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DENALI AIRCRAFT OVERFLIGHTS COUNCIL

4

October 26, 2012

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Taken at:

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National Park Service

Regional Office

7

240 West 5th Avenue, Room 518

Anchorage, Alaska

8

9:00 a.m. to 4:38 p.m.

9

Advisory Council Members:

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Erika Bennett, Commercial Aviation

Joan Frankevich, State and National Environmental

11

Community

Tom George, General Aviation

12

Nancy Bale, Local Environmental Community

Mike Yorke, FAA

13

Brian Okonek, Local Landowners

Lt. Col. Scott Babos, U.S. Air Force

14

Miriam Valentine, Designated Federal Officer

Jeff Mow, Acting Superintendent, Denali National

15

Park & Preserve

Elwood Lynn, Assistant Superintendent, Denali

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National Park & Preserve

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Audience Members:

Davyd Betchkal, Physical Science Technician

18

Dave Schirokauer, Physical and Social Sciences

Program Manager

19

Britta Schroeder, Physical Science Technician

Stan Leaphart, State of Alaska, Citizens' Advisory

20

Commission on Federal Areas

Lois Wirtz, ATIA

21

Greg LaHaie, Kantishna Air

Elaine Hulse

22

Sally Gibert

Colin Malone, Denali National Park Pilot, Acting

23

Park Aviation Manager (Via Telephone)

John Leonard (Via Telephone)

24

Reported by: Leslie J. Knisley

25

Shorthand Reporter

1 ERIKA BENNETT: Welcome.

2 So let's see who's here. We'll
3 go around, for the benefit of everybody that's
4 in the room that doesn't know everybody. Just
5 say who you are and who you're representing.

6 We'll start with you, Brian.

7 BRIAN OKONEK: I'm Brian Okonek
8 and I represent local landowners in the park.

9 NANCY BALE: Nancy Bale, local
10 environmental community.

11 LT. COL. SCOTT BABOS: Lt. Col.
12 Scott Babos, representing all military
13 entities in the State of Alaska.

14 MIKE YORKE: Mike Yorke, Federal
15 Aviation Administration, aviation safety.

16 JEFF MOW: Jeff Mow, acting
17 superintendent at Denali National Park.

18 ELWOOD LYNN: Elwood Lynn,
19 assistant superintendent at Denali.

20 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Joan
21 Frankevich, representing statewide and
22 national conservation groups.

23 MIRIAM VALENTINE: Miriam
24 Valentine, the designated federal officer of
25 Denali.

1 TOM GEORGE: Tom George, general
2 aviation.

3 ERIKA BENNETT: I'm Erika
4 Bennett. I represent commercial aviation that
5 does not have a stake in Denali National Park
6 itself, so anybody that might be flying over.

7 We do have a quorum. Suzanne may
8 make it later, depending on family.

9 MIRIAM VALENTINE: I just wanted
10 to share that Claire left out of state for --
11 had a death in the family, so she contacted me
12 this week. Charlie and Amanda had business
13 obligations and weren't able to make it. They
14 let us know ahead of time they weren't going
15 to come.

16 ERIKA BENNETT: And if you don't
17 mind starting around --

18 GREG LaHAIE: Sure. I'm Greg
19 LaHaie with Kantishna Air Taxi on the north
20 side.

21 DAVYD BETCHKAL: My name is Davyd
22 Betchkal. I'm with NPS. I'm a physical
23 science technician.

24 BRITTA SCHROEDER: Britta
25 Schroeder, Denali National Park, science

1 technician.

2 STAN LEAPHART: Stan Leaphart
3 with the State of Alaska, Citizens' Advisory
4 Commission on Federal Areas.

5 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Dave
6 Schirokauer, I'm with Denali National Park,
7 physical sciences.

8 ERIKA BENNETT: Okay. For the
9 benefit of our recorder, speak up a little bit
10 louder than you normally would, please. All
11 right.

12 Welcome, and I guess we'll tag
13 team it here. We have Acting Superintendent
14 Jeff. Would you like to tell us a little bit
15 about yourself?

16 JEFF MOW: Sure, sure. Again, my
17 name is Jeff Mow. So I'll be acting as the
18 superintendent of Denali for the next three
19 months. My day job, I guess I would say, is
20 I'm superintendent at Kenai Fjords National
21 Park where I've been the last eight years.

22 I think I'm just about at 24, 25
23 years of working for the Park Service in
24 Alaska. I was -- I've been stationed in
25 Bettles. I was chief operations for Gates of

1 the Arctic for three years in Bettles. I
2 lived in Anaktuvuk Pass for about three years.
3 I lived in Fairbanks for a couple years. I've
4 pretty much been in the state since the Exxon
5 Valdez oil spill. That's one of the things I
6 was working on when I first got here.

7 I'm not familiar with many of the
8 Alaska issues. I have worked with pocket
9 groups like this in the past, mostly
10 subsistence-oriented groups, and I am very
11 interested to see -- hear about the things
12 that you've been doing as an advisory council.

13 I've worked on the Air Tour
14 Management Plan issues in the Lower 48. I
15 worked on the Hill. I had a post with the
16 Energy Natural Resources Committee for a while
17 and worked with the Commerce Committee on Air
18 Tour Management Plans, which was sort of a
19 very intractable situation there it seemed
20 like. It's great to see something like this
21 here, which seems much more collaborative and
22 actually making forward progress on the
23 overflights issues.

24 ELWOOD LYNN: As you all know,
25 Paul retired at the end of September. So they

1 are hoping to have a new person in place
2 sometime in January is their goal.

3 So I've sat in on this meeting
4 several times over the years, and it's always
5 fun to check back after a little time lag and
6 look at all the accomplishments. It's really,
7 I think, something to be proud of when you --
8 when I travel down to parks in the Lower 48
9 and talk about the accomplishments, there's a
10 lot of green birds of envy sitting on people's
11 shoulders, because they're not getting
12 anywhere. So it's -- like I say, it's fun to
13 check in with you all and see how -- you know,
14 hear about the recommendations that you've
15 made and how they've worked out on the ground.

16 So I look forward to this meeting
17 just to see how far you've come and look at
18 some of the reports that are going to be
19 shared with you today.

20 ERIKA BENNETT: Okay.

21 MIRIAM VALENTINE: I want to just
22 teleconference Colin Malone, our park pilot,
23 in. He asked to be part of it.

24 ERIKA BENNETT: Actually if he's
25 called in already, then he's waiting. Is he

1 calling in from a different --

2 MIRIAM VALENTINE: I'm calling
3 him.

4 Colin, you're with the group.

5 ERIKA BENNETT: For the benefit
6 of the recorder and everybody else who doesn't
7 know you, can you say who you are and what you
8 do?

9 COLIN MALONE: Sure. Colin
10 Malone, Denali National Park pilot and acting
11 park aviation manager.

12 ERIKA BENNETT: Thank you.

13 Anybody else have anything they
14 would like to add before we head on to Council
15 reports? All right.

16 Well, let's go on with JBER
17 Encroachment Plan. Joan.

18 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Okay. As you
19 may or may not be aware, the Pentagon has
20 hired contractors to do what's called an
21 ICEMAP, installation complex encroachment
22 management action plan. So basically I guess
23 they do these plans -- to me, it sounds like
24 kind of a good-neighbor plan and this has
25 absolutely nothing to do with the JBER

1 EIS that happens to be going on. It's just
2 coincidence that they're happening at the same
3 time.

4 TOM GEORGE: J-Park.

5 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Sorry. Thank
6 you. So they do these encroachment plans
7 apparently for Air Force bases around the
8 country to kind of just check in and see where
9 they're having problems in the community and
10 come up with a plan to help alleviate it, if I
11 understand this correctly.

12 So they're in the process of
13 doing that now, and there were a couple of
14 environmental consultants here last spring
15 checking in with folks. So I took the
16 opportunity to have a meeting to explain to
17 them things I had learned and was surprised to
18 have learned about all the conflicts in the
19 Ruth Glacier and around Mount McKinley area
20 with military jets flying sometimes below
21 flight-seeing plans and the other problems
22 that we've heard about over the years.

23 So Nancy Bale, myself and Randy
24 Kilbourn, one of the pilots with K-2
25 Aviation -- Randy was on the phone. We met

1 with them in May to explain to them some of
2 the problems that we knew of. It was
3 invaluable to have Randy, because he had
4 firsthand information of -- he mentioned a few
5 things like he once saw a jet so low at
6 Kahiltna Glacier, it was leaving a rooster
7 tail in the snow. Two to three times he had
8 to take evasive action to avoid having impacts
9 with military jets, as have most pilots.

10 So we got their attention. They
11 were very welcoming. They were very
12 receptive. Randy's primary point was that if
13 the jets obeyed the ceiling rules of the
14 MOA -- for those who might not be familiar,
15 this is where the Susitna MOA overlaps --
16 about a third of that MOA overlaps where a lot
17 of the flight-seeing occurs. So according to
18 Randy, if they just obeyed the ceiling rules,
19 it wouldn't be a problem as much.

20 So we spoke probably 45 minutes
21 to an hour. We gave them a memo with some
22 information on some of the problems. They
23 were very receptive. It was very positive.
24 It was great to feel very listened to. They
25 also said that they were at the end of their

1 interview process and generally at that point
2 in the process when they're meeting with
3 folks, they tend to hear the same things over
4 and over again. We were the first people to
5 bring this up to them. They thanked us for
6 that.

7 This was in May. Best I
8 understand, this is not like an EIS. There's
9 not a public review process. This is an
10 internal document. They get information from
11 the public and then they make a plan and then
12 they release the final to the public. There's
13 not a review document or anything like that.

14 So I checked in with them and
15 they have recently finished their draft.
16 They're expecting a final, I think, within the
17 next month, apparently soon. This is what the
18 consultant wrote back to me. He couldn't
19 really tell me what was in the draft, but he
20 said, "I don't think I'll be giving too much
21 away by saying that the ICEMAP does include a
22 description of air space congestion related to
23 Denali and the Susitna MOA, drawing greatly on
24 our meeting and your memo. At the least the
25 issue is being socialized among people it

1 otherwise might not have."

2 So I don't know if they'll have
3 any plan or any changes, but at least we've
4 made them aware of that conflict area. It was
5 a great opportunity for us to highlight that
6 problem.

7 TOM GEORGE: So being socialized,
8 that means it will be on Facebook and Twitter?

9 JOAN FRANKEVICH: I don't know
10 what he quite meant by that.

11 TOM GEORGE: Scott, can you shed
12 any light on this?

13 LT. COL. SCOTT BABOS: Actually
14 I'm glad you guys met with them. It is
15 more -- it is an internal document. Were you
16 told that they were going to release a final
17 to you or to the public?

18 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

19 LT. COL. SCOTT BABOS: Okay. We
20 have already seen the draft. This is
21 something new that the Pentagon is trying.
22 Elmendorf is only the third base to do this.
23 There was only an initial five bases. It's a
24 good-neighbor policy that the military -- it's
25 not the specific Air Force, but DOD is --

1 obviously wherever the DOD is, especially with
2 aircraft. I'm glad -- like I said, they were
3 initially more focused on encroachment of
4 physical ground. That's why I'm glad you guys
5 met them because, again, the consultants, like
6 I said, are very good.

7 I met with them as well for
8 probably an hour and a half talking air space
9 issues. They were more focused on physical
10 encroachment around all the facilities,
11 military facilities, but it's an air space
12 encroachment. It works both ways. You -- I
13 mean, the general public sometimes encroaches
14 on your air space, which we're borrowing.
15 Sometimes we definitely encroach on your air
16 space, like by going out the bottom of the
17 MOA.

18 So I have seen the draft and,
19 like I said, it's -- this was hired by the
20 Pentagon and it's a consultant who's going to
21 give some good input. It will be a draft
22 that -- I mean, a final copy that will be out,
23 I guess, for people to see. It's just a way
24 for the DOD local commanders to interact
25 better with the community.

1 Because the biggest complaint I
2 have and you guys have is when we switch out
3 military people every 18 months to two years,
4 you're like, I've already had this
5 conversation with your last guy and you have
6 to start over. So this is -- the intention is
7 to give -- every time a new boss comes in,
8 say, look, we've already done a lot of work
9 for you, these are the people, these are the
10 issues. Continue working with them.

11 So I appreciate you guys taking
12 time to do that. I don't know when our next
13 meeting is, but as soon as it's released, I
14 can make sure that -- give you a head's up and
15 try to get it to you fast so you guys can look
16 at it. I think it's a good thing that we're
17 trying to communicate. We're neighbors with
18 you guys and especially with the air space.

19 Again, Denali is sacred to all of
20 us. So if there's recommendations in there
21 about, you know, moving the MOA up even
22 higher -- I don't know if they -- I think they
23 were just more a report -- you know, a
24 fact-finding group and they would say, this is
25 what this group said and give possible courses

1 of action for the military leaders to follow.
2 We will continue to watch that and make sure
3 that we attempt to continue to decrease flying
4 over Denali and hope that's the way we're
5 going.

6 Hopefully in the last five years,
7 I don't know, on the spot have we had less --
8 we got rid of the A-10s up north. That was
9 half our problem. Hopefully we've had less
10 military violations or people flying where
11 they shouldn't be over the last five years.

12 ELWOOD LYNN: Seems like fewer
13 encroachments to me. I haven't heard as many
14 complaints.

15 LT. COL. SCOTT BABOS: Okay. We
16 still have our few that -- Brian would
17 definitely know too.

18 BRIAN OKONEK: We were just at a
19 meeting last night and a person just mentioned
20 that they were up one of the forks up the
21 Toklat River and had military aircraft flying
22 very low. They were quite surprised. They
23 weren't expecting military aircraft in the
24 area at all. And I've heard from the rangers
25 that they have experienced some low-flying

1 aircraft over this last summer. So it
2 continues to happen.

3 LT. COL. SCOTT BABOS: Oh, yeah.
4 Like I said, I continue to say that -- we had
5 an incident this past summer. I was talking
6 to Paul's office. There was a couple. I
7 think it was --

8 ELWOOD LYNN: I remember one.

9 LT. COL. SCOTT BABOS: Yeah,
10 there was one that came right over the
11 visitors' center. Very poor choice.

12 NANCY BALE: Maybe not
13 intentionally.

14 LT. COL. SCOTT BABOS: I heard
15 anywhere from 50 feet to 500 feet. It was at
16 least 2,000 they should have been in the first
17 place.

18 NANCY BALE: This was in
19 Talkeetna?

20 LT. COL. SCOTT BABOS: No, that's
21 right in Glitter Gulch.

22 ELWOOD LYNN: And it went right
23 over the air strip in McKinley Village. They
24 had gotten some pictures of the tail number or
25 something. They were close enough for

1 pictures.

2 LT. COL. SCOTT BABOS: I think
3 they talked directly to the Eielson Wing
4 Commander, which was good. It was a TDY air
5 crew. After I got involved, I called the
6 colonel and said, hey, what are you doing? He
7 said, I got it, Scott. I talked to the lady
8 at the National Park Service. They are going
9 home now. They turned around. Their two-week
10 visit to Alaska was cut short.

11 Again, you guys all know any time
12 you see something, if you can get a cell phone
13 picture, great. If not, give me a call and
14 report it through the system. We're scheduled
15 to have a report of how many noise violations
16 or safety violations we've had this year.
17 We'll see how many officially got reported for
18 Denali. I haven't seen anything yet, but
19 hopefully it'll come up. I'm thinking it will
20 probably only be one or two. That doesn't
21 mean there's still a lot more that happen that
22 just don't get reported. So we will continue
23 to work that.

24 NANCY BALE: That's one thing I
25 learned. Joan and I both asked him if they

1 were aware of a communication system. We told
2 him about Jet Nois, 1-800 Jet Nois. And
3 there's no E on the end, right?

4 LT. COL. SCOTT BABOS: That's
5 correct.

6 NANCY BALE: But I think that was
7 one of the things at the meeting with the
8 Alaska Quiet Rights Coalition last night was
9 that people don't know how to comment, plus
10 also they're in the backcountry minus a
11 working cell phone. So they can't immediately
12 call 1-800 Jet Nois. So that was one of the
13 things we broached with the encroachment
14 folks, is the system of notification is clunky
15 and maybe can't help but be when you're hiking
16 in the backcountry, unless you have a GPS and
17 know exactly where you are and you can report
18 the date and time. Most people aren't
19 prepared to full out a notebook and do all
20 that. So I don't know.

21 I think, also, according to the
22 meeting last night, a lot of people are not
23 aware that maneuvers are not supposed to
24 happen over Denali. As far as they know,
25 maneuvers are happening over all air space.

1 So there's a communications opportunity too to
2 the general public.

3 LT. COL. SCOTT BABOS: And
4 yesterday in great detail we talked about
5 communication and just air space, and Denali
6 as well. How do we get word out to everybody
7 who -- you know, you can expect to lead the
8 horse to water, but you can't make them drink.
9 I think that's what we're all up against, how
10 do we educate everybody about issues that
11 we're all trying to work on.

12 TOM GEORGE: At this same meeting
13 that's been referred to, I did ask and was
14 told I'll receive the details on stuff last
15 summer from the hiker in question that had
16 observed the military aircraft. So I'll pass
17 that on to you just as soon as that comes up.

18 LT. COL. SCOTT BABOS: All right.

19 GREG LaHAIE: I have a quick
20 question in that regard.

21 I mean, we see any aircraft
22 coming through below 2,000 feet, I mean, a
23 common practice in GA is to make some kind of
24 announcement within 10 miles of an airport. I
25 noticed on the highway corridor definitely a

1 lot more helicopters, transitioning airplanes
2 when they're below 2- or 3,000 are making
3 better calls to let us know they're coming, so
4 that's huge.

5 But the random A-10, the C-130s
6 come in over a thousand feet over Kantishna
7 and other air strips with absolutely no
8 communication. I mean, that's a hazard.
9 Nobody would -- no one in GA would fly like
10 that. I just wonder why the military doesn't
11 go to a standard that's common practice.

12 LT. COL. SCOTT BABOS: Well,
13 that's a tough question to answer. But, first
14 of all, what they're doing is against Air
15 Force regulations and then, more important,
16 FAA regulations. Like you said, the rules are
17 on air course, maintain 2,000 feet above a
18 national park, which is a request. It's an
19 Air Force regulation.

20 So unfortunately if we have a
21 pilot or a crew that is attempting to take in
22 Denali more than they should and is not
23 accepted and, like I said, when they're
24 found -- since they know they're maybe doing
25 something they shouldn't be, they're probably

1 not going to be talking. I don't know if
2 that's a good thing or not. So, I mean,
3 you're right. If you're going to do something
4 that you're not supposed to do, don't
5 advertise it. But the right answer is don't
6 do it.

7 You're right, it's a safety
8 hazard and we're not supposed to be there.
9 Like I said, we're human and our goal is to
10 reduce it down to zero. We're going to keep
11 working on that goal. I don't know if we'll
12 ever get there because -- especially TDY crews
13 see this beautiful park and they want to see
14 it, but it's my job and, like I said,
15 leadership at the Air Force's and when they're
16 found out -- they come up here for two weeks
17 and we find out who they are and get a tail
18 number, they're sent home.

19 That way there's not a chance for
20 them to do it again and everybody gets to see
21 that. There's a lot of pride in what we do,
22 and when you get sent home from an exercise
23 that you're supposed to be here for two weeks,
24 that's a professional ding against them. Like
25 I said, this is my back yard; this is your

1 back yard. We protect it here against people
2 who just come up here for the two weeks to
3 have some fun flying.

4 So continue to let me know and
5 from General Hogue on down, we don't tolerate
6 it. It's just a little battle when you've got
7 a great big beautiful playground and people
8 don't play by the rules. We'll continue to
9 work on it. Tom is going to help me.

10 TOM GEORGE: Well, if the Park
11 Service wouldn't advertise it so heavily.

12 ERIKA BENNETT: We will go next
13 to Nancy. Nancy's going to report on the
14 summer sound exercise. This is the one that
15 was -- where was it located?

16 NANCY BALE: It's the one
17 that's -- it's the administrative one, right,
18 Davyd, that was selected for the area around
19 Cathedral Mountain? I think it's just a
20 little bit inside the purple area or a special
21 avoidance area.

22 DAVYD BETCHKAL: It's inside --
23 actually it's the main -- it was along the
24 road corridors to see if there was any traffic
25 that was getting clustered along the road.

1 NANCY BALE: What I'd like to do
2 is do the slide show. Let's see. We may have
3 to drag that folder out onto the desktop to
4 enable those.

5 First of all, I'd like to thank
6 Davyd Betchkal for escorting myself and Claire
7 Piewell (ph), who's an intern over at NPCA
8 working on some local issues for us, and
9 taking a good part out of his day to introduce
10 us to a sound station.

11 So this is on the way up. Over
12 to the left is where the road is. I have
13 another picture. We're only about what, maybe
14 three-quarters of a mile as the crow flies or
15 as the raven flies, I guess, away from the
16 road. It took us about -- oh, perhaps 35, 40
17 minutes to hike up a small creek to the area.
18 Davyd was being very good shouting, bear, bear
19 every few minutes. We didn't see any.

20 The station is visible there. I
21 don't know how many of you see it. It's sort
22 of in the middle, just in the dead center of
23 the picture. I was amazed by how hard it is
24 to actually see until you're right up on it.
25 Here we are right at the sound station. You

1 see the two tripods. Claire and Davyd are
2 talking. Then the solar panels that power the
3 station are pictured there between the two of
4 them.

5 We all had our little things we
6 carried. I carried an extra battery just in
7 case the batteries had been drained. Davyd
8 had a lot of cable, I believe, in his -- plus
9 memory devices and so forth. I can't remember
10 what Claire was bringing. That tripod on the
11 left, of course, is a microphone. You see
12 hanging down from it there's a big rock.
13 Underneath the tripod and underneath the rock
14 is a black plastic station -- or case box
15 where a lot of the electronic materials are
16 located.

17 Then to the right is the tripod
18 with the weather station. The white thing is
19 gathering data on humidity and temperature.
20 There's a small anemometer. It's hard to see
21 in this picture. Then underneath that tripod
22 is the white case that has the battery pack.
23 There's cables that run from the battery pack
24 to the solar panels and the solar panels --
25 correct me if I'm saying anything wrong,

1 Davyd -- are constantly charging up the
2 batteries. Then the station itself, the guts,
3 the electronic guts of the station under that
4 left tripod are running off that battery
5 pack/solar panel combo.

6 As I understand it, when we got
7 to this station, one of the first things you
8 check is to make sure the batteries are
9 charged up. We didn't have to use the battery
10 I brought because everything was working quite
11 hunky-dory. Here's a picture of the
12 batteries.

13 Now, are these batteries specific
14 to sound stations, Davyd, or are they RV
15 batteries or what are they?

16 DAVYD BETCHKAL: I believe
17 they're used for many different purposes.
18 They're just lithium iron phosphate batteries.
19 They're some of the lighter type that you can
20 get for the amount of capacitance they have.
21 They're great for carrying stations and the
22 like.

23 NANCY BALE: Are there two in
24 that picture?

25 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Yeah, there are

1 two of them.

2 NANCY BALE: And each one is
3 12-volt?

4 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Yes.

5 NANCY BALE: Then, here's the
6 other case that's under the microphone tripod.
7 That contains the real meat of the station,
8 the material that stores up information that
9 Davyd converts into our three soundscape
10 standards; the percent time audible, the
11 number of occurrences and the sound pressure
12 level. We'll go a little bit more deeply into
13 that.

14 One of things that he does when
15 he gets to the station is downloads the data
16 that's been collected by the main sound
17 sensors. At this time I think there was
18 something about the collection that you had to
19 plug in a new memory card, and we had to spend
20 about 40 minutes there while it downloaded.
21 But under normal circumstances it's all
22 downloaded and you just take that one memory
23 key out and put a new one in. So a sound
24 station visit could be pretty short, if a bear
25 hasn't tipped anything over, if the batteries

1 are working, if nothing's damaged and if the
2 stuff's downloaded.

3 Here's the guts of the station.
4 Davyd, if you want to pipe in here. I know
5 you wrote all this great information to me,
6 but I bet you if you'd just talk about what
7 those different things are, it would be
8 better.

9 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Sure. Despite
10 it being somewhat of a spaghetti here, I think
11 you can see what the different parts are. At
12 the very bottom is the main instrument that I
13 use, the sound level meter. It's abbreviated
14 SLM sometimes. That is what actually does the
15 measuring. It's calibrated along with the
16 preamplifier and the microphone to measure
17 sound pressure level accurately at a variety
18 of different frequencies.

19 If you look right in the center
20 there, the other device is just a digital
21 audio recorder. That's sort of the -- the
22 audio signal goes through the sound level
23 meter and it comes out into the recorder.
24 That's sort of, I call it, the memory because
25 it keeps track of what actually is heard

1 instead of just numbers, which is what the
2 sound level meter records. Then there's also
3 a bunch of electrical and data routing boxes
4 in there that I won't really go into.

5 NANCY BALE: Davyd, I know that
6 the sophistication of that MP3 audio has
7 changed so that now you're recording more
8 realtime; is that correct?

9 DAVYD BETCHKAL: It's actually a
10 continuous record.

11 NANCY BALE: It's continuous now.
12 Because didn't it use to be five seconds out
13 of every hour or something like that?

14 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Yes, it recorded
15 five seconds every five minutes and that's
16 still what I listen to. But now that we have
17 the continuous audio record, I can listen back
18 and if I want to make a more accurate
19 determination of what kind of aircraft I'm
20 hearing or possibly other natural sounds, I
21 can zoom in on that section and listen back to
22 the audio record at any point. It really
23 comes in handy.

24 NANCY BALE: And this is the
25 microphone assembly.

1 Davyd, go ahead and sound off on
2 what's going on with this microphone and how
3 sensitive it is and all that stuff.

4 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Well, it's a
5 microphone designed for measuring sound
6 pressure, so it's not the kind that you use
7 for music or any other type of purpose. The
8 top part is the micro capsule. It actually
9 has a diaphragm in it. The middle section is
10 a preamplifier and it just boosts the signal a
11 little bit better so you can make a more
12 accurate measurement. On the bottom part
13 there, those blue packets are desiccants to
14 keep the -- the connection between the
15 cable -- since it's outside for a month at a
16 time, the connection between the cable and the
17 preamplifier from corroding due to moisture.
18 That's basically it.

19 NANCY BALE: And then it has a
20 big hairy cover that you can see in the other
21 ones. Generally you take that cover off and
22 do a brief inspection on the mike? That's
23 part of your soundscape visit?

24 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Absolutely, and
25 calibrate. Every time I visit the station

1 I'll calibrate the microphone and the sound
2 level meter to a reference tone.

3 NANCY BALE: And, Davyd, say a
4 little bit about those solar panels, how long
5 they last, can they be used multiple years,
6 all that.

7 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Sure. They're
8 reusable. They're both about 25 watts. I've
9 got a panel now that weighs about -- these are
10 some of the lighter ones I have. There's one
11 now even lighter. It's about two pounds and
12 it puts out about 62 watts. Those let us get
13 stations out a little bit farther than we used
14 to be able to on foot.

15 TOM GEORGE: What does one of
16 those cost?

17 DAVYD BETCHKAL: These little
18 panels, I actually never purchased them.
19 They're quite old now.

20 TOM GEORGE: But the newer ones
21 you're talking about.

22 DAVYD BETCHKAL: The newer ones
23 are about \$900 apiece. When you consider the
24 cost of actually taking an aircraft and flying
25 out, the helicopter time, actually I've

1 already made back the money.

2 TOM GEORGE: You can say that in
3 front of park management, I guess. They
4 appreciate that.

5 ELWOOD LYNN: So your new solar
6 panels, are they flexible? Can you roll them?

7 DAVYD BETCHKAL: They are. They
8 fold up into about a size like this
9 (indicating). They fit in a backpack a lot
10 easier than a piece of metal that's this size.

11 NANCY BALE: This picture, just
12 to give you some orientation, we're looking
13 pretty much directly up toward the Sable Pass
14 over a few drainage ridge lines though. This
15 is a picture of the mike with its little hairy
16 hat back on. In the little V down below, if
17 we were just a little bit higher, you could
18 see the road. We weren't that far from the
19 road, but you know at Denali how it is. You
20 get just a little bit away from the road and
21 it feels like we're far away from it.

22 We're sort of getting ready to
23 leave. I guess that's the only picture that
24 has me in it. There's the road. You can see
25 it here in this picture.

1 TOM GEORGE: Davyd, are you able
2 to detect the sound of vehicles on the road
3 with this station?

4 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Yes. Mostly
5 what I was picking up was not so much bus
6 traffic during the daytime, but I was getting
7 more vehicle traffic on the road and in the
8 evenings.

9 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Is that because
10 there's like heavy traffic traveling then or
11 because nighttime is quieter and you can pick
12 it up easier?

13 DAVYD BETCHKAL: A little bit of
14 both. There's some larger semis traveling on
15 the road. They're doing some construction out
16 west.

17 NANCY BALE: The whole setup --
18 just to set up one sound station that looks
19 like this, can you estimate the approximate
20 cost? Not the cost of the helicopters you had
21 to fly somewhere, but just the materials.

22 DAVYD BETCHKAL: To set it up or
23 the actual physical components of the sound
24 station?

25 NANCY BALE: Yeah, what they cost

1 and -- yeah, I guess you have time in. I'm
2 just talking about the physical components, I
3 guess.

4 DAVYD BETCHKAL: The most
5 expensive part of the sound station is the
6 sound level meter itself because it's
7 certified by American National Standards
8 Institute. It's certified to measure within a
9 decibel either way. That's the most expensive
10 part. It costs \$9,000. The rest of it is
11 another 3,000.

12 NANCY BALE: Okay. I think I've
13 shown all the pictures. I'd like to thank you
14 again, Davyd, for being so cheery. On the way
15 back we saw a wolf, which was great.

16 Any other questions that anybody
17 has for Davyd about this? Probably he's the
18 one to ask.

19 I wanted to ask you one thing,
20 Davyd. That was for the winter stations, is
21 there any difference in how you would protect
22 them or ensure that they stayed charged up and
23 so forth?

24 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Yes. There's
25 quite a bit more insulation on the cases I use

1 in the wintertime. They're a little bit
2 larger and more insulated. There's also
3 different batteries. I use two car batteries,
4 100-amp power car batteries in the wintertime
5 because I need quite a bit more capacity to
6 run, because I don't have as much solar power.
7 I also use larger aluminum and glass solar
8 panels in the wintertime. They're just
9 altogether more robust and massive.

10 NANCY BALE: Have you had a good
11 successful run throughout the winter so far?

12 DAVYD BETCHKAL: It depends.
13 Usually.

14 TOM GEORGE: I think you were
15 saying last night that your microphones are
16 only certified down to zero degrees; is that
17 right?

18 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Actually I need
19 to look that up. That's something I
20 definitely -- I got stumped on that question
21 last night. I tried and I think I should have
22 looked it up before I answered.

23 NANCY BALE: Okay. Thanks,
24 everybody.

25 ERIKA BENNETT: Next thing on the

1 Council reports is a report on north side best
2 practices by Tom.

3 TOM GEORGE: Actually it was
4 Suzanne and Tom and unfortunately Suzanne
5 isn't here. Since we have one of the main
6 three north side operators, I guess I'd like
7 to invite --

8 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Is Suzanne able
9 to come later? Do we know? Maybe we want to
10 delay.

11 ERIKA BENNETT: No. If she's not
12 here now, she probably won't be here.

13 TOM GEORGE: I guess I could
14 invite Greg to provide comments, again, from
15 his organization's perspective as to how the
16 north side best practice that we implemented
17 last spring, how that worked or didn't work or
18 what impact, positive or negative, it had on
19 your operation over the summer, factoring it
20 along with everything else of course.

21 GREG LaHAIE: Yeah. I think it
22 worked rather well. My crew was very
23 receptive and open to it. I think it was very
24 easy to easily stay out of that area and push
25 over especially on the big wind days. As I

1 mentioned before, that's the preferred flyable
2 route, is right over the road is the smoothest
3 air. So we did our best.

4 We mixed it up quite a bit too
5 and would go south side, if we could, on the
6 really nice days and just tried to avoid that
7 one spot. If we did go right over that
8 sensitive area, we tried to stay high, below
9 8,000. It was no skin off our back at all.
10 It was pretty easy to maneuver around that.
11 I'm curious what comments there were on the
12 ground, if any. I haven't heard any comments
13 from --

14 TOM GEORGE: Do we have a
15 specific agenda item in the afternoon Park
16 reports?

17 ERIKA BENNETT: For north side,
18 no.

19 BRIAN OKONEK: It's under these
20 report, report on north side best practices.

21 TOM GEORGE: When it became
22 apparent Suzanne might not make it this
23 morning, I did talk to Dan McGregor last night
24 briefly to get some input from him, and he
25 said there are some things they would like to

1 talk about. Some of the transitions getting
2 across were difficult, but they thought for
3 the most part things worked out well. Again,
4 realizing the weather forces you could go
5 various places. This is something, again,
6 after we get whatever input from this meeting,
7 we might try and get the aviation working
8 group, a little bit smaller subset, with the
9 operators and stuff to sit down and take a
10 look at that and see if there are any tweaks
11 or adjustments needed to make a workable.

12 That's all. Unfortunately
13 without Suzanne, I don't really have any more
14 detail at this point. But we'll definitely be
15 in -- now that the season is over, we're
16 looking for feedback on the user community
17 side as to how that worked and talk about it.
18 Hopefully whatever feedback we get -- because
19 the thing I know that we were all quite
20 nervous or apprehensive about last year was
21 whether changing this longstanding guidance to
22 avoid the road corridor area, realizing that's
23 where the lion's share of the Park visitors
24 are -- in ways that would potentially not put
25 more traffic in that area. I think that's

1 part of what everybody is really anxious to
2 hear about later on today is, what feedback we
3 have there, positive, negative or otherwise.

4 That's all I've got.

5 ERIKA BENNETT: I happened to be
6 in the Teklanika campground for four days over
7 Labor Day and I kept an eye out for you guys.
8 I'm a little more sensitive to airplanes. I
9 hear them. I don't mind them. I would always
10 look up and every single time I saw a 206, you
11 guys were right over the road. The Navajos I
12 saw over the pass over the four days were
13 higher, but there they were right over the
14 road. It didn't seem to diminish anything in
15 my perspective, mainly because I was at the
16 Teklanika campground and you could hear the
17 road and you could hear people's generators at
18 night, things like that too, during the hours.

19 So when it comes down to it, I'd
20 never been there at any other time. It makes
21 sense that if you're going to be in a, quote,
22 high sound area, you're not really adding too
23 much to it by throwing an airplane up there
24 too.

25 JOAN FRANKEVICH: So you're

1 saying from your perspective, they were high
2 enough that it was kind of background noise.
3 It wasn't a look up, there's an airplane.

4 ERIKA BENNETT: Right. Not a
5 single one was a look up, oh, what's that
6 doing there? It was about as distracting as
7 knowing a bus was coming on the road to me.

8 TOM GEORGE: Of course anybody on
9 this Council is already tuned specifically to
10 be looking for and listening for airplanes.

11 ERIKA BENNETT: Ironically
12 enough, I went out there and I had no -- I
13 didn't have that in mind at all until I got
14 out there and I heard -- I was like, oh, hey,
15 there's an airplane. Wait a second. I ran
16 over and I started paying attention. I was
17 running after a four-year-old in the
18 backcountry most of the time.

19 TOM GEORGE: That's probably a
20 suitable distraction.

21 ERIKA BENNETT: It was a huge
22 distraction, yeah. Thank you for letting me
23 interject on that.

24 JOAN FRANKEVICH: I spent -- I
25 had two trips to the park this summer, so I

1 was particularly trying to listen. I heard
2 very -- really paying attention on the road
3 and paying attention when I was at rest stops
4 and I heard very little. One short day hike
5 did have one flight come --

6 ERIKA BENNETT: And what
7 particular time of year?

8 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Both were in
9 June.

10 ERIKA BENNETT: Mine was over
11 Labor Day weekend, so that was a particularly
12 busy weekend for everybody involved. There
13 was a lot of air traffic, but there was a
14 whole lot of bus traffic too.

15 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Yeah. The
16 first trip the weather was poor when I was
17 hiking. It was raining, but not so you
18 couldn't fly. The second trip took a long,
19 long day hike in the road corridor -- you
20 know, inside the road corridor and didn't hear
21 hardly anything on a nice day.

22 Then, I had just a brief
23 conversation with Eric Denkewalter and asked
24 him how it went. He said he just avoided the
25 area. He just flew on the south side, so it

1 was no problem for him. So that leaves Tim
2 that I haven't spoken with. I don't know what
3 it worked out for him.

4 TOM GEORGE: Well, Denali Air
5 probably does have some more specific comments
6 about whether you can make the altitude we're
7 looking for coming out of the road corridor,
8 realizing you're generating a lot of sound by
9 trying to climb at that rate. So I think
10 there's probably some more work we need to do
11 on this to fine-tune it and make some things
12 workable.

13 From my perspective, this is
14 something we started this last summer and this
15 whole Council focused initially on the
16 operators that are there at the
17 highest-frequency time. Once we get something
18 that works there, I think we can start pushing
19 out to other elements of the aviation
20 community. So we weren't out there beating
21 the drum particularly loudly this summer.
22 Figuring let's let this go with the core users
23 and see how it works before we get too far
24 ahead of ourselves. I did have a vice
25 president from AOPA -- Aircraft Owners and

1 Pilots Association -- in the state in May. I
2 managed to fly her over the area. It was one
3 of those days where the weather was such that
4 I kind of had to go further west to even get
5 across the Alaska Range at above 8,000 feet
6 and then down. We were just trying to go to
7 Talkeetna from Fairbanks. The intention
8 wasn't to go to the park at all, but due to
9 the weather that's kind of where we ended up.

10 So I at least did have the
11 opportunity to introduce in a very up-front
12 and personal way some of the practices to a
13 person from AOPA that actually deals with this
14 at the national level. So it was a good
15 chance to at least expose them to it
16 firsthand.

17 JOAN FRANKEVICH: So, Tom, are we
18 going to follow up with a small group meeting,
19 then, of the best practices to kind of refine
20 this?

21 TOM GEORGE: Well, I think that's
22 something we need to talk about. We're still
23 kind of coming out of the season. My feeling,
24 I couldn't even make the soundscape activity
25 with what the weather was doing to me this

1 summer trying to find times that I could go
2 out and do aerial photography. So I haven't
3 really polled the group or talked. At some
4 time -- now that we're out of the season, we
5 should try to get together. That might be an
6 in-person meeting. That might be something we
7 can do telephonically in a distributed fashion
8 to keep travel costs down. So we'll look at
9 that. We don't have anything scheduled at
10 this point.

11 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Is that the
12 plan? Will you take the lead on it, I guess
13 is what I'm saying?

14 TOM GEORGE: Well, I will offer
15 to work with Suzanne on that since she's
16 really the lead of that group. I don't want
17 to put too many words in her mouth. You bet.
18 Why not.

19 ERIKA BENNETT: I'll make it a
20 note in the meeting minutes that it was
21 discussed that possibly it's time to vet the
22 north side.

23 TOM GEORGE: There's a desire to
24 do that. Absolutely.

25 NANCY BALE: I have an e-mail

1 from Amanda, who's a member of the Council,
2 that she sent in early August. She said:
3 "Council, I would like to report that I've
4 been in the backcountry in Denali this week on
5 the north side," so this would have been the
6 latter part of July. "I've noticed a marked
7 difference in reduction in airplane noise when
8 I've been hiking Units 12, 13, 19 and 18."
9 Granted, this is extremely subjective, but
10 we've all discussed the problem with
11 qualitative data that plagues our project,
12 but, anyway, it's great that she, who hikes a
13 lot, noted that. "I am encouraged by our
14 recommendations and the work of the air tour
15 operators to modify their routes. I'm heading
16 back out tomorrow and will keep listening."

17 I should have just solicited some
18 comment from her, but I thought she would be
19 here today. And then I wanted to add that I
20 was on Mount Galen, which is out in the
21 Eielson area, about June 5th or 6th with a
22 group of about ten other hikers. I was
23 listening, just like we all do, and over the
24 course of our hike, which took about five
25 hours, I heard 14 motorized intrusions, but we

1 were sitting having a snack and I just put out
2 the question to the people in my group: Have
3 you been hearing those airplanes? They all
4 go, no. They were high and it was a cloudy
5 day and they were above cloud. There was
6 maybe one case where I saw a plane. They were
7 probably -- I don't know how a sound station
8 would have interpreted their DBAs, but they
9 were perhaps, such as you said, not intrusive
10 to the degree that if you weren't listening
11 for them --

12 ERIKA BENNETT: Yeah, if you're
13 not actually tuned to it, it's -- your brain
14 sort of --

15 NANCY BALE: Now, if I had been
16 in my tent, you know, I think a lot of it has
17 to do with where you're at, whether you're
18 hiking and trying to pay attention to posies
19 and watching our for bears and what
20 expectations you have, which is why I think we
21 decided we'd do this, because we felt that
22 we'd make this recommendation for this sound
23 bubble area.

24 We felt that people on the road
25 system had a lower expectation of natural

1 sounds than people who hiked a half or a full
2 day and were camping out in the upper reaches
3 of the river. So I think that was the basis
4 of why we decided to make those
5 recommendations.

6 ERIKA BENNETT: All right. The
7 next item on the agenda is a section for
8 public comment. I know that we sort of
9 interject as we go as well, but this is the
10 official time for anyone that would like to
11 make a comment on what we've been discussing.
12 We have a new person in the room.

13 LOIS WIRTZ: I'm Lois Wirtz with
14 Alaska Travel Industry Association.

15 MIRIAM VALENTINE: So I'm going
16 to offer a public comment. I had a local
17 resident of Talkeetna call early in the week,
18 Nancy Larson. She has a bed and breakfast at
19 about Mile 4 on the Talkeetna Spur Road. It's
20 three stories high, so it's higher than most
21 of the structures in that area. She was
22 saying that there were frequent helicopter
23 flights that kind of came down the Spur Road,
24 so it would be traveling south, and then went
25 west. She almost felt like her B&B was like

1 the turning spot. So I said, well, maybe. So
2 it would be prominent on the landscape, right.

3 So she thought these helicopters
4 would be flying to the park, which I kind
5 of -- I thought that was -- you know what, I
6 didn't know. So I said, well, I would bring
7 it up at the meeting today to see if anybody
8 knew of a project.

9 ERIKA BENNETT: There's not a
10 new, but there's an air taxi that is basing
11 its helicopter, R-44s and at least one 20, out
12 of Talkeetna. When I was in Talkeetna just
13 the last two weekends, I noticed an immense
14 amount of helicopter noise -- activity and
15 not -- around airports helicopters are
16 supposed to follow the air traffic patterns.
17 They're not supposed to necessarily take off
18 and go willy-nilly. Unfortunately this
19 person, whoever was piloting at the time I was
20 there, was taking off and turning and heading
21 straight over east Talkeetna, a lot like the
22 Park helicopter used to do when it was taking
23 off going right over the populated area. I
24 knew this wasn't a Park helicopter.

25 I'm guessing that there's a new

1 operator that helps service outlying Bush
2 areas. So there's a really good chance that
3 your person was not the focal point, but
4 happened to be in the flight path of somebody
5 going out to Trapper Lake or Amber Lake or
6 someplace that this helicopter was servicing,
7 either bringing supplies out or something like
8 that. But I actually noticed a lot more
9 helicopter activity out of Talkeetna, not
10 necessarily private, but possibly air taxi as
11 well.

12 MIKE YORKE: North and east of
13 Talkeetna we know there's the Watana project.
14 There's study going on up there. They have
15 three helicopters out there, R-44s. But
16 south, I don't know, Miriam.

17 MIRIAM VALENTINE: Well, and
18 that's what we were trying to -- as I was
19 discussing with her, trying to figure out.

20 MIKE YORKE: If she reversed the
21 directions, it would be explainable.

22 MIRIAM VALENTINE: I know. Then
23 it would make all the sense in the world. But
24 she said predominantly the end of July and
25 early August it was really bad. So she could

1 only describe the aircraft as it was a white
2 helicopter.

3 ERIKA BENNETT: I've seen that
4 one in Talkeetna.

5 MIRIAM VALENTINE: So do we know
6 the name of that operator?

7 BRIAN OKONEK: There's several
8 white R-44s in town.

9 TOM GEORGE: Would you pretty
10 please suggest to her and other people to
11 contact the airport manager at Talkeetna with
12 that information?

13 MIRIAM VALENTINE: Contact Steve.

14 TOM GEORGE: Yes. Because the
15 airport manager at least is the person who
16 should be conscious of whether people are
17 flying traffic patterns and doing other things
18 in the area as well as knowledgeable about
19 who's there. We really need to get that
20 information back to that part of the system.

21 MIRIAM VALENTINE: Okay. I can
22 do that.

23 ERIKA BENNETT: You said it was
24 at Mile 4 of the Talkeetna --

25 MIRIAM VALENTINE: It's pretty

1 far south. I was just thinking of it from a
2 financial perspective. Somebody is spending a
3 lot of fuel to get to that point to go west.

4 MIKE YORKE: It would defeat the
5 purpose. Sometimes what will happen when
6 there's three or four operators up there and a
7 government agency doing some water work issues
8 and some contractors, they'll find a place to
9 stay. They'll often go into a place like -- a
10 hub like Talkeetna, do their fueling and that,
11 go someplace, sleep overnight and then go from
12 there. So that may be what's occurring. Just
13 a thought, but it seems as though if you
14 reverse the directions, it would be sensible.

15 TOM GEORGE: It must be those
16 lucrative government contracts.

17 MIKE YORKE: I think they're
18 going away, Tom.

19 MIRIAM VALENTINE: I think Dave
20 has a public comment.

21 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: I had an
22 interesting public comment relayed to me kind
23 of opportunistically maybe because of my role.
24 But I ran into a couple from Taiwan and they
25 had spent 25 days at the bus out on Stampede

1 Road, the Chris McCandless bus. I just
2 happened to meet them. When I was asking them
3 about their trip, one of the biggest events
4 was two military helicopters landing and the
5 crew getting out and taking pictures of
6 themselves with the bus.

7 LT. COL. SCOTT BABOS: Did you
8 get a picture of that?

9 ERIKA BENNETT: They had to have
10 taken a picture of that.

11 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: I'm not sure
12 if they had a picture, but they were big
13 journalers and they had the date. It was a
14 comment in passing. It wasn't in the park, so
15 I just thought of it as entertaining, but I
16 thought the group would be interested.

17 LT. COL. SCOTT BABOS: They were
18 Army.

19 TOM GEORGE: However, you are
20 here representing all of the military. I
21 heard you say that earlier.

22 JOAN FRANKEVICH: What were they
23 doing 25 days at the bus?

24 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: That was their
25 adventure, I think. They did have their act

1 together. They weren't going to hurt
2 themselves or anything.

3 LT. COL. SCOTT BABOS: What was
4 the date approximately?

5 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: I can't -- I
6 don't know the exact date.

7 LT. COL. SCOTT BABOS: What
8 month?

9 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: It was late
10 summer.

11 NANCY BALE: You wouldn't get so
12 eaten alive if you were there late summer.

13 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Sometime
14 mid-August probably.

15 ERIKA BENNETT: All right. Any
16 other comments?

17 GREG LaHAIE: I have a comment.
18 I had a friend visiting from Chicago area. He
19 stayed at my house at the park entrance for
20 about a week and we spent two days in
21 Kantishna. His comments were -- coming from a
22 busy, urban area constantly. I mean, we had
23 military aircraft coming over the park road
24 corridor, which is a pretty common flight
25 path. There was a lot of activity that week.

1 Denali Air was still flying. There were --
2 you know, the normal buzz of aviation back and
3 forth. We took several big hikes and walks.
4 And he could just say nothing about, you know,
5 how quiet it was. He was just blown away by
6 how quiet it was.

7 Even after hearing aircraft and
8 everything that I saw and listened to, I
9 asked, you know, did you hear that? Most of
10 the time he wasn't even aware of it. Not to
11 diminish the fact of airplane noise, but the
12 fact that from an observation standpoint of
13 here's a guy coming from a major urban area.
14 I mean, he thought Anchorage was quiet, and he
15 was blown away with the stillness up in
16 Denali. So, I mean, even though there's a lot
17 of activity, it's still something to keep in
18 mind; our perspective of quiet and their
19 perspective of quiet.

20 ERIKA BENNETT: We're spoiled.

21 JOAN FRANKEVICH: I have a funny
22 anecdote on perspective. A friend of mine
23 who -- he spent the summer at a remote lodge
24 across Cook Inlet working, and he stayed at
25 our house before he went off to college on the

1 east coast. He was like, wow, it's noisy
2 here. I heard the train, which is about a
3 mile and a half from my house. I heard this
4 and heard that. Then he went to college for
5 two years in Philadelphia and on his way back
6 he stayed at our house again. He said, wow,
7 it's so quiet here. A lot has to do with
8 perspective and where you're coming from.

9 TOM GEORGE: Well, and I think
10 this does reinforce the notion that it's one
11 thing along the road corridor, but after
12 you've invested a day or two getting someplace
13 further away, subjecting yourself more into
14 this quiet environment, yeah, now disruptions
15 to that quiet are going to be more noticeable
16 to you. It's incredibly relative to both your
17 past and recent experience. I think from that
18 standpoint we're going in the right direction.
19 We just have to see what other challenges we
20 face to get there.

21 ERIKA BENNETT: The next thing on
22 the -- are there any more comments?

23 Thanks for closing the shades. I
24 love the sunshine, but --

25 The next thing we have is the

1 fact sheet. I unfortunately did miss the last
2 meeting, but I'm under the understanding that
3 a cover photo was agreed upon and the text --
4 the main body of the text had been vetted and
5 then was sent out for just tweaking. Tom went
6 over it briefly this last few weeks and then
7 I've read it over the last few weeks. Tom
8 sent out a fact sheet narrative with what
9 little edits he did with it last week.

10 TOM GEORGE: Our recently
11 departed Chair was going to take -- I mean, we
12 pretty much blessed the language in the thing
13 with the idea, though, to shorten it a little
14 bit. Sally was going to do that and for one
15 reason or another didn't get around to it. So
16 later I said, okay, well, send it to a couple
17 of us. We'll work on that. She did that and
18 of course about that time I got busy. So I
19 didn't actually get back to this until about
20 less than a week ago.

21 So I made a quick read through.
22 I looked at a couple of areas. I think only
23 the sidebar things -- I don't think the main
24 body of the text -- where I thought we could
25 extract a few words to shorten it slightly

1 without changing the meaning or intent. At
2 that point I figured it was too late to
3 actually ship it out to the whole Council and
4 spend time reviewing it, so I just sent it to
5 you and Miriam so we could bring it to this
6 meeting.

7 NANCY BALE: Would it be possible
8 to get printed copies to the members of the
9 Council during a break?

10 MIRIAM VALENTINE: Okay. Let's
11 have a strategy about the fact sheet first.

12 ERIKA BENNETT: I would really
13 like to see, provided there's no huge major
14 issues, and I think they've all been sort of
15 brought up, is we need to approve something --
16 approve this to the point so that we can get
17 the ball rolling. Park Service can get a
18 product out. We've been doing this for more
19 than a year and I think we've all had a good
20 stake in it. We've got a good ownership in
21 it. Nit-picking a word here and there because
22 something might be better, we could thesaurus
23 ourselves to death here.

24 With the intent of just reviewing
25 the paper, I'm sure we could probably get a

1 copy in everybody's hands in the next couple
2 of hours, but this isn't a "we're going to
3 edit this." Do you understand? I mean, this
4 isn't going to be sit down and get a red
5 marker out. This is going to be a sit down
6 and say, okay, I remember this. This is what
7 we agreed on. Unless you see an egregious
8 error in something that you remember from
9 before, when we look at the copy, it's going
10 to be kind of, all right, we're going to vote
11 on this today. Because we have a quorum and
12 we can get this finished.

13 I feel as if I've had enough
14 input. I feel as if this actually does a
15 really good job of putting together the basic
16 points of the Council for the average
17 individual. My biggest thing is if somebody
18 wants to learn everything about this Council,
19 this is a good sheet to read. I don't think
20 everybody is going to read the whole thing,
21 but the bullets on the side and the photos
22 that have been chosen, I think, are a good
23 representation and do a good job for the
24 cursory reader and the person who wants to get
25 into the meat of it.

1 So with that being said, can we
2 get copies to everybody?

3 MIRIAM VALENTINE: I can.

4 NANCY BALE: Thank you.

5 ERIKA BENNETT: Okay. So does
6 everybody feel as if being able to review this
7 piece of paper without five hours of
8 discussion on it, we can do a vote today while
9 we still have a quorum?

10 JOAN FRANKEVICH: It's been so
11 long, I would love to have the chance to read
12 it in quiet with fresh eyes and just see if
13 anything jumps out at me. So maybe we could
14 get printed copies and then vote on it this
15 afternoon?

16 MIRIAM VALENTINE: The printed
17 copies we're going to make are what Tom has
18 recently provided, right?

19 ERIKA BENNETT: Yes. I've got it
20 right here actually.

21 TOM GEORGE: Are we at a point
22 where we can take a brief --

23 ERIKA BENNETT: How about a
24 10-minute break? Ten, 15, back here; does
25 that work?

1 (Break taken.)

2 JOAN FRANKEVICH: I just handed
3 out something. If you didn't get a copy, let
4 me know.

5 ERIKA BENNETT: Joan, this is
6 bringing up the concept of kind of a fly green
7 certification.

8 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Yeah. So this
9 is just the beginnings -- at our last meeting
10 we brought up the idea of how to promote best
11 practices, how to institutionalize them, how
12 it's all voluntary and wouldn't it be great to
13 have some sort of certification program like
14 the Green Star Program that air tour operators
15 could get to signify to the public that I care
16 about Denali and I fly using best practices.
17 Some sort of a certification program. It
18 hasn't been talked about at all. It was just
19 briefly mentioned at our last meeting that,
20 gee, that might be a great idea. Let's have
21 some people look into it.

22 So we formed a work group. It's
23 myself, Tim Cudney, Suzanne and Nancy Bale.
24 We have not met yet. We've started to have
25 some e-mail conversations just in the last

1 couple of weeks. We're planning to meet the
2 week of -- we're trying to find a date the
3 week of November 5th. Our first meeting is
4 just going to be to learn more about what
5 other -- we know of three certification
6 programs. That's what's listed here:
7 Adventure Green Alaska, Green Star of Alaska
8 and Eco-Mariner Florida Bay.

9 So what we plan to do at our
10 first meeting is just learn about other
11 certification programs. How do they work,
12 what are their criteria, how do they manage
13 them, and see if anything -- gain any ideas on
14 whether they would work for us. Are there any
15 ideas that we like? Do we want to do this?
16 How do they operate? We're just in the
17 initial stages. I just went on -- these are
18 three programs we know about, so our first
19 meeting is just going to be to learn more
20 about them.

21 Lois is recently on the board of
22 Adventure Green Alaska. She has contacted
23 Sarah Leonard. She's going to come and give
24 us a presentation at our meeting. I've
25 contacted Kim Koval of Green Star, and she's

1 going to come give us a presentation at our
2 first meeting. Eco-Mariner Florida Bay is
3 actually an NPCA program, the organization I
4 work for. I plan to learn a little more about
5 it and bring some information about that. So
6 we haven't even started yet.

7 So a couple questions for
8 everybody. One, we have four members. I
9 wanted to see if anybody -- especially this
10 first meeting where it's just informational,
11 it would be great to have more people. The
12 way our schedules work with the four of us,
13 we're probably only going to be able to get
14 three of us at a meeting. The Green Star gal
15 is not available after school and Nancy is
16 only available after school. So at the first
17 meeting there will only be three of us, so I'd
18 like to have more people there.

19 So my first call is to find if
20 there's any additional members who want to
21 join us.

22 ERIKA BENNETT: You were hoping
23 for the week of November 5th?

24 JOAN FRANKEVICH: We're looking
25 at the week of November 5th. Tim Cudney is

1 very interested.

2 ERIKA BENNETT: I'd be
3 interested.

4 JOAN FRANKEVICH: And he's
5 available that week. Erika, you would be
6 interested. Maybe we can find out later what
7 day or days don't work.

8 Any other folks? You can be
9 Council members or not Council members. You
10 can join the whole work group or just come to
11 this first meeting.

12 Any other takers?

13 TOM GEORGE: I'm interested in
14 learning, but I don't think I'll be able to
15 travel.

16 JOAN FRANKEVICH: We can maybe do
17 a teleconference. I don't know if you'd want
18 to do that for that meeting.

19 TOM GEORGE: Yeah, that would be
20 fine.

21 JOAN FRANKEVICH: I think it
22 would definitely be possible.

23 BRIAN OKONEK: I've got something
24 going on that week, but keep me in the loop on
25 e-mail and let me know when and where and if

1 there's a teleconference potential, that would
2 be good.

3 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Okay.
4 Excellent.

5 MIRIAM VALENTINE: If you'd sent
6 me an e-mail too.

7 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Okay. Once we
8 get the date, then I will send out an e-mail
9 to the whole Council and invite them,
10 especially to this first meeting.

11 LOIS WIRTZ: You're welcome to
12 meet at our office. We have teleconference.

13 JOAN FRANKEVICH: We're probably
14 going to meet at ATIA. Great.

15 So then the other -- for those
16 folks who are interested, anybody know of any
17 days or dates that do/don't work in that week?

18 NANCY BALE: Election Day doesn't
19 work. Not for me.

20 ERIKA BENNETT: I have a board
21 meeting the evening of the 7th.

22 JOAN FRANKEVICH: It would be
23 during the day. We're looking at maybe a
24 two-hour meeting, probably somewhere between
25 9:00 and 2:30.

1 LOIS WIRTZ: Would it work for
2 the group to, like, meet late afternoon and
3 then the people that can come after school can
4 come, and the ones that can't come before
5 school --

6 JOAN FRANKEVICH: We could
7 start -- that's a good idea. We can start
8 with the Green Star woman who has to leave by
9 2:30. That's a good idea. We'll aim for
10 that, then.

11 TOM GEORGE: Does she have a
12 PowerPoint or something?

13 JOAN FRANKEVICH: I don't know.
14 I don't know.

15 TOM GEORGE: I have a GoToMeeting
16 account, which I could make available so that
17 if there are materials on the computer, that
18 could be viewed by people wherever they are.

19 JOAN FRANKEVICH: That would
20 really be helpful. What about for the
21 technologically challenged, like myself? Am I
22 going to be able to set this up?

23 TOM GEORGE: You click on the
24 Internet link.

25 JOAN FRANKEVICH: I think I can

1 handle that.

2 TOM GEORGE: All right. We'll do
3 a test beforehand. My recollection is if
4 you've never done one of these before, there
5 is a little software that has to be loaded
6 onto your computer. Essentially it lets you
7 see on the screen the same thing everybody
8 else is seeing on the screen.

9 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Great. That's
10 a really good idea, if we're going to have
11 people by teleconference to be able to see.

12 ELWOOD LYNN: So then you listen
13 telephonically, but you can see the material
14 on the screen?

15 TOM GEORGE: Correct. In fact,
16 the recommended way to listen is to use a
17 headset plugged into your computer, but
18 there's also a dial-in capability if you don't
19 have that ability on your computer. At least
20 the concept so far is using the computer for
21 the whole thing; audio as well as the visual
22 works well.

23 JOAN FRANKEVICH: And the audio
24 will work in a group in a room?

25 TOM GEORGE: Yeah. Well, you've

1 got to have a reasonable input. Actually this
2 works best if everybody is doing it that way
3 as opposed to 15 people in a room and two
4 people in the hinterlands. If you're going to
5 have a medium room with a lot of people in it,
6 you have to have some kind of a decent
7 pick-up, a phone like this or something.

8 JOAN FRANKEVICH: We can work out
9 the logistics. That would be great.

10 TOM GEORGE: We'll talk later and
11 we'll do a test.

12 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Okay. The
13 other thing to brainstorm and think about, you
14 know, we're going to have these two people
15 from these two programs. What kind of
16 questions do we want to ask them? Obvious
17 things are how they decided to determine the
18 criteria. I don't know. So think about those
19 things. Since we have a lot of people coming
20 to the meeting, I don't think we need to
21 necessarily think about that right now, but
22 just be thinking about those things. This is
23 just -- nothing has been decided. We're not
24 even sure we want to do this. We're just
25 exploring it as an option.

1 ERIKA BENNETT: Since the Council
2 has a life span, how does it go beyond that?

3 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Exactly.

4 ERIKA BENNETT: That would be my
5 only, like -- well, it sounds like a great
6 idea, but we're chartered for a certain period
7 of time. Whether or not our charter continues
8 -- it's not indefinite. Obviously this is
9 something you would want to be able to --

10 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Yeah. I would
11 envision like, you know, we the Council would
12 set the criteria. Businesses will do X, Y, Z,
13 follow best practices, don't buzz wildlife,
14 whatever we decide, you know, earn the Green
15 Star or whatever it's going to be called, but
16 we'd need some third party to administer it
17 that's going to -- that's the part that's an
18 unknown to me.

19 TOM GEORGE: You have Green Star
20 programs like this. It would be the program
21 to pick it up and refine. So this Council,
22 other than helping put the players together,
23 probably wouldn't necessarily have any role in
24 it significantly in the long term at all.

25 ERIKA BENNETT: If we had

1 somebody from Adventure Green talking at this
2 meeting, it might be a good question to
3 Adventure Green, like: Are our best practices
4 something you would like to include for your
5 aviation businesses?

6 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Exactly. I
7 think it's fairly new, but something I read on
8 their web site said they wanted to branch out
9 more into certain niches and things like that.

10 ERIKA BENNETT: So we'd get out
11 of the regulatory -- not that we were ever
12 going to regulate anything, really, but --

13 TOM GEORGE: We never have been a
14 regulatory group, which is, in fact, why we're
15 able to be civil and do good things.

16 ERIKA BENNETT: All right. So
17 will you be in contact with people as to when
18 a date is set?

19 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Yes, yes.

20 GREG LaHAIE: I just talked with
21 Suzanne a couple days ago and she mentioned
22 this. She said, frankly, I don't know about
23 you, but I don't have enough time for another
24 certification between the pilot training and
25 whatever. And I would agree. I mean, we

1 talked about other safety-oriented
2 certifications that we've done that everyone
3 started, but it's such a lengthy -- we have to
4 get everyone down to a training center to get
5 the certification.

6 We just don't have the time and
7 effort to do it, but I think concise bullet
8 points, best practices, that's stuff I already
9 do in my training --

10 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Exactly.

11 GREG LaHAIE: -- and that's all
12 you need. I wouldn't complicate it with a
13 long -- I mean, the certification is nice, but
14 honestly I don't -- it's a nice thing to think
15 they're doing that, but --

16 JOAN FRANKEVICH: And Suzanne and
17 I had the same conversation. But I didn't
18 realize -- applying for the Adventure Green
19 Alaska certifications, like, well, if ours
20 could maybe be folded -- you know, could
21 become part of that. If you're this type of
22 business, when you do their certification, you
23 do X, Y, Z. If you're a Denali air tour
24 operator, do you follow best practices? Do
25 you do this, this, this? Okay. So it's not

1 an additional. I don't even know if that's
2 possible. We had the same conversation. I
3 said to her, one, it's voluntary and, two, if
4 it's burdensome and we find it's too
5 overwhelming, we don't do this. It was just
6 an idea.

7 TOM GEORGE: This is an
8 exploration to look at it.

9 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Yeah. So,
10 point well taken, Greg. I understand.

11 NANCY BALE: And actually because
12 the Council has a life span, it might be good
13 to develop a mechanism for having these best
14 practices live on, but it is an ongoing
15 process. It's not -- there's nothing totally
16 fixed, except the 2000 AGL is fairly well an
17 understood thing. That's not even something
18 we developed, but there are some things that
19 could be started with. But if we do end, it
20 would be nice to have something that could
21 move on after us. I mean, it's worth giving a
22 go, but not having it be too complex or
23 onerous.

24 LOIS WIRTZ: As far as Adventure
25 Green is concerned, it's not an individual

1 person that gets certified. It's the company
2 as a whole. So each pilot wouldn't have to go
3 down and do anything. It would be the company
4 owners would just have to say that they have
5 made these decisions that this is what they're
6 going to abide by, and that's kind of what
7 your best practices -- it's pretty much the
8 same policy. So it might not be as cumbersome
9 as people think. We'll see.

10 NANCY BALE: If people were to
11 commit to include it in their onsite training,
12 for instance, that would be one way -- if they
13 were signed on to this, they would say, we'll
14 include these points in our onsite training.
15 Our pilots won't have to go somewhere else and
16 get training.

17 ERIKA BENNETT: All right. Any
18 other discussion on that?

19 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Thanks,
20 everybody. I'll be in touch.

21 ERIKA BENNETT: Thanks, Joan.

22 The next item on the list here is
23 a discussion on the designation of a
24 no-commercial flight area by Brian. I wasn't
25 at the last meeting and I wasn't really sure

1 what that meant, but I'm sure we're going to
2 find out.

3 BRIAN OKONEK: So at our last
4 meeting Paul asked us just kind of a long-term
5 question, how we envisioned the park, and he
6 asked just to kind of in a very broad sense
7 outline what areas of the park we would think
8 would be considered high-use aviation areas,
9 medium-use areas and low-use. And we came up
10 with these lines --

11 NANCY BALE: When you want any
12 other maps, let me know and I'll find what you
13 need.

14 BRIAN OKONEK: Okay.

15 So this is what we penciled out.
16 Here are the areas that are already being
17 heavily used by Denali flights originating out
18 of Talkeetna and out of the eastern end of the
19 park. And I think we know there's a lot of
20 flights transitioning over this part of the
21 park, the medium area coming out of the east
22 end of the park, but a much higher level of
23 flights going on in this area. By default
24 this whole western side of the park has been
25 much less used by the air taxis doing

1 flightseeing, and even Davyd's sound
2 monitoring shows that the quietest part of the
3 park is out in that western area very close to
4 where that word "low" is.

5 So we were just looking at this.
6 Over the years I've seen a tremendous change
7 in the activity over the park, and just
8 looking at the future several of us were
9 discussing, what is the future of the park and
10 the user experience on the ground going to be?
11 Are there going to truly be areas in the park
12 where people can expect a wilderness
13 experience with minimal air traffic? How can
14 that experience be protected in the park
15 without encroaching on the commercial interest
16 for flightseeing and the park experience for
17 those going as passengers?

18 Just looking at this map, it
19 became pretty apparent -- and you can put up
20 that picture that shows where most of the
21 flights are going, Nancy.

22 NANCY BALE: Okay. That's in
23 this picture, but there's a better one, so
24 we'll just do this.

25 BRIAN OKONEK: This is a GPS

1 tracking of some of the standard flightseeing
2 routes. You can see where they're originating
3 out of Talkeetna and the eastern end of the
4 park and flying the spine and the road
5 corridor and then flying up the Kahiltna and
6 the Ruth Glacier and circumnavigating around
7 Denali. By default, these have become very
8 popular routes because of where the airports
9 are and what the air taxis and the visitors
10 are wanting to look at. They're wanting to
11 see the spectacular mountains and in
12 particular see Denali, which is right there at
13 the corner. It's right here. There's Denali.
14 You can see that's where the flights are
15 coming from from both airports to circle
16 around.

17 A concept that I think would be
18 very interesting to talk about is having an
19 area in the park that is not in the future
20 developed as a flightseeing area. Right now
21 there are areas in the park that aren't being
22 used for flightseeing; over here on the
23 Kichatna Spires and Shellabarger Pass and
24 Mystic Pass and of course this whole western
25 end of the park in the northern area. The

1 northwestern area, people aren't going to in
2 great droves because it's pretty flat out
3 there. It's not as spectacular scenery. The
4 southwestern area, people aren't going because
5 it's quite far from most of the airports and
6 Denali is not out in that corner.

7 But things could change in the
8 future. Aircraft could change. Congestion
9 could change to where they start spreading
10 their use out to other areas of the park. I
11 think it would be really nice, having
12 experienced the park in the days when there
13 weren't flights going on all the time, I think
14 it's a very important activity for future
15 climbers and backpackers to be able to
16 experience in a national park that is known in
17 a lot of areas as one of the premier
18 wilderness parks in the Park Service system.

19 So I'd just like to entertain
20 some discussion on having kind of a voluntary
21 agreement for flight services not to expand
22 their flightseeing trips out into the
23 Kichatnas and around Mount Russell and around
24 Mount Dall and leave some areas of the park
25 where people can be dropped off by aircraft,

1 but those would be relatively few because it's
2 expensive and not that many people want to go
3 out there, but when those people are on the
4 ground, they're going to not experience the
5 type of heavy air traffic that's going on over
6 other areas in the park.

7 There is -- one of the military
8 MOAs does overlap some of that area, so there
9 already is some air traffic going on. There's
10 plenty of private general aviation that's
11 transiting through there going from one side
12 of the Alaska Range to the other. There's
13 hunting activity. It's not like there's no
14 aircraft activity, but there's far less
15 activity than in the Ruth area, the Kahiltna,
16 around Denali itself.

17 We were talking earlier about how
18 a lot of it is perception. Living in Chicago
19 and you go there, it seems really quiet. If
20 you're living someplace in the Brooks Range
21 and you go there, it's going to seem very,
22 very busy.

23 I just met a gentleman last week.
24 Bob Krear is his name. He's 90 years old. He
25 spent three months with Olaus and Margaret

1 Murie and George Schauer and a couple other
2 researchers in the Sheenjek Valley in 1956.
3 He was talking about at the time they were up
4 there studying the area for the possibility of
5 it becoming a wildlife refuge, which it
6 eventually did. In 1956 they were there
7 talking about how isn't it a shame that we
8 just happen to be on the flight path of the
9 military flights servicing the Barter Islands.
10 There were DC-3s and DC-6's flying over on a
11 regular basis. Here they were in a very
12 remote part of North America and in 1956 they
13 already saw how -- he said, you know, it
14 changed the wilderness experience. Even
15 though there wasn't much traffic, to have a
16 DC-3 coming up the valley made a difference.

17 Just something I think that would
18 be worthwhile thinking about. I don't think
19 it would have today a big impact on the air
20 taxi businesses to voluntarily just not expand
21 their flightseeing routes over that area. It
22 wouldn't affect any other aviation, and it
23 wouldn't affect their ability to fly over
24 there for drop-offs and then eventually pick
25 those same people up.

1 NANCY BALE: Just to recall our
2 prior work on the various sound-sensitive
3 areas, there really hasn't been a lot of input
4 to indicate that the preserve area, which is
5 the area you're concerned about -- the
6 protuberance in the southwestern area has
7 sensitivity, but since it's hard to get to,
8 really the only way to get there is by
9 aircraft, we probably don't have as many
10 people writing comment cards. They would
11 access that area from Talkeetna and might not
12 drop by the ranger station on their way back
13 out. So we don't have a group of constituents
14 other than Brian who's been in there and you
15 could probably talk with some of your friends
16 who have the same values, but it is harder to
17 get to.

18 BRIAN OKONEK: Well, there's some
19 very good opportunities for remote backpacking
20 on the north side of the Range there. That's
21 a pretty popular hike to walk back along the
22 Range to Wonder Lake. That would be in that
23 area.

24 NANCY BALE: So that would be
25 actually here. So are you talking about

1 actually extending this beyond the preserve
2 area? Is that your thought, to try to -- to
3 have that area include -- harder to include an
4 airport in an area where --

5 BRIAN OKONEK: Here's the
6 Kahiltna right there. Here's the Lacuna
7 coming down into the Yentna. Right now
8 there's very little flightseeing flights that
9 actually go west of the Lacuna and around the
10 west side of Foraker. So from like the
11 Lacuna/Yentna confluence over to the west and
12 then on up extending up over these flats here
13 up to the north boundary of the park, there's
14 just -- it's like Davyd's sound monitoring
15 station shows, it's very quiet over on this
16 side.

17 If we could retain that kind of
18 quiet soundscape out there, it would be
19 fantastic for the future. It would be -- I
20 think it's going to -- the soundscape is
21 something that has definitely deteriorated in
22 the park, and I think the park should try to
23 retain some areas as quiet as possible. I
24 mean, there's already air traffic out there,
25 but it's not saturated to the point that a

1 great, you know, extent of the other part of
2 the park is.

3 TOM GEORGE: Can you bring up the
4 other map you had up initially? Because I
5 guess going back to the discussion last time,
6 and I really appreciate that Paul brought this
7 up. This thinking of, okay, we started with
8 the 2006 Backcountry Plan, which was assembled
9 at a certain point in time actually before we
10 had much inventory data and whatnot and
11 getting to kind of where we are today to
12 actually relook and maybe reconsider the zones
13 along the lines of what we're looking at here,
14 which acknowledges a lot of what you're
15 saying.

16 Perhaps rejigger standards around
17 something more like this, which if we did
18 that, eventually we would have to go through
19 an EIS process which would result in a
20 revision of the Backcountry Plan. But to try
21 and say, we'll take some area and just say
22 it's off limits, I don't think that's going to
23 fly, to use an aviation metaphor, and it
24 certainly doesn't go with the character of
25 what this group has tried to do. But I think

1 if we actually did take and say, okay,
2 recognizing the levels of use -- and, again,
3 airplanes generally aren't just flying all
4 kinds of different places. They're flying to
5 places people want to go. I think through the
6 work we've done in the last few years we have
7 established and, in fact, attempted to alter
8 that. Even the map that you showed a minute
9 ago with the routes doesn't -- of course those
10 were just some specific flights that a GPS was
11 taken along because we've made it a point not
12 to actually try and establish routes for
13 safety reasons that would kind of lock people
14 into corridors when the weather doesn't
15 support that type of operation.

16 But we think -- and especially
17 this summer was our boldest attempt at
18 altering behavior to be responsive to things
19 on the ground. But you look at that and then
20 you look at the work Davyd has shown us in the
21 past and perhaps we'll see this afternoon and
22 realize that that isn't matching at least the
23 soundscape standards that were established
24 back in that 2006 plan. So I think I can
25 support the concept of what you're interested

1 in, but I think the way to do it is this way
2 and not to try and say, well, we want to
3 identify some area and say that's off limits
4 to activity of that nature.

5 Now, if we rezone and, again,
6 keep these in low standards, then as the Park
7 Service is considering various things about
8 whether to expand certain kinds of operations
9 or not, that plays right into, are we
10 achieving those resource values or not? So I
11 think I can support the concept of what you're
12 interested in, but I would not feel
13 comfortable at all, and I expect there would
14 be a great deal of resistance to try and
15 actually say, well, let's define some area and
16 just say these things are off limits.

17 BRIAN OKONEK: One thing, none of
18 what we've done is off limits. Everything
19 we've talked about is a voluntary thing. So
20 nothing has ever been off limits. People can
21 go do whatever they want to. But
22 everything -- so this would be a voluntary
23 sort of thing.

24 COLIN MALONE: This is Colin. If
25 I can just add a couple of observations.

1 ERIKA BENNETT: Go right ahead.

2 COLIN MALONE: I just want to let
3 everyone realize that we do spend as a park
4 quite a bit of time patrolling that area down
5 in the southwest preserve and we interact with
6 that aviation community quite a bit. There's
7 probably a lot more activity than people
8 realize, especially during the latter half of
9 the summer. There's quite a few hunters and
10 people that support those hunters using that
11 area. So it's not quite as unused as maybe
12 some people perceive. I'd hate to set up a
13 situation where there's disappointment for
14 people going into that country and then
15 realizing there's quite a bit of air traffic
16 that's beyond the taxi service. I just wanted
17 to point that out.

18 BRIAN OKONEK: Thank you very
19 much. That's -- there is flying in there and
20 I'm not saying that it's flight free. What
21 I'm saying is trying to keep it from turning
22 into being totally saturated by flights.

23 COLIN MALONE: Sure. Okay.
24 Thanks.

25 JOAN FRANKEVICH: I think, Brian,

1 from your perspective, I remember at one of
2 our early meetings -- and I don't remember the
3 dates -- but you spent a 30-day trip on the
4 mountain and heard virtually no airplanes.
5 Then I just remember being -- when we
6 instituted some of the best practices and
7 hearing from one of the backcountry rangers --
8 and I can't recall if it was the 14,000 camp
9 or the 17,000 camp -- but him saying, yes, it
10 had gotten significantly better. He said, we
11 used to have to -- something about, you know,
12 we can constantly hear noise, but now we don't
13 have to shout to be heard or something like
14 that. It was like, wow, at the 14- or the
15 17,000 foot there are planes constantly? I
16 mean, that's a huge change in a relatively
17 short amount of time.

18 So I commend you, Brian, for
19 looking into the future and just not wanting
20 this area to become what we have in the Ruth
21 Amphitheater and the 14- and 17,000-foot
22 camps. I don't know how we get there, but I
23 support that attempt. I think it's
24 far-reaching to think into the future like
25 that.

1 NANCY BALE: Colin, this is
2 Nancy. Just a question on when that
3 hunting-related activity begins. Is it
4 typically beginning more in early August for
5 sheep hunting, or is it more concentrated on
6 the moose hunt, which would be in September?

7 COLIN MALONE: It is actually
8 early August. I do also want to point out
9 that Brian's observations are correct. The
10 numbers are way fewer than the rest of the
11 mountain, from my narrow perspective. I do
12 know that area is also used as a transition
13 from the north side and south side of the
14 Range. There's a lot of transition traffic.
15 But predominantly the numbers increase during
16 the early August time.

17 NANCY BALE: Colin, could you
18 clarify? I know that under the Backcountry
19 Plan I believe there are two hunting
20 concessions for the preserve; is that correct?

21 COLIN MALONE: That's my
22 understanding.

23 NANCY BALE: But then the
24 preserve is available according to
25 stipulations and regulations from the Alaska

1 Department of Fish & Game to private hunters
2 in aircraft?

3 COLIN MALONE: That's my
4 understanding as well, yes.

5 NANCY BALE: And a commercial air
6 taxi could drop a private hunter off and that
7 wouldn't violate the commercial -- the
8 concessions are basically for a hunting guide,
9 but a commercial operator could drop a hunter
10 off and that would be fair game, so to speak?

11 COLIN MALONE: So to speak.
12 There are -- different air taxis are allowed
13 to do certain services within the preserve and
14 to -- there are CUAs involved and I'd have to
15 default to John Leonard to answer some legal
16 questions. But that's true. There is private
17 access that's regulated by the State -- it's
18 regulated by the Feds, by the park, but it's
19 also basically regulated as a State area.

20 NANCY BALE: So if you were a
21 private air taxi and you wanted to land
22 someone in the preserve, would you have to do
23 paperwork with the Park Service? If you
24 weren't guiding them, but you just wanted to
25 land them in the preserve, would you have to

1 do paperwork?

2 JEFF MOW: Yes.

3 COLIN MALONE: You know, I can't
4 answer that. It's my understanding that you
5 do have to have a CUA agreement, but there may
6 be a circumstance where a private person could
7 be dropped off.

8 NANCY BALE: I see. And then the
9 use of ATVs in the preserve for hunting,
10 that's not allowed, correct?

11 COLIN MALONE: That's not
12 allowed.

13 NANCY BALE: Do you see
14 violations of that? I know I'm getting off
15 topic, but I'm just curious.

16 COLIN MALONE: Occasionally, but
17 not that often.

18 NANCY BALE: Thank you, Colin.

19 COLIN MALONE: You're welcome.

20 NANCY BALE: I have a suggestion
21 that to operationalize what Brian is hoping
22 for would be -- I know the Park Service would
23 have to run an EA on this, but if the Park
24 Service could commit that they would not make
25 available any commercial use authorizations in

1 a certain defined area that we haven't defined
2 yet for scenic tour landings. We're not
3 talking about drop-offs for overnight stays,
4 but for scenic tour landings. Because that
5 would tend to diminish the amount of traffic
6 in an easy to paperwork way -- you know, easy
7 to identify way.

8 So that's a suggestion I would
9 have. It would be logical, I think. Because
10 you can't limit -- again, the rest of it is
11 voluntary. But the Park Service could run an
12 EA proposing in a certain area to not issue
13 those scenic tour landings. Of course people
14 who came along with a drop-off could snap
15 pictures, but there would have to be a
16 drop-off involved. So that's a thought.

17 ELWOOD LYNN: We're going to be
18 reviewing the Backcountry Management Plan, so
19 that's something we could consider.

20 NANCY BALE: What's the schedule
21 on that?

22 ELWOOD LYNN: Within this next
23 year, I think, we'll be looking at it.

24 JOAN FRANKEVICH: So, Tom, is
25 what you're saying is you'd rather entertain

1 this idea as part of the Backcountry Plan
2 revision and if the soundscape standards are
3 changed or --

4 TOM GEORGE: I think the
5 soundscape standards play into this. But I
6 think one of the goals was to actually kind of
7 get a more realistic compartmentalization of
8 the park to kind of make the soundscape
9 standards more match the patterns of activity
10 that we're familiar with and, again, this is a
11 big-picture thing as opposed to a specific
12 best practice here or other type of activity.

13 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Just to remind
14 us all. The center portion of the park, the
15 old park, is designated wilderness. And if I
16 were in charge of the air space, which I'm
17 not, to me that's the highest area to protect,
18 to have minimal or no flights. And, you know,
19 that's pretty impossible and is not going to
20 happen practically. So I would hope people
21 would at least entertain this idea that we
22 weren't able to achieve that and probably will
23 never achieve that for the designated
24 wilderness, but if we could find one portion
25 out of 6 million acres, I think that's a

1 reasonable goal.

2 NANCY BALE: I foresee some
3 statutory problems with making this change
4 even though it more accurately reflects
5 reality. There are powerful organizations who
6 would be legally troubled by this change, but
7 it does more accurately reflect reality.

8 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Even if the
9 standards don't change, the reality, the
10 practicality is we have like a hundred percent
11 accedences in the old park. I mean, it's not
12 happening.

13 NANCY BALE: We have traditional
14 activities that's gone undefined, so we have a
15 situation on the ground that's different from
16 the statutory situation. Whether the Park
17 Service needs to adjust their policies to
18 reflect realities that aren't statutorily
19 sound, I give that to you, Elwood. That's a
20 fun project.

21 ERIKA BENNETT: All right. Do we
22 have photocopies?

23 MIRIAM VALENTINE: Yes.

24 ERIKA BENNETT: Why don't we hand
25 out the photocopies.

1 At this point we're in a public
2 comment period. Are there any more public
3 comments on what we've discussed?

4 GREG LaHAIE: I have a question
5 maybe between Nancy and everyone. I was
6 chatting with Guy Adam about the soundscape
7 and its true mission when it was developed.
8 His take on it was that it was really just to
9 establish a base line of what was happening
10 and therefore to help take that information,
11 go back and then alter the Backcountry
12 Management Plan.

13 I mean, is that roughly what your
14 take on it is?

15 ELWOOD LYNN: When we did the
16 Backcountry Management Plan, we didn't have
17 near as much data as we have today. Now we
18 need to look at it and overlay today's
19 realities on it and see which standards we
20 need to tweak in order to try to hold the
21 line, but reflect what's actually happening.

22 JEFF MOW: I have a question. Is
23 there enough sort of -- is the spatial data of
24 the understanding, sort of spatial information
25 about the commercial flightseeing, but how

1 much spatial data is there about the other
2 uses? I think rather than go to zoning a
3 piece of geography for certain things, with
4 the right spatial planning you get the right
5 data; you can see what the different uses are.
6 You can sort of collaboratively see if people
7 just tweak their uses in a way that doesn't
8 sort of dramatically alter their abilities to
9 operate there, you can achieve -- I mean,
10 that's what's happening in the marine
11 environment is we're trying to do this spatial
12 planning where we overlay different uses,
13 commercial, conservation, just a variety of
14 uses and look for those opportunities where
15 you can create -- you know, without saying no,
16 but simply adjusting how people operate in a
17 spatial area, you can achieve that. There's
18 also that spatial issue of seasonality as
19 well. So you have that expectation for
20 somebody at some point in time that can go
21 someplace in the park and have minimal, maybe
22 not complete, but minimal intrusions on their
23 expectations for natural quiet.
24 Anyway, the data you have, for
25 what it's worth, for a commercial

1 flightseeing, you have similar data for the
2 rest of the aviation community. That would
3 include military, air taxi services.

4 BRIAN OKONEK: That information
5 wouldn't be -- you don't even have the
6 information on the backcountry use. People
7 don't have to register to fly into any part of
8 the Alaska Range except if they're climbing
9 Denali or Foraker.

10 TOM GEORGE: Well, but the sound
11 monitoring Davyd is doing is catching
12 everything. Are you later in the day going to
13 show us updates, which show some of the things
14 like you showed last night with the pie chart?

15 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Yes.

16 TOM GEORGE: It's still not
17 complete, but it's certainly a lot better than
18 it has been and each year it gets about six
19 units or so better.

20 ELWOOD LYNN: But the challenge
21 is we don't know -- we know what sound prints
22 are there, but we don't know whose they are.

23 JEFF MOW: Right, linking back
24 and seeing if those users can voluntarily
25 adjust their uses a little bit to achieve --

1 ELWOOD LYNN: I think that
2 everybody that's at the table -- you know, we
3 have representation of the people that are
4 interested in it, but the general aviation,
5 commercial jetliners, military, we're never
6 going to be able to bring all of them to the
7 table.

8 JEFF MOW: Yeah. I mean, it's
9 similar to whenever we talk about snow
10 machines and otherwise. It's a pretty hard
11 row to hoe to expect that you're going to get
12 complete of any, but you're trying to achieve
13 the best you can where you have control.

14 TOM GEORGE: Elwood, I think you
15 actually have all those elements at this table
16 right now today, all the elements you just
17 mentioned. Actually the neat thing about
18 Davyd's work is it looks like we can partition
19 prop from jet aircraft, for example, which in
20 itself -- and helicopters, which in itself
21 suggests something about which segment of the
22 community you're dealing with.

23 One of our challenges though is
24 to make sure that -- and I think you've shown
25 two sets of maps. One is how things -- what

1 accidences are happening. That has that
2 underlying initial set of zones built into it,
3 so it actually makes it a little difficult to
4 really tell the overall magnitude. I hope
5 you've got the other one that -- yeah, both.
6 If you really want to understand what's the
7 use pattern today, that's the one to look at,
8 which shows you what areas are quiet
9 regardless of what segment of the aviation
10 community is operating in that area.

11 That's, I think, a very powerful
12 tool for us to look at and to understand
13 what's what and what's where. I think we're a
14 lot further along at having that information
15 certainly than we were a few years when we
16 started this Council and certainly going back
17 to 2006. So I look forward to this afternoon.

18 ERIKA BENNETT: We are at a
19 public comment. Anybody else like to
20 interject on what we've discussed at this
21 point? No?

22 The next thing on the agenda is
23 the election of a new chairperson. Sally did
24 finally learn how to retire, sort of. We are
25 at barely a quorum, which is seven. At this

1 point in time, without having more of the
2 Council here, I'd like to at this point sort
3 of table the discussion. If anybody in this
4 room is interested, sort of put their hand up
5 and put your name on the slate until we can
6 talk to the other people who are not here and
7 see whether or not any one of them are
8 interested as well in running for the
9 chairperson position, so to speak. Keeping in
10 mind that the chairperson inevitably should be
11 a person that can easily keep in contact with
12 the entire group and sort of help keep us
13 informed and on the same page, literally and
14 figuratively.

15 How does everybody feel about
16 that, or is there somebody in the room that's
17 chomping at the bit and we should take a vote?

18 TOM GEORGE: If you're willing as
19 the vice chair to serve in that capacity for a
20 little longer, yeah, we're so short of people
21 here, it would neither be fair to elect
22 somebody who is not here, although it is
23 tempting, or to preclude them from -- either
24 way. So I would support deferring this to a
25 later meeting.

1 ERIKA BENNETT: I don't mind
2 carrying on as vice chair if you guys can sort
3 of handle my ineptitude. All right. So with
4 that being said, does everybody that is here
5 agree that we can hold off election of a
6 chairperson until at least our next meeting
7 hopefully with more than just the bare quorum?
8 Yes?

9 JOAN FRANKEVICH: I have a
10 question. Definitely no as far as being a
11 chairperson. I'm too talkative for that.

12 But are you interested in being
13 the chairperson? Would you consider it?

14 ERIKA BENNETT: At this point,
15 no, because I was -- I laughed when you
16 said -- I got elected someplace else on a
17 different, and it's kind of like, all right,
18 well, that role is -- I'm secretary over
19 there. It's kind of like I'm learning when to
20 say too much. So that would be too much. I
21 don't mind the vice chair thing.

22 NANCY BALE: Should we go around
23 the table and see if anybody sitting here
24 would like to get drafted?

25 JOAN FRANKEVICH: I'll start.

1 I'm too talkative. Not a good chair. I'll
2 pass.

3 TOM GEORGE: No.

4 BRIAN OKONEK: I would decline.

5 NANCY BALE: No.

6 ERIKA BENNETT: And you two are
7 kind of off the table because --

8 MIKE YORKE: Yeah, I believe we
9 are. As the Federal Aviation Administration,
10 I believe we should be off the table. Thank
11 you for the invite. We do have regulatory
12 issues we look at and that's part of my being
13 here.

14 ERIKA BENNETT: So the people
15 that are left are Suzanne, Amanda, Claire,
16 Tim, Charlie. So that's the five that are
17 left. So I think it's fair to them to allow
18 them to have a say in the matter. All right.

19 NANCY BALE: Have any Councils
20 had luck with having a rotating chair? I
21 think having it just for one meeting is not
22 enough, but maybe a two-meeting rotating
23 chair. It's just a thought because if we all
24 say no, then we're going to have to come up
25 with a solution.

1 ERIKA BENNETT: We need
2 continuity there.

3 JOAN FRANKEVICH: I think a good
4 role of the chair is just kind of background
5 work. Getting up to the meeting, making sure,
6 Brian, you have something on the agenda; are
7 you prepared? That kind of stuff. That kind
8 of thing takes one consistent person. If
9 you're switching off that role, it's easily
10 forgotten.

11 TOM GEORGE: And the follow-up.
12 That's where I'm feeling guilty. Having just
13 received Sally's report from last meeting,
14 seeing several things I did not do that I was
15 supposed to have. But a day before the
16 meeting, I'm sorry, that's a little -- we'll
17 have to work on that.

18 NANCY BALE: It's the situation
19 with Councils like this.

20 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Does it have to
21 be one of us?

22 ERIKA BENNETT: The chairperson
23 needs to be --

24 JOAN FRANKEVICH: It couldn't be,
25 say, Miriam or Dave or Davyd?

1 MIRIAM VALENTINE: It's not
2 something you would want.

3 TOM GEORGE: Let's see. Let's
4 jeopardize their career.

5 ERIKA BENNETT: Impartiality does
6 have its advantages. That's another thing to
7 think of is being able to be warm and fuzzy on
8 both sides of the fence is good without -- I
9 love a good quiet backcountry. I also like to
10 fly. There's a fence there. All right.

11 So we'll -- the election of the
12 chairperson will be item agenda No. 1 for the
13 next meeting that we have. Throughout the
14 next few months before our next meeting, I as
15 vice chair will contact the people who have
16 not been able to attend and sort of start the,
17 all right, who's going to be on the ballot, so
18 to speak. If that doesn't happen while, it
19 will be one of the first things that we do so
20 that we can have a good head to the
21 organization.

22 Now that everybody has the Fact
23 Sheet in their laps, would you like to take a
24 few minutes to peruse it and then at, say,
25 11:30 be ready to have a short discussion and

1 possibly vote on it? Miriam can bring up the
2 images. I believe the only thing that was
3 changed and voted on last time was the cover
4 image.

5 TOM GEORGE: You know, instead of
6 chewing up the whole Council time, we could
7 look at this over lunch and discuss it after
8 lunch and either go on to another agenda item
9 or go for an early lunch.

10 ERIKA BENNETT: Well, our next
11 two agenda items after lunch happen to be
12 video teleconferences. We need to be prompt
13 when we get back. We have a 1:15
14 teleconference with John Leonard from
15 Talkeetna and then a 1:30 teleconference from
16 Fairbanks. So those are two time constraints.

17 NANCY BALE: We're actually sort
18 of ahead of schedule. I think we have time to
19 do it now.

20 ERIKA BENNETT: If we have the
21 time to do it now -- is 15 minutes too long
22 for you to peruse this or do you want to take
23 that time?

24 NANCY BALE: I think 15 minutes
25 is good.

1 ERIKA BENNETT: Okay. Feel free
2 to do what you need to do, but you'll find me
3 herding you back here at 11:30. If there are
4 any huge egregious errors or major, major
5 malfunctions that you see -- and if you wanted
6 to look at the photos, I'm sure we can do that
7 too.

8 (Break taken.)

9 ERIKA BENNETT: Okay, everybody.
10 So those people who had a chance
11 to read -- I guess the best way to do this
12 maybe is to go through each one of us at a
13 time and see if you have any problems,
14 additions, subtractions, starting with you,
15 Mike.

16 MIKE YORKE: Thank you. I
17 thought it was well written. It's nice you
18 put the FAA up on top. I like that Miriam
19 Valentine is the owner of it. I think it's
20 great we have a document that says there's an
21 owner on it. No matter who it is, I think
22 that's a great thing. I'd just note we should
23 work on some verbiage issues, but I'll let it
24 go, unless it comes up by somebody else. But
25 I'd support it. Other than that, I think we

1 need to move on and get it out. If we need to
2 amend it, we do it in version 2.

3 ERIKA BENNETT: Scott.

4 LT. COL. SCOTT BABOS: I think
5 it's a good group effort. I think it's very
6 well written as presented. At this point I
7 have no issues, but to endorse it and I think
8 it does what we're trying to do. It's never
9 going to be perfect, we know that, but I think
10 it's excellent as written. I support it.

11 NANCY BALE: Page 1 is great.
12 Page 2, this is a grammatical -- small, I
13 think, but I think you'll agree. Instead of
14 as well as --

15 ERIKA BENNETT: Where are we on
16 the page?

17 NANCY BALE: Public safety is
18 paramount for pilots, for mountain climbers
19 who are flown into glaciers to start their
20 climb and for park visitors who take in Denali
21 through a flightseeing, one word, experience.

22 ERIKA BENNETT: Instead of "as
23 well" just "and."

24 TOM GEORGE: So moved. So "as
25 well as" goes to "and," right?

1 NANCY BALE: And for. It's just
2 more consistent construction, I think. It
3 reads better.

4 ERIKA BENNETT: I'm making the
5 changes on my sheet, but I'm looking at it on
6 here. Next.

7 NANCY BALE: And we all agree
8 flightseeing should probably be one word?

9 ERIKA BENNETT: It is. It should
10 be one word. So that would read, "comma, and
11 for park visitors who take in Denali through a
12 flightseeing experience."

13 All right.

14 NANCY BALE: Then the next
15 caption -- I think I mentioned this before, so
16 it's not a deal-breaker for me, but since this
17 sheet is about the natural soundscape, I think
18 that natural soundscapes should be included as
19 an intrinsic value right after scenic mountain
20 landscapes. So just add natural soundscapes,
21 comma, then we'd move on to wilderness
22 recreational opportunities.

23 TOM GEORGE: But the objective
24 was to shorten this. You've got it in other
25 places in here. We've got to shorten this

1 somewhere.

2 NANCY BALE: I would just like to
3 say I advocate for including that in a sheet
4 that's about soundscape.

5 I think I mentioned this before,
6 unless we wanted to really wordsmith and we
7 decided we didn't want to wordsmith,
8 "overflights and backcountry landings are an
9 important and necessary part of the range of
10 experiences at Denali." Just to be reminded
11 that -- and, remember, this is -- my
12 constituency is more on the green end. So
13 this isn't meant to create any ruffles, but
14 most overflight experiences are not
15 technically park experiences because they're
16 in the soundscape, but they are in an area
17 that's not regulated by the park. If you
18 land, it becomes a park experience.

19 So I'm certainly happy to include
20 it as a park experience because most people
21 perceive that it's a statutory issue because
22 it's a park experience that's not regulateable
23 by the park. So what is it?

24 So the other part of it is, I
25 know that to put the word "and necessary" in

1 there was meant to point out the extremely
2 important nature of management activities and
3 rescues and so forth. But in this particular
4 caption I don't see that "and necessary" adds
5 much because it's really talking about the
6 visitor experience not about park management.
7 I would just take "and necessary" out.

8 TOM GEORGE: I object to that.

9 NANCY BALE: We've talked about
10 it before, Tom. I'm just repeating for the
11 last time my heartburn with that.

12 JOAN FRANKEVICH: I have
13 heartburn with that too, "and necessary."

14 NANCY BALE: And then just moving
15 on because we'll probably have to discuss this
16 anyway, Acoustic Monitoring -- now we're on
17 page 3, the first caption. It's the last
18 correction I have. "Acoustic monitoring helps
19 document the human-caused sounds that can
20 interfere with the quality of the visitor's
21 park experience."

22 I think that with the way the
23 Backcountry Management Plan was written, there
24 were two elements to the monitoring: To see
25 what sounds violate or interfere with the

1 natural soundscape itself intrinsically and by
2 reference the visitor's experience. So I
3 would restructure this caption. I'd take out
4 "human-caused" because it's not needed, I
5 don't think. A scream or a song could be a
6 human-caused sound, and that's not what we're
7 talking about.

8 So here's how I would restructure
9 it: "Acoustic monitoring helps document the
10 sounds that can interfere with the natural
11 soundscape and the quality of a visitor's park
12 experience." That's how I would restructure
13 it to reflect more what the Backcountry
14 Management Plan said and then to remove that
15 human-caused adjective, which I think kind of
16 muddies the issue.

17 TOM GEORGE: Say that one more
18 time, please.

19 NANCY BALE: Okay. "Acoustic
20 monitoring helps document the sounds that can
21 interfere with the natural soundscape and the
22 quality of a visitor's park experience." Or
23 if you wanted to -- you could say "affect" and
24 not interfere with. That's fine too. Maybe
25 affect is better.

1 TOM GEORGE: Affect sounds good.

2 ERIKA BENNETT: I like affect.

3 NANCY BALE: That's it for me.

4 ERIKA BENNETT: Okay.

5 TOM GEORGE: I'd support that
6 change.

7 ERIKA BENNETT: Brian.

8 BRIAN OKONEK: Well, where does
9 that leave us with Nancy's other
10 recommendation?

11 ERIKA BENNETT: I'm just going
12 around right now and asking for objections on
13 a personal basis, and then we'll put it out on
14 the table and do a preliminary vote and see
15 where it will go from there.

16 BRIAN OKONEK: Okay. I like
17 Nancy's changes, so I would go with Nancy's
18 recommendations.

19 ERIKA BENNETT: Okay. I don't
20 have any personal changes to the document as
21 it is. Tom.

22 TOM GEORGE: I've already
23 commented, so nothing to add.

24 JOAN FRANKEVICH: The only thing
25 that jumps out at me and gives me heartburn is

1 the "and necessary" part, same as Nancy
2 mentioned. One quick addition, it needs a
3 date when this was printed.

4 ERIKA BENNETT: Where should the
5 date be?

6 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Doesn't matter.
7 Could be the front page or the back page, but
8 it needs to be somewhere.

9 NANCY BALE: Are the other fact
10 sheets dated and is there a rubric for dated
11 them?

12 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Most of them
13 are not dated, but they should be. We can
14 start the trend with this one.

15 NANCY BALE: And then it should
16 be always in the same spot.

17 ERIKA BENNETT: I think on the
18 front page would probably be a good idea. All
19 right.

20 As we know, we just barely have a
21 quorum on this, so we do need all seven votes
22 to pass this. So I would like to do a
23 preliminary vote and then if it doesn't pass,
24 then we need to discuss to see what we can do
25 to make it pass.

1 Does that sound reasonable?

2 TOM GEORGE: I'm confused on what
3 your proposal is.

4 ERIKA BENNETT: I guess if it
5 doesn't pass on the vote --

6 TOM GEORGE: If what doesn't
7 pass?

8 ERIKA BENNETT: The fact sheet.
9 The approval of the fact sheet as written, not
10 with any changes yet.

11 TOM GEORGE: I think it would be
12 faster to go through and consider the various
13 changes and stuff because --

14 ERIKA BENNETT: Okay. Was
15 everybody good with the edit on page 2? "The
16 public safety is paramount for pilots, for
17 mountain climbers who are flow in to glaciers
18 to start their climb and for" -- that's the
19 edit there -- "and for park visitors who take
20 in Denali through a flightseeing experience."

21 Are all of the seven Council
22 members -- did I hear yes?

23 Then, what about adding "natural
24 soundscapes" to the second caption? "The
25 intrinsic values of the park include habitat

1 and wildlife, scenic mountain landscapes,
2 natural soundscapes, wilderness recreational
3 opportunities and other wilderness values."

4 That seems awfully wordy to me.

5 TOM GEORGE: Again, our objective
6 was to try and shorten it. If we had all the
7 space in the world, I would say fine, but
8 we're trying to get this to one page. So I
9 personally think we can live without that in
10 this document. There are other places that
11 those things show up.

12 NANCY BALE: It wouldn't be a
13 deal-breaker for me.

14 ERIKA BENNETT: So if it's not a
15 deal-breaker, how about we leave it out to
16 keep it shorter.

17 JOAN FRANKEVICH: I'll go with
18 that.

19 ERIKA BENNETT: I think there's
20 going to probably be some discussion over this
21 "and necessary." The edit that Nancy
22 suggested would be: "Overflights and
23 backcountry landings are an important and
24 necessary part of the range of experiences at
25 Denali." So you would like to delete the

1 words "and necessary"?

2 NANCY BALE: Yes.

3 ELWOOD LYNN: So, aren't they
4 necessary for climbers to get inserted into
5 the mountain?

6 NANCY BALE: They're very
7 important for it.

8 MIRIAM VALENTINE: So it's like
9 two different things. So the backcountry
10 landings might be necessary, right, to provide
11 access to the park, but the overflights -- I'm
12 just trying -- if you tear it apart, what are
13 the pieces that are of concern to you?

14 ERIKA BENNETT: You don't believe
15 the overflights are necessary as a part of the
16 range of experiences at Denali; did I just
17 paraphrase that correctly or not?

18 JOAN FRANKEVICH: I agree they're
19 important. I think they're a valuable
20 experience, but --

21 NANCY BALE: But the landings are
22 necessary, right?

23 JOAN FRANKEVICH: -- necessary
24 for overflights is -- that's -- I don't want
25 to speak for Nancy.

1 NANCY BALE: So we could
2 completely restructure it to reflect that. I
3 just didn't want to make an extended
4 discussion.

5 MIKE YORKE: Nor do I care for
6 extended discussion. However, I believe the
7 word "necessary" was put in in the past
8 because I have one of the old ones that we put
9 that in there. We said, well, if there was a
10 SAR, a search and rescue, or we needed to put
11 a sound station somewhere, then I think we
12 left it because there are necessary
13 overflights and/or landings in the park.
14 That's what I remember.

15 ERIKA BENNETT: Okay.

16 NANCY BALE: I feel that this
17 caption was describing visitor experiences,
18 not management activities and so --

19 MIKE YORKE: The title of it is
20 Fact Sheet.

21 NANCY BALE: Flying is necessary
22 for management. It should be limited, of
23 course, and Park Service is trying. So I
24 guess to describe the park experience, that
25 aircraft is necessary for a park experience,

1 it's very important to have the range of
2 experience, very important. We could
3 restructure this the way Miriam suggests, but
4 it would seem stilted. Something like:
5 "Overflights are an important part and
6 backcountry landings a necessary part of the
7 range of experiences at Denali."

8 Again, backcountry landings are
9 subject to management to protect park
10 resources, but we don't want to make the
11 caption that long. I just don't want to
12 create a -- I don't want the public to not get
13 the right subtlety in this caption, and I'm
14 not sure exactly how to change it.

15 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Mike, I
16 understand your point that in some cases it is
17 necessary, but it's talking about a range of
18 visitor experiences. It's not talking about
19 management.

20 NANCY BALE: And technically
21 overflights aren't a visitor experience from
22 the statutory standpoint because they're out
23 of the park space and that's basically the
24 source of the difficulty in managing them.

25 TOM GEORGE: Well, we're trying

1 to slice way too fine a thing for a one-page
2 fact sheet that kind of communicates the
3 balance of things that we deal with in this
4 Council.

5 NANCY BALE: I totally agree with
6 you. It's a tough caption.

7 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Is there
8 another word instead of necessary that people
9 would be comfortable with?

10 BRIAN OKONEK: Really, for
11 backcountry users and flightseers, what
12 they're doing is enhancing the experience. I
13 mean, you could climb anything in the park
14 without ever taking a flight. All you need is
15 more time. So it's not absolutely necessary
16 to land in the park. So maybe "overflights
17 and backcountry landings enhance the range of
18 experiences at Denali"?

19 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Or facilitate?

20 TOM GEORGE: I think the intent
21 here, again, is to show that there's a mix of
22 things that go on here and we're trying to
23 deal with the full range of them. To me this
24 caption does at a high level and in a broad
25 way convey that. I don't think we should

1 leave out that some of those activities --
2 and, again, it includes those activities. I
3 mean, yeah, the first climb they started in
4 Fairbanks and it took them 90 days to get to
5 the top of the summit and more days to get
6 back to Nenana through the middle of breakup.
7 That's not how we operate today, and I'd say
8 modern climbers would consider those
9 necessary.

10 I'm sorry that Charlie isn't
11 here -- I mean, that's a major stakeholder --
12 because are we advocating the fact that you
13 ought to walk in to make your climbs? I don't
14 think we are.

15 NANCY BALE: Important is a very
16 good adjective. It's not saying that
17 overflights and backcountry landings are
18 grudgingly accepted by the environment
19 community. It says they're important. So do
20 we need to say more? I guess I would argue
21 that overflights are necessary as a park
22 experience if overflight purveyors are not
23 going to allow themselves to be regulated by
24 the park, you know.

25 TOM GEORGE: Well, you're getting

1 off into issues that I don't think we want to
2 get into.

3 NANCY BALE: Well, that's where
4 I'm going. It's been a key issue here with us
5 and I don't mind stating it. This is not
6 totally a flub to say it's important. Boy, we
7 really like them. They're great. They're
8 important.

9 MIKE YORKE: And necessary.

10 NANCY BALE: I didn't think we
11 had to have unanimous agreement to pass the
12 sheet. Do we? I don't think we do.

13 ERIKA BENNETT: In this room we
14 do because there's only seven of us.

15 NANCY BALE: I thought we had
16 that little -- you know, the little thing
17 where --

18 MIRIAM VALENTINE: Oh, so let's
19 pull it out.

20 NANCY BALE: I want to have the
21 opportunity not to be a roadblock, but not to
22 give in.

23 MIRIAM VALENTINE: On the
24 decision meter you have 1 of 4. You can say
25 yes. The other one is acceptable; I can live

1 with it. If anything falls below the orange
2 line, we'll continue to debate it. Which is,
3 I am opposed; I need more information. So
4 maybe a way to say, are you at 1? The hope is
5 people are at 1 or 2, and that's how you would
6 take the vote.

7 ERIKA BENNETT: Okay.

8 MIKE YORKE: So I can propose a
9 vote, Madam Chairperson?

10 ERIKA BENNETT: All right. We're
11 discussing actually that caption. If this
12 caption passes, then we can probably do the
13 thing. Why don't we do our little decision
14 meter here. Do you want to write it down on a
15 piece of paper, or do you want to do this out
16 in the open?

17 Starting with Joan.

18 JOAN FRANKEVICH: We're on this
19 caption?

20 ERIKA BENNETT: We're on this
21 caption.

22 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Taking it using
23 the original wording?

24 ERIKA BENNETT: Using the
25 original wording with no edits.

1 JOAN FRANKEVICH: I'm a 2. I can
2 live with it.

3 TOM GEORGE: I'm a yes.

4 ERIKA BENNETT: I'm a yes.

5 BRIAN OKONEK: I'm a 2.

6 NANCY BALE: I'm opposed.

7 LT. COL. SCOTT BABOS: Yes.

8 MIKE YORKE: Yes.

9 ERIKA BENNETT: All right. Based
10 on that, it still doesn't pass because we have
11 one that's below the line, so --

12 ELWOOD LYNN: I guess I had a
13 question. So you're saying that this is
14 describing the experience. So if we inserted
15 "experience and management of Denali" would
16 that --

17 ERIKA BENNETT: What was the
18 proposal?

19 ELWOOD LYNN: Somehow sneak in
20 management.

21 ERIKA BENNETT: "Overflight and
22 backcountry landings are an important and
23 necessary part" --

24 BRIAN OKONEK: "The range of
25 experiences and management at Denali."

1 ELWOOD LYNN: "Necessary for the
2 experience and management of Denali."

3 ERIKA BENNETT: I guess I'm
4 looking at you, Nancy.

5 NANCY BALE: Actually if I were
6 Joe Q. Public and I read this, "overflights
7 and backcountry landings are an important part
8 of the range of experiences at Denali," I
9 would say, yeah, they like them out there.
10 They think they're great up there. They love
11 them up there. I wouldn't parse it in my own
12 mind as Joe Q. Public. I just think the
13 necessary puts -- you know how words are so
14 important sometimes in the establishment of
15 groups' rights.

16 Well, you know, take the snow
17 machines, for example. They're never going to
18 be pulled back from -- we're never going to
19 get a traditional activities definition now.
20 The use is too established. I'm not saying
21 that we're ever going to roll back overflights
22 and I certainly wouldn't say that ever.

23 But I do feel a tension there
24 between the willingness of those who provide
25 overflights to consider themselves part of the

1 park experience and their unwillingness to
2 consider themselves subject to regulation.
3 You know, those two things are -- that's a
4 cognitive dissonance, and I think the word
5 "necessary" kind of just brings them into the
6 fold more than I would be comfortable having
7 them be in there.

8 While they're still important and
9 you could argue for -- you could say the bus
10 system is important. I guess you could say
11 the bus system is necessary too. What's
12 necessary and what's important about it?
13 Well, it's necessary to get people into the
14 park to access their hike. So I guess that's
15 necessary. So I guess the backcountry
16 landings for access to a wilderness experience
17 are necessary, but I don't think they're
18 necessarily necessary for snapping pictures.
19 I have a dissonance.

20 So I do have a lot of issues of
21 my own. I'm willing not to stand in the way,
22 so I'm going to go up above the red line on
23 this with you guys' full knowledge that I have
24 issues with it.

25 JOAN FRANKEVICH: I agree with

1 Nancy, but I have a slight different take. If
2 you just kind of take out part of it, you
3 know, it says: Overflights are a necessary
4 part of the range of experience at Denali.
5 No, they're not. That just doesn't work for
6 me. It's not necessary if I want to have a
7 good experience at Denali to have an
8 overflight. They're important, they're
9 lovely, but it's not necessary. That's where
10 it jumps out at me and it's jumped out at me
11 every time we've read this and I have it
12 highlighted all the way back.

13 How about this. Taking out
14 necessary, but adding "facilitate" and "the
15 management activities." Would this satisfy
16 everyone? "Overflights and backcountry
17 landings are an important part of the range of
18 experiences at Denali, comma, and facilitate
19 management activities."

20 TOM GEORGE: Say that one more
21 time, please.

22 JOAN FRANKEVICH: "Overflights
23 and backcountry landings are an important part
24 of the range of experiences at Denali and
25 facilitate management activities" -- "and are

1 necessary for management activities," but it
2 separates that overflights are necessary to
3 have an experience at Denali. That's what
4 jumps out at me.

5 TOM GEORGE: I think I could go
6 with the wording you just did even without the
7 necessary in there by including the reference
8 to --

9 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Facilitate
10 management activities?

11 TOM GEORGE: Yeah, yeah.

12 NANCY BALE: Yeah, that's closer.

13 JOAN FRANKEVICH: So I took out
14 "and necessary" and then comma at the end of
15 it "and facilitate management activities."

16 ERIKA BENNETT: Okay. Would that
17 bring you above -- I'm a yes on that. Brian.

18 BRIAN OKONEK: Yes.

19 NANCY BALE: Yes.

20 TOM GEORGE: I'm a yes.

21 LT. COL. SCOTT BABOS: Yes.

22 MIKE YORKE: Yes.

23 ERIKA BENNETT: So let's do a
24 formal vote on the entire --

25 TOM GEORGE: Hold it.

1 ERIKA BENNETT: We didn't do the
2 last. The last edit would be the top of the
3 second page where it starts: "Acoustic
4 monitoring helps document the sounds that can
5 affect natural soundscape and the quality of
6 the visitor's park experience."

7 Did I get that right?

8 NANCY BALE: Affect the natural
9 soundscape or just natural soundscape?

10 ERIKA BENNETT: "Acoustic
11 monitoring helps document the sounds that can
12 affect natural soundscape and the quality of
13 the visitor's park experience."

14 MIKE YORKE: Yes.

15 LT. COL. SCOTT BABOS: Yes.

16 NANCY BALE: Yes.

17 BRIAN OKONEK: Yes.

18 TOM GEORGE: Yeah.

19 ERIKA BENNETT: Yes.

20 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Yes.

21 ERIKA BENNETT: Okay. So that
22 was pretty much seven.

23 As amended, let's go through and
24 just do a quick as amended, yes or no.

25 JOAN FRANKEVICH: When we took

1 out document the sound -- "Acoustic monitoring
2 helps document the sounds." It's unclear what
3 I'm talking about. Am I talking about a bird
4 sound or are we talking about airplanes?
5 Would it help clarify by saying motorized
6 sounds? Acoustic monitoring helps document
7 the motorized sounds that can affect. Does
8 that clarify?

9 NANCY BALE: I felt like human
10 caused was not a very good metric.

11 JOAN FRANKEVICH: I agree.
12 Again, human-caused still kind of confuses me
13 what kind of sound we're talking about. Just
14 to clarify what the reader is referring to.

15 ERIKA BENNETT: Motorized?

16 TOM GEORGE: What about just
17 sound. Again, this is a high-level document.

18 NANCY BALE: It works. We're
19 assuming that it's something other than
20 natural sounds.

21 TOM GEORGE: We could turn this
22 into a book. There are books.

23 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Okay. I'm
24 good.

25 ERIKA BENNETT: Okay.

1 TOM GEORGE: The question is:
2 Are there any objections to as modified?

3 ERIKA BENNETT: Are there any
4 objections to this as modified on the edits
5 that we all just agreed on? Are there any
6 objections?

7 JOAN FRANKEVICH: No.

8 ERIKA BENNETT: Okay.

9 NANCY BALE: We're better than
10 Congress.

11 ERIKA BENNETT: I am making the
12 edits as we speak and I'll give it to you.

13 MIRIAM VALENTINE: Put it on a
14 jump.

15 ERIKA BENNETT: I will. Yes.
16 Lunch is now. We do have a video
17 teleconference that starts at 1:15, so please
18 be timely or John will feel slighted, plus he
19 has some good reports on aviation activity
20 during the mountaineering season, so we don't
21 want to miss that.

22 Thank you, everybody.

23 (Lunch break taken from 11:55 a.m.
24 to 1:15 p.m.)

25 ERIKA BENNETT: John Leonard is

1 the first presenter and he's on the telephone.

2 Everybody, we're about ready to
3 start. Colin is on the phone too.

4 This is the report on aviation
5 activity during the 2012 mountaineering
6 season; am I right?

7 JOHN LEONARD: That was my plan,
8 yes.

9 Good afternoon. Hopefully
10 everybody had a good lunch. I don't have much
11 time here to add, but I wanted to give you
12 guys just an update of what we did as far as
13 the monitoring that was requested of the best
14 practices last year on Denali.

15 We started out our season last
16 year, the first patrol of rangers and
17 volunteers left Talkeetna on the 28th of April
18 and we had rangers on Denali through the 15th
19 of July. In that time period we had eight
20 patrols led by eight different rangers and
21 about 35 different volunteers with those
22 associated patrols.

23 For each of the patrols that
24 departed Talkeetna, I sat down with the
25 rangers and the volunteers and went through

1 each of the best practices as the committee
2 laid out, and I also gave them printed
3 versions of those best practices. In the
4 briefing I asked the ranger to the best of
5 their ability to make at least one person on
6 patrol available each day to try and monitor
7 the best practices. Throughout the season,
8 after doing that, I got no feedback at all as
9 far as any best practices being deviated from.

10 I did try to encourage that as
11 much as possible and spoke to them about the
12 importance of it. I think obviously it speaks
13 for itself that the climbers were being
14 briefed. None of the rangers or volunteers
15 observed any best practice being deviated
16 from.

17 As far as climbers this year on
18 Denali, we had 1223 different climbers that
19 attempted Denali. That made up 272 different
20 groups of climbers in varying group sizes. Of
21 the 272 different groups, 71 groups made
22 comments. As part of their exit interviews or
23 debrief -- they're required with rangers once
24 they've concluded their climb. Zero comments
25 that came back from those groups had anything

1 to do with overflights or even air taxis for
2 that matter.

3 Those groups in no way were made
4 aware of best practices. They weren't
5 specifically asked about overflights noise.
6 They were just asked to give general comments,
7 concerns, issues, whatnot regarding their
8 experience here at Denali.

9 So that's what I have to report.
10 Does anybody have any questions about that
11 information?

12 JOAN FRANKEVICH: John, this is
13 Joan Frankevich. Do you have any rangers that
14 have been there previous to best practices
15 being implemented and any -- previously we got
16 a feel from one ranger kind of before and
17 after on the improvements they saw.

18 Anybody have any perspective like
19 that?

20 JOHN LEONARD: This year I didn't
21 get any written reports. I think it's fair to
22 say the general consensus is it's improved.
23 That's as objective as I can be. For what
24 it's worth, it's on my schedule and in my
25 plans to go back up next year and one of the

1 things I'm most curious about is from my
2 perspective now over ten-plus years how that's
3 changed. I was a person who had observed the
4 noise and close-flying overflights in the
5 past, so I'm curious to see that for myself.
6 I extend the invitation to the group, if you
7 guys had a member that wanted to join me.

8 ERIKA BENNETT: I'm right here,
9 John.

10 JOHN LEONARD: I would be more
11 than willing to invite you to come along.
12 It's something I've been curious and I hate to
13 say that I'm a cynic in any way, but it's
14 something I'm very curious to see the
15 improvements that seem to have happened for
16 myself.

17 NANCY BALE: John, could you just
18 comment briefly on any changes in the NPS
19 fleet of aircraft that are used on the
20 mountain and/or the commercial fleet over the
21 last four years that you think may have made a
22 difference or even if it didn't?

23 JOHN LEONARD: From what I've
24 seen, we've seen the aircraft -- we have more
25 Otters that are operated by the air taxis now.

1 I think we have seven -- or actually I think
2 eight Otters now working out of Talkeetna
3 flying climbers into the Range and maybe one
4 or two other turbine Beavers. In my
5 experience the difference in the noise that
6 those planes make -- it's a much more pleasant
7 sound and one that doesn't carry such great
8 distances.

9 It's -- in comparison to, say,
10 the planes that had been most used in the
11 past, when you have a two-bladed 185 go over
12 you and then you have a turbine Otter go over
13 you, the Otter is almost a pleasant sound. I
14 think in the increased size of the aircraft
15 that the air taxis are using, it means less
16 flights, which I don't know -- I should say it
17 would seem to me that there's less flights. I
18 don't know the math on that, but it seems
19 intuitive that when you have planes that take
20 eight people as opposed to three, you're not
21 having the number of overflights at any given
22 time as well, which seems that it would be an
23 improvement.

24 NANCY BALE: How about the planes
25 and helicopters the park uses, have they

1 changed?

2 JOHN LEONARD: You know, our
3 helicopter three years ago changed -- or three
4 operating seasons ago changed and the amount
5 of hours that that helicopter's flying has
6 increased. The majority of those flights have
7 to do with life, limb, support of park
8 operations on the mountain, as well as
9 research. We do try to limit those, but it's
10 fair to say that the amount of hours has
11 increased.

12 That's something that we struggle
13 with here as an organization on a number of
14 fronts, is we try to deal with what are indeed
15 true emergencies versus nonlife/limb type
16 emergencies that visitors request our
17 assistance for. As far as our flights in
18 support of administrative activities onto the
19 mountain, we have developed and are continuing
20 to move forward with a way to better track
21 what goes on and off the mountain. Hopefully
22 it will allow us to really examine the need
23 for flights and the need for what we're taking
24 both on and off the mountain with the hopes of
25 limiting the park's administrative impacts.

1 Colin can speak much more
2 accurately as far as fixed-wing use. As far
3 as our operations, flying rangers and patrols
4 on the mountain, for a couple of different
5 reasons we have tried to the best of our
6 ability to focus on using the turbine Otters
7 in large part just because of the added safety
8 measures that we feel the turbine engines
9 bring to the operation.

10 I think the positive unintended
11 consequences are that we end up limiting the
12 actual amount of flights. In the big picture
13 I think we don't make up a large number of the
14 fixed-wing flights that go into the Kahiltna
15 base camp or the Ruth for that matter, but
16 we're trying to limit them the best we can.

17 TOM GEORGE: Thank you very much.
18 We definitely appreciate your efforts to
19 supply us feedback, because at the moment
20 that's probably one of the things we need the
21 most just to figure out if we're going in the
22 right or the wrong direction or upside down or
23 whatever the case might be. So we appreciate
24 that.

25 JOHN LEONARD: I'm sure it's been

1 talked about, but we have -- all of our
2 flights are tracked now and that came out
3 of -- the requirement came down from the
4 accident where the park staff died. In
5 Talkeetna we have 100 percent tracking of all
6 flights, and that information is being
7 compiled and looked at from different points
8 of view.

9 Full disclosure, I think that we
10 need to be aware, cognizant and try to limit
11 our flights as much as we can. This year we
12 didn't have any searches up on the mountain
13 and those are things that really bring in
14 quite a bit of aircraft. For that matter we
15 didn't have any rescues high up on the
16 mountain, where in 2011 we had a couple of
17 multi-day operations that brought in heavy
18 helicopters, C-130s and other airplanes that
19 were up high on the mountain for extended
20 periods of time. But the events didn't
21 require that this year, so we didn't have to
22 do that this year.

23 ERIKA BENNETT: Thank you, John.

24 Anything else you'd like to add
25 before we move on?

1 JOHN LEONARD: The one offer I
2 would make is we're not -- I feel we're not
3 getting -- we don't have rangers for long
4 periods of time in other areas during the busy
5 season for scenic flights. If there's a way
6 that we can be of service in other areas, feel
7 free to let us know and if you'd like us to
8 continue observations as far as best
9 practices, I think it's something that we're
10 able to do. It doesn't take away from our
11 other efforts or if there's another means
12 which you would like us to make observations
13 or collect those, feel free to let us know.

14 TOM GEORGE: Suzanne isn't here
15 unfortunately, but my -- I do think you guys
16 watching for, again, accedences to best
17 practices and providing that information back
18 in a timely fashion is probably one of the
19 more important things we can do at the moment
20 just to get a handle on what's going on and
21 have the opportunity to try and sort that out
22 as to whether more education is required or
23 what the situation is. Yeah, I certainly
24 would like to encourage you to continue that.
25 I think that's very valuable feedback for us.

1 NANCY BALE: Do some of your
2 people -- did you have anything you were going
3 to say to Tom before my question?

4 JOHN LEONARD: No, no.

5 NANCY BALE: Do some of your
6 people go over to the preserve during hunting
7 season to monitor that over there?

8 JOHN LEONARD: We do, yes.

9 NANCY BALE: And is there any
10 monitoring of air traffic that's done on an
11 informal basis over there?

12 JOHN LEONARD: You know, this
13 year we spent a fair amount of time out there
14 and a lot of our operations out there are out
15 contacting hunters. We use -- this year we
16 used primarily rotor wing -- our park
17 helicopters go out and contact a number of
18 hunters in the preserve. This year we had
19 really good weather for the start of the sheep
20 season, and that meant both we were up in the
21 air quite a bit as were sheep hunters, but I
22 didn't get any feedback. Frankly, it's not
23 something that we were probably looking for or
24 were paying as much attention to. I don't
25 remember where the sound stations were at this

1 year, but there's no doubt that as part of our
2 enforcement efforts, there is an impact from
3 us going in and out of there.

4 NANCY BALE: Is that equally true
5 during moose season?

6 JOHN LEONARD: This year where we
7 fly a lot for -- during moose season, which
8 focused or centered right from about
9 September 1st, give or take a day on either
10 side or a couple days on either side, through
11 the 15th of September, we focus heavily on the
12 Stampede and north boundary area of the park.
13 This year we didn't have a helicopter in the
14 park, so we didn't use a helicopter to patrol
15 that area. The means of patrol from the air
16 were done all by Colin and fixed wing. That's
17 part of the way we're able to accomplish our
18 mission there and prevent and deal with our
19 park's anti-poaching efforts is spending quite
20 a bit of time in the air, whether it's up
21 along the north boundary, down along the park
22 boundaries from the Kahiltna out to the Yentna
23 River as well as on the north side and on the
24 back side of the Range all the way to park
25 headquarters.

1 Colin, do you have an idea of
2 where we're at for hours this year?

3 COLIN MALONE: A lot of what
4 allows us to get back there is the weather.
5 As everyone knows, we had many days of bad
6 weather for flying. So this year we averaged
7 around 65, 70 hours between August 10th and
8 the end of hunting season, and last year it
9 was up to 100 plus.

10 JOHN LEONARD: I think it might
11 be apparent to everybody, but the areas that
12 we -- with the exception of the preserve. In
13 our preserve areas they're open hunts. In the
14 other areas we're flying, around the north
15 boundary and those areas, the majority of our
16 overflights are on the boundaries themselves
17 and we're not going -- maybe with some
18 exception, we're not going into the heart of
19 the park, if you will. We're flying the
20 boundaries and those are the areas that we're
21 paying attention to, looking for activities in
22 those boundary areas.

23 Nancy, you make -- it's
24 interesting how at different times and when
25 we're doing different sorts of things, I

1 frankly -- it might not be a good admission,
2 but I have not probably thought, at least from
3 my perspective -- Colin probably has -- but I
4 haven't thought at times of what some of the
5 impacts are. It's one of those things that we
6 try to balance our mission that is probably
7 difficult.

8 ERIKA BENNETT: Is Andrew waiting
9 for us?

10 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: He's standing
11 by.

12 MIRIAM VALENTINE: Well, thank
13 you, John. I think everybody got what they
14 needed. Thank you for your time.

15 JOHN LEONARD: Okay. Take care.

16 COLIN MALONE: While Andrew's
17 coming up, John was a good lead-in to the
18 point I was trying to make earlier about the
19 southwest, which is that the southwest is not
20 worthy of any sort of protection now or in the
21 future. But it's probably used in a different
22 manner than most people think and perceive. I
23 encourage everyone to get out there. It's a
24 really amazing place.

25 ERIKA BENNETT: Thanks.

1 ANDREW ACKERMAN: Can everyone
2 hear me?

3 ERIKA BENNETT: Yeah.

4 ANDREW ACKERMAN: Great. Are we
5 all set to go here?

6 ERIKA BENNETT: You're on.

7 ANDREW ACKERMAN: All right. So
8 there's going to be a slight delay between the
9 slides, just so you're aware of that, and I'll
10 just pause a little bit once we get going.

11 So the good news is we've got a
12 great, long-term, robust set of commercial
13 flight data. The not so good news is I've
14 been told I've got about ten minutes to
15 present this to you, but it's in a format
16 where if there are questions later on, I can
17 easily get you more information.

18 A quick note on terms that I'm
19 going to use. We use the term scenic glacier
20 landing flights and scenic air tours
21 interchangeably. So the Backcountry
22 Management Plan at Denali calls it scenic air
23 tours. I'll primarily refer to them as scenic
24 glacier landings. Those are the landings
25 where only the passengers stay with the plane

1 and are short-term landings.

2 This dataset that I'm going to
3 present to you is approximately 14 years of
4 data, and it has about 13 years -- essentially
5 since 1999 that we have a complete dataset.
6 I'm going to review some summary stats from
7 2012 on commercial flight trends or commercial
8 flights and passengers. Then I'm going to go
9 into some longer-term data that shows trends
10 over the last 13 years. There's at least one
11 story behind a lot of this data and
12 unfortunately I won't be able to get into it
13 in too much detail, but we can have
14 discussions in the future, and of course Dave
15 Schirokauer can make sure I get in touch with
16 you if you have questions.

17 Some limitations right off the
18 bat is these air taxi and scenic glacier
19 landing data are reported to the Park Service
20 by the commercial air tour operators as part
21 of their Category 3 concessions contract. So
22 they report it to us and then it's transcribed
23 into an Excel database by our visitor use
24 assistant in Talkeetna, and then the raw data
25 is formatted and formalized in our resources

1 division. Of course we only present data
2 today that is a combined dataset. We will not
3 be presenting any individual operator's stats.

4 So looking at 2012, can you see
5 this graph on the screen now?

6 TOM GEORGE: Yeah. Looks good.

7 ANDREW ACKERMAN: Good. So,
8 again, 2012 these are monthly totals across
9 the year for scenic glacier flights and the
10 passengers. So the black bars are the
11 flights, which is on the left-hand vertical
12 axes, and the golden line is the passengers,
13 which are on the right-hand axes. And as you
14 can see, they are related and there's a
15 definite peak in our season with scenic
16 glacier landing flights.

17 We have the June, July, August
18 peak months and in that peak you can see
19 there's approximately 2100 -- 2100 flights
20 that are landing that are scenic glacier
21 landings in the park with approximately a
22 little over 20,000 -- or almost 20,000 people
23 over the season that are coming in on these
24 types of flights. It's one of the most
25 popular ways of seeing Denali now, and I'll

1 show you some more stats that show that
2 growth.

3 So moving on to the next slide
4 here, we have annual totals of scenic glacier
5 flights and passengers for 2012. So this is
6 just another way of looking at the actual
7 totals of flights and passengers. We've got
8 2550 flights this past year that were scenic
9 glacier landings and that brought in 16,648
10 people. It averages out to be about six or
11 seven passengers per flight. Keep in mind
12 that these flights may include combo, which I
13 refer to them as combo flights. They bring in
14 both scenic passengers and air taxi
15 passengers.

16 So looking at just the air taxi
17 flights, so those are the ones that the
18 passengers do not remain with the aircraft
19 once it lands; they're overnight. They're
20 doing overnight trips. We had in 2012 659 air
21 taxi flights; 123 of those, interestingly,
22 actually could qualify as scenic flights, but
23 they had air taxi passengers on them. By that
24 I mean a majority of the passengers were on
25 the flight for scenic purposes, but there was

1 at least one air taxi passenger on that
2 flight.

3 So, you know, about a fourth of
4 our -- a fourth of the amount of scenic
5 flights, if we have a little over 2,000 scenic
6 flights a year; we've got 500 or so air taxi
7 flights. So about a fourth.

8 Here are the annual totals for
9 air taxi passengers, and it's broken out --
10 the different chunks of this bar graph are
11 broken out into whether it was the first drop,
12 first pick-up, second drop, second pick-up,
13 because air taxi flights do oftentimes make
14 multiple drops and pick-ups within one flight.
15 So in 2012, we had 3,857 passengers on our air
16 taxi flights and the vast majority of them,
17 1600 or so of that 3800, were dropped at the
18 first location and then another big chunk of
19 them were picked up at that first location.
20 Then it tails off pretty quickly once you get
21 beyond those first locations.

22 Here is an area graph showing
23 both the totals of air taxi passengers from
24 the north side and the south side of the
25 Alaska Range. So the green on top is the

1 north side, essentially, Kantishna concessions
2 flying back and forth from the entrance area
3 of Denali to Kantishna. That includes both
4 arrivals and departures out of Kantishna.
5 Whereas the bold and yellow color is the
6 glacier concessions just on the south side,
7 which consist of four currently.

8 You can see the pattern from 1998
9 to 2012. The pattern is one where it's fairly
10 consistent. There's been a little bit of
11 increase throughout the years. The beginning
12 of this past decade and 2009 had some spikes.

13 Okay. Everyone still following?
14 You can stop me at any point and ask a
15 question if you don't quite get some of these
16 graphs.

17 We're going to get into it a
18 little bit more here and I'll try and explain
19 some of these interesting trends. Now we're
20 talking about trends over the 13, 14 years
21 that we've been collecting data. You can
22 start to see here I've got both the scenic
23 glacier flights and passengers from '99
24 forward. You can see that the green bars are
25 the total scenic passengers, so these are

1 scenic air tour glacier landing passengers
2 with the green bars and the golden line is the
3 actual flight numbers, which are on the left
4 vertical axes. Passengers are on the right
5 vertical.

6 So we've had a pretty consistent
7 increase. In fact, it follows a really clean
8 linear trend if you look at the number of
9 passengers that are being carried into the
10 Alaska Range on scenic glacier flights. That
11 allows us to project out with pretty good
12 confidence to the future.

13 So if I went out just five years
14 to 2017, we would probably be with our scenic
15 passengers above 18,000. But what's nice is
16 we can also say that the scenic air tour
17 flights have remained fairly stable. I mean,
18 we're talking about since 1999 at Denali our
19 scenic air tour flights have only increased
20 less than a thousand, maybe 900 flights over
21 those 13 years; whereas we've brought in via
22 those flights -- between '99 and 2012 we've
23 brought in an additional 8,000 passengers.
24 Back in '99 we were bringing in about 6,728
25 and this past year 14,520.

1 Is that pretty clear?

2 ELWOOD LYNN: One question. Do
3 you see anything with the economic
4 down-turn -- other than 2008, it doesn't look
5 like there was much impact and there's no way
6 to tell, I guess, between down-turn from
7 weather versus economy.

8 ANDREW ACKERMAN: Yeah. At first
9 I was thinking we would see a deficit set of
10 years. In 2008 you can see that drop there in
11 passengers. You know, there was a
12 corresponding drop in aircraft in 2007, and
13 there was a dip definitely if you look at
14 aircraft there in 2009. But I think this data
15 shows overall that the recession was not that
16 significant as far as affecting the overall
17 trend. It appears like the growth in scenic
18 air tour passengers is continuing.

19 NANCY BALE: How do you explain
20 that dip in the number of flights there that's
21 at that 2007 bar? How do you explain that,
22 and do you account for sort of -- there
23 were -- then it bumps back up in 2008, but
24 there were fewer passengers, so do you posit
25 that in 2008 fewer passengers rode more

1 flights?

2 ANDREW ACKERMAN: Yeah. One
3 thing to keep in mind, Nancy -- that's a good
4 question -- is that the variation on the
5 flights data line here, it's pretty minor
6 overall. I mean, we're talking within a
7 couple hundred flights. So don't read too
8 much into that, I guess, variation there. I
9 would say that what probably happened -- and
10 the reason why I circled this, other than
11 there's also the economic issue -- one of the
12 reasons why I circled this area here is I
13 believe there was a fairly significant change
14 in the fleets of some of the major scenic air
15 tour companies to allow them to have increased
16 capacity of transporting passengers. So you
17 got increased capacity; you don't have to
18 necessarily increase the number of flights if
19 you can fill that capacity.

20 Does that make sense?

21 NANCY BALE: Yeah.

22 BRIAN OKONEK: Andrew, earlier
23 you had a slide up that showed there were
24 16,648 passengers on scenic glacier flights
25 and on this slide it shows 14,000. Which one

1 is correct?

2 ANDREW ACKERMAN: These are just
3 the south side scenic glacier tours. For that
4 other one I think I threw in the Kantishna --
5 or the ones that are flying out of the north
6 side. Yeah, sorry. So this one actually --
7 these are not including Kantishna numbers. I
8 should have made that clear. All right.

9 Here again I've got the trend
10 over the last 13 years, and these are annual
11 totals combining all commercial flights and
12 passengers. So here we've got air taxis and
13 scenics all combined. Again, we see a strong
14 linear trend upwards with our passengers,
15 which are the bar graphs and we see that our
16 flights are fairly flat line.

17 So you can see that in 1999 we
18 were bringing in a total of 9,808 passengers
19 and now we're over 20,000. In 2012 we have
20 20,264 with our flights. In '99 we were at
21 3,028 and now we're just above -- almost at
22 3800.

23 Here is total scenic passengers
24 on combo flights. So these are numbers of
25 scenic passengers that flew in with other --

1 with climbers, you know, air taxi passengers.
2 One thing that -- the reason why I put this up
3 here is you can definitely see there's a trend
4 over the last 12 or so years to having -- when
5 you have an increased capacity on an aircraft
6 with the Beavers and Otters, you can bring in
7 multiple types of people. Climbers bring in a
8 lot of luggage, and you can see that basically
9 starting in 2008 or '09 here, we started to
10 see a lot more scenic passengers on flights
11 where there was air taxi passengers. So
12 you've got a mixing of those two. Back in '99
13 we only had 143 passengers on a combo flight.
14 Starting in 2009 we had 392 and this past year
15 in 2012, 365.

16 So this is total air taxi
17 visitors that were dropped and picked up by
18 location. Can everyone read that horizontal
19 text along the horizontal axis? So this is
20 broken out by location. So this sums up all
21 passengers transported over the last 13 years.
22 You can also see on here the sums of
23 passengers by the first versus the second drop
24 point, et cetera, et cetera.

25 So the golden on here, or the

1 yellow, is the first drop position, the sum of
2 all the passengers. And the green, for
3 example, is the first pick-up location. So as
4 would be expected, base camp -- we're talking
5 air taxi here -- base camp is the vast
6 majority of people being dropped and picked
7 up. Then there's a couple other areas that
8 are of interest. With air taxis we can see
9 over the last 12 years we've got probably over
10 5,000 passengers dropped and picked up in the
11 Ruth Gorge, if you include the Gorge, the
12 Mountain House and the Upper Ruth.

13 TOM GEORGE: Andrew, can you
14 explain how you appear, if I'm interpreting
15 this right, to have hauled a whole lot more
16 people into the Kahiltna than were hauled out?
17 Are we getting an increase in population at
18 the Kahiltna?

19 ERIKA BENNETT: That's dropped
20 and picked up.

21 TOM GEORGE: Oh, dropped and
22 picked up both? Okay.

23 ANDREW ACKERMAN: Yes, dropped
24 and picked up.

25 TOM GEORGE: All right. I

1 withdraw the question. Sorry.

2 ANDREW ACKERMAN: Okay. So total
3 passengers here on air taxi flights -- and
4 these are just 2012 stats here. So I just
5 wanted to see if 2012 was unusual, but
6 essentially it looks pretty much similar to
7 the last 13 years.

8 Kahiltna, again, dominates with
9 the climbers and the Ruth is in second there.
10 Little Switzerland is actually fairly popular
11 with the climbers and then we have these other
12 locations.

13 ELWOOD LYNN: One question. If
14 we had 1226 climbers in 2012, wouldn't we have
15 2400 dropped off and picked up? Just for
16 climbing Denali. Don't we double that because
17 they're being dropped off and picked up?

18 ANDREW ACKERMAN: Let's see.
19 This is dropped off -- yeah. Yeah, this
20 should have a little bit higher numbers, I
21 think. I'll look at that.

22 So here we have -- these are the
23 locations in which they were dropped and I got
24 pretty excited about this graph, but it's
25 really difficult for you to read the vertical

1 axes. Essentially those are each year over
2 the last 13 years broken out with the
3 locations. This allows you to look across
4 those years and see how those locations have
5 changed over time. So, for example, if we
6 wanted to look at -- the first one is Base
7 Camp. We want to look at that. We could see
8 how it increased to 2001, dropped off,
9 increased again around 2006, and it's kind of
10 stayed high. So that's kind of interesting to
11 be able to compare across years based on
12 location to see the different trends.

13 You know, Elwood, one thing I
14 thought about is, again, the note I made at
15 the beginning about the reporting of the data,
16 we do rely entirely on our operators to give
17 us the complete datasets and sometimes we
18 don't get complete data.

19 ELWOOD LYNN: Okay.

20 ANDREW ACKERMAN: So here's --
21 excuse me. Here's an example of some data
22 that I put into a GIS. I took the statistics,
23 put them into the GIS and was able to start to
24 show the trends of locations where -- like
25 this is an example of scenic glacier landings

1 in 2012. So the size of these yellow and red
2 dots is proportional to the amount of scenic
3 glacier landings at those location.

4 For example, this yellow and red
5 dot in the Ruth is proportional approximately
6 for the few businesses that do a lot of
7 business there. It's like 150, I believe, on
8 average. So you can start to compare across
9 the different management areas of the park.
10 Here's the special use area of the Kahiltna,
11 the west buttress. Here's the special use
12 area of the Ruth Glacier and various other
13 portals -- landing portals within Denali. So
14 you can look at it across space and time.

15 BRIAN OKONEK: What was the 150
16 referring to, Andrew?

17 ANDREW ACKERMAN: These
18 symbols -- the symbology I have here?

19 BRIAN OKONEK: Yes.

20 ANDREW ACKERMAN: Those are
21 proportional to the amount of scenic landing
22 that goes on there. For example, this yellow
23 circle represents approximately 150 landings
24 for that particular scenic air tour operator.

25 BRIAN OKONEK: 150 landings for

1 how much time?

2 ANDREW ACKERMAN: For 2012.

3 BRIAN OKONEK: Okay.

4 ANDREW ACKERMAN: So, I mean,
5 this is just an example of what you can do,
6 you know. Peter Fix and I are publishing this
7 report in the Natural Resource Technical
8 Report that is on visitor characteristics.
9 One section of this report, you know, we
10 sampled visitors both down in Talkeetna and
11 the north side -- all over the north side
12 entrance area.

13 This report has estimates of how
14 many people took a scenic flight, not just a
15 scenic glacier landing flight, but also scenic
16 overflights, but it's based on what people
17 told us that were in our sample. So we have
18 some estimates. I'm not going to go into it
19 today, but you can read this report. It will
20 be on line. It will be a PDF that you can
21 download, or you can contact me and I'll get
22 it to you in the next week or two. I'm going
23 to leave it there.

24 I do have more data, but I'll
25 take questions and if you want more

1 information, please e-mail me.

2 Questions?

3 BRIAN OKONEK: Can you easily
4 extrapolate -- what is the average number of
5 glacier landings like at the Ruth per season?

6 ANDREW ACKERMAN: You want to
7 know the number of total landings?

8 BRIAN OKONEK: I guess that's all
9 we would need, yeah. Total landings at the
10 Ruth just for an example.

11 ANDREW ACKERMAN: Okay. I'm not
12 going to be able to give you -- I mean, I know
13 just from the GIS data that it's probably in
14 the ballpark of 180 in just that area around
15 the major part of the Ruth. That doesn't
16 include like the root canal and some of those
17 other locations.

18 Does that answer it?

19 BRIAN OKONEK: Yeah. I'm
20 surprised.

21 ANDREW ACKERMAN: Surprised at
22 how few or how many?

23 BRIAN OKONEK: I think it would
24 be quite a bit more. 180 for the entire
25 season?

1 ANDREW ACKERMAN: I'm talking
2 scenic glacier landings. Is that your
3 question?

4 BRIAN OKONEK: Yeah.

5 ANDREW ACKERMAN: We're not
6 talking air taxi. Yeah, scenic glacier
7 landings, yeah.

8 TOM GEORGE: Andrew, can we get a
9 copy of these slides, pretty please, so we can
10 study them in a little more detail off line?

11 ANDREW ACKERMAN: Sure.
12 Definitely. I'll PDF this and send it down to
13 you, Tom.

14 TOM GEORGE: That would be great.
15 Thank you.

16 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Can you send it
17 out to --

18 NANCY BALE: Maybe send it to
19 Miriam and she can forward it to us.

20 TOM GEORGE: Yeah, and send it
21 out to the whole Council.

22 ANDREW ACKERMAN: Okay. Sounds
23 good.

24 ERIKA BENNETT: Thank you,
25 Andrew.

1 We have another report on the
2 schedule based on the north side best
3 practices from Davyd Schirokauer and Davyd
4 Betchkal. Do you want to take five minutes
5 and stretch your legs and then come back?

6 TOM GEORGE: Sure.

7 ERIKA BENNETT: How about 2:15 be
8 in your seats, please.

9 (Break taken.)

10 DAVYD BETCHKAL: There were
11 several different efforts this summer season
12 to evaluate the north side best practice, and
13 we're going to talk about them in a couple
14 different installments. I'm going to do the
15 first part which has to do with my sound
16 monitoring stations. Of course for review I
17 always throw one of these slides in there, but
18 I think it's good to just really quickly
19 review each of the standards and what they are
20 for each zone. Let's take a look at that.
21 We'll continue. The indicators, the
22 percentage of any hour that motorized noise is
23 audible, the number of events per day over the
24 natural ambient level, and the maximum
25 motorized noise level.

1 LT. COL. SCOTT BABOS: These are
2 out of the Backcountry Management Plan, right?

3 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Right out of the
4 Backcountry Management Plan, yeah.

5 MIKE YORKE: And as we know about
6 the maximum level, sometimes that's as stated
7 by environmental concerns, i.e., wind.

8 ERIKA BENNETT: Maximized
9 motorized level, it says. So they can tell
10 what's wind and what's not.

11 DAVYD BETCHKAL: I'm not going to
12 read the whole thing, but this is actually
13 verbatim out of the document, the best
14 practice, just to kind of summarize the idea
15 was to generally avoid areas hikers and
16 backpackers were using. The main maneuver and
17 operation procedures were to fly above --
18 8,000 feet above the mean sea level with the
19 lowest power settings possible and to try to
20 descend over -- in that area when possible
21 instead of climbing through it.

22 So there are two different parts
23 of the best practice area. They're on a map
24 in the following slide. Part of the best
25 practice was to fly 8,000 feet. That's that

1 whole polygon there. You created it. I'm
2 sure you're familiar. Then that smaller
3 polygon was to be avoided for the most part.
4 Campgrounds, also try to avoid them. They're
5 on there, Teklanika, Sanctuary, Savage
6 Campgrounds.

7 The two soundscape stations that
8 were put out, there was one in Unit 6,
9 Backcountry Unit 6, on Cathedral Mountain,
10 which Nancy already gave you a very good
11 primer on. There was also a station on the
12 upper west branch of the Toklat River. I'm
13 going to step through each one of these in
14 detail and sort of talk about the changes that
15 occurred at each.

16 First, Cathedral Mountain. It
17 was first sampled in 2007 and then sampled
18 again in 2012 of course. They were placed
19 very close to each other, but in slightly
20 different spots -- less than a quarter of a
21 mile apart, but slightly different spots. The
22 sampling periods were also slightly different.
23 In 2007 there was a long period of sampling,
24 but I realized too late that there was
25 actually road construction during the latter

1 half of it. So I aimed to resample in a
2 similar time period at the latter half, but
3 then I realized after the point in 2007 there
4 was some road noise. So we have two different
5 analysis periods that could be something that
6 would affect how comparable the two are. I
7 hope that you'll see there's not too much of a
8 difference, but the thing is you can only put
9 so much confidence into it because the
10 analysis periods are different.

11 The number of days analyzed were
12 also different, but I used -- for the
13 comparisons I used the same number of days.
14 Because the 2007 site was sampled in the month
15 of mainly late May, early June, it had a much
16 higher natural ambient level due to meltwater
17 down in the gorge below the site. So that
18 will also possibly come into play.

19 So the first standard is sound
20 pressure level. Both of these sites are the
21 same standards. They're both in the low zone,
22 so 40 decibels, maximum motorized level
23 permissible. 2007, 91 percent of events
24 exceeded. In 2012, 66 percent; so that was a
25 25 percent reduction in the number of events

1 exceeding standard.

2 And just to kind of look at the
3 actual distribution, one of the ways you can
4 describe how loud events are is to describe
5 how loud the median level of those events are.
6 They're really, really similar here. So it's
7 not really because the two -- the aircraft
8 changed how loud they were, I think. I think
9 what was actually happening is that in 2007
10 since the natural ambient level was higher,
11 there were no observations below 40 decibels.

12 So I want to get you real
13 familiar with this graph, so I'm going to
14 spend a lot of time describing what this form
15 is because you'll see it again and again in
16 this presentation. On the X axis, horizontal
17 axis, you'll see a series of bars. Each one
18 of them is a bin. They change depending on
19 the standard. In this one it's a 2 decibel
20 bin. It's 2 decibels wide. So you can see
21 events that are quieter. I don't know if I
22 have a mouse or not, but towards the left-hand
23 side you'll see events are quieter and towards
24 the right-hand side events that are a lot
25 louder.

1 The percent change in the bin was
2 the Y axis. So what you're actually looking
3 at is a difference between 2012 and 2007, all
4 those different loudnesses. They should all
5 sum to zero. So across the whole thing it's
6 zero because the event -- the only thing this
7 is measuring is change. It's relative to each
8 year because they have different numbers of
9 events.

10 For example, if you look right
11 around the standard there, that dashed red
12 line, there's a large decrease in 2012 in the
13 number of events in the 40 through about 54
14 range there. You can see that because they
15 decreased. They went down. That's kind of my
16 way of symbolizing that. I hope it works for
17 everyone. But below 40 there were quite a few
18 more observations, so there was actually an
19 increase in those bins, the number of events
20 that were observed.

21 TOM GEORGE: These are motorized
22 events now or just aircraft?

23 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Aircraft, just
24 aircraft. So what happened -- go ahead.

25 JOAN FRANKEVICH: I'm having a

1 hard time understanding this. So are you
2 saying in the 20 to 40-decibel range where the
3 black lines are above the X axis, there was
4 more of those events and the white lines
5 indicate there was less of those events?

6 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Yes, in those
7 loudness classes.

8 TOM GEORGE: So it got noisier
9 from 20 to 40 decibels. It was much quieter
10 from 40 up to about 54 and there was a little
11 burst of louder up there approaching 60; is
12 that correct?

13 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Almost. What
14 you might say is instead there were more
15 quieter aircraft detected and there were fewer
16 sort of moderately loud. There's a little bit
17 of increase around 60.

18 JOAN FRANKEVICH: So you could
19 possibly say in 2012 aircraft were flying
20 higher than they were in 2007?

21 DAVYD BETCHKAL: I don't know
22 that that's something I would --

23 TOM GEORGE: Yeah, that might be
24 a little -- we could want to think that.

25 DAVYD BETCHKAL: We'll get there,

1 though. Don't worry. I'm trying to just
2 build up towards at least some sort of basic.

3 NANCY BALE: And also you were
4 saying that in 2007 the sound of the water
5 masked quieter -- so it even masked quieter
6 motorized events too?

7 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Yeah. Nancy's
8 got the right idea here. What I think is
9 happening is because the natural ambient level
10 was louder in 2007 and it dropped in 2012, we
11 could hear more quieter events, which is what
12 this graph shows.

13 NANCY BALE: Those were not
14 events to be concerned about in terms of the
15 standards either.

16 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Right, right.
17 And that's actually what I've been trying to
18 lead up to, is that the average change under
19 the standard was an increase and the average
20 change over the standard was a decrease, so
21 the standard went down. Basically what I'm
22 trying to show in each one of these graphs is
23 the shift above and below the standard.

24 You might be right, Joan, in that
25 there were fewer events in that moderate range

1 because they might have moved to another
2 location or they might have flown higher. I
3 don't know what it was exactly, but there
4 was --

5 LT. COL. SCOTT BABOS: But they
6 could have just been offset more.

7 DAVYD BETCHKAL: So I don't know
8 if they're falling higher or if they just
9 moved away. So you can see that there was a
10 change and, again, that was the difference
11 from 91 to 66 percent. Okay.

12 Percentage of time motorized
13 noise is audible, 5 percent of any hour. In
14 this case there was actually a 5 percent
15 increase from 32 to 37 percent in 2012.
16 Really what happened there is you can see if
17 you look at the axis, there's hardly any real
18 change at all. It's less than 5 percent
19 change in any bin except for the zero percent
20 of the time audible.

21 So what actually happened? More
22 hours had events, so more had the chance to
23 exceed the standard. There were fewer events,
24 so what I think happened is the events kind of
25 got spread out into more hours. If you think

1 about that, our percent time audible standard
2 isn't just about how many events there are in
3 an hour; it's about how spread out they are as
4 well because we evaluate each and every hour.
5 If you don't have any events at all, you're
6 automatically in standard, but if you have an
7 event an hour, you have a chance of going over
8 the standard.

9 Does that make sense at all?

10 NANCY BALE: So the standard
11 there is none?

12 DAVYD BETCHKAL: The standard
13 there is 5 percent, but because there are
14 fewer number of hours without events, there's
15 more chance to exceed. Actually what's
16 interesting is that -- let me see here. So
17 there's actually -- if you kind of subtract
18 out from the number of hours that exceeded and
19 the number of hours that had them, in 2007
20 5 percent of hours with events did not exceed.
21 In 2012, 8 percent of hours with events did
22 not exceed.

23 ERIKA BENNETT: What happened to
24 10 percent? In 2012 that adds up to 90, or is
25 that not supposed to add up to 100 percent?

1 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Actually let me
2 take a step back. If you have all the
3 hours -- the second number there is the number
4 of hours with events. You either can have
5 with or without. Then if you have events in
6 an hour, sometime they don't exceed the
7 standard. They can be less than 5 percent of
8 the time. So the number that exceeded -- that
9 middle number minus the top number gives you
10 the bottom number.

11 So what actually was kind of
12 interesting about that is the percentage of
13 hours with events that didn't exceed went up
14 in 2012. I've got to think about what that --

15 ERIKA BENNETT: So in 2012
16 55 percent of hours did not have an event.

17 DAVYD BETCHKAL: You're right.
18 If you take 100 percent and subtract 45, you
19 get 55.

20 TOM GEORGE: I think you may want
21 to play with stacking a couple graphs on top
22 here kind of showing both years and then the
23 difference. I think looking at this
24 difference thing alone it's very hard to grasp
25 what the real significance of what the real

1 variation is. And I'd want to point out that,
2 yeah, we're looking at the standard today.
3 Standards could change tomorrow, so I think
4 it's very important we understand how the
5 differences are impacting and making things
6 quieter and noisier, but that's a relative
7 measure that we've just kind of plucked out of
8 the air and used there. I think the bigger
9 picture is the thing we really need to
10 understand the most.

11 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Okay. I'm going
12 to kind of move through these a little bit
13 faster, but not too much faster.

14 Essentially you had a decrease in
15 the number of hours under the standard, so the
16 standard actually went up. I'm going to
17 summarize each one of these.

18 TOM GEORGE: The standard went
19 up? What do you mean by that?

20 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Exceeds the
21 standard. That was an incorrect statement.

22 Now, in 2007, 100 percent of days
23 had more than one event. In 2012, 80 percent.
24 So there was a 20 percent reduction in the
25 number of days. What actually happened is

1 there are more extreme -- so if you can look
2 at the difference here, in the middle there
3 was a decrease in those middle numbers, but
4 you had a number that went up below the
5 standard and a number that were quite a bit
6 higher, so you had some more extreme days up
7 in the 45 -- the 30, 45 range. But because
8 they were more below the standard, there was
9 less exceedance of the standard despite there
10 being some more extreme days. That's shown
11 here.

12 So the gray dots are 2012 and
13 the -- sorry. The gray dots are 2007. The
14 blue dots are 2012. Actually there were more
15 events per day on average -- or by the median
16 number of events per day there were more in
17 2012, but there were also more days below the
18 standard. Technically you could consider it
19 an improvement in a lot of different ways, I
20 guess.

21 JOAN FRANKEVICH: If the standard
22 is one per hour --

23 DAVYD BETCHKAL: One per day.

24 JOAN FRANKEVICH: I mean one per
25 day. It's hard to see how if there were more

1 flights, the standard went down.

2 DAVYD BETCHKAL: This is how it
3 worked. If you look at the graph, you can see
4 that there are more blue dots below the
5 backcountry management standard than there are
6 gray dots. So a larger percentage of days
7 were in standard in 2012.

8 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Which could be
9 related then to weather. So on good days it
10 exceeded a lot and on bad weather days -- it
11 could mean that there's more bad weather days.

12 DAVYD BETCHKAL: It's possible.

13 JOAN FRANKEVICH: But probably
14 not.

15 DAVYD BETCHKAL: I don't think
16 so. I don't really know the answer to that
17 one. It could be due to that.

18 Overall these are my summary
19 slides for each site. You have SPL standard,
20 PA standard and event standard. Kind of gives
21 like a scale of how much change; from zero
22 percent of those things are completely in
23 standard on the left to completely out of
24 standard on the right.

25 So there are quieter events and

1 -- I'm going to step through these one at a
2 time. The sound pressure level standard. The
3 maximum sound pressure level of aircraft
4 didn't really change very much, but the
5 natural ambient went down. So we detected
6 more quiet events, so exceedance went down.
7 So there were fewer -- of the percentage of
8 events over the standard, there were fewer
9 events. Because we got more quiet ones, there
10 were fewer. When you have the total number,
11 they're more under the standard.

12 The second standard, the number
13 of hours with events went up, so exceedance
14 went up. It went up by a smaller amount than
15 the other two.

16 Event standard. The median
17 number of events went up, but the number of
18 days under the standard also went up, so
19 exceedance went down. So that's sort of a
20 thing to compare. Whether or not that's
21 progress, I don't know. That's basically what
22 happened at Cathedral Mountain.

23 Was there any congestion due to
24 noise -- was there congestion on the road? I
25 think that's the question people wanted to

1 know about. Honestly, no, there didn't really
2 seem to be much change to that. You could say
3 the extreme days were due to more people
4 flying over the road. That might be a
5 possible outcome of that, but they didn't
6 really get louder, so they weren't closer to
7 Cathedral Mountain in any respect.

8 ERIKA BENNETT: I was at
9 Teklanika and noticed a sound monitoring
10 station next to the road. I thought it was an
11 animal and then I blinked. I was, oh, that's
12 a microphone. I'm assuming that was for bus
13 things.

14 DAVYD BETCHKAL: That's right.

15 ERIKA BENNETT: On, like, Labor
16 Day, if you hear somebody giggling into your
17 microphone, that's me. I took a picture of
18 it. I'm, like, I found one.

19 DAVYD BETCHKAL: There was also a
20 project out there to get a base line
21 measurement on our bus fleet.

22 ERIKA BENNETT: They were taking
23 pictures too.

24 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Okay.

25 ERIKA BENNETT: I saw the thing

1 next to the road. I'm like, oh, they're
2 taking pictures and seeing what kind of
3 traffic it is making --

4 JOAN FRANKEVICH: So your whole
5 assessment is inconclusive whether it was
6 better in 2012 than 2007?

7 DAVYD BETCHKAL: In terms of the
8 standards, two of them went down.

9 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Okay.

10 TOM GEORGE: But that's where we
11 really need to go back and look at actual
12 relative data in terms of noise as a function
13 of time rather than trying to get wrapped
14 around the standards. There are so many
15 things going on. You've got different
16 locations of the microphone. You've got --
17 because of the seasonal difference with the
18 ambient, it's very hard to actually, I think,
19 do an apples to apples comparison and actually
20 extract aircraft out of that given the other
21 things that are going on. Now if we also then
22 wrap that into trying to match the standards
23 or understand it versus relative exceedance of
24 more hours and less noise or whatever, it's
25 very convoluted.

1 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: The standard
2 is just a red line on there. The whole
3 dataset is displayed.

4 TOM GEORGE: I understand that.
5 That's why I think -- well, we can talk off
6 line about maybe some other ways to display
7 that that might make it more intuitive to look
8 at and see what's going on.

9 NANCY BALE: I do think it's
10 important to think about how they do interact,
11 though. That is an important concern
12 because -- I don't know. To me, just from my
13 standpoint as a listener, I think the SPL is
14 very important. So if you have SPL in
15 control, you maybe could have a few more
16 incidents and it wouldn't be as troubling to
17 me as if I had within standard a number of
18 incidents, but pretty loud. So I don't know
19 whether that's something that can be modeled
20 mathematically. It's probably a huge project
21 to try to figure out, now, what kinds of
22 combinations of standards are more damaging to
23 not only the human ear, but maybe animal
24 activities or I don't know.

25 ELWOOD LYNN: That might be a

1 question we, as we look at the backcountry
2 management standards, do we -- is one rated
3 higher than the other? So still number of
4 events is important, but sound threshold seems
5 like it's more important than number of
6 events.

7 NANCY BALE: I think SPL is
8 really important. I mean, number of events
9 per day, one; no way that's ever going to be
10 achieved, I can tell you right now, and I'm an
11 environmentalist. We're not going to go
12 there.

13 ERIKA BENNETT: Well, just one
14 flight to Fairbanks with Alaska Airlines and
15 it just took you right off the map.

16 DAVYD BETCHKAL: One of the
17 reasons I have these data summarized in the
18 way that I have is because I wanted to shed
19 some light on the fact that these standards --
20 comparing them is also important. If you
21 can't communicate in a way that's comparable
22 throughout time, it's very difficult to
23 measure change. So I wanted to kind of show
24 when you're actually comparing these things,
25 there are different factors that come into

1 play. I'll admit that some of that was due to
2 my own mistakes, but the second site here
3 actually is considerably more comparable, the
4 upper west branch of the Toklat River.

5 NANCY BALE: How far from the
6 road was this?

7 DAVYD BETCHKAL: It's about
8 10 miles.

9 JOAN FRANKEVICH: On the earlier
10 map it's right on the purple boundary.

11 DAVYD BETCHKAL: So this one was
12 inside the avoidance zone. We were trying to
13 test and see if there was a difference due to
14 the avoidance zone. This time relatively
15 comparable and the analysis periods, very
16 comparable.

17 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Is this one we
18 picked to repeat?

19 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Yes.

20 JOAN FRANKEVICH: This wasn't a
21 random?

22 DAVYD BETCHKAL: No.

23 JOAN FRANKEVICH: The first one
24 was a random, right?

25 DAVYD BETCHKAL: No. They were

1 both suggestions from the Council.

2 Similar numbers of days. Natural
3 ambient level was closer, but 2012 was a very
4 windy year. We had some problems with our
5 tent blowing away as well. It was a little
6 bit louder as well due to winds.

7 So in 2009 and 2012 there was not
8 much difference in terms of exceedance of the
9 sound pressure level standard. But what's
10 interesting to note is that the distribution
11 of overflights, they did become quieter by
12 about 4 decibels, which I do believe that
13 would be possibly explainable by flying higher
14 over the area. What led me to believe that is
15 the fact that in 2009, 24 percent were over
16 60 decibels and only 15 percent in 2012 were
17 over 60 decibels. You can see that here.
18 There's quite a bit of reduction in the louder
19 events, but they clustered kind of down
20 towards the 40 realm, which is still above the
21 standard. That's why it didn't really change.

22 BRIAN OKONEK: Or, Davyd, rather
23 than being higher, they were more offset, they
24 were flying closer to the road --

25 DAVYD BETCHKAL: True. That's

1 also a possibility.

2 BRIAN OKONEK: -- which is what
3 they've been asked to do.

4 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Right.

5 So, again, not much difference in
6 the change under and above the standard. So
7 there wasn't really any change. But for --
8 again, the percentage of time audible, quite
9 similar. It's a similar story. This time
10 there just wasn't really very much change at
11 all. I believe that people were flying pretty
12 similar flight routes. When I was out there
13 on foot, we saw people still flying over the
14 best practice area, but they were flying quite
15 high. I think Dave will talk about the
16 backcountry ranger observations. I was also
17 part of that on my own installation trips.

18 BRIAN OKONEK: But, again, no big
19 change at all.

20 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Not that I
21 detected with the sound monitoring stations.

22 But there were -- there was quite
23 a reduction in the number of days that were
24 exceeded in terms of events, event standard.
25 That was, again, because there were more days

1 with zero or one events per day. Over the
2 standard really kind of stayed the same.
3 There was a distribution of days, all sorts of
4 different numbers of events, some increasing;
5 some decreasing, but we gained a couple days
6 without any events at all, which is saying
7 something, I guess.

8 NANCY BALE: Can you correlate
9 that easily and quickly with weather
10 information? Like, could you say those days
11 where there was zero, it was a hundred percent
12 humidity, for instance, which would indicate
13 rain?

14 DAVYD BETCHKAL: I need to work
15 on -- the answer to that is easily and
16 quickly, not really, but I need to work on the
17 way to get the weather data -- a better
18 summary.

19 Kind of a complex reason why I
20 think the sound pressure level standard didn't
21 change. We observed more quiet events, but
22 not too many more. The total loudness of the
23 overflights went down, which is actually what
24 the sound pressure level standard measures as
25 well. So exceedance stayed about the same.

1 But I want to emphasize again
2 that just because the standard didn't change
3 doesn't mean that things didn't get better out
4 there. There actually was about a 3 decibel
5 or 4 decibel decrease in how loud the aircraft
6 were, on average.

7 FAA standard again, not much
8 change. So no change in the amount of
9 exceedance. The number of events over on that
10 went down. One thing related to weather is
11 that wind intensity. I trim out some of my
12 data due to the fact that there's a windscreen
13 breaks down at 5 meters per second, which is
14 pretty fast, a little over 15 mile an hour
15 winds. So there was quite a bit of wind that
16 year, so you can't include some of those data
17 into the analysis. That might have also
18 affected exceedance of that standard, but I
19 have a feeling it didn't affect it very much.

20 Okay. Now it's Dave's turn to
21 talk about backcountry ranger overflights.

22 ELWOOD LYNN: Davyd, with a 3
23 decibel reduction, can the human ear pick that
24 up?

25 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Yeah, that's

1 pretty detectable. Usually 1 decibel is about
2 the limit.

3 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Is 3 decibels
4 what the average person might think about
5 halving or doubling on sound pressures?

6 DAVYD BETCHKAL: No. That's 10
7 usually. Ten decibels is about how loud you
8 think would be twice as loud.

9 Are there any other questions on
10 that one?

11 NANCY BALE: Thank you.

12 TOM GEORGE: Probably, but it
13 will take us a little time to think of them.

14 BRIAN OKONEK: Your overall, just
15 the whole broad picture, there wasn't much
16 change between 2007 and 2012?

17 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Not too much
18 except I believe that the number of events in
19 terms of that and they were a little quieter,
20 too. So flying higher made a difference, but
21 not much otherwise.

22 BRIAN OKONEK: Okay.

23 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: So you've all
24 heard from Davyd several times and you're
25 really familiar with the Park's acoustic

1 monitoring program. It's very elaborate.
2 It's measuring the physical properties of the
3 acoustic environment very accurately. It's
4 point data. There's a machine out there that
5 sits there for a month. It gets everything as
6 long as it's running. But there's a
7 difference in what people might perceive when
8 they're traversing the landscape, so we have a
9 lot of backpackers, as you know, and that's in
10 large part our motivation for being here, is
11 managing the backcountry to make it quieter.

12 So we wanted to begin looking at
13 what people perceived. So in this part of the
14 talk we used backcountry rangers who were on
15 patrols as a regular part of their job. They
16 were tasked with recording overflights that
17 they could hear. They were not asked to sit
18 quietly in a quiet place with their hat off.
19 They were just asked to do what they would
20 normally do under the existing backcountry
21 conditions. So if it's raining and cold,
22 they've got a hood on. There's a lot of self
23 noise. If they're crossing a big river, they
24 probably don't hear anything but the river.
25 If it's windy, it's just what they perceived.

1 This represents only aircraft
2 that were heard by backcountry rangers on
3 patrol. They were asked to basically listen
4 the whole time, but not actively listen. So
5 if they're in their tent at night and they're
6 sleeping and the military flies over at
7 50 feet and they don't wake up, that's not
8 going to be part of this. If they are woken
9 up by aircraft noise in the middle of the
10 night, they were told to pull out their
11 notebook and make a note of that.

12 NANCY BALE: And they can't be
13 using their iPod, can they?

14 TOM GEORGE: You're being awfully
15 personally invasive here.

16 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Do you mean
17 while they're hiking?

18 NANCY BALE: Well, it's the way
19 of the future.

20 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Backcountry
21 rangers don't use iPods while hiking in the
22 backcountry.

23 So there were a bunch of patrols
24 and they recorded the date of the patrol,
25 where they were. There were a few variables

1 they collected that we haven't analyzed yet.
2 In the future we hope to really fine-tune this
3 analysis by including a duration metric. So
4 they just categorized the duration of the
5 sound event when it was detected. There was
6 also a weather observation made during the
7 sound detection.

8 DAVYD BETCHKAL: If I could add
9 just a little thing about duration. Sound
10 stations can record the duration of
11 overflights quite well, but what we wanted to
12 try to do with it -- and it wasn't quite there
13 yet -- but try to trim out events that were
14 very short or very long and weed those out
15 from the rest with the backcountry
16 observations.

17 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: We wanted to
18 accomplish this without impacting their
19 regular job of patrolling and contacting
20 visitors. So rangers went out. They
21 collected data on a data sheet. They carried
22 a GPS with them, so that created a track log
23 that synchronized their observation with their
24 location. Kind of using technology to make
25 this is a spatially explicit type of analysis.

1 JOAN FRANKEVICH: So they
2 recorded the duration and the --

3 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: The flyability
4 rating is a type of just quick weather check.

5 JOAN FRANKEVICH: And where they
6 were and the elevation.

7 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Where they
8 were and the elevation was on the GPS track.

9 NANCY BALE: So they had the GPS
10 on them, so if they recorded the time, the GPS
11 could be obtained from them and --

12 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Yes.

13 NANCY BALE: But they were doing
14 pencil and paper; they weren't entering into
15 a --

16 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: They were
17 doing pencil and paper, so the GPS was just in
18 their backpack turned on. It wasn't something
19 they had to press buttons on during the hike.

20 ELWOOD LYNN: So where you say
21 over 8,000 feet, under 500 feet, that's their
22 estimate of --

23 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Yeah, they did
24 some training on that like with elevation
25 landmarks on the topography.

1 ELWOOD LYNN: So it's not where
2 they're hiking, but where they think the
3 airplane is?

4 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Right, and
5 under 500 is above ground level and over 8,000
6 is above sea level because those are the ways
7 it's described in the best practices.

8 This is just a summary of the
9 effort that went into it this year. So the
10 first patrol was in late April, last patrol
11 was in mid-September. There was total of 1630
12 hours of observations and just over a thousand
13 miles hiked by backcountry rangers, and they
14 observed a total of just over 1400 events.
15 They heard that many events.

16 Here are their track logs. So
17 these represent the adventures of several
18 Denali backcountry rangers this summer. The
19 blue dots are every place where an overflight
20 was detected. This isn't talking duration or
21 intensity, just the detections.

22 MIKE YORKE: That's the 1409
23 detections or reports?

24 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Are the blue
25 dots, yes.

1 JOAN FRANKEVICH: So the black
2 line is -- the blue line is where they heard
3 something.

4 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Right. So
5 there's some black lines with few detections.
6 That could be real, like there were no
7 overflights or it could be because the ambient
8 conditions or their self conditions didn't
9 allow them to hear.

10 So one of the things we really
11 wanted to focus on at this meeting has to do
12 with the new avoidance best practice that was
13 formulated at the last meeting. So to look at
14 that we took the avoidance here, we buffered
15 it, and the reason we buffered it is because
16 four miles was the average distance at which
17 backcountry staff could tell if a flight was
18 over the avoidance zone or not. So these were
19 all only detected by hearing, but once they
20 were detected, the ranger was asked to try to
21 see the aircraft and assess whether it was
22 over the avoidance zone or not.

23 So out of those observations,
24 this is what was detected kind of overall.
25 That's 11 percent of all the aircraft flew

1 over the zone and 73 did not. The 16 on
2 weather didn't allow -- or their view of the
3 landscape didn't allow them to tell where they
4 are.

5 Here it's broken down a little
6 bit more by aircraft type. As you can see,
7 there are vastly more propeller aircraft than
8 any other type of aircraft just in the
9 population of observations. And 68 percent of
10 the prop aircraft were not over the
11 observation zone versus 9 percent that were,
12 and the rest unknown.

13 Interesting, for helicopters
14 there was a higher percentage of helicopters
15 observed over the avoidance zone than not over
16 it.

17 ERIKA BENNETT: Can you go back
18 to that one? Thank you.

19 ELWOOD LYNN: Then the one
20 question would be: How many of those
21 helicopters were administrative use where
22 their work had to be done in the avoidance
23 zone?

24 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: We cannot
25 answer that exactly, but we do know -- we can

1 tell some of our administrative helicopter
2 use, and Britta is going to present on that in
3 a few minutes.

4 MIKE YORKE: You would have that
5 information. If you said all the helicopters
6 are GPS tracked --

7 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: We could
8 answer that question.

9 BRITTA SCHROEDER: We tracked
10 seven helicopters in the avoidance zone that
11 were related to --

12 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Well, that's
13 eight observations. Keep in mind that what
14 backcountry rangers actually observe, the
15 numbers on this stream are very different than
16 the number of our total track logs because
17 they have a subsample of all the aircraft that
18 actually flew over the park.

19 ERIKA BENNETT: And this is just
20 what was heard.

21 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Right. Again,
22 this represents a very short time frame
23 compared to the total number of hours in the
24 season.

25 DAVYD BETCHKAL: And temporally

1 it's sort of all over the place in time.

2 TOM GEORGE: You have one jet
3 over the avoidance area that was heard. Does
4 that mean like Alaska Airlines, or what kind
5 of jet are we talking about?

6 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: They're not
7 going to identify it to, like, airline.

8 TOM GEORGE: I understand that,
9 but jet's a fairly --

10 ERIKA BENNETT: Military or
11 commercial. I mean, obviously they didn't
12 know to differentiate between if they thought
13 it was a fighter jet doing maneuvering or a
14 passenger airliner up high. I mean, the
15 passenger jets are up at 30,000 feet.

16 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: That's a good
17 question. I suspect it's passenger.

18 TOM GEORGE: So this would have
19 included an Alaska Airlines jet at 30,000
20 feet.

21 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: If heard.

22 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Dave, when you
23 say in the avoidance zone, are you talking the
24 larger zone or the smaller purple zone?

25 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Purple. And

1 that was the purpose of this analysis was to
2 look at the purple zone, not the greater
3 polygon.

4 Another thing that we looked at
5 with the over 8,000 feet and under 500 -- the
6 under 500 being maybe more interesting. So
7 only one observation under 500 feet in the
8 avoidance zone.

9 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Actually this
10 one took into account the whole area, Dave,
11 that whole best practice, inside and outside.

12 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Right, but
13 there's only one in the purple. Is that true?

14 DAVYD BETCHKAL: True.

15 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Then, in the
16 greater best practices area there were several
17 flights observed below 500 feet. We'll look
18 at those a little closer.

19 NANCY BALE: I'm impressed with
20 that.

21 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Keep in mind,
22 these are rangers estimating.

23 TOM GEORGE: It's kind of hard to
24 estimate that.

25 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Yeah, 500 is a

1 little easier, but over 8,000 I think would be
2 pretty hard to get that exactly.

3 So this is a little bit like
4 those graphs that Davyd was showing, like a
5 difference between in and outside the zone.
6 What this shows is that -- the most
7 interesting part of this to me is the sound
8 intensity was -- so for barely audible, there
9 was a little bit more inside the zone than
10 outside. For the clearly audible there's 7.5
11 fewer events inside the avoidance zone, the
12 purple polygon, than there were outside.
13 There were also a few really loud events
14 inside the avoidance zone.

15 ELWOOD LYNN: Would you say that
16 to be a loud event they would have to be under
17 500 feet?

18 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Not
19 necessarily.

20 What do you think?

21 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Not necessarily,
22 but close. The only one I had was I was in
23 sort of like a canyon type area, one of these
24 V-shaped valleys, and it just kind of went
25 right over the top of me. It was so loud so

1 suddenly. It was one of those things where I
2 was having a conversation with someone and
3 suddenly it was like, what did you just say?
4 That kind of thing.

5 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Was that below
6 500 feet?

7 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Yeah, that one
8 was. So it could be.

9 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: So this
10 project did point out an interesting phenomena
11 of several aircraft observed below 500 feet,
12 not in the purple polygon, but in kind of a
13 high-use area of the park, partially within
14 the greater best practices area.

15 DAVYD BETCHKAL: I spoke briefly
16 with Greg LaHaie about that this morning, and
17 he was saying that due to weather-type things
18 there's occasions where they have to kind of
19 squeeze down below clouds, so it's totally
20 possible that that could be attributable to
21 conditions or it could be things like
22 propeller aircraft. We don't actually know,
23 but those are definitely -- those are
24 propeller aircraft. That kind of whole Sable,
25 Polychrome, Mount Sheldon area.

1 NANCY BALE: That does look like
2 a corridor that a low-flying plane could fit
3 in morphologically.

4 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Davyd put this
5 graph together just to take a look at how the
6 backcountry rangers' perception of events
7 compared to soundscape monitoring, just like
8 kind of a crude scale parkwide. So the days
9 are binned by number of events -- or number of
10 days where the -- number of events per day on
11 the horizontal axis and the percent of days
12 they were observed and it's comparable.

13 DAVYD BETCHKAL: It tends to be
14 towards the low end. So two, four, six being
15 most days. Between two and six events per
16 day. Maybe you might even say between two and
17 eight events take up maybe 40 percent of days.
18 There's a few more days tapering out.

19 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: These datasets
20 are pretty different from each other because
21 the soundscape monitoring is almost a decade
22 of data, and this is a very, very small subset
23 of that.

24 Back to Davyd's style of map. So
25 this is the backcountry rangers' observation

1 by percent of aircraft type. These were only
2 done by backcountry unit when there were
3 greater than 30 hours of observations
4 available. So what this means is that a
5 patrol traversed a backcountry unit. That's
6 displayed on here. The unit number is pretty
7 small, but you can see it on the map. The
8 traverse of that unit lasted at least 30
9 hours. So, yes, we're going to display the
10 data. So if a backcountry patrol only went
11 through a unit for 29 hours, it's not included
12 in this graphing.

13 TOM GEORGE: That makes sense.

14 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: The percentage
15 of the -- the ratio of the three different
16 aircraft types observed is similar to the
17 entire dataset that was measured using the
18 electronic soundscape monitoring stations.

19 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Keep your eyes
20 right there on the middle. There's Unit 10.
21 Keep your eyes on that area. That's the Upper
22 West Toklat station this year. If you flip it
23 kind of back and forth, you can see --

24 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: It's the one
25 right above the cursor. Really the main

1 reason for looking at this is just comparing
2 soundscape station data with human
3 observation.

4 TOM GEORGE: Again, this last one
5 you just showed, that gives you the overall
6 best sense of distribution aircraft noise
7 across the park. Here we're not biasing it by
8 the different standard levels. This is just
9 the raw how much. So I think that is very
10 useful.

11 NANCY BALE: Kind of conforms to
12 this in a gross way.

13 TOM GEORGE: Yeah. Absolutely.

14 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: So we have to
15 continue this in future years. Kind of refine
16 the backcountry rangers' techniques a little
17 bit, but not reinvent the wheel because we
18 want to be able to compare years. In the past
19 we've also used backcountry rangers to monitor
20 aircraft noise and it's been done in a variety
21 of ways. This year we were able to go through
22 some of our legacy data. So this is strictly
23 backcountry rangers observing aircraft. There
24 was a lot of variation in the methods, but we
25 picked out two years where the methods were

1 close to what we did this year and compared
2 them.

3 This is preliminary data. We do
4 want to point out we're working on this and
5 there is a difference. So in 2004 and '05
6 combined, the backcountry rangers spent 1,652
7 hours in the backcountry, very similar to the
8 number of hours spent in one season in 2012.
9 You'll notice the number of events observed is
10 a lot different.

11 TOM GEORGE: So that's total for
12 those two years. So it would be 1500 for each
13 year?

14 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: No, because
15 the hours are the same. Well, they're not
16 exactly the same, but they're close. So
17 that's the representation of effort.

18 TOM GEORGE: So on a rate basis,
19 then, it is much reduced.

20 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: They did have
21 a little bit of a technique difference in that
22 in the 2004/2005 the rangers were not asked to
23 log when they weren't on duty. So there was a
24 time period in the middle of the day that was
25 like their schedule. We're not sure if

1 they -- they were not required to log events
2 after it and they probably didn't. The method
3 said, okay, don't worry about it after you're
4 done working.

5 ELWOOD LYNN: But they probably
6 did.

7 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: I'm not sure
8 if they did or not.

9 ELWOOD LYNN: But that could
10 explain why they're hearing twice as many.

11 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: It could or it
12 could be that the air -- like, on the air taxi
13 and scenic landings on the glacier with the
14 aircraft size going up, which is true on the
15 north side, there may actually be fewer
16 flights because there's larger aircraft.

17 JOAN FRANKEVICH: So realizing
18 this is preliminary, roughly it looks like the
19 number of flights have cut in half?

20 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: I wouldn't say
21 that. This needs more work. But I wanted to
22 present that we're doing this. There is a
23 difference. We need to look into why, but
24 there probably is a reduction in the number of
25 aircraft.

1 Wouldn't you agree with that?

2 DAVYD BETCHKAL: I think I would.

3 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: This is just

4 north side. The aircraft are really quite

5 different than they were in 2004 and '05.

6 BRIAN OKONEK: It's changed a

7 lot.

8 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Would you say

9 the capacity of your average aircraft on the

10 north side has doubled for number of

11 passengers?

12 NANCY BALE: North side

13 operators, you mean?

14 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Yeah, north

15 side operators.

16 NANCY BALE: Well, yeah,

17 primarily, but not so much Denali Air.

18 MIKE YORKE: In 2004 we had the

19 twin Beeches, which were pretty noisy.

20 ERIKA BENNETT: Denali Air

21 switched over just to Navajos.

22 MIKE YORKE: Right about there.

23 NANCY BALE: And there's a noise

24 difference between --

25 ERIKA BENNETT: Huge.

1 MIKE YORKE: All the difference
2 in the world.

3 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: So yeah, if
4 it's a noise difference, then natural ambient
5 is going to mask more events. That would
6 explain it as well.

7 ELWOOD LYNN: I don't think there
8 were many 185s doing flightseeing on the north
9 side in '04 and '05.

10 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Eric has said
11 he has a lot less aircraft over the park now
12 than he used to because they do glacier hiking
13 or helicopter hiking outside the park
14 boundaries.

15 NANCY BALE: Greg has 206s,
16 right, and he's had them since day one.

17 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: So this was
18 another way of documenting our listening
19 effort this summer. This one was shown with
20 15 hours, so anything with less than 15 hours
21 wasn't displayed, but it's basically number of
22 events -- this is a comparison between the
23 2005 and 2012. I hadn't seen this one before.

24 DAVYD BETCHKAL: This one is
25 brand new from last night. Basically it's the

1 same idea, that there's a decrease in events
2 from 2004 and '05 to 1012 and just by unit
3 changes a little bit too. I had to trim it
4 down to 15 hours because they had a lot less
5 coverage in terms of listening hours. They
6 didn't listen as much in the evenings or
7 mornings when they weren't on duty. Out west
8 it didn't really change too much, I guess. So
9 I don't know if that's any other clue towards
10 what's going on.

11 NANCY BALE: That very dark thing
12 in the middle is --

13 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: It's also one
14 of the most sought after backcountry units in
15 the park.

16 BRIAN OKONEK: It's interesting
17 to me that you have those two units right in
18 the middle that are white, you know.

19 ELWOOD LYNN: So how did they get
20 there?

21 BRIAN OKONEK: Yeah. It's not
22 like an every airplane went around those north
23 and south.

24 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: That's just
25 random because of the days that folks were out

1 listening.

2 NANCY BALE: Actually that's a
3 worse -- that's less decrease. It looks like
4 it's bare, but really it's less decrease, so
5 it's kind of like worse.

6 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: That's like
7 status quo in a way.

8 NANCY BALE: Are you concerned
9 with the soundscape on the New Savage Alpine
10 Trail as far as whether it's going to be --
11 have a lot of aircraft noise? You know, it's
12 outside the polygon north of the road up there
13 above tree line.

14 BRIAN OKONEK: The New Savage
15 Alpine Trail?

16 NANCY BALE: Is there some
17 concern about its -- I guess you have to wait.
18 The Savage River is the set of blue dots that
19 goes north there. So it would be to the east
20 of it very slightly. It's above tree line
21 mostly until you get down to the end. It will
22 be interesting to hear what people say who
23 hiked that trail.

24 ELWOOD LYNN: Most of the planes
25 there are descending, right, so they're sort

1 of in a glide path?

2 NANCY BALE: It's outside the
3 area, so it could be a free for all. Not
4 necessarily outside the area of best practice.

5 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: That's
6 something we can look at pretty easily in the
7 future. It's highly accessible, so setting up
8 a soundscape station there would be good.

9 ELWOOD LYNN: Dave, is that
10 Mystic Pass down at the bottom left?

11 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Extreme far
12 left? That was a new site this year. It's on
13 Fourth of July Creek. That was a 2012
14 sampling site. The next one up is close to
15 Mystic Pass.

16 The one above that one, Elwood?

17 ELWOOD LYNN: Because we've got
18 it drawn in that Mystic Pass would be in our
19 low-use area, but I think we have to
20 acknowledge that there's a fair amount of use
21 through Mystic Pass.

22 TOM GEORGE: That isn't park
23 related; it's just --

24 ELWOOD LYNN: Yeah.

25 TOM GEORGE: -- getting across

1 the range.

2 NANCY BALE: If I had a plane
3 that could fly over it, though, I wouldn't fly
4 through it.

5 MIKE YORKE: If you had a plane
6 that could fly over it, you wouldn't be going
7 in that direction.

8 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Back to the
9 comparison of the gray-white dark map on the
10 Anderson Pass area, it had three to four less
11 events per hour, is that correct, not per day?

12 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Per hour
13 listened.

14 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Oh, per hour
15 listened. Not --

16 DAVYD BETCHKAL: It sort of
17 averages out a little bit from hours that
18 there were very many events and hours that
19 there are none. It's sort of a hard way to
20 compare on an hour by hour basis, but it's a
21 considerable decrease. Three to four events
22 on average per hour is quite a bit. That's
23 many events per day if you multiply it out.
24 Many, many events.

25 TOM GEORGE: I guess I would be

1 interested in knowing a little bit more about
2 the weather criteria that you observed, what
3 those categories are. I can talk to you after
4 just to get that information. I do think the
5 under 500 foot -- I mean, there's a whole
6 bunch of reasons, some legitimate, some not
7 that aircraft may be down there. But it does
8 seem to me that that's an area that if you did
9 capture a little bit more information in
10 instances where you have observations like
11 that, it would be useful to us going forward.
12 I mean, the weather can pinch people down
13 there to where that's what they've got to do
14 to get through. You've got administrative or
15 survey reasons for being down there.

16 On the other hand, if it's people
17 on a perfectly good day just cruising down
18 there and if we knew that, then that would
19 tell us there's something we need to work on
20 from an education or other standpoint. So I
21 guess going forward that would be one request
22 to consider, maybe trying to capture a little
23 more information in those instances.

24 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: We probably
25 have that.

1 TOM GEORGE: That's where
2 correlating it maybe with the weather you've
3 got so far might filter some of that out.
4 What I'm interested in is if there are
5 significant numbers of observations of that
6 that don't appear to have a logical
7 explanation or whether your observations
8 outside the weather would allow you --

9 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: I get what
10 you're saying. I think we can do that right
11 now; we just didn't do it for this. But if
12 the rangers see something unexpected, like a
13 low-flying aircraft on a clear day, there
14 probably is more information.

15 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Dave, thanks.
16 That's exactly the kind of information that
17 we've been looking for. Thank you for taking
18 that ball and running with it.

19 NANCY BALE: A brief question.
20 Did you have a grid in which they marked, so
21 they had their legend here and then they had a
22 grid where they put a 2 or a 3?

23 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: They had a
24 data form.

25 NANCY BALE: Do you have those

1 things digitally that you would be willing to
2 share?

3 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Yeah.

4 NANCY BALE: Okay. I'll get in
5 touch with you. Amanda had tried to develop a
6 tool with Tom and Sally and me, and I think
7 you carried it to a very good end. You
8 captured a lot of good -- with small numbers.
9 Since it's your Park Service instrument, I
10 would think that making it available to
11 volunteers who want to execute it in their
12 travels in the park, making it available. How
13 learnable is it? Does it take some time?

14 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: The data form
15 is pretty simple, but it also requires the GPS
16 and you have to like synchronize your watch
17 with the GPS so you have the time right
18 because it's tied to time.

19 NANCY BALE: Well, I think you
20 should just put mini GPS's in the lid of the
21 bear-resistant containers and everything is
22 cool at that point.

23 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: The data form
24 we can put on line or give you. As far as
25 getting volunteers to do this, I wouldn't

1 outrule it, but we would want to train them up
2 and make sure it was a rigorous process. We
3 are open to this concept that our backcountry
4 rangers might not follow the same routes as
5 visitors do; I would argue that they do.
6 They're told basically to go where people go.
7 Occasionally a backcountry ranger will go to a
8 place people rarely go. Most commonly they're
9 going in places that are popular in the
10 backcountry. Their job is to observe and help
11 visitors. So I think their routes are
12 comparable to what the public does.

13 NANCY BALE: There could be
14 something like if you agree to train up on
15 this, we'll forgive you your backcountry
16 permit fee if you'll collect this data for us.
17 There's all kinds of ways. We realize it's
18 qualitative data still. I think that if it's
19 done in a regular fashion, it's reasonably
20 accurate, don't you?

21 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: I think there
22 is room for volunteers to do this work with
23 us, yes.

24 NANCY BALE: I think it's great.
25 Thank you.

1 TOM GEORGE: Were there any
2 other -- I mean, this is information that your
3 rangers collected directly. Any other
4 visitor -- unsolicited visitor comment?

5 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: I think Miriam
6 needs to answer that question. I don't get
7 those.

8 MIRIAM VALENTINE: I didn't get
9 any to respond to.

10 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Did you get
11 any?

12 DAVYD BETCHKAL: None. Some of
13 the backcountry rangers mentioned that same
14 low-flying aircraft around the visitors
15 center. That's the only one I got.

16 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: But that one
17 got vetted.

18 DAVYD BETCHKAL: That's why I
19 didn't bring it up before.

20 TOM GEORGE: As far as we know,
21 we're not having comments from the -- not park
22 staff, but visitors' cards --

23 MIRIAM VALENTINE: We also
24 mentioned it in driver training this spring,
25 that we were going to try this new flight

1 route along the road. So just for people who
2 are historically on the road probably the
3 most, like, did you notice anything? Nothing
4 came back to us. We didn't say, what did you
5 think? We just into the spring kind of
6 mentioned, encouraged people to talk to us if
7 they thought it was out of the ordinary or a
8 problem. As far as I know, I mean --

9 ELWOOD LYNN: We should verify
10 with Martha because she's got every one of
11 them logged into the database.

12 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: When we had a
13 close-out meeting with the backcountry staff
14 and we were troubleshooting this, they didn't
15 describe a lot of complaints coming in. They
16 didn't mention any actually.

17 TOM GEORGE: Okay. Thanks. We
18 won't complain about that. Just wanted to
19 make sure we weren't leaving any good sources
20 of information laying on the table.

21 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: They know
22 they're supposed to pass them on. At the
23 beginning of the year we described the new
24 best management scenario and said, if you hear
25 anything, we really want to know quickly.

1 That was your request at the last meeting, so
2 that did get passed on.

3 TOM GEORGE: Thanks.

4 JOAN FRANKEVICH: You're going to
5 double-check the comment cards and see if
6 there's anything relevant?

7 MIRIAM VALENTINE: We'll check
8 with concessions. He's referring to Martha
9 who's in concessions to see if anything came
10 through.

11 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Okay. But the
12 park -- the comment cards that we've had in
13 the past, the Park Service comment cards --

14 MIRIAM VALENTINE: I don't know
15 of any. We'll double-check and if anything
16 came through, we'll PDF it.

17 ELWOOD LYNN: From where I sit,
18 it seems like we had fewer this year, because
19 I just can't recall -- where in the past we
20 did have complaints from backpackers being
21 strafed by helicopters. There were definitely
22 a number of incidents each summer, and I don't
23 recall any this year other than the one.

24 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Okay. So you
25 or somebody has read them.

1 ELWOOD LYNN: They all go through
2 my office. I read every one of them, but I
3 don't maintain the database and at some point
4 you get a little bit numb.

5 TOM GEORGE: At this Quiet
6 Coalition meeting last night we did hear a few
7 people saying that actually they saw more or
8 heard more airplanes than ever, so I guess
9 there are a few people out there --

10 ELWOOD LYNN: Who was saying
11 that?

12 TOM GEORGE: Some people at the
13 Quiet Coalition meeting.

14 BRIAN OKONEK: Yeah, who hike up
15 the Toklat. But they might not have even
16 filled out a comment card.

17 TOM GEORGE: Right. Having heard
18 those comments there is why I was curious to
19 see. Maybe they're hypersensitive because
20 they went out looking for that or maybe
21 there's a broader set of complaints we haven't
22 heard yet.

23 DAVYD BETCHKAL: I have three
24 more slides for you. They're just updated
25 maps of exceedance of the standard across the

1 entire park.

2 You can see the updates for 2012.
3 All the sound pressure level analyses actually
4 are finished. I didn't go in depth on any of
5 those. I don't know if we need to or not.
6 Perhaps that would be a good idea to step
7 through each one. This is the overall
8 results.

9 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Davyd, didn't
10 you describe the location of that image last
11 night?

12 DAVYD BETCHKAL: This is taken at
13 the Sushana Ridge station, so it's looking
14 north toward the outer outer range. That's a
15 beautiful view.

16 I want to make this clear before
17 I get started. You're used to looking at this
18 in a slightly different format. Before we
19 used to bin them all, 0 percent, 0 to 25, 25
20 to 50, 50 to 100. So you're used to seeing a
21 lot more red on some of these. I decided it
22 would be a better idea and it would give more
23 information to you to show a continuous
24 gradation of color from green to red. The
25 color doesn't necessarily mean that it's

1 extremely bad or extremely good. It's just
2 percentages color-coded to try to get a little
3 bit better picture of what's going on.

4 This is the percent time audible
5 standard. You kind of see again the area we
6 were talking about this morning. Also,
7 there's sort of a streak there from the
8 entrance area and the McKinley private strip
9 towards -- Cathedral Mountain is that
10 37 percent there sort of where the road takes
11 that turn south.

12 The number of events per day over
13 the natural ambient level. Quite a bit of
14 exceedance in a lot of these areas. I might
15 point out that in the extreme southwest corner
16 there's a consistent amount of traffic. Not
17 necessarily an extremely large amount of
18 traffic, but consistent enough that
19 100 percent of those days are being exceeded.

20 Then the sound pressure level
21 standard, just to kind of get a cursory view.
22 It's pretty obvious where the most impacted
23 areas of the park are right now in terms of
24 the standards.

25 TOM GEORGE: To me you should

1 always show this with your pac man chart
2 because you've really got several layers of
3 information stacked up here. Some things are
4 important to look at, but in terms of
5 understanding the relative distribution of
6 sound, I think your pac man chart is
7 incredibly important.

8 DAVYD BETCHKAL: The one thing
9 that chart doesn't show very well, it doesn't
10 talk anything about the duration of events or
11 how loud they are. That's the only problem.
12 So these two, until I can figure out a better
13 way --

14 TOM GEORGE: Yeah. So maybe we
15 should work on making a chart that does
16 express those dimensions of it, but in
17 absolute terms, not in relative terms.

18 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Right, right.
19 It's kind of interesting to point
20 out that on the Muldrow there and also the
21 McKinley Bar Trail, the 35 and 42 kind of
22 right in the middle of the park, there's sort
23 of a gap there where events are a little
24 quieter. I expect it's probably because
25 they're flying a little bit higher too, or

1 more distant.

2 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Where it says
3 42 percent?

4 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Right. Right in
5 the middle there there's sort of a lighter
6 green part. That's sort of interesting to me.

7 TOM GEORGE: What year does this
8 represent?

9 DAVYD BETCHKAL: All years.

10 TOM GEORGE: I know this
11 represents all years, but any one point has a
12 specific year or pair of years. That's the
13 trouble. We can't really evaluate
14 effectiveness of best practices because this
15 is an aggregate across your entire life cycle
16 of reporting.

17 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Absolutely, and
18 actually that's not the purpose of these maps
19 at all. I just thought I'd show you these
20 because they're updated for this year and
21 they're getting a little bit more dense. Just
22 to kind of give an idea of what's going on.

23 NANCY BALE: It does show the
24 problem areas pretty well across types of
25 standard. The eastern zones and the number of

1 events standard seems to be the one that's the
2 most troubled.

3 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Something I can
4 point out too is that percent time audible and
5 number of events are more closely correlated
6 than sound pressure level. So these two are
7 pretty close to each other. They're
8 correlated. Because you have more events, the
9 percent time audible is also greater. But
10 this one is not quite as correlated to the
11 other two, this sound pressure level standard.
12 In the end we may be able to get at both
13 number of events per day and percent time
14 audible in a similar way, or evaluate them in
15 a similar way. Take a noise-free interval or
16 something like that into account.

17 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Can you send us
18 these three maps?

19 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Yeah. Actually
20 I'll send the whole PowerPoint. So that's
21 actually all of our soundscape monitoring
22 analyses. There's still some administrative
23 overflights. That's what I've got, unless
24 there are any more questions for me.

25 ERIKA BENNETT: At this point we

1 have a small section for public comment.

2 Did you want to make any
3 comments, or are you just here to observe?

4 ELAINE HULSE: Well, it was
5 mostly observe, but I guess my question would
6 be for the backcountry rangers. Do they test
7 their hearing?

8 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: That's a
9 really interesting question and we don't. And
10 I'm not sure if we need to because we're
11 trying to go through the human filter on that
12 part of the project, so there's a wide range
13 in the human population of how good one's
14 hearing is. Our backcountry ranger staff may
15 or may not be representative of the
16 population. Not everyone in the backcountry
17 has perfect hearing. Some days they're
18 wearing hoods, so -- my answer is, no, we
19 don't and we're probably not going to.

20 ELAINE HULSE: Are they former
21 military personnel that worked on a flight
22 line that might have damaged hearing?

23 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: It's possible.
24 I suspect if a backcountry ranger was
25 significantly hearing impaired, he or she

1 would probably not participate in this program
2 if their hearing was an outlier, an outlier in
3 the sense that it's a lot different than the
4 average person. They could still be a
5 backcountry ranger, but we probably wouldn't
6 give them this project.

7 ERIKA BENNETT: Thank you. Any
8 more comments before we continue on?

9 Our next report is a report on
10 the National Park Service flight use by Britta
11 Schroeder.

12 Do you need time to set up?

13 We'll take a five-minute break.

14 (Break taken.)

15 ERIKA BENNETT: Britta is
16 reporting on the National Park Service, just
17 the Park Service use of aircraft in the park.

18 BRITTA SCHROEDER: Again, my name
19 is Britta Schroeder, and I'm a physical
20 science technician at Denali. I'm on the
21 pathways program.

22 TOM GEORGE: What roughly is
23 that?

24 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: It's a student
25 hiring authority for the Park Service.

1 BRITTA SCHROEDER: Some of the
2 questions I was hired to answer were to look
3 at the impacts of the flights on Denali on the
4 park soundscape. Some of the questions I'm
5 going to answer is: How many flights were
6 ordered by the park? How many of these flew
7 over the park? How many of them were in the
8 best practice areas, which is what we've been
9 looking at? How did we go about doing this?

10 I'm going to refer to an internal
11 practice spreadsheet we have called the
12 OAS spreadsheet. That just means these
13 internal spreadsheets. That's how we've --
14 the Park Service has previously gone about
15 tracking flights that were offered through
16 these budget spreadsheets. That was how I
17 obtained information for fleet and vendor
18 flights. Within that I was able to get GPS
19 data for some of these flights.

20 So we tracked for the federal
21 fiscal year of 2012, which ran from October 1
22 through September 30. There were 432 flights
23 that were ordered through this budget
24 spreadsheet. So this is not necessarily GPS
25 tracks just yet. This is just flights that

1 were ordered through the park. So 42 of those
2 were not Denali flights that were ordered;
3 they were National Park Service flights that
4 may or may not have flown over the park. This
5 is just the spreadsheet. It's not spatially
6 explicit. There were 390 flights that were
7 associated with Denali National Park missions.

8 This is the first of many graphs
9 I'm going to show you. It's broken down by
10 flights by month and by aircraft type. As you
11 can see, January and February there weren't
12 any flights. January, February, October,
13 November didn't have helicopter flights.
14 March and September there were a few
15 helicopter flights. The Temsco contracts
16 started in April and May and ended the middle
17 of August to end of August. Those helicopter
18 flights on the shoulder seasons were, I
19 believe, wildlife flights.

20 Here again, I've broken it down
21 by mission and kind of grouped them by
22 critical, noncritical and other. Critical is
23 the ranger communication, fire, mountain
24 operations. Then search and rescues. Then
25 not critical, something like Davyd's work with

1 soundscapes would fall under natural and
2 cultural resources. There was a category on
3 these spreadsheets that can be coded as other.
4 It was just other.

5 ELWOOD LYNN: That's support for
6 radio repeater sites, that sort of thing.

7 TOM GEORGE: What's
8 communications?

9 BRITTA SCHROEDER: Some of that
10 was classified.

11 TOM GEORGE: Repeaters out of
12 service or something?

13 BRITTA SCHROEDER: I think the
14 other category covered general personnel
15 transfers as well. Then there were some that
16 didn't have any code at all.

17 JEFF MOW: You got these numbers
18 off a spreadsheet and those numbers came off
19 the OAS 23s?

20 BRITTA SCHROEDER: This came from
21 the OAS or AMDs.

22 JEFF MOW: Which is subject to
23 whoever is filling it out.

24 NANCY BALE: Does this include
25 mountain operations as well?

1 BRITTA SCHROEDER: Yes, it does.

2 TOM GEORGE: Does this include
3 contract aircraft or only government-operated
4 aircraft?

5 BRITTA SCHROEDER: I don't think
6 it's called contract. It's called vendor.
7 Yes, this includes those.

8 TOM GEORGE: Thank you.

9 BRITTA SCHROEDER: I did it in
10 percentages as well. Percent of fixed wings
11 versus helicopter. Total of wildlife -- the
12 percentage of flights taken for wildlife as
13 well.

14 NANCY BALE: That would
15 include -- would that also include the patrols
16 during the shoulder season, during hunting
17 season?

18 BRITTA SCHROEDER: If they were
19 patrols taken under the rangers or law
20 enforcement, then, no. The wildlife was
21 mostly biology related. Here it's broken down
22 by mission type as well to give you an idea of
23 the percentages on the last table. Wildlife,
24 large amount of that. Here it's the number of
25 flights per day. There were almost a third of

1 the days over the course of that entire year,
2 the 365 days, that did not have any flights at
3 all that were ordered, then progressively less
4 and less. So you get to number of flights per
5 day, six flights per day that were -- there
6 were five days that had six flights per day
7 ordered.

8 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Can you go back
9 to that?

10 BRITTA SCHROEDER: Sure.

11 TOM GEORGE: Does this include
12 like if an airplane was flown to Anchorage for
13 maintenance? Would that be included in these
14 categories?

15 JOAN FRANKEVICH: This is over
16 the park.

17 BRITTA SCHROEDER: No, these are
18 not necessarily over the park. This is still
19 within that spreadsheet, the OAS spreadsheet,
20 so anything that was ordered. So, yeah, it
21 would. It did include maintenance flights to
22 Fairbanks.

23 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Quite a few,
24 actually.

25 TOM GEORGE: And those would be

1 some of the others probably in terms of your
2 categories?

3 BRITTA SCHROEDER: Yeah, there
4 were a couple of the maintenance. It did fall
5 under other.

6 Now we're going to look at the
7 GPS data. And I think one of the things --
8 one of the first things we want to talk about
9 with this GPS data is where this data came
10 from. I looked at the fleet and the vendor,
11 fixed-wing tracks that were taken from the
12 automated flight following. So every flight
13 that occurs -- that's been ordered by the park
14 has to be flight followed and this is -- this
15 AFF is done by the U.S. Forest Service. They
16 were able to give us some of these archived
17 tracks, and then we were able to get data for
18 helicopter tracks from our two Temsco
19 contracts through their web site, Latitude
20 Technologies, and then there were some vendors
21 who were able to give us their Garmin GPS
22 tracks that -- they just had a Garmin GPS unit
23 within their aircraft.

24 NANCY BALE: Is the AFF a system
25 that is a satellite-based system based on GPS

1 tracking?

2 BRITTA SCHROEDER: Yes. So all
3 of that said, there are some limitations with
4 this data. So the tracking spreadsheet,
5 again, went from October 1, 2011 to
6 September 30, 2012. There were 390 of these
7 flights associated with Denali missions. But
8 158 of those flights did not have GPS data
9 associated with them, which is a large chunk,
10 41 percent. Breaking that down, the majority
11 of that was wildlife flights that did not --
12 that were not necessarily tracked.

13 ELWOOD LYNN: That would be a
14 vendor flying by themselves without -- survey
15 work?

16 BRITTA SCHROEDER: Yes. About
17 half of these flights -- there's 102 wildlife
18 flights and about half of those took place
19 before March 1st. When I talk about these
20 limitations, just to keep in mind that half of
21 those took place before March 1st.

22 So there were some limitations
23 with this GPS data. Firstly, for the
24 AFF data, the Forest Service was only able to
25 give us AFF data that had been archived from

1 March 1st -- starting March 1st. So I was
2 unable to obtain any AFF data before
3 March 1st. We were unable to get vendor data
4 from some vendors, but we were able to get
5 some vendor data as well, like I said, with
6 GPS. We were able to get all our Temsco data.

7 This is a graphic showing you how
8 it all kind of trickles down. We had 432
9 flights on the book. We had 390 that were
10 associated with park missions. There were
11 only 322 of these flights that occurred after
12 March 1st and then there were 230 flights
13 after March 1st with GPS tracks that occurred
14 in the park. So that's the number you'll
15 probably want to take away from this is 230
16 flights for this year.

17 Here is a map of flights that
18 occurred within an 80-mile buffer around the
19 park. This is not the 230 flights; this is
20 just a buffer. The 230 is what occurs within
21 the park. I made these maps to kind of give
22 you an idea of what the impact is on the
23 outlying communities around the park. Air
24 flight, as much as we talk about within the
25 Park Service boundaries, those boundaries are

1 not a wall. There's bleed-over.

2 So these are critical flights
3 that occurred. You can see a lot of flights
4 coming out of Talkeetna going up to the
5 mountain and also over to that southwest side
6 there. Then a bunch up by Stampede.

7 These are the noncritical
8 flights, a lot of wildlife flights that are
9 coming out of Fairbanks and going to the north
10 side of the park there. There are a lot
11 coming from Talkeetna going up to the mountain
12 and I believe those are the glacial
13 monitoring.

14 TOM GEORGE: What's the
15 destination to the west?

16 BRITTA SCHROEDER: I'm not sure
17 if somebody is coming out of there or what.

18 NANCY BALE: Did you already say
19 how it's determined critical and noncritical?

20 BRITTA SCHROEDER: Critical would
21 be the communications, law enforcement, search
22 and rescue, rangers. I think that was it.
23 And fire was the other one.

24 NANCY BALE: Wildlife is
25 considered not critical, huh?

1 BRITTA SCHROEDER: Yes.

2 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: It's wildlife
3 research. Poaching patrols are in the
4 critical.

5 JEFF MOW: The group is critical
6 health and safety.

7 NANCY BALE: Sure. Got you. I
8 would think that you would consider it
9 important to gather the data and do the
10 capturing and collaring and so on. That's
11 what's represented here, isn't it?

12 JEFF MOW: Right.

13 BRITTA SCHROEDER: So here I put
14 these flights too within the park boundaries
15 and, again, classified them by critical and
16 noncritical. You can see the majority of the
17 critical are on the south and west sides.

18 Here I just kind of wanted to
19 give you an idea of this linear density. I'm
20 not sure if all of you are familiar with
21 linear density. It's miles per square mile.
22 So as these tracks are all overlaid on each
23 other over the course of time, over the course
24 of the March 1st through September 30th, then
25 we kind of are able to spatially look at the

1 density of these lines within a square mile.
2 So how many miles are within a square mile.
3 That legend there on the right side says 1 to
4 3 miles per square mile, 4 to 7 miles per
5 square mile, on up to 213 miles per square
6 mile, which is the red. So this is a
7 cumulative picture of the impacts of the
8 density of those lines on the park. As you
9 can see, the largest density is over there by
10 the headquarters. There's quite a bit of
11 density along the roadside there at Toklat and
12 Sanctuary, East Fork, Kantishna and down by
13 the mountain as well.

14 TOM GEORGE: Is that Mystic Pass
15 on the lower left?

16 DAVYD BETCHKAL: That's the
17 Yentna River there. Mystic Pass is back up.

18 BRITTA SCHROEDER: Here it is in
19 relation to that best practices polygon. This
20 is compared to 2009. I just chose to do a
21 linear density because some of these GPS
22 points are taken two minutes apart. I was
23 able to interpolate these lines from the GPS
24 points and then get an idea of the density
25 coming off the lines and not necessarily just

1 the GPS points. It's pretty similar. If you
2 toggle back and forth between them, you can
3 see the impacts of the densest areas are
4 pretty much in the same places except for in
5 that southwest corner down there.

6 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Also up in the
7 north boundary central there was like a fire,
8 I think, probably in 2009.

9 BRITTA SCHROEDER: So now I'm
10 going to talk a little bit about the best
11 management practices. Just a reminder that
12 that zone that's to -- the larger hashmark
13 zone was to spread out those flights, whereas
14 that purple polygon is to avoid those areas.
15 So for the data that we do have, the entire
16 hashmark plus the purple polygon area, there
17 were 91 flights that took place. That's about
18 40 percent of all the GPS data that I have.
19 Then within just that purple polygon, there
20 was 25 flights that took place.

21 Here, again, is the polygon
22 relayed on the topography map and overlaid on
23 top of the linear density map. There's places
24 in there where there's spaces where you can
25 see the topographic map underneath and then

1 along the road corridor some hot spots. Here
2 it is broken out by mission. So that north
3 side only has the purple polygon. The park
4 road north side is the purple polygon plus the
5 hashmark area. So, again, wildlife.

6 TOM GEORGE: Say that again.

7 BRITTA SCHROEDER: That north
8 side, on the -- the column on the left-hand
9 side, the north side, that's that purple
10 polygon, the avoidance zone.

11 TOM GEORGE: And what's the right
12 column, then?

13 BRITTA SCHROEDER: It's the
14 purple polygon plus the hashmark, so the
15 avoidance zone, the entire --

16 TOME GEORGE: The entire best
17 practice.

18 BRITTA SCHROEDER: The entire
19 best practice.

20 NANCY BALE: And these are the
21 flights that occurred within those two zones.

22 BRITTA SCHROEDER: Yes.

23 JOAN FRANKEVICH: So in the
24 purple polygon you said was 25 flights,
25 10 percent in the larger avoidance area, 91

1 flights, but what was the percent?

2 BRITTA SCHROEDER: I believe 40,
3 41.

4 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Okay.

5 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Looks like most
6 of the flights inside the avoidance zone are
7 up on the -- is that the Teklanika there on
8 the far west end? Probably is some sort of
9 wildlife -- I don't know what that would be
10 caribou, Dall sheep, something like that in
11 that area.

12 BRITTA SCHROEDER: One thing I
13 thought was interesting here is how wildlife
14 definitely is in -- the largest amount of
15 flights that went through the avoidance zone
16 were wildlife flights, but unlike a lot of
17 other flights, these ones are definitely very
18 spatially explicit. You can't do surveys of
19 wildlife in areas where there is no wildlife.

20 Here we were looking at the
21 lengths of the flights to kind of give us an
22 idea of what the average impact would be of
23 the flight of each -- by mission type flights
24 on the soundscape. That bottom number, the
25 185, that's an average of the total. The

1 wildlife, again, has the longest average
2 flight. There were only a small amount of
3 flights and they went all the way around the
4 park perimeter.

5 So overall there were 390 flights
6 that we know of that were ordered for the park
7 missions and 230 of those we were able to
8 track. Only about 10 percent of the ones we
9 were able to track went through the avoidance
10 zone with wildlife being the most. There was
11 about -- split about 67/33 for fixed wing and
12 helicopter.

13 Hopefully for next year we'll be
14 able to get the AFF data on a monthly basis so
15 that we don't have a similar problem with the
16 data only being able to get it back to March.
17 We'll be able to get data from all the vendors
18 ideally. Then Davyd and I will work together
19 to do some spatial modeling for the data that
20 he has.

21 TOM GEORGE: Does this
22 information include elevation?

23 BRITTA SCHROEDER: I have
24 elevation data and I would really like to do
25 some analysis with that in the future.

1 TOM GEORGE: Certainly in terms
2 of looking at the north side best practice
3 area, it would be nice to know -- because
4 there's a vertical component, not just a
5 horizontal component of that best practice
6 area. You could still have been honoring the
7 best practice in some areas there and yet
8 you're aligned going across that. So I think
9 that would be very interesting.

10 BRITTA SCHROEDER: There is the
11 one question that because we don't have the --
12 our DEM, I think they were waiting to have a
13 new elevation model, but I did do some
14 preliminary analysis of that and there times
15 where it looked like airplanes were flying
16 into the mountains because I think our
17 elevation model wasn't entirely accurate.

18 TOM GEORGE: Well, even if we
19 have the MSL altitudes --

20 DAVYD BETCHKAL: The best
21 practice is in terms of mean sea level.

22 TOM GEORGE: Yeah, it's not in
23 terms of height above terrain. I mean, it
24 would be interesting to look at height above
25 terrain as well, but the actual best practice

1 is MSL floor, so it's not above ground so you
2 don't really need the terrain data for that.

3 BRITTA SCHROEDER: Okay.

4 TOM GEORGE: The other thing is
5 there are other best practices that have
6 spatial dimensions to them that it would be
7 nice to include in this, not focusing only on
8 the -- like around the mountain itself. So I
9 see you're focusing on this one. Why not the
10 rest of them?

11 BRITTA SCHROEDER: Like the six
12 other --

13 TOM GEORGE: Yeah.

14 BRITTA SCHROEDER: Yeah. We can
15 do that.

16 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Somewhere along
17 the line we might have asked for that because
18 it was new.

19 TOM GEORGE: In the bigger scheme
20 of things, I think the same question comes out
21 on the other best practices as well since
22 you've got a database that covers the whole
23 park.

24 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Yeah, we'll do
25 that.

1 BRITTA SCHROEDER: Yes. This one
2 was the one that I felt was the most spatially
3 defined, I guess.

4 TOM GEORGE: Well, the others are
5 too; they're just not as big.

6 JOAN FRANKEVICH: For the south
7 side around the mountain there's some best
8 practices for those too.

9 BRITTA SCHROEDER: I guess I
10 haven't seen those polygons.

11 TOM GEORGE: We'll have to create
12 polygons for them. They didn't come with
13 them.

14 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: They're
15 described in a narrative.

16 BRITTA SCHROEDER: All right. So
17 I guess that's what I was saying. These were
18 easy to focus on because they were spatially
19 designed.

20 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: We can try to
21 turn the other ones from a narrative into a
22 map.

23 BRITTA SCHROEDER: One question I
24 did have actually within the best management,
25 we were talking earlier today about the

1 standards and this was something that I had
2 created previously and I was looking at it
3 again today. It's just the density, looking
4 at that linear density by zone. So all that
5 red there on the left-hand side is all just
6 one Backcountry Management Plan zone.
7 Obviously this is all cumulative linear data.
8 This is more of a visual to help you
9 understand what I'm grappling with. That red
10 zone, it's got a low standard so that you can
11 only have one event per day. So if -- just
12 for the Backcountry Management Plan, if a
13 flight flies through at the very, very top
14 there, then it's exceeded its max for that
15 entire area. So that might be something to
16 think about with these Backcountry Management
17 Plan standards maybe, is to ask the question
18 of --

19 DAVYD BETCHKAL: What I might be
20 able to add on to that is, is the standard
21 evaluated for a person, an individual on the
22 ground in any particular location. In other
23 words, here they are in their listening area.
24 If they hear one event a day and then someone
25 else in that same large area didn't hear one,

1 is the unit in standard or out of standard?
2 That's kind of one of those tricky things.

3 BRITTA SCHROEDER: I guess I was
4 presenting that just because in order for us
5 as scientists to better answer the questions,
6 that might help with management conflicts.
7 That might be something that would be
8 interesting to address.

9 That's all I have.

10 ERIKA BENNETT: Thank you so
11 much. That's new information that's always
12 good to know.

13 MIRIAM VALENTINE: I think we'll
14 post it on the web site.

15 BRITTA SCHROEDER: All right.

16 ERIKA BENNETT: We're at another
17 public comment section. I see a couple of new
18 people.

19 MIRIAM VALENTINE: Sally.

20 ERIKA BENNETT: Hi, Sally.

21 If there are no other public
22 comments, we are at the junction where we try
23 to look forward to another meeting date and
24 location. Were we going to put together a
25 statement of intent about the Council, which

1 hadn't happened yet?

2 TOM GEORGE: Miriam and I talked
3 about that and figured we ought to wait for a
4 new superintendent --

5 ERIKA BENNETT: Okay. So when it
6 comes to next --

7 TOM GEORGE: Or orders from
8 Washington, D.C. or something far away.

9 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Didn't we need
10 to put in something to renew? Weren't we
11 about to sunset or something?

12 ERIKA BENNETT: That's next year
13 this time.

14 MIRIAM VALENTINE: I spoke to the
15 person in D.C. who manages these groups and
16 just said there was interest in us renewing.
17 But Tom and I had just a conversation that
18 it's a park-chartered group, so that in all
19 fairness to the new superintendent having --
20 which we'll know soon, but we'll have on board
21 by January hopefully, it's like, does it
22 change the charter at all? Does the scope of
23 the work change at all with a new manager?
24 We've had six years now. We've learned a lot.
25 It's a good time to revisit, but it's time to

1 revisit with whoever is going to be leading
2 the group or be accountable for the group for
3 the next period of time.

4 TOM GEORGE: It's kind of like
5 the election. We should wait until after the
6 election and then decide where we're going to
7 go next.

8 MIRIAM VALENTINE: Pretty much.
9 There was no problem in D.C. when I said you
10 need to check the box that says we're thinking
11 about continuing this and that was good. We
12 had talked about in our previous meeting who
13 comprised the group, what stakeholders were at
14 the group. There was a suggestion maybe -- I
15 asked the question, if we were to add like a
16 tourism representative to the group, what does
17 that look like?

18 There isn't any problem, it
19 appears, to add a representative. There was
20 less -- it's easier to add than to take
21 somebody away. So I hope you all like each
22 other, because taking a representative group
23 out it's kind of like, well, you really have
24 to justify why that seat is no longer being
25 represented at the table. Did we learn

1 something that it wasn't important? So the
2 advice was given --

3 JOAN FRANKEVICH: We had that
4 discussion, didn't we, in February? We kind
5 of went through different seats and do we need
6 the seat. I thought we came to a consensus as
7 a group to just leave it at the status quo.

8 MIRIAM VALENTINE: I had asked --
9 shared that conversation with this person in
10 D.C. and just said, so here's one seat which
11 was tourism that we'd also talked about. How
12 would we go about doing it? Does it need to
13 stay at 12? The advice was, if we find that a
14 stakeholder group is not being represented to
15 the benefit of the discussion, it's easy to
16 add a seat, but you really have to be
17 thoughtful about removing a seat. In all
18 fairness to the next superintendent or the
19 person who would be taking your thoughts --

20 JOAN FRANKEVICH: We still have a
21 year left, then.

22 MIRIAM VALENTINE: It's until
23 September next year. There's time. If you'll
24 notice in your appointment letters, some of
25 the seats run through that time. Claire's I

1 just got. Claire is now official and hers
2 runs, I think, through 2014. She got added
3 like two years. So it's not like a hard -- it
4 strikes me it's not a hard, fast deadline. It
5 still could continue.

6 ERIKA BENNETT: So do we want to
7 look out into the future? What do we need to
8 do between now and another meeting?

9 Obviously, Joan, you have this
10 vetting of your idea that you'd like to get
11 done, then a north side best practice aviation
12 working group would like to sort of talk about
13 things.

14 TOM GEORGE: Yeah.

15 ERIKA BENNETT: Those are the two
16 work groups that need to -- what would those
17 work groups bring back to the next meeting?
18 Either a yea or nay or this is what we came up
19 with, Joan?

20 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Probably just
21 some ideas, reporting on what we found out and
22 if we get that far, a possible scenario.

23 ERIKA BENNETT: Okay.

24 JOAN FRANKEVICH: I think it's an
25 idea that needs a lot of discussion.

1 ERIKA BENNETT: Aviation working
2 group, sort of what works, what didn't work.

3 TOM GEORGE: Yeah. If we feel
4 there's a need to make any specific tweaks to
5 any of the best practices.

6 ERIKA BENNETT: Administratively,
7 Miriam, what would you feel would be the next
8 step now that we've finally gotten a Fact
9 Sheet?

10 MIRIAM VALENTINE: So I'm going
11 to print this out and Sally and I are going
12 to --

13 ERIKA BENNETT: Don't leave
14 without me downloading it. I have the edits
15 done.

16 MIRIAM VALENTINE: Sally and I
17 are going to pass it out at a training session
18 in a couple weeks.

19 ERIKA BENNETT: For our next
20 meeting, how far out does it need to be so we
21 have something to meet about?

22 MIRIAM VALENTINE: We usually
23 have a meeting in, like, February and then if
24 there's -- February/March, and if there's a
25 need to squeeze -- if there's specific work

1 that the Council wants to complete, we have to
2 get it done before mid-April because you're
3 bumping into everybody who's running a
4 business. So we could look at, depending on
5 what you think your workload is or what you
6 would like to talk about, we can either go for
7 March which allows you to have a working group
8 meeting like in February, which is always
9 good. So March. But then that really doesn't
10 have a meeting again until the fall. It's
11 quite a break.

12 TOM GEORGE: I'd suggest we look
13 at maybe a mid to late February meeting, I
14 think, to give the new superintendent a little
15 time, but not too long, to get their feet on
16 the ground and then meet with this group.

17 MIRIAM VALENTINE: Then the
18 only --

19 ERIKA BENNETT: Then another
20 meeting in April?

21 TOM GEORGE: We'd leave the
22 option for that, if needed.

23 BRIAN OKONEK: We might not need
24 it.

25 JOAN FRANKEVICH: We're not --

1 unlike previous years, we're not really
2 working on something new.

3 ERIKA BENNETT: Do we have any
4 big requests of the Park Service that can be
5 compiled over the winter to bring to us for
6 more information at the next meeting?

7 NANCY BALE: We might have some
8 soundscape location suggestions again. I'd
9 have to think about it.

10 ERIKA BENNETT: If we were to
11 have another soundscape location
12 recommendation or request, when should we try
13 to get that to you if it's plausible?

14 DAVYD BETCHKAL: Definitely
15 appreciate those around March, April, that
16 time of year. I'm doing all my permitting.
17 Appreciate getting those in about that time.
18 Keeps things running smooth.

19 ERIKA BENNETT: Okay. So I guess
20 if there are any other high spots that we as a
21 Council want to have more cumulative data on,
22 then we should think about that as well. If
23 we're thinking about February and we're --
24 were we going for Fridays?

25 NANCY BALE: I like Fridays. I

1 don't have a school calendar with me.

2 ERIKA BENNETT: I have a school
3 calendar. There's a President's Day in there.

4 JOAN FRANKEVICH: It's hard,
5 especially for Suzanne with three school-aged
6 children, to have a nonday, so it would be --

7 ERIKA BENNETT: February 18th is
8 a no school day, which is a Monday.

9 JOAN FRANKEVICH: That's a
10 three-day holiday.

11 ERIKA BENNETT: And there's
12 parent/teacher conferences on the 21st and
13 22nd. So Friday the 22nd is a parent/teacher
14 conference.

15 NANCY BALE: That's a good day
16 for me. Probably it should be checked with
17 Suzanne. March 1st works for me.

18 MIKE YORKE: That's running right
19 up against the Iditarod.

20 TOM GEORGE: Why don't we come up
21 with a couple of dates and circulate them
22 around to people that aren't here and let
23 them --

24 ERIKA BENNETT: February 15th or
25 22nd.

1 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Those are two
2 Fridays?

3 ERIKA BENNETT: Yes.

4 MIRIAM VALENTINE: So the only
5 challenges, if you choose February 22nd,
6 March, April, if you wanted yet another
7 meeting, there's a 60-day period of time. So
8 I'd need to know like the 22nd that we were --
9 the soonest we could have it would be
10 April 22nd for the next one, which means you
11 either consider the second date right now so
12 that we kind of notice it.

13 NANCY BALE: April 22nd is not so
14 bad.

15 BRIAN OKONEK: It's tight for all
16 the operators. I mean, they're gearing up.
17 Everything is happening then. I think we
18 might not need a second meeting in the spring
19 with what we've got on the plate right now.

20 ERIKA BENNETT: There's not a
21 whole lot of information being requested that
22 needs to be gathered and put together for us
23 anymore.

24 MIKE YORKE: So we're presently
25 looking at the 22nd?

1 ERIKA BENNETT: The 15th or the
2 22nd of February.

3 TOM GEORGE: I would say let's
4 not worry about another meeting there and at
5 that February meeting, if anything, focus on
6 some kind of a summer listening activity and
7 give it more energy and therefore more
8 participation than we were able to do this
9 year. Now we have the time window available
10 in terms of your notification.

11 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Nice to have a
12 summer activity with a new superintendent.
13 Good way to get to know them.

14 ERIKA BENNETT: Brian, did you
15 want to discuss further with the new
16 superintendent about this sort of general idea
17 of --

18 BRIAN OKONEK: Yeah, and with
19 Suzanne here.

20 ERIKA BENNETT: Right. Having
21 the lower -- keep the low low and keep sort
22 of --

23 BRIAN OKONEK: Yeah.

24 ERIKA BENNETT: -- overlap --
25 like that one hashed out where it was over the

1 top of these hard and fast lines that were
2 part of the 2006 Backcountry Management Plan.
3 You want to plan on presenting a more solid
4 sort of idea?

5 BRIAN OKONEK: Sure.

6 ERIKA BENNETT: Okay.

7 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Something we
8 might want to think about for the next meeting
9 too, since a lot of people are missing this
10 meeting, is maybe just begin with kind of a
11 brief update. Claire has not really been with
12 us. Maybe some sort of overview of where we
13 are to date, some of our accomplishments. I'm
14 thinking mostly of things people have missed
15 that have been discussed at this meeting and
16 recently.

17 TOM GEORGE: One thing I was
18 supposed to have worked on was, again, pulling
19 together web site stuff. So I think let's put
20 that back on the calendar and try and do it.
21 We'll try not to forget it this time. I think
22 that would be a step in that direction, Joan,
23 at least kind of pulling together some of the
24 things that have happened.

25 NANCY BALE: Maybe think about

1 our future, if we should disband, what we want
2 to set in motion.

3 TOM GEORGE: I hope we're
4 thinking about that every meeting we have.

5 ERIKA BENNETT: It would be nice
6 to come back and see a little bit more about
7 -- I see the numbers on the screen about our
8 south side best practices. They're still out
9 there. Hopefully they're being used and not
10 being exceeded. This year we didn't get any
11 real feedback on exceedances, so I'm assuming
12 that's a good thing.

13 TOM GEORGE: I think we wanted to
14 get through last summer and now a working
15 group meeting to review with the operators at
16 a more technical level the north side best
17 practice area. But once we either confirm
18 that that's okay as it is or make any tweaks,
19 it might be necessary to improve it. I think
20 we're probably ready to actually start
21 targeting more the second and third tier of
22 outreach to the aviation community, like to
23 your stakeholders, commercial operators that
24 don't operate routinely but have a higher
25 probability of opportunity to fly over the

1 park and also the GA users. We know the park
2 has an excellent aviation map already. There
3 may be a number of ways to try and build
4 materials. We haven't wanted to rush to build
5 those materials until we see there's some
6 stability of those best practices.

7 ERIKA BENNETT: And the best
8 practices are working.

9 TOM GEORGE: Yeah, and they're
10 working. So we aren't putting something out
11 and then changing it tomorrow. I mean, it's
12 easy to change it with a small handful of
13 operators that can all talk to their staff
14 very quickly, but it's something else to
15 change it once you've put it in motion at a
16 much bigger level. So my own sense is we're
17 getting to close to actually making more of a
18 priority of now reaching out to some of the
19 other audiences. A lot of that can be done at
20 working group. It isn't going to take the
21 whole Council to do it.

22 ERIKA BENNETT: That's where I
23 get to talk to my constituents. All right.
24 Well, we are --

25 BRIAN OKONEK: I would be

1 interested in the figure for the Ruth.

2 ERIKA BENNETT: The 180 landings?

3 BRIAN OKONEK: Yeah. To figure
4 how that came, that number --

5 MIKE YORKE: If you took the six
6 per flight that was up there times 180, you
7 come up with about 520 people. I think more
8 than 520 people did that. I'm in agreement.

9 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: You're
10 concerned about the annual number of scenic
11 landings on the Ruth being not accurate.

12 BRIAN OKONEK: Yeah. I think
13 it's very, very low.

14 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: I can follow
15 up with Andrew on that.

16 BRIAN OKONEK: Okay.

17 NANCY BALE: You also had a
18 question that it didn't pencil out the total
19 number of --

20 ERIKA BENNETT: The in and the
21 out should have been 2400, but the total was
22 only like 2,000.

23 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: That was a
24 different --

25 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Here's 2009

1 data, glacier landings by location. Ruth
2 Amphitheater, 1,389, 112 air taxi --

3 ERIKA BENNETT: The 180 is
4 supposedly just scenic passengers, but
5 actually the scenic passengers at the Ruth
6 should be a lot higher than the --

7 BRIAN OKONEK: Far exceed the
8 people that overnight there.

9 DAVE SCHIROKAUER: Was there
10 another data point that was in question
11 unrelated to the Ruth?

12 ERIKA BENNETT: No. The number
13 of landings this year, the number of scenic
14 glacier landings seemed very low.

15 BRIAN OKONEK: The other thing
16 we've never gotten a handle on is how many
17 scenic flights overfly the park without
18 landing, both from concession operators and
19 nonconcession. I mean, there's -- we have no
20 idea. We're using the sound monitoring to
21 figure out if there's disturbance or anything,
22 but as far as safety is concerned, those
23 overall numbers and trends, I think, would be
24 important to know.

25 MIRIAM VALENTINE: Brian, nobody

1 needs to report that to us or to the FAA.

2 There isn't a requirement to report it.

3 BRIAN OKONEK: Right, I realize
4 that.

5 MIRIAM VALENTINE: So we'd have
6 to think about -- you know, the Park Service,
7 our hope was in showing, well, this is how our
8 administrative stuff works and being
9 transparent around in that, which we hadn't
10 done to the extent that Britta has been able
11 to do it for us, showing that, yeah, it takes
12 a little bit of work, but it gives you great
13 information that our -- the known air tour
14 operators who do most of the scenic flights
15 around, we would feel comfortable in even just
16 cumulatively sharing our information. We did
17 X amount of flights, but it's not out --

18 BRIAN OKONEK: Some of them are
19 already gathering the same data that you're
20 gathering and some of them aren't equipped to
21 do it yet. They would have to pool it so that
22 we don't know who's flying where and who's
23 flying how many and all that, but I think it
24 would be very interesting information.

25 MIRIAM VALENTINE: Do you think

1 that one of the working groups that the
2 Council would consider kind of forming is to
3 one on one -- because it's really a trust
4 factor. Would you trust us? And who would
5 they trust?

6 TOM GEORGE: No, this is not
7 something to set up a working group for.
8 There have been two attempts among the
9 principal operators already to try and get
10 exactly what we're talking about by setting up
11 a blind receptacle, getting people to submit
12 stuff and report out a pool thing. It didn't
13 work for whatever reasons. Again, it's
14 competition, sensitive information. There's a
15 lot of dynamics going on.

16 So there have been two efforts.
17 I think Tim would be willing to try it again,
18 but he's pretty discouraged because he put a
19 fair amount of work into trying to set it up
20 in the first place. There's nobody from that
21 stakeholder group present at the meeting today
22 to really articulate that. Among other
23 things, I think maybe have the discussion when
24 those folks are present.

25 So the other approach, if you

1 really want the information and if that
2 approach isn't working, is you can invest some
3 survey money into estimating that and that
4 would be another approach to get it. It would
5 cost you money. From having thought about
6 this and looked at it -- yeah, I mean, I'd
7 like that information too, but those are the
8 two principal approaches I can see. One we
9 have not been able to socially get to happen,
10 and it might be worth some discussion one on
11 one with people to see if there's anything
12 that can be done to improve upon that.

13 ERIKA BENNETT: There is a way to
14 find out gross numbers of flight plans filed
15 out of Talkeetna and it takes effort. I think
16 I could talk to you about how to start the
17 process, but if we found out just -- I mean,
18 it's going to include all flight plans that
19 originated at the Talkeetna flight service.
20 That is a recordable number. It doesn't vet
21 anything, but if you take all flight plans
22 from blank to blank date period and you sort
23 of look at how many flight plans were filed
24 that originated and ended in Talkeetna versus
25 how many flights we already know existed, you

1 can make a general synopsis of, okay, well --

2 TOM GEORGE: Probably the more
3 rigorous way to do it is you hire a researcher
4 to go sit at -- not just the Talkeetna
5 airport, it's at least three airports, with a
6 clipboard, and for some period of hours for
7 some number of days note how many flights go
8 out and based on the size of the aircraft,
9 make an estimate of the number of people and
10 you use statistics and run that number
11 forward. I mean, that's the social science
12 activity. If you're serious about it -- I
13 mean, trying to go and analyze flight plans
14 and figure out who's going where isn't a very
15 productive way to go.

16 ERIKA BENNETT: I'd say
17 90 percent of the flight plans filed out of
18 Talkeetna that begin and end in Talkeetna from
19 April through September --

20 JOAN FRANKEVICH: I've been
21 trying to figure this out for a while in my
22 head. There's eight operators. Easily ten
23 flights a day, on a sunny day 80 to 100. I've
24 thrown that out; nobody's disputed it. At the
25 meeting we had with the ICEMAP folks I was

1 talking about earlier, Randy threw out a
2 number on a busy day of about 140. He said --
3 he was trying to tell the Air Force folks the
4 congestion. He was saying up to 20, 30 planes
5 at a time in the McKinley area. So it's not
6 based on anything but anecdotal evidence, but
7 I'd say easily between 100 and 150 on a busy
8 day gives us a ball-park figure. Because when
9 I went into this not knowing, is it 15? Is it
10 300? If we could throw that number around and
11 just get concurrences, that's all I need. I
12 don't need to know there's 123 on average
13 every day. I need to know, are we talking 15?
14 Are we talking 500? Are we talking 140? Is
15 that a good number on a sunny day? 80 on a
16 cloudy day? That kind of ball-park.

17 MIRIAM VALENTINE: Joan, would
18 you be requesting the information from folks
19 to say so that we can share it to describe the
20 safety concern? Because, Brian, if I was an
21 operator, why do you want the information?

22 BRIAN OKONEK: We need to know
23 what the trends are and we need to know --
24 we're talking about the integrity of the park
25 and we have no idea how many planes are flying

1 over it at all, and we haven't known for six
2 years. Nobody has known before then. We
3 don't know if it's gone, from 1975 to now, if
4 it's gone like this or what.

5 JOAN FRANKEVICH: I've always
6 felt like we're making decisions with one hand
7 tied behind our back.

8 MIKE YORKE: You realize why
9 there's reluctance to give you that
10 information.

11 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Competition.

12 MIRIAM VALENTINE: How about you
13 think about a more compelling reason from the
14 operator's perspective. Because what Joan
15 just described, as you were at the ICEMAP
16 meeting, you were trying to describe the
17 situation to this contractor. Then I would
18 want to give that to you because that's my
19 safety now. That isn't just like you trying
20 to figure out trends that may limit you in the
21 future. You're asking for information that
22 affects my safety potentially now. Do you see
23 the difference?

24 TOM GEORGE: I want to hear how
25 you're making the case for safety out of this.

1 What's the safety issue that you think is --

2 BRIAN OKONEK: I'll tell you
3 what. I know the terrain very well up there.
4 When I'm a passenger on a plane and I listen
5 to the air traffic going on, it scares me to
6 death because none of those pilots aren't
7 saying exactly where they're at; they're
8 guestimating at a ball-park about three miles.
9 Somebody says, oh, yeah, we just flew over
10 Glacier Point. They go, well, that's exactly
11 where I'm at. Now, are they on the other side
12 of the glacier, or are they above me 5,000
13 feet, or are they up by Fake Peak, or are they
14 up the gorge, or are they down the glacier?

15 TOM GEORGE: Are how are you
16 going to use the information you just talked
17 about to address that issue?

18 BRIAN OKONEK: Maybe there needs
19 to be some more standards for flying around.
20 When you have that many airplanes flying
21 around one mountain massive, there's an
22 accident waiting to happen.

23 NANCY BALE: Will technology
24 start helping? Most planes now use tracking
25 devices for their own internal safety of their

1 particular employees, so they would probably
2 willing to sign on to an integrated system.

3 TOM GEORGE: Well, there is an
4 integrated system in our future. It's not
5 there yet. It's called ADSP. We've had
6 briefings on it in this forum.

7 BRIAN OKONEK: There's no place
8 else like this in the state where there is
9 this incredible conversion going on to fly
10 around one point.

11 MIKE YORKE: There's one place
12 and it is in the state and it's Juneau, but
13 the same things exist, Brian. No question
14 about it.

15 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Miriam, so are
16 you saying we don't need this information, or
17 are you looking for a way to make a palatable
18 for people to share it?

19 MIRIAM VALENTINE: Right. I
20 think you really need to be sincere about why
21 you want the information and recognize the
22 audience that you're going to be speaking to
23 and a hesitancy about just sharing
24 information.

25 JOAN FRANKEVICH: We don't need

1 to share it beyond this group if that's what
2 you're referring to.

3 MIKE YORKE: If something goes
4 public, it goes beyond the group.

5 NANCY BALE: There is a capacity
6 number out there for airplanes as well, just
7 like there may be a capacity number for buses.
8 That's a concept that is an acceptable
9 concept, isn't it?

10 MIKE YORKE: Yes.

11 NANCY BALE: But it has to be
12 based on something that everybody can buy
13 into. I think safety is a good approach.

14 MIKE YORKE: Here's a thought. I
15 have a reason to be in Talkeetna on Monday.
16 I'm going to go see five of the operators.
17 I'll ask them if they'd be interested in
18 giving us the numbers, or me, and I'd pull
19 them all together just for the purpose of
20 safety. That's all. I'll use the explanation
21 that you did for the military, the ice men or
22 whatever we might call them.

23 TOM GEORGE: I think it's late in
24 the day.

25 ERIKA BENNETT: I think it's time

1 to adjourn.

2 MIKE YORKE: I'll do it if you'd
3 like me to.

4 JOAN FRANKEVICH: Love you to.

5 MIKE YORKE: Okay. I'll report
6 back.

7 NANCY BALE: See, the elephant in
8 the room is now starting to take shape again.

9 MIKE YORKE: I'll be glad to do
10 that.

11 ERIKA BENNETT: Can we get a
12 motion to adjourn here?

13 BRIAN OKONEK: I make a motion to
14 adjourn.

15 (Meeting adjourned at 4:38 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I, LESLIE J. KNISLEY, Notary Public for the State of Alaska, and Shorthand Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing proceedings were taken before me at the time and place herein set forth; that the proceedings were reported stenographically by me and later transcribed by computer transcription; that the foregoing is a true record of the proceedings taken at that time; and that I am not a party to, nor do I have any interest in, the outcome of the action herein contained.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal this 20th day of November, 2012.

LESLIE J. KNISLEY
Notary Public, State of Alaska
My commission expires: 06/06/16