

## Resident Hunters of Alaska



- Upcoming RHAK 2027 Banquet Dates
- 2027 Board of Game Cycle & Proposals
- Board of Game Special Meeting – Ambler Road No-Hunting Corridor
- Verifiers & Clarifiers now Legal for Archery-only Hunts
- Fortymile Caribou Hunt Update
- Nelchina Caribou Herd Status Updates
- Get Out & Vote!
- Advisory Committee Meetings
- Member Photos



## Save the Dates

## RHAK 2027 Anchorage and Fairbanks Banquets!

Fairbanks Annual Banquet  
Saturday, January 30, 2027  
Alaskaland Centennial Hall

Anchorage Annual Banquet  
Saturday, February 13, 2027  
Egan Center

### RESIDENT HUNTERS OF ALASKA 2027 FAIRBANKS ANNUAL BANQUET



It's the middle of a cold, dark winter in Fairbanks, what better time to join us for dinner and a fun night out with friends and family in support of RHAK! Exciting raffles, wall of guns & gear, cash bar, and more! Seating limited to 200.

**SATURDAY  
JANUARY 30, 2027**

Alaskaland Centennial Hall  
2300 Airport Way  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
Doors open 5 pm  
Dinner 6:30 pm



**INDIVIDUAL TICKET \$60**

**MEMBERSHIP SPONSOR  
TABLE \$500 (SEATS 8)**  
includes \$250 raffle package

**BUSINESS SPONSOR  
TABLE \$800 (SEATS 8)**  
includes \$400 raffle package

**PLATINUM SPONSOR  
TABLE \$2,000 (SEATS 8)**  
includes \$400 raffle package + gun



Banquet  
Tickets  
and  
Auction  
Items

Purchase tickets and view raffle items via link at  
[www.residenthuntersofalaska.org](http://www.residenthuntersofalaska.org) or call (907) 371-7436

### RESIDENT HUNTERS OF ALASKA 2027 ANNUAL BANQUET



A fun night in support of Alaskan resident hunters, with live auctions, raffles, cash bar and more. Seating limited to 350.

**SATURDAY  
FEBRUARY 13, 2027**

Egan Center  
555 W 5th Ave, Anchorage  
Doors open 5 pm • Dinner 6:30 pm

**INDIVIDUAL TICKET \$75**

**SILVER SPONSOR  
TABLE \$1,000**  
10 tickets, 1/4 page ad in program, \$300 raffle package

**PLATINUM SPONSOR  
TABLE \$2,500**  
10 tickets, 1 gun, 1/2 page ad in program, \$500 raffle package

**BANQUET SPONSOR  
TABLE \$5,000**  
10 tickets, 1 gun, full page ad in program, banner over stage as main sponsor, \$1000 raffle package

**VENDOR TABLE \$1,000**



Banquet Tickets  
and Auction Items

#### BID ON EXCITING GOVERNOR'S TAGS!

Koyukuk CUA Moose (SM823-830)  
and Chugach Brown Bear (SB470)

Purchase tickets and view auction items at [www.residenthuntersofalaska.org](http://www.residenthuntersofalaska.org)  
or mail payment to RHAK at PO Box 60095 Fairbanks AK 99706

# Anchorage Banquet Committee

## Looking for Volunteers

If you'd like to volunteer to serve, we'd love to have your help on the RHAK Anchorage banquet committee for banquet planning, auction item selections, dropping off donations, and soliciting donations. The banquet committee will begin meeting in early November and meets once or twice a month ahead of the banquet. Dinner is provided. If you can spare the time to help, please contact Mark Richards at [info@residenthuntersofalaska.org](mailto:info@residenthuntersofalaska.org), or by phone at (907) 371-7436.

## 2027 Board of Game Cycle Tentative Meeting Dates

| Meeting Dates                          | Topic                                                                                                             | Location                                      | Comment Deadline        |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>January 22, 2027</b><br>(1 day)     | <b>Work Session</b>                                                                                               | <b>Kotzebue</b><br>National Guard<br>Armory   | <b>January 15, 2027</b> |
| <b>January 23-26, 2027</b><br>(4 days) | <b>Western Arctic/Western<br/>Region</b><br>Game Management Units<br>18, 22, 23, & 26A                            | <b>Kotzebue</b><br>National Guard<br>Armory   | <b>January 9, 2027</b>  |
| <b>March 19-26, 2027</b><br>(8 days)   | <b>Interior and Eastern Arctic<br/>Region</b><br>Game Management Units<br>12, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26B,<br>and 26C | <b>Fairbanks</b><br>Pikes Waterfront<br>Lodge | <b>March 5, 2027</b>    |

If you'd like to take a look at the proposals for the upcoming 2027 meetings, they can be found at these links.

### Western Arctic/Western Region Proposals

<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.meetinginfo&date=01-23-2027&meeting=kotzebue>

### Interior/Eastern Arctic Region Proposals

<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.meetinginfo&date=03-19-2027&meeting=fairbanks>

The proposals RHAK submitted for the 2026/2027 Regulatory Cycle meetings can be found on the RHAK website here <https://www.residenthuntersofalaska.org/proposals>. More information on specific proposals will be provided later.

# Board of Game Special Summer Meeting

## Ambler Road No-Hunting Corridor



We were all caught by surprise when it was announced that the Commissioner of Fish and Game called a special meeting of the Board of Game during the middle of the summer for the main purpose of considering a Proposal from the Department of Fish & Game (Department) to impose a no-hunting corridor along the entire proposed (and private) Ambler Road.<sup>1</sup>

Advisory Committees don't meet then and the public at large was out enjoying the too-short Alaska summer. Calling a special meeting in July seemed crazy.

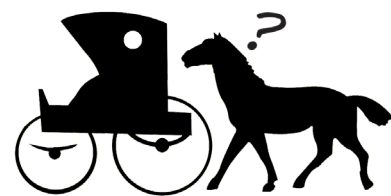
So, what the heck was this all about?

Unbeknownst to the public, a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) between the state, federal agencies, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Native corporation landowners, the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA), and Ambler Metals LLC, had previously been agreed to that stated: ***"The Parties agree to work with the Commissioner of the Department of Fish and Game or his designee to present and support a proposal to the Board of Game to prohibit hunting and fishing in a two-mile-wide buffer***

***area along the entire length of the Ambler Road as a controlled use area or other appropriate designation. The buffer would extend one mile on each side of the centerline of the Ambler Road and all associated bridges."***<sup>2</sup>

It appears that the Native corporations were concerned about hunting right along the proposed road and they wanted to ensure it wasn't allowed, even though the proposed road would be private and most of the land the road would go through is state land.

Somehow, they got the administration to agree and the Commissioner was told to get it done, which is how we ended up with a July Board of Game meeting and a proposal from the Department to close hunting down one mile either side of a proposed private road that may or may not ever be built, with absolutely no conservation or biological concerns to back up such a closure. Talk about the cart before the horse!



1. Proposal from the Department of Fish & Game

[https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/regprocess/gameboard/pdfs/2026-2027/special\\_7-22-26/4.pdf](https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/regprocess/gameboard/pdfs/2026-2027/special_7-22-26/4.pdf)

2. Memorandum Of Understanding

<https://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/Notices/Attachment.aspx?id=162852>

continued on page 4

*continued from page 3*

RHAK Executive Director Mark Richards summed up what was going on when he testified for RHAK:

*"We don't normally see the Department submitting proposals (and out-of-cycle to boot!) to shut down hunting and trapping in areas where they have no biological or conservation concerns. Neither do we see the board pass such proposals that aren't based on real biological or conservation concerns.*

*The Department and the board are clearly the scapegoats in all this, being asked – rather, told – by the administration to shut down future hunting and trapping opportunities along a proposed private industrial road because without this corridor closure, the administration says the road will never be approved and built.*

*This is politics posing as wildlife management, clearly outside the bounds of how the Department and Board of Game are supposed to operate and it is truly sad to see things go this far. Plus, think about what this proposal supposes ...that we can't have resource development without a prior agreement from the Board of Game to shut down hunting and trapping along a private industrial access road to those resources. That's certainly not what our state constitution intended, and such a quid pro quo is outlandish."*

During deliberations on the proposal, it was clear that it did not have the votes to pass. None of the board members seemed happy about how this all came about and were aware of the precedent passing such a proposal would set. There was near-zero support from Advisory Committees and the public, with most saying to either vote the proposal down or take no action on it.

The board ended up deferring the proposal to the 2027 January meeting in Kotzebue, knowing we would have a new Governor and Commissioner then. We have a feeling, though, that we may see more pressure put on the board and Department to get something through before the next Governor takes office. Stay tuned.

## UPDATE

As this newsletter was being drafted, we got word that the Commissioner of Fish & Game will be calling another special meeting of the Board of Game in November on this same Ambler Road no-hunting corridor proposal. To see such blatant misuse of the Board of Game process is disheartening to say the least. We can't premise resource development on closures to hunting opportunity. It's not constitutional and it's flat-out wrong!

## Verifiers & Clarifiers now Legal for Archery-only Hunts

Additional proposals for the special July Board of Game meeting included proposals to legalize the use of electronic scopes and verifiers and clarifiers for archery-only hunts. RHAK supported allowing verifiers/clarifiers to be used in archery-only hunts. What these devices do is help archers with near or far-sighted vision to better see the pins on their bow. They are already legal in general hunt areas. That proposal passed 5-2. RHAK opposed the use of electronic scopes for archery-only hunts. That proposal failed 0-7.

## Fortymile Caribou Winter Registration Hunt in Question

We have not received the final harvest numbers for the fall 2026 Fortymile caribou hunt from ADF&G yet. Over 400 bulls were taken in Zones 1 & 4, which was well over the quota of 190 bulls. Zone 2 met the quota but very few caribou were taken in Zone 3. The Department recently completed the fall Fortymile Caribou Composition Survey and once they finalize the data, they will determine if there will be a winter resident-only subsistence registration hunt. If there is no winter registration hunt, the Department will go to the AC 999 targeted drawing hunt. You can apply for the AC 999 targeted hunt at the link below. The deadline to apply is October 31st:

<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=huntlicense.targeted>

# Renew Your Membership | Send Us Your Photos

Membership renewal is quick and easy at [residenthuntersofalaska.org](https://residenthuntersofalaska.org) or by contacting Mark Richards at 371-7436 or email [info@residenthuntersofalaska.org](mailto:info@residenthuntersofalaska.org).

If you'd like to share your hunting adventures for our website, Facebook page, and/or newsletter, please email them to Mark.

## Nelchina Caribou Herd Status Update from ADF&G

*"This summer's Nelchina herd population survey has revealed continued encouraging numbers, with over 17,800 caribou counted—more than 13,400 of which are adults. This represents a notable increase in herd size compared to the 2025 summer count, and the 2026 Rivist model projects the population may surpass 19,000 caribou.*

*Analyzing recruitment data from 2025 and early calf survival in 2026, we anticipate robust ratios exceeding 40 calves per 100 cows and 40 bulls per 100 cows. The cessation of hunting since RY23, coupled with relatively mild winters, has contributed to an improved bull-to-cow ratio, stronger recruitment, and high survival rates among recent cohorts. As you may recall a series of severe winters had previously led to a steep decline in the herd, so this positive shift is both welcome and significant.*

*To ensure sustainable management and prevent overharvest, we are employing a conservative approach on the state side and recommending the federal system do the same for RY2027. This approach would permit the harvest of 335 bulls, representing*

*2.5% of the minimum adult count from 2026, based on observed ratios of 32.3 calves per 100 adults in recent photographic surveys. Under the current ANILCA 804 restriction, federal harvest is expected to remain below 185 animals, leaving 150 bulls available for Tier II state hunters during RY27.*

*Tier II hunt permit stipulations differ from Tier I/CSH hunts, so please refer to the subsistence supplement for specific details. Should this hunt be offered, the following conditions would apply:*

- *Up to 150 Tier II (TC566) permits may be issued.*
- *Bull-only harvest during the fall season dates, no winter hunt will be held.*
- *A maximum of two TC566 permits can be issued per household.*
- *A five-day reporting requirement.*
- *A TC566 permit may be transferred to a resident relative within the second-degree of kindred.*
- *Proxy hunting is allowed; however, the proxy hunter must also be a TC566 permit holder and may only participate once per season per species in Unit 13.*
- *There is no requirement to hunt moose exclusively in Unit 13."*

RHAK is certainly encouraged as well with these new survey numbers, but we have continued conservation concerns for the Nelchina caribou herd. The dual management system with the different seasons and allocations for Nelchina caribou on federal and state lands just isn't working for the best interests of the caribou. Hopefully this winter will be mild and the herd continues to rebound.



ADF&G Photo

# Fish & Game **Advisory Committee** Meetings

Advisory Committee (AC) meetings in your area are a great way to learn more and get involved in the process of fish and game management. ACs typically meet once a month during the board meeting cycle. To learn more about Advisory Committees and when your AC is meeting, head to the Board Support Advisory Committee page at <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=process.advisory>

## Election Season **Get Out & Vote!**

Elections have consequences. We are about to have a new Governor and some new legislators. Congressional seats are up as well. Change is coming. The only way you can influence that change is to get out and vote, ***so please take the time to cast your ballot on November 3rd!***

RHAK doesn't endorse gubernatorial and legislative candidates, though we meet with them to advocate for our mission, make sure they know who we are and what we're about. So, we can't tell you who to vote for. ***The main thing is to get out and vote!***

We don't know how the election will turn out, but RHAK will work with whomever is our next Governor, and the legislature, on our advocacy for Alaska's wildlife resources and a resident hunting priority. RHAK is a non-partisan organization, and we have always worked across the aisle to try to get bipartisan support for changes in how we manage and allocate our wildlife. A resident hunting priority is the right thing for all Alaskans, both rural and urban, no matter if one aligns with Democrats, Independents, Republicans, or any other political party.



## Member Photos

*Mark Oppe caribou*



*Brett Herbeek goat*



*Butch Currier caribou*



*Erik Boltman moose  
Left to right: Nate  
Mandreger, Erik Boltman,  
and Aaron Fragapane*

# Member Photos



*Paige Best  
first grizzly  
bear*



*Travis Drake  
with sons Coen  
and Deegan.  
Farewell bison*



*David  
Porter  
caribou*



*Ben  
Drazenovich  
moose*

## Board of Directors

Colt Foster – President | Bob Cassell – Vice President | Travis Drake – Treasurer/Secretary  
Dick Cameron | Pete Dickinson | Tom Lamal | Anthony Henry

## Executive Director

Mark Richards | (907) 371-7436 | [info@residenthuntersofalaska.org](mailto:info@residenthuntersofalaska.org) | [residenthuntersofalaska.org](http://residenthuntersofalaska.org)

## Former Board Members

Brad Sparks | Doug Malone | JR Gates | Rob Stone | Roger Denny | Brian Watkins | Adam Grenda | Tyler Loken

## PLATINUM SPONSORS



## GOLD SPONSORS



Contact Mark Richards for info on sponsorship levels and please support our sponsors!