



# Outdoor Alaska



The Official publication of the Alaska Outdoor Council and Alaska Fish & Wildlife Conservation Fund.

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

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Summer 2007

## Schedule of upcoming events:

**June 30, Fairbanks**  
Pikes Landing Celebration.  
1-4 PM. Dedication of newly rebuilt privately owned, Rep. Jay Ramras, river access open to the public.

**August 3-5, Juneau**  
61st Annual Golden North Salmon Derby, sponsored by Territorial Sportsmen [www.salmonderby.org](http://www.salmonderby.org)

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

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

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

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

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

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ADF&G wildlife biologist Becky Kelleyhouse on a double bear capture.

## Bear Management

By Pat Valkenburg

Thirty five years ago when I began my career in wildlife management any article on the subject of bear management could rightly be assumed to be about bear conservation and protection. Grizzly bears were dwindling in the Yellowstone ecosystem and black bears in eastern North America were mostly relegated to the few remaining areas of shrinking wild forest lands. In Alaska, brown bears on the Alaska Peninsula had been hunted hard during the 1960s and grizzlies had still not recovered from the federal wolf poisoning programs in the Nelchina Basin. Biologists were also concerned about possible over harvests of the slowly-reproducing Brooks Range grizzlies. In addition, the impact of bear predation on moose was unknown and bears were generally not thought of as predators that competed with hunters for game.

Today, the situation is about as different as it possibly could be. Bears, both black and grizzly, have made a spectacular comeback across most of their range where they were formerly depleted, and black bears have expanded along their southern range into relatively populated areas. Now, in Canada and the lower 48, news stories about bears usually involve problem animals that raid garbage and bird feeders or maul or kill people. New Jersey's "on again-off again" bear hunt has been in the news frequently as that state's biologists struggle to find an acceptable way to reduce bear numbers.

In Alaska, and elsewhere, biologists have frequently been surprised by how resilient bear populations are. Black bears on Kuiu Island have been able to sustain 4 or 5 times the estimated sustainable harvest that biologists

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# President's Message

By AOC President Dick Bishop



## Transition: A fancy name for "change"

"Transition" has been the rule in the last year. There have been lots of changes. We like to call them "transitions" because that suggests that people planned changes, instead of just watching them happen.

Governor Palin, whose election was probably the biggest change in Alaska's politics, established Transition Teams for each state department, including the Dept. of Fish and Game. The Governor's appointments to the Fish and Game Transition Team came from a wide array of fish and game interests. AOC interests were well represented among the 20+ Team members. Bruce Knowles, Rod Arno, and I were all Team members.

Some of the Team recommendations reflected long-standing AOC positions. Among them were the following subjects.

Restore adequate Department funding to ensure sound, science-based fish and game management, including competitive professional position salaries. It takes money to get the necessary biological data and to offset the "brain drain" of good biologists going to federal and private jobs.

Strengthen the role of Fish and Game Advisory Committees in the State Boards of Fish and Game regulatory process.

"Dual Management" – Have an effective State presence in the Federal Subsistence Board process, and challenge its chronically poor process and bad decisions. Look for ways to replace "dual management" of fish and game by both federal and state agencies with a State managed program.

Reinstate the Fish and Wildlife Protection Division. This has been done, at the Governor's direction. It's now called the Alaska Wildlife Troopers, and its organizing efforts are rapidly making changes for the better. This has been a major AOC objective.

Transfer the Habitat permitting functions back to ADF&G. AOC consistently supported this move. However, this subject has only begun to be addressed by ADF&G and ADNR. AOC's bottom line is that Alaska's fish and wildlife habitats not be compromised.

Support enacting the Sustainable Salmon Management policy in statute. This year a legislative bill was introduced to do that, but it was pigeon-holed by the House Special Committee on Fisheries, whose members seemed more concerned with commercial fishing revenues than with sustained yield salmon management.

Increase public access to lands and waters for outdoor uses. This is a critical issue as the Federal Subsistence Board, federal courts, and supporters of the federal rural subsistence priority

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seek to restrict access for the general public.

Manage wildlife to increase opportunities for wildfood harvest. Thanks to the efforts of dedicated supporters, and groups such as Territorial Sportsmen Inc. and AOC the Legislature approved substantial funding for predator management, and for a program to explain to the public why predator control is essential under some circumstances.

The Transition Team was a good way to bring these issues to the Governor's and the Legislature's attention. But we can't sit around waiting to see what will happen.

It's up to Alaska's fishers, hunters, trappers and travelers to support these recommendations with policy makers.

AOC is not waiting to see what might change. We're working to promote "transition" – to continue improving fish and game management, more fair allocations of fish and game resources, and better access to those resources. Please give us a hand! ■

# Conflicts In Subsistence Management of Fish and Game

By Rod Arno AOC Executive Director



Most of Alaska subsistence hunting, trapping and fishing regulations, whether State or federal, don't have much effect on large numbers of people. That's partly because non-local fishers and hunters are spread pretty thin and partly because the non-locals have been eliminated or discouraged by the federal, or in some cases, State, regulations. They've gone elsewhere or just given up going. The potential for eliminating even more non-local users under federal rules is a daily reality.

A lot of them have gone to accessible areas still under State fishing or hunting regulations. So, when 50,000 Alaskans sign up for a Nelchina caribou registration hunt along the Richardson Highway or 50,000 Alaskans show up for a day of salmon fishing on the Kenai Peninsula, subsistence use management does affect a lot of us, in a bad way. In most of Alaska, State and Federal subsistence hunts and fisheries take place with few conflicts. That is because there is little competition between a limited number of rural residents and very few non-local hunters and anglers willing to pay the high cost of travel off Alaska's road system.

Subsistence use conflicts occur mostly along Alaska's road connected areas and along the Alaska Marine Highway system. The reason is simple; large population of potential hunters and anglers can easily overwhelm the harvestable surplus of fish and game. Once that threatens, allocation battles ensue.

That is why State and Federal subsistence laws both have "Exit Plans", areas where subsistence use laws do not apply. For the most part areas closed to subsistence uses by Federal Nonrural Areas align with the State's Nonsubsistence Areas. The Kenai Peninsula is one place where State law says no subsistence priority and the Feds have promoted a patchwork of areas, some closed and some open, to subsistence use priorities. The difference has led to conflicts in Federal court for decades.

Federal law says rural/nonrural determinations have to be reviewed every 10 years. It's hard to report what factors the Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) uses to determine where their subsistence priority occurs, because they don't follow their own rules for establishing Federal subsistence regulations.

The FSB relied on data from the 2000 U.S. Census to form groups of communities into areas and then evaluated the area characteristics during the first review of the initial Federal rural/nonrural determinations made by the FSB in December 1990. This 10-year review was just completed this winter. For the Kenai Peninsula the results were the removal of an area north of Sterling, the North Fork Road Area east of Anchor Point, and the Fritz Creek East area along the road east of Homer from being Federal Rural Areas effective March 2012. In time the FSB may determine that the entire Kenai Peninsula road connected area is all a Federal Nonrural Area. That would put a stop to Dual (Federal and State) subsistence use management on the Kenai Peninsula.

The State's "Exit Plan" for subsistence uses does not require a 10 year review like the Federal law. Instead it's up to Alaska's Joint Boards of Fisheries and Game whether they accept proposals regarding changes to the State Nonsubsistence Areas. Currently two proposals have been accepted for consideration in October by the Joint Boards; one to remove Funtner Bay from the Juneau Nonsubsistence Area, and one to connect the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area with the Anchorage-

Matsu-Kenai Nonsubsistence Area by including parts of the Nelchina Basin in GMU 13.

The Joint Boards considers twelve factors before adopting proposals to remove or include areas to the State Nonsubsistence Areas.

Changing the subsistence hunt in the Nelchina Basin to a drawing permit hunt would eliminate 80% of the conflicts that have plagued the State Board of Game (BOG) since the first subsistence hunt was implemented by the state. The BOG has submitted proposals for public comment and deliberations for over two years in an effort to reduce the growing conflict over State subsistence hunts in the Nelchina Basin. No one likes the results the BOG came up with at its Spring 07 Meeting. (Those changes are printed on page 9) Most didn't like the old system of allocating Nelchina caribou hunting permits either. That Tier II process gave all the permits to the same 3,000 or so Alaskans who would say they have hunted or eaten Nelchina caribou for the last 40 years. A criterion for awarding points based on a hunter's individual longevity doesn't match up with the State's subsistence law.

So how do we minimize the conflicts between long time Alaskan "wildfood gatherers", including those currently classified as "rural residents" by the dysfunctional Federal Subsistence Board, and those fishers and hunters who can claim neither long-term uses or a rural ZIP CODE in the area?

Only when both the State and the Federal "Exit Plans" are adopted and the area falls back under nonsubsistence regulations.

When that happens, it will be up to the individual State Board of Fisheries or Game to adopt regulations that fairly accommodate the interests of competing hunter, trappers, and anglers while ensuring that the fish or game harvests do not exceed their sustained yield levels.

The BOG did try to come up with a "special subsistence area" proposal that would have accommodated those individuals for whom subsistence activities were their mainstay of livelihood, while limiting nonsubsistence harvest through a drawing permit system for parts of GMU 13. Had the Board's proposal been adopted, those individuals with a long history of subsistence use would have continued to have a priority in the area while new participants would have been limited by drawing permits. That would have gone a long way to reducing the majority of the conflicts that arise from new competition in highly accessible hunting areas. Athna Corporation objected, and the proposal failed.

State and Federal subsistence regulatory boards should focus their attention on road connected areas first. AOC advocates a State challenge in federal court to block the Federal subsistence fishery on the Kenai Peninsula. The liberal bag limits, and dip net fishery under State regulations can accommodate everyone's harvest needs without giving a priority to those few federally qualified Alaskans with the right ZIP CODE. The States Tier II scoring system has been before the Alaska Supreme Court awaiting a decision for over two years now regarding conflict in the Nelchina Basin subsistence hunts. AOC supports Proposal #38 before the Joint Boards of Fisheries and Game that when adopted would include parts of GMU 13, 14, and 20 in a State Nonsubsistence Area.

How can Alaskans help alleviate these subsistence use conflicts? Contact Governor Palin, your State legislators, and Alaska's Congressional delegation. Let them know the State and Federal subsistence laws are broke and do need fixing. The old saying "If it ain't broke don't fix it" does not apply here! ■



## Bear Management *continued from page 1*

predicted 20 years ago. In Unit 13, over 1,200 grizzlies have been taken by hunters during the last 10 years—more than the estimated population in the early 1990s, with barely a noticeable change in age structure of harvested bears or in estimated bear numbers. In the past, many biologists have described bears; particularly grizzlies, as a “slowly reproducing” species that must be carefully managed to prevent overharvest, and have recommended restricting allowable harvests to 4 or 5 percent of population size, preferably mostly males. Despite abundant, sound data to the contrary, this “truism” about bears appears in print regularly, both in technical scientific articles and in the popular press. Many biologists are now beginning to realize that bears are not unlike other species and sustainable harvest rates are highly variable, can often exceed 15%, and depend on the

reproduce earlier, and have more cubs. Cub survival is generally also higher in hunted populations (cub mortality is primarily caused by adult males killing cubs). Thus, bear populations “compensate” for heavy hunting with better reproduction and higher cub survival.

Results are also now in from the recent black bear removal experiment in McGrath, where about 130 black bears and 8 grizzlies were removed from a 600 mi<sup>2</sup> sows with newborn cubs were left behind. The May 2007 population estimate for black bears in the McGrath area is 72 independent bears (A 95% confidence interval would place the population between 60-90). The bear population has doubled (estimated annual growth rate of about 25%) in the 3 years since the removal



*Biologists Bob Tobey and Becky Kelleyhouse collaring bears*

abundance of bear food and immigration from surrounding areas. Hunted bear populations on the Alaska Peninsula and Unit 13 have been shown to be more productive than adjacent unhunted populations and sows in the hunted populations

ended. The good news for moose hunters is that although bears have recovered very quickly, moose calves are still surviving very well, apparently because older bears, especially males, will be the last to recover. The McGrath experiment was not the first

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## Bear Management *continued from page 4*

bear removal experiment to demonstrate that bear removal can increase moose calf survival but it has had the best follow-up and has shown that a short-term reduction in bear numbers can have longer term effects on moose calf survival.

So how can all the new information on bears (combined with what we have known for many years about wolves) help with active management programs? First, it is important to realize that it is simply not possible to manage wolves, bears, and moose over most of the sprawling extent of the boreal forest region where low density moose populations prevail. In many areas, even if predation could be reduced, poor access will prevent people from taking advantage of increased moose numbers. In much of the North people will have to be content to harvest a modest number of bull moose and very few cows. However, in some areas, where good moose habitat is concentrated, or where either bears or wolves are uncommon for natural reasons, or where access is very good, it is possible, and may be economically feasible to manage moose for high sustained yield harvests. In Alaska, Game Management Unit 20A has proven to be such an area. Moose and wolves there have been effectively managed to produce very good moose harvests for about 30 years. The area now also has some of the highest moose and wolf densities recorded anywhere in North America. One reason GMU 20A has done so well is because most moose calve in a concentrated area in which bears are not particularly effective as calf predators. Unit 20A is unusual in this regard. In most other areas, it will be necessary to reduce both wolf and bear numbers to get substantially greater moose harvests within a reasonable time.

Although Unit 20A is currently the best example of successful active management in Alaska, other areas have shown promise, particularly the Nelchina basin (GMU 13), but for political reasons management actions have not been consistently applied. In other areas (GMUs 16, 19A, and 20E) chosen by ADF&G and the Board of Game in recent years for intensive management, successfully increasing moose harvests is proving to be more difficult. The main challenge is finding effective ways to reduce bear numbers—particularly numbers of older male bears that are the most effective calf predators. Simply taking a few extra bears from the population is not a measure of success. As with wolf control, each additional bear taken does not translate into additional moose calves saved. Either the bear population needs to be reduced greatly (probably by about 75%) or the most predatory bears need to be selectively removed. To reduce bear numbers, people either need very efficient techniques or a very

large incentive. None of the liberalized bear hunting seasons and bag limits instituted by the Board of Game so far is likely to work. Some recent suggestions that should be but have not been tried include reducing grizzly bear tag fees, sterilizing female grizzlies when they are collared to estimate bear numbers, and bear trapping. It has become clear that there are too few resident bear hunters (or too little incentive for residents to hunt bears) for hunting to have an effect on grizzlies in areas like Unit 13 where access is relative good, let alone on black and grizzly bears in areas like 20E or 19 where access is poor.

Reducing black bear numbers is going to be even more difficult than reducing grizzlies. However, one technique that I think has great promise for small areas is trapping. Except for illegal snaring of problem bears around villages, fish camps, and cabins, bear trapping has not been widely practiced in Alaska and is not part of our hunting/trapping tradition. This isn't the case in Canada or Maine, where bears have been regularly trapped for centuries by small numbers of dedicated bear trappers. Black bear pelts have been regularly traded in Canadian fur markets for over three hundred years although prices have always been relatively low compared with other furbearers. Although bears were originally trapped with large, powerful, and potentially dangerous foothold traps (primarily the 4-1/2, 5, and 6 Newhouse), trappers (including biologists who trap bears for collaring studies) now use foot snares. The original foot snare design was perfected by Jack Aldrich (now a resident of Kake) who was formerly employed by timber companies to control black bears in western Washington. Newer advances in foot snares for bears have recently come from Quebec, where two inventors have developed independent designs for "bucket snares". Bucket snares are spring-loaded foot snares that are placed in the lid of a 5-gallon bucket with bait in the bottom. These designs are even more compact, effective, and selective than the original Aldrich design, and there is virtually no chance of catching non-target species. Bucket snares set off the ground can also selectively catch larger bears. A recent article in the "Trapper and Predator Caller" (vol. 31, no. 6, August 2006) by Canadian biologist Serge Lariviere describes the very effective use of bucket snares in Quebec.

In Alaska, bear trapping using bucket snares could be especially effective in small areas where moose calving is concentrated and access is relatively good (like the McGrath experimental management area) and around other villages along the Kuskokwim, Yukon, and Koyukuk rivers. Bucket

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## Bear Management *continued from page 5*

snare traps could also be effective on moose calving areas in Unit 16. Trappers would still have to work hard to catch bears, and they would still need an incentive besides being able to sell pelts. In Maine and Quebec, bear trappers advertise for people to accompany them in what amounts to guided bear trapping. Alaskan bear trappers could offer the same kind of opportunity for an even more exotic and exciting adventure.

Successful black bear trapping on relatively small, concentrated moose calving areas could result in the largest increase in calf survival for the least amount of cost to the State or private individuals. Developing the interest and expertise in bear trapping in Alaska will take several years, but based on successes already seen in Quebec, I believe the technique shows

promise. One thing is for sure. If we are really serious about active management, we need to get serious about managing bears. ■

## Anti's-bring more Ballot Box Biology

*By Rod Arno AOC Executive Director*



A Ballot Measure to prohibit the use of aircraft for predator management programs has been certified for the 2008 Alaska Primary Election.

For the third time in 12 years the Anti-predator/prey management people have us going back to the polls to defeat another attempt to block the effective practice of using aircraft to manage predator populations.

This time thanks to the efforts of the ballot measure group, Alaskans for Professional Wildlife Management we won't be "behind the power curve" on Election Day. Alaskans for Professional Wildlife Management, who spearheaded defeat of the bear baiting initiative, have again taken the lead with the backing of AOC and others. Having a number of members with past experience in running an effective grassroots campaign will be invaluable this time around.

Individuals and outdoor club representatives met this winter with Alaskans for Professional Wildlife Management to prepare a campaign that will inform Alaskan voters of the successes made in predator/prey management during the past 5 years. The documented increase in calf survival in predator/prey management areas in Alaska can in part be attributed to the use of aircraft. Along with informing the public on predator/prey management will be the expensive media campaign needed to counter the Anti's emotional pleas to leave "nature's balance" alone. ■

**To support this important effort please send your donation to:**

**Alaskans for Professional Wildlife Management**

**P.O. Box 4752**

**Palmer, AK 99645**



*Both photos courtesy of [www.isleroyalewolf.org](http://www.isleroyalewolf.org)*



## Understanding Predator/Prey Management

*By Denby Lloyd, Commissioner Alaska Department of Fish & Game*

The Division of Wildlife Conservation is gearing up to publicly describe the reasoning behind the State's predator control programs and what they are accomplishing. Two documents will form the centerpiece of the Division's education effort.

The first is a booklet designed as a biological look at predator-prey relationships and predator control. The scientific information provided will be well-established material that has stood the test of time and is unlikely to need to be changed in the immediate future. The general nature of Alaska's predator control programs, mandated by our intensive management law, will be outlined as well.

The second publication will be more of an "annual report," detailing each of our different control programs, their goals, objectives, and results. In addition to providing wolf population estimates and take, the annual report will describe corresponding results seen in each affected moose and caribou population. By its very nature, this publication will need to be updated annually to reflect the previous year's efforts.

It is a challenge to strike a balance between a presentation detailed enough to cover the necessary information and one concise enough so people will take the time to read and understand it. We intend to use maps, charts, and other graphics to illustrate the most important facts about predator management in Alaska.

Both publications will be posted on the ADF&G website as well as distributed at ADF&G offices throughout the state. Together they will provide the basis for an extensive schedule of public speaking appearances by Division staff and members of the Alaska Board of Game. In addition to traditional audiences such as fish and game advisory committees and outdoor groups, presentations

will be tailored to wider audiences such as service clubs, chambers of commerce, and the general public.

One key message is that wolves and bears are neither threatened nor endangered in Alaska and that none of the control programs will change that. It is important to emphasize that there are minimum population objectives set for every control program to ensure that enough animals remain to maintain viable wolf and bear populations in each area.

As ADF&G staff members field questions from the public, especially people from outside Alaska, that is the biggest misconception – that we somehow are trying to eradicate wolves, either in a given area or statewide. Once satisfied that this is neither our objective nor a likely outcome, many people tend to be less adamant in their opposition to predator control programs.

Another key message, of course, is that there are demonstrated and intended benefits of our predator control programs. Assuring Alaskans that these are well-designed, and that expenditures of public funds will result in improved abundance of game resources, is an important part of our effort.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game is the preeminent authority on wildlife management in the state. It is our responsibility – and a task for which we are well-suited – to help Alaskans understand their wildlife resources and how they are managed. We look forward to this project, and to the advice and assistance of the Alaska Outdoor Council. ■



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# BOARD OF GAME CHANGES TO TIER II SUBSISTENCE HUNTS IN THE NELCHINA BASIN

*By Rod Arno AOC Executive Director*

After three years of deliberations the Alaska Board of Game (BOG) has adopted major changes to subsistence Tier II hunts in the Nelchina Basin and no one is happy about it.

But then neither was anyone happy with the Tier II scoring system during the Spring 2004 BOG meeting either. Faced with 22 proposals addressing aspects of Tier II scoring and permitting the BOG chose to form a committee to look into various options rather than taking action at that time. Now, after deliberating on proposals at three different BOG meetings they finally adopted a scoring system and hunt conditions for GMU 13 that would favor Alaskan residents who's "mainstay of livelihood" was indeed subsistence uses.

State Subsistence Laws say the BOG will provide hunting and fishing priorities to residents of the state where subsistence uses are the main characteristic of the area. In subsistence areas all "other" hunters must wait until subsistence uses can be met before they can participate in a type of open or drawing hunt. When there are more subsistence hunters than game, that can be harvested annually, the BOG can give out permits to Alaskan subsistence hunters based on hunt conditions and a scoring system that more closely aligns with a traditional subsistence way of life. That is just what the Board did at this Spring 2007 meeting when they used any or all of the eight subsistence criteria available in regulation to ratchet down the number of qualified subsistence hunters in order to assure that those Alaskan's who most clearly exhibit a pattern of subsistence uses got the hunt permits.

The BOG has adopted a taxable income threshold of \$51,640 for the Tier II scoring system for GMU 13 under the premise that you can't be engaged in a subsistence way of life and still be able to devote that much time to a salaried job. Whether or not the Boards action will withstand a court challenge is yet to be seen but their intent in adopting the scoring change was clear. The board was trying to get subsistence permits into the hands of those Alaskans for whom subsistence use was their "mainstay of livelihood"; just like the state subsistence law says.

The question that remains is how many Alaskans are willing to hunt under the new conditions of salvage requirements and vehicle use restrictions [inserted with this article; Spring 2007 BOG Changes to Tier II GMU 13 Hunts] and still be able to meet the scoring minimums needed to acquire a Tier II permit? How many of the +45 years of past use Tier II permit holders would submit their application still knowing that their taxable income would zero them out on the scoring system, yet willing to get in on the random drawing of Tier II applicants?

Recently the number of applications received for the Nelchina caribou

Tier II permits has settled down to between 6,000- 7,000 Alaskans. In 1996 when the herd was opened up to Tier I that number soared to over 50,000 Alaskan applicants. Until the newly adopted changes to Tier II hunts in GMU 13 are implemented we can only guess what the number of applicants will be.

We can base that guess on past hunt records for the Nelchina caribou herd showing that from the mid-50 up until 1971 there were more caribou harvested then there were hunters. Even after the Richardson Highway to Fairbanks in the 1900's and the Glenn Highway connecting Anchorage by road in the 1940's there was still fewer then 10,000 residents and outside hunters before 1971. That changed when the herd declined in the early 70's. Since then hunters have always outnumbered the available harvest of Nelchina caribou. The chances are the Department will be able to maintain the herd at a sustainable level and allow for a maximum of 6,000 available hunt permits annually, as long as the state can manage predator/prey systems in GMU 13.

While it's yet to be seen how many Alaskans will put in for a random drawing for Tier II hunt permits under the new scoring system one thing is for sure; there will never be an open hunt in GMU 13. Each year at best only 6000 permits will be issued. The area is just too accessible to a majority of Alaskan hunters.

Another solution to the whole Tier II debacle in GMU 13 has been proposed by the Mat-Valley F&G Advisory Committee (Mat-Valley AC). They believe it's time for a change in the subsistence status for the area. The road-connected accessibility of the Nelchina Basin has allowed the characteristics of the communities in the area to have changed greatly. It has been over 25 years since the BOG first adopted a Nelchina caribou subsistence hunt and during that time has been responsible for generating over 75% of all the Tier II applications submitted. Mat-Valley AC has submitted proposal #38 to the Joint Boards of Fisheries and Game to determine that parts of GMU 13, 14, and 20 are Nonsubsistence areas.

Adoption of their proposal by the Boards would eliminate the need for the Board to pass any Tier II regulations or conditions for the hunt for Nelchina caribou. The Board could adopt a permit drawing hunt with a rotating system to give everyone a change to hunt Nelchina caribou once every few years.

Can the BOG adopt hunting permit regulations for GMU 13 that will make every one happy? I'm sure not but they can take actions, defensible by state law, that will eliminate a lot of the bickering. We'll see how it plays out under the new regulations this coming season and report back to AOC members as the process unfolds. ■



## **Board of Game Spring 2007 Meeting Tier II Unit 13 changes F Y I**

### **CARIBOU**

- Tier II hunters may not use off-road vehicles weighing more than 1,500 pounds or a plane to transport hunters, their equipment or game.
- If you obtain a Tier II permit, you may not hunt caribou anywhere else in Alaska the same regulatory year.
- You must leave the meat on the bone and salvage the head, hide, liver, heart and kidneys.
- A permittee may transfer a Tier II permit to a second-degree kindred family member, in addition to the existing proxy hunting regulations.

### **MOOSE**

- Tier II hunters (August) may not use off-road vehicles weighing more than 1,500 pounds or a plane to transport hunters, their equipment or game.
- If you obtain a Tier II permit, you may not hunt moose anywhere else in Alaska the same regulatory year.
- All hunters must leave meat on the bone and salvage the heart and liver.
- A permittee may transfer a Tier II permit to a second-degree kindred family member, in addition to the existing proxy hunting regulations.

### **Tier II scoring changes**

#### **NEW QUESTIONS:**

The taxable income of all members of a household will be considered. A family of four or fewer members will receive zero points on this question if the total taxable income of all household members exceeds \$51,640. The cutoff will be adjusted upward for larger households.

If household income exceeds the cutoff, the total score for the application will be zero. If there are Tier II permits remaining, but a pool of applicants with the same score is too large to award all permits, a random drawing is done to award the remaining permits. In other words, if there is a large pool of people with a score of zero, there will be a random drawing if there permits remaining.

Another question will ask how many days the applicant spends hunting and fishing (non-commercially) in Unit 13. Maximum points will be awarded to applicants who spend 70 days or more hunting and fishing in Unit 13.

# NRA Successes in Alaska

## Positive Environment Should Continue Under Governor Sarah Palin

*By Brian Judy, NRA-ILA Alaska State Liaison*

Any person who can legally possess and carry a handgun in plain view for self-protection should be able to carry it concealed...and the carrying of a concealed handgun for self-protection should be allowed in any place where a handgun can be legally carried in plain view. Although these two concepts are just plain common-sense to most logical-thinking individuals, common sense and logic often get thrown out the window when it comes to considering firearm-related legislation. Such was the case for eight years while Tony Knowles was Governor of Alaska.

Governor Knowles was quite antagonistic when it came to issues of concern to National Rifle Association members, including streamlining the concealed weapon permit process and bringing Alaska's concealed weapon permit laws in line with the Alaska law pertaining to the carrying of open firearms. Knowles twice vetoed NRA-sponsored concealed weapon permit reform legislation that would have made significant improvements to the Alaska law and his Administration established a policy to destroy surplus firearms rather than making them available to law-abiding citizens (and generating revenue to the state). The Governor and his bureaucrats were also absolutely uncooperative when it came to concealed weapon permit reciprocity with other states and the recognition of other states' permits.

Governor Knowles' disdain for NRA-supported issues was further evidenced by his veto of an NRA bill to protect existing shooting ranges from closure (he later signed a slightly modified bill when it was apparent NRA had the votes to override his veto) and another that would have provided protection from liability for state law enforcement officials who must sign off on the federal paperwork required of law-abiding individuals who desire to own automatic firearms.

The situation changed dramatically when Frank Murkowski was elected Governor in 2002! With the Murkowski Administration came a wholesale change of leadership within the state bureaucracy and a changing attitude toward law-abiding firearm owners and NRA concerns. Governor Murkowski was a champion of the rights of law-abiding firearm owners and amassed a perfect 100% record of support for NRA-sponsored legislation.

During the Murkowski Administration, NRA was successful in passing many significant pieces of legislation. In 2006, he signed three NRA-supported bills that will prevent government officials from restricting firearms during a disaster emergency (House Bill 400), clarify the right of law-abiding individuals to



## BANQUET SCHEDULE

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**[www.nraalaska.com](http://www.nraalaska.com)**

defend themselves and their family (Senate Bill 200) and open up government sales of surplus firearms to the public (Senate Bill 274).

In 2005, Governor Murkowski signed NRA-sponsored House Bill 184, a major piece of legislation that contained two important provisions. First, the bill gives the state sole authority to regulate firearms and, thus, preempts any local laws that are more restrictive than state law. All existing ordinances that went beyond Alaska state law became null and void with the adoption of HB 184. The second provision of the bill clarified the right of law-abiding individuals to possess a firearm in their vehicle for self-protection. Specifically, the bill prohibits any person or government entity from imposing, by law or rule, any restriction on the possession or storage of firearms in another person's vehicle.

Frank Murkowski's most significant pro-gun action, however, came in his first year as Governor when he made history by signing into law NRA-sponsored House Bill 102, landmark "Vermont Carry" legislation. Embodying the concept described in the opening paragraph of this article, HB 102 went even further by repealing the requirement that law-abiding citizens obtain governmental permission and a permit in order to carry a handgun concealed for self-protection. Alaska became the first and, still to this date, only state to repeal the prohibition on carrying a concealed handgun without a permit (Vermont never had a prohibition on concealed carry and, thus, no permit system). The new "Alaska Carry" law maintained the permit system so those who desire a permit for carry in other states can still obtain one. Governor Murkowski signed one other NRA-sponsored bill in 2003, House Bill 177, which clarified Alaska's concealed handgun permit recognition and reciprocity statute to maximize the number of states that will recognize Alaska's permit.

Now Frank Murkowski's term is over and Governor Sarah Palin has taken the helm as Governor of Alaska. She is an NRA member and has conveyed strong support for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms. All indications are that the Sarah Palin Administration will be as supportive of NRA issues as was the previous Governor. The National Rifle Association will look to establish a positive working relationship with the new Governor and will continue to search for ways to modify Alaska's statutes to improve conditions for its members and for all law-abiding firearm owners. ■



# Hunter Heritage Foundation News

By Eddie Grasser, President

The Hunter Heritage Foundation of Alaska has had a very busy year so far with the completion of several major initiatives. We have already had our Winter Becoming an Outdoors-Woman Program at Victory Bible Camp, as well as having conducted a BOW for the spouses of deployed troops on Fort Richardson Army Base in Anchorage (see photos on this and the following page).

Several programs for children have already been completed. They are the Alaska Conservation Camp, the Youth Hunter Education Challenge, the NRA Shooting Sports Camp at Birchwood, and the Spring Youth Leagues at Rabbit Creek and Grouse Ridge.

Of course all of this takes a great deal of funding and we would like to thank all those countless donors out there who support our efforts. I would also like to thank those organizations who have gone beyond the realm of normal expectations and have contributed significantly to our efforts. They are the following companies and groups:

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2007 Winter BOW Program at Victory Bible Camp



2007 Winter BOW Dutch oven cooking



Of course a large portion of the above sponsors contribute through the annual Midnight Sun Charity Shoot that U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski is associated with. Her commitment to the shooting sports and conservation education are significant for a sitting public figure. In fact having been involved with the shooting sports and conservation since the seventies, I can't think of another public figure that has done so much for our heritage.

Last of all, I would like to personally thank Representatives John Harris, Bill Stoltze, Ralph Samuels and Carl Gatto for personally donating to our efforts. Representative Stoltze also gets kudos for

*continued on page 12*



## Hunter Heritage Foundation News continued from page 12

pitching in each year as a regular contributor and participant in Youth Day at Birchwood.

Senator Murkowski and the Shootout Committee are currently busy putting together this year's Midnight Sun Charity Shoot and we expect them to provide another huge contribution to our efforts. The event this year is being held on August 9 & 10. The shooting portion will be at Grouse Ridge in Wasilla, and the banquet will be at the Captain Cook in Anchorage. Please join me and **Honorary Hosts Senator Lisa Murkowski, Rick Schroeder, Senator Lyda Green, Representative John Harris, Mayor Curt Menard and Mayor Diane Keller** for a great time and another terrific event for preserving Alaska's outdoor traditions. For more information, contact Eddie Grasser at (907) 745-6166 or email him at [mtnman@mtaonline.net](mailto:mtnman@mtaonline.net). ■



*More winter fun at the 2007 BOW Program.*







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- **AOC Spring Sports Show rifle winner**—Teri Hughes, from Mat-Su Valley.
- **AOC Spring Sports Show Winter King salmon charter for two winners**—Rosanne Bailey, from the Interior and Dave Cruz, from the Mat-Su Valley.
- **AOC extends our thanks to three new Alaska Board of Fisheries members;** Howard Delo, Vince Webster, and Larry Edfelt (second time around) for their willingness to serve on this important regulatory board.

## Pike's Landing Celebration

Jay Ramras, Pike's Landing owner, is celebrating the long tradition of public river access at the historic landing. He has overhauled the boat/snowmachine/dog team/foot access to the river with a new launch driveway and apron and a unique sign advertising Pike's Landing to the world.

Pike's Landing is probably the only privately owned river access in the Interior, and maybe the State, that is open to the public, free, year around, and Mr. Ramras says he's going to keep it that way.

On June 30, 2007, 1 - 4 PM, Mr. Ramras (who's also a State Representative) is putting on a gala public celebration in cooperation with the Alaska Outdoor Council to dedicate the newly rebuilt river Landing. There will be food and fun for all.

Fishers, hunters, trappers, and other outdoor folks are invited to come join in the fun, and celebrate this unique place that serves the Interior so well. ■



# Alaska Trust Fund

Dear Fellow Alaskans,

The Alaska Trust Fund or “Trust” was established in 1999 in response to the members citing a need for permanent and long-term funding of the Alaska Outdoor Council operations. Similar to other trust funds, the principal or “trust” is protected from invasion in perpetuity. Every dollar you invest in the Trust stays there- and only the interest it generates can be used for operations.

The Alaska Trust Fund is the only trust fund in the nation dedicated entirely to protecting Alaska’s hunting, fishing, trapping, firearms ownership, and access to public lands and waters. Every dollar donated to the Trust stays right here at home- protecting the outdoor heritage we’ve grown to love and enjoy.

There are many different ways to donate: cash, stocks, estate gifts, annuities, land, & more. Donors are also awarded with a level of distinction commensurate with their gift. For example, if you donate \$10,000 or more, you can name your own Endowment, i.e. the John Smith Outdoor Endowment. Be sure to contact your attorney and/or accountant about gifting options.

The board of the Alaska Trust Fund has set a target of reaching their stated goal of \$1 million by the year 2020. Contact the Alaska Outdoor Council (AOC) office to make donations to the Trust.



Share the vision of Bob Rausch, Duane Goodrich, Lyle Carlson, and other Alaskans by including a bequest to the Alaska Trust Fund in your will.

A few simple words in your will can establish a truly Alaskan Heritage designed to ensure conservation of our game resources for generations to come.

Make your bequest by giving the following language to your attorney:

“To the Alaska Trust Fund I give\_\_\_\_\_ % of my residuary estate.”

Or you can name a fixed amount. Contributions to the Trust are tax deductible.

Please contact the Alaska Trust Fund for more information at:

Alaska Trust Fund  
PO Box 73902 • Fairbanks, AK 99707



## End of an Era- TVSA Clubhouse Burns

*By Grant Lewis, President of TVSA*

By now many of you may have learned that the Tanana Valley Sportsmen's Association Clubhouse/Firing Range (TVSA) was destroyed by fire on 3/31/07. The club, founded in 1937 in Fairbanks, had been operating this facility for over 50 years, providing a place for youth to learn firearm safety. Most recently, the range had been home to a very active 4-H club, a middle school and four high schools' rifle teams and clubs. The NCAA National Rifle Champions, the University of Alaska Fairbanks Nanooks, boasts of members who began their training at the TVSA facility.

The TVSA facility was located along the banks of the Chena River, just west of the city limits. The building itself was an old log structure, often rented out to the public for various functions; however, the downstairs firing range had recently been improved with a new air ventilation system and boiler. The exact cause of the fire is unknown and may likely never be known since the roof collapsed and the entire structure burned. As soon as fire officials gave approval, volunteers at the site brought all the firearms and shooting gear up from the flooded basement range. The guns were taken to the University of Alaska firing range where dozens of volunteers and UAF Rifle Team members spent the entire day cleaning and oiling the firearms. Due to their efforts, most all of the firearms were salvaged.

It is crucial to get a new facility constructed prior to next fall's school opening in order to resume the youth activities. TVSA is undertaking fundraising and seeking financial assistance in its attempt at a very aggressive construction project. ■



*End of an Era-TVSA Clubhouse burns on March 31, 2007*

*Please send your contributions to:*

**TVSA**  
**P.O. Box 70669**  
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The logo for Boondock Sporting Goods is presented within a rectangular frame. The frame's border is composed of a repeating pattern of white stars on a black background. The word "BOONDOCK" is prominently displayed at the top in a large, bold, red font with a thick black outline and a slight 3D effect. Below this, the words "SPORTING GOODS" are written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Underneath that, the phrase "Alaska's Outdoor Headquarters" appears in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. The main categories of products are listed in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font, arranged in two columns and separated by red stars: "FISHING" and "TACKLE" on the first line, "OUTDOOR" and "CLOTHING" on the second, "HIKING" and "CAMPING" on the third, and "FIREARMS" and "OPTICS" on the fourth. At the bottom of the logo, the address "Eagle River Loop Road" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font, followed by "Eagle River Alaska" in a red, cursive script font. The entire logo is set against a white background.

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# AOC News Updates

*By Executive Director, Rod Arno*

## Whatever happens to past public processes that affect your ability to hunt, trap, fish, and access public lands?

By looking back (Summer 2006 AOC News Updates) at the “calls for public comment” and heads up on pending litigation you can see some conflicts just keep going on, demanding more of our attention:

- DNR has developed a **Ten-Year (2007-2017) Strategic Plan for the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation**. The strategies include expanding opportunities to provide a diversity of recreation opportunities to experience and explore our natural and cultural environments and provide sustainable outdoor recreation settings in park units, which also includes State Recreation Areas and State Historic Parks and Sites. That can mean a lot of different things to different people when it comes to outdoor recreation opportunities. Whether or not access is being expanded to some people might mean construction of projects like; roads, boat launches, hardening ATV trails, bridge crossings and the like. Other people may consider these types of projects not to be the diversity of recreation opportunities they want to see provided. What projects will get done depends in part on who the members of the **State Parks Citizen Advisory Boards** and a number of **Friends of State Parks** groups are. Friends of State Parks are non-profit organization dedicated to the enhancement of recreational resources. You can help form one for the Park unit of your choice if there isn't one already. Or you could download an application from the DNR website for appointment to one of the current Advisory Boards and become an advocate for your preferred recreation.
- The National Parks Conservation Association settled their lawsuit with the NPS over recreational ORV use along the Nabesna Road corridor. The result was until an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) study is done, ATVs will be banned from three of the nine trails cited in the lawsuit unless the ground is frozen at least six inches deep. Local subsistence hunters will be allowed to drive ATVs without restrictions on all 9 trails. Also the fed's will pay the Trustees for Alaska \$17,937.69 for lawyer fees. The NPS failed to follow their own regulations and a 25 year old study on ATV trails along the Nabesna Road corridor. The result of the settlement is a loss of access for non-local trail users for the next 4 years. Only through the efforts of Birch, Horton, Bittner & Cherot, P.C. lawyers Bill Horn and Jim Lister were outdoor access groups, including AOC, able to prevent a complete ban on ATV use in Wrangell-St. Elias N.P. &P. AOC is working to see if those trails closed to recreational ATV use may be rerouted or hardened before the 4 year ban runs out in 2010.
- The State's challenge of the Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) action over C&T determinations for Moose in GMU 12 is still waiting for a judgment in U.S. District Court.
- The Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) has refused the State's request to rescind the C&T determination for fish to three communities on the Kenai Peninsula. This summer residents living along the Sterling Highway from Falls Creek Road, south of Claim Gulch, through Ninilchik to the radio tower south of Happy Valley will have special bag limits, a special dipnet fishery, and special rod-reel methods for salmon fishing. Residents of Hope and Cooper Landing will have a special subsistence fishery for all fish. It's now up to the State to challenge the FSB action in federal court or have Alaska's congressional delegation intervene to stop the divisive subsistence fishery on the Kenai Peninsula.
- The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) is still bent on limiting (now it is less then 20% of the total commercial harvest) the amount of halibut that can be taken on a sportfish license if you hire a charter. The feds control the allocation of halibut in Alaska waters because of the international treaty with Canada. It is up



to the NPFMC to consider issues of domestic allocations. They are required to allocate halibut in a fair and equitable manner among all halibut fishermen; that's the law. So far public comments by sportfish people have had no effect at raising the Halibut Guideline Harvest Level (GHL) in order to meet present demands. It was only through Bill Horns efforts on behalf of the Alaska Sportfishing Alliance (ASFA [www.AlaskaSportFishingAlliance.org](http://www.AlaskaSportFishingAlliance.org)) that the one halibut limit was not enforced in SE Alaska this season. The NPFMC will meet this fall to consider a longterm solution to halibut allocations for the charter fleet. Also the ASFA is considering filing a legal petition to order the federal courts to direct the NPFMC to develop a **Fisheries Management Plan (FMP)** for halibut in Alaska waters. Either way strong public support will be needed this fall to increase the sport caught allocation for the charter fleet.

The real success story from the AOC Summer 2006 newsletter is the **Economic Significance of Sportfishing in Alaska -Project 2007** that Sportfish Director Kelly Hepler reported on. AOC was honored by the Sport Fish Division with the **Director's Public Stewardship Award** for working with the Division staff to acquire the necessary funding for this project during the 2006 legislative session.

- Once the project is completed, by December 2008, a baseline for regularly gathering data related to the economic significance of sportfishing in Alaska will have been constructed. The reason this 14 year old data needs updated is that it is a factor fishery managers and regulatory decision makers often require when allocating fishery resources among personal use (dipnetting), sport, guided sport, and commercial fisheries. In fully allocated fisheries like Cook Inlet the importance of the accuracy of this data becomes greatly increased when Fisheries Management Plans are being deliberated on. You can follow and participate in this project by logging on to the ADF&G Sport Fish Division website. [www.adfg.state.ak.us](http://www.adfg.state.ak.us) ■

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Alaska 2nd Amendment Coalition	Fairbanks	Interior Alaska Gun Dog Association	Fairbanks
Alaska ATV Club	Anchorage	Interior Alaska Trail Riders Association	Fairbanks
Alaska Backcountry Adventure Tours	Palmer	Juneau Alaska Billfish Association	Juneau
Alaska Boating Association	Anchorage	Juneau Rifle and Pistol Club	Juneau
Alaska Charter Association	Homer	Matanuska Valley Sportsmen, Inc.	Palmer
Alaska Frontier Trappers Association	Palmer	Mat-Su Motor Mushers	Wasilla
Alaska Gun Collectors Association	Anchorage	McKinley Mountainmen Muzzle Loading Rifle Club	Eagle River
Alaska Outdoor Access Alliance	Palmer	Personal Watercraft Club of Alaska	Anchorage
Alaska Rifle Club	Anchorage	Ruffed Grouse Society, Interior Alaska Chapter	Fairbanks
Alaska State Snowmobile Association	Anchorage	Ruffed Grouse Society/SC AK Chapter	Palmer
Alaska Waterfowl Association	Anchorage	Safari Club International, Kenai Chapter	Soldotna
Alaskan Bowhunters Association, Inc.	Wasilla	Safari Club International/AK Chapter	Eagle River
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Cook Inlet Sportfishing Caucus	Willow	Tanana Valley Rifle & Pistol Club	Fairbanks
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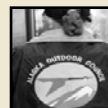
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