

**Fairbanks Fish & Game Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**Wednesday, April 17th, 2024 at 6:00 pm**  
**JP Jones Community Center (2400 Rickert Street)**

Join the meeting online: <https://bit.ly/fairbanksACApril17>

Dial in: (669) 444-9171

Meeting ID: **834 1174 7293**

Passcode: FAIRBANKS

**I. Call to Order: Called by chair at 1804**

**Roll Call:**

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

**Number Needed for Quorum on AC: 8**

- II. **Introduce Fish and Game Staff Present:** , Andy Gryska, David Lorrington, Jeff Wells, Kyle Campbell, SGT Dan valentine AWT, Andy Bassich, Deena Jallen, Al Barette
- III. **Introduce Guests Present:** Lenny and Diane Jukes, Monica C, Jim and Beth Samson, Katie Harms, Monica Casner, Ernie Weiss
- IV. **Approval of Agenda-** Approved by unanimous consent
- V. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:** March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Virgil Umpenhour makes motion to approve minutes seconded by Jeff Lucas.
- VI. **Reports**
  - a. Chair’s report: Chair denies any updates at this meeting.
  - b. ADFG staff reports and discussion
    - i. **Joint Board Meeting Recap – Kyle Campbell-** There were only a handful of proposals that passed. Proposals 4 and 5 both carried. They just aligned regulations on what on the AC Manual. Proposal 7 approved to help keep a quorum at remote ACS. Kyle states the other proposals do not directly affect the Fairbanks AC or are house keeping proposals for the department.  
**Mark R.** speaks on the RHAK generated proposal (Proposal 18) which would limit certain types of amendments. The boards attorney made a statement and opposed the proposal outright. She recommended the board to not relinquish any authority against.

**AL Barette** states that policy is only as good as the board that created the policy.

**Mark R-** So the board doesn't have to follow policy?

**Al Barrete-** Boards have the option to continue to follow that policy or ignore it. If there is a change of make up in that board, they could choose to not follow the policy of the previous board.

**Virgil-** It must be turned into codified regulation, but the boards will still ignore it and it is simply politics. **Dave Lorrington-** When Sheryl Bookings made her comments on the policy it solidified how the board will vote. It was a legal comment to the board and the board usually follows that legal counsel.

**Jeff Wells-** 65 yearling moose were captured in unit 20, this was the second year in a row that this has happened, and they are comparing weights to evaluate nutrition. In late March there was a browse survey, and the department went to 37 different locations to measure browse. Coming up there will be twinning surveys and sheep surveys in late May. In June there is research project in the Alaska range and in the hard park in unit 20A. This is to evaluate a hunted and a non-hunted population. They will be collaring 30 rams in that unit. Regarding Moose the last time they were weighed they averaged 380. Generally, the threshold is 385 lbs. Below the 385-pound threshold there starts to be nutritional concerns.

**Mike Kramer-** Ask if there is any preliminary mortality date on the sheep study in the Brooks Range. **Jeff Wells-** Most collared were sub full curl and of the ram's collard in June/July there has been around 5-6 killed out of 60.

**AL Barette** asks about the bull collaring in Minto and what we are hoping to gain out of that. **Jeff Wells-** says that 25 collars were added in Minto, Galena, and McGrath. This study is looking at what the bulls doing with movements between the time periods of the hunting season and surveys in the spring. It is also looking at antler drop and mortality rates. **Mark Richards-** Do the bulls in Minto go in a post rut concentration? **Jeff Wells-** So they are captured in November and most of the have stayed in the area they were collared. **Virgil Umpenhour-** Gives history on how there were no moose in the lower Yukon. He is concerned about mortality of moose deaths on rivers. **Jeff** States that river drownings do add a percentage of mortality.

ii. Others- **AWT SGT Dan Valentine-** We just started the bear baiting season. We have already done one citation for getting baits out early. There are grizzly and black bears out.

c. Others

i. Board of Game Meeting report- **Mark Richards-** Our AC proposal passed for the use of night vision. The RHAK proposals passed that eliminated nonresidents on the middle fork of the Chena and Salcha. Proposal to extend bear baiting til June 15<sup>th</sup> Passed. There was an amendment to change any night vision devise instead of just night vision binoculars. **Mark R-** The Matsu show gave a presentation on some of the night vision devices and its about 2200 dollars. **Lance Nelson-** Clarifies that our night vision is under a trapping license and will start November 1<sup>st</sup>. **Al Barette** There was a proposal 113 to close caribou hunting ¼ mile of the highway. This proposal was amended to 100 feet off the highway. Al B- also states they moved the 19 sheep proposals to the statewide meet. There are two new appointees for the chair and the current chair still holds the seat until 1 July 2024. The

election will happen during the first work session which is the region 4 meeting. **Dave Lorring**- inquired if we could get a bit more clarification on what happened with the RHAK proposal on the salcha/chena. **Jeff wells** states that the antlerless FMA was eliminated unless it was Vet preference and that the only antlerless nonresident hunt was for vets. **Jeff Wells**- Added that they are making Fairbanks and delta a registration permit.

- ii. **Andy Bassich**- We spoke a lot about sheep management proposals, The goal is to have a sheep plan for the specified area. The 40 miles coalition was requested that all user groups organize a meeting as soon as possible regarding the declines of the 40-mile caribou herd. **Mark Richards**- What does the Eagle AC want to see happen with the 40-mile regulations. **Andy**- We have talked about only having bulls be harvested and we are concerned on how we haven't seen any caribou in our country. He adds that the coalition has been a good tool to manage fair management practices and wants to try to plan the next 3-5 years. **Mark R**- Nonresidents are harvesting 30 percent of the caribou and how does the Eagle AC see that? **Andy**- We recognize that there are multiple user groups and the only way to make good management plans is to have a coalition. **Gale Vick** makes motion that the Fairbanks AC supports the eagle AC. Virgil seconds, and it passes by unanimous consent. **Gale** asks how far east the 40-mile herd went this year. The heard seemed to move into Canada but it was all south of Canada. A lot of the 40-mile herd wintered in the white mountains and were also intermixed with the Nelchina herd. **Mark** asks Andy on the glacier mountain sheep issue on what the Eagle AC is trying to get out of this. Apparently, there is only 12-15 sheep there and they will ask for full closures of that area until a more accurate survey is completed along with a management plan.

**Mike Krammer**- There is a trend of sheep closures across the state, and it doesn't follow the full curl management strategy that has been adopted and is cause for concern. Mark R- The department of fish and game is still sticking with that the full curl management strategy is still in effect and there is a difference between the state and the federal government on how it should be management. **Mike Krammer**- Hopes that the Brooks Range study and between the hard parks and the huntable land and it will provide evidence to support or change the full curl management plan. **Jeff Wells**- Last year there were only around 15 sheep in the glacier mountain area and there was a discussion on what should happen. They manage by population of an area, and they chose not to do anything regarding an emergency closure. **Al Barette**- The board of game passed allowing proxy hunt for bison and 40-mile caribou.

**Jeff Lucas** makes motion to have **Mark Richards** draft the support for Eagle. Seconded by **Austin Smith** and passed by unanimous consent

VII. **Public Comment- No public comment noted.**

VIII. **Old Business-** None noted

IX. **New Business**

- a. Fisheries Subcommittee report: There is going to be a preseason for the Yukon River drainage May 2<sup>nd</sup> that will be with the departments, and it will be going over the new agreement with Canada and the chinook stand down 7 years. There is talked to expand that to chum as well. **Any Bassich**- There is a lot of mixed

emotions of how this chinook standdown and there is some disagreement on how the agreement went down. From the Eagle standpoint they feel it is necessary due to the disastrous returns they have seen. They do not expect any summer/fall chum. **Gale** asks if **Andy** could speak on the EOS- **Andy**- The first EO is close 6-inch set nets for the entire season which will only allow manned fish wheels and dipnets. This will help alleviate the incidental harvest of chinook salmon when going after chum. They are only estimating around 14,000 chinooks are passing the eagle border and the number of eggs is at an all-time low. Managers at the Yukon River panel say if there is a surplus they will even investigate opening commercial fisheries. **Gale** asks to write a letter in support of this EO. **Gaberial Davis** makes the motion, and it is seconded by **Virgil Umpenhour**. **Gale Vick** offers to write the letter. **Denna Jallen**- There has not been a buyer packet and commercial is also curious and brings up concerns if this EO is **Gale Vick**- We have been hearing a lot of stories of using the dipnets almost like a seine. **Deena Jallen**- There is a method of suspending dipnets with a line with efforts to maximize the effectiveness of the dipnet.

**AL Barette**- On this EO closure are you including funeral potlatch and culture camps? **Andy B**- We are concerned that if there is a general opening, they will get caught. We are concerned that there will not be successful spawning events with the numbers so low. **Gale Vick**- We have talked many times about expanding this agreement and she expresses concerns that the 6-inch mesh will negatively affect the tributaries. **Lenny Jukes**- I would like to add that trawler bycatch that the limits are 45,000 for the bearing sea. **Denna**- The forecast doesn't support the 6 in mesh application. The hope is that if the Alaskan stocks have rebounded, we can go back to fishing. **Andy B**- This idea of being able to surgically fish on the Yukon River has been tried for the last 20 years. Given the track record and the failed returns this process is simply not sustainable. **Andy B**- He also wants to bring attention that there was a 4-inch mesh gear EO regarding fall chum conservation. He notes this is not in our area but wanted it to be brought up to the Fairbanks AC.

#### **2024/2025 Proposals**

- i. BOF appointments: **Gale Vick**- There are two new members of the Board of Fish, and she encourages the AC to support both new members
- ii. Yukon River Panel Agreement/ NPFMC Chum Bycatch- **Virgil Umpenhour**- Gives a brief history of the trawler bycatch. Potential meeting with legislators in October 2024.
- b. Discuss proposals for Board of Fisheries Agenda Change Requests - due August 30, 2024- **Virgil**- We would like to put in a proposal to ensure the board of fish has a meeting if Fairbanks as dictated by the statute. **Gale** asks if we can have a special meeting in August to go over ACRs and **Kyle** said it is doable.
- c. Discuss potential Fairbanks AC proposals for 2024/2025 Board of Game cycle - due May 1, 2024 (Central/Southwest Region (GMUs 9, 10, 11, 13, 14A, 14B, 16, 17) & Statewide Regulations) **Mark Richards** ask if everyone would agree to creating a statewide proposal for the use of night vision devices. **Mark Richards** makes a motion to write a proposal, and it is seconded by **Levi Lewellyn**. **Gabe** will write the proposal.
- d. Discuss Guide Concession Program Legislation (SB 253)- The Fairbanks advisory committee and department staff deliberated at length on the merits of SB253. There are concerns about how this bill has been written. Concerns noted include Multiple hands regarding creating guide concessions (BOG, BGCS, DNR.), Amount of influence DNR would have in the process, stress placed on the BOG cycle to create sessions,
- e. Wood Bison Restoration Project volunteers needed. - **Jeff Wells** The commissioner is making sure that Bison are coming out to the river this summer and they will be fenced in until this Spring. The wood bison project will be 65 miles downstream from Tanana. They have multiple opportunities available to support the effort.
- f. Other fisheries, wildlife, and committee business as needed. - **AI B**- SB171 HB297 The Fairbanks AC discussed the merits of these bills to keep them on the radar. The bills dealt with restitution of seized game

as well as a sport fish angler surcharge.

g.

- X. **Set next meeting date: Mark Richards** make a motion to give the fisheries subcommittee authority to submit ACRs prior to the august 30<sup>th</sup> meeting. **Gabe** seconded the motion, and it passed with unanimous consent. The next fisheries subcommittee meeting will tentatively be held July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024.  
Fisheries subcommittee on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
The next Full Fairbanks AC meet will be held October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- XI. **Other**
- XII. **Adjourn at 2054**

Minutes recorded by Austin Smith

## **2023-2024 Board Meetings Dates and Comment Deadlines:**

**Board of Fisheries 2024-2025 Proposal Deadline:** April 10th, 2024

*Prince William Sound and Upper Copper/Upper Susitna Finfish and Shellfish (except shrimp); Southeast and Yakutat Finfish and Shellfish; and Statewide Shellfish, PWS Shrimp, and Supplemental Issues*

**Agenda Change Request Deadline:** August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Board of Game 2024-2025 Proposal Deadline:** May 1st, 2024

*Central/Southwest Region (GMUs 9, 10, 11, 13, 14A, 14B, 16, 17)  
Statewide Regulations*

**Agenda Change Request Deadline:** November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024