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FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD PUBLIC MEETING

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August 2, 1999

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11 Fish and Wildlife Service

12 1101 East Tudor Road

13 Anchorage, Alaska

14 Gordon Watson Conference Room

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16 Members Present:

17

18 Mitch Demientieff, Chair (Telephonically)

19 Niles, Cesar, BIA

20 David Allen, U.S. F&W Service

21 Curt Wilson, BLM

22 Judy Gotlieb, NPS

23 Ken Thompson, U.S. Forest Service

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25 Keith Goltz, Solicitor

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P R O C E E D I N G S

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3 MR. BOYD: We have Ken Thompson who is representing
4 Jim Capland, and is with the Forest Service. Keith Goltz
5 from the Solicitor's office. Ida Hildebrand, BIA. Niles
6 Cesar, Board member, BIA. Dave Allen, Board member, Fish and
7 Wildlife Service. George Constantino, Fish and Wildlife
8 Service. Judy Gottlieb, Board member, Park Service. Sandy
9 Rabinowitch, Staff Committee, Park Service. Curt Wilson,
10 BLM. I'm assuming, Curt, that you're representing the BLM
11 Board member?

12

13 MR. WILSON: Yes.

14

15 MR. BOYD: And that's the Board that's present today,
16 Mr. Chair.

17

18 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, good.

19

20 MR. BOYD: The first item is to review the agenda.

21

22 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Unit 23 sheep, is that right?

23

24 MR. BOYD: Yeah, we have Unit 23 sheep status report
25 and then we go to the special actions on 99-02 and 99-04.

26

27 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: 99-04 and 99-02.

28

29 MR. BOYD: Right. It doesn't appear that anyone in
30 the room has any comments on the agenda.

31

32 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, good. Well, let's go
33 ahead then.

34

35 MR. BOYD: All right. We'll go ahead with the status
36 report on Unit 23 sheep. I'm assuming that's going to be
37 you, Mr. Spirtes.

38

39 MR. SPIRTEs: Hi, this is Dave Spirtes. Do you want
40 me to go ahead with that status report?

41

42 MR. BOYD: Yeah, go ahead, Dave.

43

44 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Please.

45

46 MR. SPIRTEES: Yeah, okay, on Friday, July 16th, NPS
47 wildlife biologist Brad Shults informed me of the results of
48 the cooperative sheep count in the Baird and DeLongs that was
49 done by our wildlife biologist and an ADF&G biologist. And I
50 asked that he set up a meeting with Jim Dau, ADF&G wildlife

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1 biologist and with Willie Goodwin to review that count that
2 day. The two biologists informed us that the number of 7/8th
3 or larger rams counted in the Bairds had dropped from 70 to
4 28, and they stated that this was the lowest number counted
5 in 13 years.

6
7 The told me that the decline was probably caused by
8 older sheep reaching the end of their life span in addition
9 to the 16 that were harvested under the Federal subsistence
10 hunt in 1998. And in the De Longs, they only counted 12
11 7/8ths or larger rams. Based on these numbers, Jim Dau
12 stated that ADF&G supported an emergency closure for sheep in
13 the Bairds and DeLongs. And they scheduled an open public
14 meeting on Wednesday on July 21st to inform the public about
15 the results of the hunt. We attended that meeting and Jim
16 presented the count numbers along with Brad Shults. The
17 public was satisfied that the general population trend was
18 still encouraging and that land production still favored
19 recovery, however, they also agreed that the number of full-
20 curl rams was dropping off and that there was no longer a
21 harvestable surplus. Jim Dau asked the public if anyone was
22 interested in supporting a sheep hunt, no one responded.

23
24 I wanted to make sure to see if there was any
25 traditional, ecological knowledge that any local person might
26 have to indicate a difference of opinion. Willie Goodwin
27 supported the closure and Barb Armstrong consulted with
28 several other RAC members who also supported a closure.
29 Based the advice of the wildlife biologist, we -- that is,
30 Ken Adkisson and Jim Dau went to discuss the numbers on the
31 radio and I talked this over with John Cody, who agreed that
32 we -- we should coordinate an ADF&G emergency order closing
33 the hunt with my announcement that there was no harvestable
34 permits for the sheep. And this was done -- we were trying
35 to wait for the state of Alaska to put out an emergency order
36 but because our hunt was scheduled to begin on August 1st, on
37 the 28th I released a press release stating that no Federal
38 subsistence permits would be issued for sheep in the Bairds
39 and DeLongs. And just a few minutes ago I spoke with Jim Dau
40 and he's anticipating the actual release of emergency order
41 by ADF&G at any time.

42
43 MR. BOYD: Okay.

44
45 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Tom, I'm going to ask you to

46 go ahead and help me out because I don't have any of the
47 materials here.

48

49 MR. BOYD: Sure. Dave, does that conclude your
50 report?

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1 MR. SPIRTE: Yeah, pretty much. Either Ken Adkisson
2 or I would be happy to answer any questions.

3

4 MR. BOYD: This is a status report, Mr. Chair. I
5 think the upshot here is that the Park Superintendent does
6 have the authority, as delegated by the Board, not to issue
7 permits this year. It's already been delegated so no Board
8 action is required.

9

10 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay.

11

12 MR. BOYD: Based on the survey that has been done.

13

14 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, thank you. Are we ready
15 to move on to 99-04?

16

17 MR. BOYD: Yes.

18

19 MR. WOLF: Excuse me, Mr. Chairman.

20

21 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yes.

22

23 MR. WOLF: Yes, Hi, this is Matt Wolf. I am also
24 representing Foundation for North American Wild Sheep and I
25 asked the Federal Subsistence Board if they would consider
26 changing the airplane -- use of aircraft in the harvest of
27 these sheep for this hunt.

28

29 I don't think that proper customary and traditional,
30 if any, has been used, and at this time I ask the Federal
31 Subsistence Board to withdraw the use of airplanes for this
32 hunt if, in fact, it does happen to occur in the future.

33

34 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yeah, I think we could
35 probably deal with that in terms of our normal regulatory
36 process in the spring. When is our deadline for proposals,
37 Tom?

38

39 MR. BOYD: We'll be submitting a call for proposals
40 in late August.

41

42 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Right.

43

44 MR. BOYD: And it will culminate in early November.

45

46 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Right. Because there's not
47 going to be a hunt this year so we can deal with that -- your
48 request in terms of the normal regulatory process.

49

50 MR. WOLF: Very good, thank you.

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1 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Any other discussion on this
2 matter?

3

4 MR. OLSEN: Yeah, Mark Olsen here. Just curious as
5 to why we have such a tight rope here between the season and
6 the emergency closure? It just seems that we could have had
7 information or should have had information prior to such a
8 deadline here.

9

10 MR. SPIRTEES: Yeah, this is Dave Spirtes. I think
11 the real problem is that timing of the count. We basically
12 have to wait until the snow melts before we can get an
13 accurate count. So we really weren't able to start until
14 about the 4th of July. And then by the time you get several
15 weeks of good weather to count all the sample areas, we're
16 basically only about a week before the season starts. But
17 the wildlife biologists tell me there's no other option for
18 doing an accurate count.

19

20 MR. OLSEN: Is this normal as far as time frames?

21

22 MR. SPIRTEES: Yes. Normally that's the -- normally
23 we have to wait for the snow to melt and we really can't get
24 an accurate count until July.

25

26 MR. OLSEN: Thank you.

27

28 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Any other discussion? If not,
29 let's move on to 99-04 then.

30

31 MR. BOYD: Okay. 99--04, we have Donna Dewhurst that
32 will be moving forward to present the Staff report.

33

34 MS. DEWHURST: 99-04 is the request for a Federal
35 subsistence harvest in Unit 10, Unimak Island. It would be
36 for one caribou harvest limit and the season would be
37 September 1st through March 31st of the year 2000. And it
38 would include a designated hunter provision.

39

40 As far as the analysis goes, to boil it down to a
41 nutshell, the current estimate for Unimak Island is 600
42 caribou. Recent surveys have shown good calf production so
43 the population appears to be healthy and appears to have good
44 growth potential. So biologically, there's no reason to
45 oppose the request for a Federal subsistence harvest for this

46 year.

47

48 MR. BOYD: That concludes the Staff report, Mr.
49 Chair. The Staff Committee recommendation is that they
50 recommend adopting the proposal to open a caribou hunt in

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1 Unit 10, Unimak Island, September 1 to March 31. One caribou
2 harvest limit with a designated hunter provision. The most
3 recent population estimate for caribou is 600. Just in
4 short, we feel like there is no real problem biologically.

5

6 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, thank you. Now, are we
7 ready for public testimony?

8

9 MR. BOYD: Well, we have Refuge comments, then State
10 comments and then public comments.

11

12 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay.

13

14 MR. BOYD: And then we go to Council and Board
15 deliberations.

16

17 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay.

18

19 MR. BOYD: We'll go to Refuge right now to see if
20 Refuge has any comments on this particular proposal?

21

22 MR. PEOTTER: This is Rick Peotter from Izembek
23 Refuge. We have no comments but we support the proposal.

24

25 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, Fish and Game comments.

26

27 MR. SELLERS: Hello, this is Dick Sellers. I was
28 waiting to see if Matt Robus was going to respond, I don't
29 know if Matt's still on the line or not.

30

31 But in general, we support harvesting this Unimak
32 Island population. And because the vast majority of the land
33 is Federal land, it seems to be the most expedient way to
34 allow for a harvest.

35

36 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Was that Matt trying to
37 comment?

38

39 MR. SELLERS: No, this was Dick Sellers.

40

41 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, thank you. Public
42 testimony, I'm not sure?

43

44 MR. BOYD: Well, we don't have anyone in the room
45 that wants to comment on this particular proposal. I'm not

46 sure about those on-line. I might ask, Mr. Chair, there have
47 been a number of people, about two or three beeps since we
48 started this discussion and perhaps we should pause to get
49 those people coming on line to identify themselves.

50

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1 MR. ROBUS: Yes, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Boyd, this is Matt
2 Robus of Fish and Game. I was one of the beeps because I
3 made an error here and dropped myself off, so I'm back up.

4
5 MR. BOYD: Okay.

6
7 MR. ROBUS: And I wondered, did you ask for any State
8 input on this one, yet?

9
10 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yeah, we did. Dick Sellers
11 made some comments. Do you have additional comments for us,
12 Matt?

13
14 MR. ROBUS: No, that's fine. If Dick covered it
15 that's fine and I'll try to stay on the line here now.

16
17 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay.

18
19 MR. BOYD: And there were one or two other beeps.
20 Are there any new parties that have joined us in this?
21 Apparently not. We are at the point of public comment on
22 Special Action 99-04 to open up a hunt Unimak Island, Unit 10
23 for caribou.

24
25 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Is there anyone on-line
26 wishing to testify under public comment?

27
28 (No response)

29
30 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Hearing none, we'll move on
31 into Regional Council comment.

32
33 MR. OLSEN: Mark Olsen here.

34
35 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Mark, go ahead.

36
37 MR. OLSEN: I believe this is the first I have heard
38 of the SAPCH herd being divided into two different units. Is
39 this the first time it's being done? How is this strategy
40 going?

41
42 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Do you have someone that could
43 respond to Mark, Tom?

44
45 MS. DEWHURST: Yeah, I assume Dick Sellers would.

46

47 MR. SELLERS: Dick Sellers with Alaska Department of
48 Fish and Game. Just for a long time had different hunting
49 regulations, the Unimak Island segment of the Southern
50 Peninsula population and we could maybe have some discussion

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1 about how distinct the group of caribou are on Unimak Island.
2 But given the logistics and the extent of the habitat there
3 that it's appropriate to consider different regulations for
4 those caribou on the island versus the mainland, and that's
5 not a new phenomenon.

6

7 MR. OLSEN: Is this open to the public or just the
8 residents of the Unit?

9

10 MR. BOYD: Mr. Olsen, this is Tom Boyd. The action
11 before us is specific to those communities in the local area,
12 you know, those who have customary and traditional use
13 determination.

14

15 MR. OLSEN: Thank you.

16

17 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Any other comments?

18

19 MS. TRUMBLE: This is Della from King Cove.

20

21 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Hello.

22

23 MS. TRUMBLE: Hi. Mr. Chair, we just wanted to say
24 that we do support this hunt. And we also would just like to
25 add of a concern that we've been sparse for these last couple
26 of years and that is an accurate survey of the caribou on
27 Unimak. But it hasn't been totally complete the last two
28 years because of weather and various conditions and timing,
29 whether someone can get out and fly.

30

31 But we do support the hunt for the people in our
32 region and we also, like I say, would really hope that this
33 next year that an accurate survey by State and Federal can be
34 completed.

35

36 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you.

37

38 MS. SHELLIKOF: Gilda Shellikof.

39

40 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yes.

41

42 MS. SHELLIKOF: Yeah, I would like to reiterate what
43 Della said about getting an accurate count of the caribou on
44 the island. Because I think that's very important especially
45 when they're going to open up the seasons. Because we don't

46 want to end up like we did the last four years and not have
47 any caribou hunt at all.

48

49 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you. Is there any
50 response to that, Tom?

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1 MR. BOYD: Let me go to either the Alaska Department
2 of Fish and Game or the Refuge to see if they have a response
3 to that.

4
5 MR. ROBUS: This is Matt Robus from the Refuge.
6 Everything is copacetic. Yeah, good comments. We did have
7 trouble this year getting out and we've got some plans with
8 Dick Sellers' office to step up on our efforts to get a good
9 count on that, and we'll proceed that way.

10
11 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you. Any other Regional
12 Council comments?

13
14 MR. OLSEN: This is Mark Olsen again. Is there a
15 number of permits that are going to be issued or is that an
16 issue?

17
18 MR. BOYD: It's not an issue. The proposal is not
19 limiting the number of permits.

20
21 MR. OLSEN: Thank you.

22
23 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Any other Regional Council
24 comments? Hearing none, let's go ahead and advance this to
25 Board deliberation.

26
27 MR. D. ALLEN: Are you ready for a motion?

28
29 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yes.

30
31 MR. D. ALLEN: Mr. Chairman, Dave Allen, I move that
32 we adopt Special Action S99-04 to open the season as
33 represented in the Staff analysis proposal.

34
35 MR. CESAR: I'll second that.

36
37 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, who seconded the motion?

38
39 MR. CESAR: Mr. Cesar, Mr. Chair.

40
41 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, thank you. Discussion
42 on the motion. Hearing none, all those in favor of the
43 motion please signify by saying aye.

44
45 IN UNISON: Aye.

46
47
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49
50

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Those opposed, same sign.

(No opposing votes)

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1 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Motion carries. 99-02.

2

3 MS. DEWHURST: 99-02 was originally submitted to
4 close Federal public lands for caribou hunting in both Units
5 9(D) and 10. Unit 10 is kind of a moot issue that we aren't
6 really considering because there is not a State hunt. So
7 there aren't any other users. The request is to close then
8 primarily Unit 9(D) from September 1st through March 31st to
9 all non-Federally qualified users.

10

11 Unit 9(D) has about 20 percent Federal public lands,
12 and that is all administered by the Fish and Wildlife
13 Service. As far as the biology of the caribou herd, the
14 caribou herd -- the Southern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd
15 has gone through some very large fluctuations over the past
16 100 years. And at its peaks it usually hits around 10,000
17 animals and at its lows it moves down to a couple hundred.
18 And it's done that. It just had a peak in the mid-80s and
19 then it crashed after that and it closed hunting for several
20 years.

21

22 A few years ago we had the first Federal subsistence
23 hunt, it allowed the opening of a very limited hunt. It was
24 a bulls only. And then last year the hunt was expanded a
25 little bit and granting up to 235 harvest permits for bulls
26 only. This is also a Federal subsistence hunt only. In both
27 years of the Federal hunt the harvest was low. Of course our
28 reporting is only about -- it's been averaging about 60
29 percent. But from the reporting we have, we're talking 20 to
30 30 animals, and in one case 32. So even if the reporting,
31 we're only getting half, you know, it -- you played that
32 liberal and doubled it, you'd be looking at around a 50
33 animal harvest. So the harvest has still been very low on
34 both years. As far as the surveys go, the recent, most
35 recent State survey indicates an estimate of the population
36 of still around 3,500.

37

38 The ADF&G wishes to cap the population between four
39 and 5,000 animals. That is to -- mainly for range reasons.
40 When the population grows up to 10,000 animals, the range
41 can't support it being a limited size peninsula and hence the
42 periodic cycles of crashes and booms. And so to try to
43 prevent that, the State is trying to do a management strategy
44 of capping off the population between four and 5,000. So the
45 current estimate of 3,500, of course, is approaching that

46 again. It rebounded quite quickly from the recent decline.
47 And the indications from the past two years' surveys, last
48 summer and this summer's indicate very good calf crop. Which
49 indicates the potential for further growth to be high.
50

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1 So overall the population has recovered quite nicely
2 from the decline, and it appears to be continuing to recover
3 at this point.

4
5 Harvest wise, it really isn't a biological issue here
6 as far as being able to support a harvest. At the Staff
7 Committee meeting Dick Sellers was asked what his harvest
8 goal is and he had mentioned basically one percent or three
9 to 400 animals were the harvest goals right now. When you
10 look at the history of the harvest, the concern -- this was
11 mainly presented, this proposal was presented as a user
12 conflict issue, not so much that the animals, the population
13 couldn't support the harvest.

14
15 The specific issue that was raised in the actual
16 proposal request was the issue of the Cold Bay road system.
17 The Cold Bay road system does have a history of conflicts.
18 But that was primarily in the mid-1980s when hunting of
19 Arctic nesting geese was still permitted and caribou
20 population was at a thousand animals and the bag limit was
21 more than one. So there was a lot more interest and there
22 was pretty good harvest pressure back then. But even at that
23 peak, the harvest pressure was around 400 animals. And that
24 was when the population was three times the size it is now.
25 So that's the highest the harvest ever got when things were
26 wide open and everybody was allowed to come down. And there
27 was a lot of interest in Arctic nesting geese which brought
28 other hunters into the area.

29
30 To try to prevent that sort of a situation again, it
31 was part of why when the Board of Game approved the State
32 hunt which is currently what's on the books for this year, it
33 was closed to Alaska residents from September 21st through
34 November 14th. That was an attempt to prevent the conflicts
35 -- potential conflicts with goose hunters or waterfowl
36 hunters. And the only issue left then became nonresident
37 hunt which is only limited to a 15 day period from September
38 10th through the 25th, bringing nonresident hunters into Cold
39 Bay. But most of those nonresidents will probably be guided
40 and will probably be off the road system. And then the issue
41 came of conflicts after November 15th or after the State
42 residency system would open back up.

43
44 And as far as Staff analysis was concerned, it was
45 felt that there probably isn't going to be that much of a

46 harvest pressure from nonlocals, given the high cost of air
47 transportation being six to \$800 to get there, and then a one
48 caribou limit. There are a number of places in the state
49 where you can get more caribou than that, like for example,
50 the Mulchatna herd. You could fly a lot cheaper to

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1 Dillingham and get four animals versus paying that money to
2 go to Cold Bay. So it was felt that there probably is not
3 going to be a big incentive out there to draw in-state
4 residents like Anchorage based residents down to Cold Bay.
5 And there was concern from the Staff of -- if there really
6 would be an issue of all these folks coming down to Cold Bay.
7 All of these issues of user conflicts are basically a
8 potential risk, not anything we have any real history of.
9 The hunt has been closed for a number of years to state
10 hunters so there hasn't been any competition for a number of
11 years. So anything, as far as what we're looking at this
12 year is speculation on the part of both the subsistence
13 hunter and anybody else looking at the situation. We are
14 playing a little bit of a game of trying to guess at what
15 could happen.

16
17 The bottom line is biologically the herd could
18 support a wide open hunt right now, a full -- if the harvest
19 was kept three to 400 animals. And as far as the user
20 conflict issue, it's the -- the information right now doesn't
21 lend itself to show that the potential is very high for that.
22 But that's hard to say because it is a potential.

23
24 That concludes the Staff analysis.

25
26 MR. BOYD: Mr. Chair, this is Tom Boyd. The Staff
27 Committee recommends adoption of the proposal to close
28 Federal public lands in Unit 9(D) and Unit 10 for the taking
29 of caribou by non-Federally qualified subsistence users from
30 September 1 to March 31 with the modification that Federal
31 lands be closed to non-Federally qualified subsistence users
32 only in 9(D), given that the issue is moot in 10.

33
34 In regard to 9(D) the Staff Committee supported the
35 concern expressed by the Council members who stated that
36 local residents who are heavily dependent on caribou are not
37 able to hunt this resource now for several years. And then
38 were prevented by bad weather from doing much hunting when
39 the Federal harvest was open to subsistence users for two
40 years. The Staff Committee members agree that, especially
41 since there have been wide fluctuations in the herd's
42 population, it's better to move slowly in the opening of the
43 harvest.

44
45 It was also noted that Federal land is only about 20

46 percent of the Unit in 9(D) and that State had been unable to
47 accurately monitor hunting of caribou in the Unit.

48

49 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay. Department comments.

50

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1 MR. BOYD: I think we want to go to Refuge comments.

2

3 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, yes. Refuge comments.

4

5 MR. PEOTTER: This is Rick Peotter, Izembek Refuge.
6 In essence, we do agree with the subsistence Staff comments
7 that Donna just put forward. So all of that information is
8 agreed upon. And we recognize the Regional Council's
9 concern, and because of that, I guess, we'd like to make the
10 recommendation, basically it would be to close Federal lands
11 within the Izembek Game Guide Unit. In essence, this is the
12 road system bear hunt area as described in Page 48 of the
13 Alaska hunting regulation, State regs.

14

15 Basically surrounds the road area of Izembek Refuge
16 and portion of Alaska Peninsula Refuge. And in essence,
17 that's where the prime public interaction would be located.
18 And this would free up the area north of here to allow the
19 guides access to Refuge lands and fill their nonresident
20 permits, 50 of them are being issued for that. Provide for
21 other local or Alaska residents to be able to come here and
22 be able to go outside to provide some of the caribou that are
23 in here.

24

25 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you. Department
26 comments.

27

28 MR. ROBUS: Yes, Mr. Chair, this is Matt Robus. The
29 Department has approached this State hunt, the institution of
30 a State hunt pretty conservatively. And as was mentioned
31 during the earlier report, hunting may become a pretty
32 important tool to cap this herd at a healthy level but
33 doesn't damage the range.

34

35 One of the things that happened at the Board of Game
36 meeting in spring was to carefully craft the timing of the
37 season to reduce user conflicts. And we believe that that's
38 sufficient to give local hunters an opportunity to hunt
39 caribou without a lot of outside influence or conflict. And
40 the Staff analysis, the Federal Staff analysis dated July
41 15th agrees with that approach, and so we ask that --
42 rejected. We don't feel that it's necessary to protect local
43 hunters.

44

45 And I'd like to defer to Dick Sellers, who's actually

46 managing this herd, to make any specific comments that he'd
47 like.

48

49 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Mr. Sellers.

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1 MR. SELLERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair, this is Dick
2 Sellers. I'd first like to bring the Federal Board up to the
3 latest in terms of population numbers. At last week's Staff
4 Committee meeting I didn't have the photographs from this
5 post-calving census. I've since then been able to count the
6 caribou off the photos and the photo count for this year was
7 3,612 caribou with 26 percent calves. And that represents
8 another good calf production year following the kind of
9 banner year that we had last year. And given this number of
10 caribou and the level of productivity the last two years, I
11 think the appropriate harvest level is between three and 400
12 caribou.

13
14 I would like to emphasize that given the last two
15 banner years in calf production, we can anticipate a rather
16 large potential for increase two to three year from now when
17 these young caribou reach a maximum reproductive potential.
18 So I think it's incumbent upon us to look ahead a little bit
19 and start to ratchet back on the rate of growth. I'd also
20 like to recognize that during this period of population
21 decline there's been huge public sacrifice in terms of closed
22 seasons from 1993 to 1996. During that period, starting in
23 both 1995 and 1996, there were public proposals to reopen the
24 season and in both those years the State and the Federal
25 system took a very conservative approach and hunting was not
26 reinstated until 1997, with two recent Federal openings.
27 And I would again like to emphasize the harvest estimates
28 were achieved during those two recent Federal harvests of 32
29 and 23 caribou. And I recognize that might be somewhat
30 under-reported and I also recognize that the weather
31 conditions were not real favorable to wintertime hunting the
32 past two season, but the difference between what could be
33 anticipated under continued Federal closure of the lands and
34 just an open season, I think it's pretty minuscule. I think
35 the benefits to be gained in terms of competition, reduced
36 competition for overall harvest levels are not significant.

37
38 That will wrap up my comments.

39
40 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you. Do we have anybody
41 wishing to testify from the public?

42
43 MR. BOYD: We do have Mr. Gunlogson in the room. He
44 would like to address this proposal.

45

46 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay.

47

48 MR. BOYD: I might add, while he's coming forward,
49 that he has passed out a handout and I presume he may address
50 that also.

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1 MR. GUNLOGSON: Board members, thank you for the
2 opportunity to testify on this issue. I have given you
3 written comments and I am reluctant to read them all into the
4 record if you're going to read them and consider them. On
5 the other hand, if that's necessary, I could so do. I know
6 your time is valuable and so I'll forgo that except for maybe
7 some brief comments to that.

8
9 I am an Alaska registered master guide number 51.
10 And I've hunted this area for over 35 years now, every year
11 that there has been a season for a bear or caribou to hunt.
12 And I currently hold special use permits to hunt on the
13 Refuge land. That is traditionally a part of the area that I
14 have hunted over the years. I also have the only, to my
15 knowledge, and I think that's accurate, permanent lodge in
16 Unit 9(D) that is an ongoing facility.

17
18 As Dick Sellers mentioned, we incurred a lot of
19 financial loss starting in 1993 when we were unable to hunt
20 caribou in this area. We chose not to -- because of our
21 investment in this area and all, we chose not to wander off
22 to other areas during that time to hunt in other places.

23
24 The concern that I'm going to address in this issue
25 right now has to -- it specifically relates to the
26 nonresidence season September 10th to the 25th. This is the
27 one that will enable us to participate in the hunt and the
28 State has given us that opportunity. Our harvest will be
29 very limited and it will be limited to a small number of old
30 bulls. The biologists have agreed that there is a high
31 percentage of old bulls in this herd to harvest. They're
32 going to die anyway of old age. I further understand that we
33 have -- have or are witnessing a modern miracle at this
34 point, in that, the -- my understanding, that both the State
35 and the Federal biologists in the field recognize that there
36 is no problem with an opening of hunting on State and Federal
37 lands jointly at this time.

38
39 As a practical matter it won't make -- we will
40 conduct our hunts either way for the small number of animals
41 that we plan to take because we will take them on State land
42 if that's the only thing that's available to us. It's a bit
43 confusing in the field because the caribou haven't recognized
44 the line between State and Federal land out there to my
45 knowledge. The line angles kind of right through the middle

46 of the area that we traditionally hunt in that area, and so
47 it can be really confusing in the field if we were out with a
48 client representing ourselves and the state of Alaska, to
49 have a good hunt and we're pursuing a caribou and that
50 caribou has proceeded a mile and now he's 10 yards across the

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1 boundary in the Federal land and we go back to camp and drink
2 coffee. However, as I say, we will hunt one way or the
3 other. It also limits our opportunity to take the oldest and
4 most desirable of the harvest animals that are out there, the
5 old bulls.

6

7 Last year Federal land only was open in that area to
8 any hunters. And my lodge is very close to Nelson Lagoon
9 village and they're all old friends of mine. They have, you
10 know, were not able to hunt on State lands which lies around
11 their village, and Federal land is a long ways away. I think
12 that at this point in time now that the State has cooperated
13 by opening State land to these people, as well as other
14 users, that it's time for the Federal government to share in
15 that cooperation and allow hunting for all user groups on a
16 limited basis because it's been already indicated it's
17 biologically justified.

18

19 I think that the rapid growth, as Dick Sellers
20 referred to in this herd, is of an extreme concern at this
21 point. If this herd goes into another crash within a short
22 period of time due to the abuse of the habitat, it's going to
23 be a long time in coming back again. This is, I think, as
24 real a problem as there is in the whole area because caribou
25 do not grow -- herds do not grow by addition. Caribou herds
26 grow by multiplication. This herd has already doubled and
27 more than doubled since its low point. And we are in real
28 danger of abusing this herd if it is allowed to reach the
29 point where it crashes again.

30

31 If the Board does feel that there is a need to
32 address closures in certain small areas such as the Cold Bay
33 road system in November, they can so designate. But there is
34 no reason at this time to close all remote areas in the
35 September hunt of other users, especially based on the fact
36 that this is going to be such a tiny harvest. As I say, I've
37 hunted in that area an awful long time and I do not expect a
38 deluge of hunters to show up in that area from the 10th of
39 September to the 25th.

40

41 Traditionally, in the past we have been virtually the
42 only guide operation that was hunting on that. And I
43 requested the State Board not to run the caribou season in
44 conjunction with the bear season this fall so that there
45 would not be a conflict between excessive number of

46 nontraditional guides in that area hunting these caribou.

47

48 One thing that the State -- or that could be done in
49 regulation to control the Cold Bay road system is that there
50 could be a regulation that no State or Federal employees can

00017

1 go to Cold Bay on an inspection trip when they hear the
2 caribou just got in. And if this Board has an agenda that's
3 unrelated to biological justification on this issue, I guess
4 that would be of grave concern to me.

5

6 Thank you very much.

7

8 MR. BOYD: Mr. Chair, this is Tom again. I have some
9 folks on line who may wish to testify as the public.

10

11 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Do we have any additional
12 requests for public testimony at this time?

13

14 MR. WOLF: Yes, Mr. Chairman this is Matt Wolf.

15

16 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yes.

17

18 MR. WOLF: Yes, I would like to reiterate the
19 testimony of Mr. Dick Gunlogson and further it by stating
20 that this proposal is driven by concerns about hunter and
21 human conflict. I have been down in that area and have
22 hunted for the last 15 years and I have never, ever in that
23 time come upon a human conflict. That area is just so
24 remote, no other operators are down there. And I stress
25 leave this open for Federal open for nonresidents.

26

27 Thank you.

28

29 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you. Any additional
30 requests for public comments at this time? Hearing none,
31 then we'll move on with Regional Council comments.

32

33 MR. TRUMBLE: This is Della Trumble in King Cove. I
34 don't know where to start here. First of all, this rapid
35 population growth. I'd just like to add that for those four
36 years that we weren't allowed to hunt it was because of the
37 decline in the caribou population. The people in this region
38 were not able to hunt for the past two years. The first year
39 we had extreme high winds and the people were not able to
40 harvest their caribou. The second year, which is this past
41 year, we had a tremendous amount of snow which is quite
42 unusual for the region and it has been many years that we've
43 had that much snow.

44

45 The permits that were drawn out -- a lot of people

46 turned in the permits, their names to harvest the caribou,
47 some people that maybe even don't hunt, people that normally
48 do hunt maybe didn't -- weren't issued them. And still a lot
49 of the people that do hunt that received the permits were not
50 able to harvest because of the weather.

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1 Population over the four year period, this herd was
2 not allowed to open, only by subsistence harvest, which we
3 appreciated because of one thing, one major factor in these
4 surveys. That local hunters for those two years were going
5 out with the game biologists to survey these caribou because
6 the low amount of numbers that were given to us as this
7 population was increasing slow when we weren't able to hunt,
8 that has also helped in determining where these caribou were.
9

10 Another concern, the decline, ethnically in my mind
11 and a lot of us here don't believe, you know, we're not
12 really -- there's nothing that says exactly why this herd
13 declined as fast as it did. People in this region have not
14 been able to harvest caribou because of the weather. State
15 lands are open and it's my understanding that it is to bulls
16 and cows. At the last (inaudible - telephone cuts out)
17 talked about this, that the areas around Pavlof and Morzhovoi
18 are places these guys out here would rather hunt and normally
19 do hunt. They've hunted Izembek and gone into -- tried to
20 get into Izembek to hunt the past year and the weather has
21 been bad.

22
23 The lands that are open are closer to home. The
24 Pavlof area, King Cove hunters go to, Sand Point and Nelson
25 Lagoon. False Pass hunt the Morzhovoi area. With these
26 lands open, all of our corporation lands and State lands, I
27 think the impact of that is going to be a lot higher harvest
28 in the next year even if we do have some good weather and
29 these guys are able to get out and hunt.

30
31 I really think that being able to go into Izembek and
32 hunt if they can get up there is going to be a good thing.

33
34 I'm really -- my concern is there's 2,300 residents
35 in this region, and if the limit is three to 400 caribou, I
36 think that those harvest limits are going to be higher
37 because we're going to be able to hunt, not only closer to
38 home, but areas that are easier to get to. And until we can
39 get a little bit accurate hold of what's going on with this
40 herd, I really feel that this -- a lot of the people here in
41 this community have supported this, we feel that this should
42 -- Izembek, or Federal lands should only be open to residents
43 in this region, at least, one more year until we can
44 determine what is happening with this herd; whether it can be
45 harvested.

46

47 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you. Additional
48 Regional Council comment.

49

50 MS. SHELLIKOF: Yes, this is Gilda Shellikof.

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1 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Go ahead.

2

3 MS. SHELLIKOF: I feel much the same way Della does
4 in talking to the people around here, you know, with being so
5 long without any caribou hunt and then all of a sudden it's
6 open up to everybody and nobody seems to really know -- they
7 don't even know for sure how many are on this island, you
8 know, it's obvious you don't have accurate numbers. And I
9 feel like, you know, if we could just have this closed just
10 one more year, which to try to make a more accurate counts.
11 And so that -- and I think that it's going to be, with the
12 State open, there's going to be a lot more caribou taken by
13 local people this year. And we're just asking, you know,
14 just for this one year so that we'll get a better handle on
15 what's going on.

16

17 So maybe if you guys know what's going on you should
18 share it with the communities beforehand and maybe have
19 community meetings so that people know what's going on.
20 Because I know there was one year they had local people going
21 up with the counters and that opened up a lot of
22 communication, it made people feel more comfortable about
23 what's going on. And you know, that's one of the things you
24 should consider when you're doing counting. And so we just
25 -- that's the reason for requesting that the Federal lands be
26 closed, is just so that we don't end up back where we started
27 from the first year, open to everybody.

28

29 Thank you.

30

31 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you. Additional
32 Regional Council comments.

33

34 MR. OLSEN: Yes, Mark Olsen here.

35

36 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Mark, go ahead.

37

38 MR. OLSEN: Thank you. I have to agree with what has
39 been said as we have worked on this project here for four
40 years as we have mentioned. I guess I have several concerns
41 here as far as the opening proposed here.

42

43 I recall back as to what was designated as the reason
44 for the decline of this herd from 10,000 animals, which was
45 the grazing, which I had a hard time and still have a hard

46 time ever believing that could have been it. For the simple
47 fact is, we never did find 8,000 carcasses laying around at
48 any given time or any -- any suggestion that that's what had
49 happened. And here again, if the grazing was the problem we
50 were told that it'd probably take an astronomical time, 10 to

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1 20 years before this grazing lands would be suitable for the
2 animals once again.

3

4 Here, in the good times though we have experienced a
5 good growth of the resource, production here. So that brings
6 us a great question here as to we have not answered what has
7 happened. I think we need more time to study these and look
8 at the situations so we don't get ourselves in trouble again
9 with a nonharvestable resource due to population.

10

11 The other concern that I have is to look at the way
12 subsistence and the other user groups and how the government
13 has set up for what's known as the peer hunts. Now, we have
14 never, State or Federal, as far as I know, have never set up
15 thresholds or counts or numbers that is going to alleviate
16 this problem that we would know where and when -- when it'd
17 open to public, when is it open to the commercial hunters,
18 when's it open to sport hunters, when is it open to the
19 subsistence hunters? I believe this is a very crucial tool
20 that needs to be fulfilled, that we don't have to come
21 through this year after year and have the displeasure of not
22 being able to meet the needs.

23

24 At any rate, I certainly support the issue that we do
25 hold off one more year and that we can once again get
26 together with the State and Federal governments as well as
27 the communities involved in these areas to once again sit
28 down and look at a long-range plan of how this might be
29 handled better.

30

31 Thank you.

32

33 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Regional Council comment.

34

35 MS. TRUMBLE: This is Della again, if I can add two
36 more things, Mr. Chair.

37

38 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Go ahead.

39

40 MS. TRUMBLE: I think concerning to the growth of
41 this herd. I think a lot of the contribution that has gone
42 into this is the limited harvest in the region. They also --
43 the State lands will allow for the nonresidents, the limited
44 hunt on State lands.

45

46 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Any other comments. Hello?

47

48 MR. BOYD: Mr. Chair, are you there?

49

50 (No response)

00021

1 MR. BOYD: Mitch, are you there?

2

3 (No response)

4

5 MR. BOYD: Let's standby, it appears we lost the
6 Chairman.

7

8 (Off record)

9

10 (On record)

11

12 MR. BOYD: Let's go ahead and get started again. I
13 think we have some Board members taking a break.

14

15 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Just let me know when
16 everybody gets assembled.

17

18 MR. BOYD: We're ready to go, Mr. Chairman.

19

20 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, let's carry on. Is
21 there any other Regional Council comments? If not, then
22 we'll go ahead and advance this to Board deliberation.

23

24 MR. CHRISTENSEN: Is this an opportunity to say
25 something?

26

27 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Who's this?

28

29 MR. CHRISTENSEN: This is Duane Christensen, Anchor
30 Point.

31

32 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Are you a Regional Council
33 representative?

34

35 MR. CHRISTENSEN: No.

36

37 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Oh, are you wishing to
38 testify; is that it?

39

40 MR. CHRISTENSEN: Yes.

41

42 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: All right.

43

44 MR. CHRISTENSEN: I don't actually know how I got
45 involved in this. I just tried to call and make some

46 comments to the Board and they patched me through to you
47 folks.

48

49 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, go ahead, Mr.

50 Christensen. Yeah, public testimony had ceased a little

00022

1 while ago but we'll go ahead and give you the opportunity to
2 testify.

3

4 MR. CHRISTENSEN: Okay, well, my name's Duane
5 Christensen, Anchor Point. I've been an Alaska resident for
6 49 years. I'm a White male. And I had the unfortunate
7 experience of overhearing some conversation with the Board
8 down in Ninilchik, talking about subsistence and it got me a
9 little bit upset over what's going on here with subsistence.

10

11 Like I said, I've been here 49 years and I'm about to
12 be excluded, it looks like to me, from the right to hunt and
13 to subsist because I'm White. And this is wrong, totally
14 wrong. I heard these Board members in Ninilchik saying that
15 it wasn't about culture, that it was about their right to
16 take away my hunting privilege because I'm White, and I just
17 -- I got to say, that if they're arguing for limited
18 subsistence for the Native culture, then you have to consider
19 what is culture. High powered rifles and snowmachines and
20 four-wheelers and such are White man's culture, and it's not
21 the Native culture. And I think it's totally wrong to start
22 dividing the people of Alaska up, and I don't think that we
23 have the right to say to somebody because they happen to live
24 on Fourth Avenue in Anchorage that they can't hunt, subsist
25 in this state.

26

27 So I guess I wasn't prepared to say, public
28 testimony, but I guess I'll let it go at that.

29

30 Thank you.

31

32 MS. SHELLIKOF: Can I make a comment?

33

34 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Uh-huh.

35

36 MS. SHELLIKOF: This is Gilda. When we talk about
37 our subsistence down here, we don't divide it into Native or
38 non-Native, it's for the residents of this area regardless of
39 what race they are.

40

41 MR. CHRISTENSEN: That's not what I heard at the
42 Board.

43

44 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yeah, I'm sure -- you're
45 talking about something on the Kenai Peninsula?

46

47 MR. CHRISTENSEN: Yes.

48

49 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yeah, okay, that's got nothing
50 to do with what's on the agenda here today.

00023

1 MR. CHRISTENSEN: Oh, I'm sorry.

2

3 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: We're discussing (inaudible -
4 telephone cuts out).

5

6 MR. CHRISTENSEN: Oh, I see, okay.

7

8 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yeah.

9

10 MR. CHRISTENSEN: Well, they patched me through to
11 the wrong people. I'm sorry. Okay, bye-bye.

12

13 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: It's okay, bye-bye. Okay,
14 let's go ahead, is there any other -- if there are no other
15 comments then we'll go ahead and move on to Board
16 deliberations.

17

18 MR. GOODWIN: Mr. Chairman.

19

20 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yes.

21

22 MR. GOODWIN: Yeah, this is Willie Goodwin from
23 Kotzebue. I've been listening but I wasn't sure until I
24 questioned a biologist of whether or not this herd fluctuates
25 in population, and she told me it does. You know, up in
26 Kotzebue, our Western Arctic herd fluctuates. Local
27 knowledge says it's, you know, it's every 40 years or so it
28 takes a nosedive down to about 100,000. Now, if this herd
29 fluctuates every 15 years, it's a natural thing.

30

31 Because what our knowledge knows up north is that the
32 herd can only eat so much food. So if the food is depleted,
33 then naturally it's going to decline. So if this happens
34 every 15 years, I think that the action that's before you
35 would be consistent to make sure that the local people have
36 the priority over these animals. Because at some point in
37 time it will come back up, and then consideration for other
38 users can be considered.

39

40 And as far as I can tell, just based on what I heard
41 this morning, State regulations can't keep it stable, even if
42 they open it up. So I think that with Federal action to
43 close it to other people is consistent with what's happening
44 with the natural growth and decline of the herd, and I
45 certainly would support it.

46

47 Thank you very much.

48

49 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you. Further Regional

50 Council comments.

00024

1 MS. TRUMBLE: This is Della again. I just want to
2 reiterate that we're really are only asking for one more
3 year. Like we haven't been able to hunt for four years,
4 weren't able to hunt because of weather for the past two
5 years to at least get close to the harvest levels, and at
6 least give us a chance to be able to hunt the State lands and
7 see what that looks like for one year and then go from there.

8
9 Thank you very much.

10
11 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Further Regional Council
12 comment. Let's move it on to Board deliberation.

13
14 MR. D. ALLEN: Mr. Chairman, this is Dave Allen. One
15 thing I wanted to get clear in my mind was the -- I
16 understand the State regulation allows for a harvest in 9(D).
17 This is the first time it's been open or was it open last
18 year? Could you give me a recap on exactly what the State
19 regulations have done to allow Federal harvest in 9(D)?

20
21 MS. DEWHURST: Okay. The last time the State hunt
22 was open, I believe was '92, was the last year that there was
23 a State hunt. What the Game Board did, and there are State
24 folks on-line that can correct me if I state this wrong, they
25 closed it to in-State residents from September 21st to
26 November 14th, and that was to try to eliminate the conflicts
27 with in-State residents coming down and shooting caribou as a
28 separate -- or as a secondary thing. They were actually
29 coming down either for goose hunting or bear hunting. And so
30 the idea was to close it during that period to try to limit
31 the conflicts.

32
33 Then they also restricted the nonresident season to
34 that September 10th to the 25th, and it is a bulls only with
35 a cap on it. That is a restricted season.

36
37 So those were the two restrictions the State did put
38 on the State season to try to -- it is an attempt to reduce
39 the number of potential conflicts.

40
41 MR. D. ALLEN: Okay. So if I understand what the
42 State has done in 9(D), is they have opened up 80 percent of
43 the area which had previously been closed since '93. The
44 Federal lands we have had a permit hunt for local users for
45 what, the last two years?

46
47
48
49
50

MS. DEWHURST: The last two years.

MR. D. ALLEN: The last two years.

00025

1 MS. DEWHURST: Now, keep in mind, even though the
2 80/20 split on Federal lands, I did look at the harvest data
3 base and I looked at what information I had from the State,
4 and historically a very large percentage of the harvest had
5 always been from the Cold Bay road system. Even though that
6 only represents 20 percent of the lands, most of the harvest
7 has been from that 20 percent of the lands, upwards of 75
8 percent or 80 percent of the harvest, so that's something to
9 consider relative to the amount of land.

10
11 MR. D. ALLEN: Well, that's what I wanted to zero in
12 on. So given those facts, that the issue of concern seems to
13 revolve around these levels associated with the road system,
14 right?

15
16 MS. DEWHURST: Uh-huh. (Affirmative)

17
18 MR. D. ALLEN: And right now, the State has closed
19 that area between September 21st and November 14th, right
20 to.....

21
22 MS. DEWHURST: And that was mainly during the goose
23 season and the bear season to reduce the.....

24
25 MR. D. ALLEN:to nonlocal users?

26
27 MS. DEWHURST: Right. To reduce the potential for
28 somebody wanting to come down and do a combo hunt.

29
30 MR. D. ALLEN: Mr. Chairman, what I'm trying to get
31 at here is I'm not -- you know, I'm having difficulty seeing
32 what real impact the closure actually has on the lands. And
33 given the actions that have already been taken by the State
34 to close it during periods that are known to be potentially
35 high user conflicts, and while it is open later on in the
36 year, I guess the idea that it would be users that were
37 interested in trophy hunting would be coming in the spring, I
38 assume -- is there a bear hunt in the spring? Are the
39 reasons hunters are in the.....

40
41 MR. GUNLOGSON: The bear hunting season is in the
42 spring in the even numbered years, and the bear hunt in the
43 fall is the odd numbered years.

44
45 MS. DEWHURST: This season ends March 31st.

46

47 MR. D. ALLEN: So the State season actually closes
48 right now for caribou before.....

49

50 MS. DEWHURST: The spring bear hunt.

00026

1 MR. D. ALLEN:before the spring bear hunt.

2

3 MS. DEWHURST: Well, actually it's closed during the
4 fall.

5

6 MR. D. ALLEN: Mr. Chairman, the reason for these
7 questions was to try to bring some focus to the issue and
8 maybe we can get some clarification. But it would seem that
9 the greatest concern revolves around potential conflicts on
10 the Izembek road system by some of the local users and others
11 outside, but that, in fact, during the period in which we
12 would expect most outsiders to actually be there from
13 September 21st to November 14th is closed to those people for
14 caribou.

15

16 I'm having some difficulty understanding, you know,
17 completely, what we hope to accomplish by this particular
18 closure to, in fact, benefit the local users. It seems to me
19 that the combination of things and the normal user patterns
20 would indicate that it would do very little if anything.
21 What might be open to discussion is the period September 1st
22 to September 20th currently open, and that would enable
23 nonlocal users to use the road system.

24

25 But I'd be interested to hear anymore information,
26 specifically about where people expect conflicts to actually
27 occur and during what periods.

28

29 MR. SELLERS: Mr. Chairman, this is Dick Sellers.
30 Can I comment on Mr. Allen's question?

31

32 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Go ahead.

33

34 MR. SELLERS: I'd just like to add that there were
35 other considerations that played into the way the State
36 season was crafted. And one of the most important was to
37 have it closed during the rut and that's been done. And then
38 in terms of when it reopened, November 15th, that was set
39 recognizing that a good portion of the mature bulls will have
40 dropped their antlers or in the process of it, so that the
41 appeal of going to Cold Bay after November 15th for one
42 caribou and not likely to be a trophy size or at least have
43 trophy antlers would not be real appealing given the cost.
44 So you know, we certainly recognize the need to accommodate
45 local use and try to do that without incurring a big influx

46 of nonlocal hunters.

47

48 MR. WILSON: Mr. Chairman.

49

50 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: yes.

00027

1 MR. WILSON: This is Curt Wilson, BLM. I wanted to
2 follow up with the Refuge comments. I believe I heard
3 something that they were maybe modifying the position that
4 they were taking the other day a little bit in reference to
5 the road system. Could somebody explain to me what you were
6 thinking there?

7
8 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: (Inaudible - telephone cuts out)

9
10 MR. BOYD: Yes, we hear you. Is Rick Peotter there?

11
12 MR. PEOTTER: I am, but I didn't hear the question.
13 You guys cut out for some reason.

14
15 MR. BOYD: Okay.

16
17 MR. WILSON: Yeah, the question was, I thought I
18 heard in your comments earlier, that maybe you had changed
19 your thinking a little bit on the road system in Izembek.
20 Could you follow up with some more on that?

21
22 MR. PEOTTER: Yeah, I probably wasn't clear. The
23 bottom line is we do not support the closure but as a
24 compromise I would recommend just closing the area around
25 Cold Bay. That's the bottom line of it.

26
27 MR. WILSON: Would that be easy -- would that be
28 relatively easy to show on a map and those kinds of things?

29
30 MR. PEOTTER: It's currently described in the State
31 regulations for brown bear hunting on Page 48, so yeah fairly
32 easily. We're going to have to -- if we oppose the closure
33 of Federal lands, we would have to develop maps here anyway
34 that would show the open -- or actually the closed area.
35 Because we have a -- well, a smattering of some Federal lands
36 such as the FAA withdrawal inside the Refuge would be still
37 open for a resident of Alaska for hunting. So, you know, we
38 would be developing some maps plus there's other corporation
39 lands, you know, that need to be identified around here.

40
41 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

42
43 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Additional questions.

44
45 MR. GOODWIN: Mr. Chairman, this is Willie Goodwin.

46 I'm just wondering if the State has a Tier I or Tier II hunt
47 in the area?

48

49 MR. BOYD: The answer, Mr. Chair, is that there is no
50 Tier II permit -- there is no Tier II situation here.

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1 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you.

2

3 MR. D. ALLEN: Mr. Chairman, this is Dave Allen
4 again. If I may, again, I'm trying as best I can to
5 understand and isolate the concerns of potential competition
6 to make sure that our local users certain have the
7 opportunity to take animals. But the picture so far to me is
8 still not very clear as to how significant that potential
9 competition is. Perhaps Della or someone else would like to
10 comment, you know, once again, other than the road system
11 around Cold Bay, is there something specific about Federal
12 lands, an area on Federal lands that is of concern given the
13 fact that outside of the Cold Bay road system, basically the
14 Peninsula is unroaded and access is only by other means?

15

16 MS. TRUMBLE: This is Della. On the State land
17 portion of it, like I say, there's some bays and areas that
18 the people will hunt and they will go in by boat. As far as
19 the Izembek/Cold Bay, the main concern is the road system.
20 If you look at the past years and the harvest of caribou,
21 then probably the Cold Bay residents that drew the permits
22 were able to harvest, my guess is at least 100 percent of
23 those permits.

24

25 I also know and am I aware that residents from Sand
26 Point, were having designated hunters in Cold Bay harvest
27 their caribou off that road system. The access is easier.

28

29 Our concern -- our major concern at this point, is
30 not only just the impact of what's going to happen with the
31 State opening is -- and not being clear, and whether the
32 weather will be a factor. We've had winters that we've had
33 this extreme good weather all winter. We don't know yet
34 what's going to happen. And I feel, the major part of this
35 is we feel that, given that we were closed down for four
36 years, we weren't able to harvest the last two years, I think
37 all of that has contributed to the population. Give us at
38 least a chance, the people in this region, one more year to
39 take a look at what's happening. And the road system in Cold
40 Bay is a major concern for us.

41

42 And the other part that hasn't been mentioned in the
43 seasons is there's a lot of sports fishing that happens in
44 August and September in Cold Bay. People do fly in to Cold
45 Bay to go sport fishing, and later the hunting and then we

46 get into the bear season. But it's also been in our
47 experience that we get stuck in Cold Bay a lot of times and
48 when you're stuck there for two to three days -- if you're
49 Alaska resident. And we have a lot of people flying back and
50 forth -- back and forth between here and King Cove, that does

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1 give some other people an opportunity to hunt. And just --
2 just maybe those thoughts to consider.

3
4 MR. D. ALLEN: Mr. Chairman.

5
6 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yes.

7
8 MR. D. ALLEN: Yeah, if I could have one follow-up
9 question with Della then. Della, do you have an opinion
10 you'd care to share with us about the alternative that the
11 Refuge has recommended?

12
13 MS. TRUMBLE: I appreciate, you know, they're trying
14 to come to some terms with this. I guess if it's -- if the
15 road system is closed to nonresidents but it's open to
16 residents, then maybe there's something there. But I think
17 the major concern about all of this is the fact that 80
18 percent of these lands are open. Federal lands only take in
19 20 percent. And the impact of those 80 percent, and I know
20 just in King Cove you can drive out to the airport, get on a
21 four-wheeler and go up toward Mt. Dutton and people can get
22 caribou there.

23
24 Just trying to look at the impact of this and for one
25 year, give us one more year to look at it. We've suffered
26 our losses for the past six years due to closures and
27 weather, all we're asking for is one more year to truly
28 determine what could happen here.

29
30 MR. D. ALLEN: But again -- Mr. Chairman.

31
32 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yes.

33
34 MR. D. ALLEN: You know, other than the road system,
35 what are the concerns about conflicts with other users in
36 this regard, and if so, you know, can you be specific, on
37 Federal lands? I'm sorry, Della, I meant that question for
38 you.

39
40 MS. TRUMBLE: I'm sorry, could you please ask again?

41
42 MR. D. ALLEN: Yeah. I was just asking, again, other
43 than the road system in Izembek, are there some concerns
44 about conflicts with nonlocal users, and if so, can you be
45 specific where they might be?

46

47 MS. TRUMBLE: I don't know specifically where that
48 would be. Like I said, my understanding that the State regs
49 will allow for a limited hunt by permit drawing for
50 nonresidents. And I guess, like I say, the biggest conflict

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1 or concern is the fact that a lot more lands are open and
2 what impact that will be.

3

4 I'm not sure exactly where everybody goes to hunt up
5 in Cold Bay over and above on the Federal lands around that
6 area. Whether they're residents or nonresidents. Well,
7 mainly nonresidents.

8

9 Gilda.

10

11 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yes, go ahead.

12

13 MS. SHELLIKOF: Yeah, I think, you know, what we're
14 trying to say is that what we would like to see is what
15 impact on the herd the State opening is going to have because
16 as Della said, there's going to be a lot more caribou taken
17 by local residents this year. And that, you know, 80 percent
18 of the land that wasn't open the last three years is going to
19 be open this year, and I think what we're trying to say is,
20 is just to be more cautious and if we could have this 20
21 percent of the land closed, you know, to nonresidents, just
22 for this one year just so that we could see what kind of
23 impact that it's going to have on the herd, you know, after.

24

25 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you. Go ahead, Dave, do
26 you have another question?

27

28 MR. D. ALLEN: Yeah, I've got another question.
29 Could I have Donna tell us exactly what the Federal hunt is
30 right now on Federal lands for caribou on 9(D)? What is the
31 regulation?

32

33 MS. DEWHURST: It isn't a Federal hunt. There is no
34 Federal hunt, it's the State hunt.

35

36 MR. D. ALLEN: In 9(D)?

37

38 MS. DEWHURST: Oh, you mean the past two years?

39

40 MR. D. ALLEN: Yes.

41

42 MS. DEWHURST: The first year, you'll have to excuse
43 me because this is not normally my area. The first year I
44 believe it was 160 permits were issued for bulls only. Sixty
45 of these were for False Pass for use on Unimak. Out of that

46 32 caribou were reported harvested with about 63 percent
47 reporting. Then the next year it was increased it 235 bulls
48 only permits. Of those only 61 were issued -- or was applied
49 for. Everybody that applied for got one. Only 61 people
50 applied for permits out of 135 possible. Out of the 61

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1 people who got permits, 23 caribou were harvested -- reported
2 harvested. That's the past two years of the Federal hunt.
3 There is no Federal hunt on the books for this year. So the
4 only hunt would be the State open hunt.

5

6 MR. D. ALLEN: So the only hunt right now that's on
7 the books is State open hunt which means that there's no hunt
8 even for local residents between -- am I understanding this?

9

10 MS. DEWHURST: The State open hunt is -- the Federal
11 lands are not closed under the State hunt. Everybody -- you
12 can hunt anywhere.

13

14 MR. D. ALLEN: No, I understand that.

15

16 MS. DEWHURST: Yeah.

17

18 MR. D. ALLEN: But there is no Federal permit hunt
19 regulation books in 9(D) at all?

20

21 MS. DEWHURST: Correct. Correct, because both the
22 previous hunts were special actions that were only good for
23 one year.

24

25 MR. D. ALLEN: How did we deal with this during our
26 spring regulatory season? There was no recommended hunt,
27 subsistence hunt for this year in.....

28

29 MR. EDENSHAW: Mr. Allen, this is.....

30

31 MR. D. ALLEN:9(D).....

32

33 MR. EDENSHAW:Cliff.....

34

35 MR. D. ALLEN: Go ahead.

36

37 MR. EDENSHAW: Mr. Allen, this is Cliff Edenshaw, the
38 Regional Coordinator for Kodiak Aleutians. At the meeting in
39 February in Port Lions, Robert Willis, at the time who was
40 the biologist for the regional team presented the proposal on
41 behalf of the State. The State was not at the meeting.

42 Mr. Sellers nor Steve Machita or Larry VanDaele, who normally
43 speak on behalf of the State. Mr. Willis recommended to the
44 Council in Port Lions that they should forego a Federal hunt
45 in terms of a State hunt, that was his comments at the Port

46 Lions meeting that was in February.

47

48 MR. D. ALLEN: That was the Regional Advisory Council

49 meeting?

50

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1 MR. EDENSHAW: Yes.

2

3 MR. D. ALLEN: So the Regional Advisory Council had
4 no recommendation, in other words, for a Federal hunt this
5 year. And what you're saying is that was because the State at
6 that time was acceptable and agreeable to the Regional
7 Advisory Council; am I correct in that?

8

9 MR. EDENSHAW: At the Regional Council meeting in
10 Port Lions, the Board of Game wasn't to meet until March and
11 Robert Willis' comments were that it would be more favorable
12 for the residents of the region to forego a Federal hunt and
13 to see what the outcome of the proposal, when the Board of
14 Game was to address that in March, which was to have a wide
15 open hunt. And basically Mr. Willis expressed to the
16 Regional Council in Port Lions, that if the proposal went
17 through then they would -- it would be more favorable for
18 them to hunt on the State to....

19

20 MR. D. ALLEN: All right, well, thank you. I think I
21 understand now so that this special action is just meant to
22 further modify what they had more or less agreed to last
23 spring in anticipation of a hunt this fall.

24

25 Mr. Chairman, I guess, I'm not prepared to make a
26 motion but I'll just make a comment. I'm not sure I am
27 prepared to make even a modified -- what I'm prepared to move
28 on, but I am concerned at this point in just a blanket
29 closure given the testimony that we've heard so far. I think
30 it is important that we hear substantial evidence of need to
31 close an area. What I have been hearing are many expressions
32 and concerns about moving cautiously and I certainly would
33 not disagree with that. I think we've -- I think our
34 biologists, or at least my sense is, both on the part of the
35 Federal biologists and the State biologists, have been very
36 cautious. In fact, we've been -- we've taken a lot of
37 criticism in the past for being too cautious, with respect to
38 allowing and reopening this hunt.

39

40 So given that, I'm not -- should this motion be made,
41 I think I would just make people aware of the fact that as
42 it's presently constituted, I cannot support a complete
43 closure to Federal areas in 9(D).

44

45 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

46

47 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, is there a motion?

48

49 MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, this is Ken Thompson

50 with the Forest Service. I guess I look around the room and

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1 I see nobody particularly jumping up ready to make a motion.

2

3 I know, given the evidence that I have listened to
4 here and speaking on the side with our Staff about the
5 relative likelihood of the desirable harvest of three to 400
6 animals being met is nil to none, even if we leave all of
7 these Federal lands open. I, as a biologist, understand the
8 importance of trying to address and balance populations with
9 habitat needs, desirability of trying to come to grips with
10 achieving that balance.

11

12 So I guess I would offer the motion to reject the
13 special action.

14

15 MR. D. ALLEN: I'll second that motion, Mr. Chairman.

16

17 MR. CESAR: Mr. Chairman, this is Niles Cesar. If I
18 may make some comments. I, too, am troubled by the notion of
19 shutting it down just as a general rule without some
20 supportable biology involved. And what I keep hearing from
21 the biologists and Refuge managers and the ADF&G, there seems
22 to be more concern about the herd growing too big. And that
23 when we've opened this thing up in the last two years,
24 notwithstanding the weather problems that we've had, we've
25 only gotten a fraction of the take that could have been
26 taken. And that if someone were to craft a compromise which
27 dealt with the Cold Bay road system, then I think that is
28 something I'd be interested in. But I don't see a lot of
29 support for even that. I see moving cautiously. We still
30 have the ability to intervene on Federal public lands should
31 we need to if, in fact, there is a lot of conflicts and there
32 is some concern about overreaching the harvestable level.
33 But everything I am hearing says, we're not going to come
34 close to that harvestable level, and we're more concerned
35 about the herd overreaching the carrying capacity.

36

37 And so I'm -- I as, of course, unlike some folks,
38 I've only been here 58 years and maybe I haven't seen as much
39 as other folks, but I'm not a hunter and so I defer, you
40 know, to the guides who tell me from their perspective about
41 what they're doing out there and what they're seeing out
42 there. I don't see a major concern. I think that the
43 concern of the Regional Advisory Councils and of the
44 residents of King Cove and False Pass is duly noted, and it's
45 something that if we believe or if I believe there is going

46 to be a conflict or an expressed conflict, one that we can
47 see on the ground, then I'm willing to support immediate shut
48 down of Federal public lands. But I'm not willing, I don't
49 think, to support a complete closure of Federal public lands
50 given the information we have today.

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1 MS. GOTTLEIB: Mr. Chair, this is Judy.

2

3 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Further discussion.

4

5 MS. GOTTLEIB: Mr. Chair, this is Judy. I'm not sure
6 if part of the compromise wording, if it would help, would
7 have to do with what the Refuge manager had mentioned about
8 the Izembek controlled use area. So if that's beneficial,
9 I'm sure the Board would be open to modifying the motion.

10

11 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Was that a question, Judy, I'm
12 sorry?

13

14 MS. GOTTLEIB: Yes, please. I wonder if the Refuge
15 manager might have a comment on that?

16

17 MR. PEOTTER: Mr. Chairman, I'm not -- Judy, I'm not
18 sure I understood your question, could you repeat it for me?

19

20 MS. GOTTLEIB: Sure. Well, I see the description of
21 the Izembek controlled use area in the book and I didn't know
22 if any of that wording might be helpful to answer some of the
23 local and regional concerns, to be incorporated into a
24 motion?

25

26 MR. PEOTTER: You say you did not find it or you did?

27

28 MS. GOTTLEIB: I see the wording, I'm wondering if
29 that would be helpful to our discussions here?

30

31 MR. PEOTTER: Yeah, basically it reads, the south and
32 west of a line from Moffet Point to the side of the eastern
33 entrance of Kimseroff Lagoon (ph), and north of a line from
34 the base of Cape Glazenet (ph) to Frosty Peak and to the
35 mouth of Old Man's Lagoon.

36

37 MS. GOTTLEIB: Well, I guess, Rick, I don't have a
38 sense of how much of the Refuge that encompasses. So if
39 that's useful for our discussions, if you can give a brief
40 description of that area in terms that we can understand not
41 having a good map in front of us?

42

43 MR. PEOTTER: Okay, yeah. Basically that would cover
44 the entirety of the road system and a small portion there
45 beyond, you know, allowing for a little bit of walking

46 access. It includes all of Izembek Lagoon, and a good
47 portion of Moffet Lagoon. I guess the key is really, you
48 know, the road system. Anybody that would access from there.
49 Keep in mind out in this area you cannot use (inaudible -
50 telephone cuts out) ATVs, all terrain vehicles off of the

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1 road system here so anybody that's going to hunt off the road
2 couldn't be going more than a mile or two away from there, in
3 generalities.

4

5 I hope that helps.

6

7 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Is there any more questions on
8 the motion?

9

10 MS. TRUMBLE: This is Della, can I make a comment?

11

12 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yes.

13

14 MS. TRUMBLE: I'm curious about something. The
15 Refuge wants to open these lands for caribou hunt then why
16 can't they just stipulate that it's for residents as it has
17 been in the past two years?

18

19 MR. BOYD: Let me respond to that Mr. Chair. The
20 State already has the area open through their regulation.
21 And I think that we have been opening it up the last two
22 years by special action. We have not had such an action
23 before us to consider. The proposal before us now is simply
24 to close Federal lands. I'm not sure that answers the
25 question but it is open now under State regulations, and so
26 locals can hunt under State regulations.

27

28 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you.

29

30 MR. WILSON: Mr. Chairman.

31

32 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yes.

33

34 MR. WILSON: This is Curt Wilson, again to pursue
35 this question of some sort of compromise, I still don't have
36 the exact wording but what I'd like to throw out for maybe
37 some discussion is, reject Proposal -- this would be a move
38 to reject the proposal to close public lands in 9(D) with the
39 modification that lands near the Izembek Refuge road system
40 be closed. And that may not be the exact wording but that's
41 -- I think that's the idea.

42

43 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Well, I don't have any of the
44 wording so I'm not any help on this particular question.

45

46 MR. D. ALLEN: Mr. Chairman, this is Dave Allen
47 again. I guess, you know, once again, even the compromise
48 language, as I understand it, seems more -- potentially more
49 cosmetic, I hate to use that word but in terms of its real
50 effect. Right now the area is open to all State residents

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1 from the 1st of September to the 20th of September but closed
2 after that until November, when bear season opens and most of
3 the waterfowler's are in that area. Though, as Della pointed
4 out, during the month of September, you do have some people
5 going to the Cold Bay area for salmon fishing that might be
6 potential caribou hunters as well. And after November 15th,
7 I think -- there's been no evidence to indicate that there is
8 significant use by anyone other than local -- other than
9 local residents. So I'm having a real, real hard time
10 understanding what is being accomplished, either for
11 conservation or concerns by local users, by any kind of a
12 closure to nonlocal users.

13
14 I would also suggest, Mr. Chairman, that concerns and
15 questions raised about use levels certainly between Alaska
16 Department of Fish and Game and the Fish and Wildlife
17 Service, I would hope that as we monitor the growth and the
18 reopening of this area, certainly it's important that we do
19 gather good information on use in that area. Just an
20 outright closure after it's been closed by the State already,
21 since 1993, doesn't give us any information. I'm not sure I
22 see that by keeping it closed to nonlocal users right now
23 will be very helpful to anyone in addressing the question of
24 nonlocal users. So actually there may be some advantage to
25 get some information about what potential use level is
26 incidental to people who hunt off the road purposes.

27
28 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Any further discussion? Are
29 we ready to vote?

30
31 MR. D. ALLEN: I would call the question,
32 Mr. Chairman.

33
34 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, the question's been
35 called for. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

36
37 IN UNISON: Aye.

38
39 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Those opposed same sign.

40
41 (No opposing votes)

42
43 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Motion carries. Any further
44 business to be brought before us?

45

46 MR. BOYD: Mr. Chair, there's no further business
47 with regard to the public session of the Federal Subsistence
48 Board today.

49

50 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay.

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1 MR. BOYD: We will reconvene at 1:00 in work session.

2

3 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: What time is it right now?

4

5 MR. BOYD: I have seven or eight until noon.

6

7 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay.

8

9 MR. BOYD: And we'll get in touch with you.

10

11 CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay.

12

13 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

14

15

* * * * *

C E R T I F I C A T E

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

7 I, Joseph P. Kolasinski, Notary Public in and for the
8 State of Alaska and Owner of Computer Matrix, do hereby
9 certify:

10
11 THAT the foregoing pages numbered 02 through 37
12 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the FEDERAL
13 SUBSISTENCE BOARD PUBLIC MEETING and TELECONFERENCE, taken
14 electronically by me on the 2nd day of August, 1999,
15 beginning at the hour of 10:00 o'clock p.m. at the Offices of
16 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Gordon Watson Conference
17 Room, 1101 E. Tudor Road, Anchorage, Alaska;

18
19 THAT the transcript is a true and correct transcript
20 requested to be transcribed and thereafter transcribed by
21 Salena Hile to the best of her knowledge and ability;

22
23 THAT I am not an employee, attorney, or party
24 interested in any way in this action.

25
26 DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 8th day of August,
27 1999.

28
29
30
31
32
33

Joseph P. Kolasinski
Notary Public in and for Alaska
My Commission Expires: 4/17/00