

Matanuska Valley Fish & Game Advisory Committee

December 16, 2015 MTA Building Palmer, Alaska

RC 033

Meeting called to order by Jehnifer Ehmann at 7:06 p.m.

Members Present: Jehnifer Ehmann, Terry Nininger, Stephen Bartelli, Dave Young, Randy Talvi, Dan Montgomery, Herman Griese, Hans Nordstrom, Israel Payton, Birch Yuknis

Members Absent: Excused: Andy Couch, Mel Grove, Tom Deland, Mike Buirge, Jeff Tuttle, Joe Cizek

Public present: Neil DeWitt, Pat O'Connor, Scott Glover

Alaska State Trooper: Mike Johnson

Persons to Be Heard:

Neil Dewitt: The Sheep Committee has nothing new. Sam Cotton wants to dissolve the AC's. He said it would be more effective to have committee working groups. Neil told Sam that it wouldn't work. Neil has been attending the Western Arctic Caribou Herd meeting. Neil also said he was sorry if he offended anyone but he posted a comment on the Joint Board web site stating that the Mat Su Borough Fish & Wildlife Commission should be defunded and the money they receive from the state should go to the AC's.

Stephen: Did Commissioner Cotton mention why the AC's are ineffective? **Neil:** because they don't do anything. "we were ineffective"-Cotton. **Jehnifer:** She did not get the impression that Commissioner Cotten felt the AC's were ineffective after speaking with him after last year's BOG meetings in Wasilla. Jehn suggested that perhaps he was making reference to the number of AC's which are inactive in the state. Jehn commented that she felt the Mat Valley AC was both effective and beneficial. Jehn encouraged Neil to attend a MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting and inquire about funds received if he has questions or is interested in the facts regarding the funding. **Neil:** Cotton was speaking on his own behalf, not the Department's position.

Pat O'Connor: Pat is a past member of the AC, and a past member of the Denali Committee. His biggest complaint is how complicated the fish & game rules are-several people he has talked to don't hunt or fish any more because the rules are too complicated. People need to think about this as changes are made to the regulations.

Trooper Johnson: He was here to observe the proceedings.

Scott Glover: Scott also feels the rules need to be simplified. Too many people want to add their two cents and it makes for complicated rules.

Quorum: 8 needed for Quorum -- Quorum Met

Approval of previous meeting minutes: Approved as noted: Motion to approve by Dan Montgomery, seconded by Herman. Minutes are approved.

Approval of Agenda: Motion to approval agenda as amended: Dave moves to approve, Herman seconds. Agenda approved.

Terry gave a recap on the Anchorage BOF meeting, December 2nd - December 8th.

> BOF voted 5 -2 to hold the 2017 regular meeting in Anchorage.

- Only two board members voted to hold the next meeting on the Kenai; Sue Jeffery & Fritz Johnson.
- The Valley had strong letters of support from Kevin Meyer, senate president, Jim Colver, Shelley Hughes, Mike Dunleavy & Bill Stoltz. Also a Mat Su Assembly Resolution for meeting in Anchorage, Palmer Chamber of Commerce and a letter from Louis Hoffman with 52 signatures including many local AC members.
- 5 people gave testimony about the meeting location. I spoke in favor of keeping the meeting in Anchorage, and 4 spoke in favor of moving the meeting to Kenai, including Joel Donner (Anchorage AC), Mike Navarre, (Mayor of Kenai), Arnie Thompson (Alaska Salmon Alliance), and Rick Koch, (Kenai City Manager)
- There were two overriding themes regarding the meet location:
 - 1) There was resentment regarding the Governor attempting to influence the Board on their decisions
 - 2) The Board felt that this whole meeting location issue was a real distraction to what should have been solely a Bristol Bay Fin Fish Meeting.
- Fritz Johnson was clearly for meeting in Kenai. He noted that there were many stakeholders down there and they hadn't had a meeting down there in 20 years. He then commented that the whole process was controlled by an urban tyranny of the majority.
- Sue Jeffery tried to find some middle ground. She suggested that maybe 1/2 the meeting could be on the Kenai and 1/2 in Anchorage.

Terry then gave a short overview of the BOG/BOF Joint Board Committee on December 9, 2015:

- The Intent of the meeting was to review and discuss potential changes to board processes that could result in budget savings.
- Public Testimony: 21 participants; 18 in Anchorage and 3 telephonically.
- Participants included: Homer AC, Central Peninsula AC, Fairbanks AC, Mat Valley AC, Bristol Bay Development Corp., Alaska Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, Alaska Outdoor Council, (Gary Stevens), South K-Beach Independent Fishermen Assoc.
- Glenn Haight (ADFG) referenced the on-line Budget Survey that is available on the ADFG/Joint Board web site and strongly encouraged everyone to participate, (there currently have been 88 participants).
- At the conclusion of the meeting most board/committee members agreed to continue to take comments at the Arctic/Yukon/Kuskokwim Fin Fish meeting in Fairbanks in January and then make some recommendations.
- In a Memo issued by Glenn Haight on 10/7/15 some (not all) of possible scenarios of budget reductions are identified. This is available on-line at the Joint Board web site.

New Business:

Israel: The Sheep Working Group, (WG), wants feedback from the AC's. The next working group meeting is the end of January. This meeting was to be two full days but was actually 1 ¼ days. There are 30 people on the committee. There was a good cross section of stakeholders. The facilitator is looking forward-he is all about consensus. The first 2 days offered no nitty-gritty details-it was friendly, (the facilitator said he always gets 100% consensus). But after two days he said group was going to break his 100% streak. All group members agreed that they have a good understanding of the process. The group broke up into sub-groups.

The sub-groups were to list 5 positive things: what makes you positive about sheep hunting, and 5 on what makes you negative about sheep hunting.

Israel noted that the BOG backs themselves into corner. Furthermore, some AC's don't have a good grasp on the sheep hunting issues. The AC's need to buy into the process. Ted Spraker said "I can't see why the BOG would not follow what ever solution the WG comes up with".

Stephen commented: The BOG doesn't want this monkey on their back. Israel noted that the BOG wants something by the spring meeting. Dan Montgomery: The Dept. won't have a sheep management plan until 2018. Stephen asks if there was any mention of prop 207? There are 29 proposals on sheep in the book; 22% of the book. Herman: Do they have staff to work with on the group? Israel: not at this time. Israel would like a staff person there.

Herman: Is the intent of the working group to come up with state wide regulations? Israel: The intent is to come up with solutions if there is a problem. They tried to get consensus that there is declining sheep populations-but there was no consensus on that.

Dan: 1 complaint received pertaining to 207 to Department of Safety (Troopers) which was found to be sight seeing rather than a violation.

Jehnifer: We are scheduled to meet on January 13th and January 27th. We will start with Proposal 21 at the first meeting in January and dive right into sheep. Should there be a sheep sub-committee?

Stephen: We should discuss all the sheep proposals as a full committee. There is enough attention on this that it should be discussed as a group. Israel: Do your homework ahead of time-come prepared for the proposal review. Jehn: We should get the word out that anyone who is interested in the sheep proposals should come and participate.

Jehn: After the first February meeting we can hopefully get an update on the sheep working group and address any recommendations.

A proposal to have an alternate for the sheep working group: Motion to have Dan & Stephen as alternates to the Working Group. So moved by Dave; seconded by Herman. Passed 10-0-0.

Jehn: The BOF statewide proposals deadline 2/18/16: The proposals include 202-211, 227-228, 212-215, 194.

Proposal 214: Herman believes this should be addressed. This requires salvaging of by-catch. It's time now for Commercial fishermen to become responsible. Stephen: This proposal doesn't talk about gear type. He sees two problems: all fish wasted in this group is nominal compared with Pollock by catch for Comm. fishers. Second, what about state budget constraints-if fishermen haul in extra fish and then hand it over to ADFG-this will be costly. Hermann would like to see AC support this proposal. Dave: Why throw fish back that aren't going to survive? He believes we should support This proposal.

Randy: they already do something like this on long liners-they have to surrender over a certain percentage. It would be better to have the comm. fishers take care of fish then surrender them to the state. Right now we are legally giving permission to trawlers to drop a certain amount of fish. There needs to be some type of penalty. Birch: this is more of a "feel good" proposal. Israel-what fishery would it effect the most? Israel favors the proposal in theory.

Proposal 214 passes:10 in support. 10-0-0

Proposal 202: Terry objects to this. He is in full support of eliminating invasive species but this is a little over the top. He has kept his felt wader boots to be used in salt water for clamming. Birch: You can wear them for prospecting. Randy: What about the boat you bought in Oregon and brought up here? People need

to be educated. Jehn- Agrees that we don't want invasive species in our fresh waters, however this proposal has issues with the way it is worded. She proposes we take no action.

Proposal 202: Failed 5-3- 2 abstaining (Herman abstained because it doesn't apply to everything).

Proposal 203: Randy: In special harvest areas ADFG can close to Comm. Fish but not sport fishing. Randy is in support so hatcheries have brood stock. Terry supports. Herman: most hatcheries deal with pinks but some work with sockeye. By and large not a big issue: not a lot of sport fishermen fish for pinks. Jehn-The proposal is not providing enough information. She is wondering if it is targeting one or two areas. It's way too big of a swath of the paint brush to use.

Proposal 203: Fails 0-10-0

Proposal 207: Dave supports 207: Bang sticks are used for dispatch: it is no different than use of a gun. You can use a gun now. Trooper Johnson: He is not sure why the law is there. It's actually a safe way to go.

Proposal 207: Passes 10-0-0

Proposal 208: Randy: Some charters tell clients only 1 ling cod-other charters say all clients can catch 2 ling cod. Israel: It is the same port of call issue as with flying for hunting. He does not support the proposal. Enforcement should be in the area you are fishing. This whole port of call issue opens a can of worms. Herman: It's not clear if it really is a problem. Stephen would like to take up this proposal now that we have had this much discussion. If this idea went to other venues it could be difficult. Randy would like to vote it down. Herman: It would be easier to enforce when coming into Seward-you only have 1 ling cod. Stephen is more about maximizing access.

Proposal 208: Fails 0-10-0

Member Comments:

Herman: He cannot attend the 1/13/16 meeting.

Birch: He will be out of state but will send comments in.

Dan: He would like to move meeting up 1 week to January 6, 2016 in addition to the 13th.

Jehn: She will get back to us after talking to Sherry.

Stephen: Thanks to Neil for his information input. Also Thanks to Trooper Johnson for attending. Merry Christmas & Happy New Year to everyone.

Dan: He'd like to ask Neil about the makeup of Anchorage AC. Neil: Anchorage AC doesn't have any designated seat (only Kenai).

Israel: The Mt. Yenlo, (Skwentna), AC, which has been inactive, is now up and running.

Terry: Everyone should consider taking the Budget Survey by ADFG. It is on line at the Joint Boards web site.

Jehn: She thanks everyone for being here. Also, the most effective way to do proposals is to review them before the meeting so the proposal review will go faster.

Next meeting: January 6, 2016, (tentative), and January 13, 2016.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Minutes taken Terry Nininger