

Kotzebue Sound Advisory Committee Meeting  
November 20<sup>th</sup> 2012 7-9 pm  
Meeting Called to Order

**Attendance**

Pierre Lonewolf  
Pete Schaeffer  
Karmen Monigold  
Cyrus Harris  
Enoch Shiedt  
Alex Whiting

**Not in Attendance**

Michael Kramer  
Victor Karmun  
Eugene Smith

**General Attendance**

Justin McGinnis-Wildlife Trooper  
Charlotte Westing-ADF&G  
Claude Wilson Jr.-Kotzebue Resident  
Guy Adams-Kotzebue Resident  
Marci Johnson-NPS  
Tina Moran-USFWS  
Meghan Nedwick-ADF&G  
Jim Dau-ADF&G

Approval of Agenda  
Delete AYK Genetics  
Item A, Item C  
Move Elections to January

Motion to approve Agenda  
Second  
Inquires about additional items for agenda among the public  
Add presentation by Jim Dau and Charlotte Westing  
Question: All in approve of the agenda  
All Supported  
None Opposed

Approval of Last Meetings Minutes  
Alex Whiting Motion to approve meeting minutes  
Seconded  
None opposed  
All Supported  
Minutes Approved

Elections will be held in January

### **AC Questionnaire**

Carmen Daggett: Explains questionnaire to AC members

### **Charlotte Westing Gives Moose Updates**

We did a geospatial estimate of the Lower Kobuk which was down a bit from 2006. 2,546 Moose estimate in the spring. We just finished fall estimates and I am still working on the numbers for that survey for composition. On the Noatak 50 bulls/100 cows 10 calves per hundred cows.

Seward Peninsula Musk Ox Survey in the Spring, reduced number of musk ox is 2,200 musk ox. Because of that estimate because of the changes in the way we administered that hunt, we moved back into tier II for musk ox. Because the amount requested for subsistence was higher than the harvestable surplus. If you are interested in hunting for musk ox in the fall you need to apply for the tier II permits. I brought applications with me and you can apply online till December 17<sup>th</sup>.

Pete Schaffer: Inquires about the moose bull cow ratios and what are the healthy levels.

Charlotte Westing: Our bull cow ratio in unit 23 are around 50 bulls per cow. 30 bulls per cow is the lowest level. With populations with low recruitment and low density it is important to have higher bull cow ratios to allow recovery. When recruitment and density are low.

Pete Schaeffer: Inquires about Western Arctic Caribou Herd.

Atmuk Sheidt: Inquires the drainages that were included in the current survey.

Charlotte Westing: We were flying on Friday we just finished for the lower Noatak. We were flying on Friday it was our last day of flying. We cannot look everywhere so we do a sampling scheme to look at the number of moose. We have to take samples to apply to the greater area. If you look at the raw numbers of moose you can get some information from that. Explains musk ox permit application process and details.

Jim Dau: I have two files one about the overview and the road results about the Western Arctic Caribou Herd

- Trends and counts and mortality

- Explains minimum counts of the caribou herd

- We are running our numbers based on the collars we find from the herd, gives 95% confidence interval for the minimum counts. I am glad we have this technique. No matter how you come up with your population estimate it is pretty close. It has gone down 4% each year.

- When the herd started to go down and we lost a bunch of the herd from starvation.

That is the same population chart, I just color coated it. Explains fluctuation in the herd population level.

- Explains chart that shows herd growing and declining, shows adult cow mortality and calf mortality rates.

- the last couple of years the cow mortality has been increasing, we may see an increase in decline at %18.

The huge herds in Canada have declined from 500,000 to 50,000 now.

Pete Schaeffer: Inquires about hydroelectric.

Jim Dau: Development is a huge problem it fragments the habitat. I don't know much about the health of the Canadian Caribou Range. 28:07

We are going to try to photograph the herd next July.

The thing that is happening sliding calf and cow survival rate during the summer. Once you get to the fall they are doing ok.

Pete Schaeffer: Inquires about the effects of harvest

Jim Dau: Explains that he doesn't think that it is harvests that are driving the declines, but the rain on snow events that are causing the mortality.

Jim Dau: Explains the bull cow ratios have been declining since the mid 90's. I threw that out to the working group at this point if we slide much below 40 bull cow ratios we could have a problem. I think bulls have higher mortality rates in comparison to cows. If the cows decline.

Atmuk Shiedt: Explains the caribou that are in Buckland-Deering in early fall.

Jim Dau: We do the census we do it by radio collars. We know there are caribou on the Seward Peninsula which was about 3,900. We found 1200 caribou on the Baldwin Peninsula. I don't think we have ever found 5-6 thousand caribou in that region during the summer.

Atmuk Shiedt: Inquires about caribou health. Are they healthier.

Jim Dau: Explains methods for taking blood samples and health ranking. We have also brought a veterinarian up for a couple of years and she checks parasites. We see fewer skinny caribous now than we had in the 1990s. She didn't see any problems that caused the veterinarian concern.

Here the BLM has a great data set on lichens, there has been a %13-14 increase in grasses shrubs, the range in this region is good. The hunter's are saying that the caribou that they are getting look good and healthy. The veterinarian said these were the healthiest looking caribou in the state.

Karmun Monigold: What about the impact of wolves on caribou

Jim Dau: I have not seen as many wolves. I don't have any data for that. We do have data from the slope. They have seen numbers really taking off. I don't think that means we know nothing. When hear are lots of people say there are more wolves and I see a lot more wolf tracks.

Jim Dau: Explains that we are seeing fewer Skinny caribou now than we did in the 1990s.

We have had a few die offs when caribou are coming off the North Slope in tough condition and get caught in Cape Thompson and the Cape Lisborn and they die. Last spring I saw lots of bears digging up dead caribou out of the snow. Lots of them some bears had between two and three dead caribou dug up. We got a helicopter from Red Dog to look at the dead caribou. They hadn't been killed by wolves or bears, the bones were still intact. I am curious how many random die offs are occurring throughout the extent of the heard.

Atmuk Shiedt: Inquires about Cape Lisborn, that is where caribou beginning of their life for the winter. Inquires about the beginning of the wintering grows.

Jim Dau: They head through Anauktuvuk Pass, sometimes they go to the Lisborn Hills and stop. Lichens don't grow up there very well because it is so windy. The wind blows the snow right off of the ridge tops and the snow that is there is like concrete. If they stop there and are in bad condition to begin with they made a bad choice and they die. I know that caribou that didn't stop in the Lisborn Hills they do ok, but if they stop for the Lisborn Hills they die. The bones that I broke it looked like they starved. We had veterinarians look at the caribou and they said they just look like they starved. I got reports from people in Point Hope around the 100s. We don't think harvests started the decline. We have little data on brown bears and wolves. Everything that I have seen says that predators are increasing. The role of predators may steepen the decline.

Jim Dau: I have one more thing Pete is the Movements around Red Dog. Last time we met roads were a hot point of discussion. I looked at all of our satellite collar data on their migration around the Red Dog road. I looked at the points around the Red Dog Road. I noticed all of the points above the Red Dog road and not as many before. I have never not seen thousands and thousands of caribou cross the road. I mapped every caribou that came within 30 miles of the road. We don't have any criteria to represent the reaction to the road. We have people working on that. Explains the speed change in the movement of caribou. You can see after they cross the road their movement is pretty darn straight, after they crossed the road they increased their speed to 14 miles a day prior to crossing their speed they move about 7 miles a day. Shows and explains different scenarios of caribou movement around the Red Dog road.

Atmuk Shiedt: Inquires about age and data on the caribou.

Jim Dau: Explains that he collected data and samples from the caribou in 2011. When we get a tooth we get a real good estimate.

2011 there were 72 collars, 21 collared caribou were affected by the road and three of them died. All of the caribou that stayed up above the road they died. What happens with animals that don't go by Red Dog Road. I never saw any pattern where they paused or back tracked when they migrating. The average distance movement around the road was 300 miles average 13 days longest 3 months.

Explains 2012 Data-less sample data because less went through the Red Dog Road region. We had mixed results of reactions to the road. Some sped up, some stayed the same, and some decreased their speed.

Presents the summer time data for the movement of caribou. Shows movement of the caribou during the summer. In 2011 not a single caribou crossed the road. In 2012 the top of the road was completely blacked out with the number of caribou that crossed the road.

Atmuk Shiedt: I am wondering if this is effecting the migration and why people are not getting caribou. I am still sending caribou to Kivalina.

Jim Dau: The caribou were in the region and people were getting them this week cause we saw snow machine tracks around the caribou trails.

Atmuk Shiedt: Explains the migration in relation to Red Dog Mine.  
Inquires about the actual road versus the activity on the road.

Jim Dau: I think there is noise especially at night, I think that they can smell. It is possible that caribou that reacted to the road were they are responding to the leaders. I am really less interested in the impacts of the Red Dog road in comparison to the new proposed road. It is an ideal situation, it is a relatively low use road and how much impact it can have. I think the effect of the road is a bigger one than the mine.

Atmuk Shiedt: Inquires about the role of messenger caribou.

Jim Dau: the cost of not making across the road last year was perishing.

## **Board of Game Proposals**

### **Antlerless Moose Reauthorization**

Charlotte Westing: Gives presentation

Department: We think that our populations can support antlerless moose harvests that we have. People have gotten pretty good about reporting. The harvest is pretty small, normally we say that our population can support it. Doing the Noatak moose survey we are seeing lower numbers of moose in the Noatak River system than what we have seen in the past. We are going to do a spring population estimate, make sure we get a really solid count. We may need to make some changes in Unit 23 based on what we find. That may also be true in other areas of the unit. The Lower Kobuk population was lower than what it was in 2006. People have been telling us that the moose population has been declining.

Cyrus Harris: Inquires about the spread of moose

Charlotte Westing: We see a range of distribution of groups of moose. We single moose up in the river drainages and sometimes there are groups lower in the drainage. All of the pilots were struck by how few moose we were seeing. I am just concerned because the antlerless moose is considered is a luxury item and it is possible it may need to be cut back. If you reauthorize the antlerless moose hunt we may have that option. We recognize that antlerless is a subsistence option, it may be better for the population to shoot a bull moose. We need to talk about the education message, that cows are a subsistence resource. Inquires about educational messages to encourage people to take a bull instead of cows to get the population back on track.

Alex Whiting: talks about bears and wolves eating moose instead of people eating moose. We haven't had to the discussion. The discussion has started when people are sick of feed bears and wolves and not feeding people.

Charlotte Westing: I can't spear head that conversation.

Karmen Monigold: Discusses using videography from the youth and elders to create educational tools. Amy Aiken does computer production, I don't know about being culturally sensitive. Maybe getting elders involved with those kids, because they can do some amazing things.

Atmuk Shiedt: Do you see what the sport hunters saw. Explains that caribou and moose are used interchangeably.

Charlotte Westing: The harvest data is somewhat preliminarily. North of Kelly River there was not many moose. I think the park service closure may have impacted the moose hunts. There is not a lot of pressure on the lower Noatak which includes the Squirrel and the Aggy. They may have been a little influence. There were 5-6 moose were hunted by nonresidents in that region. I only talked with a few hunters about what they saw.

Atmuk Shiedt: I talked a few people in the Noatak region people just didn't see any. Maybe the caribou are just heading North.

Charlotte Westing: We have two data points one in the spring and this fall. We hope to get a clear picture at that time. We may need to emergency order the season closed.

Atmuk: Inquires about emergency order closure if the antlerless moose hunt isn't reauthorized and the control by the area biologist.

Alex Whiting: The caribou are going other places and the wolves and bears are eating moose instead of caribou and people are not able to take the moose and the caribou. Sport hunting also goes when people are having a hard time eating. The western arctic herd built up a large predator population and now they are looking other food. That is why I am saying there are a lot of predators, and they have to eat. They are sacrificing predators across the state. It is small take of the population the first thing to go is the antlerless moose hunt and the second thing to go is the sport hunting.

Charlotte Westing: The board has to see an incremental reductions antlerless moose, reduction in non-resident sport harvest, reduction in resident harvests.

Next fall we may have to shorten the antlerless moose season.

**Alex: makes a motion to approve antlerless moose hunt**  
**All support Antlerless moose authorization**  
**None Opposed**

#### **Brown Bear Bag Fee Exemption**

Charlotte Westing: Explains brown bear tag fees. In unit 23 we do not have tag fee. You have to have the head and the hide sealed. You don't have to fork out \$25 to shoot a bear Explains traditional uses and harvest of bears. It made it easier for the user.

Alex Whiting: I think we should give people free hunting licenses if they promise to kill a bear.

Charlotte Westing: Explains the meat salvage/hide depending on the hunts.

**Alex Whiting: Makes a motion to keep the exemption of the fee**  
**Seconded: Atmuk Shiedt**  
**Discussion:**  
**All Support**  
**None Opposed**

**Proposal #92 Use of Large Hooks in All Waters**

**Alex Whiting: Makes a motion to approve proposal #92**

**Seconded: Atmuk Shiedt**

**Discussion**

**All Support**

**None Opposed Motion Carries**

Carmen Daggett: Explains Statewide Fish Proposal situation.

**State Wide Finfish Proposals**

**Moved to the January Meeting**

**Other**

Charlotte Westing: Explains questioning about education and trying to educate people to favor bulls over cows. Encourage people when there is a bull

Alex Whiting: I think the education needed to have a wolf and bear hunt.

Karmen Monigold: Education is important. Last winter there were people chasing caribou around and there were babies left behind people's houses and the babies froze to death. There is good information in education.

Karmen Monigold: With times changing we take for granted that other people are raising their kids that way. Not everyone is hunting in a conservation and education. People not are always hunting in a responsible way.

Charlotte Westing: The people are taking cow moose that are doing it very opportunistically. Only taking a cow when it is needed.

Alex Whiting: There are specific reasons and times that people are hunting for cow moose. There is a reason taking cow moose. With some of the issues that Karmen has I agree with that. I feel people hunt cow moose when they hunt cow moose. There is an opportunity to take cow moose during that season.

Alex Whiting: it is a numbers game.

Charlotte Westing: I'll talk to Amy at the school to address the cow moose issues and appropriate behavior towards wildlife.

Pete Schaffer: Explains that it may be interesting to include historical background.

Jim Dau: For a number of years a map of caribou of collars is no longer online. We are going to send a map to the reindeer herders, for a variety of different years. It was inconsistent with statues, the reindeer herders want to know more information around Serpentine Hotsprings. We are looking at ways to get tissue samples. I am convinced that the caribou are summering down there every year. For the last two years I have tried to get tissue samples of caribou/reindeer. We may try to put a project to figure out what the make up of Serpentine Hotsprings. I have talked to the people in Shismaref about getting samples.

There are 13 herds, less than 6 have reindeer any more, only 2 have greater than 1000. The old Kikaruk herd has around 1000. The Davis herd is down to 450 reindeer. There are fewer than 3000 reindeer herd that are under control.

January NEXT MEETING  
Meeting Adjourned.