

**Nushagak Advisory Committee  
Wolf Positioning Subcommittee Minutes  
February 14 & 16, 2022**

**1. Call to Order 10:05**

**2. Roll call:**

AC Subcommittee members present

Gayla Hoseth

Todd Fritze

Dan Dunaway

Public appointees

Robert Heyano (left meeting 11:03)

Frank Woods, (joined meeting 11:45)

Others in attendance

Taryn Brito ADFG Boards

David Bump AK Wildlife Troopers

Kenneth Nukwuk Nush AC at large alternate (joined ???)

Shayna Gurtler Rowe public Nenana Tribal Admin

**3. Agenda and meeting leadership**

No agenda had been developed other than the directive from the full Advisory Committee to develop comments and responses to Board of Game Proposal 271 in time for the public comment period deadline February 18, 2022.

Members present asked Gayla to lead the meeting and Dan to record minutes.

Members agreed the guiding principles for the meeting and final recommendations would must include: In GMU 17, to preserve maximum opportunity to hunt wolves from snowmachine with minimal restrictions.

**4. Discussion**

Gayla summarized the history of how Nushagak AC came to submit proposal 23.

Dan noted there is a parallel proposal WP22-40 in the Federal subsistence regulatory process and due to be addressed April 2020 by the Federal subsistence board. Dan noted that at the fall Bristol Bay RAC (BBRAC) meeting WP22-40 had been supported with the 15

mph and 300 yard language assuming the State language on positioning was “settled”. With the actions at the January BOG meeting the consequences were more far reaching. At the February 8 RAC meeting the members of the BBRAC were informed of the BOG actions then voted to request the Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) remove WP22-40 from their consent agenda, and to explain how strong objections to that positioning language has arisen. Further the BBRAC charged their chair to request the FSB to not act on WP 22-40; that there may be an effort to delay action on 271 for a year and; to wait until the State language and action on 271 is resolved.

Dan also presented comments emailed to him by WT Lt Rodgers on how enforcement has dealt with the existing positioning regulations in GMU 18, 22, 23, and 26A.

Dan presented some suggestions he obtained from retired biologist including: don’t tie hunting with snowmachines to Intensive Management as IM can expire, change quickly and is often only allowed in limited areas.

There was a long discussion on the history of regulations, how hunting wolves with snowmachines is conducted, historical practices of group hunting, potential regulatory language, whether to exclude wolverines, concerns for other laws that might make it difficult to write an effective regulation.

- Much emphasis was made that 15 miles per hour is an unacceptable restriction.
- Wolves can run much faster. Wolverines travel at a lope all the time.
- The 300 yard restriction is unacceptable; wolves are small targets and by the time a snowmachine is stopped a running wolf or wolverine will be at 400+ yards. A hunter isn’t likely to make an ethical shot on a wolf or the even smaller wolverine at 300 yards or more. We need to get much closer as we often use smaller caliber rifles that quickly lose effectiveness on these animals beyond 50 yards.
- Members believe the current annual harvest of wolves helps the caribou and moose herds.
- Strategy was discussed. Ask to delay for a board cycle due to short notice and need to inform other ACs not in this cycle? Provide only comments and let BOG develop language or provide some language in an effort to assure board can more easily accommodate our needs? Concentrate only on the needs of GMU 17 (GMU 9 was often included as well since it’s in the same cycle.)

Considerable time was spent attempting to reword 271 to fit the needs of GMU 17.

After three hours the Subcommittee decided to recess until 8:30 AM Wednesday to reflect on work done, seek more data and advice, work on potential wording. On Wednesday the

Subcommittee expects to finalize comments and wording in time to submit by the February 18 deadline.

**RECESS** The subcommittee recessed at 1:10 PM to resume by zoom on Wednesday at 8:30 AM. Dan to provide draft of minutes to date.

**RESUME MEETING:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 8:35  
via Zoom

**Roll Call**

AC Subcommittee members present

Gayla Hoseth

Todd Fritze

Dan Dunaway

Public appointees

Robert Heyano excused absent

Frank Woods, excused absent

Others in attendance

Taryn Brito ADFG Boards

Chris Brockman ADFG Wildlife Palmer

Joe Wittkop AK Wildlife Troopers

Kenneth Nukwuk Nush AC at large alternate

Heidi Kritz BBNA Natural Resources

Mark Schwantes Hunter, guide, commercial fishing

Isabelle Ross KDLG News

Wassillie Andrew Nush AC New Stuyahok alternate

**4. Discussion continued**

Gayla resumed meeting with a brief summary of Feb 14 meeting.

Chris Brockman reviewed actions of BOG in January: BOG approved proposal 23 as submitted but then sought to define “positioning”. In the development of proposal 271 the 15mp and 300 yard language was used and resulted in switching the nature of the proposal 180 degrees from positioning the animal to positioning the hunter.

It was noted that positioning the hunter (per 271) is the opposite of the intent of the Nushagak AC in proposal 23.

Before going further Brockman noted his job is representing the ADFG and does not want to step outside his authority but he offered suggestions for the Subcommittee to consider as best he understands the desires of the AC.

Brockman noted it appears the AC wants hunters to be allowed to approach animals (wolf & wolverine) as fast as they want, as close as they want and as often as they want.

Brockman strongly advised that prohibiting actual contact of the quarry with a snow machine would be best.

Chris said by his understanding the following language seems to express the desires of the AC and members of the subcommittee:

.... Position: means a snowmachine may be used to approach individual game animal at any speed to within (0,5,10, x) yards and; including multiple approaches and allow the pursuit of fleeing game. A snowmachine may not be used to contact an animal.”

Brockman encouraged the Subcommittee to include the language of no contact with the game.

He then suggested the Subcommittee’s final response to clearly state our opposition to the language in 271 as well as our desire for pursuing, multiple approaches and no distance restriction.

*There were several comments on:*

What about moose and brown bear, other species? A: No regulation addresses positioning for moose and brown bear, other species, only wolf and wolverines.

Again the concern was expressed that this will be a Statewide regulation and could affect many other ACs and GMU that are not in this cycle and this is very short notice.

The group was reminded regulations specialists will be on hand and they may suggest to the BOG that there may be a need to differentiate between positioning hunters for some species and regulations vs positioning the animal in others.

It will be important for the AC rep at the March meeting and for others testifying to help explain some of this to the BOG.

Gayla suggested eliminating any distance restriction. The rest of the Subcommittee members and participating listeners agreed.

Trooper Wittkop said setting a particular distance might not make enforcement any easier. It can be hard to tell 5 to 10 y in these situations. It's probably simpler to make no distance rule.

Who to review and approve minutes of this meeting: Gayla by consensus.

The Subcommittee came to a consensus for the following points to make to the Board of Game.

### Final Consensus

1) Nushagak AC is opposed to the language proposed in 271 restricting speed and distance.

2) Nushagak AC requests the BOG to adopt the following language:

**Position: means a snowmachine may be used to approach individual game animal at any speed and; including multiple approaches and allow the pursuit of fleeing game. A snowmachine may not be used to contact an animal."**

3) Nushagak AC requests hunters to be allowed to pursue a fleeing animal.

4) Nushagak AC requests no speed, distance, or number of approaches restrictions for hunting wolves and wolverines.

5) Nushagak AC is opposed to allowing contacting the animal with a snowmachine.

6) Nushagak AC notes this proposal is statewide and expresses concern for adequate notice to other AC's and residents of areas not in this Board Cycle.

### **5) Other Business**

Gayla and Taryn reminded attendees that the BOG is offering the option for virtual testimony but there is a sign in deadline and opportunity may not be unlimited.

Deadline for written comments is Feb 18, Virtual testimony deadline is February 28.

**Register to testify online in advance of the meeting at:**

[www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.meetinginfo&date=03-04-2022&meeting=fairbanks](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.meetinginfo&date=03-04-2022&meeting=fairbanks)

In person attendees need to register by Saturday March 4, at 10:00 AM

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.meetinginfo&date=03-04-2022&meeting=fairbanks>

During the meeting, written comments may be submitted by hand delivery; via email to [dfg.bog.comments@alaska.gov](mailto:dfg.bog.comments@alaska.gov) (attachments only); or faxed to 907-465-6094. As a practical matter, comments submitted after the deadlines are likely to receive less consideration than comments submitted earlier.

Todd encourages people to submit their testimony to show there is wide support.

**6) Adjourn 9:30**

Minutes Recorded by: Dan Dunaway

Minutes Approved by: Gayla Hoseth

Date: 2/18/2022