



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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Winter 2008

Schedule of upcoming events:

January 26, 5:00pm Eagle River
AOAA Annual Meeting Potluck
Eagle River Lions Club

January 30, 5:00pm Wasilla, Soldotna
BOF Public Meetings on Upper Cook Inlet
Finfish Proposals

- 1) Lake Lucille Best Western
- 2) Soldotna Sports Center

February 7-10 Anchorage
AOC Annual Meeting
Millennium Hotel Anchorage

February 21 Juneau
NRA-AOC Joint Legislative
Reception

February 22 Juneau
AOC Banquet & Fundraiser

April 3-8, Anchorage
Great Alaska Sportsman Show
Sullivan Arena

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Commercial fishing boats working the icy waters of Prince William Sound. Photo courtesy of Shutterstock.com

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Who Has the Legal Right to Fish? And How Much Do They Get?

By Rod Arno AOC Executive Director

Fishing rights in Alaska is an age - old issue that has shaped Alaskan politics for the last century. The answer to what the legal rights in fish allocation are still isn't clear. In February the question will take center stage once again in Anchorage as the Board of Fisheries (Board) tackles proposals for Upper Cook Inlet dealing with salmon conservation and allocation.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) estimated the 2007 statewide salmon harvest of 212 million, which made it the 4th largest catch ever. It was valued at \$374 million. There is no formal estimate for what the values of subsistence, personal use, and sport caught fish were for 2007. The latest estimated value of just "sport fishing" reported in the Economics of Sport Fishing in Alaska, prepared for ADF&G by the Institute of Social and Research (ISER) gave a total economic value of \$736 million for 1993.

The point is when the Board adopts regulations, to achieve fisheries utilization consistent with the maximum possible benefit to Alaskans, billions of dollars are at stake. Current statutes (AS 16.05-.010) require that the Board takes not only biological but socio-economic factors into account when deliberating on all proposals regulating who gets to fish and how much of the total allowable harvest is allocated to the various kinds of fishing..

Alaska's Constitution, (Article VIII, Natural Resources) gives clear instructions regarding the management of fish. The State manages and allocates fisheries to meet the biological, economic, and social objectives outlined in the Constitution and in statute. Should the Board deviate from the constitutional intent regarding fisheries management the State Courts are quick to point out their transgressions. Court cases

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President's Message

By Dick Bishop, AOC President



Time Flies When You're Having Fun

I guess I've had a ball because suddenly it's nearly the New Year. What was I doing a year ago? Oh, yes—Governor Palin's Fish & Game Transition Team. I was honored to serve on that team as co-chair along with Ken Johns. The 21 member team came from all over the state and the majority of resource user interests. The collective knowledge was impressive.

The Team's charge was to identify the most important fish and game management issues and recommend actions to make things better. Our working timeframe was short; the list was long and the people were scattered and busy. But we got done and reported to Governor Palin on Dec. 19, 2006. The Governor had a long day listening to Teams from every state department.

Our Team agreed that 8 out of 29 identified issues were of mutual interest and concern across the spectrum of users. Even 8 are too many to cover here so I'll pick and choose among those and others that were, and are, of most concern to AOC.

Funding level for ADF&G: The team was concerned that funding was inadequate for the last 10 years to maintain the high quality of science-based professional management needed. Subsequently the Legislature did provide funding for key predator-prey management programs and for important salmon fisheries research in northern Cook Inlet, among many other needed programs, and the Governor approved the funding.

Board of Fisheries and Game member conflict of interest: Commercial fisheries Team members believed the conflict of interest prohibition on Fisheries Board members was too strict and excluded some of the most knowledgeable people from serving on the Board. While all team members agreed that it was an important issue, some felt some restrictions were appropriate. The Game Board did not seem to have a similar problem. The Legislature is taking up the issue in HB15 which would somewhat relax the restrictions on Board of Fisheries participation. HB15 is currently in House Rules Committee and will probably be considered this coming session. AOC has generally favored minimizing potential conflict of interest situations on the Boards.

Dual Management with Federal Subsistence Board: State and Federal laws relating to management and allocation of resources differ considerably. Where and how each applies has been a source of confusion and conflict for years. The Federal Subsistence Board has contributed substantially to the problems affecting sound management and rational allocations by playing fast and loose with its responsibilities and authorities. This has negatively affected both rural and urban resource users as well as state management of fish and game. "Part B" of the issue suggested looking into ways to replace "dual management" with a State managed program. The underlying cause of this dilemma is Title VIII of ANILCA which not only unfairly discriminates but is poor conservation law.

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Reinstatement of Fish & Wildlife Protection as a Division: AOC objected to the elimination of the Protection Division and the resulting loss of fish and game enforcement effort. The Boards of Fisheries and Game heard that complaint all over the state. Their study of the issue confirmed the problem. AOC and others had lobbied for return of effective fish and game enforcement all through the political campaigns. The Governor promised if elected, to fix it, and she did, almost before the "ink was dry" on the Transition Team Report.

Return of Habitat Permitting Functions to ADF&G: The Transition Team unanimously supported this recommendation. AOC had opposed the transfer of Habitat Division function and related measures from ADF&G to Department of Natural Resources (DNR) by the Murkowski Administration. The Palin Administration is examining the "pros and cons" of how the system is currently working. AOC is waiting to see the analysis which should be out soon. AOC's main concern remains the appropriate maintenance of Alaska's high quality fish and game habitat.

Salary Studies / Retention (of Professional Staff): This is the "brain-drain" issue. ADF&G's

continued on page 3

Which Side Are You On?

By Rod Arno AOC Executive Director



Thanks to the ongoing efforts of the Defenders of Wildlife and their friends Alaskan voters next summer will have to again choose whether using aerial shooting to manage predator and prey numbers is an acceptable practice. “Ballot Box Biology” is on the table again. Recent statewide polls suggest that most Alaskan voters have already chosen which side of the debate they favor. Less than five percent of those polled had no opinion regarding aerial predator management.

So what are people making their decision on when they choose to vote on an initiative to ban the practice of aerial shooting to reduce predation? Either they are Alaskans who actually understand the effectiveness of aerial predator reduction, or they believe what critics of aerial predator control are telling them about the practice.

In an attempt to sway voter opinion anti-game management advocacy groups continually cry “aerial predator reduction is unethical, unsportsman like, and not fair chase hunting” in all their media blitzes. Pro-game management organizations maintain that aerial predator reduction in many cases is by far the most effective tool for increasing the survival rates of depressed populations of moose, caribou, and Dall sheep in Alaska. It doesn’t have anything to do with sport hunting, “fair chase” or hunters’ ethics. Those are not valid criteria by which to judge management of predator/prey systems.

Most environmental organizations question the practice of managing wildlife for human consumptive use. Instead they say “let nature balance itself”. They contend that it is just fine if all wildlife populations remain at low levels indefinitely. Pro-consumptive use advocates say “wildlife is a renewable resource” that should be managed for human use on a sustained yield basis.

ability to do the best job for resource management is compromised because State pay is not competitive – especially with Federal pay. The whole Team recognized this problem which AOC has lobbied on for some time. In August '07 Governor Palin appointed a commission to look into ways to address the “brain drain” problem.

Among the remaining 22 Transition Team issues AOC has weighed in on several. One is enacting the Board of Fisheries Sustainable Salmon Management Policy as statute. So far the bill, HB189, is stuck in the House Special Fisheries Committee where commercial fishing interests predominate. Another issue is adequate sport fishing representation on the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council. The Governor’s recent appointment to a vacancy was not a clear gain for more non-commercial representation.

The Transition Team took a strong stand favoring effective predator management, an issue AOC has supported. The Legislature in 2007 adequately funded predator management programs and a predator management education program in recognition that most of the public is either uninformed or is being misinformed by management opponents. Governor Palin has publicly expressed strong support for predator management where needed and sharp criticism of a Congressional proposal to eliminate aerial shooting of wolves as a predator management tool.

So how do Alaskan voters choose which side of the “wildlife management” debate to be on? Advocates on both sides know perfectly well that banning the most effective method for reducing predation renders “big game management” just so many words.

Alaska has been the proving ground for what noted conservation speaker Shane Mahoney calls the “North American Model for Wildlife Conservation” – which has worked for over 100 years. This approach to conserving wildlife and their habitats is dependent on providing continued hunting opportunities. These opportunities have been provided under state laws which provide for game management including effective predator/prey management. History has shown that this conservation model works; neither side in this debate can deny that fact.

To support “ballot box biology” undermines what Mahoney explained has worked so well for North American conservation.

Predator/prey management allows those Alaskans who choose to hunt to continue their practice of being active participants in wildlife conservation -- without diminishing the health of the wildlife resources. It is unfortunate that anti-hunting and anti-management advocacy groups continue to waste everyone’s time and money battling over “which side are we on” in the voter initiative process when we should all share the same goal of wildlife conservation.

Please vote to defeat the latest proposed ban, Ballot Measure 8, on aerial predator management during next year’s Primary election. Instead of promoting further divisive initiatives let’s work together to sustain robust wildlife populations and the habitats upon which they depend. ■

Overall, the AOC issues addressed by the ADF&G Transition Team are faring well, especially considering the high-profile oil and gas issues which preoccupied the Administration and Legislature. However, the chronic difficulties in fish and game management and allocation associated with the Federal Subsistence Board and its programs continue -- and need continued aggressive attention. In addition, the State is being falsely accused of being hostile to subsistence interests by some proponents of the federal rural subsistence priority.

In spite of all this “fun”, we did get out and do our customary and traditional moose and duck hunting. We were lucky enough to find a few ducks, grouse, and a nice moose to share with family and friends. With our fish and garden harvest the freezer is quite full. And there’s plenty of firewood. We give thanks. ■



The Endangered Species Act

By Doug Vincent-Lang

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) was first passed by Congress in 1973. Its purpose is “to provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered and threatened species may be preserved and to provide a program for the conservation of such endangered



and threatened species”. To date, the Act has been used sparingly in Alaska. This is largely the result of Alaska’s successful management of its native species and attendant ecosystems under our constitutional sustained yield mandate.

To date only 15 species that are present in Alaska have been listed under the ESA. Species currently listed as endangered are the Short-tailed albatross, Eskimo curlew,

Aleutian shield fern, Steller’s sea lion (western stock), Bowhead whale, Fin whale, Humpback whale, North Pacific right whale, Blue whale, Sei whale, and the Leatherback turtle. Species currently listed as threatened include the Spectacled eider, Steller’s eider (Alaska breeding population), Northern sea otter (southwest Alaska Distinct Population Segment, DPS), and Steller sea-lion (eastern population).

In recent years, however, more species have been proposed for listing under the ESA. For example, petitions have been filed within the last 2 years to list several species as either threatened or endangered under the ESA including the Polar bear, Black-footed albatross, Yellow-billed loon, Cook Inlet beluga whale, Lynn Canal herring, and the North Pacific right whale (as a separate DPS). In addition, the Kittletz’s murrelet is under ongoing consideration.

The ESA mandates a specific process. The process begins with a petition for consideration of listing. This can be done by any individual or organization. Once a petition is received, the responsible federal agency makes a determination if the petition presents substantial scientific and commercial information indicating that the petitioned action may be warranted. If the agency determines there is not sufficient evidence, the petition is denied. If, however, the agency determines there is sufficient evidence, then the agency notices the public that a status review of the species will be initiated. Once the status review is completed, the federal agency makes a decision to list the species as either threatened or endangered.

Once a decision to list is made, the federal agency then makes a decision to designate critical habitat for the species. This is only done after an economic review of likely impacts is conducted. Finally, recovery plans are prepared with the goal of delisting.

Each of these steps allow for public comment and input. As the primary trustee over Alaska’s fish and wildlife resources the ADF&G is a key player in the process. We provide needed input into the

development of the status reviews. We also provide informed opinions regarding whether or a listing decision is warranted.

The Department is also a key player in defining “critical habitat” which is defined under the ESA as areas essential for the “conservation” of the species in question. “Conservation” is defined as using all means necessary to bring a species to the point it no longer needs the protection of the Act. Critical habitat must be designated for listed species on the basis of the best scientific data available and after taking into consideration the economic impact, and any other relevant impact, of designating a particular area as critical habitat. The responsible federal agency may exclude an area from designation if the agency determines that the benefits of such exclusion outweigh the benefits of specifying an area as part of critical habitat, unless it is determined, based on the best scientific and commercial data available, that the failure to designate the area will result in the extinction of the species concerned. Actions of the Secretary in designating critical habitat are judicially reviewable.

The Department is also a critical player in the development and implementation of recovery plans for listed species. Section 4(f) of the ESA requires that recovery plans be developed for listed species unless the agency finds that such a plan will not promote conservation of the species. Recovery plans delineate reasonable actions which are believed to be required to recover and/or protect a listed species. They serve as a guide that delineates and schedules those actions believed necessary to restore the listed species as a viable, self-sustaining element of their ecosystem.

Listing of a species along with the designation of critical habitat and establishment of recovery plans triggers various regulatory actions. For example, designation of critical habitat requires “consultation” on federal actions (Section 7 consultation). The designation process also provides necessary information for Section 10 permits and habitat conservation plans. The designation process also provides information influencing land acquisition decisions. Finally, the critical habitat designation process provides guidance for non-federal landowners.

At the request of the governor, the legislature approved funds for the formation of an ESA team within the Department of Fish and Game. This team helps the state navigate the ESA process and coordinates state comments within the ESA process. These funds have allowed the state to provide input on the proposed listing of Cook Inlet beluga whales, polar bears, and Lynn Canal herring. The group is also working on comments for the black-footed albatross, Yellow-billed loon, and North Pacific Right whales.

For further information, please contact Doug Vincent-Lang, Special Projects Coordinator ADF&G, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99518 • (907) 267-2339 • douglas.vincent-lang@alaska.gov ■

Who Has the Legal Right to Fish? *continued from page 1*

regarding fishery regulations are common.

The reason for a clear constitutional intent regarding management of Alaska's fisheries arose from the salmon fisheries collapse caused by over fishing during territorial days. Alaska's commercial salmon fisheries until statehood had been controlled by absentee packing interests under the federal management regime. The Board of Fish and Game was created at statehood to regulate fish and game uses consistent with the Constitution.

By 1975 it became obvious that one board deliberating on both fish and game issues couldn't handle the work load. The board was split into two, allowing the newly created Board of Fisheries to deal with fish conservation and allocation regulations. Around the same time the Alaska Fish & Game Advisory Committees were activated to try and increase public participation and give local Alaskans a

greater say in who got to fish, and how much each user group could harvest.

Even with the statutory attempts of the 70's and 80's to emphasize that the Board pay close attention to cultural and socio-economic implications of their decisions on subsistence, personal use and sport uses, the commercial fisheries interests still remained dominant. The December 1986 collapse of the Board of Fisheries caused another round of scrutiny regarding whether the current Board structure could adequately adopt regulations to assure sustained yield management of fish stocks and make balanced allocation decisions among the various beneficial uses of Alaska's fishery resources.

Upper Cook Inlet Finfish proposals up for deliberation by the Board at their February 1-12, 2008 meeting in Anchorage have the potential of being another pivotal point in the history of Alaskan fisheries management. The board has an

Upper Cook Inlet Salmon Management Plan (5 AAC 21.363) that has been on the books for over twenty-five years. It states that after the statutory priority for subsistence has been satisfied "other beneficial uses, to the extent they are consistent with the public interest and overall benefit of the people of Alaska will be allowed in order to maximize the benefits of these resources." The board's ability to determine what the public interest for salmon in Upper Cook Inlet is and how that will benefit the people of Alaska will have a lot to do with who gets the fish. The Board's justification for actions it may take to redistribute current Upper Cook Inlet salmon allocations among personal use, sport, guided sport, and commercial fisheries will be closely scrutinized to determine whether the Board follows statutory direction (AS 16.05.251(e)), regarding changing socio-economic characteristics of Alaskans living in the Cook Inlet drainage.

Mandatory reports of the commercial

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Competing fisher"men" in Katmai National Park.

Photo courtesy of Shutterstock.com

D.C. v Heller & the 2nd Amendment

The Alaska Outdoor Council and its sister corporation the Alaska Fish and Wildlife Conservation Fund (AFWCF) are participating via an amicus brief in the US Supreme Court review of the D.C. v Heller case involving 2nd Amendment individual gun rights. In addition, the Sitka Sportsmen's Association, Territorial Sportsmen Inc, Juneau Gun Club, and Juneau Rifle and Pistol Club anticipate participating.

Dick Heller's challenge of certain District of Columbia's restrictive gun laws was upheld by a lower federal court. D.C. chose to take the case to the Supreme Court. This is the first serious Supreme Court review of 2nd Amendment interpretation in about 70 years.

Jack McGee, a Juneau lawyer of long experience in state and private practice, an advocate of the individual right to keep and bear arms, and an active shooter, offered to prepare the amicus brief supporting Heller's 2nd amendment rights arguments without charge, if supporters would pay the printing costs. The AFWCF Board agreed to pay the costs, estimated at \$1000. On hearing of the effort, the clubs mentioned above acted to join also.

Other clubs and individuals may participate by making a tax deductible donation to the Alaska Fish and Wildlife Conservation Fund, P.O. Box 73902, Fairbanks, AK 99707 ■

Wounded Warrior Fishing Trip

By Bruce Knowles

A group of guide boats departed Bo's Fish Camp on the Kenai River early on the 29th of August this year for a day's silver salmon fishing. Fishing had been good and we were eager to get started but many of the guides were also concerned about the comfort of their 40-plus passengers. These fishermen required special handling because the majority of them were Wounded Warriors (both men and women) from the Medical unit at Fort Richardson. They were accompanied by doctors, nurses, aids and family. These Warriors had been wounded in Iraq or Afghanistan.




Many of these fishers had never fished in Alaska and some had never caught a fish. The plan was to fish for four hours and return to Bo's Fish Camp where hamburgers and hot dogs with all the trimmings and homemade desserts awaited. The genesis of this adventure had come from John Whitlatch, a guide (Reel Adventure Charters 907-252-7335) on the Kenai River, and a long time friend. He had contacted all the guides and gotten them to volunteer their time for this trip. He asked me to help with the procuring food and other supplies to feed everyone. I asked the Alaska Outdoor Council board to supply the funds. I only had to wait a matter of hours until the funds were approved. My wife cooked up several of her chocolate cakes. The rest of the

food was purchased. I asked my son Lee to come down and help me cook (his wife had made several dozen brownies). He had been home from Afghanistan less than two months, and was more than willing to make this a success.

By 1 o'clock the fishers were starting to return with silvers and very large smiles from everyone. Before long a large fire had been built and they were chowing-down on a wide assortment of food including those desserts. Fishing tales were being swapped and the discussion eventually turned to how some of them had been wounded. I must say that some of this was very moving. Several of my fellow veterans (from other wars) turned out to help cook and take care of these young folks, and I know the volunteers had as much fun as the young warriors. After about two or three hours the warriors had packed up and headed back. Before they left they asked when we were going to do it again.

I would like to thank all that helped with this very special event, with a special thanks to everyone who donated their time, equipment, the free use of the camp and the financial support so this special event could take place. I have talked with several groups and have pledges for support next year. I have talked to guides and consumptive users about a similar trip next summer here in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley. ■



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Alaska Outdoor Access Alliance Annual Meeting / Potluck *January 26, 2008*



Eagle River Lions Club



(Located across the intersection from the Eagle River Wal-Mart on Eagle River Loop Road)

Potluck and Silent Auction, Fun and Games at 5PM

A short Business meeting will be held at 4PM

**Members and Member Organizations/Businesses
& their families are invited**

*We are looking for door prize items. If you have something to donate
please contact: **Patti Barber @ 745-4446 or pkbarber@gci.net***

2008 Juneau Banquet and Fundraiser ***FEBRUARY 22ND, 2008***

Ticket Cost: \$40 per person or two tickets for \$75

Ticket Information: Contact Ron or Jan at (907) 780-4812

Event Highlights: We will be raffling off a handmade rifle donated by Harry Keller of Juneau. Also this year we will sell raffle tickets for the original picture done by Homer, Alaska artist Ed Tussey. For both the rifle raffle and original painting raffle we will sell 250 tickets at \$20 a ticket. Remember we sell out fast.

Don't miss our Bucket raffles, Hat raffles, Balloon raffles, Card raffles and more.

And as always we will have great items on both our silent and live auctions.

Banquet Highlights: Dinner will be a surf and turf meal catered by The Hangar.

Each table will also be provided two bottles of complimentary wine.

Grand Door Prize: Our Grand Door Prize is 2 award airline tickets, valued at \$500 each—Donated by the Hunter Heritage Foundation.

Board of Fisheries Public Meetings on Upper Cook Inlet
Finfish Proposals Scheduled for January 30th, 2008

You can find the proposals at:
<http://www.boards.adfg.state.ak.us/fishinfo/index.php>

Members of the Board of Fisheries will hold public forums at two locations starting at 5:00pm in preparation for the February 1-12, 2008 BOF meeting, at which time the BOF will be deliberating on proposals effecting salmon management plans and salmon allocation between sport and commercial fisheries for Upper Cook Inlet.

The public will be allowed to participated in these hearing in either:

WASILLA

Lake Lucille Best Western
1300 W. Lake Lucille Dr.

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Soldotna Sports Center
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cordially invite you to the

2008 Annual Meeting
FEBRUARY 7TH - 10TH, 2008

AND

2008 Awards Banquet
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9TH, 2008

ANCHORAGE - MILLENNIUM HOTEL

Tentative Agenda: Thursday 2/7 - 6PM Evening Social
Friday 2/8 - 9AM to 5PM AOC Issues, Panels and Speakers
Saturday 2/9 - 9AM to 5PM Business Meeting and 6PM Award Banquet
Sunday 2/10 - Conclude Business Meeting and AOC Board Member Elections

We would like to have you participate!

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AOC 2008 Annual Meeting

By Rod Arno AOC Executive Director

Alaska Outdoor Council (AOC) and Alaska Fish & Wildlife Conservation Fund (AF&WCF) Member Club delegates and individual members will gather in Anchorage on February 7th-10th of 2008 to determine the direction that AOC's Board Members and staff will pursue for the upcoming year.

A review of last year's efforts will be presented along with an outlook of topics needing attention in the near future for the benefit of AOC/AF&WCF membership. Numerous changes to the landscape regarding outdoor activities have occurred this past year and many more changes are appearing on the horizon.

AOC Board Members and staff have spent a considerable amount of time and effort this last year working with the State Administration, legislators, the departments of; Fish & Game, Natural Resources, and Law, and the Boards of Fisheries and Game on critical topics that directly effect the quality and quantity of Alaska's renewable natural resources. Here are a few timely examples of topics that directly affect AOC's purposes, as stated in the by-laws, which will be discussed at the 2008 Annual meeting:

1. Article 3. Purpose To perpetuate the natural resource base upon which member group activities depend;

- Assuring adequate protection of fish and wildlife habitat by the State remains an outstanding issue due to changes in the Division of Habitat.
- Enforcement of regulations pertaining to allowable uses of off-road-vehicles still remains to be resolved in the legislative process.
- Some salmon returns continue to come in under the management goals set for escapement. Other salmon runs show declines in returns of size and age classes. Sustainable salmon management continues to be a major concern in certain drainages around the state.
- Predator/prey management continues to be threatened by the lack of necessary funding to provide the level of scientific data required to implement control programs. And once again the Anti-game management advocates have placed another ballot initiative before voters to ban aerial predator management.

Access to Alaska's natural resources on public lands remains an on going struggle in both the State and Federal systems. AOC Board members and staff have participated in numerous land planning efforts to insure that representation of AOC membership is part of the public process. Numerous times AOC and its Member Clubs have been the only voice advocating for continued motorized access for riders, hunters, trappers, and anglers. Again, listed here are a few of the on going topics for Club delegates to discuss at the 2008 Annual Meeting.

2. Article 3. Purpose To insure equality in access and use of these natural resources;

- Public access to State Marine Parks in SE, the Chitina dipnet fishery, Nelchina Basin motorized access, the Willow Creek boat launch, motorized access by Snowmachines in SC State Parks.
- Implementation of Tier II subsistence hunting along road connected areas of SC Alaska.
- Federal takeover of subsistence fisheries on the Kenai Peninsula.

The right to own and use firearms is another topic that has recently risen to national attention. The AOC Board members and staff have been monitoring developments which have now placed the 2nd Amendment right before the U.S. Supreme Court. AOC Delegates will be updated on the AFWCF's legal efforts involving this important case and discussing further actions if necessary.



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- Mary Bishop, Fairbanks.

Citizens Advisory Commission on Federal Areas in Alaska starts up

The Citizens Advisory Commission on Federal Areas in Alaska (CACFA) is up and running. Members, including Presiding Officer Rick Halford, met in December to work on organizational issues.

Representative Mike Kelly, sponsor of the legislation, HB 87, to recreate the Commission, thanked the members for their willingness and expertise and wished them well in their work. Rep. Kelly reiterated the importance of the Commission making itself accessible to all citizens and interested parties whose activities occur on federal public lands. With 60% of the state owned by federal agencies it's clear that Alaskans' lives are often affected by federal management.

The duties of CACFA are clearly defined in statute, AS.41.37.220. The Commission is to assist individual Alaskans in dealings with federal land management agencies, by both understanding federal laws and their Congressional intent governing use of federal areas, and by providing a forum for addressing problems that individuals encounter with the laws or their application by the agencies.

For information on CAFCA, contact Ms Melanie Lesh, Special Asst., DNR, 400 Willoughby Ave., Suite 500, Juneau, AK 99801. Phone: (907)465-4730, Fax: (907) 465-3886

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Charles Green (on the right), Winner of the 2007 AOC Raffle, collects his prize at Boondock Sporting Goods in Eagle River from Don Hanks.

- Thanks to all those who joined to help AOC's efforts by becoming members during the 2007 Winter Membership Drive. Special thanks to our sponsors and congratulations to our prize winners:

First Prize winner: Charles Green

Second Prize winner: Myles TenBroeck of Eagle River

Third Prize winner: Carl Hanson of Eagle River

- Congratulations to Paul Metz winner of the Fairbanks Rifle Raffle, and thanks to Alcan Builders for their donation of the Ruger MkII .338 Win Mag

- The Fairbanks 24th annual fundraising auction for the Fund and Council was attended by 475 people in early November.

Thanks to all the donors, volunteers and guests for making it a grand success once again.



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