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FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD

REGULATORY MEETING

VOLUME III

EGAN CONVENTION CENTER

Anchorage, Alaska

April 23, 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 - 4/23/2026)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: (Speaker
echoing) Good morning, everybody. Welcome to Thursday
night fights! Oh, sorry. That's later this evening
downstairs.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I like the echo
effect.

Good morning. We're going to start our
morning off before public testimony, fixing the lines.
I could probably karaoke on this.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: This morning
before we do start with public testimony the Special
Assistant of the Secretary is going to -- Kara Moriarty
is going to give us an update this morning. We really
appreciate her taking the time to come here and share
with us and the public an update.

Thank you. You have the floor.

MS. MORIARTY: Good morning, everyone.
Oh, I'm echoing too. Anthony, are we going to have a
choir karaoke?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Choir choir
choir.....

MS. BOARIO: It's a sport center, you
know. And for the Department of Interior number
four.....

(Laughter)

MS. MORIARTY: Hey, that was my son's
baseball number. Nice job, Sara. Nice work. Well,
good morning, everyone. For those that have not had
the opportunity to meet -- and it's always weird when
there's people sitting behind you as you're talking --

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1 my name is Kara Moriarty and I'm the Senior Advisor for
2 Alaskan Affairs for Secretary Burgum.

3

4 I just flew in from D.C. last night.
5 Landed about 1:00 a.m. this morning. I was with the
6 Secretary yesterday in front of our Senior Senator who
7 chairs the Interior Appropriations Committee, as you
8 were hearing testimony on Interior's -- or as he was
9 providing testimony on the President's budget for the
10 Department of the Interior.

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It is an honor to be in front of the full Subsistence Board once again. I met many of you back last July during your summer work session and I've seen many of you over the prevailing months either at RAC meetings that I've been able to attend in person. One in Wrangell, one in Nome, as well as other various public listening sessions around the Federal Subsistence review that is currently taking place as well as some individual tribal consultations. Some of you have been involved in that as well.

As far as the report from the Secretary, as you all know, the public comment period for the scoping review ended a couple weeks ago. We are just starting that process of going through the various comments that were submitted. So for all of you either on the Subsistence Board or those behind me that may have provided public comment we appreciate the input. We're learning a lot about the program and it's going to take us a while to get through all of those comments to have a thoughtful review to provide a potential recommendation to the Secretary.

All of that is yet to be determined. I guess I would emphasize that it was just a review. No proposed changes are being made at this time. If there were, of course that would start a full public comment through the APA process.

I did have a chance to visit with the Under Secretary for the Department of Agriculture and I think that when I was back in D.C. last week and with everyone's schedules it's -- you know, just everything that we're all -- all the departments are working on, I think it is going to take some time to work through all the various comments to see what we come up with.

I'm happy, Mr. Chairman, to take any

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1 questions. That's really the only update I have to
2 speak of and look forward to being in and out. I'll be
3 in and out today and tomorrow as you finish up your
4 meetings. With that, Mr. Chairman, I'll turn it over
5 to you for any questions that you or others on the
6 Subsistence Board may have.

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
9 Kara. Thank you for the update. Is there any
10 questions or comments from the Board. RAC Chairs. Go
11 ahead, Jack.

12

13 MR. REAKOFF: Mr. Chair. Jack Reakoff,
14 Western Interior. Once you evaluate all the comments
15 I'm wondering about the timeframe for the Councils'
16 comments if there's a change. Are we going to have a
17 period during our fall meetings to address any changes
18 suggested by the DOI?

19

20 MS. MORIARTY: Good question. I would
21 be surprised if we get through all of that by your fall
22 meetings to be quite candid. With everything that's --
23 other priorities that USDA has and that we have at the
24 Department of the Interior, we're in the middle of a
25 couple other rulemaking processes that is more of a
26 prescriptive time period than the scoping review
27 because there's no time certain. So I would be
28 surprised if we saw any recommendations if there are to
29 come before your fall meetings later this year.

30

31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Louis.

32

33 MR. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. How
34 are you doing, Kara?

35

36 MS. MORIARTY: Oh, there you are. Hi.

37

38 (Laughter)

39

40 MR. GREEN: I'm the biggest guy here
41 besides.....

42

43 MS. MORIARTY: I'm like who's talking
44 to me. This is such a big -- this is such a big room.

45

46 MR. GREEN: I'm the biggest guy here
47 besides that guy and you thought I was somewhere.

48

49 MS. MORIARTY: Yeah. Well, you know, I

50

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1 did land a couple hours ago, so like I apologize for
2 the sleep deprivation this morning.

3

4 MR. GREEN: Well, I'm everywhere.

5

6 MS. MORIARTY: Yeah, that's right.
7 Nice to see you.

8

9 MR. GREEN: Thank you. Good to see you
10 again. Just a question. You don't need to answer it
11 if you don't have an answer. Is there any thought that
12 the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture are ever
13 going to pow-wow a little bit with the Secretary of
14 Commerce?

15

16 MS. MORIARTY: On subsistence?

17

18 MR. GREEN: On our issues, yeah. Well,
19 we have salmon issues and there's other things going on
20 out there that we don't have any control over and I was
21 just wondering if, seeing as the Department of Commerce
22 is overseeing NOAA that there's an issue in the Bering
23 Sea and the Gulf of Alaska.

24

25 MS. MORIARTY: That's a good question.
26 You know, the three Secretaries were all together last
27 week actually. We were at the Department of
28 Agriculture for a roundtable. Our Secretary was
29 invited to participate. Secretary Lutnick was there
30 with Secretary Rollins and our Secretary to talk about
31 the seafood, office of the seafood liaison that the
32 Department of Ag created.

33

34 So the three of them were actually
35 together talking about seafood in a general sense, so
36 it's a good question and something we can consider and
37 try to find a counterpart at Commerce to discuss some
38 of those issues.

39

40 MR. GREEN: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
41 Chair.

42

43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Frank.

44

45 MR. WOODS: Thank you for representing
46 us here in Alaska. I've still got to invite you out to
47 Bristol Bay. In the last few days you've heard public
48 testimony from all the rural areas and tribes. What
49 I'd like to ask is that, number one, we keep
50

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1 perspective that this Board helps regulate the 300
2 million acres in Alaska. That we are unique, that the
3 public perspective is still in place, and if you read
4 the 1,500 pages of information we review and the
5 70-plus regulations that we're doing the next day or
6 so, you understand the magnitude of what we're faced
7 with.

8
9 Also, you know, the consolidation of
10 all the Federal programs, every program in Alaska is
11 suffering with the budget crisis. Not only a budget
12 crisis, but a work force development problem that we
13 don't have enough people to recruit to do all the work
14 that we do. Everybody I know in every field are doing
15 two to three jobs. And to pass on to the Secretary
16 that not only this Board, but I think every governing
17 body that regulates land or issues and human
18 interaction is being taxed right now.

19
20 We try to -- and we think we manage
21 resource, but what we're doing is managing human
22 beings. And to be human about it, that's not fair to
23 the system, it's not fair to the government, and it's
24 not fair to the people. So I appreciate your charge
25 and your representing us in Washington D.C. Thank you.

26
27 MS. MORIARTY: Thank you, Frank. I look
28 forward to getting out to Bristol Bay. It's been a
29 couple years, so I look forward to it.

30
31 MR. DUNAWAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dan
32 Dunaway, Bristol Bay RAC Vice Chair. Welcome, and
33 thank you for coming. It just occurred to me what
34 Frank was mentioning how complex subsistence is,
35 particularly to get that point across to the people in
36 the lower 48. We have a new educational manual that
37 just got printed and delivered yesterday to here. I
38 was thinking maybe a few of those manuals going back to
39 D.C. I think they're more aimed at school kids and
40 stuff, but might be -- and I haven't had a chance to
41 look through it, but might be a handy tool to help
42 explain to people in the Lower 48 that just don't get
43 this at all and how important it is.

44
45 So I just wanted to bring that up and
46 also kind of echo what Louis brought up about the
47 concerns of bycatch. You're probably aware, it's all
48 over the internet and all of the social media that's
49 around Alaska, I don't think trawlers are the only
50

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1 thing, but it is a huge concern with the lack of Kings
2 and lack of other fish. Thank you very much.

3

4 MS. MORIARTY: Thank you, Dan. Yeah,
5 if there are extra copies, I would be happy to share
6 with my colleagues back in D.C. And I think that's part
7 of the reason why the more -- some of us who are newer
8 to this issue, either here in Alaska like myself or
9 those that I work with back in D.C. -- the more we
10 learn through the review, the more we have to learn.

11

12 So we're trying to be thoughtful and
13 learn and understand the legal foundations around the
14 Board and the RACs, and all of the other issues as
15 well. But, yes, happy to take back some educational
16 materials for my colleagues back in D.C. if there are
17 some extra copies, so thanks for pointing that out. As
18 a former school teacher, it's probably in a language
19 that I can relate to if it's targeted to school kids,
20 so that's perfect. Thank you.

21

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Dan,
23 and I'm sure Heather appreciates the plug. Any other
24 questions. Comments.

25

26 (No comments)

27

28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I definitely
29 appreciate your time in coming to get a pulse on the
30 program. Here we go, Rhonda.

31

32 MS. PITKA: I think earlier when the
33 scoping process started you said that we had a
34 compressed time frame so recommendations should come
35 out by the spring. If I'm remembering that right, and
36 now -- so there's no deadlines? There's no hard
37 deadlines?

38

39 MS. MORIARTY: No, there were never
40 hard deadlines. Nice to see you, Chief Pitka. Nice to
41 see you. No, there were never any hard deadlines
42 because it's a scoping process, so we could take our
43 time. Again, the more we learn, the more we need to
44 learn. So we are going to be thoughtful about any type
45 of -- if any recommendations come forward for sure.

46

47 I just would like to say, Mr. Chairman,
48 if -- you know, yes, I'll be here for a couple hours
49 today, a couple hours tomorrow, but I would just say
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1 that my door is always open to any of the Board members
2 individually, the RAC members, other members of the
3 public. That's my job is to represent the Secretary
4 and I can't get everywhere.

5
6 I know I've had lots of wonderful
7 invitations to be in every corner of the state and
8 visit all 229 tribes, which I would love to do, but I
9 am doing my best and Sarah Taylor in my office as well
10 to try and get to as many of the region as possible.
11 We are looking to see how many of the RAC meetings we
12 can get to in person again this fall. It's a great way
13 to try to get to at least some of the regional centers
14 across Alaska. But my phone is always open, my door is
15 always open, and again I appreciate the invitation.

16
17 MS. PITKA: Sorry, just one more. When
18 we do get the recommendations from the Secretary's
19 Office do you think that there would be support to have
20 an All Regional Advisory Council meeting? We've had
21 joint Regional Council meetings in the past when we've
22 had major issues to discuss like the Yukon River Salmon
23 disaster or other issues that affect all of Alaska.

24
25 MS. MORIARTY: We understand that there
26 is a request for that and it's under consideration.

27
28 MS. PITKA: Thank you, I appreciate it.

29
30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
31 Kara. I see no further questions. We appreciate your
32 time this morning.

33
34 MS. MORIARTY: Thanks, everybody.

35
36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
37 We'll now open up the floor for public comment period
38 on non-agenda items. Again we do have a packed agenda
39 the next two days so we would ask for brevity and
40 respect for other people as they want to testify today.
41 If you want to go longer, it's your process. I think a
42 green card or a blue card, what color do we have here
43 today? Robbin will call you up and we'll start
44 receiving public testimony this morning.

45
46 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We
47 have eight folks that have signed up in the room. I
48 don't know who has signed up online. That's so that we
49 can kind of keep track of who is in the queue.

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1 Additionally we will have -- after the comments on
2 non-agenda items we will have an opportunity to comment
3 on the consensus agenda before we move back into our
4 action items.

5

6 The first person in the room is Jimmie
7 Hurley, Sr. Jimmy Hurley.

8

9 MR. HURLEY: Chairman, Federal Board
10 members, respective Board members. My name is Jimmie
11 Hurley. I am from Bristol Bay area, Ekwok. I've
12 fished Bristol Bay for 45 years and fished Petersburg
13 for a longline. All my life I've been on boats. I run
14 barges up and down the Nushagak and it's just a life of
15 fish. I've helped kickstart the CDQ program. I helped
16 pretty much voice our opinion about Pebble Mine. I was
17 the very first one who stood up against Pebble Mine.

18

19 So I've been in the political arena of
20 Bristol Bay a long time and I am not done. I had to
21 move in here about five years ago to be here, to be
22 with my family, and to testify about North Pacific and
23 some of the other ones because Nushagak River -- we've
24 seen some really declining in King salmon and chum, so
25 I teamed up with other tribes to make more aware of
26 what's going on. It's a real battle to see our Native
27 people on the Yukon-Kuskokwim pretty much starving, you
28 know.

29

30 So I'm not going to sit around and keep
31 my mouth shut about that, you know. I want to voice my
32 opinion on this and that is partly why I moved in. A
33 little bit more. I spotted herring in Togiak and
34 worked my way up to so many others. But I'm not here
35 for all that. I just -- that's another issue, but
36 people should be aware of, you know, your perspective.

37

38

39 This is the first meeting I ever went
40 to a Federal meeting. I've been to all the North
41 Pacific and all the Fish and Game meetings with the
42 State. I was made aware that Ekwok, Koliganek and
43 Stuyahok, we can't -- we can't get any caribou up
44 there. It's closed out and everybody around us has
45 been -- has access to caribou.

46

47 You know, when I go back, it's \$10 a
48 gallon for me to go up and we travel -- I have to team
49 up with somebody who will go moose hunting. And here
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1 we see these woodland caribou all the way up Mulchatna.
2 You know, the Mulchatna Herd used to be over 200,000
3 and it's depleted down to -- I don't know what the
4 numbers are, but it sure would be good to have that
5 open.

6
7 If we can't get a moose, at least we'll
8 come back with a caribou. It's just common knowledge,
9 you know. We're there to to bring meat back to our
10 table. We have a lot of salmon. I've sat on many
11 meetings. Nushagak Advisory. I pushed along a lot of
12 things to help. I've done value added at BBDC. I've
13 done everything pretty much to my ability to help
14 Bristol Bay.

15
16 I need some help with a proposal to
17 open up at least one caribou for each -- for anybody
18 going up the river, you know. So I'm not too sure how
19 this works with proposals. I mean it's the Federal
20 level here, but I know how it works at the State when
21 we shut down King salmon fisheries.

22
23 Peter Christopher and I started
24 Value-added King Salmon. We process salmon and it was
25 probably the best in the world. We did it. It wasn't
26 no company, but it came out of Bristol Bay. So it's
27 not -- you know, it's something that -- you know, you
28 think that some people bring these ideas. You know, I
29 learned all this out of Indian Valley down there. We
30 try to put value to our fish. But, anyway, I sure
31 could use some help at trying to get a proposal
32 together to open that area because there's a lot of
33 hungry mouths.

34
35 It's pretty sad to go back home and you
36 hunt a moose. You know, you travel maybe 150 miles up
37 the main river or Nuyakuk or Mulchatna, you know.
38 That's a long ways to travel for nothing and come back
39 empty. That's not a good sign for your family. You
40 got to maybe work on putting up more salmon.

41
42 So I appreciate all your time and thank
43 you very much.

44
45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
46 Jimmy. Any comments from the Board? And I know we do
47 have staff here that can help you with that, getting a
48 proposal put together for that area.

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1 MR. HURLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

4

5 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

6 Next on our list is Tom Harris. Tom Harris, please

7 address the Board.

8

9 (No comments)

10

11 MS. LAVINE: If we don't have Tom

12 Harris, the next on the list is Stanley Pete. Stanley.

13

14 MR. PETE: Thank you, Chairman and

15 members of the Board. Good morning, Chairman and

16 members of the Board. Thank you for this opportunity.

17 (In Yup'ik). My name is Stanley Pete. My mother,

18 Donna Pete, and my father, Dennis Pete. I am from a

19 small village on Yukon Delta, Nunam Iqua. It's on wind

20 swept tundra with permafrost. My family's bond is

21 strengthened through subsistence.

22

23 I come from a small Yup'ik village. My

24 family and community have always depended on

25 subsistence. The subsistence harvest opportunity of

26 salmon on Yukon River is next to non-existent. The

27 Yup'ik, Cup'ik, Koyukon and Canada Athabaskan,

28 Gwich'in, Han Hwech'in and the Hakon Athabaskan and

29 their descendants are feeling the agony of fish

30 collapse.

31

32 The regional, cultural and temporal

33 variations are many in these different user groups.

34 Even with all of our differences in utilization of

35 salmon and many beliefs and ceremonies regarding salmon

36 are on pause or not happening. Our children and

37 grandchildren are losing their culture or don't know

38 what it is. Us few who remember cherish and yearn for

39 that lifestyle. The few that get fish from other areas

40 are comforted and reminded of happier times.

41

42 With the collapse of salmon on Yukon

43 some user groups, not many, are suggesting they have

44 exclusive rights or privileges to harvest salmon. The

45 collapse of these salmon stocks is causing tension

46 between user groups. All user groups don't have same

47 food availability. Caribou, bison, muskox, moose,

48 bears, don't live on bear tundra. Marine mammals don't

49 go way inland. How can any co-management agreements

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1 exist if there is tension in river.

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4 We have many laws and acts by both
5 State and Federal bodies that dictate when we can and
6 cannot do subsistence. Marine Mammal Protection Act,
7 Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Alaska National Interest
8 Land Conservation Act, judicial rulings, many State and
9 Federal regulations, statutes. Even which Natives
10 qualify to subsist.

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On the Yukon it seems the sole burden of conservation of salmon is placed on subsistence users. Key spawning habitat are at the mercy of mining activity. Sedimentation, water quality degradation, vegetation loss, catastrophic mining spills alter or even wipe out discreet salmon stocks.

Mining activity on Yukon is governed by State and Federal regulators. Bureau of Land manages mineral development. Environmental Protection Agencies enforce regulations to protect water from impacts. State Agencies are also delegated authority. Water qualities are of a concern also. Environmental protection laws and State agencies govern standards.

In the Tanana River 11.2 million gallons a day of treated sewage is discharged into androgynous rivers. It affects those fish that go up the stream, the river to spawn. There are many variables like permafrost degradation, sewage discharge, mining activity, hatcheries, bycatch, interception, hydrology changes on Yukon water site.

I bring my concerns here to this body hoping my voice will be amplified. If all other factors of decline of Yukon salmon are disregarded and only put on subsistence users, how can anyone think these stocks will rebound? Currently there are another 100 proposed mines in different stages of development on Yukon water site.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. I appreciate that testimony. I think it gives a good picture to what the rural user faces as we just try to get a fish or a moose or a caribou. It's really a heavy-weighted responsibility on the user so I appreciate that testimony in encapsulating I think what

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1 the Yukon goes through as it tries to continue it's way
2 of life, so thank you.

3

4 Any comments from the Board?

5

6 (No comments)

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I appreciate
9 your testimony this morning.

10

11 MR. PETE: Thank you.

12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes. Rhonda.

14

15 MS. PITKA: Thank you for your
16 testimony today. I really appreciate it. I know that
17 you do a lot of work with the Tribal Fish Commission,
18 so I'd like to thank you for that work also and for
19 protecting the salmon. I definitely thank you for your
20 words today. That was excellent testimony.

21

22 MR. PETE: Thank you.

23

24 MS. LAVINE: Next speaker in the queue
25 is Shania Murphy. Shania.

26

27 MS. MURPHY: Directors of the Board,
28 Chairman Christianson, Director Lee Liddy, thank you
29 for the chance to speak today. I just want to
30 acknowledge that I am on the ancestral lands of the
31 Dena'ina people.

32

33 There are two things that I wanted to
34 talk about today and one of them is oysters reproducing
35 in Southeast's waters. When I was deckhanding for a
36 dive boat over in Behm Canal, this guy came up who knew
37 my captain, had two deer in his skiff and said I had 20
38 people out here to my beach. Come dive it if you want
39 some oysters. And that was frightening to hear. I've
40 seen many one-off populations that have huge oysters
41 growing in them from old dilapidated farms in the '80s,
42 but to my understanding there is more than that
43 happening.

44

45 The second thing that I wanted to talk
46 about was sport fishermen all the way down at a place
47 called Tree Point in Ketchikan. It's near the Canadian
48 border. This is a six-hour run by a seven knot boat
49 and about an hour and 45 minutes to two hours with a
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1 faster boat.

2

3 We've seen sport fishermen all the way
4 down there. Charter fishermen in the summer time.
5 These commercial gillnetters will follow right behind
6 them and run them off from their gillnet grounds and
7 they're coming every day. It is really concerning and
8 I would really like to see something done, like a
9 limited entry fishery for charter fishing.

10

11 That is all I have to say. Gunalcheesh,
12 thank you.

13

14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
15 Shania. Any questions, comments from the board? I
16 appreciate your testimony this morning. Thank you.

17

18 MS. LAVINE: Next in the queue we have
19 Ali Ginter. Ali.

20

21 MS. GINTER: Good morning, Mr. Chair
22 and members of the Board. Thank you for the
23 opportunity to speak during public comment today. My
24 name is Ali Ginter. I am a resident of Ketchikan, a
25 mother of four, and a Councilwoman for Ketchikan Indian
26 Community. (In Tlingit) is my Tlingit name. It means
27 the raven who stands up. I am Tlingit from the
28 Kaach.adi Clan originally from Wrangell, one of
29 Alaska's landless communities.

30

31 I am also a child of the Tahltan
32 people. I am the daughter of Kayaani Shawat, Leafwoman
33 Trixie Bennett, and the granddaughter of Minnie Larsen.

34

35

36 I first want to thank this Board for
37 recognizing Ketchikan's rural status. That decision
38 meant a great deal to many families in our community,
39 mine included. It made people feel seen, heard and
40 understood for many of us. It was an acknowledgment
41 that our lived reality matters. And I wanted to use
42 this non-agenda public comment period to speak
43 generally about rural life subsistence and what these
44 issues mean to families like mine.

45

46 Sometimes communities are viewed
47 through statistics, maps, or assumptions, but numbers
48 alone do not tell the story of how people actually
49 live. Ketchikan is an island community. We are not

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1 connected to the road system. To leave or return we
2 rely on boats and planes. We depend heavily on barge
3 crate and services for the goods that stock our stores
4 and support our households.

5
6 When transportation costs rise,
7 families feel it. When weather impacts travel or
8 deliveries, families feel it. That is part of rural
9 life. Rural life is not only about geography, it is
10 also about cost, access, isolation and reliance on one
11 another. For many families subsistence is not
12 recreation, it's not a hobby, it's not something extra,
13 it's food security, it's dignity, it's sharing with
14 elders, it's teaching children where food comes from.
15 It's keeping cultural practices alive.

16
17 For my family of six harvested foods
18 help feed our household. We rely on salmon, whitefish
19 and deer throughout the year. As my children grow, so
20 do those needs. When we harvest, we also teach
21 responsibility. We use what we can, we waste little,
22 we pass on values of gratitude, stewardship, and
23 respect for the resources that sustain us. For many
24 Alaska families, subsistence is also tied to identity
25 and healing.

26
27 My husband is Aleut, a descendant of
28 those displaced at three seas. Like many Native
29 families there were losses that cannot be undone. When
30 he teaches our sons to hunt and provide, it is more
31 than harvesting food. It is connection, it is healing,
32 it is reclaiming traditions that earlier generations
33 were denied. That is something difficult to capture in
34 policy language, but is very real in our homes.

35
36 I also want to recognize those who came
37 before me and advocated for these issues long before I
38 stood here today. My mother was heavily involved in
39 this work along with President Burns and I am proud to
40 be here to continue this good work lending my voice
41 where I can. When discussing rural communities, I ask
42 that decision-makers remember that behind every map,
43 chart, or number are real people.

44
45 There are elders waiting for
46 traditional foods, there are parents trying to stretch
47 a budget, there are children learning to harvest
48 respectfully. There are communities working to remain
49 connected to culture and place. Rural is more than a
50

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1 label. Rural is a way of life, rural is a resilience,
2 rural is community, rural is responsibility to one
3 another.

4
5 Thank you for your time and for
6 listening.

7
8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. I
9 appreciate your testimony this morning. Any questions
10 or comments.

11
12 (No comments)

13
14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I appreciate
15 you taking the time to share that. Thank you.

16
17 MS. LAVINE: Next on our list is a
18 gentleman from Togiak. Mr. Cutchiuk. Please correct
19 my pronunciation.

20
21 MR. CUTCHIUK: Good morning, Chair.
22 Members of the Board. My name is Jimmy Cutchiuk. I am
23 from the village of Togiak in Southwest Bristol Bay. I
24 know Ms. Stewart is there sitting. I am testifying in
25 support of opening a caribou season at the Cape Peirce
26 section of the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge.

27
28 Refuge memos that these caribous live
29 there year round in the refuge and should be utilized
30 for subsistence by the villages that live in that area
31 closest to where the caribou reside. My people have
32 been hunting that area for as long as I can remember. I
33 think I started hunting that area 20 to 30 years ago
34 and I've been traveling with older elders back then
35 because my only friends were those older areas that --
36 I mean the older people that know that area. So I've
37 been traveling a lot with them.

38
39 Since the Mulchatna Caribou Herd has
40 been closed and the travel conditions were good, I
41 traveled this winter 15 hours round trip to harvest
42 caribou from the Nushagak Peninsula. That's Southwest
43 of Dillingham. And with the cost of fuel as high as it
44 is, and it's going to get higher, like it says in the
45 news if their reports are good. Local season would cut
46 that to an eight-hour trip from my village.

47
48 It was a good different food from what
49 we eat every year since the Mulchatna Caribou Herd has
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1 been closed and the only food that we had is moose.
2 That caribou is really really good and I'm glad we had
3 good travel conditions. The refuge memo said that
4 these caribou lived year round in that area, so I put
5 in a proposal a couple years ago. I'd like to thank
6 some people for helping me putting in a proposal for
7 special action. I'd like to get a permanent season for
8 that area before they deplete the lunch buffet.

9

10 Thanks for your time. Thank you.

11

12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We appreciate
13 that. Any questions for Jimmy.

14

15 MR. WOODS: Jimmy, you talked about the
16 Cape Peirce caribou population and a second caribou
17 topic from Bristol Bay. Dan Dunaway is our
18 representative on the RAC. The management of Federal
19 lands is really patchwork, especially up on the
20 Nushagak for caribou is managed by the Mulchatna Herd.
21 The State biologist, John, that was in before the one
22 we have now was real active on trying to micro -- kind
23 of giving out maybe quota shares to different regions
24 for the Mulchatna is too big.

25

26 That that herd you're talking about,
27 you're correct, is on Federal land and I would work
28 through the RAC process to get a proposal for that and
29 I would support any decisions or proposals or anything
30 that come up for that population. It's on the western
31 side of the Togiak Refuge. It's a micro herd, but it
32 also can be utilized.

33

34 The other thing too is the State and
35 the Feds -- it says not an embarrassment of the people
36 or the system, but they have ceremonial permits that
37 can be issued for caribou and moose. The Lower
38 Peninsula also issues educational permits for caribou
39 and moose so at least our people can have a taste, but
40 also can teach young people on harvesting and what it
41 takes to harvest.

42

43 So I'll shut up. I wasn't going to
44 comment, but this is the second -- and I appreciate
45 both people coming up from Bristol Bay and speaking,
46 especially on caribou and wildlife populations. Thank
47 you.

48

49 MR. CUTCHIUK: English is my second

50

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1 language so I have a hard time trying to speak clearly,
2 but that wasn't my intent. Thank you.

3

4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You did a good
5 job and I thank Frank for giving options on the record
6 that what is available to create that access point to
7 the resource, you know, in the interim of getting a
8 proposal before us.

9

10 So thank you, Frank. Thank you, Jim.

11

12 MS. LAVINE: Mr. Chair, we have three
13 more folks that have signed up for the comment period
14 on non-agenda items. I know that we do have someone
15 that signed up for the consensus agenda. I might ask
16 if there is anyone else interested in addressing the
17 Board on non-agenda items. We will have another
18 opportunity tomorrow morning. I will continue with the
19 three I have here. Next person in the queue is Heather
20 Bauscher.

21

22 MS. BAUSCHER: Good morning everyone,
23 Mr. Chair, members of the Board. I had a few things I
24 failed to mention yesterday and I just wanted to
25 announce, because it came up earlier, that the teaching
26 guides did officially arrive hot off the presses. They
27 got a little delayed but they were delivered yesterday
28 afternoon and I do have them in the back of the room.

29

30 This is a limited first run of 250
31 copies and the printing was generously funded by a
32 member from the Southeast RAC that contributed content
33 regarding the early days of the program. So I want to
34 say a big thank you to Cal Casipit on the record
35 because he didn't want this to exist only in digital
36 format and recognize the need for physical copies for
37 rural Alaskans.

38

39 I also forgot to mention a few folks
40 and I wanted to say thank you to the USDA Office of
41 Tribal Relations for helping to fund the curriculum
42 guide as well as some of the recent support for the
43 program. Kim Amanderez (ph), she is our new logistics
44 support person, which is actually what is allowing me
45 to expand this program beyond Sitka and Southeast, so
46 big thank you to her.

47

48 And Taylor Bauscher did all of the
49 graphic design on this guide. She has been working

50

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1 with me on this for more than two years to try and put
2 this together, so I failed to mention them earlier. If
3 people would like a copy of the guide, please come see
4 me in the back and write down your information because
5 I'm trying to keep track of where they go.

6
7 Thanks to a lot of the conversations
8 that have been had in the room lately. I am hopeful
9 that we will find more funding in partnership with
10 agencies or other shared agreements to keep this going
11 because we will be at the bottom of funding for the
12 student travel this fall. I only have funding for
13 community workshops until next spring, but the
14 community workshops have also been a good way to find
15 the people in the communities to help support youth and
16 future cohorts.

17
18 So please reach out if you would like
19 to talk about that. Thank you so much for all of the
20 support.

21
22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
23 Heather.

24
25 MS. LAVINE: Next in the queue is Ben
26 Mallott. Ben.

27
28 MR. MALLOTT: Good morning members of
29 the committee today. My name is Ben Mallott, president
30 of AFN. I am here to make sure that the Subsistence
31 Board is aware of National Park Service rulemaking.
32 This rulemaking is reviewing certain hunting revisions
33 on reserve lands in Alaska. This goes back to 2015.
34 Since 2015 this rule has included the definition that
35 we all know in ANILCA for rural preference.

36
37 The Park Service is reviewing these
38 pre-2015 rules and is unclear to AFN in their rule -- I
39 just want to recognize that this deadline was pushed
40 back for 15 days for additional comment from our
41 membership. I also want to thank DOI and also NPS, Don
42 Striker, for meeting with AFN. This is also part of
43 the process too, right? We ask these questions and
44 wait for Interior to get back to us with more
45 information.

46
47 But I also want to recognize that right
48 now in rural Alaska times are tough. Our rural
49 preference is really for those who need it the most and
50

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1 so AFN is really concerned about any rules that could
2 open our rural areas for those that don't live in rural
3 Alaska. With that said with AFN and how this rule has
4 been proposed of how -- sorry, I didn't write my notes
5 down. It's on my phone. I didn't print it off, so I'm
6 trying to read real small.

7
8 It's unclear how AFN -- to AFN and also
9 I think this is a good question for this Board, is how
10 the NPS can manage subsistence on Federal lands, and so
11 a part of ANILCA as this rule seeks to .. According to
12 State management. AFN wants this Board to be sure of
13 this rule. I'm sure how this Board and also AFN how
14 the State regulations can impact and also still apply
15 to ANILCA when this rule is kind of written the way it
16 is.

17
18 AFN has made comments asking this.
19 Right now we are asking if the state -- asking if NPS
20 is asking that the ANILCA definition of subsistence be
21 considered with State definition. The State definition
22 of subsistence is for all. That's not a rural
23 preference. A preference for everyone is not a
24 preference at all. So AFN is asking if NPS -- we also
25 encourage this Board to also consider through different
26 regulations and especially a sector order, asking how
27 it can make deference for state opportunities of how
28 that still applies to ANILCA.

29
30 Right now we are in the middle of a lot
31 of uncertainty. We are coming up to a new season and
32 our communities are hurting. Right now communities
33 have decided between high fuel costs for not only for
34 heat, but also for activities for fishing. Right now
35 it is unclear of how these rules would actually blend a
36 State preference for all and also a rural preference.

37
38 With that said, it's confusing. I'm
39 still waking up. I want to make sure this committee is
40 aware of these rules and actually just aware that --
41 and actually has the same questions to NPS of how we
42 can blend possible additional State regs over ANILCA
43 Title VIII.

44
45 Gunalcheesh and thank you for having
46 me.

47
48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Ben.
49 I appreciate the update. Any questions or comments
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1 from the Board.

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(No comments)

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and seeing none, thank you for that update this morning. Appreciate your time.

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MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have a couple more people who signed up that were misfiled for this morning. Gayla Hoseth is next in our queue. And after that will be Peter Angasan, Sr. Thank you.

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MS. HOSETH: Good morning, Mr. Chair and members of the Board. I just couldn't stay away from this table, I guess. I wasn't planning on testifying at this meeting. But my name is Gayla Hoseth. I wear many different hats. I am here on behalf of Curyung Tribal Council here today to talk about some issues that are on non-agenda items that are really important though as what's happening out there affecting our subsistence way of life in the Bristol Bay Region.

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We just got out of a Board of Fisheries cycle and herring was a big topic. Herring, as we have in Kulukak Bay, is where we have our Federal waters on the west side of Bristol Bay and Chignik is the other one and I think there's a little section in Iliamna of Federal waters. The decisions that are being made at the Board of Fisheries and also at the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council are going to impact our communities when it comes to subsistence.

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How do we tie that together with the Federal Subsistence Board in talking. I was glad that the question that was brought up by Mr. Green from Seward Peninsula RAC to Ms. Kara about what is the connection with the Department of Commerce when these decisions are being made is what's happening out there at the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council.

44

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At the Board of Fisheries we have Proposal 188. That part of the Togiak Herring stock will go to the Dutch Harbor/Unalaska area for their quota. That's only if they are not catching 80 percent of the total allowable catch for Togiak.

1 In January of 2027, the North Pacific
2 Fisheries Management Council is going to be making a
3 decision as to how much biomass of herring is going to
4 be taken out of the Bering Sea. Right now it is 1
5 percent. That is going to possibly increase to 2 to 3
6 percent. That's going to have significant impacts on
7 herring and the species that rely on herring or herring
8 roe on help. The smaller stocks of herring along the
9 western coast of Alaska all the way up as far as
10 Kotzebue and the species that rely on herring.

11
12 I know that the next cycle is a
13 fisheries cycle. Trying to figure out how do we put in
14 a proposal is challenging as I'm thinking in my head of
15 the proposal process, but a decision could possibly be
16 made before the next Federal Subsistence Board meeting
17 of 2027.

18
19 As we see the subsistence declines for
20 fish, we see the subsistence declines for moose and
21 caribou. When we are really looking at the ecosystem
22 of our waters, herring is a key species in the water
23 that connects everything that doesn't have boundaries
24 of who's managing what resource.

25
26 So I just wanted to bring that to the
27 attention of this Board and maybe really push to see
28 how we do work with the other agencies on these
29 decisions because I don't really see a cross connection
30 of how we are communicating and having those
31 conversations.

32
33 I appreciate the engagement. I really
34 want to focus on education. I'm glad that Ben
35 highlighted a little about the National Park Service
36 comment period that we're currently in. We are in
37 comment period after comment period and we are
38 constantly reacting to all of these changes that are
39 coming our way. One thing that is really key is that
40 we really figure out how do we focus on educating the
41 public on what are the impacts on this. How do we
42 understand all of this and so many different areas and
43 sometimes we catch comment periods, and sometimes we
44 don't.

45
46 Very proud of Heather and the team that
47 she works with to do the educational guide. I think
48 that's going to help people get engaged in this
49 process. I just have to say since I am here from
50

1 Bristol Bay, I am really proud of Dan Dunaway for
2 sitting in as RAC. The RAC Chairman here at this
3 meeting. Also we have RAC member Kenneth Nukwak who
4 came to this process how many years ago when we were
5 talking about caribou. And a lot of people don't get
6 involved in this process unless something is wrong or
7 they've been cited or their way of life has been
8 drastically affected.

9
10 Also I want to recognize Frank Woods.
11 He is from our tribe and I am really proud of his
12 leadership that he serves on the Federal Subsistence
13 Board in this space as one of the public members. I
14 can't forget Crystal as well. She is also from our
15 tribe. So we have a lot of leadership here from the
16 Bristol Bay Region and I just want to say thank you
17 also for Jimmy for speaking up and those that are
18 possibly going to speak after. But the herring issue
19 is a big one that I don't want us to overlook and not
20 have it be on our radar for all of us to pay attention
21 in these different spaces that we are in.

22
23 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

24
25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
26 Gayla. I didn't realize we were Bristol Bay surrounded.
27 I thought Southeast had the floor here. Just I know
28 this as a Federal Board Program has seen this in Sitka.
29 If there is Federal waters in the bay, the Makhnati
30 Islands were closed to the harvest of herring for
31 commercial purposes.

32
33 And the State, through pressure from
34 the locals, matched that closure area in there to
35 provide for subsistence uses and conserve the stock.
36 So this Board has been engaged in herring management
37 toolmaking I guess. I would look at what happened with
38 Sitka and maybe see what we can do to help entertain
39 something out there to protect and preserve if there is
40 going to be an increase. Thank you.

41
42 MS. HOSETH: Thank you very much. I
43 would be happy to be a part of those conversations as
44 well. Thank you.

45
46 MR. WOODS: I just want to thank you,
47 Gayla, as a public member I always support statewide,
48 regionally wide, and all the issues that connect
49 subsistence to Alaska. The youth behind you, I'm
50

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1 looking at a kid I saw last year, I would challenge
2 ourselves to bring those entities and I would recommend
3 this. I've been recommending. We have a RAC meeting at
4 the school.

5

6 Like Dan was talking about also,
7 bringing a youth track into this process is huge. I
8 know it's costly, but it is important. Your leadership
9 back home has been real honored to have, not just in
10 this arena, but in different arenas, state and national
11 wide. We have identified Federal waters in Bristol
12 Bay. We have identified the impacts of herring and its
13 impact.

14

15 So with the RAC process I think we have
16 some traction. And thank you, Mr. Chair, for speaking
17 about Sitka and the Federal waters that you are
18 identifying. It's a different tract, but if that's why
19 we are here, it's a non-agenda items and we have a lot
20 of issues statewide. So I'll move on because of time.
21 Thank you, Gayla, for your input and well received.
22 Thank you.

23

24 MS. HOSETH: Through the Chair, thank
25 you, Frank.

26

27 MR. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
28 Gayla, I really appreciate the fact that you brought up
29 the herring issue and the Board of Fish taking a cut of
30 the Togiak supposedly fishery that I guess doesn't
31 really exist. Does it?

32

33 So the point I was going to make
34 because you brought that out is the fact that if you
35 are going to fish -- if people are going to fish out in
36 the Bering Sea, they are going to be fishing on mixed
37 herring stock. You know, it's not one stock. So I
38 think it's an important issue to really hone in on when
39 they can take somebody's -- a percent of somebody's
40 catch -- a quota, excuse me, and go fish it in the
41 middle of the ocean, they're not going to be targeting
42 only Togiak herring. They're going to be targeting
43 Norton Sound area. I used to fish Norton Sound.

44

45 Gayla, you mentioned the herring that
46 are probably necessary to make it all the way to
47 Kotzebue, and that would be another small stock, but
48 sheefish feed on herring. I was just talking to the
49 main man of the Northwest Borough last night and he

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1 said we don't have a lot but we really have our
2 sheefish and they are really doing well.

3
4 I encouraged him to come to the table
5 and start bringing that out because if the Board of
6 Fish is going to allow a mixed stock fishery, I don't
7 think that's going to be doing any good for the west
8 coast of Alaska. So I really appreciate you bringing
9 that out.

10
11 Thank you.

12
13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
14 other comments from the Board? I appreciate it, Gayla.
15 And thank you and to AFN for all that you do for the
16 rural subsistence user. Thank you.

17
18 MS. HOSETH: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
19 Next in the queue is Peter Angasan, Sr. Peter.

20
21 MR. ANGASAN, SR.: Good morning. A lot
22 of Bristol Bay folks here today, huh? I'm from King
23 Salmon, from Bristol Bay. I went to a meeting
24 yesterday -- not here, but the other one. The Yukon.
25 There was some kind of agreement made with Canadians
26 and Fish and Game concerning their lack of stock up
27 there and how they're going to try to preserve or get
28 their stock back. But the tribes weren't invited to
29 make comments for the agreement that was made with this
30 group.

31
32 Although they left number four. It says
33 if you have a funeral, Father Max brought up we could
34 go get some fish and bring to the people. But I think
35 that there's 200 plus tribes and they're all Federally
36 recognized, I think, and they should have a say at the
37 table concerning their resources. If we don't have a
38 say about our resources, it's going to be a big
39 problem.

40
41 And then we have another big problem
42 because, you know, we've got fishing that's in decline
43 in some areas. You've got communities that are just
44 wilting away. Then we have our children who are in
45 jeopardy and they're leaving us by means of suicide.
46 This is an epidemic.

47
48 You know, subsistence is not just going
49 out and getting a caribou or catching a fish. It's a
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1 way for our elders to communicate with us about how it
2 used to be and how it could be and how it should be.
3 We are the elders now. We're not the young kids
4 anymore that went out with our elders. We are the ones
5 holding -- leading the wagon so to speak.

6
7 But we're losing 39 people plus a day
8 nationally in suicide. Alaska is the highest rate and
9 we don't want to be in that rate. We want to preserve
10 our children. Why? Because one day our children will
11 be our future and we're going to be hopefully saying
12 good job, we did well.

13
14 I'm just saying that subsistence and
15 how we can represent our communities and we can't
16 represent them if we're not at the table. I know I'm
17 talking apples and oranges, but it all mingles down to
18 one thing. We need to be recognized. We need to have
19 a seat and our children have to be heard. We have to
20 preserve our children.

21
22 I mean I lost my son because of
23 suicide. I would have never got involved if it wasn't
24 for him and I wish I have never got involved. But
25 since I got involved I realize what we need to do and
26 what we should do and what we can do as people.
27 Subsistence is a way to preserve and help our children.

28
29 That's all I have to say.

30
31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
32 that, Peter. I think that sums up us living in rural
33 communities and the things we have to really encounter
34 as we see resources and lifestyles changing and purpose
35 diminishing. So a real big thing we're struggling with
36 as well. Thank you.

37
38 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
39 Last in the queue is Spencer Beckman. Spencer Beckman,
40 you might be online. If you are, please press -- oh,
41 he's here. Excellent.

42
43 MR. BECKMAN: Mr. Chair. Respected
44 members of the Board. My name is Spencer Beckman. I
45 was raised and currently reside in Craig, Alaska
46 located on Prince of Wales Island. I'm near lifelong
47 subsistence user and a rural resident of Southeast
48 Alaska. I currently serve as the Prince of Wales
49 Island Alaska Youth Stewards Program Manager.

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1 I'm here today because I'm
2 participating in Heather Bauscher's course supported by
3 the Sitka Conservation Council. I'm taking this course
4 with the support of Tlingit and Haida so that I may
5 bring my youth group members in the future.

6
7 I'm also here today representing myself
8 as a subsistence user. This is my first experience and
9 exposure to the Federal Board Management process. I
10 must say that I'm very thankful for the work you all
11 have done and continue to do. As an Alaskan and more
12 specifically a rural subsistence user I feel
13 represented and that my voice is heard.

14
15 I commend you for your professionalism
16 and willingness to find common ground amongst varying
17 Alaskan residents. As you stated yesterday, Mr. Chair,
18 we all have a lot in common as Alaskans. So again,
19 thank you for what you do and for setting a great
20 example of decorum for us all.

21
22 I, myself, am not indigenous; however,
23 my raising in rural Alaska has instilled in me many
24 indigenous values. While pursuing my masters in
25 education I was tasked with writing a paper on my
26 culture. For a while I was stumped. I knew that my
27 ancestry was European, but as far as culture I was at a
28 loss.

29
30 After some time I realized that
31 subsistence is my culture. It is what makes me who I
32 am. It connects me to the land, water, fish, game and
33 edibles around me. Subsistence creates purpose in my
34 life as the gentleman before me spoke. Each season is
35 something to look forward to. Subsisting off an
36 ever-changing landscape has made me a life-long
37 learner, keeping my mind sharp and my body strong.

38
39 I want to express today my support for
40 the rural status of Ketchikan, Alaska, while
41 encouraging you to prioritize the subsistence rights of
42 Unit 2 residents whose needs have gone unmet in recent
43 years. I understand the importance of the subsistence
44 way of life to my neighbors in Ketchikan and I support
45 those rights. Subsistence is culture and culture is
46 connection.

47
48 Thank you for your time and effort put
49 before these issues.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Spencer and appreciate it. Any questions or comments.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Spencer and I got to pull a few fish eggs this spring together. We work in the same department. Good luck with the kids this summer. It's really important to get out and teach that engagement. It's one of these areas in Southeast we find every avenue to kind of pick up our kids and keep them moving towards a goal of their purpose with good guardrails like Spencer. He's also a teacher, so we appreciate that leadership in our circle.

Thank you, Spencer.

MR. BECKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Frank.

MR. WOODS: Mr. Chair, thank you. Through the Chair. Spencer, thank you for bringing it to light, the reality we have in Alaska. Just because you're not indigenous doesn't mean you're not a subsistence user and I appreciate that. Number one. It's a class of cultures that need to be addressed in this room, inside this room, outside this room and with each other.

That the value system -- I value your testimony as much as I do any other indigenous or tribal entity. That needs to happen. But it realizes that we have a conflict of cultures doesn't mean we have to disagree and I appreciate your honesty and up front saying that I come to this as a non-indigenous person and I live off subsistence and culture.

If you heard my testimony at the beginning of the meeting, culture is a shared group of activities that we do as a people. Heritage is inherited and I think there's a difference between that since I'm -- I'll refer to my elder Joe Chythlook. He's my designated grandfather in a culture that I live in. He says that we only think we manage resource.

I bring this forward because the

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1 Western way of management is to what we're doing today
2 and that's foreign to our people. You come from
3 Southeast that have impacted the highest influx of
4 non-subsistence user in a resource for the last hundred
5 years.

6
7 Western Alaska is now just imposing on
8 that influx. With the guide industry, the
9 non-regulated transporters to the fisheries resource.
10 The deer population we have before us, right? All
11 those issues have to be delineated and disseminated at
12 this meeting.

13
14 That's huge. I thank you because we
15 need more of you to come testify and start sorting out
16 these issues at the table. Working them out in
17 regulation. I have to respect everyone. When I go
18 back home I'm not fully accepted in every arena. I'm a
19 half-breed. So in the Western world I am Native. I go
20 back home to my village and I'm considered a cussuck
21 (ph). I don't have the same designation of either
22 world, right? I grew up in a world where we have to
23 adapt to survive.

24
25 The Native people are strong, but also
26 the pioneers of this state helped organize and they did
27 a great job of forming this committee because without
28 this committee our rural people and Native people and
29 non-Native people would not be able to feed themselves.
30 With the high cost of -- there are people paying \$20 a
31 gallon for heating fuel right now. Ten dollars plus
32 for gas. I looked at a \$14 a gallon gas bill.

33
34 Rural Alaska cannot afford to live
35 without this program. I appreciate your and I'd
36 appreciate to see you in more meetings, you said this
37 was your first testimony, first experience, welcome.
38 You keep coming back.

39
40 Thank you.

41
42 MR. BECKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Woods.

43
44 MR. PENDERGAST: Mr. Chair, I just want
45 to echo some of the comments that Frank made. Kevin
46 Pendergast, BLM. We are here to represent a rural
47 preference. That doesn't mean a Native preference.
48 Native is an important part of that, but it's rural and
49 these folks are experiencing the same challenges,
50

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1 regardless of where they come from originally. It's
2 really important to me, the mission that we have here
3 as this body and kind of understanding all these
4 perspectives. I just appreciate your remarks and
5 wanted to mention that.

6

7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you and
8 appreciate that. A true culture of sharing in Alaska.

9

10 MS. LAVINE: Mr. Chair, the last person
11 to provide testimony on the non-agenda items is Herb
12 Mansavage. Herb.

13

14 MR. MANSAVAGE: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
15 and members of the Board. I apologize. I'm not savvy
16 to the federal process of this Board and so I have a
17 couple agenda items that I will be speaking to you as
18 I'm not going to be available tomorrow or the weekend.

19

20 For the record, my name is Herb
21 Mansavage and I represent the chair of the Matanuska
22 Valley Advisory Committee. But again, for the record,
23 this is going to be a personal testimony, but I just
24 wanted to make a note that we did submit a letter on
25 behalf of WP26-15, the deer closure. I would ask that
26 that letter is looked at as that was good conversation
27 and unanimous support from the advisory committee in
28 the Matanuska Valley.

29

30 Again, for the record, I'm going to be
31 giving personal testimony. First I'll start with
32 WP26-15. I am strongly opposed to this. Mostly from
33 the sense that I've been involved in the Board of Game
34 process for the State for the last 15 years, very
35 heavily. As a chair I really try to do my best to work
36 with the biologists and the constituents from all over
37 the state to understand our resource as best I can.

38

39 When these things come up before us I
40 really try to, from the State perspective, look at
41 what's a biological concern here. And in this case my
42 strong opposition comes from the reasoning that there
43 is no biological concern on these islands and then,
44 number two, it's a transplanted species. So I see no
45 reason for a rural preference on this particular
46 species in these areas.

47

48 Secondly, just quickly, is WP26-11, and
49 that would be the Unit 6D black bear. The only reason
50

0362

1 I wanted to make a note is I could not see -- it was
2 noted that closed portions to non-Federally qualified
3 users. I didn't explicitly see that in the proposal,
4 but I just wanted to ask that that is considered as
5 well for those that are non-qualified for Federal lands
6 there.

7

8 It's a very traditional -- at least for
9 myself, it's one of the most beautiful areas in Alaska
10 that I look forward to harvesting a black bear and it's
11 great meat and I just ask that it is carefully looked
12 at when that does come about.

13

14 For the non-agenda items I just have a
15 couple comments I wanted to make. I'd ask when
16 considering these proposals -- while I'm not a
17 Federally-qualified subsistence user, I would ask that
18 the Board recognize subsistence nature of all Alaskan
19 game and fish, which we harvest for our families.
20 Being a true steward of the land is a responsibility of
21 all Alaskan residents and it's held with great care and
22 respect.

23

24 To follow with that, while I am
25 strongly opposed to most closures of Federal land to
26 non-Federally qualified users for the reasons I just
27 stated above, I would ask that weapons restrictions be
28 considered before total closure to non-Federally
29 qualified users.

30

31 Again I am speaking on personal behalf,
32 but I am a board member of Alaska Bow Hunter
33 Association. Part of that board and reason I've been
34 on that board for eight years is -- you know, archery
35 is a heritage and it's a different way of not only
36 hunting the animals but experiencing the land and
37 environment and providing that food in that way.

38

39 So I would just ask, you know, before
40 -- and this is a broad stroke, but before closures for
41 non-Federally qualified users are considered, I would
42 ask that -- you know, it's something that a term may be
43 a primitive weapon such as a traditional muzzle loader
44 or archery equipment is considered for those users
45 before a total closure for non-Federally qualified
46 users.

47

48 Lastly, again, kind of a broad stroke,
49 but in a lot of these areas I think trophy hunting gets
50

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1 a bad name and I'd like to make note that many times a
2 trophy hunter is labeled as just that, just a trophy
3 hunter, but meanwhile it's much larger than that. True
4 conservation is in most cases the taking of large,
5 mature animals, and the meat is just as valuable, if
6 not more, than the impressive set of antlers, horn, or
7 hide. Thank you.

8
9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
10 Appreciate that. Any questions? And this is the
11 Cordova Bay proposal, just for my mind space?

12
13 MR. MANSAVAGE: Yes.

14
15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Thank
16 you. I was just placing it to a geographical area. Go
17 ahead, Don.

18
19 MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you. It's Don
20 Hernandez. Chair of the Southeast RAC. You brought up
21 that issue of whether or not transplanted species could
22 have a customary traditional use determination and
23 that's something we've dealt with in Southeast Alaska
24 where we have customary traditional hunts on some
25 transplanted species and it required a lot of
26 discussion as to validate that.

27
28 The position of Southeast RAC -- and I
29 think would be consistent with all Title VIII statutes
30 would be that people view -- you say customary and
31 traditional and people kind of take that as one term,
32 it's customary and traditional, but it's two separate
33 concepts in our view.

34
35 Traditions are those longstanding,
36 deep-seated values that people have towards their
37 practices, whereas customs is something that changes
38 over time. You grow accustomed to doing something as
39 situations change. So it's two different concepts.

40
41 So in the case of a transplanted
42 species the tradition is to go out and hunt for your
43 personal subsistence, but over time customs change and
44 you adapt. So when a species is introduced it becomes
45 part of that tradition of hunting and gathering, so you
46 have to view it in that respect. So hopefully that
47 would clarify your concerns about customary and
48 tradition uses of the introduced species.

49
50

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1 Thank you.

2

3 MR. MANSAVAGE: Thank you.

4

5 MS. PITKA: Hi. I just wanted to make
6 sure to clarify. What's your name and community and
7 which proposals were you opposed to? I usually write
8 it down at the beginning so I have a clear idea of what
9 the testimony is for the proposal. Thank you.

10

11 MR. MANSAVAGE: For the record my name
12 is Herb Mansavage. I'm representing myself from Big
13 Lake, Alaska. The letter that I spoke of was
14 representing the Matanuska Valley Fish and Game
15 Advisory Committee. We are opposed -- from the
16 Matanuska Valley perspective, we are opposed only to
17 WP26-15 and for myself I was opposed to WP26-15 and
18 WP26-11.

19

20 MS. PITKA: Thank you for that
21 clarification.

22

23 MR. MANSAVAGE: Yes, thank you.

24

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, I
26 appreciate your testimony today.

27

28 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
29 have been made aware that there is an individual online
30 who's been trying to raise their hand and it's not
31 showing up. Her name is Sunniaq (ph). Sunniaq, if you
32 could unmute your phone and address the Board, you have
33 the floor. If you need to unmute your phone, you can
34 press star six. Star 6 to unmute your phone. I see
35 now that you have your hand up. There you go. Address
36 the Board, please.

37

38 MS. LEAVITT: Thank you. Dora Leavitt
39 for the record. I am speaking on my behalf. I am a
40 subsistence hunter, lifelong resident of Nuiqsut,
41 Alaska. I am thankful for this Board, but I really
42 feel like there needs to be more communication to folks
43 that have no idea that these meetings are going on.

44

45 If it wasn't for Facebook I wouldn't
46 have listened in, but I've been listening in. We all
47 depend on the migration. We all depend on the
48 resources from the land. I live in the heart of oil
49 and gas industry and I've been watching the migration

50

0365

1 for years. I am 61 years old. Our elders have taught
2 us the pattern of the migration, when to hunt, when to
3 let the first herd pass.

4

5 This is something that we're not
6 educating the sport hunters. We like to call it sport
7 hunters. I am thankful for the closure of some of
8 these heavily trafficked sports hunting in the
9 Northwest area. A great concern besides we have a
10 concern on the decline of the Western Arctic Herd. We
11 rely on the Teshekpuk Herd.

12

13

14 Our community has put a conservation of
15 one million acres that is to protect the migratory
16 birds, the caribou calving area. It is a heavily
17 caribou calving area that has been closed to
18 development. The northeast portion of the Teshekpuk.
19 Our community felt the need to slow down industry and
20 as a trilateral group had proposed to conserve one
21 million acres and it was granted by BLM so that they
22 can do willow development.

22

23

24 It seems like when you give and give
25 and give our subsistence special areas that our parents
26 took me as a little girl to go hunt are being covered
27 with infrastructure and road system for the development
28 of oil and gas.

28

29

30 So when we hear of 26A was going to get
31 -- was going to include 26A with the caribou -- what do
32 you call it? Closure or limiting our bag. I am a
33 whaling captain's wife. We do hunt before we have our
34 blanket toss. We are going to have one in June. But
35 we do not overtake the caribou.

35

36

37 We rely on the migration. I've been
38 watching the caribou as infrastructure goes up. For
39 the last past decade we've had weather factors and the
40 migration has been really slowly to go south. For
41 years we didn't freeze up until November or snow up
42 until November, and then we -- the migration would move
43 when they see the first snow. They would start moving.

43

44

45 With road development and industry
46 infrastructure I see deflection of the caribou when
47 they come from the West, the Northwest, the Teshekpuk
48 Herd, I know that Northwest Arctic herd is heavily --
49 it goes towards Point Hope, Point Lay, Wainwright. We
50 get a little bit of the Central Arctic herd. A place

50

0366

1 where we can no longer hunt on State land.

2

3

4 I sit in the middle of Federal land and
5 on the other side of the river is State land. The
6 regulations are different. We no longer can hunt on
7 the other side where my parents used to hunt that
8 Central Western Herd with the pipeline, corral of
9 pipeline. I feel that we need to study Milne Point. I
10 see pictures and pictures of industry workers taking
11 pictures of thousand of caribou. Instant relief
12 underneath these drill sites on the roads.

12

13

14 So we need to understand what this
15 development is doing to the pattern. With the closures
16 of some of these places for sports hunters can not
17 roam, can no longer go, they will go to 26-B on the
18 Dalton highway. I see no enforcement or I don't see
19 anybody going over there. It's a little camp. It
20 looks like a little village when we pass by in the fall
21 time.

21

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I stop there occasionally to see who's
catching and what they're catching. I don't see very
much meat. I see a lot of big trophies going south.
So we need to understand what other places of sports
hunters and educate them. I was educated to let the
first herd pass so that they will always go that way
and come back.

I am thankful for the testimonies of
these elders that I hear. We share the same similar
stories of my elders now that I am becoming an elder.
I hunt for a lot of people, multiple families. When
you're awaiting captain's flag, you hunt all the time
for everybody. Not just for the caribou, but we fish
on the Colville and on the Nigliq Channel. We are
impacted by oil and gas. There needs to be a study on
deflection. When they do wildlife survey studies and
they use aircrafts or loud hover boats they displace
the caribou.

So I just wanted to testify and I want
to thank all the RACs. The Eastern RACs, the Western
RACs, the Northern RAC for keeping up with the wildlife
studies and making and ensuring that the population is
stable and strong and we have to slow down on the
limits. That's the right way. That's the Inupiaq way
and the Athabaskan way and whatever culture we live in.

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1 So I just wanted to share my testimony
2 and I want to thank you for letting me on. I do have a
3 lot to say. I watched the migration. I used to go
4 only six miles south and wait for the caribous to come
5 to me and they would. For over a decade now I don't
6 see them.

7
8 With new road infrastructure on the
9 road system towards the west, when I go south to hunt
10 caribou I go about 30 miles upriver unless I want to
11 get the Central Western Herd. I go up another little
12 river towards Ikillit. That's another river to go on
13 and catch another herd of caribou other than Teshekpuk.

14
15
16 So we need to educate about the first
17 herd. Someone needs to keep track of the 26-B unit. I
18 know we're going to see a lot more. I go to Happy
19 Valley occasionally too where there's a lot of guide
20 hunters. So I just want to thank this Board for
21 letting me on and testify.

22
23 Thank you. I'm done.

24
25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. I
26 appreciate you taking the time to call in and share
27 concerns of the area with the caribou. Do we have one
28 more online?

29
30 MS. LAVINE: Bonnie, can you please
31 press star six to unmute yourself.

32
33 MS. AYOJIAK: Are you able to hear me?

34
35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

36
37 MS. AYOJIAK: Hello?

38
39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have
40 the floor.

41
42 MS. AYOJIAK: Mr. Chair and members of
43 the Board. My name is Bonnie Ayojiak. I am from
44 Manokotak. It's in the Nushagak and Togiak areas in
45 the Bristol Bay.

46
47 First of all I would like to thank you
48 guys. I commend you for all that you guys do. As I am
49 elder, just stepping into this elder role of mentorship
50

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1 and passing on traditional knowledge and the use of our
2 land and waters, I'm really thankful for and very
3 fortunate to have leaders that keep our needs of our
4 smaller communities that rely on subsistence use of our
5 lands. Thank you to all that work on behalf of our
6 people all over the state.

7
8 The young people have and will have
9 cultural and traditional practices continued as long as
10 they live off the land. It's a way of our being, our
11 way of life. We are blessed in this state of this
12 great nation to be able to continue living our
13 traditional way of life because of the subsistence that
14 is protected. And we share what we catch, when we
15 catch, and very thankful for those who share what they
16 catch. It's our way of being and I am happy that some
17 of the younger elders are stepping into this
18 leadership.

19
20 Thank you to Frank, Gayla, Kenneth,
21 Jimmy, and to that young man that spoke, Peter. Thank
22 you all for speaking out for our communities that don't
23 know what's going on, but they use the land. It may
24 not be on a daily basis, but it's traditionally our way
25 of life. We just have to keep sharing what we know,
26 especially to the youth that are now growing into
27 being, you know (in Yup'ik). Learning to live on their
28 own.

29
30 Thank you so much for the opportunity
31 to speak on behalf of myself, my family, and our
32 village Manokotak in our region, Bristol Bay. Thank
33 you.

34
35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. I
36 appreciate you for calling in and speaking for your
37 people. I believe that concludes the public testimony.
38 Next we have two on for consensus agenda.

39
40 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
41 Yes, next for the consensus agenda testimony we have
42 Kenneth Nukwak, Sr.

43
44 MR. NUKWAK, SR.: Good morning to the
45 Chair and members of the Board. Thank you for this
46 opportunity. I will mainly be expressing my feelings
47 and my thoughts on WP26-40 and WCR26-07. I'd like to
48 thank the Bristol Bay RAC for I think listening to me
49 on WCR26-07, keeping it as status quo.

50

1 I had to be really adamant in January
2 when I was in that Bristol Bay RAC meeting as a member.
3 First I'll introduce myself. My name is Kenneth
4 Nukwak, Sr. (In Yup'ik). I sit on the Manokotak
5 Native Limited Board of Directors in Manokotak. I've
6 sat on the Manokotak Village Council and I've sat on
7 the Manokotak City Council, but I had to reduce my hats
8 in order for the work. I could not bear so much work.

9
10

11 I was encouraged by Gayla Hoseth to
12 fill out an application for the Bristol Bay RAC and I
13 thank her for that and believing in me. Once I filled
14 it out I waited for about a year and that's when I
15 really learned how the system works in this arena, in
16 the Federal Subsistence Management Program.

17
18

19 To some of it I disagree, and I agree
20 to disagree, but I will keep on coming back if I am
21 allowed to. If there is funding to testify each time
22 on the expressions of my people from Manokotak.

23
24

25 What I bring to the table when I come
26 to the meetings, it is not all from me. It comes from
27 my community of Manokotak. What they express in our
28 meetings. But when I bring it to the table they are
29 shot down every time. Just about every proposal I have
30 turned in as a Native person has not been agreed upon.
31 This is what I was told to say from one of the leaders
32 in Manokotak. I will say it in Yup'ik first. (In
33 Yup'ik)

34
35

36 I am translating it into English what I
37 was told to say was mainly because the leadership
38 within the Bristol Bay RAC is mainly English Caucasians
39 and a few Natives, we are not being listened to. Maybe
40 that might be true. The Western system and my TEK and
41 IEK do not agree on the same table on every meeting
42 I've been attending. That makes me think I have to be
43 really careful what is coming before me before the
44 meetings come up every year from the time I start
45 attending these meetings from the basic initial
46 starting in 2018.

47
48

49 Please do not try to shut off our TEKs
50 and our IEKs. My traditional ecological knowledge is
fully ingrained. My indigenous ecological knowledge
will not be pulled out. I am sorry. Let me catch my
breath. (In Yup'ik). Our way of life is very, very

0370

1 important to us. Whenever I go out hunting I have to
2 be real careful and look behind my back every time ever
3 since I got a citation in 2012.

4
5 I have to remind the other hunters to
6 be careful. If they had any citations, let me know. I
7 am going to say it again. It is not only coming from
8 me whatever I bring to the table. It is coming from my
9 community. What I hear in the steam houses, what I
10 hear in the meeting room, I bring every time.

11
12 Listen to us. This is with all due
13 respect. If we do not agree, I have learned to agree
14 to disagree and hopefully we meet on the same table
15 again with an agreement. On WCR26-07 I was worried
16 that it might pass, but the way I see it, I read it
17 afterwards, just a couple days ago. It's on a status
18 quo and I'm real happy for that.

19
20 Last year the population count report
21 was 650. If that had passed two or three years ago,
22 the permits that come to our small villages (in Yup'ik)
23 maybe they would have been less. Less meat. How we are
24 going to be quartering up the caribou to disperse to
25 the people that cannot hunt, that do not have
26 snowmachines, that do not have four-wheelers, that do
27 not have boats. We know who they are because they walk
28 on the road from Manokotak to the new town site five
29 miles out and we pick them up and bring them where
30 they're going.

31
32 The 900 clause came into being without
33 our knowledge in 2018. I was here at the meeting. I
34 did not know what it was about. Only thing I heard
35 during that meeting in 2018 that the Nushagak Advisory
36 Committee, if I have my memory correct, and the Togiak
37 Advisory Committee had not agreed on it, but yet it
38 passed because Bristol Bay RAC agreed on it. Correct
39 me if I am wrong. I am open to being corrected.

40
41 On the WP26-40 that's when that came
42 into mind. Subject went to the idea and the proposal,
43 I remind the group from Manokotak, Entities Group, that
44 I turned in a proposal. It has been very difficult
45 trying to educate the community, but that last week
46 they finally came together when I called for a special
47 Entities meeting for this meeting this week. We wrote
48 up -- we drafted up two letters. The first one,
49 WP26-40, supporting it and I reminded them that the
50

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1 atmosphere for that is already in opposition, but yet
2 they chose to draft up a letter in support.

3

4

5 On WCR26-40 we drafted a letter and
6 everybody signed from the entities group. That's about
7 20 or 21 of them or 22 from the leadership group. I
8 hope the OSM had received that. When I called the
9 person that was going to send it from Manokotak to the
10 OSM office told me that it was sent and that he got a
11 response that it was received, but I never asked if it
12 was -- I need to reconfirm that they received it.
13 Thank you.

13

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So in hopes of waking everybody up,
because I am awake, I am aware and I am alert. What
comes to the table of Manokotak, and not just
Manokotak, I hope Togiak, Twin Hills, Manokotak,
Dillingham, Clarks Point and Ekuk are aware. To reach
out to those other six communities is very difficult.
Even I tried on social media. It's still very
difficult. I tried on the phone to reach out to the
leaders of each of them. Still very difficult. So
trying to educate those -- bring this education to the
leaders, to the other six communities not very easy.

I have not come to Gayla or Georgiana
for this because they have other -- they are very busy
and I respect that. They have helped me a lot whenever
I asked for help. Even Frank has helped me out. Dan
Dunaway, thank you for sitting there. Please listen to
me.

Rhonda Pitka, I have not forgotten the
day that you supported me and Anthony and Charlie and
the late Gene. When I was rejected, but I am still
here, that meant a lot. My vocabulary back then was
very -- I didn't even know what the word egregious was.
I didn't know I was horrible when I got a citation. I
was just being myself. Wouldn't anybody feel the same
way as I did if you guys got a citation for following a
caribou? I hate the word chase. Maybe we chase them
like the wolves do.

And there is a lot that says we cannot
herd them. Our ancestors used that term, which makes
me think of a scenario. Hitting a caribou and it's
still running and we have to follow it. Maybe it has
happened already. Maybe a person might have gotten a
citation for trying to catch that caribou that they

0372

1 wounded. There's no problem that the hunter is
2 protected from trying to catch that caribou that they
3 wounded.

4

5 Maybe the hunter chasing the caribou
6 that he wounded and then the law enforcement comes by
7 and tells him you cannot chase that caribou. But it's
8 wounded. So I am going to give you a citation. That's
9 only a scenario I heard. I don't know if I heard it
10 from one of my friends. I don't know if it's from
11 Frank.

12

13 We must be protected for trying to live
14 off of the land instead of getting any citations. The
15 money that we have could be used for the gas, maybe for
16 a spark plug, maybe for a new tank because the tanks
17 that we use are plastic today and they are very easy to
18 puncture.

19

20 Whatever I said that might have been
21 aggressive or too aggressive in the meetings. I will
22 not apologize. That's just who I am. As long as it's
23 good to me. I am just trying to come across, I am just
24 trying to keep my TEK and my IEK on the same table in
25 which western science has encroached upon us.

26

27 I think that's about it. If I may
28 speak to Manokotak if they're listening, maybe one or
29 two are listening, maybe the whole 20 of them are
30 listening. (In Yup'ik) Thank you through the Chair.
31 And I apologize if I did not greet you guys with thank
32 you, with a pat on the back. I am not the young guy.
33 (Laughs)

34

35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
36 Kenneth. We appreciate your testimony here today.
37 And, again, he's the young guy, Louis, jumping around
38 and shooting caribou. So that presence that you have
39 in the room helps change the effort we make up here, so
40 we appreciate your leadership and you hang onto the TEK
41 and IEK and every other way of egregiously protecting
42 our way of life. We thank you for that, Kenneth.

43

44 MR. NUKWAK: Quyana.

45

46 (Applause)

47

48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right. I
49 think we have one more consensus agenda commenter.

50

0373

1 MS. LAVINE: Yes. The last person in
2 our queue is Linda Pete. Linda.

3

4 MS. PETE: Good morning, everyone.
5 Chair and Board members. my name is Linda Pete. I am
6 from Gakona Village. I was taught to introduce myself
7 by naming my parents and grandparents, to know where my
8 family comes from. My parents are the late Betty and
9 Nick Tyone. My mom was from Gakona and my dad was from
10 Gulkana Village in the Ahtna region. My grandparents
11 were the late Buster and Alice Gene. My grandfather
12 was born near Sourdough Lodge and my grandma was a
13 Stickwan. Her maiden name was Stickwan and came from
14 -- the village got moved. It was by the Gulkana
15 Airport but they were forced to move by the Army. So
16 she moved to Gakona. That's where we live.

17

18 I am here today to represent myself and
19 speak on behalf of the Native Village of Gakona. We
20 are the one tribal village in the Ahtna region. The
21 word you use is subsistence. We don't use that in our
22 area. We refer to it as customary and traditional
23 hunting rights.

24

25 Subsistence is a name that came about
26 from somebody, I don't know. I am used to my customary
27 and traditional ways of life. I grew up like that. I
28 lived with my grandparents in the summer time down in
29 fish camp and hunting, go berry picking with my
30 grandparents and my dad and mom.

31

32 We rely on our wildlife and game. We
33 are on the road system so we get all kinds of hunters
34 in our area from all parts of Alaska, even out of
35 state. You know, it's hard sometimes. Our village,
36 only one family got a moose probably in the last three
37 years. I live in Copper Center. That is where my
38 husband was from. I have three daughters and one son
39 and some grandchildren, but I do have one great
40 grandson.

41

42 I speak not only for today, but for
43 future generations. We have to protect what we have or
44 we will have none for them. When I first got involved
45 in State and Federal Fish and Game, under State
46 management our subsistence designation was being
47 threatened by the State of Alaska. There was nobody
48 from our area from there, but we quickly formed and
49 went there and defended our subsistence rights.

50

1 Just because people move in and out
2 doesn't change our status. We will always be customary
3 and traditional. The Ahtna people have been in that
4 area for generations. Documented over 10,000 years.
5 Probably more but who knows.

6
7 I am here today to testify on the moose
8 and caribou season, the extension in Unit 11 and 13.
9 It's been warm in August months. I don't know about
10 any other areas but my own, but it's like sometimes in
11 the 80's, still in the 80's degrees and the moose
12 aren't moving. By it being extended another five days
13 I don't think will hurt the harvest.

14
15 Has anybody ever seen the moose or
16 caribou the day after the hunting season closed? I've
17 seen it many times. I think that will give us a better
18 opportunity as we rely on moose and caribou when we can
19 have caribou.

20
21 My Uncle Nick Jackson, he spoke of the
22 caribou decline two years before it closed, but nobody
23 listened to him. I always bring that up because people
24 need to know that our elders know what's going on.
25 Even though people think science is more better, but
26 traditional knowledge is the way that they should
27 listen to the people.

28
29 For the proposal, the 26-31, to close
30 BLM lands to allow for rural hunters, that needs to
31 stay that way. I don't -- non-rural hunters have
32 better opportunities than the rural hunters in our
33 area. The State of Alaska selected over 80 percent of
34 their land in the Ahtna territory, hunting territory.
35 So they have a lot of opportunity. The little piece of
36 BLM that they want to hunt in, that takes away from us.

37
38
39 If you come up to our area when hunting
40 season opens, it's awful. Everybody comes there after
41 September 1st, up in the Eureka area, there's I don't
42 know how many cars up there, rigs, everything they
43 bring. Even in the Cantwell area they moved up that
44 way more. And on the Denali Highway up towards Paxton.
45 I see more of them are going up in Unit 13C because the
46 allocation has moved more up that way.

47
48 I know my two daughters are listening
49 online and they are really interested in learning about
50

0375

1 these processes and they're going to be the ones
2 sitting here at the table defending what should be our
3 right. When the Alaska Native Land Claims was passed
4 our elder that told us who was there representing our
5 region said that the State of Alaska promised that our
6 hunting and fishing rights will be protected. But the
7 State has failed that process. We are not protected.

8

9 I don't know how many lawsuits Ahtna
10 has with the State of Alaska in the last 20 years.
11 It's so many. That's what we have to do to protect our
12 rights, is to file a lawsuit against the State of
13 Alaska.

14

15 I sit on the Ahtna Incorporated Board
16 and I sit on the Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission.
17 I am the president for my village. I have been
18 involved in this arena since I was 19. I got elected
19 on stuff starting at 19. I quickly learned about all
20 this stuff going on and I will continue to advocate for
21 my people until I can't any longer. I know you guys
22 are needing a break. I'll stop at that. Thank you.

23

24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We appreciate
25 that. Thank you for your testimony too. I was just
26 missing Gloria Stickwan here and I said you look
27 familiar and then you say you are from the Stickwan
28 family, so I was like, oh, right on. I can see the
29 resemblance and hear the passion from the area. So I
30 appreciate you sharing the testimony today.

31

32 MS. PETE: Thank you.

33

34 MS. PITKA: I'd like to thank you for
35 your long-standing testimony back when I first became a
36 Regional Advisory Council member back in 2014. It was
37 people from Ahtna that really educated the Regional
38 Advisory Council on hunting issues. Thank you for
39 that.

40

41 MS. PETE: It's only me here today. We
42 had a death in our region, so that's why you don't see
43 anybody here. It's a priority for them to be with the
44 family, so thank you.

45

46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Condolences to
47 the community as well. Thank you. One more?

48

49 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Chair. One

50

0376

1 more. Carrie Stevens.

2

3

MS. STEVENS: Good morning. I promised
4 I would be very short. For the record my name is
5 Carrie Stevens. I am speaking for myself this morning.
6 Through the Chair, thank you. Thank you for allowing
7 me to speak. On the consensus you have Wildlife
8 Closure, I think it's 26-22. That is the closure in
9 25D West for moose.

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And I just wanted to thank the State
for being in agreement. I am grateful this is on the
consensus agenda for all the reasons that I stated on
25D remainder and we are just still in the same place
in 25D West. And so this closure really absolutely
does provide for the subsistence users of the area.

We are still seeing increased presence
of non-Federally qualified users in our area. In
particular we are seeing a lot of trespass in the early
spring around hunting for the big animal. That is
fairly new. Not sure what is going on there. Probably
one buddy told his other buddy, told his other buddy,
and they tend to leave a lot of trash in the area.

I share that in relation to this
closure because there are still a lot of non-local
residents, non-Federally qualified subsistence users in
the area and we do have a State Tier 2 permit system.
They are harvesting moose in the river corridor, right
in places where the local hunters hunt. So we still do
have non-Federally qualified users in 25D West
harvesting moose. So I just wanted to put that on the
record that just because there is a closure doesn't
mean that there is not non-Federally qualified users
harvesting in 25D West.

We continue to have very low moose
density, very high predator numbers, and a really -- I
don't want to say poor, but maybe minimal habitat for
moose. Of course we are facing the salmon crisis and I
don't believe that we know the full effect of that on
the ecosystem and it really is quiet out there. I just
can't tell you how quiet it is without the salmon.

So I just wanted to share that I am
grateful for this closure. I know the people of the
area are very grateful for this closure. So I just
wanted to put that on record.

0377

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
2 Karie. Any comments, questions.

3
4 (No comments)

5
6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none.
7 Thank you. We will take a 10-minute break.

8
9 (Off record)

10
11 (On record)

12
13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
14 Welcome back. As we fill our seats a little
15 announcement here. We are probably going to order in
16 for lunch. Seeing as the agenda today stops at
17 5 o'clock sharp we have an Executive Session that we
18 have to do at 5:00. So if we leave here for an hour we
19 will be loggerheading and getting started again. I
20 think the staff is going to circulate something to
21 order form.

22
23 Also it's going to be a real tight
24 proposal, so again we appreciate everybody and them
25 being here and if we do have testimony that we be
26 respectful of the time today. Not limiting anyone,
27 just respectful of the time, pointed to the proposal
28 and what's in before us.

29
30 So we just appreciate all that and look
31 forward to moving on and hopefully we will get through
32 a good part of this today and looking like a later
33 evening tomorrow because we keep running into something
34 to do today. So I appreciate that we will go ahead and
35 open up the floor for Staff for the next proposal.

36
37 Thank you, Brian.

38
39 MR. UBELAKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
40 For the record, Brian Ubelaker. I will now be
41 presenting summary for Wildlife Proposal WP26-64
42 regarding muskox in Unit 22. This analysis can be
43 found on Page 1,241 of your meeting materials.

44
45 This proposal, submitted by the Seward
46 Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council,
47 requests changing the closing date of the Federal
48 muskox season from March 15th to March 31st in Units 22
49 and 23 Southwest. The proponent explains that March
50

0378

1 weather and snow conditions make travel safer and more
2 predictable than earlier in the season, especially for
3 local hunters using snowmachines.

4
5 Extending the season would improve
6 harvest opportunity without biological concern since
7 calving occurs later in the spring. The intent is to
8 provider rural subsistence users with more flexibility,
9 better safety and increased efficiency when pursuing
10 muskox to meet subsistence needs.

11
12 As this proposal covers what the last
13 two proposals covered on the biology, regulatory
14 history, and harvest section, for brevity I will skip
15 over those unless anybody would like me to run through
16 them real quick.

17
18 (No comments)

19
20 MR. UBELAKER: Moving on. The proposal
21 would extend the Federal muskox season by 15 days,
22 giving subsistence users more opportunity and
23 flexibility to avoid poor weather and unsafe travel
24 conditions. No biological concern is expected since
25 the muskox population is already carefully managed
26 through quotas and permits. Pregnant cows should not
27 be impacted. This calving occurs later in the spring.
28 While late March hunts could add some stress to muskox
29 groups, the overall low harvest pressure should make
30 this effect minimal.

31
32 A drawback is added regulatory
33 complexity since the Federal and State closing dates
34 would no longer align, requiring hunters to be mindful
35 of land status. However, hunters already navigate
36 similar land status differences under other hunts.

37
38 Therefore, the OSM conclusion is to
39 support proposal WP26-64. Adopting this proposal would
40 provide increased harvest opportunity and safer
41 conditions for federally qualified users without
42 raising conservation concerns. Extending into late
43 March maintains meat and quality while improving
44 flexibility for subsistence hunters.

45
46 With that I will take questions.

47
48 (No comments)

49
50

0379

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
2 questions for Brian on the muskox.

3
4 (No comments)

5
6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
7 seeing none. Any summary of written public comment?

8
9 MR. UBELAKER: Mr. Chair, no, there
10 were not.

11
12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
13 that. Summary of tribal government Alaska Native
14 Corporation consultation.

15
16 MR. LIND: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
17 There were no comments on this proposal. Thank you.

18
19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
20 tribal, Alaska Native organization testimony here or
21 online.

22
23 (No comments)

24
25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
26 seeing none. Advisory group testimony, comment
27 summary, SRC State Advisory or multi-agency group.

28
29 (No comments)

30
31 MS LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Not
32 that I'm aware of.

33
34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any public
35 testimony here or online wave your hand.

36
37 (No comments)

38
39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
40 seeing none. We'll move on to Council recommendation.

41
42 MR. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
43 Louis Green for Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory
44 Council. We voted to support the WP26-64 in our fall
45 meeting. Our justifications were changing weather
46 patterns recently made it more difficult to access
47 muskoxen herds. A two-week extension will provide
48 users more opportunity to harvest if there is a delay
49 in access due to the weather. As there are no
50

0380

1 conservation concerns and the season will not affect
2 calving, the Council supports this proposal.

3
4 The saying goes when March comes in,
5 it's in like a lion and out like a lamb. So the latter
6 part of that kind of extending that season it holds
7 true to the saying.

8
9 In our winter meeting, to follow up,
10 the Seward Peninsula RAC voted to submit a Board of
11 Game proposal to align the season end dates because
12 there was a mismatch. It goes from the 15th of the
13 State and we want to go to the 30th or 31st. So we
14 were going to -- we voted to submit that Board of Game
15 proposal to align the season end dates if approved by
16 this Board.

17
18 That's all I have. Thank you.

19
20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
21 Louis. I believe we do have one online that wanted to
22 be recognized, Robbin.

23
24 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
25 Harold Napoleon, you have the floor.

26
27 (No comment)

28
29 MS. LAVINE: Mr. Napoleon, if you would
30 like to address the Board on Wildlife Proposal 26-64
31 Unit 22 muskox, please press star six to unmute
32 yourself. If this is a comment for non-agenda items,
33 you will have another opportunity tomorrow. So, once
34 again, if this is a comment on Wildlife Proposal 26-64,
35 please press star six to unmute yourself. Thank you.
36 If you're on Teams just raise your hand -- sorry, press
37 unmute your microphone icon.

38
39 MR. NAPOLEON: Haw'aa.

40
41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hello, Harold.
42 You have the floor. We can hear you.

43
44 MR. NAPOLEON: Oh, good. I'm sorry. I
45 didn't want to address specifically what you're talking
46 about. I just wanted to share my own ideas on what
47 subject you're talking about and that's what you call
48 subsistence. I've been working for the Yup'ik people
49 all my life. I started at 22 and I've worked on their
50

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1 hunting and fishing rights all those years securing
2 them.

3

4

5 I just wanted to make this point. When
6 you talk about -- I think you missed -- we mis-coined
7 the word. When you're talking about the culture of the
8 Alaskan Native people, hunting and fishing aren't a
9 part of our culture. That is who we are. People, no
10 matter how powerful they are, can regulate it besides
11 our own selves. So that's what you are talking about.
12 You are talking about the culture of the Alaska Native
13 people. They are the only ones who should regulate it
14 if they want to.

14

15

16 So I believe it's an intrusion on the
17 part of the Federal government and the State to
18 regulate the hunting and fishing of Alaska Natives.
19 Including where they could hunt, when they could hunt
20 and how they could hunt. Where they could fish, when
21 they could fish, what size nets. So you are regulating
22 a way of life. The only people that should regulate it
23 are the Natives themselves.

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So that's all I wanted to say. Thank
you very much for listening to me. I'll continue
listening. I finally got on. I've been trying to get
on. I'm new to all of this, so excuse me and thank you
for your work.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
calling in, Harold, and we appreciate the brevity and
the way of life you represent. Thank you.

Next we have Alaska Department of Fish
and Game.

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
For the record the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
opposes the proposal as it misaligns State and Federal
regulations, causing confusion amongst the users and
also makes it challenging for law enforcement.

If I may, I do have one question for
Mr. Ubelaker. In the OSM analysis at the beginning of
the summary it says to March 31st, but then in the
proposed Federal reg it says to March 30th. When I
count on my little fingers, 15 extra days is to the
30th. So I just wanted clarification because I heard
31st, but then I was looking at the material and it

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1 says 30th. I didn't know what the date was with the 15
2 extra days for sure.

3

4 MR. UBELAKER: Through the Chair, Mr.
5 Mulligan. If the proposal is asking for 15 days, I got
6 my talking points wrong on my math. So thank you for
7 correcting me.

8

9 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

10

11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
12 InterAgency Staff Committee. They provide their
13 standard comment.

14

15 MS. GREDIAGIN: Mr. Chair. We also
16 need to get the Northwest Arctic Council
17 recommendation.

18

19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, okay. It
20 didn't pop up on there. I'm sorry. Northwest, you
21 have the floor.

22

23 MS. PILCHER: Good morning, everyone.
24 Nissa Pilcher for the record. Council Coordinator for
25 Northwest Arctic. So the Council voted to unanimously
26 support WP26-64. The Council supported extending the
27 season as it allows people to get out when conditions
28 are safer and provides more flexibility to harvest.

29

30 Thank you.

31

32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
33 that. InterAgency Staff Committee.

34

35 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The
36 InterAgency Staff Committee provided the standard
37 comment.

38

39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
40 Board discussion with your liaison, Council Chair or
41 State Representative. Any points of clarification,
42 discussion.

43

44 (No comments)

45

46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing, seeing
47 none. Open the floor for Board action.

48

49 MR. PENDERGAST: Mr. Chair. Kevin

50

0383

1 Pendergast, BLM. I think there's a question on the
2 floor we need to settle before I can make any motion.
3 That is are we talking about extension to March 30th or
4 March 31st? I noticed the proposed regulatory text
5 says March 30th. The general description says March
6 31st. This needs to be settled, I think. I'm not sure
7 exactly how to do that, but I don't want to make the
8 wrong motion.

9
10 MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin for the
11 record. So I'm looking at the proposal that was
12 actually submitted and I think that's kind of where the
13 confusion comes in because in the issue statement and
14 the submitted proposal it says from March 15th to March
15 31st. But then in the proposed regulation language it
16 says to March 30th. You know, it was submitted by the
17 Council, but basically OSM helped draft that. So it
18 was probably ultimately our fault.

19
20 So I guess at this juncture I might --
21 I mean it's one day. I might just defer to Louis if he
22 has a preference if he wants an extra day or not.
23 Because I think the confusion came from the actual
24 proposal as it was submitted.

25
26 MR. GREEN: So I had a little confusion
27 when I was bringing up the date. When I was reading
28 this it didn't make sense because 15 days after is the
29 30th, so I suppose that's appropriate. Okay, thank
30 you.

31
32 MR. GREDIAGIN: I mean if that's what
33 the RAC discussed.

34
35 MR. GREEN: Yeah, yeah. I mean --
36 yeah, we asked for 15 extra days. So thanks for that,
37 Kevin.

38
39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So we would
40 recognize the date as the 30th based on discussion.
41 Thank you. The floor is open for a motion.

42
43 MR. PENDERGAST: Mr. Chair. Kevin
44 Pendergast, BLM. Mr. Chair, I move to adopt Wildlife
45 Proposal 26-64 to extend the Seward Peninsula Federal
46 muskox season closing date in Units 22 and 23 south of
47 Kotzebue Sound and west of and including the Buckland
48 River drainage from March 15th to March 30th. If I get
49 a second, I will open the discussion by explaining why
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1 I plan to support my motion.

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MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service seconds.

MR. PENDERGAST: Thank you. I'll open by noting that I think it's always desirable when possible to have alignment and reduce confusion between the regulations. So I was heartened to hear that there's thinking about, you know, trying to make that happen through the State process.

In this instance the muskoxen population throughout this range is healthy and stable. Federal subsistence harvest rates have remained low and most muskoxen are harvested under State permits. Extending the Federal subsistence season is therefore not expected to increase harvest substantially or lead to a conservation concern.

At the same time extending the Federal season will provide Federally qualified subsistence users with a meaningful preference. The additional 15 days in March will provide Federally qualified users with an additional opportunity to harvest muskox later in the season when the days are longer and weather and travel conditions are generally better.

The additional two weeks will also provide Federally qualified subsistence users with buffer time to account for bad weather conditions earlier in the season.

The Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council also reports that the meat and conditions are favorable for subsistence uses during this time of the season.

The BLM support of this proposal is consistent with the Seward Pen and Northwest Arctic RAC recommendation.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Kevin. Board deliberation, discussion.

(No comments)

0385

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
2 seeing none. Please read into the record the motion
3 and roll call.

4

5 MS. LEONETTI: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
6 The motion is to adopt WP26-64 to extend the Seward
7 Peninsula Federal muskox season closing date in Units
8 22 and 23 south of Kotzebue Sound and west of and
9 including the Buckland River Drainage from March 15th
10 to March 30th.

11

12 BLM Member Pendergast.

13

14 MR. PENDERGAST: Support.

15

16 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Pitka.

17

18 MS. PITKA: I support in deference to
19 the Regional Advisory Councils, the Seward Pen and the
20 Northwest Arctic.

21

22 MS. LEONETTI: BIA Member John.

23

24 MS. JOHN: BIA votes to adopt the
25 proposal as recommended and justified by the Seward
26 Peninsula and Northwest Arctic RACs as it has no effect
27 on conservation concerns and it's safer for the
28 residents and it's flexible. Thank you.

29

30 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Woods.

31

32 MR. WOODS: Public Member Woods adopts
33 in favor of the RAC's recommendation and also they're
34 aligning proposals. Thank you.

35

36 MS. LEONETTI: Forest Service Member
37 Ingersoll.

38

39 MR. INGERSOLL: Forest Service supports
40 in deference to the RACs and for the reasons
41 articulated by the Bureau of Land Management.

42

43 MS. LEONETTI: Fish and Wildlife
44 Service Member Boario.

45

46 MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service
47 supports in deference to the Seward Peninsula and
48 Northwest Arctic Advisory Councils and for the reasons
49 outlined by BLM.

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1 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Oney.

2

3 MR. ONEY: Public Member Ray Oney is in
4 support of WP26-64 as outlined by the RACs in the area
5 and also OSM. Thank you.

6

7 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Payenna.

8

9 MR. PAYENNA: Public Member Payenna
10 votes in support as in agreement with comments made
11 previous to me.

12

13 MS. LEONETTI: Park Service Member
14 Striker.

15

16 MR. STRIKER: Park Service supports in
17 deference to the RACs for the reasons articulated by
18 Director Pendergast. The two week and one day
19 extension.

20

21 MS. LEONETTI: Chair Christianson.

22

23 CHAIR CHRISTIANSON: I support in
24 deference to the RAC.

25

26 MS. LEONETTI: Mr. Chair, the motion
27 passes unanimously.

28

29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
30 Appreciate that. We'll move on to the next one. Oh,
31 we're on Western Interior. WP26-50. I feel like we're
32 accomplishing stuff.

33

34 MR. UBELAKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
35 Once again, Brian Ubelaker. I will give you the brief
36 summary for WP26-50 regarding the Upper Kuskokwim
37 Controlled Use Area in Unit 19. This analysis can be
38 found on Page 1,127.

39

40 This proposal was submitted by the
41 Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory
42 Council and requests reducing the size of the Upper
43 Kuskokwim Controlled Use Area under Federal
44 regulations. So it matches the smaller area already
45 defined under State regulations.

46

47 The CUA was originally established
48 under State regulations in 1981 to reduce competition
49 between local and non-local moose hunters by
50

0387

1 prohibiting the use of aircraft.

2

3

4 At the start of the Federal Subsistence
5 Program in 1992 matching language was adopted in the
6 Federal regulations. Under State regulations between
7 2001 and 2008 the Controlled Use Area grew and shined
8 through several different modifications to the
9 boundary.

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At the point when the CUA was at its
largest in 2006 Federal regulations were adopted to
align the boundaries. Since that time the State has
reduced the size of the CUA while Federal regulations
have remained unchanged.

There were several alternatives to
consider for this proposal. The first of which is to
align Federal and State season dates. State CUA is
only in effect during the State's moose hunting season.
The Federal CUA however extends through the entire
Federal moose season, including late September and the
winter hunt.

If the Federal regulations match the
State's, Federally qualified subsistence users could
use aircraft for the end of September and again during
the winter season.

The second alternative is eliminating
the Federal CUA entirely because the State version
already regulates aircraft use in this area and because
the Federal CUA contains almost no Federal public lands
the Federal CUA is essentially meaningless.

It only adds an extra layer of
restrictions that apply solely to Federally qualified
subsistence users. Removing it would simplify
regulations, reduce confusion and eliminate unnecessary
complexity.

The third alternative. There are
several Unit 19D moose hunt areas that are defined by
the boundaries of the Upper Kuskokwim CUA. If the CUA
is reduced or eliminated, these hunt areas would need
to be updated so that seasons and harvest limits are
not unintentionally changed.

If adopted, this proposal would align
Federal and State regulations, reduce confusion and may

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1 increase opportunity for local users during the late
2 and winter seasons. No impacts are expected to moose
3 populations or to Federal opportunity since only local
4 residents have C&T for moose in the area.

5

6 However, matching the current extent of
7 the CUA under State regulations would be essentially
8 meaningless as there are only 33.5 acres of Federal
9 public lands. These lands are located within the city
10 limits of McGrath, which has an ordinance prohibiting
11 the discharge of firearms.

12

13 Eliminating the CUA under Federal
14 regulations would be in alignment with Secretarial
15 Order 3447, which directs the Department of Interior to
16 identify and remove unnecessary regulatory or
17 administrative barriers to hunting and fishing on
18 Department-managed lands and waters.

19

20 Therefore, OSM's recommendation is to
21 support WP26-50 with modification to eliminate the
22 Upper Kuskokwim CUA entirely and change the Unit 19D
23 moose hunt period descriptors. I'll be happy to answer
24 questions.

25

26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
27 Brian. Any questions from the Board or Staff.

28

29 (No comments)

30

31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing or
32 seeing none. We'll move on to the summary of written
33 public comment.

34

35 MR. UBELAKER: Mr. Chair, none were
36 submitted.

37

38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Summary of
39 tribal government and Alaska Native Corporation
40 consultation.

41

42 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair, Board
43 members. There were no comments. Thank you.

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Tribal, Alaskan
46 Native organizational testimony.

47

48 (No comments)

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1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing or
2 seeing none. Advisory group testimony, SRC, Advisory
3 Committees of the State or multi-agency working group.

4

5 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We
6 have no comments from ACs or SRCs.

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Is
9 there any public testimony here or online, it's your
10 opportunity to be recognized.

11

12 MS. LAVINE: And for those of you that
13 would like to provide testimony on Wildlife Proposal
14 26-50 you can raise your hand or press star five.

15

16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Nobody. We'll
17 move on to the Council recommendations.

18

19 MR. REAKOFF: Mr. Chair. Jack Reakoff,
20 Western Interior Regional Council. The Council
21 submitted this proposal after discussion with OSM. A
22 motion was made. So support the proposal WP26-50 was
23 modified by OSM.

24

25 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

26

27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
28 Jack. Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

29

30 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
31 The Alaska Department of Fish and Game supported the
32 proposal as written. Discussing with my counterpart
33 here and knowing the make-up of the land which is
34 predominantly State and we do have that controlled use
35 area in place in order to reduce regulatory burden we
36 would support the modification to basically remove the
37 Federal CUA.

38

39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: InterAgency
40 Staff Committee.

41

42 MS. LAVINE: The InterAgency Staff
43 Committee provided the standard comment.

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
46 Board discussion with the State Liaison, Council
47 Chairs. Yes, go ahead.

48

49 MR. PENDERGAST: Mr. Chair.

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1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Kevin, you have
2 the floor.

3

4 MR. PENDERGAST: If I could trouble Mr.
5 Mulligan to repeat his comment. I'm not sure I quite
6 heard them completely.

7

8 MR. MULLIGAN: Through the Chair.
9 Member Pendergast. So, as I said, given OSM's
10 recommendation I believe says to eliminate the CUA
11 because you see on the map the Federal one is quite
12 larger currently. So instead of doing what the RAC
13 originally intended, which was to match us down to the
14 corridor, like it is, they just want to totally
15 eliminate it because, as Mr. Ubelaker already
16 mentioned, there is a very small portion.....

17

18 MR. PENDERGAST: What, 33 acres?

19

20 MR. MULLIGAN: Yeah, 33 acres. Which
21 would then -- I mean make this pretty obsolete when it
22 comes to you guys's regulations. So we're good with
23 that. State still has its in place and we'd like you
24 guys taking regs off your books.

25

26 MR. PENDERGAST: Thank you. So it's a
27 slight modification from the original position based on
28 information that's come to light.

29

30 MR. MULLIGAN: Yeah. I guess basically
31 to make it clear to everybody we support the OSM
32 modification as presented by Mr. Ubelaker.

33

34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So I guess my
35 next question would be to look at Jack about the
36 suggested section -- second option we heard there.

37

38 MR. REAKOFF: Mr. Chair. I've been on
39 this Regional Council dealing with this Controlled Use
40 Area for many years. The area was reduced by the State
41 or wanted to be in alignment with that. With the 33
42 acres we don't feel that this is an issue. So just
43 eliminating that and going with the State because the
44 State-managed areas we don't have a problem with that.

45

46 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

47

48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
49 that, Jack. So we are still not at adjournment yet.

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1 (Laughter)

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(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We are going to -- the floor is open for a motion. We just had some point of clarification and maybe an understanding where we might motion this.

MR. PENDERGAST: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead.

MR. PENDERGAST: Kevin Pendergast, Bureau of Land Management. Mr. Chair, I move to adopt Wildlife Proposal 26-50 to reduce the size of the Upper Kuskokwim Controlled Use Area or eliminate it in Unit 19D to match the current State regulations. If I get a second, I will open the discussion by explaining why I intend to vote in support of my motion.

MR. STRIKER: NPS seconds.

MR. PENDERGAST: Thank you. First, as explained by OSM, the Upper Kuskokwim Controlled Use Area in Federal regulation only applies to Federally qualified subsistence users hunting moose on Federal lands. Since the Upper Kuskokwim CUA on Federal regulations is not larger than the Upper Kuskokwim CUA under State regulation, Federally qualified subsistence users are now restricted from using aircraft to hunt moose in Federal lands outside of the State's CUA.

I'm making some changes on the fly here, so bear with me. Eliminating the Upper Kuskokwim CUA under Federal regulations to match the area under State regs will align Federal and State regulations.

One moment. Making some changes on the fly here. Bear with us. Mr. Chair, I'd like to amend my original motion. So I'd like to amend my own motion by moving to adopt Wildlife Proposal 26-50 with OSM modification to eliminate the Kuskokwim Controlled Use Area in Unit 19D. If I get a second on that amendment, I will provide some brief rationale.

MR. STRIKER: NPS seconds.

MR. PENDERGAST: Thank you. First, as explained by OSM, the Upper Kuskokwim Controlled Use Area in Federal regulation only applies to Federally

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1 qualified subsistence users hunting moose in Federal
2 lands. Since the Upper Kuskokwim CUA under Federal
3 regs is -- yeah, I think I'm going to end the rationale
4 now in deference to the RAC and has analyzed by OSM.
5 Thank you.

6

7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So that's an
8 amendment to the original motion?

9

10 MR. PENDERGAST: That's correct, as
11 modified.

12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: As modified.
14 So we have two votes on the floor here or just one?
15 Just the one, okay. It was seconded. Okay, thank you.
16 I was just making sure I wasn't hearing two on the
17 floor.

18

19 All right. So we are here. Motion and
20 seconded. Any further discussion, deliberation by the
21 Board as modified?

22

23 (No comments)

24

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
26 We'll read into the record and do roll call. Thank
27 you.

28

29 MS. LEONETTI: The motion is to adopt
30 Wildlife Proposal 26-50 as modified by OSM to eliminate
31 the Upper Kuskokwim Controlled Use Area and modify the
32 hunt area descriptors for moose in Unit 19D including
33 eliminating the North Fork hunt area. So I'll call on
34 BLM Member Pendergast.

35

36 MR. PENDERGAST: Support.

37

38 MS. LEONETTI: Park Service Member
39 Striker.

40

41 MR. STRIKER: Park Service supports in
42 deference to the RAC.

43

44 MS. LEONETTI: Forest Service Member
45 Ingersoll.

46

47 MR. INGERSOLL: Forest Service supports
48 in deference to the RAC and for the purpose of reducing
49 regulatory burden.

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1 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Pitka.

2

3 MS. PITKA: I support WP26-50 as
4 modified in deference to the Regional Advisory Council
5 and also for the reasons just said. Thank you.

6

7 MS. LEONETTI: Fish and Wildlife
8 Service Member Boario.

9

10 MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service
11 supports in deference to the RAC for the reasons
12 outlined by BLM.

13

14 MS. LEONETTI: BIA Member John.

15

16 MS. JOHN: BIA votes to adopt WP26-50
17 as modified by OSM and supporting the input by the
18 Western Interior RAC. I want to thank Mr. Reakoff for
19 his local knowledge and the additional input that you
20 provided.

21

22 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Oney.

23

24 MR. ONEY: Public Member Ray Oney is in
25 support of WP26-50 as modified by OSM and supported by
26 Western Interior RAC.

27

28 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Woods.

29

30 MR. WOODS: Public Member Woods moves
31 to adopt.

32

33 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Payenna.

34

35 MR. PAYENNA: Public Member Payenna is
36 in support of WP26-50 in deference to the RAC.

37

38 MS. LEONETTI: Chair Christianson.

39

40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support.

41

42 MS. LEONETTI: Mr. Chair. The motion
43 to adopt as modified 26-50 carries unanimously.

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
46 Next we have WP26-51.

47

48 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair.

49

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1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, one second.
2 I think we have a notice here. Yes, go ahead, Sara.

3
4 MS. BOARIO: I apologize for the
5 process question. The Fish and Wildlife Service would
6 like to defer this with the agreement of Western
7 Interior RAC. To do so do we need to -- do I need to
8 adopt it to defer it or can I defer instead?

9
10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I think we can
11 make a motion with concurrence with the Regional
12 Advisory Council Chair.

13
14 MS. BOARIO: Jack.

15
16 MR. REAKOFF: I'm always supportive of
17 deferring Proposal WP26-51 we got out in front of us.
18 We don't have a C&T. We have to propose a customary
19 and traditional use determination for muskox. Our
20 regional members are seeing muskox in our region and
21 they have interest in this proposal, but at this time
22 it's to be deferred so that we can submit a Customary
23 and Traditional Use Determination and have to bring it
24 back forward.

25
26 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

27
28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. The
29 floor is open for that motion.

30
31 MS. BOARIO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The
32 Fish and Wildlife Service moves to defer WP26-51 for
33 the reasons stated by the Western Interior RAC.

34
35 MR. STRIKER: The Park Service seconds.

36
37
38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
39 discussion?

40
41 MR. PENDERGAST: Mr. Chair.

42
43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Kevin.

44
45 MR. PENDERGAST: Kevin Pendergast, BLM.
46 What I would like to do, if this is a proper procedure,
47 is move to amend the motion or make an amended motion.
48 Just to clarify defer to 2028.

49
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1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Maker of the
2 motion, do you.....

3
4 MS. BOARIO: Yes.

5
6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON:concur
7 with that?

8
9 MS. BOARIO: WIRAC?

10
11 MR. REAKOFF: That's totally fine.
12 Thank you.

13
14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So let the main
15 motion reflect that time.

16
17 MS. BOARIO: Yes. Move to defer
18 WP26-51 to 2028 cycle. Is that correct?

19
20 MR. PENDERGAST: 2028.

21
22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes. Let the
23 record reflect that. Thank you, Kevin.

24
25 MR. PENDERGAST: So it's not coming up
26 this summer.

27
28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I just said the
29 second concurs with that change. Okay. Thank you. So
30 we have concurrence with the maker and the second. Any
31 more deliberation, discussion.

32
33 (No comments)

34
35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Read the motion
36 into the record, please, and roll call.

37
38 MS. LEONETTI: The motion is to defer
39 WP26-51 to the 2028 wildlife cycle. Fish and Wildlife
40 Service, Member Boario.

41
42 MS. BOARIO: Supports.

43
44 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Pitka.

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46 MS. PITKA: I support.

47
48 MS. LEONETTI: Forest Service Member
49 Ingersoll.

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MR. INGERSOLL: Support.

MS. LEONETTI: Park Service Member Striker.

MR. STRIKER: Support.

MS. LEONETTI: BLM Member Pendergast.

MR. PENDERGAST: Support.

MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Payenna.

MR. PAYENNA: Support.

MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Woods.

MR. WOODS: Support.

MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Oney.

MR. ONEY: Support.

MS. LEONETTI: BIA Member John.

MS. JOHN: BIA supports to defer.

MS. LEONETTI: Chair Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Support deferral.

MS. LEONETTI: Motion to defer passes unanimously.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We made it to another page. I can see the end of this one. Right on. WP26-41/42, Yukon Delta. We might just make a move here because the Y-K Jackie isn't here and you can see how important it is for us to have our conversation piece with the RAC. So if there's no objection by the Board here, we might just slide down to the next region as far as order of business. That way we can allow Jackie time to get back here.

If there's no objection here by the Board, we'll just step over that region. Sorry about that. And we'll just jump on down to the Bristol Bay. When they do show up this afternoon we'll go back to

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1 when Y-K is on the line. Thank you for your patience
2 with that. We'll move down to Bristol Bay WCR26-05.

3

4 MS. HOLMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
5 Members of the Board. Kendra Holman for the record,
6 wildlife biologist with the Office of Subsistence
7 Management. So this will be a short analysis -- short
8 synopsis, there we go, the analysis for WCR26-05.

9

10 So this Closure Review is for Unit 9C,
11 that portion draining into the Naknek River from the
12 south. Public lands are closed during December for the
13 hunting of moose except by Federally qualified
14 subsistence users hunting under these regulations.

15

16 Regulatory history in the 1990s ADF&G
17 issued emergency orders closing the December antlerless
18 hunt. In 1992 they proposed the harvest limit to be
19 changed. As a result of all of these things going on
20 this action, the Naknek Drainage, was then divided into
21 two hunt areas and the December hunts were closed
22 except by Federally qualified subsistence areas. The
23 area draining into the Naknek from the north and that
24 draining from the south.

25

26 In 2016 it was determined that a State
27 permit could be required for both fall and winter
28 seasons, so that is what is currently still used. In
29 '22 the State lengthened the moose season in Units 9B
30 and 9C and aligned hunt areas. This extended the
31 season by 20 days within the full units. Five days at
32 the end of the fall season and 15 days at the beginning
33 of the winter season.

34

35 In 2022 the closure was also reviewed
36 by the Board and maintained. Since the early 20th
37 Century moose on the Alaska Peninsula gradually has
38 expanded their range southwestward. This expansion was
39 accompanied by a dramatic population increase until the
40 1960s when the population peaked and began to decline.

41

42 Suitable habitat for moose in Unit 9 is
43 relatively limited. The moose population status and
44 trends in Unit 9 is difficult for several reasons
45 including low moose densities and snow and weather
46 conditions that are frequently inadequate for surveys.

47

48 Surveys started in 1991 by the Alaska
49 Peninsula and Becharof Wildlife Refuge. So there's

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1 figures 1, 2 and 3 in your book show some of this --
2 the density bull:cow calf:cow ratios. In recent years
3 the bull:cow ratios have been relatively high,
4 averaging 60 bulls and 100 cows well above the 20 bulls
5 per 100 cows in the State management objective.

6
7 I will say you'll note also in those
8 figures there's kind of some weird information. There
9 was a change around 2018 in how they did the surveys.
10 So that did kind of create a little goofy line there in
11 those figures.

12
13 So the Alaska resident moose harvest in
14 Units 9B and 9C occurs by registration permit,
15 non-resident moose harvest occurs in those units by a
16 different registration permit. While reported moose
17 harvest can be parsed out by subunit, it is not
18 possible to distribute it by hunt area. Therefore, the
19 number of moose reported harvests only in the closure
20 area is not available, although reported moose harvest
21 within Unit 9C provides some insight.

22
23 From 2000 to 2023 total moose harvest
24 in Unit 9C averaged 29 moose per year, ranging from 16
25 to 43. Ninety percent of the Unit 9 moose harvest
26 occurs in the fall. On Figure 4 it shows the breakdown
27 of reported moose harvest in Unit 9C by local and
28 non-local users. Local users are defined as those with
29 a customary and traditional use determination.

30
31 If this closure is rescinded, the
32 non-Federally qualified users would be able to harvest
33 moose on Federal public lands within the portion of
34 Unit 9C draining into the Naknek River from the south
35 during December. It may also result in an increased
36 moose harvest although increases are expected to be
37 minimal as winter conditions make this area very
38 difficult to access.

39
40 While the 2022 and 2023 moose density
41 estimates within the closure area are above the State
42 management objectives for a moderate density
43 population, this low density moose population
44 fluctuates within a dynamic equilibrium. While Unit 9C
45 bull:cow ratios are above management objectives and
46 could sustain additional bull harvest, calf:cow ratios
47 indicate a stable population.

48
49 While bull:cow ratios within the
50

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1 closure area are well below or below management areas
2 the overall Unit 9C moose populations are not. The
3 adjacent -- sorry, I'm seeing cross-eyed here. It's
4 been a long meeting. The adjacent areas are very high
5 and bull harvest is much more likely there during the
6 fall when Federal lands are open. Conservation
7 concerns do not warrant maintaining the closure
8 although OSM looks forward to hearing from.....

9

10 Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the
11 Council. I apologize. My notes -- this is not the
12 right set of notes. It has all the information though,
13 so that's why I got a little turned around there.

14

15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
16 Appreciate that. Any questions?

17

18 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair.

19

20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Sara.

21

22 MS. BOARIO: I'm sorry. I struggled a
23 little bit to follow that and I'm wondering if you
24 could describe the charts again for us. If you can
25 find the right set of notes. Sorry. I fully
26 appreciate note challenges. I'm trying to understand
27 how the neighboring TCAs relate to the closure area.

28

29 MS. HOLMAN: It might be easier if I
30 just open the analysis at this point. So those figures
31 show the trend count areas. So there's all -- there's
32 a Big Creek Corridor and there's a Park Creek Corridor.
33 So there was a change in 2018 and that kind of shows
34 that weird line or 2015 approximately. That kind of
35 shows the weird lines for the trend count areas.

36

37 The trend count area for the Big Creek
38 Corridor is relatively matched up to this closure. The
39 Park border area involves more of the National Park in
40 that area where there's much more limited hunting, if
41 any, taking place, depending on the specific location.
42 If that helps answer some of that.

43

44 So the first Figure 1 is the moose
45 density estimates overall. So you have all TCAs and
46 then the two separate ones. The second one is those
47 bull:cow ratios and the third one is the calf:cow
48 ratios. If there's something else, Member Boario,
49 through the Chair, if there's something I missed in
50

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1 there let me know.

2

3 MS. BOARIO: That's helpful. Thank
4 you.

5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
7 questions from the Board.

8

9 (No comments)

10

11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
12 that. Was there any written public comment received?

13

14 MS. HOLMAN: Mr. Chair, there were no
15 written public comments received on this one.

16

17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
18 Summary of tribal government and Alaska Native
19 corporation.

20

21 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Board
22 members. There were no comments or resolutions on
23 that. Thank you.

24

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
26 Tribal, Alaska Native organization testimony. Here or
27 online raise your hand.

28

29 (No comments)

30

31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing or
32 seeing none. The Alaska Advisory groups, SRC, State
33 Advisory or multi-agency working group.

34

35 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
36 We've received no documents from any of those groups.
37 Thanks.

38

39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
40 public testimony here or online please raise your hand
41 to be recognized.

42

43 (No comments)

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Council
46 recommendations.

47

48 MR. DUNAWAY: Mr. Chair. Dan Dunaway
49 for the Bristol Bay RAC. Council recommended

50

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1 maintaining the status quo and continuing the closure.
2 Two members present at our meeting that are very
3 intimately familiar with this area and hunt it
4 regularly expressed a lot of concern and discomfort
5 with the proposal and the data.

6
7 As you can see in the most recent data
8 the numbers are pretty erratic, depending on survey
9 conditions, which are erratic, and the limited habitat
10 where these animals are. We have two other members.
11 One was online and another wasn't present, but they're
12 also very familiar with this area and we all supported
13 their concern that it should be continued.

14
15 There's an expression, a concern for
16 the predation and predators and bears in the area that
17 can really disperse the moose and keep them somewhat
18 depressed. It was a very, very long meeting so we were
19 not able to discuss these as deeply as we would have
20 liked to, but we felt that it would be better to wait a
21 little bit until we saw stronger data trends.

22
23 Thank you.

24
25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Dan.
26 Making sure that was the only one. Any questions for
27 Dan.

28
29 (No comments)

30
31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate
32 that. Moving on to InterAgency Staff Committee.
33 Sorry. State of Alaska. I apologize for that.

34
35 MR. MULLIGAN: Jumping ahead, Robbin.
36 Shame, shame.

37
38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Get her.

39
40 (Laughter)

41
42 MR. MULLIGAN: All right. In all
43 seriousness, Mr. Chair. For the record the Alaska
44 Department of Fish and Game supports rescinding the
45 closure. As you've seen, we are meeting objectives in
46 the sub-unit. We are meeting ANS also in the sub-unit,
47 which is 100-140 animals, but we average a harvest of
48 150 to 200 within 9C. We don't have objectives for
49 that particular sub-unit, so it's hard to say whether
50

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1 or not this is meaning anything because we don't manage
2 that fine of a scale as far as our objectives.

3

4

5 I will make another point. That if you
6 rescind the closure, the State manages with the
7 registration hunts. Those registration hunts are based
8 off of quotas. Additional animals will not be taken
9 because an additional area doesn't mean additional
10 animals. We manage for the population regardless of
11 land status. So if you do support rescinding the
12 closure, no additional opportunity will be provided.
13 It's a registration hunt. We have those reported in a
14 certain amount of time. We have that quota and then if
15 it is reached, we close those hunts under the State
16 regulations.

16

17

Thank you.

18

19

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Ben.

20

21

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In the case of WCR26-05 the ISC
suggests that the Council's recommendation may not meet
the criteria for deference.

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Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Robbin. Board discussion with their liaison, Council
Chairs, State reps. This is your opportunity to ask

0403

1 for clarification.

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Sara.

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MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, to the RAC, to Dan. I just wonder if you have any thoughts on the additional information from Mr. Mulligan about the added area not being additional. And I know you can't speak for the whole RAC, but I am wondering what your thoughts are on that.

MR. DUNAWAY: Through the Chair, Ms. Boario. Actually I really appreciate Fish and Game's analysis. I was trying to remember. I don't think we had Fish and Game biologists present at our meeting to explain that. I know the king salmon in Naknek area in the past has -- when they were in Tier II for caribou they were dumfounded how many Anchorage people qualified and how many king salmon Naknek people didn't qualify.

They're also in a very convenient path from Anchorage, so there also were concerns. If the quota analysis as Mr. Mulligan described that may suffice, but it did get back to the local folks that hunted and were pretty uncomfortable with the numbers that were offered and that's the best I can say.

Thank you.

MS. BOARIO: Appreciate that, Dan. Thank you.

MR. WOODS: A question for Dan. During this deliberation, you know, it's a low density area. It's south of the Naknek River. That area, like you pointed out, has a high density of brown bear population right at the Katmai National Park and Preserve on the upper end. But they distribute it throughout the whole area and that high concentration of predators impact that Federal side, but also along the whole drainage because they're up and down that corridor the whole season.

That means they're in the calving season during the hunting season when fish aren't running and they only congregate on the upper end of Katmai during the salmon season. So the low density of moose reported I see -- and there might be a number in

0404

1 ANS, but then you look at the numbers for different
2 units. It's really apparent that they're not -- I mean
3 really low numbers.

4
5 Thank you for that. I'm inclined to
6 rescind this. I'd like to support your recommendation
7 just for that purpose. Thank you.

8
9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other Board
10 questions, clarification. RAC Chairs or State.

11
12 (No comments)

13
14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing or
15 seeing none. We'll open up the floor for Board action.

16
17 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, can I request a
18 two-minute break.

19
20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Two minutes.

21
22 MS. BOARIO: Thanks.

23
24 (Off record)

25
26 (On record)

27
28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Almost two
29 minutes, huh?

30
31 MS. BOARIO: I'm ready.

32
33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, you're
34 ready? I'm ready. You guys ready? We've been ready.
35 I really like these Native ladies next to me. They're
36 keeping me well fed under the table, keeping us going.

37
38 Sara, you have the floor.

39
40 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, thank you. Mr.
41 Chair, I move to rescind the closure. If I get a
42 second, I will explain my justification.

43
44 MR. STRIKER: Park Service seconds.

45
46 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair. I appreciate
47 the Council's concerns and perspective about
48 potentially erratic data. However, with what we do
49 have biologically there is no reason to continue the
50

0405

1 closure to moose in Unit 9C south of the Naknek River
2 to non-Federally qualified users and moose density is
3 above State population objectives.

4
5 The closure has been in place for some
6 time, over many years, leading to a lack of historical
7 use in this area and the area is relatively difficult
8 to get to especially in December with a harvested
9 moose.

10
11 The Fish and Wildlife Service
12 understands the recommendation of the Bristol Bay
13 Regional Advisory Council to retain the closure.
14 However, the new information provided by Mr. Mulligan
15 about how the hunt is managed underscores that opening
16 this area will not lead to more moose being harvested.

17
18 It is for these reasons that the Fish
19 and Wildlife Service recommends to rescind the closure
20 in Unit 9C. Thank you.

21
22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
23 Board discussion, deliberation.

24
25 (No comments)

26
27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
28 seeing none. We'll read into the record the motion and
29 roll call.

30
31 MS. LEONETTI: The motion is to rescind
32 the closure for WCR26-05. We will start with FWS,
33 Member Boario.

34
35 MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service
36 supports.

37
38 MS. LEONETTI: BIA Member John.

39
40 MS. JOHN: BIA opposes the motion. BIA
41 supports retaining the existing moose hunting closure
42 for Unit 9C as recommended by the Bristol Bay Regional
43 Advisory Council. We concur with their justification
44 as they consider testimony and information from its
45 members, tribal representatives and other rural
46 residents regarding the importance of the closed area
47 for local Federally qualified users.

48
49 This will help to provide for and
50

0406

1 continue to maintain moose hunting opportunities for
2 subsistence hunters to better meet their needs. We
3 appreciate the additional detailed information provided
4 by Mr. Dunaway regarding this moose population and the
5 factors affecting their abundance.

6

7

Quyana.

8

9

MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Oney.

10

11

12

MR. ONEY: Public Member Ray Oney does
oppose as stated by BIA and Bristol Bay RAC.

13

14

MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Woods.

15

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MR. WOODS: Public Member Woods opposes
through the information passed on our RAC along with
the full analysis and different areas. Unit 9 is
different sections and only south of the Naknek is
identified on my map. We have heard from the RAC
members and I respect the Bristol Bay RAC and their
recommendations and along with BIA's comments for
helping Federally qualified subsistence users meet
their needs.

25

26

Thank you.

27

28

MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Payenna.

29

30

31

32

MR. PAYENNA: Public Member Payenna, in
alignment with BIA's comments and in deference to the
RAC, we vote to oppose.

33

34

MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Pitka.

35

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MS. PITKA: I vote to oppose WCR26-05
to rescind the closure. I vote to retain the closure
in deference to the Regional Advisory Council and in
recognition of the continuation of subsistence uses of
the resource. And also in recognition that there are
data gaps for that particular species and I hope that
surveys can be stronger in the future and be more
supportive.

44

45

Thank you.

46

47

MS. LEONETTI: BLM Member Pendergast.

48

49

MR. PENDERGAST: BLM supports for the

50

0407

1 reasons stated by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

2

3 MS. LEONETTI: Park Service Member
4 Striker.

5

6 MR. STRIKER: Park Service supports
7 rescinding for the reasons well articulated by my
8 sister agency. Furthermore we think there's
9 necessarily a high bar for a closure. I think that
10 that same high bar in terms of substantial evidence has
11 to exist to continue closures. And we should celebrate
12 when we can rescind closures. That's something that we
13 should all be proud of. So thank you.

14

15 MS. LEONETTI: Forest Service Member
16 Ingersoll.

17

18 MR. INGERSOLL: Forest Service supports
19 the motion. It's challenging with the bar of
20 substantial evidence and what constitutes evidence.
21 There is limited evidence here and I think the doubt
22 must err on the side of rescinding closures when there
23 is limited evidence in either direction.

24

25 And also I think the Department of Fish
26 and Game has articulated that rescinding the closure
27 will not lead to an increasing harvest.

28

29 MS. LEONETTI: Chair Christianson.

30

31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support in
32 deference to the RAC. I mean oppose. Like you said,
33 both ways here. Not enough information to really go
34 one way or the other. So I'll lean on our Regional
35 Advisory Council and the statement we heard there. It
36 might not change the amount of moose, but it might
37 change the people harvesting them inside of the state.
38 So I mean that's the testimony we heard there is that
39 sometimes it's the people around too that are
40 competition with each other. So in deference to the
41 RAC.

42

43 MS. LEONETTI: Mr. Chair, the motion
44 fails. Thank you.

45

46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
47 We'll move on to the Kodiak, WP-32.

48

49 MR. ROBERTS: Hello, Mr. Chair.

50

1 Members of the Board. I'm Jason Roberts. I'm an
2 anthropologist at OSM and I'll be providing a summary
3 of the analysis of Wildlife Proposal WP26-32. This
4 analysis begins on Page 925 of your meeting book. The
5 proposal was submitted by the Kodiak Aleutians Council
6 and it requests that the Board recognize the customary
7 and traditional use of brown bears in Unit 8 by
8 residents of Kodiak.

9
10 The Council initially defined Kodiak as
11 including all the communities located along the Kodiak
12 road system except for the U.S. Coast Guard Base, the
13 Nemetz Housing Development and the Pacific Spaceport
14 Complex. A map of this proposal area is shown on Page
15 936 of your meeting book. But there have been some
16 kind of leak breaking modifications to this area since
17 the proposal was originally submitted and I will
18 describe those a bit later.

19
20 The proponents note that all residents
21 of Kodiak Island have a long history of harvesting
22 brown bears for food and using brown bear parts in
23 traditional handicrafts. They explain that the
24 importance of accessing brown bear for food and other
25 needs on Kodiak is well documented, and they argue that
26 residents of the more remote communities located off
27 the islands road system already have a C&T finding for
28 brown bear and that residents of Kodiak who have the
29 same history of use should not be excluded from this
30 finding.

31
32 Looking at a bit of the regulatory
33 history here in 1986. The Alaska Board of Game made a
34 positive customary and traditional use finding for
35 brown bear in Unit 8. However, that finding was
36 reversed in 1987 after no residents requested a permit
37 for the special subsistence registration hunt that took
38 place for that one year.

39
40 There was no Federal hunt and no
41 communities were recognized as having customary and
42 traditional use of brown bears in Unit 8 when the
43 Federal program began and announced its first
44 regulations in '92. However, the Board did carry over
45 several C&T determinations in Unit 8, such as a
46 determination for deer for all Unit 8 residents. This
47 determination is notable because deer are an introduced
48 species on Kodiak Island while the Kodiak brown bear is
49 an endemic species whose name is derived from the
50

1 Alutiiq word for island and has been present there for
2 thousands of years.

3
4 In '96, a proposal requested that the
5 Board recognize the customary and traditional use of
6 brown bears in Unit 8 by all Unit 8 residents. When
7 considering this proposal, the Kodiak Aleutians Council
8 at the time noted concerns that allowing residents of
9 Kodiak City to harvest brown bears under Federal
10 regulations could negatively impact the guiding
11 industry by reducing the number of permits available
12 for other Alaska residents and non-resident hunters.
13 At this time it appears that during these discussions
14 it wasn't clear that the Board could allocate a
15 specific number of permits to individual communities.

16
17 The Council ultimately recommended that
18 the Board recognize C&T for brown bears by residents of
19 Akiak, Karluk, Larson Bay, Old Harbor, Ouzinkie and
20 Port Lyons, all of which are located off the road
21 system. The Council also requested that the
22 communities of Ouzinkie and Port Lyons be added to the
23 C&T based on histories of migration and intermarriage.

24
25
26 In '97 the Board recognized the
27 customary and traditional use of elk in Unit 8 by all
28 Unit 8 residents. This determination is also notable
29 because elk, like deer, are an introduced species on
30 Kodiak. The Council recommended that Kodiak
31 communities located both on and off the road system be
32 included in the C&T due to the history of kinship,
33 connections and sharing between these communities. The
34 current proposal is the first to request an expansion
35 of the C&T for brown bear in Unit 8 since the
36 determination was made for off-road communities.

37
38 Subsistence practices remain central to
39 the identity, family life, community well being across
40 both remote and road accessible communities on Kodiak.
41 In a 2021 subsistence survey households on the Kodiak
42 Road System harvested an average of 224 pounds of wild
43 resources, with salmon, non-salmon fish and large land
44 mammals accounting for much of this harvest. It's also
45 noted that close social connections link communities
46 across the island and the sharing of subsistence foods
47 between road system and off-road system communities is
48 common.

1 distinct subspecies on the Kodiak Archipelago for
2 roughly 12,000 years. Archeological evidence shows that
3 Alutiiq people have consistently harvested and used
4 brown bears throughout their history on the islands.

5
6 Historic records and oral histories
7 document strong cultural and spiritual ties between
8 Kodiak residents and brown bears. These beliefs have
9 long influenced hunting practices and respectful
10 behavior toward bears, with knowledge of hunting,
11 processing, preserving, cooking, and sharing bear
12 products being passed down through generations.

13
14 Written accounts from the 1700s through
15 the early 1900s describe long-standing bear hunting
16 patterns across the Archipelago, including historic
17 villages near contemporary Kodiak road system
18 communities. Traditionally nearly all edible portions
19 of the bear were consumed, while non-edible parts were
20 used for tools, clothing, bedding, handicrafts, and
21 medicines. With bear intestines and sinew have
22 continued to be especially valued for making rainproof
23 parkas.

24
25 Subsistence harvest and use of brown
26 bears however has evolved alongside commercial bear
27 hunting in the area since at least the 1800s. Alutiiq
28 hunters were often hired as bear guides due to their
29 knowledge of bear behavior, the local terrain, hunting
30 locations and bear processing skills. Accounts written
31 in the early 1900s identify many brown bear hunting
32 sites used by Alutiiq residents, including several near
33 what is now the Kodiak Road System.

34
35 However, brown bear harvest
36 opportunities have declined since the early 1900s as
37 brown bear hunting has become a more regulated and more
38 specialized activity. The availability of deer and elk
39 populations that were introduced in the 1920s has also
40 likely contributed to a decline of brown bear harvest
41 over time. Non-resident and non-local hunters have
42 also come to account for a large proportion of the
43 yearly harvest of brown bear in Unit 8.

44
45 Residents of the Kodiak Road System can
46 currently participate in State registration hunts that
47 occur in the road accessible portion of the island, as
48 well as draw hunts, but compared to the areas where
49 draw hunts occur, the road accessible portion of Kodiak
50

0412

1 has a lower number of brown bears, a higher
2 concentration of hunters, and generally much lower
3 success rates. The likelihood of an individual Unit 8
4 resident receiving a draw permit in any given year is
5 also pretty low.

6
7 Household survey data from 1982 to 2021
8 still shows pretty consistent but fairly low harvest of
9 brown bears by residents of the road system
10 communities. Because brown bear hunting tends to be a
11 more specialized activity, conducted by a small number
12 of households and limited by bear and permit
13 availability, it's also possible that some household
14 bear hunting activity may get missed in these surveys.

15
16
17 Harvest records from 1990-2023 also
18 indicate that residents of the Kodiak Road System have
19 consistently harvested brown bears and that the number
20 of permits of bears harvested per year by road system
21 residents compares relatively favorably to that of more
22 remote Kodiak communities. This information is shown
23 in more detail on the tables and figures on Pages
24 948-951.

25
26 The OSM conclusion shown in your
27 meeting book on Page 954, that was our attempt to meet
28 the Council's intent while also simplifying the
29 regulatory language describing Customary and
30 Traditional Use Determinations for brown bear in Unit
31 8. But we've since been informed by the Chair of the
32 Kodiak Aleutians Council that a different description
33 of the CNT area would better meet the Council's intent.
34 So we support meeting that intent.

35
36 So hopefully that doesn't make things
37 too confusing but we support WP26-32 with this recently
38 suggested modification that would add all residents of
39 the Kodiak Island road system, except residents of
40 Kodiak Station CDP to the customary and traditional use
41 determination for brown bear in Unit 8. If this is
42 adopted you can see the regulations up there on the
43 slide using geographic features to define the extent of
44 the road system.

45
46 The justification is that brown bears
47 have been customarily and traditionally harvested and
48 used by residents of Kodiak Island including those
49 living in the area of the current road system. These
50

0413

1 practices are based on inter-generational knowledge and
2 beliefs. Harvest data from recent decades shows that
3 road system residents have consistently hunted and
4 harvested brown bears at low levels with annual permit
5 and harvest numbers, comparing relatively favorably to
6 residents of more remote communities.

7

8 Strong social networks also support the
9 sharing of subsistence foods between road system
10 residents and residents of more remote communities.
11 Many of whom are increasingly relocating to the road
12 system area. Excluding the Coast Guard Base and
13 off-Base military housing within Kodiak Station CDP is
14 based on research and Council testimony indicating that
15 military personnel typically reside in the area for
16 fairly short periods of time, harvest subsistence
17 resources at lower levels than long-term residents and,
18 as a result, generally lack this comparable
19 inter-generational transmission of subsistence
20 knowledge.

21

22 The proposed modification doesn't
23 specifically exclude the Pacific Spaceport complex
24 because it appears there are currently no residents at
25 this facility and any housing built in the future would
26 be temporary. So just for employees and contractors
27 who wouldn't qualify to hunt under Federal regulations.

28

29

30 If this proposal is adopted, the Board
31 would still need to adopt WP26-33 to authorize permits
32 for Kodiak Road System residents to harvest brown bears
33 under Federal regulations. That's my long-winded
34 presentation there, but I can answer any questions that
35 you have.

36

37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
38 questions for Staff.

39

40 (No comments)

41

42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
43 seeing none. Thank you. Was there any written public
44 comments.

45

46 MR. ROBERTS: Through the Chair, we did
47 not receive any written public comments during that
48 initial open period.

49

50

0414

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
2 Summary of tribal government and Alaska Native
3 corporation.

4
5 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There
6 were no comments or resolutions on this proposal.
7 Thank you.

8
9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
10 tribal. Alaska Native Corporation testimony.

11
12 MS. LAVINE: Mr. Chair, Coral Chernoff
13 is online.

14
15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
16 floor.

17
18 MS. LAVINE: Coral, you can press your
19 mic to unmute yourself on Teams or star six if you are
20 calling on your phone.

21
22 MS. CHERNOFF: Okay, I think I got it.
23 Can you hear me?

24
25 MS. LAVINE: Yes, we do.

26
27 MS. CHERNOFF: Good morning. Thank you
28 for hearing my testimony here. I want to thank Jason
29 for giving that analysis. I just want to say that OSM
30 did a great job at documenting the historic connections
31 of the residents of Kodiak to the bear of the island.

32
33 I guess I'll go back to -- I am on the
34 Aleutians RAC, but I am testifying on behalf of myself.
35 I'll just say my father, grandfather and great
36 grandfather were from Kodiak, which is currently now
37 Kodiak City. And the maternal side of my family was
38 from Afognak, which also after the earthquake many of
39 those people moved in. So there's a lot of Alutiiq
40 people and traditional people right there in Kodiak.

41
42 I am just asking that you support this
43 proposal. There has been shown to be a lot of
44 connection with the bear, and as you've heard we have
45 been -- other parts of the island have had customary
46 and traditional use recognition, so we are just asking
47 for that for the Kodiak area.

48
49 I'm asking for support so that the
50

0415

1 people here have the opportunity for subsistence of
2 bears in this area. Another thing, when I was reading
3 through this proposal I would just like to clarify that
4 there are a couple of places where -- like Page 931 it
5 talks about in 2025 the Council considered the sale of
6 brown bear hides and the vote failed 5-5. The reason
7 being that it says, "Council members opposed, stated it
8 was not culturally appropriate in their region to sell
9 the hides of brown bears."

10

11 I just want to clarify that with that
12 vote there were -- there are four members that voted
13 for that, four members that supported that vote that
14 are from Kodiak with deep historic ties to Kodiak and
15 are members of tribes and corporations there. So that
16 was a non -- a member who was, you know, newer to
17 Kodiak that had stated that -- made that comment that
18 it was not culturally appropriate. So when I read
19 through this I just -- I was a little confused by that
20 and I had to think back to the meeting of how that
21 went.

22

23 Also it states the same thing in the
24 appendix, Table A-1 Page 966 that -- again it speaks to
25 the same thing. We voted to oppose the sale of brown
26 bear, stating that it was not culturally appropriate in
27 the region to sell brown bear parts. It was not
28 cultural people who made that comment.

29

30 So I just wanted to state that. That
31 was a little -- in case any of you read that and were a
32 little confused by the contradiction of the cultural
33 use of bear hides and then those comments that came up
34 in 2025 at our meeting. That's my testimony today.
35 Thank you for hearing me.

36

37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
38 Thank you for calling in and putting that on the
39 record. We appreciate it. Any questions from the
40 Board.

41

42 (No comments)

43

44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I apologize for
45 the hearing aids. Next we have tribal, Native
46 organization testimony. Is there any other that would
47 like to be recognized.

48

49 (No comments)

50

0416

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Advisory group
2 testimony, SRC State advisory and multiple agency
3 working group. Any comments or recognition? Hearing
4 or seeing none. We will move to public testimony.

5
6 (No comments)

7
8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing or
9 seeing none. Council recommendation. Rebecca.

10
11 MS. SKINNER: Thank you. Rebecca
12 Skinner on behalf of the Kodiak Aleutians RAC. As
13 Jason alluded to, when the Council took up this
14 proposal for a C&T for brown bear for the Kodiak Road
15 System and then also the accompanying proposal that
16 would allow permits, we knew what we were trying to do,
17 but once the process continued kind of the requirements
18 of regulatory language and then also the need to have a
19 map that could be reasonably created ended up resulting
20 in language that went a little bit afield from what the
21 RAC meant.

22
23 So Jason did put some language on the
24 screen that is not in the book. The RAC did not see or
25 vote on that language because of timing. We were able
26 to see OSM recommendations for the C&T OSM recommended
27 changes, but we didn't get to see the OSM recommended
28 changes for the permits. So it wasn't until this
29 meeting that I had a chance to work with multiple
30 people in the room to come up with the revised language
31 that I think does better capture the intent of the RAC.

32
33 I will go ahead and read into the
34 record the RAC justification. For WP26-32 this is to
35 recognize customary and traditional uses of Kodiak
36 brown bear to the Kodiak Road System. The Council
37 supported the proposal with modification at the time.
38 To recognize the customary and traditional use of brown
39 bear by, at that time, all residents of Unit 8, except
40 for those residing within the Kodiak Station
41 census-designated place. That would be what in Kodiak
42 we tend to call the Coast Guard Base.

43
44 So it's the people who live within the
45 fenced perimeter of the Base as well as the Base-owned,
46 but it's off-base housing. So in Kodiak we just call
47 that the Base and that is encompassed within the Kodiak
48 Station CDP. The Council also supported recognizing
49 the customary and traditional use of brown bear by
50

0417

1 individuals permanently residing in Kodiak National
2 Wildlife Refuge housing, which is located within a
3 portion of the Kodiak station CDP.

4
5 The Council noted that the history and
6 importance of harvesting brown bears for food and using
7 brown bear parts in traditional handicrafts are well
8 documented for all of Kodiak Island. Therefore, the
9 Council felt that the customary and traditional use
10 determination for brown bear in the area should not be
11 limited to residents of the off-road communities only.

12
13 However, the Council felt that
14 excluding residents of the U.S. Coast Guard base, and
15 off-base military housing located within Kodiak Station
16 CDP from this customary and traditional use
17 determination was appropriate due to the differences in
18 the average length of residence, harvest and use of
19 subsistence resources, and subsistence knowledge
20 generally exhibited by these residents.

21
22 The Council felt that adopting the
23 proposal as modified would not present a conservation
24 concern due to the relatively low number of Federal
25 subsistence permits available for brown bear harvest in
26 Unit 8 each year. And the fact that the hide and the
27 edible meat of brown bears harvested under Federal
28 subsistence regulations must be salvaged and the close
29 management and monitoring of brown bears in Unit 8.

30
31 I am happy to try to answer any
32 questions.

33
34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
35 questions from the Board for the RAC Chair.

36
37 (No comments)

38
39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
40 clarifying that position as well. Thank you. I
41 appreciate that. We will move on to the Alaska
42 Department of Fish and Game.

43
44 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
45 For the record Alaska Department of Fish and Game
46 opposes the proposal. As was mentioned in the OSM
47 analysis, currently the Board of Game -- through State
48 regulations by a Board of Game finding Unit 8 brown
49 bear is a negative C&T. Thank you.

50

0418

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
2 InterAgency Staff Committee.

3
4 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The
5 Board makes customary and traditional use
6 determinations for the sole purpose of recognizing the
7 pool of users who generally exhibit some or all of the
8 eight factors. The Board does not use such
9 determinations for resource management or restricting
10 harvest. The InterAgency Staff Committee found the
11 analysis to be a thorough and accurate evaluation of
12 the proposal and that it will provide sufficient basis
13 for the Regional Advisory Council recommendation and
14 the Federal Subsistence Board action on this proposal.

15
16 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

17
18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
19 Board discussion with Liaison, Council Chairs, State
20 reps.

21
22 (No comments)

23
24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
25 seeing none, we'll go ahead and -- Rhonda.

26
27 MS. PITKA: Sorry, I have a quick
28 question. So in the analysis it says ADF&G is opposed
29 because of something about ANILCA, and then it lists
30 all this language but it doesn't list in there the
31 negative C&T by the Board of Game.

32
33 MR. MULLIGAN: Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't
34 see you get up.

35
36 (Laughter)

37
38 MS. PITKA: Sorry.

39
40 MR. MULLIGAN: So you're asking about
41 where the negative C&T is?

42
43 MS. PITKA: Yeah. Yeah. Because I
44 didn't see it in the objection on Page 963.

45
46 MR. MULLIGAN: So under 5 AAC 99.025 is
47 where we -- the State lists in regulations where all
48 our C&T determinations are and page reference isn't
49 going to work for you but under that, Unit 8, brown
50

0419

1 bear, has a negative C&T determination. So it may not
2 be in your information but it's in our regulation book.

3

4 MS. PITKA: Thank you for that, I
5 appreciate it.

6

7 MS. BOARIO: Actually, Mr. Chair, I
8 have a follow up question on that.

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead.

11

12 MS. BOARIO: I did just find on Page
13 928, it says in 1986 the Alaska Board of Game made a
14 positive customary and traditional use finding for
15 brown bear in Unit 8, however, this finding was
16 reversed in 1987 after no residents requested a permit.
17 Is that just like part of the process, if it's like a
18 year, within a year if somebody -- that's why it gets
19 revoked?

20

21 MR. MULLIGAN: No. That was actually
22 -- I mean we don't have a review process for C&Ts, that
23 was actually -- that would have had to have been
24 brought up in front of the Board as a proposal so we
25 didn't review it and then said no, someone actually
26 came to us, we reviewed the material and since we
27 hadn't found anyone that asked for a permit during that
28 time then the Board determined there was no C&T and got
29 rid of it. That is why. Not because we reviewed it
30 and found it normally because we don't -- the Board
31 currently does not do a cycle of reviewing every C&T
32 that it has on its books.

33

34 MS. BOARIO: That was helpful, thank
35 you, Mr. Mulligan. And it is good to know that at some
36 point the Board did make a positive C&T.

37

38 This is Fish and Wildlife Service for
39 the record, sorry I'm talking.

40

41 MR. PENDERGAST: Mr. Chair.

42

43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead,
44 Kevin.

45

46 MR. PENDERGAST: Kevin Pendergast,
47 Bureau of Land Management. Maybe a question for the
48 RAC Chair, but it might be helpful to get the language
49 back up on screen as modified, if that's possible. I'm
50

0420

1 not sure who's running that. But I'm a little confused
2 by the modification now.

3
4 I heard reference, Pacific SpacePort
5 [sic] Complex and I see that in the book but it's not
6 referenced here, why is that, is that intentional?
7

8 MS. SKINNER: Thank you. So if the
9 question is -- so the Kodiak SpacePort would be located
10 near the bottom of the pink map so it's barely right at
11 the bottom of the screen, it sits down in that area.
12

13 MR. PENDERGAST: Yeah, I'm familiar
14 with it.
15

16 MS. SKINNER: From my perspective, I am
17 less concerned with language that specifically
18 addresses that because I think in the analysis it said
19 it's not currently permitted for permanent lodging so
20 there's not going to be people that live there that
21 would even qualify for -- as, you know, permanent
22 Kodiak Alaska residents anyway. Was there more to your
23 question?
24

25 MR. PENDERGAST: That basically answers
26 my question because I'm pretty intimately familiar with
27 that particular area and there are folks that live out
28 there. It would depend on how one defined the Pacific
29 SpacePort Complex and kind of where that boundary was
30 so that was my concern, is it might sweep up some local
31 residents unintentionally, but if that's, you know, if
32 it's all pink that concern is addressed.
33

34 Thanks.

35
36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
37 questions.
38

39 Frank.
40

41 MR. WOODS: Good question BLM. I'm bad
42 at names, I'm walking through the process and Rebecca
43 thanks for your report of outlining what that looks
44 like and I think I'm reading the State's response to
45 that was Kodiak road system excluding all what you just
46 clarified, helped me understand that this is -- it's --
47 Kodiak's right to ask for a C&T for brown bears on
48 their -- and I will definitely support this just for
49 that. I'd like to thank Jack on a separate note, see
50

0421

1 we have potlatch when we go home so we know what we're
2 eating, I hope this was brown bear since we have brown
3 bear on the table.

4

5 MR. REAKOFF: Mr. Chair. That's moose
6 meat -- dried moose meat. It's not good to eat brown
7 bear meat because they have trichina so you don't try
8 to eat brown bear unless you cook it well done.

9

10 MR. PENDERGAST: I was starting to get
11 nervous, thanks, Jack.

12

13 (Laughter)

14

15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Well, for the
16 record I just ate some whale, thank you.

17

18 (Laughter)

19

20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you to
21 the wonderful lady chefs here. It was a wonderful
22 everything in the ocean salad.

23

24 (Off record)

25

26 (On record)

27

28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So we're
29 discussing, the Board is open for action on this. This
30 was our opportunity to get clarification, ask pointed
31 question so now it's our opportunity to open the floor
32 for a motion.

33

34 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, Fish and
35 Wildlife Service.

36

37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
38 floor.

39

40 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair. Fish and
41 Wildlife Service moves to adopt with Board modification
42 WP26-32 to add all residents of the Kodiak Island road
43 system east of the line from KRAG* point south to the
44 western most point of Saltery Cove including Anton
45 Larsen Bay but not including residents of Kodiak
46 Station census designated place, CDP, to the customary
47 and traditional use determination for brown bear in
48 Unit 8. If I get a second I will explain why I intend
49 to support this proposal. And did I say that right,
50

0422

1 Rebecca?

2

3

MR. WOODS: Second.

4

5

MS. SKINNER: Yes.

6

7

MS. BOARIO: Thanks. Mr. Chair. I agree with Coral, who testified earlier, the OSM did a great job documenting the robust history of the customary and traditional use of the bear of the island by residents of Kodiak and in the area that is the present day road system. Brown bears have been a distinct subspecies present on Kodiak Island for around 12,000 years and Kodiak Alutiiq people have consistently harvested and used brown bears for as long as they have been on the island. The OSM analysis finds that it has been the ancestral territory of the Alutiiq/Koniag peoples for at least 7,500 years. More recently written accounts from the late 1700s through the early 1900s described traditional patterns of brown bear hunting on Kodiak Island including in historic villages near contemporary Kodiak Road Zone communities. All parts of the bear were consumed except the hide, bones, claws, head, entrails, these non-edible parts were often used to make tools, clothing, bedding and handicrafts. Additionally, residents of remote villages are increasingly relocating to the Kodiak road system area and there are strong relationships and sharing of subsistence foods between residents along the road system and residents in the more remote communities on Kodiak Island.

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Thank you.

48

49

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any

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0423

1 further deliberation or discussion.

2

3

(No comments)

4

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing or seeing none, read into the record the motion and roll call please.

MS. LEONETTI: I like that voice that keeps coming through.

Okay, the motion is to adopt Wildlife Proposal 26-32 with Board modification to add all residents of the Kodiak Island Road system east of the line from KRAG Point south to the western most point of Saltery Cove including Anton Larsen Bay but not including residents of Kodiak Station census designated place, to the customary and traditional use determination for brown bear in Unit 8.

Fish and Wildlife Service Member Boario.

MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service supports.

MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Pitka.

MS. PITKA: I support WP26-32 in deference to the Regional Advisory Council and based on the justification on Page 954 of the Board book. Thank you.

MS. LEONETTI: BIA Member John.

MS. JOHN: BIA votes to adopt WP26-32 and supports the motion made by and read by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Oney.

MR. ONEY: Public Member Ray Oney moves to adopt WP26-32 with the Board modifications. Thank you.

MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Woods.

MR. WOODS: Public Member Woods adopts 26-32 with recommendations of the RAC and modifications

0424

1 from the Board. Thank you.

2

3 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Payenna.

4

5 MR. PAYENNA: Public Member Payenna

6 votes to support WP26-32 in deference to the RAC.

7 Thank you.

8

9 MS. LEONETTI: BLM Member Pendergast.

10

11 MR. PENDERGAST: BLM votes to support

12 for the reasons stated by the Fish and Wildlife

13 Service.

14

15 MS. LEONETTI: Park Service Member

16 Striker.

17

18 MR. STRIKER: Park Service supports in

19 deference to the RAC and for the reasons articulated by

20 Director Boario.

21

22 MS. LEONETTI: Forest Service Member

23 Ingersoll.

24

25 MR. INGERSOLL: Forest Service supports

26 in deference to the RAC and for the reasons articulated

27 by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

28

29 MS. LEONETTI: Chair Christianson.

30

31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support.

32

33 MS. LEONETTI: Mr. Chair, the motion

34 passes unanimously.

35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank

37 you, we'll break until 1:30.

38

39 MR. DUNAWAY: Mr. Chair.

40

41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

42

43 MR. DUNAWAY: Dan Dunaway here. I just

44 want to thank everybody up there, Board Members, for

45 the careful attention they gave to Bristol Bay items

46 that were before you. Thank you very much.

47

48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,

49 appreciate that. I need to take a break.

50

0425

1 (Off record)

2

3 (On record)

4

5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
6 We'll get back to business here. We're going to go
7 down to WP26-33. You have the floor.

8

9 MS. HOLMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
10 Again members of the Board, my name is Kendra Holman,
11 Wildlife Biologist with OSM for the record. This is a
12 presentation of the summary of the analysis for
13 Wildlife Proposal WP26-33 and it can be found starting
14 on Page 969 of your meeting book.

15

16 This proposal was submitted by the
17 Kodiak-Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
18 and requests up to four bear permits be allocated to
19 the community of Kodiak. The proponent states that the
20 communities of Kodiak Island have a long history of the
21 customary and traditional harvesting of brown bears for
22 food and traditional handicraft. Additional
23 information from the proponent can be found in the
24 proponent section of the analysis on Page 970 of your
25 meeting book.

26

27 In 1996 the Board established the
28 Federal brown bear season community harvest quotas and
29 customary and traditional use information regarding the
30 community -- regarding six communities on the island in
31 the area. In 2014 the Board increased the number of
32 Federal permits to 11 and in 2024 the Board removed
33 locking tags requirements -- locking tag requirements
34 for brown bears in Unit 8.

35

36 If you're -- additional regulatory
37 history was covered in the last proposal and can be
38 found in your book.

39

40 So Kodiak is broken down into six
41 management areas with eight survey areas. During the
42 2021 and 2022 surveys the densities were slightly below
43 objective in two of these survey areas, but at this
44 time these two survey areas are minimally below
45 objective and are not of concern. An additional recent
46 survey done of a third area has that population for the
47 last two surveys that it was con -- that were conducted
48 at 57 percent of the lower end of the density
49 objective. So this survey area does have some

50

0426

1 conservation concerns. The survey areas and density
2 objectives can be found in figure 1 and table 1 on
3 Pages 974 and 975 of your meeting book.

4
5 Female Kodiak brown bears successfully
6 reproduce and have four to six -- about four to six
7 years old, litter sizes are small and have long
8 intervals between successful reproductive events and
9 have short potential reproductive periods that leads to
10 low rates. In addition the.....

11
12 (Indiscernible - teleconference
13 interference)

14
15 MS. HOLMAN: In addition too they
16 exhibit a high fidelity to home ranges and little
17 immigration and emigration.

18
19 Kodiak residents can currently harvest
20 brown bears under the State registration permit, RB230,
21 which is for the road system or they may enter the
22 drawing for brown bear permits. All of these permits
23 are allowed -- only allow for one bear every four
24 regulatory years. Federally-qualified subsistence user
25 harvest can be found on table 3 on Page 978 of your
26 meeting book. There's a Federal permit, this permit is
27 undersubscribed and only issued to the six communities
28 mentioned earlier. An average of 1.6 bears out of a
29 maximum of 13 is reported harvested every year.
30 Additionally this Federal permit comprises 0.7 percent
31 of the total brown bear harvest in Unit 8.

32
33 Alternatives considered was to delegate
34 authority to the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge
35 manager to define harvest areas. While Unit 8 overall
36 does not have a conservation concern for brown bears
37 there are areas within the unit that do. Allowing for
38 harvest areas to be defined provides the in-service
39 manager the flexibility to address the concern -- areas
40 of concern by excluding these areas or limiting the
41 number of hunters that can be in these areas when they
42 have a conservation concern.

43
44 If this proposal is adopted up to four
45 Federal brown bear permits in Unit 8 will be issued to
46 residents of the Kodiak road system. However residents
47 of the Kodiak Island road system do not currently have
48 a C&T for brown bears in Unit 8, therefore the proposal
49 cannot be adopted which you passed, WP26-32 previously.
50

0427

1 There is no conservation concern like I
2 said overall for the unit, however the impact from the
3 potential harvest is not anticipated to create a unit
4 wide conservation concern, however there are concerns
5 -- potential concerns that a smaller management scale
6 within the southern -- southwestern Kodiak management
7 subunits.

8
9 The OSM preliminary conclusion is to
10 support this proposal.

11
12 Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the
13 Board. I'd be happy to address any questions.

14
15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
16 questions from the Board for Staff.

17
18 (No comments)

19
20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
21 seeing none, thank you. Was there any written public
22 comment.

23
24 MS. HOLMAN: No written public comments
25 were received, Mr. Chair.

26
27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
28 Summary of tribal government and Alaska Native
29 corporation consultation.

30
31 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There
32 were no comments or resolutions on this proposal.

33
34 Thank you, Chair.

35
36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
37 Tribal and Alaska Native organizational testimony.

38
39 MS. LAVINE: If you would like to dress
40 the -- address the Board you can raise your hand online
41 or in the room. This is for tribal Native organization
42 testimony.

43
44 We have Coral Chernoff, Mr. Chair.

45
46 MS. CHERNOFF: Yes, can you hear me?

47
48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
49 floor.

50

0428

1 MS. CHERNOFF: Okay. Thank you. This
2 is Coral Chernoff, Alutiiq from Kodiak. And I would
3 just like for you to support the permits for these bear
4 hunts. And I just wanted to give a little context to
5 the up to four which I feel like is a reasonable
6 amount. And just to compare you do have a chart there
7 that lists the villages and how many permits that they
8 are allowed and so just a little bit of comparison is
9 that Kodiak has about 10,000 people and so we're asking
10 for about four -- up to four permits. Akhiok has about
11 70 people and I think they have up to three permits.
12 Larson Bay has 39 permanent residents and they have up
13 to three permits. So I just wanted to make note of
14 that that the amount of permits we ask for the Kodiak
15 area I feel like is pretty reasonable.

16
17 And also I might note that you do have
18 a table on Page 977 which shows the total harvest of
19 bears over the years. So in many of those years the
20 permits we're asking for does not even -- you know, the
21 DOP removal, you know, is larger than that number. And
22 most years about 200 bears are harvested and a lot of
23 those are through the Alaska big game guides and non-
24 residents. So I feel like it's really reasonable to
25 have -- to ask for up to four permits for subsistence.

26
27 Thank you.

28
29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
30 that. Appreciate the testimony. Any questions.

31
32 (No comments)

33
34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Advisory Group
35 testimony, SRC, State advisory and multiagency work
36 group.

37
38 MS. LAVINE: Mr. Chair, we have no
39 documents from ACs, SRCs or working groups.

40
41 Thank you.

42
43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
44 public testimony here or on line, raise your hand.

45
46 (No comments)

47
48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
49 seeing none, Council recommendation.

50

0429

1 MS. SKINNER: Thank you. Rebecca
2 Skinner for the Kodiak-Aleutians RAC. The -- you'll be
3 seeing some revised language coming forward for the
4 motion to align the community definition for where the
5 permits would be allocated to match that to the C&T
6 language and determination that the Board just passed.
7 And that would be -- in general the permits would be
8 allocated to the Kodiak road system.

9
10 The justification is the Council
11 recognizes the long standing, traditional subsistence
12 use of bears by residents of the Kodiak Island villages
13 and those living in the area referred to as the Kodiak
14 road system. Based on the analysis the Council does
15 not identify any conservation concerns as the
16 anticipated increase in harvest would be minimal. So
17 there's up to four permits so at the most there would --
18 there could be four additional bears harvested and the
19 Council did not view that as a -- as a potential
20 problem for the bear population.

21
22 Thanks.

23
24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
25 Rebecca. Any questions from the Board.

26
27 (No comments)

28
29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
30 seeing none, appreciate that. Alaska Department of
31 Fish and Game.

32
33 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
34 The Alaska Department of Fish and Game opposes the
35 proposal. As we've had a long standing position when
36 it comes to misaligning State and Federal regulations
37 we do oppose those proposals.

38
39 Thank you, sir.

40
41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Ben.
42 InterAgency Staff Committee.

43
44 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The
45 InterAgency Staff Committee provided the standard
46 comment.

47
48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
49 Robbin. Board discussion with their Liaison, Council
50

0430

1 Chair, State reps, any questions, pointed questions to
2 the State or RAC Chair?

3

4 (No comments)

5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Seeing none,
7 the floor's open for Board action.

8

9 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, I move to adopt
10 with modification WP26-33 to allocate up to four brown
11 bear permits in Unit 8 to the residents of the Kodiak
12 Island road system east of the line from Crag Point
13 south to the western most point of Saltery Cove
14 including Anton, Larson Bay and to delegate authority
15 to the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge manager to
16 define harvest areas and determine the permit
17 allocation system on an annual basis, i.e., set the
18 number of permits to be issued through a limited
19 registration or random drawing hunt. If I get a second
20 I will explain why I intend to vote to support my
21 motion.

22

23 MR. WOODS: Second.

24

25 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, following the
26 C&T determination passed by the Board the Fish and
27 Wildlife Service supports allocating up to four brown
28 bear permits to the residents of the Kodiak Island road
29 system as defined in my motion. Similarly to proposal
30 32 the intent of the Kodiak-Aleutians Regional Advisory
31 Council was to allocate permits to those along the
32 present day road system. This modification aligns with
33 the description in proposal 32 for those that now have
34 a customary and traditional use determination for brown
35 bear in Unit 8 of Kodiak. Adopting this proposal will
36 increase subsistence hunting opportunities for people
37 in Unit 8 of Kodiak and adding four additional permits
38 should not pose a conservation concern. As the OSM
39 analysis states there is currently no conservation
40 concern and the in-season manager will have the
41 flexibility to address any that arise by excluding any
42 areas of high conservation concern. As we've also
43 heard the Federal permit hunt is currently very
44 undersubscribed with only 1.6 bears out of the maximum
45 of 13 bears reported harvested each year on average.
46 In deference to the Kodiak-Aleutians Regional Advisory
47 Council the Fish and Wildlife Service supports.

48

49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,

50

0431

1 Sara. Any Board deliberation, discussion?

2

3

(No comments)

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and seeing none, please read into the record the motion and roll call.

MS. LEONETTI: The motion is to adopt Wildlife Proposal 26-33 with Board modification to allocate up to four brown bear permits in Unit 8 to the residents of the Kodiak Island road system east of the line from Crag Point south to the western most point of Saltery Cove including Anton, Larson Bay and to delegate authority to the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge manager to define harvest areas and determine the permit allocation system on an annual basis, i.e., set the number of permits to be issued through a limited registration or random drawing hunt via delegation of authority letter only.

Fish and Wildlife Service Member Boario.

MS. BOARIO: The Fish and Wildlife Service supports. And thank you for clarifying that it is via a delegation of authority letter.

MS. LEONETTI: BIA Member John.

MS. JOHN: BIA adopts with Board modifications also as recommended by the Kodiak-Aleutians Regional Advisory Council. We concur that there'll be no conservation concerns associated with the adoption of this proposal. We appreciate the testimony of Ms. Chernoff as well as the detailed location information provided by Council Chair Ms. Skinner in support of WP26-33.

Quyana.

MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Pitka.

MS. PITKA: I vote to support WP26-33 in deference to the Regional Advisory Council and with recognition that there is no conservation concern.

Thank you.

0432

1 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Oney.

2

3 MR. ONEY: Public Member Ray Oney moves
4 to adopt WP-33 with Board modifications.

5

6 MS. LEONETTI: BLM Member Pendergast.

7

8 MR. PENDERGAST: I support the motion
9 for the reasons stated by the Fish and Wildlife
10 Service.

11

12 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Payenna.

13

14 MR. PAYENNA: I also support the motion
15 in deference to the RAC.

16

17 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Woods.

18

19 MR. WOODS: Public Member Woods adopts
20 26-33 with excellent recommendation by the RAC and U.S.
21 Fish and Wildlife Service.

22

23 Thank you.

24

25 MS. LEONETTI: Park Service Member
26 Striker.

27

28 MR. STRIKER: Park Service supports the
29 motion in deference to the RAC and for the reasons
30 articulated by Sara.

31

32 Thank you.

33

34 MS. LEONETTI: Forest Service Member
35 Ingersoll.

36

37 MR. INGERSOLL: Forest Service supports
38 the motion in deference to the RAC and the Fish and
39 Wildlife Service in recognizing that the Federal
40 harvest is a very small part of the overall harvest.

41

42 MS. LEONETTI: Chair Christianson.

43

44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Support to
45 adopt as modified in deference to the RAC.

46

47 MS. LEONETTI: Mr. Chair, the motion
48 passes unanimously.

49

50

0433

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. I'd
2 like to thank everyone for the lunch too. The spirit
3 of subsistence is alive in here as we work through
4 these proposals. Cookies, sandwiches, salad, crackers,
5 fish, whale, fish eggs.

6
7 Thank you all. You could hear us
8 slowing down up here, it's not that we're tired, it's
9 that we're full.

10
11 (Laughter)

12
13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll move on
14 to WP26-34.

15
16 MR. ROBERTS: Good afternoon, Mr.
17 Chair, members of the Board. It's Jason Roberts again,
18 Anthropologist at OSM and I'll be presenting a summary
19 of the analysis of proposal WP26-34. This analysis
20 begins on Page 985 of your meeting book.

21
22 Wildlife proposal WP26-34 was submitted
23 by Coral Chernoff and it requests that the Board allow
24 the sale of handicrafts made from the non-edible
25 byproducts of brown bear harvested under Federal
26 regulations in Unit 8. The proponent states that
27 residents of Kodiak Island have a long and well
28 documented history of harvesting brown bear for food
29 and using brown bear parts for traditional handicrafts,
30 noting that historical writings, contemporary
31 publications and museum collections document that brown
32 bears were traditionally harvested and used by Kodiak
33 residents to produce handicrafts including rain parkas
34 made from brown bear intestines. The proponent states
35 that the sale of handicrafts from non-edible byproducts
36 of legally harvested wildlife is an established
37 practice in Alaska and that Federal regulations already
38 permit the production and sale of brown bear
39 handicrafts in some game management units. The
40 proponent does not believe that allowing similar
41 practices in Unit 8 would lead to conservation concerns
42 because brown bear populations are healthy and as of
43 recently only up to 17 permits would be available for
44 subsistence users to harvest brown bear in Unit 8 under
45 Federal regulations.

46
47 The sale of brown bear parts however
48 has been regulated since the early 1900s and became
49 stricter after brown bears were added to Appendix II of
50

1 the Convention on International Trade and Endangered
2 Species or CITES in 1975. But the making and selling
3 of handicrafts from the non-edible byproducts of fish
4 and wildlife is considered a subsistence use in ANILCA.
5 Federal regulations governing the use of brown bear
6 parts in handicrafts, particularly bear claws, have
7 been contentious though due to conservation concerns,
8 the high value of some brown bear parts in
9 international markets and differences in regional
10 cultural norms governing the use and sale of bear
11 parts.

12
13 And Regional Advisory Councils have
14 historically had varied opinions on allowing the sale
15 of handicrafts made from bear parts and the Board has
16 typically implemented regionally specific regulations
17 due to this issue. In the past the Kodiak-Aleutians
18 Council has generally considered the sale of non-edible
19 brown parts in handicrafts to be culturally
20 inappropriate for their region however the Council was
21 recently divided regarding a proposal that would permit
22 the sale of brown bear hides harvested under Federal
23 regulations. Council members who opposed this proposal
24 emphasized that selling brown bear parts was not
25 traditionally appropriate on Kodiak Island, but that
26 perspectives on those uses may be changing. Members in
27 support of the proposal highlighted the value of making
28 full use of a harvested animal and the need to help
29 offset the high cost of living in rural Alaska.

30
31 So residents of the Kodiak archipelago
32 have harvested as you've heard before and used brown
33 bears for generations. The production and sale of
34 handicrafts from the non-edible portions of wild
35 resources continues to be a critical economic activity
36 for many residents. That helps in part to support the
37 continuation of subsistence activities. Historical and
38 ethnographic data indicate that all parts of harvested
39 brown bears were traditionally used for food except the
40 bone -- bones, hide, claws, head and entrails. Bear
41 hides were either left at the kill site or used as bed
42 covers or sleeping pads. Bones were used for tools and
43 traditional medicine and teeth were used for adornment.
44 The skulls of harvested bears were traditionally left
45 in the field because people believed it was
46 disrespectful to the animal to take or use them. Brown
47 bear intestines and sinew were traditionally used to
48 make rainproof parkas, bags, hats, window covering and
49 drums. And you can see some pictures of these items in
50

1 figures 1 through 3 on Page 1005. Bear intestines were
2 and are considered stronger and therefore better for
3 these purpose than sea lion intestines, but were
4 traditionally harder to acquire. And some Kodiak
5 artists and craft people continue to produce these type
6 of garments and craft items.

7
8 The OSM conclusion is to support WP26-
9 34 with modification to allow the production and
10 limited sale of handicrafts made from all non-edible
11 byproducts of brown bears except gallbladders. And
12 this is the distinction between the OSM conclusion and
13 the Council's recommendation to not allow the use of
14 gallbladders. And so allowing the sale of handicrafts
15 made from brown bear parts would help Federally-
16 qualified subsistence users more fully utilize and
17 benefit from brown bears that are harvested under
18 Federal regulations. There's substantial evidence that
19 brown bear parts have long been used to produce
20 handicrafts on Kodiak Island. And the revised OSM
21 conclusion would provide a regulation more in keeping
22 with the modifications proposed by the Kodiak-Aleutians
23 Council at their September, 2025 meeting, but it does
24 seem necessary to specifically restrict the use of
25 brown bear gallbladders because not doing so could be
26 considered providing a loophole for the sale of
27 gallbladders in valuable international markets for
28 traditional medicine made from the bile.

29
30 Federal subsistence regulations define
31 handicrafts in a way that the parts must -- used must
32 changed significantly which is intended to ensure
33 valuable items like bear claws are not just appended to
34 handicrafts and sold as raw items. Additionally ADF&G
35 has noted that they are now able to seal and track
36 brown bear claws used in handicrafts. Previous
37 information provided from Board of Game meetings
38 indicates that brown bear harvest did not increase
39 substantially after the State began allowing the
40 limited sale of brown bear hides and that internet
41 based sales of brown bear hides and parts are monitored
42 by law enforcement. Furthermore there are currently --
43 well, soon to be a maximum of 17 Federal subsistence
44 permits available to harvest brown bear in Unit 8 each
45 year. And Federal regulations require that hide -- the
46 hide and edible meat of harvested bears be salvaged.
47 Given these factors allowing the use of non -- all non-
48 edible byproducts except gallbladders in handicraft
49 appears unlikely to result in conservation concerns in
50

0436

1 this area.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
4 questions for Staff?

5

6 (No comments)

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
9 thank you. Was there any written public comment
10 received?

11

12 MR. ROBERTS: Through the Chair, we --
13 we did not receive any written public comment on this
14 one during that initial open period.

15

16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
17 Summary of tribal government, Alaska Native corp.

18

19 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There
20 were no comments or resolutions on this proposal.

21

22 Thank you, Chair.

23

24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
25 Tribal, Alaska Native organization testimony.

26

27 (No comments)

28

29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Advisory Group
30 testimony, SRC, State Advisory and multiagency work
31 group.

32

33 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We
34 received no comments on this proposal.

35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
37 public who would like to testify to this here or online
38 please raise your hand.

39

40 MS. LAVINE: Coral Chernoff is on the
41 line.

42

43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
44 floor.

45

46 MS. CHERNOFF: Yes, thank you, Mr.
47 Chair. So I would just let you know that I am here in
48 case anyone has any questions, but I did submit this
49 proposal. I would also like to note that while I was
50

0437

1 putting this together last year it was -- it's been my
2 understanding, I've worked with guts for the last 20
3 years, never sold any, but I've made a gut parka and
4 gut bags and worked with museums to talk about bear
5 guts. But in the past year a gut parka was bought and
6 sold and hangs in a public museum right now. There was
7 write-ups about it in the paper, there was write-ups on
8 the internet. So while I was putting this together I
9 was questioning whether or not this was illegal. So it
10 just kind of brings -- I think I mentioned before in
11 testimony in one of -- earlier today talking about
12 enforcement. So I guess when you look at this you -- I
13 just ask that you look is it currently -- my
14 understanding is it's currently illegal to use bear
15 parts, that's why I brought this proposal forward. But
16 then when I see that there's a very public piece that's
17 been paid over \$7,000 to be made and hangs in a public
18 museum I have to question where's the enforcement,
19 what's the point of this whole system, what's the point
20 of taking a year or two to go through the proposal
21 system if enforcement isn't going to enforce. So I
22 guess when you look at this maybe question is it
23 currently legal or illegal which that's going to direct
24 you in how to deal with this proposal.

25

26 So yeah, and so that's all and I'm just
27 here if you have any questions. And I'm totally in
28 support of OSM's modification to not use gallbladder
29 and not be able to sell gallbladder.

30

31 So thank you.

32

33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
34 questions from the Board?

35

36 (No comments)

37

38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
39 calling in and testifying. Appreciate that.

40

41 Any other public who'd like to be
42 recognized, this is your opportunity?

43

44 (No comments)

45

46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
47 seeing none, Council recommendation on this proposal.

48

49 MS. SKINNER: Thank you. This is

50

0438

1 Rebecca Skinner for the Kodiak-Aleutians RAC. The RAC
2 supports as modified by the Council. This is proposal
3 WP26-34 allowing the sale of handicrafts made from non-
4 edible product of brown -- Kodiak brown bear. The
5 Council supported the proposal with modification to
6 allow the production and limited sales of handicrafts
7 made from all non-edible byproducts of brown bear while
8 removing the proposed regulatory language restricting
9 sales of these handicrafts to consignment only,
10 removing the requirement that sales be conducted within
11 the United States only, removing the requirement that
12 transferred or gifted non-edible byproducts be
13 accompanied by a wildlife transfer statement and
14 removing the requirement that registration permit
15 numbers be retained with handicrafts. The Council felt
16 that adopting the proposal as modified would allow
17 rural subsistence users to more fully utilize all parts
18 of brown bears harvested under Federal subsistence
19 regulations while helping to offset the high cost of
20 living in rural Alaska and maintain subsistence
21 traditions.

22

23 The Council felt that adopting the
24 proposal as modified would not present a conservation
25 concern due to the relatively low number of Federal
26 subsistence permits available for brown bear harvest in
27 Unit 8 each year. The fact that the hide and edible
28 meat of brown bears harvested under Federal subsistence
29 regulations must be salvaged and the close management
30 and monitoring of brown bears in Unit 8. I will note
31 that the RAC did not speak specifically about the
32 gallbladder issue, but I don't think the RAC would have
33 a concern with that proposed modification by OSM.

34

35 Thank you.

36

37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
38 Rebecca. Any questions?

39

40 (No comments)

41

42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
43 seeing none Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

44

45 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
46 For the record the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
47 opposes the proposal as it misaligns State and Federal
48 regulations.

49

50

0439

1 Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
4 InterAgency Staff Committee.

5

6 MS. LAVINE: The InterAgency Staff
7 Committee provided the standard comment.

8

9 Thank you.

10

11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
12 Board discussion with Liaison, Council Chair, State
13 rep.

14

15 (No comments)

16

17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
18 seeing none the floor is open for Board action.

19

20 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, Fish and
21 Wildlife Service.

22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
24 floor, Sara.

25

26 MS. BOARIO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The
27 Fish and Wildlife Service moves to adopt WP26-34 and if
28 I get a second I will explain why I intend to support
29 with the OSM modification to allow the production and
30 limited sale of handicrafts made from all non-edible
31 byproducts of brown bears except gallbladders while
32 removing proposed regulatory language requiring
33 consignment sales only, sales be conducted within the
34 United States only, transferred or gifted non-edible
35 byproducts be accompanied by a wildlife transfer
36 statement and registration permit numbers be retained
37 with handicrafts.

38

39 MR. WOODS: Second that motion.

40

41 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, OSM's
42 modification would allow the sale of handicrafts using
43 brown bear parts by Federally-qualified subsistence
44 users and would enable subsistence users to more fully
45 use brown bears harvested for subsistence. However OSM
46 recommends specifically restricting the use of brown
47 bear gallbladders in the proposed regulation if not
48 doing so could potentially provide a loophole for use
49 in sales of these gallbladders and valuable

50

0440

1 international markets for traditional medicine.
2 Furthermore the sale or barter of bear gallbladders is
3 prohibited under State regulations and there's a
4 specific resolution under CITES designed to limit trade
5 and bear parts for products made from bear parts like
6 gallbladders.

7
8 I want to acknowledge the concern
9 regarding this in the last couple of proposals that it
10 is an unnecessary deviation from State regulations. I
11 agree that we want to minimize confusion for users with
12 our regulations. In this case the users themselves are
13 asking for regulations that align with their lived
14 experience and requests like these won't always
15 necessarily align with all of government. It
16 underscores what ANILCA Title VIII asks of us in this
17 forum. It directs the development of regulations
18 pursuant to the recommendations pursuant to the
19 recommendations of a network of Subsistence Regional
20 Advisory Councils. The Regional Advisory Councils make
21 many recommendations not only concerning opening and
22 closing Federal public lands, but for harvest methods,
23 seasons and harvest limits. Congress required the
24 establishment of these Councils in order to give local
25 subsistence users a meaningful voice in the management
26 of resources on which they depend.

27
28 For these reasons and in deference to
29 the Kodiak-Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory
30 Council I support this proposal.

31
32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion's been made and
33 seconded. Deliberation, discussion.

34
35 (No comments)

36
37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Read it into the record
38 please. Roll call.

39
40
41 MS. LEONETTI: The motion is to adopt
42 Wildlife Proposal 26-34 as -- with modification to
43 allow the production and limited sale of handicrafts
44 made from all non-edible byproducts of brown bears
45 except gallbladders and removing proposed regulatory
46 language requiring consignment sales only, sales be
47 conducted within the United States only, transferred or
48 gifted non-edible byproducts be accompanied by a
49 wildlife transfer statement and registration permit
50

0441

1 numbers be retained with handicrafts.

2

3 Fish and Wildlife Service Member
4 Boario.

5

6 MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service
7 supports.

8

9 MS. LEONETTI: Forest Service Member
10 Ingersoll.

11

12 MR. INGERSOLL: Forest Service supports
13 in deference to the RAC and the Fish and Wildlife
14 Service.

15

16 MS. LEONETTI: Park Service Member
17 Striker.

18

19 MR. STRIKER: Park Service supports in
20 deference to the RAC for the reasons cited by Fish and
21 Wildlife.

22

23 MS. LEONETTI: BLM Member Pendergast.

24

25 MR. PENDERGAST: BLM supports for the
26 reasons stated by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

27

28 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Payenna.

29

30 MR. PAYENNA: Public Member Payenna
31 supports WP26-34 in agreement with comments made by
32 Fish and Wildlife and in deference to the RAC.

33

34 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Woods.

35

36 MR. WOODS: Public Member Woods
37 supports 26-34 with recommendation of the RAC and U.S.
38 Fish and Wildlife's analysis.

39

40 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Oney.

41

42 MR. ONEY: Public Member Ray Oney moves
43 to adopt WP26-34 with modifications.

44

45 MS. LEONETTI: BIA Member John.

46

47

48 MS. JOHN: BIA votes to adopt and
49 support the Fish and Wildlife Service's motion which
50

0442

1 include the Kodiak-Aleutians RAC recommendation plus
2 the OSM modification prohibiting the sale of brown bear
3 gallbladders. We concur with the justifications
4 provided and appreciate the extensive work of the
5 Council during their action on this proposal.

6
7 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Pitka.

8
9 MS. PITKA: I vote to support WP26-34
10 as outlined by the BIA.

11
12 MS. LEONETTI: Chair Christianson.

13
14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support in
15 deference to the RAC.

16
17 MS. LEONETTI: The motion passes
18 unanimously.

19
20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
21 We'll jump back on our agenda since Jackie's here and
22 go back to the YKDelta, WP26-41/42.

23
24 You're back up, Tom.

25
26 MS. BOARIO: Okay. Mr. Chair, can we
27 have one minute.

28
29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah.

30
31 MS. BOARIO: Thank you.

32
33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, let's take
34 a minute. Like five minutes you mean?

35
36 MS. BOARIO: Sure.

37
38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Five
39 minutes. Yeah, we just need to coordinate for this.
40 Sorry.

41
42 Tom, you were almost up. We'll be
43 right back.

44
45 (Off record)

46
47 (On record)

48
49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.

50

0443

1 Welcome everybody back. We'll get back to region 5,
2 Yukon Kuskokwim Delta. And just before we ask the
3 Staff to present we're going to go ahead and open the
4 floor to Fish and Wildlife Service.

5
6 MS. BOARIO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr.
7 Chair, I move to withdraw proposals WP26-41/42 with the
8 of course concurrence of the RAC. I've learned that
9 the proponent which is the Fish and Wildlife Service
10 perhaps could have coordinated better with the fact
11 before this moved forward and I wish to withdraw it to
12 ensure that coordination occurs in the future.

13
14 I defer to you, Jackie.

15
16 MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Member
17 Boario, for the motion to withdraw. In the future our
18 RAC would appreciate if issues of this magnitude be
19 brought to our attention before Federal agency partners
20 submit proposals.

21
22 Thanks. The YKD RAC maintains its
23 support for allowing harvest of moose and caribou from
24 a boat moving under power as the RAC has done in the
25 past. The harvest of caribou from a boat under power
26 was first allowed in Unit 18 through an SSB proposal
27 back in 2000 and moose were also added in following
28 years, both with YKD RAC support. Hunting from a boat
29 under power is a long standing customary and
30 traditional practice in Unit 18, similar to how
31 residents of Units 23 and 26 harvest caribou in this
32 manner and have been able to legally do so for decades.
33 A requirement to shut off a motor -- boat's motor,
34 cease forward movement and subsequently lose control of
35 the boat in a moving -- in moving water before shooting
36 is impractical and unsafe. Removing the Unit 18
37 specific allowance for this practice would put local
38 people at risk of being criminalized for harvesting
39 subsistence food.

40
41 And the YKD RAC feels that changing
42 State regulations is a more appropriate way to align
43 regulations in this case. There's precedence for this
44 in other units under State regulations. The RAC is
45 drafting two proposals for the Board of Game for the
46 upcoming cycle, one for caribou and one for moose that
47 seek to align State and Federal regulations in Unit 18,
48 allowing the take of moose and caribou from a boat --
49 boat moving under power. Proposals are due May 1 and
50

0444

1 then the Board of Game will meet for the western region
2 on January 27.

3

4 Thanks.

5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. So
7 it sounds like we have concurrence for the RAC to
8 withdraw this motion.

9

10 Sara, did you want to make that motion
11 and we can get that seconded.

12

13 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, I move to, and
14 I'm in the wrong spot in my document, withdraw
15 proposals WP26-41/42 for the reasons stated by the RAC
16 Chair.

17

18 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

19

20 MR. WOODS: Second that motion.

21

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Let the record
23 reflect that it's Frank. I'll remind the Board if we
24 could state our name for the record. We lost a second
25 earlier on the record here. So please state your name
26 when you second. Appreciate it.

27

28 Motion's been made and seconded. Any
29 deliberation or discussion?

30

31 (No comments)

32

33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
34 read into the record -- oh. Yeah, read the motion
35 please and roll call.

36

37 MS. LEONETTI: The motion is to
38 withdraw Wildlife Proposal 26-41/42.

39

40 Fish and Wildlife Service Member
41 Boario.

42

43 MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service
44 supports and appreciates the kind reminder from the RAC
45 of proper coordination.

46

47 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Pitka.

48

49 MS. PITKA: I vote to support.

50

0445

1 MS. LEONETTI: BIA Member John.

2

3 MS. JOHN: BIA supports to withdraw the
4 motion for WP41/42.

5

6 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Oney.

7

8 MR. ONEY: Public Member Ray Oney moves
9 to support.

10

11 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Woods.

12

13 MR. WOODS: Public Member Woods moves
14 to support.

15

16 MS. LEONETTI: Pubic Member Payenna.

17

18 MR. PAYENNA: I support.

19

20 MS. LEONETTI: BLM Member Pendergast.

21

22 MR. PENDERGAST: Support.

23

24 MS. LEONETTI: NPS Member Striker.

25

26 MR. STRIKER: Support.

27

28 MS. LEONETTI: Forest Service Member
29 Ingersoll.

30

31 MR. INGERSOLL: Forest Service
32 supports.

33

34 MS. LEONETTI: Chair Christianson.

35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Support.

37

38 MS. LEONETTI: Mr. Chair, the motion to
39 withdraw carries unanimously.

40

41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
42 We'll move on to WP26-43/44.

43

44 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
45 members of the Board. For the record my name's Tom
46 Plank and I'm a Wildlife Biologist, Office of
47 Subsistence Management and I will be presenting a
48 summary of the analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP26-43
49 and WP26-44. And these are starting on Page 1053 in
50

1 your books.

2

3

4

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So Wildlife Proposal WP26-43 was submitted by the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge and requests establishing a may be announced antlerless moose hunt from September 1st to October 15th with a harvest limit of up to one antlerless moose by Federal registration permit in the Kuskokwim Zone 2 moose hunt area in Unit 18. And delegation of authority to determine the permit allocation to set season dates and permit conditions to manage the hunt in response to current population matrix.

And then Wildlife Proposal WP26-44 was also submitted by the Yukon Delta Refuge and it requests to extend the closing date of the Kuskokwim Zone 2 winter moose hunt in Unit 18 to March 31st. The proponent states that the lower Kuskokwim River moose population within Unit 2 has continued to increase in numbers to a point that a limited cow harvest may be warranted in anticipation of reaching carrying capacity. Proponent also states that extending the seasons will allow hunters the flexibility to adjust for winters that have little to no snow until late winter. For the last three winters lack of snow prevented many hunters from being able to travel which resulted in few moose being harvested during the winter hunt. Proponent confirms that the number of permits has been and likely will be -- continue to be limited in order to stay within sustainable harvest levels. Therefore the proponent does not believe an extension of the season would result in overharvest. Following the five year moratorium regulations have slowly become more liberalized for the Zone 2 Kuskokwim moose hunt. Currently the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge manager has delegation of authority from the Board to administer the fall hunt and to announce the winter season for the Zone 2 Kuskokwim.

During the 1990s moose densities in the Kuskokwim River drainage were low and hunting pressure limited growth of the population. The 2004 to 2008 moratorium was effective in establishing a harvestable population and since then the moose population has continued to grow. The winter 2024 moose population within Zone 2 was estimated to be about 1,700 moose which exceeds State population objectives. Bull, cow ratios are high, calf, cow ratios are still indicating a growing moose population. Zone 2 consists of

1 tributaries to the Kuskokwim rivers and requires
2 specialized boats to access as well as longer travel
3 times and more fuel. The unmet quota in Zone 2 is
4 likely a function of difficulties in access rather than
5 lack of need for moose meat. A winter season has been
6 announced the last three seasons.

7
8 If the proposal WP26-43 is adopted the
9 Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge would be delegated
10 authority to open a may be announced antlerless moose
11 hunt between September 1st to October 15 in the
12 Kuskokwim hunt area of Unit 18. This would require
13 additional harvest opportunities for Federally-
14 qualified subsistence users and could increase total
15 moose harvest in the area. No negative impacts to the
16 moose population are expected as this hunt would be
17 closely managed through harvest quotas, season dates
18 and permit numbers. Rather limitless -- limited
19 antlerless moose harvest may benefit subsistence users
20 and Zone 2 moose population in the long run by
21 maintaining the population within sustainable levels
22 and helping to prevent overbrowsing of habitat.
23 Adoption of this proposal would also increase alignment
24 between State and Federal regulations by establishing
25 fall antlerless moose hunts from September 1st through
26 October 15, however the State hunt is by State drawing
27 permit and targets Zone 1. While the Federal hunt
28 would be either Federal registration or Federal drawing
29 permits and targets Zone 2.

30
31 If WP26-44 is adopted the closing date
32 of the may be announced winter hunt would be extended
33 to March 31st. This extension increases subsistence
34 opportunities and would further provide for flexible
35 hunt manager and the ability to adapt to weather
36 conditions, change of moose population trends, hunter
37 behavior and their ability to identify bulls without
38 antlers. No negative impacts to the moose population
39 are expected as this hunt would be closely managed
40 through harvest quotas and permit numbers.

41
42 So OSM's conclusion is to support
43 proposal WP26-43 and WP26-44 with modification to
44 clarify the regulatory language. These proposals
45 increase subsistence opportunity and there are no
46 conservation concerns as the Zone 2 moose population is
47 closely managed through harvest quotas and permit
48 numbers. Extending the season for the winter may be
49 announced season, establishing an antlerless fall hunt
50

0448

1 and delegating authority for its in-season management
2 allows for a flexible, adaptable hunt management that
3 optimizes subsistence harvest opportunities and
4 conservation. This proposal allows for additional
5 hunting harvest opportunity by Federally-qualified
6 subsistence users in conjunction with the new State
7 antlerless fall hunt and increases flexibility and
8 opportunity for the may be announced winter moose hunt
9 in Zone 2.

10

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

13

14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Tom,
15 any questions from the Board for Tom.

16

17 MR. PENDERGAST: Mr. Chair.

18

19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have
20 the floor, Kevin.

21

22 MR. PENDERGAST: How many Federally-
23 qualified subsistence users are there that this would
24 benefit roughly?

25

26 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Member
27 Pendergast. Give me just a second to look that up and
28 see if I could find it. I don't have it on the top of
29 my head.

30

31 MR. PENDERGAST: Thank you. I was
32 trying to look it up myself and I couldn't find it.

33

34 MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair, may I add
35 something. This is Jackie Cleveland.

36

37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Jackie, go
38 ahead.

39

40 MS. CLEVELAND: I'll attempt here. So
41 the villages who would benefit from this proposal would
42 be Tuluksak, Akiak, Bethel, Napaskiak, Atmautluak,
43 Kasigluk, Eek, Tuntutuliak. And I see Napaskiak is a
44 circle here, but not mentioned, but then again the
45 populations of all these villages vary greatly, you
46 know, one village can have (indiscernible) or some are
47 less than a hundred if that helps.

48

49 MR, PLANK: Through the Chair. Tom

50

0449

1 Plank, OSM. I believe it's going to be on Page 1081.
2 There's a graph and that graph shows the number of
3 permits that were harvested by the RM615. That doesn't
4 exactly, you know.....

5
6 MR. PENDERGAST: I don't think that's
7 the right page number.....

8
9 MR. PLANK: It's not?

10
11 MR. PENDERGAST:we got a photo
12 copy of a letter on that page.

13
14 MR. PLANK: Oh. Then I did my math
15 wrong, hold on a second. It's in the harvest section
16 in the -- in that proposal.

17
18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: 1067 there's a
19 table.

20
21 MR. PLANK: Page 1070, I'm sorry.

22
23 MR. PENDERGAST: And, you know, I'm
24 happy to clarify my question. I guess I'm just trying
25 to develop some sense of -- we heard about the moose
26 population and that's great since we're talking about a
27 -- effectively a new hunt if I'm understanding
28 correctly. So I'm trying to compare those two pieces
29 of information like how -- what might the impact on the
30 population be when you do that.

31
32 MS. GREDIAGIN: Mr. Chair.

33
34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Lisa.

35
36 MS. GREDIAGIN: This is Lisa Grediagin
37 for the record. This is a harvest quota hunt so the
38 quota for the fall hunt and it's also divided up into
39 Zone 1 and Zone 2. And so Zone 2 is primarily what
40 we're talking about here which is harder to access in
41 the fall and the quotas for that Zone 2 hunt that's
42 managed by the Federal managers like is just usually
43 not met. And so we're not too concerned about
44 conservation concerns because they're trying to provide
45 additional opportunity to achieve harvest quotas that
46 aren't being met.

47
48 MR. WOODS: Mr. Chair.

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1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Frank.

2

3 MR. WOODS: Being that's a quota
4 managed hunt so it's State managed right now it looks
5 like, it has a quota system -- no?

6

7 MR. MULLIGAN: As Lisa just said Zone 2
8 is primarily Federal and is managed by the Refuge by
9 quota. We primarily -- if you look at the map Zone 1
10 is primarily State and so we kind of take the lead on
11 Zone 1.

12

13 MR. WOODS: Which brings me to my
14 question, do we have regulation for State land to
15 mirror this Federal hunt then or how do you manage?

16

17 MR. MULLIGAN: Well, we -- I mean, we
18 established regulations before you guys came to be and
19 so there are regulations for the State and private
20 lands within Zone 2. And that is a registration hunt.

21

22 MR. WOODS: So on the State side it's
23 under regulation on -- as a Federally managed hunt on
24 Federal land. Just trying to wrap my head around the
25 whole issue on how it's being implemented.

26

27 Thank you.

28

29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
30 questions for Staff on this presentation for
31 clarification. We were on the analysis.

32

33 (No comments)

34

35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
36 seeing none. Any summary of written public comment
37 received.

38

39 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tom
40 Plank, OSM. There were no written comments received
41 during the open period.

42

43 Thank you.

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
46 Summary of tribal government and Alaska Native
47 corporation consultation.

48

49 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There

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1 were no comments or resolutions on this.

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Thank you.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Summary of tribal government and Alaska Native corporation. Any tribal organization.

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Orville.

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MR. LIND: Excuse me, Mr. Chair. I always get into the mode, but I have in April 20th of our consultation session there was one, the Native Village of Paimiut spoke in support.

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16

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Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any Advisory Group, SRC, State Advisory or multiagency.

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23

MS. LAVINE: Mr. Chair, we have -- we've received no comments.

24

25

Thanks.

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28

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any public wish to testify here in the room or online, show by hand.

29

30

Here we go. Please state for the record your name.

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MR. HOFFMAN: My name's Avery Hoffman, the Natural Resource Director of Orutsaramiut Native Council. And ONC supports this proposal as it would increase the opportunity to harvest an abundant resource. On the Kuskokwim we are still under salmon restrictions and our caribou has been closed for many years. This proposal would increase the opportunity -- this proposal would increase harvest opportunity for Federally-qualified users.

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Quyana.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Appreciate that. Any other public wish to testify to this.

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(No comments)

0452

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any online,
2 Robbin.

3
4 MS. LAVINE: No.

5
6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
7 seeing none, Council recommendation.

8
9 MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you. The Council
10 voted to support WP26-43/44 as modified by OSM. They
11 noted that the moose population in Zone 2 is very
12 abundant and can withstand additional harvest. They
13 supported the additional opportunities for subsistence
14 users that these proposals seek to provide.

15
16 Thanks.

17
18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
19 Jackie. Alaska 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 it -- for a couple of reasons.
24 One, it'll cause a misalignment between State and
25 Federal regulations and also we feel that there are
26 better options before offering a hunt that could take
27 cow moose. I mean, you hear about the population, you
28 hear about the surplus, but we're still under a quota
29 so there is still not just a harvest where we just get
30 the numbers after the fact, there's a quota and when
31 they reach that it should be shut down, but right now
32 their still leaving bulls on the table. And bull
33 harvest is different than cow harvest because you can
34 have a surplus number of bulls that you know you can
35 take because you won't endanger the population because
36 those bulls aren't needed to propagate the future of
37 the moose population. So our concern is that they
38 should be finding mech-- the Refuge should be finding
39 mechanisms to increase the bull harvest, to take up the
40 harvestable surplus that is not being taken currently
41 in Zone 2 rather than pursuing a winter hunt and take
42 those cows which will have a very real impact to the
43 population.

44
45 Thank you.

46
47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Ben.
48 InterAgency Staff Committee.

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0453

1 MS. LAVINE: Mr. Chair, the InterAgency
2 Staff Committee provided the standard comment.

3
4 Thank you.

5
6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
7 This is an opportunity for the Board to discuss with
8 Liaison, Chairs or State representative any question or
9 clarification needed at this moment.

10
11 MR. STRIKER: Mr. Chair.

12
13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Don.

14
15 MR. STRIKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
16 I'm also still trying to wrap my head around solutions
17 and how we sort of sequence solutions. And so I have
18 two questions. Did we consider whether or not there
19 could be any State action or companion State proposal
20 to achieve the objectives here is question number 1.
21 And question number 2 if it's not too forward would the
22 State be inclined to help figure out solutions under a
23 sort of State management regime?

24
25 MR. MULLIGAN: Through the Chair,
26 Member Striker. Thinking about it and talking and
27 reading the comments from our area biologist, as you
28 can see in the regulatory, the 804 is pretty specific
29 to the communities. You know, one thought is, you
30 know, would you open to non-Federally and I think maybe
31 that might be a little more -- might be a little
32 premature. Now you could ease up on the 804 and I'm
33 probably using my terminology wrong and maybe include
34 more communities or more folks within the unit as a
35 whole to try to take up that surplus. You're still not
36 having -- hopefully, you know, having a greater
37 community come in wouldn't hamper the immediate
38 communities from being able to harvest their -- what
39 they need for their subsistence needs, but then take up
40 that surplus. So like I said I don't think we're at a
41 point where we would be involved, but there's
42 definitely a point where you guys could ease up on the
43 restriction in the 804 part to allow more Federally-
44 qualified users to come in and take those bulls that
45 are left on the table before you consider taking cow
46 harvest.

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48 MR. PENDERGAST: Mr. Chair.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Kevin.

MR. PENDERGAST: Kevin Pendergast, BLM. The open question I suppose either to the RAC Chair, Vice Chair or Mr. Mulligan or both, but -- well, I guess first of all has the RAC considered based on any data what might happen to populations if folks start harvesting cows and then likewise on the State side is there any modeling been done to kind of get a sense of what that would look like? I just -- I'm glad there's a surplus, I'd hate to be back in a handful of years because too many cows were taken dealing with another problem. So I'm trying to get some sense of that.

MS. CLEVELAND: If I may, this is Jackie Cleveland. And as mentioned by someone earlier Zone 2 is harder to access, it's -- yeah, you have to go through tributaries and shallower water and things so there's not as many hunters there, but the population growth from what we've been told is enough for now an antlerless hunt if that helps.

MR. WOODS: So maybe a good question, in-season management practice as like an analogy for this year for difficult areas to access. I see where the proposer would want to benefit this because number 1, in our region we have a State manager on Federal lands. In-season management gives the manager and Refuge director the tools to work with. Say the -- me and my friend we bumped into people from our village in Togiak and Manokotak a hundred miles from Dillingham in the most treacherous areas of the state, in mountain, valley, river, open running water. I'll stop. It was 23 below when we went out hunting the last day of moose season on February 28. February 28th there was -- that was a closer date for that season that the village of Togiak put in a request to extend it due to horrible weather conditions, negative 30, 20 -- for two months straight it was below -- 15 below, 25, 30 below for a month. And in between those extreme cold conditions it rained so nobody could go out and harvest. And I see that happening at least in this -- in Unit 18 where the manager has the option to extend the hunt until March 31st or March 30 to when all the horns fall off and when the shedding happens in March and they end up -- by that time I can't distinguish between a bull and a cow. And those numbers are minimal because at the end I'll have to go back and look and talk to a regional biologist, but during that in-season option at the end

0455

1 of February we only had 20 moose on the ground and
2 accounted for where we should have had 78 or close to
3 80.

4
5 So that in-season management tools
6 needs to be addressed and this is what I see this
7 proposal doing. So that is real important to
8 understand that they're requesting not only just an
9 antlerless moose, but also access to resources so they
10 could meet that quota system. That's why I asked Mr.
11 Bannon, the State -- that would -- and we utilize that
12 option in-season management tool to give the manager
13 options to extend it into the shedding season where I
14 don't want to be ticketed as a subsistence user for
15 shooting a cow when I didn't know it was a cow or
16 shooting a bull with horns, right. So.....

17
18 I'll shut up. Thank you.

19
20 MR. MULLIGAN: Through the Chair. I
21 guess that was directed at me, but I'll -- correct,
22 Member Woods -- okay. So after talking to my colleague
23 you are correct you need to have tools in the toolbox,
24 but right now that's not the tool because you haven't
25 reached a point where anybody has considered, at least
26 we haven't, cow harvest because we still have bulls on
27 the table. Now to do that as we've been talking you
28 might be better off and I will say this still conflicts
29 with our policy on alignment is to extend the fall
30 system instead. If they're not reaching quota why not
31 do that instead of starting an antlerless hunt in the
32 winter. That'll give folks additional time if --
33 weather events do happen in the fall rather than
34 looking at possibly having now cow harvest going on.

35
36 MR. INGERSOLL: Forest Service, Jerry
37 Ingersoll. Question for the RAC. Heard a couple of
38 suggestions from the State over how to better utilize
39 the surplus bull availability. Was that considered by
40 the Council in your deliberations as an alternative to
41 an antlerless harvest. What are your perspectives on
42 either an extended season or a redefinition of 804
43 analysis or any other way to better achieve the
44 objectives?

45
46 Thank you.

47
48 MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you for that
49 question. This is Jackie. I would say September is
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0456

1 becoming more and more harder -- I guess harder to hunt
2 because of the extreme weather conditions for the past
3 two -- at least the past two or three now fall seasons.
4 Many don't meet their quota because of the weather and
5 when it's storming all of them just kind of hide out
6 and don't come out at all. And then that area as I
7 mentioned is hard to access so in the winter it's
8 easier to access by snowmachine.

9

10 And I'm probably forgetting some other
11 things that were said, but those are the ones I can
12 think of offhand.

13

14 MS. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, would it be
15 helpful if the YKRAC also explained what had happened
16 in December with the Typhoon Halong and the increasing
17 number of fall storms that we're seeing occurring in
18 the YKDelta as a result of the changes. I happen to
19 know a lot of individual tribal communities' challenges
20 and struggles as a result of the December storm because
21 I -- we've been receiving as an agency request to
22 provide aid. And I imagine that -- I'm mentioning this
23 because Jackie Cleveland is talking about the
24 difficulties that come with attempting to hunt due to
25 permafrost degradation making it more challenging to
26 utilize snowmachines even if it's in the dead of winter
27 in the YKDelta.

28

29 (In Native)

30

31 MS. CLEVELAND: Yeah, quyana. This is
32 Jackie again. Yes, Typhoon Halong definitely affected
33 our moose hunt this past winter and then the winter
34 season came and that (indiscernible) to open for a
35 winter hunt which actually is not in the book, but
36 Quinhagak, Kwig and Kong are now included in the Zone 2
37 winter hunt, but I didn't see that in the book so I
38 thought I'd mention that. And has some of you know we
39 had such an extreme winter where it was just unbearable
40 to travel by snowmachine in those conditions for our
41 winter hunt as well. But yes, Halong -- I mean, if
42 that's your question Halong definitely affected our
43 winter hunt in the negative or our fall hunt, sorry,
44 and winter hunt.

45

46 MS. BOARIO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
47 Lisa or Tom, I apologize for putting you on the spot
48 because our Refuge manager is out of the office today
49 and couldn't join us online, but could you explain the
50

0457

1 differences or similarities between the State hunts and
2 the proposed fall hunts. When I look at this it looks
3 like the State has an antlerless fall hunt and this
4 would also be in the fall?

5

6 MR. MULLIGAN: Wrong zone.

7

8 MS. BOARIO: In Zone 1?

9

10 MR. MULLIGAN: Yes.

11

12 MS. BOARIO: Yeah, I know. So Zone 1
13 has an antlerless fall hunt, correct?

14

15 MR. MULLIGAN: Correct. And just for
16 reference because we brought up Halong, the State did
17 issue an emergency order for an additional hundred
18 permits to go out into Zone 1 in an effort to help
19 folks reharvest meat that they lost because of the
20 typhoon. And according to the latest that we got from
21 our area biologist 44 moose were harvested out of that
22 ability.

23

24 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

25

26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank the State
27 for that effort as well. Appreciate it.

28

29 MS. BOARIO: So, Lisa or Tom, so there
30 is an antlerless hunt in Zone 1, this would allow for
31 an antlerless hunt in Zone 2 and am I correct that the
32 delegation for the winter does allow the manager to
33 restrict it to one bull?

34

35 MS. GREDIAGIN: Through the Chair, this
36 is Lisa Grediagin. And that's correct that -- and I
37 also just wanted to emphasize that the proposed
38 antlerless moose hunt in Zone 2 under consideration in
39 this proposal is may be announced. And so adopting
40 this does not automatically guarantee there's going to
41 be a hunt every single year, it's up to the manager to
42 announce that hunt. And then similarly yes, you're
43 correct, Sara, that the -- currently in regulation for
44 the winter hunt it already is one moose so there
45 already is, you know, a potential antlerless moose hunt
46 in the winter and I think part of that is because bulls
47 drop their antlers in December and so if you are out
48 there in January trying to find an antlerless moose is
49 going to be pretty hard to find, you know, a -- to

50

0458

1 distinguish between bulls and cows when they don't have
2 antlers. And again this is just to extend the
3 opportunity, it's already on the books and the in-
4 season manager has authority to restrict sex
5 restrictions.

6
7 Thank you.

8
9 MS. BOARIO: Thank you. I appreciate
10 that.

11
12 MR. MULLIGAN: Mr. Chair.

13
14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Ben.

15
16 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you. Through the
17 Chair. Just to kind of emphasize, looking at Zone 1
18 and Zone 2 is not apples to apples, that is apples to
19 oranges. Got a note from our area Staff. We have a
20 antlerless hunt on the books in Zone 1 because every --
21 the browse survey indicate that we're close to carrying
22 capacity. That is not the same case from our latest
23 surveys into Zone 2. So that is why that is
24 differentiated. So you can't say just because one zone
25 has it the other zone should have it as well.

26
27 MR. WOODS: Just some comments, Mr.
28 Chair. The RAC pointed out that there are -- and also
29 OSM's analysis that there's no conservation concern and
30 since it's a quota hunt only there's going to be no
31 increase or decrease, you're just labeling it a may
32 happen or may not happen. So I really appreciate if
33 I'm walking through our deliberations and we're doing
34 our due diligence by asking all these questions. So
35 thank you, Staff and State and OSM and the RAC.

36
37 Thank you.

38
39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I now open the
40 floor for Board action.

41
42 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, Fish and
43 Wildlife Service moves to adopt WP26-43/44 and if I get
44 a second I will share my justification for why I intend
45 to support these proposals as modified by OSM with
46 additional modification to delegate authority via
47 delegation of authority letter only. And if I get --
48 oh, and if get the second -- go.

49
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0459

1 MR. STRIKER: Park Service seconds.

2

3 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, as the OSM

4 analyst shared the evidence suggests that the moose
5 population continues to grow in the Kuskokwim Zone 2
6 moose hunt area in Unit 18 and there are no
7 conservation concerns. Despite increasing population
8 the harvest quota has only been met once as hunting in
9 this zone as we've heard is more difficult requiring
10 specialized boats and tributaries, longer travel times
11 and more fuel. This proposal continues to provide
12 additional opportunities for subsistence users and
13 achieve the Zone 2 quota and allows for flexible,
14 adaptable hunt management responsive to conditions
15 including weather on the ground that optimizes
16 subsistence harvest opportunity. As the OSM report
17 noted the inability to meet the quota is not due to a
18 lack of need. The Yukon Kuskokwim Delta RAC supports
19 the OSM modification and in deference to the RAC we
20 support WP26-43/44 as modified with all the additional
21 modifications I've already said. I would also like to
22 stress that through our delegation of authority we will
23 coordinate and consult with the State, BLM, OSM and the
24 Chairs of the affected Regional Advisory Councils.

25

26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
27 discussion, Board deliberation.

28

29 (No comments)

30

31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
32 please read the motion into the record and roll call.

33

34 MS. LEONETTI: The motion is to adopt
35 Wildlife Proposal 26, both 43 and 44, as modified by
36 OSM to clarify the regulatory language which is in your
37 books and on the screen, with additional Board
38 modification to delegate authority via a delegation of
39 authority letter only.

40

41 Fish and Wildlife Service Member
42 Boario.

43

44 MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service
45 supports.

46

47 MS. LEONETTI: Forest Service Member
48 Ingersoll.

49

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0460

1 MR. INGERSOLL: Forest Service supports
2 the motion in deference to the Council and to the Fish
3 and Wildlife Service and in recognition of, you know,
4 the really good story reflected in figure 2 on Page
5 1064 of State and Federal management recovery of the
6 population and in recognition of the other closures
7 affecting the local Federally-qualified subsistence
8 users in the vicinity.

9

10 Thank you.

11

12 MS. LEONETTI: Park Service Member
13 Striker.

14

15 MR. STRIKER: Park Service supports in
16 deference to the RAC for the reasons detailed by my
17 sister bureau and with a lot of thanks to the State for
18 the open dialogue and clear willingness to engage in
19 creative brainstorming and helping to educate us as a
20 Board on -- yeah, on situations where there may be
21 differences between different units.

22

23 Thank you.

24

25 MS. LEONETTI: BLM Member Pendergast.

26

27 MR. PENDERGAST: BLM will support the
28 motion, Wildlife Proposals 26-43 and 44, but I do want
29 note this is a -- this is a tough call for me in
30 general. I think it's not great practice to change
31 multiple things at a time because if the population
32 changes in the future we're not going to know really
33 what -- I mean, you're kind of introducing multiple
34 variables. So a little concerned about that, but in
35 deference to the RAC and for the reasons stated by Fish
36 I'll go along. If this was not a may be announced
37 situation and if there wasn't there complexity which is
38 baked into the way this is written about folks not
39 being able to recognize bulls from cows after the end
40 of the year I couldn't support it, but because of those
41 reasons I'll go ahead and support.

42

43 Thank you.

44

45 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Payenna.

46

47 MR. PAYENNA: Public Member Payenna
48 supports WP26-43 and 44 in deference to the RAC.

49

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0461

1 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Woods.

2

3 MR. WOODS: Public Member Woods
4 supports 26 -- WP26-43 and 44 for all the reasons noted
5 that it may be opened, that's number 1. Number 2 is no
6 conservation concern and following our mandates for
7 subsistence resource. I'd like to commend the RAC, the
8 state of Alaska for their introduction of adaptive
9 management plans at the beginning of this meeting early
10 on, it helps me make better decision and U.S. Fish and
11 Wildlife, BLM and Park Service and agencies involved
12 for questioning because our due diligence is real
13 important as we walk through these proposals.

14

15 Thank you.

16

17 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Oney.

18

19 MR. ONEY: Public Member Ray Oney moves
20 to adopt WP26-43/44 as modified by OSM in deference to
21 the RAC.

22

23 MS. LEONETTI: BIA Member John.

24

25 MS. JOHN: BIA votes to adopt WP26-43
26 and 44 in support of the Fish and Wildlife Service
27 motion and as recommended by the YKDelta RAC. We
28 concur with the justifications provided by the Council
29 and adopting these proposals will provide additional
30 moose harvesting opportunities for Unit 18 rural users.

31

32 Quyana.

33

34 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Pitka.

35

36 MS. PITKA: I vote to support WP26-
37 43/44 in deference to the Regional Advisory Council and
38 in concurrence with the justification provided by the
39 Fish and Wildlife Service.

40

41 MS. LEONETTI: Chair Christianson.

42

43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Support to
44 adopt.

45

46 MS. LEONETTI: Mr. Chair, the motion
47 passes unanimously.

48

49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

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0462

1 We'll move on to WP26-45.

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MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the Board. My name's Tom Plank, Wildlife Biologist with OSM and I am presenting a summary of analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP26-45. And that's starting on Page 1083 in your books.

Wildlife proposal WP26-45 was submitted by the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Council and it requests to allow cow moose without calves to be taken in Unit 18 remainder from July 16 to the 31st. Proponent states that salmon fishing on the Yukon River has been restricted for a number of years and this has created severe food security issues. At the same time that salmon have declined moose numbers in Unit 18 remainder have increased and are approaching levels that pose concerns for habitat degradation. The proponent concludes that with the current abundance of moose additional harvest can be supported without conservation concerns in Unit 18 remainder. This proposal would create additional opportunities for Federally-qualified subsistence users. In response to the rapid growth of the lower Yukon moose population both State and Federal regulations have progressively become more liberal since 2005.

The Yukon River moose population currently occupies most of the available riparian habitat and at a moderate to high density and the high calf production and yearling recruitment and the population is growing while the regional really can only support a low to very low density moose population. Population and composition surveys are conducted in five survey areas in Unit 18, three of the five survey areas are located within the Unit 18 remainder hunt area. The most recent survey was done in February and March of 2021. The lowest Yukon was estimated at a population of over 12,000 with a density of 6.89 moose per square mile. The Paimiut and Andrafski units were conducted together with an estimated population of 4,800 and 6,800 respectively. And a combined density of the two survey units at 3.68 moose per square mile.

ADF&G's harvest records for the general moose hunt in Unit 18 only includes Unit 18 remainder as moose harvest in the other hunt areas of Unit 18 are by registration permit. Over the past 10 years the

1 largest portion of the harvest has been by Alaska
2 residents and while the number of hunters has stayed
3 relatively the same in the past 10 years the success
4 rate for those hunters has increased.

5

6 If this proposal is adopted users could
7 harvest cow moose without calves in Unit 18 remainder
8 from July 16 to the 31st, increasing subsistence
9 opportunities. No conservation concerns exist as the
10 Unit 18 remainder moose population is high density,
11 continues to grow and is believed to exceed habitat
12 carrying capacity. In addition the expanded harvest
13 season would increase opportunity for Federally-
14 qualified subsistence users and might promote further
15 sharing of moose throughout the Yukon Kuskokwim region
16 increasing food security especially during a time of
17 low salmon returns and caribou populations. This
18 proposal would increase regulatory complexity by
19 misaligning State and Federal regulations. Users will
20 need to know the difference between the land status
21 during the late July season and could not harvest moose
22 from the Yukon River which is a State managed navigable
23 waterway.

24

25 The OSM's conclusion is to support
26 proposal WP26-45 with the modification to also allow
27 the harvest of bulls from July 16th through the 31st.
28 The moose population in Unit 18 remainder hunt area is
29 showing signs of nutritional stress and is believed to
30 exceed its habitat carrying capacity. Allowing cow
31 moose without calves to be taken in Unit 18 remainder
32 from July 16th to the 31st may help limit the growth of
33 the moose population and will provide additional
34 subsistence opportunity for Federally-qualified
35 subsistence users contributing to food security. Also
36 allowing the harvest of bulls during the late July
37 further increases subsistence opportunity and there is
38 no biological reason to restrict bull harvest during
39 this time.

40

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

43

44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Tom.
45 Any questions from the Board for Staff.

46

47 (No comments)

48

49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for

50

0464

1 that. Did we receive any summary of written public
2 comments.

3

4 MR. PENDERGAST: Excuse me, Mr. Chair.

5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, go ahead,
7 Kevin.

8

9 MR. PENDERGAST: I did have some
10 questions.....

11

12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay.

13

14 MR. PENDERGAST:I just wasn't
15 quite fast enough to the punch there. I haven't had
16 time to keep deep into this one, but what alternatives
17 were considered, were there alternatives considered?

18

19 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Member
20 Pendergast. Give just a second to double check, but I
21 don't believe there was, but I want to double check
22 before I confirm that.

23

24 MR. PENDERGAST: I'm keeping you honest
25 this afternoon.

26

27 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair. Tom
28 Plank, OSM. Well, I'm kind of glad you kept me honest.
29 So there are alternatives considered. So one
30 alternative considered was to allow the take of the
31 bulls which we just talked about a minute ago in the
32 conclusion. Another alternative considered was to
33 allow the take of calves and cows and calves from July
34 16th through the 31st since the moose population may be
35 exceeding carrying capacity and showing signs of
36 nutritional stress, but this -- however this
37 alternative was not further considered as it does not
38 meet the proponent's intent which specified cows
39 without calves.

40

41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
42 questions from the Board.

43

44 MR. WOODS: So in order to address the
45 high density of moose and the browse, the suggestions
46 for that would be increase harvest and liberalize
47 seasons. Right now on Page 1090 so an -- in 2024 it
48 was estimated at 24 animals -- 24,000 animals were
49 recorded and then browser removal rates are estimated

50

0465

1 at a rate of 31 percent in Unit 18 in the remainder of
2 2021. Calf to cow ratios are declining because of
3 that. And how do we slow down the overburden and
4 browse is the only way to do it is help provide
5 opportunity and activity for culling the moose
6 population, we have the same problem in 17A, and allow
7 additional harvest is one thing and also allow
8 liberalizing hunts is another.

9

10 And I'll address something that was
11 addressed in this last proposal before us. This is an
12 area that's heavily affected by Typhoon Halong. I also
13 housed a family that lost everything. Everything,
14 house, freezers full of subsistence use, their whole
15 yard, house. I can't imagine losing my boats to go
16 subsisting, my snowmachines, all the work I put into
17 putting up my subsistence foods and then nowhere to
18 stay. If nobody hasn't thought about it yet Halong is
19 still affected this area, is that we liberalize a hunt
20 to help feed that refugee population and evacuees, I
21 don't think we've addressed that in any of these
22 proposals. I don't think -- not that we haven't as a
23 Native community in rural areas, but my good friend
24 back there sent a family of five to my house, a husband
25 and wife with three children and it's not only
26 heartbreaking, but I can't imagine not going back to
27 having to eat my own food, craving the same things that
28 I grew up with, let alone losing everything that I used
29 to do that activity and subsist and live off the land.

30

31 This is one little piece that would
32 help not only the population over-explosion because
33 that looks like it is almost liberalized to the point
34 where it's open almost season from July -- I could
35 imagine hunting and fishing in July 31st to whatever it
36 is. So I'll shut up, but I'm really excited that this
37 is before the table and somebody mentioned the -- you
38 know, the Typhoon Halong and its impacts because that's
39 going to be on the table for the next probably at least
40 two Board cycles because that whole -- communities have
41 lost the ability to harvest and subsist and if we have
42 some way to help inject ourselves in opening and
43 liberalizing hunts or have a special hunt, an emergency
44 accident, it can be called by any of us Board members.

45

46 I'll shut up because this is really
47 important for this -- I think this proposal
48 specifically.

49

50

0466

1 Thanks.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. I
4 think we're still on analysis. Anymore questions for
5 Tom.

6

7 (No comments)

8

9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Tom did his
10 homework today. Did we receive any written comment.

11

12 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tom
13 Plank, OSM. We did not receive any written comments
14 during the open period.

15

16 Thank you.

17

18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you very
19 much. Summary of tribal government or Alaska Native
20 corporation consultation.

21

22 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair, Board
23 members. During the April 28th consultation we did
24 receive -- hear from the Native Village of Paimiut in
25 support of this proposal.

26

27 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

28

29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
30 Orville. Tribal or Alaska Native organization
31 testimony.

32

33 (No comments)

34

35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing or
36 seeing none, Advisory Group, SRC, State Advisory or
37 multiagency work group.

38

39 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We
40 didn't receive any comments.

41

42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
43 This is the opportunity for the public to testify
44 either in here or online, show of hands.

45

46 (No comments)

47

48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Council
49 recommendation.

50

0467

1 MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you. This is
2 Jackie with the YKD RAC. The Council voted to support
3 WP26-45 as modified by OSM. The Council submitted this
4 proposal to provide additional subsistence opportunity.
5 The lower Yukon moose population is very high and there
6 are local concerns with overbrowsing and habitat
7 degradation. The Council supported the OSM
8 modification to also extend the bull season because
9 there are no conservation concerns for moose in the
10 area. The additional opportunity is especially
11 important due to the salmon shortages as well as the
12 aftermath of Halong.

13
14 And something that we just remembered
15 that was also pointed out by a RAC member was that
16 there were reports along the lower Yukon villages of
17 moose coming into the villages and sometimes causing
18 problems. And as an additional our RAC is also
19 submitting a proposal to the Board of Game to start the
20 State resident season on July 26th in Unit 18 remainder
21 to try to align this earlier Federal season with an
22 earlier State season. While we don't expect a lot of
23 people to hunt moose in the summer we will provide
24 additional opportunity that could help with ongoing
25 food security issues during the salmon crisis and again
26 after the -- or the aftermath of Halong.

27
28 Thanks.

29
30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
31 Jackie. Any questions.

32
33 (No comments)

34
35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Seeing none,
36 we'll move on to the Alaska Department of Fish and
37 Game.

38
39 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
40 For the record the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
41 opposes the proposal as a misalignment of State and
42 Federal regulations. Just as a note as far as how the
43 liberalization is being utilized, on average we have
44 less than 20 people who are taking three moose a
45 season.

46
47 Thank you.

48
49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
50

0468

1 that, Ben. InterAgency Staff Committee.

2

3 MS. LAVINE: The InterAgency Staff
4 Committee provided the standard comment.

5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
7 Board discussion with Liaison, Council Chair, State
8 reps. Last chance to question.

9

10 MR. REAKOFF: Mr. Chair.

11

12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Jack.

13

14 MR. REAKOFF: Mr. Chair, the Western
15 Interior Regional Council Member Reakoff. The benefit
16 of this proposal is that you actually
17 harvest, you target older cows that are in the
18 population. You've got a population of a lot of older
19 cows. We learned to hunt cow moose in Galena when I
20 was a kid with Jimmy Huntington. You kill those older
21 cows, they're really fat. That's a benefit to the --
22 to the overall -- those don't produce calves, they --
23 they're just basically grandma hanging out eating
24 willows. And it's a good thing to be doing in the
25 summertime and that's what a lot of people used to do
26 when I was a kid. So I see that there's many benefits
27 to this proposal, mainly that you actually can target
28 those cows. Cows with calves in the summer, they're
29 like a milk cow, they're drawn down, they're really
30 skinny. Killing cows with calves should not be
31 happening in the summertime, but this proposal's
32 exactly right, I agree with the Yukon Delta Regional
33 Advisory Council.

34

35 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

36

37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
38 that insight, Jack.

39

40 MR. ONEY: Mr. Chair.

41

42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
43 floor.

44

45 MR. ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Mr.
46 Chairman. I also want to support the YKRAC on this
47 proposal. As you heard earlier from her there are a
48 lot of moose that were coming into the village
49 especially this winter because of the volume of snow
50

0469

1 and rain and snow all through the winter. And most of
2 these are young moose that are moving into the village,
3 not only in the lower, but pretty much all over the
4 villages on the Yukon, even in Bethel from my
5 understanding the troopers had to put down two moose
6 because of the aggressiveness that the moose were doing
7 in the -- in the city. So I would support it knowing
8 that it's much needed. I would rather eat moose meat
9 rather than, you know, wait until, you know, the fall
10 when it opens up.

11

12 But again they -- they're allowing us
13 to fish for non-salmon species and we utilize that non-
14 salmon species throughout the winter and that's why we
15 look forward to summer in hopes of at least try to get
16 salmon on the table, but it hasn't been happening, you
17 know, for many, many years now. So I support this
18 proposal to allow taking of older moose.

19

20 Thank you.

21

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
23 questions for RAC or State.

24

25 (No comments)

26

27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The floor's
28 open for Board action.

29

30 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, Fish and
31 Wildlife Service.

32

33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
34 floor, Sara.

35

36 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, the Fish and
37 Wildlife Service moves to adopt WP26-45. And if I get
38 a second I will share my justification of why I intend
39 to support this proposal with the OSM modification.

40

41 MR. ONEY: Ray Oney, public Member,
42 seconds.

43

44 MS. BOARIO: Thank you. Mr. Chair, the
45 lower Yukon moose population is very high as we heard
46 shared earlier within the area near the Yukon River in
47 Unit 18. ADF&G estimated the moose population at a
48 minimum of 24,000 animals in 2024. Indices suggest
49 that the moose population along the lower Yukon River
50

0470

1 is experiencing nutritional stress and could be near
2 its habitat carrying capacity. No conservation concern
3 exists and during a time of continued low salmon
4 returns and caribou populations this provides an
5 important opportunity for subsistence users to increase
6 food security. The Fish and Wildlife Service supports
7 with the OSM modification and in deference to the Yukon
8 Kuskokwim Delta Regional Advisory Council.

9
10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any further
11 Board discussion, deliberation.

12
13 (No comments)

14
15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Read into the
16 record please the motion and roll call.

17
18 MS. LEONETTI: The motion is to adopt
19 Wildlife Proposal 26-45 as modified by OSM to allow the
20 harvest of bulls from July 16 to 31.

21
22 Fish and Wildlife Service Member
23 Boario.

24
25 MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service
26 supports.

27
28 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Pitka.

29
30 MS. PITKA: Public Member Pitka.....

31
32 (Laughter)

33
34 MS. PITKA: Public Member Pitka votes
35 to support WP26-45 in deference to the Regional
36 Advisory Council and with the justification provided by
37 the Fish and Wildlife Service and in recognition that
38 there's increased economic pressure on this region from
39 the high cost of gas and continued environmental
40 pressure.

41
42 Thank you.

43
44 MS. LEONETTI: Forest Service Member
45 Ingersoll.

46
47 MR. INGERSOLL: Forest Service supports
48 in deference to the RAC and the Fish and Wildlife
49 Service.

50

0471

1 MS. LEONETTI: Park Service Member
2 Striker.

3
4 MR. STRIKER: Park Service supports in
5 deference to the RAC and for the reasons cited by
6 Regional Director Boario.

7
8 MS. BOARIO: He gave me a promotion
9 earlier.

10
11 MS. LEONETTI: BLM Member Pendergast.

12
13 MR. PENDERGAST: BLM supports for the
14 reasons stated by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

15
16 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Payenna.

17
18 MR. PAYENNA: Public Member Payenna
19 supports WP26-45 in deference to the RAC.

20
21 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Woods.

22
23 MR. WOODS: Public Member Woods
24 supports.

25
26 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Oney.

27
28 MR. ONEY: Public Member Ray Oney moves
29 to adopt WP26-45 as modified by OSM and in deference to
30 the YKRAC.

31
32 MS. LEONETTI: BIA Member John.

33
34 MS. JOHN: BIA adopts WP26-45 in
35 support of the Fish and Wildlife Service motion and per
36 the recommendation of the YKDelta RAC. We concur with
37 the justifications provided as adopting this proposal
38 would provide additional subsistence moose harvesting
39 opportunities and could help to address food security
40 concerns due to the declines in the Yukon River salmon
41 populations as highlighted by the Council. And I just
42 want to mention that with the extremely cold winter as
43 people have less funding in their pockets due to high
44 energy costs and expensive fuel this definitely would
45 be of benefit to the region.

46
47 MS. LEONETTI: Chair Christianson.

48
49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, I support
50

0472

1 and just based off of the testimony we also hear about,
2 you know, the lack of salmon resource that at least
3 there's an abundance of a resource that we can
4 liberalize for the people of that area. So I support.

5

6 MS. LEONETTI: Mr. Chair, the motion
7 passes unanimously.

8

9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: He didn't say
10 yes so we'll go on to the next one.

11

12 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
13 members of the Board. Again for the record Tom Plank,
14 OSM. And I am presenting a summary of analysis for
15 Wildlife Proposal WP26-47 starting on Page 1099 in your
16 books.

17

18 Wildlife proposal WP26-47 was submitted
19 by the YKDelta Council and requests to remove the
20 restriction in trapping regulations against disturbing
21 or destroying beaver houses in Unit 18. The proponent
22 states that removing these restrictions will increase
23 opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users
24 and that there are no conservation concerns for beavers
25 in Unit 18. The prohibition on disturbing or
26 destroying a beaver house under a trapping license has
27 been in State regulations since at least 1971. In 1990
28 the prohibition was adopted into Federal regulations
29 from State regulations when the Federal Subsistence
30 Management Program began. Current beaver hunting and
31 trapping regulations have no limits and no closed
32 seasons in both State and Federal regulations.
33 Densities -- beaver densities in Unit 18 have remained
34 high throughout the unit and appear to be the highest
35 southeast of the Kuskokwim River in the Kilbuck
36 Mountains and along the lakes and sloughs of the
37 Johnson River southwest of Bethel. Harvest of beavers
38 is not well documented since sealing is not required
39 for Unit 18 and information obtained is through
40 voluntary trapper questionnaires.

41

42 If this proposal is adopted trappers
43 could disturb or destroy a beaver house in Unit 18 when
44 taking beavers under a trapping license. This
45 prohibition does not apply to the take of beavers under
46 a hunting license. Beaver houses may already be
47 destroyed or disturbed when hunting unless otherwise
48 prohibited by agency specific regulations. The impacts
49 of the beaver population of this regulation are
50

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1 uncertain, but conservation concerns are unlikely given
2 that the extremely liberal hunting and trapping
3 regulations under both State and Federal regulations of
4 year round seasons and no harvest limits. Depending on
5 the time of year beavers may have kits in the lodge. A
6 possible concern of allowing beaver lodges to be
7 disturbed or destroyed is increasing the likelihood of
8 wanton waste if beavers in the lodge are killed, but
9 not salvaged. Adopting this proposal increases
10 regulatory complexity and complicates law enforcement
11 by misaligning State and Federal regulations, requiring
12 trappers to differentiate land statuses.

13

14 OSM's conclusion is to support proposal
15 WP26-47. This proposal increases subsistence
16 opportunity and there are no conservation concerns.

17

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

20

21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
22 questions from the Board for Tom.

23

24 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair.

25

26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Sara.

27

28 MS. BOARIO: Just want to make sure I'm
29 reading this correctly. The prohibition does not apply
30 under a hunting license, but it does under a trapping
31 license, is that correct?

32

33 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Member Boario.
34 Tom Plank, OSM. That is correct. In the our regulate
35 -- Federal regulations the prohibition against
36 disturbing a beaver house is listed as one of the ones
37 for trapping license, but is not listed anywhere in the
38 hunting regulations.

39

40 MS. BOARIO: Do you know why the
41 difference?

42

43 MR. PLANK: To be -- Tom Plank, OSM.
44 To be honest with you, no, ma'am, I do not. My -- I
45 have an assumption, but I do not know for certain.

46

47 MS. GREDIAGIN: Mr. Chair.

48

49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Lisa.

50

0474

1 MS. GREDIAGIN: This is Lisa Grediagin.
2 I'm with Tom where I have some speculations, but no, we
3 don't know for sure.....

4
5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Thank
6 you.

7
8 MS. GREDIAGIN:for that.

9
10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: One of you --
11 the beaver expert over there, Mr. Charlie. I wouldn't
12 call him the -- do you know something about this,
13 Charlie?

14
15 MR. WRIGHT: It's not my area, but in
16 my area when that happens there's nothing left like if
17 some dog mushers go out and they start digging open
18 houses and emptying them out they take everything and
19 there's nothing left in the house so there ain't
20 nothing left for the future. So it should be the same
21 as hunt -- trapping. And you consider conservation as
22 you're going along and make sure that that house has
23 something to offer for other people in the future.
24 Just like taking all the money out of your bank, you
25 have none left if you do that and then you're hungry.
26 So it's a common sense thing that you don't leave the --
27 you don't take everything, we never take everything,
28 we only take what we need.

29
30 Thank you.

31
32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. And
33 sorry for putting you on the spot there, but I know you
34 are beaver trapper. You know it.

35
36 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah, Lisa Grediagin.
37 And just -- you know beaver hunting regulations are
38 relatively new. I mean, this has been in what, since
39 the 1920s and hunt -- beaver hunting regulations are
40 only in on the past couple decades. So sorry, that's
41 my speculation why it's only in trapping is it's the
42 timing of it.

43
44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
45 questions from the Board for Staff.

46
47 (No comments)

48
49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
50

0475

1 that best effort on that. Any written comment
2 received.

3

4 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tom
5 Plank, OSM. There were no written comments received
6 during the open period.

7

8 Thank you.

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
11 Summary of tribal government or Alaska Native
12 corporation.

13

14 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
15 During the August 10th consultation or August 19, I'm
16 sorry, there were two representatives from ONC in
17 opposition to this proposal.

18

19 Thank you.

20

21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
22 Summary of tribal government or Alaska Native
23 corporation. I just did that. Tribal, Alaska Native
24 organization testimony.

25

26 MS. LAVINE: Mr. Chair, we have Avery
27 Hoffman in the room.

28

29 MR. HOFFMAN: Avery Hoffman, ONC. That
30 was my comment on August 19th that ONC did not support
31 this proposal.

32

33 Thank you.

34

35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
36 Appreciate your brevity too. Any additional testimony.

37

38 (No comments)

39

40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Advisory Group,
41 SRC, State Advisory or multiagency

42

43 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair.

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I heard that,
46 but I don't see where it's coming from.

47

48 MS. BOARIO: Me.

49

50

0476

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, Sara.
2 There it is.

3
4 MS. BOARIO: I just wanted to -- it was
5 so fast. I was wondering can we ask why the
6 opposition, ONC?

7
8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, you betcha.

9
10 MS. BOARIO: Yeah, that would be
11 helpful.

12
13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah.

14
15 MR. HOFFMAN: Thank you for the
16 question. Beaver houses are a natural structure and
17 are used by other animals as well. And so ONC did not
18 support the destruction of beaver houses in our unit.

19
20 MR. WOODS: Mr. Chair.

21
22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Frank.

23
24 MR. WOODS: Oh, thank you. My question
25 is on the same terms that, you know, beaver -- beaver
26 houses and beaver dams are number 1, fish habitat.
27 Also restrictive. In our area when I was growing up,
28 maybe I'm too old, but they had destruction of beaver
29 dams to allow more salmon to come into the streams.
30 Second, there were destruction of beaver houses and a
31 lot of trapping. There was a main cash economy in the
32 Bristol Bay region for beaver pelts in the not only
33 thousands, but probably tens of thousands. So moose
34 browse, is there any study from OSM and/or Staff that
35 would identify habitat from the destruction of beaver
36 houses and/or dams and also, you know, increase fish
37 population by rearing streams?

38
39 Thank you. You just said you're
40 against it, I just listed some reasons and options on
41 how we're looking at this. And maybe I'm going too far
42 back and I'm too old so.....

43
44 MR. HOFFMAN: Through the Chair. Avery
45 Hoffman, ONC. Just responding to the proposal is
46 beaver houses and I don't think I'm qualified to speak
47 on anything other than that.

48
49 Thank you.

50

0477

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
2 Appreciate that. A lot of testifiers could learn from
3 you. Not here though, I mean, we've had a wonderful
4 engagement process this week. I'm just saying good job
5 there, young man. For the record. Yeah, I think we're
6 getting there.

7
8 Any other public testimony -- Oh, you
9 got one online.

10
11 Thank you.

12
13 MS. LAVINE: If you have just raised
14 your hand and your last four digits of your phone
15 number are 6659, you are unmuted, please address the
16 Board.

17
18 MR. SHEPPARD: Good afternoon, can you
19 hear me?

20
21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
22 floor. Yes, online. You have the floor, we can hear
23 you.

24
25 MR. SHEPPARD: Can you hear me?

26
27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We can.....

28
29 MR. SHEPPARD: Can you hear me?

30
31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We can hear you
32 now.

33
34 MR. SHEPPARD: Can you hear me again?

35
36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: One more time,
37 yes.

38
39 MR. SHEPPARD: Okay. Yeah, my name's
40 -- thank you, Mr. Chair. My name is Stanislaus
41 Sheppard. I was born and raised in Mountain Village on
42 the lower Yukon. Within the past I'd say 50 years the
43 beavers in the lower Yukon increased and one elder told
44 me when we're trapping beaver and we happen to clean
45 out a beaver house at a certain time the beaver house
46 not only makes a house for itself when we clean them
47 out though they move to another area. Those beaver
48 houses are used with -- by muskrat, mink and otter. I
49 didn't believe him until after five years a beaver
50

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1 house wasn't occupied he put a otter trap and he was
2 catching otters up to maybe five or six. So when the
3 beaver house is not being used by beaver muskrats, mink
4 and otter take over.

5

6 That's all I've got to say. Thank you
7 for letting me speak.

8

9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
10 Thank you for taking the time to call in and sharing
11 that testimony. Appreciate it.

12

13 Anybody else on the queue, Robbin?

14

15 MR. SHEPPARD: You're welcome.

16

17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
18 Appreciate it. ARC, SRC, State Advisory, multiagency.

19

20 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We
21 received no comments on this proposal.

22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
24 public testimony online or here in the audience, please
25 raise your hand.

26

27 (No comments)

28

29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Council
30 recommendations.

31

32 MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you. Jacqueline
33 Cleveland with YKD RAC. So our Council voted to
34 support WP25-47 [sic] which they also submitted. The
35 Council noted that beaver numbers are very high and
36 there are no conservation concerns. Beaver pelts are
37 prized for use in skin sewing because of their soft,
38 warm fur and removing the restriction could help
39 subsistence users more easily harvest them. And during
40 discussion it was mentioned that adopting this proposal
41 does not mean that all trappers will start disturbing
42 and/or destroying beaver houses because beaver houses
43 are very labor intensive for humans to totally
44 dismantle in the first place and additionally beavers
45 are very good at what they do and can repair any
46 disturbances very quickly. Additionally beaver
47 trapping is not as common as it used to be because
48 there are a lot -- are not a lot of fur buyers left and
49 gas is so expensive. So this proposal is not likely to
50

0479

1 have much of an impact on the number of beavers
2 harvested. The ability to disturb or destroy beaver
3 houses is already allowed under hunting regulations.
4 So adopting this proposal will better align regulations
5 and make it less confusing for local people.

6
7 Beaver populations have grown in recent
8 decades, they have colonized many new areas where they
9 did not previously inhabit and they are permanently
10 altering the ecosystem. Local people and RAC members
11 have been raising concerns about this for years, but
12 studies about beaver impacts have not been a priority
13 for research in our area. And some of the issues we
14 are experiencing from beavers including blocking fish
15 migration routes and spawning grounds. They are
16 creating more habitat for predator fish like pike which
17 are also expanding in numbers and are also of concern.
18 And beavers are impeding access for -- impeding access
19 for subsistence like berry picking areas.

20
21 YKD RAC has learned that beaver numbers
22 are increasing in the Arctic region and altering the
23 landscape there in similar ways. Luckily for the
24 Arctic they have a group called the Arctic Beaver
25 Observation Network or ABON that has been documenting
26 these ecological changes and working with local people
27 to study ways to manage the negative impacts. We are
28 happy to report that a member of our RAC was invited to
29 attend their upcoming workshop this summer being held
30 by ABON in Kotzebue so that our region can continue to
31 learn about how beavers are changing landscapes and how
32 to mitigate the negative impacts to other species and
33 subsistence users.

34
35 Thanks.

36
37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
38 Jackie. Any questions for the RAC.

39
40 MR. WOODS: Mr. Chair.

41
42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Frank.

43
44 MR. WOODS: I appreciate your answers
45 to my question. I was reading your report and it is
46 impacting, that's why I asked the question. So those
47 questions are answered and in support of this proposal
48 number 1, because, you know, even we try to move
49 forward as a food source, there's no conservation
50

0480

1 concern, and the impacts are I would believe minimal.

2

3

So thank you.

4

5

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Ray.

6

7

MR. ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Raymond Oney here, public member. I'd like to maybe get your feedback once you send that individual, one of the YKRAC members up to Kotzebue to learn more about what they're doing up in that area. I think -- I think this Board will be very interested in just see, you know, what -- what they've learned there in hopes of, you know, doing that same thing for our area. So maybe in the future if you can jot that down to at least have that individual or give a report to this Board on what has been learned and how we can make it effective in our area.

19

20

Thank you.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Charlie.

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MR. WRIGHT: I want to say that I've been teaching beaver trapping in the interior for 30 years and we don't have a lot of other sources of meat so we protect our beaver houses and we teach our kids to not overtrap them. And I can't speak for her area, but it's a good food source for us and where I live and we don't have as many as they do so we protect them and we manage them properly. We even go and release water in the springtime from the big ones and we don't take them all the way out, but we open them up so that the fish can come out and we help our areas really pay attention to them and we don't have a problem of overcrowding. So we want more.

37

38

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41

42

So I just wanted to make sure you all understood that I have a reason for the way that I spoke. And it's for my region and I don't want to confuse or go against my fellow RAC member here in anyway. I want to support here if I can.

43

44

Thank you.

45

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for that for the record, Charlie. Appreciate that. We all do something a little different based on abundance.

Hearing and seeing no more questions,

0481

1 Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

2

3 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
4 For the record the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
5 opposes the proposal as it will institute a
6 contradictory practice as we have in State regulations
7 which is specifically you may not disturb or destroy
8 any beaver house or den when trapping in Unit 18.

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Ben.
11 InterAgency Staff Committee.

12

13 MS. LAVINE: Mr. Chair, the InterAgency
14 Staff Committee provided the standard comment.

15

16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Board
17 discussion with their Liaison, Council Chair or State
18 rep, any further questions.

19

20 (No comments)

21

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing or
23 seeing none, we'll open up the floor for a Board
24 motion.

25

26 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, Fish and
27 Wildlife Service.

28

29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
30 floor.

31

32 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, I move to adopt
33 WP26-47 and if I get a second I will share my
34 justification for why I intend to support this
35 proposal.

36

37 Mr. Chair, Wildlife Proposal.....

38

39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, we've got
40 to get a second first.

41

42 MS. BOARIO: Oh, sorry.

43

44 MR. STRIKER: Park Service seconds.

45

46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

47

48 MS. BOARIO: Thank you, Regional
49 Director.

50

0482

1 (Laughter)

2

3

4 MS. BOARIO: It's getting late. Mr.
5 Chair, Wildlife Proposal WP26-47 requests to remove the
6 restriction in trapping regulations against disturbing
7 or destroying beaver houses in Unit 18. And as we've
8 just heard it has come to our attention that this same
9 prohibition is not including -- included in hunting
10 regulations. This proposal is supported by the Yukon
11 Kuskokwim Delta Regional Advisory Council and we defer
12 to them and their local knowledge of the region they
13 live in. We do acknowledge the ecological role that
14 beavers do have in the ecosystem to create new habitats
15 that are ideal for some animals, but also that beavers
16 are abundant in the Yukon Delta region, there's no
17 conservation concern and they provide an important food
18 source for people in the region and are also prized for
19 their pelts for their handicrafts as we heard.

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We've also heard the local concerns about beaver colonizing new areas and that local people in the YKD have been raising this issue for years. We appreciate the perspectives of others, but defer to the RAC with the local knowledge in their own region and their active engagement with the Arctic Beaver Observation Network and support because of this.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any further Board discussion, deliberation.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Please read into the record, roll call. Oh, here we go, Jolene, you have the floor.

MS. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, I do have a question. Obviously this is the Federal Board and the State earlier just said that it's not allowed under State regulations. I'm just curious to know what possibly would happen regarding State trooper law enforcement on this matter if they do come across a trapper or a hunter basically dismantling a beaver home?

MR. MULLIGAN: Through the Chair, Member John. I can only speculate because I am not

0483

1 actually a lead and we do not have the troopers within
2 our department, but depending on where the beaver dam
3 is, so again my colleague had pointed out not all
4 beaver dams sit above ordinary high water, if the water
5 is navigable we have -- State regulations still apply
6 and if the person destroyed it in order to conduct
7 their Federal trapping I imagine the trooper might cite
8 them because technically that is State submerged lands
9 and State jurisdiction applies.

10

11 MS. JOHN: Okay. Thank you.

12

13 MS. LEONETTI: Okay. The motion is to
14 adopt Wildlife Proposal 26-47.

15

16 Fish and Wildlife Service Member
17 Boario.

18

19 MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service
20 supports.

21

22 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Woods.

23

24 MR. WOODS: Public Member Woods
25 supports.

26

27 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Payenna.

28

29 MR. PAYENNA: I also support.

30

31 MS. LEONETTI: BLM Member Pendergast.

32

33 MR. PENDERGAST: BLM supports for the
34 reasons stated by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

35

36 MS. LEONETTI: Park Service Member
37 Striker.

38

39 MR. STRIKER: Park Service supports in
40 deference to the RAC for the reason enumerated by my
41 colleague from Fish.

42

43 MS. LEONETTI: Forest Service Member
44 Ingersoll.

45

46 MR. INGERSOLL: Forest Service supports
47 in deference to the RAC and for the reasons articulated
48 by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

49

50

0484

1 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Pitka.

2

3 MS. PITKA: Yes, I support WP26-47 in
4 deference to the Regional Advisory Council.

5

6 Thank you.

7

8 MS. LEONETTI: BIA Member John.

9

10 MS. JOHN: BIA adopts -- votes to adopt
11 WP26-47 in support of the Fish and Wildlife motion and
12 in deference to the YKDelta RAC. We concur with the
13 justification of the Council and acknowledge plus
14 appreciate their work on this proposal.

15

16 Quyana.

17

18 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Oney.

19

20 MR. ONEY: Public Member Ray Oney moves
21 to support WP26-47 in deference to the YKRAC.

22

23 MS. LEONETTI: Chair Christianson.

24

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support in
26 deference to the RAC and also to food security for the
27 region.

28

29 MS. LEONETTI: Mr. Chair, the motion
30 carries unanimously.

31

32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Let's take five
33 minutes.

34

35 (Off record)

36

37 (On record)

38

39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: That was gavel,
40 gavel, gavel. We're going to try to do five more
41 Crystal said. I'll be happy with three.

42

43 And just so the public knows, we did 11
44 today and 19 left on the list.

45

46 (Applause)

47

48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'm just giving
49 you guys a taste of tomorrow. We're happy and clapping

50

0485

1 today, but we'll see you guys all tomorrow at the same
2 time just enjoying the process. So let's get started
3 here, we'll call on the Staff to do 26-48.

4

5 Thank you.

6

7 MS. HOLMAN: Hello, Mr. Chair, members
8 of the Board. Again for the record Kendra Holman,
9 Wildlife Biologist with OSM. This is a summary of
10 proposal WP26-48 submitted by the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta
11 Regional Advisory Council. The Council requests to
12 increase the hunting harvest limit for wolves in Unit
13 18 from 10 to 15. There have been very few regulation
14 changes since the establishment of the Federal program.
15 In recent history -- regulatory history January of 2024
16 at the Board of Game meeting a proposal lengthening the
17 wolf trapping season in Unit 18 to end April 30th was
18 adopted.

19

20 Wolves have been found throughout Unit
21 18 and are well adapted to the hills, tundra and valley
22 -- river valleys of the unit. Wolves first breed from
23 ages two to four with litters of five to six pups. In
24 August as much as 50 percent of a pack consists of
25 pups. These young then disburse from the pack as
26 yearlings to two year olds.

27

28 Wolf numbers were low throughout Unit
29 18 from the demise of the reindeer herding in the 1930s
30 until the 1980s when the moose population became
31 established. Based on observations from trappers,
32 hunters, fur buyers and agency biologists the wolf
33 numbers have increased in Unit 18 particularly along
34 the main stem of the Yukon River and the Kilbuck
35 Mountains -- and in the Kilbuck Mountains east of
36 Bethel. Their population has been increasing along the
37 Kuskokwim River and its tributaries from Kalskag to
38 Bethel. This reflects the expanded distribution and
39 increased abundance of moose.

40

41 It appears that the Unit 18 wolf
42 population is regulated more by natural factors than by
43 human harvest. The harvest of wolves and the use,
44 barter and sale of pelts is an important subs --
45 important for subsistence in Unit 18. Wolf ruffs are
46 highly prized as parka trim. The local domestic demand
47 for wolf pelts is high. In any given year snow
48 conditions for snowmachine travel and weather affect
49 wolf harvest levels.

50

1 State and Federal regulations require
2 that wolves harvested in Alaska be sealed by ADF&G or
3 an appointed fur sealer.

4
5 From regulatory year 2002 to 2023 the
6 reported annual harvest of wolves in Unit 18 ranged
7 from six to 88 wolves per year. This information can
8 be found on figure 1 on Page 1112 of your meeting book.
9 On tables 1 and 2 found on Page 1113 it provides the
10 number of wolves harvested that were reported during
11 the ADF&G subsistence household surveys in two
12 geographical areas within Unit 18. The percentage of
13 households attempting to harvest wolves was low across
14 all communities in all survey years ranging from zero
15 to 7 percent. Based on ADF&G's wolf harvest records
16 from 1997 to 2009 there were only 12 cases of someone
17 shooting five or more wolves in a given regulatory year
18 in Unit 18.

19
20 If adopted the Federal hunting harvest
21 limit for wolves in Unit 18 would increase to 15 wolves
22 increasing subsistence opportunity. Users may already
23 harvest an additional unlimited number of wolves by
24 firearm under a trapping license from November 10 to
25 April 30th under State regulations including on all
26 Federal public lands in Unit 18. The functional affect
27 of this proposal is allowing users to harvest an
28 additional five wolves from August 10th to November
29 9th. Impact of this proposal on the Unit 18 wolf
30 population is uncertain as there's limited information
31 available. While less than 50 percent of the harvest
32 is thought to be reported through the sealing harvest
33 household surveys suggest relatively few households
34 attempt to harvest wolf. Access to the harvesting
35 areas is dependent on snow cover and snowmachine access
36 and varies annually. Few users likely harvest 10
37 wolves by firearm each year. The hide of all harvested
38 wolves must be salvaged and the condition of wolf hides
39 during late summer and early fall may not be prime
40 therefore harvest likely will be more opportunistic.
41 Expected low harvest pressure, resilience of wolf
42 populations and their ability to withstand high
43 mortality rates suggests that the proposal would have
44 minimal affects on the Unit 18 wolf population and
45 conservation concerns are unlikely.

46
47 The OSM conclusion is to support this
48 proposal.

0487

1 Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the
2 Board. I'd be happy to address any questions.

3

4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
5 Thank you for the presentation. Any questions from the
6 Board for Staff.

7

8 (No comments)

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
11 seeing none, was there any written public comment.

12

13 MS. HOLMAN: Mr. Chair, there were no
14 written public comments received for this proposal.

15

16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
17 Summary of tribal government and Alaska Native
18 corporation consultation.

19

20 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There
21 were none.

22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
24 Tribal, Alaska Native organization testimony here or
25 online.

26

27 We have one in the audience. You have the
28 floor.

29

30 MR. HOFFMAN: Thank you again. My
31 name's Avery Hoffman, Natural Resource Director for
32 ONC. ONC supports this proposal because it would give
33 local hunters more opportunity to harvest wolves in our
34 region. Many community members are skilled wolf
35 hunters and are committed to protecting the health of
36 the caribou herd. Right now the Mulchatna Caribou Herd
37 is struggling. ADF&G's predator control program faces
38 criticism from outside groups that don't rely on these
39 resources. Even though this program has helped
40 increase the calf survival rate for the first time in
41 20 years raising the harvest limit from 10 to -- from
42 10 wolves to 15 wolves provides additional opportunity
43 for local hunters and may further support the efforts
44 to improve the condition of the caribou herd.

45

46 Thank you.

47

48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
49 that. Any questions. None

50

0488

1 (No comments)

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate your
4 testimony. Any other tribal or Native organization.

5

6 (No comments)

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Advisory Group
9 testimony, SRC, State Advisory or multiagency working
10 group.

11

12 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
13 We've received no comments.

14

15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
16 public testimony here or online please raise your hand.

17

18 (No comments)

19

20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
21 seeing none, Council recommendation.

22

23 MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you. This is
24 Jacqueline Cleveland with the YKD RAC again. So the
25 Council voted to support WP26-48 which they also
26 submitted. The Council submits additional
27 opportunities to harvest wolves. They noted that wolf
28 numbers are abundant and increasing in Unit 18 and
29 there are no conservation concerns. They also
30 discussed the potential benefits that increased wolf
31 harvest could have for public safety and predation on
32 other important subsistence species. Our RAC is also
33 submitting a proposal to the Board of Game to increase
34 the harvest limit and align State and Federal
35 regulations.

36

37 Qu yana.

38

39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
40 questions for the RAC.

41

42 (No comments)

43

44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Alaska
45 Department of Fish and Game.

46

47 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
48 For the record at this time the Department opposes,
49 this misaligns State and Federal regulations. But as
50

0489

1 an aside we do appreciate the YKD RAC of commitment to
2 submitting something on the State side to align those
3 regulations.

4

5 Thank you.

6

7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
8 InterAgency Staff Committee.

9

10 MS. LAVINE: The ISC provided the
11 standard comment.

12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Board
14 discussion with State Liaison or Council Chair.

15

16 (No comments)

17

18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
19 seeing none the floor is open for Board action.

20

21 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, Fish and
22 Wildlife Service.

23

24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
25 floor.

26

27 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair the Fish and
28 Wildlife Service moves to adopt WP26-48 and if I get a
29 second I will explain my justification for why I intend
30 to support this proposal.

31

32 MR. PENDERGAST: BLM seconds.

33

34 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, according to
35 the OSM analysis observations from trappers, hunters,
36 fur buyers and agency biologists indicate that wolf
37 numbers have increased in Unit 18 with the distribution
38 and abundance reflecting the expanding distribution and
39 increased abundance of moose. The Yukon Kuskokwim
40 Delta RAC also notes that wolf numbers are abundant and
41 increasing and supports additional opportunities for
42 harvest. The harvest of wolves and the use, barter and
43 sale of pelts is important for subsistence in Unit 18.
44 While the OSM analysis notes that the impact of this
45 proposal on the wolf population is uncertain due to
46 limited information it also point to harvest surveys
47 that suggest relatively few households attempt to
48 harvest wolves and that during reporting and -- and --
49 excuse me, and reporting during the last five year
50

0490

1 period, 2019 to '23, the annual Unit 18 reported wolf
2 harvest of 26 wolves was dramatically lower than the
3 average of 46 wolves from the previous five year
4 period, 2014 to '18. The expected low harvest pressure
5 and resilience of wolf populations and their ability to
6 withstand high mortality rates suggests this proposal
7 would have minimal impacts to the Unit 18 wolf
8 population. Like the Department of Fish and Game, Fish
9 and Wildlife Service is pleased to hear the RAC will be
10 approaching the Board of Game as well. And for these
11 reasons and in deference to the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta
12 RAC the Fish and Wildlife Service supports.

13

14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. The
15 floor is open for discussion, deliberation.

16

17 (No comments)

18

19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
20 seeing none please read into the record the motion and
21 roll call.

22

23 MS. LEONETTI: The motion is to adopt
24 Wildlife Proposal 26-48.

25

26 Fish and Wildlife Service Member
27 Boario.

28

29 MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service
30 supports.

31

32 MS. LEONETTI: BIA Member John.

33

34 MS. JOHN: BIA votes to adopt WP26-48
35 in support of the Fish and Wildlife Service motion and
36 as per the recommendation and justification provided by
37 the YKDelta RAC to provide additional opportunities to
38 harvest wolves.

39

40 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Oney.

41

42 MR. ONEY: Public Member Ray Oney
43 supports WP26-48 in deference to the YKRAC.

44

45 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Woods.

46

47 MR. WOODS: Public Member Woods
48 supports the recommendations and information from the
49 Regional Advisory Council and U.S. Fish and Wildlife
50

0491

1 Staff reports.

2

3

Thank you.

4

5

MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Payenna.

6

7

8

MR. PAYENNA: Public Member Payenna supports WP26-48 and the comments submitted by the Fish and Wildlife Service and in deference to the RAC.

9

10

11

MS. LEONETTI: BLM Member Pendergast.

12

13

14

MR. PENDERGAST: BLM supports the motion for the reasons states by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

15

16

17

18

MS. LEONETTI: Park Service Member Striker.

19

20

MR. STRIKER: NPS supports in deference to the RAC for reasons articulated by Sara.

21

22

23

MS. LEONETTI: Forest Service Member Ingersoll.

24

25

26

MR. INGERSOLL: Forest Service supports in deference to the RAC and for the reasons articulated by the Fish and Wildlife Service. Also appreciating the Council's action to try to align or to bring a parallel proposal to the Board of Game. We should deviate only when it's necessary or appropriate to deviate.

27

28

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33

MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Pitka.

34

35

MS. PITKA: I vote to support WP26-48 in deference to the Regional Advisory Council and noting that there are no conservation concerns for this species.

36

37

38

39

40

Thank you.

41

42

MS. LEONETTI: Chair Christianson.

43

44

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I support in deference to the RAC.

45

46

47

Thank you.

48

49

MS. LEONETTI: The motion passes

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0492

1 unanimously.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
Next we'll go to the next one on the queue, WP26-49.

MS. HOLMAN: For the record again
Kendra Holman, Wildlife Biologist with OSM. This is a
presentation of the summary of the analysis for
Wildlife Proposal WP26-49. It can be found starting on
Page 1119 of your meeting book.

This proposal was submitted by the
Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory
Council requesting the increase of the harvest limit of
coyotes in Unit 18 from two to four and lengthen the
season -- lengthen the hunting season in August. The
proponent states that this would create additional
opportunity as well as the Unit 18 residents have
observed the number of coyotes increasing as part of --
in parts of the unit. Hunting regulations for coyotes
were transferred from State regulations in 1990 when
the Federal Subsistence Management Program was
established. Hunting seasons and harvest limits have
remained relatively unchanged since then. The coyote
population information in Unit 18 is very limited and
comes from hunter and trapper sightings, fur buyers and
voluntary trapper reports. According to the most
recent ADF&G fur bearer management report the Unit 18
coyote population is stable and increasing at low
levels. Coyotes a peripheral species to trappers in
Unit 18 with very low harvests. Reported harvests for
coyotes throughout is through voluntary questionnaires
sent by ADF&G. This data is gathered by regions
instead of units. Unit 18 is part of the northwest
Alaska region which includes Unit 22, 23 and 26A.
Since 2010 the number of coyotes reported shot in one
year was two with up to 10 reported from trappers.
This can be seen in figure 1 on Page 1122 of your
meeting book.

If this proposal is adopted Federal
regulations for coyotes -- for coyote hunting in Unit
18 would be liberalized. This would increase
opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users
to harvest coyotes under a hunting license in Unit 18.
No conservation concerns are expected as all available
information indicates that coyote harvest is extremely
low and the populations are increasing. Additionally
the trapping harvest limit is no limit and coyotes also

0493

1 may be taken by a firearm under a trapping license.
2 While hides must be salvaged and the quality of hides
3 during the extended season into August and May is
4 likely to lower -- sorry, it's likely lower than during
5 the winter. Adopting these regulatory changes also
6 increase regulatory complexity by misaligning State and
7 Federal regulations for coyotes in Unit 18.

8
9 The OSM conclusion is to support this
10 proposal.

11
12 If there's any questions I'm happy to
13 address them, Mr. Chair.

14
15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
16 that. Any questions for Staff.

17
18 (No comments)

19
20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
21 seeing none, was there any written comment to this
22 proposal.

23
24 MS. HOLCOMB: Mr. Chair, there were no
25 written public comments received for this proposal.

26
27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
28 Summary of tribal government or Alaska Native corp.

29
30 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair, Board
31 members. There were no comments.

32
33 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

34
35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
36 Orville. Tribal or Alaska Native organization
37 testimony. We have one at the table. Any online raise
38 your hand.

39
40 MR. HOFFMAN: One last time, Mr. Chair,
41 thank you, and the Board. ONC -- for the record my
42 name's Avery Hoffman, Natural Resource Director for
43 ONC. ONC supports this proposal. It gives more
44 opportunity to potentially harvest more coyotes in our
45 region. Previously coyotes were not a common
46 encounter. Many hunters in the region have reported
47 high activity and have come across several packs.
48 Coyotes are known to prey on struggling caribou herds
49 and newborn calves. Allowing for an increased harvest
50

0494

1 aligns with responsible wildlife management and will
2 help address the rising predation pressure on the
3 caribou calves and other local species.

4
5 Qu yana.

6
7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
8 that testimony. Appreciate it.

9
10 Anyone on line, Robbin.

11
12 (No comments)

13
14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Seeing or
15 hearing none that concludes that. Advisory Group
16 testimony.

17
18 MS. LAVINE: No comments received.

19
20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
21 public testimony here or online, please raise your
22 hand.

23
24 (No comments)

25
26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing or
27 seeing none, Council recommendation.

28
29 MS. CLEVELAND: Qu yana again. Jackie
30 Cleveland with YKD RAC. The Council voted to support
31 WP26-49 which they also submitted. They noted that
32 coyote numbers are increasing and there are no
33 conservation concerns. This proposal would increase
34 subsistence opportunity and the Council also discussed
35 that coyotes are new to the -- are so new to the area
36 that there's not even a Yup'ik word for coyote, but
37 maybe it's time. The YKD RAC also submitted -- is also
38 submitting a proposal to the Board of Game to increase
39 the harvest limit and to align State and Federal
40 regulations.

41
42 Qu yana.

43
44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The further
45 south we go they call them creator or relatives from
46 the south. Thank you for that. Sorry. That was a RAC
47 recommendation, the other one didn't consider it.
48 We'll move on to Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

49
50

0495

1 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
2 For the record the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
3 opposes the proposal as it misaligns State and Federal
4 regulations.

5
6 Thank you.

7
8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. ISC
9 Staff.

10
11 MS. LAVINE: The ISC provided the
12 standard comment.

13
14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
15 Board discussion, questions to Chair, State rep.

16
17 MR. PENDERGAST: Throughout this
18 discussion I kept asking myself and going through the
19 paperwork trying to figure out why. Actually I didn't
20 even know there were coyotes up here. I'm from Oregon
21 where they're kind of common. But it doesn't sound
22 like anyone's really targeting them, no one's limiting
23 out right now unless by accident. So I'm not
24 necessarily opposed just trying to understand. The
25 only why I heard was maybe in the testimony, folks are
26 kind of drawing a connection of potential caribou
27 predation, but maybe the RAC Chair could articulate
28 like why did it come up in the first place?

29
30 MS. CLEVELAND: So yeah, and in
31 addition to helping predation they're also -- they've
32 also become a threat to our communities as some of them
33 come into the communities. And I guess a personal
34 testimony is one with my own dog. I didn't know we
35 were being followed by a rabid coyote when taking a
36 walk towards evening at dusk and as soon as I went into
37 the house my dog went crazy and fought a rabid coyote.
38 And luckily was vaccinated and lived through it and
39 then that coyote went onto the town because I would be
40 the first I guess home to -- furthest upriver. So like
41 my home and then my pets are often the first ones to
42 see wild animals. So anyway when that coyote went into
43 the actual village it attacked other dogs and someone
44 finally caught it. So it's one example.

45
46 That's enough.

47
48 MR. PENDERGAST: Thank you.

49
50

0496

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
2 That was the RAC recommendation. Oh, we're under
3 discussion. Sorry. Any other questions of the State
4 or Regional Advisory Council members from the Board.

5
6 (No comments)

7
8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing or
9 seeing none, we'll open up the floor for Board action.

10
11 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, Fish and
12 Wildlife Service.

13
14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
15 floor.

16
17 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, the Fish and
18 Wildlife Service moves to adopt WP26-49 and if I get a
19 second I will explain my justification for why I intend
20 to support this proposal.

21
22 MR. PAYENNA: Ben Payenna, I'll second.

23
24 MS. BOARIO: Don was busy. Mr. Chair,
25 as the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional
26 Advisory Council has noted there are no conservation
27 concerns. Coyotes in region 5 of which Unit 18 is a
28 part of were most recently reported in the Alaska
29 Department of Fish and Game trapper report as common
30 with an increasing trend in '23, '24 and local
31 knowledge shared in testimony this afternoon aligns
32 with this. This proposal would increase subsistence
33 opportunity and as we just recently heard maybe safety
34 as well.

35
36 I want to acknowledge again the concern
37 that has come up with the last several proposals that
38 they are an unnecessary deviation from State
39 regulations. I appreciate the State's engagement as we
40 work through these and I agree with the goal of
41 minimizing confusion for users with regulations. In
42 this case the users themselves are asking for
43 regulations that align with their lived experience at
44 the local level and because of that local experience
45 and knowledge requests like these won't always
46 necessarily align with all of government. However as
47 we've also heard at times this week users are
48 proactively working to help government align with their
49 lives at both State and Federal levels and thank you
50

0497

1 for that.

2

3 ANILCA Title VIII provides Subsistence
4 Regional Advisory Councils the authority among other
5 things to make recommendations for policies and
6 regulations. Congress required the establishment of
7 these Councils in order to give local subsistence users
8 this voice in the management of the resources on which
9 they depend.

10

11 For these reasons and in deference to
12 the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Regional Advisory Council
13 Fish and Wildlife Service supports.

14

15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other Board
16 discussion, deliberation.

17

18 (No comments)

19

20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
21 seeing none please read into the record, roll call.

22

23 MS. LEONETTI: The motion to adopt
24 Wildlife Proposal 26-49.

25

26 Fish and Wildlife Service Member
27 Boario.

28

29 MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service
30 supports.

31

32 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Pitka.

33

34 MS. PITKA: I support WP26-49 in
35 deference to the Regional Advisory Council and noting
36 that there are no conservation concerns and this
37 increases opportunity for Federally-qualified users.

38

39 Thank you.

40

41 MS. LEONETTI: Forest Service Member
42 Ingersoll.

43

44 MR. INGERSOLL: Forest Service supports
45 in deference to the RAC and for the reasons articulated
46 by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

47

48 MS. LEONETTI: Park Service Member
49 Striker.

50

0498

1 MR. STRIKER: Park Service supports in
2 deference to the RAC, for reasons outlined by our very
3 articulate colleague from the Fish and Wildlife Service
4 and in hopes of a YKD unanimous sweep.

5

6 (Laughter)

7

8 MS. LEONETTI: BLM Member Pendergast.

9

10 MR. PENDERGAST: BLM supports for the
11 reasons stated by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

12

13 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Payenna.

14

15 MR. PAYENNA: I also support WP26-49 in
16 agreement with comments made by U.S. Fish and Wildlife
17 and in deference to the YKD RAC.

18

19 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Woods.

20

21 MR. WOODS: Public Member Woods
22 supports. Thank you.

23

24 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Oney.

25

26 MR. ONEY: Public Member Ray Oney moves
27 to support.

28

29 MS. LEONETTI: BIA Member John.

30

31 MS. JOHN: BIA votes to support Fish
32 and Wildlife Service's motion and the justification
33 provided by the YKDelta RAC. I really appreciate the
34 personal stories and public testimony of those residing
35 in the region.

36

37 Quyana.

38

39 MS. LEONETTI: Chair Christianson.

40

41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support in
42 deference to the RAC. And I just had a question, have
43 you guys seen any roadrunners with them?

44

45 MS. JOHN: Beep. Beep.

46

47 (Laughter)

48

49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Just

50

0499

1 making sure. They've been putting highways everywhere
2 so that's probably next.

3

4 MS. LEONETTI: Mr. Chair, the motion
5 carries unanimously

6

7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right. For
8 order of the day we're going to move into Southcentral,
9 we're going to take up W26-15. And we're going to jump
10 ahead too so if I'm throwing Staff off we're going to
11 do 26-15 just because southcentral people are going to
12 leave. And so the majority of southcentral will happen
13 tomorrow. With concurrence from the Board.

14

15 (No comments)

16

17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
18 Hearing no opposition, I appreciate it.

19

20 MR. SANDERS: Good afternoon, Board.
21 My name is Andrew Sanders and I'm a biologist for the
22 Chugach National Forest. I'll be presenting WP26-15
23 which is on Page 769 of the meeting materials.

24

25 This proposal was submitted by the
26 Native Village of Eyak and requests that Federal public
27 lands on Hawkins and Hinchinbrook Islands in Unit 6D be
28 closed to deer hunting by non-Federally-qualified
29 users. The Native Village of Eyak states that
30 increased harvest pressure on deer in eastern Prince
31 William Sound by non-Federally-qualified users and
32 declining deer density on Hawkins and Hinchinbrook
33 Islands have resulted in Federally-qualified
34 subsistence users being unable to meet their
35 subsistence needs. This competition issue has occurred
36 for many seasons, but an additional conservation
37 concern -- sorry, this competition issues has occurred
38 for many seasons, but an additional conservation
39 concern arising during the '24/'25 hunting season
40 prompted the proposal. All rural residents of Alaska
41 may harvest deer in Unit 6D.

42

43 A little bit of biological background.
44 Sitka black-tail deer were introduced to Unit 6 between
45 1916 and 1923. Following their introduction deer
46 became an important subsistence species. There are no
47 estimates of deer abundance in the unit so a deer
48 pellet survey is used as an index of the population.
49 Pellet counts are a lagging indicator of the deer
50

0500

1 population because deer produce pellets throughout the
2 winter before they starve in the springtime.

3

4

5 The deer experience more extreme
6 population fluctuations in Unit 6 than they do in their
7 native range further south. During severe winters
8 winter kill is high and snow concentrates deer on the
9 beaches where they can experience high harvest rates.
10 The winters of -- the winter of 2025/2026 was very
11 cold, but with low snow and the winter of '24/'25 was
12 warm and mild. However snowy winters in the previous
13 five years correlate with modest declines in the Prince
14 William Sound deer pellet index.

14

15

16 In 2025 only Hawkins, Hinchinbrook and
17 the north end of Montague Island were surveyed. The
18 island wide density estimate for Hawkins Island was
19 estimated to be low and the island wide estimate for
20 Hinchinbrook Island was found to be moderate. Three of
21 the four survey zones showed decreases from 2024.

21

22

23 Within Unit 6D most deer are harvested
24 off the major Island of Hawkins, Hinchinbrook and
25 Montague which support the most extensive winter
26 habitat. From 2015 to 2024 estimated total deer
27 harvest on Hawkins and Hinchinbrook Islands ranged from
28 302 to 972 deer. 2024 saw harvest of 355 deer which
29 was below average, but higher than in 2022. Harvest
30 success in regulatory year 2024 was below average for
31 all hunters, but comparable to previous years that had
32 difficult conditions or temporary declines in the deer
33 population. Most deer harvest on Hawkins and
34 Hinchinbrook Island is by Federally-qualified
35 subsistence users. Between 2015 and 2024 73 percent of
36 all deer harvested on the two islands were harvested by
37 Federally-qualified users. 70 percent of all deer
38 harvested were by residents of Cordova specifically.
39 In regulatory year 2024 72 percent of deer were
40 harvested by Federally-qualified users.

40

41

42 Currently subsistence priority is
43 provided by a late season to hunt deer in January after
44 the State season has closed. While Federally-qualified
45 users have reported some competition and displacement
46 issues in Unit 6, winter weather may be a greater
47 factor affecting Federally-qualified user opportunity.
48 Deer abundance, mortality and behavior are affected by
49 winter severity. Weather conditions during the winter
50 of '24/'25 were mild and favorable to deer and could

50

0501

1 explain the low numbers some hunters observed. Deer
2 were in mid elevation timber with dense understory and
3 not concentrated near the beach. These conditions also
4 resulted in poor preservation and sightability of fecal
5 pellets.

6
7 The OSM preliminary conclusion is to
8 oppose proposal WP26-15. It does not appear that there
9 is a significant conservation concern or that the
10 continuation of subsistence uses is being severely
11 impacted. The pellet count index does indicate that
12 the population of deer on these islands is low to
13 moderate however the deer population in Prince William
14 Sound is prone to short term fluctuations in response
15 to winter conditions and is expected to rebound after
16 the most recent mild winters. Relatively few deer are
17 harvested on these islands by non-Federally-qualified
18 users and the percentage of deer harvested by non-
19 Federally-qualified users has been trending downward
20 over the last decade. Harvest data also suggests that
21 Federally-qualified users are generally successful on
22 Hawkins and Hinchinbrook Islands therefore closing the
23 island to non-Federally-qualified users would not be
24 expected to have a substantial impact on Federally-
25 qualified user opportunity and would be an unnecessary
26 restriction on non-Federally-qualified users.

27
28 And I'm happy to take any questions.

29
30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
31 Andrew. Any questions from the Board for Andrew.

32
33 (No comments)

34
35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
36 summary of written public comment.

37
38 MR. SANDERS: There were no public
39 comments during the open comment period.

40
41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. We
42 received a packet. Just so the Board can reflect and
43 remember too we also took a statement on the record for
44 the guy that was leaving during the non-agenda items so
45 if you just can reflect back on that as part of the
46 testimony from the public as well as the written been
47 sitting on the desk here. So thank you, Andrew, just
48 making sure that the Board was aware that they -- we
49 did receive that.

50

0502

1 Thank you. Summary of tribal government
2 and Alaska Native corporation consultation.

3
4 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
5 During the February consultation and April 20th
6 consultation the Village of Eyak spoke in support of
7 that proposal.

8
9 Thank you.

10
11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
12 Tribal, Alaska Native organization testimony.

13
14 MS. LAVINE: If you would like to
15 address the Board online and you are a representative
16 of a tribal or Native organization please press --
17 please raise your hand or press star, five.

18
19 Thank you.

20
21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: And you have
22 the floor. Please state your name for the record,
23 please.

24
25 MR. SMITH: I'm Jim Smith, I'm
26 representing the Native Village of Eyak. Thank you for
27 this opportunity to speak and I applaud your stamina.

28
29 (Laughter)

30
31 MR. SMITH: So I'm reading through the
32 OSM report on this -- on this proposal, looking at the
33 reasons they oppose it, pellet surveys and volunteer
34 harvest reporting. We've had quite a few meetings on
35 this topic in Cordova because we care about this
36 population. These meetings are public and they're
37 posted online for you all to look at if you care to.
38 Our area management biologist is kind enough to humor
39 us all and our questions. When she was asked about
40 what determines deer population our area management
41 biologist said and I quote, the tools we have are not
42 generally very scientific. If you ask how many deer
43 are in PWS, nobody knows, we might never know, unquote.
44 Yet it's cited here. We all know how accurate the
45 volunteer reporting is. She goes on to talk about that
46 too in the meeting we had this winter. She says
47 transporters have no requirements to talk to us, Fish
48 and Game, about what they are doing. There are no
49 limits to the transporters.

50

0503

1 This data is weak at best and they say
2 that severe weather events are the only thing that
3 would prompt a closure by them. The last severe
4 weather event we had they say 80 percent of these
5 animals died. But this data is incomplete and that's
6 why I'm put here today by my community. I often hear
7 that the data that we have though incomplete is the
8 best that we got and that's just simply not true. And
9 I think you guys recognize that in your communities.
10 We have our testimonies and we have our realities just
11 as we all do here, people in the crowd. We've lost
12 time and most area when it comes to our king salmon
13 subsistence. We took a big hit last Board of Fish, our
14 halibut numbers are way down, we lost rock fish. We
15 depend on these deer more and more every year. And the
16 Department's data does show a decline in population and
17 an uptick in effort.

18
19 Our proposal is not unique. Most
20 everyone here representing a rural community has a
21 common problem, the ability to harvest our food is
22 being impacted by outsiders. And even our transporters
23 recognize that and we might not agree on the lines, but
24 we agree that there needs to be a spot where our
25 community can feed itself and this proposal is what the
26 Native Village of Eyak and many community members in
27 Cordova support to do that.

28
29 That's all I got.

30
31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. I
32 appreciate that testimony. Any questions for the
33 tribal representative.

34
35 (No comments)

36
37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
38 taking the time to share that point of view. We
39 appreciate that.

40
41 Thank you.

42
43 MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you.

44
45 MR. STRIKER: Mr. Chairman, question.

46
47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, we have a
48 question. Sorry.

49
50

0504

1 MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Don.

4

5 MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, through the
6 Chair. I wonder if -- this is Don Hernandez from the
7 Southeast RAC. You know, we've dealt with issues like
8 this down in southeast and I was just kind of wondering
9 are there specific places on those two islands that
10 local people prefer to hunt that are being particularly
11 impacted by non-Federally-qualified users?

12

13 MR. SMITH: Yeah. So there -- we don't
14 have a map up, but the -- Hawkins is pretty -- the
15 whole island of Hawkins is pretty frequented by
16 Cordovans and the transporters have been dropping
17 people off typically on the northern part of the island
18 which the southern part of that island and the eastern
19 part of Hinchinbrook is the spots where the skiffs
20 typically go, the people with the small boats and the
21 bough pickers because it's shallow and generally
22 protected, close to town. And there's a lot of good
23 hunting spots there. The transporters have been on the
24 northern side of Hawkins and then in -- you can enter
25 in through what they call the cutoff, in between those
26 two islands. And they hunt there a lot and that's a --
27 that's a pretty frequented local spot. And what
28 happens is -- you know, it's a small town, if someone
29 says oh, do you know so and so. If you don't know them
30 by name you say oh, well, what boat do they have. And
31 lots of times there'll be a group of hunters taken out,
32 dropped off in various spots down the -- the beach and
33 there's no way to tell if there's people there. And
34 it's been a problem and a safety problem.

35

36 MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Some of the
37 same issues we hear in southeast so thank you.

38

39 MR. SMITH: Yeah.

40

41 MR. HERNANDEZ: Appreciate it.

42

43 MS. SKINNER: Thank you. Rebecca
44 Skinner from the Kodiak-Aleutians RAC. Do you know if
45 the transporters are bringing in any Federally-
46 qualified users or is it your understanding that
47 they're all non-Federally-qualified users?

48

49 MR. SMITH: Nobody tracks that, but the

50

0505

1 most outspoken one takes 100 percent NFQs and looks
2 outside of state for business.

3

4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
5 questions from the Board or RAC Chairs.

6

7 (No comments)

8

9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
10 that. Oh, I got one question. How was the snow this
11 year and what does that local knowledge look like
12 because it was pretty snowy down in southeast?

13

14 MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, it passed us all,
15 it just skipped right -- right below us and went to
16 Yakutat and Juneau and.....

17

18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: They got hit.
19 So that's where it came from

20

21 MR. HERNANDEZ: It's like what the
22 heck. We just got the cold wind is all this -- this
23 winter.

24

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: And that's
26 hopefully good for that population as well.

27

28 So thank you for that.

29

30 MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah.

31

32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
33 testimony from tribal or ANCSA leaders.

34

35 (No comments)

36

37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing or
38 seeing none, Advisory Group, SRC, Advisory or
39 multiagency.

40

41 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We
42 did not receive any written or submitted comments
43 although I do believe there are people in the room who
44 are representing ACs.

45

46 Oh, no, I am so very sorry, I even
47 opened them up. We do have four and I will read them
48 to you in a moment.

49

50

1 Thank you. Okay. The first comment we
2 have is from the Cordova AC. The Cordova Fish and Game
3 Advisory Committee included the Federal proposal, WP26-
4 15 to its agenda February 10th of 2026. Proposal 26-15
5 was opposed by the AC with the stipulation to submit
6 comments to the Federal Board to consider. Subsequent
7 to providing comments the AC hosted a town hall meeting
8 to consider public concerns regarding the issue. The
9 AC consensus is that there is significant anxiety in
10 the community regarding licensed transporters expanding
11 operations on Hawkins and Hinchinbrook Islands. The
12 concern is in regards to black-tail deer hunting,
13 mainly that pressure on the resource is increasing from
14 commercial transporters where rural residents have
15 traditionally hunted. The AC believes this issue is
16 not a biological concern at the present time, but that
17 the user conflict will not resolve without regulatory
18 changes that address the unregulated numbers of
19 commercial transporters allowed to provide service in
20 GMU 6D. The ASC offers its opinion or the AC offers
21 its opinion that WP26-15 goes too far in terms of
22 Federal oversight and that closing public lands to only
23 Federally-qualified users does not address the
24 underlying issue of unchecked commercial transportation
25 activities in the region.

26
27 The next comment I have is from the
28 Valdez AC. Dear members of the Federal Board. I am
29 writing you all today on behalf of the Valdez Advisory
30 Committee to express our strong opposition to proposal
31 26-15 which would close Federal public lands on Hawkins
32 Island and Hinchinbrook Island in game management Unit
33 6D to deer hunting by non-Federally-qualified users.
34 After reviewing the proposed -- proposal document and
35 the OSM preliminary analysis we believe this regulatory
36 change is unjustified and unnecessary and we urge you
37 to reject this proposal. Here are some reasons. One,
38 not necessary for wildlife conservation. The proposal
39 stated concern is deer population decline and increased
40 harvest pressure by non-Federally-qualified users.
41 However the agency's analysis concludes that reported
42 harvest by non-Federally-qualified hunters represents
43 only a small portion of the total harvest on these
44 islands, 27 percent, and pellet count in this use do
45 not indicate a significant conservation issue currently
46 affecting deer populations. Closing these areas would
47 therefore restrict opportunity without providing
48 measurable conservation benefit. Additionally as
49 stated by the OSM the percentage of deer harvested by
50

1 non-Federally-qualified users has been trending
2 downward over the last decade.

3
4 Number 2, lack of evidence showing
5 subsistence need requires closure. Proposal proponents
6 argue the closure would benefit subsistence users,
7 however the existing Federal subsistence season already
8 aligns with the State season and prioritizes
9 subsistence hunting under current regulations. The
10 available data does not clearly demonstrate that
11 subsistence hunters are unable to meet their needs due
12 to competition from non-Federally-qualified users. In
13 fact harvest data shows that Federally-qualified
14 subsistence users have been successful under existing
15 regulatory framework 64 percent to 85 percent of the
16 deer harvested from Hawkins and Hinchinbrook Islands
17 between 2015 and 2024. And populations are expected to
18 rebound after natural fluctuations due to weather
19 conditions. To note there is an average 72 percent
20 success rate by hunters that are residents of Cordova
21 in the survey data from 85 to 2014. This success rate
22 is 28 to 44 percent higher than the reported hunter
23 success rate from Westing and Fowler, ADF&G. Unit 6
24 deer management report historic data that reported
25 hunter success rates from 50 to 56 percent for hunters
26 harvesting at least one deer.

27
28 Number 3, imposed an unnecessary
29 restriction on public use. Closing Federal lands
30 especially in areas where access is limited and
31 wildlife resources are shared place an undue
32 restriction on recreational and rural resident hunting
33 opportunity. The Federal Subsistence Management
34 Program should not impose broad analysis -- should not
35 impose broad closures unless there is a clear
36 scientific and socioeconomic justification. In this
37 case the analysis suggests that any observed deer
38 population fluctuations are more likely linked to
39 environmental factors rather than unsustainable harvest
40 and existing harvest patterns by non-Federally-
41 qualified users do not warrant an outright closure.

42
43 Enforcement and burden complexity,
44 number 4. The proposed closure could create
45 enforcement challenges and confusion for hunters on the
46 ground especially in areas with mixed State and Federal
47 jurisdiction. Requiring law enforcement to determine
48 Federally-qualified status in the field could strain
49 limited resources and deter lawful participation.

1 For these reasons we respectfully
2 request that the Federal Subsistence Board oppose the
3 adoption of proposal 26-15, protecting access to
4 wildlife resources while conserving healthy populations
5 requires careful evaluation of both biological and
6 social impacts and this proposal fails to demonstrate a
7 compelling need for the restrictions it seeks.

8
9 Thank you for our careful consideration
10 of our views. Respectfully, Nicholas W. Crump,
11 Chairman of Prince William Sound, Valdez ADF&G Advisory
12 Committee.

13
14 And the last comment -- oh, no, last
15 two, two more. Sorry. Whittier. This is from the
16 Whittier Fish and Game Advisory Council -- Advisory
17 Committee regarding opposition to Wildlife Proposal 26-
18 15, closure of Federal lands on Hawkins Island and
19 Hinchinbrook Island to deer hunting especially by
20 Federally-qualified subsistence hunters.
21 Justification. Both the Alaska Department of Fish and
22 Game and Federal reviewers oppose this proposal. In
23 discussions with our Committee the area biologist
24 stated unequivocally that there is no biological
25 justification for reducing harvest on Hawkins or
26 Hinchinbrook Islands. She explains that non-resident
27 harvest, an annual average of .5 deer representing just
28 .9 percent of the total harvest in Prince William
29 Sound, while non-rural Alaskans harvest one deer and
30 Unit 6 residents harvest 1.5 deer together accounting
31 for 26.2 percent of the harvest in Prince William
32 Sound. These figures reenforce the lack of any
33 biological need to restrict access as proposed. She
34 further cautions that implementing a closure without a
35 biological basis would lead no clear metric or pathway
36 for reopening it.

37
38 Brief. The Whittier Advisory Committee
39 is composed of members who live, work, subsist and
40 recreate in Prince William Sound, many of whom have
41 historically hunted these islands. This regulatory
42 change would restrict the majority of our members based
43 on a proposal that is not supported by science and
44 would be effective irreversible if adopted. The
45 proposal appears to address social conflict through
46 regulation rather than biological need resulting in
47 unnecessary restrictions on neighboring communities
48 such as Whittier and Valdez. Notably Federally-
49 qualified subsistence users from Cordova have provided
50

0509

1 no data demonstrating unmet subsistence needs nor
2 evidence that such needs are directly attributable to
3 the non-qualified users they seek to restrict. While
4 Federally-qualified subsistence users statewide would
5 not be restricted they represent a small minority of
6 hunters, 2.7 percent.

7

8 If adopted the proposal would
9 effectively grant Cordova hunters disproportionate and
10 predominant access to deer in these large and highly
11 desirable hunting areas.

12

13 In closing we respectfully and
14 unanimously request the Board not to adopt these
15 regulations. Sincerely, the Whittier Fish and Game
16 Advisory Committee, David Pinquoch, Chair.

17

18 Okay. Now the last one. Matanuska
19 Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee. To the
20 Honorable Members of the Federal Subsistence Board.
21 The Matanuska Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee
22 for Board of Fish and Game is submitting this letter in
23 strong opposition to the proposed regulatory changes
24 that would close Federal public lands on Hawkins Island
25 and Hinchinbrook Island in Unit 6D to all deer hunting
26 except Federally-qualified subsistence users. This
27 proposal represents a significant restriction on long
28 established Alaska resident hunting opportunities and
29 sets a concerning precedent for access to Federal
30 public lands in the Prince William Sound. A
31 substantial number of Alaska residents particularly
32 from the Matanuska Susitna Valley travel out to
33 Whittier and/or Valdez to hunt deer in this area.
34 These are Alaskan families who depend on access to
35 these resources to offset the ever increasing cost of
36 food and basic living expenses in our state.
37 Additionally for many families these hunts represent
38 not only a source of food, but also deeply rooted
39 Alaskan traditions. These proposed changes would
40 effectively eliminate hunting opportunities in Unit 6D
41 for these stakeholders.

42

43 The justification Native Village of
44 Eyak has provided cites increased harvest pressure from
45 non-qualified users and the declining deer population
46 on Hawkins and Hinchinbrook Islands. However it is
47 important that management decisions of this magnitude
48 be based on comprehensive and verifiable scientific
49 data. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game already
50

0510

1 has well established authority and scientific tools to
2 respond to biological concerns or declining
3 populations. These tools are designed specifically to
4 respond to conservation concerns without resorting to
5 blanket exclusions to other user groups. Therefore a
6 full closure of Federal lands to all except a narrow
7 user group is not a necessary conservation measure.
8 This proposal goes far beyond addressing subsistence
9 concerns. It effectively removes long standing
10 resident hunting opportunities based on unproven
11 scientific cause and is an overly broad regulatory
12 remedy.

13

14 For these reasons we strongly oppose
15 the proposed closure of Hawkins and Hinchinbrook
16 Islands to general hunting access. We urge the Board
17 to reject this proposal and instead pursue management
18 solutions that are targeted, evidence based and
19 consistent with maintaining equitable access for all
20 Alaskans residents.

21

22 Thank you for your consideration and
23 for your continued service in managing Alaska's
24 wildlife resources. Sincerely, Herb Mansavage,
25 Chairman, Matanuska Valley AC.

26

27 And that is all.

28

29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
30 that. Next is public testimony.

31

32 MS. LAVINE: Mr. Chair, there may be
33 someone from an Advisory Committee and AC that is
34 online, but they can also go first for public
35 testimony.

36

37 If your last four digits of your phone
38 number is 8313 please step up to the mic or I'm sorry,
39 please unmute.

40

41 8313 you were momentarily unmuted.
42 Press star, six. There you go. Please address the
43 Board.

44

45 MR. DAVIS: Hello. Hello.

46

47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We can hear
48 you. You have the floor.

49

50

0511

1 MR. DAVIS: All right. Hi, my name's
2 Gunner Davis and I'm 16 years old and a life long
3 Cordovan and tribal member. I've hunted and harvested
4 deer on these islands close to Cordova since I was
5 eight years old and I support proposition WP26-15.

6
7 Thank you.

8
9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
10 calling in too. Appreciate the youth that get engaged
11 early. So good luck hunting as well.

12
13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I seen a hand
14 come up in the audience. Did you want to be recognized
15 as a public testifier?

16
17 MR. BOWMAN: Yes.

18
19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah. Thank
20 you.

21
22 MR. BOWMAN: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair
23 and Board members. For the record my name is Bruce
24 Bowman. I'm wearing a couple of hats today. I'm here
25 to support the position of both the Whittier AC and the
26 Valdez AC which I serve on.

27
28 And we are in firm opposition to WP26-
29 15. I would -- there's repeating.....

30
31 (Indiscernible - teleconference
32 interference)

33
34 MR. BOWMAN:that the managing
35 biologist made it very clear that without a biological
36 basis this would leave no clear metric or pathway for
37 reopening this or changing it. Therefore it is
38 irreversible if it is adopted. I just want to make
39 sure you understand that. And thank you very much for
40 reading our letters.

41 I would switch to my personal comments.
42 And I'm -- I was confused originally by this issue as
43 described by the proposers. It indicated that the
44 proposal sought to protect unmet needs of the entire
45 Cordova community. I'm not sure that that actually
46 happened and have contradictory information for that.
47 And in contradiction to that notion Prince William
48 Sound Cordova AC obviously submitted their opposition
49 to this proposal. I am a Federally-qualified user and
50

0512

1 personally oppose the proposal. Furthermore
2 reconciling this action to the standards and thresholds
3 of ANILCA is difficult and that's your job I guess as
4 the Board to decide how this fits into that.

5

6 Thank you for your time and hope --
7 happy to take any questions.

8

9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
10 taking the time to testify. Any questions.

11

12 (No comments)

13

14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
15 Thank you for your work out there on the ACs too.
16 Appreciate it.

17

18 Yep, I see another hand. You got it.

19

20 MR. ZADRA: Dear Chairman Christianson
21 and members of the Board. My name is Dennis Zadra and
22 I'm reading my testimony today to help me stay on topic
23 and be concise with the information I wish to provide.
24 I encourage any questions or clarifications after my
25 testimony. I have been on the Southcentral RAC for 11
26 years and I am the Co-Chair of the Copper River Prince
27 William Sound AC to the Department of Fish and Game. I
28 have run my big game guiding operation, Lonesome Dove
29 Outfitters out of Cordova for 30 years and I have
30 commercially fished Prince William Sound and the Copper
31 River for 36 years.

32

33 This proposal, WP26-15, came before our
34 RAC at our fall meeting which occurred on January 13th
35 and 14th. OSM's preliminary conclusion was to oppose
36 this proposal primarily because it does not satisfy the
37 requirements of section 815(3) of ANILCA. I encourage
38 you to review their discussion and effects of their
39 justification on Page 779 of your meeting materials.
40 Our Council passed this proposal on a split vote of six
41 in favor and five opposed after much discussion. The
42 Council members that would be most affected by this
43 closure, myself included, were adamantly opposed. This
44 proposal brought forward by the Native Village of Eyak
45 is an effort to curtail increasing commercial
46 transporting activity on these two islands. While I
47 agree that this activity is increasing this Federal
48 process is not the way to address these transporter
49 issues. I refer to the written comments of our local
50

0513

1 AC. This topic has generated a great deal of
2 discussion and division in the community of Cordova
3 with the vast majority of residents being opposed. If
4 this were to pass I could no longer take my
5 grandchildren -- my grandkids deer hunting in the
6 places that I've hunted deer for the past 30 years and
7 all Cordova residents could no longer take their out of
8 town family on these traditional hunts. More
9 importantly it does not meet the criteria of section
10 815(3). There is not a conservation concern and this
11 proposal would displace a great deal of non-Federally-
12 qualified users. I encourage you to follow OSM's
13 recommendations and reject this proposal.

14
15 Thank you for the opportunity to
16 testify and I encourage any questions.

17
18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
19 your testimony today. Any questions from the Board.

20
21 MR. WOODS: Mr. Chair.

22
23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Frank.

24
25 MR. WOODS: You said you're a member of
26 the RAC for 12 years?

27
28 MR. ZADRA: Eleven, yes.

29
30 MR. WOODS: And then it's -- we have
31 testimony in front of the RAC is supporting this, is
32 that correct?

33
34 MR. ZADRA: Yes, the vote was six in
35 favor, five opposed.

36
37 MR. WOODS: Okay. I'm just -- I'm just
38 gathering information that would help me make a
39 decision. So I appreciate your testimony number 1 and,
40 you know, our job is to support subsistence --
41 Federally-qualified subsistence user access to the
42 resource. So that's our job and I appreciate your
43 input and then 12 years of service on the RAC is
44 commendable. That's a -- a volunteer in that arena is
45 never appreciated and recognized. So I thank your --
46 your service.

47
48 Thank you.

49
50

0514

1 MR. ZADRA: Thank you. And I've
2 learned a lot through the process for sure.

3
4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
5 Thank you for your testimony.

6
7 MR. ZADRA: Mr. Chairman, if I may ask.
8 I need to leave tomorrow to jump on a ferry and I would
9 like to provide my testimony to WP13(b) and 14(b) if
10 possible. It's brief. This is the brown bear stuff.

11
12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, if you
13 keep it brief. Thank you.

14
15 MR. ZADRA: Okay. Thank you very much.
16 Dear Chairman Christianson and members of the Board.
17 My name is Dennis Zadra and I'm reading my testimony
18 today to help stay on topic. I'd encourage any
19 questions or clarifications after my testimony. I have
20 been on Southcentral RAC for 11 years and the Co-Chair
21 of the meeting as I mentioned before.

22
23 I submitted proposal WP26-13(b) because
24 the original proposal, WP26-14(b) only included the
25 residents of Chenega and Tatitlek and I felt it
26 incumbent to include the Federally-qualified users of
27 my town of Cordova. This does not mean that I support
28 these proposals, quite the contrary. I asked during
29 our discussion of these proposals why on earth would
30 anyone want to shoot a brown bear in August. The hide
31 quality is terrible and the quality of the meat is even
32 worse after feeding on salmon all summer. It was
33 mentioned that there were other reasons for harvesting
34 such as claws and hides for artifacts. To me this is a
35 terrible waste of an incredible animal. These bears
36 are highly vulnerable during the months of August,
37 September and June because of their feeding habits and
38 that is why the State season doesn't open until October
39 15th and closes on May 25th.

40
41 I disagree with OSM's justification
42 that these proposals are not expected to substantially
43 increase the harvest. If passed every seine boat
44 fishing for pink salmon in Prince William Sound with a
45 Federally-qualified subsistence user on board can kill
46 any brown bear they see walking down the beach or
47 fishing in the salmon streams. Our brown bear
48 populations are not robust by any means and these
49 proposals could put a great deal of additional pressure
50

0515

1 on them especially the large males.

2

3 I encourage you to reject these
4 proposals or if passed have the opening and closing
5 dates aligned with the State season.

6

7 Thank you.

8

9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
10 Appreciate that. I want to make sure that we reflect
11 that when we get to that proposal.

12

13 MR. ZADRA: Thank you.

14

15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I believe we
16 have a few more cards in the room and then we'll go to
17 those online.

18

19 MS. LAVINE: Next in the queue is
20 Andrew Hull.

21

22 MR. HULL: Good afternoon, Chairman and
23 members of the Board. My name is Andrew Hull and I'm
24 testifying today to voice my opposition to WP26-15. I
25 own and operate a small commercial fishing vessel out
26 of Cordova and hunt extensively on Hawkins and
27 Hinchinbrook Islands where I've harvested numerous
28 deer. I spend a substantial amount of time in the
29 Cordova area, more than anywhere else in the state, but
30 because I live on my boat during that time. My primary
31 residence is in Anchorage. While I am not a Federally-
32 qualified subsistence user I still practice subsistence
33 values and depend heavily on the fish and game I
34 harvest to carry me through the winters. I fish and
35 hunt side by side with Cordova residents and I share my
36 harvest with people in that community.

37

38 A lot of my main points have already
39 been covered so just out of respect for everyone's time
40 I'll just quickly say that the main reason I opposed
41 this proposal is that there's really no biological
42 imperative to these restrictions and that swings in
43 population rather than competition between hunters is
44 the primary driver of harvesting success rates.
45 Federally-qualified subsistence users out number non-
46 qualified users on these two islands by almost three to
47 one. And this proposal would eliminate access to a
48 small group of hunters without improving access to
49 qualified subsistence users in a significant manner.

50

0516

1 It would instead have a negative impact on the handful
2 of users like myself who practice subsistence values
3 and care deeply for both the resource and the community
4 that it sustains. Nevertheless I respect rural
5 subsistence users priority to access in these resources
6 and I would just ask that in the future if competition
7 increases or does become a limiting factor I would just
8 request less sweeping cuts that still afford some level
9 of opportunity to non-qualified users.

10

11 Thank you for considering my testimony
12 and allowing me to participate.

13

14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
15 Thank you for testifying today and putting that onto
16 the record. Appreciate that.

17

18 Any questions, comments.

19

20 (No comments)

21

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
23 Appreciate that. And the sharing you do in the
24 community. Yeah, goes a long ways. Next.

25

26 MS. LAVINE: Next we have Josh. And,
27 Josh, if you can please pronounce your name, I know it
28 begins with a C-H.

29

30 (No comments)

31

32 MS. LAVINE: Josh, are you in the room?

33

34 (No comments)

35

36 MS. LAVINE: And he -- no, we can hold
37 this just in case he returns. Next in the queue is
38 Michael Opheim.

39

40 MR. OPHEIM: Good afternoon, Board.
41 Thank you for the opportunity to give this testimony.
42 My name is Michael Opheim, I'm the Tribal Fish and
43 Wildlife Liaison for our Tribal Fish and Wildlife
44 Department for the Chugach Regional Resources
45 Commission. And our director had to leave on another
46 project so I will be reading our comments on WP26-15.

47

48 The Chugach Regional Resources
49 Commission would like to voice the support of WP26-15,
50

0517

1 serves the seven tribes of the Chugach region in
2 southcentral Alaska, the Native Village of Eyak, Valdez
3 Native Tribe, Native Village of Tatitlek, Chenega IRA
4 Council, Qutekcak Native Tribe, Port Graham Village
5 Council and the Nanwalek IRA Council. A subsistence
6 alliance group with representatives from each of the
7 Chugach Tribes and when they came together in March
8 this year all the tribal members present were aligned
9 with this proposal. The neighboring tribes want to see
10 their relatives -- relative tribe have access to the
11 resources of the lands they've always stewarded without
12 a fight or disruption.

13

14 In February of this year our Tribal
15 Fish and Wildlife Department Staff collaborated with
16 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Subsistence
17 Division to conduct household subsistence surveys in
18 Cordova. Opportunity to visit the homes of the
19 welcoming community members of Cordova to share their
20 subsistence practices with us gave rich perspectives
21 for their ways of life that put into context the
22 importance of all the natural resources they use,
23 especially the deer on Hinchinbrook and Hawkins. The
24 residents living and working to keep the community
25 going that can't take their whole family of four on a
26 ferry to make a Costco run need a healthy, stable
27 population of accessible deer to fill their freezers
28 with meat for the winter. The residents of Unit 6 have
29 relied on Sitka black-tail deer as a primary food
30 resource since they have been able to harvest them
31 after being planted in 1916. We'd like to see the
32 Federally-qualified users on the Federal public lands
33 of Hawkins and Hinchinbrook Islands given safeguards
34 for obtaining this vital resources.

35

36 Thank you.

37

38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
39 Thank you for that testimony and bringing that letter
40 here. Appreciate it. Any questions.

41

42 (No comments)

43

44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
45 Thank you for your work. Appreciate it.

46

47

48 Robbin, was there somebody else in the
49 room to be recognized or online?

50

0518

1 MS. LAVINE: Last in the room is Angela
2 Totemoff.

3
4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

5
6 MS. TOTEMOFF: Good evening. Thank you
7 for hearing me today. My name is Angela Totemoff. I
8 am the Vice President of Community and Shareholder
9 Relations from the Tatitlek Corporation. Today I'm
10 speaking as a tribal citizen from the Native Village of
11 Tatitlek and we do support this proposal. I do share
12 the sentiments that my comrade, Michael, just
13 mentioned. I also want to mention too that I heard a
14 lot of testimony today about having biological evidence
15 and testing done and as discussed by our -- my friend
16 over here, by Jim Smith, saying that the organizations,
17 the agencies responsible for those studies are
18 chronically underfunded and understaffed making it
19 really difficult to really track those numbers.

20
21 And I also want to mention that we have
22 more -- that this is more than just biological studies,
23 we have to consider cultural activities and traditional
24 customary activities within the region as well. So
25 it's not all truly based on science alone, there's more
26 to it than that, there's a whole people and identity
27 like tagged to it.

28
29 And lastly I just want to mention that
30 the State really cannot defend or has to defend this
31 because we -- between State and Federal agencies there
32 is a clash here, the State cannot defer to one
33 population, they have to represent all of their
34 residents versus the meaning of this Board is to
35 protect those residents under terms of conservation.

36
37 So thank you for your time and thank
38 you for staying after and I appreciate the ability to
39 speak to you today. Open to any comments or questions.

40
41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
42 comments, questions.

43
44 (No comments)

45
46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Well appreciate
47 you testifying today.

48
49 Thank you. The sky is falling.....

50

0519

1 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr.....

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON:even the
4 ceiling's tired.

5

6 MS. LAVINE: Yeah. I would note for
7 everybody in the room and I would like you to note too
8 that the ceiling fan above that portion of the audience
9 looks a little loose. So I have reported this to the
10 building security and they told me they've turned off
11 the air conditioning, but it's back on again. And just
12 to be safe if no one would sit underneath it I'd feel
13 so much better.

14

15 And then returning -- I think that is
16 the last of our public comments in the room. Online we
17 have -- the next in the queue is Raven Cunningham.

18

19 MS. CUNNINGHAM: Hi. Yes, can you hear
20 me okay?

21

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
23 floor, Raven.

24

25 MS. CUNNINGHAM: Thank you so much and
26 thanks for this opportunity to speak today. It's been
27 said my name is Raven Cunningham and I'm a Native
28 Village of Eyak tribal member and year round resident
29 of Cordova. And I'm here to support this proposal, 26-
30 15 to close deer hunting on Federal public lands on
31 Hawkins and Hinchinbrook Islands to non-Federally-
32 qualified users.

33

34 This issue is -- became very personal
35 to me. Deer are a critical food source for our
36 community, not just for myself, but many, many members
37 of this community and for my own family of course.
38 Over the past several years I've at first hand seen
39 hunters that are hunting deer and it's harder to find
40 and the harvests are less reliable. It's not just
41 anecdotal, but that's available data that we have for
42 the region which is the multi year pellet count.
43 Surveys show a clear decline in deer population,
44 whether people believe in this data or not, it's the
45 best available data we have and it's our responsibility
46 to act on it.

47

48 At the same time the pressure has
49 increased and I personally witnessed this, more non-
50

0520

1 local hunters accessing from the northwest side. These
2 areas -- are accessing these areas through transport
3 services and private vessels. As harvest opportunities
4 have declined in other regions that pressure is
5 shifting to Prince William Sound because we do have a
6 higher deer -- amount of deer that can be harvested and
7 it provides more yield for many people. This harvest
8 data supports that trends showing a decrease in hunter
9 success rates in recent years and an increase in
10 participation.

11
12 However something I want to touch on is
13 that this voluntary reporting doesn't actually
14 represent the harvest happening and I can attest to
15 that because I have gone out and hunted, not been
16 successful and did not submit my report back to the
17 State. And I'm one of many people who have done this.
18 And by closing these Federal lands to non-subsistence
19 hunting is a necessary and reasonable step I believe.
20 These islands are geographically limited and
21 ecologically sensitive and cannot support unlimited
22 harvested. Prioritizing subsistence use in these areas
23 is the Federal Subsistence Management Program's mandate
24 to provide priority for rural residents.

25
26 And I also lastly it's been brought up
27 about the transplanting of deer in the Prince William
28 Sound in 1916. That was funded and supported
29 completely by the Cordova Chamber of Commerce to
30 provide food opportunity for the people of Cordova.
31 And that investment has made -- was made to make a
32 benefit to the community, not increase outside
33 pressure. And we continue to support those
34 populations.

35
36 I strongly support this proposal and I
37 appreciate you taking my comments today.

38
39 Thanks.

40
41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
42 Appreciate your comments. Any questions from the
43 Board.

44
45 (No comments)

46
47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
48 seeing none, thank you again for calling in today.
49 We'll take the next one in the queue, please.
50

0521

1 MS. LAVINE: Next in the queue is Kyle
2 Wilkinson.

3
4 MR. WILKINSON: Hello. Thank you for
5 having me this afternoon. My name is Kyle Wilkinson,
6 I'm a resident in Willow and I was wanting to call in
7 about how disheartened I was to hear about this
8 proposal and state my opposition.

9
10 Many points of my opposition have
11 already been stated today for WP26-15 and again as a
12 respect for time I will not reiterate some of those.
13 Part of my comment that has not been addressed that I
14 would like to focus on is the impact on the local
15 economy. I myself have made two trips to hunt on
16 Hinchinbrook Island, the most recent of which was last
17 November where my group chartered or hired a local
18 transporter to take us from Cordova to a public use
19 cabin on the island. Making Cordova our jump off point
20 for our trip really I think impacted the local
21 community as do other transport trips that leave from
22 Cordova. Our group not only paid for our transport by
23 supporting a local family business, we also rented a
24 vehicle on the front and back end of our trip from a
25 local company. We ate multiple meals from various
26 restaurants and bakeries in Cordova, purchased
27 groceries from the local grocery stores, supplies from
28 the hardware store before and after the hunt and I
29 believe that taking this opportunity away from non-
30 locals, non-Federally-qualified users takes out that
31 opportunity to boost the local economy. When we went
32 we went in November to hunt the black-tail during their
33 rutting time which is not traditionally a season where
34 there are a lot of people coming to Cordova, a
35 traditional off season from the summer tourism and
36 commercial fishing. So I think the presence of non-
37 locally qualified users in the area definitely boosts
38 that local economy.

39
40 Again I live in Willow, I take all of
41 the meat that I harvest on these trips home and none of
42 it goes to waste.

43
44 (Teleconference interference)

45
46 MR. WILKINSON: Can you still hear me?

47
48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have
49 the floor.

50

1 MR. WILKINSON: Thank you. And I want
2 to reiterate how important that meat is to me to bring
3 home and to not only enjoy myself, but to share with
4 friends and family. I last winter harvested three
5 black-tails on Hinchinbrook, brought all of them home,
6 bone in, and not only did I utilize all of the meat I
7 also harvested some of the organs, I harvested the
8 bones which I gifted to a friend of mine who was able
9 to take those and turn those into bone broth. I think
10 a lot of people might be concerned about the non-
11 residents or non-locally qualified users coming in and
12 taking some of these animals as quote a trophy, to me
13 that is not what I'm going after. I'm completely going
14 after an experience and meat for the freezer to sustain
15 myself through the winter.

16
17 When we were there this last winter we
18 noticed a very large population of deer in our area,
19 the majority of those were does. We actually saw very
20 few bucks and our only harvest was on the males to
21 hopefully prolong that population and allow those does
22 to continue breeding. We also did not see another
23 group or another hunter during our trip, there was only
24 the three of us in our area. The only other person
25 besides our transporter that we saw was a single plane
26 that flew over on the last day of our hunt. So I
27 personally have not seen the presence of other hunters
28 in the area, nor did we see any sign and I do
29 understand that a majority of the deer harvest in these
30 areas are from both locals and non-locals that come to
31 hunt later in the season as these deer are being pushed
32 down towards the beaches where they're a little bit
33 more accessible. So I understand that a majority of
34 the harvest probably happens there, but from my
35 experience during the time I've been there I have not
36 seen that.

37
38 The last few points I wanted to talk
39 about was re-emphasizing that these black-tail were
40 brought to this area, they're not historically there
41 maybe for the past hundred years, but before that they
42 weren't necessarily a traditional resource in the area
43 and that they were brought to there and that I do
44 acknowledge that they boost and sustain local members
45 of the community, they're not traditionally part of
46 that area.

47
48 And then a recent concern I had was if
49 these areas are closed to non-Federally-qualified users
50

0523

1 is going to push the hunting competition and the
2 hunting pressure elsewhere say to Montague or some of
3 the other islands that may sustain black-tail
4 population. And should that happen I would be
5 concerned of those deer populations starting to drop
6 and dropping the overall population and health of
7 black-tail in Prince William Sound.

8

9 Thank you so much for the opportunity
10 to speak on this and yeah, appreciate everybody's time.

11

12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
13 Appreciate your testimony today. Any questions from
14 the Board.

15

16 (No comments)

17

18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
19 seeing none, we'll call on the next one in the queue.
20 You have a good day.

21

22 MS. LAVINE: Next in the queue is
23 Tesha.

24

25 MS. BROBRICKIE: Hi. Thank you to the
26 Board for the opportunity to comment. My name is Tesha
27 Brobrickie, I live in Cordova full-time. I work a 9:00
28 to 5:00 job in public health and I am a subsistence
29 user. Deer is a primary food source for me and
30 subsistence opportunity is a big reason I live and work
31 here. Because of my job and the weather I have a
32 limited window to hunt, mostly weekends and in good
33 weather conditions. I also have a slow boat, I can fly
34 at six knots if the tide is right. So when I go out
35 that time really matters. What my hunting looks like
36 now is a lot of stress and uncertainty. I'm leaving as
37 early as I safely can and sometimes unsafely trying to
38 get ahead of transporters. I've spent hours traveling
39 to a spot only to turn around because a transporter's
40 already there. And I've had times where I thought I
41 was alone and then heard shots nearby from hunters who
42 had been dropped off. If I come across another
43 subsistence hunter I can adjust pretty easily, but with
44 a transporter I don't know how many hunters are out or
45 where they are. That whole area becomes unsafe and
46 effectively unavailable to me. There's also a
47 difference in resources. The people using transporters
48 are paying a lot of money to be there or it's folks
49 with -- who can have a fast boat that can outrun the
50

0524

1 transporter and that's not something I can do. I'm
2 working full-time with limited time trying to harvest
3 food.

4
5 I also want to speak to the data being
6 used. I want to highlight that effort is not accounted
7 for in the data as Raven mentioned. Until recently I
8 didn't even know I was supposed to share about all the
9 times I have tried to hunt and was unable to do so. So
10 if that data isn't reliable then subsistence user
11 testimony really matters and I want to share that I'm
12 being impacted and if transporter pressure increases
13 even slightly I don't believe I will have a -- any
14 ability to meaningfully hunt. For me access means
15 having a real chance to harvest food with a modest boat
16 and reasonable time and so I fully support Wildlife
17 Proposal WP26-15 as written.

18
19 Thank you so much for your time.

20
21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
22 calling and testifying, giving us that perspective of
23 the local user. Appreciate that. Any questions from
24 the Board.

25
26 (No comments)

27
28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Next in the
29 queue.

30
31 MS. LAVINE: Madeline Demaske.
32 Madeline.

33
34 MS. DEMASKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
35 members of the Federal Subsistence Board. Can you guys
36 hear me okay?

37
38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have
39 the floor.

40
41 MS. DEMASKE: Okay. Wonderful. Thank
42 you again. Good afternoon. For the record my name is
43 Madeline Demaske and I'm speaking on behalf of Safari
44 Club International. We strongly oppose Wildlife
45 Proposal 26-15 which would close Federal public lands
46 on Hawkins and Hinchinbrook Islands in game management
47 Unit 6D to Sitka black-tail deer hunting by non-
48 Federally-qualified users. Not only does this proposal
49 lack Office of Subsistence Management support, but it
50

1 runs counter to the directive set out in the Alaska
2 National Interest Lands Conservation Act, commonly
3 referred to as ANILCA. ANILCA section 815(3) only
4 allows this Board to close Federal public lands to non-
5 Federally-qualified users when necessary for the
6 conservation of healthy populations of fish and
7 wildlife or to continue subsistence uses of such
8 population. Thus ANILCA preserves the right of non-
9 subsistence hunters to share in hunting opportunities
10 on public land. SCI fully understands and supports
11 ANILCA's priority for subsistence use opportunity,
12 however the status of deer in this area do not require
13 that non-subsistence hunting be restricted to protect
14 the subsistence priority. The deer populations on
15 Hawkins and Hinchinbrook Islands are the largest in GMU
16 6. This abundance is confirmed through deer pellet
17 surveys which do not indicate any conservation
18 concerns.

19
20 Further based on reported harvest data
21 subsistence users harvest more deer on Hawkins and
22 Hinchinbrook Islands. Between 2015 and 2024 Federally-
23 qualified subsistence users accounted for almost 73
24 percent of the total deer harvested on the two islands.
25 Because relatively few deer are harvested by non-
26 Federally-qualified users closing Hawkins and
27 Hinchinbrook Islands to them is not necessary for the
28 continued subsistence use of Federally-qualified users.
29 The proponents make no showing that this limited
30 restriction standard has been satisfied stating that
31 the proposal is primarily intended to address
32 competition among users. ANILCA does not authorize
33 restricting non-Federally-qualified users due to
34 perceived competition between user groups. The Ninth
35 Circuit in Ninilchik Traditional Council versus United
36 States found that although ANILCA emphasizes the
37 importance of subsistence lifestyles its other goals
38 include the preservation of non-subsistence hunting
39 opportunities which inherently result in competition,
40 but if a subsistence priority opportunity is not
41 reduced that competition is outside any closure
42 authority set forth in ANILCA.

43
44 We respectfully urge the Board to
45 reject Wildlife Proposal 26-15 which would close
46 Federal public lands on Hawkins and Hinchinbrook
47 Islands in game management 6D to non-Federally-
48 qualified users because it exceeds ANILCA's limited
49 closure authority.
50

0526

1 Thank you for the opportunity to
2 comment on this proposal.

3

4

5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
6 Thank you for calling in today and taking the time to
7 testify. Questions, comments.

8

9 (No comments)

10

11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
12 seeing none, next in the queue, please.

13

14 MS. LAVINE: Next in the queue is Cade
15 Butler.

16

17 MR. BUTLER: Hello, can you hear me?

18

19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

20

21 MR. BUTLER: Hello. Thank you for
22 taking the time to hear my testimony. I strongly
23 oppose restricting this deer hunting on Hawkins and
24 Hinchinbrook Islands exclusively to Federally-qualified
25 subsistence users because it unfairly excludes other
26 local Alaskans who rely on these lands for food,
27 tradition and recreation. Deer hunting in Prince
28 William Sound has long been a shared resource among
29 residents and creating a system that limits access
30 based solely on Federal subsistence qualification
31 undermines the broader community's connection to the
32 land.

33

34 Thank you.

35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
37 Thank you for taking the time to call in and appreciate
38 the brevity in your testimony. Thank you.

39

40 Next in the queue.

41

42 MS. LAVINE: Next in the queue is
43 Shannon Jones.

44

45 MS. JONES: Hi, this is Shannon Jones.
46 I just want to say that I oppose this measure and would
47 really like you to think hard about what it means to
48 shut it down to non-Federally-qualified users. Other
49 hunters bring in money and resources to the community

50

0527

1 which benefits everybody. Everybody should have a
2 right to use this land and asking for it to be shut
3 down is asking for it to take away that aspect of
4 hunting. Everybody should have the right and everybody
5 should have access.

6
7 Thank you. And I also have another
8 person here on this line that would like to testify as
9 well.

10
11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Please have
12 them state their name for the record.

13
14 Thank you.

15
16 MR. SCUTT: I'm Don Scutt, last name S-
17 C-U-T-T. I am a resident of Cordova. You know, I
18 strongly oppose this measure. There's no biological
19 reason for the closure and the -- even the Office of
20 Subsistence Management and Alaska Department of Fish
21 and Game oppose the closure and agree there is no
22 biological reason for it. I also have a cabin on
23 Hinchinbrook Island at Boswell Bay and I have noticed
24 an increase in deer in the last few years in the
25 Boswell Bay area and surrounding area. And so I would
26 just like to say I strongly oppose this WP26-15.

27
28 Thank you.

29
30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you .
31 Thank you for that testimony today. Appreciate you
32 guys calling in.

33
34 Any other in the queue, Robbin?

35
36 MS. LAVINE: Next in the queue is
37 Shannon Jones. Shannon.

38
39 MS. JONES: I just testified.

40
41 MS. LAVINE: Oh, great. Next in the
42 queue is John Wiese. Jose.

43
44 MR. WIESE: Can you hear me?

45
46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have
47 the floor.

48
49 MR. WIESE: Well, my name's John Wiese,
50

0528

1 I am an Alaska resident, I grew up in Cordova, Alaska.
2 I've been a subsistence user, a State user, I -- one
3 thing I -- the biggest testimony I've heard that
4 relates directly to me was young Gunner, 16 year old
5 Gunner, I know him very well. I know his dad real
6 well. I always commend his dad for taking him out
7 hunting all the time. He's a very lucky kid that he's
8 one of the young guys growing up that has a lot of
9 access to this area and I've got to watch Gunner drive
10 deer up the beach or up the docks. And one thing
11 Gunner has got to do is also watch my daughter who's 14
12 years old drive lots of deer up that dock over the
13 years and she is not a qualified subsistence user. Her
14 dad has hunted deer here, her grandfather has hunted
15 deer here and there's a huge part of the Cordova
16 community who isn't being represented in this -- by
17 this and I -- if this happens I -- my dad has seven or
18 he's got six grandkids who he will not be able to take
19 deer hunting in the areas that we've grown up and been
20 here for years and years in the community. And this
21 proposal takes that opportunity from many community
22 members, Cordova community members, who are not
23 Federally-qualified users.

24
25 So that's all I have to say. I oppose
26 this proposal. And thank you for your time.

27
28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
29 Thank you for calling in and testifying today. Any
30 questions, comments.

31
32 (No comments)

33
34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We appreciate
35 you guys calling in. Anymore, Robbin?

36
37 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
38 Next in the queue is Chelsey.

39
40 MS. HIGMAN: Yeah, hi. My name is
41 Chelsey Higman, I'm a Cordova resident and a
42 subsistence user. And I'll just keep my comments brief
43 that I'm opposed to this proposal and for much of the
44 same reasons that the previous commentators have stated
45 particularly the ones with Cordova community members
46 who have moved away from the community. I have
47 teenagers now, I have taken them hunting many times. A
48 lot of my concerns are that as they grow up and move
49 away they're not going to be able to hunt in the same
50

0529

1 areas that we have. And that just makes me sad to
2 think about losing that.

3

4 Thank you so much for your time.

5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
7 Thank you for your brevity too. We appreciate that
8 here at this hour of the day.

9

10 So anybody else on the line that would
11 like to testify this is your opportunity to speak to
12 the proposal.

13

14 MS. LAVINE: Mr. Chair, next in the
15 queue is Kenneth Jones. And for our benefit if you are
16 still waiting to speak please raise your hand. You can
17 do so by using the raise hand function in Teams or
18 star, five on -- by cell.

19

20 Thank you.

21

22 MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
23 just wanted to call in, I'm on the ferry on my way home
24 and I just wanted to call in and point to my comments
25 from yesterday. I appreciate the opportunity. Also I
26 would like to just address something that I heard
27 earlier and just a little bit more new information in
28 which, you know, I -- like I spoke to you yesterday I
29 own a small transport company based out of Cordova and
30 I am a third generation born and raised local there.

31

32 One thing I heard is that we
33 (indiscernible) people on the weekends which is not in
34 anyway true, we do our turnover on the weekend. So
35 there has not been a weekend where we're out with
36 clients in the last three years. So we do get confused
37 or my boat looks very similar to other boats, we use a
38 commercial bow picker because I'm also a commercial
39 fisherman. So our boats look very similar to all the
40 other commercial bow pickers in the harbor which
41 there's over 300. So I get a lot of phone calls from
42 people who are angry about what I'm doing and it's not
43 even me out there. It happens more than I would like
44 to admit. So I do think that the transporter thing, we
45 get a lot of the blame that's maybe misplaced. And I
46 just wanted to bring that up.

47

48 Thank you.

49

50

0530

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
2 Thank you for calling in and keeping it brief.
3 Appreciate that. And safe travels.

4
5 Who's next, Robbin?

6
7 MS. LAVINE: Brad, you're next in the
8 queue.

9
10 MR. SJOSTEDT: Okay. Can you hear me?

11
12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have
13 it, Brad.

14
15 MR. SJOSTEDT: Hello, my name is Brad
16 Sjostedt, I'm a life long resident of Cordova, Alaska
17 and I strongly oppose this. I think it's crazy and I
18 don't hunt that much, but I do a little bit, one or two
19 times a year. And I just don't really see a good
20 reason behind this. Most of my family and close circle
21 of friends here in Cordova oppose this. Our family has
22 a cabin out on Hinchinbrook Island that we utilize as
23 an opportunity to harvest deer. And I just wanted to
24 get on here and say it's going to be a real bummer for
25 us and our family and a lot of people in Cordova if you
26 do this. So I just wanted to -- just wanted to say
27 that I strongly oppose this.

28
29 Thank you.

30
31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
32 Thank you for taking the time and giving your position.

33
34 Next, please.

35
36 MS. LAVINE: Will phone number 3520,
37 3520 unmute yourself. You can do so by pressing star,
38 six.

39
40 (No comments)

41
42 MS. LAVINE: 3520 you may address the
43 Board by pressing star, six to unmute your mic. There
44 you go.

45
46
47 MR. SMITH: Do you got me now?

48
49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We got you.

50

0531

1 MR. SMITH: Yeah, my name's Bob Smith
2 and I'm calling. I'm in strong support of this 26-15
3 proposal. I've been hunting since I was 19 years old,
4 I'm 66 and it is in my opinion it's a brutal shame to
5 see this resource being industrialized. It's there to
6 feed the community and when people are using it to
7 enrich themselves, it just takes food off of
8 everybody's plates. And yeah, I hope that it goes
9 through.

10

11 Thank you.

12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, thank
14 you. Thank you for calling in and.....

15

16 MR. SMITH: Yeah.

17

18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON:stating it
19 on the record. We appreciate your testimony.

20

21 Next in the queue please.

22

23 MS. LAVINE: Next in the queue is.....

24

25 MR. SMITH: Thank you.

26

27 MS. LAVINE:is phone number
28 ending in 8313. 8313, press star, six to unmute your
29 phone. There you go. Please address the Board.

30

31 (No comments)

32

33 MS. LAVINE: 8313, you look to be
34 unmuted, but we cannot hear you. Oh, you've muted
35 yourself. Try star, six to unmute and see if there's
36 also a mute and unmute function. You're unmuted, give
37 it a try.

38

39 MR. DAVIS: Can you hear me now?

40

41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

42

43 MR. DAVIS: This is Jason Davis,
44 Cordova resident. I guess I've been mentioned by one
45 of my good friends and I have been 26-15, but I do feel
46 the controversy of.....

47

48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We lost you
49 again.

50

0532

1 MS. LAVINE: I think -- I think he
2 disconnected. No, he's unmuted now. Please 8313
3 please address the Board.

4
5 MR. DAVIS: All right. Yeah, this is
6 Jason Davis, Cordova resident. I guess I was mentioned
7 earlier by one of my good friends. And I understand
8 the controversy of this and the only controversy that I
9 understand is from people that have lived here for
10 their whole lives that want to continue to freely hunt
11 on the local islands here. That being said I'm still
12 in support of 26-15. I've seen an increase in
13 transporter pressure and unfortunately the State of
14 Alaska doesn't really regulate it and it has affected
15 the deer population on these islands. I've seen it,
16 I've seen the local hunters hunt Hawkins Island more
17 heavily which makes it even harder for people with the
18 smaller skiffs that try to hunt really close to town.
19 And I've heard, you know, local testimony saying that
20 that's what they're seeing. And I've seen that myself.
21 I hunt deer every year, I hunt lots of days and don't
22 take any animals whether it's because I don't feel like
23 it or maybe I didn't see anything.

24
25 So anyway that's it, I'm in support of
26 26-15. I guess I would like -- I wish there was a way
27 that people that grew up here that have families
28 directly on the ground still could have hunting rights
29 in this area, but if there's not then that's that.

30
31 So that's all I have to say.

32
33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
34 Thank you for your testimony today. Appreciate the
35 call.

36
37 Robbin.

38
39 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
40 Will phone number 1774 please press star, six to unmute
41 yourself. 1774, press star, six to unmute yourself.
42 You are unmuted. Please address the Board.

43
44 MR. RICHARDSON: Hi, there. My name is
45 Matt Richardson. Can you hear me?

46
47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Matt, you
48 have the floor.

49
50

0533

1 MR. RICHARDSON: Yeah, I'm a Cordova,
2 Alaskan where I own and operate my own fishing
3 operation and have a small family of four with the
4 birth of my daughter just recently. I would like to
5 strongly oppose proposal WP26-15. I think closing
6 public lands on Hawkins and Hinchinbrook Islands to
7 non-Federally-qualified users is not justified by
8 biological need or conservation data. There's no clear
9 evidence that current regulations are failing or that
10 non-subsistence hunters are harming the deer
11 population. You have direct testimonies from very
12 reputable sources that go in great detail on the
13 subject.

14
15 Furthermore I'd like to point out that
16 Cordova hosts a large amount of families who are in the
17 military and not just the ones that are in the military
18 who don't get to voice their concerns and are not all
19 Alaska year round residents. In the 10 years that I've
20 hunted these two islands I have not once had a problem
21 filling tags and quite frankly don't know anyone else
22 in the community who struggles to fill tags. I've not
23 once ever ran into another hunter or a group while out
24 deer hunting. Yes, the islands are small, but the fact
25 of the matter is NFQ users are not the problem. The
26 community is so tight knit, you know where each other's
27 going, you know where they've been and when to go and
28 where to go to beat the weekend warriors and out of
29 state hunters. We as a community don't just hunt the
30 rut, we hunt August through December. If you can't get
31 a buck or two and a few doe, whatever your family needs
32 then, you know, that's hunting. It's, you know, it
33 just is what it is.

34 Lastly, you know, these animals were
35 given to us to hunt, I think, you know, we should get
36 to keep hunting whether you're Federally-qualified or
37 non-Federally-qualified, you know, everyone's doing
38 their part for conservation.

39
40 So thank you for your time.

41
42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
43 Thank you for calling in and testifying. Appreciate
44 you doing that today.

45
46 Robbin, do we have another one in the
47 queue?

48
49 MS. LAVINE: Last in the queue is Aaron
50

0534

1 Hanson.

2

3

4 right?

5

6

7

8

9

10 Aaron Hanson. And I support the proposal. I am a
11 local subsistence user, I utilize the deer population
12 and the other subsistence resources within our region
13 to feed my family. I have three young children who are
14 actively hunting with me as well, minus the four year
15 old. I will say that I have noticed a high increase in
16 pressure and it's continuing every year. And I do feel
17 for the people who were born and raised here, that's a
18 big deal, but I am concerned for the continued pressure
19 that is coming from the transporters, and not just the
20 transporters that are here in our community that are,
21 you know, pushing to better themselves or their, you
22 know, means of making money, but I'm one of the people
23 that -- me and my -- we don't -- we don't go to the
24 grocery store and buy meat, that's not what we do, we
25 rely on the deer and the moose and the goat and the
26 salmon and the other resources that are available. And
27 my concern is as this continues it's going to make it
28 more and more difficult and restrict some of the take
29 that we have.

30

31

32

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In recent years, you know, when you're
hunting around the local people you're aware and you
see the boats and one of my last interactions with a
group of transporters that were dropped off, you know,
normally if you see somebody in the woods you're -- you
know, you get their attention, you might meet up and
communicate, but my last interaction with someone who
was dropped off that wasn't there with another boat was
he silently crept back into the woods maintaining eye
contact and never to be seen again. So that made me
feel very uncomfortable and ended up making it back to
the beach.

So I just -- like I said my fear is
what is coming and the continuation and what it's going
to do to the resources.

Thank you for your time.

0535

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
2 Thank you for testifying to that position. Appreciate
3 you calling in.

4
5 We got one more.

6
7 MS. LAVINE: 5364 please press star,
8 six to unmute. Go ahead.

9
10 MS. RYDELL: Hello, my name is Sara
11 Rydell and I support this proposal. I am a Native
12 Village of Eyak tribal member and I live in Cordova and
13 also on Hinchinbrook Island. My family depends on
14 harvesting deer. We are off the road system and the
15 cost of food and fuel in Cordova is extremely steep.
16 When we are lucky enough to harvest deer we utilize as
17 much as physically possible. We process all the meat,
18 we made bone broth, render tallow, any extra scraps of
19 fat are cut up or ground up for animals. We respect
20 this resource, practice sustainable take and we are
21 harvesting to feed our family.

22
23 I support this proposal because my
24 experience is not unique. Many rural residents in our
25 community depend on our local deer. The deer pellet
26 surveys are the only consistent population data we have
27 is showing a downward trend in the population. At the
28 same time harvest reporting is very low with only 11
29 percent of hunters reporting. This makes it difficult
30 to fully understand harvest pressure, but what we have
31 seen is it's becoming increasingly difficult to harvest
32 deer. There has been a noticeable increase in
33 transporter activity on Hawkins and Hinchinbrook
34 Islands. These services often anchor for extended
35 periods in the few bays that are safe and accessible.
36 This creates overcrowding and limits access for food
37 rural users or limits access for local rural users. In
38 some cases a single transporting operation may consist
39 of multiple large vessels, significantly increasing the
40 number of non-local hunters in a concentrated area.
41 There is currently no cap on how many transporting
42 services can operate in this area. Hawkins and
43 Hinchinbrook Islands are incredibly important to my
44 family and to other rural residents who rely on these
45 lands for subsistence. Increased pressure and limited
46 access are directly affecting our ability to harvest
47 food.

48
49 For these reasons I respectfully ask
50

0536

1 the Board to support Proposal WP26-15 and protect these
2 areas for subsistence users.

3

4 Thank you and I'm happy to answer any
5 questions.

6

7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
8 Appreciate you calling in today.

9

10 Any questions

11

12 (No comments)

13

14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: And again thank
15 you for your testimony today. Appreciate that.

16

17 And that's it. Just for the public
18 testimony. Back to the list.

19

20 Council recommendation.

21

22 MS. CAMINER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
23 This is Judy Caminer, Vice Chair of the Council. Well,
24 you've kind of heard it all already and this was a much
25 more vibrant and numerous amount of comments than we
26 had, but it does reflect a lot of what our Council
27 discussed as well. We did hear -- we had the concern
28 about increasing transporter traffic out there. We
29 heard that some culture camps had to move because of
30 this disruption or displacement. So as you also heard
31 we had a very close vote, six/five. And you can see
32 why that's happened. We really appreciated Native
33 Village of Eyak bringing this to the Council and to our
34 attention and trying to be proactive, but yet others
35 felt that this didn't meet the threshold. And it makes
36 me think, this is just my personal comment, the Council
37 didn't even get to this. As you are we were always
38 pressured it seems like by time, we had a lot of
39 proposals as have you. And we probably could have
40 hammered out more of a compromise, but be that as it
41 may the majority felt that there was increasing
42 activity by non-Federally-qualified users that could
43 impact future opportunities for subsistence users.

44

45 And we noted that figuring out deer
46 population is really challenging on the island and that
47 proposed closure would be good stewardship. Now those
48 who were opposed again appreciated NVA -- NVE being
49 proactive and some didn't -- some people accepted there
50

0537

1 could be a conservation concern, some people did not.
2 That's always hard to discern certainly.

3
4 But I also want to mention Fish and
5 Game was neutral on the proposal, I think that's
6 different from what they're saying now so we didn't
7 have the benefit of that information at the time.

8
9 I think I'll stop there. This is a
10 really challenging one and a very difficult decision.

11
12 Thank you very much.

13
14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
15 that report, Judy. I'll give Sara the floor and then I
16 have a comment.

17
18 MS. BOARIO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
19 Thank you, Judy. You seemed to allude that perhaps the
20 Council discussed maybe alternatives to closing the
21 entire unit or at least starting to think about a
22 different compromise you said I believe. So that was
23 my question, were alternatives that don't close the
24 whole unit discussed like we've seen in other parts of
25 the state, just more targeted?

26
27 MS. CAMINER: Thank you. Through the
28 Chair and Ms. Boario. Unfortunately we did not talk
29 about alternatives, we just looked at open, closed.
30 And I think in the future maybe we'll think a little
31 bit harder about that so that isn't such a difficult
32 choice because it's -- none of these proposals are
33 clear cut and we all do the best we can with the
34 information we have at that time.

35
36 Thank you.

37
38 MS. BOARIO: Thank you.

39
40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. And
41 you kind of answered -- asked my question, Sara, it was
42 about, you know, all -- other places around the State
43 we have other tools that we used to maybe just give a
44 window of opportunity for rural users without
45 restricting, you know, Federally-qualified users for
46 the whole season, but giving that opportunity or window
47 of time for the locals to get out there and not feel
48 like they're in competition is one of the tools we've
49 been using quite a bit in other areas whether it's the
50

0538

1 extended season or some intermittent time during the
2 peak season.

3

4 So we can limit that, but those are
5 maybe some tools we might look at if something needs to
6 happen here today. So just.....

7

8 MR. PENDERGAST: Mr. Chair.

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead,
11 Kevin.

12

13 MR. PENDERGAST: Well, since it came
14 up, Kevin Pendergast, BLM, I'll just note that
15 Federally-qualified subsistence users already have an
16 open period that's not available to non-Federally-
17 qualified users. So I would like folks on the body to
18 understand that, they've got January subsistence hunt
19 that's not open to others so it's an important point I
20 think people should be aware of.

21

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: And as a rural
23 subsistence user too speaking probably for the Native
24 people, January is a tough time to eat skinny deer. So
25 just for the Eyak people I want to put that on the
26 record that sometimes when we're pushing stuff out I
27 shot zero deer in January, it's been open on POW for a
28 long time.

29

30 MS. BOARIO: Jerry, did you have.....

31

32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead,
33 Jerry.

34

35 MR. INGERSOLL: I had a question, but
36 it was the same question that my colleague from Fish
37 and Wildlife Service asked.

38

39 MS. BOARIO: I was just -- to build on
40 it, I mean, I was -- I saw that part too, Kevin, and I
41 was thinking more like a newer -- this issue in
42 particular, but like looking at more geography and
43 seeing like for example the numbers on Hawkins look
44 like lower than the numbers on Hinchinbrook and just
45 was wondering the RAC had just started to look into
46 some of those options differently. But we're not
47 there, but Jerry is.

48

49 MR. INGERSOLL: Yeah, I guess I have a
50

0539

1 question for the RAC. Did you consider taking more
2 time and deferring this proposal that's obviously very
3 divisive across -- well, it -- on the RAC, in the
4 community, across the larger -- did you consider
5 deferring and sort of crafting a little compromise over
6 a longer term, would you consider that. It strikes me
7 that we're about to get into a position where we're
8 going to have to have winners and losers and thoughts
9 there?

10

11 MS. CAMINER: My personal thoughts are
12 right, we don't like having winners and losers. And so
13 we -- it would be good to craft something that could be
14 more consensus oriented and not look at it as
15 unfortunately as winners and losers. But no,
16 unfortunately we didn't talk about deferring it, we
17 just kind of had it in front of us and thought we need
18 to make a decision.

19

20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
21 Thank you. I think that concludes with the Regional
22 Advisory Council. Next we'll -- oh, Kodiak has it here
23 too. Sorry.

24

25 Thank you.

26

27 MS. SKINNER: Yeah, we -- this Rebecca
28 Skinner with the Kodiak-Aleutians RAC. We discussed
29 this because we have a C&T, but the RAC noted that
30 people from our region don't go up to this area to hunt
31 deer and so we deferred to the wisdom of the local RAC.
32 So good luck.

33

34 Thanks.

35

36 (Laughter)

37

38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
39 That was wise of you, Rebecca.

40

41 All right. Any other questions,
42 comments for the RAC's position.

43

44 (No comments)

45

46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
47 We'll move on to the Alaska Department of Fish and
48 Game.

49

50

0540

1 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
2 For the record the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
3 opposes the proposal to close Hawkins and Hinchinbrook
4 to non-Federally-qualified users. ADF&G can see no
5 reasons until Title VIII of ANILCA for the Federal
6 Subsistence Board to approve this. There's been a lot
7 said and a lot has been what was entailed in our
8 comments. A few things though I would point out that
9 hadn't been pointed out. I was -- while folks were
10 testifying I dug into our latest management report and
11 in there we had numbers of locals, non-local residents
12 and non-residents who participated in Unit 6D hunts and
13 that has remained static over the years. It's
14 fluctuated up and down, but it has not grown.

15
16 Also looking and with that -- and one
17 thing that I don't think was really highlighted was in
18 the OSM analysis and the chart that is on Page 778 I
19 believe, you will notice the trend for the percentage
20 of harvest has grown for Federally-qualified users, but
21 has overall trended down for non-rural Alaskans and if
22 you can see there's is -- I mean, basically no blip for
23 non-residents. It's sitting there right at the floor.
24 So overall we still see Federally-qualified users
25 harvesting and improving that amount of harvest out of
26 this area.

27
28 Another things that I -- if I can have
29 the latitude I would ask I know, you know, when it
30 comes to us, to the State, the State can regulate
31 commercial activities on its lands. And so with the
32 comments that we've heard that, you know, the
33 commercial activity is occurring so I would say what
34 does the Forest Service see as regulating that
35 activity. If you want to reply I just wanted to throw
36 it out there as a possibility.

37
38 MR. INGERSOLL: Yeah, and I'd have to
39 look into it further, but transporters who are spending
40 all of their time on saltwater and simply transporting,
41 it becomes difficult for the Forest Service to regulate
42 that activity.

43
44 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, sir.
45 Appreciate that. Member Pendergast had mentioned the
46 extra 30 days and yes, that -- as the Chair pointed out
47 isn't a great time, but this Board passed that time
48 because someone wanted that time. So if that's not the
49 greatest time then you as a Board need to look at
50

0541

1 what's the best time to provide that additional
2 opportunity if that's not the best because at some
3 point in time not -- maybe not you all, but the Board
4 passed that proposal to give something that someone had
5 asked for.

6
7 So and then the last thing I will
8 mention and not all of you were here, but it was a bone
9 of contention and the thing that we stressed during the
10 Unit 4 closures was how do we see a path forward.
11 There is no metric, you know, what -- I mean, it's a
12 combination, but when is a look. And the closure
13 reviews don't do us -- I mean, when the one proposal
14 that we got closures lifted during this meeting that
15 was overwhelming, like that just -- I mean, that
16 cleared it. So unless I see something that is, you
17 know, best ever, am I -- are we ever going to see this
18 lifted. I know that it is not precedent setting to do
19 that. As many of you may know for the SAP there is a
20 threshold number in which -- that was established by
21 the Board in which that closure would be lifted. So I
22 would encourage -- not maybe at this time it will --
23 well, if we defer it as a conversation to had, to
24 mirror something like that so everybody knows like what
25 is the health of the population, what is the harvest,
26 you know, some sort of idea when we're going to get out
27 of this because if not like the Unit 4 closures the
28 State does not see a light at the end of the tunnel
29 unless it is basically the historical best population
30 and best harvest ever. But I say that when I know the
31 information I had on Unit 4 was that criteria and we
32 still closed.

33
34 Thank you.

35
36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
37 comments for the State.

38
39 (No comments)

40
41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
42 that, Ben. Oh, Frank.

43
44 MR. WOODS: Thank you, Mr. Mulligan.
45 I'm reading the total deer harvest Hawkins report on
46 Page 778. I appreciate your information on this. It
47 looks like during covid from 2021 there was a huge
48 increase due to the Park Service eliminating all the
49 permits and requirements. And then on the bottom it
50

0542

1 delineates the same -- kind of the pattern of -- I like
2 the way it's set up where actually we have non-rural
3 Alaskans, other rural users, Cordova and non-residents.
4 What I -- for me I'm looking at exploitation rate, the
5 highest rate would have been basically 80 percent like
6 in 2023 and during covid it was a lower rate, about 80--
7 75 to 80 percent. But I'm delineating all the
8 information of what all the testimony is and we've
9 heard this before and I'll say this is a part of the
10 process I was talking about, we need to delineate or at
11 least separate user groups at some point because number
12 1, our purpose is to satisfy the subsistence user.
13 What I've heard is commercial, recreational, sports and
14 I'm trying to stop the Federally-qualified subsistence
15 users and non-qualified and separation of urban versus
16 rural like we talked about in the beginning. What I
17 see is there's conflicts and just within the region,
18 but it's going to -- we see it all over the state.

19

20 And being at the table like the
21 gentleman at -- from the RAC and the RAC itself
22 addresses that these are serious concerns that we have
23 to kind of -- at least at a management level and a
24 regulatory level address independently almost. It's
25 going to take a lot of time. It's been a long day, Mr.
26 Chair, I'll -- I just want to commend you on bringing
27 all these things forward because for us as Board
28 members, you know, we have to sort out all this stuff
29 and you're sitting at the table and helping that
30 process.

31

32 Thank you.

33

34 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Woods,
35 appreciate that. If I may, Mr. Chair, just a little
36 latitude. The Board of Game has finer tools to get at
37 things than you all. Non-Federally-qualified users
38 encompasses a large group of folks. The Board of Game
39 has a multitude of ways to dissect hunts especially
40 when it comes to non-locals, draws, registration, tier
41 if necessary. There's ways to step down things instead
42 of going from a hundred miles an hour to a screeching
43 halt. So I will mention that and advocate for folks to
44 employ the Board of Game system because in looking at
45 the last cycle people must forget about us because no
46 proposals were in to do that.

47

48 Thank you.

49

50

0543

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
2 Sara.

3
4 MS. BOARIO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr.
5 Mulligan, do you know why the State was neutral at the
6 -- or did I hear that right or.....

7
8 MR. MULLIGAN: The State was neutral at
9 the time because the RACs meet too soon in our own
10 process in order to come up with an official position.
11 So at the RAC meetings we have to state a neutral
12 position because we have not vetted it through our --
13 the proposals through our system.

14
15 MS. BOARIO: Thank you.

16
17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you
18 Department of Fish and Game for that. We'll move on to
19 ISC comments.

20
21 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
22 I'll give an abbreviated version of the ISC comments.
23 You have our full comment in the meeting materials.
24 The Federal Subsistence Board will need to consider a
25 few key sections of ANILCA before taking action on
26 proposals requesting closures and closure reviews.
27 Specifically those sections pertaining to Council
28 deference, that's section 805(c) and those pertaining
29 to limitations to closures or restrictions of
30 subsistence and non-subsistence uses on Federal public
31 lands in sections 815(3) and 816(b). These three
32 sections speak to the heart of Board authority and
33 require a careful balance between the Federal priority,
34 the continuation of subsistence uses, the necessary
35 conservation of subsistence fish and wildlife and
36 unnecessary restrictions. In the case of Wildlife
37 Proposal 26-15 the ISC suggests the Council's
38 recommendation to close deer hunting on Federal lands
39 in Unit 6D by non-Federally-qualified subsistence users
40 may not meet the criteria for deference.

41
42 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

43
44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
45 Robbin. That opens up the floor for Board discussion
46 with the Council Chair and Liaison.

47
48 MR. PENDERGAST: I'm getting up to
49 speed through the long discussion and testimony, Kevin
50

0544

1 Pendergast, BLM, learning a lot about what goes on in
2 this area, looking at the maps, appreciate all the
3 folks who have testified. Whatever we do is, you know,
4 going to be viewed controversially by some folks. I
5 just want to throw a few cautions out there I guess for
6 us as a body. One is sometimes our tendency is to
7 defer matters and send it back to the RAC to work on it
8 some more and that's, you know, a possible outcome.
9 But what occurs to me here is we have a proposal that's
10 probably outside of our legal mandate, I'm not sure we
11 have the authority, you know, to pass such a thing even
12 if we wanted to. And we're sort of wading into the
13 area of weighing different user groups against each
14 other in the absence of any real biological data or so
15 forth.

16

17 So I just -- I just wanted to throw a
18 healthy caution out. I think hypothetically if we were
19 as a body to close this area to non-Federally-qualified
20 users this is not going away, it would be back before
21 us, I think there'd be questions about our legal
22 standing, I think there'd be questions about lots of
23 things. So it's just -- it's one of those proposals I
24 think requires a very careful consideration and clearly
25 we've got high passion on all sides of it and a split
26 RAC.

27

28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
29 Kevin. I don't hear any questions to our State or
30 Federal.

31

32 Go ahead, Rhonda.

33

34 MS. PITKA: Yeah, so we're constantly
35 and consistently being asked to make decisions, you
36 know, based on the best available science, but
37 sometimes when that science isn't available what do we
38 do then, when there are places like this where locals
39 are reporting both conservation issues and lower deer
40 populations and it's based on a pellet study. Does the
41 State have any plan to beef up the wildlife management
42 studies, some of those surveys that they do because,
43 you know, we need good information to make good
44 decisions.

45

46 Thank you.

47

48 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you. Through the
49 Chair, Member Pitka. We do our best with the resources

50

0545

1 that we have available. And we do manage where we
2 manage. But I will say this with closures comes
3 responsibility. So I would look to my brethren at the
4 Forest Service to come in to help us because now we are
5 basically kicked out of the management role. And so
6 whose responsibility is it now to assess that
7 population when the State has effectively lost its
8 management role. So we will do our best, but we would
9 need help.

10

11 MR. INGERSOLL: And I'd just offer we
12 have absolutely the same challenges with cuts in our
13 resources and limited ability that the State has which
14 is not to shirk that responsibility, we'll do the best
15 we have with what we got. And -- yeah, and lack of
16 resources is a challenge for everyone.

17

18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I think we're
19 at the floor is open for a motion. I think we've
20 discussed this enough.

21

22 MR. INGERSOLL: Mr. Chair, Forest
23 Service.

24

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
26 floor.

27

28 MR. INGERSOLL: Mr. Chair, the Forest
29 Service for the purposes of putting a motion -- a
30 positive motion on the table moves to adopt WP26-15.
31 If I get a second I'll explain why I intend to oppose
32 my motion.

33

34 MR. PENDERGAST: BLM seconds.

35

36 MR. INGERSOLL: Mr. Chair, the Forest
37 Service opposes WP26-15 because there does not appear
38 to be substantial evidence of a conservation concern
39 for deer or for the continuation of the subsistence use
40 here. We believe that this proposal does not meet the
41 ANILCA standard for restricting hunting for non-
42 Federally-qualified users in section 815(3). Over 70
43 percent of the harvest is by Federally-qualified users
44 with a 70 percent success rate.

45

46 There's clearly conflict among users,
47 there is division within the community, there's
48 division among the larger user community and yet
49 division in the community is not one of the reasons
50

0546

1 that this Board is empowered to close an area to all
2 non-Federally-qualified users. From the dialogue we
3 had with the RAC it appears the RAC was closely divided
4 on this issue too and there may be opportunity if we
5 reject this proposal now for the RAC to work within the
6 community and craft a more balanced solution. Because
7 the division is real, we've heard serious concerns
8 which are real about an increase in transporters and an
9 increase in access and division among access. I
10 believe that there's opportunity to craft a more
11 balanced solution rather than beginning with a complete
12 closure here.

13

14 And I also believe that it's important
15 just as all of us support the rural priority for
16 subsistence use because it's in ANILCA, I think it's
17 important for us to follow all of the provisions of
18 ANILCA to protect the ones that we care about most.

19

20 Thank you.

21

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The floor is
23 open for deliberation, discussion.

24

25 MR. WOODS: Mr. Chair.

26

27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Frank.

28

29 MR. WOODS: So I -- yeah, you're
30 absolutely correct. We take closures real seriously.
31 I don't think we've kind of explored separating user
32 groups to seasons, I don't think we've explored or
33 heard recommendations from management, State and/or
34 Feds, I heard just -- if I heard correctly, you can
35 correct me if I'm wrong, that both entities are
36 strapped with time and also management and
37 administrative authority. Under the non-subsistence
38 and subsistence rules for ANILCA, reasons for public
39 safety and administration can restrict or close
40 wildlife regulations. That's the last thing we want to
41 do. The first thing I want to do is keep everybody at
42 the table and work out solutions that might be and make
43 -- might make sense. And I don't think anybody
44 explored separating seasons for rural or non-rural
45 residents, Federally-qualified subsistence users or
46 qualified subsistence users. There's options, but we
47 haven't explored them and I'm not in favor of bringing
48 this to the table or voting it down or up. But I will
49 weight in on that when that time comes.

50

0547

1 Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Did you want to
4 say something now?

5

6 MR. STRIKER: Yeah. You know, I'm very
7 deeply moved by the public testimony in support of this
8 proposal and very much respect the interests of the
9 proponent. Clearly there are conflicts. And yeah,
10 Frank, our job is to protect rural subsistence
11 priority, but there are guidelines, there are rules
12 that we have to follow. And I think particularly given
13 the timing of where we are in a review of the Federal
14 subsistence process, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera,
15 we need to be really, really careful as a Board. I
16 think our credibility and perhaps our future depends on
17 us being really clear about what our authority is. And
18 when there is not substantial evidence to satisfy the
19 very high bar -- I guess what I want to say is I -- in
20 my 10 years here as Park Service I'm super sensitive to
21 Federal overreach because I get accused of it all the
22 time. And the last thing I would want to see is a
23 narrative of FSB overreach. So I just urge all of us
24 to make sure that our vote is fully supported.

25

26 Thank you.

27

28 MR. PENDERGAST: Mr. Chair.

29

30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Kevin.

31

32 MR. PENDERGAST: I can't elaborate more
33 fully on those excellent comments, but since we're
34 having a discussion about this I did want to weigh in a
35 little bit, Frank, and note because it came up once
36 earlier in our proceedings on another proposal, I like
37 getting to an up or down vote. It sends a clear signal
38 about where our authority is. It doesn't mean it can't
39 -- that the RAC can't grapple with this issue and come
40 up with a different proposal and come back. It doesn't
41 mean the issue is dead for all time. It's just like
42 this proposal's flawed and if it goes down it goes down
43 or whatever the case may be, but I don't view that as
44 permanent. If there are continued conflicts and issues
45 and folks in the community are going to have to come up
46 with some solutions to that.

47

48 MS. JOHN: BIA here. I was just
49 curious to know if there was any opportunity on how we

50

0548

1 might be able to initiate a deferral at this time for
2 the RAC to go back and consider alternatives,
3 compromises, whether it's staggered opening times or
4 different bag limits for the different populations
5 versus just ending with the final action today.

6
7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, I think
8 for the order of business we'd have to have the maker
9 of the motion withdraw that. So I'm not sure if that
10 would be something they would do today.

11
12 MR. INGERSOLL: I'd be willing to
13 withdraw the motion and if -- and make a new motion to
14 defer.

15
16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: That's up to
17 the -- you if you get concurrence by the second.

18
19 MR. PENDERGAST: Are we in discussion
20 mode still?

21
22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We're still in
23 discussion so that's just a discussion, not a motion.

24
25 MR. PENDERGAST: I guess what I would
26 say is if -- I want to remind folks that we're
27 operating I believe and I think it's been well
28 articulated here, with a proposal that is not able to
29 be supported within the legal authority that we have.
30 So for us to defer adds an air of legitimacy to that
31 proposal such that maybe folks should go kind of tweak
32 it a bit, but it doesn't meet the legal standards we
33 have to operate under. So I think a much clearer
34 posture for the Board and for the public to understand
35 what an appropriate proposal looks like is to, you
36 know, in my view and giving away my vote here is to
37 oppose it and let the process -- you know, follow the
38 process as Ken Lord used to like to say and folks can
39 craft a different proposal if they choose and bring
40 that forward at a future time.

41
42 MS. BOARIO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm
43 happy to go forward in either direction. I think a
44 deferral is not a signal. I think the deferral is also
45 with a message that things need to be changed and
46 looked at differently.

47
48 So whatever avenue we want to pursue I
49 think it gets there because the message is to the RAC
50

0549

1 to look at different ways, different consensus and
2 alternatives to come -- to come back if they choose to
3 come back. So I don't think it's an endorsement of a
4 legal perspective or opinion, either one, sending it
5 back to the RAC. If that is where people are more
6 comfortable, I can go either way.

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: And just as a
9 rural representative I've always got to remind
10 ourselves traditional ecological knowledge bears a lot
11 of weight here and that the user in the rural end is
12 who we represent is the communities and we heard pretty
13 drastic differences about support and non-support and
14 some of that support was friends that had a different
15 opinion. One guy said this other guy hunted with him
16 today and he was in an opposing view of his friend.
17 And so I guess we'll stay friends after this, but this
18 is one of those tough ones when we look at our
19 relatives, you know, across the region and living on
20 Prince of Wales which probably has a bigger impact, but
21 we're getting through it. I can see this being
22 complicated as it is and again with the lens on us
23 we've got to be really clear on the record on why.

24

25 And just for the record I support the
26 effort by Eyak, I understand where they're coming from
27 and to remind the Board that traditional knowledge is
28 what pretty much drives the testimony that sits across
29 the table from us and we heard both sides today. Both
30 from Alaskans who use the resource as well as the six I
31 believe Federally recognized tribes in Cordova Bay who
32 signed a letter to support this. So sovereign nations
33 are behind as well as testifiers.

34

35 And so legal or not legal our job here
36 is to make sure that our rural residents are meeting
37 their needs and I see graphs here where there is a
38 collision coming, upticking two on the bottom and a
39 downtick on the one on top. And so just again it will
40 be before us again so however we vote it today I just
41 wanted that on the record that I value the testimony
42 from rural residents as much as the rest of the -- what
43 did they say, we're an arms length away. So just
44 appreciate all that, but I also appreciate this process
45 where we get to hear all sides and do what's in the
46 best interest of the user and the resource.

47

48 So just wanted to state that on the
49 record.

50

0550

1 I think we talked about it enough.
2 Someone want to call the question and then we can
3 either vote it up or down or make a resolution or are
4 we ready to vote?

5
6 Jerry's got the motion. So we're here,
7 nobody's saying anything else about. Roll call.
8 Please read into the record the motion.

9
10 Thank you.

11
12 MS. LEONETTI: Mr. Chair, the motion is
13 to adopt Wildlife Proposal 26-15.

14
15 Forest Service Member Ingersoll.

16
17 MR. INGERSOLL: Oppose and I want to
18 say I appreciate the comments of the Chair. I think
19 there is room for another proposal submitted to this
20 process at some point in the future.

21
22 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Pitka.

23
24 MS. PITKA: I vote to oppose WP26-15.
25 I'm going against the RAC recommendation because it
26 doesn't meet the qualifications under 815(3) of ANILCA.
27 But also with the recognition that we do not have good
28 biological data on that species, but what we do have
29 indicates that the species is still healthy. So I
30 would definitely suggest more studies and in the future
31 I hope that within communities they're able to come
32 together and work on solutions before it gets to this
33 level. Because the instruments that we do have are
34 very, very blunt.

35
36 Thank you.

37
38 MS. LEONETTI: Fish and Wildlife
39 Service Member Boario.

40
41 MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service
42 opposes for the reasons stated by the Forest Service,
43 previous speakers and as justified by the OSM
44 conclusion. And as others have already said, you know,
45 the public testimony to the Board is concerning and
46 points to emerging or strengthening conflict and hoping
47 this -- there are other avenues for it to be resolved,
48 but also noting there are other tools through the State
49 as they've noted, but also while our tools are maybe a
50

0551

1 little blunter there are some that are less blunt than
2 others as we know. So if it does come back before the
3 RAC, you know, good to look at those other alternatives
4 and the final tools maybe that the Federal program has
5 well.

6

7 MS. LEONETTI: BIA Member John.

8

9 MS. JOHN: BIA will vote to adopt WP26-
10 15 in deference to the Southcentral RAC.

11

12 Thank you.

13

14 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Oney.

15

16 MR. ONEY: Public Member Ray Oney moves
17 to oppose WP26-15 as stated by public Member Rhonda.

18

19 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Woods.

20

21 MR. WOODS: Public Member Woods moves
22 to oppose to the -- our criteria we have to follow and
23 outline us for conservation concerns and outline us for
24 conservation concerns and outline how we're supposed to
25 communicate with the RAC on how this process for us
26 work. I've nothing against the RAC and their decision
27 and I think at the end of the day and it's been a long
28 day, we will hopefully come up at some point come back
29 to us with a more clear or at least motivated direction
30 for us to act on. So -- yes.

31

32 Thank you.

33

34 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Payenna.

35

36 MR. PAYENNA: Public Member Payenna
37 will also have to oppose in agreement with Mr. Woods
38 and Ms. Pitka and comments submitted by our Federal
39 agencies as well.

40

41 MS. LEONETTI: BLM Member Pendergast.

42

43 MR. PENDERGAST: BLM also votes to
44 oppose. And I had some rationale written our, but
45 really appreciate the thoughtful, thorough rationale
46 provided by the Forest Service. So for that reason I
47 oppose.

48

49 MS. LEONETTI: Park Service Member

50

0552

1 Striker.

2

3 MR. STRIKER: Park Service with deep
4 respect for the proponent and the RAC opposes for the
5 reasons articulated by my colleagues to my left and my
6 right.

7

8 MS. LEONETTI: Chair Christianson.

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: It's a tough
11 one, but I made my statement and I'll give deference to
12 the RAC in support of their decision, you know, they're
13 the front eyes and ears of it with the support they got
14 from the tribal governments there. I look to support
15 them in the way that the -- it's going to fail here
16 today based off the vote, but that it encourages them
17 that they have a friend here that sees it the way they
18 see it.

19

20 MS. LEONETTI: Mr. Chair, the motion
21 fails eight to two.

22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
24 Appreciate the day, guys. That concludes our business.
25 We're going to go into executive session now. I'm glad
26 that one's not tomorrow.

27

28 MS. LEONETTI: Fifteen minute break, we
29 need a.....

30

31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Five minutes.
32 We've got to.....

33

34 MS. BOARIO: No, we're going to take a
35 15 minutes break, I'm sorry.

36

37 (Laughter)

38

39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Five minutes is
40 15.

41

42 MS. LAVINE: However this is the end of
43 the public meeting.

44

45 Thank you.

46

47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: See you all
48 back here at 9:00 a.m.

49

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(Off record)

(PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)

