



Outdoor Alaska



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"Protecting your hunting, fishing, trapping, and outdoor heritage since 1955"

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Fall 2007

Schedule of upcoming events:

August 9-10 **Wasilla**
Midnight Sun Charity Shoot.

August 14, 6:30pm **Eagle River**
Alaska Outdoor Access Alliance
BBQ - Downstairs Eagle River
VFW.

October 1, **Anchorage**
NPFMC meeting to review and
discuss halibut charter allocations
and GHL measures.

October 5-8, **Anchorage**
Alaska Joint Board of Fisheries
and Game. Topics: Local F&G
Advisory Committee System and
review of Nonsubsistence Areas.

October 27, **Wasilla**
AOC Banquet & Fundraiser.
Volunteers contact Rod Arno at
376-2913

November 3, **Fairbanks**
AF&WCF Banquet & Fundraiser.

November 9-12, **Bethel**
Board of Game meeting on
proposals for Arctic/Western
Region.

February 22, **Juneau**
AOC Banquet & Fundraiser.

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Read about the mysterious disappearance of Muskox from the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge ANWR on page 7.

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2007 Legislative Session Wrap Up

By Rod Arno AOC Executive Director

Conservation, access and confirmations of Commissioners and board appointments topped the list of AOC's activities in Juneau this past legislative session.

A number of AOC members, led by AOC Fisheries Committee Chairman Bruce Knowles, worked on HB 189, the Sustainable Salmon Policy, introduced by Representative Bill Stoltze. In 2000 the Board of Fisheries (BOF) adopted the Statewide Sustainable Salmon Fisheries Policy to establish a basic level of management for all state fisheries. Even though the BOF established the policy as a working document to guide management, AOC believes it is important enough to be adopted as state statute so it would not only be policy, it would be the law.

HB 189 was heard in the House Special

Committee on Fisheries. In general, sport groups testified in support of strengthening the law to manage salmon fisheries based on the sustained yield principles enshrined in the Constitution of the State of Alaska, (Article VIII, Natural Resources, Section 4-Sustained Yield) and commercial groups testified against it. Much of the commercial fishing industry opposition came from Cook Inlet, where select Susitna drainage Sockeye, Coho, and Chum salmon fisheries have failed to meet management objectives. The bill was assigned to a subcommittee where opponents hope it will die. AOC members who harvest salmon, especially in the Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound drainages, need to make their voices heard on this bill. AOC will provide more information when the legislature reconvenes.

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President's Message

By Dick Bishop, AOC President



The Brain Drain

Remember the old song, "Where have all the flowers gone"? It popped into my head when I was thinking of the exodus of many ADF&G biologists from State service in recent years. "Turned into federal employees, every one", became my mental refrain.

Fortunately, the ADF&G folks aren't all gone, but there's a continuing trend of losing well trained, experienced, successful state Fish & Game biologists and technicians to other employers—mainly federal agencies.

What's driving this trend? Better pay and benefits; or, as former ADF&G Commissioner McKie Campbell wryly observed, "more pay for less work!"

But other employers and even other lines of work have taken their toll, too. Last fall, Campbell illustrated the point this way: not long ago, an Anchorage ADF&G biological technician quit to take a higher paying job as a municipal dog catcher in Wasilla! Private businesses and non-profit groups also recruit biologists, technicians, and other resource managers, but the biggest draw for fish and game biologists is the federal government's many wildlife and wildlands agencies.

The trickle of job hopping among employers became a torrent as federal agencies ballooned in response to all the new refuges, parks, wild and scenic rivers, conservation areas, etc., created by the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). ANILCA also mandated the federal rural subsistence priority, and enabled a burgeoning bureaucracy to administer it.

Alarmed at the attrition of its core staff in both fisheries and wildlife divisions, ADF&G in 2001 commissioned an analysis of factors responsible for what had become known as "the brain drain". In short, the ADF&G study found:

1. State employee salaries haven't kept pace with inflation. In the 16 years between 1985 and 2001, salaries increased about 17%, but the Anchorage Consumer Price Index increased 46%.
2. The federal government is the State's biggest competitor for job applicants in the biological sciences.
3. State starting pay for biological scientists averages 36% lower than the federal starting pay. A big part of the pay differential is the 25% (of salary) tax free federal cost-of-living allowance. The disparity was even greater among higher level positions.

Following up on the study, a plan was developed and approved to raise pay rates, but Governor Knowles rejected it. The study also noted that, in 2001, State retirement benefits were somewhat better than the federal retirement plan. For many state employees who preferred working for the state, that provided enough incentive to stick with state employment.

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However, recent informal feedback indicates that, since the State changed the retirement system from a defined benefit retirement system to a defined contribution retirement system, the incentive to stick with state employment has taken a beating. And, state pay increases have not kept up with the cost of living.

So what? So the State, with broader responsibilities than the federal agencies for management of fish and game, is having a harder time recruiting and retaining top quality, experienced staff who can gather and analyze data and make sound management plans and recommendations. At the same time, there are increasing public demands for more resource uses in areas unencumbered by the federal rural subsistence priority law.

It gets harder and harder to do the job with the high professional standards that have been the hallmark of ADF&G since statehood. Past and present employees of the ADF&G as well as other interested Alaskans who take pride in Alaska's stewardship of its wild renewable resources are concerned. They see "the brain drain" going on, they look at the federal programs that absorb the employees, and they become

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Executive Director's Report

By Rod Arno AOC Executive Director



AOC Positions on Bills Introduced in 1st Session of the 25th Legislation

AOC will again call for members help to inform their legislators of the importance of supporting AOC's positions on the following bills during the next legislative session:

• **HOUSE BILL 256/SENATE BILL 176**—AOC supports passage as the bill is currently written.

Bill's intent—*Amend current statutory provisions for intensive game management and the use of aircraft for taking predators as part of a predator control program authorized by Board of Game action.*

This bill was submitted to both the House and Senate Rules Committee by request of Governor Palin at the close of the 1st session. Both bills have the same content. The bill was developed in response to over three years of litigation including several lawsuits challenging State approved predator/prey management programs. The State has successfully kept all five current predator control programs from being stopped by court action. During the years of court challenges by various anti-game management advocates the State attorneys have discovered loopholes in State statutes governing game management and the airborne hunting laws that if amended would make their job of defending the programs more efficient and less costly to the State. AOC appreciates the Department of Law's efforts in these ongoing challenges and supports these amendments to the current State law.

• **HOUSE BILL 189**—AOC supports strengthening sustainable management of salmon fisheries and would like to see this bill get a fare hearing.

Bill's intent—*Strengthen the Alaska Board of Fisheries' Policy for the Management of Sustainable Salmon Fisheries by incorporating it into statute.*

This bill was submitted by Representative Bill Stoltze back on March 12th of the 1st session. Unfortunately the bill has been held captive by the House Special Fisheries Committee since its introduction. On April 2nd the bill was assigned to a Subcommittee within the Special Fisheries Committee for further study – which suggests it's unlikely to receive any further public hearings or Committee action. It's hard to believe that a Committee with a responsibility for the continuation of healthy fisheries would not discourage public debate on legislation to strengthen laws protecting the sustainability of salmon stocks throughout the State.

very worried about sound fish and game management and about public resource use opportunities.

The 2001 ADF&G salary study is still relevant but it's getting outdated. And, although "the brain drain" situation was highlighted by Governor Palin's ADF&G Transition Team – and many policy makers are aware of it – to the best of my knowledge it has not been systematically addressed up to this time.

• **HOUSE BILL 41**—AOC supports strong fish and wildlife habitat protection and will work with the Commissioners and Administration to achieve that goal prior to the start of the 2nd session.

Bill's Intent—*Return certain duties regarding habitat management from the Department of Natural Resources to the Department of Fish and Game.*

The bill was introduced by Representative Les Gara soon after the start of the 1st Session (Jan. 07). The bill was referred to the House Special Fisheries Committee. In the sponsor's statement Rep. Gara recognizes that "in theory the Habitat Division could serve its function equally within either the Department of Natural Resources or the Department of Fish and Game". At that early stage of the newly elected Palin Administration her staff asked the Committee for time to allow the commissioners and their staff to analyze current levels of habitat protection compared with past performance. The results of that analysis will be used to form recommendations to the Governor prior to the 2nd Session. AOC will work with the Commissioners and the Governor to recommend any needed changes to the Executive Order 107 signed by former Governor Murkowski in 2003. Should the outcome of that effort not be agreeable to AOC we will work within the legislative process to assure strong protection of fish and wildlife habitats.

• **CS FOR HOUSE BILL 194(JUD)**—AOC supports passage with amendment to insure habitat protection consistent with allowable uses for off-road travel.

Bill's Intent—*This bill was introduced by the House Resources Committee with the purpose of increasing fines for certain violations or infractions of miner offenses and providing enforcement authority for lands managed by the Department of Natural Resources.*

The provision giving DNR enforcement authority for violations of allowable off-road uses was removed from the bill by amendment. AOC would like to see changes to statute (Title 38. Public Lands) that would make violation of regulations governing transportation on State land or water an offense enforceable by the Dept. of Public Safety (DPS). The obvious reason for this statutory change was made painfully clear to us some years ago when neither DNR nor DPS had authority to stop an off-road vehicle which was destroying the vegetative mat in the Mosquito Flats area of the 40 Mile drainage. AOC has long supported the opening of the Dalton Highway Corridor to regulated ORV use, but until this enforcement authority is granted to State officers the BLM will remain reluctant to work out a management program that would increase public access to areas currently unavailable to ORV travel. ■

Good staff and good data are needed for good management. Sound management information is also needed in dealing with the Federal Subsistence Board, which generally makes regulations based on political patronizing of special interests rather than on sound management for conservation.

It's time to work on plugging "the brain drain". ■

Some Surf with your Federal Turf?

By Will Sherman, Attorney for AOC in Katie John III litigation

Alaskans have endured almost two decades of Federal subsistence management of Public Lands. The current Federal water grab, however, may have far greater consequences. Consider salmon. If the Feds take over just an acre of salmon management adjacent to a Park hundreds of miles from the coast, they potentially gain control of the entire downstream river system as well. Both commercial and sport fishers beware!

Alaska v. Norton, A case currently before the U.S. District Court, will decide which (if not all) of Alaska's navigable waters the State will soon lose to Federal subsistence management. AOC has intervened in this case to ensure that an adverse decision will at least get appealed.

Understanding this case, as well as Alaska's water predicament, requires a brief look back. At Statehood, Alaska acquired title to the land beneath its navigable waters. For the next twenty or so years, the State simply managed its fish and wildlife, be it on Federal or State land, just as any state traditionally does.

Then the U.S. and the State parted company over subsistence, spawning the current "you manage your land and I'll manage mine" scheme. Without sounding cynical, it was probably only a matter of time before the Federal management of Federal land would find a way to spill over to State and private land as well.

That "spillway," aptly, was water. The Ninth Circuit's 1995 Katie John decision held that the U.S. could manage fish and wildlife on all navigable waters in Alaska in which it had "reserved water rights." The claim being that whenever the U.S. uses its land for a particular purpose, such as a Park, it also reserves any water rights necessary to accomplish such purpose.

Are you troubled by a holding that land given to Alaska in 1959 could somehow subsequently get "reserved" for a bunch of Parks and a subsistence priority that Congress didn't even dream up until the 1970's? It may also bother you that Congress itself didn't even explicitly mention this "reservation" when it performed this clairvoyance in 1980. Apparently it didn't bother the Knowles Administration, which in turn didn't bother to try and appeal this decision to the U.S. Supreme Court. It's now the law.

And now back to the present. After Katie John, it was left to a number of friendly, unbiased Federal agencies such as the Park Service to perform the alchemy that would select and justify the navigable waters the U.S. was said to have reserved under ANILCA. Unsurprisingly, the list reads like a "Who's Who" of Alaska Rivers. It even includes marine waters, which ANILCA seemed to explicitly exclude.

Thus the State is now suing the Federal Agencies, claiming

they went way too far in their selections of which waters the U.S. had "reserved." Meanwhile, in a consolidated case, the Native American Rights Fund is suing the Feds claiming they have not gone far enough. The argument goes that Native Allotments are somehow a form of "Public Land," thus any river adjacent to an Allotment (and potentially any downstream water as well) must be managed for a rural subsistence priority. Of course, this theory neatly sweeps every major and minor river in the state into the Federal maw.

And what might an adverse decision in this case mean to individual AOC members? Already, John Conrad cannot continue to operate the Slana River fish wheel his family had depended upon for over 20 years. The Park Service has likewise blackballed AOC member Michael Tinker from his state subsistence fishery of many years. And these Federal Agencies are just now getting their feet wet.

As noted above, the Feds could theoretically shut down an entire river system due to a weak salmon run on one "reserved" tributary, taking down hundreds of miles of sport and commercial fishing in the process. Bye-bye Bristol Bay?

But fish aren't the only creatures found in and around rivers. Moose, bear, caribou, sheep—they all cross rivers—and could thus find themselves fair game in a federal subsistence shooting gallery despite spending 99% of their time on dry State land.

Thus far in the case, Judge Holland has decided that the Federal Agencies used the correct process in selecting the reserved waters. The parties are now wrangling over the remaining issue: What specific waters will the Feds take over for subsistence management?

In any event, Federal subsistence managers are soon likely to enjoy a lot more "surf" with their "turf." ■

Will Sherman, attorney

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'07 Legislative Wrap Up *continued from page 1*

AOC President Dick Bishop led the charge on another important bill, HB 220, which bans computer-assisted hunting in Alaska. Game farms in the lower 48 have set up rifles next to video cameras to allow people to pay a fee on the internet, click a button to activate an electronic trigger, and kill an animal. As Dick said in his testimony opposing such a practice in Alaska, "the values associated with hunting, and the wildlife hunted, deserve more respect than points on a video game and more initiative than a credit card purchase." HB 220 was sponsored by Representative Bob Buch, a new representative from West Anchorage. AOC looks forward to working more with Representative Buch, and appreciates his support for the 2nd Amendment.

AOC also supported HJR 4, sponsored by Representative Kurt Olson, putting the legislature on record against the Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) decision to allow residents from the communities of Ninilchik, Happy Valley, Hope, and Cooper Landing to have a subsistence fishery priority on the Kenai Peninsula. While HJR 4 is not

legislation to change Alaska law, it is important as a statement from the legislature to the U.S. Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture, plus Alaska's delegation in Congress that the Alaska State Legislature is on record requesting that the FSB rescind its decision. AOC also appreciates Rep. John Coghill and Senator Charlie Huggins for the help in the procedure of getting HJR4 moved along.

An old friend of AOC has returned, courtesy of Representative Mike Kelly. Rep. Kelly sponsored HB 87, reestablishing the Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Areas in Alaska. The commission was established following enactment of ANILCA to protect Alaskans' access and traditional activities on federal land. AOC testified in favor of HB 87, and provided examples of how it worked to serve Alaskans before Governor Tony Knowles let it die. The commission has a record of effectively assuring that federal land management decisions were made consistent with the Congressional intent of ANILCA. With federal land managers and the Federal Subsistence Board ignoring the intent of

ANILCA we hope the newly reinstated Commission will be invaluable in protecting the interests of Alaskans.

During this time of renewed focus on ethics in government it was surprising to us that the commercial fishing industry continued to push HB 15 last session. HB 15 would have allowed a member of the Board of Fisheries to have a conflict of interest on an issue before the board, yet still sit at the table and vote on the issue. AOC helped "de-fang" this snake-in-the-grass. The bill now proposes to allow BOF members with a conflict to sit at the table and discuss the issue, but they would no longer be allowed to vote. Comfish interests say that board members with "expertise" in a fisheries issue should be allowed to share their knowledge with the rest of the board. AOC would rather see the state hire and retain highly qualified biologists and let them be the experts at board meetings. We shouldn't be picking board members for their "expertise", we should be picking board members for their dedication to the public board process, for their ability to process information, and for their

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Author and sheep hunter Tony Russ at the right place at exactly the right time

The Passing of a Conservation Crusader

By Rod Arno AOC Executive Director



Dale Bondurant passed away last October after years of carrying the torch for sustainable management of Alaska's fish and wildlife. Article VIII of the Constitution of Alaska pertaining to management and allocation of natural resources was his banner and he marched at the front of the crowd with it numerous times. On some battle fronts it was just Dale and a few others with the same convictions, but no crowd at all. That's typical; very few people ever march to protect their outdoor heritage. They would much rather be out fishing, hunting, trapping or just plain recreating than battling special interest groups who are willing to take away their opportunities.

Dale served his apprenticeship in the public arena by creating a Union for Civil Service employees on Fort Richardson back in the 50's and 60's. He knew the power the public had when it came to due process under the law. That experience plus thirty years as a machinist straightening crankshafts served him well when it came time to deal with a bureaucracy entrusted with providing for common use and sustainable management of fish and game. Dale knew it took a little straightening at a time.

Dale was there in Washington D.C. when Congress started marking up the legislation that in 1971 became the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Dale, with others, also prevailed in a case that assured public access to navigable waters and submerged lands (Alaska Public Easement Defense Fund v. Andrus, 435 F. Supp. 664 D. Alaska 1977). Again in 1980 it was Dale Bondurant and like-minded people who started a seven year journey that ended in a victory for the State of Alaska over the Department of Interior (the Gulkana case) regarding Navigable Waters.

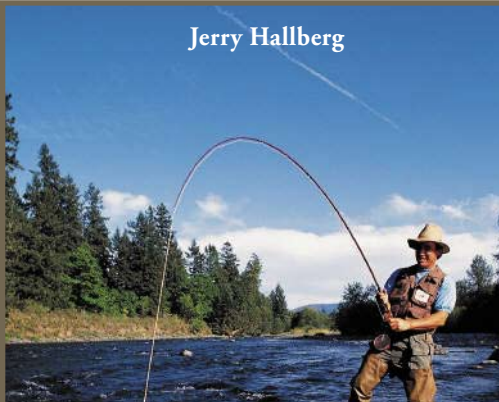
Dale formed the Sportsman's Game Preservation Committee in the mid 70's to battle for local Fish & Game Citizen Advisory Committees control over harvest of cow moose in their areas. Today the Board of Game still needs the support of local AC's before they can open seasons for cow moose hunts.

Dale took the "common use" clause enshrined in Alaska's Constitution to heart. He along with his peers Sam McDowell and others could not accept the notion that the constitutional protection of fish, wildlife, and waters would not be reserved for all the people of Alaska for common use. The State subsistence law of 1986 violated that constitutional protection. Dale, Sam, Warren Olson, Tim Stevens, and others won the McDowell case which declared that a rural subsistence priority for fish and game violated common use provisions of Alaska's constitution. Dale Bondurant spent the last thirty years of his life battling "to protect common use and equal access to Alaska's fish and wildlife."

Exemplary of the true conservationist he was Dale dedicated 2000 feet of his Kenai River bank property for a Conservation Easement. That along with his contribution of view land in Homer to the Kachemak Bay Conservation society for a possible headquarters will assure his gifts for all Alaskans will continue to be appreciated.

His good friend and co-crusader Warren Olson summed it up when he said "No greater friends and confidants, for all Alaskans, than Dale Bondurant and Sam McDowell, will appear in our State for the next generation. Let us take from these great Americans a sense, that with hard work, dedication, and passion, we can level the chaos of government" ■


Jerry Hallberg



Long-time outdoorsman, biologist, and staunch AOC member Jerry Hallberg died peacefully at home from Lou Gehrig's disease on July 4, 2007.

Jerry and Pam moved from Wisconsin in 1974. He worked as an ADF&G Sport Fish biologist out of Fairbanks from 1975 to 1998. Until his condition precluded it, Jerry was an enthusiastic, active supporter and leader of outdoor pursuits for kids and adults. He became an advocate of learning more about how to conquer Lou Gehrig's disease.

Donations in memory may be sent to:
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P.O. Box 81255, Fairbanks, AK 99709-1255



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Barbara Koneczny, AOC bookkeeper, and Dick Bishop, AOC President, selling hot dogs, chips, and drink to raise money for rebuilding the TVSA Clubhouse at the 1st annual Pike's Landing gala celebration. Thanks again to Rep. Jay Ramras for throwing the party

Dick Bishop, AOC President cutting the ribbon to dedicate Rep. Jay Ramras' newly constructed arch to his public access launch site to access the Chena River at Pike's Landing.



North Slope Muskox Mystery

By Patrick Valkenburg

During the mid-1800s, the last muskoxen in Alaska died somewhere near Arctic Village. Modern firearms are widely cited as the reason for their demise, but other factors could have been involved. In 1927 the Territorial Legislature began the long and tedious process of reestablishing muskoxen, and in 1935 and 1936, 31 were released on Nunivak Island. When planning the restoration of muskoxen, the Alaska Game Commission wisely chose Nunivak Island to avoid having to deal with the dual problems of dispersal and predation. It took almost 30 years to establish the Nunivak population from which future transplants were taken. Finally, during the late 1960s, ADF&G and USFWS worked together to reestablish muskoxen on mainland Alaska with a series of transplants, first to Nelson Island, and then to the Seward Peninsula, the eastern North Slope, and the Point Hope/Cape Thompson area. All of the mainland transplants succeeded and hunting seasons were opened in the early 1980s.

The Seward Peninsula and North Slope transplants appeared especially promising. During the mid-1990s there were about 700-800 muskoxen in the eastern North Slope population, including 300 in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and about 150 in northern Yukon. However, during the late 1990s the eastern North Slope muskoxen began to decline, and by 2006 they were once again gone from ANWR (except perhaps for a remnant group near Arctic Village). At first, the decline was thought to be weather related, but then some evidence appeared of disease, unusual movements north onto sea ice, and heavy predation by grizzly bears. One factor that has not been discussed much is the possibility of excessive hunting, which if it did occur, would have been illegal.

Despite the huge effort involved in reestablishing muskoxen to ANWR, USFWS was apparently not alarmed by the

apparent decline and did not provide funding for a serious effort to determine the cause of the decline. They probably did not expect the muskoxen to completely disappear from ANWR, nor did ADF&G, which meanwhile had taken a less active role in muskox matters on the federal refuge as a result of the terms of ANILCA's emphasis on federal responsibility and the exclusion of non-rural hunting of muskoxen on ANWR. Although ANWR staff still has responsibility for investigating factors affecting the animals, the opportunities for study of what contributed to the decline in muskox numbers on ANWR are much diminished.

Fortunately, muskoxen have fared somewhat better in Unit 26B and eastern 26A (outside of ANWR boundaries) where there are probably still about 200-250. However, the 26B muskoxen have also been experiencing problems similar to those that first appeared in ANWR, and it is possible that the entire eastern North Slope population is headed toward extirpation. Fortunately ADF&G has elevated the priority of muskox research and began a new study in 2006 to determine how many calves are being born and the major causes of mortality. Although there may be other factors involved (including disease and weather), predation by grizzly bears appears to be the leading cause of death of calves, and some individual bears have become so focused on killing muskoxen that they regularly kill adults and engage in surplus killing.

Predation by grizzly bears on muskoxen was not widely documented in the scientific literature until recently. It may be that bears on the North Slope have only learned to kill muskoxen recently and are now passing on that behavior to their offspring. This kind of behavioral adaptation is not unusual in large predators and is well documented in African lions and

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By Brad Kruger, AK NRA Field Rep.

Greetings from the Alaska Friends of NRA! Boy this year is just flying by! We have wrapped up our spring banquet season and I am proud to report another BANNER SPRING! We had four banquet committees achieve the High Caliber Club for netting over \$25,000 and three of them were NEW-Homer, Juneau, and Mat-Su. Ketchikan is our fourth High Caliber Club winner and they have been one for years and years! It never ceases to amaze me how passionate Alaskans are about the Shooting Sports!

But I do not want to bore everyone with numbers, I would like to take this opportunity to inform everyone about how our volunteer Friends of NRA Committees are going the extra mile! The Sitka Friends of NRA committee recently sponsored a range clean up day at the Sitka Public Range with hotdogs, chips, and even a free gun drawing for those that showed up to help clean up the range. It was by all accounts a HUGE SUCCESS! Forty-five people showed up and they proved the adage- "Many hands make light work"!

The boys up in Kotzebue grabbed the bull by the horns and had Eddie Eagle there for their Fourth of July Festivities. Eddie marched in the Parade and handed out free gun safety coloring books and stickers. If this isn't enough they are now flying Eddie out to the bush villages to conduct Eddie Eagle Gun safety classes. They have 11 villages lined up so far!

The Kenai FNRA Committee also held Eddie Eagle Gun safety Classes for their youth at their schools annual safety day. They had a round robin of classes and had over 100 kids and their parents attend.

The FNRA Committee in Homer held their first ever Women On Target (a ladies only firearm instruction class). Ten Ladies attended the one-day revolver clinic, were treated to lunch and a lot of "trigger time". Several of the ladies had never fired a firearm before in their lives and at the end of the day were printing VERY respectable groups! I did happen to run into one of the ladies 2 weeks after the course at the gun counter of the Kachemak Gear Shed purchasing her first firearm! I actually got choked up I was so proud!

The Midnight Sun Committee has the husband and wife team of Larry Boyle and Alex Brown. Both are certified NRA instructors in a plethora of disciplines. This Dynamic Duo conducts a Women On Target course once a month in the Anchorage Area. They break it down by discipline, (revolver, rifle, shotgun) and usually cannot meet the demand of all the students who want to attend.



BANQUET SCHEDULE

FOR INFORMATION ON NRA BANQUETS

Visit the official website for more information
www.nraalaska.com

Their level of commitment and professionalism is ABSOLUTELY ASTOUNDING!

The Alaska Friends of NRA is 100% committed to promoting firearms education, training, and safety! We are not only raising funds to ensure the future of our shooting and hunting heritage we are taking action! Of course we are always looking for a few more "doers". If you only want to complain about the way things used to be, I am sorry but we do not have the time. We are busy planning our next project. If you want to see our hunting and shooting traditions passed down to the next generation please give me a call, or stop me when you see me at your local Friends of NRA Banquet. To find one near you go to www.nraalaska.com. Thank you every body for your support! ■



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Hunter Heritage Foundation News

By Eddie Grasser, President

If you are serious about preserving your outdoor traditions, then we'd like to suggest you join U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski and other state leaders at the Midnight Sun Charity Shootout. The Shootout is held each year in Wasilla, Alaska and raises important funding for the shooting sports and outdoor education programs throughout Alaska.

This year's Midnight Sun Shootout should raise over \$200,000 for a number of programs, including Becoming An Outdoors-Woman, NRA programs such as Women on Target and the Youth Hunter Education Challenge, youth shooting leagues at Rabbit Creek and Grouse Ridge Shooting Parks and numerous how to clinics for Alaskans both young and old designed to get them out the door and into the field.

There will be a number of celebrities present, including the honorary host, Sen. Lisa Murkowski, actor Ricky Schroeder, author Dr. James Swan, Senate President Lyda Green, Speaker of the House John Harris and numerous others

Senator Murkowski literally got her feet wet in the shooting sports on a duck hunting trip when she was 10. The second daughter in a family of six, her father Frank Murkowski (later U.S. senator and governor of Alaska), outfitted Lisa and a younger brother with hip boots and they sloshed off into the marsh. "My brother got to carry the gun, but I was the retriever," Lisa says.

A third generation Alaskan, born in Ketchikan, Lisa grew up around firearms and learned to respect them, but her passion for hunting and shooting did not really take off until she had her own family and it came time for she and her husband, Verne Martell, an Anchorage small business owner, to introduce her two sons to the rich tradition of hunting and shooting sports.

Every year since the boys turned eight, she says proudly, "The opening day of duck season has been a special holiday for the family, almost like Christmas."

And, yes, they have a dog to do the retrieving these days.

Lisa Murkowski is the first Alaskan-born senator, the first woman senator from Alaska, and only the 33rd female to serve in the U.S. Senate since its founding in 1789. She is a pioneer, and she walks her talk.



Last year Sen. Murkowski co-sponsored Senate Bill 1522, the "Hunting Heritage Protection Act," which seeks to see that there is a No-Net-Loss of hunting access on federal lands. She says she hopes to re-introduce the bill in this session.

It seems only natural that when the Hunting Heritage Foundation of Alaska wanted to start a shooting program to raise money for shooting sports and conservation in Alaska — The Midnight Sun Charity Shootout — that Lisa became the perennial honorary host, appearing in photos carrying her favorite gun, a .20 gauge Ruger Red Label shotgun.

"Last year we fielded the first all-woman shooting team in the "Shootout" she says proudly, adding, "I feel my being public about shooting helps me connect with my constituents." She hopes this will be the start of more such events that make shooting sports an accepted part of everyday life.

For more information about the Midnight Sun Charity Shootout call Eddie Grasser with The Hunter Heritage Foundation at (907) 745-6166 and or check out their website: www.hhfak.org. ■

North Slope Muskox Mystery *continued from page 7*

marine mammals like killer whales. In northern Botswana, for example, several prides of lions recently have begun to specialize in killing elephant calves, and in Tanzania during the 1930s a couple of adjacent prides of lions developed man-eating behavior that resulted in the death of 1,000-1,500 people over a 15-year period. Killer whales also appear to have recently targeted sea otters in the Aleutians and are currently thought to be the main cause of low otter numbers. Although change in hunting behavior of predators is an almost constant process, the kinds of dramatic changes seen in these cases are unusual and unpredictable. This kind of predatory behavior often seems unbelievable when first discovered and is often discounted, especially in modern times when predators are viewed as beneficial and important indicators of ecosystem health.

On the North Slope, muskoxen may be particularly vulnerable to selective hunting by bears because of their spotty distribution and herding behavior. The unusual movements of muskoxen seen in ANWR and more recently in Unit 26B could also be caused by harassment from bears. It may also be that muskoxen simply have not had enough time to adapt to bear predation.

Whatever is going on with the eastern North Slope muskoxen appears to be unique to this population, or group. Grizzly bears also occur on the Seward Peninsula and in northwestern Alaska but they do not appear to concentrate on killing muskoxen. On the Seward Peninsula, the explanation may be that predatory

bears have not been tolerated by reindeer herders, and around Nome recently expanded hunting of bears appears to have reduced bear numbers. There are now about 3,000 muskoxen on the Seward Peninsula and the population has increased continuously since they were introduced. Bear-free island populations of muskoxen generally fare better than mainland populations both in Canada and in Alaska, and muskoxen can reach very high numbers despite occasionally severe weather and diseases that are enzootic (regularly occurring at low levels) in most areas. This is additional evidence suggesting that bear predation is important on the North Slope.

The eastern North Slope population of muskoxen is important to Alaskans, and AOC has asked ADF&G to implement a management experiment to mitigate the effects of bear predation while a viable population of muskoxen still exists. We have also recommended a well funded research program to fully explore all possible causes of the decline, preferably using State Wildlife Grants (SWG) money provided by the federal government that is intended for use on species where a conservation concern exists. ADF&G is applying for approval from the USFWS, which administers those funds, to use this money for the new project.

Whatever is going on with North Slope muskoxen, it would be unwise to risk allowing them to die out once again, especially if this turns out to be a very manageable problem that can be arrested by removing a few bears and modifying the impact of their predatory behavior through selective harvest. ■



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Along with legislation AOC also added members' voices to the state budget process. Many thanks are due to many people for funding in the state capital budget to continue and expand the state's predator management program. Board of Game member (and game biologist) Ron Somerville developed the funding proposal in coordination with ADF&G. If you put a moose or caribou in your freezer this year, thank Ron for efforts to see that you get to eat it.



AOC enthusiastically supported the confirmations of two new board members. Bob Bell was confirmed to a seat on the Board of Game (BOG). Mr. Bell is a supporter of predator/prey management, and as an active hunter in GMU 16 for the past couple of decades has personally seen effects of the predator-prey imbalance in that area. AOC is glad to see Mr. Bell on the BOG and appreciates his service. AOC is also glad to see former ADF&G biologist, and Mat-Su AC Chairman Howard Delo, confirmed to the Board of Fisheries. We expect Mr. Delo to be an excellent board member, as he was an AC Chairman. ■

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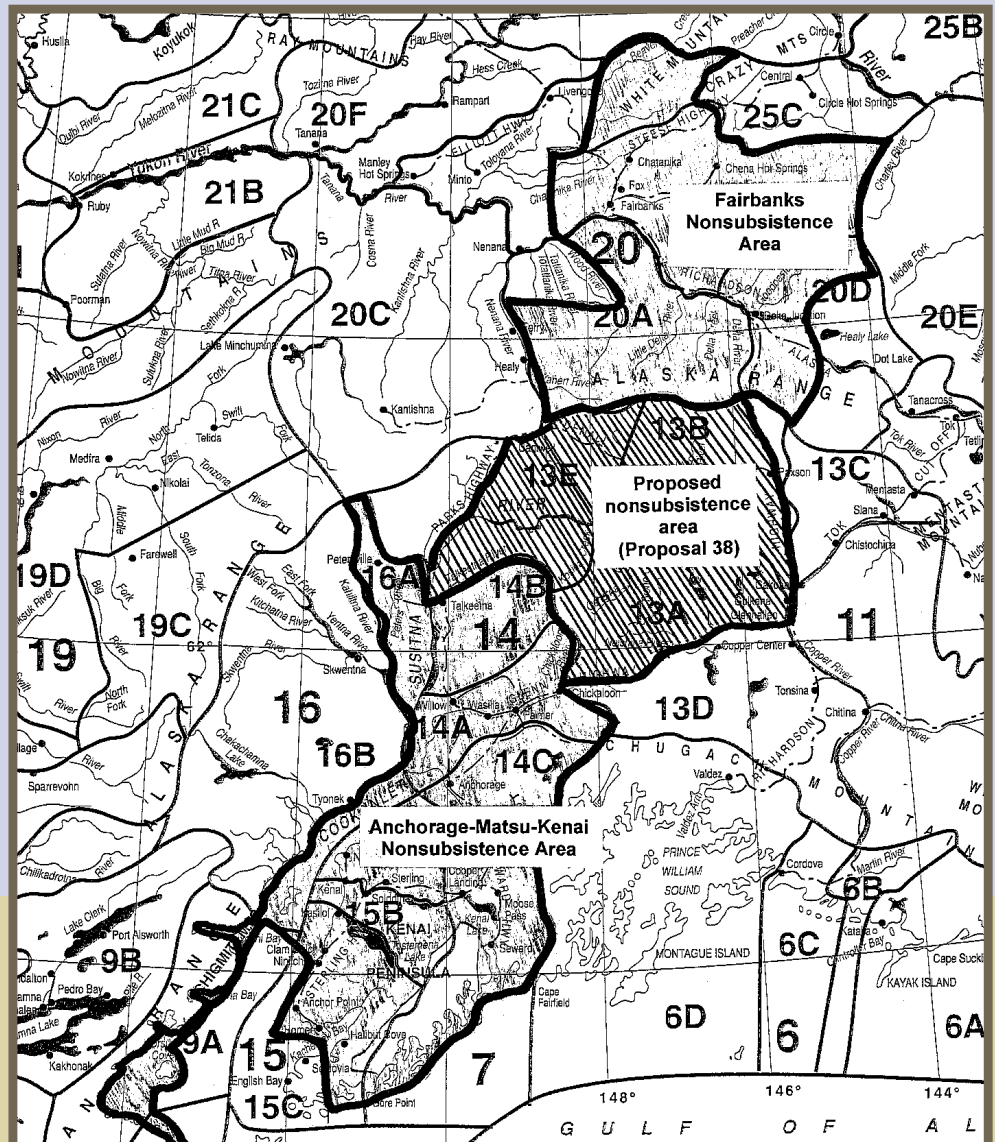
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AOC News Updates

By Rod Arno AOC Executive Director

- Black bear control in GMU 16B** - The Board of Game (BOG) did their part, they liberalized bag limits and methods and means for reducing predation on moose calves. Now it's up to hunters to do their part; go harvest as many black bear as you want out of the control area. There are a number of regulations that apply only to resident hunters who have a Control Area Permit. The permit allows you to hunt and access bait stations the same day you have flown, plus allows you to sell tanned bear hides. These and all the other liberalized conditions can only be found in the department's new Predator Control Supplement, they are not in the "handy dandy" regulations booklet. You must go down to the local ADF&G to get your copy of the Predator Control Supplement and your Control Area Permit. If hunters don't show up to do their part to reduce moose predation by black bears the chances are slim the BOG will go through the laborious public process of adopting liberalized regulations such as these again.
- Predator Control Supplement** - The Alaska Bear & Wolf Control Supplement is available online at <http://wildlife.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=regulations.main>. In order to participate in wolf and bear predator programs currently underway in 5 areas of Alaska you must first obtain a Control Area Permit. Wolf control area permits are now being issued for all or parts of GMU's 13A, 13B, 13C, 13E, 16A, 16B, 19A, 19D, 12, 20D, 20B, 20E, 25C. Brown bear control area permits are now being issued for all or parts of GMU 19D and 20E. Black bear permits for all or part of GMU 16 and 19D. The boundaries and liberalized hunting conditions can only be found in the Predator Control Supplement, so head down to your local ADF&G office for a permit and do your part to help achieve abundant wildlife.
- Tier II scoring for Nelchina caribou Permits** - Ken Manning won the state's challenge to his Superior court victory. The alternative source of game criteria being used by the BOG is unconstitutional. The Alaska Supreme Court affirmed the order of the superior court. The most important aspect of the case for all Alaskans was that the Alaska Supreme Court reaffirmed the 1989 McDowell decision that limiting subsistence fishing and hunting activities to rural residents violated the equal access clauses enshrined in the Alaska Constitution. Shortly after Manning won at the Alaska Supreme Court the Superior Court granted an injunction to Ahtna Tene Nene Subsistence Committee which again puts Tier II scoring for Nelchina caribou back in the courts. Ironically the Injunction filed by Ahtna would result in more permits in the hands of Anchorage residents making fewer available for residents of the Nelchina Basin. Who knows how Tier II scoring will eventually turn out if left to the courts? AOC is advocating for the adoption of Proposal #38 before the Joint Boards of Fisheries and Game that would turn State lands in the Nelchina Basin into a Nonsubsistence Area. This would completely do away with Tier II permits along the road system; between the Parks Hwy and Richardson Hwy, north of the Glenn Hwy.
- GMU 13 Nonsubsistence Area** - The Joint Boards of Fisheries and Game will take comments until September 21, 2007 on Proposal #38 to create a new Nonsubsistence area that would connect the Fairbanks and Anchorage/Mat/Kenai Nonsubsistence Areas together. This new Nonsubsistence Area would



include portions of GMUs 13, 14, and 20. The initial review will take your comments into consideration at the October 5th-8th Joint Boards meeting in Anchorage. If there isn't strong public support for Proposal #38 the likelihood of it being adopted is slim and Nelchina caribou permits will remain under the Tier II scoring system. You can either mailed or faxed your comments in to:

ATTN: Joint Board Comments

ADF&G, Boards Section

P.O. Box 115526

Juneau, AK 99811-5526

FAX: (907) 465-6094

- **Alaska Supreme Court vacancy** - Justice Alex Bryner is retiring from the Alaska Supreme Court. Two attorneys with very strong records of supporting States Rights and equality in access to public resources have applied to fill the vacancy; Joanne Grace, assistant attorney general in Anchorage and Wayne Anthony Ross, in private practice in Anchorage and past gubernatorial candidate. Governor Palin will appoint a new justice in October from a list of nominated finalists.

The Judicial Council invites public comment. Write to:

Judicial Council

1029 W. Third Ave.

Anchorage, Alaska 99501

- **The Federal Subsistence Board (FSB)** agrees to reconsider C&T for Ninilchik on Kenai River- One small victory for Alaskans is the FSB's willingness to admit they were out of order when they approved a C&T finding for residents of Ninilchik and Happy Valley for all fish in the Kenai River. While the State and Safari Club International (SCI) had both submitted a request for reconsideration (RFR) of the Boards actions they were granted only a point of order under Robert's Rules of Order. The FSB took this action in a closed to the public meeting on July 13th. In Anchorage on September 13th the FSB will be given another chance to get it right. There will be an opportunity for discussion before their vote. Should they reverse their position and deny the priority, fine. Should they again approve a fisheries priority to some residents of the Kenai depending on what their Zip Code is a court challenge is the only step left in the process.

- **No Charter fleet representation on the NPFMC** - Governor Palin and her administrative staff decided that one recreational representative on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) was enough. Apparently individual anglers and the halibut charter fleet should be satisfied with that. Sam Cotton, who is currently a fisheries consultant for the Aleutians East Borough, and Duncan Fields, a fish processor and fishermen as well as the chair of the Alaska Fisheries Marketing Board, were appointed to the two vacated seats. Alaskans will get their first opportunity to hear what these new members have to say regarding halibut charter issues such as Allocation/Compensation, Discard Mortality, Logbook Data, 3A GHL Measures when the NPFMC reviews these topics in Anchorage October the 1, 2007. Never before has representation from the charter fleet been more important on the NPFMC then in the next year when the Council takes action regarding the longterm viability of the halibut charter industry.

- **Funding for Shooting Ranges** -The Legislature would like for shooting ranges to start paying their own way in 2009 and the Administration must feel the same way based on budget cuts to ranges this year. With that in mind two of AOC's member clubs have stepped up to the plate and are raising funds for their projects.

The Tanana Valley Sportsmen's Association has started rebuilding their Clubhouse/Firing Range in Fairbanks after the fire that destroyed the building this winter. The range has provided a place for youth to learn to shoot and compete for over 50 years. It is imperative to rebuild the range in order to house four high school rifle teams, one middle school team, and 4-H youth who used the range on regular bases, along with many members of TVSA.

The Mat Valley Sportsmen are also raising funds for a major ventilation improvement project in their indoor range. Youth team shooting has been curtailed until the ventilation improvement project is complete. The range is located on the Glenn Hwy south of Palmer and is open to the public for a fee. *(Call 907 746-4862 for times and fees)*



Sheep hunter and financial planner Rene Russ demonstrating Best Practices bear viewing; from a distance

The AOC/Fund has donated \$5,000 to each club for their construction projects but the need for financial assistance goes far beyond that now because of lack of State funding. Please donate to these worthy undertakes by AOC club members:

Tanana Valley Sportsmen's Association

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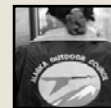
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