

Fairbanks Fish & Game Advisory Committee
June 24, 2026
Special Online Meeting

I. **Call to Order:** 5:35pm by Chairman Lewellyn

II. **Roll Call**

Members Present: Levi Lewellyn, Mark Richards, James Paine, Eric Anslinger, Virgil Umphenour, John Wisniewski, Gabe Davis, Krystal Lapp, Chuck Derrick, Mike Tinker, Gale Vick. Lance Nelson joined the meeting at 5:37 p.m. Jacques Etcheverry joined during the proposal discussion and was present for voting beginning with Proposal 2)

Members Absent (Excused): John Haddix, Julia Hnilicka, Warren Giuchici,

Members Absent (Unexcused): None recorded.

Number Needed for Quorum on AC: 8. A quorum was present.

List of User Groups Present: Alaska Outdoor Council (AOC), Northern Alaska Environmental Center (NAEC).

III. **Fish and Game Staff Present:**

- Ryan Scott- Director, Division of Wildlife Conservation, ADF&G
- Mark Nelson- Area Biologist, Fairbanks, GMU 25(A,B,D), 26(B,C), Division of Wildlife Conservation, ADF&G
- Matt Olson- Fall Season Area Management Biologist, Yukon Area Salmon, Division of Commercial Fisheries, ADF&G
- Deena Jallen- Summer Season Area Management Biologist, Yukon Area, Division of Commercial Fisheries, ADF&G
- Lindsay Dreese- Fairbanks Assistant Area Biologist, ADF&G
- Zach Liller - AYK Regional Research Coordinator, Division of Commercial Fisheries, ADF&G
- Leila Williams- Regional Coordinator, ADF&G Boards Support / Advisory Committees

IV. **Guests Present:** Jennifer Yuhas, Diane and Lenny Jewkes, Rod Arno, Ernie Weiss (Anchorage AC), Brooke McDavid (Office of Subsistence Management/Eastern Interior RAC), Al Barrette (Board of Game), Dave Lorrington (Board of Game), Carri Ann Mueller (Board of Game), Sean Busby (Wiseman), Heidi and Scott Schoppenhorst (Wiseman), Steve (Wiseman), Ella Van Wyk (NAEC intern)

V. **Approval of Agenda:** Eric Anslinger moved to approve the agenda; Gabe Davis seconded. The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

- VI. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:** James Paine moved to approve the April 8, 2026, meeting minutes; the motion was seconded. The minutes were approved by unanimous consent, with clarification that the AC took no action on the Mark Lindberg Dalton Highway archery-distance proposal idea and did not submit it as an AC proposal.
- VII. **New Business:** The Fairbanks AC met to discuss 4 proposals before the Board of Game at their special July 22-23 meeting, and a Federal Subsistence Board proposal (WSA 26-04), and get a fisheries update from Gale Vick.

BOG Proposal 1- Reauthorize a non-intensive management predator control plan for muskox in Unit 26B

Action: Support

Vote: 12 support, 0 oppose

Vote type: Unanimous consent, no roll call. The chair asked for unanimous support and asked members to speak up or raise their hand if there were objections. No objections were heard. Mark Richards confirmed the vote count with Chair Lewellyn as 12 yes, 0 nays

Discussion Summary: ADF&G staff explained that Proposal 1 would reauthorize a non-intensive predator control plan for muskox in Unit 26B. Mark Nelson said ADF&G used a similar authorization from 2011 to 2016 after bears were documented taking muskox. During the prior effort, ADF&G took seven bears total over the project period. He said the current proposal would be similar, limited to a few bears, and would remain within the harvestable surplus. He also reported that ADF&G had collared one large adult male bear that came out of the den in spring 2026 and was documented killing three muskox in one day.

Committee questions focused on community input, timing, methods, and salvage. Krystal Lapp asked whether ADF&G had talked with affected communities. Mark Nelson responded that he had discussed the issue in Kaktovik and with the North Slope AC, and said feedback appeared broadly supportive. Al Barrette asked why the proposal was being handled outside the regular cycle, and ADF&G staff explained they were trying to act before additional muskox were lost to bear predation. Krystal also asked how bears would be taken and whether ADF&G intended to salvage hides, skulls, meat, or other parts. ADF&G responded that identified bears would be taken by helicopter as quickly and humanely as possible, and that staff hoped to salvage what they could, though summer conditions can make salvage difficult.

Committee discussion was generally supportive. Virgil spoke in favor of the proposal, describing bears as highly efficient predators and supporting targeted removal when specific bears are known to be taking muskox. He also discussed past predator-control efforts where bear meat was salvaged and used for jerky and sausage to show that bear meat could be used. No separate public testimony was recorded on Proposal 1. The committee then supported the proposal by unanimous consent, with 11 in support and 0 opposed.

BOG Proposal 2 - Allow the use of verifiers, clarifiers, and non-electronic scopes in hunts for big game restricted to archery only

Action: Support

Vote: 13 support, 0 oppose.

Vote type: Unanimous consent, no roll-call vote.

Discussion Summary: The committee discussed Proposal 2 as a proposal to allow verifiers, clarifiers, and non-electronic scopes for big game hunts restricted to archery. Mark explained that the proposal was meant to help hunters with poor near vision who have difficulty seeing pin sights. He described these devices as legal in several other states and said they help hunters see their sights without giving an unfair advantage.

Eric spoke in support and explained that the issue is not limited to older hunters. He said his son has astigmatism and that shooting with glasses affects his anchor point. He explained that a clarifier in the peep sight could help hunters with vision issues take game more effectively with archery equipment.

ADF&G staff clarified the difference between Proposal 2 and Proposal 3. Ryan Scott explained that the two proposals were similar, but Proposal 2 dealt with **non-electronic scopes**, while Proposal 3 involved electronic scopes. Clarifiers and verifiers were included in both proposals. Committee discussion focused on whether the devices would help hunters with vision limitations without increasing harvest or creating an unfair advantage. Members generally agreed that verifiers, clarifiers, and non-electronic scopes could improve ethical shot placement and participation for hunters with vision challenges. No separate public testimony was recorded on Proposal 2.

BOG Proposal 3- Allow the use of verifiers, clarifiers, and electronic scopes in hunts for big game restricted to archery only

Action: Support

Vote: 12 support, 1 oppose

Vote type: Not roll call. The chair asked whether there were objections. Mark Richards stated he would vote no and confirmed with Chair Lewellyn that there were 13 voting members present. The final vote was recorded as 12 yeas and 1 nay.

Discussion Summary: ADF&G staff explained that Proposal 3 was similar to Proposal 2, but Proposal 3 would allow electronic scopes, while Proposal 2 was limited to non-electronic scopes. Clarifiers and verifiers were included in both proposals. Ryan Scott noted that other states vary on whether electronic scopes are allowed.

Committee members asked several questions about what “electronic scopes” would include. Chuck asked what electronic scopes are capable of and how they are used. Mark Richards described non-electronic scopes as similar to rifle scopes with nothing electronic associated with them, and said electronic scopes may include electronic focus or reticle features. Eric then explained several examples, including illuminated pins that do not project light externally, red-

dot/prism-style sights, and electronic range-finding sights made by companies such as Burris and Garmin. He explained that range-finding sights can range a target and adjust holdover after the bow is set up, reducing the need to range with one hand, drop the rangefinder, and then draw. Eric said this could help on the Haul Road, where rushed or longer archery shots can lead to wounded caribou.

Dave asked whether either proposal would allow thermal, infrared, or forward-looking technology. The response was that those technologies would not be allowed under the proposals. Chuck also asked whether a red dot meant a laser projected onto an animal, and Eric clarified that it would be like a red dot or prism optic, not a projected laser.

Mike asked whether anyone knew if electronic scopes would increase the number of animals killed or wounded compared with non-electronic scopes. ADF&G did not have data specific to that question. Ryan Scott later clarified that harvest reports capture whether an animal was taken by firearm, archery, or other method, but do not track the level of technology used in the archery equipment.

Krystal asked whether internal illuminated parts would be allowed as long as they did not project light externally. Mark Richards responded that internally illuminated parts are already legal.

Committee discussion was mostly supportive. Virgil Umphenour supported the proposal, explaining that sight alignment becomes harder with age and that a lighted reticle or similar aid could help hunters align the sight to the target without projecting light. Gail Vick also supported the proposal, saying that if an electronic rangefinder could reduce waste and wounded animals, she was in favor. James Paine said the proposal appeared to combine existing legal technologies into one unit and could help hunters make more ethical shots, including on the Haul Road and in the management area for moose.

Krystal asked that members of the public in bowhunting areas be given the opportunity to comment. The chair agreed and invited public comment, but no public testimony was offered on Proposal 3. The chair then asked whether there were objections. Mark Richards voted no, stating earlier that he had a problem with Proposal 3, and the proposal passed 12-1.

BOG Proposal 4 - Close a 2-mile-wide corridor along the Ambler Road

Action: Oppose

Vote: 0 support, 13 opposed

The AC unanimously opposed Proposal 4 as drafted and recommended that the Board of Game take no action on the proposal. A separate letter was approved to explain the AC's opposition and recommendation

Vote type: Not roll call. A positive motion was made to support Proposal 4, seconded, and then the chair asked for those in favor. No members voted in favor. The chair stated the motion failed 0–13, the AC unanimously opposed Proposal 4.

Discussion Summary: The committee discussed Proposal 4 as a proposed no-hunting/no-trapping corridor along the proposed Ambler Road. The chair clarified that although the proposal had been described as a one-mile corridor, it would be one mile on each side of the road, making it a two-mile-wide corridor. Members also discussed the route map and noted that the road alignment should still be understood as a corridor/general alignment rather than a final hard line, since the final road could shift during design and field work.

Discussion focused heavily on whether a closure was needed at all because the Ambler Road is proposed as a private industrial road with locked gates and no public access. Mike Tinker argued that the MOU coordination requirement was satisfied by bringing the proposal forward for AC and public comment, but that the Board of Game should take no action because the road would already be gated with 24-hour security and only authorized users would be allowed beyond the security checkpoint. He also noted that contractors could prohibit employees and service workers from hunting, trapping, or fishing through employment policies, similar to early TAPS construction rules.

Gabe raised concerns that the proposal would close a section of the Dalton Highway corridor and could affect existing road trappers. He also asked what would happen with spur roads to private mining claims, villages, or other developments, and whether those roads would also have hunting and trapping closures. Members noted that the proposal and MOU did not clearly address how spur roads would be treated.

James asked why the closure was being proposed when the road would not be public and when ADF&G comments indicated there was no biological concern for the affected species. Ryan Scott responded that the proposal was connected to the administration's priority to move the area toward development and to create a "level playing field" so road users would not have an advantage. He also acknowledged the point that the road would already be closed and said public safety could be a concern, but specific future crossings and access points were not yet known.

Eric opposed the proposal and said it would create another closure and reduce hunting opportunity for locals and people who may access the area by air or river. He expressed frustration that the road would be built through remote country without public access, while the state was also proposing to close hunting opportunity around it.

Krystal opposed the proposal as premature and said it was "putting the cart before the horse." She noted that there is ongoing litigation and many unknowns about the road. She also raised concerns that the proposal did not match the MOU language, because the MOU referenced hunting and fishing while the Board of Game proposal addressed hunting and trapping. She also objected to a blanket closure because the area includes RS 2477 trails, navigable waters, existing trapline trails, and other permitted activities. Krystal also said the affected communities identified in the MOU should be consulted before a closure decision is made.

Lance also opposed the proposal, stating that if the road ever became publicly accessible, the AC should not support restricting future access. He also noted that even if the road remained private, resident workers might be the only people able to lawfully use nearby resources, and he questioned why the committee would restrict those people from utilizing game or trapping resources.

Gale opposed the proposal and said the AC should make a strong statement that there are broader unresolved concerns about the Ambler Road, especially fish and wildlife protections and the need to examine fish impacts in the region. Mark Richards then asked Ryan Scott whether, because the MOU mentions fisheries, ADF&G intended to submit a similar proposal to the Board of Fisheries. Ryan responded that the fisheries divisions were aware of it, but he did not know the plan.

Krystal also asked whether the Department would submit something to the Federal Subsistence Board because of potential effects on federally qualified users and federal lands. Ryan Scott responded that ADF&G had not gotten that far yet because they were outside the federal wildlife cycle but noted that federal agencies involved in subsistence had signed the MOU and that he would anticipate the federal side may address it later.

Mike's final comment was that AIDEA and developers were treating mineral development as the only important resource and not fully considering other public resources and future local/public access. He said the issue should be put to bed and that Board action was not needed.

No separate public testimony was recorded on Proposal 4. The discussion consisted of committee member comments, questions, and ADF&G staff responses. Board of Game members and members of the public were present, but no separate public testimony was offered before the Proposal 4 vote.

Federal Subsistence Board WSA 26-04 - Request for a winter moose hunt on Gates of the Arctic federal lands for Wiseman-area residents

Action: No Action

Vote: 11 support take no action, 2 oppose take no action

Vote type: Not roll call. Eric Anslinger moved to take no action on WSA 26-04. James Paine seconded. The chair asked for unanimous consent. Krystal Lapp and Gale Vick opposed taking no action because they supported the proposal. The final vote was recorded as 11 in favor of taking no action and 2 opposed.

Discussion Summary: The committee discussed WSA 26-04 after completing the Board of Game proposals. Mark explained that, after BLM conveyed lands along the Dalton/Haul Road corridor back to the State, Wiseman residents lost the federal subsistence moose hunt opportunity they had used on those lands. He summarized the request as a replacement opportunity: a winter moose hunt on Gates of the Arctic federal lands, with no expectation that it would increase harvest because the historic harvest had been minimal.

Krystal explained why she brought the proposal to the AC, noting that Regional Advisory Councils often comment on Board of Game and Board of Fisheries matters and that she wanted that relationship to be reciprocal. She also gave background on the revocation of Public Land Orders 5150 and 5180 along the Dalton Corridor and noted that Wiseman is the only village completely within that corridor. She asked that Wiseman residents on the call be given the chance to speak about their lived experience and immediate needs.

Public testimony / Wiseman resident comments: Sean Busby, a Wiseman resident, supported the proposal. He said there are only about 13 full-time residents in Wiseman, or roughly five families that would actively try to harvest a moose. He explained that the loss of the federal lands and timing of the land revocation meant residents lost the opportunity to apply for a draw hunt by the December deadline. He emphasized food security and said some residents rely heavily, or completely, on a subsistence diet.

Scott, speaking from Heidi's Zoom account, said his family has been in Wiseman since before the pipeline or Haul Road and has traditionally harvested moose in the area. He said residents had used a one-antler bull moose opportunity for decades and that the loss of that opportunity created hardship, especially because few local residents are archery hunters.

Steve also supported the proposal, saying Wiseman residents no longer have federal subsistence opportunity on the conveyed lands and are not suddenly going to become bowhunters. He said access to moose in the park would be a "game changer."

Heidi spoke in support and said she grew up in Wiseman and has always hunted in the area. She described the land change as feeling like residents were "locked down" from hunting, cutting firewood, and other essential activities. She said moose is essential to what her family eats, she is not a bowhunter, and a winter hunt would provide an option for winter meat.

Committee and agency discussion: Krystal provided additional background, explaining that conveyance and title do not happen instantly and that it may take a year or more for the State to establish regulations for the Wiseman/Coldfoot area. She said Wiseman residents' livelihood depends heavily on subsistence, that the Koyukuk River has also been affected by poor salmon returns, and that residents also faced uncertainty around firewood access. She framed WSA 26-04 as a temporary two-year measure, from 2026 through 2028, while state regulatory issues are worked out.

Eric asked whether there was already a fall moose hunt in Gates of the Arctic. Krystal and Wiseman residents were not aware of one. Brooke McDavid later checked the regulations and confirmed there was not currently a fall hunt in Gates of the Arctic. The chat also recorded Dan Valentine stating that Gates of the Arctic did not have a federal moose season.

Ryan Scott said ADF&G was looking at near-term state opportunities as well, including a possible state winter hunt, while sorting through the legal issues around conveyance versus

fully titled state lands. He said Glenn Stout was working on the issue, that the Department recognized the change “came down kind of like a hammer,” and that ADF&G was looking at using emergency order authority to provide opportunity without having to wait for the Board of Game process. He also stated that any state opportunity would be available to all Alaska residents.

Chuck raised concern about the timing of the proposed winter hunt, noting that by December 15 many bull moose may have dropped their antlers. He questioned whether hunters would be able to reliably distinguish antlered bulls from cows if antlers had already dropped. Scott later responded from the Wiseman perspective that he has seen moose carry antlers well into winter and that if a bull has dropped its antlers, it would not be harvested under an antlered-bull requirement.

Lance said he was against the proposal. He compared the timing hardship to what Yukon Flats hunters experienced when they had to change hunting camps and find new places to hunt, saying that while the timing was difficult, it was still the regulations.

Brooke McDavid, Eastern Interior RAC Coordinator with OSM, explained that the Federal Subsistence Board would take up WSA 26-04 at its summer work session on August 4–5. She said the analysis should be posted online a couple of weeks before the meeting, and if approved, the decision would likely go into effect within 10 days unless there was an objection from above. The chat also provided the comment email address, subsistence@ios.doi.gov

Dave reminded the committee that the five-mile Dalton Highway corridor prohibition on firearm use is statutory, meaning Wiseman residents would still have to go outside that five-mile corridor unless the Legislature changed the statute.

Gabe supported the concept of the hunt, noting that the area appeared to have no current open moose season and that the moose population on Park Service land was not otherwise available to Fairbanks-area hunters. He said that if Wiseman residents could use that currently unhunted population without competing with other hunters on state land, he did not see a reason to oppose it. He also said he has seen bulls carry antlers into February.

Mike said he did not oppose Wiseman residents being able to hunt in Gates of the Arctic, but believed Fairbanks AC constituents could not participate in that hunt and were not directly affected. He recommended that the AC leave the argument to local residents and the local AC, while possibly commenting that the Fairbanks AC understood the issue and supported the concept of replacing the lost subsistence opportunity. He also referenced the area biologist’s view that the proposed additional harvest would not have a biological impact.

Gale supported WSA 26-04, saying she viewed the AC as a “friend of the court” and that Wiseman was in a difficult transitional period. Krystal also supported the proposal, urging the AC to think of Wiseman residents as neighbors and noting that ACs are often asked for comments in federal subsistence processes. She argued that the situation was about people’s

food and immediate needs, and that what happens in Wiseman could set a precedent for other communities.

Eric ultimately moved to take no action, explaining that hunting in Gates of the Arctic was outside the Fairbanks AC's ability to participate and did not affect Fairbanks AC constituents in the same way BLM or Forest Service lands might. After the motion passed 10–2, members discussed submitting comments or minutes explaining that the AC was sympathetic to Wiseman residents and that some members supported the proposal, even though the committee took no formal action.

VIII. Other Business: Fisheries Update and Other Business

Gale reported that Board of Fisheries agenda change requests (ACRs) are due August 29, 2026, and that the Board of Fish work session is scheduled for October 28-29, 2026. Work session comments are due October 13, 2026; a fisheries subcommittee meeting was discussed for October 12, 2026. She also summarized concerns related to Area M, including the dismissed lawsuit, the Attorney General action vacating several Board of Fish actions from the February meeting, reversion to the 2023 Adaptive Management Plan, and reported June fishery harvest numbers of approximately 415,000 chum salmon and nearly 1,000 Chinook salmon at the time of the meeting.

The AC discussed moving the already-noticed August 10, 2026, full AC meeting to July 21, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. by Zoom to discuss fisheries ACRs before the deadline.

Virgil discussed mandatory retention, Chinook reporting concerns, and enforcement/citation concerns in the South Peninsula fishery.

Deena reminded members that Yukon River closures for Chinook and summer chum salmon were being announced by district as the Chinook run moved upriver; four-inch mesh opportunities and later gillnet removal dates would be announced by emergency order. She noted Pilot Station Chinook counts were higher than recent years but still well below average and unlikely to meet escapement goals.

Gabe asked that the AC consider a future agenda item on cost-saving measures for locking tags, including whether the state could move away from plastic locking tags toward adhesive tags to reduce mailing and tag costs.

Leila noted that members interested in Copper River reports could email her to be added to the distribution list.

Next Meeting: July 21, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. by Zoom only, to discuss Board of Fisheries ACRs and related fisheries business.

Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:22 p.m. by unanimous consent.

Minutes Recorded By: Krystal Lapp

Alaska Board of Game Special Session July 22nd and 23rd, 2026 Fairbanks, AK Comment Deadline July 16, 2026			
Proposal Number	Proposal Description		
Support, Support as Amended, Oppose, No Action	Number Support	Number Oppose	Comments, Discussion (list Pros and Cons), Amendments to Proposal, Voting Notes
<i>Note: Effective September 2019, when abstentions occur, the action or decision of a majority of the remaining members at a meeting at which a quorum is present is an act of the committee. For example, a vote tally of 7-6-2 means the motion carries. Members abstaining from voting must provide an explanation that is included in the committee record.</i>			
1	Reauthorize a non-intensive management predator control plan for muskox in Unit 26B, as follows		
SUPPORT	12	0	The AC supported past efforts to curb muskox predation that were successful in helping muskox recovery and we fully support renewed efforts to ensure muskox on the north slope rebound fully.
2	Allow the use of verifiers, clarifiers, and non-electronic scopes in hunts for big game restricted to archery only, as follows		
SUPPORT	13	0	These type of devices are currently used legally in other states and provide no advantage to the hunter. They are needed for hunters with poor near-vision to better see pin sights and the AC fully supports their use for archery.
3	Allow the use of verifiers, clarifiers, and non-electronic scopes in hunts for big game restricted to archery only, as follows		
SUPPORT	12	1	These type of devices are currently used legally in other states and provide no advantage to the hunter. They are needed for hunters with poor near-vision to better see pin sights and the AC fully supports their use for archery. One member voted no due to opinion that the electronic scope aspect of the proposal went too far.
4	Close a 2-mile-wide corridor along the Ambler Road – as follows		
OPPOSE	0	13	The AC voted unanimously in opposition to Proposal 4 and recommended the board take no action. See our comments on Proposal #4 in separate letter See our comments on Proposal #4 in separate letter

Federal Subsistence Board - Wildlife Special Action WSA 26-04

Proposal	Description	Action / Vote	Comments, Discussion, Voting Notes
WSA 26-04	Request to establish a temporary federal winter moose hunt in Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve for federally qualified subsistence users affected by the loss of prior federal subsistence opportunity along the Dalton corridor near Wiseman.	NO ACTION 10 support for no action, 2 oppose	The AC heard comments from Wiseman residents describing loss of prior federal subsistence opportunity after the Dalton corridor lands were transferred to state management, the importance of moose for food security, and the difficulty of converting to archery-only opportunity. Discussion included whether a fall federal hunt currently exists in Gates of the Arctic (none was identified), the proposed winter timing, bull antler retention, the five-mile firearms corridor statute, expected minimal biological impact, and whether the issue directly affects the Fairbanks AC constituency. Members stated sympathy and support for the Wiseman residents, but the AC voted to take no action because the hunt would not be available to the Fairbanks AC constituency. The AC discussed submitting comments or minutes to the FSB noting the discussion and the concern for Wiseman residents.