the blue testifier forms that you can fill out and hand to myself or any staff with OSM. For those joining by Teams who would like to provide comments, you can press star-five to raise your hand and we'll call on you. If you're on Teams, please raise your hand using the raise your hand function. Written comments will also be accepted, and you can send comments to subsistence@ios.doi.gov. There are recent copies of the agenda on the table, and all meeting materials are also posted online. To view the meeting materials online, the address is doi.gov/subsistence and you can go to the Regions tab and select Kodiak/Aleutians and then Meeting Materials. For folks online, if you could also remember to mute your phone when you're not addressing the Council, you can do that by pressing star-six to mute and unmute your phone. As a reminder about conduct and ethics during the meeting, if you feel you have any conflicts of interest on anything, you can excuse yourself from a vote or discussion. And we also ask that everyone remain respectful throughout the meeting. All right. Thank you very much for letting me share that information.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Good morning, everyone. We'll go ahead and call the meeting to order at 9:07. This is the Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Advisory Council and the first thing on our agenda is the Invocation. Pat, do you mind leading that?

MR. HOLMES: Yes, ma'am. I'm sorry I forgot my carving of Liam Sua that I usually try to

1 bring, but I think that we are really honored and blessed
2 to be able to have this role and to try to find solutions
3 for folks so that they can maintain their traditional
4 lifestyle. And so, I would suggest that we all just
5 close our eyes for a minute or two. And if Lord's Prayer
6 is your favorite or whatever just pray for the success
7 of our meeting and be thankful that we're able to do
8 this to help all our friends and neighbors and families.

9

(Pause)

10

11

Thank you very much.

12

13

14

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
15 you, Pat. Oh, sorry. Now it's call to order. We'll call
16 the meeting to order again at 9:09. All right. Next item
17 is Roll Call and Establish Quorum. Leigh, do you mind
18 doing that?

19

20

MS. HONIG: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair.
21 Okay. We'll start with Jeff Wasley.

22

23

MR. WASLEY: Here.

24

25

MS. HONIG: Patrick Holmes.

26

27

MR. HOLMES: Here.

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MS. HONIG: Sam Rohrer.

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MR. ROHRER: Here.

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MS. HONIG: Coral Chernoff.

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MS. CHERNOFF: Here.

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MS. HONIG: Rebecca Skinner.

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CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Here.

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MS. HONIG: Daniel Smith.

42

43

MR. SMITH: Here.

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MS. HONIG: Natasha Hayden.

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MS. HAYDEN: Here.

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MS. HONIG: And Brett Richardson.

50

1 MR. RICHARDSON: Here.

2

3 MS. HONIG: And I'd like to make a quick
4 announcement. Karen Kalmakoff has resigned from the
5 Council, so we do have a vacant seat, and we thank her
6 for her service on the Council. And with that, Madam
7 Chair, we have a quorum.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great. Thank you.
10 The next agenda item is the Election of Officers, and I
11 will hand this back over to Leigh for the election of
12 Chair.

13

14 MS. HONIG: Hi. Leigh Honig again,
15 Council Coordinator. In accordance with the Council
16 Charter, Council members elect a Chair, Vice Chair, and
17 Secretary for one year term. The term usually starts at
18 the beginning of a calendar year. I'd like to go ahead
19 and open the floor for nominations of the Council Chair.
20 The nominations do not need to be seconded.

21

22 MR. HOLMES: I'd like to nominate Becky
23 Skinner. She is an incredible young lady that I've known
24 for a long, many, many decades. And not only her role
25 and ability here with our Council but observing her off
26 and on at the State Fish and Game Advisory Committee,
27 she's an absolutely marvelous and intelligent person
28 that can do so many things at the same time that it just
29 amazes me. So, I would nominate Becky and give her my
30 strongest positive statements.

31

32 MS. HONIG: Great. So, Ms. Rebecca
33 Skinner was nominated to serve as the Council's Chair.
34 All in favor, say aye.

35

36 IN UNISON: Aye.

37

38 MS. HONIG: All those opposed, say nay.

39

40 (No response)

41

42 The vote has carried. And now I will
43 pass it back over to you.

44

45 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
46 you, everyone. All right. Next, we have nominations and
47 election for Vice Chair. Any nominations for Vice Chair?
48 Coral, go ahead.

49

50 MS. CHERNOFF: Is that on? Natasha Hayden.

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CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank you. Any other nominations?

(No response)

Okay. Seeing none. All right. Natasha is the Vice Chair. All right. And now we have nominations and elections for Secretary. Coral, go ahead.

MS. CHERNOFF: I would like to nominate Daniel Smith.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Are there any other nominations?

(No response)

All right. Seeing none. Congratulations, Daniel. Okay. Moving on to the next agenda item, Meeting Announcements. I'll hand it over to Leigh, and then I might have one as well. Thanks.

MS. HONIG: Okay. Thank you, Madam Chair. Leigh Honig. I kind of touched on most of the announcements earlier. I would like to note for the Council that on Thursday we do have a little field trip scheduled over to the aquarium and touch tank from 12:15 to 1 p.m. So, if you'd like to join, please do. And one more note. So, the meeting is going to be recorded and transcribed, so when you speak, if you could say your first name before you begin talking, that'll help with the transcription service. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. So, I just wanted to go through a couple characteristics of how I run the meeting. So, we'll try to run from 9 to 5. We'll start at 9, try to end at 5. I expect that we should be able to complete our business within that time. If it looks like it's going to be tight, we may run late, but my goal is to end at 5. And then I do plan to try to break for lunch as close to noon as possible. With Thursday, since we're going to the aquarium, I'm - that's going to make it a little challenging for lunch, but we'll figure out how that works. And I do like to take regular breaks. So, there's going to be probably a mid-morning break and a mid-afternoon break so people can get up. It's hard to sit. And sometimes that's an impediment to actually getting business done. And as I see hands go up, I usually write you down in order. So,

1 if I make eye contact, you raise your hand, if I nod my
2 head, write your name down. I'm going to call on people
3 in the order that their hands went up. All right. Are
4 there any questions or comments about flow of the meeting
5 or how the meeting is going to go?
6

7 (No response)
8

9 Okay. Not seeing any. All right. We are
10 up to Welcome and Introductions. So again, this is
11 Rebecca Skinner. I am from Kodiak. So, welcome,
12 everyone, to our meeting here in Kodiak. I am going to
13 go around the RAC table first and have members introduce
14 themselves. For this part, if you could just keep it
15 brief, your name, where you're from, if you'd like to
16 say a sentence about yourself. But the longer Council
17 reports will be a little bit later on in the agenda. So,
18 this is just a short introduction. Then I will go to
19 people in the room and then we'll go to people online.
20 So, I'm going to start with Sam.
21

22 MR. ROHRER: Okay. Thank you. My name is
23 Sam Rohrer, born and raised in Kodiak. Served on the RAC
24 since, I think 2021 or 4. I was just looking in the book
25 and I couldn't see it. So anyway, happy to be here this
26 morning. Thank you.
27

28 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Jeff.
29

30 MR. WASLEY: Good morning. Jeff Wasley.
31 Cold Bay, Alaska. Thank you.
32

33 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you.
34 Natasha.
35

36 MS. HAYDEN: Good morning. Natasha
37 Hayden. Born and raised in Kodiak and, yeah, happy to
38 be here. Thanks.
39

40 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Again,
41 Rebecca Skinner. Born and raised here in Kodiak. And
42 we'll go next to Coral.
43

44 MS. CHERNOFF: Coral Chernoff from
45 Kodiak.
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47 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Brett.
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49 MR. RICHARDSON: Brett Richardson.
50 Unalaska.

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CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Pat.

MR. HOLMES: Pat Holmes, Kodiak. I guess you could say I was reborn here in '63. So, anyway, really happy to be here.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Pat. Daniel.

MR. SMITH: Good morning, everyone. Daniel Smith, born and raised here in Kodiak.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. We'll go to Leigh before I go to the back of the room.

MS. HONIG: Leigh Honig, Council Coordinator with the Office of Subsistence Management. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank you. And we'll start with Scott. Oh, sorry. Yes. And if you're in the room, if you can come up to the microphone so we can catch you on the record.

MR. AYERS: Scott Ayers, Deputy Director for OSM out of Anchorage. Happy to be here. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Anna.

MS. SENEAL: Good morning. I'm Anna Senecal. I'm a Fisheries Biologist with OSM out of Anchorage. And I'm also happy to be here.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great. Thanks. And everyone can just come up in order. Thanks.

MR. WITTEVEEN: Good morning. My name is Mark Witteveen, Assistant Area Management Biologist for Sportfish in Kodiak. And I'm also from Kodiak.

MS. WOOLEVER: Good morning, Brianna Woolever, and I'm with Sportfish Fishery Biologist in Kodiak.

MS. ERLNBACH: Joy Erlenbach with the Kodiak Refuge in Kodiak.

MR. CHEN: Good morning, Madam Chair and Council Members. My name is Glenn Chen. I'm the

1 Subsistence Branch Chief for the Bureau of Indian
2 Affairs. Always a pleasure to attend your meetings.

3

4 MR. VAN DAELE: Matt Van Daele, the
5 Natural Resources Director for Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak.
6 Thank you for joining us today.

7

8 MR. CHERVENAK: Good morning. I'm Paul
9 Chervenak, a 46-year resident of Kodiak, and I'm
10 Chairman of the Kodiak Fish and Game Advisory Committee.
11 Thank you.

12

13 DR. ROBERTS: Good morning, Madam Chair.
14 Members of the Council. I'm Jason Roberts. I'm an
15 Anthropologist with the Office of Subsistence
16 Management.

17

18 MS. TAPIO-HARPER: Good morning. I am
19 Kristi Tapio-Harper. I am with the Native American Fish
20 and Wildlife Society.

21

22 MR. GERKEN: Good morning. I'm Jon Gerken
23 with the Fish and Wildlife Service in Anchorage. I'm a
24 Fisheries Biologist and then Federal In-Season Manager
25 for Aleutians, Bristol Bay, and Alaska Peninsula.
26 Thanks.

27

28 MS. FUJII-DOE: Good morning, everyone.
29 My name is Danielle Fujii-Doe. I'm the Deputy Refuge
30 Manager for Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge.

31

32 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great. Danielle,
33 do you mind hitting the button on the mic? Thank you so
34 much. Okay, we'll go to those online. I'm going to group
35 people by agency. So, I'll start off -- is there anyone
36 else from BIA on the phone?

37

38 (No response)

39

40 Okay. Do we have anyone from BLM on the
41 phone?

42

43 (No response)

44

45 Anyone from Fish and Wildlife Service?

46

47 MS. HONIG: Go ahead, Jeff.

48

49 MR. KALIN: Hey. I'm Jeff Kalin.....

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1 (Simultaneous speech)

2

3 MS. FOSADO: Hey. Good morning.....

4

5 MR. KALIN: Sorry.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Go ahead, Jeff.

8

9 MS. FOSADO: Go ahead, Jeff.

10

11 MR. KALIN: Deputy Refuge Manager at
12 Izembek. Go ahead, Maria.

13

14 MS. FOSADO: Hi. Good morning, Madam
15 Chair and Members of the Council. My name is Maria Fosado
16 and I'm the Izembek Refuge Manager.

17

18 MS. WILLIAMS: Good morning, Madam Chair,
19 Members of the Council. My name is Allison Williams. I'm
20 the Wildlife Biologist for Izembek National Wildlife
21 Refuge.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. I think
24 that's it for Fish and Wildlife Service. Thank you.
25 Anyone from Forest Service?

26

27 (No response)

28

29 Okay. Not seeing anyone. National Park
30 Service.

31

32 (No response)

33

34 Okay. And Office of Subsistence
35 Management.

36

37 MR. FOLEY: Good morning, Madam Chair,
38 Members of the Council. This is Kevin Foley, Fisheries
39 Biologist with OSM, calling in from Anchorage.

40

41 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Looks
42 like that's it. And then, is there anyone from Fish and
43 Game on the line?

44

45 (No response)

46

47 Okay. Not seeing anyone. Anyone else
48 online that needs to introduce themselves?

49

50 (No response)

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All right, so, Davis, I hate to call you out, but can you introduce yourself?

MS. HONIG: If you're calling in, you can press star-six to unmute yourself or you can use the Team's function.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. I think that's going to be it for online. We got everyone in the room. All right. We're up to agenda item number 7, Review and Adopt Agenda. Is there a motion to adopt the agenda?

MR. ROHRER: We'll make a motion to adopt the agenda.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Sam. Is there a second?

MR. WASLEY: I'll second it.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Jeff. All right. I wanted to make a few comments on the agenda. Primarily under 11, Action Items, which includes the call for fishery proposals and then development of fishery proposals by the RAC, and then we also have fishery closure reviews. And the way we're going to walk through this section is, we'll leave the call for fishery proposals where it is, so staff can present how that item works and what's it about. Then we're going to skip down to the fishery closure reviews, and as we go through, if a closure review is going to require new regulations, we'll handle the new regulations with -- and the closure review at the same time. So, we'll be, for example, with Unalaska Bay, that's probably -- there's going to be a motion to rescind the closure, but some protective measures are desired so that is going to require a new fishery regulation. So, we'll have that proposal happen at the same time. The other thing I'm going to do is move the Summers Bay and Morris Lake. So that's Roman numeral little ii, I'm going to move that underneath McLees. And I think we're looking at least three new fishery proposals just for people's consideration and planning. Item d, Alaska Board of Game, I think there's going to be a request that the RAC comment on 2 or 3 items that are before the Board of Game. And I think that's it. So, with those slight modifications in the order of some of those that's how I intend to walk through the agenda. Is there any other discussion, questions, or changes to the agenda? Pat, go ahead.

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2 MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair, I assume that
3 you and Sam will be able to give us a bit of a summary
4 on the local Fish and Game Advisory Committee meetings
5 as to what the local folks' thoughts were on those items.
6 Thank you.

7

8

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Sam, go ahead.

9

10

11 MR. ROHRER: Thank you for that, Pat.
12 This is Sam. Yeah. I was just going to ask if we could
13 set a time where we could have -- since we have our AC
14 Chair with us, Mr. Chervenak, if we could set a time for
15 him to give us a quick, just a pretty brief review of
16 what the AC's actions were.

16

17

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, go ahead.

18

19

20 MR. HOLMES: On the ACs, I did request
21 that our materials be sent out to the Fish and Game
22 Advisory Committee out on Unalaska. I called a few of
23 those folks to let them know about our meeting. Hopefully
24 they will be able to call in. I don't know. But anyway,
25 I think we have an important role in trying to solve
26 things, even though there's jurisdictional things often.
27 Our Council can come up with some solutions that the ACs
28 can't and vice versa. I think a good example would be
29 the 20 years working on or more on goat harvest here.
30 Anyway, so I'll shut it off.

30

31

32 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
33 you, Pat. So, in response to the request to have a time-
34 certain for consideration of the Board of Game proposals
35 and asking the AC Chair, Paul Chervenak, to come back,
36 if we did a time-certain after lunch today so around
37 probably 1 or 1:30, would that work for you?

37

38

MR. CHERVENAK: I'm available anytime.

39

40

41 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. All right.
42 So, what I suggest then is, we'll have the Alaska Board
43 of Game proposals will be the first thing after lunch,
44 and we'll have a better idea of exactly that time once
45 we get closer to lunch. And if we haven't gotten through
46 the fishery closure reviews and regulations, we'll just
47 take a break from those, do the Board of Game, and then
48 get back into the closure reviews. And is it a fair ask,
49 Paul, when you come back, can you give a -- as Pat
50 requested, a brief update of the items of particular
interest to the AC? Okay. Okay. Thank you. All right.

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1 Is there any other comments or questions on the agenda?

2

3 (No response)

4

5 Okay. So, with the adjustments noted,
6 is there any objection to approving -- adopting the
7 agenda?

8

9 (No response)

10

11 Okay. Seeing no objections, the agenda
12 is adopted. All right. Review and Approve Previous
13 Meeting Minutes. Leigh.

14

15 MS. HONIG: Thank you, Madam Chair. The
16 Council has the fall 2025 meeting minutes to review and
17 approve, and they can be found on page seven of your
18 main meeting book.

19

20 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Is there
21 a motion to approve the fall 2025 meeting minutes?

22

23 MR. RICHARDSON: I move to approve the
24 minutes.

25

26 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great. Thank you,
27 Brett. Is there a second?

28

29 MS. HAYDEN: Second. This is Natasha.

30

31 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Natasha.
32 All right. Is there discussion or corrections? Daniel.

33

34 MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair.
35 Reading my chair report, there are a couple edits that
36 I'd like to make note of here. The first paragraph, only
37 5 fledglings survived at Pasagshak and 21 at Kalsin Spit.
38 So, 5 fledglings survived in Pasagshak and 2 in Kalsin
39 spit, instead of that 21 number. And then secondly, the
40 last paragraph in the chair report or council member
41 report, my apologies, there were 24 confirmed gray whale
42 strandings, instead of more than, it should be
43 equivalent to numbers during the previous unusual
44 mortality event. And that's all my edits.

45

46 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
47 you. Pat, did I see your hand up?

48

49 MR. HOLMES: Yes, ma'am. I'd like to --
50 on page 12, on WP26-34 brown bears, allowing the sale

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1 of handicrafts and using of non-edible byproducts. I was
2 participating in this online because we were down
3 visiting our grandkids and I -- we had three items that
4 we dealt with and one was the sale of handicrafts, and
5 I voted against that. Maybe it didn't come through
6 because of trying on the computer, but I talked to a lot
7 of the elders and based on what I had heard from them
8 as far as cultural values and particularly Mr. Lind over
9 at Karluk, that's the reason why I voted against it,
10 because it was a change of philosophy and maybe quite
11 warranted or not, but I did project what the old timers
12 felt. And of course, a lot of us are dying off, so. But
13 anyway, it passed, but I just wanted to note that I had
14 voted against that item.

15

16 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
17 you. Any further corrections or discussion? Natasha, go
18 ahead.

19

20 MS. HAYDEN: Thanks, Madam Chair. This
21 is Natasha. I had submitted to my fellow council members
22 the transcript from our discussion on the Federal
23 Subsistence Board Management Program review, and I would
24 like to amend our minutes to include that -- what I had
25 provided to the fellow Council members, which is
26 directly out of the transcripts that I received from
27 Leigh. So, I guess I'm making a motion to amend the
28 minutes to include that. Is that the process?

29

30 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah. Leigh, how
31 would that work or what would that look like?

32

33 MS. HONIG: Yeah, it would be helpful if
34 -- were there specific items that needed to be modified
35 from the transcripts or what was missing from the meeting
36 minutes from the Council discussion? If you can point
37 that out, that's helpful. If not, I can also work with
38 Natasha afterwards to clean up the minutes.

39

40 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Yeah, I just
41 wasn't sure -- like if the request was to append the
42 transcripts to the minutes. I wasn't sure if that was a
43 possibility. So, whatever is the easiest way to make the
44 correction of the record, but I mean, either way, the
45 transcript is always available.

46

47 MS. HAYDEN: Yeah. So, my request is to
48 amend the minutes to include the transcription that I
49 provided. I believe that what is included here in our
50 minutes is very brief and truncated and didn't capture

1 the intent of the discussion or the comments that were
2 made with the intention of them to be on the record in
3 the -- as a product of the meeting. And so that is my
4 intention, is to have the minutes amended to include the
5 transcript. And if it is preferable to just take the
6 pages out of the transcript from the discussion so that
7 it is like the official transcript from the meeting,
8 then that's fine. What I did was, I just copied them out
9 of the transcript and deleted the line numbers and
10 deleted the portion of where Madam Chair is saying, okay,
11 thank you. And then I'm calling on, you know, an
12 individual, but I included that individual's name and
13 all of their comments in their entirety.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, I might ask
16 Leigh to respond to this. My understanding is that with
17 the minutes, there was a desire specifically to go to
18 the more truncated ones. It seems like appending the
19 actual transcript pages to the minutes would be an
20 acceptable solution in this case. But I'll look to Leigh
21 because I know it seems like OSM has a particular
22 standard that they're trying to follow. So, if you can
23 suggest how we can best accomplish this. Thanks.

24
25 MS. HONIG: Thank you, Madam Chair.
26 Leigh, for the record. I may need to come back to the
27 Council with a definitive answer. You are correct that
28 the meeting minutes are just somewhat of an abbreviation
29 of the record, and the more detailed meeting information
30 is available via the transcripts. And then also it's in
31 more detail the actual comment letter that was submitted
32 to the Board for the scoping process. So, I can speak
33 to my colleagues about adding the transcripts to the
34 meeting minutes and see if that is allowable. I don't
35 see why not, but I understand what the ask is, and we'll
36 come back to the Council with an answer. Thanks.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thanks.
39 Natasha, go ahead.

40
41 MS. HAYDEN: Just to follow up on that,
42 I mean, just -- I would -- my desire is to have that
43 included in whatever the appropriate format is. You
44 know, in part because we weren't notified about the
45 review until just a couple of days before our meeting.
46 And the last time that we met, the deadline for comment
47 on the scoping process would have already passed. And
48 so, the letter that we submitted to the Secretaries was
49 a request for them to extend the scoping period, which
50 indeed they did, which is fantastic, but it didn't

1 include any comments regarding what is being scoped. And
2 you know, what our desires are to communicate on the
3 specific items that are being -- that are potentially
4 going to be reviewed. And so, we had a pretty in-depth
5 conversation about all of the specific bullets --
6 bulleted items that were provided to us that are being
7 looked at for the scope -- scoping process. And I believe
8 that is the only period in the meeting that we had an
9 official conversation about it or discussion about it.
10 And it was for the purpose of us to be able to have that
11 on the record, because of the very short scoping period.
12 So, it is my desire and it will be up to the entire, you
13 know, Council if we were to agree to amend the minutes.
14 But that was -- that would be my intent and why. Thank
15 you.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah. And I'll also
18 let Leigh jump in, but I believe we generated two
19 letters. One was the request for more time. One was the
20 substantive comments, and both have been sent. And I
21 know Leigh is going to cover that in the correspondence
22 update, but we did submit a 3 -- 2 or 3 page letter of
23 comments. But Leigh will get back to us about what's
24 possible as far as putting transcript pages in. All
25 right, Pat, go ahead.

26
27 MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair, I'd like to
28 endorse Natasha's comments on this. I think there's a
29 little more detail, but I think it's well warranted.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Are
32 there any other questions or corrections to the minutes?

33
34 (No response)

35
36 Okay. Seeing none. Is there any
37 objection to approving the minutes from our fall 2025
38 meeting?

39
40 (No response)

41
42 Okay. Seeing no objection, those minutes
43 are approved. Next, agenda item 9, Regional Subsistence
44 Reports. This is where council members have a chance to
45 share out information. And I'm going to start with Daniel
46 this time.

47
48 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Madam Chair. This
49 is Daniel Smith. From last fall at the Cold Bay meeting,
50 I reported on the shearwater mortality event in the

1 Pasagshak Bay and Ugak Bay area. This mortality event
2 included 50 dead or actively dying sooty shearwaters,
3 which were found along a three-mile stretch of coastline
4 at Surfers Beach and the head of Pasagshak Bay at the
5 southern end of our road system. Three of these birds
6 were tested at the National Wildlife Health Center and
7 from the final report there was a determination that the
8 cause of death was attributed to emaciation. All three
9 birds were tested for high pathogenic avian influenza
10 and those were negative, and they were also tested for
11 saxitoxin levels so associated with paralytic shellfish
12 poisoning and toxins, and they were below the detectable
13 limit in their gastrointestinal tract and liver. As
14 these birds were juveniles, it is likely that there may
15 have been a food availability issue in the vicinity of
16 Chiniak Bay and Pasagshak during last fall which may
17 have attributed to this event and is likely not
18 associated with harmful algal blooms.

19
20 In early February, there was a striped
21 dolphin that was reported stranded at Chiniak, and this
22 was one of the farthest north locations that a striped
23 dolphin had been reported and stranded in the Pacific,
24 which really highlights the fact of changing ocean
25 conditions that we do have in the Gulf of Alaska. Based
26 on the necropsy results, to investigate the cause of
27 death, the striped dolphin had an empty stomach and most
28 likely had died from starvation. It also had,
29 interestingly, a high parasite load with possible
30 meningitis. In 2025, there were a total of 13 humpback
31 and 25 gray whale strandings reported in our Kodiak
32 region. This was a significant increase in mortality for
33 both of whale species, the humpbacks and gray whales,
34 than in previous years, reaching levels equivalent to
35 gray whale strandings during the gray whale UME or
36 Unusual Mortality Event which occurred from 2019 through
37 2023. There was also an apparent lack of humpbacks
38 observed at Pasagshak towards Cape Chiniak this spring
39 and fall during land-based surveys conducted by the
40 Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak which may coincide with the
41 potential lack of food in this area.

42
43 In good news, there were consistently
44 around 200 gray whales this previous summer, staying off
45 of Pasagshak Point, Narrow Cape, and it will be
46 interesting to see if this behavior continues this next
47 year. And it is possible that some of these gray whales,
48 which usually go farther north to the Bering Sea, do not
49 feel the need to do so, and then station themselves in
50 the Kodiak vicinity for longer periods of time. And this

00017

1 is just a newly occurring behavior in some of these gray
2 whales.

3
4 Silver runs were fairly strong in Buskin
5 this fall achieving the lower escapement goal. And I was
6 reading Fish and Game reports that they take out the
7 weir on September 30th -- roughly September 30th each
8 year, but a significant portion of the coho return is
9 after this date into late October. And after I give my
10 report, if there's someone from Fish and Game, I would
11 like to hear how the final numbers are estimated through
12 the statewide harvest survey to get that final
13 escapement estimate. The silver run at Pasagshak Lake
14 was also fairly strong with lots of harvesting going on
15 into September. The Olds and American also seemed to me
16 like it had decent runs, and I'd be interested to see
17 what the final escapement estimates were on those two
18 drainages especially after the coho closure on the
19 American in 2024.

20
21 There also has been concerns about the
22 increase in mink numbers around Kodiak. Personally, over
23 the last five years I have seen an increase and potential
24 expansion across the road system. And looking at the
25 Board of Game proposals, I don't know if this is one of
26 the proposals that we're going to review later on in the
27 meeting, but Proposal 241, this would open a year round
28 season for trapping mink in Unit 8, and I believe this
29 will -- and I'd be interested to see more control on
30 mink here in Kodiak. And if there's a way to do so
31 without incidental harvest for other smaller trappable
32 animals such as weasels. I'd like to see that. And it's
33 pretty much relatively unknown the impact of mink on
34 Native species, such as nesting birds like Aleutian
35 terns and Aleutian terns are a species of conservation
36 concern. They were traditionally harvested by the
37 Alutiiq people and they're just having a rough go about
38 it. They had very low success in nesting last year to
39 get to that fledgling stage.

40
41 Emperor goose sport and subsistence
42 harvests were closed in 2025. In this winter, as some
43 other Council members will probably say, this was a
44 rather cold winter compared to the last previous two
45 years. There was more ice present in Womens Bay during
46 December and through January. This seemed to push
47 emperor geese outside from the head of Womens Bay and
48 use Gibson Cove to Pier II more routinely during these
49 months. A large number of around 300 birds continue to
50 be stationed in Gibson Cove and the Pier II area, which

1 is something based on some surveys that Sun'aq Tribe
2 conducted last year. It just didn't really seem like
3 they've been utilizing that when the bay was frozen. And
4 so it's pushing them around a little bit.

5
6 This previous winter or previous push
7 of winter weather concerns me about the deer population
8 on our road system. Each winter I tend to walk the
9 Termination Point Loop Trail to gauge the level of deer
10 mortality, especially near Pelenga Bay. And two weeks
11 ago, I counted five deer carcasses roughly around a mile
12 stretch off of Pelenga Bay, and this was prior to the
13 last push of winter weather where we got down to the
14 single digits. There were also multiple deer, and this
15 was prior to the last winter storm along the Chiniak
16 Highway, roughly around ten deer. Once you hit the gravel
17 road out at Chiniak. And they all seemed -- most of them
18 seemed to be in pretty good shape, but others might have
19 had a hard time with the cold and windy weather this
20 last push we got.

21
22 The sea duck population seemed to be
23 fairly healthy on our road system. Our overwintering
24 Steller's eider appear just based on my observations
25 looking off of Buskin Beach, they seem to be rather
26 stable or potentially increasing. There was a flock of
27 roughly around 150 birds. And that's good to see. That
28 they might be reaching a stable point after some high
29 periods of decline. Dabbling ducks. There was just
30 larger numbers in Womens Bay this winter, and we're
31 continuing to see an increase in overwintering trumpeter
32 swans, especially in Coulson Pond and Pasagshak Lake.
33 There's roughly around 200 overwintering trumpeter swans
34 which in the 1930s there was roughly around 100 that
35 were known to even be alive. And so now we're reaching
36 levels you know, double that just here in Kodiak in the
37 winter. So, that's really good to see. And then later
38 on in the agenda for our crayfish project, Natural
39 Resource Director Matt Van Daele is going to cover that
40 in the tribal comment. So that's all I got for my report.
41 Thanks.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. You set a
44 high bar. All right. Pat, go ahead.

45
46 MR. HOLMES: Well, what can I say? That's
47 a really great report, Daniel. All I was going to comment
48 on is, being I'm a geezer, lot more of my friends and
49 children of folks that I used to give fish and game to
50 have been dropping by and helping things out for Patty

1 and I. And anyway, the deer did look pretty good to me
2 for a while. Most of it. I'd have seen a couple more
3 mortis this year on the beach for our walk. And I thought
4 your comments on the whales was also quite interesting.
5 And because that particularly gray whale numbers to me
6 seems like that changes dependent on the abundance of
7 feed. And back when we had shrimp, it wouldn't be at all
8 unusual to see them in Kalsin Bay for a good part of the
9 year. And so, I think your thoughts on their abundance
10 and presence here are really significant. Anyway, I just
11 can't top him. I think you did a good job. And I think
12 overall, folks I've talked to had a pretty good
13 subsistence season and particularly on berries in the
14 fall was probably outstanding, but things are pretty
15 fair. Thank you.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Pat.
18 Brett.

19
20 MR. RICHARDSON: Brett Richardson,
21 Unalaska. So, I'll backtrack to summer a little bit,
22 just to give a better overview. The summer weather was
23 overall very good. Seemed to be a longer, warmer summer
24 season in the area. Led into kind of a great extended
25 fall weather season and an excellent berry season, one
26 of the best I've seen in the past 15 years. It started
27 early with the blueberries and went late. So that was
28 nice to be outside more. So, there was a weir in Iliuliuk
29 Creek this year and we reported a better than average
30 red return in the early summer, which was high as far
31 as people who take notice of those things and low early
32 pink return. During the culture camp at Humpy Creek, we
33 had to pull the net three times to get a very small
34 return of pinks. And there was some, you know, hemming
35 and hawing over that. We got a lot of Dolly Varden during
36 -- when we pulled the net. And so, we smoked those too.
37 But enough for, you know, cultural purposes. The pinks
38 did come in a little late and seemed to increase to kind
39 of average levels in the fall, but it seemed low for an
40 odd year. There was a decent to good coho salmon return
41 depending on your ability to get to areas where they're
42 running. Halibut seems to have been better again,
43 further out you go from the bay seems to be a common
44 theme this year. Rockfish were extremely plentiful.
45 Octopus seems to be picking up and cod seems actually
46 pretty low. I haven't caught very many cod lately, and
47 I haven't heard very much about them. The overall feeling
48 was that people got their fish for the most part.

49
50

1 Oh, it seems the -- let's see, bird
2 populations. Overall, the bird populations seem
3 extremely healthy out in the bay and into the colder
4 months, duck, geese, and the bald eagles are extremely
5 healthy. Talking about the weather, the winter weather
6 and windstorms took hold in December through most of
7 January and made Dutch Harbor largely inaccessible for
8 weeks. Recently the wind mostly has abated and has led
9 to a short run of early spring like 45 degree days,
10 which was wild. You see all the shoots coming up and
11 then immediately have to hide again when the 20 degree
12 days we've had for the past month return. Very little
13 precipitation and little wind lately. So, strange fall
14 and winter months. I think despite the periods of good
15 weather, when they appear, the windstorms seem to have
16 increased in severity. And that's all I have.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Brett.
19 Coral.

20
21 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, my report will just
22 be short. I've been out of state for the fall, but I
23 think in being out of state I've come back a few times
24 and I really am -- I know that when we're here, you
25 know, we're all involved in, you know, fishing and
26 hunting and having access to food, but going to another
27 state and being away from that ability to access food
28 and to interact on the land, like we're so blessed in
29 Alaska to have that connection. And I just like it's --
30 I guess I was just not, you know, just living in it day
31 to day, it doesn't impact me. I know that it's a big
32 part of my life, but being away from it and coming back
33 has really made an impact on how I see that. This place,
34 you know, especially Kodiak and all over Alaska, like
35 it's so dynamic and we're so interactive with our land
36 and our food sources. And then also like, it's just
37 amazing. And I just want to thank everybody who sits up
38 here and takes the time to protect our ability to access
39 those things. We just live in a wonderful state. It's
40 important for our personal health, our community health,
41 our family health. And I just appreciate everyone and
42 myself, the ability to have this -- to be able to sit
43 on a Council like this to protect those for everybody.
44 I really appreciate that. Thank you.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you.
47 Natasha.

48
49 MS. HAYDEN: Thanks, Madam Chair. Natasha
50 Hayden. So, I'm going to start with -- went deer hunting

1 in October in between some pretty big weather events and
2 I didn't see any bucks. I saw quite a few does with
3 fawns, but I didn't see a single buck. And so, this is
4 that period of the year where I think non-resident
5 hunting has slowed down and there's not as much pressure
6 because we didn't see any other hunters and we were out
7 on our boat and we covered a lot of coastline and -- but
8 I just thought that was noteworthy. Yeah, and just to
9 reiterate how brutal this winter has been. It has wintery
10 out there. Winter, winter. It's been pretty significant
11 where I've had the water running in my house most of the
12 winter. I think that we have had some snow, or I know
13 that we've had some snow which has been good for
14 coverage, and as far as like depth of freeze, but it has
15 been pretty remarkable how wintery it's been.

16
17 There was a couple of gatherings over
18 the past couple of months. There was a traditional foods
19 gathering hosted in -- I think it was a partnership
20 primarily led by KANA that was very successful. I think
21 it was the first one of its kind and it brought -- it
22 focus on -- or they had it grouped in different
23 categories like meat, fish, veggies, all from --
24 obtained from the Kodiak region. We were able to provide
25 seal meat for the gathering and seal was prepared in
26 several different ways. And there was other proteins,
27 deer, bison and it was also a potluck. People were
28 invited. So, they had samples out that were prepared by
29 the people who organized it. And then they had people
30 bringing dishes as well. And so -- then they had like a
31 fish station. So, there were several different ways of
32 -- types of species and the ways that they were prepared,
33 and veggies and included kelp and berries. And, you know,
34 just, there's so much abundance here with these
35 different resources and got to have some duck soup for
36 the first time in forever. And it was really, it was
37 very successful. I would like to see something like that
38 continue on.

39
40 The Secretaries hosted an open house.
41 Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture hosted open
42 house on the Federal Subsistence Board Management
43 Program review in Anchorage last month, and I was able
44 to participate. I went to represent the Kodiak Island
45 Tribal Coalition and provide comments. It was very well
46 attended. It was a little -- because there were so many
47 people there, it was Katya Wessels was sort of, you
48 know, keeping people on track and keeping people to a
49 time limit of comments, which was somewhat frustrating
50 because there was leaders from tribal governments, from

1 Alaska Native organizations, you know, and when there's
2 an open invitation for leaders of communities to come,
3 and then to have to cut somebody off at three minutes
4 is -- I think it was all done in good faith. I don't
5 think there was any ill will, but it was very limiting
6 in how we were able to interact with the representatives
7 of the Department of Interior at that. There is going
8 to be a tribal consultation coming up. I'm not sure if
9 it's in March or April on that Secretarial Review. So,
10 there's more opportunities to interact with in an
11 official way for tribes. So just want to make sure that
12 people are aware of that opportunity that's going to be
13 coming up.

14
15 And then this morning I heard my first
16 (In Native), is that the red-breasted robin, the birds
17 that come back in -- the migratory birds that come back
18 and they have the sing -- they sing their song super
19 loud. And so, this morning it caught my ear right before
20 I was getting in my car and it was, you know, it's the
21 (In Native), which means, you know, spring is here and
22 the return of the fish. So, I'm looking forward to that.
23 Thank you.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Jeff.

26
27 MR. WASLEY: Thank you. Jeff Wasley, Cold
28 Bay. I guess, yeah. Continuing from last fall, I'll just
29 start with like the good. It seems like berries were
30 excellent in other parts of the region. We were the
31 same. Most berries were as prevalent as I've ever seen.
32 Our silvers seem to bounce back. '24 was a little down.
33 This past fall, I think we caught our first silvers
34 around August 10th or 11th, and we're still getting a
35 few bright fish in early October with sea lice on them.
36 So, it was a real solid run of silver salmon, which was
37 good since our sockeyes are still kind of down a bit. I
38 talked to my friends and neighbors in town, the saltwater
39 fishing for halibut in particular was probably as good
40 as it's been in recent times. Cod kind of average, but
41 definitely some around. Ptarmigan numbers remain pretty
42 solid. And that's been about 4 or 5 years now, we've had
43 good ptarmigan. Overall, puddle ducks and diving ducks
44 were excellent. I think it was our best year ever on
45 puddle ducks.

46
47 Onto some of the stuff not doing so
48 well, emperors are closed, but we did see some larger
49 family groups, some of them with, you know, 3 to 4, even
50 5 young that survived all the way into migrating down

1 to Izembek. Unfortunately, our brandt, we're in a
2 restrictive season for the first time since the late
3 80s, and I have reached out to Fish and Wildlife Service,
4 and the fall number was 196,000 roughly. And that puts
5 our three-year average at about 210,000 and will put us
6 in restrictive seasons, probably for the next few years.
7 We need a three-year average of I think it's 243,000.
8 So, it's definitely a big hit for our community, both
9 subsistence and sport hunters. And then some of the later
10 stuff is out in St. Paul for most of January. We had a
11 strong number of sea ducks out there. The Pribilofs have
12 had some die offs from toxins, from algae on fur seals.
13 And I think that's kind of a new thing. So that's
14 something to keep an eye on. And there was also a
15 grounding of a boat on St. George in January. And I'm
16 not sure to the extent of like, what kind of oil spill
17 or oiling of birds that had. I haven't really heard much
18 about that.

19
20 Other than that, like folks have
21 mentioned the weather, it was a really nice mild fall
22 up until about mid-December, early December. And then
23 it was really volatile, I guess, like really warm or
24 really cold and lots of wind. So, it's been kind of a
25 colder than average winter. I suspect some of those
26 Steller's that folks are seeing in other parts of the
27 area got froze out of Izembek and moving them around I
28 saw some people with pictures of them in Homer, which
29 sounds like it's rare there. So, but other than that, I
30 think it was a great year all in all for subsistence and
31 for sport hunting. And I think we have a looming problem
32 and it's going to, you know, be the Izembek Road that
33 there will be some adjustment if that goes through. So,
34 we can talk about that more later when it comes up. But
35 that's what I have. Thank you.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Sam.

38
39 MR. ROHRER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Sam
40 Rohrer here. First off, I just want to say I'm really
41 sorry I missed the fall meeting. It sounded like it was
42 a good meeting, productive. Jeff taking everyone around
43 in the boat to show folks down there -- show folks around
44 down there sounded like a pretty neat deal. And falls are
45 just tough for me. So anyways, wish I could have made it.

46
47 Coral, I really appreciated what you had
48 to say. I just got back from a week of traveling and got
49 in yesterday, and it just -- it never ceases to surprise
50 me how disconnected people in the lesser 48 are from

1 wildlife and the land. It makes me appreciate every time
2 I get back to Kodiak, what we have here. Appreciate
3 being able to raise my kids here. Kodiak is a great
4 spot. So anyways, really appreciate that. Deer numbers,
5 you know, our deer, I think are at an all-time high
6 since the bad winter of 2016, those numbers have been
7 steadily increasing. The all-time high -- I'm saying in
8 reference to the die off in '16. Easy -- last couple
9 winters have been easy. Those numbers have come back
10 good. Our deer hunting has been great. With that has
11 brought an increase in transporters, which our AC has
12 been wrestling with and trying to figure out how to deal
13 with. That's a challenge, I think. But this winter has
14 been noted, has been rough and so we'll see. We're coming
15 into the time where our deer are the absolute most
16 vulnerable, march and then into early April. We really
17 need this cold weather to start warming up, or we're
18 going to have deer start dying more than they have been.
19 So, we'll be watching that. There's not much we can do
20 about it, but we'll obviously be watching and seeing
21 what happens.

22
23 Salmon runs were strong on the west side
24 of the island. That's where I spend most of my time. The
25 coho run was probably the best, maybe the best I've ever
26 seen, certainly the best in the last few years. So that
27 was that was great. The pink run was strong. Berry
28 production was off the charts. The start of berries came
29 on early, lasted all through the summer, and we always
30 see strong berry years always affect bear movements. We
31 see less bears down on the river when we have good
32 winters or good berry years. But this year was like was
33 exceptional. It was just surprising how, I guess to me,
34 how much the bear movements changed. An area that I
35 spent a lot of time goat hunting in late September, we
36 normally see a lot of bears starting to head up into the
37 alpine that time of year. No bears in the alpine. They
38 were all still down and they weren't on the river, so
39 they weren't down fishing. They weren't up in the alpine.
40 They were in the mid brush where you can't see them. And
41 it was just an interesting change to their normal
42 movements.

43
44 Last thing I'll just remind folks, Board
45 of Game is going to be in town starting on the 20th.
46 That's the first time they've ever been here. So that's
47 exciting. We have lots of Kodiak proposals up. I have a
48 list that I was going to give to the AC Chair to ask him
49 to talk about that maybe we could comment on. And I
50 added, Daniel, thanks for mentioning mink, the AC did

1 vote to open a season on that, and I added that to my
2 list to have them talk about. So that's all I have.
3 Thank you.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great. Thanks. For
6 Chair's Report, I don't have a lot. There was the
7 government shutdown in the fall that started almost
8 immediately after our fall meeting. So that was a big
9 chunk of time. So, I think some of the stuff I might
10 have done in my role as Chair didn't happen during the
11 shutdown. I did sign a couple of letters on behalf of
12 the RAC, but Leigh is going to cover those in
13 correspondence update, so I'm not going to steal her
14 thunder. I'll agree with the comments around the room
15 from Kodiak representatives about the cold and windy
16 weather we've had since 00 off and on since December.
17 And then I thought Daniel or Coral might mention the
18 numbers of emperors, but I think at the beginning of
19 January, I -- there was a lot of emperors in Womens Bay.
20 I saw groups of emperors that were bigger than I had
21 noticed. But I am not a birder, so I'm not out there
22 looking for them, but I think I saw about 200 emperors
23 sitting near Salonie Creek, so on the far side of Womens
24 Bay. And then there's also emperors on the side of Womens
25 Bay closer to town. So, it seemed like there was a lot
26 just in that one area on that particular day. And that's
27 it as far as my Chair's Report. Okay. Scott has his hand
28 up.

29
30 MR. AYERS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Scott
31 Ayers, OSM, just for the record there. I just wanted to
32 note Member Hayden had brought up the tribal
33 consultations for the Federal Subsistence Management
34 Program Review, and I just wanted to say that there are
35 going to be two statewide consultations. They're
36 happening on March 10th and March 17th from 1:30 to 3:30
37 p.m. Additionally, any other tribes that are interested
38 in having a one-on-one consultation with the Secretary's
39 representative, we're setting those up as well. They
40 just need to contact our office. They can do so through
41 our phone number or through our subsistence@ios.doi.gov
42 email address. I just wanted to make sure everyone was
43 aware of those opportunities.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great. Thank you.
46 Pat, go ahead.

47
48 MR. HOLMES: I think the increased effort
49 for consultation with the tribes is really swell. But,
50 you know, there's an awful lot of folks that aren't

1 Native or are partially Native that don't qualify for
2 it anymore because of the blood quantum. And so, I think
3 some folks are getting lost on this. And then when they
4 had the big decision made after the short run of chums
5 in AYK, there was a major decision to make -- add
6 additional members to the Board from the tribal, but
7 there was no consultation. Nobody even talked to our
8 RAC, much less folks that weren't there. And so, it's
9 good to try to address things for major groups and
10 tribes, but some folks get left out and our whole region
11 being left out regardless was a bit painful. Thank you.
12

13 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Scott,
14 did you have anything else on that? Okay. Thank you.
15 Okay. The next agenda item is item number 10, Public and
16 Tribal Comment on Non-Agenda Items. And Matt Van Daele,
17 did you want to start or -- I hate to call you out, but
18 I know Daniel said you were going to speak. Thank you.
19

20 MR. VAN DAELE: Yeah. No worries, Madam
21 Chair. Matt Van Dael, Natural Resources Director. I
22 wasn't sure if this would be item 10 or 13, but I would
23 be happy to talk right now, if that's appropriate.
24

25 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: It's up to you. You
26 can even speak at both spots if you want.
27

28 MR. VAN DAELE: Okay. Yeah. I want to
29 echo Sam and Coral, your comments about Kodiak and how
30 fortunate we are to be here. I just recently got back
31 from Florida for a two-week training, and it was
32 remarkable going down there and how disconnected they
33 are with natural resources and then coming back here.
34 And it was interesting, almost kind of seeing myself in
35 a mirror and realizing what we take for granted,
36 unfortunately, just day to day, we're living it. And so,
37 it was very good to come back here and see this and have
38 this opportunity to talk with you all today. Shungnak
39 did submit a letter regarding the Federal Subsistence
40 Management Program Review. We're very concerned about
41 this. We would certainly like the opportunity to have
42 greater -- a greater voice, more opportunities for
43 consultation about this. And it is concerning that you
44 as a RAC were not necessarily informed promptly about
45 this. So, I hope that you all are able to discuss this
46 more and also have a voice.
47

48 It's been an interesting and hectic fall
49 and winter. As you heard in the council member reports,
50 we are seeing an increase in whale mortalities again.

1 That's very concerning. We're not sure what is going on.
2 We're hoping to get a better idea about that. We are
3 going to be starting live gray whale research in May
4 with Oregon State University, and hopefully get a better
5 handle, better understanding about that. With the
6 crayfish, there is good news on the crayfish front. Our
7 tribal biologist is in the final stages of his PhD work.
8 It's very exciting seeing the results of the data that
9 we've been collecting over the last few years with the
10 acoustic monitoring aspect. It's fascinating to see that
11 our method of what we're attempting to do with functional
12 suppression, we're not going to be able to eradicate the
13 crayfish. So, we're aiming for functional suppression
14 because we are having funding issues. We are having time
15 and staff issues because we have so many projects going
16 on, we have to prioritize. And so, we're aiming at
17 functional suppression and targeting areas that have the
18 highest densities of crayfish, one being the outlet of
19 Buskin Lake. And if we can hold the line there, we'll
20 be able to do our best to make sure that they're not
21 spreading further throughout the watershed. But with
22 this acoustic monitoring project, we found that crayfish
23 in areas that we're hitting harder with capture tend to
24 be more nocturnal now, whereas ones that are farther
25 away from where we're having our greatest efforts to
26 capture, they are diurnal. They just do whatever the
27 crayfish want to do. Whereas the ones that we have the
28 greatest emphasis with our efforts and also public
29 efforts, they're switching to a nocturnal behavior.
30 We're also seeing an increase in crayfish that appear
31 to be juvenile. They have juvenile markings and yet
32 they're having eggs. And so, these are these are very
33 small crayfish, but they have eggs. And this is a very
34 good indicator that the population is under a lot of
35 stress to the fact that suboptimal females are
36 attempting to reproduce. With the stable isotopes of the
37 carbon and nitrogen analyses, we are seeing that there
38 is a shift. There's a marked shift towards marine-
39 derived nutrients. So, meaning salmon, salmon-derived
40 nutrients. And unfortunately, a lot of those crayfish
41 are in Buskin River itself. And so, when the weir is in
42 operation, that definitely is an impediment for our
43 capture efforts with that. And so that's something that
44 we would like to explore further, how we can maintain
45 or holding the line in functional suppression and work
46 around still having the weir there in place.

47
48 And finally, you know, funding has been
49 an issue for us. We in the Natural Resources Department
50 are doing okay, but we're still hoping to find funding

1 to have a more comprehensive limnological assessment of
2 the Buskin watershed. We feel that that's very, very
3 important, especially with biological escapement goals
4 with the sockeye and coho salmon. And if we're able to
5 start collecting a broader suite, more comprehensive
6 suite of limnological data, that would be -- that would
7 be fantastic. And we're still waiting on word from a
8 tribal wildlife grant from Fish and Wildlife Service
9 that would enable us to do nearshore marine bird and
10 marine mammal surveys. Normally those are awarded in
11 October, but with the government shutdown and new
12 protocols, apparently the Department of Interior has,
13 we still have not received word if we're going to be
14 getting that grant or not. And then finally, back to the
15 crayfish, we're aiming at having a draft management plan
16 for the crayfish to present to you in person at your
17 fall meeting. If there are any questions, I'll be around
18 and quyana. Thank you again for your time.

19

20 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
21 you. Do we have any other public comment from people in
22 the room?

23

24 (No response)

25

26 Okay. Not seeing a rush to the
27 microphone. Is there anyone online that wants to give
28 public comment?

29

30 (No response)

31

32 Okay. And public comment is available
33 at the beginning of each day. So, this is definitely not
34 the only chance. Okay, we're going to move on to the
35 next agenda item, which is our action items. I think
36 we'll hear the federal fishery call for proposals and
37 depending on how long that takes, we may take a break
38 after that or we might get started and then take a break,
39 particularly if it would be helpful to have time for RAC
40 members to be able to conference about the proposals.
41 So, we have Anna at the mic. You can feel free to start
42 at any time.

43

44 MS. SENEAL: All right. Thank you, Madam
45 Chair, Members of the Council. My name is Anna Senecal,
46 Fisheries Biologist with the Office of Subsistence
47 Management. Okay, here we go. So, I'm here accompanied
48 by Dr. Jason Roberts, an Anthropologist with OSM. And
49 we're here to give you a brief update on where we're at
50 in our regulations cycle. So new since last time, the

1 changes that were made in this region for the 2025
2 through '27 regulatory years are now in effect. And the
3 through-line for these changes is pertinent to our work
4 today, because they were all made to provide
5 conservation protections following the removal of
6 federal closures, which took place the previous cycle.
7 So, in short, these changes were made to allow for rural
8 subsistence fishing priority while also maintaining
9 fisheries conservation goals. And these include in the
10 Kodiak area, limiting allowable gear to rod and reel
11 only in Afognak Bay. AK Pen, limiting harvest by use of
12 nets in Russell and Trout Creeks, and enacting
13 conservation regulations in line with sportfish regs,
14 state sportfish regs. And then in the Aleutians
15 eliminating harvest with nets on the fresh waters of
16 Adak and Kagalaska Islands.

17
18 So, what are we doing today? We are
19 currently accepting proposals to change the Federal
20 Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for the 2027 through
21 '29 regulatory cycle. So, the Board will consider
22 proposals to change seasons, harvest limits, methods
23 means, and customary and traditional use determinations
24 for federal fisheries. So, all of the levers are
25 available to you through the proposal process. So, if
26 you wish to submit a proposal as a Council, you will
27 have to do so at this meeting. Individuals can also
28 submit proposals through April 3rd, and there's
29 information on how to do this. There's a variety of ways
30 through our website under the Fisheries Regulations tab.

31
32 So, we have a parallel process, however,
33 that is these closure reviews. The two are different
34 proposals and closure reviews, but they are related.
35 They are both vehicles for changing fisheries
36 regulations. So, I have a handout. I'm going to come
37 around. You got it? Okay. And apologies, Leigh, we're
38 going to skip over you because there are only seven. But
39 then you can have mine. So, this is a roadmap of the
40 regulatory process which you are all very familiar with
41 at this point. We are at the beginning of the road here
42 where we are accepting proposals. You will see those
43 proposals after our analysis in the fall. That's the
44 green dot. In about a year from now, a whole year, the
45 cookie is made and we finally have those regulations in
46 effect in our regs books. If you'll turn to the next
47 page, you can see the levers available to you. What
48 you're able to do within the context of a closure review,
49 is quite limited. You can change that closure. You cannot
50 make it something it is not. So, you can make changes

1 to the area. You can change the population which the
2 closure pertains to, and you can make changes to the
3 species which the closure pertains to. You cannot add
4 new species, but you can retract species. Within a
5 regulatory proposal you can do anything. You can change,
6 set the seasons. You can set methods and means. You can
7 set limits. So, you just have a lot more flexibility.
8 And then the final page shows that if proposals -- if
9 closures are -- if you wait until your fall meeting to
10 make decisions to rescind or modify existing federal
11 fisheries closures in your area, you only have those
12 limited options available to you. If you choose,
13 however, which it sounds like there is a momentum behind
14 this to enact parallel proposals today, you have a lot
15 more resources at your disposal. So, all that being said,
16 does the Council have any regulatory proposals to put
17 forward? Or I am open to the best process moving forward.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you for --
20 first of all, thank you at the very beginning for
21 starting with the -- I forget what you called it, but
22 you basically related today back to what happened a year
23 ago and how this process kind of flows. That is
24 challenging. We don't meet very often. And we -- I think
25 I tend to lose the flow of what we did last meeting and
26 how it relates to today and how it relates to the next
27 meeting we're going to have in six months. Thank you
28 also for the explanation of how the closure reviews
29 relate to the regulations and also for the visuals. Are
30 there questions about the process, the relationship
31 between the closure reviews and generating regulatory
32 proposals or anything that Anna just covered? Sam, go
33 ahead.

34
35 MR. ROHRER: Thank you. Through the
36 Chair. This is Sam. Thanks for the presentation. Can you
37 talk just a little bit about the fishery closure reviews?
38 I remember when those first came up a couple years ago,
39 and I can't -- but what I don't remember is what triggers
40 the closure reviews? Is that -- or do we just have it?
41 So, we're going through every closure and it's just --
42 I mean, is there a time period that's required to review
43 them or what's the trigger to decide when we do a closure
44 review? Thank you.

45
46 MS. SENECA: Yeah. Thank you for the
47 question. Through the Chair. Council Member Rohrer,
48 thank you. For the record, Anna Senecal, Fisheries
49 Biologist, OSM. So, the closure review process. These
50 closures are -- that exist, get reviewed on a four-year

1 interval. There was a period of time that I understand
2 that predates me, where these closures were not
3 reviewed, and I think that was just due to a backlog of
4 closures that existed throughout the state. So, we are
5 current now and so, these closures get revisited every
6 four years. I believe this Council has thus far rescinded
7 10 of 15 closures in this area. So, we're just working
8 through the list. So, there's no -- there's nothing,
9 there's no intent to change anything beyond the
10 closures, but it is a process that we are obligated to
11 do every four years through the Federal Subsistence
12 Board. We are required. Thank you.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. As far
15 as process, as I said at the beginning, if we have
16 regulatory proposals that relate to closures, we'll take
17 those up together. But I know we have one interest in
18 one regulatory proposal that does not relate to closure
19 review. So, I think we'll -- we can start with that one.
20 This will be good practice, but we're going to have a
21 number of these today. So, I think we'll get better at
22 them as we go. So, I guess, does anyone have a fishery
23 proposal that they'd like to get out on the floor?
24 Daniel, go ahead.

25
26 MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair.
27 So, I'm requesting to bring this proposal forward. This
28 is a request to change the customary and traditional use
29 determination in the Kodiak Area, except the Mainland
30 District for salmon. The current regulation for the
31 Kodiak Area, except the Mainland District for harvesting
32 salmon is, that it allows residents of the Kodiak Island
33 Borough, except those residing on the Kodiak Coast Guard
34 Base. And this is a change from the current regulation.
35 This change would be the customary and traditional use
36 determination for the Kodiak Area, except the Mainland
37 District allows residents of the Kodiak Island Borough,
38 except residents within the Kodiak Station Census
39 Designated Place or CDP, to harvest salmon. This
40 exception does not include residents of the Kodiak
41 National Wildlife Refuge facilities, which is located
42 within a portion of the Kodiak Station CDP.

43
44 An explanation of this is, the Kodiak
45 Station CDP should be used instead of the Kodiak Coast
46 Guard Base in the customary traditional use
47 determination to harvest salmon in the Kodiak Area,
48 except the Mainland District, as there is U.S. Coast
49 Guard military housing off base, including those in
50 Nimitz, Lake Louise, and Aviation Hill. This is

1 appropriate to include this designation to encompass the
2 intent of the original formation of this customary and
3 traditional use determination regulation more
4 effectively for harvesting salmon in the Kodiak Area,
5 except in the Mainland District. The residents that
6 reside in the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge facilities
7 will be exempt from the Kodiak Station Census Designated
8 Place exemption for this customary and traditional use
9 determination. This language was proposed at the fall
10 of 2025 Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Advisory Council
11 meeting in recognizing customary and traditional uses
12 of Kodiak for Unit 8 brown bear, and that was wildlife
13 proposal 26-32, Unit 8 brown bear recognized customary
14 and traditional uses of Kodiak and therefore should be
15 adopted for salmon. Thank you.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. I think
18 I will consider that to be a motion. Or would you like
19 to make a like a shorter motion and then we'll take a
20 second?

21
22 MR. SMITH: Yeah. This is Daniel Smith.
23 Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to make a motion to
24 accept this proposal to request the change in customary
25 and traditional use determination in the Kodiak Area
26 except the Mainland District for salmon.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thank you. Is
29 there a second?

30
31 MR. HOLMES: Second.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Pat.
34 Daniel, I think you already spoke to your motion. Do you
35 -- okay. Are there any questions for Daniel about the -
36 - what he is proposing? Pat, go ahead.

37
38 MR. HOLMES: I think it's excellent
39 because it gets down to a point of being very specific
40 on who really traditionally depend on the subsistence
41 salmon. And I forget how long ago when we had the Kodiak
42 rural/non-rural. But that was one of the first places
43 in our times in our community where we identified that
44 -- nothing wrong with these Coast Guard folks, but that
45 when it came down to really customary and traditional
46 use, the vast majority of them would only be here for
47 one term of stationing, a couple of years or so and then
48 move on or come back. And so local folks were quite
49 concerned that if things were restricted and we were
50 being redefined as a more urban area that having so --

1 having additional 2,000 people participating in local
2 subsistence just wasn't acceptable. So, I think this
3 will get down and define things very precisely and
4 without being negative about it. Anyway, I strongly
5 endorse the proposal.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Are
8 there other questions or any questions for Daniel?
9 Natasha, go ahead.

10

11 MS. HAYDEN: Thanks, Madam Chair. This
12 is Natasha Hayden. I just want to -- a clarifying
13 question is that the proposal is to define the customary
14 and traditional use eligibility to now be defined by the
15 U.S. Coast Guard Census Designated Place? And that's got
16 a formal definition under -- in the U.S. Census Bureau
17 versus the way it's defined now as residents of the U.S.
18 Coast Guard Base. Is that -- I'm just clarifying that I
19 want to make sure that that's what the proposal is doing.

20

21 MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you for the
22 question. This is Daniel Smith, through the Chair. Yes,
23 it's essentially changing the language of that
24 determination to encompass instead of just residents on
25 the Kodiak Coast Guard Base, would include Kodiak
26 Station CDP, which encompasses base housing off base.

27

28 MS. HAYDEN: Okay. Thank you.

29

30 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Any further
31 questions? Sam, go ahead.

32

33 MR. ROHRER: Yes, through the Chair.
34 Thank you. I'd like to see it. Do you have copies of
35 your proposal that we can look at? It's a little bit
36 easier to see. And then can you -- two parts of that,
37 can you expand on you said it covers base personnel who
38 are living off base. Are you talking just in Aviation
39 Hill and Nimitz, or would that be Coast Guard folks that
40 have bought houses in town or live in rentals in town?
41 How are they covered? And then can you explain again for
42 refuge staff as well, the refuge land out there? Thank
43 you.

44

45 MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thanks for the
46 question. This is Daniel Smith. So, it would only cover
47 residents within Kodiak Station CDP, and the CDP
48 encompasses Nimitz, Lake Louise, and Aviation Hill as
49 well as the Coast Guard Base. And so, Coast Guard Base
50 residents that live outside of the Kodiak Station are

00034

1 not included in that determination. Yeah.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Are you good or do
4 you have a follow up?

5

6 MR. ROHRER: Well, yeah, I'll just follow
7 up and say good that, I mean, there's a difference if
8 buy a house in town, if you're living in the community,
9 then you should be able to participate in subsistence,
10 I think. So anyway, so, I'm glad that that's how that
11 fell out. Thanks.

12

13 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Coral.

14

15 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah. Daniel, does the
16 census area -- does it come with a map? So, is there a
17 map that you could actually include with this?

18

19 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah. Go ahead.

20

21 MR. SMITH: Yeah. So, there is a map. And
22 so, for the wildlife proposal from the last cycle in
23 that analysis, there was a pretty thorough map in that
24 I don't have that attached with this proposal. But there
25 is, yeah, a map associated with the Kodak Station.

26

27 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yes. So, one
28 comment, what we would do at this meeting is generate a
29 proposal, and then the proposal would go through an
30 analytical or analysis process, during which I am sure
31 they will create and append a map. And then at our fall
32 meeting we would actually vote on the proposal. So today
33 it's just getting the idea for the proposal into the
34 system. And Daniel is asking the RAC to generate the
35 proposal. So, this would be a RAC generated proposal.
36 If we didn't generate it. Daniel could also generate it
37 as an individual by the April 4th deadline. Question for
38 Anna, is that enough information? So, if this were to
39 pass what Daniel proposed, is that enough information
40 for -- to go into the process, or is there anything else
41 you need to know, or do we need to do anything
42 differently?

43

44 MS. SENEAL: Anna Senecal, for the
45 record. Chair Skinner, I'm going to phone a friend on
46 that. Mr. Ayers, please approach the table. But you are
47 correct that there is a whole process. It's outlined in
48 your handy dandy handout. There is a series of analyses,
49 and we do have a cartographer. There will be a detailed
50 map.

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MR. AYERS: Yeah, Madam Chair. Scott Ayers. This is perfect. We have more than enough information and we were provided a copy of the draft proposal beforehand. If the Council is comfortable with this, we're happy to take it and run with it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank you for that clarification. Jeff, go ahead.

MR. WASLEY: Yeah. Jeff Wasley. I guess I'm just curious. I'm not in this area. I see the Coast Guard, obviously have far more numbers than other like federal employees. So, I'm just curious why Fish and Wildlife or Forest Service or whoever else are allowed to do this, but not the Coast Guard and just the rationale behind that. Thank you.

MR. SMITH: Yeah. So, there are -- I don't know how much [sic] folks live permanently within the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge facilities, but we excluded them. This is from the proposal that we voted on last cycle, in the fall meeting, to basically give those individuals an opportunity to still federal subsist, since in our opinion, you know, as a RAC we voted on that. They do have that customary and traditional use rather than the residents of the Coast Guard Base.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: We'll take Sam and then Pat.

MR. ROHRER: Thanks.....

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: And I see Dr. Roberts approaching the microphone. Do you want to hold off? Okay. All right. Sam, Pat, and then Dr. Roberts.

MR. ROHRER: Okay. Thanks. Through the Chair. Yeah, I'll just add to that, growing up here, I knew -- I had friends who their folks worked for the refuge. They lived on the refuge facilities for, I don't know, 10 or 15 years. I mean, they were regular long-term members of the community. And so, it wouldn't make -- in my view, it wouldn't make any sense to exclude them. I don't know how long people are living there now, but certainly there was long-term Kodiak residents living there at one point. So yeah, I would not support

1 it if it didn't include them, I think. Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Pat, go
4 ahead.

5

6 MR. HOLMES: Yeah, I agree with Sam. It
7 all depends, but I would say there can be anywhere from
8 two, three, maybe as many as five families that live out
9 there. And I would say the majority of them that I've
10 known in the past, they've had a turnover lately, but
11 some of them lived out there for 10, 15, 20. There was
12 one family who was out there for practically the whole
13 career of that biologist. And then they moved to town
14 like at year 25. And so, they're pretty much vested in
15 the same things as folks are in town. So, thank you.

16

17 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Doctor,
18 are you good? Okay. Coral, go ahead.

19

20 MS. CHERNOFF: So, I don't know if Dr.
21 Roberts could address this, but part of the customary
22 and traditional use, there's requirements. There's
23 requirements and I don't know, there's specific
24 requirements to be met. And so, subsistence isn't about
25 groups of people. It's about areas that have customary
26 and traditional use. And so, we covered those in past
27 meetings and maybe Mr. Roberts could cover those
28 requirements that have to be met.

29

30 DR. ROBERTS: Yeah. So, through the
31 Chair, this is Jason Roberts. Ms. Chernoff, yeah, there
32 are eight factors of customary and traditional use that
33 we will -- if the Council right now submits this
34 proposal, in our analysis, we will be analyzing the
35 proposal based on those eight factors. But you know, you
36 don't really need to make that kind of determination
37 right now. That'll come up in your next meeting where
38 you look at the analysis, make your judgment based on
39 local knowledge, that kind of thing.

40

41 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
42 you. Are there any further questions or comments? I'll
43 make comments. I like that this aligns the C&T -- I'll
44 call it the C&T definition between the brown bears and
45 the fish. I think that the proposal more correctly
46 identifies which areas where people are living or which
47 people we're trying to exclude from the C&T
48 determination. So instead of just being the perimeter
49 of the base, so when you go out to the base, you have
50 to go, you know, drive through a gate, there's a

1 checkpoint. Everything within the perimeter is
2 considered on base. And that's what the current language
3 for C&T is, excluding people who live within the
4 perimeter. However, there's also closely adjacent
5 housing areas for -- they are solely for Coast Guard
6 personnel, and they are adjacent to the base and the
7 Census Designated Place area that Daniel described
8 captures that housing. So, this is the population I think
9 that we intended and we intend to exclude from C&T
10 because these really are a more -- generally a more
11 transient population of Coast Guard and Coast Guard
12 dependents. So, I will be supporting this motion to turn
13 this into a proposal that we will -- it'll get analyzed
14 and we'll vote on it at the fall meeting. Sam, go ahead.
15

16 MR. ROHRER: This is Sam Rohrer. Call for
17 the question.
18

19 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
20 you, Sam. Are there any objections to the motion?
21

22 (No response)
23

24 Okay. Seeing none, that motion passes.
25 All right. So now I think we're going to take a break.
26 I'm going to give us a generous 15 minutes. We do have
27 a lot of people in the back. This will also give us a
28 chance to visit a bit with them. When we come back, we
29 will go to the Unalaska Lake drainage closure review and
30 start with that one. So come back in 15 minutes. Thanks.
31

32 (Off record)
33

34 (On record)
35

36 All right. If we can get council members
37 to head back to their seats, we'll get started here in
38 just a second.
39

40 (Pause)
41

42 All right. I think we have most of the
43 council members back. Before we jump into the closure
44 reviews, I did want to let people know that for the
45 Alaska Board of Game proposal discussion, again, we're
46 going to have the Kodiak AC Chair, Paul Chervenak, first
47 thing after lunch, which I anticipate will probably be
48 around 1:30-ish. He's going to come back, highlight what
49 the Kodiak AC, which met the last two days, things that
50 they decided to recommend. But there are some specific

1 proposals that right now it looks like we are going to
2 talk about today. So, I wanted to let people know those
3 proposal numbers. I do have the Board of Game proposal
4 book if people want to actually read the proposal
5 language, but the proposals we would look at, the first
6 category are the deer proposals, and these would be
7 discussed as a group. So, it would be one discussion.
8 Generally, these proposals look at increasing the non-
9 resident bag limit for deer. And those numbers are 199,
10 200, 201, 203, and 204. So basically 199 to 204 except
11 202.

12
13 Second set would be the mink proposal.
14 That's 241, and this would allow a year-round mink
15 trapping season. The next set has to do with using
16 infrared, like night vision goggles and artificial
17 light, that kind of thing, using that in trapping. So,
18 prohibiting the use of those devices in trapping. The
19 numbers on those are 245 to 248 and also 240. And then
20 the last one has to do with goats. This was an expansion
21 of the subsistence goat hunt, although it's not actually
22 subsistence. But that is proposal 220. So those are the
23 ones I expect we will definitely discuss when we get to
24 the Board of Game discussion. That doesn't prohibit
25 other proposals coming to the table, if people wanted
26 to talk about anything else. And again, I do have the
27 Board of Game book, if anybody needs to look at that.

28
29 Okay. We have all the council members
30 back at the table. So, we will now move to our first
31 fishery closure review. We'll start with Unalaska Lake
32 drainage, and Anna, if I could hand it over to you.

33
34 MS. SENECA: Absolutely. Anna Senecal,
35 OSM, for the record. Madam Chair, Members of the Council.
36 Let's see. So, I'll be presenting a summary analysis for
37 Fisheries Closure Review, FCR 27-04, the closure of
38 Unalaska Lake drainage to federal subsistence users. The
39 analysis begins on page 19 on your meeting materials,
40 and there's a map of the closure area on page 23. So as
41 stated before, this is a standard once every four-year
42 review of the closures. This one is specific to the
43 Unalaska Lake drainage. And it's the Board's policy that
44 federal public lands and waters should be reopened as
45 soon as practicable, once the conditions that originally
46 justified the closure have changed to such an extent
47 that the closure is no longer necessary. So, the purpose
48 of this review and the ones that will follow it, is to
49 determine if the closure is still needed.

50

1 All right. So, this review -- this
2 closure rather stands out from the rest of the suite in
3 that it is the oldest of the Unalaska area closures on
4 the books. It has been in place to my reading since
5 1968. So, when federal jurisdiction in non-navigable in
6 1991 and then navigable waters in 1999 was codified,
7 then it was decided throughout the state in many cases
8 to adopt state regulations, and this carried over into
9 federal regulations. So, these were adopted in our
10 federal regulations in 2001 and have continued ever
11 since. So, while this system is closed to both state and
12 federal subsistence uses, it does support a limited
13 sport fishery. And you have seen and reviewed this
14 closure previously. So, in 2020, the closure was first
15 reviewed and deferred for additional time and community
16 input.

17
18 In 2022, it was voted to keep the
19 closure in place, citing concerns around species
20 conservation, potential overharvest. The regulatory
21 cycle timing being out of sync, meaning that when the
22 closure reviewed, and when the subsequent parallel
23 proposal for conservation could be discussed, left open
24 -- to too much time would have passed and open it up to
25 conservation risk. And then also a need for law
26 enforcement. So, in 2023, the Board retained the status
27 quo in deference to this Council's fall 2022
28 recommendation. And the closure remains in place. And
29 so here we are today picking up the same closure.

30
31 So, a little bit of background.
32 Biologically, the system supports coho, pink, and
33 sockeye salmon and Dolly Varden. Throughout Unalaska
34 area, the sockeye salmon runs have declined since the
35 mid to late 1980s. And I'll preface this by saying the
36 biological background, some extent the regulatory
37 history and the cultural and traditional background for
38 all of these Unalaska reviews are going to be very
39 similar. Okay. These areas also don't have a lot of
40 great biological data available to us. Given that they
41 are remote, they're also often weather conditions that
42 preclude sampling and they're quite small. So, the
43 resources simply aren't available. The best data we have
44 do come from a series of aerial drone surveys that were
45 operated from 2018 to 2023, in response to the Unalaska
46 area salmon escapement information gap. So, the Unalaska
47 Native Fishermen's Association, the Unalaska
48 Corporation, pardon, and the City of Unalaska funded the
49 Aleutians Aerial LLC to conduct drone surveys along the
50 Unalaska road system drainages. These surveys were

1 provided to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for
2 analysis, and that's -- that provides a great foundation
3 for us to discuss and talk about.

4
5 So average escapements for that time
6 period, 2018 to 2023. For sockeye salmon was about 500
7 even year pinks 12,000 and odd 750. And it's noted that
8 the timing of the surveys just doesn't capture coho
9 movement. So, there's not great information there to
10 derive any inferences. In terms of cultural knowledge
11 and traditional practices and harvest history for the
12 area in general, we know that harvesting wild resources
13 has been and continues to be central to the identity and
14 culture and economy of the people. These resources are
15 customarily shared widely and also used as trade items
16 among residents to gain social status and prestige. So,
17 the state has conducted harvest surveys in 1994 and 2020.
18 And again, this is not for the particular drainage. This
19 is for the whole area. And what we have seen generally
20 a trend is a decline in the use of subsistence resources
21 in general and salmon specifically. So, between '94 and
22 2020, the pounds of subsistence foods used declined by
23 55%. Pounds of salmon use declined by 39%, and percent
24 of households using salmon reportedly, albeit declined
25 by 15%. Of the salmon used for subsistence, 80% or more
26 are sockeye, most of which come from McLees Lake and
27 Rice Bay, although the Unalaska Lake vicinity and other,
28 notably, Volcano Bay are also popularly reported. The
29 methods are predominantly subsistence, followed by rod
30 and reel, and then commercial harvest or home pack. And
31 I'll just note that although the Unalaska Lake vicinity
32 is not the predominant source of the subsistence
33 resources, it is noted that those road accessible
34 locations are important for a significant portion of the
35 community that don't have the resources and means to
36 access those further afield places that require fuel and
37 larger vessels, for example. However, there are concerns
38 with depletion of salmon stocks, habitat issues, and
39 lack of law enforcement in these areas.

40
41 So, the regulations in place, state and
42 federal subsistence fisheries are closed. There is a
43 small sport fishery. The whole drainage is closed to the
44 harvest of sockeye salmon. There's a small section of
45 the outlet stream that is open to sport fishing, and one
46 can have five salmon per day, five in possession, only
47 two of which may be coho. So OSM's preliminary conclusion
48 is to retain the status quo. That would mean that the
49 closure would continue and there would be -- we would
50 not be providing a priority for rural subsistence users.

1 So, this is the desire to provide subsistence
2 opportunity is weighed heavily against conservation
3 concern. This is a small, very accessible population
4 vulnerable to extirpation and noted the need for law
5 enforcement. A lot of this came from previous RAC
6 transcripts, really trying to incorporate the feedback
7 from the community and from this body into our analysis.
8 So, this system -- rescinding the closure would rely
9 heavily on in-season management using delegated
10 authority to close or restrict the fishery. This is not
11 only, you know, not only places somewhat of a burden,
12 heavy pressure on an individual, it might also introduce
13 more risk than you may want into the management of a
14 very vulnerable small salmon population. And with that,
15 that concludes my analysis of FCR27-04.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Are
18 there any questions from council members? Pat, go ahead.

19
20 MR. HOLMES: I think that was an
21 excellent summary. I've been in and out of Unalaska since
22 the early 60s and worked for the department for 27 years,
23 and probably half that time was out in the Aleutians and
24 Unalaska. And I think the points that you raised,
25 particularly on enforcement, small populations are very
26 significant. I know there's been some folks that really
27 want to open up Unalaska Lake and Iliuliuk to sport
28 fishing, but for Unalaska, I'm sorry, I don't have it.
29 I don't know if -- anyway, a few meetings back ago I
30 brought in an Aleutian salmon fly and gave it to the OSM
31 staff and basically a spark plug with three halibut hooks
32 welded on the bottom and a piece of yarn because out
33 there, snagging is such -- I mean, that's the way people
34 catch reds and in saltwater, in the fresh water if they
35 can get away with it. And that is part of the problem
36 on enforcement. And I think most of the people don't
37 really realize that when treble hooks are used and
38 snagging or fishing, even if it's a regular lure in the
39 small hook that cut across the fish and you really only
40 get maybe one out of ten cast to catch a fish. And if
41 those fish, once they -- as they're migrating into fresh
42 water, then those cuts become infected with fungus and
43 bacteria. And I -- forgive me, it's been too long since
44 I've kept up on the fisheries publications, but a large
45 portion of those die without being able to spawn. And
46 so, the whole question of having -- on those small
47 systems of having an increased harvest and the potential
48 for them to go in and be snagging or even using allowable
49 gear unless it was restricted to a fly or one hook. But
50 folks, I wish we had a photograph of Iliuliuk River

1 because most of it is like for me to Sam. I mean, it's
2 a narrow, small system and the lake is really small.
3 Over the decades when the military came in, they probably
4 filled in the upper third of the lake. And since then,
5 there was so much problems with sedimentation. The fish,
6 generally the sockeye only are stream spawners. I guess
7 this year with having that probably the highest run
8 they've had in decades, 2400 fish. Because that
9 happened, those -- a few of the fish did go upstream,
10 partially up, maybe a quarter mile up. But in the long
11 run, the habitat has been so destroyed and really needs
12 to have a lot of rehabilitation. I mean, it's just in
13 my mind, so critical to just leave it the way it is. I
14 called up and talked to two of the members of the Fish
15 and Game Advisory Committee. I sent out our brochures
16 and everything and tried to drum up some folks to try
17 to call in. And I don't think that the people's concerned
18 out there of the difficulties on habitat, salmon
19 numbers, enforcement. The closures that came about years
20 ago was as a result of what the community wanted to
21 have. And I don't think that's really changed. And so,
22 I would hope that when we address this, that we just
23 leave it at status quo because those -- that system is
24 just really delicate. The other ones on the road system
25 are even smaller. Summers Bay probably has a reasonable
26 amount of fish returning to it, reds. But it's a very
27 small system and really you only have about -- the
28 distance from the ocean to the lake is maybe the length
29 of this building, is really small. And so, I think
30 leaving status quo would be good. And thank you for your
31 report. I think it was spot on.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Daniel, go
34 ahead.

35
36 MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair.
37 And thank you, Anna, for this summary. One thing that
38 really stands out to me from Table 1 on page 27, looking
39 at the sockeye salmon numbers from 2025, and then before
40 that, you know, there's a pretty fairly large increase
41 in sockeye salmon escapement. Specifically, in the years
42 prior to 2025, a drone was flown. And I just remember
43 reading in the analysis that drones could severely
44 underestimate the amount of salmon that you're counting.
45 Is the tribe, to your knowledge, is the tribe going to
46 continue conducting escapements in the weir going
47 forward? Seems like that's a lot better of a way to
48 estimate the population. Thank you.

49
50

1 MS. SENEAL: That's a great question.
2 Thank you for that. Anna Senecal, for the record, through
3 the Chair. Mr. Smith, my understanding is that the tribe
4 does have some PCSRF -- some funding to continue the
5 operation of the weir, but I would reach out to them to
6 double check that. And yes, the drone surveys provide
7 indexed information, and it is notably different from
8 the weir counts. We actually have paired data for the
9 McLees system. There are three years in which there was
10 a weir and there was also an aerial survey. And the
11 discrepancy ranged from somewhere in the 20s to into the
12 90s. And I think there was some sampling there as well.
13 But so, there is a discrepancy. So, we're more, you
14 know, we're looking at general trends obviously over
15 time. But yes, when there are -- when there is funding
16 available, a weir is always preferred.

17
18 MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Is there
21 a motion for this item?

22
23 MR. RICHARDSON: I move to.....

24
25 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Retain?

26
27 MR. RICHARDSON: Yeah, we'll retain the
28 closure.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Is there
31 a second?

32
33 MR. HOLMES: Second.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Scott has
36 his hand up. Oh, are we not? We're not taking action.
37 Sorry. I take it back. These are not actually action items.
38 These are more informational to generate regulatory
39 proposals. All right. Okay. Thank you for that. But when
40 we get to the fall, you do plan on making a motion to
41 retain the closure. All right. Go ahead, Brett.

42
43 MR. RICHARDSON: Brett Richardson,
44 Unalaska. So, I went to the Advisory Committee meeting
45 on Friday, which I think they threw together at the last
46 minute just because I prompted them on this. And we
47 spoke about this at length. Majority of people on the
48 AC are subsistence users and have access to other
49 subsistence users in the area. And so, we went over each
50 one of the closures and just general, you know, asking

1 why they were being reviewed. Things we've already gone
2 over, but general -- I don't know, yeah, the idea that
3 we would reopen Town Creek was received with a kind of
4 general horrified eyes. Nobody who subsists in Unalaska
5 would do it there. The sockeye run as noted through the
6 weir, that information is very good. But as Pat pointed
7 out, I think it's still in recovery mode. There may be
8 historical data, pre-World War II that people were
9 netting fish in the lake, but nobody's done that for
10 years. And sports fishing in the area is -- very, very
11 few people would put a rod and reel in there. Nobody's
12 snagging in the river. Everybody's snagging in (In
13 Native) Bay, right behind the hotel, and then out at
14 Summers Bay into the bay itself. Those are the two areas
15 where people go to cast with rod and reel with the treble
16 hooks. To even think of trying to subsist in this area
17 is -- it's a majority pink run. Again, the sockeyes were
18 a surprise this year. I don't think you could target any
19 one species and be successful in catching what you try
20 to. Anybody puts a rod and reel in there and you're
21 going to come with most mostly Dollies as far as my
22 experience goes.

23
24 So yeah, retaining the closures, the way
25 to go. It's too close to the high-density town
26 population. It's too much going on once the fish actually
27 get through the river, into the lake, through. As Pat
28 pointed out, the kind of destroyed areas at the head of
29 the lake and then into the river beyond. You know, they
30 have a chance to spawn and hopefully they haven't been
31 damaged too much to get that done. And so, we need to
32 leave the fish actually entering the system in as much
33 peace as possible. So, everybody I talked to in the area
34 recommends to retain the closure and I agree.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
37 you. Any other questions or comments on this closure
38 review?

39
40 (No response)

41
42 Okay. Seeing none. Like I said, we're
43 going to move the Summers and Morris Bay closer to the
44 bottom of the list. So next up would be FCR27-06,
45 Unalaska Bay freshwater streams. Sorry, go ahead.

46
47 MS. HONIG: Okay. Anna, real quick,
48 before you begin, I just wanted to do another brief
49 instruction for those online. I've noticed a few other
50 people who have come online. If they want to address the

1 Council, they can raise their hand in the Team's platform
2 or you can press star-five to raise your hand and I will
3 see that, and we can call on you at the appropriate
4 time. Okay. Thanks for that.

5
6 MS. SENEAL: All right. Anna Senecal,
7 OSM. Madam Chair, Members of the Council. So, we're here
8 now discussing FCR 27-06, the closure of Unalaska-based
9 streams to federal subsistence users. This analysis
10 begins on page 71 of your meeting materials, and there
11 is a map of the closure on page 76. And zooming out
12 again, apologies. I was unclear. All of the analysis
13 presentations of these closure reviews are for your
14 information. They will become action items at your fall
15 meeting. Any parallel proposals you may consider
16 submitting relating to these closures would happen
17 today. That is your action item and that is why you are
18 being presented with this information now.

19
20 So, with that in mind, moving on. So
21 regulatory history for the next three closure reviews
22 is the same. So, in 1997, the State of Alaska issued an
23 emergency order closing on Alaska-based streams to
24 subsistence and commercial salmon fishing. And then the
25 state subsistence fishery permanently closed in 1998.
26 Those state regulations were carried over to the federal
27 books once the non-navigable and the navigable waters
28 jurisdictions were decided, and they were formally
29 adopted in 2001 and have continued ever since. So, while
30 this system is closed to state and federal subsistence
31 uses, similar to the other reviews, it does support a
32 limited sport fishery. So, the Council history, again
33 you have seen this previously in 2020. The closure was
34 first reviewed and deferred for additional time for
35 community input. In 2022, the Council voted to keep the
36 closure in place, citing concerns around species
37 conservation, overharvest, regulatory cycle, timing, and
38 the need for local law enforcement. And then in the
39 following year at their meeting, the Board retained the
40 status quo in deference to the Council.

41
42 Biological background. We have the same
43 suite of data to pull on for all of these systems. So,
44 it is limited. It is the best available. The primary
45 drainages, and forgive my novice pronunciation, we have
46 the Iliuliuk, the Makushin. Feel free to correct me.
47 Nateekin and Shaishnikof Rivers, and Summers and Morris
48 Lake drainages. There's a variety of species associated
49 with each system. Chum, coho, pink, Dolly Varden. Some
50 have some -- I won't go down the list. It is in your

1 meeting materials. We have previously discussed that the
2 sockeye salmon runs in Unalaska have declined in general
3 since the mid- to late 1980s, and the permanent closure
4 of subsistence fishing on Unalaska Lake shifted
5 subsistence fishing efforts towards Reese Bay and
6 Mcleese Lake watershed. So those are the predominant
7 sources of subsistence salmon harvest.

8
9 Information is limited. These are small
10 remote systems. They're difficult to access, and the
11 surveys are expensive. So, we have reviewed previously,
12 as stated, the available data overlapping with this
13 closure already. So, we have Unalaska, Summer and Morris
14 Lakes' aerial surveys, and we have the Unalaska Lake
15 weir in 2025. The cultural knowledge and traditional
16 practices. The harvest history is the same as previously
17 discussed. Madam Chair, would you like me to reiterate
18 that?

19
20 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: I'm not seeing nods
21 from around the table, so I think we're good.

22
23 MS. SENEAL: Okay. Thank you. For
24 regulations again, state and federal subsistence
25 fisheries are both closed. There is a sport fishery
26 excluding king salmon. 20 -- salmon over 20 inches, you
27 may possess five per day or in possession under 20
28 inches, it's ten and ten. And what are the areas that
29 are open on the Nateekin and Makushin Rivers, it's
30 downstream of regulatory markers. So, I mean the high
31 points are, it's very specific, small, pinpointed
32 sections of these watersheds. We previously discussed
33 the Unalaska Lake outlet stream. There's a small portion
34 that's open there. And then Summers Lake and 250-yard
35 radius of the outlet stream mouth for a season, January
36 1st through August 15th. So, they are limited. The sport
37 fisheries are limited.

38
39 There were a couple of alternatives
40 considered when we looked at this area. So, one was to
41 rescind and come with a parallel proposal. So, this would
42 support federal subsistence opportunity. It would open
43 it up to subsistence use. However, and with the proposal
44 to restrict the open areas, to limit gear types, and
45 limits allowed would offer those conservation measures.
46 This is preferred; however, it is out of scope for a
47 closure review. As we discussed earlier, within the
48 framework of the closure review, you can only modify the
49 existing closure. You can't come with new things. That
50 requires a separate proposal. So, with that in mind, our

1 preliminary conclusion is to rescind the closure. So,
2 the area is closed to subsistence but open to sport
3 fishing. Rescinding here would not affect other closures
4 in place. Namely Unalaska Lake and Summers and Morris
5 Lakes. And these are the most accessible fisheries with
6 conservation concerns. So, taking this option without a
7 parallel proposal would rely heavily on the in-season
8 manager using their delegated authority and reviewing
9 the limited data that are available to make those
10 decisions to either close or restrict the fishery. A RAC
11 proposal would relieve the in-season manager of this
12 obligation and institute consistent conservation
13 measures, irregardless of who is in that position and
14 what resources they have, what data are available. And
15 that, Madam Chair, concludes my presentation.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Are
18 there any questions on the report? Brett, go ahead.

19
20 MR. RICHARDSON: I'm Brett Richardson. A
21 quick question about Shaishnikof River. Is that
22 completely closed to sports fishing, or is there a
23 designated area kind of like Makushin and Nateekin
24 Rivers?

25
26 MS. SENEAL: Anna Senecal, OSM, through
27 the Chair. Mr. Richardson, I don't have that here in my
28 notes handy. Somebody in the room, perhaps our folks
29 with the state. Do you know that off the top of heads?
30 Perhaps we're able to pull up state sport fish
31 regulations. Maybe.....

32
33 (Simultaneous speech)

34
35 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: We can also give
36 them a chance to find it and if they find it in the next
37 ten minutes. Unless you've got something, Scott.

38
39 MR. AYERS: Madam Chair. Yeah. Thank you
40 for the question. I have pulled up the state's sport
41 fishing regulations. I will say I can't speak
42 definitively for the state, obviously, because I'm just
43 reading the book here. In this region, there are special
44 regulations for the Aleutian Islands freshwaters and
45 there are a couple of specific drainages mentioned. The
46 one in particular for Shaishnikof is not listed.
47 However, there is an Unalaska Bay drainages category
48 here where it says, for coho, chum, sockeye, and pink
49 salmon in combo five per day, five in possession, only
50 two of which may be coho salmon and only two of which

1 may be sockeye salmon. And I would presume, given that
2 there's no clear indication that this is a closed
3 location, that that would count for there.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Are
6 there any other questions? Natasha, go ahead.

7

8 MS. HAYDEN: Thanks, Madam Chair.
9 Natasha. My question is, the alternative that was
10 analyzed is to rescind the closure but have us create a
11 proposal to modify the regulation to reflect what is an
12 existing regulation that the state has right now and
13 that includes the State of Alaska subsistence
14 regulation. And so, my question -- that's correct,
15 right? Is that was what part of what was analyzed for
16 the alternative?

17

18 MS. SENEAL: Anna Senecal, OSM, through
19 the Chair. Ms. Hayden, what was analyzed, pardon, was
20 to rescind the closure. So set that aside and we're not
21 making changes to that now. We're considering a new
22 proposal to come forward and protect the -- be
23 conservative and protect the runs, protect the species
24 there. So that could, without putting words in the RAC's
25 mouth, that could look like regulations that mirror
26 state sport fish regulations. It could look like
27 something else. It could look like regulations that
28 allow for a little bit more, different limits, for
29 example, or timings or areas that would really be at the
30 discretion of this body. But what was analyzed at a very
31 high level was rescinding the closure, and once you
32 rescinded it, opens it up to the area wide federal
33 subsistence regulations. So that's use of nets are at
34 your disposal. And it's 25 salmon per household -- per
35 person plus 25 per each member of the household. So, if
36 that seems like that would open up potential overharvest
37 situations, then you could come with a proposal for this
38 area that would restrict the area, could restrict the
39 time, could, you know, you have all of those options
40 available to you, but mirroring the state subsistence
41 regulations was not something that we analyzed.

42

43 MS. HAYDEN: Thank you for that follow
44 up. This is Natasha. The -- rescinding the closures would
45 then -- and then if we didn't put forward a proposal,
46 it would -- the new circumstances of there not being a
47 closure would then -- that if there was like poor run
48 return -- poor returns in a year that there would be in-
49 season management. There would -- there's still like --
50 that would be the mechanism for protecting the run if

00049

1 there is low returns. And that means like if we do
2 nothing, that would be the process for that system. Is
3 that correct? These systems.

4
5 MS. SENEAL: Through the Chair. That is
6 correct.

7
8 MS. HAYDEN: Okay. Thank you.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Scott, do you have
11 something to add?

12
13 MR. AYERS: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair.
14 I just wanted to say again that right now the process
15 that we're going through is simply to determine -- to
16 let you know where we're at. We're going to go through
17 the closures. These are going to be coming to the Council
18 in the fall. There's no action being taken by the
19 Council. Our recommendation for your early viewing and
20 understanding of the proposal is out there right now.
21 However, this closure is still in place. It will be at
22 the Council's discretion this fall, what to do with it.
23 This is just an opportunity to decide if you want to
24 provide a parallel proposal to go with this closure.
25 Thanks.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yep. And I think
28 we do have a proposal for a regulatory proposal. Okay.
29 Does somebody want to make a motion to start the proposal
30 process? Go ahead, Brett.

31
32 MR. RICHARDSON: Motion to start the
33 proposal process on -- do you need -- is FCR27-06.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: No, that's the
36 fishery closure review. We're not taking action on that.
37 What you're doing is -- and I'm sorry, so this is where
38 I'm going a little -- I changed the agenda. So, we had
39 the fishery closure presented. We're not taking action
40 on that. But now there's an opportunity for the RAC to
41 generate a change in the regulations. So right now,
42 you're going to propose a fisheries regulation for this
43 area. And then you can describe it and just give a kind
44 of a high level what do you want this new regulation to
45 look like. So, your motion would be that.

46
47 MR. RICHARDSON: Motion to propose a
48 change to the fisheries regulations.

49
50

1 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: And then go ahead
2 and state generally what you're changing, what you want
3 it to look like. So basically what you emailed to me,
4 just say that.

5
6 MR. RICHARDSON: Okay. Well, we would
7 support rescinding the closure and proposing a new
8 proposal to mirror sport regulations in the area.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Is there a
11 second?

12
13 MR. HOLMES: Could you clarify that? I
14 don't quite understand.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yes. So, the motion
17 is to -- for the RAC to generate a fisheries proposal
18 that would make the federal management of subsistence
19 on the stream we're talking about, which is Unalaska Bay
20 freshwater streams, to make the federal subsistence
21 regulations basically the same as what the state sport
22 regulations are. So, in essence, that provides some
23 protection. So, if we rescind the closure, then the
24 general federal subsistence regulations go into place.
25 And that would allow using nets and having 25 fish per
26 household, plus you can get additional fish. I'm going
27 to put a little bit of words in Brett's mouth, but my
28 understanding from Brett is that the community was
29 concerned with that, that that was too liberal. And so,
30 what they're proposing is to mirror the state
31 regulations, which are in essence, more restrictive. And
32 so, we have a motion. Is there a second.....

33
34 (Simultaneous speech)

35
36 MS. CHERNOFF: Second.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER:for Brett's?
39 Coral, thank you for the second. We'll go back to Pat.

40
41 MR. HOLMES: The state sport fish
42 regulations or the state subsistence regs?

43
44 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: The state sport
45 fish regulations. And again, not to put words in Brett's
46 mouth, but my understanding is that's because they are
47 more conservative as far as gear type and limits. Brett,
48 go ahead.

49
50

1 MR. RICHARDSON: So, just to explain a
2 little bit, this would mostly affect off-the-road system
3 Makushin and Nateekin. The question I had about
4 Shaishnikof was because it is on the road system at the
5 far end. So Makushin and Nateekin are regulated by a
6 marker that is two miles from -- roughly two miles from
7 the mouth of the streams where there is no sports fishing
8 from that point on upstream. From that marker
9 downstream, there's a five salmon limit, two sockeye,
10 two coho, and one other all year. So, I think five in
11 possession, five bag limit catch per day. And what was
12 that? And five in possession is the state sport
13 regulation in those areas. And so, we would just be
14 opening that up to federally qualified subsistence users
15 to do the same thing. And the other major change would
16 be obviously not using a net, but rod and reel.

17

18 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
19 you, Brett. Are there additional questions for the maker
20 of the motion? Natasha, go ahead.

21

22 MS. HAYDEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. This
23 is Natasha, for the record. Can you -- you just said
24 that there's -- the way that the sport reg is now that
25 there's markers two miles inland from the ocean and
26 that's where the sport fishing can occur is below that
27 or above that?

28

29 MR. RICHARDSON: Through the Chair. Above
30 the marker upstream, no fishing allowed. Below the
31 marker downstream to the mouth, it's allowed currently.

32

33 MS. HAYDEN: Okay, thank you for that.
34 So, but the -- so your motion is to not allow any
35 subsistence gear fishing. It would be only sport fishing
36 gear in the river. Is that correct?

37

38 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So just to clarify
39 that gear used for subsistence purposes can include rod
40 and reel. So, I think what you're asking is yes, he's
41 limiting it to rod and reel, but that is a gear -- an
42 appropriate gear type that can be used for subsistence.
43 Go ahead, Natasha.

44

45 MS. HAYDEN: Right. Thank you, Madam
46 Chair. But that's not what I'm asking, because in the
47 subsistence regulation, it says, under lawful gear and
48 gear specifications, salmon may be taken by seine and
49 gillnet or with gear specified on the subsistence
50 fishing permit, which would include rod and reel. And

1 so, what my question is, is that what you're proposing
2 would not allow seine and gillnet fishing under the
3 federal subsistence fishing proposal?

4

5 MR. RICHARDSON: Correct. From the mouth
6 of the river to the marker.

7

8 MS. HAYDEN: I'm sorry. Just, do -- so
9 is it allowed -- seine fishing is allowed in river, from
10 the mouth of the river to the marker out in saltwater?
11 The saltwater marker?

12

13 MR. RICHARDSON: Through the Chair. The
14 marker is two miles inland along the river. Yeah, upriver
15 you have to -- from the mouth hike two miles, there's
16 the marker. From that point, no fishing of any kind is
17 allowed downstream to the mouth where the bay begins.
18 You can use the rod and reel at this time.

19

20 MS. HAYDEN: Okay. Thank you. No, so I
21 think -- so, I understand that that's the rod and reel
22 in river fishing for subsistence. But currently the
23 state regulation allows for seine and gillnet fishing
24 in saltwater. And so, what I'm asking is, does this
25 motion not include seine and gillnet fishing in
26 saltwater? Is it only -- does it mean that that is not
27 a legal method of obtaining your subsistence fish using
28 a seine and gillnet outside of in in saltwater?

29

30 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, I think we have
31 Anna raising her hand. So, just to clarify, right now
32 federal subsistence fishing is completely closed on the
33 stream. So, what we're seeking to do is open it up.
34 Brett's proposal would open it up with some limitations.
35 And then we have a question that Natasha just posed. Is
36 there state subsistence in this area? I thought you said
37 there was not, but I might have misunderstood, but go
38 ahead.

39

40 MS. SENEAL: Yeah. Anna Senecal, OSM,
41 through the Chair. So, Ms. Hayden, there is a state
42 subsistence marine fishery that this closure and these
43 proposals do not affect. So, the use of nets in the
44 marine subsistence fishery are unchanged. We're talking
45 about the waters under federal jurisdiction, which are
46 the fresh waters.

47

48 MS. HAYDEN: Follow up, Madam Chair.

49

50 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Natasha, go ahead.

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MS. HAYDEN: Thanks. Natasha Hayden. So that helps clarify that jurisdiction under the federal program is only in-river, like it would not include -- we don't -- the subsistence program doesn't have jurisdiction over subsistence in saltwater.

MS. SENEAL: We do not. Well, typically. Here we do not.

MS. HAYDEN: Okay. And the reason why I'm asking that is because we do here in Kodiak, right. We have saltwater -- we have subsistence -- jurisdiction over subsistence in saltwater in Kodiak. But that's not the case for these systems over here? Is that correct?

MS. SENEAL: That is my understanding.

MS. HAYDEN: Okay. That's why I was asking, and I do understand the -- what we're attempting to do is to lift the closure, but I'm just -- if there's subsistence available -- subsistence opportunities available through the state in saltwater, but not in the federal program. I'm just wanting to make sure that there's not opportunities for the state program that are then therefore not available through the federal program as well. So -- but it sounds like there's no jurisdiction in saltwater. Okay. So great. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. So, I think we're at the stage of questions for the maker of the motion. Coral, go ahead.

MS. CHERNOFF: Thank you. Yeah. I just wanted to clarify. So, you -- this is adopting the limits, the methods and means, and the boundary markers of the state? Or mirroring those things from the state?

MR. RICHARDSON: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Daniel, go ahead.

MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair. Following up on that question, would -- so Iliuliuk Creek or Town Creek, would that also be included within this motion?

MR. RICHARDSON: Not included.

1 MR. SMITH: Okay. Because -- so in the
2 sport fishing regulations on page 75 for the Iliuliuk
3 River drainage -- so the downstream portion from the
4 Church Hole would be open. Is that right? Because that's
5 open under sport fishing regs.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Anna, if you want
8 to jump in, I'm guessing this is a difference between
9 state jurisdiction and federal jurisdiction.

10
11 MS. SENEAL: So many things at play.
12 Anna Senecal, OSM, through the Chair. Mr. Smith, so the
13 keeping the closure in place -- the federal closure of
14 the Unalaska Lake drainage keeps that closed. So, we
15 have regulations on top of regulations. So, that's
16 protected. And similarly with Summers and Morris Lakes,
17 whatever this body decides to do that will remain in
18 place. And then we have the Unalaska Bay. Does that make
19 sense?

20
21 MR. SMITH: Yeah, it does. And so,
22 there's just so Iliuliuk River and then Summers and
23 Morris. Those are separate closures. Okay. That makes
24 sense. Thank you.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Sam, go
27 ahead.

28
29 MR. ROHRER: Thanks, through the Chair.
30 I guess, if the proposed federal subsistence regulations
31 mirror the state regulations and don't open up any
32 additional opportunity, I guess my position's kind --
33 or my question is, what's the point? It's the same
34 people. It's the same fish. You're putting it in the
35 same freezer. Like it really doesn't matter what
36 regulation you're -- whether you're catching those fish
37 under federal regulation or under state regulation. If
38 all the seasons and bag limits mirror each other, the
39 fish don't care what regulation they were killed under,
40 and I certainly don't care when I put them in, you know,
41 when I put them on my grill and eat them. So, I guess
42 kind of, what's the point is my question. Thanks.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, I can take a
45 stab at that. I agree the fish probably don't care, but
46 the federal subsistence program does, and the federal
47 subsistence program provides a subsistence priority to
48 federally qualified users. So, if those in those areas,
49 if there is a sport opportunity under state regs, but
50 federal subsistence is closed, that creates a

1 disconnect, given the priorities that are inherent in
2 the federal subsistence program. So that would be my
3 response. I don't know Anna, if you want to correct me
4 or further respond. Thanks.

5
6 MS. SENEAL: No correction. Thank you.
7 Anna Senecal, OSM, through the Chair. Mr. Rohrer, so,
8 where the priority comes into play is during times of
9 conservation concerns, there is still in-season
10 management, there's still delegated authority so that
11 federal jurisdiction could be closed to non-federally
12 qualified users. And the qualified -- federally
13 qualified subsistence users could continue to harvest.

14
15 MR. ROHRER: Yeah. Thanks. That's the
16 difference. Yeah.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Coal, go ahead.

19
20 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah. I want to go back
21 to what Daniel was asking about Town Creek. So, in here
22 in the -- it says, waters are closed to sport fishing.
23 And it says, is closed to sport fishing for sockeye
24 salmon at the bottom of 75. Page 75. I guess my question
25 was, are there more than -- are there other salmon that
26 are in that area other than sockeye? Okay.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, there was
29 nodding that yes, there are other salmon in that system
30 other than sockeye.

31
32 MS. CHERNOFF: Oh, yeah. And I guess
33 because I asked so also the limits include the amount
34 of fish, the method and means, the boundaries, and some
35 of the type of salmon is you're adopting from the state
36 regs? So, there's.....

37
38 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Brett, go ahead.

39
40 MR. RICHARDSON: Correct. Five total, two
41 coho, two sockeye, one whatever else happens to be
42 present. And just to further comment on that, the
43 likelihood of getting two coho and two sockeye at the
44 same time is incredibly unlikely, right. So, you could
45 not hit your bag limit at all on a very good day.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Sam, go ahead.

48
49 MR. ROHRER: Thanks, through the Chair.
50 Is there a C&T determination for the salmon fisheries

00056

1 in this area, or that would be needed if you wanted to
2 open this?

3

4 MS. SENEAL: Anna Senecal, OSM. I'm
5 scanning the room for my anthropologist. Yes, sir. You
6 are correct. Through the Chair. Mr. Rohrer, you would -
7 - there has to be a C&T in place for subsistence to take
8 place. Yeah.

9

10 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Is Dr. Roberts
11 lurking out in the hallway? So, there is no C&T
12 currently? Was that the answer or...?

13

14 DR. ROBERTS: Through the Chair. Mr.
15 Ayers, calling out a lifeline for you. I believe there
16 is currently a C&T. I do not have my reg book right in
17 front of me.

18

19 (Pause)

20

21 Yep. So, through the Chair. The C&T for
22 the Aleutian Islands area applies to all fish, and it's
23 for residents of the Aleutian Islands area and the
24 Pribilof Islands.

25

26 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thank you.
27 Jeff.

28

29 MR. WASLEY: Jeff Wasley. Brett, just for
30 you, like, are there non-federally qualified subsistence
31 users in the area fishing a lot in these remote rivers?
32 Thank you.

33

34 MR. RICHARDSON: Through the Chair. There
35 are some. I don't know that I would say it's a lot.
36 Again, the two main rivers in question require some boat
37 to get out to or maybe a kayak if it's a great day. But
38 it's difficult to get out there. And most people probably
39 targeting halibut if they have a day to get out on a
40 boat, so to go river fishing. Again, it's happened, we've
41 heard about it, but it's -- there's not a huge population
42 doing this.

43

44 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Any
45 further questions for the maker of the motion?

46

47 (No response)

48

49 Are there any comments on the motion?

50

1 (No comments)

2

3 And then after this we will proceed to
4 vote on the motion. Okay. I'll make comments. I do intend
5 to support the motion. The idea or the concept for this
6 really came out of the community. That the community
7 where this fishery is located and the impacted
8 subsistence users. So, I am going to support their
9 recommendation that this is the course of action they
10 feel is most appropriate. So, I will be voting in favor
11 of the motion. All right. We will try this. Is there any
12 objection to the motion?

13

14 (No response)

15

16 Okay. Seeing none, that passes. And I
17 should have asked this before. Anna, do you have all the
18 information you need for what you need to do as a next
19 step? Was the motion clear enough? You're good?

20

21 MS. SENEAL: I believe so.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
24 you. Okay. We will now move on to the closure review.
25 And then the same as we did here, we'll review the
26 closure. And then if there's a proposed regulatory
27 proposal, we will deal with that. But this is the McLees
28 Lake drainage fishery closure review. Anna.

29

30 MS. SENEAL: Anna Senecal, OSM. Madam
31 Chair, members of the Council. So here we are talking
32 about the fisheries closure review FCR27-07. This is
33 informational. This is not an action item. Regarding the
34 closure of McLees Lake to federal subsistence users, the
35 analysis begins on page 95 of your meeting materials.
36 And there is a map on page 100. The regulatory history
37 mirrors the previous analysis. So, there is state
38 emergency orders in '97 that closed Unalaska Bay streams
39 to subsistence and commercial salmon fishing, and then
40 the state subsistence fishery permanently closed in '98.
41 The state regulations carried over to federal
42 regulations when jurisdiction change, moved into non-
43 navigable and navigable waters and were adopted in 2001
44 and have continued ever since. And while the system is
45 closed to those subsistence uses, it does support a
46 limited sport fishery. The Council has seen this closure
47 review as well. So, it was first discussed in 2020 and
48 deferred for community input, revisited in 2022, and
49 voted to keep in place, citing concerns, the same ones,
50 overharvest, cycle timing discrepancies, and the lack

1 of law enforcement. And in '23, the Board deferred to
2 the Council's recommendations and kept the closure in
3 place, so it has been closed since then.

4
5 The biological background is a little
6 different. In this case, there is some additional data.
7 So, the watershed produces mainly sockeye salmon. We
8 have discussed the general declines in the areas and
9 permanent closures in other subsistence fisheries, the
10 historically popular fisheries shifted subsistence
11 efforts towards this area. So, it's an important area
12 for subsistence. And this area has more information than
13 others. So, there's the older aerial surveys from the
14 mid-70s to the 2000s. In addition, the Qawalangin Tribe
15 and ADF&G and Fish and Wildlife Service have funded and
16 or operated a weir on the system periodically. So, 2001
17 to '17 and then 2020 to 2023. Intermittent funding has
18 affected those operations. And then of course we have
19 the drone survey data as well. So, sockeye salmon
20 escapements have ranged from a high of over 100,000 in
21 2002 to a low of around 5,000 in 2020, with a recent
22 three-year average, that's '21 through '24, of around
23 19,000. And I do -- we discussed this earlier. I do want
24 to note that there are some years of overlapping drone
25 survey and weir data 2020, 2021, and 2023. And it looks
26 like drones underestimate the weir counts by about 50%.

27
28 Cultural knowledge and traditional
29 practice harvest history is the same for this area. Just
30 at a very high level, we've seen the subsistence
31 resources use decline and specifically salmon used since
32 the mid-90s. The most important resource reported is our
33 sockeye salmon. And we do see people using rod and reel
34 current -- under current conditions, but the subsistence
35 harvest means and methods are the most relied upon. This
36 fishery is a little different in that it is somewhat
37 self-limiting due to its location. It requires a boat,
38 requires fuel, requires a weather window. So, there's
39 some luck, some planning, and some cost that is required.
40 As was stated at a previous RAC meeting, there is always
41 escapement. People can't be out there all the time.

42
43 The regulations in place. So currently
44 state and federal fisheries are closed. There is a
45 limited sport fishery which looks to be the same as --
46 the regulations mirror what is in place for the general
47 Unalaska Bay area streams. So, that's excluding king
48 salmon. Salmon over 20 inches, that's five per day or
49 five in possession and under 20 inches, ten and ten. An
50 alternative considered was to rescind the closure and

1 come forth with a parallel proposal, very similar to
2 what this Council just discussed with regards to FCR27-
3 06, the Unalaska Bay freshwater stream closure. So, this
4 would remove the federal closure but put in place
5 conservation-minded regulations that may mirror state
6 sport fish regulations. This was preferred, however, out
7 of scope for a closure review as we have discussed.

8
9 So given all that, the OSM conclusion
10 is to rescind the closure noting that it is close to
11 subsistence and open to sport. So, there's an
12 opportunity to provide a priority for federally
13 qualified subsistence users. The location is less
14 accessible, and thus less prone to conservation concerns
15 as compared to road system watersheds. It still relies
16 on in-season management and the manager using their
17 delegated authority to close or restrict the fishery
18 limiting limits or means, for example. But a RAC proposal
19 would somewhat relieve this in-season manager of the
20 obligation and institute consistent conservation
21 measures. As discussed previously, however, that in-
22 season management and delegation of authority would
23 still exist at the discretion of that manager during
24 times of conservation concern to provide for that
25 priority. And so with that, that concludes my
26 presentation.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great. Thank you.
29 Are there questions on the presentation? Daniel, go
30 ahead.

31
32 MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair.
33 This is Daniel Smith. Kind of a similar question from
34 two closures ago, I think. So, in Table 1 you mentioned
35 that it's roughly 50% compared to the weir count from
36 the aerial drone count. That the aerial count roughly
37 about 50% of the actual count. To me, it sounds like
38 that's a -- it's quite variable. Like 2021 is, you know,
39 13,000 in the aerial, 16,000 in the wire count. And then
40 2023, not even 1,000, but the actual weir count was
41 around almost 27,000. What is like the confidence
42 interval in that 50%? Is it pretty skewed?

43
44 MS. SENEAL: Great question. Anna
45 Senecal, OSM, through the Chair. Mr. Smith, so I haven't
46 -- I have my interpretations. I did not collect these
47 data. We had a sample size of three, so that's not great
48 to begin with. Those are the years where the weir data
49 and the aerial surveys overlap. The differences ranged
50 from 21% to 96%. The sample sizes for the aerial survey

1 were -- seemed very low. I assume, so this is my
2 interpretation piece, I assume that the estimates based
3 on aerial surveys are very subject to environmental
4 conditions such as visibility. So I don't think that --
5 I wouldn't imagine that there would be a consistently
6 accurate correlation or correction factor if you're
7 trying to relate the results of the aerial drones to a
8 weir. It's my interpretation.

9
10 MR. SMITH: Yeah. And so, I'm just
11 thinking, you know, so with the long-term variability
12 comparing weir and drone counts, is there not like a way
13 that you could use like a correction factor in terms of
14 like, okay, maybe a weir isn't needed and rather a drone,
15 which is, you know, more cost effective in the long run.
16 Is the variability too much to like use a correction
17 factor at this point?

18
19 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: I thought you just
20 spoke to that, but go ahead.

21
22 MS. SENEAL: Yeah. Anna Senecal, OSM,
23 through the Chair. Mr. Smith, I simply don't know. I
24 think it would be a very interesting thing to explore.
25 There are a lot of caveats. I think you would need a lot
26 of anecdotal information regarding weather and
27 conditions, just the environment in which the survey
28 took place and given perfect, replicable conditions,
29 could you relate the two? I don't know. At the end of
30 the day, it is an index. So, we're looking for trends
31 over time. Did it increase? Did it decrease? By what
32 factor and what were the conditions affecting the
33 surveys? It really -- in this area, my read is we do the
34 best with what we have. And you know better than I given
35 your ties to the community in the area. It's a great
36 question.

37
38 MR. SMITH: Thank you.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Pat.

41
42 MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair. You know,
43 having flown surveys on that lake and being an ardent
44 supporter of the weir, the problems are -- is in the
45 distribution of the fish when they come in. There are
46 some shore spawners, but there's not a lot of shore
47 spawning area. The fish often hold in deep water before
48 they go up the stream. And one of the major factors
49 there, I think, that inhibit the drones are the lake
50 itself. And so, if you have a warm summer, Arnie Shaw,

1 who was the area manager out there for close to 30 years
2 in Cold Bay but would fly the surveys, and then his
3 predecessor, Glenn Davenport, is that when you have a
4 warm summer, the lake can get so murky with plankton
5 that you can't see diddly squat until the fish -- the
6 ones that are going up the river, go up the river. And
7 so, it's really, really, really difficult. But I think
8 to have a direct proportional index between the weir
9 count and trying to do it with the drones that just
10 won't work. Unalaska Lake, all the fish, almost all of
11 them are shore spawners and the water's relatively
12 shallow, even though it gets mucky at times, that's a
13 place where, you know, you might be able to develop
14 something, but the weather out there and the amount of
15 light is just such a critical factor on being able to
16 count the fish, that I don't really think that you could
17 come up and say, okay, we have an aerial -- I don't
18 think aerial surveys could ever replace the weir. I mean,
19 that's why there was so much emphasis on getting that
20 weir in and our continued attempts to try to, I mean,
21 not that weir has as much priority in our region as a
22 the Buskin here. And it's just -- can't do it, you know.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thanks.
25 Coral, go ahead.

26
27 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah. This is Coral. I
28 have a question. In this information we have under the
29 OSM conclusions, under effects, there is a statement
30 here that under federal regulations, harvesters would
31 not be required to purchase a \$20 license, and it would
32 require a state subsistence permit since there are no
33 federal subsistence permits. It's my understanding, I
34 thought I've seen in the book where some areas don't
35 have permits. So, is it a possibility that people would
36 be subsistence fishing but not under a permit? So that's
37 question one. And then question two. If it's under a
38 state subsistence permit, what is the process for
39 sharing that information or would it be stated under
40 there that people would be fishing under a state
41 subsistence, but actually under federal subsistence?

42
43 MS. SENEAL: I'm trying -- Anna Senecal,
44 OSM, trying to capture your questions, through the
45 Chair, Ms. Chernoff. So, the first question, are people
46 subsistence fishing, but not under a state permit? Was
47 that the first question?

48
49 MS. CHERNOFF: No.
50

1 MS. SENEAL: Federal permit?

2

3 MS. CHERNOFF: Yes. I believe there are
4 some areas where they have subsistence fishing, but
5 they're not under a permit of any sort. I believe some
6 areas have no permits because they essentially have no
7 place to get them.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Scott Ayers is
10 approaching the microphone.

11

12 MR. AYERS: Thank you for the question.
13 Through the Chair, this is Scott Ayers. Yeah, it's
14 variable across the state whether or not a permit is
15 required for harvest of subsistence. In the regulations
16 for the Aleutian Islands area, a subsistence fishing
17 permit is necessary to fish for salmon, trout, and char,
18 except that you don't need a permit in the Akutan, Umnak
19 and Atka-Amelia Islands District. So, there are
20 exceptions, but there is a requirement in the
21 regulations that can be changed. But as it currently
22 stands, a subsistence fishing permit is required. There
23 is not currently a federal subsistence permit in place.
24 And when that happens, we defer back to the state
25 subsistence permits.

26

27 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: And then did you -
28 - was there a second part to the question?

29

30 MS. CHERNOFF: Yes. Then how do you log
31 and share that information? And on the state permit,
32 does it clarify that it's actually a subsistence --
33 federal subsistence permit information?

34

35 MR. AYERS: Through the Chair. I'm going
36 to have to beg forgiveness for not having an answer on
37 that right now. But I will look into it, and I will see
38 what I can find for you.

39

40 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
41 you. Are there any additional questions on the reports?

42

43 (No response)

44

45 Okay. I'm not seeing any. Is there a
46 motion? Sorry. Not a motion on the fishery closure, but
47 a motion to propose new fishery regulations. Brett, go
48 ahead.

49

50

1 MR. RICHARDSON: I move to propose new
2 fishery regulations on the McLees Lake drainage area.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. And what
5 would the -- generally, what are you proposing?

6
7 MR. RICHARDSON: I propose to allow
8 federally qualified subsistence users to fish in the
9 area, mirroring state sport regulations.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Is there
12 a second?

13
14 MS. CHERNOFF: Second.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Are
17 there questions to the -- well, I guess first, Brett,
18 I'll give you an opportunity to speak to your motion.

19
20 MR. RICHARDSON: So, when I -- sorry.
21 Brett Richardson, Unalaska. I presented this to the
22 Dutch Harbor AC last week and everyone was either okay
23 with this or didn't have an opinion for the most part.
24 People seem to think that this would be acceptable. It's
25 not on the road system. It's very difficult to get to,
26 the bag limits are higher out there and there's no limit,
27 correct me if I'm wrong, on type of salmon. So, you can
28 get depending on size. So, the 20 inches or greater, you
29 get five per day and ten in possession or 20 inches
30 under, would be ten per day and ten in possession. With
31 no restrictions to type. So that could be ten 20-inch
32 sockeye. And so that's some of the reason that sports
33 fishing license holders go out there, or perhaps to other
34 areas outside the Unalaska Bay area to get the higher
35 bag limit. So, this would just kind of match the ability
36 for federally qualified subsistence users to do the
37 same.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Are
40 there questions for the maker of the motion? Daniel, go
41 ahead.

42
43 MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair.
44 A question about those users who sportfish currently
45 over in McLees Lake. It says that the possession limit's
46 ten. How long -- I guess first question, how long of a
47 boat ride is it to McLees Lake? And then, do some people
48 just do day trips over there or do they tend to try to
49 get two bag limits in one go over the two-day span?

1 MR. RICHARDSON: Good question. Through
2 the Chair. It's about an hour ride in good water and
3 good weather. Anecdotally, I've heard of people going
4 out there, camping to try to get a back to back limit
5 and again, very small number of people who do this. So,
6 you know, getting out there would be difficult, but also
7 anchoring the boat you got in on or you just maybe you
8 got dropped off. You know, there's a lot of variables.
9 And then getting to the lake. The lake is massive and
10 hiking into it, there's not really a great trail. It
11 would be difficult. And then, you know, being
12 successful, getting out of there. It would -- it's a lot
13 of work, right. I don't -- this is not a common practice
14 whatsoever. I do want to add something real quick. I did
15 receive an email from Fisheries Manager at the
16 Qawalangin Tribe and she's unavailable, I think, to
17 attend this meeting. She wanted to comment that the
18 Qawalangin Tribe does support a new proposal on this.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Any
21 additional questions for -- Pat, go ahead.

22
23 MR. HOLMES: Oh, just a little bit of
24 general information. McLees Lake, even getting ashore,
25 you need to have one person running the skiff for the
26 boat and wear chest waders, or get wet all the way up
27 to your chin because the beach is so stiff, so steep,
28 and the onshore drift with any kind of wind is perilous
29 to get ashore. And then when you are ashore, if you look
30 on page 90, that diagram, there's a small section there
31 from the beach up to the lake, and it's less than 50
32 yards. And at that point below where they do have, you
33 could see where it constricts at the part where the lake
34 comes out. That's where they put the weir in. And it's
35 really interesting. And I think particularly for folks
36 in the anthropology section, is one can look at that and
37 see that's where the Unangan people had their weir to
38 catch the fish, so they didn't have to go all the way
39 up in the lake. They just blocked it off there and dipnet
40 them out or grab them or whatever. But it's just there's
41 hardly I'd say out of that 50 yards, there might be 30
42 that a person could sport fish in or less, 25. And so
43 it's a really difficult place to get in. And I don't see
44 anybody getting ashore and putting in a canoe or skiff
45 to paddle up to the headwaters to try and catch some of
46 the fish that are going up to spawn. It's a tough place.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Any
49 additional questions for the maker of the motion?

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1 (No response)

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Any comments? Additional comments from

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Jon Gerken.

MR. GERKEN: Thanks, Madam Chair. Jon Gerken, Fish and Wildlife Service Federal In-Season Manager. Just to clarify that adopting the daily harvest for sport fish is different than what it would be specified in a subsistence permit. So even though we're suggesting or talking about adopting sport fish take, those take numbers are different than what's currently on a federal -- or on a state or federal subsistence permit. So just keep in mind that those numbers are not completely the same. So, if you are allowed to harvest five fish per day, you would still need to record those on your subsistence harvest permit, and you would still be set to having 25 per household -- or 25 per permit, and then 25 additional per household member. So just adding a little bit of clarity that the numbers are different, even though we're talking about sport -- or sport fish harvest numbers translate into subsistence. Those numbers for harvest are different. So just a note.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, are you saying that if the new regulation puts limits that those limits essentially would not apply?

MR. GERKEN: No. What I'm saying is -- through the Chair, what I'm saying is that we're talking about federal subsistence regulations that are required to have a federal subsistence permit that does have a cap on it. Those caps are different than sport fishing regulation caps. And so just keep in mind that if you adopt sport fishing regulations for federal subsistence harvest, be aware that those numbers do not match up completely with the federal subsistence permit versus the daily harvest rate. You still have to record them. You still have to turn them in at the end of the year. That's different than you would under a sport fishing harvest license, so.

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CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Brett, go ahead.

MR. RICHARDSON: Thank you. Just to clarify, on top of that. Thank you for that clarification, by the way. These would be recordable on your permit part of the 25. So, your five per day, if you caught the five, you'd write them down, time, place. And then -- so the bag, the total in possession limit,

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1 I think would be expanded to the 25 allowable on the
2 permit. Is that correct?

3

4 MR. GERKEN: Yep. Through the Chair.
5 That's how I would understand it. So your -- just don't
6 get confused. There's two different limits that you're
7 talking about. And we're -- just seems like we're getting
8 stuck in the sportfish regs by adopting them to the
9 federal subsistence. But the federal subsistence regs
10 have a very specific limit on the subsistence permit.
11 So, you are correct. Anything you would catch at McLees,
12 hypothetically, your ten possession for the day, you
13 would have to record on your federal subsistence permit
14 or state subsistence permit in this particular instance.
15 And so you could not exceed that. You just would have
16 to be aware of the number until you got another permit.
17 Does that make sense? Yeah. Okay. Thank you.

18

19 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: And then I just
20 want to make sure that with -- because I'm viewing
21 mirroring the sport limits helps slow down the fishery.
22 So, if you can only catch five per day, it's slowing
23 down the catch. That would -- if that's part of the
24 regulation that gets put in place for subsistence, that
25 would still hold. So, there is a -- there would be a
26 valid limit of, say, ten fish per day. And I understand
27 that that's a different set of numbers than the 25 that's
28 on the permit. But mainly there is this control of only
29 so many fish per day. Is that still going to be the
30 case?

31

32 MR. GERKEN: Through the Chair. If the
33 proposal goes forward and specifies that exact number
34 per day and mirrors the sport fish regulations, you know,
35 to the T, yep. You're correct. Thanks.

36

37 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Natasha.

38

39 MS. HAYDEN: Thanks, Madam Chair. Natasha
40 Hayden. What I think I heard you talking about, though,
41 is the annual bag limit is different. And so here in the
42 analysis, the sport fish bag limit for salmon other than
43 king salmon is ten. And so, the bag limit -- so it says
44 bag limit of five fish possession limit of ten for 20
45 inches or greater and then less than 20 inches bag and
46 possession limit of ten fish. And so that's your overall
47 annual limit is, as well, right? Your bag limit?

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49 MR. GERKEN: Through the Chair. There --
50 as I understand there is no annual bag limit on sport fish.

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MS. HAYDEN: Okay.

MR. GERKEN: You do have an annual limit on your subsistence permit.

MS. HAYDEN: Okay.

MR. GERKEN: So.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. HAYDEN: And so that's the difference, is that there's no limit and no annual limit in sport fishing regulations, state sports fishing regulations. But there is a 25 total per person in the federal subsistence regulation.

MR. GERKEN: Through the Chair. 25 per permit, and then 25 additional per household member.

MS. HAYDEN: Okay. But, can we remove that 25 annual limit in this proposal and have it mirror -- if the community wanted it, like if not, then, you know, that's doesn't matter? But if the community wanted to eliminate the 25 per person or per permit per year, that's, is that part of something that can be done in this process?

MR. GERKEN: Through the Chair. I think it could be done. It might be cleaner just to have a whole different proposal that was specific to this area that would change the overall federal subsistence limit. So, this is all hypothetical, but like you could say we want to have the limit for this area is 500 salmon annually as opposed -- I'm not suggesting that, I'm just using it as an example, but change the overall limit in order to -- and then a different proposal and then have this proposal go forward because this is very specific to fishing regulations in a specific area. And then have the -- your daily limit potentially in a different proposal.

MS. HAYDEN: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Coral.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah. I don't have a question, but I -- just thank you for coming forward with that. And that was where I guess I was thinking

1 about leading with asking the questions about the
2 permit. I guess I would recommend that if we're going
3 to do federal subsistence, we either create a system of
4 capturing that information for that federal season so
5 that we don't end up with crossing over and creating
6 unintentional confusions for subsistence users and for
7 capturing and logging that information.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Are
10 there any further questions for the maker of the motion?

11
12 (No response)

13
14 Any additional comments?

15
16 (No comments)

17
18 Okay. I will try -- Coral, go ahead.

19
20 MS. CHERNOFF: I guess I'll just go ahead
21 right now and ask why it was suggested to use the state
22 or -- I guess my question would be how hard is it to
23 create a subsistence permit for the area?

24
25 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Let's go ahead and
26 finish the motion on the floor. I think that's probably
27 a bigger, higher-level question. Pat, go ahead.

28
29 MR. HOLMES: Could you repeat the motion,
30 please?

31
32 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: The motion is to
33 initiate a regulatory proposal for the waterway in
34 question that would mirror state sport fishing
35 regulations. And the waterway in question is the McLees
36 Lake drainage. Okay. Is there any objection?

37
38 (No response)

39
40 Okay. Seeing none, that motion passes.
41 We -- I think I'd like to break at 12:30, but we have
42 eight minutes to discuss Coral's question. And Scott is
43 reluctantly approaching the microphone.

44
45 MR. AYERS: Thank you, Madam Chair,
46 Member Chernoff. I've just put a question in to our
47 regulatory specialist to ask about that. I think, I mean,
48 we've obviously gone through and had permits or had
49 proposals previously to create permits or require
50 federal permit. I think it's a possible thing for us to

1 do. I will also note that is possibly something -- I
2 mean, obviously we're at the process right now of just
3 developing proposals that will be analyzed and go back
4 to the Council this fall. As we get more information,
5 either during this meeting or as the process of the
6 analysis goes through, that could be something that
7 would be potentially included as an amendment when the
8 Council makes a motion on this in the fall. If that's
9 something that you're looking for. If we're looking to
10 create a proposal that would be broader than, say,
11 specific to McLees, since this is a proposal directly
12 related to this drainage, it probably would require a
13 separate proposal than just tacking on -- there will be
14 a federal permit for this to the motion that the Council
15 makes and I want to see if Mr. Gerken to my right has
16 any additional comments on that front.

17

18 MR. GERKEN: Yeah. Jon Gerken, Fish and
19 Wildlife Service In-Season Manager, through the Chair.
20 I think we can and we have in the past made permits.
21 Some of the pros and cons are one, you know, if you make
22 the permit, then yes, you can track those numbers that
23 are captured by a user. But you also have to issue the
24 permits, which also can be difficult if you need to do
25 that in person. So, someone would need to be there to
26 go out and issue the permits. The OSM is working on a
27 database where there would have some online access. So
28 that bodes well for something like this. But keep in
29 mind, you know, you can make the permit, you can use
30 that to track those data, but you also have to issue
31 those permits and you have to get the permits back. So,
32 there's a bunch of different parts of the permit there.
33 But thank you.

34

35 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
36 you. Natasha, go ahead.

37

38 MS. HAYDEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Not
39 really a question, but just sort of to contribute to the
40 discussion is that it is important to -- maybe not right
41 now, but in the future, because we have the dual
42 management in this very complicated jurisdictional, you
43 know, systems that we have that -- to be able to do
44 that, that, you know, the purpose of a subsistence
45 priority is to have -- the rural subsistence priority
46 through the -- that is defined by ANILCA, so that rural
47 residents are able to continue to maintain access to
48 those resources. And so it is, I mean, I'm foreshadowing,
49 you know, 10, 15, 20, 30, 40 years that without having
50 it documented or having a mechanism to document and track

1 that, that it's going to limit the Subsistence Board's
2 ability to continue to provide that. And so, I just
3 wanted to contribute that, you know, as far as things
4 progress, as we evolve under these very complicated
5 management jurisdictions that it's important for us to
6 be able to do that. Maybe not right now, but in the
7 future. Thank you.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. I think we're
10 going to go ahead and break for lunch. Does an hour seem
11 like enough time? Looking at Council members, especially
12 ones from Kodiak. Okay. Seeing. Okay, so Kodiak people
13 think an hour is enough time. All right. We will
14 reconvene then at 1:30? 1:30. Thank you.

15
16 (Off record)

17
18 (On the record)

19
20 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. We're
21 going to go ahead and call the meeting back to order.
22 And as previously promised, up first, we're going to
23 have Paul Chervenak, who is the Chair from the Kodiak
24 AC, to talk to us a little bit about what the AC did
25 with Board of Game proposals.

26
27 MR. CHERVENAK: Madam Chair and Members
28 of the Council, good morning. My name is Paul Chervenak.
29 I am Chairman of the Kodiak Fish and Game Advisory
30 Committee. I want to thank you for the opportunity to
31 speak and especially accommodating my schedule. I have
32 been on the AC committee for over 30 years, and I believe
33 we have a very diverse committee. That is quite good at,
34 excuse me, taking the resource first, while trying to
35 balance opportunity, especially with the increasing
36 demand on everything, it seems. We're very conscious of
37 trying to provide local opportunity. We are sometimes
38 hamstrung by the Alaska Constitution, but I'm proud to
39 say we get pretty creative. I'll give you a brief --
40 just a brief summary of the different species and actions
41 and then happy to answer any questions.

42
43 For elk, like everything, there's an
44 increasing demand. We tried last cycle to make some more
45 permits available in the communities of Ouzinkie and
46 Port Lions, which we had mixed results with how that
47 worked. We think we've come up with another way this
48 year to put all the registration permits for elk. They
49 typically been online and go instantly, but to make those
50 in-person pickup in the Kodiak office and then hopefully

1 some in those villages. Bears. we have a highly
2 successful and pretty complex bear management plan on
3 Kodiak. I've been involved with it a long time. It does
4 quite well. Most of the proposals were to increase
5 harvest or we thought would increase harvest, especially
6 if sows, so voted mostly to just keep it all the same.
7 Mountain goats. We have a very good mountain goat
8 population here on the island so, we tried to increase
9 opportunity there. One of the big ones was to extend the
10 registration hunt on the north end of the island and the
11 draw -- that happens after the draw in these Units, from
12 December 31st to March 31st, which hopefully will give
13 more opportunity and also would be whether it's higher
14 quality meat. We also voted to extend the season earlier
15 on the south end of Kodiak and the registration area
16 from August 20th to August 1st, which hopefully will
17 make it a little more accessible with nicer weather to
18 some people, especially our youth, as it would be before
19 the school year.

20
21 Deer. There were quite a few deer
22 proposals. Again, we're seeing a lot of increased
23 activity. Last cycle we lowered the non-resident limit
24 to one deer, one buck hoping to somehow reduce the marine
25 transporter problem and influx on the island. It's only
26 been in action now two years so we're getting the data.
27 It seems to be working, but there were maybe 4 or 5
28 proposals to increase the nonresident bag limit back up,
29 and we elected to fight those all pretty hard and keep
30 it where it's at, so we can get some more data and
31 hopefully help with that problem. One of the offshoots
32 of the one deer non-resident limit was an increase of
33 sea duck harvest. They're here for 4 or 5 days and are
34 done on the first day and want to do something else. So,
35 we did vote to reduce the non-resident sea duck limit,
36 in hopes of curtailing some of that harvest. Trapping.
37 There were a few proposals on trapping. One fairly big
38 one around town here was extending the mink season year-
39 round. Mink are not indigenous to the island. We don't
40 want them to get started here or try to control them
41 some. So, we supported that. There's also been -- and
42 Kodiak has sort of been the leader, we haven't had a lot
43 of success, but some trap identification, breakaway
44 snares and stuff, especially on the Kodiak road system
45 where it's pretty high use, catching unintended animals
46 or pets. So, we are still strongly fighting for all
47 that. Some day we might win.

48
49 Finally, there were 4 or 5 miscellaneous
50 proposals, mostly dealing with night vision, artificial

1 light and infrared for taking up fur bearers. We are --
2 we came out strongly opposed to all those. In fact,
3 trying to remove Unit 8 from a statewide proposal that
4 passed. We don't -- we think Kodiak is so different
5 first, but we don't believe in it. So, that's a brief
6 synopsis, and I'd be happy to answer any more particular
7 questions.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thanks,
10 Paul. And I appreciate you being at this meeting, given
11 that we had 6.5 hours of AC meeting Monday and 7 hours
12 of AC meeting yesterday. So, thank you for coming to
13 this meeting today. Are there any questions for Paul?
14 Pat, go ahead.

15
16 MR. HOLMES: Yeah, I'd like to compliment
17 you and Becky for keeping that meeting going. The AC
18 meeting sometimes can get pretty rough, but I think you
19 folks have a very professional way of handling it. And
20 I was in the back of my mind for a long time wondering
21 about the sea ducks, because I've heard from some of the
22 folks in the villages that, you know, soup ducks. But I
23 know that some of the guides and some of the people in
24 your profession are really restrictive on when they're
25 guiding hunts for those and really limit what their
26 patrons are shooting. And that meat ends up going to
27 Larsen Bay or wherever so, my hat's off to that strategy,
28 but I could see how, over the long term, the non-resident
29 sea duck thing could definitely be a subsistence problem
30 around the island. So, I'd like to compliment the AC for
31 addressing that. So, thank you, Madam Chair.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Any
34 other questions or comments? Sam, go ahead.

35
36 MR. ROHRER: Yeah, through the Chair.
37 Just want to say thanks, Paul, for being here and doing
38 the presentation. And thanks for your time, your service
39 on the AC. So, thank you.

40
41 MR. CHERVENAK: Thank you.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Natasha.

44
45 MS. HAYDEN: Thanks, Madam Chair. Natasha
46 Hayden. Thanks for coming and giving us the summary. Can
47 you tell us if the AC made any formal -- took any formal
48 action on the elk proposals first and then I, one of the
49 proposals, I was just curious about the requiring
50 everybody to take the -- is it the hunter safety course

1 for brown bear hunting? That I saw. Anyways, first off,
2 did you guys take any formal action on any of the elk
3 proposals as my real.....

4
5 MR. CHERVENAK: Member Hayden, through
6 the Chair. We did not take any action on 209, which was
7 requiring non-residents to be guided -- or no, we did.
8 We supported that. We think there's been a lot of wanton
9 waste, especially with moose and elk in this state. 210,
10 we elected to take eight of the tags that are currently
11 given away in the villages. Put them back in the general
12 pool, making them available to everybody. From what we
13 heard of the people from Port Lions and Ouzinkie, not
14 many of the villagers got them. So, we tried that avenue
15 last cycle. What we want to do this year, and they were
16 having trouble getting to town to pick up registration
17 permits. Hardly anybody can get them when they're online
18 because they go instantly. Everybody around the state
19 is waiting to pick them up. So, we're trying to change
20 that to make those picked up in person so people would
21 have to come to the Kodiak office. And then some of them
22 will be available in Port Lions and Ouzinkie. So, they
23 have an opportunity to get those registration permits
24 and make it easier for them to get elk.

25
26 Extending the elk registration unit was
27 one that's the remainder of Unit 8 on Kodiak Island
28 proper. We elected to extend that to December 31st,
29 giving a little more opportunity. Elk don't get over
30 there very often. We're also trying to keep them off
31 main Kodiak Island to protect the refuge. And it would
32 just give more opportunity. And limiting the non-
33 resident elk permits up to 10%. We turned that down
34 right now. The current participation is only about 5 or
35 6%. And we're just going to keep watching that one. And
36 what was your question on bears?

37
38 We supported. We believe in education.
39 We fight hard for it. There's a -- in the past, they
40 haven't made it required because there's so much
41 information available online, but you can't always make
42 sure people look it up. Responsible people do, but
43 obviously some people don't. So, we voted to support
44 that to make it a requirement.

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46 MS. HAYDEN: Okay. Thank you very much.

47
48 MR. CHERVENAK: Thank you.

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50 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Jeff.

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MR. WASLEY: Yeah. I'm just curious, what the proposed sea duck limits are. Thank you.

MR. CHERVENAK: We basically cut them in half. Both the annual limit, then your daily bag limit by species was four ducks per species, that went down to two, and your annual limit went down to ten.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Any further questions?

(No response)

All right. I don't see any. Thank you so much.

MR. CHERVENAK: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Go ahead, Sam.

MR. ROHRER: Sam Rohrer, for the record. Do we want to entertain a proposal for -- a proposal for writing comments, or are we going to just go back to our normal schedule and do that down the road?

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah. So, I was going to ask that. What would council members prefer? We can address the Board of Game stuff now, since you've just heard the update, or we can go back to the fishery closures. Finish those and then come back to Board of Game. Sam, go ahead.

MR. ROHRER: Sam Rohrer, for the record. I would just prefer to do it now. It's fresh in our minds. Paul's in the room, if we have questions, and seems to make sense to just do it.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. That sounds good. My thought is that, for the Board of Game game comments, we will send one letter. And so, as we go through to address proposals, we'll just be voting to add them to this comment letter. Does any -- do you want to start Sam or...? Okay, thanks.

MR. ROHRER: Okay. Sam Rohrer again, for the record. So, there was basically four groupings that I wanted -- that I thought would make sense for our RAC to comment on. That would be deer proposals, goat

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1 proposals, the mink proposal that Daniel mentioned and
2 then the miscellaneous trapping proposals. And I can --
3 I have those proposal numbers lumped by species if you'd
4 like me to give those.

5

6 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yes. Why don't we
7 take them one lump at a time?

8

9 MR. ROHRER: Okay. So, the first lump
10 would be deer proposals. That'd be proposal 199, 200,
11 201, 203 and 204. And my recommendation would be that
12 we largely just mirror the ACs comments, which is non-
13 residents would stay at one deer and would switch it
14 from one buck to just one deer.

15

16 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: I think it was one
17 buck to September 30th and then any deer after that?

18

19 MR. ROHRER: Correct.

20

21 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. That's your
22 motion? Is there a second?

23

24 MR. HOLMES: Second.

25

26 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Pat.
27 Would you like to speak any more to it?

28

29 MR. ROHRER: Sam Rohrer again. I think
30 all the words were used up in the last two days so, I
31 don't know that much more needs to be said other than,
32 we're seeing -- it did seem like reducing the harvest
33 to one deer, while it didn't slow down the number of
34 people coming, that number still seems to be increasing.
35 But it did slow down the harvest. And so, I think all
36 of our expectation is the number non-resident deer
37 hunters coming to the island is going to continue to
38 increase. So, it makes sense to keep that reduction in
39 place. And, while there is some concern about the
40 increased sport fishing and increased duck hunting
41 that's happened, frankly, I think that ship -- that's -
42 - cat's out of the bag. And even if we did increase back
43 up to two deer, I don't think that's going to save any
44 of those other critters. Thanks.

45

46 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Sam.
47 Natasha.

48

49 MS. HAYDEN: Thank you, Madam Chair.
50 Natasha Hayden. So, I just want to make sure I heard you

1 correctly is opposing the proposals to increase the bag
2 limit, but to modify the regulation so that the one deer
3 can be a doe when -- after the season opens it up for
4 everybody for does. Is that correct?

5
6 MR. ROHRER: Through the Chair. Yes. And
7 I don't remember which of the proposals. One of those
8 proposals, the AC would have chosen to make that
9 modification and the purpose of that, understanding that
10 almost no nonresidents are going to take a doe. The only
11 reason for that is because of, if you have a buck only
12 you're required to keep evidence of sex on the meat. And
13 so, you have some meat contamination issues and things
14 like that. So, by having it be any deer, you don't --
15 you no longer have to keep evidence of sex on the deer.
16 Nobody -- I don't think anyone thinks it's going to
17 increase doe harvest. It's just purely about meat
18 quality.

19
20 MS. HAYDEN: Okay. Thank you.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. And
23 then, I guess I'll make some comments. So, as Sam said,
24 in the AC discussion, there was recognition that the
25 non-resident hunt -- hunters that come to Kodiak are an
26 important part of supporting Kodiak's economy. But there
27 was a very strong interest in maintaining access to food
28 for people who live in Kodiak. So, it looked like in the
29 data, as Sam said, that decreasing the limit to one deer
30 for non-residents has not been a deterrent. So, we're
31 still getting non-resident hunters. So, that seemed like
32 a good number to maintain. And, but with that limit, it
33 also provides a kind of a protection for local food
34 access for people in Kodiak but then liberalizing it a
35 little bit to allow the any deer after October 1. And
36 then, I was trying to see if I could find which proposal
37 we amended. I'm assuming it was 199 because that would
38 make sense. Any additional comments on this particular
39 set of proposals?

40
41 (No comments)

42
43 Okay. Is there any objection?

44
45 (No response)

46
47 Okay. Seeing no objection, the RAC will
48 submit comments opposing 199, 200, 201, 203 and 204.
49 Opposing an increase in bag limits. Suggesting that the
50 bag limit should remain at one deer but liberalizing to

1 allow any deer after October 1.

2

3 MR. ROHRER: Madam Chair, Sam Rohrer
4 here. The next grouping of proposals is the
5 miscellaneous trapping proposals. That'd be proposal
6 245, 246, 247, 248, and 240. And I would recommend that
7 we write in a letter -- or add this to our letter
8 opposing those proposals.

9

10 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: I -- this is the
11 infrared? So, I think you're wanting to support 248,
12 which is prohibiting the use of infrared. And then the
13 comment on the other proposals in that group would be
14 C., comments and action on, C, comments on 248.

15

16 MR. ROHRER: Through the Chair, Sam
17 Rohrer. Yes, you are correct. I had lumped all those
18 together thinking just to duplicate the Acs comments.
19 And you're correct. That's what it is, supporting
20 Proposal 248. Yes. And then I think we -- some of those
21 proposals are supporting infrared, some of those
22 proposals are opposing it. Some are about natural or
23 artificial light. And I think that you're correct. Yeah,
24 we supported 248 and then just referencing our comments
25 on the other ones.

26

27 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: And I will comment
28 here, because this gets a little confusing. In state
29 hunting regulations, the use of infrared and artificial
30 light are currently prohibited so, you cannot use those
31 devices in hunting. They are currently allowed statewide
32 in trapping furbearers. And when you are trapping
33 furbearers, you can shoot them. So, it was confusing to
34 me that we're talking about trapping, but you're
35 actually using a gun to shoot them. And so, Proposal 248
36 is specific to the trapping regulations, but that's
37 because that's the only like class of activity where
38 these infrared and artificial light devices are allowed.
39 So, are there any questions? Pat, go ahead.

40

41 MR. HOLMES: Discussion for 236.

42

43 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, do you mean
44 246? Okay. Sorry.

45

46 MR. ROHRER: Through the Chair, Sam
47 Rohrer here. 246 was banning all infrared hunting in
48 Unit 8 and the AC, they supported that, but I think
49 they, again, they, I'd have to look at the actual wording
50 of the proposal. So, I don't quite remember, but I think

00078

1 they supported 248 and then just said, yeah, go ahead.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah. So, 246
4 wanted to ban infrared hunting, but infrared is already
5 not allowed in hunting. So, after discussion, I think
6 the AC realized that the proposal wouldn't -- it wouldn't
7 do anything. So, we didn't take action on it, kind of.
8 Go ahead, Leigh.

9

10 MS. HONIG: Sorry, thank you. Leigh, for
11 the record. I was just wondering if I could get more
12 information on why you, or like the justification for
13 that decision to -- where are we on? Support the
14 prohibition on 248 just for writing the comment letter,
15 if there was some more justification you guys wanted to
16 provide.

17

18 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, I wasn't quite
19 to that part, I was still on questions about the motion.
20 Okay, do you want to speak more and then I'll open it
21 up?

22

23 (No response)

24

25 Or I can open it up? Okay. Natasha.

26

27 MS. HAYDEN: I just wanted to make sure
28 that you're -- this -- what is? This lump of proposals,
29 is all of the proposals that were proposed that we're
30 wanting to comment on between 235 and 238? Is that
31 correct?

32

33 (No response)

34

35 Or is that -- because there's -- some -
36 - this is the -- I -- the like the mink trap trapping
37 proposal is in this lump or is it like, I just want to
38 make sure that we're not leaving some of the ones that
39 are amongst us out.

40

41 MR. ROHRER: Through the Chair, Sam
42 Rohrer here. So, I'm going off -- the AC put together
43 a list of proposals that they were going to comment on
44 and they have them lumped. 247, 248, 245, 246, and 240.
45 And so, those were the -- that I was just referencing
46 those same proposals that the AC talked about. The mink
47 proposals 241, and I'm going to bring that one up next
48 so, that one would not be included in this lumping. This
49 is just lumping ones that have to do with artificial
50 light and infrared hunting and trapping.

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MS. HAYDEN: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Are there, besides Sam, are there other comments on justification, why we would not want infrared an artificial light devices used in trapping in Kodiak? Coral.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, this is Coral. I think the overwhelming justification in those meetings, both this year and last year or two years ago, last year, were that we really have a culture of a fair hunt here. Kind of fair chase and conservation. Conservation is a big concern of ours. And it's just kind of at the top of the list, conservation for ours. And I think when you introduce these artificial lights and infrared activities, the ability to capture a lot more of the wildlife increases. And so, I think we generally are against those, that -- for those reasons.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, I'll add on to that. So, when the Board of Game approved use of infrared at a statewide level, a lot of the discussion had to do with wolverine and wolves. And the hunts were mostly located farther north, where there's bigger difference in daylight hours. Kodiak is farther south so we do have shorter days in the winter, but it's not as bad as farther north, at higher latitudes, number one. Number two, we don't have the wolverine and the wolf. There was voiced a lot of concern about, as Coral said, conservation issues with foxes. Because we do have a lot of hunting that goes on the beach. So, if you had infrared or spotlights and you drove a boat up onto the beach, it'd be really, I'm imagining a fox thinking he's hiding in the dark. But infrared, you can see them. So, there was concern about the kind of the fairness, fair chase, also just the conservation issue that maybe there would be overtaking of these animals.

There was also a concern with potential bleed-over, of using these devices in trapping. Saying you're using them in trapping but actually using them to get an advantage with big game, whether it's deer or bear. There was particular concern about when the bears are starting to come out of their dens, that overlapped with one of the trapping seasons. So, you could be out there with infrared and very easily, I assume, see the bears emerging. And that creates a kind of an unfair situation for the bear. I think those were the high points that really resonated in the room or resonated

1 with me. So, I'm making those comments because I am --
2 I agree with them. Are there additional comments on the
3 set of proposals? Coral.

4
5 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, I would just like
6 to say with the Advisory Committee here. When this came
7 up and went before the Board last year, we had very
8 strong opposition to it. And for the Board to, I guess,
9 you know, legalize this was almost kind of, I mean, for
10 me to say, like a slap in the face to our Advisory Board
11 and what we want for the culture of what we're deciding
12 on here. And so, I think it would be very good for us
13 to comment here also with subsistence to just reiterate,
14 this is how we feel about this and the future of hunting.
15 Thank you.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Okay,
18 I'll try this. Is there any objection to submitting
19 comments to the Board of Game along the lines of what
20 we just talked about?

21
22 (No response)

23
24 Okay. Seeing no objection, that passes.
25 Go ahead.

26
27 MR. ROHRER: Madam Chair, Sam Rohrer
28 here. The next proposal was on goats. It's proposal 220,
29 and we could add in proposal 221 and 230 as well, if we
30 wanted to. I would like to see the AC -- or the RAC put
31 in a letter or add these to our letter in support of
32 those two proposals. Thank you.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Have I been getting
35 seconds? Did I get a second on the last one?

36
37 MR. ROHRER: Through the Chair. You did
38 on the first one. Not on the second one. Okay, so the
39 first one's good. Second one was.....

40
41 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Can I just -- can
42 I ask for a second and can.....

43
44 MR. HOLMES: Second.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thank you,
47 Pat. All right. That was the second for the second one.
48 Pat, are you seconding this one as well? Okay, good. All
49 right. Thank you, Pat for the second.

1 MR. ROHRER: Through the Chair, Sam
2 Rohrer. I'll just speak to that briefly. Proposal 220
3 extended the goat subsistence hunt in Unit 8. We, the
4 term subsistence hunt is used, it's technically not a
5 subsistence hunt. It's a registration hunt. And then
6 proposal 221/230 would move the start date of the
7 registration hunt, RG480, which is different than the
8 hunts that I just referenced in proposal 220. A start
9 date of August 20th, that would move that back to August
10 1st. And just, real briefly, stepping back to 221 a
11 second, where we'd extend the goat subsistence hunt, I
12 don't have the date in front of me on when that hunt's
13 extended to, but Rebecca will have that. But just to
14 say, while it does -- it's a substantial extension, just
15 everyone can keep in mind that the department still has
16 emergency order authority when that -- when they hit
17 their quota for those individual areas, they can still
18 do an EO to -- I mean, that that's how they do, they
19 would do an EO to shut that season down. So, there's
20 still safeguards in place so we don't overharvest. And
21 then, on Proposals 221 and 230 we're still in the area,
22 RG48, the state's still trying to see a higher goat
23 harvest there. I think the refuge supports that. They
24 want to see more goats harvested. And so, this would
25 bring -- start that season 20 days earlier. It would
26 coincide with opening of deer season, give you maybe an
27 opportunity, before they start in school to go goat
28 hunting. So, that's, those two proposals or three. Thank
29 you.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Pat, go
32 ahead.

33
34 MR. HOLMES: I'd like to add a footnote
35 on 220. Because the longer season was implemented with
36 a study group between the AC and RAC members, not
37 necessarily the RAC, but RAC members, to provide for
38 more accessibility for folks in the villages. And so in
39 that case, it really is subsistence for folks that are
40 living in more remote areas, easier access as the goats
41 are still kind of down and getting ready to move up the
42 mountains, but it just makes it work out a whole lot
43 better, particularly for the folks down in the Old Harbor
44 and the folks from Akhiok that live in Old Harbor. Just
45 -- so in some respects, I don't know if, technically you
46 call it subsistence, but that was our whole objective
47 of our entire island community is to facilitate that.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah. Thank you,
50 Pat. Daniel.

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MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair. This is Daniel Smith. For the RG480 hunt. Goat hunt in Unit eight, what is the start date in current regulation for that?

MR. ROHRER: Through the Chair. Sam Rohrer. August 20th.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Pat, do you mind hitting your microphone button? Thank you. Okay. Is there additional comment or questions on Proposals 220 -- or 221, and 230 kind of went together. Daniel, go ahead.

MR. SMITH: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. I would be in support of the proposal 221, with the start date of August 1st, it just makes sense to me, that's the deer season opener. And so, if people are going out to harvest deer and goat at the same time, it just sounds reasonable. And so, I'd be in support of that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. And Sam, I just wanted to make sure that I'm understanding. 221 and 230 do the same thing, right?

MR. SMITH: Through the Chair. Sam Rohrer here. I don't know that definitively, I would -- I need to look and see. I know they were lumped together here. I, so, I was assuming they did, but I can briefly check that if you'd like.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Yeah, I'm looking at it. I think it's true because, 230 and the Board of Game proposal book says extend the dates for RG480 to be August 1 to March 31; and proposal -21, says it intends to open the season for RG480 from August 1 to March 31 so, it looks like they are, they do have identical purpose, that's why they're lumped together. I just wanted to make sure we were clear on the record that that's why we're taking them together. Pat, go ahead.

MR. HOLMES: I'd also like to compliment the AC in your discussions on the proposal to change the bag limit for hunting goats in Unit 8, to 1 billy only. I thought your discussion on that was really good because some areas you're going to have more than one goat hunt. And I thought the discussion on being able to distinguish

1 -- I've seen some really big female goats out there and
2 I've seen some really small male billy goats. And so, I
3 think that that's perfectly logical thing to do because,
4 particularly from a subsistence point of view, you're
5 just out there getting food and not going for a trophy.
6 Whereas the implication from this, from the person that
7 wrote it, was to enhance things for trophy hunting. And
8 so, I'd like to compliment the AC on their approach to
9 their discussion of that one.

10

11 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Pat, can
12 you hit your microphone button? Thank you. So, I'll
13 comment in support of Proposal 220, that basically
14 increases the opportunity for goat hunting later in the
15 season. So, it extends the season date later in March.
16 I supported that because we had comments in the room
17 from hunters that the quality of the meat is better
18 later in the winter or later in the spring, however you
19 want to define that time period, compared to the fall.
20 So, in November and December, it was noted that the
21 goats taste pretty bad. So, if you're looking at the
22 actual season, but you're really concerned with the
23 quality of meat which I am, I mean, to me, these are
24 people hunting for food, it made sense to me to extend
25 the season into a time when the quality of the meat was
26 a little better.

27

28 As far as Proposals 221 and 230, they
29 also extend the season, but they extend it to start
30 earlier, at the beginning of August. There was a lot of
31 discussion that that would allow kids to go hunting with
32 parents. And so, there's the value of being able to do
33 -- to have family groups hunt together, the value of
34 having the opportunity for kids to get more involved in
35 hunting. It was noted that the weather is better, which
36 is probably good if you're going to take kids out in the
37 field, for forced family fun. And, you know, obviously
38 there's the other side of that is in warmer weather,
39 keeping the meat in warmer weather is more challenging.
40 But this does err on the side of providing more
41 opportunity for getting food and also for engaging, you
42 know, younger people who would otherwise be in school,
43 to engage them in these activities. Any other comments
44 on the goat proposals, which would be 220, 221 and 230?

45

46 (No comments)

47

48 Okay, I'll try this. Is there any
49 objection?

50

1 (No response)

2

3 Okay. Seeing none that passes. Go ahead.

4

5 MR. ROHRER: Madam Chair, Sam Rohrer. The
6 last proposal that I wanted to single out was proposal
7 241. This would remove the season dates for mink in Unit
8 8 and would allow year-round trapping. And I would ask
9 that the RAC send in -- add this to our letter in support
10 of this proposal. Thank you.

11

12 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Is there a second?
13 Second.

14

15 MS. CHERNOFF: Second.

16

17 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Coral.
18 Would you like to speak more to your proposal?

19

20 MR. ROHRER: Sure. Sam Rohrer, for the
21 record. Just to say that there was testimony from several
22 people, including the proposer of this proposal that
23 just said that that's a resource we don't want to see -
24 - it's a nonindigenous and we don't want any more of
25 them here. It's a good resource for people to be able
26 to trap, this person traps them with their kids and
27 they're just looking for extended opportunity. And we
28 don't want them expanding on the island so there's no
29 reason to have a trapping limit. Thank you.

30

31 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Pat.

32

33 MR. HOLMES: Another footnote on that. A
34 few years ago, I reported Ronnie, my cousin Ronnie Lind
35 at (In Native) concern from folks on the west side about
36 the ptarmigan population dropping off and getting
37 smaller. And this mink increase may have or may not, I
38 don't know, but I think it could also help our
39 subsistence by keeping some of these other critters that
40 the mink would be after. Anyway, that was something in
41 the past. I think that might help, I don't know.

42

43 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Further
44 comments on the mink?

45

46 (No comments)

47

48 So I -- oh, go ahead Daniel.

49

50

1 MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair.
2 This is Daniel Smith. I would be in support of Proposal
3 241 just based on the concerns of nesting bird
4 populations on the road system here, for specifically
5 Aleutian terns, which are not doing so well with nesting.
6 And if the mink continues to expand, which they probably
7 already are in the areas of Callison Bay, (In Native)
8 Bay, then that would, that wouldn't be a good outlook
9 for that species that's heavily declining. So, I would
10 be in support of opening year-round season. Thank you.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Yeah, I
13 will also be supporting this proposal. I was pretty
14 excited, not too long ago, to see my first mink running
15 around Kodiak. But they're -- those are -- mink are bad
16 in Kodiak. But we have been hearing a lot about the
17 increase in the mink population and the concerns about
18 the seabird nests. Obviously when you have a -- they
19 were described as a voracious predator. So, when you
20 have this introduced voracious predator species running
21 around, it's going to have a lot of impacts on other
22 Native species. And I've heard growing concern and
23 growing observation of people seeing minks around their
24 houses, around downtown, out in the, like even areas
25 away from town, which is even more concerning. So, I
26 think having a more liberal trapping season will be good
27 to remove some of the mink from our environment. All
28 right. Any final comments on the mink proposal?

29
30 (No comments)

31
32 Okay. Is there any objection?

33
34 (No response)

35
36 All right. Seeing none, that passes.
37 Okay so, those were the Board of Game proposals that Sam
38 brought to the table. Does anyone else have any other
39 Board of Game proposals that they would like the RAC to
40 discuss and take action on? Pat, go ahead.

41
42 MR. HOLMES: What about the proposal on
43 sow restrictions and penalties for resident hunters? How
44 did that one come out?

45
46 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Go ahead, Sam.

47
48 MR. ROHRER: Through the Chair, Sam
49 Rohrer here. The AC chose to -- they supported keeping
50 - so, they would they opposed the proposal. They support

1 keeping those sows, those cow restrictions in place. I
2 didn't mark that one down for us to comment on. I don't
3 know that we need to, we certainly could. But the AC's
4 view was, we need to keep those in place.

5

6 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Are
7 there any other Board of Game proposals that RAC members
8 want to discuss?

9

10 (No response)

11

12 Okay. Sam, go ahead.

13

14 MR. ROHRER: Sam Rohrer, for the record.
15 I don't have any more proposals -- Board of Game
16 proposals, but I do have a proposal to make in regards
17 to these proposals. So, I would like to propose two
18 parts: number one, that the AC have Rebecca Skinner do
19 our public testimony in front of the Board when they're
20 here in two weeks. And then the deadline for these
21 comments is short, they have to be in on Friday. So, I'd
22 like, I'd just add to that proposal that we have I guess
23 Rebecca approve the letter. Maybe we do that anyway, I
24 don't know if that has to be a proposal, but if it does
25 have to be a proposal, that would be my proposal: let
26 Rebecca give approval on that letter and then provide
27 our public testimony. Thank you.

28

29 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Leigh, go ahead.

30

31 MS. HONIG: Yes. So, we can also submit
32 this as an RC copy. We will have OSM staff there at the
33 meeting so that does provide us a little bit more time
34 to develop this letter and have Rebecca review it. And
35 she approves it as the Chair and will be submitted.

36

37 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, I will say
38 my preference was to have the letter drafted and
39 submitted by Friday, and I was planning on doing the
40 bulk of the drafting of it. Because I do think having
41 it in the materials ahead of time is a definite
42 advantage, even though you can submit it as an RC. But
43 yes, I usually do review the letters before my signature
44 gets affixed at the bottom. Okay so, I think we do need
45 an action on if I speak for the RAC at the Board of
46 Game. So, I'll take that as the motion. Is there a
47 second?

48

49 MR. SMITH: I'll second.

50

1 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
2 you, Daniel. Is there any discussion?

3
4 (No response)

5
6 Natasha, go ahead.

7
8 MS. HAYDEN: Thanks, Madam Chair. Natasha
9 Hayden. I'm supportive of that motion of having Chair
10 Skinner present in person to the Board of Game. Thanks.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Any
13 other discussion?

14
15 (No response)

16
17 Okay. Is there any objection?

18
19 (No response)

20
21 Okay. That passes.

22
23 (Pause)

24
25 All right. I put my agenda somewhere.
26 Okay, so that concludes the Board of Game items. We will
27 go -- back up to the fishery closures and I think we are
28 on FCR2705 Summers and Morris Lakes drainage.

29
30 MS. SENEAL: All righty. Hello, Madam
31 Chair, Members of the Council. My name is Anna Senecal.
32 I'm a fisheries biologist with OSM. Here's our summary
33 analysis for fisheries closure review FCR2705, the
34 closure of Summers and Morris Lakes drainages to federal
35 subsistence users. The analysis begins on page 45 of
36 your materials. And there's a map on page 49. So, once
37 again, this presentation is informational in nature.
38 There's is no action item here that will follow.
39 Regulatory history is the same as the previous analyses.
40 The state issued an emergency order in '97, closing on
41 Alaska based streams and the state subsistence fishery
42 permanently closed in 1998. Similar to Unalaska Lake,
43 when federal jurisdiction in navigable waters was
44 decided, there were many cases across the state where
45 existing state regulations were carried over into
46 federal regulations, and this is an example of that. And
47 Summers-Morris Lakes federal regulations closing these
48 areas to subsistence uses were adopted in 2001 and have
49 continued ever since.

1 So, the system again, is closed to state
2 and federal subsistence uses. It does support a limited
3 sport fishery. Council history is also familiar to you.
4 First reviewed in 2020 and deferred for additional time
5 for community input. 2022 was voted to keep the closure
6 in place, citing concerns around conservation over
7 harvest, the regulatory cycle timing and lack of local
8 law enforcement. In 2023, the Board retained the status
9 quo in deference to this Council's 2022 recommendation,
10 and the closure remains in place. So, once again, every
11 four years we pick up these closures, we dust them off,
12 we talk about them and decide if they're needed any
13 longer. Biological background. This system supports coho
14 pink and sockeye salmon, dolly Varden. In general,
15 sockeye salmon populations have declined since the 80s.
16 There are no current escapement goals. However, there
17 have been historically, and while it's limited, there
18 is some information available on these two lake systems.

19
20 For Summers lake. Data are available for
21 12 of 20 years and the historical goal, escapement goal
22 was 800 to 1,600 sockeye and 8,000 to 1,600 pink salmon.
23 And, let's see, the ten-year average for this system
24 puts sockeye escapement at about 1,300 so, right in the
25 mid-range of that goal, 800 to 1,600, 70 coho and then
26 about 2,500 pink. So, the pinks are consistently low,
27 below the escapement goal, the historical escapement
28 goal. For Morris Lake's data are available seven of 20
29 years, and the escapement goals are much lower,
30 historical. Again, there are no current goals. For
31 sockeye, it's 200 to 400, and for pinks it's 800 to
32 1,600. And so, the ten-year average for sockeye here is
33 87. So, we're shooting for 200 as a low bar. Coho,
34 average of 3. And pink salmon, about 100. And the low
35 bar there is 800. So, below the historical, again. And,
36 also here, we have that 2018 to 23 drone survey data to
37 draw from. From those data, it looks like Summers Lake
38 met the escapement goal five of six years. And, once
39 again, we've discussed how those estimates are likely a
40 low estimate. So, that's encouraging. And in Morris, the
41 escapement goal was met two of six years. This is a very
42 small run. So, the high points. The pink salmon numbers
43 are consistently low and Summers is a small but stable,
44 apparently, sockeye salmon run. Morris has a very small
45 run. And there's a note here, that none of these surveys
46 were intended to capture the peak of coho movement.

47
48 The cultural knowledge and traditional
49 practice harvest history for this location, the data we
50 have are the same as the previous analyses so, we know

1 that subsistence is important, particularly sockeye
2 salmon. We know that the use or harvest has declined
3 since 1994. We know that the methods leaned on first,
4 predominantly subsistence, then rod and reel, then
5 commercial harvest. We've heard about how road
6 accessible harvest locations are important for a
7 subgroup of users, subsistence users, and also how this
8 comes along with the vulnerability of those systems,
9 particularly small ones, to overharvest, conservation
10 issues and the lack of law enforcement. For regulations,
11 state and subsistence, state and federal subsistence
12 fisheries are closed and there is that limited sport
13 fishing. So that's five per day, five in possession
14 sockeye and coho, a limit of two each. Caveat for Summers
15 Lake. There is a season, so, January 1 through August
16 15, open window for the lake and 250 foot radius of the
17 outlet stream. The outlet stream itself is closed. Is
18 that right? Yard, 250 yard. Excuse me. So, two
19 alternatives were looked at here. The one was to simply
20 rescind the closure. So, to open up all of Summers and
21 Morris Lakes drainages to harvest. And that would open
22 it up to the area-wide federal subsistence harvest
23 regulations. There were conservation concerns associated
24 with this, given the accessibility, the vulnerability
25 and just the small size of those populations.

26
27 Alternative two was to modify the
28 closure. So, again, there are limited things we can do
29 within a modification, but we can change the area. So,
30 changing the area to more closely match what's depicted
31 in state sport fishing regulations and coming with a
32 parallel proposal that limits gear types and the limits,
33 in order to provide some of those conservation measures.
34 This is preferred, however, out of the scope of a closure
35 review. So, our recommendation -- what we can do within
36 the closure review process, is to modify that closure.
37 So, the suggested modification was to strike out Summers
38 from the description of waters that are closed. So, the
39 lake is open. So, maintaining the closure for Morris
40 Lake, but closing the Summers Lake outlet stream, which
41 mirrors what is written in state sport regulations.
42 There is no seasonal window, however, outlined in in
43 this modification. So, the justification here is, of
44 course, to provide a rural federal subsistence priority.
45 Given that this system is closed to subsistence but open
46 to sport, it seems as though Summers has a small but
47 stable population capable of supporting a sport fishery
48 and thus arguably a subsistence fishery of similar
49 means. And from what we've heard, similar population,
50 just fishing under a different permit. It would still

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1 rely on in-season management, using their delegated
2 authority to close or restrict the fishery in times of
3 conservation concern. And a RAC proposal. However, a RAC
4 proposal would relieve some of this pressure and
5 institute consistent conservation measures, which you
6 all have control over. And that Madam Chair, is my
7 presentation.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
10 you. I wanted to clarify them -- so, to get the best
11 solution on this, under the recommendation, the RAC
12 would modify the closure to basically open up the waters
13 of Summers Lake. And along with that, the recommendation
14 was also to put additional -- to do another fishery
15 regulation proposal with some limits. So, it's two
16 parts? Okay. Thank you. Are there any other questions
17 on the report?

18
19 (No response)

20
21 Okay. So, again, I guess I'll open it
22 up, if in the fall, when we actually take action on this
23 fishery closure, if the intended direction is to do
24 anything other than retain the closure, we probably want
25 a new regulation. Do you have some regulatory language
26 to propose? Okay. All right. Go ahead. Brett.

27
28 MR. RICHARDSON: I'm in -- sorry, Brett
29 Richardson. In support of modifying the closure. I
30 propose a new proposal to apply the closure only to
31 Morris Lake and continue Summer Lake Creek closure and
32 open Summer Bay Lake to match sporting regulations.
33 Sorry, sports fishing regulations.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, so, to
36 clarify, the motion would be for the waters of Summers
37 Lake, develop federal subsistence regulations that
38 mirror the state sport fishing regulations. Okay. Thank
39 you. Is there a second?

40
41 MS. HAYDEN: Second. This is Natasha.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you,
44 Natasha. Brett, would you like to speak more to your
45 proposal?

46
47 MR. RICHARDSON: Yes. Thank you. Brett
48 Richardson. The sockeye run at Summers Bay is
49 sustainable and healthy. It's probably the most popular
50 place to go for snagging, right. And they snag in the

1 bay. They're supposed to be away from the creek. And for
2 the most part, everybody abides by that guideline. Being
3 in the lake itself with a sports, you know, fishing
4 license, happens from time to time. I've seen people
5 fishing in a kayak on the lake. But I think to not allow
6 federally qualified users to do the same thing, in an
7 area that has a healthy run, is kind of against the
8 intention of what we're going for here. It's also on the
9 road system, road's currently closed now due to storm
10 related issues, but once it gets open again, hopefully
11 by summertime you know, having a car to go out there
12 with your kayak, pop it in the lake, you're all legal
13 with your permitting, you get your two sockeye, you'd
14 be good to go. So, I would support this.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
17 you, Brett. Are there questions for the maker of the
18 motion? Pat, go ahead.

19
20 MR. HOLMES: Yeah, Brett. Did the AC
21 discuss this one?

22
23 MR. RICHARDSON: Yes, we discussed it,
24 there were no objections. The only item that was brought
25 up was, again, fishing in the creek, which is an issue
26 regardless of what we do here today. That would need
27 more enforcement, which is a different issue.

28
29 MR. HOLMES: I have another question
30 along that line for Morris -- I mean, on Summers. Do you
31 think folks would object to having a limitation on using
32 single hooks? Because then that would eliminate the
33 potential of anybody snagging, because it's a short
34 spawning lake mostly. And so, if you're going for sport
35 gear, you could end up with somebody having just as bad
36 effects as is snagging off the beach. And so, maybe
37 having amend that to require a single hook, because I
38 know different areas for sport fishing have that type
39 of a modification. And then that would allow for the
40 potential, but yet it would prevent the problems that
41 can occur with snagging, particularly on the spawning
42 areas around the lake and up at the inlet stream. Those
43 little streams up there. Would you accept a
44 modification?

45
46 MR. RICHARDSON: Yes, definitely. That
47 sounds common sense. I think anybody who's going to be
48 snagging is going to stay where they are on the beach,
49 as it seems to be a bit easier to do. The real anglers
50 might give a -- give the lake a shot.

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MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair, could I amend the motion to -- on opening the lake for subsistence, using sport fish gear, but limiting the use to single hook or whatever sport fish would -- how would you define that?

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yep. Is there a second?

MR. RICHARDSON: Second.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great. Okay. Is there, are there any questions on the single hook amendment?

(No response)

Are there any additional comments on the single hook amendment?

(No comments)

Is there any objection to the single hook amendment?

(No response)

Okay. That was, seeing no objection that passes. The single hook amendment is now part of the proposal on the table. And if people have comments about single hook, you can still make the comments. Go ahead, Coral.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, I guess I'm thinking about just a tendency to object, just because it wasn't something that came forward that was discussed. And so, my tendency would be, I would support what came out of the meeting. But so, that's my comment.

(Pause)

I do realize that it has time to get put together and then be commented on also. That's why I'm wavering about actually objecting.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Brett, go ahead.

MR. RICHARDSON: I believe we have until April 3rd. Is that correct? Yeah.

1

2 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, what's
3 happening right now is we're working where -- there's a
4 motion for the RAC to generate these proposals. We have
5 to do that at this meeting today or tomorrow. Individuals
6 have until April 4th to do whatever proposals they want.
7 I guess the other comment I would make is that, in this
8 case, Brett is the one making the proposal. He did --
9 there was back and forth between Pat and Brett and Brett
10 said the single hook was fine with him. So, there's,
11 this proposal doesn't actually exist anywhere outside
12 of today because today is the first time it's ever been
13 invented. Okay. Is there additional questions or
14 comments on this motion? Daniel, go ahead.

15

16 MR. SMITH: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair.
17 I have a question. About the sport fishing regulations
18 in Summers Bay drainage. On page 48, waters close to
19 sport fishing, Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands
20 area, so for b. the Summer Bay Lake drainage and salt
21 waters within a 250-yard radius of the creek. So, those
22 areas are closed under sport regs. But if we were to put
23 a -- like the proposal in question right now, would it
24 open Summers Bay Lake for federal subsistence
25 regulations that are mirroring sport fishing
26 regulations?

27

28 MR. RICHARDSON: Currently in the
29 freshwater lake, correct. Not in the saltwater.

30

31 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Are
32 there any other -- well, so I will say -- so, this is
33 generating a proposal that's going to be analyzed. I
34 assume that Anna is listening to the discussion. So, as
35 particular questions come up, she'll know where there's
36 particular interest when she does the analysis. I assume
37 that -- okay. Pat, go ahead.

38

39 MR. HOLMES: Oh, perhaps a verbiage that
40 could be utilized would be, rather than saying sport
41 fishing gear, federal sport fishing gear would be rod
42 and reel. Just simply say rod and reel under subsistence
43 regulations rather than sport, because then that would
44 separate it philosophically.

45

46 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Pat. All
47 right. Additional questions or comments?

48

49 (No response)

50

1 Is there any objection?

2

3 (No response)

4

5 Seeing none, that motion passes. Okay,
6 so, they, we are now on the last fishery closure review,
7 which is FCR27-08, Kodiak area king crab. I'm going to
8 hand this over to Jason Roberts. Yes. It looks like our
9 in-season manager's waiting.

10

11 (Talking)

12

13 Yeah. If there's comments come up to the
14 table.

15

16 MR. GERKEN: Jon Gerken, Fish and
17 Wildlife Service. Through the Chair. So, the -- this RAC
18 put in a proposal to the Board of Fish for subsistence.
19 Bear with me. And this was specific to changing the open
20 season hours in the Unalaska District. So, in your
21 regulations, currently as written in the Unalaska
22 District while fishing for salmon, open season is year-
23 round, 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. So, this RAC put in a proposal
24 to the Board of Fish to remove the 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. That
25 happened two weeks ago. The Board did support that
26 proposal and then removed those timelines. So, I guess
27 I would recommend this RAC to maybe submit a proposal
28 on the federal side, because it's still in federal regs,
29 to do the same thing. So, the state has removed those
30 timelines. I would urge this RAC to also remove the six
31 a.m. to 9 p.m. in a proposal and just say open season
32 year-round.

33

34 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Did -- thank you
35 for that. Did the Board of Fish -- I don't -- did they
36 basically just say you can do subsistence fishing any
37 time so, there was actually no date or hour restrictions?

38

39 MR. AYERS: Madam Chair. Scott Ayers. The
40 recommendation that was given to the Board that they
41 followed up on was to simply say that subsistence fishing
42 was open January 1st through December 31st to mirror
43 regulation that they had in other parts of the state.
44 So, they didn't put hours, say open 24 hours or anything
45 like that. They just simply said, it's open.

46

47 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Yep, that's
48 what I was asking. That's what I thought I had read. So,
49 basically, you can subsistence fish any time. Okay. So,
50 we have a -- I guess I'll look toward Brett. We have a

1 suggestion to put in an additional proposal which would
2 be appropriate for this cycle to make the federal
3 subsistence fishing opportunity times in your area, the
4 same as on the state side, which now the state has its
5 -- there are no day or time limitations. So, are you
6 interested in considering that or -- we'll go with Pat.
7 Pat.

8
9 MR. HOLMES: How did that? Well, one: how
10 did that evolve? And two: here in Kodiak, several years
11 ago, they went to the 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. because of an
12 enforcement issue and people leaving their gear out 24
13 hours or going and taking a prime spot and staying on
14 it for 24 hours. And so, our community went for the 6
15 a.m. to 9 p.m. restriction here. So, is that changed
16 here for Kodiak? Because if its statewide, I think that
17 was on the last permit I got. So, I'm just wondering how
18 this season thing evolved and statewide because I just
19 don't know. Is that really -- how did it happen?

20
21 MR. GERKEN: Yeah, through the Chair. Jon
22 Gerken, Fish and Wildlife Service, thanks for the
23 question. I don't work for the state, so I don't know
24 what the evolution for the 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., specifically
25 in Unalaska District. There was a fair amount of
26 conversation. I think the Board asked the same question,
27 where did this come from? Best of my recollection, I
28 don't believe the manager had a response to that, but
29 they did ask (indiscernible), specifically, if there was
30 any conflict in there. And to my recollection, they said,
31 no, there is no conflict, at least in the Unalaska
32 District. So, this, what I'm recommending has nothing
33 to do with Kodiak geography. It only has to do with the
34 reg in the Aleutian Islands, federal subsistence
35 regulations, in this one spot where it says Unalaska
36 District, you can only fish from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

37
38 MR. HOLMES: I believe that when that was
39 implemented, that was the same logic as that we had here
40 was enforcement and to keep people from just leaving
41 their gear out and you know, letting the seals eat it
42 and not necessarily taking care of their nets or, you
43 know, conservation as well as an enforcement issue from
44 when that went in. So, I don't know where you're at, but
45 too bad we don't have somebody from ADF&G Comm Fish to
46 bring us up to what's currently going on.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Brett.
49
50

1 MR. RICHARDSON: Brett Richardson. So,
2 just to clarify, and I know you're federal, not state,
3 but the proposal we put forward wanted to rescind 6 a.m.
4 to 9 p.m. and put in place sunrise to sunset. So, was
5 that not listened to and they just took all limitations
6 off?

7
8 MR. GERKEN: Yeah. Through the Chair, Jon
9 Gerken, Fish and Wildlife Service. They did discuss
10 sunrise and sunset, and then they chose to amend it and
11 remove the sunrise-sunset portion of it, primarily
12 because sunrise and sunset changes throughout the year.
13 So, they thought that was harder to manage and harder
14 to at least apply law enforcement stuff to. So, it did
15 end up, basically, how Mr. Ayers stated earlier. So 24/7,
16 basically. Open season, year-round.

17
18 MR. RICHARDSON: And then to clarify
19 further, since we don't have access to a federal permit
20 out there and this would update the state permit, is it
21 necessary to make this change? Simply because we're not
22 really following federal guidelines currently.

23
24 MR. GERKEN: Jon Gerken, Fish and
25 Wildlife Services, through the Chair. If you were to
26 fish using federal regulations as a federally qualified
27 user out there, you would need to follow the federal
28 regulations. So, there is no federal permit in that area,
29 but you are still required to have a permit. So, here's
30 where it kind of gets a little bit wishy-washy. So,
31 there's no federal permit. You could record your harvest
32 on a state subsistence permit. But if you're harvesting
33 those fish on federal lands, under federal regulations,
34 you would need to comply with the federal regulations,
35 which is currently 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

36
37 MR. RICHARDSON: Okay, one more follow
38 up. So, the proposal we're putting forth now for the
39 federal freshwater lakes and rivers and whatnot. If we
40 harvested from those areas, we would need to follow
41 federal guidelines. So, all the proposals we're doing
42 now would require us to put a further proposal forward
43 to alter these hours. Is that correct?

44
45 MR. GERKEN: Jon Gerken, Fish and
46 Wildlife Service, through the Chair. I guess I would
47 urge the Council to propose a -- its own proposal that
48 says that changes the open season timing in Unalaska
49 District for salmon fishing. Currently, it states year-
50 round 6 to 9. I would suggest or I would recommend that

1 the proposal will be something like open season for the
2 Unalaska District for salmon fishing is now year-round.
3 So, you would just be getting rid of the 6 a.m. to 9
4 p.m.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: I think what I'm
7 going to suggest on this is we can take it up later or
8 tomorrow. Because this just kind of sprung upon us, that
9 we'll have time to think about it. Brett, I just asked
10 if the proposal that we just approved went through and
11 people were fishing in those freshwater streams, would
12 they have to follow federal guidelines and I -- or
13 federal subsistence and I shook my head. The reason I
14 shook my head is that we're mirroring state sport fishing
15 so state sport fishing in those areas is open. So, you
16 could sport fish there now. But we're -- uh-oh, Scott
17 Ayers is approaching the mic. Okay, go ahead.

18
19 MR. AYERS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I
20 just wanted to clarify a little bit the way that this
21 would work out likely, is that we would not -- when
22 writing the analysis, say mirroring state sport fishing
23 regulations. What we would do is say for these areas the
24 season dates, gear types, restrictions are X, Y, and Z.
25 They would be the same things that are currently in the
26 state sport fishing regulations but we wouldn't say,
27 reference state sport fishing regulations. Because we
28 do have a regulation on the book for this area that
29 says, in the Unalaska District, you may take salmon for
30 subsistence purposes from 6 a.m. until 9 p.m. from
31 January 1st through December 31st, that we're beholden
32 to that. So, that timeline, even if we put, even if this
33 Council goes through, accepts and recommends to the
34 Board that all these new proposals that you've generated
35 get passed, if there's no additional changes made to
36 this season date and the daily time limits, those just
37 remain in place even though you're mirroring the gear
38 and the harvest limits and the areas that are currently
39 open under sport fishing regulations. Thank you, Madam
40 Chair.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, go ahead.

43
44 MR. HOLMES: Just thinking back 30 years
45 ago or so, when that discussion came up for not only
46 Kodiak, but out west and, particularly out west, because
47 they used to have a pretty dynamic pink fishery there
48 in July, 2 or 3 million a year. And part of I think of,
49 I don't know if it was Arnie or Glenn, probably was
50 Arnie because he came on after 1982, was that,

1 occasionally, though, you'd have commercial gear, and
2 if the processors were open in a even year the process
3 humpies, if you had open all the time, the -- I think
4 that just needs to be coordination between the state and
5 the federal government, because you could have somebody
6 out there in a commercial boat, let's say, this year is
7 2026, could be a boomer year. They don't have enough
8 pollock to process and they might decide to, you know,
9 go for an opening with on the commercial side. So, you
10 could end up with somebody out there at night doing a
11 round haul right off the mouth of McLees, after dark,
12 and nailing a whole bunch of fish. And so, I think that's
13 a topic that needs to be discussed between the federal
14 coordinator and the state coordinator on whether it's
15 there or not, you know. To me, it's kind of an important
16 concept, but that was years ago.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Scott, you have
19 more to add?

20
21 MR. AYERS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I
22 just -- to Member Holmes's comment, I just wanted to
23 agree that I could see how that could be a conservation
24 concern. But would note that, for the regulations that
25 we're talking about right now, this would only pertain
26 to the freshwater systems and, again, only if these
27 closures are rescinded and limited to the gear we're
28 talking about here.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. So, like I
31 said, I think it makes sense to -- I'll leave the
32 possibility open that if somebody wants to bring forward
33 a proposal for the Aleutians area, which would probably
34 be Brett. You don't have to do it right now, if you want
35 to think about it overnight and bring that forward
36 tomorrow, that's fine. But thank you for noting the
37 discrepancy between state and federal management. And
38 we'll come back to this one if we need to. All right,
39 thank you. Now on to Kodiak king crab.

40
41 DR. ROBERTS: All right. Good afternoon,
42 Madam Chair, Members of the Council. Anna graciously
43 allowed me to present one thing at this meeting. So, my
44 name is Jason Roberts. I'm an Anthropologist with OSM,
45 and I'll be presenting a summary of federal fisheries
46 closure, FCR27-08. The analysis for this closure begins
47 on page 119 of your meeting books. So, like the other
48 closures, this is a standard review of a federal fishery
49 closure to king crab harvest by non-federally qualified
50 users in the Kodiak and Afognak areas. And it's the

1 Board's policy that these types of closures be reviewed,
2 at least once every four years, and that they do not
3 remain in place unless necessary. And so, the purpose
4 of this review is to determine if the closure is still
5 warranted. A map of the closure areas under
6 consideration is shown on page 122 in your meeting book.
7 So, these king crab fisheries were first closed to
8 nonfederally qualified users in 1995, and at the time
9 this was, of course, motivated by conservation concerns
10 following the crash of the king crab stock in the 1980s.
11 And so, while the commercial king crab fishing has been
12 closed for many years under state regulations, the state
13 does allow a limited amount of subsistence king crab
14 harvest in the Kodiak area.

15
16 In 1996, the Board of Fisheries reduced
17 the daily subsistence harvest limits for king crab from
18 six per person to three per household, per year due to
19 conservation concerns, and the Board of Fisheries has
20 consistently opposed proposals seeking an increase in
21 these harvest limits. In 2003, the Federal Subsistence
22 Board deferred to your Council on a fisheries proposal,
23 and in doing so, they adopted a seven-inch minimum shell
24 width requirement for king crabs harvested in the Kodiak
25 and Afognak areas and reduced allowable harvest gear to
26 one pot of any size, but did not reduce annual harvest
27 limits for federally qualified users. And this action
28 aligned federal regulations for shell size and gear with
29 state regulations but maintained the closure to
30 nonfederally qualified users. In 2023, the Board --
31 Subsistence Board voted to maintain the current king
32 crab closure in deference to your Council, acknowledging
33 that the closure remained necessary due to conservation
34 concerns and the need to continue subsistence uses.

35
36 So, red king crab are long lived cold
37 water species with a complex life history, and their
38 populations are highly sensitive to shifts in ocean
39 temperature, predation, and recruitment variability.
40 Since relatively few red king crabs are captured in the
41 state trawl survey each year, it's not possible to
42 accurately determine population trends, since small
43 differences in catches result in large differences in
44 population estimates. However, these surveys show that
45 king crab stock in the Kodiak area has remained at very
46 low abundance with no indication of rebuilding, and
47 these findings are consistent with earlier analyses. So,
48 there is no specific management objective that's been
49 set for the federal or state king crab subsistence
50 fisheries in the Kodiak area. However, the state does

1 set a total threshold abundance of fertilized females
2 for determining when to reopen the commercial fishery.
3 The state trawl survey estimates have continued to
4 remain below that threshold level. Womens Bay and Gibson
5 Cove have been identified as key nurseries for juvenile
6 king crab within the larger Chiniak area and this has
7 led to ongoing discussions about the best ways to
8 maintain these nurseries.

9
10 So, commercial production of king crab
11 peaked in the 60s. And the fishery was essentially
12 exhausted in the early 80s. Bruce Short explained at a
13 previous Council meeting that overharvesting and the
14 emergence of sea otters played key roles in this decline.
15 The estimated annual subsistence harvest for the Kodiak
16 area was almost 18,000 king crabs in 1982. But the total
17 subsistence harvest declined to less than 6,000 by the
18 1990s. Recent annual harvests documented through
19 subsistence permits have often been well under 100 king
20 crabs per year, more recently. However, residents of the
21 area still depend on many types of shellfish and other
22 marine invertebrates as key components of their
23 subsistence base. A 2018 study found that king crab were
24 one of the most regularly used subsistence shellfish
25 species in Akhiok, Old Harbor and Larsen Bay, but that
26 they had not composed a significant portion of local
27 subsistence diets in these communities in many years.
28 In 2021, the most, during the most recent subsistence
29 survey, Tanner crab accounted for the greatest
30 proportion of marine invertebrate harvest in the Kodiak
31 area, and more households use Tanner and Dungeness crabs
32 than any other shellfish species.

33
34 So, the OSM preliminary conclusion is
35 to retain the status quo on this closure, as there
36 continues to be significant conservation concern for
37 king crab in these areas. The Kodiak area king crab
38 stock remains consistently low. Marine waters under
39 federal jurisdiction in Womens Bay are a known nursery
40 area for the larger Chiniak Bay area, and these waters
41 are easy to access from the Kodiak road system.
42 Restricting the harvest of king crab in these federal
43 public waters for nonsubsistence uses is necessary for
44 the conservation of the king crab resource and to help
45 ensure the continuation of subsistence uses. Because
46 about 98% of the mature king crab caught in the state's
47 annual trawl survey were caught outside of federal
48 marine waters, it's unlikely that a continued limited
49 harvest by subsistence users in these areas will
50 detrimentally impact the population of king crab. And

1 that's all I've got and I can answer any questions.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Are
4 there any questions for Jason? Pat, go ahead.

5

6 MR. HOLMES: Good job.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Are there any
9 additional questions for Jason?

10

11 (No response)

12

13 Okay. So, we don't take action on this
14 closure until the fall meeting. My sense from discussion
15 on this previously is that we would probably maintain
16 this closure. But we're not taking action today, I'm
17 just saying that to elicit thought or discussion on this
18 before we move on. Any other comments? Pat, go ahead.

19

20 MR. HOLMES: Yeah, I think we probably
21 will end up in the fall retaining it. Some of my dear
22 friends, her husband, as like Natasha and other folks,
23 were very serious on harvesting sea otters in Womens
24 Bay, but all it took was that one pot of 50 or 75 otters
25 in there and talking to the NOAA divers out there that
26 do the Tanner research, there just isn't any left. They
27 really cleaned it out. And so, I think until we see some
28 whole changes in the marine environment, I think the
29 idea of opening it up is just not feasible. And probably
30 the only other area in the island down in the south end
31 and Olga Bay there's still a few and there was a few up
32 on Afognak, but I haven't talked to any of my friends
33 that are in the sea otter business up there as to what
34 the crab are doing up there, but it's pretty serious. I
35 don't think there's really enough to justify opening,
36 but we'll take that up in the fall. Thank you.

37

38 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Coral.

39

40 MS. CHERNOFF: I just have a question.
41 Here, we're looking at this red king crab survey table
42 here, and it looks like most of the crab that are caught
43 in these surveys is down in Alitak Bay. Is there any
44 other information to access about what's in Womens Bay
45 or Karluk? Pat had just referenced NOAA and Tanner crab
46 surveys. Like, do they take note of king crab in there
47 or is there other stuff -- other information we can
48 access other than this?

49

50

1 MS. SENEAL: Anna Senecal, through the
2 Chair. Member Chernoff, so the state conducts the trawl
3 surveys and it's a grid so, they, and the results are
4 geo referenced by basic locality. So, we can give you,
5 drill down a little bit, not like specifically. I can't
6 produce that right now, but I can definitely include
7 that in -- so these are -- you can consider these as
8 draft analyses, because they'll come back at you in the
9 fall. So, I can make a note of this and make sure that
10 we have more detail on Womens Bay specific catch. I can,
11 subjectively, tell you it was very low.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Are
14 there any other questions on the report?

15
16 (No response)

17
18 Okay. Seeing none, I think we're going
19 to take a break. Let's come back at 3:15.

20
21 (Off record)

22
23 (On record)

24
25 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. We've
26 got all the council members back at the table so we'll
27 go ahead and resume the meeting. We have completed a,
28 b, c and d. So, the call for fishery proposals,
29 developing fishery proposals, fishery closure reviews
30 and then developing comments for the Board of Game. Just
31 as a reminder, if we do want to come back and do another
32 fishery proposal for the fishing times of day for the
33 Aleutians, we can do that tomorrow. The next agenda item
34 is Review and Approve the FY2025 Annual Report. And I
35 will hand this over to Leigh.

36
37 MS. HONIG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Leigh
38 Honig, for the record. So, the annual report can be
39 found in your blue little supplemental meeting
40 materials. It's going to be under Tab 2. And so, this
41 is an opportunity for the Council to make any edits to
42 the annual report. Unfortunately, at this time we're not
43 able to add any other topics. But if any of the
44 information that is in the annual report needs to be
45 updated or amended, the Council will have an opportunity
46 to do that. And as a reminder, this is an action item.
47 Thanks.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
50 you, Leigh. Let's go ahead and start with a motion to

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1 approve the annual report. And then we'll have
2 discussion. Do I have a motion?

3

4 MR. HOLMES: Move to accept the annual
5 report.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Is there
8 a second?

9

10 MS. HAYDEN: Second. This is Natasha.

11

12 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
13 you. Okay, and I'll open the floor for discussion or
14 correction or small changes to the report. So, as Leigh
15 said, I think we're constrained to the topics that are
16 already in there. But if there are clarifications that
17 are needed, we can add additional words to more clearly
18 convey our intent. Or if there are errors, we can correct
19 those. So, I will give people a couple of minutes and
20 anyone ready to raise your hand, if anyone has comments,
21 I'll take those.

22

23 (Pause)

24

25 But I think, while people are looking,
26 just in case we have people listening on the phone that
27 don't have the letter in front of them, I'll go over
28 what the general topics are. So, in our FY2025 report,
29 topic number one, we commented on was the importance of
30 fisheries research and weir funding. We do specifically
31 call out the McLeese Lake weir as being particularly
32 important. And then, a need for consistent funding,
33 particularly for fish surveys, because if we don't have
34 the fish surveys, we have reduced access to harvest the
35 fish. Topic two was along similar lines, stressing the
36 importance of wildlife population studies. So, having
37 information gaps or if we don't have wildlife surveys
38 or if we're missing wildlife population numbers, that
39 impedes the ability to effectively manage those
40 populations and also probably results in less harvest
41 ability for subsistence users. Three, enforcement
42 capacity. This has been a consistent topic that's come
43 up in our region. Just the challenges with not having
44 enforcement consistently available in some of our high
45 use areas, particularly when there's multiple user
46 groups. So, subsistence users, in combination with sport
47 users, for example. Four, we specifically called out
48 Mortensen sockeye salmon returns and subsistence access.
49 So, there was concern, specifically with Mortensen
50 Lagoon sockeye. And we noted this as being an issue.

1

2 And then, finally, we had declining
3 goose populations and disproportionate impacts of
4 management actions. This noted continuing declines in
5 emperor goose, brant goose and cackling goose
6 populations, largely driven by poor production in the
7 YK delta. And then the -- not discrepancy, but the
8 impacts for our region, just because birds move around
9 at different times of year. And so, we may have limited
10 access -- we may have limited amounts of birds in our
11 area when those seasons are open. So, hopefully I've
12 killed enough time. Do any council members have any
13 corrections or comments on the annual report?

14

15 (No response)

16

17 Pat, go ahead.

18

19 MR. HOLMES: A couple small ones. On item
20 number two, down about second to the last sentence there.
21 Members noted prior commitments from the U.S. Fish and
22 Wildlife Service to prioritize surveys at Izembek
23 National Refuge. I think after U.S. Fish and Wildlife
24 Service, you might want to consider commitments from the
25 US Fish and Wildlife Service senior staff, because it
26 was the assistant director, at one time, that said that
27 they would assure us that that would be the number one
28 priority, was doing the caribou surveys at Izembek and
29 it was ignored, or somebody else would pull the pilot
30 out and it would go to southeast or some other place
31 rather than doing the survey on the caribou, which was
32 really critical for the people on the Alaska Peninsula.
33 And number three, enforcement capacity. This relates to
34 primarily Unalaska. It might in some sense be to Cold
35 Bay, but I think we should, maybe say, enforcement
36 capacity at Unalaska and Alaska Peninsula or something
37 like that, but at least say at Unalaska. I think those
38 would be two small verbiages that would provide some
39 more persistence and precision in our comments.

40

41 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Pat. Are
42 there any further corrections or clarifications from
43 council members? Coral, go ahead.

44

45 MS. CHERNOFF: I have no corrections or
46 clarifications, but I just do want to comment on the
47 declining goose populations and disproportionate impacts
48 of management actions. I just want to say like being the
49 Chair for AMBCC for Kodiak, I disagree with what is
50 being said here. I don't think that the seasons and the

1 regulations on the seasons and the spring subsistence
2 hunt are disproportionate. And I guess that's all I want
3 to say. I think we watched that spring hunt, closely.
4 We're not getting any more than the sport hunters or
5 whatever. We also have -- there's also agreements for
6 that subsistence hunt with -- I don't know why I'm
7 blanking out on what those agreements are called. But
8 anyway, there's agreements for that hunt and we operate
9 within those agreements for that spring hunt. So, I just
10 wanted to say that I disagree with that disproportionate
11 impacts of management for birds.

12

13 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, go ahead.

14

15 MR. HOLMES: Yeah, Coral, I was wondering
16 if -- has it ever been addressed? I haven't been
17 attending your migratory bird meetings for a couple of
18 years, but I remember quite a while back there was quite
19 a debate on how the population surveys were conducted.
20 And did they come up with some agreements, because they
21 used to have multiple agencies involved in the
22 evaluation of the migratory birds, particularly the
23 emperor geese. And there was a state representative on
24 there who found a statistician that was a bird person
25 that went in and evaluated at that time the technique
26 for their population estimates and basically identified
27 that their population surveys could be off by more than
28 50%. And so, I was wondering if that was ever settled
29 in the past and if they've done a review on the
30 populations, because, obviously, the application is
31 disproportionate for folks in our area. But I'm just
32 wondering how solid are their estimates on the bird
33 population, because the techniques that they're using -
34 - what's the confidence interval on them? I wonder if
35 some kind of verbiage could be applied in here, asking
36 them to explain their surveys or their confidence
37 intervals. How precise are their surveys? Because if
38 they were more precise, then there might be a better
39 allocation seasonally.

40

41 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Pat. So, I
42 was also thinking about this paragraph. It has come up
43 across multiple RAC meetings. I thought the timing issue
44 of when things like emperor geese are in our area doesn't
45 always line up with the hunting seasons, I thought that
46 had been a common thing that has come up. So, when I
47 read this section, I was just thinking about, from the
48 standpoint of when the birds are here and when we have
49 opportunity to hunt that, I guess I was thinking that's
50 mostly where this was going. But based on Coral's

1 comment, I guess, can you repeat what your concern is
2 or disagreement is, because I'm not sure I understand
3 what you're pointing out things.

4
5 MS. CHERNOFF: Well, my disagreement is,
6 I guess in comments about, let's see: current management
7 actions in response to declining populations, such as
8 foreclosures for emperor geese, the elimination, da da
9 da da -- are disproportionately impacting local hunters
10 because most harvests in our region occurs when birds
11 are present during the fall, when sport regulations are
12 in effect. In contrast, spring subsistence hunters have
13 seen fewer restrictions. As brandt and clackler are
14 harvested. So, I guess it's with that. We've seen a lot
15 of -- just having been to the meetings, I know that
16 we've seen a lot of restrictions and we've even, through
17 the subsistence hunt, while we have low surveys for
18 emperor geese, for example, we take extra measures that
19 aren't even required of us, like we've shut down the egg
20 hunt. That's been voluntarily done in the north. So, we
21 have taken actually extra measures beyond what we're
22 required to do. And so, I guess I just take issue with
23 that kind of pitting against the spring hunt when like,
24 in fact, we're there for subsistence and we're here for
25 subsistence. And I just feel like that's a very untrue
26 statement to make.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: We'll take Jeff,
29 and then Pat.

30
31 MR. WASLEY: Jeff Wasley. So, from
32 publications, from studies by the state of Alaska,
33 Subsistence users take 90% of brandt and sport or fall
34 harvest is 10%. And since then, brandt have gone to a
35 restrictive season for sport, which is down from the
36 full 107 days to 51 days. And they also took out our
37 September season, which our brandt harvest was down like
38 80% last year. So, meanwhile, there is no further
39 restrictions on brandt harvest for subsistence. So, I
40 think we are definitely taking the brunt of management.
41 And with emperor geese, I think subsistence harvest was
42 like 95%. So, our sport season is closed. So, I think
43 just the numbers just prove that like, we are taking the
44 brunt of management. So, and those are, you know, data
45 from the state of Alaska. So, thank you.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat.

48
49 MR. HOLMES: I was just kind of curious
50 as to, you know, this differentiate between seasons. Is

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1 that a function of the survey methodology or is it a
2 function of where they're surveying and when? So, do the
3 people up on the delta, proportionally, do they have a
4 higher proportional harvest of these species or not? And
5 why? But I don't know how to answer, even.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, I -- in the
8 interest of, because I don't think it's productive or
9 helpful to have user pitted against user in our annual
10 report. I think I would really like to see consensus on
11 what's going in here. I guess, I'm hoping that the
12 decline in goose populations, we can all agree that
13 that's a valid thing. Because part of what we report to
14 the Federal Subsistence Board is our subsistence needs.
15 So, what species do we need and how much do we need of
16 it? And then, what is the status of it? And so, if we're
17 seeing declining goose populations that's an appropriate
18 thing for us to report to the Board, that's part of our
19 job. So, I think we can all agree on that. I think the
20 disagreement is on the, I guess the characterization of
21 sport versus harvest. So, is there a message that we can
22 agree on that's not pitting it in that sense of it's
23 sport versus harvest? And, I mean, I do think the like,
24 the seasons for subsistence hunts, has come up before.
25 Because if we have an open subsistence hunt here or fall
26 hunt, whatever. If you set season dates when the birds
27 are not in fact in the area, that creates an access
28 problem, and I think it's fair to comment on that. But
29 is there -- how can we rephrase this so, it keeps the
30 meat of what we're trying to convey, which is access to
31 subsistence resources, without getting into a back and
32 forth. Go ahead, Sam.

33
34 MR. ROHRER: Through the Chair. Sam
35 Rohrer here. So, what you're saying is how I read that
36 paragraph, that was my understanding of the paragraph.
37 I hear, Coral, what you're saying. I hear, Jeff, what
38 you're saying. But I think the point of that paragraph
39 was not to say whose fault it is. The point of the
40 paragraph was just saying the season is opening Kodiak,
41 but the critters aren't here. The critters are only here
42 in the fall, and the fall season gets closed. The spring
43 season sees less restriction. That's great for people,
44 other places, but it's bad for us because the birds
45 aren't here, so. That was the point, was, you're opening
46 the season when the animals aren't here.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, that's how I
49 originally read it because that discussion has come up.
50 Natasha, go ahead.

1

2 MS. HAYDEN: Thanks, Madam Chair. Natasha
3 Hayden. I would just suggest so, that second sentence
4 that begins with 'Current management actions in response
5 to', just delete that 'Current management actions in
6 response to' and just start with, 'Declining
7 populations'. But then, because at the end of this
8 paragraph, it says, 'We're requesting that managers look
9 closely -- managers closely evaluate how those
10 conservation measures are distributed across the user
11 groups'. So, it's, I mean, I see the -- how -- it sounds
12 like it's implying that management is doing like -- that
13 -- and, going through an allocation process that is --
14 that that's being elevated in that statement that it's
15 an allocation issue versus a declining population issue.
16 And then similarly with the next sentence where it says,
17 'In contrast, spring subsistence hunters have seen fewer
18 restrictions as brandt and cackler harvests remain
19 largely unchanged'. I mean, it should elevate fewer
20 restrictions on brandt and cackler, you know, species.
21 Just, you know, cut out the, just, to eliminate the
22 goose, you know, the potential of the interpretation
23 that goose is being referred to in that sentence.

24

25 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, go ahead.

26

27 MR. HOLMES: I appreciate everybody's
28 comments today. And I was just thinking on Natasha's
29 comment. Could we take that last sentence and just add
30 a Council request that the managers closely evaluate how
31 seasonal conservation measures, our seasonal
32 harvests/conservation measures, are distributed across
33 user groups and consider more equitable appropriations.
34 Move that sentence up to the start or maybe the second
35 sentence in the in the paragraph, because then you take
36 our conclusion of that discussion and put it right up
37 there at the top saying, here's the problem. Just a
38 thought.

39

40 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, thanks, Pat.
41 All right. So, if we rephrase some of the language in
42 this paragraph, focus on the concerns with the declining
43 goose population also, keeping the references to this
44 concept that having an open season for geese or ducks
45 isn't helpful if those birds aren't in your region at
46 the time that season is open, keeping that concept and
47 then just rephrasing some of the sentences so that this
48 comes across -- so we're taking out the chance that
49 somebody reads this as though it's, we're pitting sport
50 against subsistence, which I don't think is the point.

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1 And -- but focusing on our main concern, which is, hey,
2 there's declining goose populations. Also, we have weird
3 access to them because our season dates are wonky. Is
4 that acceptable if we make those changes? Or does anyone
5 have any other comments?

6

7 (No response)

8

9 Okay, I'm not seeing or hearing -- oh,
10 Coral, go ahead.

11

12 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, I guess my view too
13 is -- and it does say the remainder of this report is
14 for information purposes only. However, the Subsistence
15 Board has no jurisdiction in bird, migratory bird
16 populations. They do know subsistence. Yeah. It's on --
17 it falls under migratory birds, so.

18

19 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah. And I think
20 that's why it was specifically under the informational
21 purposes only. And we have commented on migratory birds
22 multiple times in the past. Pat.

23

24 MR. HOLMES: Yeah. Becky, your last
25 comment. I think that kind of summarized things and pull
26 it together very well.

27

28 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, well, seeing
29 no more comments on that, I guess Leigh -- I'll work
30 with Leigh to get that rewritten. Okay, so Leigh, of all
31 the comments for changes and stuff, were those all clear,
32 do you need any more clarification?

33

34 MS. HONIG: Thanks, Madam Chair. That was
35 all clear to me.

36

37 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Is there any
38 further discussion on the annual report before we vote
39 on approving it?

40

41 (No response)

42

43 Okay. Is there any objection to
44 approving our FY2025 Annual Report with the changes that
45 we've discussed?

46

47 (No response)

48

49 All right. Seeing none, the annual
50 report is approved. Okay, next agenda item is Future

1 Meeting Dates. And I believe that Leigh distributed
2 calendars. So, everyone should have two pages of
3 calendars. And I'll hand it over to Leigh, I think.

4
5 MS. HONIG: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair
6 Leigh Honig, for the record. So, this is an action item,
7 and we're going to be confirming the fall 2026 calendar
8 and then selecting winter 2027 and fall 2027 meeting
9 dates. So, sorry to have you jump back and forth between
10 books. The fall meeting date is in your actual meeting
11 book. That one is still current, and for that one, the
12 Council has selected September 15th through the 16th in
13 Unalaska. So, that's the first one. We can take these
14 one at a time or moving on to the winter 2027, that
15 should be a handout because the Western Interior and
16 North Slope recently just met. And actually, the Eastern
17 Interior is meeting right now, and they already decided
18 on meeting dates yesterday, so, I can provide that
19 update. And they had selected February 23rd through the
20 25th, as well. And then fall 2027 is another handout
21 with you, where Western Interior and North Slope have
22 selected October 5th and 6th and Eastern Interior will
23 be October 12th through the 14th. So, you can schedule
24 meeting dates at those same times. We generally like to
25 keep, you know, two Councils at a time during those
26 meeting dates so, we have enough staff to support those.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: What did you say
29 was the 12th through the 14th?

30
31 MS. HONIG: That is for Eastern Interior
32 is October 12th through the 14th. So, circling back
33 around to fall 2026, if the Council can vote to confirm
34 their meeting date or they can change it. And that was
35 once again, September 15th through 16th in Unalaska.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. So, I would
38 be looking for a motion to confirm our fall 2026 meeting
39 dates and location as September 15th and 16th in Unalaska
40 or a motion with different dates and different location.
41 And again, that map -- that calendar is in the, our big
42 meeting book on page 147.

43
44 MS. HAYDEN: Madam Chair, this is
45 Natasha. I moved to keep our meeting -- our fall 2026
46 meeting dates for September 15th-16th in Unalaska.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Is there
49 a second?

1 MR. WASLEY: Second.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Daniel.

4 Is there discussion?

5

6 (No response)

7

8 Is there any objection?

9

10 (No response)

11

12 All right. Seeing no objection, that
13 motion passes, we will keep our fall -- 2026 fall meeting
14 dates as September 15th and 16th in Unalaska. So, moving
15 to winter 2027, I missed -- did you give Eastern Interior
16 dates for that? I didn't write them down.

17

18 MS. HONIG: Yes. Eastern Interior also
19 chose February 23rd through the 25th.

20

21 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, there's three
22 RACs?

23

24 MS. HONIG: U-hum.

25

26 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, so I move we
27 meet that same week. No, just kidding. Okay, so, at this
28 point if we want to have some -- a little discussion
29 first before we get motions on the floor, I'm okay with
30 that. Pat, go ahead.

31

32 MR. HOLMES: Well, I think the
33 approximate times that we've selected for this year
34 would be applicable for next year if we can fit them in,
35 particularly if we're going to be going out west
36 Unalaska. I can ask our folks from out there, but I
37 think usually if we are out there early in September,
38 we have a better chance of getting there and getting
39 back.

40

41 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So Pat, we're in
42 the winter meeting, which is the February-March
43 timeline.

44

45 MR. HOLMES: I'd still like to go from
46 about the same time that we had set-up for this year.

47

48 MS. HONIG: Yeah. March.

49

50

1 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: I'm like, oh, when
2 was that meeting? I don't remember it. It's this meeting.
3 Okay. Brett, go ahead.

4
5 MR. RICHARDSON: Brett Richardson. Same
6 location and dates works for me, the 3rd and the 4th of
7 March in Kodiak.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Jeff, go ahead.

10
11 MR. WASLEY: Yeah, I'd like to go a week
12 later, like the 9th or the 11th. Thank you. Here.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, so we have
15 two ideas on the floor. One is the week of March 1st,
16 and the second is the week of March 8th. The location
17 would be in Kodiak. So additional comments around either
18 of those?

19
20 MS. HAYDEN: Madam Chair, this is
21 Natasha. I just want to check the Kodiak Island Borough
22 School District schedule and see when their spring break
23 is so, if you can just give me a moment, please.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yep.

26
27 (Pause)

28
29 So, while Natasha is checking on that,
30 the North Pacific Fishery Management Council has shifted
31 their meetings and their -- what used to be their
32 February meeting will now end on March 2nd. So, for me,
33 probably that week of March 8th would be slightly better,
34 although -- well, it would be better, the week of March
35 8th.

36
37 MR. HOLMES: Let's go for the March 8th
38 because we need to -- Becky needs to have a break every
39 now and then.

40
41 MS. HAYDEN: Madam Chair, this is
42 Natasha. I think that's fine. I don't think it's been
43 finalized yet, so. That's, I have no objection to that.
44 Thank you.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, so, it sounds
47 like things are kind of shifting toward the March 8th
48 week. Does that not work for anyone?

49
50 (No response)

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And then, as far as days of the week does -- and I guess I'll look at Leigh, does it matter what day of the week? Wednesday. Thursday, Monday, Tuesday. You like to stay away from Mondays? Does it matter? Okay. Okay, so day of the week is also open. Brett.

MR. RICHARDSON: But that's spring break in Unalaska. I don't know if it's the same all across, but it works for me that week. But I would prefer similar Wednesday, Thursday, because just leaving on a Saturday or Sunday is slightly difficult for me.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. So, looking at Wednesday, March 10th and Thursday, March 11th in Kodiak. And if somebody wants to make that a motion, we can try that. Jeff.

MR. WASLEY: Jeff. I'll make a motion for March 10th and 11th, in Kodiak. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Is there a second?

UNIDENTIFIED: Second.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Is there further discussion?

(No response)

And is there any objection?

(No response)

Okay. Seeing no objection, that motion passes. Our winter 2027 meeting is tentatively set for March 10th and 11th, 2027 in Kodiak. Okay, moving on to fall 2027. Pat, did you want to go ahead with your fall -- you had started to make comments about fall of 2027. And that would be the piece of paper that was handed out. One of those, yeah.

MR. HOLMES: I would suggest early in September. Maybe the 15th to the 16th. No later than that. I think the first week, schools are getting going, but I think maybe the second week would be good. At least over the last 40 years ago. So, it seems after the second week of September, we always get some kind of a

1 typhoon or something ripping through and there'd be even
2 more difficult that third week. Second week would be
3 difficult, but the worst would be September. And so I
4 like to operate -- offer 15th and 16th of September.
5 Just a thought.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. And what
8 location were you thinking?

9

10 MR. HOLMES: Cold Bay. What do folks
11 think? Because we haven't been out there for a bit.

12

13 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: I thought we just
14 met in Cold Bay. Okay. Yeah, we met in Cold Bay this
15 last -- in September of 2025.

16

17 MR. HOLMES: Oh, okay. Well, somebody
18 else can make a suggestion on that, because we want to
19 get this guy here rather than have him out hunting.

20

21 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: What are the
22 chances of getting you for a fall meeting in September
23 or October?

24

25 MR. ROHRER: Tough. But I have Starlink
26 thanks to Elon Musk. So, if I'm in -- if I'm at camp,
27 then I can. And I actually I think this year I'll be
28 able to make because of it being a little bit, yeah,
29 earlier. But fall's really tough for me. It's just --
30 it's hunting season.

31

32 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, I heard a
33 motion that we send a thank you letter to Elon Musk. All
34 right.

35

36 MR. ROHRER: Yes.

37

38 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. So, we have
39 some dates, September 15th and 16th on the table. It
40 could be Cold Bay because our next fall meeting is
41 Unalaska. So, Cold Bay would be a fair location. Go
42 ahead, Jeff.

43

44 MR. WASLEY: Yeah. I'm not going to be
45 able to make Unalaska this fall. And I'll have a full
46 camp in September every week, every year. So, like, if
47 it's not in Cold Bay, I can't attend. I can do my best
48 to get on for some of it with Starlink but thank you.

49

50

1 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. But if we did
2 have it in Cold Bay, there's at least a chance you could
3 attend or...?

4
5 MR. WASLEY: Yeah, I mean, I can, I'll
6 just make my assistant guides, you know, two extra
7 whatever. But it's much easier to, like, I just think
8 the value of being there versus remotely is it's just
9 night and day. So, thank you.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. So -- yes.
12 Okay. So, I think if somebody wanted to make a motion
13 for Cold Bay in 2027 what that would mean is in 2025,
14 we met in Cold Bay, 2026 will be Unalaska, hopefully,
15 and then 2027 would be Cold Bay again, which seems like
16 a fair enough alternation. Is that a word? Rotation?
17 Whatever. And then we've had the dates of the September
18 15th and 16th thrown out and nobody suggested anything
19 else. So, if somebody wants to make a motion for
20 September 15th and 16th in Cold Bay, for 2027, we'll see
21 what happens.

22
23 MR. RICHARDSON: I move to meet in Cold
24 Bay on September 15th and 16th in 2027.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Brett.
27 Is there a second?

28
29 MR. WASLEY: This is Jeff, I'll second.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Is there
32 any discussion?

33
34 MR. HOLMES: I think that's a good idea,
35 to meet in Cold Bay. It would be nice timing. Some time
36 to get to Sand Point again. But in the fall, with the
37 runway at Cold Bay, got a better chance of being able
38 to get there and get out. Same as like, it was nice to
39 go to King Cove at one time, but you know, going six
40 days before I caught up with my luggage. I'm glad I
41 brought my skivvies in my pack.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Oh yes, I have fond
44 memories of being without luggage. King Cove, as well.
45 Okay. If there's no further discussion, is there any
46 objection to having our fall 2027 meeting September 15th
47 and 16th in Cold Bay?

48
49 (No response)

50

1 All right. Seeing none, that motion
2 passes. Okay. And getting back to the agenda, I would
3 like to put the FR -- the Fisheries Resource Monitoring
4 Program section off until tomorrow. I know Matt Van Daele
5 from Sun'ag Tribe wanted to be here for the Partners for
6 Fisheries Monitoring Program. He will be back tomorrow
7 and the FRMP discussion will be a facilitated
8 discussion. It's going to take at least an hour. And I
9 think that is something best undertaken tomorrow. So,
10 if we can push that to tomorrow, that would be helpful.
11 If we do that, we are into the report section. So first
12 up would be tribal governments. Do we have any tribal
13 governments that wish to give a report?

14
15 (No response)

16
17 Seeing and hearing none. Any Native
18 organizations that wish to give a report?

19
20 (No response)

21
22 Okay. Alaska Department of Fish and
23 Game. Would you like to give a report?

24
25 MS. HONIG: Madam Chair, if I could just
26 -- they have a presentation. Could I have a couple
27 seconds to.....

28
29 (Simultaneous speech)

30
31 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yes, we will stand
32 down for a couple of minutes while we get squared away,
33 getting the presentation up. Thanks.

34
35 MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair, a little
36 background. I did try to send out copies of our meeting
37 information to the Q Tribe. I talked to Chris Price,
38 even though he's no longer working for them, to refer
39 it to them. I also left them a message there and then
40 also, tried to leave a message with the Unalaska
41 Corporation. That -- things are happening there and also
42 tried to get some notices out to the villages here in
43 town. But you know, things happen or don't happen.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. We have
46 the presentation in the room. Is this also being shared
47 via Zoom or.....?

48
49 MS. HONIG: We will do that.

1 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. So, I think
2 we're going to get that. Make sure that [sic] shared
3 online as well. And as soon as we confirm that, we'll
4 get started. Okay. We have the presentation up in the
5 room and it is also being shared online, so we are ready
6 to start.

7
8 MR. WITTEVEEN: Okay. Madam Chair,
9 members of the RAC, my name is Mark Witteveen, I'm the
10 Assistant Area Biologist for Sportfish for Kodiak,
11 Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands. Today we're going
12 to be reporting on the 2025 results of the OSM project
13 Buskin River Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment. With me
14 is Brianna Woolever, who is our new Project Biologist.
15 And so, she will start off the presentation here.

16
17 MS. WOOLEVER: So, the purpose of this
18 presentation is to present some updates and overview
19 from our Buskin River Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment
20 just from this last 2025 season. So, just to recap, the
21 primary objectives for this study have been to census
22 the sockeye salmon escapement in the Buskin, estimate
23 the age composition of the escapement and harvest, and
24 then also summarize the sex length data. So, this graph
25 shows the Buskin River sockeye salmon escapement from
26 2015 till 2025. The escapement is shown in blue, and
27 then the dashed line shows the lower and upper bound
28 escapement goal range, which is 5,000 to 8,000. And then,
29 the solid line shows our recent five-year average. So,
30 2020 to 2024. The weir was operational from May 14th,
31 and we removed it on August 4th. And we installed another
32 weir for another project in the lower Buskin, on August
33 4th, and so, we continued to count sockeye salmon through
34 the end of September. Our total 2025 count for sockeye
35 salmon was about 10,500 fish, which exceeded our
36 escapement goal range of the upper end of 8,000. Data
37 was collected for further future stock assessment this
38 field season, as usual, by sampling sockeye for age, sex
39 and length, and our sample goal, which is 320, was
40 exceeded by almost double. So, we sampled 630 fish. And
41 the data that we collected suggests that Buskin River
42 sockeye salmon escapement was primarily composed of age
43 one-three fish at about 73%, followed by age one-two
44 fish, then age one-three and age two-two, and then age
45 two-three fish. Next slide please.

46
47 This graph shows our daily sockeye
48 salmon count in blue. Date at the bottom there and then
49 number of sockeye salmon counted and the percentage of
50 the escapement on each of the Y axes. The run started

1 fairly slow, as typical, and ramped up early in June.
2 This led to liberalization of the busk and sockeye sport
3 fishery on June 16th, when we increased the bag limit
4 from 2 to 5 fish per day, and then again on June 30th,
5 we increased the bag limit from 5 to 10 fish per day.
6 And peak day was the 23rd of June, and we passed 705
7 sockeye salmon that day. Next slide please.

8
9 So, our internship program typically
10 employs two top qualified high school students each
11 year, who will end up working on this busking project
12 between June 8th and August 8th. Unfortunately, due to
13 the statewide hiring freeze, we were unable to hire
14 interns this season. However, this intern program has
15 pretty outstanding success to the point that at least
16 nine former interns are currently employed with Fish and
17 Game, and 28 of 40 former interns have returned to work
18 for the department at some point. So, this internship
19 provides pretty valuable hands-on experience for
20 students to gain knowledge and understanding of biology
21 and how we manage fisheries and the importance of this
22 work to commercial, subsistence and sport fisheries. So,
23 we hope to continue this program in the upcoming season.
24

25 MR. WITTEVEEN: For the record, Mark
26 Witteveen. So, I'm going to discuss a little bit about
27 the newer component of this project, which is scale
28 measurement. We're looking to accomplish a couple of
29 things with this. This was a request of the RAC to
30 incorporate scale measurements into our project. And
31 basically, we're going to measure scales, look at
32 relative freshwater growth, its effect on return age,
33 compare saltwater growth among different years,
34 freshwater growth, and then look at some environmental
35 variables and see how they correlate with the growth and
36 then aim at improving our forecasting skills. We are
37 still kind of in the late analysis stage of this. We
38 were able to measure 20 years of scale measurements,
39 2004 through 2025 and did, excuse me, a lot of the
40 analysis this winter that's currently under biometric
41 review. And we'll publish that in our final report here
42 this spring. But I would like to give you a little sneak
43 peek of what we're looking at and there's a lot of data
44 here, we combed through a lot of indices and, and I used
45 AI significantly to really go through a lot of the
46 variables, looking at different time frames of
47 environmental indices versus our scale measurements. So,
48 this is a little data-heavy. Hopefully, people's eyes
49 don't glaze over too much. Feel free to ask questions,
50 but just to give us a little sneak peek.

1

2 First off, scale measurements are an
3 index of growth. And so, they don't necessarily
4 correlate perfectly with certain life stages. For
5 instance, you know, time in the gravel, the fish don't
6 have scales so, we can't measure that. But what we did
7 do is we took the portion of a -- of scale growth, for
8 instance, that was in freshwater and if that was 10% of
9 the total growth, we applied that to the actual length
10 of the fish, because we have that paired data. And so,
11 we kind of expressed our measurements in millimeters of
12 fish. And it's relative, it's not perfect, but it's kind
13 of an interesting way to look at things. So, as I said,
14 I looked at a ton of different stuff, but I'll just
15 throw out some of the interesting things here. So, this
16 graph shows the freshwater growth on the X axis of a
17 one-three, age one-three fish, and on the Y axis, the
18 proportion of fish that return as age one-three versus
19 two-three. So, you can see there's a positive
20 correlation there and the take home message is that the
21 more fish grows in the freshwater, the more likely it
22 is to come back earlier as a one-three fish, so. Next
23 slide, please. And one of the other interesting things
24 we found was the way fish utilize their freshwater
25 environment. And so, there's a lot going on here but,
26 if you look at the top two lines, they represent fish
27 that are age one-three fish and two-three fish, that are
28 in their first year of freshwater residence. And you can
29 see, there are differences in the magnitude that they
30 grow, but the pattern is very, very similar. The red
31 line is two-three fish in their second freshwater year.
32 The data is staggered so they're all experiencing the
33 same conditions in the same year but you can see that
34 second freshwater year is, something is different.
35 They're eating different food. They're following a
36 different life history. And so, that's just an
37 interesting thing to observe that for -- the second year
38 in the fresh water, is markedly different, as you would
39 expect, but it's still cool to see. So, next slide.

40

41 Just to illustrate some of our
42 observations, this next series of slides just kind of
43 follows age one-three fish through its life history. And
44 so, in this graph, you know, pay particular attention
45 to our one-three in red. And you can see the one-threes
46 and the one-twos, this is in their first freshwater
47 growth year. The one-threes and the one-twos, those fish
48 that spend one year in freshwater, grow a lot more than
49 the fish that spent two years in freshwater. Again, you'd
50 kind of expect that they get big enough to leave, but

1 there's a marked difference, you know, in that year. So,
2 whether fish are predisposed to this genetically or
3 their habits -- they're aggressive feeders so, they grow
4 more, is sort of unknown, but we really see a consistent
5 pattern in that. So, next slide. And so, this slide
6 shows the total freshwater growth of our two fish. And
7 so, we look at our red line one-three fish compared to
8 the two-three. Again, that one-three fish grew a lot
9 more in the first freshwater year. But when they hit the
10 ocean, the two- three fish, by comparison, has had two
11 years to grow so, it's bigger. And then if we go to our
12 next slide, this is a little more unexpected. In our
13 first saltwater year, despite the fact that that one-
14 three fish is smaller, it grows more in the first
15 saltwater year. And whether that's because, you know,
16 in that freshwater environment, it was more aggressive,
17 it grew faster and it continues that kind of strategy
18 into the salt water or it just simply needs to catch up,
19 to be reproductively, you know, achieve an even playing
20 field is unknown. But it's pretty consistently growing
21 more in that first saltwater year. Our next slide,
22 please.

23
24 And so, this is, in our third year of
25 saltwater growth. Again, we're looking at one-threes and
26 bringing in green and red -- and two-threes in red. And
27 here we see everything's kind of evened out. Sometimes
28 the one- threes are bigger, sometimes the two-threes are
29 bigger, so. The one-threes start off growing more, they
30 grow more in the first saltwater year. But by the time
31 they are ready to return, they're kind of the same size.
32 Next slide, please. And then that's -- oh, sorry, this
33 one here. And this is just kind of, a look at
34 environmental variables. Some interesting observations
35 here. Again, I apologize, there's a lot of data rich,
36 but there's a lot of noise around these, given that
37 there's a lot of factors involved, but it was interesting
38 to note that on the horizontal X axis is the western
39 Gulf of Alaska sea surface temperature. And we see that,
40 generally, in the left pane, the saltwater age one growth
41 is positively correlated with temperature. And the
42 second year is negatively correlated with temperature.
43 And again, that's kind of like what we saw in the
44 freshwater, that these fish are doing different things
45 at different ages. They're utilizing their environment
46 differently. And so, if we just look at temperature on
47 survival, that's not kind of a deep enough look. And as
48 I said, I explored lots of these different variables.
49 And this is just a couple age classes, but interesting
50 stuff. Next slide.

1

2 This is another observation we made,
3 consistent with other studies. But the red and green
4 lines represent the third year of saltwater growth. And
5 the blue line is a harvest of pinks in the Gulf of Alaska
6 but is a surrogate for the amount of pinks that are in
7 the water at that time. And so, you can see the biannual
8 variation of pink salmon. As we know, odd and even years
9 are dominant differently. And whether this is a
10 correlation or causality is unknown, but we definitely
11 see that when there's a lot of pinks in the water,
12 saltwater growth is a lot less. And vice versa.

13

14 And that kind of concludes what I'm
15 going to tell you about scales. I did want to -- I saw
16 there was some concern, if you want to go to the next
17 slide, there was concern over jacks in the Buskin lately.
18 And we don't count jacks on a daily basis. We keep track
19 of that and -- or we don't keep track of it, but we
20 interact with the crew and they tell us what they see.
21 And they have a very, very good view looking directly
22 down at the fish, there are lots of Dollys swimming
23 around all the time. So, when a jack sockeye swims
24 through, it's pretty obvious. You know, they're there
25 three times a day. They're certainly the experts on
26 identifying those fish. We haven't seen a lot more
27 lately. What we do sample is behind the weir we beach
28 seine so a very unbiased method of sampling fish. And
29 then we generally sample everything we catch. So, we
30 have a good accounting of jacks in a season wide basis.
31 The percentage over years has been pretty consistent,
32 you can see, the kind of high point was about 6% in
33 2023. And that's when the run was about 1,600. So, the
34 number of jacks was not high. The percentage was a little
35 bit higher. We don't account for these on a daily basis
36 because it just hasn't been an issue in some fisheries
37 that have bigger commercial gillnet fisheries out in
38 front of them, like Dog Salmon, Frazer, (In Native) on
39 the Alaska Peninsula, Bear River. They see percentages
40 of 30, 40, 50% sometimes of jacks. So, it hasn't been a
41 concern for us. If it's a concern for you, we can count
42 them on a daily basis. It's not an issue for us, but I
43 just saw that was a concern so, I wanted to address it.
44 And I think that's about all we have. I'm happy to answer
45 any questions. I want to thank OSM for funding this
46 project and the RAC for supporting us.

47

48 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah. Thank you.
49 And thank you for addressing the jack sockeye question.

50

1 MR. WITTEVEEN: U-hum.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Are there
4 questions for Fish and Game? Daniel, go ahead.

5

6 MR. SMITH: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair.
7 And thanks to you both for this presentation. I had a
8 question regarding the age composition. Looks like age
9 one-three fish were the majority of almost 75%. How does
10 that compare to previous years? Is that pretty
11 consistent or...?

12

13 MR. WITTEVEEN: Through the Chair, Member
14 Smith, Buskin is a pretty highly variable system as far
15 as age composition. If you go to the next slide. Oh,
16 maybe we didn't include that one. One more after that.
17 Oh. That is not unprecedented. High composition of age
18 one-three fish. We anticipated that because the
19 composition last year had a lot of age one-two fish,
20 those -- they are siblings from the same brood year. And
21 typically we see that. Yeah, so, if you look at that
22 last slide, we can -- might be muted, it looked like it
23 had a slash through it so, it might not pop up. But,
24 basically, the green line is what we're talking about
25 in 2025. And you can see in 2021 and let's see, 2020 and
26 2021. We've also seen that, usually preceded by a big
27 blue line the year before so, not uncommon. Thank you.

28

29 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, go ahead.

30

31 MR. HOLMES: Yeah, I was wondering, quite
32 a few years back, we were able to get some funding for
33 you folks to have a smolt program and disappeared. But
34 I was wondering if, you know, it'd be difficult, but I
35 was wondering if you might have glanced at some of that
36 data from previous decades and see how it interacts with
37 your scales coming off the adult fish. I mean, you have
38 the same result, but I was just wondering if you've had
39 similar pulses.

40

41 MR. WITTEVEEN: Through the Chair, Member
42 Holmes. We haven't compared to the smolt years
43 necessarily. This scale age or scale measurement data
44 kind of gets at quite a bit of what a smolt project
45 would do, you know, and the difficulty of course, is
46 that we are -- we're measuring the survivors. So, you
47 know, we don't get the entire picture because we can't
48 measure fish that die in the ocean or die in Buskin. But
49 we get a pretty complete picture of this and will
50 continue this work, should we be funded again.

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CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Further questions?
Sam, go ahead.

MR. ROHRER: Thanks, through the Chair.
Thanks for the presentation. My question was on one of the very first things that you said about not being able to hire the interns. I know that the intern program has been great producer of long-term employees. Do you -- is this project funded for next year? And if it is, do you expect to have the same hiring freeze issue for interns?

MR. WITTEVEEN: Through the Chair. Member Rohrer. We don't know if we're funded yet this year. That is, I think that's probably still an unknown, and hopefully we'll find out this month. We have taken steps to smooth the process of any kind of impact of a hiring freeze. Unfortunately, that's a statewide thing. It's independent of the funding source. So, that's how we kind of got stuck in this this year. But we have taken steps, this year, this upcoming season, to avoid that. So, hopefully it all pans out.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, go ahead.

MR. HOLMES: I was wondering, would it help at all, I don't know if it would but to have some comments or positive reinforcement about your program coming from AC as well as the RAC, reflecting on the public's desire to see the intern program going. Because this is probably one of the best ones in the whole state. And it's really providing a lot of really good professional folks a few years down the line and I just -- not trying to trap you into anything, but, you know, is there some way that the interaction from these two advisory groups could perhaps provide some assistance?

MR. WITTEVEEN: Through the Chair, Mr. Holmes. I kind of don't think that would make that much difference. This is kind of a bigger issue thing. We were kind of directed to not ask for updates. And, while that wouldn't hurt, I'm not sure if it would have an impact. And I am hopeful that we have taken the right steps to avoid it in the future. But I'm sure it wouldn't hurt.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Further questions?

(No response)

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All right. I don't see any more questions. So, thank you very much.

MR. HOLMES: Good job.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. I'm going to ask council members, how would you guys feel about ending for today and picking it up tomorrow? Before you answer that, I will let you know a few things. Under the item number 12, the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program update, letter b. FRMP discussion. This will be a facilitated discussion. I think I already said this is, it's going to take about an hour or at least an hour. Also, tomorrow we have the field trip to the, I call it the touch tank and aquarium building. So, that's 12:15 to 1:00. So, those are two-time commitments we have for tomorrow. But we have gotten through most of our action items so, I'm not worried about completing our business. So, I think if people wanted to end at 4:30, well, it's past 4:30 now. If they wanted to end now, we could or we can keep going and get a few more reports done. So, comments? Pat, go ahead.

MR. HOLMES: I don't think it hurt to get another report or two. I would like for the folks that are here, particularly from out of town, are two museums are open basically 10 to 4. Right across the street is the former Baranov Kodiak History Museum. And then just up the street, a block, is the Alutiiq Museum. They're both open 10 to 4. I believe that the historic museum is open into the evening times on Friday, if you're staying over and you know, you might even consider grabbing some grub here at the lunch break if you don't have a meeting to go to and kind of check them out, because that gives you a good feeling for the history and the culture of Kodiak.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Other thoughts on ending now or pushing on through. Brett, go ahead.

MR. RICHARDSON: I'm not adverse to hearing another report till five.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Sounds like we're going to hear another report. So, that would take us up to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge report or Izembek National Wildlife Refuge report. Or both. Okay. So, I think we're

1 checking to see if Izembek is available to do their
2 report.

3

4 MS. WILLIAMS: Hi, Madam Chair this is
5 Alison Williams from Izembek Refuge. I -- we are still
6 online so, would be available to (distortion).

7

8 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, thank you.
9 Alison, we'll go ahead and take your report then. You
10 kind of faded out at the end there, of what you were
11 saying. So, when you do your report, if you could just
12 make sure to be close to your phone because you started
13 out good, and then you kind of faded out. But you can
14 go ahead and start, whenever you're ready.

15

16 MS. WILLIAMS: All right, sounds good.
17 Good afternoon, Madam Chair and Members of the Council.
18 My name is Alison Williams. I am the Wildlife Biologist
19 here at Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. And I'll go
20 ahead and run through our activity report here. It should
21 be in. I believe in supplemental three. So, the first
22 section we have here is on caribou. The first section
23 discusses the Unit 9D federal subsistence hunt. The
24 previous hunt ran August 1st through September 30th of
25 2025, and there's a current open season November 15th
26 through March 31st. At this time, we've had reports of
27 two harvested caribou submitted to the Refuge. The next
28 section discusses the Unit 10 federal subsistence hunt.
29 This hunt runs August 1st through September 30th, and
30 at this time, we do not have any harvest reports that
31 have been submitted to the Refuge. And then our third
32 section there talks about the winter caribou population
33 survey that we've conducted. We conducted a winter
34 caribou population survey of the southern Alaska
35 Peninsula and Unimak Island's caribou herd on February
36 8th and 9th of 2026. This survey cover -- flew for 11
37 hours, and we counted 577 caribou on the Southern Alaska
38 Peninsula and 50 on Unimak Island. These surveys are
39 intended to produce a minimum population count of the
40 caribou herds and the trends over time, rather than the
41 true numbers of caribou present. However, these numbers
42 are significantly lower than the counts produced by the
43 Department of Fish and Game in the summer of 2024 and
44 2025, and the discrepancies in the counts here are likely
45 due to the fewer hours that were flown during this survey
46 compared to those other surveys. The seasonal changes
47 in distribution of caribou on the landscape, and even
48 the difficulties of sighting caribou in the winter. So,
49 you'll see on the next page, there we have a couple
50 examples of the siteability [sic] that we had during the

1 survey. Historically at this time of year, surveys were
2 completed during complete snow cover. And so, caribou
3 were really easy to see, as you'll see on the left side
4 of those images. The past several years, snow cover has
5 been more inconsistent. And so, we have some areas that
6 look like that middle image, where caribou are really
7 visible against the brown landscape. But we'll also have
8 these kind of transition zones like the third image on
9 the far right of that. The top of that second page,
10 where the caribou are really hard to see because there's
11 a lot of variability in the snow cover. And so, during
12 this survey, we did see all three of those snow
13 conditions, which made getting a complete count a little
14 difficult.

15
16 The next section on here covers our
17 avian work that we've been doing. The first thing I
18 wanted to bring up was our brandt age ratio survey that
19 we conduct every year. This was conducted from September
20 30th to October 17th in 2025. Throughout the survey,
21 observers counted about 46,000 birds from 94 different
22 flocks of brandt, which was then used to model an
23 estimate of nesting success. The raw estimate for 2025
24 indicated that about 25% of the fall staging population
25 were first year birds. This was lower than the 2024
26 estimate of 33%, but some variability in the annual
27 productivity is expected. And the last year's estimate
28 was approximately level with the long-term average of
29 about 25%.

30
31 The next survey I was going to address
32 was the brant behavior and disturbance study. We
33 initiated a new study documenting the behavior of brandt
34 during fall station -- staging at Izembek Lagoon. It's
35 aimed to understand how waterfowl spend their time at
36 Izembek, how frequently these staging birds are
37 disturbed and if levels of disturbance to these staging
38 waterfowl has changed during a similar study that was
39 conducted in the 1980s. This year's, the 2025 project
40 was a pilot study which was designed to kind of test our
41 field methods and develop the research study design. And
42 throughout the months of September, October and
43 November, we had six different observers record 288
44 hours of observation at brandt. This produced a really
45 large data set. And so, we are still working on analyzing
46 these data. And so, we don't have any further results
47 to present at this time.

48
49 And then the final project that I wanted
50 to bring up is another new project on acoustic

1 monitoring. We started a new study to obtain a baseline
2 soundscape for the Refuge, and through collaboration
3 with the National Park Service and the University of
4 Alaska Fairbanks, the Refuge obtained some acoustic
5 monitoring equipment that was installed at several
6 places on the Refuge to record sound levels and document
7 wildlife use. During the sampling periods that we had
8 in 2025, the baseline ambient sound level on the Refuge
9 was 15.8 decibels, which is remarkably low for outdoor
10 spaces. This is something we're hoping to continue to
11 develop throughout summer of 2026. You'll see there a
12 photo of one of the acoustic monitoring setups that we
13 had on the refuge this past year. And that concludes the
14 biological work that we worked on. But I do want to pass
15 the microphone over to our Refuge Manager, Maria Fosado.

16
17 MS. FOSADO: Thanks, Alison. Madam Chair,
18 Members of the Council, I did just want to provide one
19 additional update and that's related to staffing. I
20 wanted to report out that I will be transferring out,
21 I've accepted a reassignment. And so, the upcoming
22 staffing levels at Izembek will essentially be Jeff
23 Kalim, who's the Deputy Refuge Manager, and Alison
24 Williams is the Biologist.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
27 you. Are there questions on the report? Sam, go ahead.

28
29 MR. ROHRER: Thank you. Through the
30 Chair, Sam Rohrer here. I was just curious about the
31 acoustic monitoring program. Haven't heard of that
32 before. So, curious. Just briefly why and what you hope
33 to do with the information or what you hope to be able
34 to show or just kind of the thought process behind it.
35 Thanks.

36
37 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes, through the Chair.
38 Thank you for the question. It's a great question. This
39 is something that we did collaborate a lot with the
40 National Park Service on, because they do have an entire
41 division that's devoted to natural sounds. And so, they
42 do a lot of this acoustic research. And the reason it
43 is important is because there are a lot of wildlife that
44 rely on sound for communication. You know, sound can
45 disrupt wildlife or kind of alter their behavior, as
46 well. And so, a lot of the work is focused on
47 understanding what conditions are considered natural and
48 to monitor overtime, if there are any changes, how it
49 changes overtime. And then, another objective of it, is
50 to kind of get a baseline inventory of species in the

1 areas where we're deploying these stations, largely for
2 bird species that are very vocal. But these stations,
3 we've also set up game cameras to collect photographs
4 of wildlife that are less vocal and kind of understand
5 what wildlife are passing through the area. You know,
6 that some of these more remote parts of the Refuge, we
7 don't have a lot of that information about. And so,
8 we're just looking to get a little more comprehensive
9 view of what conditions are like in these areas. And
10 then what wildlife are present in these areas.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
13 you. I actually had a question about the baseline ambient
14 sound being remarkably low for outdoor spaces. What are
15 your -- what's your take on that? Does that mean it's
16 low because there's nothing there or it's low because
17 outdoor spaces are usually next to a highway? Can you -
18 - what can you say about the -- like, your observations
19 or thoughts or conclusions on the low ambient sound?

20
21 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes. Thank you, Madam
22 Chair. A big part of why it is so quiet at Izembek is
23 there's not a lot of development. We don't have high use
24 aircraft corridors, things like that. And so, it's an
25 area where there's not a lot of human built
26 infrastructure. And so, that I believe is why this area
27 was so quiet. There are other natural areas that might
28 be loud just because of wave action or you know, maybe
29 avalanche, rockfall, other like things that cause sound.
30 And, you know, the sampling period that we did at this
31 time was during the fall. So, there aren't a lot of
32 breeding birds calling at that time, which couldn't --
33 could be part of why it was so quiet. But there are a
34 lot of staging birds. And so, we did actually capture a
35 lot of migratory waterfowl on these recordings, too. And
36 it, so, I don't think it necessarily means that nothing's
37 there. It just means that it's considered a really
38 natural undeveloped area.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thanks.
41 Yeah, it helps, the context that some of the comparison
42 areas might be where more people or more development are
43 or things like Niagara Falls, you go there, it's very
44 loud. Or being around trees where there's wind blowing
45 through the trees can be pretty loud. But looking at the
46 picture, there's no trees and there's almost no grass.
47 So yeah, I could see why that would be the case. Are
48 there any other questions? Jeff, go ahead.

49
50

1 MR. WASLEY: Jeff here. Just less of a
2 question, more of just thanks for the presentation and
3 thank you to Maria for years of service out there and
4 wish her well on her future endeavors. Thank you.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
7 you, Jeff. Pat, go ahead.

8
9 MR. HOLMES: Yeah. I'm sorry that you're
10 moving on, Maria. I hope you're going to have fun where
11 you're going. And I want to thank you and your whole
12 staff from when we did our trip to King Cove a while
13 back, and you put us up there in the Fish and Wildlife
14 housing, that was absolute luxury and a wonderful place
15 and kind of gave us a chance to get to know your staff
16 a whole lot better. I think that was great. Did you
17 folks, on the caribou surveys, I'm glad you're able to
18 get it going again. Did you used to have a spring and a
19 winter survey, or did the state have -- do one of those
20 and you folks did the other? And was that the case this
21 year? What, were the state observations the same as yours
22 is a pretty low population than both the Unimak and
23 South Peninsula?

24
25 MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah, through the Chair,
26 thanks for the question. Yes. The state can certainly
27 speak a little better towards the surveys they do. And
28 they -- but they do historically do like spring surveys
29 and fall surveys that are a little different in purpose.
30 They're more at getting parturition pregnancy rates and
31 composition of the herds. And so, they're not focused
32 on getting a like, a minimum population count, which is
33 what this winter survey is intended to do. And so, they
34 are a little different than the state surveys that
35 happen. And this winter survey, you know, has changed a
36 little, just with the changing snow conditions, it --
37 now we don't get as much snow cover down here as we used
38 to. And then the other thing that has changed a bit is
39 not having a pilot stationed here to go fly when the
40 conditions are right. We have pilots coming in from
41 Anchorage. And so, we're really tied to the dates of
42 availability for that. So, those are some things that
43 have changed over the last 5 to 10 years out here.

44
45 MR. HOLMES: Yeah. Thank you very much.
46 I, we're hoping that we can stimulate some better funding
47 for your survey program. And it's the populations being
48 down as, as kind of sad and disappointing. Certainly not
49 your fault. But I can recall in the early 70s when, you
50 know, the population out at Unimak was what, 3 to 5,000

1 and 2,000 patched it up and came across False Pass and
2 moved up through the Peninsula and for decades there,
3 the city or the state would have to send trucks out to
4 chase caribou off the runway so they could land and
5 having the numbers fall so low. Is that a reflection of
6 the change in habitat, or are you still having increasing
7 difficulties with predation?

8

9 MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah, through the Chair.
10 I don't know that we have all the answers to what has
11 changed over that time. We do know that our -- the
12 population is lower than was historically, but based on
13 the counts that the state has done in the last couple
14 years, in the summers when they were doing, like trying
15 to get a better population estimate, it seems that the
16 populations here are doing fairly well and are fairly
17 stable. Particularly when we look at caribou, how
18 caribou are faring in other areas in the state. So yeah,
19 it's really hard to know exactly what has happened with
20 these herds, why we don't have, you know, thousands of
21 animals on Unimak anymore. But yeah, we're doing our
22 best.

23

24 MR. HOLMES: And has the cow to calf
25 ratio that seemed a while back was starting to improve
26 considerably. Is that still a trend?

27

28 MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah, through the Chair.
29 I would more have to defer to the state on that one,
30 since they're conducting those composition surveys. So,
31 I don't have those numbers available at the moment.

32

33 MR. HOLMES: Thank you. And I guess the
34 final thing I heard a while back that on the surveys on
35 Unimak Island, that they're finding that the cows have
36 adapted and moving higher up on the mountains to drop
37 their calves rather than doing it in the flats and larger
38 groupings. And that's probably a reflection of their
39 finding ways to avoid mortalities on the calves soon
40 after their births. Is that a reasonable assumption?

41

42 MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah, through the Chair.
43 I mean, we have seen those caribou up high in the hills
44 during the summer. And so, that's possibly an
45 explanation for that. But there could be a number of
46 things going on, and I don't know if we have a definitive
47 answer. It could also be just weather conditions. But
48 yeah, I'm not exactly sure, but that's a possible theory.

49

50

1 MR. HOLMES: Okay. Thank you very much.
2 And I always appreciate your updates on all the work
3 that you folks are doing. It's a difficult place to
4 work. And with the weather and everything and with the
5 current government cutbacks and funding, and we'll hope
6 that our Council can try to provide you some more support
7 because you certainly need it and deserve it. So, thank
8 you very much.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Are
11 there further questions?

12
13 (No response)

14
15 All right. I'm not seeing any. Alison
16 and Maria, thank you very much for calling in. And Maria,
17 best wishes for your future endeavors. So, thank you,
18 Izembek. Okay, so I think we are going to call it a
19 night. So, we have proceeded down through 13.e for
20 reports and in the morning, I think I'd like to start
21 with item 12, the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program.
22 It's good with Anna. Daniel, can you double check with
23 Matt that that's a good time? Okay. All right. So, we'll
24 plan to reconvene at 9 a.m. and we're going to start
25 with item 12 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program
26 agenda item. All right. Thank you everyone.

27
28 (Off record)

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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 131 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the KODIA/ALEUTIANS SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME I recorded on the 4th day of March;

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 25th day of March 2026.

Rafael Morel
Chief Project Manager