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Volume Sixteen, Number Fourteen

April 4, 1979

Anchorage, Alaska

Subsistence policy, guidelines adopted

The Alaska Boards of Fisheries and Games adopted a subsistence policy statement last week assigning subsistence uses of fish and game a priority among beneficial uses.

In both the policy statement and an accompanying document outlining the procedures for its implementation, the boards avoided giving a specific definition to just what subsistence might be. However, the boards did warn that although the use of fish and game for subsistence is vital to many Alaskans, limitations on fish and game stocks may in turn limit the number of persons who could be defined as subsistence users.

The boards recognized, as some feared they would not, that subsistence use goes beyond merely satisfying food requirements. "... home consumption of fish and game tends to preserve cultures and traditions and gives gratification to a strong desire possessed by many Alaskans to harvest their own food," read a portion of the policy statement.

"The latter functions seem genuinely important to the physical and psychological well-being of a large number of Alaskans," continued the statement, which was passed unanimously.

The statement was signed by Gordon Jensen, chairman of the joint boards

of fisheries and game; Dr. Samuel J. Harbo Jr., chairman of the Alaska Board of Game, and Nicholas Szabo, chairman of the Alaska Board of Fisheries.

The policy statement and implementation guidelines came at the end of five days of sometimes heated testimony as urban and rural users pushed their points of view.

"There's a hell of a difference between village and urban users," Jimmy Huntington, board member from Galena, pointed out in the final stages of discussion on the policy statement. "Just because the (urban user) camps out a couple of times a year doesn't make him a subsistence user."

Huntington said he knew of Natives in small villages with no income who could not compete in their own areas with urban hunters who come in by airplane.

"Just because you eat

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BOARD PONDERERS — Members of the joint boards of fish and game wrestle with the subsistence question at meetings in Anchorage. From left are Jim Beaton, Chris Goll, Jimmy Huntington, Calvin Fair, Mick Szabo, Chairman Gordon Jensen, and Dr. Samuel Harbo.

— B. Englishhoe Photo

Wolf kill to continue

The state's aerial wolf hunt can continue, Anchorage Superior Court Judge Milton Souter ruled late Monday.

But, melting snow and breakup conditions are hindering the state's efforts to kill off 170 wolves in the area between Mt. McKinley Park and the Yukon River.

Only about 50 wolves have been killed so far, according to the latest reports. The controversial hunt was initiated in an attempt to bolster the dwindling moose population in the 35,000 square mile area.

Environmentalists attacked the decision by Fish and Game Commissioner Ronald Skoog in both state and federal courts. They won in the federal courts when a U.S. District Court judge ruled in March that wolf hunting could not continue on federal lands unless an environmental impact statement was filed.

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Beaufort Sea sale may be delayed

By LAURY ROBERTS
Juneau Correspondent

Leaders in northern coastal communities are reacting with "cautious cooperation" to proposed state and federal offshore lease sales which could result in oil and gas development, while the first of those, the Beaufort Sea sale, could be postponed, due to incomplete preparation.

Both the state and federal government have proposed separate five-year offshore leasing schedules. Lease sales, which require up to 2½ years of prior study, will be held jointly where possible.

Native leaders from Kodiak, Kotzebue, Bristol Bay, Nome, and Barrow testified in person and via the teleconference network last week during meetings in Juneau on the federal outer continental shelf (OCS) lease plan and the Beaufort sale set for December.

Witnesses from the bush expressed concerns for timely planning, the preservation of subsistence life-style and culture, and strict safety standards.

"A lease sale does not

signal the beginning of the end," said Kotzebue mayor Royal Harris, during a statewide "town meeting" teleconference on proposed OCS leasing. "We want technology compatible with our subsistence lifestyle."

"OCS is orderly development and can be more so if the entire region is involved in discussion," said Dennis Tiepelman of Mauneluk Non-Profit Native Corporation.

But others were more wary of offshore leasing. During a teleconference press interview with Gov. Jay Hammond, reporter Sue Boyle of Nome said the Unalakleet Native Corporation wanted to know which

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GOV. JAY HAMMOND makes point during Saturday meeting of Board of Fish, but avoided trying to define subsistence use.