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FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD

REGULATORY MEETING

VOLUME I

EGAN CONVENTION CENTER

Anchorage, Alaska

April 21, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Anthony Christianson, Chairman
- Raymond Oney, Public Member
- Benjamin Payenna, Public Member
- Rhonda Pitka, Public Member
- Frank Woods, Public Member
- Sara Boario, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Jeremiah Ingersoll, U.S. Forest Service
- Jolene John, Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Kevin Pendergast, Bureau of Land Management
- Don Striker, National Park Service

Interior Solicitor, Lisa Doehl

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Anchorage, Alaska - 4/21/2026)

(On record)

MS. LEONETTI: Welcome to the Wildlife regulatory meeting of the Federal Subsistence Board. (In Native) my Yup'ik name is Ciiquq, I also go by Crystal Leonetti and I'm the Director for Office of Subsistence Management.

I have a few announcements to make before the meeting gets underway. This meeting of the Federal Subsistence Board and the public process we rely upon is crucial to upholding the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Title VIII, and to support the rural priority for subsistence hunting, trapping and fishing on Federal public lands in Alaska.

This meeting is being recorded and transcribed. Anything you say to the Board will become a part of the public record. Transcripts will be available on our website.

For those attending our meeting in person please make sure you sign-in at the table just outside the meeting room doors. There's a sign-in sheet for each day of the meeting and we'd appreciate if you would sign-in each day that you are here. For those joining online the agenda and meeting materials can be found online at doi.gov/subsistence/board under the meetings tab.

Our progress through the agenda will be updated daily on the web.

For those online please remember to mute yourselves when you are not addressing the Board. If you are calling in on your phone you can press star, six to mute yourself or use the mute feature on Teams.

This is a regulatory meeting and the Board will be discussing and deliberating on proposals to change wildlife regulations for 2026 to 2028 as well as reviewing existing closures that are up for review. There will be an opportunity for tribal and public comments during that proposal periods. You can see the steps of the proposal presentation procedure on the

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1 non-consensus agenda. There will be an opportunity for
2 public to comment on non-agenda items at the beginning
3 of each day starting tomorrow, Wednesday, April 22nd.
4 The Chair will announce this each morning and that will
5 be an opportunity for those present as well as those
6 participating on the phone to speak on non-agenda
7 items. We would ask you hold any comments on proposals
8 or agenda items until such time as they come up before
9 the Board so that the Board will hear all pertinent
10 information at the time they're working on that item.
11 However the Chair can make exceptions. This is a very
12 full agenda with 78 wildlife proposals, 46 of those on
13 the non-consensus agenda and 17 closure reviews. This
14 is definitely the most proposals the Board has seen at
15 any meeting in the last 10 years. We recognize there
16 are many large issues like the Park Service proposed
17 rule, Public Land Order 5150, a request for
18 reconsideration on Ketchikan Rural, the Federal
19 Subsistence Management Program review and Fisheries
20 issues at large that we all care about. We're going to
21 have an update from the Department of Interior, Senior
22 Advisor for Alaska, on the program review later this
23 week. There is still outstanding requests for tribal
24 consultation that are being honored, but this isn't the
25 venue to provide input on the review.

26
27 So with that full agenda we're going to
28 ask you to keep your comments very succinct and to the
29 point so that we don't go -- we don't have to go late
30 into the evenings or late on Friday.

31
32 This way of life, living with and in
33 relationship to the land is precious for so many people
34 across Alaska. In this program we're limited in how we
35 can support it. It is bigger than just fish and
36 wildlife. Updating publicly informed fish and wildlife
37 is the focus and the authority of the Federal
38 Subsistence Management Program. We ask to remain
39 focused, succinct and focus on the most important
40 aspects of the regulations in front of us this week.

41
42 If you would like to address the Board
43 during the meeting for folks in the room please fill
44 out a blue testifier form that you'll find at the front
45 table. This helps us keep track of anyone who'd like
46 to speak regarding a specific agenda item. If you are
47 online using the Teams platform you can raise your hand
48 by pressing the button. If you're calling in you may
49 raise your hand by pressing star, five. If you would
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1 like to email your comments in you may do that as well
2 by emailing subsistence@ios.doi.gov. If you're unable
3 to stay with us until the public comment opportunity is
4 open for the particular proposal you'd like to address
5 you may consider submitting a written comment instead.
6 You can do that by emailing your comment to that same
7 email address, subsistence@ios.doi.gov. You need to
8 indicate your name, affiliation and what proposal or
9 closure your comment addresses. Written comments will
10 be accepted until the start of the presentation of each
11 proposal or closure review analysis. We will share
12 those with the Board. When you address the Board
13 please state your name for the record before making a
14 comment or presenting a topic. This helps us get an
15 accurate record of our meeting.

16

17 Our meetings are conducted by Robert's
18 Rules which helps us provide structure and maintain
19 order throughout the meeting. All participants, Board,
20 Staff and public members are expected to be courteous
21 and respectful in all interactions as a matter of
22 meeting etiquette. It's understood that the nature of
23 some of the issues discussed at these meetings can be
24 difficult and controversial. We are all here because
25 we care about subsistence and we all need to strive
26 together to work on issues before us. Although some
27 comments shared throughout this meeting may be
28 passionate no insults will be tolerated.

29

30 So with that, Mr. Chair, I'll do a roll
31 call to establish quorum.

32

33 Chair Tony Christianson.

34

35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Present.

36

37 MS. LEONETTI: Public member Charlie
38 Brower is excused from this meeting.

39

40 Public member Chief Rhonda Pitka.

41

42 MS. PITKA: Here.

43

44 MS. LEONETTI: U.S. Fish and Wildlife
45 Service, Sara Boario.

46

47 MS. BOARIO: Good morning. Present.

48

49 MS. LEONETTI: National Park Service,

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1 Don Striker.

2

3 MR. STRIKER: Present.

4

5 MS. LEONETTI: Bureau of Indian
6 Affairs, Jolene John.

7

8 MS. JOHN: (In Native)

9

10 MS. LEONETTI: U.S. Forest Service,
11 Jerry Ingersoll.

12

13 MR. INGERSOLL: Good morning. Present.

14

15 MS. LEONETTI: Bureau of Land
16 Management, Kevin Pendergast.

17

18 MR. PENDERGAST: Present.

19

20 MS. LEONETTI: Public member, Frank
21 Woods.

22

23 MR. WOODS: Here.

24

25 MS. LEONETTI: Public member, Raymond
26 Oney.

27

28 MR. ONEY: Here.

29

30 MS. LEONETTI: And Public member, Ben
31 Payenna.

32

33 MR. PAYENNA: I am here.

34

35 MS. LEONETTI: Thank you. And, Mr.
36 Chair, we do have a quorum. I'll also note that we
37 have our Department of Interior Solicitor, Lisa Doehl
38 here. We also have on the line U.S. Forest Service
39 General Counsel, Randall Lockyear. We are joined by
40 Alaska Department of Fish and Game Deputy Commissioner,
41 Ben Mulligan and Subsistence Liaison, Aaron Poetter.
42 And all of the RAC Chairs that are present here in the
43 room and online. We have a quorum.

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
46 that, Crystal. And then we'll just begin. Welcome
47 everybody this morning to the Federal Subsistence Board
48 Wildlife meeting and look forward to a productive
49 meeting. Crystal said all the detailed stuff and so we
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1 just try to put out as a precursor to the meeting just
2 what the expectations are so that you're -- you're
3 informed and know when you can testify and do what you
4 need to do to get yourself heard here on the record.
5 And so we welcome the new Board members to this
6 meeting, the new rural and tribal seat members as well
7 as the actings that we have sitting here. We
8 appreciate the service that we work on here as we focus
9 on the -- setting regulations on the public lands.

10

11 And so with that we look to review and
12 adopt the agenda at this time.

13

14 MR. WOODS: Move to approve.

15

16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, Robbin.

17

18 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
19 members of the Board. This is Robbin Lavine,
20 Subsistence Policy Coordinator. And I have a couple of
21 changes to the agenda that I'm aware of, but before we
22 move forward with that I would like to request a pause.
23 There are a couple of -- we want to connect to the
24 screens and the meeting appropriately. If you'd give
25 us about five minutes.

26

27 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

28

29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Five minutes.

30

31 (Off record)

32

33 (On record)

34

35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right. We
36 apologize about the technical difficulties. We're
37 going to go ahead and resume again where we left off
38 and we were reviewing and adopting the agenda so we'll
39 go ahead and return it back to Robbin Lavine.

40

41 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
42 members of the Board. OSM has -- is aware of a couple
43 of modifications to the agenda, some that OSM would
44 like to request and I think other Board members or
45 members of the Federal Subsistence Management Program
46 have some suggested changes as well. So I'd like to
47 bring those forward. And before I talk about changes
48 or modifications to the agenda I want to make an
49 announcement on the order of our regions that we are
50

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1 taking up the proposals in. And we are starting for
2 the very first time with North Slope and we are working
3 through the proposals in consecutive order by -- from
4 the North Slope to Eastern Interior, et cetera, et
5 cetera, all the way down, finishing with Southeast on
6 the last day. And we are printing up some agendas with
7 the order of the proposals as we take them up during
8 the meeting and they will be available at the front
9 desk or in the back of the room.

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So with that announcement made there are a couple of items that I would like to request for OSM is that we defer the Wood Bison Management Plan to the summer work session. That will give more time for that discussion during the work session and also with Chairs in attendance hopefully. We are also requesting to defer 26-01 to the Fisheries regulatory meeting. If deferred the Board may want to consider any changes that might need to be made in actions on Wildlife proposals 26-10, 26-13(b) and 14, 27, 28(a), 43/44, 51, 61 and 62(b) which is on the consensus agenda and 65. These are things that OSM Staff is tracking and we imagine that the suggested changes would be more administrative than -- something easy that hopefully we might be able to deal with at the time that we take up those proposals.

Those are the changes that I want to note and request the Board approve. And I believe there are other requests for changes to the agenda that Board members can bring forward.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Robbin, the floor is open for Board members.

MR. PENDERGAST: Mr. Chair. Kevin Pendergast, Bureau of Land Management. I do have a request to withdraw one proposal. Mr. Chair, I request withdrawing Wildlife proposal 26-27 from the agenda. This was BLM proposed. BLM submitted the proposal with the intent of providing the BLM Glennallen Field Office in-season manager with more flexibility in managing the Nelchina Caribou Herd by delegating the manager the authority to set harvest limits on Federal lands in Unit 13 remainder. In an effort to reduce regulatory complexity and provide the in-season manager with the same management flexibilities it has in Unit 13A and B,

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1 BLM also requests delegating the manager with the
2 authority to set sex restrictions. In its comments the
3 Alaska Department of Fish and Game opposed this
4 proposal because the Nelchina Herd has not recovered to
5 a level in which any proposed liberalization of the
6 Federal regulations should be considered. It's not
7 expected for the herd to recover to such population
8 level for at least another year. BLM would therefore
9 like to have more time to consult and coordinate with
10 Fish and Game as well as AITRC, the National Park
11 Service and other stakeholders before deciding the best
12 plan for co-management of the herd.

13

14 So again for that reason we'd request
15 to change and withdraw Wildlife proposal 26-27.

16

17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
18 Kevin. Any other Board members, changes?

19

20 MR. STRIKER: I'm a little bit out of
21 my depth here so I'll ask for my fellow Board members
22 to help me out. We did get a request yesterday to
23 remove 66, 67 and 69 from the consent agenda and to put
24 it on the regular agenda. I think that perhaps only 66
25 is relevant in this case for reasons that we can get
26 into when we actually have the conversation, but I
27 would request that we also consider moving those off of
28 the consent agenda and having them as part of the
29 conversation.

30

31 Thank you.

32

33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: And we'll get
34 to that procedurally when we get to that portion of the
35 agenda and it will be an opportunity for us then. So
36 that will probably be this afternoon as we start to get
37 into that presentation from the Staff and do that. So
38 there's another opportunity here, this is just the
39 first stab at that.

40

41 Thank you, Don.

42

43 Any other Board action request,
44 deferral.

45

46 (No comments)

47

48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
49 seeing none, move to adopt the agenda as presented

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1 with.....

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MR. WOODS: So moved.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So moved. Can I get a second?

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MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service seconds.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Can we -- and just so the record reflects that we are reviewing and adopting by second a request to change the agenda to defer the Wood Management Bison Plan to the summer work session, defer WP26-01 to the Fisheries regulatory meeting and then to withdraw the BLM 26-27 Wildlife proposal.

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All in favor signify by saying aye.

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IN UNISON: Aye.

23

24

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposed same sign.

25

26

(No opposing votes)

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries unanimous to accept the agenda with the changes.

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Thank you. Next we move into Board information sharing session. Board members and OSM Director, this is an opportunity for the Board members here that represent different agencies to share things that they have going on that affect the -- this program, the way of life and then -- and then what it is that they're mandated to manage. So at this time we'll go ahead and open the floor and maybe we'll start down with Jerry.

40

41

42

43

I -- do we have a list? Oh, wait, sorry. Yeah. We're good. Crystal will take over after this.

44

45

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Jerry, you got it. He -- we're going to let Jerry go first because Jerry is the winner of jeopardy, Federal Subsistence Board big game we played, I was real competitive. We were talking about -- but, yeah, there's our winner of jeopardy, Jerry. Welcome.

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1 MR. INGERSOLL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
2 And it is an honor to be here and to be taking part in
3 these deliberations. And I say that because I will be
4 retiring from Federal service next week on April 30th
5 after serving 38 and a half years with the Forest
6 Service. And I have to say that the work on the
7 Subsistence Program is among the highlights of my
8 career because this work matters to Alaskans and to
9 rural communities and to Native and non-Native
10 residents and I believe in this work.

11

12 The Forest Service is also going
13 through a reorganization. And I want to assure you
14 that we will continue to have an active role and play
15 an active role in subsistence management. The position
16 of Regional Forester is planned to be abolished and
17 that is the position that I am acting in today, but
18 there will be a State Director for Alaska in the new
19 organization and that position has just been advertised
20 yesterday. And we'll receive competitive applications
21 and the agency intends to move as quickly as reasonably
22 possible to fill that job. In the interim between my
23 retirement and when that position is filled, the
24 Regional Forester in Portland will provide coverage for
25 Alaska. The Deputy Regional Forester in Juneau will be
26 delegated the authority to act as Acting Regional
27 Forester for the purposes of subsistence management and
28 of course our outstanding Staff continues to work in
29 this field. So I want to provide assurance that my
30 retirement will not interrupt our commitment to this
31 program and our engagement with the rest of you.

32

33 Thank you very much.

34

35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you and
36 congratulations with your retirement. Appreciate your
37 service on here, Jerry.

38

39 All right. Next we've got Mr. Striker.

40

41 MR. STRIKER: Wow, was that just
42 anticipation. Thank you, Crystal.

43

44 Don Striker with the National Park
45 Service. Good to see everybody. I echo Jerry's
46 sentiment in the importance of these proceedings and
47 this process. It's one of the highlights of my career
48 too and I take the responsibility really, really
49 seriously. On that note I'm sure many people have
50

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1 noticed that the National Park Service recently
2 proposed a draft regulation for hunting and trapping in
3 national park system units in Alaska. Originally this
4 was a 30 day review period, about a week ago Friday we
5 decided to extend the comment period so the comment
6 period for that rule is now this Friday. And you can
7 see in the listing in the Federal Register all the
8 different ways that you can send comments in on that.

9
10 I would like to take the opportunity to
11 remind folks here though that our responsibilities and
12 regulations guiding consultation doesn't have a
13 deadline. So even though there's a hard deadline for
14 getting written comments in on this rule, whether it's
15 the State or the ANCs or any other entity that wishes
16 to do consultation with the National Park Service, we
17 will continue that consultation throughout the process
18 of the draft, the review of the comments on the reg,
19 publication of a final regulation, et cetera, et
20 cetera, et cetera, and that's not going to happen fast.
21 So I offer this because although it was unintended I
22 should have noticed that this particular rule coming
23 out at the same time that there was a review of Federal
24 Subsistence Board activities put squarely in the
25 spotlight any effort anywhere that has anything
26 potentially to do with subsistence and that has served
27 to be a third rail for me in the last couple of -- in
28 the last couple of weeks. I should have seen that
29 coming, I just totally whiffed on it. So everybody has
30 plenty of opportunity to continue to consult with me is
31 the take home message.

32
33 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

34
35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

36
37 Raymond, Mr. Oney.

38
39 MR. ONEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My
40 name is Raymond Oney, my Yup'ik name is (in Native).
41 I'm from the village of Alakanuk on the mouth of the
42 Yukon River that spills out into the Bering Sea. I've
43 been a lifelong resident of the Yukon. I'd like to
44 thank my family for allowing me to come to meetings
45 like this. It's been hard over the year, but I'm very
46 fortunate that my wife has allowed me to come to these
47 meetings. I want to thank the people from the YK area
48 also too for all their support over the years serving
49 as the YKRAC member. I learned a lot from different
50

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1 areas of the YK area and also being in this position
2 has given me a greater view of what's going on
3 throughout the state of Alaska in our backyard, in our
4 -- in our home -- home village. So looking forward to
5 all the comments and all the deliberations that will be
6 going on this week.

7

8 So again thank you.

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Ray.

11

12 Jolene.

13

14 MS. JOHN: Yeah, good morning. (In
15 Native) Jolene John, Regional Director, BIA. Just want
16 to share that just this week we're seeing releases of
17 the President's budget for fiscal year '27. I have
18 seen just briefly what BIA's budget looks like so if
19 you're interested that should be available. For those
20 that are familiar with the Tribal Interior Budget
21 Council process they are going to revisit that
22 structure and meet with tribes of May 19 and 20 in
23 Washington, DC. Alaska has been experiencing a lot of
24 water and fuel crises across mostly the rural coastal
25 communities and areas where they've experienced extreme
26 winter temperatures. And so the senior leadership of
27 BIA has taken -- made a decision to contribute toward
28 providing some relief for those that are seriously
29 struggling with the source. And similarly the Senate
30 Committee on Indian Affairs is going to Bethel the week
31 of May 4 at which time the BIA leadership will be there
32 to hear what the impacts have been following Typhoon
33 Halong.

34

35 Bureau of Indian Affairs' employees
36 were offered the third round of the deferred
37 resignation program and fortunately we only have one
38 employee at this time and through the efforts of our
39 senior leadership in DC we also may have a chance to
40 open a few positions at our region, mostly the lower
41 grade levels and that should offer some relief for
42 support.

43

44 Across the nation BIA is also focusing
45 on probate programs. Recently during the Tribal Self-
46 Governance Conference our -- Kena Spellmark
47 particularly spoke about this effort and encouraged
48 tribes that my be interested to really dig deep and see
49 if they can assist in the process by way of contracting
50

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1 or compacting this program. Our tribes in Alaska are
2 very interested in how probate works and so we're
3 seeing increases of requests for detailed proposals and
4 presentations in the region. So we welcome those
5 invites. Also as a result there's -- I'm talking with
6 the Alaska Federation of Natives to see if we can have
7 some kind of space for a probate surge activity.

8
9 And good news this week that we heard
10 our providers conference package has reached the
11 Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs' office which is
12 more hopeful than what it was last year. Hopefully we
13 will see providers conference happen this year, the
14 first week of December.

15
16 And that is it for me. Quyana.

17
18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
19 Jolene.

20
21 Rhonda.

22
23 MS. PITKA: Good morning. I'm Rhonda
24 Pitka from the village of Beaver. I've been Chief of
25 the village of Beaver since 2011. I was elected
26 Chairman of CATG, Council of Athabaskan Tribal
27 Governments in the same year -- two months after I was
28 elected Chief. So it's a -- it's always been an
29 interesting role in leadership in the Yukon Flats and
30 it's one that I hold very dear to my heart. I was
31 recently appointed as Vice President of Tanana Chiefs
32 Conference and I look forward to the next two years of
33 my term finishing up Chief Sharon Hildebrand's Vice
34 President term.

35
36 We're one of the tribes that was
37 extremely cold this year. The temperatures reached
38 minus 50 for five weeks in a row. We didn't get a
39 plane for three weeks in a row and when the temperature
40 dropped down to minus 70 every -- every fuse that could
41 break in our generator broke. This comes at a time
42 when we're already being chronically under funded and
43 Federal funding has been cut back considerably. We
44 thank the BIA for their assistance and their help with
45 getting water and fuel to our village. We -- the
46 challenges that we face on the ground in our villages
47 can't be overstated.

48
49 The Yukon River salmon disaster. We
50

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1 have had no fishing on the Yukon River since 2019.
2 This has been a critical fishing disaster. It's been
3 heartbreaking to say the least. We -- I just got done
4 with Yukon River Panel last week and the forecast is
5 low again. And it's going to continue to be low until
6 we actually get very serious about a unified plan to
7 manage Yukon River salmon that involves all of the
8 entities along the river that don't work in silos and,
9 you know, generally work against each other.

10

11 One of the other things that the salmon
12 disaster brought on was our reliance on moose as a
13 protein source because we don't have any fish anymore.
14 In our area we've always had poor moose browse and
15 we've always had low moose numbers. We live in a
16 wildlife refuge and because of laws that are none of
17 our making we don't have easy access to predator
18 control. And that combined with the overrun of hunters
19 from out of state, from Wasilla, from Anchorage, from
20 Fairbanks into our areas has caused a considerable
21 disaster. Families are having to go out 10 to 20 days
22 in order to have success in feeding their families and
23 getting a moose. And a lot of people haven't. These
24 aren't wealthy people that have jet boats and all of
25 this stuff, you know, they're poor and the cost of gas
26 that they use to go harvest for their families is
27 extremely expensive, if it's even available. The
28 continued war in Iran is affecting the price of gas
29 considerably to the point where villages in the region
30 are considering turning off their generators at night
31 to save fuel.

32

33 So our ability to live our way of life
34 has been -- has always been marginalized, it's always
35 been on the edge, but now with these further cut backs
36 from the Federal government in ways that they've never
37 cut back before in the name of efficiency, has caused
38 our way of life to be in considerable decline. So it's
39 been a very, very serious years and I really would like
40 to congratulate everybody on their retirement and it's
41 -- and it's actually really said because whenever we
42 have this many retirements in a row we lose
43 considerable knowledge on this Board and then we have
44 to go through and educate everybody else again. We've
45 taken considerable effort on this Board as public
46 members to make sure that our agency heads are educated
47 properly in our way of life and we will continue to do
48 that and continue to do so no matter what
49 Administration we're in.

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1 Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
4 that update, Rhonda.

5

6 We'll move on down. Kevin.

7

8 MR. PENDERGAST: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
9 I'll be brief. Kevin Pendergast, Bureau of Land
10 Management. I've been State Director at the BLM since
11 last June so coming up on one year anniversary, with
12 BLM in Alaska for six years prior to that, in Alaska 26
13 years, came up in the year 2000. Lived and worked all
14 over the state. So this is actually my first wildlife
15 cycle meeting so looking forward to the proceedings.

16

17 Just a couple of updates from BLM's
18 perspective. And someone brought up the topic of, you
19 know, staffing these days, continues to be a challenge.
20 We're operating in an environment of reduced staffing
21 and that's consistent with one of the priorities of
22 this Administration and so we're all working to pivot
23 and really make sure our work is focused on priorities
24 at any given time. So in certain senses we're busier
25 than we ever have been at BLM and our staffing picture
26 looks different, but we're also extremely proud of all
27 the progress we're making, we've got great folks doing
28 good work and again just, you know, trying to make sure
29 we're keeping the right things moving at all the right
30 times and not let any balls drop.

31

32 I know top of mind for many folks
33 across the state and I would expect we hear a little
34 bit it during the proceedings, but is what's happening
35 with public land orders. Public Land Order 5150 up in
36 the central part of the state running along the Dalton
37 Corridor is of particular interest to many folks. And
38 that Public Land Order was rescinded and the Secretary
39 signed what I'll call an opening order on those lands.
40 And what's important about that in this context is that
41 when that happens what had been state top filings
42 attach just by operation of law, nothing we need to do
43 further, and become State selections. So right now
44 we've got in the Dalton Corridor a little over 2
45 million acres which is State selected land which
46 removes from Federal rural subsistence priority.
47 That's not the end of the story, there's more work to
48 come in that area, but that's the current status quo
49 today. We've had great partnership from the State

50

0016

1 thinking about subsistence impacts of these actions and
2 what might be done to facilitate access for users going
3 forward in and across those lands to subsist under
4 State law to reach Federal lands and subsist in that
5 way, so really pleased with the dialogue we've got
6 going there as these actions take place. Executive
7 Order 14153 has more instruction for us and things we
8 need to focus on with respect to public land orders.
9 So some more work to come around the state, it's early
10 days, but you'll hear more about steps as we move
11 through the pieces and parts of that executive order.

12

13 Shifting to the North Slope just for a
14 second, there's been a lot of activity up there. Again
15 much of it directed and very in-line with
16 Administration priorities, but there's been a return to
17 and an emphasis on oil and gas leasing in the National
18 Petroleum Reserve in Alaska as well as to the east in
19 the coastal plain of Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.
20 So what's coming in the near term, we had a very
21 successful sale in March in the NPR-A, but what's
22 coming in the near term is a lease sale in the coastal
23 plain of ANWR in early June. That was publicly
24 announced late last week and then -- and then documents
25 published this past Monday. So that's kind of the
26 latest up there.

27

28 But again just an extraordinarily busy
29 time at BLM. Happy to be able to take out several days
30 and focus in on these issues.

31

32 Thank you.

33

34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
35 Kevin.

36

37 Ben.

38

39 MR. PAYENNA: Hey, good morning,
40 everybody. I'm brand new to the Federal Subsistence
41 Board, this is my first official meeting. Just a
42 little background on myself. I'm a lifelong Nome
43 resident, my father was born and raised on King Island
44 so I grew up doing a lot of marine mammal hunting as
45 well as land hunting. And I've served on other boards
46 and chairman and vice chairman seats for Kawerak Board
47 of Directors, Alaska Co-Management Council, Eskimo
48 Walrus Commission and other boards like that so I am a
49 little bit familiar with board processes, but this is
50

0017

1 my very first Federal Subsistence Wildlife Board
2 meeting so I'm anxious to learn how the process goes
3 and be a part of it.

4

5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Sara.

6

7 MS. BOARIO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
8 Good morning, everyone. Sara Boario, Regional Director
9 for the Fish and Wildlife Service. It's great to see
10 the room filling up this morning. I think this is the
11 biggest rooms we've been in since my tenure on the
12 Board. So some of you are really small and far away,
13 but doing my best to look around and see all the
14 wonderful, familiar faces. This is a position I've had
15 the privilege to serve in for the last just over four
16 years and the far greater privilege is to have spent a
17 lifetime in Alaska, living, working, learning alongside
18 so many folks across this state. This work is, as
19 Jerry noted, and congratulations, Jerry, we will miss
20 your experience, but as Jerry noted this work is so
21 important to so many people and their lives across the
22 state.

23

24 So as part of my information sharing
25 this morning I wanted to introduce some key program
26 leadership, just three very important folks that are
27 here to serve you, know how they can assist you finding
28 information on a range of issues. They support me in
29 all I do as well, but they're here to work for all of
30 you. Wendy Loyla, you can just raise your hand, I'll
31 make this quick, but Wendy Loyla is our program lead
32 for the Migratory Bird Program here in Alaska and she
33 also serves as the Fish and Wildlife Service
34 representative on the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-
35 Management Council alongside Mark Burch with the Alaska
36 Department of Fish and Game and Randy Mayo who many of
37 you know from the interior region who serves as the
38 Native Caucus Chair. And of course the Executive
39 Director for many years, Patty Schwalenberg, who has
40 hosted at Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission. I
41 would be remiss if I didn't notice -- note that AMBCC
42 recognized our Board colleague who can't be with us
43 here this week, Charlie Brower, for his extraordinary
44 role in founding -- being one of the handful of
45 founding members for AMBCC. So, Charlie, wherever you
46 are, thank you for just your many decades of service
47 and contributions to AMBCC.

48

49 The migratory bird team is preparing to

50

0018

1 fly their statewide aerial surveys that inform both the
2 spring/summer subsistence and fall/winter bird harvest.
3 We should know by August, I know it's been on many
4 people's minds how the emperor goose population is
5 doing, we should know by August what those numbers are
6 looking like and for now we know this year that harvest
7 remains -- and eggging remain closed and we hope for
8 better numbers here in the future.

9

10 Our shorebird team is -- continues to
11 evaluate the health of populations on the North Slope
12 and other areas and will be supporting the fourth
13 annual Utqiagvik migratory bird festival in mid June.
14 They continue to track seabird die-offs and continue to
15 share information on avian influenza which we get many
16 questions about. So thank you, Wendy, to you and your
17 team. If you have anymore questions, folks, Wendy's
18 here and happy to meet you.

19

20 Karlin Itchoak, he serves as our
21 Assistant Regional Director for our National Wildlife
22 Refuge System in Alaska. He works with all of us,
23 everyone in this room, to oversee and steward 16
24 national wildlife refuges, managing and conserving over
25 76.8 million acres, approximately 85 percent of the
26 public lands within the National Wildlife Refuge System
27 nationwide. His work also includes shared and co-
28 stewardship and recently he and his team just
29 negotiated and finalized a 638 agreement with --
30 between Koniag, Inc. and Kodiak National Wildlife
31 Refuge. Karlin also, and I know we get many questions
32 about this, I wanted to make sure folks were aware.
33 Karlin also oversees our refuge law enforcement. His
34 Chief, Dan Shamhart, wanted to be with us here today
35 too and be in the room, be able to meet request and he
36 is out at previously scheduled training. But our
37 Federal wildlife officers, we know we hear from folks
38 lots of questions about subsistence enforcement and the
39 critical role they play in working with communities to
40 protect our resources. So thank you, Karlin, and your
41 team for that.

42

43 Finally Pete Fasbender is our Assistant
44 Regional Director for fish and aquatic conservation in
45 our Ecological Services Program. His Staff helped
46 manage our in-season fisheries and monitor populations
47 of non-salmon species like whitefish and sheefish.
48 Their Staff, his Staff also manages threatened and
49 endangered species, prepares for and responds to oil
50

0019

1 spills and under the Marine Mammal Protection Act works
2 alongside the Alaska Nannut Co-Management Council and
3 the Eskimo Walrus Commission as well which also Charlie
4 serves on. He and his many hats so lots of shout outs
5 to Charlie today. A noted intersection with Pete's
6 team's work, yesterday during tribal testimony we heard
7 about some of the tribe on Prince of Wales work with
8 Pete's team on combining their indigenous science into
9 our Alexander Archipelago wolf species status
10 assessment. That was Pete's team that worked with them
11 in just a concrete intersection with people's lives.

12

13 And last but not least, Jill Klein,
14 behind me, our Regional Subsistence Coordinator and a
15 crucial member of the InterAgency Staff Committee.
16 She's also been wearing many hats lately. She's been
17 assisting Karlin as one of his Refuge Supervisors. She
18 brings just a tremendous amount of statewide knowledge,
19 huge support to me.

20

21 So thank you to my team and I hope
22 folks get a chance to meet them and know that we're all
23 here to serve you and help answer questions on your
24 mind.

25

26 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

27

28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,

29 Sara.

30

31 Frank.

32

33 MR. WOODS: Hey, good morning, public
34 member Frank Woods. I'm from Dillingham. I am a
35 resident, born and raised in Clark's Point, but raised
36 in Dillingham, graduated. I'm a Curyung tribal member,
37 an avid -- not just a subsistence user, but a rural
38 resident. I'm also Native under the tribal designation
39 of Curyung which makes my -- my lineage goes back a
40 long time. I follow that because number 1, each one of
41 our agencies that approached this Board yesterday, you
42 know, had a consultation with us which was
43 unprecedented and has grown up. We had no voice when I
44 was growing up. We didn't have a say in what was
45 supposed to be done with our resources and how we're
46 supposed to manage.

47

48 I'd like to address that. Number 1, I
49 recognize RAC, Dan Dunaway is our representative. We

50

0020

1 have a whole group, please raise your hand or stand up,
2 from Bristol Bay, from Kenneth, to Jorjana, looks like
3 Jimmy, Jimmy's wife, and all the people in Bristol Bay
4 last -- at this meeting last wildlife cycle we put in a
5 proposal with that group and proponents back there to
6 change the regulation and expand the area for caribou.
7 We are the last caribou hunt, I never imagined running
8 out of caribou in Bristol Bay when we had 200,000 in
9 the Mulchatna Herd. We're down to two a year for the
10 villages that are in the consortium of Federally-
11 qualified subsistence users in Bristol Bay. When we
12 expanded that region and expanded that hunt it got --
13 started getting utilized this last year. We got calls
14 that the herd had moved up into the expanded area and
15 people were hunting. And so that proposal and the
16 proponents that address that, I was on that end asking
17 this Board to change that regulation. It actually
18 implemented and worked for that purpose. So I thank
19 this Board and the proponents and the people engaged.

20

21 As anybody knows I work hard, number 1,
22 at highly educating our youth in the process because
23 that's our future. I engage and help in trying to get
24 people here, get people interested. There are a lot of
25 highly bright and educated people that need to be
26 engaged in our process.

27

28 So regionally we just intercept -- this
29 is the first where the Board cycle -- we have Board of
30 Fish and all the regulation processes that go with
31 that. In our area there's only like 7,000 people, the
32 size of Ohio. There ain't enough people engaged in the
33 regulatory process, State, Federal or local management.
34 And we have to recruit heavily because that needs to
35 happen not just regionally, but statewide.

36

37 I'll shut up and that, you know,
38 there's one thing I'd like to have got from John
39 Elliott. It says tolerance is a responsibility of
40 those with the higher vision. And each one of us in
41 here are sitting here for that reason, that we have a
42 higher vision for our people. Subsistence is changing
43 dramatically, it is a constant -- we are growing as a
44 state, we have run out of land and places to put
45 people, we are conflicting with each other and our own
46 user groups have a hard time putting anything on the
47 table. I say that because we have the responsibility
48 to help the rural residents, feed our people that live
49 there. And I'd like to thank you for all attending

50

0021

1 because we need this and more, right, we need to help
2 young -- we need young people to help us write the laws
3 that make sense to them because I'm not doing this for
4 me, you know, I know what the laws are, I know what the
5 rules are. We abide by those rules as subsistence
6 users and harvesters because we don't want to lose that
7 right. But Federal and State managers, they put those
8 regulations for the best intentions, sometimes they're
9 wrong and that's why we live in America is if the rules
10 and the laws are wrong our responsibility is to help
11 guide them rules.

12

13 I'll shut up because we've got a long
14 meeting and I'm -- welcome to the Federal Subsistence
15 Board.

16

17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
18 Frank, for being -- your brevity. Appreciate your
19 passion. I think everything Frank said -- that's why
20 we sit here, we appreciate to see the growth like he
21 said yesterday having the longest, largest consultation
22 process.

23

24 My name's Anthony Christianson, I've
25 been on the Board since 2012. And so watching it
26 happen from the start when we'd have one tribal
27 representative I think in the room if we were lucky and
28 we'd sit here and kind of look at ourselves and ask
29 ourselves how long we should keep the door open because
30 somebody might call in. Now we're like we got five
31 minutes until the door closes and can we fit one more
32 in. And so that's the growth we see with our tribal
33 representation. The public you can see the rooms are
34 full, the youth groups out there are now -- you know,
35 we're calling in and being guest speakers to people who
36 have a learning curve higher than ours. Like Frank's
37 stating, the ball's always changing and evolving and
38 we're learning as it -- as it goes how to manage the
39 system and in a changing environment. And it takes the
40 eyes and ears of our Regional Advisory Council Chairs,
41 the RAC members who sit and listen to all the testimony
42 from the public lands that need addressing to make sure
43 our way of life is protected, to the students that are
44 educating themselves and looking at this process so
45 it's not something that's a weird science, but an
46 applicable way to help drive your lifeway like Frank
47 was stating. So we really encourage everyone to
48 continue to do what we see happening out there, full
49 hallways, full classrooms and then education happening
50

0022

1 across the landscape at a real critical time for the
2 conservation of a way of life and a species that we all
3 depend on, salmon and especially this week, wildlife.

4
5 And so we do have a huge agenda here
6 before us, lots to go through that does affect our way
7 of life to bring balance to the user groups and so I'll
8 be brief in mine as well. I've been mayor of Hydaburg
9 19 years, grandfather to three kids already even though
10 it doesn't look like it. But hey, Sara, I just found
11 out -- as you know we go through training, Sara was a
12 ball star so recently just won the gold medal
13 basketball tournament at 50. So, you know, these
14 things matter, right, like because you've got to stay
15 in this lifestyle healthy, right, we have to be able to
16 hike mountains and we got to be able to pull fish and
17 we have to be a uncle that is visibly, actively engaged
18 in a lifestyle not just for myself, but for the next
19 generation and the people that we serve here because if
20 I sat here and was just a pumpkin that wouldn't make
21 sense to our constituents. So my way of life is like
22 Frank a rural user, I depend on the land, the resources
23 and all that abound in our great state. And it still
24 continues to serve us, you know, and some areas are
25 really tight and hopefully we can find solutions to
26 those and some areas are abundant, but experiencing
27 user conflict because of the abundance in that area and
28 lack in others. And so it's just a moving target as
29 far as how this body continues to manage these
30 resources. Hopefully in a holistic approach that makes
31 sure our subsistence user gets their need met in these
32 regions. And that's the priority focus for this Board
33 and hopefully we can nail that down this week with the
34 proposals we have before us.

35
36 And so appreciate everybody and their
37 time.

38
39 And next we have Crystal.

40
41 MS. LEONETTI: Well, I don't know if I
42 can play ball anymore, but I did run three miles this
43 morning. So.....

44
45 (Laughter)

46
47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I made it sound
48 better than it was.

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(Laughter)

MS. LEONETTI: Well, just a little bit about me. I'm the Director for Office of Subsistence Management, lifelong Alaskan, born and raised in Homer and Anchor Point, Alaska. My dad's side of the family are homesteaders that came up from Texas and Nebraska so I grew up on a little farm in Anchor Point. And my mom's side of the family, Yup'ik from Curyung, so Dillingham area. And I am a tribal citizen of Curyung and shareholder of Curyung Unlimited and Bristol Bay Native Corporation. And I see my elder, Joe Chythlook in the audience and I just want to say hi to Joe and acknowledge all my elders out there, good to see all of you and I hope we do you proud this week.

I live in Anchorage where I always said I would never live and I live here with my husband and our two kids. So I have the honor and privilege of working for all of you and for the Federal Subsistence Management Program and with an awesome Staff at Office of Subsistence Management.

So the Federal Subsistence Management Program is closing out a wildlife regulatory cycle at this meeting and in the beginning stages of a fisheries regulatory cycle. The window to submit Federal fisheries proposals closed in early April. We currently have eight proposals and 10 closure reviews for the 2027 to 2029 Federal subsistence fish and shellfish regulations cycle. The proposals and closure reviews are available on the OSM website at doi.gov/subsistence/fisheries. Public comments on the fisheries proposals and closure reviews will be accepted through July 31st and the public can also attend the Regional Advisory Council meetings in the fall to provide verbal testimony for the Council's deliberation and recommendations to the Board. I would say the RACs, the Council meetings, is where the rubber meets the road, that's where the work happens. The Board will meet to take up the fisheries proposals and closure reviews on February 1 through 5, 2027.

The OSM's fiscal year budget. We are currently receiving for this fiscal year \$9.4 million. It's lower than usual, but OSM will continue delivering essential services that protect and support rural subsistence opportunities across 220 million acres of Federal lands and waters in Alaska. This work includes

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1 core functions that keep fish and wildlife resources
2 healthy and available for rural residents including
3 processing regulatory proposals, supporting the Federal
4 Subsistence Board and Regional Advisory Councils and
5 conducting public meetings and consultations and
6 maintaining critical permitting and regulatory
7 publications.

8

9

10 A little bit about the Fisheries
11 Resource Monitoring Program. The FRMP has announced
12 the 2026 monitoring plan listing funded projects which
13 is now available in its entirety on the Federal
14 Subsistence Management Program website. This program
15 identifies regional priority information needs
16 identified by the Councils and through funding
17 assistance to partner organizations provides
18 information to sustain subsistence fisheries on Federal
19 public lands for rural Alaskans. The program proposal
20 review process is rigorous and with the available from
21 USDA and Department of Interior we were able to approve
22 10 projects addressing priority needs in all fisheries
23 regions of Alaska. Five projects are funded by USDA in
24 southeast Alaska and five projects are funded by DOI,
25 one for each of the remaining regions in Alaska. USDA
26 has allocated just under 600,000 towards the southeast
27 Alaska projects for year one of this four year cycle.
28 Looking at Jerry, saying thank you for that. And
29 Department of Interior has allocated just over \$750,000
30 towards year one of the cycle for the projects in the
31 rest of the regions of the state.

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Just briefly about staffing. OSM has
been creative in utilizing three to four month long job
exchange opportunities for remaining Staff to gain
skills and new perspectives while remaining on track to
fulfill ANILCA Title VIII. We've had a rotating cast
in our Operations Deputy position, our State Liaison
position, several administrative positions and in our
Fisheries and Anthropology Division Lead positions. Of
those in the room please stand, the Acting Subsistence
Liaison -- State Liaison is currently Jarred Stone
whose permanent position is Fisheries Biologist.
Thanks, Jarred. And also Kevin Foley, Acting Fisheries
Division Lead whose normal job is Fisheries Biologist.
Thanks, Kevin. And also Liz Williams, Acting
Anthropology Division Lead whose normal job is
anthropologist. Thanks, Liz. We've been fortunate
enough to welcome temporary job assignments from the
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service so thank you, Sara, and

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1 from the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance.
2 And at our front table outside the door there is Glenn
3 Westdahl who many of you have seen and gotten to know
4 over the years and he is retiring at the end of this
5 month which we're very sad about, but we're wishing him
6 well in his journey in his next chapter. So be sure to
7 congratulate Glenn when you see him. And law
8 enforcement. Are there any law enforcement in the
9 room, I'd like to say thank you to you if you are.
10 Hopefully we'll have some law enforcement for
11 professionals joining us throughout the week. OSM has
12 been working to increase their involvement to provide
13 that on the ground knowledge of how regulations are
14 applied and to respond to priorities of the Regional
15 Advisory Councils. OSM met with a very large
16 contingent of Federal agency law enforcement in
17 February and we appreciate their utmost integrity in
18 showing up to provide support. The Regional Advisory
19 Councils have been asking for that support and we're
20 glad that they can provide information to them at their
21 meetings.

22
23 I'd like to thank the Deputy
24 Commissioner of Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Ben
25 Mulligan, for his ongoing presence and involvement,
26 willingness to discuss the goals our two programs have
27 in common and participate in candid discussions both on
28 long term issues and ever changing fish and wildlife
29 around the state. So thank you, Ben.

30
31 Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations.
32 As we continue to do our diligence and the Federal
33 fiduciary responsibility to engage with the sovereign
34 tribal governments of Alaska as well as our
35 responsibility to consult with ANCSA corporations, OSM
36 has been working to update our contact list. So you
37 may be seeing an email to update your tribe or
38 corporation's information and we appreciate your
39 response so that we can stay in full communication with
40 you. Thank you to all the tribal governments and
41 Alaska Native corporations for continuing to work with
42 the Federal Subsistence Management Program.

43
44 And lastly the Council Chairs. Thank
45 you for meeting yesterday and coming in just a little
46 bit early to do that. We appreciate all the work that
47 you do. We met and we collaborated on addressing
48 critical subsistence issues across your diverse
49 regions, we shared information and coordinated on
50

0026

1 several matters including introductions to each other,
2 some of you are new and correspondence, some policies
3 and future coordination. So thanks to all the Council
4 Chairs for that.

5

6 All right. Mr. Chair, that's all I
7 have.

8

9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
10 Thank you, everyone, for your information sharing and
11 again farewell to all those who are retiring and thank
12 Glenn for his service, I just now heard -- found that
13 out, I probably heard it before, but he does a good job
14 keeping us in line so we appreciate that service.

15

16 Next we'll move on to our Regional
17 Advisory Council Chair discussion, topics of concern
18 with the Board. And we'll start over here with Mr. Don
19 Hernandez.

20

21 MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Chairman
22 Christianson. Good morning, Board. I'm Don Hernandez,
23 Chairman of the Southeast RAC and I live in the little
24 community of Point Baker which is on Prince of Wales
25 Island. It's a pleasure to be here with you in
26 Anchorage for this meeting. Unfortunately I did not
27 make the last Board meeting, I got stranded at home due
28 to the bad weather, I'm glad to be here this time. I'd
29 like to welcome the new members to the Board and I'd
30 also like to thank Jerry Ingersoll for attending our
31 Council meeting in Juneau this winter. It was much
32 appreciated by the Council.

33

34 So I think I'll start with kind of a
35 situation that the whole state experienced this year,
36 very severe weather in southeast Alaska as well. We
37 had several storms with hurricane force winds in the
38 fall and it was overall a very mild fall through most
39 of the hunting season, the temperatures were really
40 mild, wet, stormy, not the best for hunting deer. And
41 then in December everything drastically changed, got
42 bitter cold, heavy snows, snow just kept piling up all
43 through December. January was a major thaw with
44 unseasonably mild weather again, very wet, stormy.
45 Completely turned around again in February, I mean,
46 more bitter cold and started snowing and kept snowing
47 right up through March. And snow piled up clean up
48 until 1st of April which is a little unusual for
49 southeast, it was record setting snowfalls. And that
50

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1 all kind of raised a lot of concerns about our deer
2 populations in southeast and maybe some concerns with
3 fisheries as well, you know, you got these extreme rain
4 events with extreme scouring and landslides and things
5 like that happening throughout the region. So there's
6 a lot of concern there.

7
8 This past year has been a really busy
9 one for the Southeast RAC. We've dealt with some very
10 consequential issues for our region and also besides
11 the regular business of making recommendations on
12 proposals and closure reviews and our Fisheries
13 Resource Management Projects. We also reviewed and
14 made comments on game proposals to the Alaska Board of
15 Game and we submitted comments on the Secretarial
16 Review. And we added more input to the Tongass Forest
17 Plan revision which is an ongoing project which has,
18 you know, a lot of implications for subsistence uses in
19 southeast Alaska. The Council's greatest challenge for
20 the past year came as a result of the Board's decision
21 last year to change Ketchikan's status from non-rural
22 to rural. That caused the Council to take immediate
23 action to protect the continuation of subsistence uses
24 by residents of Unit 2 who are experiencing a decline
25 in deer population and that's kind of resulted in a
26 failure of a lot of local harvesters to be able to meet
27 their needs. The Council submitted a special action
28 request to deal with the season that we just had, 2025
29 season. The Board took no action on those special
30 actions that we requested, they essentially said they
31 wanted to see how the first season with Ketchikan
32 hunters being Federally-qualified, how that went. So
33 at our March meeting we also at the same time we put in
34 the special action request we also put forward some
35 proposals for this meeting. One of the proposals was
36 to initiate an .804 analysis to do a prioritization to
37 take place at this Board cycle. I should note that the
38 Board also has received a request for reconsideration
39 on your decision on Ketchikan rural determination. I
40 think it's important that the Board take action on our
41 .804 prioritization determination just due to the time
42 frame of a request for reconsideration and the
43 uncertainty of how that may turn out.

44
45 So yesterday I attended the tribal
46 consultation session and heard lots of testimony about
47 the deer situation in Unit 2. So you are aware of the
48 importance of making a fair and equitable .804
49 prioritization for Unit 2. I should point out that the
50

0028

1 Southeast RAC had never done an .804 determination
2 prior to this one. And I think you'd be pleased with
3 how we went about this process. First and foremost the
4 Council heard many hours of testimony and we listened
5 to that testimony. It was real important testimony,
6 very informative and the Council paid a lot of
7 attention to all of the testimony that we received on
8 that. Also we had some very excellent analysis from
9 the OSM Staff on this and we also reached out to the
10 Staff several times for guidance on how to proceed and
11 how to evaluate criteria and what was necessary for
12 justifications on our actions. And Staff assistance
13 was very helpful and they should be commended for that.
14 So after a lot of deliberation from Council members
15 from throughout the region, we were able to present to
16 you what we think is a fair and equitable proposal that
17 is called for in this situation.

18
19 So now I'd like to give you a little
20 synopsis of other actions taken by the Council. Okay.
21 Sitka meeting last spring, they said we would put
22 forward the special action requests and drafted the
23 proposals you're going to be dealing with here at this
24 meeting. And also at that meeting we had more -- we
25 dealt with the Forest Plan, we made comments to the
26 Forest Plan at that meeting. We also wrote a letter to
27 the Board concerned with wolf management in Unit 2 and
28 we also drafted a letter with concerns on one of the
29 sockeye systems in our region. Eek Lake is a major
30 subsistence sockeye stream in the Hydaburg area.

31
32 So then we had our fall meeting and it
33 took place in Wrangell. And as you know all the
34 Council meetings got delayed due to the Federal
35 furlough so we didn't have a lot of -- so our meeting
36 got delayed from October until December. And we also
37 shortened the meeting because there wasn't a whole lot
38 of Staff available at that time due to all the changes
39 and meeting schedules and whatnot. So normally we
40 would have done our wildlife recommendations at that
41 meeting, but we only took up a couple of those and we
42 pushed all of our wildlife recommendations back to our
43 winter meeting which just happened a month ago which
44 kind of made for kind of a short time period between
45 our meeting and your deliberations, but I think
46 hopefully, you know, the Staff got everything written
47 up the way we wanted it and were prepared. So it was a
48 two day -- only a two day meeting. December, bad time
49 for travel in southeast Alaska. Myself and two other
50

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1 Council members didn't make it to the meeting, had to
2 attend by phone, but we got some stuff done at that
3 meeting as well. Took up a closure review and did a
4 couple of other wildlife proposals that weren't as
5 controversial. And the Council also spent a fair
6 amount of time drafting the comment letter on the
7 Secretarial Review on the Management Program, Federal
8 Management Program. And we also spent some time, a
9 fair amount of time, drafting a comment letter with our
10 comments on the wildlife proposals before the Alaska
11 Board of Game.

12
13 So at our Juneau meeting is where we
14 did the bulk of our work for this year and instead of
15 our normal three day meeting we asked for an extra half
16 of day so we had three and a half day meeting so we
17 could go through all these wildlife proposals and like
18 I say that's where we spent a huge amount of time
19 discussing the .804 determination that you'll be
20 dealing with here. And we also added another
21 opportunity to add more comments on the -- on the
22 updated Forest Plan for the Tongass Forest, we took
23 some time to work on that as well. So it was a very
24 busy -- some very busy meetings this year.

25
26 So thank you. That concludes my
27 report.

28
29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Don.
30 Any questions from the Board for Don.

31
32 (No comments)

33
34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I always
35 appreciate Southeast work. Thank you. Dan.

36
37 MR. DUNAWAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
38 Dan Dunaway, I'm the Vice Chair of the Bristol Bay RAC.
39 Our Chair, Nanci Morris, couldn't be here.

40
41 So where to start. First I was glad
42 that Frank acknowledged Bristol Bay elders and
43 residents that are in attendance and are going to keep
44 me honest and squared away and correct me if I've made
45 a mistake. I'm Dan Dunaway, born and raised in
46 Anchorage. I've lived in the Dillingham area for 37
47 years and before that I lived in Alaska Peninsula
48 Aleutians since 1978. So southwest Alaska's kind of
49 been my home since -- I forget when that was, whenever
50

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1 '78, however old I was.

2

3

4 The Council continues to observe
5 subsistence in the Bristol Bay region in strong and
6 critical. Conditions are getting, especially for
7 weather and population, are getting variable and less
8 predictable. Across a -- during our most recent
9 meeting communities reported highly unusual weather
10 patterns. Last year we basically had no snow to travel
11 on, it was very difficult, we were -- very hard to
12 access a lot of our hunting areas. This year we got
13 snow and it was generally pretty good, but you're also
14 a little weary when they don't have safe ice, but one
15 friend of mine said that the -- one of the rivers had
16 like five feet of ice on it so it's a little easier to
17 feel good about traveling in those conditions. It's
18 melting rapidly now, but access to hunting areas and
19 free travel is still really a concern.

19

20

21 Among wildlife we have mixed trends,
22 moose and caribou populations are present in many of
23 these areas, but like I said access is difficult, but
24 the Mulchatna Caribou Herd is still very poor. It may
25 be increasing, it's difficult to know. The RAC has
26 supported the Bear Reduction Program that the State has
27 started, but keeps getting stopped by court action. As
28 we go into these days with rapidly increasing food
29 prices, especially meat, getting these herd -- this
30 herd back stable and harvestable is really important to
31 us. Interestingly enough the Nushagak Caribou Herd is
32 doing well, partly because we haven't been able to hunt
33 it much. Now we're a little concerned that -- about
34 over-grazing. I have not gotten reports on how many
35 were harvested this year, but I know several folks
36 managed to get a few. I went out for three days,
37 didn't get anything, moose or caribou. We didn't go
38 far enough.

38

39

40 But let's see. That -- as Frank
41 mentioned the Nushagak Peninsula hunt areas was
42 expanded and that was really valuable to people because
43 they are moving around because they are eating their
44 main area and they're starting to wander around looking
45 for food farther afield. The North Alaska Peninsula
46 Herd is doing a little better. I believe some people
47 are catching a few caribou. One really part I really
48 want to notice and compliment the Park Service for is
49 the Kukaklek Bench caribou hunt. That's been an
50 important issue for me as I'm pretty close with people

50

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1 in Egegik and a few in Iliamna and Kokhanok and we
2 started pushing for this years ago and I thought it
3 would be one of these forever, some day we'll get a
4 hunt and lo and behold it started happening way before
5 we expected and it's making a difference. Egegik takes
6 a lot of their young folks out to teach them to hunt.
7 The middle of winter and the cost of meat, four or
8 five, six caribou in a village makes a big difference.
9 And there's no sneaking around, they can do it right
10 out front. So I really want to thank the Park Service
11 for accommodating that, it's wonderful.

12

13 Going on to fish, salmon, especially
14 king salmon are a high concern. We're overwhelmed with
15 reds right now almost, but kings are looking worse and
16 worse all the time and that's so important to people
17 around the Bay. Nushagak has been hurting the most,
18 but now I hear Naknek River, Egegik, Togiak, they're
19 not doing so well and the first are smaller, they're
20 sparse. Whatever can be done to help that is really,
21 really important. Silvers have been really poor and
22 little. There was a time when I could catch enough
23 using sports gear that I didn't need to put a net out
24 and now there's so few fish I don't bother putting a
25 net out and some of them are so dinky they'd squirt
26 through anyway. So what's going on there, the concern.
27 Some salmon did better, humpies are okay I guess,
28 they're not as critical to us, but they are an
29 important species in the whole mix so we don't want to
30 ignore them.

31

32 We've also been -- through the Council
33 we've been getting regular reports from the North
34 Pacific Fisheries Management Council on the bycatch.
35 They make some very nice presentations, but I usually
36 end up in others so doesn't really give us a clear path
37 to how to fix the problem so we remain very concerned.
38 Years ago when I was still on the RAC early on the
39 Chair and I, and I think other members, our meeting was
40 here, the Anchorage Westward or whatever it is now,
41 Hilton, was right next door to the North Pacific
42 Council so we ran through our meeting quick and a whole
43 bunch of us led by I think Donald Mike went over and
44 testified at the Council. And we saw some significant
45 changes that dramatically reduced bycatch around 2007,
46 2008. We thought it was fixed and then I start seen
47 fusses on Facebook and hearing other stuff and I --
48 well, we got that fixed. But no, the bycatch is way
49 back up. So we are again extremely concerned about
50

1 that. I'm not sure if trawlers the entire blame, from
2 my experience around trawlers in Unalaska and so on,
3 but I've seen the quality of fish and salmon that are
4 intercepted in photos and all, it's a -- I hope we can
5 somehow coordinate with other Federal agencies to get a
6 handle on this. And not just me, the whole Council, I
7 shouldn't be just speaking for me.

8
9 Other key issues. We were brought up
10 at this -- our last meeting was a need to improve
11 tribal consultation. I hope some of the folks that
12 raised those concerns could have seen this meeting
13 yesterday, I think there was a massive response to the
14 concerns like ours on that regard. A lot of the
15 consultations in the past have kind of -- they come in
16 the summer and people are scattered and so distracted.
17 I've talked to Orville about this, called village after
18 village and there's nobody to talk to or they're just
19 too busy so I compliment the effort that occurred
20 yesterday at an easier time.

21
22 Several folks brought up the
23 representation of smaller, remote -- more remote
24 communities. We bounce our meetings between Naknek and
25 Dillingham. We've tried to have meetings that -- in
26 Togiak to Port Heiden, but the logistics -- we get the
27 word back from OSM that it's just not practical. We
28 even used to say we're willing to sleep on the gym
29 floor, but it is very difficult and the air services
30 are a little more limited in our area now than they
31 used to be. But communities like Manokotak, New Stu --
32 New Stuyahok, Koliganek face barriers in participation.
33 We do try hard, I -- I especially like to say I have a
34 lot of friends in Egegik, Kokhanok, Iliamna and we have
35 some like Kenneth Nukwak now's from Manokotak and he's
36 been an eloquent spokesman for his community at our RAC
37 and our Advisory Committee meetings, he's on both.

38
39 Third issue. Council emphasized the
40 importance of maintaining adequate staffing and
41 resources. We're really concerned with this shift over
42 to -- when OSM moves we want to make sure they get some
43 Staff support because I know they used to draw a lot on
44 Fish and Wildlife. Also with knowing we have public
45 members on the main Board here, we hope they're getting
46 the support as much as the agency heads who can draw on
47 their whole agency. Our public members put a lot of
48 extra personal effort in this and they need the support
49 too. And I feel wonderfully supported by our Staff
50

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1 when we have these meetings and expect to help me with
2 the script here.

3

4

5 The Council continues to stress the
6 importance of local knowledge, community observations
7 are the first indicators of change and concern.

8 Hopefully I'm adequately reporting them here.

9 Subsistence resources are available, but access, timing
10 and predictability become more challenging again

11 especially in the winter, but also some of the salmon

12 runs, we've got a little tiny king run and it -- you

13 might have a couple of pulses in -- unpredictably in

14 late June and if you're not there you don't get them.

15 And then kind of added to this, it's been really

16 growing over the wintertime, the fuel costs and food

17 costs are just skyrocketing. My wife comments every

18 time she goes to the store. I watched some folks, I

19 was getting -- well, I'm actually buying gas now and

20 stashing it because the rumors are when the barge comes

21 it's going to go way up. We pay 6.40 a gallon now

22 which is nothing compared to what Beaver and other

23 places do, but I see people from Manokotak loading up

24 big jugs of gas and before the trails go to pot they're

25 hauling them back to Manokotak. I don't think

26 anybody's hauling it to Togiak, but even the people

27 selling the gas are expressing real concerns. And it's

28 not just gas, it'll be the heating oil. So there's a

29 lot of effort going out and cutting wood and that.

30 There's a lot of Native lands and they're trying to

31 control the proper use of their lands. There's

32 poaching going on I believe and other folks have to go

33 to State lands or Federal lands to get wood. I'm lucky

34 I have a chunk of land that the trees are dying from

35 the beetle so I can't keep up.

36

37 So that about summarizes it. Thank you

38 very much.

39

40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Dan.

41 Any questions.

42

43 MR. WOODS: Yeah, thank you, Dan, for

44 your report. As a public member you got a proposal,

45 W26-05, it'll be brought up later, but appreciate all

46 the work that Rock's doing in recruiting. Looks like

47 there's public outreach for the village participation

48 and also I like your idea of bring it back to the

49 schools and rural villages because that's needed

50 especially -- you know, putting the RAC meetings in the

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1 school engages the youth, engages the communities and
2 introduces people to start communicating better.

3

4

So thank you, Dan.

5

6

7

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Frank. I think we'll go to Ms. Judy and then after Ms.
8 Judy we'll take a short break.

9

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MS. CAMINER: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and
thank you, Board members. I'm Judy Caminer, I am
representing the Southcentral Regional Advisory Council
because our Chair, Greg Encelewski, who was I believe
at the morning member yesterday isn't available today.
So you'll see me today and then when we get to our
proposals as well. I also have a couple of my
colleagues from the Council here today in the audience,
Michael Opheim, Angela Totemoff, so appreciate their
support and there may be others showing up when we get
to proposals too.

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The Southcentral region has about 50
communities. And I know there's Councils with other
regions with larger number of communities, but the bulk
of this region is connected by roads and many of the
region's subsistence users are more -- I think I'll say
that a different way then. User conflict as you've
heard from many others and competition for limited
resources are of course one of the highest concerns
here. We have miles and miles of roads, trails and
freshwater marine access points. How should these
resources be distributed including how should these
resources be distributed among just rural users is a
topic that seems to be coming more and more before the
Council and very regularly.

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I'm glad Crystal started off the
meeting mentioning Title VIII and I'm very pleased that
all of you echoed the importance of Title VIII and your
responsibilities to uphold it. Our RAC takes those
responsibilities likewise very seriously and when we
see something like the program review and we attended
and saw many, many, many people providing comments.
When Crystal and Katya and Crystal's team stayed late
into the night to take all those comments, that's very
much appreciated, but we don't like the concept that
the Board or the regulations might turn into State
regulations. That's not upholding Title VIII. And
similarly with the Park Service proposed rule where it

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1 says in there let's just be like the State regulations.
2 That doesn't sit well with us because we know State
3 regulations may not uphold Title VIII. And sorry, Don,
4 your comment on timing is exactly true. Many of the
5 RACs met before the regulation -- the draft rule came
6 out. Many of the Subsistence Resource Commissions
7 which are Park Service Commissions established to
8 advise the Superintendents had met already. And
9 unfortunately the presentation -- we had very little
10 time to even look at it and the presentation was pretty
11 slim let's say. So to hand us a press release and then
12 one copy of the Federal Register notice, it's a lot to
13 absorb and it's not enough for a group to have that
14 and, you know, what do you think about it when people
15 don't have a basis to make constructive comments. So
16 we did put together comments, we got them done and then
17 we find out the deadline's been extended. That didn't
18 help us unfortunately and it probably may not have
19 helped many other people either. I mean, you have a
20 deadline, you get it done and then you find out it's
21 extended. I think we look forward to seeing the
22 environmental assessment and specifically of course the
23 810 analysis, but we really can't support it.

24
25 So some of our specific areas of
26 concern are the crash of the Nelchina Caribou Herd and
27 then those impacts that -- to the people who relied on
28 it, much of which you've heard already and much of
29 which you'll hear as we go through it. The reduced
30 number of resources with plenty of users wanting to
31 have them. We have concern over we're displaced non-
32 Federally-qualified Federal hunters are now focusing on
33 since they can't harvest the Nelchina Caribou.

34
35 And the concern over salmon populations
36 across the region and specifically of course the upper
37 Copper River as has almost always been a concern and
38 the Kenai River. We also have a concern about just the
39 region-wide increases in populations of users.

40
41 Some regional priorities still remain.

42
43 We'd like further research on climate
44 change and how it affects all of us and how to mitigate
45 further affects on subsistence needs. We also hear as
46 we always do that funding is reduced, but it's going to
47 be very challenging for us, for you to make decisions
48 without the needed information. We advocate for our
49 region to receive more Fisheries Resource Monitoring
50

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1 money. Again we hear that there's not much money and
2 we know that there's not much Staff, but at some point
3 everything gets to a breaking point is something for
4 you to consider there too. We'd also advocate and
5 you'll hear this I'm sure over and over of getting more
6 youth involved and particularly for our Council, we're
7 interested in that. We'd also like to -- in our annual
8 report we'll once again ask for some compensation for
9 time. I know there's many rules against that, but it's
10 something to look into again. Commercial traveling
11 operations -- excuse me, commercial trawling operations
12 and how they're detrimental to subsistence uses. I
13 think that's something that needs to be -- continued to
14 be looked into whether at North Pacific or otherwise.
15 And we'd like adequate signage in areas that are used
16 for subsistence hunting and fishing where you know
17 you're going to have a large influx of people, that's
18 really important. We do have a concern about marine
19 resources in light of the changing ecosystems that we
20 mentioned before.

21
22 So we will be transmitting that report
23 to you and look forward to your advice on that.

24
25 We had 24 wildlife proposals including
26 one statewide and two crossover proposals and we'll
27 talk about that as the meeting progresses.

28
29 But thank you for your time here today
30 and your dedication. We appreciate it.

31
32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
33 Judy. Any questions from the Board, comments.

34
35 (No comments)

36
37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
38 Hearing and seeing none we're going to go ahead and
39 take a five minute break. And when we do return the
40 Board up here has to take a quick picture just so you
41 know. So quick break.

42
43 MS. LEONETTI: We're going to ask for
44 audience involvement in that too so be prepared.

45
46 (Off record)

47
48 (On record)

49
50

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1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
2 Thank you all for that. Appreciate everybody getting
3 into the picture. I think that gives a good snapshot
4 that we're all in it together, you know, that this is
5 what the Federal Board process looks like, you know,
6 with the leadership here, with the leadership from our
7 Regional Advisory Councils and the leadership from our
8 tribal, ANCSA and village people and rural Alaskans.
9 So we appreciate you stepping into the picture and
10 giving, you know, big uncle a snapshot of what we look
11 like, that, you know, we're -- we're actually human
12 beings that are working through a process and, you
13 know, whether it's decisive or not or might not all
14 agree, we can all stand up and take one good smiling
15 picture together. And I think that really encapsulates
16 what this program is about. So appreciate that and
17 everybody willing to step in and do that.

18
19 We'll get back to Regional Advisory
20 Council Chairmen and we'll start with Rebecca.

21
22 MS. SKINNER: Thank you. My name is
23 Rebecca Skinner, I'm the Chair of the Kodiak-Aleutians
24 RAC. Good morning, Mr. Chair and members of the Board.

25
26 Just to remind people that KRAC has
27 three sub-regions. We have the Kodiak-Archipelago, the
28 Alaska Peninsula and then the Aleutian Islands. We are
29 currently one member short and we have a -- kind of a
30 gap in representation from the Peninsula sub-area. I
31 bring this up because we have had less discussion on
32 caribou than we would in the past. You'll notice that
33 later in my report.

34
35 I want to also note that communities in
36 our region which is the Southwest Alaska region rely on
37 commercial fishing. And our region is home to all of
38 the trawling ports in the state as well as Area M
39 salmon fishery. I appreciate the RAC Chairs meeting
40 yesterday. This was the start of an opportunity for
41 dialogue among the different regions and I'm looking
42 forward to the ongoing opportunity to share our
43 regional perspective, knowledge and accurate
44 information about what happens in our region.

45
46 The Kodiak-Aleutians RAC was able to
47 meet in September of 2025 prior to the government
48 shutdown. We generated a comment letter on the
49 Subsistence Program review and that's available in the
50

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1 correspondence section of our website so I'm not going
2 to speak in detail to that. But I did want to note the
3 importance of the Councils, the fact that they are
4 regional and they are made up of residents in each
5 respective region. This is not the case with the State
6 Fish and Game Advisory Committees or really any other
7 regulatory body that has advisory committees. And I
8 wanted to note the importance of maintaining this
9 requirement for residency in the area and then the
10 local perspective that that brings to the management
11 process.

12
13 I also wanted to note in regards to
14 FRMP that at our last RAC meeting a couple of months
15 ago we had a mini strategic planning session to talk
16 about the FRMP program, the grant opportunities and
17 then the PINs or the priority information needs that we
18 have as a RAC. So we weren't developing the PINs, we
19 were more talking about FRMP more broadly. So we went
20 through this process, I think it was well received by
21 the RAC, everyone was really excited and then we
22 learned about the cut in funding. So consequently the
23 Kodiak-Aleutians RAC doesn't have a funded FRMP
24 project, but because we had a really good strategic
25 discussion if we expect the current FRMP funding levels
26 to continue I'm hopeful that as a RAC we can continue
27 our strategic discussion at our next meeting, maybe
28 have the same facilitation and brainstorm about how we
29 can meet our fishery monitoring needs for our region
30 and the state as well given the very limited resources.
31 So this may mean coming up with ideas, pretty bold
32 ideas, about how the program could be restructured or
33 how the funding can best be leveraged because dividing
34 all that -- the fund -- the smaller funding among all
35 of the regions, it doesn't work very well because
36 there's just too many regions and too many needs.

37
38 This winter in Kodiak we did have -- it
39 was a pretty cold winter, we have a fairly extended
40 cold period so for us, fairly extended I mean somewhere
41 between three and five weeks and very cold is in the
42 single digits. I realize other regions that's not even
43 cold, but for us that's pretty cold and we had pretty
44 high winds. One thing I wanted to share is that this
45 longer and colder period created thicker sea ice,
46 normally we don't get sea ice, it was thick enough that
47 I saw a seal lounging on the ice in Womens Bay, that's
48 the first time I've ever seen that. Normally we get
49 kind of like slushy ice that builds up in the bay, but
50

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1 this time it was clearly thick enough for the -- this
2 fat seal to haul himself out and sit on the ice. So
3 that was pretty exciting. But that is going to have
4 impacts on our deer population because the deer
5 population is most susceptible to winter overkill when
6 we have high winters or hard winters.

7

8 For this wildlife cycle the Council
9 continues to observe a mix of stability and growing
10 uncertainty across the Kodiak-Aleutians region. In
11 terms of wildlife populations we're seeing mixed
12 trends. Some species like ptarmigan and certain
13 waterfowl appear to be doing well in localized areas.
14 At the same time there are concerns about deer
15 populations following the more severe winter conditions
16 and then ongoing variability in marine mammal
17 observations. We also have reports of whale strandings
18 and other mortality events and we may -- remain
19 concerned that these may be tied to broader ecosystem
20 changes.

21

22 Bird populations continue to be a
23 significant issue for our region. So we do have within
24 our region is Izembek which I -- I've heard is kind of
25 known as the -- not like the waterfowl capital of the
26 world, but that's kind of how it's been presented. We
27 had our last RAC meeting out in Cold Bay and we got to
28 go out on the lagoon and see the huge flocks of -- I
29 think they were black brant that were flying around the
30 lagoon. We don't have those kinds of aggregations of
31 birds in Kodiak so seeing that at Izembek was pretty
32 impressive. And I was told they weren't even large
33 flocks, that it was actually fairly small flocks for
34 that time of year. So migratory birds are very
35 important in our region. We remain concerned about
36 decline in emperor geese, brant and cackling geese and
37 we do understand the need for conservation measures,
38 but we note that fall closures and restrictions in
39 particular have a disproportionate impact on our region
40 because the species that we hunt are primarily
41 available in the fall. So they -- for example emperor
42 geese do come to Kodiak, but the time when they're
43 there, the spring season isn't open. So really the
44 only time to hunt these birds would be in the fall. So
45 fall closures basically preclude any hunting
46 opportunity. And then when those opportunities are
47 limited it does directly affect subsistence users and
48 cultural practices.

49

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1 We're also hearing consistent
2 observations from our communities about changing
3 environmental conditions. This can mean warmer
4 summers, more variable winters so some winters are much
5 warmer with less snow, some winters like this winter
6 are much colder. We always have wind in Kodiak, but
7 this winter seemed particularly high winds. And then
8 shifting seasonal timing of when animals or fish --
9 when they show up. It's been different in the last
10 probably five years we're seeing really big shifts in
11 availability, things are not where we expect to see
12 them. These changes are affecting wildlife
13 distribution, overwinter survival, migration patterns
14 and ultimately subsistence access and success.

15
16 From our annual report the Council
17 continues to emphasize the need for improved wildlife
18 monitoring and data collection. Gaps in surveys and
19 limited resources make it difficult to fully understand
20 population trends and to make informed management
21 decisions. We also continue to raise concerns about
22 limited enforcement capacity throughout our region and
23 the need for better coordination across agencies.

24
25 Finally I want to highlight again the
26 importance of local knowledge. Many of these changes
27 are being first observed at the community level and
28 that information is critical to understanding what's
29 happening on the ground. Overall the Council is seeing
30 a system that still supports subsistence, but with
31 increasing variability. We encourage the Board to
32 continue prioritizing data, communication and local
33 input while ensuring that conservation measures also
34 consider meaningful subsistence access.

35
36 Finally I want to thank our
37 coordinator, Leigh Honig, for her great work and
38 continually positive attitude, both are much
39 appreciated.

40
41 That's all I have. Happy to try to
42 answer any questions.

43
44 Thank you.

45
46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
47 that, Rebecca. Any questions or comments from the
48 Board.

49
50

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1 (No comments)

2

3

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate the
4 report there. We do see the same thing in Southeast,
5 similar to Kodiak, a big shift in cycles and timings
6 based on weather patterns. So thank you for that.

7

8

Next we'll call on Leonard.

9

10 MR. BARGER: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair.
11 Put my other glasses on, after you get to the old age.
12 So before I start I gave you guys a handout earlier so.

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And, you know, we take it very serious.
You know, before I got here I never sleep for two days
and a good rest. So, you know, when we're out on the
ice, you know, we're hunting. You know, we hunt for
our people. We barter and we trade, you know, for --

0042

1 you know, we don't sell that, you know, we're not
2 allowed to sell the muktuk and beluga and stuff, you
3 know, we barter. You know, I got friends that, you
4 know, my daughter, she's got friends from, you know,
5 other places, she wants blueberries and, you know, all
6 the other stuff, but, you know, I just want to give
7 that brief, you know, view, you know, me and Point Hope
8 and stuff.

9
10 My name is Leonard Barger, I'm from
11 Point Hope and I serve as the Vice Chair of the North
12 Slope Borough Advisory Council. Thank you for the
13 opportunity to speak today and to participate in the
14 importance of regulation process. I also want to
15 express the -- my gratitude for the chance to share
16 several key priorities that are deeply important to the
17 subsistence users in the North Slope. And like I
18 stated, you know, North Slope is pretty, you know,
19 people in the North Slope are -- you know, this is a
20 bad time for us right now, we're out there whaling. I
21 know Charlie's not here, I know he's excused. He's a
22 captain, you know, he'd rather be out there. And our
23 Chairman, he's a whaling captain, you know, he couldn't
24 make it. He called me up, hey, Leonard, you better go
25 to the Fish and Game Board meeting. I was like I'm
26 driving for my nephew. No, no, you got to go. So I'm
27 here now. So I'm -- I would like to stay until, you
28 know, when this meeting's over, but I'm leaving
29 tomorrow because my nephew -- my other nephew's been
30 bugging me, you better get home, you better get home,
31 you know, we need you to drive because the other drive
32 he just -- he came here last night to Anchorage so he's
33 without a driver. So I told him I'll be there, you
34 know, tomorrow afternoon. So and, you know, it's
35 pretty hard, you know, I couldn't sleep, people were
36 texting me all night last night, I didn't go to sleep
37 until about 3:00 o'clock this morning. So I was
38 getting texts left and right and my nieces and my
39 nephews, my daughters and my uncle were calling me and
40 texting me. So I had to turn my phone off to go to
41 sleep.

42

43 (Laughter)

44

45 MR. BARGER: So anyways I would like to
46 -- the users of the conflict between subsistence and
47 sport users in the North Slope region remains one of
48 our community's most processed concerns as mainly the
49 sport hunters like Anaktuvuk Pass, their -- they have a
50

0043

1 big issue over there. I have a lady, she -- she's on
2 the Board, you know, she's on the Fish and Game Board,
3 she's been on the Board for a long time and she brings
4 up this issue over and over, nothing has -- hasn't been
5 done. Nothing. She brings it up over and over. And
6 she tears -- tears up and brought the issues and stuff
7 and still nothing the past 10 years she's been bringing
8 it up. So she's getting tired of it, you know. This
9 lady's been, you know, the backbone of the community,
10 you know, voicing their concerns for their community.
11 And also, you know, we talked about the caribou. You
12 know, Point Hope and Point Lay we have only one stock
13 of caribou that we hunt, the Western Arctic Caribou
14 Herd. And that's the main caribou. This time of the
15 year like right now in March I would have to travel --
16 I would have to go to Buckland or call my friends, you
17 guys getting caribou and, you know, there's caribou. I
18 had -- I had to drive all the way from Point Hope all
19 the way to Buckland just to get caribou. Why, I get
20 that animal for captains that we depend on it during
21 whaling time, keeps us warm out there on that -- that
22 animal that we catch. We don't get males during the
23 winter, lot of people know that we don't get whale --
24 males during the winter, we get the cows and now
25 they're regulating. I know northwest is regulating the
26 -- you know, the proposal on the cow. Us North Slope
27 Borough we went, you know, one cow and four, you know,
28 bulls and that's good, but, you know.

29
30 And the other thing is on the behavior
31 of the caribou that, you know, a lot of people that go
32 out and hunt, you know, especially the sport hunters,
33 that's the major concern we have in the North Slope. A
34 lot of sport -- you know, we see them fly in, fly out.
35 And Nuiqsut, you know, that's -- they're -- you know,
36 they see them there and they had the excuse, oh, my
37 meat got rotten. And they -- you know, they got the
38 big antlers. We know that they -- they just hunt the
39 antlers only. And there's quite a few seen, you know,
40 that their ant -- you know, that their meat, they said
41 oh, it got rotten. Us people here in Alaska, we take
42 care of our meat, we know how to take care of our meat,
43 how to process it, you know, how to take care of it
44 through the whole summer or winter, to prepare.

45
46 So also I'd like to -- behavior studies
47 has been conducted and examined whether repeated short
48 terms, should be in long term affected on their
49 migration behavior. This lack of research leaves our
50

1 communities with unanswered questions while the
2 problems grow more urgent each year. Likewise the
3 comprehensive studies has been conducted to study on
4 the impact of users conflict, subsistence users. In
5 the previous annual report to the Board we informed the
6 Board of the needs, of the importance of the studies,
7 types and interactions among other things through
8 wildlife research monitoring programs. And that's
9 another -- you know, we'd love to have to see
10 monitoring programs and stuff that these animals. And
11 also the food source, primary food source, are being
12 out competed by wealth and access. This is not equal
13 playing field and the Council feels responsible to
14 bring forward. Look to your leadership and your
15 expertise as technical experts and quite honestly as a
16 space where we can gauge the dialogue that will bring
17 real resources, solutions, reach in the ground. I
18 think we are in the point of the history that need
19 coordination and collaboration between Federal agency
20 and State to help address this conflict issue.

21
22 And also I know people were talking
23 about gas prices. When I went to Noatak in February I
24 went there just to go get fish and stuff, you know,
25 prepare for whaling and I got sled load of trout. And
26 I had to call my wife and I said I'm low on money. I
27 had to pay 17 bucks a gallon of gas over there. That's
28 how much their gas prices were there at Noatak, 17
29 bucks a gallon of gas. Heating fuel was 19.95 a gallon
30 and they're limiting households five gallons for, you
31 know, to buy. So those kinds of issues and stuff, you
32 know, we talked about gas prices all over, it's hurting
33 all over the world, not just, you know, any other
34 place, you know, people were complaining here in
35 Anchorage, oh, gas prices are high. You go to the
36 villages they're a lot higher, you know, we pay more.
37 You know, you guys are lucky you guys are only pay five
38 bucks, you know, other villages are paying six, seven
39 bucks a gallon of gas. And you guys got more access
40 and more, you know, food that you guys have here. You
41 guys got Walmart, you guys got, you know, all these
42 places that you have. I always order food from Amazon,
43 you know, cheaper, you know, it's a lot cheaper. And
44 at our store we -- you know, when -- my kids like to
45 have hamburger. A bag of hamburger, you know, you guys
46 see here it's only like 12 bucks here, in my store at
47 AC, 65 bucks for the bag, one bag of hamburger patties
48 65 bucks. And you -- we all celebrate, you know,
49 Thanksgiving. We want that ham. Guess how much I had
50

0045

1 to pay for -- well, my wife wanted the ham and it was a
2 hundred and 25 bucks just for that ham. Those kinds of
3 things, real high price, you know, that we pay now at
4 our local stores.

5
6 So I just bring, you know, all these
7 issues. You know, fish, I had to -- you know, we talk
8 about fish, this year -- this summer -- last summer I
9 just only caught 40 to 50 and I kept only seven for me,
10 for my family. The other ones I give to elders and
11 widows. My first catch, I'll go bring it to them right
12 away because they want that taste of the -- what they
13 eat. That's my priority, I give them first the elders,
14 the widows. I respect them and that's the way of life
15 that us Natives that we bring up, we hunt for our
16 elders first and widows. And right now I know my
17 nephew is bringing elders -- and we have a lot of
18 ladies and men that are widows, he's over there feeding
19 them right now, the taste of that muktuk. That's our
20 tradition, we honor them and we feed them.

21
22 And so back to my letter. I'm getting
23 way off on my things that are not in there. But anyway
24 first of all, you know, thank you for, you know,
25 hearing me out and this is my first time, you know, as
26 coming here to the Board. You know, you guys listen to
27 us as a RAC. I'm just one, I'm talking to all our RAC
28 members in the North Slope, I'm their voice, I'm there
29 -- you know, I -- I listen to them and I'm here, you
30 know, I wish we had all of our members were -- you
31 know, be here talking about their issues instead of the
32 Chairs, you know, it would be nice to have them here,
33 you know. Like I talked about that lady that lives in
34 Anaktuvuk, she's been there on the Board for so many
35 years and, you know, she's been bringing up, bringing
36 up all these issues and stuff, but nothing's being
37 done. And she was getting tears, tears every time she
38 talk over and over. And we tell her, you know, we're a
39 hundred percent behind you, we fight for everyone.
40 We're, you know, talking about the issues that we need,
41 the proposals, the -- you know, the laws and stuff.
42 One elder tell me hey, go get me a caribou. I say hey,
43 I got to -- I got to get my hunting license. No, no,
44 you go get me a caribou, I want it. I said no, no, I
45 got to wait until I get my hunting license. We don't
46 have a guy that, you know, gives out hunting license.
47 We don't know -- some people don't know about the, you
48 know, tech, you go on your phone, you can get it
49 online, you know, some people don't know about it. And
50

0046

1 so that elder wanted that -- you know, that meat. And
2 there was caribou close by in our town and I said I --
3 can you wait, I've got to call a friend of mine, see if
4 she can get me a hunting license. So I called her in
5 Barrow so she ordered it for me and send it -- send it
6 to me on email so I was good to go. And I went to go
7 get that caribou for him and it was a cow. And, you
8 know, he doesn't want male because they're stinky, you
9 know, they rut, we -- we know it's rut during, you
10 know, February, December, we don't want that male, but
11 young ones, the young males, you know, they're good,
12 but we don't want to get them, we want them to grow.
13 So that's the issue, you know.

14
15 Present in the North Slope communities
16 what does matter. Our communities are not only dealing
17 with regulatory complexes, they are dealing with rapid
18 ecological changes, weather patterns are shifting,
19 animal behavior and changes. Communities like
20 Anaktuvuk -- like I said Anaktuvuk Pass have struggled
21 through the difficult periods not having caribou to
22 harvest. Now we hear that the Western Arctic Caribou
23 Herd had dropped to roughly 100 animals -- 100,000
24 animals and it has the -- caused deep concern from the
25 place like Tikigaq, Point Hope and Point Lay. The
26 people most affected by regulation changes and
27 decisions must be able to understand them. Weighing in
28 their -- on them and see that their voices matter. We
29 have a lot of voices over there, but, you know, when we
30 have meetings some of them don't want to go to the
31 meetings. And we -- you know, I'm just one voice, I
32 can't make that decision or rule for my community, we
33 have to have their voice heard too. So they also need
34 the opportunity to ask questions.

35
36 I bring this to your attention because
37 there are -- there's room for improvement. We operate
38 under the assumption that people know how to engage to
39 make their voices heard, but that is not the case. In
40 my region alone I think there's opportunities to
41 strengthen and expand outreach effort across the North
42 Slope communities, to provide similar explanations of
43 proposals, decisions and program roles, vitals and
44 diagrams are helpful. Develop community level maps.
45 there are maps, you know, like Unit 23 and that covers
46 Point Hope and that's in, you know, the Northwest
47 Arctic region. And, you know, I'm happy and thankful,
48 Crystal, that approves me to go to the Northwest RAC
49 because I rep -- I'm with the North Slope, but the
50

0047

1 issues and stuff in the Northwest Arctic, they concern
2 us too in Point Hope because we're in Unit 23. We get
3 the same animals. And I brought up in our RAC that,
4 you know, mapping, they should follow the North Slope,
5 you know, boundaries or the ANCSA boundaries to put us
6 instead of, you know, putting us in Unit 23, put us in
7 that same unit for -- so we don't have to voice our
8 concern because we don't have representation in
9 Kotzebue. And I brought that up in our meetings.

10
11 So increase in persons visiting and
12 opportunities for two-way conversation, ensure
13 materials and translate and interpret because we would
14 go to meetings like some of us here, you know, we're
15 Inupiaq or, you know, Indian -- translate, some of --
16 you know, some of us (in Native) we don't -- when I
17 say, (in Native) means we can't understand. Like when
18 we regulate some of the elders think, you know, four
19 caribou plus one, they think it's for a family, it's
20 not, it's per person, that's what they think, you know.
21 We have to give them more understanding of what we, you
22 know, regulate on their proposals and stuff that, you
23 know, like -- because like some elders -- I talk to a
24 lot of elders myself and I talked to a lot of them
25 passed on and, you know, hate to see them, but they're
26 in a better place, no more suffering, they're eating --
27 you know, they're eating, you know, healthy up there.
28 But, you know, I'd like to go back again, increase in
29 persons visiting and opportunities for two-way
30 conversation. One more education about land
31 management, regulate history and how to navigate the
32 complicate of Unit 26A and widen our region. This
33 investment is not optional, it is essential for the
34 functions, responsible public driven Subsistence
35 Management Program.

36
37 And I would like to thank you for the
38 opportunity to share this priority with you and I hope
39 we can discuss with more details. And I bless you and
40 thank you for listening to me about my -- you know, my
41 thing that we have here.

42
43 Thanks, Mr. Chair.

44
45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
46 Leonard. I think this is the most valuable part of it
47 and getting to know each other and what you represent
48 and how you serve your people is probably the pinnacle
49 of the program. So thank you for feeding the elders
50

0048

1 and appreciate those super subsisters that are always
2 looking out for the needs of our people in the
3 community.

4

5 We'll move on next to -- are there any
6 questions from the Board or comments?

7

8 We need to take a real -- one five
9 second pause, not a long one, we have a little
10 technical Teams difficulty so we going to give the IT
11 that time.

12

13 We can continue here since that's just
14 between us here. We'll go ahead and step over to Mr.
15 Mulligan from the State and we'll give him an
16 opportunity to information share as well as we do get
17 our IT together.

18

19 Thank you.

20

21 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
22 For the record Ben Mulligan, Deputy Commissioner for
23 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. I come into
24 these meetings and I've been coming to them for eight
25 years now trying to think of a way to succinctly give
26 the Board, the RACs, the public, a summary of what the
27 Department is doing. I mean, there's so much going on
28 right now, you know, we had some of the Board talk
29 about, you know, things that are going on with their
30 budgets. And right now we are in Legislative session
31 still and so our budget is still in the air. And I
32 think the one thing that I've seen floating around
33 Facebook and the press that you guys all may have seen
34 as a decision by the -- at least on the House side, may
35 jeopardize the continued function of the Fairbanks
36 sport fish hatchery. There's several pieces of
37 legislation out there that would impact the Department.
38 And so like I said in order to facilitate the meeting
39 going by smoothly I would say if you have a specific
40 thing you want to know about your region come chat.
41 Most of the time you'll see me sitting right here, I
42 won't move because I'm trying to prepare for the next
43 proposal or closure review comments that I'm going to
44 give, but I will always take the time if you come sit
45 down and ask me a question about what's going on in
46 your region, more than happy to -- you know, Dan came
47 by real quick just to ask about a proposal and I gave
48 him the low down, more than happy to do that with
49 anybody else as well because, I mean, I do -- we just

50

0049

1 came out of -- I mean, kind of springtime I guess
2 depending on where you're at which meant that a lot of
3 wildlife surveys had been conducted. And at the same
4 time as all of you know this is the time to gear up for
5 field projects so we have a lot of folks hiring,
6 getting training related for all the projects that you
7 see out in your areas that we're conducting. We also
8 have subsistence household surveys that are wrapping up
9 in -- but in some areas they will still be continuing
10 into the spring. There's just a ton of stuff that we
11 do and no way that I could tell you all about it in a
12 way that would lead us to probably getting done until
13 after you all went to lunch.

14

15 So with that and not to, you know,
16 speak lightly because we do do a lot is just say come
17 by, pick my brain for a few minutes, and if I don't
18 know I'll take notes and I will try to get back to you
19 with that information.

20

21 So thank you, Mr. Chair.

22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Mr.
24 Mulligan. Any questions or comments from the Board for
25 Ben.

26

27 (No comments)

28

29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I appreciate
30 the State being here. And we're good. We'll move on
31 to Mr. Louis Green.

32

33 MR. GREEN: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair.
34 My name is Louis Green, I'm the Chairman of the Seward
35 Peninsula RAC in the Bering Straits region. I wear a
36 lot of hats, but not as many as Charlie over here, but
37 I serve on the regional ANCSA Board, Bering Straits,
38 and I serve on the village corp Board Sitnasauk for
39 Nome. I think I'm going to be dipping my toes in the
40 water with the AFN Subsistence Committee, Bering
41 Straits put my name forward for that. And that gives
42 me a pretty wide range of people who I represent so
43 it's, you know, we, the people, I think. I -- that's
44 where I come from.

45

46 Just personally my -- through my
47 lifetime I've fathered seven children, got three
48 natural born grandchildren and a couple others that --
49 is that loud enough, I could hear my echo out here

50

0050

1 which is kind of rare because I'm not so good at
2 hearing. So anyway -- thank you, Katya, I served on
3 the Northern Norton Sound Advisory Committee for about
4 13 years back in '93 to '05, part of the -- most --
5 half time as Vice Chair. I'm giving out kind of who I
6 am because I know there's new people in here and
7 there's new people coming. I spent a lot of time in my
8 life -- the reason I'm in this arena here and I've been
9 for over 25 years between the State and the Fed systems
10 is -- I guess it's a passion of mine because my
11 grandmother bringing me up from the time I -- at least
12 I can recall five years old, trying to be part of
13 fishing salmon at the time. It's been a -- you know,
14 my whole life I've been hunting and gathering and I
15 always brought my family and friends and their friends
16 through times of those seasons to hunt and gather. So
17 I'm kind of -- like I said it's a passion of mine.
18 I've commercial fished from Kodiak to the Bering Strait
19 and around the corner, familiar with the halibut
20 fisheries, the king crab fisheries, we have red king
21 crab there in the Norton Sound, the herring fishery
22 that kind of came and went, see a lot of the need for
23 that to come back. I spent time herding reindeer with
24 an airplane as well as handling in the chutes with
25 people up on the Northern Seward Peninsula. I also was
26 a spotter pilot out of Togiak and Norton Sound for
27 herring. Marine mammal hunter, walrus, seals, Beluga.
28 And what I do with that is I try to pass it on to the
29 younger generation, I always have. It's been a passion
30 of mine to make sure that these younger people have the
31 skills to be able to continue to feed the families that
32 they bring up into the world.

33
34 So I have a -- like I said I was the
35 father of seven. I also have a friend in life that's
36 my partner in life, Gayla Hoseth, and we have similar
37 passions about our natural fish and game, natural
38 resources, which is a rare thing maybe.

39
40 As far as the Board, we're here to -- I
41 appreciate the ability to be here and the opportunity
42 to speak to you to elevate the concerns of -- there's
43 several concerns brought forward of our Council
44 members. I go back to the early '90s and Board of Fish
45 meetings and it's been -- you know, it's really heart
46 wrenching because I sit there and I listen to what I
47 heard over 30 years ago from people now, it's all the
48 way across the state and western Alaska especially and
49 I just don't understand why things are so bad that --
50

0051

1 and then nobody's really seemingly doing anything about
2 it. We know there's -- there's a industry out there
3 that's not on the beach like the rest of us. And I'll
4 speak a little more to that, but I wanted to get to a
5 point here that one of my lifelong friends, a grandma's
6 boy like me, I wanted to recognize Tommy Gray and his
7 lifelong service for, you know, decades of service to
8 the Advisory Committees, the Beluga Commission, the
9 Federal Subsistence RAC process. And, you know, Tommy
10 was one of the regulars, his voice, commitment shaped
11 every discussion. You know, I used to tell him, I said
12 I'm sure glad you're sitting here because, you know,
13 everybody tells me I talk too much, but, man, when
14 you're there at the table you put me in a good light
15 because you talk more than me. And we'd laugh and go
16 about our business. It's -- he's well missed there at
17 the table. So I just wanted a moment of silence for
18 Tommy Gray and I'd ask everybody to stand.

19

20 Thank you.

21

22 (Moment of silence)

23

24 MR. GREEN: Okay. Thank you and that
25 honor that. He always called me young man, I was
26 almost as old as him. And thank you, folks, for doing
27 that.

28

29 One of the things that -- you know,
30 many of us have served on these Councils and Committee
31 for, you know, decades and one of the -- you know, for
32 the idea that continuity flows, we have the information
33 and we hear how people up here from the government side
34 of things are changing out and we're seeing it, you
35 know, hearing it today. The people that are there that
36 have been there for a long time are there because they
37 want to be like myself, we have one fellow that's been
38 over 30 years, Elmer Seetot, and Tom Gray was, you
39 know, two or three decades himself. I've been there
40 since 2010 at the Federal level. So looking at the
41 future is looking into the youth that we have in our
42 region and trying to foster the interested ones into
43 coming to the table and taking part in here and taking
44 over for us. Like I said, you know, we're -- we can't
45 do this forever, but we probably will anyway, you know,
46 but we do this because it's part of our life story and
47 so we want to pass that on and have it continue. The
48 unfortunate thing for those of us that do this, there's
49 no retirement plan so here we are.

50

1 Our youth today, they face a time where
2 their fish and their game resources are down and, you
3 know, we came from a time when there was abundant --
4 lots, we've -- we seen lots, we had easy opportunity,
5 but nowadays it's not like that anymore for different
6 reasons. I say, you know, bringing these younger
7 people into the system -- I like what I heard somewhere
8 somebody was doing this in the school system. Mr.
9 Woods might have mentioned that where they do their
10 meetings in a school and during a school -- when it's
11 in session sounded like to me. I think that might be
12 something that my region might want to -- we might want
13 to look into. We're already looking into the program
14 to bring our youth into the regulatory system and
15 learning how to navigate it and our Council's explored
16 some ways to engage our youth and the one thing that we
17 really appreciated was the fact of adding a non-voting
18 youth seat to our charters which we thought was a step
19 forward. Unfortunately haven't had that happen in our
20 area yet where we have one on the Council, but I think
21 that we were really interested in seeing how the
22 Federal agencies such as BLM and the National Park
23 Service could help support that youth involvement in
24 our region. Like planting a seed, we'd like to see
25 someway to have those youth engaged. And a friend here
26 from Southeast, Heather Bauscher, Bauscher, excuse me,
27 did come up to our Council meeting in March and present
28 what she's doing here with these youth back here with
29 her now. We want to see that from up there, I'd like
30 to see that in every region. I think it would be the
31 smartest thing that we could do is bringing our youth
32 forward so I'm putting a lot of emphasis on that. She
33 does actually have a manual for this I think she's
34 coming out with and if you're interested in something
35 like that in your region I would suggest that you have
36 a sidebar conversation with her. She's very willing to
37 have those conversations. So appreciate her being here
38 today and that was really a pleasure to have her up
39 there when we conducted out last meeting.

40
41 The talk about salmon. The idea that
42 salmon have played a part in human history is
43 phenomenal, you know, they've been around for 5 million
44 years. Knowing of a study that took place back in the
45 late '80s pointing out that the -- the importance of
46 salmon to the whole Pacific Rim was interesting. I --
47 I'm not -- I don't have a name on that, but there was a
48 hell of a presentation done by the guy that was part of
49 that. At one time I watched a short film there. But
50

0053

1 what was interesting was they had identified two salmon
2 production areas or regions in Western Alaska and one
3 was Bristol Bay, one we can all understand that, we
4 look at millions of sockeye fish -- salmon that go
5 there. But the other one was which has been in sad
6 shape since probably the late '70s is the Norton Sound.
7 So when you talk about salmon it plays a part in every
8 part -- everything from marine world to the -- to the
9 land, you know. I made an example to somebody, I said,
10 you know, of all the sea mammals that feed on that and
11 all the sharks and whatever else feeds on salmon on the
12 way, when they're out there rearing in the sea and then
13 they return to the river systems and lakes, the
14 predation of those fish, not just man, when it hits
15 land it's bears and wolves, human beings and everything
16 in between.

17
18 But one of the things that I drew an
19 example of was, you know, the moose we eat and we're
20 having moose herd problems, we all know that too,
21 that's another factor in our lives out in rural Alaska
22 is that, you know, that big animal on four legs is --
23 provides a lot of -- a lot of protein for people. And
24 what I said was, you know, the salmon, they come up the
25 river and people always see a river like this, right,
26 it's -- there's the bank and there's the other bank.
27 There's willows growing on that bank. But what they
28 don't think about is the water table underneath it
29 stretches out beyond that bank and the way to identify
30 how far it reaches is kind of like the willow pattern
31 that's on the side of the rivers, it kind of goes back
32 away and then fades away. Well, moose eat those
33 willows and for decades now I can say that Norton Sound
34 has been pretty sad for those types of animals that
35 feed on that because the salmon, the marine river
36 nutrients that they deliver to those rivers is not
37 really being delivered anymore. Just for instance we
38 got involved in this in '93 at the Board of Fish level
39 and we had salmon, we had problems with salmon, chums
40 and kings were going, silvers were going. The idea
41 that that far back was involved and I thought we were
42 doing things to progress forward, to come to a point
43 where management would actually do something and we
44 would retain those runs and everything would get
45 better, but, you know what, I went down to the Nome
46 River last summer where there's a spawning bed there,
47 it's below a spring and there wasn't one king there.
48 One -- there wasn't anything in that section of the
49 river. And I thought where have we come from 1993 to
50

1 now, we've come from fish and fighting for fish to the
2 point where there is none. So something's absolutely
3 wrong and I don't think it's the people that are
4 sitting here at the table that are representing our
5 folks, it's the people that are in the management side
6 of things in the governments, they -- Federal that
7 aren't listening. And, you know, talking about
8 traditional knowledge we all bring it to the table, we
9 have biological knowledge come to the table and yet
10 we're still dealing with -- it's like a monetary issue,
11 it's not about how a person can feed themselves because
12 for 20,000 years, I say 20,000, people have been
13 walking down to a river and feeding themselves. They
14 didn't have to buy 16 and \$17 gas to go fishing, they
15 didn't have to buy 16 and \$17 gas worth a gallon of gas
16 to go caribou hunting 90 to a hundred miles which we do
17 now, it's pathetic. So the problem isn't the people
18 that come here representing the masses of people, it's
19 the management systems that we're dealing with that
20 aren't doing what they need to be doing to preserve
21 things for the future. And, man, when I look at
22 listening to my friend over there on the North Slope
23 talking about the difficulties of just going and taking
24 care of business and paying \$17 for a gallon of gas I
25 go my goodness. We shouldn't have to do that, nobody
26 should.

27
28 So in the interests of our natural
29 resources being intact I think that if we were -- if
30 we're managing -- if our systems were managed for
31 subsistence first then everybody would have a piece of
32 the pie, all the other user groups would have
33 something. So when I look at from the Norton Sound's
34 Nome sub-district all the way down to Bristol Bay I
35 just -- it's a sad thing to witness in my lifetime.
36 I'm going to be 68 years old in a couple of weeks. And
37 to think that, you know, at the age of 35 I started
38 this and it's -- it's worse than it ever was.

39
40 The caribou, what's the answer for the
41 caribou. You know, we deal with that too up there in
42 Norton Sound, up on the Seward Peninsula, we're both of
43 that WACH, Western Arctic Caribou Herd. We seen where
44 we protected the people's who are Federally-qualified,
45 people's right to hunt them close by and it made a
46 difference like up in the Noatak, I know that we closed
47 the Federal lands and it gave opportunity for people to
48 go out there. And one was an old man that went out
49 there, we had a young fellow come in here and talk to
50

0055

1 us at a meeting and he said he was so happy, he got up
2 there and he's -- he described what that old man told
3 him about hunting that animal and how he had to stalk
4 it and he got it and how he was dancing around, the guy
5 was imitating him. And it was like, you know, you see
6 that and then -- and realize that all the people that
7 sat at the table from the '80s on, the elders that are
8 all dead and gone now and we've become the elders, am I
9 going to have to dance like that someday because I got
10 opportunity. I sure hope not and that's why we're
11 here.

12

13 So the Norton Sound stocks have been
14 depressed for decades and I always say we're the canary
15 in the coal mine, we got hit first, then the next was
16 Unalakleet, and then the next was the Yukon and then
17 the Kuskokwim and I see it in -- down in Bristol Bay.
18 I fished there last year, subsistence with my partner,
19 Gayla Hoseth. And we're lucky there was a few kings,
20 but to see that big system down there starting to get
21 hit, when are we going to wake up the people that are
22 supposed to be doing the job of preserving those
23 resources. I hear mining, mining, mining. Well, it
24 ain't mining that's doing that to our fish except it is
25 considered in my mind mining out in the ocean with
26 those trawlers. I've never spoken well of them since
27 they first started with the CDQ program, I didn't like
28 what we were getting involved in up there in my region
29 and I told my Board member not to get into it and buy
30 into it, just -- you got the quota, just stay out of
31 the infrastructure. Didn't happen. Now we're part of
32 it.

33

34 So where do we go from here.

35

36 Our Council has been at the table and
37 we've had discussions about that and we talk about the
38 fact that -- I know we sent letters in that say there's
39 the Department of Agriculture and the Department of
40 Interior, where is the Department of Commerce and why
41 doesn't this Federal Subsistence Board have the ability
42 not to have any authority over those Federal water
43 fishes. There's some questions to be answered.

44

45 And I'm about ready to rest here. I
46 think we all have the same thoughts, I heard other
47 people speak of the Department of Commerce. The
48 Department of Commerce needs to be engaged with us and
49 sit at the table so that they can take that information
50

0056

1 back to the -- to DC and tell whoever's Administration
2 is at the time that this is what's going on up there.
3 It's not the land of plenty anymore. The people up
4 there need what they have, they don't have it, they
5 need it. So the Superintendent -- excuse me, the -- I
6 think the idea of the Department of Commerce directly
7 in a cross jurisdictional dialogue and decision-making
8 particularly when we're having salmon bycatch and
9 trawlers, we -- impacts is the very top of the priority
10 list, we should find some way to get to that.

11

12 In closing the Seward Peninsula
13 Regional Advisory Council appreciates the Board's time
14 and attention to these matters and we look forward to a
15 continued partnership and ensuring that the needs and
16 the rights and the voices of our subsistence users
17 present and future bringing from the past, that we have
18 here at the table are heard and respected. We need to
19 manage for subsistence. I want to see that before the
20 day I take my last breath.

21

22 So thank you. Sorry about the passion.

23

24 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

25

26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: That's why we
27 love you, Louis. Any questions from the Board.

28

29 (No comments)

30

31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I think that's
32 a good place to take lunch and think about everything
33 Louis said and we'll come back at -- one hour and 15
34 minutes. We'll see you guys back here at 1:30.

35

36 (Off record)

37

38 (On record)

39

40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Caron McKee.
41 Caron McKee. We want you to come -- if you're willing
42 to do a little introduction we're going to reconvene
43 this meeting after lunchtime to the art project we have
44 there so we can let everybody here know what's going on
45 with that and what our expectations with voting are.

46

47 Thank you.

48

49 MS. McKEE: Hi, Mr. Chair and members

50

0057

1 of the Board. I'm Caron McKee, I'm the Outreach
2 Coordinator for the Office of Subsistence Management.
3 And we hosted a student art contest this year, it was
4 open to all students in Alaska, grades K through 12.
5 We had a whopping 189 submissions which is one of the
6 highest levels of participation we've ever had so we
7 really want to thank all the parents and teachers who
8 encouraged their kids to participate. The quality of
9 the art this year was really amazing to see, just the
10 knowledge of species and subsistence uses and
11 resources.

12

13 So we're excited to have all the Board
14 members and ISC members be the judges this year. You
15 have supplemental binders and in those binders there is
16 a voting form. The art itself is displayed on the two
17 back tables in the back, there's 25 pieces of art for
18 you to peruse during the meeting and then when you feel
19 like it go ahead and fill out your judging form and
20 return it to me. I'm seated over here kind of near the
21 coffee stand. And when judging is completed we'll
22 tally the votes and announce the first and second place
23 winners.

24

25 Thank you.

26

27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
28 that. Appreciate the update.

29

30 All right. With that we'll get back to
31 our RAC Chair reports and we'll call on Mr. Charlie.

32

33 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
34 Through the Chair. Thanks for this time and thanks to
35 the Council for being here and doing all that you do
36 and all the sacrifices you make. Appreciate you.

37

38 First I'd like to recognize all the
39 Chiefs in the room and the former Chiefs. I grew up
40 along the Yukon River between Rampart and Tanana,
41 hunting, fishing, trapping and living a subsistence
42 lifestyle. And I have to say right now that my
43 subsistence needs haven't been met in 15 plus years
44 wholly. I have to go all the way to Bristol Bay to get
45 fish for my family because we can't get fish on the
46 Yukon. I drive my truck to Anchorage and I fly to
47 Ekwok and I fish, freeze and dry fish and I bring it
48 all the way back to the Yukon and drive it down the
49 Yukon to my mother in Rampart so that she could stop
50

0058

1 looking downriver and wanting fish. I do that every
2 chance I get to bring fish home to her. I have to do
3 that for my extended family, I've always been a
4 provider for them. So it's something that I'll always
5 do as long as I can walk and get along.

6
7 I also run culture camps, teach
8 trapping for over 30 years trying hard to keep the
9 traditions alive for the people along the river in my
10 area.

11
12 I go over 500 miles to moose hunt, even
13 more than that if it takes me the whole -- sometimes I
14 don't get one, but if it takes the whole season you
15 talk about a thousand miles. I don't like to hunt near
16 my village because there's people there that have less
17 opportunity than me and they don't have a good boat,
18 they don't have a camp down the river that they can go
19 to and have a good floor in place to stay and look for
20 moose.

21
22 A lot of the communities in the Eastern
23 Interior are in a no other means situation and it's
24 getting worse as we go forward with all the added
25 pressure from the outside of the region. The moose,
26 caribou, sheep, bear are in bad shape, low numbers,
27 sometimes it takes a whole moose -- a whole season to
28 find a moose like I said a little big ago.

29
30 In my mind a Federal Review needs to be
31 -- to favor the Federally-qualified users at this time.
32 Like I said we're in a no other means in a lot of the
33 villages right now and we the people need this Board to
34 make the right decisions for us during this review. We
35 all need the Department of Commerce to take action
36 before our salmon go extinct, we need special actions
37 to support the areas that have low numbers of moose or
38 the -- so the managers-- otherwise the managers will
39 keep hunting these areas until there's nothing left. I
40 asked a manager what was the magic number he would
41 consider closing a hunt on a caribou herd, he told me
42 500. That's not sustainable with client uncertainty
43 now. As humans we all need to do better for the
44 resources. We need to get along and we need to work
45 together to sustain these herds and runs of salmon for
46 the generations to come.

47
48 The way that the Board is structured
49 now the people that live off the land and on the land
50

0059

1 are the ones making these recommendations for changes
2 and they're the good ones, they're the people that see
3 everything, that have seen all the changes.

4
5 There should be no hunting by non-
6 Federally-qualified users until the managers can do a
7 proper count. Using kill numbers don't say nothing,
8 but how many was killed. As an example in 20F where I
9 come from there's been no count for years and now
10 there's no more moose, none. There's too much
11 uncertainty in this kind of management, not -- don't
12 open hunts and not put game wardens on there also
13 because we have an awful lot of wanton waste going
14 on. And it's time to strengthen the rules for
15 wanton waste and wasting. They need to lose hunting
16 time, the individuals that are found wanton waste
17 because there's too many people that are hungry right
18 now. If you can get out there and hunt and you can get
19 out there and talk to the communities in the area and
20 if you don't want the meat, you only want the racks,
21 then there's a place for that meat to go. There has
22 been for years. I talked to a Fort Yukon resident
23 yesterday and he told me he wished to see a subsistence
24 hunt only where they cut off the racks, half of the
25 rack on a moose like they do in the Nowitna management
26 style. The big bulls are all being taken out and this
27 is your problem. They teach the young how and what to
28 eat and how to heal themselves and from other natural
29 affects. They know what to do with the big ones that
30 -- we are seeing a lot of parasites in the moose in
31 20F, two out of three have parasites. Growing up we
32 seen them in the cyst form, but now they're six to
33 eight inches long, going up the legs, underneath the
34 fascial tissue and they're in the marrow already.

35
36 There's been a few changes in the
37 fishing at the North Pacific and the Board of Fish.
38 There was 150 tribes in the unity room. There are --
39 and this is because there's no escapement goals being
40 met anywhere in our rivers. Maybe a couple, Kuskokwim
41 could be one of them, they're fishing and they manage
42 towards the top of the escapement goal. And I think
43 that's why they're successful with their co-management.

44
45 Climate. We think -- my group think
46 that the cold winters -- the cold winter we just had is
47 great for salmon, the spawning grounds and other
48 creeks, steams, will be full of ice and that'll mean
49 good health for the salmon. And the ice comes down on
50

0060

1 the Bering Sea will bring good health, healthy
2 nutrients to the sea and the colder water will keep
3 toxic algae blooms down on the bottom. Overall better
4 health to the system with our small changes to the
5 management bodies, North Pacific and the Board of Fish
6 we hope to see better numbers in the future. And
7 health of the salmon and other species that depend on a
8 healthy ecosystem.

9

10 The lack of salmon is affecting the
11 whole ecosystem from top predators to very small bugs.
12 In my area wolves hunt spawning fish, they feed up to
13 250 species in an anadromous stream, they put a
14 hundred, 200 fish up on the bank and they leave and
15 they come back in a week later and they eat the skins,
16 that's all they want. They left everything else.
17 They're providers like myself. This salmon disaster's
18 affecting everything in this ecosystem, spawning ground
19 to the Bering Sea.

20

21 And that's the short and sweet report
22 that I want to make and I want to thank you guys for
23 the opportunity and your dedication and sacrifice of
24 your time.

25

26 Thank you.

27

28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
29 Charlie. Any comments or questions from the Board.

30

31 (No comments)

32

33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We appreciate
34 your leadership. Thank you, Charlie, for your report.

35

36 Move on to Jacqueline.

37

38 MS. CLEVELAND: (In Native) Jacqueline
39 Cleveland. (In Native). Hi, my name is Jacqueline
40 Cleveland or (in Native) and I'm from Quinhagak. I'm
41 here as the Chair for the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta RAC and
42 this is my first time at a Federal Subsistence Board
43 regulatory meeting as a Chair.

44

45 And with that I believe salmon and
46 caribou continue to be our most concerning food
47 security issues. For salmon as many of you know there
48 has been a salmon crisis on the Yukon River for too
49 long and for the Kuskokwim watershed which is doing

50

0061

1 better, but still not like it -- how it used to be.
2 And in our bay outside of Quinhagak we continue to
3 harvest all five species of salmon with sockeye salmon
4 being at the top for both the bay and Kuskokwim River.

5
6 There were two big meetings this
7 winter. As many of you know North Pacific and Board of
8 Game for Area M or sorry, Board of Fisheries for Area M
9 and we're hopeful some of the actions taken in these
10 meetings will help more salmon return to our rivers and
11 bay.

12
13 It is difficult for subsistence users
14 to have a -- have to continually attend meetings and
15 advocate our subsistence fisheries in multiple
16 regulatory arenas like Board of Fish, North Pacific,
17 NSSD. We really need to help -- we really need the
18 help of our government leaders to bring all these
19 entities together to protect and manage salmon across
20 their entire ecosystem including their ocean habitat.

21
22 And on a lighter note the people in our
23 region are very happy with the co-management
24 arrangement between the Kuskokwim River InterTribal
25 Fish Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
26 manager. Having tribal representation at the decision-
27 making table has resulted in more trust being built all
28 around. And they are also prioritizing conservation to
29 make sure escapement goals are being met and future
30 generations are able to continue to fish. And we're
31 hopeful to see co-management on the Yukon soon as well
32 as the Yukon River InterTribal Fish Commission
33 continues to build its capacity.

34
35 As for the Mulchatna Caribou which are
36 historically a vital subsistence food source for us, we
37 haven't been able to hunt them for several years now.
38 Our RAC is writing a letter to request the formation of
39 a Mulchatna Caribou working group to bring Federal and
40 State managers as well as local people together to
41 collaborate with rebuilding efforts.

42
43 I'm going to have to mention that the
44 aftermath of Typhoon Halong continues to impact our
45 communities and subsistence life as we try to rebuild.
46 And our RAC has also requested that those who had to
47 relocate to Anchorage or other urban areas remain
48 eligible to hunt and fish as rural subsistence users
49 under Federal regulations since their relocation was
50

0062

1 out of their control.

2

3 Moving on to moose. Moose numbers in
4 Unit 18 are so high right now it is becoming a very
5 popular spot for sport hunting and guided hunts. This
6 is a complex problem because we need to harvest moose
7 so that their numbers don't get so high that they
8 crash, but the influx of outsiders is creating an
9 increasing competition with local subsistence users and
10 more issues with trespassing on Native corporation
11 lands and Native allotments. There are also more
12 reports of wanton waste. And the YKDelta RAC would
13 like to see more law enforcement in the area during the
14 fall season, hunting season, and have check points at
15 hub community airports like Bethel and Saint Mary's to
16 ensure meat is being salvaged properly and to reduce
17 wanton waste. Also in some cases when meat is donated
18 to communities it's already gone bad.

19

20 We're putting a few Board of Game
21 proposals for parts of Unit 18 to try to shorten the
22 long -- the non-resident season and start the resident
23 seasons earlier. This might help the conflicts by
24 letting locals have an earlier shot at moose before
25 non-residents arrive.

26

27 Our RAC has also asked that regulatory
28 maps be updated so that they show Native corporation
29 lands and Native allotments. We think this could help
30 raise awareness about the ownership and maybe reduce
31 trespassing. And these maps should be posted at
32 airstrips and boat launches. And I wanted to add it
33 would also help the hunter and subsistence user on the
34 ground by having these maps as well.

35

36 And going back to my community of
37 Quinhagak sport fish -- fishers are rafting well into
38 mid-September on the Kanektok River during moose season
39 when locals are trying to hunt. We really want to see
40 the permits for floating to end before moose hunting to
41 reduce conflicts and increase chances of locals getting
42 their subsistence moose.

43

44 Commercial sport fish guiding
45 operations that are on the Kanektok River. Locals feel
46 that there needs to be a limit on the number of boats
47 in the State waters when it comes to sport fishing
48 operating boats each day. Much like the Refuge allows
49 like six boats a day or something, we kind of wanted

50

0063

1 something similar within State waters because the
2 Kanektok River is getting overcrowded and contributing
3 to erosion.

4
5 Which brings me to the RDIs. There are
6 currently five RDIs recordable disclaimers of interest,
7 efforts that the State of Alaska is pursuing within our
8 region which would affect Federal lands and those held
9 by Alaska Native corporations as well. And the
10 proposed disclaimers of interest will transfer
11 ownership in submerged lands to the State of Alaska
12 ending the subsistence priority for rural subsistence
13 users. The Department's RDIs are based on findings
14 that the body -- bodies of waters at issue are
15 navigable. And the comment period for this had been
16 shortened from 90 days to 30 days. One of those -- one
17 of those non-navigable rivers affected is Quinhagak's
18 very own Arolik River or Arolik River. The river and
19 surrounding lands hold deep cultural, historical and
20 subsistence importance to the Yup'ik people of
21 Quinhagak. Today the -- with the increased sport fish
22 traffic on the Kanektok River sometimes leaving locals
23 without an area to subsist, we have heavily relied on
24 the Arolik for food, travel, teaching and the passing
25 down of traditional knowledge, connections that cannot
26 be meaningfully evaluated or honored in a 30 day
27 comment period.

28
29 I want to note that I plan to join the
30 BLM consultation for this on Thursday morning from
31 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. I'm hoping that the YKDelta
32 RAC is not called on during this time if possible. So
33 that's Thursday morning.

34
35 The Federal Subsistence Program is so
36 important to the people of rural Alaska, the YKDelta
37 RAC had a long discussion of all the topics in the
38 review and I won't mention all, but I wanted to
39 highlight a couple. Ultimately the RAC hopes that the
40 outcomes of the review will be used to strengthen and
41 improve the program and not to diminish it. We fully
42 support the Federal Subsistence Program and keeping it
43 with OSM and DOI. The rural priority for subsistence
44 on Federal lands is extremely important for food
45 security in rural places. That said the dual
46 management system between Federal and State governments
47 make it very complicated for subsistence users on the
48 ground. The RAC supports all opportunities to simplify
49 regulations and meeting cycles while still maintaining
50

0064

1 the rural priority.

2

3

4 The YKDelta RAC and other RACs have
5 continued to request that Council members receive
6 compensation for attending meeting and providing their
7 local and traditional knowledge to the program and to
8 the Federal Subsistence Board. Members should be
9 fairly compensated for their time away from families,
10 jobs and subsistence activities and for their
11 expertise. This could also help with the recruitment
12 to fill vacancies within the RAC.

13

14 Lastly we ask that the Board and OSM
15 keep working to improve the correspondence process,
16 elevate letters in a timely manner and ensure more
17 responses and two-way communication with the RAC. It
18 is great that RAC Chairs are now being encouraged to
19 attend the summer work session where we have more time
20 to discuss issues with the Board instead of just
21 through correspondence.

22

23 I look forward to attending this summer
24 and also continuing to work with other Chairs from
25 other regions so we can all work together to protect
26 our subsistence life.

27

28 Quyana.

29

30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
31 Jacqueline. Any questions from the Board, comments.

32

33 (No comments)

34

35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate the
36 report today.

37

38 Jack, you have the floor.

39

40 MR. REAKOFF: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
41 Board members, new Board members on the Board.
42 Appreciate your service, appreciate the service of
43 members who are leaving the Board. And so we -- this
44 -- I've been on the Western Interior Regional Advisory
45 Council since 1993, I've attended a lot of Board
46 meetings and I was sent as the Secretary for the
47 Western Interior Council by my Chair, Ron Sam, who
48 schooled me to attend these meetings and he told me it
49 was a process that he went through as a 12 year old
50 boy. So I've attended a lot of Federal Subsistence

50

0065

1 Board meetings, I have a long history of remembering
2 when the Board was much smaller and wasn't comprised of
3 -- there was the Chair, Mitch Dementieff and the
4 regional heads. And that was a real problem trying to
5 advocate for proposals with people sometimes that were
6 new to the process, didn't have any experience and I --
7 it just didn't work out. The review process in 2008,
8 we went through Pat Pourchot, we talked about
9 additional membership and public members and the
10 statute under .805 so that there's -- and ANILCA Title
11 VIII is referring to administrative structures that has
12 -- gives rural residents a meaningful role in
13 subsistence management. So this -- the process there,
14 you know, multiple reviews, we're on our third or
15 fourth review right now is basically the -- get the
16 Board make up that we have right now so we have a mix
17 of agency concerns and processes and then we have the
18 public member process and of course the regional
19 council process is very important to the whole program.
20 And so there was -- when we had an all RAC meeting in
21 2016 there was 110 regional council members all in the
22 same room.

23

24 So my background is I was born in
25 Alaska, I moved to the Brooks Range when I was three
26 years old. We lived in Evansville for four years, we
27 moved down to Southwest Alaska, I commercial salmon
28 fished down there, I lived on -- at Galena and a lot of
29 people in Galena, I went to school in Galena when I was
30 10 to 11 years old and we moved back to the Brooks
31 Range in 1970. I've lived in Wiseman since 1971 when I
32 was 13 years old before the road, before the pipeline,
33 before the -- before the utility corridor. And so this
34 5150 issue is a big deal for us and my community. And
35 so we -- I'm on the -- of course the Western Interior
36 Regional Advisory Council, I was on the Koyukuk River
37 Advisory since 1990, I'm the Chairman of the Koyukuk
38 River Advisory to the State Board of Game and Board of
39 Fish. I'm on the Gates of the Arctic Subsistence
40 Resource Commission, I've been on there since 1991.
41 And so we just had a meeting last week and I'll be
42 referring to some of the actions taken by that
43 Commission. I'm the Vice Chair of that. And I'm the
44 liaison for our community association with the State of
45 Alaska and so I receive paperwork, notifications about
46 things from the State.

47

48 So the conditions this year, we had a
49 pretty hot summer, it hit 90.3 and as far as I can
50

0066

1 determine I have a 120 years of oral history from the
2 old timers that lived in Wiseman, the community that I
3 live in was established in 1905. I have a cabin that
4 was built in 1901 and was moved there. It's an old
5 place, it's an old gold rush community. There are 12
6 people that live in the community. Point Baker's got
7 about 15, we got 12 and these small places they rely
8 heavily on subsistence. We're off grid, we don't have
9 a power plant, we make our own power and we're acutely
10 aware of how we use electricity because we pay \$7.50 a
11 gallon which would be cheap in most rural villages off
12 the road system, but we run that through a generator
13 and that's very expensive electricity.

14
15 So the conditions this last summer were
16 really hot, but then in August we had 12 inches of rain
17 from August to early September, we had a flood of 3.71
18 inches, I take weather for the National Weather
19 Service. It's -- it blasted the bottoms out of the
20 rivers and the streams, scoured teeth down to boulders
21 as big as that screen that's sitting out in front of us
22 and decimated any spawning habitat that was available
23 with -- we've had very poor runs of -- in the Yukon
24 River system, we're losing these cohorts of salmon one
25 after another. So then we went into a -- it kind of
26 straightened up, we had -- it froze up hard and the
27 ground was frozen six inches deep on September 25, then
28 a monsoon or this -- whatever this typhoon that went
29 through, beat up western Alaska, knocked 70 percent of
30 the timber down in the lower Koyukuk River, the old --
31 the people that lived down there said the timber's just
32 all laid down, their trails are obliterated. It warmed
33 up dramatically, it thawed the ground out and the
34 cotton grass sedge started to grow because it thought
35 it was springtime. And then it froze again and now
36 we've ended up with 16 inches of snow. So the dall
37 sheep population was decimated, we had 12 bad winters
38 in a row, deep snow, with snow last winter of '24/'25,
39 52 inches deep. And we had rain on snow, killed about
40 20 percent of the sheep population, there's GPS
41 collared sheep in the study, we lost around 20, 25
42 percent of the sheep population.

43
44 The Federal Subsistence Board provided
45 a closure on the dall sheep population that allowed the
46 population to get recruitment into the population so at
47 least we have some younger animals. But once they're
48 at nine years of age they start to taper off in
49 productivity. So the sheep population is low, but it's
50

0067

1 stabilized because we're getting a younger component in
2 there. That was the objective to get the younger
3 component.

4
5 The Western Interior Regional Advisory
6 Council has produced a sheep management plan. We have
7 fisheries resource monitoring programs, we don't have a
8 wildlife monitoring program so it was incumbent upon
9 the Regional Council to produce a sheep management plan
10 because we had data that we did not have, there's no
11 composition data developed with the State survey
12 technique so they're currently with the Gates of the
13 Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission, we're
14 submitting a hunting plan recommendation. When they
15 survey they're going to have half curl, three-quarter
16 curl and full curl. If they're flying a moose survey
17 they go for yearling bulls, medium sized bulls and
18 adult bull. That tells you what their population
19 performance is, it tells you if they're getting
20 recruitment. We use science. So the half curl
21 component is the most important portion of the survey,
22 it tells you if your sheep have actually survived as
23 lambs and then entered the population. They're big,
24 they're going to be -- at half curl they're going to be
25 three or four years of age. They have 2,500 photos of
26 dall sheep at the Department of Fish and Game, we're
27 going to enumerate that exactly. What that means is
28 dall sheep don't produce lambs until they're three
29 years of age so it tells you if you've got one half
30 curl ram that means you got a female of the same
31 cohort, it's going to tell you what your performance
32 is.

33
34 So that's it. We're requesting that
35 the Federal Subsistence Board adopt our sheep
36 management strategy because we need -- we have -- look
37 at the turnover in these agencies, we constantly got
38 people -- new biologists showing up, we need to have
39 something, a document in front of them that tells them
40 what the ecology of this animal is and how to -- how to
41 manage this animal. That's what our objectives are.

42
43 So thank you very much for the sheep
44 closure, that established a younger component in the
45 population. Thank you very much if you adopt the sheep
46 management strategy that will be used within our
47 region. We're not making it -- forcing it onto other
48 regions, but we had it out for comment for several
49 years.
50

1 The conditions this year with shallow
2 snow and then the tundra started to grow in October,
3 the caribou -- well, we had two meetings, the Western
4 Interior met with our Eastern Interior back in December
5 and so we discussed our -- our primary joint meeting
6 was discussion of the program review, salmon common
7 issues that we have salmon on the Yukon River. And so
8 we worked with Sara Taylor on this -- on the program
9 review and we've -- we also talked with the BLM about
10 the lifting of the 5150 or basically the State was top
11 filed on 2.1 million acres around our community, those
12 were lifted, the State attached to that. That happened
13 on -- in our second meeting in February and WIRAC was
14 meeting in Fairbanks again and we were informed that we
15 had one month of subsistence harvest to go before that
16 was the end of the rural subsistence priority. It was
17 40 below zero when the clock started. I had to hunt
18 caribou at 40 below zero. When you pick -- when you're
19 dressing -- you lay it on the ice for a second, your
20 hand sticks to the knife, you're covered in frozen
21 blood, it's not my favorite time to kill caribou, but I
22 targeted bull caribou and specific caribou. I learned
23 how to hunt from Raymond Panyeah, he's an Inupiaq elder
24 at Anaktuvuk Pass, we hunt by collar, we hunt by the
25 health of the animal and so I got three bull caribou.

26
27 I am distraught when I see on Facebook
28 cow caribou harvests. That has to stop. I will tell
29 this Board again caribou don't have a calf until
30 they're three or four years of age and they only have
31 one calf ever, they never have a twin. So cow caribou
32 harvest when you got a declining population is a --
33 it's -- we're going to lose the Western Herd, I keep
34 seeing cow caribou killed over there. We're not
35 killing any -- I told the guys around, I've got some
36 young guys around Wiseman, like we do not kill cow
37 caribou. And the bull caribou that I killed in the
38 first of March had a quarter inch of fat, they were in
39 good -- because of the low snow and that green grass
40 that they had underneath the snow, they're in good
41 condition like they'd would have been at the end of
42 May. There's absolutely -- it's one of the best
43 conditions I've seen. This is going to convey into the
44 sheep population. The sheep population is going to
45 respond to that or be really -- there's not many, but
46 they're going to be really super healthy and
47 productive. So really I'm really encouraged by this.
48 This is the first time in 12 years where we've actually
49 had that.
50

0069

1 Our moose population is also low. I
2 hunted all fall, I have to hunt when it gets cold
3 enough to hang a moose, I hunted all fall, all the way
4 to the 1st of October, I didn't get a moose. The moose
5 population -- the flood put all the moose up high, the
6 population is lower, it's about two-thirds -- it's
7 about a third lower than it used to be. So what's
8 going to happen now that the -- our community we need
9 access to the Gates of the Arctic National Park which
10 is only five miles distance to the rest of us. So I
11 was at our Regional Council meetings I kept telling BLM
12 we need an 810 analysis, we have issues that we need to
13 talk to. Back about the -- when we had a Department of
14 Natural Resource meeting about access for subsistence
15 lo and behold there's a memorandum of understanding
16 with the State of Alaska and it should be in your
17 packet. This memorandum of understanding is signed by
18 Director Pendergast here, it's signed by the
19 Commissioner of Natural Resources, John Boyle, Doug
20 Vincent Lang at the Department of Fish and Game and the
21 Commissioner of Transportation. This document is going
22 to -- they're going to meet with our community
23 hopefully in early June, we're going to go over our
24 access to reach the Federal lands that -- by -- the
25 Commissioner can actually sign for certain access
26 easements into the Park, and to the other Federal
27 public lands.

28
29 So right now the State has top filed on
30 2.1 million acres, I check the mapping program every
31 day, there's -- I see no selection. The State is
32 eligible to select, but they haven't selected yet and
33 we don't know -- as you were saying there's other
34 public land orders that may be lifted. The State may
35 actually shift some of their selection away from where
36 the utility corridor is and may make more BLM land
37 which would be available for subsistence use. That's
38 what that actions means. So I'm acutely aware of --
39 I'm watching daily so that I know what we can
40 anticipate so I can work with the Department of Fish
41 and Game, my -- our area biologist, he says we don't
42 know what's going to happen. He doesn't want to change
43 State regulations too quickly.

44
45 So I want the Board to be aware that
46 we're sort of in flux right now about where we can
47 hunt. We've made a special action request to the Gates
48 of the Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission that was
49 finalized yesterday afternoon. I kept running in and
50

0070

1 out of here, that's what -- I was dealing with that
2 issue with the coordinator for the Gates of the Arctic
3 Subsistence. There's an area in Unit 24A just to the
4 north of our community, inside of the Park, you'll get
5 that special action request and you'll deal with that
6 at some point this summer.

7
8 So this utility corridor thing doesn't
9 just affect my community, it affects Rampart, Stevens
10 Village, Bettles, Evansville, Allakaket and Alatna,
11 Anaktuvuk Pass and Nuiqsut. There's people from
12 Nuiqsut. There's people from Nuiqsut that have road
13 access, they drive down the road, I see where they kill
14 caribou, I know they're taken care of, there's nothing
15 left, they take the whole thing. There's a gut pile
16 there. There's people that utilize the utility
17 corridor, but that's not well documented because
18 they're transitioning. It's well documented about us
19 because we're -- we live there, we have registration
20 permits for moose. We will still need the Federal
21 registration permit for the exterior portions that
22 actually get into the Federal public lands in the fall
23 hunt, we'll need the sheep permit for the Gates of the
24 Arctic National Park and if the -- if the -- there's an
25 area in 26B that the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
26 comes within 400 yards of the road. So there's an area
27 in the Arctic Refuge that we will be utilizing as part
28 of our -- because we're being displaced from the
29 mountains that we normally could hunt on, for decades
30 we've hunted under Federal subsistence regulations, as
31 of March 26th that stopped. So we're going to be
32 acutely aware of where we can hunt.

33
34 So I want the Board to be aware that
35 we're work -- we're working with the State process,
36 we're working with whoever we can to try and get the
37 easements we need to have the least adverse -- .810 of
38 ANILCA says it's supposed to -- the analysis is
39 supposed to come up with a -- to mitigate this issue
40 with the least adverse to the subsistence users.
41 That's what we're trying to do.

42
43 So thank you very much, Director
44 Pendergast.

45
46 So I -- we have -- our hare population
47 is increasing, our caribou population is low. We had a
48 meeting of the Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource
49 Commission, the Kobuk Valley and the Northwest Arctic
50

0071

1 Regional Advisory Council has decided they do not want
2 to see any cow harvest, they are endorsing the
3 regulations for four bull caribou. We're -- we agree
4 to that, I will submit a proposal to the State Board of
5 Game for Unit 24 and when we come for call for
6 proposals next year for the wildlife cycle four bull
7 caribou for Unit 24. 26B, the Central Arctic Caribou
8 Herd was 34,000, it's down to 26,500. They had a late
9 spring, they had -- they were calving into snow. The
10 number of caribou calves is about one out of five had a
11 calf. It's not going to sustain that population.
12 Right now they have a five caribou bag limit for all
13 hunters on the North Slope. That means cows, bulls,
14 calves, the whole works, July 1 to April 30th. That is
15 a disaster, that has to change. If there's going to be
16 any cow harvest there should never be -- cows are in
17 lactation all the way through the -- into October. You
18 can't kill cows with calves in July and August when
19 they're in lactation because you're basically putting
20 that calf into a position of starvation or wolf fodder,
21 one of the two.

22

23 So there's going to be proposals before
24 -- I'm going to submit proposals before the Board of
25 Game to reduce the four bull caribou, there's
26 absolutely no reason -- the Porcupine Caribou Herd was
27 100 or 218,000. This summer they surveyed Porcupine at
28 146,000. It's declined 30 percent, it needs protection
29 on the cow component. Porcupine Caribou Herd for eight
30 years now is coming to the Dalton Highway and it's like
31 a fence. When I was hunting on the roads south of --
32 they were mostly south of Wiseman, 98 percent of the
33 tracks came to the road and turned back, only 2 percent
34 crossed the road. Why is that, because they see people
35 on the road, they don't like people, they -- they
36 bounce off that road. It's -- it's really - it's just
37 graphic, just a -- that population wants to go to the
38 west, there's trails in the ground that the caribou
39 follow. The Nunimut people are like where -- have you
40 seen any Porcupine Caribou, they know they were
41 supposed to come. I said the road is bouncing them
42 off, Raymond, or -- and various people over there. The
43 herd is (indiscernible) across that road, once they
44 cross the road there's about 150 miles of unused lichen
45 to the west, the whole south slope of the Brooks Range
46 is unused by caribou for over 50 years. I know for a
47 fact because the Western Arctic used to use that area
48 and left in 1973 to go to the Kobuk, they've been over
49 there ever since. But the Porcupine Herd has used the
50

0072

1 Old Crow Flat all the way to the Ogilvie Mountain and
2 now moving wants to go west and they will. Some have
3 gotten across there, they had a real easy winter,
4 they're going to remember that. They know -- they go
5 back to exactly the same places that they've had good
6 food before, they've got a GPS in their head. I got to
7 have a little instrument in my hand to do that. They
8 do -- they know exactly where they're at on the
9 landscape.

10

11 So we can anticipate Porcupine coming
12 back, the Porcupine Herd needs protection. I will be
13 working with the Board of Game and you will be
14 receiving proposals also in the next wildlife cycle.

15

16 So that's sort of an overview of what's
17 going on with our Council. We have -- we're going to
18 be working with DNR and the Department of Fish and Game
19 throughout the summer and we will be making reports
20 back to -- at our -- through our fall meeting cycle.

21

22 So thank you, Mr. Chair. Any questions
23 from the Board?

24

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
26 Jack, for that thorough report. Any questions from the
27 Board or comments.

28

29 MR. REAKOFF: Thank you.

30

31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate your
32 recommendation as well. Judy has her hand up. Yes.

33

34 MS. CAMINER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
35 And one thing I neglected to mention, but it was said
36 by several of the RAC Chairs, we really appreciated
37 that all RAC meeting of a few years ago. And I think
38 all of us would probably like to see another one if
39 that could be arranged again. I know it's a lot of
40 money, but very worth while.

41

42 Thank you.

43

44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Jack.

45

46 MR. REAKOFF: One additional comment.
47 You know, when we lost -- we didn't -- lost our fall
48 meeting with the government closure. When OSM wanted
49 to have another meeting I said well, let's go for mid
50

0073

1 December with EIRAC because we need to talk to them
2 about this 5150 stuff and -- and the salmon issues.
3 That's cost -- that's cost effective to -- we -- when
4 all possible to have overlap with two different
5 councils. You're using the same Staff and its cost
6 effective for the -- for the program, especially with
7 budgetary constraint. And so I will -- I -- we highly
8 enjoyed meeting with EIRAC, they are good friends over
9 there. And so we have commonality of issues, we would
10 -- I said I would like to have meetings with YKD at
11 some point. So the schedule -- the coordinator should
12 work to -- trying to schedule two different Councils
13 together if that's possible because it's effective.
14 Three -- three Councils with YKD would be even better.

15

16 So thank you, Charlie. Thank you, Mr.
17 Chair.

18

19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. I
20 think that's a good recommendation as well. Things
21 happen when we get together. So thank you guys, the
22 Regional Chairs for the report today and giving us some
23 insight to what the people you serve are speaking to
24 and the issues, the animals and the conservation
25 concerns.

26

27 Next we have on the agenda is -- I got
28 to flip my page, 2027 to '29, subpart C and D proposals
29 and closure review. We get to this.

30

31 MR. DUNAWAY. Mr. Chair.

32

33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Dan.

34

35 MR. DUNAWAY: Thank you. While we have
36 a little lull here. I would just like to insert --
37 repeat what Jacque said about some compensation for
38 some of the RAC members. One of our members who's
39 sadly passed last summer was another proponent for
40 getting help. For some folks it means that --
41 financial help to get access to internet. Some of us
42 have it and -- like Jacque said there's some that may
43 be excluded before they can't afford it or, I just want
44 to kind of piggyback on what Jacque said there. Thank
45 you.

46

47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Dan.
48 That's what I recommend too.

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0074

1 (Pause)

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yep, we'll go ahead and get started now. To Staff.

MR. LIND: Well, thank you, Chair and Board members. At this time we're going to give a summary of the wonderful consultation we had yesterday with a record number of tribal members and chiefs and folks from all over the state. And I will go ahead and start by giving the information. And this is not done by myself. My coworkers are such awesome people. Credit to Hannah Voorhees who's online, Liz behind me and Robbin.

So thank you all.

I will go ahead and start with we heard from about 12 tribal governments and a number of different organizations yesterday who consulted with the Federal Subsistence Board. And there were many, many topics, the fish and wildlife populations of course, the challenges they were having with providing subsistence for their families. And when we talk about families I want you to understand too especially on the -- on the river systems we have several villages along -- up and down the river and so subsistence from one family may extend to 12 or more families up -- upriver. So it's the challenges that they are concerned about and by coming to the Board they're looking for -- they're looking for ways to make progress and find that balance to where they can have their subsistence foods.

We have also numerous folks talk about the Ketchikan's rural status and really specifically about the wildlife proposals and closure reviews at the agenda at this meeting. I'll go along and say in regards to the RFR25-01 and 02, the rural status of the Ketchikan, there are six representatives of the Ketchikan Indian Community that spoke in support of Ketchikan's rural status. There were four tribal government representatives also spoke in opposition to Ketchikan's rural status which included the Craig Tribal Association, Klawock Cooperative Association and two from the Organized Village of Kasaan. The Organized Village of Kasaan presented a letter signed by six tribal governments in opposition to Ketchikan's rural status and these included those listed above and the Wrangell Cooperative Association, the government --

0075

1 Organized Village of Kake, and the Hydaburg Cooperative
2 Association.

3

4

5 Also in regard to Wildlife Closure
6 Review 26-02 the continued closure -- seasonal closures
7 to non-Federal-qualified users for Unit 5A moose except
8 for the Nunatak Bench or -- yeah.

8

9

10 There were two representatives Yakutat
11 Tlingit tribe and one from the Sealaska Heritage
12 Institute spoke in favor of retaining the status quo.

12

13

14 In regard to Wildlife Proposal 26-10 to
15 establish a 45 day guaranteed season Unit 2 wolves from
16 November 15 to December 31st. The tribal association
17 spoke in support of that.

17

18

19 In regard to Wildlife Proposal 26-15,
20 close Unit 6D deer on Hawkins and Hinchinbrook Islands
21 to non-Federally-qualified users. And of course the
22 Native village of Eyak spoke in support of that.

22

23

24 In regard to Wildlife Proposals 43 and
25 44, to establish a fall may be announced antlerless hunt
26 for Unit 18 moose and to delegate authority to manage
27 hunt in Kusko hunt area in WP26-45, extend Unit 18 cow
28 moose season to open July 16 in the lower Yukon hunt
29 area. And the village of Paimiut spoke in support of
30 that.

30

31

32 In regards to Wildlife Proposal 26-41
33 and 42, eliminate take harvest from boats moving under
34 power and of course of village of Paimiut spoke in
35 opposition of that.

35

36

37 In regards to Wildlife Proposals 26-66
38 to extend Unit 23 wolf season to open August 1st and
39 increase harvest limit to 20, Wildlife Proposal 26-77
40 to extend Unit 23 muskrat trapping season to year-round
41 and Wildlife Proposal 26-68 to increase Unit 23
42 ptarmigan harvest and possession limit and extend the
43 season to close June 15th. The natives of Kotzebue
44 requested the removal of these proposals from the
45 consensus agenda and spoke in support of them.

45

46

47 In regard to Wildlife Proposals 28B,
48 29, 30 for moose, Wildlife Proposal 26-28B to extend
49 moose season to close September 30th. Wildlife
50 Proposal 26-29 to shift moose season five days later to

50

0076

1 August 6th to September 25th. Wildlife Proposal 26-30,
2 shift moose season 10 days later to August 11th to
3 September 30. And the Ahtna InterTribal Resource
4 Commission spoke in support.

5

6

7 In regard to Wildlife Proposals WP26-
8 75, to close moose harvest to non-Federally-qualified
9 users in Unit 25D remainder the Council of Athabaskan
10 Tribal Government spoke in support of full closure of
11 Unit 25D remainder.

11

12

13 And, Mr. Chair, Council members, Board
14 members, that concludes my summary of -- our summary of
15 the consultation yesterday. And if there's anyone here
16 that needs to add anything or may have forgot
17 something, please speak up.

17

18

19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Good thing
20 Southeast is still out to lunch. I'm just joking, all
21 my cousins. All my cousins aren't here, I could crack
22 a joke, 'ey. No, I appreciate that, Orville, thank you
23 for that. And again it was a well attended public
24 tribal consultation process so we appreciate all the
25 input and the summarization.

25

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27

Lisa, did you have something to add?

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MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin. I just
wanted to clarify for the Northwest Arctic proposal it
was 20 -- WP26-67, I think Orville accidently said 77
and then also it was WP26-69 about the take of mink and
I'm blanking weasel instead of WP 26-68 regarding
ptarmigan.

Thanks.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
the correction for the record. I want to reflect that
in the report.

MR. WOODS: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Frank.

MR. WOODS: So, Orville, in your report
you listed -- what was it, how many tribal entities?

MR. LIND: 12 tribal.....

0077

1 MR. WOODS: From 12 tribal governments.
2 Okay. Was there any corporate or.....

3
4 MR. LIND: There -- I remember there
5 was a couple corporation members. I couldn't tell you
6 which ones right now. I can go back and take a look
7 and give you that later.

8
9 MR. WOODS: Yeah, if you could get me
10 that. I'm interested because number 1, in 2017 a
11 reserve treaty designated land was announced at the
12 Federal level, that the corporation lands were
13 designated under that Federal designation and I don't
14 think anybody's acted on those designations. That
15 means the corporation lands that are filed with the
16 State of Alaska are -- we have State hunts under those
17 regulations, but also there's a designation that not --
18 somebody mentioned Native allotments, corporate lands
19 and reserve treaty rights is what I'm going to pass on
20 by information for the Solicitor because those lands
21 are important not only for in holders of Federal, but
22 BLM is a -- and Park Service are adjacent to those
23 lands on Federal property. Those things are real
24 important to pass on to the land managers and our job
25 is to help not impact those lands. But if we need to,
26 you know, at some point, I don't think anybody's
27 brought it up, but those eventually might be either
28 Federally managed or co-managed or in cooperation with
29 State of Alaska. Private land owners, corporate and
30 then this body. So in the future I'd like to maybe get
31 a number of those lands and what it impacts for the
32 people that we're here or actually I'm representing.

33
34 So, no -- thanks. Good report,
35 Orville.

36
37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
38 questions, comments from the Board.

39
40 (No comments)

41
42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
43 Orville, for your report. We'll move on to the
44 announcement. Announcement of the consensus agenda.

45
46 MS. GREDIAGIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
47 This is Lisa Grediagin, the Wildlife Division
48 Supervisor at the Office of Subsistence Management.
49 And I'd also like to briefly take this opportunity to
50

0078

1 ask for some additional grace during this meeting. I'm
2 recovering from ACL reconstruction surgery and what was
3 already a tough cycle with 78 proposals and 17 closure
4 reviews and a lot of curve balls has made that much
5 tougher by not being able to walk. So Dr. Ron is not
6 here, but I'm using my crutches so she doesn't keep
7 yelling at me. And I think I finally got a Yup'ik name
8 from Board member Frank Woods of Hop Along.....

9

10 (Laughter)

11

12 MS. GREDIAGIN:although I don't
13 know how to pronounce it in Yup'ik because I think I've
14 got another year to -- to practice that.

15

16 All right. So the consensus agenda
17 contains all of the proposals and closure reviews for
18 which there is agreement among the Federal Subsistence
19 Regional Advisory Councils, the Federal InterAgency
20 Staff Committee and the Alaska Department of Fish and
21 Game concerning Board actions. The consensus agenda
22 can be found after the public meeting agenda in the
23 Board meeting materials or online on the OSM website.
24 The analyses for these are contained in Volume I of the
25 meeting materials and they're also available online on
26 the OSM website.

27

28 Anyone may request that a proposal or
29 closure review be removed from the consensus agenda and
30 considered individually by the Board, however the Board
31 must officially make a motion and vote to approve
32 removing any proposal or closure review from the
33 consensus agenda. After the Board acts individually on
34 all of the non-consensus proposals and closure reviews
35 the Board will take up the consensus agenda and vote on
36 it collectively towards the end of this meeting.

37

38 Thank you, Mr. Chair. That concludes
39 the announcement of the consensus agenda.

40

41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
42 Lisa. Any questions? And again this is the
43 opportunity like Lisa stated that if there is something
44 to be pulled from the consensus, this is the
45 opportunity for the Board member to do so.

46

47 MR. PENDERGAST: Mr. Chair.

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49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the

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0079

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MR. PENDERGAST: Yeah, Kevin Pendergast, Bureau of Land Management. I'd like to request that Wildlife Proposal 26-62B, Unit 22A muskox, be removed from the consensus agenda, please.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any discussion, comments, arguments against it? I'm just teasing. Yeah, we're just making sure we don't have to vote on each block here. So I don't think we do, I think the Board members can just do that.

Was there any other Board members here that wanted to pull from the consensus to the non-consensus?

MR. STRIKER: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah.

MR. STRIKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Don Striker, National Park Service. Wildlife proposal 26-66 and that's the only one we confirmed with the SRC Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Is there any other, any other we -- yes, Robbin.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There's a Karen Button online who has raised her hand.

Karen, please address the Board.

MS. BUTTON: Thank you so much. Hello, my name is Karen Button and I'm representing the Cooper Landing Safe Trails Committee. And we respectfully request that WP26-22 be moved from the consensus to the non-consensus agenda.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: There's a request. Is there a Board member here that would like to take up that request?

MR. INGERSOLL: Jerry Ingersoll, Forest Service. So moved.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So moved. Any other hands online, anybody else?

0080

1 (No comments)

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Did we capture
4 everything from the consultation, I know we had some
5 requests yesterday?

6

7 (No comments)

8

9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Hearing
10 none we'll move on.

11

12 MR. WOODS: Mr. Chair.

13

14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, Frank, go
15 ahead.

16

17 MR. WOODS: So, Mr. Chair, for the
18 public record what we did was we announced the
19 consensus agenda and for transparency and clarity for
20 our youth and the public, that consensus agenda we
21 will review now and then we take up non-consensus
22 agenda items that need to be reviewed later. This is
23 for the youth that might not understand the full
24 process, Mr. Chair. Just for clarification the Federal
25 Subsistence Board takes on wildlife proposals that our
26 RACs present them. And a consensus agenda is basically
27 we approve those items on the agenda. And when we pull
28 those things then we review them after we agree and go
29 through the 104 and 105 process, correct? So for the
30 youth this process is real important. That anyone from
31 the agencies or public that disagrees with the
32 proposal, you have the right to step up and ask to be
33 withdrawn or testify on it, right? So that is -- that
34 is why we're here.

35

36 Just for clar -- thank you for help --
37 let me pass it on.

38

39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
40 Frank. We appreciate that. Every opportunity to learn
41 And so I think we pulled three from the consensus
42 agenda. So we'll be naming them 26-22B, 26-66 and 26-
43 22. So if we can get a Board motion so that we can
44 pull those and place them onto the non-consensus for
45 deliberation.

46

47 MR. WOODS: So moved.

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49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We have a

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0081

1 motion to remove those. Can I get a second.

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MR. STRIKER: Second. Park Service.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Is there consensus by the Board?

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(Consensus head nods)

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and seeing consensus, motion carries unanimous. We'll now move on to the Board deliberation and action on non-consensus agenda items.

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MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair. I just also wanted to clarify that public comment on consensus agenda proposals and closure reviews is available at the beginning of each day following comments on non-agenda items so just anyone listening online or in the room to just be aware of that opportunity.

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Thank you.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Lisa. We're going to take a five minute break. Five minutes.

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(Off record)

(On record)

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hey, it looks like we got all the Board back here and we need to get started. So with that we're going to go ahead and start with the non-consensus agenda proposals we have before us for wildlife. We start with proposal WP26-72A from Eastern Interior, Unit 20E, brown bear. Page 1385 in your book if you have one.

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MS. WILLIAMS: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and members of the Board. I'm Liz Williams, an anthropologist at OSM. And this proposal requests recognition of the customary and traditional use of brown bear in Unit 20E by the resident of Unit 20E. It was submitted by the Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council and this one is important. Customary and traditional use, we just look at patterns of use, we don't look at quantity or things like that, harvest

0082

1 data, we just look at patterns of use. And most of the
2 residents that we're talking about in this unit are the
3 residents of Eagle and Eagle Village. Chicken is also
4 Unit 20E, but there haven't been any subsistence
5 studies there.

6
7 The people that are asking for this
8 customary and traditional use determination already
9 have determinations for most large land mammals
10 including caribou, moose, sheep and all rural residents
11 are eligible to harvest black bear, beaver, coyote,
12 fox, hare, lynx, wolverine, wolf, grouse and ptarmigan.
13 So there is a customary and traditional use
14 determination for brown bear in Unit 20E, but right now
15 it's only for the residents of Unit 12 and the
16 community of Dot Lake which are in 20D. And this is
17 just an aspect of the history of C&T determinations.
18 When the program first began in the '90s the upper
19 Tanana people especially made a super concerted effort
20 to get their customary and traditional use
21 determinations set and they were able to demonstrate
22 their customary and traditional use determination
23 through intermarriage with residents of 20E and current
24 and former travel for hunting and trading as well. So
25 this is just one of those things where the people of
26 20E didn't ask for it in the '90s because they didn't
27 see a need for it because they probably were just
28 harvesting under whatever regulations existed at the
29 time. And so we do a C&T, when we look at a pattern of
30 use, we look at all the eight factors and a lot of it
31 is handed down information from generation to
32 generation. It's -- you know, it is how people use
33 things.

34
35 And so what we find here is that like
36 all subsistence resources harvests are opportunistic,
37 they've adaptive, people change their harvests as
38 everyone has talked about in the last two days
39 according to what's available for them and what shows
40 up. And so most of the time brown bear harvests in
41 this area are highly opportunistic. People today and
42 in the past say that they often harvest a brown bear
43 when they're out maybe looking for other things or just
44 hunting in general. In recent surveys conducted by the
45 Alaska Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence, there's
46 only one evidence of brown bear usage and this is a one
47 year snapshot so it's not the whole history of Eagle
48 and Eagle Village, but it shows use of brown bear by
49 people in Eagle Village. And again that's part of a
50

1 pattern. When we look back farther there are some
2 citations on pages 1390 and 1392 that show some
3 historic uses of brown bear and also traditional
4 knowledge of brown bear harvests. There's a quote that
5 a long dead anthropologist researching the Han
6 Athabaskan people found, he was doing archival research
7 in New York and found an army officer's journal, a guy
8 who had lived with the Han in 1910 and that guy
9 described people going around, men, making raven noises
10 to attract brown bear because ravens often alert
11 hunters to the presence of the carcass. And they knew
12 that this wouldn't attract young bears because they
13 wouldn't have learned about raven calls yet and so this
14 is what the army officer documented about the Han
15 people practicing brown bear harvest in 1910. There's
16 also a really good point made by our beloved former
17 Western Interior Council member, Ray Collins, who spent
18 a lot of time in Nikolai and he talked about customary
19 and traditional use determination and he said when
20 you're doing a C&T on an animal like bear brown that is
21 limited opportunistic use it seems to me that it's
22 self-regulating. People are choosing not to use it
23 very often. It's sufficient reason to find that there
24 maybe isn't C&T in some people's minds, but living in
25 Nikolai we used brown bear in potlatches, use has
26 declined, but has never stopped. And it's especially
27 prized by some of the older men and just eaten by them.
28 So it seems to me if you make a C&T finding based on
29 the fact that the subsistence user determines whether
30 they want to hunt it or not, if it's available or not
31 and depending on what else is available, just because
32 there's not a lot of use doesn't mean it's not a
33 customary and traditional use species.

34
35 So those are some of the highlights of
36 this customary and traditional use proposal request.
37 And, you know, we often focus on the one resource,
38 that's sort of the rule, but we can see in all of the
39 state that salmon harvests are nonexistent or very low
40 and in Eagle and Eagle Village caribou is -- was the --
41 one of the main sources of their diet. And Council
42 members from the two interior regions have also
43 complained that they'd like some variety different from
44 bear in their diet. So it's clear that there is
45 traditional and customary uses of brown bear in Unit
46 20E, it just wasn't something that came up in the C&T
47 radar for these communities, but now it has become
48 important and it's something that they request.
49
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0084

1 That's the end of my presentation.

2 Thank you.

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4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Is
5 there any questions from the Board or Staff on this
6 proposal?

7

8 (No comments)

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
11 your presentation. Next we'll hear the summary of
12 written public comment.

13

14 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

15

16 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
17 There were no written public comments.

18

19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
20 We'll move on to summary of tribal and government,
21 ANCSA corporation consultation.

22

23 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair, Board
24 members. Good afternoon. We did not have any tribal
25 resolutions or letters during the consultation held
26 August 19th and February 18 for that region.

27

28 Thank you.

29

30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
31 Orville. Next tribal, Alaska Native organization
32 testimony.

33

34 (No comments)

35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Again this is
37 an opportunity, anyone affected?

38

39 (No comments)

40

41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: None. Advisory
42 group testimony, comments, summary, Subsistence
43 Resource Commission, State Advisory Committee or any
44 agency working group related to this.

45

46 (No comments)

47

48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Anybody in the
49 public, this would be our cue to fill out a green card

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0085

1 to be recognized to speak. So I guess we'd walk
2 through this as -- this will be our starter.

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Robbin.

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Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
the process there, Robbin. So if there is no public
testimony here or online we'll move to the Council
recommendation.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Through the Chair. WP26-72A, Unit 20A brown bear,
recognize customary and traditional use for Unit 20A
residents. The Council voted to support WP26-72A which
they submitted. They noted that this is somewhat of a
housekeeping proposal and will correct a previous
oversight for the C&T of residents of other units was
recognized for Unit 20E, but not the -- not of the
people who live in Unit 20E. Council members from Unit
20E noted that although brown bear may not -- may not
be frequently tagged, they are harvested
opportunisticly and help contribute to food security
especially as salmon, moose, caribou and sheep
populations decline. Local observations suggest brown
bear populations are increasing and the berry fed bears
are really good eating in the fall. Bear fat can last
all winter and is great for making pie crusts, cookies
and salve. Hides can also be used to make moccasins,
hats and ruffs among other items.

Mr. Chair, I want to end right there
and take a moment to have a moment of silence for one
of our long time EIRAC members who passed away lately,
his name was Don Woodruff. And right up to the last
minute he was alive he was using bear salve to help
heal himself. And I just -- he was a big part of this
proposal and I wanted us all to stand up and give him a
moment of silence if we could.

Thank you.

0086

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Recognize.

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(Moment of silence)

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MR. WRIGHT: Thank you so much. And that's all I have, Mr. Chair.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Charlie. Alaska Department of Fish and Game comments.

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Thank you, sir.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Ben. Any questions from the Board for Ben.

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MS. BOARIO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Fish and Wildlife Service. Thank you, Mr. Mulligan. And I apologize if you're not the right person to answer, it's more of a curiosity, maybe it's just that there's a different process the Board of Game uses, but I'm curious if you know why they had a negative C&T determination. Just looking at kind of the OSM analysis and the ethnographic background wasn't sure if it was just a different process or something else to understand?

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MR. MULLIGAN: Through the Chair, Member Boario. I do not have the answer to that question. We do have our own set of criteria that we use, but as far as the history on what -- how that determination was made, when we go back that far into our own records it requires a lot of pulling of banker boxes and so we have to optimize our time.

MS. BOARIO: Appreciate that. Thank you.

0088

1 seeing none we will open the floor for a motion.

2

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4 MR. STRIKER: Mr. Chair, I move to
5 adopt proposal WP26-72A and if I do receive a second
6 I'll explain my intention of voting in support of my
7 motion.

8

9 MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service
10 seconds.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion's been
made and seconded. You have the floor.

MR. STRIKER: Thank you, sir. National
Park Service supports WP26-72A in deference to the
Eastern Interior RAC. The residents of Unit 20E, Eagle
and Eagle Village, have relied on a wide variety of
subsistence resources for generations. There's clear
ethnographic data which shows that brown and grizzly
bear have been part of the subsistence harvest here of
the Han and rural residents of Eagle and Eagle Village.
Historic accounts include that the harvest of brown
bear was a specialization which required unique
traditional knowledge and a skill for a successful
hunt. Brown bear may not have been used as a staple
food in an area that was rich with caribou and salmon,
it is and was, however, one of many food sources in the
area.

As noted by OSM and RAC members
including the famous Ray Collins, limited use of a
resource does not indicate that there is no customary
and traditional pattern of use. Instead when
considering customary and traditional use
determinations it's important to remember that reliance
on various species changes over time. Fish and
wildlife populations fluctuate as we've heard and rural
Alaskans harvest what is available to them. Currently
Eagle and Eagle Village are adapting to decreased
population of salmon and caribou. This situation, like
many across the state that we've heard about, shows the
importance of considering the entire subsistence
harvest and the status of all resources when reviewing
proposals to recognize customary and traditional use
and/or increases or decreases in access to one species.
This is especially critical when the two or three major
species traditionally depended upon by a community are
decreasing at the same time.

0089

1 As the Eastern Interior RAC noted this
2 C&T determination seems to address a previous oversight
3 where the C&T residents of other units was recognized
4 for 20E, but not of the people who live in 20E.
5 Council members from 20E noted that although brown bear
6 may not be frequently targeted they are harvested
7 opportunistic -- opportunistically and help to
8 contribute to food security especially as salmon,
9 moose, caribou and sheep populations decline. Local
10 observations suggest brown bear populations are
11 increasing and as we heard the berry fed bears are
12 really good eating in the fall. The fat can be used
13 all year for many purposes and the hide has many
14 traditional uses as well.

15
16 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

17
18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Mr.
19 Striker. Any Board comments, discussions,
20 deliberations.

21
22 Frank.

23
24 MR. WOODS: Public member Frank Woods.
25 I just want to support this because number 1 there's no
26 conservation concern, it'll also help align the State
27 regulations and address all the problems that are
28 listed. And I agree it would have been nice to have
29 C&T with this, but that's like the formation of
30 statehood, we go back to what was divvied out back then
31 has definitely changed today. So glad that we're
32 addressing this.

33
34 Thank you.

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36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other Board
37 comments.

38
39 (No comments)

40
41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
42 we'll move to a Board vote.

43
44 Anyone oppose this?

45
46 (No opposing votes)

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48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Consensus on
49 this across the Board. Motion carries unanimous.
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0090

1 Thank you.

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And I appreciate Mr. Striker justifying the vote on the record for the Board to make that decision. Thank you for the clarity and making sure we get that on the record. Appreciate it.

We'll move onto the next. Eastern Interior 26-75, Unit 25D moose.

MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the Board. My name's Tom Plank, I'm a Wildlife Biologist in the Office of Subsistence Management and I will be presenting a summary of the analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP26-75 and that's on page 1397 in your books.

Proposal WP26-75 was submitted by the Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council and requests to close moose hunting in 25D remainder to non-Federally-qualified users. The proponent states that the moose density in the area is very sparse and there are conservation concerns for moose. No aerial surveys for moose have been done in Unit 25D remainder since 2015 and the proponent also notes that there are concerns about the ability of Federally-qualified subsistence users to meet their needs for moose due to the low numbers and competition with non-Federally-qualified users. The proponent wants to ensure that the moose population can remain at sustainable levels for harvest for Federally-qualified subsistence users and the closure in neighboring Unit 25D west has been working well for the local residents and proponent feels replicating this in 25D remainder would also help residents of that portion of the unit to be more likely to meet their subsistence needs.

Unit 25D has been divided into Unit 25D West and Unit 25D Remainder since the early 1980s to allow for regulatory schemes that reflect the different status of moose populations. The seasons in Unit 25D Remainder was extended in 1990, 1991, 2010 and again in 2024. In 2024 this Board extended the fall moose season in Unit 25B, 25C and 25D Remainder to close October 15th. In Unit 25D Remainder this extension -- this extends the season by 14 days giving a total of 25 days increased opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users after the State season has closed.

1 Recent -- this was a report that I
2 heard about after the proposal was finished and
3 submitted into the book and normally I wouldn't go into
4 it except for this particular case I wanted to bring it
5 to your attention because I think it's important to
6 this one. There was a survey that was finished in
7 March and the survey -- but it was a spring survey so
8 caution needs to be taken to compare that to previous
9 fall surveys. The survey had an estimated population
10 of 745 with a density of about .25 moose per square
11 mile. Again I only bring this up because it is -- I
12 think it's relevant to this proposal and for the
13 Board's information.
14

15 Prior to that the last survey was in
16 2015 and moose density in Unit 25D Remainder at that
17 time was estimated at .34 moose per square mile and
18 that was a fall survey. Between 1999 and 2015 fall
19 bull/cow ratios in Unit 25D Remainder averaged 64 bulls
20 per 100 cows. In 2015 the fall cow -- calf/cow ratio
21 was extremely high at 80 calves per 100 cows. The
22 habitat is not considered a limiting factor. Unit 25
23 as a whole contains excellent moose habitat and is
24 maintained by wildfires. Predation by wolves and bears
25 may be a limiting factor for the Unit 25 moose
26 population. Moose harvested in Unit 25D Remainder
27 primarily occurs by harvest ticket under State and
28 Federal regulations. As harvest tickets do not have a
29 strict reporting requirement and can be used for
30 general season hunts across the state reported harvest
31 should be considered the minimum. The average annual
32 reported harvest in Unit 25D Remainder from 2015 to
33 2024 was 27 moose. The total number of reported
34 hunters during the same time period averaged 80 per
35 year with 74 being residents of Alaska. Most of the
36 reported moose harvest in Unit 25D Remainder occurs
37 during the second and third weeks of September. Any
38 harvest reported after September 20th is by Federally-
39 qualified subsistence users as the State season is
40 closed.
41

42 One alternative to consider was to
43 consider a winter moose season of February 18th to 28th
44 to align with the State regulations. Currently Federal
45 regulations have a December moose season while State
46 regulations have a February moose season in 25D
47 Remainder. Establishing a February season under
48 Federal regulations would provide additional
49 opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users
50

0092

1 and would reduce regulatory complexity by aligning
2 State and Federal winter seasons. However this
3 modification is outside the scope of the proposal.

4

5 Next slide.

6

7 Another alternative considered after
8 the fall, 2025 Eastern Interior Council meeting was to
9 establish a targeted closure along river corridors
10 during the fall hunt, specifically a 10 mile corridor,
11 five miles either side, along the Yukon River and five
12 mile corridor two and a half miles on either side along
13 Birch Creek including the upper and lower mouths,
14 Sheenjek River to river mile 60, the Porcupine River,
15 Black River and Chandalar Rivers from September 10th to
16 the 20th.

17

18 Next slide.

19

20 As you can see on this map that just
21 pulled up.

22

23 So if Wildlife Proposal WP26-75 is
24 adopted Federal public lands in Unit 25D Remainder will
25 be closed to the harvest of moose by non-Federally-
26 qualified users and all users that live within 25D West
27 and outside Unit 25, only Federally-qualified
28 subsistence users, those with a customary and
29 traditional use determination for moose in Unit 25D
30 Remainder would be able to harvest moose on Federal
31 public lands in Unit 25D Remainder. This would
32 decrease competition between user groups and could
33 provide more opportunity for Federally-qualified
34 subsistence users to harvest moose in Unit 25D
35 Remainder possibly enhancing the chances of successful
36 hunts. However information on the number of moose
37 harvested by Federally-qualified subsistence users
38 versus non-Federally-qualified users in Unit 25D
39 Remainder is currently unknown. While the majority of
40 moose harvested in Unit 25D Remainder occur by Alaska
41 residents OSM is unaware of how many of these are by
42 rural versus non-rural hunters. Additionally non-
43 Federally-qualified users would still be able to
44 harvest moose on non-Federal lands in Unit 25D
45 Remainder which notably occur around most of the
46 villages in the area and therefore closure of Federal
47 lands may worsen any existing user conflicts or
48 competition issues by concentrating non-Federally-
49 qualified subsistence users on the non-Federal lands

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0093

1 close to villages.

2

3

4 Furthermore adoption of WP26-75 would
5 close Federal lands during the State's February moose
6 hunt as there is no corresponding February hunt under
7 Federal regulations. This would reduce opportunity for
8 Federally-qualified subsistence users to harvest a
9 moose from the Federal public lands during February.
10 Federally-qualified subsistence users already have an
11 additional three and a half weeks of hunting
12 opportunity in late September and early October when
13 State seasons have closed and an additional two weeks
14 of hunting opportunity in late August and early
15 September before the State season opens although the
16 early season opportunity is not very meaningful due to
17 warmer falls, delayed ruts and concerns about meat
18 spoilage. Federally-qualified subsistence users also
19 have 10 days of additional opportunity in December when
20 State seasons are closed. Impacts to the moose
21 population and conservation concerns are uncertain due
22 to the lack of data and the most -- and prior to what I
23 just said earlier before that the most recent
24 biological data is 10 years old.

24

25

26 So OSM's conclusion is neutral on
27 Proposal WP26-75 as modified by OSM to close moose
28 hunting by non-Federally-qualified users from September
29 10th through the 20th within a targeted closure area of
30 Unit 25D Remainder consisting of the 10 mile corridor
31 along the Yukon River and five mile corridors along
32 Birch Creek including upper and lower mouths, the
33 Sheenjek River to river mile 60, the Porcupine River,
34 Black River and the Chandalar River. User conflicts in
35 Unit 25D Remainder are well acknowledged, but
36 disagreements persist on how best to address them.
37 This modification would provide increased opportunity
38 for Federally-qualified subsistence users by reducing
39 competition with non-Federally-qualified users for the
40 entirety of the fall moose season in the area most
41 hunted by local subsistence users and when most of the
42 user conflicts occur. This targeted closure also
43 addresses concerns expressed by the Council and would
44 not negatively affect a few of the individuals who
45 commented during the Council's fall meeting. It also
46 prevents the unnecessary closure of all Federal public
47 lands in Unit 25D Remainder since as previously stated
48 the areas most necessary for continuation of
49 subsistence uses are along the rivers where local
50 residents access moose by boat during the fall. Very

50

0094

1 little moose harvest occurs during the winter hunt and
2 a year round closure reduces opportunity for Federally-
3 qualified subsistence users to hunt Federal public
4 lands in February under State regulations. However
5 this alternative may still not alleviate all user
6 conflicts and could even worsen them. While almost all
7 land along major rivers in Unit 25D Remainder are
8 either Federal or Native owned lands, non-Federally-
9 qualified users could still harvest moose on gravel
10 bars below the mean high water mark as these are State
11 managed lands. Without the Federal lands to hunt non-
12 Federally-qualified users may become even more
13 concentrated along the rivers themselves exaggerating
14 conflict.

15

16 Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the
17 Board. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

18

19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
20 the presentation, Scott [sic]. Any questions or
21 comments from the Board.

22

23 Sara.

24

25 MS. BOARIO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
26 Fish and Wildlife Service. Thank you, Tom, for the
27 thorough report. You may not have this answer, but I'm
28 curious. You spoke to and the analysis captures the
29 well-acknowledged user conflicts, it has a section that
30 says Council members, State and Federal agency Staff,
31 tribal representatives and public testifiers all
32 acknowledge user conflicts are a concern. Did -- and
33 then yesterday in the tribal testimony we heard kind of
34 a suggestion that maybe various efforts have been made
35 in the past to address those. Did you find anything in
36 your analysis, in your work about those past efforts
37 and what they were?

38

39 MR. PLANK: Tom Plank, OSM. Thank you,
40 Member Sara. Give me a second, let me look and confer
41 with the anthropologist on it because I -- off the top
42 of my head I'm not remembering so give me a second.

43

44 MS. BOARIO: Thank you.

45

46 MS. WILLIAMS: Member Boario, through
47 the Chair, this is Liz Williams, Anthropologist with
48 OSM. As far as documentation of user conflict or
49 addressing user conflict is that I sort of will defer
50

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1 to the Chair of the Eastern Interior Council, but I
2 will say that there are years and years of Council
3 transcript documentation of these conflicts. And not
4 just in the Eastern Interior, but, you know, there's a
5 whole series of documents created by tribes and by
6 Subsistence Division researchers that sort of portray
7 or not portray, but actually delineate the evolution of
8 user conflicts. Stevens Village Land Management Plan
9 talks about fur trappers, gold miners, people
10 infiltrating the land where they weren't seen before.
11 So that's an early step. Steamboat captains, people
12 harvesting animals for their crews. But probably one
13 of the most impactful of course was the Dalton Highway.
14 That was told -- people were told that it would not be
15 open to the public, but then it was. And the Yukon
16 River bridge is a major point of access for people with
17 the means to bring big boats, hovercraft type stuff,
18 that gets them into areas that are almost impenetrable.
19 And so this -- you could write 25 long series on this
20 sort of evolution because it just keeps growing as
21 access grows as has been discussed for the whole two
22 days of this meeting so far. So other parts of the
23 State have tried to work on hunter education programs
24 to work with people from other places to hunt like in
25 Alaska and to be cognizant. They have met with people
26 in airports as they come and go and funding seems to
27 disappear for those.

28
29 So that concludes my remarks. Thanks.

30
31 MS. BOARIO: Thank you, Liz. I
32 appreciate that.

33
34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
35 questions from the Board for Tom.

36
37 (No comments)

38
39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
40 the presentation, Tom.

41
42 MS. PITKA: I don't have a question,
43 just a comment. So what the anthropologist was
44 referring to was a moose management cooperative that
45 CATG worked on for many years. We had a lot of funding
46 through Federal agencies to come up with this moose
47 management plan. And we also had funding from I think
48 it was called Eyes on the Bush. It was a program put
49 out by Land Stewardship, Land Conservation something or
50

0096

1 other, they would have people in Circle and at the Fort
2 Yukon airport to greet hunters every year and to pass
3 out information to make sure that hunters that were
4 flying into the areas were well informed. There was
5 quite a lot of outreach to no avail. Hunters keep
6 coming into the area and disrespecting not only the
7 local people, but leaving a lot of garbage and other
8 things that really make it difficult for local people
9 to harvest in our own area. The conflicts listed and
10 the amount of residents with permits as 74 is -- that
11 means all Alaska residents, that doesn't mean residents
12 of the village itself. The permit numbers for those
13 particular village, I think that probably Ben Mulligan
14 has those numbers available at some point.

15

16 Thank you.

17

18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other Board
19 comment.

20

21 (No comments)

22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
24 We'll move on to the summary of written public comment.
25 There was none?

26

27 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tom
28 Plank, OSM. There were no written public comments
29 submitted here in the open period.

30

31 Thank you.

32

33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
34 Next we'll move on to summary of tribal government and
35 ANCSA corporation consultation.

36

37 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
38 Orville Lind, Native Liaison for OSM. During the
39 consultation sessions there were no questions or
40 concerns on this proposal. We had one support. The
41 Tribal Council of Athabaskan Tribal Governments were in
42 support of that proposal and that information is under
43 Tab 2 in the materials.

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

46

47 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

48

49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing or

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0097

1 seeing no questions we'll move on to the tribal, Alaska
2 Native, organization testimony. And just for order of
3 process here we did receive a public comment in support
4 of Proposal WP26-75 from the Tanana Chiefs Conference,
5 but they represent 42 member communities, 39 villages
6 and 37 Federally recognized tribes across 235,000
7 square miles of the interior. And so they submitted a
8 letter of testimony in support.

9

10 Robbin.

11

12 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We
13 have two people in the queue with their hands raised
14 for tribal and Native organization testimony. The
15 first is Diloola Erickson.

16

17 MS. ERICKSON: Good afternoon, can you
18 hear me?

19

20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

21

22 MS. ERICKSON: Good afternoon. Through
23 the Chair and to the Board. My name is Diloola
24 Erickson. My family comes from Kaltag or
25 (indiscernible) out on the Yukon River. I work for
26 Tanana Chiefs Conference as the Tribal Resource
27 Stewardship Department Director and I just wanted to
28 submit public comment on behalf of Tanana Chiefs.
29 Thank you for noting that you received our letter this
30 morning.

31

32 So Tanana Chiefs is a tribal
33 consortium, we represent 42 member communities
34 including 39 villages, 37 Federally recognized tribes
35 across approximately 235,000 square miles of Interior
36 Alaska. We provide direct services and policy advocacy
37 for more than 18,000 Alaska Native people and we have
38 long served as a unified tribal voice in support of our
39 traditional ways of life including the protection of
40 fish and wildlife resources that are essential to
41 subsistence, food security, continuity and tribal
42 sovereignty. And we wanted to submit public comment on
43 behalf of Tanana Chiefs in support of Wildlife Proposal
44 26-75.

45

46 Moose remain a critical subsistence
47 resource for communities across our region. They
48 provide essential food security and are deeply
49 connected to cultural practices that have been

50

0098

1 sustained for generations. Current conditions across
2 Interior Alaska continue to reflect conservation
3 concerns and increasing challenges for Federally-
4 qualified subsistence users working to meet their
5 subsistence needs. In times of low abundance increased
6 competition can make it more difficult for rural
7 residents to access this essential resource. A
8 precautionary approach that reduces competition is both
9 appropriate and necessary under these conditions.

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TCC has consistently supported management actions that prioritize subsistence use and help ensure long term sustainability. This proposal aligns with these established priorities. We also recognize that similar closures in adjacent areas including Unit 25D West have helped improve opportunities for local residents to meet their subsistence needs. Extending this approach to the remainder of Unit 25D is a reasonable and consistent step forward.

I want to thank the Board and the members of the Regional Advisory Councils for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of this proposal.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for taking the time to call in. Any questions from the Board.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I appreciate you taking the time. Robbin, next in the queue.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you. Next in the queue is Kayleen Ward Peter.

Thank you.

MS. PETER: Hi, everyone. My name is Kayleen Ward Peter, I'm a tribal council member for the Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government. Can you guys hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

0099

1 MS. PETER: Okay. I just wanted to
2 call and show my support for WP26-75 for Unit 25D to --
3 the proposal to the alternative to close moose hunting
4 along the river corridors. I just wanted to submit my
5 opinions and for others in my region that Federally-
6 qualified subsistence users should have priority for
7 hunting moose. And I was listening to the report just
8 now and I believe that proposal would benefit our
9 Native people to maintain our moose populations.

10

11 Let me see. We do have issues -- I
12 mean, I've heard many stories of our people getting
13 buzzed by planes from outside hunters and we constantly
14 have rafts coming down our rivers and sometimes we
15 don't know if they took all the meat when they hunt and
16 things like that. And it's -- I've heard many stories
17 of how sometimes non-Federally subsistence hunters
18 would buzz villages or they'd be seen buzzing animals
19 like caribou. And I know this is about moose and I
20 just want to say that on behalf of our people we
21 understand the need to keep our moose healthy for not
22 only our communities throughout the whole Yukon Flats
23 and everywhere else in Alaska. These are, you know,
24 things that are being watched and we do need Native
25 surveys and everything for our region, but our people
26 really depend heavily on moose year after year for our
27 families.

28

29 And I just really wanted to say that on
30 behalf of all of our communities and our future
31 generations thank you for coming up with a proposal
32 that could help the non-Federally -- I mean, the
33 Federally-qualified subsistence users and I agree with
34 this proposal.

35

36 Thank you.

37

38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
39 taking the time to call in. Any questions from the
40 Board.

41

42 (No comments)

43

44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right. You
45 have a good day. Any others online, Robbin.

46

47 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For
48 anybody online wanting to make a comment, right now
49 this is the open mic for tribal and Native organization

50

0100

1 testimony. If you are representing a tribal or Native
2 organization press star, five to raise your hand.

3

4

(No comments)

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Next we move to the Advisory Group testimony and comment summary, Resource Advisory Committees, et cetera.

MS. LAVINE: Mr. Chair, there is someone online who has raised their hand as an Advisory Group representative.

And so the one person who has raised their hand online would you please unmute by pressing star, six and address the Board. And the last four digits of your number is 8141.

MS. KAIGELAK: Hello.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hello. You have the floor. Please state your name for the record.

MS. KAIGELAK: For the record my name is Bernice Kaigelak, I'm from Nuiqsut, Alaska. I'm part of Kuukpik Corporation and I'm also a tribal member of the Native Village of Nuiqsut. And we had things happening in our community the last few days so we couldn't attend until now. So I would like to know -- I know there are some talks that people do for predator control, but out here, you know, there's some cases where 15 caribou were killed by a pack of wolves. So it's been long-standing that our people would have a balance by controlling predators when food is scarce. And I understand the need to protect animals, but sometimes protection is not enough or over protecting like for instance when you over protect the sea lions they kill all the little fish and, you know, you have a fish problem or you don't control the fish that eat other fish in the river, you have no fish. So I think our people have long took care of our land for many, many millennia. And when it's out of balance it creates havoc like it is right now. I noticed there's a lot of brown bears, lots of brown bears now. Those need to be addressed as well, the other predators for the caribou. And if we keep at this pace they may not recover.

So I just wanted to point that out.

0101

1 And thank you, I'll try to read more on what's online
2 and what's passed, but I'm an active hunter, I'm a
3 whaler and I thank you for all your hard work.

4

5 Thank you.

6

7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
8 Bernice. Any questions from the Board.

9

10 (No comments)

11

12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
13 seeing none, appreciate your comments today. Any other
14 online.

15

16 (No comments)

17

18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing or
19 seeing none so move on to the opportunity for public
20 testimony on this proposal either online or by blue
21 card. And there is one.

22

23 Robbin.

24

25 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
26 Mark Richards with the Fairbanks AC is online. And so
27 I suppose he can start of the public testimony.

28

29 Thank you.

30

31 MR. RICHARDS: Can you hear me, Mr.
32 Chairman?

33

34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have
35 the floor.

36

37 MR. RICHARDS: Okay. Thank you. For
38 the record my name is Mark Richards. I'm the Executive
39 Director of Resident Hunters of Alaska. And I'm
40 actually representing Resident Hunters of Alaska, not
41 the Fairbanks Advisory Committee. I'm representing
42 over 3,500 members from across the state. What we do
43 is we advocate for sustainable wildlife management
44 policies with an emphasis on protecting and enhancing
45 the hunting opportunities of all Alaskans no matter
46 where they live.

47

48 We oppose Wildlife Proposal WP26-75.
49 We understand that moose are a vitally important
50

0102

1 resource to those living in Game Management Unit 25D
2 Remainder and the surrounding areas, but we don't see
3 how this proposal will really help local federally-
4 qualified subsistence hunters catch more moose.
5 Federally-qualified users in this area already have a
6 much longer season on Federal lands, they can hunt for
7 52 days in the fall whereas non-Federally-qualified
8 users can only hunt 11 days under State regulations.
9 There already is a strong rural priority in this area.
10 The real problem with catching moose in this area is
11 that it's one of the lowest density moose populations
12 in the state. Also not helping is the high population
13 of black bears.

14
15 The way this proposal was modified
16 after OSM originally opposed it to where OSM is now
17 neutral is also a concern. The changes to this
18 proposal to create river corridors where only
19 Federally-qualified users can hunt on Federal lands
20 doesn't really change the affects it would have on non-
21 Federally-qualified users. No one is going to go that
22 far off the river to catch a moose. And since these
23 waterways are State lands to the high water mark, if
24 this proposal passes all it will do is create conflicts
25 along the rivers between Federally and non-Federally-
26 qualified users.

27
28 One last thing, Mr. Chairman, that I
29 wanted to point out and I'll point it out on some other
30 proposals later in the meeting, when these type of
31 proposals prohibit non-Federally-qualified users, we
32 never see any evidence down the line whether it
33 actually led to more moose being caught by local
34 Federally-qualified hunters. We have no way of knowing
35 if it worked. There needs to be some kind of required
36 ARLIS data collection by Federal agencies and working
37 with the Department of Fish and Game if these type of
38 proposals pass. Show it worked or it didn't. If we
39 really believed this proposal would help more local
40 Federally-qualified hunters catch more moose we would
41 support, but we just don't see that, Mr. Chairman.

42
43 Thank you very much for the opportunity
44 to comment.

45
46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate your
47 comments and I appreciate how you broke it down to
48 modified and original. And so when we do recognize
49 that here in the room too as well, any questions from
50

0103

1 the Board.

2

3 (No comments)

4

5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate you
6 taking the time to call in and sharing your point of
7 view today.

8

9 Thank you.

10

11 At this time any public testimony?

12

13 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We
14 have a Grant Kopplin on the line and then after Grant
15 is Carrie Stevens.

16

17 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

18

19 MR. KOPPLIN: Hi, there, my name is
20 Grant Kopplin. Can you guys hear me?

21

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

23

24 MR. KOPPLIN: Hey. Well, thank you for
25 the opportunity to give public testimony today. I
26 wanted to call in and just give comment that personally
27 I would oppose both this proposal and the amended
28 version from the office of OSM mainly because as Mark
29 pointed out the amended proposal includes the main
30 travel corridors that lots of other Alaska residents
31 would utilize to hunt as well. And I notice looking at
32 the land ownership maps that there's significant tribal
33 land surrounding the villages that already offer a
34 pretty significant buffer where.....

35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You still have
37 the floor. There's a bleep in our system.

38

39 MR. KOPPLIN: Okay. Can you guys still
40 hear me?

41

42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

43

44 MR. KOPPLIN: Okay. As I was saying,
45 you know, I understand that the villages around there
46 should have a priority and as Mark pointed out I think
47 they do with their longer seasons and opportunity than
48 any other resident that doesn't live in Unit 25. And
49 looking at the land ownership map I can already see

50

0104

1 that there's significant tribal land in Unit 25 and
2 along these river corridors where there should be no
3 other competition than people who are allowed to
4 utilize those private lands. I believe that closing
5 the rest of the Federal public lands to other Alaska
6 residents doesn't do anything other than just harm the
7 other Alaska residents who live here and also need to
8 utilize these resources.

9
10 One of the points that was brought up
11 by a previous comment was about the predator control.
12 Obviously the moose density is very sparse in that
13 area, it sounds like has been for a long time. It
14 sounds like in large part that's due to the large
15 population of brown bears and black bears and other
16 predators. From what I know about the area, it sounds
17 like it's great moose habitat and what I've been told
18 by area biologists, but it seems like the moose
19 population is stuck in a predator pit and could really
20 benefit from having some predator management done to
21 control these bear numbers to allow the moose
22 population to increase to a level that I think would
23 ultimately help the rural communities and rural users
24 more so than trying to eliminate competition from other
25 users like other Alaska residents who want to utilize
26 the Federal public lands in 25D Remainder along the
27 river corridor.

28
29 So I know with it being a Refuge that
30 might be difficult, but I would just urge the rural
31 communities and users to work with their Federal
32 managers and through their governments to try to work
33 with the Federal government to implement some sort of
34 predator control program to help increase and improve
35 the moose population in that area. I truly believe
36 that if there were more moose on the landscape there
37 would be less problem. I don't think removing a few
38 non-local hunters like people from Fairbanks or other
39 parts of Alaska who live on the road system is
40 ultimately going to improve their experience as much as
41 improving the moose population in the area.

42
43 So I know there's been several other
44 people that have commented on that as well so I just
45 urge the Board and rural users and communities to seek
46 that out because I think that would be the ultimate and
47 more appropriate fix rather than trying to close off
48 what public land there is out there to other Alaskans.

49
50

0105

1 So thank you for your time.

2

3

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
4 taking the time to call in. Any questions from the
5 Board, comments.

6

7

Frank.

8

9

MR. WOODS: So Frank Woods, public
10 member. You had a comment that number 1 I'm looking at
11 the -- you attended the meetings for the area and you
12 referenced -- what I was listening to was a report from
13 ADF&G, what I'm reading on page 1408 the harvest --
14 number of hunters in the harvest reports. In 2024
15 there were 58 permits and 52 residents harvested those
16 and six non-residents, but in the analysis it
17 references in 2025 that 50 percent of the hunters were
18 -- 50 percent, was there that big of an increase from
19 non-resident hunting in 2024 and 2025? I'm trying to
20 wrap my head around the actual numbers I'm hearing and
21 what's on the paper here. So on page 1408 it talks
22 about a harvest report and then on 1410 or no -- and in
23 the same report it lists -- there was a 50 percent non-
24 resident hunter permits being issued. I'm trying to
25 look at the numbers to help educate myself on what's
26 actually happening.

27

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So on 1408.....

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Tom, I was
going to go ahead and just lean into Staff and see if
Tom -- oh, Tom's right there. I thought he was sitting
over here.

MR. WOODS: So, Mr. Chair, I just want
to clarify. Yes, on 1408 it talks about 58 hunters,
six were non-resident and then 1410 it references
during the fall meeting ADF&G biologists presented
information hunter numbers by residency which showed
roughly 50 percent of the reported moose hunters in
Unit 25D from the 2020 were non-Federally-qualified
users. So that doesn't -- the numbers don't add up if
you understand what I'm saying.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Tom.

MR. PLANK: Through the Chair. For the
record Tom Plank, OSM. So the difference you're seeing
there is the top number, that is residents of Alaska

0106

1 and non-residents of Alaska. And then when you get
2 down to the analysis addendum that breaks it down
3 between Federally-qualified users, local users and non-
4 Federally-qualified users. Does that help clarify --
5 clear it up for you, sir?

6
7 MR. WOODS: Yeah, that's clearer now.
8 Thank you.

9
10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Tom.
11 Any more, Frank?

12
13 MR. WOODS: No.

14
15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: And thank you
16 for calling in today as well. Robbin, is there another
17 one online?

18
19 Thank you. Recognize them.

20
21 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We
22 have another hand raised by Diloola. Diloola, you
23 may.....

24
25 MS. ERICKSON: Good afternoon. I just
26 wanted to comment on behalf of myself and the -- as a
27 public member on this wildlife proposal and express my
28 support of it. I think it's important to note when
29 making these decisions that the Eastern Interior RAC
30 which is made up of members that represent the area
31 have identified this as a need and a priority. I think
32 some of the other solutions around ways that you could
33 increase moose population are valid and they're
34 accurate and they should be explored and pursued.
35 However we need to control the things we can control
36 and reducing hunting pressure from non-Federally-
37 qualified users and those who don't depend on a
38 subsistence resource for their livelihood is an
39 appropriate step to betaking. I think especially with
40 the current situation we are in with the salmon crisis
41 on the Yukon that has allowed for zero subsistence
42 harvest on the Yukon by Federally-qualified users for
43 the last number of years when salmon has been
44 historically about 50 percent of people's diets in
45 rural communities, it's really important that we be
46 protecting the resources that we have and ensuring that
47 the people who depend on them the most have access to
48 them first.

49
50

0107

1 So I just wanted to make that comment
2 as a public member in my support of this proposal.

3

4 Thank you.

5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. And
7 is this in support of the modification as presented by
8 OSM for the record?

9

10 MS. ERICKSON: Yes, for the record.

11 Thank you.

12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
14 Anybody else wanting to be recognized online.

15

16

17 (No comments)

18

19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
20 in-house we have Carrie Stevens.

21

22 MS. STEVENS: There's a camera between
23 us. Thank you through the Chair and for the Federal
24 Subsistence Board, I appreciate your service and the
25 opportunity to weigh in here today. For the record my
26 name is Carrie Stevens and I am speaking on my own
27 behalf as a member of the public.

28

29 As I've mentioned previously and for
30 those of you who don't know me just a -- where I am
31 coming from in my perspective. Yesterday I shared with
32 you that my family is from Stevens Village which is in
33 25D West, but I also lived in Gwichyaa Zhee, Fort
34 Yukon, for 14 years. I lived in Arctic Village and I
35 traveled to all the villages within the Yukon Flats for
36 over 20 years. So this is kind of an area very near
37 and dear and close to my heart for the people of that
38 area. And so I just wanted you to know that I lived in
39 25D Remainder for many, many years although it's really
40 just a blink of a eye so I thank Gwichyaa Zhee for
41 putting up with me.

42

43 At any rate I appreciate the other
44 public testimonies and I also really want to thank our
45 anthropologist, Liz, for bringing up additional issues
46 regarding access earlier.

47

48 As has been mentioned the entirety of
49 the Yukon Flats, 25D West, which has been under Federal

50

0108

1 closure and is on your consensus agenda for quite some
2 time, I think as long as I've been around and it's a
3 Tier II on the State side, and 25D Remainder, the
4 entirety of the Yukon Flat is an ecosystem. It is the
5 third largest Refuge in the nation. It is a flats that
6 progresses up to the Brooks Range in the north and the
7 White Mountains in the south. I say that because the
8 people of the Yukon Flats have been working day and
9 night for decades with the State and with the Feds on a
10 Yukon Flats Cooperative Moose Management Plan. It has
11 been recognized for decades as was said today that this
12 is a very depressed moose population, the density is
13 low. One of the things we have to be proud of is high
14 twinning rates, we do have high twinning rates, but
15 even with the amazing cow moose productivity we still
16 suffer low density. Why and without question as I
17 recall every wildlife season with all of you is many
18 studies by the Refuge have demonstrated low quality
19 moose browse. It's not just around 25D West, it is the
20 entirety of the ecosystem. The region simply cannot
21 support a higher moose density biologically. Our other
22 testifiers who oppose the proposal also spoke to this.

23

24 Additionally the Yukon Flats has an
25 inordinate amount of wolves and big animals. This is
26 their country and for all of you who are trappers you
27 know you can spend a lot of time and a lot of energy in
28 this vast ecosystem on wolves. And the trappers do
29 that live there, the Federally-qualified users day in
30 and day out work at balance, both the big animal, my
31 husband's way I shouldn't call it so I won't, and the
32 wolves. There have been many studies by ADF&G area
33 biologists, by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the
34 numbers and it's been encouraged by the Refuge to
35 increase take by local trappers. We've even received
36 Fish and Wildlife funding over the years to support the
37 Yukon Flats Moose Management Plan. We used to have big
38 animal derbies and try to support trappers. So I do
39 not want the impression that this is not a priority of
40 the local hunters, it absolutely is what they do all
41 day. And what we often find around -- all across
42 Alaska is that our local indigenous first stewards work
43 at balance all day long and when they work at balance
44 and populations improve they're often not the ones who
45 benefit.

46

47 And so just a point made from some of
48 the last comments there that absolutely tribal
49 governments, local hunters are trapping as much as they

50

0109

1 can afford very expensive gas and they are taking out
2 the big animals. It's also a very cultural practice
3 and there's no waste. So they're not going to take out
4 an animal and not use it.

5

6 So I just want to be very clear, I,
7 myself for the first time rendered grease two years ago
8 and, you know, everybody was happy because that's how
9 they grew up with that grease from the big animal. So
10 there is use and there are constant on the ground
11 approaches to keeping balance between predators and the
12 moose. This is a vast ecosystem and they run that
13 river corridor, man, they own it, they run right by me
14 and they run all the way down to the bridge. So
15 they're really out there and the men are working.

16

17 Actually after I spoke yesterday during
18 tribal consultation, again I want to point out that
19 just because you don't have a huge number of hunters
20 sitting here from the region doesn't mean they care
21 [sic]. My messages were blowing up, thanking me,
22 calling for antler destruction, calling for the
23 closure. They're not used to these spaces and that's
24 why, you know, I utilize my own privilege to sit here
25 and speak for them. It's a huge concern as is the
26 increase in looking at the RS247s and the corridor that
27 there could be even more increased traffic brought to
28 this area. So I just want to say biologically this
29 region has had a depressed moose population for
30 decades, that's not new and that's well documented.
31 And again the State, the Feds and the tribes have had a
32 cooperative moose management plan for decades. It
33 falls off the radar, there's no funding, can't support
34 it, yada, yada. So that's a -- the biological fact out
35 there.

36

37 I also want to say that I don't take a
38 closure lightly. I know you don't take a closure
39 lightly, I know it's really important that you have the
40 facts and that you have as much information as
41 possible. And I want to say that I support WP26-75
42 without modification and I'll get to that in a minute,
43 but it is important to consider and I'm just going to
44 repeat some things for the record that have been said.
45 Subsistence needs are not being met. One of the things
46 that we worked on many years in Fort Yukon, ADF&G has
47 written multiple technical reports, is that we know the
48 harvest ticket system doesn't work, it's not an
49 accurate count. So to the point of not knowing if
50

0110

1 closures help maybe somebody should refund the tribes,
2 they used to be funded, to do moose harvest survey.
3 That was the only way we had accurate numbers. Again
4 the State's written multiple technical documents saying
5 that it doesn't work, the harvest reporting and ticket
6 system. And so I really encourage if we want adequate
7 harvest numbers for 25D West or 25D Remainder that we
8 fund harvest surveys.

9

10 In that same regard there are no
11 salmon. That was the primary protein source of the
12 region and there is absolute increased reliance by
13 Federally-qualified subsistence users for food for
14 moose. And I really appreciate pointing out how could
15 this number be right. We're hearing, you know, by
16 testimony oh, it's only a couple of non-local, non-
17 Federally-qualified hunters, and it's half of the
18 people on the landscape. Now between is it September
19 10th and 22nd approximate, you guys have it down there,
20 the State season, oh, they have a shorter opportunity
21 and so Federally-qualified users do have increased
22 access. Well, that may be true, but all of our hunters
23 in the area know your best chance of getting a moose is
24 right there in the middle of that prime hunting season.
25 You go early, they're not moving yet. That's a lot of
26 work, you got to pack your meat a long ways. You go
27 late, your moose might not taste the way you want your
28 moose to taste. That's not a good meat, they could be
29 run thin, they're less fat. So we are giving the
30 primary, you know, best time to take the moose is 50
31 percent more people on the land. So, you know, I just
32 -- I really need to express that. I appreciate you
33 giving me a little extra time here because I feel like
34 we didn't get that much public testimony so I just want
35 to speak to it with the hunters -- you know, I do hang
36 out with hunters. So I don't always wear a blazer.

37

38 So, you know, there is a significant
39 amount of trespass in the Yukon Flats on Alaska Native
40 lands. We know that by law if it's not marked every --
41 what is it, 40, hundred yards, it's not their problem.
42 So we have dramatic trespass, we have dramatic hunter
43 conflict. Why, because people are hungry. You're
44 hungry, you spent two paychecks, maybe three on gas,
45 you got no fish and there's some guy you never seen
46 before in your camp. It's not a good situation, you
47 can imagine. So the Federally-qualified users in 25D
48 Remainder are suffering and they really are under great
49 stress. That's -- there's equal number of outside
50

0111

1 hunters, non-Federally-qualified users as there are
2 qualified users.

3

4

5 Now to the point of, you know, the
6 folks that spend their winters out there, the trappers
7 who aren't Federally-qualified users, I just want to
8 say that I really honor them, I think they should work
9 with the tribes, I think they should, you know,
10 consider the State season and working with the tribes
11 and the ANCs, you know, I don't know anybody more kind
12 or giving than Alaska Native people. They like their
13 neighbors and they want to support them so I think that
14 there's a way to help support them even if they're not
15 a Federally-qualified user. So I just want to say that
16 I have -- really have heard all sides of this argument,
17 I know that a closure is a big decision, but the bottom
18 line is subsistence needs in 25D Remainder are not
19 being met. Most people in 25D Remainder have to hunt
20 as multiple families, multiple hunters to afford the
21 gas. They get back, they have maybe if they're lucky a
22 hind quarter for their family. We all know that's not
23 going to get you through a winter with no salmon. So
24 subsistence needs are not being met in the area. The
25 non-local, non-Federally-qualified number of hunters is
26 significant and the region has proven as we heard from
27 everybody who testified, it cannot biologically sustain
28 an increased moose population.

28

29

30 So for those reasons I support WP26-75
31 with a heavy heart and without the OSM modification. I
32 appreciate OSM trying to come to a solution, but I'm
33 afraid it will create utter confusion, chaos and as
34 we've heard again and again increased hunter conflict.
35 And so I really appreciate you giving me the
36 opportunity, Chair Christianson and that's my testimony
37 as just me, Carrie.

37

38

Thank you very much.

39

40

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
41 that, Carrie. Any questions from the Board for Carrie.

42

43

Frank.

44

45

MR. WOODS: So, Carrie, thank you for
46 your testimony. And 25 Remainder, that's all Native
47 land if you look at the map, that's Native corporation
48 land?

49

50

0112

1 MS. STEVENS: Thank you for the
2 question. So in our area not all of it is Alaska
3 Native corporation land. The Venetie lands are not
4 held by a corporation, it's very unique. That is held
5 by the Native Village of Venetie tribal government and
6 it's fee simple title. And so it's just as if I owned
7 a piece of land that big and so it falls under ADF&G
8 jurisdiction as well as ANCSA lands which would be
9 under that State season.

10

11 MR. WOODS: So thank you on that
12 answer. The second thing is corridors. You said you
13 want to support the unmodified proposal, but as we've
14 known for a long time corridors work really well.....

15

16 MS. STEVENS: Uh-huh.

17

18 MR. WOODS:on helping remove the
19 conflicts within -- and I read the report, it might
20 increase the complex, but there are at least -- it
21 gives an opportunity.....

22

23 MS. STEVENS: Uh-huh.

24

25 MR. WOODS:and it -- there's a
26 compromise there. What I'm trying to address is, you
27 know, in our area we have the same -- and all over the
28 state we have the same issues.

29

30 MS. STEVENS: Yeah.

31

32 MR. WOODS: This is a prime example of
33 all the conflict issues that we're going to be facing.
34 Second, if they're not village corporation land, but
35 tribal lands has the alternatives and I haven't heard
36 from OSM or any other proposer or opposer from this
37 proposal that they go before the corporation and Native
38 land ownership. In our area we start restricting
39 access for none -- none shareholders, that we start
40 reserving the rights for prime subsistence use on those
41 Native selected lands for that purpose. And that any
42 word and maybe I'll ask OSM or any other agency has
43 heard that, you know, at least restricting and during
44 like in our area we have an early hunt from August 20th
45 to September 15, we restrict time for non-shareholders
46 basically for that purpose is to provide for our Native
47 people in our village to fill their freezers.....

48

49 MS. STEVENS: Uh-huh.

50

0113

1 MR. WOODS:but we also open it up
2 after that date on a regular hunt for the non -- non-
3 shareholders, non-qualified subsistence users. So
4 there's alternatives and that's why I spoke on this
5 behalf and I'll keep speaking on it that there are
6 solutions at the table that we need to address and
7 listen to because as these conflicts grow we're going
8 to have to get it in not only writing, but in
9 agreement, we're going to have to sit down at the table
10 and start agreeing on alternatives and action
11 items.....

12
13 MS. STEVENS: Uh-huh.

14
15 MR. WOODS:and in law along with
16 State and Federal to address those conflicts. So I
17 appreciate your input and it's a complicated one.

18
19 Thank you.

20
21 MS. STEVENS: Thanks you. Could -- if
22 I could respond real quick. And I really appreciate
23 the comment and I should say that, you know, we also
24 didn't bring up there, these are two of the only roads
25 in the entire region, not only at the bridge below
26 Stevens Village which is 25D West, but also there is a
27 road to Circle and I -- I failed to mention that, which
28 is the main hunting access point. But I just want to
29 say to this point is that it's my understanding
30 trespass has been brought up by the tribes numerous
31 times to in particular their regional ANC Doyon and
32 Doyon takes out a full page I believe spread every
33 hunting season in the Fairbanks Daily News Miner
34 hunting section that their lands are not open to any
35 non-shareholders and that trespass is not allowed. And
36 trespass is a large problem throughout the region and
37 way down river we had huge incidents and the troopers
38 were essentially not interested because they said it's
39 private land. We have non-Native and non-local people
40 camping in people's traditional camps up and down the
41 Yukon. So it's a real ongoing issue.

42
43 You remind me of one thing I failed to
44 mention and I'll be brief is that many hunters -- one
45 of the reasons that I don't support the modification,
46 is because I'm worried about the high water mark and
47 hunters saying they're going anyway and actually
48 creating more conflict in the corridor, but also there
49 were numerous accounts this year of highly increased
50

0114

1 plane traffic and people landing across the Refuge in
2 particular and hunting. Now these are local accounts,
3 you know, I didn't see them myself, but there's a huge
4 concern by hunters that there is a lot of increased air
5 traffic. So I would also say, you know, closures
6 aren't forever, but if you look at one option or the
7 other you also consider what are those reports from the
8 Refuge and at the last cooperative moose management
9 planning meeting I attended which has been a while
10 back, the last one was funded maybe five, 10 years, I'd
11 have to look at my notes, this was a huge issue. And
12 there was a request for increased communication on any
13 permits for guiding or hunting in the Refuge directly
14 with the tribes. That was the suggestion to resolve
15 this issue. The Refuge felt it was a small number, but
16 locals did not feel like it was a small number.

17

18 So thank you, Frank, you jogged my
19 memory. That was my other comment I wanted to make.

20

21 So thank you.

22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
24 Carrie. Hearing and seeing no other questions,
25 appreciate your testimony.

26

27 I don't think we have any more blue
28 cards. We have one hand up. We have Grant Kopplin.
29 He did speak already so we'd ask him -- was he on
30 already?

31

32 MS. LEONETTI: Uh-huh.

33

34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Yeah,
35 we'll give him one more opportunity.

36

37 MR. KOPPLIN: Hi, this is Grant Kopplin
38 again. Thank you for another opportunity. I'm sorry
39 that I didn't recall this extra comment that I wanted
40 to make during my initial testimony, but, you know,
41 something I hope to talk about tomorrow morning when I
42 can give public comment on non-agenda items. You know,
43 unfortunately this system -- I feel like one of the
44 problems that we're facing is that it's pitting Alaska
45 residents against Alaska residents. And this proposal
46 and the modified proposal, I mean, it's -- and the
47 modified proposal essentially for the average Alaska
48 resident is still locking up the entire area. Like,
49 you know, I'm an Alaska resident who's not a Federally-
50

0115

1 qualified subsistence user, but like to travel across
2 the state and utilize our natural resources. And my
3 family -- we live in Palmer, Alaska, but we still try
4 to live a primary subsistence lifestyle and all we eat
5 in our household is game and fish that we're able to
6 harvest. And even the modified proposal is locking
7 essentially to other Alaska residents, you know, the
8 primary travel corridors throughout the area and
9 hundreds of miles of river and public land to other
10 Alaska residents. And so I ask that these decision are
11 not taken lightly because, I mean, that is a large
12 section of the state that's important to other Alaska
13 residents for their subsistence needs even though they
14 don't live in the immediate area.

15

16 And one of the things that I wanted to
17 bring up as well and I'm not sure if the Federal
18 Subsistence Board has this authority or not to, you
19 know, potentially implement a closure to non-residents
20 as in out of state hunters first before implementing a
21 total closure that would include Alaska residents as
22 well who just aren't Federally-qualified subsistence
23 users. I believe that that's a tool that we could try
24 to work with through the Alaska Department of Fish and
25 Game and the Board of Game. It sounds like there's
26 been an uptick in out of state hunters in the area as
27 well. And I feel like that should be the primary group
28 that if we're concerned about, you know, additional
29 pressure in the area that we address first before
30 hamstringing and taking away opportunity from fellow
31 Alaskans.

32

33 So I just ask that that be a
34 consideration, I'm not sure if the Federal Subsistence
35 Board can differentiate a closure between a non-
36 resident of Alaska or not, but if that's a possibility
37 I think that should be on the table. And if it's not I
38 think there is room for more cooperation and, you know,
39 like development of proposals with the Alaska Board of
40 Game to limit that segment of user first to help
41 address some of these issues before we pit Alaskans
42 against Alaskans.

43

44 So again that's just my last comment I
45 wanted to mention. It sounds like there's an uptick in
46 non-resident hunters, whether that's from air
47 transporters and floaters or people running the rivers
48 or what it is or hunting guides, I'm not sure, but it
49 sounded like in the data that that's shown to increase.
50

0116

1 And I feel like that is where maybe we should think
2 about targeting, you know, some restrictions and
3 lessening pressure before a total closure that would
4 affect thousands of other Alaska residents' opportunity
5 on their public lands in their own state for a resource
6 that is supposed to be managed for the benefit of all
7 Alaskans.

8

9 So again and I -- and I sympathize and
10 I do believe that rural residents should have a
11 priority. And, I mean, this -- and I understand that
12 closures are one of those tools, but maybe we can have
13 some sort of tiered closure system where it targets
14 non-residents first. I'm totally in agreement that
15 more liberal seasons, like longer seasons, more liberal
16 bag limits are essential to those rural communities and
17 users, but I just -- I just don't like when we start
18 pitting Alaskans against Alaskans and taking away
19 opportunity from other residents on their own public
20 lands.

21

22 So that's my final comment. Thank you
23 for your time and allowing me to speak again.

24

25 Thank you.

26

27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
28 Grant. And thank you for that additional comment. It
29 jogged my mind as well so I appreciate that testimony
30 there.

31

32 Somebody else is in the queue, we'll
33 recognize them at this time.

34

35 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr.
36 Stanislaus Sheppard, please address the Board.

37

38 MR. SHEPPARD: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
39 My name is Stanislaus Sheppard, born and raised down
40 here in the lower Yukon, Mountain Village. I'm a
41 lifelong subsistence hunt, subsistence -- I live a
42 subsistence lifestyle. I wear a couple hats and one of
43 my jobs I just recently got hired the past two or three
44 years working with U.S. Fish and Wildlife here as a
45 Refuge Information Technician. But I will be speaking
46 on my behalf, I'm not representing the Refuge.

47

48 It hit me real hard when influx of all
49 the hunters, lower 48 come and kind of like take over.

50

0117

1 Past maybe 10, 15 years ago when the lower Yukon
2 started seeing sport hunters coming in. The first year
3 they start arriving with local hunters down here there
4 was an altercation. This guy first time show up he
5 tells a local guy here from Mountain Village who's been
6 hunting in that area all his life get out of here, I'm
7 hunting here, you're not allowed, I'm hunting here.
8 And that brought a can of worms.

9

10 I sat on the Lower Yukon Moose
11 Management Committee as a Chair when we had the moose
12 -- lower Yukon moose moratorium for five years. Before
13 it was adopted there was a lot of opposition, but the
14 Board, they didn't -- they didn't pay attention to the
15 testimonies in opposition, all these lower Yukon
16 communities had. So we went along with this and the
17 Lower Yukon Moose Management Committee was formed. It
18 was hard to deal with when we have our Lower Yukon
19 Moose Management Committee meeting, but we got advice
20 from elders. Those were the key to managing building
21 up the moose population down here in the lower Yukon.
22 I was just wishing we had a workshop and a known elder
23 from Marshal gave traditional knowledge, he said all
24 these committees, that oversee our subsistence way of
25 life, our -- the way we harvest, the way -- what we
26 eat. They make the rules and laws, when, what time and
27 how many to pick up, hunt. He gave example, he took a
28 water bottle, he said this water bottle represents all
29 the traditional knowledge all these elders hold, it's
30 supposed to be sitting in the middle of the table when
31 our -- our food is being talked about. But do you know
32 what's going on right now, the bottle of water is at
33 the end of the table where they don't have any say so.

34

35 So I agree with the closure and I
36 guarantee you that the lower Yukon communities are
37 going to come to this Board here asking to close sport
38 hunters even though Department of Fish and Game say we
39 have a lot of moose down here. The elders say they're
40 not going to last very long. It's like a person that
41 wins a jackpot, he'll have that money four years, maybe
42 the fifth year he go broke. Some people say no, the
43 moose will never run out down here. We see it already
44 upriver. We used to go up the Innoko River for the
45 moratorium we had down here we never go up there
46 anymore. So to help the communities upriver -- and I'm
47 letting you -- giving you the head's up, the lower
48 Yukon's going to have the same problem in the future.

49

50

0118

1 Thank you very much for allowing me to
2 speak.

3

4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
5 Appreciate you calling in and testifying. Any
6 questions from the Board.

7

8 (No comments)

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
11 that elder testimony, appreciate it. That wraps up the
12 public testimony, we'll move on to Council
13 recommendation.

14

15 MR. WRIGHT: I heard a comment a little
16 while ago and thank you, Mr. Chair, for my turn here,
17 but I heard a comment a little while ago to defer to
18 the Chair. And I didn't get a chance, I'd like a
19 chance to say a few words about the closure.

20

21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, definitely.
22 You have the floor, it's on you.

23

24 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you.

25

26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
27 floor.

28

29 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you very much, I've
30 been waiting.

31

32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah.

33

34 MR. WRIGHT: I want to say that as a
35 RAC Chair I got many, many phone calls last fall from
36 the Yukon Flats with concerns of huge amounts of
37 hunters and disrespectful ones. Like you heard Mr.
38 Stanislaus Sheppard say, I'll call the cops on you,
39 I'll call the troopers on you, right away creating
40 conflict and trying to get you out of their way. I
41 have no disrespect for them, but I live in Rampart my
42 whole life and I see thousands of hunters go by every
43 year in both directions going down and then back up.
44 Some boats have 10 people in there, some boats have
45 four boats inside of the boat with 10 people in there
46 and you see one boat with three guys in there and it's
47 16 feet long and it's going back upriver with three big
48 racks on there and there's just no way they can haul
49 that much meat. So you see a lot of it. I have a camp
50

0119

1 -- cabin in the Nowitna Wildlife Refuge, I own land
2 there, I go there and they'll be a guide in my house
3 with his four-wheeler right underneath the no trespass
4 sign. Across the river they got their tents on my
5 land, they're sitting in my stand and paddling in my
6 canoe. It's terrible, there's a boat at every lake,
7 every meadow, every trail, they find them from the air
8 with airplanes, they have airplane support, a lot of
9 them, the ones with the big boats with boats inside.

10

11 Now this is going to get worse because
12 of the increase in population, we've been seeing it
13 slowly going up and it's -- a lot of people coming from
14 the Fairbanks area because the areas have no more
15 moose, the Minto Flats have totally been shot up, they
16 hunt in their two weeks, they seen one cow. Rampart's
17 20F, three moose shot last fall. All the way to Tanana
18 down the new highway, no moose being shot. Anywhere
19 there's a road there's a huge affect on the corridor.
20 The corridor from the bridge all the way to Galena, to
21 the Nowitna River you can't -- you have a hard time
22 finding a moose. So this is affecting people.

23

24 I just wanted to add that part before I
25 move on. I just wanted you guys to hear that. I
26 appreciate you giving me the time.

27

28 Thank you.

29

30 The Council voted to support WP26-75 as
31 modified by OSM. The Council felt that closing
32 corridors along the rivers instead of entire subunits
33 focuses action in the area with the greatest long
34 standing issue. There's much higher harvest pressure
35 along the rivers than in the remote parts of the
36 subunit that are only accessible by aircraft. The
37 corridor modification maintains opportunity for non-
38 Federally-qualified users to hunt in the more remote
39 parts of the subunit while alleviating pressure and
40 conflict along river corridors where local subsistence
41 users hunt. However the Council is very concerned
42 about reports of air taxi, transporters dropping off
43 hunters who may not be prepared for the conditions of
44 your -- a remote hunt or how to properly take care of a
45 moose without resulting in wanton waste. They noted
46 that there needs to be more accountability for air
47 taxis and oversight of drop off hunters along with
48 increased hunter education and ethics, outreach.
49 Limited law enforcement in the area and -- is another
50

0120

1 great concern especially given local reports on
2 aircraft covering their tail numbers.

3

4

5 The Council further noted that hunter
6 displacement as a result of the closure corridors will
7 need to be monitored so that any impacts can be
8 assessed. During the discussion of the modification
9 the Council re-emphasized the need for the closure due
10 to the conservation concerns and high harvest pressure.
11 They pointed out that the lack of recent biological
12 data requires a greater reliance on local knowledge for
13 information on how the moose population is doing. This
14 area has always been a low density moose population and
15 local residents have testified that they are having
16 continued difficulty meeting their subsistence needs
17 due to low moose abundance as well as user conflicts,
18 crowding, interference and harvest by non-Federally-
19 qualified users. Some action is needed to increase
20 opportunity for Federally-qualified users to meet their
21 needs. The Council discussed the importance of regular
22 population surveys and partnering with local people to
23 survey efforts. They requested improved outreach so
24 that both local and non-local hunters are better aware
25 of proposals and regulation changes.

25

26

27

That is the recommendations of the RAC,
Mr. Chair.

28

29

Thank you.

30

31

32

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Charlie. Appreciate both testimonies. Any questions
from the Board for the Regional Advisory Council Chair.

33

34

35

Jerry.

36

37

38

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49

50

MR. INGERSOLL: Sure, I have a
question. Jerry Ingersoll, Forest Service, through the
Chair. Reading the Staff report that there's a concern
with the closure that it may concentrate the non-
Federally-qualified hunters on the gravel bars and
State lands. Was that discussed by the Council and
what was the Council's thoughts on that question and
deliberations on that question?

Thank you.

MR. WRIGHT: Could you repeat that,
please?

0121

1 MR. INGERSOLL: There was Staff -- in
2 the Staff analysis it referred to if the hunt is closed
3 to non-Federally-qualified users it could concentrate
4 them on gravel bars and on lands that are below the
5 mean high water and State lands. And was that an issue
6 that was discussed by the Council and what was the
7 Council's consideration of that question?

8
9 MR. WRIGHT: I think that's already the
10 -- that's the conflict that we're talking about from
11 lots of phone calls I got last fall that they were
12 everywhere, you know, and that's -- it is a problem.
13 So and we did talk about it and I -- and myself
14 personally I didn't agree with the modification because
15 of concerns, but I'm over -- majority wins there.

16
17 So that's my answer. Thank you. Hope
18 that's good enough.

19
20 MR. INGERSOLL: Yeah, thank you.

21
22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
23 questions, Charlie.

24
25 (No comments)

26
27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
28 seeing none, thank you for that report, Charlie. Next
29 we have Alaska Department of Fish and Game comments.

30
31 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
32 For the record Alaska Department of Fish and Game
33 opposes the original proposal as written as well as the
34 suggested modification by OSM. The Department does not
35 feel that this meets the criteria under Title VIII of
36 ANILCA. We see the current opportunity for Federally-
37 qualified users as adequate and given -- just put it
38 another way, there's 82 days of hunting opportunity for
39 Federally-qualified users and then what we would refer
40 to as non-Federally-qualified Alaska residents have 20
41 days and non-Federally-qualified non-residents have 10
42 days. You know, we look at -- you know, local
43 participation and non-local participation by Alaska
44 resident and also non-resident, you're looking at for
45 locals according to our harvest information you have
46 about an average 36 hunters per year and that number
47 fluctuates, but remains relatively static. The amount
48 of moose being harvested if you look at just the trend
49 over the last 10, 15 years it is slowly increasing and
50

0122

1 they also have the highest success rate of any of the
2 three groups. On average you're looking at a 42
3 percent success rate to harvest a moose by a 25D local.
4 And to give you just the latest year of information we
5 do have is 2024 and that success rate jumped up to 58
6 percent. We have non-local residents average about 25
7 hunters coming into 25D and then we have non-residents
8 at about 10. So yes, you add those up so non-
9 Federally-qualified and Federally-qualified about
10 50/50. And they -- but they have a much lower success
11 rate, both of them hover around the 25 percent mark.
12 And just to give you some context on average across the
13 State the success of moose hunters just on average is
14 20 percent.

15
16 You know, we look at this and we see
17 that and as Mr. Kopplin mentioned, you know, an option
18 you as a Board do not have, but our Alaska Board of
19 Game does have is to parcel out these groups. You
20 know, they can be looked at as far as -- right now as
21 has been mentioned there's a harvest ticket. Well,
22 there's also registration, drawing and if felt
23 necessary someone could put in a proposal for a tier
24 hunt like it is in 25 West to really ratchet down on
25 that participation. Member Boario had asked about
26 efforts to remediate that conflict so I jumped in and
27 looked at the last two Eastern Interior cycles that we
28 had at the Board of Game and there was no proposals on
29 25D moose to restrict residents or non-residents. So
30 that is something that -- I mean, as -- just like this
31 process our process anyone can put forward a proposal
32 and have that entertained, you don't have to show up
33 for the actual meeting, you just put it in and a lot of
34 times those proposals even if the proponent had never
35 even shown up.

36
37 So, you know, you guys have the ability
38 to close for non-Federally-qualified which throws a
39 larger group out. You know, Mr. Kopplin was asking
40 about the options for -- to try to, you know, winnow
41 that down before just basically closing out the whole
42 area. You know, we view the amended -- the
43 modification is still effectively doing the same thing
44 which is closing the whole unit because who's -- most
45 of the folks that use the area that are non-local
46 Alaska residents are probably coming from one boat.
47 Aircraft and has been mentioned is an expensive
48 proposition, not a lot of folks will be able to do that
49 and who's going -- there's not going to be very many
50

0123

1 people who will still use a boat, hike five miles in,
2 shoot a moose and try to shoot that five miles given
3 the country. So we see it as the same.

4

5 The other thing that we heard was -- is
6 predators. You know, as the State side we have a
7 different take on management of predators and when we
8 feel that predators are the limiting factor we have a
9 statute that has -- that implements an intensive
10 management program and we are ready and willing to have
11 that conversation with any Federal agency that wants to
12 have it.

13

14 You know, other than that just to close
15 out, we see the participation and the success rate is
16 all solid, above average, increasing in some effort so
17 we don't see any reason under Title VIII to approve
18 this closure.

19

20 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

21

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

24

25 Sara.

26

27 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, thank you.
28 Thank you, Mr. Mulligan. A couple of questions. The
29 first one, your -- your perspective on whether this
30 would increase conflict, I'm just curious about that.
31 You just noted who would still do this so I'm wondering
32 would it from -- I mean, again we're -- I feel like
33 we're kind of working in hypotheticals here which is
34 challenging, would it or would it not increase
35 conflict, but your perspective, I -- I'm curious here?

36

37 MR. MULLIGAN: Through the Chair,
38 Member Boario. For probably the first few years yes,
39 because folks are still going to go out, they're still
40 going to want to access their hunting opportunity and
41 now they're going to be stuck into what little area is
42 State public land because as you've heard Native
43 corporation land is close to non-shareholders. So
44 those folks who are still wanting to go up there are
45 still going to want to access and so that State land is
46 going to be utilized more heavily, that land happens to
47 be closer to some of the villages and so you might see
48 an uptick in folks reporting conflict.

49

50

0124

1 MS. BOARIO: Thank you. The other
2 question I was going to ask is when would the Board of
3 Game next take up something like you were suggesting?
4

5 MR. MULLIGAN: Let me see. So that
6 would be in two years. So it would be in 2028.
7

8 MS. BOARIO: Thank you. And then I
9 just had one final question, Mr. Chair, if you don't
10 mind if I continue, I know others are waiting. Let me
11 find this.
12

13 On page 1401 it reads the State man --
14 the State management objective for moose in Unit 25D is
15 a population of 10,000 to 15,000. And I -- I'm just
16 wondering do you know what it is today? I feel like
17 the population surveys that just happened that we --
18 was reported on was just for one portion of 25D and it
19 was 748. So that 10,000 to 15,000 number seemed really
20 high to me, but just wanted to confirm that's accurate
21 or.....
22

23 MR. MULLIGAN: Sorry, give me a quick
24 minute because you're talk -- that's for the whole
25 unit, not just remainder. And I'm looking up our
26 latest AMR which will have that objective. Yes, that
27 -- so the population objective for Unit 25D is still 10
28 to 15,000 moose.
29

30 MS. BOARIO: And do you know what the
31 -- for the entire unit the population is now or.....
32

33 MR. MULLIGAN: Through the Chair. Not
34 off the top of my head.
35

36 MS. BOARIO: Thank you.
37

38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
39 other questions?
40

41 Don. Oh, Rhonda and then we'll go to
42 Don.
43

44 MS. PITKA: Sara stole my question. I
45 was going to suggest that we ask Mark Bergstrom or Mark
46 Nelson that particular question if they're online, but
47 if not, this is what makes me a little bit confused
48 about the State's position. When they oppose it they
49 say that there's no biological reason to restrict
50

0125

1 hunters, but then on the next page the last survey was
2 done in 2015. So in the last what, 11 years or so,
3 there's been a stable population based on no
4 information, is that what we're.....

5

6 MR. MULLIGAN: So the latest survey was
7 the spring survey that was just conducted. And given
8 the latest information we know and yes, I will admit
9 there's been a vacuum because it's very challenging as
10 I'm sure you heard at the RAC meeting, we don't not do
11 surveys because we don't feel like it, it's a
12 challenging environment and do I think my area
13 biologists would like to do it as oft -- more often,
14 yes, but given the numbers and given where it's sat at
15 2015 and where it sits now and seeing the harvest
16 numbers, it seems to be rela -- like the population
17 seems to be stable at the current level at that.
18 Hasn't -- hasn't gone down as of 2015 compared to 2025
19 and it hasn't gone up, it's just pretty much on average
20 flatlined.

21

22 MR. STRIKER: Thank you. Sara also
23 stole my question with her first question. I wanted to
24 first thank you though, Mr. Mulligan, your testimony
25 gives me pause to reflect on so many other people that
26 have talked today and including yesterday's
27 conversation about trying to solve the Unit 2 deer
28 problem and being motivated to find solutions that
29 don't force us into a rural/non-rural tool in the
30 toolbox, because that's the only one that we have as
31 the Federal Subsistence Board. And I really like the
32 brainstorming that you do to think about other creative
33 ways that we could attack this problem if in fact this
34 problem is mostly about conflict.

35

36 I had one follow-up question because
37 you work with a lot of certified smart people. Are you
38 -- are you thinking that the conflict is greater with
39 non-residents?

40

41 MR. MULLIGAN: Through the Chair. All
42 I can do -- sorry, member Striker. All I can do is
43 look at the numbers and so when I hear that there's --
44 there's a report of greater conflict, unfortunately I
45 don't have what happened this 2025/2026 season, things
46 are still coming together. So I don't have anything to
47 measure off what I've heard so I can't really talk
48 about that. I know that non-residents, so people
49 coming from outside of Alaska, you know, you're looking
50

0126

1 at for the last five years they've averaged 10 people
2 who have gone hunting. Alaska residents, non-
3 Federally-qualified users average around 25. So I
4 would imagine that maybe that conflict is coming from
5 that source, but it could -- I mean, it could be
6 both.....

7

8 MR. STRIKER: Well, or what I -- riddle
9 me this, does the -- do the folks from outside have
10 disproportionate conflict because they're not neighbors
11 and because they can afford planes and buzzing people
12 and et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. So even though
13 the numbers might not work out that way it might be
14 that the non-residents are the primary source of the
15 conflict?

16

17 MR. MULLIGAN: Through the Chair.
18 Speaking hypothetically just on what I've heard across
19 the state, non-residents tend to -- even with moose
20 being a non-guided species they tend to take guides
21 which means that yes, some come in through boats, a lot
22 of them come through planes and I think as the RAC
23 heard a lot of those guys are jumping past the corridor
24 and they're landing in other places away from it which
25 tends to alleviate the conflict because just like, for
26 an example, as we've heard from folks when we were
27 discussing the Western Arctic Herd, guides,
28 transporters tend to take those folks at least
29 hypothetically as they've told us into areas where
30 folks normally wouldn't go because it's easier for them
31 to take them without those conflict, it's bad business.
32 So it just depends on what is the practice and what is
33 the human nature of the moose hunt. And I -- at this
34 point I can't give you even a speculative guess on that
35 one.

36

37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Frank.

38

39 MR. WOODS: On that note, Mr. Mulligan,
40 appreciate your openness about having to provide for
41 our state is a wonderful place to provide for all
42 Alaska. Second this user group conflict's going to
43 continue and the last two Board cycles I've attended --
44 do you have a number of what the guide industry is, is
45 there registered guides and how many non-resident
46 guided permits, either State or non-resident?

47

48 MR. MULLIGAN: Through the Chair,
49 Member, what -- I do not.

50

0127

1 MR. WOODS: So in my analysis I look at
2 numbers and this is pretty serious because 10 years ago
3 at least, I don't want to reference my area, 20 years
4 ago we have 473 permits being issued in '17. Ten years
5 ago it became 18 -- or became 800 permits. Five years
6 ago we have over 1,400 permits being issued in Unit 17,
7 my front door and back door. So that number just
8 increased threefold. Whether it's non-resident or
9 resident, whether it's local or non-local, whether it's
10 qualified or Federally-qualified non-user, the effort
11 has tripled statewide where it's focusing on an
12 alternative in a proposal that came to help alleviate
13 that. What would be your alternative I guess, my -- my
14 answer to that?

15
16 MR. MULLIGAN: Through the Chair.
17 You're asking what I would do as an alternative to this
18 closure. I gave my official positions, sir, and I will
19 stay with that position.

20
21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Good try,
22 Frank.

23
24 (Laughter)

25
26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other Board
27 member questions.

28
29 (No comments)

30
31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Next we have
32 the InterAgency Staff Committee comments.

33
34 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
35 This is Robbin LaVine. The InterAgency Staff Committee
36 gave the following comment on Wildlife Proposal 26-75.
37 The Board will need to consider a few key sections of
38 ANILCA before taking action on proposals requesting
39 closures and closure review. Those sections of Title
40 VIII pertaining to Council deference and the
41 limitations to closures or restrictions of subsistence
42 and non-subsistence uses on Federal public lands.

43
44 ANILCA section .853 -- 8153 clarifies
45 that nothing in this title shall be construed as
46 authorizing a restriction on the taking of fish and
47 wildlife for non-subsistence uses on public lands
48 unless necessary for the conservation of healthy
49 populations of fish and wildlife for the reasons set
50

0128

1 forth in .816 to continue subsistence uses of such
2 populations or pursuant to other applicable law. And
3 ANILCA section .816(b) states that closures can occur
4 for -- allows for closure or restrictions of Federal
5 public lands to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife
6 for reasons of public safety, administration or to
7 ensure the continued viability of a particular fish or
8 wildlife population.

9
10 ANILCA section .805(c) states, the
11 Board must consider the recommendations of the Councils
12 concerning the taking of fish and wildlife on public
13 lands in their regions and may choose not to follow such
14 a recommendation only if it supported by substantial
15 evidence, violates recognized principles of fish and
16 wildlife conservation or would be detrimental to the
17 satisfaction of subsistence needs.

18
19 These three sections speak to the heart
20 of Board authority and require a careful balance
21 between the Federal priority, the continuation of
22 subsistence uses, the necessary conservation of
23 subsistence fish and wildlife and unnecessary
24 restrictions.

25
26 In the case of Wildlife Proposal 26-75
27 the ISC recognizes that there is user conflict in Unit
28 25D Remainder, but addressing the issue is complicated.
29 If corridors are closed to non-Federally-qualified
30 users it may concentrate those users on gravel bars
31 which are under State jurisdiction along rivers below
32 high mean water mark.

33
34 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

35
36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
37 Robbin. Any questions for ISC.

38
39 (No comments)

40
41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
42 seeing none we'll go to Board discussion with the
43 liaison, Chairs and State representative. This is our
44 opportunity to ask any other questions for
45 clarification or if we need to hear anything asked
46 again.

47
48 Rhonda.

49
50

0129

1 MS. PITKA: So in some of your comments
2 you reference that it would be difficult to pack out a
3 moose five miles from the high water mark, but what
4 we're seeing is that people aren't carrying out a
5 moose, they're carrying out antlers and it's a lot
6 lighter and so it's a different -- it's a different
7 mechanism. What we witnessed on the land and in areas
8 that are critical for us have been hunters will come in
9 from either Circle or the Yukon River bridge and they
10 will -- they'll camp, you know, on sand bars which is
11 what they're allowed to do, but then they will go onto
12 either Doyon land or our corporation land and
13 continually hunt. We see evidence of it constantly.
14 Up the Hodzana River we've seen at least four rafts,
15 four rafts with antlers on them with very little meat.
16 I've constantly reported this to police and to law
17 enforcement with the Refuge. I've probably never done
18 that before this year, but when you hear Fort Yukon, a
19 community of 650 people harvesting 10 moose for the
20 year with no salmon, it really gives you pause to think
21 about some of those implications and what could be.

22
23 So I would definitely, you know, be
24 interested in working with the State on solutions to a
25 lot of the I guess user conflicts. And more education
26 on corporation land and the access to it.

27
28 Thank you.

29
30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
31 Rhonda. Are there any other Board questions,
32 deliberation or comments before we open the floor for a
33 motion?

34
35 (No comments)

36
37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing or
38 seeing none, we'll open the floor for a Board motion at
39 this time. With that we'll take a minute.

40
41 MS. LAVINE: Mr. Chair.

42
43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, one second,
44 Robbin. Oh, yes, Mr. Mulligan, you have the floor.

45
46 MR. MULLIGAN: Sorry, since you guys
47 were still interacting with us, I needed to correct
48 myself on the record. The next Board of Game meeting
49 to discuss 25 will come up in March of 2027 so
50

0130

1 Proposals are due May 1st. So if anybody is interested
2 in providing the Board with a mechanism to act that is
3 not a complete closure, to look at either a
4 registration or a draw or whatever to look at winnowing
5 down the participation from non-Federally-qualified
6 users you have until May 1st to get that in.

7

8 Thank you. Sorry about that, Mr.

9 Chair.

10

11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Ben.
12 Appreciate that clarification. The next thing on the
13 agenda is to move to approve and we're just taking a
14 second here so we can articulate the right motion for
15 the record so that we're now developing our
16 justification. So we're going to give Sara a minute.

17

18 MS. BOARIO: Please give me my privacy.

19

20 (Laughter)

21

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So why doesn't
23 everyone just take a five minute -- five minute break
24 right now so Sara can -- so we don't all stare at Sara.

25

26 MR. WOODS: Mr. Chair, while she's
27 doing that can I recognize a past RAC member and ADF&G
28 Board support as RAC member, Molly Chythlook. Welcome.

29

30 (Applause)

31

32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,

33 Frank.

34

35 (Off record)

36

37 (On record)

38

39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: And I think
40 we'll come out of our little resource there and we'll
41 reconvene the meeting now. We were at the point of
42 where we were with the Board was we were opening the
43 floor for a motion by the Board.

44

45 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, Fish and
46 Wildlife Service. Thank you, Mr. Chair. The U.S. Fish
47 and Wildlife Service moves to adopt WP26-75. If I
48 receive a second I will explain why I intend to support
49 as modified in deference to the Eastern Interior

50

0131

1 Regional Advisory Council.

2

3 MR. WOODS: Second.

4

5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Mr.
6 Chair.

7

8 MS. BOARIO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At
9 the Eastern Interior Council meeting information was
10 provided which highlighted user conflicts along river
11 corridors during the fall where subsistence users hunt
12 and access moose in Unit 25D Remainder. This is also
13 where crowding, displacement and disruption of
14 subsistence hunts by non-Federally-qualified users is
15 reported to occur. As referenced in the OSM analysis
16 during the 2025 Eastern Interior Council meeting
17 Council members, State and Federal agency Staff, tribal
18 representatives and public testifiers all acknowledged
19 are a concern for moose hunting in Unit 25D Remainder.
20 And as we heard today conflicts have been identified
21 for years and year and years, a 25 volume series. The
22 full closure does not seem justified as noted by OSM's
23 conclusion at that time and by the data from this
24 spring's most recent survey although larger populations
25 of the entire unit is not known. However this
26 modification is a targeted closure that would provide
27 increased opportunity for Federally-qualified
28 subsistence users by reducing competition with non-
29 Federally-qualified users for the entirety of the fall
30 moose season in the areas most hunted by local
31 subsistence users and where most of the conflicts
32 occur.

33

34 As we heard in tribal consultation
35 testimony yesterday and then again in testimony today,
36 the need for this increased opportunity cannot be
37 viewed in isolation. It coincides with the drastic
38 decline in alternative subsistence resources primarily
39 salmon which has increased dependency on subsistence
40 resources like moose. As the Park Service said earlier
41 fish and wildlife populations fluctuate and rural
42 Alaskans harvest what is available to them. And it is
43 important to consider the entire subsistence harvest
44 and the status of all resources in the Yukon Flats
45 region. In Unit 25D Remainder they are also adapting
46 and the situation also shows how important it is to
47 consider the entire subsistence harvest.

48

49 This Board has heard a great deal of

50

1 testimony over the years on the salmon decline and the
2 declines continue. In a recent report to the Alaska
3 Board of Fisheries in November, 2025 the Alaska
4 Department of Fish and Game still reports that the
5 Yukon -- quote, the Yukon River has seen an
6 unprecedented decline in salmon returns for all species
7 since 2020. This lack of salmon as an essential
8 protein source on the Yukon River and an important food
9 source for people in this region is missing. With
10 consideration of the salmon crisis additional moose
11 hunting opportunity in Unit 25D remainder is a prudent
12 measure at this time.

13
14 When faced with these challenging,
15 multifaceted decisions I anchor in the Congressional
16 findings in Title VIII of ANILCA that read in part, the
17 situation in Alaska is unique and that in most cases no
18 practical alternative means are available to replace
19 the food supplies and other items gathered from fish
20 and wildlife which supply rural residents dependent on
21 subsistence uses. And continues in part, continuation
22 of the opportunity for subsistence uses of resources on
23 public and other lands in Alaska is threatened by the
24 increasing population of Alaska with resultant pressure
25 on subsistence resource and by increased accessibility
26 of remote areas containing subsistence resources.

27
28 This limited closure addresses concerns
29 expressed by the Council and prevents the unnecessary
30 closure of all Federal public land in Unit 25D
31 Remainder. While this moose population is low, but
32 stable, Title VIII of ANILCA includes the closing of
33 public lands for the take of fish and wildlife for non-
34 subsistence uses when necessary to ensure the
35 continuation of subsistence uses of those fish and
36 wildlife.

37
38 I understand the concern and carry it
39 too with the hypothetical for continued or increased
40 conflict. And we've heard various speculation on
41 whether it will or won't increase, but it's hard to
42 give that hypothetical more weight than the actual well
43 documented history of existing conflict that is the
44 result of the current approach. And it's hard to give
45 it more weight than the RAC. The Eastern Interior
46 Regional Advisory Council has made their recommendation
47 to the Board. It is these Council members who have
48 personal knowledge of local conditions and the years
49 and years and years of conflicts that they say impact
50

0133

1 their ability to meet their subsistence needs which
2 provides support for this recommendation.

3
4 The Fish and Wildlife Service defers to
5 them and their meaningful role in the management of
6 subsistence in their region in support of this partial
7 river corridor closure. The surface -- the Service
8 will also offer to be a part of continuing efforts to
9 address user conflicts in this region. We anticipate a
10 new Refuge Manager in the next few months at Yukon
11 Flats National Wildlife Refuge can help engage in this
12 effort. And I do hope people take the opportunity to
13 provide the Board of Game with proposals to consider as
14 well and we may find other ways for it in the future.

15
16 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

17
18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
19 Sara. We have a motion on the floor that has been
20 seconded. We're going to deliberate, before we do
21 we'll turn over the -- over to Rhonda.

22
23 MS. PITKA: Hi, I need to recuse myself
24 from discussion on WP26-75 for deliberation. I'm
25 Chairwoman of the Council of Athabaskan Tribal
26 Governments and while the Council of Athabaskan Tribal
27 Governments does not benefit financially from this
28 proposal we were the proponent so I'm recusing myself.

29
30 Thank you.

31
32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
33 Rhonda. And with that we'll move to a roll call.

34
35 MS. LAVINE: Debate.

36
37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any debate,
38 deliberation, discussion between the Board.

39
40 (No comments)

41
42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
43 seeing none, roll call, please.

44
45 MS. LEONETTI: Fish and Wildlife
46 Service Member Boario.

47
48 MS. BOARIO: Yay.

49
50

0134

1 MS. LEONETTI: BIA member John.

2

3

4 MS. JOHN: BIA votes to adopt WP26/75
5 with the OSM modification as recommended by the Eastern
6 Interior RAC. We concur with the Council and Fish and
7 Wildlife Service justification for this recommendation
8 and appreciate their considerable efforts on this
9 closure review.

10

11 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Oney.

12

13 MR. ONEY: Public Member Oney votes in
14 support as modified by OSM.

15

16 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Woods.

17

18 MR. WOODS: Public Member Woods votes
19 yes with the OSM recommendation in the amended
20 proposal.

21

22 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Payenna.

23

24 MR. PAYENNA: Public Member Payenna
25 votes yes.

26

27 MS. LEONETTI: BLM Member Pendergast.

28

29 MR. PENDERGAST: That's correct. I
30 oppose WP26-75 and the modification. ANILCA section
31 .805 gives deference to the RAC unless their
32 recommendation violates recognized principles of fish
33 and wildlife conservation. Moose and other subsistence
34 resource populations have declined in the region and
35 many Federally-qualified subsistence users are not
36 meeting their subsistence needs. Federally-qualified
37 subsistence users likewise report competition conflict
38 such as we've heard about and that's made it difficult
39 for them to access and harvest moose for subsistence
40 uses. And in responseto that to help Federally-
41 qualified subsistence users with these challenges the
42 Board adopted WP24-33 to extend Federal subsistence
43 moose season to October 15. There hasn't been enough
44 time to determine from data, harvest data and testimony
45 the extent to which the adoption of WP24-33 into
46 regulation has provided Federally-qualified subsistence
47 users with a meaningful preference for the continuation
48 of subsistence uses of moose. And although local
49 observations suggest that the moose density may have
50 declined along the river harvest data suggests that

0135

1 there isn't yet a conservation concern.

2

3

4 At this time the evidence suggests that
5 a closure to moose harvest by non-Federally-qualified
6 users on Federal lands in Unit 25D Remainder would not
7 be based on data. And for that reason we oppose.

7

8 MS. LEONETTI: National Park Service
9 Member Striker.

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MS. LEONETTI: National Park Service
Member Striker.

MR. STRIKER: Yeah, the National Park
Service and I am also opposed although for a slightly
different reason. I think the proposal, particularly
as modified, is going to increase conflict which
ultimately in turn is going to be detrimental to the
satisfaction of subsistence needs.

MS. LEONETTI: U.S. Forest Service
Member Ingersoll.

MR. INGERSOLL: The Forest Service
supports the motion as indicated in deference both to
the Resource Advisory Committee and to our colleagues
in the Fish and Wildlife Service who manage the lands
at issue and for the rationale provided by the Fish and
Wildlife Service.

I will also add that this is a complex
issue. This motion may not solve the problem and there
may be a need for future actions either by the Board of
Game or by this body. And yet I defer to the wisdom of
the RAC and our colleagues in the Fish and Wildlife
Service.

Thank you.

MS. LEONETTI: And Chair Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support it as
presented by the OSM modification and it's to ensure
the continuation of subsistence uses of fish and
wildlife. We heard here today from our rural residents
and to provide that deference to our Regional Advisory
Councils who are listening posts as well as all the
testimony today and the availability of addition
resources which is really hamstringing the ability of
our rural residents to meet just the basic needs in
this area. So giving them that opportunity to have
this hunt I think will help them meet their needs so I

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1 support.

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MS. LEONETTI: Mr. Chair, the motion to adopt WP26-75 as modified by OSM passes seven to two.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. And we are going to do one more because if you see our list it's really long. So the next one is going to be a little shorter, we didn't get a lot of outcry about this so we'll go ahead and call on the Staff to analyze WP26-76, please.

MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the Board. My name is Tom Plank and I'm a Wildlife Biologist at OSM and I will be presenting a summary of the analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP26-76 and that's on page 1421 of your books.

So Wildlife Proposal WP26-76 was submitted by the Eastern Interior Council and requests to extend the Federal lands closure to sheep hunting by all users in portions of Unit 25C and 20E through the 2026 to 2028 wildlife regulatory cycle. Proponent states that the Federal Subsistence Board approved wildlife special action request WSA26-01 to close sheep hunting in these areas for the 2024 to '25 regulatory years due to significant declines in the sheep population and extreme conservation concerns. The intent of the original closure was to give time for sheep populations to rebuild and not enough time has passed for this to occur and therefore proponent wants to extend the closure for another two years and it is the hope of the proponent that during this closure extension the population will show signs of recovery. The proponent adds that surveys will be necessary to monitor the population status before the next regulatory cycle.

Prior to 2014 there were no Federal hunting season for sheep in units 20E or 25C and in 2023 the Board approved a wildlife special action to close sheep hunting to all users within the Yukon Charlie Rivers National Preserve in units 20E and 25C for the fall 2023 season to assure the continued viability of sheep. In 2024 the Board extended the closure to sheep hunting to all users within the Yukon Charlie Rivers National Preserve in units 20E and 25C for the fall, 2024 season with modification to also close Federal public lands to sheep hunting by all

0137

1 users in the North Peak Mountain area within the
2 Glacier Mountain Controlled Use Area in Unit 20E
3 through the 2025 season.

4
5 ADF&G also issued an emergency order
6 closing all 2024 sheep seasons in the Glacier Mountain
7 Controlled Use Area and the closure was extended for
8 the 2025 season.

9
10 The sheep population within Yukon-
11 Charley Rivers National Preserve is naturally small and
12 isolated from larger population sources which reduce
13 recovery opportunities through migration. There has
14 not been an indication that the population has
15 increased since the most recent survey conducted in
16 Yukon-Charley National Preserve in July, 2023 when only
17 two legal rams were observed. The July aerial survey
18 in 2024 for the Glacier Mountain Controlled Use Area
19 only observed 13 total sheep and no legal rams.
20 Between 2018 and 2022 reported sheep harvest within the
21 Preserve averaged 1.4 rams per year, ranging from zero
22 to three rams per year and no legal harvest has
23 occurred since 2023.

24
25 One alternative to consider is to close
26 all Federal public lands within the Glacier Mountain
27 Controlled Use Area instead of only the lands in North
28 Peak Mountain area. This would reduce regulatory
29 complexity by simplifying the regulatory language and
30 aligning with the current State closures. No impacts
31 on the sheep population or subsistence users
32 opportunities are expected from this modification as
33 the Federal public lands within the Glacier Mountain
34 Controlled Use Area that are outside of North Peak
35 Mountain area are low elevation, poor quality sheep
36 habitat, where sheep and sheep hunting are very
37 unlikely to occur.

38
39 Next slide.

40
41 Another alternative to consider is to
42 remove the limitation of the closure only being in
43 effect from the 2026 to 2027 regulatory years. This
44 would make the closure permanent until a proposal is
45 submitted to rescind the closure. This alternative
46 would reduce the administrative burden and would not
47 need a proposal very two years to keep the closure in
48 place. However if this alternative is adopted then the
49 closure would only be reviewed every four years and as
50

0138

1 proposed this closure would need to be addressed again
2 in two years in order to remain in effect for the 2028
3 and '29 seasons. If this proposal is adopted Federal
4 public lands in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve
5 and the North Peak Mountain Area within the Glacier
6 Mountain Controlled Use Area in units 20E and 25C will
7 continue to be closed to sheep hunting by all users
8 through the 2026 and '27 seasons. This would continue
9 to decrease opportunity for Federally-qualified
10 subsistence users and for anyone hunting under State
11 regulations in the short term, but could help ensure
12 sheep hunting opportunities in the long term.

13

14 Federal lands within Yukon-Charley
15 Rivers National Preserve in Unit 25B would remain open
16 which would provide some harvest opportunity within
17 Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve under both State
18 and Federal regulations. Individuals hunting under
19 State regulations would still need -- still be able to
20 harvest sheep on private, State and other Federal lands
21 outside the closure areas in Unit 20E and 25C. This
22 closure of Federal lands could result in displacement
23 of hunters onto these lands.

24

25 Adoption of this proposal may aid in
26 the recovery of the Yukon-Charley Rivers National
27 Preserve and Glacier Mountain Controlled Use Area sheep
28 populations by improving the chances of survival for
29 the few remaining rams in the area. Conservation of
30 any remaining rams and minimizing disturbance to these
31 sheep populations will aid in faster recovery and
32 reduce risk to local extirpation.

33

34 OSM's conclusion is to support proposal
35 WP26-76 with modification to close all Federal public
36 lands within the Glacier Mountain Controlled Use Area
37 to sheep hunting for all users for the 2026 and '27
38 regulatory years. Population viability concerns
39 warrant closure to sheep hunting on Federal public
40 lands within Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve in
41 units 20E and 25C as well as the Glacier Mountain
42 Controlled Use Area in Unit 20E by all users. The
43 sheep populations in these areas are naturally small
44 and isolated, making them more susceptible to
45 extirpation during large population declines when
46 reported harvest was low prior to current closures.
47 Any additional mortality could extend the duration of
48 recovery or risk local extirpation. While Federal
49 public lands only compromise of a small portion of the
50

0139

1 Glacier Mountain Controlled Use Area, the population
2 viability concerns for the Glacier Mountain sheep
3 population are extreme. The sheep population has
4 significantly decreased 2019 to only 13 total sheep
5 observed in 2024. No legal rams have been observed in
6 recent years and lamb production has been very low in
7 recent years. There's no surplus -- harvestable
8 surplus of sheep in this population and any additional
9 mortality could extend the duration of recovery or risk
10 local extirpation. Closing all Federal public lands
11 within the Glacier Mountain Control Use Area reduces
12 regulatory complexity by simplifying the regulatory
13 language and aligning the 2024 and 2025 State closure.
14 This modification has no impacts on sheep or
15 subsistence hunters.

16

17 Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the
18 Board. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

19

20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Tom.
21 Appreciate that. Any Board questions for Tom.

22

23 (No comments)

24

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
26 seeing none, appreciate the presentation. We'll move
27 on to summary of written public comment.

28

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

32

33 Thank you.

34

35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
36 Summary of tribal government and Alaska Native
37 corporation consultation.

38

39 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
40 Orville Lind, Native Liaison for OSM. During the
41 consultation sessions there were no comments, no tribal
42 resolutions or letters.

43

44 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

45

46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
47 Orville. Tribal or Alaska Native organization
48 testimony here or online.

49

50

0140

1 MS. LAVINE: If you're online and would
2 like to address the Board you can press star, five to
3 raise your hand, if you're on Teams you can use the
4 raise hand function.

5

6 Thank you.

7

8 (No comments)

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: At this time
11 we'd also welcome the Advisory Group testimony,
12 Subsistence Resource Commission, State Advisory
13 Committee or multi agency groups.

14

15 (No comments)

16

17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: No other -- no
18 public testimony, we got no blue cards and no hands
19 being raised. This is your opportunity.

20

21 (No comments)

22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Seeing or
24 hearing none we'll call for the Council recommendation.

25

26 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
27 through the Chair. The Council voted to support WP26-
28 76 as modified by OSM with an additional Council
29 modification to remove the sunset clause. The Council
30 submitted this proposal and continues to support due to
31 significant conservation concerns for sheep. They
32 recommended modifying the proposal to remove their
33 initial suggestion timeframe for the closure to sunset
34 and instead have the closure remain in place and be
35 reviewed every four years per the Federal Subsistence
36 Board's closure policy until the sheep population can
37 support harvest. Survey data indicates a dramatic
38 population decline for sheep in the area since 2015 and
39 it's important for the closure to remain in place
40 longer to allow time for the sheep population to
41 recover, recruitment to improve and for younger rams to
42 grow. The Council also supports the OSM modification
43 to include all Federal lands in the Glacier Mountain
44 Controlled Use Area. The Council further noted that
45 sheep populations are down statewide and are
46 experiencing numerous stressors, heavy snowfall years
47 have resulted in high winter mortality of sheep, ran on
48 snow events three winters in a row created ice layers
49 making it difficult for sheep to access forage.

50

0141

1 Windblown ridges further lock up habitat preventing
2 feeding. Predation especially by golden eagles further
3 depress sheep populations and hamper recovery.

4

5 And I'd also add to that the State is
6 closing this fall due to concerns also in the area. So
7 we support that and we appreciate them worrying about
8 the population.

9

10 And that's all we have, Mr. Chair.

11

12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
13 questions for the RAC Chair.

14

15 (No comments)

16

17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
18 the presentation, Charlie. Moving on to Alaska
19 Department of Fish and Game.

20

21 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
22 For the record the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
23 opposes the proposal as written and, but after looking
24 at the OSM analysis and looking at our own actions that
25 we've taken in the Glacier Mountain Controlled Use
26 Area, we would support alignment with that closure
27 because as OSM has said there is some Federal land
28 within that controlled use area and so technically
29 without the closure -- with our closure and then with --
30 if they didn't do something on the Federal side you'd
31 have that opportunity in there albeit what size Federal
32 lands is there it would -- it would occur. So we've
33 taken that action.

34

35 And then just as a comment with the
36 rest of 20E we do have -- it's a draw hunt and it's a
37 very limited draw hunt. I know for just this upcoming
38 2026 season it's two, we're going to give out two
39 permits. And that's not the first time we've -- we've
40 done this before for a few years now and sometimes no
41 one harvests a sheep, but every once in a while someone
42 will get one sheep. So it's a very limited opportunity
43 that we do provide in the remainder of 20E. Just want
44 to mention that as it was talked about.

45

46 But we would support -- we would
47 support aligning State and Federal closures within
48 Glacier Mountain Controlled Use Area and we would
49 support still having it only be for a limited amount of
50

0142

1 time. We wouldn't support just having that closure
2 indefinitely until a closure review came up.

3

4 Thank you.

5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Ben.
7 Any questions for Ben from the Board.

8

9 (No comments)

10

11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate
12 that. InterAgency Staff comments.

13

14 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For
15 wildlife proposal 26-76 the ISC provided the standard
16 comment. I'll read it once each day and otherwise I
17 will just report the standard comment.

18

19 But for the record, the InterAgency
20 Staff Committee found the analysis to be a thorough and
21 accurate evaluation of the proposal and that it
22 provides sufficient basis for the Regional Advisory
23 Council recommendation and the Federal Subsistence
24 Board action on this proposal.

25

26 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

27

28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
29 Robbin. We'll move on to Board discussion with the
30 Liaisons, Chairs and State Reps. This is the Board
31 opportunity to ask any further questions or
32 clarification.

33

34 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair.

35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Sara, you have
37 the floor.

38

39 MS. BOARIO: Just a clarification. Mr.
40 Mulligan, were you saying the State supports or no -- I
41 mean, I couldn't -- I wanted to make sure I understood
42 the nuance of what you were sharing there?

43

44 MR. MULLIGAN: So the State supports
45 aligning State and Federal closures which is the
46 Glacier -- as OSM has modified which is just the
47 closure to the Glacier Mountain Controlled Use Area.
48 We didn't support lifting the timeframe the closure was
49 going to be enacted this -- according to the original
50

0143

1 proposal. So not having it basically out into the
2 future and only reviewed during the normal closure. So
3 it would sun -- I guess the simple way, Member Boario,
4 sorry about that, we would support having the sunset
5 still remain in place.

6
7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other Board
8 questions, clarification?

9
10 (No comments)

11
12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
13 seeing none, we'll open up the floor for Board action.

14
15 MR. STRIKER: Mr. Chair, I move to
16 adopt as modified Proposal WP26-76. And if I get a
17 second I'll explain why I intend to vote in support of
18 my own motion.

19
20 MR. WOODS: Second.

21
22 MR. STRIKER: Thank you. Population
23 viability concerns more than closure to sheep hunting
24 on Federal public lands within the Yukon-Charley Rivers
25 National Preserve in units 20E and 25C as well as in
26 the Glacier Mountain CUA in 20E, by all users under
27 .816(b) of ANILCA. The sheep populations in these
28 areas are naturally small and isolated making them more
29 susceptible to extirpation during large population
30 declines. Sheep abundance in the preserve within the
31 seven survey areas in units 20E and 25C has dropped by
32 67 percent since the 2018 survey and is 77 percent
33 below the long term average. Only two legal rams were
34 observed across all survey areas within the Yukon
35 Charlie during the 2023 surveys. While reported
36 harvest is low, about 1.4 rams per year broken between
37 the 2018 to 2022, any additional mortality could extend
38 the duration of recovery or risk localized extirpation.

39
40 While the Federal public lands only
41 comprise a small portion of the Glacier Mountain CUA,
42 the population viability concerns for the Glacier
43 Mountain sheep population are extreme. The sheep
44 population has significantly decreased since 2019 to
45 only 14 sheep observed in 2023. No legal rams have
46 been observed in recent years and lamb production has
47 additionally been very low in recent years. Total
48 reported harvest from 2013 to 2023 is low with an
49 average of 1.6 a year and no harvest was reported in
50

0144

1 2022 or 2023. This indicates there's no harvestable
2 surplus of sheep in this population and any additional
3 mortality could extend the duration of recovery or risk
4 localized extirpation.

5

6 Adopting this proposal may help sheep
7 abundance recover within Yukon-Charley south of the
8 Yukon River and within the Glacier Mountain CUA,
9 improving their viability. While subsistence hunting
10 opportunity has been reduced for the short term it will
11 help preserve opportunity for the long term by
12 providing additional time for these sheep populations
13 to recover.

14

15 And I'd also like to point out that the
16 fact that subsistence users themselves are voting to
17 restrict to all users including themselves indicates
18 that everybody supports the conservation efforts and
19 closing the non-Federally-qualified users is warranted.

20

21 Thank you.

22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Don.
24 And just for the record the motion is to support as
25 modified by OSM and then we have a support as modified
26 by OSM with the Council modification to remove the
27 sunset clause. So just for the record which one are we
28 supporting?

29

30 MR. STRIKER: So with both
31 modifications, as modified by OSM and as modified by
32 the RAC.

33

34 MR. WOODS: Second concurs.

35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Second concurs.
37 So that's -- for the record let it be clarified that
38 that's it.

39

40 MR. STRIKER: Nice catch. Thank you.

41

42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah. Thank
43 the Staff here. Yeah, we got good ones.

44

45 All right. Any other Board
46 deliberation.

47

48 MR. STRIKER: And I also should have
49 pointed out in deference to the RAC.

50

0145

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay.

2

3 MR. WOODS: Yeah, the public member
4 also agrees with the RAC and the recommendations.

5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: It looks like
7 we're to a vote now. Nobody's jumping up and down so
8 we'll go ahead and do a roll call.

9

10 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Pitka.

11

12 MS. PITKA: I vote to support as
13 modified with the additional EIRAC modification in
14 deference to the Regional Advisory Council and in
15 recognition that the -- there is extreme conservation
16 concerns for this species.

17

18 Thank you.

19

20 MS. LEONETTI: Fish and Wildlife
21 Service, Boario -- Member Boario.

22

23 MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service
24 supports in deference to the RAC and with the
25 justification provided by the National Park Service.

26

27 MS. LEONETTI: BIA Member John.

28

29 MS. JOHN: BIA votes to adopt with the
30 OSM modification, and in deference to the Eastern
31 Interior as well as the justification offered by the
32 National Park Service.

33

34 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Oney.

35

36 MR. ONEY: Raymond Oney is in support
37 of WP26-76 with modifications by OSM.

38

39 MS. LEONETTI: Public member Woods.

40

41 MR. WOODS: Public Member Woods votes
42 yes for WP26-76 with modifications by the Board and
43 OSM as written.

44

45 Thanks.

46

47 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Payenna.

48

49 MR. PAYENNA: Public Member Payenna

50

0146

1 also votes yes in deference to the RAC and after
2 hearing reports and modifications.

3

4 MS. LEONETTI: BLM Member Vickers.

5

6 MR. VICKERS: Thank you. BLM supports
7 the motion to adopt WP26-75 [sic] with modifications by
8 OSM and the Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council
9 -- in deference to the Council. There's conservation
10 concern for dall sheep population in the portions of
11 units 25C and 20E. Closing sheep hunting on Federal
12 lands in Unit 25C and 25E [sic] to all hunters will
13 help the population recover. Removing the sunset
14 clause will allow for standard review in four years
15 with the need -- no need for a new proposal in the
16 meantime. BLM appreciates the Eastern Interior
17 Regional Advisory Council for taking actions for
18 responsible management of dall sheep in this region.

19

20 Thank you.

21

22 MS. LEONETTI: Park Service Member

23

24 Striker.

25

26 MR. STRIKER: I support my own motion.

27

28 Thank you.

29

30 MS. LEONETTI: Forest Service Member

31

32 Ingersoll.
33 MR. INGERSOLL: Forest Service supports
34 the motion as made in deference to the RAC, to our
35 colleagues in the National Park Service and due to the
36 extreme conservation concern for sheep in this area.

37

38 MS. LEONETTI: And Chair Christianson.

39

40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support as
41 stated and in deference to the Regional Advisory
42 Council the modification.

43

44 Thank you.

45

46 MS. LEONETTI: Mr. Chair, the motion to
47 adopt WP26-76 as modified by OSM and modified by the
48 Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council to remove
49 the sunset clause passes unanimously.

50

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

50

0147

1 Thank you to the Staff. Thank you for everybody being
2 patient today and staying until a little later. We
3 appreciate all the work and effort. We'll reconvene
4 this meeting at 9:00 a.m. in the morning and get right
5 back into lots of morning public testimony. So then
6 we'll start our agenda back up. So -- and potentially
7 just so you know, it could be a long day tomorrow based
8 on the number of proposals we have here. We're going
9 to see how far we get in the agenda and there's
10 potential we could go a little deeper into the evening
11 tomorrow. So just for -- just so that everybody is
12 aware that's the intent tomorrow.

13

14 Thank you. See you in the morning.

15

16 (Off record)

17

18 (PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)

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