

## CHARTER

### **Unit 23 Working Group**

Approved April 24, 2008

The following Charter was approved by consensus of the Unit 23 Working Group on April 24, 2008, at its meeting in Kotzebue, Alaska.

#### **Background**

Fall hunting in Game Management Unit (GMU) 23 in northwest Alaska has been the subject of conflict between local hunters, non-local hunters and commercial operators (e.g., hunting guides, transporters) since the early 1980s. In 2006, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), Division of Wildlife Conservation, interviewed representatives of different user groups, regional organizations, landowners and land management agencies about Unit 23 user conflicts. Interview results and background information are found in the ADF&G report "*Fall Hunting in Game Management Unit 23: Assessment of Issues and Proposal for a Planning Process.*"<sup>1</sup>

In May 2007, key individuals and agency representatives met in Kotzebue to discuss fall hunting conflicts in Unit 23. Participants at that meeting recommended that a working group be formed to try to cooperatively resolve the conflicts.

#### **Unit 23 Working Group Process**

The Unit 23 Working Group was formed in early 2008 to discuss fall hunting conflicts and to try to agree on solutions to the conflicts. The group expects to meet a number of times, for 3-4 days per meeting, over the next two years in Kotzebue in 2008-2009. A third year may be added if needed. The group's work and advisory recommendations will be included in a final report. While the process may extend two to three years, it is recognized that there is a sense of urgency to begin addressing conflicts as soon as possible.

All Unit 23 working group meetings are open to the public. The public will receive information about the process and will be invited to suggest topics for discussion and ideas to resolve conflicts. (NOTE: A public outreach plan will be discussed and approved by the working group.)

**Mission:** Preserve the Inupiaq values of the region, their hunting, heritage, and ability to take caribou needed, as unrestricted as possible, while providing a reasonable opportunity for resident personal use and non-resident harvest.

**Goal:** The goal of the Unit 23 Working Group is to protect subsistence uses, and to identify and minimize user conflicts resulting from the influx of fall hunters to GMU23.

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<sup>1</sup> Prepared by Cynthia Jacobson, ADF&G, Division of Wildlife Conservation, February 25, 2008.

**Objectives:**

1. Discuss fall hunting user conflicts in Unit 23 and share and discuss the information that is important to resolving these conflicts.
2. Develop specific recommendations for resolving user conflicts, which respond to public concerns and can be feasibly and legally implemented. The recommendations *may* address such topics as:
  - numbers of users, density, distribution on the landscape, and compatibility issues;
  - future needs for data and local knowledge (to inform future management and monitor effectiveness of actions taken to address user conflicts);
  - public outreach and education to reduce conflict and impacts;
  - strategies to reduce impacts and increase benefits to Kotzebue and other communities;
  - other topics addressed through the Working Group process.
3. Recommend a monitoring approach to track future changes in GMU 23 fall hunting and determine if actions taken to address user conflicts have been effective.
4. Keep the public informed about the Unit 23 Working Group process. Allow the public to express their concerns, opinions and knowledge about fall hunting conflicts, and suggest solutions to these conflicts.
5. Take into consideration climate change; changes in big game populations, distributions and migration; and other changing conditions.
6. Improve communication between local hunters, non-local hunters, guides, transporters and management agencies. (In addition to potentially resolving user conflicts, this could also improve safety.)

**General Principles:** The Working Group will seek to ensure that its recommendations meet these general principles (not in priority order):

- Protect the long-term conservation and health of GMU23 caribou and moose populations.
- Minimize detrimental impacts to natural resources.
- Maximize benefits to the public, where possible.
- Protect the way of life and the cultural values of the local people, including the continued opportunity and prioritization for subsistence use.<sup>2</sup>
- Maximize the quality of the experience for hunters.
- Provide for equity among commercial service operators.

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<sup>2</sup> The use of the term “prioritization” references existing state and federal laws, with no further implications.

- Minimize disruption to caribou migration and the subsistence hunting practices and locations based on these migration patterns.

**Working Group Membership:** The Unit 23 Working Group will include 21 people who represent users who participate in fall hunting in GMU23, including local hunters, non-local hunters, and commercial operators (e.g., guides and transporters); local governments; wildlife managers and regulators; and land owners/managers within the region. Working Group members include:

Name	Affiliations
Hazel Apok	Maniilaq
Lee Anne Ayres	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Kerry Cope	Big Game Commercial Services Board
Jim Dau	Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Glenn Douglas	Upper Kobuk Advisory Committee Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group
Phil Driver	Alaska Professional Hunting Association Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group
Mike Fleagle	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
Enoch Mitchell	Noatak/Kivalina Advisory Committee
Ron Moto	N. Seward Peninsula Advisory Committee
Jeanne Proulx	Alaska Department of Natural Resources
Walter Sampson	NANA Regional Corporation
Pete Schaeffer	Kotzebue Sound Advisory Council
Joe Schuster	Alaska Professional Hunting Association Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group
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

**Staff and Resources to Support Process:** Jan Caulfield, Sheinberg Associates,<sup>3</sup> has been hired as a neutral contractor to serve as the Facilitator and Project Manager for the Unit 23 Working Group process, with oversight by Mark Burch with ADF&G. Mark will provide logistic and administrative support. The facilitator and ADF&G, in consultation

<sup>3</sup> Jan Caulfield, Sheinberg Associates, 204 N. Franklin St., Ste. 1, Juneau, AK 99801. Phone (907)586-3141, email [janc@gci.net](mailto:janc@gci.net)

with the Working Group, will develop and distribute material to inform the public on the project and seek input.

The process is currently supported by State capital project funds (\$50,000), US Fish and Wildlife Service (\$45,000), Bureau of Land Management (\$39,000) and National Park Service (\$45,000). It is anticipated that local governments and/or organizations will contribute meeting space, refreshments, logistics and other support for the process. ADF&G will pay travel and lodging costs for public group members who must travel to attend the meetings.

**Working Group Process:** The Working Group will use a consensus-building process, facilitated by a neutral party. Each working group member begins the process intending to work cooperatively to reach consensus decisions, on even the most difficult issues. “Consensus” is defined as an agreement all parties can accept because it meets their most important needs. It does not mean that everyone likes the solution equally, but it is the best solution overall to address the interests involved. If the group can not reach consensus on all issues, the differing opinions will be explained in the group’s meeting summaries and final report.

**Working Group Recommendations:** The Working Group will develop advisory recommendations. These recommendations may be further evaluated (as required) and implemented by agencies, governments, organizations or other parties. Consensus recommendations from this diverse group of Unit 23 residents, users and agency managers would likely carry significant weight with decision makers.

Tools for implementing the group’s recommendations could include regulatory proposals to the Board of Game and/or Federal Subsistence Board, ADF&G or other agency management actions, state and/or federal management plans, projects accomplished by a government or organization, or other actions.

**Responsibilities of Working Group Members:**

- Working Group members will be expected to attend all meetings and participate in the discussions. Group members must stay current with the information and ideas discussed at each meeting.
- Meetings will operate under the attached Ground Rules.
- Throughout the process, each Working Group member should communicate with individuals or groups that hold similar interests to theirs, and share the comments they receive with the full group.
- Working Group members may be asked to help with public outreach efforts during the process, and/or to help present the group’s recommendations at the end of the process.
- Working Group members may agree by consensus to issue press releases or other media information, assisted by ADF&G and the Facilitator. Members of the group agree to not make statements to the media until the group agrees it is appropriate to do so.

**Ground Rules for Communication – Unit 23 Working Group**

1. Respect the values, interests and views of all group members.
2. Give each person an equal opportunity to speak. Please do not interrupt.
3. Seek to understand, as well as to be understood. Listen carefully to understand other points of view.
4. If you disagree with a point someone else is making, explain why in a constructive way. Do not criticize the speaker.

If you disagree with the group on an issue or recommendation, you have a responsibility to explain why. Try to suggest an alternative approach that might be acceptable to the whole group