

**Draft Minutes  
Nushagak Advisory Committee  
February 3, 2022  
Zoom / Teleconference**

Call to Order: 9:06am by Chair Susie Jenkins-Brito

Roll Call

Members Present:

Susie Jenkins-Brito, Dillingham, Chair  
Travis Ball, Aleknagik, Vice Chair  
Dan Dunaway, undesignated, secretary  
Gayla Hoseth, undesignated  
Peter Christopher, New Stuyahok  
Gust Tugiung Jr. Koliganek  
Joe Chythlook, Dillingham, joined 11:10

Todd Fritze, Dillingham  
Curt Armstrong, Dillingham  
Tom O'Connor, Dillingham  
Mariano Floresta, Clark's Point  
Chris Carr, Portage Cr.  
Steve Perkins, Dillingham Alt at Large  
Kenneth Nukwak, Manokotak, Alt at Large

Members Absent (Excused):

Peter Walcott Sr., Ekwok Alt  
Walter Kanulie, Togiak Alt  
Wassillie Andrews, New Stuyahok Alt  
Joe Wassily, Clark's Point Alt  
Kay Andrews, Aleknagik Alt

Members Absent (Unexcused):

Barbara Moore  
Moses Kritz  
Joe Kazmirowicz

Number Needed for Quorum on AC: 9 (13 present at roll call)

List of User Groups Present: (taken from member activities)

Trapping	Guiding
Sport Fishing	Processing (fish)
Subsistence	Outdoors Person
Hunting	Assoc./Corp.
Commercial Fishing	

Fish and Game Staff Present:

Taryn O'Connor-Brito, Boards  
Tim Sands, Com Fish  
Lee Borden, Sport Fish  
Chris Brockman, Wildlife

Robin Dublin, Subsistence  
Bronwyn Jones, Subsistence  
Lisa Olson, Subsistence  
Joe Wittkop, AWT Troopers

Guests Present:

Andy Aderman, Togiak Refuge  
 Gary Cline, BBEDC  
 Heidi Kritz, BBNA  
 Kay Larson Blair, BBNC Education Fund  
 Jeff Regnart, BBEDC / BBSRI  
 Renee Roque, BBNA

Robert Heyano, Commercial Fisherman  
 David Bendinger, OBI  
 Frank Woods, BBNA  
 Cody Larson, BBNA  
 Malone, Alaska Guides  
 Nicholas Dowie, Commercial Fisherman

### Approval of Agenda

Gayla move Tom 2<sup>nd</sup> to adopt w provision to address BOG items to top to allow Brockman to be free of meeting soon.

Adopted by unanimous consent.

### (Old Business) Follow Up to Board of Game January meeting Central & SW

Below is the discussion and comments of the Nushagak AC during their February 3, 2022, meeting after the January 2022 BOG. For reference, attached at the bottom of these minutes are the Nushagak AC's original comments on 23 from their December 2020 meetings.

Proposal 23, BOG RC 59 and eventual Statewide Proposal 271.

Susie and Chris Brockman explained the actions BOG took on Proposal 23.

BOG adopted an amended version of Proposal 23 (see RC 48): In addition the BOG created a separate Proposal 271 (RC59) to define *positioning* which will be addressed at the March 22 Statewide meeting. A long discussion followed the explanation of Board action.

Main points include:

### **BOG RC 59 Amended language for Proposal 23**

**Submitted by ADF&G/DWC**

**January 24, 2022**

5 AAC 92.080(4)(B)

(vii) in Unit 18, a snowmachine may be used to position a wolf or wolverine for harvest, and wolves or wolverines may be shot from a stationary snowmachine;

(viii) in Unit 17, a snowmachine may be used to assist in the taking of a caribou, **wolf or wolverine**, and caribou, **wolf and wolverine** may be shot from a stationary snowmachine.

"Assist in the taking of a caribou, **wolf or wolverine**" means a snowmachine may be used to approach within 300 yards of a caribou, **wolf or wolverine** at speeds under 15 miles per hour, in a manner that does not involve repeated approaches or that causes a caribou, **wolf or wolverine** to run. A snowmachine may not be used to contact an animal or to pursue a fleeing caribou, **wolf or wolverine**.

- 1) The BOG borrowed language from a similar proposal being considered for Federal Subsistence regulations 22-40.
- 2) This is restrictive and not at all what was intended by the person originating the proposal nor was it the intent of the Nushagak AC to adopt more restrictive language of 15 mph and 300 yards.
- 3) The BOG wants to define positioning.
- 4) The original proponent and the Nush AC members thought the word “positioning” was settled (legally speaking) since it has been used for quite a few years for GMU 18, 22, 23 and 26A. “We just wanted to add on to those GMU and be allowed to do what they have been doing.”
- 5) Todd Fritze described snowmachine wolf hunting: Drive until you cut a track, follow track, when tracks are running you are beginning to get closer, when you first see them they probably look like ants on the horizon running. You’ll never catch up to them at 15 mph. One must drive fast to get within range to make an ethical shot. Wolves are really pretty small and its darn hard to make an ethical shot at 300 yards you need to be able to get closer. “I’ve been told by some its important to make the ethical shot.”
- 6) Usually when wolves are first seen they are usually running. If we must stop pursuing when they run it will be impossible to hunt most wolves. This will pretty much stop all wolf hunting.
- 7) Our good wolf hunters have been very successful on wolves the last 10 or so years and we’re finally keeping their numbers down. How many wolves have been taken yearly? Wolves reproduce quickly and we are likely to lose ground again real fast if this becomes the regulation. Remember we are trying to protect the caribou herd so it can recover.
- 8) 15 mph makes no sense at all. There should be no speed limit. Wolves head for cover really fast.
- 9) This action by the BOG will affect more GMUs than 17 and on very short notice. What are the statewide implications? How has it (current positioning language) been used and enforced in those other [GMU 18, 22, 23 and 26A.] units? We need to inform these other units that are unaware and on a different cycle.
- 10) This is far more complicated than we wanted or expected.
- 11) Since this is statewide, we need to be careful and get this right.
- 12) We need to consider the subsistence aspects of this proposal.
- 13) We can’t sugar coat this. Hunting wolves is far different than for caribou. We are trying to protect moose and caribou herds. We have intensive management in force. This is not about fair chase for wolves like it is for caribou.
- 14) We need to keep caribou hunting separate from wolf hunting.
- 15) we should address wolves only on this and drop wolverines. Wolverines are incidental really. Wolves should be the main concern. I would give up wolverines in this if we can maintain positioning wolves like we need to.
- 16) We need to keep wolverines in this. They are always running or loping when they travel - 15 mph is too slow to catch them.

- 17) Can positioning be defined differently by GMU?  
 18) Should we form a subcommittee to gather data and work out language and approaches?  
 19) what if we could tie unrestricted snowmachines to the Intensive Management? Give out tags or permits to snowmachine hunters and let them get the wolves. Kind of like the airplane permits.

MOTION To form a Positioning Subcommittee

Dan moved Gayla 2<sup>nd</sup> to form a subcommittee to address the definition of positioning of wolves and wolverines for GMU 17 and 9. Our concerns for the low caribou herd and moose numbers should be reflected as well. We need to protect the moose and caribou. This subcommittee will be authorized to represent the full AC.

Member Kenneth Nukwak left the meeting (12 members present.)

**Motion Carried.** 11-0 unanimous (Chris Carr briefly dropped offline missed vote)

**Proposal 271** language permitting snowmachine to position at 15 mph and within 300 yards....

Motion to adopt by Todd F, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Travis

**Motion Failed.** 0-12

Discussion

We need to vote on this just to be sure the BOG knows we are opposed to the language and restrictions in 271. Our discussion regarding formation of the subcommittee explains our issues with 271.

Roll call vote

**Proposal 22** Customary and traditional finding for Nushagak Peninsula Caribou.

Dan Moved Trav 2<sup>nd</sup> to adopt

**MOTION Carried** to adopt 11 – 0 (Gust Tunguing, no response at vote)

Discussion

Robin Dublin, Lisa Olson, and Bronwyn Jones did a power point presentation for the AC. Paper and electronic copies of presentation were provided to members ahead of meeting.

Chair Susie noted the AC had not acted earlier due to absence of a Subsistence representative to present and explain the proposal.

Togiak Refuge biologist Aderman was asked if this action might affect the harvest potential on the herd. No change is expected. Aderman briefly outlined the history of the herd, its ups and downs have been pretty wide. He also outlined the population goals and changes to them. Aderman suggested at current goals subsistence use is likely to keep the herd at desired levels.

The difference among the Federal C&T and State C&T was explained. The proposal would apply to the small amount of state land in the area.

It was noted harvest on this herd is managed in consultation with the Working Group. Adoption of 22 isn't likely to affect the working group process.

One member noted that the transplant of these animals received significant funding from sport hunting sources, and it would be nice if regulations and harvest could accommodate some sport harvest when possible.

Second noted it seems like a good thing and he's in support.

Roll call vote

### **ANS for Nushagak Peninsula Caribou Herd.**

Travis moves, Dan 2<sup>nd</sup> to request Board of Game not recommend an ANS at this time, and instead address in next proposal cycle.

Todd calls question and asks unanimous consent.

### **Motion Carries Unanimously**

#### Discussion

There was a discussion if AC 's can comment. Yes, they are able.

ADFG Brockman noted: If the BOG adopts, they will also set the amount necessary for subsistence (ANS). It's not normal for AC's to comment.

The suggested range options are:

65 - 90 animals

20-150 animals

Or, adopt no determination.

Some had a concern if ANS is so high the opportunity for sport harvest might be unlikely. It was noted given weather and access makes harvest opportunities highly variable and harvest has ranged widely. Herd size has varied widely too.

Several members said they were not comfortable setting a range at this time and preferred to have more time to consider the information.

There seemed to be agreement that the BOG should not set a range until the AC could have time.

Woodsy supports the motion and waiting to set ANS in the next Proposal Cycle.

There was discussion on how the state rule applies to private lands (including large Native holdings). Some would like regulations that take private landowners into consideration.

BREAK 11:10 to 11:20

Kenneth Nukwak returned, and Joe Chythlook joined meeting at 11:12 (14 members present)

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### Reports

1. Chair Report: Essentially included during introductory remarks. Brief outline of January BOG participation by phone. Noted electronic distribution of preliminary BOG results file. Key points were actions on proposals 23, 22, and pending proposal 271.
2. BBSRI / BBEDC: Jeff Regnart presented a brief update on the Nushagak King Salmon committee. They've met 3 times, most recently in January '22. They plan 1 or 2 more meetings and hope to find consensus on some items. The goal is to submit a proposal to the Board of Fish on the items of consensus and provide an historical report plus added data that has been gathered to develop the planned proposal. The Committee will share all information with the AC in the coming weeks. Robert Heyano and Tom O'Connor are on the committee.

3. ADFG Staff:

- 1) Sport Fish: Lee Borden presented brief report. As normal still awaiting statewide harvest survey information; currently has mostly 2020 data. Sport effort and harvest was down as expected from covid restrictions. Example: Nushagak effort of 4,900 angler days was 30% of a normal year. and the harvest of 1,950 kings was also about 30% of normal. 2021 Field work included surveys on the Togiak king fishery and Nushagak cohos. Nushagak coho seems to be an emerging fishery; max effort was 60 anglers; hope to survey again in 5-7 years. 2022 plans include Naknek king fishery survey, possibly Kvichak drainage spring rainbow work probably at the Kvichak River and Lower Talarik Creek.

- 2) Commercial Fisheries: Tim Sands gave report. Just posted the 2022 escapement goal memo for the public online. Discussed the Nushagak King escapement goal - the 2021 escapement was about 55,000 fish. Allowing for harvest above the sonar 62,000 are needed to project 55K on the spawning grounds so it appears the goal wasn't quite met; no king projection for this summer. For 2022 sockeye expecting a 29.48 million run with 26 available for harvest. It may not be possible to harvest all of that while trying to meet the king goal and other unexpected factors. Tim will be striving to protect chum escapement as well as kings. This year is expected to be unusual with more sockeye projected for the Nushagak River (18.6 m) than Wood River (9 million). More 3 ocean fish are expected in this biggest ever forecast.

A discussion followed covering expected opening schedules, protection of king salmon escapement, Igushik River run (2 million). Tim may go to continuous

opening if daily harvest is expected to be 1 million or more.

3) Subsistence: Robin Dublin, Bronwyn Jones, and Lisa Olson answered questions regarding Subsistence being switched from a Division to a Section answering directly to the Commissioner.

4) Board Support: Taryn O'Connor-Brito noted that the BOG recognized 2 Nushagak AC members for excellence in service: Joe Chythlook and Dan Dunaway, and updated AC on Board of Game intention to accept some remote public testimony for upcoming statewide meeting.

#### 4. Other Agencies:

- 1) Alaska Wildlife Troopers: Joe Wittkop was available for questions. One complaint voiced that drifter get too close to set nets at Igushik. Wittkop asked folks to report violations to help the few AWT during the commercial fishery. Discussed that some drifters maybe be using very heavy lead lines as anchors. Short discussion about offshore set nets on Igushik mudflats.
- 2) USFWS Togiak Refuge Andy Aderman. Briefly mentioned the 17A winter moose hunt extension to Feb 3. Reminded hunters to submit hunting reports
- 3) BBNA Natural Resources Cody Larson updated the AC regarding the coming BBNA, ADFG Subsistence joint survey of households starting in February. Hope to contact 180 households. Last survey was in 2010. Robin Dublin offered to email project information to members.

#### Public Comment

Public were allowed to comment throughout the meeting if desired but were minimal. Discussions of the proposal items capture some public comments.

#### New Business

Call for Fisheries proposals: There was a wide-ranging discussion and question period lasting about 2+ hours. **No Proposals** were developed to move forward from this meeting.

Topics touched on were:

- a) set a cut off threshold (fleet size?) where D boats are cut off in Nushagak district to reduce competition Dual permits may take 75% of harvest at times. Look into impacts of Dual permits (D boats).
- b) last 2 years the chum escapement goal for the Nushagak R was not met.

- c) Proposal submission deadline is April 11. Submit through Dillingham Board office or online. ADFG staff, AC Chair, are ready to help with proposals.
- d) some talk of eliminating gear allocations. Tim noted WILL result in less fishing time. Or making the Nushagak commercial district super-exclusive like Togiak.
- e) ANS - amount needed for subsistence salmon by species or lumped together? Does this need to be refined?
- f) Some members wanted to spend more time trying to develop proposal concepts at this meeting. Others expressed a preference to let individuals or other groups develop proposals and let AC review. Chair and other members expressed a strong wish for AC members and the public to come to meetings with some developed proposals or concepts. It was noted that a lot of work goes into writing a good proposal and that its best to come to the AC with a more researched and fleshed out concept.
- g) one member brought up recent Area M Chum catch as a concern.
- h) some mentioned rumors of proposals for bigger boats and deeper nets.
- i) processing capacity was mentioned. Sands said a survey is in process.
- j) several mentions of concerns to protect spawning grounds. Sport closures on king salmon reviewed and discussed. Enforcement of closures mentioned. A couple suggestions to make spawning season closure earlier. Comment: it seems nearly all kings heading upriver have net marks.
- k) one mention that some subsistence fishers not getting enough king salmon.

Miscellaneous Business:

Representation: March 4-11 BOG March meeting, decided at December '21 meeting, Dan Dunaway will represent committee.

Set next meeting date: Call of Chair before April 11<sup>th</sup> proposal submission deadline.

Review and approval of these minutes: overlooked and not discussed; minutes will be submitted to BOG Statewide meeting as draft.

Adjourn 1:45 pm

Minutes Recorded By: Dan Dunaway

Minutes Reviewed By: Susie Jenkins-Brito

Date: 2/27/22

**Proposal 23: Original Nushagak AC comments on the proposal from official minutes December 2020 meeting.**

23	Allow the use of snowmachine to position wolf or wolverine for harvest in Unit 17		
Support	11	0	<p>Joe Move, Todd F 2<sup>nd</sup></p> <p>Todd F spoke in support and to history of proposal after wolf and wolverine were dropped from a proposal that included caribou in 2017. This is a long-time common practice in western Alaska and folks don't like looking over their shoulders. Its allowed in other GMUs.</p> <p>ADFG noted that since IM is in effect in much of GMU 17 they support. It would help moose and caribou populations but emphasized snowmobile must be stationary at time of firing.</p>