

2013 Alaska Chapter TWS Business Meeting Notes
University of Alaska – Fairbanks
April 5, 2013

Approximately 40-50 people were in attendance of this meeting. President Jerry Hupp kicked off the meeting with a PowerPoint presentation.

Health of the Chapter (Jerry Hupp)

- Chapter membership has been fairly steady over recent years, with 225 currently on the books. Increase in 2011 may have been an artifact of timing.
- Treasury report: 2012 beginning balance was \$12,028, end was \$15,415. Goal is to break even after annual meeting. We exceeded that and therefore are open to ideas for spending surplus dollars in positive ways.
- Annual meeting attendance has been good, with a rising trend over the past several years. It is high this year (123) even with decreased federal attendance due to the sequester. Number of presentations is also on par with previous years.

Recent Chapter Actions (Jerry Hupp)

- Federal Register comment of support on wood bison reintroduction.
- Pack goat position statement finalized, written and oral testimony given to BOG, and a parallel proposal submitted to the Federal Subsistence Board (more details below).
- Letter of support on lead weight ban submitted to BOF at the request of a member.
- Progress on intensive management position statement (more details below).
- Please let the Board know what else the chapter should be involved in.

Other Business (Jerry Hupp)

- **2014 Meeting in Anchorage:** Need volunteers to help organize the venue, special sessions, etc. Question from member on floor: Could we use some of the surplus funds to help organize? Jerry: this could take a big bite from budget, but student participation could really help.
- **2014 Elections & Positions:** Candidates needed for president-elect, section reps, secretary-treasurer. Also looking for someone to volunteer as a new web master. Our current web master Liz Solomon will help this person transition into the role.
- **Interagency Cooperation (Grant Hilderbrand):** We have a lot of collaboration right now but there are impediments too, especially at levels above the biologists. We largely serve the same publics. Should TWS prepare a letter or position statement affirming working relationships? Grant will send a request out to general membership. Members can also contact Grant sooner with thoughts or to help.
- **Bylaws revision related to position statements and resolutions:** Want to provide for *ad hoc* committees, clarify role of executive board, insure member comment, clarify voting method, and retain 2/3 requirement for passage. Floor member comment: 30 day membership voting

period may be longer than needed, propose to change to 15-30 days. Motion made and passed. Motion also made and passed to accept the remaining revisions.

- **Revision of Intensive Management Position Statement:** IM Law and our corresponding position statement are almost 20 years old. Member request to revise statement. BOG, legislature, and Commissioner are main intended audience. A committee worked on the revision and presented it to the Board. The Board conducted further revisions and sent to six knowledgeable and diverse members for further review/comment. The board has addressed these comments and sent the advanced draft to general membership for review by April 15, 2013. Board will address these comments as well and send revision to membership for electronic vote. Many thanks to the committee and reviewers. The president advises/feels the chapter should remain neutral on the validity of the law, and focus on implementation. Points in statement: Support to ADF&G for adaptive management approaches and use of metrics to evaluate. Also highlight cost of IM and address applicability to bears. Are we close to accepting this? Floor member comment: Positive, looks in good shape. Always room for improvement. Would the chapter be worse or better off in having a position statement? Better. Can we live with this and will the chapter, legislature and other agencies be better for it? Ideas from the floor: It could be effective to present (in person) the statement to the intended audience (though this has risks if not well prepared). Could try to arrange meet and greet when meeting in Juneau in 2015. Also could do an op/ed piece in Dispatch, ADN, &/or News-Miner.

Wild Sheep and Goat Disease Risk Position Statement (Jim Herriges):

- In February 2013 the Chapter supported and the BOG adopted Proposal 126: *The aid or use of domestic goats (Capra spp.) and sheep (Ovis spp.) as pack animals is prohibited in sheep, goat, or muskox hunting.*
- Chapter submitted proposal to FSB for parallel action, but we have been advised that regulating use of pack animals will likely fall to federal land management agencies rather than the FSB. Further work may be needed to pursue this angle.

Overview of recommendations in disease risk position statement:

1. Agencies and organizations should develop proactive programs and policies to minimize risk: Raise awareness, expand disease monitoring, conduct research.
2. Transport use as pack stock, and pasturing of domestic sheep and goats should be prohibited within occupied Dall's sheep and mountain goat habitat—including state and federal lands.
3. Llamas and alpacas may have lower risk but precautions may be warranted and research should be encouraged.
4. ADGF should take a lead role in coordinating interagency efforts. Establish a wild sheep and goat working group and formulate an action plan.
5. Fed land agencies should develop policies for pack animal use.

Other actions under consideration:

1. Letter to land management agencies informing them of statement and asking them to consider implementing recommendations. Point out BOG ruling. State & BLM lands have historically fallen through cracks in other habitat issues (e.g., wetlands, use of ohv's).
2. Opinion piece by president in major papers.
3. Form *ad hoc* committee to raise awareness and promote more discussion.

Floor Comments on Disease Risk:

- BOG is receptive to addressing llamas and other animals as they did inquire why these animals weren't included in the original proposal. The BOG can do more than ban use for hunting; they can also address wildlife habitat needs. In other words, they can pass something that applies to more than just hunters. For example, disease free testing & certification. ADFG would likely support a more inclusive ban but not initiate it. This could be a good role for the Chapter.
- DOD is considering using goats to transport. Comments could be sent to Garrison Commander at Ft Wainwright.
- There are a few very vocal outfitters using llamas on Kenai. Not sure how many other outfitters are out there.
- Horses, mules, & donkeys are not of concern.
- Public awareness could go a long way – letters to the editor, outdoors shows, public service announcements (PSA), etc. Could also tack on concern for spread of weeds. There is a general sense that use of pack animals is considered environmentally friendly. Could put a PSA right in the regulations. Chapter could suggest this to BOG. Could develop a brochure and have ADFG & others distribute it. Could approach Wild Sheep Foundation to fund it. NW Section may also be of help since this is a multi-state issue/opportunity.

Other Business Originating from Floor

- There is an opportunity to work with kids for Science Fair projects related to wildlife. Dan Wetzel expressed interest in highlighting this in the next newsletter.
- Undergraduate participation appears very low this year. We are on a university campus and are clearly missing a recruitment opportunity. UAF Student Chapter had a few activities this year, now gearing up for fundraising event. TWS could be more active with schools (including high school). UAA could be targeted next year. (Laura Prugh, Travis Booms, Dan Thompson expressed interest in further pursuit of student recruitment)