

On-Time AC Comment Index

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Anchorage Fish and Game Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 14, 2021 via Zoom

Via web conference:

<https://zoom.us/j/94055905597?pwd=WXNNVVZQZkoxU1lrT3Q4RmljWWZ4dz09>

OR

Via teleconference: +1 253 215 8782

Meeting ID: 940 5590 5597

Passcode: 907

1. Meeting was called to order by the Chair at 6:01 pm.
2. Establish a Quorum: 13 members present; quorum established by Chair.

Members Present:

1. Kevin Taylor
2. Martin Weiser
3. Willow Hetrick
4. Rick Rogers
5. Jim Nabulsi
6. Shawna Buchannan
7. Neil DeWitt
8. Matt Moore
9. Tyler Loken
10. Georgie Heaverley
11. Bryce Eckroth
12. JR Gates
13. Joel Doner

Members Absent Excused: None

Members Absent Unexcused:

1. Lynette Hinz
2. Phillip Calhoun

3. List of User groups present: Mark Richards, Resident Hunters of Alaska & Fairbanks Advisory Committee.
4. Introduce Fish and Game staff present: Charity Lehman (Board Support) and Jay Baumer (Southcentral Region Fishery Biologist III)
5. Public present: Katie Herzner, Erin Shew, Scott Crowther
6. Approve the Agenda: Neil DeWitt motioned; Tyler Loken seconded. Carried unanimously.
7. Approve the November 10, 2020 minutes: Neil DeWitt motioned, Shawna Buchannan. Carried unanimously.
8. Public testimony: Mark Richards, Resident Hunters of Alaska (RHAK) & Fairbanks Advisory Committee (FBX AC). FBX AC put in a request to the Board of Game to limit non-resident allocation of the DC827 caribou permit to no more than 10% of the permits be allocated to non-residents. Non-residents have historically received ~25% of the permits for this hunt. Department



changed proposal against AC input. Asking for Anchorage AC support to the Board of Game does not change the intent of the proposal (proposal #146 at regional meeting this past spring); suggest either voting it down or generating a board generated proposal. Mat-Su AC voted unanimously in support of the FBX AC's efforts. JR Gates read the draft letter into the record to the Anchorage AC for consideration.

JR Gates motioned a short letter referencing the RHAK letter in support; Martin Weiser seconded. 12 support, 0 opposed, 1 abstain. See letter at end of meeting minutes.

9. Committee Reports: None

10. Old Business: None

11. New Business

1. Prepare comments for the Joint Board Committee meeting, re: Board schedules in light of Covid-19. Language is provided below:

It is our opinion that Board of Fish and Board of Game meetings work best when the public and the Advisory Committees can provide input and feedback freely and in person. We think it will be extremely difficult to have meaningful meetings and discussions with the current format that is allowed. Zoom will not work when there are multiple groups and hundreds of individuals that want to participate. The impact of public testimony will be minimized when done with video.

The COVID 19 virus remains highly contagious and state medical experts still do not have it under control. The entire state of Alaska has been adversely impacted and it will be months before we return to anything resembling normal if ever. The vaccine timeline is still in flux and it might take 6-9 months before that is completed.

The Anchorage AC is in favor of taking a pause with Board of Fish and Board of Game meetings for this cycle and moving everything back a year. Meetings should be postponed until Alaskans can safely meet and travel to the communities throughout the state. It is difficult to have AC meetings via Zoom, we cannot imagine trying to hold a Board meeting with this venue.

We also realize that there may be some proposals that cannot be paused like the cow moose hunt authorizations. We will participate in whatever methods are designed to cover the issues that cannot be postponed for a year (i.e., antlerless moose reauthorizations and brown bear fee tag exemptions).

The Anchorage AC suggests that the Department consider accepting new proposals per each regulatory cycle as there will be new information and data to consider when Board of Fish and Board of Game meetings are postponed for a year..

Martin Weiser made motion to approve the letter as written accept as amended to accept new proposals and identify which Board meetings being referred to; Matt Moore seconded. 13 support, 0 opposed, 0 abstain.

12. Adjourn: 6:38pm.

The next regular Anchorage Fish & Game Advisory Committee meeting is TBD.



April 22, 2020

To: Alaska Board of Game

From: Resident Hunters of Alaska (RHAK)

Re: For consideration during the January 21, 2021 Work Session meeting to be held in Wasilla

Dear Board Members,

RHAK had initially drafted this as a proposal for the 2021 Statewide meeting, and in discussion with Executive Director Tibbles, she felt this may be the best avenue to approach a proposal to adopt a Finding or Policy. However, we certainly don't want this to get denied for the Work Session and/or lost in the myriad of other issues that will come before the board during the Work Session.

Here's what we want to address, and this is from our original proposal draft for the Statewide 2021 meeting:

Amendments to Proposals submitted by the public that run completely contrary to the original proposal

At the last Region III BOG Meeting in 2020, Resident Hunters of Alaska (RHAK) submitted a proposal (#146) to limit the number of nonresident hunters being awarded the DC 827 caribou draw permit, asking that no more than 10 percent of the permits be awarded to nonresidents, and a minimum of 90 percent of the permits to residents. At that time the DC 827 caribou draw permit was open to all equally, and due to an influx of hunt booking agents flooding the draw permit application pool nonresidents were typically receiving 25 percent of the permits, which we strongly disagreed with.

When the Board deliberated our proposal, they successfully amended and passed it guaranteeing nonresident caribou hunters at least 25 percent of the DC 827 permits.

This decision was the complete opposite of the intent of our proposal! The Board could have just voted down our proposal, allowing hunt bookers to continue to flood the application pool for the DC 827 caribou permit leading to the same high nonresident percentage of awarded permits. Instead, they forever guaranteed nonresidents a minimum of 25 percent of those permits.

The Alaska Board of Fisheries has Standing Rules that address this issue in their Finding #91-128-FB1, and in that Finding it states: "Do not change or reverse the

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<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/regprocess/fisheriesboard/pdfs/findings/ff91128x.pdf>

intent of a proposal/issue. For example, if a proposal's intent is to restrict a particular fishery and the board wishes to close or expand the fishery, the board will not amend the original proposal. The board will defeat, table or take no action on that proposal and then develop a board generated proposal to accomplish the action they feel is needed."

We would like to see the Board of Game adopt a similar Finding or Policy or Standing Rules governing amendments that change or reverse the intent of public proposals, as happened with RHAK proposal #146 at the Region III 2020 meeting.

We understand that amendments to public proposals are often necessary for clarification, and that minor changes are often warranted. We are not asking that the Board not be allowed to make



amendments to proposals. But these kinds of amendments that take the complete opposite position of the proposer should not be allowed.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mark Richards Executive Director Resident Hunters of Alaska (907) 371-7436

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Fairbanks Fish & Game Advisory Committee

Interior Region Fish & Game Advisory Committees

Kirk Schwalm
Chairman
PO Box 83825
Fairbanks, AK 99708

Central	Middle Nenana River
Delta Junction	Middle Yukon River
Eagle	Minto-Nenana
Fairbanks	Ruby
GASH	Stony Holitna
Koyukuk River	Tanana-Rampart-Manley
Lake Minchumina	Upper Tanana Fortymile
McGrath	Yukon Flats

January 14, 2021

Comments to the Board of Fisheries, Board of Game, and Joint Boards

The Fairbanks Fish & Game Advisory Committee (FAC) met by teleconference/zoom on January 13, 2021, with 14 members present.

Motion to support the Resident Hunters of Alaska (RHAK) April 22, 2021 letter requesting that the Board of Game develop a rule, policy, or finding to prevent amendments to proposals that completely change the intent of a proposal but would still allow amendments necessary for legal reasons or to clarify intent: Motion passed by unanimous vote.

The FAC discussed options for the 2020/2021 cycle BOF and BOG meetings during an ongoing pandemic.

Motion for the Boards to hold in-person meetings this spring: Motion failed 5 – 9

Motion for the Boards to hold meetings this year via teleconference (zoom) if in-person meetings cannot be held: Motion passed 8 – 6

Motion for the Boards to postpone 2020/2021 cycle meetings one year due to pandemic: Motion passed 13 – 1

Motion for the Boards to allow the public and the Department to submit new proposals by proportionally extended normal pre-meeting deadlines for the 2020/2021 cycle meetings if they are postponed a year: Motion passed by unanimous consent.

Motion that the Board of Fisheries hold their hatchery non-regulatory meeting via teleconference: Motion passed by unanimous consent.

The FAC also discussed supporting a Board of Game meeting via zoom to reauthorize tag fee exemptions and antlerless moose reauthorizations if in-person meeting were delayed. While there is no record of official FAC action on this topic, the discussion generally supported such a meeting.


Kirk Schwalm
Chair



Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee
1/13/2021 Meeting Minutes
Teleconference/Zoom meeting

I. Call to Order: Chair at 6:36PM

II. Roll Call:

	<u>CHAIR</u> Kirk Schwalm	<u>VICE-CHAIR</u> Mark Richards	<u>SECRETARY</u> Mark Oppe	Jeff Lucas	Gale Vick	Mike Quinn	Mike Tinker	John Wisniewski
Present	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Absent								
Abs/Excused								
	Levi Lewellyn	John Siegfried	Richard Doering	Warren Guichici	Mike Bryan	Mike Kramer	Chuck Derrick	Virgil Umphenour (alternate)
Present	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Absent								
Abs/Excused						x		

III. Introduction of Guests: Reed Morisky, Al Barrette, Sam Ferrara, Karen Brewster, Erin Julianus (BLM), Jon Haddix (BLM), Kevin Meacham, Lenny Jukes, Becky Manbeck, Alex Stetten, Reed Morisky

Fish & Game Staff Present: Nissa Pilcher, Mark Nelson, Klaus Wuttig, Tony Hollis, Jeff Gross, Trooper Valentine, Trooper Eyester

IV. Comments

Chair Comments: Hunted 40 Mile caribou twice over Christmas break on CHSR and the Steese, did not observe any bad behavior. Has reviewed pre-filed bills in the legislature and identified several that may be of interest to the AC at future meetings.

Vice Chair: none

Trapping: none

Game: none

Fish: none



AC Member Comments: Mike Quinn would like an update on timeline for in-person meetings and AC elections. Kirk Schwalm stated that guidance from Board Support has not changed and that the AC would have to hold in-person meetings without support from the state. Mike Tinker believes holding meetings with members in person and public attending online may be a step toward resuming regular meetings. Mike Quinn concurs with Mike Tinker.

Chuck Derrick would like to thank Gale Vick for information sent out regarding fisheries issues over the last several months. He is opposed to in-person meetings at this time.

Gale Vick believes meeting of joint boards on Jan. 19th may provide direction for future AC meetings. Kirk Schwalm agrees that AC workload is dependent on what the boards do and that this may be a topic that can be addressed at the next AC meeting. Nissa Pilcher informed AC that the boards are looking for AC input on how to proceed this year.

Al Barrette believes that state employees are not currently allowed to have in-person group meetings. There is also the issue of local community mandates.

Public Comments: none

V. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: approval of Nov. 9, 2020 minutes by unanimous consent

VI. Approval of Agenda: approved as amended by unanimous consent

VII. Old Business: none

VIII. New Business:

F&G Staff Reports:

- **Fortymile Caribou Herd Status and Winter Hunt Update:** Jeff Gross shared Power Point on Fortymile herd update as of Jan. 2021. Herd size currently estimated to be approximately 80,000 (appx. the same as it was believed to be around 1930). Herd has showed signs of nutritional distress since 2010 based primarily on birth rates and calf weights. Survival rates of all ages have been declining over past 5 years, with 2019 rates being lowest recorded to date. Adult female survival rate has been significantly lower from mid-May 2019 through mid-May 2020. Summer 2020 population survey was unable to be completed. Current population estimates are based on models, rather than survey. Models indicate the herd is on the verge of a precipitous population decline. Biologists concluded that best management strategy was increased harvest to reduce herd size. Latest harvest plan is intended to stop herd decline caused by poor health and nutritional stress. Department's goal is to reduce herd below 50,000 through increased harvest. This accounts for increased quota and bag limit for 2020-21 hunt. Fall harvest objectives were met, but crowding, roadside hunting, trail damage, and safety concerns occurred. Department is currently working with land management agencies and AWT to mitigate these problems in the future. Winter hunt is ongoing, with 1183 caribou harvested to date. The department believes that significant progress toward herd reduction will be achieved by spring 2021.



Mike Tinker believes that harvest in the Yukon has not been addressed, but is likely not a significant factor in reducing herd population due to limited Canadian utilization of this herd.

Mark Richards asked for clarification on partrition rates and revised population estimate in the fall before the winter hunt opened. Because no survey has been conducted since 2017, current estimates are based on several years of models. 2020 model was not complete until shortly before fall hunt, resulting in late announcement of increased bag limits.

Mike Quinn would like to know why the herd is not utilizing more of the historic range and if the winter hunt will remain open until March 31 if the quota has not been met. Jeff Gross stated that historic range is based on 1920s observations without modern survey techniques, and is likely not as accurate as modern surveys. Winter hunt is not anticipated to close in any zones prior to March 31. Goal this winter is to hit the overall objective, rather than zone quotas.

Kirk Schwalm asked if there has been any consideration of revising historic range estimates based on modern science and knowledge. Debate over historic location of the herd has made this difficult.

John Wisniewski would like to know why there are only 30 youth tags for the Fortymile herd if reduction is the objective. The BOG would have to revise this.

Mike Tinker states that increase to youth hunt permit number would have to go before the BOG and probably doesn't qualify for emergency action during the current cycle.

Historic range estimate is likely based on a lot of double counting and should not be considered nearly as accurate as modern data. The department has done a great job at getting to where we're at with this herd considering the restraints they have to work within. One more year of intensive hunting is likely necessary before population reduction objective is met.

Al Barrette (BOG) is concerned with high number of reported cow harvest compared to WACH. Also wonders if it is realistic to believe we will reach the 10,000 caribou harvest objective and if increased bag limit may be necessary. Would like to know if the herd is currently at emergency status or something less. Jeff Gross stated that the objective is to reduce the herd as quickly as possible and increased bag limit might be under consideration, but this year's harvest plus winter mortality should alleviate a lot of the problem the department is trying to address.

Mike Quinn believes difference in cow harvest between Fortymile and WACH is likely related to enforcement and reporting discrepancies.

Mark Richards would like to know purpose of lower jaw specimen requirement for winter hunt and why it is not required for the fall hunt. This is related to studies to come up with population estimates using new techniques and has only recently been implemented.

Mike Tinker is happy to discuss details of Fortymile management with members of the committee, public, and press.

- **20B Survey Results:** Good survey was done in 20B this year due to early snow. Estimated 12,479 moose. This is similar to 2017 estimate and is within population objective. Composition is 24 bulls per 100 cows, which is an improvement but still below objective of 30 bulls per cow. 34 calves per 100 cow is good coming off of difficult winter last year.



Mark Richards would like to know number of potlach requests in 20B this year. Tony Hollis does not have the number on hand, but will find it. Average per year is around 40.

- **Fall 2020 Harvest:** Total harvest reported in 20A was 524 bulls, 60 cows. This is up compared to 2019 by about 50 moose.

20A sheep 65 rams harvested, down from average of about 100. 36 harvested by NR hunters; 29 by resident.

20A caribou 56 harvested; slightly higher than avg.

20B moose 342 bulls, 61 cows harvested.

20C 156 moose harvested (slightly below avg.)

20F 39 bull moose harvested.

25C 55 bull moose harvested (avg. is 82; over 100 in 2019).

25C sheep 10 rams harvested (recent avg. 8 rams).

Trooper Eyester reports that AWT has been monitoring ongoing Fortymile hunt. No significant bad behavior has been observed. Seems to be much better than the fall hunt. There were reports of gut piles on CHSR, but Trooper Eyester did not personally see this.

Discuss BLM Central Yukon RMP: Mark Richards would like to know if BLM knows what PLO 5150 lands may be reverted to the state. Chel Ethun (BLM) states that this is addressed at the beginning of Ch. 3 of the BLM plan. These lands are basically surrounding the Dalton Hwy. These lands were withdrawn from selection and mineral entry. Under ANILCA some of these lands were available for selection by the state and the state had top-filed by the state to become state selections if the withdrawal goes away in the future. Anything that is priority 1 for the state is assumed that title will be asked for and be conveyed within 10 years.

It is unknown at this time how a new administration and Interior Secretary will affect this plan. The plan is still a draft and within the 90 day public comment period (ending March 11). Agency preferred plan is not definitely what will be implemented, and final plan is likely to be a combination of elements from different alternatives.

Chel Ethun encourages AC members to take a close look at wildlife sections of the plan and comment on any concerns.

Public meetings will be on Zoom. First 2 meetings (Jan. 26-27) will be general. Subsequent meetings (Jan. 28, Feb. 2-4) will be regionally focused.

Mike Tinker would like to know science behind not having mineral extraction in recreation areas (specifically White Mountains). BLM was required to look at compatibility of different land uses, and mining was determined to be incompatible with recreation.

Kirk Schwalm believes that there is not much in this plan that is likely to affect the AC's areas of concern.

Al Barrette would like to know if a state ANILCA team is working with BLM on this plan or if it is a federal ANILCA team. The state has assigned a team to work with BLM on the plan.

Al Barrette would like to know why conveyance of land to the state south of the Yukon was easier than north of the Yukon. Pre-existing rights and amendments south of the Yukon created a different legal situation than north of the Yukon.

Kirk Schwalm suggests that the AC may want to add this to the agenda for the next meeting so that members have an opportunity to look at the plan in more depth and give Mike Kramer the opportunity to speak on it. If we have a February meeting, this will still leave time before public comments close.



Discuss BOG work session topics: Resident Hunters of Alaska has submitted a letter to the BOG requesting that they do not amend proposals to change their intent. Mark Richards stated that this is due to a change made to a previous RHAK proposal by the board. The board does need to be able to amend proposals for legal reasons, but should not amend them to change the intent. The Mat-Su AC has already voted to unanimously support RHAK's letter.

Al Barrette would like to know if board members are bound to abide by policies created by other bodies.

Motion for the AC to support RHAK's letter by Mark Richards. Seconded by Mike Bryan.

Motion passed unanimously on roll call vote.

Discuss joint board committee meeting topics: Nissa Pilcher states that it is not determined at this time how the BOF and BOG will proceed this year. They are looking for input from ACs on what they would like to do. Some communities have restrictions on gathering sizes that will make it difficult to have board meetings. The boards are not interested in long-term Zoom meetings, and would prefer to conduct business in person. Liability concerns include introducing COVID into communities through board meetings.

Mark Richards stated that many villages will not send representatives to meetings this year due to risk of bringing COVID back to their communities. If the 2021 meetings are postponed, would like to allow new proposals to be submitted prior to 2022 meetings.

Gale Vick reminds the AC that there is still the issue of board appointments that have not been confirmed by the legislature. If meetings are postponed proposals should be allowed to be submitted.

Mike Tinker believes the boards should consider meeting in person and allowing public participation by Zoom. There are decisions that must be made and proposals that must be acted on. We cannot wait for another year. Also believes new proposals should be allowed to be submitted.

Virgil Umphenour believes meetings can be doubled up if necessary.

Al Barrette believes that comparing BLM meetings to BOG meetings is not relevant. Meetings are conducted differently. It may be easier for federal agencies to conduct meetings over Zoom, but state board meetings involve more public interaction.

Chuck Derrick has heard that fishermen out of Cordova are opposed to a meeting there in March since they are getting ready to go fishing then. Pace of vaccinations is slow, and he favors pushing board meetings off until next year.

Mark Richards would like to know if the BOG has discussed meeting for antlerless reauthorizations or brown bear hunts. Al Barrette states this has not been discussed yet.

Kirk Schwalm believes that we need to figure out how to adapt to current conditions and move forward with business to the extent that it is possible. It is likely that many people will choose not to participate in in-person meetings. Extending the meeting cycle into the summer should be an option on the table. Ongoing litigation over unconfirmed appointees may void actions taken by the boards. If meetings are postponed proposal cycle should be extended. If it is possible for the boards to conduct business over Zoom with public participation he would support this, but if not the cycle may need to be postponed.

Gale Vick suggests separating the issues of moving forward with the board cycle and extending the proposal period.

Al Barrette wonders if current proposals should be kept or if all proposals should be updated and



resubmitted. This might reduce burden on staff. Mark Richards agrees that submitted proposals should be allowed to update them with new information. Mark Oppe agreed that updating and resubmitting all proposals might be the best solution if the boards do not meet.

Chuck Derrick would like to know what will happen with reauthorization of antlerless moose permits. These must be acted on each year, along with tag fee exemptions. Concerned about proposal books that have already been printed and proposals that have already been commented on.

Al Barrette states that the BOG did not publish hard copies of proposal books this year.

Motion by Mark Richards that boards allow new proposals to be submitted through normal deadlines this year if regulatory cycle is delayed. Seconded by Jeff Lucas. Motion passed by unanimous consent.

Motion by Mark Richards to hold BOF and BOG meetings in person this spring. Seconded by Mike Quinn. Motion failed; 5 yes, 9 no.

Motion by Kirk Schwalm to hold board meetings by Zoom if in-person meeting cannot be held this year. Seconded by Mark Richards. Motion passed; 8 yes, 6 no.

Motion by Mark Richards to postpone 2020-21 cycle meetings 1 year due to pandemic. Seconded by Mike Tinker. Motion passed; 13 yes, 1 no.

Schedule Fish Subcommittee meeting: Gale Vick suggested Feb. 11 as meeting date; alternate Feb. 18. Nissa Pilcher will check these dates and notify AC members by email.

Other: Mark Richards is willing to write letter to the boards on AC input on meetings this year. Al Barrette suggests AC may want to comment on board nominations, DNR Quartz Lake trails in February.

Kirk Schwalm concurs that we have enough business to fill our agenda for a February meeting. We can make a decision at that time about having a March meeting.

Gale Vick would like AC to support BOF remote hatchery meeting. Approved by unanimous consent.

IX. Adjourn: Chair at 10:38PM

Minutes Recorded by Mark Oppe



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MICHAEL J. DUNLEAVY



AC03
1 of 2

Matanuska Valley Fish & Game Advisory Committee
Herb Mansavage, Chair

3087 S. Jib Circle
Big Lake, AK 99652
907-841-8928

January 15th, 2021

Dear Members of the Alaska Board of Game,

The Matanuska Valley A/C recommends that the board not have the Region 4 and Statewide meetings this year if the public is not allowed to attend. We believe that it is vital for the public to attend these meetings as in the past so the board can hear from the people first hand and interact with them.

The board should still meet on line this year and vote on reauthorizing antlerless moose hunts and Brown/Grizzly bear tag exemptions.

Thank you for your time to consider our recommendations.

Sincerely,

Herb Mansavage
Chair, Matanuska-Susitna Fish & Game Advisory Committee



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MICHAEL J. DUNLEAVY



AC03
2 of 2

Matanuska Valley Fish & Game Advisory Committee
Herb Mansavage, Chair

3087 S. Jib Circle
Big Lake, AK 99652
907-841-8928

January 15th, 2021

Dear Members of the Alaska Board of Game,

We are in support of the letter, Executive Director of Residents Hunters of Alaska Mark Richards, has written to Board of Game. We feel this opposition to amendments that are contrary to the original intent, is not only legitimate but fair standard.

Sincerely,

Herb Mansavage
Chair, Matanuska-Susitna Fish & Game Advisory Committee





Middle Nenana River Fish & Game Advisory Committee

Interior Region Fish & Game Advisory Committees

Allan Mortenson
Chairman
HC1 Box 4080
Healy, AK 99743

Central
Delta Junction
Eagle
Fairbanks
GASH
Koyukuk River
Lake Minchumina
McGrath

Middle Nenana River
Middle Yukon River
Minto-Nenana
Ruby
Stony Holitna
Tanana-Rampart-Manley
Upper Tanana Fortymile
Yukon Flats

January 15, 2021

At the January 12, 2021 Middle Nenana River Fish and Game Advisory Committee meeting, with 8 of 11 members present, the committee discussed the boards scheduling issues due to Covid-19. While no formal vote was taken, the committee noted

There are a lot of good things that come out of in person meetings, so if that is not an option, then the AC would not be opposed to seeing things pushed down the road.

Nothing is so pressing in the proposals that it could not wait a year in relation to what is occurring right now.

These meetings should occur sooner than later when face to face meetings can begin again, and discussion was had on some game related topics that cannot wait for 2021-2022 such as antlerless reauthorization proposals.



Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Northern Norton Sound Advisory Committee
Teleconference Meeting
January 6th, 2021 1330hrs
1-800-504-8071, Access Code: 4421717
Meeting Minutes

Charlie Lean – Chair, Brandon Ahmasuk – Vice Chair, Kevin Knowlton – Secretary,
Jacob Mannix – Nome, Andrew McCann – Nome, Edward Stang – Nome,
Patrick Knodel – Undesignated, Tom Gray – Undesignated,
Davis Lincoln – White Mountain, Lloyd Kiyutelluk – Shishmaref,
Tanya Oblowaluk – Teller, Clifford Seetook – Wales, Henry Olanna Jr. – Brevig Mission,
Charles Saccheus – Elim, Jack Fagerstrom – Golovin

1. Call to Order: meeting called to order by Chair Charlie Lean at 1337hrs
2. Roll Call (8 members required to meet quorum)
 - a. Present on phone: Charlie Lean, Brandon Ahmasuk, Kevin Knowlton, Andrew McCann, Jacob Mannix, Tom Gray, Davis Lincoln, Jack Fagerstrom, Charles Saccheus
 - b. Excused: Edward Stang, Patrick Knodel, Clifford Seetook
3. Guests in Attendance
 - a. Alaska Department of Fish and Game Staff on phone: Bill Dunker, Sara Germain, Jim Menard
 - b. Federal Officials: None
 - c. Guests on the phone: Wes Jones – NSEDC, Ashley Dunker – NSEDC, Myra Scholze – NSEDC, Dawn Wehde - NSEDC
4. Approval of Agenda: Motion Made by Kevin Knowlton, Second by Jacob Mannix to approve the agenda as amended. Ad BOG Proposition 120 to the agenda. Motion carried unanimous
5. Chairman's Report/Update:
 - a. The caribou working group met telephonically, they recommended that the department maintain a conservative approach to the herd management though the herd population seems to have stabilized.
 - b. The chair had published a note to the Federal Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council reference the Norton Sound Red King Crab population not having recovered enough yet to support a commercial season while maintaining the subsistence harvest. The SPRAC put their opposition to a commercial fishery on record.
 - c. The Chair mentioned the the National Park Service had made new rules regarding navigable waters to respond to the fact they had lost to Sturgeon in the Supreme Court.
6. ADF&G Wildlife Division Report / Update: Bill Dunker and Sara Germain
 - a. In response to a question from Jack Fagerstrom about wolf population on the Seward Peninsula, Bill Dunker stated that a wolf population survey in Unit 22 had not been done and that it would be very difficult. The technique used to determine the amount of wolf predation on big game in the unit is by referencing when collared animals tend to be killed and it is mostly in the springtime after bears have come out of hibernation.
 - b. The RM840, Unit 22 registration Moose hunt was very brief this year, the harvest was maintained at a sustainable level. The department does not have enough data yet to



see if limiting the permit availability made a difference especially with having to factor in local COVID-19 travel restrictions. 520 RM840 Permits were issued with 300ish hunters actually hunting. Survey of Unit 22D and 22E shows that the moose populations remain stable with 33 bulls to every 100 cows. Which indicates that the department should maintain status quo.

Jack Fagerstrom asked if due to COVID -19 the department would be providing the opportunity for the harvest of extra moose or releasing access to caribou tracking information. Bill Dunker advised that the issue of extra moose is being addressed at the state level with no decision yet and public access to the caribou collar locations is restricted by state law but what he could share was that the majority of the heard has not migrated south of the Kobuk nor west onto the Seward Peninsula yet this year.

Tom Gray asked if the department had considered shortening the reporting times for moose harvest so the department could close the season in the fall leaving a portion of the harvest available for a winter hunt. Bill Dunker stated that the department feels that it is not at a point where they need to make any changes at this time. Jack Fagerstrom expressed that the winter hunting opportunity is vary important to the residence of Golovin because of limited access during the fall hunt.

Brandon Ahmasuk asked, when was the last ANS study done in Unit 22 for moose? And if 321 bull moose harvest in unit 22 was sustainable? Bill Dunker advised it has been a number of years since an ANS study had been done and that any changes to the ANS required board action but a proposal to the board addressing the issue would be the way to address it and the deadline for proposals to the board will be due in the spring of 2022.

- c. Seward Peninsula Muskox – the population survey is scheduled for February 2021, last years harvest data showed 28 muskox bulls were harvested in Game Management Unit 22 which was approximately 2.1% of the population. The Seward Peninsula Muskox population appears to have stabilized. Unit 22A will have a scheduled hunt in RY21, though a hunt of the population in unit 22B East, near Koyuk has been underutilized. Consideration of separating management of 22B West and East is being considered.

7. New Business – Board of Game

The State of Alaska Joint Board of Fish and Game asked for input from the Advisory Committees on how they would like to see the board handle future meetings with the uncertainty of COVID-19 restrictions? The NNSAC prefers in person meetings but with circumstances being what they are Telephonic meetings will work. Due to connectivity issues in the smaller villages Zoom, Teams and others virtual means are not practical. Meetings should not be postponed with some time sensitive issues needing action. For example, the Norton sound Red King crab commercial season and the delicacy of the current population. As things in the population change, they need to be addressed in a timely manner.



Proposal Number	Proposal Description		
Support, Support as Amended, Oppose, No Action	Number Support	Number Oppose	Comments, Discussion (list Pros and Cons), Amendments to Proposal, Voting Notes
<i>Note: Effective September 2019, when abstentions occur, the action or decision of a majority of the remaining members at a meeting at which a quorum is present is an act of the committee. For example, a vote tally of 7-6-2 means the motion carries. Members abstaining from voting must provide an explanation that is included in the committee record.</i>			
119	Add Muskoxen in Tier II hunts. (Charlie Lean)		
Support	10		Motion Made by Kevin Knowlton, Second by Tom Gray to support the proposal. No further discussion
129	Allow the use of expanding (soft point) bullets for big game hunting excluding wolf and wolverine. (Ted Spraker)		
Opposed		10	Motion Made by Jack Fagerstrom, Second by Kevin Knowlton to support the proposal. Against it for rural Alaska, cannot afford multiple or larger caliber rifles. Proper shot placement is the key to big game hunting. The definition of the available bullets is vague.
130	Prohibit use of urine from any species of the deer family as bait or scent lures. (ADF&G)		
Support	10		Motion Made by Jacob Mannix, Second by Kevin Knowlton to support the proposal. No further discussion.
134	Allow use of camera sensory devices. (John Ryan)		
No action			Difficult to enforce.
190	Reauthorize brown bear tag fee exemptions. (ADF&G)		
Support	9	1	Motion Made by Tom Gray, Second by Kevin Knowlton to support the proposal. A means to show how many hunters are hunting Bear, this could be achieved with no fee charge by making the region a registration hunt area.
	<i>Proposal 120 was added to the Agenda and the AC deliberated on it.</i>		
120	Taking of game by proxy. (Roger Seavey, McGrath AC)		
Support as Ammended	10		Motion Made by Jacob Mannix, Second by Kevin Knowlton to support the proposal as amended, to add Game Management Unit 22 to be covered by the proposal. No further discission.

Board of Fish

- a. Jim Menard Region manager for Fish reported that the 2019 Salmon harvest and return was not good, and the department is not sure why. The trawl surveys of 2015



did show that this might be the case but nothing definitive. By using the Trawl survey of 2016 data 2021 should be better.

- b. Red King Crab - the Board of Fish changed the winter commercial opening date to February 1st so the season will open then. This year for a commercial harvest looks to be like last year with no buyers and only two fishermen catcher/seller not looking to have a good harvest.

Tom Gray inquired about the 2021 summer commercial season; he is very concerned about the subsistence availability.

Wes Jones inquired as to what is the biomass of 5" males. Jim Menard replied that information is not available now and that is an allocative issue. He suggested if the AC disagreed with the Harvest Guideline we take it up at the Crab Planning Team Charlie Lean asked of Jim Menard, Have you read the regulation on how to manage the crab fishery in the King and Tanner Crab Management Policy? Jim replied that the guidance from the BOF had sunseted and that the crab planning team will be meeting next week.

Tom Gray stated that subsistence crab harvest has really taken a hit and the priority is subsistence and because the manager still focuses a commercial fishery while planning on having an opening for the commercial season.

8. Public Comment

Jack Fagerstrom for the village of Golovin, With COVID -19 we need to be able to get food with the least amount of gas usage. What resources are available to us? We need to be provided with information on the location of harvestable game.

9. Advisory Committee members comments

None.

10. The committee unanimously supported the Chair, Charlie Lean, to attend the upcoming board meetings

11. Next meeting date is to be at the call of the chair should an issue arise.

12. Meeting adjourned at 1618hrs.

Minutes prepared by

Kevin Knowlton

NNSAC Secretary

Approved

Charlie Lean

NNSAC Chair

Brandon Ahmasuk

NNSAC Vice Chair



Sitka, Alaska January 15, 2021

Dear Joint Boards members, staff, and participating public,

The Sitka AC met on the 13th of January to comment on the consideration of rescheduling meetings due to the unresolved Covid-19 pandemic. The Sitka AC understands how important the Board processes are for conservation, management, and sharing of our fish and wildlife resources. We applaud the decision by the joint boards to consider rescheduling the meetings during the time of Covid for multiple reasons but will focus on the questions asked about in the announcement.

1. Conduct some or all of the meetings through web conferencing.

The members of our committee are starting to become familiar with zoom, google conferencing, and other web meeting teleconference tools. However, Zoom or other contemporary on-line meeting apps will not replicate the traditional process of representatives of all user groups, staff, and Board members together. All of these platforms have a learning curve before they can be used effectively. Based on our experience with this on a smaller scale and the mixed level of abilities with these technologies across our committee, we believe virtual meetings are an inadequate substitute for in person meetings. To jump directly from our traditional meeting system to virtual meetings could also jeopardize the Board members decisions and Alaska's fish and wildlife management. The complexities of resolving issues around fish and wildlife conservation, management, and enforcement will not be communicated efficiently to board members without direct back and forth in-person meetings. Group and individual negotiations will be minimized. We believe in person meetings are essential for the best decisions to be made and for public confidence in the Boards processes, decisions, and resulting regulations. Therefore, our AC strongly recommends no web conferencing for the major BOF and BOG meetings to consider proposals.

2. Should meetings be postponed until the 2021/2022 meeting cycle?

The Sitka AC strongly recommends postponing meetings, particularly SE fisheries and wildlife proposal meetings until at least January of 2022. Many of us in SE Alaska are fishing in the spring and in the fall. A spring or fall meeting in SE either in person or by web conferencing will disenfranchise us and many of our Sitka area stakeholders due to potential conflict with major commercial fishing openings or sport hunting seasons.



3. Impacts on the public.

We feel there will be negative impacts to public participation if the BoF or BoG regulatory meetings are held over Zoom. There are concerns that the limitations of the technology will limit the public's ability to participate and lead to issues in equity. Regarding public comment opportunities, participation may be hindered or limited due to the barriers of this technology, including access and the skills required for effectively utilizing these alternative platforms. We are also concerned that many folks in rural areas or otherwise may not have the same access to technology or the internet for a variety of reasons. We also recognize the challenges of the past year and acknowledge that the beginning of the global COVID pandemic coincided with the deadline for submitting proposals for this regulatory cycle. We recognize that these issues may have also caused difficulty for various other ACs to complete their work on time and meet the proposal submission deadline. We would like to see an additional opportunity for proposals to be submitted. Due to the nature of the 3 year cycle, if this opportunity is not provided, those proposals that may not have met the deadline will require waiting another 3 or 4 years before they can be considered.

We suggest the following measures for mitigation of these issues:

- a) Re-open an opportunity to submit new proposals for 30 days after the Boards announcement of new meeting dates.
- b) Extend the comment period until the usual deadline before meetings

Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Heather Bauscher, Chair Sitka Fish & Game AC