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FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD MEETING

TELECONFERENCE - ALASKA

April 19, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Anthony Christianson, Chairman
- Rhonda Pitka, Public Member
- Charles Brower, Public Member
- Jill Klein, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Steve Cohn, Bureau of Land Management
- Sarah Creachbaum, National Park Service
- Glenn Chen, Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Dave Schmid/Greg Risdahl, U.S. Forest Service

Ken Lord, Solicitor's Office

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Teleconference - 4/19/2023)

(On record)

OPERATOR: Welcome and thank you all for standing by. At this time I would like to inform all participants that your lines have been placed on a listen only mode until the public comment section of today's conference. Today's call is also being recorded. If anyone has any objections, you may disconnect at this time. I will now turn the call over to Ms. Sue Detwiler. Thank you. You may begin.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Operator. This is Sue Detwiler, the Assistant Regional Director for the Office of Subsistence Management. I want to confirm first, Court Reporter, are you recording now?

REPORTER: Yes. This is Tina and I am online and yes, go ahead.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you very much. With the permission of the Chair, Tony, would you like me to start going through the roll call?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Sue. Thank you for that. We'll get the meeting started. Appreciate that.

MS. DETWILER: Okay. Thank you. Bureau of Indian Affairs, Glenn Chen.

MR. CHEN: I'm present.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Glenn.

Bureau of Land Management, Steve Cohn.

MR. COHN: Good afternoon. I'm present.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Fish and Wildlife Service. I understand Sara Boario got called away urgently. Jill Klein, are you standing in as the Acting Fish and Wildlife Service Board Member?

MS. KLEIN: Hi, Sue. Yes, this is

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1 Jill. I'm on the line.

2

3 MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Jill.

4

5 National Park Service, Sarah
6 Creachbaum.

7

8 MS. CREACHBAUM: Good afternoon, Sue.
9 Good afternoon, everyone. I'm present.

10

11 MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

12

13 U.S. Forest Service, Dave Schmid.

14

15 MR. SCHMID: Good afternoon, Sue.
16 Dave's on.

17

18 MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Dave.

19

20 Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

21

22 MS. PITKA: Hi, I'm here. Good
23 afternoon, everyone.

24

25 MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Rhonda.

26

27 Public Member Charles Brower.

28

29 (No response)

30

31 MS. DETWILER: Chair Anthony
32 Christianson.

33

34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'm present.
35 Thank you.

36

37 MS. DETWILER: While we're waiting for
38 Public Member Charlie Brower I'll go through the rest
39 of the roll call here.

40

41 Legal counsel, Department of Interior,
42 Ken Lord, are you on?

43

44 MR. LORD: I'm here. Hi, everybody.

45

46 MS. DETWILER: Okay. Mike Routhier,
47 Department of Interior, are you on?

48

49 MR. ROUTHIER: Yes, I'm here.

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1 MS. DETWILER: Okay. Thank you.

2

3 USDA Office of General Council, Jim
4 Ustasiewski.

5

6 (No response)

7

8 MS. DETWILER: Boykin Lucas.

9

10 MR. LUCAS: Hi, this is Boykin. I'm
11 on. I think it's possible Jim might call in as well.

12

13 MS. DETWILER: Okay. Thank you.
14 Moving to liaison to the Board, Alaska Department of
15 Fish and Game Ben Mulligan.

16

17 MR. MULLIGAN: Present.

18

19 MS. DETWILER: And Mark Burch.

20

21 MR. MULLIGAN: He's on listen mode.

22

23 MS. DETWILER: Okay. Thanks, Ben.
24 Regional Advisory Council Chairs. I'll start with the
25 two affected Regional Advisory Councils for this
26 request, this agenda item.

27

28 Region 5, Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta.

29

30 MS. MCDAVID: Good afternoon, Sue.
31 This is Brooke McDavid, Council Coordinator for the YK
32 Delta. The Chair and Vice Chair are not available
33 today and I'll be standing in to present RAC
34 recommendations. Thank you.

35

36 MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Brooke.

37

38 Region 6, Western Interior.

39

40 MS. PILCHER: Good afternoon. This is
41 Nissa Pilcher, Council Coordinator for the Western
42 Interior Regional Advisory Council. The chairman is
43 busy at another meeting and asked me to speak for them.

44

45 MS. DETWILER: Okay. Thank you, Nissa.
46 Do we have any other Regional Advisory Council Chairs
47 online?

48

49 (No response)

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1 MS. DETWILER: Okay. And Department of
2 Interior Field Special Assistant for Alaska Sara
3 Taylor, are you on?

4
5 (No response)

6
7 MS. DETWILER: All right. Moving back
8 to the Board we're waiting on Public Member Charles
9 Brower. Were you able to get in, Charlie?

10
11 MR. BROWER: I'm here.

12
13 MS. DETWILER: Great. Thank you, Mr.
14 Brower. Mr. Chair, you have a full complement of Board
15 members today. You have a quorum. All eight are in
16 attendance. Back to you.

17
18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Sue.
19 I appreciate that. Welcome everyone to the meeting
20 today. Thank you everyone for taking their time.
21 Everybody knows why we're here, so I'll get right to
22 the point and I'll go ahead and turn the meeting back
23 over to Sue and then the Staff for presenting the
24 information today.

25
26 Thank you.

27
28 MS. DETWILER: Okay. Thank you. We
29 have a short agenda to go through today, Mr. Chair. We
30 just finished Item 1, call to order and welcome.
31 Moving through the rest of the agenda for the Board to
32 review and adopt we have only one action item on the
33 agenda today. That is Fisheries Temporary Special
34 Action Request FSA23-01, which pertains to the harvest
35 of chinook and chum salmon on Federal public waters of
36 the Kanektok River drainage.

37
38 After the Board acts on that the agenda
39 as currently written calls for adjournment. So back to
40 you and the Board to adopt the agenda.

41
42 MR. BROWER: Mr. Chair, I so move.

43
44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
45 Charlie.

46
47 MS. PITKA: This is Rhonda. I'll
48 second.

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1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion has been
2 made and seconded to accept the agenda as presented.
3 Any discussion, comments, questions.

4
5 (No comments)

6
7 MR. BROWER: Question.

8
9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The question
10 has been called. All in favor say aye.

11
12 IN UNISON: Aye.

13
14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposed same
15 sign.

16
17 (No comments)

18
19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing no
20 opposition, motion carries unanimous. We'll move on to
21 the next agenda item, which is to present the proposal
22 from staff. Thank you.

23
24 MS. DETWILER: That starts out with
25 Kevin Foley and Pippa Kenner will be presenting the
26 staff analysis.

27
28 MR. FOLEY: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair
29 and members of the Federal Subsistence Board. For the
30 record my name is Kevin Foley and I'm a fish biologist
31 at the Office of Subsistence Management. With me is
32 Pippa Kenner, who is an anthropologist at OSM. We're
33 here to present to you Temporary Special Action Request
34 FSA23-01.

35
36 Temporary Special Action Request
37 FSA23-01 submitted by the Native Village of Quinhagak
38 requests the Federal Subsistence Board close Federal
39 public waters of the Kanektok River drainage to the
40 harvest of chinook and chum salmon except by Federally
41 qualified subsistence users from June 1 through June
42 30, 2023, and June 1 through June 30, 2024.

43
44 The proponent's justification is that
45 chum salmon runs throughout western coastal Alaska are
46 in serious decline with the poorest returns on record
47 and escapement goals throughout the
48 Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim region are largely not being
49 met. Chinook salmon all over the state have also been
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1 in a long period of decline.

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The Kanektok River drainage supports all five species of North American Pacific salmon. Of the five species chinook and sockeye salmon are the predominant salmon species harvested in subsistence fisheries by residents of Quinhagak since 2008. However chum salmon surpassed subsistence harvest of sockeye salmon in seven years between 1990 and 2007.

Chinook and chum salmon are distributed throughout much of the Kanektok River drainage and have similar run timing as in the Kuskokwim River. Chinook salmon begin entry into the Kuskokwim River in late May and diminish in early July. Chum salmon begin entry into the Kuskokwim River in mid June and diminish in late July.

Currently there is no real time run assessment of chinook or chum salmon in the Kanektok River drainage although relative run timing may be estimated from commercial catch statistics of salmon harvest in District 4 and historical mid-river estimates that are available from a weir data that was operated in years 2001 to 2015.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has conducted aerial surveys to assess chinook salmon escapement goals for Kanektok River salmon since 1980. ADF&G currently manages for chinook salmon sustainable escapement goal range of 3,900 to 12,000 individuals. Aerial survey estimates of Kanektok River chinook salmon have been within the sustainable escapement goal range in eight of the last 10 years.

Aerial survey data for chum salmon escapement to the Kanektok River are scant and currently there are no escapement goals for chum salmon escapement to the Kanektok River. Assessment of chum salmon escapement to the Kanektok River has been through limited historical aerial surveys and weir data.

Chum salmon aerial survey estimates are reported for five years within the 42 year period from 1980 to 2021 of aerial survey data reported. ADF&G no longer conducts aerial surveys for assessing escapement of chum salmon to the Kanektok River. The last supported aerial survey estimate of chum salmon in the

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1 Kanektok River was in 1996.

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ADF&G operated a weir on the Kanektok River from 2001 to 2015 to assess chinook and chum salmon. The weir was discontinued at the end of 2015 through the funding reductions and the absence of a commercial fishery during that time. During the last year of weir operations in 2015 approximately 10,400 chinook salmon and 15,000 chum salmon passed through the weir.

There is no commercial fishery within the Kanektok River. However, District 4 of the Kuskokwim Management Area consists of Kuskokwim Bay marine waters near Quinhagak between the mouth of Weelung Creek to the north and the mouth of the Arolik River to the south. The District 4 commercial fishery targets chinook, sockeye, coho and chum salmon. Pink salmon are harvested incidentally.

Since 2001 the commercial harvest of chinook salmon in District 4 ranged from a low of 2,054 fish in 2013 to a high of 25,465 fish in 2004. Since 2012 chinook salmon commercial harvest has been below the 10-year average of 9,981 fish, which does not include years when no commercial fishery occurred because of no commercial buyer.

The 2021 District 4 commercial harvest of chinook salmon was ranked the third lowest since 1968 when 8,879 fish were harvested. The 2021 commercial harvest of chinook salmon was a 75 percent decrease from the 10-year average. For chum salmon in District 4 commercial harvest has also varied over the past 20 years.

Chum salmon harvest occurred from lows around 5,300 fish in 2021 to highs of approximately 106,600 fish in 2010. The 2021 District 4 commercial harvest of 5,310 chum salmon was the lowest harvest observed on record since 1967 when 8,087 fish were harvested. The commercial harvest of 6,531 chum salmon in 2020 and 5,310 chum salmon in '21 is a decrease of 87 and 91 percent from the 10-year average.

There was no commercial fishery in District 4 that took place from 2016 to 2019 and ADF&G have indicated that there is not likely to be a commercial fishery for salmon in District 4 during

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Now Pippa Kenner will continue our presentation with the summary of subsistence and sportfishing harvest history.

MS. KENNER: Good afternoon, members of the Board and staff. Again this is Pippa Kenner with OSM. So I'll continue the presentation. All residents of the Kuskokwim area are eligible to harvest fish in the Kanektok River drainage. However, people from Quinhagak take the majority of fish harvested in the subsistence fishery because of their close proximity to the drainage.

The fairly isolated long-standing Yup'ik village is accessible by boat, plane or snowmachine and consists of about 775 people, most of whom are originally from the village. Along the Kanektok River people use a large number of seasonal camps for fishing and other subsistence activities. Quinhagak people are highly dependant on wild resources, especially fish, and salmon is a large portion of their harvest of fish.

People harvest salmon for subsistence from marine waters in the bay in front of the village and from the fresh waters of the Kanektok River drainage using gillnets, rod and reel and by retaining salmon from their commercial catches.

Quinhagak people harvest a mix of chinook, coho, chum and sockeye salmon. You can see estimated annual harvest on Table 4 on Page 19 of your meeting materials. The most recent data has estimated harvest of 2021 at about 7,800 salmon consisting of 2,700 chinook, 800 chum, 1,100 coho and 3,200 sockeye salmon.

The sport fisheries along the Kanektok River and further south the Goodnews River represent most of the sport fishing activity in the Kuskokwim management area conducted mainly by non-residents of Alaska practicing catch and release fishing and who primarily target rainbow trout, chinook and coho salmon. Some chums are also caught. These catch and harvest statistics are displayed in Table 5 on Page 22 of your Board materials.

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1 In the sport fishery more chinook
2 salmon are being caught in the Kuskokwim Bay streams of
3 Kanektok and Goodnews Rivers than in the Kuskokwim
4 River drainage streams because Emergency Order closures
5 in the Kuskokwim River drainage have redirected effort
6 to areas where chinook salmon can be legally caught,
7 such as the Kanektok River drainage. However in 2020
8 very few fish were caught in the sport fishery on the
9 Kanektok River because of the Covid-19 travel
10 restrictions and precautions through most of the
11 season.

12

13 I'm going to hand it over to Kevin now.

14

15 MR. FOLEY: OSM's conclusion is to
16 support Temporary Fisheries Special Action Request
17 FSA23-01 with modification to close the Federal public
18 waters of the Kanektok drainage to only harvest of chum
19 salmon by non-Federally qualified subsistence users
20 June 1st through June 30th, 2023 and June 1st through
21 June 30th of 2024.

22

23 This modification does not include
24 chinook salmon. The modified regulation would read:
25 Federal public waters of the Kanektok River drainage
26 are closed to the harvest of chum salmon except by
27 Federally qualified subsistence users effective June
28 1st through June 30th, 2023 and from June 1st through
29 June 30th, 2024 unless reopened by the Federal
30 in-season manager. The Federal manager will adjust
31 Federal subsistence fishing schedules, openings,
32 closures and fishing methods as needed.

33

34 There is very little data to assess the
35 health of salmon populations in the Kanektok River
36 drainage although aerial survey estimates of Kanektok
37 River chinook salmon have been within the sustainable
38 escapement goal range in eight of the last 10 years.
39 Aerial survey data for assessing chum salmon escapement
40 are scant. Further, there are no chum salmon
41 escapement goals to the Kanektok River.

42

43 Given the lack of data on chum salmon
44 escapement to the Kanektok River and concerns raised by
45 local users, a conservation approach is warranted. The
46 proponent is aware that some of the lowest chinook and
47 chum salmon returns on record in Western Coastal Alaska
48 have occurred recently.

49

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1 However, given available data, a
2 similar determination could not be made for the
3 Kanektok River. Further, it could not be determined
4 that the returns are deemed healthy with the lack of
5 data specific to the Kanektok River. Local users are
6 highly attuned to the conditions on the river and have
7 described their observations during public hearings for
8 this Special Action Request.

9
10 ADF&G reports indicate chinook salmon
11 estimates of run size and escapement appear healthy
12 within the Kanektok River and have been within the
13 sustainable escapement goal range in eight of the last
14 10 years. This data shows sufficient chinook salmon
15 escapement and therefore it is not warranted to limit
16 the harvest of chinook salmon to Federally qualified
17 users at this time.

18
19 Without having recent and reliable chum
20 salmon data to show if the runs are healthy or not and
21 with declining trends in Western Alaska it is prudent
22 to close the sport fishery to targeting and retention
23 of chum salmon from June 1st to June 30th, 2023 and
24 June 1st to June 30th, 2024.

25
26 Mr. Chair, members of the Board, thank
27 you very much for your time. This concludes our
28 presentation on the Staff analysis for FSA23-01. Nine
29 of my colleagues are standing by for any questions you
30 may have.

31
32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
33 Appreciate the presentation. Any questions for the
34 Board based on the presentation. The floor is open for
35 questioning staff.

36
37 (No comments)

38
39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
40 Hearing none. We'll move on to the next part of the
41 agenda. I'm just pulling mine up. Sorry, I'm on my
42 phone. Which is to open up the public testimony on
43 Fishery Temporary Special Action Request FSA23-02. We'd
44 ask that we keep it to this specific fishery action and
45 if there is anybody at this time would like to be
46 recognized this is your opportunity.

47
48 OPERATOR: Thank you. For the public
49 testimony if you would like to make a comment, please
50

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1 ensure that your phone is unmuted. Please press star
2 followed by 1 and record your name clearly when
3 prompted. If you do need to withdraw, please press
4 star followed by 2.

5

6 Again, if you would like to make public
7 testimony please press star followed by 1. We'll just
8 take a moment to see if there's any comments coming in.
9 One moment.

10

11 Our first comment comes from Julius.
12 You may go ahead.

13

14 JULIUS: Good evening. Hey, guys, this
15 is Julius out of Quinhagak. I'm a long-time resident
16 and I'm also a sportfishing guide on the Kanektok. So
17 with FSA23-01, I believe, with it being closed the
18 question is -- the question would be would sport
19 fishermen be able to fish without harvesting chinook
20 and chums.

21

22 Thank you.

23

24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
25 I'll refer that question to staff.

26

27 OPERATOR: Thank you. Are you ready
28 for the next comment?

29

30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, no. This
31 is the Board Chair. He asked a pointed question about
32 the closure and species, so I think he had a question
33 more than a statement. So I'm seeing if Staff can
34 clarify for him what the regulation does as he's a
35 sport guide on the river there.

36

37 Thank you.

38

39 MS. KENNER: Yeah, this is Pippa
40 Kenner. I think we're all just being polite. All
41 right. Yes, the sport fishery would still be
42 operating, but they would not be able to target and
43 target for catch and release fishing chinook and chum
44 salmon if the Board adopted the Special Action Request.

45

46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
47 Pippa. I hope that answered your question there.
48 Operator, is there anybody else that would like to
49 testify at this time? This is their opportunity.

50

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1 OPERATOR: We do. Next we have Jackie.
2 You may go ahead.

3
4 MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you. Again, this
5 is Jackie with the Native Village of Quinhagak. I'm a
6 Council member. Sorry, my last name is Cleveland. I
7 just wanted to say thanks to Kevin Foley. You ended up
8 saying a lot of what I was going to say today. I'll
9 try to keep mine short and more targeted towards what
10 I've been observing from local knowledge, local
11 Quinhagak knowledge.

12
13 It's been reported by locals that
14 during that 2020 year when we had the least amount of
15 sport fish activity is when people noticed a lot less
16 dead fish on the gravel bars compared to the years that
17 this fishery is open. I just wanted to say that bit
18 about mortality.

19
20 I have a couple other comments. You
21 know, we are asking -- it is a modest ask what we're
22 asking. When we thought of this, we thought very
23 carefully to be considerate of other fisheries besides
24 our own subsistence fishery, such as the commercial
25 fisheries schedule. We were sensitive to that.

26
27 Then, you know, the sport fishermen
28 they're still going to be there. There's other species
29 to fish for. If they're not depending on the chum for
30 their survival, I mean they still get to enjoy the
31 river, fish for other species and have fun that way.

32
33 I had a question though. Is there
34 going to be a gear type restriction to go along with
35 this at some point if it does pass? That's my question.
36 And then just one other thing I wanted to say is we are
37 making efforts to get data back again because having no
38 data -- well, pretty much no data since 2015 is far too
39 long to be fishing blindly.

40
41 The reason last standing fishery pretty
42 much and it's not even -- it doesn't really live up to
43 that anymore with the lower numbers and certain
44 species. So I might come up with more. I might get
45 back on, but as far as my question goes is there an
46 answer to the gear type question?

47
48 Thanks.

49
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1 MR. FOLEY: Through the Chair.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
4 floor.

5

6 MR. FOLEY: Thank you. Through the
7 Chair. Jackie, this is Kevin Foley. Thank you for
8 your comments. I wanted to address your question on
9 gear types. To my knowledge there will be no specific
10 gear type restrictions. I would also like to point out
11 that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has closed
12 sport fishing for chum salmon this year.

13

14 Thank you.

15

16 MS. CLEVELAND: Yes, we're aware of
17 that. Thanks.

18

19 OPERATOR: Thank you. At this time
20 there are no further public testimonies. As a
21 reminder, that is star followed by 1 if you would like
22 to make a public testimony.

23

24 MS. DETWILER: Mr. Chair. This is Sue
25 Detwiler. May I just make a comment while we're
26 waiting for more public testimony if they're going to
27 come on I forgot to mention during the beginning of the
28 call?

29

30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
31 floor, Sue.

32

33 MS. DETWILER: Thank you very much. I
34 just wanted to mention that the agenda and the Staff
35 analysis for this proposal is online at the Federal
36 S u b s i s t e n c e B o a r d w e b s i t e a t
37 www.doi.gov/subsistence/board. I just wanted to make
38 sure everybody was aware of where the materials were.

39

40 Thank you.

41

42 OPERATOR: At this time there are no
43 further public testimonies.

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
46 Operator, and thank you for that, Sue. We'll go ahead
47 and move on to the summary of public hearings.

48

49 Brooke.

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1 MS. MCDAVID: Good afternoon, Mr.
2 Chair. Members of the Board. For the record this is
3 Brooke McDavid and I'm the Council Coordinator for the
4 Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Advisory Council. I
5 helped to facilitate the public hearings for this
6 special action and I'll now provide you with a summary
7 of the comments that we received.

8
9 There were two public hearings held for
10 this special action. The first one took place in person
11 in Quinhagak and also via teleconference on February
12 15th. There was a second hearing on February 21st via
13 teleconference only. In total there were 16
14 individuals and organizations that provided testimony
15 during the public hearings and testimony was received
16 both in support and against this special action
17 request.

18
19 I'll begin with a summary of comments
20 in support. Most testifiers in support of this special
21 action request said that low numbers of chinook and
22 chum salmon are entering the Kanektok River and that
23 local families who rely on these salmon for subsistence
24 cannot do so anymore.

25
26 One testifier said local residents have
27 been relying on salmon since time immemorial and
28 they're in an emergency situation with the low returns.
29 Another said we need to make sure that somebody is
30 listening and to make sure that salmon stocks in the
31 river do not get depleted and that will remain a viable
32 salmon river.

33
34 Several testifiers shared comments
35 about how environmental and climactic changes are
36 negatively impacting salmon run sizes and reducing the
37 size of chinook salmon. Noted changes included warmer
38 water temperatures, low water levels in spawning areas,
39 increasing numbers of beaver dams that are reducing
40 spawning areas, increasing swimming sources for salmon
41 in deep water and increasing numbers of northern pike
42 preying on salmon fry in the river.

43
44 The interception of salmon in other
45 fisheries was also cited as a contributing factor to
46 low salmon returns on the Kanektok River. One
47 supporter said that the Native Village of Quinhagak
48 also submitted proposals to the Alaska Board of
49 Fisheries to address low salmon run sizes.

50

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1 Finally, there was a comment about the
2 lack of salmon assessment data for the Kanektok River
3 and the need for accurate counts of the number of
4 salmon in the river.

5

6 Now a summary of comments that were
7 opposed to this request. For the most part these
8 testifiers were concerned about declining salmon run
9 sizes in the Kanektok River, but did not think the
10 special action request would address the root of the
11 problem.

12

13 Some of these testifiers that were
14 opposed to the special action explained that sport
15 fishing is mostly catch and release and few chinook
16 salmon are retained. They suggested that conservation
17 measures need to instead be taken outside of the
18 Kanektok River and should include a reduction in
19 fishing times in the bay in District 4 and also
20 intercept fisheries in other regions such as False
21 Pass.

22

23 One testifier in opposition offered an
24 example that during some years few chinook salmon are
25 observed in the river, in the Kanektok River, until
26 nets in the bay are removed.

27

28 Another testifier said that the number
29 of boats in the bay should be reduced so that more
30 salmon can enter the river. They say that in the past
31 the commercial fishery was open every other day to give
32 salmon a chance to enter the river and spawn.

33

34 One testifier cited increasing harvest
35 pressure near the mouth of the Kanektok River as a
36 result of fishing closures in the Kuskokwim River.

37

38 Finally, one testifier opposed the
39 special action because sport fishing industry provides
40 an important source of income for Quinhagak. This
41 testifier also said that the timing of the special
42 action request is too close to the summer fishing
43 season and will not provide enough time for sport
44 fishers and guides to make alternative plans if the
45 river is closed to sport fishing in June 2023.

46

47 Mr. Chair, that concludes my summary of
48 public comments received during the public hearings.

49

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1 Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
4 Brooke. Is there any questions for Brooke from the
5 Council.

6

7 (No comments)

8

9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
10 Brooke. We'll move on to tribal consultation summary.
11 Orville Lind.

12

13 MR. LIND: Good afternoon, Chairman.
14 Board members. Orville Lind, Native Liaison with OSM.
15 I'm going to give you the summary of Fisheries Special
16 Action 23-01 with the village of Quinhagak was
17 conducted on February 16th of 2023.

18

19 All five agencies were present via
20 teleconference and members of the Quinhagak Council and
21 one from Natural Resources from Quinhagak. OSM Staff
22 presented the special action and I'll go ahead with
23 responses from Quinhagak. The residents stated that
24 the village council had discussed several options and
25 there just was no data on chums since 2015 and there
26 were no chums last year. So subsistence needs are not
27 being met.

28

29 It was also stated that a bigger issue
30 was that the chinooks were being taken more by the
31 commercial fishery than by rod and reel. There were
32 other issues, contamination issues in the river.
33 Erosion as well. The residents stated that they were
34 really not targeting the sport fishermen and they were
35 looking at all the options.

36

37 There was a Refuge Manager that asked
38 how did they go about developing the Special Action.
39 The Quinhagak resident replied that the proposal was
40 submitted to the Board of Fish and then mirrored that
41 proposal to the Federal Subsistence Program. During
42 the whole process they were asked not to overlap
43 seasons with the commercial fisheries. They wanted to
44 make their concerns known.

45

46 The Refuge Manager also commended
47 Quinhagak's efforts to do something about the situation
48 on chinook and chum. They were also asked about the
49 tagging salmon program and the manager replied there
50

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1 was no tagging program ongoing. However, there were
2 some genetic studies going on.

3

4

5 There was an elder from Quinhagak
6 shared his story about the youth days fishing in
7 western Bristol Bay. Many pink salmon he said was in
8 the river but they didn't care about the pink salmon,
9 so fishermen usually threw them away. Now we have
10 chum, but numbers are so low and they are lost. The
11 pinks have not returned. They are lost.

12

13

14 Now the chinook and chums are in the
15 situation now. He also stated that the commercial
16 fishery has caused a decline of those salmon. There
17 must be a better way to manage the fishery. The kings
18 have gotten smaller, like the size of a coho now. They
19 used to be 45 to 55 pound kings, which are very rare
20 now.

21

22

23 Also Area M is managed by the ADF&G
24 while some fish are being thrown away and we are just
25 trying to bring them back. More and more fishermen are
26 taking fish. More attention needs to be paid to the
27 people coming in and taking the fish.

28

29

30 The Board members from Fish and
31 Wildlife Service and the Park Service and public
32 members thanked the Quinhagak residents for sharing
33 that information.

34

35

36 There was another Quinhagak resident
37 asked about the False Pass fishery and why they have
38 long nets. He also said that is just one of the
39 reasons why our fish numbers are down here. Refuge
40 Manager replied that there's a fishery often called an
41 intercept fishery which the Alaska Department of Fish
42 and Game manages. Yes, it is frustrating for
43 communities up here because they really don't have a
44 say in the fisheries down there.

45

46

47 There are meetings being held in
48 Anchorage to try and change the intercept fisheries.
49 Kwethluk and Eek are frustrated and there's complaining
50 as well. OSM Council Coordinator shared that the
Bristol Bay has entered Board of Fish proposals to
reduce intercept fisheries.

51

52

53 Quinhagak resident asked about the
54 fishery closures for the month of June for chinook and

55

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1 chum. Again the manager replied that they didn't think
2 there was a closure on this fishery, this tributary.
3 He also stated that there was no buyer on the Kanektok
4 River last year, which is why there may not have been
5 any fishing there last year. The guides do not come
6 until after June because the fish come in later.

7

8 Another Quinhagak resident shared that
9 the statement made by the manager is really not true.
10 However, they've been trying to find the best time to
11 fish so that they can harvest salmon, mainly sockeye,
12 because that's what the processors take.

13

14 They are also trying to make kings
15 available for subsistence users. There are different
16 prices on kings and sockeyes and chums. We're trying
17 to change fishing methods to target more reds and
18 sockeye salmon. Maybe we need to change the proposal.

19

20 OSM Staff shared that one approach
21 would be to submit a request or special action and OSM
22 Staff also shared the FRMP program, Fisheries Research
23 Monitoring Program, may have an answer to some guidance
24 to that question. OSM Staff shared information and
25 contact information for the FRMP program.

26

27 The Refuge Manager was asked locally
28 about some clarification on fishermen on the river and
29 that there was a River Ranger Program before. However,
30 there were no more funds for that position -- that
31 program.

32

33 The Public Use Management Plan was
34 first developed in 2005 and then again in 2011. Under
35 that plan the number of guides is limited, but there
36 are do-it-yourselfers. As far as the guides go, most
37 fishing is catch and release only, especially for
38 rainbow trout. Occasionally people may keep a coho
39 salmon.

40

41 They used to have LE, but there is no
42 money to do that anymore. However we do have an RIT
43 that does go up the river, but we don't have a formal
44 monitoring program right now. OSM Staff shared that if
45 possible people could share their catch and release
46 with local folks. They would appreciate it.

47

48 Closing comments were made by Federal
49 Subsistence Board members, given thanks to translators

50

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1 and that concludes my summary for Fisheries Special
2 Action 23-01. Chair.

3

4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
5 that, Orville. Any questions from the Board for
6 Orville.

7

8 (No comments)

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
11 Hearing none. We move on to Regional Advisory Council
12 comments and we'll call.....

13

14 MS. PITKA: This is Rhonda.

15

16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Rhonda,
17 you have the floor.

18

19 MS. PITKA: I was just going to say I
20 thought the tribal consultation was definitely one of
21 the better ones. It was really Aleutians oriented and
22 I thought it was a really productive conversation.

23

24 Thank you for that.

25

26 MR. LIND: Quyana.

27

28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate the
29 positive. Good job, Orville. Any other questions from
30 the Board for Orville?

31

32 (No comments)

33

34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Hearing
35 none. We'll move on to the Regional Advisory Council
36 comments and we'll call on Brooke for the YKD RAC.

37

38 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
39 This is Brooke McDavid for the record. The
40 Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory
41 Council supported FSA23-01. The Council acted on this
42 Special Action Request before the final analysis was
43 made available.

44

45 The Council supported the closure to
46 the harvest of chinook and chum salmon by non-Federally
47 qualified users, including catch and release fishing,
48 during the month of June because of conservation
49 concerns for these runs into the Kanektok River. The
50

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1 Council further noted subsistence fishing should not be
2 restricted by the Special Action.

3

4 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
7 Questions from the Board for the RAC.

8

9 MS. DETWILER: I believe Nissa is on
10 next for the Western Interior RAC report.

11

12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Thank
13 you, Sue. I lost my agenda here for a second. Thank
14 you.

15

16 You're up next.

17

18 MS. PILCHER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
19 This is Nissa Pilcher, Council Coordinator for the
20 Western Interior RAC. The Western Interior Regional
21 Advisory Council supported FSA23-01. The Council acted
22 on the Special Action Request before the FSA23-01 final
23 analysis was made available. The Council supported the
24 closure as written.

25

26 The Council's justification was that
27 closures to sport fish are warranted and needed when
28 levels are below management objectives. There are high
29 mortality rates associated with catch and release
30 fishing.

31

32 As the analysis was unavailable at the
33 time the Western Interior RAC met and Chairman Reakoff
34 is unavailable today, he requested the following
35 additional comments made to the Board. The Council was
36 concerned with incidental harvest mortalities during
37 salmon-targeted catch and release fishing, but did not
38 consider other fish stocks that may be present and
39 targeted by sport fishers such as rainbow trout. There
40 would be incidentally caught salmon while sport fishers
41 are targeting these species.

42

43 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
46 questions from the Board for the Regional Advisory
47 Chair.

48

49 (No comments)

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none. We'll go ahead and move on to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game comments, Ben Mulligan.

MR. MULLIGAN: Hi, Mr. Chair. Just double checking since I'm on the teleconference can you guys hear me okay?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes. You have the floor. Loud and clear.

MR. MULLIGAN: Awesome. Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record my name is Ben Mulligan from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Listening to the testimony and the analysis so far I would say the Department would not oppose the amended version proposed by OSM.

I would add context to this situation in that it was already stated the sport fishery for targeting chums is closed. They made that emergency order at the end of last month, but along with that one there was an advisory announcement by the Commercial Fisheries Division that commercial fishing out in the bay is not expected to be conducted.

So between those two fisheries being closed in addition to at least on the chinook side the fact that people have noted that we've made the aerial survey goal eight out of 10 years and given the low sport participation there is a harvestable surplus we feel that those fisheries can still be conducted.

Ultimately we can accept the OSM amended version, but even then we've already taken conservation actions where we've seen the need to do so, especially in regards to what we're seeing with chum salmon.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Mr. Mulligan. We appreciate the efforts too. Any questions from the Board for Mr. Mulligan.

MS. PITKA: This is Rhonda Pitka. I was just thinking about the stateside who is already closed to sport fishing, is that correct?

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1 MR. MULLIGAN: Through the Chair to
2 Member Pitka. Yes, I think it was March 29th the Sport
3 Fish Division issued an emergency order which closed
4 chum salmon fishing in the Kanektok for this year. It
5 goes through this season. We only do ours a season at
6 a time.

7
8 So I imagine, depending on what we see
9 as far as numbers coming back and getting information
10 from local users we'll make a determination next year
11 as well. I make that comment because, as you guys
12 consider a special action, that would go over this
13 season and the 2024 season.

14
15 MS. PITKA: Oh, okay. So management
16 already made a decision to close that for this year?

17
18 MR. MULLIGAN: Yes, ma'am.

19
20 MS. PITKA: Is there any -- one of the
21 previous testifiers asked a question about data, you
22 know. Are there a way to get that or maybe start some
23 of those projects again?

24
25 Thank you.

26
27 MR. MULLIGAN: Through the Chair.
28 Member Pitka, not at this time. I think everybody has
29 -- we're looking at currently flat funding so we need
30 to prioritize some things, but if we do see some
31 continued issues down there, I know that we can -- we
32 do and can shift projects around and look for
33 additional funds to try to take care of those.

34
35 So I would say not at this time, but
36 it's not out of the realm of possibility as also we see
37 what we're doing along with the total suite of packages
38 for both Yukon and the Kuskokwim as it relates to the
39 situations there and spreading that even further along
40 to some other systems.

41
42 MS. PITKA: Thank you for that. I
43 appreciate it.

44
45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
46 other questions from the Board.

47
48 MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chair, this is Dave,
49 Forest Service.

50

0024

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

3
4 MR. SCHMID: Hey, Ben. Can you just go
5 back. I appreciate setting some context there with the
6 closed sport fishery on chum. The chinook, what you
7 shared there, and I may not have seen that, that
8 they've closed comm fish's -- closed the bay. Then I'm
9 most interested if you could just describe -- so the
10 aerial escapement counts those are happening annually
11 and in the river and you've met, at least within your
12 SEG there, eight of the last 10 years, is that correct?
13 Could you just describe those aerial escapements and
14 how you're evaluating that. That would help me.

15
16 MR. MULLIGAN: Through the Chair to
17 Member Schmid. So we do our -- I guess I should say we
18 don't do our annual surveys annually because sometimes
19 I think, as any resource manager is aware, you've got a
20 timeframe to do those surveys and if the weather
21 doesn't work out, some years you can't do them. But we
22 make a concerted effort to get out there on an annual
23 basis to make those counts. The escapement goal is
24 based off of those, so it takes into account kind of
25 the counting errors that have to do with aerial
26 surveys.

27
28 Right now, yes, we are -- we have met
29 the -- I should say it this way. We have gone into the
30 escapement goal range eight out of the last 10 years
31 and at this time feel comfortable with not restricting
32 chinook harvest in the Kanektok because of that
33 combined with the low number of sport fishermen that
34 participate in a sport fishery, whether directed at
35 chinook or not, at this time.

36
37 MR. SCHMID: Thank you. I appreciate
38 that.

39
40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
41 Thank you for that, Mr. Mulligan. Thank you, Dave.
42 Anybody else have questions from the Board.

43
44 MS. PITKA: This is Rhonda. I just
45 want to know if the returns turn out higher than
46 expected, they can lift it, right?

47
48 MR. MULLIGAN: Through the Chair to
49 Member Pitka. Yes, that is correct. You know, we
50

0025

1 empower our area biologist to make in-season decisions
2 too. So that goes both ways. So let's go a best case
3 scenario. We get into the season and chums are looking
4 good and then they look really good. We'll reevaluate
5 based off of what we're seeing, what we're hearing from
6 locals and we could end up lifting it.

7
8 I guess I will say in a kind of worse
9 scenario, let's say, you know, what we're seeing and
10 what folks are talking to us about for chinook, it
11 could be that our Sport Fish manager would then say,
12 okay, I think I need to -- you know, in some way, shape
13 or form he could go to -- because right now you'd go to
14 catch and release or to no retention. I guess
15 ultimately what I'm saying is we've got the ability to
16 pivot either way given what we're seeing in season.

17
18 MS. PITKA: Thanks for that.

19
20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
21 Appreciate the feedback and back and forth. Any other
22 questions from the Council for the State.

23
24 MS. CREACHBAUM: Mr. Chair. This is
25 Sarah Creachbaum for National Park Service.

26
27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Sarah, you
28 have the floor.

29
30 MS. CREACHBAUM: Thank you. Ben, I
31 just wanted to check in. So I know that we have heard
32 that eight out of the last 10 years that we've exceeded
33 escapement goals, but I'm also reading that in 2018,
34 2020 and 2021 it was on the lower bound of the
35 sustainable escapement goal. That sort of suggests the
36 low end and I wondered if you could address that,
37 please.

38
39 MR. MULLIGAN: Yes. Through the Chair,
40 Member Creachbaum. Sometimes we do fall into the lower
41 end and I would say that still -- that range still
42 provides sustained yield and considerations of
43 subsistence harvest, then commercial harvest and sport
44 harvest. So those things are all taken into
45 consideration.

46
47 So even though -- I mean you may make
48 the lower end of the goal, you're still within that
49 which provides for more than the replacing of that
50

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1 population. So there is not just future sustainability
2 of that run, but future harvestable surplus of that
3 run.

4
5 I guess on a side note if we weren't
6 making it, I don't know if the Board is aware, we do
7 have a stock of concern policy and it's three out of
8 the last five years, then we would be recommending it
9 as a stock of concern and then you put in -- we have an
10 action plan that goes with it and the whole nine yards.
11 But as of right now, given the numbers that we're
12 seeing and then given our policy, we haven't taken that
13 action yet and asked our Board of Fisheries to ratify
14 it.

15
16 MS. CREACHBAUM: Thank you.

17
18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
19 other Board comments or discussion. The floor is open.

20
21 (No comments)

22
23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
24 Appreciate that. Good discussion back and forth.
25 We'll go ahead and move on now to the Interagency Staff
26 Committee recommendations. Robbin Lavine, you have the
27 floor.

28
29 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
30 Members of the Board. This is Robbin Lavine,
31 Subsistence Policy Coordinator with OSM and chair of
32 the Interagency Staff Committee.

33
34 The Interagency Staff Committee has
35 found the staff analysis to be a thorough and accurate
36 evaluation of Fisheries Special Action Request 23-01.
37 The Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and Western Interior Alaska
38 Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils both took up FSA
39 23-01 and both Councils supported it.

40
41 The ISC acknowledges the Councils'
42 expertise in regional subsistence issues and notes the
43 Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Council's discussion about
44 potentially expanding the Native Village of Quinhagak's
45 request to include a closure to all species in addition
46 to chinook and chum salmon.

47
48 It was pointed out that even with a
49 closure to chinook and chum salmon sport fishing will
50

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1 still continue to occur for non-salmon species of fish
2 such as rainbow trout. However, there would not be
3 time for the Council to consider this addition and the
4 Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Council did not further consider
5 it.

6
7 It should also be noted that neither
8 Council was presented with an analysis and, therefore,
9 were not made aware of the OSM preliminary conclusion
10 to support FSA23-01 with modification to close Federal
11 public waters of the Kanektok River drainage to the
12 harvest of chum salmon only except by Federally
13 qualified subsistence users.

14
15 For the Board to consider this
16 modification they would need to consider the Council's
17 recommendations concerning the taking of fish and
18 wildlife as outlined in Section 805(c) of ANILCA. The
19 Board may choose not to follow any recommendation that
20 it determines is not supported by substantial evidence,
21 violates recognized principles and fish and wildlife
22 conservation or would be detrimental to the
23 satisfaction of subsistence needs.

24
25 There are pros and cons to the OSM
26 modification. While the aerial survey data shows
27 escapement for chinook salmon being met in the Kanektok
28 River in eight out of the last 10 years, there were an
29 additional two years where the survey goal was not
30 assessed and that was in 2017 and 2022 due to inclement
31 weather that prevented surveys from being conducted.
32 While this information provides evidence of chinook
33 salmon escapement goals being met recently, aerial
34 survey counts were near the lower end of the goal
35 range.

36
37 There is a general lack of data for
38 salmon monitoring in the Kanektok River drainage.
39 Overall chinook and chum salmon returns in the Arctic
40 Yukon Kuskokwim Region have been well below average and
41 given the lack of data showing healthy chinook and chum
42 salmon returns we cannot state with certainty that
43 there is or is not a conservation concern. Further
44 information is worth considering.

45
46 Kuskokwim Bay Advisory Announcement No.
47 1 from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced
48 that ADF&G does not anticipate any commercial gillnet
49 openings in Kuskokwim Bay Fishing Districts 4 and 5 in
50

0028

1 2023 based on the well-below average pre-season outlook
2 for chinook and chum salmon.

3
4 Additionally, ADF&G also issued an
5 emergency order March 29th, 2023 that closed the entire
6 Kuskokwim Goodnews area to sport fishing for chum
7 salmon effective 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, April 5th of
8 2023.

9
10 This closure prohibits all sportfishing
11 for chum salmon including cash and release fishing and
12 states that all chum salmon caught incidentally while
13 fishing for other species may not be removed from the
14 water and must be released immediately.

15
16 Also of significance are the concerns
17 and observations shared by Quinhagak residents.
18 Following 2020, after a year of curtailed sport fishing
19 due to pandemic restrictions, community members noticed
20 the number of dead fish on gravel bars in 2021 and 2022
21 were noticeably higher than in 2020, which they believe
22 stemmed from catch and release mortality. This local
23 knowledge is important when considering the impacts of
24 sport fisheries on chinook and chum salmon returns.

25
26 Finally, the tribal consultation with
27 the Native Village of Quinhagak was informative and led
28 to a good discussion between the tribes and Board
29 members. The ISC encourages the Board to read the
30 summary of the tribal consultation provided in the
31 analysis to help inform their deliberations.

32
33 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

34
35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
36 Interagency Staff, Robbin. Anybody from the Board have
37 any questions on the ISC recommendation.

38
39 (No comments)

40
41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
42 Thank you, Robbin, for that. Appreciate the ISC work
43 on this. We'll move on now and open it up to the Board
44 for discussion with liaison and Council Chairs.

45
46 (No comments)

47
48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right. I
49 think we had a good discussion on this and a good back
50

0029

1 and forth. We'll go ahead and open up the floor for a
2 Board motion at this time. The floor is open for a
3 motion.

4

5 MS. KLEIN: Mr. Chair, this is Jill
6 Klein with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Jill, you
9 have the floor.

10

11 MS. KLEIN: Thank you. I do just want
12 to mention that Member Boario does apologize for not
13 being able to be here today. She got called away to
14 another appointment.

15

16 So, Mr. Chair, I would like to move to
17 adopt Fisheries Special Action FSA23-01 as modified by
18 OSM. If I get a second, I'll explain why I intend to
19 vote in support of the OSM modification.

20

21 MR. BROWER: Second.

22

23 MS. KLEIN: Okay, thank you. The
24 proposed OSM modification is to close the Federal
25 public waters of the Kanektok River Drainage to the
26 harvest of chum salmon except by non-Federally
27 qualified users from June 1 through June 30, 2023 and
28 from June 1 through June 30, 2024.

29

30 As we heard earlier, the OSM
31 modification does not include chinook salmon. We also
32 heard that the Yukon Delta and Western Interior
33 Regional Advisory Councils did support FSA 23-01 to
34 close to both chinook and chum salmon. Neither Council
35 was presented an analysis and the analysis has included
36 the OSM modification just to close chum salmon only.

37

38 This is based on the justification that
39 we've heard from the analysis and also the Alaska
40 Department of Fish and Game that the aerial survey data
41 does show that chinook salmon escapement has been met
42 in the Kanektok River in eight out of the last 10 years
43 and also in four of the last five years. This is the
44 best available information we have and it does provide
45 evidence of meeting escapement goals on this river.

46

47 We also want to acknowledge the chinook
48 conservation concerns in Alaska statewide and
49 especially across western Alaska. We do appreciate the
50

0030

1 Native Village of Quinhagak for addressing salmon
2 fishery issues and bringing this to the Federal
3 Subsistence Board. Plus their shared observations of
4 the chinook salmon that they do see in the river are
5 the younger and smaller jack salmon. This seems like
6 an important area for future research monitoring and
7 partnership.

8
9 For chum salmon we heard about the
10 recent emergency order also from the Alaska Department
11 of Fish and Game and that's announced in the
12 Kuskokwim/Goodnews area that the chum salmon sport
13 fishery has been closed to protect chum salmon in
14 periods of low abundance. This is justified by the low
15 returns, the restricted subsistence harvest
16 opportunities in 2022 and also local knowledge from the
17 Kanektok River that has indicated poor returns for chum
18 salmon.

19
20 To point out the Federal fisheries
21 in-season manager who has delegated authority, it's the
22 Refuge manager from Yukon Delta National Wildlife
23 Refuge and they may issue special actions to open or
24 close Federal subsistence fishing and specify methods
25 and means, harvest and possession limits for the
26 Federal subsistence fisheries. The delegation also
27 does permit the manager to issue special actions to
28 close and reopen Federal public waters to
29 non-subsistence fishing.

30
31 The Federal manager will coordinate
32 with Office of Subsistence Management, representatives
33 from the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and Western Interior
34 Regional Advisory Council and also the Alaska
35 Department of Fish and Game prior to issuing any
36 special actions.

37
38 That's all I have for now.

39
40 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

41
42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
43 Jill. Any Board questions, comments or discussion.

44
45 (No comments)

46
47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the
48 question.

49
50

0031

1 MR. BROWER: Question.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Roll call,
4 please, Sue. Thank you.

5

6 MS. DETWILER: Okay. Thank you. The
7 motion is to adopt Fishery Special Action 23-01 as
8 modified by OSM.

9

10 I'll start out with Fish and Wildlife
11 Service, Jill Klein.

12

13 MS. KLEIN: Support.

14

15 MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

16

17 National Park Service, Sarah
18 Creachbaum.

19

20 MS. CREACHBAUM: The National Park
21 Service votes to support FSA23-01 as modified by OSM
22 for the reasons stated by U.S. Fish and Wildlife
23 Service. However, close monitoring of chinook salmon
24 should be conducted in 2023 to obtain a population
25 estimate and possible impacts of mortality associated
26 with the sports fishery.

27

28 The chinook counts barely meeting
29 minimum escapement goals, no survey data being
30 available from the previous year in 2022, local
31 observations of decline in both chinook salmon and
32 given the downward trends in record low returns of both
33 chinook and chum salmon across the region, a proactive
34 conservation approach is warranted at this time.

35

36 Thank you.

37

38 MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

39

40 Steve Cohn, BLM.

41

42 MR. COHN: The BLM votes to support the
43 motion as modified by OSM and for the reasons
44 articulated by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

45

46 MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

47

48 BIA, Glenn Chen.

49

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0032

1 MR. CHEN: The BIA supports the motion
2 as modified by OSM. Also with the reasons offered by
3 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Thank you.

4
5 MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

6
7 U.S. Forest Service. I understand Greg
8 Risdahl is sitting in for Dave Schmid who had to leave.

9
10 MR. RISDAHL: Yes, this is Greg sitting
11 in for Dave. I thought he might still be there, but he
12 must have just stepped out. The Forest Service will
13 support as modified the motion as justified by the Fish
14 and Wildlife Service.

15
16 Thank you.

17
18 MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

19
20 Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

21
22 MS. PITKA: I support as modified by
23 OSM and the justification I put forward already. Thank
24 you very much.

25
26 MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

27
28 Public Member Charlie Brower.

29
30 MR. BROWER: Support as modified by
31 OSM.

32
33 MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

34
35 And finally Chair Anthony Christianson.

36
37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support for
38 reasons stated on the record. Thank you.

39
40 MS. DETWILER: Great. Thank you. The
41 motion passes unanimously. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

42
43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: While I really
44 love hanging out with you guys, with the sun shining
45 down here in southern Southeast I will open up the
46 floor for an adjournment.

47
48 MS. PITKA: I make a motion to adjourn.

49
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0033

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Without
2 opposition I hope you guys all have a good day. Thank
3 you to the Staff for all your hard work. Have a good
4 week.

5

6

(Off record)

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(END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

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

THAT the foregoing, contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD MEETING taken electronically by our firm on the 19th day of April 2023;

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

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

DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 21st day of April 2023.

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