

**Alaska Board of Game
Resolution
Request to the U.S. Forest Service Regarding Management of
Guided Brown Bear Hunting in Unit 4
2002-138-BOG**

Whereas, the Board of Game has since the early 1990s heard testimony from the public and from management agencies concerning user conflict and potential over-harvest or displacement of brown bears in Unit 4; and

Whereas, in 1995 the Board of Game responded to these concerns by establishing a “Southeast Alaska Brown Bear Committee” to review the situation; and

Whereas, this committee reported to the Board of Game that year that the best solutions to two central problems – the proliferation of bear hunting guides and capping harvest – were outside state control, and that the U.S. Forest Service, whose authority did allow direct control of guide numbers and guide-by-guide allocation of harvest, was not intended to exercise control without a National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) process; and

Whereas, the Brown Bear Committee, as a result, disbanded without effecting significant change in the status quo; and

Whereas, at the Board of Game fall 1998 meeting, testimony from the U.S. Forest Service that a NEPA process was now under way to establish a framework for controlling guide and guided hunt numbers and other related actions in collaboration with the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game; and

Whereas, this testimony from the U.S. Forest Service, and a number of proposals illustrating continued public concern over several aspects of brown bear management centering on Unit 4, prompted the Board of Game to establish a ‘Unit 4 Brown Bear Management Team (BBMT)’ comprised of two board members, a broad array of public interests, as well as U.S. Forest Service and Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game representatives; and

Whereas, this team, after two years of deliberation, produced by consensus a “Management Strategy for Brown Bear Management in Unit 4” which was unanimously accepted by the Board of Game at their fall 2000 meeting; and

Whereas, this document again flagged the proliferation of guides and hunt allocation as very important concerns; and

Whereas, the U.S. Forest Service responded in August 2000, by placing a moratorium of issuance of new bear guiding permits for Unit 4 (and Unit 1), pending outcome of the NEPA process intended to deal with these matters; and

Whereas, the U.S. Forest Service decided during the NEPA process to defer consideration of matters related to brown bear hunting; as a consequence, the draft "Shoreline Outfitter/Guide EIS" produced in July 2002, failed to address these issues; and

Whereas, the U.S. Forest Service has recently stated its intent to deal with issues related to guided brown bear hunting in an additional, unspecified process once the NEPA process is final.

Now be it resolved that the U.S. Forest Service is respectfully requested

- to maintain the moratorium on new guiding permits until the additional process addressing guided brown bear hunting is in place and has reached appropriate decisions; and
- to describe the process and timeline envisioned for arriving at and implementing a policy on matter related to brown bear hunting, including plans the U.S. Forest Service may have for public and other agency involvement.

Vote: _____
November 7, 2002
Juneau, Alaska

Ben Grussendorf, Chair
Alaska Board of Game