

# FeedbAK

**RHAK**  
Resident Hunters of Alaska

## Carrying on During a Pandemic

With the inability to hold large gatherings, such as our annual banquet, RHAK's fundraising ability has been greatly hampered. Our banquet is and was our major source of annual fundraising. We have scheduled our 2021 banquet for March 27th at the Egan Center in Anchorage, and are hopeful it will happen and many of you will attend. We also hope to return to a normalcy where we can again host member meetings and conduct educational seminars.

We are looking at other ways to raise funds and are always open to new ideas and new sponsors willing to donate services. This spring we held a spring flyout grizzly hunt raffle and this past fall we conducted a larger raffle package that included a Kodiak deer hunt for six and a South African safari, along with other prizes.

We want to thank Zack Knaebel at [Tok Air Service](#) for the donation of the flyout spring grizzly hunt. RHAK member John Wisniewski with a friend won the hunt and flew out with Zack to Unit 20E. John was successful and took a nice spring grizzly (see photo).

We also want to thank Captain Chad Sorenson of [Kodiak Deer Hunts](#) and his crew of the F/V Naknek Spirit for working with us to provide the Kodiak deer hunt for six.

We look forward to offering that same hunt package in a raffle next year. Likewise, a big thank you to Dave & Nikki Davenport of [Leopard Valley Safaris](#) in South Africa for the donation of the Eastern Cape safari hunt package. And finally, thanks to Anchorage and [Wasilla Sportsman's Warehouse](#) and [Barney's Sports Chalet](#) for their gift certificates.

With our membership promoting these raffles and purchasing tickets, RHAK was able to raise nearly \$30,000 to help fund our mission! Thank you so much for your help!

We will likely conduct another raffle this winter that incorporates a membership drive, so be on the lookout for that. Renewal notices are going out, so please renew your membership if you get an email notice. Membership dues also help with funding our mission and you are welcome to renew at a higher level!



*John Wisniewski's spring grizzly*

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## Hunter Access

RHAK has been supporting hunter access projects that help fully utilize the federal Pittman-Robertson funds from the sale of guns and ammo that are directed toward the Division of Wildlife Conservation. One such project that RHAK supported was recently approved, expanding parking to accommodate trailers at the Eklutna Lake Trailhead in Chugach State Park. [Click to read our letter of support.](#)

## 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](mailto:info@residenthuntersofalaska.org).

# Board of Game Stacked with Commercial Hunting Interests

RHAK Founding member Tom Lamal was not reappointed to the Board of Game this year, and with long-serving chairman Ted Spraker stepping down, the Governor appointed two more guides to the Board – Lynn Keogh & Jake Fletcher. That makes 3 licensed guides now serving on the seven-member Board.

During a normal year, and normal legislative session, our membership would have already heard about this. And we've been ready to notify membership to call and send in letters and emails to legislators opposing these appointments. But due to the pandemic, after these appointments were made, the legislature adjourned and there were no confirmation hearings, let alone hearings in Senate and House Resources committees as required.

The new guide appointees will likely sit and vote at the upcoming Statewide and Central/Southwest meetings this winter without the public or legislature having had a chance to weigh in on the addition of two more licensed guides to the board.

It should be noted that RHAK supported Al Barrette (a guide from Fairbanks) during the previous nomination

period. He essentially replaced another guide who was not reappointed. We don't support the addition of any more guides to the Board of Game.

RHAK has been in communication with several legislators already concerning this issue. And we will be in contact with newly elected legislators as well. We will ask for a swifter process after the new legislative session begins in January, to hold hearings on these new appointees and for the full legislature to hold a confirmation hearing prior to end of session as is normally done. There is already precedent for such actions.

We want to stress that our opposition to these two new appointees is based solely on the fact that their appointments unbalance the board in favor of commercial hunting interests and present a clear conflict when it comes to decisions regarding a resident hunting priority and allocations to nonresidents who must be guided.

We will send notice when it is time to call and send in letters. Along with you, our membership, we will do everything we can to convince legislators next session to oppose the addition of more guides to the Board of Game.

## Unit 19C Sheep

A longtime guide in Unit 19C in the western Alaska range [recently requested](#) that the Board of Game hear his proposal to shut down all sheep hunting for everyone in the unit for two years, due to his estimates of a 60% die off of sheep and very low numbers. The Department of Fish & Game [told the Board](#) that *“there may be a biological concern if existing regulations remain in place, although ADF&G does have emergency order authority to close seasons if necessary,”* but the Board declined to approve the request to consider the proposal at the next meeting.

RHAK certainly did not support any closure for residents, but supported the request to hear the proposal because we welcomed getting this in front of the Board again in the hope they would finally do something. From the outset RHAK has been proposing to limit nonresident guided sheep hunters in Unit 19C who take the majority of the harvest and threaten continued opportunities for residents.

Sheep management should be based on a conservation model that prioritizes resident sheep hunting opportunities, not one that allows nonresident hunters to take the majority of the harvest until significant declines shut down hunting opportunities for all.

## Alaska Election & Legislative Update

It's still too early to tell what the makeup of majorities in the Alaska House and Senate will look like in 2021. Several incumbents lost primaries or elections and we have a slate of new legislators. Budget issues will again prevail and dominate discussion as the 32nd Legislative session begins.

The capitol is being set up to control and prevent Covid 19 spread. The ongoing pandemic may affect public participation, but it's too early to know yet on that. The lobbyist community and our lobbyist will be in Juneau and working during the entire session. We will be pursuing legislation again to protect resident hunting opportunities along with meeting with legislators to better inform them about the issues resident hunters face.

# Board of Game Meetings Update

The Board of Game was scheduled to hold a Central/Southwest Region IV meeting in Wasilla in January, and a Statewide meeting in Fairbanks in March. However, due to the ongoing concern with the pandemic, the board has postponed the January meeting to a to-be-determined date in March or April 2021, and will meet via teleconference in January to determine if in-person meetings can be held at all this spring.

The public was asked to weigh in on their recommendations to the board and RHAK recommended in-person meetings if possible, or potentially teleconference/Zoom meetings. What we didn't want to see was a postponement of these meetings until 2022, and the entire 3-year Board cycle thus shift a year. Having said that, a teleconference meeting in no way can match an in-person meeting where Board members and Department staff are available to speak with, and where the general public can testify and mingle and discuss issues as well.

Comment deadlines for the January Board meeting have been revised and are due two weeks prior to a rescheduled meeting.

It's still important to look at the proposals before the board for the upcoming meetings and send in comments on those you want to weigh in on. Below are links to the information for the 2021 Central/Southwest Region IV meeting and the Statewide meeting. Proposals can be found at those links. We will send more information on specific proposals in a member email.

**Board of Game Meetings**  
[Central & Southwest Region Meeting Info](#)  
[Statewide Regulations Meeting Info](#)

# Fish & Game Advisory Committee Meetings

Advisory Committees typically meet monthly during the winter months and are an essential part of our public system of wildlife management. We encourage all members to attend meetings, run for a seat on the committee that represents your area, and to vote for those who represent your interests in wildlife conservation and a resident hunting priority. Most meetings now are being held via Zoom or teleconference, which makes it easy to listen in. For a list of meetings this winter, choose your committee of interest on the [ADFG Advisory Committees by Region web page](#).

# Federal Subsistence Board Report

Many of our members were rightly upset when the Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) closed caribou and moose hunting this past fall on federal lands in parts of Unit 13 to non-federally-qualified subsistence users. The closure extends through 2022.

RHAK opposed the proposal, ([click here to read our letter](#)) which was yet another Wildlife Special Action Request absent of any biological necessity. In this instance, the FSB acknowledged there were no biological concerns but determined that non-federally-qualified hunters were somehow hindering or crowding fed-qualified hunters. Which makes no sense considering fed-qualified users have an earlier caribou season date and a two-caribou bag limit, and can start hunting bull moose a month earlier with no antler restrictions.

RHAK fully supports hunting restrictions for residents based on biological concerns for a wildlife population, but if there is a nonresident component involved that group should always be limited or restricted first. The problem is the federal system does not allow any distinction between lower 48 residents and Alaska residents who don't live in the proper zip code. We are each non-federally-qualified users. This includes Alaskans who grew up in, or moved from, a rural area who would like to return to hunt with family and friends on fed lands.

The state filed an injunction against the FSB to stop the closure, which was denied by the court. RHAK will continue to ask our congressional delegation to get more involved with FSB actions and stop needless closures on fed lands to so many.

# RHAK Donates to Alaskans Afield

RHAK utilized revenues from the auction of Governor's tags to further boost a contribution to the Division of Wildlife Conservation's Alaskans Afield program. The program is similar to Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW), which we have contributed to before, but open to all genders and ages. With the addition of federal 3:1 Pittman-Robertson matching funds we were able to add \$6,500 toward program scholarships. We encourage more members to get involved in teaching BOW and Alaskans Afield classes and pass on our hunting traditions and experience to others.

[Click here to read about the various classes in your area.](#)

# Cassell v. State of Alaska & Board of Game

RHAK Board member Bob Cassell has had enough and has taken it on himself using his own money to challenge the Board of Game's Kodiak brown bear allocation policy that awards 40 percent of all draw permits to nonresident guided hunters. The attorneys representing Mr. Cassell also represented John Sturgeon in his successful case before the U.S. Supreme Court. This is going to be costly and time consuming. We encourage you to donate to Mr. Cassell's legal fund via the information on the link above. The case is now making its way through Superior Court.

[Click here to read the complaint, motions, and counter-motions](#)

## Introducing New RHAK Board Members

When RHAK formed in 2006 we recognized that the work involved in getting the organization up and running would be intense and that not all of our original board members – with families to raise, work and other commitments – would serve forever. So we made a plan recognizing some would leave after their initial 3-year term. We also wanted our board to have a revolving door that incorporated new

board members with new and fresh ideas and vitality, so our bylaws set the number of board members allowing from 5 to 9. We are proud to announce our two new board members, Colt Foster, and Dick Cameron. See their bios below. This brings our board to 8 members. If you are interested in serving on the RHAK board please contact Executive Director Mark Richards.

## Meet Board Member Colt Foster

Colt Foster was born and raised in Wasilla, AK and has spent his entire life enjoying everything the outdoors has to offer. After finishing dental school in 2008 Colt returned to Alaska because of the amazing hunting and fishing opportunities he had grown up with. Seeing an increase in hunting pressure and in-the-field conflicts, Colt became involved with RHAK as a founding member with the hopes of preserving quality hunting opportunities for future generations of Alaskans. "I want to help give residents a voice going forward. I want my kids and their friends to have some of the same experiences I had growing up. Hunting adventures with my family in this great state shaped who I am today."



## Meet Board Member Dick Cameron

We're not sure when my grandfather left Scotland, but he landed in Juneau in 1917. Over the generations our family has participated in mining, commercial fishing and construction but the one constant has been hunting and fishing. Growing up we gardened and fished the summer months, canned and hunted in the fall and lived off what we put away throughout the winter. I was taught to respect the ocean, streams and woods and creatures that live in them. To harvest what you need and use all that you harvest.

I've been fortunate to be able to hunt and fish most Alaska's varied geographic regions from the western Brooks to the south tip of Prince of Wales. The range of emotions one can experience are as vast as the land we live in. The satisfaction



of witnessing your values and love for the outdoors come to life in your children, and soon, grandchildren. These are the experiences that should be made available to those who choose to live and work here first, rather than sold off to the highest bidder.

Alaska in a national treasure, a beautiful place steeped in opportunity and tradition. The appeal to the traveling sportsman is 100% natural and to be expected. The desires of Outside hunters and anglers, along with the industries that facilities them, should never be allowed to supersede the wishes and needs of those us who have chosen to live here. I hope my unique perspective and experiences can help RHAK restore and protect what we all hold so dear.

# Member Photos



*Landen Soloy with grizzly and his first sheep*



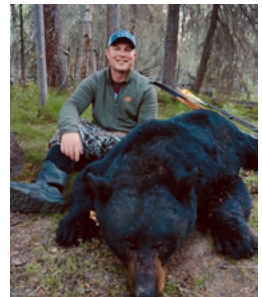
*Nick Muche with sheep, caribou, grizzly, and black bear*



*Diane Jewkes and family*



*Lenny Jewkes with an easy pack*



*Emily Cizek*



*Mackenzie Cizek*



*Hunter Hongslo*



*Lindsey Hongslo*

# Member Photos



*Dalton Borton with caribou, bear, and deer*



*Scott Jenkins*



*Braxton Jenkins' first deer*



*Scott Jenkins*



*Scott Jenkins and his son Braxton*



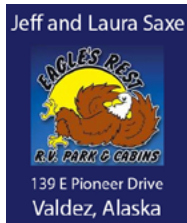
*Greg Borton*



*Jordan Hunter Geary with moose, and a bear that was his first bow hunt harvest*



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