

FeedbAK

RHAK

Resident Hunters of Alaska



IN THIS ISSUE

- RHAK IS ONE YEAR OLD
- MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS
- RHAK FIRST ANNUAL BANQUET A SUCCESS
- BOARD OF GAME ACTIONS AND NEW REGULATIONS, INCLUDING **REPEAL OF PROPOSAL 51**
- FEDERAL WILDLIFE SPECIAL ACTION CLOSURE REQUESTS
- LEGISLATIVE REPORT – RHAK BOARD MEMBER TOM LAMAL APPOINTED TO BOARD OF GAME
- MEMBER RECOGNITION – MARK LAPORTE
- VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!



Lori Richards and Rich Flanders at the Fairbanks Outdoor Show 2017 in April.

Happy Birthday RHAK!

RHAK formally launched on May 14th, 2016, and it really is hard to believe how far and how fast we have come in just one year. From 100 Founding Members who threw their names and financial support behind a brand-new organization, RHAK has grown to represent some 1,300 Alaskans from Barrow to Ketchikan and points in between at all membership levels. And we're growing every week! RHAK was at the state fairs last fall and all the sports shows this spring, spreading the word and recruiting

new members. We represented our members at all Board of Game and Big Game Commercial Services Board meetings, and were instrumental in repealing the guide lobby proposal that forced all residents to punch their tags when hunting a must-be-guided species with a nonresident relative. We recently sent in proposals for the Statewide and Region IV Board of Game meetings for the next regulatory year to keep up the pressure to expand resident hunting opportunities and manage our wildlife in

continued on page 2

Membership Renewals

All RHAK Founding members will be receiving an email about renewing their membership and continuing to invest in this important work. Automated email renewal notices will go out to all members one year after their original annual signup date. All members will now be able to renew online.

Print & Post

On the RHAK [Files & Links page](#) you can click to view and print this **Economic Impact of Resident Hunters of Alaska** poster.

WE ARE RESIDENT HUNTERS

RESIDENT HUNTERS SPEND 1.065 BILLION DOLLARS annually on our hunting activities in Alaska.

Money spent on hunting in Alaska

RESIDENT HUNTERS PAY 88 PERCENT

Non-resident hunters pay 12%

What **RESIDENT HUNTERS BUY** with our hunting dollars annually

Millions of Dollars	
Fuel for vehicles.....	297.5
Gear and equipment purchases.....	252.6
Groceries, food, liquor purchased at stores.....	170.4
Outfitter, charter, and transporter fees.....	117.1
Transportation fees or tickets.....	95.8
Trip package spending.....	42.6
Meals purchased at restaurants and bars.....	42.6
Lodging.....	32
Equipment rental.....	10.7
Souvenirs and gifts.....	8.6
Licenses and tags.....	2.1

Alaska's **RESIDENT HUNTERS SUPPORT 7,216 JOBS** or **\$396 MILLION** in labor income.

This includes Alaskan jobs directly related to hunting (transporters, taxidermists, game meat processors) and jobs that are indirectly supported (grocers, sporting goods stores, ATV and boat dealers, gas stations).

Because we pay property taxes in Alaska, **RESIDENT HUNTERS CONTRIBUTE** to community schools, police, and firefighters.

RHAK
Resident Hunters of Alaska

Resident Hunters of Alaska is dedicated to enhancing and prioritizing opportunities for Alaskan resident hunters in accordance with responsible wildlife management, focused on preserving our Alaskan hunting heritage for future generations.

Join today at www.residenthuntersofalaska.org

Source: "The Economic Importance of Alaska's Wildlife in 2010" published March 2014, prepared by ECONorthwest for the Alaska Department of Fish & Game.

Happy Birthday RHAK continued

accordance with the sustained yield principles outlined in our state constitution. You can view all the RHAK proposals on our BOG [Proposals](#) page.

RHAK is a presence in Juneau during the legislative session, with the entire RHAK board (at their own expense) doing a fly-in event earlier in the session to meet with legislators in their offices and after hours to talk about why our state needs a resident hunting priority and legislation to further that agenda.

Our very own Founding member and (now former) RHAK Board member Tom Lamal was appointed to the Board of Game, and our first Annual RHAK Banquet was the icing on the cake that showed we have the strong backing and support from so many individual Alaskans from all walks of life.

RHAK is making a difference and your voice is being heard after only one year in existence thanks to your support!



Above, Mark Richards testifying in Barrow, on May 14, 2017.



At right, the RHAK Juneau Fly-In, on February 23, 2017.

WSF Thinhorn Summit

RHAK board member Bob Cassell and Executive Director Mark Richards attended the 2-day Thinhorn Summit put on by the Wild Sheep Foundation April 11-12 in Anchorage. The focus was disease transmission from domestic sheep and goats to wild sheep in the four northern regions (British Columbia, Northwest Territory, Yukon Territory, Alaska) inhabited by Stone and Dall sheep. It was an impressive attendance

of sheep hunters, guides, biologists and veterinarians from the four regions and Bob and Mark enjoyed meeting and talking and learning from everyone. The takeaway message was that there are real risks to wild sheep from domestic sheep and goat stocks and we need to find a way to work with farmers to mitigate and prevent those risks. Thanks to WSF for hosting and sponsoring the event.





RHAK First Annual Banquet a Success!

RHAK sold out for our first Annual Banquet on March 25th, with approximately 360 people showing up to support the cause. We can't thank everyone enough for making our first banquet such a resounding success!

We especially want to thank RHAK Founding members Mark LaPorte and Randy Howard for the long volunteer hours they put into helping organize the banquet and pull it off. Thanks also to RHAK Founding member Jeff Varvil who mced, and to our auctioneer and RHAK member Rohn Nelson, and to all the volunteers on the RHAK banquet committee.

We look forward to an even bigger event next spring!



Board of Game Report

It was a busy winter for Board of Game meetings with the Region IV meeting in Bethel in February, the Region III meeting in Fairbanks in March, and the special out-of-cycle regulatory meeting in Glenallen later in March on Copper Basin issues and the community subsistence harvest hunts.

RHAK was represented at all the meetings, with the entire RHAK board (at their own expense) coming to the Fairbanks meeting for a couple of days to each testify on a different RHAK proposal and spend time talking with BOG members, guides, other hunters and RHAK members.

RHAK's proposals that centered on a resident hunting priority – 90/10 resident/nonresident allocation for all draw permits & put all nonresident sheep hunters on draw – were all voted down (again) by the Board, but we will keep submitting them. The RHAK proposal to have an earlier archery-only grizzly season for residents only within the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area did pass 7-0, so resident archers now have the opportunity to take a grizzly bear within the corridor in Unit 26B starting on August 10th.

RHAK had another proposal seeking to limit nonresident

continued on next page

Board of Game Report *continued from previous page*

Central Arctic Herd (CAH) caribou hunters, and to also limit cow seasons and bag limits for both residents and nonresidents, due to concerns we had with the CAH. Between the time we submitted that proposal in May of 2016 and the meeting this winter, ADFG came out with new population estimates for the CAH that showed the herd less than half the size of previous surveys. ADFG amended our proposal for more severe restrictions than we originally asked for based on the updated population estimate, and we agreed with further restrictions (residents 2 caribou bull only, nonresidents 1 caribou bull only) but we did not agree with a nonresident season with a projected harvest of 43% of the total. We objected during a break and an amendment was posited to reduce the nonresident season and projected harvest but it was voted down 2-5.

One good bit of news is that after a lot of effort from RHAK, the Alaska Professional Hunters Association proposal 51 that was passed by the BOG in 2016 to force all resident hunters hunting with a nonresident relative for a must-be-guided species to punch their tag... ***was repealed!***

Federal Subsistence Board Wildlife Special Action Requests

RHAK has consistently opposed Wildlife Special Action (WSA) requests to shut down caribou hunting on the north slope for all non-federally qualified subsistence users.

Mark Richards recently traveled to Barrow to testify for RHAK in opposition to the latest WSAs to close caribou hunting in all of Unit 23 and Unit 26A/26B to non-local users during the 2017-2018 regulatory year. Thank you to the many RHAK members who also called in to testify!

We believe that the Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) must deny the Unit 26A & B closure request (WSA 17-04) based on actions the Board of Game took in March for Central Arctic herd caribou hunting restrictions. Extending the Unit 23 closure another year (WSA 17-03) should also be denied based on actions the BOG took in February to realign the Noatak Controlled Use Area based on proposals from local hunters.

RHAK is seeking help from our congressional delegation to incorporate changes in the FSB process to only allow WSA requests when there is a biological emergency with a wildlife population, and to change the public process for more inclusion of those outside a region where these closures would take effect to publicly comment in writing or in person.

Legislative Report

RHAK (former) Board Member Tom Lamal was unanimously confirmed by the legislature to a 3-year term on the Board of Game. ***Congratulations Tom, and thank you for being willing to serve! We already miss you on the RHAK board.*** The legislature also confirmed Ted Spraker, Larry Van Daele, Karen Linnell, and Stosh Hoffman. Teresa Sager Albaugh and Nate Turner round out the current 7-member Board of Game.

RHAK weighed in on several bills this session and continues to educate legislators on the issues resident hunters face with the current makeup of our Board of Game and the continued influence of the commercial hunting industry that impacts all resident hunters.

We have been working on and expect to introduce legislation next session to put a resident hunting priority in statute.

HB 211, sponsored by Rep. Dean Westlake, sought to make caribou a must-be-guided species for nonresidents for all north slope caribou populations. RHAK strongly opposed it but it narrowly passed the House and has little support in the Senate. Mark Richards met with Rep. Westlake in Juneau after the bill passed the House to, as he told Rep. Westlake, “make lemonade out of lemons,” and discussed with Rep. Westlake how much we have in common on wanting to provide a priority to resident Alaskan hunters, but that trying to limit nonresident hunters by requiring them to be guided was the exact wrong approach. Rep. Westlake was receptive to our position and agreed that a statutory resident hunting priority would be beneficial, and we look forward to future discussions with him.

The proposed “Guide Concession Program” that has been dead on the table for so long is undergoing resuscitation efforts by the guide lobby and SCI, this time via budgetary shenanigans inserting 1-million dollars of federal taxpayer funds into the state budget for startup costs for the program. The proposed GCP is what the Board of Game has used for a decade now as rationale to ***not*** take action to limit nonresident hunters. RHAK opposes the guide concession program and you can read more about our position on our webpage, [The proposed “Guide Concession Program” and why RHAK Opposes it.](#)

BOG Regulatory Changes to be Aware of Starting July 1, 2017

Central Arctic Herd Caribou – The new Unit 26B restrictions on bag limits and seasons for Central Arctic Herd (CAH) caribou will affect many of us. The new season opener for residents is August 1st, so those of you who may in the past have hunted in July and had plans to do the same this season, that is no longer possible. The new season and bag limits for CAH caribou in Unit 26B Remainder are:

- Residents – 2 bull caribou August 1 – April 30
- Nonresidents – 1 bull caribou August 1 – September 15

Emperor Goose Hunting Now Allowed – For the first time in 30 years, Emperor Goose hunting will be allowed via registration permits and individual area quotas along the migratory range of the population.

For more, download [Summary of changes adopted by the Alaska Board of Game for regulatory year 2017-2018](#).

Quarterly Member Recognition

RHAK would like to recognize member Mark LaPorte for his volunteer time and efforts in making the first Annual RHAK Banquet a success. We could not have pulled it off without him and the help of the entire banquet committee! Mark Laporte has been a police officer for 24 years, 21 of them in Anchorage. His wife brought him to Alaska and he fell in love with hunting and fishing. Mark believes in the core values of hunting and self-reliance and the rights our founding fathers intended so we can pass on those skills and traits to our children.



Mark LaPorte

Member Photos & Stories

Please email photos to share. We also are looking to publish RHAK member hunting stories with pictures. Send yours today!



Family member Matt Merrell wearing the RHAK hat.



Robert Woodside's very first moose!



Lance and Celeste Johnson on a Copper River bison hunt.

Volunteers Needed!

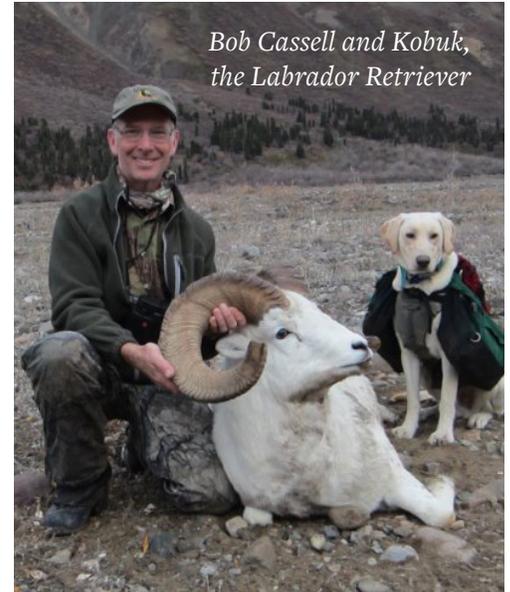
RHAK is looking for volunteers in southcentral and interior to help set up quarterly in-person member meetings. This will entail finding free or low-cost venues, recruiting guest speakers, and choosing meeting dates. Please contact Mark Richards if you are able to help with this effort.

Board Member Bio

Bob Cassell moved to Alaska in 1977 with his family and started college the same year in the University of Alaska system in Anchorage. He skinned his way through college working part time at a taxidermy shop while spending as many days as he could out enjoying hunting and fishing adventures while going to school.

Graduating with a BS in biology from UAF he landed a dream job with ADF&G as a wildlife technician in the Anchorage office putting his biology degree to use in South Central Alaska where the first teeth he pulled were on Kodiak brown bears immobilized from the back of a Bell helicopter with a dart gun, flying numerous big game surveys including doing the age/sex composition surveys for sheep in GMU 14C. During this time the Federal/State split on how subsistence was going to be managed demoralized Bob and he left ADF&G for dental school, completing his postgraduate training at the University of Washington.

After returning to Alaska from dental school, Bob and his wife Cynthia settled in the Valley and began to seriously enjoy the great outdoor experiences Alaska has to offer. They purchased the family Piper Cub from Cynthia's father and still have it today, Bob having recently rebuilt it himself over six winters, giving reliable transportation to remote areas of Alaska that few people see.



*Bob Cassell and Kobuk,
the Labrador Retriever*

Business Membership Level Added

RHAK is introducing a new \$100 business membership model intended to be a mutually beneficial shared expression of support. We will advertise your business name/logo in our newsletters and on our website, and in turn we ask that the business will help advertise RHAK with a poster and some brochures at the place of business and by word of mouth. [Sign up here!](#) The \$100 Business mem-

bership includes quarterly digital newsletter and RHAK updates via email, business logo placement in our newsletters and on RHAK website. We want to thank Salcha River Property Owners Association, [BK Marine Services](#), and [Glacier Bear Gourmet](#) for recently signing up as Business members, look for their logos here in the future along with other business members and please support them!

RHAK BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President Brad Sparks | brad@residenthuntersofalaska.org
Vice President Doug Malone | doug@residenthuntersofalaska.org
Secretary JR Gates | jr@residenthuntersofalaska.org
Treasurer Rob Stone | rob@residenthuntersofalaska.org
Board Member Bob Cassell | bob@residenthuntersofalaska.org

RHAK EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mark Richards
(907) 371-7436
info@residenthuntersofalaska.org

RESIDENTHUNTERSOFALASKA.ORG