

0001

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

NORTHWEST ARTIC SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME I

NORTHWEST ARTIC HERITAGE CENTER
Kotzebue, Alaska
March 31, 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

Recorded and transcribed by:

Lighthouse Integrated Services Corp
877-261-2495
Info.@lighthouseonline.com

P R O C E E D I N G S

(Kotzebue, Alaska - 3/31/26)

(On record)

MS. COCHON: All right. Good morning, everyone. Now that we have some of the sound issues cleared up, this is the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting. Looks like everyone's taking their seats. And so, I think we're ready to begin and I'll hand it off to the Chair.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Grace. Good morning, everyone. This is Chair Thomas Baker of the Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Council to the Federal Subsistence Board. I'd like to thank everyone for joining us today. At this time, would anyone like to give an invocation or a moment of silence.

MR. RAMOTH: Mr. Chair. (Indiscernible) memory of Pete Schaeffer, please. Moment of silence. We got Karmen here if you want to open it. I learned a lot from him or we all did. So, if it's a moment of silence or a prayer by Karmen. I think that would be appropriate. By request.

MS. MONIGOLD: Through the Chair. Thank you, Clyde. I'm not much -- good on prayers, but I would like to say that if it wasn't for Pete. I wouldn't have gotten into the subsistence fight for our rights. And when we listen to his stories of what they went through to get us where we are today, you know, it wasn't only him but there was a lot of our elders that went and we wouldn't have what we have today if it wasn't for them. So, if I could do a moment of silence, that would be great. And just, you know, to thank his wife, Polly, and his family because he gave up so much of his time and so much of our time is, you know it's voluntary. So, Thank you. And, you know, for our love of Pete, we could give a moment of silence. Thank you.

(Moment of silence)

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Karmen. Thank you, Clyde. So, with that, we will move on to item number 2 on the agenda, which is Call to Order. It is now 9:07 a.m. on March 31st. I will call this meeting to order. Grace, can we please get a roll call?

0003

1 MS. COCHON: All right. Do we have Ms.
2 Karmen Monigold.

3
4 MS. MONIGOLD: Here.

5
6 MS. COCHON: All right. Mr. Thomas Baker.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Here.

9
10 MS. COCHON: Mr. Tristen Pattee.

11
12 MR. PATTEE: Here.

13
14 MS. COCHON: Mr. Micheal Kramer.

15
16 MR. KRAMER: Here.

17
18 MS. COCHON: Mr. Wilbur Howarth, Sr.

19
20 (No response)

21
22 All right, Mr. Clyde Ramoth.

23
24 MR. RAMOTH: Ramoth.

25
26 MS. COCHON: Ramoth.

27
28 MR. RAMOTH: (In Native). Meaning here.

29
30 MS. COCHON: Thank you. Mr. Elmer
31 Armstrong, Jr.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: He is excused for the
34 morning.

35
36 MS. COCHON: Mr. Verne Cleveland, Sr.

37
38 MR. CLEVELAND: Here.

39
40 MS. COCHON: Okay. With six out of eight
41 members -- eight seated members, we do have a quorum.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
44 Grace. We'll move on to item number 4, which is the
45 Election of Officers. And I will turn it back to you for
46 the election of the Chair.

47
48 MS. COCHON: Mr. Chair. Is it okay if I
49 do some housekeeping announcements first?

50

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, please.

2
3 MS. COCHON: Thank you. Okay. So just
4 welcome everyone to the Northwest Arctic Subsistence
5 Regional Advisory Council meeting. My name is Grace
6 Cochon. I am the Designated Federal Officer for today's
7 meeting. And just a few housekeeping items before we go
8 to the election of officers. For those in the room, if
9 you could please sign in at the -- on the sign-in sheet
10 at the table by the door in the back, we'd greatly
11 appreciate it. And help yourself to any of the meeting
12 materials. For those joining us virtually, you can find
13 the agenda and meeting materials online at the Federal
14 Subsistence Program website at www.doi.gov/subsistence.
15 If you go to the Regions tab to the left, please select
16 Northwest Arctic and then go to Meeting Materials.

17
18 And then also as a reminder, please mute
19 yourself online. Unless you are speaking, you can use
20 the Team's mute option. If you're on your phone, you can
21 press the mute button or dial star-six to unmute and
22 mute yourself. If needed, we will mute you, for you. All
23 right. And so, for the election of officers, in
24 accordance with the Charter, council members elect a
25 Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary for a one-year term. So
26 currently we have Member Baker as the Chair. Member
27 Kramer as the Vice Chair and Member Ramoth as the
28 Secretary. And so, I'd like to open up the floor for
29 nominations for Council Chair. And just a reminder that
30 the nominations do not need to be seconded. So, do we
31 have nominations for Chair?

32
33 MR. PATEE: I nominate Thomas Baker.

34
35 MS. COCHON: Thank you. We have one
36 nomination for Thomas Baker. Mr. Vern.

37
38 MR. CLEVELAND: I ask for unanimous
39 consent on the -- thank you.

40
41 MS. COCHON: Okay. Thank you.

42
43 MR. RAMOTH: Motion to close it. Motion
44 to close the unanimous consent for Thomas Baker Chair.

45
46 MS. COCHON: Okay. So.

47
48 MR. PATEE: I'll second that motion.

49
50

0005

1 MR. RAMOTH: Make a motion to -- if
2 that's done, Tristen Pattee as Vice Chair.

3
4 MS. COCHON: Okay. I think we need to
5 vote on -- unclosed. Yes. So, if there are no further
6 nominations for Chair we could -- we can vote on it. So,
7 we have Mr. Thomas Baker was nominated to serve as the
8 Council's Chair. All in favor, say aye.

9
10 IN UNISON: Aye.

11
12 MS. COCHON: Do we have an aye for Mr.
13 Kramer -- from Member Kramer.

14
15 MR. KRAMER: Aye.

16
17 MS. COCHON: Member Kramer?

18
19 MR. KRAMER: Yes. I'm here. Aye.

20
21 MS. COCHON: Thank you. Okay. So, Mr.
22 Baker was elected as the Councils Chair.
23 Congratulations.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Grace.
26 With that, we will move to the election of Vice Chair.
27 Are there any nominations? Clyde.

28
29 MR. RAMOTH: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Make
30 a motion to nominate Tristen Pattee as Vice Chair with
31 unanimous consent to close the nomination.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Clyde. Are
34 there any other nominations before we move into
35 unanimous consent?

36
37 (No response)

38
39 Hearing none. I would like to make a
40 motion to -- would we like to vote for closing the
41 nomination for Vice Chair?

42
43 MR. CLEVELAND: Let me move on that to
44 close the nomination in Vice Chair.

45
46 MS. MONIGOLD: Second.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, motion made by
49 Verne. Seconded by Karmen to close nominations. All
50 those in favor please signify by saying aye.

0006

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: And those opposed,
same sign.

(No response)

Hearing none. Congratulations, Mr. Pattee, you are now Vice Chair of the Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Council. We will move into the election for Secretary. Are there any nominations? Clyde.

MR. RAMOTH: Clyde Chair nominate Karmen Monigold. Despite -- she's nodding her head.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Are there any other nominations for Secretary?

MR. RAMOTH: I'll make a motion to close the nomination.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Motion made by Clyde to close nominations. Is there a second?

MR. CLEVELAND: Second.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Seconded by Verne. All those in favor, please signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: And those opposed,
same sign.

(No response)

So, with that, nominations were closed with only one person. Karmen, congratulations. You are now Secretary for the Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Council. So, with that Grace, I will ask you to take us back to item number 5: Meeting Announcements. Do we have any more announcements at this time?

MS. COCHON: Yes. Mr. Chair. So, for the Member update, the Council currently has two vacancies. We are accepting applications to join the Council, and those are due on April 2nd, which is this Thursday. If you or someone you know is interested, please fill out

1 an application. We have -- for those in person we have
2 some on the back table there or you can also access them
3 online at www.doi.gov/subsistence/regions/membership.
4 The Council's functions -- they function best when a
5 robust and diverse membership is part of the Council.
6 So -- and we thank all of our members who continue to
7 serve in their seats that expired last December. Thank
8 you.

9
10 Regarding public comments for this
11 meeting for those wanting to address the Council on non-
12 agenda items, there will be an opportunity for public
13 comments later today. The Chair will announce this
14 opportunity and call on those who wish to address the
15 Council. For those in person, please fill out a blue
16 card which is also located on the back table and please
17 submit it -- them to OSM staff. We have some lovely
18 staff in the back or you can hand them to me. And you
19 can do that either during the public comment period or
20 beforehand, or for a specific agenda topic as well. For
21 those online, please raise your hand in Teams, or if
22 you're on the phone, please press star mute -- I'm sorry,
23 star-five to raise your hand. For those on -- who called
24 on, please identify yourself for the record when you
25 speak by stating your first and last name your community
26 and if you're representing an organization. Also, if you
27 want to submit written comments instead of, or in
28 addition to oral comments please turn it into any OSM
29 staff in the room or email it to
30 subsistence@ios.doi.gov. And please be sure to include
31 your name and affiliation as well.

32
33 And then just a short reminder to all
34 that our meetings are conducted by Robert's Rules, which
35 helps us provide structure and maintain order throughout
36 the meeting. All participants, including staff, the
37 council members and public attendees, are expected to
38 be courteous and respectful in all interactions as a
39 matter of meeting etiquette. It is understood that the
40 nature of some of the issues addressed during these
41 meetings can be difficult or controversial. Although
42 some comments shared throughout the this meeting may be
43 passionate no insults or foul language will be tolerated
44 during the meeting. If any kind of unruly behavior or
45 insulting language from anyone occurs during this
46 meeting, please be advised that we will intervene
47 immediately. So, thank you, Mr. Chair, for allowing me
48 to share this information.

49
50

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
2 Grace. So, we will move on to item number 6, which is
3 Welcome and Introduction. So again.....

4
5 (Simultaneous speech)

6
7 MR. KRAMER: Mr. Chair. Its Kramer.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, Mike. Go ahead.

10
11 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. I don't understand why
12 we got two vacant seats when we had people that applied
13 last year and the year before because of the government
14 shutdown so I -- they even got interviewed. But still,
15 I mean, this is obviously a problem with OSM. We do have
16 -- we did have people that applied, they got their
17 interview but were never heard from. So, this -- the
18 reason why we have two vacant seats is because of OSM.
19 Thank you.

20
21 MS. LA VINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
22 is Robbin La Vine, Subsistence Policy Coordinator and
23 lead for the meeting. Leadership Team Representative
24 here at OSM -- or here at the meeting. And thank you for
25 your concern regarding where we're at in the nomination
26 process. OSM is also really sorry that it's taking as
27 long as it has. And things sometimes are slower than
28 we'd wish. We do hope -- we do anticipate hearing the
29 nominations from the last cycle soon, perhaps on
30 completion of this meeting cycle and we still need
31 volunteers to step up and apply for our next cycle. So,
32 we really appreciate your patience. We're really, really
33 sorry, and we still need your participation. So, if
34 there's anyone here who is -- whose seat is expiring at
35 the end of this year, please reapply. We hope that now
36 that we're kind of getting further into this
37 administration, things are beginning to click along a
38 little faster. Thank you all.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Robbin.
41 Vern. Did you have something?

42
43 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes. Do we have that
44 Robert's Rules of Order book here on the table or inside,
45 or do we have anything that we can follow with that we
46 can -- he said we have Robert's Rules of Orders. Do we
47 have the booklet here on the table? We have to have it
48 inside to have it in our meeting. Otherwise, we'll walk
49 out. Thank you.

1 MS. COCHON: I don't believe we do have
2 that reference for us. It's -- we try to follow it as
3 best as possible, but I don't think we have to follow
4 it to the T. We just do our best -- the best we can.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Clyde.

7
8 MR. RAMOTH: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I've
9 always thought in growing up like that in our Iñupiaq
10 values and like Wil over there from the Fish and Wildlife
11 Service folks from the -- there's Alex from the state.
12 Following Bob's rules of orders is simple. We don't have
13 to be real formal, as long as it's written in black and
14 white and follow just respecting the Chair and others,
15 I think we'll be okay.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Mr. Barger, did you
18 have something?

19
20 MR. BARGER: Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr.
21 Chair. This is Mr. Leonard Barger from Point Hope. It
22 would be nice to see other villages that represent their
23 communities. Not you know -- they're missing. So, it'd
24 be, you know, very specific for them to be here, you
25 know, representing their community and seeing the
26 agenda. You know, you see topics and stuff that are in
27 their issues in their area, but there's no
28 representation in their community, so it'd be nice to
29 have them representing them. So, thanks.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Leonard.
32 Did you have your hand up, Robbin?

33
34 MS. LA VINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
35 Council Member Barger. If I recall, this particular
36 Council has made it a strong intention on having a
37 diverse representation of their region on their Council.
38 And so as long as we get a diverse applicant pool, you're
39 in them. So once again, a plug for people to reapply or
40 to submit if they're interested, applications for the
41 next cycle. Thank you.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Robbin.
44 So, with that we'll move into introductions. And so,
45 what I would like to do is I will call on each
46 organization. And if one person in the room from each
47 organization can introduce who is there with them and
48 then we'll go to the phone. So, we'll start with OSM.

00010

1 MS. COCHON: Hello. This is Grace Cochon
2 with OSM, the Office of Subsistence Management. And I
3 am the Council Coordinator for today's meeting. And we
4 -- also in the room, we have Robbin La Vine who just
5 spoke earlier and then Kevin Foley as well. And he is
6 the fisheries biologist who will be talking to you later.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: We will move in the
9 room to the Park Service.

10

11 MS. CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. (In
12 Native). Good morning. My name is Annie Carlson. I'm the
13 Resources Program Manager with the Western Arctic.
14 National Parklands with our headquarters here in
15 Kotzebue. And with me in the room is Emily Creek, she
16 is our Cultural Anthropologist and Subsistence.
17 Coordinator.

18

19 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: And in the room, Fish
20 and Wildlife Service.

21

22 MR. WIESE: Good morning. Wil Wiese
23 Refuge Manager for Kallik National Wildlife Refuge.

24

25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: In the room, Alaska
26 Department of Fish and Game.

27

28 MR. HANSEN: Good morning, Alex Hansen.
29 Alaska Department of Fish and Game and with me today is
30 Kelly Marcus, Wildlife Technician.

31

32 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. In the
33 room, do we have any other organizations represented
34 today?

35

36 MR. JONES: (In Native) My name is Craig
37 Jones. I'm from Ambler, Alaska, and I'm here with the
38 Ambler Access Project.

39

40 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Craig.
41 Anyone else from any other organizations in the room?

42

43 (No response)

44

45 Before I move to the phone, I'd like to
46 recognize Mr. Barger. If you could introduce yourself.
47 Because you're not technically a part of our RAC but if
48 you could put your name on the record.

49

50

00011

1 MR. BARGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
2 Leonard Barger from Point Hope. And I'm on the North
3 Slope Regional Advisory Committee, so I'm here on behalf
4 of them. So, thank you.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr.
7 Barger. We appreciate your participation. On the phone,
8 OSM, anyone on the call from OSM?

9
10 MS. PILCHER: Hello, everyone, this is
11 Nissa Pilcher Co-Council Coordinator with Grace. Also,
12 online with -- from OSM is Liz Williams with the
13 Anthropology Division, and looks like Tom Plank with
14 Wildlife Division has also joined and I believe that is
15 it for OSM.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. On the
18 phone, anyone from the National Park Service.

19
20 MS. FLOREY: Hi. This is Victoria Florey,
21 National Park Service down here in the regional office.

22
23 MRS. FRONSTIN: Morning. This is Raime
24 Fronstin, Wildlife Biologist with Western Arctic. I'm
25 sorry I couldn't be there. I'm home recovering from
26 surgery, but I look forward to hearing from everyone.

27
28 MR. JOLY: Hi everyone. I'm Kyle Joly.
29 I'm a Caribou Biologist for the Park Service.

30
31 MS. OKADA: Good morning. This is Marcy
32 Okada Subsistence Coordinator for Gates of the Arctic
33 National Park and Preserve. And I'm based out of
34 Fairbanks.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. Anyone
37 from the Fish and Wildlife Service on the call?

38
39 MR. HANDER: Yes. Good morning. This is
40 Ray Hander with the Fairbanks Field Office, U.S. Fish
41 and Wildlife Service. I'm a Fish Biologist. I'm sorry I
42 can't be there, but I am honored to let you know that
43 I'm calling from the part of the country of Katy John,
44 Eastern Alaska.

45
46 MS. SWEENY: Good morning. Brittany
47 Sweeny.

48
49 (Simultaneous speech)

50

00012

1 MS. KLEIN: (Indiscernible)

2

3 MS. SWEENEY: Oh, go ahead, Jill.

4

5 MS. KLEIN: Oh, sorry. Brittany. Yeah.
6 This is Jill Klein with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
7 Service, Regional Subsistence Coordinator calling in
8 from Anchorage. Good morning. Go ahead, Brittany.

9

10 MS. SWEENEY: Thank you, Jill. This is
11 Brittany Sweeney, Assistant Refuge Manager with Selawik
12 Wildlife Refuge. I'm calling in from down the street in
13 Kotzebue so we can keep our office open. Thank you.

14

15 MR. CARTER: This is Bill Carter, Fish
16 Biologist, National Wildlife Refuge. I will be there
17 shortly.

18

19 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. Anyone
20 else from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game on the
21 call?

22

23 MR. HENSLEE: Hey. Good morning, Council
24 Members, this is Luke Henslee. I'm the Assistant Area
25 Management Biologist for Kotzebue Fisheries. I was
26 hoping to be there in person. I'm currently sitting at
27 the Bering Air terminal in Nome looking at a dense ice
28 fog, so hopefully I'll be there later today, but if not,
29 I'll be joining remotely. So, thanks for having me.

30

31 MR. SCANLON: Good morning. This is
32 Brendan Scanlon. I'm a Fish Biologist for the Department
33 of Fish and Game at Fairbanks.

34

35 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. Do we have
36 anyone from the U.S. Forest Service?

37

38 (No response)

39

40 Anyone from the Bureau of Land
41 Management?

42

43 MR. TOWNSEND: Hello and good morning.
44 This is Craig Townsend, Wildlife Biologist, BLM
45 Anchorage Field Office, and I'm joined here by Jake
46 Vialpando, our Field Manager. Thanks.

47

48 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Do we have anyone on
49 the call representing a tribe or Alaska Native
50 organization?

00013

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

(No response)

Do we have any members of the public calling in?

MS. LUBY: Good morning. This is Caitlin Luby, and I'm a Master's student at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

MS. STINCHCOMBE: Good morning, Mr. Chair, Members of the Council. This is Taylor Stinchcombe with the Wildlife Conservation Society, based in Fairbanks. I believe my colleague Kevin Fraley, our Fisheries Biologist, is also on the call.

MR. Fraley: Thanks, Taylor. That's right. And good morning, everybody. Great to be here and listening in.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Last call. Is there anyone else on the call?

(No response)

Hearing none. Thank you everyone for joining us today. So, with that we will move into item number 7, which is Review and Adoption of the Agenda. Grace, do we have any items that we'll need to move around or is the agenda set as presented?

MS. COCHON: I believe we're good for today being said as it is.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. Would anyone like to make a motion? Clyde.

MR. RAMOTH: Mr. Chair, I'll make a motion to adopt the agenda as presented.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Motion made by Clyde.

MR. CLEVELAND: Second.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Seconded by Verne. All those in favor to adopt the agenda as presented, please signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

00014

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: And those opposed,
2 same sign.

3
4 (No response)

5
6 With that, we have adopted the agenda
7 as presented. We'll move into item number 8, which is
8 Review and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes. It was
9 brought to our attention, there are some typographical
10 errors. Those will be clarified before everything is
11 finalized at this time. Is there anything anyone would
12 like to amend in the minutes?

13
14 MR. RAMOTH: Mr. Chair, I'll make a
15 motion to adopt the meeting minutes of the previous in
16 January. With the modification with the corrections.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Verne.

19
20 MR. CLEVELAND: Yeah, there's a typo on
21 that on the meeting minutes. Invocation. Clyde Raymoth.
22 That's spelled wrong. Thank you.

23
24 MR. RAMOTH: That's why I said
25 modifications.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. So, I'll
28 be duly noted. Thank you for that, Verne. Motion made
29 by Clyde. Is there a second to approve as amended?

30
31 MR. CLEVELAND: Second.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Seconded by Verne.
34 All those in favor, please signify by saying aye.

35
36 IN UNISON: Aye.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: And those opposed,
39 same sign.

40
41 (No response)

42
43 With that, we will approve the previous
44 meeting minutes as amended and corrected. We'll move
45 into item number 9, which is Regional Subsistence
46 Reports. So, at this time, who wants to go first? Tristen
47 Pattee, would you like to go first for the Council Member
48 Reports?

49
50

1 MR. PATEE: Yeah, sure. Thank you, Mr.
2 Chair. For the record, (In Native). My name is Tristen
3 Pattee. I'm from Ambler. I'd just like to share some
4 subsistence observations from our community since our
5 last meeting in January. Some I've repeated on here just
6 because it's only been a couple of months. So, this past
7 fall caribou arrived in early October. This was the first
8 time in several years that they came through before the
9 river froze, which led to a lot of boat traffic near
10 Onion Portage. The caribou arrived during a storm, so
11 river conditions were very rough. Even with the
12 dangerous water, many people still went out because the
13 opportunity was there. Thankfully, many community
14 members were able to harvest caribou. I've also been
15 seeing people sharing their harvests on social media,
16 which shows that people are still able to get caribou.
17 As a community, we've always taken care to harvest in a
18 way that protects the herd. I just want to remind us all
19 how important it is to focus on taking bulls and leaving
20 the cows, so we can help sustain and rebuild the caribou
21 population for the future.

22
23 Fishing conditions are mixed. Sheefish
24 harvest was good, but salmon was not as strong, mainly
25 due to the high-water levels that made fishing difficult
26 and affected the runs. We also set nets for (In Native),
27 pike in some of the creeks and did very well, which
28 helped provide for people that wanted some (In Native).
29 Since January, we're still seeing ongoing and increased
30 wolf activity very close to the community. Wolves
31 continue to come near homes and storage areas. There
32 have been multiple incidents involving dogs, and it
33 appears wolves may still be targeting them as a food
34 source. We're also witnessing more wolf activity near
35 Red Dog, where wolves have been observed chasing and
36 killing caribou, some off cliffs. This is something
37 people are continuing to see, and it adds to our concern.
38 Overall, it seems like wolves may be struggling to find
39 food, and we are concerned this could be connected to
40 the decline in the caribou herd. This situation
41 continues to be a safety concern for both people and
42 animals in our community. Those are my observations.
43 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
46 Tristan. Clyde, would you like to make a member report?
47

48 MR. RAMOTH: (In Native). My name is
49 Frank Ramoth. I originally came from my dad's side from
50 -- between Kiana and Ambler. And I speak my fluent

1 Iñupiaq language, but I'm going to try and speak fluent
2 English. But when we talk about traditional ecological
3 knowledge and share and being transparent. I think
4 during my time and experiences at Selawik with the
5 limited caribou numbers there's a beaver workshop coming
6 up in June. I helped the young lady that's going to be
7 running it. And they're asking from one representative
8 from each community that's going to be talking about
9 beaver, (In Native). So, (In Native).

10

11 I know were live on KOTZ but for our
12 community, we had very limited number of caribou. Our
13 fish of course were named after sheefish. (In Native),
14 meaning a place of sheefish where we have six different
15 species along with the (In Native) and other fish. It's
16 always concerning with the climate change stuff. So, my
17 main priority listening to our people not only from
18 Selawik but the whole area. We can call it region,
19 borough or whatever, but our Iñupiaq language, I always
20 say (In Native), our land. When we take care of what --
21 people like Tristan take care of Red Dog is environmental
22 -- comes from his heart, not his job, his heart. So,
23 when we take care of our land, our people, our resources,
24 our regulations, I always thought as long as we have
25 transparency, and good communication will go a long way.
26 I got a lot to report, but I think my little speech is
27 good enough. Thank you.

28

29 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Clyde.
30 Vern, do you have anything to report?

31

32 MR. CLEVELAND: Verne Cleveland,
33 Noorvik. Since our last meeting, there's not much. But
34 sure has been cold, all year. Very cold. And a few days
35 ago, that warmed up just like we're back to living again.
36 But there's abundance of caribou right by Noorvik and
37 they've been there all year. Very healthy caribou and
38 some guys started getting some sheefish from Callahan,
39 which are humongous and healthy fat sheefish and (In
40 Native). Man, they were yummy. (In Native). Thank you
41 for the meeting.

42

43 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Verne.
44 Karmen.

45

46 MS. MONIGOLD: (In Native). Hi, this is
47 Karmen Monigold. I just moved back to camp and -- at
48 Ivvik and we've, you know, been having a lot of caribou
49 going north. They look really healthy. A lot of pregnant
50 females. You know, there's wolves following them, which

1 we don't normally see in broad daylight. And they're,
2 you know, caribou come by camp and they're resting
3 because they're so exhausted from the chase. And then
4 the wolf, you know, goes a different way so then they
5 can rest. One thing that was brought to my attention was
6 that this past summer, a dog was torn off of its lead
7 by a bear sow with her cub, and all that was left was
8 the leash. And that was at a camp where, you know, they
9 have dog teams. So just to be careful because they are
10 getting hungrier and not finding enough food. And trails
11 rough, man, that ice road is a nice, beautiful thing.
12

13 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
14 Karmen. Mike Kramer, do you have any reports at this
15 time?
16

17 MR. KRAMER: I mean, not much his new
18 from last time. I didn't see a lot of concerns regarding
19 our caribou. We just had our Kotzebue Sound Advisory --
20 Fish and Game Advisory Council meeting last week, and
21 it looked like everything went well. A lot of concern
22 still about bears. I heard a lot of people going out.
23 There's still people out there whacking cows, and that's
24 not good. So, we're trying to make a difference. There's
25 so many people against us. Moving it down to 4 a year
26 but you know it's going to happen regardless. We all
27 need to work together and to be able to preserve this
28 herd. You know, I know we're going to have some guys
29 that don't care.
30

31 For the bears. Still unsure if our other
32 populations (indiscernible). I did hear a lot of people
33 had run ins with grizzly bears. They had one in Kotzebue
34 this last fall had to be taken down by some local people
35 because there's only one Fish and Wildlife officer, and
36 you can't be out there all the time. That's another
37 concern I'll bring up later. But a lot of foxes in the
38 -- around Kotzebue. Some (indiscernible) by the
39 elementary school and people are going to school. There
40 just not, you know, the City of Kotzebue, Fish and
41 Wildlife need to start getting out there and taking care
42 of these animals over there, especially by an elementary
43 school. I did see a lot of concerns about wolves in the
44 villages. See a lot of videos, pictures. You know, there
45 was a lot of concern about the salmon run. The
46 possibility, you know, hopefully they can try and get a
47 sonar in place so this coming summer they can start
48 monitoring the return to ensure that we have a future
49 return. But that's all I have for right now. Thank you
50 and good morning, everybody.

00018

1

2 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that.
3 Mike. Wilbur Howarth, have you gotten on the call yet?

4

5

MR. HOWARTH: Yeah. Good morning.

6

7

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Good morning,
8 Wilbur.

9

10

MR. HOWARTH: Can you hear me?

11

12

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, we can hear you.
13 Do you have any reports at this time?

14

15

MR. HOWARTH: Well, first of all, I'm
16 sorry about calling in so late. I was mistaken on the
17 calendar dates and so. Report. Well, there's -- like
18 Verne said, there's a lot of caribou right here behind
19 our neck of the woods on this side and all over the
20 airport airstrip area. Big concern is just wolves.
21 Everybody I talk with say they got to do something about
22 wolves. They're the ones keeping these caribou right
23 next to (In Native). So that's a big problem. I didn't
24 really get to fish this summer. I was too busy and
25 working, so. But Verne gave a good report on.

26

27

Fish are doing okay. The whitefish,
28 they're still nice and healthy, but they also seemed
29 like earlier upriver because I'd miss them. We usually
30 get them as soon as it freeze-up with net under the ice.
31 But by then there were already -- some of them just
32 oozing out of it, the eggs oozing out. Otherwise, we
33 still have bear problems close by, all spring, summer.
34 I hardly ever set net away from town. Last couple of
35 years I set net out of town area, the bears just tear
36 the net up and eat half of the fish. So, I haven't done
37 that in a while. Otherwise, (In Native). Good reports.
38 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

39

40

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Wilmer. At
41 this time, it looks like we've gone through all the
42 member reports. And just so that folks are aware, I'll
43 give my Chair's Report and then after that will be Mr.
44 Barger's report for the North Slope RAC update. I'll
45 keep my Chair's report fairly short as a lot of the
46 information I planned -- I had been planning to share
47 has been shared already. Just with the update of lots
48 of caribou moving north around the Kotzebue area and
49 people going out harvesting caribou. It's pretty
50 exciting to see the mailer that people in Kotzebue --

1 I'm not sure where else it's gone to, but there's a
2 mailer talking about caribou harvest. I don't know if
3 anyone in the room can speak to it officially or on the
4 call, perhaps, since I don't have my copy with me. But
5 -- Emily Creek.

6
7 MS. CREEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah,
8 that was prepared by Deb Lawton from ADF&G, but it was
9 part of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Communication
10 committee outreach. So, the committee worked on that.
11 I'm glad you saw it and hopefully people are reading it.
12 Thank you.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Emily. I
15 appreciate that. And you know, a lot of -- I'm excited
16 to see things like this because this is what we're
17 talking about every time we're coming together and
18 meeting is having these -- having this information out
19 to the public and making sure that we're getting the
20 word out to the people when there are concerns about our
21 subsistence resources, that we have the proper
22 information going out. So, people know this is what I
23 should be harvesting, this is what I shouldn't. So, I
24 just wanted to share my appreciation for that, and I
25 will close my Chair's report. We will move on to item
26 10, so the North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory
27 Council Update. Mr. Barger, if you could put your name
28 on record, the floor is yours.

29
30 MR. BARGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
31 is Leonard Barger from Point Hope, representing the
32 North Slope Regional Advisory Committee. And I don't
33 know how long I have time. I don't know if I have a time
34 limit to -- I've got three pages to report, but no, I'm
35 just kidding. But anyways, thank you. I love to be here.
36 I love to come to my hometown again, Kotzebue. And you
37 know, I grew up here. I graduated here in Kotzebue, and
38 I live in Point Hope now. And, you know, bad timing, you
39 know, we're getting ready for whaling in Point Hope and
40 everybody's all excited. Can't wait to get the tan and
41 you know, get the bowhead whale and the belugas and
42 stuff. So, but anyways, first of all, I'd like to say,
43 you know, my, you know, condolences, like, you know, our
44 memory of Pete, you know, he's a pretty strong person.
45 I talked with a lot of elders that passed on and I've
46 learned a lot from elders that passed on. And, you know,
47 we have to -- you know, those knowledges that we have
48 from them, you know, they tell us, oh, watch when we're
49 gone. Things are changing. It's not going to be just one
50 place. It's going to be all over. We see it. I see it.

1 Not just, you know, one community, it's going to be all
2 over. And, you know, it's hurting, you know, but you
3 know, we're here. You know Board -- the Board here.
4 You're representing your people. And your voice
5 especially, is really strong, that you guys voice your
6 concerns for your community. And I, you know, I retired
7 and worked and, you know, I try to go hunting more but,
8 you know, these people keep on bugging me to join this
9 committee, you know. You are a speaker. You know, a lot
10 of people don't like to speak. They're kind of shy. But,
11 you know, I do it for people, our Iñupiaq way of life
12 are traditional of hunting.

13
14 And, you know, we talk about rules. Back
15 then, they didn't have rules back in the 60s-70s. You
16 know, we didn't have rules. You know, one elder told me
17 that, you know, go get me caribou. I said wait, I have
18 to go get me a license. No, don't. You don't need a
19 license. Go get me caribou. I don't want to go to jail.
20 I don't want to go, you know, get a fine. But, you know,
21 I did it for an elder. He was 94 years old and, you
22 know, I got him a caribou. I said, it's going to take
23 me a couple of days to go get it, but you know. No, I
24 need it now. Go get it for me. So, I went and got it.
25 And, you know, I talked to some friends of mine and told
26 them, you know, I got a caribou, but I didn't have my
27 license. But you know, I got it for an elder.

28
29 And so those kind of things, you know,
30 those rules that we, you know, we -- but anyways, our
31 North Slope RAC, we talked about -- I know Alex, he was
32 in Barrow. Good to see him there. And, you know,
33 everybody was real excited for him to be there for the
34 State point of view and stuff. And, you know, it's always
35 good to have other people that, you know, represent, you
36 know, the -- their company and stuff. And, you know, we
37 see them on the phone, but we like to see eye to eye,
38 you know, get the input on them and stuff and, you know,
39 talk about their issues and stuff. But anyways, we just
40 -- I was just looking at this map you guys got here, you
41 know, this one here we talk about, you know, Unit 23.
42 Unit 23, it's -- includes Point Hope, you know, we're
43 in there Unit 23. But, you know, I brought up in our
44 North Slope RAC on mapping issues and stuff, and I was
45 hoping they would, you know, put Unit 26. You know, the
46 boundaries of the North Slope or the ANCSA boundaries.
47 You know, that were, you know, that was our proposal to
48 -- in our RAC meeting. And I see this map. That's a
49 pretty good unit, you know, Unit 23, but they don't --
50 it doesn't show Point Hope in there. I see Point Hope

00021

1 there, but Unit 23 is included as, you know, in our
2 boundaries. So, we all depend on the caribou. We all
3 depend on, you know -- we just got one herd, you know,
4 all the other places, they get different kind of herds,
5 Porcupine, you know, all that other stuff. And we just
6 depend on the, you know, Western Arctic Caribou Herd.
7 You know, we depend on it and we live on it and stuff.

8
9 And, you know, Anaktuvuk they're
10 suffering. They're really suffering over there. They've
11 got issues over there. Why? Game hunters, game hunters.
12 A lot of game hunters over there, and it's really an
13 issue. You know they put rules on us Iñupiaq. Why don't
14 we put a rule on the game hunters, the sport hunters?
15 Put regulations on them, not just us Iñupiaqs putting,
16 you know, giving us, you know, limits on hunting our
17 animal that we depend on. Those guys, the sport hunters,
18 they spend thousands of bucks and most of them just get
19 the antlers. They don't take the meat, most of them. You
20 know, I've talked to a lot of people over Anaktuvuk, you
21 know, over at the North Slope area where all the, you
22 know, the main road over there. A lot of sports hunt,
23 they just take the rack. You know, I see, you know,
24 guide hunters here. They see the meat when they come in?
25 You see the antlers. And I saw a video on Facebook one
26 time, one hunter was at Alaska Airlines. I don't know
27 if you've seen it, but there was a hunter there really
28 bawling out that guy at Alaska Airlines. Don't touch my
29 f-ing antler and he was a cargo guy at Alaska Airlines,
30 bawling him out. I see that video that was like 2 or 3
31 years ago. One sport hunter really bawling out that guy.
32 You know, really getting mad at him. He was -- he's from
33 down states. The guy, he was a Native here. He was a
34 cargo guy, and he was just doing his job as a cargo.

35
36 But anyways, to the point is, you know,
37 North Slope, I got a, you know Gisela, I call her G our
38 Coordinator for the North Slope. She gave me a --
39 guidelines and stuff on this paper that I, you know. And
40 she told me, you know, if you're going to wear two hats,
41 I'm not wearing two hats. I'm wearing one hat. It's for
42 my people. I'm talking for my people. That's my one hat.
43 Not two hats. I know it must be, you know, Northwest
44 Arctic. But the North Slope -- Northwest is my home. I
45 grew up here, but I got family here. And you know I love
46 it. You know, each community in the northwest, I've got
47 a lot of friends here Clyde, Verne. You know, I grew up
48 with these guys around here in the area. I just get to
49 know Tristan. I know he's from Ambler. And, you know,
50 good to know people. I know Thomas, his parents. I know

1 his parents, his mom and dad. His mom, I graduated with
2 her. Her dad, you know, he's a good ball player. Karmen,
3 you know, I -- like you said, you know, you look like
4 your mom. I know you do look like your mom, but anyways.

5
6 But, you know, to the point on the
7 reporting and stuff we've discussed on the -- let me see
8 that Unit 26A you know, we proposed and request that,
9 you know, caribou harvest and stuff and the language I
10 brought up to the language. You know, the four and one.
11 People don't understand. They think it's per household.
12 It's not. It's per person. We have to language that
13 proposal because they misunderstand. Because they don't
14 -- you know, they think it's per household. It's not per
15 household. It's per person. What you guys are
16 regulating, you know. So, I brought that up in our North
17 Slope RAC. You got to re-language that, you know, the
18 proposal you guys are bringing up because they think,
19 you know, it's per person, per household. So, I talked
20 to a lot of people and say, oh, per person. Oh, that's
21 good. You know, that's good, you know, to work. Because
22 that's -- that was the main issue was, you know, we talk
23 about caribou. We live on caribou.

24
25 And I would like to bring up another
26 issue. I don't see it on the agenda. You know, the Norton
27 Sound, you know, the fishery and also the beluga. You
28 know, I would love to have a good meeting here in
29 Kotzebue about the beluga stock. A lot of people love
30 the beluga here in the Northwest Arctic. You know, that's
31 another issue of the beluga. We have to bring it up. We
32 have to fight, you know, to bring that stock alive. I'm
33 on the Alaska Beluga Whaling Committee. I'm the Chair
34 now. My -- the person that was the Chair, he's a legend,
35 Tom Gray. He was a real nice person. You know, ward
36 harking [sic] man for his people. Fought for his people.
37 And you know, I was talking to him two days before he
38 passed away. He called me, 8:00 at night. You know, we
39 all talked to each -- me and him talk, you know, about
40 the beluga -- issues and stuff, belugas. Because I'm the
41 Chair -- Vice Chair and (indiscernible) words back and
42 forth and stuff. But yeah, I got a call and he got --
43 after this meeting we had that last time I got home; I
44 got a call from his wife. Your good friend passed away.
45 And I was like, oh man, really hurt. You know, I know
46 you just talked to him a couple days ago. And, you know,
47 I don't know if you guys know Tom Gray, but he was a
48 good man and strong voice, vocal man, and he was just
49 starting his reindeer herding. And, you know, I got --
50 the Board asked me, you know, can you go to his funeral?

00023

1 And so, I said, yeah, I could. So, I got stuck in
2 Kotzebue. Not Kotzebue. But Nome, you know, for a couple
3 days and you know how prices in the hotel, 300 something
4 bucks at the hotel and, you know. I waited there and I
5 called the Borough, the guy that runs our funding and
6 stuff. And I said, hey, might as well send me home, you
7 know, it's costing too much. I don't mind going back
8 home, but I got a call from Tom's wife. You know, we're
9 holding the funeral for you. We want you to be here for
10 my husband to attend his funeral. I said okay. I got a
11 call back. So, I called John Cedar, He was our Like
12 Coordinator, like Grace is. But I said, hey I got a hold
13 up. I hope it's just -- you know, I -- you know, prayer
14 is strong. Prayer is really strong. I, you know, I prayed
15 and I said, and I hope it's good tomorrow. Sure enough,
16 it was good for me to go to his funeral in White
17 Mountain. I got a niece lives there and it was -- you
18 know, went to see her. Surprised her. What are you doing
19 here? But anyways, you know, I said, oh, I'm here for
20 Tom's funeral. So, but anyways, I got there and, you
21 know, I, you know, brought some muktuk for the potluck,
22 you know, so it's good to have something different. And
23 all those people, you know, you never bring beluga. A
24 lot of people, you know, love beluga more than muktuk.
25 But you know, I brought some real soft muktuk and, you
26 know, they enjoyed it. And my mom, Helen Berger, she
27 lived at the senior center there. My parents are Blaine
28 and Helen Berger, and my great grandparents were Andrew
29 and Dolly Booth from Noatak. And I grew up with them
30 younger, but I got adopted to my mom's. My real mom is
31 Alice Adams from Kivalina and she was, you know --
32 anyways, I -- my mom, she was living in the senior center
33 there and I like to go bring some Native food that, you
34 know, the elders love, they grew up eating, but they
35 can't have it because the, you know, FDA regulations
36 they have over there. But, you know, they go stash. You
37 know, go hide and cut some beluga or muktuk for them,
38 you know. Hey, you want some? You want some? All cut up,
39 ready for them to eat. And they look like little kids.
40 But anyways, my mom, she was -- I don't know, you guys
41 know her, but she was real loud. Real loud lady. And so,
42 you know, I brought the big Beluga, I don't want white
43 muktuk, I want gray one. She pulled out her teeth. I was
44 like, mom, you can put your teeth in. I don't want white
45 muktuk. I want gray one. I was like -- there was two
46 other older, elder guys. And they all looked at me and
47 I said, you got one of them? They were like -- I could
48 see their eyes real big and like real happy. They enjoyed
49 it. You know that kind of excitement, you know, to see.
50 I go there once in a while and bring some, you know, the

1 Native food and stuff over there. And I would bring a
2 tote full. Sometimes I'd go bring them to senior center
3 here because, you know, they depend on it. Once a month
4 they would have a, you know, gathering of their Native
5 foods at the senior center. And I'm happy they do that.
6 And, you know, I go see them once in a while and they
7 always ask me, you know, try to give me something. I
8 told them, all I want you guys to do is your prayers.
9 Pray for us hunters out there that are out there whaling
10 because we're out there in the cold. If you guys
11 experience it, if you guys, you know, ever experience
12 whaling and stuff, we're out there in the cold whaling
13 for that animal, you know. It's dangerous sometimes.
14 But, you know, like I said, you know, we learn from our
15 elders and stuff. I learned a lot from (indiscernible),
16 from him. He was a strong whaling captain. I learned a
17 lot from him. If you are afraid that animal knows. If
18 you fight for those animals or say anything bad, it's
19 not going to come to you. All these animals, we fight,
20 we argue. Those animals are not going to come to you. I
21 learned a lot, quite a few from those elders. We argue,
22 we talk about it and stuff. They're not going to come
23 to you. I learned a lot from elders that passed about
24 these animals that we -- but you know, we hunt them. We
25 -- you know, most of us, you know, we do it for widows
26 and elders. We provide for them and also, I'd like to -
27 - closing is you know, thank you all Board members and
28 stuff. Good to see you guys again. Hope down the line.
29 Hopefully come again to, you know, see you guys again.
30 God bless you all. Thanks.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
33 Leonard. We really appreciate the opportunity to hear
34 from someone from the North Slope Subsistence Regional
35 Advisory Council. So, at this time, it is 10:06 a.m. we
36 have our opportunity for Public and Tribal Comment on
37 Non-Agenda Items. We have this each day. So, if you're
38 in the room and you would like to make a public or a
39 tribal comment on non-agenda items, we have the blue
40 pieces of paper at the back of the room. And if we have
41 anyone on the phone that was hoping to make a public or
42 tribal comment on non-agenda items and that would be
43 your time. You would need to state your name for the
44 record, and you would have two minutes for your comment.
45 I'm seeing no one in the room and at this time we don't
46 have any blue sheets. Is that correct, Grace? None at
47 this time. Anyone on the phone?

48
49 (No response)
50

1 Clyde you can stay at your.....

2
3 MR. RAMOTH: For the record, Clyde
4 Ramoth. I'll represent the Tribal Native Village of
5 Selawik this morning as the Secretary Treasurer. Our
6 main concern is that predatorial stuff. And thank you,
7 Leonard, for your talks. A lot of our people are
8 concerned, of course, like Ambler, any other community
9 that had issues with wolves. Some people are kind of
10 scared or hesitant to get their reports done when they
11 shoot or trap or kill the wolves, but I think it's --
12 when we talk about the predatorial regulations with the
13 bears and the wolves, I think that should be considered
14 kind of a more educational stuff throughout the radio
15 world or PSA, Facebook, whatever. I always think a lot
16 of our -- like I said, our people are hesitant to put
17 them down, but it's becoming a problem. Even our kids
18 walking to school. I got a six-year-old that loves to
19 walk, but not every day I could walk him to school, but
20 just the freedom of being out there. The number of wolves
21 are getting into Selawik and Ambler and Buckland and
22 Shungnak. Because the caribou are running away from the
23 predators. So, when we think about those kind of stuff,
24 I think my main thing is just bringing out more
25 educational stuff, more voice, whether it's on paper or
26 PSAs whatever it may be. I'm always going to say that
27 forever like a broken record. Thank you.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you Clyde for
30 your comment. Is there anyone else on the call who is
31 hoping to make it public or a tribal comment on a non-
32 agenda item?

33
34 (No response)

35
36 Seeing and hearing none. We will have
37 an opportunity for this again tomorrow. So, at this time
38 it is 10:10. We'll go ahead and take a 15-minute break.
39 And then when we come back, we'll move into the action
40 item. So 10:10, 15.....

41
42 (Off record)

43
44 (On record)

45
46 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. It is now.
47 10:36. If we could all come back together and

48
49 (Distortion)

50

00026

1 It is 10:36 we are going to move into
2 our action items. First, will be Relevant Fisheries
3 Regional Reports. Selawik River Sheefish Spawner
4 Response to the 2004 Landslide. Ray Hander and Bill
5 Carter.

6
7 MR. HANDER: I'm -- Rays here online.

8
9 MR. RAMOTH: (In Native).

10
11 MR. HANDER: Yes, sir.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: The floor is yours,
14 Ray.

15
16 MR. HANDER: Okay. I'm sorry. I'm a
17 little unfamiliar with how these slides might be
18 presented. Is -- there we go. Okay. Here we go. Thank
19 you very much.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: One second record,
22 Ray.

23
24 MR. HANDER: Okay.

25
26 MS. COCHON: Please accept my apologies.
27 I'm working on getting the correct screen shared in the
28 room.

29
30 MR. HANDER: No worries. And in the
31 meantime, would proper etiquette -- would you like me
32 to have my camera on?

33
34 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: If you'd like to, you
35 can, but we'll be looking at the slides that will be
36 full screen.

37
38 MR. HANDER: Okay, I'll leave it off just
39 for the sake of bandwidth and such.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right, Ray, it
42 looks like we have it set up in the room if you would
43 like to begin.

44
45 MR. HANDER: Okay. Thanks a lot. Okay,
46 for the record, I'm Ray Hander. I'm a Fish Biologist
47 with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Northern Alaska
48 Fish and Wildlife field office out of Fairbanks. Thank
49 you, Chairman Baker and the Council for the opportunity
50 to present this sheefish work on the Selawik River

1 related to the 2004 permafrost (indiscernible)
2 landslide. This information will probably be familiar
3 for a lot of folks on the Council -- and on the Council
4 and hopefully -- but beneficial to everyone. And my co-
5 investigators Randy Brown and Bill Carter, we want to
6 sincerely thank the Council for many years, like as in
7 about 20 plus years of support that you have provided.
8 And we want to also acknowledge the long-term
9 involvement and contributions by the Native Village of
10 Selawik, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
11 Sportfish and Commercial Fish Divisions, the Native
12 Villages of Kiana and Ambler on the Kobuk River, Selawik
13 National Wildlife Refuge and the Fish Resource
14 Monitoring Program. Okay. Next slide.

15
16 And we'll familiarize you, a quick
17 orientation with the places we'll be referring to. First
18 off, the red triangle there on the right-hand side, the
19 upper Selawik River, the permafrost thaw slump, the --
20 just downstream of that in the red circle is the sheefish
21 spawning area for the Selawik River. And then up on the
22 Kobuk River, upper middle Kobuk River -- above Kobuk is
23 the Kobuk River sheefish spawning area. And then the red
24 star there at Kiana. That's where the chum salmon test
25 fishery occurred with the Alaska Department of Fish and
26 Game, was the source of the -- many of the age samples
27 that we were able to get. And they were a incidental
28 catch to the chum salmon test fishery. We have the Native
29 Village of Selawik down by Silver Lake and, let's go
30 next slide please.

31
32 First off, we'll just kind of do a run
33 through of the permafrost thaw slump landslide, the
34 progression that it has taken since 2004 that initially
35 pushed out all this silt. And you can see on the upstream
36 and downstream side, on the upstream side to the right
37 of that 2004 picture, it's nice, clear water and the
38 slump as it poured out all this material and sediment,
39 it started changing the color of the Selawik River. You
40 can see the same thing still happening in 2009. All that
41 material that you see to the right-hand side of the
42 slump deposition fan. That's all -- all came out of the
43 slump as it grew. Next slide, please. And the slump just
44 kept on growing. And by about 2013, it started maturing,
45 so to speak. These slumps, they often fill themselves
46 in and they start being flatter and don't flow out as
47 much material. So, they start making or growing
48 vegetation in the -- some of the areas and 2018, you can
49 see it pretty much had stopped doing any thawing or
50 contributions to the river. Next slide please.

1
2 And then in 2019, Bill Carter was
3 looking at some remote sensed imagery and said, hey, I
4 think we've got -- this thing has started over again.
5 And so, it began thawing again, not at a full tilt scale
6 like it did when it was a fresh new slump in 2004. But
7 it did start contributing some sediment to the river
8 again. And then since then like here's 2020, you see
9 there's still active erosion going on and some
10 contribution to the Selawik River. Next slide, please.
11 And the slump has grown to about 1100 feet wide. This
12 is 2022. So, not adding anything to the Selawik River
13 sediment wise. Next slide, please. What we did see during
14 the height of the years that there was a lot of sediment
15 coming out of the slump was certainly sediment making
16 it down to the spawning ground for the Selawik River
17 sheefish population. So that's about 25 miles down from
18 the slump. And this is Shovel Creek, local name Shovel
19 Creek that comes in here. And this right almost -- right
20 in the middle of the Situk River sheefish spawning area,
21 which runs -- it's about a 12-mile stretch of river that
22 they choose. That is their spot that they return to
23 annually to spawn. Next slide please. And this is what
24 we would see in the fall, during those heavy silt
25 sediment runoff years. We would see this bathtub type
26 ring of silt that has been deposited within the spawning
27 area on the gravel bars. Just -- that was pretty strong
28 confirmation for us that that was -- silt was reaching
29 the spawning ground. Next slide, please.

30
31 And so that led us from the very
32 beginning back in 2004, we happened to be on the Selawik
33 River doing a sheefish project there. And we ran into
34 this a massive amount of silt, kind of glacial river
35 glade -- grade of silt load coming down. So how are we
36 going to -- everybody was concerned. The Native Village
37 of Selawik, the Selawik Refuge, our office. It's like,
38 wow, this is a -- this is something to pay attention to.
39 So, we figured that trying to get at as best we could,
40 an answer to this would be attacking it from an age
41 structure angle. So next slide please. So first off, the
42 silt that was coming down, what problems can that cause
43 for spawning habitat? Sheefish and other whitefishes,
44 they need a gravel stream bottom habitat for successful
45 egg survival and protection, water and oxygen flow.
46 Sometimes there's upwelling waters that help maintain
47 temperature for overwinter survival. But the silt can
48 penetrate the gravel and restrict that water flow and
49 reduces oxygen that might harm developing eggs. Silt can
50 also fill the spaces between gravels, and they change

1 it to a smooth rather than a rough surface where eggs
2 to settle. And then silt can also cover eggs that settle
3 into the spaces between gravels. And so, what we're
4 concerned here with it -- so sheefish and the other
5 whitefishes they are broadcast spawners. And so, they
6 spawn up in the water column and their eggs just -- they
7 are kind of negatively buoyant. So, they sink slowly to
8 the bottom and come to rest in the cracks and crevices
9 in the gravels. And so that's why the concern of covering
10 up gravels or restricting water flow. Next slide please.

11
12 So, we chose to evaluate the slumps
13 impact on spawning success using sheefish spawner age.
14 So, our age analysis, the -- we were curious of where
15 the sheefish going to return post slump, and are --
16 there will there be any age classes missing. Some
17 indication that there might be an impact to spawning
18 success. And we were also able to include Kobuk River
19 sheefish samples as a way to tell if the declines might
20 be affecting -- if there might be something else going
21 on that would be a region wide or just a Selawik specific
22 situation. And that picture there below, that's a
23 sheefish otolith. And when they get processed, the --
24 we take a small section out of the middle like you see
25 there on the bottom part that's broken into three pieces.
26 Next slide please. And so, to get the samples we -- to
27 -- for aging, we sampled 200 male sheefish from the
28 upper Selawik over the course of, wound up being ten
29 years. And we chose the males, we did -- were concerned,
30 if there was an impact going on, we did not want to
31 impact the females, the egg bearing females, and so on
32 -- and through the course of our work, we figured out
33 that males actually outnumber females about 3 to 1. And
34 we were also able to get samples, like I said before,
35 from the Kobuk River chum salmon test fishery. So that's
36 our team of folks over the time that -- sampling. It's
37 a sunny -- Frank Sannyberry there, on the left. Patrick
38 Foster in the middle there. And our team of folks
39 processing the Fish taking length, age, weight, sex.
40 Okay. Next slide please.

41
42 So, each fish has two sets of otoliths,
43 and they're found just behind the brain where those
44 little arrows point to. So, we were able to extract
45 those. We cleaned them up and seeing the same picture
46 again, we take that small middle section of the bottom
47 one and grind it down to a very thin thickness. Next
48 slide please. And so, all these fish that we sacrificed,
49 we -- early on made a deal, a contract. They got
50 permission from the Native Village Selawik because we

00030

1 were going to be trying to take so many fish that all
2 this Sheefish meat made sure that it was found its way
3 back to Selawik. And so, we would take these fish from
4 the study site up in the upper Selawik on the spawning
5 area and we would transfer them down to Selawik. And in
6 the meantime, we would -- while we would bulk up fish,
7 we would hang them to get them to kind of a half dry
8 state before we took them down and then transfer them
9 over into boats -- by boat for folks to take back to
10 Selawik, and that worked for quite a number of years.
11 We were able to get some very nice positive feedback on
12 that as well. Next slide please.

13
14 So here is a -- one of those thin
15 sectioned otoliths. And this happens to be the oldest
16 sheefish that we've aged. It actually came from the
17 Selawik River and the -- Bill is a good at explaining
18 this, but these -- the fish, they lay on layers of
19 otolith material over the years and it forms when you
20 thin section it, you get something that starts looking
21 like a tree ring structure and each one of these darker
22 lines represents a year. So, this one, the yellow dots
23 go in ten-year increments and allows us to accurately
24 age these fish. It's the most reliable way to age these
25 -- some of these long-lived whitefishes because the
26 scales are similar to salmon where they don't -- they
27 underage fish. So, this happens to just be the best
28 evaluation means. Next slide please. So, this
29 constitutes the ten years' worth of age data that we
30 were able to get from 2011 to 2018. And we took a break,
31 a five-year break, and then we sampled again in 2023 and
32 2024. That's kind of that big black line down there.
33 Just a little bit of -- couple of rows up. Just as a
34 notation breaker that there's a break in time there. The
35 takeaways from this graph is that we can follow these -
36 - it's a recruitment pattern that that occurs. And if
37 you go from like 2011 and you start -- you keep following
38 down all the way down to 2018, you can see the middle-
39 aged fish. So, fish age is on the x axis on the bottom.
40 And these are -- the little numbers in the top right
41 corner of each box. That's the number of fish that we
42 took each year out of each system, and that -- the bars
43 represent the percent of an age class that would have
44 been part of that sample. And so, each of those years,
45 we would reflect the number of -- or the age structure
46 of those fishes. So, you start out like in 2011 with the
47 -- kind of the fish into the main group, into the 18 to
48 20 age level. And then as you go through the years,
49 those fish, they tend to die -- they die off or are
50 harvested. And then once you get down into say about

1 2016, you see the younger fish coming in and replacing
2 those older classes that have died off. So that's
3 something that we found that occurs synchronously that
4 more or less at the same speed at for both Kobuk and
5 Selawik fishes. The one thing I want to -- the kind of
6 the take home message here is if you look on the bottom
7 two boxes years there for the Selawik, when we came back
8 in 2023 and '24, we were able to confirm that for both
9 of those years. And you see in the very bottom one where
10 the says the arrow pointing to the orange bar, 2004
11 (indiscernible) year, that is the year that the slump
12 occurred. And so, what we see now, all the age classes,
13 all those black bars and including the orange bar off
14 to the left, those are all fish that were spawned after
15 the slump. So, I've been able to confirm that that --
16 the slump, as best we can tell, has negligible, you
17 know, next to no effect as best we can tell on spawner
18 success. I think I'll leave it at that and not wear that
19 thing out more -- maybe leave that -- leave something
20 for some questions. So next slide please.

21
22 So, what have we discovered? So, through
23 the course of this work, we've figured out that Kobuk
24 and Selawik River sheefish, they live well into their
25 30s. And this is likely a life history advantage that
26 they repeat spawn over their lives. And they have the
27 ability to kind of ride out events like this slump or
28 other issues. And that spawners from the Selawik and
29 Kobuk, they tend to turn into adult -- mature adult
30 spawners at 10 to 15 years of age. And both the -- it's
31 pointed out earlier, both the populations have --
32 spawning populations have a similar recruitment
33 patterns. And I think one thing to note is, it's
34 important that the Selawik River sheefish have returned
35 to spawn every year since the slump started in 2004. So
36 that's, I think, a big encouragement. And then based on
37 our sampling, we, once again say, I think there's a
38 negligible slump effect on Selawik sheefish spawners.
39 Next slide please.

40
41 So, I think a lot of time here recently
42 and then not in the past few years is what else do we
43 need to learn about sheefish that are kind of lacking
44 for potential management scenarios? And there's some key
45 components to that, is along with this age data that we
46 presented, we need regular region-wide harvest
47 estimates. Spawner population counts whether we -- there
48 has been mark recapture estimates and sonar counts made.
49 And I think there's more of those potentially in the
50 works. I know there's proposals that have been brought

1 before the Council and hopefully those will be fruitful.
2 Like to encourage the spawner age structure evaluation
3 and five-year intervals. This would allow the potential
4 to identify problems either region wide that might
5 affect both populations, or if there was something going
6 on within one or the other populations might be able to
7 detect some kind of age gaps, age differences from what
8 we've identified through the recruitment patterns. Right
9 as we -- as it stands, we can't tell Selawik and Kobuk
10 River sheefish apart genetically. And so, there's
11 possibility of using otolith microchemistry to help
12 identify each stock of origin. And also, there's -- I
13 think there are other -- there may be other more advanced
14 genetic techniques that can be put into play. And then
15 in equal importance is just continued local observation
16 and reporting changes and -- to all the things that the
17 Council and their villages see and be able to report in
18 these Council meetings. Next slide, please.

19
20 And once again, out of the team of folks
21 that have been at it over the years here, the office --
22 Northern Alaska field office, the Office of Subsistence
23 management for the funding for all these years.
24 Sannyberry Selawik Refuge employee and main go getter
25 from Selawik, Ingram Clark, Patrick Foster, Charlie
26 Wright from Selawik, the Native Village of Selawik and
27 Selawik Refuge, the Native Village of Ambler, and ADF&G
28 for providing all the otoliths and data from the Kobuk
29 River. Next slide please. And once again, it goes to
30 nothing but a huge amount of effort over the years to
31 pull these projects off. So, thank you. I'll be happy
32 to take any questions.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Clyde.

35
36 MR. RAMOTH: (In Native). Great report,
37 Ray. Just thinking about the otolith and the age of the
38 sheefish and the studies like Bill Carter does with his
39 team. The sacrifice they take, the difference between -
40 - I think my main question is, with the climate change
41 is there any difference between -- I know you're studying
42 the Kobuk upriver Ambler area sheefish. And mind you,
43 the mudslide despite the vegetation growing. I guess my
44 main question is with the climate change all over the
45 Arctic, is there any similar studies or reports done
46 from Russia, Canada, Greenland? Anywhere there's
47 sheefish whitefish. I know our Whitefish population --
48 I mean, species are like 5 or 6. There's still one being
49 studied, the (In Native). So, the spawning periods are
50 changing. The concerns are overwhelming for people like

1 us that subsist and rely on the fish because the lack
2 of caribou nowadays. I'm just curious about an overall
3 question Ray, maybe Bill could answer to. Is there a
4 similar studies with mudslides and sheefish or whitefish
5 studies in the Arctic, as a general question.
6

7 MR. HANDER: Boy not -- sheefish in
8 particular? No, this is a -- the Selawik was a certainly
9 a probably -- I don't know if isolated is the right
10 word, but it was a -- something that has not occurred
11 anywhere else that we're aware of for sheefish. Because
12 sheefish occur in the Kuskokwim and the Yukon. And then
13 Selawik, Kobuk drainages. And so, the Fish and the
14 Kuskokwim and the Yukon, you know, they navigate glacial
15 river mileage all the time, back and forth, long
16 migrations and then they spawn, you know, at near freeze
17 up when the water clears up, which is the same thing
18 that Kobuk and Selawik sheefish do. So, there's -- that's
19 not exactly answering your questions, but I -- you know,
20 as far as studies of sediment causing problems for fish,
21 that's a very well-known issue. There's been a lot of
22 salmon studies that have looked at that. Whether the
23 sedimentation causes is human caused or natural caused.
24 When you have enough of a problem with sediment building
25 up in a spawning ground, it could cause problems for egg
26 development. And I think -- one of the things that I've
27 come to figure out here with the sheefish on the Selawik
28 River is that luckily the distance between the slump and
29 the spawning ground was -- at least as far away as it
30 was, because I think the dilution of sediment coming
31 down, by the time it got to the spawning ground, it was
32 not heavy enough to cause a problem. And so, in a lot
33 of times the habitat with the whitefish spawning areas,
34 including sheefish, there is some habitat quality there.
35 A lot of times we suspect there's upwelling water that
36 helps us keep the temperature so -- at a level that the
37 eggs don't freeze or anything like that over the winter.
38 And so that upwelling water also comes into play as a
39 possibility for maintaining egg survival. But yeah.
40 Clyde to answer your question again, there's not a lot
41 of studies that are specific to whitefish or sheefish.
42

43 MR. RAMOTH: Follow up, Mr. Chair. Gee
44 Ray, you haven't aged a bit. So, follow up question with
45 the mudslides and the stuff that Bill studies and we get
46 good transparent reports from Wil Wiese with our tribe.
47 And I'm always curious about the mudslide. Is it --
48 going back to my second question, I guess, is it in the
49 Arctic area, whether it's Russia, Canada, Greenland. Is
50 there any other mudslide that might be impacted by any

1 kind of fish or studies that's being done? Although you
2 guys got -- I mean, we got reports, but is there like a
3 ICC or any kind of international reports that you might
4 know Ray?

5
6 MR. HANDER: I've studied the literature
7 quite a bit as looking for those very questions, trying
8 to find somebody that's studying fish below a spawning
9 ground and they're -- or excuse me, studying fish below
10 a permafrost thaw event and there certainly are folks
11 doing that. They are -- there are some that are looking
12 at metals and different chemicals that might be
13 unearthed when those slides happen. And yes, and there
14 are in the broad scope of wherever permafrost occurs.
15 There's certainly -- there are studies going on trying
16 to understand the downstream effects of -- I think the
17 closer you get to the origin of a slump or a landslide
18 source like that, the heavier the materials are. They
19 fall out close downstream from those events. And then
20 they certainly will kind of paste the stream bottom so
21 that you take out the small insects that live in the --
22 aquatic insects and things that, you know, and then
23 things that feed on them may suffer. That's the
24 downstream effects. There are certainly people looking
25 at that and -- but as far as like one great big report,
26 I will -- let me get back to you on that because I know
27 that I can't spot on say in the literature where I've
28 run across that recently. But I know over the course of
29 the years, I've run across some of those type reports.

30
31 MR. RAMOTH: Thank you, Ray. I'll -- both
32 Bill and Wil got my cell phone number. Thank you.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Verne.

35
36 MR. CLEVELAND: So, you're saying that
37 the spawning areas do change for the sheefish. Are you
38 saying that that the spawning areas change for the
39 sheefish?

40
41 MR. HANDER: No. I don't think that the
42 slump -- as best we can tell, because of the returning
43 -- the fish that became old enough to go spawn after the
44 slump happened. They're -- all those fish are coming
45 back to spawn, so we don't think that anything dramatic
46 happened in the spawning area. Otherwise, I think we
47 would have detected some weak or missing age classes of
48 returning fish. And the other thing that we've learned
49 over the years, we've done some radio tagging studies
50 on Selawik sheefish. One back in the mid-1990s and then

1 again in about 2005. And we learned spot on that those
2 Selawik sheefish, they go to that certain spot in the
3 river, that is their home when they go to spawn. And so,
4 we fortunately had that information to pretty much put
5 a -- put up lines on the map almost on the upstream end
6 and the downstream end of the spawning area. So, we're
7 -- yeah, best we know they are still going there without
8 any changes. Thank you.

9
10 MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you. And also, I
11 witnessed that on the Selawik and Kobuk were -- I mean
12 Selawik and Kobuk Lake right on the edge of Selawik Lake
13 that there are thousands and thousands of fish jumping.
14 Sheefish. I mean, it was quite a sight. I'm surprised
15 nobody don't have a picture of it because if it's not -
16 - there was a million. I mean, just jumping over the
17 water. I had -- took some pictures of it and I
18 accidentally dropped my phone in the water, so the
19 pictures were gone. So, it was -- we're picking berries
20 late July and we ran into this by the age of Selawik,
21 what we call a (In Native). And there were thousands of
22 fish jumping. You could get a dip net and get a load of
23 fish. But we didn't do that, we were -- our minds was
24 on berries, so. Someone had to go take pictures of that
25 area when -- about late July. That's pretty -- quiet a
26 sight to see. Thank you.

27
28 MR. HANDER: That'd be cool. Thank you.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any other questions
31 for Ray or Bill at this time? Leonard.

32
33 MR. BARGER: Yes, Mr. Chair Leonard from
34 Point Hope. Back five years ago, one of my friends, we
35 do a lot of fishing on the coastline and Point Hope, and
36 he went and texted me, hey, can you come over and go see
37 this fish? I don't know what it is. Went over there and
38 it was a sheefish caught in Point Hope. So, you know,
39 they come up there. So that was the first. And so yeah,
40 I just want to let you guys know that, you know, sheefish
41 do come once in a while up there, up north. So, thanks.

42
43 MR. HANDER: Yeah, that that's great.
44 Yeah. Thank you for that report because I know one of a
45 colleague, Kevin Fraley, he's online. He's been doing
46 some, some work trying to figure out about kind of how
47 far north and south the sheefish travel outside of the
48 strait they're coming out of between Kotzebue and into
49 Kotzebue Sound. So, thank you.

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any other questions
2 from the Council at this time? Leonard.

3
4 MR. BARGER: Yeah, I forgot to say we
5 also got -- two years ago, there was a wolf fish. I
6 don't know if you guys know what's a wolf fish. It's got
7 real strong teeth, you know. And one of my nephews said
8 the same thing. He asked me, hey, can you go see what's
9 this? And I said take a picture of it. I don't want to
10 go over there. I'm tired of going back and forth. You
11 know, I want to stay where my net is. So, he took a
12 picture and there was a wolf fish. I was like, you know,
13 I know some people that you know, do fishing and stuff.
14 And I texted him, hey, how -- do you know what kind of
15 fish is this? Right away he just said, it's wolf fish.
16 So, if you Google fish, you know, like that paper over
17 there, you know, all that stuff. But yeah, I just wanted
18 to bring that up. I forgot to bring it up through that
19 wolf fish's comes up there once (indiscernible).

20
21 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Verne.

22
23 MR. CLEVELAND: Yeah. With this global
24 warming in effect with our waters warming up, how long
25 do you think the fish will last with the water warming
26 up? And how far up are they going to spawn, or if they
27 spawn at all with the global warming?

28
29 MR. HANDER: Oh, boy. That's -- I would
30 say that's the million-dollar question. And I think it
31 will certainly be an encouragement for the Council to
32 support any kind of temperature and water quality
33 monitoring on the Selawik and Kobuk Rivers because I
34 know at least in the -- oh, I think it was 2014 that the
35 Kobuk River had a warming event that caused a die off
36 of chum salmon. And I'm pretty sure there -- if I
37 remember correctly, there were some whitefishes and
38 maybe some sheefish that that also died in that event.
39 So, I think it's going to be very important to continue
40 to monitor our streams to try and understand how that
41 goes and not only the streams, but once again, get at
42 those recommendations of being able to get a handle on
43 the number of spawners that are going up to spawn
44 annually. And then trying to figure out the difference
45 -- we can tell the difference out in the common
46 environment for the Selawik and Kobuk sheefish when they
47 get out into Kobuk Lake and Selawik Lake, things like
48 that. Because we don't -- right now, we just, if you
49 pull the fish out, there would be no way to assess which
50 stream it came from.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

MR. CLEVELAND: (In Native).

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Clyde.

MR. RAMOTH: Clyde Ramoth, for the record. Ray and Bill question, probably and Wil. We know there are different species of whitefish, meaning the humpback, the broad whitefish, the least cisco, the other ciscos [sic]. I know in Selawik -- my mom still talks about -- and mind you, she's 88 and she talks about the (In Native), the Selawik Fish River, which is toward the headwaters, towards Kiana. And the Selawik River is like 156 miles from the headwaters of the hot springs, but I want to pose the question, is there more studies or is there more money that we should look for whitefish habitat? How they could change from climate change? And I know there's a beaver workshop here coming up in June and how the impacts of the igloos and the dams are impacting just our fish alone. Because like I mentioned before, and I'll keep mentioning with the lack of caribou now, we rely on fish more solely. I mean, Selawik are named after -- it means a place of sheefish. So, we rely on fish a lot. Matter of fact, I can't wait to go home and jig for some pikes. And the (In Native), the fish river, Selawik fish river, whitefish. Is there more money needed or more studies being done? Ray, Bill or Wil?

MR. HANDER: I think I'd throw that one to Bill. I know he's been heading up that way, and I think that'd be the better person.

MR. CARTER: For the record, Bill Carter, Fish Biologist, Selawik National Wildlife Refuge. Yeah. Member Raymond -- or Ramoth. Sorry. Yeah. So, we are currently working on a eDNA study to identify spawning areas. We know about the Fish River spawning area, and we know that they -- that there's humpbacks and broad whitefish that also spawn with the sheefish and about the same area. But a radio telemetry study from around 2013 that Randy Brown did, identified those spawning areas, in fact, a lot of the broad whitefish that he tagged around Selawik actually went into the Kobuk. But then there's some confounding stuff. The least ciscos [sic] and the and the broad Whitefish should have been in a stream as we know it as a spawning area, but they were all out -- they were mature size, so we expected them to spawn. They were all out in Selawik Lake. And there's records of whitefish, lake whitefish, which are

1 similar to our humpback whitefish in the Great Lakes
2 that spawn on reefs like lake trout do. So, there's more
3 possibilities there. The biggest issue is accessing
4 those areas during the spawning time, which we all know,
5 Selawik Lake is a really dangerous place to be in late
6 September through freeze up, so. It just -- it makes it
7 logistically difficult to study the lake, but we are
8 working on identifying all the spawning areas on the
9 Refuge. As far as you know, any possible spawning areas
10 outside the two that we already know.

11
12 MR. RAMOTH: Oh, I didn't realize I had
13 my mic on. Maybe I had a follow up question. Thank you,
14 Bill. And I appreciate you guys hard work. I mean, it's
15 endless work. I mean, just the otolith for me to
16 understand that the age of like 30-year-old sheefish
17 means a lot to us. But going back to a general question,
18 I think, if we could find some more monies to study the
19 different species of Whitefish, even if it's from that
20 inland lake towards different areas of Selawik because
21 we got 10,000 lakes and ponds, there's areas that's hard
22 to get to and through because of the climate change, the
23 shallows. I know from oral traditional ecological
24 knowledge and studies and stuff, I've read and ask
25 personal questions where they used to harvest a lot of
26 different species of whitefish is quite interesting
27 because we could say humpback, we could say broad fish,
28 we could say different kinds of ciscos [sic]. But it's
29 quite interesting how they even change because of how
30 they have to spawn, how they have to thicken their skin
31 and their scales. We might have a new species. I mean,
32 it's just interesting. So, I guess my main question is,
33 is it hard to get monies for more whitefish studies in
34 upper Kobuk and Selawik or Buckland River or anything
35 of that nature, Noorvik area.

36
37 MR. CARTER: Bill Carter again. Getting
38 money is always an issue. What you're talking about,
39 scientists call ecophenotypic polymorphism, means they
40 change to meet whatever environment they're in.
41 Genetically, they may not be different, but they
42 basically -- if they change -- if they are eating stuff
43 off gravelly bottoms, they might change their morphology
44 the way they look, the way their mouths are. So, they
45 can exploit that resource as best to their ability. So,
46 the sheefish genome is very plastic. It can change very
47 easily. But the fish itself, you'd recognize as a
48 humpback or a broad, it takes really spawning
49 differentiation so spawning in different areas to really
50 become a different species.

1

2 MR. CLEVELAND: One more question. Yes,
3 you can tell the difference between Selawik and Kobuk
4 Lake fish sheefish. Because I tested my mother in law
5 about 25 years ago, and she said, this is from Selawik
6 Lake, and this is from Kobuk Lake. Because the Kobuk
7 Lake Fish was a lot firmer, a lot more firm meat, and
8 the Selawik Lake was easy to bake. I don't know what
9 that means, but it's a lot softer than the Kobuk Lake
10 fish. That's where I learned that what she said about
11 the Selawik Lake and the Kobuk Lake. Yes, you can tell.
12 Thank you.

13

14 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Verne. Any
15 final questions? Comments? Clyde.

16

17 MR. RAMOTH: Our Fish tastes more
18 muddier.

19

20 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair.

21

22 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Is that Wilmer?

23

24 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah, for the record Wilbur
25 Howarth. Noorvik. Clyde had some good comments and
26 questions there. For studying where and who does
27 studying the climate change folks like the meeting I
28 went to all over the world -- where people from all over
29 the world that -- just like subsistence folks. That would
30 be a real good question for -- to bring up that climate
31 change because we did a lot of -- on the sea mammals.
32 We got information from all over the world, like Norway,
33 for instance, they did studies on the walrus, and they've
34 been building platforms because of climate change to ice
35 disappearing. And studies should be -- that's a good
36 place to be brought up about our fish. Because maybe ten
37 years ago or so I got a fish and I showed it to Francis
38 (indiscernible), my neighbor. And she said, those fish,
39 they're little whitefish with the big brown eyes almost
40 look like a herring, but they came from way up above the
41 Selawik or in the Selawik River, where there was some
42 place, some kind of lake, she said. But yeah, we get
43 them now here in the Kobuk. So, Clyde got good questions
44 for Ray. And thank you, Ray. Thank you, Bill. That's
45 all.

46

47 MR. HANDER: You're welcome.

48

49 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair.

50

00040

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
2 Wilmer. Any other questions, comments from other members
3 of the Council?

4
5 (No response)

6
7 Hearing and seeing none. Thank you,
8 gentlemen, for the answers to the questions and for the
9 presentation and the report. Would we like to move right
10 into the summary of sheefish research and knowledge, or
11 did we cover that? The floor is yours if you want to
12 push the button.

13
14 MR. CARTER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again
15 Bill Carter, Selawik National Wildlife Refuge. Just a
16 second, until we get the presentation up here. I'm going
17 to run through the first four slides here pretty quickly
18 because there are a lot of words, not my normal
19 presentation. And then we'll get to the -- hopefully
20 I'll leave lots of time for questions. Maybe some of
21 them have already been answered, but I gave you a
22 printout of my hand out here at the break so, and I also
23 handed out a bibliography of all the studies that I
24 included when I made this presentation. They -- it does
25 have hotlinks in it. So, if you want the actual document
26 so that you can get -- use those hotlinks rather than
27 typing out those whole things, you can ask the Council
28 Coordinator for that document later. Next slide please.

29
30 MR. RAMOTH: What does bi.....

31
32 MR. CARTER: Bibliography?

33
34 MR. RAMOTH: What does that mean?

35
36 MR. CARTER: It means a list of studies.
37 Okay, so my first slide here is well, what we often
38 refer to as the godfather of whitefish, Ken Alt. He was
39 the first person to do intensive studies in the region.
40 He started working on his Master's degree actually in
41 the 60s. Worked all the way through the 80s, has 40 or
42 more papers and reports not specifically on this area,
43 but a lot of them have to do with this area. His biggest
44 contribution when he was doing that was his tagging
45 efforts. Tagged almost 25 -- or sorry 2500 fish both in
46 the Kobuk and Selawik. And he found -- he was the first
47 one to find out that these fish home to their spawning
48 areas. And they're pretty reliable at going to those
49 spawning areas year after year. Then in the 80s, ADF&G
50 did quite a few studies on both subsistence -- or

1 subsistence, sportfish and commercial fish. They worked
2 on mostly -- most of their information is catch reports
3 either from the commercial fishery, sportfish harvest
4 up on the upper Kobuk mainly because the Selawik doesn't
5 really have a whole lot of sportfish harvest. It's all
6 -- mostly subsistence harvest in the lower river. There
7 are very few people who actually go up towards the
8 spawning grounds. As Ray said, we use otoliths now, but
9 in this time period they were using scales and we found
10 that they are -- they dramatically underage cold-water,
11 long-lived fish. So, they -- their ages in this period
12 are off by ten or more years. So, we can't use that
13 data. We can use our length/weight data to get some
14 things. The first coordinated mark recapture project
15 where we were putting tags in, early in the season,
16 waiting a few weeks, going up farther on the spawning
17 ground and then doing some statistics to get estimates
18 of the spawning population. We're done in the 90s on
19 both the Kobuk and the Selawik River. And also, some
20 rudimentary radio tagging was done. Can I have the next
21 slide? Sorry.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Before you continue,
24 Bill.

25
26 MR. CARTER: Yes.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Mike Kramer were you
29 wanting to make a comment?

30
31 (No response)

32
33 Sounds like Mike was having some phone
34 issues and wanted to make a comment. If you can hear me,
35 Mike, the floor is yours if you have something.

36
37 (No response)

38
39 MS. COCHON: Member Kramer, if you're --
40 if you want to try logging in -- or logging out of the
41 meeting and logging back in, that might help solve your
42 audio issues.

43
44 MR. KRAMER: Hello.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Go ahead, Mike.

47
48 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. I've been unable to
49 comment especially like on Bill and the guys on the
50 sheefish study. If we can go back to that for a minute.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, please ask your question.

MR. KRAMER: Okay. Yeah. This is Councilman Kramer. I was the one that suggested that we did a study on sheefish during that slump period from 2004. And I applaud you guys for, you know, really watching our sheefish. Because sheefish are a very fragile species. You know, they don't spawn till they're 8-11 years old. And we know that there been continuous harvest of them. I know on the Kotzebue Sound Advisory Council we put in to eliminate the commercial fishing season for sheefish. But it got put down because there's just not enough of an impact. I know that a lot of people, you know, are starting to depend on other resources due to the lack of salmon and you know, caribou and moose. So, a lot of people are starting to follow up on other subsistence sources. I'd like to see the continuation of the study occur. And during the years, you know, on a monthly basis from spring to fall, if you guys could do like a water contamination sampling, you know, both on the Kobuk and Selawik. Especially near the spawning areas, because I know that the tundra has gas, is a bunch of methane and a bunch of other stuff, chemicals. You know, one of the ones that we're dealing with in Kotzebue water system, you know, that one is starting to -- you know, we started to have high numbers, that was people were consuming of a certain chemical, and they'd like to see continuous studies on sheefish because they're very fragile species. And every village pretty much depends on sheefish on a yearly basis.

You know, another study I'd like to see continuously going on is a caribou in the Noatak, Kobuk and Kivalina and Wulik River. Because they did get some concerns like in Noatak that they were only getting smaller char when they went out and fished, you know, not the real big ones like they used to. And they know that beavers had an impact upon the Noatak and continuously having an impact on them, especially their spawning grounds and their streams and stuff. And you know, I'd like to thank Helen Cole for heading up that on the beaver study and Alaska Department of Fish and Game and other entities. I know that on the Noatak, Lower Noatak, I'm starting to see some of the banks collapse, you know, more and more from like Paul through on up. And I know that a lot of places are eroding, you know, and the continuous, you know, decline of our salmon. I did request that Fish and Game start putting

1 out sonars on boats on the Kobuk and the Noatak to
2 continuously monitor our returns to make sure and ensure
3 that we have a return for the previous year or the
4 following years. But that was all I had for right now.
5 I'm glad to be back on because I was kind of panicking
6 because I couldn't comment on anything. Thank you.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mike.
9 Bill.

10

11 MR. CARTER: Okay, so back to the end of
12 this last slide here. Yeah, we started -- we did a mark
13 recapture project, and we did some radio telemetry
14 through the early 90s. Next, please. We're at a bit of
15 a lull in the 2000, but there were a couple of important
16 traditional knowledge on Susan Georgette's whitefish --
17 Susan Georgette and Attamuks Whitefish book. You can get
18 a copy of that as a PDF or a hard copy if you don't have
19 one at the Refuge Office. Alex Whiting also did a
20 comprehensive harvest report from Kotzebue here. And
21 then Ray and I -- this is when we started looking at the
22 issue with the slump in 90 -- we repeated the '94 to '96
23 study as a mark recapture project. And we did more radio
24 telemetry along with -- ADF&G did a large radio telemetry
25 study of 300 fish over two years in the Kobuk, and that's
26 where we really solidified some of the repeat spawning
27 and percentage of the population on the spawning grounds
28 in any given year. Next slide please.

29

30 In the 2010s is where we had some real
31 improvements in techniques and technology. This is where
32 we really started using otoliths on a large scale. This
33 is where the slump project that Ray just talked about,
34 this is when that was done. We could use programmable
35 radio transmitters that had -- that were individually
36 programmed. And also, for time so we could extend the
37 lifespan of the battery. And the -- these two important
38 studies that I just discussed with ADF&G, James Severide
39 and Ray and my project there.

40

41 So, we ripped through those slides about
42 what we did. And then now we're going to go to -- here's
43 what we found. So, they begin their -- sheefish begin
44 their spawning, like most everybody knows here in late
45 July. But one of the interesting things after cutting
46 open several thousand fish, none of them are eating for
47 the entire time they're spawning. So, when they go up
48 and when they go back after several thousand fish, we
49 found one pike and that's it. And it may be the fact
50 that their normal size prey isn't available to them up

1 there because we all know that they're eating herring
2 and tomcod and other sheefish other whitefish when
3 they're down in the lakes. So that the size preference
4 may just not be there when they're up in the spawning
5 grounds. They spawn right about when the water is
6 freezing up. It makes things difficult for like sonar
7 projects because if you have slushy ice coming down, it
8 blurs the sonar. So, it makes it difficult, especially
9 in the Kobuk where you have those Brooks Range
10 tributaries chunking out ice before the actual Kobuk
11 itself freezes up. It just blurs the sonar, and you
12 can't count the fish. And then soon after that water
13 temperature hits close to freezing, they spawn and then
14 they all out migrate at night, almost 100% at night.
15 It's like a light switching on and off. We were able to
16 do several years of -- oh. Next slide. Sorry. We're able
17 to do several years of sonar on the Selawik because it's
18 a much smaller system and you don't have that ice buildup
19 the way you do on the Kobuk. And as soon as it got dark,
20 they started running out and they would do that until
21 sunup.

22
23 The spawning frequency is variable. This
24 is where the radio tags on the Kobuk really came in
25 because they had so many fish tagged they -- the smaller
26 the fish, whether it's male or female, the more likely
27 they are to spawn every year. The larger the fish, the
28 less likely they are. They had some females that only
29 spawned once or only spawned twice in the seven years
30 that the tags were out there. So, they were caught on
31 the spawning ground and tagged, we presume they spawned
32 that year. And then they didn't come back for maybe
33 three more years and then the battery life ran out. So
34 that -- and they were all almost all large females that
35 did that kind of thing. The other thing they found from
36 that is that in any given year, there's maybe only a
37 third of the spawning population on the spawning
38 grounds. Which means we have two thirds of the possible
39 adults, not counting all the (In Native) and smaller
40 fish. They're still out feeding because it takes
41 multiple years to be able to spawn. Again, we haven't
42 seen any fish that have been tagged on the spawning
43 grounds in either -- on either of the spawning grounds.
44 We've never seen any crossover between the Kobuk and the
45 Selawik spawning populations. Next slide please.

46
47 As Ray mentioned in his presentation
48 just before, they have nearly synchronous spawning
49 periods. As far as they have these big recruitment events
50 and it takes a while for those fish to get out of the

1 population before we can have another large spawning
2 event, and it's between 9 and 12 years for that. Also,
3 from that study, we presume that the population is stable
4 and is unaffected by current harvest. The age for males
5 is -- spawning age for males is between 9 and 11 and
6 females -- and that's for spawning, 10 and 12. We
7 consider them all recruited to the spawning population
8 by the time they're 15, whether they're on the spawning
9 grounds or not. Again, as Ray said, sheefish live into
10 their 30s. The oldest fish that I can find in any of the
11 literature anywhere around the world. So, these fish,
12 sheefish extend from the Ural Mountains in Western
13 Russia all the way over to the Mackenzie drainage in
14 Canada. So, they're almost circumpolar. They basically
15 don't show up in Greenland, Finland, Sweden, those --
16 that area. So, they're a very widespread fish. And the
17 two spawning populations share a feeding ground here in
18 the Kobuk and Selawik Lakes. And they feed on a variety
19 of things. They're unable to tolerate full marine water
20 temperature -- winter marine water temperatures because
21 they don't have any antifreeze like the cod and other
22 marine species do. So, they have to be in freshwater,
23 which is relatively warm. It's 32 degrees. So, what they
24 do is they make forays into that marine layer to catch
25 herring and tomcod and those things. Because that's
26 where the majority of the food and the high calories
27 are. May be a possibility why the fish that come from
28 Kobuk Lake takes different than the fish from Selawik
29 Lake because they're feeding on those more marine
30 species, whereas the other ones may be feeding on more
31 other whitefish and themselves. And the slump hasn't
32 shown an effect on the spawning population at this time.
33 Next slide. Question time.

34

35 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Verne.

36

37 MR. CLEVELAND: Is there ever a low count
38 on fish? I mean low count of sheefish you guys encounter
39 before anytime?

40

41 MR. CARTER: So, in our mark recapture
42 projects and our sonar counts, the count was very
43 variable, and we couldn't find any correlation between
44 the number of fish that we counted or estimated and the
45 age distribution of the fish that we were catching at
46 the same time. So, it's really difficult to say if those
47 counts are -- and again, only about a third of the
48 spawning population is on the spawning grounds. So, the
49 overall population is very hard to estimate. That the
50 project -- the telemetry project that was done on the

1 Kobuk, they had a wide variety of estimates of how much
2 of the population was actually on the spawning ground
3 in any given year. Maybe up to 50%, maybe down to only
4 30%. So, it just makes it -- their life history just
5 makes it very difficult to come up with a population
6 estimate for the entire population.

7
8 MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Karmen.

11
12 MS. MONIGOLD: Hi. Thank you. Through the
13 Chair. It's really good to hear that they're doing okay
14 because as the caribou is going down and we're going to
15 definitely be relying a lot more heavily on our other
16 species, that of traditional foods. My question is, are
17 there any studies that you know of on the food that they
18 eat, like the smelts, or the tomcod, or the herring?
19 Because, you know, I've heard locals in the last, say
20 five years that are hardly catching any smelts. And, you
21 know, we don't know if it's climate change or maybe
22 they're passing before it's safe to get out on the ice.
23 So, we're just wondering about the food that they eat.
24 Thank you.

25
26 MR. CARTER: Through the Chair. We
27 haven't done any on the food -- any studies on the food
28 currently. And like you said, it's very difficult
29 because when they're passing it's difficult to get out
30 there. I am in contact with some researchers who want
31 to try to do otolith microchemistry on herring to try
32 to figure out at least where they spawn, so that we can
33 then try to work back from where the herring are
34 spawning. And it kind of appears that we may even have
35 two different runs because we do get herring coming into
36 the system in the fall, but then we see most of them
37 during -- and it may just be an accessibility point
38 right at that thing where we catch them off the front
39 street there. And at those times of year, but they may
40 be here in different parts of the lake. It's another one
41 of those difficult questions to get at, but it is
42 something that we're interested in pursuing. It's just
43 trying to figure out how to get a study that gets to the
44 question that we want, so.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Verne.

47
48 MR. CLEVELAND: Is there study on early
49 breakups and late precepts on the fish? Because of early
50 breakup, does it affect the fish and the herring? Does

1 that take effect on the fish or -- because we got early
2 breakups in the late freeze up. Isn't there a difference
3 between 20 years ago than now?
4

5 MR. CARTER: So, I don't have records of
6 20 years ago as far as when breakups and freeze ups
7 happened, but fish eggs develop on what we call degree
8 days. So, if the water temperature is one degree Celsius
9 for 24 hours, it counts as a degree day, and whitefish
10 are all in about the 240 to 280 degree days. So, if
11 they're spawned in let's say October. They need almost
12 six months to mature, but if they have warmer water,
13 they mature faster. So those breakup times may not affect
14 them as much. What might be more of an effect is if they
15 hatch too soon and their food as small fish isn't
16 available to them. That's kind of the linkage that might
17 be an issue when you have development of the fish faster
18 than what they're used to.
19

20 MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you.
21

22 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Clyde.
23

24 MR. RAMOTH: Yeah. Clyde Ramoth again.
25 Thank you, Bill. I think this question goes back to Ray
26 Hander, Randy Brown Bill Carter, Wil. Anybody else? Alex
27 from the State. I know Angela Matz did some studies on
28 the pike. The northern pike back in the 90s, 2000,
29 something about the mercury studies. And we found out
30 the bigger the pikes are, the more mercury they have.
31 And any kind of sheefish, whitefish, we know they're all
32 predatorial fish. They'll eat other fish. And with the
33 climate change Llike Verne had some interesting
34 questions. Karmen did. Everybody did. Having more
35 studies on the climate change, the environment, the
36 amount of beaver habitat. I mean, gosh, I -- one 5-hour
37 ride, I counted 40 beaver igloos just on the main river
38 at Selawik last fall. And those kind of stuff that
39 impacts our environment with the climate change, the
40 beaver numbers, the warmer temperatures. It's concerning
41 to me because does it impact their migration? Their
42 breeding time? Is it something that's ongoing, Bill?
43 Like with Randy, yourself, Ray. Is it something other
44 agencies keep studying to find out? Is there any big
45 impacts from the weather, the climate change? Kind of a
46 general question, but a comment at the same time.
47

48 MR. CARTER: Through the Chair. So, we
49 do have an array of temp loggers out. And I also do
50 what's called a discharge measurement on the three main

1 tributaries of the Selawik plus the Fish River. So, the
2 Kougarok, the main Selawik and the Tag River, I do a
3 discharge measurement on those, and most of that is to
4 secure state water rights. But I also take a bunch of
5 other measurements at the same time. I do what's called
6 a sonde measurement and it measures total algae,
7 conductivity, temperature, pH, all these things all at
8 once and right now we're collecting that data just as
9 baseline data. So that in the future, if we have money
10 to actually synthesize that into a report that will be
11 done. There is also a project that the Native Village
12 of Selawik has approved with AF and Texas A&M, the one
13 health project that we will be looking at contaminants
14 in the whitefish that we're actually targeting 4
15 species, 4 or 5 species. Sheefish, burbot or mud sharks,
16 broad whitefish and pike. So those are the four I know
17 of. There may be also ciscos [sic] in there also, but.

18
19 MR. RAMOTH: Just a follow up question
20 is that compared to like the Fish and Game studies that
21 are being done, like with Alex or others. Tom, you might
22 know or -- Bill, is that something -- Wil is that
23 compared to other studies that are being done by the
24 state, do you know of like comparison? Because when I
25 listen to Karmen and other like upper Kobuk or wherever
26 it may be, are -- or even Verne for that matter. Our
27 fish are -- I guess with the climate change, it really
28 does impact our fishing period because we rely more like
29 Karmen mentioned, more solely because of the lack of
30 caribou. So, I think it's just -- I asked the question
31 to myself 4:00 in the morning with a cup of coffee. How
32 is it impacting with all these climate changes? Is there
33 more studies? Are we comparing to State studies, federal
34 studies anybody studies and just compare and share?

35
36 MR. CARTER: Through the Chair. So, the
37 one health study is in -- is being combined with a
38 similar study that's being done in Kivalina. So that
39 will have a comparison of some sort, but some of it has
40 to do with jurisdiction and who's funding what. So like
41 Kobuk money is almost all ADF&G stuff and then the Refuge
42 funds, the studies or researchers come to us and we
43 assist them with studies on this -- on the Selawik.

44
45 MR. RAMOTH: Because going back to that
46 general question, I wonder what kind of sheefish they
47 have in Kaktovik. I know they have humpback, they have
48 broad fish. They (In Native) just like us. That means
49 they seine just like us. Are they similar, like in
50 Canada? Are they dealing with the same kind of issues

1 with climate and different seasonal migration or
2 spawning changes between the different species of
3 whitefish? I don't know if I'm repeating the question,
4 but it's always going to be in my gray hair.

5
6 MR. CARTER: Through the Chair. Yeah.
7 Changing temperatures and changing environments are
8 going to change habitat. And we're going to see that no
9 matter what -- you know, no matter where we are in the
10 global system. So, it's a very difficult question to get
11 at currently.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Verne.

14
15 MR. CLEVELAND: In the future, are you
16 planning anything to farm fish? I mean, anybody thought
17 about farming fish.

18
19 MR. CARTER: So, in Europe, they do
20 hatchery whitefish of several kinds. I'm not an aqua
21 culturist. And I don't know the feasibility of farming
22 fish either to be released into the wild or to be
23 harvested directly from net pens or something like that.
24 So there's nothing currently in the works in this region
25 as far as aquaculture of that kind.

26
27 MR. CLEVELAND: I brought that up to
28 Clyde because they were handing out salmon recently from
29 Maniilaq, and somebody from Bristol Bay said that they
30 might be farm fish. Between the natural fish, you can
31 tell the difference between those two fish and I brought
32 it up to Clyde when they were handing out the salmon a
33 few days ago. Thank you.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any other questions?

36
37 MR. RAMOTH: So, are they genetically
38 modified?

39
40 MR. CARTER: Some farmed fish are, but I
41 don't think if -- it's my understanding that the fish
42 that were being handed out were wild caught sockeye. But
43 I'm not I wasn't there. I don't know exactly.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Mike or Wilbur, any
46 questions from online?

47
48 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah, Mr. Chair.

49
50 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Go ahead, Wilbur.

1

2 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah. Wilbur Howarth for
3 the record. The study I would like to see done is on the
4 herring. Because what Karmen just said about heering and
5 they're right in her backyard. (In Native) the seals are
6 forever just piling up right there in (In Native). And
7 -- for all these herring would be pushed right into the
8 lake there. And that's when the pike (indiscernible) are
9 abundant just all over in that grassy area. And yeah,
10 it would be nice, but I know when they -- when the
11 spotted seals are just thick in the Kotzebue area, that's
12 when the herring really moves in and heading up towards
13 the lake. It would be interesting to find out where they
14 spawned. I see them seals way up Wolf Creek, they're
15 sitting way up there in the shallow water. And there's
16 a lot of them during the late fall that are way up
17 Melbourne channel. So, that's all I got. Thank you.

18

19 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur.
20 Mike, did you have any questions or comments for this
21 portion?

22

23 MR. KRAMER: No, I didn't. Thank you. And
24 I hope they continue the monitoring of our sheefish.
25 Thank you.

26

27 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mike.
28 Tristan, did you have something?

29

30 MR. PATTEE: Yeah. Would you be able to
31 read the comment from the chat?

32

33 MS. COCHON: So, Kevin Fraley noted that
34 we, Wildlife Conservation Society, have measured mercury
35 and PFAs in sheefish in both the Cape Krusenstern lagoons
36 and on the upper Kobuk River. I could provide some --
37 he could provide some links to those studies if anyone
38 is interested.

39

40 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Sure, if you want to
41 put those links in the chat or send them to Grace, she
42 can disseminate them. Clyde, did you have something?

43

44 MR. RAMOTH: And can we find a link from
45 Angela Matz? M A T Z. Fisheries Biologist out of
46 Fairbanks. She did a study on the northern Pike. Oh,
47 Bill might help. Oh, thank you Bill.

48

49 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any final questions,
50 comments from the Council at this time?

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

(No response)

Hearing none. Thank you, gentlemen, for your presentation. I'm sure that we'll have lots of questions for you throughout the rest of the day. The time is now 12:03. What is the wish of the Council? Would we like to break for lunch now or go into the call for Fisheries -- Federal Fisheries Proposals? How long do you estimate it would take, Mr. Foley?

MR. FOLEY: Mr. Chair. For the record Kevin Foley, OSM. It'll take as long as the Council wishes. If the Council has regulations, proposals that they want to put forward or discuss regarding fisheries in the area. That's what we're here for, to discuss today. If the Council does not have any then that's pretty quick, I'd say.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, I'm getting looks and nods of the head. We will pick that up after lunch. So, it's now 12:04. We'll come back at 1:15. So we're going off the record now at 12:04, coming back at 1:15.

(Off record)

(On record)

MS. COCHON: Hello, this is Grace Cochon and we're going to do a quick roll call for the members to reestablish the quorum. Member Karmen Monigold.

MS. MONIGOLD: Here.

MS. COCHON: Thank you. Chair Thomas Baker.

MR. BAKER: Here.

MS. COCHON: Okay. Member Tristen Pattee.

MR. PATTEE: Here.

MS. COCHON: Member Micheal Kramer.

MR. KRAMER: Here.

MS. COCHON: Okay, thank you. Member Wilbur Howarth, Sr.

1 MR. HOWARTH: Here.

2

3 MS. COCHON: Okay. Member Clyde Ramoth.

4

5 MR. RAMOTH: Here.

6

7 MS. COCHON: Member Elmer Armstrong, Jr.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: He is still excused.

10

11 MS. COCHON: Member Verne Cleveland Sr.

12

13 MR. CLEVELAND: Here.

14

15 MS. COCHON: All right, with 7 out of 8
16 members present, we have a quorum.

17

18 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right. Thank you,
19 Grace. It is now 1:19. We're going to go back on the
20 record. At this time, I'd like to ask Mr. Foley if we
21 can go through the Call for Federal Fisheries Proposals.
22 If you could put your name on the record, the floor is
23 yours.

24

25 MR. FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members
26 of the Council. For the record, my name is Kevin Foley
27 and I am a fish biologist with the Office of Subsistence
28 Management out of Anchorage. And I've called into this
29 meeting several times in the past and heard all of your
30 voices but this is the 1st time appearing before you in
31 person and I can say it's wonderful to see everybody and
32 put a voice with a face, so thank you.

33

34 All right, so we're here to announce our
35 Call for Proposals to change federal fisheries
36 regulations. The Federal Subsistence Board is currently
37 accepting proposals to change federal subsistence
38 fisheries regulations for the 2027 through the 2029
39 regulatory cycle. The Board will be accepting proposals
40 through April 3rd, which is this Friday. The Board will
41 consider proposals to change seasons, harvest limits,
42 methods and means, and customary and traditional use
43 determinations for federal fisheries only. This is not
44 the avenue or the arena for us to accept recommendations
45 or changes to state regulations, commercial fish or
46 sport fish, that's a completely separate process through
47 the Board of Fish. If the Council wishes to submit a
48 proposal, you will need to do so during this meeting.
49 The public may also submit proposals to change federal
50 fisheries regulations and the public may find

1 information on how to submit proposals on our website
2 at doi.gov/subsistence/fisheries.

3
4 Proposals submitted will be analyzed by
5 OSM staff and presented to the Councils during your fall
6 meeting for your recommendations. Proposal analysis and
7 Council recommendations will be presented to the Federal
8 Subsistence Board for its action during the February '27
9 Fisheries Regulatory Meeting. And so with that, I'll
10 turn it over to the Council and ask if the Council has
11 any regulatory proposals that they'd like to put forward
12 for changes to federal subsistence regulations. Thank
13 you, Mr. Chair.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Foley.
16 Any questions, comments or proposals from members of the
17 Council?

18
19 (No response)

20
21 Mike or Wilbur, do you have any comments
22 or ideas for a proposal?

23
24 MR. KRAMER: I have none.

25
26 MS. HOWARTH: None. Wilbur.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Clyde.

29
30 MR. RAMOTH: Just a general comment --
31 question. I know with the fisheries studies going on
32 with sheefish by Fish and Wildlife Service or any other
33 fish studies being done by other state or federal
34 agencies and -- has there been proposals by, like,
35 Dillingham area for trawling and the boundaries of the
36 borders out there? I don't know how to question that,
37 but it's just a general question because we're -- we all
38 eat fish.

39
40 MR. FOLEY: Through the Chair, Councilman
41 Ramoth. Thank you for that question. We field a lot of
42 discussion and topics on that issue, trawlers in the
43 state. And the Federal -- this regulation process, we
44 have to operate within the jurisdiction and the -- sort
45 of the boundaries of the Federal Subsistence Board. And
46 that includes regulations within or adjacent to federal
47 public lands and waters and many of the areas that you're
48 talking about remain outside of those areas and
49 therefore outside of the Board's jurisdiction. Thank
50 you.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

MR. RAMOTH: Yeah, I was going to go back to jurisdiction because you know, I could question this as a tribal council member -- officer for my tribe. Because the fact that everybody has to consult with tribes, are those type of question goes to the State or is that international question -- issue?

MR. FOLEY: Through the Chair, Councilman Ramoth. I'm not as familiar with the state consultation process as I am with the federal consultation process. Perhaps if there's a member from the State that would be interested in fielding that question, I'd be happy to defer the mic to them.

(Pause)

Through the Chair, Councilman Ramoth, I'm very eager to hear about your questions regarding funding and things that are available for funding and funding opportunities. It seems to be a theme that comes up, and although it's outside the scope of this particular presentation, I will be talking later at this meeting on that to provide you with more information surrounding something that's known as our Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. So, we can get to it then if you'd like.

MR. RAMOTH: Okay, thank you. And thanks for pronouncing my last name correctly.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any other questions, Comments, proposal, ideas?

(No response)

Hearing none. To confirm, the deadline is Friday, April 3rd, so this Friday, if someone wanted to make a proposal and submit it as an individual, there is still that opportunity. We, as the Council, cannot submit anything after today, it would be something we need to vote on. So, we need a quorum for an Action Item but if there are any questions, we can refer to Mr. Foley. Do you have anything else in closing, Mr. Foley?

MR. FOLEY: Mr. Chair, I do not. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: All right, thank you. So, we will move on and before we get into the rest of

00055

1 our action items, we do have a time sensitive
2 presentation due to the availability of 1 of our
3 presenters who had a report they were going to share
4 with us. Grace.

5
6 MS. COCHON: Yes. So, Erica, would you
7 like to..... Okay. Is -- Johannes Slana, are you
8 available? Are you online?

9
10 (Pause)

11
12 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. If you
13 could put your name on the record and explain your
14 presentation. The floor is yours.

15
16 MS. QUADE: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair,
17 Council. I'm Erica Quade, I work with Teck, with
18 projects, I manage the Community Reporter Program, I'm
19 the lead for community projects with them. And if you
20 guys give me 1 second, I'll get my computer up.

21
22 MR. RAMOTH: Closer to the mic, please.

23
24 MS. QUADE: Oh, there we go. Is that
25 better? Okay. I have a little voice sometimes.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Verne.

28
29 MR. CLEVELAND: Just who you said you
30 were and who you represent. I didn't hear it.

31
32 MS. QUADE: Oh. I'm sorry, I'm Erica
33 Wade. I'm with TEK, and I work closely with Red Dog. I'm
34 -- Teck America is who I work for, but I spend most of
35 my time working with Red Dog proper.

36
37 MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you.

38
39 MR. RAMOTH: Is this like an
40 environmental report?

41
42 MS. QUADE: So, I was asked to come and
43 present today by Tristen, he said the last time you guys
44 met, there were quite a few questions on the Community
45 Reporter Program. I manage the Community Reporter
46 program, so I'm hoping I can give you all some
47 information for a better understanding on this program,
48 and then answer any questions you may have on it. So,
49 excuse my tardiness here guys. I'm just going to --
50 opefully get on to some Wi-Fi and get this going, I'm

00056

1 just going to hotspot. I do not have a card. I'm sorry.
2 You know, do I have a card? No, I don't think I do. But
3 Mr. Ramoth, I'd be happy to share my contact information
4 with you.

5

6

(Pause)

7

8 All right. Well, my firewall is blocking
9 the meeting, I am so sorry. Tristen, would I be able to
10 just email this to you real quick? Just email you the
11 link?

12

13

(Pause)

14

15 All right. Thank you, Mr. Chair,
16 Council, thanks for your guys' patience. It is, yep there
17 we are. So, this presentation was going to be co-
18 presented with Liz (In Native), unfortunately, she was
19 unavailable today, so it will be a solo presentation.
20 You guys' now just get me, hopefully that's okay. But
21 this is a presentation on the Red Dog Mine Community
22 Reporter Program. Next, please.

23

24

25 So, I'm going to go ahead and start with
26 an overview of the program itself. The way this works
27 is that the Community Reporter program hires individuals
28 from Noatak and Kivalina, the 2 closest communities to
29 Red Dog, and they do a variety of activities throughout
30 the mine, a variety of observations, they help out and
31 take records of these observations, and then come -- do
32 a report at the end of the day on what they have seen
33 and what they've experienced. These observations and
34 reports are compiled, so these are daily reports,
35 they're compiled monthly into one larger report that is
36 sent out to the leadership of Noatak, Kivalina, NANA and
37 Red Dog. This has been a valuable way for us to
38 communicate with the communities of Noatak and Kivalina,
39 and for those communities to continue to have an
40 understanding of the activities that are going on at Red
41 Dog. And, you know, lots of really valuable outcomes to
42 this program. One of the main ones is relationship
43 building. This transparency is a -- an effective way for
44 us to build trust and communication with our
45 communities. Next.

45

46

47 So, the community reporters, as
48 mentioned previously, go all different kinds of
49 activities on site, though there are a few focuses that
50 the community reporters have. Right now, it's the tail
end of the caribou activities at site. So, the community

1 reporters focus most of their time currently on caribou
2 watching, directing traffic, ensuring that the caribou
3 are unaffected as much as possible by the activities at
4 the mine, and this is very much in relationship with the
5 mine itself and the operations. And Teck does support
6 with building the relationships with the community
7 reporters working with the community reporters. They
8 also supply some really fantastic equipment for the
9 community reporters to do this important work. We have
10 really fancy camera systems, infrared cameras, night
11 vision binoculars, you know, trucks, things of that
12 nature, snow machines, to ensure that we have access to
13 any of the activities that are happening at site for the
14 observations and for reporting. Another component of
15 this is that we are able to utilize the experience, the
16 lived experience and the traditional knowledge of the
17 community reporters as well in the work that we do, and
18 to help advise and -- at times with operations on how
19 to move forward, specifically this year with caribou
20 migration. Next.

21
22 So, I'm going to go into a little bit
23 of a history of the program. This program started during
24 COVID, so between 2021 to 2023, community members
25 weren't able to come to site to do observations
26 themselves and to check out and see what's going on at
27 Red Dog. And a way to give access to these community
28 members was to hire individuals to come to site to do
29 these observations and then report back to their
30 communities. This is because only employees were allowed
31 at site during that time, so you'd have to be employed
32 there to be able to go there to do the observations. And
33 so, initially this started just with the exploration
34 program so there wasn't -- it wasn't a whole mind site
35 observation opportunity for these community observers
36 at that time, they stayed mostly just with their
37 exploration. There also weren't quite as many employees.
38 There were between 1-3 employees between 2021 and 2023.
39 Next.

40
41 In 2024, there was a bit of a revamp of
42 the program. We changed the name to the Community
43 Reporter Program. This was to emphasize the real
44 actionability and the reporting back component. The
45 importance of that work in this program. In 2021 to
46 2023, while there were observations that were done,
47 there was not a reporting back to community. And so,
48 we're missing a large component of that. This was
49 remedied in 2024 with more of a focus on the reporting
50 back component. We also expanded the program to work

1 throughout the mine site, so not just exploration but
2 we began building relationships with operations and port
3 as well, and very much so with the environmental
4 department that Tristen works with. 2025, we became even
5 more involved across the mine site and so, we weren't
6 just doing observations, but we were at times consulted
7 as far as caribou migrations and different activities
8 on the port road to ensure that there were no adverse
9 effect to the caribou. So, the community reporters were
10 oftentimes tasked with assisting and managing traffic
11 on the port road, making sure that trucks were stopping
12 before the caribou were affected so that the caribou
13 could cross safely and there were no impacts -- vehicle
14 caribou impacts. We also are very focused on employee
15 development in the program. We are hiring individuals
16 from Noatak and Kivalina and invest very heavily in their
17 professional engagement to ensure that if they would
18 like to work beyond a community reporter program or move
19 up in the community reporter program, they have that
20 support to do so. And so, we do this with quite a bit
21 of an onboarding focus, many of the community reporters
22 are subsistence hunters. Coming into a mine is very,
23 very different than their home life and there's a huge
24 cultural component that you would have to be more
25 familiar with to be able to do well. And we address that
26 in an extensive onboarding process. We also ensure that
27 the community reporters have leadership growth
28 opportunities as well. So, the community reporters that
29 had started in 2024, there's one individual who started
30 as a community reporter, worked her way up to a lead
31 community reporter then to a senior personnel assistant,
32 and now she is working as a temporary crew supervisor
33 for the program. And we hope to have this type of
34 trajectory for all the community reporters, if not in
35 this program, then elsewhere. The community reporters
36 also help drive the focus of the observations of the
37 program and the program priorities itself. I do not
38 choose what is going to be important for communities
39 that comes from the community reporters who are from
40 those communities as well as the Subsistence Committee,
41 Nana and leadership of Noatak and Kivalina. Next.

42
43 So, 2026, here we are. We have quite a
44 few goals this year to build on with this program, and
45 expanding the indigenous knowledge and monitoring is one
46 of our larger projects that we are hoping to be able to
47 work diligently on, and continue to inform the work that
48 we do, and hopefully the work that others do in mining
49 with indigenous knowledge. We are also taking over the
50 management of the Marine Mammal Migration Observation

1 Program. That is something that is necessary for
2 permitting during dredging if dredging is necessary. We
3 are going to expand it so that we are able to do marine
4 mammal observations throughout the whole migration
5 period, instead of a smaller part of the season to be
6 able to work better and give more information back to
7 communities. Again. employee development, onboarding,
8 mentorship, leadership growth. It remains a focus in the
9 program with the goal of being able to have this
10 completely shareholder ran and working to strengthen our
11 relationships throughout Noatak, Kivalina Nana the
12 Subsistence Committee, Red Dog projects and Teck, as
13 well. So, quite a few goals on our list this year that
14 we are -- that we're working towards. So, I kept this
15 fairly short on purpose, hoping that we could open this
16 up to questions. I didn't want to take too much time.
17 So, if you guys have any questions, I would be happy to
18 hear them.

19

20 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Clyde.

21

22 MR. RAMOTH: Yeah, for the record. Clyde
23 Ramoth. Thank you for your report and I do recall in
24 January, we did post that question to Tristen, I believe
25 before he went back to Red Dog and we had questions
26 about the caribou migration. I had questioned about the
27 lichen, are they being studied, or is there dust studies
28 that still goes on? The air quality, the water's? Meaning
29 the Wulik River. Meaning the air, land and waters, is
30 there heavy studies being done? I know Tristen probably
31 couldn't answer some of those questions for
32 environmental and yourself. I still need your contact
33 number, but once upon a time I worked at Red Dog for
34 about 10 years or so. But the tailings pond used to bug
35 me because I was a warehouse supervisor, and one time I
36 watched a moose swam across and it couldn't cross that
37 that drainage pipe and all you got was whatever was
38 drained to that pond is -- it's a tailings lake now, but
39 there's not one living organism, not one living bug was
40 what I was told, and that poor moose barely made it
41 across. So, we posed a question a lot of us from the
42 villages asked if they could build a fence, they said
43 they couldn't. But questions like that about the
44 environment, how strict all the environmental agencies
45 can be. But myself as a resident from the borough, we
46 wanted more reporting, not just from Nana, not from Teck,
47 not just to Kivalina and Noatak, but be more like to us
48 in general. The newsletters are fine. Is there something
49 you guys can send, like to our tribal governments and
50 all 11 villages just to, bi-annually report just for the

1 environment itself. Because caribou numbers are low, we
2 don't know about the environment there, about the
3 lichen. Is it -- dust controlled at 100%? Those kind of
4 questions always hinder a lot of our people. And I'm not
5 speaking just about myself. I hear those questions all
6 the time from our elders, our environmental concerned
7 people, parents that have kids working there, you know
8 that kind of stuff. I think because if the caribou is
9 not studied, whether they're healthy or not in the Red
10 Dog area, I know they stop for the road and all that
11 stuff, but are they eating healthy? Is there studies on
12 there -- do they have any chemicals in their system?
13 Those kind of stuff, a lot of questions. But someday,
14 maybe I'll feel comfortable with one little question
15 that could be answered.

16
17 MS. QUADE: Yes. Thank you. Chair,
18 Council. Mr. Ramoth, I unfortunately do not have the
19 answer to those questions. It's unfortunate that Jojo
20 was not able to attend, she would have been somebody who
21 could give you more insight into the different studies
22 that are happening at Red Dog. I do know that there are
23 studies with the caribou. Every few years there's a metal
24 study, and I believe this year's supposed to be one of
25 those years where they will do that study. I don't have
26 all the particulars, so I don't want to speak out of
27 turn on this, but I would be very happy to give you my
28 contact information, maybe you can give me yours and I
29 can help find some of those answers for you. Since I'm
30 -- I don't have them personally.

31
32 MR. RAMOTH: Okay, so that could be 1 of
33 your goals.

34
35 MS. QUADE: I'll put that on 2026.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Vern.

38
39 MR. CLEVELAND: Verne Cleveland,
40 Noorvik. I got a question. Why do you have Subsistence
41 Committees just from 2 villages from Kivalina and Noatak
42 when it affects us from Kotzebue all the way up the
43 river? Why are we not -- left out from that Subsistence
44 Committee? And it affects all of us.

45
46 MS. QUADE: I can absolutely understand
47 your perspective on that and your experience. The 1982
48 agreement that Teck has with NANA dictates that there
49 is a Subsistence Committee that is comprised of Noatak
50 and Kivalina, and that's what they have currently. I

1 don't have -- I'm sorry, again, much information on the
2 possibility of expanding that relationship. I'm not
3 sure, Tristen, if you have any additional information
4 on what that -- what's available.

5
6 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen
7 Pattee. No, just, yeah, it is, you know, the agreement
8 that was originally made between NANA and at the time
9 Cominco, it was that was -- that was -- that's what was
10 in it. It was a Subsistence Committee that has you know,
11 the closest stakeholders, which is Noatak and Kivalina
12 at the time. But what this is, it's not, and yeah, it's
13 not a committee. It's an actual program that we -- that
14 they hire, but yeah, they do hire people from Noatak and
15 Kivalina, which are the closest stakeholders. So, it's
16 not a committee or a council or anything like that that's
17 separate from the actual Red Dog Subsistence Committee.

18
19 MR. KRAMER: (Indiscernible).

20
21 MR. CLEVELAND: And which committee --
22 community do they report to?

23
24 MS. QUADE: So, the community reporters
25 are employees of Teck. They are Red Dog employees, Teck
26 Alaska employees and they report to their manager, which
27 is me. And the reporting that they do though, goes to
28 the leadership of Kivalina and Noatak. And so, these
29 month-long daily reports are compiled and sent to those
30 2 villages as well as NANA.

31
32 MR. CLEVELAND: How can we get that
33 report to our other villages like Kobuk, Shungnak,
34 Ambler, Kiana, Noorvik, Kotzebue, Buckland, Deering? Do
35 they give the report to them?

36
37 MS. QUADE: Currently they do not, though
38 this is feedback that we have been hearing and is
39 something that needs to be under consideration.

40
41 MR. CLEVELAND: Have [sic] to be. You got
42 to consider cause, we're right -- our caribou is low
43 count right now and we need some kind of report from Red
44 Dog and we can't get nothing. We made a proposal or some
45 sort of thing deal with Western Arctic Caribou Herd
46 Caribou to complete shut down during migration and
47 haven't been done and nobody gave us report or on
48 anything. Can you relay to that?
49

1 MS. QUADE: I can the caribou -- the
2 reporting that we do that we give to Noatak and Kivalina
3 is not necessarily a report just on caribou. These are
4 the daily activities that the community reporters
5 themselves do. What this looks like is the community
6 reporters would go out, if it's caribou migration, they
7 would go out on the port road and they would look for
8 caribou. And if caribou are approaching the road or near
9 the road, they would stop traffic, sometimes we would
10 have to completely shut down the mine for a few days,
11 which we did have to do quite a few times in October,
12 November and December to ensure that the caribou were
13 not negatively affected by traffic. But the reports that
14 are sent out are not reports just on caribou. They are
15 written by the community reporters as their lived
16 experience, as their work experience on that day. So, I
17 think it might look a little bit different than what
18 you're wanting. If you're wanting a report on caribou
19 numbers and things of that nature, I think we would have
20 to pull in Jojo for some of that work.

21
22 MR. CLEVELAND: So, you're saying that
23 shut down completely shut down the blasting and
24 everything else, right? Is that what you're saying?

25
26 MS. QUADE: Yes.

27
28 MR. CLEVELAND: And when did this happen?

29
30 MS. QUADE: October and November, we had
31 some complete shutdowns and then we also had multiple
32 road stoppages. At Red Dog, there's a lighting system
33 that indicates if the port road is going to be open or
34 not. If the light is green, that means you can continue
35 as normal, you can go down the port road, you know, with
36 you know, appropriate speeds that are agreed upon and
37 regulated heavily. If it's on yellow, that could be
38 because of poor weather or because of caribou presence.
39 And when the road is on yellow, only essential personnel
40 can be on that road. If it's for caribou, generally that
41 would just be the community reporters and only if needed,
42 the surface crew to keep up the road so that they were
43 able to continue down the road to look for the caribou.
44 If the road is on red, it's completely shut down. So,
45 I'm giving this information because when the road was
46 on yellow, oftentimes it was on yellow all day. And so,
47 nobody was on the road except for community reporters.
48 There were times that the road was also on red, which
49 was completely shut down.

50

1 MR. CLEVELAND: The Western Arctic
2 Caribou Herd Working Group is half the State, the group,
3 more than half the State. And they asked this question,
4 when are you guys going to come to our table and report?
5 We invited Red Dog to our meeting and they haven't showed
6 up till last year. They gave a little report. Because
7 NANA Board was there and it's the first I heard of
8 reporting from Red Dog.

9
10 MS. QUADE: Yeah, thank you for that
11 information. And I think that that can give us some
12 things to work towards.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Mike, were you going
15 to say something or was that Wilbur a few minutes ago?

16
17 MR. KRAMER: That was me, Councilmen
18 Kramer.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Go ahead, Mike.

21
22 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. You know, you guys --
23 since Red Dog open, back then in 1982, they came to that
24 agreement, you know, and there was nothing new since you
25 know, they started the other mine site area from the
26 first original mine site area. And then now they're
27 looking at going 8 to 10 miles east, you know, that was
28 never brought up at any of our meetings. Our caribou
29 herd, Western Arctic Caribou Herd right now is in serious
30 condition, serious. It's in conservation mode to where
31 we need the State of Alaska, Fish and Game to shut down
32 -- the Board to Game to shut down caribou hunting. You
33 know, and with that extension going on that was never
34 brought across our table. It was -- there was no
35 presentation saying, hey, this is what we're looking at
36 doing, and this is where we're going to do it. You know,
37 people -- there's actually a documented presentation by
38 one of the caribou biologists that's been here for well
39 over 30 years, Jim Dau, and that -- it does prove that
40 the Red Dog road does ping caribou back and forth. I've
41 seen some truck drivers go, oh, we've never seen the
42 road ping caribou back and forth. I was like can you see
43 10-15 miles out there? Because they take -- radio collars
44 do not lie.

45
46 You know, the other thing with this
47 extension to this mine and Like Clyde said, you know,
48 about the tailings pond, you know, the tailings pond is
49 far beyond what it was the capacity that it was supposed
50 to be taking. And with them continuing to mine more

1 minerals, where's this stuff going to go when the
2 tailings pond is at its max capacity? Then the other
3 thing is that the tailings pond was off gassing SO₂. How
4 many of our, you know, subsistence resources are
5 breathing this stuff in, eating it? You know, it's
6 getting critical, our caribou herd, it doesn't need any
7 more stress than it already is. And I don't understand
8 why NANA never came up to our table. We saw them here
9 at our meeting, but they never spoke a word. You know,
10 the first lunch break, they're gone. Never stay there
11 throughout our whole entire meeting. I think what Teck
12 needs to do is they need to have somebody who's on their
13 on their Subsistence Committee start showing up to our
14 meeting along with you or whoever it may be. Need to
15 start showing up to our meetings so we have some kind
16 of say so in what's going on because we eat this stuff,
17 you don't. You know, has any contaminants, studies been
18 done on caribou on the (indiscernible) and the Wulik and
19 Kivalina River. Other wildlife that are in the area,
20 duck, geese, ptarmigan, you know, moose, you know, has
21 any bears, you know, has any kind of contamination
22 studying being done and has that stuff ever been brought
23 to the table? I've never seen it. I've been with this,
24 this Council for well over 20 years, and I haven't seen
25 it come up to our table once. And so, for NANA to do it
26 behind our back and Teck to do it behind our back and
27 extend the road 8 to 10 miles east, you know, that's
28 going to really, really hamper our caribou herd.

29
30 I can remember caribou crossing the
31 Noatak River by (indiscernible), you know, Pike slough,
32 Lower Canyon, Nat Creek, Eggy, (indiscernible). We never
33 see that anymore. Caribou never come around here
34 crossing the fall time, ever since that mine is open.
35 You know, there's going to be a lot more concerned now
36 that our subsistence resources are in peril. We're
37 losing them, these federal agencies and Teck aren't
38 going to do nothing for us in the future when they're
39 gone. So, it's time for NANA and Teck to start stepping
40 up to the table and start supporting some of these
41 studies that are going on. You know, is there people
42 that are 10-15 miles from the road monitoring caribou
43 when they come down? I could remember Jim Dau stating
44 that caribou had migrated 10 miles prior to the Red Dog
45 Road and mingling there and then migrating back north
46 behind Point Lay -- Point Hope and then coming back
47 down. And each time they're going back and forth, they're
48 coming back slower and slower. Their 1st migration was
49 like 7 miles a day. By the time the, you know, the 3rd
50 thing, they're going 2-3 miles a day and some are

1 dropping dead because they're just flat out exhausted
2 having to waste this energy going back and forth, trying
3 to get to a place where they could winter.

4
5 So with that being said that, you know,
6 NANA and Teck start taking action on what we see and
7 what we do because we survive on food and with the
8 economy and everything the way it is now, it's going to
9 get worse when these resources are gone, we have nothing.
10 Then what will you guys do for us? Nothing. As I said,
11 like the Park Service about the sheep. You know our
12 sheep -- we'll never be able to hunt sheep anymore inside
13 Game Management Unit 23. And then Red Dog, has anybody
14 been out there monitoring sheep in the area? I know that
15 back in the day when I first started there, we were
16 seeing sheep everywhere and now I wouldn't be surprised
17 if there's nothing even there. When you're out fishing
18 in the Kelly River just below the (indiscernible) creek,
19 I can hear backup alarms from vehicles and I'm in the
20 Kelly River. That's all I have for now. Thank you.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
23 Mike. Wilbur, did you have any questions or comments?

24
25 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah, Mr. Chair and I guess
26 the most information I ever been really getting is being
27 on that NANA Subsistence Advisory Committee. And there's
28 about 8 of us, there's Larry Westlake (Kiana), myself
29 from Noorvik, Morgan Johnson from Ambler, Nellie Griest
30 from Shungnak, Henry Horner from Kobuk and we have Andy
31 Baker and we do have reports from NANA on subsistence.
32 What's the caribou doing? Have the fish being studied?
33 Yes, they are still. Lichen still takes about 8 years
34 to grow. And they do migrate not in the same pattern all
35 the time because it takes so long for the lichen to
36 grow. But anyways, I guess we need to get maybe at least
37 Andy Baker or somebody from this committee. Which is I
38 would say, maybe Randy, he's the one who runs the Ambler
39 Road Project. We also have Cole Schaefer in the meeting.
40 Yeah, Andy Baker from Kotzebue. I've been trying to
41 invite them to this meeting for a while. I just -- I
42 don't know why it's so hard for them to do. But Nanook,
43 I'm pretty sure they can send Robbie Kirk. He usually
44 give good updates and stuff on stuff like this. But we
45 need to have somebody from the Red Dog. Thank you, Mr.
46 Chairman.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
49 Wilbur. Any other questions or comments from members of
50 the Council? Karmen.

1

2 MS. MONIGOLD: Hi, thank you through the
3 Chair. Thank you for your presentation, I appreciate it.
4 We had seen within the last year a video of caribou
5 crossing the Red Dog road, and I believe it was from one
6 of the working trucks. So, it was 1 of the employees
7 actually taking the video. And so, when you come in,
8 tell us that, you know, we have all these things in
9 place, but yet your own employees are videoing caribou
10 right there, it doesn't build trust. Thank you.

11

12 MS. QUADE: Through the Chair. Thank you,
13 Ms. Monigold. I believe I know the incident that you're
14 speaking of, and I can give a little more context, if
15 that's okay. So, the community reporters do observations
16 on the port road looking for caribou. And this year we
17 had quite a large number of caribou migration happening
18 at site and the community reporters were out looking for
19 caribou and the caribou came over the hill and they were
20 a bit stuck in surrounded by the caribou. And one of the
21 employees did take a video and post that after many
22 hours of being stuck within the herd of caribou, they
23 did have to move incredibly slowly out of that herd
24 because they couldn't stay there, you know, for so many
25 more hours and I think that that's the situation and
26 that is a risk because the community reporters are out
27 there looking for the caribou to ensure that the other
28 trucks are going to stop and allow them to pass, that
29 sometimes it's happens a little quicker than
30 anticipated. And that was the situation we learned from
31 that experience. That hasn't happened again, we're
32 taking steps to ensure that doesn't happen again. But
33 that was actually a mistake on our end and not on
34 operations.

35

36 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen
37 Patee. I just wanted to go over just -- yeah, there was
38 a bunch of questions and information that was being asked
39 and stated on here. So, I just want to go over really
40 quick of what I know, which is not everything. And I was
41 hoping Jojo would be on here, but she's not yet, but I
42 think she will be here at some point today or tomorrow.
43 So, first I wanted to go over the community observer
44 program, which is it's fairly new. It's, you know, last
45 couple of years that we started using this with Kivalina
46 and Noatak as their primary -- the people that are
47 actually hired as community observers. So, the whole
48 goal of this whole thing is basically being transparent,
49 you know, so we put the people that are stakeholders
50 that live in the communities to be able -- to be

1 firsthand, have, you know, be boots on the ground in
2 that location where the impact is taken -- were caribou.
3 You know and the Red Dog, Teck, they give these community
4 observers a lot of say. So, basically they gave them,
5 you know, all these guidelines on what they can and
6 cannot do and so this summer they shut down the road a
7 lot, I mean, it was the most I've ever seen the road
8 shut down. And that was the decisions just off of those
9 reporters that are from Kivalina and Noatak, because
10 they saw, you know, they know that that's their food.
11 They want to let it pass, they want to let the caribou
12 migrate. So, they shut down the road completely for days
13 and days. There was a lot of, you know, a lot of trucks
14 lined up on the road, some of them had to turn back to
15 go back to go back the other way, and then just wait
16 until the road could actually open up. And so yeah, the
17 Red Dog did give them a lot of say in this whole thing
18 and which is -- and which shows the importance that the
19 company is putting in this caribou herd, you know,
20 they're doing what they could in order to lessen the
21 impact, especially with the decline in the caribou herd.

22
23 And I want to say, you know, it's -- I
24 know there's all these comments that are happening about
25 the stopping the migration, but I grew up in Ambler, you
26 know, more south and every single season I see caribou.
27 Every single year they go up to that breeding ground and
28 every year I still see them. The only time I saw it
29 really decline was 2016. That's when we started seeing
30 it start to slow but when you say it's -- yeah, of
31 course, yeah, it does delay. There's definitely
32 indication that they were delayed because of the road,
33 yes, they've proven that, but they still show up. I've
34 been getting caribou every single year since I was a kid
35 and, and Red Dog been around most of my life. You know,
36 1989 is when they opened. I was born in '85. So, but
37 I've been getting caribou -- we've been getting caribou
38 every single year. So, obviously the caribou are showing
39 up, they're migrating south. It's just when it declined
40 is when I saw, that it's actually taking longer [sic].
41 And with the type, you know, what's happening in the
42 world with the different weather, because I've noticed
43 a big change in the weather patterns as well and that's
44 when I did start seeing the delay in the caribou showing
45 up.

46
47 To address some of the comments that
48 Mike made. So yes, we do have an SO₂ issue right now
49 it's reactive rock and once it heats up, that's when it
50 actually creates the sulfur dioxide, SO₂ that goes into

1 the air and that's heat, heat and the reactive rock is
2 what actually does it. What mitigates it is water. So,
3 when you say tailings pond is creating SO₂, that's not
4 true because water is what mitigates the whole -- all
5 the SO₂. NANA did give an update on SO₂ at the NANA
6 meeting, you were there, Verne. So, they did give a
7 pretty detailed -- there was a whole presentation, so
8 I'm hoping that you were able to attend the NANA meeting
9 online because they definitely gave a lot of information
10 on what was going on and the mitigations that were being
11 done at Red Dog. And obviously NANA was the one
12 presenting it and they -- they're basically letting all
13 the shareholders know that we're able to attend, which
14 every shareholder is able to attend those meetings. Tell
15 them the SO₂ situation and there's a lot of mitigation
16 efforts being put in into the SO₂ which is using water.
17 And so, that's what mitigates it, that's what turns it
18 off. And so, since we started -- since Red Dog started
19 doing mitigations, it's helped out a lot in the actual
20 camp and they don't see it as much anymore.

21
22 For the studies, I wish Jojo was online
23 because the amount of studies that her team is putting
24 is a lot, there's a lot of studies. I mean for one
25 example -- or an example they hired hunters from Noatak,
26 Kivalina. What they did was they took caribou, they cut
27 them all up and they basically did the whole study. They
28 sent everything to a lab in Lower 48, and they did
29 different types of cooked soup, bone soup and then they
30 typed -- they had different controls. There was just a
31 regular soup, and then there was different types of soups
32 that were made. And then once they got, you know, the
33 bones, you know, got the oils and everything out. Then
34 they tested every single one in different, there was a
35 control and then there was different situations on each
36 of these pots of soup. And they did all those studies
37 to test for all kinds of different metals, you know and
38 which the -- after that study, it was found that there
39 weren't extensive metals in the caribou that we eat. And
40 they also did flesh studies. And so, that that study is
41 out there. So, that would be something Jojo -- you can
42 ask her about once she does get online because she was
43 managing that actual study. Right now, she's doing a
44 whole thing on lichen. I mean, Red Dog is actually --
45 Teck is investing in this whole study that's across seas
46 to grow lichen, which is huge. And so, -- and they're
47 partnering with multiple different agencies and
48 entities.

49
50

1 And then also just recently we had, you
2 know, with these wolves, they chase 4 caribou off a
3 cliff and they all died. And so, we immediately
4 responded, took all these caribou, cut them up, they're
5 in the freezer right now, and we're sending them off to
6 a lab to test them for all different types of things for
7 their health, because we want to know and we want that
8 information to be able to provide [sic] everyone. So,
9 that's in the freezer, we're waiting for the lab to tell
10 us to send it and we're going to send it. But we
11 immediately collected those, we didn't want it -- we
12 salvaged what we could, we didn't want to waste any
13 caribou regardless, you know. So, but I don't think there
14 was very much that was salvageable, you know, I mean,
15 their stomachs pop and all that stuff, so it was -- it
16 made the meat go bad.

17
18 Tailings capacity. We've always known
19 what the tailings capacity is, we knew the level, we're
20 almost there, we're getting to that point. We're looking
21 at a different tailings capacity to reuse our old pit.
22 And so, that's going to be the whole new area if we are
23 able to extend the extend the mine. So, that's sort of
24 the -- that is the plan right now. And so, let's see.
25 So -- oh, and also this -- about Red Dog and NANA going
26 behind our backs about this 8-mile road. When you get -
27 - when you apply for a permit, you have a public process,
28 you have a public commenting process, it goes through
29 all kinds of things. So, obviously it wasn't done behind
30 your back because before we could do anything, there's
31 a public process for you to comment on this potential
32 road that we're going to build so, there was an
33 opportunity. Sorry you missed it, but it definitely was
34 a public opportunity. The tribes knew about it, you know,
35 because we had to actually go back and then -- it was
36 back and forth for a little while. So, it was very --
37 it was out there. And yeah, I guess that's it. Thank
38 you, Mr. Chair.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Clyde, then Vern.

41
42 MR. RAMOTH: 1985, huh? I was born -- I
43 was working at Prudhoe Bay, then I landed at Red Dog
44 July 7th, 1989, I wanted to see him blush, but let's
45 see. You know, when we consult with the tribe, it's a
46 good thing and Wilbur mentioned something about the
47 lichen, and I know it takes, what up to 20 years for the
48 lichen to regrow? I don't know, what's the -- I would
49 love to see more reporting to the villages through the
50 tribe, through consultation. Thank you, 1985 guy for

1 your report, it was good to hear. All kind of
2 communication is good because we hear miss
3 communication. Then we get to a negative mode, right,
4 and put our FBI hats on. But going back to the goals, I
5 think even just the ptarmigan study, the caribou study,
6 the ducks, the birds, the moose, the mice, the squirrels,
7 they're all up there at Red Dog. The moose -- once a
8 moose turn around, they don't turn back.
9 (Indiscernible), true fact. I heard somebody mention
10 about the blasting, I think that was Wilbur or Verne.
11 And the mining blasting quits for a period of time, you
12 say during the caribou migration? Tristen or...?
13

14 MS. QUADE: That was during the caribou
15 migration when they were on site. And so, it's not during
16 the entire caribou migration, it was only when they were,
17 you know, near that area on that road.
18

19 MR. RAMOTH: Okay. Because I worked up
20 there for most of the 90s and it used to shake our
21 windows in our bedrooms. And for the caribou, I mean,
22 they have four feet, I mean, 4 legs. I mean, they feel
23 everything. So, I don't know if they (indiscernible) or
24 (indiscernible) like the moose, but I'm sure they turn
25 back. But with the migration lower now I think there's
26 probably talks with Red Dog or NANA, maybe about making
27 stricter guidelines for mining and blasting. And the --
28 I know the road I used to love to stop and wait but the
29 50 mile AIDEA road, that's a long road. And when, when
30 the caribou are migrating if that lichen takes 20 years
31 to regrow and there's good vegetation there for them,
32 they might want to hang out, but it all depends on the
33 activity at Red Dog. So, it's good to hear all these and
34 please, one of your goals, please consult with our
35 tribes. Thank you.
36

37 MS. QUADE: May I respond, Mr. Chair?
38

39 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.
40

41 MS. QUADE: Thank you. Thank you for
42 that. I will add that to the goals. I think -- I agree
43 completely with you, having that communication is so
44 important to avoid the miscommunication. And as far as
45 (indiscernible) goes with the caribou, they don't seem
46 to maybe as much as the moose Because the caribou this
47 year liked to cross the road, and then they like to turn
48 around and cross it again. And there was quite a bit of
49 crossing of the road this year, so maybe they have a
50 different disposition this year than the moose but thank

00071

1 you for that feedback and for that recommendation.

2

3 MR. RAMOTH: Because the Ambler Road's
4 going to open someday, we got to get ready.

5

6 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Verne, did you have
7 something?

8

9 MR. CLEVELAND: I know Red Dog do reports
10 on yearly basis on the villages. But I never hear about
11 anything on caribou. They just report about mine and I
12 asked them questions about -- what about during
13 migration. I think maybe you guys' ought to get into
14 that team and start reporting to each village. Because
15 Red Dog goes through each village, as you guys know,
16 with Wayne, every -- maybe every spring, every summer
17 yeah, every year. And should do a report on caribou, on
18 migration time and ensure that people know because we
19 depend on caribou. That's our main diet, caribou. And
20 we know they're on decline now. But like I talked to one
21 of these guys earlier and they said, we don't hunt bulls
22 this time of the year. I'll get this female and right
23 now it's females are closed. But do we eat both at the
24 end of the year? No, I don't think so. We go with the
25 flow, with how it runs, and that's been going on for
26 years. That's how we roll, you know. And I ain't [sic]
27 going out there to go shoot some (In Native), some skinny
28 bull -- moose - caribou, no, I'm spending \$10 a gallon
29 on gas, I ain't going to waste no bullets on some skinny
30 caribou. I'm not, because I want some good meat and
31 that's what I'm going for. And every year I do this --
32 we have a meeting every year. I would like someone from
33 Red Dog at least come down to our meeting in December
34 and give us a good report on this. Thank you.

35

36 MS. QUADE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr.
37 Cleveland, thank you for that -- those suggestions as
38 well. The annual village visits happen every year.
39 Sorry, I have a -- is that better? Okay. The annual
40 village visits happen every year. And right now we are
41 -- we're in the midst of the planning period, and I will
42 absolutely bring your suggestion to the team, to include
43 a caribou report to each of those village visits. So,
44 thank you.

45

46 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Wilbur and then
47 Leonard. Was that Wilbur or Mike?

48

49 MR. KRAMER: Mike.

50

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Go ahead, Mike.

2
3 MR. KRAMER: Yes, one thing I'd like to
4 see is you know, Alex has radio collar data, I would
5 like to see eventually radio collar data from 2020 to
6 2030. Because this involves that extension in the road
7 from Red Dog to this new site. And that would obviously
8 prove that, you know, the extension is causing our
9 caribou to migrate further east to go south. So, I think
10 that kind of data would be perfect into proving and
11 understanding that, excuse me, that, you know, it is
12 hampering our caribou herd migration direction and maybe
13 timing. But I think that sufficient data there would be
14 able to prove a lot. And, you know, and see if Alex can
15 start bringing that kind of information up on a, you
16 know, a yearly basis to see if there's any transitions
17 where the caribou are moving further east to go south,
18 like towards Cutler and then down. But that was all I
19 had. Thank you.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mike.
22 Leonard, did you have something?

23
24 MR. BARGER: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
25 Leonard Barger, Point Hope. And I think Tristen, you
26 must be working from Red Dog, right? Environmental. Very
27 good job. You were 2 years old when I had to quit the
28 environmental department over there at Red Dog. I worked
29 there for 8 years in that department. And, you know, I
30 worked with Jim (indiscernible), John Martinescu, Jackie
31 Lundberg and those people. But they all retired and so
32 got new, new people there. So yeah, good department to
33 work with. I've done a lot of sampling and stuff up in
34 the Noatak and mainly Kivalina, where we're getting
35 water samples over there and, you know, right down by
36 the where the river is, you know, that drainage there
37 there's -- I was the first one that I noticed there was
38 a fish coming up there. So, that's why they put that dam
39 there. Yeah, fisheries dam, yeah so.

40
41 But anyways yeah, I see community
42 observing program, I know the Ambler Road that would be,
43 you know, the Noatak road to Red Dog, that's a real big
44 issue. I've been trying to help them. That's a community
45 there at Noatak, you know, they, they paid 20 to almost
46 30 bucks a gallon of stove oil or heating fuel. And it's
47 hard for them to get their fuel there. They have to fly
48 it in and they, you know, limit households 5 gallons
49 per, you know, that would be a real good, you know, to
50 build a road to Red Dog, that'll help. You know, I was

1 hoping, you know, Teck, Red Dog would help Noatak, you
2 know, help them build that road. You know, and you know
3 that -- that's a major issue. You know, I see your --
4 like you said, community observing my -- I don't know
5 if you know the people that you employ there, the
6 observers Dolly, Dolly Swan.

7

8 MS. WADE: Dolly Swan. Yes, I know her.
9 Yes.

10

11 MR. BARGER: Dolly's my sister.

12

13 MS. QUADE: Oh my goodness. Well, she is
14 lovely.

15

16 MR. BARGER: (Indiscernible) is my
17 brother in law.

18

19 MS. QUADE: So, you have a lovely family.

20

21 MR. BARGER: Elvin (indiscernible).

22

23 MS. QUADE: Yes, yes, Yes,
24 (indiscernible) Burns, Duke Burns.

25

26 MR. BARGER: Yeah.

27

28 MR. QUADE: Yes.

29

30 MR. BARGER: I'm all related to him, so.

31

32 MS. QUADE: Oh, my goodness. Well, they
33 are just the best people.

34

35 MR. BARGER: I lived in Kivalina for 8
36 years, 9 years. And you know, I had to quit my job at
37 Red Dog because I moved to Point Hope because, you know,
38 I loved that job over at Red Dog. You know, the
39 environmental department because I was there at the
40 community, you know, all the concerns and stuff, issues
41 I brought up because I lived there. And I know Tristen
42 knows about all the sample results and stuff and, you
43 know, the limits and I would, you know, bring it up to
44 our community that last time when they had a big meeting
45 in Kivalina, I was on R&R. Jim (indiscernible), and the
46 president of Teck was there, and they, you know, they
47 had a big meeting and a lot of people were arguing. You
48 know, I don't know, (indiscernible), you know, when you
49 go to Kivalina or somewhere, you know, they argue, argue,
50 get mad and stuff. You know, do this, do that, you know.

50

1 And Jim (indiscernible) come over to me,
2 hey, Leonard, can you go speak? I was like, hey, Jim I'm
3 on R&R. So, they said, oh, we'll pay you, we'll pay you.
4 You know, I was like, okay I hope I get a big bonus. He
5 starts smiling and the president, you know, the
6 president of Teck, he goes, gave me a thumbs up. And so,
7 I spoke [sic] and, you know, because I was there that,
8 you know, see the results in the water and stuff. And
9 it was a lot cleaner than it was before that Red Dog was
10 there because it was real bad before Red Dog was built,
11 real bad. You know, the water, all those sediments and
12 stuff. And -- but now, you know, I, you know, I see it
13 myself because I worked in that department for 8 years
14 and I get the first 2 years I was just learning and
15 learning. And after I got to my 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th year
16 and I knew the system. And so, you know, people and
17 Kivalina were like, you know, thank you, we finally got
18 somebody to, you know, keep an eye on Red Dog. You know,
19 we got some fish samples and stuff. And, you know, it
20 was a major concern.

21
22 But, you know, back then it was, you
23 know, people and Kivalina, there was a fish that was
24 caught though, trout we call them. It was the biggest
25 trout, you know, in Alaska That was caught in Kivalina
26 River, so. But yeah, I just want to bring that up and
27 (indiscernible). But my main thing is, you know, help,
28 you know, help Noatak on, you know, trying to help them
29 build that road to Red Dog, you know, for them. That'll
30 help them a lot more. You know, if you guys can't pay,
31 you know, your passengers, you know, people going on R&R
32 or you could drive them all the way to Noatak. That's
33 another thing, you know, safety issue. So -- but yeah.
34 Thank you.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Leonard.
37 Any final questions, comments, for Erica?

38
39 (No response)

40
41 Do you have any closing statements?

42
43 MS. QUADE: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. I
44 just wanted to thank the Council for allowing me --
45 inviting me and allowing me to speak on this program and
46 for your really thoughtful suggestions and concerns. You
47 know, it's opportunities like this when we can speak to
48 each other and hopefully communicate better that we can
49 move forward better. So, thank you so much. Appreciate
50 it.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for your time, Erica. At this time, it is 2:27. We're going to go ahead and take a 10-minute break before we move into the special action requests.

(On record)

(Off record)

This is Chair Thomas Baker. It's now 2:44 p.m. Just to make sure, Mike and Wilbur, are you back online with us?

MR. HOWARTH: Yeah, Wilbur's here.

MR. KRAMER: Micheal's here.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, gentlemen. With that, we will move into our Action Items, item c, Special Action Requests. First one being Wildlife Special Action 26-01, reduce harvest limit for caribou in Units 22, 23, and a portion of 26A. And it looks like that will be on page 27 of our books or packets. Mr. Tom Plank, will you be taking the lead on this?

MR. PLANK: Yes, sir, Mr. Chair. Thank you. For the record, Tom Plank wildlife Biologist Office Subsistence Manager. And as Mr. Baker has already pointed out, this is Wildlife Special Action WSA 26-01, and it was submitted by the Western Arctic Caribou Working Group, and it requests to reduce the caribou harvest limits and units 22, 23 and the southwest portion of Unit 26A, to 4 caribou per year, only 1 which may be a cow. And I think we may have touched on some of this a little bit during our last meeting, but the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working group at its annual meeting signed the management level to critical declining for the Western Arctic Caribou Herd based on the current census and adult cow survival rate. And the July 2025 photo census, estimated to herd at 121,000 caribou and represented approximately 20% decline from the survey before that in 2023. And so, the proponent, Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group, identifies an immediate need to address the current herd decline by limiting the harvest of both bulls and cows to allow the herd population to stabilize and begin to recover. And that's all I have at this moment. If you have any questions, I am here for you, sir.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Questions from members of the Council? Elmer.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Through the Chair. Elmer Armstrong. I think we should start the discussion to amend language in this and remove the cow and just go to 5 bulls. Just to start the discussion.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, just that we're all on the same page on the back of our name plates, we do have the procedure for how we address these special action requests, so we'll go through that process. And then once we get to the appropriate portion, we can talk about if we want to modify, we just need to get through these first -- portions first. So, with that, Mr. Plank, can you give us a report on Board consultation from any tribes or ANCSA corporations for this -- for 26-01.

MR. PLANK: Through the Chair, Tom Plank, OSM. We have not heard back from any tribes or ANCSA corps as of yet, but we do have a public hearing on April 9th. And also, at any time they can request a consultation as well.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that, Mr. Plank. At this time, are there any agency comments? Mr. Wiese, if you could put your name on record, please.

MR. WIESE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Wil Wiese, Selawik National Wildlife Refuge Manager. My comments on this this Special Action Proposal, you know, our role as the Refuge is participate in management of the herd and cooperate with other agencies. And I think, from my perspective, looking at all the data harvest the cows right now is just not sustainable. So my comment, my position as the manager of Selawik, is that really this should be no cows harvested the number 4 or 5 bulls is probably less important, but looking at the data, I would say a total limit of 4 bulls and 0 cows would be appropriate with where the herd is going at this point. And that's my comment unless there's questions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Wil any questions or comments for Mr. Wiese at this time from the Council? Tristen.

MR. PATTEE: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tristen Pattee. I just want to state for the record

1 that, yeah, I do agree with his -- with Mr. Wiese's
2 statement on the removing the cow. Yeah, it is for the,
3 you know, it's -- we're in a different time right now.
4 It's not -- we don't have an abundance of caribou out
5 there. And it's, you know, we need to conserve for the
6 future generations. It's, you know, it's, we're going
7 to have to adapt now to be able to help our -- the future
8 later. So, I think it is very important, especially based
9 off of the information that we're getting from the State,
10 from Alex Hansen. And so, you know, it's -- I think it's
11 very wise to, to listen to the people that are doing the
12 real science out there. You know, because we wait for
13 our food, we're not out there studying year-round and
14 seeing what's going on with the herd, we're just waiting
15 for our food. But now they're telling us this is
16 important and I believe them, you know. And so, I really
17 think it's important to really consider you know,
18 removing the cow from this -- from the proposal. Thank
19 you, Mr. Chair.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Tristen.
22 Any other questions? Comments from members of the
23 Council?

24
25 MR. KRAMER: Yes, this is Micheal.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes. Go ahead, Mike.

28
29 MR. KRAMER: Yes. You know, my advice to
30 [sic] rest of my council members is I think before we
31 take any more cuts. The guides and transporters need to
32 be discontinued first. You know, we've taken a lot of
33 cuts so far, you know, for our conservation of our herd.
34 So, I think what needs to happen and occur first is the
35 Board of Game needs to shut down guides and transporters
36 to Game Management Unit 23. That way, we still are able
37 to harvest our caribou. But, you know, it's been a
38 longstanding issue between guides, transporters and
39 subsistence users. So, I think before we take any more
40 cuts, we've already proved ourselves to take this many
41 cuts and we're taking a lot. I can remember when we were
42 allowed to get 15 caribou a day, and now we're at 15 a
43 year and 1 can be a cow. I know that in the future, some
44 of our people are going to be out there poaching because
45 they can't go without that good cow meat, you know. And
46 my -- one other question, I'm kind of confused. Is the
47 cow season closed December 31st or -- I'm kind of
48 confused, I don't have that information right in front
49 of me. I just got a limited book because I'm down here
50 in Anchorage, but I think before we take any other cuts

1 my fellow council members, I think the Game of -- Board
2 of Game, needs to eliminate transporters within Game
3 Management Unit 23, and any other surrounding game
4 management units that our Western Arctic Caribou Herd
5 pertains to.

6
7 And my other question is, you know,
8 since we are taking these cuts, what are the status of
9 the other users? North Slope, Norton Sound, Eastern or
10 Western Interior? You know, are they taking cuts also
11 along with us? Because it sure wouldn't be fair, we're
12 only taking cuts in their not. Yes, Western Arctic
13 Caribou Herd spends a lot more time in Game Management
14 Unit 23, but still, we need to be able to all get
15 together and be able to decide what is best for our herd
16 together as Game Management Unit or as RAC, as Fish and
17 Game Advisory Council. We all need to be on the same
18 page to allow everything to align, so that there's no
19 differences in any management and/or the amount of
20 caribou we could harvest. Thank you.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
23 Mike. Does anybody else have any questions for Wil Wiese.
24 Hearing -- Tristen Pattee.

25
26 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen
27 Pattee. Just to respond to some of the comments from
28 Mike and yeah, I know it's -- you mentioned, are all the
29 other areas taking cuts. I don't think that's a question
30 you should be really asking, I mean, yeah, even if
31 they're not, it's up to us, this herd is very important,
32 so we're going to have to create that path, we're going
33 to have to be the ones to make the statement, and make
34 the important decisions and be the leaders in this
35 decision, it's a hard decision. I mean, 4 caribou years,
36 not a lot, but it's per person. This is a good
37 opportunity to get your family, your sons, whoever your
38 daughters take them all hunting you get 4 each, you
39 know, they get them off their video games, teach them
40 to hunt. Especially teach them to, you know, tell the
41 difference between a cow and a bull because that's
42 important. But yeah, it's up to us to start this and be
43 leaders and, you know, make that bold statement and show
44 how important this herd is. Thank you.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
47 Tristen. It appears that there are no questions for you,
48 Wil. Are there any other agency comments at this time
49 on Wildlife Special Action 26-01? Mr. Hansen.

50

1 MR. HANSEN: Yes, Mr. Chair, and for the
2 record, my name is Alex Hansen, Alaska Department of
3 Fish and Game, here in Kotzebue, work [sic] with the
4 Western Arctic Caribou Herd. Many of you in this group
5 have already had the opportunity to address this WSA
6 through AC, SRC's and other opportunities. So, I
7 appreciate Elmer just kind of cutting to the chase and,
8 you know, talking about the removal of the cow and that's
9 where we're at. If we look at the harvestable surplus
10 of this population, it's estimated at 5,800 bulls. So,
11 the harvestable surplus of cows currently is 0. So, any
12 cow that we take at this point in time is going to,
13 certainly not help the population recover. And, you
14 know, the more we live on the landscape, the more that
15 we can recover and the quicker we can get back to where
16 we want to be, to less restrictive harvest
17 opportunities. So currently, our estimates are that
18 about 4,000 cows are taken from this population annually
19 and that's a major concern. And it's our understanding
20 and belief that if we leave even one cow on the harvest
21 ticket or in the bag limit that that cow, you know, it's
22 just human nature, right? We might just say it's just
23 one, I'm only going to take one but you know, we all
24 kind of feel that way at some point. And then many, many
25 are taken. And so as was pointed out, you know, as
26 Tristen pointed out, we have to work together to help
27 this population recover. And for clarification, this WSA
28 includes all areas that are affected by or that are
29 occupied by the Western Arctic Herd, so everyone would
30 be included the [sic] harvest from the Western Arctic
31 Herd. Thank you.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Alex. Any
34 questions from the Council for Alex? Leonard.

35
36 MR. BARGER: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair.
37 Speaking on behalf of the North Slope RAC, we went and
38 did the proposal and stuff, and we passed on the
39 proposal. And, you know, Alex was there and we talked
40 about it and we went through and talked about it, about
41 the issues and stuff. Thank you.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. Karmen.

44
45 MS. MONIGOLD: Hi, yes, we just had our
46 RAC meeting also. And we also agree that 0 cows can be
47 taken at this time because we're getting close to a Tier
48 II hunting system, which if anybody has a Tier II system
49 within their hunting unit, they know that is not fun.
50 We don't want to go that route at all. So, what we can

1 do now -- I mean, if you look at it within 3 years, if
2 we keep losing this herd, we will be at 0 harvest
3 anywhere in Game Unit 23. So, you know, we tried to get
4 it past a couple years ago with 4 cows -- I mean, 4
5 bulls and it didn't work out on the state side. And now,
6 we're bringing it up again because they didn't take us
7 seriously last time when the numbers were even higher.
8 And we can't afford to go any lower because if we do,
9 we get into Tier II status. So, we need to all pitch in
10 and yes, get your daughter's anybody who can get a tag
11 in your family, take them out on a boat, take them out
12 on a snowmachine. You know, that's how you get your
13 meat. And it's not just guys that hunt anymore. Thank
14 you.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
17 Karmen. Does anybody have any questions for Alex?
18 Hearing none.

19
20 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, Wilbur.

23
24 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah, I agree with that,
25 just horrible. This time of the year or earlier, they're
26 good eating. So yeah, we could go without cows. Let's
27 try to rebuild. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur.
30 Tristen, did you have something?

31
32 MR. PATTEE: Yes, through the Chair,
33 Tristen Pattee. Just -- I had a question, so on this
34 special access request, it says a portion of 26A is that
35 like what part? I mean, is it southwest only or can you
36 clarify, please?

37
38 MR. HANSEN: Oh, yes, good question.
39 Through the Chair, Alex Hansen. Yes, Tristen that would
40 be the 26A southwest portion. And so, that includes --
41 and part of the reason that this failed last time at the
42 last Board of Game is we were sussing that out and we
43 have some real issues with harvest out of Anaktuvuk Pass
44 as Leonard spoke to. But this one basically just looks
45 at the harvest of Western Arctic Herd, which Point Hope
46 is 100% Western Arctic, and then we go north to Point
47 Lay it's about 70%, maybe 60% to Wainwright. You know,
48 it changes on a given year but. So, it's those 3
49 communities within the North Slope. Yeah.

50

00081

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any questions for
2 Alex?

3
4 (No response)

5
6 Hearing none. Thank you, Alex. Any other
7 agency comment? Yes, Mike.

8
9 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. I'm all for
10 eliminating the cow, don't get me wrong. But before we
11 even go to 4 a year, you know, we also -- I mean, that's
12 why I was saying we need to consider, you know, according
13 to ANILCA, Section VIII, it says that once the
14 subsistence resources reaches a critical limit like now,
15 that guides and transporters -- 1: guides transporters
16 be eliminated; 2: predator control; 3: land enhancement.
17 We can't do much for land enhancement, I brought this
18 up many times, but you know, the only reason why we put
19 that cow in there was for the accidental taking of a of
20 a cow not a purposely taking the cow, but for accidental
21 purposes. But it was also encouraged for everyone to try
22 and take, you know, 15 bulls. So, you know, that's what
23 I was trying to get at, but I do agree with eliminating
24 the cow, you know, back when we had the -- we had -- we
25 eliminated the moose cow (distortion) hunt, for the
26 (indiscernible) and that sure has helped. You know, I'm
27 not sure if the moose population is stabilized because
28 we've eliminated that. But you know, it is and it should
29 be eliminated. But the only reason why we put it in
30 there was for the accidental taking. You know, unless
31 you guys wanted to get a certain permit that they get
32 for an accidental taking of a cow. That's, you know,
33 that should be considered because I know that there is
34 people out there and I know some people were saying that
35 I'm afraid to go hunt caribou because man, I'm afraid
36 I'm going to shoot a cow, you know, that's just how it
37 goes sometimes you don't really know because the young
38 ones all like, you know, the same little finger looking
39 horns. But you know, the difference is their main and,
40 you know, the way they look from their ear and body
41 size, but that's all I have for now. Thank you.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mike.
44 Thank you, Alex. Are there any other agency comments at
45 this time?

46
47 (No response)

48
49 Hearing no agency comments. Advisory
50 group comments from other Regional Councils, Fish and

1 Game ACs, Subsistence Resource Commissions. Emily Creek.

2

3 MS. CREEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My name
4 is Emily Creek, I'm the Subsistence Coordinator for
5 Western Arctic National Parklands, based in this
6 building, and I am the Coordinator for the Kobuk Valley
7 Subsistence Resource Commission and the Cape Krusenstern
8 Subsistence Resource Commission. The Kobuk Valley
9 Subsistence Resource Commission voted to support the
10 special action with the modification to 4 bull caribou
11 per year, no cows. The justification is similar to the
12 conversations you're having. The SRC had a long
13 discussion about the proposal for a continued reduction
14 in harvest and the impact of cow harvest. Members are
15 concerned for their neighbors who may need to get a cow
16 to get food on the table but understand that the
17 population cannot support it. The SRC recognizes that
18 they are making this decision not only for them, but for
19 others as well, and believes that though it is incredibly
20 difficult to say no cow harvest. It is important to make
21 a bold statement in order to protect this herd for the
22 future and everyone needs to be proactive. Later on in
23 this meeting, I'll share their proposals to the Board
24 of Game. But for your information, now they did submit
25 a mirroring proposal.

26

27 And then the SRC also asked the National
28 Park Service and other agencies to continue outreach,
29 specifically highlighting why there should be no harvest
30 of cows and let people know that more extreme regulations
31 could occur if the herd does not make a rebound. The SRC
32 finally reminded everyone that regulations are not set
33 in stone. We need to do something now and hope that we
34 can increase again in the future. Then the Cape
35 Krusenstern Subsistence Resource Commission just voted
36 about an hour ago and the vote from this SRC was that
37 they support no cow harvest, they did not address the
38 number of bulls to be taken. Their justification, again,
39 was that this is a really difficult decision, there are
40 a lot of mixed feelings, but they feel that there is no
41 choice when it comes to cows. Thank you.

42

43 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Emily. Do
44 we have any other comments from other Regional Councils
45 or Fish and Game Advisory Committees? Mr. Plank, would
46 you be able to go over the council recommendations that
47 we have on the screen currently?

48

49 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the
50 record. Tom Plank, Wildlife Biologist, OSM. So, all the

1 other Councils that are -- will be taking this up have
2 taken this up today -- up to today. As you see on the
3 screen in North Slope RAC, they supported WSA 26-01 with
4 the modification to change the caribou harvest limit to
5 10 caribou only 1, which may be a cow per year per hunter
6 in the southwest portion of Unit 26A and the northwestern
7 portion of Unit 23, which includes Point Hope. The
8 Council supported changing the caribou harvest limits
9 in Units 22 and 23 remainder to 4 caribou only 1 which
10 may be a cow per year, per hunter, as proposed in the
11 submitted request.

12
13 The Western Interior Council. They took
14 no action and deferred to the home regions. The Council
15 believes the request does not adequately protect the
16 interests of interested subsistence users. If approved,
17 there would be a disparity between state and federal
18 regulations making federally qualified subsistence user
19 harvest limits significantly lower than the state bag
20 limit. And additionally, the Council feels that the
21 harvest of cow should be eliminated when the population
22 is this low.

23
24 The Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Council. They
25 took no action, deferred to the home range. And the
26 Seward Peninsula, they acted on this yesterday and they
27 -- give me just a second here. They supported it with
28 the modification to eliminate the cow harvest. So, 4
29 caribou, no cows. And that was because of the
30 conservation concerns and the need to eliminate cow
31 harvest since the estimate has been about, as Alex had
32 mentioned, was 4,000 cows a year. And that is all that
33 I have for the Council recommend [sic]. Thank you.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
36 Do we have any comments from Fish and Game Advisory
37 Committees?

38
39 (No response)

40
41 Hearing none. Can we please have a
42 summary of written public comments?

43
44 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tom
45 Plank, OSM. Again, we have not received any written
46 comments on this, but the open comment we will have a
47 hearing for this on the 9th of April, which is next
48 week.

49
50

00084

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
2 At this time, is there any public testimony?

3
4 (No response)

5
6 Final call, is there any public
7 testimony for Wildlife Special Action 26-01.

8
9 (No response)

10
11 Doesn't appear that we have any. Next,
12 the Regional Council Recommendation. So, Grace, would
13 you be able to walk us through how the motion needs to
14 be worded?

15
16 MS. COCHON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So,
17 it would -- the motion would need to be worded in the
18 affirmative. So, you would make a motion to support the
19 proposal and modify it as needed.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Would anyone like to
22 make a motion?

23
24 MR. RAMOTH: Yep. Hearing everybody like
25 Karmen and North Slope and other agencies and listening
26 to our elders for this certain question, I'll make a
27 motion to adopt Wildlife Special Action 26-01 with the
28 modification of no cows. Four bulls, no cows.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Clyde. So,
31 motion made to support with the modification of removing
32 the only one maybe a cow, language. Is there a second?

33
34 MR. PATTEE: I'll second that motion. Oh.

35
36 (Simultaneous speech)

37
38 MS. MONIGOLD: Second.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Tristen's hand
41 touched the button first. So, seconded by Tristen
42 Pattee. For discussion and justification, we have had
43 some discussion throughout this presentation. Would
44 anyone like to discuss further? We do need to state what
45 our justification is for the record before we make the
46 final motion and vote on this. Tristen.

47
48 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen
49 Pattee. Yeah, just for justification for this motion.
50 It would be to conserve for future generations. We are

1 having a, you know, obviously we -- it's -- we have a
2 decline in our herd and it's happening at a pretty quick
3 pace. So, we -- I think it's important that we adopt
4 sustainable practices. And then, you know, for this herd
5 to, you know, potentially start growing. Another
6 justification is to protect our subsistence lifestyle.
7 Without this herd, what are we going to teach? What
8 subsistence lifestyle, I mean, for caribou, particularly
9 if we don't have this, how are we going to teach the
10 younger generation? So, we want to be able to protect
11 that subsistence lifestyle by having this herd for
12 future generations. And so, I think it's just a shared
13 responsibility that we all must take in order to continue
14 this, you know, our traditions on. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

15

16 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Tristen.
17 Karmen.

18

19 MS. MONIGOLD: My justification would be
20 that, you know, 4 caribou, a year is a lot better than
21 no caribou in 3 years. And that, you know, this might
22 hurt a little bit right now, but it's not going to be
23 forever if we do this correctly and we do this together.
24 You know, the herd has bounced back from the 1970s from,
25 I think 75,000. So, it is possible and it's just the
26 rate that it is declining. We only have 3 more years of
27 hunting and that is absolutely terrifying that our
28 children may not be caribou people like we are. So, even
29 if it hurts right now, it'll be worth it in the long
30 run. Thank you.

31

32 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Karmen.
33 And as we're discussing this, I do have one question for
34 OSM. With this proposal as written, I'm just looking at
35 what is in our packet and there isn't an effective date
36 of when this would change. Maybe Mr. Plank, from the
37 original proposal drafted by the Western Arctic Caribou
38 Herd Working Group, is this intended to change once the
39 herd reaches X number as stated by their action plan
40 with the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group? Just
41 so that we're aware of if this would require another
42 change to be made and voted on at a later date.

43

44 MR. PLANK: Of course. Thank you, Mr.
45 Chair. Tom Plank, OSM. So this particular one, this is
46 a temporary Wildlife Special Action. And so, that means
47 it's 1 of those ones where it goes through really
48 quickly. And the Board will be meeting on this on June
49 3rd. And if this is adopted, then -- as it's written,
50 it is in place to be in effect for this year. This season

1 coming up the '26-'27. So yes, if you wanted to continue
2 to keep it at this level, we would have to actually put
3 in a regulatory change, a proposal like we did last time
4 around. And when the next wildlife cycle comes, opens
5 back up, which is I'm thinking next year, if I remember
6 right, it's going to be like January of next year. But
7 yeah, this is only a temporary special action, but this
8 gets it on the books now. And if you want to continue
9 it, that would require a proposal later.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
12 Ms. La Vine.

13
14 MS. LA VINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
15 is Robbin La Vine, Subsistence Policy Coordinator, for
16 the record. Hey, Tom, can you clarify? You did just say
17 that this would be -- if the Board were to approve this
18 Special Action request, it would be from this year, 2026
19 through 2027. I thought it was -- is it through the 2020
20 -- from 2026 to 2028 regulatory year or is that -02 and
21 -03? Thanks.

22
23 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Robbin. Through.
24 Chair. Tom Plank, OSM. This is only for this coming
25 season, the 26-27 regulatory year. The next 2 proposals
26 we get to, those are proposed to go through the '28 year
27 as well. So, as this one's written and requested, it is
28 just this one regulatory year, so far.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that
31 clarification, Mr. Plank. Any further discussion or
32 justification from members of the Council?

33
34 MR. KRAMER: Yes. Micheal.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, please go ahead,
37 Mr. Kramer.

38
39 MR. KRAMER: You know, earlier Alex had
40 said that, you know, the cow harvest is roughly about
41 4,000 animals a year. It -- you know, the only way I
42 could see that happening in the last few years is that
43 4,000 people are getting you know, a cow a year. Yeah a
44 cow. You know, you got to also consider the factors of
45 predation, natural die off, starvation, whatever, you
46 know, injuries, whatever you know, and that could be
47 that number could be higher, but how this 4,000 came up
48 is, should be based on how many harvest tickets you had,
49 how many were reported that's scientific data, that
50 scientific data is not here. Just saying 4,000

1 (indiscernible), but normally harvested that doesn't
2 really, you know, explain much. But that's my concern
3 is that, you know, you also gotta look at what's in
4 front of you and how many harvest tickets, how many
5 people harvested caribou, kinda plus or minus some for
6 starvation, predation and so on. You know, that 4,000
7 could be higher, you know, in other categories, not just
8 our harvesting of these 4,000 cows. So, that's one thing
9 I'm kind of seeing a discrepancy on you know, with the
10 numbers. But, you know, I think that kind of data we
11 need to be able to make better judgment.

12
13 And I know that -- and I am all for
14 eliminating the cow. You know, we did it with the moose
15 and hopefully they are starting to bounce back. You know,
16 we had a nice coffee mug that had the one cow in the
17 middle and it went all the way out to how many other
18 moose. So, I'm hoping that, you know, this will help our
19 Western Arctic Caribou Herd rebound and start getting
20 it to where we can start harvesting caribou at a better
21 number and see the other thing is, is with that 4,000
22 animals, you got to look at their geographic location.
23 We aren't seeing very much here in Kotzebue other than
24 the last 2 years. Before that there was only Ambler,
25 Shungnak, Kobuk, maybe, Selawik, and Buckland that were
26 harvesting caribou. Noatak also. Some Kivalina, some
27 Kotzebue. So, you know, we need to look at that kind of
28 data. How many harvest tickets we had, how many were
29 reported, how many were given out, and so and so. You
30 know, until we could start looking at better ways of
31 being able to manage this herd. And I'm all for
32 eliminating the cow don't get me wrong and the only
33 reason why it was put in there in the beginning was for
34 accidental taking of cows. But, you know, it was
35 preferred that they all took bulls. So, with that being
36 said I, you know, I'd like to see some more of that data
37 sometime.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mike.
40 Alex.

41
42 MR. HANSEN: Yes, thank you. Through the
43 Chair. I'll respond to Member Kramer. So, Mike you know,
44 one of the challenges that we deal with is harvest,
45 understanding harvest, right? So in 2017, we had a
46 mandatory harvest permit come on the books, RC907. We've
47 been working to get those out into people's hands
48 currently. I estimate our harvest reporting is about
49 10%. So, our compliance is super low and it's super
50 frustrating and we need to continue to work on that.

1 We're working with Subsistence Division, they're going
2 to ramp up efforts in the next few years, starting this
3 year to really get a better understanding on harvest.
4 The number 4,000 is based on collars harvested by
5 individual hunters. And so, I estimate you know, that
6 was kind of an average of the last 5 years that about
7 4,100 caribou or caribou cows, were harvested by hunters
8 every year. That's -- unfortunately, it's not the ideal
9 or gold standard metric, but that's what we have to work
10 with right now since our harvest data is so limited. It
11 does track very well with our long term understanding
12 of harvest that we've, you know, gotten through the
13 Subsistence Division and other resources. Our long-term
14 average harvest is about 12%. We know from historical
15 harvest that Unit 26A harvest at approximately 80%
16 bulls, 20% cows. Unit 23 is about 70% bulls, 30% cows.
17 Unit 22 historically, is about 60% bulls and 40% cows.
18 So, we average that all together our harvest is roughly,
19 you know, 33% or a 1/3 is cow harvest. So, if we run
20 those numbers out, we get pretty close to 4,000 cows.
21 So, it tracks pretty well with what I'm seeing with the
22 collar harvest. You know, I agree with you, it's
23 unfortunate that not everybody's getting a permit. It's
24 an it's an uphill battle, we're fighting it and we're
25 working on it.

26
27 I will also say that that data
28 corroborates with the North Slope Borough Wildlife
29 Department. They do extensive surveys, household surveys
30 and tracks with those same numbers in those 3 communities
31 of Wainwright, Point Hope and Point Lay. So, we're doing
32 our best, and that's what we've got. I will say that,
33 you know, hunter harvest is not the only thing I
34 absolutely admit that. And when we look at harvest
35 through that same basically method that I described,
36 hunter harvest takes about 12% of the harvested collared
37 cows or removed from the population collared cows. And
38 then predation takes about 70% with the remaining 18%
39 in the unknown category. So, if I go out and I find a
40 collar in a stream after hiking 3 miles up the river and
41 all I find is a collar, it's going to be classed as
42 unknown because there's no way to call it anything else.
43 So, the bulk of the caribou are taken by predators.
44 Using those same methods, I would estimate the predators
45 take about 26,000 caribou a year, cow caribou. So, just
46 using that same metric, I'll admit it's flawed, but
47 that's what I have to work with at this point. So, you
48 know, you can have that discussion later under the Board
49 of Game proposals. Other the unit -- or sorry, the SewPen
50 RAC just met yesterday, they're meeting today as well.

1 And they're talking about drafting a proposal for a
2 intensive management action to take place within the
3 range of this herd. So, that's something you could
4 discuss, that's up to you. But we take that seriously
5 as well and it is a tool in our tool bag that we might
6 potentially use. Thank you.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
9 Alex. Follow up questions for Alex before he leaves the
10 mic? Clyde.

11
12 MR. RAMOTH: For the record, Clyde
13 Ramoth. Under my motion, I just need clarification, I've
14 heard some discussions about the 4 bulls and 1 may be a
15 cow, but I thought I made the motion to remove that
16 portion. What's the clarification?

17
18 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, that is correct.
19 So, with your motion, that is what we would be voting
20 on is to support but take out the cow language, so you're
21 just able to harvest bulls. Verne.

22
23 MR. CLEVELAND: All females don't get
24 pregnant, I guarantee you. You sit on the edge of the
25 river and a bunch of caribou come across. You can easily
26 pick off the females without calves easy and they're
27 very healthy caribou and they're not pregnant. But once
28 you get the other ones that are pregnant, you can tell
29 there's 2 of them in there. But the one without not
30 being pregnant, it's an old female. If you can tell if
31 you're a hunter, if you just talk out of your head and
32 not being a hunter, there's a difference between a hunter
33 and a non-hunter. You can get out and hunt a female if
34 you want, as long as they're not pregnant. You can tell
35 easily and I'm with this, we made this up in our Western
36 Arctic Caribou Herd and I told them we can't -- let's
37 not get female. Nothing, zip. Didn't want no caribou --
38 no female. But this proposal came up now it's just with
39 our caribou count still low, no females at all should
40 be hunted, as of right now. And we have a hard time
41 getting harvest reports from each village. We were
42 having a hard time having harvest reports. We cannot get
43 new harvest reports, we don't know who gets caribou.
44 Where, when, why? The Interior doesn't get anything,
45 nothing. Nome -- in the Nome area. You have to go 2 or
46 300 miles to get caribou. I got a friend in Shaktoolik,
47 he had to go 300 miles to get a caribou. And that's
48 pretty damn near over here, from Shaktoolik. That's a
49 long run on a snow machine and there's no snow this
50 year. We got to think about the other people, not just

00090

1 us here, not just think about us here. Got to think
2 about those other folks that are living further south.
3 And I would suggest that, yes, let's not do -- let's go
4 away with female harvest. Thank you.

5

6 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Verne.
7 Thank you, Alex. Any further discussion for our
8 justification?

9

10 (No response)

11

12 So, just to restate our justification
13 based on the decline of the herd and making sure that
14 we're doing everything that we can to sustain the herd
15 and protect the animals. The language that we would
16 support would be removing the harvest of cows. So, with
17 this, would anyone like to make a restate the final
18 motion for the record.

19

20 MR. RAMOTH: I need legal on this.

21

22 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, I'll go ahead and
23 restate. Okay. The final motion would be to support WSA
24 26-01, with the modification to remove the language,
25 comma space, only one may be a cow.

26

27 MR. RAMOTH: I so move.

28

29 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, motion made by
30 Clyde. Is there a second?

31

32 MS. MONIGOLD: Second.

33

34 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Seconded by Karmen.
35 Can I please get a roll call vote, Grace.

36

37 MS. COCHON: Member Karmen Monigold.

38

39 MS. MONIGOLD: Yes.

40

41 MS. COCHON: Member Verne Cleveland.

42

43 MR. CLEVELAND: I don't know, I have no
44 idea, I'm a hunter and I can't -- but I'll say yes.
45 Thank you.

46

47 MS. COCHON: Member Tristen Pattee.

48

49 MR. PATTEE: Yes.

50

00091

1 MS. COCHON: Member Clyde Ramoth.

2

3 MR. RAMOTH: Yes.

4

5 MS. COCHON: Member Chair Baker.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

8

9 MS. COCHON: Member Mike Kramer.

10

11 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

12

13 MS. COCHON: Member Wilbur Howarth.

14

15 MR. HOWARTH: Yes.

16

17 MS. COCHON: So, that is a -- oh, no,
18 sorry, Mr. Elmer Armstrong.

19

20 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

21

22 MS. COCHON: Apologies. Okay, so we have
23 8 votes yes.

24

25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Grace. So
26 for the record, motion to support as modified passed on,
27 WSA 26-01. We will move into WSA 26-02 which will be
28 located on page 29 of the packet, close federal lands
29 in Unit 22 to non-federally qualified Subsistence users.
30 Mr. Plank, the floor is yours.

31

32 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members
33 of Council for the record, Tom Plank, OSM. So, temporary
34 Wildlife Special Action WSA 26-02 was submitted by the
35 Bering Land Bridge National Preserve, and it is
36 requesting to close federal public lands in Unit 22 to
37 Caribou hunting by non-federally qualified users for the
38 2026 to 2028 regulatory cycle. And this request was
39 prompted by all the same reason that we just discussed
40 for 26-01. The proponent further stated that the last
41 estimate continues precipitous decline that began in
42 2003 and at the current rate of decline, approximately
43 10% per year, the herd will drop below 100,000 in 2027.
44 And at Unit 22 is considered the winter range of Western
45 Arctic Caribou Herd. Although collared animals from the
46 herd have not made use of the Seward Peninsula for 6
47 years now. Some remnant groups of Western Arctic Caribou
48 Herd have been observed there, particularly in and
49 around Bering Sea Bridge National Preserve. And this
50 action is necessary for the continuation of subsistence

1 use of Western Arctic Caribou Herd by federally
2 qualified users in Unit 22 as is consistent with the
3 existing closure to non-federally qualified users in
4 Unit 23. And that's all that I have for you at this
5 moment, and I'll stay on for any questions.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
8 Any questions before we dive into the process?

9

10 (No response)

11

12 Hearing none. Report on board
13 consultation. Do we have -- did we have any board
14 consultation from tribes or ANCSA corporations?

15

16 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tom
17 Plank, OSM. We have not at this moment yet.

18

19 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Do we have any agency
20 comments at this time? Alaska Department Fish and Game,
21 federal agencies?

22

23 (No comments)

24

25 Any advisory group comments? Ms. Creek.

26

27 MS. CREEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The
28 Cape Krusenstern Subsistence Resource Commission voted
29 in support of this closure. Believing that it supports
30 subsistence priority and that it -- and the next one,
31 help the whole range of the herd Have the Federal
32 enclosure like we have in Unit 23. Thank you.

33

34 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Ms. Creek.
35 Any other advisory group comments at this time?

36

37 (No response)

38

39 Mr. Plank, could you go through the
40 other Regional Advisory Council comments and
41 recommendations?

42

43 MR. PLANK: Yes, sir, through the Chair,
44 Tom Plank, OSM. So the North Slope Council met on this
45 and they supported WSA 26-02 as proposed. The Council
46 state it is important to provide a subsistence priority
47 and support subsistence users within the impacted
48 region, due to the decline of the Western Arctic Caribou
49 Herd.

50

1 The Western Interior Council took no
2 action and deferred to the home range regions. The Yukon-
3 Kuskokwim Delta Council took no action and deferred to
4 the home range. And the Seward Pen, supported WSA 26-
5 02, for conservation concerns and that. And that just
6 leaves y'all now.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
9 At this time, do we have a summary of written public
10 comments?

11
12 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tom
13 Plank, OSM. We did not have any written public comments
14 for this. But again, just to plug it [sic] another time,
15 we will have the public hearing on April 9th from 4 p.m.
16 to 6 p.m.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
19 At this time, do we have any public testimony for
20 Wildlife Special Action 26-02?

21
22 (No response)

23
24 Final call for public testimony on
25 Wildlife Special Action 26-02.

26
27 (No response)

28
29 Hearing none. What is the wish of the
30 Council?

31
32 MR. RAMOTH: I forgot my mic is on. Mr.
33 Chair, I'll make a motion to adopt Wildlife Special
34 Action 26-02, closed -- closure of federal public lands
35 in Unit 22 to non-federally qualified subsistence users.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Clyde.
38 Motion made. Is there a second?

39
40 MS. MONIGOLD: Second

41
42 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Seconded by Karmen,
43 to support WSA 26-02 for discussion and justification.
44 Does anyone have anything you'd like to add? Verne.

45
46 MR. CLEVELAND: So, my daughter --
47 they're not in that area, cannot hunt in that area.
48 They're -- they live in Anchorage.

49
50

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, this is for Unit
2 22, not our area.

3
4 MR. CLEVELAND: Sorry, I didn't see that.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Can we get a
7 confirmation of Unit 22? That would be which area for
8 the record?

9
10 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair, Tom Plank,
11 OSM. So, for Unit 22A, that would be the residence of
12 Unit 21D, west of the Koyukuk and Yukon rivers; 22 except
13 residents of Saint Lawrence Island; Unit 23; 24; Kotlik,
14 Emmonak, Hooper Bay, Scammon Bay, Chevak, Marshall,
15 Mountain Village, Pilot Station, Pitkas Point, Russian
16 Mission, Saint Mary's, Nunam Iqua, and Alakanuk. Sorry,
17 I'm horrible pronouncing some of these names. And then
18 for the Unit 22 remainder would be the residence of Unit
19 21D west of the Koyukuk and Yukon rivers, and 22 except
20 residents of Saint Lawrence Island, 22, 23, and 24. And
21 then Grace has a map up for you.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
24 Mr. Plank. So, to confirm this is -- essentially this
25 is doing what this Council has done over the years with
26 the federal lands in our -- in game unit -- Game
27 Management Unit 23 of closing federal public lands in
28 that unit to non-federally qualified subsistence users.

29
30 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair. Correct.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Any further
33 discussion? Justification from the Council?

34
35 MS. COCHON: This is Grace Cochon. Please
36 accept my apologies. Earlier I forgot to note that there
37 is also the option to take no action, for the Council
38 to take no action and to defer to the home region. For
39 this motion and the next motion as well. Thank you.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
42 Grace. Tristen, did you have something?

43
44 MR. PATTEE: If we were to defer would
45 we -- would that allow us to not provide justification?

46
47 MS. COCHON: I believe so. You could just
48 say it's not your region.

49
50

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Can we put the other
2 Council recommendations back on the screen just so we
3 can show what it looks like if you were to.....

4
5 (Pause)

6
7 So, as you can see on the screen, we
8 have the recommendations for the other RACs that are
9 involved with the Western Arctic Caribou Herd,
10 essentially North Slope RAC is supportive of the
11 request. Western Interior Region deferred to the home
12 region. Yukon Kuskokwim referred to the home region.
13 Seward Pen, that's there region. We like to discuss
14 further?

15
16 MR. PATTEE: Yeah. How do we move forward
17 with that? Do we make an amendment? Because we're
18 speaking on one -- his motion now. Do we make an
19 amendment to this motion or do we -- how do we end his
20 motion?

21
22 MR. ARMSTRONG: He would have to
23 rescind.....

24
25 (Simultaneous speech)

26
27 MS. COCHON: I believe.....

28
29 MR. CLEVELAND: Call for question.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Let Grace talk.

32
33 MS. COCHON: Apologies. I'm not an expert
34 with Robert's Rules. You can either, you know, vote on
35 the motion on the floor. You can make a new motion, I
36 believe. Unless someone has any other recommendations.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, what we can do
39 is Clyde made the motion and Karmen made the Second. Is
40 that correct? Clyde would rescind his motion, you would
41 rescind your second and a new motion could be made to
42 take no action. Would anyone like to do that? Karmen.

43
44 (Simultaneous speech)

45
46 MR. RAMOTH: My argument -- oh, sorry.

47
48 MS. MONIGOLD: I have a question. I
49 understand where you're going with this. This is still
50 the same herd we're talking about. That goes from North

1 Slope all the way down. So, I don't know why we wouldn't
2 have the same type of commentary that we just had with
3 going to 4 caribou a year because if they have -- if
4 they don't have our support and it doesn't go through
5 and they have nonfederal users there, but we don't have
6 any federal users here, and now we're down to 4 caribou
7 with 0 bulls, but they still have no qualified, I mean
8 non-qualified Federal users. It just -- to me, it doesn't
9 make sense not to have an opinion on that if it's the
10 same herd through the range in my opinion. Thank you.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
13 Karmen. I do see where you're coming from and part of
14 it is it plays into these other special action requests,
15 like the one that we just went over still reduces the
16 harvest limits and everything in Unit 22. So, it's up
17 to the Council of if we'd like to change the motion vote
18 on the motion.

19
20 MR. PATTEE: Tristen through the Chair.
21 I was just trying to get past this motion, but now it's
22 taking longer. So yeah, if we can use the same
23 justification we use for our special action 26-01 is
24 that possible or do we have to state it? Okay. If we can
25 use the same justification from the special action 26-
26 01. I'd like to do that. Thank you.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, and everything
29 is recorded and being written down. So, as they're going
30 through to draft everything, we can take that exact
31 verbiage and move it over. Verne.

32
33 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes. What -- Verne
34 Cleveland. What would -- I would say you just vote yes
35 or no? There's nothing -- I just called for a question
36 and you guys didn't say anything. You either vote yes
37 or no. No, don't pass. Either pass or don't pass. Right?
38 Thank you.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, with that being
41 said, I will restate the final motion for the record.
42 The motion being to support WSA 26-02, the justification
43 as presented. Grace, can we please get a roll call vote.

44
45 MS. COCHON: Member Elmer Armstrong, Jr.

46
47 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

48
49 MS. COCHON: Member Karmen Monigold.

50

00097

1 MS. MONIGOLD: Yes.

2

3 MS. COCHON: Member Verne Cleveland Sr.

4

5 MR. CLEVELAND: No.

6

7 MS. COCHON: Member Tristen Pattee.

8

9 MR. PATTEE: Yes.

10

11 MS. COCHON: Member Clyde Ramoth.

12

13 MR. RAMOTH: Yes.

14

15 MS. COCHON: Member Micheal Kramer.

16

17 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

18

19 MS. COCHON: Member Wil -- Wilbur

20 Howarth.

21

22 MR. HOWARTH: Yes.

23

24 MS. COCHON: Member Chair Baker.

25

26 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

27

28 MS. COCHON: With 7 out of 8 members
29 voting yes, the motion passes.

30

31 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
32 Grace. Do we want to do WSA 26-03 or take a quick break?

33

34 (No response)

35

36 No one said anything. So, we're moving
37 into a 26-03, close Federal public lands in a portion
38 of Unit 26A, to non-federally qualified subsistence
39 users. Mr. Plank.

40

41 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again
42 for record, Tom Plank, Wildlife Biologist. And temporary
43 Wildlife Special Action WSA 26-03 was submitted by the
44 North Slope Council and is requested to close Federal
45 public lands and units 26A southwest to caribou hunting
46 by non-federally qualified users for the 2026 through
47 the 2028 regulatory cycle. And the North Slope used all
48 the same previous reasons as the other 2 that we've just
49 discussed. So, I won't go through that again. But they
50 did also add to it that the Council asserts that the

00098

1 federally qualified subsistence users should not be the
2 only users to take action to ensure the continued
3 viability of the herd, and that is also part of the
4 reason they gave for this request. I'm here if you have
5 any questions.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
8 At this time, can you give us a report on any board
9 consultation from Tribes or ANCSA corporations?

10
11 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Chair. Tom Plank,
12 OSM. And there was none.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
15 At this time, do we have any agency comments? Alaska
16 Department Fish and Game, federal agencies?

17
18 (No comments)
19
20 Hearing none. Advisory group comments.
21 Ms. Creek.

22
23 MR. KRAMER: (Indiscernible).

24
25 MS. CREEK: Emily Creek, Western
26 Arctic.....

27
28 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: One second. Was that
29 Mike?

30
31 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Did you have
34 something, Mike?

35
36 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. The only thing I was
37 wondering was which portion of Unit 26 A was it?

38
39 (Pause)

40
41 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Can someone put on
42 the map so we can see it and then describe it? I'm not
43 sure if Mike is able to see what's being shared. Anybody
44 describe what this closure address is?

45
46 MR. PLANK: Hello Mr. Chair. Tom Plank
47 OSM. So since -- Mike, if you're on the phone, you won't
48 be able to see the map. It's up there, so I'll try to
49 describe it. And please accept my apologies for some of
50 the mispronunciations I'll do here. So, it is Unit 26A,

00099

1 West of the Colville River drainage upstream from Innoko
2 River and drainages of the (In Native) south and west
3 of and including the Cook and (In Native) River
4 drainages. And so, that's basically the area 26 A that
5 includes Wainwright, Point Lay, and Point Hope. I hope
6 that kind of helps describe it better.

7

8 MR. KRAMER: Yes, it does. Thank you.

9

10 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. Mike. Any
11 other questions from anybody before we get into Emily's
12 comment?

13

14 (No comments)

15

16 Not. Thank you. Emily, you have the
17 floor.

18

19 MS. CREEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Emily
20 Creek Subsistence Coordinator for Western Arctic
21 National Parklands. The Cape Krusenstern SRC voted to
22 support this closure. For the same reasons they gave for
23 the other one, but basically that it supports
24 subsistence priority. Thank you.

25

26 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Emily. Any
27 other advisory group comments?

28

29 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair, Tom Plank,
30 OSM. So, only 2 other Councils have taken this up.
31 Obviously, North Slope took it up and they supported it
32 for the continuation subsistence uses and conservation
33 of the herd. And Western Interior did not consider this
34 one. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

35

36 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
37 At this time can you give us any summary of written
38 public comments?

39

40 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair, Tom Plank,
41 OSM. There are no written comments received, but again,
42 I will have to make my plug for the public hearing April
43 9th next week at -- from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Thank you.

44

45 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Plank.
46 At this time, is there any public testimony for WSA 26-
47 03, and whoever is shuffling papers by their mic, can
48 you please mute. Any public testimony at this time for
49 WSA 26-03?

50

000100

1 (No response)

2

3 Final call. Public testimony. Going
4 once, going twice. Not Sold. No one bid on it. With
5 that, what is the wish of the Council?

6

7 MR. RAMOTH: Mr. Chair. Make a motion to
8 support Wildlife Special Action 26-03, close federal
9 public lands and portions of Unit 26A to non-federally
10 qualified subsistence users as discussed.

11

12 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. Motion
13 made by Clyde to support.

14

15 MS. MONIGOLD: Second.

16

17 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Seconded by Karmen.
18 Discussion, justification? Tristen.

19

20 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair. Tristen
21 Pattee. Justification for the continuation of
22 subsistence uses and conservation of the herd.

23

24 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Tristen.
25 Any other discussion, justification?

26

27 (No response)

28

29 To restate the final motion for the
30 record, the motion is to support Wildlife Special Action
31 26-03. Can I please get a roll call vote.

32

33 MS. COCHON: Member Elmer Armstrong.

34

35 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

36

37 MS. COCHON: Member Karmen Monigold.

38

39 MS. MONIGOLD: Yes.

40

41 MS. COCHON: Member Verne Cleveland.

42

43 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes.

44

45 MS. COCHON: Member Tristen Pattee.

46

47 MR. PATTEE: Yes.

48

49 MS. COCHON: Member Clyde Ramoth.

50

000101

1 MR. RAMOTH: Yes.

2

3 MS. COCHON: Member Micheal Kramer.

4

5 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

6

7 MS. COCHON: Member Wilbur Howarth.

8

9 MR. HOWARTH: Yes.

10

11 MS. COCHON: Member Chair Baker.

12

13 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

14

15 MS. COCHON: So, that is 8 members voting
16 yes to -- the motion pass.

17

18 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
19 Grace. We have gotten through the special action
20 requests. Would anyone like a short break before we
21 continue on?

22

23 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes, sir. I'll take a
24 break.

25

26 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: It's 3:51, will come
27 back on record at 4.

28

29 (Off record)

30

31 (On record)

32

33 Thank you, everyone. This is Chair
34 Thomas Baker. It's now 4:06.....

35

36 (Distortion)

37

38 It is now 4:06, we'll go ahead and
39 continue on with our action items. We have completed the
40 special action requests. Moving on to Item d: Call for
41 Alaska Board of Game Proposals. I know this is a little
42 outside the scope of OSM staff. Is there a Fish and Game
43 employee who would like to talk about this process, maybe
44 someone brand new or -- is Alex still in the building?

45

46 Mr. Hansen, would you be able to speak
47 to the Call for Alaska Board of Game Proposals, just so
48 that we have a little better understanding of this
49 process, since we don't have a crystal clear
50 understanding, since this is the federal side of things.

1

2 MR. HANSEN: Yes, absolutely. Through the
3 Chair, my name is Alex Hansen, Alaska Department Fish
4 and Game here in Kotzebue. So, the -- I guess the purpose
5 of this is the call for proposals has gone out. The
6 deadline is May 1. So, this is an opportunity to put a
7 proposal together where you could request that the Board
8 make changes to current regulations. So, under state
9 regulation, right? So, you know, generally speaking, I
10 would say that the, you know, a group like this would
11 carry a fair amount of weight. You know, as opposed to
12 like some guy from, you know, just a random guy off the
13 street. So, here you are, you have an opportunity to
14 talk about, you know, state law regulation and put
15 together proposals.

16

17 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Alex.
18 Tristen, did you have something.

19

20 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen
21 Pattee. Before you go, Alex. So, I would like to know
22 more -- a little bit more if you can explain the about
23 the intensive management program.

24

25 MR. HANSEN: Yeah. So, maybe I'll just
26 back way up and say that there was a proposal that was
27 drafted in the Western Arctic Herd Working Group. And
28 that's kind of where these WSA's are coming from, 1 of
29 them at least. And so, another one that we haven't talked
30 about, because it's not coming through the Federal
31 process, because it's a state action is to create under
32 IM or intensive management, basically a public permit
33 to harvest wolves from an aircraft. So, basically the
34 state would administer a public permit. So, if an
35 individual had an airplane, you know, had certain
36 qualifications, then we could issue a permit and they
37 could harvest wolves from aircraft like was done, you
38 know, back in the day, 60s and beyond that or earlier
39 than that. So, that's kind of the kind of the tip toe
40 entry into intensive management. But intensive
41 management is basically a tool bag but is also
42 administered under state law. So, we have certain
43 mandates that we're supposed to look at the options that
44 are offered through intensive management when the
45 population gets low enough that it's not providing
46 adequate subsistence resource.

47

48 So, the intensive management level set
49 in statute on the state side for this herd is 200,000
50 animals. So, we've been below that intensive management

1 line for 5 years. So, the Board is likely going to
2 address intensive management, partly because of the
3 proposal that was brought forth through the working
4 group. And I believe -- you guys haven't met yet, but
5 the North Slope AC was talking about putting together a
6 proposal. So, they're going to have an official meeting
7 in April. Is that correct, Leonard? Okay. So, there'll
8 be a couple proposals coming through the system. And
9 basically, depending on how far you go with it, it's an
10 opportunity where the state could step in, or it could
11 use public assistance as well to remove brown bear or
12 wolf populations, or reduce the populations to allow the
13 caribou to recover. That's sort of in a nutshell.

14
15 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen
16 Pattee. So, what would the language look like for a
17 proposal like this? Do we need to be very specific on
18 the type of intensive management we're talking about?
19 So, like if we wanted to focus on wolves, do we need
20 updated or is it would it just be like predators, to
21 focus on like predators? Or do we need to focus on --
22 or do we need to state both, you know, wolves or bears
23 or whatever issue we have?

24
25 MR. HANSEN: So, as you know, the Seward
26 Pen RAC is meeting right now as well. So, they started
27 yesterday. Today's concurrent with their meeting. I was
28 asked to step in on that call this morning to discuss
29 this. And basically, they I haven't seen the final
30 verbiage, but they were talking about just doing a
31 generic proposal that would say, you know, basically
32 suggest that the Board of Game consider instituting a
33 predator control program or an intensive management
34 control program for the Western Arctic Herd. Now kind
35 of how that works is we have something that's called a
36 feasibility assessment that we have drafted continually
37 and changed it since about 2016, when the population
38 approached 200,000. That's still -- we're still working
39 on that, but we put a lot of work into that at the last
40 Board of Game cycle. And as we go through that
41 feasibility assessment, we're looking for opportunities
42 for success. I think it's very easy for us just to make
43 the conclusion that bears eat caribou and wolves eat
44 caribou. And I think we all know that, right? And that's
45 fine, and that's normal, and that's the way it should
46 be. That's the natural cycle of things. But if we can
47 find an opportunity there to bring the population of
48 those predators into check just a little bit for a short
49 moment in time.

50

1 There's, you know, several examples
2 through the system where we've seen the prey populations
3 turn around and then rebound. There are times, you know,
4 where the predator populations can keep the prey in check
5 to the point where they can't recover. So, the current
6 one in the hot topic around the state is the Mulchatna,
7 IM is taking place down there, been removing bears and
8 wolves for 3 years now, this will be going into our 4th
9 year and we've seen that population start turning the
10 corner. However, it got so low you know, it got down to
11 like 12,000, now we're coming up close to 16,000, that
12 it takes a long time to rebuild from that level. To
13 maybe more to your point, something generic, you know,
14 requesting that the Board of Game address this issue of
15 IM or look at instituting IM for the Western Arctic
16 Herd. I will say that one of the challenges that we deal
17 with here is, you know, in Unit 23 is kind of where we
18 would operate. You know, looking at my feasibility
19 assessment for wolves specifically, and then for bears,
20 it makes more sense, 26A, MPRA. Now What we deal with
21 is a lot of federal lands, we can operate on state lands
22 pretty easily. You know, I think there's some reason to
23 believe we could work on NANA lands, but it would be
24 challenging to operate on many federal lands based on
25 policy. Generally speaking, we've had a good track
26 record of operating these programs on BLM, but I would
27 have to let the federal agency managers, you know, speak
28 to that. It's beyond what I know. Thank you.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Alex.
31 Elmer.

32
33 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes, thank you. So, this
34 is just a comment so we could submit a proposal like you
35 stated earlier, for aircraft to be used to take wolves.
36 And also, maybe another proposal to secure funding to
37 do an analysis. If it is working or maybe the same way
38 you do a caribou count, maybe? And also, another proposal
39 maybe close state lands to non-residents.

40
41 MR. HANSEN: Yeah, if I may, Member
42 Armstrong. So, a couple things there. I will just start
43 backwards, but yeah. Proposal to close the non-resident
44 hunting on the books for, you know, under the state
45 regulations is an option you have. I think we're getting
46 very close to that. And it you know, it's probably a
47 sensible option at this point in time. You know, from
48 the states perspective, it's not that important
49 biologically, but we understand that there are
50 much bigger implications, so. I would encourage you to

1 consider that and talk through that proposal.

2

3 And then the other one, as far as like
4 the funding goes for the predator control stuff that's
5 in state law and the state has funds for those projects.
6 I will say, you know, very carefully that, you know, we
7 take these projects very seriously and we do not want
8 to set ourselves up for failure. If we talk about wolves
9 specifically, the data suggests that if we want to see
10 a reduction in wolf population, you know, at the extent
11 that it helps populations of a prey recover, we need to
12 remove 80% of wolves within that area. We know that
13 caribou move and so that complicates things. So, it's
14 typically going to be a winter or spring time treatment.
15 And we would have to, you know, be able to operate within
16 that area or within the area of the -- a good number of
17 caribou for a few years in a row to have a real effect.

18

19 So to the study question that you posed,
20 we are currently planning on collaring wolves this
21 spring. So, we have collars coming and we're going to
22 make an effort to get out there, collar them, and then
23 start getting a better handle on wolf populations, at
24 least in a specific area within Unit 23, to get a handle
25 on the entire population with Unit 23 would be, you
26 know, we're interested in that, but it's very expensive
27 and very challenging, and it takes a long time. So,
28 we're going to break this down into a subsample and work
29 on getting a density estimate for that area.

30

31 MR. ARMSTRONG: I know regulations are
32 pretty loose on wolves and bear right now, but -- yeah,
33 I don't know if there's too many hunters that are just
34 going to take bear and wolves. I know it's good to see
35 through social media that they're doing it, but I don't
36 think it's going to really make an impact on lowering
37 the numbers of predators.

38

39 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Mike or Wilbur, do
40 you have any comments or questions?

41

42 MR. KRAMER: Yes, it's Micheal.

43

44 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Go ahead, Mike.

45

46 MR. KRAMER: Through the Chair. Yes. So,
47 I agree with the intensive management. I know that back
48 in the day when aerial wolf hunting, you know, was kind
49 of seen as crude and crude and unusual punishment towards
50 wolves. And it's always been that way, right? Then after

1 that they moved to land and shoot. See, the big problem
2 I see with this is we need to put restrictions in that
3 proposal saying only aircraft and Game Management Unit
4 23, registered, and the pilot be registered within Game
5 Management Unit 23. That way we don't have 50 super cubs
6 and 8, you know, 18 -- Cessna 180 up here to do aerial
7 wolf hunting all at once. And you know, there needs to
8 be a thing in place where, you know, one aircraft can't
9 go out and shoot 170 wolves and, you know, and the rest
10 of the people that are out on snow machines get nothing.
11 I think what we also need to do is put a bounty on wolves
12 just for the carcass, not the hide and skull. You know,
13 we do have regulations in our in our subsistence for
14 trapping and hunting of fur bearing animals.

15
16 You know, with this being said, and we
17 know that the furs to these animals are always used for
18 cultural use and parka use and, you know, garments those
19 shouldn't be eliminated for the -- from the people that
20 are out there doing these hunts through aircraft and or
21 land and shoot or by snowmachine. So, I think what we
22 need to do is we really need to look at saying, hey, you
23 know, only pilots with aircraft that are registered and
24 that are here year-round along with the pilot is here
25 year-round. That way we don't have 80 super clubs flying
26 around chasing wolves all over the place. Then we're
27 going to get, you know, a bunch of complaints about all
28 these aircraft cruising everywhere. So, we need to make
29 sure, like Alex said, we get a handle on this situation
30 and say, hey, this is how we want it. So my suggestion
31 is, is our first intensive management proposal that goes
32 through is, you know, aerial wolf hunting. If that
33 doesn't pass, then our second step that would be to fall
34 behind this one would be aerial land and shoot. Because
35 when the aerial wolf hunting was fading away, they went
36 to land and shoot. So, that would be my recommendation
37 and that, you know, any further or anything that is used
38 for these intensive management, I think what you need
39 to do is remove the verbiage, predator control and make
40 it intensive management. You know, for these resources
41 that are hindering other resources from populating like
42 wolves and bears. But that's my take on it. I think we
43 need to create 2 proposals to the Board of Game. Make
44 it 3 see if we could try and eliminate the guides and
45 transporters from coming up here and hunting caribou
46 since we're taking such a big bite of our yearly harvest
47 of 15 animals, and 1 can be a cow. So, those are the
48 three proposals that I'd like to see come. And I think
49 what we need to do is we need to sit down together and
50 come up with the verbiage for these 2 proposals or for

000107

1 those intensive management. Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mike.

4 Tristen.

5

6 MR. PATTEE: I'm just -- I was just going
7 to ask, is that when is the appropriate time to move to
8 a proposal?

9

10 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: I think we can
11 whenever someone has a proposal. Do you have? The floor
12 is yours.

13

14 MR. PATTEE: Okay. Through the Chair,
15 Tristen Pattee. I moved that the Council formally
16 request that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
17 evaluate the feasibility of implementing an incident
18 management approach to address the ongoing decline of
19 the Western Arctic Caribou Herd.

20

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

23

24 MR. HOWARTH: Second.

25

26 MS. MONIGOLD: Second.

27

28 MR. HOWARTH: Wilbur.

29

30 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Seconded by Wilbur
31 since he's on the phone. Any discussion? Questions from
32 members of the Council?

33

34 MR. RAMOTH: Call for question.

35

36 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Just to confirm,
37 there's some eyebrows raising. Could you restate that,
38 Tristen, that it was intensive management that you're
39 looking for with this motion.

40

41 MR. PATTEE: Yes. So, I'll just restate
42 it. I move that the Council formally request that the
43 Alaska Department of Fish and Game evaluate the
44 feasibility of implementing an incident management
45 approach to address the ongoing decline of the Western
46 Arctic Caribou Herd. And -- oh yeah that's.....

47

48 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: You said incident
49 management, not intensive management. So, that was the
50 confusing part, I think.

000108

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

MR. PATTEE: Yes, that's what I meant.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Everything you said,
but intensive.

MR. PATTEE: Intensive, yes.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you. Question
has been called for. Can I get a roll call vote, please?

MS. COCHON: Member Elmer Armstrong.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

MS. COCHON: Member Karmen Monigold.

MS. MONIGOLD: Yes.

MS. COCHON: Member Verne Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Yes.

MS. COCHON: Member Tristen Pattee.

MR. PATTEE: Yes.

MS. COCHON: Member Clyde Ramoth.

MR. RAMOTH: Yes.

MS. COCHON: Member Micheal Kramer.

MR. KRAMER: Yes.

MS. COCHON: Member Wilbur Howarth.

MR. HOWARTH: Yes.

MS. COCHON: Member Chair Baker.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

MS. COCHON: With everyone voting yes,
the motion passes.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
Grace. Elmer.

000109

1 MR. ARMSTRONG: Through the Chair, Elmer
2 Armstrong. I make a motion to submit a proposal to close
3 state lands in Unit 23 to non-residents.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, motion made by
6 Elmer. Is there a Second?

7
8 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair. Is it
9 possible to amend it to extend it to 26 -- Unit 26
10 southwest?

11
12 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Elmer.

13
14 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes, you want me to
15 restate it?

16
17 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Your motion was not
18 seconded. So, if you would like to change it, go for it.

19
20 MR. ARMSTRONG: Okay. My motion is to
21 bring a proposal to close state lands in Unit 23 and 26A
22 southwest.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Is there a Second?

25
26 MR. PATTEE: I'm sorry. Should we do all
27 of 26? Would that be appropriate for non-residents? What
28 do you guys think?

29
30 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Alex has his hand up,
31 it might help clarify.

32
33 MR. HANSEN: Yeah, if I may, through the
34 Chair. So, to Member Armstrong. I guess my
35 recommendation would just rather than saying state
36 lands, just ask that the state close the non-resident
37 hunting season and then you can, you know, quibble about
38 what units you want to talk about. But, you know, if
39 we're talking about the Western Arctic Herd, it's 22,
40 23 and 26aA effectively you know, the 26 A southwest --
41 26A proper is, you know, a different discussion. But
42 kinda [sic] the problem that we run into in 26A is, you
43 know, there -- most of 26A proper not in the southwest
44 portion is out of the Teshekpuk Herd. So, it's less of
45 a concern, but there certainly is some hunting that takes
46 place even based out of Kotzebue that takes place on the
47 Colville River by non by non-resident hunters. So, that
48 would be in 26A proper, if you will.

49
50

000110

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Karmen, did you have
2 something?

3
4 MS. MONIGOLD: Through the Chair, Alex.
5 Aren't these numbers that were going by though the
6 Teshekpuk and the Western Arctic?

7
8 MR. HANSEN: So, that's a really good
9 point that you bring up, Karmen. And when we're talking
10 about, you know, big items like intensive management and
11 Tier II, we're talking about ANS and we're getting into
12 state statute. So, the issue is, and this is just the
13 same for the conversation about Anaktuvuk Pass. You
14 know, Anaktuvuk Pass was kind of set aside for this
15 conversation about reduction in harvest because they're
16 harvesting from the Central Arctic and the Teshekpuk
17 primarily. And so, those herds are not in decline, their
18 much smaller herds, and they've always been smaller, but
19 they're not harvested at the same level that the Western
20 Arctic who has, you know, potentially 40 communities
21 harvesting from it. So, to your point, not exactly. So,
22 for the non-residents, you know, I mean, if we run the
23 numbers, the non-resident harvest within both herds
24 Teshekpuk and the Western Arctic last year was 255 bulls
25 which isn't much, right? And within Unit 22 it was maybe
26 50, and 26A, you know, it went up when the federal land
27 closure took place. But kind of as a catch all, probably
28 the best proposal would be, you know, close the non-
29 resident hunting season within 22, 23 and 26A that's
30 maybe the cleanest way to say that.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, just for the sake
33 of following procedure, there is a motion on the floor
34 and we do have some discussion that needs to happen. I
35 would recommend that you rescind your motion so that we
36 can wordsmith it to have the right motion, so that we
37 don't have to keep going back and amending the same
38 motion. So, Elmer, if you would like to rescind, you
39 can.

40
41 MR. ARMSTRONG: Through the Chair, Elmer
42 Armstrong. I rescind my motion on the proposal.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, one point that I
45 wanted to discuss once we got to this portion. And Mike
46 mentioned it and it's been discussed over the years. So,
47 not only closing non-resident hunting throughout the
48 range of the herd but I think unguided, just drop off
49 hunting is kind of what a lot of us are concerned with.
50 Over the years, as we've discussed it, that has been the

000111

1 recurring issue. I know myself personally, this is
2 something I feel strongly about, that it's a major
3 factor. So, before we make a motion, if we could have a
4 discussion of what we would like to address. So, the
5 original motion was to close non-resident hunting in
6 these Game Units, would we like to pursue that, pursue
7 non-guided or it's just someone from Kentucky getting
8 dropped off in the middle of nowhere. Alex.

9
10 MR. HANSEN: Yeah, just for
11 clarification, Mr. Chair. so if they're from Kentucky
12 closing the non-resident hunt, they're not able to hunt
13 there anymore. So, it's fairly clean. The next -- the
14 other issue, and you've already addressed that through
15 the WSAs, which could go into Wildlife Proposals, would
16 be what happened in Unit 23, the non-federally qualified
17 closure of federal lands. So, I estimated it was actually
18 for prepping for the North Slope AC meeting. Non-
19 federally qualified hunters within Unit 26A, last year,
20 like residents of the state was about 24, and Unit 22,
21 it was 1. So, there's small numbers, but they're still
22 residents and kind of speaks to the same concern that
23 you raised Verne about your daughter who lives in
24 Anchorage. You know, we got to be a little bit cautious
25 and cognizant of all that. So anyway, to the non-guided
26 drop off hunters, if they're non-residents, they would
27 be basically removed if you put a proposal in to close
28 the non-resident hunting season.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Alex. And
31 part of the reason why I bring that up is in the past,
32 when we've attempted to do even just the federal
33 closures, is the pushback from people in 26, stating
34 that we do have guides in this game unit. So no, we're
35 not going to support this closure. So, that's why I
36 wanted to bring it up. We don't need to, but that's just
37 something for the record that has been discussed in the
38 past. Is that guided versus unguided tidbit. But is there
39 any other discussion, any ideas?

40
41 MR. KRAMER: Yes, this is Mike.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Go ahead, Mike.

44
45 MR. KRAMER: Through the Chair. Yes. You
46 know, I hold the commercial services seat on our RAC.
47 And the reason why is because I did 5 to 6 years as an
48 assistant guide working for a master guide. I've seen
49 the difference between guided and unguided. I worked
50 one-on-one with my hunter, I take what meat I want to

000112

1 take, he doesn't have a say. I've tried to have hunter
2 say, you don't need that piece of meat. I'm like, excuse
3 me, I'll turn you in for wanton and waste and I ain't
4 afraid to. And you know, one-on-one with your hunter is
5 so much better, because that person has to ensure that
6 all that meat makes it back to the camp prior to the
7 trophy portion of it. Because I've had hunters saying,
8 well, are you ready to put those horns on my back? I
9 said, no, I'm not carrying this whole dang caribou out
10 because I told them, I said, it's regulation that the
11 trophy portion of this animal comes out of the field,
12 after all meat has been brought in back to camp and they
13 automatically changed their mind and start filling their
14 pack full of meat. Then once they get all the meat that
15 I see, that is sufficient to take back and what's
16 required under regulation to take back, then we could
17 tie the antlers and the cape onto the backpack frame and
18 headed back to camp.

19
20 As for transporters, they're literally
21 just a taxicab. They ain't there to make sure your meat
22 is not [sic] taken care of. You know they ain't, you
23 know, they're not there to ensure that you properly cool
24 your meat and keep it away from bugs and their predators.
25 I mean, some of them could care less. They probably even
26 put it out to a bear could haul all their meet off. And,
27 you know, and I used to work for an airline, and it
28 would be funny because they'd see 5 caribou heads come
29 in and only 2 boxes of meat fly out, and then you got
30 people complaining about dumpsters just reeking of meat.
31 And, you know, these transporters are just going from
32 dumpster to dumpster in Kotzebue trucking a few game
33 bags of meat, sour meat. You know, and I've even heard
34 of elders being given sour meat. It's just a thing that
35 we need to look into and curiously put thought into
36 these, you know, into these -- I work as a guide, you're
37 one-on-one with your hunter, you know. I tell my hunter
38 straight up how it's going to be and if they don't listen
39 to me, then I'm sorry. Looks like your horns and your
40 cape are staying behind where the bears and wolves can
41 get to it.

42
43 So, you know, I agree that both should
44 be eliminated, but, you know, 1st of all, I think the
45 transporters need to be eliminated because the guide is
46 a totally different story because you're one-on-one with
47 your hunter. And the other thing is I think that to
48 promote local people in getting their guiding permits
49 and all this other stuff is to work under either a
50 registered guide or a master guide, and you have to have

1 so many hours of guiding time. It turned out that I had
2 like 250 hours of guiding time. I went down to Anchorage
3 to go take my test and they upped it and I was done --
4 I was done not providing meat for my family, you know,
5 because I'm guiding. I can't shoot unless a hunter asked
6 me to back him up. I can't take a caribou when I'm there,
7 the only thing I can do is if a hunter wants to. He
8 said, hey, I'll give a hindquarter and a front quarter
9 to Mike for his family, and he has to write out paperwork
10 to hand it over to me to bring to my family.

11
12 You know, there's a lot of differences
13 between transporters and guides. And I worked on the
14 side of the guides and that is what I've seen and that
15 is what I've noticed. You know, and these local guides
16 that they hire, they should be local so they can become
17 registered guides. And these bring bear hunt to help
18 bring down the bear population. Also, maybe even take
19 some wolves. You know, you're trying to put money into
20 the region by these people being able to take out some
21 of our predators. And, you know, to help our herd
22 recover. So, we all need to look into this thing we have
23 here and figure it out and figure out the way to re --
24 verbiage it to where it protects, you know, our Western
25 Arctic Caribou Herd and our culture and our subsistence
26 way of life. So, you know, that was my thought on that
27 because I did work as an assistant guide for many years.
28 I did sheep hunts, bear hunt, caribou hunts. I didn't
29 do any moose hunts because that area had been hunted out
30 many years before and during the 6 years I was there, I
31 saw one moose with horns and that was it and that was
32 up Trail Creek. But that's all I have for now. Thank
33 you.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mike.
36 Wilbur, do you have any comments, questions?

37
38 MR. HOWARTH: No.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur.
41 Further discussion from Council? Tristen.

42
43 MR. PATTEE: No, I'd like to move on with
44 the motion if we're good.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: So, he rescinded the
47 motion so someone can make one.

48
49 MR. PATTEE: Okay. I move that the
50 Council proposes to Alaska Board of Fish -- Alaska Board

000114

1 of Game that they close nonresident caribou hunting in
2 Unit 26, Unit 23 and Unit 22.

3

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

6

7 MR. CLEVELAND: Second.

8

9 (Simultaneous speech)

10

11 MR. RAMOTH: Second.

12

13 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Seconded by Verne.
14 Any discussion?

15

16 MR. CLEVELAND: Question.

17

18 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Question has been
19 called for. Can I please get a roll call vote, Grace.

20

21 MS. COCHON: Member Elmer Armstrong.

22

23 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

24

25 MS. COCHON: Member Karmen Monigold.

26

27 MS. MONIGOLD: Yes.

28

29 MS. COCHON: Member -- okay. Member Verne
30 Cleveland says yes.

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 Micheal Kramer.

43

44 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

45

46 MS. COCHON: Member Wilbur Howarth.

47

48 MR. HOWARTH: Yes.

49

50 MS. COCHON: And Chair Baker.

000115

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

MS. COCHON: Okay, so all 8 members unanimously voted yes, the motion passes.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Grace. Any other proposals? Discussion regarding Alaska Board of game proposals? Alex.

MR. HANSEN: Yeah. If I may, I would recommend you consider basically the same 4 and 0 proposal that you discussed for the WSA, because the WSA is going to be, you know, 1 year if it goes into federal regulation. We want to get everything on the same track. And you know, the Federal Subsistence Board may lead with this or they may defer. And then the Board of Game will pick it up and next January. So, my recommendation, if you know, if you're serious about this and you want to carry this conservation message forward, then send the same proposal to the Board of Game. That's all. No cow harvest, yeah. Just basically write the same thing, submit it to the Board of Game. It's fairly redundant because, you know, our Kotzebue Sound AC submitted it, other folks will as well, but it still sends a unified message from the region.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that, Alex. I was confused when you said 4 and 0. I didn't know what code that was, but for other people that were lost like me, 4 bulls, 0 cows. Thank you, Mr. Hansen. Would anyone like to make that motion? Tristen, I see your hand.

MR. PATTEE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tristen Pattee. I move that we propose to the Alaska Board of Game that we reduce the harvest limit for caribou in units 22, 23, and 26 A southwest, to 4 bulls, 0 cows.

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

MR. RAMOTH: Second.

CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Seconded by Clyde. Any discussion?

MR. ARMSTRONG: Question

000116

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Question has been
2 called for by Elmer. Grace, can I please get a roll call
3 vote.

4
5 MS. COCHON: Member Elmer Armstrong.

6
7 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

8
9 MS. COCHON: Member Karmen Monigold.

10
11 MS. MONIGOLD: Yes.

12
13 MS. COCHON: Member Verne Cleveland.

14
15 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes.

16
17 MS. COCHON: Member Tristen Pattee.

18
19 MR. PATTEE: Yes.

20
21 MS. COCHON: Member Clyde Ramoth.

22
23 MR. RAMOTH: Yes.

24
25 MS. COCHON: Member Micheal Kramer.

26
27 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

28
29 MS. COCHON: Member Wilbur Howarth.

30
31 MR. HOWARTH: Yes.

32
33 MS. COCHON: And Chair Baker.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

36
37 MS. COCHON: All right. All 8 members
38 voted yes, so the motion passes unanimously.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
41 Grace. Is there any other proposals you would like to
42 make at this time?

43
44 MR. KRAMER: Yes. This is Micheal.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes. Go ahead, Mike.

47
48 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. I'd like to make a
49 proposal to the Board of Game or to whoever it may be,
50 you know to where the Board of Game starts stepping up

1 to the plate and start having their meetings every 2
2 years or every year. Because of the fact that resources
3 are becoming critical within the state of Alaska and
4 subsistence is, you know, getting hit pretty hard. I
5 think what we needed to do is make a proposal to the
6 Board of Game or to whoever may be to see if we could
7 either have a 2 year gap between the Board of Game
8 meeting or a 1 year every year. You know, they hold
9 their Board of Game meetings because every 4 is a long
10 time, you know, and during that time, resources are
11 critical for people in the subsistence realm of people
12 filling their freezers. So, I think what we need to do
13 is we need to put in a proposal to see if the Board Game
14 could meet more often because it's beginning to become
15 critical statewide. Caribou populations are declining,
16 moose, sheep, while the predators are continuing to
17 rise. People's freezers are starting not to be filled.
18 And it's becoming an impact towards the people. Both on
19 the state and federal side. So, I would like to see if
20 we could put a proposal together for the Board of Game
21 to start having their meetings either every 2 years or
22 1 year. Thank you.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Mike.

25
26 MR. ARMSTRONG: So just for discussion,
27 the proposals we did, are they on that '26 to '28 year
28 cycle?

29
30 MR. HANSEN: Yeah. So, the proposals you
31 just did, they would be submitted to the Board of Game,
32 and they need to be submitted before May 1st this year.
33 And then they would be taken up at the Board of Game
34 meeting in Kotzebue next January. So, those would take
35 effect beginning July 1st of 2027.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Karmen.

38
39 MS. MONIGOLD: Through the Chair when we
40 have special items through the 4-year cycle, isn't that
41 a special action item?

42
43 MR. HANSEN: So, under the Federal
44 Subsistence Board, that's what you call special action.
45 Under the State, you know, we could do something called
46 an agenda change request and submit if something were
47 an emergency issue, right. Whatever it was, we could
48 submit that to the Board. And there's a deadline, it's
49 usually like, November 1, and it would be taken up in
50 another Board meeting. So, let's say they just met in

1 Kodiak. Had we got that in prior to that deadline, then
2 it could have been addressed at that meeting. So, we can
3 look at the Board cycle. And if there's something we're
4 serious about and interested in addressing, we can look
5 at that cycle, submit something under an agenda change
6 request, which is sort of similar to the Wildlife Special
7 Action, except that if it goes through, you know, on the
8 Board of Game, then it goes into regulation, it's
9 permanent, right? Until we change it again. So, the
10 Wildlife Special Action is just, you know, sunsets after
11 that period. For some reason, we have 1 for 1 year and
12 2 for 2 years but -- does that answer your question,
13 Karmen? Did I talk around it too far? And, you know,
14 there's other things, right, like there's something
15 within the state system called an emergency order. So,
16 you know, it is possible. You know, we have the ability
17 to, let's say, close the cow season. That's something
18 that the state could do. You know, it's not something
19 I'm interested in doing without public support. But, you
20 know, based on, you know, we spent some time out behind
21 town last week, and you know, that kind of made me
22 convinced that we should consider that option because
23 there were lots and lots and lots and lots and lots of
24 cows and a lot of wounding loss, which caused me a lot
25 of concern. But so, you know, I'm not interested in just
26 dropping hammers on local people. You know, if we can
27 come to the decision that it makes sense and we could
28 entertain those ideas.

29
30 MS. MONIGOLD: Through the Chair. I guess
31 I'm just -- I know that there's a reason why they have
32 the 4-year cycles is or 3 year cycles, sorry. You know,
33 because they want to get to each area and give it the
34 time it deserves. And I'm just wondering, you know, to
35 try to request the change that Mike is asking if that's
36 even feasible? I mean, that -- that's why I'm asking.
37 Thank you.

38
39 MR. HANSEN: Yeah, through the Chair. You
40 know, not many years ago was probably well, it's probably
41 been a decade now. It used to be a 2-year cycle. And I
42 got here just as they changed it to a 3-year cycle, I
43 don't understand the reasoning for all that. Aside from
44 the fact that there's a heavy workload that comes with,
45 you know, these Board of Game cycles or Federal
46 Subsistence Board cycles, it takes us a lot of time and
47 meetings to discuss all the things and make them, you
48 know, bring them to the table and bring them to the
49 people. And, you know, changes kind of slow, there are
50 tools in place to do emergency changes if necessary. We

1 try to use those sparingly. But I think it's important
2 also from another perspective, that we need to try a
3 change for a few years before we just change things
4 again and again and again. Because, you know, human
5 nature, if something doesn't happen very quickly, then
6 we don't like it and we want to move on and change,
7 change it again, right. But we've been kind of stepping
8 into this change and if I will walk you carefully
9 through, you know, the last decline, you mentioned
10 earlier in your comments that this population got down
11 to 75,000 in the mid-70s. It was a period of about 9
12 years until we got back to, you know, very liberal
13 regulations. So, we kind of have to work through the
14 process at a normal pace and see how the changes work.
15 You know, it takes time to for change to be effective
16 and to notice the change, I guess is my point.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: I think you already
19 answered my question, Alex. I was going to ask if, you
20 know, if it's a per statute that they have to have the
21 cycle where it's at, but you said you're not sure why
22 they went from 2 to 3. That was my one thought is perhaps
23 it's a per statute. The Alaska Board of Game has to be
24 by whatever. But I don't know if anyone in the room can
25 Google that real quick or see if there's any -- what the
26 process would be if this is something that we could
27 submit, if that was the wish of the Council as a proposal
28 to the Board of Game.

29
30 MR. ARMSTRONG: So, I have a question
31 too, I know you use the ratio tool to determine your
32 decision on when a caribou count is taken. You think
33 that is affected or does it need to be revisited and
34 revised?

35
36 MR. HANSEN: Are you talking about, like,
37 an estimate for the population count?

38
39 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

40
41 MR. HANSEN: Okay. So, I'm going to sound
42 a little bit prideful here, but, you know, the tool that
43 we use for counting caribou is very accurate. You know,
44 if you're counting other things like muskox or moose or
45 fish or lots of things, right, they're just not as
46 precise as what we do for caribou. I worked in Lower 48,
47 we counted, you know, elk and bighorn, bason and deer
48 and all kinds of stuff, and they just don't come together
49 in big groups and stand there for photographs, right.
50 And so it is very precise, I wouldn't say 100% accurate

1 because nothing is right. But we photograph all of those
2 groups and we count every individual in there. And then
3 we have an estimator which is -- was your question,
4 right? And so, that estimator accounts for missing
5 collars. So, if we didn't find a collar for whatever
6 reason, then it's going to run through a statistical
7 analysis and basically give a number to add to for that
8 missing collar. And sometimes in some years we've
9 actually counted more than the estimator indicated
10 because we'll find groups that are uncollared. That's
11 not the case anymore because we have more collars and
12 fewer animals. But I would say it's pretty darn good.
13 But I always appreciate the question, right. You know,
14 are we really doing our best? Yes, we are really doing
15 our best. And not that many years ago when I arrived,
16 2016 was the last year they did it with a photographs,
17 you know, like a hard copy photograph, black and whites
18 and they were counting those individual animals, you
19 know, with the magnifying glass. So, that went away in
20 2017, and now it's in the computer. We can zoom in, zoom
21 out, and I can tell you approximately how many calves
22 because those photos are that good, there are within the
23 group. And if you're ever curious and in town and want
24 to stop by, I'm happy to show you those photos because
25 they're pretty cool.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Karmen, go ahead.

28
29 MS. MONIGOLD: Okay. Through the Chair.
30 Correct me if I'm wrong, but we weren't due for Kotzebue
31 to be the Board of Game meeting until the next cycle,
32 but they're moving it because of the Western Arctic
33 Caribou decline. Is that correct?

34
35 MR. HANSEN: Yes, Karmen. And you know,
36 I would encourage you to speak to your points that you
37 shared with us at the AC meeting the other night. But
38 yes, so, due to the big changes that are likely to take
39 place for the Western Arctic Herd Caribou, the Board
40 felt like it was appropriate to meet within the range
41 or the heart of the Western Arctic Herd. So my advice
42 and I'm sure Karmen will echo this is get everybody to
43 show up, fill out those cards, make comments, and make
44 your presence known because it's an important way to
45 participate in the process. You know, share your
46 comments, share your concerns and be loud and proud and
47 whatever you want to do.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Karmen.
50

1 MS. MONIGOLD: Yeah. Just to what he
2 stated at our committee meeting I just wanted to state
3 at the Board level what I have seen over the years that
4 I've been a part of that, is that you know, when we
5 discuss caribou a couple of years ago, you know, we had
6 the 4 caribous with 1 being a cow and it was shut down
7 because Anaktuvuk Pass showed up with a whole bunch of
8 people, and rightfully so, because they have a number
9 of herds that they can hunt from and that is one of
10 their only main sources of meat. And the Board of Game
11 went with what they wanted, and no one showed up from
12 Unit 23 to talk about it and to speak on it, on why it
13 was important. And now, 2 years later, we're all in
14 panic because we do not want to be in a Tier II system.
15 Which -- maybe he could speak with a Tier II system is.
16 But I just want to voice how very important it is to
17 show up at these meetings or to call in when it's
18 appropriate, because the Board of Game doesn't always
19 go by the science. We had the science 2 years ago that
20 said 4 was the maximum and it still didn't pass. And
21 then they still let sport hunters hunt, which blew my
22 mind. And it blew the mind of the guy that showed up
23 representing the sport hunters, so. It just shows that
24 when we band together and we show up at these meetings,
25 our voices actually do matter. So, I think it's in
26 January, you know, be on the lookout and come and speak,
27 come and support because we all need to do our part to
28 protect our herd. Thank you.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Karmen.
31 Elmer.

32
33 MR. ARMSTRONG: So, I wanted to open the
34 start the -- conversation on a proposal on wolves. How
35 should we word it? I know we talked about it earlier,
36 but if we wanted to word it and say it the right way,
37 on the wolves with airplanes, but I know we're going to
38 get some flak from maybe Save the Wolf Club or something.
39 But you know, I think wolves are -- have a big part in
40 the decline of the caribou herd. So, I just wanted to
41 open that up.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
44 Elmer. Our previous proposal that we have already
45 approved regarding intensive management. I don't know
46 if that covers it or if we feel that we should pursue
47 something specific to wolves. If we would like to, we
48 can, I'm sure. What's the wish of the Council?

49
50

1 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen
2 Pattee. I think that our previous proposals would give
3 Alaska Department of Fish and Game to actually do the
4 feasibility and then make that decision with whatever
5 opportunities are there. I don't think we need to go
6 into focused on proposals for that. They'll make --
7 they'll do that whole thing themselves.

8
9 MR. ARMSTRONG: All right. Thank you.

10
11 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair

12
13 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes, go ahead.

14
15 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah. Wilbur Howarth. These
16 proposals, when we get them ready to hand over to the
17 Board, could we label them as emergency since they're
18 all -- we need to get started on something here. Alex.

19
20 MR. HANSEN: Yes. Through the Chair, Alex
21 Hansen to Wilbur. You know, we kind of talked around
22 like an emergency order, and that would be something
23 that we could have to have good justification for. And
24 then also the ACR, so that would be submitting outside
25 of the Board cycle. So, I guess, I don't know, I mean,
26 you can discuss that and decide if you have 1 or 3 or 2
27 of these things that you feel like are emergencies and
28 you want to move to a different step at the state level,
29 that's certainly up to you. We can talk through it. I
30 feel like part of the trouble is it takes time to get,
31 you know, get the word out and get things going and get
32 people on Board. And I'm a little bit hesitant to make
33 anything an emergency when we're trying to bring people
34 along. As I expressed my concerns earlier, you know,
35 we've been working on this permit for, you know,
36 compliance for about 10 years. And our compliance is
37 super low, maybe 10%. So, the wheels move slow. The one
38 emergency item that I would, you know, consider putting
39 in, not without support, would be to close the cow season
40 in the coming season. We could do that as an emergency
41 order. Anyway, if you're supportive of that, I'm happy
42 to talk around that, but or any of these others Wilbur.

43
44 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah. Mr. Chair, I would
45 agree with that 4 bulls no cows as emergencies. That's
46 the one we've been working on for a while. Thank you,
47 Alex.

48
49 MR. HANSEN: Thank you, Wilbur.

50

1 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: What is the wish of
2 the Council? How would we like to -- Clyde.

3
4 MR. RAMOTH: Yeah, real quick. While Alex
5 is on the table here. And Karmen had a good comment
6 about being involved and using our voice. I just wanted
7 to point out our Lower Kobuk State Advisory Council will
8 start soon, hopefully. I've been working with Samantha
9 Kirby, Sam Kirby. I got 2 from Noorvik, 3 from Selawik,
10 I'm waiting to hear from Kiana. So, Elmer and Wilbur,
11 if you're here, I'd like to solicit and get up to nine
12 of us so we could get to learn the state regulations.
13 Just for info.

14
15 MR. HANSEN: Thank you. Through the
16 Chair. I appreciate that we've been desperately hoping
17 that other ACs will meet so we can get more input from
18 other communities. So, appreciate that, appreciate your
19 efforts. And I guess I will just ask the question, you
20 know, if you want to talk about it or not, but if you
21 think you might be supportive of like an emergency
22 closure on the cow season. That would be the cleanest
23 way to do it. It wouldn't happen for this season because
24 the season closes tomorrow. Cows are closed effectively
25 tomorrow, but we could put an emergency request or an
26 emergency order to close the cow season in the coming
27 season, so that would start July 1 of '26. So, if this
28 Council is supportive of that and they want to make a
29 recommendation to the state to do that, I can certainly
30 push that effort forward. But I'm not going to push
31 anything upon you at this point. I think it's -- it
32 would probably be a good move, honestly. But at any
33 rate, we'll leave it at that.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that.
36 Alex. What is the -- Karmen.

37
38 MS. MONIGOLD: Just to speak on that. So,
39 under ANCSA we're supposed to have -- I mean, the reason
40 why we have federal regs and state regs is because we're
41 supposed to have priority. And if we do that, then
42 federal regulations will be less than state regulations
43 until the state meets. When's the next...?

44
45 MR. HANSEN: So the state will meet in
46 January of '27. So that was maybe one concern expressed.
47 You know, one of our SRC meetings is the federal
48 subsistence folks don't want to be more restrictive than
49 the state. You know, with something like this in
50 discussion, if the state were, you know, directed or

1 asked or requested to EO close the cow season, then
2 maybe that would change the landscape of that
3 conversation. I think there's value in somebody leading,
4 you know, and we can just put it off like maybe the
5 Federal Subsistence Board won't consider this, or they
6 might just push it down the road. And that WSA just sets
7 until we go through the state process. And then, you
8 know, if we get what we're requesting here, then we have
9 4 bulls and 0 cows. Then in the regular cycle on the
10 federal system, they could follow suit or do something
11 different, right. So, it's kind of, you know, who wants
12 to go first is kind of the game of chicken here. And you
13 know, but what we really want, all of us, I hope, is
14 just to turn this caribou population around.

15

16 (Pause)

17

18 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: What is the wish of
19 the Council? Tristen.

20

21 MR. PATTEE: Is this -- so we're
22 discussing on if we want to make it to an emergency
23 thing. Is that correct, for the 4-0?

24

25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Alex.

26

27 MR. HANSEN: Yeah. Just for
28 clarification, I'm not really we're not asking for
29 proposal. I'm just testing the waters here and see how
30 you guys feel about it because you know, under my
31 purview, we have the statutory authority to close the
32 cow season. I wouldn't recommend going to the 4 and 0,
33 I would just probably close -- EO the cow season closed
34 for the next season. So, we probably wouldn't change
35 numbers, we would just close the cow season. Would it
36 do anything? Maybe, right? But we're putting regulations
37 on the book. We also then have to have enforcement and,
38 you know, education and people to take notice. And that's
39 the long battle is just getting people, you know, in our
40 communities to be serious about this because, you know,
41 everybody wants good meat. You know, as you pointed out,
42 Verne, it's really hard to pass up a fat cow. They're
43 tasty. But I think if we want our grandchildren to hunt
44 caribou, that's what we have to do for a bit.

45

46 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen
47 Pattee. I mean, I think that goes along with what we're
48 proposing. You know, we're already proposing only bulls.
49 And so, I think this would, you know, this would just
50 help out doing exactly what we're trying to do. And as

1 you say, purview, that would just basically mean as if
2 you have the support, you guys close it down.

3
4 MR. HANSEN: Yeah. So, it's kind of a way
5 to work hand in hand with the Federal Subsistence Board.
6 You know, if that actually does close under Wildlife
7 Special Action, then that cow goes away and then we
8 could, you know, easiest thing is just to EO close the
9 cow season. So, that just closes. So, what I -- if you're
10 interested, the -- what I'm looking for is basically a
11 letter of recommendation to me as the herd manager to
12 close the upcoming cow season. It's not a -- not an
13 issue now because it closes tomorrow, but starting July
14 1, basically and it could be for Unit 23 specifically.
15 You wouldn't have to get into the weeds with the other
16 communities at this point. And honestly, you know, 26A
17 could be a concern, but mostly it's 23 that I'm concerned
18 about right now.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Tristen.

21
22 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen
23 Pattee. I move that the Council writes a letter in
24 supporting the closure of the cow season in the next
25 hunting season in Unit 23.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Motion made by
28 Tristen. Is there a second?

29
30 MS. MONIOGLD: Second.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Seconded by Karmen.
33 Any questions, discussion?

34
35 (No response)

36
37 Hearing none. Can I please get a roll
38 call vote, Grace.

39
40 MS. COCHON: Member Elmer Armstrong.

41
42 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

43
44 MS. COCHON: Member Karmen Monigold.

45
46 MS. MONIGOLD: Yes.

47
48 MS. COCHON: Member Verne Cleveland.

49
50 MR. CLEVELAND: Yes.

1
2 MS. COCHON: Member Tristen Pattee.

3
4 MR. PATTEE: Yes.

5
6 MS. COCHON: Member Clyde Ramoth.

7
8 MR. RAMOTH: Yes.

9
10 MS. COCHON: Member Micheal Kramer.

11
12 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

13
14 MS. COCHON: Member Wilbur Howarth.

15
16 MR. HOWARTH: Yes.

17
18 MS. COCHON: Member Chair Baker.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Yes.

21
22 MS. COCHON: 8 out of 8 members voted,
23 yes, so the motion passes unanimously.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you for that,
26 Grace. The time is now, 5:09 are there any final
27 proposals we'd like to discuss to the Board of Game?

28
29 (No response)

30
31 Hearing none. Thank you Alex for that.
32 Item e: the NPS Proposed Rule. The individual who is
33 going to be speaking to that went home at 4 will not be
34 available until at least 11 a.m. tomorrow. So, we'll
35 bring this back around tomorrow morning. And at this
36 time, we'll move into item f: the Review and Approval
37 of the FY 2025 Annual report, should be on page 37 of
38 our packet. Grace.

39
40 MS. COCHON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
41 is Grace Cochon, for the record. The Councils draft FY
42 -- Fiscal Year 25 Annual Report, ensures that the Board
43 is aware of issues, concerns and current events that
44 impact your Subsistence way of life. With your report
45 and recommendations, the Board can make informed
46 decisions on regulatory and policy actions. At your last
47 meeting in January, the Council discussed various topics
48 over the 2 days and we identified 4 issues that were
49 repeated throughout the meetings or throughout that
50 meeting. Okay, sorry.

1

2 Okay so, the first topic is the need to
3 address ongoing declines of caribou populations. As you
4 all have been talking about during this meeting, you all
5 had grave concerns. So, the recommendations that we
6 heard were to strengthen enforcement of current harvest
7 limits, implement additional harvest restrictions and
8 work with the state to implement similar strategies. The
9 second topic was to support additional research funding
10 and studies to fill data gaps. The Council had concerns
11 about climate change and other factors impacting
12 subsistence resources and harvest opportunities. And so,
13 the recommendations we heard from you were: support for
14 scientific studies and surveys to fill data gaps and
15 better understand populations; more monitoring research
16 and proactive measures to better inform proposals and
17 decision making by the Federal Subsistence Board; and
18 then to also to fund studies through the Federal Resource
19 Monitoring Program and seeking other opportunities and
20 collaborations for these studies.

21

22 The 3rd topic I identified was to
23 support the increase of hunting and trapping
24 opportunities for wolves and bears. As you all have been
25 discussing today, you've -- the Council had extreme
26 concern for predators, for village safety and healthy
27 populations of subsistence resources. And so, the
28 recommendations we heard were to -- for federal
29 assistance to fund predator studies and surveys increase
30 hunting and trapping opportunities through larger bag
31 limits, fewer restrictions and/or unlimited harvests.
32 And then your report also includes one item for
33 informational purposes only. The Council didn't request
34 a response on this item, but the issue is still important
35 enough to note for the Board's awareness. And that was
36 concerns about contamination from mining and potential
37 development projects. The Council is seeking additional
38 information and would like researchers to investigate
39 contamination in the area.

40

41 So, at your fall meeting in January, we
42 said we would draft the annual report and bring it before
43 you for this meeting for you to review, make edits or
44 include additional information. So, this is your
45 opportunity to do so, especially if you want to change
46 your recommendations, which we kind of just gathered
47 from your discussions throughout the 2-day meeting last
48 January. Please remember, we cannot add any topics,
49 especially if they weren't mentioned during the meeting
50 in January. But you can make edits to the draft or leave

000128

1 it as is. But this is an action item for you. Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Thank you, Grace.
4 Does anyone have any recommendations for edits or are
5 we happy with the product we have before us on page 37?

6

7 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen
8 Pattee. Are we able to just take the night to go over
9 it again and make any decisions tomorrow?

10

11 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: We can, if that's the
12 wish of the Council. So, we will pick this item back up
13 tomorrow. Local time in Kotzebue is 5:14 p.m., would we
14 like to go over the future meeting dates right now, or
15 would we like to be done for the day?

16

17 MR. PATTEE: Through the Chair, Tristen
18 Pattee. Be done for the day.

19

20 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: Anyone else?

21

22 MR. CLEVELAND: Done for the day. Thank
23 you.

24

25 CHAIRPERSON BAKER: You heard it here
26 first. It is 5:14. We are going to go ahead and recess
27 tomorrow morning. We will pick back up at 9 a.m. here
28 in Kotzebue at the Northwest Arctic Heritage Center. And
29 we will pick up with Action Item g: Future Meeting Dates.
30 Thank you everybody.

31

32 (Off record)

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

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 128 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the NORTHWEST ARTIC SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME I recorded on the 31st day of March;

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

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

DATED at Isabela, Puerto Rico this 22nd day of April 2026.

Rafael Morel
Chief Project Manager