

Minutes
Lower Bristol Bay Advisory Committee
January 28, 2020 Teleconference

I. Call to Order: 10:20am by Mitch Seybert

II. Roll Call:

Members Present:

Mary West

Mitch Seybert

Mike Enright

Tim Enright

Brian Cato

Kim Rice

Tom Bursch

Tacey Vrem

John Christiansen

Gerda Kosbruk (after 10:38am)

Members Absent:

Gerald Olson Jr.

Eric Beeman

Mark Kosbruck

III. Number Needed for Quorum on AC: 7

IV. Approval of Agenda:

Tim Enright move to approve the agenda

Tracey 2nds

No additions

Approved 9-0

V. Fish and Game Staff Present:

David Crowley- Wildlife

Chris Peterson- Wildlife

Lee Borden- Sport Fish

Aaron Tiernan- Commercial Fisheries

Taryn O'Connor-Brito- Boards Support

VI. Guests Present:

Travis Lons- Alaska Wildlife Troopers
Jon Clouse- Southwest Region Schools
Catie Bursch- Pilot Point fisherman

VII. Elections for three undesignated seats with terms that expired June 30, 2019

Floor opened to nominations for all seats

It is noted that Eric Beeman does not wish to stand for re-election.

Tim Enright nominates Brian Cato. Tom seconds with his support.

Mitch Seybert Nominates Catie Bursch. Mike Enright seconds the nomination.

Mitch Seybert Nominates Tim Enright. Tracey Vrem seconds the nomination.

With no further nominations floor is closed.

All nominees are un-opposed and seated by unanimous consent of AC members and public. Terms will be good through June 30, 2022

Note- Gerda Kosbruk Joined the meeting (10:38am) 10 members present.

VIII. Elections for Officers

John Christiansen moved to open the floor to elections for officers

Tim Enright 2nds

Tim nominates Mitch Seybert for Chairman

Tom 2nds

No other nominations for Chairman

Unanimous support for Mitch as Chair

Tim Nominates Tracey Vrem for Vice Chairman

Tom Seconds

No other nominations for Vice Chairman

Unanimous support for Tracey as Vice Chairman

Tim nominates Caiti Bursch as Secretary

Gerda 2nds

Caiti just boarded an airplane and is not available to accept the nomination

Unanimous support for Catie as Secretary pending her acceptance

IX. Commercial Fisheries Skills Camp at Pilot Point

Jon Clouse-Southwest Region Skills gave update

- Camp started with Caiti Bursch approaching BBEDC who in turn reached out to Southwest Region Schools.
- Last year was the first camp. Very positive experiences.
- Southwest Region Schools needs the support of the AC in order to obtain this year's educational permit from CFEC.

Gerda Kosbruk moves to support approval of the educational permit
Brian Cato 2nds
Gerda voices support for the camp.
Question
AC Supports 10-0

X. Staff Updates:

- David Crowley Wildlife:
*See notes provided

NAP Caribou- Not likely to close by EO before end of season.

34/100 calf-cow ratio – 53/100 bull cow ratio- Current harvest of 60 for TC505 Caribou herd continuing to increase gradually, good calf production the last 2 years. Current population is around 4,100.

-Tracey is interested in current and target population growth rates, and whether or not sport hunting is likely to make a comeback.

Dave says current growth is between 5% and 10% and that management doesn't want to see growth rates much higher because of the risk of overshooting the population objective. He estimates there will be a couple more years of tier 2 and then a registration hunt as the population rebounds.

-Mitch asks what the current population objective is.

Dave says Population objective is 12,000 – 15,000. Harvest will be increased to keep pop. Within objectives.

Unit 9E moose- Looks good, though this year's data is not complete yet.

Last year 32/100 calf-cow ratio- 77/100 bull-cow ratio (bull cow ratio is biased high because the bulls are more visible than the cows when surveying without snow). The current harvest for RM 271, 281 is 33 moose.

Mitch asks about population density

Dave says density is low in Unit 9 with most animals congregating around lakes and rivers where brows are available.

Unit 9 Bear- 2 years ago proposal to shorten the bear season in Unit 9 passed.

Harvest has been declining rapidly so hopefully the shorter seasons will help.

There is history of shortening the seasons in the past for the same reason.

-A member expressed interest in environmental factors at play.

Dave heard reports in 2012-2013 of flooded out dens. There were also some recent berry crop failures. Bears are long lived. 20-30 year life spans are

expected so for management it is a long game. There are certainly natural events at play, but for management there is harvest.

-Tom is interested to hear Dave's opinion on sow harvest

Dave thinks it is good to avoid taking sows because they continue to have cubs year after year, and if one is without cubs one season will likely have them again the next.

-Tom requests some education materials which Dave will provide.

-Mitch wants to know about plans for future surveys

Dave says he is working on getting some aerial surveys together hopefully for next year.

Ptarmigan- Dave is finally seeing more on the landscape. Seem to be recovering quicker in the north than the south

-Mitch notes seeing a few flocks near Port Heiden recently where there had been none.

- Lee Borden, Sport Fish-

Hot summer with above average water temps seems to have delayed run timing. Created thermal blockages in some rivers, but escapement achieved. Effort was average for all species.

- Aaron Tiernan, Commercial Fisheries-

Replaced Paul Salamone

2019 Sockeye run 50 million bay wide, 43 million harvested for 2nd largest harvest on record. Egegik had a 2.3 million escapement which was about 300,000 over the goal. 14.5 million harvested. Ugashik had an escapement of 1.5 million which was about 100,000 over the goal. Harvest was 1 million. Its believed water temp caused the fish to hold in the bay. About 1 million passed the tower in a 4 day timespan.

-Mitch notes that escapement has been over the upper end of the goal for several years in a row, and wonders about ramifications.

Aaron agrees, department aims to vary escapements within the goal range.

-Tom is curious about the fish that were forecasted but didn't show up. If there were missing fish, he is interested in where they went.

Aaron is also curious and would like to see genetic data.

-Mitch would like to see the line moved in in Area M when Ugashik is behind the curve and feels that it should have happened this year. Encourages the department to use that tool in the future.

The forecast for the 2020 season is 10 million for Egegik, and 4.5 million for Ugashik.

XI. Comments AC members/Public
There were no further comments.

XII. New Business:

a. Board of Fisheries Proposal 279: Operation of 200 Fathoms of Drift Gillnet Gear in Bristol Bay.

Aaron Tiernen explains that currently D- Boats in Bristol Bay cannot fish when the Naknek River Special Harvest Area is open. This proposal would remove that layer of regulation.

-Tom confirms that D-Boats can fish, they just cannot fish the extra 50 fathoms. Aaron agrees.

-Mitch states that port molar shows that fish bound for different areas travel in different migration paths and doesn't see why Nushagak district is included in the current regulation.

-Tim notes that when boats move into the Naknek river that D-Boats tend to transfer to the Nushagak, and that is why they are included.

-Mitch is interested in what happens to D-Boats when Egegik goes in river?

Aaron says you wouldn't be able to fish the extra gear in the SHA, but you still could elsewhere.

-Mitch also wants to know how many Kvichak bound fish Ugashik and Egegik tend to harvest?

Aaron says it is dependent on the wind.

Mitch states he will support the proposal

-Question: Proposal 279 is supported 10-0

b. Board of Game Proposal 166: Reauthorize the Brown Bear Tag Fee Exemption.

Dave Crowley explains that there is a \$25 fee for resident brown bear tags, which in unit 9 is only waived for the RB525 (Near village hunt). Dave's opinion is that the probably doesn't add significantly to the bear harvest in these areas of the state but may reduce DLPs. Management is losing out on money, but it is a bigger deal in other units where more bears are taken without a tag fee.

-Brian Cato Moves to adopt, Tom 2nds

Comments-

-Brian clarifies to vote no is to say yes to a \$25 fee. Most fees are paid by nonresidents, and he feels like residents should carry more weight.

-Tracey wants to clarify that this is about the near village hunt. The other hunts in Unit 9 require a tag fee, so Unit 9 hunters are contributing.

-Question: Motion on Proposal 166 Fails 0-10

- c. Board of Game Call for Proposals for Central/Southwest and Statewide Game
Mitch asks if the AC needs to put forth any proposals this year.
-Tracey states that he is going to wait one more cycle before proposing any changes.
-Brian concurs. He thinks that the right call was made on bears last cycle.
No proposals brought forward

XIII. Approval of these minutes for submission to the Board of Fisheries and Board of Game
Meg moves that Brian approve the minutes, and Tim 2nds. Brian agrees
Question: Motion Supported 10-0

Adjournment: 11:57am

Minutes recorded by: Mitch Seybert
Minutes approved by: Brian Cato
Date: 2/28/2020