

ALASKA BOARD OF GAME
October 23, 2016 Special Meeting | Teleconference

On-Time Advisory Committee Comment Index

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STATE OF ALASKA



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Bill Walker, GOVERNOR

Anchorage Fish & Game Advisory Committee

Joel Doner, Chair

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October, 12 2016

Kristy Tibbles
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RE: AHTNA request for BOG action

Chairman Spraker, and Fellow Board Members

The Anchorage Advisory Committee is writing you in regards to the AHTNA special meeting request seeking the Boards action. Our first and biggest concern is the fact that this is taking place outside of the normal meeting cycle. Our AC just met for the first time on September 27 to begin this season's work, and first thing out of the gate is the Ahtna request for changes to the Copper Basin CSH hunt for both moose and caribou. We would recommend that the Board take no action at this time, due to the timing of this meeting, and lack of public involvement. Rescheduling this issue for one of the regular BOG meetings taking place this winter makes more sense, by giving the process a chance. Taking up this issue via a teleconference meeting due to timing concerns could cast a shadow of suspicion in circumventing the public process on an issue that is very contentious, to say the least.

Since our meeting on the 27 of September we have been able to receive some preliminary data in regards to harvest and hunter participation from the Department of F & G. Most AC's haven't held their first meeting of the season yet, let alone had chance to meet, discuss, and weigh in on the Ahtna request. The Alaska AC process plays a very key role in this decision making process on issues that affect so many of the people we represent. There are 1567 CSH members who participate in this hunt from the Anchorage area. As of now there are 21 groups that have coordinators with Anchorage addresses only. We have not yet received a breakdown

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on the Eagle River or Chugiak area coordinators. So it is needless to say that interest in the Anchorage area is high. We do not want Anchorage hunters to be excluded from this hunt based on their zip code. We are all Alaskans.

Since the inception of this the Board has added more hurdles to qualify for this hunt in order to discourage applicants, with little or no effect. If we understand Ahtna's proposals correctly, we do not see how increasing bag limits and lengthening the seasons would address their current concerns. By adding more sub-legal bulls to the hunt along with the current head start season opening date will only have an increase in hunter participation.

What we don't have and haven't seen is the cost and the burden of administrating this hunt by the Department. We can only imagine the amount of man hours involved in trying to keep up with the work load this hunt alone has created.

The Anchorage AC has concerns with the BOG taking any action at this time, and is asking the Board to reschedule this action item for one of the regular meetings this winter.

Respectfully,

Joel Doner, Chairman

Anchorage Advisory Committee.



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RE: Reconsideration of Proposal 51, 2016 BOG Statewide Meeting

Chairman Spraker and members of Board of Game,

The Anchorage AC would like to encourage the Board to schedule a reconsideration of their regulatory action taken during the March 2016 Statewide meeting concerning Proposal 51. This is dealing with the second-degree kindred on the taking of brown bear, sheep, and goat.

The Anchorage AC was unanimously opposed to this proposal and feels it puts a heavy unwarranted burden and cost on the resident hunter who wishes to take a qualifying second degree non-resident family member hunting with them. Forcing the resident hunter to punch his or hers tags when a non-resident family member is successful in taking a sheep is a very steep price for the resident hunter to bear.

Best Regards,

Joel Doner, Chairman

Anchorage Advisory Committee



COPPER BASIN FISH AND GAME ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
for OCTOBER 11, 2016 at the Glennallen High School Library

Meeting was called to order at 5:10 pm:

Members Present: Chuck McMahan, Karen Linnell, Jim Odden, Brad Henspeter, Don Horrell, Alysia White, Leif Sorlie, Dave Sarafin, David Bruss, Christopher Gene, Brad Sinyon

Agency Staff present: Heidi Hatcher, Frank Robbins, Mark Somerville of ADF&G, Jon Simeon of AK State Wildlife Troopers; Jesse Hankins of BLM

Public Present: Gloria Stickwan, Jeff Logan, Rod Arno (Alaska Outdoor Counsel), JW Hann, Michelle Anderson,

Meeting to discuss Proposal 154.

Motion by Henspeter, 2nd by Sorlie: Proposal 154 as Amended: Cancel the community hunt in GMU 13 for moose and caribou as currently regulated effective next year 2017.

Call for question: Christopher Gene, Proposal 154 as amended (to cancel the hunt): 11 for, 0 nay

Discussion: We supported the original intent of the community hunt as proposed by Ahtna in 2008 and implemented in 2009, the whole community of Copper Basin benefited from the proposal for a community hunt. However, since then the hunt has gotten out of control. This is due to the hunt being opened up to all Alaskans to form groups. This year (2016) 73 groups participated in the hunt. Next year there will be at a minimum of the 73 groups as they had to sign up for a 2 year commitment to hunt GMU13. The 73 groups was a rise of 30 new groups from 2015. How many more groups will be formed in 2017? This is the unknown question. There is no cap on the number of groups who can apply. Currently there are only two eligibility requirements: the group must have 25 members and the group must report.

The hunt has gotten to be too large for our local Fish and Game office to manage.

The hunt is impacting all other species. Due to the large number of Community hunters out in the field they are also killing bears, coyote, fox, ptarmigan, grouse, etc. in GMU13.

The quality of the hunt has diminished. Too many people all over, trash along highways and trails, toilet paper and human waste in the bushes in turn outs and parking areas.

The land is getting torn up by motorized vehicles. Concern expressed about vegetative resources and habitat.

With decreasing budget how can the hunt continue to be monitored by fish and game and the wildlife troopers? There has been a steady rise in the number of moose harvested over the last several years. In 2016 193 moose were reported to be taken not including the federal subsistence moose take. The big question is how many more moose of various sizes were killed



and snuck out of the unit. There are not enough enforcement personnel to cover the vast area of GMU 13 24 hours a day. Committee members expressed hearing stories of groups taking moose over limit or sub legal and not turning themselves in. Glennallen Wildlife troopers reported 17 sub legal moose that were self turn in or caught. This number does not count the self turn in and caught number of moose from GMU 13 being reported in Palmer, Cantwell, Delta.... There were also 6-9 sub legal moose found killed along the roadways and left in GMU 13. How many more were left wasted in the field?

Frustration was expressed that the board of game is holding the meeting to discuss this issue in a teleconference format to listen into, no live testimony will be allowed. This hunt effects our community directly yet no one from the board of game has come to our advisory meetings to discuss this issue with the community impacted.

There was discussion that a working group could be formed after canceling the hunt as currently regulated. That working group would start over to look at this issue to come up with a better way to manage the hunt. Suggestions were to get rid of the early hunt start date, have each group have to apply and meet the 8 criteria to qualify, make a mandatory reporting of harvested animals through either check stations or at local fish and game offices. Make the survey that has been developed mandatory as a part of the reporting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Minutes taken by Alysia White
Approved by Chuck McMahan
10/13/2016



Comments to the Board of Game on the October 23, 2016 Special meeting

October 13, 2016

The Fairbanks Fish & Game Advisory Committee (Committee) files its comments on proposed Agenda Change Requests (ACRs) and regulatory changes for the October 23, 2016 Special meeting of the Alaska Board of Game (Board).

Proposal 154

The committee is somewhat confused as to whether the Board is treating Ahtna's August 30, 2016 letter as a petition for rule making or an Agenda Change Request (ACR). It is also concerning that the Department would rewrite a letter into proposal format before the Board has acted. Overall the committee is opposed to Ahtna's request.

If the Board is treating the letter as a petition, the Board has clarified the reliance on the call for proposals and regular meetings in the Joint Board Petition Policy at 5 AAC 96.625. Under the petition policy, the Board will apply the criteria of 5 AAC 96.615 for "petitions dealing with subsistence hunting." 5 AAC 96.615 requires emergency like situations where the game population has been previously identified by the Board as a population customarily and traditionally used for subsistence uses. It goes on to provide examples of circumstances that require expedited consideration of a proposal, such as court decisions or federal action. The committee does not believe the reasons articulated by Ahtna require expedited consideration by the Board under these regulations.

If the Board is treating the letter as an ACR, the Board should consider its ACR policy, which provides that "the board will accept an agenda change request only: a. for a conservation purpose or reason; b. to correct an error in a regulation; or c. to correct an



effect of a regulation that was unforeseen when a regulation was adopted. None of these three criteria exist in the Copper Basin. The Department has not indicated a conservation concern, there is no error in the regulations, and it was foreseeable that any special opportunity would lead to increased participation.

On the substance of Ahtna's request, the Committee is concerned that the request asks for special rulemaking applicable to only one group in clear violation of the Alaska Constitution Article VIII as interpreted by the Alaska Supreme Court.¹

The committee is also concerned for potential drastic action to the regulatory scheme with limited notice and opportunity for public participation. The committee is opposed to any regulatory change at the October 23 meeting due to the lack of participation and normal proposal process that all users have come to rely on. Scheduling the topic for a later Board meeting is somewhat preferable to immediate action but the Committee opposes any out of cycle action on the CSH.

ACR 2

The committee agrees with the Department comments, does not believe the area qualifies for a special use area, and would ask the proposer to use the normal proposal process.

ACR 4

The committee is opposed to ACR 9 because it does not meet the ACR criteria.

ACR 9

The committee is opposed to ACR 9 because it does not meet the ACR criteria.

Proposal 51

¹ *McDowell v. State*, 785 P.2d 1 (Alaska 1989)



The committee urges the Board to consider this as an ACR and schedule it for the Fairbanks meeting.

Approved at the October 12, 2016 meeting.



Submitted By
Herman Griese
Submitted On
10/13/2016 3:15:28 PM
Affiliation
Mat-Su AC

Matanuska- Susitna Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Board of Game
Ted Spraker, Chairman

Mr. Spraker,

The Mat-Su F&G Advisory Committee met 7:00-9:00 PM, 12 October 2016 at the Palmer MTA building and considered proposals 154 submitted by Ahna Tene Nene' and the reconsideration of Second-degree of Kindred hunters in proposal 51 of the last years board cycle. Please accept the Mat-Su Advisory Committee comments.

Proposal 154: The advisory committee voted 0 in favor, 14 opposing and 0 abstentions. (0-14-0)

Summary of comments:

First, we are concerned that a proposal as controversial as this would be held as a teleconference. The CSH system is certainly controversial and prone to abuse as knowledge of this option grows. Consideration of the intent and effects of this proposal should be addressed in an open public forum.

The proponents seem to have ignored the availability of the federal moose and caribou permits, available only to those individuals that qualify, primarily residents of Unit 13. They also ignore or fail to take advantage of the exclusive use and access of their posted lands throughout much of Unit 13. Hunting success is typically a product hunting effort. If harvest is going to "outside-the-unit" CSH then the proponents must not be putting in equal effort.

Proposal 51 (2015) reconsideration:

The AC agreed unanimously that 2017 Game proposals 19, 49 and 50 should not be acted on individually because this is a statewide issue and thus should be considered in the next Statewide board meeting. The committee however, did also agree that 2015 proposal 51 and its implications should be reconsidered, but only at the next statewide meeting.

Comments: "This proposal seems to be driven by sheep hunter and commercial guiding interests for exclusive allocation."

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Jehnifer Ehmann, Chair
Mat-Su Fish and Game Advisory Committee



**Paxson Advisory Committee
10-5-2016
Meiers Lodge**

- I. Call to Order: 6:30pm by John Schandelmeier, Chair
- II. Roll Call:
Members Present:
Greg Swope
Alan Echols
John Schandelmeier
Mark Schlenker
Gary Alcott
Lee Harper

Number Needed for Quorum on AC: 4
- III. Approval of Agenda:
Fisheries Proposal
Ahtna Proposals
Elections
Previous Minutes
Review of Statewide Proposals
Open discussion
- IV. Fish and Game Staff Present: Frank Robbins
- V. Guests Present:
Steve Chmielowski, David Hoffmeister
- VI. Old Business:
Reviewed comments made by members at Federal Subsistence Board meeting at Copper Center regarding the Paxson Closed Area. Members are opposed to opening the Paxson closed area to federal hunting due primarily to safety issues.
- VII. New Business:

Fisheries Proposal

Discussion around proposal from Kenai Advisory Committee regarding Habitat. John Schandelmeier to gather further information about proposal.

Ahtna Proposals

Proposal and history of Community Hunts (CH) were reviewed with all attendees. Attendees discussed the initial intent of the CH and how it was no longer successfully meeting the objectives of allowing Ahtna and other traditional users a method of meeting reasonable harvest goals.



Initial discussion focused on the first year of CH and how the initial hunt was successful but that subsequent years have been less and less successful due to the removal of RURAL PREFERENCE leading to more and more groups applying for the CH. Most members pointed out that with out Rural Preference, the CH has actually had a negative impact on Ahtna and other local communities as it has increased hunting pressure.

Members all agreed that increasing the number of Moose taken from 100 to 150 would just increase hunt pressure, decrease the number of Moose available over time, and ultimately lead to more unsuccessful Community Hunts.

All members of the Paxson Adv Committee believe that the concept of the CH (without Rural Preference) has actually had a negative impact on Ahtna and other local communities and should be abolished. With the number of groups applying for CH status, this will just increase overall hunting pressure on Moose resulting in reduced success for Ahtna and other local communities.

Discussion focused on the need to have less preferential groups and to look at GMU13 as allowing equal access for all Moose Hunters. With less groups applying for preferences such as the CH, it would hopefully result in less hunt pressure, reduced hunters, and increase successful moose hunt percentage for communities such as Ahtna.

There was also widespread agreement among the members and guests that Subsistence is more than just Moose and Caribou. There are many other options for subsistence beyond these two game animals.

Tweaks and minor changes to the community hunt has not made the program better. The addition of more communities has actually make the program less successful. With the likelihood that more and more groups will apply, we have all agreed that the best solution to increasing the hunt success for local communities is to do away with the entire program.

Elections:

New members elected to Board:

Steve Chmielowki, Secretary

David Hoffmeister, Alternate

Previous Minutes

Review of Statewide Proposals

Concern was raised about the growth in the number of Drones in Alaska and the impact it is having now and the likely future impact. While the Paxson Adv Committee did not have a specific proposal, we feel that this is a growing issue that will need to be addressed.



We will be looking at current Statewide Proposals and will draft a statement of our concerns and possible suggestions.

Open discussion

There was a general discussion about water quality in Paxson Lake and the impact it is/may have on fish in the lake. In the past few years there has been a significant increase in Algae, weeds, grasses, and suspended solids in the water. Questions were raised about whether this was a general condition affecting all Alaska lakes due to warmer temperatures and longer ice-free growing seasons or if it might be related to Fish Hatchery (Located upriver of Paxson Lake) disposing of fish carcasses that has increased the nutrients in the water. Advisory members were going to see if we could get historical data on water quality to better understand the situation.

Adjournment:

Minutes Recorded By: Greg Swope
Minutes Approved By: John Schandelmeier
Date: 10/13/2016



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER



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Michael Opheim, Chair
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October 12, 2016

ADF&G Boards Support
P.O. Box 115526
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Re: Seldovia Village Tribe ACR

Board of Game Members:

The Seldovia Fish & Game Advisory Committee supports the Agenda Change Request (ACR) being submitted to you by the Seldovia Village Tribe. It is apparent to us that this ACR would help slow down the over harvest of black bears in subunits 15C and 7 while still allowing hunters opportunity to harvest black bear. Currently 3 bears per year are being allowed and what this ACR is asking for is that it go back to 1 bear per regulatory year to help the depressed population to bounce back.

This population of bears has been in decline for some time now. Our local hunters have had harder times harvesting black bears for themselves. Many have had to go much farther back into the mountains to harvest decent black bears and even at that have seen very few bears in those areas.

If no action is taken at your teleconference and it is tabled till your next regulatory cycle in 2019 it may be too late to give these black bear the time they need to start increasing in population. If this happens this will create a monetary drop in sales from businesses here in Seldovia when the outside black bear hunters come in but it will affect the state as well because many of these people use the Alaska Marine Highway to get their four wheelers and side by sides to Seldovia where they start their hunts from.

We ask the Board of Game to seriously consider all of this in their deliberation on the subject of this ACR and maybe to do some actual on the ground survey work in this area in the future to help support any new harvest limit increases.

Thank you,

Michael Opheim
Seldovia Advisory Committee