

FeedbAK

RHAK
Resident Hunters of Alaska

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*The Alaska
State Capitol
Building*

SB 87 - A First Small Step Toward a Resident Hunting Priority

RHAK has worked hard since our inception to inform and educate legislators about what has been going on for too long with wildlife allocation decisions by the Board of Game (BOG) and why we believe it needs to change.

This past legislative session, Senator John Coghill (R – North Pole) introduced SB 87 on our behalf, a one-word change to the statute (AS 16.05.256) that currently reads:

Whenever it is necessary to restrict the taking of big game so that the opportunity for state residents to take big game can be reasonably satisfied in accordance with sustained yield principles, the Board of Game **may, through a permit system, limit the taking of big game by nonresidents and nonresident aliens to accomplish that purpose.**

Note the bolded word “may” in the statute, which gives the BOG latitude to do nothing, or in fact to do the opposite and give nonresidents an actual harvest priority. This is exactly what happened with the declining Central Arctic caribou Herd (CAH) when the BOG placed restrictions on everyone.

When the CAH dramatically and suddenly declined in 2016, RHAK introduced a proposal to restrict cow harvests and lower the bull harvests for both residents and nonresidents and shorten seasons so that nonresidents bore the brunt of the restrictions necessary to regrow and

sustain the herd. This is what AS 16.05.256 really intended, but didn't require.

In the end the Board of Game did restrict cow harvests for everyone, shortened seasons for everyone, lowered the bull bag limits for everyone, using an ADF&G presentation that predicted that under these new restrictions nonresidents would take 43% of the harvest and residents 57%. But in reality we ended up with nonresidents now taking the majority (55%) of the harvest under these new regulations.

All SB 87 asks for is to change that word “may” to “shall” in statute, so whenever it is necessary to restrict resident hunting opportunities, the Board “shall” ensure that nonresidents bear the brunt of those restrictions by being put on a permit system.

This should be a no-brainer really for all Alaskans, a simple fix for the times when game populations decline and there needs to be restrictions.

SB 87 had one hearing in Senate Resources and our legislation was also introduced late in the House last session by Rep. Chris Tuck (D – Anchorage) as HB 137. We were aware these bills would not move last session due to the late makeup of the House coalition and the state budget concerns, but we do expect and hope them to move next session. Thank you to all the RHAK supporters who wrote in on SB 87, the supporting letters vastly exceeded those of opposition. We will need the same help and more next session as these bills are heard in committee.

RHAK 3rd Annual Banquet Exceeds Expectations!

The banquet is our primary fundraiser and this past March at the Egan Center in Anchorage we had over 400 people join us for an evening of camaraderie and a bunch of fun on raffles and auction items to support our mission. We raised nearly \$100,000! This will help us continue our efforts across the state and in Juneau promoting a resident hunting priority and ensuring our kids and grandkids will have the same hunting opportunities that we have had. RHAK's 4th Annual Banquet will be held on March 28th, 2020 at the Egan Center in Anchorage.

RHAK Juneau Fly-In

RHAK board members (at their own expense) did their annual Juneau Fly-in last March to meet with legislators, lobby for our cause, and host a reception at McGivney's Sports Bar and Grill downtown. We spent a day on the hill lobbying and later that evening about a quarter of the legislature, some Commissioners and staffers, showed up at the reception for food and drinks. A good time was had by all.



From left to right: Tyler Loken, Brad Sparks, Bob Cassell, Mark Richards.

Board of Game and Federal Subsistence Board Report

RHAK had several proposals before the Board of Game (BOG) at the Southcentral Region II meeting last spring. Most dealt with Kodiak brown bear permit allocations and were voted down.

We were successful in creating more bear baiting opportunities in Unit 14C remainder in the Twentymile River country.

We also brought up before the Board information that nonresident guided hunters were not even going through the permit process, rather they were dealing with guides directly to secure a hunt, which wasn't the way the system was supposed to work. We asked for changes to where all nonresident guided hunters would have to go through the permit process, just like residents, but were denied. The system on Kodiak is a perfect example of how exclusive guide areas lead to guides being allocated individual permits to do with them what they wish. Some guides even admitted to not utilizing all the permits for their areas. In the end, resident hunters have to go through a lottery process whereby we have 2-3% odds of drawing a permit, but nonresident guided hunters can just call up a guide and be guaranteed a hunt completely outside the permit process. See Cassell Lawsuit information on page 4.

The 2020 BOG cycle includes the Western Arctic BOG meeting in Nome in January, and the Interior meeting in Fairbanks in March. RHAK will be present at both meetings; you can view RHAK proposals on our website at this link: <https://www.residenthuntersofalaska.org/bog-proposals>

Mark Richards attended and testified for RHAK at last spring's Federal Subsistence Board meeting in Anchorage, opposing (yet again) a special action request from the North Slope Regional Advisory Council to prohibit hunting of the Central Arctic caribou Herd (CAH) on federal lands by non-federally-qualified subsistence hunters. This is an issue RHAK has been involved with for some time now, trying to protect our hunting opportunities along and off the haul road on the north slope. While none of the public members of the Board were swayed, the other half of the Board that represents the various federal agencies all voted the proposal down, which ended up as a 4-4 tie vote. Meaning, the proposal failed and there were no CAH hunting restrictions on fed lands for non-local, non-fed-qualified users.

Executive Director's Corner

By Mark Richards

There is something that has been troubling me for some time now. How to let our membership—and the public—know that many of the other hunting organizations besides RHAK that some of us belong to strongly oppose our mission and work effectively against us in Juneau and with the Board of Game.

I meet with the representatives of these orgs to discuss our positions. These same orgs also fund and work in conjunction with the Alaska Professional Hunters Association (APHA), which as an org seeks to preserve and expand nonresident hunting opportunities in Alaska. I meet with APHA reps too. I attend guide board meetings with them and other guides, going into the proverbial lion's den, testifying on RHAK issues and observing how things work from the inside. I respect these guys and gals and understand they are fighting for the status quo they have known for so long, even if they know in their hearts as Alaskans that status quo is not the way it should be.

The RHAK Board of Directors has also struggled with this issue. Should we, and how do we, call out these other hunting orgs for opposing us so strongly? We don't want to allude they are somehow bad, that membership with them is not worthwhile...but the fact is they are a major stumbling block to achieving a resident hunting priority.

Safari Club International, Wild Sheep Foundation: I mean you. Those two orgs have donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to APHA, funding their fight against a resident hunting priority in Alaska. It's terribly ironic considering they all claim to be conservation oriented. You all want to conserve Dall sheep in Alaska? Well I have an idea that would help: limit how many nonresidents can kill them! That would "put" more rams on the mountain each year for sure.

But sadly, it isn't just the Outside orgs that oppose us. The biggest (and most disappointing) surprise came this past legislative session when the Alaska Outdoor Council (AOC) joined APHA in opposition to our Senate bill SB 87 that seeks to require the Board of Game to place the burden of any hunting restrictions on nonresidents if residents are to be restricted. How is that not a "no-brainer" for AOC? How can a hunting group with Alaska in its name not support that? How ironic is it that AOC fights for a resident personal use fishing priority but when it comes to hunting their position is 180 degrees opposite?

The answer is that Outside hunting interests have dominated our big game guide industry and wildlife allocation decisions since we became a state, even within other state orgs like AOC.

It's time to call them out publicly.

RHAK Seminars and Outreach to Educate & Recruit New Hunters

RHAK is working in conjunction with Fish & Game to educate and recruit and retain hunters. We are proud to offer scholarships for Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) classes. RHAK and the Alaska Bowhunters Association (ABA) put on two seminars this past spring and summer, one on bear baiting and one on sheep hunting. Both were held at 49th State Brewing Co. in Anchorage, got great reviews and are now available online to view. Tons of information in these videos that every hunter will find useful. Links are below and on the RHAK website.



Part 1 - Everything you need to know by ADF&G biologist Sean Farley at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFSlwJ3V87E>

Part 2 - Q&A expert panel discussion at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGGpb8CWlQ8>



Hosted by Brad Sparks, panel includes Matt DeLuca, Scott Luber, Bob Cassell, ADFG Biologist Tom Lohuis.

Part 1 - Expert advice on location, gear, and preparing for the hunt at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hQpzVe9sKnU>

Part 2 - How to judge legal rams, how to hunt rams, where to hunt at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4w1C4yABcFc>

Cassell Lawsuit Against Board of Game and State of Alaska

RHAK Board member Bob Cassell has had enough! Having applied for but never drawn a Kodiak brown bear tag, he is suing the State and the Board of Game over Kodiak brown bear permit allocations, arguing that the current “up to 40%” of permits going to nonresident guided hunters is unconstitutional according to Article 8 of Alaska’s constitution.

The case has only recently been filed, and of note is that one of Bob’s attorneys, Matt Findley, is the same attorney who argued successfully in the U.S. Supreme Court for John Sturgeon. The Alaska Professional Hunters Assn. has filed a motion to intervene, which is being opposed by Bob’s legal team. The case filing and other documents on the case can be found on our website at this link: <https://www.residenthuntersofalaska.org/news>

While RHAK is fully behind Bob’s lawsuit, right now Bob is doing this all on his own with his own money, and it will end up costing hundreds of thousands of dollars to get this case before the Alaska Supreme Court. You can donate to Bob’s legal fees by sending a check to Ashburn & Mason, P.C., with “Cassell Trust” noted in the memo line. You can also call them with credit card information:

Ashburn & Mason, P.C.
1227 W. 9th Ave Ste. 200
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 276-4331

All this information is also available on our website in the News section.

Meet New RHAK Board Member Adam Grenda

Adam Grenda was born and raised in northern Idaho and lived for hunting, fishing, and a life outdoors. At age 17 Adam got his Coast Guard six-pack license, and for the next several summers between college semesters he guided in Alaska as a fishing guide and then returned to Idaho in the fall to hunt and study.

In 2009, he first stepped foot in a de Havilland Beaver. Adam then knew what he wanted to do for his career. He completed his private pilot license in less than a month, and moved on to get his instrument, commercial, flight instructor and float plane ratings. He began flying Beavers on floats for various fishing lodges for the next several summers, accumulating thousands of hours of flight time.

Adam graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Outdoor Recreation and met his wife, Tana, in Idaho in 2014, after she had also just returned from Alaska getting her air traffic control degree from UAA. After they got married, Adam and Tana moved to their dream location in King Salmon, Alaska, where he is a pilot for the federal government. They bought their dream airplane, a Piper Super Cub, to venture



on all of their own dream hunts and adventures. Adam loves planning, researching and preparing for his hunts and looks forward to the logistical challenges that Alaska offers.

At the 2018 Board of Game meeting in Dillingham he met Mark Richards from RHAK and began to see that residents do not have a priority in Alaska. Adam’s life revolves around hunting and he is passionate about resident hunting rights in the state he plans to reside in forever.
adam@residenthuntersofalaska.org

Introducing New RHAK Board Member Roger Denny

In 1974 I was 11 years old when my Dad, sister and myself packed our bags and left California to move to Alaska. Most of our relatives thought Dad was crazy to move two young kids so far away from family and home, but for us, it was an adventure of a lifetime – and still is! As kids, dad drug us up and down every river or creek that crossed the road from Anchor Point to Fairbanks. The places we went, the things we saw and the fish we caught are as vivid in my memory today as they were the day we experienced them!

45 years have passed since those early days and a lot has changed. I've had the opportunity to hunt and fish in just about every region of the state. I've seen the good, the bad and the extraordinary! Alaska is still an amazing place that has plenty of surprises and opportunities for all residents to experience. The only requirement is the freedom to go and the willingness to see what's over the next hill.

Those hills will always be there but the freedoms and opportunities for residents are something that cannot be taken for granted and complacency must be overcome. Most of us are so busy working and raising families, that it's easy to overlook or even realize that hunting opportunities for resident Alaskans are being slowly "shaved" away one small opportunity at a time. RHAK has become your



voice – the voice of the working Alaskan who just want to take their family hunting and put some meat in the freezer. I'm proud to be part of such a group!

Outside of hunting and fishing, I make my living as a General Contractor. I've lived in Eagle River / Chugiak for 45 years and I'm married to my sheep hunting partner, Shelly – "The Toughest Chick I Know!" We've raised a "pile" of kids the last 30 years. Some like to hunt more than others, but one thing they all have in common with most kids today; there are a lot more distractions for them today than when we were young. But through all those distractions, I've never had a young person say, "no" when I've asked them if they wanted a plane ride, or to go hunting or fishing – they just need to be asked. Never quit asking!

roger@residenthuntersofalaska.org

Other RHAK Board News



When RHAK formed we recognized that the amount of volunteer work Board members would be required to take on with a brand new organization would eat into their own work and daily lives, and that there would have to be some turnover of Board members.

Recently, RHAK Board member Doug Malone stepped down. Doug recently got married and was instrumental in helping RHAK get going. We can't thank him enough for all he has done for us; he will be sorely missed on the Board.

JR Gates and Rob Stone will be stepping down next fall. We are seeking new Board members, especially from the Interior. Contact Mark Richards if you are interested in volunteering for a great cause. The Board meets monthly from October to March, mostly by teleconference, but in person as well. Board members pay their own travel expenses.

Member Photos



Nichole D'Agostino



Brad Sparks and Trevor Embry



Tim Graham



Diane Jewkes



Sayr Aho with father Brad



Daniel Ferucci with father Paul



Hannah Hoagland

Advisory Committee

Keep up on ADF&G Advisory Committee meeting dates and times on our [RHAK Facebook page](#). We publish upcoming meetings there and encourage all to get more involved.

Renew Your Membership

Membership renewal is quick and easy on the RHAK website. But you can always contact Mark Richards at 371-7436 or info@residenthuntersofalaska.org.

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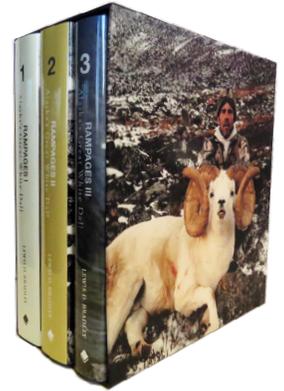


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Sheep Books

RHAK Founding Member Lew Bradley is out with a 3-volume set of books that span over 40 years of sheep hunting in Alaska! It also includes a history of Alaska Dall sheep hunting from 1914 to the present, 1800+ pages, and 1,000+ color photos.



As one reviewer stated, "This is a serious work, qualifying as the Gutenberg bible of Dall sheep hunting." Click for more info and how to order [Rampages, Alaska's Great White Dall](#).

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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