

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Izembek National Wildlife Refuge
Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a Proposed Land
Exchange Involving Izembek National Wildlife Refuge Lands
Virtual Public Meeting Transcript
December 11, 2024, 3:00 – 5:00 pm Alaska Time

00:00:03.920 --> 00:00:09.530

Megan Stone - AECOM: Hello, everyone! I'd like to welcome you all to the US Fish and Wildlife Service's

00:00:09.550 --> 00:00:18.750

Megan Stone - AECOM: Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement virtual public meeting and the ANILCA Section 810 subsistence hearing.

00:00:18.940 --> 00:00:26.080

Megan Stone - AECOM: We're going to give folks a few minutes here to join the meeting, and then we'll begin the PowerPoint presentation shortly,

00:00:26.090 --> 00:00:27.829

Megan Stone - AECOM: so please stay tuned.

00:00:28.180 --> 00:00:37.959

Megan Stone - AECOM: I do want to note that closed captioning is available by clicking the live transcript button on your Zoom Toolbar and selecting show subtitles.

00:00:38.390 --> 00:00:43.040

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you everyone, for your patience as we give folks a few minutes to join.

00:01:59.130 --> 00:02:02.670

Megan Stone - AECOM: Again, welcome everyone to tonight's meeting.

00:02:02.780 --> 00:02:10.180

Megan Stone - AECOM: We're going to give folks just a minute here to join the meeting. So please stay tuned, and we'll start the presentation shortly.

00:02:10.440 --> 00:02:16.800

Megan Stone - AECOM: Again, I do want to note that closed captioning is available by clicking the live transcript button

00:02:16.810 --> 00:02:20.689

Megan Stone - AECOM: on your Zoom toolbar and then selecting show subtitles.

00:02:21.690 --> 00:02:26.860

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you again for your patience as we give folks just another minute here to join.

00:02:56.050 --> 00:03:06.060

Megan Stone - AECOM: Hello, everyone! We're going to go ahead and get started with our meeting this evening. On behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, I would like to thank you all for joining us.

00:03:06.250 --> 00:03:09.420

Megan Stone - AECOM: We appreciate your time and participation.

00:03:09.640 --> 00:03:16.609

Megan Stone - AECOM: My name is Megan Stone, with AECOM. We're the consulting firm that is helping the Service on this project,

00:03:16.800 --> 00:03:20.029

Megan Stone - AECOM: and I'm going to be your meeting facilitator tonight.

00:03:20.270 --> 00:03:25.550

Megan Stone - AECOM: Additionally, we have members of the Service on with us who will be introduced in a moment.

00:03:25.910 --> 00:03:27.420

Megan Stone - AECOM: Next slide, please.

00:03:31.080 --> 00:03:37.480

Megan Stone - AECOM: Before we get started with the presentation, I'm going to go over some housekeeping items for this meeting.

00:03:38.200 --> 00:03:47.010

Megan Stone - AECOM: First, your microphones and videos will be turned off for the duration of the meeting. You will only be unmuted, if and when,

00:03:47.160 --> 00:03:52.669

Megan Stone - AECOM: I unmute you during the Draft SEIS verbal public comment portion,

00:03:52.880 --> 00:03:56.659

Megan Stone - AECOM: or ANILCA 810 hearing portion of the meeting.

00:03:57.250 --> 00:04:01.580

Megan Stone - AECOM: Second, this meeting is being recorded as part of the project record.

00:04:01.970 --> 00:04:10.669

Megan Stone - AECOM: We do want to note that there will be two separate meetings this evening. We will start with the public meeting on the Draft Supplemental EIS,

00:04:11.030 --> 00:04:18.149

Megan Stone - AECOM: which will consist of a short presentation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, followed by public comments.

00:04:18.940 --> 00:04:29.940

Megan Stone - AECOM: We ran a registration report at the start of the meeting to identify those that indicated they wanted to offer a verbal public comment on the Draft SEIS this evening.

00:04:30.250 --> 00:04:38.539

Megan Stone - AECOM: These individuals are on our list of pre-registered commenters. We will call on these commenters in the order of registration,

00:04:38.640 --> 00:04:45.320

Megan Stone - AECOM: after I provide some additional instructions following the draft SEIS presentation.

00:04:46.360 --> 00:04:52.889

Megan Stone - AECOM: If we have time remaining after we've gone through our list of pre-registered commenters, which I think we will

00:04:53.200 --> 00:05:03.489

Megan Stone - AECOM: we will open the Draft SEIS verbal public comment portion of the meeting to anyone who would like to offer a verbal public comment tonight, who has not already done so,

00:05:03.650 --> 00:05:09.769

Megan Stone - AECOM: regardless of whether you selected yes or no to commenting when you registered for tonight's meeting.

00:05:10.260 --> 00:05:14.339

Megan Stone - AECOM: To allow everyone an opportunity to provide verbal comment,

00:05:14.480 --> 00:05:18.269

Megan Stone - AECOM: we'll be using a 3-minute time limit for each commenter

00:05:18.420 --> 00:05:22.319

Megan Stone - AECOM: and we'll have an on-screen timer that will start when you begin your comment.

00:05:22.560 --> 00:05:26.880

Megan Stone - AECOM: Again, if time allows, we'll circle back to folks for additional comments.

00:05:27.910 --> 00:05:37.600

Megan Stone - AECOM: When public comments on the Draft SEIS are finished, we'll end the public meeting portion and begin the ANILCA Section 810 subsistence hearing.

00:05:37.950 --> 00:05:42.470

Megan Stone - AECOM: Again, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will give a short presentation,

00:05:42.550 --> 00:05:47.699

Megan Stone - AECOM: followed by accepting verbal testimony on the draft subsistence findings.

00:05:48.230 --> 00:05:56.360

Megan Stone - AECOM: We ran a registration report at the start of the meeting to identify those that indicated they wanted to offer verbal input

00:05:56.670 --> 00:06:00.480

Megan Stone - AECOM: during the ANILCA 810 subsistence hearing this evening.

00:06:00.830 --> 00:06:05.680

Megan Stone - AECOM: Again, these individuals are on our list of pre-registered commenters,

00:06:05.860 --> 00:06:09.539

Megan Stone - AECOM: and we'll call on commenters in the order of registration.

00:06:09.660 --> 00:06:17.440

Megan Stone - AECOM: If we have time remaining after we've gone through our list of pre-registered commenters, which again, I think we'll have time;

00:06:18.130 --> 00:06:28.750

Megan Stone - AECOM: we'll open up the ANILCA 810 hearing to anyone who would like to offer verbal public input, regardless of whether they selected yes or no

00:06:28.890 --> 00:06:31.669

Megan Stone - AECOM: when they registered for this evening's meeting.

00:06:31.730 --> 00:06:37.049

Megan Stone - AECOM: Again, to allow everyone an opportunity to provide verbal comment

00:06:37.100 --> 00:06:45.119

Megan Stone - AECOM: we'll be using a 3-minute time limit for each commenter, and we'll have an on-screen timer that will start when you begin your comment.

00:06:45.860 --> 00:06:57.920

Megan Stone - AECOM: Ideally, you would provide your comments on the Draft Supplemental EIS in the first portion of the meeting; and your ANILCA subsistence comments during the second portion of the meeting, which will follow.

00:06:58.490 --> 00:07:03.469

Megan Stone - AECOM: If you do not get the opportunity to offer your verbal public comment this evening,

00:07:03.540 --> 00:07:06.219

Megan Stone - AECOM: written public comments can be submitted

00:07:06.390 --> 00:07:12.360

Megan Stone - AECOM: on regulations.gov and through other methods, which we'll provide information on later.

00:07:12.740 --> 00:07:17.929

Megan Stone - AECOM: We'll provide that information in the Zoom chat as well, so you can copy that down.

00:07:18.500 --> 00:07:24.729

Megan Stone - AECOM: So, with that I want to thank you all for your patience as I went through those housekeeping items.

00:07:24.750 --> 00:07:37.609

Megan Stone - AECOM: And I'll go ahead and turn it over to Bobbie Jo Skibo, who is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service project manager for this effort, and will be giving a presentation on the Draft Supplemental EIS.

00:07:39.120 --> 00:07:48.340

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Well, hello and welcome to our first virtual public meeting! We have been out on the road, so it's nice to have a different format to allow other people to participate.

00:07:48.340 --> 00:08:09.609

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: As Megan mentioned, I'm Bobbie Jo Skibo. I've been with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for three years. I've been working as the project lead on the oil and gas leasing program in the Arctic, that was also a supplemental environmental impact statement, and then I've been helping to be the senior planner and lead on this as well.

00:08:09.610 --> 00:08:36.469

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: I have had 30 years- close to 30 years- of working on natural resource issues in Alaska, and really just grateful to be a part of this process and to be here to hear everybody out. I have a few colleagues with me that I'd love to introduce, and then we will do a short presentation, and then we'll be here to listen to all of you. So with that, I'd like to pass it over to our assistant regional director for refuges.

00:08:39.720 --> 00:08:48.060

Karlin Itchoak - USFWS: Thank you, Bobby Jo. Hello, everyone. Thank you for being on tonight. My name is Karlin Itchoak. I'm the assistant regional director

00:08:48.500 --> 00:08:56.379

Karlin Itchoak - USFWS: for refuges with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and I'm calling in today from the ancestral homelands of the Dena'ina People.

00:08:56.400 --> 00:09:00.539

Karlin Itchoak - USFWS: And we'd like to begin by acknowledging that the proposed

00:09:00.580 --> 00:09:03.019

Karlin Itchoak - USFWS: road in many of these discussions

00:09:03.280 --> 00:09:14.800

Karlin Itchoak - USFWS: are happening around the ancestral homelands of the Unangan People in Aleut; and we recognize their stewardship since time immemorial.

00:09:15.610 --> 00:09:18.409

Karlin Itchoak - USFWS: As the chief of refuges,

00:09:19.237 --> 00:09:29.300

Karlin Itchoak - USFWS: it's not lost to me that we have over 570 refuges in the United States, totaling about 95 million acres of land.

00:09:29.360 --> 00:09:37.850

Karlin Itchoak - USFWS: And here in Alaska, we have 16 of those 570 refuges. And on our 16

00:09:38.010 --> 00:09:40.980

Karlin Itchoak - USFWS: national wildlife refuges here in Alaska,

00:09:41.444 --> 00:09:45.789

Karlin Itchoak - USFWS: it makes up about 76.8 million acres

00:09:45.860 --> 00:09:51.870

Karlin Itchoak - USFWS: of the National Wildlife Refuge System. So, a little over 90%

00:09:51.890 --> 00:10:04.949

Karlin Itchoak - USFWS: of the National Wildlife Refuge System acreage is here in Alaska. And it's a big job to steward those lands and we take it very seriously, but I would like to

00:10:05.572 --> 00:10:14.089

Karlin Itchoak - USFWS: pass the mic now to our capable manager for the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, Maria Fosado.

00:10:14.200 --> 00:10:16.769

Karlin Itchoak - USFWS: Thank you for being here. I look forward to listening.

00:10:19.060 --> 00:10:38.079

Maria Fosado - USFWS: Thank you, Karlin, and good afternoon everyone. As Karlin noted, I am Maria Fosado. I'm the Izembek Refuge Manager. I've been working for the Fish and Wildlife Service for over 15 years now. I started my career in the State of Minnesota and worked at various national wildlife refuges and wetland management districts throughout that state,

00:10:38.080 --> 00:10:51.699

Maria Fosado - USFWS: until making my way up to Alaska. I came to Alaska in 2020 when I accepted the position as the Izembek refuge manager, and since that time I've been living and working out of Cold Bay. So,

00:10:51.700 --> 00:10:59.450

Maria Fosado - USFWS: with that, I think we're going to go ahead and get started. I'm going to provide you some information- background information on Izembek National Wildlife Refuge.

00:10:59.810 --> 00:11:01.389

Maria Fosado - USFWS: Next slide, please.

00:11:03.470 --> 00:11:19.839

Maria Fosado - USFWS: Alright. So, Izembek National Wildlife Refuge was first established as Izembek National Wildlife Range by public land order in 1960, and it was established as a refuge, breeding ground and management area for all forms of wildlife.

00:11:20.430 --> 00:11:47.519

Maria Fosado - USFWS: In 1972, Izembek Lagoon and its surrounding watershed was protected by the Alaska Legislature through the establishment of the Izembek State Game Refuge. And then with the passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, otherwise known as ANILCA, in 1980 the Izembek National Wildlife Range was redesignated as the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. It encompasses approximately 310,000 acres,

00:11:47.850 --> 00:11:55.370

Maria Fosado - USFWS: of which at that time, approximately 300,000 acres, were designated as Wilderness by Congress.

00:11:55.520 --> 00:11:57.200

Maria Fosado - USFWS: Next slide, please.

00:11:59.390 --> 00:12:09.010

Maria Fosado - USFWS: The congressionally designated Izembek Wilderness Areas do comprise a majority of the refuge and became part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

00:12:09.150 --> 00:12:23.609

Maria Fosado - USFWS: These areas are administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such a manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, to provide for the protection of the areas, and for the preservation of their wilderness character.

00:12:23.720 --> 00:12:34.620

Maria Fosado - USFWS: These areas provide scenic wildlife and scientific values, as well as the opportunity for solitude and primitive and unconfined-excuse me- types of recreation. Next slide, please.

00:12:36.900 --> 00:12:48.179

Maria Fosado - USFWS: So, each unit within the National Wildlife Refuge System is established to serve a statutory purpose that targets the conservation of native species, which depend on its lands and waters.

00:12:48.220 --> 00:12:58.120

Maria Fosado - USFWS: And to administer those lands in accordance with those statutory purposes, activities are evaluated for appropriateness and compatibility with their statutory purpose.

00:12:58.760 --> 00:13:22.710

Maria Fosado - USFWS: So, with the passage of ANILCA and the redesignation of Izembek National Wildlife Range to Izembek National Wildlife Refuge; the refuge also received ANILCA refuge purposes. And those are as follows: to conserve fish and wildlife populations and habitats and their natural diversity, including but not limited to, waterfowl, shorebirds, and other migratory birds, brown birds and salmonids;

00:13:22.900 --> 00:13:40.380

Maria Fosado - USFWS: to fulfill the international treaty obligations of the United States, with respect to fish and wildlife and their habitats; to provide for the opportunity for continued subsistence use by local residents; and to ensure water quality and necessary water quantity. Next slide, please.

00:13:44.150 --> 00:14:03.219

Maria Fosado - USFWS: Izembek National Wildlife Refuge was the first site in the United States to be designated as a Wetland of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention in 1986, and subsequently was also recognized as an important bird area of global significance by Birdlife International and the National Audubon Society.

00:14:03.220 --> 00:14:18.519

Maria Fosado - USFWS: Izembek received these global recognitions due to its diverse habitats, the dynamic landscapes, and its unique geographical location with it being situated between the highly productive waters of the Bering Sea and the Gulf of Alaska.

00:14:18.630 --> 00:14:20.209

Maria Fosado - USFWS: Next slide, please.

00:14:25.590 --> 00:14:48.390

Maria Fosado - USFWS: So, from brown bears to salmon, more than 200 species call the refuge home. At the heart of the refuge is Izembek Lagoon, a coastal ecosystem that is home to one of the world's largest eelgrass beds. Kinzarof Lagoon, which is separated from Izembek Lagoon by a narrow isthmus, is considered one of the most significant eelgrass beds on the Pacific side of the Alaska Peninsula.

00:14:48.780 --> 00:15:02.970

Maria Fosado - USFWS: The location of Izembek Refuge along avian migration routes combined with the abundant food sources, which the eelgrass beds provide; make Izembek Lagoon one of the most important migratory bird staging and wintering habitats in the world.

00:15:03.540 --> 00:15:24.739

Maria Fosado - USFWS: The site is especially critical for many species of waterfowl, particularly geese, and shorebirds that undertake trans-oceanic flights. This site supports virtually the entire population of Pacific black brant, more than half the world population of emperor geese, and a significant percentage of the world's population of Steller's eiders and Taverner's Canada goose.

00:15:24.800 --> 00:15:46.040

Maria Fosado - USFWS: The highest density of brown bears on Izembek Refuge occurs within the Joshua Green River watershed on the northeast side of the refuge, and ultimately of Cold Bay. However, bears can be seen and observed all throughout the refuge as they use a wide variety of habitats, including coastal shorelines, low-lying meadows and tundra streams, all the way into the Alpine areas.

00:15:46.890 --> 00:16:04.900

Maria Fosado - USFWS: Caribou have a high profile as a refuge purpose species and are a high value to subsistence users. The Southern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd ranges from Port Moller all the way south to the southern end of the Alaska Peninsula, with its primary calving grounds located just to the north of Izembek Refuge.

00:16:05.390 --> 00:16:28.010

Maria Fosado - USFWS: The wintering areas historically have extended southward and encompass the Izembek Lagoon area and the Cold Bay area. The narrow isthmus between Izembek and Kinzarof Lagoon has been an important movement corridor between these wintering and calving areas, and the refuge does also support satellite populations of caribou year-round.

00:16:28.420 --> 00:16:51.080

Maria Fosado - USFWS: And, lastly, Pacific salmon have also been identified as a high profile, as a refuge purpose species, and are a high value for subsistence users. Izembek Refuge does support five species of Pacific salmon, which return to streams each year to spawn and fuel the coastal ecosystems. So, with that I am going to go ahead and send it over to Bobbie Jo.

00:16:53.440 --> 00:16:55.560

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Great. Thank you so much, Maria.

00:16:56.295 --> 00:17:00.099

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Okay. So, I am gonna take us down a little walk

00:17:00.120 --> 00:17:10.859

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: through history, and we're going to start in 2009. I'm going to first recognize though, that this project pre-dates 2009 by quite a lot of time. But let's start here.

00:17:10.910 --> 00:17:35.580

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: So in 2009, the Omnibus Public Land Management Act was enacted. We call it the 2009 Act. It has since expired, but at that time it directed the Secretary of the Interior to analyze a land exchange through the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge and the Izembek Wilderness, and it also directed the Service to prepare an environmental impact statement under the National Environmental Policy Act

00:17:36.270 --> 00:17:43.750

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: In 2013 the environmental impact statement was completed and at that time, a No Action Alternative was selected.

00:17:44.340 --> 00:17:51.500

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: In 2019, Secretary Bernhardt signed a Land Exchange agreement with the King Cove Corporation.

00:17:51.850 --> 00:18:00.650

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: But in 2023, the sitting Secretary, Secretary Haaland, withdrew from that agreement citing several procedural flaws.

00:18:00.810 --> 00:18:01.850

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Next slide.

00:18:05.210 --> 00:18:15.669

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: So this brings us up to today, the Draft Supplemental EIS that we have developed, it supplements the 2013 EIS.

00:18:15.740 --> 00:18:26.909

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: It was prepared at the request of the Secretary of the Interior, and we were asked to consider a newly proposed land exchange, based on an offer that was presented to the Service from the King Cove Corporation.

00:18:27.420 --> 00:18:37.399

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: This is located within the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, just like the 2009 Act, including that congressionally designated wilderness area.

00:18:38.060 --> 00:18:53.680

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Within the Supplemental EIS, we have updated and evaluated information based on new circumstances, new information wherever possible. And just note that we will also be doing that between the draft and the final. Thank you for your public comment. That'll help us do that.

00:18:53.940 --> 00:19:18.889

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: The Draft Supplemental EIS that we're working on includes a no action alternative and four action alternatives that came from the 2013 EIS. We'll explain a little bit further as to how this all shakes out of what is now viable and still moving forward; but it also adds an

additional alternative, Alternative 6, as the new action alternative based on that offer from King Cove Corporation. Next slide.

00:19:22.310 --> 00:19:33.349

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: The proposed action for the Supplemental EIS is to enter into a land exchange to add land with conservation, subsistence, and habitat values to the National Wildlife Refuge System,

00:19:33.440 --> 00:19:53.620

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: in exchange for a transfer to King Cove Corporation of real property interests. That includes the surface and the subsurface of the lands of the United States for a corridor through the refuge that that would be traded for those lands from King Cove. Next slide.

00:19:57.430 --> 00:20:13.759

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Okay, the purpose and need of the project. The purposes of the project are to provide a safe and reliable year-round transportation system for health and safety purposes. This is with a particular emphasis on emergency medical evacuations between those two communities.

00:20:13.980 --> 00:20:26.990

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Another purpose is to increase the overall conservation value of lands preserved in the National Wildlife Refuge System, and to also maintain or increase the opportunity for subsistence uses by rural Alaskans.

00:20:27.000 --> 00:20:39.869

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: The need for this project is pretty lengthy, and we didn't want to minimize all the words, you know, on one screen. So please take a look at that, it is in section 1.4. It was just a little bit too long for us to put on a slide. Next slide.

00:20:43.530 --> 00:21:11.179

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Okay, so to help us orient- and in the public meetings I have a little pointer- so I'm going to see if one of our folks behind the scenes can help. But for those that know this area probably even better than me; we were just there, so it's really helpful to see this project on the ground. But orienting, King Cove is down on that- there we go-

King Cove is down in the corner there and then Cold Bay is up where there's a purple kind of area

00:21:11.190 --> 00:21:13.790

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: over to the left side there.

00:21:14.040 --> 00:21:26.499

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: There- on this map there are a few things to just note. The alternative that some people remember from 2013, which is a ferry. It's the green and white dashed line on this map going from Cold Bay to Lenard Harbor.

00:21:27.160 --> 00:21:36.930

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: The Hovercraft Alternative is the purple and white looking hashed line, and that would go across from Cold Bay over to

00:21:37.150 --> 00:22:02.080

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: the northeast terminal. And then the red line on this map, is what is considered Alternative 6 and the new proposed land exchange and road corridor. So, we will look at this a little closer, but you can see the green outline of that map which is the wilderness boundary. So, most of that red line goes through that and then there's a portion outside of it. Okay, that was just to get a lay of the land. Let's go to the next slide.

00:22:05.360 --> 00:22:32.640

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Okay. So, the range of alternatives that are being considered in the Draft Supplemental EIS are a No Action that is customary for all NEPA projects; Alternative 2 and 3 have been kept for comparative purposes only, but because of the 2009 Acts expiration. Those two alternatives are no longer viable. They included lands and a relationship with the State that no longer exists for this proposed project today.

00:22:32.800 --> 00:22:44.999

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: But Alternatives 4, 5, and 6, the Hovercraft operations, the Lenard Harbor Ferry, and then the offer from King Cove, which is the Alternative 6, are on the table for consideration in this document.

00:22:45.290 --> 00:22:46.720

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Okay, next slide.

00:22:49.610 --> 00:22:58.470

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Okay. So just to reorient folks to what Alternative 4 was, this is a hovercraft from the northeast terminal to Cold Bay;

00:22:58.530 --> 00:23:27.900

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: and it was in the 2003 EIS. See, I told you it predates 2009. There was even one- an EIS prior to 09. So, this was considered in 03, and then in 2013, and it is still being considered as reasonable for this analysis. And it considered operations of the Hovercraft for six days of service per week between, again, the northeast terminal- if you know where that's at on the ground- over to Crosswind Cove.

00:23:27.900 --> 00:23:32.639

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: And again, it is being retained as a viable alternative for analysis. Next slide.

00:23:36.170 --> 00:23:54.049

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Alternative 5 is the Lenard Harbor Ferry with Cold Bay dock improvements. You could see the green and white line there. So, it would use a ferry to travel 14 miles between a terminal in Lenard Harbor and a substantially modified Cold Bay dock.

00:23:54.060 --> 00:24:10.030

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: We were notified recently while we were in Cold Bay, that the borough is in the baby stages of the design, but they are working with the Alaska Department of Transportation and public facilities on that replacement dock and a design, So, that is still to be seen.

00:24:10.520 --> 00:24:20.480

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: This alternative would not include a land exchange, and it has been retained from the 2013 EIS into the supplement as a viable alternative.

00:24:20.540 --> 00:24:21.620

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Next slide.

00:24:24.870 --> 00:24:40.370

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Okay, so this is where the changes exist, for those of you that are tracking this project, especially for those that tracked it back in 2013. So, Alternative 6, the 2024 Land Exchange and proposed land exchange and road alignment.

00:24:40.400 --> 00:25:00.250

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: This has been identified as a preferred alternative by the Department of Interior at this time, but I want to note that that does not constitute a commitment or a decision. Ultimately, that will be made in the record of decision which is the final step of the National Environmental Policy Act process.

00:25:00.260 --> 00:25:13.569

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: But if you could start, you can see somebody on the back- background of this can point to number one. That is where it starts, at the terminus of the King Cove Access Road, near the Northeast Terminal;

00:25:13.660 --> 00:25:18.189

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: and that has been a road that has been built out to that point from King Cove.

00:25:18.270 --> 00:25:26.350

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Then it would continue through the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge up and over, including through the congressionally designated wilderness.

00:25:26.390 --> 00:25:31.340

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: You will note there are a bunch of little red dots along that corridor,

00:25:31.430 --> 00:25:39.780

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: those will be the material sites that will be used to help construct the road. I'll talk about that in here in a second.

00:25:40.140 --> 00:25:50.330

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: And then that's number 2, and then you go off outside of the wilderness boundary and it will terminate at the intersection of Outer Marker Road and Blinn Lake Loop

00:25:50.780 --> 00:25:57.939

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: On this map as well, it's good to see on this one, there are a few yellow hashed

00:25:57.980 --> 00:26:20.080

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: areas. And with my pointer it's easier for me to do this, but the Kinzarof Lagoon parcels, that's the 1,739 acres; those would be transferred from King Cove. And then down on the bottom of the map, this larger chunk, that's also the lands that would be transferred as a part of the land transfer. Okay.

00:26:20.160 --> 00:26:21.950

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Thank you. Next slide.

00:26:24.310 --> 00:26:45.760

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Okay. There's a lot going on, on this slide, but I want to kind of corresponds to what I just showed you with the yellow hash marks and the red corridor. So, the key components of Alternative 6 include 31,198 acres. Those would come from King Cove Corporation to the Federal Government.

00:26:45.990 --> 00:27:01.530

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Of the 31,000 and some change, 29,459 acres of surface only, not subsurface as well, those 29,000 would end up being transferred over to the Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge.

00:27:01.630 --> 00:27:14.819

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: The 1,739 acres that you saw in that lagoon parcels, that would be surface and subsurface, and that would actually come back into the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge.

00:27:14.940 --> 00:27:18.799

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: And those would become congressionally designated wilderness.

00:27:19.260 --> 00:27:28.059

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Okay? So, the transfer then, from the Federal Government to King Cove would be a total of 490 acres.

00:27:28.190 --> 00:27:33.219

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: 484 would be surface and subsurface,

00:27:33.330 --> 00:27:49.270

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: and 6 just subsurface. And that would be for one of the material sites that is being proposed. And of the 490 acres, currently 336 of those are congressionally designated wilderness.

00:27:49.770 --> 00:27:59.360

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Okay. Another component of Alternative 6 in the proposed land and road alignment, would be an 18.9 mile single lane, gravel road.

00:27:59.750 --> 00:28:05.599

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: It would include 15 material sites. And again, you saw the little red dots along the map.

00:28:05.730 --> 00:28:12.350

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: 13 of those would be within the corridor and adjacent, and 2 would be a spur off-

00:28:12.749 --> 00:28:19.550

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: off of that road corridor. And if you look in the SEIS, you can find maps that depict that. Okay, next slide.

00:28:22.970 --> 00:28:27.140

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Another key component of- if you can go back one more?

00:28:28.440 --> 00:28:46.809

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: One of the other key components of this is a restriction to non-commercial uses, and it's further restricted to those necessary for health and safety purposes and accessing the refuge by the federally qualified subsistence users who are actively engaged in subsistence uses.

00:28:46.900 --> 00:28:47.990

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Next slide.

00:28:52.070 --> 00:29:08.689

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Okay. This- when we are in a public meeting, it's a little bit easier because we have a poster up. But basically, this is a comparison between Alternatives 2 and 3 and yes, they have been only included for comparative purposes and are no longer viable.

00:29:08.690 --> 00:29:25.949

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: But for those of you that have been working on this and following this project for many years, we wanted to do a comparison for you. So, as you can see, in road corridor miles there's a little bit of a difference. And Alternative 6 would be 18.9 miles, like we just mentioned.

00:29:26.220 --> 00:29:32.670

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Now, the road corridor width would be different. So, Alternative 2 and 3 had assumed an average of a hundred foot

00:29:32.760 --> 00:29:50.989

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: and Alternative 6 includes a varying width of 100 to 240 feet. And that was based on Alaska Department of Transportation study, that they looked at the topography and how to avoid water bodies, etc. And then, there would be the material sites along that corridor.

00:29:51.830 --> 00:30:07.269

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: So again, this is just a different way to see the numbers that I just presented. But acres proposed for exchange from Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, would be 490 surface and subsurface, 336 of which are wilderness currently.

00:30:08.420 --> 00:30:32.339

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: The acres proposed for exchange to be added to the National Wildlife Refuge System, in this exchange, would be 31,198 compared to the 52,583 from the past efforts. Of the 31,198 acres, 1,739 would come back to Izembek, surface and subsurface;

00:30:32.340 --> 00:30:57.569

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: and the 29,459, that is surface only, would be added to the Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge. You can see the zeros there under Alternative 6, that just shows that there are no parcels that were associated with the state parcels, and things were different back in the 2013 EIS for Alternative 2 and 3. Okay, next slide.

00:30:59.400 --> 00:31:07.579

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Okay. Now, we've given you a very high-level perspective of what the new alternative is and how it was compared to the 2013 EIS.

00:31:07.580 --> 00:31:30.629

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: For those of you who've been tracking a few projects recently, I think the Willow Project up north did this and we tried it, hopefully it helps; is to take the 2013 EIS, and when there are substantial edits to sections, you will see a box like it is in that picture summarizing what changes occurred in that portion of the document.

00:31:30.730 --> 00:31:52.340

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: And then any revised text within that section will be highlighted or a table or a header will have an asterisk or both, in some situations, just so you can really find what is new and how to navigate the document a little quicker. It is about 1,400 pages long, so hopefully this helps some of you navigate it. Next slide.

00:31:53.600 --> 00:32:08.429

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Okay. So, we hope you'll speak tonight and offer a public input or testimony for the ANILCA 810 portion of this, but we do have the regulations.gov available for, you know, public comment.

00:32:08.600 --> 00:32:20.020

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: And feel free to drop- you know the docket number there helps you navigate to get there quicker or you can search in the search bar for Izembek SEIS, and get there that way.

00:32:20.060 --> 00:32:41.449

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Please note there is a 45-day comment period currently, and that goes from November 15th until December 30th, 2024. That is 11:59 Eastern Standard Time. If we do get something postmarked on that day and we receive it later, that still will be a part of the process. So, you know, just in case that happens for you.

00:32:41.450 --> 00:32:58.520

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: And then, right now, we will be taking all of this input and information that's provided to us during this public process to update the Draft to get to a Final Supplemental EIS. And I believe everybody's aware that we are in the middle of a transition of administrations,

00:32:58.520 --> 00:33:14.950

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: so we're not sure you know how fast we're going to be moving on things. We're going to get direction when our new bosses get into place, but we do anticipate that a final SEIS and a record of decision will be issued in 2025, at some point.

00:33:15.080 --> 00:33:16.159

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Next slide.

00:33:19.260 --> 00:33:29.980

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Okay, I think I will pass it over now back to Megan. This is the portion of the meeting where we get to listen to you, and we really appreciate everybody's time tonight. So, with that Megan.

00:33:31.630 --> 00:33:43.319

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you, Bobbie Jo, and thank you, Maria, for those presentations. We'll go ahead and get started with the public comment portion for the Draft SEIS.

00:33:43.880 --> 00:33:51.260

Megan Stone - AECOM: I'm now going to read through the instructions for participants who indicated they wanted to offer verbal public comment

00:33:51.290 --> 00:33:55.770

Megan Stone - AECOM: on the Draft SEIS when they registered for this evening's meeting.

00:33:56.080 --> 00:34:02.530

Megan Stone - AECOM: Again, we have a list of these participants and we'll accept comments in the order of registration.

00:34:02.890 --> 00:34:09.239

Megan Stone - AECOM: If you registered before the start time of tonight's meeting, you're on our pre-registered commenter list.

00:34:09.530 --> 00:34:16.290

Megan Stone - AECOM: When it's your turn to provide your comment, we'll read your name aloud from the list and display your name on the screen.

00:34:16.650 --> 00:34:22.650

Megan Stone - AECOM: We'll also display the name of the commenter who is next in line. When you hear your name called out,

00:34:22.719 --> 00:34:29.500

Megan Stone - AECOM: please use the raise hand feature so that we know you are available and ready to offer your comment.

00:34:30.250 --> 00:34:37.879

Megan Stone - AECOM: You can access the raise hand feature by clicking on either the reactions icon or the participants list icon,

00:34:38.050 --> 00:34:41.819

Megan Stone - AECOM: which are both located at the bottom of your Zoom screen.

00:34:42.230 --> 00:34:48.720

Megan Stone - AECOM: If you wave your mouse back and forth across the bottom of your Zoom screen, the icon should appear.

00:34:49.060 --> 00:34:54.969

Megan Stone - AECOM: You may need to exit out of your full screen view in Zoom to see those icons.

00:34:55.370 --> 00:35:00.709

Megan Stone - AECOM: You can then select the raise hand feature located either in the reactions icon

00:35:00.740 --> 00:35:03.719

Megan Stone - AECOM: or at the bottom of your participants list.

00:35:04.290 --> 00:35:07.179

Megan Stone - AECOM: I don't see that we have any phone callers on,

00:35:07.520 --> 00:35:14.530

Megan Stone - AECOM: but if we do have anyone joining by phone, you can press Star 9 to raise your hand on your phone keypad.

00:35:15.260 --> 00:35:20.560

Megan Stone - AECOM: Once you've raised your hand, you'll be unmuted so you can provide your verbal public comment.

00:35:20.870 --> 00:35:28.259

Megan Stone - AECOM: You may be double muted. If that's the case, we'll prompt you to unmute yourself on your end so that we can hear you.

00:35:28.800 --> 00:35:37.039

Megan Stone - AECOM: We ask that you please spell your first and last name for the record before providing your verbal public comment for the Draft SEIS.

00:35:37.390 --> 00:35:42.469

Megan Stone - AECOM: And if you are representing an organization or group, please say so during your comment.

00:35:43.010 --> 00:35:48.210

Megan Stone - AECOM: As I mentioned earlier, we'll allow 3 minutes for you to offer your comment.

00:35:49.170 --> 00:35:54.970

Megan Stone - AECOM: Each person will be given 3 minutes to speak, so that everyone has a chance to comment.

00:35:55.060 --> 00:35:59.350

Megan Stone - AECOM: You'll see the clock on the screen, and it'll show when your time's up.

00:35:59.680 --> 00:36:04.680

Megan Stone - AECOM: We'll let you know when your time is nearly expired, so that you have time to finish.

00:36:04.940 --> 00:36:11.419

Megan Stone - AECOM: If you're not able to complete your comment in 3 minutes, we'll try to come back to you if time permits.

00:36:11.580 --> 00:36:14.219

Megan Stone - AECOM: Which again, I think we'll have time for.

00:36:15.010 --> 00:36:20.429

Megan Stone - AECOM: After you've provided your comment, we'll mute you and move on to our next commenter.

00:36:20.880 --> 00:36:31.319

Megan Stone - AECOM: Once we worked our way through our current list, if we have time, we'll move on to those who registered after the start time of tonight's meeting who selected they wanted to offer a comment.

00:36:31.790 --> 00:36:37.189

Megan Stone - AECOM: If we still have time remaining after we've worked our way through those participants,

00:36:37.300 --> 00:36:47.759

Megan Stone - AECOM: we'll open the verbal public comment portion of tonight's meeting to anyone who would like to offer comment on the Draft SEIS, who has not already done so.

00:36:48.160 --> 00:36:49.670

Megan Stone - AECOM: Next slide, please.

00:36:51.920 --> 00:36:56.590

Megan Stone - AECOM: So, on the screen here, just in case we have anyone who

00:36:56.680 --> 00:37:02.700

Megan Stone - AECOM: needs a refresher on Zoom. I've included graphics on where you can find the raise hand feature.

00:37:03.070 --> 00:37:09.430

Megan Stone - AECOM: On the left you can see the participants list icon. That's one way to find the raise hand

00:37:09.670 --> 00:37:15.690

Megan Stone - AECOM: and on the right you can see that reactions icon, which is another way to find the raise hand.

00:37:16.230 --> 00:37:19.990

Megan Stone - AECOM: I'll leave this up for a moment before moving to the next slide.

00:37:28.870 --> 00:37:30.480

Megan Stone - AECOM: Next slide, please.

00:37:34.350 --> 00:37:40.639

Megan Stone - AECOM: And really quick, I'm going to turn it over to Bobbie Jo for some additional input.

00:37:41.650 --> 00:38:11.219

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Yeah. I just wanted to note, and I should have done this earlier, so I apologize. I wanted to let folks know that we really did want to make it out to Nelson Lagoon and False Pass. Those are two communities that we were not able to physically make it, so today's meeting is set up to acknowledge those folks in the rural communities. So just know, that we wish we could have made it there and tonight's meeting is, you know, trying to have that geographic focus for you all to speak

00:38:11.260 --> 00:38:28.879

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: but we need to open it up to the public as well, so you might hear some other folks speaking. But I just wanted to let you folks know that we really appreciate you being here, and we wish we could have made it over if the travel logistics would have worked out in our favor. So- but thank you very much for being here.

00:38:30.210 --> 00:38:32.620

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you, Bobbie Jo, for noting that.

00:38:33.270 --> 00:38:39.849

Megan Stone - AECOM: We'll go ahead and move forward with officially starting our verbal public comment portion

00:38:40.100 --> 00:38:44.239

Megan Stone - AECOM: to receive comments related to the Draft SEIS.

00:38:44.650 --> 00:38:51.390

Megan Stone - AECOM: Again, this verbal public comment portion of the meeting is being recorded as part of the official record.

00:38:51.650 --> 00:38:56.680

Megan Stone - AECOM: As a reminder, your camera and mic control settings are restricted during this time.

00:38:56.900 --> 00:39:05.649

Megan Stone - AECOM: You'll be able to unmute when we unmute you during the public comment session, so please remember to speak when prompted.

00:39:05.940 --> 00:39:12.639

Megan Stone - AECOM: The Service wants to hear from all members of the public this evening, so we'll use the following guidelines.

00:39:13.290 --> 00:39:25.090

Megan Stone - AECOM: First, please be mindful of the length of your comment, so that everyone who wants to speak has an opportunity to do so. Second, please be respectful of others and their viewpoints.

00:39:25.320 --> 00:39:28.440

Megan Stone - AECOM: Third, please refrain from using profanity.

00:39:29.070 --> 00:39:31.590

Megan Stone - AECOM: While passion is welcome in your comment,

00:39:31.830 --> 00:39:36.619

Megan Stone - AECOM: policy requires that we mute anyone who uses inappropriate language

00:39:36.760 --> 00:39:44.320

Megan Stone - AECOM: because we are recording this meeting, and others may be live streaming. So, please avoid inappropriate language.

00:39:44.350 --> 00:39:47.449

Megan Stone - AECOM: If that does happen, we'll provide a reminder

00:39:47.510 --> 00:39:53.359

Megan Stone - AECOM: before unmuting the person to try again, using words acceptable to all ages.

00:39:54.020 --> 00:39:56.880

Megan Stone - AECOM: With that, we'll go ahead and get started.

00:39:57.080 --> 00:40:09.769

Megan Stone - AECOM: The first person signed up to comment for the Draft SEIS portion of this meeting is Deborah Williams.

00:40:11.560 --> 00:40:16.490

Megan Stone - AECOM: Deborah, if you'd like to provide a comment. Oh, perfect! I see your hand raise.

00:40:17.100 --> 00:40:18.929

Megan Stone - AECOM: Hi, Deborah! Can you hear us?

00:40:19.690 --> 00:40:20.640

Deborah Williams: I can.

00:40:21.950 --> 00:40:26.159

Megan Stone - AECOM: Amazing. Thank you. Could you spell your first and last name for the record.

00:40:26.340 --> 00:40:35.269

Deborah Williams: Yes, it's Deborah, D-E-B-O-R-A-H. Williams, W-I-L-L-I-A-M-S.

00:40:36.470 --> 00:40:38.669

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you. You can begin your comment.

00:40:39.760 --> 00:41:03.350

Deborah Williams: Thank you. Good afternoon. I'm Deborah Williams, formerly special assistant to the Secretary of Interior for Alaska and Attorney for the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I've worked on ANILCA for over 45 years, and on Izembek since 1995, including collaborating with knowledgeable tribal leaders throughout the state and officials like President Carter.

00:41:03.830 --> 00:41:16.830

Deborah Williams: This proposed illegal land exchange and the deeply flawed DSEIS must be rejected for four fundamental reasons. Number one. They violate the clear terms of ANILCA.

00:41:16.860 --> 00:41:33.310

Deborah Williams: Under ANILCA Title 11, Congress established, "a single comprehensive statutory authority" to minimize the adverse impacts of siting transportation systems within "units established or expanded by the Act."

00:41:33.310 --> 00:41:56.699

Deborah Williams: Izembek National Wildlife Refuge was indeed established and expanded by ANILCA, so Title 11 explicitly applies. The Proposed Action clearly violates Title 11. Specifically, section 1106B since building a road through congressionally designated wilderness can only be done pursuant to Secretarial, Presidential,

00:41:56.700 --> 00:41:58.439

Deborah Williams: and Congressional approval.

00:41:58.490 --> 00:42:09.339

Deborah Williams: Number two. In other words, there is no secretarial authority to do this exchange. Recognizing that the Secretary did not have the authority to do a land exchange

00:42:09.340 --> 00:42:27.640

Deborah Williams: for a road corridor through Izembek in 2009, Congress provided a narrow, carefully delineated, and strictly time-limited grant of exchange authority. That exchange authority completely expired in 2016. None exist now. Period. Number three.

00:42:27.640 --> 00:42:45.410

Deborah Williams: The exchange is clearly contrary to the subsistence and conservation purposes of ANILCA. Indeed, in 2013, Secretary Sally Jewell rejected a much more generous and less damaging land exchange as not being "in the public interest."

00:42:45.480 --> 00:43:02.609

Deborah Williams: As reflected in tables 2.5-1 and -2 and 2.9-1, the current proposed land exchange is unquestionably worse, and certainly does not confer a net benefit to the conservation and subsistence purposes of ANILCA.

00:43:02.740 --> 00:43:21.929

Deborah Williams: The Preferred Alternative would establish a precedent that significantly undermines the protection for over 150 million acres of national public lands in Alaska, by making meaningless in their interpretation, and use the subsistence and conservation purposes of ANILCA.

00:43:22.500 --> 00:43:28.769

Deborah Williams: Number four. There is a much better tribally supported alternative, the Marine Alternative.

00:43:28.830 --> 00:43:41.380

Deborah Williams: For the sake of state-wide subsistence considerations, with an emphasis on statewide; environmental justice; adequate tribal consultation; prior Federal government investments;

00:43:41.410 --> 00:43:50.430

Deborah Williams: future federal and government investments that are already committed; and more, this alternative needs to be further examined and adopted.

00:43:50.780 --> 00:44:13.249

Deborah Williams: Do not put in jeopardy over 150 million acres of currently protected national public lands in Alaska, and all of the incomparable benefits that they confer to current and future generations, by pursuing this illegal land exchange. This exchange does not constitute stewardship of our national wildlife refuges. Thank you.

00:44:15.380 --> 00:44:22.850

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you for your comment, Deborah. We'll go ahead and place you back on mute and move to our next commenter,

00:44:23.520 --> 00:44:30.699

Megan Stone - AECOM: who is Julie Toomey. I'll go ahead and unmute you now. Julie, can you hear us?

00:44:31.100 --> 00:44:33.540

Julie Toomey: Great. Yes, I can hear you. Can you hear me?

00:44:34.100 --> 00:44:37.939

Megan Stone - AECOM: We can. Could you spell your first and last name for the record?

00:44:38.330 --> 00:44:41.339

Julie Toomey: Yes, it's J-U-L-

00:44:41.450 --> 00:44:48.719

Julie Toomey: I-E. Last name is T, as in Thomas, O-O-M, as in Michael, E-Y.

00:44:50.410 --> 00:44:52.439

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you. You can begin your comment.

00:44:52.870 --> 00:45:00.310

Julie Toomey: Hi! Good evening or good afternoon. My name is Julie Toomey. I'm the Vice President of Regional Affairs for the Aleut Corporation.

00:45:00.470 --> 00:45:08.699

Julie Toomey: The Alaska Native Regional Corporation serving over 4,000 shareholders and Aleut descendants worldwide.

00:45:08.770 --> 00:45:15.540

Julie Toomey: I am one of those shareholders and my family hails from King Cove, Alaska, and I am part of the Agdaagux Tribe.

00:45:15.920 --> 00:45:16.690

Julie Toomey: And

00:45:17.820 --> 00:45:23.950

Julie Toomey: I am here to passionately advocate for this road to be put in place.

00:45:25.510 --> 00:45:31.249

Julie Toomey: This land was our ancestral lands for our people and it was

00:45:31.420 --> 00:45:34.510

Julie Toomey: taken away from us without tribal consultation.

00:45:36.910 --> 00:45:45.430

Julie Toomey: Izembek is over 300 acres and about half the size of Rhode Island, and we're asking for just 0.1%

00:45:45.490 --> 00:45:56.240

Julie Toomey: of this land for a single lane gravel road. We're very grateful for Fish and Wildlife Service, who put in the time and effort and due diligence to put together a great

00:45:56.370 --> 00:46:03.649

Julie Toomey: Draft SEIS that has the preferred option of the road, Alternative number 6.

00:46:04.470 --> 00:46:12.989

Julie Toomey: There are signs throughout Izembek National Wildlife Refuge touting 40 plus miles of already existing roads sprawled throughout the Refuge.

00:46:13.220 --> 00:46:24.250

Julie Toomey: We're asking for an 18.9-mile one lane, gravel road to connect the community of King Cove to use in times of emergencies.

00:46:25.160 --> 00:46:26.950

Julie Toomey: Human lives are at risk.

00:46:27.080 --> 00:46:29.940

Julie Toomey: This should be a no brainer to get this done.

00:46:29.950 --> 00:46:36.310

Julie Toomey: Across the country there are countless wildlife refuges that have extensive and active two-lane highways.

00:46:36.340 --> 00:46:43.460

Julie Toomey: They have paved roads throughout their boundaries, built for people to pass through with convenience because there was demand.

00:46:43.620 --> 00:46:47.470

Julie Toomey: Karlin, I want to thank you for recognizing the ancestral lands of the Unangan.

00:46:47.880 --> 00:46:54.449

Julie Toomey: We are providing over 31,000 acres back to Fish and Wildlife Service for a mere

00:46:54.570 --> 00:46:59.760

Julie Toomey: 496, I believe, acres to provide a corridor on these lands.

00:47:01.480 --> 00:47:15.669

Julie Toomey: Conservation of our people. Conservation of our subsistence practices should not be in jeopardy for, excuse me-

00:47:16.050 --> 00:47:20.450

Julie Toomey: This road will not put into jeopardy our conservation

00:47:20.940 --> 00:47:24.630

Julie Toomey: of our eelgrass of our birds and of our waters,

00:47:25.030 --> 00:47:30.879

Julie Toomey: but it will also save human lives. And so, I reject the notion that this is an illegal

00:47:31.020 --> 00:47:39.779

Julie Toomey: Draft SEIS and I reject the comments of the individual prior to this. Thank you.

00:47:41.900 --> 00:47:49.889

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you for your comment, Julie. We'll go ahead and place you back on mute and move to our next pre-registered commenter,

00:47:50.090 --> 00:47:52.240

Megan Stone - AECOM: who is Mark McNeley.

00:47:52.560 --> 00:47:57.990

Megan Stone - AECOM: I see that we have Mark on with us this evening, and their hand is raised.

00:47:58.720 --> 00:48:01.589

Megan Stone - AECOM: Hi, Mark. Are you able to hear us?

00:48:01.590 --> 00:48:03.109

Mark McNeley: Yeah. Can you hear me? Okay.

00:48:03.810 --> 00:48:08.139

Megan Stone - AECOM: We can. Could you spell your first and last name, if you don't mind?

00:48:08.140 --> 00:48:11.980

Mark McNeley: Yes, Mark McNeley . M-A-R-K.

00:48:12.030 --> 00:48:14.430

Mark McNeley: M-C-N-E-L-E-Y.

00:48:16.240 --> 00:48:18.740

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you so much. You can begin your comment.

00:48:19.420 --> 00:48:26.210

Mark McNeley: Okay. I'm not native. I lived in Nelson Lagoon near all my life, 57 now.

00:48:27.211 --> 00:48:30.399

Mark McNeley: The gal that was arguing the,

00:48:31.580 --> 00:48:35.440

Mark McNeley: the legalities there. She don't live here,

00:48:35.470 --> 00:48:38.039

Mark McNeley: Nelson Lagoon or in King Cove.

00:48:38.410 --> 00:48:44.000

Mark McNeley: And there's one place I fear the most to fly into is King Cove.

00:48:44.380 --> 00:48:51.869

Mark McNeley: I've done enough traveling around the area to know that that is not a place safe place to fly even on the nicest of weather.

00:48:53.570 --> 00:49:04.609

Mark McNeley: I'm also the head of the environmental department in Nelson Lagoon and greatly respect the issues that she's bringing up there, in regards to the

00:49:04.960 --> 00:49:12.650

Mark McNeley: the area. However, that what she neglects to mention is that not so long ago

00:49:12.720 --> 00:49:16.609

Mark McNeley: Nelson Lagoon, or near our entire coast

00:49:16.660 --> 00:49:22.110

Mark McNeley: was included in the Port Moller critical habitat area,

00:49:22.180 --> 00:49:26.299

Mark McNeley: Which multiplied that by probably about tenfold.

00:49:26.740 --> 00:49:36.707

Mark McNeley: And so, what she's neglecting to say is that there was no truly native input

00:49:37.820 --> 00:49:40.436

Mark McNeley: to make that even happen.

00:49:41.000 --> 00:49:46.189

Mark McNeley: Now we have to have a permit to build an outhouse, to install

00:49:46.740 --> 00:49:51.180

Mark McNeley: new structures in our own village.

00:49:53.180 --> 00:49:59.720

Mark McNeley: So, these are some of the concerns, but safety is by far the

00:49:59.830 --> 00:50:03.950

Mark McNeley: most critical thing here. You know, by not having this road

00:50:05.100 --> 00:50:11.390

Mark McNeley: these--these people that live there that have no access to safe escape, if you will, when--when

00:50:12.280 --> 00:50:16.449

Mark McNeley: you know, your--your health is in a concern. There's no Med Evac out of King Cove.

00:50:16.690 --> 00:50:22.889

Mark McNeley: You have to go to Cold Bay to get a Med Evac. And it's just like, without

00:50:23.530 --> 00:50:30.050

Mark McNeley: persons actually living here experiencing these situations that that you wind up in,

00:50:30.120 --> 00:50:33.429

Mark McNeley: is that I don't think that they have a right to speak

00:50:33.730 --> 00:50:36.210

Mark McNeley: to what's truly going on. And--

00:50:36.370 --> 00:50:42.620

Mark McNeley: and you know, as far as the impact goes, I think that the technologies today

00:50:43.860 --> 00:50:49.249

Mark McNeley: can truly do a good job as to conserving the wildlife

00:50:49.580 --> 00:50:53.560

Mark McNeley: and you know the marsh areas and things like that.

00:50:55.290 --> 00:50:59.099

Mark McNeley: But yeah, I'm-I'm totally for the road, always have been.

00:50:59.480 --> 00:51:03.270

Mark McNeley: And it would be nice if Nelson Lagoon had a road to Cold Bay.

00:51:03.812 --> 00:51:09.949

Mark McNeley: But the way the way things are being said here, is that that's probably going to be an impossible thing.

00:51:10.748 --> 00:51:14.059

Mark McNeley: Not that it's truly necessary at the moment. But,

00:51:14.200 --> 00:51:19.369

Mark McNeley: just saying is that—and the other thing was, is that laws can be changed, you know, amended.

00:51:20.650 --> 00:51:24.300

Mark McNeley: These things are not cut in stone, so thank you.

00:51:26.090 --> 00:51:32.930

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you for your comment, Mark. We'll go ahead and move on to our next commenter and lower your hand.

00:51:33.560 --> 00:51:36.689

Megan Stone - AECOM: Our next commenter is Peter Mjos.

00:51:37.040 --> 00:51:41.370

Megan Stone - AECOM: Apologies if I struggle with that pronunciation.

00:51:41.510 --> 00:51:44.919

Megan Stone - AECOM: I do see that we have two Peters on the meeting.

00:51:45.160 --> 00:51:50.890

Megan Stone - AECOM: So if you're ready to offer your comment, please do use that raise hand feature.

00:51:51.430 --> 00:51:59.289

Megan Stone - AECOM: Again, you can access that in the participants list or you can find the little hand icon on your screen.

00:52:00.180 --> 00:52:05.870

Megan Stone - AECOM: And if you're having trouble with that, I will help you out. But I'll give you a moment here.

00:52:14.820 --> 00:52:19.900

Megan Stone - AECOM: I'm going to go ahead and just prompt you to unmute, Peter, and see if you're able

00:52:21.252 --> 00:52:25.480

Megan Stone - AECOM: to raise your hand or unmute if you'd still like to provide a comment.

00:52:32.160 --> 00:52:34.680

Megan Stone - AECOM: You should be able to unmute now.

00:52:38.240 --> 00:52:44.440

Megan Stone - AECOM: And I'll go ahead and let the other Peter, with the same name, unmute as well.

00:52:45.210 --> 00:52:46.852

Peter Mjos: Okay. Excellent. Hi.

00:52:47.400 --> 00:52:53.129

Megan Stone - AECOM: Hi. Perfect! We can hear you. Could you spell your first and last name for the record?

00:52:53.130 --> 00:52:56.690

Peter Mjos: Yeah, I'm Dr. Peter. Last name Mjos. M-J-O-S.

00:52:58.210 --> 00:53:00.480

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you. You can begin your comment.

00:53:00.480 --> 00:53:17.239

Peter Mjos: Thank you. I first arrived in King Cove in 1973, as a primary physician with the United States Indian Health Service and practiced with King Cove until about 2002. I was also for many years, a medical director for Eastern Aleutian Tribes.

00:53:17.410 --> 00:53:20.350

Peter Mjos: I traveled the roads out of King Cove many, many times.

00:53:20.770 --> 00:53:30.240

Peter Mjos: Even then, I have encountered raging storms, blighting storms, zero visibility, and treacherous freezing rain and spray.

00:53:30.250 --> 00:53:31.780

Peter Mjos: Now, let's be honest.

00:53:31.790 --> 00:53:41.630

Peter Mjos: The road to Cold Bay was initially proposed solely for commercial purposes. There was no mention of patient transport.

00:53:41.730 --> 00:54:04.190

Peter Mjos: For many years, we've been told that the proposed road is necessary to transport patients to the Cold Bay Airport, and its 10,000-foot runway to access Med Evac aircraft when the weather is too inclement to

prevent flights into the King Cove Airstrip or transport via ocean capable seagoing vessels.

00:54:04.460 --> 00:54:15.570

Peter Mjos: Over the course of many years in King Cove, I participated in several Med Evacs some by boat and many by fixed wing aircraft. Every single Med Evac

00:54:15.620 --> 00:54:19.810

Peter Mjos: for me was successful and without incident.

00:54:20.010 --> 00:54:45.359

Peter Mjos: Here is the bottom line. If weather conditions are so atrocious and not infrequent circumstance that any Med Evac cannot safely land in Cold Bay, then any attempt to access Cold Bay is nonsensical. There is no medical facility in Cold Bay capable and able to hold, maintain, and care for a patient in extremis.

00:54:46.560 --> 00:54:53.690

Peter Mjos: Travel via the proposed road in such an illusion maelstrom would be potentially catastrophic and fatal.

00:54:54.120 --> 00:55:03.519

Peter Mjos: Medical hurricane force winds, freezing spray, and heavily glazed surfaces, impenetrable drifts, zero visibility, and avalanche danger.

00:55:03.910 --> 00:55:31.669

Peter Mjos: A vehicle to attempt the drive will become impossibly stuck. Rescue efforts could be suicidal. Cold Bay officials have recorded numerous such events, where even clearing the runway only 10,000 feet is an impossibility. Imagine, then, the impossibility of clearing the road many miles long, much less even reaching a stranded vehicle.

00:55:31.670 --> 00:55:42.050

Peter Mjos: Attempted vehicles is futile, and possibly fail. In those conditions, the only option is to maintain the patient

00:55:42.120 --> 00:56:03.670

Peter Mjos: in the well organized and well equipped and staffed King Cove Clinic until meteorological conditions improve, such that a Med Evac can access either the Code Bay or the King Cove runway and transport via fixed wing, aircraft, chopper, or by via sea. That is the sheer reality.

00:56:05.070 --> 00:56:19.969

Peter Mjos: Now, today the Biden Administration has allocated over 40 million dollars for a protected Cold Bay harbor, and additionally a permanently stationed United States Coast Guard helicopter in Cold Bay. These additions will provide Med Evac transport

00:56:20.390 --> 00:56:25.209

Peter Mjos: reliably, whenever Med Evac help can access Cold Bay.

00:56:25.720 --> 00:56:26.650

Peter Mjos: Thank you.

00:56:28.360 --> 00:56:33.390

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you for your comment, Peter. We'll go ahead and place you back on mute,

00:56:33.770 --> 00:56:38.790

Megan Stone - AECOM: and move to our next pre-registered commenter, who is Melissa Foster.

00:56:39.200 --> 00:56:45.400

Megan Stone - AECOM: Melissa, if you'd still like to provide a comment this evening, please access that raise hand feature.

00:56:45.530 --> 00:56:46.630

Megan Stone - AECOM: Perfect!

00:56:47.560 --> 00:56:49.830

Megan Stone - AECOM: Hi! There! Can you hear us, Melissa?

00:56:50.750 --> 00:56:53.059

Melissa Foster: Yes, I can.

00:56:53.650 --> 00:56:54.510

Megan Stone - AECOM: Perfect.

00:56:57.250 --> 00:57:06.583

Melissa Foster: I would like to raise some questions after hearing all of these really excellent comments.

00:57:09.020 --> 00:57:17.860

Melissa Foster: I-I've been hearing a lot of conflicting-conflicting statements, and I

00:57:18.300 --> 00:57:21.740

Melissa Foster: I wish everybody could get together.

00:57:22.313 --> 00:57:23.159

Melissa Foster: This is

00:57:23.270 --> 00:57:31.179

Melissa Foster: purely theoretical, but-but get together and talk it out. Because you know, Deborah Williams is talking about

00:57:32.363 --> 00:57:36.216

Melissa Foster: a terrible precedent possibly being set that could

00:57:38.170 --> 00:57:45.710

Melissa Foster: you know, really degrade other the conservation of-subsistence values of other wildlife refuges.

00:57:46.310 --> 00:57:52.519

Melissa Foster: And—and then we hear from the woman who is passionate about needing that road.

00:57:53.226 --> 00:57:55.719

Melissa Foster: My heart goes out to you know,

00:57:55.980 --> 00:58:02.040

Melissa Foster: that cause. But then, we just hear from a primary care physician who's worked there for years

00:58:02.210 --> 00:58:05.510

Melissa Foster: saying that the road would not

00:58:06.090 --> 00:58:09.479

Melissa Foster: help at all to get people medical service they want.

00:58:09.490 --> 00:58:22.149

Melissa Foster: On the contrary, it could end in tragedy. And not only that, but the Biden Administration has also made available funds to buy these Med Evac helicopters.

00:58:23.780 --> 00:58:28.000

Melissa Foster: So—I, yeah.

00:58:28.970 --> 00:58:36.639

Melissa Foster: Yeah, it just—it just seems like something, some arrangement, something needs to be clarified. There's a lot of conflicting

00:58:39.070 --> 00:58:45.640

Melissa Foster: statements of experience here. And one last thing, I must say that if it's—

00:58:46.520 --> 00:58:54.250

Melissa Foster: it's a little suspicious that the road was originally designated for commercial use and all of a sudden, now it's only medical?

00:58:55.662 --> 00:59:01.999

Melissa Foster: Because once a road is in it can be used, for you know, as one gentleman

00:59:02.390 --> 00:59:08.314

Melissa Foster: so-so wisely observed that the laws change, and it could be used for anything.

00:59:08.860 --> 00:59:15.369

Melissa Foster: Anyway, that that's all I have to say. I've just listened and that's my response. Thank you.

00:59:18.640 --> 00:59:23.449

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you for your comment, Melissa. We'll go ahead and mute you now.

00:59:24.000 --> 00:59:34.709

Megan Stone - AECOM: With that we've moved through all of the folks who signed up to provide a comment on the Draft SEIS when they registered for this evening's meeting.

00:59:34.970 --> 00:59:43.280

Megan Stone - AECOM: We don't see that anyone's registered after the start time of this meeting and signed up to provide a comment on the Draft SEIS.

00:59:43.480 --> 00:59:50.189

Megan Stone - AECOM: So, at this time we'll open it up to anyone who would like to provide a comment, regardless of whether or not

00:59:50.470 --> 00:59:52.149

Megan Stone - AECOM: they signed up.

00:59:52.270 --> 00:59:54.020

Megan Stone - AECOM: I do see you have a few-

00:59:54.580 --> 01:00:11.879

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Hey, Megan. Angela, one of our hosts from Nelson Lagoon, and again, thank you so much, did say that there are a handful of community members who would like to make a public comment. And I'm wondering if Angela, are they in the same space as you? Or how can we accommodate that?

01:00:12.520 --> 01:00:32.489

Megan Stone - AECOM: Definitely. Yeah, Angela actually is the first on my list of hands raised. So, Angela, I'll go ahead and unmute you in a moment here. And if you could just have folks in the room identify themselves before they provide input that we—we can get that recorded for the record. That would be great.

01:00:32.980 --> 01:00:37.289

Megan Stone - AECOM: So, we'll unmute you now, and just make sure that the audio is sounding good.

01:00:37.720 --> 01:00:39.450

Megan Stone - AECOM: Hi, there! Can you hear us?

01:00:40.150 --> 01:00:42.120

Angela Johnson: I can hear you. Can you hear me?

01:00:42.710 --> 01:00:44.949

Megan Stone - AECOM: We can. Yes, sounds good.

01:00:45.490 --> 01:00:51.899

Angela Johnson: Alright. My name is Angela Johnson. I am the president of the Nelson Lagoon Tribal Council.

01:00:52.240 --> 01:00:57.509

Angela Johnson: Among other things, for my first comment

01:00:57.860 --> 01:01:07.530

Angela Johnson: I would like to comment on behalf of the native village and Nelson Lagoons Tribal Council in that, we are in complete support of this

01:01:07.660 --> 01:01:10.640

Angela Johnson: land exchange and road completion.

01:01:10.710 --> 01:01:16.930

Angela Johnson: This road has been in the works for my whole entire life and

01:01:19.300 --> 01:01:27.309

Angela Johnson: the need for this road is imperative for the community of King Cove.

01:01:28.420 --> 01:01:33.620

Angela Johnson: And then I would like to make my own personal comments from myself.

01:01:33.730 --> 01:01:34.960

Angela Johnson: I-

01:01:36.380 --> 01:01:40.730

Angela Johnson: When you travel through King Cove

01:01:41.300 --> 01:01:52.020

Angela Johnson: and through the whole entire area down here on the Aleutian Peninsula, there's a lot of different weather conditions that you can run into. And just because it is

01:01:52.710 --> 01:02:14.550

Angela Johnson: cloudy, zero zero, and terrible weather at the King Cove Airport does not mean that it won't be clear and good to fly out of Cold Bay. A lot of the time the Med Evac plane will be waiting in Cold Bay, and the

Coast Guard will have to be called to get into King Cove to get patients out of the community.

01:02:15.520 --> 01:02:31.269

Angela Johnson: And to add to that, if you're not able to fly off King Cove due to weather, you sure do not want to be getting on the water and onto a boat to try to be transferred over to Cold Bay from King Cove, in that sense.

01:02:32.420 --> 01:02:36.420

Angela Johnson: So, to conclude that statement,

01:02:37.011 --> 01:02:53.560

Angela Johnson: I'd also like to comment on behalf of our community health aid practitioner, Melinda Johnson. She serves Nelson Lagoon, and in the month of November she had been covering in King Cove, Alaska.

01:02:53.600 --> 01:02:56.390

Angela Johnson: She had experience firsthand with this

01:02:56.470 --> 01:03:05.459

Angela Johnson: in King Cove. A patient of hers needed to get Med Evac out and Med Evac plane was not there. The Med Evac wasn't going to be to

01:03:05.570 --> 01:03:07.980

Angela Johnson: reach King Cove due to the weather.

01:03:08.560 --> 01:03:20.170

Angela Johnson: The Coast Guard then had to be called, and it took 7 hours of waiting to get the Coast Guard to King Cove to get this particular patient out of King Cove.

01:03:20.560 --> 01:03:24.130

Angela Johnson: If the road was already completed,

01:03:24.460 --> 01:03:37.689

Angela Johnson: this would have saved them at least 3 hours of waiting time in King Cove and made the situation a lot more dire and stressful for everybody involved.

01:03:38.230 --> 01:03:42.970

Angela Johnson: So, I would just like to make that comment and

01:03:43.040 --> 01:03:56.280

Angela Johnson: this road is proposed by Unangan people on Unangan land. And it is not supposed to be something to debate upon about whatever

01:03:56.320 --> 01:04:01.250

Angela Johnson: blocks there for a long time, and-

01:04:01.510 --> 01:04:09.109

Angela Johnson: for this particular community area and for these people for their safety. It's very important and

01:04:09.260 --> 01:04:12.370

Angela Johnson: we support it here in Nelson Lagoon.

01:04:12.410 --> 01:04:14.760

Angela Johnson: And I think that's all I have.

01:04:15.080 --> 01:04:17.430

Angela Johnson: And then I have another person

01:04:17.990 --> 01:04:21.230

Angela Johnson: that would also like to make a comment.

01:04:22.900 --> 01:04:33.680

Megan Stone - AECOM: Yeah, thank you, Angela. Just to let you know at the very end there, your audio started cutting out. We were able to hear you, but just wanted to give you a heads up.

01:04:33.800 --> 01:04:36.339

Megan Stone - AECOM: I'll let you know if it cuts out again.

01:04:36.520 --> 01:04:43.089

Megan Stone - AECOM: But please do let us know who the next individual who would like to comment is.

01:04:44.390 --> 01:04:45.989

Angela Johnson: We have Theo Chesley here.

01:04:48.720 --> 01:04:50.330

Theo Chesley: Can you hear me?

01:04:51.020 --> 01:04:54.740

Megan Stone - AECOM: We can. Could you spell your first and last name for the record?

01:04:55.020 --> 01:05:02.089

Theo Chesley: Name is Theo Chesley. T-H-E-O. Last name is C-H-E-S-L-E-Y.

01:05:03.420 --> 01:05:05.920

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you, Theo. You can begin your comment.

01:05:06.410 --> 01:05:11.210

Theo Chesley: Okay, I grew up in Nelson Lagoon. I've been around here for about 50 years.

01:05:11.890 --> 01:05:18.590

Theo Chesley: I'm an air charter pilot in the Alaska Peninsula, Eastern Aleutian State of Alaska, also a commercial fisherman.

01:05:18.710 --> 01:05:29.150

Theo Chesley: I have children that were born and raised here, and also raised in King Cove, that are direct descendants of the Aluet people of the Alaska Peninsula, Eastern and Western Aluetians.

01:05:29.470 --> 01:05:34.859

Theo Chesley: So, that's a little bit of my history. We're talking about a very contentious issue here.

01:05:34.940 --> 01:05:40.030

Theo Chesley: We've got numerous environmental groups that are totally against this

01:05:40.210 --> 01:05:44.970

Theo Chesley: land swap and corridor where the road is to be built.

01:05:45.681 --> 01:05:54.690

Theo Chesley: I can tell you that they do not understand the dynamics of this road, and the measures that it can take to relieve.

01:05:54.800 --> 01:06:00.520

Theo Chesley: some of the stress off the town of King Cove. Residents.

01:06:00.980 --> 01:06:20.050

Theo Chesley: The clinic. I know the providers personally. What they go through when they get into a situation where they need to get a patient out of there, can be horrific. I personally have my own airline and do surgical extracts out of there to try to get to the jet port.

01:06:20.090 --> 01:06:23.750

Theo Chesley: And there's several times we can't do it.

01:06:24.160 --> 01:06:30.880

Theo Chesley: That's where the beauty of this road would come in. As for some of the comments from the Eastern Aluetian Tribes

01:06:31.310 --> 01:06:45.329

Theo Chesley: previous director, the weather as far as a wintery, complete snow blown road; that's a rare-rare occurrence. What generally happens with King Cove is the visibility goes down, and as Angela said,

01:06:45.728 --> 01:06:55.900

Theo Chesley: you know Cold Bay is wide open. There's a Med Evac aircraft sitting there, but they can't get in there because of visibility. This is where the road would shine.

01:06:56.430 --> 01:07:12.349

Theo Chesley: And this- these comments are going to take a little bit longer here because there's a lot on my plate here that you guys need to hear. I've been directly involved with this road project for a lot of years. I did the flying for the surveys when the land swap was up towards the north.

01:07:12.360 --> 01:07:25.070

Theo Chesley: I've done all these surveys, and I'm telling you it's the deal of a lifetime for what the Federal Government is getting compared to what the city of King Cove and the King Cove Corporation is giving.

01:07:25.855 --> 01:07:34.100

Theo Chesley: I will tell you that Karlin said it perfectly. The King Cove residents and the Aluets that live in the regions are the stewards of the land.

01:07:34.840 --> 01:07:40.619

Theo Chesley: They have taken care of this land for centuries, thousands of years, actually.

01:07:40.950 --> 01:07:46.429

Theo Chesley: And for the Federal government to come in and say that they can't get this one small piece of road

01:07:46.640 --> 01:07:52.320

Theo Chesley: because there's people that do not understand these dynamics, is literally criminal.

01:07:53.437 --> 01:07:58.330

Theo Chesley: You talk about the eelgrass. Okay, let's talk about that eelgrass.

01:07:58.650 --> 01:08:03.280

Theo Chesley: The eelgrass is very important. Yes, it's a flyway.

01:08:03.420 --> 01:08:10.279

Theo Chesley: But you have State and Federal hunting going on literally three miles from this eelgrass

01:08:10.570 --> 01:08:26.669

Theo Chesley: the Federal Government sanctions, and also the State of Alaska. You have a gauntlet of out of state hunters that are literally lined up just past these eelgrass beds, waiting to shoot these very birds that you are trying to protect.

01:08:26.920 --> 01:08:34.000

Theo Chesley: And yet we can't get a small road and a quarter past there, and yet all this hunting goes on.

01:08:34.010 --> 01:08:42.639

Theo Chesley: But you don't hear Deborah Williams talking about it. You don't hear anybody talking about it. They don't understand. These are the dynamics that are happening

01:08:42.970 --> 01:08:49.029

Theo Chesley: As far as this Hovercraft and the ferry, it's been tried. It was a failed event.

01:08:49.340 --> 01:08:58.889

Theo Chesley: The—the ferry. It's another bad idea. As Angela said, if it's that bad out, you're not going by boat, either. It's a road situation.

01:08:59.120 --> 01:09:14.670

Theo Chesley: And the upkeep on a ferry maintenance crews to keep that going. The cost is unbelievable, and everything is going up. The Hovercraft that was a failed endeavor, never did work out and it cost the borough millions.

01:09:14.840 --> 01:09:24.509

Theo Chesley: So, all of this has to be on the plate in view of everybody that is talking about this. It's got to be on the table,

01:09:24.569 --> 01:09:37.149

Theo Chesley: because I see some of the things have been taken off, some of the things are put on. The most viable situation and idea that we can put our finger on is this road.

01:09:37.290 --> 01:09:44.350

Theo Chesley: And Angela brought up a great point also before this meeting, if it's such an issue for this road

01:09:44.439 --> 01:09:46.909

Theo Chesley: to have a corridor access

01:09:46.920 --> 01:10:04.750

Theo Chesley: that you know certain times of the year. Maybe the road would be closed for certain periods. Maybe it's closed from the Hovercraft landing that they designed at the northeast part of the King Cove Road to Cold Bay. Maybe we shut that down. But these are ideas that we can discuss

01:10:04.750 --> 01:10:17.399

Theo Chesley: to try to make it easier for people to accept. We need this road. The residents of King Cove need this road. The Aluets, and this is their land, need this road.

01:10:17.800 --> 01:10:23.409

Theo Chesley: So, I hope you take all of this into consideration because I personally lived it.

01:10:23.470 --> 01:10:31.399

Theo Chesley: I've done many Med Evacs out of there. Not only are people scared, fighting for their life, then they got to go on this ride in an aircraft.

01:10:31.900 --> 01:10:41.149

Theo Chesley: It's just, it doesn't make sense anymore. I mean, we're going into 2025. Let's pull it together and get this done for these people.

01:10:41.210 --> 01:10:42.390

Theo Chesley: That's all I got.

01:10:42.660 --> 01:10:44.139

Theo Chesley: I appreciate your time.

01:10:46.870 --> 01:10:48.920

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you for your comments, Theo.

01:10:49.200 --> 01:10:52.550

Megan Stone - AECOM: Is there anyone else in the room with you

01:10:52.700 --> 01:10:54.790

Megan Stone - AECOM: who would like to provide a comment?

01:10:55.070 --> 01:10:59.620

Megan Stone - AECOM: We have one other individual on the meeting who would also like to provide a comment.

01:11:00.890 --> 01:11:04.440

Angela Johnson: There's nobody else.

01:11:05.200 --> 01:11:05.970

Megan Stone - AECOM: Nobody else? Okay.

01:11:06.650 --> 01:11:12.740

Megan Stone - AECOM: Let me know if that changes. I'll keep an eye out for the raise hands. But thank you all for your comments.

01:11:14.680 --> 01:11:20.500

Megan Stone - AECOM: We'll go ahead and move to our final commenter, Ernie Weiss.

01:11:21.070 --> 01:11:23.580

Megan Stone - AECOM: Ernie, I'm going to go ahead and unmute you now.

01:11:24.440 --> 01:11:25.340

Ernie Weiss: Okay. Can you hear me?

01:11:25.340 --> 01:11:29.559

Megan Stone - AECOM: Yes, we can. Yes. Could you spell your name for the record?

01:11:29.800 --> 01:11:34.370

Ernie Weiss: Sure, my name is Ernie Weiss. Spelled E-R-N-I-E.

01:11:34.500 --> 01:11:38.866

Ernie Weiss: Last name, W-E-I-S-S. I appreciate your time. I've-

01:11:39.290 --> 01:11:48.869

Ernie Weiss: I was at the anchorage meeting and the weather that greeted us there, that was King Cobe weather, with trees falling down. I nearly lost my hat. The

01:11:48.940 --> 01:11:56.740

Ernie Weiss: the car door on my boss's car, she nearly sprung it. That that's what happens in King Cove. I appreciated

01:11:57.584 --> 01:12:02.440

Ernie Weiss: previous testifiers, Mark McNeley. Yeah, everybody is afraid to fly into

01:12:02.900 --> 01:12:14.682

Ernie Weiss: King Cove. It's some of the worst weather ever. Theo is one of the best pilots in the region, possibly the state, and he knows that. So, thank you both. Thank you for the opportunity,

01:12:15.130 --> 01:12:19.320

Ernie Weiss: and I appreciate the people in Nelson Lagoon stepping up. I work with

01:12:19.590 --> 01:12:38.910

Ernie Weiss: the people of Nelson Lagoon on fisheries issues in my current position. I do work with the Aleutians East Borough. Previously, again, as I mentioned the other night, I was a teacher in King Cove, was also the mayor for a term. So, this issue has been, you know, my number one issue for many, many years. It's an obvious answer

01:12:39.348 --> 01:12:46.359

Ernie Weiss: The marine alternatives, they are not options. Anybody who lives in King Cove has certainly taken a vessel

01:12:46.420 --> 01:12:52.009

Ernie Weiss: and had to climb that ladder in Cold Bay. And the Cold Bay dock,

01:12:52.090 --> 01:12:59.140

Ernie Weiss: deservedly, is going to get an upgrade. It needs it, but it doesn't mean that the marine alternatives

01:12:59.170 --> 01:13:04.156

Ernie Weiss: are true options for health and safety, getting people in and out.

01:13:04.630 --> 01:13:12.990

Ernie Weiss: This action does not need to be precedent setting. It's a discrete issue that would solve this for the people of King Cove.

01:13:14.530 --> 01:13:19.690

Ernie Weiss: Of course, other communities do have access problems, but this has a solution.

01:13:20.234 --> 01:13:37.139

Ernie Weiss: This--this road alternative would enhance the wilderness. It would provide better enforcement of hunting and fishing regulations, and it would provide for great wildlife viewing opportunities not to mention adding thousands of acres to the wilderness. So,

01:13:37.170 --> 01:13:46.240

Ernie Weiss: again, I appreciate you guys putting all this time in and thank you to the people in Nelson Lagoon for supporting this road, and that's all I have. I appreciate it. Thank you.

01:13:51.250 --> 01:13:54.510

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you for your feedback.

01:13:55.380 --> 01:14:00.949

Megan Stone - AECOM: And with that, I think we've heard from everyone who had their hand raised

01:14:01.080 --> 01:14:04.289

Megan Stone - AECOM: to provide comments on the Draft SEIS.

01:14:06.070 --> 01:14:13.569

Megan Stone - AECOM: I am going to quickly just see if I can change my speaker. I'm getting some input that I'm having some feedback--

01:14:14.690 --> 01:14:19.309

Megan Stone - AECOM: and I don't want to make anyone listen to bad audio.

01:14:20.300 --> 01:14:23.520

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: It sounds better now!

01:14:24.140 --> 01:14:29.529

Megan Stone - AECOM: Perfect. I dabbled with some buttons and glad that worked out.

01:14:30.177 --> 01:14:44.520

Megan Stone - AECOM: With that we're going to go ahead and officially move into the ANILCA 810 subsistence hearing portion of the meeting. I'm going to go ahead and pass it over to Bobbie Jo for a presentation on this piece.

01:14:46.020 --> 01:15:08.739

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Okay, thank you so much and really appreciate everybody who commented, and those that were maybe just listening always really appreciate that, knowing that you'll have other opportunity to comment. And again, President Johnson, thank you again for helping us to host and set this meeting up, and for the work that you did to distribute the information. So, thank you.

01:15:08.740 --> 01:15:33.370

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Okay, so the ANILCA subsistence section 810 hearing. Let's talk about that. What we're going to go over is, you know, why we're doing this? What are some of the evaluation factors that we use to make determinations? We'll touch base on the summary of findings, and then just let you know where the locations for the hearings will exist. Again, as I mentioned, we weren't able to get physically to Nelson Lagoon.

01:15:33.370 --> 01:15:50.450

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: I definitely hope to get there at some point. So that is why we are holding this as a virtual option, to ensure that we do hear from those in the community. And hopefully, if there's other comments from the community, they can participate in other ways. So let me go to the next slide.

01:15:50.450 --> 01:16:04.589

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: And I'm going to let you know that I might read a few things off of my page because of the--there's sometimes, if you miss a word, you may miss the entire meaning of what I want to try to convey. So,

01:16:05.070 --> 01:16:19.879

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act has Section 810, and what it does is requires us to evaluate the effects on subsistence uses and needs, in determining whether to withdraw,

01:16:19.930 --> 01:16:30.809

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: reserve, lease, or otherwise permit the use, occupancy, or disposition of public lands on national wildlife refuges in Alaska.

01:16:30.890 --> 01:16:35.969

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: I would never remember that if I didn't read it, so thank you for that.

01:16:36.000 --> 01:16:52.549

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: ANILCA also requires the Service to hold public hearings on subsistence resources and activities, in conjunction with public meetings in the vicinity of communities for which a positive "may significantly restrict" determination has been made.

01:16:52.770 --> 01:16:53.779

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Next slide.

01:16:58.670 --> 01:17:00.260

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Okay. So,

01:17:00.420 --> 01:17:20.549

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: three factors are considered when determining if a significant restriction of the subsistence and uses and needs may result from

the proposed action, the alternatives, or the cumulative effects or the cumulative case. So, they're the A's: abundance, availability and access.

01:17:20.550 --> 01:17:34.450

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: So, what we like to listen to and tune into, even if we don't hear it in this ANILCA 810 portion, but people have brought it up in the other parts of our meetings. We do tease that out and utilize that information. So just know that if

01:17:34.450 --> 01:17:51.799

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: you've provided public input on these types of topics; we will still utilize those. So this isn't, again, the only opportunity. But what we look at is, if there's a reduction in the abundance of harvestable resources used for subsistence purposes, again, based on the proposed action?

01:17:51.830 --> 01:18:00.490

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Is there a reduction in the availability of resources used for subsistence caused by the alteration of their distribution?

01:18:00.580 --> 01:18:03.500

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: The migration patterns or the location?

01:18:03.780 --> 01:18:30.439

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Or is there a legal or physical limitation on access of subsistence uses to harvestable resources? So those, again, are the three things that we look at. And so, when you're speaking at a hearing, or you know, at the next portion, if you kind of think about it that way on abundance, the availability of these resources or access. Those are the things that really help us in the final determination that will be made.

01:18:30.450 --> 01:18:31.890

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Okay, next slide.

01:18:34.360 --> 01:18:41.119

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: So again, each of the alternatives and the cumulative effects were analyzed according to those criteria.

01:18:41.120 --> 01:19:05.960

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: And so, the preliminary finding that has been documented in the Draft Supplemental EIS is as follows: it's because Alternative 6 in the cumulative case may significantly restrict subsistence uses, the Service is holding public hearings on subsistence resources and activities in the communities for which a positive "may significantly restrict" determination has been made.

01:19:06.390 --> 01:19:11.579

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: We were in King Cove, Cold Bay, and Sand Point last week.

01:19:11.720 --> 01:19:40.919

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Pardon me. And then, we are here today with Nelson Lagoon and others, just to be able to hear from all of you. And then we will be having a meeting with False Pass on the 16th. All of these meetings are on our project website, so just know if you're interested in participating or listening, or maybe have something more to say, those would be that other opportunity. And then the next slide explains something a little further. So, if you want to go to the next one.

01:19:41.870 --> 01:19:59.100

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: So, we also will be holding a public meeting and ANILCA 810 hearing in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta hub community of Bethel, and that will be tomorrow. We'll be flying out in the morning. That meeting will be tomorrow evening.

01:19:59.100 --> 01:20:18.410

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: And then--this is because a number of the communities in the vicinity of the YK Delta could meet the "may significantly" restrict threshold, based on a reduction in the abundance of certain migratory bird species that they harvest. So that is why we're going to go there and listen and learn, and see

01:20:18.410 --> 01:20:35.640

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: from what we find out, if that could tip the scale into a positive finding. And that will be also—the other thing I was going to mention is because we recognize of the travel burden for folks to get from the rural communities in the YK Delta into Bethel,

01:20:35.640 --> 01:20:48.540

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: we are holding a virtual session again, just like we are here today, kind of geographically focused on the YK Delta. But again, public can join us, and that will be Friday, this coming Friday, the 13th.

01:20:48.860 --> 01:21:10.750

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: And at the end of this process we take all this information and work through it, and then a subsistence determination of a ANILCA Section 810(a)(3) will be completed, and that will be documented in the Final Supplemental EIS. And so, with that, I think that is the last slide here to kind of frame why we do it;

01:21:10.750 --> 01:21:29.440

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: what are we looking for in the information; and where are we going and why based on the preliminary determinations that have been made in the preliminary findings. So, with that, I think this is pretty straightforward, like we just went through with the public comment period. But I will let Megan go through anything she'd like to, and then we hope to hear from some of you

01:21:29.660 --> 01:21:32.299

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: on the ANILCA 810 piece. Thanks again.

01:21:33.490 --> 01:21:35.120

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you, Bobbie Jo.

01:21:35.190 --> 01:21:48.949

Megan Stone - AECOM: I'll try and provide kind of an abbreviated version of these Zoom logistics. But just in case we had anyone join us later, I want to make sure everyone feels comfortable in Zoom.

01:21:49.640 --> 01:21:56.729

Megan Stone - AECOM: So, if you would like to offer verbal testimony during the ANILCA 810 subsistence hearing,

01:21:56.820 --> 01:22:05.160

Megan Stone - AECOM: we have a pre-registered list of those who would like to provide input. We'll accept input in the order of registration.

01:22:05.500 --> 01:22:08.029

Megan Stone - AECOM: When it's your turn to provide your input,

01:22:08.130 --> 01:22:12.420

Megan Stone - AECOM: we'll read your name aloud from the list and display your name on the screen,

01:22:12.460 --> 01:22:15.000

Megan Stone - AECOM: just like we did for the comment session.

01:22:15.300 --> 01:22:19.290

Megan Stone - AECOM: We'll also display the name of the commenter who is next in line.

01:22:19.620 --> 01:22:29.339

Megan Stone - AECOM: So, when you hear your name called out, we ask that you please use the raise hand feature so that we know you're ready and willing to offer your comment.

01:22:30.330 --> 01:22:37.099

Megan Stone - AECOM: Again, you can access the raise hand feature by clicking on the reactions icon or the participants list,

01:22:37.170 --> 01:22:40.279

Megan Stone - AECOM: which are at the bottom of your Zoom screen.

01:22:40.410 --> 01:22:46.409

Megan Stone - AECOM: If you wave your mouse back and forth across the bottom of your Zoom screen, those icons should appear.

01:22:47.430 --> 01:22:55.179

Megan Stone - AECOM: You can then select the raise hand feature located, again, either in the reactions icon or at the bottom of your participants list.

01:22:55.840 --> 01:23:04.950

Megan Stone - AECOM: I don't see that we have any phone callers joining us, but if we do, I'll keep an eye out and go over instructions for how they can participate.

01:23:05.980 --> 01:23:17.869

Megan Stone - AECOM: Once you've raised your hand, we'll unmute you so you can provide your verbal public comment. You may be double muted. If that's the case, I'll prompt you to unmute yourself on your end so that we can hear you.

01:23:17.980 --> 01:23:20.380

Megan Stone - AECOM: If that happens, you'll get a little

01:23:20.750 --> 01:23:25.020

Megan Stone - AECOM: pop-up on your screen that says the host is asking you to unmute.

01:23:25.240 --> 01:23:29.629

Megan Stone - AECOM: If you don't want to provide input anymore, you can just reject that.

01:23:30.180 --> 01:23:37.420

Megan Stone - AECOM: We ask that you please spell out your first and last name for the record before providing your verbal public comment.

01:23:37.670 --> 01:23:42.860

Megan Stone - AECOM: And if you're representing an organization or group, please say so during your comment.

01:23:43.390 --> 01:23:47.829

Megan Stone - AECOM: As we mentioned earlier, we'll allow 3 minutes for comments.

01:23:48.350 --> 01:23:51.840

Megan Stone - AECOM: We'll give each person 3 minutes, so that everyone

01:23:52.190 --> 01:23:55.850

Megan Stone - AECOM: who wants to speak this evening has a chance to do so.

01:23:56.180 --> 01:24:00.200

Megan Stone - AECOM: You'll see the clock on the screen, and it'll show you when your time is up.

01:24:00.800 --> 01:24:05.370

Megan Stone - AECOM: We'll let you know when your time is nearly expired, so you have time to finish.

01:24:05.670 --> 01:24:12.059

Megan Stone - AECOM: And again, if you're not able to complete your comments in 3 minutes, we'll try to come back to you if time permits.

01:24:13.430 --> 01:24:18.190

Megan Stone - AECOM: After you've provided your comment, we'll mute you and move on to the next commenter.

01:24:18.260 --> 01:24:25.459

Megan Stone - AECOM: Once we've worked our way through our list of pre-registered commentors, if we have time, we'll move on to those who registered

01:24:25.480 --> 01:24:28.390

Megan Stone - AECOM: after the start time of tonight's meeting.

01:24:28.800 --> 01:24:35.140

Megan Stone - AECOM: If we still have time remaining after that, we'll open up to anyone who would like to provide a comment.

01:24:35.910 --> 01:24:42.059

Megan Stone - AECOM: Again, this ANILCA 810 hearing is being recorded as part of the official record.

01:24:42.210 --> 01:24:47.570

Megan Stone - AECOM: As a reminder your camera control settings are restricted during this time.

01:24:47.660 --> 01:24:53.320

Megan Stone - AECOM: You'll only be able to unmute, if and when, we unmute you after you raise your hand.

01:24:53.790 --> 01:24:57.529

Megan Stone - AECOM: And we do want to hear from all members of the public,

01:24:57.730 --> 01:25:00.740

Megan Stone - AECOM: so we'll be using those same guidelines.

01:25:00.790 --> 01:25:06.500

Megan Stone - AECOM: Please be mindful of the length of your comment. Please be respectful others in their viewpoints.

01:25:06.530 --> 01:25:09.880

Megan Stone - AECOM: And third, please refrain from using profanity.

01:25:11.100 --> 01:25:15.869

Megan Stone - AECOM: Now that I've gone through those housekeeping items, we'll move to the next slide.

01:25:18.250 --> 01:25:25.709

Megan Stone - AECOM: And again, I'll just leave this up in case we have anyone new joining us who might need to know where to find that raise hand feature.

01:25:25.930 --> 01:25:30.360

Megan Stone - AECOM: You can find that in the participants list or in the reactions icon,

01:25:30.480 --> 01:25:33.430

Megan Stone - AECOM: where the little hand icon is located.

01:25:36.680 --> 01:25:42.730

Megan Stone - AECOM: With that, we'll move to the next slide and get started with our first pre-registered commenter.

01:25:43.570 --> 01:25:51.389

Megan Stone - AECOM: So, our first preregistered commenter for the ANILCA 810 hearing is Julie Toomey.

01:25:52.920 --> 01:25:56.570

Megan Stone - AECOM: Julie. I see your hand raised, so we'll unmute you now.

01:25:57.270 --> 01:26:00.980

Megan Stone - AECOM: And if you could spell your first and last name again, that would be great.

01:26:01.730 --> 01:26:05.260

Julie Toomey: Alright. Thank you, Julie Toomey. J-

01:26:05.500 --> 01:26:14.390

Julie Toomey: Alright sorry. It's just J-U-L-I-E. Last name is Toomey, T, as in Thomas, O-O-M, as in Michael, E-Y.

01:26:15.522 --> 01:26:22.947

Julie Toomey: Really appreciate the time to be able to speak to this in terms of our subsistence availability.

01:26:25.460 --> 01:26:32.840

Julie Toomey: You know, Murkowski recently wrote something on Izembek and the King Cove Road

01:26:33.020 --> 01:26:42.210

Julie Toomey: and she also talked about when Izembek was initially created, and it was done so without consultation of the local Alaska natives,

01:26:42.540 --> 01:26:48.590

Julie Toomey: specifically, King Cove. And public meetings, they were held in Cold Bay

01:26:48.820 --> 01:26:57.679

Julie Toomey: and in Anchorage, but not in King Cove. And then let's add insult to injury, personal property, such as our subsistence cabins were burned overnight

01:26:58.060 --> 01:27:02.760

Julie Toomey: after the passage of ANILCA . And so I just want that to

01:27:02.770 --> 01:27:05.569

Julie Toomey: sink in and be just reminiscent of

01:27:05.730 --> 01:27:12.080

Julie Toomey: what has happened to our people, on top of the fact that we can't utilize this road.

01:27:12.100 --> 01:27:15.640

Julie Toomey: I do want to talk about subsistence, specifically and just-

01:27:15.760 --> 01:27:22.949

Julie Toomey: how specifically most people are concerned about the black brant and the-I believe it's the emperor goose.

01:27:23.030 --> 01:27:30.750

Julie Toomey: But I'd like to talk about two refuges in the United States that have successfully protected wildlife and their environment,

01:27:30.850 --> 01:27:48.810

Julie Toomey: without impeding human progress. San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge in Southern California protects a rich diversity of endangered, threatened, migratory, and native species and their habitats in the midst of a highly urbanized,

01:27:48.910 --> 01:27:53.419

Julie Toomey: coastal environment and it is also an important setting for eelgrass.

01:27:53.560 --> 01:28:04.170

Julie Toomey: This wildlife refuge is surrounded by big and developed urban life and activity, including highways, bridges, roads, trains, buses, and airports.

01:28:05.160 --> 01:28:14.720

Julie Toomey: The second one I'd like to share is Gray's Harbor National Wildlife Refuge in Washington. It has one of the largest concentrations of shorebirds on the West coast.

01:28:14.770 --> 01:28:22.960

Julie Toomey: The intertidal flats, salt marshes, and open water provide essential habitat for diversity of fish and wildlife,

01:28:23.000 --> 01:28:28.770

Julie Toomey: especially for hundreds of thousands of shorebirds during the spring migration.

01:28:28.950 --> 01:28:35.990

Julie Toomey: This is another refuge where eelgrass beds are critical, and yet this refuge is adjacent to the Bowerman Airport

01:28:36.190 --> 01:28:37.960

Julie Toomey: and the Gray's Harbor Port.

01:28:38.080 --> 01:28:51.599

Julie Toomey: And despite the constant stream of air, water traffic, and being bordered by Washington State Route 109, his refuge continues to support hundreds of thousands of birds during the spring migration.

01:28:51.770 --> 01:28:59.600

Julie Toomey: These examples prove that protecting vital ecosystems, like eelgrass, can coexist with urban life and human infrastructure;

01:28:59.760 --> 01:29:13.020

Julie Toomey: and especially if we're talking about subsistence. These are critical features, is making sure that our eelgrass and our birds are ready for our people for generations to come to make sure they can subsist off the land, and

01:29:13.510 --> 01:29:19.480

Julie Toomey: we should be able to have a road to protect human lives consistently.

01:29:19.690 --> 01:29:30.600

Julie Toomey: So, I just want to leave that with you. This road is designed to save human lives, and that should be able to coexist with conservation goals and subsistence goals. Thank you.

01:29:32.190 --> 01:29:34.400

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you for your comment, Julie.

01:29:34.590 --> 01:29:37.150

Megan Stone - AECOM: We'll go ahead and place you back on mute.

01:29:37.540 --> 01:29:39.770

Megan Stone - AECOM: And we'll move to our next

01:29:39.940 --> 01:29:51.090

Megan Stone - AECOM: person who signed up to provide testimony for the ANILCA 810 subsistence hearing who is Mark McNeley.

01:29:51.820 --> 01:29:55.679

Megan Stone - AECOM: I don't see that we have Mark on our

01:29:56.540 --> 01:30:02.630

Megan Stone - AECOM: participants list right now, but we'll circle back and see if they join again later on.

01:30:04.780 --> 01:30:10.660

Megan Stone - AECOM: With that I believe those are the two individuals who signed up to provide

01:30:11.146 --> 01:30:16.379

Megan Stone - AECOM: testimony for the ANILCA 810 subsistence hearing portion of the meeting.

01:30:16.800 --> 01:30:22.620

Megan Stone - AECOM: So, at this time we'll open it up to see if anyone else would like to provide input.

01:30:23.380 --> 01:30:26.329

Megan Stone - AECOM: I'll keep an eye out for raised hands

01:30:26.820 --> 01:30:33.929

Megan Stone - AECOM: and we'll leave this slide up so that folks can have those instructions on how to access the raise hand feature.

01:31:08.590 --> 01:31:18.879

Megan Stone - AECOM: We've also gone ahead and put some information in the chat on where you can find the link to regulations.gov to submit your public comments.

01:31:19.070 --> 01:31:21.279

Megan Stone - AECOM: So, we have that link in the chat.

01:31:21.630 --> 01:31:26.389

Megan Stone - AECOM: You're welcome to provide comments by December 30th, 2024,

01:31:26.510 --> 01:31:29.590

Megan Stone - AECOM: 11:59 PM Eastern time.

01:31:29.920 --> 01:31:36.520

Megan Stone - AECOM: So, if you didn't have a chance to speak this evening, or you're still thinking about what you might like to comment.

01:31:36.670 --> 01:31:39.919

Megan Stone - AECOM: That's a great resource for submitting those.

01:31:40.630 --> 01:31:47.810

Megan Stone - AECOM: And we put that information in the chat, so you can copy that link down. With that, we'll continue

01:31:48.210 --> 01:31:55.319

Megan Stone - AECOM: to keep this meeting open in case anyone else would like to provide ANILCA 810 input.

01:31:55.730 --> 01:31:56.970

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you guys.

01:32:43.660 --> 01:33:11.979

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Megan, would you like to just move to the final slide in case anybody in Nelson Lagoon wants to jot down my phone number in the event that—just making sure that nobody else in that public space wants to speak as well. But I just want to make sure before people drop off, they do have the information to access all of the project information, and then my direct email and phone, I think Angela might already have President Nelson, or—

01:33:12.060 --> 01:33:19.469

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: sorry President Johnson probably already has it from communication. But if you'd like to put that up on the screen

01:33:19.490 --> 01:33:36.860

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: as we wait to see if anybody else joins, that would be great and just know, really appreciate those of you still on the line to have you here. If you do want to reach out. That's my information. And then our project website. I think that's getting around pretty good

01:33:36.910 --> 01:33:50.750

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: to interested folks. But we are going to keep that updated with any current information that comes so definitely check back to that. As we go forward over the next many days, we'll also be having

01:33:50.960 --> 01:34:11.919

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: two different statewide consultations, one with tribal governments on the 17th next week, and then we will have a statewide consultation with ANGSA corporations. So, President Johnson, that's new information that you probably should have received, but we may not have all the current information so definitely

01:34:12.440 --> 01:34:20.579

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: take a look at that website and participate in the statewide consultation if you're interested in that as well.

01:34:20.670 --> 01:34:26.429

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: And I think that was probably the most-newest information that we could provide you that came out the last few days.

01:34:26.950 --> 01:34:33.029

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: But other than that, we will keep the line open until 5, since we have

01:34:33.741 --> 01:34:38.509

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: advertised for a 5 o'clock end. But,

01:34:38.620 --> 01:34:52.630

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: maybe we do want to ask if there are any go backs from—I think we still have Deborah Williams and Angela Johnson for any one part, if there's any, go backs that you want to add to your public testimony. We could also do that at this time.

01:35:01.340 --> 01:35:11.369

Megan Stone - AECOM: Yeah, thank you. We'll continue to keep an eye out to see if we have additional hands raised, and we'll be on for the next 24 min or so.

01:35:11.570 --> 01:35:18.520

Megan Stone - AECOM: We've posted information on the chat, including the information that we have on this slide here,

01:35:18.530 --> 01:35:22.219

Megan Stone - AECOM: so folks can get in contact with you if needed.

01:35:22.380 --> 01:35:27.510

Megan Stone - AECOM: If anyone has any additional comments, please do use that raise hand feature.

01:35:28.440 --> 01:35:29.760

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you, guys.

01:44:07.530 --> 01:44:13.880

Megan Stone - AECOM: Hello again. Everyone. Just a reminder that will be on for the next 15 minutes or so.

01:44:14.070 --> 01:44:17.449

Megan Stone - AECOM: We are ready to accept any comments that you might have.

01:44:17.590 --> 01:44:26.199

Megan Stone - AECOM: We have information on the slide on where you can get information and project updates. And we've also put that in the chat.

01:44:26.230 --> 01:44:32.400

Megan Stone - AECOM: We'll continue to monitor to see if anyone has their hand raised and would like to provide a comment

01:44:33.090 --> 01:44:39.480

Megan Stone - AECOM: and we'll close it out in around 14 minutes or so, here. Thank you, everyone.

01:50:29.940 --> 01:50:44.929

Megan Stone - AECOM: Hello, everyone. Just a reminder that we'll be accepting input for the next couple of minutes or so before we go ahead and close out the meeting. If you'd like to provide, input please do use that raise hand feature.

01:50:45.100 --> 01:50:52.260

Megan Stone - AECOM: We'll leave this side up so you can copy down where to find information and prop project updates,

01:50:53.150 --> 01:50:58.259

Megan Stone - AECOM: and we'll also leave information in the chat on when the comment period ends,

01:50:58.270 --> 01:51:01.119

Megan Stone - AECOM: and where you can submit those written comments.

01:51:01.180 --> 01:51:07.260

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you for your participation, and we'll go ahead and keep an eye out for any hands raised.

01:56:35.480 --> 01:56:43.540

Megan Stone - AECOM: Alrighty. It doesn't look like we have any more hands raised. So, with that, we're going to go ahead and move on

01:56:43.660 --> 01:56:45.369

Megan Stone - AECOM: to closing remarks.

01:56:45.620 --> 01:56:50.989

Megan Stone - AECOM: and I'll turn it back over to Bobbie Jo Skibo with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

01:56:53.640 --> 01:57:09.239

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Alright. Well, thank you so much. This was our first virtual public meeting. Thank you so much for letting us work out a few of the kinks, but I think it went great, and we'll be looking forward to meeting in Bethel tomorrow in person, on Friday, another virtual meeting with the YK Delta broader communities.

01:57:09.240 --> 01:57:25.960

Bobbie Jo Skibo - USFWS: Please check our website for project updates. And again, we really just appreciate being here to listen to all of you. And for you providing the information that you did. So with that, we will close out tonight's meeting, and again, just really appreciate your time. So, thank you very much. Take care.

Meeting Chat:

00:31:20 Lily Benson - AECOM: Hello everyone - we will begin the meeting momentarily.

00:31:34 Lily Benson - AECOM: Please join using your computer audio. You can access computer audio by navigating to the mute icon, clicking on the

arrow next to the mute icon to open audio options, and then selecting join using computer audio. Webinar ID: 820 0408 1640

00:31:44 Lily Benson - AECOM: Closed captioning is available by selecting the Live Transcript button icon on your Zoom toolbar and then selecting show subtitles.

01:04:17 Lily Benson - AECOM: The Draft SEIS is available online at: www.regulations.gov. Docket No. FWS-R7-NWRS-2023-0072

01:09:54 Lily Benson - AECOM: The comment period closes December 30th, 2024 (at 11:59 p.m. EST). If you are unable to offer or complete your verbal public comment during the hearing today, the USFWS encourages you to submit your comment in writing via the project webpage: <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/FWS-R7-NWRS-2023-0072>

01:56:55 Lily Benson - AECOM: The comment period closes on December 30th, 2024 (at 11:59 p.m. EST). If you are unable to offer or complete your verbal public comment during the hearing today, the USFWS encourages you to submit your comment in writing via the project webpage: <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/FWS-R7-NWRS-2023-0072>

02:04:47 Lily Benson - AECOM: For more information and project updates, go to: <https://www.fws.gov/project/potential-land-exchange-road-between-king-cove-and-cold-bay>. Contact: Bobbie Jo Skibo, Senior Planning Staff and Project Leader, at bobbiejo_skibo@fws.gov

02:28:40 Megan Stone - AECOM: Izembek NWR Land Exchange/Road Corridor Draft SEIS Overview Handout | FWS.gov