

Grayling Anvik Shageluk Holy Cross Fish and Game Advisory Committee Meeting

February 4, 2021

Teleconference

Members Present Shirley Clark & Rich Freireich, Grayling
Ken Chase\$ Nathan Elswick, Anvik
Chevie Roach, Shageluk
David Walker & Eugen Paul Holy Cross
Bruce Werba, Undesignated

Members Absent; Roger Hamilton Jr

Guests Present

Serena Fitka (YRDFA), Bruce Irvine (TCC), Jeff Demientieff (Holy Cross), Alfred Demientieff (Holy Cross), Kathy Chase (Holy Cross), Jeremy Havner (FWS)

ADF&G Staff Present; Josh Peirce, DWC; Deena Jallen & Christy Gleason, DCF; Nissa Pilcher, BDS

Meeting called to order 6:05

Proposed agenda addition – Eugene would like to add to election of undesignated seat and officer election to the agenda. Boards noted that if the AC wanted to discuss officer elections, no notice was needed but elections could not be held for the undesignated seats at this meeting due to lack of notice, and that the intent of the AC was to hold elections for this seat at the next face to face meeting. Further discussion was held on the election process, how community involvement at AC meetings and elections can be very different depending on the community and the agenda topics. AC members would like a clear, laid out election process in place when the elections are held at the next face to face meeting, and that the current seat holder, Bruce, was not appointed to the seat, but elected.

It was noted that for the undesignated seat that any resident over 18 who attends the meeting can vote for the undesignated seat at the next face to face election meeting.

There was no formal motion to add officer elections to the agenda during this discussion.

Minutes approved.

Chair Report/AC Members Questions and Concerns

Western Interior RAC is seeking nominations, and there is no voice for this area on that committee any longer. The chair requested that anyone that was interested should apply to serve on the council, and that the deadline to apply is February 15th.

Ken also noted that he would like to receive a Bison Report, which the Department gave;

Josh Peirce was given a brief update by Tom Seaton to present to the AC. Slight decrease of animals in the herd last two years, but this winter has been much better. Deep snow and freezing rain were factors in the last two years, but this winter is mild and less snow, so hopeful that this weather will stay mild and the bison will have a good calving year. Seems like the herd is getting established and comfortable with the landscape and the bison really have started to figure out where they need to be in the winters to survive better.

Chair report cont – Concerned about the lampreys; noted that for the last couple years we haven't gotten them, and the commercial harvest seemed really large and it was alarming in the past. Would really like to see more studies on their behavior and population since there are still subsistence uses of this fish so we don't eliminate them with commercial use.

Christy Gleason noted that UAF and FWS are working on tagging study on lampreys, so there may be some more information coming.

It was noted that last year there was an odd year, the ice was bad and weather was warm so unsure if the lampreys were missed or if they didn't show up in the numbers that the communities are used to seeing.

Members requested information on the male/female ratio of the commercially harvested lampreys to see if the harvest has done any damage to the population (see bottom of minutes as the information was made available after the meeting)

Bruce – interested in muskox information

Josh Peirce noted that there is now a resident herd near Kalskag, the herd is established and hopefully growing, and the herd is in 21E and 19A both. Diet of the musk ox asked about- they are not competing for food with the bison which was the concern of the members.

Ken asked Department about the registration permits in 21A. Department noted that there has been good reporting in the past but this year there has not been; the reports documents the GASH communities subsistence needs for moose, and this effects allocation at future Board of Game meetings. Also, if you don't report you can't get the permit next year so it is really important to report on the permit even if you don't end up using it. If you can help spread the word in the communities to please get in your reports.

Chevie noted that there is not a postmaster in Shageluk and hasn't been for quite some time, so people aren't getting their mail and aren't able to send any either, except once a month when someone comes in from Aniak. Was interested to see what other technological advances there could be to make reporting easier.

Josh replied that if you can call the McGrath office and we will gladly take your report, and you are also able to report online (it was noted that due to the mail issue that the overlays for Shageluk got lost in the mail and never made it to be entered so this was not an option for those residents)

Board of Game and Fisheries Cycle Update

Nissa gave an overview of what the BOG/BOF had decided to do with the 2020-2021 Cycle. The antlerless moose proposal and the brown bear tag exemption fee would be taken up, but not any of the other proposals including the ones submitted by this AC to the Statewide meeting. They would be taken up next year. The Board of Fisheries were also currently accepting fisheries proposals and would hold double meetings depending on double funding being given.

Staff Update - Wildlife

Josh noted that quite a bit of the planned update was already gone over with earlier questions, but gave an update on moose. There is a new winter antlerless hunt on the books that the GASH AC voted to support last year. There are two permits currently- residents can get either the state or the federal permit but the federal permit limits you to only utilizing federal lands, and that it was only open for those that had not successfully harvested a moose in the fall season.

The AC asked about the FTR list; reporting is required, or you wouldn't not be eligible the next year for the hunt, and there is a short reporting window since the hunt is operated on a quota. Additional questions were on who was eligible for the hunt – it was noted that all Alaska residents were eligible for the state hunt but that since the hunt area is well off of the road system, nonlocals were not expected to participate much in this hunt, and Ken noted that private and federal lands were also closed to nonlocals. Question asked about the corridor along the river still being off limits – Department noted that the AC decided to not request that corridor closure because there are a lot of moose on the islands and that is exactly where the animals need to be taken – over browsing the islands is a concern, and it was clarified what the bag limit was for the hunt, that you cannot take a cow with a calf.

This is the first year so we will see how it goes and if it needs to be changed we can go from there.

Proposal 187 – Reauthorize antlerless moose season in Unit 21E

Members noted it would be nice if they could vote on this after this winter hunt was done so that they could see how this hunt went, but there isn't time to that, and Josh noted that the Department has a lot of ability to change the hunt as needed and if it doesn't go well at all then have a lot of leeway to make changes in order that the hunt, which alleviated concerns.

Members asked about being able to take more bulls in the fall to help with the population since they seem to be eating themselves out of house and home, including potentially upping the nonresident drawing hunt amount. Josh noted that there is already a pretty liberal state season, could extend the season dates (resident hunt) or increase drawing hunt numbers, but could run into crowding issues as we heard at the last meeting.

Rich – would like to commend you for your efforts on the moose, and thank you for clarifying the regulations, also noted that the boats coming down from Fairbanks were nearly nonexistent with the pandemic this year

Unanimous Support (8-0)

Proposal 189 – Reauthorize resident Brown Bear tag fee exemptions in the Interior

Shirly noted that bear skins make really good leather

Unanimous Support (8-0)

There are other proposals that the AC was planning on taking up at this meeting, but since the Board of Game has deferred them we would like to take them up in person when we meet next during the next cycle.

Staff Update – Fisheries

Summer Season Update given

AC Comment – would like to see more patrolling on the river, there was large mesh being used at night (Department noted that if you can let us know about that in season then we can get enforcement there to help)

YRDFA Serena Fitka introduced herself and let everyone know about YRDFAs schedule and let the AC know who was at the last meeting to represent the area. Question asked about how the next meeting would be held – potentially in person, or potentially teleconference. If teleconference, then having ‘district’ meetings will be considered to help with that. Fishery disaster request was submitted for last year, it is in the Governors office and we are waiting to hear back from him.

Fall Season Update given

Rich – fishing was pretty bad for salmon, the fall chum we did get seemed like they were inferior quality, sort of like they were cooked. Did anyone else on the river note that?

Department note that should have caught more 5yo, which would have been larger fish, but noted that others had said the opposite that the fish looked better later in the season than normal

David – any studies being done on the Fukushima nuclear accident

Department – CDC does tests on this annually, and there has not been any concerning results in the last 5 years. Will get the most recent results and email them to you.

Federal Issues

Fisheries – Currently fisheries proposals are out, nothing in your area.

AC asked about federal enforcement – FWS noted that due to the Sturgeon case that the federal enforcement had been asked to stand down they believed so they wouldn’t be able to offer state enforcement any assistance, but to be sure federal enforcement would need to be asked specifically that.

Game – noted that with the change in administration that unsure of when the call for proposals for game will happen, but should be this fall.

Discussion of the potential to joint the federal and state winter moose hunt into a shared permit.

With the individual permit right now hunters need to have one permit for state lands and a different permit for federal lands. Both need to be reported on. There would be a joint quota, and overall goal for winter hunt for both state and federal would be for 40 moose and the current federal season isn't coming close to that quota which is why the state season was opened, to allow people to hunt on both federal and state land.

Concerns talked about would be if nonlocals started utilizing the hunt, that the hunts could have different dates. It was noted that GMU has a bag limit of 2 moose so it will probably be unlikely that many from that unit will come over here for the winter hunt since their needs are being met there.

It was noted that the state and the federal system have different proxy hunting regulations, and that the federal system is easier for most to use.

The AC clarified that this move would take an action of the FSB, and that while the call for proposals was expected this spring, it had yet to come out, and they didn't want to see anyone from any of the 4 communities not be able to participate if they still had yet to get a moose.

The AC did not choose to take action on this potential proposal idea at this time.

Meeting Adjourned after 8 pm

Minutes approved by Ken Chase

Lamprey Information given via email

“

Sampling and percent female information:

Sabrina Garcia has been involved on the ADFG side. At UAF, Trent Sutton would be the primary contact. Katie Shink (USFWS) was involved earlier, but has moved to another position.

Brief intro of project from Sabrina Garcia;

Lamprey tagging project to look at the effects of tagging on lamprey survival and swim performance.

Lamprey will be in 5 different treatment groups: no tag/no surgery, surgery/no tag, radiotag1, radiotag2, and radiotag 3. We want to know if lamprey can survive surgery and tagging and how it affects their swimming. Lamprey from each of the five groups will be put into specialized tanks where they will have to swim at different speeds to see if there is a difference between the control group and the four remaining groups.

Test fishing summary from Mick Leach (ADFG technician) for 2020:

A total of 2,263 lamprey were captured in exactly 4 weeks of fishing that started on Sept. 11. Some of the most notable daily fyke net catches occurred on Sept. 28; 213 lamprey, Sept. 29; 256 lamprey, Sept. 30; 589 lamprey, and Oct. 10 with 344 lamprey captured but with 72 hours soak time.

282 lamprey were successfully shipped from Emmonak to Trent Sutton in UAF.

Contact Information

Trent M. Sutton, Ph.D.

Undergraduate Research and Scholarly Activity (URSA), Director

Department of Fisheries, Professor of Fisheries Biology

College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences (CFOS), Associate Dean of Academic Programs

University of Alaska Fairbanks

Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-7220

Phone: 907-474-7285

Trent Sutton <tmsutton@alaska.edu>

Sabrina Garcia

Marine Research Assistant

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Division of Commercial Fisheries

333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99517

907-267-2180

Garcia, Sabrina (DFG) <sabrina.garcia@alaska.gov>

As to percent female, I have sex ratios from 2004, 2006, 2009, 2012-2016 of lamprey sampled from Emmonak, St. Marys, Mountain Village, Marshall, and Grayling. Grayling samples were from every one of those years, other communities were only sampled in 1 or 2 of those years.

A total of 3,192 lamprey were sampled between 2004-2016. The average % female was 40%, with a low of 22% female in 2012, and a high of 50% female in 2006.

Year	Sampled	% Female
2004	462	41
2006	500	50
2008	250	42
2009	205	46
2010	250	34
2012	96	22
2013	198	48
2014	305	42
2015	345	37
2016	135	42
Total	3192	42

“