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NORTHWEST ARTIC SUBSISTENCE  
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME II

NORTHWEST ARTIC HERITAGE CENTER  
Kotzebue, Alaska  
April 1, 2026

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

Regional Council Coordinator, Grace Cochon  
Regional Council Coordinator, Nissa Pilcher

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Kotzebue, Alaska - 4/01/26)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Good morning, everyone. It is now 9:03. This is Chair Thomas Baker. Today is April 1st and we are reconvening the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting here at the Northwest Arctic Heritage Building in Kotzebue, Alaska. Grace, can I please get a roll call?

MS. COCHON: All right. Do we have Karmen Monigold?

MS. MONIGOLD: Present.

MS. COCHON: Thank you. Thomas Baker.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Here.

MS. COCHON: Tristen Pattee.

MR. PATTEE: Here.

MS. COCHON: Micheal Kramer.

(No response)

Okay. Wilbur Howarth, Sr.

MR. HOWARTH: Here.

MS. COCHON: Thank you. Clyde Ramoth.

MR. RAMOTH: Here.

MS. COCHON: Elmer Armstrong, Jr.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Here.

MS. COCHON: Verne Cleveland, Sr.

MR. CLEVELAND: Here.

MS. COCHON: All right. Looks like we have a quorum. Thank you.

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,  
2 Grace. Before we get into the bulk of the agenda, do we  
3 have any housekeeping announcements?  
4

5 MS. COCHON: Yes. Thank you. So just a  
6 quick welcome, everyone, and good morning. My name is  
7 Grace Cochon. I am the Council Coordinator for the  
8 meeting today. And just a few housekeeping items. For  
9 those in the room, please sign in on the back table by  
10 the door and help yourself to meeting materials. If  
11 you're joining us virtually, again, you can find the  
12 agenda and meeting materials online at the Federal  
13 Subsistence Program website at [www.doi.gov/subsistence](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence).  
14 And then just a reminder, please mute yourself unless  
15 you are speaking, you can use the Teams option. If you're  
16 on your phone, you can press the mute button or dial  
17 star-six to both mute or unmute. Thank you.  
18

19 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Grace. At  
20 this time, I will open it up for any public or tribal  
21 comments on non-agenda items. We do have an opportunity  
22 for this each day of the meeting. So, at this time if  
23 there's anyone in the room, we would ask that you fill  
24 out the blue paper. At this time, we don't have any  
25 public or tribal comments on non-agenda items. Is there  
26 anyone online who would like to make a public or tribal  
27 comment on a non-agenda item? If there is, you will have  
28 two minutes for your comment.  
29

30 (No comments)  
31

32 MS. COCHON: And for anyone on their  
33 phone, you can raise your hand by pressing star-five.  
34 And then if you are on Teams, you can just use the raise  
35 your hand function. Thank you.  
36

37 (No response)  
38

39 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Anyone for public or  
40 tribal comment on non-agenda items?  
41

42 (No comments)  
43

44 Hearing none. We will move on. We do  
45 have to shuffle the action items around just a little  
46 bit based on yesterday's -- where we left off. Grace,  
47 what's next on the agenda?  
48

49 MS. COCHON: Next on the agenda we have  
50 the Subsistence Report from Member Elmer Armstrong.

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CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, Elmer, if you have a Subsistence Report, since you weren't here yesterday morning, you have the time to do it now.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Elmer Armstrong, for the record. From Noorvik. I know last year, our last summer, salmon runs were slow. I had to keep my salmon net out longer because I figured I need so much. Even though I thought they were going to be -- I thought the run was going to be good. But -- so I put my net out early and -- but I noticed that the runs were pretty weak. Moose hunting. I was able to catch one moose somewhere down the Nasuruk area, down by the mouth. Caribou was -- the temperature was there maybe -- I don't know, it was still probably too warm, but you know, through media and local talks, I heard there were some that were going through upriver. I went up one time to Hunt River and didn't see no caribou.

I attempted to go up one more time before it froze up but had a family emergency and had to turn around at Kiana. That's where I got phone signal. And then the next day, the river froze up. I put -- after it froze up, I know I should have put my net -- oh, yeah, right before it froze up, I should have put my net, but I didn't, for whitefish with eggs because after it froze up, I put a net in and I didn't catch too many with eggs. And a lot of people were putting out their nets, which is good. It's good to see people fishing for salmon, whitefish. So, I just left it out for so many days. I noticed that the last two seasons, two I know I'm going to jump through the seasons. We've been getting -- we've been seeing snow geeses [sic] fly right through (In Native) peak and so hunters now they just go hunt back there for snow geese. Usually, you have to travel so many miles for snow geese. Maybe Schultz Bay. But yeah, last two seasons been seeing good numbers of snow geese. And then just seeing other ducks come through, which is really good. You know, when the ice goes out, a lot of ducks are in the river. Geese, speckled bellies. That's all I have. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that, Elmer. Grace, what was our next item? Was it the annual report review?

MS. COCHON: That's correct.

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, if we turn to  
2 page 37, our next item is the review and approval of the  
3 FY 2025 Annual Report. Grace, would you like to walk us  
4 through that?

5  
6 MS. COCHON: Chair Baker, would you like  
7 me to rehash the summary or...?

8  
9 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Just a brief  
10 overview, please.

11  
12 MS. COCHON: Okay, so just to remind you  
13 all, the Council, this is your opportunity to make any  
14 edits to the draft annual report based on what you  
15 identified or discussed during your last meeting in  
16 January. The topics we have are: the need to address  
17 ongoing declines of caribou populations. That's the  
18 first topic. Number two is, support additional research  
19 funding and studies to fill data gaps. Number three is,  
20 support the increase of hunting and trapping  
21 opportunities for wolves and bears. And the fourth topic  
22 is -- which is just an informational topic with no  
23 specific recommendations for the Board, is the Council's  
24 concerns about contamination from mining and potential  
25 development projects. We are looking for the Council's  
26 input, more specifically on the recommendations you'd  
27 like to see from the Federal Subsistence Board, or you  
28 know, on the federal side of the management program. At  
29 your last meeting, you weren't -- you didn't provide  
30 distinct recommendations, just general comments during  
31 your discussion. So, we want to verify that the  
32 recommendations are what you want them to be in the  
33 annual report. Thank you.

34  
35 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any questions,  
36 discussion from members of the Council regarding the  
37 annual report? Clyde.

38  
39 MR. RAMOTH: Yeah, just general question.  
40 Good report from 1 to 4, and if there's additional,  
41 would that be like by motion or just a recommendation  
42 there, Grace?

43  
44 MS. COCHON: Any edits you'd like, any  
45 additional recommendations you would like to add -- you  
46 might not be able to change the topics per se, but you  
47 can change what is stated under the topics. Yes, you can  
48 add to it. Yes. Add recommendations or other  
49 information.

50

1 MR. RAMOTH: For the record, Clyde  
2 Ramoth. I would like to add, highly support, on number  
3 three. Highly support the increase of hunting and  
4 trapping opportunities on wolves and bears. Wherever it  
5 says support, I would like to include highly support,  
6 if that's okay with the rest of the Council.

7  
8 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,  
9 Clyde. Any other edits, discussion?

10  
11 (No response)

12  
13 Wilbur or Karmen online? Do either of  
14 you have anything? Tristen.

15  
16 MS. MONIGOLD: This is Karmen, through  
17 the Chair.

18  
19 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, please, go  
20 ahead, Karmen.

21  
22 MS. MONIGOLD: Hi. Yes. So, you know,  
23 we're addressing already the decline of the caribou  
24 population. You know, I'm not sure if there's anything  
25 more that we can add to that, you know, besides the  
26 recommendations that we put towards the Board of Game,  
27 which will meet January 2027 in Kotzebue. You know, we've  
28 recommended stuff for animals, the predators. So as far  
29 as following up on what we can do on the federal level,  
30 that's, you know, a question, I guess for the feds, but  
31 -- and I'm not, you know, as far as the studies go, I  
32 mean, we get a lot of reports, we get a lot of good  
33 studies. So, I think it's, you know, I think two and  
34 four would be the main ones that are things we can do  
35 something about because we are kind of already been  
36 forced to do something about the other two. Thank you.

37  
38 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Karmen.  
39 Tristen, did you have something?

40  
41 MR. PATTEE: Yeah. Through the Chair,  
42 Tristen Pattee. I'm just -- I'm looking at number four.  
43 So, you said this is just informational. So, we're not  
44 going to have any action items on this?

45  
46 MS. COCHON: No recommendations for the  
47 Federal Subsistence Board, but as a Council, your action  
48 item would be to approve or amend the report. It would  
49 need -- it is a -- the annual report is required. And  
50 so that would be your action item. Does that make sense?

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CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, we would need to make a motion to approve the report so that it can be finalized -- the draft can be finalized to be sent to the Subsistence Board?

MS. COCHON: Yes, but the informational topic is just for the Board's awareness and not for their action.

MR. RAMOTH: So is there a motion in order?

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: There is not one, but someone can make a motion at this time if they wanted to.

MR. RAMOTH: Okay, Mr. Chair, I'd like to make a motion to address number four. Our concerns about contamination from mining and potential development projects. Maybe a written report for all tribal communities, not just our Council, but all through consultation, through transparency.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So just to clarify, we don't need a motion to edit anything. It's once we're through with the discussion and we're done talking about it, that's when we would need a motion to approve the entire report. So, we don't need that last motion to just make the edits.

MR. KRAMER: Good morning, this is Kramer. I make a motion to approve the annual report.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mike. Motion made by Mike Kramer to approve the report. Is there a second?

MR. PATTEE: Second.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Seconded by Tristen. Any further discussion?

MR. CLEVELAND: Question.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Question has been called for. Grace, can I please get a roll call vote?

MS. COCHON: Member Elmer Armstrong.

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1 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.  
2  
3 MS. COCHON: Member Karmen Monigold.  
4  
5 MS. MONIGOLD: Yes.  
6  
7 MS. COCHON: Member Verne Cleveland.  
8  
9 MR. RAMOTH: Yes.  
10  
11 MS. COCHON: Member Tristen Pattee.  
12  
13 MR. PATTEE: Yes.  
14  
15 MS. COCHON: Member Clyde Ramoth.  
16  
17 MR. RAMOTH: Yes.  
18  
19 MS. COCHON: Member Micheal Kramer.  
20  
21 MR. KRAMER: Yes.  
22  
23 MS. COCHON: Member Wilbur Howarth.  
24  
25 MR. RAMOTH: Yes.  
26  
27 MS. COCHON: And Chair Baker.  
28  
29 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.  
30  
31 MS. COCHON: Okay. With eight yeses, the  
32 motion passes unanimously. And could I just clarify that  
33 the motion is to approve the annual report with the  
34 edits noted?  
35  
36 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.  
37  
38 MS. COCHON: Okay. And then with member  
39 Ramoth's recommendation for the written report for  
40 tribal communities, would that go to -- was that for  
41 Teck and Red Dog to share that information?  
42  
43 MR. RAMOTH: Yes.  
44  
45 MS. COCHON: All right. Thank you.  
46  
47 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. So, we  
48 will move on to our next item, which is g: Future Meeting  
49 Dates. So, if we turn to page 41 in our packets, we --  
50 the action items are, we confirm the fall 2026 meeting

1 date and location, select winter 2027 meeting date and  
2 location, and then select the fall 2027 meeting date and  
3 location. So, Grace, if you could kind of go over what  
4 we discussed this morning about the Seward Peninsula RAC  
5 and their request for a joint meeting.  
6

7 MS. COCHON: Thank you. So, for the fall  
8 2026, we currently have -- at your last meeting in  
9 January, the Council agreed to hold the meeting on  
10 September 24th and 25th. This just -- I just want to  
11 note this was an error in the draft meeting minutes. We  
12 mistakenly said October 24th to 25th. And so that's one  
13 of the edits to those meeting minutes. But at your  
14 meeting, you agreed September 24th through 25th, the  
15 Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory  
16 Committee, they were interested in holding a joint  
17 meeting and -- with this Council in the fall to talk  
18 about the Western Arctic Caribou Herd issues, you know,  
19 Board of Game proposals for some items they wanted this  
20 Council's input before they moved forward with certain  
21 things. So, they thought it would be a benefit to both  
22 Councils if -- potentially, if you agree to have a joint  
23 meeting that could take the shape of having one meeting  
24 where you met jointly and then, you know, another day  
25 where you addressed more of your region-specific topics.  
26 So that is what they would like to do and they made a  
27 motion to send a letter to the OSM Director with that  
28 request, so.

29  
30 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any thoughts? Verne.

31  
32 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes. Verne Cleveland. And  
33 where would this meeting be at, if we have a joint  
34 meeting?  
35

36 MS. COCHON: It could be held in Kotzebue  
37 or Nome, or I think Anchorage was mentioned as well.  
38 There would need to be approval obviously, if you were  
39 to meet outside of the region.  
40

41 MR. CLEVELAND: We had a joint meeting  
42 with the whole state and that turned out pretty good. I  
43 mean, the more people we gather, the stronger we were.  
44 You know, just be a good opportunity for us to be --  
45 hear our voices from in different Councilmen. Thank you.  
46

47 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Verne.  
48 Tristen.

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1 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen  
2 Pattee. Yeah, I spoke with one of the Councilwomen  
3 yesterday, and yeah, I know it's -- what was brought up  
4 was the 4 and 0. So, I think that's one of the big things  
5 they want to discuss just to make sure we're in line  
6 because that's what was mentioned, that they're in line  
7 with the 4 and 0 as well. So, they wanted to be sure  
8 with us. So, I'm supportive of the joint meeting.

9  
10 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Verne.

11  
12 MR. CLEVELAND: Did you say Florida?

13  
14 MR. PATTEE: 4 and 0, 4 bulls, no cows.  
15 Florida does sound nice, though.

16  
17 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Mike, was that you  
18 that started talking on the call?

19  
20 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. I'd like to see our  
21 meeting this coming fall, September 24th and 25th.  
22 That's our slot right here. If we could just add Seward  
23 Pen in there, that way, when the January meeting comes  
24 up for the Board of Game, we'll already have a bunch of  
25 stuff put together. That gives us plenty of time to be  
26 able to get a bunch of stuff together. I mean, unless  
27 they want to have it on the spring meeting, it's up to  
28 these guys. But that would be my suggestion since we  
29 already have dates set. But I think for early winter  
30 meeting, we don't have a slot on here. But I think SSRAC  
31 [sic]. Is that Southcentral? Never mind. But I think if  
32 we either have it in this coming fall meeting or the  
33 winter meeting would be best here, down in Anchorage  
34 with Seward Pen, that way we get everything together  
35 before Board of Game meeting.

36  
37 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,  
38 Mike. I would like to propose that if we were to have a  
39 joint meeting, it'd be in Anchorage and that we move the  
40 date to the meeting being September 21st and 22nd. So,  
41 if it were to take place in Anchorage, we're able to  
42 travel the day before, get there, get set up, and just  
43 get right into the business at the beginning of the  
44 week. Grace.

45  
46 MS. COCHON: So, yesterday the Seward Pen  
47 Council, they did approve their meeting dates for  
48 October 14th and 15th, and I heard that they were looking  
49 to avoid September because of moose hunting season. So,  
50 I don't know what you are looking to avoid exactly.

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CHAIRPERSON BAKER: For myself, I would like to avoid meetings in October because that's when we have had historic floods for the last two years that have disrupted meetings. Tristen, did you have something?

MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen Pattee. Yeah, I was going to support that decision with the October, but I see your point. But yeah, I do for the dates between September 15th through October 5th. Yeah, I run a tour business. I won't be able to make those within that time frame, so.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, Clyde.

MR. RAMOTH: Through the Chair. I would like to get more discussion about the scheduled dates because I think it's real critical for Tristen to be present, especially with his Red Dog influence. So, anytime September? What's open for you, October?

MR. PATTEE: October. Like October 2nd through the whole month, whichever date.

MR. RAMOTH: So, October 4, 5, 6? Somewhere in there? My motion.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: What's the wish of the Council? What do we want to do?

MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen Pattee. I mean, I still suggest the joint meeting with the Seward Pen on those dates that were mentioned before.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: The October 14-15 dates.

MR. PATTEE: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Robbin.

MS. LA VINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the Council. Robbin La Vine, for the record. There is a limitation on OSM's capacity to support more than two Councils a week. And so there may be, especially if you, let's say, do a between yourself and Seward Pen, you conduct a three-day meeting and imagine, perhaps, that the one Council meets on the first day. Both meet on the second day and then the second Council completes

1 their individual business on the third. That might be a  
2 possibility, but we should run it by leadership first.  
3 We need to have approval for the move of the Council to  
4 Anchorage, and we can look at what -- how we might be  
5 able to make sure we have all of the staff members and  
6 tech people to support you all. And so, looking at the  
7 dates, we already have two meetings the week that Seward  
8 Pen has confirmed for their dates. But looking at that  
9 week of October 5th through 9th, there may be a  
10 possibility, if we get approval to have a three-day  
11 meeting that basically doesn't have three Councils  
12 meeting at the exact same time in different venues. Do  
13 you see what I mean? We could look at the 21st to 25th,  
14 and we could ask for the 5th through the 9th, and we  
15 could see what the other Council would support and what  
16 they can do. So, you could give like some options, first  
17 option, second option, and we can see what works out.  
18 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

19  
20 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,  
21 Robbin.

22  
23 MR. KRAMER: Mr. Chair.

24  
25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes. Go ahead, Mike.

26  
27 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. I think October 1st  
28 and October 2nd and we could have a three Council meeting  
29 with North Slope RAC in Barrow or Utqiaġvik. That way  
30 there would be three Councils on a Thursday and Friday  
31 in Utqiaġvik, if that's an option. That way we have a  
32 joint meeting with North Slope, Seward Pen, and us.

33  
34 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Robbin.

35  
36 MS. LA VINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I  
37 think that week would be too difficult. And Seward Pen  
38 had made a specific request to meet with Northwest  
39 Arctic, right. And they gave the options. They're  
40 flexible in a certain way. They gave Kotzebue, Nome or  
41 Anchorage. Additionally, I would also note that the week  
42 of September 28th through October 2nd, we already have  
43 two Councils scheduled. And to try to schedule two more  
44 would eat into our staff and our ability to support all  
45 those Council meetings. Thanks.

46  
47 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Leonard.

48  
49 MR. BARGER: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair.

50

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1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Go ahead, Leonard.

2

3 MR. BARGER: Sorry. Thank you. You know,  
4 with the North Slope, I mean, you know, that's the good  
5 time of the year. You know, if you guys want to  
6 experience whaling, you know, that's their fall whaling.  
7 And we're trying to get more entities and, you know,  
8 RACs to come up and experience and see the first look.  
9 And first, you know, invite people. And that was our,  
10 you know, thing to bring up. You know, you guys come up  
11 and, you know, I've talked with Brower, our Chairman,  
12 and, you know, they're welcoming with open arms to, you  
13 know, Seward Peninsula, Northwest Arctic, all these  
14 other. And, you know, I was hoping we all, all the RACs  
15 could come together in one place and gather each board  
16 members and get all the opinions on, you know, what  
17 we're, you know, addressing for our people. And that  
18 would be a good opportunity for each RAC that represent  
19 each place, you know. So, I just want to bring that up  
20 and thank you, Mr. Chair.

21

22 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,  
23 Leonard. Wilbur or Karmen, do you have any thoughts or  
24 comments?

25

26 MS. MONIGOLD: Through the Chair, this  
27 is Karmen.

28

29 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes. Go ahead,  
30 Karmen.

31

32 MS. MONIGOLD: I'm not particular on  
33 where we meet, but you know, the later in the fall would  
34 be better because of moose season. That's just -- so  
35 October sounds great. Thanks.

36

37 MR. KRAMER: Hello. It's Mike.

38

39 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Go ahead, Mike.

40

41 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, I think that would be  
42 a good joint meeting. And Leonard, usually every five  
43 years we have an All RAC meeting in Anchorage. We just  
44 had one the other year, so. We put in -- I made a  
45 recommendation many years ago that we have an All RAC  
46 meeting every five years, but I think having this meeting  
47 in Utqiagvik could be good. North Slope, Northwest  
48 Arctic, and Seward Pen during October 1st and October  
49 2nd. That way we could all talk about caribou together.  
50 I think that would work out pretty good.

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CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Clyde.

MR. RAMOTH: I would like to express my opinion to you about the Utqiagvik gathering, because it's critical when we talk about different species, whether it's caribou, muskox, beluga whale, bartering seasonal climate change, there's always all kind of issues that we have to address. And the Seward Peninsula, especially, we're kind of in a blind with them. So, I would recommend our RAC and the North Slope RAC, and Seward Peninsula RAC meet together. Then that way it's more of a Northern meeting. Then we could be ready for like other -- whether it be AFN report or whatever. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Robbin.

MS. LA VINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Robbin La Vine. While I am not the person that can say yes or no, I'm going to tell you that it's really, really hard for us to do more than 2 meetings in one week. One. Two, the North Slope Council has to officially meet to approve, receive, and agree to the meeting. And you've already met. And yet, your presence here, Leonard Barger, your presence here is fantastic. And that kind of exchange where a representative from one Council can attend and report on discussions from the others, I think is a good way of getting around that, right? So, let's say you guys have a meeting with Seward Pen. And let's say you meet that second week of October. After the North Slope meets, you could invite Leonard and Leonard could arrive as a spokesperson for his Council as these discussions proceed between the two. That's one possibility. And again, I'm looking at the week of October 5th through 9th because there's only the Western Interior Regional Advisory Council meeting there, and I'm still challenged as to see how we might be able to support all three, and I -- so I'm not, again, I'm not the person that would make that call. I imagine our team is really good at trying to figure some of these things out. It's just going to be a struggle. So, I wanted to give you a heads up, and then one final thing, give us some options to work with, within our parameters, right. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Robbin. Leonard, did you have something?

1 MR. BARGER: Yes. Thank you. You know,  
2 the reason why I came here is because Point Hope is in  
3 Unit 23. That's the whole point that I'm here to  
4 represent our community in Point Hope. And our North  
5 Slope RAC recommended me to be here. That's why Unit 23,  
6 you guys are talking about the issue, and that's why  
7 Point Hope is in Unit 23 and I brought up the issue  
8 about, you know, the mapping, you know, change the  
9 mapping, you know, through the boundaries of the North  
10 Slope, the SRC boundary and ANCSA boundary. And looking  
11 at your -- the map here, what you guys just gave that I  
12 talked about yesterday, that would be a good mapping for  
13 the units, you know, take out Point Hope, you know, have  
14 our own, you know, boundaries with them. You know, our  
15 North Slope RAC. That's the only reason I'm here is  
16 because of the Unit 23 and our RAC told me to come here  
17 and, you know, be represented for the North Slope RAC  
18 and, you know, so thank you.

19  
20 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Tristen.

21  
22 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen  
23 Pattee. Obviously, yeah. It's going to be way too  
24 difficult for three Councils to meet, and she just  
25 mentioned they have to request. So, I think we need to  
26 focus on meeting with the Seward Pen and focus on those  
27 dates with them. And can they be on the same day, like  
28 let's say October 8th and 9th, can we both be on the  
29 same day? Would that work?

30  
31 MS. LA VINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I  
32 might suggest again that three-day meeting window where  
33 one RAC meets on the 7th, both RACs meet on the 8th and  
34 the second RAC meets and completes their business on the  
35 9th. And if it's all in the same venue, then we have all  
36 the same staff to support you, including our folks that  
37 do the sound and our tech support. Thank you.

38  
39 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair. Tristen  
40 Pattee. So, you said the 7th -- so there's three RACs  
41 on that day. Is that going to be possible?

42  
43 MS. LA VINE: On the 7th, there would  
44 only be two RACs meeting if we did things the way I  
45 suggest. Again, it's still a little -- again, I'm just  
46 making suggestions and we still have to pass that through  
47 approvals. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

48  
49 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, just to make  
50 clear, the suggestion that you're making would be if we

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1 were to have that [sic] three days blocked off. Northwest  
2 Arctic meets on the 7th. Seward Pen and Northwest Arctic  
3 on the 8th. And then Seward Pen concludes their business  
4 on the 9th. So that we have a day to do our own  
5 discussion. The second day we all come together. The  
6 third day, they can make a decision based upon our  
7 discussion together. Yes, Robbin.

8  
9 MS. LA VINE: Mr. Chair, I do know that  
10 our wonderful support team at OSM is listening in, and  
11 they may have some more informed guidance. Thank you,  
12 Mr. Chair.

13  
14 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: I would be happy to  
15 hear it.

16  
17 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair.

18  
19 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, Wilbur.

20  
21 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah, I think Robbin set a  
22 good -- set up the meeting, I like that. 7-8-9. Thank  
23 you.

24  
25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur.  
26 Robbin.

27  
28 MS. LA VINE: What I'm hearing  
29 preliminarily from the team is that the support -- the  
30 staff support is not as much of a problem if the meeting  
31 is in Anchorage. We have a lot more folks on hand. Thank  
32 you, Mr. Chair.

33  
34 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Robbin.  
35 Leonard, did you have something?

36  
37 MR. BARGER: Yeah, I'm just texting with  
38 Gisela and our Chairman. You know, she just texted me.  
39 I think it would be a good idea to have three RACs  
40 meeting in North Slope. So, she's in Seward right now,  
41 in the meeting right now. So, I've been updating her and  
42 letting her know what's going on. And so, I just want  
43 to bring that up.

44  
45 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,  
46 Leonard. Robbin, is there an update?

47  
48 MS. LA VINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So,  
49 some of the challenges that we're coming up with is that  
50 many of our council members wear different hats. And so,

1 it's -- I'm learning that some of the SRCs are meeting  
2 that week. And so, some of you all here at this table  
3 or in Seward Pen may have other obligations. So, I might  
4 pause for a minute because this sounds a little sticky  
5 and it sounds like I might need to do some consultation  
6 with folks back in the office. To move us forward, can  
7 we see what the OSM team can come up with as far as  
8 options where we know or we have a preliminary assessment  
9 of your availability and Seward Pen's availability, and  
10 why don't we move on with the other two meeting dates?  
11 Confirm those, and we'll circle back around to the fall  
12 meeting dates when we have a little bit more information,  
13 we can see what's possible because I love this idea  
14 brought forward by the Seward Pen, but I see that other  
15 Councils, like the North Slope, are really thinking  
16 about the same thing, that your voices together, hearing  
17 the same information at the same time is powerful. So,  
18 we would like to support that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

19  
20 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So that doesn't move  
21 us forward because it's still an action item to confirm  
22 our fall date. So how do you propose we do that?

23  
24 MS. LA VINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
25 Confirm the winter 2027 and the fall 2027 dates, and  
26 we'll circle back around to confirming fall 2026. Thank  
27 you, Mr. Chair.

28  
29 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Robbin.  
30 Mike, did you have something?

31  
32 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. You know, when you got  
33 three RACs together, you got three coordinators. You got  
34 a lot of help here in Anchorage. Either -- you know,  
35 even in Barrow. It's time to toughen up, buttercup. Let's  
36 get this meeting going and let's get the talking about  
37 our needs and our subsistence resources and get on with  
38 it because, you know, I've never heard a person who  
39 represent us, you know, doesn't want to do it. It can  
40 be done. You're talking about three coordinators working  
41 together to put together a meeting. You know, we -- the  
42 three RACs here, all deal with Western Arctic Caribou  
43 Herd, Teshekpuk, you know, and it's time for us to sit  
44 down together and talk about, you know, caribou. It can  
45 be done and you guys can do it. There is no excuse. I've  
46 seen it done. I made -- I've seen it done many times and  
47 it can happen. So, you can consult all you want, but I  
48 think it needs to happen. Thank you.

49  
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1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mike.  
2 Robbin, did you have something?

3  
4 MS. LA VINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair and  
5 Member Michael Kramer. We are very tough and we really  
6 want to support this. The only question I would ask is,  
7 who do you want to lose, right? Because some of your  
8 council members may not be able to make it, if it's one  
9 week as opposed to another. And that's the coordination  
10 that needs to take place, not whether we want to make  
11 it happen, but if it can be made -- if it's possible,  
12 because Vern may be doing something with one group.  
13 Tristen, I think is on an SRC as well as Elmer. So,  
14 please let us work for you, Mr. Kramer. And thank you  
15 so much.

16  
17 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Verne, did you have  
18 something?

19  
20 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes. We also discussed  
21 this with the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group,  
22 and we went for the cheapest. It was -- it's cheaper to  
23 have a meeting in Anchorage because we discussed having  
24 a meeting here in Kotzebue and it's very expensive, so  
25 it'd be cheaper for us to have a meeting in Anchorage  
26 and you'd have more staff, like she said, they're  
27 available. Thank you.

28  
29 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Vern.  
30 Grace.

31  
32 MS. COCHON: I know Emily Creek has some  
33 information about SRC dates which they scheduled around  
34 the RAC meeting dates. So, I would encourage her to  
35 provide more information if that's okay, Mr. Chair.

36  
37 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: I'm -- just,  
38 everybody, stop. Clyde, did you have your hand up?

39  
40 MR. RAMOTH: Yes, Mr. Chair. How about  
41 during AFN? Because why not report all at the same time?  
42 After? We don't have to be present but have a complete  
43 report from our Councils.

44  
45 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Robbin.

46  
47 MS. LA VINE: Mr. Chair, once again, I  
48 think that we can do some information gathering and look  
49 at availability of all of the council members and what  
50 the staff can do as well, and what dates are potentially

1 the best for all council members. And then we can come  
2 back to you later, like maybe right before lunch or  
3 right after lunch. So, I'll start doing some research  
4 and I will huddle up with Emily, and we'll find out  
5 where the conflicts of meeting dates are and see what  
6 we can present to you in a little bit. Thank you, Mr.  
7 Chair.

8  
9 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. Did you  
10 have a hand up? Okay. So, with that, we will circle back  
11 to the fall 2026 meeting date and location so we can  
12 figure out what dates do work for all parties involved.  
13 On page 43, we've got the calendar for the winter 2027  
14 meeting date. Currently, we need to select that meeting  
15 date and location. Does anyone have any recommendations  
16 for the winter 2027 meeting?

17  
18 (No response)

19  
20 Tristen.

21  
22 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen  
23 Pattee. I suggest the week of the February 15th, so  
24 maybe anywhere between the 16th and 19th.

25  
26 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any other  
27 discussion, suggestions?

28  
29 (No response)

30  
31 I see that that next week the North  
32 Slope RAC is meeting. And not to throw another monkey  
33 wrench into it, but I wonder if that might be our  
34 opportunity to say we would like to meet with Seward  
35 Peninsula and the North Slope RAC, all at that time,  
36 since this is something that we should do. And if we  
37 suggest this for the winter meeting, we have the fall  
38 meeting timeframe to be able to coordinate, get things  
39 kind of set up. So, if the Council is interested in  
40 that, I think it would be very beneficial. But how do  
41 we feel about Tristen's suggestion of that week of the  
42 15th of February for our meeting at least?

43  
44 MS. MONIGOLD: Mr. Chair.

45  
46 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, Karmen.

47  
48 MS. MONIGOLD: This is Karmen. Thank you.  
49 I think the only question I would have during that period  
50 is when spring break is. I don't know if anyone here has

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1 kids that are in school or not that, you know, might be  
2 taking vacations. Thank you.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,  
5 Karmen.

6

7 MS. COCHON: And, Mr. Chair, I have the  
8 meetings for Seward Pen. They decided this week they  
9 would like to schedule their meeting on February 17 and  
10 18 in 2027. And then the fall meeting is September 22  
11 and 23. Thank you.

12

13 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: What is the wish of  
14 the Council? Tristen.

15

16 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair. Yeah, I  
17 like the idea with the North Slope, but there's already  
18 three meeting at that time. Do they even have the  
19 capacity? Should we even consider that right now?

20

21 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Well, we can leave  
22 that up for our staff to figure out whether it's  
23 possible. But I think as we've just discussed, one of  
24 the big hurdles is we would need that RAC to actually  
25 meet to talk about it, see if they're interested, agree  
26 to doing something like that and meeting jointly. Like  
27 what Seward Peninsula has sent a letter to us regarding  
28 -- so potentially we could see if the North Slope RAC  
29 would like to meet that earlier week of the 15th. If  
30 Seward Peninsula is already looking at 17th, 18th, and  
31 you've suggested that week, it looks like it lines up,  
32 at least for us to be in the right time zone. I would  
33 be interested in seeing if we can get the North Slope  
34 RAC as well and have all three in Anchorage if possible  
35 and get us all working together. And you can see that  
36 that next -- that week of February 22nd, you've got  
37 Western Interior and Eastern Interior, I'm assuming  
38 meeting jointly in Fairbanks for that same reason that  
39 we're discussing. If it makes sense that people overlap  
40 and talk about the same issues.

41

42 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen  
43 Pattee. So, does the week of -- or does February 17, 18,  
44 and 19, those days work okay for everybody?

45

46 MS. MONIGOLD: Through the Chair, this  
47 is Karmen.

48

49 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, Karmen.

50

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1 MS. MONIGOLD: Would this be in addition  
2 to a joint meeting with Seward Pen for this coming fall?

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes. Tristen.

5  
6 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, I move  
7 to set the date for February 18-19.

8  
9 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: We also need to set  
10 the location. So, would we -- is it to that date just  
11 for our RAC, or would we like to entertain a tri-meeting?

12  
13 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair. Does the  
14 staff have the capability for that? Because we can't  
15 just make the decision and then they're not able to do  
16 it right. So, we should find that out first.

17  
18 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Would it be  
19 appropriate to send a letter -- essentially do what  
20 Seward Peninsula RAC has done? Send a letter to both of  
21 the other RACs and say we are meeting on the week of  
22 February 15th. We would like to know the availability  
23 and interest of your RAC so that we can have this time  
24 to plan it out in advance. Does that sound agreeable to  
25 staff and Council? I'm seeing heads shaking. People are  
26 saying yes, not into their microphones, but.....

27  
28 MS. MONIGOLD: Through the Chair. This  
29 is Karmen.

30  
31 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes. Go ahead,  
32 Karmen.

33  
34 MS. MONIGOLD: Is Alex with Fish and Game  
35 in? Would they have a caribou count, if they're able to  
36 capture their caribou count? Would they have that  
37 available? I guess we already have it.

38  
39 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Alex is not in the  
40 room yet. Well, from our Fish and Game employees, should  
41 we have that number? We're getting shakes of the head  
42 saying, yes, they should have that number by February,  
43 Karmen.

44  
45 MS. MONIGOLD: Thank you.

46  
47 MR. CLEVELAND: I'll agree with her.

48  
49 MS. COCHON: And I just want to make one  
50 more note that the Seward Pen Council would like not to

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1 have overlapping dates with this Council if they're not  
2 meeting jointly, because it's very hard for certain  
3 staff who cover both regions to come to both meetings.  
4 And so, if they are scheduled at the same time, they  
5 would like a joint meeting and not overlapping.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Verne, then Leonard.

8

9 MR. CLEVELAND: Yeah. On the caribou  
10 count, that depends on the weather. If the weather is  
11 bad, there's no caribou count, but usually we have the  
12 caribou count numbers in our December meeting. Thank  
13 you.

14

15 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Verne.  
16 Leonard, did you have something?

17

18 MR. BARGER: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
19 This is Leonard from the North Slope. Yeah. They have  
20 the capacity to, you know, hold, you know, 3 or 4  
21 entities to come in, you know, at a place. So, I just  
22 want to bring that up and let you guys know. So, thank  
23 you, Mr. Chair.

24

25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Leonard.  
26 Anyone else, thoughts? How would we like to proceed?  
27 Would we like to send a letter to the other -- to the  
28 Seward Pen and North Slope RACs to gauge their interest  
29 in a winter meeting jointly?

30

31 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair. Yes.

32

33 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes.

34

35 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

36

37 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: I think I need  
38 someone to make a motion.

39

40 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen  
41 Pattee. I move that we set the date for the week of  
42 February 15th and send letters to the North Slope RAC  
43 and also the Seward Pen RAC to see what their  
44 availability is for a joint meeting.

45

46 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: With the location  
47 of...?

48

49 MR. PATTEE: The location.....

50

1 (Simultaneous speech)

2

3 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Flexible?

4

5 MR. PATTEE: Yes. Flexible. Yes, whatever  
6 makes more sense. Whatever can work.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, a motion made by  
9 Tristen to send the letter to the other RACs to gauge  
10 their interest and availability, with a flexible  
11 location for a joint RAC meeting that week of February  
12 15th. Is there a second?

13

14 MR. RAMOTH: Second the motion.

15

16 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Seconded by Clyde.  
17 Grace, can I please get a roll call vote?

18

19 MS. COCHON: Can I ask a clarifying  
20 question quickly? Robbin, can I ask you, what a letter  
21 need to be sent to the OSM Director for this request?

22

23 MS. LA VINE: Thank you. Through the  
24 Chair. The OSM Director will need to approve. It's not  
25 just whether or not we have the team and, you know, the  
26 Councils are available to participate, it's also  
27 dependent upon what our budget can afford as well. If  
28 it is in Anchorage, it may actually be something we can  
29 manage, but I don't know. I'm familiar enough with the  
30 budget other than to say it's not good.

31

32 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, with that being  
33 said, before you walk all the way back to the table,  
34 with this motion, would we need to amend it to say, send  
35 a letter to the OSM Director that we would like to do  
36 this? What is the procedural way forward?

37

38 MS. LA VINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In  
39 this regard, I don't think you need to formally write a  
40 letter. I think -- but I mean, certainly you can make a  
41 motion. You're all in agreement that your intention is  
42 to try to have a joint three Council meeting with a  
43 focus on caribou and you've identified a window of time  
44 you'd like to request approval and support from OSM, and  
45 you'd like to request interest and attendance from the  
46 other Councils, and staff can take care of that. I do  
47 not believe we need to have a formal letter to look into  
48 this. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

49

50

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1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Robbin.  
2 So, we do have a motion on the floor that was seconded  
3 for sending the letter to the other RACs. So, Grace, can  
4 I get a roll call vote for that so we can finish that  
5 motion?  
6

7 MS. COCHON: Member Elmer Armstrong.

8  
9 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

10  
11 MS. COCHON: Member Karmen Monigold.

12  
13 MS. MONIGOLD: Yes.

14  
15 MS. COCHON: Member Verne Cleveland.

16  
17 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes.

18  
19 MS. COCHON: Member Tristen Pattee.

20  
21 MR. PATTEE: Yes.

22  
23 MS. COCHON: Member Clyde Ramoth.

24  
25 MR. RAMOTH: Yes.

26  
27 MS. COCHON: Member Micheal Kramer.

28  
29 MS. MONIGOLD: Yes.

30  
31 MS. COCHON: Member Wilbur Howarth.

32  
33 MR. HOWARTH: Yes.

34  
35 MS. COCHON: Chair Thomas Baker.

36  
37 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

38  
39 MS. COCHON: With eight votes for yes,  
40 the motion passes unanimously.

41  
42 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,  
43 Grace. And then we will turn to page 45 to select the  
44 fall 2027 meeting date and location. What is the wish  
45 of the Council?  
46

47 MS. MONIGOLD: Through the Chair, this  
48 is Karmen.

49  
50 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Go ahead, Karmen.

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MS. MONIGOLD: The later in October works better for me. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that, Karmen. Duly noted. Tristen.

MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen Pattee. That works for me as well.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Tristen. Does anyone have a suggestion on date and location for fall of 2027?

MR. CLEVELAND: Was that a joint meeting with the -- Verne Cleveland. Is that a joint meeting with the other (indiscernible), or is it just for our RAC?

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: As of right now, this would just be for us.

MR. CLEVELAND: Here in Kotzebue. I would suggest that for 2027 meeting. Otherwise, if not, we'll find a cheaper place to go to. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Verne. So, location.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. RAMOTH: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, Clyde.

MR. RAMOTH: Yeah. I do set net underneath the ice, too. So, end of October would work for me also.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Clyde. Tristen, do you have something?

MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen Pattee. I move to set the fall 2027 RAC meeting for October 26-27.

MR. CLEVELAND: Second.

MR. RAMOTH: Second the motion.

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1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Before we get real  
2 into it for discussion, a motion made by Tristen,  
3 seconded by Verne, I'm just going to see when AFN is to  
4 make sure that we're not overlapping dates, unless you  
5 checked that already?

6  
7 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen  
8 Pattee. I don't see any dates for 2027, just 2026.

9  
10 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, at this time,  
11 what dates did you say again, Tristen, for your motion?

12  
13 MR. PATTEE: For the motion, October 26-  
14 27.

15  
16 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, motion made by  
17 Tristen for October 26th, 27th. Was that in Kotzebue?

18  
19 MR. PATTEE: Yes, in Kotzebue.

20  
21 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: In Kotzebue.  
22 Seconded by Verne. Any further discussion?

23  
24 MR. CLEVELAND: I call for question.

25  
26 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Question has been  
27 called for. Can I please get a roll call vote?

28  
29 MS. COCHON: Member Elmer Armstrong.

30  
31 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

32  
33 MS. COCHON: Member Karmen Monigold.

34  
35 MS. MONIGOLD: Yes.

36  
37 MS. COCHON: Member Verne Cleveland.

38  
39 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes.

40  
41 MS. COCHON: Member Tristen Pattee.

42  
43 MR. PATTEE: Yes.

44  
45 MS. COCHON: Member Clyde Ramoth.

46  
47 MR. RAMOTH: Yes.

48  
49 MS. COCHON: Member Micheal Kramer.

50

1 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

2  
3 MS. COCHON: Member Wilbur Howarth.

4  
5 MR. HOWARTH: Yes.

6  
7 MS. COCHON: Chair Thomas Baker.

8  
9 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

10  
11 MS. COCHON: Okay. With eight votes for  
12 yes, the motion passes unanimously.

13  
14 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,  
15 Grace. And we will come back around for the fall 2026  
16 meeting once some information gathering has been  
17 completed. Was there anything else in our amended action  
18 items list before we get into the reports, Grace?

19  
20 MS. COCHON: We have -- we still have to  
21 talk about the National Park Service Rule -- their  
22 proposed rule, but the person would be available at 11:00  
23 a.m. today. So, we can move forward.

24  
25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,  
26 Grace. So, with that, we will move into reports. I'm  
27 going to ask that we keep a time limit of 15 minutes per  
28 report. If we could try not to just read from the slides  
29 and give briefer overview, so it gives time for questions  
30 in those time slots. First, we will go with any tribal  
31 governments. Do we have any tribal governments that were  
32 planning on making a report today?

33  
34 (No response)

35  
36 I see none in the room. Do we have any  
37 on the phone? Any tribal governments on the phone hoping  
38 to give a report to the Council today? Mr. Ramoth.

39  
40 MR. RAMOTH: As a Tribal Council  
41 Secretary Treasurer, our only concern is the caribou  
42 migration and the predatory with the wolves and bears.  
43 No limits for getting the wolves. The caribou numbers  
44 are low, so I think our Chair and the Council request  
45 that there be more -- some type of educational ways,  
46 whether it be Facebook, posters, whatever it may be about  
47 the caribou numbers and why we made the 4 bull and zero  
48 cow.

49  
50

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,  
2 Clyde. Are there any other tribal governments hoping to  
3 make a report?

4  
5 (No response)

6  
7 At this time, I don't see any on the  
8 call or in the room, so we'll move into Native  
9 organizations. Are there any Native organizations that  
10 were planning to make a report today?

11  
12 (No response)

13  
14 Seeing none. Alaska Department of Fish  
15 and Game. Mr. Henslee, if you could put your name on  
16 record, you have the floor.

17  
18 MR. HENSLEE: Thank you very much, Mr.  
19 Chair and Council members. My name is Luke Henslee. I'm  
20 the Assistant Area Management Biologist for Norton Sound  
21 and Kotzebue, and I'm based in Nome. So, thank you for  
22 letting me present to you today. And today I'm going to  
23 be giving more of an update about future research  
24 directions for our chum salmon stocks here in Kotzebue.  
25 So, I'm going to be updating, but I'm also requesting  
26 some input into kind of what directions the Council would  
27 like to see the department put our effort and resources  
28 into investigating our chum salmon stocks. So, as you  
29 may know, our long-running test fishery on the Kobuk  
30 that was based in Kiana, we lost funding for that  
31 project. The last time it was run was 2023, and in the  
32 five seasons or so preceding that, the data that we were  
33 getting from that project was fairly limited. And the  
34 biggest reason for that is river levels were so high.  
35 Drift netting in a huge river can get you some fish, but  
36 does it really give you a good idea of how many fish,  
37 what the run timing is, you know, the big things that  
38 we're looking for when we're conducting that project.  
39 And as most of you probably know, trying to get that  
40 information from a huge, swiftly moving river is not  
41 only pretty futile, but kind of dangerous. So those are  
42 some of the reasons that that project was kind of put  
43 on the chopping block.

44  
45 And so, we did receive some disaster  
46 relief funds to conduct some research into these chum  
47 salmon stocks. We've been hitting kind of snag. The  
48 biggest one being the state hiring freeze, because we  
49 did receive funds to hire a research biologist to just  
50 focus on Kotzebue chum, which is awesome, but we haven't

1 been able to get hiring approval for that. So that is  
2 part of the reason it's been taking us a few seasons to  
3 get these projects off the ground. There are a few  
4 projects that we're hoping that we can initiate this  
5 season without a devoted biologist. One of the biggest  
6 ones we hope to get off the ground is a sonar feasibility  
7 project. Mainly right now we'll be focusing on the Noatak  
8 because the Department has run a sonar on that river  
9 previously in the late 80s and early 90s, and from  
10 everything I've read about that project, it seemed like  
11 it was pretty effective and useful. And from what I can  
12 tell, it just -- it kind of came under the same budgetary  
13 constraints as a lot of our projects do.

14  
15 So, our plan for this year is to go back  
16 up to the Noatak. We'll probably be investigating our  
17 previous study site, which is -- I believe it's just a  
18 few miles down from the old hatchery down the -- where  
19 the river turns south. And some of you might even  
20 remember where that project was. We also ran a test  
21 fishery there for a few years. So, we have better  
22 technology now than we did back then. We have more  
23 effective sonars. One concern I might appreciate some  
24 input from the Council here is, you know, back when we  
25 ran those projects in the late 80s and early 90s, the  
26 vast majority of salmon going up the Noatak were chum.  
27 And now we're kind of hearing from people that pinks  
28 are showing up more in that river. So, one of the limitations  
29 of sonar is that, you know, when we look at the screen,  
30 we see little green blips. We can't necessarily tell  
31 like what species that is. Sometimes we can tell from  
32 the size of the blips, you know, like between a pink and  
33 a king, for example, okay. We can tell. But one of the  
34 big parts of a sonar project is that we have to go in.  
35 We have to physically look at fish in the river, and  
36 then we can sort of apply those species apportionments  
37 to our sonar counts. So yeah, it's a lot easier when the  
38 main species is kind of your target species and you can  
39 be looking out for that.

40  
41 We're also hoping to do a site  
42 assessment on the Kobuk River. Our first target would  
43 probably be near like the site of the test fishery,  
44 since that way we could observe salmon going past before  
45 they're going up different tributaries of the Kobuk  
46 drainage. And any input about potential, yeah, sites or  
47 anything like that would be appreciated. So that project  
48 we're hoping to get off the ground this year just to do  
49 some site surveys to kind of set us up for possibly like  
50 a future project that would be more permanent.

1  
2           And then another project that we're  
3 hoping to kind of get off the ground this season would  
4 be increased aerial surveys. So, we used to do a lot of  
5 aerial surveying. I think our last big survey year was  
6 2014. It came up again against some funding limitations,  
7 but the other thing is that, you know, aerial surveys  
8 also are not very effective when you have huge rivers,  
9 you can be flying over a big muddy river and it's really  
10 hard to tell what's in there. So, what we're -- we've --  
11 -- it's been long enough now that we're kind of starting  
12 from scratch. We used to have sort of our, like  
13 established survey areas, sections of river where we  
14 would continuously fly and look for chums. And so, this  
15 year, again, it's kind of like, let's start from scratch.  
16 Where's a good spot that we need to be surveying? Where  
17 can we actually see fish? And where can we consistently  
18 come back year after year to kind of get an index of  
19 abundance for these salmon?

20  
21           We have another project that we're  
22 trying to do centers around differentiating between  
23 Kobuk and Noatak chum salmon in the commercial catch.  
24 So, as you know, the two big components of our commercial  
25 fishery are our fish bound for spawning grounds on the  
26 Kobuk drainage and fish bound for the Noatak. As of  
27 right now, we don't have any way to tell which fish are  
28 which in the commercial fishery. We have some historical  
29 research that we can look at that tells us that Kobuk  
30 fish run earlier than Noatak fish, but we don't really  
31 have any kind of formal estimate for what the proportions  
32 are in the fishery. So, one of the ways that we are  
33 hoping to do that is through higher resolution genetic  
34 sampling and analysis. So, part of our project will be  
35 heading to spawning grounds and getting genetic samples  
36 from spawning -- spawned out salmon. Nome origin salmon.  
37 So, if we get some samples, you know, way up the Kobuk,  
38 we can say these are Kobuk fish unless they strayed, but  
39 it's not very likely. So yeah, that's kind of my report  
40 of these projects that we have that we're hoping to get  
41 going very soon, possibly this season. So, I'll leave  
42 it at that for now and if I have any questions or  
43 comments, I'd be happy to.....

44  
45           CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Luke.  
46 Elmer.

47  
48           MR. ARMSTRONG: So, if we put proposals  
49 in for assignment surveys on the Kobuk and the Noatak,  
50 I guess maybe sonar would be cheaper than doing aerial

1 surveys just because there's things happening in other  
2 areas of the world that is affecting fuel prices. So, I  
3 think sonar would be the best way to conduct your  
4 projects on salmon. You know, like I stated earlier, the  
5 salmon runs were really low and also one would be the -  
6 - is there a time frame where we could do a proposal on  
7 other fisheries to try to close a certain fishery or  
8 like trawling? Is there a time frame where we could put  
9 in a proposal from this RAC?

10  
11 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Verne.

12  
13 MR. CLEVELAND: It's sad to hear that  
14 you're not doing your project in Kiana because you guys  
15 feed a lot of family in Kiana with that project. Not  
16 only that, the fish come down from -- to Noorvik to feed  
17 families too. And because I went up there and they were  
18 on that project and I got a load of salmon for nothing.  
19 Not even -- nothing. They just throw in my boat. Yeah.  
20 I'll take them into my family. And what they should do  
21 is bring it to Selawik, because Selawik come over to our  
22 -- to Noorvik to get some salmon. Sometimes they clean  
23 out my freezer. So, this project helps us in the long  
24 run, and I'm sorry that it no longer there. Thank you.

25  
26 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Verne.  
27 Just going back to Elmer's question. Do any of the staff  
28 have a response to his question regarding proposals and  
29 trawling? I know in the past we've included that in our  
30 annual report. I don't know that we're necessarily --  
31 that it's in our jurisdiction, but, Mr. Foley, if you  
32 put your name on record, please.

33  
34 MR. FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the  
35 record, this is Kevin Foley, Fisheries Biologist with  
36 OSM. Through the Chair, Mr. Armstrong. We are currently  
37 in the open proposal period for accepting proposals for  
38 changes to federal regulations only. I'm not clear on  
39 the cycle for the Alaska Department of Board of Fish.  
40 And when that occurs for the region, I know that it has  
41 recently gone by, and I believe that it will -- for this  
42 region, may not be available for accepting proposals or  
43 the cycle begins in three years. And so that might be  
44 something for the Council to think about if they want  
45 to submit a proposal to the Board of Fish cycle in the  
46 future. Thank you.

47  
48 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Tristen, did you have  
49 something?

1 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen  
2 Pattee. So, you mentioned you wanted some input. Can you  
3 give me a quick summary of the projects and then what  
4 input you would like on which project? Please.

5  
6 MR. HENSLEE: Thanks for that, Member  
7 Tristen. I think mostly what we're looking for is maybe  
8 sort of some observations on changes in run timing or  
9 maybe even spawning area, so we can match up like, for  
10 instance, our aerial surveys, we can match up when we're  
11 surveying. When we do a survey, we try to get what we  
12 call a peak survey, you know, so we're not going out  
13 early in the spring or late in the fall. Like we want  
14 to be on the grounds, you know, when those chum are  
15 spawning, that's the best way to get a snapshot so we  
16 can get an index of abundance. As far as sort of our  
17 sonar projects go, what I'm really looking for -- and  
18 it doesn't need to be right now. I can, you know, leave  
19 my contact information. What I'm looking for are sites  
20 where this is something we can do, like there's a lot  
21 of erosion happening. I know it's been brought up in  
22 this meeting. Banks are sloughing off and we're looking  
23 for a spot that that's not happening. Like something  
24 that's a little bit more permanent. We could set up a  
25 camp and kind of establish a standardized protocol that  
26 we can continue year after year. So, I don't need  
27 lat/longs from anyone right here at the table, but I'll  
28 definitely leave my contact information and if anyone  
29 has any information, I'd be happy to have it. And the  
30 other thing is just if anyone right now has observations  
31 about chum salmon that they think would be worthwhile  
32 for us to put our time and effort, but as far as the  
33 Department goes, what we mainly use for management, as  
34 you know, are index of abundance. How many fish do we  
35 have? When are they coming? Those are the big questions  
36 that we're looking for. And I should add too, this whole  
37 question about stock composition in our fisheries like  
38 -- we know Kobuk fish come first. We know Noatak is  
39 usually the more -- the stronger. More of the fish in  
40 the fishery come from the Noatak. If there's any sort  
41 of insight into how those patterns might be shifting,  
42 if they seem relatively stable, that kind of thing can  
43 help us sort of guide our direction in the future.

44  
45 MR. RAMOTH: Clyde Ramoth, for the  
46 record. Thank you for your hard work. So, do you guys  
47 work with the tribal governments, like for consultation  
48 on the date and maybe when and using traditional  
49 knowledge because the climate change is one big factor.  
50 And despite any kind of data you might have, the last

1 ten years could mean nothing. For the next ten years  
2 could mean a lot. So that's just my general consensus.

3  
4 MR. HENSLEE: Yeah. Thank you very much  
5 for that. I think our biggest contribution from tribal  
6 governments and people that are using the resource --  
7 and I try to tell folks that I talk to, you know, it is  
8 such a huge area and we're such a small office, we really  
9 rely on reports from subsistence users, commercial  
10 fishermen, people that are out on the grounds. And  
11 there's a few really reliable folks that we talk to.  
12 They'll call in and just be like, hey, the fish are  
13 here. Like great, that's a data point that I wouldn't  
14 have had otherwise. You know, hey, the rivers are huge.  
15 We're not catching. That's a data point. It's -- that's  
16 the hardest part. When those rivers are huge, it's like,  
17 okay, are there no fish or are just nets not really  
18 being effective right now? It's probably a combination.  
19 But I would say, yeah, that's our biggest request is  
20 just -- I love it when folks call in and just, hey, fish  
21 are here. Hey, we were expecting them, they're not here.  
22 Data points.

23  
24 MR. RAMOTH: And just like member  
25 Cleveland mentioned, some days (indiscernible) probably  
26 have some salmon.

27  
28 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Elmer.

29  
30 MR. KRAMER: Chair, this is Kramer.

31  
32 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mike.  
33 Elmer first then we'll get to you.

34  
35 MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Elmer  
36 Armstrong. Noorvik. So, in your projects, do you collect  
37 the water temperature? And, I don't know, how about  
38 oxygen in the water? Because I know in recent talks  
39 there was talks about salmon die-off because there's  
40 maybe not enough oxygen or I know temperature plays a  
41 part in when the salmon start coming up. Is that part  
42 of the data you guys use or collect?

43  
44 MR. HENSLEE: Yeah. Thanks for that  
45 question. Through the Chair. It certainly is. We do  
46 collect data when we can. I mean, every project we have  
47 has temperature sensors. We get temperature. Other  
48 observations like oxygen, some of that more like fine  
49 scale granular data, it's useful to the Department, but  
50 as far as in-season salmon management goes, it's not a

1 tool that we rely heavily on. So, that sort of  
2 information is looking more at trends and how that might  
3 affect the future, and sort of what we're focused on is  
4 like, what's happening today? What's the decision that  
5 we need to make today? And not to say that that  
6 information won't inform that kind of in-season  
7 management, but as far as, you know, the management side  
8 of the fisheries go, all of that gets considered, but  
9 it's not necessarily our primary objective. There are a  
10 lot of other groups that are collecting information like  
11 that and that communicate with us. And it's always good.  
12 We can't have too much information, but to answer your  
13 question, yes, when we set up projects like that, we  
14 generally do collect environmental data as well.

15

16 MR. ARMSTRONG: Another question to --  
17 you know, your projects, are they in your calendar every  
18 year or only when proposals are put in?

19

20 MR. HENSLEE: Thanks for that, through  
21 the Chair. So, in my office, we tend to -- our goal is  
22 usually to set up long-term monitoring projects like the  
23 test fishery. How long did that go? It went for decades.  
24 Those are our main focus. If we -- the whole point of  
25 setting up this sonar feasibility project, that's going  
26 to take a few years for us to like work out the kinks,  
27 but the future goal would be to have a project that we  
28 can run year after year after year, and that's going to  
29 inform in-season management. And to your comment earlier  
30 about, you know, funding for aerial surveys and sonars,  
31 first of all, I want to say sonars are crazy expensive.  
32 That's one of the biggest, you know, limitations to  
33 setting up sonar projects, is just the devices  
34 themselves. They cost a lot. One thing I might request  
35 from the Council, if you were feeling so inclined, is  
36 to draft a letter of support for the Department to set  
37 up a long-term monitoring project that could be useful  
38 for us in the future if we go after OSM funds to run a  
39 project like that. It doesn't need to be today, but it  
40 might just be something to start thinking about because  
41 if there's an OSM funding call in the future, a letter  
42 from the Council would be really, really helpful.

43

44 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Luke. Mike  
45 Kramer.

46

47 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. Back in the past, you  
48 know, just south of (In Native) Creek, at that next  
49 inside bend before the -- above the -- right  
50 (indiscernible) above point of the Canyon, Lower Canyon

1 and the Noatak River, that's where they ran their sonar.  
2 As for the Kobuk, the Kobuk was up above Small Salmon  
3 and Big Salmon where it narrowed. There's even a shed  
4 there that I've seen at one time that had sonar equipment  
5 in it. And that they used that one in the past and I  
6 haven't, I mean, I haven't gone back up there in a while,  
7 but I know there's a building -- small shed there that  
8 had sonar equipment after they stored their sonar  
9 equipment. And as for the Noatak River, just you know,  
10 not even a quarter mile below (In Native) Creek,  
11 (indiscernible) and (In Native) Creek, at that inside  
12 bend and going across the Noatak River, that's where  
13 they had their sonar set up for the Noatak River. I  
14 brought this up the last couple of years, you know,  
15 because we've had devastatingly low chum returns. I  
16 think last year, not this last -- not this fall's, you  
17 know, commercial fisheries, the recent one, but the one  
18 prior, 2024, I believe was a rare -- very, very poor.  
19 2025 was kind of so-so, but you know, my concern was the  
20 returns. You know, are we going to have salmon five  
21 years from now? You know, what kind of -- what's our run  
22 going to look like? You know, like last year, you know,  
23 in 2024, it was very low. Are we going to have the amount  
24 of returns coming back up to make, you know, to have a  
25 commercial fishing season and subsistence?

26  
27 I know that in 2024, my brother set a  
28 subsistence net, one (indiscernible), and I believe he  
29 only got a few fish. There's a lot of seals out there  
30 stealing fish. You know, you might see them a hundred  
31 yards away and then all of a sudden you see your net  
32 getting hit by salmon. And then, you know, you see that  
33 seal a hundred yards away really eating a salmon. And  
34 he, you know, he dove, snagged that salmon out of your  
35 net and swam 100 yards away to eat it. But those are the  
36 two locations that I know in the past -- you know, I  
37 used to be a commercial fisherman in the 80s. You know,  
38 early 80s to -- I mean, the whole decade of 80s. I  
39 commercially fished with family and parents and my dad  
40 and stuff like that. But those were the two locations  
41 that I know of that where sonar were set up. And the  
42 reason why I put in for sonar was to be put in the last  
43 couple of years is because of poor runs we've been  
44 getting. And I asked to see if we could find some kind  
45 of funding in FRMP, you know, the federal fisheries or  
46 you know, also on the state side, to see if they could  
47 come up with some funding to put forth, to put these  
48 sonars back in. And our main concern is just, are we  
49 going to have future runs? And what's the escapement?  
50 You know, because we want to -- if we're not going to

1 have that great of a return for commercial fishing, at  
2 least hopefully we can have some for subsistence. But  
3 that's all I have. Thank you.

4  
5 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mike.  
6 Vern.

7  
8 MR. CLEVELAND: Do you have specific  
9 places where they spawn? Because in our media, our  
10 Facebook, you know, talks -- is it their spawning in the  
11 Hunt River? And that's -- I said, man, that's very  
12 unusual, but it just happened maybe a couple of years  
13 ago or last summer, they said that they were spawning  
14 in Hunt River. So that might be a good spot for where  
15 to check out fish. Goes both ways and it's pretty much  
16 clear by Hunt River and the Kobuk. That'd be a good  
17 idea. A good place to monitor fish right there in the -  
18 - both sheefish, whitefish, trout, whatever. It goes  
19 both ways. Right there at the Hunt River. Thank you.

20  
21 MR. HENSLEE: Yeah. Through the Chair.  
22 Thanks for that, <ember Cleveland. I made a note of  
23 that, so I appreciate that.

24  
25 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen  
26 Pattee.....

27  
28 (Simultaneous speech)

29  
30 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair.

31  
32 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: First Tristen, then  
33 Wilbur.

34  
35 MR. PATTEE: Yeah. So yeah, I've caught  
36 some salmon in the Hunt River as well. But keep in mind,  
37 it's really good for sheefish. So, you might be getting  
38 more of those in that location. And maybe even check out  
39 the Salmon River. Yeah, there seem to be a lot of bears  
40 when we go to that place. So that's a good indication.  
41 I'd recommend talking to Brendan with the NPS. He's been  
42 -- he floated that, I think. Was it Brendan that floated  
43 the float of the salmon a couple of years ago? Oh, okay.  
44 Oh, yeah. Maybe if we could go with the Park Service  
45 because they do some floating, spend some time with  
46 different projects. The Museum of the North. I can't  
47 remember her name. They did the float one year as well,  
48 so it might be good to talk to those folks. Thank you.

49  
50 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Wilbur.

1

2 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah. Mr. Chair. The  
3 majority of the salmon at the Kobuk run I've been seeing  
4 them lately coming up the Melbourne Channel, but a good  
5 place for a sonar is where I see them in huge numbers.  
6 It's right at Stoney's Camp. Right before, maybe what?  
7 300 feet or so from the Salmon River where they spawn.  
8 But that -- I mean I've seen them just (distortion) and  
9 there's a steep area right below. I think right below  
10 his camp. But you know, I have to talk with (distortion)  
11 who set up a camp there, but that would be a real nice  
12 place to set up sonar. And the Noatak is like Mike,  
13 Micheal said was, that's a good spot. That's all I have.  
14 Thank you.

15

16 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,  
17 Wilbur.

18

19 MR. CLEVELAND: Verne Cleveland. Do you  
20 herd fish? Herd -- you herd fish like herding reindeer?  
21 Do you try and turn them to a different river?

22

23 MR. HENSLEE: Through the Chair. No. Tell  
24 me more.

25

26 MR. CLEVELAND: I was trying to tell you.  
27 Maybe you should try and herd some fish through Selawik  
28 River. Thank you.

29

30 MR. HENSLEE: Thank you.

31

32 MR. ARMSTRONG: Through the Chair, Elmer  
33 Armstrong. Back to that letter of support. It would come  
34 from OSM, right? The letter of support if we did a  
35 proposal to support sonar survey?

36

37 MS. COCHON: Through the Chair. That is  
38 correct. OSM would draft the letter for Chair Baker to  
39 sign.

40

41 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So it come from the  
42 Council but OSM Would draft it like the previous letters  
43 we've done.

44

45 MR. ARMSTRONG: Elmer Armstrong again. I  
46 make a motion to draft a letter or write a letter, not  
47 draft, write a letter in support of sonar survey. Thank  
48 you.

49

50

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, motion made by  
2 Elmer. Is there a second?

3  
4 MR. RAMOTH: Second.

5  
6 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Seconded by Clyde.  
7 For discussion. Mr. Henslee, would that be in alignment  
8 with your suggestion earlier of -- what kind of verbiage  
9 would we need in a letter that would help Fish and Game  
10 with these study efforts?

11  
12 MR. HENSLEE: Yes, thank you for that,  
13 Mr. Chair. The way I would probably word it at this time  
14 would be perhaps just to support our efforts to monitor  
15 the Kotzebue chum salmon runs because right now we're  
16 trying to find out, is sonar going to be a feasible  
17 method? Is aerial survey going to be more useful? Should  
18 we revive the test fishery? We're kind of in the state  
19 where we're at ground zero rethinking the whole thing.  
20 So, being really specific about sonar might be a little  
21 bit of a hindrance if we kind of decide that there's a  
22 better way to go. If it's the wish of the Council to  
23 really get behind sonar, then I would encourage you to  
24 maybe do a little research about the limitations and I  
25 can talk more about that if you want, but I know that  
26 there's some regions where folks really want sonar to  
27 be used. It's kind of a -- it's a pretty non-invasive  
28 technique as opposed to like a weir or a test fishery,  
29 and so, some places are really concerned about the  
30 specific methodologies that we're using to monitor these  
31 runs. If you're mainly concerned that, you know, like I  
32 am, that we just need data about how many fish are making  
33 it up to spawning grounds, then I would draft a letter  
34 that would be like a little bit more general in  
35 supporting our efforts to monitor these runs.

36  
37 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Verne, did you have  
38 something?

39  
40 MR. CLEVELAND: What about the way you  
41 were doing it in Kiana? That was a good way of doing it.  
42 That way you put someone that needs a job to work with  
43 you, and you feed the families. That was a good way of  
44 doing it. And why not do it that way? I would suggest  
45 that you keep going the way you were doing it in the  
46 past. Just like going up to Kiana and fish on the river.  
47 That was a good way of doing it.

48  
49 MR. HENSLEE: Yeah, thank you. Through  
50 the Chair, Council Member Vern. I -- yes and it's not

1 off the table like I was saying. If we are kind of, you  
2 know, exploring these different methodologies with the  
3 disaster relief funds that we have, and we kind of  
4 realize, you know, what the most consistent and best way  
5 to do this is the test fishery, then it's not out of the  
6 question that that would be a direction we would go in.  
7 There's limitations to that methodology as there are  
8 with every methodology for counting salmon. I also want  
9 to say that, you know, if we ever did set up sonar  
10 projects, which is, you know, kind of what I'm sort of  
11 hoping and thinking are the most feasible for the future,  
12 we would continue to hire folks, you know, from the  
13 region. And I'll add that our efforts to apportion  
14 species, like I was saying earlier, depend on us  
15 physically looking at salmon in the river. Usually that  
16 takes place with a test fishery style project. It  
17 wouldn't be as intensive as the previous test fishery,  
18 but if we're running a sonar, we need to see which  
19 species are going past the sonar. And one of the ways  
20 to do that would be to do sort of a scaled down test  
21 fishery. And in that instance, if that were to happen,  
22 all that fish would go back to the community kind of  
23 like we've done in the past.

24  
25 MR. CLEVELAND: I can talk to Trump right  
26 now and see if we can support you. Thank you.

27  
28 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Elmer and then  
29 Tristen.

30  
31 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah. Just for -- just  
32 to comment, you know. Once they get the support for that  
33 project, they'll use that data and they could tell us  
34 every season how healthy are the runs. I mean, I put my  
35 net out too when the salmon start to, and however many  
36 I catch, it gives me an idea of how healthy the runs  
37 are. If they're weak or they're strong. So, I think that  
38 letter would be good. Thank you.

39  
40 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Elmer.  
41 Tristen.

42  
43 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair. Yeah, I  
44 think that just focusing on just sonar -- I think we  
45 just make it more broad and make it have them kind of  
46 decide what the best methods would be in that letter  
47 rather than just focusing just on sonar because they  
48 have these different tools. You know, let them decide  
49 on what is going to be best used for their project. So,  
50 if we might have to amend this, amend it.

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MR. ARMSTRONG: Well, also it goes back to their budget too. But like you said, sonars are spendy. You could put in another proposal for your idea on that project. It doesn't hurt to put it in proposals right now while we have them here. Letters of support.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, I think based on the conversation, we do have a motion on the floor that's been seconded to write a letter to support sonar efforts. We can make another motion to support, in general, study efforts.

MR. RAMOTH: So -- Member Ramoth here. I'll make a motion to amend and do an additional more. I say that because of our efforts with our sheefish at Selawik with the otoliths, to study what, Bill Carter and Wil and others, I'm sure you guys -- I mean, the salmon has limited life, lesser than the sheefish. But like Verne say, due to climate change, maybe they'll divert and move towards Selawik Lake and Selawik Rivers). There's a lot -- of course, money is a factor, so I'll stick to that motion with my comment.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: The motion has been made. Is there a second?

MR. CLEVELAND: Chair, Verne. We already have a motion on the floor. Let's take care of the motion first, then we take care of the other motion, am I correct? We can't -- you can't double up motions. And otherwise, I'll make another motion and you'll have three motions on the floor. So, let's take care of the first motion, then we move on from there. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that, Verne. That was the direction I was going to go. We have the motion on the floor from Elmer and it's been seconded. So, at this time we're not really able to amend it. Someone else can't make a motion to amend his motion. So, can I get a roll call vote for the motion to write a letter in support of sonar and the verbiage used by Elmer?

MS. COCHON: Okay. Elmer Armstrong.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

MS. COCHON: Karmen Monigold.

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1 MS. MONIGOLD: No.  
2  
3 MS. COCHON: Verne Cleveland.  
4  
5 MR. CLEVELAND: No.  
6  
7 MS. COCHON: Tristen Pattee.  
8  
9 MR. PATTEE: No.  
10  
11 MS. COCHON: Clyde Ramoth.  
12  
13 MR. RAMOTH: No.  
14  
15 MS. COCHON: Micheal Kramer.  
16  
17 MR. KRAMER: No.  
18  
19 MS. COCHON: Wilbur Howarth.  
20  
21 MR. HOWARTH: No.  
22  
23 MS. COCHON: Chair Thomas Baker.  
24  
25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.  
26  
27 MS. COCHON: With six votes for no and  
28 two votes for yes, the motion fails.  
29  
30 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Grace.  
31 Tristen, did you have something?  
32  
33 MR. PATTEE: Yes. I'll move to, for OSM  
34 to write a letter of support from this Council, for the  
35 efforts that Alaska Department Fish and Game are doing  
36 on the chum salmon run on the Kobuk River.  
37  
38 MR. RAMOTH: I'll second the motion.  
39  
40 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Clarifying question,  
41 would that be addressed to Fish and Game?  
42  
43 MR. PATTEE: Yes.  
44  
45 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, motion made by  
46 Tristen, seconded by Clyde. Any discussion?  
47  
48 MR. CLEVELAND: Call for question.  
49  
50

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1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Question has been  
2 called for. Grace.

3  
4 MS. MONIGOLD: This is.....

5  
6 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Karmen.

7  
8 MS. MONIGOLD: Yeah, I just had a comment  
9 before the question.

10  
11 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, please.

12  
13 MS. MONIGOLD: I would just say that,  
14 whatever they did on the other rivers that failed for  
15 the salmon runs, please don't do that on ours. Thank  
16 you.

17  
18 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for your  
19 comment, Karmen. Grace, can I please get a roll call  
20 vote?

21  
22 MS. COCHON: Member Elmer Armstrong.

23  
24 MR. ARMSTRONG: No.

25  
26 MS. COCHON: Member Karmen Monigold.

27  
28 MS. MONIGOLD: Yes.

29  
30 MS. COCHON: Member Verne Cleveland.

31  
32 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes.

33  
34 MS. COCHON: Member Tristen Pattee.

35  
36 MR. PATTEE: Yes.

37  
38 MS. COCHON: Member Clyde Ramoth.

39  
40 MR. RAMOTH: Yes.

41  
42 MS. COCHON: Member Mike Kramer.

43  
44 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

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46 MS. COCHON: Member Wilbur Howarth.

47  
48 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

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50 MS. COCHON: Chair Thomas Baker.

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CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

MS. COCHON: Okay. With seven votes for yes, the motion passes.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that, Grace. Is there any final questions, comments before we take a break?

(No response)

Hearing none. Mr. Henslee.

MR. HENSLEE: Sorry, really quick. Before I leave the table, I know that Brendan Scanlon from Sportfish, there's a sheefish project that we're starting. And he wanted a quick minute to update the Council on that, if that is agreeable.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: If someone had said that a half hour ago, when you began, that might have been a quick minute thing. If it's an actual quick minute, yes. So, Mr. Scanlon, are you online?

MR. SCANLON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will make this quick. Just wanted to say, I'm really glad to have that sheefish discussion yesterday and all the information provided by Ray Hander and Bill Carter was great and thorough. And I wanted to mention that the sheefish sonar project we had applied for OSM funding for to start on the Kobuk this year for three years, was denied funding yesterday. So, that won't happen. And, but we will beginning -- beginning this weekend surveying people out on the ice in front of town, sampling their catch for age, sex and length composition. We'll collect some genetics information, otoliths, whole stomachs, and we will have just a few simple questions for people who are fishing about the history with the fishery, their observations, their concerns, things like that. So, Luke and I will be out on the ice, probably starting Friday or Saturday, for about eight days or so. And look forward to talking to people and hearing what your concerns are and sampling some fish. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Brendan. Any questions? Clyde.

MR. RAMOTH: Why was the funding denied?

1

2 MR. SCANLON: Through the Chair, we got  
3 a letter of notice yesterday. It got really good reviews  
4 from the TRC and we had letters of support from the  
5 Northwest RAC and local commercial fisher. They said our  
6 capacity building was low, but it's still scored very  
7 high. So, I just got the letter last night. I haven't  
8 had a chance to reply. It doesn't appear like there's  
9 any appeal process. I'm pretty surprised, but I really  
10 wish that this was going to get done, but we'll try  
11 again at the next funding call. Thank you.

12

13 MR. FOLEY: Through the Chair, Chairman  
14 Ramoth. Kevin Foley, Fisheries Biologist, OSM. We were  
15 really hamstrung with our budget, this past year, for  
16 this funding cycle. And OSM had a very difficult decision  
17 to make with the projects that we were able to fund, and  
18 it came out to essentially, we were able to fund one  
19 project within each of the regions, as it panned out.  
20 And the process and the procedures that we have in place  
21 for ranking the various projects, going through the  
22 review process, you know, certain ones rate higher than  
23 others. And, ultimately, projects are signed off on and  
24 we had an incredible array of projects submitted and we  
25 just had very limited financial capacity to fund these  
26 projects. And, you know, this is a trend that we're  
27 seeing with our FRMP program, over the past few years.  
28 And believe me when I tell you, we're doing the best we  
29 can at OSM to meet the needs of the people. So, thank  
30 you.

31

32 MR. RAMOTH: Just a follow up question.  
33 Is it, how many staff to do the rating for the funding  
34 part? OSM?

35

36 MR. FOLEY: Through the Chair,  
37 Councilman Ramoth. There is a pretty lengthy process.  
38 There's multiple people, multiple agencies involved. You  
39 know, we have a Technical Review Committee that sits  
40 down and does the ranking per se. And it's a multi-day  
41 meeting and it's comprised of individuals from various  
42 land management agencies including the Alaska Department  
43 of Fish and Game, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Indian  
44 Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, National Park  
45 Service, Fish and Wildlife Service. And then that, you  
46 know, that gets, that process, we can speak to at length.  
47 But, basically, it will, you know, it starts with the  
48 TRC and then those projects get elevated to the various  
49 RACs as projects that were submitted in your region. You  
50 may recall from some of your meetings in the past, you

1 speak upon them and sort of give feedback to OSM. And  
2 then, those recommendations go forward to the Federal  
3 Subsistence Board. And it's all kind of bundled up into  
4 what we call the Monitoring Program. And then, once the  
5 Board, sort of, takes into account the recommendations  
6 of the Council and the various feedback through the  
7 process it ultimately comes down on the desk of the  
8 Director of OSM who takes, you know, signs off on that  
9 program. And so, that's, we were just able to, kind of,  
10 figure out where our money was coming from. We had a lot  
11 of uncertainty with the budgets and so we were just able  
12 to get out our letters yesterday at 5:00, as Brendan  
13 mentioned. And again, you know, it's really regrettable  
14 that we're not able to fund some of these projects.  
15 They're really incredible, super valuable, and we really  
16 look forward to have them come in. Thank you.

17

18 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any other questions?

19

20 MR. RAMOTH: Follow up, Mr. Chair. So,  
21 that would, those type of funding or proposals or budget  
22 constraints could be, like, recommended the next cycle,  
23 fiscal year, whatever you call it?

24

25 MR. FOLEY: Through the Chair, Councilman  
26 Ramoth, kind of. You know, we have a, we're sort of  
27 thinking about our future FRMP cycle. And I'll have more  
28 information for you on that later today, if we're able  
29 to get to it. Thank you.

30

31 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any final questions,  
32 comments for Brendan or Luke?

33

34 (No response)

35

36 Hearing none, thank you gentlemen. It  
37 is 11 a.m. We're going to take a ten-minute break. And,  
38 when we come back, we will start with the University of  
39 Alaska Fairbanks. Miss Luby, are you on the line?

40

41 (No response)

42

43 I see your box on the Teams. Caitlin  
44 Luby.

45

46 MS. LUBY: .....with my microphone. I am  
47 online.

48

49 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Okay. When we  
50 come back, in about ten minutes, you will be the first

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1 presenter, just so you're aware.

2

3 MS. LUBY: Okay. Thank you.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right so, 11:01.

6 We'll come back in about ten minutes.

7

8 (Off record)

9

10 (On record)

11

12 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. It is now  
13 11:17. We're going to Get back to business. First will  
14 be Caitlin Luby. And then we will have -- excuse me  
15 while I find the name. After Ms. Luby's presentation,  
16 will we have the NPS proposed rule with Elizabeth Bella.  
17 And then Dr. Brinkman should be available after that.  
18 So, Ms. Luby, if you're ready, you have the floor.

19

20 MS. LUBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And good  
21 afternoon, Council Members. My name is Caitlin Luby, and  
22 I'm a master's student in Dr. Todd Brinkman's lab, at  
23 the University of Alaska Fairbanks. And I'm just wanted  
24 to give you a brief update on my research. During the  
25 January meeting, my advisor, Todd, and I, presented some  
26 preliminary results from our research about the changing  
27 availability of caribou as a food source in your region  
28 in Northwest Alaska. We've been analyzing these RAC  
29 meeting transcripts from 1993 to present, about how the  
30 access, distribution and numbers of the Western Arctic  
31 Herd impacts the herd as a food source. And we showed  
32 that the 11 communities in the study have different  
33 trends of good versus bad availability. I don't have a  
34 presentation or a substantial update for this meeting  
35 but wanted to share that availability isn't mirroring  
36 the population trends and the decline of the herd at the  
37 same rate. Although the herd has been declining since  
38 2003, hunting opportunities haven't been declining as  
39 steeply across the region. And also, availability during  
40 the fall is much different than in the winter, and we're  
41 honing into that subset to explore environmental  
42 conditions that may explain that fall variability. And  
43 based on recommendations from the last meeting, some  
44 early findings are showing that high temperatures during  
45 the fall may have some influence on those fluctuations.  
46 And I plan to complete my research this summer and will  
47 have more results and some final results to share for  
48 your fall meeting. And I just wanted to thank you for  
49 your time to present kind of these updates and  
50 your support during this project and happy to take any

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1 questions if there are any. Thank you again.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Ms. Luby.  
4 Are there any questions or comments from members of the  
5 Council?

6

7 (No response)

8

9 Mike, Wilbur or Karmen? Do you have any  
10 questions?

11

12 (No response)

13

14 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Hearing none. Thank  
15 you, Ms. Luby, and we look forward to hearing more as  
16 your study progresses, unless you have anything in  
17 closing.

18

19 MS. LUBY: Nothing in closing. If Todd  
20 is online and wanted to add anything, he's welcome to,  
21 but I don't have anything else. Thanks again.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you  
24 for your update. Elizabeth Bella, are you on the call?

25

26 (No response)

27

28 Dr. Brinkman, are you available for your  
29 presentation on statewide exploratory study on hunting  
30 ammunition?

31

32 DR. BRINKMAN: I'm ready, Mr. Chair.

33

34 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Dr.  
35 Brinkman. This will be page 51 of our meeting packet.  
36 If you could put your name on record. Dr. Brinkman, you  
37 have the floor.

38

39 DR. BRINKMAN: Sure. Thank you. My name  
40 is Todd Brinkman. I'm a professor of wildlife ecology  
41 at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. And thanks,  
42 everybody, for an opportunity to talk today. I was  
43 curious, are my slides up on your screen there? If not,  
44 that's okay.

45

46 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: They are not, but I  
47 believe someone can get them up in a moment.

48

49 DR. BRINKMAN: I'm happy to proceed, but  
50 if you want me to walk through the four slides I shared,

1 I can do so. I'll leave it up to the Chair.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: We have them on the  
4 screen, here in the room, so you can begin.

5

6 DR. BRINKMAN: Okay. So first I want to  
7 say that the overarching goal of my report to the RAC  
8 today is to spread awareness on a research project that's  
9 just about to begin, and then, also, it's to invite  
10 feedback and participation on this research project from  
11 the RAC and the communities in your region. We're in the  
12 early stages of a statewide research project. It's a  
13 collaborative effort between UAF and Alaska Department  
14 of Fish and Game, and our research will focus on  
15 collecting information on Alaska residents use and  
16 perceptions of different types of ammunition for  
17 hunting. We are especially interested in learning about  
18 hunter thoughts on the use of lead-free ammunition.  
19 Studies like this one on ammunition and lead-free  
20 options have been conducted in a bunch of different  
21 states in the U.S, and in Europe, in places like Norway  
22 and Sweden, but nothing like this has been done yet in  
23 Alaska. And for me and my collaborator, it's really  
24 important that we get good feedback and participation  
25 from rural Alaska. So, next slide, please.

26

27 So, our research is a two-step process.  
28 What we're starting now that will continue on until about  
29 June or mid-summer is we're facilitating focus group  
30 discussions with hunters all around Alaska. And the idea  
31 is, through these discussions and the information that  
32 we collect, it will help inform a statewide survey that  
33 will go out to thousands of Alaska resident hunters to  
34 collect their perceptions, their attitudes on the use  
35 of hunting ammunition, especially lead-free options.  
36 Next slide, please. So, it's been identified as an  
37 important knowledge gap that we want to fill. Collecting  
38 information from hunters will help us understand and  
39 document perceptions and concerns related to different  
40 types of ammunition. One of the reasons that we're giving  
41 special attention to lead-free ammunition is because  
42 it's been well documented that there's some potential  
43 negative consequences on lead on the environment and  
44 certain animal species. For instance, after an animal  
45 shot, when the gut pile remains, there's scavengers and  
46 other things that eat that, that can suffer from  
47 contamination, especially things like golden eagles. But  
48 I do want to say that we consider this just an  
49 exploratory study, aimed to learn about what hunters  
50 think about this topic, if they're aware of lead-free

1 options and if they're interested in using this  
2 ammunition for hunting. Next slide, please.

3  
4 The anticipated benefits of this  
5 research project are an advancement of knowledge on,  
6 maybe, the barriers that hunters may experience when  
7 trying to get the ammunition types they want, or use  
8 alternative ammunition types. This research will also  
9 document some perceptions of -- that hunters have on the  
10 relationships between the ammunition they use and the,  
11 say, the environment or wildlife health on their hunting  
12 practices, and maybe, the role that ammunition plays in  
13 participation of hunting or hunters. Next slide, please.  
14 So, here's my request for RAC members or anyone listening  
15 in your area. For this research to be useful and relevant  
16 to Alaska hunters, and for this survey that we're going  
17 to conduct, probably, sometime, next year, to be  
18 relevant, we need hunters to participate now and share  
19 their thoughts. That helps us ask the right questions,  
20 the right way and collect good information. So, we're  
21 currently recruiting hunters to participate in focus  
22 group discussions. These discussions is, I'll be sitting  
23 down with 2 to 3 hunters at a time. Take them through  
24 some questions, but it's kind of open-ended questions  
25 because we're allowing the conversation to go in all  
26 sorts of different directions just to learn more about  
27 the topic. It's anticipated that the discussions will  
28 last 1 to 2 hours and, as reimbursement for people's  
29 time and knowledge and sharing with us, we're able to  
30 pay \$100 for each participant. So, between now and mid-  
31 summer, across the state, we're hoping to sit down with  
32 50 to 70 hunters. So, if there's people in Kotzebue or  
33 the surrounding communities that want to participate,  
34 please let me know. We do have funds where I can travel  
35 out, if there's enough interest, for a couple of days,  
36 to sit down with hunters. Alternatively, if there's  
37 adequate Wi-Fi or cellular service in your area, we can  
38 do this online. And Mr. Chair, that is all I have for  
39 you today. And please let me know if anyone has any  
40 questions. Thanks again for fitting me in on your  
41 schedule.

42  
43 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Dr.  
44 Brinkman. Do we have any questions, comments? Clyde.

45  
46 MR. RAMOTH: Yeah. Thank you. \$100 sounds  
47 like a lot. Especially for our people in rural villages.  
48 Of course, I would be one of them. No, just -- Bbt, I  
49 used to be a steel shot instructor, where we transferred,  
50 we learned, got away from lead shot on our shotguns, 12-

1 gauge. And we taught our people to use steel shots. So,  
2 now, for the bullets, from -- get away from lead. How  
3 big of a -- what do you call it? Info. Is it statewide  
4 information, you could have flyers to every community  
5 like the tribal offices?  
6

7 DR. BRINKMAN: Yes. Through the Chair.  
8 Thanks, Clyde for the question. Yeah, the goal is Alaska  
9 Department of Fish and Game will provide us a record of  
10 resident hunters with licenses, hunting licenses. So,  
11 the survey will go out to a large sample across the  
12 state. And, of course, we're probably going to  
13 strategically sample more in rural Alaska, to make sure  
14 that we get that response. But I've done surveys like  
15 this in rural Alaska for the last 20 years, not on lead,  
16 but on a variety of other topics. And I know it's  
17 important to apply some different strategies to make  
18 sure that we get these surveys out and we get a good  
19 response rate. So, what I've done in a lot of the  
20 previous studies is, I've got copies of these surveys  
21 or say QR codes, so somebody could take a picture of it  
22 with their phone and take the survey on their phone or  
23 computer. I've made sure to get that to the -- not just  
24 the tribal offices and individual communities, but also  
25 the regional organizations and corporations, so we can  
26 make sure to spread awareness the best that we can. Is  
27 that what you're asking, Clyde?  
28

29 MR. RAMOTH: Yes, sir. And so, the follow  
30 up question, is there like a trade program, if any  
31 individual might have three boxes of old lead bullets,  
32 where they could trade for steel or copper?  
33

34 DR. BRINKMAN: Yeah, yeah. Through the  
35 Chair. Yeah. Thanks for asking that, too. Currently,  
36 there is the Alaska Copper Ammo Challenge that is live  
37 and active in our state. Now, that's a partnership  
38 between ADF&G and a number of other groups. But right  
39 now, they are offering hunters a rebate up to \$80 off  
40 for two (indiscernible) boxes of copper rifle  
41 ammunition, if somebody wants to try it. For those folks  
42 in the room or listening that reload their own shells,  
43 they offer up to \$50 for two boxes of bullets for  
44 reloading. So, there is an incentive in place to, maybe,  
45 help people try different ammunition, if they want to.  
46 And we're hoping that the results of this survey will  
47 provide us with more information on the barriers that  
48 others are facing, whether it be cost or availability  
49 or concerns about performance, so we can address that  
50 and maybe get folks to use some of these alternative

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1 ammunition types that might be better for our  
2 environment and our wildlife.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Dr. Brinkman, would  
5 you be able to send a link or any information relevant  
6 to what you were just describing to Grace, so that she  
7 can distribute it to the Council?

8

9 DR. BRINKMAN: Yeah. Would it be easy if  
10 I just put it in the chat right now and she can grab it?

11

12 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yeah, that would be  
13 just fine. And we do have stuff in the room, but for the  
14 folks that are online, we can distribute that to the  
15 whole Council. Elmer, did you have something?

16

17 MR. ARMSTRONG: So, just a couple  
18 questions. What pushed this study? Was it just  
19 conversations through meetings like this, or is there a  
20 specific group that is pushing to remove lead like how  
21 they did to bird shots?

22

23 DR. BRINKMAN: Through the Chair. So, the  
24 -- ADF&G has been part of that Alaska Copper Ammo  
25 Challenge and there's been lots of information collected  
26 all over the world that lead contamination can have some  
27 negative consequences. Not just on the environment, but  
28 also potentially on people that consume the meat  
29 although that's a little bit debatable. There's no  
30 interest no one's indicated to me that they're going to  
31 try to create any sort of regulation or policy to limit  
32 the ammunition that people can use. This is, basically,  
33 an effort to understand hunter awareness and their  
34 attitudes towards this. So, if there is greater interest  
35 in using lead-free options, we can understand that level  
36 of interest and those barriers and maybe, we can bolster  
37 programs like the Alaska Copper Ammo Challenge or work  
38 with ammunition distributors to make that ammunition  
39 type more available. So, I'd say the motivation is, from  
40 a lot of the partners in the Alaska Copper Ammo Challenge  
41 and the need, just to get a better understanding of  
42 where Alaska residents sit on this issue.

43

44 MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Elmer  
45 Armstrong again. You know, one of my shells have lead  
46 tip, but I know I bought another box that had composite  
47 tips. So, I was kind of thinking I might move towards a  
48 composite. I mean, just, you know, that's my opinion.  
49 So, I might start moving to composite tip from now on.  
50 But thank you for doing this study.

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DR. BRINKMAN: Through the Chair. Thanks,  
Elmer.

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MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair. Tristen Pattee. Yeah, I think this is a great study. You know, I work at Red Dog Mine. It's a lead and zinc mine. And, yeah, we do have a lot of education on the impacts of lead. And I think this is -- I think that same type of, kind of, you know, information and education for the people that are, you know, buying ammo to -- for food, it's good that they -- they're educated on the impacts of lead, you know, and that would potentially, you know, sway them from purchasing lead when they're hunting animals for food. And yeah, you know, copper, the copper bullets, you know, I mean, copper is, it's an antimicrobial, antibacterial. So, it's, you know, it's a -- that's another good property for, you know, using that type of ammo. You know, when hunting your food. So, that's all. Thanks.

MR. CLEVELAND: Oh, Verne Cleveland,  
here.

(Simultaneous speech)

DR. BRINKMAN: (Indiscernible). Oh,  
sorry.

DR. BRINKMAN: Go ahead, Verne.

MR. CLEVELAND: I had a hard time adjusting from lead to copper. I'm a pretty good shot. I -- and I don't like to waste bullets and miss. But when we -- when they quit using lead and go back to copper, I had to adjust because they're lighter than the lead. And the lead, it's accurate, it's heavier. But when they come out with these new shotgun shells that full of, what did you say, copper? And, boy, that was hard to adjust because they're lighter, and, you know. But, after a while, you get used to it, you know, without using your lead. Because lead -- when you kill animals with lead, you know, and it's for consumption, for human consumption, think about it, the lead goes to your body. So, that's why they were doing away with that with the lead, they quit selling it in the stores and stuff like that. It was pretty, there was a big uproar about it, about lead shots and copper shots and whatever. I do hunt with full metal jacket or brass points. That's what I do hunt with, now. I don't hunt with no lead point or

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1 anything else. It's all full metal jacket or brass  
2 points. It's accurate. I mean, if you use brass points,  
3 it's just dead on. One shot, it's dead. I mean, you  
4 know, it's gone. But I'm going to give you a good shot.  
5 But yes, we are getting -- as a hunter, we are adjusting  
6 to that, not using lead. And thank you for that, for  
7 bringing it up. Thank you.

8  
9 DR. BRINKMAN: You're welcome.

10  
11 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any other questions,  
12 comments? Clyde.

13  
14 MR. RAMOTH: Yeah. Once upon a time, I  
15 was a steel shot instructor, too, with (indiscernible)  
16 from Huslia and Patrick Meadows from Koyukuk. And we  
17 went to Noorvik and we thought -- we had a steel shot  
18 clinic, we had one at Selawik first, but we went to  
19 Noorvik and we had 28 participants and we used the old  
20 airstrip, and we shot lead and we shot the steel shot.  
21 And guess who was the number one shotter [sic]? A young  
22 lady by the name of Ms. Carter. End of comment.

23  
24 MR. CLEVELAND: I wasn't there.

25  
26 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,  
27 Clyde. Sounds like someone will have to have a rematch.  
28 Wilbur or Mike or Karmen, do you have any comments?

29  
30 MS. MONIGOLD: Through the Chair, this  
31 is Karmen.

32  
33 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Karmen, then Wilbur.

34  
35 MS. MONIGOLD: Are we on the radio?

36  
37 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Can anyone confirm if  
38 we are on KOTZ Radio?

39  
40 MR. HOWARTH: I believe so.

41  
42 MS. MONIGOLD: Okay. The only thing I  
43 would request is, for the broad audience, if they could  
44 put the contact, so that, you know, hunters out there  
45 can get in contact.

46  
47 MR. RAMOTH: Email: t j b r i n k m a n  
48 at capital A, Alaska Range dot edu  
49 (tkbrinkman@Alaskarange.edu.) Phone number: 907-474-  
50 7139. Hundred bucks.

1

2

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that, Clyde, and thank you for that reminder, Karmen. Wilbur, did you have something?

5

6

MR. HOWARTH: Yeah, I'm reading this and, how many of you know that I believe NANA owns the ammunition store in Fairbanks? I was there, a week or so ago for a meeting, and drove by that place. And this guy, my relative, told me that was owned by NANA. So, if NANA does own that ammunition store and anybody from NANA that has anything to do with that store, maybe they can look into this ammunition or type, there, so. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that, Wilbur. Mike, do you have any questions or comments?

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MR. KRAMER: Yeah. I know back in the day when, you know, they were transitioning from lead to steel. And back then I used to work at Hanson's (indiscernible), you know, and the lead shot was always less expensive and the steel shot was always more expensive. And one day I asked our manager, I said, hey, why don't we switch these prices around? Let's make steel, you know, make steel lower than the cost of lead. Let's jack up the price of lead, so people will buy steel. He didn't go with it. And then, like, a week later, he said, let's do it. So, we did it. And man, a lot of people were buying steel and a lot less lead, you know. And the sole purpose for this back then was, you know, all the puddle ducks, you know, the wigeons and pintails and mallards and all these other puddle ducks. What they were doing is all the years of shooting lead shot, in a lot of the lakes, you know, they're dabbling duck, they go down and eat off the bottom and they're consuming lead pellets from some of these lakes and stuff like that. And it was causing a lot of waterfowl to have a lot of lead poisoning. Not only that, you know, the wounded bird that got hit but didn't, you know, drop. They were contaminated with lead shot. Yeah. Like Wilbur was saying, NANA, they own the ammo company called Kobuk Ammo. You know, maybe they could get together and try and, you know, find something that works good. But I've always used, you know, full metal jacket. Biggest rifle I own is a .270, and I don't take that one out very much, but everything else I use uses .223 full metal jacket. That's it. All right, thank you.

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,  
2 Mike. Leonard, you got anything?

3  
4 MR. BARGER: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
5 Thank you, radio land. Yeah. You guys talk about, you  
6 know, ammo. Ammo is pretty expensive nowadays to get to  
7 buy, you know. You don't realize how much it costs just  
8 to get a box. Especially when you go to Anchorage. You  
9 know, you get a, you know, a box of (indiscernible) in  
10 Anchorage, holy crap! 89 bucks a box. You come to  
11 Kotzebue, you know, 65, that's 30 bucks. And you go to  
12 the village and stuff they're 40. I rather, you know,  
13 look into, see where the cheapest place to buy. And, you  
14 know, got some buddies, you know, in the villages, you  
15 know, call me. You know, where's the best place. You  
16 know, (indiscernible) shells. You know, that's a pretty  
17 good weapon there. But all my hunting, you know, polar  
18 bears, I see your graph here on shells. You know, I hunt  
19 polar bear, and I shoot my polar bear with a .22 Hornet.  
20 And you see, you know, it's (indiscernible), and, you  
21 know, you got these big rifles, grizzly bears and brown  
22 bears and stuff. These big shells. And, you know, I shot  
23 polar bears with my .22 Hornet and, you know, other  
24 smaller game, like, with the .223, you know, I shoot a  
25 moose. And you got these big shells, you know, like  
26 .335, you know, shoot a moose. You know, bigger shells,  
27 you make bigger whole, you know, mess up the meat and  
28 there's, you know, you shoot them where you shoot the  
29 animal. You know, you want the heart shot. A lot of  
30 people like to have the heart and liver. Where I shoot  
31 my animal, like, on the polar bear, I shoot it right in  
32 the ear. And, you know, that's a deadly shot. You know,  
33 at 25 yards and 25 yards is pretty close. So, I just  
34 want to bring out, you know, the shells that cost a lot  
35 of money and you know and thank you, Mr. Chair.

36  
37 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,  
38 Leonard. Any final questions or comments from members  
39 of the Council?

40  
41 MR. RAMOTH: Just a quick one. Great  
42 educational stuff with this email we got for the Dr.  
43 there and the knowledge, like Mr. Barger was talking  
44 about and, like, for myself, I don't want caribou, but  
45 I do hunt moose. And I use only a .300 Magnum Winchester  
46 and, you know, utilizing our bullets, I know .223 and  
47 other stuff we use for caribou, but my other relatives  
48 hunt the caribou I only hunt moose all time. But getting  
49 these educational stuff, how we could pass them on to  
50 each community is going to be critical because copper

1 versus lead is going to be a topic.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Dr. Brinkman, any  
4 final comments, questions?

5

6 DR. BRINKMAN: No, Mr. Chair. Thanks,  
7 everybody, for their comments and questions. And then,  
8 Clyde, on your last comment, it's always the most  
9 important thing after we get results from this -- these  
10 studies is to get it back to the community. So, that'll  
11 be the first thing that we do. So, I'm sure you folks  
12 will be hearing about this, again, as we get further  
13 along. Thanks.

14

15 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Dr.  
16 Brinkman. With that. Elizabeth Bella or anyone that's  
17 going to be speaking on the National Park Service  
18 Proposed Rule.

19

20 DR. BELLA: Hello. I'm on here. I'm Dr.  
21 Elizabeth Bella. I'm the Associate Regional Director for  
22 the National Park Services, Alaska Regional Office. But  
23 I've done a lot of different things with the Park  
24 Service, that's my current role. So, thank you for having  
25 time for me to be here and share some updates on the  
26 current rulemaking, which is known as the Hunting and  
27 Trapping Rule or the Wildlife Rule. It's been, there's  
28 been several different iterations of the Rule over time.  
29 I'm going to give you a brief update and provide some  
30 information on ways to comment on the current  
31 rulemaking, and then I'd be happy to answer questions.

32

33 All right. So, the current comment  
34 period on the Alaska Hunting and Trapping Rule, and this  
35 is round four, was opened on March 10th, 2026. The  
36 comment period for public comment remains open until  
37 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time on April 9th, 2026. So, that's  
38 a 30-day comment period. Please note that 11:59 p.m.,  
39 Eastern Time means 8:59 p.m. Alaska time. So, I just  
40 want to make sure everybody's clear that that is the  
41 only time that public comments will be accepted on the  
42 proposed rulemaking. There's several different ways to  
43 comment. You can get on to the Federal Register website  
44 and then you would, in the search box, enter the docket  
45 number or RIN number. And that is 1024-AE96. And so,  
46 then you'll follow the prompts to click a green submit  
47 a public comment button, and then follow the  
48 instructions for submitting comments. I think, once you  
49 get in there and start clicking around, it's pretty clear  
50 how to submit your comment. You can also go in through

1 the federal E-rulemaking portal, and same deal, is in  
2 the search box, you would enter 1024-AE96, and then it  
3 will search and bring up the appropriate rule to comment.  
4 And then it's another set of clicking through a tab and  
5 a title. And you're going to find your way to the open  
6 for comments box and then click the blue comment box.  
7 One's green, one's blue, I don't know why. You can also  
8 submit your comment by hard copy. This would be mailed  
9 to the National Park Service Regional Director in the  
10 Alaska Regional Office in Anchorage, Alaska. So,  
11 anything delivered on external storage devices will not  
12 be accepted. And they will not be accepted by fax or by  
13 email. Just mailed hard copy. And, again, you would want  
14 to put that docket number or RIN number 1024-AE96. You  
15 could also make sure you put on there that this is  
16 attention to National Park Service or the Park Service,  
17 some way indicate you're commenting on this Rule for the  
18 Park Service.

19  
20 There's also information on the NPS's  
21 Public Comment and Project Management page, which is  
22 known in shorthand as the PEPC page. Hopefully, some of  
23 you or all of you are familiar with these different  
24 portals to another realm or, realistically, just NPS  
25 actions. So, I just wanted to make the point here that  
26 there's lots of different ways to get your comment in.  
27 And I'm sure NPS folks would be more than willing to  
28 assist you if you're interested in doing that. I also  
29 wanted to share on the general project timeline. So, as  
30 I mentioned, the public comment version of the proposed  
31 rule was published on March 10th. That means it's still  
32 quite a bit of a process to get to a final rule. There  
33 still has to be environmental analysis on what the  
34 potential impacts of this rulemaking are. That is done  
35 through the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA  
36 process. We expect there would be analysis via an  
37 environmental assessment or shorthand known as an EA,  
38 as was done with prior iterations of this rulemaking,  
39 as is done in any proposed federal action in which there  
40 may be impacts.

41  
42 So, we -- our best guess is, the  
43 earliest this could be finalized, would be July, but  
44 that would be an exceptionally fast timeline. But we're  
45 probably looking at more of August or September. As with  
46 any federal action, now or in the past, this is always  
47 subject to change, subject to what direction we get from  
48 the Department of Interior in terms of whether we need  
49 to wait or speed it up. There's also a variety of high-  
50 level reviews that take place in centralized Washington

1 agencies. So, it all goes through a very careful process  
2 of vetting and reviews. And there has to be time to  
3 consider those public comments that are coming in that  
4 might suggest changes to make the Rule better than it  
5 is currently presented and written.

6  
7 So, brief commentary now, on all the  
8 changes that have taken place. There was a 2015 rule and  
9 there was an EA or environmental assessment written in  
10 2014 to analyze the impacts of that potential  
11 rulemaking. So, that rule was initiated as a -- in a  
12 desire to take some of the regulatory changes that were  
13 made, year to year, on individual parks through the  
14 superintendent's compendium and codify them into more  
15 of a centralized and more organized way. And then there  
16 was a 2020 rule and also an associated environmental  
17 assessment that was done in 2018 to analyze the impacts  
18 of that rule. And that changed some things,  
19 specifically, around bear baiting. So, a lot of  
20 questions always come up on this rulemaking about bear  
21 baiting. So, essentially, the 2015 rule disallowed or  
22 prohibited the practice of bear baiting on national  
23 preserves, where it was otherwise allowed by state and  
24 federal law. So, it specifically applied only to  
25 national preserve lands that had allowances for bear  
26 baiting, which is a pretty limited number of places in  
27 Alaska. So that everything we talk about is very specific  
28 to National Parklands and in particular about bear  
29 baiting to national preserve lands. The 2020 rule in  
30 effect removed the prohibition on bear baiting on  
31 national preserves so that practice could, again,  
32 continue. So, based on feedback and other input to the  
33 Park Service, and observing how things were going, the  
34 2024 rule, Rule number 3, with associated environmental  
35 assessment that was written in 2023, that took a look  
36 at how bear baiting and practice was working. And it,  
37 once again, prohibited the practice, specifically on  
38 certain national preserve lands in which the practice  
39 had been allowed.

40  
41 Another related rulemaking I'd like to  
42 mention, that is addressed in this current proposed  
43 regulation, is the 2017 rule, which deals specifically  
44 with subsistence collections and subsistence management  
45 on National Parklands. And in shorthand, we call this  
46 the Subsistence Collections Rulemaking. There's also a  
47 PEPC project associated with that. There was an  
48 environmental assessment on collections that includes  
49 everything. It addressed everything from collecting live  
50 wildlife for various purposes. Collecting sheds, etc.

1 And that rulemaking was set forth to clarify what could  
2 and could be, could not be done on National Parklands.  
3 Just to make it a little more clear on what the practices  
4 should be or what's allowed and what's not. Just to give  
5 everybody practitioners guidance on that. So, that,  
6 also, included a cost benefit analysis, a regulatory  
7 flexibility threshold analysis as is has to be done for  
8 rulemaking. And then there were some amendments through  
9 categorical exclusions, which is, also, some of the  
10 procedural stuff we do to follow up on various  
11 rulemakings. And so, with this, in all endeavors, what  
12 is written and proposed, we don't always get it right.  
13 And so, we really do look to public input to help us  
14 understand what is wanted.

15  
16 And in this case, because it's been  
17 three prior rulemakings specific to the Wildlife Rule  
18 or the Hunting Rule and a prior rulemaking on subsistence  
19 and subsistence collection practices, I think it's  
20 understood, not just for those of us that work on this  
21 internally, but for everybody, that there is some  
22 fatigue on this, that we're like, oh, this thing again.  
23 But not to downplay the importance of this, I think it's  
24 still important to read the rule and to take time to try  
25 to understand what the changes are, because this current  
26 proposed rulemaking is written and published in the  
27 Federal Register is quite lengthy. It's 13 pages, which  
28 is unusual. And so, I'd like to acknowledge that, I,  
29 myself, had trouble reading it and understanding it. And  
30 I -- it's -- it would not be surprising if others are  
31 also struggling to understand what the changes are.  
32 Because we have only a limited time to comment on it,  
33 30-day period. I did want to allow opportunity to take  
34 questions or to provide guidance that I can. I can't say  
35 I know everything or can describe it in its entirety,  
36 but I just want you to understand or to allow space to  
37 answer questions. That it's a big, complex, rulemaking  
38 that is out there. What else did I want to tell you  
39 about?

40  
41 Oh, I did want to mention there's two  
42 formal consultation processes underway regarding this  
43 rulemaking. One is the tribal consultation process, in  
44 which we would request the government-to-government  
45 consultation from tribal entities. A Dear Tribal Leader  
46 consultation letter was sent out in April and May of  
47 2025, and that was sent to tribes that are associated  
48 or near, within the area of the various park units. And  
49 that was sent out either by the Park Service  
50 Superintendents in those regions or by the Deputy

1 Regional Director. This information was also sent out  
2 to ANCSA corporations too, from the regional office. As  
3 I've described, what is being proposed now has expanded  
4 quite a bit from what we thought we were going to propose  
5 back in -- a year ago, April 2025, just with some  
6 different executive orders and secretarial orders and  
7 different directions and updates to other regulations.  
8 There's also a state consultation process underway, in  
9 which the Park Service and the Department of Interior  
10 share formal input and exchange of information and input  
11 from the State of Alaska.

12  
13 All right. So, in thinking about, or  
14 maybe considering commenting on this rule, once you have  
15 a chance to read through it all, there are often helpful  
16 suggestions on what a substantive comment would be. So,  
17 like I mentioned earlier, we really do want to understand  
18 what would work better and what's not working. Comments  
19 about needing more time are very valid. There's been  
20 some comments for an extension of the comment period,  
21 and I'm not sure if that would actually be able to  
22 happen, but it's a common thing to comment on, to request  
23 more time during a public comment period. Other things  
24 that are often focused on are making sure that the  
25 language in the proposed regulation is clear and easy  
26 to understand and make sense. And so, suggestions for  
27 improving language or requests to clarify certain  
28 sections of it are always appreciated and helpful and  
29 help us write a better rule. And then, anything that you  
30 can provide input on of, well, I'm not sure this would  
31 work, but how about this? So, there could be ideas on,  
32 I don't really agree with what this is saying or how  
33 this would play out in practice, but here's a way to  
34 improve it and make it work for everybody. Make it work  
35 for the public and all of the agencies involved. So, the  
36 BLM and there's other links online that give good  
37 guidance on what a substantive or an effective comment  
38 is, so. It's easy to search for that and I'm sure we'd  
39 be happy to provide links to the particular BLM document  
40 I'm talking about here. All right. So, all that was  
41 pretty high level and covered a lot of specifics about  
42 the schedule, how to comment. At this time, I'd be happy  
43 to take any questions or dive into more of the specifics  
44 on it, if people would like to discuss that.

45  
46 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bella,  
47 this is Chair Thomas Baker. I fail to understand what  
48 it is that you are asking for, because at no time did  
49 you describe the proposed rule, in any way that someone  
50 just listening on the radio could just understand what

1 is being proposed and what is at stake, so to say. So,  
2 if there's a way that you could, briefly, summarize what  
3 this proposed rule is, I don't believe this is something  
4 that we can take any definitive action on today other  
5 than saying, as you stated, and I've heard from other  
6 staff members of OSM and different organizations, it's  
7 not quite clear and it's very difficult to suss through  
8 what is being proposed and what is being asked of folks.  
9 We can't really take any action other than saying folks  
10 may need more time to be able to discern this so that  
11 we can make a comment. Would you be able to speak to  
12 that at all?

13  
14 DR. BELLA: Sure, Mr. Chairman, and it's  
15 Dr. Bella, FYI. Let me run through a list of bullets  
16 about what some of the major changes are. I'm happy to  
17 do that and it is lengthy. And I think the ask here is  
18 -- the big thing is to understand that the comment period  
19 is closing soon. And so, if there is a desire or request  
20 for more time, now would be the time to comment on that,  
21 almost immediately. Okay, so like I said, it's dense and  
22 lengthy. So, there are changes proposed, specifically,  
23 in the Code of Federal Regulations, and they are specific  
24 to Title 13, Chapter 1, part 13. So, that's technical  
25 talk. But that's how, in effect, changes are made, by  
26 changing the Code of Federal Regulations. There's a vast  
27 and complicated set of regulations that guide everything  
28 that happens on public lands. And so, that is the  
29 specific changes being proposed, as was done in the past  
30 3 iterations in that 2017 rule. It's a common, it's how  
31 we do it. The regulations are what give us guidance,  
32 keep us safe, and provide specific guidance on what  
33 activities are allowed or not allowed. So, specific  
34 changes in this case, what is being proposed in this  
35 Wildlife Rule or Hunting and Trapping Rule. There would  
36 be a return of regulatory authority of use of firearms  
37 and trapping on National Parklands, back to the State.  
38 And so that just takes out some language that was added  
39 in 2024. And that rulemaking that provided definitions  
40 for specific items under trapping, the definition of  
41 furbearer. And then, there were specifics about how a  
42 firearm could be used for humane dispatch of animals in  
43 certain trapping situations. And so, that would no  
44 longer be covered under federal regulations. That  
45 authority would defer back to state management of these  
46 practices.

47  
48 All right. So, there would be changes  
49 in some hunting and trapping provisions on all Park  
50 lands. So, things like management of live wildlife

1 collections, as, if you were to collect chicks for use  
2 in raptor purposes. Raptor and, let me check on that  
3 one. I'll make sure I get it relatively right here. So,  
4 falconry activity. So, if there's a desire to collect  
5 chicks for falconry activities, that would no longer be  
6 managed by the federal authorities, that would go back  
7 to state and specific Fish and Wildlife Service  
8 Authority to manage collections in that way. There would  
9 be changes to the way closures could be made on public  
10 lands. So, in some and often is the case, there's bear  
11 activity. And so, a superintendent of a park might do  
12 an emergency closure to keep people safe and keep them  
13 out of areas where there's bear activity. So, for the  
14 time period in which the closure is in effect like  
15 fishing wouldn't be allowed or a trail might be closed.  
16 Those are just examples. So, it would, the language being  
17 proposed would change the conditions under which a  
18 closure could happen, and it would require greater  
19 consultation with state and other entities before that  
20 closure could be put into effect. So, it just adds a  
21 little more check and balance or ways to consider the  
22 impacts of the closure and the purpose of the closure.

23  
24 What else? So, there was language about  
25 subsistence purpose collections on Park lands. And the  
26 overall idea here is, there was feedback that the  
27 regulations weren't necessarily working or they weren't  
28 clear, and there was a desire to move back to the rules  
29 that were in effect prior to 2015 or prior to 2017. And  
30 so, there's a lot of little specific bits about how  
31 things could be collected, like antlers, that would  
32 revert back to how it was done prior to 2015. In  
33 practice, I don't think that would change a whole lot  
34 of how it's done already, but it would clear it up so  
35 that it's less of a federal oversight in terms of  
36 subsistence collection of subsistence items. And to be  
37 honest, I'm not sure what the impacts would be. We would  
38 have to wait until the environmental assessment to  
39 analyze what the actual impacts of changing the  
40 regulations around that would be.

41  
42 There's some regulatory language that  
43 would be moved from one CFR to a different one, to  
44 streamline how the regulations read. And, also, add some  
45 state authorities to subsistence fishing practices and  
46 subsistence fishing. I'm still looking down the list  
47 because it's dense. There would be an increase in certain  
48 areas of state regulatory authority for take and  
49 management of fish and wildlife for subsistence uses in  
50 parks. I already mentioned fishing. It wouldn't really

1 change a whole lot, other than federal regulations would  
2 still apply, as appropriate, but also state would have  
3 a greater say in how fish and wildlife is managed on  
4 National Park Service lands And the idea there is to  
5 address some of the secretarial orders that direct the  
6 states and the federal government to look at ways to  
7 align regulatory language better so that they're closer  
8 together. So, that's what that addresses.

9  
10 And I think those are the highlights.  
11 And I did want to get back to bear baiting, the practice  
12 of taking bears over bait, that would once again not be  
13 prohibited and would be allowed in accordance with  
14 existing state and federal regulations on that. Yeah, I  
15 know it's a lot. And I guess I'm here to be able to  
16 drill into some of these if you have any specific  
17 questions. And as I mentioned, it's a lengthy  
18 rulemaking. It's 13 pages. It's -- there's a lot of  
19 stuff going on. So, I just want to acknowledge that.

20  
21 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Dr. Bella.  
22 Clyde, do you have something?

23  
24 MR. RAMOTH: Yeah. That's a lot to get  
25 our people, to educate. So, in simplicity, I mean, you  
26 talk about code of federal regulations. CFR 13.1, 13,  
27 whatever it may be. So, do you guys have, like,  
28 interpreters where they could, the average Joe at home,  
29 listening to radio land that could talk about the bear  
30 stuff? Bating. And how long does the CFR get into place?  
31 How long does it take for the Congress to adopt those  
32 regulation changes? Those could be simply put into like  
33 our educational, whether it's Facebook or whatever it  
34 may be.

35  
36 DR. BELLA: Yeah. These are great  
37 suggestions and points that it would be, excuse me, I  
38 got a little frog in my throat. It would be helpful to  
39 have a plain language breakdown of exactly what the  
40 proposed changes would be, in effect. And, we don't have  
41 that put together, but we are working on a revised  
42 consultation letter that would go out to tribal  
43 entities, that would really break down what the specific  
44 points would be. And it would relate back to how I just  
45 tried to describe all of the specific changes, that it  
46 would be helpful to have simple bullet points to  
47 understand, these are the major changes that would be  
48 affected without all of the fancy overwrought language  
49 about code of federal regulations, etc. I don't  
50 necessarily have the ability or the authority to publish

1 any of this on social media. That's all handled by our  
2 Office of Communications, and it's really beyond  
3 anything that the region would handle. That would be  
4 handled centrally. And I'm not sure if the department  
5 or the agency has any plans to do that. Typically, we  
6 don't necessarily offer updates on social media for  
7 regulatory changes or proposals like this. So, we do  
8 rely on meetings like this and other ways to connect  
9 with our public to try to describe or discuss some of  
10 the changes underway. The other -- let's see, hopefully  
11 that addressed your question. Sorry if I missed parts  
12 of it. Yeah.

13  
14 MR. RAMOTH: Member Ramoth, again. So,  
15 yeah, just a simple black and white letter with few  
16 comments to the tribal villages would be appropriate, I  
17 think.

18  
19 DR. BELLA: Yeah. So, I can -- the  
20 suggestion is well taken and the mechanism to get that  
21 in -- that request in, officially, and comment on it is  
22 to submit a comment on the proposed rulemaking that  
23 request that. And that would also get back to requiring  
24 or requesting clear language that's easy to understand.  
25 And that would meet the another executive order that  
26 requests that rulemaking have clear language in it.  
27 Plain language. So, at this time, with the comment period  
28 still open, that would be the best way to get that kind  
29 of request in and, hopefully, provide a mechanism to  
30 provide that information out to the public.

31  
32 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Elmer.

33  
34 MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you for your  
35 discussion on this. Elmer Armstrong, from Noorvik. Was  
36 this pushed through from outside groups?

37  
38 DR. BELLA: Yeah. The question is.

39  
40 MR. ARMSTRONG: Go ahead.

41  
42 DR. BELLA: I, yeah, I can address that  
43 a bit. Is that, what you're getting at essentially is  
44 what is the purpose for and the need for this rulemaking,  
45 which is a big component of being able to analyze the  
46 impacts in NEPA sense in an environmental assessment,  
47 but also that would relate back to what we would actually  
48 put in the rulemaking and how we would change the Code  
49 of Federal Regulations. So, the purpose of it is to  
50 (indiscernible) direction that's been put out in

1 executive orders and secretarial orders that relate to  
2 unleashing Alaska's energy potential and other  
3 potential. Let me make sure I keep my train of thought  
4 here. I got some notes on this. The purpose for -- back  
5 to the purpose of need.

6  
7 So, the question was, were there, are  
8 there, were there outside entities asking for this?  
9 Like, where did the prompt for this come from? Why is  
10 this happening now? So, it's supposed to respond to  
11 executive and secretarial orders and to respond to a  
12 series of requests and concerns that have been expressed  
13 by different groups since the first rulemaking in 2015.  
14 So, with any rulemaking, there's those that love it,  
15 those that don't like it, and those that are like, okay,  
16 it's fine. But there were, there's definitely been some  
17 different feelings from both the state and from various  
18 hunting and sports groups over the -- over years. And  
19 tribal entities have weighed in on it. And the new  
20 rulemaking was proposed to be responsive to some of the  
21 concerns that the 2015 Rule and the 2017 Rule and the  
22 2024 Rule weren't really meeting the needs of  
23 practitioners and users of these resources on National  
24 Parklands.

25  
26 And if you do end up reading through the  
27 13 pages of the proposed rule text, there's a couple of  
28 entities that are specifically mentioned. One of them  
29 is Safari Club International. And I believe there's a  
30 couple others that were mentioned in there. Some tribal  
31 entities are mentioned, somewhere in there. The  
32 Sportsmen's Alliance Foundation and the Alaska  
33 Professional Hunters Association are also mentioned in  
34 there. So, with any rulemaking -- if the federal  
35 government proposes a rulemaking, there's always a lot  
36 of reasons why. To be responsive to comments and input  
37 over the years. Yeah. Hopefully that answers your  
38 question or your comment.

39  
40 MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you.

41  
42 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair.

43  
44 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, Go ahead.  
45 Wilbur.

46  
47 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah. Wilbur Howarth,  
48 Noorvik. I think this topic is going to take most of  
49 these meetings. So, that would be one topic we could  
50 start on, to read, right or, on the rulemaking. In

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1 discussing these, you know, I think this is going to be  
2 a big topic that we need to reach out to the communities.  
3 And thank you, ma'am. That's all.

4  
5 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,  
6 Wilbur. Any other questions, comments from members of  
7 the Council?

8  
9 MS. MONIGOLD: Through the Chair. This  
10 is Karmen.

11  
12 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes. Go ahead,  
13 Karmen.

14  
15 MS. MONIGOLD: If I'm understanding this  
16 correctly, anything that we hand over to the state gets  
17 away from rural preference, which is the whole point of  
18 having federal oversight. Right?

19  
20 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Dr. Bella, are you  
21 able to respond to that?

22  
23 DR. BELLA: I want to make sure I  
24 understand the question. So, this -- the question was  
25 about rural preference.

26  
27 MS. MONIGOLD: Yes. I, you know, I've  
28 been writing down changes to go to state, which, you  
29 know, back when 1959 or whenever we were created, and  
30 they started doing all these laws. There was no real  
31 preference to protect the people in the rural  
32 communities. And that's why the feds had to step in,  
33 which is why now we have federal RAC committees, why we  
34 have federal regulations, why we have state regulations.  
35 So, when I was listening to you, I heard changing it  
36 back to state regulations, which to me, sounds like  
37 getting away from rural preference, which was the whole  
38 point of having federal laws for hunting and trapping  
39 and all that.

40  
41 DR. BELLA: Yeah. Okay. I think I can  
42 address the question in the sentiment that there are  
43 changes proposed to this that would affect subsistence  
44 practices, but it would only -- it would -- it's based  
45 on changes that had been made in 2015 and 2017. And it  
46 would turn back the clock, basically, to how things were  
47 regulated prior to 2015, before the first rulemaking  
48 took place. And I, you know, looking back over time,  
49 there were reasons at the time and going forward why the  
50 2015 rule, the 2017 rule and the 2024 rule were finalized

1 and implemented. And some of that was in response to  
2 concerns about how rural residents might be able to  
3 engage in some of the practices. So, the language in the  
4 current proposed rule doesn't -- isn't terribly strong  
5 about making changes. So, it's one where if it was --  
6 if things were going well in 2014, that's, kind of ,how  
7 it would go after implementation of this rule, if it's  
8 finalized. And because I am not the subsistence expert,  
9 that's Eva Patton, who is on a much deserved break and  
10 I'm filling in for her, I can't go into a deep dive into  
11 what the impacts would be in terms of how you and all  
12 of your other public and other folks that are  
13 practitioners would be impacted by the changes in this.  
14 And some of this would also be looked at -- the rule is  
15 to take a hard look at the impacts and the environmental  
16 assessment portion of this process.

17  
18 MS. MONIGOLD: Thank you. This is Karmen,  
19 again. I just want to state that, for the people  
20 listening, you know, if you could look this up and  
21 anything that has to do with taking away our rural  
22 preference, you know, that's a slippery slope. It's a  
23 dangerous thing. You know, yeah, sure, bear baiting is  
24 great, but at the same time, if we're losing rural  
25 preference when times get hard, which they are,  
26 especially coming up with our caribou declining and  
27 we're not getting our salmon, stuff like this, we really  
28 need to pay attention to. Thank you, Chair.

29  
30 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,  
31 Karmen. Are there any other questions or comments from  
32 members of the Council? Tristen.

33  
34 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen  
35 Pattee. I think, from what I understand from this, it's  
36 basically in the national preserves, they're wanting to  
37 match or align the state regulations within those  
38 preserves, basically like the Noatak area and whatever  
39 other preserves we have out there. So, that's -- I think  
40 that's what the proposal is, basically bringing back  
41 bear baiting in those places. And, from what it sounds  
42 like -- it does sound like the Park Service or the feds  
43 would have less say on what type of hunting or who can  
44 hunt in those preserves are going to be. Is that correct,  
45 in my understanding?

46  
47 DR. BELLA: Yeah. So, I can make a  
48 comment on that. There are specific provisions that  
49 relate only to National Preserve lands in this proposed  
50 regulation. And you hit on bear baiting as one of them.

1 But more broadly, there are proposed changes to co-  
2 management or state management of subsistence practices  
3 on National Parklands, not just preserve. So, some of  
4 the proposed changes are more broad. Or reversions to -  
5 - its regulations that had been added since 2015. And  
6 it would remove those and, in some cases, change what's  
7 written to include and state. Yeah. The idea is to align  
8 state and federal regulations more closely.

9  
10 MR. PATTEE: Tristen Pattee here. And so  
11 -- but, no matter what, I mean, state regulations will  
12 not apply in the parks. It would have to be the state -  
13 - they could only align with the preserve if, from what  
14 I understand on this proposal. So, if this goes through,  
15 it's not going to allow state regulations within the  
16 federal park lands. Right?

17  
18 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: I think that.....

19  
20 (Simultaneous speech)

21  
22 DR. BELLA: But to answer.....

23  
24 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Just to clarify, so,  
25 I understand the question. Are you asking -- are you  
26 essentially asking if this rule were to go through,  
27 Tristen, the National Park Service would still be the  
28 manager of that area. It wouldn't be that the State of  
29 Alaska Department of Fish and Game becomes the manager.  
30 Is that what you're asking? If you could say it on  
31 the.....

32  
33 MR. PATTEE: Tristen Pattee. I just  
34 wanted to make, just kind of have that out there. Just  
35 so, it's understood that, basically, if this goes  
36 through, the feds are still going to manage the Kobuk  
37 Valley National Park area for hunting. So, it's still  
38 going to be subsistence priority for those locations. I  
39 think this only will affect the preserves.

40  
41 DR. BELLA: I want to make sure I answer  
42 this carefully and correctly. There are changes on  
43 preserve management, but some address more broad  
44 management of subsistence on National Parklands, not  
45 just preserves. So, yes, the NPS would still manage all  
46 of its lands, but the management of fish and wildlife  
47 would be moving towards more of a co-management or state  
48 management for those resources.

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any other questions  
2 or comments from members of the Council? Elmer.

3  
4 MR. ARMSTRONG: So, Elmer Armstrong,  
5 Noorvik. So, if this goes through, the hunting  
6 regulations would be in line with state regulations?

7  
8 DR. BELLA: Yes, I would say that is  
9 true, that there would be no difference in the  
10 regulations, just some -- the state would have authority  
11 over the resource, the wildlife or the fish resource and  
12 state -- all existing state and federal regulations  
13 would continue to apply. This would just change some of  
14 the language, in a few very specific areas, guiding  
15 wildlife management and practices such as subsistence.

16  
17 MR. ARMSTRONG: Just another comment.  
18 What would that do to the regulations on federal lands  
19 for caribou?

20  
21 DR. BELLA: I don't know that there would  
22 be -- there's not -- there's no specific language  
23 governing a particular species. And so, the changes, as  
24 discussed in the regulation, would simply say that all  
25 existing state regulations would apply. State and  
26 Federal.

27  
28 MR. ARMSTRONG: Elmer Armstrong, again.  
29 Would it nullify any of our actions that we put in place  
30 on caribou?

31  
32 DR. BELLA: I can't say for sure, but my  
33 interpretation of it is that, if a regulation is put  
34 into place or adopted, then it would not. This would not  
35 prohibit or disallow or prevent any future actions from  
36 taking place.

37  
38 MS. MONIGOLD: Through the Chair. This  
39 is Karmen.

40  
41 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, please go ahead,  
42 Karmen.

43  
44 MS. MONIGOLD: So, you know, considering  
45 where this is coming from, you know, we have a lot of  
46 federal parks and federal lands all around us. And to  
47 me, this -- let's say that under state regulations, you  
48 could only get one caribou a year. Let's say we get down  
49 to that. This is just an example. But under federal  
50 regulations, because we have rural preference, let's say

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1 we set it to 3. If it falls to state regulations,  
2 wouldn't that just bring it back down to 1? As an  
3 example?

4

5 DR. BELLA: Yeah, as a theoretical  
6 example, that is probably the case. Yeah.

7

8 MS. MONIGOLD: This is Karmen again. So,  
9 for another example. Sorry, my -- if we had no hunting  
10 on federal lands for non-resident users, but under state  
11 it's still open, then it would fall to state, which  
12 would leave it open to non-qualified federal users,  
13 correct?

14

15 DR. BELLA: Yeah. So, that's an  
16 interesting point that, that is something that has  
17 brought up, been brought up as an area that would need  
18 to be analyzed in the environmental assessment to  
19 understand what the actual impacts in that realm would  
20 be.

21

22 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Mike Kramer.

23

24 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, this is Councilman  
25 Kramer. You know, I've been listening to this thing that  
26 you're talking about, and I don't support it because,  
27 you know, it sounds like you're trying to flip us into  
28 a situation to where the state will have a say so on  
29 federal lands, and they'll start having guides and  
30 transporters. And, you know, it's, and you know, it --  
31 it's not going to -- it won't fly by me. This is kind  
32 of a situation where you're saying that, you know, the  
33 state will have say so and if the state has say so, then  
34 the state will say, all right, hey, we can put guys in  
35 transporters right here because we have say so. It's not  
36 going to fly with me. I'm listening to the whole thing.  
37 And you're trying to coerce us into approving this thing  
38 so that the Board of Game can start operating on federal  
39 land. This is that whole cockamamie thing that I saw  
40 with the, you know, the Safari Club International and  
41 what that other Alaska something group. That's not going  
42 to fly. Our subsistence resources are ours. This whole  
43 cockamamie thing you're talking about, you know, that  
44 you're trying to set us up for failure. And from what I  
45 see, I would not support anything like she [sic] said.  
46 The state will have nothing to do with federal land  
47 because of the fact that if the state has nothing to  
48 something to do with the federal land our subsistence  
49 way of life will diminish. And it's because of the state  
50 has no tough subsistence rule. Board of Game is not

1 subsistence. Board of Game is about that mighty dollar,  
2 the mighty dollar. Politics, money, you know. It's -- I  
3 can see what you're doing. You're trying to word it to  
4 where we might say yes, let's all vote yes, we all vote  
5 yes. And here comes Safari Club International and that  
6 other cockamamie Alaska or whatever conservation group  
7 or, not conservation group, kind of a commercial, I don't  
8 know who was driving that thing up. So, my take, though,  
9 is that we don't support anything that this, what they're  
10 trying to push through here. Because this is going to  
11 take away from our subsistence lifestyle and it's going  
12 to bring commercial services into federal land. I know  
13 that there's federal lands up in the preserve. I've  
14 guided up there, in the area. You know, that's where it  
15 belongs. It doesn't belong in the park. And if it was  
16 up to me, all guiding and transport should be eliminated,  
17 anyway, because there's really nothing for them to hunt  
18 other than bears and wolves. So, my suggestion to my  
19 fellow council members, do not support what this lady  
20 is trying to tell you, because she's trying to coerce  
21 us into the scam of the State of Alaska wants to take  
22 over federal lands and once they have say so and we  
23 agree, then here they come. All these guide services  
24 coming in and they're able to do whatever they want on  
25 our lands, and we're limited. That ain't gonna fly with  
26 me, man. I'm sick and tired of people trying to steal  
27 from us. I fought hard with Pete Schaefer, Mr.  
28 (indiscernible) and all of these elders.  
29 (Indiscernible). I fought hard for what we got. And the  
30 State of Alaska is not going to push us into letting  
31 anything go. Thank you.

32

33 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mike.

34

35 DR. BELLA: Yeah, I appreciate the  
36 comment. And I would encourage you to submit that comment  
37 so that can be heard and understood. I'm not here to  
38 propose to push or advance a certain agenda. I am trying  
39 to, factually, provide you with what I am able to, and  
40 give you information so that you can make good comments  
41 to help us get it right.

42

43 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Tristen.

44

45 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair Tristen  
46 Pattee. Elizabeth, I didn't hear it like Mike at all.  
47 Everything I heard was just, you were just explaining  
48 the actual proposed rule. I appreciate the time you took  
49 to explain everything to us. I understood it, I think  
50 it was misunderstood by Mr. Kramer. But, yeah, thank you

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1 for your time with that.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Elmer, did you have  
4 something?

5

6 MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Elmer  
7 Armstrong, Noorvik. So, this is going to apply to all  
8 preserves in Alaska?

9

10 DR. BELLA: That is correct. Some of the  
11 regulatory language changes would apply to all national  
12 preserves in Alaska. Some of the changes would apply to  
13 all park lands beyond preserves in Alaska.

14

15 MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you.

16

17 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any final questions  
18 or comments from members of the Council?

19

20 (No response)

21

22 Hearing and seeing none. I believe,  
23 based on our discussion today, that it would be  
24 appropriate for our Council to submit a comment. As Dr.  
25 Bella had mentioned, stating that our Council feels it  
26 would be more appropriate for a plain language version  
27 of this rule to where folks that would be affected, that  
28 live in these areas may be able to better understand the  
29 outcome of, if this rule were to change, as well as  
30 extending the comment period accordingly so that, if  
31 there were a plain version that people were able to  
32 understand, they're able to then give their own personal  
33 commentary. What is the wish of the Council? How would  
34 we like to proceed? This would be an action item that  
35 we would vote on to direct staff to prepare our comment.

36

37 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen  
38 Pattee. I think we should request an extension of the  
39 of the comment period. And then just, yeah, like you  
40 said, I think we need to educate -- get more educated  
41 on this and then, create a comment from that -- from  
42 there.

43

44 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Clyde.

45

46 MR. RAMOTH: Yep. I was going to echo  
47 that, too, because we need to educate our people,  
48 ourselves first prior to any kind of decision making or  
49 any kind of motion. I believe the more we know, the  
50 better off we are, rather than just minutes of listening,

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1 is appropriate and respectful.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Clyde.

4 Anyone else?

5

6 (No response)

7

8 Would anyone like to make a motion along  
9 those lines?

10

11 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair. I move  
12 to request the extension of the comment period for this  
13 proposed rule, along with providing information in  
14 layman's terms for the public.

15

16 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Motion made by  
17 Tristen. Is there a second?

18

19 MR. RAMOTH: I'll second that. Is that  
20 like a 90-day?

21

22 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Seconded by Clyde.  
23 Any further discussion? Elmer.

24

25 MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Elmer  
26 Armstrong. Should we make a motion for another -- would  
27 this -- well, the question should be -- can -- will they  
28 accept our proposal? If not, should we make another  
29 proposal to have staff write a letter.

30

31 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Which proposal? The,  
32 with the motion that he just made to send in the official  
33 comment.

34

35 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah, his proposal is to  
36 extend the comment period. My question was, do they ever  
37 turn down proposals to extend?

38

39 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Can anyone answer  
40 that question? It seems, like, from discussion that  
41 other staff members have said is that other RACs have  
42 requested extending the comment period.

43

44 DR. BELLA: So, I can speak to, in terms  
45 of if a comment period is actually extended. In a lot  
46 of cases, in my experience, it has been, but not always.  
47 So, the comment is most definitely seen and received.  
48 But whether the department or the agency decides to  
49 actually extend, it's unknown. I don't know, it's not  
50 up to me. So, I can't speak to the willingness or the,

1 how it would be received, but I can say that those that  
2 are monitoring the comments coming in, which is some of  
3 the team I work with, any such requests are elevated to  
4 National Park Service and department leadership so that  
5 they see those comments right away. So, they're not just  
6 sitting there, unmonitored and unseen. They're  
7 definitely shared as soon as they are -- they come in  
8 through the different electronic systems. I don't know  
9 that we've gotten a whole lot of paper comments yet.

10  
11 MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Well, what I'm  
12 getting at is a backup. At least we'll have a letter  
13 written trying to prevent this or oppose it. You know,  
14 I could see where he's getting at. He wants to extend  
15 the comment period to where we could get more traction  
16 on a better understanding of this and what it's going  
17 to do. But what I'm getting at is, should we make a  
18 motion for the staff to write a letter as backup just  
19 in case they, for some odd reason, they deny the  
20 extension of the comment period. Thank you.

21  
22 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Elmer. I  
23 see what you mean now. I think that would be a good idea  
24 that, we have both sent in. I mean, it would be a  
25 comment. We would send them both in as a comment, not  
26 necessarily a letter, but it's neither here nor there.  
27 We can act upon this motion and then we can do another  
28 motion opposing it. If that is the wish of the maker of  
29 the motion. We just would need to get through this one  
30 first.

31  
32 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah. Otherwise,  
33 there'll be no backup to a backup. Thank you.

34  
35 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. Any final  
36 discussion on this motion to....?

37  
38 MR. ARMSTRONG: Call for the question.

39  
40 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Question.....

41  
42 (Simultaneous speech)

43  
44 MR. RAMOTH: Question.

45  
46 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: .....called for.  
47 Grace, can I please get a roll call vote for the motion  
48 to send in a comment, as discussed?

49  
50 MS. COCHON: Yes. Member Elmer Armstrong.

1  
2 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.  
3  
4 MS. COCHON: Member Karmen Monigold.  
5  
6 MS. MONIGOLD: Yes.  
7  
8 MS. COCHON: Member Verne Cleveland.  
9  
10 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes.  
11  
12 MS. COCHON: Member Tristen Pattee.  
13  
14 MR. PATTEE: Yes.  
15  
16 MS. COCHON: Member Clyde Ramoth.  
17  
18 MR. RAMOTH: Yes.  
19  
20 MS. COCHON: Member Mike Kramer.  
21  
22 MR. KRAMER: (Indiscernible).  
23  
24 MS. COCHON: I'm sorry. Can you say that  
25 one more time? Member Kramer.  
26  
27 MR. KRAMER: I don't know. Yes. According  
28 to the.....  
29  
30 MS. COCHON: Thank you. Member Wilbur  
31 Howarth.  
32  
33 MR. HOWARTH: Yes.  
34  
35 MS. COCHON: Chair Thomas Baker.  
36  
37 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.  
38  
39 MS. COCHON: With eight votes for yes,  
40 the motion passed unanimously.  
41  
42 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Grace.  
43 Would anyone else like to make any further motions for  
44 further comments to be submitted?  
45  
46 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair. I just  
47 wanted to make a comment before we do this. I know you're  
48 looking at a motion to oppose this thing, which, you  
49 know, I'm fine either way, but if it does pass,  
50 basically, you know, we're already in the trajectory

1 [sic] of closing all hunting for caribou, even if it's  
2 managed under state or federal lands. If this passes and  
3 it's, basically, going to have -- it's going to be under  
4 state regulations for, you know, residents of Alaska to  
5 be able to go here and hunt the predators, basically,  
6 which would help in the long run, because they'd be  
7 helping with the predators because they're not going to  
8 be allowed to hunt caribou. That's just the -- that's  
9 just what I, from what I see and understand from this.  
10 So, yeah, it's, regardless that they're not going to be  
11 able to hunt caribou even if it is under state managed  
12 land because it's, you know, we're in the trajectory of  
13 closing it anyway. So, they'll just focus on -- if they  
14 do come up here, they're going to focus on predators is  
15 what I see.

16  
17 MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Elmer  
18 Armstrong, Noorvik. So, if this changes it's going to  
19 apply to all the animals, right?

20  
21 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Dr. Bella.

22  
23 DR. BELLA: Sure. So yeah, the  
24 regulations address fish and wildlife. Yeah. And there  
25 are specific provisions that, about bear baiting  
26 specifically, but writ large, there will be changes to  
27 authority and on subsistence take of fish and wildlife,  
28 as well as collections guidance for subsistence  
29 purposes. Yeah. And if I may, I would direct your  
30 attention, when you're considering how you might want  
31 to comment or what things you might want to,  
32 specifically, talk about. If you go to, towards the end  
33 of the rule, there's a section and there's some stars  
34 and other weird stuff down there. And there are what I  
35 could interpret 12 different amendments, and those are  
36 numbered 2 to 14. And there is no number 13, for whatever  
37 reason. It looks like it was skipped, but those are the  
38 specific changes that would be made in the Code of  
39 Federal Regulations. And it's a whole lot of link  
40 clicking and side by side language comparison, which is  
41 something we are working on to prepare the consultation  
42 letter. A very clear comparison of what the changes are  
43 from what they are now to what they would be, whether  
44 it's reverting back to pre-2017 or pre-2015. But that's  
45 where I would focus energy. And to be honest, a lot of  
46 federal regulation or rulemaking, there's a lot up on  
47 up at the top. That's the preamble and the background.  
48 And not to downplay the information that's in there, but  
49 in practicality and reality, based on what's acted on,  
50 that's just fluff. And it does provide some context and

1 some background. Typically, those sections are 1 to 2  
2 pages. So, I do understand it's a lot to review, but the  
3 real meat of this is those changes proposed in numbers  
4 2 through 14, with no number 13 down at the bottom.

5  
6 MR. ARMSTRONG: Through the Chair. So,  
7 I'm thinking, you know, all the work we have done in the  
8 last couple years to help preserve the caribou  
9 population. I think it's going to be nullified if this  
10 is passed. Because we had regulations that were put in  
11 place to help conserve the caribou population. So, if  
12 I'm understanding right, if this passes, those all go  
13 away. It'll be regulated with state regulations. Correct  
14 me if I'm wrong.

15  
16 DR. BELLA: No. I can go back to saying  
17 that there -- this is something that would be more  
18 closely looked at during the analysis phase, when  
19 looking at the impacts analysis of what the specific  
20 changes would be. I'm not sure that it would be broad  
21 sweeping changes to how specific species are managed,  
22 other than those particular areas that fall into  
23 National Parklands. This is very narrow and it only  
24 applies to park lands and some, for some of the changes  
25 or preserve, national preserves, for some of the others.  
26 And, again, it goes back to the idea of instead of there  
27 being a federal and a state set of regulations, there  
28 would -- we would move towards just one set. And this  
29 isn't comprehensive or sweeping to speak to the whole  
30 state. It's just very specific in particular, little  
31 bits that deal with Park Service lands, preserve lands,  
32 and very specific entries to types of species or  
33 situations.

34  
35 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: What is the wish of  
36 the Council? We like to make another comment? Any further  
37 discussion?

38  
39 MS. MONIGOLD: Through the Chair. This  
40 is Karmen.

41  
42 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, Karmen.

43  
44 MS. MONIGOLD: I would like to put a  
45 motion for the comment that we are against this. And my  
46 reasoning would be that we have federal regulations for  
47 a reason, and that's for rural preference. And  
48 regardless of, you know, where the caribou are at right  
49 now, all of our other species would still be in play,  
50 which is both fish and wildlife. So, I would like to put

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1 a letter forward that would be against this change. Thank  
2 you.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Karmen.  
5 So, a motion has been made to oppose the rule. Is there  
6 a second?

7

8 MR. RAMOTH: Second.

9

10 (Simultaneous speech)

11

12 MR. ARMSTRONG: Second.

13

14 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: I looked at Elmer  
15 first. So, second by Elmer. Any discussion before we  
16 move on to the vote?

17

18 MR. RAMOTH: Question.

19

20 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Question has been  
21 called for. Grace, can we please get a roll call vote?

22

23 MS. COCHON: Member Elmer Armstrong.

24

25 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

26

27 MS. COCHON: Member Karmen Monigold.

28

29 MS. MONIGOLD: Yes.

30

31 MS. COCHON: Member Verne Cleveland.

32

33 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes.

34

35 MS. COCHON: Member Tristen Pattee.

36

37 MR. PATTEE: No.

38

39 MS. COCHON: Member Clyde Ramoth.

40

41 MR. RAMOTH: Yes.

42

43 MS. COCHON: Member Michael Kramer.

44

45 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

46

47 MS. COCHON: Member Wilbur Howarth.

48

49 MR. HOWARTH: Yes.

50

1 MS. COCHON: Chair Thomas Baker.

2  
3 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

4  
5 MS. COCHON: With seven members voting  
6 yes, the motion passes.

7  
8 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Grace. Is  
9 there any final discussion, questions from the Council?

10  
11 MR. KRAMER: Yes. It's Kramer.

12  
13 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, go ahead, Mike.

14  
15 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. So, see, what they're  
16 trying to do is they want it to where the state will  
17 have say so with their regulations over federal land,  
18 on federal lands and over federal rule. I don't support  
19 this. You know, I was wondering if there's a possibility  
20 I could have commercial services or, you know, removed  
21 from my label on the -- this committee because, you  
22 know, I mean, yeah, I worked as an assistant guide, but  
23 you know, I do not support commercial services when our  
24 subsistence resources are, you know, declining. You  
25 know, I see that. I've been doing some studying lately  
26 and reading up on the way Canada, you know, there was a  
27 herd in Canada that had like 800,000 strong and now  
28 they're at like 15,000, 20,000 animals and nobody can  
29 hunt them. That's because they went unchecked for so  
30 many years. And there was more commercially service-  
31 based than, you know, there was a lot of subsistence,  
32 but there was a lot, people were allowed to hunt caribou  
33 and sell it to stores to be sold, you know, and such  
34 like that. But I don't approve of, you know, the state  
35 having any say, whatsoever, over our land or our  
36 resources or our regulations, you know, that's them  
37 trying to put their foot in the door so they, we could  
38 take over this over with commercial services. That's not  
39 going to fly, and I oppose it. So, I just wanted it out  
40 there that I oppose, you know, this, you know. And yes,  
41 I agree that our regulations should be aligned. You know,  
42 if we could get one caribou on state, it should be the  
43 same one caribou on Federal. So, you know, in that way,  
44 for subsistence purposes. But for commercial services,  
45 I don't think commercial services should even be able  
46 to operate in federal lands. You know, I know that the  
47 Noatak Preserve has guide service use areas, I believe.  
48 If somebody could refresh my mind, I know that there's  
49 a bunch of them up there. I don't know who has them  
50 since I herd it declined but I do not approve of the

1 state having any say so whatsoever over federal land,  
2 over our resources, over our regulations and over our  
3 subsistence and our culture. Thank you.

4

5 (Distortion)

6

7 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mike. Any  
8 other final questions, comments from members of the  
9 Council? Clyde.

10

11 MR. RAMOTH: Yeah, Clyde Ramoth, for the  
12 record. Just a general question. Do we or do we have the  
13 ability to go through legal counsel for approaches like  
14 this, for this kind of discussion, regardless of the  
15 minutes it's been taken us this morning? Is that  
16 something Robbin or Kevin could answer? Because it's  
17 something -- could be critical.

18

19 MS. LA VINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
20 Through the Chair. Can you please ask that question  
21 again? I only heard about half of it. Thank you.

22

23 MR. RAMOTH: Okay, Robbin. So, hearing  
24 the discussion this morning, is it -- wouldn't it be  
25 appropriate if we, like, get some legal consultation  
26 prior to even discussing these kind of matters in a  
27 matter of minutes for regulation changes? I mean, we've  
28 had debate and discussions and we talk about federal and  
29 state regs and we talk about population stuff. Does OSM  
30 or anybody from the federal side have legal we could  
31 refer to before even having this kind of discussion  
32 brought up by someone from another agency? Is that a.....

33

34 MS. LA VINE: Through the Chair.

35

36 MR. RAMOTH: Is that a good question that  
37 could be answered?

38

39 MS. LA VINE: Through the Chair, this is  
40 Robbin La Vine. We -- there are a couple of things that  
41 enter my mind as you're talking. And so, I'm thinking  
42 about a number of things that I know. One of the things  
43 I know is that this is a FACA committee. And under FACA,  
44 all of your discussions are open to the public. Secondly,  
45 while the program has solicitors to advise the Board,  
46 those solicitors are there to advise the board members  
47 and they work under attorney-client privileged  
48 information. It is essential that is shared only with  
49 the Board. And then, maybe, another thing that I'm going  
50 to think about is that it's not necessary to have legal

1 advice or support here. You, as a Council, are the  
2 experts for your region. You, as a Council, are  
3 representing your communities and the people and you,  
4 as a Council, can request as much information as you can  
5 to be brought forward so you can make an informed  
6 decision. And OSM is your staff, we try and do that for  
7 you. We'll conduct analyses on fish and wildlife  
8 proposals to change regulations. That's what we do. And  
9 we can give you as much information as we can on  
10 different topics and issues affecting your region.

11  
12 What's happening right now is beyond  
13 OSM's purview, right? So, it's happening at a very high  
14 level in the federal government, involves our -- the  
15 National Parks and the Park Service. And everyone on a  
16 local level is receiving the information kind of at the  
17 same time right now, right? So, even the folks online  
18 have kind of just been made aware that this has been  
19 percolating in the background. And, so, the folks here,  
20 online, in this room, your local staff, OSM staff, will  
21 do our very best to give you the information that we  
22 have. It's limited and growing daily.

23  
24 So, one last thing is I think you are  
25 well within your duties as a committee to ensure that  
26 you have up to date information and you can request  
27 potentially more time for the comment period. I would  
28 note that when it was listed that the Secretarial Review  
29 of the Federal Subsistence Management Program had a  
30 deadline for public comments, a lot of the Councils  
31 forwarded letters requesting an extension and it was  
32 extended. I can't guarantee that it will happen this  
33 time. Take the time you need. We can't guarantee you  
34 that that comment period will be extended. Forward the  
35 comments that you may have with the best available  
36 information today. And who knows what opportunities may  
37 happen in the future. Again, as a FACA committee, you  
38 probably will not meet again before the deadline, even  
39 if it were to be extended. So, this is really your only  
40 chance to develop an official Regional Advisory Council  
41 comment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

42  
43 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Final questions  
44 comments before we break for lunch?

45  
46 (No response)

47  
48 Hearing and seeing none. Thank you, Dr.  
49 Bella. Appreciate your time on this matter. It is  
50 now 12:59. We're going to go ahead and break for lunch.

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1 We'll come back at 2:10.

2

3 (Off record)

4

5 (On record)

6

7 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you  
8 everyone. It is now 2:24. We're going to get started.  
9 Grace, can you please give us a roll call?

10

11 MS. COCHON: Mister -- Member Elmer  
12 Armstrong are you...?

13

14 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: He is present.

15

16 MS. COCHON: Okay. Karmen Monigold.

17

18 MS. MONIGOLD: Here.

19

20 MS. COCHON: Okay. Verne Cleveland.

21

22 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Should be returning  
23 shortly.

24

25 MS. COCHON: Tristen Pattee.

26

27 MR PATTEE: Here.

28

29 MS. COCHON: Clyde Ramoth.

30

31 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Clyde has an  
32 appointment, and he should be joining us when he is  
33 finished.

34

35 MS. COCHON: Okay. Micheal Kramer.

36

37 MR. KRAMER: Here.

38

39 MS. COCHON: Wilbur Howarth.

40

41 MR. HOWARTH: Here.

42

43 MS. COCHON: Okay. We have six members  
44 out of eight present at the moment, so we have a quorum.

45

46 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you,  
47 Grace. At this time, we're going to go back to the  
48 confirmation of the fall 2026 meeting date and location.  
49 Can someone from OSM please put themselves on record and  
50 let us know what the recommendation at this time is?

1

2 MS. LA VINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This  
3 is Robbin La Vine. After consulting with the folks back  
4 at OSM, you can simply request that we do everything in  
5 our power to identify a joint Council meeting windows  
6 that are possible, that we can staff and that -- where  
7 council members are available. And you can at the same  
8 time hold your original or confirm your Seward --  
9 Northwest Arctic RAC meeting window only as well, just  
10 in case it doesn't go through. But it's a simple thing.  
11 You guys just vote on record to request we look into it  
12 for you. We've had enough discussion on the record that  
13 we know what you want. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

14

15 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,  
16 Robbin. Would anyone like to make that motion? It would  
17 be a motion to direct staff to find the window of time  
18 that allows for a joint Northwest Arctic RAC and Seward  
19 Peninsula RAC meeting during this fall cycle.

20

21 MR. PATTEE: Okay. Tristen Pattee. I move  
22 that we request the OSM staff to identify a time that  
23 would work for the Seward Peninsula RAC and the Northwest  
24 Arctic RAC for the fall meeting.

25

26 MR. ARMSTRONG: Second.

27

28 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, a motion made by  
29 Tristen. Seconded by Elmer. Is there any discussion?

30

31 MR. ARMSTRONG: Question.

32

33 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Question has been  
34 called for. Grace, can I please get a roll call vote?

35

36 MS. COCHON: Member Elmer Armstrong.

37

38 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

39

40 MS. COCHON: Member Karmen Monigold.

41

42 MS. MONIGOLD: Yes.

43

44 MS. COCHON: Member Tristen Pattee.

45

46 MR. PATTEE: Yes.

47

48 MS. COCHON: Member Micheal Kramer.

49

50 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

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MS. COCHON: Member Wilbur Howarth.

MR. HOWARTH: Yes.

MS. COCHON: Chair Thomas Baker.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

MS. COCHON: Okay. With six votes yes, the motion passes unanimously.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. And can I just get a nod of the head, would it be appropriate to now make a motion to confirm our date in the event that we cannot have a joint meeting? I'm getting a nod of the head. So, if we look at page 41, we are currently scheduled for the Northwest Arctic RAC to meet September 24th and 25th of 2026 here in Kotzebue. And again, this would be the fallback in the event we are not able to secure a joint meeting with the Seward Peninsula RAC. Would anyone like to make a motion to confirm the September 24-25 dates in Kotzebue?

MR. PATTEE: Mr. Chair. Tristen Pattee here. I'll make a motion to confirm the September dates and Kotzebue.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Motion made by Tristen. Is there a second?

MR. ARMSTRONG: Second.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Seconded by Elmer. Is there any discussion?

MR. ARMSTRONG: Question.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Question has been called for. Grace, can I please get a roll call vote?

MS. COCHON: Okay. Member Elmer Armstrong.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

MS. COCHON: Member Karmen Monigold.

MS. MONIGOLD: Yes.

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1 MS. COCHON: Member Tristen Pattee.

2

3 MR. PATTEE: Yes.

4

5 MS. COCHON: Member Micheal Kramer.

6

7 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

8

9 MS. COCHON: Member Wilbur Howarth.

10

11 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

12

13 MS. COCHON: Chair Thomas Baker.

14

15 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

16

17 MS. COCHON: Six votes, yes. The motion  
18 passes unanimously.

19

20 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,  
21 Grace. Thank you everyone. At this time, we do have  
22 Johanna Salatas with Teck who is not able to join us  
23 yesterday but is able to join us now. Johanna, can you  
24 hear us? All right.

25

26 MS. SALATAS: Good afternoon. (In Native)  
27 I can totally hear everybody.

28

29 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. If you  
30 could put your name on the record, the floor is yours  
31 for your update on the Teck Resources Environmental  
32 Monitoring Program.

33

34 MS. SALATAS: Yes, my name is Johanna  
35 Salatas. I work at Red Dog Operations. I'm a Biologist,  
36 and I am putting my slide show up. I hope you can all -  
37 - hold on. Let me try again. Share. Okay, here. Can  
38 everybody see my slide presentation now?

39

40 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes. You may begin.

41

42 MS. SALATAS: Okay. Thank you. So, I  
43 apologize for not being present yesterday. I got my dates  
44 confused and I've been on medical leave, so I'm not  
45 technically working. But I wanted everyone to have my  
46 email and phone number in case you have any questions  
47 after the meeting. You can contact me at either of these  
48 ways. So, thank you, (In Native) again, Mr. Chair and  
49 esteemed resource committee and all other attendees.  
50 I'll try to go through these slides relatively quickly.

1 I know you talked to Erica Quade yesterday about the --  
2 some of the work going on at Red Dog. And it's pretty  
3 exciting this year, 2025 to 2026 and ongoing. The first  
4 thing I just wanted to let everyone know is there's  
5 multiple areas throughout the circumpolar Arctic where  
6 we are experiencing herd number declines. These include  
7 areas in Russia and Canada, of course, the Western Arctic  
8 Herd near Red Dog operations and where all of you hunt  
9 and subsist and an area in Greenland. And so, there's  
10 reasons for these declines that will -- you know, I'm  
11 sure you've already talked about with Alex Hansen and  
12 Raime Fronstin and all the good people you've been  
13 hearing from already, so I'll try to keep that brief.  
14 But at Red Dog, our goal is to control the controllables  
15 and make continuous improvements over time. And so, we  
16 formally created a Red Dog Caribou Research Group. I  
17 think that was in 2020 or 2021, and the goal of the  
18 group is to bring together communities, NANA, National  
19 Park Service and Alaska Department of Fish and Game with  
20 Red Dog folks like myself and Erica and the community  
21 reporters. We're really interested in Western science  
22 monitoring and research, but we absolutely are grateful  
23 for any traditional ecological knowledge that people  
24 from the communities and the Red Dog Subsistence  
25 Committee share with us. And we always look for  
26 generational knowledge and regional Northwest Alaska  
27 experience as well as statewide experience.

28  
29 And so, the objectives of our little  
30 internal group are to really guide adaptive management,  
31 meaning we want to minimize the potential disruption of  
32 caribou during their migration or even when they're not  
33 migrating, and just allowing the caribou to choose when  
34 and where to be, when to cross the road, or when to  
35 overwinter and where to overwinter. So that's our  
36 primary objective. And our secondary objective is to  
37 figure out where can we best restore habitat as we start  
38 to approach closure. And a lot of focus is placed on  
39 lichens. So, as we -- you probably already have seen  
40 this figure a few times. The five warmest winters on  
41 record have been in the past like ten years. And the  
42 coldest winters on record have been between 1960 and  
43 about 1990. So, we keep seeing this increase in  
44 temperatures, as we all know, Arctic amplification. And  
45 because of that, we've got shifting vegetation patterns  
46 that are becoming very apparent from satellite imagery  
47 as well as on the ground. As you probably know, it's  
48 called shrubification. So, the warming temperatures are  
49 leading to longer growing seasons, which is allowing  
50 shrubs and trees to expand into tundra areas and

1 surrounding the Red Dog operation, there is quite a bit  
2 of tundra. And the risk is that some of those kinds of  
3 shrubs and trees are great for certain animals like  
4 moose, but they could outcompete lichens and that could  
5 create a barrier during migration and winter and spring.  
6 So, they're -- also may favor predators. So, I -- we  
7 always hear about the predator control issues that come  
8 up during some of these meetings. And then the other  
9 things I always get to hear about from everyone are the  
10 rain on ice events and how lichens in the winter become  
11 unavailable because the snow will melt or there will be  
12 rainfall and that will create an ice barrier. And then  
13 caribou are having a hard time getting into those  
14 impenetrable layers below the snowpack. And this can  
15 lead to poor body condition, reduced calf survival and  
16 mass starvation events. And finally, there's this  
17 connection between sea ice loss and lightning storms and  
18 activity and lightning storms being more frequent and  
19 fire. And so, we've, you know, even at Red Dog, we've  
20 noticed fires being -- and lightning being much more  
21 frequent in the most more recent years, like the past  
22 five years. Just having to stop the operation when  
23 lightning ends up being present in the summertime.

24  
25 So now I'm going to get to the  
26 controlling the controllables at Red Dog. These are the  
27 things that we can focus on, things that we can hopefully  
28 do based on conversations with multiple stakeholders,  
29 such as folks from the communities, from -- hearing from  
30 the RAC before and from our conversations with the Red  
31 Dog Subsistence Committee. So, our goal is always for  
32 rehabilitation, reclamation and restoration of areas  
33 along the port road and near the mine site. And we also  
34 want to have meetings with multiple agencies and  
35 landowners. So, we try to include Fish and Game,  
36 Department of Natural Resources, NANA, EPA, communities,  
37 National Park Service. And a lot of these meetings are  
38 used to inform the reclamation planning because as I  
39 mentioned, Red Dog is really starting to approach  
40 closure. We don't know what will happen beyond 2031, but  
41 we definitely are trying to do progressive reclamation  
42 right now. And so, we have been investing in Native seed  
43 collection. Caribou are a vital part of all of our  
44 reclamation planning, and we have conducted DNA testing  
45 on flowering plant seeds collected from Red Dog, Noatak,  
46 Ambler and Fairbanks. Seeing if those are going to be  
47 viable sources for reclamation. And we've also developed  
48 an invasive species plan for Red Dog. And foxtails can  
49 be really hard on caribou and other types of large  
50 mammals that might eat them. And so, we are also doing

1 some trials with the DNR plant materials center. Trying  
2 to figure out how to prevent those from taking hold in  
3 the region.

4  
5 So as part of controlling the  
6 controllables with reclamation and closure planning, we  
7 are focused especially on lichens as we all have heard,  
8 lichens are symbiotic organisms comprised of fungus and  
9 algae. They grow very slowly. We wanted to use a lab  
10 setting to study growth rates. Like possibly expand it  
11 to local businesses and Kotzebue, Noatak and Kivalina.  
12 But what we are doing right now, as of 2025 and into  
13 2026, is we're using collections from the southern U.S.  
14 as transplanting trials to see how do the same species  
15 of lichens, the cladonia rangiferina species, how does  
16 that survive over winter in Anchorage? And how does it  
17 survive over winter in areas like near Red Dog? So, if  
18 that's something we can prove, like if that's something  
19 that would be useful, then maybe these kinds of resources  
20 could be used in future reclamation projects to really  
21 give caribou another source of lichens that they prefer  
22 to eat in the wintertime.

23  
24 So that was our initial like discussion  
25 and goal, which we started working on. And then in the  
26 fall, we were able to join a partnership with Boreal  
27 Orchards and Venova, which is basically the country of  
28 Sweden's innovation agency, and they have other industry  
29 partners. They're trying to develop methods to restore  
30 reindeer lichen in disturbed mining landscapes. And so,  
31 when we were approached, we were able to make the case  
32 that this is something Red Dog really wants to be  
33 involved in. So we are hoping that through this research,  
34 where they've already done the same thing with mosses  
35 that are found in the Arctic areas that perhaps lichens  
36 can be also seeded throughout areas where it's, you know  
37 -- where caribou may have overgrazed an area or where  
38 fires have been present so that we can hopefully use  
39 this technology of growing lichens to, you know, do  
40 better reclamation in the future. So, we will have  
41 results hopefully in two years, but it's considered a  
42 four-year project. And so, we're pretty excited about  
43 this. And I hope that we'll get some good information  
44 and we'll have a seat at the table when that -- when --  
45 if and when the reclamation technology becomes  
46 available. So, stay tuned for that.

47  
48 Again, this is something you guys talked  
49 about with Erica, I believe yesterday. And I'm sorry I  
50 missed that, but we do have the community Reporter

1 Program at Red Dog. And aside from really looking at all  
2 the different kinds of things that Red Dog is doing and  
3 being able to report back to the communities, the  
4 community reporters I consider the eyes and ears of the  
5 port road and around the mine and the port, and they're  
6 the eyes and ears of the road, but they're also the eyes  
7 and ears for the caribou. And so based on their  
8 observations, their traditional knowledge, and what they  
9 believe could be happening with caribou, we have had a  
10 lot of success in the past. I'd say nine months with  
11 caribou migration and having them move further south.  
12 And then sometimes they've moved back north and there's  
13 multiple reasons that may be, but we did see them like  
14 actually cross the road, go towards Noatak, spend a few  
15 days in Noatak and then come back north and spend a lot  
16 of winter in -- at Red Dog. So, it's kind of interesting  
17 because we -- again, our goal is to let the caribou do  
18 what the caribou want to do. And it's interesting to  
19 learn what they want to do. So, one of the actions we've  
20 done along with having the community reporters is to  
21 revamp our caribou cards. We gain a lot more information  
22 this way. So, it's not just the community reporters that  
23 are collecting this information, but really any truck,  
24 any haul truck that's stopped because there's caribou.  
25 It's giving us a lot of more -- a lot more information  
26 about what's happening in the background when caribou  
27 are near the road. So that's kind of a part of our  
28 research.

29  
30 We also have additional research we've  
31 been developing with NANA trespass officers, the  
32 environmental department technicians, and ABR, which is  
33 a biological firm in -- located in Fairbanks. And using  
34 the help of the community reporters, we're able to get  
35 specific behavioral observations from the port road and  
36 that helps us to create energy budgets. So, we also get  
37 a lot of pictures. I'll just go through these really  
38 quick. We do love to find tracks when there's fresh  
39 snow. It's really helpful to see if caribou have crossed  
40 the road or if they have deflected from it, because that  
41 helps us understand operationally what might be  
42 happening in specific areas. We do have a lot of caribou  
43 that forage within or beyond 300ft of the port road, as  
44 I'm sure you guys went over. And to help the community  
45 reporters, we have invested a lot of money into trucks  
46 for the community reporter program. Fancy cameras, fancy  
47 binoculars, spotting scopes, and the things that I like  
48 the most are the thermal imaging cameras that have been  
49 mounted to trucks. They create visible images by  
50 detecting infrared radiation or heat, and that's

1 naturally emitted by all living objects. So, the camera  
2 sensor can measure the temperature variations and then  
3 create a heat map. So, we can see like in the distance  
4 in this lower panel and in this upper panel here, those  
5 are caribou out there. So, when we have two people  
6 driving down the port road and one person is looking at  
7 the laptop to see what they can see with the thermal  
8 imaging camera, it's really useful because then we can  
9 stop traffic ahead of time. So, stopping traffic is super  
10 important because, you know, we know that caribou are  
11 sensitive to trucks and noise. Sometimes they're less  
12 sensitive, sometimes they're more sensitive. It depends  
13 if -- I think if they're in rut or not and hormonally  
14 charged.

15  
16 But the next thing that we're looking  
17 at is the Pelco IR camera. And this is similar to the  
18 NightRide 360 that we just looked at, which is relatively  
19 inexpensive. This one's much more expensive. But it will  
20 give us a lot more ability to see animal's behavior at  
21 night and animals will be more apparent while driving  
22 along the road. We've ordered these in 2025, but due to  
23 supply chain issues, they haven't arrived at Red Dog  
24 yet. But hopefully next time I get to talk to you guys,  
25 if that's possible, we'll have some really cool images  
26 to share. Possibly much better than we currently have.

27  
28 So anyhow, with all of these research  
29 projects and you know, people on the road trying to  
30 document what the caribou are doing, we're able to put  
31 together energy budgets. So, this is an example from  
32 2024 where we had behaviors such as paralleling the road  
33 where caribou might be, you know, not crossing, but  
34 staying kind of north of the road. Foraging near or like  
35 near the road or beyond. If they're approaching the road,  
36 we're able to document those behaviors. Are they  
37 deflecting from the road? Are they resting, wandering,  
38 alert, crossing or stopped? And so that really helps us  
39 understand where caribou might be traveling from and  
40 where they want to go. And it also helps us understand  
41 where are their hang ups. And so, with that 2024 data,  
42 that's how we were able to get the Community Reporter  
43 Program together with Erica's group. Having all those  
44 folks from Kivalina and Noatak driving the road  
45 continuously 24 hours a day, seven days a week is amazing  
46 to help us understand when we need to shut down traffic.  
47 And you know, we -- oh, sorry, this is out of order, but  
48 we have reduced the speed limit because we don't want  
49 to, you know, impact caribou, hit caribou. We also want  
50 to increase driver safety, caribou safety and hunter

1 safety, because we do have hunters that are allowed to  
2 hunt on the road. So really having that lower speed  
3 limit has been a real game changer for us. So, we're  
4 happy that we were able to do that in 2025.

5  
6 We ask that the community reporters who  
7 are the eyes and ears of the caribou approaching the  
8 road, we ask that all trucks wait for instruction from  
9 community reporters. They are announcing on the radio  
10 whether they should -- people should stop or where they  
11 should stop. And, you know, we want them to stop when  
12 they're within 600ft of a road of the road. In the past,  
13 it was 300ft. But based on our 2024 research, we were  
14 able to increase that to 600ft. We must stop when caribou  
15 appear to be approaching the road. And we also want  
16 people to stop as far as -- away as possible from  
17 caribou. So, they're not -- So we're not startling them  
18 when we're stopped at the road. And we ask that everyone  
19 be quiet. And then we also have a list of things that  
20 people shouldn't do. Again, these were all made by the  
21 community reporters. You know, we don't want people  
22 stopping next to the caribou. Don't get out of your  
23 vehicle, don't honk your horn, slam your doors, keep  
24 your radio quiet as quiet as possible. Never feed any  
25 animals with food waste, especially predators like  
26 foxes, wolves and even, you know, ravens. That can be a  
27 problem for caribou so and then fill out a caribou card.

28  
29 And then this is what I wanted to talk  
30 about a few slides earlier. Based on our 2024 research  
31 and getting the community reporters, we also started  
32 having management operations system operating system  
33 meetings for continuous improvement. These meetings  
34 occur three times per day and it's really a plan do  
35 check, act kind of approach to the operation. And it  
36 helps us to standardize workflows, integrate planning  
37 and put -- ruthlessly prioritize the tasks for caribou  
38 so that we're ensuring that we're focusing on the most  
39 critical work. And so, on the road, of course, we're  
40 trying to get trucks to go up and down the road, but in  
41 the fall time, especially when there's a lot of caribou  
42 around, we need dynamic prioritization and we need these  
43 meetings to help there be collaboration across all  
44 groups. And so, you can see since 2011, we started  
45 documenting how many hours the road was closed each year.  
46 In 2024 that increased to 90. So, 2023 it increased to  
47 72 with some of the observations we were doing. In 2024,  
48 it was 96 hours. And in 2025 we went well beyond 480  
49 hours. I don't -- I have not compiled the final numbers  
50 yet, but it's been multiple days of closure. So, I think

1 that's a really good news story that we're trying to  
2 learn from the data we're collecting and we're trying  
3 to learn from the community reporters and trying to --  
4 we're giving them the ability to tell us when we need  
5 to shut down the road. And I think that's a critical  
6 piece for ensuring that caribou can move where they want  
7 to go and when they want to go.

8  
9           The next thing I want to talk about  
10 really quick is that we have a lot of interested in  
11 predators. We see a lot of predators near, you know,  
12 when we're driving along the road, there's a lot of  
13 wolves. Foxes might not necessarily eat an entire  
14 caribou, but they can inflict damage on them. This is a  
15 picture of a wolf chasing a little caribou herd. So  
16 basically, we were able to work in 2025 with Dr. Raime  
17 Fronstin, who's -- I think he's on this call. And he was  
18 locating wolf dens, and we thought, well why don't we  
19 try to do this near Red Dog, and we can collect scat and  
20 fur and hopefully through some lab analysis, they can  
21 figure out what's being eaten and who they're related  
22 to. So, I think this is something that was a very small  
23 step in 2025. But in 2026, we really hope to increase  
24 this study by adding cameras along the road and other  
25 areas surrounding the Red Dog operation to learn more  
26 about wolf movements and behavior interactions with  
27 caribou. And we don't want to attach satellite collars  
28 to caribou you know, I know that there's a lot of issue  
29 with that potentially. But what we do want to think  
30 about perhaps in 2027 is if we can have a wolf study  
31 where wolves are collared and if those wolves are  
32 collared, we can learn so much more about how they're  
33 interacting with caribou. And from what we understand,  
34 there's always a need for more information in the region  
35 for how wolves interact with caribou.

36  
37           So that might be upcoming. We're working  
38 on those plans right now. Another piece of information  
39 we're trying to really hone in on is our radar trial.  
40 We have -- we know that radars used for weather  
41 monitoring and it's also used to locate hazards when  
42 boating at sea. It can help return a signal to the radar  
43 unit to help us determine distance, speed and direction  
44 of movement of different things. And it's been used  
45 successfully at tracking birds in flight and polar bears  
46 on the North Slope. And so, we thought maybe we could  
47 use a radar unit at the Red Dog port. And so, we  
48 purchased a Furuno solid-state Doppler radar with  
49 coastal monitoring software in 2024. In 2025, we were  
50 able to trial the radar while it was mounted to a light

1 vehicle. We also tried to get it up onto the MS2 material  
2 site two comms tower, which is down near the port. It's  
3 a really high tower, so it would give us a good field  
4 of vision. And by having this, we hope that we would get  
5 some early detection of caribou. And by having early  
6 detection, we can shut down the road a lot sooner than  
7 when we just hear from the community reporters that  
8 they're able to see the caribou. So, our 2025 trial  
9 suggested that the radar may work better in snow covered  
10 conditions than in, you know, early fall when there's  
11 no snow on the ground. So, we still need community  
12 reporters 100%, but we are going to be hooking it up in  
13 May 2026 for constant and instant communication with the  
14 site, and we do know that we can see at least 1.8 miles  
15 from where the radar is located. And we think that with  
16 some additional tweaking of the radar equipment, we  
17 might be able to go as far as 5 or 10 miles. So that's  
18 going to take some mapping information. But that's  
19 something that we're trying to work on because that real  
20 time early detection warning system as caribou  
21 approached the road is going to be so useful as they  
22 continue to try to use the Red Dog area as they -- as  
23 they're migrating south, as we've seen in recent years.

24  
25 So, the last part of this presentation  
26 really gets into diseases and parasites. Well, actually  
27 it doesn't get much into that, but it talks about what  
28 can Red Dog do about diseases and parasites. And so, as  
29 we know that -- as the Arctic is warming, the parasites  
30 and the diseases that were previously restricted to more  
31 southern areas in Alaska are expanding northward, and  
32 that level of insect harassment is increasing, and it  
33 sometimes can force caribou to spend more of their energy  
34 budget escaping insects instead of foraging. And so  
35 that's bad because we don't want it to lead to poor body  
36 condition, like in the case of brucellosis on the right  
37 here. It also -- you know, having these really gross  
38 nasal bots like kind of irritating the caribou, it means  
39 that they have to go to areas where there's probably, I  
40 don't know, maybe not as good food resources in the  
41 summer so they can't fatten up for winter and when they  
42 really need the resources when they really need the fatty  
43 reserves to get through a harsh winter.

44  
45 So, what Red Dog is doing as a control  
46 the controllables is, we have been monitoring caribou  
47 since 2001 for metals concentrations, because I think  
48 everybody's concerned about metals in their Subsistence  
49 food. We do a lot of metals monitoring throughout Red  
50 Dog Mine port and along the road. The last event was in

1 2018 where we had subsistence hunters from Noatak and  
2 Kivalina come to site and they were able to get the  
3 caribou, bring them onto site. The next event was  
4 supposed to happen this spring, but because the caribou  
5 population is in such a -- well, I'll just say, you  
6 know, steep decline, as you probably talked about with  
7 others in the past few days. Because of that, we decided  
8 that we're going to try to shift it to fall and hopefully  
9 that will -- you know, it won't disturb the caribou as  
10 much when they're coming out of winter. And it will also  
11 coincide with when people are actually hunting and using  
12 caribou for food resources. And the real goal of this  
13 program is to verify that caribou are safe to eat. We  
14 collect a lot of tissues. In the past, we focused on  
15 kidney, liver and heart. This year we're starting to get  
16 some tongue, hair, front shoulder, hindquarter fat,  
17 feces, uterus, bone marrow and metatarsal tissues as  
18 well. And we work with the UAF veterinarian and Alex  
19 Hansen is also a key player in this. So, we try to have  
20 as many people present as possible.

21  
22 So, here's some pictures from 2018 when  
23 caribou were brought to site to be dissected and  
24 necropsied to figure out what their condition of health  
25 was. It was pretty exciting. We had a lot of different  
26 people working together. It -- we had to turn the spill  
27 tent into a slaughterhouse basically which created very  
28 slippery conditions. We were looking -- we were -- we  
29 had some other people from the University of Norway and  
30 another UAF professor present who was looking at  
31 leptospirosis and brucellosis while we were also  
32 collecting our tissue concentrations for metals  
33 analysis. And we also had a bunch of subsistence hunters  
34 who were very helpful -- and very helpful with the  
35 dissections and necropsies and, you know, doing things  
36 like health assessments, like counting warbles and under  
37 the skin and things that might be irritating to caribou  
38 and potentially creating poor body condition.

39  
40 In 2018, we also did a food safety  
41 study, a cooking study. And the reason we did this is  
42 because back in 2000 -- the 2000s Kivalina -- when we  
43 did the risk assessment, Kivalina and Noatak. You know,  
44 they were like, you guys used meat in your risk  
45 assessments, but you never used bone and marrow. But  
46 that is something that we always cook in our soups. And  
47 so, they had concerns about the safety of using caribou  
48 bones, caribou marrow and caribou meat when they're  
49 cooking it. So, the cooking study was intended to try  
50 to get an answer because we looked through the literature

1 and couldn't find anything about that. So, the -- this  
2 is a pretty busy slide. I apologize for that. But the  
3 2018 caribou cooking study focused on the leg shanks,  
4 and they were basically cut into four different pieces.  
5 One random sample from it was used for an uncooked  
6 analysis at the lab. We just wanted to know what was the  
7 raw sample of meat, what was the raw sample of bone and  
8 marrow, and like, what were the metals concentrations  
9 in there. And then the other samples were put into  
10 cooking pots randomly, and we had a water stew, which  
11 was just basically, you know, adding heat using water.  
12 But then we also wanted to test how do acidic ingredients  
13 like vinegar and tomatoes, how might those extract  
14 metals from bone, for example, and end up in people's  
15 subsistence foods in their soups, for example, the soups  
16 that they feed to their children and to their elders.  
17 So that was kind of important to get a -- the raw samples  
18 and compare them to the cooked samples. So basically,  
19 each soup was cooked for six hours at approximately 90  
20 degrees. After cooking, the bone was pulled from the  
21 soup and then analyzed for metals at a lab. The meat,  
22 marrow and bone samples were analyzed separately, and  
23 the remaining ingredients were blended into a broth and  
24 that broth was analyzed. So, it's a pretty comprehensive  
25 cooking study. And what we were able to find is that the  
26 concentrations in marrow are definitely lower than what  
27 you find in the meat. And that was a good news story  
28 because a lot of people were concerned about eating the  
29 marrow. They say it's the best part of the caribou, and  
30 we want to know what those concentrations were. So  
31 compared to what we'd already known about meat  
32 concentrations, it worked pretty good.

33  
34 We also had zinc bone concentrations  
35 before and after cooking. We did this with lead and  
36 cadmium as well, but I just included the zinc photos  
37 here. So, it basically shows if there was a raw -- like  
38 raw meat -- or, sorry, raw bone and then if that bone  
39 was cooked in water vinegar or tomato, it didn't change  
40 the concentration. Same for zinc or for lead and for  
41 cadmium, the raw concentration, it did increase a little  
42 bit, but not to the extent that it was like harmful to  
43 people. So, knowing that bone concentrations -- or  
44 sorry, that concentrations of metals from bone did not  
45 get extracted during the cooking process was really  
46 important.

47  
48 This is just a quick slide to summarize  
49 everything and to show this is where the lab where we  
50 did the cooking study, we brought folks from Kivalina

1 and Noatak to help. Well, first of all, for them to help  
2 give us the traditional knowledge and preparing the  
3 meats and oversee, we learned that there were no  
4 consistent differences in metal tissues between caribou  
5 collected near Red Dog and Other caribou herds. The metal  
6 concentrations in 2018 were lower than in previous  
7 years. The lead, cadmium and zinc concentrations in the  
8 western Arctic herd caribou were similar to or lower  
9 than other herds. Acidic ingredients in the cooking  
10 study did not increase metals leaching from bone or  
11 marrow. So that was another good news story. And  
12 basically, it confirmed that everything that was done  
13 in 2007 as part of a major risk assessment, which showed  
14 caribou were safe to eat. It confirmed in 2018 that you  
15 can eat cooked caribou meat, cooked marrow, cooked bone  
16 in a soup, serve it to your children or to your elders  
17 or to yourselves, and it remains safe to eat. And so  
18 that was kind of the conclusion of that 2018 caribou  
19 cooking study. Again, we're going to do some more  
20 monitoring this fall. So, stay tuned for results on that.  
21

22 And then I'm just going to pause here  
23 because I've been talking a long time. I have a whole  
24 nother [sic] section of this. I wasn't sure what  
25 everybody wanted to hear about, but we do lots of  
26 different fugitive metals dust monitoring at Red Dog.  
27 So, I will stop talking for a second. And if you guys  
28 want me to keep going, I can, I think I have about eight  
29 more slides. A lot of pictures that just show how much  
30 monitoring goes on.

31  
32 CHAIRPERSON BAKEER: Elmer.

33  
34 MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you for your  
35 presentation. Elmer Armstrong, Noorvik. So earlier in  
36 the slides, you talked about different types of lichen  
37 from different areas, and you talked about  
38 transplanting. You have any data on that yet?

39  
40 MS. SALATAS: No, we don't, but we just  
41 actually started that trial in summer 2025. So, we should  
42 know -- this summer is when we're going to go out and  
43 see how things survived and how they, how they grew or  
44 how they are growing and how they fared over winter. So  
45 hopefully by August this year, we'll have some  
46 information on that.

47  
48 MR. ARMSTRONG: And another question.  
49 Elmer Armstrong again. One of your slides showed -- and  
50 you talked about it too. Why are the caribou heading

1 north or east following the road. Have you guys figured  
2 out why yet?

3  
4 MS. SALATAS: Yeah, I think in 2024 and  
5 -- 2022, 2023, and 2024, we were able to have a lot more  
6 observations on the road. And we determined that by  
7 reducing the speed limit, we would give trucks the  
8 ability to slow down and hopefully see what's going on  
9 in the area a little better. And then in 2025, when we  
10 added the community reporters to the road and they're  
11 doing their observations 24 hours a day, 7 days a week  
12 with binoculars and spotting scopes and night vision,  
13 they were able to give advance warning to trucks that,  
14 you know, there's caribou heading this way. Can you  
15 please stop at mile marker -- I don't know, mile marker  
16 ten, for example. And then they would have to stay  
17 stopped for one hour, two hours, sometimes multiple  
18 days, we had the road shut down. So, I think that was  
19 really helping caribou cross the road, having that  
20 community observer program. And again, we're really  
21 hoping that the radar unit will be another -- if we can  
22 get that really dialed in, it will be another good piece  
23 of information to help give the operation advance  
24 warning to know when caribou are coming. So that's, yeah,  
25 that's really helpful having the community reporters.

26  
27 MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you. I know you  
28 talked about slowing down some of your studies. I know  
29 that they use calcium for dust control on the road. Have  
30 you guys been studying the hooves? Is there any data on  
31 that?

32  
33 MS. SALATAS: You know, that is a really  
34 interesting point. And I think in the fall, when we do  
35 the next monitoring event, we could add hoof  
36 examinations to that study. Because yes, they -- you  
37 know, we do use calcium. It's just directly on the road.  
38 We only use it in the summer months. In the winter,  
39 we're not able to use the calcium. It doesn't work so  
40 much. So, we usually have just a snowpack or ice pack  
41 with snow on top of it. But you know, I think if we do  
42 a fall sampling, that could be something interesting to  
43 look at. like what is the condition of their hooves. I  
44 think it's also something that I know people might use  
45 in soups and stuff I've heard. So, adding that as a  
46 sampling tissue could be done. So, thank you for that.  
47 I will add it to our list as something to consider for  
48 the fall 2026 monitoring event. I just wrote it down.

49  
50

1 MR. KRAMER: Mr. Chairman, this is  
2 Kramer.

3  
4 MR. ARMSTRONG: Go ahead, Mike.

5  
6 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Go ahead Mike.

7  
8 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. I know in the past,  
9 you know, I posted things about you know, caribou pinging  
10 off of the Red Dog Road. And for many, many years, I've  
11 tried to get Jim Dau to admit it. And then now that he's  
12 retired, he had a presentation that it does affect the  
13 caribou migration and he did prove it. You know, there  
14 were days, the first migration at caribou coming down,  
15 they were going about seven miles per day, and then they  
16 stopped 10-15 miles short of the road, and they started  
17 going back north again, Point Hope. And they mingle  
18 around there for a few days. Then they come back down  
19 and they're coming down about 5 miles a day, and they  
20 stopped maybe 10-15 miles away from the Red Dog Road and  
21 go back north again. And then by the third or fourth,  
22 ping caribou started to die off because they're burning  
23 so much energy, because something was not allowing them  
24 to go beyond their -- across the road.

25  
26 You know, I think truck drivers said,  
27 oh, we never -- we don't ever scare the caribou. We  
28 never, you know, we don't see them. They crossed, they  
29 crossed. And I'm like, yeah, but satellite data does not  
30 lie. Can you see caribou out there 15 miles away in your  
31 truck? No. You know, and they just kind of, you know,  
32 these retired drivers kind of stopped right at that  
33 because they said satellite data does not die -- you  
34 know, does not lie. And I know that, you know, these  
35 caribou are -- I mean, we had a die off pretty good --  
36 big die off that one year. And they pinged off the road  
37 3 or 4 times. By the time they hit the road again, some  
38 of them were forced to cross. Some of them died. But you  
39 know, it is obvious. And one thing I would like to do,  
40 you know, like I spoke earlier about with Alex was that,  
41 you know, with this extension of the Red Dog Road to  
42 compile satellite data from 2020 to, you know, 2030 and  
43 to see if there is a change in their migration, whether  
44 they're going further east or whether they're coming  
45 across the road, you know, that kind of a thing.

46  
47 And then one other thing I spoke, I  
48 said, why can't they put trip meters out there at about  
49 15 miles out by that mountain over by (In Native) is  
50 that one mountain there. And that's like the beginning

1 of the Brooks Range or the DeLong Mountains. You know,  
2 out there on the Tundra where the caribou or something  
3 walks by could not only take a picture, but it'll sense  
4 something walk by. And you know, with obvious data  
5 cameras and pictures and stuff nowadays, you should be  
6 able to get good data to when these caribou are starting  
7 to approach way beyond within human view. And that kind  
8 of stuff would be a lot better for collecting data that  
9 proves that the Red Dog Road, you know, maybe one day  
10 the Ambler were going to start deflecting caribou. You  
11 know, that one doctor somewhere in Fairbanks came up and  
12 said that the roads do not deflect caribou. Well, that  
13 guy was paid by somebody to say that because, you know,  
14 when you have a biologist that's been up there for 40  
15 years or longer, you know, he's a caribou biologist and  
16 he tells us that they do deflect. I go with the biologist  
17 that lives within our region for the last 30-40 years.  
18 Thank you.

19  
20 MS. SALATAS: Yeah. Thank you so much for  
21 the for the discussion. I agree, I would love to find  
22 out what's happening 15 miles or further out. You know,  
23 like having some advance warning that caribou are  
24 starting to approach because then operationally, we can  
25 take it into those meetings, right? And we can say, hey,  
26 we might want to proactively stop the road, which we  
27 have been able to do, you know, from getting information  
28 from hunters, for example, and Kivalina like, hey, we're  
29 getting a lot of caribou right now. That's given us a  
30 little bit of ability to you know, like, stop the  
31 operation, stop what's happening on the haul road. We  
32 also really wanted to try to use some drones. But that  
33 was an idea that I brought up in 2024, and I think at  
34 the time, some of the elders suggested that drones might  
35 actually scare the caribou. So, we're not using those  
36 right now, but you know, it remains to be seen maybe in  
37 the future we can use something like drones to figure  
38 out where are they. Again, using an airplane to do some  
39 routes further north could be done. And that's something  
40 we've tried to put in front of the Subsistence Committee.  
41 And I think the community members themselves have  
42 suggested that maybe those flights could be frightening  
43 to the caribou or could be used in the wrong way by  
44 sport hunters to actually go find caribou. And so that  
45 was an idea that was nixed. But anything we could do to  
46 help us understand, like when caribou are approaching  
47 so that we don't have deflections, if it is indeed from  
48 the road, we would love to be able to do more. So that's  
49 where we hope that radar unit will come in handy. And  
50 if we can add some of those along the road or maybe in

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1 more remote areas, it's something, you know, we will  
2 definitely consider. So yeah, really appreciate your  
3 discussion. And I also hope we can get a, you know, a  
4 compilation of all the satellite movements going  
5 forward, I think it would be really enlightening to see  
6 what they've done in the past. And then, you know, like,  
7 I'm really curious to see what happened in 2025 and over  
8 winter in 2026. So, I think as soon as the Park service  
9 and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game get that  
10 information, I hope they can share it with us because  
11 that'll be really enlightening to see how the community  
12 reporter program worked. Like, you know, we think it was  
13 effective, but it would be nice to see how effective it  
14 was at helping caribou be where they want to be and  
15 cross the road when they want to cross. So, thank you.  
16 (In Native).

17

18 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. This is Mike again.

19

20 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: What was that, Mike?

21

22 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, one of the -- I mean,  
23 there's that one big lone mountain out there by the  
24 Wulik. The Wulik is south of this one mountain. It's  
25 like the beginning of the Delong. I mean, I think it  
26 would be great to put a station up there somewhere on  
27 that mountain. Or you could have a couple of people stay  
28 up there and just, you know, glass out there with  
29 spotting scopes and with a camera attached so they could  
30 zoom in even closer. Or even just that you know, motion  
31 sticks out there when something crosses the laser, you  
32 know, a laser or something, it sets it off. And then you  
33 guys get early warning that, hey, something's wrong. We  
34 need to look at it, and then you could get a hold of the  
35 guys on the mountain and say, hey, what's going across?  
36 Oh, there's probably about 10,000 caribou coming down.  
37 You got good ample warnings to stop the heard or stop  
38 the vehicles from going through the road. And I think  
39 that's one thing that would really work, you know, and  
40 hire local people from Kotzebue. Hey, you know, go out  
41 there and go camp out. We'll pay you to camp out and  
42 watch the caribou and let us know when they're coming  
43 through or, you know, I don't know if you guys want  
44 several stations like that, but I think it would be  
45 great to be able to monitor them. You know, 10-15 miles  
46 out. That way you're getting a better understanding of  
47 what the effects are of the road is. Thank you.

48

49 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. Yeah.

50 Elmer.

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MS. SALATAS: Thanks.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Elmer Armstrong again, Noorvik. So, in the last several years, we've been having remnants of typhoons head up the Bering Straits and Chukchi and dissipate in this area with heavy rain and releasing natural metals into the water. I know, I'm pretty sure you guys collect that data. Would you guys be able to check the caribou when you guys are collecting samples to see if those metals are in the caribou too?

MS. SALATAS: Yes, exactly. Thank you for the comment. We absolutely are going to be checking those -- the tissues from the collected caribou for those metals concentrations. I think it'll be really interesting because since 2018, which is the last time we've done the metals monitoring and now it's 2026, you know, there has been so much of the rusting river issues and the permafrost melting. It will be interesting to see what the -- what metal concentrations have done over time with those additional stressors on the caribou, so. So yes, if I'm invited back and we have an opportunity, I will present that data next time. We'll probably in 2027 at some point we will -- it'll take us a while to get it analyzed.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Verne.

MR. CLEVELAND: Verne Cleveland, Noorvik. We got an eight-mile road behind Noorvik, and the caribou migrate through Noorvik in the back and you have a vehicle and you're going down the road, the caribou return five miles out. Even no matter how fast or how slow you're going, they still return. And they turned everything off in my all my heat and everything. And they slowly went up the road. That car of mine makes a lot of noise on gravel. It makes so much noise that caribou just stopped. I tried, I -- just to check it out. I moved and boy, they turned. So, it's got to be a complete shutdown. Not slow down or anything. You have to complete stop, turn engine off until the caribou come across. And a lot of it -- most of the caribou just go by the road and turn back. Go the road, turn back and that's all -- it's right there on the map, Western Arctic Caribou Herd multiple times. I mean, most of the caribou just get close to the road, go back, both hit the road back and we ask simply complete shutdown. And you said there was a -- what 480 hours of shutdown or 72 hours.

1 They couldn't get that?

2

3 MS. SALATAS: Oh, yeah. Sorry. I can go  
4 back to that slide. It was -- hold on a sec. Oops. Went  
5 too far. Here is the slide. So yeah, I think when we  
6 started shutting -- like actually taking notes about how  
7 long the road was shut down in 2011, you know, through  
8 about 2022, there wasn't a lot of hours. I think our  
9 highest was 30 hours in 2019 that it had to be shut  
10 down. And then in 2023, we had 72 hours shutdown. In  
11 2024, it was 96 hours. And in 2025 it was over 480 hours.  
12 And again, I think the reason we're able to do that is  
13 because we have the community reporters that are on the  
14 road that are describing exactly what you're talking  
15 about, which was, you know, what are they doing? Are  
16 they are they getting spooked by the noise or are they,  
17 you know, not spooked? Like, when do we need to shut  
18 down? So, using the community reporters, their  
19 traditional knowledge and they're like real time  
20 observations, I think has really helped us see some of  
21 these things that you guys are talking about. And as a  
22 result, we've got over, you know, this wasn't a  
23 consecutive shutdown, but there were multiple shutdowns  
24 in 2025 and 2026 already to accommodate caribou and  
25 that's, you know, completely stopped traffic.

26

27 MR. CLEVELAND: That's not enough hours  
28 for 72 hours. That's enough. The caribou migrate and  
29 there's 120 -- 20 -- 21,000 Caribou That's not enough  
30 hours to shut down. You got to completely shut down for  
31 a week, at least a week to have the caribou migrate  
32 because they should've been bouncing, hitting that road  
33 and going back and 72 hours, three days. I don't think  
34 that's not enough hours to -- during migration. And here  
35 in our area, our villages, (In Native) is our main diet,  
36 caribou. And we spend a lot of money on gas on the river  
37 all the time. Looking for caribou and the gas prices  
38 ain't going down. You spend 6-700 dollars on gas for  
39 hunting and there's no caribou. And you're telling me  
40 you shut down for 72 hours, three days. That's not long  
41 enough. That's not even -- that's nothing compared to  
42 what we do with our caribou, but I would suggest that  
43 everything would shut down, blasting everything else  
44 would have to shut down. Thank you.

45

46 MS. SALATAS: Thank you for the comments.  
47 I will definitely take it back to site.

48

49 MR. KRAMER: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Kramer.

50

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, Mike.

2  
3 MR. KRAMER: Yes. One other question I  
4 have is I know that, you know, my brother used to work  
5 in the trespass program, and he was the one that started  
6 it to where they started putting guys out there from  
7 security or (indiscernible) lands or trespass or  
8 whatever. But anyways you know, the one curious question  
9 I have is, you know, when these hunters from Kivalina  
10 or wherever go up the road towards mine site and are  
11 hunting caribou off the road, which side of the road are  
12 they shooting them on? Are they shooting them on the  
13 north side or are they shooting them on the south side?  
14 Because if they're shooting them on the north side,  
15 they're deflecting them back north again. And then  
16 they're going to, you know, their hooves emit the scent  
17 of fear and they're not going to come back. So, you  
18 know, situations like that is ruining it for the other,  
19 you know nine villages south of the Red Dog Road. But  
20 you know, it's -- I mean, it's critical that these  
21 caribou come through unhindered. Our caribou is in  
22 decline right now, and it needs less, far less pressure  
23 on them now. Ambler Road will decimate our caribou. They  
24 say that it won't, but they're so full of bologna, you  
25 know.

26  
27 I lived it. I lived in Kotzebue all my  
28 life. Majority of my life. And I can remember going up  
29 to the -- just beyond the mouth of the Noatak and being  
30 able to hunt caribou swimming across. I can remember  
31 going up (In Native) mountain getting caribou in the  
32 river. Around the corner from (In Native). You know, all  
33 the way up to the canyons and up to the Eggy and (In  
34 Native) Creek and Hatchery and (indiscernible), that's  
35 just up from the Hatchery. Now there's nothing. It's  
36 empty. It's a barren land, you know. And I've grown up  
37 there my whole entire life. And I've seen personally  
38 what the Red Dog Road has done to our caribou deflection  
39 of their migration over the years. You know, I get  
40 interviewed pretty frequently from, you know just here  
41 recently a university and then I got another guy that  
42 wants to do another one interview with me. But it's, you  
43 know, knowledge and the reason they -- at the Borough  
44 and my brother worked there with one of our old  
45 coordinators, Zach Stevenson. They did a subsistence  
46 mapping program for the Borough. So, they got, you know,  
47 data from 15 years ago where people used to hunt and  
48 overlap, and then they put all this stuff together. And  
49 it's a pretty wide area. There's a lot of circles where  
50 people, you know, hunted for bears, wolves, caribou,

1 moose, sheep, everything, you know, out in the ocean.  
2 They did that study that, that subsistence mapping  
3 program. My brother and Zach Stevenson, Lance Kramer and  
4 Zach did it. And I would like to see, you know -- I'd  
5 like to see a difference, and I'd like to see that  
6 subsistence mapping occur again with this -- these newer  
7 generations to see if there's any difference between a  
8 guy 30 years ago to a guy today. You know where  
9 (indiscernible). I bet you everything is going to be so  
10 out of whack, you know. So out of whack. I used to go -  
11 - I could remember I could hunt caribou by the  
12 (indiscernible) camp that's at the mouth -- near the  
13 mouth of the Melbourne up to Melbourne, (indiscernible)  
14 caribou all the way up to Kiana. Kiana all the way up  
15 to Sandy, Onion Portage. And you know they used to cross  
16 their free. But now it's like I said, it's like a barren  
17 wasteland. Thank you.

18  
19 MS. SALATAS: Thank you for those  
20 comments. Yeah.

21  
22 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Elmer.....

23  
24 MS. MONIGOLD: Through the Chair. This  
25 is Karmen.

26  
27 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Elmer then Karmen.

28  
29 MR. ARMSTRONG: Okay. Thank you. Elmer  
30 Armstrong, Noorvik. I would like you -- I know you talked  
31 about partnering for studies. I know you talked about  
32 partnering with Alex Hansen. I would like to see you  
33 continue that partnership to collect data. And also,  
34 maybe start a partnership with the Park Service and build  
35 up on these data collecting. Thank you.

36  
37 MS. SALATAS: Yes, I appreciate that  
38 comment because that is definitely something we have  
39 been doing is partnering with the Park Service and with  
40 Fish and Game, not necessarily partnering. They don't  
41 need us, but we -- we're trying to help where we can.  
42 And at the same time, we learn a lot from the data  
43 they're able to collect. You know, the satellite imagery  
44 data, I'm able to use that a lot in -- when we're talking  
45 to people at site about the importance of caribou and  
46 how we operate. So yeah, that is definitely something  
47 we will continue to do. It is really great to have those  
48 folks working with us as well as the NANA and also our  
49 Red Dog Subsistence Committee, like getting information  
50 from all the different sources is -- it's crucial as we

1 try to improve constantly, you know, that continuous  
2 improvement part.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Karmen.

5

6 MS. MONIGOLD: Hi, yes. First, I just  
7 want to say thank you for the presentation. You know,  
8 it's the first time I've seen a lot of this and I find  
9 it absolutely awesome. Because it's good to know that  
10 things are improving in the sense that, you know, Red  
11 Dog is stepping up to the plate more than they have in  
12 the past. You know, I know that at a meeting a few years  
13 ago, they said they were going further out. And now to  
14 hear about your officers that are there, you know,  
15 actually looking all over for the caribou. That's great.  
16 And the amount of hours that the road has been closed  
17 shows that. So, for that I just want to say thank you.  
18 And then the second thing I wanted to state is, you  
19 know, the testing that you guys have done on the caribou.  
20 I don't know where all you share this information, but  
21 for me as a local from Kotzebue, you know, it's my first  
22 time hearing of it. And I think that it eases my mind  
23 quite a bit to know that there's, you know, not high  
24 levels of mercury or lead or zinc or, you know, whatever.  
25 Because, you know, that's one of our main staples. And  
26 to see those type of testing, I'm just wondering, does  
27 this get out to all of our region or all of the range  
28 of the Western Arctic? You know because I mean, it really  
29 does ease the mind. I can't even tell you how much. So,  
30 I really appreciate that. And thank you for your  
31 presentation. Just know that it's very much appreciated.

32

33 MS. SALATAS: Thank you, Karmen, for  
34 those kind words. I think you've identified something  
35 where, you know, some people in Kotzebue and some people  
36 in each community will receive the annual report we put  
37 together on metals monitoring, which is not just  
38 caribou, it's, you know, sediment and soil and water  
39 sampling and like all sorts of different things. I think  
40 that is a report that I will try to figure out --  
41 something I've had on my list is maybe having like a  
42 website for Red Dog where we can just put their annual  
43 report so people can look at it and peruse through it  
44 at their own will. And that way, anybody -- it's  
45 accessible to anybody because right now it's just on a  
46 mailing list with a lot of people on it, but it might  
47 not necessarily get to, you know, all the members of the  
48 community. So that's something I will definitely  
49 prioritize based on your comments. Thank you for that.

50

1 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair.

2  
3 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, Wilbur.

4  
5 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah. Wilbur Howarth,  
6 Noorvik. Just one thing I always worry about is the  
7 lichen, and I know they grow -- it takes a while for  
8 them to grow. Does the grass -- in the past couple of  
9 years or maybe three years, I've seen so much grass grow  
10 in the area where lichen or where the caribou migrate.  
11 But does the grass do any effect on stopping or slowing  
12 the lichens growth?

13  
14 MS. SALATAS: Yeah, that's a -- thank you  
15 for the question. I think you're -- you hit a really  
16 good point. At Red Dog, we have been doing vegetation  
17 surveys every three years to try to understand what is  
18 the relationship between grasses and lichens, as well  
19 as shrubs and trees growing, and how is that impacting  
20 lichens. We have our next monitoring event this year.  
21 As of so far, you know, as of 2023, there have not been  
22 big shifts in the lichen community succumbing to grasses  
23 or other vegetation. So that's good news. But one of the  
24 things that Red Dog were hypervigilant about is the non-  
25 Native invasive species. So, we do monitoring every year  
26 and removal, if necessary, to try to prevent grasses  
27 that don't belong in the area, grasses that might not  
28 be part of the Tundra complex. To just remove those  
29 because we don't want to introduce non-Native grasses  
30 to the area. And so, so far, we've had, you know, good  
31 success with that. I think there's been some areas in  
32 the Northwest Arctic where folks have used grass seeds  
33 to do reclamation. And if you're only using grass seeds,  
34 that can be problematic. It can prevent lichens from,  
35 you know, allowing to have a foothold because those  
36 grasses can create a really high thatch area and then  
37 you're not going to get much other than that. So  
38 basically, along the tundra areas, there hasn't been yet  
39 anything that we've seen that has been outperforming the  
40 lichens. But again, we have to be hyper vigilant about  
41 non-Native species in this area, especially with climate  
42 change and longer growing seasons. It can give other  
43 seeds from lower, southern Alaska, from the Lower 48 an  
44 opportunity to grow. And that's something that we're  
45 hyper vigilant about. So, thank you for that. But yeah,  
46 as of now we haven't seen that. We will be looking again  
47 this year in 2026 when we do our next monitoring round.

48  
49 MR. HOWARTH: I have another one, if you  
50 don't mind. Wilbur Howarth from Noorvik. This -- when

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1 we get out of pollen floating down the rivers and they  
2 hit the area it has -- it doesn't do anything to the  
3 grass or whatever is on the sides of the creeks or  
4 rivers?

5

6 MS. SALATAS: I'm sorry. I couldn't quite  
7 hear everything. Could you say it one more time, please?

8

9 MR. HOWARTH: All this pollen that was  
10 floating down the river in the past fall and stuff over  
11 the past couple of years. Does it affect these -- I  
12 think these are blown up trees or something, but does  
13 that affect the growth of our original...?

14

15 MS. SALATAS: Oh, yes. Yeah. If there --  
16 you know, I think as the Arctic continues to warm, it  
17 is possible that trees may get a foothold in areas where  
18 they previously weren't present. It's also possible that  
19 shrubs might start growing or, you know, there might be  
20 evergreen trees in one area that start to move northward  
21 so they're able to progress. I think that's been seen  
22 in a lot of satellite imagery. There's been some studies  
23 on that. So, it -- yeah, I think, you know, that's just  
24 a -- that's not one of the things we can control  
25 necessarily, but it is interesting to -- and important  
26 to probably document and keep track of what's happening  
27 with that.

28

29 MR. HOWARTH: Okay. Thank you. That's all  
30 I had. Thanks for this presentation. So far, we've got  
31 more to go.

32

33 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Any final  
34 questions or comments for Ms. Salatas? Mr. Pattee.

35

36 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen  
37 Pattee. I just want to thank you, Jojo, for the  
38 presentation. Yeah, it's just really awesome to see when  
39 she -- things of study to do, she just -- oh, let's do  
40 it. So, it's pretty awesome and inspiring to see her  
41 come up with all these different studies, you know, that  
42 she's doing at Red Dog. There's quite a bit and she's  
43 always very busy. So really appreciate it, Jojo.

44

45 MS. SALATAS: Well, thank you Tristen.  
46 We should probably thank folks like you and the managers  
47 and management at Red Dog for allowing me to do these  
48 things. So yeah, it's very interesting, but very  
49 important that we make sure that the subsistence foods  
50 are okay to eat, that people can eat them safely and can

1 continue to have a subsistence lifestyle that they've  
2 had for generations. So that is the ultimate goal. And  
3 you know, we learn more all the time. So, hopefully by  
4 learning more from all of you and from, you know, others  
5 in the region that we can continue to do better. So much  
6 appreciated. Thank you for the time. (In Native)  
7 everybody, have a great afternoon.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for.....

10

11 MR. HOWARTH: One last question, Mr.  
12 Chair.

13

14 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: What was that, Mike?

15

16 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, one more last  
17 question. Is she still there? I know that in Kotzebue,  
18 you know, our water. We've been having issues with  
19 manganese. I'm just wondering, do you guys ever test  
20 that metal or that, you know, that contaminant?

21

22 MS. SALATAS: Oh, we don't -- I think  
23 we've definitely tested water for lots of different  
24 elements, but manganese has never come up as something  
25 of concern in our Red Dog monitoring. So, if there is  
26 something going on in Kotzebue, it would be interesting  
27 to know what that was. And like I did -- hopefully you  
28 can have my phone number or my email, and we can talk  
29 about what you guys are seeing in Kotzebue because it's  
30 always interesting to just, you know, keep an eye on  
31 what's happening throughout the whole region and  
32 understand that. So, thanks.

33

34 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen  
35 Pattee. Yes, we do. We do test for -- one of our analytes  
36 is for manganese and we do total and dissolved.

37

38 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you  
39 everyone. I'm going to move on now, and I'd like to ask  
40 Mr. Alex Hansen. If he could come up to the microphones,  
41 we could discuss something that you brought up  
42 previously regarding the closing of a cow season.

43

44 MR. HANSEN: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
45 And for the record, my name is Alex Hansen, Alaska  
46 Department of Fish and Game.

47

48 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, it was brought  
49 to our attention -- you did mention this during -- I  
50 don't remember if it was yesterday or today, but your

1 position as one of the managers of the herd that it is  
2 something in your purview to effectively close the cow  
3 harvest. Can you speak a little bit more to that, what  
4 that process might look like? And if there is anything  
5 that this body may be able to do to help influence the  
6 ability to make that happen.

7  
8 MR. HANSEN: Yes. Thank you. So, as we  
9 discussed yesterday, we have -- you know, most of us in  
10 the region have concerns about cow harvest and, you know,  
11 the state of this caribou population. So, we want to do  
12 what we can to help out. As we discussed yesterday, an  
13 emergency order is kind of under my purview. I've had a  
14 brief discussion with our management in Region 5, and  
15 I'll need to take that beyond, but should be within our  
16 capability to close the upcoming cow season. It ended  
17 yesterday for this regulatory year and Unit 23, but for  
18 the coming year, which would start at least in Unit 23,  
19 July 1, we could close that season. I need to expand  
20 that discussion. You know, I don't want to overreach  
21 until we have discussions with folks in the North Slope  
22 and Unit 22, but I'll work on that as well. But for the  
23 purposes of this discussion, I'd like to consider making  
24 that change to Unit 23. So, for support on my end and I  
25 could take this to, you know, our regional staff and  
26 beyond a letter of rec -- basically a letter of support  
27 from this Council would go a long ways to, you know,  
28 helping me sell this idea because we feel like it's  
29 biologically important and necessary at this juncture.

30  
31 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: And would that be  
32 addressed to a specific individual? The Department of  
33 Fish and Game, to you if a letter were written?

34  
35 MR. HANSEN: Yeah. You can just send that  
36 to the Department of Fish and Game. Just, you know, our  
37 address here in town and just put my name on it. And as  
38 an email or however you want to draft that. And then I  
39 can have that as -- you know, basically what I don't  
40 want to do, I'm not king of anything, right? I don't  
41 want to just create this thing out of thin air on my  
42 own. I would like support. That's why we're having this  
43 conversation.

44  
45 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Anyone have any  
46 questions for Alex? Tristen.

47  
48 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen  
49 Pattee. So, this would be a little letter of support  
50 just for Unit 23 at this moment?

1

2 MR. HANSEN: At this point, if you want  
3 to, you know, if you want to extend your reach, that's  
4 entirely up to you. We have Leonard at the table. I  
5 don't know that he wants to speak for the entirety of  
6 Unit 26A. That's up to him, but I would suggest that we  
7 carry this conversation on. So, I'll reach out to Karmen  
8 Daggett in the North Slope, and then she can start that  
9 conversation up there. I just don't -- I'm not interested  
10 in overreach. I just want to step carefully and make  
11 sure we move forward, you know, with everybody aware of  
12 what's going on.

13

14 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Leonard, did you have  
15 something or were you just moving your mic?

16

17 MR. BARGER: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
18 I know you're talking about Unit 23. Like I stated  
19 earlier yesterday, you know, Unit 23 -- Point Hope is  
20 in Unit. 23 and you know, we're in the North Slope and,  
21 you know, Unit 26A is a lot different. You know, we're  
22 making decisions and stuff. You know, it's not up to me.  
23 It's, you know, what we're after. And if you could define  
24 cow, you know, what's -- you know, some people out there  
25 in the radio line, you know, a lot of these new, you  
26 know, hunters and the, you know, the (In Native) Iñupiaq,  
27 you know, people like to talk Iñupiaq. And, you know,  
28 we like to understand more on what to call what's a, you  
29 know, and a lot of people know bull, you know, certain  
30 years when we hunt in winter time, we go after the  
31 females, you know, I know we're trying to put a stop to  
32 it, but you know, it's hard. We have to, you know -- we  
33 depend on -- I would travel -- one time I had to travel  
34 all the way to Buckland just to go get caribou. When I  
35 was living in a further up north and you know, just for  
36 that caribou. And like everybody stated that, you know,  
37 that's our livelihood, our caribou, so. But you know,  
38 if you define, you know, a cow. And for those people  
39 that are listening out there, they, you know, they could  
40 better understand and also, you know, hunting for a  
41 person that's, you know, defined that -- do like we  
42 stated in Barrow, you know, you're there Alex. You know,  
43 some of these people don't really understand. They think  
44 it's per household. It's not, it's per person. And if  
45 you guys really define on what you guys are stating and,  
46 you know, letting the people know because you know,  
47 they're all negative because they think it's per  
48 household. They don't understand that it's per person,  
49 you know, for those animals. So, if you explain it more  
50 for them to know and understand. They'll understand what

1 you guys are going for. And you know, we don't have reps  
2 from, you know, Kivalina, Noatak, Ambler or we got one  
3 from Ambler, Shungnak, Buckland, Deering, you know,  
4 those people that represent their communities. You know,  
5 I know you guys are talking on behalf of them with the  
6 Northwest RAC. And so, but yeah, I just want to state  
7 that and, you know, if you could, like I said, define  
8 cow. What's a cow? What's, you know -- think because you  
9 know, in radio land, you don't really know. So, I just  
10 want to explain that to you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

11  
12 MR. HANSEN: Thank you, Leonard. And  
13 through the Chair. So, by definition, cow would be a  
14 female. So, any female at this point, we would suggest  
15 that the harvestable surplus is none should be  
16 harvested. You know, bull harvest is the only thing we  
17 can recommend at this point. So maybe a clearer way to  
18 state that until Leonard can talk to his constituents  
19 is 23 remainder because you would be within 23 north of  
20 the (In Native). So, there's, you know, that little  
21 section of 23 where Point Hope resides that could be  
22 excluded for the purposes of this discussion. And then  
23 we can carry that on and, you know, seek support  
24 elsewhere. But I guess one thing, let me just make it  
25 very clear, kind of the main purpose of this discussion  
26 is to start the conversation and start the practices of  
27 not harvesting cows, because we want to turn this  
28 population decline around. And the thing that is looming  
29 before us, I just submitted this today through the Board  
30 of Game or towards the Board of Game is a Tier II  
31 proposal for the caribou. So that would include all of  
32 Western Arctic Herd harvesters. So, if we can avoid going  
33 into a Tier II system, it would be beneficial for all  
34 of us. And the sooner we can reduce the harvest and keep  
35 the numbers where they are or start increasing them, the  
36 safer will be from that issue.

37  
38 So currently Tier II system relies on  
39 something called ANS, the amount necessary for  
40 Subsistence. So, the current state of affairs is that  
41 the Teshekpuk Lake, the Western Arctic have share a  
42 combined ANS. And that's 8 to 12,000 animals. And our  
43 current harvestable surplus puts us about 1400 animals  
44 above the 8000. So, we're at 9400. So functionally next  
45 year we could go do a caribou count in either of those  
46 herds and we could fall below that and Tier II could  
47 take effect. So really the onus is on the users at this  
48 point to try to get away from that and avoid that. And  
49 we could get into the nitty gritty of that. But I don't  
50 think we want to at this point. We just take me at my

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1 word when I say we don't want to go there, we want to  
2 avoid it. And if there's anything we can do to not go  
3 into Tier II, we should take action now.

4

5 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair. I will  
6 move to -- for -- move that this Council writes a letter  
7 of support to close Unit 23, 22 and 26A Southwest and  
8 it is -- and then address it to the -- to Department of  
9 Fish Game.

10

11 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Is there a second?

12

13 MR. CLEVELAND: Second

14

15 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Seconded by Verne.

16 Any discussion?

17

18 MR. CLEVELAND: Question.

19

20 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Question has been  
21 called for. Grace, can I please get a roll call? Vote.

22

23 MS. COCHON: Member Elmer Armstrong.

24

25 (No response)

26

27 Member Karmen Monigold.

28

29 MS. MONIGOLD: Yes.

30

31 MS. COCHON: Member Verne Cleveland.

32

33 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes.

34

35 MS. COCHON: Member Tristen Pattee.

36

37 MR. PATTEE: Yes.

38

39 MS. COCHON: Member Micheal Kramer.

40

41 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

42

43 MS. COCHON: Member Wilbur Howarth.

44

45 MR. HOWARTH: Yes.

46

47 MS. COCHON: Chair Thomas Baker.

48

49 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

50

1 MS. COCHON: With six yeses, the motion  
2 passes.

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,  
5 Grace. So that letter of support for closing the upcoming  
6 cow season will be drafted and sent over. Thank you Alex  
7 for your time. With that we will move to the Wildlife  
8 Conservation Society. Kevin Fraley and Taylor  
9 Stinchcomb. Did I say that correctly?

10  
11 MR. FRALEY: Hey there. Thanks. Yeah. Let  
12 me share my slides here and I'll try to keep it very  
13 brief just to make sure everybody else is able to talk  
14 today and for time. My name is Kevin Fraley. I work for  
15 the Wildlife Conservation Society, and my colleague  
16 Taylor Stinchcomb will be talking as well just after me.  
17 Share my screen here. Okay, so today we're just going  
18 to be giving an update about some of the projects we  
19 have going in the Northwest Arctic region that might be  
20 of interest to the Council. And thanks a lot, to the  
21 Chair, Council Members and the organizers for letting  
22 us give an update today.

23  
24 Okay, so a bit about our organization.  
25 The Wildlife Conservation Society is founded in 1895,  
26 and it's now branched out into this global conservation  
27 organization. Our goals are to protect wildlife and wild  
28 places through science and conservation outreach, and  
29 we have an office in Fairbanks. It's called the Arctic  
30 Beringia Program there. And that's where Taylor and I  
31 work. And WCS has been working out in the northwest  
32 region since about 2012. We worked with the Native  
33 Village of Kotzebue and the Park Service on mainly  
34 fisheries monitoring projects, but we're starting to do  
35 more in the region now. So, I'm just going to go briefly  
36 through a study that we did up near Point Hope on arctic  
37 grayling. And as people have been talking about, this  
38 is near the northern edge of the Northwest area, but I  
39 think we've got some really relevant results here that  
40 people will be interested in. And then after I go through  
41 this very briefly, I will hand it off to my colleague  
42 Taylor to talk about her projects.

43  
44 So as folks know, up in Point Hope,  
45 grayling are a very important harvest species there  
46 right behind us, tomcod and arctic cod as far as the  
47 numbers caught, based on the studies that are out there  
48 or the harvest surveys, I should say. And people like  
49 to go catch them, especially in the autumn time and  
50 early winter, through the ice setting nets or fishing

1 through the ice there. And when we went up to Point Hope  
2 to talk about some other fisheries projects in 2023, we  
3 heard from people that grayling catches were a little  
4 bit lower at that time.

5  
6 And also, there was water discoloration  
7 happening. So, we were thinking about the, you know, the  
8 rusting rivers issue that's been occurring in Northwest  
9 Alaska. And we started looking at some satellite imagery  
10 and we were able to identify 5 or 6 of these rusty seeps  
11 in the upper river. And we kind of pointed that out to  
12 the folks in Point Hope and they were interested in  
13 embarking on a study to see if there was any effects on  
14 grayling downstream. And so, we kind of embarked on that  
15 and did field work out there last year. These seeps, you  
16 know, they discolor the river. This is a photo -- this  
17 next slide is a photo from Joe Spencer from Fish and  
18 Game from the Noatak. This is what they can look like  
19 and obviously that can have a big impact on bugs and  
20 water quality and fish. And so, we wanted to see if  
21 there was maybe some downstream effects from these Kobuk  
22 River seeps. This next photo is a satellite image from  
23 the (In Native) up near Mount Kelly. And so, you can see  
24 on the top right, there's clear water, and then all of  
25 a sudden, you hit this point where the river just turns  
26 bright orange. And these there's about five of these  
27 seeps in the upper (In Native). And so, we wanted to  
28 test some grayling and sediment and invertebrates  
29 downstream and see if there was higher levels of metals  
30 like copper, mercury, iron, zinc that folks from Park  
31 Service and USGS have found that these resting rivers  
32 pump out quite a bit of -- and of course, this is from  
33 permafrost thaw is what causes these rusting rivers.

34  
35 So, we floated the orange sections --  
36 we flew in with bush plane, floated those orange sections  
37 of the (In Native) and the North River. There the river  
38 and collected grayling sediment samples and  
39 invertebrates. There's a few pictures from fieldwork.  
40 I'll just breeze through that to get to the results. We  
41 did find a couple interesting things. We actually  
42 sighted some beavers and took video of them and an  
43 evidence of them on the Lower Rivers there and reported  
44 that to UAF researchers. And they had -- I guess they  
45 had not received reports of beavers in that river system  
46 before. Although, people in Point Hope sounds like --  
47 knew that beavers were around as well as otters too, so.  
48 But that was a pretty useful sighting for some of the  
49 beaver researchers out there. We also took chum and pink  
50 salmon for Fish and Game for genetics work. And then our

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1 results from the grayling coming up here. And this will  
2 be pretty much the last slide. So, on the left-hand side  
3 there, those black dots are mercury levels from each of  
4 the grayling that we collected on the (In Native) and  
5 mercury is on the y axis. And you can see that each of  
6 those black dots, which is grayling, was quite low, well  
7 below levels that we saw in the Kobuk River in grayling,  
8 which is that green dashed line.

9  
10 And then below that red dashed line,  
11 which is the state of Alaska fish consumption guideline  
12 threshold, where they start saying that like sensitive  
13 people, like pregnant women and children should start  
14 limiting their number of fish that they eat per month.  
15 So super low mercury concentrations in these (In Native)  
16 River fish, which was cool. We also looked at copper and  
17 zinc on the right-hand side there, zinc and gray, copper  
18 and orange. And we looked at other metals too, but I  
19 haven't processed that data yet. But the dash lines again  
20 show what we saw in grayling from the Kobuk River and  
21 the (In Native) River grayling were pretty much right  
22 on par with that. So, kind of the takeaway so far is  
23 that it doesn't seem like there's a huge -- well, you  
24 know, we were not seeing a huge signature, I guess, from  
25 the rusty seeps further up in the drainage. But those  
26 have only been occurring since 2020. And so, you know,  
27 in the future, it's worth looking at these fish again  
28 to make sure that there's not sort of cumulative effects  
29 happening. But for right now, everything looks very  
30 healthy, safe to eat for these grayling.

31  
32 And then just a brief note that I will  
33 be up in Point Hope in late June, either probably the  
34 29th or the 30th. I'm working with Micheal  
35 (indiscernible) up there in the North Slope Borough to  
36 set up a public meeting where I'll go through these  
37 results in much more detail as well as going through  
38 kind of all the photos and slides from our trip up on  
39 the (In Native). And I'll probably be doing a  
40 presentation in Kotzebue too about some of the sheefish  
41 and other fish contaminants results that we found on the  
42 upper Kobuk River and Cape Krusenstern National  
43 Monuments fish. So that's -- I'll leave it there and I'm  
44 going to hand it off to my colleague Taylor. Feel free  
45 to hit me up if you'd like more of this information and  
46 hope to see you all out there in June. Thanks a lot.

47  
48 MS. STINCHCOMB: Through the Chair. Good  
49 morning or good afternoon. It's been a long day. Good  
50 afternoon, everyone. My name is Taylor Stinchcomb. I

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1 work with Kevin at WCS Arctic Beringia and I'm just  
2 going to share some updates from the social science side  
3 of our program. So let me just share my screen here. All  
4 right. Can you all see that in the room?

5

6

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, we can.

7

8 MS. STINCHCOMB: Great. Yeah. So, like I  
9 said, these are just some updates from our social science  
10 and co production. So, my official title is Social  
11 Science and Co-Production Specialist with Arctic  
12 Beringia. And this is our social science team. So along  
13 with myself, we have Maya Hosey King, who's our One  
14 Health Social Scientist, and Thais Montalvo, who is a  
15 Social Scientist working mostly on bison in the  
16 Interior. But she also helped me out with this project,  
17 The Local and Indigenous Knowledge of Carnivores in  
18 Northern Alaska. So, this is an interview-based project  
19 that was -- I believe an update was presented by myself  
20 to this committee a couple years ago, but I'm sure  
21 there's some new members on the Council now. It was an  
22 interview project to elevate the local and indigenous  
23 knowledge of carnivores and community stories and  
24 experiences with these animals in northern communities.  
25 And so, these animals include wolves, bears, wolverine,  
26 lynx, fox, and we discovered river otters have come up  
27 much more frequently in recent years in these  
28 conversations. And because these are interviews and  
29 semi-structured so we have questions, but we allow  
30 people to tell stories and elaborate on those questions.  
31 Beaver and caribou came up very often in these  
32 interviews, I think the interconnectedness of animals,  
33 people and lands and waters was very evident in these  
34 interviews. And the beaver -- changes that people are  
35 experiencing from beaver were very salient, especially  
36 in the upper Kobuk region. And the connections between  
37 wolves, bears and caribou, as we've heard frequently  
38 throughout this meeting alone, are very important to  
39 communities.

40

41 And so, we were also able to document  
42 the changes that these communities are experiencing  
43 affecting subsistence practices. Younger generation  
44 participation in trapping, for example and we also  
45 collected some Iñupiaq stories and interviewed some  
46 elders in the communities. And that was to -- the purpose  
47 of that was to just to document those on -- the Iñupiaq  
48 stories around carnivores as well as document that elder  
49 knowledge for the community. So, we're giving that data  
50 back to the communities. And these are just the

1 communities that we've done the project in. I'm  
2 currently trying to engage with Anaktuvuk Pass, have to  
3 get tribal consent to participate. So that process is  
4 ongoing. We did the first -- one of the first communities  
5 we did was Kotzebue back in 2023. There is a report --  
6 summary report from Kotzebue that's been approved by the  
7 Native Village that I can share with anyone interested.  
8 And then Kobuk, we did a couple of interviews and then  
9 Shungnak was -- we did ten interviews in Shungnak. It  
10 was very -- they were very engaged in the project. I was  
11 supposed to go there this weekend, but they have been --  
12 -- been having a lot of water issues and so that community  
13 meeting you see in that table is postponed. But I'm  
14 hoping to host a community meeting there. Deliver back  
15 the interview recordings and transcripts and then get  
16 some, you know, final feedback from the community.

17  
18 And so, this will lead to a combined  
19 report where I will -- myself and the help of my social  
20 science team will compare what people are saying across  
21 this kind of Brooks Range region of communities about  
22 these animals and their experiences. And then we're also  
23 working on a literature review looking at western  
24 scientific knowledge on these animals and the  
25 information gaps and needs. And part of our work -- a  
26 really important part of our work involves going to  
27 communities, spending time in communities and getting  
28 on the land with hunters and harvesters. I think it's a  
29 very important learning experience for us to be able to  
30 understand the importance of subsistence and the  
31 different cultural values that are still being passed  
32 down in communities through things like Iñupiaq day in  
33 Shungnak, which were very Great graciously invited to  
34 attend and help document the first Iñupiaq day since  
35 Covid in the community.

36  
37 So, moving on. This is another project  
38 that might be of interest to more coastal communities.  
39 It's called Clams for Healing and it's a huge  
40 collaborative project that we are leading on the social  
41 and cultural impacts of harmful algal blooms across  
42 Alaska. So, there's a workshop that we're holding to  
43 look at how HABs are impacting food security in coastal  
44 communities and that's happening May 5th and sixth in  
45 Anchorage. So, I know we're in communication with folks  
46 in Kotzebue but if there's other more coastal  
47 communities experiencing HABs in your region, please get  
48 in touch with me if you're interested.

49  
50

1                   Another workshop. So apparently, I'm  
2 hosting a lot of workshops this year. And at the end of  
3 May, I'm bringing folks together from across Alaska to  
4 talk about pollinators and the many different ways that  
5 we can be stewarding pollinators. And this could take  
6 forms of indigenous agriculture, habitat restoration,  
7 monitoring, monitoring pollinator relationships with  
8 berries, and how those are changing. So, lots of  
9 different exciting topics to hopefully be discussed in  
10 this workshop. And it's yeah, May 20 through 22 and we  
11 are sending out invitations as I speak. So, if you are  
12 interested in learning more about the pollinators in  
13 your region and ways in which you can steward them, let  
14 me know. My email is there on the screen, and I'll post  
15 it in the chat after I'm done talking.

16  
17                   And finally, we have a One Health  
18 program that's actually led by my colleague Michelle  
19 Johansen, and she has been working with communities and  
20 tribal staff to develop these harvester sampling kits.  
21 And this project specifically arose during Covid 19. So,  
22 the virus that causes Covid 19 is SARS-CoV-2. And they're  
23 also paying particular attention to avian influenza. So,  
24 this is focused on community-based sampling to look at  
25 the presence of those potential viruses in subsistence  
26 resources. And so, this -- she developed this kit, which  
27 has local languages and sampling information on it and  
28 to provide communities with -- harvesters with a way to  
29 participate in that testing program. She's also working  
30 with engineers -- university engineers to develop more  
31 portable testing devices so that the results delivery  
32 can be much faster. There can be more community ownership  
33 over that entire testing process. And yeah, I -- if you  
34 have any questions, I can get you in touch with Michelle.

35  
36                   The social science part of this project  
37 was looking at the reporting structures within  
38 communities. So, this was led by Maya, who you saw in  
39 the first slide. And so, it was looking at how are --  
40 if there's a public health risk or a food safety issue  
41 that -- it has been found in wildlife that are harvested  
42 by community members or in domestic animals, like dogs  
43 that interface with -- between humans and wildlife. How  
44 do -- how does that get reported into him? And so, this  
45 was basically looking at, are there gaps and  
46 inefficiencies in these structures that we can work to  
47 resolve? And this is still ongoing through additional  
48 work that Michelle is doing.

49  
50

1                   And a couple future projects that we're  
2 currently envisioning is looking at the cultural  
3 indicators or meanings of things like resilience and  
4 restoration that we hear a lot in the scientific space.  
5 What does that look like from cultural perspectives? How  
6 do we get to ecological resilience, but also cultural  
7 resilience at the same time? And how can we incorporate  
8 those meanings and values into decision making  
9 frameworks for and we're specifically looking -- hoping  
10 to go into fisheries management with this idea. We're  
11 also looking to extend the work on carnivores. Maybe  
12 narrowing it down to more community interests and --  
13 instead of being so broad on so many species and then  
14 we're always here to provide technical support and so,  
15 and science for community requested projects. So  
16 Shungnak has requested an elder's film, for example,  
17 that we're trying to pursue funding for. And we're always  
18 open to hearing from the RACs and the SRCs to what kind  
19 of social science, traditional knowledge. I heard  
20 subsistence mapping project earlier that you all are  
21 interested in that we could help find the funds for and  
22 help collaborate on carrying out that work. So, I (In  
23 Native), we will take any questions.

24  
25                   CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Elmer.

26  
27                   MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you for your  
28 presentation. Elmer Armstrong, Noorvik. Does your  
29 project allow to expand other studies in different  
30 areas, maybe like right below Point Hope is Kivalina.  
31 They have the Kivalina and the Wulik. Does your project  
32 have an option to expand a study in there?

33  
34                   MS. STINCHCOMB: Are you interested in  
35 Kevin's fish studies and contaminant studies?

36  
37                   MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

38  
39                   MS. STINCHCOMB: Maybe Kevin can speak  
40 to that.

41  
42                   MR. FRALEY: Sure. Yeah, we -- I mean,  
43 so we're interested in helping communities test their  
44 fish. But of course, all that takes money and  
45 coordination. So, it'd be something we'd be happy to  
46 talk about. I know people are interested in what's in  
47 their, the trout and other fish, and I think Red Dog  
48 folks do a lot of studies out there too, but feel free  
49 to reach out to me if you have some specific thoughts  
50 about places where you'd like to see fish studied for

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1 those contaminants.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Other questions,  
4 comments? Verne.

5

6 MR. CLEVELAND: Verne Cleveland,  
7 Noorvik. Do you guys -- you said you're doing studies  
8 on the upriver right now, for Ambler, Shungnak, Kobuk.  
9 Is that where the studies are at? Because we ought to  
10 start now to do the studies before that mine at -- Ambler  
11 Metal mine opened up. We should start from now before  
12 it opens up to do some studies on the rivers, creeks  
13 near Ambler everywhere on the water to try to do some  
14 water sampling on fish, caribou, moose, bear, muskrats.  
15 Everything that's edible, ptarmigan, in the area. Are  
16 they doing that now?

17

18 MR. FRALEY: I'll take that one, if I  
19 may. And so, we completed a study and put out a report  
20 where we tested fish and sediment and invertebrates on  
21 the upper Kobuk River. We floated from lake Minakokosa  
22 to the (indiscernible) river confluence and collected  
23 sheefish, and grayling there. We also studied the John  
24 River, the Alanta River, and the Koyukuk where the Ambler  
25 Road would potentially cross those just to get baseline  
26 levels of PFAs, mercury, and all sorts of different  
27 metals. So, we do have that report available. It's pretty  
28 new, but -- and we're working on submitting it to a  
29 scientific journal, but that information is out there,  
30 and I'll put a link in the chat.

31

32 MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you.

33

34 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any other questions  
35 or comments from members of the Council?

36

37 (No response)

38

39 Final opportunity for questions or  
40 comments?

41

42 (No response)

43

44 Hearing none. Thank you, Kevin and  
45 Taylor. I appreciate your time. I'm going to move on to  
46 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service report.

47

48 MR. WIESE: Good afternoon. Wil Wiese,  
49 Selawik Wildlife Refuge Manager. Thanks for the time.  
50 We're going to keep this short. I also have with me

1 Karlin Itchoak. He's the Assistant Regional Director for  
2 overseeing all the National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska.  
3 So, I'll let him introduce himself. But when I'm done  
4 giving our quick update feel free to pepper him with  
5 questions as well. Karlin.

6  
7 MR. ITCHOAK: Thank you, Wil. Chair  
8 Baker and members of the Council as Will mentioned my  
9 name is Karlin Itchoak. I'm the Assistant Regional  
10 Director for the National Wildlife Refuge System here  
11 in Alaska and just wanted to take this opportunity to  
12 introduce myself. I was born and raised down the coast  
13 in Nome, and my parents are Norley Itchoak and the late  
14 Tommy Itchoak. My grandparents and my dad's side were  
15 Wilbur and Cora (In Native) from Utqiaġvik and from the  
16 Colville River, and my grandparents on my mother's side  
17 were the late Norman and Margaret Ervin from  
18 Schenectady, New York. But born and raised in Nome and  
19 spent most of my life here in Alaska and in this region,  
20 and also going up to Utqiaġvik twice a year to go whaling  
21 with my family there. So, I'm not new to this area but  
22 really appreciate this opportunity to be back up in this  
23 region and this opportunity to introduce myself, so.  
24 Quayana (In Native). Wil.

25  
26 MR. WIESE: Thanks, Karlin, and thanks  
27 for being here. So, I handed out a program report. I'm  
28 not going to go through everything in there. You can  
29 look at it, read it. I'll just hit a couple of highlights  
30 and kind of try and touch on things that have been  
31 discussed and important questions and issues the Council  
32 has brought up so far in the last two days. First thing  
33 is caribou, of course incredibly important. It's also a  
34 purpose of Selawik National Wildlife Refuge conservation  
35 of caribou, including coordinated studies and management  
36 of the herd. And so, one thing we're doing this year is  
37 working with everybody in this room, I hope to get the  
38 word out about the big concern about caribou. We'll be  
39 doing a lot of work in Selawik and Noorvik this year to  
40 get that message out there. I applaud this Council for  
41 taking the issue seriously, making some difficult  
42 decisions, taking some tough votes to limit harvest. I  
43 know that it's going to hurt people in this region. I'll  
44 say those are really tough things to do. I'll say the  
45 even tougher thing is to get people to change their  
46 behavior and get the message out there and get people  
47 to stop harvesting cows because I think we need to now.  
48 So, I ask that everybody in this room do that in the way  
49 you can individually. The Councils acted as a group and  
50 spoken strongly, but it's going to be harder for me to

1 go and talk to my friends and people I know in this  
2 region who have lived here their whole lives and say,  
3 hey, got to pass up that cow this year and stick my neck  
4 out there and be willing to say it. So, I hope we all  
5 can carry that message forward.  
6

7                   Next, I'll mention wolves because  
8 they're going to keep coming up. Predators are really  
9 important. We're working with ADF&G and Alex. I'm glad  
10 they got funding to put out some collars on wolves. We  
11 purchased some collars with cameras on them like Jojo  
12 was talking about. That we're hopeful we'll get here by  
13 next week and we can -- ADF&G agreed to put some of  
14 those out on wolves. The idea being is not only will we  
15 be able to understand a little bit more about how many  
16 wolves are on the landscape, but hopefully we'll be able  
17 to get a much better idea on diet and figure out --  
18 start getting information that eventually we'll be able  
19 to answer that question is how many caribou are being  
20 eaten by wolves. That's what we want to know. What is  
21 the scale of the issue. I'll also say on wolves, it was  
22 brought up at the beginning of the meeting. Wolves are  
23 on villages. That's -- and in villages. That's not  
24 something I'd heard of in the first four years I lived  
25 here, of wolves being in villages and it sounds like  
26 it's a new thing. And it's really interesting that it's  
27 widespread, that it's -- I've heard about it from  
28 Buckland, Selawik and Shungnak and Ambler. Like, it's  
29 really interesting. I'm hopeful we can get better  
30 information on what's going on there. I also want to  
31 remind folks that, you know, anyone with a hunting  
32 license, wolf season is open right now. It's open through  
33 the winter. 15 wolves per hunter. You know, you do have  
34 to harvest that animal respectfully and take the pelt.  
35 Skin it. But there is that opportunity to harvest wolves  
36 and especially if wolves are a public safety risk, I  
37 hope hunters are doing their best to protect their  
38 communities because we can't be everywhere.

39  
40                   I won't get too much into fish stuff,  
41 but we do have a bunch of fish projects going on as  
42 always, because we've got our Biogist Bill Carter  
43 leading the way and working with a bunch of other folks  
44 who have who have talked. So, I won't get too much into  
45 that. But there is some more information in your handout.  
46 Finally, I'm going to just finish -- I do have to get  
47 going because we're having an open house over at the  
48 refuge office to hand out copies of this new book,  
49 Memories of Muskrat Camp, which is a collection of  
50 information from interviews with elders and Selawik

1 about their memories of muskrats. And we're going to  
2 keep doing work like that too, and trying to get  
3 information out there about what we know and traditional  
4 knowledge and so anybody who wants a copy of this book,  
5 there's some on the back table or you can stop by and  
6 pick one up at our office. With that, if there's any  
7 questions, I'd be happy to take them.

8  
9 MR. ARMSTRONG: Through the Chair. Elmer  
10 Armstrong, Noorvik. I know I did my report yesterday,  
11 but I forgot to say that one time I went to Selawik Lake  
12 to pick salmon berries and I noticed there was green  
13 algae along the side. I didn't report it right away, I  
14 should have, but I think it was last month. I brought  
15 it to Wil Wiese's -- just to let them know. Yeah, that  
16 was something different. I know in other years, too. I  
17 seen orange algae, too, and I brought that up in my  
18 report. Thank you.

19  
20  
21 MR. WIESE: Through the Chair. Thanks,  
22 Elmer. And that's just a good reminder that we really  
23 appreciate those reports and they're really helpful.  
24 It's how we kind of learn about things and it helps us  
25 figure out where our priorities should be and how we  
26 prioritize what we do. And yeah, so call anytime, stop  
27 by anytime. Our numbers 302-4959 again, 302-4959. But  
28 yeah, call us. Let us know what's going out on the  
29 landscape.

30  
31 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Verne.

32  
33 MR. CLEVELAND: This muskrat reminds me  
34 of back in the day, this was the only thing they get  
35 with muskrats. And we get a bunch of them and a bunch  
36 of guys together in the camp. What else are they going  
37 to do? Pull out the cards. Here you go, muskrat. Play  
38 with muskrat cards in the -- once they threw them around  
39 so much. Muskrat stretch, you know, my father-in-law,  
40 my late father-in-law talked about it. And because they  
41 said. He said there was no caribou, no moose, just  
42 muskrat and beaver. And whoever wins, they come home  
43 with a whole bunch of caribou -- I mean muskrats, and  
44 whoever doesn't don't get nothing, you know. So, you  
45 know, it's a long story. Funny story. But, you know, I'm  
46 not -- no more on muskrat. But you're right about the  
47 wolves coming into town. There was one about a week ago  
48 by our dump, wolf was up to -- and everybody started  
49 getting scared. Just go up there and get your rifle and  
50 try and knock it down. One of my boys took off. They

1 didn't see it so, because our caribou are right behind  
2 Noorvik right now. There about 4 or 5 miles out, hanging  
3 out. They're very healthy caribou.

4  
5                   And abundance of caribou, abundance of  
6 fish. And I know a lot of guys are planning to go out  
7 fish. But they are aware of the caribou closing, aware  
8 of how many they can get per person, and they're very  
9 aware of hunting. When you go out and hunt, you know,  
10 they know what the bag limit and they know they're not  
11 supposed to get females. But right now, they're all  
12 female. I mean, you go out there and there's just a  
13 bunch of females hang out. The bulls will come in later,  
14 and that 8-9 dollars a gallon. No way. I ain't going to  
15 turn back and go -- I got to get me some caribou. I got  
16 to fill my freezer. And the only choices are females  
17 right now. And bulls will come in later, but I have no  
18 choice but to get females at the time. And to ask --  
19 answer Leonard's question about hunting for other  
20 people, there's a -- what do you call that? You got to  
21 fill out a piece of paperwork to hunt for people, and  
22 you got to fill out that -- some kind of paperwork to -  
23 - if somebody could elaborate a little bit on that. To  
24 hunt for elders or for another person without boat or  
25 snow machines. They have to be eligible for hunting or  
26 have a hunting license or something like that. Can  
27 somebody explain that? Thank you.

28  
29                   MR. WIESE: Yeah, through the Chair.  
30 Thanks for the question. It is a little bit complicated.  
31 There are -- you know, we have two separate systems. The  
32 state system and the federal system. Both have a system  
33 for allowing somebody to hunt for somebody else. Under  
34 the State system, it's only for hunting for elders or  
35 somebody who's incapacitated. Under the federal system,  
36 it doesn't have to be an elder. It can be any kind of  
37 hunter hunting for somebody else. Need licenses need,  
38 the paperwork done, right. Honestly, the easiest thing  
39 to do or the best thing to do, rather than me trying to  
40 explain it here and remember it is if that scenario  
41 comes up, you call our office or you call ADF&Gs office  
42 and we walk you through it step by step. And we make  
43 sure both people have the right -- have their hunting  
44 license, have the permits, have the paperwork all  
45 straight and then, yeah, you can do that. You can  
46 designate a hunter to go hunt for you. The reason I say  
47 to call is questions we end up asking are where are you  
48 going to hunt, and those kinds of things. And so, if we  
49 can take a case by case, we can set you up with the best  
50 system to make sure you're legal in doing it.

1

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Wil.

2

3

4

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Leonard.

5

6

MR. BARGER: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. This is Leonard Barger again. Very interesting, you know, this -- an elder telling me and these people are making a lot of rules for us as Natives, you know. Really? And I look back, this guy passed on, but, you know, before he passed out, he told me, he said, hey, watch, they're going to put a lot of rules on these Natives. They're not going to put nothing on the sport hunters. I brought that up earlier today about sport hunt. They're not being regulated. None of them. And they're, you know, on the caribou. And I'm bringing it up again, the sport hunters out there. And I'm happy there's one guy listening in. Robbie Kirk, I know you're listening. I check your online, so I know you're a hunter there and I'm glad you're -- you know, he's from Noatak. So, and all these, you know, the agenda, you know, the Kobuk. There's nobody from the Kobuk area that representing in this Northwest. You know, committee, but I'm bringing it up again. But yes, you know, all these regulations and stuff, you know, I just see the paper, you know. Gotta [sic] fill out the paper just to hunt for another. When we were younger, we would hunt for our elders. No paper applied. I know Elmer, Verne, Tristen. We hunt for our elders. We don't have to fill out no paperwork. We give it to them. You know, when an elder asks for an animal, we grew up, you know, hunting for them. We don't have to fill out the paperwork. It's easy. Simple as that. Now we're doing all this for us hunters regulating us. You know, that's totally wrong, but I just want to address it. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

37

38

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Verne.

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MS. MONIGOLD: Through the Chair. This is Karmen.

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MR. CLEVELAND: Leonard -- Verne Cleveland responding to Leonard's question. We regulated because of our caribou is low count right now. But in that sense of pushing it to people to understand that if you're going to hunt for people like your aunt you have to fill out paperwork because we're having a hard time with harvest reports, that's the main thing. We're not getting no harvest reports at all. Maybe we get

1 what, 10%? Maybe 10% of the harvest report So, if we do,  
2 we have to find some way of What -- where are the tuktu  
3 going? Who's getting the tutu? (In Native). Do we ask  
4 that question? Where are they? We don't know. If you get  
5 caribou, please give a harvest report. I've been testing  
6 this for several years now, and we still never get no  
7 harvest report. Nothing. Nobody doesn't want to put  
8 their names on. You don't have to put your name in there.  
9 All you got to do is how many caribou you get per year,  
10 and we want to know that. We just can't go out there and  
11 kill as many caribou as you want like back in the day.  
12 No. Where -- our caribou are so low right now, we're in  
13 a critical situation. Like back in the early 70s, I was  
14 there hunting at 1972, '79. It was critical and we were  
15 being harassed big time. We were afraid to hunt caribou,  
16 which is right behind our background. That was a scary  
17 situation. And who was being harassed? We were. The  
18 hunters, who was trying to survive from tutu we get. And  
19 today we're here in the same boat again. We're down to  
20 121,000 caribou, and nobody don't listen to us or will  
21 not listen or not get no harvest report. If they would  
22 give their harvest report even to the tribe or the city  
23 without names and let us know how many they get per  
24 year. That'd be a big, big help for us. Other than that,  
25 for hunting for other people, please take -- get a copy  
26 and write it down. I got lucky, I'm going to hunt for  
27 (indiscernible). Put it down. You know, if they can't  
28 hunt when you got a hunter in the house, please do it.  
29 That would help us out to Fish and Game and everybody  
30 else. Thank you.

31  
32 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Verne.  
33 Karmen, did you have something?  
34

35 MS. MONIGOLD: Yes. I just wanted to  
36 address as far as the sport hunter concern. When we have  
37 a Board of Game meeting that's held in Kotzebue and  
38 nobody shows up, nobody speaks up, nobody calls in, it  
39 is very, very hard to defend why we need the sports  
40 hunters out. We can speak all day long to each other,  
41 but when the time comes for the Board of Game to make  
42 those rules and regulations and nobody shows up, it's  
43 hard to defend that we did everything we could. You  
44 know, when I mean, the last Board of Game meeting, I was  
45 the only one that asked for them to put it to zero  
46 because of the count. And they still didn't do it. They  
47 lowered it, but they didn't do it. And so, I just want  
48 to let radio land know that, you know, when that time  
49 comes in January, the more people call in, the more  
50 people that sign up to speak, the more people that show

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1 up to the meeting, the more powerful that we are. Because  
2 we can make change, it just takes a village. Thank you.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Karmen.  
5 Leonard.

6

7 MR. BARGER: Yes. Thank you. Thank you,  
8 Verne and Karmen. Yes. You know, I get where you guys  
9 are at and, you know, and sport hunters, I mean, you  
10 know, on the Board of Game, you know, I've addressed it  
11 to, you know, on the Board of Game. Most of them were  
12 all sport hunters on the Board. And there's only one  
13 that is not a sport hunter that's on the Board of Game.  
14 And I've addressed it before in our North Slope RAC. And  
15 I'm speaking out too on radio land. And you know, it's  
16 good to, you know, go hunting for elders and widows. And  
17 I'm glad, you know, -- Cathy here at the wildlife or the  
18 -- Cathy Yule. You know, she would call me once in a  
19 while, get caribou, you get caribou. I would give her,  
20 you know, my report, you know, because my nephews and  
21 my nieces would go hunt for me. I try to go out and go  
22 hunting, but they also want me to go hunt. So, so but  
23 anyways, thank you very much.

24

25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Leonard.  
26 Other questions? Comments from the Council.

27

28 MR. ARMSTRONG: Through the Chair. Elmer  
29 Armstrong. I think, you know, for many seasons we've  
30 just been seeing the caribou just only in wintertime.  
31 Just a comment. Maybe we should have more discussions  
32 on changing the regulations. Changing the months.  
33 Because we're not getting any caribou in the fall time.  
34 We see them in the winter. Maybe we have to do regulation  
35 changes. That way. And also, maybe, you know how we have  
36 to report on those late RM880 Maybe we should do a  
37 regulation change too, on caribou. That way, when we get  
38 those caribou tickets, we have to report on how many  
39 caribou we get. And also, another way, you know, in the  
40 villages elder support. They give out gas to the super  
41 hunters that go hunt for people that can't hunt. Maybe  
42 we could work with the entity that gives that gas. Maybe  
43 put it in policy when a person goes to use that gas to  
44 hunt for an elder to report. Just an idea. Because we're  
45 not seeing no caribou in the fall time, no more. Only  
46 in wintertime. Many trips from Noorvik to here, you could  
47 see where they're grazing in the snowmachine trails, or  
48 when you go through the river, you see their tracks.  
49 Yeah, there was a lot of caribou again this year behind  
50 Noorvik. I thought that last year was gonna [-- I thought

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1 they were going to eat all the lichen, but this year a  
2 lot of caribou showed up behind Noorvik again. Thank  
3 you.

4  
5 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,  
6 Elmer.

7  
8 MR. KRAMER: Mr. Chairman. It's Kramer.

9  
10 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes. Go ahead, Mike.

11  
12 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. You know, over the  
13 years, you know, I remember going up to the Kobuk up to  
14 my camp up there by the sand dunes, and I was coming  
15 home with caribou, you know, and then all of a sudden,  
16 you know, we started not getting caribou. And I remember  
17 one time we were sitting there on the bank, and at that  
18 time we lost probably about 200,000 caribou and we were  
19 sitting there and we watched them five miles back.  
20 Mingling around, eating. As soon as they come down close,  
21 they start working their way towards the river, a boat  
22 goes by. They go way back again. Then all of a sudden,  
23 you know, we're not getting no more caribou on the Kobuk.  
24 Bulls, you know, we always harvested bulls, and we  
25 hammered the bulls on a Noatak and on the Kobuk River.  
26 And all of a sudden, you know, we stopped getting caribou  
27 on the Kobuk River and people in the upper Noatak were  
28 getting caribou. But, you know, the people in Ambler,  
29 Shungnak, Kobuk, Kotzebue, Kiana, you know, Noorvik  
30 weren't getting the fall time caribou. You know, it went  
31 down to that then every fall people would go back up  
32 there and they'd see them, but they'd never come back  
33 to the river, you know. So, man, there's so many people  
34 wasting money, gas going up there for nothing. All to  
35 watch these caribou go back north again.

36  
37 I think where we all went wrong,  
38 agencies and subsistence users and regulations went  
39 wrong was when we stopped getting those bulls. And when  
40 the cows came through here in October, November and  
41 December, we hammered them. We hammered it so hard for  
42 years. And I also looked at and kind of blame, you know,  
43 Fish and Game for not seeing this big picture. So, we're  
44 not getting bulls anymore. And we're hammering cows year  
45 after year after year after year. Something's got to  
46 click here that says, hey, maybe we need to stop and  
47 harvest the cows. But then they say, oh, there's still  
48 a serviceable amount. You know, a sustainable amount to  
49 harvest, sustainable harvest amount. It don't matter.  
50 If you notice something is getting decimated it's time

000129

1 to step in and stop it because look where we're at now.  
2 121,000.

3  
4 You know just like Park Service for  
5 years, five, six years, I tell them to shut down the  
6 sheep season. Oh, no, they're still harvestable amount  
7 of surplus. Next time, you know, they do a sheep survey  
8 and then bam, they shut it down. And when they talk  
9 about it, all I said to them was, duh, we're advisors.  
10 We advise you of what we see. And you guys don't listen,  
11 you know. Northwest Arctic, North Slope, Seward Pen,  
12 every single one of these Councils got amazing council  
13 members that serve their region. I remember I applied  
14 when you know, Tim Tuliġuk, I believe his name was from  
15 Nome used to be the subsistence manager. Federal  
16 Subsistence President or Chair. You know, I applied for  
17 his position. I kind of understand why I didn't get  
18 hired because I come from the most conflicted area in  
19 the state, Northwest Arctic. They ended up hiring Mr.  
20 Christiansen, you know, then all of a sudden, we get  
21 these three indigenous seats on the Federal Subsistence  
22 Board. Why isn't there any of us on that Board? It's  
23 because our tribal agency don't see us as to what we  
24 fight for. They're not there. IRA, you know, NANA comes  
25 there. They're finally showing up, you know. KIC, we  
26 never see them. You know, I mean, they have land. Yeah,  
27 they have beautiful land, KIC, you know. But we don't  
28 see these entities. They're trying to say, hey, how can  
29 we help? Where can we help? Let's all work together and  
30 let's make this work. You know, as tribal land, you  
31 know, tribal KIC, NANA, you know, IRAs in the villages,  
32 everything. Let's all work together to try and protect  
33 our herd. You know, and it's absolutely wrong that people  
34 think that they can just go out there and whack cows.  
35 And then all of a sudden, when we have nothing, they'll  
36 be like, man, we sure wish we had caribou,  
37 (indiscernible). Yeah, you're darn right,  
38 (indiscernible). You know, what is it going to come down  
39 to? That's not hunting no more. And all of a sudden, we  
40 become criminals for feeding our family. Putting meat  
41 in the freezer illegally. You know, and I understand how  
42 some people say, I don't need no stinking piece of paper  
43 to put meat in my freezer and feed my family. I've heard  
44 that. I've seen that. You know, it's going to get worse.  
45 Everything I said in the past about what's going to  
46 happen is coming true. And it's here, you know. It's  
47 time to open up the (indiscernible) and say, hey, let's  
48 all sit down together and figure something out. Let's  
49 get this fixed. And we as advisors, you know, we need  
50 to be labeled as something else because we advise and

1 they don't listen. These agencies don't listen. The  
2 Board of Game. You know, the Federal Subsistence has  
3 been -- backed us more than anything else. Board of  
4 Game, Alaska Department of Fish their more commercial  
5 orientated. It's got to happen, man. You know, every  
6 time I speak people listen. I -- sometimes I'm amazed  
7 when I speak, the room is absolutely quiet when I look  
8 around when I'm talking, everybody's looking at me  
9 because I know what I'm talking about. I've been here  
10 with Pete Schaeffer, Viktor Karmun, Raymond Stoney, Mr.  
11 Kumak, you know, my uncle from Buckland. Ballot, Percy  
12 Ballot. You know, I shared a lot with these guys. I was  
13 the youngest kid there for many, many years. There had  
14 to be at least a 50-year gap. And now look, we got more  
15 younger guys in there. Me and Verne are the old men  
16 there, you know. What's it going to take for us to start  
17 -- and these agencies to start taking us seriously. Thank  
18 you.

19  
20 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Tristen.

21  
22 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair Tristen  
23 Pattee. I appreciate all the stories, but can we stay  
24 on point? And otherwise, we're going to be here all  
25 night.

26  
27 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,  
28 Tristen. Are there any final comments or questions for  
29 the National Wildlife Refuge?

30  
31 MR. CLEVELAND: Verne are you going to  
32 open up that Huslia, Shungnak for the Iron Dog? Is it  
33 going to be open for the -- next year's race to the  
34 upper Kobuk can see the races go by too? Thank you.

35  
36 MR. WIESE: Great question. Through the  
37 Chair. Yeah. We're working on permitting for the Iron  
38 Dog for 2027. We're doing an assessment of impacts. One  
39 of those things will assess impacts of subsistence. So,  
40 if there are any concerns over impacts of subsistence,  
41 please let me know. I've reached out to tribes in the  
42 region and I've reached out -- I haven't really gotten  
43 concerns over impacts of subsistence. And so we're on  
44 track to make a decision on that in plenty of time for  
45 the race next year.

46  
47 MR. CLEVELAND: And also, the Hot Springs  
48 buildings, are they going to do -- rebuild the buildings  
49 or when's that going to happen?

50

1 MR. WIESE: Great question. So, the  
2 cabins at the hot springs, you know, we permit those you  
3 know, the -- Huslia has got one cabin, upper Kobuk got  
4 the other cabin. We were in talks about possibly  
5 rebuilding and how that would look. We haven't been  
6 working on that actively the last few months. Been busy  
7 with a bunch of other projects, so I don't know when  
8 that might happen, where in the future that might happen.  
9 The biggest thing there is that as a Refuge, we've never  
10 wanted to sort of take over that site. It's an important  
11 site for the people in the upper Kobuk in the whole  
12 region here and Huslia people and so, we really wanted  
13 to support the communities in rebuilding. Provide any  
14 support we can, but not kind of take over and have it  
15 be Fish and Wildlife's way at those sites. And so, I  
16 expect to -- Karlin and I to go up to Shungnak this  
17 weekend, hopefully get down to the hot springs, take a  
18 look at it and talk some folks upriver and kind of  
19 restart that process and see if we can get some movement  
20 on improving those.

21  
22 MR. CLEVELAND: Yeah, I helped build  
23 those buildings back in the day and that's a long time  
24 ago. Thank you.

25  
26 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: If there's nothing  
27 else, thank you, gentlemen, for your report and for your  
28 time. Move on to National Park Service. Who would like  
29 to go first? We have Gates of the Arctic Subsistence  
30 Resource Commission Update.

31  
32 MS. OKADA: Thank you, Mr. Chair, Council  
33 Members. My name is Marcy Okada. I am the Subsistence  
34 Coordinator for Gates of the Arctic National Park and  
35 Preserve and I'm not sure what page our update is on in  
36 your meeting booklet.

37  
38 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: We can see it on the  
39 screen.

40  
41 MS. OKADA: You can. Okay. Thank you. So,  
42 I'll just give a very quick update. We have a Subsistence  
43 Resource Commission for Gates of the Arctic. Tristen  
44 Pattee is a member on our commission. We were not able  
45 to meet in November of last year. And so, we're scheduled  
46 to meet in April, on April 15th and 16th in Fairbanks  
47 and we'll be discussing the federal wildlife proposals  
48 that your RAC has submitted, and we'll also be taking  
49 action on the same wildlife special actions that you  
50 covered at your RAC meeting yesterday.

1

2                   We'll also be discussing the Ambler  
3 mining access road. Similar to you, the status of the  
4 Western Arctic Caribou Herd, Dall sheep management in  
5 the park. Research projects that are in partnership with  
6 our affiliated communities and then hear general updates  
7 from park service staff. Oh, and also in addition to  
8 that we'll be discussing the Federal Subsistence  
9 Management Program Review. Since we weren't able to take  
10 that up at our February 17th meeting due to a lack of  
11 quorum.

12

13                   Moving on to caribou. Kyle Joly is not  
14 on the call right now. And some of this is old news  
15 because of the migration timeline that occurred from  
16 September of last year to January of this year. I think  
17 folks already know how the caribou moved across the  
18 landscape this past season. And then I just want to  
19 point out two caribou journal articles. One related to  
20 caribou group size as it corresponds to seasonal life  
21 events. And then another article titled: What Determines  
22 Caribou Migration Strategies. So, there's links to both  
23 those articles available.

24

25                   Quickly moving on to Dall sheep. Our  
26 sheep biologists conducted a survey from July 5th to  
27 July 11th of last year. It was the most eastern portion  
28 of Gates of the Arctic, so the furthest away portion of  
29 Gates of the Arctic from you folks that was surveyed.  
30 Results show that the estimated number of sheep in those  
31 areas were slightly lower compared to 2024. But in  
32 general, I mean, basically the population is stable.  
33 Survey is going to be conducted again this year in July.  
34 And then a park wide survey, the entirety of the park  
35 is scheduled -- hopefully scheduled to be surveyed in  
36 2027.

37

38                   And then just a real quick informational  
39 note on arctic brown bears. So, Gates of the Arctic  
40 covers the Central Brooks Range and there was a study  
41 on bears and Gates of the Arctic. And on average, the  
42 brown bears in the park spent about 206 days a year in  
43 their dens and on average, they enter their dens around  
44 late September, and they come out of their dens around  
45 April 25th or so. There was one bear that actually  
46 remained in hibernation a little bit longer on average,  
47 and was in their den for about 233 days, which is kind  
48 of pushing it as far as being in torpor for that long.  
49 So that's just our very quick update for Gates of the  
50 Arctic, if folks have any questions.

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CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Marcy.  
Elmer.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Marcy. Elmer  
Armstrong, Noorvik. You said that the sheep survey is  
stable. What's the status on that area? Is it in  
conservation status or open?

MS. OKADA: Thank you, Elmer. That's a  
good question. So currently for Unit 26B, west of the  
Sagavanirktok River, that area is closed to sheep  
hunting for subsistence and sport hunting. And then for  
Unit 24A which is that portion within Gates of the Arctic  
along the Haul Road that's also closed to subsistence  
and sport hunting. But that closure is only up until  
June 30th. And then the Western Interior Regional  
Advisory Council, which ended up putting that closure  
in, decided not to keep the closure. So, the hunt's  
going to open up this coming season. Folks in that area  
think perhaps that the sheep population has had time to  
recover and so, the hunt's going to reopen.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Verne.

MR. CLEVELAND: In the Gates of the  
Arctic by Bornite there's some sheep. And I know I'm not  
allowed to hunt because I'm from Noorvik, but I grew up  
in Shungnak. And the ones that are allowed to hunt is  
Ambler, Shungnak and Kobuk. Do they get permits to hunt  
sheep in that area by Bornite?

MS. OKADA: So that area by Bornite is  
not Gates of the Arctic. You know, to go all the way  
into Gates of the Arctic folks have to go through various  
drainages. Ambler, (In Native), you know, they head up  
north to the headwaters area of the Noatak River in  
order to get into Gates of the Arctic. So, for them to  
hunt around Bornite that's considered state land. You  
know, for them to go all the way into Gates, that's  
quite a bit of a ways to travel. And I haven't heard any  
news of anybody heading into Gates to do that hunt. And  
so, for the area around Bornite that would be a state  
hunt. And I'm not quite sure about the, you know, the  
state regs for that area.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any final questions,  
comments for Marcy?

1 (No response)

2

3 Hearing none. Thank you Marcy, for your  
4 presentation. And the interest of time, we're going to  
5 move to Kevin Foley.

6

7 MS. OKADA: Thank you.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: As he does need to  
10 catch the evening flight. So, we will be jumping down  
11 to the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program Update and  
12 the Partners for FMP [sic].

13

14 MR. FOLEY: Mr. Chair, members of the  
15 Council, thank you very much for that. For members in  
16 the room, those online and tuning into KOTZ 7:20 a.m.  
17 Good evening. My name is Kevin Foley and I'm a fisheries  
18 biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management. And  
19 I'd like to share with you a brief update on our  
20 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. So many of you  
21 may be familiar with our Monitoring Program. But for  
22 those who are not the purpose of the Monitoring Program  
23 is to identify and provide information needed to sustain  
24 Federal Subsistence Fisheries. The Monitoring Program  
25 also supports meaningful involvement in fisheries  
26 management by Alaska Native and rural organizations, and  
27 promotes collaboration among federal, state, Alaska  
28 Native, and local organizations.

29

30 OSM is currently in the final phase of  
31 the '26 Monitoring Program funding cycle, and the  
32 Federal Subsistence Board met in early February and  
33 approved the Final Monitoring Program Funding Plan. And  
34 as we heard earlier in our meeting, we sent out our  
35 award notices just yesterday, and we will be posting the  
36 final management plan to our website. And so, with this  
37 cycle coming to an end, it's time for the Councils to  
38 begin developing priority information needs for the 2028  
39 monitoring program call for proposals. So, priority  
40 information needs or PINs, as we call them, are an  
41 important component of the Monitoring Program as they  
42 outline knowledge gaps and local concerns related to  
43 subsistence fisheries and guide the projects that are  
44 submitted for consideration. And so, we are asking for  
45 volunteers from this Council, as well as other Councils  
46 in the region, to meet by telephone this summer to help  
47 us identify knowledge gaps and information needed for  
48 management of subsistence fisheries. The draft list of  
49 priority information needs that is developed by the  
50 volunteers will be presented to the Councils and this

1 Council for final approval during the fall 2026  
2 meetings. And so what -- how this would work is at a  
3 time of convenience, by sort of communicating with the  
4 volunteers, we establish a meeting date and we -- you'll  
5 receive ahead of time a small packet of information that  
6 you can peruse to sort of help inform what you already  
7 know about the information gaps and the resource  
8 information needs from your respective regions. And when  
9 we get together, we discuss those ideas, we formulate  
10 them, put them down on paper. And then as we mentioned,  
11 when we come back together in the fall for the fall RAC  
12 meeting, we'll put those up on the screen and we'll be  
13 able to go through them and sort of finalize them before  
14 submitting them forward with the program. So, it's a  
15 relatively low commitment, but there is some homework  
16 that you'll need to do with a little bit of reading. So,  
17 this is not an action item, but we are looking for  
18 volunteers that would like to help develop the priority  
19 information needs for the next cycle. Thank you, Mr.  
20 Chair. I can take questions and accept volunteers at  
21 this time.

22  
23 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Do we have any  
24 volunteers at this time?

25  
26 MR. CLEVELAND: Verne Cleveland. I'll  
27 volunteer. For whatever it is, I'll volunteer.

28  
29 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Wilbur, Karmen or  
30 Mike, would any of you like to volunteer for this  
31 opportunity?

32  
33 MR. HOWARTH: It's Wilbur. No, I'm good.

34  
35 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Is there a time  
36 limit, Mr. Foley? Is there a day that you need to know  
37 who would like to volunteer by? If anyone changes their  
38 mind and would like to reach out to you via Grace.

39  
40 MR. FOLEY: Mr. Chair, there's no  
41 particular timeline. The meeting is not for a while off.  
42 When we'd be contacting Folks and sending out  
43 information. So, if there's a member of the Council that  
44 changes their mind. With the exception of Council Member  
45 Verne Cleveland, he's locked in. We would love to have  
46 them participate at the meeting. The more information  
47 we have, the more solid our FRMP is going to be and the  
48 better off we're going to be able to fill some of those  
49 knowledge gaps. So, we appreciate any help we can get.  
50 Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Foley.  
So, with that -- Elmer.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Elmer Armstrong, I'll  
volunteer.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Now you've doubled  
your force. So, with that, if anybody else would be  
interested, please contact Mr. Foley. You can reach out  
to Grace to get his contact information if you don't  
have it. Anything else, Kevin? Good?

MR. FOLEY: Mr. Chair Not for the FRMP.  
But I am prepared to deliver a very quick update on our  
Partners Program if you would like to have that  
information.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, please.

MR. FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, the  
office of Subsistence Management posts a notice of  
funding opportunity for the Partners for Fisheries  
Monitoring Program during the spring of 2025. And this  
was a competitive grant for Alaska Native and rural non-  
profit organizations. The intent of the program is to  
strengthen Alaska Native and rural involvement in  
federal subsistence management by providing salary funds  
to organizations so they may hire a professional  
biologist, social scientist, or an educator. The grant  
also provides funds for science and culture camps as  
well as paid student internships. And so, this funding  
lasts for up to four years in total. And the Partners  
Program Review Panel, made up of subject matter experts  
across various Department of Interior agencies, have  
reviewed the proposals, and the office of Subsistence  
Management Director Crystal Ciisquq Lionetti has  
approved funding for three new partners. That includes  
the Bristol Bay Native Association, the Native Village  
of Eyak and the Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resource Commission.  
The next notice of funding opportunity will be sometime  
in the spring of 2027 for funding to begin in 2028. And  
if you'd like to learn more about this program, you can  
contact Liz Williams by email or phone, and our contact  
information can be found on the partner's web page at  
[www.doi.gov/subsistence/partners](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/partners), or if anyone here is  
interested, please come and talk with any OSM staff  
member and we will be happy to provide you with the  
information you need. With that, Mr. Chair, this  
concludes my update on the Partners for Fisheries

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1 monitoring program. Are there any questions from the  
2 Council?

3

4 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any questions at this  
5 time? Elmer.

6

7 MR. ARMSTRONG: So, Elmer Armstrong,  
8 Noorvik. That sheefish survey project that was denied.  
9 And do we have to put in another proposal for it to try  
10 to get funding again?

11

12 MR. FOLEY: Through the Chair. Council  
13 Member Armstrong. I believe you're referring back to the  
14 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program and one of the  
15 many projects that did not receive funding going into  
16 the future. So, what -- I guess the most -- the easiest  
17 way to answer your question is, is when we sit down and  
18 we develop PINs, if the Council -- if this Council  
19 identifies a resource, a priority information need a  
20 data gap related to Sheefish in the region, you would  
21 put that idea forward. And for members of the public you  
22 know agencies, not for profit organizations, anyone  
23 who's responding to the notice of funding announcement  
24 that we will put out that contains that they may apply  
25 again following the guidelines, much the same as they  
26 did. But you know, we have no control over who applies  
27 in the types of projects that are submitted. We can  
28 merely put forward the needs that are addressed in the  
29 regions. And then once again, we're sort of bound by the  
30 amount of money that we're able to spend towards each  
31 project and it's not an easy decision that's made. I'm  
32 just glad that I don't have to do it.

33

34 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Anybody on the phone  
35 have any questions?

36

37 MR. HOWARTH: No, not from me. Wilbur.

38

39 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Well, if  
40 anyone does have any questions, we'll be sure to reach  
41 out. Thank you, Mr. Foley, for your time. With that,  
42 we'll go back to the National Park Service. Is there  
43 someone that would like to do the Western Arctic  
44 Parklands Update?

45

46 MS. CREEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair, Members  
47 of the Council. My name is Emily Creek. I am the  
48 Subsistence coordinator for Western Arctic National  
49 Parklands and.

50

1 MS. KOELSCH: Hi, through the Chair. I  
2 am Jeanette Koelsch and I am the Acting Superintendent  
3 of Western Arctic National Parklands. I am also the  
4 Superintendent of Bering Land Bridge National Preserve  
5 in Nome. Emily will be providing you the brief shortened  
6 Western Arctic National Parklands Report.

7  
8 MS. CREEK: Thank you. So, if you don't  
9 have copies of this, I have some here, and I can get  
10 them to you when we're done. So just super briefly, we  
11 wanted just to highlight that we have some spring  
12 operations happening. So, some staff are leaving town  
13 tomorrow. They'll be at the Kiana and Ambler shelter  
14 cabin, warming it up for the dog teams coming through  
15 on the 440. We will have staff going out to (In Native)  
16 and Cape Krusenstern and working on the cabins as well  
17 as continuing filming for an oral history project. And  
18 after the large fires in Kobuk Valley National Park last  
19 summer, we've turned our focus to some brush piles at  
20 (indiscernible) cabin. Our team was not able to make it  
21 to the cabin a couple of weeks ago due to the snow  
22 conditions and will try again later this month. And then  
23 for spring our birding programs that we do in correlation  
24 with Fish and Wildlife Service will start happening  
25 soon. And the one project of kind of most interest right  
26 now for you is that Dr. Raime Fronstin will be expanding  
27 his wolf den monitoring project that he's been doing for  
28 several years. So, he'll be going from the one den that  
29 he's been doing and expanding to several other dens this  
30 year. That's kind of the brief on our Park Service  
31 Update. Do you want me to move straight into Kobuk Valley  
32 SRC Update?

33  
34 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Are there any  
35 questions before you do?

36  
37 (No response)

38  
39 Looks like you can move right in.

40  
41 MS. CREEK: Cool. And just one note. If  
42 you are interested in the projects that will be taking  
43 place this summer, we have our project list on that  
44 table and that will be all of the different projects  
45 occurring. So, for Kobuk Valley Subsistence Resource  
46 Commission. We met March 12th and 13th here in Kotzebue  
47 and I already shared most of those votes with you. And  
48 again, I can provide you with a copy of this letter if  
49 you would like it. The main order of business is that  
50 our Chair Tristen Pattee. He is a RAC appointed member

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1 and he is up for reappointment. So, I'm here today to  
2 ask if this Council would please reappoint Tristen to  
3 the Kobuk Valley SRC.

4  
5 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: I don't know. I would  
6 ask Mr. Pattee, do you wish to be reappointed?  
7

8 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair. Tristen  
9 Pattee. Yes, please.

10  
11 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Would we need to make  
12 a motion or what is the proper procedure?  
13

14 MS. CREEK: I believe you do a formal  
15 vote. Yes.

16  
17 MR. ARMSTRONG: Through the Chair Elmer  
18 Armstrong. I make a motion to reinstate Tristen Pattee  
19 to Kobuk Valley SRC.

20  
21 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, a motion made by  
22 Elmer. Is there a second.  
23

24 MR. HOWARTH: Second.

25  
26 MR. CLEVELAND: Second.

27  
28 MR. HOWARTH: Wilbur.

29  
30 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Seconded by Wilbur.  
31 Any discussion?  
32

33 MR. CLEVELAND: Question.

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

38  
39 IN UNISON: Aye.

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

43  
44 (No response)

45  
46 With that, Mr. Pattee, you have been  
47 reappointed to the Kobuk Valley SRC.

48  
49 MS. CREEK: Thank you very much for that.  
50 And now I can provide an update from Cape Krusenstern

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1 SRC if you would like me to.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, please.

4

5 MS. CREEK: All right. The Cape  
6 Krusenstern Subsistence Resource Commission. We've had  
7 a few meetings. So in January 29, the SRC met to submit  
8 a comment about the Federal Subsistence Program  
9 Programmatic Review. They had their regular meeting on  
10 March 10th and 11th here in Kotzebue and did not have a  
11 quorum. And yesterday we were able to hold a voting  
12 session on the wildlife proposals and special actions,  
13 which I briefed you on yesterday. There is one wildlife  
14 proposal that I just wanted to bring to your attention.  
15 There's no action required by the RAC, but because they  
16 did vote differently, we wanted to bring it to your  
17 attention. So WP26-66, which is about wolf hunting to  
18 align to state regulations. The Cape Krusenstern  
19 Subsistence Resource Commission as well as the Kobuk  
20 Valley Subsistence Resource Commission voted to support  
21 that as written versus a modification, which was  
22 actually to remove those two units from the proposal.  
23 The reason being was to align to state regulations and  
24 make it easier across the landscape. So, I just wanted  
25 to bring that to your attention. I do have a long comment  
26 from the Cape Krusenstern SRC, but in interest of time,  
27 I can just give you the letter if you would rather.

28

29 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, please.

30

31 MS. CREEK: Okay. Sounds good. So that's  
32 my update. At this time, we do have one vacant RAC seat  
33 on the Cape Krusenstern SRC. It just opened up. A member  
34 stepped down this last meeting. So, I will work on seeing  
35 if there's anyone interested to present to you at your  
36 next meeting.

37

38 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any questions at this  
39 time?

40

41 (No response)

42

43 Hearing none. Thank you for the updates  
44 and we will let you know if we have any questions. I  
45 will ask Ms. Robbin La Vine to come up for the Office  
46 of Subsistence management Update.

47

48 MS. LA VINE: Okay, that's my report.  
49 April Fools. Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and members of  
50 the Council and Member Leonard Barger of North Slope.

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1 It is great to be here. I'm going to do my very best to  
2 give you a trimmed down version of our OSM report today.  
3 Oh, and for the record, my name is Robbin La Vine,  
4 Subsistence Policy for OSM. I'm here to provide you with  
5 a summary of what OSM and the Federal Subsistence  
6 Management program has been up to since you all last  
7 met, which wasn't that long ago. And I have to say that  
8 so far for 2026, we have been dominated by compressed  
9 timelines, and we're still working to catch up after an  
10 extended furlough last fall. All ten Regional Advisory  
11 Councils were able to hold their fall meetings for their  
12 fall 2025 meetings. Eight of them were rescheduled and  
13 held in December and January and so huge kudos to OSM  
14 staff, the Council Coordination, Grace and the rest of  
15 her team for putting that together and making that  
16 happen.

17  
18 On February 5th, the Federal Subsistence  
19 Board met in Anchorage for this Winter work session.  
20 Among other things, they took care of a number of  
21 administrative tasks, including accepting the 2026  
22 Fisheries Resources Monitoring Plan. The results of that  
23 you have just recently heard. Additionally, they  
24 approved Regional Advisory Council transmittal letters  
25 to the Secretaries. And those topics included Council  
26 concerns around ANCSA 17(d)(1) lands, cross  
27 jurisdictional and conservation related fisheries  
28 concerns and Regional Advisory Council Member  
29 compensation. So those packages have been wrapped up and  
30 forwarded on to the new administration. Most of that was  
31 submitted to the previous administration.

32  
33 Tribal and ANCSA Corporation  
34 consultations on Wildlife proposals and closure reviews  
35 usually held immediately following our fall meeting  
36 cycle, they were held virtually February 17th and 18th  
37 of 2026. If you are interested in any kind of  
38 consultation opportunities with the Federal Subsistence  
39 Board, you can contact our OSM Tribal Liaison Orville  
40 Lind. And if you have any questions about upcoming  
41 opportunities for consultation, you can also speak to  
42 him. I can give you a heads up that the next time the  
43 Board will be meeting with tribal and ANCSA corporation  
44 entities will be April 20th at 1 p.m. at the Egan Center.  
45 As usual, the Board always holds an opportunity for  
46 consultations prior to a regulatory meeting. So that's  
47 going to be April 20th from 1 p.m. You can be there in  
48 person, or you can call in and participate online. And  
49 if anybody in the room or listening over the radio has  
50 any questions about tribal consultations, you can go to

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1 our website and there's directions to contact our Native  
2 Liaison Orville Lind.

3  
4 The Federal Subsistence Board will then  
5 hold its public meeting April 21st to 24th at the Egan  
6 Center in Anchorage to discuss wildlife regulatory  
7 proposals and closure reviews. As always, Council Chairs  
8 or Council representative will be in attendance as  
9 integral support and advisors to the Board as they go  
10 through all of these regulatory proposals. If people  
11 listening in want to participate in the meeting, you can  
12 attend either in person or you can call in. The Board  
13 receives comments on non-agenda items every morning of  
14 the meeting, and they receive comments on regulatory  
15 proposals as they come up on the agenda. August 4th and  
16 5th of 2026, the Board will meet in Anchorage for its  
17 summer work session. This has evolved into a great  
18 opportunity for Councils to have face-to-face meetings  
19 with -- or discussions with the board members. We are  
20 extending an invitation. Of course, all Council members  
21 and Chairs are invited to listen in and participate, but  
22 we are inviting the Chair or representative of each  
23 Council to show up in person. The summer work session  
24 is where a lot of Council business is taken care of,  
25 including a review of your Council reports and Board  
26 replies. We have a closed session to review and forward  
27 nominations for Council applicants and any  
28 correspondence that's going to the Board. So, this is -  
29 - we are really hoping as it grows, you know, we all  
30 grow in awareness that this is an opportunity for the  
31 Councils to have more insight and discussion with the  
32 Board in person, if possible.

33  
34 As mentioned earlier, the Secretarial  
35 Review of the Federal Subsistence Management Program  
36 open for public comments on December 15th, 2025. All ten  
37 Councils took up this topic and submitted letters with  
38 comments on the review. Many Councils also requested the  
39 comment period be extended, which it was, by 45 days.  
40 It just closed this Monday, March 30th, 2026. Statewide  
41 tribal and ANCSA consultations on the review were held  
42 March 10th and 17th, and tribes are encouraged to request  
43 a consultation with DOI on this topic at any time. A  
44 number have been scheduled and taken place already, and  
45 a few more are pending. At some point, I imagine that  
46 time for that will run out, but you can contact our  
47 office for more information. Kara Moriarty, the Senior  
48 Advisor to the Secretary of the Interior of Alaska  
49 Affairs has noted that all comments will be reviewed and

1 that no decisions have been made on whether the review  
2 will result in any programmatic changes as of yet.

3  
4           Once again, as shared earlier in this  
5 meeting, we are now accepting proposals to change fish  
6 and shellfish regulations. Anyone can submit a proposal.  
7 You can find more information on the OSM website. The  
8 period for submitting fisheries proposals ends this  
9 Friday, April 3rd. The Councils will make  
10 recommendations on these proposals during their fall  
11 meetings, and the Board will take them up during the  
12 fisheries regulatory meeting, February 2027. The 2025  
13 application submitted during last year's recruitment  
14 cycle are still under consideration at the Secretary of  
15 Interior's Office. Once the Secretary's Office completes  
16 its review and appointments are finalized, we will share  
17 updates and we're really hopeful that this will happen  
18 very soon. As you also know the Board opened a call for  
19 applications for the next cycle. Application forms are  
20 available on the public table and on our program's  
21 website for details, you can reach out to your  
22 coordinator Grace and Nissa. Applications must be  
23 submitted either in person or via email by tomorrow April  
24 2nd, 2026.

25  
26           The OSM fiscal year 2026 budget of 9.4  
27 million will allow the program to continue delivering  
28 essential services that protect and support rural  
29 subsistence opportunities across 22 -- 222 million acres  
30 of federal lands and waters in Alaska. While this amount  
31 is modestly lower than last year, OSM will prioritize  
32 core functions of the program through planning,  
33 efficiency, and focused effort. OSM will continue to  
34 uphold Title VIII and support food security for rural  
35 Alaskans. This concludes my presentation and I'm happy  
36 to take any questions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

37  
38           CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Vern.

39  
40           MR. CLEVELAND: I only got about 15  
41 questions to ask. And thank you. April Fools.

42  
43           (Laughter)

44  
45           CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any other questions?

46  
47           (No response)

48  
49           It appears that we do not have any which  
50 will bring us to Other Business, Correspondence Update,

1 Federal Subsistence Management Program Review Comments.  
2 Grace.

3  
4 MS. COCHON: This will be quick. As  
5 Robbin already mentioned there was the Secretarial --  
6 public comment period for the Secretarial Review of the  
7 Federal Subsistence Management Program. The Council  
8 submitted their comment letter based on the discussion  
9 at the last meeting. Chair Baker signed that on February  
10 18th. The comment period is closed and so the Council  
11 is not able to submit additional comments from this  
12 meeting. And I could provide a recap of the comments,  
13 but I know it is almost 5:30. Thank you.

14  
15 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Questions, comments?

16  
17 (No response)

18  
19 Hearing none. we'll move on to Council  
20 Member Closing comments. I'm going to start on the phone.  
21 Wilmer, do you have any closing comments?

22  
23 MR. HOWARTH: Yes, Mr. Chair. The past  
24 couple days has been very interesting and a lot of good  
25 feedback for those present, (indiscernible), those hard-  
26 working folks. All the staff and yourself, Mr. Chair.  
27 Real good job with all the discussions we went through,  
28 I hope we make a change and saving -- and hopefully our  
29 herd will go back up, and you guys have a safe spring.  
30 We're getting a lot of snow right now. It's been snowing  
31 almost all day, so. Be careful out there and just be  
32 safe. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

33  
34 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,  
35 Wilbur. Mike, do you have any closing comments?

36  
37 MR. KRAMER: I'm here. I'm here. It's  
38 been an interesting meeting. See how it goes next --  
39 within the next year. Hopefully it goes for the best for  
40 our caribou herd, but it was good to hear all the studies  
41 and, you know, try to encourage more studies to continue  
42 happening. You know, I've been nothing but ever been  
43 happy with all the biologists and all their hard work.  
44 You know, there's times where I do get frustrated, you  
45 know. Point fingers at times, but it's our livelihood  
46 that we're talking about here and we're making decisions  
47 for and our families and the rest of our people. That's  
48 all I have for right now. Thank you. I'm driving, so.

49  
50

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mike.  
2 Karmen, do you have any closing comments?

3  
4 MS. MONIGOLD: Hi, yes, I do. I just want  
5 to thank everyone for all their hard work. You know,  
6 this is my first year under my belt, just about with  
7 this RAC. And I've got to say, one thing I'm so amazed  
8 at is just the amount of information that we're given  
9 on the federal level versus the state level. And, you  
10 know, I mean, it makes sense because they have a lot of  
11 federal lands, but you know, having them separate I think  
12 is eye opening. And, you know, you don't realize the  
13 importance of the federal side until you go to one of  
14 these meetings and you're bombarded with just all the  
15 studies and all the work that people do to make sure  
16 that these meetings happen. So, I really, really  
17 appreciate that. I didn't realize quite how different  
18 it was from being on the Kotzebue Sound Subsistence  
19 Advisory Committee on the state side.

20  
21 All that being said you know, we should  
22 have more rights under rural preference and I would just  
23 -- I gotta pound that to the ground. So, you know, when  
24 it comes to the Board of Game, we're doing what we can.  
25 Just let people know out there that right now I think  
26 we're the only operating committee in our region. And  
27 I'm glad to hear that the Lower Kobuk might be coming  
28 up. So that'll be nice. And just thank you to everybody  
29 because it -- what we do is important. And to all the  
30 folks out there listening, you know, we're all going to  
31 take a hit. This is times where you have to start  
32 harvesting other animals. Start, you know, putting away  
33 different foods because well, there may be caribou right  
34 now. You know, outside of Noorvik or outside  
35 (indiscernible) or wherever. That rate they're  
36 declining, that is not guaranteed for the future. So,  
37 thank you everyone.

38  
39 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,  
40 Karmen. I'd like to ask our guests from the North Slope.  
41 Mr. Barger, I -- Well, Mr. Barger, do you have any  
42 closing comments?

43  
44 MR. BARGER: Thank you. I've been called  
45 worse. Barger. Burger. It's Barger. Thank you, Mr.  
46 Chair. It's very interesting. And, you know, we -- you  
47 know, we work together as one you know. Northwest, North  
48 Slope, Seward Peninsula. You know, all these places in  
49 Fairbanks and area, we're all fighting for our people.  
50 And it's very good that you guys represent our people

1 and stuff. And I like to see more people in other  
2 villages that come here. You know, there's nobody from  
3 Noatak, Buckland, you know, all these other places. But,  
4 you know, I'd like to say thank you very much. And I'm  
5 not April fooling. But people out there listening in the  
6 radio land, you know, voice your concerns and stuff and,  
7 you know, fight for your people. You know, we've got --  
8 you know, first time I ever, you know, see in a meeting,  
9 you got limit two minutes to talk, you know, to voice  
10 your opinion. And you know, when you voice your opinion,  
11 you know, you're talking on behalf of your people. And,  
12 you know, I just want to let people know, you know,  
13 don't be -- you know, I used to be shy, but, you know,  
14 I'm not -- I used to coach basketball, coach in Kivalina  
15 and Noatak, Point Hope. And, you know, as a coach, you  
16 know, I'm -- you know, I got all these white hairs from  
17 coaching the girls, you know. But anyways, thank you  
18 very much, Mr. Chair and the Board. You know, I'm glad  
19 to be back here again and hopefully later down the line,  
20 you know, I'm more -- you know, I'm hoping I'm welcome  
21 again. You know, it all depends on OSM for me to come  
22 back because, you know, I call her G, our Coordinator  
23 Gisela. You know, it all depends on them. So, I'd love  
24 to be back again and, you know, so thank you very much  
25 and bless you guys all.

26  
27 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Leonard.  
28 Tristen, any closing comments?

29  
30 MR. PATTEE: Yeah. I just want to thank  
31 everybody for a really strong meeting. There are a lot  
32 of meaningful presentations and discussions. I learned  
33 a lot today. We appreciate the Council, the staff and  
34 everyone who showed up and spoke for our region. This  
35 work matters and it's good to see people staying engaged  
36 and speaking up. I also want to leave us with something  
37 important. Our caribou are struggling and what we do  
38 right now matters. As a community, we've always known  
39 how to take care of the herd, and that means being  
40 mindful of what we take. We need to continue focusing  
41 on taking bulls and leaving the cows, so the herd has a  
42 chance to recover and there -- and be there for the next  
43 generations. I also just want to thank you guys for  
44 keeping me on the Kobuk SRC. And just as a reminder, the  
45 cow season is currently closed as of today. And it's not  
46 April Fools. All right. Thank you.

47  
48 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Tristen.  
49 Verne. Any closing comments?

50

1 MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you for a good  
2 meeting. And I will appoint Tristen Pattee as an  
3 alternate for the Upper Kobuk Western Arctic Caribou  
4 Herd Working Group. I'll appoint you as an alternate for  
5 the Upper Kobuk alternate. And thank you, everyone, for  
6 meeting. And thank you very much.

7  
8 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Verne.  
9 Elmer.

10  
11 MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Elmer  
12 Armstrong, Noorvik. Through the Chair. Yeah. Good  
13 meeting, good discussions. You know, the caribou herd  
14 is declining and we're trying to make -- trying to show  
15 that we're doing something. So, the Board of Game will  
16 see that we're trying to lower the hunting tags. You  
17 know, we're trying to preserve this herd. Otherwise, if  
18 we don't, it's going to get a lot tougher when we go  
19 into a tier status. And also, I think when people are  
20 not getting too much caribou, we're going to have to  
21 keep an eye on the moose count. If people are not getting  
22 caribou, they're going to get more moose. And also, we  
23 need to stay on reporting for our fishing. You know,  
24 like I stated yesterday, that fishing was pretty slow  
25 on the salmon. The temperatures are getting warmer and  
26 it's having an effect on the seasons. You know, as people  
27 that live and hunt through the seasons, we need to keep  
28 on top of that. I think if we keep going year after  
29 year, not seeing caribou, I think we might have to put  
30 in proposals to do hunting regulation changes to where  
31 we start hunting them in the winter. You know, I seen  
32 caribou tracks here and there on the peninsula, lower  
33 Kobuk. It's good to see, but still the numbers are  
34 declining, and we need to conserve the herd. Good  
35 discussions. We're only going to get better on  
36 proposals. Making policy changes, regulation changes.  
37 Thank you. Thank you to all the Council. You know, it  
38 shows that we're working together. We can't do this  
39 alone. And we're all representing the people. Thank you.

40  
41 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Elmer. I'd  
42 just like to say thank you to everybody, to the staff,  
43 to the folks listening in, to the folks that have called  
44 in and most importantly, to the members of the RAC. It's  
45 really inspiring the work that we do. When you think  
46 about it, it's been this Council over the years that's  
47 been pushing to make these changes, pushing to protect  
48 the Western Arctic Caribou Herd that's -- now we are  
49 getting other RAC that want to meet with us, that want  
50 to collaborate and make sure that we're all on the same

000148

1 page. So, thank you, past and present members. Thank you  
2 for all the work that you put in. I know we're all  
3 volunteers. I would just like to say have safe travels  
4 home. We've got a lot of work ahead of us. And with  
5 that, I would entertain a motion to adjourn.

6

7

MR. CLEVELAND: So, moved.

8

9

MR. ARMSTRONG: Second.

10

11

12

13

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Motion made by Verne,  
seconded by Elmer. All those in favor, please signify  
by saying aye.

14

15

IN UNISON: Aye.

16

17

18

19

20

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: And with that, we are  
adjourned at 5:36 p.m. on April 1st. Thank you,  
everybody. Have a safe flight home. Safe travels home.

21

(Off record)

22

23

END OF PROCEEDINGS

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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 148 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the NORTHWEST ARTIC SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME II recorded on the 1st day of April;

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 22nd day of April 2026.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rafael Morel  
Chief Project Manager