

Matanuska Valley Fish & Game Advisory Committee Minutes
February 24, 2016 at MTA Building in Palmer

Meeting called to order at 7:05 Number needed for Quorum 8 — Quorum Met

Members Present: Andy Couch, Israel Payton, Herman Griese, Jehnifer Ehmann, Steve Bartelli, Birch Yuknis, Dan Montgomery, Hans Nordstrom, Mike Buirge, Dave Young arrived at 7:35

Members Excused: Randy Talvi, Joe Cizek, Terry Nininger, Tom DeLand, Jeff Tuttle, Mel Grove

Public Present: Rod Arno — Alaska Outdoor Council, Nick Steen Neil DeWitt, Max Sager, ADF&G Sam Ivey Fisheries and Dave Battle — Anchorage game, Cory Santel - Anchorage Assistant Game, Gino Del Frate — game regional supervisor (Region 2)

Public Comment:

Neil DeWitt — Western Arctic Caribou — Was 16-01 plan number — will be another meeting March 10 in Anchorage with a teleconference call in number. This covers hunting on federal lands by people from the Northwest Arctic Area — but not by other people outside the area. This covers 21 D and several other Units. No guides / transporters wanted on federal lands.

March 1 is the the deadline for submitting comments.

Sabrita Holland veterinarian Proposals 90 and 91 — wanted to point out that there are already good animal controls already in Alaska and also in the Mat-Su. Animal control does not do anything about some animals unless there are complaints from the public. Would like to have a meeting between animal control and Fish & Wildlife protection — Sabrita would also like to participate. Would like to find a better way to deal with this issue of wild “feral” type animals. If there is something already in place then lets make use of it. —Jehnifer Ehmann suggested making comment to the Board of Game. Israel Payton mentioned that Sabrita might want to contact the Alaska Chapter of the Wild Sheep Federation — Kevin Keho.

Rod Arno (Alaska Outdoor Council) — provided handout of USFWS comment period on refuge purpose changes. The changes would eliminate management of predators. If other animals declined so would hunting opportunities for those other species. March 8 is the comment deadline. Rule RIN 1018-BA31. Commented that Israel has been doing a good job on the sheep working group. Proposal 103 would apply subsistence regulations developed for the Nelchina basis to go statewide on subsistence hunts.

Legislation HB 137 license tag bill —- creates an intensive management surcharge — \$10 to \$15 per person. HB266 Would require BOF or BOG to go through the same process of developing a proposal as everyone else. SB 164 creates 2 classes of violation misdemeanor or citation — in some areas of the state regulations are already not dealt with as far as game permits and reporting this would maybe allow that to be legal.

Tiana — hunter, truck driver, and eater who loves sheep meat. Proposal 90 would make a drastic impact economically. Would like to see domestic sheep and goats remain on the clean list. Would ask that the sheep working group provide supplements for wild sheep. Would also like to see crossbow proposal passed — as she can not shoot a regular bow. If sheep and goats were to be delisted then all other animals on the clean list would also be up for delisting.

Janet Otto — Proposal 90 believes Board of Game may do something with this proposal — she has a large goat herd that is clean and disease free. Sheep and goats are a valuable source of meat in Alaska. Would like to see sheep and goat remain on the clean list.

Hans told Janet she might want to contact legislators about this issue. She already has. Israel mentioned Janet may want to comment to the the Alaska Wild Sheep Federation about this issue as well (writer of the proposal). Andy Couch mentioned that the Matanuska Valley AC had already looked at proposal 90 and did not support delisting sheep and goats.

Suzy — talking about proposal 90 — owns sheep and opposes this proposal. This would put a great many people out of business. slaughterhouses would no longer be able to deal with sheep or goats. 4-h kids and there projects would go away. This would restrict private residents from raising their private animals on their private property.

Becky Oviatt — person who owns sheep and goats on 3 acres. You take that away you take away her complete livelihood. Opposes proposal 90. Has brought animals up from the lower 48 to raise quality animals. She comes from a group of hunters and wants to hunt, but also wants the opportunity to raise her sheep and goats.

Briana Pritchard has interest in protecting wild sheep — but also want to maintain her rights to raise her own animals. Opposes proposal 90 and fears that the Board of Game may pass it anyway. Would rather have regulations that protect both wild and domestic animals. If new regulations are to be passed then they should not be so vague and not so far reaching to affect people and animals that are not part of the problem.

Scott Oviatt — asked AC members to explain how disease affecting sheep and goats is transmitted. Jehnifer replied that the AC would not explain details of Prop 90 as they are not authors of this proposal but that members of the public could make comment. Scott commented that he does not see a threat between domestic and wild animals — they are not in area of the Butte where he resides.

Jehnifer mentioned that the decision on Proposal 90 is not made by the Matanuska Valley AC, but will be made by the Board of Game. The AC does not believe that the Board of Game has authority to pass proposal 90.

Sam Ivey with ADF&G covered emergency regulations for king salmon in the Mat-Su Valley for 2016. Over time we've seen that we can fish at a lower level and put more king salmon on the spawning grounds. Preseason actions started taking affect in 2012, with more preseason emergency action in 2013, 2014, 2015, and now 2016. Sam looked at escapement data post 2012 — and the department has decided to allow the use multiple hooks starting May 15 and bait starting June 1 on the Deshka River and ADF&G hopes to manage for about the mid-point of the run goal. This year harvest will be allowed on the Little Susitna River on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Mondays. Seasonal limits remains restricted at by emergency order at 2 king salmon from the Susitna Drainage and Little Susitna River combined. ADF&G hopes to maximize king salmon harvest at the Eklutha Tailrace fishery. Israel wanted to know criteria for reopening the Talachulitna. Sam said we've made the goal the past couple years but not by much. With in season data ADF&G may be able to reopen the Tal. Israel wanted to know what criteria. Sam mentioned that if numbers looked good in the Little Susitna, Eklutha, Deshka and Eastside Susitna then possibly the Tal could be opened — but otherwise it might not be until next year. He mentioned that they may do some aerial king salmon counting starting sometime in June.

Motion to accept the agenda by Dan Montgomery. Amend to allow Israel to give a sheep working group update. Amendment to reconsider proposal 97 motion failed 2 in favor. Agenda approved as amended with no objection.

Israel said consensus issues on the sheep working group were as follows. ADF&G should have some standard way to judge the legality of sheep between the different ADF&G offices. Raise draw fee for sheep to \$10 per permit hunt. Double the cost of nonresident sheep tags. Resident should purchase a \$50 sheep stamp. Allow people to put in for 6 sheep drawing hunts rather than just 3. Does the AC agree with some type of allocation between resident / nonresident allocation of sheep tags? Steve and Birch want resident / nonresident participation to be more on the level of 90 / 10. Dan made a motion that the AC seek a 80 / 20 resident / nonresident participation allocation for sheep hunting opportunity. Allocation would likely be unit wide to accommodate current use levels. — Jehnifer made a ruling that there is not enough time to work through this issue.

Minutes to be considered later as they were not provided early enough for members to review.

AC meeting March 2nd will be the time that the Feb. 10 and Feb 24 minutes will both be approved.

Proposal 98 Dan made an amendment that this should only apply for sheep and goat permits with 50% of permits available to all applicants — 50% of permits would be available to preference point holders. With 1 preference point awarded per year applied and those points would be squared for the application. Points could be bought for a year in which the hunter decided not to participate in the drawing. No second on the amendment. Proposal 98 as written.

Birch wanted to know ADF&G's position on this proposal. ADF&G neutral on allocation — but say a preference system will cost money. Israel will not support this proposal — Dan feels this is too complicated and does not like allowing to put in for all the permit hunts for a species. motion failed 0 in favor 10 opposed.

Proposal 99 After a hunter signs an agreement to hunt with a guide if drawn — a guide would put their verification number on the permit application and send it in. Israel wanted to know how next of kin works. Dan said those hunting with next of kin must put in the name and relationship of the person to be hunted with. Birch wanted to know what happened if the guide for some reason could not participate. Dan said the drawing winner then would be unable to participate. Steve Bartelli asked what if the person who won the permit decided not to participate with the guide.

Gino Del Frate said ADF&G required a number to be on the application previously— but did not check those numbers for validity until after hunters were drawn. Herman does not see the point for supporting if ADF&G is not going to verify numbers. Israel said ADF&G comments are neutral on this proposal. Code would be verified by computer. motion failed 4 - 5- 1. Abstain did not understand what the proposal would do if passed.

Proposal 100 No action taken.

Proposal 101 would allow only a maximum of 10% of the available permits to be awarded to nonresidents. Dan mentioned that not all residents participate but that nearly all nonresidents do participate. Andy opposes as this would apply statewide — including permits that may be undersubscribed if nonresidents could only win a maximum of 10% of the permits. Gino mentioned there is the question of how the maximum of 10% of permits would be issued. Would it be on a per unit basis? per hunt basis? statewide basis? Some of these permit hunts are already nonresident only — so how would it apply to these hunts? motion failed 3 - 7-0.

Dave with ADF&G talked about Agenda Change Request — 20 mile hunts (unit 14 C and Unit 7 border area) and all of 14C hunts. ADF&G has managed toward the lower end of the moose population objective. Herman said with no surveys for the last few years what is the number of permits based on. Dave mentioned indirect numbers — roadkills, other indications. JBER hunt success rates are partially determined by when the training areas are open for hunting — rather than being used by the military. With mild winter and training area closures harvest numbers have been down. Ship Creek registration hunt success has remained good. Managing for the lower end of the moose objective may result in less winter kill and less car collisions. Bull to cow ratio is approximately in the 30's but may be into the 60% range in some areas. Dave mentioned they are ramping up some of the bull permits for this reason.

Moose antlerless reauthorizations —

Proposal 116 for Unit 14 C and 7. motion passed 10-0-0.

Proposal 117 for Unit 14c. motion passed 10-0-0.

Proposal 119 — Lots of hunters from the Mat-Su Valley participate in Unit 13 and we have had jurisdiction in that area in the past and would like to remain with jurisdiction. Motion passed 9-0-0.

Proposal 120 Andy has problems with the late winter hunt and feels that fall hunts provide better opportunities for taking prime shape animals. Herman said it was sold to the AC as a means to harvesting problem animals in targeted areas, but this does not seem to be the case anymore. Todd Rinaldi would like to continue the permit hunting regime. Israel wanted to know why the harvest objective is so low in Unit 14A, since we have harvested more than the objective for the past 3 years. Gino's comment was that ADF&G is attempting to bring the moose population back down to the population objective level. Steve wants to support the proposal. Herman wanted the population data to be kept up to date. Herman said a 14B hunt along the highway is impacting. Andy amends to reduce the winter permits by reallocating 50% of the winter permits to fall hunts. Steve wanted to know the percentage of bulls taking in the winter. Gino says perhaps lower than the bull to cow ratio — but did not have solid numbers at the meeting. Dave plans to support the proposal as is. Mike says that we may not be hitting moose to such an extent in some areas perhaps because the strategy may be working.

Amendment fails 3-7-0. proposal 120 as written passes 10-0-0.

Proposal 121 reauthorize Kalgan Island hunt passed 10-0-0.

Jehnnifer wants to know if we will have a quorum on March 2 —- so members please let her know if you will not be able to attend.

Israel heard confirmation hearings on the Board of Game and said the newest member may be quite interesting.

Herman thanked ADF&G for showing up.

Meeting adjourned at 10:02.