

**Matanuska Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, July 7, 2026
Zoom Only**

I. Call to Order: 7:01pm, by Herb Mansavage, Chair

II. Roll Call

First Name	Last Name	Profile
Herb	Mansavage	Chair X
Dan	Montgomery	Vice Chair Game X
Michelle	Heun	Secretary X
Andy	Couch	Vice Chair Fish X
Neil	DeWitt	A/E
Dom	Nickles	A/E
Hunter	Hongslo	X
Birch	Yuknis	A/E (Prepared written comments)
Shawna	Williams	X
Robert (Bob)	Cassell	X
Daniel	Schmitz	X
Bruce	Privett	A/E
Steve	Bartelli	X
Dewey	Bitler	X
Pete	Imhof	X
Danny	Lewis	Alternate A/E
Ron	Linder	Alternate X

Number Needed for Quorum on AC: 8 members

*Present: **12**

*Members Absent (Excused): **A/E - 5**

*Members Absent (Unexcused): **A/UE - 0**

List of User Groups Present: Hunting guide, sport hunter, subsistence hunter, fishing guide, commercial fishing, sport fishing, subsistence fishing, trapping, wildlife photographer, wildlife viewing, conservationist

III. Fish and Game Staff Present:

Ryan Scott, Division Director, AK Fish and Game Wildlife Conversation Headquarters

Ross Dorendorf, Wildlife Biologist 3 (Palmer)
Tim Peltier, Fish and Game Coordinator (Palmer)
Leila Williams, Board Support

IV. Guests Present:

Rod Arno, Alaska Outdoor Council (AOC)
Mark Richards, Resident Hunters of Alaska (RHAK)
Mike Harris, Alaskan Bowhunters Association (ABA)
Carri Ann Mueller, Alaska Board of Game (BOG) member
David Lorrington, AK BOG member
Lancee Whitman

V. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve made by Michelle, second by Steve

VI. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (None)

VII. Reports

a. Chair's report

Chair Mansavage asked members how they would like to proceed with meeting. He suggested not taking up Proposal 1 as it is outside the Mat Su Advisory Committee area.

b. ADF&G

Director Scott explained proposals 2 and 3 are priorities for this administration. The special meeting was primarily for Proposal 4. Proposal 1 was submitted mainly to expedite signing. Proposal 2 is for non-electronic sites and Proposal 3 is electronic. These would provide for hunters who need sight assistance and it's fair to say it would likely provide opportunity.

c. Others

VIII. Public Comment

Mark Richards, RHAK: Opposed to Proposal 4. Too far reaching, too soon.

Rod Arno, AOC: Opposed to Proposal. Want to hear the departments justification to have these proposals in the summer.

Mike Harris, Alaskan Bowhunters Association: On Proposals 2-3. Proposal 3 adds language in for electronic sites and could open the door for more verifiers. In their board discussion there are some against everything in the proposals and some are neutral. Opposed to Proposal 3. Main concern is why are these in a special meeting and department initiated. Very concerned the precedent this may set throwing these into a special meeting. We would rather see No Action. Should be a public proposal. Believe it's a misuse of a special meeting. Would like to see No Action on both.

Director Scott: Proposal 4 refer to the Memo of Understanding (MOU). I believe this is the first

step to out things in place to move the Ambler Road forward. We are a development state and the administration is interested in mining development. (MOU provided to committee members by Chair Mansavage.)

IX. Old Business None

X. New Business

- a) Board of Game Special Session Proposals 1-4
- b) Other Fish & Game Business as Needed

Alaska Board of Game Special Session			
July 22 -23, 2026 Fairbanks, AK Comment Deadline 8:00am, 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		
No Action			Committee agreed to take No Action as this is out of the district and no one had strong background knowledge on it.
2	Allow the use of verifiers, clarifiers, and non-electronic scopes in hunts for big game restricted to archery only, as follows		
Oppose	0	13	Herb: Take up 2 and 3 together? Michelle: Requested clarification on the difference between the two proposals. Andy: Motion to adopt /second. (See comments in Proposal 3.) Hunter: Call question. Herb: Anyone in support?
3	Allow the use of verifiers, clarifiers, and non-electronic scopes in hunts for big game restricted to archery only, as follows		
Oppose	0	13	Andy: Agreed the proposals looked nearly identical and I would like to understand the distinction before deciding. Hearing from the public and the department, this came from the administration. I see no need to support either of these away from the public process. Something got voted in without a public process. I will vote in opposition to both. Bob: Agree with Andy.

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			Steve: More of point of order. Should have more public process in a normal cycle. I don't think this is appropriate.
4	Establish a 2-mile hunting and trapping closure corridor on either side of the proposed Ambler Access Road through Units 22, 23, and 24A		
Oppose	1	11	Motion made by Andy to adopt, Steve second. Andy: What does department have to say? What is the reason? Herb: Looking at the map for the access project the MOU. Department (Director Scott): We only have a proposed corridor and proposed path until things are actually constructed. There is a lot of state land. There are other things here that don't involve wildlife. Alaska Industrial Development Authority (AIDEA) will be at both days meetings to answer questions. Steve: When it's hunting season every conveyance for construction and mining use has a rifle in it. If this is going to be a private road these folks will have their own private land to hunt which is not open to the public which paid for its construction. I know 422 square miles closed to hunting, but if none of the rest of us have access is it right to let workers have their own private hunting grounds? Is there conservation concern for that game area? Director Scott: Not right now because there is not access. Will there be in the future, possibly. This closure is applicable to everyone. Steve: Only people allowed on the road. It will be private. Dewey: One chance to get it right before the project goes in. Planning ahead. The haul road works out good with the five-mile buffer. Just because there is a gate on one side doesn't mean an airplane can't land. I'm all for a two-mile buffer. If you put a road in and allow them to hunt it doesn't help the villages. Dan: I'm opposed to the whole thing. The locals travel all over up there and they need to be able to cross the road with no restrictions. I opposed the whole project. I don't think the public should be paying for any of it. Mr. Lorrington to Director Scott: Does the MOU stop the federal subsistence from allowing the same thing to happen to be able to hunt within the corridor. BLM is one of the signatories and that intent is to do that. Bob: This is public property and using public funds to do this. State money to close roads to hunting access. I oppose this strongly.

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			Mr. Richards: Companies don't allow any of the drivers, workers, or pilots to hunt. Herb: Was the five-mile corridor on the Dalton was that for the safety of the pipeline or hunting concerns? Director Scott: Overlying regulations, it's complicated. Lots of overlying statutes that govern that. Herb: Was the five-mile a F&G proposal or DOT official position? Director Scott: I believe it was BOG proposal. I don't know the distance. Dewey made a good point, I think a lot of people opposed to the Ambler, I see them use the Dalton. It's an access and echoes Dan and Bob. This just seems like too much of an overreach. No hunting or trapping is very restrictive. Director Scott: Some of these questions should be directed to AIDEA. Bring in the history of the Dalton Hwy as it is the closest to this. Bob to Director Scott: The Governor has directed the department to bring this to the Board. The one-mile closure is political also being directed by the Governor and the village corporations to protect the resource, but will have access. Director Scott: I don't know the answer to that. That's outside hunting and trapping and should be directed to AIDEA. The Ambler Mine District is an administrative priority. I don't know whose driving it. Outside the hunting and trapping aspects. Andy: Been losing moose to road traffic and in the Mat Su valley it has opened up opportunities. There will be hot spots where animals will get hit, so maybe providing opportunities to hunt. I don't know if villages would be able to get there anyway. Hunter: I will be opposed to the two-mile closure. Right now, you can go and hunt there. Public land and public pays. Another loss of hunting land. Dewey: This is like the difference between the Denali Hwy hunting close to the road. If you have access, you just can't drive to the Ambler and once a road is in now is the time to plan to do it right. A nicer experience and people won't be shooting close to the road. Steve: I am going to oppose this. I was hoping to get some comments for the BOG to reflect on. Ready to call the question. Pete: We have a guard sitting at both ends and locked out. It will mostly effect guys with planes. Even with the corridor, most of us can't touch it

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			unless the road is open. It's a low density. If the road was opened it should be a permit system and not open it up to motorhomes. Mr. Richards: The Fairbanks AC didn't realize it, but Director Scott is right. There will be a lot of issues that come up. In Proposal 4, those proposals have to come in cycle. The Board will be inundated with agenda change requests (ACRs) allowing proposals to come in for Units 23/24A out of cycle. Herb: I'm opposed by principle. We can have discussions about buffer and closures. It should be a public process. How many people could make it to this meeting in Fairbanks in the middle of the summer? The Board needs to considering what these political motives are behind the special session. Herb: Read member Birch Yuknis written statement to be included into the record: "First, why is there a special meeting? Two, none of these would qualify for a ACR if there was a regular meeting. Third, it is not the departments place to be forwarding these proposals. And, I know they have said the road is to be private, but I will fight every day to make it a public road if one dollar of public money is spent to build the road (some already has been spent). Finally, the department should not be limiting Alaskans access to their public lands." (Ron Linder left meeting and did not vote.) Steve: Call the question. *Notes from AI transcript: The special summer session was called with limited public notice, restricting broader public participation — particularly for residents who cannot travel to Fairbanks in late July. The Ambler Road corridor closure (Proposal 4) raises unresolved questions about subsistence village access, worker hunting enforcement, and future management flexibility that fall outside Fish and Game's jurisdiction and require ADA involvement. Proposal 4 as written restricts future proposals regarding the corridor to the regular cycle, potentially creating a backlog of agenda change requests once the road is built and new issues emerge.

XI. Select representative(s) for board meeting

Herb is willing to go to the meeting in Fairbanks on July 22-23, at his own expense and not use AC funds.

Andy: If there are special board meetings to have the AC participate there should be funds available. The public should not be taken out of this process.

Mr. Richards advised that ACs can call in to testify.

Leila: Specifically for the BOG to testify it has to be arranged in advance.

Andy: Made a motion that Herb represents the AC at the meeting, second and Unanimous consent.

XII. Set next meeting date (TBD)

XIII. Other

Andy: Noted that changes to the drift gill net plan for Upper Cook Inlet passed at the March statewide finfish meeting have not been reviewed by the state's legal department or signed by the Lieutenant Governor. As a result, the drift fishery is operating under previous regulations. Expressed concern that coho salmon goals at Little Susitna and Deshka River may not be met this season.

Mr. Lorrington: Asked whether Board of Game regulations from Southeast and Kodiak are in the same situation.

Alaska Board (Leila): Confirmed uncertainty about the status of those regulations and noted pauses with Area M regulations. Agreed to follow up with Carri Ann.

Ms. Mueller: Confirmed that Board of Game regulations for areas 26 and 27 are also not in effect, as the Department of Law has not approved and authorized the changes. Previous regulations remain in effect.

Danny: Noted a specific sport fishing regulation (requiring king salmon, lingcod, and halibut to be brought to dock whole) was printed in regulation books but later listed on emergency orders as not in effect.

Andy/Steve: Motion and second for written AC position on Proposal 4. If the regulation goes into effect there should be an ARC to address conservation concerns.

Herb: If these have been ACRs these would not have been a special session.

Steve: We list this as one of the many reasons why we don't support. I would make an amendment that we send the letter with bullet points.

Steve will write a letter, short with bullet points why the Mat Su Valley AC doesn't support. The letter should reflect our majority vote position.

XIV. Adjournment: 8:32pm

Minutes Recorded By: Michelle Heun, Secretary

Minutes Approved By: Herb Mansavage, Chair

Date: July 12, 2026