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FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD

WORK SESSION

VOLUME I

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE BUILDING
Anchorage, Alaska
August 4, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Anthony Christianson
Rhonda Pitka, Public Member
Charles Brower, Public Member
Raymond Oney, Public Member
Frank Woods, Public Member
Jill Klein, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Don Striker, National Park Service
Kevin Pendergast, Bureau of Land Management
Jolene John, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Nicole Grewe, U.S. Forest Service

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

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(Anchorage, Alaska - 8/4/2026)

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(On record - 9:00 a.m.)

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8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
9 we'll go ahead and welcome everyone this morning and
10 call the meeting to order, this work session of the
11 Board. Welcome, again, everybody. I'll go ahead and
12 turn it over to Crystal.

12

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MS. LEONETTI: Good morning everybody.
This is Crystal Leonetti, Director, for Office of
Subsistence Management, and we'll do roll call.

17

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Chair Tony Christianson.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Present.

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MS. LEONETTI: Charles Brower.

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MR. BROWER: (In Inupiat)

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MS. LEONETTI: Press your button and
say it.

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28

MR. BROWER: (In Inupiat)

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MS. LEONETTI: Thank you. Raymond
Oney.

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33

MR. ONEY: Present.

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MS. LEONETTI: Rhonda Pitka.

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MS. PITKA: Here.

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MS. LEONETTI: Frank Woods.

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MR. WOODS: Here.

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44

MS. LEONETTI: Pen Payenna is excused
unless he's online. I'm just going to doublecheck.

45

46

(No comments)

47

48

MS. LEONETTI: Okay, he's excused.

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1 BLM Kevin Pendergast.

2

3 MR. PENDERGAST: Present.

4

5 MS. LEONETTI: Park Service, Don

6 Striker.

7

8 MR. STRIKER: I'm here, thank you.

9

10 MS. LEONETTI: Thanks, Don.

11

12 Fish and Wildlife Service, Jill Klein.

13

14 MS. KLEIN: Present.

15

16 MS. LEONETTI: And, Forest Service,

17 Nicole Grewe.

18

19 MS. GREWE: Present.

20

21 MS. LEONETTI: I'm feel like I'm

22 missing people on my list here.

23

24 BIA, Jolene John.

25

26 MS. JOHN: Wacaa', good morning,

27 Crystal.

28

29 MS. LEONETTI: Okay. Mr. Chair, we

30 have a quorum.

31

32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, at

33 this time we review and adopt the agenda.

34

35 MR. BROWER: So moved.

36

37 MR. WOODS: Second.

38

39 MS. LEONETTI: There's some changes.

40

41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: There's been a
42 motion to accept and adopt the agenda as presented with
43 a second. At this time we have some recommended
44 changes here and I'll go ahead and let Crystal speak to
45 those.

46

47 MS. LEONETTI: Okay. Mr. Chair, we're
48 going to request to switch agenda items 6 and 7.

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1 (Laughter)

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4 MS. LEONETTI: And then we will also
5 request to add two agenda items after Wildlife Special
6 Action 26-04, and those two agenda items are -- the
7 first one is delegating additional authority for Unit 7
8 caribou, and the second one is an Emergency Special
9 Action Request that just came in today. And we thought
10 we could take care of these two things while you're
11 convened instead of burdening you with another special
12 meeting or email poll. So this will be Emergency
13 Special Action Request WSA26-08 and it is for Unit 18
14 moose, Staff will explain when we get to that item.

15 Robbin, I just want to make sure, is
16 there anything else? Did I catch everything?

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Robbin, I just want to make sure, is there anything else? Did I catch everything?

MS. LAVINE: Yes, thank you, it's perfect.

MS. LEONETTI: Okay.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, if there's no objections from the Board, any comments about the additions and reordering?

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and seeing none, let the record reflect the change to the agenda. All in favor of adopting the agenda as presented with the changes signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposed, same sign.

(No opposing votes)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries unanimous to adopt the agenda. At this time is our opportunity to do information exchange between the Federal Board members, the Director and the DOI leadership. So we'll go ahead and -- Crystal can call out the roll call here.

MS. LEONETTI: Mr. Chair, if it's okay we'll start with Ms. Moriarty, who has to step out for

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1 another meeting at 9:30.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
4 floor.

5

6 MS. MORIARTY: Without objection, Mr.
7 Chair. Good morning, everyone. For the record, for
8 those of you who I have not met I am Kara Moriarty, I'm
9 the Senior Advisor for Alaskan Affairs for the
10 Secretary. It's a pleasure to be here. I don't have a
11 lot of information to share. Just to let you know that
12 I look forward to listening to the conversation, I
13 appreciated being part of the RAC Chair meeting
14 yesterday for a few hours before I got pulled away to
15 other engagements. And I will be kind of in and out
16 today but do plan to attend as best I can. I just want
17 to say thank you for your continued service and
18 representing your communities on this very important
19 issue for all of Alaska.

20

21 MS. LEONETTI: Thank you. And we'll
22 just go down the line here. Public Member Frank Woods.

23

24 MR. WOODS: Yeah, Public Member Woods,
25 Bristol Bay, Dillingham. I think a couple things is, I
26 come from a region where it's pretty wrapped around
27 commercial fishing and the guide industry.

28

29 Kings have been a huge concern in our
30 area because of the decline affecting every possible
31 area from subsistence, lack of resource and then the
32 exploitation of the commercial and sports industry.
33 The guide industry is well established, along with the
34 corporations and the people in it. But as a -- we have
35 about three big tracts of Federal land in Bristol Bay.
36 We got Togiak Refuge, which is the biggest, Becharof
37 and to help people that are new or listening about
38 Bristol Bay is, our caribou population used to be huge,
39 like 200,000. And one of our Staff members was part of
40 the caribou enhancement project about 15/20 years ago.
41 And those things are important because, No. 1. to help
42 feed people you got to create safety and regulations to
43 preserve those resources for the people that depend on
44 it. As a commercial fisherman, you know, I don't
45 depend on that resource other than exploiting it for
46 commercial value, but we are representing people that
47 feed and eat what we're talking about.

48

49 The second thing is, you know, as a

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1 guide in that whole recreational sports industry is not
2 friendly to our program. We have a huge
3 responsibility, and that responsibility is the people,
4 not just for economic value and just for pleasure or
5 sports oriented. When I sit here I carry about three
6 different generations. I look back and my grandmother
7 was born and raised, seen the first sailing ship come
8 in, and I say this because I have Native blood running
9 through my veins and that makes me connected, not just
10 to the resource but the land and people.

11
12 So, Kara, I appreciate all our
13 conversations we've been having. And you're -- I mean
14 every time -- you're welcome to come to Dillingham, I
15 always say that but, you know, you've been a real
16 positive part of this Board.

17
18 MS. MORIARTY: Thank you, Frank. And,
19 hey, I'm looking forward to coming to Dillingham. I
20 got skunked on the Kasilof two weeks ago so, you know,
21 maybe you can help me out.

22
23 MR. WOODS: I got a bunch of humpies
24 you can have.

25
26 (Laughter)

27
28 MS. MORIARTY: Awesome. I'll send them
29 to all my family in South Dakota, they'll never know
30 the difference.

31
32 (Laughter)

33
34 MR. WOODS: Thanks, Kara. Things are
35 -- you know, the biggest second last thing is the
36 economic impacts for heating fuel. There are going to
37 be people that are going to be making hard choices, I
38 cry because it hurts. I seen this 20 years ago when
39 the price went from 3.50 to 5.75 for heating fuel.
40 People having to choose to put food on their table or
41 heat their homes. I live in an area where half the
42 people live in poverty and about 70 percent are under
43 the median income. I don't take that lightly. Because
44 when we sit here in meetings and we don't have those
45 issues, we don't have those struggles that we -- I see.
46 We don't have the struggles that people have to get up
47 and work everyday to feed and heat and feed their
48 families and provide for their community. That's the
49 things that we do here is help those people survive.

50

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1 And right now it's a matter of survival, there should
2 be -- every Native organization, every regional, our
3 Legislative body, our government, our city declaring an
4 emergency order because of the fuel crises in rural
5 Alaska. I'm not asking for pity, I'm not looking for
6 any compassion, I'm looking for a reality check because
7 when it's 9 bucks a gallon for gas in my town, it's 15
8 dollars a gallon of gas up the river and I've heard of
9 24 gallon of gas. Nobody can sustain that level of
10 economic pressure. No one.

11
12 If each one of you had to buy a gallon
13 of gas for \$24 I don't think you would be able to
14 survive and I don't think you'd walk. I go back and I
15 look -- I remember somebody pointed out this spring,
16 the price went from \$7 a gallon to \$9 a gallon, I said,
17 well, I got a choice, and, yeah, it's a huge choice.

18
19 So I'll shut up and move on with the
20 meeting.

21
22 I'm really excited of being here, it's
23 falltime, I'm just coming off the commercial fishing
24 kind of mode, it's good to be in nice, friendly
25 country, I love traffic and I love tourism and I can
26 welcome it with.....

27
28 (Laughter)

29
30 MR. WOODS: So thank you.

31
32 MS. LEONETTI: Okay. Public Member Ray
33 Oney.

34
35 MR. ONEY: Thank you. For the record my
36 name is Raymond Oney. I'm from the Lower Yukon River,
37 a small village called Alakanuk. We got a population
38 of probably about 700 people. It's a small village
39 that spills out into the Bering Sea. It's right on the
40 mouth of the Yukon River. I've lived all of my life
41 there. I've lived a subsistence way of living all my
42 life.

43
44 I'm very, very fortunate to hear that
45 we had an opportunity to fish, a small opportunity to
46 put food on the table this summer. I'm very thankful
47 to Fish and Wildlife and Fish and Game for giving us
48 that little opportunity to harvest some of that salmon
49 that comes into the Yukon River. It's been awhile
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1 since we've had that opportunity to put food on the
2 table so we're very thankful that opportunity came.

3
4 It brought a lot of joy to a lot of
5 people.

6
7 If you look at the social media, there
8 was an elder from Russian Mission, this is maybe about
9 100 miles further up the river, it was -- it went viral
10 because of what brought her happiness as far as cutting
11 fish again and she hasn't been doing that for the last
12 10, 15 years because of the declines and no opportunity
13 to harvest what we depend on from year to year. That's
14 what we look forward to every summer.

15
16 Summer is the busiest time that we look
17 forward to as far as getting ready for the long, hard
18 winter that we try and prepare for and we're thankful
19 that we had an opportunity to put a little bit of fish
20 away for the winter and had an opportunity for dry fish
21 so we're very thankful for that.

22
23 And I'd like to mention, too, that the
24 two villages that have been devastated by the Halong
25 Typhoon, we're very thankful that they're continuing to
26 get help, they're trying to put them back in their
27 villages before the winter sets in so it's been a
28 really, really busy summer for those people that are
29 working in in this way so we're very thankful that a
30 lot of people stepped up to help out in one way or the
31 other to try and get them back to their villages.

32
33 So, again, thank you, for giving me an
34 opportunity to be here and I look forward to working
35 with you all.

36
37 Thank you.

38
39 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Charlie
40 Brower.

41
42 MR. BROWER: Thank you, Crystal. Good
43 morning, my name is Charlie Brower. My Inupiat name is
44 (Inupiaq) and welcome everyone.

45
46 This summer we had a pretty hardship on
47 our bowhead whaling. There was no offshore ice but
48 there was some shorefast ice and all the whales went
49 far out in the ocean, about 60 miles where the ice-pack
50

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1 was and we just towards the end of the season we
2 harvested one, a 55 footer and I don't think that was
3 enough to go around through the whole town but at least
4 we got one this spring, and hopefully this fall we will
5 be harvesting more. We're allowed 25 for Barrow and
6 hopefully we'll be lucky enough to see some this fall.

7

8 But otherwise this summer there's no
9 place like the Arctic, 30 above every day, wind blowing
10 35 to 40 knots, ice-pack in solid all summer and we
11 haven't a chance to go out and do our seal hunting,
12 walrus hunting, the ice is so jammed. You can see the
13 walrus go by in the distance but you can't get to them,
14 there's no open water but, you know, I was advised this
15 morning that we had some east wind that blew the ice
16 out and people are getting ready to go out boating now
17 that the ice out. We had a fantastic.....

18

19 (Technical difficulties)

20

21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Star six.

22

23 (Laughter)

24

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I speak whale.

26

27 (Laughter)

28

29 (Off record)

30

31 (On record)

32

33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Charlie, did
34 you want to tell us one more thing about your whales?

35

36 MR. BROWER: No, that concludes my
37 report, Mr. Chairman.

38

39 (Laughter)

40

41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The whales
42 started speaking back there.

43

44 (Laughter)

45

46 MR. BROWER: By the way it's been real
47 cold this summer, we've had snow every other day and
48 too much west wind, ice jam, the barges are in but they
49 are running away through the inlet. They're bringing
50

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1 all that rock for a water barrier breaker but they're
2 having a hard time traveling that ice so we'll see what
3 happens. But otherwise we -- our bearded seal -- seal
4 hunting was very good. Our caribou hunting we did very
5 good. But we're still waiting for end of August to get
6 the prime caribou at that time but otherwise in Barrow
7 things have been pretty normal.

8

9 Thank you.

10

11 MS. LEONETTI: Qu yana.

12

13 Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

14

15 MS. PITKA: Thank you. Public Member
16 Rhonda Pitka. I'm from the village of Beaver. I'm
17 still the Chief of the village of Beaver and this last
18 year I was appointed as Vice President of Tanana Chiefs
19 Conference. So in that role I get to travel to a lot
20 more of our Interior villages than I ever have before.

21

22 This summer we went down to Takotna,
23 McGrath, and Nikolai and we talked with a lot of the
24 people there and they were concerned about the high
25 cost of gas impacting their ability to go and pick
26 berries and fish and do all their subsistence
27 activities. Right now in Nikolai they're paying \$19 a
28 gallon and their corporation is able to subsidize \$2 a
29 gallon so they're at 17 dollars a gallon in an area
30 that's been economically depressed already. So it's an
31 absolute crises and it's absolutely horrible what the
32 war has done to our peoples livelihood who are like a
33 million miles away from the actual conflict. This
34 affects everything that our smaller communities are
35 able to do and their ability to stay in existence.

36

37 We talked greatly about the Yukon River
38 salmon crises in all of our villages, it's affecting
39 all of us still. We've been in this crises since 2019
40 with very little appreciable impacts, I suppose,
41 through our hundreds of thousands of hours of advocacy,
42 all of the dollars that our agencies spend on this
43 issue with no real impacts or no real change. I'm
44 really, really grateful to the Regional Advisory
45 Council Chairs for having the discussions on the salmon
46 crises, that's going to be very impactful to us and
47 hopefully we come out with some good action items and a
48 lot of discussion and a lot of food for thought.

49

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1 I was just in Canada for the Gwich'in
2 gathering with a lot of our people and we're very
3 concerned about the Porcupine Caribou Herd declines.
4 The biologist told us that it would crash because they
5 were at carrying capacity at 219,000 so now it's down
6 -- it's still in the green and it's I think 145,000,
7 but the impacts to the lichen in our areas from climate
8 change have impacted the caribou so much, much more in
9 the area than from predators, is the lichen and the
10 climate change effects. We're still seeing impacts to
11 our areas from those and on the Canadian side they
12 haven't seen caribou from the Porcupine Caribou Herd in
13 great numbers in at least five years in Old Crow and at
14 least a dozen years in Northwest Territory. So, you
15 know, even though they haven't been coming as much as
16 they should be, you know, people are still concerned
17 about it. They still want to maintain our community
18 relationships through our bartering relationships like
19 we used to but we're unable to maintain those community
20 relationships from bartering because of the lack of
21 salmon and the decline in the caribou herd.

22
23 In our area it's been incredibly,
24 incredibly difficult in the Yukon Flats region to --
25 for families to have success in moose hunting. A lot
26 of families didn't get a moose last year and it's been
27 horrible to have empty freezers on top of lack of
28 salmon so no moose, no salmon, caribou numbers down,
29 we're in an actual crises that's unmitigated and
30 nothing is being done about it. You know every time we
31 go to try to maintain a closure in an area or protect a
32 resource for people that live there, we get shot down,
33 we get moved around, the public process has been
34 absolutely destroyed in these areas. I'm not
35 necessarily certain who our Governor is serving at this
36 moment but it's definitely not the people in our areas
37 that depend on those resources heavily.

38
39 We definitely need movement to protect
40 the people in the state of Alaska from overharvesting
41 by outside hunters. We've consistently brought up that
42 issue in EIRAC for the last 30 years and we still don't
43 have data points on a lot of these issues. A lot of
44 our people are raising the idea of, well, there must be
45 like an economic impact study from guiding from our
46 areas, from our respective areas, like when is the last
47 time when one of these economic studies have been done,
48 what is the net impact to our remote areas from those.
49 Because if people that live there aren't able to
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1 harvest and feed themselves, then what next, you know,
2 what next? It's been an absolute travesty this year.

3
4 The Dalton Highway -- I think if Jack
5 Reakoff was here he would probably hit me if I didn't
6 mention the Dalton Corridor impacts to subsistence and
7 the complete lack of public process around that. We
8 need to maintain those closures in rural Alaska for
9 those particular things and make sure the subsistence
10 is protected.

11
12 Let's see, one last thing. In our area
13 we -- the people in the area asked for 25D to remain
14 closed for moose hunting and came up with a compromise
15 with the help of the Office of Subsistence Management
16 to maintain that closure for the river corridor and in
17 this small area we're now getting, I guess, feedback,
18 that the Governor wants to reopen that and reassess
19 that so they're going around what was already part of
20 the public process and asking the Secretary to set
21 those aside even through the lengthy process analysis,
22 testimony of our people, and I think that's an absolute
23 shame. And, you know, if we don't get loud about that
24 and get serious about it we're going to be facing this
25 in areas throughout the state. It's absolutely
26 horrible when we have volunteers who volunteer their
27 time for three or four weeks a year, take time off
28 work, go through the lengthy analysis required by the
29 system, work the system as hard as they can for their
30 people and then come out of it with somebody who has
31 never even been to our areas able to take back that
32 decision completely. It's an absolute shame and it's
33 horrifying to me right now, the, I guess, complete and
34 utter disregard for the public process and the
35 disrespect to our Regional Advisory Councils.

36
37 The last thing that I wanted to talk
38 about was more of like an administrative matter. So
39 for the last, I don't know, 20 years or so, we've
40 worked with the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge to
41 give out moose hunting permits in our area. So people
42 come into our office, our tribal offices and they give
43 us their hunting license, we fill out their information
44 and then we scan it and we send it in, every single
45 year, for the last 20 years. This is what I do with my
46 August. And this year they told the Refuge, OSM told
47 the Refuge that we can no longer issue those permits
48 from our village tribal offices, our partners can no
49 longer issue those permits so it's causing an actual
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1 issue because they're requiring a Federal employee to
2 issue those permits and in our rural areas there's very
3 little State and Federal employees, very little State
4 and Federal presence in our actual communities. In
5 Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge, there are, I
6 think they have three Staff members who are responsible
7 for managing the land in the whole area. You know we
8 haven't had any tribal consultation on this particular
9 change and I actually just found out about it a couple
10 of days ago so this is going to cause hardship for our
11 smaller areas, for smaller areas like Fort Yukon,
12 Beaver, Stevens Village, areas that require that
13 particular hunting permit. And we really -- there's
14 really no solution right now to having a non-existent
15 Federal employee come in to issue hunting licenses when
16 hunting starts in approximately 22 days. So I'm not
17 sure what the solution is, I don't know what that is at
18 this moment but, you know, something needs to give.
19 Something needs to happen or, you know, people will
20 just be out there hunting without licenses and that'll
21 be impossible to enforce in an area that's already
22 pretty difficult to enforce.

23

24 Thank you.

25

26 MS. LEONETTI: Thank you, Rhonda. And
27 I'll look into that. Go down the line here, Dr. Glenn
28 Chen, BIA.

29

30 MR. CHEN: Actually, Jolene is here.

31

32 MS. LEONETTI: Jolene John, BIA.

33

34 MS. JOHN: Good morning. I was just
35 out for a meeting and I believe you're still doing info
36 sharing.

37

38 The Bureau of Indian Affairs, Alaska
39 Region, this has been shared with the tribes, there is
40 a virtual meeting of the Tribal Interior Budget
41 Council, or TIBC, tomorrow and Thursday. Normally
42 these are in person and this sort of would be the first
43 virtual of its kind in its history. Then the Bureau of
44 Indian Affairs was allowed to share some job openings
45 that are in the lower grades, which hopefully if
46 they're filled, would offer some Staff support to our
47 partner programs.

48

49 Nationally, BIA has a high focus on

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1 probate and so we are planning another probate search
2 during AFN and somehow Co-Pilot or AI is confusing the
3 BIA Providers Conference is happening at the same time
4 as AFN, that is inaccurate and so it's all focused on
5 probate.

6
7 I've had the fortune of joining the
8 Tanana Chiefs Conference as I toured the four
9 communities of McGrath, Telida, Nikolai, and Takotna.
10 My first time ever in that part of the Kuskokwim River
11 and certainly was amazing and, of course, difficult to
12 hear the stories of being unable to harvest whatever
13 they need from the river, the fish and other land
14 mammals and so appreciate that opportunity.

15
16 Also at the Alaska Native Tribal Health
17 Center, BIA received an invite to tour five communities
18 that have been impacted due to Typhoon Halong. I was
19 able to go to the communities of Napakiak, fly over
20 Kipnuk, land in Kwig, go to Quinhagak, get into
21 (indiscernible) and fly over Newtok to hear from those
22 tribal communities and their own struggles, trying to
23 ensure safety of their tribal residents, certainly
24 gives you a lot of thought of, you know, how else will
25 our coastal communities be impacted further this coming
26 fall when more storms come around.

27
28 And so we've been busy having those
29 discussions, whether it was Typhoon Halong impacts or
30 the upcoming and ongoing fuel and energy crises that
31 our communities are talking about and how they're going
32 to survive this coming winter.

33
34 I know the Bureau of Indian Affairs
35 central office leadership at the national level,
36 they're engaged, they've been informed, they're aware,
37 they have come to some meetings in the state previously
38 and so it's front and center for them and I do
39 communicate with them where the needs are, especially
40 with year end coming around and see how much we can try
41 and bring back to the regions, especially when it comes
42 to things like food security and that is something
43 that's always a concern for subsistence communities.

44
45 I'm going to stop it there. I hope you
46 had a successful harvesting season as we did so far and
47 looking forward to more berry picking.

48
49 Guyana.
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1 MS. LEONETTI: Quyana, Jolene.

2

3 Brent Vickers, BLM.

4

5 MR. VICKERS: Good morning. This is
6 Brent Vickers, Subsistence Program Coordinator, ISC
7 member for BLM. I'm temporarily sitting in for State
8 Director Kevin Pendergast who's on a phone call right
9 now. I won't speak for Kevin for any updates he has on
10 BLM, but while I have the mic just share that I
11 recently had the opportunity to visit some of the field
12 offices for BLM, not only Anchorage Field Office down
13 the street, but Glennallen, East Interior, Central
14 Yukon and the Arctic Staff and I was just really amazed
15 and impressed with the passion that those biologists
16 and field managers have for the resources and for
17 working with the community members out there who rely
18 on those resources. I think we're all very excited to
19 strengthen BLM's capacity to better serve community
20 members with subsistence-related issues.

21

22 Thank you.

23

24 MS. LEONETTI: All right, welcome,
25 Nicole. Nicole Grewe, Forest Service.

26

27 MS. GREWE: Good morning everybody,
28 Nicole Grewe with the Forest Service Alaska Region --
29 good morning, yeah, Deputy Regional Forester, thank
30 you.

31

32 So agency updates this morning, I have
33 a handful of updates I'd like to share. I'll start
34 internally with the impacts of workforce reshaping. As
35 you might have read across the Forest Service has
36 undergone a lot of attention by the Administration to
37 reshape our workforce. And what that meant is we had a
38 mass exit of people to early retirement in 2025, that
39 continues to this day. There's another round of early
40 retirements, incentivised resignations. And so where
41 that really leaves us in Alaska Region with the Forest
42 Service, I'll just say two-thirds of the Regional
43 Office have departed the agency and about a third of
44 each of the National Forests. Statewide, we're kind of
45 about 50 percent of the workforce that we had prior to
46 2025 but work continues, really good work continues.
47 We are also transitioning to a State Director model,
48 similar to other Federal agencies here in Alaska. So
49 the Regional Office, which is located in Juneau will be
50

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1 phased out and a State Director's office will be stood
2 up and that will be headquartered in Juneau.

3

4 So, you know, moving forward I would
5 expect that all to happen, you know, probably this fall
6 season. We're waiting announcements on all 15 State
7 Directors. So instead of 9 Regional Offices
8 nationwide, we're going to go to 15 State offices.
9 Alaska will have its own State office with a State
10 Director with a small staff. The mission of that, the
11 State office will be different than the Regional
12 Office. I used to work for the Regional Office years
13 prior in my career and there's a lot of expertise there
14 and surge workforce for the National Forest and that
15 part of it probably will not exist anymore but the
16 State Director's office will be a very slimmed down
17 Staff that is going to be dedicated to external
18 relations.

19

20 So not totally unknown to the Federal
21 government, new for the Forest Service.

22

23 So I will just close out a little bit
24 of talk around the internal workforce reshaping. Is to
25 look forward to a new State Director and State
26 Director's office to be stood up, the Regional Office
27 to be phased out, and then I missed one point, further
28 integration of research and development with the
29 National Forest system so we have three branches of the
30 Forest Service moving forward. They're all going to be
31 housed under one umbrella and they're going to create
32 opportunity for integration between research and
33 development and land management, part of the agency.
34 And I'll just note that for the most part the research
35 and development Alaska-based Staff are largely
36 unimpacted. We have a lab here in Anchorage and a lab
37 in Juneau and those locations will remain and those
38 same scientists will be doing the good work that we
39 have used for decades and they will continue to do that
40 good work.

41

42 So, really, the workforce reshaping is
43 about sending -- phasing out the Regional Office but
44 also sending resources to the National Forest. So
45 while we're phasing out one unit I don't want to forget
46 that we are also staffing up the National Forest. So
47 the Chugach and the Tongass, I expect, to be fully
48 staffed in a way that they probably haven't been in
49 years. So there's some good news there.

50

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1 On to more substantive matters, with
2 the new Administration comes new policies and
3 priorities and you likely have heard about these
4 already. We have the Proposed revision of the 2001
5 Roadless Rule, that work is ongoing. It will impact
6 both the Tongass and Chugach, and I expect this fall
7 season for the proposed rule and associated
8 environmental analysis to be posted and available to
9 the public. So, again, that is likely -- they're
10 looking at a multitude of options, but they're looking
11 at rescinding the 2001 Roadless Rule.

12
13 We also have a call to what we call
14 internally as active management. And, really, that is,
15 you know, being responsive to a couple executive orders
16 that apply specifically to Alaska, or they have
17 components that apply to Alaska. One is the unleashing
18 Alaska's Natural Resource potential and the second
19 executive order is about immediate expansion of timber
20 production. So we take those executive orders and then
21 we operationalize them and how are we going to do this
22 as an agency and we've kind of coined this term of,
23 active management, but it's a return to timber
24 production, thinning, prescribed fire and
25 reforestation. And that is nationally. That's
26 happening nationally. So we have a new call to timber
27 production specifically around 4 billion board feet per
28 year. That's a national number and we'll see if we can
29 meet it as an agency.

30
31 But, you know, what these things really
32 mean for Alaska is, you know, look for the 2001
33 Roadless Rule to undergo significant revision this
34 fall. There will be opportunity for public input. We
35 will do subsistence hearings on that. We have active
36 management, which is more impactful for the Tongass in
37 Southeast Alaska than the Chugach in Southcentral
38 Alaska. But under active management we are looking to
39 increase timber production on the Tongass in alignment
40 with our 2016 Forest Plan. And to maintain a
41 transition from old to young growth harvest. So
42 there's renewed energy around timber production and
43 it's specifically focused on supporting rural economic
44 development and rural economy.

45
46 We also have, at the National level, in
47 addition to the Roadless Rule and a call to active
48 management, we also have streamlining and reducing
49 inefficiencies in how we do our NEPA analysis. So look
50

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1 for shorter environmental analysis documents moving
2 forward, faster decisions. There is a volume of work
3 that we're being called to do and to harness and
4 utilize every efficiency that we have available. I
5 think that that for Alaska, and I will note I've worked
6 my entire career in Alaska and mostly in rural parts of
7 the state and I think this will be a cultural change on
8 Forest Service lands and the rural communities that are
9 located within and adjacent to the National Forest.

10

11 So, again, just to wrap up what we're
12 looking at for Alaska Region in the Forest Service, is
13 phasing out the Regional Offices, standing up State
14 Director's office with a new State Director, likely to
15 be announced this fall season. I might have missed
16 that point. We'll see what happens with the 2001
17 Roadless Rule and the proposed recision and what that
18 environmental analysis looks like this fall. I suspect
19 subsistence hearings will happen on that this fall
20 season in Alaska on both the Chugach and the Tongass.
21 And then I failed to mention the Tongass National
22 Forest Plan is also undergoing a revision so these are
23 two things that are happening at the same time and they
24 are interlinked. So you have a proposed recision of
25 the 2001 Roadless Rule or components of it while you
26 also are undertaking a plan revision on the Tongass
27 National Forest with over 9 million acres of roadless
28 area. So these two things are interwoven. But I
29 expect the proposed Forest Plan to be available for
30 public comment very early in 2026 [sic], which will
31 start another round of public input, another round of
32 subsistence hearings.

33

34 So important things happening on Forest
35 Service lands here, mostly focused in Southeast more so
36 than Southcentral, although we are talking about fuels
37 reduction up here on the Chugach. Chugach isn't
38 totally untouched but with the focus on natural
39 resource management and timber production, most of the
40 impacts are kind of being born in Southeast Alaska
41 right now.

42

43 And with that I will close out, thank
44 you, Mr. Chair.

45

46 MS. LEONETTI: Thank you. And, Fish
47 and Wildlife Service, Jill Klein.

48

49 MS. KLEIN: Okay. Good morning

50

0019

1 everyone. My name is Jill Klein and I'm the InterAgency
2 Staff Committee member at the Fish and Wildlife Service
3 and I'm sitting in today for our Regional Director,
4 Sara Boario, who couldn't be here. In my regular
5 position at Fish and Wildlife, I'm the Regional
6 Subsistence Coordinator so I support our Regional
7 Director in her role here at the Federal Subsistence
8 Board and also work with our field staff, our Refuge
9 Managers and their Staff and then our delegated
10 fisheries managers as well.

11
12 So I thought I would just mention a
13 little bit about our Federal fisheries management this
14 summer and we have five -- if I didn't say that already
15 -- five delegated managers who are delegated authority
16 from the Federal Subsistence Board. So in Kodiak we
17 had one emergency special action that took place this
18 summer, it was to close subsistence fishing in the
19 Buskin River and that was coordinated with Alaska
20 Department of Fish and Game and the efforts there were
21 to conserve sockeye salmon and that expired on July
22 15th. In Chignik there was also one emergency special
23 action to close Federal public waters in the Chignik
24 drainage to subsistence fishing for chinook salmon and
25 that was also for conservation concerns, that one is
26 still ongoing through August 18th. And as you heard a
27 little bit from Ray and Rhonda we have more active
28 Federal fisheries management taking place in the Yukon
29 River as well as the Kuskokwim River and that's in
30 Federal public waters really since the beginning of the
31 fishing seasons in early June, also for conservation
32 concerns as you heard about, and continuation of
33 subsistence fisheries when possible. And on the Kenai
34 River, no special actions but the Federal manager there
35 distributes numerous permits and we have Greg here from
36 Ninilchik from the Southcentral RAC who's pretty
37 familiar with that fishery but the Ninilchik
38 Traditional Council's community gillnet fishery which
39 targets sockeye salmon as their primary species for
40 harvest. And some of you may recall we did hear from
41 some of our Federal fisheries managers at the Board's
42 winter work session and that was a really valuable
43 experience, I think, so we're looking forward to
44 participating in that again, if possible.

45
46 And just want to say that we appreciate
47 being able to work with all our colleagues, if it's the
48 Alaska Department of Fish and Game, also working with
49 the Regional Advisory Council members and our tribal
50

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1 partners, everybody brings different values, resources
2 and knowledge to our work as part of the Federal
3 Subsistence Program.

4
5 And then I just wanted to highlight
6 briefly a little bit about our Refuge Information
7 Technicians, and I know we have one, at least one in
8 the room today, and just make the public aware that we
9 are advertising for at least two more Refuge
10 Information technicians and these are new positions,
11 one each in King Cove and Cold Bay and the application
12 period's open through August 12th and the positions
13 will serve as liaisons between the Refuge, local
14 communities, tribes, and partners and support
15 collaboration and ensure community perspectives to
16 inform Refuge management. They'll join a longstanding
17 program of Refuge Information technicians that we have
18 around the state and we are looking at more
19 opportunities to have them in more places, maybe
20 addressing some of the comments that Rhonda raised with
21 respect to how do we have Federal employees give out
22 permits in communities where there's no Federal Staff
23 there. So that's something that we're looking in to.
24 And I just want to thank all our RITs for the work they
25 do.

26
27 That's all I have, thank you.

28
29 MS. LEONETTI: Thanks. All right, I'll
30 go next and then Tony will go last -- no, wait, you
31 wanted to go first.

32
33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, yeah, I'll
34 go first.

35
36 (Laughter)

37
38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: She has all the
39 technical stuff, I said that's program relatable, so
40 I'd rather have that go last than myself.

41
42 Yeah, Anthony Christianson, Board
43 Chair. Appreciate all the work the group did
44 yesterday, having our Board Chairs come together and
45 speaking about the most critical issue, I think, we're
46 facing as a Board here, is, critical to our success and
47 so I'm looking forward to the next agenda item.

48
49 For me, fishing, obviously is a primary
50

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1 source of a way of life for me. So our fishing season
2 in Southeast has been going okay. Contrary to the
3 commercial fishery, which is going -- like Prince
4 William Sound, no pinks and a lot of guys waiting for
5 income to hit the docks and their decks. So a big
6 price but no fish being caught for our boys so that's a
7 concern because they put food on the table as well just
8 the same as the subsistence people. So just hope that
9 that can come around in our area. You could hear the
10 Forest Service's report there, that's concerning for us
11 Southeast people who live off the land, again, when
12 they come back in with let's cut 'er down. It causes
13 concerns for the local citizens and she knows and I
14 know how much that they raise hairs down there, so does
15 this Board, so does our Southeast rep, and we've been
16 reading and hearing these things in our annual reports
17 for a little while now so something -- I appreciate you
18 putting that on the record because that's going to be a
19 challenge for our Forest Service counterpart to deal
20 with as the time comes and these things have to get
21 mandated with have to be enacted. So good luck, you
22 know, with that.

23
24 I think for the deer, you know, another
25 big thing we have is Unit 2 deer, and I live there. A
26 lot of deer out there. I think some of the management
27 things we've done is looking like something's working,
28 there's a lot of deer on the landscape. I move around
29 quite a bit and so it looks a heck of a lot better than
30 it did five or 10 years ago as far as the productivity
31 and the land and so I just hope that stays abundant
32 enough that we don't continue to get proposals from
33 that area for a reduction and what not because I'd like
34 to see all user groups have access when there's
35 abundance.

36
37 Personally, my subsistence season is
38 going good, we've been harvesting fish and lots of
39 wildlife so I'll just keep it short for the day. I'm
40 also the Mayor so my headache is that we've been out of
41 water for nine days, almost didn't come because we're
42 in a state of emergency but trusting your Staff to take
43 care of stuff when you get all the wheels turning and
44 today they got water so it was a good choice. So
45 sometimes doing two things at once can pay off and just
46 thank the higher power -- I was going to have Orville
47 open in prayer today and we forgot and then so then we
48 had reverberation and kickback and feedback.....

49
50

0022

1 (Laughter)

2

3

4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON:and held
5 up and all that other stuff and so we'll just thank
6 ourselves and next time we're going to make that
7 correction on the record, that we need to have a higher
8 power authoratate us as we move forward and do things
9 that really affect the way of life and things that
10 people have passion for and the job we have here is
11 near and dear like you heard Frank speak to, that we
12 make decisions that affect access to the resources and
13 then the changing climate of economic downturn, it
14 becomes more critical that we're seeing all of the
15 issues and putting them on the table here from each
16 region and understanding how that affects that access
17 to resource in an ever changing climate.

17

18 So, thank you, for the passion you guys
19 bring.

20

21 Thank you.

22

23 MS. LEONETTI: Okay, I will just echo
24 Chair Christianson and the other Board members in
25 welcoming -- a great big welcome to the Council Chairs
26 and Vice Chairs that came all the way from your summer
27 gathering grounds to the biggest city and spending a
28 couple days here with us, we really, really appreciate
29 you. This is the first time the Council Chairs are
30 gathering on a singular topic, I'm talking about the
31 salmon crises, so we know this is very important to all
32 of you, and this is the first time you're all here
33 joining the Board's summer work session and I think
34 there's a couple items on this morning's agenda that
35 they're interested in having a dialogue with you about.
36 So we're glad to make this happen.

37

38 Another first is that we are going to
39 be joined by two youth non-voting members at the
40 Regional Advisory Councils. There will be one for the
41 Southeast Council and one for the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta
42 Council. So if Board members are in attendance at the
43 fall RAC meetings, please, help those youth members
44 feel welcome and, of course, I'm looking forward to
45 listening in on those council meetings and seeing how
46 you all work to incorporate their youth voice in the
47 process. It's very exciting.

48

49 Let's see, I have to wear my glasses.

50

0023

1 Okay.

2
3 OSM continues our regular engagements
4 with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The
5 Deputy Commissioner, Ben Mulligan, and the Federal
6 Subsistence Coordinator Liaison Aaron Poetter and so we
7 are meeting with them on a monthly basis. It's been
8 really good to open -- keep open our lines of
9 communications, we talk about upcoming meetings, data
10 requests and working together on meaningful
11 consultation. Ben will join us this afternoon, after
12 we come back from lunch and so I'll wait until he's
13 here but I'm really excited to report to the Board and
14 Councils that we have jointly developed a guidance for
15 the Federal in-season managers on meaningful
16 consultation with State -- the counterparts at the
17 State. So we'll talk more about that after lunch but
18 it's great that we are working together on efforts like
19 that.

20
21 The 2026/2028 wildlife regulations are
22 behind in publication just due to lengthy reviews and
23 the sheer number of proposals that the Board had on
24 their table this year so we're hoping to see it
25 published by the end of August. So just stay tuned on
26 that and that's why we're seeing a couple extra special
27 action requests coming in so that we can implement some
28 of the things that the Board adopted in April.

29
30 Just a couple updates on Staffing. We
31 have not received approval to fill any vacant positions
32 but one great news item is that our pathways
33 anthropology intern, Kristen Marrow, received her
34 doctorate, and she has permanently converted to an
35 anthropologist at the Office of Subsistence Management
36 so congrats Kristen.

37
38 (Applause)

39
40 MS. LEONETTI: And we're really excited
41 to have her on board permanently.

42
43 Let's see, just for my sister Bureaus,
44 BLM, Fish and Wildlife, BIA, Park Service, we're going
45 to be advertising some details on the DOI website,
46 including a GS13 fisheries supervisor, a GS11/12 permit
47 specialist and a FS14 deputy for operations so
48 hopefully you will help me get the word out and get a
49 couple critical roles filled at least for a short
50

0024

1 amount of time.

2

3

4 Budget. I gave a budget update at the
5 February work session. We're making tough decisions
6 because of the smaller budget but we're trying to
7 ensure that our Fisheries For Resource Monitoring and
8 our Partners Program money gets out to our partners
9 effectively so that is our top priority, is that money
10 and those partnerships and that research so that we can
11 utilize that data for making effective decisions.

12

13

14 To the Council Chairs, I ask that you
15 keep asking for meetings in villages, asking for joint
16 Council meetings, and for attendance at other
17 regulatory body meetings. I will work with Staff to do
18 budget analysis on each of those requests and we'll
19 just see what we can do. But I think that several of
20 you have talked about meeting jointly with your
21 neighbor Councils and that could potentially save some
22 money so I'm looking forward to seeing those requests
23 come in.

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And then, yeah, I think that's all I
have for you and looking forward to reporting out about
the meaningful consultation guidance when Ben is here
this afternoon.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Excellent.
Correspondence discussion.

MS. LEONETTI: Yeah, correspondence
policy, I think we're talking about that on the agenda.

MS. LAVINE: Later.

MS. LEONETTI: Later, yeah.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Well, I just
wanted it to reflect while she's talking, a big part of
our discussion yesterday in our briefing is just really
recognizing the value of the annual reports and then us
developing our own correspondence policy so that we're
more transparent in how we're digesting the information
and then handling it so that the expectation that we
have and you have of us is drafted. So we figured that
today's meeting would drive the development of that
because obviously the process belongs to the RAC and
then we process what we receive so that was a big
discussion and probably one of the top discussions in

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1 our briefing. So.

2

3 MS. LEONETTI: Okay.

4

5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We're going to
6 take a five minute break because I think the next
7 discussion is going to get a little bit lengthier.

8

9 MS. PATTON: Oh.....

10

11 MS. LEONETTI: Oh, we forgot about Don
12 Striker.

13

14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, Don, you're
15 online. Sorry, we got one more. Thank you, Eva. Mr.
16 Striker, you have the floor.

17

18 MS. LEONETTI: Hold on, Don, we can't
19 hear you in the room, just give us a second here.

20

21 (Pause)

22

23 MS. LEONETTI: Try it again. You might
24 have to choose a different microphone or -- you're
25 muted. No, we still can't hear you.

26

27 (Pause)

28

29 MR. STRIKER: Can you hear me?

30

31 MS. LAVINE: Yes, we can hear you now.

32

33 MS. LEONETTI: We can hear you now.

34

35 MR. STRIKER: Oh, okay, thank you. I
36 started out with out of sight, out of mind.

37

38 (Laughter)

39

40 MR. STRIKER: And what I really mean by
41 that is I apologize for not being there in person. One
42 of the things that I really love about Alaska is that
43 there's no poison ivy up here because I'm prone to
44 getting it and when I get it I get it really bad and I
45 got some when I was visiting family in Ohio and
46 suffices to say I'm supposed to be minimally dressed
47 and airing it out and if I were in public I think I
48 would be creating a hostile work place for all of you.

49

50

0026

1 (Laughter)

2

3 MR. STRIKER: So I'm forced to sort of
4 be remote today.

5

6 Park Service business. It's been a
7 pretty good summer for us I will say, although it's
8 really good to be in Alaska this summer for the Park
9 Service as opposed to being in Washington, D.C. I
10 think you'll hear more later about the funding
11 opportunities that we've been pushing out. The amazing
12 Eva Patton is there in person with you, if you guys
13 need to defer to her because of any technical glitches,
14 Kim is there and still a steady hand on the tiller for
15 me.

16

17 We've been brainstorming ways to try
18 and close some of the funding gaps that we had in some
19 of the important harvest survey work, particularly
20 along, I think, the Ambler Road, and we're also trying
21 to brainstorm how to expand the internship project that
22 Forest Service funds in Southeast and see if we can't
23 bring that up north into the Interior communities.

24

25 Staffing-wise, we selected Jeanette
26 Koelsch, who many of you probably know, for the Western
27 Arctic area Superintendent so she'll be adding another
28 8 million acres to her portfolio still retaining Bering
29 Landbridge and Beringia. she's one of our superstars
30 so for those that don't Jeanette, this is really good
31 news.

32

33 I think of interest to people is we're
34 in kind of the home stretch with the final rule in
35 draft, if that's not an oxymoron, but the final rule
36 for what we are now calling the Alaska Wildlife Harvest
37 and Access rule. This is formally known as the hunting
38 rule. It's working its way through the Washington,
39 D.C., surveying process with all of the associated
40 compliance and environmental assessment and economic
41 analysis, the .810 analysis, FONZI, et cetera, et
42 cetera, et cetera. Special thanks to all of the folks
43 out there who consulted with us and commented on that
44 draft rule. It was really clear that our wording was
45 not as precise as it needed to be to be crystal clear
46 that nothing in that rule is going to diminish the
47 rural subsistence priority or any of the work that we
48 do as part of this Federal Subsistence Board and I
49 think that you'll all be pleased at the clarity of the

50

0027

1 language that we managed to develop, in many cases
2 adopting recommendations that folks that made as part
3 of that feedback.

4
5 It was also pretty exciting in May, the
6 Secretary visited and sort of set the Park Service
7 straight I might say with respect to ATV use, OHV use
8 in Gates of the Arctic up in the Anaktuvuk Pass area.
9 And in this case the Secretary and his team, with --
10 and I say his team, huge shout out and props to Kara
11 and Sara and Lisa and the other solicitors, I think to
12 make that decision real simple is he just clarified for
13 the National Park Service that our use of Webster's
14 definition for customary and traditional was simply not
15 ANILCA's intent with respect to talking about
16 traditional means of transportation in conservation
17 system units. So anyway that's a huge success story, I
18 think, for the subsistence folks out there. Working
19 through the process he also gave us a six month
20 deadline to make sure that we come up with any minimal
21 reasonable regulation needed to make sure that we
22 protected the resource values of the Gates of the
23 Arctic National Park and Preserve. Anyway, a similar
24 application of that theory, that very clear direction
25 with respect to traditionally transportation uses for
26 subsistence purposes is also being applied in Katmai.
27 I just heard from the Superintendent at Katmai
28 yesterday that they're going to authorize ATV use for
29 their special caribou hunt.

30
31 I think a couple other things in Gates
32 of the Arctic that might be interesting to folks is
33 just that we continue to work with AIDEA, they have not
34 yet requested a permit to actually construct the road
35 but we did issue them a right-of-way so that they can
36 be doing some of the preliminary work core drilling, et
37 cetera, et cetera trying to figure out where to put
38 bridges in, so that work has been going on.

39
40 You'll see later, WSA26-04, I think
41 that's very timely as a result of the land changes
42 recently with -- especially given how quickly BLM is
43 moving on those transfers. So I look forward to having
44 that conversation. I hope people are alert for that
45 conversation, that's a proposal that I think makes good
46 sense.

47
48 And I think that's it.

49
50

0028

1 Thank you.

2

3 MS. LEONETTI: Thank you, Don. Sorry
4 we missed you the first time.

5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, we're
7 going to take a five minute break.

8

9 (Off record)

10

11 (On record)

12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
14 we'll get started again. Welcome back from our break
15 everybody. Take a seat. We're at an important part
16 here, the most important part. Okay, the Thomas, I get
17 that, I bet you get that quite a bit don't you.

18

19 MR. BAKER: Yeah.

20

21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Them smoke
22 signal references there.

23

24 (Laughter)

25

26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We have a
27 spokesperson. All right, we're going to get started
28 with the next agenda item, which is Alaska Salmon
29 Crises Chair's workshop results and next steps and
30 appreciate that, again, like we said, that that
31 happened and trying to do more of this to bring us
32 together more often so we can get the perspective of
33 our people that we work for and our deference goes to
34 the RACs so you have the floor, Tom.

35

36 MR. BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can
37 you hear me all right?

38

39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Pull it in a
40 little bit.

41

42 MR. BAKER: How about now?

43

44 MS. LAVINE: Yes.

45

46 MR. BAKER: And no echo even, sweet.
47 Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record my name is Thomas
48 Baker, my Inupiaq name is (In Inupiaq). I was born and
49 raised in Kotzebue and I currently serve as Chair of

50

0029

1 the Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Council.

2

3 As has been discussed, yesterday the
4 Chairs of nine of the 10 Regional Advisory Councils
5 came together for a salmon crises workshop. Just a
6 side note, I kind of admitted yesterday that I'm the
7 youngest out of all the Chairs so I got volun-told to
8 be the spokesperson today.

9

10 (Laughter)

11

12 MR. BAKER: So with that being said
13 I've compiled notes from yesterday's discussion. I
14 usually try not to use notes but these are all of our
15 words put together so if you'd bear with me, if I have
16 to read just to make sure I'm getting everything
17 correctly.

18

19 It is widely recognized that there is a
20 problem across the entire state of Alaska. As a first
21 step in addressing this monumental problem we requested
22 a meeting together as a group rather than sending
23 letters, acting independently or duplicating efforts.
24 We reviewed the strengths and weaknesses of our
25 Councils and discussed what opportunities for and
26 threats to the program and subsistence management are
27 out there. In identifying the gaps we came together to
28 read the river, so to speak.

29

30 We had a comprehensive dialogue of what
31 success looks like in addressing the salmon crises and
32 other looming catastrophes. I could list what we wrote
33 but I believe members of the Board and the people in
34 this room know what success looks like. It's small
35 children learning to cut fish. It's elders passing
36 down knowledge. It's communities having traditional
37 foods to share because the freezers are full.

38

39 Now that everyone is hungry, I'd like
40 to thank the Board for this opportunity.

41

42 We admitted yesterday that this is one
43 step. That we may not have solved the whole problem,
44 that victory is not quite here yet. But we know, and
45 the Board knows what victory looks like for subsistence
46 management. Each of our RACs can look back on their
47 individual successes as well as the challenges we face,
48 despite these challenges each RAC has overcome. Each
49 RAC. We represent all the regions of Alaska and while
50

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1 we understand our charges to our regions we know in
2 order to keep our salmon and other resources from going
3 the way of the buffalo we need to come together. With
4 that in mind allowing for joint Council meetings, All
5 Chair meetings, focused workshops, attending work
6 sessions such as this with the Board; these are all key
7 to using the collective knowledge and experience of
8 subsistence uses around the state to protect our
9 resources.

10

11 Subsistence users need to have a seat
12 at the table and we are grateful to be at this one
13 today. But the next table we hope to be at may need to
14 be a little bit bigger. On behalf of the Regional
15 Advisory Councils we would like to request an
16 opportunity for a meeting between the RAC Chairs, the
17 Federal Subsistence Board and the Secretaries of the
18 Interior and Agriculture.

19

20 Again, I would like to thank the Board
21 for their time and look forward to the work ahead of
22 us.

23

24 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

25

26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
27 Thomas. I appreciate the report from yesterday.
28 Appreciate the work and identifying the issues and I
29 also appreciate the last request you made to get an
30 audience with the Department of Interior so we'll be
31 taking note of that. I think as we put it on the
32 record we can do our best to make sure those things
33 happen because I think it's a good part of what we need
34 to do to get that dialogue of what important issues
35 that our Regional Advisory Councils are facing and that
36 they need to be elevated to the bigger table so I
37 appreciate that last request.

38

39 Any questions or comments here from any
40 other Board members.

41

42 Frank.

43

44 MR. WOODS: I see listed co-management
45 agreements and how that'd look moving forward. I am
46 Chairman of the Alaska Walrus Commission, the first co-
47 management agreement between the Feds, State and tribal
48 entities. I see that process working well. We know
49 that 20 years ago the State demanded or back when, you
50

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1 know, the Parnell Administration, came up with the king
2 salmon, kind of rebuilding plan because it happened
3 almost 20 years ago. We left that up to the best of
4 bureaucracy in the State and the Federal system and a
5 member of the king salmon monitoring program in Togiak,
6 they were putting radio telemetry little beads in the
7 king salmon going up the Togiak, in that process we
8 used an information -- the State uses that information
9 and we don't coordinate any of that information to
10 delineate into a population increase or right now they
11 use that information to reel back commercial fishing
12 but it's still open for sports, there's different
13 regulation process, I'm not going to get into the weeds
14 here, but I'm going to say one thing is that the --
15 when we don't include the tribal populations in co-
16 management, just like the permitting process, having an
17 issue on permits, we want to help, preserve not just
18 help, the Federal and State agencies be successful but
19 we have a personal agenda on that as a tribal member
20 and a tribal seat to help feed our people.

21

22 In the next few days, between now and
23 tomorrow I would love to hear any ideas on how to co-
24 manage, not just hunting and fishing, but true co-
25 management.

26

27 So I appreciate your summary and thank
28 you for all your good work. It was great just -- I'm
29 sorry for just attending a few minutes but we have our
30 own busy schedule. I am in chills in watching what you
31 did yesterday because that's a long time needed. And
32 now that we're in this arena I like -- not just behind
33 me, but what you just read, because we need to sit down
34 and start working on this together, so, thanks.

35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other Board
37 comments. Discussion. Any other Council Chairs want
38 to make comments or statements. This is your
39 opportunity to get us.

40

41 Louis.

42

43 MR. GREEN: You avoided looking at me
44 but you knew I was going to be up.

45

46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah.

47

48 MR. GREEN: Is there somebody else
49 besides you.

50

0032

1 (Laughter)

2

3

4 MR. GREEN: Yes, Louis Green, Seward
5 Peninsula RAC. The idea that we're trying to call out
6 the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture -- excuse
7 me, am I still there? Tina. Hello.

7

8

9

8 REPORTER: Yes.

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MR. GREEN: That we're trying to call
out the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture,
there's one more out of our RAC for the Seward
Peninsula that we have pushed forward is the Department
of Commerce Secretary. You know this is an offshore
marine waters Federal fishery that is probably
impacting us greatly across the state and we would like
to have that Department at the table also. And so
thank you, Mr. Chair.

The salmon issue is important, more
than anything else I think for just because of the
land, it's necessary for the land, it's necessary for
the people. We need to be heard and I think the
inclusion of the Department of Commerce would be a
plus, so thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Louis. Frank.

MR. WOODS: You know, I sit on
different boards and I think approach the North
Pacific, which the Department of Commerce controls that
whole through the Magnuson-Stevens Act, I think it's
good to look at all aspects and all impacts. It took
me eight days to look for an impact study of the North
Pacific. Anybody who's dealing with the North Pacific,
I think we understand what that process looks like. As
we sit here we need to include all impacts, right.
Because it's a cumulative impact that is affecting our
resource. It's everybody's resource. And this is not
just a complicated issue but it's a survival issue.
That we are beyond crises. We are beyond talking about
it. We are beyond giving it lip service. We need
regulation, policy and law changes that help and affect
our resources. And that's what it's going to take, a
change, and get back our fisheries that we've lost. So
thank you for bringing that forward because we need
everybody at the table. So thanks.

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1 MR. GREEN: Thank you, Frank. It's,
2 you know, the burden of conservation of conservation in
3 the Norton Sound Bering Straits region where I'm from
4 has been felt for probably over 40 years and, you know,
5 it's interesting to know that there was a study done in
6 the late '80s about the Pacific Rim and how important
7 salmon were to the rim. The success of the Pacific Rim
8 is because of salmon. The interesting fact is there
9 was two areas pointed out that were important to the
10 whole production of the Pacific Rim. And, one, we all
11 know that the Bristol Bay region is one of those places
12 that's important to the Pacific Rim. The other one,
13 which is really interesting, is the Norton Sound that
14 was found to be important. And those two were the two
15 in Western Alaska that were pointed out. So I thought
16 I'd share that. There's a study that was done and that
17 came out of it.

18
19 So thanks, Mr. Woods.

20
21 MR. WOODS: Mr. Chair, one more
22 comment. Is that I've watched in my short lifetime the
23 Native conservation concerns, we volunteer to take the
24 burden of conservation. We've seen it in Togiak in the
25 early '90s, that is now -- it is now the crown jewel
26 since Togiak itself took the burden of conservation, a
27 five year moratorium 30 years ago. They're benefitting
28 with the highest density of population of moose in the
29 region. We've seen the Yukon Kuskokwim, seven year
30 moratorium for no fishing on the subsistence user, and
31 when the subsistence user takes on that burden of
32 conservation everybody benefits but the user because
33 they take the conservation hit.

34
35 When we address this, we have to
36 realize that, you know, when we volunteer as tribal
37 entities, and villages and agencies and we see it in
38 Bristol Bay, like Togiak they moved the commercial line
39 away from the village and they don't fish in front of
40 it for conservation of king salmon, there's hundreds of
41 examples statewide, that we as subsistence users,
42 volunteer of our own resource for the conservation of
43 fish and wildlife.

44
45 So thank you for bringing that forward
46 and I appreciate all the work that you guys do. You
47 have really really active members in each one of your
48 RACs that do a lot of work that isn't appreciated,
49 isn't acknowledged, not just personally but publicly.
50

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1 I know what sacrifice is and each one of you guys are
2 sacrificing time, energy, away from home, away from
3 families and away from subsisting, and so I appreciate
4 that and I'll let you share and finish.

5

6 Thank you.

7

8 MR. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

9 Thank you, Frank. This is not the land of plenty
10 anymore, it just isn't. We're looking at all the way
11 across the board, across the state, everybody has a
12 problem, there's caribou, moose in my area, caribou in
13 my area, even the muskox are down, the salmon, of
14 course, is down, there's a bright spot of salmon
15 because of our lake fertilization project in the Salmon
16 Lake, the sockeyes are doing half decent in providing
17 for people that can afford to go and get out in the
18 country to where the rivers are that provide these
19 fish. But the Safari Club is attacking the system.
20 They still think it's the land of plenty and I just
21 wanted to make sure I had that on the record. It's
22 not. And furthermore, in the marine world we're
23 reading about grey whale die-off. Grey whales are
24 dying off like you wouldn't believe and they seem to be
25 resting on the beaches of Washington, a lot of them
26 have. Grey whales are bottom feeders and they feed in
27 the Bering Sea and the Gulf of Alaska on their way up
28 to the Chuckchi and Arctic Ocean. Chuckchi Sea. So
29 there's definitely something wrong and we've seen it
30 coming for a long time and we've raised the flags all
31 the way from my way area on the Seward Peninsula, Nome
32 for a good 40 years and nothing's taken shape, so
33 hopefully this process is going to help us get through
34 to get some notoriety in our situation up here.

35

36 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

37

38 Thank you, Mr. Woods.

39

40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Eva.

41

42 MS. BURK: Thank you. Through the
43 Chair. I just want to thank Chief Rhonda Pitka for her
44 comments this morning, they were spot on. I'm not
45 going to repeat or rehash some of the things I said
46 yesterday but I do urge you, if you have the time to
47 look at them, maybe follow up and report.

48

49 But a couple things that stand out for

50

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1 me is within the work that we've already done to get to
2 this meeting here we have been for years asking for the
3 request that just came from Mr. Thomas today. We've
4 been asking and asking for that and it isn't happening
5 and so I'm confused as to why we had to do all this
6 instead of just getting that meeting to happen right
7 away so that now we can meet and use our time to
8 actually take what we learned from those meetings and
9 do the next step. I have a lot on my plate so I tend
10 to want to be efficient so I try to look for the
11 efficiencies where they could exist.

12
13 I learned through listening to many
14 people, through doing my own research, sitting and
15 listening to a lot of testimony from folks, the Bering
16 Sea is going to die. That's what people are saying
17 from the Hooper Bay area. The Chief there. In studies
18 that she's having prepared. That the Bering Sea will
19 be dead in 15 years. And right now in Alaska we have a
20 single species holding up the entire seafood production
21 and even for the United States and it's not
22 sustainable. Single species fisheries at this scale
23 cannot be sustainable and you're not going to find your
24 answer to that in science. I study natural resources
25 and within natural resources is the topic of
26 sustainability, and biology and environmental
27 conditions are part of it but so very much are
28 political and economic pressures. There are political
29 and economic pressures to unleash Alaska's resource
30 potential and to expedite those resource development by
31 shortening the NEPA analysis process, which will
32 definitely affect the public process. We're already
33 spinning. All we do is go from meeting to meeting to
34 meeting just so we could actually live our way of life,
35 but the reality is I'm here instead of living my way of
36 life. I should be taking my aunties berrypicking right
37 now and my baby girls, I should not have to sit in this
38 meeting and tell people how to do their job, that
39 they're getting paid for.

40
41 The success of the Kuskokwim is
42 something to look at. Where tribes lead there is
43 success. I'm not totally sure, but I do believe the
44 Kuskokwim is the only place making escapement right now
45 because they're sacrificing their need to eat. They
46 can't get those numbers to meet escapement and eat
47 unless something changes in the ocean, which we clearly
48 laid out in the EIRAC letter what needs to happen, we
49 clearly laid it out in the seven of the 10 RACs that
50

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1 agreed when we had the All RAC meeting, we all agreed
2 on some things. A limit of 10,000 bycatch was one of
3 them. You have to work across jurisdictions. We talk
4 about gravel-to-gravel, there is not even a gravel
5 stewardship plan, let alone a gravel-to-gravel plan.
6 Unless you have NOAA and NMFS at the table with the
7 other Federal agencies it's not a gravel-to-gravel
8 plan. And if salmon are spending most of their life in
9 the ocean that's where we need to focus. I really
10 firmly believe that. We do not understand the food web
11 in the ocean. Chinook salmon are only and only getting
12 ichthyophonous from pollock ovaries, not from herring,
13 not from anything else, from pollock ovaries, and, why,
14 because they're so starving they got to follow a
15 catcher, processor around in the ocean to get some
16 scraps to survive to try to make it home. And right
17 now we have climate survivors spawning and we need to
18 protect those. That's the good genetics that needs to
19 be protected right now. And limiting the Yukon River
20 people to 300 king salmon for the entire river through
21 a culture and education permit while 30,000 kings can
22 be tossed by a trawler industry, it's unfathomable. We
23 cannot understand this. The moratorium that the Yukon
24 River people self imposed started in 2014, yesterday I
25 asked the attorney if she was aware when the last time
26 when the Yukon River people's subsistence needs for
27 salmon had been met and she was not. That's really
28 concerning if people at this level don't realize the
29 direness of the situation, we are in true peril.

30
31 Rhonda said it very clearly, not only
32 is it the salmon, it's the moose and the caribou. So
33 our entire food system is being shook to its very core
34 right now. And instead of acknowledging that, we're
35 being asked to take more from it by outside interests.
36 Our knowledge of the land is being questioned because
37 it's not in a scientific study. You know, indigenous
38 knowledge should be leading because if the Yukon River
39 people knew in 2014 at the very beginning of the Bering
40 Sea heatwave that they needed to stand down from
41 fishing, they were way ahead of everybody else, way
42 ahead. And maybe had we listened to them we wouldn't
43 be in this awful situation because guess what,
44 commercial fishing still happened on our river for five
45 years after that. It finally ended in 2019. The
46 subsistence priority is not being upheld. Commercial
47 is being prioritized and we understand why because
48 we're desperate in this state for money. We're
49 desperate for economy. Fisheries is the third largest
50

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1 economy. Mining is second. Oil is first. Oil is
2 gone, they're coming for the mines, and they're trying
3 to increase seafood production. None of it makes
4 sense. None of it makes sense to me. All I can think
5 is all of the things I was taught by my elders through
6 the creation stories that this world will collapse
7 through its own greed and eating everything and trying
8 to sell its food and water. That's what I see
9 happening. So I'm not surprised.

10

11 You know, I just -- I have to be
12 passionate because for 12 years people have come here
13 being humble. I'm a hybrid and I have to use my voice.
14 I have to speak seriously and I have to let you know
15 this is a crises. This is a humanitarian crises, we
16 have no other options, we have no economy, we have no
17 grocery stores. Like Rhonda said, everything is
18 collapsing, the price of fuel, all of the assistance
19 programs that are helping us survive, everything is at
20 risk right now. The people that had to come to
21 Anchorage, because they couldn't live in the village
22 because of climate, we're not done seeing that. We're
23 going to see more and more and more. And we're not
24 ready in these urban centers to take that on. I live
25 in Fairbanks, I can tell you, we're not ready to help
26 the people the way that they need to be helped.

27

28 So I just urge this Board, there are
29 very specific things in the seven of 10 RACs that
30 agreed, if we could start to make sure that that
31 knowledge is communicated directly -- when we asked for
32 this meeting so we can have a head start and all use
33 our time efficiently, I very much appreciate that.

34

35 Baasee'

36

37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Eva.
38 Any comments or questions from the Board.

39

40 MR. WOODS: I'll be the advocate for
41 Eva. I appreciate all your work. That's a tireless
42 and thankless job that you're doing. It's well noted
43 and in these rooms and when you leave, so appreciate
44 all the work that you do.

45

46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I was cheering
47 for you yesterday.

48

49 (Laughter)

50

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1 MS. BURK: Did you grow?

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I grew.

4

5 (Laughter)

6

7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I went back to
8 our meeting and said I grew.

9

10 (Laughter)

11

12 MR. WOODS: One thing I'd like to share
13 is that thank you for pointing out all the science and
14 all the studies and all the meetings ain't going to fix
15 this problem, we already had that done already for the
16 last 20 years. 10 years of moratorium, seven years of
17 no fishing for the Yukon. It's not just a crises no
18 more. It is beyond that. And I'll keep advocating.
19 And I thank every one of you on the RACs for pointing
20 that out and keeping that charge because we need to
21 keep beating that drum until we can help fix the
22 problem so thank you.

23

24 MS. BURK: I got to say one more thing.
25 Thank you. It's a good story though. So we think
26 indigenous knowledge is anecd -- indigenous knowledge
27 should be where we start when we formulate research
28 questions. I am a researcher, right. And all the time
29 people are researching these things, where had they
30 talked to folks on the land they would have had more
31 efficiency because they would have been like, here's
32 the real thing that we need to look at. One thing that
33 I learned is we're wondering where are the Yukon kings
34 going, what are they eating in the ocean, we couldn't
35 split up our genetics for how much of our fish was
36 being caught, we just figured out how much kings being
37 bycaught are from Kusko, Bristol Bay versus how much
38 are from Yukon. We're just now getting that
39 information, we're so far behind. And I learned from
40 the Lower Yukon people from an elder, and he has to be
41 pushing 90 and he told me the people from the
42 Pribilofs, they say our Yukon fish migrate through on
43 the east side of St. George, when we start looking at
44 the data in the pollock industry, guess what, they just
45 came out with this year, in June, sure enough there's
46 the Yukon king all being caught around the Pribilof
47 Islands. That's the power of traditional and
48 indigenous knowledge, and we need to start really,
49 really looking at it and uplifting it and starting
50

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1 there, not adding it on, we need to start there.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Close that
4 side. Any other comments from the Board or feedback
5 from our Regional Advisory Councils.

6

7 (No comments)

8

9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We appreciate
10 the passion, too, that's why we do what we do so this
11 is the room for it.

12

13 Dan, you have the floor.

14

15 MR. DUNAWAY: Thank you. Thank you,
16 Mr. Chair. Just want to thank Thomas here, he didn't
17 just get volun-told, he proved his capability in
18 eloquence because I could not have put it together as
19 eloquently as he did. He's a rising star. It's good
20 to see young guys doing it.

21

22 Thank you.

23

24 MS. LEONETTI: Ask him what model year
25 he is?

26

27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: What model year
28 are you?

29

30 (Laughter)

31

32 MR. BAKER: I'm a 1995 model.

33

34 (Laughter)

35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hey, I
37 graduated in '94 so.....

38

39 (Laughter)

40

41 MS. MORIARTY: Mr. Chair, Mr. Chairman,
42 did you really want to know that?

43

44 (Laughter)

45

46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: That was.....

47

48 MS. MORIARTY: But, yes, Thomas has
49 been a rising star in the state for some time and

50

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1 served his district very admirably in the State
2 Legislature so he's got great experience already for a
3 younger person.

4

5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Volun-told is
6 how I ended up here. You have the mic there, Greg.

7

8 MR. ENCELEWSKI: Yeah, Mr. Chairman,
9 Members of the Board and everyone else here. I started
10 this out in the 1948 model so I am maybe a falling star
11 but I have a lot of indigenous knowledge and a lot of
12 work around and it was very enlightening to listen to
13 all the action that we may be able to get some answers
14 but the truth of the matter is is I'm just going to
15 echo, it's way past time for action. You know when
16 they're allowing 45,000 bycatch and no one getting fish
17 up river and everyone hurting, it is a major, major
18 crises. And just for a report on the Kenai, we've been
19 very fortunate because we got the Federal net on the
20 Kenai River. We've been blessed and we use it for the
21 community. This year we didn't fill our permits yet,
22 we've only got a couple thousand fish and we usually
23 get about 4,500, the Kenai run hit in pulse and then it
24 dropped off to nothing so the kings have been gone
25 forever. The smoked salmon I brought in for you is
26 from Southeast, we bought it and smoked it, that's how
27 things go nowadays. Sad. But that's a true story.
28 But they're very good kings so that's troll caught king
29 there.

30

31 But, anyway, you know, the priority for
32 subsistence certainly doesn't seem to be met and it's a
33 political thing, whether we like it or not. If we
34 can't get it changed and we can't get some action,
35 we're doomed. I mean our resources are terribly
36 getting depleted. Even on the Kenai. The halibut, they
37 run around, little ping pong paddles, you know, it's
38 disgusting to see that. But there's a lot of good work
39 and good action, I think, that we could convince the
40 right people or maybe we got to change the Presidency
41 too, I am not sure, but we got to do something pretty
42 drastic to get our situation out before the people that
43 could give us help.

44

45 Thank you.

46

47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
48 Greg. Any other comments. Questions. Feedback.

49

50

0041

1 (No comments)

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
4 the fire.

5

6 Oh, go ahead, Louis.

7

8 MR. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just
9 in a hearing, the '48 model, this is a '58 model has
10 lived a life from plenty of salmon to the point where
11 we were the first ones to take the hit, the red flags
12 are all over, especially in the Nome subdistrict and it
13 migrated south. This has been going on since the '80s.
14 And it's well documented and it's continued on down to
15 the rest of the way and now it's probably down in the
16 Bay. So it's not for the lack of people sitting
17 hundreds of hours at Board of Fish testimony, you know,
18 providing testimony, our elders that were all part of
19 that are all gone now and I've become one of the elders
20 now, so like the '48 model over there, we're way past
21 time. So appreciate your listening.

22

23 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

24

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
26 Really appreciate the work you guys do. Keep getting
27 us so we can get on it, appreciate that.

28

29 Next we'll move on to the Federal
30 Subsistence Board replies to the Regional Advisory
31 Councils annual reports.

32

33 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It
34 might just take us one moment to get our screens in
35 order here so bear with us here. Thank you.

36

37 (Pause)

38

39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
40 we'll go ahead and get started, Staff's ready to
41 present.

42

43 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
44 Good morning Members of the Board and our
45 representatives from the Council. For the record my
46 name is Brooke McDavid and I am a Council Coordinator
47 with the Office of Subsistence Management. I
48 coordinate the Eastern Interior and Yukon Kuskokwim
49 Delta Councils. And today I am going to be helping
50

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1 lead everyone through an overview of the topics that
2 were raised in the FY2025 Council annual reports to the
3 Board as well as looking at some of the Board's
4 responses.

5

6 I wanted to note that efforts have been
7 made in recent years based on feedback from the
8 Councils and the Board to try and make the annual
9 report process more meaningful and engaging. For the
10 first time, at this work session, we have
11 representatives from almost all of the Regional
12 Advisory Councils here to discuss the topics of concern
13 from their reports. Last year we had four Chairs join
14 us and so we've really built on that, it was a great
15 success last year and definitely look forward to
16 hearing some great discussion today.

17

18 Because of the presence of our Council
19 representatives, tried to set up this agenda item to
20 take less of the focus on me, as a Staff member,
21 presenting these issues to you and focus more on
22 discussion between Councils and the Board.

23

24 I have done my best to streamline this
25 presentation but if you've seen the annual reports
26 you've seen there is a plethora of information
27 contained in them. So these slides will contain a lot
28 of words but I will really do my best to breeze through
29 them quickly so that we can turn it over to have that
30 important discussion.

31

32 You all are aware that many topics that
33 are raised in the annual reports to the Board fall
34 outside of the Board's jurisdiction. Some of the
35 issues require engagement by the Secretaries, by
36 individual agencies or the State to potentially address
37 them. Nevertheless, they are issues that impact
38 Federally-qualified subsistence users, their ability to
39 harvest and meet subsistence needs in the everyday
40 lives of rural Alaskans. And I know in the background
41 there has been some discussion and continued thinking
42 about ways to make communication of these issues from
43 the grassroots Council level to the Board and to the
44 Secretaries a little bit more effective and responsive,
45 including ways to potentially improve this annual
46 report process.

47

48 Following this presentation and agenda
49 item there is an agenda item No. 7 now that will be a
50

0043

1 discussion of the process. So just wanted to kind of
2 set the stage that this portion, we're really going to
3 try to focus on the content of the reports and then
4 there will be plenty of time later to talk about the
5 process and potential ways to continue working to
6 improve that process.

7
8 So this slide is just showing a brief
9 outline of how we'll proceed through this agenda item
10 today. I'll start with a very brief background on
11 annual reports and replies, you'll be able to talk more
12 about that later and there are additional handouts
13 about the history and statutory requirements that will
14 come up in the later agenda item.

15
16 The meat of today's discussion will be
17 on the topics that were raised by the Councils. We
18 looked at all of the topics that were given in the
19 annual reports this year and we're able to identify six
20 major themes from this years reports and we'll proceed
21 through each of those themes one by one. I will give a
22 quick overview of the issues raised, the Council
23 requests and highlight some of the draft Board
24 responses and then we'll turn it over to the Councils
25 and the Board to discuss those issues and potential
26 actions.

27
28 I and other Staff will be helping to
29 track any updates or edits that the Board might want to
30 make to your final replies. The replies that have been
31 included in your meeting materials, they're replies to
32 all 10 Regional Advisory Councils are in the meeting
33 booklet if you want to see any specific language.

34
35 And there are -- since there are six
36 major themes this year we want to make sure we have
37 time to get through all of them, this is probably your
38 largest agenda item to get through during this meeting
39 as far as the amount of content and the length, so if
40 needed we will probably just need to keep an eye on
41 time and make sure that we're able to get through all
42 the discussion. There are a couple other agenda items
43 that we want our Council Chairs to be able to be
44 present here for. And then at the end after we've
45 moved through talking about these six major themes,
46 which I'll explain what they are in a minute, we'll
47 just do a quick circle back to make sure there weren't
48 any topics that came up in individual Council annual
49 reports that might have accidentally been missed and
50

0044

1 review any potential any other modifications that the
2 Board might like to make to their replies. And then
3 after my presentation and role in this, it will be up
4 to the Board to make a motion to approve the final
5 annual report replies with any modifications and then
6 later will be that further discussion about the annual
7 report reply process.

8
9 So the requirement for annual reports
10 originates in ANILCA and in Section .805 is where the
11 Regional Advisory Council authorities are listed and
12 that includes the preparation of an annual report to
13 the Secretaries. ANILCA is very specific about what
14 reports shall contain, and this is the list. It says
15 identification of current and anticipated subsistence
16 uses of fish and wildlife populations within the region
17 and evaluation of current and anticipated subsistence
18 needs, a recommended strategy for the management of
19 fish and wildlife within the region to accommodate
20 subsistence uses and needs, recommendations concerning
21 policies, standards, guidelines, and regulations to
22 implement the strategy. And it also directs -- or
23 Section .805 also directs that the Secretary shall
24 consider the report and recommendations of the Regional
25 Advisory Councils.

26
27 Just a little bit of history. The
28 first annual reports to the Secretaries and replies to
29 those reports happened even before the establishment of
30 the Federal Subsistence Management Program and we have
31 found some records of those replies from the early
32 years after ANILCA. Katya and other OSM Staff have
33 been working to compile a history of the annual report
34 process, how it might have changed over time, it's not
35 a straightforward task, those are not digital records
36 that we can easily search through, there's a lot of
37 boxes of old papers that they're beginning to try to
38 comb through. So I would expect that there might be a
39 more detailed -- there might be some more detailed
40 information that comes up in the future as that work
41 continues. But one other point about the background is
42 that at some point the Secretary delegated the
43 authority to the Board to consider and respond to
44 annual reports. The Subsistence Board's powers and
45 duties are outlined in the Federal regulations in 43
46 CFR 51.10 and that also includes the Board is to be
47 accountable to considering the reports and
48 recommendations from the Councils. It is not explicit
49 about the replies. And, again, more discussion on that
50

0045

1 later in the day.

2

3

4 I left this slide in here from Katya's
5 presentation in previous years because it mentions that
6 the 2010 Secretarial Review also set forth a directive
7 to specifically ensure that the Secretaries are
8 informed when non-Departmental rulemaking entities
9 develop regulations that may adversely affect
10 subsistence users. This is just something to keep in
11 mind as we are, you know, thinking in the background
12 more broadly about how the Board and Councils
13 communicate issues affecting subsistence users in
14 Alaska to the Secretaries and whether or not those
15 issues fall within the authority of the Board or
16 outside of it and whether those are elevated through
17 these annual reports or otherwise.

17

18 Some of this is kind of hard to read on
19 the screen, it's just an overview of the timeline and
20 process that we go through every year for the annual
21 reports and the replies. It begins at the fall
22 Regional Advisory Council meetings when the Councils
23 first identify topics of concern for their annual
24 reports for the previous fiscal year. Between the fall
25 Council meetings and the winter Council meetings,
26 Coordinators work on drafting the annual reports based
27 on the discussion at the fall Council meeting and
28 working with the Chair, the Chair and other OSM Staff
29 review those initial drafts and then at the winter
30 meetings the full Council reviews the drafts and makes
31 any edits they see fit and then they approve their
32 annual report. Once that report is approved at the
33 winter Council meeting then the work begins on the
34 replies to the report. And OSM and ISC and the Board
35 agencies work together to draft and review those
36 replies and that's a lot of work and I do just want to
37 pause and say thank you to all of the Staff in our
38 agencies that help out in drafting those replies.
39 It's, you know, additional work to your everyday duties
40 but it is very much appreciated by the Councils.

41

42 Once the draft replies are ready the
43 ISC, in the summer, reviews the draft Board replies and
44 then a final draft is prepared for this meeting, and
45 that's where we are today, we're here to go over the
46 report topics and review some of those replies.

47

48 There is a large table that's been
49 floating around. We have some extra copies up here if
50

0046

1 anyone in the audience is interested. This table is
2 meant to be sort of a one-stop shop for trying to look
3 at all of the topics that were raised in the annual
4 reports and how those fall into the different themes
5 that were identified. So it's just a helpful little
6 handout because there's probably over 100 pages in the
7 annual reports to go through so this is -- can be a
8 reference. We tried to put the topic numbers on there
9 so that if there was a specific topic you wanted to
10 pull up in one of the reports that it might help you
11 do so more quickly.

12
13 All right, so these are the six
14 overarching themes, we're calling them, that came up
15 in the annual reports this year.

16
17 They are salmon and marine issues,
18 which we've heard some about already this morning;
19 monitoring and research gaps; enforcement and user
20 conflicts; caribou declines in management;
21 environmental and land use issues; and program,
22 administration and communication. And we've noted
23 there the number of Councils that brought up topics
24 under each of these categories.

25
26 There were a total of 42 individual
27 topics brought up this year. About 32 of those
28 contained requests from the Councils for replies or
29 actions and there were about 10 that were informational
30 and compared to last year, in the FY'2024 annual
31 replies this number is greatly reduced, it's actually
32 almost halved the number of topics that were raised in
33 the annual reports down from 78 so this year we have
34 42.

35
36 I want to note that the reduction in
37 the number of topics in the annual reports, it doesn't
38 mean that there are less issues or concerns in the
39 Council, in the regions -- or that the Councils are --
40 subsistence users are experiencing. It's likely due to
41 efforts by, I think, two things, OSM Staff trying to
42 work more with the Councils to maybe direct certain
43 topics more straightforward to agencies or those who
44 might have jurisdiction over particular issues and the
45 second thing that I feel probably influenced it was the
46 fact that we just concurrently went through a
47 Secretarial Review, which the Councils also provided a
48 significant amount of feedback and information on
49 particularly about program administration, and some of
50

0047

1 these topics -- other topics also came up during that
2 discussion. I did want to earmark that for the Board
3 to think about, the Secretarial Review comments were
4 attached to a couple of the Councils annual reports and
5 they did request that the Board review those so we can
6 talk about that later but for a potential future
7 meeting it might be something that you could be
8 interested in looking at the Council comments from the
9 Secretarial Review.

10

11 Let me back up.

12

13 Before we get into our first thematic
14 topic, I do want to say that some of the topics that
15 were raised fit neatly into one of these categories,
16 some of them bleed into multiple themes, so the
17 groupings might not be 100 percent perfect but we hope
18 by focusing in it takes 42 different topics and puts it
19 into something more bite size that can be handled in
20 one meeting.

21

22 The last point is that just because a
23 Council didn't include a topic under one of these
24 themes it doesn't necessarily mean that they aren't
25 experiencing issues related to those themes in their
26 region.

27

28 All right. Our first theme today.
29 You've already heard a lot about this but I think it
30 deserves some repeating because it is such an important
31 issue. So these are some of the points that Councils
32 have raised about the issues they're experiencing
33 related to salmon in the marine environment. Across
34 the state folks have noted that salmon are declining in
35 number and size, although the severity of those
36 declines varies by area and species. Subsistence users
37 are experiencing food insecurity and loss of culture
38 from not being able to meet needs or harvest salmon at
39 all. Halibut declines in number and size are also a
40 concern. Councils have repeated the issue of
41 ineffective and siloed management. They've stated that
42 the subsistence priority is not being upheld in
43 practice, nor applied across jurisdictions. They have
44 concerns about trawling impacts to the marine echo
45 system, including disrupting food webs and sea floor
46 habitat. Hatchery salmon, competition with wild salmon
47 is also an issue that was raised by many Councils and
48 that includes both domestic and international
49 hatcheries. In some regions Councils noted the link

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1 between the impacts to subsistence economies when
2 commercial opportunities decline and at least one
3 region raised concerns about this subsidization of
4 certain commercial fisheries.

5

6 As you've heard the Councils have made
7 a very strong request to address the ineffective siloed
8 management of salmon. They've requested that this
9 crises be elevated to the Secretaries and make it clear
10 for the need for inter-jurisdictional ecosystem based
11 management. They've requested that there be
12 Secretarial level engagement between Departments of
13 Interior, Agriculture, Commerce and State and also the
14 State of Alaska. They have included the need to
15 address hatchery, wild salmon competition in these high
16 level discussions. They have asked to invite the
17 Secretaries or their representatives to meet with the
18 Board and Council Chairs to discuss the salmon crises
19 and hear directly from subsistence users and they've
20 requested guidance from the Solicitor's Office on how
21 to ensure that a subsistence priority is upheld across
22 all jurisdictions and in marine waters.

23

24 So some of the responses that we've
25 highlighted here from the Board are to note that the
26 Board has elevated Council letters and recommendations
27 to the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture through
28 the letters that Councils have written to the Board.
29 Yesterday, we had the first of what might be a series
30 of workshops among the Council Chairs to discuss the
31 salmon workshop and that was the first time the Chairs
32 also got to speak directly with the Solicitor. The
33 Board continues to encourage Councils to engage
34 directly with other regulatory bodies like the Alaska
35 Board of Fisheries and the North Pacific Fisheries
36 Management Council. And then I've highlighted in blue
37 here two more action oriented items that the Board has
38 committed to in your draft reply. The first of those
39 is requesting an annual meeting with the Secretaries to
40 address subsistence issues that fall outside of the
41 Board's jurisdiction, and a pledge to follow up with
42 the request to have the Departments of Interior and
43 Commerce meet together.

44

45 And with that, that is my overview of
46 what was raised in the annual reports on this topic, or
47 this theme, and I would like to turn it back over to
48 you, Mr. Chair, and the Council representatives to
49 elaborate on anything or discuss any of these

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0049

1 responses.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Brooke. Appreciate the way you put it together here in the package. So theme one, salmon and marine issues, and they did give it to us in a nice beautiful table so appreciate that, a flow chart there. Any questions here from the Board for Staff and other representatives or comments.

MR. BROWER: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Charlie.

MR. BROWER: Thank you for the presentation on salmon and marine issues. The only thing missing in that is the environment, the sea habitat and what's causing the decline of food sources for the fish and the marine mammals and especially the fungus, the algae that's affecting the whole process of issues with salmon in their run. I think that's one of the most important things that needs to be looked up. But Mother Nature plays in mysterious ways or we can't -- it comes as it progresses. So I think that's one of the important issues that should be looked into with scientists or what can be done, I have no idea, but I -- I believe the response and their concerns are valid, but the major issue is the ecosystem and how it's affecting the ocean, the algae, fungus is rapidly growing and covering the bottom of the ocean so I just wanted to express that, Mr. Chair.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Charlie. Any other comments from the Board. Frank.

MR. WOODS: Yeah, thank you, Brooke, for taking on such a big responsibility and the RACs for bringing it forward, all the RACs that attended. We have to take responsibility for the decline in, not just population and resource, but I think Charlie brought up is also -- as a traditionally minded person I could say there's like three different generations. You got the elders, the people that are dependent on, you know, say like 100 year, my grandmother, for example, traditionalist, have lived off the resource. We have the next generation of educated, what do you

0050

1 call them, my mom and dad are part of that whole
2 generation where they got shipped off to school and
3 they lost that connection. And then a third generation
4 of educated -- I'm a halfbreed, I don't fit right with
5 the village, I'm still a gussuk, and I go into the
6 Western world and I'm Native, right, so we have this
7 population of mix. And half our population gets, you
8 know, absent because they live in Anchorage, like
9 someone pointed out. What we fail -- and I think that
10 I'm going to pass this on to the RAC is that we have a
11 Marine Mammal Protection Act that protects marine
12 mammals for Native indigenous people of 25 percent
13 blood. It has worked well. And it may not -- I can't
14 speak for any other area but in our area we have way
15 too many seals, way too many belugas, and we don't have
16 any estimate in population because they're feeding on
17 salmon as they come in before they get, not only to the
18 commercial district, but to the counting towers. In a
19 population of 40,000 seals where back in -- back when I
20 was growing up there might have been 10,000, we've
21 quadrupled that amount, not only are they not part of
22 the management plan but they don't have the numbers
23 that delineate of how much impacts -- especially during
24 king salmon, or the first salmon come in, the impacts
25 of belugas harvesting kings as they go up river.
26 Seals, on the same arena. They don't have the numbers
27 that we have, where we need to delineate that
28 information, how many salmon they're catching and
29 eating before they get up to the spawn -- counting
30 towers and spawning streams.

31
32 The second thing is we manage in our
33 area for terminal stock fisheries and there's mixed
34 stock fisheries that impact us. I'd like to
35 acknowledge Bristol Bay is attempt -- trying to address
36 all these issues. One of the things I think is missing
37 is that we are starting to have to accommodate the
38 guide industry for chartered halibut fisheries in
39 Bristol Bay now. Guided waterfowl that also impact our
40 subsistence use. Because we are just now at the
41 forefront, where Southeast have been impacted for over
42 200 years, we're just now getting that influx because
43 we're the last -- there is no Last Frontier. That
44 Frontier is gone. If we're experiencing waterfowl
45 guided hunts, halibut charters, we are in the same
46 arena as the Southeast or Prince William Sound or
47 anywhere else. We have to be real careful and I
48 appreciate all the work that the RAC has done and
49 Brooke has done on this but we are -- we are listening
50

0051

1 and this has to be, we have to take responsibility for
2 these action items that need to be done, and it's going
3 to be a lot of work and I appreciate it.

4
5 I have one other thing to share. I
6 appreciate the RACs for not pointing arrows. You know
7 we could throw all the arrows and shoot arrows at
8 different industries but the Federal Subsistence Board
9 and OSM has worked diligently at including the sport
10 and -- in Dan's case, because he's a sports seat and
11 he's got a recreational background and a whole
12 different level but he is engaged to help us keep on
13 track in every -- I've worked with you on the Nushagak
14 Advisory, you were the Secretary, and worked well,
15 those seats that help this whole process aren't
16 recognized enough in the outside world. When my best
17 friend, Hans Nicholson, died, he was Chairman of the
18 Nushagak Advisory, nobody gave him a thank you letter,
19 nobody gave him an acknowledgement, nobody gave him a
20 word for attending all them years. Stop and think
21 about that, Dan. When you're sitting here and nobody
22 acknowledges your presence and how much you dedicate
23 for this meeting or any other meeting, the Board of
24 Game, Board of Fish, all that work that Eva's doing,
25 Thomas, I forget my husband's name there.....

26
27 (Laughter)

28
29 MR. WOODS: And every one of these
30 seats here seen here.....

31
32 (Laughter)

33
34 MR. WOODS: And to make light of it
35 because this is so serious that we don't have all the
36 answers and I hope you understand that we're doing the
37 best we can and each one of you guys are important to
38 that process. Thank you, Brooke, because this is a
39 huge, huge deal. I want to sit down -- next year I
40 want to be passing policy to help make -- outlining
41 this system Thomas is talking about -- next year I want
42 to be passing policy that makes sense to us, right,
43 that impacts how we're supposed to move forward,
44 whether it's Department of Secretary or Kara here,
45 we've got to lead the charge at some point because,
46 number 1, there is no more resources here, we are run
47 out of resource, we've heard that for years, you know,
48 we are now at the stage of -- it's the worst growing
49 pain that you can experience as, not only a State, but
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1 as a country, you know, this is ground roots, this is
2 survival.

3

4 So I'll shut up and thank you for the
5 report, Brooke. We got to look forward to, I'll shut
6 up for now. Thank you.

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other Board
9 comment or RAC comments. I see Jill down here -- oh,
10 no -- okay, we'll go around then Jill.

11

12 MS. MORIARTY: No, go ahead, Jill.

13

14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Kara. Okay,
15 Jill.

16

17 MS. KLEIN: Okay. I'll go first. My
18 comment was more specific to the third flag down, about
19 encouraging Councils to engage directly with other
20 regulatory bodies and just noting Crystal's comment
21 earlier when she spoke about the Councils continuing to
22 ask for that but wanting to make sure, I think it was
23 in the Southeast RAC's topic, on halibut, at the North
24 Pacific Fisheries Management Council, there was an ask
25 to attend the North Pacific Fisheries Management
26 Council and if there was funding to do that, and so
27 just wanted to highlight that. I think in our draft
28 reply it states that it might not be possible to do
29 that because it's perhaps outside of the Board's
30 authority. So just wanted to raise that for a possible
31 edit before it goes out.

32

33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Robbin, you're
34 raising your hand.

35

36 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
37 Jill, can you highlight that text and submit that to
38 OSM for edits, thank you.

39

40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Kara.

41

42 MS. MORIARTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
43 for the latitude here, not an official Board member.
44 But I just want the RAC Chairs and the Subsistence
45 Board members to know that I've seen the requests come
46 in, either through conversation, your draft, Crystal
47 helped me organize all of the whole reports and so I've
48 got my Bible here/binder, all of them here, and
49 recognize that there is a request to meet with

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0053

1 Secretary Burgum in addition to potentially Secretary
2 Rollins and Secretary Lutnick, so just know that I'm
3 aware of the request and talking to folks back in D.C.,
4 to see how we may be able to accommodate that and what
5 the schedule might look like. So no commitments but
6 just know that I hear you and it's acknowledged and
7 that's why I'm here today.

8
9 Because I wanted to hear directly as
10 you talk about the annual reports, to make sure that
11 it's not just reading the report, but also hearing and
12 listening to your conversations both officially on the
13 record and as Frank gives me a hard time, off the
14 record, over here in the corner.

15
16 (Laughter)

17
18 MS. MORIARTY: Dangerous spot to be by
19 Frank.

20
21 (Laughter)

22
23 MS. MORIARTY: But I do have a
24 question, if I may, Mr. Chairman. On two of the points
25 on salmon, and people don't have to give me the
26 examples now but whether it could be during a break
27 because I just want to make sure I understand, but if I
28 could get an example of -- because I don't want to make
29 any assumptions, no assumptions, there was a -- one of
30 the -- I think it was on the previous slide, Brooke,
31 where it talked about the subsistence priority is not
32 upheld and practiced nor applied across jurisdictions.
33 So, yeah, it's kind of in the middle of that slide, if
34 somebody could just give me an example of that, either
35 now or off the record, in addition to on the next
36 slide, because this is part of the request to meet with
37 the Secretaries to address subsistence issues that fall
38 outside of the Board's direct jurisdiction, if I can
39 get examples of that as well.

40
41 Thank you.

42
43 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair.

44
45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
46 Kara. Oh, go ahead.

47
48 MS. MCDAVID: If it's okay I could
49 start a response to Kara and then maybe ask if our
50

0054

1 Chairs could share a few words?

2

3

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Sure.

4

5

6 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. Thank you, Kara,
7 for flagging those and we definitely have some experts
8 here who could speak to how the subsistence priority
9 is, in their eyes, not being applied across
10 jurisdictions and as you -- oh, sorry, I'm clicking too
11 many things here. And the things that fall outside of
12 this Board's jurisdiction, just to get the maybe
13 discussion going on that.

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Thank you.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Cal.

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MR. CASIPIT: Okay, Ms. Moriarty, I
gave that specific example and it's in our annual
report, it has to do with king salmon and recognition
of king salmon as a subsistence species by the State of
Alaska.

The last cycle for the Board of Fish
for Southeast Alaska, the Southeast Alaska Regional
Advisory Council submitted a proposal to the Board of
Fish to create a subsistence fishery for king salmon in
Southeast Alaska and it was not -- it was not approved
and I -- I provided 15 minutes of testimony to the
Board of Fish on that and received no questions or
comments back, it was just -- we were just totally
ignored in that request.

And I'm going to back up here a little
bit I've got to put in some background information
because I don't think everybody really knows what's
going on there for king salmon in Southeast, but, the

0055

1 way it works for king salmon in Southeast, it's under
2 the harvest sharing agreement with the Pacific Salmon
3 Treaty. The State gets an overall cut of the allowable
4 harvest of king salmon in Southeast Alaska. There is
5 some numbers that are taken off for incidental catch
6 and net fisheries and stuff like that, there's
7 discussions around the TransBoundary Rivers but
8 basically what happens is whatever's left for the --
9 basically after they take off for the net fisheries and
10 some of these TransBoundary Rivers there's an overall
11 number and that number is split 80 percent
12 commercial/troll and 20 percent sport. That's the way
13 it's been in Southeast Alaska for as long as I can
14 remember. In this last meeting, and back up one more
15 time, of that 80 percent that's caught in the
16 commercial/troll, there's a lot of that that's kept for
17 home use in small Native communi -- our small villages
18 and communities in Southeast. Historically, a large
19 portion of subsistence needs were met through take home
20 from commercial catch. Not a lot of that is occurring
21 anymore because of the loss of permits in the villages.
22 That's all in the background now. So at this Board
23 meeting when we presented our ask for a subsistence
24 fishery we were asking for a fishery so that folks can
25 go out one day and catch king salmon and come back
26 home. Basically the way it is now most of the fishing
27 occurs -- well, the State of Alaska has closed
28 basically all the inside waters in Southeast Alaska
29 until June 15th to comm -- to sportfishing for king
30 salmon, so all the inside waters of Southeast Alaska
31 are closed until June 15th for sportfishing. After
32 June 15th you can fish inside waters but I'll tell you
33 the truth, there's not a whole lot of them around by
34 June 15th, a lot of them have already moved through and
35 gone up the TransBoundary Rivers, gone up the Chilkoot,
36 gone up the Chilkat, what have you, so basically the
37 only opportunity now is the -- is to catch king salmon
38 out in the open ocean on the outside coast, basically
39 it's an interception fishery. So that's the only place
40 where folks can catch king salmon in any numbers so
41 what our proposal was that so folks who travel to the
42 outside coast get all your fish at once, come back, you
43 don't have to go back every day to catch one fish.
44 Again, that was not -- we were not -- they didn't even
45 hea -- yeah, anyway, so go back to that 80/20. So
46 there's supposed to be a subsistence priority
47 under State regulations as well as Federal regulations,
48 granted that priority is granted to all Alaska
49 residents, not just rural residents but we were still
50

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1 asking for that subsistence fishery under State regs
2 for all Alaska residents in that 80/20 split, and it's
3 always been that way. So as a result of this meeting,
4 the Board of Fish shifted three percent from
5 commercial/troll to guided sport -- to sportfishing and
6 they shifted that three percent because they said, we
7 have to provide a resident subsistence priority and
8 here was a way to that -- the Council had asked for a
9 resident subsistence fishery and they didn't -- so they
10 basically blamed our proposal for the reason they had
11 to shift three percent away from commercial/troll to
12 sport. And I'm going to tell you for the past five
13 years 66 percent of the sport caught king salmon in
14 Southeast Alaska have been caught by the guided sport
15 industry. Now, you tell me how that's a rural -- how
16 that's a priority for Alaska residents, it's not. Two-
17 thirds of them are going out to non-resident charter
18 fishers.

19
20 Now, that's related to another issue
21 that I have here about, you know, unguided -- unguided
22 resi -- unguided sportfishing but I'll save that for
23 later. But that's a specific example of where the
24 State's not even implementing its own subsistence
25 priority on a very important species for -- I haven't
26 eaten a king salmon in eight years now because I'm not
27 going to run my boat out to -- way out there in the
28 open ocean, I'm too old for that now.

29
30 Thank you.

31
32 MS. MORIARTY: Thank you.

33
34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Eva.

35
36 MS. BURK: Don't be scared.

37
38 (Laughter)

39
40 MS. BURK: I'm specifically addressing
41 what she asked. And I also sent a draft Yukon River
42 salmon situation report to Brooke so Brooke could email
43 that to you so you could see the data for yourself and
44 how it varies but I'll point out a couple highlights.
45 We commercially fished for three species on the Yukon,
46 fall chum, summer chum and kings. For kings, for 19
47 years the amount necessary for subsistence has not been
48 met. The amount necessary would be 50,000 kings. In
49 four of those years commercial fishing for kings was
50

0057

1 allowed. For fall chum, eight years commercial fishing
2 was allowed when the amount necessary for subsistence
3 was not met, and that was pretty much steady from 2015
4 to 2019, that's especially important because fall chum
5 is really important to the Upper Yukon folk, it's a
6 very important salmon source that they heavily rely on
7 and so that was an issue for a long time. And then for
8 summer chum, I thought I just wrote it, five years --
9 five years for summer chum, commercial fishing was
10 allowed when subsistence needs were not being met. And
11 they switched to a dipnet fishery in the Lower Yukon at
12 some point for commercial but that was before my time
13 at the Yukon River InterTribal Fish Commission but
14 there hasn't been king commercial from what I can see
15 since about 2010, yeah. So those are the in-river
16 issues.

17
18 And then I would also say when you know
19 for a fact you're catching CWASC summer chum, which is
20 Coastal Western Alaska summer chum which includes all
21 reporting groups from Bristol Bay to Norton Sound, when
22 you know that you're catching those fish in an
23 intercept fishery which is happening in State waters,
24 which is the Area M fishery and you're not restricting
25 that fishery but in-river users are restricted, that's
26 another case where commercial is being prioritized over
27 subsistence. Like we just saw the Board of Fish passed
28 regulation and then the Alaska Attorney General said,
29 oh, we're not going to follow that regulation because
30 they disqualified a Board of Fish member even though
31 during the process that disqualification did not
32 happen.

33
34 So those are the examples I have now.

35
36 Then as far as allowing like the trawl
37 industry or pollock fishing, the MSA is a lot different
38 as far as the language around subsistence so I'm not
39 even try to get into that right now but I do believe
40 there is language about highly migratory species and
41 then within that there may be some answers.

42
43 Thank you.

44
45 MS. MORIARTY: Thank you.

46
47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I failed to
48 recognize Ray earlier, did you still want to speak Ray,
49 thank you.

50

0058

1 MR. ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Mr.
2 Chairman. Yeah, what I was going to bring up was that
3 I wanted to thank all the RACs for bringing this
4 subject up, the salmon, you know, we've been dealing
5 with the salmon crises for way too long already. What
6 I want to see from this outcome of this meeting, this
7 workshop that we're doing relating to salmon crises is
8 that we build a foundation based on your concerns, your
9 recommendations as a starting point and hopefully we
10 could build upon it to bring out the issues that is
11 related to what we're dealing with, not only salmon but
12 like what Charlie said about the environment, the
13 ecosystem, things like that, that we need to work on.

14
15 So thank you again.

16
17 I've been a RAC member for a number of
18 years myself too and we've brought a lot of these
19 issues before and I believe, I don't know, how many
20 years ago, a couple years ago when we first had the All
21 RAC Meeting, you know, it was brought out, we addressed
22 that a number of times to try to build a foundation
23 that we could -- a strong foundation that we could
24 build upon addressing the issues that we're dealing
25 with today. So like I said earlier, I'm looking
26 forward to working with you all in any way that we
27 could build this foundation in a meaningful way that we
28 could get help from, every avenue that's dealing with
29 fisheries. As a subsistence user, it's been a way of
30 life and we don't see that anymore as you heard
31 already. You know a lot of times I'll tell my people
32 that I work with on the local level, you know, we know
33 what the problems are, let's come to the table with
34 solutions and I'm seeing that right now as we speak
35 from each one of you from different areas of the state.
36 So thank you again and I look forward, again, to work
37 closely with you to see what we could come up with as
38 far as setting a foundation for the salmon crises that
39 we're continuing to face today.

40
41 Thank you.

42
43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, I
44 just got one final too. One probably specific instance
45 I could think of is the Kuskokwim Fishery and this
46 Board making some decisions to close it and the State
47 opening it. That's a jurisdictional difference. It
48 happened a couple years in a row and ended up in
49 litigation. So pretty specific jurisdictional
50

0059

1 difference. You know we closed it and they opened it
2 to all residents when we're trying to provide a rural
3 priority preference fishery, it ended up in a two year
4 -- they did it two years in a row which ended up us
5 having to take legal action over authority and
6 jurisdiction over the river. I think there's some
7 findings on that one so that one's readable and a
8 specific example as I could remember us, as a Board,
9 you know, trying to do things that are passed up from
10 our Regional Advisory Council and the deference of
11 taking the fish and wildlife and a jurisdictional fight
12 resulted in a difference of how we applied openings and
13 closures, which ultimately led to litigation. So
14 that's one example I could remember.

15
16 And if there's no more comments it's
17 lunchtime -- oh, I knew that was going to get Eva going
18 -- there you go Eva.

19
20 MS. BURK: Because you remember we have
21 submitted special action requests for, I think since
22 2021, asking that this body help manage the Yukon
23 because in all those years that the commercial happened
24 and subsistence needs were not being met it was because
25 those management decisions were being made by the State
26 and there wasn't a Federal management strategy, in
27 fact, so that's something that we're working on in-
28 river. But this year I don't think we don't need a
29 special action request because there was collaboration
30 between the Yukon River manager and the Yukon River
31 InterTribal Fish Commission.

32
33 So I just wanted to add that, thank
34 you.

35
36 MR. WOODS: Kara, I appreciate your
37 question. Because number 1, it's real important on how
38 we operate in Alaska. I think the Department of
39 Interior Secretary and the Department of Commerce need
40 to hear that all this information has been ongoing and
41 it's lineal, right, we're at the ground level, next
42 elevation, 30,000 foot level is the directors and all
43 the -- now, I'm talking 100,000 foot level because of
44 lineal, for me it's lateral and, you know talk about
45 why it's so important. We manage fisheries in Alaska by
46 the Governor and basically controls through the AG's
47 office and the Attorney General and the Commissioner,
48 but that process has been shattered, like Eva pointed
49 out, with the AG's office eliminating Board action.
50

0060

1 Second, there's a whole push statewide
2 to rationalize a fishery and this is ongoing because
3 number 1 it's happening in Eastern and the whole
4 fisheries on the East Coast have been rationalized to
5 the point where they limit them on a processors, and
6 catch against taking the quota system and that is now
7 how they operate on the East Coast. On the West Coast,
8 in Oregon, Pacific it's the same thing that's happening
9 in Southeast. You see companies come in, they own the
10 resource, or there's a quota system, they limit the
11 amount of -- like the limit seiners, seining has been
12 rationalized to the point where there's only a certain
13 amount of seiners that can go out and limit that catch.
14 Area M is a big concern. The sports industry and state
15 of Alaska controls the Board of Fish and the
16 Commissioner's office because it creates so much
17 revenue. You can't blame the state of Alaska for
18 wanting to keep that revenue in their stream, but the
19 sports industry in our region has been free-reigned on
20 our king salmon, Dan, they haven't -- the first year
21 I've heard them not retain any fish, first year.
22 There's been closures but they have never been -- the
23 sports industry has -- and Nanci even pointed out, your
24 Chairman, put in a proposal to the Board of Fish to
25 close the upper region for sports industry to be
26 targeting kings once they pass the tower. That is --
27 that should be illegal 10 years ago. Number 1, i s
28 we're not going to be able to meet returns. Number 2,
29 we are killing spawners that need to come back, that we
30 need for that return. The second thing is that we have
31 to own this. Each one of us in this room, on September
32 2nd, limited entry is up on the radar for legislative
33 office in Juneau. Number 1, that limited entry is for
34 Alaskans, that limited entry was written in the
35 Constitution, or at least for resource management for
36 us to retain. We are no longer -- and I am going to
37 speak outside the box, we have to regu -- I question my
38 authority here at the Board, we have limited amount of
39 authority to provide access for Federal lands and
40 Federal waters but we are all, each one of you sitting
41 on this -- like you just pointed out, we all attend the
42 Board of Fish meetings, we all attend local Advisory
43 Committee, we all sit there and help regulation process
44 and that process scale isn't free, these guys volunteer
45 their time and energy to do all that. That is
46 valuable. If we put all your time and energy into the
47 equation, Eva, I wouldn't be able to afford you.

48

49 MS. BURK: Yeah. Nobody can.

50

0061

1 (Laughter)

2

3

MR. WOODS: And I say that because
4 Number 1, it is a valuable resource, people in this
5 region, in this room, have to be engaged and I am
6 trying to bring and educate as much young people as
7 possible. Thomas, you are the guiding light so I am --
8 and in every region that needs to happen.

9

10 But I just wanted to say we have to
11 back up, you know, on the 100,000 foot level we are
12 faced with the Department of Commerce, the trawl
13 industry, AG's office, Commissioner, the Governor -- at
14 the swipe of a pen, the Governor can fix all our
15 problems, Eva. Seriously. That's who controls the
16 fisheries in Alaska. And if that message isn't brought
17 to him he needs to hear it, somehow.

18

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And I'm not going to go any further
because that's out of our purview but I can voice that
as public member, that those issues are just as
important as what we're facing. When you bring those
issues forward we might have our hands tied, but each
one of you guys, thank you for your dedication for your
subsistence proposals to the Board of Fish, whether
they're heard or not. Each one of you has an important
role and I appreciate that.

So, Kara, thank you for listening.
Thank you for those questions.

Doi.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Louis.

MR. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Thanks for speaking about trawl. I'm just going to
read something from the Seward Penn RAC. It was talking
about the Bering Sea trawl fishery and other commercial
intercept fisheries like the Alaska Peninsula intercept
and then the Gulf of Alaska trawl. Experiencing the
continued declines of king and chum salmon being
widespread across multiple regions of Western Alaska,
including Kotzebue, Bristol Bay, Yukon, Kuskokwim and
the Seward Peninsula. So there's the thought here that
there's on the record, there's off the record, there's
a broken record. I mean we keep coming back saying the
same thing. In the military service there's broken
arrow and it means military fighting unit facing

0062

1 destruction. I think we're facing destruction, or a
2 nuclear weapon accident, you know, our salmon is nuked.
3 I don't know what else to say about that. The salmon
4 crises of wild stock is in so bad of shape it's
5 disgusting to keep coming back with the broken record
6 attitude, you know, that's the way it is.

7

8 When I look at my fisheries up in
9 Norton Sound up there, a commercial fishery that even
10 got opened in Nome, in the Nome Subdistrict when we
11 were experiencing just a little bit of recovery in
12 comes the Board of Fish with a commercial fishery,
13 opened it back up. Low and behold the people that are
14 executing the fishery are the CDQ and I think that goes
15 all the way down the coast and it hits Bristol Bay. So
16 our CDQ spends 6 to 9 million dollars a year, a season
17 to execute for economic development, I guess.

18

19 The other thing is, we've been told for
20 decades in the beginning there that the fresh water
21 environment was the problem. Well, it's pristine, it's
22 been noted that it's been pristine. And so broken
23 record, broken arrow. I'm still here. It's been a
24 long time since 1993 but I'm still here, I'm not going
25 away.

26

27 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

28

29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other.....

30

31 MR. GREEN: Oh, one -- I'm sorry. One
32 last thing. The State and Federal management for
33 subsistence is a must. You manage for subsistence
34 everybody's going to be happy because everybody will
35 get the fish. But subsistence should be priority one.

36

37 Thank you.

38

39 Sorry about that.

40

41 MS. BURK: One thing.

42

43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: One thing, Eva.

44

45 MS. BURK: Thank you. I urge you to
46 look at the State of Alaska's escapement -- latest
47 escapement goal review for the State in which you'll
48 find that they do not meet their own escapement goals
49 that they set. So about half the time they are not

50

0063

1 getting enough fish up the river to spawn and I -- I
2 don't know why that's such a mystery to them that we're
3 in the situation that we're in right now.

4

5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Louis.

6

7 MR. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To
8 followup on Eva's conversation there. The Fish and
9 Game reduced the escapement goals in my area, okay.
10 Back a long time ago when Gene Sandone was the AYK
11 Director, and I asked him, why are you doing that, and
12 he says, so you can fish sooner and I go that doesn't
13 make any sense. If there are not enough to make the
14 escapement goals that have been set in the past what
15 makes you think they're going to meet the needs of the
16 people in the future and what do we see, escapement
17 goals lowered, runs get lower, the real problem isn't
18 solved.

19

20 So thank you, I'm done.

21

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'm not rushing
23 you guys. I always say I'm not Russian, I'm.....

24

25 (Laughter)

26

27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: It's a loaded
28 statement.

29

30 (Laughter)

31

32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You guys are
33 hearing my stomach growling for Mexican, that's why.

34

35 Cal.

36

37 MR. CASIPIT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
38 just had a comment for Mr. Woods. You know this
39 Council's not going to give up on king salmon, the
40 Board of Fish is going to see another proposal in their
41 next cycle.

42

43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
44 thank you for that engaging conversation. That's why
45 we're having the session the way we are, if it takes
46 all day to get through each one then we're listening to
47 the people we work for. We'll take an hour lunch
48 break, thank you.

49

50

0064

1 (Off record)

2

3 (On record)

4

5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.

6 We'll go ahead and reconvene our meeting this
7 afternoon, sorry I'm a little bit later than we planned
8 for. Our cows were still eating grass when we ordered
9 our burger.

10

11 (Laughter)

12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. All
14 right, before we get back to the annual report we're
15 going to have a little schedule change here and we're
16 going to go through consultation process and we have a
17 guest here today so we'll go ahead and turn it over to
18 Crystal and Ben.

19

20 MS. LEONETTI: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

21 This won't take too long but Ben wasn't here this
22 morning when we did information sharing and so I'll
23 open it up with a little bit of background on in-season
24 management. If you're not familiar with in-season
25 management it is a great tool that the Board uses. It
26 allows for realtime monitoring and adjustment in
27 fisheries and wildlife regulations in-season.

28

29 So the Board delegates its authority to
30 Federal field managers so they can liberalize or
31 restrict take depending on what is happening with the
32 population before and during the season. When the
33 Board delegates these authorities the field managers
34 must abide by certain responsibilities including
35 holding public hearings, consulting with others and
36 issuing public announcements. And OSM's going to have
37 a more thorough report for you, the Board, in the
38 February 2027 Fisheries regulatory meeting. For
39 example, we're looking at ways to keep field managers
40 apprised of their duties, including training and
41 regular updates on the website. For now, though, the
42 Office of Subsistence Management and the InterAgency
43 Staff Committee has worked closely with Alaska
44 Department of Fish and Game to develop new guidance for
45 meaningful consultation between Federal and State
46 managers on in-season management actions.

47

48 You've all heard a little bit about
49 Executive Order 14153 which is the one that's about

50

0065

1 unleashing Alaska's extraordinary resource potential.
2 In there there's a paragraph that says that all DOI
3 Bureaus are directed to conduct meaningful consultation
4 with the State Fish and Wildlife management agencies
5 prior to enacting land management plans, or other
6 regulations that affect the ability of Alaskans to hunt
7 and fish on public lands. So, therefore, we worked
8 together and Ben, thank you for your leadership for
9 drafting the first draft of this new guidance for
10 Federal in-season managers. It will create consistency
11 and reduce confusion for field managers as they
12 consider making in-season actions. So I'd also like to
13 thank the InterAgency Staff Committee for working
14 through the details with Deputy Commissioner Ben
15 Mulligan as they finalized and worked together on this
16 draft.

17
18 So this is on your tables. This is the
19 new guidance for in-season managers and we're glad to
20 have gotten this done and sent out to all in-season
21 managers and for the Federal land managers in the room,
22 we hope you'll help us get this out, get the word out
23 to your field managers so that they're putting this to
24 use.

25
26 So, with that, i'd like to turn it over
27 to Mr. Mulligan for any information sharing, including
28 this guidance.

29
30 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you very much.
31 Good afternoon to the Board, to the RACs, to the
32 public. Thank you for inviting me here.

33
34 Yes, the guidance document, in my view,
35 has been a long time coming. It's always been in the
36 delegation, nothing's ever changed since I had my first
37 meeting and sat in this chair and it was always hit or
38 miss on whether or not the Federal agencies actually
39 carried out the duties that you gave them under that
40 delegation, which was to provide consultation with the
41 State Department of Fish and Game when implementing
42 those in-season actions and so when it came to
43 considering what was WP26-01 this came up, and then we
44 initiated the process. And I would say this is what I
45 viewed as just common sense and handed over. I didn't
46 think long and hard, I just thought about what I would
47 need to have if I was the area manager and I had my
48 Federal counterpart trying to make a decision, what I
49 would expect.

50

0066

1 You guys do rely on us heavily. In
2 looking back at how many times you cite the State for
3 sources of information, at your April meeting, we made
4 up 61 percent of the sources cited. And so we come
5 with the expertise and the history on a lot of this
6 that we conduct and so having this here, hopefully the
7 Federal agencies will encourage their folks. I would
8 say this season has worked out best with Yukon Delta
9 National Wildlife Refuge. The manager there, Spencer,
10 has done a really good job with the Kuskokwim now. A
11 little hiccup on the start of it but I get the notes
12 from our manager of when consultation occurs. I don't
13 know if you all saw it, there was recently a release
14 for a moose hunt and he consulted with our Staff in
15 McGrath, so when I asked that, it was a yes and so
16 appreciate that. So what I mean what I'm looking for
17 is, instead of what I was getting before was -- when I
18 would contact an area biologist and I would say, hey,
19 did someone from Refuge, BLM Office, you know, District
20 Office for the Forest Service, call you and they would
21 say -- to talk about this -- and they would say, no,
22 but then I would get a yes from the Federal agency but
23 then no details, so, hopefully with this someone can
24 say, yes, Fish and Game was talked to on this date at
25 this time and it's all clear.

26
27 So I'm optimistic that this will work.
28 Hopefully we'll see 100 percent on it and thank you
29 very much.

30
31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Ben,
32 appreciate that. We're always looking for a way to
33 improve that and I know definitely on the ground is the
34 best place for our biologists to come to terms with how
35 to manage that resource.

36
37 So it looks like Frank has a question.

38
39 MR. WOODS: Ben, thank you. I was
40 trying to list what you were talking about. A prime
41 example is the winter moose hunt in 17A. Evelyn,
42 what's her name, Lisha, Liqua (ph), actively engaged in
43 active in-season management, extended the moose hunt
44 from February 28th to March 31st when it was too
45 weather -- and the weather actually -- and along with
46 Stan Culling (ph) from the Togiak Refuge, that in-
47 season management is working well. Because your
48 biologist, it looks like in Palmer, called Evelyn, we
49 got a letter request from Togiak and that in-season
50

0067

1 management actively improved the hunt so what you're
2 doing is really meaningful. Thanks.

3

4 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you. Appreciate
5 that. No, it does work out when -- when it comes to
6 those in-season manager to manager conversations, me
7 and Mr. Poetter don't like to stand in the way of that
8 because sometimes it has to move fast and we're not
9 there. We just need to know it happened because we're
10 in charge of the policies that dictate things, so,
11 again, thank you so much. And, yeah, when it works, it
12 works great and sometimes it does come down to knowing
13 that there's supposed to be consultation occurring and
14 certain personalities. So hopefully this will help
15 along the way.

16

17 But we definitely got some strength in
18 some areas already.

19

20 MR. WOODS: That scenario worked
21 because, Number 1, the Togiak Refuge didn't know that
22 that request came from Togiak Village Traditional, so
23 they sent it to the Palmer Office so when I called to
24 check on it that's when Stan was informed that it was
25 all agreed upon, that we all agreed, right. So that
26 level of communication is key to that whole in-season
27 management.

28

29 Thank you.

30

31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Rebecca.

32

33 MS. SKINNER: Thank you. Maybe this
34 question is for Crystal. Can you talk a little bit
35 about the consultation with the RAC Chairs because I
36 think with the Buskin closure, or when we have a
37 closure in our region, the Federal in-season manager is
38 supposed to consult, I think, with the RAC Chair. I
39 appreciate this clarification for the perspective of
40 consultation with the State. What is the current
41 guidance or requirement for consultation with the RAC
42 Chairs when there's actions that occur in their region?

43

44 MS. LEONETTI: Thank you, Rebecca. We
45 -- I think every single letter -- I'm looking at Staff
46 to make sure I'm going to get this right, has a clause
47 that says that the RAC Chairs should be consulted prior
48 to any temporary action in-season. And sometimes those
49 actions are emergencies that don't always give enough

50

0068

1 time for the in-season manager to consult but I think
2 what we've been experiencing is a lot of turn over in
3 the positions of the field managers and so what OSM is
4 working on and the Board will hear about at the
5 February meeting is new training and guidance for all
6 in-season managers that will be required annually so
7 that everybody's aware of that responsibility. I'm
8 just looking at Lisa.

9

10 MS. GREDIAGIN: (Nods affirmatively)

11

12 MS. LEONETTI: Okay. Good.

13

14 MS. SKINNER: Okay. And then just a
15 quick follow up, could we reasonably expect that
16 they'll do a similar thing that they do with the State,
17 okay, so this kind of would apply to consulting with
18 the State and consulting with the RAC Chairs?

19

20 MS. LEONETTI: Yeah. And I would say
21 this -- like Ben said, it boils down to common sense,
22 it really is two things. It's no surprises and it's
23 having a direct conversation about the action before
24 the action is taken or announced. So it's pretty basic
25 but it's very important.

26

27 MS. SKINNER: Yep.

28

29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
30 questions or comments from the Board.

31

32 (No comments)

33

34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: RAC Chairs.

35

36 (No comments)

37

38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I appreciate
39 that we're putting writing to what we expect our Staff
40 to do so thank you guys. Thank you, Ben. And thank
41 you for the 61 percent of the information, it helps us
42 guide our program.

43

44 (Laughter)

45

46 MR. MULLIGAN: You are very welcome,
47 Mr. Chair. I will see you all tomorrow afternoon for a
48 robust discussion about some special actions.

49

50

0069

1 (Laughter)

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll consult
4 with you then.

5

6 (Laughter)

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
9 we're back to the topics of the annual letter RAC
10 reports and replies.

11

12 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
13 I'm going to ask other Staff if they could stop sharing
14 the procedural presentation and I'll share my slides.
15 Thank you.

16

17 (Pause)

18

19 MS. MCDAVID: Once again for the record
20 this is Brooke McDavid, Council Coordinator with the
21 Office of Subsistence Management. Before we broke for
22 lunch we were wrapping up discussion of salmon and
23 marine issues which was the first overarching theme in
24 the annual reports from the Councils this year. There
25 was one thing I wanted to note, Mr. Chair, before we
26 moved on and that was we did hear earlier from the
27 Council Chairs, based on their workshop yesterday, what
28 could be a potential modification that you might want
29 to make to one of the replies. Of course it's up to
30 you all to decide that and that was, in addition to the
31 Board having an annual meeting with the Secretaries,
32 the Chairs would appreciate the opportunity to
33 potentially meet to talk about the salmon crises and be
34 involved in that discussion. So if that were a
35 modification you all wanted to make just keep that in
36 mind when we get to the end to the actual vote, because
37 currently that is not included in the draft replies
38 that have already been prepared.

39

40 Okay.

41

42 Mr. Chair, Eva wanted to say something.

43

44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Eva, go ahead.

45

46 MS. BURK: Thank you. I just wanted to
47 make sure that we didn't forget on Theme 1 because Mr.
48 Brower started to talk about the ecosystem and the
49 environment and he just called out salmon and halibut

50

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1 but specifically in our seven RAC letter we called out
2 herring, crab, and marine mammals. So I thought it was
3 important just to note that the marine environment in
4 totality is suffering.

5

6 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair,
7 thanks, Eva. And I did -- well, I was thinking that
8 Mr. Brower's comment also kind of applies into this
9 theme because you're talking -- you know, we're talking
10 about all the issues affecting salmon but monitoring
11 and research is what helps us better understand those
12 causes and so you'll see here there is a lot of need
13 for more of that monitoring and research based on the
14 feedback from our Councils.

15

16 So with that we'll get into summarizing
17 the issues that were raised under this theme by the
18 Councils. And just, overall, many of the Councils --
19 this came up in nine regions, identify a need for
20 expanding -- expanded monitoring of both fish and
21 wildlife, just in general. A lot of the Councils did
22 list targeted research needs in their individual
23 regions for specific more pressing issues. They noted
24 the importance of long-term data sets and ongoing
25 monitoring projects, the need to address funding gaps
26 and funding inconsistencies. And also they placed an
27 emphasis on collaboration between the agencies with the
28 tribes and communities and also with the State.

29

30 So some of the requests from the
31 Councils under this theme were to create a Wildlife
32 Resource Monitoring Program similar to the Fisheries
33 Resource Monitoring Program. They would also like to
34 see consistent funding for the Fisheries Resource
35 Monitoring Program. We've seen declines in that in
36 recent years and some, according to what the Councils
37 said, some very important projects have had to be cut
38 because of that which results in more data gaps needed
39 for management.

40

41 The Councils encourage agencies to seek
42 outside collaborations to support research needs when
43 internal funding is lacking.

44

45 They would really like to ensure
46 Federal agencies and OSM are adequately resourced and
47 staffed to carry out consistent and comprehensive
48 resource monitoring and program administration.

49

50

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1 They would like to see a prioritization
2 of a statewide socioeconomic analysis of subsistence.
3 It's a big ask but they think that that could be used
4 to communicate the widespread importance of subsistence
5 across the state and how it has changed over time,
6 especially as resources continue to decline. Sometimes
7 the value of subsistence is difficult to translate into
8 concepts understood by folks in Washington and from the
9 Western perspective. So several Councils talked about
10 that yesterday as well.

11

12 And then lastly, as I noted, there were
13 several region specific requests to fill data gaps and
14 those varied. They ranged from things like
15 predator/prey surveys, the need for fisheries weirs,
16 caribou migration and deflection studies. Studies
17 about hunter conflicts.

18

19 And in the Board's replies, the Board
20 did agree that establishing a Wildlife Resource
21 Monitoring Program would provide essential information
22 but, again, the Board noted they do not have authority
23 over appropriations. They encourage the Councils to
24 convey their concerns to the Secretaries about this,
25 potentially via a joint Council letter. So I've
26 highlighted that here. That wouldn't be necessarily a
27 Board action but it is something that the Council
28 Chairs, if you were interested, your Coordinators could
29 work to draft a letter that could come to each of the
30 Councils this fall and then your Councils could
31 consider it and vote on it and if you all wanted to
32 sign on then that letter could be forwarded to the
33 Board to elevate further.

34

35 The Board also acknowledges the
36 challenges of inconsistent Fisheries Resource
37 Monitoring Program funding. But in light of that
38 they're committed to providing proponents, the folks
39 who apply for research projects with budget updates and
40 overviews just to try to keep people informed of what's
41 going on.

42

43 The Board also, in their replies,
44 communicated specific Regional Council concerns to the
45 relevant agencies since some of those -- well, I guess
46 because the Board and OSM doesn't carry out monitoring
47 and research on our own, so they shared your concerns
48 as appropriate.

49

50

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1 And, with that, Mr. Chair, I will turn
2 it back over to you and the Council Chairs.

3

4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
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, Regional Advisory Council comments.

12

13 Rebecca and then Eva.

14

15 MS. SKINNER: All right, thank you. So
16 I just want to let the Board know the KARAC, one of our
17 comments had to do with adequate funding for weirs. So
18 for our region our Council has identified that the
19 weirs are really important to provide access to the
20 fishery subsistence resources so if we don't have the
21 weirs, if they pulled the weir or if they stopped doing
22 the weir counts then mostly the Alaska Department of
23 Fish and Game is going to be more conservative and so
24 it really does hurt our access to subsistence. The
25 McLees weir and the Buskin weir in Kodiak have been
26 funded in the past by FRMP grants and we share an FRMP
27 region with Bristol Bay and we recently had our joint
28 RAC working group so we came up with recommendations,
29 they obviously need to go back through each of the RACs
30 but we reduced our recommended list of priorities from
31 probably six things to probably two and those two
32 things are exclusively focused on monitoring projects
33 because that -- between the two RACs that is what would
34 help us most right now, is having the monitoring in
35 place so we can actually have access to the subsistence
36 resources.

37

38 The other thing that I'm hoping to have
39 more discussion at our next KARAC meeting is having a
40 better consistent process where the RAC can interface
41 with potential applicants for these projects. So, one,
42 the RAC could get a better idea from these potential
43 applicants the kinds of things that they think are
44 useful that maybe we can incorporate into our PINS but
45 also we could have more conversation with these
46 potential applicants about the PINS that we chose and
47 why they might want to do those projects. Because we
48 can come up with a list of PINS but if nobody, you
49 know, bites on that and writes a project, nothing's
50

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1 going to happen with it. So I think there's an
2 opportunity for having more consistent interaction
3 somehow. So I'm hoping that at our next RAC meeting
4 we'll talk about that so we can better -- take better
5 advantage of the FRMP funding.

6
7 That's all I had, thanks.

8
9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Eva.

10
11 MS. BURK: Thank you. Through the
12 Chair. Similar to the priority information needs
13 process that we developed for the Yukon, what we
14 realized through that exercise is that a lot of this
15 work would be better served by establishing robust
16 community based monitoring programs and so funding to
17 build capacity to do that community based monitoring is
18 essential. And if we're talking about co-stewardship
19 or co-management, just like you heard Fish and Game has
20 61 percent of the data, on the Yukon I think they're
21 doing all of the monitoring projects and so if we
22 wanted to step into co-management or co-stewardship
23 we're going to have to start preparing ourselves to do
24 more research and monitoring projects on the Yukon and
25 it's more cost efficient if you have the people in
26 place doing that research instead of sending out
27 different teams of people. The data, a lot of the
28 seats, in the agency seats, I think this is something,
29 our feedback for the review process was, sometimes
30 agency folks, it's kind of like a revolving door and
31 once we get them trained up very well then they leave
32 on to a new position and so having more research that's
33 at the community, that stays in community, it adds to
34 the -- it leads to better knowledge outcomes, better
35 knowledge, like bringing it all together.

36
37 And also all of us are struggling for
38 funds. We don't know what the future holds when it
39 comes to funding and so having the conversations early
40 on at the community level with the agencies involved to
41 start to figure out how we can be collaborative, more
42 efficient, bring costs down and build capacity at the
43 community level, I feel like those are really important
44 things. And there are great models out there. The
45 Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission, the Kuskokwim
46 Fish Commission, the Yukon Fish Commission. So I feel
47 like continuing to support that work is really
48 important because they've already started to -- like
49 the Kuskokwim does their own data so that they can
50

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1 manage the river. That's what's needed. That's what
2 we're going to need to do on the Yukon if we want to
3 step into those shoes.

4
5 And then kind of hand in hand with the
6 community based monitoring, and this is from my
7 perspective as an indigenous scientist, is, if we spend
8 so much time in these systems we're going to lose our
9 own knowledge systems and so we need to have indigenous
10 knowledge succession plans and community based
11 monitoring can kind of help that because I am
12 struggling right now in Nenana to go home because of a
13 job but if a job could be created, which I'm working
14 very hard to create, through some type of stewardship
15 work that can then serve the agency and the management
16 and stewardship of all of our lands, that's where I see
17 a future in. And there's a lot of us on the ground
18 that are fundraising actively for outside resources so
19 it's just something to keep in mind when we bring our
20 Native orgs together and all that collective thinking
21 and knowledge, that that's where the solutions lie.

22
23 And I just wanted to add like from our
24 perspective, when we talked about the monitoring and
25 research gaps, we were like, hey, we should be doing
26 this and we have to if we're going to manage.

27
28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Ray.

29
30 MR. ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Mr.
31 Chairman. Eva, I know TCC's been talking a lot about
32 the sonar project. I remember that being talked about
33 when I was on the YKRAC, do you know if that's been
34 installed yet, or where we are at at this point in time
35 in that sonar? Thank you.

36
37 MS. BURK: That's a great question,
38 thank you. And that is a Fisheries Resource Monitoring
39 Program funded project and it's in the second round of
40 feasibility so I know that they're doing some more work
41 this fall. And then I think, from my understanding of
42 the sonar project, right now there's a lot of questions
43 around the sustainability and applicability, like if we
44 do the sonar what are we using the data for.
45 Initially, it was thought that if we had a mid-river
46 sonar that instead of shutting the upper river down we
47 would have a better idea of how much fish are getting
48 up to Canada, right. But also at the same time that
49 sonar project cost a lot of money to operate every
50

0075

1 year, I feel like it's a half a million or something
2 like that. And then we're looking at one data point
3 versus how many other data points we need to look at.
4 And I think, again, that's where community based
5 monitoring comes in because we're only really looking
6 at lower river and Canadian Border but we don't know,
7 really, what's going on with the spawning grounds and
8 how things are moving around. So there's a lot. And
9 it's a huge river.

10

11 So thanks for the question.

12

13 MS. MORIARTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
14 Just a question. For some of these proposals, whether
15 it's the Wildlife Resource Monitoring Program, other
16 research needs, did the -- does the RACs or more
17 appropriately OSM Staff have any cost estimates, so if
18 I was to take this back to the Department the first
19 question I'm probably going to get is, is, okay, well,
20 what kind of costs are we looking at and if you don't
21 know that's fine. I'm just curious if there was an
22 approximate number that is being discussed or
23 potential.

24

25 MS. LAVINE: Through the Chair, this is
26 Robbin, the Subsistence Policy Coordinator for OSM.
27 And thanks for that question. The Wildlife Resource
28 Monitoring Program has been a proposed idea that this
29 program has been engaged with, especially from the
30 Councils for a long period of time. More recently
31 there was a request from the Secretaries to put a value
32 on let's say ensuring the FRMP and initiating a WRMP
33 and I do believe we have a budget for that but it's
34 probably about three years old and may need to be
35 updated for today's costs but that should be good to go
36 pretty quickly.

37

38 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

39

40 MS. MORIARTY: Thank you. That would
41 be great. And then another question and this is maybe
42 for the scientists in the room, which I am not, so if
43 this is out of the realm of possibility, but are there
44 any AI tools that can be deployed in helping identify
45 where these gaps might be? Are we aware of any? Just
46 curious.

47

48 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair. We -- I will
49 just say I think most of us are still pretty new to AI

50

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1 and are figuring out new ways to utilize it. One thing
2 that I know as a Council Coordinator that I've been
3 thinking about and others on our team is we have years
4 and years of these reports. Every Council meeting
5 Council members give a report on what is happening in
6 their region and so that is all documented and now we
7 have new technology that can help more quickly analyze
8 it, but additionally the RAC meetings are a great place
9 to identify those priority needs and gaps. That's kind
10 of the process that's used in the Fisheries Resource
11 Monitoring Program. Every time a new funding cycle is
12 coming available it starts with the Regional Advisory
13 Councils listing their priorities and then those are
14 what are put out there in the call for projects and
15 proposals for people to respond to. So the researchers
16 are and the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program
17 directly responding to the needs that the RACs have
18 already raised.

19
20 So, thank you.

21
22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Rebecca.

23
24 MS. SKINNER: Kind of related to this
25 but not related to AI at all. I did want to add one
26 thing and then talk about reporting out on projects.
27 So when I was talking about the FRMP funding for the
28 shared region with Bristol Bay, in past years because
29 there was more FRMP money, Bristol Bay usually had at
30 least one project funded and the Kodiak/Aleutians
31 region had at least one project funded. With this last
32 year because of the cut in FRMP funding we only had one
33 project for our shared region and so that project went
34 to Bristol Bay for this last year. And that's why when
35 we were looking at prioritizing monitoring projects we
36 were being very, like really going in and slashing out
37 all the projects, or all the priorities that we're not
38 monitoring because if we can only have one funded we
39 felt like monitoring would give the most benefit to
40 subsistence users in our area. If there was more FRMP
41 funding we would have had a longer and more varied list
42 of priorities because there would be more money to go
43 around but if we can only have one project for our
44 shared region, we talked about can we hand it off, so
45 Bristol Bay gets funded one year and Kodiak gets funded
46 one year. Didn't reach a conclusion on that.

47
48 The other thing I wanted to say is that
49 in the conversation one of the things Dan, from Bristol
50

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1 Bay, mentioned on the phone or he raised it as a
2 question, could we use drones for monitoring escapement
3 or salmon going up a stream and I said, well, we did
4 that, we had an FRMP project out in Unalaska. So there
5 was an actual project using drones and there was a
6 final report and I'm not even sure we, the Kodiak
7 region, had gotten it at that point, but Bristol Bay
8 didn't know anything about it. So I do think there's
9 an opportunity to share some of these project and
10 project outcomes across regions because even between
11 Bristol Bay and Kodiak that share an FRMP region, so we
12 actually talk every few years specifically, that
13 information sharing wasn't happening.

14
15 So that doesn't get to AI but it does
16 get to we have information that we're not even kind of
17 leveraging and sharing across all of the RACs and all
18 of the regions right now. So I think there is an
19 opportunity there.

20
21 Thanks.

22
23 MR. BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
24 Question for Crystal. Procedurally, I am curious, I
25 don't think I'm still the spokesperson for the RAC
26 Chairs but on behalf of the RAC Chairs, just a
27 question. As something like this recommendation comes
28 up in response to something, are we allowed to request
29 that Staff begin drafting these things so that they can
30 be looked at at the fall meetings or do we have to wait
31 until the fall meeting to talk about it with our entire
32 Council and then make the request for it to be drafted
33 and then talk about it at the winter meeting?

34
35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Good job.

36
37 MS. LEONETTI: Do you mean
38 drafting.....

39
40 MR. BAKER: So the blue one encourages
41 the Councils to convey their concerns to the
42 Secretaries potentially via a joint Council letter to
43 emphasize the need/importance. As we know this is a
44 slow moving process, it's an effective process but just
45 define how slow it has to move, if we, as we're going
46 through this with the Board today and have this
47 discussion and say that's a really good idea, thank you
48 FSB, can we make that request today, or do we need to
49 wait until we can vote with our entire Council, to at
50

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1 least have a draft made that could be presented to the
2 Council.

3

4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Something to
5 hash out.

6

7 MR. BAKER: Yeah.

8

9 MS. LEONETTI: Yeah.

10

11 MR. BAKER: So that at the.....

12

13 MS. LEONETTI: Yeah, for sure.

14

15 MR. BAKER:fall meeting we could
16 at least review it and then vote if we wanted to sign
17 on to it, not to say that we would draft it and our
18 Councils all automatically agree to it, but that's the
19 question. Can.....

20

21 MS. LEONETTI: But that Staff could
22 draft it.....

23

24 MR. BAKER: Draft it.....

25

26 MS. LEONETTI:for you to review
27 at the next meeting?

28

29 MR. BAKER: Correct.

30

31 MS. LEONETTI: Yeah. Yeah, that can be
32 done today if you want to make that request you can ask
33 Staff to get started on it and then Councils could
34 discuss it at their next -- at the fall Council
35 meetings. Robbin did you want to add to that, okay.

36

37 MS. LAVINE: Thank you. Through the
38 Chair. I think that providing materials to encourage
39 Board discuss -- Council discussion and then action on
40 the record, as a FACA committee, I think is part of
41 what we do and how we support the Councils.

42

43 Thank you.

44

45 MS. MCDAVID: Playing microphone button
46 game over here. Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Brooke.
47 Council Chairs, I think if this is something that you
48 would like to have brought to your Councils at the fall
49 meeting we would just need maybe at least probably a

50

0079

1 majority of you or some of you to agree with -- Mr.
2 Baker.

3

4 (RAC Chairs nod affirmatively)

5

6 MS. MCDAVID: And it looks like from
7 the show of hands everyone is supportive of this idea.
8 And just for our sake, as Staff who will be helping
9 with the initial draft of the letter, from the
10 discussions I've heard and based on what's been
11 included in the annual report and the Board replies;
12 what you are interested in is some adequate and
13 consistent funding for the Fisheries Resource
14 Monitoring Program that also needs to include some
15 funding for Staff to run the programs and then the
16 addition of a Wildlife Resource Monitoring Program. Is
17 there any other kind of just high level things that
18 should be a part of this request?

19

20 Thank you.

21

22 MR. BAKER: Through the Chair. I think
23 for this one that is adequate. But not the
24 spokesperson, just speaking on my own.

25

26 (Laughter)

27

28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We got Dan and
29 then Kara.

30

31 MR. DUNAWAY: Well, thank you for that
32 Thomas. Yeah, I think that would give the RACs a
33 little more meat to chew on when we go because
34 sometimes stuff comes to us and it's kind of --
35 especially in a short meeting, how to, you know, really
36 get on it. Originally my hand was up to try to agree
37 with Rebecca here. Since we are kind of unique in that
38 we have one region -- or two regions and share one
39 funding, I was going to speak -- she added to it a lot
40 in her second comment, that, yeah, that's where the
41 consistency of funding is really critical.

42

43 I've been feeling fortunate on a few
44 things. We've got a pretty good rapport between the
45 RACs which wouldn't be because there's been some real
46 screaming matches when it comes to Area M. I've been
47 to Board meetings where guys wouldn't even get in the
48 same elevator together. And I feel fortunate right now
49 that we can be real agreeable and that we don't have
50

0080

1 anything so pressing in Bristol Bay right now that
2 qualifies for funding. I mean if we could put Federal
3 money on the Nushagak kings but we have very little
4 nexus there. But I feel fortunate in some ways we can
5 support KARAC for now but the time could come where
6 there'd be a real need and maybe a more fierce
7 competition between the two and, yet, we need to
8 cooperate. So just underlining that consistent
9 funding. And Rebecca speaks so well for a lot of this.

10

11 Thank you.

12

13 MS. MORIARTY: And just in closing, I
14 was back in D.C., last week and the Secretary
15 challenged us to start thinking about how can AI be
16 utilized across the Department to make our programs
17 quicker, more efficient, broader knowledge based for
18 the good of the American people. And in this case and
19 if I go back in my notebook I even said, like I'm
20 writing notes to myself, you know, how can AI be
21 utilized in terms of subsistence, whether it's
22 analyzing data quick, you know, putting reports in that
23 have been done, identifying gaps where research is
24 needed maybe quicker to enhance all of our work. Not
25 to replace anybody or anything, but is there a way. So
26 when we're talking about research and monitoring gaps,
27 I just -- it made me think, is there a way? I don't
28 have the answer, but I just challenge all of us to be
29 thinking about how can we utilize AI, both within the
30 RACs, OSM Staff and the Board.

31

32 So thank you, Mr. Chairman.

33

34 MS. SENECA: Through the Chair. Ms.
35 Moriarty. My name is Anna Senecal, I'm a Fish
36 Biologist. I am support Staff for the Kodiak/Aleutians
37 area and I worked with Chair Rebecca Skinner and Dan as
38 well to help identify priority information needs for
39 their region and utilizing AI, I mean we're -- yes, we
40 are new at this and we are trying to use it, experiment
41 with it, quality check it, make sure it's accurate.
42 But there's a lot of these priority information needs
43 going back. Some of them are associated with past
44 funded projects and so in a sense they've been met and
45 some of them are not. Some of them repeat through
46 time, some of them are new and have never been funded
47 so using AI, I was able to go back and summarize that
48 and give that as support Staff, provide that
49 information so that in this time of really limited
50

0081

1 resources I can support them in making the best
2 decision to prioritize the most important projects
3 necessary to provide that opportunity for subsistence.
4 So I just wanted to give a real example of how we, as
5 Staff, really are trying to use AI when it's
6 appropriate and responsibly.

7
8 MS. BURK: Thank you. I also try to
9 use AI but I mostly use it to like summarize like a
10 meeting like this, right, where it transcribes it and
11 gives me a summary. As far as like research when it
12 comes to salmon issues I would be very careful with AI,
13 especially doing a data gap analysis. What it's going
14 to do is it's going to try to pull from reports that
15 exist online, it's going to pull from places like the
16 Alaska Salmon Research Task Force report and what I
17 find very problematic in many of the recent articles,
18 scientific articles, findings, salmon research task
19 reports, there's really no accountability or
20 responsibility put on management and different fishing
21 gear effects, fishing time effects, how about the
22 different exploitation rates on different river
23 systems. So I think what those reports and recent
24 studies are trying to do is to frame climate change as
25 the only thing that's responsible for the salmon crash
26 and that's not true because I shared earlier, in 2014,
27 the Yukon River people were already ready to implement
28 in-season management strategy, which is don't fish, and
29 that's where I feel like you're not going to get the
30 information that you need because, again, they're going
31 to blame climate change without looking at those kind
32 of things that are harder to find. And then there's a
33 lot of stuff within the data that exists that clearly
34 points to a shifting baseline syndrome, which means,
35 when we're making fishery management decisions today,
36 even Fish and Game, they're looking at the past 10
37 years of data, or the past 20 years of data. Often
38 times in these reports we try to blame the fish crash
39 as something that just happened when it's been going on
40 for decades. And so that's a shift in baseline. What
41 data are you actually looking at, right and why is that
42 important. Because commercial fishing was happening on
43 our river for 50 years before data on escapement or
44 population began to be collected. So we have no idea
45 what the commercial impacts on the Yukon are. But if I
46 were to take a traditional knowledge report of walking
47 over the backs of salmon on some of these tributaries I
48 can most certainly guarantee that the abundance
49 estimates that the sonar is collecting, they're not
50

0082

1 equitable, they're two different sources of data and
2 you're not going to have some of the older important
3 data. A lot of that stuff is also scanned in so as far
4 as like pulling the text in you're going to have to
5 scan each historical document in and pull each word, so
6 that's a whole other issue.

7
8 Genetics. This is where I have a lot of
9 heartburn because genetics are used to calculate impact
10 rate, right. what is -- how much fishery -- or how
11 much bycatch or intercept are we taking. We're taking
12 genetics during times of depressed stocks. So the
13 example I shared about Area M and the genetics taken
14 for that study, it was supposed to be king genetics
15 originally in 2007 to 2009 but they didn't do that,
16 they did chum. And that timeframe is not when we had a
17 lot of chum. By that period we were at half of our
18 historical run size. During that period we had about
19 two million to three million chum, before there was
20 four to five million chum. So taking genetics when
21 things -- that's not reflective. And how it shows up
22 is, and similarly, before I summarize, in 2023 to 2024
23 the State of Alaska began taking genetics because they
24 knew they had to respond to the actions in the Area M
25 intercept fishery -- yeah intercept fishery, and so
26 what happens is when you take genetics during those two
27 time periods you switch from showing that you're -- the
28 chum in Area M used to be 60 to 70 percent of what was
29 caught, were coming from Coastal Western Alaska and
30 then when they took it in the depressed stocks it shows
31 that only 20 percent of the chum caught in Western
32 Alaska -- or in the Area M fishery are from Western
33 Alaska. So you can clearly see that you should not be
34 taking genetics and making management decisions when
35 you're taking those genetics during depressed run
36 sizes. And that also shows up in North Pacific
37 because the genetics are not available until 2011 and
38 that's after the low king runs and, again, after the
39 chum sizes are half of what they used to be. And so I
40 feel like that is hiding the impacts and not accounting
41 for historical impacts. And a lot of -- you know, I
42 asked directly to North Pacific, do you know the
43 cumulative impacts of your fishery, of the bycatch on
44 these rivers, they do not know that. We don't know how
45 much of our salmon was taken before 2011 or 2007 even
46 though there was decades of commercial fishing
47 happening.

48
49 So AI is going to have a real hard time
50

0083

1 pulling all of that information together and what
2 they're going to tell you is climate change is the main
3 factor when in fact there's a lot of management
4 decisions that could have been done to make -- to
5 hopefully wouldn't make us be in the situation that
6 we're in now.

7

8 Thank you.

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Well, I think
11 that was a good session, I think we have a letter
12 coming out.

13

14 Louis.

15

16 MR. GREEN: I can't help it. What she
17 said about old data and lacking of older data that's
18 necessary to come up with real numbers, we talked about
19 this 30 years ago. It's like here it comes again.
20 You're catching on a stock that's declined. Okay.
21 Well, it comes back to this management system. If you
22 want to manage something you need to spend money on it.
23 You need to spend money on funding for your projects.
24 You need to spend money on personnel; you need to spend
25 money on equipment to be adequately able to do the job.
26 If I'm a contractor and I'm bidding on a doggone
27 contract, I'll tell you what, I got all kinds of things
28 I got to show to put on the table that I'm capable of
29 doing the job. When you look at the State and the Feds
30 right now, what's been going on now for decades, is
31 that they don't have enough money. It's always a
32 funding issue. Why? This is -- the State of Alaska is
33 sitting here in the dumps right now because we didn't
34 do adequate work on both the government -- sides of
35 government management here on our fish and game. When
36 is that going to be important? It's too bad we lost
37 all that -- what we could have had, old data, like Eva
38 just pointed out, you know, this is nothing new to the
39 table, it's been discussed -- 30 years ago I was
40 sitting there talking about it with people at Board of
41 Fish meetings.

42

43 So if you're going to do the job
44 adequately you got to have the adequate funding to do
45 the job so I think that the Secretaries ought to know
46 that. It's not -- what's been going on isn't adequate
47 and we need adequacy here.

48

49 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

50

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1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. I
2 think that concludes that one and we'll move on to the
3 next section. These three are connected.

4
5 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair.
6 Staff, is there a way we could show on the screens the
7 presentation that I'm still sharing.

8
9 (Pause)

10
11 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. All right,
12 moving on to the third thing that came up in the annual
13 reports this year and that was enforcement and user
14 conflicts.

15
16 So many Councils, I believe there were
17 eight of them raised concerns about conflicts between
18 user groups and this was especially true between local
19 and non-local hunters although it might apply for
20 fishing as well in other areas. Councils stated that
21 there is inadequate law enforcement presence and
22 funding for more enforcement. There's a lack of
23 oversight for air taxis and transporters, specifically
24 those who are dropping off sporthunters in the field.
25 Councils raised concerns about ongoing trespassing
26 issues, especially on Native Corporation lands and
27 Native allotments. They identified that there is a
28 lack of clear information and certain infrastructure
29 such as signs and maps that contributes to this issue.
30 And they raised the need for more hunter education and
31 ethics outreach.

32
33 So some of the requests related to this
34 theme are to strengthen law enforcement presence in the
35 field. Increase funding for Federal enforcement
36 programs and fill vacant enforcement positions. Expand
37 cross training for Federal law enforcement officers in
38 coordination with State and local partners. Establish
39 and Staff more hunter checkstations in heavily utilized
40 access points. Some examples were like regional hub
41 airports, Yukon River bridge, places like that where
42 people that are access points into rural Alaska. They
43 requested that funding be prioritized or Staff time to
44 develop communications and outreach materials aimed at
45 reducing some of these hunter conflicts and improving
46 hunter ethics. They would like to see permit
47 conditions strengthened and enforcement authority also
48 over guide services and transporters. And they would
49 like to see timely in-season reporting required for air
50

0085

1 taxi operators instead of end of the year reporting.

2

3 So some of the Board responses related
4 to these issues were, first, just noting that the Board
5 doesn't have authority regarding the enforcement of
6 harvest regulations or agency funding for enforcement
7 programs. However, they also noted that the Federal
8 agencies are working to streamline law enforcement
9 efforts despite shrinking budgets. They suggested --
10 the Board suggested that the Councils invite relevant
11 Federal and State managers to your Council meetings to
12 discuss some of these issues such as the feasibility of
13 establishing additional hunter checkstations. They
14 also recommend that the Councils write directly to the
15 State, to the Troopers, Alaska Department of Fish and
16 Game to express enforcement concerns on State managed
17 lands. And they do -- the Board also did acknowledge
18 the importance of hunter education and outreach but
19 unfortunately just due to budget constraints the
20 program itself doesn't have the ability to take on that
21 extra effort now and can't direct other agencies to do
22 so either.

23

24 And that is the conclusion of the
25 summary for this theme, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

26

27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
28 Brooke. Any questions from the Board for Staff on this
29 comment.

30

31 MR. PENDERGAST: Mr. Chair.

32

33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Kevin, you have
34 the floor.

35

36 MR. PENDERGAST: Kevin Pendergast, BLM.
37 No questions just kind of a comment. It's true the
38 Board doesn't have authority over enforcement and so
39 forth. There's a lot of good work going on in this
40 area, I've seen an emphasis coming from OSM on
41 coordinating with the Bureaus and making sure
42 enforcement -- law enforcement folks are, you know,
43 aware of the program, engaged with RAC meetings as
44 they're able and kind of building awareness and rapport
45 back and forth so that's healthy.

46

47 BLM maintains a memorandum of
48 understanding with the State of Alaska. I just signed
49 a renewed version of that, which allows better resource
50

0086

1 sharing back and forth with the State. So our folks,
2 if they encounter someone in the field that's violating
3 State regulations, but is still maybe wanton waste or
4 something, they're not just in an advisory capacity,
5 they can actually take action on behalf of the State
6 under their laws, so things like that. So just wanted
7 to acknowledge some of the good work going on in this
8 area.

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
11 Kevin. Any other questions. Frank.

12

13 MR. WOODS: Good comments from the
14 RACs. I think maybe Dan can concur, most of our
15 problems are real minimal when it comes to in
16 compliance. I think -- when I was Chairman we had over
17 zealous enforcement officers, we both had State -- they
18 called them Bustin Justin, and we had.....

19

20 (Laughter)

21

22 MR. WOODS:officers on the
23 Federal side profile people and meet people -- coming
24 into the village to issue tickets. That caused a lot
25 of heartburn. As the Chairman of the Advisory
26 Committee I'd recommend that you educate and BLM sounds
27 like they're working on that kind of whole thing. We
28 actually -- when I was under BBNA, my subsistence
29 coordinator, we offered like cross-cultural educational
30 programs, those cross-cultural educational programs
31 help understand that -- just last year I went hunting
32 with an elder, he was scared to go moose hunting
33 because he was afraid of getting a ticket. Last year.
34 From the village of Manokotak, an elder was too worried
35 about getting a ticket because he got stopped in front
36 of the village for caribou hunting with me. That is
37 criminal almost to have him worry about, number 1,
38 feeding his family over getting a ticket. So what we
39 did is we cooped the moose and got him a moose. I went
40 hunting with this guy about, oh, four or five years ago
41 and he hunts vigorously for his family and he abides by
42 the law because the threat -- if he doesn't abide by
43 the law, he'll get those hunting rights taken away and
44 that's what his fear was. So when we ask for
45 enforcement, we also ask for you to ask for education
46 and cross-cultural education. Because the majority of
47 our population in rural areas want to comply so they
48 can continue to subsist.

49

50

0087

1 Great recommendations.

2

3

4 I think that, Number 1, we have to
5 change perspectives. When we're dealing with a West
6 Point graduate that has high level of intensity and
7 military training, you put that person right from West
8 Point right into the Troopers or the enforcement
9 division, he has a different mentality. And that
10 different mentality affects how we engage with that
11 officer. I've had that officer come up to my hunting
12 team, my hunting team of about four or five, sniffing
13 people's rifles because he wants to know who shot what.
14 That is over zealous. And I asked him, why are you
15 doing this and he goes, well, we have identified a
16 snowmachine track and it fits one of your party members
17 and I'm like you're profiling us and to have that
18 happen right in the field. I would literally get
19 pulled over by a Trooper and I'd be driving off out of
20 town, whether I'm hunting, fishing or whatever, I might
21 be going out on a Sunday afternoon cruise, that Trooper
22 would pull me over on a snowmachine with his airplane,
23 land and ask if I got a license. For what? So I'd
24 call the Trooper every time I left town.

24

25 (Laughter)

26

27 MR. WOODS: Yeah, get his airplane in
28 the air.

29

30 (Laughter)

31

32 MR. WOODS: And I want to comply
33 because that compliance keeps my security for being
34 able to subsist. So education should be a part of it,
35 and I appreciate it. Great concerns. I'm really
36 excited about that list. We can only get better at
37 what we do, so, thank you.

38

39 MR. DUNAWAY: Yeah, thank you, Mr.
40 Chair. I'll kind of spin off of what Frank said. He
41 articulated more, the real specifics. As you can see
42 Bristol Bay RAC didn't really fill in that blank much
43 but I was going to add that if there was something that
44 was discussed in training, that culturally sensitive --
45 I have heard complaints that I was lining up on a
46 caribou and here this guy comes roaring up right next
47 to me, I want to see your license, you know. So the
48 training, I would think my RAC would support the
49 training. And some of the officers have it. I've had

50

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1 officers that catch me at my moose camp and say, well,
2 while you're sitting here cooking dinner we'll check
3 your tags and your license, no, you're okay, so we
4 won't have to bother you when you're really out
5 hunting. You know, that was super appreciated. But I
6 hear some of this other stuff, like Frank says and I've
7 heard other complaints.

8

9 So, yeah, it's how they do it, not how
10 much and I'll leave it at that. Thank you.

11

12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
13 Another good round of discussions. We have time for
14 one more of these before we break -- yeah, we do.

15

16 (Laughter)

17

18 MS. MCDAVID: There's three more
19 themes. I did hear some -- thank you, Mr. Chair.
20 Right before we move on, I did hear some discussion,
21 important discussion amongst the Chairs previously
22 about, you know, the impacts of people coming into
23 their regions. Sometimes there's been regulatory
24 actions that they've put in proposals to try and deal
25 with some of these things that meet with some push back
26 so I didn't know if anyone -- especially that's not
27 represented here, this was a big issue that North Slope
28 Council raised and unfortunately they're not here to
29 help discuss that. But just wanted to make sure there
30 were no other comments before we move on.

31

32 (No comments)

33

34 MS. MCDAVID: All right, hearing none.
35 Our next topic is caribou declines and management.
36 Many caribou herds are declining across the state and
37 this is resulting in subsistence hunting restrictions
38 and closures affecting people's ability to meet their
39 subsistence needs. Some of the specific herds that
40 have been mentioned in the annual reports this year are
41 Western Arctic, Central Arctic, Mulchatna, Fortymile
42 and Nelchina Herds. That's not necessary an all
43 encompassing picture of all the herds that might not be
44 doing well across the state. Some Councils noted that
45 increases in caribou -- predation on caribou are
46 contributing to some of these declines. There is a
47 note about a lack of widespread outreach and education
48 regarding these declines and hunter ethics related to
49 some of those user conflicts you were just talking
50

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1 about. Several Councils brought up issues related to
2 the disruption of caribou migrations, especially some
3 of the northern herds and those along the road systems
4 by transporters, by guided hunters and by either
5 existing roads or roads that may be proposed to be
6 built in the near future. Councils noted that there is
7 inadequate research monitoring, enforcement and
8 collaboration between the State and the Feds. Doesn't
9 mean that some of that isn't happening, it's just maybe
10 we need more of it.

11

12 All right.

13

14 So some of the requests related to
15 caribou are to take further action to support the
16 survival of Western Arctic Caribou including
17 implementing additional harvest restrictions and
18 strengthening enforcement. To work collaboratively
19 with the State to implement conservation strategies on
20 State managed lands. To implement educational
21 initiatives to help hunters distinguish bulls from cows
22 and to properly care for meat in the field. The
23 Councils request that studies be funded about predators
24 and to expand opportunities for hunting and trapping of
25 wolves and bears. They request collaboration between
26 State and Federal enforcement to monitor and reduce
27 disruptions to caribou caused by aircraft and fly-in
28 hunters. They encourage Federal agencies to study
29 disturbances to caribou and to subsistence users caused
30 by transporters, guides, roads and other development.

31

32 And some of the Board responses for
33 caribou items were the Board did note that special
34 actions were recently adopted to help address the WACH
35 caribou concerns. Those implemented harvest
36 restrictions and closing some areas to some Federal
37 lands to non-Federally-qualified users. The Board
38 notes that agencies like the National Park Service and
39 also Refuges are implementing educational efforts for
40 hunters and Alaska Department of Fish and Game also has
41 outreach materials available about distinguishing bulls
42 from cows and how to properly care for meat in the
43 field also. The Board encourages Councils to submit
44 proposals to liberalize Federal bear and wolf
45 regulations during the next wildlife proposal cycle if
46 they feel that's appropriate in their regions and also
47 ask that the Councils remain aware of the Board's
48 predator control policy. The Board also recommends
49 Councils can write directly to Federal and State law
50

0090

1 enforcement agencies and Fish and Game about their
2 enforcement concerns and invite agency personnel to
3 meetings to talk about those issues further. And the
4 Board encourages discussion between Councils in
5 different regions that might be dealing with similar
6 issues or might utilize the same caribou herds that
7 migrate across regions.

8

9 And that's my concluding summary for
10 this theme, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

11

12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
13 Brooke. Any questions from the Board, comments for
14 Brooke.

15

16 Frank.

17

18 MR. WOODS: I will be the devil's
19 advocate in this because we need Ben here, where is he?

20

21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Tomorrow.

22

23 MS. LAVINE: He'll be here tomorrow.

24

25 MR. WOODS: Good. Tomorrow. Because
26 the intensive management plan, that originates from the
27 State of Alaska. That intensive management plan is a
28 bear to walk through. It takes about a year to
29 implement. The last time we implemented a predator
30 control, they don't even want you to call it predator
31 control because at these meetings, the Defender's of
32 Wildlife, PETA, Friends of the Animals and that group
33 will come and sue you. I did this two years ago when
34 the biologist that passed away in Dillingham was sued
35 for not reporting adequately and they removed that --
36 the first round of lawsuits two years ago, I think we
37 attended those meetings and we had to reverse that
38 decision. Intensive management is just removing enough
39 animals so the population can rebound. I would love to
40 have a presentation on what that looks like for our
41 Board, Mr. Chair. Just to outline that process because
42 that process is pretty intense to implement when we're
43 talking about -- especially bears. So, yeah, to add to
44 that, Brooke, if we can, as a Board, public Board
45 member -- Federal Subsistence Board members have a
46 presentation of what that looks like. It might be just
47 five minutes, a review, or it might be a half an hour,
48 whatever we -- because we have -- you know, time is --
49 I don't have all day to sit here and talk about

50

0091

1 intensive management or predator control but it's a
2 process.

3

4 So, thank you.

5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thomas.

7

8 MR. BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So
9 in response to that one of the issues that Northwest
10 Arctic, North Slope, Seward Penn, Western Interior has
11 run into as we've talked about the Western Arctic
12 Caribou Herd and these issues over the last few years
13 is agencies saying, well, we can't necessarily engage
14 in intensive management until we know how many animals
15 there are and if the animals are what's causing the
16 issue. One of the biggest things just from my seven
17 years on the RAC, one of the biggest things that we
18 have been told is we don't know how many animals -- how
19 many caribou are being taken by local hunters, by non-
20 residents, by wolves, by lightening strikes, by
21 landslides, locusts, whatever it might be. So over the
22 years it's gotten better to where we -- the State can
23 say, well, based on the number of people that have
24 gotten a tag for non-residents they got 217, that is
25 what they got. We estimate that the locals took 14,000
26 animals but only 300 people got harvest tickets and
27 reported the numbers of what they got. So because they
28 estimate that only 10 percent of people report their
29 numbers, multiply that up by 10 and there you have the
30 locals are the Number 1 issue when it comes to the
31 decline in the Western Arctic Caribou Herd.

32

33 So I just wanted to put that out into
34 the Universe, that that's one of the issues that we've
35 run into and then the next issue being, well, we don't
36 have funding to do a bear study, to do a wolf study, so
37 that leads into our previous thing is we want to get
38 wildlife research programs going.

39

40 MR. WOODS: I suggest you hire a
41 biologist like we did for Bristol Bay to implement a
42 caribou/moose enhancement project that included
43 predator populations, predator/prey ratios, calf
44 mortality. We had to question our old biologist, and
45 we had to question him because the only thing he came
46 up with during this whole process was bear season's
47 open from March 31st until -- we have the most liberal
48 hunt in the world or wolf season is open, how come
49 you're not out killing them. And that's

50

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1 understandable, they don't want to have to tackle that.
2 I think in our engagement we had to come up with a pro
3 list that we could agree upon all those criteria that
4 you talked about and it took a couple years and a lot
5 of work by someone. To implement that whole project
6 was about a two year process and that two year process
7 became another year with the Board of Game proposals
8 and action items. So you're right, that's why I'm
9 asking for this educational piece of it so we can
10 understand and implement if we need to.

11

12 Thank you.

13

14 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
15 Through the Chair. So I think -- first I wanted to
16 clarify your ask. Your asking for a presentation on
17 intensive -- within the Federal Programs or the Federal
18 agencies?

19

20 MR. WOODS: I would ask for both State
21 and.....

22

23 MS. GREDIAGIN: Microphone.

24

25 MR. WOODS: So officially I'd ask for a
26 State outline of what it looks like for implementing
27 intensive management, not just in Federal side because
28 they tell me it'd never happen, right, but on the State
29 side, you know, we share boundaries and we share a
30 resource, they're a little more liberal on this if you
31 get the right biologist behind you. Thank God we had
32 one. It worked out to where it actually -- yeah, on
33 both sides, Robbin, if we can, right, because we're
34 going to be dealing with that -- that collaboration
35 letter we just got done reviewing with Ben, that's the
36 collaboration we need.

37

38 MS. LAVINE: Through the Chair. The
39 first part of my question was to clarify his ask and
40 then the second part of my response is just to clarify
41 that the Federal Subsistence Management Program and the
42 Board has a policy on intensive management or predator
43 control on our website and, you know, specifically I'll
44 hone in on, you know, a few lines here which is the
45 Board administers the subsistence taking and uses of
46 fish and wildlife on Federal public lands through
47 regulations that provide for the non-wasteful harvest
48 of fish and wildlife by Federally-qualified subsistence
49 residents consistent with the maintenance of healthy
50

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1 populations of harvested resources. Such subsistence
2 taking and uses are; and it's in quotation marks; for
3 direct personal or family consumption. Wildlife
4 management activities on Federal public lands other
5 than the subsistence take and use of fish and wildlife,
6 such as predator control and habitat management are the
7 responsibility and remain within the authority of the
8 individual land management agencies.

9
10 So confirming that statement as far as
11 what the ability of this body can have influence over
12 there can definitely be an opportunity to provide
13 probably to the Councils and to the Board various
14 different management strategies that address predators
15 or intensive management in State and Federal land
16 managing agencies but as far as within the tool kit of
17 this Board, we are limited.

18
19 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

20
21 MR. WOODS: In response, Mr. Chair.
22 Through the Chair. Thank you, Robbin. Because I
23 question my own authority in this whole -- you know, I
24 don't want to expand our authority in any direction but
25 it's part of our -- it's part of this that you and the
26 public and we need to know that this process is really
27 complicated and if we can just review what it looks
28 like and give us a picture and a snapshot of what it
29 takes to do that you're going to be dealing with the
30 rest of your life basically. And I'm speaking to you
31 specifically because Number 1, it's a process and I
32 don't want to wish that on anyone literally and I don't
33 want to go out of our authority, Mr. Chair, and,
34 Crystal, you know what I mean, but these are issues
35 that are important. Because we share that resource, it
36 crosses State and Federal boundaries and we have to be
37 abreast on what those impacts are. And just like the
38 fisheries, that cross boundary and that migration is
39 important for us to address.

40
41 So, yeah, thank you, Robbin.

42
43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Dan.

44
45 MR. DUNAWAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
46 Backtrack just a tiny bit but be quick about it.
47 Earlier we were talking about enforcement and we don't
48 have a whole lot of authority to discuss or
49 enforcement, but this is an opportunity to reach some
50

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1 of the higher level agency folks who do have
2 enforcement authority, that maybe there's some trickle
3 down or up about our concerns so it seems appropriate
4 to be able to voice them here.

5
6 Second, we are -- in Bristol Bay we are
7 very worried about our Mulchatna Herd and intensive
8 management is a -- we're looking at as kind of a key
9 for it. But I also wanted to note that we have a
10 couple of small populations that are doing all right.
11 And in one case maybe better than we thought. And I
12 want to commend the Park Service forgetting on board
13 and getting that Kukoklik Bench hunt -- and I'm
14 repeating myself -- I'm really pretty tired, so I feel
15 like I'm repeating myself -- but the Kukoklik Bench
16 Caribou Herd providing some caribou to Kokhanok and
17 Igiugig, I've known of that for years when I was
18 working in and out of Igiugig since the '90s, and I'm
19 really thrilled that they got on board -- I thought
20 it'd be a long foot dragging thing and they're on it
21 now and it's making a difference.

22
23 Also the Nushagak Peninsula Caribou
24 Herd is doing okay, or all right, and I want to commend
25 the Togiak Refuge Staff for their caribou committee and
26 we had that meeting about a week, a week and a half ago
27 and it's a pretty cool thing where the communities get
28 together with their representatives and figure out how
29 to prosecute the hunt and allocate the hunt, and I
30 think it's working pretty good. They were very
31 accommodating this year. They were recommending a
32 little more strict season for this fall, several folks
33 spoke up that, you know, given that it was so relaxed
34 last year and we didn't harvest as many as they want
35 they were accommodating and I feel like we're going
36 into the season in a really, you know, team, we all
37 agree type mode, and I want to thank the Refuge Staff
38 for that too. Thank you.

39
40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Louis.

41
42 MR. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The
43 conversation on intensive management. The SPRAC had a
44 presentation and it was back in either 2014 or just
45 before that, somewhere in there, a man named Patrick
46 Volkenberg, I think -- am I right -- yeah, he's the one
47 that did that stuff and there's a presentation in the
48 literature somewhere. There's got to be something in
49 the archives, and I don't think it's going to change
50

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1 any from then until now. There's actually some
2 information there in our archives. And he did the
3 complete -- I wasn't at the meeting, I was out of town,
4 but my Vice Chair, Tim Smith, who was a game manager
5 conducted that meeting so it's in there somewhere so we
6 already have that information.

7

8 Thank you.

9

10 MS. BURK: Thank you. I have to speak
11 up about caribou. It's something on the EIRAC that
12 keeps coming up and I spend a lot of time on salmon but
13 this past year I've been looking more and more at
14 caribou because as I was sitting on the North Pacific
15 and I was looking at different halibut population
16 graphs, crab population graphs, caribou population
17 graphs, salmon population graph, right, when you start
18 looking at all these things they look very similar as
19 far as like the peaks and the valleys. And a lot of
20 it, I feel like has to do with pressure that was
21 increased on these resources after statehood. So I
22 think -- and that goes back to the single species
23 management approach versus managing on an ecosystem.
24 So we should be looking at the land, how healthy it is
25 and then how do we manage all of these animals on their
26 longterm cycles like we all know about how you trap
27 less or trap more or fish less, you know, people know
28 how do to that. I feel like where we need to go is to
29 some of that, we need to do it in the ocean and we need
30 to it on shore.

31

32 You know, you might not realize that
33 the people from Nenana are from the (Indiscernible)
34 Caribou Clan, but we haven't seen caribou in Nenana
35 since like the '40s or '50s. Railroad and the Parks
36 Highway was dropped on us and so they don't come. And
37 then when I was working for ASRC they'll always write
38 in their EIS that the development of road or whatever
39 don't have impact on caribou but that's not true. As
40 you start listening more and more to people you
41 realize, yes, there is an impact from those road
42 systems. But, once, again, who funds the research, who
43 designs the research questions and how is that
44 information used.

45

46 I have a huge problem with predator
47 control.

48

49 One, because wolves are very hard to

50

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1 manage and they'll just keep coming. So you can try
2 but they're just going to keep coming. Bears are a
3 little bit different. And I think what I hear a lot of
4 time in the EIRAC is they kept pressing me, my whole
5 Council was pressing me to increase the bear hunt and I
6 just refused. I refused because there's no information
7 on what we're doing to these bears. When the salmon
8 escapements were set for the State they never talked
9 about how much salmon was needed to feed the land and
10 all the things that rely on it. So how do we know
11 what's happening to the bears. We're just assuming
12 they're not -- they're not undergoing stress so let's
13 shoot them all. If you read the -- there was a very
14 good article about predator control recently in
15 Anchorage Daily News and there was a former State of
16 Alaska biologist who shared a lot of information about
17 his opposition to the predator control. So I feel like
18 that, again, is not a well informed approach. It's a
19 more of a kill everything mentality in my mind. So
20 let's go ahead and -- if we got a low here let's go
21 ahead and kill this but we're not totally sure if
22 that's going to come back and then at the end of it all
23 everything might have issues. I have a real problem
24 with that kind of approach so I just really wanted to
25 put that out there. I know people are fans of predator
26 control but I'm being told by my elders and my people
27 that it's not good and that is not the way to go about
28 it.

29
30 There is different working groups for
31 different herds and I was thinking about what we're
32 hearing about the Fortymile Herd. There is a lot of
33 like focus on Federal users, you know, taking all the
34 hunts so nobody else gets any and so a very small group
35 of people got to hunt but they didn't talk about the
36 non-resident hunting, that that group of folks had
37 already -- had actually went over their quota for
38 caribou so how -- and that's because that's a State
39 duality where they'll allow the non-resident, where you
40 can't implement Federal subsistence user qualification.
41 So I still feel like part of our issue, we're going to
42 start limiting stuff, you know, we can't keep saying we
43 need to serve non-residents, I understand that the
44 guiding and stuff is an important economy for some of
45 our rural folk but I will remind folks, what do you do
46 when you sell your food and then at the end you have
47 nothing to sell and nothing to eat. That's what's
48 happening to us on the Yukon.

49
50

0097

1 We don't talk about old stewardship
2 practice that we used to do, which is like lake
3 burning, to increase the habitat that you'll see
4 Ahtna's like doing the browse by mowing and creating
5 new willow growth. You know, we intentionally set
6 fires to create growth and habitat and feed. So
7 there's a lot of other things that if they were funded
8 or looked at that we could be doing versus predator
9 control.

10

11 And I also noticed that -- you know,
12 they're building farm where I'm from in Nenana, they're
13 turning all this land into agriculture land and what I
14 notice in there is it's a cow sanctuary and why it's a
15 cow sanctuary is because of the certain type of meadow
16 grass that's there and then there's a certain type of
17 diamond willow that grow there and so we're not looking
18 at moose the way that we look at caribou calving
19 grounds or, you know, spawning grounds, when, in fact,
20 moose -- cow moose have a range and actually the
21 science proved that the cow moose stay in these little
22 pockets, recently that data became available. So I
23 always feel like science is catching up to our
24 knowledge and I kind of just wanted to share more about
25 that.

26

27 And then also about what do I see when
28 it comes to wanton waste. So a lot of non-residents
29 are accessing places with jet boat or airplane. Are
30 these jet boats going up very shallow water that salmon
31 habitat, do we know that? I don't think we know that.
32 Are these airplanes dropping people off in very remote
33 areas that are cow and calf animal sanctuaries that are
34 not meant to be accessed because that's where the
35 animals are trying to go to have safety so should we be
36 having planes go out there? In Nenana, I see all these
37 big boats -- they built a boat launch and we're right
38 next to Fairbanks, right, so we have a lot of urban
39 pressure in Nenana, we see it there and then you see it
40 at the Yukon bridge. And what I see, I see all those
41 boats going by my camp and then when I see them coming
42 back, they have like these two tier boats, they're just
43 goofy looking, and you always know like Native people
44 don't have jet boats, they all have prop boats because
45 they actually have to push a load, you know, and these
46 jet boats they don't have all that meat on there. All
47 they carry -- all that jet boat has to carry is all
48 that gas down, right, and so what you'll see is three
49 antlers and no meat on these jet boats with all these
50

0098

1 people coming back and there's no enforcement out
2 there, there's no checkstation. Sometimes we find
3 their game bags at the dump, multiple communities
4 reported this at the EIRAC. And I know even us, an
5 elder took out some meat and made dry meat off of some
6 of this discarded wanton waste so we actually try to --
7 like the king salmon in the ocean, try to get a few
8 scraps to feed ourselves, you know, like it's kind of
9 that situation right now and I don't think folks are
10 super aware of that unless you live there and we come
11 from proud people so it's hard for us to share what's
12 happening to us and to ask for help. That's hard. And
13 like we have to do something. We're in a complete
14 ecosystem crises, like Rhonda shared, there's no moose
15 on the Yukon River corridor. I come from Minto Flats
16 area where the cow hunt has decimated our population of
17 moose and now the Fish and Game still wants to bring in
18 cow hunts.

19
20 So just the values and the approach to
21 management to this very day is still the wrong approach
22 and I'm not totally sure all the ways. I feel like
23 some of these working groups for the herds are good
24 but, again, a lot has to do with, in my mind, some of
25 the non-resident -- I hear you're saying the local, but
26 I also think there's a lot of non-resident stuff
27 happening.

28
29 So I just wanted to share that.

30
31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Eva,
32 appreciate that perspective. Any other Board
33 discussion. Any other RAC comments on this theme, 4,
34 caribou?

35
36 (No comments)

37
38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, we'll
39 take a five minute break -- make it 10 -- oh, Jackie.
40 Jackie's got the floor, one second, one second.

41
42 MS. CLEVELAND: I'll make it quick,
43 thank you. I wanted to go back to Mulchatna, of
44 course. So much like the Western Arctic Caribou Herd
45 Working Group, our RAC, YKDRAC is also requesting for a
46 formation of a Mulchatna and Kilbuk Caribou Herd
47 Working Groups. So far we've written a letter to
48 Togiak National Wildlife Refuge manager and Alaska
49 Department of Fish and Game to request that and it
50

0099

1 would be, of course, to monitor the herd status and
2 collaborate on rebuilding as well as discussing
3 potential opportunities for a limited hunt much like
4 how the Bristol Bay has been trying. And we're
5 requesting that this group include members from our RAC
6 and maybe Bristol Bay RAC as well as the Advisory
7 Committees for Fish and Game as well.

8
9 So, yeah, we just think it's very
10 important that local people will be a part of this
11 working group as well the State and Feds working
12 together on it.

13
14 That was it, thanks.

15
16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
17 Jackie, appreciate that. And I hope we can start you a
18 working group out there. A lot of our information that
19 we do use comes from those localized efforts like that.
20 Like we're not out there, like you said, and I've never
21 even shot at a caribou so anybody who has all that
22 intell that can share it with us, the more out there
23 you guys do on the ground, the better for me.

24
25 Louis.

26
27 MR. GREEN: Just another perspective on
28 bears and beavers, I'm going to put them both in the
29 same bucket. From the elders back in 20, 30 years ago,
30 they talked about bears. Bears were hunted down until
31 it was dead. Because they worried about the children
32 and the women out gathering berries and greens. The
33 thing about our area up there is it's not full of
34 trees, it's wide open. So their idea was we got to
35 protect our women who are out there gathering and our
36 children, bears are going to go and that's -- and going
37 back into the early '60s we didn't hardly have any
38 bears but when the moose moved into the Seward
39 Peninsula it was some time later on here comes the
40 bears, predation.

41
42 The other one was the beaver. They
43 talked about the beaver to us and they told us that
44 there was a place to the east of Nome where they hunted
45 all the beaver out until they were gone because they
46 dammed up rivers and streams and stuff and caused
47 problems, they thought the beaver was a competition,
48 you know, trying to deal with salmon. And those are --
49 this is a different concept.

50

0100

1 So I'm not out for killing everything
2 every time I turn around but I'll tell you one thing, I
3 know there's a lot of bears dead out there somewhere in
4 the sticks somewhere where somebody gut shot them and
5 let them go die off in a hole and that's -- that came
6 up in a meeting that I had -- I was a part of. I don't
7 remember if it was the RAC or if it was the Northern
8 Norton Sound Advisory, where somebody asked, well,
9 what's going to happen if we don't find some way to
10 resolve the bear issues because the numbers are growing
11 and it came up, well, somebody's just going to start
12 shooting them and not reporting them. So there's two
13 sides to that coin too.

14
15 So I just want people to have that
16 information in their mind, you know, that there's other
17 reasons, there's different mentalities towards it.

18
19 So, thank you.

20
21 I'm not challenging anybody.

22
23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We're going to
24 go ahead here, I think that was it. Again, the
25 challenges you hear from Northwest is 300 permits,
26 14,000 caribou, more enforcement. First time we
27 complain guess who gets the ticket at our office, it's
28 the local residents that were just out feeding their
29 family and maybe or maybe not get that permit or give a
30 crap about what the government has to say about feeding
31 their house. So we come from that area, right, and the
32 same as predation management, God bless me for not
33 being that guy that's trigger happy but I know the
34 people who are and that's how it's been, I think, from
35 the beginning. I also watch karma happen to those same
36 souls so it's one of those, you know, really having the
37 respect and balance for the whole total ecosystem and
38 how it manages to manage itself. So tough job here
39 when we're limited with our faculties and our faculties
40 are screaming for a 10 minute break.

41
42 (Laughter)

43
44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Break.

45
46 (Off record)

47
48 (On record)

49
50

0101

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, we're
2 going to get started again. Boy, coming in with sweaty
3 palms, all right, all right.

4
5 (Laughter)

6
7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, we'll go
8 ahead and give it back to Brooke and we're on Theme 5
9 and resume our Staff presentation. Thank you.

10

11 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
12 This is Brooke. And as you noted we're on to our fifth
13 overarching theme that was raised in the annual reports
14 this year from the Councils. I did want to note like I
15 would personally say this is probably the most varied
16 theme across regions. A lot of region specific things
17 that Councils were noting and maybe a little bit more
18 of an informational item for the Board compared to some
19 of the others.

20

21 So some of the issues that were raised
22 specific to the Southeast was habitat degradation from
23 logging in the Tongass. Declining goose populations
24 and changes to seasonal access and availability, I
25 believe that came up from Kodiak/Aleutians region.
26 Natural disasters and severe storms leading to food and
27 infrastructure loss and relocation of subsistence users
28 specifically this past year in the YKDelta and then
29 also concerns from Seward Peninsula region. Across
30 many regions Councils raised awareness about changing
31 weather patterns that are affecting subsistence
32 resources, including increased flooding, erosion and
33 rain on snow events. There were also concerns about
34 the impacts of different development projects including
35 the proposed Ambler Road and mining.

36

37 (Pause)

38

39 MS. MCDAVID: It appears my
40 presentation is not advancing so one moment please.
41 I'm going to stop sharing and try again.

42

43 (Pause)

44

45 MR. DUNAWAY: Yeah, I was wondering,
46 Brooke, if a paper copy of your presentation could be
47 shared with Chairs. We.....

48

49 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah, I saw Robbin

50

0102

1 passing them out. Robbin, did Council Chairs all get a
2 copy, perhaps maybe if we could print -- ask Staff to
3 print enough copies for the rest of the Chairs that
4 would be great, thank you.

5

6 MR. DUNAWAY: Well, thank you for that.
7 Because it'll help me share it with the RAC. Really
8 good job, Brooke, by the way.

9

10 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you very much for
11 your feedback, Dan, I appreciate it.

12

13 (Pause)

14

15 MS. MCDAVID: I apologize, the slides
16 are still not advancing.

17

18 (Pause)

19

20 MS. MCDAVID: Oh, okay. So I didn't
21 make animations. Thank you, this must be a holdover
22 from Katya's report last year. She is very good at
23 formatting, I am not, and apparently as the stars
24 begin to shine across the map up there it will indicate
25 what regions brought up these themes.

26

27 (Pause)

28

29 MS. MCDAVID: It takes a village as
30 they say.

31

32 (Pause)

33

34 MS. MCDAVID: All right, on to the
35 Council requests related to this theme.

36

37 There was a request to the Forest
38 Service to strengthen adaptive management and habitat
39 restoration efforts to improve wildlife habitat that's
40 been impacted by past logging. There was a request to
41 the Board and DOI agencies to provide a report to
42 Councils outlining actions that the agencies can take
43 to support subsistence users during and after natural
44 disasters. And Council -- at least one Council asked
45 that displaced users from Typhoon Halong be able to
46 retain their rural eligibility to participate in
47 Federal subsistence harvesting. There is in an ask to
48 ensure continued regulatory flexibility to be able to
49 address changes as they arise. There were specific
50

0103

1 regional requests for coordinators and agency Staff to
2 arrange for information of interests and research to be
3 presented to the Councils. And then there were
4 additional requests for monitoring of environmental
5 change and land use impacts and noted here that ties
6 into the earlier theme about the importance and the
7 need for more monitoring.

8

9 All right.

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So in the Board responses, the Board noted that the Ambler Road Final EIS is publicly available and it does contain information on potential impacts to subsistence. The Board noted that requests about the Forest habitat in Southeast, about that restoration, are best addressed by reaching out directly to the Tongass National Forest and the Board also encourages the Southeast Council to provide input during the Tongass Forest Plan Revision process, which I do believe they have already been doing. And the Board noted that many agencies have been working together to assess the impacts of Typhoon Halong and to provide support to displaced users. There is discussion underway with the Secretary's office about how to potentially address Federal subsistence eligibility status of displaced users, longer term, if it takes awhile for communities to rebuild and families to be able to move back to their communities. And they also noted that Councils can request updates about this at their upcoming meetings. I know I will be working with YKDelta Council to get some of those updates. Councils can also request that their coordinators invite land managers and researchers to the Council meetings to discuss environmental and land use issues.

And that is the conclusion of the summary for this theme, Mr. Chair, thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Brooke. Any questions from the Board. Comments about this theme.

42

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(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: RAC Chairs.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I think we kind

0104

1 of talked about some of these things and the other
2 things and how they pertain to what it is, like all of
3 the topics are interrelated like Thomas was expressing
4 earlier. I think this is just the one where you see
5 where sometimes we are outside of our toolbox to
6 address. So as we address them it's just trying to
7 find a pathway where the Regional Advisory Councils can
8 still find that dialogue and elevate their concerns to
9 the appropriate -- and as we speak through these issues
10 today, we're also sitting here drafting in our minds
11 how that policy looks for us as a Board. So that's,
12 again, part of our internal discussion.

13

14 So, thank you, appreciate it.

15

16 MR. PENDERGAST: Mr. Chair.

17

18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, go ahead.

19

20 MR. PENDERGAST: Just a clarifying
21 comment and it's a small thing. But I realize how many
22 Federal documents are flying around out there and how
23 hard it is to track everything, it's the Ambler Road
24 Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement. It
25 was actually published in 2024. The EIS is a fair bit
26 older than that, going back to 2021, I think, maybe
27 2020. I just -- there's two documents, EIS, and then
28 the supplemental was published in 2024.

29

30 MS. BURK: Thanks. I was also talking
31 about it in caribou but I had kind of switched over to
32 salmon. But I come from an area where there's a lot of
33 swamps and we're also talking -- in our area we had
34 boreal lichen before and lichen takes a really long
35 time to regenerate and so part of the issue that we
36 noticed was the Fortymile hunt was -- again, it goes
37 back to the false abundance. When an animal is
38 stressed it tries to spawn but then the spawn -- the
39 abundance might look high but it's unhealthy, right,
40 and then so after that it crashes. So in the Fortymile
41 they said, oh, gosh, there's all these animals, the
42 land can't support it, we got to go kill them and then
43 what they did was they allowed all these ATVs and
44 traffic to go out there and scour up all the lichen and
45 stuff. And so how are we pairing land -- like the way
46 we allow different vehicles to travel on the land and
47 those impacts on the fish and wildlife. And so I think
48 when you allow ATVs where caribou lichen is growing,
49 that's a problem. When you allow jet boats on lakes

50

0105

1 where they're drying up, that's a problem. When you
2 allow jet boats to go up spawning streams with no
3 restrictions after the eggs are in the reds, that's a
4 problem. And so I fee like we're not looking at any of
5 that and if we are, please correct me, but I haven't
6 seen anybody doing it.

7

8 So I would also just kind of stress the
9 importance of considering that as fish and wildlife
10 population declines may continue, right, and then how
11 do we start to address it so this may be part of that.

12

13 Thank you.

14

15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Eva.
16 Any other comments from RAC Chairs. Dan.

17

18 MR. DUNAWAY: More to Eva. When I first
19 got to the Bristol Bay area the jet boat concern was a
20 burning issue and the Park Service did some studies,
21 they couldn't conclusively show any significant harm
22 and both for the hunting and only the antlers and so
23 on, and I've been down that road for awhile and it
24 might be worth looking up some of the studies but the
25 ones I recall, you couldn't really show any significant
26 harm. In one case, I believe, is American Creek, the
27 Park Service did a pretty careful study, but bears
28 walking the water upset the salmon way more than -- and
29 people -- way more than prop boats or jet boats. So
30 that's a little tidbit and we could talk separately or
31 something and possibly get you some sources.

32

33 Just offer that, thank you.

34

35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. I
36 think that concludes Theme 5. Theme 6, we're at the
37 last park [sic].

38

39 MS. MCDAVID: All right, final stretch.
40 Theme 6 is related to program administration so it's
41 pretty broad and covers a lot of aspects of the Federal
42 Subsistence Management Program. So getting into it.

43

44 Some of the issues that were brought up
45 are related to tribal co-management, tribal
46 consultations, outreach needs, education, youth
47 engagement, the Secretarial Review process, the lack of
48 compensation for Council members, improving annual
49 report and Council member application processes,

50

0106

1 inadequate Federal Staff and funding, the importance of
2 joint Council meetings, delays and lack of engagement
3 on issues elevated by the Councils, relationships with
4 other Departments in the State of Alaska and then
5 Western Interior had a request for finalization of
6 their sheep management strategy.

7

8 All right.

9

10 A number of requests under this and as
11 I noted before a lot of these, or some of these also
12 came up during the Secretarial Review discussion and
13 some Councils did attach their comments on the
14 Secretarial Review to their annual report so I pulled
15 some of the main points from the Secretarial Review
16 comments that were attached but, again, the Board may
17 want to consider hearing a more complete summary of the
18 Council comments at a future time.

19

20 But the requests that came up in the
21 annual reports this year were to improve the
22 correspondence process to ensure timely elevation of
23 letters to and responses from the Secretaries offices.
24 Establish clear written policies for Board and Board
25 agency correspondence, similar to a policy that exists
26 for the Councils. Improve cross agency participation
27 in the various regulatory processes. And I believe
28 some examples of that were maybe establishing more
29 liaison positions. It was noted that North Paci --
30 there's missing a North Pacific liaison to the Federal
31 Subsistence Board and also commenting on cross
32 regulatory proposals or actions that might impact
33 things like salmon and other jurisdictions. Council
34 compensation, that continues to -- Council member
35 compensation continues to be a request that's raised
36 and I know that has been elevated in the past. One
37 Council asked the program to continue to be mindful of
38 the heavy workload placed on volunteer Council members.
39 It was asked that the program review the timing and
40 accessibility of tribal consultation to ensure
41 meaningful engagement. Request to increase outreach
42 and engagement more generally with the Federal
43 Subsistence Program, especially with small and remote
44 communities. There was a request for another All
45 Council meeting. To reestablish the MOU with the State
46 of Alaska. To develop educational and outreach
47 materials about the Federal Subsistence Program in
48 general, hunter ethics, dual management, et cetera.
49 And then a request to finalize or potentially endorse
50

0107

1 the Western Interior Sheep Management Strategy.

2

3

4 So you'll note there are several blue
5 more action items that the Board included in their
6 responses that include that the Board plans to request
7 an annual standing meeting with the Secretary. The
8 Board will consider developing a correspondence policy.
9 And also noted that meanwhile that OSM has been working
10 to streamline tracking and review of Council letters.
11 And as noted before the Board may want to consider
12 requesting an overview of Council comments on the
13 Secretarial review.

13

14

15 And I will note, Mr. Chair, that first
16 one, the Board does include that in your replies
17 already so if you voted on the replies as written, then
18 it would indicate that you were going to request that
19 standing meeting with the Secretaries. The other two
20 about considering developing a correspondence policy, I
21 guess you could go further if you wanted to say that if
22 the Board thinks that developing a correspondence
23 policy is something you would like Staff and the ISC to
24 work towards that could be a potential modification.

24

25

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Brooke.

26

27

MS. MCDAVID: Yes.

28

29

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So moved.

30

31

(Laughter)

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MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We
will be sure to make a slight edit to say that the

0108

1 Board has directed OSM to start working on developing
2 that for discussion at future meetings.

3

4 Thank you.

5

6 And then I guess before we move through
7 the list, would the Board want to provide any
8 information about whether you would like to hear a
9 review of the Secretarial Review comments from the
10 Councils in the future? It's one of the potential,
11 that third blue bullet item there.

12

13 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
14 Members of the Board. I might suggest, this is Robbin,
15 Subsistence Policy Coordinator for OSM, I might suggest
16 that this be an informational agenda item perhaps at
17 your next work session or Board meeting. It's also an
18 opportunity to get an update on where the Program's at
19 within the Secretarial Review and then also consider
20 what your Councils submitted in regards to their
21 comments on the Review.

22

23 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

24

25 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Robbin. And
26 I'm seeing nods from some Board members and the Chair
27 that that sounds like a plan.

28

29 So moving down the list, some other
30 responses from the Board related to these program
31 administration items were that the Board did note they
32 have forwarded the Councils request for compensation to
33 the Secretary of Interior already and are waiting any
34 feedback on that request. And the Board acknowledges
35 the substantial workload that our Council members and
36 especially our Chairs do as volunteers to the Program,
37 we couldn't do it without you guys.

38

39 The Board has added regularly scheduled
40 tribal and ANCSA Corporation consultation opportunities
41 after the fall Council meetings and this is intended to
42 provide a second opportunity for engagement outside of
43 the busy subsistence season that happens in the summer.
44 That also provides an opportunity for the discussion to
45 have already taken place on a lot of proposals at the
46 fall RAC meetings and then maybe folks have a little
47 more information to consider when attending those
48 consultations.

49

50

0109

1 The Board has directed Staff to
2 continue updating that consultation guidelines and
3 evaluating how to enhance communication tools and
4 practices. The Board recognizes the value of All
5 Council meetings but does recommend waiting until the
6 Secretarial Review has been completed before trying to
7 do another All Council meeting and reason being just
8 the complexity of pulling those off and the budget
9 needs for those types of meetings.

10

11 And that concludes the summary for this
12 theme, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

13

14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
15 Brooke. Any questions here from the Board for Staff on
16 this presentation.

17

18 (No comments)

19

20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any discussion
21 from Regional Advisory Council Chairs, comments.

22

23 Cal.

24

25 MR. CASIPIT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
26 Through the Chair. I just wanted to -- it's a little
27 -- it's small. But I just wanted to point out that in
28 the request that the Southeast Council put in as far as
29 the -- I'm a little uncomfortable saying -- the
30 educational curriculum that Heather Bauscher has
31 authored, we asked for funding support for that to get
32 published and circulated. We just didn't ask for help
33 in distributing it, we asked for help in publishing it.
34 We didn't get that help. I personally paid for some
35 copies to get made and I'd like to see that get some
36 further distribution. I wasn't able to afford much,
37 you know, I was able to fund 250 copies, I would like
38 to see more of that. I'd like to see more published
39 and get out to folks. So if one of the agencies at the
40 table there could find a way to find a couple two or
41 three thousand dollars to do this that would be great.

42

43 Thank you.

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
46 that plug, Cal. That even educated me and I've been
47 the Federal Board Chair for 10 years and we sat in on
48 that and they pretty much dialed down this process to a
49 really finite comb so I like that document as well.

50

0110

1 MR. THOMAS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
2 Cal, have you guys worked with Alaska Geographic? Are
3 you familiar? I used to be on their board and so this
4 might be something to contact Alaska Geographic about
5 for possibly helping publish something.

6
7 MR. CASIPIT: I am familiar with Alaska
8 Geographic, however, you know, I've been working with
9 Heather and her group to get this done and it's -- I'll
10 make that suggestion to Heather and maybe she can get
11 them to come up with some money for that. I was
12 appealing to the people who might be -- you know, if I
13 could get in front of the Alaska Geographic people I
14 would appeal to them too so, yeah, thanks.

15
16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
17 comments or questions from RAC Chairs about Theme 6.

18
19 (No comments)

20
21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: That concludes
22 our letters and our replies and I think we did pretty
23 good at walking through it and making some suggestions
24 and firming up some of the actions we need to take as a
25 Board and as the office to fulfill the needs of the
26 rural Advisory Councils and elevating your concerns and
27 so I think it's been real positive constructive
28 atmosphere. I think this is why we suggested that we
29 do this, it's like an actual working dialogue going on
30 here, not you sending me a piece of paper, we read and
31 bypassed and summarized and passed off, but an actual
32 exchange of information and so for the record I truly
33 appreciate that we have this face to face time and also
34 build a rapport and get the feel of the actual passion
35 that our Council Chairs have for the job that they have
36 and I like to be balled out. I represent the
37 government, so get me while you can because when I get
38 out of here then I represent the people.

39
40 (Laughter)

41
42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I love this
43 job, thank you guys.

44
45 MR. WOODS: Well, with that, Mr. Chair,
46 I move that we approve.....

47
48 MS. MCDAVID: Excuse me, Frank.

49
50

0111

1 MR. WOODS: Oh.

2

3 MS. MCDAVID: Sorry. We have just a
4 couple little wrap ups before you might want to make a
5 final motion if that's okay, thank you.

6

7 I just -- before we wrap up wanted to
8 give the opportunity, since this was kind of a high
9 level summary and overview, if there were any
10 outstanding annual report topics that the Chairs feel
11 that were missed or not covered by these overarching
12 themes that were important for your regions that you
13 would like to have discussion with the Board since you
14 have the opportunity to do so now.

15

16 So I'll just pause.

17

18 (Pause)

19

20 MR. DUNAWAY: Yeah, thank you, Mr.
21 Chair. Just seems like I'm a little bit behind here on
22 this but regarding, I think it was some of our Bristol
23 Bay RAC members that felt a real need for compensation
24 and we were supporting that. Some of our -- we were
25 thinking that, one of our members in particular, he's a
26 late member now, I miss the guy, he was a friend, but
27 he lived in one of the more far-flung corners of our
28 area and to participate on teleconference or anything
29 was a financial burden as well as difficult to even get
30 a place to do so. And so, again, that kind of meshes
31 with the concerns for the smaller communities to be
32 able to participate and be informed. We thought
33 possibly compensation for their costs and stuff would,
34 again, encourage a wider range of regional
35 participation. So I just kind of wanted to add that
36 detail.

37

38 And then also I think this was a real
39 -- compared to last year, I feel this was an efficient
40 way of getting through a lot of topics and, again, I
41 want to thank Brooke and all the other folks who worked
42 hard so thank you very much.

43

44 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Dan. Any
45 other Council Chairs have outstanding items that you'd
46 like to bring up.

47

48 MR. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
49 Brooke. Something that came to mind that's in the
50

0112

1 works now but it took awhile to get to that point was
2 the fact that the Western Arctic Caribou Herd is not
3 coming down to the Seward Peninsula and their collars
4 aren't showing. And the late Tommy Gray and I both
5 advocated, kept advocating for this study on doing
6 collars on the -- a herd that's on the Seward
7 Peninsula, it's called the BELA Herd now, Bering
8 LandBridge. It wasn't 'recognized as a residential
9 herd. And the worry was -- the knowledge was, Tommy
10 and I both knew that there was a reindeer herd that was
11 done away with back in that area and they became wild
12 animals and mixed up with caribou, I guess, but they're
13 residential animals, they finally got collars on there,
14 like 25 collars. But the issue is that those animals
15 are managed just like the WACH group. So, you know,
16 say there's 2,000, 3,000 of them there, I don't even
17 know the number now but they're getting managed like
18 they're part of the other herd and they're two
19 different herds. So hopefully this collar study that
20 goes on alleviates the issue of who's animals, which
21 herd do those animals belong to comes out.

22

23 I just want to put that on the record
24 just so it's on there. I know we covered something
25 different but thank you for allowing it.

26

27 MS. MCDAVID: All right. Any other
28 final comments from Chairs.

29

30 (No comments)

31

32 MS. MCDAVID: If not, I'll just briefly
33 summarize some of the modifications to the replies that
34 were suggested so that the Board is aware what you will
35 be voting on if you're voting on approving the replies
36 with the modifications discussed.

37

38 Member Klein provided some language to
39 edit a topic in the Southeast report, topic No. 7, just
40 based on some of the points that Crystal mentioned in
41 the introduction today.

42

43 Fish and Wildlife Service also provided
44 some minor edits to Seward Peninsula RAC replies for
45 Topic 1, just providing some additional information
46 about what Selawik Refuge is doing in regards to hunter
47 education and outreach.

48

49 And then Member Pendergast asked that

50

0113

1 we doublecheck in the replies to reference the correct
2 document for the Ambler Road. We definitely can do
3 that.

4

5 We noted, or the Board noted that they
6 would like a summary of the Secretarial Review comments
7 from the Councils.

8

9 The Board also direct Staff to start
10 putting together a draft correspondence policy that
11 will be further reviewed and refined.

12

13 And then, Mr. Chair, there was one
14 pending modification that I'm not sure I heard any
15 consensus on and that was the Chairs request to have an
16 audience, potentially, with the Secretary about the
17 salmon crises. So if you wanted to have any discussion
18 on that before moving on, if you wanted to include that
19 in the request that you might send for a meeting you
20 could do so.

21

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I don't see the
23 value of not putting in the request, I mean it can't
24 hurt our program to say, hey, we -- you know, the
25 people we work for would like to talk to you too and I
26 like how they bring it so I think we should add it.

27

28 Jill, did you have something else.

29

30 MS. KLEIN: Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair.
31 I wanted to say I have some new information from our
32 enforcement Staff about new officers coming online and
33 that we have five new officers being trained at Fish
34 and Wildlife Service and I wanted to see if I could
35 just add that language about the number of officers and
36 where they might be stationed to the enforcement
37 sections where we responded.

38

39 (Board nods affirmatively)

40

41 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Jill, we -- I
42 have noted that down on our tracking list that we're
43 keeping internally here and it sounded like the rest of
44 the Board is fine with that as well.

45

46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, Brooke,
47 we have one more here with Louis.

48

49 MR. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

50

0114

1 Brooke, on this plan another All Council meeting, what
2 are we going to do, what's going to happen? I mean
3 that -- you know, like a timeframe? I forgot to ask.
4

5 MS. LEONETTI: I'll try -- I'll take a
6 stab at that. We shoot for every five years to have an
7 All Council meeting. The last one was in 2024 -- yeah,
8 2024, so the next one will be 2029. They do take at
9 least 18 months to two years to plan. it's a pretty
10 big effort so, '29.
11

12 MS. MCDAVID: And I believe that's
13 funding that there will be funds -- as long as there's
14 funds to do that.
15

16 And, Mr. Chair, this isn't related to
17 the actual replies but I did note down a couple of
18 other follow ups that we'll be following up on, for a
19 lack of better words, and Ms. Kara Moriarty had
20 requested a budget needs estimate for FRMP and WRMP
21 funding. The Councils requested that we draft a letter
22 for potentially all -- a joint Council letter that will
23 be reviewed at their fall meetings for -- to request
24 adequate funding for both of those programs. And then
25 there also was a request from Member Woods for a future
26 presenta -- educational presentation about intensive
27 management and the Federal Subsistence Board Predator
28 Control Policy.
29

30 So with that, that does conclude my
31 portion of this agenda item and I do want to just say a
32 big thank you to our Council Chairs and our Council
33 members -- other Council members who aren't here for
34 bringing all these issues forward and really informing
35 our Federal land managing agencies and other members on
36 the Board about what you're experiencing out in your
37 region and trying to come to potential ways that some
38 of these issues might be addressed and to our agencies
39 and your Staff, thank you again for helping with the
40 replies in drafting those and the extra Staff time
41 that it takes and, of course, for all the good work
42 that you're doing out on the landscape.
43

44 So, thank you.
45

46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I think we have
47 one more Brooke, Don, online, Mr. Striker, you wanted
48 to speak to something, you have the floor.
49
50

0115

1 MR. STRIKER: No, I was just clapping
2 for having the RAC Chairs picture.

3
4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, Mr.
5 Striker says he's.....

6
7 MR. STRIKER: Does that make sense?

8
9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah.

10
11 MR. STRIKER: Just saying, thank you.

12
13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Right on,
14 appreciate it.

15
16 That concludes the presentation, I
17 think now the floor is open for a Board motion.

18
19 MR. WOODS: With that, Mr. Chair, I'd
20 like to approve basically -- I just read the whole
21 thing in my mind but I just forgot where I put it down.
22 So I'd like to approve the 2025 Council annual reports
23 and Board replies, along with all the modifications as
24 discussed.

25
26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: There's been a
27 motion made and.....

28
29 MR. ONEY: Second.

30
31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON:seconded.
32 Any further questions, deliberation here by the Board.
33 I think we did a good job hashing it out today.

34
35 (No comments)

36
37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Roll call
38 please.

39
40 MS. LEONETTI: Okay. Public Member
41 Rhonda Pitka.

42
43 MS. PITKA: Yes.

44
45 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Frank
46 Woods.

47
48 MR. WOODS: Yes.

49
50

0116

1 MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Ray Oney.

2

3 MR. ONEY: Yes.

4

5 MS. LEONETTI: BIA Jolene John.

6

7 MS. JOHN: BIA, yes.

8

9 MS. LEONETTI: BLM, Kevin Pendergast.

10

11 MR. PENDERGAST: Aye.

12

13 MS. LEONETTI: Forest Service, Nicole
14 Grewe.

15

16 MS. GREWE: Yes.

17

18 MS. LEONETTI: Fish and Wildlife
19 Service, Jill Klein.

20

21 MS. KLEIN: Yes.

22

23 MS. LEONETTI: And National Park
24 Service, Don Striker.

25

26 MR. STRIKER: Yes.

27

28 MS. LEONETTI: Mr. Chair, there's one
29 excused member, one absent member but everybody voted
30 yes so the motion passes.

31

32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I vote yes too.

33

34 MS. LEONETTI: Oh.

35

36 (Laughter)

37

38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I don't wear
39 ties -- oh, sorry.

40

41 (Laughter)

42

43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, next
44 we're on to Council correspondence to the Board and
45 Board and Council correspondence to Secretaries. This
46 is where we look to -- we'll call on Robbin.

47

48 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
49 Members of the Board. And also Council Chairs and
50

0117

1 representatives. You've just been handed out a pretty
2 large packet. On the first page is a table. And this
3 table addresses some of the recent outstand -- and not
4 so recent actually, outstanding correspondence that the
5 Councils are waiting for Board action on. I'm going to
6 walk you through this table, I suggest taking action
7 individually and I will prompt you when action is
8 called for. Before we do dive into it I want to give
9 you just a brief background on the correspondence
10 drafting and response process, it's similar to the
11 annual report and reply process.

12
13 The Councils submit letters to the
14 Board or through the Board. A lot of Staff are on hand
15 to support that process. And then the ISC also
16 assesses and directs who might be responsible for
17 drafting a response in your name, right. And so before
18 a correspondence goes out, recently we've been able to
19 provide you with a head's up and a moment, an
20 opportunity to address any substantive changes you wish
21 before the letters, or the replies go out from the
22 Board, in your name.

23
24 I'm going to walk you through a few of
25 the correspondence letters, or the responses that are
26 ready for your review but generally we do this via
27 email.

28
29 So the first letter that you should see
30 is letter 26040. It's a request to elevate issues in
31 pollock and pink salmon subsidization programs from the
32 Eastern Interior. And they specifically request the
33 Board elevate their concerns regarding USDA purchase of
34 pollock and pink salmon to the Secretary of the
35 Department of Agriculture and they wish the Board to CC
36 the Alaska Congressional Delegation. They're
37 requesting your approval and the Board can take action
38 upon quick review of this letter to direct Staff to
39 elevate this to the Secretary of Agriculture and CC the
40 Congressional Delegation.

41
42 And if our representative from the
43 Southeast wishes to provide any context or if you wish
44 to ask any questions of the representative he's here.

45
46 Thank you.

47
48 MS. MCDAVID: And this is Brooke, just
49 a correction that's an Eastern Interior letter so if
50

0118

1 Eva wants to speak to it.

2

3

4 MS. BURK: Okay. I have to hold a lot
5 in my head so -- so during this entire salmon crash and
6 crises I began working on it in about 2022 and I also
7 am -- we're also adapting in Nenana, we're building a
8 farm, we're bringing in sockeye from Bristol Bay so
9 we're looking and paying attention to the United States
10 Department of Agriculture Programs and the USDA has
11 been subsidizing both pink salmon and pollock and the
12 amounts are millions and millions of dollars and what
13 the tough part about it is is the years that these
14 subsidies happen were the same years that we were
15 advocating in these spaces for them to fish less and to
16 put out less pink hatchery. And so to us it doesn't
17 make sense -- it feels like bad business planning and
18 we're being asked to -- because we're all paying,
19 right, those are all our tax money and if they would
20 fish less then they wouldn't have a surplus and so
21 they're tapping into the surplus program at the USDA to
22 bail themselves out basically. And I think, as a
23 United States citizen, I am not willing to pay for that
24 because the answer is fish less so you don't have all
25 the extra fish and they can talk about all this market
26 stuff but that information was out there and they knew
27 it.

27

28 And I also want to point out the -- you
29 know when you fish in Alaska and everything that
30 happened on the Yukon in 2019, like when we saw the
31 fish floating up dead, you know, this is 2019 and then
32 nobody -- the commercial industry was impacted in 2020,
33 right, so 2021 was a clean up year, everybody hit the
34 ground, they hit the grounds hard and what you see in
35 2021 is no accounting for what was happening to the
36 Yukon River or the Kuskokwim or the Bristol Bay chum,
37 right. All of our fish was crashing and they took a
38 whole bunch of chum out of the system in 2021 as both
39 bycatch and intercept and those were hundreds of
40 thousands of chum that could have went to Western
41 Alaska during a time -- in 2021 is when we hit the
42 lowest. So not only did they take that fish, it was
43 one of the lowest runs that we've ever had on record
44 and so just not knowing what was happening in Alaska
45 while you're fishing -- executing and operating a
46 fishery that has an impact on those lands and waters, I
47 just feel like -- and as I'm listening and trying to
48 sort out how the attorney here isn't aware of the last
49 time that the subsistence needs for salmon have been
50

0119

1 met on the Yukon, it just feels like nobody at the
2 national level even has a clue what's happening to us
3 and how serious it is.

4
5 I'm sometimes in shock but then I'm
6 not. So I just think that is important for us since
7 this is the Secretary, the USDA is part of the
8 Secretaries that you have to communicate with and
9 they're the Department that's allowing this, I thought
10 this Board could address that and that's why I brought
11 it up.

12
13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any questions
14 from the Board for Eva.

15
16 Frank.

17
18 MR. WOODS: Just for clarification. So
19 you're asking us to write a letter and elevate to the
20 Department of USDA to stop purchasing pollock and pink
21 salmon. Right now we have a pink salmon commercial
22 fishery going on right in Bristol Bay. When Murkowski
23 requested USDA start buying fish it was not just pink
24 and I'm glad it's just pink and pollock, but sockeye as
25 well. In 2019 there was no shortage of chums in our
26 area but 2023 and '24 we barely met, we were at the
27 level of stock of concern for chums. At the same time
28 Area M was still intercepting like I think in 2021 or
29 2022 they had 3.1 million chums on the books that were
30 reported in Area M. Now the impact in the bycatch, I
31 think -- there's two things going on in my head, you
32 know, it's out of our purview but it's not, right, and
33 it's hard for me to decipher that with a silo letter
34 from one perspective and I'm adding up all the
35 cumulative impacts. And your letter is pretty specific
36 for just those and it doesn't decipher hatchery fish
37 from wild caught, right. Like if we write this and
38 they implement it our fish that are market -- that are
39 wild caught right now will not be available.

40
41 Two years ago, in 2023, they were
42 paying six cents for pinks, last year they paid 13 to
43 15 cents. Do you have any idea what they're paying
44 now? 60 cents. 60 cents for pink salmon. There's a
45 commercial fishery right now that's happening and the
46 impact is is the crash of the seafood market was a
47 worldwide effect with the tariffs and everything that
48 happened within our own infrastructure marketing. I
49 agree the hatcheries are bad. I agree that bycatch is
50

0120

1 bad. And mixed stock fisheries and impacts are bad.

2

3 Sorry, I'm going to have to disagree
4 with this letter. And my two cents, I don't know what
5 we're supposed to be voting on, honestly. Maybe you
6 can clarify it.

7

8 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
9 Through the Chair. These correspondences are from the
10 Regional Advisory Councils and per the correspondence
11 policy they can write on issues to other agencies
12 through the Board. So they're not actually asking you
13 to solve this issue, they are asking you, as the Board,
14 to further on their correspondence.

15

16 MR. WOODS: Thank you. I can do that.
17 That's why I -- remember I was telling you yesterday in
18 the work session that I'm confused in our authority.
19 My authority isn't -- you know, I'm trying to -- you
20 know, and maybe I'm overthinking it but I'm not, right.
21 You know I'm trying to get to the end so thank you,
22 Robbin, yes, I can agree to have this letter and this
23 concern, so thank you and I'll shut up.

24

25 MR. PENDERGAST: Mr. Chair.

26

27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Kevin.

28

29 MR. PENDERGAST: So I don't think
30 you're overthinking it, Frank. I think we need to be
31 careful not to just merely pass along correspondences
32 if that's our role with respect to this if it is, in
33 fact, outside of our arena. And, you know, we operate
34 under delegated authority from the Secretaries to
35 implement Title VIII of ANILCA, that's it. For us to
36 go further in correspondence to the Congressional
37 Delegation, who the Secretaries may elect to engage
38 with, but that's not really our arena outside the
39 Secretaries direction but to go sending letters to the
40 Congressional Delegation or advocating the Secretaries
41 to take some policy action that we think would be
42 beneficial. Educating, like, hey, there's this
43 apparent disconnect, you know, did you know USDA is
44 purchasing this amount and it's hard for us to
45 reconcile that on the ground, like education I'm okay
46 with but actually like we're asking you to stop
47 purchasing pollock, things like that, that's activism
48 and from within this body I think that's well outside
49 of our arena.

50

0121

1 So the substance like I can be
2 comfortable with some of it but the framing, I think
3 needs a little bit of work.
4

5 MS. BURK: Thank you. I appreciate
6 your guys' comments. I think they're important to
7 understand the authority and what we can do and I don't
8 think I always understand that either. But we went
9 over the ANILCA -- introduction to ANILCA there's a
10 Section .813, which asks for periodic reports and there
11 was some confusion about when are these reports
12 required, but within the -- what this report should
13 include is, you know, the status of fish and wildlife
14 populations on public lands that are subject to
15 subsistence uses, description of the nature and extent
16 of subsistence uses and other uses, the role of
17 subsistence uses in economy and culture of rural
18 Alaska. And it also includes a section about a
19 description of those actions taken or which may need to
20 be taken in the future to permit the opportunity for
21 continuation of activities relating to subsistence uses
22 on the public lands.
23

24 So while we might, you know, have not
25 total agreement about the path forward to salmon
26 rebuilding, both science and indigenous knowledge have
27 called out bycatch and intercept as, you know,
28 secondary cause factors to the rebuilding of salmon.
29

30 And without getting into a bunch of
31 statistics and math, going back to my earlier comments
32 about how data sets are lacking because of the time
33 period of when they started compared to when those
34 activities actually started versus the data collection.
35 I feel like there's been a ball dropped because had a
36 report like this been done, which my understanding is,
37 in the Yukon River Panel process the Feds are basically
38 deferring to the State on regulations for the river.
39 So in that case there should be every three years or
40 something you should be getting a report on how the
41 State's doing on the management of that river. That's
42 my expectation when I read ANILCA. And maybe that's
43 not everybody else's expectation but that's what my
44 expectation is and I feel like it's a common sense one
45 too actually.
46

47 So I would -- I would kind of argue
48 back, like, hey, we don't really actually know per the
49 scientists' mouth the cumulative impacts of these
50

0122

1 fisheries on our fish. We don't know that because of
2 the lack of genetics taken, and the lack of data, but
3 we do know that we are managed to zero percent while
4 other industries are given anywhere from one to five
5 percent of the run size as far as what they're allowed
6 to harvest within law. What that means is we can take
7 zero fish on the Yukon River whereas they can take
8 thousands of chum and chinook and the amounts of those
9 chum and chinook can be five percent of a run size in
10 some years, it just depends. So I would argue back
11 that there are a lot of unknowns, that the people feel
12 that bycatch needs to be reduced and that people feel
13 that they should not be subsidizing a surplus when, in
14 fact, we don't believe it was a surplus. We believe
15 it's overfishing.

16
17 But I'll leave it at that, thank you.

18
19 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
20 would like to remind people that we do have a Council
21 correspondence policy in which the Councils-- we
22 support the Councils in drafting letters, voicing their
23 observations, their recommendations, their -- and
24 alerting the public to issues of importance to their
25 regions and the subsistence way of life in their
26 regions. We have a policy supporting that. What we're
27 asking you to do is not to -- not to concur, but just
28 to use your position as a body to move their messages
29 along.

30
31 So we are talking about getting
32 guidance from the Board in your correspondence -- you
33 know, on a Board correspondence policy, and it could be
34 that you may want to provide guidance on what issues
35 you would support in forwarding on and transmit. Right
36 now we have a pretty good record of forwarding on
37 issues to other agencies, other Federal agencies and --
38 and occasionally if the Board, in discussion, often
39 during these work sessions, feels they agree with the
40 Councils, they actually will write a cover letter in
41 support of that particular issue and notice that the
42 Councils are providing. We have done that sometimes
43 with some of their joint letters. Sometimes we only
44 transmit when we recognize that action on a particular
45 issue across the state is going to adversely impact
46 some and support others, the Board has taken a more
47 neutral tone.

48
49 So right now the only thing that you
50

0123

1 all need to do, or, you know, I'm asking you to take
2 action on is to look at this particular letter, the
3 first one in your packet. The Eastern Interior is
4 asking you to transfer their letter on to the Secretary
5 of Agriculture and then to CC the Alaska Delegation,
6 for their notice, and, again, this is kind of
7 informational. We're doing this as an opportunity to
8 inform these folks about this particular issue that is
9 being raised by our Council members.

10

11 You can approve or not.

12

13 Thank you.

14

15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I think that
16 was a good explanation of how we've seemed to handle
17 and manage big issues like road projects and everything
18 else, we take the, you know, the content that we get
19 from our Regional Advisory Council concerns and we
20 forward them, we don't take a stance on it. We don't
21 say we endorse this or don't endorse it but that we
22 certainly are the listening post for our FACA
23 committees and in that exchange of information, the
24 responsibility of this Board to forward it to
25 appropriate agencies, I think is our job. So I would
26 say, you know, I'm comfortable with supporting with
27 moving it forward with, you know, the neutrality that
28 this Board has to take based on the authority we hold.

29

30 Louis.

31

32 MR. GREEN: Yeah, I like that
33 comparison that Eva had out there about the overfishing
34 because, you know, maybe the numbers add up and she's
35 right on spot.

36

37 But one of the things I noticed with
38 the -- through the WIC program and the Quest Card, is
39 that, at one time people used to be able to go to the
40 store and get a can of sockeye, you know, that's pretty
41 good fish, right. It kind of migrated from that and it
42 turned into pinks, mackerel and tuna. Why? You know,
43 why would you want to deprive anybody from the most --
44 more nutritional fish. So I like the idea that we're
45 going to elevate -- that you would potentially elevate
46 this thing to the Secretaries so there's a little more
47 of an eye on things because it's -- I think people
48 should have equality.

49

50

0124

1 Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Nicole.

4

5 MS. GREWE: Thank you. Question for
6 Staff. So I'm hearing that we can share information
7 upwards, share potential RAC information upwards but on
8 the table here it says, requires Board response letter,
9 so is that a response back to the RAC or I mean what is
10 that?

11

12 MS. LAVINE: Through the Chair. Thank
13 you for asking. There are a couple of things that the
14 Councils ask for specifically and it may not be in this
15 letter, it may be in the other letters. But the -- my
16 note to myself in that table was trying to keep track
17 -- trying to keep a public record of whether or not the
18 Board has taken action on these things and it would
19 probably be a cursory, you know, thank you for your
20 letter, the Board has done as you asked, we have
21 forwarded it on and we have CC'd the Alaska Delegation.

22

23 It may be that discussion here is
24 enough. But as you will see shortly sometimes these
25 issues come out in annual reports, they come out in
26 Board replies, they come out from letters from
27 different regions. Sometimes on the same topic and not
28 in coordination with each other and different people
29 respond to them. Sometimes there are discussions in
30 Council meetings. Sometimes there are discussions in
31 Board meetings. And it is a real challenge to track
32 whether or not an issue has actually adequately been
33 acknowledged and so for me it was just a thought of
34 like there can be a -- you know a letter as part of
35 the public record for the Eastern Interior saying, you
36 know, thank you the Board has responded or, you know,
37 has forwarded on your concerns.

38

39 Thank you.

40

41 MS. GREWE: Quick follow up. And
42 probably because I'm a newer member to the Federal
43 Subsistence Board but I'm just -- you know I would
44 really support sharing up the expertise and knowledge
45 of our Resource Advisory Councils but I'm just
46 wondering to my fellow Board Member Pendergast's
47 comment, like some of this is very action oriented and
48 do we own that as a Federal Subsistence Board or are we
49 simply information sharing?

50

0125

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I think just
2 for myself being here so long is that when we took no
3 action we left trust that we built with our RACs down
4 to zero and that's why they're still wondering what our
5 correspondence policy is so responding and elevating
6 and doing these things are things that build that
7 relationship that we've actually heard you, response
8 back, yes or no, we had discussion on the Board,
9 whether you're comfortable or not, you know, as far as
10 the context, it's how we respond administratively as a
11 Board to the things we heard. You know, so you hear us
12 trying to develop a correspondence policy because it's
13 -- we're chipping away at it right here, slowly. The
14 record will create that as we go, especially where
15 we're having discussion with the affected Regional
16 Advisory Chairs, and so I think it would -- what's the
17 fancy word -- behoove us as a Board, to take some of
18 these recommendations and continue to do what we've
19 consistently done, just elevate them past our listening
20 post to the ones that may be able to grab on to
21 something and move it, but outside of our authority,
22 and so I think we're doing the justice of elevating it
23 but not injecting us because we don't have any
24 authority. So it's kind of our job to do that. That's
25 what they're talking about, these reports, that haven't
26 been going out about the overall numbers, management,
27 take, stock assessment, conservation stuff, who's
28 responsibility, who dropped the bag, who didn't and I
29 think we're past all that now. I mean we're at a point
30 now we're holding the bag and some of the bag has stuff
31 we're not responsible for so how do we get that
32 responsibility elevated to appropriate agencies that
33 could step in because now it's becoming a bigger and
34 bigger bat [sic] that we need to help with the problem.

35

36 Kevin.

37

38 MR. PENDERGAST: Well -- and, yet, the
39 Board does have a role here or we wouldn't be talking
40 about this and there has to be a line somewhere where
41 the Board would not. I mean I could postulate some
42 outlandish request that the Board would say we're not
43 going to pass this on without further work; I'm not
44 going to do that. But I think the issue here is not
45 trust, it's not the substance of the concern, it's not
46 educating or passing any of that along, it's the
47 advocacy piece, it's requesting specific action that is
48 outside the responsibilities that we have under the
49 law. So that's my particular issue. It's not, we've

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1 got these concerns, have you considered this, we're
2 aware this purchasing excess pollock, whatever, that's
3 fine, I have no concerns with that, because everybody's
4 concerned about bycatch and the salmon crises and all
5 the different causes that could go into that but the
6 line, to me, is where a RAC says we're asking you to
7 take this specific policy action and by the way we want
8 to go further than that and now we're copying the
9 Congressional Delegation to try to pressure you Mr.
10 Secretary to take such policy action. That's out of
11 bounds.

12
13 That's not something I can do in an
14 agency context, it's not something we do in the
15 Executive Branch in general and that's the context
16 we're operating in here.

17
18 So elevating concerns, fine with me.
19 Educating. Trying to compel action from that
20 education, you know, and making sure they have all the
21 facts that the RACs think they need to have as they
22 consider things but the specific policy advocacy and
23 trying to pressure the Secretaries to do certain
24 things, that's where I think we need to refine this a
25 little bit.

26
27 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
28 thank you Member Pendergast for those comments. I
29 think this really does feed into the discussion of the
30 future development and refinement of a correspondence
31 policy and also perhaps some more discussion with the
32 Board about the differences between what Council
33 members, as representatives -- they're not held to the
34 exact same restraints in some ways as Board members who
35 may be government agency employees or special
36 government employees of -- as members on the Board, and
37 so some of this, I think, we do need more discussion
38 and education amongst all of ourselves so where we know
39 where those lines are, like you're bringing up, but
40 also there has been directives in the past that the
41 Secretaries, as I noted earlier, when we were talking
42 about the annual reports have requested notification
43 about other things that are outside the Board's
44 jurisdiction that may impact subsistence users.

45
46 And so it seems like a path forward for
47 this letter could be that you're elevating it as an
48 informational item that has been raised by a -- a
49 concern by the Council, you're not taking a stance on
50

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1 it one way or the other. If you wanted to say that you
2 only were comfortable elevating it to the Secretary but
3 not copying the Delegation, I think, you know, that
4 could be a compromise that the RAC would still
5 appreciate it being elevated.

6
7 Thank you.

8
9 MR. WOODS: Mr. Chair.

10
11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Frank.

12
13 MR. WOODS: I'd like to put our 26040,
14 I move that we approve the request to elevate to end
15 the pollock/salmon subsidation program written by
16 Eastern Interior, that we support our own process in
17 passing information on. We're not taking any action.
18 We're not taking a stance on this. Like my first
19 comment was I was shocked that we're even dealing with
20 pollock because that's not ours to deal with, we are
21 dealing with an issue from a Regional Advisory Council
22 that needs to be addressed out of our purview and
23 letting the process take care of itself.

24
25 What I talked about yesterday was
26 setting policy on how we deal with these, right. We
27 don't have a real set organized way of -- there's so
28 many issues but we -- out of our authority but we have
29 the responsibility to carry that message whether it's
30 from the public or especially our RACs, so there is --
31 if I put this on the table and agree that we move it
32 forward and pass it on to the existing -- our process,
33 that you just outlined, we're not agreeing to anything,
34 we're just using our process to elevate their concerns.
35 It's not in our authority to address these issues
36 because it's out of our authority. That's what I'm
37 saying.

38
39 I'm clarifying that for everybody in
40 the room, that we're not agreeing to anything in this
41 letter, we're just using our -- out of our authority
42 and using our process to elevate the issue.

43
44 So with that, Mr. Chair, I put our
45 26040 on the floor.

46
47 MR. ONEY: Second.

48
49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: A motion's been
50

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1 made and seconded to take Board action on 26040 -- I
2 got my glasses off, zero -- I think we can continue to
3 discuss it, we did have a good discussion there. I
4 think, again, the general policy here has been to
5 respond to our Regional Advisory Council concerns the
6 best we can and to move the ball whatever direction or
7 court it belongs in and the ones that we don't belong
8 in, injecting it with a neutral state of being, so that
9 we're not advocating for anything but that we're
10 elevating the voice of Regional Advisory Councils who
11 have a different charter than we have, it's a little
12 more liberal, little more listening post and the things
13 that affect their way of life are a little different
14 than what affect how we divide the policy here.

15

16 So any other discussion on this.

17

18 Yes, Jill.

19

20 MS. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
21 think just what you said was really well said and
22 wondering if we could add some language that might
23 capture that information in the transmittal letter that
24 might make it clear of what the Board's role is in
25 transmitting it, that it's informational. It might
26 address some of Member Pendergast's concerns.

27

28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Kevin.

29

30 MR. PENDERGAST: Yeah, thanks, Kevin,
31 BLM. I'm not trying to over complicate things. To me
32 it's pretty simple. Like if we are strictly passing it
33 along, I mean I've said my peace about kind of our
34 authorities as a Board and kind of our orbit. I think
35 it's good for us to be mindful of that. But with
36 respect to this letter, if we're just passing it along
37 and taking no action or position on it, I can be
38 comfortable with that but I'm absolutely not
39 comfortable with us or OSM sending it to the
40 Congressional Delegation, that's not our role. I'm not
41 sure what we would be trying to accomplish by that
42 other than sort of activism, trying to compel some
43 action. Others can do that, we can't do that as a
44 Federal body, shouldn't be doing that without, you
45 know, in this process so that's -- those are my two
46 concerns.

47

48 MR. WOODS: Mr. Chair, I'd like to make
49 that amendment that it's out of our authority, we're
50

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1 passing on in the process for helping support our RACs
2 and their opinions and service and needs for their
3 communities they serve, if that makes sense. Would
4 that be agreeable?

5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I think what
7 we're doing here is, I think we've always had this
8 general policy we're discussing here t hat we don't
9 elevate things with any kind of flavor from the Board,
10 just kind of verbatim and if it's comfortable here
11 that, you know, the Board has taken no action on this
12 and, you know, we just serve like we do, like we're
13 stating, you know, and we've done that on multiple
14 issues over the years, is kind of how we handled these
15 and got a lot of good concerns elevated up that the
16 Board, individually, has taken care of as land owners
17 themselves, too, right, by elevating to the Secretary
18 and conversations happening outside of this Boardroom,
19 have had some effective action and change on the ground
20 so I'm glad to hear that we can continue to do that
21 without seeing it as a problem here so, you know, where
22 we're just not taking any action, we're just elevating
23 so no position taken.

24

25 And just for the record, Frank stated
26 to amend his to not CC the Delegation.

27

28 MR. BROWER: Second the amendment.

29

30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Second the
31 amendment. All in favor of the amendment say aye.

32

33 IN UNISON: Aye.

34

35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposed, same
36 sign.

37

38 (No opposing votes)

39

40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries
41 unanimously. So back to the original motion to elevate
42 the concerns and to draft our policy, all in favor say
43 aye.

44

45 IN UNISON: Aye.

46

47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposed, same
48 sign.

49

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0130

1 (No opposing votes)

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries

4 unanimous.

5

6 MS. PITKA: It is 5:00 p.m. right now,

7 I vote that we recess until 1:30 p.m., tomorrow.

8

9 MR. WOODS: Eva had her hand up.

10

11 (Laughter)

12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, a motion

14 entertained, do I hear a second.

15

16 MR. PENDERGAST: Second.

17

18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Second. Any

19 opposition.

20

21 (No opposition)

22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,

24 adjourn until 1:30 tomorrow. Board we have an

25 executive session at 9:00 a.m., so we'll see you guys

26 here in the morning. Thank you.

27

28 (Off record)

29

30 (PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)
) ss.
STATE OF ALASKA)

I, Salena A. Hile, Notary Public in and for the state of Alaska and reporter of Computer Matrix Court Reporters, LLC, do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing, contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD MEETING WORK SESSION taken electronically by our firm on the 4th day of August 2026;

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

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

DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 10th day of August 2026.

Salena A. Hile
Notary Public, State of Alaska
My Commission Expires: 09/16/26