

Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee
 12/14/2022 Meeting Minutes
 J.P. Jones Community Center
 204 Rickert Street
 Fairbanks, AK
 &
 Teleconference

I. Call to Order: Chair at 6:02PM

II. Roll Call:

	<u>CHAIR</u> John Siegfried	<u>VICE-CHAIR</u> Mark Richards	<u>SECRETARY</u> Mark Oppe	Jeff Lucas	Gale Vick	Virgil Umphenour	Mike Tinker	John Wisniewski
Present	X	X	X	X	x	x	x	x
Absent								
Abs/Excused								
	Levi Lewellyn	Austin Smith	Warren Guichici	Bill Larry	Mike Kramer	Chuck Derrick	Gabriel Davis	James Paine (alternate)
Present	X	X	x		x	x		
Absent				x			x	x
Abs/Excused								
	Lance Nelson (alternate)							
Present	x							
Absent								
Abs/Excused								

III. Introduction of Guests: Al Barrette (BOG), Chris Bye, Tim Hammond (BLM), Jen Yuhas

Fish & Game Staff Present: Tony Hollis, Trooper Valentine, Kyle Campbell, Deena Jallen, Christy Gleason, Chuck Brasil (F&G), Shane Ransbury, Trooper Dirks, Sam Decker, Andy Gryska

IV. Comments

Chair Comments: First time as chairman; please be patient. There is a lot to cover this evening, please keep comments brief.

Vice Chair: none

Trapping: none

Game: none

Fish: none

AC Member Comments: Virgil Umphenour announced publication of “Dall Sheep Management” by Wayne Heimer.

Public Comments: none

V. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: approval of November 9 minutes by unanimous consent

VI. Approval of Agenda: approved by unanimous consent

VII. Old Business:

VIII. New Business:

Steese White Mountains Travel Management Plan overview with Tim Hammond (BLM): Referred AC members to maps available at the meeting. White Mountains winter map shows approval for motorized access throughout almost all of the area, with exception of designated non-motorized trails intended for ski access to cabins. Summer map shows more extensive restrictions on motorized travel, color coded for differing restrictions. New areas may allow e-bike access. Accommodations for larger side by sides on some trails. Overview of Nome Creek map; highlighting differing OHV restrictions and restrictions on domestic sheep, goats, and llamas. Highlights of Steese winter map & proposed new motorized access as resources become available in the future. Summer Steese map; highlighting off-route game retrieval in areas otherwise closed to motorized access & proposed routes that depend on funding.

Jeff Lucas asked about using public to help out with new/extended trails. This will be part of the public outreach plan & depends on interest. There may be legal issues (insurance, etc.)

Chuck Derrick asked about repercussions of going outside of motorized boundaries. This would be a ticket and fine, but there are limited enforcement resources available throughout the area. Severe damage resulting from failure to follow travel management plan could result in trespass violation.

Mike Tinker asked about absence of trails on state lands on the maps. This was a conscious decision to avoid confusion and clutter on maps. There may be a forthcoming collaborative map that shows trails on both federal and state lands in these areas.

Mark Richards asked if horses are allowed in areas that restrict other domestic animals & about restrictions on feed. Horses are allowed. Weed-free feed is preferred. Improved signage will be installed to clarify all restrictions and boundary areas. Joint state/federal signs may be installed. Working on identification of approved route to Preacher Creek.

Al Barrette asked about definition of “exposed soils” and logic behind closed area on south side of Birch Creek. This is a judgement call in research natural areas. Closed area is result of policy not to open areas without current demand/evidence of use. There is an adaptive management strategy, so this could change in the future.

Mike Tinker pointed out that historic trails have been removed from these current maps, which erases evidence of past/traditional use. There was discussion of RS2477 routes, but these cannot be dealt with in travel management plans under BLM policy.

John Siegfried asked about how weight of vehicles is determined? Also would like to know about access for tracked vehicles. Tracked vehicles are currently not allowed. This may change in the future based on more data. Weight is based on curb weight (manufacturers published weight with full fluids and fuel).

Dept./AWT Update: Tony Hollis reported on 20A moose survey. Chose to do the survey in order to compare to last year after the hard winter. Est. 11,028 moose (down from 14,000 last year). Objective in the area is 10-15,000. Bull/cow ratio was 28/100. Calf/cow ratio was 33/100. Harvest data is not yet complete but is anticipated to be about normal compared to recent years. Anticipate less yearlings as a result of last winter, but this has not been calculated yet.

Trooper Valentine reported that the end of the 40 mile caribou hunt was quiet with few citations. There was some increased harvest off the Taylor Hwy. Mark Richards asked about subsistence violations. Most of these have been qualified hunters who were on state land rather than federal.

Fisheries Subcommittee Recommendations BOF AYK Proposals: Gale Vick

asked for approval of 11/7 subcommittee meetings from members who were in attendance. Approved by unanimous consent.

Review of proposals discussed by the subcommittee (packet included in materials for this meeting).

Discussion of Proposal 81, allowing retention of 24" and under kings on the Yukon (dipnets & fish wheels only). Some concern that this undermines the message that "every fish counts" during current/recent run declines. Holly Carroll suggested that this could be determined by emergency order depending on harvestable surplus to provide equitable fishing/harvest opportunity.

Mike Kramer does not support this proposal. 24" kings are likely to be successful spawners and there is no evidence that they will produce more 24" fish. Proposal will lead to enforcement issues, catch & release mortality, etc.

Mike Tinker stated that Canadians believe that 24" fish are not viable spawners. Have U.S. managers made this determination. Deena Jallen stated that these fish have simply come back early and are likely to successfully spawn.

Virgil Umphenour provided brief history of discussion of similar proposals in the past and other rivers in Alaska. Does not believe that with current run sizes managers will not allow harvest anyway.

Chuck Derrick asked if fish wheels are required to have a live box & are they required to be closely attended. Deena Jallen stated that fish must be immediately released. Holly Carroll supports use of selective gear, which we are already doing, and leaving bag limit and size limit to managers. The current proposal needs work, but this could be a valuable management tool when there is a small harvestable surplus. Chuck Derrick asked for clarification of whether the department has the discretion to require fish wheels to be closely attended. Holly Carroll stated that the department can require this when fishery is open to selective gear in conservation mode. Deena Jallen stated that this can be done through emergency order or by regulation making it a requirement of the permit.

Mike Kramer believes it is unrealistic to think that people will deploy fish wheels to keep two 24" fish. Gale Vick stated that wheels will not be in the water unless there is a harvestable surplus of chums and that this rule would apply under a permit.

Mike Tinker believes this discussion needs to be had by the Board and that in order for this to happen we need to support moving the proposal forward. Gale Vick agrees that proposal should be moved forward with detailed comments reflecting the discussion by the AC.

Motion by Mike Tinker to modify proposal with size & bag limit set by emergency order and support Proposal 81. Seconded by Mark Richards. Motion passed by vote of 13-1.

Discussion of Proposal 84 regarding lawful gear/specs for Yukon River subsistence fishery. Mike Tinker supports this proposal with language cleaned up. Christy Gleason stated that 6" gear would avoid targeting the few larger fish in the run & will generally benefit subsistence fishermen. Deena Jallen asked for list of changes and discrepancies in proposal so that they can be addressed by the time the board looks at this proposal.

Discussion to clarify that the fish subcommittee opposed Proposal 63 with comments.

Motion by Mark Richards to approve all fish subcommittee recommendations not already acted on. Seconded by Jeff Lucas. Motion approved by unanimous consent.

Game/Trap Subcommittee Recommendations on Region I BOG Proposals: Mark Richards reviewed proposals discussed by subcommittee (recommendations included in packet for this AC meeting).

Motion by Mark Richards, seconded by Mike Tinker, to support recommendations of subcommittee. Motion approved by unanimous consent.

Other: Fish subcommittee will meet on Jan. 9. This meeting will be critical due to discussion of Area M.

Game/trap subcommittee will not meet in January.

AC will not send a representative to the BOF AYK meeting in Anchorage. Gale Vick and Virgil Umphenour will represent the AC at the BOF Area M meeting.

Hatchery meeting will take place on March 9.

Jeff Lucas will represent the AC at the BOG meeting in Soldotna March 17-21.

WACH working group meeting today and tomorrow. Dave Kilbourn is representing Fairbanks hunters. Mark Richards suggested inviting Dave to the next AC to report on this meeting.

IX. Adjourn: Chair at 8:34PM.

Minutes Recorded by Mark Oppe