

**Seward Fish & Game Advisory Committee Meeting
Minutes of January 15, 2014
Seward Community Library**

I. Call to Order at 7:03 pm by Chairman McCracken

II. Roll Call:

Members Present: Jim McCracken, Jeanette Hanneman, Jim Herbert, Bob White, John Flood, W.C. Casey, Trent Foldager, Arne Hatch, Robin Collman.

Quorum present: 9 members present, 8 required.

Members Excused: Mark Clemens, Dianne Dubuc, Ezra Campbell, Jim Hubbard

Members Absent: Matt Hall

User groups present: Sport and Commercial Fish, Hunting, Conservation, Wildlife viewing, Guiding, non consumptive users, personal use, trapping

III. Approval of Agenda: [Motion–Casey; Hatch] add item H2, letter from Ferren, to new business. No objection to addition or amended agenda

IV. Approval of minutes from November 14, 2013. [Motion - Casey; Hatch] were approved with minor edits - no objections

V. Agency Staff Present: Sherry Wright, Board Support

VI. Public Present: approximately 10 persons

VII. Correspondence: Wildlife Harvest and Survey Data for the Kenai Peninsula report from Jeff Selinger were distributed.

Collman alerted members of the spread of the invasive water weed Elodea and asked that members keep an eye out for it. Locally Jen Kain and in Juneau Tammy David of ADFG were mentioned as experts who could identify the plant and see the information could be officially noted. Eradication efforts will begin this summer in several infested lakes.

White felt there were misrepresentations in the F&G Moose on the Kenai pamphlet that was sent to borough residents. He disagrees with the current management plan and advocates much more aggressive predator management, especially bears.

McCracken offered introduction of the Committee members to any in the audience and their areas of interest.

VIII. Citizen's comments on F&G matters: none

IX. Presentations: None

X. Old Business: Kids' Fishing Day will be held May 17th. Collman has been the lead person on this program and has agreed to be in charge again this year. A review of the activities was presented to the audience. We hope the F&G Lab Truck will be in town 5/17 to add an educational component to the event. McCracken encouraged members to volunteer their time and money to help Collman with this outreach to the community. The committee is very grateful for the donations from Safeway and Three Bears as well as other merchants for the event.

Wright wanted to know if the concerns she heard a year ago on the trampling of vegetation associated with the Kids' Fishing had been addressed. The use of a large portable tank to hold the target fish significantly solves this problem at First Lake and makes for a much more enjoyable experience for the young fishermen. We intend to do that again this year. Collman asked that if Bear Creek Fire Department ever wishes to dispose of the portable tank that they will allow us to purchase it.

Sheffler Creek's banks closest to the Bay were not a problem this year because of the lack of fish during the designated youth fishing periods. Hatch said he corresponded with the person who raised the concerns and they agreed to disagree on the matter.

XI. New Business: McCracken distributed Dubuc's report of her participation in the December Board of Fish meeting. Members were asked to review it. The Chair will send the secretary an electronic copy to attach to these minutes as an addendum. Wright complimented Dubuc for her help in educating other AC representatives at the Joint Board meeting and for her effective participation.

McCracken invited Howard Ferren to elaborate on a letter to the AC. He advocates F&G put a full time fishery biologist in Seward. Andy Bacon, the seasonal biologist, was introduced and described his duties. He is supervised by the Ground Fish Biologist in Homer. The last full time local fish biologist was Ted McHenry who retired around 1980.

The committee agreed that it was a good idea though there was pessimism that there is the money to do anything about it. McCracken, Casey, and Ferren will meet to strategize on the matter. They may try to get a letter of support from the mayor and council.

The language of the letter submitted by Ferren [Casey, Collman] was approved 9-0-0 to be included in the final product.

Annual elections were presided over by Wright. She explained recent changes by the Joint Boards. The changes will not take place until later this year after the governor or lieutenant governor signs the papers. At that time our AC will have 11 members plus two alternates compared to the current maximum of 15+2. Alternates serve to fill the quorum but participate and vote. The terms for members all over the state will become July 1 to June 30. We will have to adjust the election cycle and the number elected each of the future three years.

For now we are under the old rules and can elect up to 5 persons. McCracken asked for nominations from the floor. No nominations received. He asked current members whose terms had expired if they would serve again. The following agreed to serve and were nominated:

Ezra Campbell, W.C. Casey, Robin Collman, Jim Hubbard, Jim McCracken

Casey moved, White seconded that nominees be accepted by unanimous consent. Since there were five nominations for five positions there were no objections. They will serve for three years unless readjusted at a later date.

No one from the audience volunteered to serve as an alternate. We may appoint an alternate at any time for a one year term.

There is no election of officers until January 2015.

XII. Citizen's Comments: Nate Smith commented on the Cape Cleare sport king salmon fishery. He feels there is significant mortality from the catch and release he has seen in the area. He is looking for a conservation minded approach to see that king salmon are there for his grandchildren. He was encouraged to submit changes since that area is in the PWS area and will be considered this year.

There was a discussion of smolt mortality when stocking Resurrection Bay. This also referred to the possibility discussed at the last meeting of putting net pens in the Lagoon. The Chamber of Commerce is keen on this project and seeks to make it into a potential annual event.

XIII. Next Meeting: March 7, 2014 prior to the due dates for PWS Board of Fish proposals and the May 1, 2014 Board of Game proposals. Casey will try to reserve the City Council Chambers.

XIV. Adjourn: 8:27 p.m. [Foldager, Flood].

Thanks to Jeanette for the cookies and Sherry for the elections.

ADDENDUM TO MINUTES OF JANUARY 15, 2014

BOF LOWER COOK INLET REPORT PRESENTED TO THE SEWARD FISH & GAME ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON 1-15-2014

I recently had the opportunity to represent the Seward AC at our area in cycle meeting for Lower Cook Inlet. The following is a summary of that meeting. We took action on several LCI proposals at our November 7th AC meeting. A number of these proposals were to also be discussed at the upcoming Upper Cook Inlet meeting. Public testimony was heard on these proposals but the Board did not take any action. The remaining proposals dealing with strictly LCI will be discussed here.

Proposal 46 to allow party fishing failed with a vote of 0-7. The rational was that LCI would have different regulations than the rest of the state.

Proposal 51 which would prohibit catch & release fishing for coho in Resurrection Bay failed 0-7. Board discussion was as follows: As written, once the angler reached their limit of coho; they would not be able to fish for other species. Anglers who were targeting other species would be forced to retain coho and cease fishing when their coho limit was reached. This proposal would create enforcement problems created by additional regulation. I was happy to see solid support from the Board against this proposal.

Proposal 58 would close the Anchor River to sports fishing on Wednesdays. We had a split vote to support 5-3. The Board chose to oppose this proposal 1-7. The opposing vote was by Carl Johnstone who is prone to err on the side of conservation. There was discussing about the liberalization of the regs for the Lower Inlet streams which the Board passed in 2007 and the subsequent demise of king salmon in these streams. As is often the case, the Board sided with the Department on this proposal. The vote was based on the rational was that once something goes away, it is almost impossible to get it back. Forget the fact that this was one of the restrictions lifted in 07 that may have led to the demise of kings in these systems today.

Proposal 59 would delay the re-opening of sports fishing on the Lower Peninsula streams for 2 weeks was supported by us unanimously as it was by the Board with substitute language. The substitute language was to allow fishing with one single, unbaited, hook with an artificial lure. The basis for this vote was to allow the kings that have entered these systems should have a fair shot to hit the spawning grounds before allowing sprotsfishing for other species.

Proposal 60 would allow fishing on the Lower Peninsula streams to occur in November & December. We supported this proposal 7-1 on the basis of expanding sports fishing opportunity. The Board opposed it 7-1. The rational was that the fish should get a break from fishing pressure. The point was also made that the Lower Peninsula streams are usually froze over by November so the point is mute.

Proposal 61 would limit the bag & possession limit on the Ninilchick River to one fish. We supported this proposal unanimously as did the Board. Substitute

language was inserted that stated that once an angler had retained a king in either the Ninilchick, Anchor, or Deep Creek cannot fish in those drainages for the rest of the day.

Proposals 63 dealt with using sport caught chums and pinks as bait. Proposal 64 would allow pinks to be used as bait in the sports fishery. We opposed proposal 63 because of the concerns we have with using wild chum as bait. The Board took no action on 63 because of the action they took on Proposal 64 which they supported 6-1.

Proposal 65 would allow the use of dogfish as bait. We supported this proposal 7-1. The Board, on recommendation of the Department opposed this proposal on a split vote of 3-4. The opposing votes were concerned about the longevity of dogfish as was our dissenting AC voter.

The next proposals we discussed and voted on were the CIAA proposals numbered 82, 83, & 84. Our AC grouped these proposals together and unanimously opposed them. Our AC was the only AC to oppose these proposals. Seward was the only group to realize that as written, these proposals would shut down sports fishing in the Special Harvest Areas until both broodstock and cost recovery goals had been met. Traditionally, ADF&G sports fish division has managed sport fisheries in the SHA for broodstock concerns only. CIAA has historically not been able to achieve cost recovery goals in Resurrection Bay. As written, these proposals would mandate that the Department manage the sport fisheries in the SHA to include cost recovery as well as broodstock concerns. Board member Kluberton, in response to our concerns, inserted RC 26 which mandates in regulation that the sportfish division of ADF&G manage sports fisheries in the SHA determined only on broodstock concerns, not cost recovery. All three proposals passed with unanimous consent.

Proposal 85 would restrict salmon fishing in Resurrection River until salmon broodstock goals were met failed with a 0-7 vote. Only once since the early 90's has CIAA not met broodstock goals.

As always, it was a privilege to represent our AC at the state level.

Draft Minutes created January 16, 2014

Minutes Approved March 6, 2014

J. Herbert, Secretary