

**Anchorage Fish and Game Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**of Tuesday, September 27, 2016 6:30 pm**  
**at the William J Hernandez hatchery conference room, located at 941 Reeve Blvd.**

1. **Invocation** was led by Joel Doner
2. **Pledge of Allegiance** was led by Joel Doner
3. **Establish a quorum**

Members present: Bryce Eckroth, Phillip Calhoun, Kevin Taylor, Dino Sutherland, Ernie Weiss, Trevor Rollman, Frank Neumann, Joel Doner, Martin Weiser, Matt Moore, Brian Nelson, Neil DeWitt, Art Nelson, Kenny Rodgers. Members absent Excused Jim Bolgiano, Willow Hetrick

Public Present: Arni Thomson, Lindsey Bloom, Tim Troll, Melissa Heuer, Matt Koenig, Ryan Astalos, Emily Anderson, Cat Schessler, Moira Pyhala, Mary Elizabeth Wilson, Kyla Kosednar, Satchel Pondolfino, Emily Leak, Sam Snyder, Eric Booten, Sam Weis, Mark Richards, Mike Miller, David Martin

4. **Introduce Dept. Guests** – Sherry Wright, Lt Paul Fussey
5. **Advise Guests of Public Testimony Sign-up sheet**
6. **Approve Agenda** – unanimous consent
7. **Approve Minutes of Last Meeting** – was done by the chair so they could be posted timely
8. **Public Testimony**

Mark Richards of Resident Hunters of Alaska, came to speak briefly to the committee about their organization and the Ahtna request for a special meeting. Has concerns about Board teleconference meetings and the inability to effectively comment. Degree of kinship is another aspect and ACR approval could occur at this meeting. Proposal 51 from the 2016 BoG Proposal Book, submitted by AK Professional Hunters Assoc. may also be revisited. – next of kin aspect. Oppose this proposal.

Moira Pyhala – born in Homer, lifelong Alaskan studying political science. Title 16 ‘request for action’ was the topic of her testimony. She spoke about her family and their history in Alaska commercial fishing. Fishing has sustained their family for several generations. She spoke about the need for conservation of the resource so that it is sustainable.

Melissa Heuer – Executive Director of the Susitna River Coalition. Set net site in Kodiak and concern of protecting their most reliable food source in protecting the salmon. Would like the BOF to support the initiative regarding updating Title 16.

Sam Snyder – Requested the Anchorage AC support the efforts underway to update Title 16. A growing number of people are concerned about the future of our salmon. He’s grateful for the opportunities of his children to hunt and fish here as Alaskans, although he is not Alaska born. What if of the Susitna Dam project and the impact on our fisheries by that project. One of the reasons it is possible for the state to utilize state dollars is that the Title 16 has not been updated. He hopes resource development and the economics doesn’t become a political tool for pushing agendas. Alaska public must be able to weigh in on

development. Must be done scientifically rather than politically. Temporary water use permits are just issued and there should be some type of evaluation by the public on those.

Cat Schessler - From Kasilof and commercial fished with her dad out of there. Title 16 has not been updated since statehood, which is what prompted her to attend this meeting and speak about this issue. The Constitution instructs us to protect the resources, salmon in particular. Questioned about contacting legislators directly – she stated they are just exploring all their options at this time.

Eric Booten – Lives in Anchorage and spends spare time chasing salmon and wild trout. He is conservation chair of Trout Unlimited. Encouraging the Anchorage AC to support updating Title 16. We have the luxury of looking at costly mistakes made in the Lower 48 and can learn from them. Fish and wildlife are reserved for the people of Alaska and we should therefore have the opportunity to speak and have a voice in the permitting process and that ADF&G has tools needed to protect anadromous waters. The anadromous streams catalog is woefully incomplete and it may be wise to assume all waters are anadromous unless proven otherwise. Supports BOF authority to make recommendations to legislators to update Title 16.

Emily Leak – student at UAA. She was raised on wild fish and game and believes it is the healthiest food source. Grew up in Colorado and felt it was losing the resource rich rural area in which she grew up. Alaska has provided that place to her now. For these reasons she believes our salmon habitat must be protected. Support the request for action on Title 16.

Satchel Pondolfino – Lifelong Alaskan that has enjoyed salmon as a staple growing up. When in school in Oregon she realized most people get their salmon at Costco. Now that she is back in Anchorage, the days of the cooler of fish sent by her father are behind and abundance of salmon runs are still here. The culture of salmon is unique to our state and we need to have the resources to maintain this way of life. Please use your power to support this request before the BOF. The language in Title 16 is too vague. Questioned if she considered legislators could do something that would go backwards – she responded not until the question was asked. By asking for a stronger public process, the intent would be strengthen, not weakening it.

#### **9. Mike Miller- AK Wildlife Conservation Center**

Presentation regarding the release of wood bison. Mike shared a video showing the release of the wood bison. Reintroduction of an animal has to have documented history of inhabiting the region, must have habitat, must not have human encroachment. Yukon Flats has optimal bison habitat and there is a desire to do another release there. Around the discussion of bison being on an endangered species list, a suggestion of the first bison hunt being a governor's permit was suggested as a way to introduce hunting without major concern of lawsuits. There are more bison now from new births than the number of bison that have died since their release. They are very resilient against predators, and the predators in the area have no idea how to deal with bison. Mike requested support of their efforts to continue this work and release bison in the Yukon Flats area. A question of the genetics came up. All the current bison came from the original 23 that were obtained. Once they were released, the bison will do as they do. Many people have been very generous to the success of this program.

#### **10. Old Business - none**

#### **11. New Business**

Title 16 Habitat Protections – Lindsey Bloom came to talk the committee about their request for action (non-regulatory proposal 'n' for the October 18-20 BoF Work Session). Emily Anderson helped with questions of law. They are asking the BOF to ask the legislators to amend Title 16. Lindsey grew up in a fishing family

in Bristol Bay and learned much about the permitting process through the Pebble Mine activity. Alaska has the best Constitutional language for state management in the United States. The next level is statutes (where agency commissioners get their powers). In the statutes are the authority to permit projects in fish habitat. Page 7 of the booklet they handed out shows that there is nothing in Title 16 or ADF&G regulations that defines what constitutes the “proper protection of fish and game” when they go to issue a permit. The state would not have invested 200 million in a project (Susitna Dam) if they didn’t think it was going through. That project would have eliminated fish passage. The purpose of this request for action is to get the conversation going. The one place there is any language regarding protecting fish is in the BOF sustainable salmon policy. A question of what specific language would be added was responded that a preference for experts in law language may better answer that. Specific problematic permitting was another issue brought up – it is difficult to track due to lack of public notice or public comment process. Generally, you don’t really know until the project is underway. Pebble Mine is the most well known issue. Public notice would be one of the things desired to add in to the language. Understanding how the resource agencies work together is the first step. DNR, ADF&G, DEC are state agencies that deal with water permitting issues. Emily shared an example of how DNR worked on Pebble Mine. 12 years DNR allowed millions of gallons of water to be removed in Bristol Bay area. Sufficient stream water was not tested during the course of this activity. The concern of no way to keep DNR in check in regards to fish habitat is the major concern. A question if the ADFG commissioner is already under the law to make sure this happens. It is written in a manner that makes following it discretionary, rather than mandatory. The catalog triggers whether or not drilling could occur. Fish must be documented in various stages of life in order for a stream to be included in the anadromous stream catalog.

A draft letter was reviewed by the committee. Art Nelson made a motion for the AC Chair to send a letter on behalf of the Anchorage AC in support of the non-regulatory proposal before the BoF. Second by Frank Neumann. Following some discussion, motion to send a letter was approved unanimously.

## **12. Committee Reports**

Fish Sub-Committee- Joel Doner has stepped off the sub-committee to allow other committee members opportunity to serve. Kevin will chair the Fish sub-committee. Joel asked AC members to let him know of any other mutually agreed changes to the sub-committee rosters.

LCI BOF, UCI BOF, MSA-Dino Sutherland brought information about the UCIDA lawsuit. Information included some of the history leading up to the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals ruling that NMFS must adhere to the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) established in 1976 and remands it back to AK District Court to enter judgement in favor of UCIDA. The goal is not for the feds to take over management of the fisheries. A new Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) with the State of Alaska, NPFMC and all user groups must be created. MSA National Standards orientation information was provided for committee review. The first slide listed the 10 standards. Each of the standards was then further examined and explained. Concern of whether this will result in federal management is one of the biggest things people are asking about. That is not the goal. The goal is for Cook Inlet fisheries to be managed under the standards that are laid out under MSA. The example of the crab fishery, which the NPFMC has delegated to the state for management was provided.

Game Sub-Committee-Frank Neumann spoke to the committee about the AHTNA Request – Frank provided information on CM300 harvest by resident community 2016. Average size of the community was 44. The

question of the AC is do we want to put this on the next meeting agenda so that the public can provide comment? 5 AAC 92.072 is the regulation on community subsistence harvest. The committee agreed to take this up at their next meeting and it was determined that we could get a quorum.

**13. Adjourn** Meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm.

Next meeting: October, 4 2016 at King Career Center 6:30 pm to continue discussion to prepare comments for the BOG teleconference, and LCI BOF proposals.

Chair: Joel Doner

Secretary: Ernie Weiss