

Matanuska Valley Fish and Game Advisory Meeting
January 24, 2018 minutes
MTA Building in Palmer 7 p.m.

Members Present: Andy Couch, Bob Marshall, Danny Lewis, Hans Nordstrom, Herb Mansavage, Mel Grove, Mike Buirge, Neal Dewitt, Steve Bartelli, Tim Stephens

Members Absent:and Excused: Austin Manelick, Birch Yuknis, Chad Lipse, Chris Alderman, Dan Montgomery, Terry Ninger.

Motion to approve January 9 minutes by Mike Buirge 2nd by Mel Grave.

Minutes approved without objection.

Motion to accept agenda. Friendly amendment to Include action on Comments to DEC.

Amended motion approved without objection.

Motion to Approve Comments to DEC's Little Susitna River Listings by Andy Couch 2nd By Mel Grove. Andy Couch read some typed up comments and the committee asked several questions. It was discussed that if comments are approved the Advisory Committee should also ask to be included in DEC's ongoing process for Little Susitna River listings including any discussion of regulation change. Motion approved without objection by all 10 members present. Comments to be attached and submitted with minutes. Will also need to be submitted to DEC.

Additional comments to DEC must be in writing and may be e-mailed to drew.grant@alaska.gov All comments must be received by 5pm January 29, 2018. Written comments may also be faxed to (907) 465-5117 or sent by letter to Drew Grant, DED Division of Water, PO Box 111800, Juneau, AK 99801.

Neal DeWitt wanted to discuss ADF&G's fish stocking plan, but with some other people absent who wanted to discuss stocking, Herb suggested taking up stocking at another time.

Mel Grove made a motion with Steve Bartelli's second that the Advisory Committee write a letter to support Teresa Albaugh's and Larry Van Dale reappointment to the Board of Game. Mel agreed to draft the letter. Motion approved without objection.

Neal DeWitt will be attending a federal subsistence meeting in Anchorage — and wanted Committee members to know incase the had comments they would like to add.

Game proposals — motions by Mel 2nd by Steve Bartelli

103. Steve mentioned that the Committee has a history of not supporting CSH hunts, but if CSH for Copper Valley were to continue this might be a way to shrink the impact. Steve would like to the whole committee to come to agreement in how to vote on this proposal. Bob Marshall says he likes the opportunity to align season dates. Steve mentioned that at the last BOG meeting dealing with Unit 13 all Advisory Committees were opposed to CSH, but the board continued the program anyway. Motion passed 9-1-0. The opposed vote felt like the vast majority of Advisory Committees had already opposed a CSH Hunt.

104. Steve asked Is winter portion of the hunt required? Gino Del Frate said no the Department could have a shorter season. Steve wants to oppose because of the winter hunt — March 1 - 31 dates and its impact on moose in the late winter. ADF&G started the March hunts in 2014. Motion passed 6-4-0.

105. Would eliminate Unit 13 Antlerless moose hunt. Motion Opposed Unanimously 0-10-0.

106. ADF&G neutral on allocative aspect. Regulation currently allows for small harvest of any bulls — proposal would eliminate. Motion opposed 0-10-0.

107. Would create a late season registration any bull moose hunt. ADF&G neutral on allocation. Permits would be issued from a Unit 13 village(s). Number of permits greatly limited. Steve opposed for possible unfairness of permit issuing process. Nelson Island hunt for musk ox was mentioned as one such big problem. With such a limited number of permits this is really not registration this is a race to get those permits. To be fair registration hunts should have an opportunity for everyone to obtain a permit — but if a reasonable number of permits were issued, so there was a reasonable opportunity for everyone to obtain a permit, permit numbers would be so high that excessive harvest would likely occur. Motion opposed unanimously 0-10-0.

108. Bull to cow ratios would likely start to decline with a more liberal antler restriction. ADF&G mentioned that season may need to be shorted if bull harvest were too high. Andy mentioned that this management strategy had been used previously in Unit 13 for several years and had worked successfully for a number of years. Herb asked about having alternate years of 3 brow tine legal or 4 brow tine legal moose? Would this be some kind of amendment the AC might support as a way to provide a more liberal hunt opportunity, but possibly offset and down turn in bull cow ratios. It was mentioned that with the requirement that CHS and Tier 1 permit caribou hunters required to hunt moose in the same area the number of moose hunters has expanded. This is a very popular hunt area with lots of moose hunter participation. Motion failed 3-7-0.

109. Would change the drawing hunt to full curl ram from any ram. Herb was opposed. Lot of large rams that may not be legal under full curl regulation in this area — some may still be legal under age criteria, but that make judging even more difficult.. ADF&G does not make money off these hunts on a permit basis. According to ADF&G the approach currently used in these Units would likely be cost prohibitive if it was use statewide, because of the cost of doing sheep surveys in moe remote locations. Motion opposed 3-7-0.

110. Steve Bartelli favors this drawing hunt switching to registration. ADF&G may establish smaller hunt areas with specific quotas for these areas. Motion approved 10-0-0. Gives more people a better opportunity to participate.

111. Bob likes the opportunity to hunt brown bear over bait. ADF&G neutral — have not seen any biological problems, but population may be declining slightly. Steve mentioned hunting conditions are so thick in Unit 13D that he see this as the only way to take brown bear. Motion approved 10-0-0.

112. Motion approved 10-0-0.

113. last year 47 wolverine taken — 50 to 80 per year. Wolverine start denning to have young about mid Feb. How many area of refuge are there. Gino felt this partially a social issue. ADF&G has little wolverine information. ADF&G feels Wolverine harvest may be driven by a handful of trappers on how they manage their line for catching wolverine. Neal opposes because at present our regulations align with federal season. Mel asked what the incidental catch is. Gino mentioned that incidental out of season catch turn in has been very low. He mentioned he knew of two and one of those was turned in by a trooper. Mel agrees with aligned longer season if no biological problems. Season vary for other adjourning units. ADF&G feels their are upper end healthy wolverine populations in upper end of Unit 13. Herb mentioned that a lot of the good wolverine areas have poor availability during short winter days, but better conditions later in the winter — Herb would like to support. Motion failed 3-7-0.

114. motion opposed 3-7-0.

115. motion opposed 3-7-0.

116. Would allow incidental harvest of two out of season fur bearers. Mike and Herb both oppose. Mel feels this proposal would not fix anything. Hans feels people would be more careless and take more animals out of season. Motion opposed 0-9-0 (Neal Dewitt had to step out).

122. motion passed 10-0-0. Housekeeping / clarity to use of boats / launch in this area according to ADF&G.

123. ADF&G attempt to simplify regulation. A portion of this trail is in the controlled use area and a portion is out. This is primarily an attempt by ADF&G to clarify and keep hunters from being cited. Mel wants to make the trail motorized access to hunt. Motion passed 7-3-0.

124. Would maintain status quo. Members feel this change would cause more problems in Unit 13.

Herb asked AC members to give him a priority of items they would like to work on at the next AC meeting. He is planning to cover just proposals that members want to bring up.

Other items of business that were not dealt with at this meeting include comments to ADF&G's fish stocking plan. Comments to representation at the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council and implications of management of fisheries in federal waters of Upper Cook Inlet by the council. This items could be timely to consider at the Jan. 31 meeting as well.

Meeting adjourned at 9 p.m. Next meeting will be January 31, 2017.

Minutes taken by Andy Couch
Approved by AC
Date Approved: January 31, 2017