

Unit 23 Working Group Meeting April 23-24, 2009 – Kotzebue, Alaska Meeting Summary

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1.0 Introduction

The Unit 23 Working Group held its fourth meeting on April 23-24, 2009, in Kotzebue, Alaska, at the Northwest Arctic Borough (NWAB) Assembly Chambers. The Working Group was formed in 2008 to discuss fall hunting conflicts between local hunters, nonlocal hunters and commercial operators (guides, transporters) in Game Management Unit (GMU) 23, in northwest Alaska.¹ The group is working together by consensus, to develop solutions to fall hunting conflicts. The group's advisory recommendations are sent to regulatory boards, land and wildlife management agencies, and others to evaluate and consider for implementation. Working Group members are listed in Attachment 1. Jan Caulfield facilitated the meeting,² assisted by Mark Burch of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G).

The objectives of the April 2009 meeting were to:

- Review Unit 23 Working Group recommendations to date – and progress that is being made on those recommendations.
- Discuss proposals for changes in wildlife harvest regulations that might be appropriate to address user conflicts.
- Hear public comment (in person and through toll-free call-in).
- Discuss next steps and schedule for Working Group.

Section 2.0 presents new consensus agreements reached by the Working Group at this meeting and follow-up assignments. Section 3.0 is a general summary of the discussion,

¹ See Unit 23 project web site for additional information and previous meeting summaries:
www.wildlife.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=planning.unit23

² Jan Caulfield, Unit 23 Facilitator, 114 S. Franklin St., Ste. 202, Juneau, AK 99801, 907-523-4610,
janc@gci.net

including the status of recommendations and assignments from previous meetings; Section 4.0 gives notice of future meeting dates. Public comments are summarized in Section 5.0.

All Unit 23 Working Group meetings are open to the public. The April meeting was broadcast on public radio station KOTZ (including web broadcast) from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on the first day, April 23. Attachment 2 lists members of the public and agency staff who attended and/or provided comments. The meeting agenda is in Attachment 3.

The Working Group plans to meet next via teleconference in October 2009 and in Kotzebue in January 2010.

2.0 Consensus Recommendations – Next Steps and Assignments

At its April meeting, the Working Group reached consensus agreement on four new recommendations to address fall hunting conflicts in Unit 23. Section 3.2 below gives an update on the status and assignments related to Working Group recommendations from earlier meetings.

2.1 Amend and Submit Proposals to Board of Game and Federal Subsistence Board for Noatak Controlled Use Area Dates

At its October 2008 and January 2009 meetings, the Working Group had agreed to propose to the Board of Game to extend the dates of the closure to the use of aircraft for big game hunting in the Noatak Controlled Use Area (CUA).

In April, the Working Group agreed to submit a proposal to the Board of Game to amend the dates of the CUA to August 15-September 30 (from the current dates of August 25-September 15).³ The fall caribou migration has become more variable and generally later. Lengthening the dates of the Noatak CUA is necessary to accomplish its original objective of separating boat and airplane hunters during the fall hunting season. Enoch Mitchell and Hazel Smith reconfirmed the importance of this change in the CUA to the people of Noatak. If this proposal is approved by the Board of Game, the revised dates for the Noatak CUA would take effect for the 2010 hunting season.

Assignment:

- Jan Caulfield will submit the Noatak CUA regulatory proposals to the Board of Game (due August 28) and the Federal Subsistence Board (due April 30).⁴

2.2 Submit Proposal to Board of Game Requiring Mandatory Education for Pilots Flying in Unit 23 for Hunting (excluding guides)

The Working Group agreed to submit a proposal to the Board of Game to require a one-time education session for all transporter pilots and private pilots (non-commercial) flying in Unit 23 for the purpose of hunting big game. Transporter pilots will be required to meet with the ADF&G in Kotzebue or with someone designated by ADF&G, and will be required to review the information with their clients. Private pilots will be able to take

³ The proposal will also be submitted to the Federal Subsistence Board for their consideration in January 2010, so the state and federal regulations regarding the Noatak CUA will be consistent.

⁴ Hazel Smith is assisting Noatak with submitting proposals proposing the same regulation changes.

the course on-line. All participants will receive a certificate documenting completion of the one-time education session. Education topics should include:

- Region's culture and traditional way of life; importance of subsistence to local residents
- Wildlife harvest regulations
- Meat care
- Sensitive locations to avoid – (*See recommendation 2.3 below*)
- Land status – including Native allotments, lands not open to hunting, etc. (*Shelly Jacobson, BLM, will provide updated land status maps*)
- Behaviors that avoid conflict
- Other relevant topics

If approved by the Board of Game, the regulation would take effect for the 2010 hunting season.

In discussion, the Working Group emphasized that if this mandatory education requirement does not adequately reduce conflicts, it might be necessary to take other regulatory action (such as a permit hunt) in the future to manage the numbers, density and/or distribution of hunters in Unit 23.

Assignments:

- Jan Caulfield will draft the regulatory proposal, distribute it to the Working Group for comment and submit it to the Board of Game (due August 28). Jan will also consult with Jim Dau, Dan Stevenson (NPS) and the other federal agencies regarding the content of the education sessions.
- If the proposal is approved, ADF&G will implement the education requirement through face-to-face consultations in the region with ADF&G or Public Safety staff (for pilots providing commercial transport services) and an on-line option (for private pilots). How certification will be demonstrated and enforced must also be addressed. The federal agencies have agreed to help to implement the program (particularly in the first year), if ADF&G requests their help.

2.3 Identify Sensitive Areas Commercial Operators and Non Local Hunters Should Avoid

The Working Group agreed that commercial operators and nonlocal hunters should be informed about sensitive areas where they should avoid taking clients, landing aircraft, flying at low elevations, setting up camps, and hunting. In 2009, this information could be included in pre-season briefings with land management agencies when permits are issued to operators, and in pre-season information packets for commercial operators and hunters. Beginning in 2010, the information would be included in the mandatory education for pilots (see 2.2, above), as well as in pre-season information packets. Examples of sensitive areas include areas near villages that are important for local hunting (e.g. along river corridors), usual local hunting camp sites, and near Native allotments. Areas could be adjusted annually, as necessary.

(Important Note: These identified sensitive areas are not the only places where local people hunt. Species know no boundaries and local people use all of GMU 23 to hunt food for their families and communities. However, there is value in identifying key areas

that commercial operators and nonlocal hunters can avoid to reduce the potential for conflict.)

Assignment:

- Lee Anne Ayres (lead), in coordination with Pete Schaeffer, Hazel Smith, Enoch Mitchell, Reggie Cleveland, Joe Schuster, and George Helfrich. This group will consult with others as needed, including local residents and commercial operators, when discussing specific areas of the region.

2.4 Improve Informal Communications between Local Hunters and Commercial Operators

The Working Group recommended that one or more people be identified in each community who would serve as a VHF contact for commercial service providers during the hunting season. This type of informal VHF radio communication between guides, transporters, clients and local community hunters could help avoid conflicts and build relationships.

Assignment:

- Hazel Smith will work with communities to identify local contacts. Contact information will be provided to commercial operators in pre-season briefings.

3.0 Summary of Working Group Discussion

This section provides a brief summary of Working Group discussion at the April 23-24, 2009 meeting. (See Agenda in Attachment 3).

3.1 Opening Discussion

The meeting began with introduction of Working Group members and people in attendance. Jan Caulfield, Facilitator, reviewed the meeting objectives and agenda.

During an informal opening discussion, the Working Group discussed the importance of youth hunter education and firearms safety in the region, including involving respected local hunters. It was noted that there is not a shooting range in Kotzebue, but that the Air Force is getting close to transferring a facility to the City of Kotzebue. Charlotte Westing of ADF&G will pursue youth hunter education and firearms safety; the NWAB indicated it will help.

Another discussion point / suggestion was to make game bags available in Kotzebue. It was suggested that this could be a fundraiser for school / youth activities.

3.2 Discussion of proposed changes in GMU 23 wildlife harvest regulations

One of the main purposes of the April meeting was to discuss whether proposal(s) for changes in state wildlife harvest regulations should be submitted to the Board of Game for their consideration at the November 2009 Board meeting. The Working Group discussed two main proposals:

- Change dates of Noatak CUA

- Consider whether there was need for other regulatory proposal(s) to address hunting conflicts in Unit 23

Noatak CUA – As discussed in section 2.1 above, the Working Group reached consensus on a recommendation to propose a change in the dates of the Noatak CUA to August 15 – September 30, with no changes to the CUA boundaries. This proposal will be submitted to the Board of Game and the Federal Subsistence Board.

The Noatak IRA Council had suggested a timeframe of September 1 – October 30. However, the Working Group recommended the August 15 start date to ensure that if caribou move through the area in late August (as they did in 2008), aircraft use for hunting would not disturb the migration or hunters accessing the area by boat. Ending the restriction on September 30 is supported by past harvest data, which shows very little nonlocal hunting in Unit 23 in October. The group noted that it would be best to have dates that could stay in regulation for the long-term, rather than be frequently readjusted. (Note: Following the meeting, Hazel Smith and Enoch Mitchell explained the Working Group’s recommendation to the Noatak community, who agreed to support the revised dates of August 15-September 30.)

Other Regulatory Proposal(s) – As discussed in section 2.2 above, the Working Group reached consensus to submit a proposal to the Board of Game to require a one-time education session for all private and commercial pilots flying in Unit 23 for the purpose of big game hunting (excluding guides).

Before it reached this agreement, the Working Group considered a report from a subgroup that had been formed (at the January WG meeting) to consider establishing an *interim* CUA for the Squirrel and Aggie River areas (in GUA 23-06), because of the high use of these areas during fall caribou hunting. The subgroup met via teleconference on March 18 and April 10. It decided that a CUA would not be an effective solution for a number of reasons:

- Restricting use in a new CUA would likely displace hunters and move conflicts in an uncontrolled manner to other areas, something the Working Group is working to avoid.
- The Board of Game is reluctant to establish new CUAs.
- A CUA would close guides and transporters out of certain areas in GUA-6 that they use intensively now, which would heavily impact these businesses.
- A CUA is more effective for addressing on-the-ground conflicts between different types of users (e.g., high numbers of nonlocal hunters in areas that are also heavily used by local hunters.) That is generally not the issue in GUA 6.

Instead, the subgroup presented two different options for Working Group discussion, presenting an analysis of the pros/cons of each option.⁵

1. Provide for a staggered start to the hunting season, creating an earlier

⁵ The written subgroup report to the WG can be found on pages 6-11 of the April 2009 meeting packet, which is posted on the Unit 23 WG project web site.

“subsistence” hunt and a later “general” hunt in GUAs that have the greatest conflict (e.g., GUA 6).

2. Establish a caribou permit hunt in each of the seven GUAs in Unit 23 for hunters who want to be able to take a set of caribou antlers out of Unit 23. (Such a registration or drawing caribou permit would provide a general mechanism to regulate the numbers and distribution of hunters who do not reside in Unit 23.)

The subgroup had determined that a staggered season (option #1) would not likely be feasible or effective for caribou hunting in Unit 23, since the timing of herd migration is becoming more variable and cannot be predicted. Managing the caribou harvest in season (e.g., through emergency order) is not practical for agency managers or for commercial operators and clients. The Working Group agreed that this option should not be pursued.

The Working Group discussed the following points regarding the idea of establishing a permit hunt for caribou in Unit 23 (option #2):

Points in favor:

- A permit hunt would provide a tool for managing the total number and distribution of hunters in Unit 23 who wish to keep the antlers from the caribou they harvested (which would generally be hunters that do not reside in Unit 23). This could reduce conflict in high use areas and address the concern that conflicts will increase if the number of nonlocal hunters increases without a limit (e.g., if a new high volume operator came into the unit, or low caribou herd numbers elsewhere in Alaska attracts more nonlocal hunter to Unit 23.)
- A unit-wide permit hunt could be managed to ensure that lowering nonlocal hunting use in one area would not simply displace high use (and potential conflicts) to other areas of the unit. (There is a concern that limits placed through agency management plans may cause this problem; see section 3.2).
- These permit hunts would likely avoid the need for management agencies to set limits to commercial operations in their individual management plans.
- Local hunters are not able to move their hunting to other areas in Unit 23 to avoid crowding or conflicts; they hunt within more restricted areas (e.g., river corridors) because they cannot afford to travel longer distances. Permit hunts could distribute nonlocal hunters to avoid conflicts with important local hunting areas.

Points opposed:

- The Board of Game would not likely support a restriction on the number of hunters or on hunting opportunity through permit hunts, since there is not a conservation concern with the caribou herd.
- Not all Working Group members believed that the densities of nonlocal hunters in Unit 23 or in specific GUAs were high enough to justify limiting the number of nonlocal hunters in the unit, or to redistribute hunters among the GUAs.
- Commercial operators were concerned that establishing permit hunts for another big game species in Unit 23 would have a major impact on the economic viability of guiding businesses (drawing permits are already in place for sheep, moose and bear).

- Some Working Group members believed that if the state is going to manage the number and density of commercial operators and their clients, that should be done through the BGCSB – not through permit hunts regulated by the Board of Game.

Ultimately, the Working Group did not reach consensus on a recommendation to propose a permit hunt for caribou in Unit 23.

The Working Group did reach consensus on requiring mandatory education and improved communication to reduce and avoid user conflicts (see sections 2.2 – 2.4, above). Several members advocated that this approach should be used before more restrictive regulations are put into place. However, the Working Group also emphasized that if increased education and communication does not adequately reduce conflicts, it may be necessary to take other regulatory action in the future.

3.2 Working Group Recommendations to Date – Update on Status

The following work has been done to follow through on Working Group recommendations from previous meetings (see also the meeting summary from the January 30-31, 2009, meeting for additional details):

- Recommend BGCSB Have Statutory Authority to Regulate Transporters. Representative Joule is preparing to submit a House Bill to the Alaska State Legislature for consideration in 2010. The BGCSB and APHA are supportive of this legislation.
Assignment: The following Working Group members are interested in working on this recommendation: Pete Schaeffer (lead), Cliff Judkins, Hazel Smith, Joe Schuster, and Charlie Gregg. Jan Caulfield and Jim Dau will assist with drafting talking points with back-up data to present to legislators.
- Comments to BGCSB at March 2009 meeting. The Working Group commented to the BGCSB regarding the following: (1) need BGCSB regulation of transporters and change in definition of “air taxi,” (2) State-established guide concession areas should provide a means to exclude specific areas from commercial use, when appropriate; (3) need to address loop holes that weaken the Board’s ability to manage the number and intensity of commercial services in a GUA, and (4) need guides and transporters to provide specific locations (latitude/longitude) and dates of guide camps and spike camps, and hunter drop off and pick up locations. The BGCSB replied; they support the change in air taxi definition and have asked guides and transporters to voluntarily provide latitude/longitude information in 2009. (Note that the federal agencies will also require this latitude/longitude information for operators permitted on federal lands, beginning in 2009.) BGCSB member Ted Spraker said that the Working Group’s letter was well received at the BGCSB’s meeting; the Board is very interested in regulating transporters in the future, but is first completing its regulatory program for guides. BGCSB member Raymond Stoney said that the Working Group should closely coordinate with the BGCSB, since the Board has the right tools for management of commercial services.
Assignment: Jan Caulfield and ADF&G staff will coordinate with BGCSB staff to improve the commercial operators database for 2009 and in the future, including

getting the latitude/longitude data from guides and transporters for operations in Unit 23.

- Update on DNR Guide Concession Program. Dianna Leinberger reported that in March the BGCSB had submitted its recommendations for concession areas, number of guides within concession areas, and selection criteria for the guide concession program to DNR and that DNR's draft program and regulations for the program will be open to public comment. Public meetings are planned for Fairbanks, Tok, Anchorage, Dillingham, Juneau and possibly Kotzebue. DNR has tentatively planned to adopt regulations by the end of 2009 and implement the guide concession program in 2011.⁶

Assignment: Jan Caulfield will write a letter to Clark Cox, DNR, requesting that a public meeting also be held in Kotzebue.

- Federal & State Agency Coordination – Planning and Management. At the request of the Working Group, the federal land management agencies are working closely to coordinate planning and management to provide an integrated and consistent approach to addressing hunting conflicts on federal land in Unit 23. Updates on progress included:

- Permit Stipulations – The federal agencies have developed a core set of permit conditions that would apply to transporter services in 2009 on federal lands (with each agency adding on stipulations as required). Stipulations that particularly address issues raised at Working Group meetings include requiring lat./long. data for hunter drop-offs/pick-ups; clearly stating that use of Native-owned, Native-selected or other private land is not authorized; recommending minimum aircraft altitude of 2,000 feet; requiring appropriate buffer areas for hunters and camps already on the ground; and requiring minimum 12-inch identification numbers on aircraft.

Assignments: Federal agencies will continue to work together to develop core conditions for guide operations. Dianna Leinberger will research DNR's authorities for managing transporters. (DNR now manages transporters as a "generally allowed use" but the Commissioner may have the authority to require a permit that could include stipulations.)

- Pre-Season Information Packet – For use in 2009, a pre-season information packet will be developed to help businesses educate their clients, comply with regulations and permit conditions, and reduce hunting conflicts. The Working Group brainstormed a possible list of contents (but noted that commercial service providers and hunters may need different packets, tailored to their information needs):
 - Introductory letter from Unit 23 Working Group
 - Local community VHF radio contacts (see 2.4, above)
 - Permit stipulations
 - Hunting Legal / Hunting Smart
 - Land status maps (BLM to provide)

⁶ For more information, contact Clark Cox, DNR, Division of Mining, Land and Water, at clark.cox@alaska.gov, 907-269-8565.

- Meat care poster
- Caribou Trails & recommended reading list (regional / cultural information)
- NANA lands brochure
- Visitor survey form

The group recommended that information packets be printed in hard copy to provide to commercial operators and to have at agency offices / visitor centers. Information should also be accessible on-line at Unit 23 website for hunters to access and review before coming to Unit 23.

Assignment: Lee Anne Ayres, USFWS; Shelly Jacobson, BLM; George Helfrich, NPS; with federal agency staff and consultation with Jim Dau ADF&G. Joe Schuster and Jan Caulfield assist with introductory letter from Working Group.

- Pre-Season Meeting for Communities – Beginning in 2009, the NWAB will sponsor an annual pre-season teleconferenced meeting for the public (including phone connections to communities), so that agencies can tell the public which guides and transporters received permits to work in different areas in Unit 23. The meeting should be broadcast on KOTZ.

Assignment: Charlie Gregg, NWAB, assisted by federal and state agencies.

- Planning – Each of the federal agencies is preparing plans for the lands they manage in Unit 23, which must follow specific processes and timelines and meet different agency mandates. The plans include the NPS Big Game Commercial Services Management Plan, BLM Squirrel River Recreation Management Plan, and USFWS Selawik Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP).

Adrienne Lindholm, NPS, explained the planning process for the Noatak National Preserve Big Game Transportation Services plan. The NPS is conducting its “scoping” for the plan (including public meetings in Noatak and Kotzebue in late May) and will complete a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) with a number of different management alternatives by the beginning of 2010. The following points were made in WG discussion of the NPS plan:

- Hazel Smith suggested that education of local youth in hunting be addressed.
- Enoch Mitchell does not want the plan to discourage hunters from coming to Noatak, since they contribute to the community’s economy. He also suggested that a minimum elevation be established for aircraft.
- George Helfrich emphasized that the plan will manage commercial use of the preserve, but will not restrict individual hunters’ access. He noted that there has been a public complaint about the NPS interim moratorium (in place for 2008 and 2009) on the number of permits issued and the cap on the number of clients.

Shelly Jacobson said that BLM expects to complete a draft EA for the Squirrel River plan by April 2010. At the Working Group’s request, the State DNR has agreed to work with BLM as a cooperator (assigned to Dianna Leinberger, DNR). BLM has asked the NWAB to be a cooperator during the planning process, and will also request government-to-government consultation with the Kiana and Noorvik IRA councils. Shelly will distribute the final results of the Squirrel River use surveys to the WG. She anticipates that BLM will consider “zoning,” that would separate commercial use from areas important for local hunting.

Lee Anne Ayres, USFWS, indicated that the Selawik Refuge CCP will be available for public review in fall 2009. The Refuge has been separating commercial use areas from important local use areas, and will likely continue that practice.

The Working Group discussed the concern that if limits on commercial use are set in only certain areas of GMU 23, the use will move to other areas of the GMU where there are not limits. This may just move the problems around, which the Working Group has sought to avoid. It is essential that the federal agencies coordinate closely with one another and with DNR to avoid this.

One working group member emphasized that the State needs to develop appropriate and effective management tools for managing the number and distribution of commercial providers, such as BGCSB management authority over guides and transporters, and noted that there would likely be local pressure for agencies that do have the authority to place limits, to do so.

- Enforcement Coordination – The federal agencies are increasing their coordination for enforcement and will coordinate closely with the NANA trespass program. (See January 30-31, 2009, Working Group meeting summary for more detailed discussion). The Working Group noted that it is essential that all enforcement officers receive cross-cultural training before they work in the field. Assignment: Federal agencies – Include requirement for cross-cultural training for law enforcement officers in the interagency memorandum of understanding.

4.0 Future Meeting Schedule

The Working Group will meet in October via teleconference, to review the fall hunting season and prepare for the November Board of Game meeting. The next in-person meeting of the Working Group will be in January 2010 in Kotzebue.

Next steps include:

- Follow-through on the regulatory proposals and on-going assignments (see Section 2.0)
- Develop a strategy to support the longer-term recommendations (e.g., the proposed statutory change regarding BGCSB authorities.)
- Draft a status report that communicates the results of the Working Group process and the group's recommendations.

5.0 Public Comments

Public comments were welcomed from people attending the meeting in Kotzebue, as well as through a toll-free telephone line. However, there were no telephone comments at this meeting. The following points were during the public comment period.

An elder from Deering raised concerns about caribou with disease affecting the health of people eating the meat. Jim Dau from ADF&G replied, noting that this type of disease has not caused health problems for humans for many years.

Representatives of the guide and transporter industry that offered comments at the meeting made the following points.⁷

- The guide industry depends upon conservation of wildlife and availability of a harvestable surplus. It is important to have stewardship of wildlife and of the hunting industry, that provides for subsistence needs first.
- The Alaska Professional Hunters Association (APHA) has a long history of supporting the subsistence way of life.
- All representatives of commercial operators that commented at the Working Group meeting support the proposed change in dates of the Noatak CUA. (This included APHA, Northwestern Aviation, and Mountain Monarchs.)
- Encourage the Working Group to recommend increased education for commercial service providers (guides, transporters), rather than additional regulations. Suggest mandatory education to ensure that the businesses and their staff understand the way of life in the region, the culture, sensitive areas to avoid, and behaviors that will avoid conflicts. Increasing education over the past 3-4 years has been very effective.
- It would be beneficial to have more information regarding locations of native allotments/private lands.
- There may be some need for limits on new businesses, such as what the NPS is doing.
- Establishing a permit for hunters of caribou in Unit 23 is not supported by APHA. It is more appropriate for the BGCSB to address numbers and density of guide and transport services. Land use management agencies should also regulate guide and transporter use of public lands through permits.
- Proposals should not refer to a “trophy” hunt – many nonlocal hunters are also very interested in the meat.
- BGCSB was recreated in 2005. The Board is recreating licensing standards for the guide and transporter industry; has adopted very high ethical standards.
- BGCSB and DNR are working jointly on guide concession areas on state lands; they will address transporters next. APHA supports the proposed change to the definition of air taxis (requiring them to be licensed as transporters if they are transporting to and from the field for purposes of hunting.)
- Consider petitioning BGCSB to require some level of penalty for not submitting guide hunt reports and transporter activity reports.
- Suggest that there should be an increase in the license fee for resident hunters, so that Alaskans’ fees contribute more to ADF&G Division of Wildlife Conservation budget.

⁷ Note that at the April 2009 meeting, the people who provided public comments were primarily participants in guiding or transporting businesses (with the exception of one elder from Deering). This has not been the case at other meetings of the Unit 23 Working Group, where many local residents have provided comments in person or through a toll-free telephone call-in (refer to summaries of previous WG meetings for these comments.)

- Concern that a proposal to provide a “staggered season,” with an earlier start for local subsistence hunters might increase conflicts between local and nonlocal hunters by compressing nonlocal hunting into a shorter time period. Also, the weather is worse later in the season and this might cause clients to take greater risks.)
- The proposal to establish a permit hunt would not spread out hunters and would not reduce density within a GUA. Drawing permits are not a commercially viable option. All three species (bear, moose and caribou) would be on a drawing permit basis, which would make clients very uncertain about what types of hunts they would be able to participate in. This would discourage business.
- If a permit hunt is pursued, permits should be allocated to guides and transporters who have operated as conscientious stewards of the land and wildlife resources; not a random drawing permit.
- It is important for clients to behave respectfully when in Kotzebue. Behaviors have improved in the past several years due to education.
- There is no appropriate place in Kotzebue to process and package meat.
- Commercial operators should talk to their clients about not leaving locally desired meat in the field (e.g., the bible, other organs.)

Unit 23 Working Group Membership & Attendance at April 23-24, 2009 Meeting

Name	Affiliations
Lee Anne Ayres	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Kerry Cope (unable to attend)	Big Game Commercial Services Board
Jim Dau	Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Reggie Cleveland (unable to attend)	representing: Upper Kobuk Advisory Committee
Phil Driver	Alaska Professional Hunting Association Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group
Mike Fleagle (unable to attend)	Federal Subsistence Board
Charlie Gregg	Northwest Arctic Borough
George Helfrich	National Park Service
Shelly Jacobson	Bureau of Land Management
Cliff Judkins	Board of Game
Victor Karmun	Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Council Kotzebue Sound Advisory Committee
Dianna Leinberger	Alaska Department of Natural Resources
Enoch Mitchell	Noatak/Kivalina Advisory Committee
Ron Moto, Sr. (unable to attend)	North Seward Peninsula Advisory Committee
Walter Sampson (unable to attend)	NANA Regional Corporation
Pete Schaeffer	Kotzebue Sound Advisory Council
Joe Schuster	Alaska Professional Hunting Association Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group
Hazel Smith	Maniilaq Association
Ted Spraker	Board of Game Big Game Commercial Services Board
Raymond Stoney	Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Council Lower Kobuk Advisory Committee Big Game Commercial Services Board Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group
Alex Whiting	Kotzebue IRA

Public & Agency Attendance List
Unit 23 Working Group Meeting
April 23-24, 2009 – Kotzebue, Alaska

Name	Affiliation
Michael Baffrey	Department of the Interior, Office of the Secretary
Martin Balukas	Mountain Monarchs
Susan Bucknell	ADF&G
David Case	NWAB Attorney
Bobby Fithian	Alaska Professional Hunters Association
Willie Goodwin	National Park Service
Cyrus Harris	Maniilaq
Dave Howell	BLM
Marci Johnson	National Park Service
Jim Kincaid	Northwestern Aviation
Andrew Levi	ADF&G
Adrienne Lindholm	USNPS
Calvin Moto	Regional elders, Deering
Sky Starkey	NWAB Attorney
Clarence Summers	National Park Service
Charlotte Westing	ADF&G

Public comments presented by:

Martin Balukas, Mountain Monarchs
 Bobby Fithian, Alaska Professional Hunters Association
 Jim Kincaid, Northwestern Aviation
 Calvin Moto, Deering

Unit 23 Working Group April 23-24, 2009

Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly Chambers
9:00 am – 5:00 p.m. each day

Public radio station KOTZ will broadcast the meeting from approximately 9:00 a.m. –2:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 23 (only). Tune to 89.9 FM or AM 720, or listen via the web at www.kotz.org

AGENDA

Meeting Objectives

- Review Unit 23 Working Group recommendations to date – and progress that is being made on those recommendations
- Discuss proposals for changes in wildlife harvest regulations
- Public comment session – Thursday, April 23, 1:15-2:15 pm
- Discuss next steps – future schedule for Working Group

Thursday, April 23

Coffee/Refreshments

9:00 a.m. Welcome, Introductions, Working Group Roundtable

- Member & audience introductions
- Review agenda & objectives – Introduce matrix of Working Group recommendations to date
- Working Group roundtable – information, updates, comments on agenda and/or what you want the group to accomplish at this meeting; revise agenda if necessary

9:45 a.m. Discussion of Proposed Wildlife Harvest Regulations Changes

- Noatak Controlled Use Area (CUA) – date change proposal
- Report on subgroup work on proposed regulatory approaches to address conflicts, in other areas of the Unit
- Working Group discussion and recommendations

(Mid-morning break)

12:00 p.m. Lunch

- 1:15 p.m. Public Comment Opportunity – Telephone Call-In & In-person comments**
To provide comments by phone, dial 1-800-315-6338, enter code 23#.
Time per comment will be limited, to ensure opportunity for those who want to speak.
- 2:15 p.m. Break**
- 2:30 p.m. Continue Discussion of Proposed Wildlife Harvest Regulation Changes**
- 5:00 p.m. Adjourn for evening**

Friday, April 23

Coffee/Refreshments

9:00 a.m. Welcome – Announcements

The agenda on Friday will provide time for the following:

- 1) Additional discussion of proposed wildlife harvest regulations, if required**
 - 2) Review Working Group Recommendations to Date – and Status**
 - Recommended statute change regarding State regulation of hunting transporters & definition of air taxis – status, next steps
 - Comments to Big Game Commercial Services Board – Board response
 - Update on BGCSB and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) progress on guide concession program
 - Federal agency coordination – brief update on core permit stipulations, pre-season information provided to permitted guides/transporters, enforcement coordination, federal agency planning projects
 - Request to DNR to participate with Bureau of Land Management in planning for the Squirrel River area
 - Pre-season meeting with communities & agencies to discuss expected activity
 - 3) Discussion of additional topics identified by the Group**
 - 4) Wrap-up / Summary / Schedule**
- 5:00 p.m. Adjourn**