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KODIAK/ALEUTIANS SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME I

UNALASKA PUBLIC LIBRARY
Unalaska, Alaska
September 15, 2026

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Rebecca Skinner, Chair
Patrick Holmes
Coral Chernoff
Daniel Smith
Brett Richardson

Regional Council Coordinator, Leigh Honig

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Unalaska, Alaska - 9/15/2026)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Good morning, everyone. This is Rebecca. All right. This is Rebecca Skinner, Chair of the Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Advisory Council, calling the meeting to order at 9:12. Apologies for the delay. We had a fire alarm and the fire truck showed up to the hotel this morning. So, we had a bit of a late start getting over here. Okay, so this meeting is occurring in Unalaska at the Unalaska Public Library. This is September 15th and we're gonna [sic] go ahead and get started with the invocation and the invocation will be given by Pat Holmes and he's going to relocate to the public speaking mic here.

(Pause)

MR. HOLMES: There we go. Well, good morning, everybody. I'm glad that we didn't get delayed a long time having to clean things up at the hotel. I'm going to do a little different thing today for the invocation. This is a carving of Liam Sua. It's a Alutiig presence or solar spirit. And it's basically considered to be person of the universe, kind of the holiest of holiest, most important entity. And I wanted to go from this carving that I did many years ago for the Council. And I'll leave it up here for folks to look at while they're doing their testimony. But I have found a really neat book at the library last time I was here. And it was done by the high school, kind of a history of some of the elders in the community. And so, I'm going to relate to you some of the words of Philemon Tutiakoff. He's an Alaska Unangax^ leader. He passed away, unfortunately, in 1985. He was a reader at the Orthodox Church. Did many things in the community, as well as teaching wood carving to students and any young person that wanted to learn how to do that. And part of the abstract was amongst the rock -- his thoughts kind of help guide our meeting. Amongst the rocks and beaches of our islands are things that we eat and stay alive with. Once a year there are salmon in our lakes and streams. It takes time and trouble to catch them. Think about the Aleuts in their home. They have lived in these islands for thousands of years. These islands have been their homes. They had food all the time. They looked to the sea and what was in it. A human being on earth has

1 something no other living thing has, the power of
2 reasoning. So let this be a pad to a productive
3 discussion about our meeting here and subsistence in our
4 region. Thank you.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thank you,
7 Pat. All right, and it looks like I erroneously already
8 called the meeting to order, but now I will call the
9 meeting to order again. And to let people in the
10 audience, if you're gonna come up and testify and RAC
11 members, this funny looking alien thing in the middle
12 is a camera. So, we're all on camera and broadcasting.
13 Okay, next is Roll Call and Establishing Quorum, Leigh.

14
15 MS. HONIG: Thank you, Madam Chair, Leigh
16 Honig for the record, council coordinator. Start off
17 with Pat Holmes.

18
19 MR. HOLMES: Here.

20
21 MS. HONIG: Samuel Rohrer, were you able
22 to call in?

23
24 (No response)

25
26 Coral Chernoff.

27
28 MS. CHERNOFF: Here.

29
30 MS. HONIG: Rebecca Skinner.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Here.

33
34 MS. HONIG: Daniel Smith.

35
36 MR. SMITH: Here.

37
38 MS. HONIG: Great. Natasha Hayden is
39 excused. And Brett Richardson.

40
41 MR. RICHARDSON: Here.

42
43 MS. HONIG: All right, Madam, we -- Madam
44 Chair, we do have a quorum. Thank you.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great, thank you.
47 Next agenda item is Meeting Announcements, Leigh.

48
49 MS. HONIG: Good morning, everyone, and
50 welcome to the fall meeting of the Kodiak/Aleutians

1 Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting. Once
2 again, my name is Leigh Honig, and I am the council
3 coordinator. I do have a few housekeeping items to go
4 over before we begin. First of all, this is a public
5 meeting. And the meeting will be recorded and
6 transcribed. For those attending in person, please make
7 sure that you sign in over where the food is located.
8 There's a sign-in sheet for each day, so please sign
9 each day that you attend. For those joining us online,
10 the agenda and meeting materials are available on the
11 Office of Subsistence Management's website under the
12 Kodiak/Aleutians Meeting Materials. I'll also put a
13 meeting link and materials in the chat. If you are
14 joining by Teams, please keep your microphone muted when
15 you are not speaking. If you are calling in by phone,
16 you can press star six to unmute and to also mute
17 yourself. This meeting includes several fisheries
18 proposals and closure reviews that the Council will be
19 discussing and making recommendations on.

20
21 There will be opportunities for tribal
22 and public comment on each proposal. There will also be
23 an opportunity for a tribal and public comment on non-
24 agenda items each morning, and the Chair will announce
25 that opportunity. If you would like to speak on a
26 particular agenda item, please fill out a testifier form
27 if you're here in person. If you are participating
28 through Teams, please raise your hand. And if you're
29 calling in by phone, you can also press star five to
30 raise your hand. You may also submit written comments
31 by email to subsistence@ios.doi.gov. Please include your
32 name, affiliation, and the proposal or agenda item your
33 comment addresses. Written comments on proposals will
34 be accepted up until the start of the presentation of
35 that proposal or closure review, and staff will provide
36 those comments to the Council. And finally, please
37 remember to identify yourself for the record when you
38 speak, particularly if you're participating remotely.
39 Thank you, Madam Chair.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great. Thank you,
42 Leigh. All right. The next item is Welcome and
43 Introductions. So, I would welcome everyone who is here
44 and online with us. And for introductions, I am going
45 to start with members of the RAC first, and then we'll
46 move out to people in the room, including audience
47 members, and then I'll go to -- online. So, I'm gonna
48 start with Coral Chernoff to my left.

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50 MS. CHERNOFF: Coral Chernoff, Kodiak.

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CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Pat.

MR. HOLMES: Pat Holmes, Kodiak. And, when we get into the meat of the discussion, Vince Tutiakoff, the local mayor had asked to give him a heads up so that he can pop over for some of the discussions, but he's kind of got a busy day. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Brett.

MR. RICHARDSON: Brett Richardson, Unalaska, Dutch Harbor.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Daniel.

MR. SMITH: Daniel Smith, from Kodiak.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. And I'm Rebecca Skinner, also from Kodiak. And then I'm going to go to staff in the room. Can we start with Lisa? And just go in order so you can be ready.

MS. GREDIAGIN: Hi. Lisa Grediagin with the Office of Subsistence Management.

MS. WESSELS: Good morning, members of the Council, Madam Chair, Katya Wessels, I'm council coordination division supervisor with OSM. Thank you.

MS. SENEAL: Good morning, everybody. Anna Senecal, fisheries biologist, Office of Subsistence Management.

DR. ROBERTS: Good morning, everyone. My name is Jason Roberts. I'm an anthropologist with OSM.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, can we hear from Leigh?

MS. HONIG: Morning, Leigh Honig, council coordinator. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Glenn.

MR. CHEN: Good morning, Madam Chair and Council members. My name is Glenn Chen. I'm subsistence branch chief for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Always a pleasure to attend your meetings.

1 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. All
2 right, can we have members of the audience introduced?
3 Can we start with you?

4
5 MS. GOLODOFF: Good morning. My name is
6 Suzie Golodoff. I'm a resident here in Unalaska.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you.

9
10 MR. CALVITTI: Good morning. I'm Jacob
11 Calvitti. I'm a fisheries coordinator with the
12 Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you.

15
16 MS. DORROUGH: Good morning, everyone.
17 Chelsey Dorrough, Tribal Administrator, Qawalangin Tribe
18 of Unalaska.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great. Thank you.
21 Okay, we're going to switch over to online.

22
23 MR. VAN DAELE: Cama'i, good morning.
24 Matt Van Daele, Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak, Natural
25 Resources Director.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Matt. I'm
28 actually going to hand navigation over to Leigh because
29 she can see who's online. If you could do it by agency
30 from who you can see, just navigate.

31
32 MS. HONIG: Sure. Can we start with Fish
33 and Wildlife Service, please?

34
35 MR. GERKEN: Good morning, this is Jon
36 Gerken.....

37
38 (Simultaneous speech)

39
40 MS. KLEIN: This is.....

41
42Fish and Wildlife in Anchorage.
43 Sorry. Okay. Back to (indiscernible).....

44
45 MS. KLEIN: Jon, it's okay. Hi, this is
46 Jill Klein. I'm the regional subsistence coordinator
47 based out of the Anchorage regional office. Joining
48 online.

49
50

1 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Who did we have
2 besides Jill? People were talking over each other and I
3 couldn't catch whoever was trying to speak before Jill
4 Klein.

5
6 MR. GERKEN: Hey Rebecca. That was Jon
7 Gerken, Fish and Wildlife Service. I have the Federal
8 delegated authority for fisheries in this area. Thank
9 you.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, thank you,
12 Jon.

13
14 MR. PETERS: Good morning, everyone. My
15 name is Graham Peters. I'm the Acting Refuge Manager out
16 at Izembek for the months of August and September. Thank
17 you.

18
19 MS. WILLIAMS: Good morning, members of
20 the Council. My name is Alison Williams. I'm a wildlife
21 biologist with the Fish and Wildlife Service at Izembek
22 National Wildlife Refuge in Cold Bay.

23
24 (Pause)

25
26 MS. HONIG: Okay, can we -- is there
27 anybody from ADF&G online?

28
29 MR. POETTER: Yeah, good morning. This
30 is Aaron Poetter, the State's liaison to the Federal
31 Subsistence Program, online. Good morning.

32
33 MR. RUSSELL: Good morning. My name is
34 Greg Russell. I'm the lead subsistence research for the
35 Southwest. It's good to see everyone.

36
37 MS. CHRISTIANSEN: This is Maddie
38 Christiansen. I'm the Subsistence Resource Specialist
39 for Southwest.

40
41 MS. HONIG: All right, let's go to OSM
42 next. Thanks.

43
44 MS. LA VINE: Good morning, everyone.
45 This is Robbin La Vine, Subsistence Policy Coordinator
46 with OSM.

47
48 MR. LIND: Cama'i. [In Native]. Good
49 morning, Madam Chair, Council Members, Cousin Pat. Good
50 to see you guys on. This is Orville Lind, Native liaison

1 for the Office of Subsistence Management. It's good to
2 see you all. Qu yana.

3
4 MR. AYERS: Hello, members of the
5 Kodiak/Aleutians Council. This is Scott Ayers, Deputy
6 Director of Sciences for OSM. Glad to see you. Wish I
7 was there in person to visit with you all.

8
9 MR. UBELAKER: Good morning. This is
10 Brian Ubelaker, Acting State Liaison for the Office of
11 Subsistence Management.

12
13 MR. FOLEY: Morning, Madam Chair, members
14 of the Council. This is Kevin Foley, Fisheries Biologist
15 with OSM, calling in from Anchorage. Good morning.

16
17 (Pause)

18
19 MS. HONIG: Are there any tribal
20 organizations online that would like to introduce
21 themselves?

22
23 (No response)

24
25 Any members of the public that would
26 like to introduce themselves, please go ahead.

27
28 (No response)

29
30 Okay, is there anybody else that I have
31 missed? Anybody from NPS or BLM?

32
33 (No response)

34
35 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great, thank you,
36 everyone. Okay, the next item is to Review and Adopt the
37 Agenda. And what I would like to do is talk through some
38 proposed adjustments to the agenda. And I kind of have
39 a lot of them. So, hopefully this won't be too confusing.
40 So, at a high level, what I'm trying to do is push
41 council action on the fishery closure reviews and
42 fisheries proposals into tomorrow because tonight after
43 the meeting ends, the Council is going to do a field
44 trip around Unalaska to see the waterways that are
45 subject to these proposals. So, we want to be able to
46 do that before we take action. So, a lot of the
47 adjustments I'm making are to put other agenda items
48 ahead of what would be 11.a. So, what I propose is that
49 we walk through and order agenda items 1 through 10. And
50 then we hear an intro on 11.a, which is the Developing

1 recommendations on Fishery Proposals and Closure
2 Reviews. So, we would get kind of a high level, what are
3 the closure reviews? Why do we do them? And then how do
4 the fishery proposals play into that. But we wouldn't
5 hear detailed presentations on each of the closure
6 reviews or proposals until tomorrow. That'll -- so, that
7 whole chunk of most of what you see in 11.a would move
8 to tomorrow. But then, moving to 11.b Annual Report. So,
9 we would hear that next. And I suggest that we get an
10 intro into the Identifying Issues for the FY2026 Annual
11 Report, but that we delay taking action on that until
12 close to the end of the day tomorrow. So, we'll get an
13 intro so we can be thinking about what kinds of things
14 we want to put in the annual report. We'll have more
15 time today and tomorrow to think and to talk about it.
16 And then, we'd actually identify the issues tomorrow.

17
18 I think we would also do -- move 11.c
19 up. This is a Joint Letter Requesting Funding and
20 Staffing for Resource Monitoring. I propose we leave the
21 future meeting dates -- normally, we do that toward the
22 end of our meeting. I suggest we do that again. So, we
23 wouldn't take action on that until tomorrow afternoon.
24 And then I would suggest moving up item f, the Fisheries
25 Resource Monitoring Program. So, this one will get some
26 background on FRMP. We'll also be hearing -- we have a
27 subgroup with Bristol Bay RAC. We'll hear what their
28 recommendations were for our priority information needs.
29 But also, little Roman numeral two, the Public comment
30 on research gaps and subsistence management information
31 needs. This is an opportunity to have more dialogue. I
32 know it's listed as public comment, but I plan to
33 approach it more as a dialogue so we can have a little
34 bit of back and forth between the Council and members
35 of the public, or particularly people who might be
36 submitting -- who might want to submit proposals to the
37 FRMP program. And I want to do that time certain today.
38 So, it'll either be 1:30 or 2 this afternoon. So, anyone
39 else -- and I'm doing that to make sure we get Kodiak
40 Fish and Game on the line. Otherwise, they weren't sure
41 they would be able to attend. So, anyone else who wants
42 to participate in that, for example, I think the Q Tribe
43 has gotten proposals before if you want to engage in
44 this dialogue, or anyone else who might be thinking about
45 doing a proposal.

46
47 So, this is really geared toward -- so,
48 there's priorities that Council members have, but
49 there's also priorities that people who are more boots
50 on the ground for resource monitoring, there may be ideas

1 you have, and this is an opportunity to have some back
2 and forth on that. So, I'm highlighting that for
3 something like 1:30 or 2 o'clock today. And those were
4 all the adjustments. So again, I'm trying to get all
5 those fishery proposals into tomorrow, but we'll have a
6 better idea at lunchtime, how we're doing on the agenda.
7 So, there may be some other things we need to adjust.
8 And then I did wanna [sic] update that under item 14,
9 Reports, we will be hearing from Alison at Izembek. So,
10 they're not listed on there, but we will be hearing from
11 them. So, I apologize. That was -- that's a lot of
12 adjustments, but overall, like I said, the goal is to
13 push the closure reviews and fishery proposals to
14 tomorrow. So given all that, I would entertain a motion
15 to review -- or to adopt the agenda with the adjustments
16 that I've suggested.

17
18 MR. HOLMES: Move to adopt as suggested.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Pat. Is
21 there a second?

22
23 MR. RICHARDSON: Second.

24
25 MR. SMITH: Second.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
28 you, Brett. Is there any additional discussion,
29 questions, or amendments to the agenda?

30
31 (No response)

32
33 All right. Seeing and hearing none, is
34 there any objection to approving the agenda as amended?

35
36 (No response)

37
38 All right. Seeing and hearing none, that
39 passes. Next agenda item, agenda item 7, is to Review
40 and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes. Is there a motion
41 to approve previous meeting minutes? And these are at
42 page 7 in the booklet.

43
44 MR. RICHARDSON: I move to approve the
45 meeting minutes -- previous meeting minutes.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Brett.
48 Is there a second?

49
50 MS. CHERNOFF: Second.

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CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Coral.
Is there any discussion including corrections to the
minutes that anyone wants to note?

(No response)

All right, I'm not seeing anything. Is
there any objection to approving the previous meeting
minutes?

(No response)

Seeing and hearing none, minutes are
approved. Oh, Pat, go ahead.

MR. HOLMES: Glancing back at my notes,
Madam Chair. There was a motion passed, you know, so
there was a discussion on Kodiak area king crab. Let me
see the overview of the king crab closure and non-federal
subsistence users. But I think one of the things that
was mentioned that really wasn't touched on here is the
consequence of increased sea otter predation,
particularly in the Womens Bay area of Kodiak. And, you
know, that's a difficult thing for getting subsistence
when folks have to compete with the sea otters. And from
folks I know that hunt them, the -- when they -- before
they moved into Womens Bay two years ago,
(indiscernible), a friend of mine went over there and
there were just a couple. So, he got a couple and went
home. Sea otters. And then, when they came back a week
later, there was probably 50 of them in there. And as
soon as he came around, the corner into the bay, all of
the sea otters just got together in one huge group and
moved over by the Coast Guard cutters. So, it was like
they had some kind of common sense that somebody was
after them and were taking advantage of the protection
within the bay. Anyway, sorry to diverge, but the sea
otter is an important part of the Kodiak king crab
harvest subsistence. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
you, Pat. Okay, so the previous meeting minutes are
approved. The next item, item 8, Regional Subsistence
Reports. And I'm going to start again to my left with
Coral.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, thank you, Madam
Chair. I don't have much, I guess, to report since the
last meeting. I think you'll probably hear through

1 others, we had a long cool spring leading into summer
2 and then we've had a dry summer. I did pass by some
3 rivers in the flats every day this summer, and there was
4 one particular river that was dried up for quite a while,
5 so fish couldn't get very far up that river. We've had
6 very little rain. Bells Flats reeks of dead fish, like
7 within probably a half a mile of the river. It's just
8 in the air.

9
10 Subsistence for Buskin River. I got in
11 some early subsistence. We got a few fish. The run seemed
12 to be healthy. There was people out there, but apparently
13 the weirs indicated that fish weren't going up, so it
14 was closed to subsistence and sport for 30 days, I
15 believe, at least. And then the weirs were pulled early,
16 so that was a struggle in knowing how many fish went up
17 the river. And then most recently, berries or berry
18 production seemed to be quite low. From what I heard, I
19 did not go out berry picking this year just because I
20 heard it was low and I didn't have the time to search.
21 You could see on the hillsides; we had another heavy die
22 off of the salmonberries. And then what was left was
23 really late, I would say like three weeks later than
24 usual. The emperors arrived back in town on time. And
25 then, being a member of the AMBCC Native Caucus and
26 representative for Kodiak, there will be a closure again
27 this year for emperors, except for in the area of the
28 Yukon Delta. So, there will be an egg closure and hunting
29 closure in all other areas. And that's my report. Thank
30 you.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Coral.
33 Pat.

34
35 MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair, thank you. I
36 think Coral described things quite well. I didn't get
37 out this year because of my funky knee and just getting
38 old and promised Patty I'd get somebody 25 years younger
39 to help me go gillnetting and my buddy couldn't make it.
40 The returns to the Buskin were -- for reds were very,
41 very low. The funding that normally they would get for
42 Fish and Game to run the weir from the -- I believe FRMP
43 program, did not occur. They scraped together a little
44 bit of money between the Commercial Fisheries Division
45 and Sport Fish in order to put in the red weir, which
46 is down -- up at the lake. But the amount of fish that
47 came back in were very, very low. Probably one of the
48 worst red ones they've had in years. They didn't have
49 money to continue operating the river, but they tried
50 to follow it up with aerial surveys the best they could.

1 But they concluded that probably the early part of the
2 run was probably less than 2,000 fish, whereas normally
3 they'd have 10,000 or more. And so that's very much a
4 disaster.

5
6 Berry crop is [sic] way down. Patty and
7 I like to try to go for walks and very, very few
8 salmonberries. Looked like most of the previous years.
9 Bushes were killed off. Just not so good at all with the
10 berries. And -- but that also results out, and the pinks
11 coming in late resulted in a whole lot of bears trucking
12 through town all over the place and so that created
13 quite a bit of worrisomeness [sic]. We had one lady out
14 at the Bells Flats that got chewed on by a bear when
15 their dog got between the cubs and the mum, and anyway,
16 it was pretty dicey, and the Game Division folks and
17 protection are keeping their eyes open and counseling
18 people to be very careful with the bears. Fortunately,
19 the pink salmon returned this year, even though it was
20 a bit late, was probably one of the strongest ones in
21 even years and many, many, many in several decades.
22 Probably 30 years ago, there was a shift because we
23 always used to have strong runs in even years, but it
24 shifted over because of bad winters. But this year, it
25 looks like they got something like over 20,000 pinks
26 into the stream initially, which was really swell
27 because the Kiwanis Kids Pink Salmon Derby was quite a
28 success this year. So, that's it, Madam Chair. Thank
29 you.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Pat.
32 Brett.

33
34 MR. RICHARDSON: Thank you. Brett
35 Richardson, Unalaska. Good morning, everybody. So, for
36 the Unalaska report since winter, just to go over a
37 couple of things that we had just kind of a volatile
38 winter weather pattern. It seems like more wind and less
39 precipitation. The summer weather seem to arrive in June
40 after a chillier May than normal. And the weather has
41 been overall very warm, with higher humidity, more sunny
42 days, less rain. Didn't get a lot of snow and still
43 didn't get a lot of rain, but quite windy. Dense fog in
44 patches through late August affecting travel, like
45 normal. Along with the warmer air temperatures, we're
46 seeing warmer water temperatures. The warmer water --
47 we're seeing fish stay offshore into the cooler temps
48 and make their runs at night. Also aided by the higher
49 tides when people aren't able to fish.

50

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2 According to ADF&G, there are 126 active
3 subsistence salmon permits in Unasallaska this year.
4 There were 117 issued in 2025 and 89 returned. The recent
5 trend shows individuals with vessels large enough to get
6 outside past Reese Bay are going to Volcano Bay and seem
7 to be finding success. The last five years, the harvests
8 have picked up substantially out there. For sockeye,
9 that is. McLees Lake Watershed is the biggest salmon run
10 in the area, just outside of Unalaska District. And
11 access can be difficult. It's about an hour away. And
12 dealing with weather, water, and wind can be extremely
13 challenging to get out there and then to get on the
14 beach. A few different times people reported being able
15 to get out there and then not set a net because the
16 breakers are too dangerous.

17
18 There has been a weir setup in McLees
19 Lake for years. Our funding has been volatile, so counts
20 haven't been taken since 2023. Aerial counts could
21 provide good information and cost savings as a
22 replacement. Funding for a weir has been found for
23 Iliuliuk Creek in the middle of town for the past two
24 years. However, the red run is much smaller compared to
25 Unalaska Lake, like 20,000 versus 2,000 in McLees. This
26 year, there's increased return for reds to Unalaska
27 Lake, total -- totaling 2,910 reds and then 88 pinks
28 before it got pulled on 8/2 -- sorry, August 2nd. And
29 then, the last day 450 fish were reported. So, it's a
30 good return to this little river right here.

31
32 August 4th, Fish Day at the culture camp
33 was a great day. Warm and sunny at Humpy Cove. We
34 successfully got about 50 pinks within 20 minutes. The
35 year before it took three attempts to not get that many.
36 Still seeing a lot of large Dolly Vardens [sic] in the
37 net and the fish were hanging in the smokehouse within
38 the hour. Overall, the subsistence feels like it's
39 picked up on Front Beach. Probably because it's so close.
40 Easier to get to than McLees. And while you may get
41 fewer fish, it's closer to town and you still get some,
42 right? So, maybe you go home with 10. This could be
43 related to prices at the grocery stores and the gas
44 pumps so, people are staying closer into town and looking
45 for what they can find without having to go an hour away
46 and take that chance. Halibut catch seems average.
47 Success depends on weather occurrence and ability to
48 reach the fish, which seem to be going farther and
49 farther away. Cod return or, you know, fishing feels
50 low. Octopus is prevalent. The otter population is

1 exploding around here or all over the place. That may
2 be affecting various, you know, food supplies, as Pat
3 pointed out. Seals, sea lions, porpoises, whales are
4 very prevalent in the inner bay. And then, so far, one
5 of the worst berry seasons in recent memory. Salmonberry
6 and blueberry production seems to be affected severely
7 by the lack of precipitation. We'll see how it goes
8 through the rest of the month in October. That said,
9 moss berries and lagoon berries are looking good. That's
10 it. Thank you.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Brett.
13 Daniel.

14
15 MR. SMITH: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair.
16 This is Daniel Smith. I'm starting with salmon -- sockeye
17 salmon escapement. Pasagshak is a bit below average but
18 still managed to reach the lower escapement goal of
19 3,000. There are a lot of mixed reports of people doing
20 -- (indiscernible) a decent gillnetting at the
21 Pasagshak, but I've heard of larger catches of sockeye,
22 especially in early July towards Gull Point in Ugak Bay,
23 where people likely caught both Saltery and Pasagshak
24 reds that overlap in that area. Sockeye's escapement at
25 Buskin, as Coral had already mentioned and also Pat, was
26 very low, leading to sport and subsistence closures in
27 late June. The total escapement estimate is likely an
28 underestimate due to the weir not being in the water
29 until June 5th and only being in for three weeks.

30
31 We had large flooding happen in late May
32 and early June, and it's likely some fish up in the
33 early season that we missed. It is unfortunate about the
34 state of FRMP funding, given the priority of the Buskin
35 Weir Monitoring Project for sockeye by our RAC. For
36 humpies, there was an explosion of even-year pink salmon
37 at the Buskin. Not sure if this was the highest on
38 record, maybe second highest, but it seemed like they
39 came at a large pulse in early mid-August, and then it
40 was just done. I was fishing in late August towards the
41 river mouth of Buskin for silvers and saw hundreds of
42 sea-bright humpies that were all dead because of low
43 dissolved oxygen levels in the river. I even saw a couple
44 silvers that were also keeled over and dead.

45
46 I talked with Fish and Game at the weir
47 location, and they said that the DO is around 40%, which
48 is a very critical and lethal number for salmon. And
49 this just leaves some concerns in my mind about the
50 amount of biomass that is in the Buskin and what that's

1 going to do for future growth for aquatic insects and
2 really the whole ecosystem, all the way up to crayfish.
3 Some of the research that has been conducted on the
4 signal crayfish seem to be that they consume salmon
5 nutrients, including salmon eggs and carcass scavenging.
6 And this is actually the most amount of humpies that
7 I've seen up in the Upper Buskin River and Buskin Lake,
8 actively spawning all throughout the lake. And so, what
9 is that going to mean for potentially increased
10 productivity for this invasive crayfish going forward?
11 Other systems also appear to have unusually large pink
12 years from what I saw. And even a couple of days ago,
13 there were even sea-bright humpies that were still
14 coming into the rivers out in Chiniak mixed in with some
15 of the silvers. And I think that might actually be the
16 latest bright pink salmon that I've ever witnessed here
17 in Kodiak in this mid-September. Because of the warm
18 weather and lack of rain that was mentioned previously
19 in the summer and fall, it seems like the silvers are
20 waiting for a good shot of rain before making their way
21 upstream. That Buskin, they were well below -- they are
22 still well below their average or escapement goal. And
23 I think they're sitting -- at least a couple days ago,
24 they were at 526 silvers, which they need a lot more in
25 order to reach that escapement goal, the lower end of
26 4,700. And if we don't get some rain soon, I feel like
27 another closure, unfortunately, is inevitable for the
28 system.

29
30 For crayfish in the Buskin, the Sun'aq
31 Tribe continued suppression efforts this year and to
32 date have removed just over 4,100 individuals. There did
33 appear to be a potential rebound of adult signal crayfish
34 in some areas that we have targeted quite heavily over
35 the last five years. But most were significantly
36 smaller, that were barely mature adults, than in
37 previous years. And so, my thoughts on this is that when
38 we were targeting these areas that we call high-priority
39 locations in 2022 and 2023, we removed over 6,000 in
40 2022 and then over 4,000 in 2023. With the majority of
41 these crayfish that we pulled out being adult crayfish,
42 large-bodied crayfish and that there was less
43 competition and crayfish being cannibals some of the
44 more competitive crayfish that we removed, it could have
45 meant less competition, less cannibalism that has
46 occurred between the juvenile crayfish and more mature
47 adult individuals over the last few years, which led to
48 that increase in survival of these age classes that were
49 juveniles back then, but now they're, you know, just
50 reached that adult stage to be considered sexually

1 mature. And so there could be -- those are just some of
2 my thoughts that -- then that apparent rebound in that
3 age class. We didn't see an increase in female crayfish
4 with eggs this spring and summer in those two high-
5 priority locations and it also could be because these
6 are prime habitats for the crayfish. That -- because
7 we've removed year after year just a lot of biomass, a
8 lot of crayfish from these areas that they're moving to
9 these areas and just being more productive, less
10 competition amongst the different crayfish in those
11 prime habitat locations. But after targeting these areas
12 in June and July, before the crayfish released their
13 hatchlings in August, it did appear that we had a lower
14 catch over time of those egg-bearing females once we
15 implemented this management approach. We did see
16 significantly fewer adult crayfish in the upper Buskin
17 River this year, as well as on the west side of Buskin
18 Lake, where sockeye salmon spawning activity is the
19 highest. And so that's good to see that we might be
20 containing the fire, so to speak, in Buskin Lake. And
21 we just want to target areas like the Buskin River
22 outlet, which we have been doing quite consistently this
23 summer. But it seems like with this apparent rebound in
24 that age class, it's going to be a battle. And, you
25 know, it's very imperative that we need to continue to
26 -- continue to control this population, especially with
27 this new data that is -- it is quite concerning with
28 indirect and direct effects on sockeye, and in coho, and
29 pink salmon in the Buskin.

30
31 For deer, it seemed to me that there was
32 a decent number of smaller bucks, spikes and forks, on
33 our road system in June and July. But once August hit,
34 they sort of disappeared. It seems like that's just a
35 common trend once August 1st hits. I don't know if they
36 were shot or they just moved elsewhere. But a lot of
37 younger bucks, which was encouraging. Didn't see any
38 really big bucks into the alpine. And I'm wondering if
39 the harsh late winter that we had in March took them
40 over their limit. And just a couple -- last couple
41 things. Two of the three active Aleutian tern colonies
42 on the Kodiak road system were successful in raising one
43 fledgling that got to that stage. But it's still well
44 below sustainable levels. There is [sic] around 120, so
45 about 60 nesting pairs at one of the colonies and it led
46 to abandonment and by -- or mostly abandonment. A lot
47 of failed nests due to predation of tern eggs by foxes
48 and corvids like magpies and crows. But at Kalsin Bay,
49 at the head of the Olds River or the mouth of the Olds
50 River, there was a [sic] Aleutian tern colony that

1 attempted a nest and that one completely abandoned and
2 it's likely that an invasive American mink got into the
3 colony. And I've been talking to biologists at U.S. Fish
4 and Wildlife Service and the Alaska Department of Fish
5 and Game about next steps. And the Sun'aq Tribe is
6 beginning a control effort and monitoring by trapping
7 this invasive species around breeding tern colonies. And
8 this is a subject of concern at the local AMBCC and
9 statewide AMBCC about protection for these Aleutian tern
10 colonies on Kodiak, which recent statewide data does
11 suggest that this could be Alaska's most imperiled
12 seabird just based on the population estimates.

13
14 And then for gray whales, there was a
15 decrease in strandings in the Kodiak area this year,
16 which is a little counter to what happened in the Pacific
17 coasts areas like California, Oregon, and Washington,
18 where there was an increase. And the Sun'aq Tribe, and
19 Matt Van Daele, the Natural Resources Director, I
20 believe will be talking about that project that we
21 started this spring with Oregon State University, the
22 Marine Mammal Institute, in conducting photo ID for
23 these gray whales and evaluating body condition and
24 genetics of this migratory stock that appears to -- at
25 least some individuals appear to be stationing
26 themselves at the Pasagshak, the Ugak Bay area
27 throughout the summer, which is a new kind of phenomenon
28 in some of these areas, especially out there at Narrow
29 Cape. And he'll be giving a little bit more of a
30 background during his tribal report later in the
31 meeting. And that's all I got for my tribal report.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Daniel,
34 for that very thorough report. Okay, so I will go on to
35 the Chair's Report. So, between now and our last meeting
36 in the wintertime, I did attend the Federal Subsistence
37 Board Work Session in August. Feels like it was about
38 three months ago. I guess it wasn't that long ago. In
39 addition to the Federal Subsistence Board Work Session,
40 the RAC chairs, so all of the chairs or representatives
41 for the chairs of each of the RACs throughout the state
42 came together and had an opportunity for a little bit
43 of training, a lot of information sharing. And then we
44 also had an afternoon session speaking specifically
45 about the salmon crisis in the state. I'm not going to
46 do a lot of detail on that because there's a separate
47 agenda item to talk about that later.

48
49 But what I did want to share -- during
50 the work session -- and I think this will also be

1 addressed later in the agenda a little bit. So, this is
2 just my perspective on it. The RAC chairs and the Federal
3 Subsistence Board had an opportunity for more dialogue
4 around the annual reports. So, normally what happens is
5 that each of the Councils has a written report that goes
6 into the Federal Subsistence Board and then the Board
7 sends back a written reply. And a lot of times the
8 replies are -- and this is not intended to be negative
9 toward the Board; it more has to do with the subject
10 matter. But a lot of times the replies come back. They
11 basically say, "Thank you for sharing that information.
12 We can't do anything about that issue." And so, some of
13 the dialogue that happened at the work session was, "Is
14 there a better way to approach this?" So, from a RAC
15 perspective, is it helpful to get back a written report
16 where a lot of it says, "Thank you for sharing that, but
17 there's nothing we can do?" Or does it make more sense
18 for those replies to be focused on things where the
19 Board actually can do something or the Board sharing
20 back really important information or context that the
21 RAC could then do something with? And I think there was
22 -- it seemed like there was general agreement from other
23 RACs and Board members that we're really trying to focus
24 on useful communication and that getting back replies
25 that is -- basically, it's just a reply for the sake of
26 reply. It's not actually conveying information that can
27 be used by the RAC, is what -- it is the goal. And I
28 think there's still work to be done on how that could
29 best be accomplished. But that this dialogue that
30 occurred at this -- at the work session, having everyone
31 in the same room was viewed as very beneficial. And I'm
32 not sure if that's the very first time that's ever
33 happened. We'll probably hear more about that later. But
34 my impression was, it was definitely the first time in
35 recent history.

36
37 The chairs' meeting that happened in the
38 morning, that it was a focus on getting information or
39 perspective about salmon -- the state of salmon in each
40 region. And one thing that was clear is that the
41 performance or abundance of salmon throughout the state,
42 it varies by region and also by species. So, for example,
43 in Bristol Bay, they've had really good sockeye returns,
44 so they don't have any concerns in that regard. Whereas
45 up north with chum and chinook, there have been
46 significant declines in returns. And then Southeast, I
47 think my impression was they were pretty good salmon
48 wise, except for chinook. There's always the -- so,
49 chinook have declined statewide. And then also in
50 Southeast, they struggle a lot with the impacts of the

1 Salmon Treaty.

2

3 And with the chairs' meeting -- and then
4 the chairs' meeting led into a work group in the
5 afternoon talking specifically about the salmon crisis.
6 I think they're -- there's a desire to find where can
7 all of the RACs align. So, where can we find common
8 issues, common agreement, where we can reinforce each
9 other to try to improve our situation. And part of the,
10 I guess, the tension here is that with the RACs, they
11 are Regional Advisory Councils. So, our charge is
12 regional. So, for KARAC, we focus on the Kodiak Aleutians
13 region, and ANILCA and the regulations don't really or
14 don't clearly contemplate the RACs having -- kind of
15 advocating for, having opinions on things that are
16 outside of their region. But there was clear recognition
17 that where we can have a common voice and all kind of
18 pull in the same direction on issues, that that would
19 be useful. So, I think this was really a first
20 conversation to see where those common areas were and
21 how we could -- and if we wanted to continue trying to
22 work together in that manner.

23

24 We also had a presentation on ANILCA,
25 which I think would be really useful for the RAC to
26 have. So, that was just the RAC chair sitting in that
27 presentation. I think there was really useful
28 information and context that would be good for each of
29 the individual RACs to have. For example, one of the
30 things that the -- that was covered in the presentation
31 was that with the subsistence priority, and I'm -- this
32 is my understanding of it, if anyone wants to correct
33 me, please do, but that with the subsistence priority,
34 it's not an absolute priority that subsistence --
35 there's always a complete subsistence preference. It is
36 a meaningful preference. So, that word meaningful was
37 very important. I think this came out of a court case,
38 but I think this kind of information, and discussion,
39 and understanding would be really helpful to have at
40 each individual RAC level. And also coming out of the
41 meeting, the whole set of meetings, the RAC chairs'
42 meeting and then the Federal Subsistence Board, I felt
43 like there was a lot of focus on clarifying I think what
44 I would call the chain of command. So, the Federal
45 Subsistence Board can communicate fairly freely with the
46 Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture because those
47 are the secretaries that are over the Federal
48 Subsistence Program. But that communications outside of
49 that, for example, to the Secretary of Commerce, that
50 is a different sort of communication. And the -- so,

1 from the Federal Subsistence Board, communications go
2 to Interior and Agriculture, and then those secretaries
3 can decide whether to forward on communications to other
4 secretaries. And I felt like that was a -- there was a
5 lot of -- again, a lot of focus on clarifying how the
6 communications and authorities work, and I'm assuming
7 there will be more to come on that. And actually, that
8 may be encompassed in the communications update later
9 on the agenda. And that's all I had for my part, but I
10 may add more information and context as we get to the
11 individual agenda items later on the agenda. All right,
12 so that concludes agenda item 8, the Council and Chair
13 Reports. And I'll pause to see if there's any questions
14 or comments from Council members. Pat, go ahead.
15

16 MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair, Pat. I was
17 wondering, will they -- the results of your joint chairs'
18 meeting will -- are you expecting to get some more
19 follow-up from the administrators as to how to make
20 things work better? Are they going to respond?
21

22 MS. HONIG: So, later on, on the agenda,
23 we do have a few topics that kind of came out of this
24 work session, the FSB work session and the chairs'
25 meeting. So, hopefully that'll answer some of your
26 questions.
27

28 MR. HOLMES: Thank you.
29

30 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Any
31 other questions or comments?
32

33 (No comments)
34

35 Okay. Seeing none, we will move on then
36 to -- oh, actually, sorry. Vince Tutiakoff, not to call
37 you out, but do you mind introducing yourself? You missed
38 the introduction section at the beginning.
39

40 MR. RISDAHL: Madam Chair, this is Greg
41 Risdahl, the Forest Service Subsistence Program Lead in
42 ISC. I'm happy to be here today too. Sorry, I may have
43 been interrupting this gentleman here. I couldn't see
44 him. Thank you.
45

46 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thanks,
47 Greg. Go ahead.
48

49 MR. TUTIAKOFF: Yeah, thanks. My name is
50 Vince Tutiakoff, Sr. I'm the Mayor for City of Unalaska

1 and also Honorary Chief for Qawalangin Tribe. I've
2 served on the Federal Subsistence Board many years ago.
3 Close to 15 years before I found another place to go.
4 Appreciate being out here in Unalaska. I would like to
5 testify at some point when you get to that agenda item.
6 So, I'll be in and out as you can see. I'll be in and
7 out of these meetings as much as I can. I'll be here.
8 Other than that, if you have any questions, I'm
9 available.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great, thank you.
12 Yeah, so we do have one other agenda item, Council Member
13 Service Awards before Public and Tribal Comment. So,
14 we'll probably be getting to public comment very
15 shortly.

16
17 MR. TUTIAKOFF: Okay, thank you.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, go ahead.

20
21 MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair. Vincent, I
22 understand from just talking to other folks that there's
23 being quite a bit more coordination within the community
24 between the Q Tribe, Ounalashka Corporation, different
25 entities on trying to find out what's happening with
26 your local salmon runs. And so, it would be interesting
27 maybe sometime to just get a very brief summary on how
28 the different groups are trying to work together to solve
29 some of these problems.

30
31 MR. TUTIAKOFF: Through the Chair.
32 Thanks, Pat. The community has what we call a trilateral
33 agreement. Between the Tribe, OC and the City. We work
34 on various subjects such as environmental cleanup is a
35 main issue here in this community. We work together in
36 providing information to each other so that we're not
37 doubling up on our work schedules. The -- been very good
38 for the community, as far as getting the information out
39 and receiving information that we could discuss, maybe
40 come to an agreement on some of the larger issues.
41 Subsistence is one of them, as you may hear later on.
42 It's been pretty rough last year. We're very little --
43 very small run of both humpies and red salmon, silvers.
44 This year seems to be a little different. We've got --
45 our creeks are full of humpies, and we've got a good run
46 of silvers this year for some reason. Reds were kind of
47 in between from Reese Bay to Unalaska Front Beach. And
48 when we get into the public comment area, I'll talk a
49 little bit more about the effects that we're having with
50 subsistence users. Thanks.

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CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thank you. Okay, we will go on to the Council Member Service Awards. And then depending on how long that takes, we may take a morning break, or we may do public comment and then do a morning break, which actually makes more sense as I even say that. All right, Leigh, go ahead.

MS. HONIG: All right, thank you, Madam Chair. Before we move on, I'd like to take a few moments to recognize longtime member, Pat Holmes. You have served on the Council for 25 years, and we do have a little plaque for you that Lisa is handing over to you. So, that's great. So, Pat Holmes has served on the Council for 25 years, first joining in 2001. Over those 25 years, Pat has brought a tremendous amount of fisheries knowledge and experience from throughout the Kodiak, Alaska Peninsula and Aleutians region. He's also had a strong connection to the communities and people who depend on these resources. His willingness to share his knowledge and experience has been a real asset to this Council and to the Federal Subsistence Management Program. So Pat, thank you for your 25 years of service to the Council and to the subsistence communities of Alaska. We really appreciate everything you've contributed. And in the supplemental materials, there's a little thank you and recognition of Pat in there as well. So, thank you.

(Applause)

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, go ahead.

MR. HOLMES: Thank you very much. Through the Chair. This is really fantastic. I believe that this watercolor is through one of the environmental education programs that goes around statewide. And so, that's very touching to receive that. And I also wanted to complement -- comment on the thing in our booklet, the photograph of Massacre Bay, Dock at Attu, taken by Lisa Hupp, who's a former colleague of mine that is with the Fish and Wildlife Service as well. I can remember going out over to Attu in 1963 or 66'. I go on the trip, I was working as a janitor at (indiscernible), convinced the Coast Guard to let me have a drive -- a flight over there and spent a few days hiking around the island, looking at the critters and fish and stuff. At that time, the old Navy dock was still in place and the changes there at Attu that have occurred over the decades has been amazing and it's an incredible place and all the folks that I

1 met in the Aleutians -- it's just been a very important
2 thing to me and my life. And I guess that's why I
3 continue to still try to poke around and hopefully try
4 to help solve some problems. So, thank you very much,
5 folks. I appreciate a lot.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
8 you, Pat. All right, Leigh.

9

10 MS. HONIG: I'd also like to take this
11 time to recognize Coral Chernoff. This is her last
12 meeting for a moment, hopefully. So, Coral has served
13 on the Council for 12 years, beginning in 2014. And
14 Coral has shared a deep knowledge of the land, waters,
15 and subsistence traditions of the Kodiak region, as well
16 as a strong connection to the Alutiiq traditions. Her
17 perspective, passion and dedication have enriched the
18 Council and the Board of Federal Subsistence Management
19 Program. We sincerely thank Coral for her 12 years of
20 service and wish her all the best in the years ahead.
21 So, thank you Coral for your time on this Council.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. And there
24 is a gift of cupcakes, which will show up. Got
25 interrupted with the fire alarm this morning. So -- all
26 right. Did you want to say anything?

27

28 MS. CHERNOFF: I would just like to say
29 thank you for that recognition. And I am stepping down
30 just because I'm out of state for a year. But I do intend
31 to not be done with subsistence. I think subsistence,
32 living off the land, acknowledging all the connections
33 are like really important to my heart and soul. And I
34 do have a voice that I tend to use a lot. And I think
35 it's good for -- to be able to represent other people
36 and I'm honored to have done that. Thank you.

37

38 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great, thank you.
39 Okay. Oh, yes, clapping. All right. We're going to go
40 ahead and do Public and Tribal Comment on Non-Agenda
41 Items. And then once we finish that, we'll take a morning
42 break. So, anyone who wants to give public comment will
43 start in the room, if you want to approach the table.
44 And we'll take everyone in the room and then move to
45 online.

46

47 MR. TUTIAKOFF: Thank you, Madam Chair,
48 Board members. My name -- excuse me. I've got a cold.
49 My name is Vince Tutiakoff, Sr. Born and raised here in
50 Unalaska. I've had -- most of my life have been a

1 subsistence user. I also share majority of my fishing,
2 hunting, catch with the community, mostly the elders
3 that can't get around like I can. I get out, go do a lot
4 of things. My concern here is the abuse that's
5 overfishing of our lakes. Unalaska Lake is supposed to
6 be closed and yet I see people out in their canoes and
7 kayaks, and some of them don't even have a fishing
8 license. That goes to the point of enforcement. I see
9 the message that you put out regarding enforcement. We
10 do need to have someone here all the time and checking
11 people for abuse that there -- I see happening. They
12 catch pinks, and silvers, and reds. I would say about
13 half of the people are abusing the salmon by just taking
14 the eggs and leaving the carcass in the beach or throwing
15 them in the water. I've actually witnessed that, and I
16 confronted a couple of people, and they said, "Well, we
17 have the right to fish here." And it's hard to argue
18 with people who don't understand the many years that the
19 Aleut people have lived here and taken care of the
20 salmon, the seals, sea lion, to the point that we just
21 take what we need.

22
23 And the other issues that I have is the
24 actual subsistence permit process. I know some
25 individuals that have a subsistence permit issued here
26 in this community and they're not residents. That needs
27 to be looked at and maybe worded differently, possibly
28 in the permits themselves. But I know that they're
29 short-handed, I understand that. But there's no excuse
30 for issuing a permit when somebody just walks in off the
31 plane and goes get a permit, fishes for visits -- for
32 salmon, ships it out to their friends and neighbors in
33 the Lower 48. And that's been going on for quite a while.
34 And it's affecting our Front Beach fishery. You got
35 people that come out to Unalaska and put their nets out
36 in the Front Beach and we have specifically an area
37 that's limited to 10 per permit, 10 salmon. And I know
38 for a fact that there's people out there that are taking
39 more than their share. This is causing the runs of the
40 salmon to be less and less every year. I'm hoping the
41 Council will address this issue. That the users need to
42 be qualified residents of the community and the State.

43
44 The -- let's see, I had a couple other
45 items, but I came -- figured tomorrow or later this
46 afternoon, I left my notes and the -- my concern is, you
47 know, that the elders who depend on receiving salmon for
48 the winter, are not getting it because of the overfishing
49 that's happening in this community. Trident Seafoods
50 gives -- in the food bank that we have, has provided

1 filets of red salmon to the elders. At least they're
2 getting that, which is, I think, maybe a tribal
3 spokesperson can speak more about the food bank and how
4 that helps families that don't have a boat. They don't
5 have means to get out there and get their fish, and so,
6 they rely on the food bank, which is a salmon that they
7 receive. But I won't answer any questions you might have.
8 For me, I think I've said enough. Thanks.
9

10 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Pat, go
11 ahead.
12

13 MR. HOLMES: Vincent, when I was the last
14 Aleutian salmon biologist before the oil prices dropped
15 and I basically was forced to retire back in '97, one
16 of the things that several people commented to me then,
17 in the years prior, was the disproportionate use of
18 salmon here on sport licenses and comments that a goodly
19 number of the sportfishing licenses were issued to
20 processors that moved up from the States and claimed
21 while we live over in blah, blah, blah. And getting
22 resident licenses. And I know when I tried to do some
23 work at Summers Bay [sic], I'd go talk to somebody and
24 I'd ask them for some ID, and they'd show me a driver's
25 license from Washington, or Idaho, or some other place.
26 And yet they'd have the other sport license. Is this
27 type of abuse still going on?
28

29 MR. TUTIAKOFF: I would say yes and it's
30 unfortunate. A lot of it is possibly not having the
31 right person in the office, maybe at the time they get
32 their permit. I think they need to enforce that more and
33 not issue a subsistence permit to people who do not live
34 in the State or in this community. I know other
35 communities might have the same problem, they just don't
36 know where to talk to or who to talk to, but yeah, it's
37 still going.
38

39 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, go ahead.
40

41 MR. HOLMES: And I think that does relate
42 also in the sportfishing because at Summers Bay [sic],
43 which is one of the hottest quote sport, or slash sports
44 subsistence fishing area there in saltwater because
45 people snag. I think that probably even the sportfish
46 licenses are abused. Is that the case?
47

48 MR. TUTIAKOFF: That could be. I haven't
49 done actually any review of everybody's license, but I'm
50 sure that's happening. I mean they present, like you

1 mentioned, that they live in certain part of town and
2 it's a rental. It's not their home. It's loading up on
3 salmon then leaving.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Brett, go ahead.

6

7 MR. RICHARDSON: Vince, thanks for coming
8 today. Thanks for your comments. I was recently in touch
9 with Annie Brewster and Matthew Keyse from Department
10 of Fish and Game. They sent me a report. Fishery
11 Management Report No. 26-03. And it goes over the catch
12 for a lot of the years, sockeye, coho, pink, all that.
13 And there is a line item in there that says, other
14 residents of Alaska, right? It seems like that's an
15 allowance in the State subsistence permit, which I don't
16 know a lot about that. I had assumed that they were
17 based on residency in local communities. But that's the
18 State permit that we go by here in Alaska because we
19 don't have access to the Federal permit at this time.
20 So that -- that's something I want to look into. I didn't
21 realize that other people from other parts of Alaska can
22 fly in and fish for the week, take their catch, and go
23 home, and not bring anything back to the community. That
24 doesn't seem necessarily the right thing to do. I'd also
25 talk to the trooper who's based in Unalaska. Have you
26 talked with him before?

27

28 MR. TUTIAKOFF: No. I've only seen the
29 trooper on the road system either going to Summers Bay
30 [sic] or returning from Summers Bay [sic]. I have not
31 actually talked to him. Although, I did talk to the
32 prior State Trooper before he left, and he seemed to be
33 doing what he could, you know, to prevent a lot of this,
34 just his presence. You'll see that people leave the
35 beach, you know, because they're taking maybe 10-20
36 fish. When -- if you're out there snagging, there's your
37 sports fishing. It's -- as far as I know, I haven't
38 talked to this new State Trooper here in town.

39

40 MR. RICHARDSON: I did get him to respond
41 to a couple of emails. He said there's been no reported
42 incidents this year or last year. I guess nobody's seen
43 anything or heard anything that has reported to him. And
44 so, I invited him to this meeting and I'm not sure if
45 he's online or willing to join. But I think it'd be a
46 good idea to hear from him or his office.

47

48 MR. TUTIAKOFF: Yeah, I'd be interested
49 in talking with him a little bit more because my wife
50 works for the Ounalashka Corporation as security,

1 checking for permits. And if they don't have one, they're
2 reported to the Ounalaska Corporation. And if they don't
3 get a permit, then they'll be banned from OC properties,
4 my understanding. But she has ran into several
5 individuals that just don't pay attention. They're
6 telling me you can't have that much fish, it's just
7 sports fishing, unless you got a permit that's [sic]
8 allows you to take subsistence. My understanding is that
9 you can't have both happening at the same time. So --
10 and we need to get out and ask these individuals what
11 they're doing, why they're doing it. My concern is
12 basically the people who catch a salmon, and if it's got
13 eggs, they take the eggs and leave the rest on the beach.
14 And that's abuse in my mind.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Are
17 there any other questions while Vince is at the table?

18
19 (No response)

20
21 Okay. Seeing none. Thank you very much.

22
23 MR. TUTIAKOFF: Thank you for the
24 opportunity to say what I had to say. Thanks.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Is there anyone
27 else in the room that wishes to give public or tribal
28 comment on non-agenda items?

29
30 MS. GOLODOFF: Good morning. My name is
31 Suzie Golodoff. I live here in Unalaska and really want
32 to thank Vince for all the things he said, and so I
33 won't speak to those. One of the things that's been
34 really hard to see is the use of snag -- snagging, like
35 the jig hooks. And I'm not really sure if that's
36 subsistence gear or sports gear. And I do admit that
37 there have -- there's a certain amount of skill. I've
38 watched some of the young boys be able to get a silver
39 out of a group of humpies, and there's something to be
40 said for their skill. But what I'm seeing a lot of is
41 people who are going to the mouths of these little
42 streams, Summer Bay and Morris Cove in particular, the
43 streams are so low the fish can't get up and so the fish
44 just school up right on the beach in a little pool and
45 they're just snagging them. And what's going on is you
46 might have you know, 40 or 50 fish in this school, and
47 every time they do this, they're just raking through
48 those fish and damaging them or killing them or slicing
49 them up. And sometimes they're after red or silver and
50 they just toss the humpies. And I see this a lot. It's

1 hard to witness and -- so, I don't know how that could
2 be addressed or, if maybe we can consider some
3 regulations about that, it might be helpful. So, thank
4 you.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
7 you. Is there anyone else in the room who wishes to give
8 public comment on non-agenda items?

9
10 (No comments)

11
12 All right. Seeing none. Is there anyone
13 online?

14
15 MR. VAN DAELE: Cama'i. Hello, can you
16 hear me?

17
18 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yep, you're coming
19 in loud and clear. Go ahead.

20
21 MR. VAN DAELE: Oh, good. Yep, Matt Van
22 Daele, Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak. Quyana for the
23 opportunity to have a bit of a discussion this afternoon
24 about the FRMP process. I will be standing by. It would
25 be great to have a discussion about this, especially
26 with the FRMP funding in what happened with the Buskin
27 weir. That was quite unfortunate. What happened with
28 sportfish, major impediment to understanding what's
29 happening with our sockeye, coho, and pink salmon
30 returns. And also, the Technical Review Committee. But
31 a quick question to you, the Chair, about 11.a.5 or v
32 with the FP27-04 Kodiak Area Salmon Customary Use and
33 Tradition Determination. Is that going to be discussed
34 today or is that going to be discussed tomorrow?

35
36 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, my plan is
37 to push all of those proposals. So, everything --
38 basically everything that falls under 11.a, with the
39 exception of a brief overview and intro, which I think
40 would be useful to have today, I'm pushing that whole
41 section off until tomorrow; is my plan.

42
43 MR. VAN DAELE: Well, quyana again for
44 all of your service and we'll be standing by if you
45 would like to have some more discussion about the FRMP
46 proposal process.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. And that's
49 all you had for public comment right now?

50

1 MR. VAN DAELE: Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

2
3 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thank you.

4
5 MS. HONIG: For those online, if you
6 would like to speak, you can press star five to raise
7 your hand or star six to unmute to try and address the
8 Council. Thank you.

9
10 (No comment)

11
12 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, I am not
13 getting any indication that we have anyone else online
14 who wants to give public comment. Again, there will be
15 more public comment opportunities tomorrow. So, I think
16 we're going to go ahead and take a break. It's 10:35.
17 Let's come back in 10 minutes at 10:45. And the first
18 thing we'll be talking about or getting an update on
19 would be 11.a, the overview for the fishery closures and
20 fishery proposals. But again, we won't be taking up the
21 actual proposals and closure discussions in action until
22 tomorrow. All right, thank you.

23
24 (Off record)

25
26 (On record)

27
28 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: No, I think Pat's
29 making his way back to his chair. We can go ahead and
30 get started. So again, we are on item 11.a and what
31 we're going to hear is information and overview of the
32 fishery closures and fisheries proposals. But again,
33 we'll be putting off the detailed and substantive
34 discussion of those until tomorrow and also any action
35 on these until tomorrow. So, go ahead.

36
37 MS. SENEAL: Okay. Thank you very much.
38 Good morning, Madam Chair, members of the Council. My
39 name is Anna Senecal. I'm a fisheries biologist with the
40 Office of Subsistence Management. I'm joined by my
41 anthropologist counterpart, Dr. Jason Roberts. So, the
42 Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Advisory Council has five
43 fisheries closure reviews and five fisheries proposals
44 to consider this regulatory cycle. Before we dive into
45 those, this is an overview of them. What are we doing?
46 Why are we doing it? And how do these items relate to
47 each other? An action on one potentially implicates
48 directions the Council might choose to take on another.
49 So, what are closure reviews? In the early development
50 of our program or Federal Subsistence Management

1 Program, a lot of the regulations were taken over from
2 the State side or adopted from the State side. My
3 understanding is because -- the understanding at the
4 time was that the Federal management would be temporary.
5 It would shift back over to State management. So, it
6 made sense in that context. It is the direction of the
7 Federal Subsistence Board that these closed areas be
8 picked up every four years, so a regular interval, and
9 re-examined with the intent of understanding whether or
10 not they're necessary at this point. Under ANILCA, so
11 that's our guiding light, our statutory obligation, we
12 show up in the Federal Subsistence Management Program
13 looking to provide a rural subsistence preference, a
14 meaningful preference, as was spoken earlier today. And
15 so, when -- at the soonest opportunity, when we can
16 remove these closures, that's really our charge to do
17 so. And now that's not at the expense of the conservation
18 of a population, if it makes sense at that time.

19
20 So, with all that being said, what I
21 have prepared for you, and it's in your supplemental
22 materials located on page 8, is an overview of some
23 visuals that include some wonderful maps, our
24 cartographer put together, showing how the Unalaska,
25 specifically, those closures and the proposals relate
26 to each other. So, I'm going to share my screen now for
27 folks in the room as well as online to follow along.
28 Okay, so you'll recall we met last March and we went
29 over the area closure reviews as non-action items. So,
30 we're familiar with them. You discussed them and we --
31 and you came up with recommendations and also some
32 parallel proposals that were developed throughout the
33 course of the winter and reviewed and vetted and those
34 are returning to you today. Let's see if I can advance.

35
36 So, what we have on this diagram -- the
37 proposals are all represented by circles. The ones that
38 have matching closure reviews are represented by the
39 rectangles. So, you see we have paired McLees Lake, the
40 Unalaska Bay, and Summers/Morris Lakes. The Unalaska
41 Lake closure review stands alone because the Council
42 recommendation was status quo at the time. So, there is
43 no paired proposal there. So, we're going to mix things
44 up a little bit because we have this suite of analysis,
45 I will call them, I'll refer to the closure reviews and
46 the proposals together as analyses, that are under this
47 overarching umbrella analysis of Unalaska Bay because
48 they are geographically superimposed. So, any action --
49 what that means, why does that matter? Any action you
50 take on the Unalaska Bay proposal potentially affects

1 or covers -- blanket covers all of those other analyses
2 that are nested. So, that's Summers/Morris, that's
3 Unalaska Lake, and the Unalaska Bay closure review. So,
4 for example, were the Council to recommend adopting
5 regulations in line with State sportfish regulations
6 throughout Unalaska Bay, it would cover all of those
7 other areas, even though there is no paired proposal for
8 Unalaska Lake.

9
10 So, here -- and this is just a -- I'm a
11 visual person. Honestly, this presentation was probably
12 most developed for myself to understand how things fit
13 together, but hopefully it's also helpful for you. So,
14 here is the extent of the Unalaska Bay closure. So again,
15 the Federal and the State subsistence management
16 programs at dual management is very confusing. Our
17 jurisdiction is within the fresh waters, so to mean high
18 tide. The Federal Subsistence Program does not extend
19 in this location into the marine waters. So,
20 unfortunately, we cannot influence things that happen
21 out in Reese Bay, for example, or out in front of Front
22 Beach, for example. But we do have jurisdiction to
23 discuss and make good choices for the freshwater systems
24 that drain into those marine systems and those
25 freshwater systems that provide the spawning and rearing
26 habitat for these populations. So, within the Unalaska
27 Bay area, we have nested the Unalaska Lake closure area.
28 So, a potential direction for this Council might be to
29 adopt State sportfish regulations throughout Unalaska
30 Bay but maintain the Unalaska Lake closure. So, you would
31 essentially have a carve out there.

32
33 Another route you could choose to go is
34 to adopt State sportfish regulations throughout the
35 Unalaska Bay area. And rescind the Unalaska Lake
36 closure. And so those regulations would apply drainage-
37 wide. Similar for Summers and Morris Lake closures. So,
38 there are these three potential carve-outs. You could
39 choose to go with a modification to the Morris -- Summers
40 and Morris closure and maintain Morris Lake as a closed
41 area and then adopt regulations in line with State
42 sportfish or anything else the Council decides for
43 Summers Lake and Unalaska Lake. So, there's really --
44 there's this whole array of options that this Council
45 could choose to pursue, but really the -- given the
46 proposal in place to come forward with conservative
47 regulations in line with what the State does around State
48 sportfishing, there is no situation that you -- requires
49 you to withdraw a closure and move into area-wide federal
50 subsistence regulations. So, there's no 25 fish per

1 permit, plus additional 25 person per household
2 situation, which was the scenario that happened last
3 time around, where we rescinded closures and then the
4 next cycle we came in with proposals to bring more
5 conservative regulations for Afognak Bay, for example.
6 So, we're not dealing with that here. You have the
7 opportunity to come forward with a level of conservation
8 that meets your community's needs. You have a lot of
9 options here. I think -- yeah, so that's everything on
10 the table. That is the extent of the overview that I
11 have for you that explains the workload you have before
12 you this meeting for the Unalaska Bay analyses and how
13 they relate to each other. And I'm very happy to try to
14 answer any questions.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. I want
17 to make sure I understand. And I think that the map you
18 have up there is probably the best map to be looking at.
19 So, the Unalaska Bay closure is the big pink striped
20 area. And then we have the sub areas under that. If we
21 rescinded Unalaska Bay closure, I want to make sure I've
22 got this clear. We can still maintain each of the
23 individual closures that are listed. So, we could still
24 -- and I guess -- I don't think that's what I'm trying
25 to ask. If we rescinded Unalaska Bay but then let's say
26 we took no action on the other three. So, in essence,
27 we didn't do anything. The closure was still in place.
28 Would those closures still be in place? Or are you saying
29 they would be overridden by removing the Unalaska Bay
30 closure? Does that question make sense to you?

31
32 MS. SENECA: Madam Chair, it does make
33 sense to me. And here's my understanding. And if it's
34 incorrect, someone will help me out and chime in. So,
35 the scenario is the Council decides to recommend
36 rescinding Unalaska Bay closure. I'm assuming that they
37 will also recommend to pass the fisheries proposal that
38 brings in conservative regulations. And that's the
39 decision point there. So, if the proposal passes to
40 promulgate regulations in line with State sportfish
41 throughout the Unalaska Bay area and no action is taken
42 on the other closures, then those closures are in essence
43 null, and those regulations carry throughout the
44 drainage. If, alternatively, an Unalaska Bay closure is
45 rescinded, which I don't think we even need to do -- you
46 wouldn't even need to do if you pass the fisheries
47 proposal to make regulations happen throughout the
48 watershed, and then you take up the individual closure
49 reviews and you decide you'd like to move forward with
50 a status quo or modification option, then that's when you

1 start making those carve outs to maintain those areas -
2 - those closed areas.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, that answers
5 my question. I wanted to make sure it was clear that
6 literally Unalaska Bay, whatever we do there is going
7 to control everything unless we do something different.
8 So, even though there's smaller closures already in
9 place and we said, "Hey, leave -- we took no action."
10 So, technically the closure is still there. If we remove
11 the closure from Unalaska Bay, that overrides all of the
12 small areas. That's what I'm trying to ask.

13
14 MS. SENEAL: Through the Chair. If you
15 remove the closure from Unalaska Bay and you don't pass
16 a fisheries proposal, the whole area reverts to area-
17 wide Federal subsistence regulations.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Brett, go ahead.

20
21 MR. RICHARDSON: Thank you for that. I
22 love the maps as well. They're great. So, with FCR 27-
23 06, this also talks about the freshwater streams as well.
24 Is that correct? Nateekin and Makushin? So, we would
25 need to -- if we wanted to open those and maybe not all
26 other things, as you say, carve out space for this --
27 for those specifically versus a kind of blanket passage
28 of this, is that right?

29
30 MS. SENEAL: Through the Chair -- I'm
31 sorry, can you -- would there -- so, the question I
32 heard was, would we need to make specific carve outs to
33 open major drainages, but keep the rest closed? Is that
34 correct?

35
36 MR. RICHARDSON: Basically, yeah. I'm
37 just not seeing the rivers included on the map.

38
39 MS. SENEAL: Okay. Yeah, the -- it's a
40 very high-level depiction of the map. The proposal again
41 would be to match State sportfish regulations. So,
42 inherent in that are specific closeouts. So, there are
43 geographical markers, boundaries on the major waterways.
44 So, the Nateekin, the Makushin, right? Where -- that are
45 closed areas and also Unalaska Lake, of course, it's
46 only open to Church Hole and there's no harvest of
47 sockeye. So, anything that exists within State sport
48 fish regulations would carry over to all the watersheds
49 that drain into Unalaska Bay under that fisheries
50 proposal. And in your supplemental materials -- do I

1 have another map? I do! So, here is the OSM
2 recommendation that shows a little bit more resolution.
3 So, you see the closed portions of the Makushin River
4 drainage. So, that's upstream and it's area, not the
5 streams themselves. It's the watershed area and the
6 Nateekin. So, that's the watershed area upstream of
7 those geographical markers and also in Summers Lake
8 drainage, Summers Lake outlet streams, seasonal -- so,
9 it shows seasonal closures and there's not a lot of
10 resolution for Unalaska, but the intent of this map is
11 to illustrate the effects of adopting regulations in
12 line with State sport fish; what that would look like
13 across the drainage. So, if you pull that lever -- like
14 you can -- you start there, kind of as a foundation, and
15 then you can start to customize to what suits the Council
16 needs; make the recommendation that really works for
17 you. You can keep closures. You can modify closures.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Are
20 there any other questions? Pat, go ahead.

21
22 MR. HOLMES: I think it would be good to
23 -- it's unfortunate that we don't have some State
24 discussions on the closures and why they're there. I
25 could add a little bit on the Makushin, and the Nateekin,
26 and those uppers [sic] areas of the streams were closed
27 some time ago because those are the spawning areas, and
28 particularly for silvers. They're very, very vulnerable
29 at that point and that's why the community elected to,
30 under the State regs, have those permanently closed
31 because of people coming in and, you know, if they
32 weren't adept enough to catch the silver in the saltwater
33 or in the lower stream, they just take up to creek and
34 and basically have the pixie on the end of the rod and
35 stick it in the mouth of the fish and rip them right out
36 or snag them. And so, that was the slots behind that
37 part. On the others, it would be interesting to have a
38 little more discussion on those -- why the closures were
39 there. But I can't address all that because I'm getting
40 all forgetful.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, so we've
43 received kind of an overview -- the landscape of what
44 we're going to be doing and how we got to this point
45 with the closure reviews and fishery proposals. Are
46 there any other questions for Anna while she's sitting
47 at the table? Pat, go ahead.

48
49 MR. HOLMES: I'm sorry, my brain finally
50 kicked in. That's trouble when you get into 80s. The

1 closures there on Morris Lake and Summers Lake around
2 them, those were, I think, done on the part of the
3 community. Yeah, and then what they observed on abuse
4 of fishing in the spawning areas and potentially over
5 harvesting. So, that sort of same thing applies to all
6 the areas as far as I think original justification, the
7 best I recall.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, I'm not
10 seeing any other questions or comments. Anna, is there
11 anything else you want to say that would help us -- that
12 we'd want to think about before we get to the detailed
13 discussion tomorrow?

14
15 MS. SENEAL: Through the Chair. Thank
16 you. Thank you for that. I guess to back up in general
17 for closure reviews. Remember that you have the three
18 options. You can maintain status quo. You can choose to
19 modify the closure, or you can rescind the closure. So,
20 what this Council has discussed in terms of
21 modifications is basically area, reducing the area of
22 the closure. But if you think about other creative
23 options that potentially haven't been addressed through
24 some of these draft analyses, and you want to talk about
25 them throughout the course of the day or on a field
26 trip, I'm really happy to do that with you. Thank you.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, thanks. And
29 then, with modification of a closure, is area the only
30 thing we can consider? Because I think one of the other
31 times we discussed the closures, the reason we had such
32 a lag between the last time we reviewed closures and
33 then getting regulations in place for those areas is
34 because we weren't ready to go with regulations at the
35 time we reviewed the closure. And so, we were limited
36 by what we had in front of us. So, I just want to make
37 sure we're all on the same page about -- do we have all
38 the right pieces in front of us to literally do whatever
39 we want? Or what are the limitations on the options we
40 have to work with next?

41
42 MS. SENEAL: Through the Chair. That's
43 a great follow-up question. We can't do whatever we want,
44 unfortunately. And that's why you have prepared these
45 parallel proposals. Because that gives you all the
46 latitude that you could want. Within the scope of these
47 closure reviews, what we discussed having the ability
48 to modify under the modify option was area, user group,
49 and potentially, species. Duration? Okay.

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CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Duration, as in time periods of the year? Or what do you mean by duration?

MS. SENEAL: Season, yeah.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, well, I am not seeing any more questions. So, thank you for that overview. And then we'll look forward to getting the detailed walkthrough of each of the closures, and closure reviews, and fishery proposals tomorrow. Thank you.

Okay, so the next agenda item that I would like to go to is 11.b Annual Report. And we'll go ahead and just take these in order. And again, my plan is that final action on our annual report issues, so the things we want to report to the Federal Subsistence Board, final action on that would not be until tomorrow. Thanks. Leigh.

MS. HONIG: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. Before we start the annual report replies agenda item, I wanted to provide a little context for how we got to the annual report discussion that's on the agenda today. The annual report process looked a little different this year. And you mentioned this in your Chair's Report. But at the Federal Subsistence Board summer work session, the Board considered the FY25 Annual Reports from all 10 Councils. Rather than looking at each report individually, OSM pulled out the overarching themes that were coming through across the Councils. And if you'd like to see that presentation, it is in your supplemental materials beginning on page 17. And there were some pretty strong common themes, salmon and marine issues, monitoring and research gaps, enforcement and user conflicts, caribou declines and management, environmental and land use issues, and program administration and communication. The Board heard those themes from OSM and then had the opportunity to discuss them directly with the Council Chairs. That discussion also led to some broader conversations about how the Board communicates with Councils and how the annual report process could work going forward. The Board is looking at how it handles Council correspondence and how it responds to issues that are within its authority versus issues that may need to be elevated to the Secretaries. And also, how annual reports can be used more effectively to identify and elevate important

1 issues. And that is where the draft communication policy
2 comes in that Lisa is going to talk about later on. The
3 draft policy proposes treating annual reports as an
4 important way for Councils to provide information about
5 current and anticipated subsistence uses and needs. And
6 it also provides that the Board -- or it also proposes
7 that the Board review the annual reports directly with
8 Council Chairs at an annual public work session and
9 identify priority issues for potential elevation to the
10 Secretaries.

11
12 The summer discussions also identified
13 some issues where there was clearly common ground among
14 the Councils. One example is the resource monitoring.
15 And the Council Chairs agreed that inadequate and
16 inconsistent fisheries and wildlife monitoring was a
17 significant issue. Whether or not every Council had
18 specifically identified it in its annual report. That
19 led to the development of the joint Council letter that
20 you'll consider later on in the agenda that requests
21 adequate funding and staffing for fisheries and wildlife
22 monitoring. So, with that, I'll jump into the annual
23 report reply from the Council's FY25 report. And that
24 is available online or in your supplemental materials
25 beginning on page 12. And I'll give a brief overview of
26 the Council's topics and the Board's responses and then
27 we can discuss any follow-up.

28
29 So, first of all, fisheries research,
30 we are funding. The Board shares the concern about
31 inconsistent FRMP funding and says OSM can improve
32 communication about budget updates and merit review
33 outcomes. For wildlife population studies, the Board
34 supports the concern about monitoring gaps and
35 communicated it to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which
36 said it'll make every effort to maintain consistent
37 high-quality data as resources and staffing allow. For
38 the enforcement topic, the Board acknowledges limited
39 and inconsistent enforcement capacity and describes
40 multi-agency coordination efforts and staffing
41 constraints. For Mortensen's Lagoon, the Board
42 recommends continued research and monitoring advocacy
43 and notes an existing FRMP PIN. It also suggests inviting
44 the delegated in-season manager and ADF&G to discussing
45 -- to discuss changing reliance on direct subsistence
46 harvest. For the goose populations topic, the Board
47 recognizes the Council's observations and the value of
48 the Council members as early sources of information on
49 changing conditions and trends. That is all I have for
50 this agenda topic. Thank you, Madam Chair.

1

2

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you. Are there any comments or questions from Council members?

4

5

(No response)

6

7

Okay, seeing and hearing none. The next sub item is Federal Subsistence Board Draft Communications Policy.

10

11

(Pause)

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13

MS. GREDIAGIN: All right. Thank you, Madam Chair, members of the Council. For the record, my name is Lisa Grediagin, and I work for the Office of Subsistence Management.

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(Talking)

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All right, so I'm gonna walk you through the Draft Board Communication Policy, which is on page 34 of your supplemental materials packet. So, this draft policy comes from discussions between Board members and Council representatives during the August work session. During that work session, the Board directed staff to draft a policy that explains how it responds to correspondence and the Council's annual reports. The Board also asked for your feedback before it reviews the final draft at its February regulatory meeting. This policy will be public-facing document posted on the OSM website. It's meant to provide general direction while detailed step-by-step guidelines will be handled internally by staff. One of the primary purposes of this policy is to explain what the Board can respond to directly and what is outside its authority. The Board will respond directly to anything within its relatively narrow authority over the subsistence take and use of fish and wildlife on Federal public lands.

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If an issue is outside of the Board's authority, such as funding or State management, the Board may elevate it to the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture and only those Secretaries. The Board will not forward Council communications directly to the congressional delegation, State authorities, or other Federal department Secretaries such as the Secretary of Commerce or State. We recognize that timelines for Board responses have been a continual concern of many Councils and want to acknowledge that. But putting a timeframe in policy may set the Board up for policy violations if

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1 deadlines cannot be met. One possible solution could be
2 updates on outstanding correspondence as a standing
3 agenda item at every Council and Board meeting.

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5 Also, according to this draft, policy
6 responses to each annual report topic will not be drafted
7 ahead of time. Instead, the Board will have face-to-face
8 discussions with the Council Chairs on their annual
9 reports during the Board's work session. Then responses
10 will be written afterward based on those discussions.
11 While this is still a very draft policy, we recognize
12 this potential change may affect how the Council writes
13 their fiscal year 2026 annual report and what topics
14 they choose to include. All right. Thank you. That
15 concludes my overview and I'll open up for Council
16 discussions. But I know Chair Skinner was also at the
17 Board work session and may want to add some additional
18 things to this overview. Thanks.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, so I will
21 start off by saying that -- first, I need to get to the
22 right page in my materials. I think that having this
23 communications policy will be really beneficial. What I
24 observed, primarily from attending the summer work
25 sessions -- because that's normally where the Federal
26 Subsistence Board would, I think, have the time to
27 discuss the communication. So, the letters that were
28 coming in from the RACs, the Board didn't have a set
29 standard, or policy, or guidance on what to do with that
30 correspondence. Because it's outside of what is put into
31 regulation. So, the annual reports are in regulation.
32 It's very clear to everyone what's supposed to be in it,
33 who gets it, how the response comes, when it happens,
34 when the response comes. But with correspondence, there
35 was no guidance whatsoever. And so, what was happening,
36 you know, I think through no fault of the Board, because
37 they didn't really have a set mechanism or any guidance
38 on how to respond, correspondence was sitting there and
39 responses weren't happening for literally years at a
40 time. And so, that generated a lot of frustration. So,
41 I think having this policy -- making it clear, kind of
42 what I call the chain of command or the chain of
43 communication, giving some guidance to both the RACs
44 when they're writing letters, but then also setting
45 expectations from what the RAC should expect from the
46 Board. I think that this will be really helpful. Is this
47 -- you know, is the absolute best final policy or could
48 there be some changes to it? You know, probably, but I
49 think this is a really helpful first step.

1
2 The other comment I wanted to make is
3 that for the annual reports, when we had the Chairs'
4 meeting with the Federal Subsistence Board, the Board
5 members were asked what kind of information would be
6 helpful in our annual reports. So, we talk about a lot
7 of stuff. We have a lot of priorities, but it wasn't
8 clear to me what does the Board actually -- what can
9 they actually use in their decision making. And so, we
10 did get a little bit of guidance that was really helpful,
11 I thought. So, there were a couple of examples. One of
12 the examples was I wanna [sic] say -- I'm just gonna
13 [sic] say transporters. So, I interpret that as kind of
14 user conflicts or resource conflicts related to
15 transporters bringing in, I'm assuming hunters and
16 fishers into areas or maybe the behavior of when like
17 if the planes come in and drop people off, that in a
18 number of regions that is leading to challenges for
19 subsistence users. And one Council member said
20 specifically, stuff like that is useful to know. So,
21 context information, what's happening in your region
22 that is causing a problem that Board members may not
23 otherwise know. So, if we don't tell them, "Hey, there's
24 this thing going on in our region." How else it's --
25 because it's not going to show up necessarily in analyses
26 or those only come up so often. So, it's that kind of
27 context and information. For our region, I think of the
28 closure of the processing plant at King Cove. That's
29 something that did have a big impact to a community in
30 our region that Board members, you know, if you're not
31 involved in fishing and you're not in the Southwest
32 region, you may not even know it happened and you may
33 not understand that closing a processing plant is going
34 to impact the need and reliance on subsistence or even
35 access to subsistence. So, those are things that I hadn't
36 necessarily, like especially the transporter issue in
37 Kodiak, transporter -- concerns with transporters comes
38 [sic] up a lot. It had never occurred to me it should
39 go into a subsistence report, but after getting that
40 feedback from Board members, I realized that maybe that
41 is helpful context that would be helpful for the Board
42 to know. So, are there questions or comments on this
43 draft policy? And again, it's -- I think it's only two
44 pages and it's in the -- maybe it's three pages. And
45 it's in the supplement book. Two pages.

46
47 MR. SMITH: I have a question, Madam
48 Chair.

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50 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yep, go ahead.

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MR. SMITH: Yeah, this is Daniel Smith.

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I have actually a couple of questions. Page 35. Looking at the matters within Board authority, it mentions Interagency Staff Committee. So, my first question is, what is their, I guess, role in that process? And then, further down with the Council annual reports where it says the Board will review and discuss these reports face to face with Council Chairs and then identify priority items for elevation to the Secretaries. Does that -- I guess my question would be, do -- is it from all the different Councils, they kind of just merge the priority items all together amongst Councils and defined kind of some similarity amongst Councils? And is that, I guess, what I'm seeing in the different themes? So, the themes one through six earlier in the supplement materials, is it kind of like merging together to identify those priority items? Or am I getting that completely wrong?

MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin, for the record. I think that's somewhat open, you know, I don't -- this is an extremely draft policy. And in the past, nothing has been elevated to the Secretaries from the annual reports. And then, this last year, we kind of recognized like a lot of this really, you know, the annual report should be going to the Secretaries and not just stop at the Board and, you know, I don't know if anyone else has anything else to add. I knew Katya was not going to let me get away with..... (indiscernible).

MS. WESSELS: Madam Chair, members of the Council, for the record, Katya Wessels. So, during the meeting -- I wasn't there at the summer work session, but the Board discussed with the Council Chairs and representatives and then decided to send a letter to the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture requesting an annual meeting. So, that letter being drafted, and finalized and it's been submitted to both Secretaries just a few days before this meeting. So, the hopes are that, you know, the annual reports, like what was discussed here, that the most important items that are outside of authority of the Federal Subsistence Board will be brought up to the Secretaries during that meeting and discussed with the Secretaries on how the Board can proceed. Because obviously a lot of the issues that are brought up by the Councils affect subsistence. And just because they're outside of the Board's authority doesn't mean that they're not affecting subsistence. So, the hopes are that this annual standing meeting will be

1 granted and these issues can be discussed with the
2 Secretaries. And, you know, as in regards with policy,
3 just like Lisa said, this policy is sort of in its
4 infancy. And, you know, really, I don't know if the
5 Council members had time really to read through it and
6 think about it. So, maybe you need just a little bit of
7 time to look at the policy and see if you have any
8 suggestions. Because we're really looking for
9 suggestions from the Councils and feedback; what you
10 think about it. So, I don't know if I answered all of
11 Daniel's questions, but that's what I have to say at the
12 moment.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thanks.
15 And I'll give my perspective as Chair. So, sitting in
16 that meeting on behalf of KARAC -- so, I think the way
17 I heard Daniel's question was basically how are the --
18 how is the summary of issues -- how does that come
19 together? So, is it taking all the issues that came out
20 of all the annual reports and is it kind of mashing them
21 together and is that how it worked? Yes. So, from my
22 perspective as a Chair, I do look at this as the table
23 or the summary that gets put together is staff's
24 interpretation of what came out of the annual reports.
25 As a Chair sitting in the room, I then have an
26 opportunity to clarify or correct. So, if I think the
27 way the issues were stated or presented coming out of
28 KARAC, if that's not actually accurate based on what the
29 discussion that happened at the RAC meeting, I have an
30 opportunity to add clarity or give more context. But
31 overall, because there's an interest in communicating
32 these annual report concerns to the Secretaries, the
33 reality is the Secretaries and their staff are not going
34 to read however many pages of annual report. 100 pages?
35 Just estimating, like how many pages have you took all
36 the annual reports and you put them into a packet. So,
37 those can get forwarded. But it's an our -- like the
38 bigger our here, the -- you know, from a Federal
39 Subsistence Program and a RAC perspective. It's in our
40 best interest to summarize things into, you know,
41 hopefully 1 page, maybe 2 pages, definitely no more than
42 three, but to create these summaries, because that's
43 realistically when you get to the higher levels, they're
44 not gonna read 100 pages. They might read 1 or 2 pages,
45 but it's gotta [sic] be presented in a way that fits
46 their time and also the way they prefer to receive
47 information. Because honestly, we can give it to them
48 the way we'd like them to read it, but if it's not --
49 if it's too lengthy or it's too hard to read, we're
50 really doing a disservice to ourselves. That's how I

1 look at it. It's how can we best communicate what's
2 important to us in a way that will actually be read and
3 understood and then perhaps acted on. So, that gets to
4 the -- how did this summary of issues come about? And
5 then Daniel, I -- can you repeat your first question
6 about the Interagency Staff Committee? I didn't quite
7 catch it the first time you asked it.

8
9 MR. SMITH: Yeah, my first question was
10 just the role, I guess, of the Interagency Staff
11 Committee. I might have glanced over that in previous
12 meetings, but I guess what is their role in this process?

13
14 MS. WESSELS: Well, the Interagency Staff
15 Committee, they're advisors to the Federal Subsistence
16 Board there. Basically, they advise the Federal members.
17 We have one advisor from OSM, which is a tribal liaison,
18 Orville Lind.

19
20 (Telephone ringing)

21
22 And sorry about it. Okay, and my
23 apologies for that. So, in -- specifically, in the annual
24 report process, the way it worked before, OSM staff and
25 staff from other agencies drafted the reports. And then
26 the Interagency Staff Committee reviewed these drafts
27 before -- and, you know, fine-tuned them before they
28 were submitted to the Board for final review and
29 approval. I think in this process that the Interagency
30 Staff Committee will just kind of assess which issues
31 are within the Board's authority. And, you know, after
32 the discussion will happen between the Council Chairs
33 and the Board, which we hope to continue that every time
34 when in your reports to discuss that will be a direct
35 discussion between the Council Chairs and the Board.
36 Then the Interagency Staff Committee will help with
37 finalizing the replies after that meeting. And you,
38 Rebecca, are right, that was the first time when actually
39 the majority of the Council Chairs were meeting with the
40 Board. The previous year we just had three, it was you
41 and Bristol Bay, and YKD. But before we never have
42 Council Chairs come in and actually discussing the
43 annual reports and replies in person.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Lisa.

46
47 MS. GREDIAGIN: Thanks. Lisa Grediagin,
48 for the record. I -- another thing that we kind of wanted
49 to specifically get the Council's feedback on is, how
50 do the Councils want things elevated to the Secretaries?

1 You know, if you would prefer to have them elevated
2 through letters or any annual reports, and I think this
3 draft policy could probably use a little clarity in its
4 formatting because it covers both, you know, all
5 correspondence through letters and annual reports. And
6 I think there's a little conflation between the two. You
7 know, already I'm kind of realizing reading this is like
8 when we identify priority items for elevation at
9 Secretaries, I think we're talking both about the annual
10 reports and potential correspondence that comes up from
11 the Councils and so trying to make sure it's all clear
12 and formatted correctly. So, there's not confusion later
13 on. But anyway, I'll just say when Councils elevate
14 things to the Secretaries through a letter. It's, you
15 know, the Council's individual letter versus, yeah, like
16 you said, in an annual report, it might be all 10
17 Councils' topics potentially kind of being lumped
18 together or forwarded more as a package. So, just if
19 there's any feedback on that. Thanks.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, so
22 responding to the first part of what you said, I do
23 think it would be very helpful to the Councils, to the
24 whole process, to have more clarity on what does the
25 Board want to go into an annual report? And particularly
26 I'm interested in, what does the Board use? So, I think
27 it's fine to put together a report, but if it's not
28 being used by the audience -- so, if the Board's not
29 actually using what's in the report, why are we doing
30 it? And I -- while the Board members who gave feedback
31 on what kind of information is useful to them, I don't
32 know that they got into a lot of detail about how they
33 would use it, which might be helpful down the road to
34 get more clarity. But I do think, from a RAC perspective,
35 when we're deciding whether to put something in an annual
36 report or generate a letter, it would be helpful to
37 understand which one goes in annual report, which one
38 goes in the letter. And I think that you're right, this
39 policy, the way it is because it addresses both
40 communication and the annual reports, it -- I think it
41 is not as clear as it could be. And so, when I'm talking
42 about the clarity, to me, it's a decision point. Because
43 we're sitting up here in a meeting and we're having to,
44 you know, we get -- we go over a lot of stuff at these
45 meetings and we're having to make decisions about -- are
46 -- again, are we voting -- is the motion to do a letter?
47 Is the motion to put it in an annual report? And having
48 more guidance so that we're choosing the best path that
49 is most useful to the Board and honestly is creating the
50 less -- the least administrative burden. So, most

1 benefit, least burden, that would be helpful. And I say
2 that mainly because what my understanding is with the
3 annual reports is that those were creating a huge burden
4 to generate replies. And so, when the replies were just,
5 "Thank you for sharing, we can't do anything." I'm like,
6 okay, well, that's a lot of burden for absolutely no --
7 that's not a value to the RAC. And then, Daniel, was
8 that enough clarification on the Interagency Staff
9 Committee?

10
11 MR. SMITH: Yes, it was. Thanks.
12

13 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thanks. All
14 right, is -- are there any other comments or questions
15 from RAC members? And I guess I would also leave this
16 open. So maybe if you -- if people -- Council members
17 do wanna [sic] take time today and part of the day
18 tomorrow and then provide feedback later in the day
19 tomorrow, I think that's fine. The important thing is
20 that if you have feedback, or suggestions, or questions
21 to somehow convey that to OSM.
22

23 (No comments)
24

25 All right, I'm not seeing any other
26 questions or comments on this topic. Did you have
27 anything else on this?
28

29 (No audible response)
30

31 All right, so that takes us to the next
32 agenda item, which is Identify Issues for the FY2026
33 Annual Report. And again, we can start discussing this,
34 but I suggest we leave action until tomorrow.
35

36 MS. GREDIAGIN: All right. Thank you,
37 Madam Chair. Again, for the record, my name is Lisa
38 Grediagin with OSM. And just a few pointers regarding
39 the annual report development. There's an overview on
40 your supplemental materials packet on page 33. And so,
41 as you all are aware, annual reports are required by law
42 by ANILCA Section 805. And so, per ANILCA, annual reports
43 should contain an identification of current and
44 anticipated subsistence uses of fish and wildlife
45 population within the region. An evaluation of current
46 and anticipated subsistence needs for fish and wildlife
47 populations within the region. A recommended strategy
48 for the management of fish and wildlife populations
49 within the region to accommodate such subsistence uses
50 and needs, and recommendations concerning policy

1 standards, guidelines, and regulations to implement the
2 strategy. So again, this is, you know, per statute what
3 annual report should contain, but I recognize, you know,
4 the Board could probably provide further guidance and
5 clarification on, as Chair Skinner said, what's most
6 useful to them and how they could use it.

7
8 And so, just a few other pointers.
9 Again, the Board has delegated authority for
10 administering subsistence take and uses of fish and
11 wildlife on Federal public lands. The Board might not
12 be able to take action or provide substantive responses
13 on the issues outside of its authority. So, I think
14 we've already covered that pretty thoroughly and
15 previously that, you know, a lot of these responses, you
16 could still put that -- it's still useful information
17 to put in the annual report, but it's just more for the
18 Board's information, not for them to really respond to.
19 The Board will meet with Council Chairs/representatives
20 in person during a work session to discuss the issues
21 in their annual reports, and also the staff in the
22 meeting right now might be able to address some Council
23 concerns, you know, on the spot during this meeting
24 instead of including it as an issue in an annual report.
25 So, just to be aware, if you bring up a question, you
26 know, maybe run it by us before just putting everything
27 in the kitchen sink in your annual report. Issues related
28 to Federal agencies might be better sent directly to
29 these agencies in a letter. And so, you know, the five
30 land -- the five agency heads on the Board, you know,
31 if something sits squarely within the jurisdiction of
32 Fish and Wildlife Service, just send a letter to them
33 versus kind of involving the whole Board. And one thing
34 we discussed, potentially to change this, year with the
35 annual reports is adding a topic in every annual report
36 that's just kind of lists what the correspondence is for
37 those Councils. And so, instead of kind of sending a
38 letter and then repeating that topic in your annual
39 report to just kind of have that note potentially even
40 included as an enclosure to keep track of all the
41 letters. So, the Board is aware that letter was written
42 and sent, but it's not a whole separate topic that has
43 to be written in the annual report.

44
45 And then again, no additional topics can
46 be added when any reports are reviewed during the winter
47 2027 meeting. So, this is your meeting to identify the
48 topics, develop, you know, the information to include,
49 and then just approve it and clarify the existing topics
50 at your winter meeting. And in the past couple cycles,

1 we were trying to push councils to identify whether
2 topics were informational only, or if there's a specific
3 request, and you guys are welcome to do that if you
4 want. But I think you recognize, Chair Skinner, that
5 kind of had an unintended consequences that if it was
6 an informational only item, it just got kind of pushed
7 to the side and didn't get as much attention as ones
8 that had specific requests in them. And so, again --
9 especially now that we may be changing how we respond
10 to these annual reports. Instead of just writing
11 specific replies, just having a discussion face-to-face
12 at the Board work session, I don't think it's really as
13 important to make that distinction. So, thank you.
14 That's kind of just a general overview on the annual
15 reports. Thanks.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. So, if
18 anyone at this point had ideas of things that you want
19 to include in the annual reports, we can start noting
20 some of those down. I myself think we should include the
21 enforcement issue again. Because we did hear a public
22 comment about it today. It continues to be a challenge
23 in Unalaska, there may be enforcement issues or
24 challenges throughout our entire region, but definitely
25 for Unalaska. So, I know we've noted this before, but
26 based on, you know, I've -- since I've had the
27 opportunity to start going to the work sessions and the
28 Board meetings, I used to -- my approach used to be,
29 "Well, we already said that, we don't need to say it
30 again." I have now learned better. If we have an issue,
31 we need to keep repeating it because nobody's going to
32 repeat it for us and they need to keep seeing it. That's
33 what I learned. So, if it's an issue, we're going to
34 keep saying it until it gets fixed, which may mean we
35 keep saying it forever. It would be my recommendation.
36 So, I have noted enforcement. Is there any other issue
37 -- are there any other issues that people have in their
38 mind right now? And this is not the only opportunity.
39 Coral, go ahead.

40
41 MS. CHERNOFF: I think for me -- oh, and
42 I do want to say on that comment is if we might want to
43 -- or if we're able to think further and perhaps say,
44 particularly, you know, enforcements in issue in this
45 area, and can we have a more specific ask, like, could
46 we get 30 days of a wildlife officer during a particular
47 high peak time? If we could get more specific, I -- and
48 I guess I'm asking that of you guys, like how specific
49 we can get. And then I will just mention, my ask is
50 having our local streams shut down for subsistence at

1 the same time as sport and for 30 days at a time. I
2 guess all three -- those two issues shutting down at the
3 same time as sport while commercial is open is always
4 an issue for me. And then shutting down for 30 days, I
5 guess might be an issue for me too, like for that long
6 period of time.

7
8 MS. GREDIAGIN: So, just to clarify. The
9 two issues, one is kind of the bigger picture, having
10 subsistence shut down while sport and commercial get to
11 continue, that's number one. Number two, regarding the
12 30 days, are you saying 30 days is too long? You'd prefer
13 if there's a closure that it be in smaller increments?
14 Or I didn't quite understand what -- the detail on that.
15 Thanks.

16
17 MS. CHERNOFF: Yes, I think considering
18 smaller increments, although now that I think about
19 that, they might be able to go back and reopen. So, in
20 the years that we have a weir and say, you know, we're
21 closed down and then all of a sudden, we have a big push
22 of reds, can they -- I think they can open it back up
23 again now that I think about it. But then also, with
24 that is the -- I guess I will say lack of tribal
25 consultation that goes along with that. I think in the
26 past there's just a call that says, "We're shutting
27 down." And that's not a tribal consultation.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: And then just to
30 clarify, you're talking about the -- so, there -- for
31 the federal -- for Federal subsistence, they are
32 required to do consultation with the State and the RAC.
33 So, there -- it's not tribal consultation. It's with the
34 RAC. Is that what you're referring to? Or are you
35 referring to something different?

36
37 MS. CHERNOFF: I am referring to that,
38 and it seemed like at some point in time there was a
39 mention, although last time I looked into it, you're
40 right, there was only a State and a RAC, but I thought
41 there was a tribal consultation involved, and if there
42 is, I would like to see that actually happening.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Lisa, go ahead.

45
46 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah. So, for in-season
47 management actions, the letter state to conduct tribal
48 consultations if practicable. And so, they're not
49 required, you know, similar like consultation with
50 ADF&G, the Council Chairs, you know, it's required.

1 Whereas, you know, some other entities, it's if
2 practicable. And I'll also just mention -- I mean I know
3 you're speaking specifically for fisheries, but the
4 wildlife in-season management actions are kind of going
5 through an overhaul, like they're kind of being whole
6 programmatically, systematically reviewed and kind of
7 redone. And what some -- with some of the wildlife
8 delegations, what's happened is, Councils have asked for
9 specific tribal entities to be added for that list of
10 required entities. So, it's like, you know, Tanana
11 Chiefs Conference or Ahtna Intertribal Resources
12 Commission that they're in that same list of people to
13 consult with, like the Council Chairs and ADF&G. And so,
14 a potential -- I mean, these delegation authorities are
15 administrative, so the Board can change them at any time.
16 It's not like they have to go through a regulatory
17 process like a proposal. And so, if this Council wants
18 to support, you know, adding a tribe, a specific tribal
19 entity for the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge Manager
20 to consult with, similar to the Council Chairs before
21 any in-season management actions taken on the Buskin,
22 right? I mean, you could make that request, and it'd be
23 up to the Board to approve that or not.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Coral, go ahead.

26
27 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, and that was going
28 to be another ask of mine is I did read that language.
29 And when you say when practicable or there was another
30 bit of language in there that essentially means nothing,
31 it means they don't have to. And I would like to suggest
32 that maybe we or the Board work on more definite language
33 for that.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, Coral, I wrote
36 down three numbers, but my third one just says priority.
37 So, if I could recap, your three points were the shorter
38 closure increments or reopen sooner, a subsistence
39 priority, so not having ongoing commercial and sport
40 fisheries if subsistence is closed. Did you have a third
41 point? I had written down the word priority, and that's
42 all I wrote.

43
44 MS. CHERNOFF: Was my third point --
45 changing that language so, it's [sic] becomes actually
46 specific.

47
48 MS. GREDIAGIN: Okay. Thank you.

49
50

1 MS. CHERNOFF: And I think noting in that
2 priority and subsistence shut down that -- let's just
3 say generously or minimally commercial fisheries. And
4 we never actually see the numbers in here, how many
5 thousands or millions of pounds of salmon get caught.
6 But essentially commercial accounts for 97%. And
7 subsistence is a blip on the radar. And so, for us to
8 be shut down at the same time as sport, while commercial
9 remains open is an issue for me. And should -- it is an
10 issue of subsistence.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
13 you. Pat, go ahead.

14
15 MR. HOLMES: If I might provide a
16 different perspective on that. As far as the Buskin,
17 they have done studies looking at the scales of fish.
18 And were lumping together two different actions, one the
19 Federal management and two, the in-season management by
20 the State. And if we're having difficulties on the
21 question of the Buskin, they've done studies where
22 they've looked at scales of fish caught different points
23 around the island. They've done tagging studies around
24 the island. And when the Buskin is closed, they --
25 there's no -- at any time, any focused red fishery
26 relating to the Buskin, they close the whole area around
27 Womens Bay, any place where there might be red fish, red
28 salmon, when the weir closes, it's never even open
29 commercial. That's just part of the written policy on
30 the Buskin, is there's no focused red salmon harvest on
31 the Buskin. And so, consultation or not we're mixing up
32 two different systems, the Federal program and the
33 state. And when they do something on the Buskin, the
34 area biologist calls up the refuge person that says,
35 "Hey, this is what we have to do." And if you disagree,
36 it just doesn't happen. And so, it's -- anyway, it's
37 just a confusion in my mind of policy and whose -- who
38 does what. But when it's closed, it's closed to
39 commercial fishing. And when they close it to -- they
40 have a whole progressive thing that's gone through the
41 Board of Fish and that's been discussed both on the
42 Federal and the State before. I'm sorry, I just better
43 shut up. Thank you.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, thanks Pat.
46 I think that particularly this last summer, I heard
47 several people say to me that the seiners were seining
48 like right outside of Buskin River, so I think that may
49 be -- like in the public -- that definitely generated
50 some concern. And then I think throughout the State, the

1 complexity of fisheries regulation that you have, some
2 of it is managed by the Federal government commercial,
3 some is managed by the Federal government subsistence,
4 some is managed by the State. And while each individual
5 fishery, it's clear who's managing that fishery at that
6 time in that location. When you step back, what became
7 clear from the chairs' meeting over the summer is that
8 there is a lot of concern because the management -- it
9 does end up like a patchwork of management. And so, I
10 do -- like, I do understand your point and I take your
11 point, but I think that that's actually part of the
12 perceived problem is that you've got management systems.
13 You could describe them as having nothing to do with
14 each other, but the problem is cumulatively, the
15 perception is that they are having an impact. So, I
16 think this gets at the heart of the discussion that
17 started to happen at the summer chairs' meeting.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, go ahead.
20

21 MR. HOLMES: Just one more point on the
22 Buskin. When it is open to seining, there aren't any
23 reds off the mouth. And that's done focusing on -- the
24 one that did open this year was soaking out pinks because
25 we had a record return of pinks. So, that's -- the reds
26 weren't there. It was a weak run, but even if they were,
27 they're very, very careful. They've had a
28 (indiscernible) of policy that has gone through the
29 State Board that they try to get all the reds up to a
30 lake and to the system as they can, and they never have
31 any focused openings that could contradict that.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Coral, did you have
34 your hand up or no? Okay. Okay, we'll go to Daniel and
35 then if Coral wants to talk more -- did you have your
36 hand up, Brett? I'm sorry, I saw -- I did see Brett
37 first. We'll take Brett and then Daniel.

38
39 MR. RICHARDSON: Thank you, Madam Chair.
40 This is Brett Richardson, Unalaska. I hear what you're
41 saying when you say we need to make ourselves heard in
42 terms of constantly repeating the issues that are
43 constant issues. And I think the number one thing here,
44 and in Kodiak as well, is the weir issue and funding for
45 the weir, regular consistent funding so we don't have
46 gap years. McLees has been closed since 2023. So, you
47 know, we're missing three years on that. And then -- so,
48 you know, just hitting that nail constantly all the time,
49 it's got to be on every report, it's got to be, you
50 know, at the forefront. But then, to Lisa's point, or

1 maybe -- I'm sorry, was it you who said that? The Board
2 gets 100 pages of information to go over and, you know,
3 it's hard to digest that. And so, if we can distill down
4 into the absolute highest priority needs, that is, you
5 know, the most valuable, the easiest reading, the things
6 that can be addressed. And of course, you know, we were
7 speaking last night at our pre -- the meet and greet
8 about things that we kind of want, pet projects that
9 would be great things. With Unalaska Lake, cleaning it
10 up and that kind of thing. That to my mind has to be
11 pushed back, right? We've got to just focus on the most
12 important things and try to get movement towards those.
13 Thank you.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thanks,
16 Brett. Daniel.

17
18 MR. SMITH: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair.
19 I just want to mention a couple more things about the
20 Buskin, maybe to add to the conversation. You know, even
21 though there wasn't like a targeted fishery for sockeye
22 salmon, just based in previous years, there does appear
23 to be more of a, you know -- I mean, don't get me wrong,
24 you know, the bulk of the run does occur in June and
25 July, but there are a few stragglers for sockeye salmon.
26 And, you know, I'm just -- I guess ever since that
27 commercial fishing or two emergency openings, there's
28 just been a lot of concern at least for me with the
29 incidental catch for sockeye as well as silvers, you
30 know, I said my Council report earlier this morning that
31 the silvers just don't really appear to be doing well
32 at this time of year. It's probably due in part due to
33 the weather and the amount of water in the systems, but
34 I guess -- maybe, I don't know if this would be a topic
35 for necessarily an annual report. Maybe, you can see it
36 there, but at least just to bring some clarity to -- and
37 whether this data is publicly available somewhere that
38 I might just not be able to find. But with the commercial
39 catches in that opener, I personally tried to reach out
40 to commercial fish, didn't get a response about the
41 number of silvers and reds that were caught in those
42 openings. But I guess my request would be, maybe we
43 could even just write a letter to them to get some
44 clarity about the catch. And so, there isn't so much
45 conflict between maybe some different parties here.

46
47 And then also, I guess my second point
48 or question would be, is the -- there is a refuge or in-
49 season manager for the Federal fisheries here. Does
50 he get kind of the approval for -- or at least, maybe

1 not approval per se, but is he just kind of in contact
2 with commercial fish prior to the openings? Or how does
3 that kind of process work? Especially in terms of the
4 Buskin having those emergency seiner openings here last
5 month. And I'm not saying that, you know, that was
6 probably the worst thing to do because there was
7 overabundance of humpies but just having some clarity
8 to this issue.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Daniel. So
11 just to clarify, your question is, does the refuge
12 manager there in Kodiak have communication with Fish and
13 Game Commercial Management prior to doing those
14 emergency openings for commercial fishing? Is that your
15 question?

16
17 MR. SMITH: Yes, that was my second
18 question. Yep.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. I don't know
21 if we have an answer to that, but I have written it down
22 and the collective we will seek to get an answer to
23 that. Thanks.

24
25 MS. SKONBERG: Hi, I'm sorry, if I could
26 add something. So, my name is Pam Skonberg. I had my
27 hand up and I got skipped over.....

28
29 (Simultaneous speech)

30
31 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, I'm sorry,
32 Pam. We're not taking public comment right now. This is
33 just -- this is a Council. We're just taking comments,
34 suggestions from the Council right now. But we will
35 have.....

36
37 MS. SKONBERG: So, this has to do with
38 the Fish and -- I'm the Community Affairs Liaison for
39 Kodiak. So, I work with the Wildlife Refuge and going
40 to be opening up communication with ADF&G.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah. Okay, if
43 you're trying to answer Daniel's question, go ahead, but
44 this is the only public comment we're going to take
45 during this section. We do have a separate section for
46 public comment and questions. Thank you.

47
48 MS. SKONBERG: Okay. And it kind of goes
49 back to Coral's concern as well, too, for -- so, my job
50 role is to open up communication lines with the Koniag

1 Wildlife Refuge and the Fish and Game. So, I'm going to
2 be the liaison. I'm going to be focusing more on
3 subsistence. So, there will be more communication
4 between the Board. I'm going to reach out to every one
5 of you that are on the Kodiak -- from Kodiak on the
6 Board as well, too. And I'm sorry, I didn't mean to
7 interrupt. I just wanted to say that, yes, my new
8 position with Koniag is going to be to have more open
9 discussions. So, it won't be just a quick, "Hey, we're
10 closed." And rivers are closed and the community doesn't
11 know about it. So, I will be focusing more on
12 subsistence, and I'll be reaching out to more of you
13 after these meetings are over.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, we're
16 going to go ahead and break for lunch. We're going to
17 reconvene at 1:30.

18
19 MS. GREDIAGIN: Sorry, quickly. Lisa
20 Grediagin, for the record. I'm getting a message from
21 colleagues that Acting Refuge Manager Natalie Fath,
22 Faith [sic], did reach out to Comm -- Commercial
23 Fisheries before doing a special action, like the in-
24 season management actions.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, the question
27 was special emergency action by Fish and Game Commercial
28 Management to the refuge, not refuge to Fish and Game.
29 So, I think you just answered the -- before she did the
30 closure, she reached out to Fish and Game, that wasn't
31 the question. The question was, is Fish and Game
32 Commercial reaching out to the refuge before making
33 commercial decisions. All right, okay, we're gonna [sic]
34 reconvene at 1:30.

35
36 (Off record)

37
38 (On record)

39
40 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, we're ready
41 to get started. We are starting with Agenda Item 11.f,
42 which is the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. And
43 we were taking this item as a time certain at 1:30. So,
44 if you're paying attention to the flow of the agenda,
45 there are some items we'll have to go back and pick up
46 after we finish this one. But for this item, we have
47 Anna Senecal from OSM fisheries can go ahead and start
48 whenever you're ready.

49
50

1 MS. SENECA: Okay. Thank you so much.
2 Yes. For the record, my name is Anna Senecal. I'm a
3 fisheries biologist with the Office of Subsistence
4 Management. Madam Chair, members of the Council. So, we
5 are reconvening now to talk about the Fisheries Resource
6 Monitoring Program. So, in 2028, we will be filing our
7 new notice of funding opportunity for this program.
8 There was a volunteer group that met to identify some
9 of the information gaps regarding subsistence management
10 and subsistence fisheries conservation needs. So, the
11 purpose of this program really is to support the
12 subsistence -- Federal Subsistence Management Program.
13 This funding opportunity is to identify and put forth
14 and then fund projects that enable subsistence users to
15 access this resource. So, that's the purpose. And it's
16 done with strong support for collaboration among
17 federal, state, and Alaska Native and local
18 organizations. There's also an emphasis on tribal Alaska
19 Native rural capacity building. And that is really held
20 as a dual priority along with this information
21 gathering. So, that's a little bit about the background
22 of the program.

23
24 The cycle comes around every two years,
25 and it culminates in a monitoring plan. The process
26 begins with the development of these priority
27 information needs. So, identifying the research gap.
28 After the needs, comes a project solicitation. The
29 projects are collected. They're reviewed by a Technical
30 Review Committee. Councils then comment on the
31 proposals. The director of the Office of Subsistence
32 Management makes a final funding decision and then the
33 Board approves and then we end with this product, the
34 monitoring plan. So, where we're at in this process right
35 now is identifying those priority information needs.
36 These are research questions identified by you, the
37 RACs, the local community with input from subject matter
38 experts and local subsistence users. Projects score
39 highest when they speak to a priority information need,
40 it speaks to the strategic management priority of the
41 work.

42
43 So, shortly after your winter meeting
44 last March, the 2026-29 monitoring plan was finalized.
45 The plan was disappointing for many. The actual 2026
46 funding fell far short of hopes of around \$5.3 million
47 instead of the -- so, we received around 5 million
48 instead of the anticipated 9 million that was originally
49 announced. So, when put into perspective for this
50 region, the Southwestern region, which includes two

1 RACs, your RAC as well as Bristol Bay, there were five
2 Southwest Region proposals competing for funding
3 totaling over 2.8 million in requests. The allocations
4 permitted only selection of one Southwest Region
5 project, a single project, and that was Project 26-451,
6 Understanding the Importance of Resource Networks in
7 Alaska: Documenting Subsistence Fish Sharing Networks
8 in Select Bristol Bay Communities, carried out by the
9 Alaska Department of Fish and Game, in partnership with
10 the Bristol Bay Native Association. And we've heard from
11 several areas through several different channels that
12 this perhaps wasn't the highest priority project. And
13 so, that is something that we are taking into
14 consideration here and continuing this discussion.

15
16 So, since then, in late July, July 21st,
17 we held our volunteer PIN development meeting. Attending
18 that meeting was Chair Skinner, and members Holmes and
19 Richardson from your RAC, along with sister RAC, Bristol
20 Bay Vice Chair, Dan Dunaway. So, the draft PINs that
21 this volunteer group put forward can be found on page
22 265 of your Council books. And you chose to be strategic
23 this year. Given the likelihood of continued funding
24 reductions, you identified the need to focus on small,
25 high-priority stock and status and trends projects, for
26 this interim, for this time. You identified the need for
27 practical benefits to in-season management with the
28 intention to maintain open subsistence fisheries. So,
29 the draft list of priority information needs included
30 two that you put forward down from ten previously. And
31 I will read them now. The first one is reliable estimates
32 of the abundance of salmon populations in Kodiak,
33 Unalaska and Bristol Bay important for subsistence use
34 and assessment of changes in these populations. Specific
35 areas of concern include McLees Lake, Unalaska; Buskin
36 River in Kodiak; Lake Clark, Bristol Bay; Big Creek,
37 Bristol Bay; Togiak, Bristol Bay; and Chignik, Bristol
38 Bay. The second PIN identified was using scale analyses
39 of fresh and saltwater growth patterns over multiple
40 years, examine how recent changes in the ocean impact
41 growth and survival of chinook and sockeye salmon within
42 their range and habitats. The Kodiak/Aleutian drainages
43 of particular concern include the Buskin and the McLees
44 drainages and/or the Bristol Bay Alaska Peninsula
45 drainages, Lake Clark, Chignik, Big Creek, Naknek, and
46 Togiak drainages.

47
48 So, these are the two priority
49 information needs at this time. These are draft, so they
50 can change. They can be modified, you can add to them,

1 you can edit these. We're trying something additionally
2 new this season, this cycle, and that's a strategic
3 public engagement to contribute to this dialogue, this
4 discussion, to give you the chance to hear from, again,
5 from local managers and users and potentially refine or
6 maybe validate this list of draft PINs that you've
7 developed. So, after engaging with public comment, you
8 can decide to keep these PINs as is, or you can make
9 changes to the draft list, and you can do this by making
10 a motion. So, with all of that, I'm happy to take any
11 questions or you may be ready to proceed to public
12 comment.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great. Thanks,
15 Anna. I did have a question. Is -- in the NOFO or in the
16 review criteria, does it -- is it required that in order
17 to be awarded funds, the project has to be related to
18 one of the priority information needs that the RAC
19 develops? Or is that -- does that merely just make their
20 application stronger? So, is it a requirement or is it
21 just a consideration?

22
23 MS. SENEAL: Through the Chair. It is
24 highly unlikely that a project would advance to funding
25 without speaking to a PIN, but it's possible. And that
26 possibility, I've been told, that door is left open to
27 entertain the possibility that an unforeseen critical
28 project could be advanced and wanting to maintain the
29 ability to take it up and fund it.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
32 you. Are there any other questions for Anna based on
33 what she just presented? Pat, go ahead.

34
35 MR. HOLMES: I'm on a decision to fund
36 what was funded in Bristol Bay on those -- on that
37 systems [sic]. Is the minutes of that meeting available?
38 So, one can understand the logic of that choice.

39
40 MS. SENEAL: Through the Chair, Member
41 Holmes, could you repeat the question? I'm so sorry.
42 You're asking for minutes of which meeting?

43
44 MR. HOLMES: The one that decided on the
45 last funding, for doing the -- I forget what it was, but
46 it was basically in the Bristol Bay got the funding for
47 the last round and that was decided to be a priority for
48 the region. And so, I would like to know if the minutes
49 are there, so that I can understand, but we could
50 understand why that decision was made for that over

1 providing information that would allow for improve
2 subsistence, getting fish to the people.

3
4 MS. SENEAL: Through the Chair, member
5 Holmes. There are -- so, it was a whole process that
6 accumulated [sic] in that decision and there wouldn't
7 be transcripts available for example, because it wasn't
8 a FACA committee meeting. There are a series of
9 supporting documents that could potentially be talked
10 about. So, there's the privacy concerns, there's the
11 FACA constraints that we work within. And so, basically
12 my answer is I don't know what I can produce for this
13 group to review, but I can look into it and bring it
14 back to you. So, the whole Technical Review Committee
15 process is what is brought forward to the Board and to
16 the Director, and then the funding decisions get made.
17 And none of that is on a transcript.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thank
20 you. Are there any other questions about the intro that
21 we just heard?

22
23 (No response)

24
25 Okay. In order to manage this next
26 section effectively, because I would like it to be as
27 much of a dialogue as possible, I'd like to get an idea
28 of which members of the public or potential applicant
29 agencies are online and available or in the room and
30 wanting to participate. So, I guess I'll start with, do
31 we have Kodiak Fish and Game online?

32
33 MR. WITTEVEEN: This is Mark Witteveen.
34 I think Sport Fish is here, Tyler, myself, and Brianna
35 are all here and available. I'm not sure if CommFish is
36 also online.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thanks,
39 Mark. And then do we have Matt Van Daele from the Sun'aq
40 Tribe?

41
42 MR. VAN DAELE: Yes, you do. Thank you,
43 Madam Chair.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great, thanks. And
46 is there anyone else online or in the room who planned
47 to either give comment or participate in the dialogue
48 about FRMP funding?

49
50

1 MS. HINKLE: Hi, this is Elizabeth
2 Hinkle. I'm with the Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska. I
3 don't really have any current comments or feedback about
4 the PINs or the FRMP proposal process, but I am here to
5 listen and might chime in.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, great. And
8 then there's another person online too.

9
10 MS. HONIG: Jon, I see your hand raised.
11 We have Jon Gerken.

12
13 MR. GERKEN: Go ahead. Yeah, through the
14 Chair. This is Jon Gerken Fish and Wildlife Service. We
15 would like to be involved in the conversation. Thanks.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thanks.
18 Okay. How about let's go ahead and start off this way.
19 Let's -- the people who are online that want to
20 participate in the dialogue, I'd like to start off with
21 hearing any comments that you want to make. These could
22 be -- so, to give you an idea of what the, I guess what
23 I think would be most useful to hear. First of all,
24 would be research gaps or information gaps. So, what
25 kind of data information, that kind of a thing, would
26 be needed in the region. So, the Kodiak/Aleutian region,
27 to better support subsistence. So, what are things that
28 we need to know that we don't -- we're not currently
29 getting or we're not currently supporting. The other
30 thing that I am interested in hearing that maybe the RAC
31 could choose to turn into a letter or put it into an
32 annual report would be any observations on the FRMP grant
33 process, the application process, timing, any kinds of
34 perceived barriers, obstacles, challenges, or if there's
35 things that work particularly well, that could be useful
36 to hear too. So, I'm looking for anything where the RAC
37 might be able to weigh in and recommend changes that
38 would make the program better, more accessible, more
39 effective. And then on the priority information needs
40 side, we are -- the RAC is interested in getting feedback
41 so that when we're putting together our list of PINs,
42 it is not done in a complete silo, separate from the
43 people and entities that might apply for the funding.
44 So, if there's a mismatch between what we prioritize and
45 what people want to write into a proposal, that's not
46 going to work very well. So I'll -- does anyone want to
47 volunteer to go first in sharing any comments or
48 feedback?

49
50

1 MR. WITTEVEEN: Madam Chair, this is Mark
2 Witteveen. I can start off if you'd like.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, all right,
5 we'll hear from Mark Witteveen, and then I have Matt Van
6 Daele after that. And I am trying to leave this as close
7 to a dialogue as possible. So, my plan is Mark and Matt,
8 and as people share, if you share information, there may
9 be questions from Council members. So, there may be a
10 little bit of back and forth dialogue. I think that'll
11 yield the best results for this. But go ahead, Mark.

12
13 MR. WITTEVEEN: Sure. I guess just kind
14 of addressing your first comment, Madam Chair. As far
15 as information needed for subsistence fisheries, as I'm
16 sure everyone knows, our project was not funded to
17 enumerate Buskin escapement this year. And we had a
18 really good data set going, so we had a pretty good idea
19 of what the upcoming year was going to look like. And
20 we were able to scrap together about a month of extra
21 funding to operate the weir. But that being said, we
22 really have no idea what the run was like. It looked
23 bad. We couldn't count fish and we closed the subsistence
24 fishery as a result. So, that's just kind of a very
25 short synopsis of information that we used to have, that
26 we don't have any more, and it directly impacts the
27 subsistence fishery, so.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thanks.
30 It looks like Pat has a question.

31
32 MR. HOLMES: Mark, a brief question. Was
33 the commercial fishery allowed to continue? And was
34 there a sport fishery, or was -- everything was buttoned
35 up for reds? Question.

36
37 MR. WITTEVEEN: Through the Chair, Member
38 Holmes. Everything was closed. We did close the
39 commercial, sport and subsistence fisheries.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thanks,
42 Mark. I wanted to comment specifically the Buskin weir
43 project when it's been funded through the FRMP program
44 has had an internship component. And my understanding
45 is that internship component has been really effective
46 at converting, you know, the high school age interns
47 into full-time Fish and Game employees over time. And
48 my understanding, and Mark, you can correct me if I'm
49 wrong on this, but my understanding is the alternative
50 funding you're pursuing to fund a weir in the future,

1 is not going to include that internship component. And
2 this is going to relate to comments I'll make later
3 about FRMP in general. But I just wanted to emphasize
4 that from my perspective as one person on the Council,
5 I really appreciated having the internship associated
6 with the weir. And I do think it was a really good way
7 to expose people to science and the biology of fishery
8 science. And then actually convert them into full-time
9 Fish and Game employees. And some of them live in Kodiak
10 and some live in other places in Alaska. But I think
11 that that program was really effective. So, I just wanted
12 to voice my support for the internship component in
13 particular. And note that it was possible because of the
14 FRMP program and other funding sources -- it just wasn't
15 as viable under other funding sources. So, I think that
16 was a real loss to the Kodiak area. Pat has a hand up.

17
18 MR. HOLMES: Oh, I agree totally, 100
19 percent.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Are there any
22 other questions or comments for Mark right now?

23
24 (No comments)

25
26 Okay, seeing none, let's go on to Matt
27 Van Daele.

28
29 MR. VAN DAELE: Cama'i. Can you hear me?

30
31 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yep, you're coming
32 in.

33
34 MR. VAN DAELE: Yep. Matt Van Daele,
35 Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak. Going back to your intern
36 question and comment. They do produce people other than
37 just Fish and Game employees. And I was one of the
38 original interns that that program hired. And kudos to
39 Tyler, he was one of the first ones there too. But with
40 the FRMP funding, Sun'aq was in, in quotes, competition
41 with Fish and Game through the Buskin weir funding. But
42 we're very concerned that Buskin weir was not funded.
43 And our proposal was meant to be a complement [sic] what
44 they're doing with the scale analysis and of course the
45 escapement and everything else. But we are aware that
46 funding is scarce these days. It would be nice to know
47 if the Board or OSM or the Federal Government has other
48 ideas about trying to have these funding resources
49 available. And the Technical Review process does not
50 seem that they necessarily add the best information

1 available to you all for review and that's a major
2 concern. All right.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Matt.
5 Are there any questions or comments for Matt?

6

7 (No comments)

8

9 All right, I am not seeing any there.
10 Oh, okay. Jon, do you want to go ahead?

11

12 MR. GERKEN: Yeah, through the Chair, I
13 don't have a question for Matt, but just comments from
14 the Fish and Wildlife Service, I guess, in-season
15 management. Want me to proceed on that?

16

17 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, cause [sic]
18 I don't see any questions here. So, go ahead.

19

20 MR. GERKEN: I guess just specific to
21 your question on subsistence users, typically where I
22 get the most questions are in fisheries related to
23 Chignik, Mortensen's Lagoon does come up quite a bit,
24 and those are probably the big two. And then just for
25 point of clarification in the PIN, the Fish and Wildlife
26 Service does plan to operate a weir on Big Creek
27 beginning next year. So, that'll be funded with --
28 through the fisheries program and then also the
29 Alaska/Becharof National Wildlife Refuge. So, we spent
30 a little bit of time out there this year just getting
31 everything squared away and we should be enumerating
32 next year, so.

33

34 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thanks,
35 Jon. Can you clarify? You said that you get questions
36 around Chignik and Mortensen's Lagoon. What are the
37 nature of the questions that you get?

38

39 MR. GERKEN: A lot of the ones for
40 Chignik are usually are -- typically always tied to some
41 enumeration projects. So, in the past we have been
42 successful putting proposals in with the department and
43 Chignik Regional Aquaculture to extend weir operations
44 that would allow for enumeration of the -- all the way
45 through August, which is a big deal for subsistence users
46 in Chignik cause [sic] they move up either on the late
47 run or into the upper lake for redfish and so those
48 numbers are important. We also did some different
49 subsistence harvest surveys in those communities there
50 to see how many people were harvesting early run, late

1 run or redfish in the Chignik area just depends on the
2 year and you know a lot of other socioeconomic things
3 for how they move around. And then, most recently when
4 we had a number of public meetings in Cold Bay to figure
5 out how to potentially go forward with some of the
6 fisheries closures that the RAC did a few years ago,
7 Mortensen's always came up as a area that folks were
8 targeting for subsistence and there was some comments
9 on we need to get enumeration back. Just in conversations
10 with the department there in Kodiak, Sportfish and
11 CommFish, I think they're also aware of those. And so,
12 we've had those discussions, though we've not formally
13 moved together for proposal or anything like that. But
14 it does come into conversation quite a bit.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, great.
17 Thanks. Are there any questions for Jon? Questions or
18 comments?

19
20 (No comments)

21
22 Okay. So, all -- if anyone of the three
23 people who just gave comment, if what somebody else said
24 sparked a new thought or a question, I would -- I'm
25 gonna [sic] give an opportunity for that because I would
26 love this to be more of a dialogue than it sounds like
27 it is right now. We're kind of quiet around the RAC
28 table. But does anyone want to have a follow-up comment
29 online? So, that'd be Mark, Matt, or Jon. Okay, let's
30 take Matt and then Mark.

31
32 MR. VAN DAELE: Thank you. Yeah, my
33 connection was kind of bad there for a second. Main
34 thing is busting down the silos between federal, state,
35 and tribe in working together. And it's difficult to
36 navigate these courses right now. We appreciate you on
37 the Board of understanding that. I hope my connection
38 is not cutting out again. It seems to be. But the more
39 that we can work together, that would be nice. But my
40 connection seems to be bad. So, thank you for your time.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, thanks,
43 Matt. I can't tell if it's a bad connection or if you're
44 just -- if there's long pauses between what you said.
45 But what I heard was the main thing is breaking down the
46 silos between federal, state, and tribes and working
47 together more effectively on these -- whatever kind of
48 data projects that are going to support subsistence.
49 Okay, Mark, do you want to go?

50

1 MR. WITTEVEEN: Sure. I guess we have
2 lots of stuff to say, but we'll go with the flow of the
3 discussion here. I just wanted to follow up a little bit
4 with the scale work, which I think you guys recognize
5 as a pretty important component. We have measured 20
6 years' worth of scales and really feel like that gets
7 at a lot of important data that is hard to get any other
8 way and also is a good surrogate for other components
9 like, you know, we get -- we have a pretty good handle
10 on freshwater growth. And the only other way to really
11 get at that is a full blown smolt project. And we have
12 that from 20 years in the past and have the scales to
13 do another 20 years. And so, I think that's a lot of
14 bang for your buck. As far as a data gap goes, we can
15 look at ocean growth and freshwater growth and survival.
16 And we did include that as a potential component in our
17 search for other funding, but it was kind of a pivoting
18 situation, where if the money's not available, it won't
19 be done. But I do like to see that that is listed as a
20 priority information need because I think that's a very
21 useful and really gets a lot of bang for your buck, like
22 I said. So, I just wanted to kind of comment on that
23 data gap component that I think has pretty tangible,
24 useful results that are actionable and it lets us look
25 into the future and can really be applied anywhere. Thank
26 you.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thanks,
29 Mark. And I will note that when we had our working group
30 between KARAC and Bristol Bay RAC, one of the things we
31 talked about was the historical store of scales. I got
32 the impression Fish and Game has scales that they've
33 collected that are available to be tested, but there
34 hasn't been bandwidth or money to actually test those
35 scales. So, I feel like -- that -- I don't personally --
36 -- I would not prioritize that over a weir because I
37 think the weir is -- gives you more immediate access to
38 subsistence. But I feel like that's the kind of project
39 that it would be nice to fund. And we have a -- like a
40 whole time series of these scales, because my
41 understanding is they were collected. As you say
42 plucked. They were plucked off the salmon, and they're
43 in storage. So, we've got basically years of scales that
44 could just go through the testing and analytical
45 process, of which I know nothing. All right. Pat has his
46 hand up. Go ahead, Pat.

47
48 MR. HOLMES: You know, I think that the
49 scale analysis is very important and particularly tying
50 it in with escapement because that allows the management

1 folks to make some reasonable, very reasonable, idea of
2 forecast of what's going to be happening in the future.
3 Going back in time, that's great and academic, but I
4 think in-season sampling and being able to sit down and
5 relate that and let's say they were primarily two ocean
6 fish before they spent the time there and they spent two
7 years in the lake. So, that means in five years then if
8 you had a great escapement then you're probably going
9 to have a heck of a good run. And so, then if you're
10 running amok on funding on the counting of the fish, at
11 least that gives you some kind of basic idea of what
12 might happen or might not. And conversely, if you had
13 very poor growth in certain age classes back in time,
14 then you're going to have a damn good idea that --
15 forecasting, that you're going to have a weak run and
16 then folks can kind of plan, go up to Afognak and get
17 the fish. But, you know, it's -- the two tie together
18 very well.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Brett, go
21 ahead.

22
23 MR. RICHARDSON: I have a question, maybe
24 for Anna. What's the primary method of scale collection?
25 Or anybody that might know?

26
27 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: I wonder if maybe
28 Mark could answer that?

29
30 MR. WITTEVEEN: Madam Chairman, sure, I
31 can talk about that. Specifically, the method, we just
32 collect a couple scales from a very specific area on the
33 fish and then pair that data with sex and length
34 information. And as Rebecca said, we have a pretty good
35 repository of that information. Buskin, we have 40
36 years, but other systems like Karluk, I believe we have
37 a pretty complete scale repository from 1922 to present.
38 So, we keep all of that stuff in storage and it's all
39 available, but it's a pretty low-cost way to collect
40 data. I mean, you just have to handle the fish for 15
41 seconds and we can get a collection that fast. Thank
42 you.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thanks.
45 Brett.

46
47 MR. RICHARDSON: Yeah, to be more
48 specific, how are we catching the fish to do the
49 collection?

50

1 MR. WITTEVEEN: Through the Chair. We --
2 it depends on location. A lot of systems that are weired
3 we'll have a trap that the fish go into and we just let
4 them into the trap, close the trap, and collect the fish
5 as they go by. In Buskin, the Buskin fish kind of have
6 a different personality. They will battle to get out of
7 that trap pretty badly and end up injuring themselves.
8 So, we just set a beach seine behind the weir, collect
9 the samples and send the fish upstream. So, it depends,
10 it varies by area. You can also just go out to a remote
11 stream and catch them with a net and let them go. But
12 it kind of depends on the behavior of the fish and what
13 kind of resources you have at that location.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thank
16 you, Mark. So, one of the -- getting out a little
17 bit..... Oh, sorry, Daniel, would you like to go?

18
19 MR. SMITH: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair.
20 Yeah, I got a question for Mark. So, with the historical
21 scales for the sockeye in the Buskin, what, I guess, I
22 think I know the answer, but if -- so, seems like there's
23 a lot of scales over the last 40 years that haven't been
24 analyzed. And based on the historical scales, what types
25 of data could improve like with like the forecasting per
26 se or escapement goals? Is that kind of the intent of
27 analyzing these historical scales from the sockeye in
28 earlier years?

29
30 MR. WITTEVEEN: Through the Chair. Yeah,
31 the -- so, we have 20 -- the past 20 years have been
32 measured. All scales have been aged. So, that data gap
33 from older scales and from other systems will allow us
34 to look at, for instance, the first year of ocean growth
35 versus environmental conditions that we're not seeing
36 now. If the ocean was colder 35 years ago, what was the
37 growth in the first year of saltwater residence of those
38 fish? And that will allow us to establish relationships
39 to kind of predict what the future looks like, you know,
40 are we going to see more survival from a cold ocean?
41 What do extreme temperatures mean in freshwater
42 conditions? What is competition with other fish such as
43 pink salmon? So, it allows us to look at conditions that
44 we're not seeing right now. With a shorter data set, we
45 can only look at a pretty short range of environmental
46 data and competition data and escapement data, you know,
47 the escapement has been much bigger in the past, and we
48 can see how that affects growth, but we can't see that
49 with our shorter data set. Does that get at your
50 question?

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MR. SMITH: Yes, it does. And you said environmental parameters. Is it just specifically temperature? And then you mentioned competition with pink salmon. Are those kind of the two main ones that you have in mind?

MR. WITTEVEEN: Those are two, but we looked at an awful lot and there are several graduate projects within this data set. We looked at circulation data, Pacific decadal oscillation, El Niño, competition with pink salmon, how growth might affect the proportion of fish coming back as two-year-olds versus three-year-olds. There's a whole lot of data that a person could explore with more time. And of course, it's fascinating to me and useful, both in the future and looking at the past. So yeah, there's really a lot there. And it would take time to really nail down every possibility, but there are many.

MR. SMITH: Okay. Yeah, that's helpful. Thank you, Mark.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, thanks, Mark. When you talk about competition with pink salmon, are you looking at -- are -- cause I'm assuming the scale itself doesn't tell you, oh, there was a lot of competition with pink salmon. Are you comparing that with the information you have about how many pink salmon were observed? So, either escapement or caught in a fishery in a particular year. So, are you going back and looking at the historical data you have on the pink salmon for that year and then comparing it to something you find in the scale? Sorry, I don't know how this works. Go ahead.

MR. WITTEVEEN: Madam Chair, that's essentially it. Yeah, we looked at -- we found correlations. So, we don't know that they are a causality situation. But we saw that when there is a lot of pink salmon in the ocean, as measured by catch and escapement in a given year. The growth of specifically saltwater three-aged fish is negatively correlated to the number of pink salmon in the ocean. And in our 20-year data set, that is pretty much unwavering. There are no outliers in that relationship. It's very, very solid. So, it could be that the same thing is positively affecting pink salmon that happens to negatively affect saltwater age-three growth, but it also could be a causality thing. It makes biological sense that you have

1 a ton of pinks in the water and there's less for sockeye
2 to eat, so. But yeah, you kind of nailed it.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thanks,
5 Mark. So, I do have a question for the people on the
6 phone. Would there be high levels of concern if the
7 priority information needs that the RAC voted to accept
8 were the ones that Anna presented earlier in this
9 meeting? So, basically prioritizing monitoring aspects,
10 by which in our conversation, we generally prefer weirs,
11 but it could also -- we've had drone projects as well.
12 So, prioritizing monitoring, and then we also had the
13 element that had to do with the scale analysis. Would
14 that concern -- for the people on the phone, do you
15 think that misses any big areas. And just remembering
16 this is in the context of very limited FRMP funding. So,
17 if we are in a -- if continue to be in the situation
18 where only one project for the Southwest Region, keeping
19 in mind we share FRMP funds with the Bristol Bay RAC as
20 well. If we're in that very limited funding situation,
21 would any of you be concerned if our priority information
22 need was essentially -- we're prioritizing monitoring,
23 weirs, et cetera? Matt, go ahead.

24
25 MR. VAN DAELE: Weirs, yes. Weirs are
26 most important. Scale analysis is very important, but I
27 think we need to be looking forward to limnology and
28 smolt as well. Thank you.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Matt.
31 Elizabeth Hinkle.

32
33 MS. HINKLE: I'm -- I like the two PINs
34 that have been presented, but I also second what, I'm
35 sorry, I didn't get that guy's name, but whoever just
36 spoke about the importance of limnology. I also agree
37 that could be an important aspect that we should consider
38 taking into account for future years.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thank you.
41 Okay, it looks like Jacquie Keating is next.

42
43 MS. KEATING: Thank you, Madam Chair.
44 Good afternoon, everyone. This is Jacquie Keating,
45 Division of Subsistence. Really appreciating the good
46 discussion here. I just want to add to the record,
47 bearing in mind of course that these are very difficult
48 times and we need to prioritize funding. Just want to
49 let everybody know when there is more funding available
50 that we've heard from two different Kodiak communities

1 asking us when they could do their next subsistence
2 update. Two of them are sort of right on schedule. So,
3 just to add the conversation, that maybe when the next
4 cycle comes up, if there is -- if the funding picture
5 looks a little bit less bleak, that that could
6 potentially be something that makes the list next round
7 too. Thank you, Madam Chair.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yep. Thank you,
10 Jacquie. Coral, go ahead.

11
12 MS. CHERNOFF: I guess I have a question
13 or I guess I keep questioning weirs. Like are weirs used
14 to manage subsistence or are they managing commercial
15 fisheries? So, I have a struggle with that. I believe
16 our weirs a lot of times, you know, they're used for
17 Fish and Game to manage commercial fisheries. And I get
18 -- so, I'm just trying to figure out you know if we're
19 asking money, perhaps weirs aren't necessarily to me the
20 best issue. Maybe the best ways -- maybe we need to
21 start having studies about like if Buskin has been closed
22 down, I don't know three times or something in the last
23 five years or six years seven years whatever. But I know
24 for myself, I take quite a hit when Buskin is closed
25 down for thirty days or fifteen or whatever and then
26 open back up because my time for opportunity is usually
27 the very first part of June. And then I tend to not have
28 that opportunity for the rest of the year. So, even if
29 it is open back up, I don't have that opportunity. My
30 opportunity is gone. So, that concerns me for others
31 that are dealing with this issue. And I know -- I guess
32 I'll ask Mark, you said that commercial fishing [sic],
33 and I keep saying commercial fishing [sic], fishing
34 is not shut down when sport and subsistence are shut
35 down. And I guess what I will explain by that is --
36 explain what I mean by that is, I still see fishing all
37 over the different parts of the island. Commercial
38 fishing being open. So, I don't necessarily mean -- so,
39 like when you say that commercial fishing was also shut
40 down, could you explain to me the area that was shut
41 down? And when we say commercial fishing is shut down,
42 I think it's kind of disingenuous to say that we've also
43 shut that down when the fish are traveling. They're
44 traveling from other places. They're traveling from the
45 south end of the island and north end of the island. And
46 so, do we know those patterns of those fish that are
47 coming from Buskin? And that might be a better place to
48 put our money is tracking, so that we, when the fish get
49 to the end of the line and that's where we catch them
50 for subsistence, we don't get the short end of the stick.

1
2 MR. LAWSON: Through the Chair, this is
3 Tyler. I'm on here with Mark. I can talk to management
4 here for a little bit. The Commercial Fisheries Division
5 manages both subsistence and commercial fisheries. And
6 we work with them for the sportfish management and with
7 the federal -- our federal counterparts at the refuge
8 too, for Buskin in particular, and then Jon and his shop
9 for other places. The -- I'll just start by saying, with
10 the weir question, and Coral, please jump in, you know,
11 if I misunderstood your question or if you have other
12 parts to it, I'm glad to talk about this too but start
13 with the weir question. This season is a good example
14 of why weirs are so important to subsistence users. And
15 we, you know, talk about subsistence in sport for Kodiak,
16 but for Buskin River, let's just -- let's be clear that
17 everybody is fishing to take home fish to eat. The
18 sockeye fishery at Buskin is not a tourist fishery like
19 this like the coho fishery is, it's -- the vast majority
20 are locals and the vast majority are federally
21 qualified. You just can't use your federal permit in the
22 majority of the river. So, between the gillnets and
23 sportfisherman it's essentially -- we treat it as a
24 similar fishery even though we have separate management
25 and regulatory structures for those.

26
27 The weir, like Mark said, we've got
28 essentially a 40-year data set, one of the best data
29 sets we have for a sockeye run. And part of that is
30 because, as you guys all know, the Buskin River sits at
31 the very head of Chiniak Bay. And so, it's geographically
32 isolated from most of the rest of the fisheries on the
33 island. Compared to say, Karluk, where the Karluk
34 empties out right into the Shelikof Strait. And there's
35 a bunch of different things going on in the Karluk, or
36 near the Karluk, that make it a little bit more difficult
37 to account for the total amount of fish that come back
38 to that run. So, one of the things that we do is we, you
39 know, we -- a weir gives us daily counts. So, we're
40 looking at these daily. We typically compare those daily
41 counts to the 10-year average. And we're actually able
42 to project, to some degree, what we think the run will
43 do in the future. The further we get into the run, the
44 better confidence we have in that. But for instance,
45 this year we ran the weir for about three weeks in June.
46 We -- based on all the data that we collected through
47 weir counts, through aging scales, and then through more
48 recently the scale measuring that Mark was talking
49 about. We had a pretty good idea that this year's return
50 was going to be weaker than we had expected. And so,

1 with that information, we would go into any season being
2 more conservative. Be -- having in the back of our mind
3 that at some point we're probably going to have to have
4 restrictions, at least until the weir count showed that
5 we were going to make our escapement goal. In this season
6 what we did is we put the weir in, realized okay, we're
7 not projecting to meet the escapement goal, and by the
8 time we got to that point we had closed sport and
9 subsistence fisheries and we had to pull the weir. And
10 so, we weren't able to know what the total run size was
11 and how many spawners actually went into the Buskin this
12 year. In a -- in more years than not, how this has played
13 out in the Buskin is that we have counted fish up through
14 about the middle of June. We've often had more fish than
15 would meet the escapement goals. So, we're going to go
16 over the goal. And so, we've actually liberalized the
17 sockeye fishery for both sport and subsistence more
18 often than not in the Buskin. But without the weir, we
19 don't have that ability. And so, we were more
20 conservative. And even if we didn't close the fishery
21 this year, we would not have liberalized the fishery,
22 even if we thought it was a strong run. We'd have to
23 have really solid data for that. So, more often than
24 not, the Buskin weir has given us the ability to allow
25 more harvest for both the sport and subsistence
26 fisheries.

27
28 Now your second part, the commercial
29 fishery. That -- so, commercial fisheries are managed
30 different than sport and subsistence fisheries.
31 Commercial fisheries are closed by regulation until
32 they're opened either through a management plan or
33 emergency order. So, the Buskin area is always closed
34 unless a -- an emergency order opens it for commercial
35 fishing. Now, folks might have seen the commercial
36 fishery harvesting pink salmon here in August. There was
37 quite a number of boats out there for a couple of days
38 because the Buskin had an incredible pink run. That is
39 exceptionally rare during the sockeye run. It's only
40 happened a couple of times in history. And so, in June
41 and even up through early July, the closest commercial
42 fisheries to Buskin would typically be North Cape on
43 Ouzinkie or on Spruce Island or say in Ugak Bay, and
44 those are much closer to places like Pasagshak or Litnik
45 than they are to Buskin. So, yes there is commercial
46 fishing on the island but -- and we don't know the exact
47 route that those fish travel but Buskin is far more
48 isolated geographically than say other subsistence
49 fisheries like Pasagshak or Litnik, which are equally
50 as big and important as Buskin. So, that's probably a

1 little bit of a complicated answer, but that's how these
2 fisheries are managed. It is a little bit complicated
3 and nuanced, but the take-home message is that anytime
4 you don't -- aren't able to count fish, you do forgo
5 harvest opportunity in sport and subsistence fisheries.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thanks,
8 Tyler. Coral.

9
10 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, thank you, Tyler.
11 I'm not sure you answered my questions that I asked, but
12 I guess I'll just leave it at that -- at that. Except for
13 that -- when did the commercial -- how -- when did the
14 commercial season open? And I guess I also asked about
15 tagging fish. Has there ever been a fish tagging program
16 for fish returning to Buskin or what you suspect are
17 returning to Buskin? Yeah, I guess that's my question.

18
19 MR. LAWSON: Yeah, good question. Through
20 the Chair. We -- to my knowledge, there hasn't been one
21 specifically for Buskin. It would be difficult to find
22 those fish before we -- before they got anywhere close
23 because they're such a small run compared to the large
24 runs elsewhere. It's been done for other big runs like
25 Chignik and Karluk in the past. One thing we do have is
26 we did a genetic analysis study of fish caught in the
27 subsistence fishery out in front of Buskin. And so, we
28 have a pretty good idea of what is caught in front of
29 Buskin, local fish versus traveling fish. Mark just
30 pulled it up for me here. On average, it was 91% of the
31 fish caught at Buskin, are local Buskin fish. So, it's
32 not exactly answering your question, but it does, you
33 know, there's not a ton of fish traveling in the Chiniak
34 Bay besides Buskin fish is the take-home. That's what
35 we know. The commercial fishery is -- has, you know,
36 management plans that are mostly tied to the bigger runs
37 on the west side, Karluk, Ayakulik, and then pink salmon
38 runs, which on the East side, which would be all the
39 many, many pink salmon runs we have. That's a whole
40 other ball of wax, I guess. But the short of it is, is
41 that Chiniak Bay here where Buskin is not in part of the
42 West side management plan that -- that's driven by Karluk
43 and I include escapements for commercial fishing. It's
44 managed separately. It is part of the East side
45 management plan, which predominantly is managed for pink
46 salmon abundance beginning on July 6th. So typically,
47 commercial fishing doesn't happen near town until July
48 6th or later. That's just the way it's always been. It's
49 tied to a different management strategy than for Karluk.
50 So, hopefully that answers the question.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thanks,
3 Tyler. Brett, go ahead.
4

5 MR. RICHARDSON: I have a question for
6 Elizabeth from the Q Tribe, regarding the weir in
7 Iliuliuk Creek. Now let's say there's funding for McLees
8 setup, would that affect funding and operations
9 potentially in the town creek going forward, if you know?
10

11 MS. HINKLE: Thanks for -- yeah, I do
12 know. So, the real objective with the weir on Iliuliuk
13 Creek is to just get baseline data for that stream
14 because we don't really have any. So, actually managing
15 subsistence in that area is difficult without historic
16 data. So, we have I think three years of data right now,
17 but it might just be two. And we have continued funding
18 for that weir through next summer. So, if I were to be
19 able to get funding for McLees, this would be an
20 additional project. So, both weirs would still be
21 completely operational. And I think somebody mentioned
22 earlier, and maybe it's also worth bringing up now that
23 historically McLees had data for 20 plus years. And then
24 in 2024, we lost that funding. As far as I know, we
25 applied for the FRMP grant last year, and we were also
26 unable to secure those funds. So, it's also a very long-
27 term and informative data set that we have not been able
28 to secure funding for the past couple of years. But in
29 synopsis, yes, both of those weirs would continue if I
30 was to get funding from McLees as well.
31

32 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thanks.
33 So, I have three questions or topics that I think it'd
34 be useful to get feedback on. And I'll just run through
35 what these three topics are and then anybody who wants
36 to jump in can. So, first one, how can we increase the
37 dialogue so, similar to this conversation, although
38 maybe not at a public meeting, maybe at a public meeting.
39 I don't know. But to help increased communication about
40 the work that needs to be done, the funding that's
41 available, how we're prioritizing, and also helping to
42 break down the silos. So, that's topic one. Topic two,
43 I wrote down limnology, question mark, I would like to
44 have a little bit of dialogue about what is limnology
45 and how do you go about collecting data on it? Is that
46 going out into the field and taking samples of different
47 water bodies. That's probably a shorter topic. And then
48 I do want to get some feedback on process and timing.
49 So, this would be for people who are applying for this
50 grant or waiting to hear about awards. Do you have any

1 feedback, questions, concerns, suggestions about that?
2 So, looks like Matt Van Daele, your hand is up. Go ahead.

3
4 MR. VAN DAELE: Yes. It would be nice to
5 know who the Technical Review Committee is in going
6 through OSM to provide you all with understanding what
7 our proposals are. Second is limnology, yes, that's
8 exactly it. We're going to go out and collect water
9 samples, phytoplankton, zooplankton, all of those
10 things. Third, I'm not really sure about. Thank you.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thanks,
13 Matt. Coral, go ahead.

14
15 MS. CHERNOFF: I have a question. I don't
16 remember. Is there any -- when this goes to the Technical
17 Committee, there currently is no contact then with the
18 people who have submitted for the grants, right? So,
19 there's no opportunity for them to sit down and perhaps
20 ask questions or gain more knowledge about what's in
21 that?

22
23 MS. SENEAL: Through the Chair, Member
24 Chernoff, I don't believe so. Somebody's typing, got the
25 phone a friend, typing furiously, wait for it.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Oh, those three
28 dots.

29
30 MS. SENEAL: So, less a dialogue
31 question and answer, but the Review Committee does give
32 the reviews to the investigator. So, there's a one-way
33 delivery of feedback with strengths and weaknesses. So,
34 information for how to do better next time.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: And then is the
37 identity of the Technical Review Committee usually
38 released, or is that confidential? Cause I know with a
39 lot of other grant programs, they do not release the
40 names of the review people. Go ahead.

41
42 MS. SENEAL: Through the Chair, correct.
43 It's confidential.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Oh, Mark, go
46 ahead.

47
48 MR. WITTEVEEN: I guess I would speak a
49 little bit to the Review Committee as well. I have no
50 need to know who it is, but some of our reviews have

1 been pretty confounding there. They don't seem to really
2 have a good handle on fish biology sometimes. Some of
3 the questions they ask and in some of the comments we've
4 got in the past, we specifically address them very
5 directly in subsequent proposals and get the same
6 comments again. There have been times where I would swear
7 that the reviewers are looking at a four-year-old
8 proposal. It's really confusing and that part of the
9 process is pretty frustrating to us. There seems to be
10 a recurring idea that the cost of these projects should
11 be going down with every single component going up in
12 price, personnel, gas, lumber, everything. And we've
13 been dinged several times on, you know, just sort of
14 cost-of-living level adjustments. You know, we were
15 criticized for having inconsistent funding from year to
16 year within our project this year, and our funding was
17 identical year-to-year, and it was just a function that
18 the proposal requested the first year being 1.5 seasons.
19 So, we were criticized for stuff that I struggled with,
20 and I guess that that would be my input. I don't know
21 if there needs to be a back and forth between reviewers
22 and proposers. I don't think so. But that is a
23 frustrating part of that -- the proposal process.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thanks,
26 Mark. Okay. And then another comment I had heard around
27 the timing of the award announcements. And if anyone
28 online wants to speak more to this, they can. But I
29 heard frustration that perhaps in the NOFO it indicated,
30 you know, approximately this time you'll be hearing
31 about an award announcement, or maybe that was
32 communicated in a different way, and then that deadline
33 or that time completely passed and maybe it was months
34 or even a year down the road when the applicant actually
35 found out if they were awarded or not. And I can see the
36 challenge with that, if you are expecting one timeline
37 but then a different timeline manifests. I say this
38 realizing if you've got funding challenges or funding
39 uncertainty that that could be challenging, that could
40 be leading to these timing issues. But then if this is
41 a program that's completely within OSM, it seems like
42 maybe there's a way to level out those swings or delays
43 with timing because we've got applicants who are trying
44 to do very time-specific projects. Putting a weir in for
45 salmon, it's very time specific. If you don't get it in
46 time, whether it's May or June, you've lost your whole
47 season and you're not going to need it for that year.
48 But anyway, I see Mark has his hand up.
49
50

1 MR. WITTEVEEN: Madam Chair, yes. I hate
2 to monopolize this part of the discussion. But to answer
3 your question, yes, the timing is very difficult for
4 OSM. And I understand that part of that is, you know,
5 as a federal agency, I have this big unwieldy federal
6 funding creature. And -- but the timing is very long. I
7 mean, typically we're looking at fourteen to sixteen or
8 eighteen months between the time we propose to the time
9 that the funding is announced. And that announcement
10 usually comes in the springtime, between March and May,
11 when most of our hiring is done. So, the pool of
12 applicants is very difficult to find qualified people
13 to get -- like our administrative staff kind of freaks
14 out when they get a big pot of money at the last minute
15 and we have to sort of hit the ground running in mid-
16 May. That's fairly difficult to deal with. And, you know,
17 just as a perspective, AKSSF, the time that that proposal
18 package is reviewed is five to seven months, and the
19 notice of award is in December. And I think they're
20 pretty hard on that schedule. And that might be the
21 difference between a state administered federal funding
22 and directly from the feds. I don't know. But you know
23 also their preparation, like for us we've probably spent
24 five or six weeks on the federal -- on the OSM proposal
25 package and the AKSSF was a week and a half or two weeks
26 of our time. And that's two people you know working
27 pretty good at getting all the i's dotted and t's
28 crossed. And then just the reporting in general, the OSM
29 requires several financial updates, several progress
30 updates, a pretty big report every year, a really big
31 report at the end of the four-year cycle. And between
32 the proposal and the progress reports and the annual
33 reports, you know, it is a load of staff time. So, just
34 to offer that perspective. Thank you.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thanks,
37 Mark. Pat.

38
39 MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair, thank you. Good
40 comments, Mark. I would think that being -- we've
41 discussed this at least 25 years that I've been around,
42 there needs to be some consistency in the review timing
43 and process and the boards. And what has consistently
44 been the request of the RACs has been, what's the most
45 important thing, what gets the fish to the people. And
46 that's knowing how many fish are going to be available
47 with the weirs. And so, that in my mind should be like,
48 the number one thing, you should be developing a calendar
49 in which that can be done and in a reasonable time period
50 to allow programs to continue. And I know that you're

1 tightening up on ethics and whatnot, but I have known
2 people that have been involved in your shop that no
3 longer are there, years gone, that have told me, like
4 when we lost the funding at McLees, was that they assumed
5 -- they knew that Fish and Game, because of their
6 connection to Fish and Game, that there was money there
7 to fund a weir, and it was not there. And so, sometimes
8 there are some decisions that really should be checked
9 out, and particularly for things that are so important,
10 like the weirs. And so, it's just a suggestion for you
11 folks to explore. When I first started, we would have
12 one, either a chairman or vice chair, would go up for
13 these discussions on funding. They didn't make any
14 judgments, but they sat there in the room to provide
15 information as to why that project was so important to
16 the communities. That disappeared a long time ago.
17 Anyway, just some thoughts thank you.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Pat. We'll
20 take Elizabeth Hinkle and then Jon Gerken. Elizabeth.

21
22 MS. HINKLE: Yeah, thanks. Yeah to add
23 to what both of these guys just said I agree the timing
24 is unideal and in the sake of -- for the sake of
25 discussion I guess, from the committee side who decides
26 you know how this money is handed out, like logistically
27 what are the challenges there? You know, could those
28 awards be given in the fall or the -- earlier in the
29 spring or is that just too logistically complex to change
30 at this point?

31
32 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, if Anna wants
33 to try to answer this, that's fine. Otherwise, this may
34 be something that would need to be discussed back at the
35 OSM house. But Anna, if you want to respond, you can.

36
37 MS. SENEAL: Thank you. Anna Senecal,
38 OSM, through the Chair. I don't have a specific answer,
39 but there are lots of boundaries that we work with. And
40 so, one is receiving the budget, as was alluded to by
41 Mark. We need to wait not for a continuing resolution,
42 but for a budget, and then we need -- that kind of sets
43 the clock. We also come back to RAC meetings for your
44 input. So, there are these landmarks in the timeline,
45 in the schedule that we -- that our policy -- they could
46 be changed, but it is the way that we have done things.
47 We know that this is a long and drawn-out timeline as
48 far as other funding programs go. And it's been picked
49 up and looked at and turned over, kicked the tires again
50 and again, looking for ways to shorten that timeline.

1 And so far we haven't figured it out. Additionally, we
2 have to take the process to the Federal Subsistence Board
3 who meets in January and again, we always have to wait
4 on a federal budget. So, we just have these really hard
5 windows in the timeline that we have to -- we have to
6 hit, we have to work within.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Sorry. And now we
9 have Jon Gerken.

10

11 MR. GERKEN: Yeah, thank you. Through the
12 Chair. Just one other -- excuse me, one other important
13 piece to know about the FRMP is that, it is one of the
14 maybe last funding opportunities that does not require
15 a non-federal match. And so, you know, with folks like
16 me, Fish and Wildlife Service, it's hard to typically
17 find that. Even in the tribal groups, it's hard to find
18 that unless it's coming from a non-federal entity. And
19 the State's got some options, but even their general
20 fund is pretty well spoken for. So, there's a lot of
21 attraction to the FRMP because you don't have that check
22 mark whereas, you know, a AKSSF or some of the other I
23 guess big funding sources do require a 30% match in many
24 instances. So, just keep that in mind that's probably
25 why we get a lot of attraction and a lot of proposals
26 every year is because the constraints are not as high
27 as some of the other competitive funding sources.

28

29 And just a couple comments on the weir
30 stuff. I do think there's an attraction to many of the
31 ones that you guys listed in your priority information
32 needs, and Mark spoke to it a little bit. But, you know,
33 having long data sets is important because, you know,
34 you have to understand the full life history of the
35 fish, right? So, you count fish one year, you still
36 need, depending upon the species, you know, five years
37 to understand what that fish that you enumerated at, you
38 know, what it brings back, right? So, all of these weirs
39 need to have long-term data sets. And so, the ones that
40 are listed in that priority information need are
41 attractive because they have been operated in the past
42 so there are some comparative data to compare that to,
43 so. And then the third part is, I don't fully understand
44 the difference between the PIN number one and the PIN
45 number two. Typically, when there's scale pattern
46 analysis done it's included or it's part of the weir
47 operation. So, you actually need the weir in order to
48 get the scale pattern analysis stuff unless you're going
49 to just do something very specific, like Mark alluded
50 to some other methods that you can use to collect fish,

1 but at least in my experience you need the weir or some
2 other escapement project to collect the fish. You do the
3 scale pattern analysis on that, so, it's kind of like
4 the same -- it's part of the same PIN, I guess, when you
5 say reliable estimates on these fish, you would be doing
6 the scale pattern analysis. And many times that's a
7 requirement by the State where you need to collect scales
8 as part of the enumeration project to get the permit.
9 So, thank you.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, thanks, Jon.
12 And that actually was the discussion we had at the
13 subgroup. The scale analysis was kind of viewed as an
14 add-on. So, it wouldn't be as standalone. It would be
15 something that could potentially be added on to the weir.
16 So, I know it's not worded that way or presented that
17 way, but that is how the subgroup talked about it. Okay.
18 I don't think there's any more hands online. Oh, Pat,
19 go ahead.

20
21 MR. HOLMES: I would like to comment to
22 the OSM staff, you know, sometimes I'm critical and bring
23 up dirt from the past, I think you folks do an incredible
24 job. And I think the process that you're going through
25 in reviewing funding and all the materials that you have
26 giving us from the handouts on trying to sort things out
27 and come up with priorities and how to redefine things
28 in a much better way is very commendable. And so, you
29 guys do a good job and it's just -- mistakes happened
30 in the past, and that's the way it goes. I just hope
31 that we can find some way to have some consistent funding
32 for enumerating the fish, because that's what gets the
33 fish home to folks and gets it in the jars in my back
34 bedroom, which I can't. So, thank you.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks, Pat. I
37 guess I'll look to Anna. This was not your topic but OSM
38 was really wanting to get more feedback, or I interpreted
39 it as having more dialogue about this. Did this go kind
40 of how -- okay, getting the thumbs up that this was good
41 or acceptable. Okay. So, by the end of this agenda item,
42 we are supposed to adopt our priority information needs.
43 So again, what you -- in the materials and what you've
44 heard, there were two PINs that are recommended out of
45 the working group. Those are essentially the monitoring
46 and then the scale analysis. And I forget exactly what
47 page they're on, but those are -- that's the
48 recommendation coming out of the KARAC and Bristol Bay
49 working group that met over the summer. Does it seem
50 like we are ready to vote on these PINs? Do we want to

1 have more discussion? And I -- we probably still have
2 the people online who participated in the discussion. I
3 guess first I'll ask, is there anything else for them
4 before they drop off and we get into the Council part
5 of the work? Pat, go ahead.

6
7 MR. HOLMES: This is a bit of a tangent,
8 but it just struck me in reviewing the last discussions
9 on funding. We had the Buskin and McLees for our region,
10 and yet Bristol Bay had one, two, three, four different
11 projects tossed out. Is the number of projects that are
12 considered, is that a function of the population size
13 or how does that happen? Because the regions are --
14 we're half of one region, one district. And so, it would
15 seem at least logical on a personal perspective from the
16 Western region that we would have similar numbers or
17 similar amounts of funding on these PINs.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Anna, would you
20 like to take a stab at that?

21
22 MS. SENECA: Through the Chair, Anna
23 Senecal, OSM fish biologist. I mean, it really came down
24 to the work of the volunteer group. We sat in the virtual
25 room together and we discussed the funding landscape and
26 your priorities. And there was back and forth. And it
27 kind of came down to that. I mean, that could be a
28 discussion that you pick back up as a volunteer group.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: I guess, Pat, were
31 you asking about priorities or funded projects? Or what
32 was your question?

33
34 MR. HOLMES: Funding of projects, because
35 it was suggested that we had our two major things from
36 our half of the district and Bristol Bay had four. And
37 so, I'm just wondering on balance, what we got there,
38 McLees, Buskin, and then Bristol Bay had Big Creek,
39 Togiak, Chignik. So, they had three; one, two, three.
40 And anyway, before -- but anyway, just wondering how
41 that evolved.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, I think Pat's
44 question, as I understand it, has to do with funding of
45 projects, not coming up with the priorities. And he's
46 asking if the funding between KARAC and Bristol Bay has
47 anything to do with the populations of each of those,
48 call them sub regions. I'm guessing it does not. My
49 understanding from listening to all of this through the
50 years is, the proposals come in, we are in one FRMP

1 region. All of those projects get thrown into a bucket
2 and they are reviewed according to the criteria. So, the
3 review committee, Technical Review Committee uses that
4 criteria for all of the projects and ranks them. And
5 then we do have a chance to look at those ranked
6 projects. I'm not sure how much our input actually
7 changes the outcome at that point. But at no time have
8 I ever heard population having any impact whatsoever.
9 Okay, so Anna is shaking her head that within the review
10 process for deciding what projects to award, there is
11 no consideration of population of the -- so for us, it'd
12 be between Bristol Bay and Kodiak. And what we have up
13 on the screen right now are the two recommended priority
14 information needs that came out of the working
15 subcommittee or subgroup. Which included both Bristol
16 Bay and KARAC representatives. And again, it's not
17 worded this way, but the scale analysis really was viewed
18 as an add-on to a monitoring project. And perhaps that
19 may need to actually be called out in there. So, the
20 question is, are we ready to vote on the PINs? And if
21 so, do these PINs look acceptable or do we want to have
22 more discussion? What is the will of the Council?

23
24 Yeah, and so the screen is being shared,
25 so everyone online should also be looking at the same
26 thing that we see in the room. Brett, go ahead.

27
28 MR. RICHARDSON: I think we're pretty
29 ready to vote on this. I would see if we can move scale
30 analysis as more of a sub point to the top, making
31 basically one PIN with the analysis kind of tagging
32 along.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, can -- is
35 everyone okay with that? Okay. Oh, perfect. Look at that.
36 Okay, so on the screen we have -- so essentially, we
37 would have one main -- one PIN which is monitoring
38 projects and then we have this kind of a -- an add-on
39 alternative. I think of it almost as, you know, do you
40 want fries with that? You would only get it if you've
41 ordered the hamburger. The hamburger is the first
42 paragraph. The fries is the alternative part. And does
43 anyone want to make a motion that the KARAC approve this
44 as our PINs for whichever year this is for? Is this our
45 2028 PIN? 2028 PIN. Thank you.

46
47 MR. RICHARDSON: Yeah. Brett Richardson,
48 Unalaska. I moved to adopt the -- these PINs for 2028,
49 with FRMP funding.

50

1 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
2 you. Is there a second?

3
4 MR. HOLMES: Second.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank
7 you, Pat. Is there any discussion? Coral, go ahead.

8
9 MS. CHERNOFF: Thank you, Madam Chair. I
10 would just like to put this out there, that I think in
11 looking at this, I don't think that having estimates and
12 just looking into future PINs or asks for maybe Sun'aq
13 or someone to come up with, I don't think reliable
14 estimates -- I don't think there's any doubt of the
15 abundance of salmon populations. What I see is our
16 struggle to be able to get subsistence when we're
17 competing with so much more commercial and then sport.
18 So, I think the direction we should look at is how do
19 we get our fair share when we're only asking for a little
20 tiny bit. There's no doubt -- if you look all across the
21 state at the number of salmon that were caught this
22 summer across the state, the numbers are in the
23 thousands. So, I just feel like maybe even in the
24 millions, I'm not even sure how many commercial fish are
25 caught these days. So, I don't think abundance is the
26 issue. I think we have to look at how do we get our
27 subsistence in this process of a shared resource.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thanks,
30 Coral. Any further discussion? Daniel, go ahead.

31
32 MR. SMITH: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair.
33 You know, just going off of Coral's comment, I'm
34 wondering if rather than reliable estimates of the
35 abundance of salmon populations, I wonder if we can kind
36 of modify the verbiage saying, reliable escapement
37 estimates. Because from what I'm gathering is what we're
38 just discussing is we just want to have the statement
39 and monitor that, rather than saying estimates of the
40 abundance of salmon populations. I think that might be
41 a better approach.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thanks,
44 Daniel. From sitting through the work group discussion,
45 I think that that is consistent with what the work group
46 discussed. It says it in a more specific and targeted
47 way. I guess Pat and Brett, do you have any -- does that
48 seem to make sense? Do you have any concerns with that
49 proposed language change?

50

1 (No response)

2

3 Okay, I'm not seeing any objection to
4 that.

5

6 Coral, go ahead.

7

8 (Pause)

9

10 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, I guess I have a
11 question in what we mean by the assessment of changes.
12 Is that just the weir counts year-to-year? Or do we mean
13 something else?

14

15 (No response)

16

17 I mean, I guess that's what I'm reading
18 it as, so that all just comes basically, if you're
19 reading it from the information we're getting from the
20 weirs.

21

22 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, my
23 understanding is this is kind of a reference to these
24 long time series of information. So, we've heard about
25 how McLees Weir was in for, I already forgot how many
26 years, and the Buskin weir was in for even longer than
27 that. So, you have these long time series so you can --
28 if -- so there's a very low run this year, you can see
29 how that compares to this long historical average that's
30 kind of -- that's how I interpreted the assessment of
31 changes as you're comparing the enumerated fish, the
32 result of the enumeration to what it looked like in the
33 past. So, you could -- you get a sense of, do we need
34 to panic this year because it's really low or wow that's
35 way higher that's the highest it's ever been in the
36 whole time series. But that was my non-scientific
37 interpretation of what that meant.

38

39 All right, so we have on the screen, we
40 have a PIN and there was a motion and a second to adopt
41 this PIN. So, now there have been changes made, but
42 everyone kind of nodded their heads with Daniel's
43 proposed change. Is there any objection to adopting this
44 PIN for the 2028 FRMP? Pat, go ahead.

45

46 MR. HOLMES: I'm wondering on that added
47 statement there, reliable escapement estimates of
48 returning salmon populations, and I think that might be
49 a little more definitive.

50

1 (Pause)

2

3 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, so we've
4 added the word returning. I think that just adds more
5 specificity. I don't think it changes the overall intent
6 of the PIN. Okay, is there any objection to adopting
7 this PIN for 2028 FRMP?

8

9 MR. HOLMES: Move to adopt.

10

11 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, yep, we
12 already had a motion and a second to adopt, so we're at
13 the voting stage. I'm just gonna ask for objection
14 instead of doing a roll call.

15

16 (No response)

17

18 Okay, and I'm not hearing or seeing, and
19 I can't -- I don't have -- we don't have the computer
20 screen to see Daniel's hand, but I'm assuming he has not
21 objected. Oh, it's up there. Okay. All right, so hearing
22 no objection, this PIN is adopted for 2028 FRMP. I would
23 ask Leigh if you could let the Bristol Bay RAC know what
24 we did, so that if they want to put the same change in
25 and hopefully follow the recommendation of the subgroup,
26 that would be great.

27

28 MS. HONIG: Yes, for sure. We have our
29 fish team online who will relay this information to the
30 Bristol Bay Council.

31

32 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. So, we have
33 finished, 11.f and thank you everyone from Fish and Game.
34 So, thank you, Tyler. Thank you, Mark. Thank you, Matt.
35 Thank you, Jon. And thank you, Elizabeth for calling in
36 and participating in that, in the discussion we had on
37 FRMP. So, we have now finished Agenda Item 11.f. Would
38 Council members like to take a short break or shall we
39 continue on? Break? Okay, let's go ahead and take a 10-
40 minute break. We'll come back at 3:15.

41

42 (Off record)

43

44 (On record)

45

46 Okay, we are ready to continue on with
47 the meeting. And since we did our time certain agenda
48 item, now we're going to circle back up farther up in
49 the agenda. And we are now at Item 11.c, which is
50 Consider Joint Council Letter Requesting Funding and

1 Staffing for Resource Monitoring. I do want to note that
2 we haven't taken action yet on our annual report items,
3 and I am planning to take that up tomorrow. So, that's
4 the last part of Item b. But we are now going to do Item
5 c, the Joint Council Letter Requesting Funding and
6 Staffing for Resource Monitoring. And I'm going to hand
7 it over to Leigh.

8
9 MS. HONIG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just
10 an FYI, this one is a handout, so it should be in your
11 stack of papers. Daniel, this is also -- and the public,
12 this is also available online. But this is a joint letter
13 from the 10 Regional Advisory Councils as a result of
14 the FSB work session in August. This is requesting that
15 the Federal Subsistence Board elevate to the Secretaries
16 a request for adequate funding and staffing for
17 fisheries and wildlife monitoring in Alaska. The letter
18 asks for three things. One is to restore FRMP funding
19 to at least FY25 levels adjusted for inflation, with
20 dedicated staff. And establish an equivalent wildlife
21 resources monitoring program with staff. And lift the
22 hiring freeze and adequately staff Alaska resource
23 management agencies and OSM.

24
25 The letter also explains why stable
26 monitoring matters for management and subsistence
27 opportunities and cites the research responsibilities
28 in ANILCA Title VIII Section 812. So, the Council can
29 discuss the letter and identify any changes or concerns
30 before taking action. And if there's any substantial
31 changes or if the Council feels like they want to address
32 certain topics specifically for their region, one option
33 is we can also draft a letter that can coincide with
34 this letter, and we can send it as a packet on to the
35 Secretaries. Thank you, Madam Chair.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thank
38 you. So, I will continue to look at this letter. But it
39 came up in our pre-meeting, the issue of whether this
40 letter said, don't decrease money going to fisheries
41 monitoring in order to fund wildlife monitoring. Did any
42 -- was there any like a -- was that specific statement
43 added to the -- is this letter any different from the
44 one we looked at during our pre-meeting?

45
46 MS. HONIG: No, it is the same meeting.
47 No edits have been made to it.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Thank you.
50

1 (Pause)

2

3 Okay, given that -- well, let me
4 clarify. So, if we ask that that language be added to
5 this letter, is that possible? Or would we need to
6 generate our own letter to cover that very specific
7 topic?

8

9 MS. HONIG: It's my understanding that
10 an edit like that can just be made to this base letter.
11 You wouldn't need to create an additional letter.

12

13 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. So, not a
14 motion, because I'm chairing the meeting. But what I
15 would suggest is that on page two in the numbered list,
16 so under number two, establish an equivalent wildlife
17 resource monitoring program, with staff to manage the
18 program. I would just add additional words that say
19 without taking away from fisheries monitoring but maybe
20 use slightly better words than that. And my reason for
21 that is particularly for our region, the monitoring of
22 fisheries is very important. There's -- everywhere in
23 our region relies very heavily on fisheries. And so, I
24 would not want to see adding wildlife monitoring come
25 at the cost of the fisheries monitoring. But if the
26 wildlife monitoring can be added in addition to
27 fisheries monitoring, then I think that that is great.
28 And we have as a RAC spoken in the past about needing
29 more consistent wildlife caribou monitoring, that kind
30 of thing. Are there any other comments or questions about
31 this joint letter?

32

33 MR. HOLMES: I think your points on not
34 deleting any funding from existing programs. I think
35 that that's a very, very good comment, and I think it
36 would also be good to have your phraseology in there and
37 that several regions in the cap -- and state, are more
38 relied on fish -- fisheries than on wildlife. You know,
39 that's some kind of paraphrasing of that. I think I
40 think your comments are really good, Becky.

41

42 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, question on
43 that, maybe this is to Leigh, would that particular
44 nuance be better in a in a separate letter?

45

46 MS. HONIG: I think if you would like to
47 expand on that, it might be better to go into a separate
48 letter. If it's just like a little tweaking of the
49 language, then that would be fine to keep it in the
50 original letter.

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MR. HOLMES: I think it would probably be better to have it as a separate letter just so that it makes the point. Myself, I'd have it in bold.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay.

MS. HONIG: Just to have it clear on the record, it would be good to have it as motion.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, so Pat has made a motion that we -- so, this isn't -- we can still sign on to the joint letter, but a motion to generate a separate letter from KARAC and there may be multiple things in that letter, but one of them would be to emphasize the importance of fishery resources to our region. And that while we do support increased monitoring for wildlife, we definitely don't want to take away from the fishery monitoring because our region just particularly relies very heavily on fisheries. And then if there's any -- so, that says motion, is there a second?

MR. HOLMES: Second.

MR. RICHARDSON: Second.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Brett seconded Pat's motion. And then if there's other items besides that that you would like in an individual KARAC letter, this would be a good time to bring that up during discussion. So, is there any additional discussion or additional items to include in this letter? And again, this is a standalone letter from KARAC. We will still vote on whether to sign on to the joint letter.

(No response)

(Pause)

Daniel, go ahead.

MR. SMITH: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. I don't know if this would be specifically for a letter from the KARAC but, just looking at the third request of lifting the hiring freeze and adequately staff Alaska Resource Management Agencies and the Office of Subsistence Management. I guess I have a little bit of confusion about the word adequately staff and maybe a better -- maybe a little bit better of a choice of words

1 would be like adequately staff agencies, OSM to original
2 levels, you know, prior to 2024, since a lot of those
3 positions were taken out. And so, I guess I just have a
4 little bit of confusion about what the word adequately
5 would mean. Maybe that'd be a little bit of discussion
6 there.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: So, this letter
9 manifested itself through OSM. So, would anyone from OSM
10 like to take a stab at responding to that?

11
12 (Pause)

13
14 MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin, for the
15 record. And just to be clear, the question was, what
16 does adequate mean when it says adequately staffed?

17
18 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, what does
19 adequately mean and then if you had any other response
20 to the kind of the suggestion -- I think the
21 question/suggestion is around -- let's be clear and what
22 we're asking for. And are we -- I'm reading into the
23 question, or do we want somebody up the chain to
24 interpret and define what adequately means, or do we
25 want to be more specific around what we think adequate
26 means? And so, then I'm now turning to OSM to see, can
27 you recommend what do you think adequately means?

28
29 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah, Lisa Grediagin. I
30 think adequately -- I mean, it's in ANILCA that the
31 Councils need to be adequately staffed. And so, I think
32 that the language in that letter may, you know, we're
33 kind of used to the term adequately staffed because
34 that's what ANILCA uses. But I would say, I mean, that
35 the positions on your org chart are filled. I mean, to
36 me, that's what adequately means. You know, if you got
37 the position on your org chart, you know, there's a
38 reason and you should be able to fill it. And right now,
39 I mean, we have so many vacancies on our org chart and
40 not able to fill any of them. So, maybe to be specific,
41 you could just say, fill positions that are currently
42 on your org chart.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Daniel, does that
45 answer your question?

46
47 MR. SMITH: It does. I think probably
48 being more specific would be better in this case. And
49 so, it doesn't, you know like you were mentioning earlier
50 Rebecca, goes up the chain and someone decides what

090

1 adequately means.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, so maybe....

4

5 (Simultaneous speech)

6

7 MR. SMITH: Thanks.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Go ahead. Thanks.

10 Okay, sorry.

11

12 MR. SMITH: Yeah.

13

14 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Maybe -- I'm not
15 opposed to leaving adequately staffed or adequately in
16 there because if you're reflecting back to the ANILCA,
17 I think that's fine. But maybe lift the hiring freeze
18 and fill all vacant positions. That's -- I would
19 understand that to be the same thing as what Lisa just
20 said about if you have a position on the (indiscernible),
21 it should be filled. So, it could say lift the hiring
22 freeze and fill all vacant positions to ensure adequate
23 staffing for Alaska resource management. So, you can
24 still leave the adequately staffed in there.

25

26 (Pause)

27

28 Okay, I'm sorry. I guess I -- we had a
29 motion on the floor to generate a specific KARAC letter
30 that would emphasize we are a fisheries dependent region
31 and we don't want to see wildlife monitoring come at the
32 cost of fisheries monitoring. So, that was the motion
33 on the floor. Is there any other discussion on that? And
34 then we'll go back to the joint letter that Daniel was
35 just commenting on.

36

37 (No Response)

38

39 And if there's no further discussion,
40 is there any objection to Pat's motion to generate a
41 KARAC specific letter emphasizing our dependence on
42 fisheries?

43

44 (No Response)

45

46 Okay, seeing and hearing none. That
47 motion passes. So, we will generate a KARAC specific
48 letter that basically says, yeah, we'd love to fund
49 resource monitoring or wildlife resource monitoring. But
50 our region is highly dependent on fisheries resources,

1 so we don't want to give any of that up. Okay, so we're
2 back to the joint letter. We have talked about two
3 changes to the joint letter. In the numbered list on
4 page two, one was to add at the end of number two,
5 without harming fisheries monitoring or without coming
6 at the cost of fisheries monitoring. And then we had
7 discussion on item number three, which was lifting --
8 something like lifting the hiring freeze and filling all
9 vacant positions to ensure adequate staffing for Alaska
10 resource management. So, it's being a little bit more
11 specific around what is meant by adequately staff. And
12 does anyone want to make a motion to sign on to this
13 joint letter?

14
15 MR. HOLMES: I'd like to move that we
16 join on to the joint letter there because it'll give us
17 solidarity with the other RACs.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thank
20 you. Is there a second?

21
22 MR. SMITH: I'll second that.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thank
25 you. Is there any further discussion on the joint -- and
26 then just to clarify..... Okay, is there any further
27 discussion on the joint letter?

28
29 (No Response)

30
31 Is there any objection to signing on to
32 the joint resource monitoring letter?

33
34 (No Response)

35
36 Okay. Seeing and hearing none, that
37 motion passes. And then just for our purposes, the two
38 changes we asked for will be run up the chain or run
39 through the other RAC somehow.

40
41 MS. HONIG: Yes, that is correct.

42
43 MR. HOLMES: Would it be strategic to
44 perhaps in that phraseology there say that we recognize
45 the needs for improved wildlife management in other
46 regions of the state. But we are, you know, the
47 phraseology we had about our fisheries just kind of give
48 a little more impact of saying that on the joint letter
49 we're going for you, but don't forget about us.

50

1 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, I think
2 that's completely appropriate to put into the KARAC
3 letter. So, to emphasize that we do support wildlife
4 monitoring, we recognize other regions have a -- I mean,
5 they may have a very high reliance on wildlife, but that
6 for our region, we rely on fisheries. So -- and also, I
7 think acknowledgement that the regions are different.
8 But yeah, I think that's appropriate for the KARAC
9 letter. Thank you.

10
11 MR. HOLMES: And that's good. And then
12 that would also, you know, the difficulties we've had
13 with the herd there on the Alaska Peninsula Caribou,
14 that, you know, we'd like to have more information on
15 that. And, yeah, I think that's a good approach, Becky.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Alright, so that
18 was Agenda Item 11.c. We will move on to Agenda Item
19 11.d, Future Meeting Dates. Is there any objection to
20 taking this up now? I had originally said maybe we do
21 it later in the meeting, but after thinking about it, I
22 don't think there's any reason we can't decide future
23 meeting dates right now.

24
25 (No Response)

26
27 And so, that is on confirming winter
28 2027 meeting date and location. That's on page 261 of
29 the main packet.

30
31 (Pause)

32
33 So, for KARAC, that would be -- this is
34 a March meeting. We have March 10th and 11th in Kodiak.
35 Does that...?

36
37 (Pause)

38
39 Okay, we are going to need a motion on
40 this. I'm actually going to suggest we do these meetings
41 separately. So, does anyone want to make a motion to
42 confirm our March 2027 meeting as occurring March 10th
43 and 11th in Kodiak?

44
45 MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair, I'd like to
46 move that we have our meeting March 10th and March 11th
47 in Kodiak.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Pat. Is
50 there a second?

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MR. RICHARDSON: Second.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Thank you, Brett. Is there any discussion?

(No response)

Okay. Seeing and hearing none. Is there any objection?

(No response)

Okay, seeing and hearing none. Those dates are confirmed for winter of 2027. Next would be our fall 2027 meeting date and location. This is on page 263 of the packet. And for Kodiak, we are down for September 15th and 16th at [sic] 2027 in Cold Bay. And I feel like I should note when we originally chose the Cold Bay location, I was heavily influenced by the fact that we had a Council member in Cold Bay, which we no longer have. That doesn't mean we shouldn't go to Cold Bay, but that was something I was thinking when I originally voted in support of the location. Go ahead, Katya.

MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just about the fall meetings. You have a member on your Council that seems like never can make the fall meetings. And I just wanted to ask the Council if you want to consider some other dates to accommodate that Council member. You know whom I'm talking about, Sam.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Has Sam communicated dates that might work for him?

MS. WESSELS: No, he did not. I -- we wanted to reach [sic] to him, but we didn't have time to do that. Because I know other Councils, they also have some Council members that have other circumstance that prevent them to meet certain times. It just -- that's for your consideration, and suggestion. And also, in regards to the place to meet, you might want to consider Sand Point or King Cove as well, or even coming back to Unalaska, so people in the community get to know the Council more.

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, go ahead.

1 MR. HOLMES: Yeah, I was wondering, you
2 know, we can just leave it as it is at this point, and
3 then we can -- when we have our March meeting and we can
4 discuss it further. I've talked with Sam a lot and the
5 reason that we really supported him is because he has
6 such an extensive experience with wildlife in the Kodiak
7 area as a guide. And so, he's out in this hunting camp
8 in the fall. And I've tried for about a week sending
9 emails to his satellite connection and not being able
10 to get with him. And calling his mom and dad and whatnot
11 because it would be -- I practically beg him to somehow
12 use his satellite phone to call in on some of the key
13 issues at least. And so, I think we should probably work
14 on him a little bit more on that to see if there's some
15 way that we could get him more involved and if it's a
16 change of dates or something like that, I don't know.
17 Because, you know basically, I think his field season
18 starts in August and runs until probably October,
19 November, but I don't know. But I think it's worthy of
20 inquiring with him. But he certainly is a very viable
21 and important member of our Council on the other issues.

22
23 And I think maybe -- I've got -- Katya's
24 suggestion of maybe considering somewhere else. I think,
25 you know, we might explore Sand Point sometime because
26 there's some folks there that -- we haven't been to Sand
27 Point in, I don't know, 15-20 years. But that's also a
28 tricky place to find a place to stay. And it's almost
29 as tight as getting in and out of Cold Bay. But there
30 are some folks there that I know have been very
31 supportive of Della and that's a consideration. I think
32 if we go to Cold Bay, I was wondering if our coordination
33 might check about seeing if we couldn't [sic] stay at
34 the refuge housing. Because that was probably some of
35 the best remote housing that I've ever stayed at in our
36 meetings. And that would significantly reduce the cost.
37 So, just a couple thoughts. Thank you, Madam Chair.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. So I
40 actually heard a couple of suggestions there. One was
41 to leave the fall 2027 meeting dates and location as is
42 and revisit the question in the March meeting. Leigh,
43 does that timing make any difference? Like, would you
44 have been trying to make arrangements before March?

45
46 MS. HONIG: No, that should be fine to
47 really finalize it at the winter meeting.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, so I heard
50 one suggestion to leave it as is and then I heard a

1 suggestion or maybe some discussion on considering a
2 location other than Cold Bay. So, I think what I would
3 look for now is a motion to do something, either a motion
4 to leave it as is for now and then revisit it at the
5 March meeting, or if somebody wants to propose a
6 different location or different dates. And I think in
7 the meantime, we also -- it'll help to get more feedback
8 from Sam, to see if the timing makes any difference to
9 his ability to attend the meeting. So, does anyone want
10 to make a motion?

11
12 MR. HOLMES: Madam Chair, I move that we
13 leave the March meeting as we have now, set up for Kodiak
14 and then when we have that meeting, that we review the
15 September meeting location and dates if that is
16 possible.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. We already
19 did the motion on the March meeting, what we're doing
20 now is a motion specific to the September 2027 meeting.
21 So, it's either leaving it the dates and the location
22 as is, understanding that we can revisit it in March,
23 or it's suggesting a different location.

24
25 MR. HOLMES: I move that we leave it as
26 it is and then we can discuss it further later.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. Is there a
29 second?

30
31 MR. RICHARDSON: I have a second.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thanks,
34 Brett. Is there any further discussion?

35
36 (No response)

37
38 Okay, is there any objection? And again,
39 just restating the motion is to leave our fall 2027
40 meeting for September 15th and 16th in Cold Bay.

41
42 (No response)

43
44 All right, hearing -- I think I just
45 asked if there was any objection. So, hearing and seeing
46 no objection, that motion passes.

47
48 Okay, so that concludes Agenda Item
49 11.d, future meeting dates. Agenda Item 11.e, Fisheries
50 Updates. This was actually kind of related to FRMP and

1 we've already covered that. So, I just wanted to note
2 that there is -- there's nothing additional to Agenda
3 Item 11.e, Fisheries Updates. Okay. So, that takes us
4 to Agenda Item 12, Partners for Fisheries Monitoring
5 Program update.

6
7 MS. SENECA: Thank you, Madam Chair,
8 Council members. For the record, I'm Anna Senecal, fish
9 biologist, Office of Subsistence Management. I have a
10 short Partners update for you. Let's see. The Office of
11 Subsistence Management will soon post a notice of
12 funding opportunity for the Partners for Fisheries
13 Monitoring Program this coming winter. This is another
14 funding program. It's a competitive grant for tribes,
15 Alaska Natives, and rural nonprofit organizations. As
16 compared to the FRMP, anybody who is qualified to conduct
17 such research can apply. This is specifically for
18 tribes, Alaska Native, and rural nonprofit
19 organizations. For successful applicants, awards would
20 be available in spring of 2028. The intent of this
21 program is to strengthen Alaska Native and rural
22 involvement in federal subsistence management. So, it's
23 capacity building. Providing salary funds to
24 organizations so they can hire a professional biologist,
25 a social scientist, or an educator. This program can
26 also be used to fund science and culture camps, and it
27 can be used to run paid student internships. For more
28 information on this funding opportunity, you can go to
29 grants.gov and grantsolutions.gov. The main program
30 points of contact within OSM are Jarred Stone or Liz
31 Williams, and their contact information can be found on
32 our OSM website. That's
33 <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/partners>. Thank you,
34 Madam Chair. This concludes my updates on the Partners
35 for Fisheries Monitoring Program. Does the Council have
36 any questions about this program?

37
38 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: I don't have a
39 question. I have a suggestion that you include a
40 hyperlink on the agenda to that web address for their
41 contact information. That would be great. All right. But
42 I feel like there was no dialogue here. Does anybody
43 have any questions or comments?

44
45 (No comments)

46
47 All right. We're not seeing any. Thank
48 you.

49
50 (Pause)

1
2 Oh, except the next Agenda Item is also
3 and Anna Senecal. Which is Agenda Item 13, Council Chairs
4 Meeting/Salmon Crisis Workshop and this is a handout.
5 So, we have a stack of papers. And it's the one that's
6 called Alaska Salmon in Crisis and I think it is just
7 that set of papers. But you can go ahead and start
8 whenever you're ready.
9

10 MS. SENEAL: Okay. Thank you, Madam
11 Chair, Council members. The -- so, the way we had talked
12 about presenting or dialoguing over this information was
13 to first give the Council participants, the floor to
14 provide their perspectives and feedbacks [sic], which
15 you offered in your Chair's report. But before I go down
16 the list, Chair Skinner, are there additional opening
17 thoughts or feedback threads you'd like to pick up and
18 run with?
19

20 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: On the whole
21 experience or...?
22

23 MS. SENEAL: Thoughts, impressions,
24 highlights.
25

26 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Sure. So, I think
27 that it is really important, or I guess what I would ask
28 KARAC members, other RACs and the program to keep in
29 mind is the importance of finding common ground or common
30 positions or common perspectives and then running with
31 those common perspectives. And I think there's a huge
32 difference in that because that takes a lot of work. It
33 takes a lot of work to have the dialogue and figure out
34 what do we have in common? What can we actually agree
35 on? That takes the most time and then you can figure out
36 how are we going to carry through on it. That's very
37 different than kind of starting with an agenda and then
38 just getting people to sign on to a particular agenda
39 or a particular viewpoint. The, you know, it already
40 came up in this meeting that the regions are different.
41 And I think that creates strengths, it also creates
42 challenges when you're trying -- because different
43 issues impact different regions differently. Different
44 regions have different priorities. And I'm laughing
45 cause I'm thinking of the -- is there a North Slope RAC,
46 or the person from the North Slope? I'm not sure that -
47 - not that they didn't think salmon wasn't important,
48 but I got this impression, they're kinda [sic] like,
49 wow, this is a lot on salmon. So, different regions
50 legitimately have different priorities. They look at

1 things differently. They have different perspectives.
2 What I would hate to see is that regions get pitted
3 against each other and or the program, it looks like
4 they're taking sides. So, they're taking the side of a
5 certain perspective. I think that that would be horribly
6 damaging to the program. So, my comment or feedback or
7 perspective is that I hope that that is kept in mind by
8 everyone, that it is very important to do the work to
9 find the common ground and go from there. Because
10 otherwise tough issues have the danger of just tearing
11 us apart, which is not the point. The point of this
12 trying to work together was trying to work together. So,
13 that's my overall comment and perspective.

14
15 I think overall, guessing this was the
16 first of its kind, is the first I've ever seen. So, it's
17 a learning process. I mean, kudos for OSM for pulling
18 this together. I -- could things have, you know, perhaps
19 gone a little differently? Maybe. Also, in the
20 afternoon, we were in a little -- it felt like a little
21 tiny room. It was very warm. So, we're all crowded into
22 this very tiny upstairs room, which, you know, may not
23 help when you're trying to discuss contentious things.
24 And I'm laughing and it may sound trivial, but those
25 kinds of things actually do make a difference. But I
26 think overall that those are just my high-level kind of
27 perspective and wishes for this. I may have more specific
28 things as you go through. Are you going to walk through
29 this? Okay, yeah, I may have others like specific
30 perspectives on individual or on specific things in the
31 report. Thanks.

32
33 MS. SENECA: That sounds wonderful. For
34 the record, Anna Senecal, OSM, fish biologist. Madam
35 Chair, members of the Council. Chair Skinner, I think
36 you hit the nail on the head. We came together, it was
37 unprecedented. Council Chairs asked to meet on a single
38 topic and we did the best we could with what we had. And
39 the intent of the meeting ended up not being solving the
40 salmon crisis. It ended up being workshopping how could
41 Councils work together, should they so choose. And
42 there, you can imagine the wide range of potential
43 projects that that group could endeavor to work on
44 together. So, at the end of the day, what did you walk
45 away with? You walked away with an understanding of how
46 you would conduct future meetings, work sessions. How
47 you would interact with each other in the form of
48 dialogue agreements. So, these were collectively
49 brainstormed within the group. You assessed your current
50 situation, walking through strengths, weaknesses,

1 opportunities, and threats analysis, similar to what
2 this RAC did around the FRMP last meeting. Only this was
3 looking at the RAC structure in general, and then the
4 container, the environment in which you operate, with a
5 specific emphasis on salmon in general, but beyond that,
6 considering all of the landscape, political, ecological,
7 funding, communication. All of the barriers, all of the
8 opportunities. Which were both identified in that space
9 between the existing state and the desired future state.
10 You identified some things that were standing in the
11 way, but also some potential bright spots to work on.
12

13 Those specific areas held within the gap
14 are pertinent to OSM staff as well, particularly around
15 understanding subsistence priority. We spent some time
16 throughout that work session period delving into that.
17 Thinking about agency ignorance and turnover is
18 something we walked away with. Thinking about community
19 health and unity and just acknowledging that the path
20 forward is unclear. Together you spent time thinking
21 about what a desired future would look like, what it
22 would taste like, what it would feel like, smell like,
23 and really embody that. And then into the meat of the
24 session, you spent time brainstorming the response to a
25 question. Essentially asking what it would look like to
26 work together. What would it look like to speak with a
27 common voice and to really stand in your power and work
28 on something collectively? And there was a lot of time
29 spent on talking about trust, listening, holding
30 respect, developing and maintaining integrity both
31 within the system and external to it. Being somebody,
32 being a body that people come to, they care about your
33 opinion, they ask you questions. How to increase your
34 impact? So, you can see how all these things translate
35 beyond salmon. Talking about improving processes, how
36 to communicate before and after meetings, how to follow
37 up, how to really identify what the TEK needs are, how
38 to identify the Western science needs and integrate
39 them, how to form partnerships. There was mention of
40 joint Council meetings and a desire to address the
41 strengths and weaknesses that you recognized in the
42 existing state exercise.
43

44 And then that final category, upholding
45 sovereignty. How do you do the work that you do, these
46 collective actions? What do they look like? Is it
47 additional letters? Is it meetings? Are you self-
48 organizing? Is it a subset of you? Is it entire RACs?
49 What is successful co-management? What does it look like
50 beyond subsistence, recognizing the ties to culture and

1 life and life ways? So, there's -- are a lot of really
2 high-level important foundational things talked about,
3 and they all rolled up into these big three categories.
4 So, building external trust in Councils, improving
5 process, and upholding sovereignty. Those are things
6 that you can take. If the group decides, whatever the
7 group is, if it decides to continue this work, you can
8 take those forward and apply them to whatever the project
9 is.

10
11 The first potential project which was
12 asked for was a joint meeting with the Secretaries and
13 requesting potentially that the Secretaries of Interior
14 and Agriculture also include Secretaries of Commerce and
15 potentially State to specifically think about the salmon
16 crisis. And so, one potential would be to spend time
17 thinking about that request. Of course, we can't be sure
18 that it will transpire, that a meeting will happen. But
19 there are also other, many, many other potential
20 projects for that group to work on. And some of them, I
21 think the group discussed even today. So, you have the
22 deliverables, you have the report out, you have the
23 experiences from your Chair to lean on. And the questions
24 we'd really like to hear discussed are are you interested
25 in continuing this type of work in the future How does
26 it happen? When does it happen? What does it look like?
27 What might you like to look at or to work on rather? Do
28 you think that forming a joint Council working group
29 would be beneficial? So, the ball is really in your
30 court. There's no -- we've not done this before. There's
31 no precedent. And there's really no agenda on behalf of
32 staff. We're here to support you.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah. So, I
35 realized that it's probably challenging to absorb this
36 and react to it when you weren't in the room going
37 through the process because this is very much distilled
38 down. The -- I will say the table that's on the third
39 physical page of the handout. So, these rolled up, I
40 mean, this simplified table was the result of -- I'm not
41 sure how long we worked on that. It felt like it was
42 over an hour, where Anna was facilitating and she had
43 this weird sticky stuff that was on the wall. But she
44 was putting up sticky notes. And then we had to -- I
45 forget if we came up with topics first and then populated
46 specific ideas or we came up with specific ideas and
47 then lump them into topics. But this really is the --
48 it's a -- it's distilled down because we had a whole
49 wall full of sticky notes that kind of got organized
50 and, you know, reviewed and pushed together. So, if

1 things look kind of similar, you know, they went under
2 one category. So, all you're seeing is this table, but
3 this table is a result of two hours. Three hours? Three
4 hours, three hours of the Chairs kind of struggling. I
5 mean, I don't want to say it in a negative way, but we
6 were struggling with -- cause these are, you know, these
7 are hard -- they're hard topics, hard problems. There's
8 not obvious solutions. If there were, we'd already be,
9 you know, these would already be solved.

10

11 So, I recognize that I think, you know,
12 what Anna is asking you to do is look at this and give
13 feedback. It's -- but you guys weren't in the room going
14 through the process, which is actually I think -- I
15 mean, I get you -- I would not want to do that with an
16 All-Council meeting. I think that that would be
17 logistically very, very, very challenging. But I do
18 think there are significant limitations and challenges
19 with having that just be Council Chairs. But I don't
20 have a better solution. But I do think than [sic] the
21 people who didn't get to be there, they're missing a lot
22 of the context and the stuff that didn't end up
23 represented in the summary. And I agree you have to have
24 a summary, but there's a lot that's not represented
25 there. Go ahead, Brett.

26

27 MR. RICHARDSON: Yeah, I was invited to
28 give a report on Unalaska during the first half of the
29 meeting. And what struck me was as everybody took turns
30 talking about their regions. And the issues that face
31 each region which tend to be different definitely was
32 maybe what I imagined it to be like before it took place
33 and then what actually was said during the meetings. And
34 I felt like I learned a lot. I felt like the perspectives
35 represented were refreshing and pretty positive overall
36 and kind of searching for solutions. And I thought it
37 was a -- at least what I witnessed, I didn't take place
38 in a lot of the -- any of the second part where you guys
39 seem to do a lot of the hard work. But it was good to
40 hear and understand what leaders in those communities
41 feel as they represent the communities and their issues
42 and getting a handle on that. We kind of maybe imagine
43 a lot of that because we don't have a lot of direct
44 communication with one another. And that would be
45 something I might like to see a little bit more to come
46 out of this, would be some slight rundown of what was
47 represented by each of the 10 RACs during that meeting.
48 Like if you could boil down the gist of what they were
49 saying as a person that wasn't attended [sic] or any
50 of the other committee members not knowing that, I think

1 that would be valuable to learn. Thanks.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: And Anna, can you
4 repeat what -- you had specific questions you wanted us
5 to consider. So, one of them was, are you interested in
6 continuing the collective work? But then you had a couple
7 of extra ones after that. What are you? What do you say
8 whatever?

9

10 MS. SENEAL: It's basically all that
11 question, just more context. Do you want to work
12 together? How do you want to work together? When do you
13 want to work together? You know, but basically is this
14 a project you're interested in continuing?

15

16 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: I think additional
17 feedback just from my perspective, similarly to the
18 resource monitoring, I think working together is great
19 as long as it's not going to come at the cost of what
20 we are required and enabled to do at a regional level
21 under ANILCA. Just thinking about that meeting and the
22 amount of time and cost and people's time to come into
23 the meeting to do that, if we're going to continue doing
24 that, that's obviously going to be a -- it's going to
25 be a heavy lift for everyone. I don't want to see that
26 work cost what we're -- what -- the focus we would have,
27 not the focus, but the time and the effort that is
28 required to do our regional work. And I think that that's
29 a real trade-off. I don't even know what it looks like
30 because this is new. But that is something that I wanted
31 to flag. Pat, go ahead.

32

33 MR. HOLMES: Awesome project. Almost
34 overwhelming just thinking about it. And, you know, then
35 we'll come on to whether or not we'll be addressing that
36 as a group, having one person take the lead and making
37 that part of their lifestyle to monitor that and then
38 bring back the information to us, or if we're going to
39 want to track it all the way within our committee? That's
40 going to be some tough questions on how we get this to
41 work. Very tough. And I think, Becky, the fact that you
42 could spend the 3-4 hours in a hot room, sweating, trying
43 to put this together, having people sticking things on
44 the walls. I've done some of those sort of get togethers,
45 and that's really tough. So, my hat is off to.....

46

47 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Is --
48 are there any other comments, questions, discussion?

49

50 (No response)

1
2 Anna, do you feel like -- I mean, did
3 you, again, I'm not exactly completely sure what you're
4 looking for, otherwise I'd be trying to help draw it
5 out. Did you get -- was -- did you kind of get what
6 you're looking for or...?

7
8 MS. SENEAL: This Agenda Item is a
9 little unclear because the whole project is unclear and
10 OSM doesn't have -- staff doesn't have an aim here. We
11 don't have a direction we need the Councils to go in.
12 It's really up to you. Up to the -- do you have a
13 question?

14
15 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: It's just my sense
16 is we're looking for more guidance on this side. And
17 you're like, well, but it's up to you guys. I'm kind of
18 like, well, we're in this cycle here.

19
20 MS. SENEAL: That's fair. Where I was
21 going, I should have gotten there sooner, should have
22 gotten there quicker. At the -- so, at the end of the
23 session last time, there was -- we heard a desire to
24 keep these meetings, or an All-Council meeting or a
25 Chairs meeting. And we have a fisheries regulatory
26 meeting upcoming in February of 2027. So, there are these
27 meeting -- Board meeting touch points that would serve
28 as a framework for this group to come back together but.
29 So, I guess what I'm interested in walking away with is
30 a sense of whether you think it's worth continuing to
31 try to put energy and resources behind convening folks
32 around these Board meeting touch points to keep trying
33 to move the -- move the needle on organizing for a joint
34 meeting, or maybe you talk about FRMP or a WRMP or I
35 don't know. I don't know what else you talk about. But
36 it can't be staff telling the Council members that they
37 need to do another thing, that is not really clearly
38 outlined in ANILCA. So, it does -- the request does have
39 to come from you guys.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Pat, go ahead.

42
43 MR. HOLMES: I wonder if some of this
44 will be answered in the reasonable future, just from
45 what's going on within our state in terms of politics,
46 and who's waving yellow flag of warning, who's wearing
47 -- being red flag. And just almost seems like we need
48 to say, yeah, it's a good concept but when do we make
49 the decision to leap into it with both feet? And that's
50 a tough one.

1

2

CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yes, Leigh.

3

4

MS. HONIG: Hi, this is Leigh, Council Coordinator. I just wanted to share, before this meeting convened, a letter was finalized that was sent to DC. It is included in your packets of letters, but it is the letter to the Secretaries requesting the standing meeting. And so, I just wanted to put that out there as more information. This doesn't have to be the only time that we can talk about this. Perhaps if we get a response back from the Secretaries, that might give us more direction on how we can focus our efforts. But I just wanted to reiterate that this isn't the only time where we can receive feedback on this. And another thing I was thinking you know is if the Council does think that this is a great idea and they want to continue doing that, like, that's great feedback to hear. And we can keep developing this behind the scenes maybe come up with some ideas to present to the Council at a later date. Or you know if the Council would like to maybe have one or two members from the Council move forward with this with the other regions, you know, that is another idea, where it doesn't have to all rest on one person. But just kind of throw on some additional ideas and thoughts out there for you to ponder.

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CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah, so what I am struggling with -- well, there's multiple things, but one I already spoke to is that I do think the Councils working together and leveraging their collective voice on common things they can agree on, common issues. I like that concept. As Chair of the RAC or as a Chair, and I hope every chair feels this way, I feel really uncomfortable being the only one in that room and nobody else from the RAC gets to be there. I -- like, I'll do it. I'm fine doing it. I think it's really shortchanging the whole process. But also, I mean, but I, wouldn't -- like I said, I would not recommend trying to do this at an All RAC meeting. I think that would be crazy. So, it needs to be a smaller group, I guess, but I'm uncomfortable that it has to be a smaller group. So, that's number one. Number two, I think it is really hard to react to the question, do we want to keep working together? It seems very amorphous. It's like, sure, we'd love to work together, but on what? What are we doing? When are we doing it? Who's doing it? What's the goal? How long is this gonna take? And then, you know, most importantly, have we actually agreed on what it is we're working on? So, it's hard for me, you know, as a --

1 personally, to be like, yes, I'm fully on board. I feel
2 like, well, what did I -- what am I agreeing to? I don't
3 know. I don't know exactly what is. So, that's why I
4 keep asking you like, okay, give us more. And you're
5 like, well, I can't give you more, you have to tell us.
6 And it's like, well, you gave us the universe of what
7 we could come back and tell you we want to do. That
8 seems like too much. Maybe baby steps. Like I would love
9 to have a joint RAC meeting with Bristol Bay. To me,
10 that's a reasonable, first step where we would get to --
11 -- all of our RAC would get to interact with all of their
12 RAC. It's a small enough group we could make it happen.
13 And to me, that's a good baby step toward working
14 together. Let's practice, you know, a joint meeting with
15 with the Bristol Bay RAC, I can actually imagine that
16 happening. And it is -- it's a definite thing that has
17 parameters. I guess I am concerned -- for me, I don't --
18 -- I'm having [sic] really uncomfortable with the idea
19 of saying, yes, I agree. But then I don't know what the
20 parameters are. I don't know, like I said, I don't know
21 exactly what it is I'm agreeing to and I was at this
22 workshop. So, I cannot imagine for people who are not
23 at the workshop, they're being asked to react to
24 something. It seems very kind of unfair. So, yeah, you're
25 probably looking at me like, why isn't she saying this
26 is a great idea? Well, this is my, you know, this is my
27 feedback and reaction from going through the experience.
28 I do think -- I really liked the idea of coming together.
29 I think it needs to have more -- there needs to be more
30 definition. I think it's not really fair to like ask
31 KARAC what's that definition because they weren't there.
32 They didn't get to see it, experience it. If you're
33 asking me to do it individually, that's one thing, but
34 you're not, you're asking KARAC to do that. And I guess
35 that that's what I have. And nobody else is saying
36 anything. Go ahead, Coral.

37
38 MS. CHERNOFF: Well, when I look at this,
39 I see that there can be valuable information to move
40 forward with but deciding where to move forward. One
41 thing for me is I do notice a lot of conflicts of
42 interest in commercial fishing, forage fish bycatch,
43 competition for resources. All those things like I've
44 been talking about the last couple of years. And so, it
45 just came to my mind, you know, I'm unhappy with the
46 system. So, maybe coming up with things that -- this
47 structure has holes in it, right? Like some things work
48 really well. If we have a proposal, we've got a great
49 system. Public comes, we look at it, we vote at it --
50 on it. OSM does some background stuff. We have

1 biologists. That works really great. For me, an area
2 definitely is -- perhaps subsistence needs their own
3 management system or board, you know, to come up with
4 things like, you know, to me, I guess, as I sit here,
5 the -- and this is just an example of like having
6 something to solve. So, for me, I just get a lot of
7 angst about Fish and Game saying here's what the weir
8 counts are, we're closing down sports. So, what do you
9 say? You know, they're having a consultation about
10 closing down subsistence. And I think in the recent past,
11 when I've gone through maybe three of these so far, the
12 phone just gets picked up and someone says, oh, we're
13 closing this and the wildlife manager says, okay. But
14 the wildlife manager, how much management skill do they
15 have to look at those numbers, understand how much
16 subsistence is happening, kind of weigh those things.
17 So, perhaps I see maybe going down the road of having
18 an actual subsistence committee or board that actually
19 deals with these management decisions. And so, I don't
20 know if that's clear, but I can see through some of
21 these things. We keep talking about the same things and
22 maybe having these Council -- the RAC Chairs come
23 together and do this. You can kind of look at some areas
24 where all across the state, we kind of have issues with
25 the structure of probably most often competing with the
26 commercial systems. You know? Competing with whatever
27 goes on out there. Or maybe that's just the problem we
28 look at and go, let's try and find five solutions to
29 that problem. Instead of, you know, me passing the
30 cupcakes around the list and I say you have priority or
31 someone says I have priority for the cupcakes because
32 they were bought in honor of whatever I was going
33 through, right? And then we pass those around and then
34 there's none left at the end for me. It's like that same
35 thing.

36
37 That's a system that I see on here just
38 being talked about over and over. So finding, you know,
39 really looking at that and go, what in our structure can
40 we fix? Because do we have to stay with the same
41 structure that we started in the beginning? Usually
42 things, you know, as a parent, my parenting changes over
43 time, right? Like you deal with your kids, your kids
44 age, there's different situations. Each year, it's the
45 same kind of thing. Like we're changing and growing and
46 I think this structure in this system hasn't changed or
47 grown while a lot of things around it have. And so, I
48 see that being really valuable here to sort of point out
49 the sort of blocks in the structures that we're dealing
50 with and finding -- working forward to find a solution

1 for just, you know, one issue or two issues, one at a
2 time or something. But otherwise, I have to say, I mean,
3 we probably could have all sat in a room by ourselves
4 and filled this out for the whole state because we've
5 heard these things for thirty years over and over and
6 over again. And so, if just coming back to the table to
7 do these every five years, I think that's a waste of
8 kind of everybody's time. And it needs to lead to
9 something, some kind of a solution for something on these
10 pages.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yeah. So, true
13 story. At one of the -- I think it was the April Federal
14 Subsistence Board meeting. So, the Chairs, are sitting
15 on these tables across the room and then the Board is
16 there. And one of the other RAC Chairs brought in some,
17 I don't know what it was dried moose meat. He starts
18 where he is. He has it in a Ziploc bag and he takes it
19 around. Takes it down that table, takes it down that
20 table, takes it here. I'm sitting next to the guy, the
21 RAC Chair from Bristol Bay, who gets the last piece. And
22 then the guy, he looks at the empty bag, he looks at me,
23 oh, I'm all out. So, your cupcake story, was like, oh
24 yeah, I've lived that experience. It was funny at the
25 time. So yeah, I think -- and I'm not -- I -- it's
26 probably in here, but one of the -- like, I agree with
27 what Coral said, the structure, the structure doesn't
28 work for the problems that are being identified. Because
29 you have all these management bodies that are in control
30 of either different geographies or the fish while
31 they're in different places. As RACs and as the Federal
32 Subsistence Board, we have limitations on what we can
33 do. We can't go lobby Congress to change ANILCA. Well,
34 we can't go as a group, go lobby Congress for anything.
35 And in reality, that's probably -- to kind of fix the
36 gaps or the holes or the blocks. That's probably what
37 we would have to do. So, within the system we're in, to
38 some extent, we have to deal with -- we have to live
39 within the system we're in. If you want to change the
40 system, individuals can do stuff that RACs can't, that
41 the Federal Subsistence Board can't. And I think that
42 definitely came up in the Chairs meeting and at the
43 workshop. So, I think there's a lot of frustration,
44 there's recognition of what some of the gaps are, what
45 some of the blocks are, but as RACs and within the
46 federal subsistence management system, we literally may
47 not be able to change the things that we think need to
48 be changed. And I think that's just a reality. I mean,
49 I don't know that we have -- I did not get out of the
50 attorney who gave a presentation that we have any choice

1 with that. So yeah, it is frustrating.

2

3 Okay, well, unless -- I don't see hands
4 up online, if there's nothing else on this right now, I
5 think that's okay. And maybe there can be more offline
6 discussion, and we still have tomorrow. So, if people
7 have thoughts, they can share them tomorrow as well.
8 Anna, go ahead.

9

10 MS. SENEAL: Yeah, thank you, Madam
11 Chair. Just a parting thought that's pertinent to what
12 -- if there is a structure going forward. If it is a
13 small group that meets, a rotating group, maybe it's the
14 Chair, maybe it's not the Chair, whatever, not the whole
15 group, whatever happens in that small group, that
16 working group has to come back to the RAC. And so, that
17 is what we're doing right now. And I understand and I
18 have empathy, more empathy, after having heard you speak
19 about the disadvantage that those other members are at,
20 especially after having gone through all of that work
21 and just reading a printout. So, moving forward, there
22 would have to be some back and forth between the small
23 group and the big group, especially or particularly for
24 decision points. Yeah, so that's all.

25

26 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay. So, if
27 there's no other discussion on this, then I'm
28 comfortable moving on. But like I said, we have tomorrow.
29 So, if somebody thinks of something overnight and wants
30 to share it in the meeting tomorrow, they can. Anna's
31 here. And also, if people have specific questions for
32 me about additional impressions of going through the
33 meeting, definitely ask me. But I am understanding
34 you're looking for -- so, you're looking for formal RAC
35 feedback. I hear that, but I also think informal feedback
36 can also be helpful. And so, we are here now and we're
37 going to be here through tomorrow or Thursday. So,
38 there's going to be other opportunities to share. But
39 otherwise we have finished agenda item 13.

40

41 (Pause)

42

43 Okay, so we're at Agenda Item 14. And I
44 think what I'd like to do is hear from Izembek. Alison,
45 I understand you wanted to share a report or share
46 information. And then if we have someone on from Alaska
47 Maritime, I think Keely, if we can hear those two that
48 -- it may take us to the end of the day, or maybe we'll
49 add on another Item. But Alison, are you on and ready
50 to talk about Izembek?

1

2

MS. WILLIAMS: Yes, we are online still.

3

4

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CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Okay, go ahead and start whenever you're ready.

6

7

MS. WILLIAMS: All right. Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the Council. For the record, my name is Alison Williams, I am the wildlife biologist at Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. Online, we also have Graham Peters, who is our current acting refuge manager. And we just have a brief report we're gonna share out on some of our recent activities. We do apologize that it's not there in writing for you, but we're happy to answer any questions or provide any follow-up information as needed.

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I was first going to mention the federal subsistence hunt for Unit 9D. It ran November 15th through March 31st for caribou. The harvest regulations were the same as the prior year's federal subsistence caribou hunt with a harvest limit of three caribou. And to date, we have not received any harvest reports from the participating communities. On Unimak Unit 10, the hunt runs from August 1st through September 30th, and the harvest limit for the federal hunt is one bull by registration permit. It's -- to date, we have not received any harvest reports from this hunt either.

So, some of the work that we've been working on since we last met. I was going to provide brief updates on -- the first I was going to provide a quick update on is the breeding bird survey. Izembek surveyed the Cold Bay route of the breeding bird survey on June 26 this year. Breeding bird survey is a long-term and international monitoring program that's conducted across North America. During the 2026 survey, we detected 38 unique bird species, which is a similar count to the previous three years. Something of note in the past few years, are the increasing numbers of Pacific golden plovers and American robins that are summering and possibly breeding in the area. And these species weren't commonly documented prior to 2023. So, this is a recent change. We also conducted the annual brown bear stream survey, August 22nd through 24th of this year. During the survey, we observed 113 bears on Izembek National Wildlife Refuge and 112 bears on Unimak Island. The total number of bears were similar to findings in the last complete survey in 2024, but a notable finding from this year was that there was a high number of cubs,

1 particularly cubs of the year, that we saw on the survey
2 area.

3
4 We've also continued to monitor a walrus
5 haulout in Izembek Lagoon, where these animals haul out
6 and rest between foraging trips in the Bering Sea. We're
7 monitoring the haulout for use by walruses and the levels
8 of disturbances to walruses. And this is important to
9 monitor as these disturbance events can result in
10 stampeding injuries and mortality. We also had a USGS
11 research biologist, Tony Fischbach, who researches
12 walruses, visit the haulout in June, and he conducted
13 surveys of the haulout to help inform the population
14 size estimates. There's been recent developments in
15 satellite imagery that allows walrus haulouts to be
16 detected through satellite photographs or radar imagery.
17 And this imagery shows the area and size of a haulout,
18 but it doesn't show how many walruses are present. So,
19 Tony was here to understand the density of walruses
20 within that area. And so, he used a high-resolution drone
21 to capture imagery of the haulout at the same time as
22 the satellite imagery is captured. And this enables
23 researchers to get an exact count of walruses and how
24 densely they haul out. The density found in these drone
25 surveys is going to be used to inform density of walruses
26 at other satellite detected haulouts in southwestern
27 Alaska and produce a haulout population estimate. So,
28 during these surveys there was a lot of monitoring to
29 ensure there was no disturbances to the walruses and we
30 did not observe any disturbances and we had all the
31 proper permitting to conduct that research. And during
32 the visit, we estimated there were about 7,000 walruses
33 present at the haulout. The number of animals using the
34 haulout has declined in the last couple months. And as
35 of right now, it appears that there are not any walruses
36 using the haulout at Izembek Lagoon.

37
38 Unfortunately, this spring and summer,
39 we did have a number of walrus mortalities. There were
40 probably at least twenty walrus mortalities in the
41 Izembek area. We were able to get brain and fecal samples
42 of some of these carcasses for testing to try and
43 determine a cause. These carcasses did test negative for
44 the highly pathogenic avian influenza. But they did show
45 low levels of saxitoxin, which is a type of toxic algae.
46 So, it suggests that one of the possible causes of these
47 mortalities could be harmful algal blooms that occur in
48 the Bering Sea. And another interesting finding from
49 these was that 6 of 8 fecal samples that we collected
50 contained the fur and skin of other marine mammals, which

1 indicates that these walruses may have been feeding on
2 seals.

3
4 Another project we worked on was the
5 eelgrass abundance and productivity monitoring. We
6 conducted eelgrass surveys in Izembek and Kinzarof
7 lagoons, August 7-17. This is part of a long-term
8 monitoring study designed to assess changes in status
9 and trends of distribution and abundance in eelgrass.
10 So, we visited 182 survey points and recorded
11 information on eelgrass cover and length, seaweed cover,
12 water temperature, water salinity, water depth, and
13 invertebrate presence. So, this past winter, after an
14 extreme winter with complete ice cover and a very late
15 spring, there was significantly lower eelgrass biomass
16 present in the lagoon. And there was also moderate
17 amounts of ice scour and sediment deposition in shallow
18 areas. And so, this reduced the distribution of eelgrass
19 that we saw in the lagoon as well. So, we're going to
20 continue these surveys over the next couple years and
21 learn a bit about the recovery abilities of these
22 eelgrass beds and how quickly those places will fill
23 back in with eelgrass.

24
25 We've also done a lot of work with
26 invasive species. Invasive species compete with the
27 native plant and wildlife species and disrupt ecosystems
28 that subsistence users rely on. So, we're continuously
29 working to limit the spread of invasive species. We've
30 conducted surveys for invasive species in Izembek
31 National Wildlife Refuge in the town of Cold Bay, and
32 have also continued treatments in Cold Bay on invasive
33 creeping thistle, orange hawkweed, oxeye daisy, and
34 creeping buttercup. We did find multiple new
35 infestations of creeping buttercup, tall buttercup,
36 meadow hawkweed, and creeping thistle, and all of these
37 new infestations were treated, including an infestation
38 of creeping thistle on an island within Izembek Lagoon.
39 Our invasive species staff also has been setting crab
40 traps in Cold Bay and also in King Cove to survey for
41 invasive European green crab. And these crabs can have
42 a significant and destructive effect on native aquatic
43 plants. But fortunately, we have seen no evidence of
44 these green crabs in either community.

45
46 Our invasive species staff also
47 partnered with Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
48 and hosted the second slug-off event in the community
49 of King Cove. The non-native European black slug was
50 established in the area, and this event is aimed at

1 trying to limit the slug's population and the spread to
2 protect subsistence resources such as plants, and
3 berries. And during this event, community members
4 collect slugs to compete for prizes and reduced the
5 number of slugs in the area. And over three days,
6 participants collected a total of 7,768 slugs that
7 weighed a total of 74.72 pounds. And our invasive species
8 staff also conducted some exploratory rat detection work
9 in Cold Bay to determine if rats are present and no rats
10 or non-native rodents were detected in Cold Bay. This
11 same work is planned and scheduled to occur in Sand
12 Point next week if weather permits travel.

13
14 And then some of our upcoming work that
15 is ongoing this fall. We are continuing our partnership
16 with USGS to monitor for avian influenza. So, there are
17 USGS staff here in Cold Bay. That's going to be here
18 through October to sample hunter harvested birds and
19 fecal material at roost sites to test for presence of
20 avian influenza. This is the 16th consecutive year that
21 this project has occurred. We also plan in early October
22 conducting the brant age ratio survey, which is to inform
23 the reproductive success for brant this year. When the
24 entire population is here, we can measure the proportion
25 of juveniles and adults to understand reproductive
26 success. And then we're also going to be continuing a
27 new survey that we started last fall. It was on brant
28 behavior and disturbance where the study is aimed to
29 understand how waterfowl spend their time at Izembek,
30 how frequently the staging birds are disturbed, and if
31 levels of disturbance to staging waterfowl have changed
32 since a similar study was conducted in the 1980s. The
33 data from 2025 are still being analyzed. It ended up
34 being quite a large project with several hundred hours
35 of observational data collected. At this time, that
36 wraps up the report that we've prepared, and we're happy
37 to take any questions that the Council members have.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great. Thank you,
40 Alison. Pat, go ahead.

41
42 MR. HOLMES: Well, that was a really
43 impressive report considering that what I've heard of
44 the shortage of personnel you folks had been working
45 really, really hard. And it's just amazing on those
46 things. On your brant study, the reproduction, does it
47 seem like things are picking up or are they stable?

48
49 MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah, through the Chair.
50 We haven't started this survey yet, so we don't have any

1 results from this year. But anecdotal evidence from the
2 North Slope and Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta indicates that
3 there was good breeding success this year, and lots of
4 juveniles were produced. And so, we won't know for sure
5 until we get out and survey. That's scheduled to start
6 October 5th. But every indication so far is that there
7 was good reproductive success.

8
9 MR. HOLMES: And another question along
10 that line, your eelgrass surveys. Do you have a feeling
11 of things being positive or negative on that?
12

13 MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah, through the Chair.
14 We did have a lot lower biomass and length and density
15 of eelgrass this year. And we believe that is tied to
16 the extreme ice cover that we had this winter. Yet, we
17 did see places where the ice froze to the roots of the
18 eelgrass and pulled it out of the sediment, in places
19 where some of the eelgrass had been buried. And so, it
20 was slow to come back. And we also had the ice melt
21 pretty late. And so, that prevented the start of the
22 growth for a while. So, this year there was low biomass.
23 There was a similar event in Kinzarof Lagoon a couple
24 of years ago and that has seemed to recover pretty well
25 in the last couple of years. So, I am hopeful that
26 Izembek will do the same and that in the next couple of
27 years we'll start to see what we were typically seeing
28 before this event.

29
30 MR. HOLMES: Very interesting. I think
31 that parallels 34 years ago when it used to get down to
32 5-10 below out in the neck of the woods. Obviously, that
33 freezing and icing is affecting eelgrass and then that
34 affects all the other critters. I wanted to make a little
35 bit of an amusing observation on your rats and I can
36 recall being out there March, April in '84, doing a pink
37 salmon pre-emergent and staying at the Flying Tigers
38 Inn, and then listening to (taping sounds), up above the
39 bed bunks that we're in, all night long of the critters
40 running back and forth. And so, it's nice that you're
41 getting those Norwegian rats under control. So, anyway,
42 a wonderful work and I appreciate all that you folks are
43 doing. Thank you.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thanks. Any
46 further questions?

47
48 (No response)

49
50

1 I had two questions with the plovers and
2 the robins, you said it looked like they've been
3 increasing their use of Izembek for breeding since 2023.
4 Where would -- where did they used to go? And then, do
5 you have any idea why you're seeing more of them at
6 Izembek breeding?

7
8 MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah, thank you for that
9 question. It is a really interesting pattern, and I don't
10 have a lot of positive or confirmed information in
11 answer. The golden plovers back in, I believe, the early
12 2000s, there were some surveys to determine how far south
13 on the Alaska Peninsula they nested. And the furthest
14 south incident was found by the David River, which is
15 near Nelson Lagoon. And so, at that point, that was the
16 furthest south that these golden plovers nested on the
17 Alaska Peninsula. But starting in about 2023, we started
18 seeing them during the summer in breeding plumage around
19 Izembek. And in 2024, we found an egg on Izembek. And
20 so, it seems this could be related to changes in climate,
21 maybe even changes in population where they're expanding
22 their breeding range a little bit. But it's hard to know
23 for sure without a dedicated study on that. The robins
24 had been periodically seen in the spring passing through
25 and I'm not sure where these exact birds are coming from
26 or going. But I suspect it's a similar thing where
27 they're starting to expand their range a little bit
28 because we are seeing them in the summer now and seeing
29 them do a little bit of courtship and singing like they
30 would in an area where they're breeding. And so, it's -
31 - again, could be related to changes in population,
32 changes in climate that is encouraging them to expand
33 their breeding area. But I -- it would be hard to know
34 definitively without doing a little more research.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Great, thanks. And
37 then, my last question is around the use of satellites
38 to -- and the drones to, I guess, identify the walrus
39 haulouts and then send the drone in to count the actual
40 animals. Can that also be used for Steller sea lions,
41 or are they different enough from walrus that you
42 couldn't use that same technique or technology? Or do
43 you know?

44
45 MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah, thank you, Madam
46 Chair. That's a great question. I would imagine that
47 this technology could be applied in a very similar way
48 with Steller sea lions. The only thing that might be a
49 challenge is the walruses here are hauled out on sand.
50 And typically, a Steller sea lion may -- haul out happens

1 on rocks and that -- those radar images scatter a little
2 differently on rocks than they do on sand. So, it might
3 be slightly harder to detect the sea lions because that
4 scatter pattern of radar might look really similar
5 between a rock and a sea lion versus a walrus in the
6 sand looks very different. But I'm sure that that is
7 something that could be developed. It's kind of a new
8 recent use of technology that USGS is pioneering. And I
9 know right now their biologist is very focused on
10 walruses, but I imagine with continued success of this
11 project that could be explored with sea lions as well.
12

13 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thanks.
14 And I actually did have one other question. Is the -- I
15 can't remember if you were with the RAC members when we
16 went on the boat tour of Izembek Lagoon the last time
17 we met in Cold Bay, and we went out to where we could
18 see the pink blobs of the walruses. It -- are -- would
19 that be the same haulout, like if you go all the way
20 across the bay and it looked like there was kind of a
21 sandbar or a sand island between the lagoon and the open
22 ocean and the walrus were just kind of sitting on the
23 sandbar. Would that be the haulout that you refer to in
24 your report?
25

26 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes, Madam Chair, that is
27 the same haulout that we were doing these surveys on and
28 that we're referring to. It seems to be the only
29 regularly established haulout in Izembek and it has been
30 growing in recent years. Like I mentioned this year, we
31 saw 7,000 animals there, and we had never seen that
32 many. So, it's pretty exciting and pretty important
33 habitat for these walruses.
34

35 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right, thanks.
36 Yeah, I was trying to imagine seven thousand pink blobs
37 on the horizon. All right. Are there any other questions
38 for Alison?
39

40 (No response)
41

42 Okay, I'm not seeing any. Thank you so
43 much for your report and the information. Next, if we
44 have Keely from Alaska Maritime?
45

46 MS. LOPEZ: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm
47 here. Can you all hear me?
48

49 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Yes, you're coming
50 through.

1
2 MS. LOPEZ: Great. Hello to all of the
3 members of the Council. I'll start by introducing
4 myself. My name is Keely Lopez, and I am currently the
5 Acting Deputy Manager here at Alaska Maritime. I have
6 only been here for a few weeks, so I'm still trying to
7 get up to speed on all things Alaska Maritime and all
8 things Alaska. So, forgive me as I share with you the
9 updates that the team provided me with. I might not have
10 all of the details if you have questions for me, but I
11 will be happy to try to answer them. I also think that
12 you have our update in writing, so I won't read it
13 verbatim. But I'll start by jumping in on the Rat
14 Eradication on Four Aleutian Islands Draft Environmental
15 Impact Statement. We are hoping that that will go out
16 for public comment yet this fall. When it goes out, it
17 will be out for 30 days and there will also be a virtual
18 meeting option that will be open to the public to learn
19 more about the project and process. That date is yet to
20 be set, but you can find more information about the
21 draft EIS at the website that is provided in our written
22 details. And if people are interested, I can also put
23 that link in the chat after my update.

24
25 The next thing that I have, Alison
26 already covered. It was the slug-out in King Cove that
27 we partnered with them and a bunch of other entities on.
28 I won't go over that in depth. I'll just say that we are
29 hopeful to do that again in 2027, at the request of
30 community members and event participants. It was a huge
31 success, so we hope to continue that momentum. This year
32 we also completed Poa removal on Aiktak Island with a
33 goal of controlling non-native annual bluegrass. So, in
34 May and July, infested areas were treated using chemical
35 and manual methods to remove the grass. Mapping also was
36 completed and they will continue monitoring treatment
37 effectiveness and develop a long-term management plan
38 there.

39
40 Moving on, we continue to support youth
41 science and culture camps in various places,
42 specifically Sand Point, St. Paul, and Unalaska. We also
43 are able to provide some financial support as well as
44 staff time to provide hands-on lessons. So, in Sand Point
45 in July, our visitor services manager had multiple
46 participants, K through 4th grade, focusing on
47 migrations. In August in Unalaska, our environmental
48 education specialist emphasized Aleutian birds.

49
50

1 Our summer field work is coming to a
2 close. Our teams are returning to the office. We do
3 still have some folks that are in the field trying to
4 get home. So, our biotechs are back here at Alaska
5 Maritime in Homer, at the office here in Homer, and they
6 are wrapping up all of their analysis of data that they
7 collected, et cetera. It's looking so far like we had
8 approximately an average year with the seabird
9 populations that they monitor. More information will be
10 shared with our annual seabird report card that will be
11 published later in the fall. So, you'll hear about that
12 at our spring update. Lastly, we completed our first
13 survey for cultural resources on Semisopchnoi this
14 year. That was with staff from our archaeological
15 program from our regional office. It was a proactive
16 survey. There are no projects proposed on the island,
17 but they were trying to meet National Historic
18 Preservation Act, Section 110. And they conducted
19 surveys. They looked at charcoal samples from several
20 pit features and determined that there were occupations
21 ranging from 400-600 years before present, and they hope
22 to continue returning to the island to conduct
23 additional surveys, including radiocarbon dating and
24 other places, to place the villages on the island in the
25 broader context of other habitation sites in the central
26 Aleutians. That concludes my update, and I'm happy, like
27 I said, to try to answer questions if there are any.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Thank you, Keely.
30 I'm going to give you credit for including photos of the
31 slug-out. So, that's kind of gross, but kind of
32 fascinating to see the little container o' slugs there.
33 All right. Are there any questions or comments? Pat, go
34 ahead.

35
36 MR. HOLMES: Oh, yes. Excellent report.
37 Welcome to Alaska, Ms. Lopez. I think you'll be having
38 a lot of excitement out there in the Aleutians and the
39 Maritimes. What were the four islands that you're
40 starting rat control on?

41
42 MS. LOPEZ: Through the Chair, I don't
43 have those at the top of my mind. So, let me scroll back
44 in the document. Those are Great Sitkin, Kiska,
45 Amchitka, and Attu. And the process right now is still
46 in the NEPA phase. So, we are hoping to put out that
47 draft EIS in the coming months before we actually begin
48 any eradication activities.

49
50

1 MR. HOLMES: Okay. Well, that'd be quite
2 an accomplishment. Attu is a big island and interesting
3 on Kiska when I was working out there in '82, that
4 probably has one of the highest densities of fox because
5 they were feeding very successfully on the pink salmon.
6 And, then they did a nice eradication of them. But then
7 that's too bad, you couldn't have had, I don't know,
8 sterile fox or something, because I understand from crab
9 fishermen, they're going in at night and turning on the
10 light on the dock that, you know, they'd see tens of
11 thousands of little red eyeballs from the rats, so.
12 That's a difficult problem all the way across. And I
13 think the archeological study on Semisopochnoi is very
14 exciting. I've been there and, flown over it and wondered
15 about it and that's really something to be taking a look
16 at that part of the Aleutians and getting some basic
17 information. So anyway, my hats off to you. You guys are
18 doing a lot of good work. Thank you.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: Alright, are there
21 any other questions or comments for Keely?

22
23 (No comments)

24
25 All right. I'm not seeing any.

26
27 Thank you, Keely, and welcome to Alaska.

28
29 MS. LOPEZ: Thank you, Madam Chair.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON SKINNER: All right. Well, it
32 is 4:53. So, I'm actually okay breaking for the day.
33 Looking at Leigh, does that seem...? Okay, that seems
34 workable. So, we'll go ahead and break for today and
35 reconvene the public meeting at 9:00 am. For KARAC
36 members, we are going to leave from here and go on our
37 tour. So, maybe we'll try to be ready by 5:05. That
38 should give you time to pack up, use the restroom, etc.
39 And we'll go on our little tour of the waterways. All
40 right. And see everyone here tomorrow at 9. Thanks.

41
42 (Off record)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Rafael Morel, for Lighthouse Integrated Services Corp, do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 1 through 118 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the KODIAK/ALEUTIANS SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME I recorded on the 15th day of September;

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

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

DATED at Isabela, Puerto Rico this 1st day of October 2026.

Rafael Morel
Chief Project Manager