

WESTERN INTERIOR FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME II

McGrath Native Village Council
Community Service Center
McGrath, Alaska
October 9, 2019
9:00 o'clock a.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jack Reakoff, Chairman
Raymond Collins
Timothy Gervais
Don Honea
Jenny Pelkola
Pollock Simon

Regional Council Coordinator, Karen Deatherage

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(McGrath, Alaska - 10/9/2019)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We'll go ahead and start the meeting. So if we can -- we have quite a bit of agenda to do today, it'd be good to start the meeting on time, I got 9:00 o'clock.

So we've completed through -- identify issues for the annual report is what we're at right now, correct, Karen?

MS. DEATHERAGE: Yes, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And so we identified -- what issue did we identify for the annual report yesterday, we had one issue.

MS. DEATHERAGE: I'll find it in my notes.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. Council members, do you have issues for the annual report? Do you feel that the Mulchatna Caribou issue should be on the annual report, Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: I'm sorry, can you.....

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We're talking about the annual report topics, and do you feel that the Mulchatna caribou issue should be at least put on the list for discussion at our spring meeting for finalization, and we'll see what happens with this Mulchatna issue?

MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, I'd like it to be on the annual report. We've been trying to, for several years, to get the population growing and we're still going the wrong direction.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right.

MR. GERVAIS: So, yeah, it's pretty critical.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. And then

1 you've got the other one, Karen.

2

3 MS. DEATHERAGE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
4 The issue that the Council wanted on the annual report
5 was regarding the high water mark, the mean high water
6 mark and the definition.

7

8 With respect to the Mulchatna Caribou
9 Herd, that is a regulatory issue and, in general, the
10 annual report deals with those issues that are outside
11 the regulatory issue so you might consider that if
12 there's an issue with the process for how the special
13 action is being handled at this time, you can put that
14 in the annual report, but as far as the regulatory
15 issues those generally don't go into the annual report.

16

17 Thank you.

18

19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, there were
20 some issues that should be highlighted on the annual
21 report. And one that was very apparent was there's
22 miscommunication, or no communication between the
23 Refuges, Togiak and Yukon Delta about harvest, and with
24 the Department of Fish and Game. There's a complete
25 disconnect between those agencies who are making
26 management decisions on that herd. Nobody seemed to
27 know what the harvest was at all and Fish and Game's
28 harvest reporting system apparently is not capturing
29 hardly anything, only the sport harvest is basically
30 what they're getting. So there's some annual report
31 issues for the Mulchatna that need to be incorporated
32 into that report to the Federal Subsistence Board.

33

34 MR. GERVAIS: Mr. Chair.

35

36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tim.

37

38 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, I would like to see
39 if we could put this concept in the annual report
40 because it has to do with the Mulchatna Herd, has to do
41 with bycatch, has to do with many factors, has to deal
42 with our talking about drop out rates, and this is -- I
43 would like to see the Federal Subsistence Board and at
44 some level, ADF&G, recognize these components for non-
45 reporting or unreporting. I know when we were looking
46 at Amendment 91 with the chinook salmon, they kept
47 talking about bycatch numbers but from my experience
48 from talking with other fishermen, those bycatch
49 numbers were all under reported but the North Pacific

50

1 Management Council made no allowance for under
2 reporting the bycatch and then when we talked about
3 introducing all these different types of gear into
4 Kuskokwim and more different styles of gear and the
5 Yukon for this catch and release king salmon
6 conservation strategy, we're not addressing as a whole
7 the -- the river committee's not addressing the drop
8 out rate, mortality from catch and release so we have
9 this -- like there should be like somewhere in the size
10 of the run estimate there should be some component for
11 unknown -- under reported or unknown drop outs and I
12 don't see it in any of the final reports or any of the
13 final run analysis or -- so we're seeing this
14 conversation we had with Fish and Game about Mulchatna
15 Herd yesterday, they're like well we don't -- we don't
16 know what this unreported caribou harvest is, but
17 they're not like putting that into the analysis of what
18 the harvest is, where it's definitely a component.
19 Everybody on this Council and the managers all know it
20 exists so I think it should have formal recognition.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right.

23

24 MR. GERVAIS: So that's a concept I
25 would like to bring up in the annual report, is we need
26 to have a component for the unknown or under reported
27 -- under reported, or unknown.

28

29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, it's a big
30 deal with -- the unknown reported harvest, that's one
31 component. But the other is the unrecognized
32 incidental harvest mortality factor with certain
33 species. When you fish six inch net you're going to
34 have drop outs of a high number of dead salmon that
35 fall out of the net. Or if you have high competition,
36 hunts, there's a high incidence of incidental harvest
37 mortality. People start getting pressured to shoot
38 further, they shoot into herds, they imbed things,
39 especially with caribou, and aggregating species, bad
40 things happen with caribou. Nelchina was graphic.
41 5,000 taken home, 30,000 missing. 2017 70,000 caribou.
42 2018 35,000 caribou. 35,000 caribou are missing and
43 only five were recovered. There's some incidental
44 harvest mortality factors, it can be phenomenal, that's
45 completely uncalculated, nobody even pays any attention
46 to that. The more higher the competition, the more
47 stress there is in the hunt, especially with certain
48 aggregating species. Dall sheep mortalities are high.
49 Incidental harvest mortalities are high in aggregating

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1 species.

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So these are factors that need to be calculated, and it needs to be -- an issue that needs to be brought up to the Federal Board, is that the biological information is not complete.

Jenny.

MS. PELKOLA: I would like to say that it seems like we've been talking about this for a long time, this Mulchatna Herd, and we always say the same thing and it seems like nobody is really getting it, or listening or responding, or whatever. So I think -- I don't know who -- who is the contact person that would do something about it. It seems like we can talk about it and talk about it and nothing -- there's no ears to hear it. Maybe I'm wrong.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, we're bringing it up to the Federal Subsistence Board, they're the regional directors of the agencies and they should be aware of this issue. They should be directing Staff to analyze how they're implementing their biological information. So we can only bring it up, we're advisory, we can't make anybody do anything.

MS. PELKOLA: Uh-huh. Okay.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So any other topics besides those topics?

MR. COLLINS: What about the issue of Donlin was raised. The impact on the.....

REPORTER: Ray, your microphone.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You want to.....

REPORTER: Thanks, Jack.

MR. COLLINS: Oh, okay. The issue of Donlin came up because they completed the studies basically but I don't know if they have reached a decision on the route because there's problems with both routes. If they come through the mountains and down from Farewell then they're opening up even if they had, you know, keep a road open, the fourwheelers are going to use it and they'll be in every drainage up

1 there. They charter into Farewell with bigger planes
2 to bring the fourwheelers in. So that impacts Nikolai
3 who have traplines out that way and hunt out that way.
4 And then if they bring the fuel up the river, you've
5 got the impact on salmon with the constant barges and
6 waves created by those and so on, and so both routes
7 have problems.

8
9 I don't know what you want to say about
10 that, but we noticed that Bethel changed its opinion.

11
12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. Karen, you
13 have a statement.

14
15 MS. DEATHERAGE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
16 Member Collins, through the Chair. The Council had put
17 this issue in the annual report, the last annual
18 report, and we also sent in comments to the Bureau of
19 Land Management regarding the mine and the concerns
20 over the route, especially in the hills versus down in
21 the Black Spruce in the permafrost and Bonnie Million
22 is going to be on the phone later today talking about
23 the Bering Sea Western Interior Resource Management
24 Plan. The Donlin Mine issue is in that plan, and so at
25 that time I would recommend that you ask her about the
26 concerns that you raised with the Council and see if
27 those were handled in any way in the Final
28 Environmental Impact Statement for that mine within the
29 Bering Sea Western Interior Plan.

30
31 Thank you.

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33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you, Karen.

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35 MS. MILLION: Karen.

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37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Somebody on the
38 phone.

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40 REPORTER: It's Bonnie. Go ahead,
41 Bonnie.

42
43 MS. MILLION: Yes, sorry, good morning,
44 Mr. Chair. This is Bonnie Million. I'm actually on
45 the phone now if you would like me to respond to any of
46 the Donlin items.

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We're going to get
49 to that issue in the Bering Sea plan. So we're on
50

1 annual report topics, we're on an agenda item right
2 now, Bonnie.

3
4 MS. MILLION: Okay. Okay. I just
5 would like to make one point of clarification for the
6 record. The Donlin Plan is -- or the Donlin right-of-
7 way, the BLM process is separate entirely from the
8 Bering Sea Western Interior Resource Management Plan.
9 They're not related. But I will give an update on
10 Donlin during my time for the agency update.

11
12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, I'd appreciate
13 it at that time.

14
15 Thank you.

16
17 MS. MILLION: Yep.

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19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And so other topics
20 for the annual report.

21
22 (No comments)

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24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We may identify
25 others during the meeting so we'll -- we have two items
26 at this time.

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28 MR. GERVAIS: Mr. Chair.

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30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tim.

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32 MR. GERVAIS: When we talk about the
33 high water mark definition, could we also get navigable
34 water clarification with that, those -- because like
35 there was this case last year, while it finished its
36 case, it's been going on for several years over at
37 Yukon-Charley and the Preserve. Their enforcement
38 officer arrested a fellow for airboat use and it went
39 all the way through the courts, so I would like an
40 update on what's navigable water and what's the
41 significance of navigable water.

42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

44
45 MR. GERVAIS: And that ties in pretty
46 close with what the high water mark is.

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, the high water
49 mark issue needs to be a defined point by the State and
50

1 Federal government. They have to work together to tell
2 the public where this mean high water mark is, is that
3 the debris line, is that where the willows start. We
4 have to have something that's physical that we can look
5 at for enforcement and the public so that we -- we keep
6 getting crossways with different interpretations.
7

8 The navigable water issue, that can be
9 an educational thing that the OSM can bring to the
10 Council at one of our meetings. The Federal Board does
11 not deal with that issue, but the Federal Board can
12 work on the mean high water mark which is an ongoing
13 issue for subsistence users on regulatory processes
14 where the season begins for specific hunts and where
15 they do not include. And so that's, I think the
16 navigable water thing can be -- I would like to know
17 are navigable waters definitions within our region,
18 what is the current definition, the State is always
19 pushing for more navigable waters because they own the
20 waters underneath.
21

22 MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair.
23

24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Don.
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26 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
27 think Tim brings up kind of an interesting point and
28 maybe clarification of the mean high water mark on
29 Federal waters. For instance across from Ruby there,
30 up to the Bone Yard, like 30 miles below Tanana that's
31 Federal waters, is there -- maybe clarification about
32 high water marks on Federal waters, is that what he's
33 talking about, I mean I -- maybe it's just a point of
34 view here.
35

36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The Federal
37 jurisdiction is associated to specific conservation
38 units. The navigable water issue is another issue of
39 what is considered navigable. And so then the State
40 jurisdictions on navigable waters, these are like three
41 different types of issues. One is jurisdiction for
42 Federal management of fisheries on Federal water, the
43 other is where the boundaries are for hunting zones
44 where the mean high water mark for specific areas for
45 hunting or State jurisdiction. This is a big
46 convoluted thing for the public but we should have --
47 currently I don't know what's all navigable within this
48 region, what -- where the State's jurisdiction begins
49 and State jurisdiction ends; I don't know that.
50

1 So it'd be good to have sort of a map
2 so that we know what is State jurisdiction, especially
3 in upper rivers like here, you know, you get into the
4 upper drainages, the navigability goes away and so
5 where is the Federal priority and where the Federal
6 priority ends on navigability.
7

8 But do we have any other items on the
9 annual report. We may identify those at this meeting.
10 We'll have an update on the Donlin. But we included
11 Donlin in our concerns in our last annual report.
12

13 (No comments)
14

15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So I don't hear any
16 other annual report issues at this time but we'll
17 incorporate others.
18

19 MS. DEATHERAGE: Mr. Chair.
20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Karen.
22

23 MS. DEATHERAGE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
24 I'd like to recommend that we open the floor to any
25 public or tribal testimony this morning as we
26 customarily do.
27

28 Thank you.
29

30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes. And so is
31 there -- on a daily basis, is there any public or
32 tribal comments on non-agenda items?
33

34 (No comments)
35

36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any public member
37 have anything on non-agenda items.
38

39 (No comments)
40

41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Vince, you got
42 something, non-agenda?
43

44 MR. MATHEWS: Maybe.
45

46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.
47

48 MR. MATHEWS: Vince Mathews with a
49 rolling table here.
50

1 (Laughter)

2

3 MR. MATHEWS: I need clarification on
4 your discussion on navigable waters, are you asking for
5 it to be an agenda item and are you asking not only
6 definition of jurisdiction but possibly enforcement?
7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, we were
9 talking about the annual report issue of this mean high
10 water mark and where the boundary -- we need to have a
11 definition between the State and Federal government so
12 everybody's on the same sheet of music. The public
13 knows that -- my opinion, it should be where the
14 willows begin, that's the high water mark. Willows can
15 grow there, they -- it's not washing them away that's
16 the high water mark so then everybody knows what we're
17 doing. That's been a big issue throughout this whole
18 mean high water mark and boundaries and so forth. And
19 so the State and Federal government has to come
20 together and come up with a definition that the public
21 can work with; come to terms with this thing. This is
22 60 years of State navigability and all these various
23 issues and we need to deal with -- the Federal
24 government needs to deal with that. We want the
25 Federal Subsistence Board to deal with that.
26

27 But the navigability issue is where is
28 the State boundaries already, which waters and at what
29 point is State navigability. And that is just a report
30 that the Council can take, where are these waters, in
31 the Koyukuk River, where are the boundaries of
32 navigability, above this point that's all Federal
33 waters, don't have navigability; that's something that
34 we would like to have in a report to this Council. And
35 where the Federal jurisdictions are, just in that same
36 report, where the Federal jurisdictions are for
37 fisheries.
38

39 That's basically what we were
40 discussing.
41

42 MR. MATHEWS: I just bring it up
43 because there may be not clarity on enforcement
44 following that Supreme Court, and so that's why I was
45 just wondering and then so you're going to request that
46 in your annual report to have it as a topic, people
47 will get you up to speed on navigable waters following
48 the Sturgeon case.
49

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1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, what we're
2 asking in the annual report is for a definition of mean
3 high water. There is no definition. Nobody can come
4 up with a definition that's satisfactory to both agen
5 -- State and Federal and to the public. The public is
6 asking for a definition, this is way too long of
7 dragging their feet on this issue and they need to deal
8 with that. That's a completely different issue to
9 where navigable waters and State jurisdiction, and we
10 need to know -- okay, the Sturgeon case just happened,
11 what does this mean and where is the navigable waters.
12 So we need a report on that, we don't need to have the
13 Federal Board talk to us about it, we just need to have
14 a report at our meeting, just a topic at the meeting.

15
16 So, thank you.

17
18 MR. MATHEWS: Yeah, I appreciate that
19 because there's possible confusion on.....

20
21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Uh-huh.

22
23 MR. MATHEWS:still working out
24 the details of the follow from that case.

25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we're talking
27 about non-agenda items.

28
29 Kevin, did you want to come and talk to
30 us about that meeting that's going to be in Bethel with
31 the preseason planning and you were trying to invite me
32 to that meeting. Can you come to the mic here and talk
33 about that for a minute.

34
35 MR. WENTWORTH: We'll touch on it when
36 we present.

37
38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: When you present,
39 okay. So that covers the annual report issues at this
40 time.

41
42 Board of Game proposals. Does
43 everybody have these copies here, or this -- oh, I have
44 the cheatsheet. So the Board of Game is going to meet
45 on March 6th, I think, in -- it's in this book here.
46 There's a whole bunch of Board of Game proposals, an
47 astounding number of proposals that have been made by
48 the public for this region, Interior and Eastern Arctic
49 meeting at which this Board of Game is going to meet in
50

1 Fairbanks around the first part of March. Our meeting,
2 spring meeting is on -- so, yeah, it'll be, let's see
3 here.....
4

5 MS. DEATHERAGE: Mr. Chair. The
6 meeting is February 11th and 12th, the Council meeting.
7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: February 11th and
9 12th. The Board of Game comment deadline is February
10 21 and we should address several of these proposals
11 that affect the region but we're going to have a lot of
12 time to do that and that can happen at our February 11
13 and 12 meeting in Fairbanks. So there's several
14 proposals that affect this region within the Galena
15 area. I can just give the numbers and what the effect
16 of those proposals are.
17

18 Proposal 59 is to change the winter any
19 moose season in Unit 21D, which is WIRAC's proposal for
20 the Kaiyuh Flats hunt.
21

22 Authorize an any moose season during
23 March in a portion of 21D, we should address that.
24

25 Extend the resident moose season within
26 the Kanuti Controlled Use area, that's the Subsistence
27 Resource Commission's proposal to extend the season to
28 October 1. That's Proposal 61.
29

30 Proposal 63 is to repeal the Dalton
31 Highway Corridor by the Fairbanks Advisory Committee.
32 The Dalton Highway Corridor is the only way to control
33 the hunting pressure and the Fairbanks Advisory
34 Committee wants to throw the baby out with the bath
35 water, and we have controls on the Haul Road so that we
36 don't wipe out the low density game populations and we
37 can't eliminate the Dalton Highway Corridor Management
38 Area. We should look at that.
39

40 Clarify the legal use of highway
41 vehicles and snowmachines in the Dalton Highway
42 Corridor, Proposal 64.
43

44 Proposal 67 is to increase the bag
45 limit for brown bear in 21D, we should look at that.
46

47 Proposal 68, open the fall bear baiting
48 in 21C. That's kind of -- I'm not sure about that one.
49 Put that one on there, we can prioritize these when we
50

1 have our meeting.

2

3 Proposal 72 increase the resident bag
4 limit for brown bear in 24B, that's Subsistence
5 Resource Commission's proposal for basically Allakaket
6 up to Anaktuvuk Pass which is on the divide and the
7 Anaktuvuk people want to have a bag limit increase to
8 two brown bear, which the brown bear harvest in 24B is
9 low.

10

11 Proposal 73 eliminate the brown bear
12 registration permit for 21D and 24, that was my
13 proposal to eliminate the registration permit, which
14 actually burdens the subsistence users. When they have
15 an opportunity to take a brown bear, the State says
16 we'll seal the bear, you can -- you bring the skin and
17 the skull in, put it in a box, send it in and we'll
18 seal it and we'll pay the freight. But this permit, if
19 you don't have that permit in your hand and you shoot
20 that bear you don't -- you can't kill the bear, so the
21 burden of the permit -- regis -- if you're just hunting
22 under State regulations, see a bear, you shoot it, all
23 you have to do is like save the skin and the skull,
24 send it to the Department of Fish and Game and they'll
25 seal it, you don't have to have any kind of permit
26 before. So that's become kind of an issue because it's
27 real hard to get these permits. So that's Proposal 73.

28

29 Proposal 75 develop a feasibility
30 assessment for intensive management in 21D and 24.

31

32 Extend the sheep season in Proposals 84
33 -- extend the sheep season in the Dalton Highway
34 Corridor Management Area. We don't have any sheep to
35 give. We have to address this proposal.

36

37 Open an archery season for sheep with
38 extended season is Proposal 85. The Dalton Highway
39 Corridor.

40

41 Proposal 95, establish a resident moose
42 hunt in 19D East, that's a McGrath area proposal that's
43 proposed by the McGrath Advisory Committee. That
44 should be addressed by this Council, shouldn't it, Ray?

45

46 MR. COLLINS: Yeah.

47

48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And so there's these
49 McGrath area -- reauthorize the predator control

50

1 program. 96.

2

3 Change the Tier II permit for moose
4 hunt in 19A to a registration permit. That area's
5 still in recovery. That's Proposal 97.

6

7 Proposal 98 change the Tier II permit
8 hunt in 19A. Another one of those.

9

10 Proposal 99 change the Tier II hunt in
11 19A. We need to look at those.

12

13 Proposal 102 shift the seasons for Tier
14 II moose hunt in 19A.

15

16 Proposal 107 establish a winter moose
17 hunt in 21E.

18

19 Proposal 109 replace the moose general
20 season for residents and non-residents in 21A with a
21 registration permit hunt.

22

23 Proposal 110 allow proxy hunting in
24 19D.

25

26 Allow proxy hunting in 21A and 21E.
27 Proposal 101.

28

29 Proposal 112 open a registration permit
30 hunt for portions of 19C. These are McGrath Advisory
31 Committee proposals.

32

33 Some of these proposals, this --
34 Proposal 115 require meat left on the bones for
35 caribou, moose, and bison in 19, 21A and 21E, and that
36 one we need to really endorse because we keep hearing
37 continuously about spoiled meat, boned meat coming into
38 McGrath and communities that's spoiled. We put a meat
39 on the quarter regulation in the Koyukuk Controlled Use
40 Area back in the early '90s, that saved a lot of meat.
41 Meat on the bone without boning, without exposing all
42 that meat to bacteria and then being thrown in a game
43 bag and souring and turning green has had a phenomenal
44 increase in the salvage of moose and caribou in Unit
45 24.

46

47 There's a proposal to extend the lynx
48 season. Proposal 119.

49

50

1 So those proposals I threw out there to
2 put a -- I feel that those should be looked at during
3 our spring meeting.
4

5 Does the Council -- when we look at
6 them -- some, at that point, the Council may or may not
7 want to take them up, but I think that those all affect
8 the Council to larger degrees than some of the other
9 proposals.
10

11 Karen.
12

13 MS. DEATHERAGE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
14 For the Council, I'd just like to let you know that
15 I'll be sending you copies of the list of proposals
16 that Jack just read with the priority ones that he
17 selected, as well as a copy of those particular
18 proposal outlines from the book from Fish and Game so
19 that you have time to review that before the spring
20 meeting.
21

22 Thank you.
23

24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That would cover the
25 Board of Game proposals and that should be a blocked
26 out agenda item for our spring meeting.
27

28 So at this time we're going to start
29 into agency reports. And so we're at tribal.....
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31 MR. GERVAIS: Mr. Chair.
32

33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tim.
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35 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, Jack, are you going
36 to represent the RAC at Board of Game?
37

38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I -- there's the
39 Koyukuk River Advisory Committee will be represented at
40 the Board of Game and I really should attend that
41 meeting but the reality of the Board of Game meeting is
42 you take all this public comment, you sit there --
43 there's this many proposal, there's going to be
44 hundreds of people commenting and you're going to spend
45 a lot of time waiting for that to get the comments in
46 and so the Board of Game can eat a phenomenal amount of
47 time and so that -- I can't spend like days at a Board
48 of Game meeting. I may prioritize one day, or two days
49 as the Koyukuk River Chair to go to that Board of Game
50

1 meeting but I can't spend the entire 10 days. And when
2 they -- you get into the lobbying of the Board of Game
3 process -- if we could attend the meeting during the
4 deliberation of the proposals that would make a
5 difference but there's a flaw in the Board of Game
6 process where you can't -- you basically -- the Board
7 starts into deliberation and you can't talk to the
8 Board. The Department can. They can talk to the
9 Board. But the public, the Advisory Committees and the
10 Councils cannot directly talk. So we can comment to
11 the Board with our concerns and they should be written
12 concerns because they seem to pay more attention to --
13 they file those into each proposal so then they look at
14 those -- our record copies more than they actually
15 listen -- because they forget what the testimony was
16 because it happened eight days ago, when they get to
17 the deliberation. That's the flaw in the whole Board
18 process. It's a big convoluted mess. Each proposal
19 should allow the public to comment on each proposal so
20 you would have a block of comments before each proposal
21 and then the Board would be very aware of what you just
22 said as they go through the deliberation, just like we
23 would do here.

24
25 But, yes, I intend to be at the Board
26 of Game for a period of time but I can't spend the
27 entire 10 days there, I just can't do that.

28
29 So we're going to go to tribal
30 governments, InterTribal Fish Commission was going to
31 -- where'd Kevin go.

32
33 MS. DEATHERAGE: Mr. Chair.

34
35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Uh-huh, Karen.

36
37 MS. DEATHERAGE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
38 Sorry for the interruption. We were going to hear from
39 Lisa Stube this morning as first out because she's got
40 to be on a plane this afternoon, so thank you.

41
42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I have the tribal
43 governments first and Kevin's -- it's -- she's got kind
44 of a lot of time right.....

45
46 MS. STUBE: It's.....

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:now.

49
50

1 MS. DEATHERAGE: You got a lot of time,
2 okay. Okay.

3
4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: On my agenda here I
5 got agency reports and tribal governments are first and
6 Native organizations. So InterTribal Fish Commission.

7
8 MS. DEATHERAGE: We have them here so
9 they could follow the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

10
11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh.

12
13 MS. DEATHERAGE: Yeah, so that they
14 could compliment that after the discussion there.

15
16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh, I see. I put
17 them in the wrong spot.

18
19 MS. DEATHERAGE: No worries.

20
21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Sorry about that.

22
23 MR. SAMUELSON: We could go if you
24 want.

25
26 (Laughter)

27
28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: No, we I got -- I
29 put you down in the wrong place, sorry about that.

30
31 Okay.

32
33 So Lisa's going to give us a -- my
34 mistake, sorry about that.

35
36 MS. STUBE: I'm -- I'm flying out at
37 1:45 so.....

38
39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Uh-huh.

40
41 MS. STUBE:I mean I -- I.....

42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we're at Alaska
44 Department of Fish and Game, we have the Yukon River --
45 but we were moving yours up, you're the radiotelemetry
46 sonar enumeration for Kuskokwim River sheefish, so we
47 moved you up because you're flying out, we dropped them
48 back one, 2019 Yukon River Salmon Season Summary will
49 be after Lisa and this presentation.

50

1 So it's Department of Fish and Game is
2 the next category right now.

3
4 So is this going to work -- hopefully.
5 Are you standing on one foot?

6
7 (Laughter)

8
9 (PowerPoint setup issues)

10
11 (Pause)

12
13 MS. STUBE: Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair
14 and Members of the Council. I'm Lisa Stube, Alaska
15 Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sportfish,
16 Region 3. And I'm going to talk about what started off
17 as a three year project and turned into a 12 year
18 odyssey on sheefish within the Kuskokwim River
19 drainage.

20
21 The main objectives of this project,
22 which started in 2007, it started off as a three
23 project funded through the Office of Subsistence
24 Management with lots and lots of encouragement from Ray
25 Collins. I definitely have to thank you for that,
26 you've been the biggest supporter of this project. Is
27 -- is -- we used radiotelemetry techniques to document
28 spawning stocks and spawning locations, that was a
29 primary, in addition, using the radiotelemetry we
30 identify specific summer feeding areas and
31 overwintering areas as best as we could, and also, you
32 know, and -- and -- it definitely brought up some more
33 questions. So we were able to determine migratory
34 timing using radiotelemetry. I mean I wanted to get on
35 the ground -- it's one thing to say, you know, I think
36 this is a spawning ground, or, you know, be able to get
37 on the ground as a -- I'm getting a little ahead of
38 myself, but we ended up collecting a bunch of genetics
39 -- to get on the ground to collect genetics and just
40 kind of look at the extent of the spawning areas
41 because didn't really discover anything that people in
42 the upper -- upper river didn't already know. I
43 definitely have to thank folks like Nick Petruska and
44 some elders who -- Ray and others who definitely
45 steered me as to, you know, you need to fly up this
46 drainage or this drainage and you'll find some spawners
47 there. Definitely couldn't -- this project would not
48 have been successful without the help of the -- of the
49 communities -- up river communities in particular key
50

1 elders. And also, too, I've always been curious to
2 know what makes these fish tick and I got on the ground
3 and -- and was looking at habitat characteristics.
4

5 So initially we deployed some
6 transmitters in 2007, it was a little hard to catch the
7 fish that year and also in 2008 -- I'm getting a little
8 ahead of myself but -- but -- none of the transmitters
9 went up to a pretty well known spawning location up --
10 yo around Highpower Creek on the Swiftfork so that
11 prompted me to ask for more funding to try to, you
12 know, to try to target fish that might be heading way,
13 way up river and thus ended up having -- having some
14 more deployment, this time targeting up river fish. So
15 pretty much, you know, deployed transmitters through
16 most of the drainage. We used drift gillnets. The
17 whole idea of this -- or set nets -- the whole idea of
18 this project, though, was to try to put out radio
19 transmitters and fish in very, very good healthy shape
20 so most of the time we used hook and line. And each
21 fish was anesthetized and we used -- and implanted
22 with a radio transmitter. And we tracked the fish
23 through a series of stationary tracking stations. The
24 one over to the left is near Medra and the one over to
25 the right is at Dora Eesye's (ph) camp on the Big
26 River. Phillip Eesye gave me lots and lots of good
27 advice. And also we tracked the fish, initially during
28 the summer to look for feeding areas and then in the
29 fall to try to pinpoint the spawning areas and the
30 extent of the spawning areas. And this is over the
31 MiddleFork.
32

33 And so I guess I'll proceed by just
34 describing the year in the life of a Kuskokwim River
35 sheefish.
36

37 We flew the whole drainage, up to 2011
38 during July and sheefish and I have one thing in
39 common, we love to eat. And you'll see them posted,
40 you know, at the mouth of major drainages feeding on
41 out-migrating juvenile salmon, down river, up migrating
42 smelt and, you know, pretty much if it's there, yeah,
43 they'll eat it.
44

45 I'm going to show a couple of places,
46 in particular, really caught my eye, number 1 is the
47 Holitna River, which is a beautiful drainage, but to a
48 sheefish it's a grand feast. And that didn't come
49 through. But -- and so anyway, a couple of fish that
50

1 we captured had stomachs just chock full of out-
2 migration juvenile salmon because this is a major
3 salmon spawning river. And then we had tagged in 2008
4 in mid-May, very cold, but.....
5

6 MR. GERVAIS: What species of salmon?
7

8 MS. STUBE: Ay-yi-yi, well, on the
9 Holitna pretty much all five species of Pacific salmon
10 spawn. I couldn't identify the little juveniles. But
11 you get the Holitna and, of course, king salmon -- we
12 had a radio telemetry project where we deployed radio
13 transmitters as a mark/recapture, and a good 40, 50
14 percent of my transmitters actually went up the
15 Holitna; that was years before. Oh, yeah, sockeye
16 salmon. There's sockeye that spawn up the river. As
17 well as Telaquana Lake, there's a stock of them up the
18 river. Sockeye. I've seen pink salmon. A carcass of
19 a pink salmon below the Kugrugluk River weir, and it
20 definitely was a pink and I was like, wow. And coho
21 salmon will also spawn up there. And chum salmon. So
22 pretty much all five species of Pacific salmon. It's
23 quite the drainage.
24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: My question would
26 be, what would be out-migrating at that time, or
27 what.....
28

29 MS. STUBE: Oh.
30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:would be
32 present, that would primarily be juvenile chinook.....
33

34 MS. STUBE: Juvenile, I.....
35

36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:and coho in
37 summer.
38

39 MS. STUBE: Oh. I'm going to think
40 about -- I'm going to think about the Copper because I
41 helped out with a -- I helped with a -- a totally
42 different drainage but I did help out with a smolt
43 project, it was doing coded wire tags on the Copper
44 River and I remember we had to, in June, try to
45 delineate king salmon from -- the juveniles are so
46 similar looking, king salmon from coho salmon, they
47 were both out-migrating together and there was also
48 sockeye as well that I remember as well as chum so I
49 think for -- I mean -- I mean I'm not an expert on
50

1 this. But -- but I do believe that most -- that at
2 least coho, king -- coho, king, sockeye and chum are
3 probably out-migrating together. At least definitely
4 coho and king based upon what I've seen in other
5 drainages, but like I said I'm -- I'm not a -- I'm not
6 an expert.

7

8

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

9

10 MS. STUBE: But, anyway, this fish was
11 captured mid -- and radio tagged mid-May 2008 at the
12 mouth of the Johnson River, this is below Bethel, and
13 it looks pregnant, it's not pregnant, it's full of
14 smelt. Yeah, I mean they had stomachs just chock full
15 of smelt. And this was a plate of ninespine and
16 threespine sticklebacks. I went down with John
17 Chythlook, our area management biologist for the
18 Kuskokwim, and we -- we saw just a concentration of
19 fish up the Kongoruk, which is a tributary of the
20 Johnson River and we were just checking it out to see,
21 well, could they be spawning there, it was about the
22 time of spawning, late, you know -- you know, late
23 September, early October, but, instead, they were
24 feeding on ninespine and threespine stickleback. And I
25 later read that I -- one of the stickleback is --
26 they're just full of lipids, they're full of fat, so
27 they're a good fish to eat.

28

29

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And then after a summer of feeding and
putting on some fat, it's time to spawn. And the
spawning area is -- the spawning areas are up river,
but you're probably looking and saying, well, gee, most
of this drainage, you know, they're kind of all over.
So they -- they don't spawn every year, they might skip
one or more years between spawning events. Both males
and females.

And here's the up river. Now, I'm sure
Ray is noticing the names, this is the USGS names, many
years ago I talked to Nick Petruska, who said I talked
to that map maker back in the mid-1950s and I told him
what the names were, he didn't listen to me. And so in
a little bit I'm going to show you the same map but
with the real names I took from Ray's report.

So anyway pretty much, you know,
located the sheefish within the four spawning
locations, the Big River, the Glayezighoshno (ph); am I
doing that right Ray?

1 MR. COLLINS: (Pronouncing)

2

3 MS. STUBE: (Pronouncing)

4

5 MR. COLLINS: (Pronouncing)

6

7 MS. STUBE: (Pronouncing) You'll have
8 to.....

9

10 MR. COLLINS: (Pronouncing) Fish and
11 (pronouncing) is harvest.

12

13 MS. STUBE: So Sheefish Harvest River.
14 Definitely the majority of fish went to here. Lesser
15 numbers up the MiddleFork. And then about four to
16 five, I'm going to say five went up the SouthFork below
17 the Tonzona River here. And then a population, for
18 sure, up here that we tracked on the (Pronouncing)
19 River and it -- there was a man back in the '70s, Ken
20 Alt, he was a fish biologist; did you know Ken, Ray?
21 Ken Alt?

22

23 MR. COLLINS: I may have met him but I
24 don't recall.

25

26 MS. STUBE: Yeah, but he was working
27 with sheefish throughout the state of Alaska pretty
28 much and the Yukon and the Selawik and Nowitna, and
29 back then they didn't have the telemetry technology so
30 he was relying upon spaghetti tags but he got to know
31 lots of people throughout the state, which helps, too,
32 to have folks call in and say, hey, I've got one of
33 your fish and I know Steve Eluska met him years ago and
34 he -- he -- he and his parents -- I don't know if they
35 still live in Telida but they had a home in Telida and
36 lived there yearround so, anyway, he had documented the
37 sheefish presence and, of course, folks in Telida had
38 docu -- you know used the fish for the sheefish -- the
39 spawning area up here. None of my transmitters went up
40 there. And I went to a meeting in Nikolai many years
41 ago with KNA that were doing -- we were doing a similar
42 -- kind of a project -- a project on Bering Cisco in
43 Kuskokwim and people were telling me, we haven't seen a
44 sheefish since the mid-90s. So can't say. We got on
45 the ground, we fished, we tried to catch them, we put
46 out nets, caught coho, which Haldona (ph) appreciated
47 back in Telida and we -- it -- it's not a big -- big
48 drainage, and we didn't -- we didn't catch or see
49 anything. Can't say if it's no longer a viable

50

1 spawning area or not but -- but we were unsuccessful.

2

3 Well, anyway, on the Big River,
4 MiddleFork we had -- one of our stationary tracking
5 stations was at the mouth to look for timing and I
6 guess in general you -- I mean you could see that these
7 axis are different dates but -- but they're the same
8 time -- you know, two month time period. The point I'm
9 trying to show here is the sheefish might arrive to
10 their spawning areas early, salmon spawn up the Big
11 River so, you know, there's food for them to eat and
12 they're broadcast spawners so it doesn't hurt to show
13 up early but you don't want to be late for the big
14 broadcast event. Usually this spawning took place end
15 of September, early October and you look at the below
16 chart, is once they were done spawning, they were out
17 of there, usually within a week or two, most of the
18 fish were -- were -- swam out fairly quickly.

19

20 Of the transmitters we deployed I think
21 it was like 120-ish or so, some of them disappeared for
22 a year or two. It's a big drainage. Either I just
23 didn't find them, they could have sunk to a deep hole,
24 or who knows, Ken Alt once tagged a fish up the Holitna
25 that someone called in at Kaltag and said, hey, we got
26 one of your fish so that does happen.

27

28 But, anyway, there were 49 fish that
29 during the years 2008 to 2011 that I was able to track
30 consistently and they were alive and moving. And the
31 point I want to show here is that these fish can kind
32 of be all over the place. As is -- you know, of -- of
33 these four years and these 49 fish, 23 percent spawned
34 once; 29 percent spawned twice; three -- 18 percent
35 spawned three times and about -- it was actually four
36 fish, eight percent spawned four times, and then
37 there's a proportion that didn't spawn at all. So --
38 so, yeah, that was pretty -- pretty surprising.

39

40 So after, you know.....

41

42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Excuse me.

43

44 MS. STUBE: Uh-huh.

45

46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The non-spawners are
47 young fish or just don't spawn?

48

49 MS. STUBE: They just didn't spawn.

50

1 And actually one point I -- I didn't quite make, these
2 -- and I'll go back to this, as far as feeding, as I
3 mentioned feeding locations is -- some of the fish,
4 when they traveled after the ice went out to their
5 feeding locations, or didn't, or just stayed down
6 river, some would just -- you know, were always going
7 to their favorite feeding location, like the Holitna,
8 some were pretty fidel year after year, some would go
9 from mouth to mouth to mouth and, I mean it -- it -- it
10 was not -- you know, it was not consistent, it wasn't
11 really predictable. The only thing that was
12 predictable was their desire to eat.

13
14 During the time of spawning, though,
15 they generally spawn late September, early October,
16 that was fairly consistent, both within the Kuskokwim
17 and this has been seen with other studies in the Yukon
18 and North -- Northwest Alaska. So after spawning and
19 feeding it's time to overwinter and a majority of fish
20 I could tell, you know, with the tracking stations
21 overwintered down river. This was actually -- I kind
22 of culled this a little bit from Ken Alt's map. But
23 not always. I actually had about 15 percent would
24 spend the winter on the Holitna. Had one fish that
25 spent three winters on the Holitna, the fourth winter I
26 guess it got tired of the Holitna so it spend the
27 fourth winter down river. And I've had other fish,
28 too, that just overwintered within the mainstem. Most
29 went down river but -- but there was -- there was --
30 but there was some differences, and not necessarily
31 year to year.

32
33 We did get our -- I wanted to get on
34 the spawning grounds plus there was a Fish and Wildlife
35 Service, Gene Conservation Laboratory was doing a
36 statewide genetic study on fish and so we -- we got on
37 the ground and collected some sheefish and took a
38 finclip for genetics. And also, too, you know, we
39 caught fish and -- and just -- you know, just to be
40 able to kind of certify that, yeah, they're definitely
41 certify that, yeah, they're definitely spawning on this
42 date. A -- females -- whitefish -- female whitefish
43 don't -- I mean -- I mean -- if you can express eggs
44 with very light pressure, then they're either ready
45 like within a couple days of spawning or they are
46 spawning and we did collect a otoliths, ear bones from
47 the fish. Which, if I have time, I'll talk a little
48 bit about -- using stranchim to -- to look at anagonmy,
49 which really corroborated with this study very well, if
50

1 we have time, which is why I have these crystals here
2 on the table. And same with the males.

3
4 And -- and I'm curious, too, because
5 sheefish, you know, if I go back to this map, they
6 spawn in very relatively small -- relatively small
7 areas compared to let's say Pacific salmon, which might
8 spawn in very broad reaches. I think the spawning here
9 in the Big River alone was like 20 kilometers;
10 MiddleFork about 6 kilometers; SouthFork about 15
11 Kilometers; below Dennis Creek I think it was about 10
12 kilometers. So very few, very -- very relatively small
13 spawning locations. So I was just kind of curious to
14 see what makes it tick, plus I've read other reports
15 from other folks who've worked on sheefish and just
16 want to see if you could corroborate and there was
17 definitely some characteristics that fit all areas and
18 I was lucky enough to be able to visit all of these
19 areas.

20
21 MR. GERVAIS: Lisa, what's that.....

22
23 MS. STUBE: Uh-huh.

24
25 MR. GERVAIS:GSI on the last
26 slide?

27
28 MS. STUBE: Oh, that's gonados somatic
29 indices. The few fish that were sacrificed, we -- you
30 -- you measure the -- and actually Randy Brown had done
31 a lot of GSI, I only collected a couple, a few, so in
32 other words, you -- you take the weight of the gonads
33 for females and you divide -- and you divide that by
34 the total weight and if it's a certain percentage, you
35 know, 20-plus percentage, then that means they're in
36 spawning condition for whitefish.

37
38 So there was a lot of similar
39 characteristics, the substrate was differentially sized
40 gravel, high dissolved oxygen, which you definitely
41 want that for a spawning area. It's -- it's very
42 important that conditions are good for egg survival
43 over the winter. pH was always about 8. And
44 conductivity was relatively high but compared to --
45 which is not really a characteristics and the Kobuk
46 conductivity's a lot lower but it's a clear running
47 river. But on the Kuskokwim, the Big River,
48 MiddleFork, SouthFork they are glacial rivers, either
49 fully glacial or like the MiddleFork partially

50

1 glacially influenced. I did throw SwiftFork in there
2 even though I didn't find any sheefish, they were --
3 they were -- yeah. I did -- and the characteristics
4 were very similar.
5

6 One thing, too, which I thought was
7 kind of interesting is, is if you're a sheefish and
8 let's say you show up a month before spawning, well,
9 you're not going to sit there and fight a current,
10 you're going to go to a nice low energy area, you know,
11 hopefully you can snack on some juvenile pike or some
12 -- or some other juvenile fish while you're waiting for
13 the great big broadcast spawning event. And -- and
14 I've noticed that like HighPower Creek, which, I guess
15 the sheefish -- you know, talking to Steve Eluska, you
16 know, he was telling me about where he used to, you
17 know, fish for sheefish in Highpower, and going on to
18 SloughFork, yeah, you know, it's all very similar, you
19 know, organic silt and mud, you know, lower dissolved
20 oxygen, pH about the same, of course conductivity a lot
21 lower, and the Tonzona River above -- located above
22 Nikolai too, not really spawning areas, with organic
23 silt and mud, I mean the eggs would get stuck and --
24 and -- and die.
25

26 I -- I talked to -- if you look at old
27 reports, I remember talk -- I did talk to Ken Alt about
28 that because he reported Highpower Creek as a spawning
29 area and he said at -- at the time he thought well they
30 can't spawn in the glacial river, I mean this was like
31 back in the ear -- late, late '60s. Although Steve
32 Eluska was saying, oh, no, they're not spawning there,
33 they -- they move out up the SwiftFork, so I think the
34 SwiftFork was -- this -- I think this was more of a
35 milling area, these are more milling areas, they're
36 going to mill and being a nice low energy area until
37 it's time to move out. And I actually saw that one
38 year when flying in 2014, and the fish would, you know,
39 saw them down at the SloughFork and then a week or two
40 -- a week later, boom, up river and a spawning area is
41 below Dennis Creek here on this drainage. And also the
42 Big River, MiddleFork, you know, lower in the river, I
43 mean, you know, WindyFork it's a confluence so, again,
44 there's lots of nice back eddies, saw them down there.
45 Lots of back eddies lower in the Big River. And, yep,
46 a week and a half or two weeks later you could see
47 where -- where they've moved up to -- to their spawning
48 areas. The one thing that's hard to do is they
49 generally spawn at night, so I'm getting them -- when
50

1 you fly, you have to fly during the day so we're --
2 we're -- we're near -- near about.

3
4 Now, most of the sheefish, and, again,
5 this wasn't really designed as a percentage to the
6 spawning area, it's more of a -- just a -- you know,
7 locate document, look at spawning extents, you know,
8 how high up they go as best as possible, and pretty
9 much got it, is by far the majority of fish went up the
10 Big River.

11
12 So here's the map with the correct
13 names.

14
15 Ray, how do you pronounce this, this is
16 MiddleFork?

17
18 MR. COLLINS: MiddleFork.

19
20 MS. STUBE: MiddleFork, yeah, this --
21 that name. I took it from one of your old reports.

22
23 MR. COLLINS: I can't really see it.

24
25 MS. STUBE: Yeah, it -- it -- yeah,
26 but, anyway.....

27
28 MR. COLLINS: It's not clear enough for
29 me to see it.

30
31 MS. STUBE: Oh, yeah, sorry, that --
32 that -- yeah, that is a bit far away.

33
34 But, anyway, because of -- because Fish
35 and Wildlife Service, Ray Hander of Fish and Wildlife
36 Service put a sonar on the Selawik, if you remember an
37 earlier slide, I mentioned they might take a while to
38 get up to their spawning area, but when -- when they're
39 done spawning, they're out of there. So Ray has tried
40 on the Selawik to try to capture that -- that -- that
41 rapid out-migration so -- so it -- it's been tried on
42 the Slukna, on the Upper Nowitna, and the Kobuk and I
43 thought, well, what the heck, let's -- let's try it
44 here. It did hav -- this -- this project was fraught
45 with some -- with some difficulties for sure as -- as
46 were the Selawik, which is doing -- you know, and
47 Kobuk, et cetera.

48
49 Here's -- so, anyway, in 2016, '17 and
50

1 '18 we -- we tried deploying an ARIS, it's a sonar,
2 it's kind of like an ultrasound, or like what dolphins
3 use to, you know, to capture prey so it's sound waves,
4 not -- not harmful to the fish -- and -- and I mean
5 I've stood in front of it for a long time, not harmful
6 to people either, it's just soundwaves. And it wasn't
7 totally straightforward because they're not the only
8 fish that spawn up the Big River, but luckily they're
9 the biggest and humpback whitefish lengths are much --
10 much smaller. So let's see if I can get this to run
11 and -- and one thing, too, Ray noticed that when
12 sheefish passed by the sonar on the Selawik that they
13 were usually beating their tails backwards, they're
14 swimming backwards, and happily I saw that too, so that
15 was another way of delineating. So if you look close
16 you can see where -- ah, I guess it's hard to see this
17 far away. Well, anyway, you have to take my -- take my
18 word for it. So we were counting -- oh, there goes a
19 bunch of Least -- counting sheefish. They -- they tend
20 -- most of them -- not all, but were beating their
21 tails backwards.

22
23 So to -- to process the files you look
24 for these little blips and then you can correspond the
25 blips -- with the screen a closer to the video I just
26 showed you and then try to ascertain, well, is this a
27 sheefish or is this a humpback. For the most part they
28 were pretty straightforward. Sometimes I actually had
29 to use the measuring tool to try to delineate.

30
31 Now, the problems I said was not -- it
32 was not a -- it was fraught with one big difficulty is
33 that sheefish -- and this has been seen with the other
34 sonar projects is they come out as -- generally as the
35 temperature nears zero. Well, as the temperature nears
36 zero you get ice, and once you get a little ice on --
37 and these rivers can ice up (snaps fingers) so fast,
38 within a couple hours, plus you have a crew and a camp,
39 and you need to get everybody out of there so they
40 don't get iced in, and a -- and a boat, and the sonar
41 too, I mean it -- it -- yeah, the ice can get on the
42 sonar, they almost didn't make it out in 2016. It was
43 very nervewracking. But here, too, you know, where's
44 the fish. I mean you -- you just get -- a sonar will
45 take a three dimensional image and put it into two
46 dimensions. I think the Selawik, out of eight years
47 they -- they managed to get one -- one full census, one
48 full count of the fish that were coming out of the
49 river.

50

1 MR. COLLINS: Lisa.

2

3 MS. STUBE: Uh-huh.

4

5 MR. COLLINS: I think the functioning
6 of that icing up is that the silt stops coming in too
7 as the headwaters.....

8

9 MS. STUBE: Right.

10

11 MR. COLLINS:freezeup.....

12

13 MS. STUBE: Right. Right.

14

15 MR. COLLINS:it's not putting the
16 silt in the river so the river -- the water's clear
17 enough.....

18

19 MS. STUBE: Right. Right.

20

21 MR. COLLINS: But I heard the figure 80
22 -- approximately 80 percent, is that, you know,
23 the.....

24

25 MS. STUBE: Yeah, yeah, I -- I -- yeah,
26 here's the scoop.....

27

28 MR. COLLINS:amount of.....

29

30 MS. STUBE: Yeah, I -- I mean -- I mean
31 this project wasn't designed initially, it was designed
32 initially to kind of locate and -- and it really was
33 more of a life history type study but -- but -- but
34 initially -- when we did initially tagging in 200 --
35 mostly the fish we tagged was in 2008 and they were
36 down river, so in a way that -- and -- and during the
37 summer -- so that might be -- and -- so the 80 percent
38 of those fish did travel up river. And then because no
39 fish went up to Highpower, we ended up getting some
40 more funding from OSM so we were able to -- to do some
41 more tagging, but I tagged further up river, and so I
42 might have been targeting more fish heading up, you
43 know, Tonzona, up -- up river and I might have been --
44 been targeting -- but again it wasn't designed to look
45 for what proportion but I can definite -- and -- and I
46 -- remember I was trying to work with BLM on getting
47 this area -- an area of critical ecological concern, I
48 wasn't quite sure how to present it. I mentioned
49 overall 60 percent because even -- even fish I tagged

50

1 -- that we tagged up at the mouth of EastFork above
2 Medra, I have several of those fish went on down and
3 went up the Big River, so, I mean that's definitely the
4 -- the -- you know, the biggest spawning location. But
5 -- but I -- I -- probably realistically about 80 -- I
6 mean, yeah, if you look at the initial spawning of 120
7 transmitters that were deployed between the Johnson and
8 the Tatlawixtuk, and maybe seven more that were
9 deployed up around McGrath but 120 -- these -- these
10 fish -- again, were -- were low in the river so that --
11 that -- I mean -- you know, I was talking to a lady at
12 BLM and she said, well, that -- that's probably more
13 approximate. But, again, this study wasn't initially
14 designed to do that so -- but you can't take the
15 MiddleFork or the other areas -- lesser fish go there
16 but they're still important.

17
18 Anyway, 2016, the -- the dashed line is
19 temperature and the -- the solid line is the count and
20 you can see looking at the -- the hot pink here, as the
21 temperature dropped, and we actually didn't get started
22 until late because it was flooded, so the temperature
23 dro -- as the temperature goes down you can see that
24 the fish almost kind of mirror migration, temperature
25 goes down, the out-migration goes up, and this is
26 pretty typical. This is seen on the Kobuk, seen
27 elsewhere where, you know, all of a sudden the fish
28 just kind of go, boom, and they start coming out. But
29 we didn't get a full count because the ice chased us
30 out. And you can't run a sonar in ice. So -- and the
31 crew had to get out of there. And they -- they -- they
32 were battling ice in the main stem, it was -- they said
33 it was pretty shocking to get out of there.

34
35 In 200 -- so -- so this is a minimum,
36 that -- that -- we know there's -- we know there was at
37 least that many fish in there but, you know, we
38 definitely couldn't run the sonar and -- and like I
39 said, the other projects which have kind of gone away
40 as well for the same issue.

41
42 2017, you know, you can see the
43 temperature going down and then all of a sudden it went
44 up in early October. Kind of like -- it feels like
45 it's doing it today, it's very warm out there. And
46 then it rained and rained and rained and rained. And
47 actually the Big River flooded and they had to remove
48 camp and get out of there on October 11th because it
49 was flooding. You don't have a gravel bar, you can't
50

1 run a sonar or have a camp so -- so -- so we only
2 managed to get 2,635.

3
4 Last year was a very, very late
5 freezeup, remember. So last year, because of the late
6 freezeup and you look -- look at -- this is the orange,
7 you can see as the temperature drops the number of
8 sheefish start going up but it does stay -- you know,
9 pretty warm, three degrees. And I almost feel like
10 these fish finally said about late October, we got to
11 get out of here and -- and we did manage to get most of
12 the fish and so this, you know, we're regarding as a
13 full count of about 7,000 fish.

14
15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Say, Lisa.

16
17 MS. STUBE: Uh-huh.

18
19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We're going to have
20 to shorten this way up.

21
22 MS. STUBE: Oh, sure, sure. Sure.
23 Okay. And real quick, and -- and the down stream
24 migration, they mostly traveled at night.

25
26 And that's all.

27
28 And I -- I can talk about this, if you
29 all want to -- the -- do I have like two minutes?

30
31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You have two minutes
32 on that isotope.

33
34 MS. STUBE: Okay, isotope, so -- so
35 isotopes, Randy Brown helped me, we collected some
36 otoliths and we were looking at degree of anadrogmy,
37 that is how these fish travel out into the marine
38 environment. And basically, you know, otoliths are
39 composed of calcium carbonate. And otoliths, they're
40 araganite, which is -- which is a polymorph, araganite
41 calcite, the crystal structure is just a little
42 different, if anybody's curious, they're right here.
43 And so that's what otoliths are -- are composed of,
44 this, and -- and basically there's more stronchiam in
45 the marine environment than there is in a fresh
46 environment and stronchiam is -- it is -- in the
47 periodic table is an alkaline earth metal here and
48 sometimes stranchiam gets substituted for calcium so if
49 you're in the marine environment you might get more
50

1 stranchiam than calcium.

2

3

4 Okay.

5

6 And, so, anyway, went down to otoliths,
7 used a laser ablation massspectrometer and found like
8 three fish, one each from the Big River,
9 (indiscernible) and MiddleFork, that they had ventured
10 out into the marine environment, prob -- and -- but for
11 the most part, here we go, wow, if it's above this line
12 here it's been out to the marine environment, most of
13 the fish, though, spend their time in fresh water. And
14 with a little bit of forays out into the -- you know,
15 fo -- fish that -- that spend time down river, below
16 Bethel, and the estuary, and -- and -- I had mentioned,
17 for instance, you know, I had a fish that spent the
18 winters on the Holitna, probably stayed, you know, in
19 the Holitna for several years or -- or within the fresh
20 water portion for several years and then finally
21 forayed down river. So you can see that, you know --
22 you can see that this kind of behavior is probably
23 mirrored, you know, in this particular fish as well,
24 spent some time in fresh water, then into marine. Saw
25 it as well. Something similar.

26

27 I have lots of people to thank.

28

29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you. That was
30 a real education on sheefish. I think that was a
31 really interesting timings with water temperature and
32 so forth. We have a lot of sheefish populations in the
33 Western Interior, the Alatna stocks, the -- and over in
34 the Kobuk -- Alatna and Kobuk stocks are really close
35 together.

36

37 MS. STUBE: Uh-huh.

38

39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And it's interesting
40 to see that they spend so much time in the fresh water,
41 well, that's going to be kind of a big issue if we have
42 a mine that may release toxins into these overwintering
43 areas in the upper mid-drainage of the Kuskokwim River.
44 That's what I took home. It's very critical habitats
45 for those.

46

47 So any questions from the Council.

48

49 MS. PELKOLA: I have a comment.

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Jenny.

2

3 MS. PELKOLA: Lisa that was very
4 interesting, too bad we ran out of time but it seems
5 like you worked very hard on this.

6

7 Thank you.

8

9 MS. STUBE: Thank you.

10

11 MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair.

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Don.

14

15 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. What
16 I found interesting in this whole scenario was that a
17 fish would not just relegate itself to one tributary or
18 something, and the fact that it showed up on the Yukon
19 is kind of interesting.

20

21 MS. STUBE: Yeah, I -- I can't say, you
22 know, if any of these fish -- or how often that
23 happens, that was something that Ken Alt did many, many
24 years ago. So looking at some of the fish that show --
25 there was only three fish that showed that they had
26 definitely forayed into the marine environment is not
27 too surprising and Randy Brown has seen that too on the
28 Yukon fish, that some look like they spend their whole
29 lives in the fresh water and some move out in the
30 marine. As you can see it's not necessarily, well, it
31 -- this -- this is what this fish does -- I mean
32 genetically they're one single stock on the Kuskokwim.
33 You know, like you said, you know, a good 80 -- 60 to
34 80 percent majority of them spawn and they're broadcast
35 spawners so these might be brot -- these are brothers
36 and sisters and cousins, and, yet, their life history
37 can be so diverse within each -- each fish. And --
38 and, again, I -- I have only limited time but I could
39 -- I could go on and on.

40

41 (Laughter)

42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: But we have limited
44 time to get out of McGrath.

45

46 MS. STUBE: Right.

47

48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Appreciate that.

49

50

1 MS. STUBE: If you're curious, I could
2 -- I could -- this is what their otoliths look like.
3
4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: All right.
5
6 MS. STUBE: On the -- on the crystal.
7
8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you. So we're
9 going to go to the Yukon River salmon season summary
10 and Fred Bue's here and then is Holly going to be --
11 or someone with ADF&G.
12
13 Go ahead, Fred.
14
15 MS. JALLEN: Yeah, this is Deena Jallen
16 with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. I'm on
17 line to help answer any questions but, yeah, I totally
18 turn it over to Fred to cover the summer season.
19
20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thanks so
21 much.
22
23 Karen.
24
25 MS. DEATHERAGE: Thank you, Jack.
26 Apparently there's quite a few people on line so I
27 thought we might take a minute to have people introduce
28 themselves so we know who is on the telephone
29 currently. Anybody in the room who has not signed the
30 signin sheet at the back of the room, could you please
31 do so.
32
33 Thanks.
34
35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Who's on the
36 phone today.
37
38 MR. LIND: Good morning, Jack and
39 Council members. Orville Lind, Native Liaison for OSM.
40 Good morning.
41
42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Good morning,
43 Orville.
44
45 MR. MASCHMANN: Gerald Maschmann
46 with.....
47
48 REPORTER: Gerald, speak up.
49
50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Gerald, yeah, I can
2 barely hear you. Go ahead, next.
3
4 MR. MOSES: This is Aaron Moses, Yukon
5 Delta.
6
7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, Aaron.
8
9 MS. ROGERS: Good morning. This is
10 Alissa Nadine-Rogers.
11
12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Who?
13
14 REPORTER: Alissa Rogers.
15
16 MS. MONCRIEFF: Good morning. This is
17 Catherine Moncrieff with Yukon River Drainage Fisheries
18 Association.
19
20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Karen?
21
22 REPORTER: Catherine Moncrieff.
23
24 MR. MCKENNA: Good morning, this is
25 Brian McKenna with Tanana Chiefs Conference.
26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Say again.
28
29 REPORTER: Brian McKenna, TCC.
30
31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you.
32
33 MR. JENKINS: Good morning, Council
34 members. Wayne Jenkins, Yukon River Drainage Fisheries
35 Association is on the line.
36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, Wayne, thank
38 you.
39
40 MR. ROWE: Good morning. This is Eric
41 Rowe with Tanana Chiefs Council.
42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Good morning.
44
45 MS. MCDAVID: Good morning. This
46 is.....
47
48 MS. MILLION: Good morning. This is
49 Bonnie.....
50

1 MS. MCDAVID:Brooke McDavid with
2 ADF&G, Division of Subsistence in Fairbanks.
3
4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.
5
6 REPORTER: Go ahead, Bonnie.
7
8 MS. MILLION: Okay. Good morning.
9 This is Bonnie Million, I'm with the BLM.
10
11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, Bonnie.
12
13 MS. MORAN: This is Tina Moran with
14 Kanuti Refuge in Fairbanks.
15
16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Tina?
17
18 REPORTER: Yes, Tina Moran.
19
20 MR. SHARP: This is Dan Sharp with
21 Bureau of Land Management in Anchorage.
22
23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Good morning, Dan.
24
25 MR. HARWOOD: Good morning. Chris
26 Harwood with Kanuti Refuge.
27
28 REPORTER: Chris.
29
30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Chris, okay, go
31 ahead, next.
32
33 MS. OKADA: Good morning. This is
34 Marcy Okada with Gates of the Arctic National Park and
35 Preserve.
36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, Marcy.
38
39 Anyone else?
40
41 MR. HAVENER: Yeah, good morning, this
42 is Jeremy at Koyukuk/Nowitna/Innoko National Wildlife
43 Refuge.
44
45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, Jeremy.
46
47 MR. BURCH: This is Mark Burch.....
48
49 MS. JALLEN: Yeah, good morning.
50

1 MR. BURCH:with the Department of
2 Fish and Game.

3
4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, Mark.
5

6 MS. JALLEN: Good morning. This is
7 Deena Jallen, Alaska Department of Fish and Game in
8 Anchorage, summer season assistant manager for the
9 Yukon River.

10
11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, Deena.
12

13 MR. WACKOWSKI: Good morning. Steve
14 Wackowski from the Office of the Secretary.

15
16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Good morning, Steve.
17

18 MS. DAMBERG: Good morning. This is
19 Carol Damberg with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
20 Subsistence Regional Coordinator and ISC member.

21
22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Good morning, Carol.
23

24 MR. PAPPAS: Good morning. George
25 Pappas, OSM State Subsistence Liaison from beautiful
26 Los Anchorage.

27
28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Good morning,
29 George. Anyone else.

30
31 REPORTER: I think that's it.
32

33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you.
34 Appreciate everybody being on the call. So we're going
35 to go to the Yukon River post-season report, go ahead,
36 Fred.
37

38 MR. BUE: Yeah, good morning, Mr.
39 Chair. Council members. My name's Fred Bue. I'm the
40 Yukon River area fisheries manager and I'd like to
41 preface my presentation. Maybe you have this in the
42 packet, it's a season summary and it's a joint effort
43 between the State of Alaska and Fish and Wildlife
44 Service. And this presentation is really a combination
45 of both agencies and so it summarizes our work as we go
46 through the whole season.

47
48 So there is a lot of details. It was a
49 very busy season and it's hard to summarize into a few
50

1 short words, minutes for you so I apologize if it does
2 get long and boring, but there are different parts of
3 the river that have different interests and so bear
4 with me here.
5

6 Again, with all the planning and stuff
7 that we do, much well before the season, our outlook
8 was for a run similar to what we saw in 2018 for summer
9 chum and chinook. Chinook, the run forecast was
10 168,000 to 241,000, that's a pretty wide range. That's
11 well before the season. The run at the low end of the
12 range would require conservative management,
13 significant restrictions, however, a run at the upper
14 end of the range would accommodate full subsistence use
15 and no restrictions. So it is quite a range to plan
16 for going into the season, which way are we going to
17 go. So we took all the new management tools we gained
18 over the last few years, combined them with a great
19 deal of fishermen suggestions and feedback, come up
20 with a management strategy for a conservative approach
21 prior to the season. And that we printed and mailed
22 out prior to the season.
23

24 Starting in the lower river, rather
25 than going directly to six inch gillnets just after the
26 ice went out, we allowed 7.5 inch nets to harvest front
27 tricklers until the chinook catches started to pick up
28 near the mouth. There were also other sheefish and
29 other species out there that people could harvest at
30 the time. When chinook test net catches began to
31 increase, we restricted the Lower Yukon to half their
32 normal window schedule with 7.5 inch gear. Through the
33 middle of the season, as they're coming in through the
34 mouth of the river, we further reduced mesh size to six
35 inches, we cancelled a period, we had another period of
36 six inch even though the run by that time was looking
37 pretty good. But we were also hedging that the
38 exceptionally warm water that we were seeing at the
39 time was going to be a factor so we were holding back
40 some fishing time there with concern of unknown.
41

42 Some levels of restrictions continued
43 through up river districts as the chinook salmon
44 continued up stream. Closures were used to protect
45 groups of fish through sections of the river, six inch
46 or smaller mesh gear was used to help target chum
47 initially and while we were expecting to reduce the
48 harvest of chinook at the time.
49
50

1 Assessment continued to indicate that
2 the 2019 chinook run was coming in closer to the top
3 end of the preseason forecast warranting the relaxation
4 of the subsistence fishing schedule. However, as
5 you're all aware the summer chum was coming in either
6 poor or very late. Managers were contemplating
7 restrictions to the summer chum subsistence fishing and
8 possibly foregoing the summer chum commercial harvest
9 altogether.

10
11 One thing we did do was while keeping
12 subsistence periods on the reduced schedule, after the
13 chinook pulse closure in the lower river the gillnet
14 mesh size was restricted -- that restriction of six
15 inches was lifted to allow fishermen to avoid some of
16 those summer chum, while pursuing a few chinook, but
17 the periods were still limited in length so they
18 weren't harvesting heavy on those. As Mr. Chairman --
19 many of you are aware, Mr. Chairman, Jack Reakoff,
20 requested a teleconference of all three RACs about that
21 time to discuss Federal management, what sort of
22 options we had for conserving summer chum, what was our
23 interest and what did we need to do. And at that point
24 we want to thank the RACs, especially the RACs, OSM for
25 putting that meeting together. It was really helpful
26 to us managers to get some sort of feedback in-season
27 when decisions have to be made even though we don't
28 have really good data and we don't have a good idea of
29 what our outcomes are going to be taking those actions.
30 So it was a point of uncertainty and we appreciate
31 getting the feedback from throughout the drainage, was
32 -- like I say, the Yukon-Delta, Middle River, even up
33 in Eagle River and so it was a drainagewide
34 communications, and we really appreciated that and that
35 helped a lot.

36
37 Fortunately the summer chum eventually
38 did come in, they came in late. It was the latest on
39 record as far as our fishing goes. However, it was
40 still below average run strength but it was still large
41 enough to provide some late commercial harvest based on
42 the drainagewide goal. Relaxations to summer fishing
43 schedule in the lower river generally did not incur
44 until 75 to 80 percent of the chinook had passed.

45
46 For the Upper Yukon, they saw fewer
47 subsistence salmon restrictions because by that time
48 chinook salmon had started to arrive in these
49 districts, projections were pointing towards the upper
50

1 end of the goal -- upper end of the forecast range,
2 excuse me. At that time managers were more confident
3 and the assessment was showing a surplus of chinook
4 available for subsistence harvest. Subdistricts 5A, B
5 and C were restricted to half their normal schedule for
6 three periods with six inch nets. Then similarly
7 Subdistrict 5D, which is that section from Stevens
8 Village up to the border was restricted to half their
9 normal schedule, and their normal schedule is seven
10 days a week so we cut them down to three and a half
11 days with 7.5 inch gear but unfortunately at that time
12 we were starting to get the feedback from the Eagle
13 sonar, the first fish were starting to pass and it
14 looked like there weren't as many fish as we were
15 expecting and it takes fish a month to get from the
16 mouth to the border, so there's a lot of fish movement
17 and a lot of time uncertainty in between one end of the
18 river to the other. So by that time the run wasn't
19 looking so good passing the border. Therefore, in
20 Subdistrict 5D we closed it for 11 days and then
21 reopened to half their schedule. And then we relaxed
22 to 7.5 inches and eventually opened to seven days per
23 week back to their normal schedule once when they're in
24 the ballpark of when the fall season would normally
25 start, already there.

26
27 District 6, that's the Tanana River
28 district, again, was not managed as intensely for
29 chinook as the rest of the Yukon because our genetic
30 sampling indicated the Tanana component of the run
31 would be adequate for escapement with the harvest we
32 would expect. Subsistence, personal use in District 6
33 was placed on half their normal schedule with six inch
34 nets for three periods and then we placed them back to
35 their normal windows schedule with 7.5.

36
37 I think Pages 7 and 8 of your book will
38 show the restrictions that we had. It's just a summary
39 of those.

40
41 Also ADF&G still has subsistence
42 surveyors in those villages, communities. Many areas
43 are still fishing, or they're wrapping up, it's
44 starting to get ice and so they start surveys in the
45 lower river and work their way up with the progression
46 of the fish and it is getting quite late.

47
48 A note for the summer chum commercial
49 fishing, there's a summary of tables on Pages 17
50

1 through 21 that gives you period by period catches,
2 location and fishing times.

3
4 The note there with the summer chum
5 commercial, this year we didn't -- the State did not
6 open with dipnets or beach seines like they have in
7 recent years, that was because of the low number of
8 summer chum but also because the timing of the chinook
9 and summer chum didn't overlap nearly as much as they
10 had in other years. And so with that type of gear type
11 it allows them to release chinook if they incidentally
12 catch them, but the chinook had already passed by the
13 time the summer chum had gotten there. So summer chum
14 didn't open until the three-quarter point in the
15 chinook run.

16
17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Was there incidental
18 harvest of chinook during the executed -- or prosecuted
19 commercial fishery for chum?

20
21 MR. BUE: Yeah, just -- yes, there
22 were, incidentally the -- we started out -- those first
23 few incidental ones with the six inch nets for summer
24 chum, those fish were taken home, caught but not -- so
25 still required to be recorded on fish tickets. The
26 total summer chum harvest was 227,000, that's the
27 lowest since 2009. But then later on at the transition
28 of the summer chum season and the start of the fall
29 chum, most of the chinook were through there and then
30 they did allow some incidental harvest of chinook,
31 sales, they were allowed that sale, and the lower Yukon
32 had already pretty much saturated their subsistence
33 harvest so people had already taken what they wanted.
34 The season was rainy and they didn't want those fish
35 and nobody wanted them to go to waste and so they -- so
36 there were those that were caught and not sold that
37 were taken home for subsistence, was 1,179, and then
38 those later on that were caught and sold, was, 3,100,
39 and that was both the summer and fall chum fisheries
40 because the overlap there is when they were picking up
41 those kings.

42
43 As far as escapement goes, that's on
44 Page 12, there's a couple of tables. The upper one is
45 chinook, and essentially what it shows is escapement
46 goals were exceeded for chinook in the EastFork
47 Andrefsky River and met for the Salcha River. The
48 minimum escapement goal was not met for the Chena
49 River. Chinook runs past the Gisasa and Henshaw weirs,
50

1 those are not goals, but they were well below average.
2 The border sonar near Eagle, estimate of passage into
3 Canada indicates we may have met the low end of the
4 escapement goal for Canadian chinook and will likely
5 fall short of our -- what we've -- our harvest share
6 agreement with the Canadians and so we maybe passed
7 enough for escapement but through the agreement we're
8 trying to get them fish to harvest, and we're probably
9 falling short of that full amount.

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Are you working with
12 the Department of Fisheries over there, Yukon
13 Whitehorse was indicating -- paper was indicating that
14 they had extremely low passage into Whitehorse and
15 there was concern that there was mortality between the
16 border passage figure and what was actually getting to
17 the spawning grounds. Is Canadian managers doing an
18 analysis of the mortality factors?

19

20 MR. BUE: I guess I'm not certain, what
21 were you thinking, mortality factors would be in
22 Canada?

23

24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Once we passed --
25 45,560 fish past Eagle, but they didn't show up at
26 Whitehorse and they're showing real poor returns,
27 expecting escapement but we don't -- we're not actually
28 verifying that escapement with these mortalities that
29 were experienced here in Alaska, and apparently in
30 Canada would possibly be having that same problem, so I
31 -- just a question, you know, whether the managers in
32 Canada are looking at this critical 19C mortality
33 factor, water temperature factor that seems to have
34 killed several fish, like Henshaw weir shows 450
35 chinook when they usually have around 1,100/1,200
36 chinook averages, not seeing hardly any chinook up in
37 the Jim River systems, hardly -- you know, the returns
38 were -- the escapements are not actually shown as
39 escapements, they're shown -- their main stem might
40 have got 45,000 but I don't know that we actually have
41 escapement into Canada this year as far as if there was
42 mortality. So that'll probably be in the Panel
43 discussions and so would like to get a report back
44 after -- in our spring meeting.

45

46 MR. BUE: Yes, for sure, Mr. Chairman.
47 And, yes, it's -- the dynamic of the river is a little
48 bit different. Once you get to Canada, then it spreads
49 out and goes in multiple different drainages and some

50

1 do better than others and you can't -- just because
2 they cross the border that doesn't mean they equally
3 distribute to all these places. And so some streams do
4 okay and some do fall short.

5

6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Uh-huh.

7

8 MR. BUE: And we'll have a much better
9 idea what the Canadians are assessing. The Joint
10 Technical Committee is the technical group that does
11 the research for the Panel and they'll be meeting in
12 November and working -- coordinating, both the State --
13 Alaska information collected there and Canada because,
14 of course, mortality happens the entire length of the
15 river and it is a coordinated effort.

16

17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Just wanted
18 to make that comment, thank you.

19

20 MR. BUE: But, yes, there is a lot to
21 come, and, again, this is just preliminary information.

22

23 But, I guess, for summer chum passage,
24 also we end up with 1.4 million fish passing Pilot
25 sonar 2019, that's not a great number but it's not
26 particularly low. It's below the median. Again, we
27 made the drainagewide escapement goal. Andreafsky weir
28 goals were met. Anvik goal has been chronically low
29 the last several years and we're not sure if it's a
30 shift in production from lower river tributaries
31 further up but, you know, historically we remember how
32 the Anvik was a major contributor and it hasn't been
33 performing as much as the other streams, even though
34 it's still one of the biggest producers of summer chum
35 in the river, individual tributary it just isn't
36 getting the returns that it has in the past for
37 whatever reason.

38

39 Chena/Salcha they'll show up as well
40 below their escapement but there, again, those projects
41 don't typically assess the entire run, and so that
42 combined with a real late run means that they probably
43 missed a significant portion of the run just because of
44 the nature of the project. So it may not be as low
45 when you compare the data -- as the comparable data
46 suggests.

47

48 For fall season, the fall chum outlook
49 was for an average run and the projection for this year

50

1 originally well before the season was 930,000 to 1.6
2 million, that's well before season. One of the
3 advantages with fall season is that we can observe how
4 the summer chum performed and we have a pretty good
5 relationship there as -- so if the summer chum perform
6 poorly then we can adjust our fall chum in-season and
7 adjust our management on the very front end of the run
8 that's -- that's the highest risk part of the run where
9 you don't know exactly what's going to come in and so
10 that's really helpful to have that. So initially when
11 we're coming towards the end, transition between summer
12 and fall, we saw that the summer chum actually looked
13 even worse than what the end result was because it was
14 so late. So the fall chum projection was 625,000 but
15 once that late group of summer chum came into the river
16 it bumped up to a range of 700 to 800,000 so that's a
17 pretty good range. That provides plenty for
18 subsistence and escapement and a pretty sizeable amount
19 for commercial, in fact. So what we saw in-season with
20 our assessment projects, actually starting -- we're
21 tracking above that outlook range of 700 to 800,000. At
22 that point we had no concerns for subsistence and we
23 would manage commercial with consideration for
24 subsistence and escapement.

25
26 The lower river subsistence was relaxed
27 to their seven days a week, that's their normal
28 schedule, the fall. The middle river was relaxed to
29 five days a week, that's their normal schedule. And
30 then we -- it was further liberalized to seven days a
31 week just to accommodate fishermen's flexibility, it
32 doesn't pigeon hole them into certain days of the week
33 to fish and they can take their fish as they need.

34
35 Fishermen reports -- well, I guess 5B
36 was -- going on up the river was also the same.

37
38 Fishermen reports and subsistence
39 harvest were good for fall season, high quality fish,
40 fishing branch in the Porcupine has not been producing
41 very well in the recent years either. Subsistence
42 fishing in the main Porcupine was -- well, it still is,
43 it's currently closed, there's a few trappers that move
44 up there to put up fish before it freezes up and that's
45 what they're doing now but we allow them to use four
46 inch nets and also fish in the tributaries. But the
47 main -- the reason for protecting the main stem portion
48 are those fish that are bound to Canada going to Old
49 Crow and on to the Fishing Branch River.

50

1 So as of Friday the total fall chum
2 commercial harvest was 268,000. The coho commercial
3 harvest is only 58,500. Commercial fishing in District
4 6 is still going on right now, it's getting close to
5 ending because the wheels are starting to ice up. But
6 because of the concern for coho, I forgot to mention,
7 that coho, the end of the season was not extended in
8 the lower river like it has been in recent years
9 because the coho was not coming in as strong as we had
10 hoped. Also in the Tanana River now, they pulled a
11 period and I haven't heard because I'm here out of
12 phone range, but if they pulled in more, but there is
13 concern for coho and just trying to be conservative on
14 the Tanana drainage.

15
16 So fall chum is still -- assessment is
17 still going on, so you know Delta River they'll be
18 doing foot surveys October, into November. Those fish
19 are spawning very late. Same with Fishing Branch weir,
20 that still goes on. So we passed 843,000 fall chum by
21 the Pilot Station sonar, that was slightly above the
22 median. However -- and that's based on the normal
23 dates, July 16th is the normal accounting date where
24 the sonar doesn't know a summer chum from a fall chum
25 so -- excuse me July 19th at the sonar. But we did see
26 that first pulse of fall chum, or big group that came
27 in, or what we thought we were counting for fall chum,
28 we saw 88 percent of those were summer chum and that's
29 what we're attributing to that lateness of the summer
30 chum. By genetics we can tell the difference. So
31 managers took that large proportion of summer chum into
32 account for that fall season thinking that, well, maybe
33 like we have more summer chum but that means we have
34 less fall chum, and so we have to keep that in our
35 decisionmaking process and move forward.

36
37 It's expected the post-season analysis,
38 which includes both drainagewide, commercial and our
39 estimated harvest along with escapements will place the
40 total fall chum run near one million fish, which is
41 slightly above average, pretty reasonable. The point
42 there is that it keeps getting later in the season and
43 it gets harder to measure.

44
45 Okay, this one, they changed the name
46 on me, Trajeendik, it's formerly known as the Chandalar
47 River, Pollock or somebody could probably say it better
48 than I can. They passed 101,000 fall chum. This is
49 below average but within the escapement goal range.

50

1 Based on run timing -- again, the project ceased before
2 that last pulse of fish, it wasn't just the tail, it
3 was the pulse of fish had completely passed, and so we
4 expect that some expansion to come up with the final
5 number there. We're looking, potentially at 111,000 to
6 134,000 is ballparking right now but we'll have that
7 information later. Same with Eagle sonar, I think it
8 was Saturday or Sunday was the last day of operation,
9 October 6th, they passed 101,678 past Eagle sonar,
10 again, that's below average. It's within the interim
11 management escapement goal, the agreement that we have
12 with the Canadians for the escapement goal range of --
13 that range of 70,000 to 104,000, so it's within that
14 range. Then we're going to apply that late timing
15 again for that and we're projecting the range to also
16 be around 114,000 to 134,000 fall chum, very similar to
17 Chandalar, and this puts us close to the bottom end of
18 the total allowable catch, our harvest share agreement
19 with Canada but we'll have to wait and see how the
20 numbers turn out. We do know that there is -- the
21 Eagle sonar, the community of Eagle harvest some fish
22 before they actually cross the border and so we have to
23 remove that harvest and we won't know that until after
24 the surveyors are done. Porcupine River sonar count
25 through October 3rd is 22,774, this is below average of
26 32,531. The Fishing Branch weir count through October
27 3rd was 12,302, this is below the average of 22,366.
28 Again, those late runs, I don't know to what extent
29 Canada's going to be able to continue count. Winter's
30 coming. Those fish frequently swim under the ice, it's
31 difficult to get the tail end of the run, it just
32 depends on the weather. Like I say, fish are just
33 starting to arrive now at Big Delta on the Tanana River
34 spawning areas.

35
36 For coho the estimated Pilot Station
37 passage was 86,000 and that was by the end of the
38 project operation, which is below the median of
39 135,000, we know coho continue to run past Pilot late
40 into the fall but that's the index that we use, what's
41 passing by the end of the sonar. Therefore, the --
42 like I said the commercial season in the lower river
43 was not extended because of that low index. Also the
44 coho are just now arriving in the Delta Clearwater
45 River, that's up near Big Delta. That's the only
46 established escapement goal we have in the whole Yukon
47 River drainage. But we don't have a measure of those
48 yet so that's still coming.

49
50

1 This is still pretty early data for
2 fall season.

3
4 Then, I guess, shifting gears is you're
5 all familiar, just as important as the numbers are to
6 management, people living along the river can relate to
7 the environmental uncertainties we're experiencing.
8 You've all mentioned there's very little Bering Sea ice
9 this last winter and ice out at the mouth of the Yukon
10 was 13 days early, which is pretty early.

11
12 Usually the common thought there is if
13 the earlier the ice out the earlier the fish come back
14 so we anticipated an early run but like I said chinook
15 were three days late and summer chum were six days
16 late. Other indicators of the Bering Sea that I look
17 at is, you know, as far as the environment is herring,
18 you know, as they mature and come near the beach.
19 Togiak herring was one of the earliest on record and so
20 there's a real -- things are getting out of synch, the
21 Bering Sea was really early and now we're seeing the
22 Yukon may be late. So that's really in opposite
23 directions.

24
25 We also saw -- you talked about snow-
26 pack in the Southern Brooks Range, Nulato Hills
27 affecting moose, but it also affects fish, and that was
28 a lot of water coming out of those rivers. It delayed
29 putting our projects in the water because it was over
30 the bank, you know, Henshaw, Andreafsky, even our -- it
31 was all the way across the Brooks Range. Our Chandalar
32 sonar camp, our camp platforms were washed off their
33 foundations. And this is kind of funny because Eagle
34 -- the Yukon passing Eagle was not high, it was all
35 coming out of the Brooks Range.

36
37 So you contrast that springtime
38 flooding and then mid-summer you have these very same
39 drainages experiencing record low levels of water flow,
40 high water temperatures, Interior Alaska experienced
41 high temperatures during the prime chinook and summer
42 chum migration periods. Page 15 has a little bit of a
43 graphic there. At Emmonak you can see how 2019 was
44 tracking pretty high through there. Also the next page
45 has a few of the other water flows, other streams,
46 temperatures and, so, again, you're seeing how dynamic
47 that is, high water in the spring, low water mid-summer
48 and the degree that these fish are going through. So
49 we saw, you know, like Interior Alaska experienced the
50

1 high temperatures during prime summer so fishermen
2 primarily along the Yukon -- or the Koyukuk reported
3 seeing hundreds of dead fish, we heard that in your
4 testimony. We've heard that in teleconferences all
5 summer long with prespawning mortalities, a lot of fish
6 with eggs still in those. St. Mary's was, likewise,
7 and the Andraefsky River so it was throughout the
8 drainage.
9

10 One thing we did not hear much about
11 was chinook and the other non-salmon species in there,
12 and I'm not sure if that's just the nature of the fish,
13 they don't float up where you can see them or it's
14 because, you know, there's just so many more chum than
15 there are chinook and so it's just chum are more
16 visible that way. We don't know.
17

18 We thought we had good numbers of both
19 chinook and summer chum passing Pilot but like you say,
20 we do have -- we're wondering why they didn't show up
21 at those places and one thought is the temperature, but
22 it can also be a condition factor, there could also be
23 a marine component where the fish aren't as strong as
24 they normally would be coming into the river and so
25 maybe combining those two is -- you know, one hardship
26 stacks on top of another.
27

28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The fall chum, I
29 fish fall chum and they were in excellent shape. And
30 so the fall chum component showed that they ate well,
31 it would stand to reason that the summer chum also
32 should have been in similar conditions. But the water
33 temperature seemed to be a mortality factor with the
34 summer chum because of all of these high temperatures.
35

36 So was there -- is there like a fat
37 content indices taken in the commercial fishery
38 comparison for fall chum versus summer chum stock, or
39 is that part of the biological analysis?
40

41 MR. BUE: Not really. Anecdotally, you
42 know, we look at the thickness of the belly fat and you
43 can usually -- that's usually the indicator of a summer
44 chum versus fall chum. A summer chum will have a real
45 thin white line in the belly when you cut it and fall
46 chum will be a good quarter inch thick. It seemed like
47 fall chum wasn't as much as we normally think and
48 summer chum we normally think of just not having much.
49 One -- and we don't do specific sampling for that but
50

1 we can look at the commercial average weight per fish
2 and that was less this year than typically for fall
3 chum and so I don't know if it's an age class thing or
4 if it was -- we're still looking at that sort of stuff.
5 But I suspect fish that make it as far as your place,
6 they're probably pretty healthy fish, and so it may be
7 that you don't see some of that but I'm not certain
8 because we do know that fall chum go all the way up
9 Klulani and beyond in Canada also.

10

11 So, I guess, all this has us confused,
12 you know, about the unpredictability of the environment
13 and it affects the salmon run and whether it's linked
14 to heat stress or decreased productivity of the ocean
15 or all of the above. And so there's -- like I say
16 there's a lot of questions we have and fishermen have
17 questions and observations, too, that can help us. And
18 it's throwing everybody out of whack, the fishermen and
19 the managers and so we can sympathize with people
20 trying to live off the resource.

21

22 Again, that's just about the end of
23 what I had, but I want to remind you that the
24 subsistence surveyors are still working up the
25 information and that's a big piece of the puzzle when
26 we're starting to reconstruct these runs and put all
27 that happened back into there. But we did hear that
28 subsistence fishermen were pretty happy with chinook,
29 the ones they did catch. It seemed like they had -- it
30 was an efficient harvest, too, for them, it wasn't like
31 they were missing fish, like something was gone, they
32 seemed like they did all right. Summer chum, likewise,
33 the other side of it is the weather cooperated with
34 people and so the fish that they did put up they were
35 pretty happy and it's just nice when things work out
36 for the fishermen on the river.

37

38 Then, of course, we want to thank all
39 the fishermen who shared the information with us all
40 summer long, it makes a big difference on the
41 teleconferences.

42

43 Don mentioned earlier in his
44 introductory remarks about people communicating and
45 talking to each other a lot more and having these
46 meetings. Meetings get overwhelming at times but it
47 sure helps having all the RACs meet together, you know,
48 having three RACs communicate to each other is a big
49 deal, that's not very common. We have YR DFA working

50

1 together and YRDFA and InterTribal Fish Commission
2 meeting together and overlapping with their meetings,
3 that all helps communication-wise.
4

5 One thing that maybe I don't speak to
6 this RAC enough about, is, you do have representatives
7 on the Panel from your different areas and those
8 representatives speak and represent you when we're
9 meeting with Canada and, you know, opportunities are
10 there to reach out to them, you know, Richard Burnham
11 is -- these people on the Panel have a pretty big
12 drainagewide perspective and understanding and
13 knowledge of fish and that's what they do day in and
14 day out and look at and so I encourage people, if they
15 have interest and thoughts to go to those Panel
16 representatives. And just to name off the ones, just
17 because people maybe aren't familiar, but Ragnor
18 Alstrom and John Lamont in the Lower River and Eric
19 Winegarth and Sven Palkin. Middle River we have
20 Richard Burnham, Rhonda Pitka from Beaver, Virgil
21 Umphenhour's been around a long time, Andy Bassich.
22 Those are the Panel members and their alternates and
23 then there's some assistant people there that also are
24 good resources for you. And so I encourage everybody
25 to use those people and, in fact, like I said, that
26 preseason planning meeting that we have in the spring,
27 the Panel actually are the ones, the funding source
28 that brings those people together from all the
29 villages.
30

31 And so with that I'd turn it over and I
32 -- oh, actually I guess I should ask, Deena, did you
33 have anything to add to my summary?
34

35 MS. JALLEN: No, Fred, thank you.
36 Through the Chair. That was an excellent summary of
37 the season. I'm on line to help, you know, answer any
38 questions but you can certainly field questions on our
39 behalf.
40

41 Yeah, I definitely want to thank
42 fishermen for all their participation this summer. We
43 really appreciate all the calls that we get to our
44 office, through the YRDFA calls, the information from
45 fishermen like what they're seeing throughout the
46 summer is incredibly important to us and really helps
47 to inform our management. Yeah, so, just thanks. It
48 was an interesting summer and, yeah, hopefully everyone
49 had a -- you know, didn't do too badly.
50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thanks, Deena.

2

3

Any questions from the Council.

4

5

Don.

6

7

MR. HONEA: Not a question, maybe more
of a comment maybe. I appreciate that Fred.

8

9

10 I guess one of the concerning things
11 for me was to hear about the fish on the Koyukuk River,
12 mainly below Allakaket and maybe near closer to Huslia
13 and stuff and I know that the InterTribal Fish
14 Commission, Stephanie and them had gone down there from
15 -- boated down there to check that out. And, you know,
16 when you look at the overall thing, and this was like
17 in maybe the end of July, third week in July, whenever,
18 that just happened, I can't help but think that it was
19 weather related, whereas on the -- you know, you could
20 -- even in the Middle Yukon there, Ruby in fish camp,
21 the heat was really oppressive. I mean when you're
22 like 80, 85 degrees and knats all over and stuff like
23 that, but the Yukon is so much bigger and deeper, I
24 would -- you know, I'm just thinking that maybe what
25 happened on the Koyukuk because it was -- the water is
26 so much shallower, that it had an effect on there. I
27 guess it's just -- I guess we're just going to have to
28 write that off as maybe global warming or, you know, I
29 don't know what kind of studies that's going to go on
30 from there or anything.

31

32

But I just wanted to throw that out.

33

34

And, again, I want to thank you or
Holly or whoever, you know, because it's chancy and I
-- we, in the middle Yukon, I'm speaking specifically
for Ruby and Galena, whatever, we're thankful for those
windows, and for the 7.5 inch mesh.

35

36

37

38

39

40

Thank you.

41

42

43

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Don.

44

45

Any other questions.

46

47

Tim.

48

49

MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, thank you, Mr.

50

1 Chair. Very good report, Fred and Holly.

2

3 I think the information presented is
4 just right for understanding what happened.

5

6 I'd like to salute both you and Holly
7 and Fish and Game and Fish and Wildlife Service for
8 really high performance in-season management, you were
9 able to work with all the strange events and all the
10 unknowns and get good harvest rates from most all the
11 subsistence users and meet the spawning goals.

12

13 So I'd say congratulations for another
14 job well done.

15

16 And I would like to wish you good luck
17 in your retirement and I know the people in our region
18 and throughout the whole drainage really appreciate all
19 your decades of work for your fisheries management
20 skills and you're really a benefit to our wildlife
21 management process -- or fisheries management process.
22 So good luck and we'll -- I'm impressed with your calm
23 demeanor and good results. So have a great life.

24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Tim.

26

27 I will endorse Tim. Your presence was
28 a mentoring to younger biologists that are going to be
29 managing the Yukon River fishery and we appreciate all
30 the years that you spent working with this Council and
31 with the users on the Yukon River. The Yukon River is
32 a complex drainage, really hard to manage, really hard
33 to bring cohesion of all the users together and so,
34 yes, your calm demeanor has helped a lot with that
35 Fred. We appreciate all your years working with that.
36 And I think that we have biologists, you know, Holly
37 and Gerald and some of the -- and Deena, they've
38 learned quite a bit of -- sort of the finer points, the
39 finesse of how to manage the Yukon. The Yukon is a
40 real hot bed, nobody particularly wants to do it but
41 you seem to have stuck it out, so appreciate that
42 dedication to that fishery.

43

44 I have one question, ichthyophonus, was
45 any ichthyophonus found with these kind of water
46 temperatures, was ichthyophonus with chinook an issue,
47 did you hear anything about that?

48

49 MR. BUE: We heard very little. And it

50

1 is interesting because there are people that have a lot
2 of concern for it and are looking at it pretty closely,
3 you know, particularly in the Rapids area and people --
4 that's where it's been observed in the past and people
5 are familiar there, the same fishermen are still there
6 and they're looking at it but we didn't hear much of
7 anything to that extent this year. I really expected
8 it to raise its head, just fish under stress and maybe
9 they can't fish -- but whether or not it manifested
10 itself into something that it affects them to a large
11 degree is, I think, maybe a factor of temperature but
12 it didn't seem to be that way this year. So we'll see.
13

14 Like you say, there's also some --
15 there are people that have been doing temperature
16 studies, mortality studies at Pilot Station for the
17 last few years and they're starting to come up with
18 enough data to look at and some of that information's
19 going to be coming out here soon. So that'll be good.
20 It's not just all of a sudden, we've been noticing
21 things are changing over time and people are interested
22 and they are looking at stuff.
23

24 So I think that is something to keep in
25 mind, when temperatures change then the whole flora of
26 the fish and the environment changes and so we'll have
27 to keep an eye on that.
28

29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks Fred. I
30 appreciate your -- Pollock.
31

32 MR. SIMON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The
33 Yukon, maybe four years ago there was a lot of chum
34 salmon but last couple years the runs were just a
35 little bit smaller and smaller every year and the
36 chinook salmon has dropped too. So even though the run
37 size on the Yukon River, (indiscernible) River hasn't
38 had that much fish in the last couple years.
39

40 Thank you, Mr. Chair.
41

42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks Pollock.
43

44 Jenny.
45

46 MS. PELKOLA: Fred, I would just like
47 to also thank you very much for your work, it'll be
48 strange not seeing you at the meetings, I've been
49 seeing you for years and got to know you a little.
50

1 Thank you very much.

2

3 MR. BUE: I guess I better have one
4 last word. I want to thank you all very much, I
5 appreciate it, and that cooperation goes both ways.
6 You know I learn from the people here, and from the
7 people that I cross paths with all along the way, it
8 hasn't -- it's not just me, it's people who are helping
9 me and that's kind of how traditional knowledge is, it
10 just keeps on adding and adding and we try to pass it
11 on so I appreciate your patience with me.

12

13 Thank you.

14

15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks Fred. Have a
16 good time down in Oregon, you'll have to stop by and
17 visit when you -- you will come back, you can't stay
18 down in Oregon, you will come back.

19

20 (Laughter)

21

22 MR. HONEA: All right, thank you Fred.

23

24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we covered that
25 report. And so let's see we got 11:00 o'clock, we
26 should have a break for probably 15 minutes would be
27 probably a good break, and then we'll come back on the
28 record again. So I got 11:06 so probably about 25
29 after, something like that.

30

31 (Off record)

32

33 (On record)

34

35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Are you there Holly.

36

37 MS. CARROLL: Yes, this is Holly here
38 in Anchorage. And I believe Deena Jallen was just
39 going to give you the update on one of the supplemental
40 items we included in your packet, she's going to
41 describe what that is.

42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, go ahead.

44

45 MS. JALLEN: Hi Jack -- sorry, through
46 the Chair. This is Deena Jallen, Alaska Department of
47 Fish and Game here in Anchorage. And I believe that
48 you guys got a handout on the table, also available to
49 the public titled Yukon Chinook Salmon Run Sizes,

50

1 Harvest and Escapement Explained. And this is a
2 document that we put together, me, and Holly and Fred
3 and Gerald, so Fish and Game and Fish and Wildlife
4 Service to kind of address some comments that were
5 brought up at the WIRAC (ph) meeting and some comments,
6 concerns voiced to the Federal Subsistence Board.
7

8 And those concerns are that some people
9 observed that approximately 20 to 25,000 chinook salmon
10 are unaccounted for and some people kind of think that
11 that means that these fish are not reported, so this
12 document attempts to address that perception and kind
13 of step through some parts of the run that we don't
14 always talk about, that we don't lay out necessarily
15 very clearly and also kind of talk about -- so the
16 subsistence harvest, kind of what that perception of
17 missing fish kind of might actually be.
18

19 I don't know if you've had a chance to
20 review this handout, if you have specific questions or
21 I can just walk through it kind of generally.
22

23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We're leafing
24 through it, if you'd just hit the high points of this
25 document for the Council.
26

27 MS. JALLEN: Yeah, so the high points
28 is that when we talk about the run seasons, we get a
29 number at Pilot Station, we get a number at Eagle, we
30 have subsistence harvest that takes place along the
31 river, you know, commercial harvest, whatever, we
32 measure escapements at a few other projects, and kind
33 of crush those numbers together and see the map, you
34 can kind of think that you've maybe got like 60,000
35 fish that are unaccounted for, they're fish that we
36 don't ever say where they go. So some people think
37 that that means that maybe fishermen are harvesting way
38 more fish and not reporting that. And while we do
39 acknowledge that there is, you know, that our
40 subsistence harvest are an estimate, we use information
41 from the fishermen to get that estimate, we think that
42 fishermen are very honest, that they share information
43 with us because it's going to help management and help
44 us get good harvest estimations. On that subsistence
45 harvest estimate we usually figure that we're off by
46 plus or minus 3,000 kings, so that's one kind of area
47 of uncertainty and we do acknowledge that some people
48 do take chinook salmon and sell them for strips, but
49 that that wouldn't account for that bigger kind of
50

1 difference, like that 60,000 fish difference.

2

3 Another thing to look about is a map
4 that we've got in Figure 4 kind of showing the entire
5 drainage and that shows you like where we have
6 projects, where we do monitoring, where we have
7 escapement and you can also see that there are a lot of
8 dots and kind of circled streams on the map where we
9 don't do any monitoring. So each of those streams
10 could have, you know, a thousand or 500 king salmon
11 going into them, and if you add up all those
12 unmonitored streams that's a much more logical
13 explanation for where those kind of missing fish are
14 going, they're spawning in streams that we just don't
15 enumerate them in, because we don't enumerate them, you
16 know, it's hard to say exactly how many fish that those
17 account for.

18

19 So then kind of getting back a little
20 bit, harvest, we don't that harvests are way higher.
21 The typical subsistence harvest of chinook salmon,
22 looking back through the decades has been about 50,000
23 or less. So to think that there is an additional
24 doubling of harvest that is somehow unaccounted for
25 seems like unlikely. I think people would notice that
26 in their communities if someone was taking somehow an
27 extra thousand king salmon and selling them. That
28 would be kind of a very noticeable large scale harvest
29 of fish and we don't think that that is possible given
30 the restricted management that we have, the historic
31 harvest over time that we -- and just talking to
32 fishermen, you know, if fishermen say that they had a
33 good year this year but it might mean that they got
34 maybe 40 kings instead of 30 kings, a good year doesn't
35 mean that they got 400 kings instead of 30 kings.

36

37 So just kind of looking through
38 information that we collect over time, acknowledging
39 this uncounted, unexplained, unreported escapement that
40 we don't estimate -- I think it kind of helps to
41 address this concern of where missing fish might go.
42 And I can get more into how we do counts, or where we
43 do counts if you have more specific questions.

44

45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So did you
46 analyze the incidental harvest mortality factor, that
47 would be a missing component that's not -- is that in
48 the calculation, drop-outs?

49

50

1 MS. JALLEN: It is not. That's not
2 something that we look at. And that would be a really
3 good topic for us to kind of explore, like I think
4 there have been some studies in other places, you know,
5 kind of looking at drop-outs, but it's hard to, you
6 know, it would be a good thing for research to look at
7 and try to figure out, you know, how would we even
8 quantify that, you know, in a lot of our streams the
9 water's hard to see through, so I don't know how you
10 would see fish going in and out, you know, we don't
11 necessarily hear a lot of reports of fishermen seeing
12 dead kings wash up, that they think has had some sort
13 of gear mortality. So if fishermen are experiencing
14 that it would be great to hear that from them, there's
15 -- whenever we do the annual surveys there's always a
16 question at the end where fishermen can tell us any
17 other information that they think would be useful to
18 know. So if fishermen could quantify that and tell it
19 to us, that would be useful but, yeah, like -- yeah,
20 it's not something that we have explored. We know
21 that it does occur but it's probably kind of consistent
22 over time. You know, we don't think -- you know, we
23 don't think that mortality would be increasing greatly.

24
25 And it is one of the reasons why we do,
26 like the -- let fishermen fish with 7.5 gear, it lets
27 fishermen fish with whatever gear that they have, it
28 doesn't restrict them to a mesh size that may cause
29 more drop-out, you know, and that's one of the
30 rationals for allowing larger gear types.

31
32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I feel that, you
33 know, for this question of missing fish, you used to
34 fish on the South Naknek Beach, you know the windrows
35 of dead fish that fell out of gear in front of your
36 camp, that's an incidental harvest mortality factor.
37 There are -- I will send you a diagram that I made for
38 Danny Evenson when we did the selectivity study on the
39 Yukon River in 2007 of where the catch points are on
40 salmon that cause incidental harvest mortalities. The
41 use of six inch net when you're intending to catch
42 chinook have a much higher incidental harvest mortality
43 factor because it pinches the gills shut, they die,
44 they fall out of the net, they sink to the bottom. So
45 the reality is we're looking for lost fish in the
46 analysis, I think that the Department needs to
47 seriously look at coming up with an indices, and I've
48 said this for years and years and years and maybe you
49 haven't been here long enough to hear my reiteration of
50

1 this incidental harvest mortality factor so I always
2 have said, fish with the select -- you want to kill
3 king salmon use 7.5 inch gear, don't put six inch gear,
4 you're going to drop fish, you're going to lose fish,
5 everybody knows that. You know that, Deena, you used
6 to fish, you use five inch mesh for sockeye you're
7 going to lose all kinds of fish out of your net, you
8 use 5 and a quarter, 4-7/8ths on sockeye, you're going
9 to lose a whole bunch of fish, you fish 5-1/8th, you're
10 going to catch all kinds of fish, you're going to hold
11 the fish, you're going to kill them.

12
13 This is a problem with the analysis, is
14 that, it doesn't show.....

15
16 MS. JALLEN: Yeah, I remember fishing
17 at Naknek.....

18
19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:the -- it needs
20 to.....

21
22 REPORTER: Deena, hold up a second.

23
24 MS. JALLEN:and seeing.....

25
26 REPORTER: Deena, hold on.

27
28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:relook at the
29 incidental harvest mortality factor with drop-out. So
30 we can't spend a lot of time on this issue but I didn't
31 see that in this pamphlet here, this handout here.

32
33 A response.

34
35 REPORTER: Deena, go ahead.

36
37 MS. JALLEN: That's a good point.
38 Yeah, that's definitely something that we -- that we
39 can consider more and can add in. The fishing on the
40 river, you know, in-river versus Bristol Bay is a lot
41 different just in terms of the number of people that
42 are out fishing hard, lots of gear, lots of fishing
43 going on, millions of sockeye coming through all at
44 once, but I definitely -- you know, we know that drop-
45 outs can be a concern, it's just really hard to figure
46 out how we would measure that in a fresh water system,
47 you know, putting Go-Pros on the end of nets or, you
48 know, floating down river banks and counting fish that
49 are drifting up. Like if people have ideas as to how

50

1 to quantify dropouts, like we would love to hear it and
2 it would be something that would be good for us to kind
3 of consider and try to figure out if it's changing over
4 time or if it's just been a consistent level of
5 mortality that, you know, we kind of absorb every year
6 and hopefully it doesn't affect the outcome too
7 terribly.

8
9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: My comment is how
10 you prosecute the chinook fishery. If you're going to
11 kill king salmon, kill king salmon. If you're going to
12 avoid king salmon don't -- don't think you're saving
13 king salmon with six inch net, you're going to lose a
14 bunch, you're going to not only not harvest them you're
15 going to lose them as dead loss. So dead fish -- fish
16 die in nets specific ways. And I'll send you a diagram
17 of positive and negative catch points on salmon and
18 I'll send you a method that you could use for
19 enumeration of that drop-out. But I can't spend a lot
20 of time on that right now. But I will email you those
21 diagrams, which I've given to Fred and I've given to
22 various managers over many, many years because I fish,
23 and fish -- nets are nets, I don't care if you're
24 fishing in Bristol Bay, the Yukon River, a net is a
25 net, and how fish die in nets is a specific way they
26 die and you can lose them if you don't catch them
27 right.

28
29 So appreciate this handout, though.

30
31 Yes, there are a lot of other streams
32 they could go to but there's components that are not
33 actually in the analysis, that's what I'm pointing out
34 with this explained harvest versus escapement,
35 explained, it's not -- it has the missing unknown
36 factor of mortality, that's where there's a flaw.

37
38 Any other questions or comments.

39
40 Tim.

41
42 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

43 Tim Gervais.

44
45 Deena, perhaps one method you could use
46 to get some information on the amount of drop-outs, is
47 just include two more questions on your household
48 survey, ask how many drop-outs did you see, like all
49 the drift fishermen, they're aware when they -- to get
50

1 -- a king is contacting their gear and then they try to
2 haul their gear and get it in and sometime they lose
3 the fish before they can get it in so that's like a
4 known drop-out. And then the second question for that
5 is how many fish do you estimate you lost to dropping
6 out for your season. And then that would, at least get
7 the process started and seeing how significant or
8 insignificant the fishermen feel the situation is.

9
10 Thank you.

11
12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks Tim. Other
13 comments.

14
15 (No comments)

16
17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks so much,
18 Deena. Is that all that ADF&G had on Yukon salmon?

19
20 MS. JALLEN: Yeah, that was just the
21 kind of one additional piece that we wanted to
22 introduce after the excellent season summary that Fred
23 gave. And, yeah, we definitely appreciate your
24 comments and you guys taking the time to review that
25 and address that issue.

26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'm holding the
28 document in my hand of a picture of a salmon with catch
29 points on it and I'm going to pass it around the room
30 and then I'm going to email it to you when I get
31 internet again.

32
33 So it's a.....

34
35 MS. JALLEN: Yeah, thank you, yeah
36 appreciate that.

37
38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It's how the fishery
39 is prosecuted. If you're going to fish for king salmon
40 fish with 7.5, if you're going to fish for chum fish
41 six. It's just basically.....

42
43 MS. JALLEN: Yeah, I guess I might add
44 that one of the reasons why we do fish with six inch in
45 the Lower River, especially, is that, they're usually
46 on a lot more chum, it was different this year because
47 the runs didn't overlap but by putting people on six
48 inch, you know, we know that they're going to go out
49 and get a lot of chum just because the magnitudes of

50

1 the run are so much different. But, yeah, in general,
2 we know that if we want people to catch kings, 7.5 is
3 the mesh size that we should be using and letting
4 people use.

5
6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you. No, I'm
7 not faulting Fish and Game. But I'm just using it as a
8 cautionary, when you fish six and you have -- and
9 you're intending for people to catch king salmon you
10 can anticipate a much higher mortality factor that's
11 unaccounted. That's what I'm saying.

12
13 You should analyze when you had six
14 inch mesh restrictions and then you had larger missing
15 components, you can analyze that as the component was
16 dead loss, that's where much of that increased.

17
18 So we need to move along here because
19 we have a lot more agenda to do.

20
21 Appreciate Alaska Department of Fish
22 and Game's participation, though, and looking at where
23 those fishing are going.

24
25 And so we're at -- we are at Kuskokwim
26 River post-season, do we have a presenter for that? Is
27 it on.....

28
29 MS. DEATHERAGE: No, we have the.....

30
31 REPORTER: Karen, your mic.

32
33 MS. DEATHERAGE:Kuskokwim River
34 InterTribal Commission.

35
36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. InterTribal
37 Commission then, okay.

38
39 Kevin.

40
41 Come on up. Introduce yourself on the
42 record and for the phone.

43
44 MR. SAMULESON: Good morning.

45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Good morning.

47
48 (Laughter)

49
50

1 MR. SAMULESON: Welcome, again, to the
2 Kuskokwim. We're smaller maybe than the rivers you're
3 used to but we like it here.
4

5 (Laughter)
6

7 MR. SAMULESON: My name is Jonathan
8 Samuleson. I was raised in Bethel along the Lower
9 River. I grew up right here in McGrath. It was a long
10 move. And my family comes from Red Devil and
11 Georgetown in the Middle River. So I've been up and
12 down my whole life. I work for the Kuskokwim River
13 InterTribal Fish Commission and I'm here to give you
14 sort of an intro and an overview of our organization
15 today. We're really glad that you were able to meet
16 here in McGrath, it makes it a little bit easier for us
17 to get here to present to you guys.
18

19 You want to introduce.
20

21 MR. WENTWORTH: Go ahead, I will.
22

23 MR. SAMULESON: Okay. So we're going
24 to kind of just start with a bird's eye view of the
25 Fish Commission because I think this might be the first
26 time a lot of people have been introduced to us.
27

28 There are 33 Federally-recognized
29 tribes in our watershed. The Commission strives to
30 represent equally all 33 of those tribes and their
31 interests around salmon and other fisheries on our
32 river.
33

34 We formed in 2015 much -- very, very
35 similar to the formation of the Yukon InterTribal Fish
36 Commission, which maybe you're more familiar with at
37 this point. At that time we self-selected seven units
38 or clusters of villages along our river to form seven
39 units. And the way we are operationalized, as a
40 governing body is through an Executive Council, which
41 is made up of one representative from each of those
42 seven units. To try to get 33 people to meet regularly
43 is very difficult so we kind of spread that, and the
44 executive council meets numerous times throughout the
45 year and the off-season. We call them the governing
46 body of the Commission.
47

48 The other way we address management is
49 through four in-season managers, which are elected from
50

1 the Commission as a whole. We meet annually, the whole
2 Commission does, and each year we elect -- it started
3 with three, but now four in-season managers who come
4 from different parts of the river. The role of those
5 managers is to meet when it's -- when the fish are
6 running, they meet weekly in Bethel usually with U.S.
7 Fish and Wildlife Service and the Refuge manager and
8 their team and also the State of Alaska and the
9 Kuskokwim area biologist and that sort of team when
10 available, we meet and discuss what the run is doing,
11 what we think is going to happen, and it's in those
12 meetings we make the very hard decisions, they make the
13 decisions of fishing restrictions, gear type that's
14 going to be allowable, windows of opportunity, and we
15 also bring traditional and local knowledge to those
16 meetings, which is more and more being sort of elevated
17 into this management regime, which I think is really
18 one of the main goals of our InterTribal Fish
19 Commission, is to make sure that local and traditional
20 long-time knowledge is at the management table.

21
22 I guess that's kind of the overview of
23 what we're doing as a Commission. Kevin will get into
24 a little bit more of the specifics and I have a little
25 bit more after, but that's kind of who we are and what
26 we're here to do.

27
28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'm not clear, the
29 Commission members, are they selected by each tribal
30 council?

31
32 MR. SAMULESON: Okay, yeah, so each
33 member tribe elects -- appoints, I guess is a better
34 word, one commissioner to represent their tribe and
35 their community and it's completely up to each tribe
36 who that person is and how they find them.

37
38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thanks.

39
40 Kevin.

41
42 MR. SAMULESON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
43 Members of the Council. I'm Kevin Wentworth, fish
44 biologist for Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish
45 Commission. I'm the first Fish Commission's fisheries
46 biologist. We're young enough where just a year and a
47 half ago they needed a biologist and they hired me.

48
49 So there's three Staff members, we have
50

1 an executive director, myself and Jonathan. So that's
2 the make up of our Staff, that's our entire group.
3 Jonathan talked about all the other positions that are
4 elected and so on.
5

6 I think most of you know me. Grew up
7 here in McGrath. Worked with Fish and Wildlife Service
8 for many years. My last position with Fish and
9 Wildlife Service was at Innoko National Wildlife
10 Refuge, the Deputy Refuge Manager here in McGrath
11 before that Refuge moved to Galena. I've worked all
12 over the state, Selawik Refuge, Koyukuk/Nowitna, Innoko
13 Refuge, Yukon-Delta Refuge, Maritime Refuge. Went off
14 to college and got a degree in wildlife out of UAF and
15 been using that degree in different things. But,
16 anyhow, really proud of being in this position.
17

18 I just want to welcome you guys to
19 McGrath and thanks for coming to McGrath. I think
20 McGrath's a good central place. There's a lot of
21 Federal lands around us. The Innoko Refuge is to the
22 west of here. The Nowitna Refuge is to the north. We
23 got the two Parks. The BLM lands just 22 miles to the
24 east of here. And a lot of our management with fish is
25 out of the Yukon-Delta National Wildlife Refuge, which
26 that's another RAC but it's central for us to work with
27 them as well as this RAC.
28

29 I kind of -- I didn't even put that in
30 my notes, but, anyhow, some of the projects that I've
31 been working on, assessment projects for the
32 Commission. We run the Takotna River weir. And that's
33 a weir about 15 miles from here in the village of
34 Takotna, it's the only run weir that is entirely run by
35 the village people, people from McGrath, people from
36 Takotna. There's no oversight by the State of Alaska
37 or Federal government, we run the weir. The weir is
38 actually the -- parts are owned by the State of Alaska
39 so we have a cooperative agreement to use their weir
40 but they don't oversee the project, it's run by us,
41 which is a unique project because there's no other
42 project on the Kuskokwim that I know of that are run by
43 the village people. And we're really proud of that.
44 It's the only headwater assessment project that has a
45 long-term data set. And also it's the only project on
46 the entire Kuskokwim that actually has a weir on a low
47 production stream. Most of the other streams that are
48 monitored are high production streams like the
49 Kwethluk, Kogrugluk, or the Salmon PitkaFork up stream
50

1 of here, the George is more of a medium production. So
2 the Takotna weir, in our opinion, is a very good
3 project for us to run. We've run it for three years
4 now. And every year there's things that we correct and
5 things that we've improved on and it's run really
6 smooth and I'm really proud of the group up there in
7 Takotna. They install the weir, they operate the weir,
8 they take care of all data management, take the weir
9 out at the end of the season, and every year they do a
10 really good job.

11
12 We've had some turnover but every time
13 we've had turnover it seems like we adopt somebody else
14 who comes in, or hire somebody else who comes in with
15 even more experience. There's 16 years of running that
16 weir and that community by the State of Alaska
17 partnering with the community. There's -- we had
18 somebody leave and somebody else came in with seven
19 years of experience, which was just -- it just blows me
20 away. A community of 50 with so much experience
21 running a weir.

22
23 So we've used this project as a -- it's
24 a really project to show that communities can run
25 projects like this. So I've helped with writing the
26 Kwethluk weir, the FRMP process, we went through the
27 grant process and I helped them write their proposal
28 for that project, which we saw earlier yesterday that
29 this project might get funded. We boosted the capacity
30 building and partnership capacity within that project
31 so we're going to be working with the village of
32 Kwethluk, and myself and Kuskokwim InterTribal Fish
33 Commission and our expertise to help move that weir
34 along so that the community is taking more of a
35 responsibility. Their cap is not set at just the
36 capacity of just providing people, but we're going to
37 actually -- we wrote into that process that over the
38 next five years Fish and Wildlife will hand that
39 project over to the tribe and they will take more of a
40 responsibility and run that project instead of just
41 capping them off at a certain level of capacity, we
42 pushed it so that we're now working towards getting
43 that tribe, the people in place and the capacity within
44 them to actually do everything, a lot like what they do
45 in Takotna and here in McGrath. We're really proud of
46 that project as well.

47
48 Because Takotna is doing such a good
49 job and every year they keep improving in their project
50

1 and they're doing it so smoothly, other entities are
2 looking at the Takotna as a base for other projects.
3 So this year, as well as the Kwethluk, we did a heat
4 stress project where we collected samples from king
5 salmon. It's a non-lethal sample taking process. So
6 we collected samples from 40 king salmon at our
7 Kwethluk weir and this Takotna River weir. We haven't
8 processed those samples yet because we don't have the
9 funding to process them yet but we're hoping to process
10 them so we're looking at finding as when the fish are
11 heat stressed there is a protein that you can see in
12 their flesh and it depends on if -- if they're not heat
13 stressed then they don't have that protein so it's a
14 good indicator. And we're hoping to see what sort of
15 results we get. So this year at the Takotna River weir
16 we had two time periods where we were within that 18 to
17 21 degree celsius threshold where the king salmon are
18 getting stressed so it was a good year for us to do
19 that project and we'll see the results, how it comes
20 out to be.

21
22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: One question. Did
23 you take samples in between when they weren't in that
24 zone for baseline?

25
26 MR. WENTWORTH: No. So they -- no,
27 it's just a yearly thing so if they're stressed they're
28 going to show that.

29
30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So the enzymes there
31 whether they're in stress or.....

32
33 MR. WENTWORTH: I don't know that.

34
35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

36
37 MR. WENTWORTH: So the results -- this
38 project was done with USGS there, they kind of oversee
39 the project, we just took the samples. But the neat
40 thing is the Takotna weir, the people at the Takotna
41 weir, those folks are doing a good enough job where
42 other entities are saying, hey, we could do this
43 project or let's do another project, on top of running
44 the -- doing environmental collecting of data,
45 collecting of the run; other entities are looking at
46 that project. So it's.....

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: What is the sample,
49 it's a small muscle sample?

50

1 MR. WENTWORTH: Yep. So, yeah, you
2 basically took a plug, you just took a plug right out
3 of their side and release them. Which is a very, you
4 know, sensitive thing to do because they're already
5 stressed and you're handling them, measuring them,
6 taking all this ASL data and then you're going to plug
7 them. So it's something that we -- we're sensitive to,
8 you know, we weren't sure if we wanted to do it because
9 there was already stress but we did it, and we didn't
10 have any die-off that we know of. It's just the
11 indications so we'll see in the future what sort of
12 heat stress they have.

13
14 I did send Tim a paper, on the Yukon
15 they did a heat stress project, we copied that project
16 on the Kuskokwim, it's the project they did on the
17 Yukon, I can't remember, just a few years ago so I
18 could forward that project to you guys if you guys are
19 interested.

20
21 So the other project that we were
22 partnered on is a community based harvest monitoring
23 project in the Lower Yukon -- or Lower Kuskokwim River
24 near the Bethel region where we had monitors in certain
25 villages, six of them I think, and they recorded
26 harvest. So whenever we had an opener, these monitors
27 were taking -- doing interviews in the communities and
28 trying to track how much harvest was being taken place
29 and then with aerial surveys done by U.S. Fish and
30 Wildlife Service we used the monitor's interviews and
31 aerial survey data that the Fish and Wildlife collected
32 and we could extrapolate and come up with a harvest
33 estimate for each opener and then at the end of the
34 season we can add all the openers up. So this year we
35 counted, within the Refuge, about 41,000 harvest of
36 chinook salmon and that community based harvest
37 monitoring project was integral. We wouldn't be able
38 to get that harvest estimate data as accurately and in-
39 season as we did without that project so that project's
40 really a neat one.

41
42 A lot of my role, as a biologist with
43 the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission is
44 being an adviser for the in-season management group,
45 the group that Jonathan covered.

46
47 And then the other project that I work
48 on is we're working with BSFA, Bering Sea Fishermen
49 Association, to look at use of drones. So this year we
50

1 used drones up above the Takotna River weir and above
2 the Kwethluk River weir but we flew drones up into
3 those two drainages because we knew how much fish
4 passed the weir at a certain time and we went above the
5 weirs looking for these fish with drones. And it's a
6 feasibility study, it's in a research phase, we don't
7 have any protocol, we're just -- I just want to educate
8 you guys that we're looking into drones and using
9 drones, maybe some day they could be a project where we
10 could use them where they supplement weir data, or if
11 there's any holes in our data across the drainage where
12 we want to maybe monitor low production streams like
13 the Takotna, and other places. I know the State of
14 Alaska does aerial surveys but those are really indices
15 that can be inaccurate; I'll just put it that way.
16 We've had aerial surveys done on SamPitka Fork and they
17 say differently than what the weirs say so we're
18 looking at using drones to try to come up with a more
19 accurate way to assess salmon.

20
21 So those are the projects, do you guys
22 have any questions about projects. I could get into
23 details more but I kind of just wanted to just skim
24 through them. I do want to -- I got other things, too.

25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Any questions
27 so far on those projects?

28
29 (No comments)

30
31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Those are
32 interesting projects.

33
34 MS. PELKOLA: Uh-huh.

35
36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Appreciate those.

37
38 MR. WENTWORTH: Yeah, so my main job
39 with this company is to try to build their assessment
40 projects and their department, which is really neat for
41 me. It's an awesome opportunity.

42
43 The last thing I wanted -- Kwik-Pak
44 does want to -- we want to thank Ray for everything
45 he's done over the years. All this work with natural
46 resources, with education, language, his involvement in
47 the community, he's an inspiration for everybody, for
48 all us young guys and women, young people. I think all
49 of us are probably younger than Ray here.

50

1 (Laughter)

2

3 MR. WENTWORTH: But just everything
4 you've done for the community, for the people here, for
5 Kwik-Pak, we just want to thank you and Ray's always
6 been one of those guys who's just always so welcoming,
7 always open door, willing to talk fish, willing to talk
8 natural resources, whatever you want, he's willing to
9 bring you in, have a sip of tea. So we got you a gift
10 Ray, and it's that bear, the welcoming bear there.

11

12 (Applause)

13

14 MR. SAMUELSEN: That's yours Ray.

15

16 MR. COLLINS: Oh, wow.

17

18 MS. DEATHERAGE: Say bear, Ray.

19

20 (Photos)

21

22 MR. WENTWORTH: So that's all, thank
23 you. Thank you, Ray.

24

25 MR. COLLINS: Well, thank you. I'm
26 glad to see someone like yourself that are picking up
27 and following through in becoming very knowledgeable
28 about what's going on in the area. I know I've looked
29 to you for information because you're talking to some
30 of the fishermen here that have nets and how they're
31 doing and so on. So I'm hoping you can continue that.
32 I'd like to see you sitting in this chair, too.

33

34 MR. SAMUELSEN: Also just a couple more
35 things and also to give my gratitude. I just wanted to
36 back up and say that we do -- the Fish Commission has
37 an MOU, a memorandum of understanding -- understanding
38 signed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which
39 sort of lays out our relationship during in-season and
40 we are working, and we're meeting in just a few days
41 actually to go over some more plans and ways to better
42 collaborate in the future in moving forward. We've had
43 that MOU in place for three years. I think we signed
44 it in 2016.

45

46 And we really look forward to working
47 with this body and hopefully Kevin will be sitting up
48 there, too, soon. But, you know, part of that MOU is
49 to involve the RACs, both this one and the Yukon Delta

50

1 RAC. And we understand and we realize that there's
2 been a gap here in communication between the Fish
3 Commission and the RAC and hope to close that gap in
4 whatever ways possible, whether that's us coming to you
5 with our positions on proposals or just, you know,
6 conversation throughout the year back and forth. We're
7 open to ideas and contact information to start that
8 relationship.
9

10 I guess one other thing. I'm not
11 familiar right now with any proposals that are in the
12 upcoming cycle, something that's important I think is
13 the front end closure that the people on the river have
14 sort of self-implemented sometimes, which, you
15 know.....
16

17 MR. GERVAIS: Say that last sentence
18 again.
19

20 MR. SAMUELSEN: Sort of self-imp -- I
21 wasn't around when the front end closure was designed
22 or decided on but my understanding is that it was
23 people of the river that really decided on this front
24 end closure to be in place. And the front end closure
25 is a closure to chinook salmon fishery in the early
26 season. It ranges from late May until about June 11th,
27 always, at which point Federal management comes into
28 play on that river and we start our sort of in-season
29 process with the Refuge manager. So I think it's
30 important that we keep that front end closure in place
31 for as long as we need to and remember that the goal of
32 that is to get kings this far up the river, and able to
33 spawn in these headwaters.
34

35 So we met in May -- the Fish Commission
36 met at our annual convention under the theme, (In
37 Native), which in the language of the people in Nikolai
38 and Ray can probably say it better than I can, means,
39 working together, and that was our theme, and it keeps
40 coming up every time we meet throughout the year and
41 everywhere we go and it is in all our thanks to Ray
42 that we were able to have a written form of this term
43 and use that language and his knowledge to guide us
44 through our journey. Kevin covered a lot about his
45 efforts over, you know, his lifetime, to become one of
46 our knowledge-bearers, and I'm just thankful that we're
47 here today to recognize him in his home. We met a
48 couple weeks ago, the executive council and easily,
49 unanimously supported this recognition today. One of
50

1 our commissioners spoke to when he was first getting to
2 know Ray, he said when I first started going to
3 meetings around fish and game, people would call on
4 this guy, I didn't know who he was and he didn't sit on
5 any boards and it was Ray Collins, because I soon
6 learned that that was his role, his specialty was to
7 carry that knowledge to these meetings, whether or not
8 he sat on the boards, and just has seen him throughout
9 his career in these sort of meetings. I know Ray
10 mostly as my friend's grandpa, my childhood friends
11 that I grew up with here in McGrath so that's sort of
12 my knowledge of Ray, or my perception, but as I get
13 more involved in issues like this and come to meetings
14 like this I see his -- it's priceless, you know, the
15 knowledge and the wisdom he carries and the guidance he
16 gives us all. So I just wanted to add my gratitude to
17 that and (In Native), we'll keep working together and
18 thank you Ray for, everything.

19
20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you. I'll
21 second those words.

22
23 MR. COLLINS: (In Native) for those
24 remarks.

25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Don.

27
28 MR. HONEA: A couple of comments.
29 Thank you both for your presentation.

30
31 Kevin, I'm hoping to -- because of your
32 involvement in the fisheries monitoring, the programs
33 here, I'm looking forward to maybe working with you on
34 that. And I think that's a really great example of a
35 village here assuming that program in their region, in
36 their village. That's kind of like ground kind of
37 stuff that I'd like to work toward, you know, whether
38 it's the village, whether it's with TCC or something.

39
40 And one other comment here and you
41 mentioned this stress kind of thing there, little did I
42 know about what the chinook actually go through. So
43 when they found out that -- at the Rapids, putting them
44 in the live boxes or whatever, the mortality rate of
45 those king salmon that were caught and tested was much
46 higher after they were released than those that weren't
47 even caught. So, you know, we don't even consider
48 that. So I think it's great that you guys are doing
49 that program so thank you.

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Other Council.

2

3

4

Ray.

5

6 MR. COLLINS: Yeah. I want to mention
7 -- he mentioned the volunteering efforts, Kevin did,
8 Nikolai up there, they've had to shift from using a
9 traditional weir to get their king salmon and then
10 using hook and line for catching them, but they
11 purposely release the large females with eggs and that
12 was their own choice in the village so many of them are
13 doing that now, making sure that those big fish get to
14 the spawning grounds. They're caught right in the
15 Salmon so they don't have too far to go before they
16 spawn.

16

17

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Uh-huh. Cool.

18

19

Tim.

20

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MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Kevin and John, thanks for coming and presenting today.
It helps me as well as the other Council members
understand the functions of your organization and how
it's going to fit into the management of the fish on
the river and what not. So I'm glad to hear what you
guys are doing and excited to work together and get the
good information out of your weir and the other
information projects.

Also I have a request, the last couple
years we've had trouble recruiting a Council member
from, what I call the -- what I consider this Kuskokwim
region, like between Stony River and Kalskag, if you
know somebody from that area, especially we're trying
to recruit somebody from that area, we're trying to get
female -- up our female membership also, so if through
your work with the InterTribal Fish Commission, if you
know somebody that wants to step up and represent that
area of the Western Interior, that's one part of our
knowledge base that we're short on right now.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Kevin.

MR. WENTWORTH: If I could make a
comment -- couple comments, Mr. Chair.

1 You know last year I did an egg weight
2 project where I was -- I wanted to work with
3 subsistence users and take samples from king salmon,
4 the eggs, and I was looking at the bigger fish, how
5 much more eggs they're carrying compared to the smaller
6 fish, these are female king salmon, well, I went up to
7 the Salmon River because I wanted to do it in a
8 headwaters area so I went to Salmon Pitka Fork where
9 everybody rod and reel fishes and started asking folks
10 if I could work with them on this project, and I right
11 away realized it's not going to work because they
12 release all the females. They didn't harvest any
13 females. If they did it was just the incidentals,
14 okay, hey, let's keep one this evening we'll make soup,
15 have some eggs, but there's -- I wanted to get 25
16 samples, I think, from up there, it wouldn't have been
17 possible because they voluntarily release all the
18 females to try to keep the population coming back,
19 which was really neat to see. Even the littlest kid, he
20 had a string of five fish and they were all -- I asked
21 him, I said, hey, you catching any females, he said we
22 leave -- we push them back, we don't -- you could tell,
23 you could see them, you don't have to catch them.

24
25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Uh-huh.

26
27 MR. WENTWORTH: And, Tim, just a
28 comment about recruitment. So at our annual meeting,
29 and our meetings with the tribes along all of the
30 river, we have expressed that we need people to step
31 up. We're concerned that there is nobody on the
32 Kuskokwim after Ray leaves, so we've been talking to
33 people from the upper Kuskokwim, middle Kuskokwim
34 within the Western Interior RAC region and pushing that
35 idea that, hey, we need to step up, we need to get
36 people involved and get young people, females, so we're
37 working on that and we'll continue to do that because
38 we think it's important and we're kind of sad to see,
39 you know, after Ray leaves that nobody's on the
40 Kuskokwim anymore so it is forefront.

41
42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. I want to
43 encourage the Kuskokwim InterTribal Fish Commission to
44 attend our meetings or at least call in to our
45 meetings. We appreciate the projects that you're doing
46 and your involvement with the overall holistic
47 management of the Kuskokwim River fishery, working with
48 the Federal managers, these are all positive steps in
49 the bringing everybody together, bringing everybody on
50

1 the same sheet of music for conservation of the
2 resource and I'm really encouraged to see that local
3 people are starting to, you know, do these weir
4 projects and so forth. It's like TCC's running the
5 Henshaw weir but they're not actually the local people
6 from Allakaket or Alatna, there's maybe one employee or
7 something but it's not actually the same thing, so I'm
8 happy to see that.

9
10 So thank you for your report,
11 appreciate that.

12
13 Anything else. Everybody's good.

14
15 (Council nods affirmatively)

16
17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thank you.

18
19 MR. WENTWORTH: Thank you.

20
21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And so it's 12:15
22 and so it's probably lunchtime, Karen, what do you say.

23
24 MS. DEATHERAGE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
25 Yes it is lunchtime in the world and so we have a lot
26 of food so we elected to have a happy leftover potluck
27 today. We have some chili, we have sandwich makings,
28 we have lots of treats over there on the table, we have
29 fruit, so everybody here is welcome to help themselves
30 to any of the food that we have available.

31
32 Thank you.

33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thank you. So
35 we're going to -- we're at 12:15, so we'll break for
36 one hour to 1:15. For those on the call we're going to
37 break until 1:15 for lunch, and we're going to be
38 coming back on record sharp for Council members.

39
40 (Off record)

41
42 (On record)

43
44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So, Karen, and so
45 everybody -- I hear that phone beeping so we're going
46 to come back to order and we're going to -- we had
47 InterTribal Fish Commission, Kuskokwim River
48 InterTribal Fish Commission, and so we're going to go
49 to YR DFA, Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association.

50

1 There's a PowerPoint coming up on the wall here and we
2 have Wayne Jenkins, are you on the phone, Wayne.

3
4 MR. JENKINS: Yes, I am Chairman
5 Reakoff, can you hear me.

6
7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, go right
8 ahead. We have the first slide up that's your
9 management teleconference and community surveyor
10 program, go ahead.

11
12 MR. JENKINS: Okay. I'm having a
13 little trouble hearing you but I'm going to go ahead.

14
15 Good afternoon, Chairman Reakoff and
16 WIRAC. I'm Wayne Jenkins, Yukon River Drainage
17 Fisheries Association.

18
19 REPORTER: Wayne, you're breaking up.

20
21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You're really
22 broken, Wayne, and we're having a real hard -- your
23 phone is not good, are you close to your mic?

24
25 MR. JENKINS: Is this better?

26
27 REPORTER: Much.

28
29 MR. JENKINS: Much better, okay.

30
31 REPORTER: Go ahead, Wayne.

32
33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, try that, you
34 sound better.

35
36 MR. JENKINS: Good afternoon, Chairman
37 Reakoff and WIRAC members. That is better, Mr.
38 Chairman?

39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go right ahead,
41 Wayne.

42
43 MR. JENKINS: All right. So most of
44 you know me, I'm Wayne Jenkins. I'm the Director of
45 YRDFA. And I want to thank you so much for giving us
46 this opportunity to share our program with you. I'm
47 sorry not to be there but we do appreciate being able
48 to listen in and give you our updates by phone.

49
50

1 Before I get into the PowerPoint I have
2 you, I have two fairly large announcements. Next year
3 will be YRDFA's 30th anniversary. The YRDFA Board
4 would like to thank all three of the Yukon River RACs
5 for their critically important role in the fisheries
6 and subsistence and traditional use on the Yukon River
7 over the years. The challenges have been many and
8 complex and we appreciate your effort over those many
9 years for balancing the needs of the Yukon River
10 subsistence users and maintaining a sustainable
11 resource. Not an easy or simple job.

12
13 The second development that I want to
14 share with you is that our Director, me, I will be
15 stepping down into retirement in early 2020. YRDFA is
16 in the process of seeking and hiring our next director
17 for a smooth transition and the continuation of our
18 important work for Yukon River subsistence users and
19 the habitat and wildlife that defines their lives and
20 culture. The transition period is planned for late
21 winter and into spring of 2020.

22
23 So we'll move into the PowerPoint now,
24 Karen, I'm assuming you're ready and we're on the
25 beginning slide.

26
27 REPORTER: Yes, go ahead Wayne.

28
29 MR. JENKINS: All right. So thank you
30 for allowing us to give this report. I'm going to just
31 cover important FRMP projects that provide opportunity
32 for in-season discussions between fisheries and
33 managers supporting fisher's voices in the management
34 process.

35
36 Next.

37
38 REPORTER: Go ahead, Wayne.

39
40 MR. JENKINS: So Yukon River in-season
41 salmon management conferences is the first program,
42 you're familiar with this I'm sure. It's been going on
43 quite some time.

44
45 Why do we do this project?

46
47 The teleconferences are an in-season
48 forum for Yukon River fishers to engage with the
49 managers. There are approximately 45 tribal councils

50

1 and 10 First Nations in Canada that harvest salmon
2 along the Yukon River, it's important for their voices
3 to be heard. This project is a cost effective method
4 of bringing people together on a regular basis to
5 discuss fishery issues weekly, via the teleconference
6 during the fisheries run. It's become a fixture of in-
7 season management on the Yukon River where fishers and
8 managers exchange real-time first hand knowledge what
9 is happening on the river.

10

11 It has been running every year since
12 2001.

13

14 This project is currently funded by the
15 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program through March of
16 2020. And so we have put in our proposal to hopefully
17 be able to continue this project.

18

19 Next.

20

21 Who is doing the work?

22

23 YRDFA moderates these calls every
24 Tuesday at 1:00 p.m., Alaska time; 2:00 p.m., Canada
25 June through August by hosting a toll free number for
26 both U.S. and Canadian fisheries and interested
27 stakeholders to call in. We share this number in an
28 outreach campaign every spring so hopefully there's a
29 poster in every tribal council office, magnets on
30 fisher's fridges or boats and other easy access
31 locations that remind people how and when to call in.
32 The YRDFA Director, Wayne Jenkins, typically moderates
33 the call, sometimes Catherine Moncrieff, our
34 anthropologist or other staff moderate and fill in or
35 guest moderators a few times over the summer.

36

37 Who is participating?

38

39 Often times the media and political
40 representatives are on the call. We ask them to
41 announce themselves at the beginning of the call so we
42 know who we are talking with. Fishers from the entire
43 length of the river call in and start off each call
44 with subsistence reports from their community. They
45 update us on fishery activities, weather, water
46 conditions and any concerns, (breaking up) experience
47 in their region. Other participants of the call
48 include the Yukon River managers, ADF&G, U.S. Fish and
49 Wildlife Service, DFO in Canada, all participate in the

50

1 call where they are on the agenda to present the most
2 current fishery data and management report or planned
3 action. They stay on the entire call to answer any
4 questions that arise.

5

6

Next.

7

8

9 So the 2019 teleconference season. We
10 held 13 calls starting June 4th, ending August 27th.
11 Important discussion topics included record breaking
12 hot weather, high water temperatures and poor chum
13 flesh quality and spores(ph) on fish in some parts of
14 the river. Fishery issues including dead salmon on the
15 Koyukuk River. Discussion took place between fishers
16 and managers over providing for subsistence harvest and
17 meeting critical escapement goals. More Canadians
18 calling in this year and some really good discussion
19 between Canadians and Alaskans on concerns that they
20 have. And there was surprise at the high number of
21 chinook counted at Pilot Station but barely making the
22 escapement goal of Canadian origin fish.

22

23

Where did the fish go?

24

25

26 That is one of the big questions. And
27 you had some of that addressed earlier by ADF&G.

27

28

Next.

29

30

31

32 Recently we conducted an evaluation
33 with Alaskan fishers to gather their feedback about the
34 teleconferences. We also reached out to fishers,
35 tribal council representatives and others who
36 participate for feedback to improve the teleconferences
37 and to make sure they are meeting the needs of the
38 river.

37

38

39 The following is a quote from one of
40 the managers fisher's evaluation.

40

41

42 The teleconferences provide the only
43 consistent and dependable opportunity for managers to
44 interact with the public in group discussion while the
45 fishery is actually in process.

45

46

47 Another manager considers this an
48 excellent tool to see how fishers are doing and stated
49 that it helps them clear up controversial issues as
50 they arrive.

50

1 Other comments from the evaluation
2 include fishers get to hear what fish are coming up the
3 river and the management assessment and rationale.
4 Fishers also get to discuss or stand up for their
5 feelings or rights surrounding an issue. They get to
6 talk to each other directly, leading to learning
7 experiences for everyone. Sometimes these are the most
8 effective discussions of the call. The feedback also
9 tells us that we need more people to call in,
10 especially when fish are not in their area because that
11 paints a bigger picture or understanding of what is
12 happening on the river. Both managers and fishers find
13 the teleconferences to be extremely valuable, results
14 show that the teleconferences are valuable in building
15 and maintaining a knowledgeable fishing community that
16 works in cooperation to sustain the shared resources.
17 This knowledgeable community is developed with
18 discussions with fishermen and managers. It's also
19 developed by conversations between fishers and fishers
20 in different parts of the river. When we learn about
21 others observations and concerns, important information
22 is exchanged.

23

24 Next.

25

26 So in summary, the teleconferences have
27 become an integral part of in-season fisheries
28 management on the Yukon River. Both fishers and
29 managers come to rely on the teleconferences for real
30 time information and discussion surrounding Yukon River
31 fisheries details.

32

33 Up river fishers learn that down river
34 fishers plan their fishing time, discussions occur on a
35 weekly basis between fishers and fishers, fishers and
36 managers, between Americans and Canadians over a
37 variety of topics, observations and concerns.

38

39 Teleconferences have been funded since
40 2001 by the FRMP as well as some funding from the Yukon
41 River Panel. This cost effective communication tool is
42 up for renewal through the FRMP process and we hope
43 that it will be selected and continued support.

44

45 Next.

46

47 So the next project I'd like to share
48 -- support for the teleconferences -- and it is the in-
49 season community surveyor program.

50

1 This slide highlights the 2019 season,
2 which went really well. A quick summary of how this
3 program works is as follows.
4

5 Surveyors attend the group training and
6 pre-season meetings learning about how to do their jobs
7 and any current issues or management actions to expect
8 this summer. They're instructed to bring any community
9 concerns or such items to these meetings. They return
10 home with their binders and inform the tribal council
11 and community what they learned at the meeting and then
12 prepare for the start of their survey season. Once the
13 salmon arrive to their community and people start
14 fishing they begin interviewing once a week for six
15 weeks. They ask fishers basic questions about how
16 fishing is going and any challenges or concerns that
17 they're having. This information is reported to YRDFA,
18 it's anonymous and it is sent to the managers weekly
19 just before the teleconferences. The surveyor then
20 gives the report from their community on the weekly
21 teleconference. This year we were able to have the
22 surveyors report on seven weeks of teleconferences,
23 which is one more than usual, or required in their
24 contract and it makes a big difference on the
25 teleconferences.
26

27 In 2019 our surveyors were able to
28 interview a total of 142 households in 377 interviews.
29 In their final interviews, the surveyor's ask
30 participants if they were able to meet their
31 subsistence needs. The table above shows the results
32 for 2019. As you can see participants in Ruby, Tanana
33 Rapids and Eagle all reported meeting their needs. In
34 three communities, most participants reported meeting
35 their needs. These communities are Alakanuk, Marshall
36 and Fort Yukon. In Alakanuk participants had mixed
37 comparison -- fishing compared to last year. In
38 Marshall fishers reported fishing was about the same as
39 last year but some thought that there were more and
40 bigger chinook salmon. There was concern about dead
41 sea mammals and they commented about the very hot
42 summer. In Fort Yukon most participants met their
43 needs and said fishing was good but that (breaking up).
44 There suggestion to management was no closures. In
45 Mountain Village about half of the participants met
46 their needs for chinook and all of Mountain Village
47 participants said that they had (breaking up) they
48 liked being able to use nets, the dipnets, and most
49 said fishing was better than last year for chinook but
50

1 would light on chums. Also in Russian Mission about
2 half the surveyed participants reported meeting their
3 needs and those that did not had personal issues that
4 prevented their success. More than half of the
5 participants requested to stay on their weekly schedule
6 and reported they did not receive enough notice about
7 openings. In Huslia, three fishers participated in the
8 final interview and two of them did not meet (breaking
9 up), one of these two had personal issues, the other
10 reported poor fishing. One participant said the
11 fishing was better this year.

12
13 Next.

14
15 So we recently conducted our evaluation
16 program with the surveyors and managers. We do this
17 each year to hear constructive feedback and to use it
18 to improve the program and our ability to meet the
19 needs of the fishers on the river. The results show
20 that surveyors value the opportunity to participate in
21 the program, they felt well trained and supported and
22 most believe the program represents fishers in their
23 community well. Some reported that they value being
24 able to anonymously represent voices in their community
25 who usually do not want to speak up. Others appreciate
26 that the program involves communities, tribal councils,
27 fishers and managers. Managers appreciate the real
28 time information sharing, explanations for fishing
29 success and challenges which helps them evaluate their
30 assessment tools. They also appreciate consistent
31 reporting on the teleconference and the development of
32 the surveyor as the community spokesperson. Managers
33 also appreciate that this program involves local
34 community and the river-wide network of sharing of the
35 salmon resource.

36
37 Next.

38
39 In sum, this program running since 2002
40 provides an opportunity for fishers to have a voice in
41 management. They can share their successes, concerns
42 and questions anonymously with fishery managers and
43 with the entire river. It provides local employment
44 and local community directed reporting. It helps
45 managers validate and trust their assessment tools and
46 to determine if opportunity has been provided or
47 whether they need to provide more opportunity so that
48 fishermen can achieve their subsistence fishing goals.
49 This program has funding only through March 2020 unless
50

1 the proposal is accepted by the FRMP process and we ask
2 that you support this program to keep opportunities for
3 capacity building and Yukon fishers voices strong.
4

5 So that is the end of the PowerPoint
6 and my two large announcements. I have a brief
7 discussion of our other programs but I would pause now
8 to see if there are questions from the Council, Mr.
9 Chairman.

10
11 (Telephonic interruption - cell phones
12 ringing on teleconference line)
13

14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Wayne. Do
15 any Council members have questions on the presentation.
16

17 (No comments)
18

19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Hearing none, you
20 have additional Wayne.
21

22 MR. JENKINS: I'm having trouble
23 understanding and hearing.
24

25 REPORTER: So, Wayne, there's no
26 questions so go ahead with your additional.
27

28 MR. JENKINS: Thank you so much.
29

30 REPORTER: Okay.
31

32 MR. JENKINS: I hear there are no
33 questions so I will go ahead.
34

35 The first brief program that I want to
36 go over is the pre-season fishermen meeting, you have
37 heard people refer to it and you are probably quite
38 familiar with it. It's purpose is to conduct an annual
39 meeting with Yukon River fishers, fishery managers to
40 build and aware public constituency motivated to
41 maintain the Yukon River salmon stock and meeting the
42 Yukon River escapement goal with Canada as directed by
43 the Yukon River agreement. All Yukon River fishing
44 districts and communities are invited. The funding
45 source is the Yukon River Panel Restoration and
46 Enhancement Fund and the funding for this round ended
47 September 30th of this year. We have applied for
48 funding for the 2020 fishing season and will be
49 reviewed and decided upon in December of this year. If
50

1 funded, we will be working with our partners and
2 stakeholders to meet in Anchorage in April or May 2020.
3

4 The next project I would like to cover
5 is our anthropologist, Catherine Moncrieff's project,
6 traditional knowledge of anadromous fish in the Yukon
7 Flats with a focus on the Dranjeek Basin. The purpose
8 is to provide information critical to the management of
9 anadromous fish and the habitat that supports them
10 through interviews and mapping activities with
11 knowledgeable fishers and hunters to identify areas in
12 the Dranjeek Basin with salmon and whitefish spawning
13 (indiscernible - breaking up). This will then be
14 verified by biological field work via helicopter and
15 riverboat work and finally nominations of new areas to
16 be submitted to the Anadromous Waters Catalog. This is
17 a partnership with Tanana Chiefs Conference, YRDLA and
18 the communities in the area. The funding is through
19 the FRMP and goes through March 31st of 2021.
20

21 Accomplishments. Field work conducted
22 in Fort Yukon, Venetie and Chalkyitsik August of 2018
23 through February of 2019. 12 interviews and mapping
24 activities have been conducted. Local research
25 assistants have been hired in each community.
26 Interviews transcribed and drafts which are all
27 summarized, biological field work conducted October
28 28th, preliminary (teleconference beeping) show samples
29 all positive for salmon species and 2019 biological
30 fieldwork planned and detailed for all salmon species
31 but postponed due to heavy fire activity in the region
32 here. The next steps include additional interviews and
33 biological team groundtruthing locations, identified by
34 participants, biological field work from 2019 will be
35 rescheduled for 2020 due to the fire activity in 2019.
36

37 The next project is one you're quite
38 familiar with. It's the educational exchange. The
39 Yukon River educational exchange is a way for people
40 who live and use the Yukon River in the U.S. and Canada
41 to reach an understanding of their neighbors
42 experiences and challenges relating to supporting and
43 maintaining sustainable salmon runs to the spawning
44 grounds in Canada. The funding source is the Yukon
45 River Panel Restoration and Enhancement Fund. The
46 funding is through -- for this last trip this year,
47 March 31st, 2019. A 2020 proposal was submitted in
48 early October with a decision at the December Yukon
49 River Panel meeting in Anchorage.
50

1 The 2019 education exchange did have
2 some challenges this year, we had a shorter timing
3 period from when it was accepted so attendees could
4 attend the April Yukon River Panel meeting in
5 Whitehorse, that was the first, and at the last minute
6 we lost two attendees, they had family emergencies to
7 attend to, which took the attendees down to three and
8 myself going to Canada. Despite this, the Alaska and
9 Canadians participants that were queried felt the trip
10 was very useful for better understanding of the work of
11 the Yukon River Panel, Canadian fisheries management,
12 First Nations culture and deep culture relations to
13 fish and the same issues from the Alaska perspective.
14 If the 2020 exchange is funded, we look forward to
15 hosting our fellow friends with visits to Lower River
16 villages, monitoring stations, commercial and
17 subsistence fishing observing and share people's
18 stories on the Alaska side in 2020.

19
20 So the last program I wish to briefly
21 cover for you is our building and maintaining public
22 support of the salmon resource management. And the
23 purpose is to build and maintain public support of
24 meaningful participation in Yukon River salmon resource
25 management by maintaining community capacity to
26 participate by developing mutual understanding between
27 management agencies and the public for encouraging
28 conservation and stewardship of the salmon species.
29 This funding is through U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
30 Restoration and Management Fund, or the R&M fund. The
31 funding is through June 30th of 2019. The 2020
32 proposal will be submitted in early January for a
33 decision at the April Yukon River Panel meeting.

34
35 Next steps, the 2019 YRDFA Board
36 meeting was held April 23rd and 24th in Fairbanks.
37 Some key accomplishments of that meeting were initial
38 meeting with the new Alaska ADF&G Commissioner, Mr.
39 Douglas Vincent-Lang. We had in-depth discussions
40 about large scale hatcheries and in a draft
41 comprehensive salmon management plan, the decision to
42 create to young future advisory positions on the YRDFA
43 Board was passed. The passage of eight fishery
44 associated resolutions and more. Board members
45 participated in the pre-season planning meeting which
46 followed on April 25th in Fairbanks.

47
48 And, very briefly, I would like to
49 share with you five of the eight resolutions passed by
50

1 the YRDFA Board because this is one of the key ways
2 that the YRDFA Board shares concerns and decisions
3 about fisheries and impacts and other issues.
4

5 So 2019-02 continued previous
6 opposition to the Ambler Road proposal due to concerns
7 around impacts to salmon habitat, water quality,
8 potential pollution and impacts to the land and water
9 traditional way of life.
10

11 2019-04 YRDFA had been involved in the
12 Southeast Transboundary Mining issues before it passed
13 State administration, moved on, and we seek to -- we're
14 working to become involved in the new process, which
15 now I think involves the U.S. State Department so it's
16 gone up to a little bit higher level. The concern
17 there is driven by past and potential future mining in
18 the Canadian province of the Yukon Territory.
19

20 The third -- go ahead.
21

22 REPORTER: Go ahead, Wayne, no one said
23 anything.
24

25 MR. JENKINS: The third resolution I
26 would share is 2019-06.
27

28 This is opposition to large scale
29 hatcheries on the Yukon River and that included in the
30 draft Alaska Comprehensive Salmon Plan and setting
31 specific limits on Alaska hatchery releases. This is
32 part of a process that's been going on for several
33 years. The State Comprehensive Salmon Planning process
34 creates the document for the permitting or not of
35 hatcheries in specific areas in the state. The
36 previous document from 1998 had a no large scale
37 hatchery from the Yukon River, and the Yukon -- or I
38 mean the YRDFA Board believes that is the proper way to
39 go forward now, especially with the changes that we're
40 seeing on the river.
41

42 The next resolution is 2019-07
43 continued concerns for the potential impacts of the
44 proposed Donlin Mine on the Kuskokwim River.
45

46 And then the last one is the 2019-08
47 continued support of Yukon River communities that have
48 nominated traditionally used water sheds on Bureau of
49 Land Management lands, protection of resources, they
50

1 have used for thousands of years. The concern there is
2 that the NEPA processes that have been taking place on
3 the Central Yukon and Bering Sea Western Interior BLM
4 regions have not been managed very well by BLM and
5 tribes and communities do not feel like they are being
6 heard despite their efforts to engage and share
7 specific information about their future needs and their
8 desires to protect these very important water sheds.
9

10 And with that I will close and open it
11 up to have any questions, if I, hopefully, can hear
12 them I'll be glad to try to answer them.
13

14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thanks, Wayne.
15 That was a very thorough report. Any questions from
16 the Council.
17

18 Karen, you got one.
19

20 MS. DEATHERAGE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
21 I just would like to comment that I participated in
22 several of those teleconferences and was provided with
23 the summaries from those teleconferences and found them
24 to be extremely valuable so I think that the work of
25 YRDFA is very much appreciated.
26

27 Thank you.
28

29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I would reiterate
30 that. The teleconferences are integral to the
31 management of the fishery on the Yukon River.
32 Appreciate all your work, Wayne, and so this may be our
33 last hearing from you, or meeting with you, as you step
34 down in the future, so appreciate all your work with
35 Yukon River, and so we look forward to working with
36 your organization in the future.
37

38 Thanks so much.
39

40 MR. JENKINS: Thank you, Chairman
41 Reakoff and the Council for all the great work you guys
42 continue to do. It's not easy but you guys are up for
43 it. And, you know, as we go into this changing in
44 seemingly less predictable future we really all are
45 going to have to continue to work together, maybe in
46 ways that we haven't imagined before, but I think it's
47 the only way we're really going to get through it.
48

49 Thank you so much.
50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thank you.
2 I'm going to have Vince -- no, Fred.

3
4 MR. BUE: Yeah, thank you, Mr.
5 Chairman. I apologize, Wayne reminded me of the
6 Comprehensive Salmon Plan for the Yukon. I forgot to
7 mention that it is out for review right now. Some of
8 you may be aware of it, some of you may not but the
9 review due date is 12/31 this winter. So if you need a
10 copy or an electronic version to look at it, it regards
11 the hatchery permitting on the Yukon.

12
13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, appreciate
14 that. Maybe you could send a link to Karen so we could
15 look at that on line.

16
17 So, Vince, Kanuti National Wildlife
18 Refuge report. We're going into U.S. Fish and Wildlife
19 Service reports.

20
21 MS. KENNER: Any more PowerPoints.

22
23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: What a minute, what
24 point is Suzanne's presentation, Karen.

25
26 MS. DEATHERAGE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
27 The Bering Sea Western Interior Tribal Commission will
28 follow the BLM presentation on the Bering Sea Western
29 Interior Plan.

30
31 Thank you.

32
33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. I see it now.
34 Yes. I see it now. So, Vince, go right ahead.

35
36 MR. MATHEWS: Okay, thank you. Vince
37 Mathews, Refuge Subsistence Coordinator for Kanuti,
38 Yukon Flats and Arctic. I believe Tina may be on line,
39 if there's something I miss or she wants to add, and,
40 also maybe Chris Harwood would be, because I'm going to
41 not spend any time on the bird notes, and they're in
42 different bird surveys, but if you have questions
43 either we can go to that or Chris or Tina could answer.

44
45 I believe you all have a handout of it
46 saying October 2019, the front page covers the moose
47 season changes for Pollock's area, that's just for your
48 information. The other thing I want to point out is
49 there were discussions yesterday, which was great to
50

1 get your input on, on snow levels, so the Refuge for
2 the Kanuti area. The Refuge intends to do a moose
3 survey with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in
4 November 2019 if snow conditions allow. So I want to
5 make sure you get that and if you're interested more in
6 the moose population survey data from the past, they're
7 on several pages there in charts.

8

9

The next.....

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CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The snow -- excuse
me. The snow depth in the Kanuti and the south slope
of the Brooks Range may be adequate to fly survey now
so managers should be aware of that, don't sit in
Fairbanks and think there's one inch of snow, there's a
lot of snow up there right now and you can look at the
Bettles snow totals also. So I wanted to -- and
question on that moose survey, is that a GSPE
population survey, Tina, on the line there?

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MS. MORAN: Mr. Chair. That is a GSPE
and we are -- Fish and Game is leading that survey so
we just text them yesterday, they're watching the
conditions, we'll work with them at the start of the
survey.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Yes, it's
imperative, we had high mortalities last winter and we
need to get a survey and appreciate that survey being
conducted.

Continue Vince.

MR. MATHEWS: Yes, I just want to point
out to you because some of you are trappers, the
information on the lynx movement studies, you might be
interested in. That was a joint effort with a list of
Refuges and including Gates of the Arctic. And you'll
see in there there's some data on that, but what's
really impressive is for me and for others, is that the
range of where they move, those lynx. So that's on
Figure 2, and there's some other maps if you want to
see more detail on that in the future.

Like I mentioned with the breeding
surveys, I don't want to downplay those but they're in
your written material. If you have questions, now, or
later, you can get a hold of me or Chris or Tina and we
can answer those bird surveys.

1 So that covers that section.

2
3 I do want to point out a little bit on
4 the lesser yellow leg studies, the main thing I want to
5 point out there because sometimes people have a feeling
6 that they're pretty isolated, pretty remote and not
7 connected elsewhere, well, lesser yellow legs in your
8 area, if you look at that map, travel quite a distance,
9 so you definitely are connected and that relates to a
10 study about the value of undeveloped areas. That's my
11 term. You may have had a different term on that, but
12 that shows the value of your areas.

13
14 Again, we'll just keep moving along.
15 There's the multi-geese survey, if you're interested in
16 that.

17
18 Salmon studies that are further along,
19 Henshaw Creek, you already discussed that. There was
20 very low returns compared to average. So the summer
21 chum passage, which estimated at 34,342, which is well
22 below the 189,310, which is the historical median. So
23 that is quite a drop. So that's something that I'm
24 sure you're going to be keeping an eye on.

25
26 There's information on the water
27 resources and weather there for you to followup.

28
29 As Jack mentioned yesterday, there
30 wasn't a lot of fires directly in the area up there so
31 there's some information about the one fire there in
32 Figure 6.

33
34 Okay.

35
36 I won't go through all the details on
37 all of the -- oh, excuse me, there is one thing before
38 I get to the interns. The new Refuge Manager, which
39 was announced at the last meeting, but there's more
40 information about her, is Joanna Fox. She's back at
41 Kanuti Refuge. She was the Deputy Refuge manager for
42 2007 through 2014. And Jack and I knew her when she
43 used to be in Galena. So it's good to have a permanent
44 Refuge manager on board and one that has the depth of
45 knowledge and experience in Alaska.

46
47 There's a bunch of sections in here on
48 seasonal employees. I encourage you to read that. The
49 reason I encourage you to read that is the fact is that
50

1 a lot of our activities and that depend on having
2 interns, which are pretty much volunteers, and they are
3 the future leaders. So you'll see there, there's the
4 one that was assisting with the spring, summer field
5 work at Kanuti Lake. And then I supervised the two at
6 the Arctic InterAgency Visitor Center. And then
7 Catherine Monore who's still on board is helping out.
8 So that is something you need to be aware of that these
9 interns bring a lot of energy and they help us complete
10 projects. So there's more information on that.

11

12 And then, unless there's questions,
13 I'll just keep rolling along.

14

15 There's the Henshaw Creek Science.....

16

17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: One from Tim here.

18

19 MR. MATHEWS: Yes.

20

21 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, Vince. Do you know
22 on the Henshaw Creek weir numbers, the historic median,
23 is that a 10 year average or goes back even further,
24 the 189,000 chum?

25

26 MR. MATHEWS: No, I do not know. Fred
27 might bail me out here.

28

29 (No comments)

30

31 MR. MATHEWS: Nope, he's not.

32

33 (Laughter)

34

35 MR. MATHEWS: But I think the point of
36 it is, is that, it is probably a long average. I don't
37 know how long that weir has been going.

38

39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The timeframe's from
40 1999, so that's an average -- I think that's an average
41 for that timeframe.

42

43 MR. GERVAIS: Twenty years.

44

45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Twenty year average.

46

47 MR. MATHEWS: Okay, thank you, Jack.

48

49 So the interns I already covered, so

50

1 please look that over.

2

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And then if you run into them make them, you know, feel welcome and challenge them, Jack did that for the ones in ColdFoot.

The Henshaw Science Creek camp was conducted. I want to recognize Pollock Simon. He was one of the elders there. He had two assignments. One, to help with traditional, ecological knowledge, that's the Henshaw Creek Science camp. And the other thing was to keep an eye on me because I attend that camp, and he did an excellent job on both. But he played a very valuable role as being a leader for the youth. He helped with drying of salmon and other traditional activities. And the other elder was Anna Franke who's originally from Minto. And you can read about all the activities that are covered there. There's a lot of things, lessons on fish dissection, leave no trace. The other thing I want to point out is that the -- yeah, the new law enforcement officer for this area, Cody Smith, attended that and did a super excellent job with the youth there, including gun safety, not the full course, but gun safety and archery. So hopefully he'll make it to future meetings. So you'll see a picture of us with our T-shirts there.

The other thing I want to talk to you about, and I have additional handouts on it, last year was my second year involved with the Native Youth Congress. It's full title is Native Youth Community Adaption and Leadership Congress. This is high school seniors from across the nation that learn how to spread their wings a little bit and become conservation leaders in their area. The reason I bring this up, besides my involvement is we only had four from Alaska. So I need -- well, I don't need it, but Congress needs you to get more youth to apply to be involved with Native youth from across the United States, as far west as America Samoa, as far east as Maine. It's a lot -- it would be great to have more there. So I'll have a handout on that if you can pass it around and share it in your communities or button-hole a youth, that'd be great.

There's a picture of the Staff from the Arctic InterAgency Visitor Center in ColdFoot, again, that's your front line for a lot of issues. I shouldn't say issues, a lot of front line for getting

1 information out to people from around the world about
2 the importance of Alaska, importance of Interior Alaska
3 but also important of the Refuges and Gates of the
4 Arctic and BLM. So that's just a picture to give you
5 that. And then some more information about the winter
6 visitor's center in ColdFoot. There is a continuing
7 public desire for that center to be open longer each
8 winter so the Refuge, as well as with the other
9 partners, BLM, Park Service, are planning on upcoming
10 winter visitor season. So with that, the main point I
11 would like to get across to you is please let us know
12 if there's additional things you would want in the
13 summary. If there are items in any of the summaries or
14 a topic that comes up that you would like maybe a
15 presentation on , we can see if we can pursue that.
16 And obviously it'd be at a meeting where you may have a
17 little bit more relaxed agenda.

18
19 So with that I'll stop and see if
20 there's any questions, or if Tina or Chris have
21 something else to add.

22
23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I appreciate the
24 handout. I read the handout. It gives me a good
25 understanding of what Kanuti's actually doing. Some of
26 those projects, like the telemetry work with lynx and
27 the yellow legs. I'm happy to see Joanna Fox back at
28 Kanuti. She used to be Deputy manager there. She was
29 also the subsistence coordinator at Galena when we
30 started this program back in '93, early '90s.

31
32 And I wanted to comment that the winter
33 visitation is declined so far. The trade embargo that
34 we have, 95 percent of the visitors coming to the
35 Brooks Range in winter were Chinese and so that's
36 affecting the number of people that I'm seeing already.
37 The main visitation is between the end of February
38 through the end of March when there's lots of people on
39 spring break and Asiatic people like to see aurora
40 because they have a Buddhist and Shintoism background;
41 it has nothing to do with procreating underneath the
42 aurora or anything else like that.....

43
44 (Laughter)

45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:which is
47 Hollywood's version, it has to do with appreciation of
48 nature. So I work in the visitor industry and so know
49 why these people come. But I do feel that it's good to

50

1 have some availability for the public there at
2 ColdFoot.

3
4 Other comments from the Council on
5 Kanuti's presentation. I think it was a very thorough
6 presentation and I do really appreciate all of these
7 projects and these photos of your interns and so forth.
8 That's important for this -- a picture is worth a
9 thousand words.

10

11 Other comments from the Council.

12

13 MR. HONEA: Yes.

14

15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: One more there, Don.

16

17 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
18 just wanted to remark in the eleventh hour here, of
19 what you guys compiled here and appreciate that because
20 I realize, I mean even right now when the next one
21 comes up, they just completed, you know, the
22 checkstations and stuff so, you know, we don't have
23 handouts like this -- but I appreciate that, thank you,
24 Vince.

25

26 MR. MATHEWS: Yeah, thank you. I'll
27 carry it back to the Staff and hopefully Chris is on
28 line because he's the one that gets us all to put
29 pieces in there. It takes a bit of work so hopefully
30 he's on line to get that appreciation because we want
31 to get the message out and we want it to be the best
32 message for your needs. So it sounds like we're
33 meeting it, if we're not, let us know.

34

35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: No, I think the
36 handout and it shows all of the projects that Kanuti's
37 doing and it's a very worthy -- all of them have
38 worthiness.

39

40 (Cell phone interruption)

41

42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So thanks so much

43

Vince.

44

45 MR. MATHEWS: Thank you.

46

47 (Cell phone interruption)

48

49 (Laughter)

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we're going to go
2 to Innoko/Koyukuk/Nowitna National Wildlife Refuge.

3
4 MR. HARRIS: Jeremy just texted me and
5 he's trying to call in.

6
7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh, he's stuck out.

8
9 REPORTER: The phones just went down.

10
11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The phones are down.

12
13 REPORTER: Yes, the phone service is
14 completely down.

15
16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The phones, okay.

17
18 MS. DEATHERAGE: Rural Alaska, pretty
19 regular.

20
21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we can't do
22 Aaron, we can't do.....

23
24 MS. DEATHERAGE: We can do BLM, well,
25 part of it, we have a piece of BLM here.

26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, we can do
28 Bruce Seppi since he's here.

29
30 REPORTER: Oh, no, the line says it's
31 trying to reconnect here.

32
33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Did the phones come
34 back then Salena.

35
36 REPORTER: They're coming back up on
37 line, hold up a second.

38
39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Standby. Our phones
40 might be coming back.

41
42 (Pause)

43
44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So let's see,
45 if all else fails we'll go to Suzanne Little because a
46 lot of the participation's on the phone and if our
47 phone stays down, so.....

48
49 REPORTER: Is there anyone on line with

50

1 us?

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Did we come back up
4 again?

5

6 REPORTER: It says we are. Is there
7 anyone on line with us?

8

9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Let's see
10 what -- do we have people on the phone, can you hear me
11 on the phone?

12

13 REPORTER: There's 20 people on the
14 phone.

15

16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: There's 20 people on
17 the phone, we lost the phone for awhile so Jeremy are
18 you there?

19

20 MR. HAVENER: I am, yeah, we just got
21 back on.

22

23 REPORTER: Okay, go ahead Jeremy,
24 you're on now.

25

26 MR. HAVENER: Okay. Sorry, we were off
27 a little bit, are we on the Innoko/Koyukuk/Nowitna
28 update?

29

30 REPORTER: Yep, you're on Jeremy.

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, I was wanting
33 that and then the phones dropped out and I was trying
34 to scramble to fill time, but go right ahead if you're
35 there go on.

36

37 MR. HAVENER: Okay, thank you, Mr.
38 Chair and Council members. I'll be pretty quick here
39 today.

40

41 The first thing we want to start off
42 with is I just want to thank Ray Collins, and the
43 Refuge here wants to thank him for his time served on
44 the Regional Advisory Council, I think it's been 26
45 years since it was established and just want to
46 recognize his work on that Council and all the things
47 he's done for subsistence in that area. We were hoping
48 to be there in person to present him a gift but I think
49 we're going to have to try to mail it at this point.

50

1 So if at some point we could get his address and
2 contact information that would be wonderful.
3

4 So I just wanted to start off there and
5 recognize that and really thanks very much, Ray, for
6 your service on the Council.
7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And, Jeremy.
9

10 REPORTER: Jeremy, hold on.
11

12 MR. HAVENER: Okay.
13

14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Jeremy, my statement
15 would be you could send it to your RIT and that RIT
16 here in McGrath could give it to Ray personally.
17

18 MR. HAVENER: Okay. That will work out
19 perfect. I can give it to Kelly and she could get it
20 over to Ray, that'd be wonderful.
21

22 (Pause)
23

24 REPORTER: Go ahead, Jeremy, you're on.
25

26 MR. HAVENER: Okay. So jumping into a
27 few things here, the first thing I want to start off on
28 is just we do plan on doing a full Refuge update in the
29 spring once we get all our biological reports
30 finalized, outreach, reports and different things like
31 that.
32

33 So the first thing I want to start off
34 with is a Staff update. We do have a couple things
35 going on. The first one I'll talk about since it's
36 related there to McGrath, is the hiring of a Park
37 Ranger position, and her name is Kelly Pearce and she's
38 located there locally. She's been doing some great
39 things since she -- she hit the ground running there.
40 She's the only person out there right now so she's
41 taking care of maintenance, and all those different
42 things along with outreach and education and she's been
43 doing some wonderful things so far so we're really
44 excited to have her on board with us. A couple things
45 she's done this summer was participating in the science
46 camp that she held, where a lot of folks from McGrath
47 participated in that and then she's done some culture
48 camps and also a couple open houses where we've been
49 down there for those and had a good chance to meet with
50

1 the community and hear concerns and different things
2 like that. So really appreciate having her on board.
3 We were hoping she could be there today but she had
4 prior obligations and couldn't make it. So
5 unfortunately she is not there right now but hopefully
6 in the future, if we have another meeting in McGrath,
7 you guys will be able to meet her and talk to her in
8 person.
9

10 Another Staff update. We just recently
11 hired a new fisheries biologist and a little different
12 process with that, it was a nation-wide hire. They had
13 a team put together that selected this position. And
14 we're expecting this position to be filled -- well, it
15 is filled, but they're going to get out here -- the
16 person's name is Wyatt Snodgrass, and he will be out
17 here starting December 10th, is his report date, so
18 we're real excited to have that position filled again
19 and get some fisheries work going here at
20 Innoko/Koyukuk/Nowitna.
21

22 And then finally on Staff updates, we
23 did just get permission to fly a Refuge Information
24 Technician position for the Galena area for the Koyukuk
25 and Nowitna National Wildlife Refuges, so I'm going to
26 be jumping into that and hopefully get that position
27 filled very soon because we've been really missing that
28 position, it's been vacant for a couple years now and
29 hopefully get somebody good in there for that position.
30

31 And then real quick a couple
32 subsistence updates. I just got back from a month long
33 stint out at the Nowitna checkstation so while that's
34 fresh on my mind I'll update on that real quick. This
35 year we had 117 hunters, which is kind of getting up
36 there and 42 moose were harvested this year. And I was
37 kind of looking through some of the stuff on that and I
38 noticed that over half of those bulls that were
39 harvested appeared to be 50 inches or bigger, so quite
40 a few big moose harvested this year. And, you know,
41 most of those moose were harvested under a registration
42 permit. I think out of the 42 moose that were
43 harvested we had 28 registration moose and then 14 of
44 those moose were under draw permits. So it seemed like
45 a pretty good year for everybody, success rates were
46 really well. We did have law enforcement come this
47 year and kind of patrol the river and they were really
48 happy with what they saw, the contact that they made,
49 they really felt that the checkstation was helping out
50

1 with compliance, you know, and meat care and all that
2 stuff. So things are looking really good there. And I
3 think most of the hunters that are going in there have
4 a really good understanding of the regulations and do a
5 good job of taking care of the meat as we're checking
6 all that stuff as it comes out. And, you know,
7 everything -- a lot of them are in game bags and the
8 meat appears to be dry and clean and it's all there.
9 So everything looked good this year from that aspect.

10

11 Under the Federal hunt that takes place
12 from September 26th through October 1st on the Nowitna,
13 we had 12 permits issued this year, which was kind of
14 up a little bit and I think a reason behind that was it
15 was reported that Tanana had a little bit more of a
16 difficult time getting moose this year so we had a few
17 extra people from Tanana show up to participate in that
18 moose hunt. So it's good that that opportunity is
19 there and we ended up with three bull moose harvested
20 during the Federal Nowitna moose hunt.

21

22 And then jumping back from our February
23 15th to March 15th 21E moose hunt, real quick we had --
24 it was kind of a low year on the number of permits
25 issued and I don't know if that was based off of the
26 fact that our RIT, Ken Chase, he had an operation and
27 he wasn't able to go around and issue permits out to
28 the villages so we kind of worked with them over the
29 phone and I don't know if there was some confusion but
30 we only ended up with two permits for the southern
31 Federal hunt, so the hunt that takes place south of
32 Piamiut Slough for the Kuskokwim River villages and one
33 bull moose was harvested under that, and then the rest
34 of the portion of that 21E we had six permits issued
35 with three bull moose harvested. So pretty low numbers
36 this year and maybe that reflects on the fact that the
37 fall hunts were really well and everybody was able to
38 get their moose.

39

40 So those are my subsistence updates and
41 I think that's everything and I'm kind of open up for
42 questions at this point.

43

44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks so
45 much, Jeremy. Questions, you got one there, Tim, go
46 ahead.

47

48 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
49 Thanks for your presentation, Jeremy. Tim Gervais. Do

50

1 you think for next year that the permits for the
2 Federal hunt 26th of September through October 1st,
3 that they could be made available in Ruby?
4

5 MR. HAVENER: Mr. Gervais, yeah, that's
6 a good question and, you know, I think looking at our
7 policy on permits, they're technically supposed to be
8 issued out by a Federal representative so, yeah, I
9 don't think that's going to be able to happen.

10
11 MR. GERVAIS: What if the post-mistress
12 did it?
13

14 MR. HAVENER: Hum, that's a good
15 question and I'd have to get confirmation on that one.
16

17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Is there a licensed
18 vendor in Ruby? Kanuti had the licensed vendor issuing
19 Federal permits in Allakaket, is there a licensed
20 vendor there, Tim?
21

22 MR. GERVAIS: Not that I know of.
23

24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. You're going
25 to get a new RIT for the Galena area, can you send that
26 RIT up there to issue those permits?
27

28 MR. HAVENER: Yeah, Mr. Chair,
29 absolutely. And, you know, with my status this year
30 being at the checkstation all month long, you know, it
31 doesn't allow me to be able to travel to Tanana or Ruby
32 to do that so if we do have an RIT on Staff that would
33 definitely be the plan to send them there, to be in
34 person, so that way if anybody has questions or
35 anything like that it can get all covered. And then,
36 you know, is somebody misses that, the date that the
37 RIT is there they can always call our office and we can
38 work with them to get that permit, usually over the
39 phone and working with the tribal office. So, yeah,
40 that's kind of the plan.
41

42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So that
43 sounds great. Ray, go ahead.
44

45 MR. COLLINS: Yeah, does the harvest o
46 those 50- inch bulls, that was most of them there, does
47 that have any impact on the breeding situation, because
48 the bigger bulls are primary breeders too, so how does
49 that compare to the general population of bull moose?
50

1 MR. HAVENER: You know, I typically
2 would defer this question to our wildlife biologist,
3 Brad Scotton, but I'm just going to touch on that a
4 little bit, with that many big bulls harvested I'm
5 guessing it's going to have a little bit of an impact.
6 But, you know, we'll know for sure once we finish up
7 our November moose surveys in that area so we should be
8 able to get some good data and see if that does have an
9 impact on our trend count numbers.

10
11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You could compare
12 that against your past survey, just get a rough idea,
13 and so we can -- or give us that as a report item at
14 our spring meeting in Fairbanks?

15
16 MR. HAVENER: Yep, that's been noted
17 and we will definitely do that.

18
19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Tim, you got another
20 question.

21
22 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, Jeremy, I just
23 wanted to thank you and your Staff for doing a good
24 job, or great job on keeping that moose population
25 healthy. It's really a huge resource for the community
26 of Ruby to be able to harvest moose on the Nowitna
27 Refuge and the adjacent Doyon and Village corp lands,
28 which the moose are traveling through so it's a really
29 -- it's a really important resource for our community
30 and everyone appreciates the good hunting opportunity
31 that the Refuge provides.

32
33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you, Tim.

34
35 Don.

36
37 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
38 Jeremy, hey, this is Don. I haven't been up to visit
39 you guys at the checkstation this year, I was down at
40 camp most of the hunting season. But I did have a
41 question on you gave us good numbers and stuff on the
42 Nowitna, whether you have any numbers from the Koyukuk
43 or the GASH area that's anything of concern, other than
44 that we will see the numbers probably at our spring
45 meeting, is there any -- I mean you being up there, is
46 there anything that we should be concerned about on the
47 Koyukuk or the GASH area.

48
49 Thank you.

50

1 MR. HAVENER: Yeah, Don, this is
2 Jeremy. No, that's a good question. You know we'll
3 see numbers from Glenn Stout and then down in the GASH
4 Area, that will be from Joshua Pearce, the area
5 biologist there, and, you know, obviously the concerns
6 we have around the Galena area and the Koyukuk, you
7 know, it was talked about it in the proposal with the
8 low bull/cow ratio in the Pilot Mountain Slough area,
9 and then you know as you jump into the Koyukuk, a
10 couple years ago there was a little bit of a dip in the
11 population and, you know, the number of large breeding
12 trophy bulls were declined and, you know, Glenn Stout,
13 the area biologist, issued out a letter recommending
14 hunters that are coming up there to maybe look at a
15 different area to try to rebuild that. But, you know,
16 overall numbers are sitting pretty good. Things are
17 stable. And we feel pretty good about the moose
18 population in this area. But with those numbers, I'll
19 definitely make sure to include those on our spring
20 report once I get those from Glenn and Josh.

21
22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thank you. I
23 do appreciate Koyukuk/Nowitna/Innoko staffing the
24 checkstation at the Novi. I think that does keep the
25 hunters in line having a checkstation there and meat
26 recovery is a lot better if they know they're going to
27 have to check through. So I appreciate all your hard
28 work that you put in there Jeremy, and appreciate your
29 report.

30
31 Thank you.

32
33 MR. HAVENER: Yep, thank you. You guys
34 take care.

35
36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you. See you
37 in the spring.

38
39 So we're going to go to Yukon Delta
40 National Wildlife Refuge, are you there Aaron.

41
42 MR. MOSES: Hello, Mr. Chair, yes, I
43 am.

44
45 (Pause)

46
47 REPORTER: Go ahead, Aaron.

48
49 MR. MOSES: Hey, guys. Thank you, I'm

50

1 so sorry I'm not up there this year, I'll be there in
2 the spring. I'm getting married this Saturday so I
3 couldn't make it up there.

4
5 (Laughter)

6
7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's an excused
8 absence.

9
10 (Laughter)

11
12 MR. MOSES: So I just want to give a
13 quick update from Yukon Delta. First with Staffing.

14
15 Our Refuge manager took another job at
16 the regional office as the Chief of Realty and so our
17 Deputy manager Ray Born is our acting Refuge manager.
18 We are in the process of trying to hire a wildlife
19 biologist. And we're just trying diligently to fill
20 positions as soon as possible.

21
22 Talk about some of the projects that
23 happened. I'll give you a better list this spring, but
24 I got some highlights from our waterfowl crews. This
25 spring they tested drones to -- they're trying to
26 determine how drones disturb nesting geese out on
27 Kigiak Island and right now all that data is being
28 looked at right now and I should have a pretty cool
29 slide show for you this summer or this spring on that
30 project.

31
32 As for cackler goose banding, the Yukon
33 Delta Refuge is required to band a minimum number of
34 500 cackling geese. This year's cackling geese banding
35 effort was the second year involved -- was the second
36 year that involved the use of a helicopter instead of
37 having 10 to 20 people and it just worked out so much
38 and it's made capturing cackling geese so much more
39 efficient and a lot less time consuming.

40
41 Again, this year we had the Crund (ph)
42 Lake duck banding. This year they banded a total of
43 1,200 birds and this year we actually got 78 mallards,
44 which is a lot higher than we've had in quite awhile.

45
46 For the summer of fish preservation
47 project, me, along with fish biologists here, we worked
48 on studying the effects of bug netting and mold on
49 trying to find better ways to dry fish during the

50

1 summer season. Again, I'll have more information for
2 you on that for the spring meeting.

3
4 And lastly talk about the Kuskokwim
5 fishery for this summer. In 2019 it was anticipated to
6 have a weak chinook salmon run and the U.S. Fish and
7 Wildlife Service through the action of the Federal
8 Subsistence Board assumed primary management authority
9 of the Kuskokwim River chinook subsistence fishery
10 within the boundaries of the Yukon Delta National
11 Wildlife Refuge on June 1st, 2019. During the 2019
12 chinook salmon season, the first entry season there
13 were a total of 10 Federal special actions presented.
14 The Kuskokwim Federal in-season manager issued six, the
15 Federal Subsistence Board issued three and one request
16 from the Organized Village of Kwethluk was withdrawn.
17 There were two six inch set gillnet opportunities
18 provided during the front end closure and four six inch
19 drift and set gillnet opportunities provided between
20 June 12 and June 22. A total of 41,000 chinook salmon
21 were harvested between Tuntutuliak and Akiak during
22 these opportunities, only 1,000 of which were harvested
23 during the two set net gillnet opportunities. An
24 estimated 51,000 chinook salmon were harvested
25 drainage-wide as expected, however, this is not -- this
26 will not be finalized until after the Alaska Department
27 of Fish and Game post-season survey is completed. This
28 is the largest chinook salmon harvest since 2013. The
29 2019 preliminary Kuskokwim River total run size -- run
30 estimate for chinook salmon is 233,204 chinook salmon,
31 which is the largest run size since 2008. And an
32 estimated 181,641 chinook salmon escaped the Kuskokwim
33 River fishery, greatly exceeding the drainage-wide SEG
34 of 65 to 120,000 fish, as well as the in-season
35 escapement targets of the Federal in-season manager and
36 the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission.
37 Preliminary data of the chinook salmon weir escapement
38 goals were met or exceeded within the Kuskokwim River
39 drainage. Six tributaries have aerial survey SEGs and
40 all six tributaries either met or exceeded their
41 respective SEG ranges. For those tributaries without
42 SEGs, chinook salmon counts were well above their
43 perspective 10 year average.

44
45 Again, this spring I'll have some more
46 cool projects that we've done here at the Refuge and
47 I'll get into detail and I will definitely be in person
48 for the spring and so if you guys have any questions.

49
50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thanks so much
2 Aaron. Any questions from the Council.

3
4 (No comments)

5
6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: If drones disturb
7 waterfowl, can you use drones to drive the geese, the
8 cackling geese instead of helicopter?

9
10 MR. MOSES: Right now we're on the
11 forefront of this, we even hired a grad student to
12 write protocols so that other waterfowl biologists will
13 be able to count birds, I think that's right what the
14 project is about, is to be able to count birds and not
15 disturb them when they're on the nest because they were
16 using thermal cameras to look for geese that were
17 laying down in their nests and they were pretty
18 successful but they're still looking over the data from
19 it.

20
21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Well,
22 appreciate your report, and if you could make a print
23 out, you know, like some of these other Refuges are
24 making a printout on some of those projects with a
25 couple photos, that would be good for the Council.

26
27 I do really super appreciate you being on that
28 call yesterday to give us that harvest data for
29 Mulchatna and I super appreciate YK-Delta being on the
30 call for this meeting, and thanks so much.

31
32 MR. MOSES: Thank you all. See you
33 guys in the spring.

34
35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Have a good
36 honeymoon.

37
38 (Laughter)

39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we're going to
41 move on here. We're down to let's see, Gates of the
42 Arctic, are you there Marcy.

43
44 MS. OKADA: Hi. Good afternoon, Jack
45 and Council members. This is Marcy Okada, the
46 subsistence coordinator for Gates of the Arctic
47 National Park and Preserve, and I'll just provide a
48 quick update.

49
50

1 The Gates of the Arctic National Park
2 Subsistence Resource Commission met this past April in
3 Anaktuvuk Pass. Main discussions were focused on
4 studies that have taken place in the areas surrounding
5 the community of Anaktuvuk Pass, as well as National
6 Park Service and Alaska Department of Fish and Game
7 updates on the Western Arctic Caribou Herd, Teshekpuk
8 Caribou Herd, and dall sheep. Additionally, there was
9 an Ambler Mining District Road update from the Bureau
10 of Land Management and the National Park Service. The
11 meeting had good community participation and the SRC
12 was able to hear local concerns. The next meeting is
13 scheduled for November 13th to 14th in Fairbanks.
14

15 In regards to the Western Arctic
16 Caribou Herd, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
17 conducted a successful census in July but the results
18 are still pending. A new analysis was published
19 looking at factors associated with the herd's
20 distribution. An analysis of spring migration, year-
21 round movement and survivorship are under way. This
22 past spring radio collars were deployed with net guns
23 for the first time ever in the herd because roughly
24 half of the herd did not migrate through Onion Portage
25 for the last two years. But that being said, this year
26 radio collaring at Onion Portage just wrapped up and 49
27 radio collars were put out.
28

29 In regards to moose, Gates of the
30 Arctic was able to survey the Kobuk River Preserve Unit
31 or the southern unit of Gates of the Arctic this past
32 March, April. Population estimate was 601 moose, down
33 from 727 moose in 2014. Calf recruitment improved from
34 2014 when it was seven calves per 100 cows and it is
35 now currently 23 calves per 100 cows.
36

37 For grizzly bears, grizzly bear numbers
38 were down in the 2018 survey compared to the 2010
39 survey but snow conditions may have impacted those
40 results. The field component of the collaring project
41 is completed and the results are currently being
42 written up. The most recent journal article document
43 den site characteristics, disease prevalence,
44 recruitment and changes in Arctic populations over
45 time. We're anticipating a few more journal articles
46 to be written up before the project is completed.
47

48 For dall sheep, a dall sheep survey was
49 conducted this past summer in the Killik and Anaktuvuk
50

1 area by two pilots and two observers. All transects
2 were completed in these two areas. Overall numbers
3 appear to be stable in both areas with no major
4 increase or decrease. Lamb recruitment appears to be
5 good in both areas. The data is currently being
6 analyzed and results will be available at your next
7 meeting. The National Park Service will continue
8 annual surveys in the northeastern portion of Gates of
9 the Arctic to monitor changes in sheep population
10 demographics. But next year a Park-wide survey is
11 scheduled to be conducted.

12
13 Moving right along to the Ambler Mining
14 District Road. On August 23rd, the National Park
15 Service released its draft environmental and economic
16 analysis, otherwise known as an EEA, for public review
17 and comment. This document was prepared in response to
18 a right-of-way application submitted by the Alaska
19 Industrial Development and Export Authority as part of
20 the proposed Ambler Mining District's industrial access
21 project.

22
23 Approximately 20 miles of the proposed
24 road crosses National Park Service lands in the Western
25 -- or the Kobuk River Unit of Gates of the Arctic. The
26 comment period is now open for 60 days and comments
27 will be accepted via on-line and postal service mail
28 through October 29th.

29
30 And then lastly for fire management,
31 there was a total of three wildlife fires in Gates of
32 the Arctic. All three were in the southern Preserve
33 Unit, or the Kobuk River Unit of the Park, of the
34 Preserve, and all of them were lightening caused fires
35 and they were declared out by August 21st.

36
37 Any questions.

38
39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks Marcy.

40
41 MS. PELKOLA: I have a question.

42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Jenny.

44
45 MS. PELKOLA: Marcy, this is Jenny
46 Pelkola. Did you say the comment period ended on
47 October 29?

48
49 MS. OKADA: Yes. So originally the

50

1 comment period was supposed to be 45 days and it was
2 supposed to end on October 15th but it has been
3 extended an additional 15 days and now it ends on
4 October 29th.

5

6 MS. PELKOLA: Thank you.

7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Other questions for
9 Gates of the Arctic presentation.

10

11 (No comments)

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Seeing none, no,
14 that was a thorough report, Marcy. Thanks for the
15 handout. And so I wanted to see a sheep survey this
16 summer on the south slope of the Gates of the Arctic
17 and the State lands -- or the BLM lands, and no surveys
18 were done, so now we're going into the Board of Game
19 process with proposals for additional harvest, and so I
20 would have liked to have had some kind of data to
21 combat -- I have no data to combat all these proposals
22 for expanding the hunting availability on the south
23 slope. So I wish that would have happened.

24

25 So I appreciate your report and thanks
26 so much. I'll see you at the SRC meeting in November.

27

28 MS. OKADA: And I think, Mr. Chair, we
29 could maybe have a little bit more of a discussion
30 about future sheep surveys at our SRC meeting next
31 month.

32

33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes. So I did at
34 our Anaktuvuk meeting and I got a push back from Park
35 Service about where they were going to do the survey,
36 and a bad decision from the regional office, or whoever
37 made that decision. So I'm voicing my displeasure with
38 that. Not towards you, towards whoever made that
39 decision.

40

41 So we're going to move on now, thanks
42 so much, Marcy.

43

44 And so we're going to move to Bureau of
45 Land Management, draft environmental impact statement
46 for the Ambler Road, that's A, and then I have the
47 status of the Central Yukon presentation and the status
48 of the RMP also should be included in that. So we're
49 on the draft environmental impact statement for the

50

1 Ambler Road, is that -- who's doing that one -- Bruce?

2

3 MR. SEPPI: It should be Tim LaMarr
4 calling in.

5

6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Tim LaMarr, are you
7 on line?

8

9 MR. LAMARR: Yes, Mr. Chair. This is
10 Tim LaMarr. I am able to speak to the Ambler Road we
11 well as the Central Yukon RMP so I can cover those two
12 items.

13

14 Getting started with the Ambler Road,
15 folks probably know the BLM is the lead agency for the
16 environmental impact statement on that project. The
17 draft EIS was officially released on August 30th for a
18 45 day public comment period. The BLM has since
19 extended the comment period through October 29th, and
20 so we've actually been coordinating with the Park
21 Service a little bit trying to keep our timeframes
22 aligned on the comment period for the EEA as well as
23 the EIS so that folks don't get confused about that.

24

25 We're currently in the process of
26 holding 21 public meetings. The meetings are public
27 meetings combined with ANILCA .810 hearings. We've
28 completed, I think, 13 of the meetings, or 14 of the
29 meetings and we have a team of people out on the road
30 now working out of Kotzebue visiting communities in the
31 west end of the project area this week for those
32 meetings and hearings. We also have been soliciting
33 invi -- you know, soliciting interest on the part of
34 tribal governments for government to government
35 meetings in concert with these public meetings and
36 hearings and we've completed eight of those at the
37 request of various communities. So we have about six
38 more meetings to go before we get that all wrapped up.
39 We did also hold a teleconference last Friday geared
40 toward communities -- primarily geared toward
41 communities to the westward with a strong focus on the
42 Western Arctic Caribou Herd, but we did get in folks
43 from the east side of the project area who also
44 participated in that.

45

46 So, yeah, that's kind of where we are.
47 The current plan is the public comment period would
48 wrap up, as I said, October 29th. The project schedule
49 is to target release of the final environmental impact
50

1 statement after we address public comments. The Final
2 EIS is slated to be released at the end of calendar '19
3 and with a ROD date targeting early 2020, probably late
4 January, early February of 2020.
5

6 So that's kind of the summary of where
7 we are with Ambler. Is there any questions, I'll take
8 those.
9

10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Questions on
11 the Ambler Road from the Council. Comments on the
12 Ambler Road from the Council.
13

14 (No comments)
15

16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: My comment would be
17 that the .810 analysis does not address all of the
18 subsistence concerns. The road is slated to be closed
19 to the public but all commercial users including
20 miners, hunting guides, hunting transporters and all
21 other commercial users have access to the road, yet
22 subsistence users are excluded from the road. And
23 under Title .VIII of ANILCA, those lands associated
24 with the BLM to the Dalton Highway Corridor are
25 currently being used by subsistence users and can be
26 seen in the use areas that are in your publications.
27 My position is that if the road is open for commercial
28 uses, including hunting -- commercial hunting uses,
29 there should be subsistence access on that road and the
30 subsistence users should not be excluded from the use
31 of that road.
32

33 So I would like this Council's
34 position, do you feel that subsistence use should be
35 continued in that corridor that the lands associated,
36 Bureau of Land Management lands, the Federal public
37 lands that are associated to that road; any comments
38 from the Council on my question?
39

40 Go ahead, Pollock.
41

42 MR. SIMON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm
43 Pollock Simon, Sr. I live in Allakaket. And I
44 represent Allakaket and Alatna on this Board. And the
45 Allakaket Tribal Council has drafted a letter opposing
46 the Ambler Road. So I personally oppose the Ambler
47 Road also. There's report that we get -- peoples that
48 come to Allakaket to make reports states that the
49 Ambler Road will be for industrial use only, we want to
50

1 keep it that way because we don't want it turned over
2 to the State and then later it'll become public road
3 and we had that experience with the oil pipeline road
4 which was for industrial use only, they told us then
5 later it was turned over to the State and became public
6 road and lots of peoples came up the road not only to
7 look at the mountains but to fish and hunt and trap in
8 the immediate area where we subsist. So that's the
9 concern of the peoples that I represent in Allakaket.

10

11 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks for those
14 comments.

15

16 This Council's on record as being
17 opposed to the Ambler Road but of course I'm not dumb
18 enough to see that this Administration is driving this
19 road forward at light speed, pushing the road, the
20 record of decision is going to be released in early
21 winter of 2020, the Ambler Road is being driven forward
22 dramatically and so if, and most likely when the Ambler
23 Road is going to be built, I think that the analysis
24 should show -- under the .810 analysis, that the
25 subsistence users cannot be excluded from the road,
26 that if you're going to build the road you have to
27 allow the subsistence users because that's Title .VIII
28 of ANILCA, there's a priority use over commercial
29 users. Because when Joe Balash wrote back and
30 commenting specifically to my concerns as to the miners
31 bringing their hunting equipment along and all of the
32 hunting, it was actually stated that it would be mining
33 -- primarily mining interests and other commercial
34 users. Well, that opens the entire door to hunting
35 transporters, that bring all of the hunters and all of
36 their off-road vehicles and all of their boats, there's
37 going to be commercial transporters. There will be.
38 That's what that says. There'll be hunting guides that
39 will have commercial access. So the Bureau of Land
40 Management, in their analysis, needs to understand that
41 if you open that -- if the road is built, you have to
42 maintain subsistence access. Surface means, under
43 Title VIII, .11, Section .811 of ANILCA.

44

45 So there's a flaw in the .810 analysis
46 that I see in the evaluation of the major impacts to
47 subsistence will be the massive amounts of commercial
48 use and other users that are using the road for
49 whatever commercial reason. But we can see a

50

1 significant impact to subsistence resources for fish
2 and wildlife. Fishery resources crossing all of the
3 major drainages of the south slope and all of the
4 wildlife populations associated with the road, up and
5 down the river systems because they will launch boats
6 in every last river, John River, the main stem of the
7 Koyukuk, the Wild River, the Alatna River, the Kobuk
8 River, the Beaver Creek, the Selby, there will be all
9 of these rivers that will have influences from this
10 road because it's open to commercial uses and so
11 there'll be all this transportation. They'll be using
12 boats all the way to the Chuckchi Sea in Kotzebue
13 fueling up because they can launch into the main stem
14 of the Kobuk River. The commercial use is opening
15 language of the proposal by AIDEA allowing the use of
16 -- commercial users opens the floodgate to the hunting
17 pressure and fishing pressure off the Ambler Road.

18
19 So I'm getting this all -- this is all
20 being transcribed, Tim. And so I would like the BLM to
21 evaluate those impacts to subsistence uses in the light
22 that the floodgate is open, and that the subsistence
23 users cannot be excluded from that road.

24
25 That would be my statement.

26
27 Thank you.

28
29 Any other comments from the Council, go
30 ahead Ray.

31
32 MR. COLLINS: Well, I, too will say
33 since the commercial activities like the transporting
34 and the other is going to be allowed, that we're
35 setting a precedent when the State takes over, then
36 they just open it up to all State residents to use that
37 road too. If the subsistence users are given a
38 priority now in the use of that, then they could argue
39 when it goes to the State that they maintain that it's
40 subsistence access only.

41
42 So I think it's important that they
43 have that access and I think they ought to rethink
44 that, the villages up there, of what's going to happen
45 with just the word commercial.

46
47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Uh-huh.

48
49 MR. COLLINS: Yeah.

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, that's -- you
2 know it's been purported in the news and all over the
3 place that the road is closed to the public, it's like,
4 no, it's not. When you allow commercial users to bring
5 commercial entities on that road, those are trans --
6 they call them transporters, whether they're flying
7 airplanes, whether they're on boats or whether they're
8 on a limited road access, they will transport hunters.
9 There will be hunting pressure. Nobody's being fooled
10 here. We know exactly what's going to happen and we
11 know the road will be opened because the Dalton Highway
12 had a checkpoint and it was closed to the public, in
13 fact, ANILCA says it was supposed to be closed to the
14 public and it's still open. Don't tell me that the
15 road is going to be closed, I know the road's going to
16 be opened, that's just the way it is. Nobody's fooling
17 me. Been there, done that. I make a mistake, shame on
18 me, once. I do the same mistake again, shame on you,
19 I'm not fooled, I know this road's going to be opened
20 and I'm going to make sure that the subsistence users
21 have access on that road and the customary and
22 traditional users include Allakaket, Alatna, and the
23 communities that have customary and traditional uses of
24 all the resources on those Federal public lands.

25
26 That has to be in the analysis, in your
27 final EIS.

28
29 Your response, Tim.

30
31 MR. LAMARR: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair.
32 I appreciate yours and everyone's comments. And I
33 think that we need to clarify, you know, there was no
34 intent for commercial use to include commercial hunting
35 guide access, so that's a clarification I would say we
36 need to make in the environmental impact statement. I
37 think -- and, you know, I think -- I appreciate your
38 point about, you know, the reason we have .810 hearings
39 is to get input on how to, you know, minimize impacts
40 to subsistence users and subsistence resources, and so
41 your point's well taken, you know, for consideration
42 that -- that the road needs to be available for
43 subsistence users, and I'll take that forward as part
44 of your input.

45
46 I presume that you guys will be sending
47 us a letter as well; is that fair to assume?

48
49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The Chair will

50

1 entertain a motion for a letter to be sent to the
2 Bureau of Land Management on this issue regarding
3 subsistence use and accesses that are foreseen.
4

5 MR. HONEA: I move.
6

7 MS. PELKOLA: So move.
8

9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Moved by Don.....
10

11 MS. PELKOLA: Second.
12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:seconded by
14 Jenny. That letter will be -- we'll use the
15 transcripts of this discussion to submit comment to the
16 Bureau of Land Management and the National Park
17 Service's EEA on the Park Preserve area.
18

19 Tim.
20

21 MR. GERVAIS: But I think the letter
22 should also reiterate what Tim's saying that there will
23 not be any commercial hunting or transporting on the
24 road, that the commercial uses of the road will be
25 specified for mining only as, I think, was the original
26 purpose of the road.
27

28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The intent -- what's
29 purported is that it'll be a mining commercial use road
30 and other -- and there's the -- here's the flaw, is,
31 the other commercial uses, which is this giant window
32 to throw -- of truckloads of hunters through. Unless
33 you specifically say in the EIS that there will be no
34 transportation of hunting, game parts, or gear on that
35 road, then we will not agree -- that you have it closed
36 to those entities and we have a truck -- a loophole in
37 this whole process that you can throw truckloads of
38 hunters through. Literally.
39

40 So that letter should be specific to
41 state that there should be no transportation of
42 hunters, game parts or gear by non-subsistence users.
43

44 MR. GERVAIS: Or guiding.
45

46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That'd be.....
47

48 MR. LAMARR: Yeah, and I just raised
49 the point to -- you know, to try and make sure I
50

1 understood. That that's a point, however, we need to
2 clarify that, whatever -- whatever it is, between the
3 draft and the final.

4
5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And so we will.....

6
7 MR. LAMARR: The point about
8 commercial, yes.

9
10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We will send this
11 letter. We have a motion to transmit this -- to draft
12 this letter and transmit this letter to the Bureau of
13 Land Management, does this letter still fall within the
14 October 29 timeframe?

15
16 MR. LAMARR: Yes, it would.

17
18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we'll make sure
19 that we get that in there before the deadline.
20 Electronically received?

21
22 MR. LAMARR: Yeah, there are multiple
23 ways to provide comments. The BLM e-planning website
24 for the Ambler Road EIS provides you a link to email
25 comments and, you know, and attach attachments.
26 There's a way to comment live, you know, on the e-
27 planning site, there's a link you can hit to comment,
28 and then just type your comments right in on the
29 website and then they'll go into our inbox that way.
30 Or, of course, you can, you know, do it the old fashion
31 way and mail us a letter. So we're trying to be as
32 broad as possible with the modes in which we accept
33 comments.

34
35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Appreciate
36 that. Just expressing our opinions and positions.

37
38 So there's a motion on the floor to
39 draft that letter and transmit it by October 29 to the
40 Bureau of Land Management regarding subsistence uses
41 and non-subsistence uses on the Ambler access Road.
42 Any further questions or comments.

43
44 MR. SIMON: Question.

45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Question's called.
47 Those in favor of transmitting that letter to the
48 Bureau of Land Management within the timeframe
49 specified signify by saying aye.

50

1 IN UNISON: Aye.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign.

4

5 (No opposing votes)

6

7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks so much Tim.

8 And so you're going to give the Central Yukon update

9 and we also would like to know what is the status of

10 the Central Yukon RMP; go ahead.

11

12 MR. LAMARR: Yes, sir. Okay. Yeah,
13 that's a fairly short topic. I mean where we are with
14 that project right now, is we're still working on
15 finalizing the alternative. We're making some
16 adjustments to some alternatives right now. And so
17 once we have those adjustments finalized we'll probably
18 be getting the draft environmental impact statement out
19 -- I -- we don't have a sets time on that right now but
20 it'll likely be later this winter and that's about as
21 definitive as I can be on that because we're still
22 going through some iterations here to get some things
23 finalized for that.

24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Appreciate
26 that.

27

28 MR. LAMARR: But when the draft EIS
29 comes out there'll be a 90 day public comment period on
30 that one as per our planning regulations, there's a 90
31 day public comment period required on land use plans so
32 there'll be a 90 day public comment period along with,
33 you know, a suite of public meetings and opportunities
34 for comments at that time.

35

36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Appreciate
37 the 90 day comment period. And, Ray, you got a
38 comment.

39

40 MR. COLLINS: Yeah. Have they
41 identified any areas within there for the -- I can't
42 remember the language now about special resource areas
43 or any that need additional protection.

44

45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: ACEC.

46

47 MR. COLLINS: Yeah.

48

49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: ACEC.

50

1 MR. COLLINS: ACEC.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: ACECs.

4

5 MR. COLLINS: Any identified in the
6 area?

7

8 MR. LAMARR: What you'll see when the
9 EIS comes out is there'll be a range of alternatives
10 that do include ACECs in the range of alternatives and
11 they'll be -- you know, they'll be, you know, variable
12 management by alternatives is what you'll see.

13

14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. And so the
15 Central Management Plan -- correction, Resource
16 Management Plan will be most likely released in late
17 winter of 2020?

18

19 MR. LAMARR: Not necessarily late
20 winter, you know, our schedule is a little bit delayed
21 with these final iterations we're making on the
22 alternatives so it'll probably be, you know, I don't
23 know I wouldn't be surprised if we get it out by the
24 end of the calendar year but I can't give you a date
25 for sure.

26

27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

28

29 MR. LAMARR: I apologize for that.

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, I just wanted
32 kind of a rough idea. That's good. And so did you
33 have other Central Yukon update for the Council.

34

35 MR. LAMARR: I don't unless there are
36 any questions about the report that we just sent in
37 ahead of time.

38

39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Were you on this
40 call for most of this call, Tim?

41

42 MR. LAMARR: I've been on and off this
43 afternoon. I was on a little before lunch and came on
44 back a little bit after lunch.

45

46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. I wanted the
47 BLM to know, Bureau of Land Management to know that
48 there was an excessively deep snow pack on the south
49 slope of the Brooks Range, which you are most likely

50

1 aware of. It was a huge impact to moose and dall sheep
2 populations and we missed the survey for dall sheep and
3 so the -- the populations of dall sheep and moose in
4 the northern part of the Central Yukon area were highly
5 impacted and I would encourage participation for sheep
6 surveys to be pushed to the forefront for this next
7 year. It's imperative. We had a catastrophic event
8 and we're starting into another deep snow event so I
9 want your upper management, yourself, to know that
10 we're entering almost a crises situation for dall sheep
11 in the Central Brooks Range. So I just wanted you to
12 be aware of that.

13
14 MR. LAMARR: I appreciate that. And
15 I'll talk to our ecologist about that, she was just out
16 doing some dall sheep work last week, I don't believe
17 it was population survey work though, but I'll touch
18 base with her. If I have any more specific information
19 on what she was doing last week that might be pertinent
20 I'll let you know, but, yeah, I noted that in your mind
21 it's important that we be involved with population
22 surveys this next year and take that forward.

23
24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks a lot.
25 Other questions from the Council or comments.

26
27 Ray.

28
29 MR. COLLINS: Well, I missed it when we
30 were talking about the Kuskokwim, but I tried to get a
31 designation for that critical spawning area for
32 sheefish.

33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: This is the Central
35 Yukon, we're going to.....

36
37 MR. COLLINS: I know. I know. I just
38 missed that other one, though, I don't know if the guy
39 that presented is still on. But those EIS are not easy
40 to get, what do you call them, ACEC.

41
42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: ACECs but we're
43 going to do Bonnie Million here in a little bit for
44 this area. This is the northern part of the BLM lands
45 and then we're going to do the southern parts here.

46
47 MR. COLLINS: Oh, okay.

48
49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So, yeah, we're

50

1 talking about two different management areas.

2

3

MR. COLLINS: Right.

4

5

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any other questions,
6 comments for the Central Yukon management area?

7

8

(No comments)

9

10

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So I don't see any
11 questions or comments, Tim. So thanks so much, thanks
12 for taking my ire to higher levels. I appreciate your
13 participation on the phone.

14

15

MR. LAMARR: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
16 Thanks for having me.

17

18

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So do we have Bonnie
19 Million on the phone still?

20

21

MS. MILLION: Yes, sir, I'm here.

22

23

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So we got
24 Bruce here in the room, he's passing out a sheet of
25 paper for us and so you have the floor, go ahead.

26

27

MS. MILLION: Thank you so much, Mr.
28 Chair. For the record my name is Bonnie Million. I am
29 the field manager for the Bureau of Land Management,
30 Anchorage Field Office.

31

32

The two page piece of paper that Bruce
33 is handing out, it's just a quick update for the
34 Council on some of the activities that Anchorage Field
35 Office has been completing within your area. I think
36 the main thing I wanted to focus on, it sounds like
37 it's of great interest to the Council there, is a brief
38 update on the Bering Sea Western Resource Management
39 Plant.

40

41

The most recent accomplishment for that
42 project, we did complete a 90 day public comment period
43 for the draft environmental impact statement from March
44 15th through June 15th of 2019. During which time we
45 held 17 public meetings and ANILCA .810 hearings in
46 various communities throughout the planning area. The
47 next step for that project is eventually we will
48 release a final environmental impact statement and the
49 proposed resource management plan. Once that final EIS

50

1 is published that will start a 30 day public protest
2 period and it will start a 60 day Governor's
3 consistency review. Much like the Central Yukon
4 update, our schedule right now is in a little bit of a
5 grey area, there's lots of moving parts but I will
6 definitely give the Council a head's up as soon as I
7 can give a better ball park timeframe on when we might
8 expect that final EIS and proposed RMP to hit the
9 street.

10
11 The last bullet point in that topic
12 area is just a reiteration of the BLM project website
13 where folks can find more information on the project
14 status so far, the different reports that have been
15 created and that draft environmental impact statement
16 can be found on that website. And that website is also
17 where we will post the final EIS once it is made public
18 and we, of course, will be sending out numerous
19 letters, there will be press releases, there will be
20 radio announcements, the whole nine yards when that
21 final EIS goes live.

22
23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Any questions
24 on that.

25
26 MS. MILLION: I wanted to keep it brief
27 because I know you guys have got a lot of stuff coming
28 up. So are there any questions.

29
30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I was going to ask
31 the Council for questions.

32
33 Ray, go ahead.

34
35 MR. COLLINS: Yeah, the question I rose
36 for the northern when they -- was anything done about
37 that critical spawning area for sheefish on the Yukon.
38 I know at some point early on in the study there I
39 asked for a special designation for that area and what
40 is it, an EIS, no ACEC, did it make it in the plan at
41 all?

42
43 MS. MILLION: So the only area that I'm
44 familiar with that dealt specifically with sheefish
45 spawning was up in the Kuskokwim River drainage up, I
46 believe, outside of McGrath.

47
48 MR. COLLINS: Yeah.

49
50

1 MS. MILLION: I don't remember anything
2 specifically on the Yukon.

3
4 MR. COLLINS: No, it's the one near
5 McGrath that I'm concerned about, so it was mentioned
6 in the report?

7
8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Bruce.

9
10 MS. MILLION: Yeah, so in -- yes, under
11 the draft environmental impact statement under
12 Alternative B there is a sheefish area of critical
13 environmental concern.

14
15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So Bruce is at the
16 table, Big River sheefish spawning area has a ACEC?

17
18 MR. SEPPI: That's correct.

19
20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And it encompasses
21 the entire spawning areas?

22
23 MR. SEPPI: No. Because the spawning
24 area doesn't all go on to Federal BLM land, but it's an
25 area that encompasses part of it.

26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Okay.

28
29 MR. SEPPI: What's under our
30 jurisdiction.

31
32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we've got Suzanne
33 Little wants to speak on that issue. Suzanne, on that
34 particular issue?

35
36 MS. MILLION: So really, really.....

37
38 REPORTER: Well, wait a second, Bonnie
39 -- Bonnie, hold on.....

40
41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Standby Bonnie.

42
43 REPORTER: Bonnie, wait a second.

44
45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Standby Bonnie.

46
47 MS. LITTLE: I just wanted to clarify
48 for the Commission that, yes, in one of the
49 alternatives there is a sheefish spawning ACEC in the
50

1 Bering Sea Western Interior Draft Plan but it is not in
2 the preferred alternative. It is not moving forward as
3 BLM's final plan. I just wanted to clarify that.
4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, that's a
6 critical clarification. So can you hear me Bonnie?
7

8 MS. MILLION: Yep.
9

10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Suzanne Little's
11 actually informed us that the preferred alternative
12 does not give that protection to the Big River sheefish
13 spawning area, which is a critical factor for the whole
14 fishery of the -- major stocks of the Yukon River
15 sheefish spawn there -- correction, in the Kuskokwim.
16

17 MS. MILLION: The Kuskokwim.
18

19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And that -- the
20 Kuskokwim stocks, it's an absolutely critical place.
21 We just had a presentation from the Department of Fish
22 and Game on all the telemetry work that showed those
23 fish spawn in that place, and so that ACEC should be
24 moved into the final EIS and it should be included in
25 the preferred alternative.
26

27 REPORTER: Go ahead, Bonnie.
28

29 MS. MILLION: So, yeah, actually I'm
30 glad Suzanne spoke up and that was actually what I was
31 trying to say at the same time. ACECs are only listed
32 in the draft environmental impact statement under
33 Alternative B, Bravo. Alternative C, Charlie was the
34 alternative that was identified as the preferred
35 alternative in the draft EIS.
36

37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: At this point can
38 Bravo, B, be moved to the preferred Alternative Charlie
39 as a critical area of concern, that should not have
40 been eliminated in the preferred alternative -- can
41 that be done?
42

43 MS. MILLION: So the stage that we are
44 in now, that the BLM is in now, is crafting the final
45 EIS and the proposed resource management plan and what
46 that process is looking at all of the different
47 management actions that are analyzed in the entire
48 document and sort of picking and choosing which ones
49 would go forward into that proposed RMP.
50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So it can be
2 moved over?

3
4 MS. MILLION: It is an option.
5

6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It should be. This
7 Council says it should be.
8

9 Tim.
10

11 MS. MILLION: Copy that.
12

13 MR. GERVAIS: Bonnie, this is Tim
14 Gervais. Can you state why that ACEC on the Big River
15 wasn't included in the preferred alternative?
16

17 MS. MILLION: So the draft
18 environmental impact statement, especially for resource
19 management plans, one of the tasks that the BLM uses is
20 to try and really illustrate a broad range of
21 alternatives, and so in the Bering Sea Western Interior
22 Resource Management Plan, draft environmental impact
23 statement, what we had was ACECs under one alternative,
24 that was Alternative B; Alternative D, which was more
25 of the resource use alternative, those areas had no
26 protections whatsoever. And then Alternative C,
27 Charlie, which was identified as the agency's
28 preferred, there was a middle of the road type of
29 approach that was taken. There wasn't an official ACEC
30 designation or title that was given to the areas
31 however there were multiple management actions that
32 were put in place that provided similar protection.
33 Management actions such as right-of-way avoidance
34 areas, salable minerals on a case by case, no surface
35 occupancy for oil and gas development, things of that
36 nature.
37

38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Other comments.
39

40 MR. HONEA: I do.
41

42 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, I have a followup.
43

44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Don's got a question
45 here, go ahead Don.
46

47 MR. HONEA: Yeah, Bonnie, this is Don
48 Honea, Council member. Okay, I just had a question on
49 the ACEC, the areas of critical concern that we, as the
50

1 Ruby tribe, submitted our designated lands, now what is
2 the next step here. I realize that some of the ones
3 that were submitted were not accepted or something, by
4 BLM, and I just think it -- I mentioned this at the
5 Galena meeting, that it was kind of a moot point to
6 even allow us to select lands and then not be eligible,
7 or those particular lands for berry picking or
8 whatever, that we had chosen, that they didn't -- it
9 didn't fall under their guidelines or something. So my
10 question is as we, as a tribe, can we just look that up
11 and say that whether this has been accepted. I see it
12 says next step is the final EIS, I mean, where are we
13 in this process?

14

15 Thank you.

16

17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Bonnie.

18

19 MS. MILLION: Sure. So Ruby, I
20 believe, falls into the Central Yukon Resource
21 Management Plan process, but I can answer generally
22 speaking for the process in reviewing areas of critical
23 environmental concern.

24

25 For the Bering Sea Western Interior
26 there was a call that went out for ACEC nominations
27 back in 2013, or 2014, we received multiple nominations
28 over the course of several years since the call
29 initially went out. The review process associated with
30 areas of critical environmental concern, it's sort of a
31 high bar to meet. The BLM has regulations that we have
32 to -- the nomination has to meet certain levels of
33 relevance and importance criteria, and so that's one of
34 the sort of review processes it goes through.

35

36 For the Bering Sea Western Interior
37 project we do have an ACEC report that is available on
38 that project website that sort of goes through each of
39 the nominations we received, why it was either found to
40 meet the relevance and importance criteria or why, in,
41 some cases, areas that were nominated did not meet
42 those criteria.

43

44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Does that
45 answer your question, Don.

46

47 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Bonnie. I guess
48 what I'm looking for is so are we -- did it pass, I
49 mean did ours pass or can we look on the website or is

50

1 it just a waiting game here now?
2

3 MS. MILLION: So if Ruby nominated an
4 area that is in the Bering Sea Western Interior
5 planning area, that ACEC report is available on our
6 project website. I can't speak for the Central Yukon
7 Resource Management Plan process, Tim, are you still
8 on?
9

10 (No comments)
11

12 MS. MILLION: No, he might not be. But
13 I can followup for the Council and find out about any
14 ACEC nominations for the Central Yukon Resource
15 Management plan.
16

17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.
18

19 MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair.
20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tim.
22

23 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Bonnie. I don't
24 want to be mixing up our individual things with the
25 Western Interior's areas of critical concern. Maybe
26 this is a wider area.
27

28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'm pointing out the
29 Central Yukon management area, the blue, did any of
30 your ACECs fall inside that blue boundary?
31

32 MR. HONEA: No, it in our region,
33 across the river, I mean.....
34

35 REPORTER: Don. Don.
36

37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Don. Look at the
38 paper, is your ACEC, is it dead center inside the
39 Central Yukon, that doesn't apply to this Bering Sea
40 plan, this is a completely different plan. That's the
41 Central Yukon plan, that blue area there, we're talking
42 about the Bering Sea plan with Bonnie. It's two
43 different places.
44

45 MR. HONEA: Okay.
46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's what I'm
48 trying to show.
49
50

1 MR. HONEA: Okay.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So okay we've
4 clarified that Bonnie. And Tim had a comment.....

5

6 MS. MILLION: Okay.

7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:or question.
9 Go ahead, Tim.

10

11 MR. GERVAIS: So, Bonnie, Tim Gervais.
12 What's the link to read the BLM justification for not
13 including the Big River ACEC in the preferred
14 alternative?

15

16 MS. MILLION: So it would be in the
17 actual draft environmental impact statement and there's
18 not necessarily -- wouldn't necessarily call it a
19 detailed justification that is in there, it's simply
20 that it's part of the range of alternatives that was
21 analyzed in the draft EIS, along the lines of what I
22 described. In one alternative we have ACECs, in one
23 alternative we have no ACECs and no management
24 protection, and then in Alternative C, which is the
25 middle of the road alternative we have -- not an ACEC
26 name, but we do have management actions in place that
27 provides similar protection.

28

29 MR. GERVAIS: Okay. So is there any
30 actions that this Council could do that would
31 facilitate moving that ACEC into a preferred
32 alternative status?

33

34 MS. MILLION: So technically the public
35 comment period for the draft environmental impact
36 statement has closed, that closed back on June 15th,
37 however we do -- have been receiving letters from
38 tribes and from ANCSA corporations that we have been
39 responding to and continuing government to government
40 consultation or ANCSA corporation consultation.

41

42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Ray wants to
43 comment. Go ahead, Ray.

44

45 MR. COLLINS: Well, I don't see how it
46 could be more critical when it affects the whole
47 Kuskokwim River and 80 percent of the -- approximately
48 80 percent of all the sheefish spawn in that area. So
49 why in the world it wouldn't be in the alternative with

50

1 special protection that's offered by that, so I don't
2 know what could get more critical than that if you have
3 80 percent -- and it's not a recent phenomena because
4 of the name of the river itself, as I mentioned, you
5 know, (In Native) Sheefish Harvest River, the
6 Athabascans were recognizing that hundreds if not
7 thousands of years ago as a critical area for sheefish.
8

9 So I'd like to have that reconsidered
10 and given more special protection, not just general
11 protection in the final plan.
12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So the Chair will
14 entertain a motion for a letter to be drafted to the
15 Bureau of Land Management, Anchorage Field Office that
16 states that the Big River ACEC designated in
17 Alternative B be moved into the preferred Alternative C
18 as an area of critical concern, not just piecemealed
19 various managements that would add to protection but as
20 an area of critical concern, it would be looked at as a
21 special area that needs special considerations during
22 any kind of activity on that, and so those other
23 protections that would be, ordinarily used piecemeal
24 would be looked at as an area of actual critical
25 concern because it has 80 percent of the stocks.
26

27 And so the Chair will entertain a
28 motion to that effect.
29

30 MR. COLLINS: So moved.
31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Moved by Ray.
33

34 MR. GERVAIS: Second.
35

36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Seconded by Tim.
37 Those in favor of writing that letter, since you've
38 accepted letters from the other entities post-closing
39 of the date on June 15, I feel this letter should be
40 accepted, Bonnie, those in favor of sending that letter
41 signify by saying aye.
42

43 IN UNISON: Aye.
44

45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we'll write you a
46 letter on that issue so that it can be part of your
47 record for the final record of decision.
48

49 MS. MILLION: Okay.
50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Is that acceptable,
2 Bonnie?

3
4 MS. MILLION: Absolutely. I definitely
5 look forward to reading it.

6
7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

8
9 (Laughter)

10
11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Ray, a comment.

12
13 MR. COLLINS: Well, could we contact
14 the Nikolai and McGrath tribe and see if they would
15 write something too, if they're dealing with tribes and
16 that, I think they would support that, too. I know
17 Nikolai's certainly concerned.

18
19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes, that letter
20 could be CC'd to the other tribes and to the Kuskokwim
21 River InterTribal Fish Commission should also get a --
22 receive that letter to possibly be a signatory or a
23 proponent of that area of critical concern also for the
24 Big River.

25
26 MR. COLLINS: Uh-huh.

27
28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So, yeah, CC those
29 also as noted.

30
31 Any other questions on that RMP,
32 Resource Management Plan for the Bering Sea Western
33 Interior.

34
35 (No comments)

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, continue on
38 Bonnie.

39
40 MS. MILLION: That's really the main
41 topic that I wanted to talk to the Council about. The
42 handout that Bruce passed out just provides some of the
43 other resource projects that we've got going on. My
44 contact information is on the first page there, if
45 there is -- if anybody has any questions or if there
46 are any other projects that the Council might be
47 interested in learning more about, I can definitely
48 come prepared to the winter meeting and give you more
49 in-depth information. But I know you guys are crunched

50

1 for time this afternoon so I just wanted to leave it
2 there.

3
4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Appreciate
5 your participation on this, the RMP process, as you can
6 tell the Council wants to be involved with areas that
7 would affect subsistence use as is their statutory
8 mandate under Title VIII, .805 ANILCA, so thanks so
9 much for being on the call there.

10
11 MS. MILLION: Absolutely.

12
13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Did you have
14 anything to say to us Bruce.

15
16 MR. SEPPI: No.

17
18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: No. So any
19 questions on any of these projects from the Council
20 that are on the BLM handout.

21
22 (No comments)

23
24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Seeing none, thanks
25 so much to the BLM for participating in the Regional
26 Council meeting. So now we're going to move over to
27 Suzanne Little, she's going to give us a PEW Charitable
28 Trust presentation.

29
30 Suzanne.

31
32 (Pause - PowerPoint setup)

33
34 MS. LITTLE: Okay, thank you, Mr.
35 Chair, and honorable Council people. Delighted to be
36 here today and I'm here because I am an authorized
37 advisor for a very newly formed tribal commission that
38 the tribes have called themselves, the Bering Sea
39 Western Interior Tribal Commission. And I'm going to
40 talk just a little bit about the Central Yukon plan
41 because your subsistence region includes that area as
42 well as the Bering Sea, so I can provide information on
43 it.

44
45 But, Ray, I just wanted to note that
46 the BLM's ACEC report, it's their report where they
47 evaluate nominations for areas of critical
48 environmental concern, I wanted to quote out of BLM's
49 own report about the Big River sheefish spawning area.

50

1 It says: "This area of the Big River is rare and
2 irreplaceable for the Kuskokwim River sheefish
3 spawning. An ACEC designation would provide protection
4 for this important natural resource." That's quoted
5 out of BLM's ACEC report about the Big River, yet, in
6 their preferred alternative BLM included no ACECs.
7 None. Okay.

8
9 Okay, with that, I'll just go on to
10 provide more information.

11
12 So this is the Bering Sea Western
13 Interior planning area, the yellow land on this plan is
14 the land that's being planned. Everything above high
15 water so it doesn't include rivers, everything above
16 high water is uses of this land for the next 20 to 30
17 years is going to be in this plan. It's going to be
18 decided.

19
20 So this is the Central Yukon and you
21 can't really tell where this is in the state but that's
22 the Beaufort Sea on the very top and the yellow land in
23 there is the land that's being planned. The Central
24 Yukon is 13 million acres, Bering Sea plan is 13
25 million acres, a heck of a lot of land here, the future
26 of this land use is being planned here.

27
28 So this just says what I just said.

29
30 Up lands from the rivers are being
31 planned. So surface uses, subsurface uses are all
32 going to be decided in this planning process.

33
34 So the key communities that I have
35 listed here in red have over a million acres of BLM
36 land around them, so the red communities here are going
37 to be really affected by whatever decisions are made in
38 this plan. And I did not do the same with this but the
39 Central Yukon communities, there's 24 communities in
40 the Central Yukon, so 60 -- over 60 in the Bering Sea
41 Western Interior plan.

42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You don't show
44 Wiseman.

45
46 MS. LITTLE: Yes. Oh, I don't. Okay,
47 I'm going to fix that.

48
49 (Laughter)

50

1 MS. LITTLE: Okay. So scoping is
2 completed for both the Central Yukon and the Bering
3 Sea. The draft resource management plan for the Bering
4 Sea, as Bonnie just mentioned, is completed, and the
5 draft plan for the Central Yukon is expected soon,
6 that's when we're going to know, Don, whether or not
7 your nomination made it into the plan or not. Then the
8 final resource management plan for the Bering Sea is
9 expected sometime this fall, I guess, fall-ish, winter-
10 ish, like Bonnie said. And then both plans, we're
11 understanding, are supposed to have a record of
12 decision sometime in the spring of 2020.

13
14 So in the Bering Sea plan tribes made
15 nominations for areas of critical environmental
16 concern. All these colored places on this map are the
17 nominations that were made by communities and tribes,
18 including the sheefish spawning area, which you can see
19 there, and there were 17 ACECs that made it into the
20 draft plan, Alternative B, that encompassed 4.2 million
21 acres. So tribes nominated about 9 million acres and
22 about 4.2 million acres of ACEC nominations made it
23 into Alternative B in the plan.

24
25 And no acres were in the preferred
26 alternative for ACEC protection.

27
28 So in the draft plan, BLM opened 99
29 percent of the BLM land to mining. That includes all
30 of the areas that were nominated by tribes and
31 communities for protection as ACECs. And that pretty
32 much is the reason that this tribal commission formed.
33 So the cooperating agency tribes, non-cooperating
34 agency tribes, and recently Bering Sea -- AVCP tribes
35 have joined this commission, and the commission's
36 purpose is to have a unified voice for impacted tribes
37 in the planning process to advocate for sustainability
38 of our traditional way of life, to ensure the voices of
39 indigenous people living with the land are reflected in
40 the final Bering Sea Western Interior plan and then the
41 tribal commission was just to engage with the BLM
42 throughout the implementation of the plan, over the
43 life of the plan.

44
45 So because the plan opens 99 percent of
46 the planning area to mining, and provides conservation
47 protection to only one percent of the 13.4 million
48 acres, the tribes think -- believe that the BLM has
49 ignored the tribal people's nominations for protections

50

1 of critical watersheds and the tribal commission formed
2 because of concerns for sustainability of people's
3 traditional way of life. One commission member said
4 tribes don't own the land but we belong to the land,
5 what happens to the land happens to us.
6

7 So this is directly from a letter
8 written from the tribal commission to both the State
9 Director of BLM, and to Joe Balash, who is no longer in
10 his position as the Assistant Secretary of Land and
11 Minerals.
12

13 From our perspective the planning
14 process is fundamentally flawed. Tribal nominations
15 for conservation of critical watersheds were affirmed
16 by BLM as being relevant and important but were
17 rejected for protection in the draft plan, and the pre-
18 public proposed plan. We believe impacts from mining
19 to our customary and traditional use areas were not
20 considered nor evaluated seriously and will seriously
21 impact our traditional way of life.
22

23 That's a quote from a letter from the
24 tribal commission.
25

26 So the tribal commission has asked BLM
27 that the tribes concerns be reflected in the final plan
28 and that protection for high value watersheds -- BLM
29 creates this term called high value watersheds and
30 opens all of it to mining, so that didn't make sense to
31 the tribal commission. And so the tribal commission
32 asked that I come here and respectfully request support
33 for the tribal commission's efforts to have -- to gain
34 protection for the nominated areas that the tribes put
35 forward in the planning process. The tribal commission
36 has said that they would be happy with Alternative B,
37 which, as I said, provided 4.2 million acres of ACEC
38 protection, which is far fewer acres than how many the
39 tribes nominated but, you know, I think it's fair to
40 say the tribal commission understands that BLM is a
41 multiple use agency and it's required to provide for
42 other uses than conservation, but I think it's fair to
43 say the tribal commission doesn't believe that
44 conservation has been given a fair shake in the draft
45 plan that's been put forward.
46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's the end of
48 your presentation?
49
50

1 MS. LITTLE: Yes.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So Council
4 comments to Suzanne on the.....

5

6 MR. COLLINS: I have a comment.

7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead there, Ray.

9

10 MR. COLLINS: Yeah, I was at that
11 initial meeting in Anchorage when I was asked to
12 represent the village of Nikolai, and I tried to get
13 them to move that pipeline away from the hills down
14 into the black spruce and they dismissed it because
15 they said that's wetlands, and why that was considered
16 wetlands, it's drying out, there's very little game in
17 there, mostly marten and small game. But the moose use
18 it for protection in the winter but they spend all of
19 their time along the foothills up there. So that area
20 between SouthFork and Big River, with all of those
21 drainages -- sheep behind -- and moose and caribou
22 along the frontal part of the range is -- has been
23 critical habitat and they wanted to go right through
24 that because it was probably easier construction than
25 moving down into the black spruce. And I'm wondering
26 if there's any change in that. Is it true that that's
27 wetland and so they're not allowed to move it down --
28 it wouldn't be much to move, plus it would put it
29 closer to Nikolai and McGrath and some others if they
30 ever used it to tap into that for power.

31

32 MS. LITTLE: Mr. Chair.

33

34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Suzanne.

35

36 MS. LITTLE: I am not an expert on that
37 area and those issues aren't covered in the resource
38 management plan because it's part of the Donlin
39 Pipeline EIS, which I'm -- that's the thing I'm not an
40 expert on.

41

42 MR. COLLINS: Yeah. Yeah.

43

44 MS. LITTLE: It's very unfortunate that
45 the pipeline EIS is coming before the planning process
46 is completed because, you know, common sense would tell
47 you that you'd make a plan for the land first and then
48 consider industrial uses. But I can't answer your
49 question I'm sorry to say.

50

1 MR. COLLINS: Uh-huh.

2

3

4

5

6 MS. PELKOLA: I have a question. Do
7 you think -- the way I feel, I guess, when BLM came to
8 our community and started interviewing us and, you
9 know, where do you use and all this good stuff, it
10 sounded really exciting so we all -- many of us chose
11 our area, areas, and I think when BLM went back to
12 compile all their data, they didn't really contact the
13 tribes as much as they should have, I think, that's the
14 way I feel, and then they just went ahead with whatever
15 they're going to do and they said that, well, we
16 contacted the tribes and by then a lot of people got
17 eliminated. That's what I think happened, I don't
18 know.

19

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CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Suzanne.

MS. LITTLE: Mr. Chair. The tribes
have felt -- for a couple of years really, tribes
didn't receive much communication from BLM, and that
was right after the areas of critical environmental
concern nomination process happened. And then nobody
heard from BLM, I think both -- or not much anyway, you
know, both in the Bering Sea plan and the Central Yukon
plan for quite awhile until the ACEC reports came out,
which showed that a lot of the areas were rejected, and
it was difficult to understand why, and so, you know, I
think -- the tribal commission really feels that what
you're saying is true, that BLM has not listened to
tribes, has ignored tribal concerns in this process.
And the other thing is, you know, the tribal people, in
both of these planning areas are going to get only
people living every day with the results of the
planning process; other people are going to come and
go, but the tribal people are going to live every day
with the results.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Thanks for your presentation, Susan.

I think it's inappropriate that the BLM
could bring up this ACEC designation and then after
looking at all the nominations not select any of the
areas, especially over such a huge area as you describe

1 in your presentation, Bering Sea Western Interior, so
2 you're asking on behalf of the tribes that we support
3 these concerns brought up in the presentation, what
4 means of support is the intertribal commission looking
5 for from us, how can we assist?
6

7 MS. LITTLE: Yeah, it would be great to
8 have a letter of support to.....
9

10 MR. GERVAIS: To BLM or.....
11

12 MS. LITTLE: Even to the tribal
13 commission, I could get you an address, or we're just
14 -- we're trying to show that there are subsistence
15 consequences. The tribal commission realizes that.
16 And that's the reason that I'm here making this
17 presentation on behalf of the tribal commission, that
18 people really believe that the way of life is at stake
19 here, subsistence way of life, without any protections
20 for critical watersheds that would be afforded by an
21 area of critical environmental concern and prohibition
22 of mining, the tribal commission feels that there would
23 be serious subsistence consequences.
24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Another comment Tim.
26

27 MR. GERVAIS: Oh, sorry I left my mic
28 on. No, but would you like to comment, Jack, or will
29 you entertain a motion that the Western Interior draft
30 a letter, and I would ask for the other member's
31 opinion, if there should be a second different letter
32 from the one talking about the Big River, and solely
33 addressing this -- all the withdrawal -- or all the
34 non-nomination of these areas put forth by the Bering
35 Sea Western Interior Tribal Commission.
36

37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You had a comment
38 there, Don.
39

40 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
41 Suzanne are you the official spokesperson for this
42 group?
43

44 MS. LITTLE: I'm an authorized advisor.
45 There are four authorized advisors. But I have been
46 authorized to come here and make this presentation.
47

48 MR. HONEA: Okay. With that being
49 said, I don't have a problem with supporting the idea.
50

1 I think they're not an official group but somebody was
2 dissatisfied with the way that BLM had not given us
3 very much time to do this, a letter was drafted,
4 correct me if I'm wrong here, and -- in the Bering Sea
5 or whatever region we're talking about, it picked up
6 steam there and villages signed on; is that correct? I
7 mean and so actually it's in opposition to the way BLM
8 was pushing that on people, or whatever, so I think
9 what you're doing is asking for support for the idea of
10 what -- and, you know, I think, you know, I'm not
11 bringing the tribe in here again but I believe we have
12 seen the letter and we agree essentially with the whole
13 proposed idea of it.

14
15 So, Mr. Chair, I am in favor of, you
16 know, if it came down to drafting a letter in support.

17
18 Thank you.

19
20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So, Tim, did you
21 want to make a motion and give some language of support
22 for the Bering Sea InterTribal Commission in regards to
23 their letter of wondering why the 4-something million
24 acres were excluded in the preferred alternative, and
25 the preferred Alternative C, that were excluded from
26 the B alternative that had those 4-something million
27 acres?

28
29 MR. GERVAIS: Certainly. So is Bonnie
30 the person that the letter should -- she's -- it's all
31 in her area of concern?

32
33 MS. LITTLE: As far as I know right now
34 it's out of her hands and in Washington, D.C., and the
35 State -- Chad Padgett, who's the new State BLM
36 Director, so it might be most appropriate to address it
37 to everybody.

38
39 MR. GERVAIS: Are we allowed to address
40 it to Murkowski and Sullivan?

41
42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: No. That's the
43 Hatch Act, not going.....

44
45 MS. DEATHERAGE: No, you can't.

46
47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:there.

48
49 MR. GERVAIS: Okay.

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we can -- Karen.

2

3 MS. DEATHERAGE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

4 Member Gervais, through the Chair. We can send a
5 letter to Mr. Padgett, Director Padgett on behalf of
6 the Council. A letter was written before regarding
7 other issues with the planning efforts, so we can
8 certainly write to the State Director.

9

10 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, I would make a
11 motion to draft an additional letter expressing our
12 concern, feeling that it wasn't appropriate to not
13 allow any of these ACEC nominations to go into a
14 preferred alternative and just some language stating
15 that having an in-tact and healthy under-develop --
16 well, leave out the under-developed part, but a healthy
17 ecosystem is important for the subsistence economy in
18 the Western Interior and the Bering Sea and we'd ask
19 the BLM to reconsider that they don't have any of these
20 ACECs selected -- nominations in their preferred
21 alternative.

22

23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, so is that
24 copied?

25

26 MS. DEATHERAGE: (Nods affirmatively)

27

28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So that's the
29 motion. Do we have a second for that.

30

31 MR. COLLINS: I'll second.

32

33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Seconded by Ray.
34 Further discussion.

35

36 (No comments)

37

38 MS. PELKOLA: Question.

39

40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Question's called by
41 Jenny. Those in favor of transmitting that letter of
42 support signify by saying aye.

43

44 IN UNISON: Aye.

45

46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign.

47

48 (No opposing votes)

49

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks so much
2 Suzanne. And.....
3
4 MR. CHASE: Mr. Chair.
5
6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh, go ahead, we
7 have someone on the phone there.
8
9 MR. CHASE: Yeah.
10
11 REPORTER: Identify yourself Ken.
12
13 MR. CHASE: This is Ken Chase over in
14 Anvik, I was a little bit slow there. I was listening
15 to Suzanne there and could I comment on something.
16
17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go right ahead.
18
19 (Pause)
20
21 REPORTER: Go ahead, Ken.
22
23 MR. CHASE: Okay. I did quite a bit of
24 work with Suzanne and stuff on this Bering Sea Western
25 thing and as far as our village and our corporation and
26 one of the things that we had early in our discussions,
27 you know, is the consultation between the tribes and
28 the Federal government and we couldn't do anything
29 about that. We couldn't get involved, and the
30 corporation was really vocal, our village corporation
31 was vocal on a lot of the areas and, in fact, they led
32 the talks for quite awhile, and then now I'm hearing
33 the names of -- or committee that's been formed, and I
34 don't know anything about that. I would like to know
35 who's involved in that committee or what villages or
36 what tribes are involved in that so I could kind of
37 research what's going on there, I've been kind of out
38 of the loop here.
39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Suzanne.
41
42 MS. LITTLE: I'd be glad to communicate
43 with him.
44
45 REPORTER: Suzanne, your mic.
46
47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Suzanne's going to
48 respond to you Ken. Go ahead Suzanne.
49
50

1 MS. LITTLE: This is Suzanne. Hi Ken.
2 I'd be glad to give you a call and sort of catch you up
3 if that's helpful.

4
5 MR. CHASE: Okay. Yeah, I'd appreciate
6 that.

7
8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thanks so
9 much. You have anything else Ken.

10
11 MR. CHASE: No, that's it.

12
13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thanks so much
14 for the call in.

15
16 So we're coming down on the end of our
17 agenda here. We have Office of Subsistence Management
18 updates and how is that going to entail, we may need a
19 break.

20
21 MR. HARRIS: About 10 to 15 minutes.

22
23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Karen.

24
25 MS. DEATHERAGE: Mr. Chair. I do
26 believe we have some time here if you want to take a
27 short break.

28
29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'd like to.....

30
31 MS. DEATHERAGE: Our flight, just so
32 everybody knows, the plane's expected to arrive in
33 McGrath, barring any weather issues, at 5:40.

34
35 Thank you.

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So we'll take
38 a -- Salena needs to break this equipment down and we
39 want to give her time to break that down too.

40
41 REPORTER: So I only need 30 minutes,
42 max.

43
44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So we'll take
45 a 10 minute break and then we're going to come back to
46 the OSM update and then finalize our confirmation of
47 our next meetings.

48
49 (Off record)

50

1 (On record)

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we're going to
4 finish up here. Ray, and we got Tim, Pollock's back
5 there and so we're going to -- you want to be at the
6 table Ray or can we start.

7

8 MR. COLLINS: Go ahead and start.

9

10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Here he comes. All
11 is well.

12

13 (Pause)

14

15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So go right ahead
16 Frank.

17

18 MR. HARRIS: Mr. Chair. Council. For
19 the record my name is Frank Harris with the Office of
20 Subsistence Management. I'll give you a brief overview
21 of the 2019 Federal Subsistence Board actions, the 2019
22 OSM Staff highlights and an update of OSM Staffing.

23

24 First we'll start with the Federal
25 Subsistence Board.

26

27 At the Board's April 2019 regulatory
28 meeting, April 2019 Board meeting, the Federal
29 Subsistence Board took action on 19 fisheries
30 regulatory proposals analyzed by OSM Staff. The Board
31 also implemented a system of temporary special actions
32 to cover approved changes to the fisheries regulations
33 until they were published in the Federal Register.

34

35 The Federal Subsistence Board also took
36 action on one non-rural proposal, one fisheries
37 temporary special action request, and three requests
38 for reconsideration.

39

40 At the Board's July 2019
41 teleconference, the Federal Subsistence Board took
42 action on three temporary special action requests
43 associated with WSA19-03, Unit 13 moose and caribou,
44 which was rejected. WSA19-05, Unit 10 Unimak Island
45 caribou, which was approved. And WSA19-06, Unit 20E,
46 25C and 20F caribou, which was approved.

47

48 At the Board's August 2019 public work
49 session, the Federal Subsistence Board reviewed the

50

1 Regional Advisory Council nominations and charter
2 package. The package has been submitted to the
3 Secretary's office after being reviewed by the Special
4 Assistant to the Secretary's office and the USDA
5 Regional Forester. Also the Federal Subsistence Board
6 took action on three wildlife temporary special action
7 requests. One was associated with WSA19-01, Unit 18
8 which was approved with modification to the delegation
9 of authority; WSA19-02, Unit 2 wolves, which was
10 approved, and WSA19-04, Unit 23 moose, which the Board
11 approved with modification.
12

13 The Board also reviewed two Federal
14 Subsistence Program informational videos entitled: How
15 to submit a proposal and how to become a member of a
16 Regional Advisory Council. Additional videos are being
17 developed on how to submit a special action and how to
18 request a cultural educational permit. It was produced
19 in partnership with the Alaska Teen Media Institute.
20 The videos are available via FaceBook, OSM web page and
21 YouTube.
22

23 The Federal Subsistence Board has
24 scheduled the following meetings for the upcoming year.
25 January 28th through 30th, 2020, Board retreat/public
26 work session will be held in Anchorage. The Board will
27 address the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program and
28 other agenda items that have not been decided on.
29

30 Then April 20th through the 24th, 2020.
31 The wildlife regulatory meeting will be held in Gakona.
32

33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: In Gakona?
34

35 MR. HARRIS: In Gakona, yes.
36

37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The Federal Board's
38 meeting in Gakona?
39

40 MR. HARRIS: Yes. In April.
41

42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'm astounded.
43

44 (Laughter)
45

46 MS. DEATHERAGE: What's that?
47

48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I've never seen the
49 Federal Board meet outside of Anchorage other than they
50

1 went to Juneau for little secret meetings or something.

2

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MR. HARRIS: At the Gakona meeting there, the Board will take action on the wildlife regulatory proposals and other agenda items that have not been decided on.

Office of Subsistence Management 2019 Staff highlights.

55 wildlife proposals were analyzed by OSM Staff and are scheduled to be presented to the appropriate Regional Advisory Councils during their fall meetings, you heard some of those at this meeting. The Federal Board will take action on these proposals at its April 2020 meeting.

The Anthropology Division Staff conducted analysis on 10 customary and traditional use determination proposals for Southcentral, Southeast and Interior Alaska regions. So far this year OSM Staff have analyzed eight wildlife temporary special action requests. The FSB has taken action on six of those requests and two are still in the review process. 17 wildlife closure reviews were analyzed by OSM and were presented to appropriate Regional Advisory Councils during their winter 2019 meetings. The Federal Subsistence Board will take action on these reviews at its April 2020 meeting.

OSM Staff made comments on 46 Alaska Board of Game proposals with the potential to affect Federally-qualified subsistence users for the Southcentral and Southeast regions.

One Federal subsistence chinook salmon fishery was restricted by the Federal Subsistence Board through temporary special action process, the Kuskokwim River, and two Federal subsistence chinook salmon fisheries were restricted or closed through emergency special action processes this season. That was the Situk and Stikine Rivers. Two Federal subsistence sockeye salmon fisheries were closed through Federal actions, emergency special action due to low returns this season on the Chignik and Stikine. Stikine River, after the in-season run assessment prompted an automatic closure through the Pacific Salmon Treaty due to harvestable surplus.

1 Six subsistence rulemaking documents
2 were published in the Federal Register this year.

3
4 Two proposed rules. Three final rules.
5 One notice of -- on information collection for permits
6 and Council nomination packets.

7
8 The Native liaison has conducted
9 numerous consultations with 149 Federally-recognized
10 tribes and 10 regional corporations, conducted 10
11 tribal engagement sessions and worked with high school
12 students in four regions with the goal of increasing
13 awareness of the Federal Subsistence Program and its
14 objectives.

15
16 As you may know in 2017 the Board
17 adopted a new policy on non-rural determinations and in
18 the spring of 2019 the first call for proposals to
19 change non-rural determinations was issued. OSM
20 received a proposal from the Southcentral region. The
21 Federal Subsistence Board determined that the proposal
22 met the threshold requirements at its April 2019
23 meeting and at that meeting the Board directed OSM
24 Staff to proceed with a full analysis. The analysis
25 will go before the Board for final action in January of
26 2021.

27
28 OSM outreach and information booths are
29 scheduled at the upcoming AFN annual meeting, BIA
30 Provider's Conference and several regional corporation
31 annual meetings.

32
33 One of the primary functions of
34 Regional Advisory Councils is to provide
35 recommendations to the Federal Subsistence Board on the
36 take of fish and wildlife on Federal public lands in
37 Alaska. The past regulatory cycle, the Board received
38 20 fisheries proposals, one was withdrawn by the
39 proponent. The Board accepted the majority of the
40 Regional Advisory Council recommendations in whole or
41 with modification on 18 of the 19 proposals, which is
42 95 percent acceptance rate. With this I wanted to
43 stress that the Federal Subsistence Board does hear the
44 voices of the Regional Advisory Councils.

45
46 So on to the Fisheries Resource
47 Monitoring Program, we touched on that earlier a little
48 bit. I just wanted to say that Staff reviewed 28
49 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program proposals for the
50

1 2020 notice of funding opportunity, and we discussed
2 how they'd already been scored by the TRC, and you have
3 commented on some of those at this meeting. The FRMP
4 awards will be announced later on this winter.
5

6 Federal and State partners reviewed a
7 total of 14 proposals for the Partners Fisheries
8 Resource and Monitoring Program this year and seven
9 proposals were awarded for the 2020 funding period
10 including Bristol Bay Native Association, I'm just
11 going to say ONC because I cannot pronounce that,
12 Tanana Chiefs Conference, Native Village of Eyak,
13 Native Village of Piamit as well as two new partners,
14 Yakutat Tlingit and the Qtribes, the Qtribe I believe
15 is in Unalaska.
16

17 Also I'll take this time to give you a
18 little bit of a fisheries regulatory cycle update.
19

20 The Federal Subsistence Board, we
21 already talked about that -- but the next call for
22 proposals for the regulatory cycle will be in early
23 2020. The Council will have an opportunity at the next
24 meeting to discuss and submit any proposals they see
25 fit. So at the next meeting we'll be discussing that a
26 little more closely but now's the time to start
27 thinking about those things.
28

29 And lastly, Office of Subsistence
30 Management Staffing.
31

32 OSM currently has 12 vacant positions.
33 Our Assistant Regional Director position was advertised
34 for 30 days and recently closed. We are hoping to have
35 someone permanently in that position soon.
36

37 OSM hiring priorities for the remaining
38 jobs are:
39

40 Anthropology Supervisor.
41 Administrative assistants, we have three positions
42 there. Fish biologist, there's two openings. Two
43 wildlife biologist openings. Council coordination
44 supervisor. Anthropologist. And subsistence policy
45 coordinator position.
46

47 Until we can permanently fill those
48 positions we are detailing people in as we can.
49
50

1 Currently the Fish and Wildlife Service
2 is consolidating Human Resources, Finance and
3 Acquisitions and Property and Safety into one
4 centralized entity called the Joint Administrative
5 Operations, JAO for short. This process has slowed the
6 hiring process. Once the JAO is up and running we're
7 hoping the hiring process will move more quickly in
8 2020.
9

10 On a brighter note, in 2019 OSM hired
11 and placed 11 ANSEP students, Alaska Native Science and
12 Engineering Program, ANSEP, interns in the field with
13 biologists to expose them to careers in biology. This
14 includes four ANSEP Bridge students entering their
15 first year in college and six ANSEP University success
16 students with career interests in the U.S. Fish and
17 Wildlife Service, ADF&G and rural conservation
18 organization partners.
19

20 With that I'd be happy to try to answer
21 any questions you may have.
22

23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thanks, Frank.
24

25 Questions.
26

27 Tim.
28

29 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
30 Frank, you have 12 positions open, what's the total
31 number of Staff in OSM?
32

33 MR. HARRIS: I'm not sure of the total
34 number but I believe it's above 40 when fully Staffed.
35

36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Other
37 questions on the OSM presentation.
38

39 (No comments)
40

41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Distinctly under
42 staffed and so this JAO organization will give cross
43 boundary within the office, this is within the OSM
44 office so that the hiring process can be accelerated?
45

46 MR. HARRIS: So the JAO is within the
47 Fish and Wildlife Service within the region, not within
48 OSM.
49

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh, that's a
2 regional thing.

3
4 MS. DEATHERAGE: Nationally.

5
6 MR. HARRIS: Nationally also, yeah, but
7 yeah, so it's not just OSM.

8
9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: When is the
10 finalization of that reorganization?

11
12 MR. HARRIS: I'm not sure of the
13 finalization date on that.

14
15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So hopefully it
16 speeds things up because this ARD position's been
17 unfilled for a year, a long time. So this needs to be
18 accelerated, this program's too important to let this
19 -- so I feel your pain at OSM and the work load that
20 the Staff has to endure and I hope that it doesn't
21 drive off more Staff members because of the way this
22 process moves so slowly so I appreciate all of our
23 Staff at OSM, the fewer and fewer that we have all the
24 time.

25
26 Other comments.

27
28 (No comments)

29
30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So thanks so much
31 Frank.

32
33 MR. HARRIS: Thank you.

34
35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks for attending
36 our meeting this whole time and assistance.

37
38 So we're going to go to confirmation of
39 the winter and fall meeting dates and location.

40
41 So the Fairbanks dates that we had
42 selected earlier were in -- we'd already selected that
43 in early February which is in Fairbanks, February 11
44 and 12, is that still acceptable to the Council.

45
46 MS. PELKOLA: Uh-huh.

47
48 MR. COLLINS: Fine with me.

49
50

1 MR. HONEA: It's fine.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It's on Page 263 is
4 the calendar so that's still good for me.

5

6 Jenny.

7

8 MS. PELKOLA: It's good for me.

9

10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And Tim.

11

12 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, good.

13

14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And hopefully we'll
15 have new appointments by that time. Appointments come
16 on board -- you're supposed to get a letter of
17 appointment on December 2nd, we're hoping that this
18 Administration will make those appointments because
19 we're real critical on quorum. So then that looks good
20 for the Council for the spring meeting in February, 11
21 and 12, in Fairbanks. Pikes is preferred because they
22 got a good meeting place and we can get -- we usually
23 get a large participation from the agencies -- there'll
24 be a lot of Board of Game proposals and we need that
25 Alaska Department of Fish and Game Staff there.

26

27 So then looking at the fall meeting.
28 The first -- the calendar's on 264, we have moose and
29 sheep season that goes through the end of September,
30 first of October. We have clean up if we are -- and we
31 are getting pushed further and further back in these
32 hunting seasons with climate change, moose move later.
33 They don't even start to move -- up there this year
34 never saw hardly any movement of moose until around the
35 26th of September, which is super late, they used to
36 move on the 10th. They're still breeding on time but
37 the aggregation effect is very delayed. So the meeting
38 window would be the next week, the week of October 4th
39 through the 10th, and then this Columbus thing can
40 bottle things up. We have a clean sheet here because
41 we're the first Council.....

42

43 MS. DEATHERAGE: Second.

44

45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Second Council,
46 correction.

47

48 MS. DEATHERAGE: Kodiak/Aleutians met.

49

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And when did
2 Kodiak/Aleutians select?
3
4 (Pause)
5
6 REPORTER: August.
7
8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: August.
9
10 MS. DEATHERAGE: Yes, Chairman Reakoff,
11 it's in August, they're going to Dutch Harbor so
12 probably not a good time to go to Dutch Harbor in
13 October.
14
15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So that's a non-
16 conflict.
17
18 (Laughter)
19
20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So what dates would
21 the Council prefer.
22
23 MR. SIMON: October 7 and 8.
24
25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: October 7 and 8.
26 Other Council comments on those dates.
27
28 MR. GERVAIS: I'd prefer the 14th and
29 15th but I can make that 7th and 8th work.
30
31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: 14th and 15th, is
32 that okay Pollock.
33
34 MR. SIMON: That's okay.
35
36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Don, 14 and 15 okay?
37
38 MR. HONEA: It's great.
39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Jenny.
41
42 MS. PELKOLA: Uh-huh, yeah.
43
44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Yeah, we can
45 work with that. So the travel day is on October 13, so
46 place -- we haven't had a meeting in the lower portion
47 of this region, Aniak, for a long time. I was talking
48 to Kevin and Jonathan about where to meet in Aniak
49 outside of that echo chamber, which is referred to as
50

1 the Community Hall, but I found out that the middle
2 school, referred to as the Middle School, that the
3 School District has -- would have a room that has
4 adequate space. I feel that the OSM Staff should
5 contact -- I feel very uncomfortable not having had a
6 meeting down there, it's such a huge region and a lot
7 of that part of the region is in the lower portion of
8 this Western Interior. We've been in Galena. We've
9 been in Fairbanks. I feel that it's pretty much
10 imperative that we have a meeting in Aniak or an
11 associated community that can accommodate, well Aniak
12 can accommodate us with accommodations, it's the
13 meeting, and so contact the city council, the school
14 board, and everybody else to come up with that possible
15 middle school meeting location that would be -- we need
16 a phone line is the problem and so with -- the phone
17 system, analog versus digital, what phone system do we
18 -- equipment do we need -- analog only?

19
20 REPORTER: This is digital.

21
22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh, this is digital.

23
24 REPORTER: And we've dropped this call
25 like almost 40 times during this meeting.

26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So.....

28
29 MS. DEATHERAGE: I can check that, Mr.
30 Chair, but it's not guaranteed.

31
32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. Salena.

33
34 REPORTER: We need a phone line, just
35 any phone line anymore, we can run the line -- we do
36 the best we can with what we get, it's never the same
37 in any town, but something to connect, quality,
38 different matter. This worked, old school.

39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah.

41
42 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Two cans.

43
44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I had a meeting in
45 the Wiseman Community Center and I had a phone line
46 strung from here to that yellow large tree out there
47 out to a phone booth and I had a conference call with
48 the Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission
49 so you can send a phone line -- I know a guy that had a

50

1 trespass cabin in Fairbanks that had it running
2 underneath the railroad tracks for like at least a
3 quarter of a mile so someone's got an analog phone
4 around there, and we'll string it through the woods or
5 whatever it takes to have a meeting in Aniak.

6

7 REPORTER: Whatever it takes, we've
8 done it before, right, Vince.

9

10 MR. MATHEWS: Yep.

11

12 (Laughter)

13

14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: But that's an
15 important place to have a meeting and I feel that Aniak
16 is -- so what does the Council feel about that.

17

18 MS. PELKOLA: I think it's about time
19 we have a meeting down that way.

20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes.

22

23 Don.

24

25 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
26 Yeah, I think I mean being out of the loop and not
27 having a rep from Aniak, maybe it would inspire
28 somebody if we had a meeting there to get back on the
29 RAC. I really think the least we can do is to try to
30 get somebody from that area back on our committee.

31

32 Thank you.

33

34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I would like to have
35 an evening portion of that meeting to accommodate
36 comments from people who are employed so I would like
37 to have our meeting time go through -- start at 9:00,
38 go through 5:00 have a break, then a dinner break and
39 then come on at 7:00 to 9:00, or whatever, open for a
40 two hour period, if nobody shows up we don't -- but I
41 would like to accommodate the public at this meeting.
42 And so for comments -- I want to know from the public
43 so I would like to have an evening portion of that, at
44 least one day, maybe possibly the first day, if we have
45 demand we should have an open calendar for another
46 portion for an evening meeting. I get to these
47 villages and I've been to villages in Huslia and the
48 whole community's all irate about some issue that we
49 had no clue was happening, and so we needed to quell

50

1 and talk this back and come up with strategies to
2 accommodate the subsistence issues that the people are
3 having. So I would like to have an evening component
4 to that meeting. Is the Council willing to work in
5 evening sessions.

6
7 MR. GERVAIS: Yes.

8
9 MR. HONEA: Yes.

10
11 MS. PELKOLA: Uh-huh.

12
13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So Aniak 7
14 and 8 meeting time with possible evening meeting
15 published for the community, published on the radio
16 station so that people are aware that we're there and
17 bulletins in the post office and stuff because they
18 might have forgotten who we even are and what we're
19 actually doing and we need to be there to reinitialize
20 our relationship with Aniak and that southern portion
21 of our region.

22
23 Does that sound good to the Council.

24
25 MS. PELKOLA: Uh-huh.

26
27 MR. GERVAIS: Yes.

28
29 MR. HONEA: Yes.

30
31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That sounds good,
32 mark those dates on the calendar.

33
34 Karen.

35
36 MS. DEATHERAGE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
37 And, yes, we have got those dates down and the
38 location. The thing I wanted to note is right now I
39 can't get into the October 2020 flight schedule, Ravn
40 flies there from Fairbanks, but, they do have every day
41 they fly in and out of Aniak, so that's good news
42 because that has been a challenge here in McGrath of
43 people not being able to fly out.

44
45 Thank you.

46
47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Ravn flies direct
48 Fairbanks to Aniak?

49
50

1 MS. DEATHERAGE: According to this.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And they don't stop
4 in McGrath, I can hardly even.....

5

6 MS. DEATHERAGE: Let me make sure they
7 don't go through Anchorage.

8

9 REPORTER: It goes to Anchorage I think
10 from Fairbanks, then Aniak.

11

12 MS. DEATHERAGE: It's.....

13

14 MS. KENNER: Well, we'll find out.

15

16 MS. DEATHERAGE: Yes, it goes through
17 Anchorage, I'm sorry.

18

19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Yes, I
20 thought so.

21

22 MS. DEATHERAGE: So it's going to be a
23 long trip.

24

25 MS. LITTLE: I think you have to go
26 through Anchorage.

27

28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

29

30 MS. DEATHERAGE: You do. You do.

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. But it's
33 still -- I really want to meet in Aniak and I'm willing
34 to endure the Anchorage stop to get there.

35

36 So this charter, I was informed, cost
37 us 15,000 bucks to fly down here and fly back to
38 Fairbanks, which I consider is -- as a taxpayer, that's
39 a lot of money.

40

41 MS. KENNER: It's well worth it when
42 you add per diem, hotels.....

43

44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. Well, the
45 analysis that Karen had was like -- was it
46 substantially cheaper?

47

48 MS. DEATHERAGE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
49 I think it was definitely cheaper to go through

50

1 Anchorage even with the extra per diem, but I think the
2 case can and can always be made that your time is very
3 valuable as well.

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right.

6

7 MS. DEATHERAGE: And to expect the
8 Council to spend an entire week traveling or staying
9 somewhere for a two day meeting was problematic and so
10 we were able to do that. But for Aniak, because of
11 where it is, I think that definitely we are going to
12 end up going through Anchorage so folks should plan for
13 that.

14

15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right.

16

17 MS. DEATHERAGE: And we'll bring you in
18 early Don.

19

20 (Laughter)

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So, okay.

23

24 MR. GERVAIS: Mr. Chair.

25

26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tim.

27

28 MR. GERVAIS: Why don't we charter a
29 Navajo and do a milkrun, Ruby, Galena, Nulato, Aniak.

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Because if we got
32 into that deal -- I was on the instrument approach into
33 Ruby and we couldn't get in there, and so we're having
34 these.....

35

36 MS. DEATHERAGE: We're not trying to
37 get into Ruby.

38

39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:no-go's getting
40 into Ruby in the falltime like that, it's like unless
41 you want to come down by boat to Galena, we could get
42 in there. But that's what happened, we were shooting
43 on instrument approaches that whole trip, it was like
44 bad weather, this is a bum time of year for flying so
45 we need to be getting into like here where they have
46 instrument approaches that are well developed for
47 Aniak, McGrath, Galena, those you can fly into, landing
48 on top of ridges in Ruby on saddles, those pilots don't
49 particularly care for that one.

50

1 MR. GERVAIS: I would drive my boat
2 down to Galena if it could save me an overnight on the
3 road system.

4
5 MS. PELKOLA: But you're just one
6 person, there's Don too.

7
8 MR. GERVAIS: I got room for him.

9
10 (Laughter)

11
12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, we can discuss
13 that process of travel later, Karen has to make these
14 analysis and so forth.

15
16 So that's Aniak middle school, if
17 possible, or at least contact the city or somebody else
18 to find out if we have some other spot besides the echo
19 chamber of that community center, we can't -- because
20 the acoustics for this equipment, can't happen there,
21 that doesn't work.

22
23 So, okay, we're down -- we got that
24 set, so closing comments.

25
26 So we started down this side, let's go
27 from Don, going down the table, go ahead, Don.

28
29 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
30 Again, I guess I'm going to reiterate I enjoy coming
31 over here. Maybe logistics might be a big factor and
32 where we meet and stuff but I really enjoyed this --
33 coming over here. And the accommodations I think is
34 just excellent where we stayed there, and everything
35 is, you know, just a block away or something.

36
37 You know, the thing I regret about the
38 meeting is that I wish there was a way that the high
39 school students or something, you know, maybe in each
40 village and I guess we often see that wherever we meet,
41 not very much participation but I'd certainly like it,
42 you know, if we went to -- whether it's Galena, whether
43 it's Aniak or Holy Cross or something, to get a hold of
44 the school, get a hold of the students and stuff
45 because, you know, they're the upcoming leaders and are
46 going to be replacing us.

47
48 But other than that I think we are
49 successful in conveying our problems.

50

1 You know one of the -- when I first got
2 on one of the Council members, and I mentioned this
3 before, he said Don you got to remember you're speaking
4 for the whole area and that's why it bothers me when,
5 you know, when I miss a meeting it's really hard to be
6 on there telephonically. I use my cell and halfway
7 through the eight hours or something, I had to charge
8 it and it's really -- it's really a burden to get on
9 here. Other than that but like I mentioned I'm sorry
10 to see Tommy and Goodwin not here because I don't know,
11 I mean I don't know what their problems are even if
12 it's only 200 miles away, I know my immediate are and
13 that's what I bring to the table. And I want to keep
14 reiterating the fact that, you know, if we meet in
15 Aniak maybe it'll spur Carl or somebody to come back on
16 board. I -- it just bothers me that I don't know the
17 -- I don't know the problems, I don't know your fishing
18 problems on the Kusko, and those guys do, and so I
19 think, you know, until we get somebody that -- that
20 knows those problems we're just -- I don't like
21 speaking towards some of them.

22
23 But I enjoyed the time and I think we
24 took care of that and, again, I'm going to -- I'm going
25 to miss Ray's presence on our -- on our Council, I mean
26 over the years I've stayed with him in a few places and
27 I know that he -- he likes to read and, you know, he's
28 -- and I think he's well-learned and I just appreciate
29 his presence and, you know, I still feel like he's our
30 mentor here and that we had this bond and that's kind
31 of why I like meeting here too, just to see him.

32
33 I just wish you guys a good winter.

34
35 Thank you.

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks so much Don.

38
39 Your comments Pollock.

40
41 MR. SIMON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
42 want to say I enjoyed myself down here the last few
43 times we've had our meeting down here, good food and
44 good accommodations. I agree with Don, we stayed in
45 good hotel, nice and quiet. I'm glad to be sitting at
46 the meeting with Ray again. Ray has been on this board
47 from the beginning to present so it's good meeting with
48 him. I'd like to thank the Board members for his
49 recognition, it was good. Thank you to Karen. We
50

1 serve on this Board because we want to and I said it
2 yesterday that I serve not only on this Board but lots
3 of other boards, we serve because we want to help each
4 other out, our communities, and it's good to be
5 recognized.

6
7 I'd like to thank, also recognize Jack
8 for running our meetings. Thank you, Jack.

9
10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, thank you,
11 Pollock. Thanks for your participation.

12
13 Ray, you're next.

14
15 MR. COLLINS: Yeah. I certainly
16 appreciate all the recognition here, I don't know if I
17 deserve it but it was really nice, the presents and
18 just to have you here again too, it was nice because I
19 didn't have to travel. And I hope that you'll continue
20 to look on McGrath as a good place, if you come back
21 two years from now in the winter, I hope to be here,
22 it'll be my 85th birthday that spring, so -- but I hope
23 to still be here and I'll certainly sit in on your
24 meeting then if you're here.

25
26 Just thank you again for all the
27 fellowship we've had over the years and good friends.
28 And as you mentioned when I taught courses for the
29 University Jenny was one of my students and Shirley was
30 too but Shirley's a disappointment because she hasn't
31 come.....

32
33 (Laughter)

34
35 MR. COLLINS:come to any
36 meetings, maybe one, anyway it's been a wonderful time
37 the whole time.

38
39 I might mention why I keep going. When
40 we were in school you had to choose a class motto at
41 the end and my class chose the motto that may it be
42 said in the years ahead that we were saved to serve.
43 And I've always tried to live by that. So I see this
44 as one of the services and I thank the State and the
45 BLM and others fit to appoint me to these boards and
46 councils because it was an opportunity to serve and use
47 the knowledge that I've gained from living in Nikolai
48 for eight years. And I think of all the elders, and
49 they're all gone now, we're losing elderlies fast, and
50

1 I'm one of the older men now up there and so I've gone
2 from young status to elder in the village, there's only
3 a few women that are older than me, and that's one of
4 the reason's its kept me going is to be able to honor
5 them for what they taught me and share it with others.

6

7

So thank you it's been a good time.

8

9

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Appreciate that Ray.

10

11

Jenny.

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

MS. PELKOLA: I would like to thank the
community of McGrath for their hospitality and tribal
council for the good food that they put out yesterday.
Also, Ray, it's hard to let you go but I guess we have
to. I've learned a lot from you. It seems like you're
always so patient and I just want to thank you for
being my mentor all these years and serving on our
Council.

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

Also I thought the reports were pretty
good, some of them I didn't see in writing and I'm a
hand's on person, I like to see stuff in front of me,
so maybe in the future, even if it's just a small
little report I'd like to see a report in front of me
if it could be done.

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

And one thing I forgot to say when we
first started was this summer we caught a lot of
sheefish with our king salmon and they were really big,
bigger than I've noticed before so I just wondered
what's going on and a lot of them, not only a few, but
a lot of sheefish. So I just wanted to bring that to
the attention.

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42

I think Aniak is a good spot for a
meeting, hopefully it'll work out and hopefully we can
get a rep from down there, man or woman, it doesn't
matter. I'm used to serving on boards with men anyway
so it doesn't matter.

43

44

(Laughter)

45

46

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MS. PELKOLA: I'll continue to do it.
But I enjoyed this meeting. I enjoyed the place we
stayed and it seems like I'm getting to know more of
you than I have before. It was nice rooming with
Karen, we got to know each other and she goes to bed

1 too early but I know she works hard.

2

3

Thank you very much.

4

5

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you, Jenny.

6

7

Tim.

8

9

MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

10 I'd like to thank the community of McGrath and the
11 tribe for hosting us and providing us with a nice
12 facility to work here.

13

14

I wish Ray an enjoyable retirement from
15 our Council, I certainly consider a lot of information
16 you've conveyed over the years as irreplaceable and
17 it's kind of cool whenever I look at a map of Alaska,
18 even a globe now, sometimes I'll say, oh, yeah, that's
19 where Ray lives, over there, so it's been kind of a --
20 you're like an ambassador of this region for us since
21 we're Yukon River people and you've helped introduce a
22 lot of culture and wildlife and fish issues for this
23 drainage here. So thanks so much.

24

25

And also wish -- as I said earlier, I'm
26 just really impressed with the information we've gotten
27 from years from Fred and I hope you enjoy being
28 retired. And I guess you know but there's a lot of
29 people -- a lot of people have benefitted greatly by
30 having a stable fishery resource and so as far as self-
31 worth or whether you had an impact, know that, know
32 that you helped feed our village and a whole bunch of
33 other people in a consistent way, where they don't
34 think about it that much, there hasn't always been a
35 great abundance of kings but there's always been
36 something there and as a river community we've always
37 been working on trying to maintain that.

38

39

I forgot to mention in my presentation
40 about Federal Subsistence Board, there was quite a bit
41 of younger folks, high school and maybe some college
42 kids there that were there for class projects and stuff
43 like that and they actually did a lot of testimony and
44 some of them were interested in subsistence rights and
45 some of them were really focused on Native subsistence
46 rights and it was all encouraging to see the younger
47 folks paying attention and wanting to be connected to
48 their subsistence economy.

49

50

1 I would like the Western Interior to
2 invite this lady from NOAA's Auke Bay Laboratory over
3 near Juneau, Ellen Yasumiishi, and she has done some
4 presentations this fall for Kodiak/Aleutian Island RAC
5 and Salena told us it was a worthwhile presentation and
6 talking a lot about ocean temperature and how that
7 relates to bycatch and fish movement, some potentially
8 -- I'll look it up some but I think she's involved with
9 disseminating the data from that International Year of
10 the Salmon research project that they did this past
11 winter where they were trying to figure out where the
12 ocean range, it was a multi-country research project,
13 they were trying to figure out the ocean of these
14 different salmon populations, genetically.

15
16 Another interesting development came up
17 yesterday or the day before is the Bristol Bay Native
18 Association is suing the EPA over that withdrawal over
19 the watershed protection for the Pebble Mine, so
20 that'll be interesting to see what can come of that.

21
22 And then, yeah, this draft EIS is
23 coming out in December for the Ambler Road, I think,
24 that even after that final EIS is out we can submit a
25 -- if we don't get the alternative that we think's
26 appropriate, I think we could submit a protest letter
27 but I think it has to be done within 30 days of that
28 EIS coming out. So we should pay attention to the
29 timing of that and see if we can meet by email or
30 teleconference and see if that's an action we want to
31 pursue.

32
33 This last topic we were covering with
34 no nominations for the ACEC was disappointing. I know
35 a lot of time for the WIRAC had been spent on that, BLM
36 put a lot of time and effort into that, Suzanne put a
37 lot of effort into that, YRDFA put a lot of effort into
38 that and I just encourage everybody to keep their chin
39 up and maybe -- not many of us or none of us got the
40 result we wanted from it but there was a lot of good
41 information we learned about our areas and what's
42 critical and brought out -- did get on the public
43 record, a lot of environmental concerns that may come
44 into play later or in future development decisions, so
45 good work to everybody on that for trying.

46
47 And then I'd like to thank all the
48 other Council members and the Staff members for
49 contributing to a safe, productive meeting. I
50

1 appreciate everybody's comments and information we ask
2 and try to just be efficient and save us time so we can
3 get back to our other lives.

4

5 And that's it.

6

7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks Tim,
8 appreciate those words.

9

10 My final comments would be I really
11 appreciated working with Ray these last -- since 1993,
12 all of the positive things that Ray has brought to
13 better this whole region, the Western Interior region,
14 traveling and great sacrifice that his wife Sally did
15 while he was gone. The family members that hold down
16 -- keep the home fires going, literally, actually are a
17 huge part of this program that's.....

18

19 MS. COLLINS: I'm going to have to find
20 something else for him to do now.

21

22 (Laughter)

23

24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, we'll come
25 back to McGrath and he'll be back over again but when
26 we -- we do appreciate the unsung heros of family
27 members who support these Regional Council members
28 being gone throughout the whole state of Alaska,
29 there's 110 or however many Regional Council members
30 there are. So thanks for your good work Ray. We'll
31 have you back over here and you can give us some advice
32 when we come back to McGrath again.

33

34 Thanks for all your good work with us
35 all these years.

36

37 I appreciate the Staff. Karen does a
38 real good job making sure that our paperwork gets out
39 on time and makes sure that all of our action items are
40 put in place, she jots stuff down. Pippa's -- I'm glad
41 to see you back at our meetings again. Lisa did a very
42 good job at our meeting here. She's come up to speed,
43 she's a real good biologist, she's done a real good job
44 for us here. Really appreciate that Lisa. And, Frank,
45 appreciate you being here and giving us the rundown
46 with OSM Staff.

47

48 I appreciate Fred Bue being, from all
49 those years, fall season manager, in-season manager for

50

1 Federal government. Fred's done a good job. And just
2 like Tim said, you know, he's actually provided untold
3 amounts of meals for people by making sure that the
4 salmon resources are actually meet escapement goals and
5 so forth so appreciate that Fred.

6
7 Kevin, I'm really glad you're working
8 for InterTribal Fish Commission down on the Kuskokwim,
9 that's a real important thing and I'm really excited
10 about your projects.

11
12 Suzanne I appreciate you coming to our
13 meetings and making sure that we're aware of other
14 issues that aren't presented by certain agencies.

15
16 And Bruce is always at our meetings
17 here when we get into the southern part of these
18 regions. And I appreciate all the work that BLM has
19 done, I'm not decrying the Staff of BLM, I'm decrying
20 the progression of these things that are happening. I
21 know where they come from. I know that -- I appreciate
22 Bonnie and Tim LaMarr speaking to us and it's our --
23 it's our position to speak back, we're not holding
24 back. We're not going to hold back. I don't work for
25 them. I work for the people in this region and the
26 resource, that's who I'm working for. So I -- but I
27 appreciate the position that they're put in.

28
29 Vince was our coordinator, he was at
30 our meetings a lot and so he's got this institutional
31 knowledge that he brings along with him and seems to
32 keep notes in that little computer over there, so
33 appreciate that also.

34
35 I appreciate this Council.

36
37 I'm glad that we had good
38 participation, and I'm hoping for good appointments for
39 the next -- and appointments on time so that they can
40 come to our next meeting. And I would like to see that
41 OSM Staff, ARD or whoever it may be, goes down to
42 Washington, D.C., and makes sure that those
43 appointments come through on time, the Secretary of
44 Interior's office has to make those appointments on
45 time for all of these Regional Councils.

46
47 And I appreciate this meeting room and
48 the McGrath Tribe providing meals and so forth.
49 They're not here right now but I do appreciate that.

50

1 I appreciate all the people on that
2 phone. I know I've been on that phone and it's hard to
3 hear what's going on in the room sometimes and people
4 were on that phone for a long time and I have a high
5 appreciation of that because I've been there and done
6 that and that's not so fun.

7
8 So with that, I appreciate my awards
9 that I was given and recognitions, but I didn't intend
10 to get into this game but when we were not provided
11 subsistence uses and we were driven by the State of
12 Alaska to enter the Federal Subsistence Management
13 Program to protect subsistence uses and the resources,
14 which many times are not looked at as a benefit to the
15 people of Alaska but as a revenue source, you can't put
16 agencies that are in charge of fish and wildlife
17 management in the protection of the resource with an
18 economic incentive, so bad things can happen and many
19 times it does, but I feel the dual management -- I'll
20 say it again and I've said it before at other meetings,
21 the dual management system actually checks itself, it
22 has a check and balance, it moves towards the middle a
23 lot of times. People want to have only State
24 management, well, I've been there and done that when
25 you have seven politically appointed Board members that
26 have basically sport interest in mind you're not going
27 to get much subsistence out of that, so the Federal and
28 State systems actually check each other to many degrees
29 and move towards the middle. And I have appreciation
30 of that. Most people don't understand that part but I
31 do, and I think it moves more towards -- more
32 beneficial for the resource and the people.

33
34 And so I think that the Mulchatna issue
35 coming up before this meeting, we pried deep into that
36 issue and actually hit the puss pocket of where we're
37 losing this caribou herd. And so I feel that the
38 managers will back up and start -- and I hope that the
39 OSM Staff and our biological Staff actually understood
40 where we went with that and that the Federal government
41 and the State need to work more towards protection of
42 that herd at the Federal Board process.

43
44 So having said all that, the Chair will
45 entertain a motion to adjourn the meeting.

46
47 MS. PELKOLA: So moved.

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49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Moved by Jenny.

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MR. COLLINS: I'll second.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Seconded by Ray.
Those in favor of adjournment signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: See you at the next
meeting, those who are attending.

Thank you.

(Off record)

(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 for Computer Matrix Court Reporters, LLC, do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing pages numbered ___ through ___ contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the WESTERN INTERIOR FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME II taken electronically on the 9th day of October at McGrath, Alaska;

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 25th day of October 2019.

Salena A. Hile
Notary Public, State of Alaska
My Commission Expires: 09/16/22