

Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee  
5/12/2021 Meeting Minutes  
Teleconference/Zoom meeting

**I. Call to Order:** Chair at 6:37PM

**II. Roll Call:**

	<u>CHAIR</u> Kirk Schwalm	<u>VICE-CHAIR</u> Mark Richards	<u>SECRETARY</u> Mark Oppe	Jeff Lucas	Gale Vick	Mike Quinn	Mike Tinker	John Wisniewski
Present	X	X	X	x	X	X		x
Absent							x	
Abs/Excused								
	Levi Lewellyn	John Siegfried	Richard Doering	Warren Guichici	Mike Bryan	Mike Kramer	Chuck Derrick	Virgil Umphenour (alternate)
Present	X	X	x		X		X	X
Absent						x		
Abs/Excused				x				

**III. Introduction of Guests:** Dianna Leinberger (DNR), Karen Brewster, Al Barrette (BOG)

**Fish & Game Staff Present:** none

**IV. Comments**

**Chair Comments:** Current administration has reaffirmed commitment to open federal public lands to hunting and fishing.

**Vice Chair:** Attended BLM meeting on Pinnell Trail today. Good meeting; looking for recommendations on outreach to user groups, signage, etc. Members of Central AC were also on the call. Would be good to have hunters participate in the trail work June 5-6. There may be another day at the end of June.

**Trapping:** none

**Game:** none

**Fish:** none

**AC Member Comments:** none

**Public Comments:** none

**V. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:** approval of April 14, 2021 minutes by unanimous consent

**VI. Approval of Agenda:** approved as amended by unanimous consent

**VII. Old Business:** none

**VIII. New Business:**

**F&G Staff Reports:** none; no F&G staff present

**Pinnell Trail Repair:** There will be a sign-up for helping with trail work. Mark Richards will send out info to the AC members. Volunteers should not have to walk more than 2 miles. Work will focus on water diversion, replacing boardwalk, signage, etc. Work will take place June 5-6 and June 26. Material will be pre-staged by Alaska Fire Service helicopter along the trail over the next two weeks. Al Barrette had concerns about how trail users were counted based on who pulled out at the DOT pullouts on the Steese and an algorithm predicting how many people used it when there was nobody there to observe. Levi Lewellyn stated that only people using the pullouts were counted. Kirk Schwalm appreciated how user groups have come together to address this issue. Karen Brewster agreed, thanked the AC for listening, and hopes to see members out there to work on the trail. Mark Richards and Al Barrette asked about the possibility of DNR creating a special use area. Dianne Leinberger stated that this would likely not happen without the support of various user groups and local ACs. No general concept or feasibility determination for a special use area exist at this time; currently there is no plan and it would depend on support from stakeholders.

**Colorado Creek Trail Easement:** BLM has requested easement over state land to connect to the road, but would restrict motorized access on the state land. Al Barrette is concerned about degree of federal control over state land if this easement is granted and hopes to see some type of negotiation to address this in order to allow Alaskans to continue to access this area for hunting/subsistence. John Wisniewski asked about bear baiting in this area. Al Barrette believed about 6 bears are taken out of this area per year. Dianne Leinberger stated that DNR has rescinded this decision and put it out for additional public comment due to newly raised concerns. There was only one comment, by a miner, during the original public comment period. There was no intent for the trailhead to be non-motorized

for access to state lands. Levi Lewellyn clarified that BLM's intent is to prevent excessive rutting on this trail to prepare it for winter use. The federal government cannot spend money on additional improvements without an easement in place. Deadline for public comment on this is June 6. Motion to oppose an easement with restrictions to motorized access by Mike Quinn; seconded by Mark Richards. Dianne Leinberger stated that comments explaining AC position on this easement would be most helpful. Mike Quinn clarified that AC should submit comments in opposition to easement restricting motorized access to Colorado Creek trail. Kirk Schwalm asked if it would be possible to have seasonal motorized restrictions. Dianne Leinberger stated that this is possible, but it is not commonly done. Motion passed 11-0 with 2 abstentions.

**BOG Proposals from the Game/Trap Subcommittee:** Two proposals forwarded to AC from subcommittee: rescinding requirement to transport rib meat on the bone and to allow the passing of drawing permits to surviving relative of deceased permit holder.

Mark Richards stated that Senate bill dealing with deceased draw permit holders has moved out of Senate Resource and appears to be fast-tracked for passage this session. If this does not pass, there will still be time to submit a proposal if the bill does not pass. Motion by Mark Richards for AC to submit a proposal if this bill does not pass; seconded by Mike Bryan. Mark Richards has been told this would be outside the Board's authority and would be put at the end of the proposal book for discussion as outside of Board's authority. Kirk Schwalm believes this is based on an incorrect interpretation of the statute dealing with licenses, not permits. Al Barrette believes this is a topic for discussion by the Board and that Board Support does not have the authority to make this determination. Virgil Umphenour pointed out that there are numerous transferable permits in Alaska (Governor's permits, Super 7 raffle), and permits should also be transferable in this circumstance as well. Motion passed by unanimous consent.

Mark Richards stated that requirement to salvage rib meat on the bone would include moose, caribou, and bison. Draft proposal would remove this requirement. General discussion of weight of meat on ribs vs. weight of bone and how to identify rib meat after boning out. The issue with ribs is the weight and space they take up. Mark Richards stated that best rationale for the proposal is that the requirement is not consistent across the state. Motion to submit proposal removing salvage of rib meat on the bone is specified units by Mark Richards; seconded by Levi Lewellyn. Motion passed by unanimous consent.

Kirk Scwhalm may submit proposal requiring department to confirm that location of bear bait stations is legal and removing liability from permit holders if their station is not in a legal location.

**Legislative Update:** SB22 repeal of intensive management surcharge has passed Senate; appears to be headed for passage in the House. SB44 (personal use fishery) unlikely to move, but would be worthwhile discussing strategies to further this next

session. There has been no response to Mike Kramer's email to legislators on this bill. This may require fish subcommittee to meet over the summer. HB50 on municipal trapping also not likely to move. HB80 (hatchery surcharge) passed the House, passed Senate Resources; now in Senate Finance and appears to be headed for passage. Senator LeBon spoke in favor of Fairbanks hatchery funds. HB41 (shellfish aquaculture) is in Senate Resources; likely to pass. HB115/SCS115 (aquaculture release sites) also likely to pass.

Chuck Derrick brought Rep. Wool's bill to require firearms to be securely stored in homes to the AC's attention. General discussion of bill's likelihood of passing at this point in the legislative session and impact on ability to access firearms for hunting/subsistence purposes.

**Continued Discussion of HB162:** Bill is unlikely to pass this session, but would be worth further discussion in the fall.

**Update on Board Confirmations:** All nominees were confirmed except for Abe Williams. Opposition centered on permit stacking on commercial fishing boats and shift to increased non-resident permits.

**Update on Pre-Season Fisheries Forecasts:** No significant changes to forecasts since last AC meeting. Gale Vick can send out additional run forecast information to any AC members who want it. Al Barrette asked why lower Yukon subsistence users are able to harvest, but as numbers come in upriver subsistence users face increased restrictions. Gale Vick acknowledged this is a problem, but it is hard to put restrictions in place early in the run with insufficient data. Virgil Umphenour states that some progress has been made with gear restrictions and openers. Kirk Schwalm reported low forecasts for Copper River. Test fisheries will begin this week.

**Discussion of Virgil Umphenour's current BOF proposal & what might be done for support before fall:** Proposal 54 (chum salmon) & 55 (pink salmon) regarding hatchery fish and data on overgrazing of ocean. Proposals would restrict hatchery production. Gale Vick suggested that fish subcommittee should take this up over the summer. Al Barrette asked about public notice requirements for subcommittee meetings over the summer with legislators or BOF members. Kirk Schwalm stated that public notice would still be necessary, but that subcommittee chair can call meeting without action of full AC.

**Fish/Game Calendar:** Gale Vick has compiled calendar of upcoming events and deadlines.

FSB will meet on June 6 regarding wildlife special action request 2101. Mark Richards reported that there is word it will not pass. Al Barrette stated that state takeover of navigable waterways will allow non-federal subsistence users to harvest game within the normal high water marks of these waterways.

**Public Comments due on June 7 for Migratory Bird Treaty Act:** Gale Vick would encourage AC members to look up proposed changes on this prior to the deadline for public comments.

**Other:** Levi Lewellyn reported that hunter education classes will be returning to full size without mask requirements.

**IX. Adjourn:** Chair at 9:34PM

Minutes Recorded by Mark Oppe