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Alaska Board of Game
Boards Support Section
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

RC 019

Re: Comments for the 2015 Region 1 BOG Meeting

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written comments relating to the proposals for the Juneau Board of Game meeting, January 9-13, 2015.

My wife and I have lived in Sitka for the past 40 years. Our 3 children were born and raised in Sitka and all 3 continue to reside and work in Alaska. I have worked as a hunting guide in SE Alaska since 1985 and currently hold a Master Guide license.

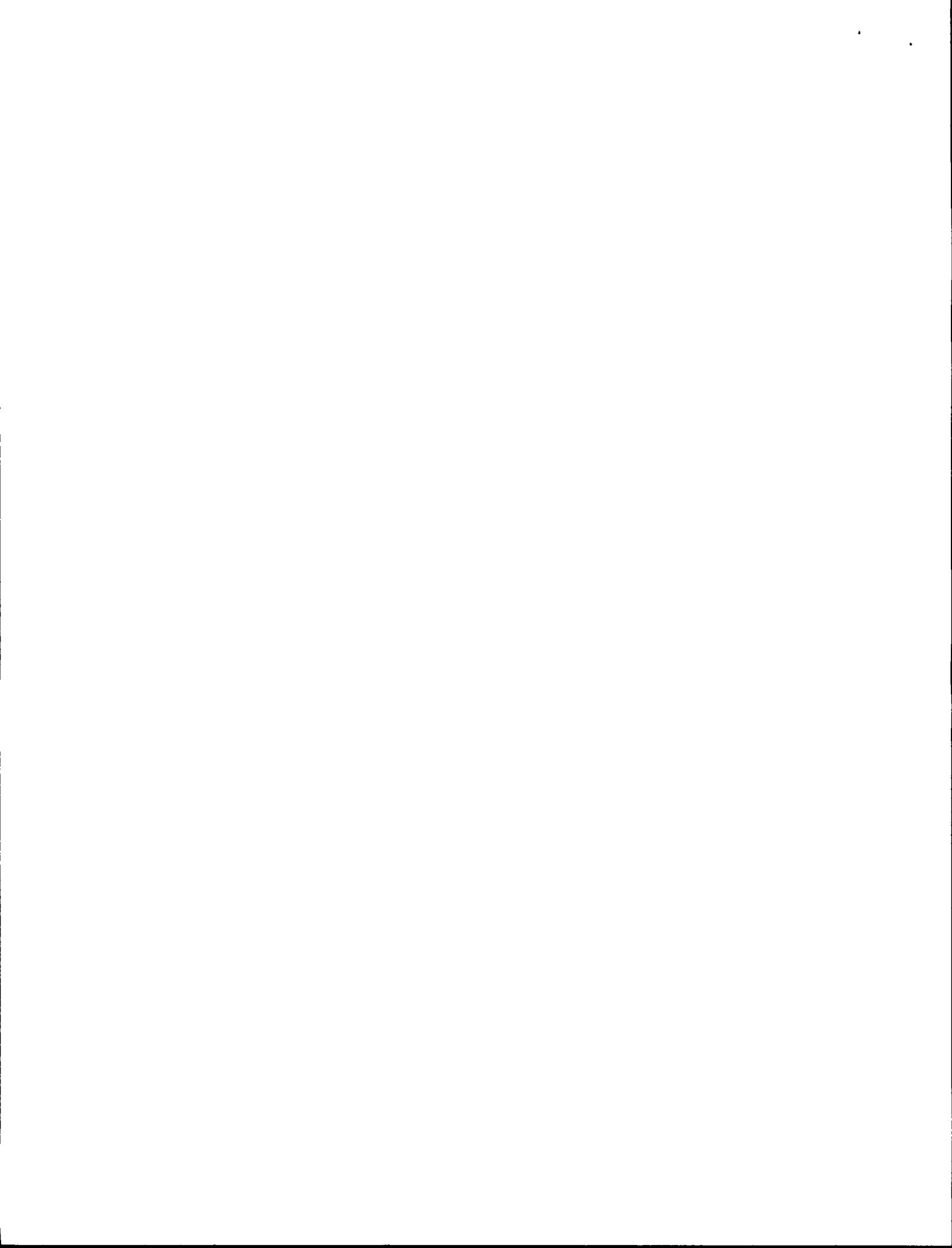
Proposal 11

I submitted Proposal 11 because the second degree of kindred component is the only non-resident group not currently managed according to the Unit 4 Brown Bear Management Strategy (BBMS).

Two years ago at the Sitka Region 1 BOG meeting the BBMS was supported over and over again both in testimony as well as the break out session dealing with brown bear management in Southeast. There was general consensus that the 2000 plan was not out of date, not broken, and continues to be a valid management tool.

The BBMS made very specific recommendations as far as numbers of non-resident brown bear hunters. There were recommendations for numbers of non-resident hunters to be guided by professional licensed guides as well as for non-residents hunting with relatives within second degree of kindred. For the first group, those recommendations were adopted through the USFS special use permitting system. For the second group, no system is currently in place to control their numbers.

Within the plan, the recommended number of non-resident brown bear hunters going into the field with relatives was 4 per year. Anticipated hunter success was 50%, or 2 bears per year (page 13 of plan). In the past 10 years the number of non-residents hunting with relatives has ranged from 14-23 hunters per year and the bear harvest has averaged 8 bears per year, four times what was anticipated.



Proposal 32

I am in support of this proposal.

At the BOG meeting for Southeast in Ketchikan, two cycles ago, a new management strategy for black bears was developed which requires unguided non-residents to draw a black bear tag before they can hunt. Guided non-resident hunters would be restricted in numbers below the current guiding allocation based upon the actual number of hunters taken out in 2007- 2009 (RY). The guided non-resident allocation has not been allowed to increase ever since 2000, but by restricting it further to the actual use during 2007-2009 this amounted to about a 30% reduction in the previous number of guided hunters.

The reason for the new system was the continually increasing harvest of black bears by the do-it-yourself or transported nonresidents with no way to control the growth. The proposal in Ketchikan had over whelming support, not just because the data showed the increased harvest came from that group, but also because of a number of social conflicts caused by that group in the Southern Southeast area.

Since that time, however, we've become aware of a small group of non-resident black bear hunters which are neither "guided" nor "independent". These are the non-residents within 2nd degree that hunt with relatives. One of the objectives with the new system was to have no impact on residents, but there have been a few very outspoken residents that have complained about there not being a provision for relatives. Black bears are not a "guide required" species and so we never thought about the issue.

The new system is working. Harvest numbers are being controlled and hunt quality seems to be improving. I want to keep the system in place, but if there is a way to provide for 2nd degree opportunity without throwing the whole system wide open for debate I would like to do that.

Proposal 32 would allow a resident hunter to give one of his black bear tags to a 2nd degree relative. Since residents are allowed 2 tags, resident hunters and their relatives could still conduct a hunt together.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these proposals. Thank you, also, for your time and the effort that each one of you makes as a member of the Board of Game.

Sincerely,
ALASKA COASTAL OUTFITITERS

Brad Dennison
Master Guide, Sitka



Additionally, the sow harvest by this group has averaged 36%, with much of the remaining harvest being small boars.

Based upon discussions that I've had with other guides as well as some discussion with ADF&G staff, I believe it would be reasonable to limit the number of non-residents hunting with relatives to 4 hunters each spring and 3 hunters each fall. I feel this allowance of 7 hunters per year vs. the annual allowance of 4 hunters in the BBMS is reasonable since the plan did not indicate any historic use on Chichagof Island. Since Chichagof Island currently receives a significant amount of second degree of kindred pressure, I think it is fair to make an allowance for this use.

I have asked that this allocation be made through a registration process rather than a drawing, although either would work. My concern about implementing a drawing system is that this could lead to a Kodiak type of drawing system for all non-resident brown bear hunters. A Kodiak style of drawing would not work in Southeast without a very major change in the Forest Service permitting system. I believe it would take many years to implement such a change within the U.S. Forest Service.

Proposal 31

I oppose Proposal 31, which would either eliminate the current regulation dealing with bear wounding, or, as an alternative by adding the word "mortally" to the regulation, would basically gut the regulation.

The current wounding regulation establishes consequences upon a hunter for not being sure of his shot. It has helped to reduce the tendency of some hunters to take long shots when there is no consequence if the shot is poor. The current regulation is in the best interest of the resource, the public in general, and hunters in particular.

This is an ethical issue. As hunters we are ethically responsible to be as sure as possible of our shot prior to taking it. If it means we must pass a shot because conditions are not correct or the distance too long then pass it we should. This is true whether we are hunting with a rifle or a bow. This is true whether it is the first day of the hunt or the last.

An additional benefit of the existing regulation is that since it encourages closer approach to the bear, the ability of the hunter to judge the size and sex of the bear is improved. The need to "take a closer look" has been stressed by the Department as an important part of becoming a more ethical hunter. The current wounding regulation is consistent with this philosophy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fred Hansen", is located at the bottom center of the page.

