

Appendix 3

Subsistence Hearing Transcripts

The Forest Service held a subsistence hearing on the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Prince of Wales Outfitter and Guide Management Plan on August 25, 2012. Six people testified during that hearing. This appendix displays the hearing transcripts.

Introduction

Following publication of the EA, a public meeting and subsistence hearing was held in Craig, Alaska on April 25, 2012. Eleven people attended the meeting and hearing. Six people provided oral testimony during the subsistence hearing. The hearing transcripts are included in their entirety in this appendix.

Much of the testimony heard in the subsistence hearings was also expressed as comments on the EA (see Appendix 2 of this decision). This testimony, the other comments made about the EA, and discussions heard during meetings with the tribes and the public were considered in making the decision on this project. Please see the Decision Notice and Appendix 2 to see more information on the decision and on the comments and responses to these concerns.

Additionally, many of the concerns brought forward in the subsistence hearings are outside the scope of this project or outside the jurisdiction of the Forest Service. Because some issues are outside our jurisdiction, the Forest Service is unable to change the management of these resources to address the public's concerns. To better inform the agencies that do manage resources outside of our control, we forwarded the comments and concerns brought forward in the subsistence hearings to the State. The State is the regulating agency that addresses these concerns.

Additional questions were asked and answered during the public meeting on August 25, 2012. Those conversations are available for review in the project record.

Hearing Transcript

**Prince of Wales Outfitter and Guide EA Public Hearing
Craig Alaska
Wednesday, April 25, 2012
6:00p.m.**

Francisco Sanchez: “This is being recorded. This is a public meeting for an ANILCA hearing for the Prince of Wales Outfitter and Guide Management Plan. My name is Francisco Sanchez I am the district ranger here in Craig. I have been delegated by the United States Forest Service as a hearing officer for this proceeding. I would like to

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welcome you all here, thank you for coming tonight. I appreciate your interest in this project and your effort to be here for this subsistence hearing.

The purpose of this hearing is to receive your views on the alternatives proposed for the project and how they may affect your subsistence use of the project area. We are also interested in your comments and will accept them for the record. The hearing hours tonight are from 6 pm to 8 pm. If you have not done so, please sign in on the sign in sheet in the back room. Please clearly print your name, address, and if you are representing anyone and indicate if you would like to give oral testimony tonight. Written testimony will also be received, and there are pencils and paper available in the back. When giving testimony please come sit in the chair to my left, speak into the microphone so testimony may be recorded, please state your full name, and spell it out for the record when you come up to testify. Since there is few people present I will not limit it to 10 minutes. There are about five people all together. I will say if you wish to give additional testimony, you will have the opportunity to do so after everyone else present has had a chance to speak. If I have someone up here and they are up to 30 minutes in testimony we will go ahead and stop you to let other people come up and speak. Then we will go back and listen to you after everyone has gone through.

This session combined an information meeting and hearing. During the hearing no questions can be answered other than those concerning the hearing procedures. Are there any more questions concerning this project, or the project location at this time?

We will now get started and start with the sign in sheet and go in the order that people have signed up.”

6:12 pm

Hearing Testimony

James D. See: “With all of the road closures that have occurred, this is the first year that I have traveled out of town with my grandkids, going over to winter harbor, with the long road that goes behind Nasik being closed, it was very difficult in November trying to hunt because of the number of people that were there from Ketchikan. They were all running around on 4-wheelers and it was a problem. I can’t foresee adding any guides at this time, so I would say that alternative 1 for hunting is as good as we go with this.

I don’t drive around much so I don’t know how bad it is up north. People have told me the North end has got a lot of road closure too so it’s compressed all the people that live here into a smaller area so it is going to make it more difficult for people to get deer in my opinion.

As far as the fishing part goes, I am pretty much a conservationist. That is not a preservationist. I use the definition as why use as resource not nobody gets to use it. I have no problem with people keeping a steelhead here or there, but when the numbers are down, something needs to be done about it. I do appreciate what has been done in Klawock by the Ranger here, because of the resource just being really trashed up there.

I really don’t want to see any more guides here. I think if we had more guides here they are all going to come from somewhere else or not going to be people on the island. I don’t know if that is a legal technicality for you guys or not, but outside people do not need to come in here and

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deal with a lot more stuff and bring in a lot more people in my opinion. If we start having hard winters here, we are not going to have very many deer.

Thank you. “

Francisco: “Also during this testimony if you think of something else that comes to mind wait until that last person comes in and then you can give testimony again.”

Clinton Cook: “I am the president of the Craig Tribe. As far as the hunting I agree with Mr. See in a lot of the areas of hunting. You guys have closed thousands of miles of road. It has impacted us greatly as people of the forest. We are people of the forest, the tribes, and it impacts us greatly when you guys close our areas and everything gets compacted into very few limited roads that we can access. The pressure is just tremendous in those areas even when you go out in a skiff. It puts a lot of pressure on the areas that are open to hunt.

As far as fishing, that is our resource, not somebody’s to open up and make money off of. That is our resource that is taken away from us.

Another huge factor is the price of fuel. Our people are not going to be able to travel to roads that are open to hunt; they are going to stay closer to home. If the roads are closed, they may not get their deer they need to survive the winter. Or they will not be able to go get the sockeye to can. That is our feeling, and the tribe will follow up with a resolution on this issue.

Thank you for your time.”

Brian Castle: “I am in favor of proposal 1 because I would just as soon there not be any more guides than there are now, whether that is hunting or fishing. Because the logging is now growing up on the island in the last 20 years, so those areas are not productive like they were. It has forced people to go into a more confined area. There seems to be quite a few guides on the island already. If you go on the East side of the island there are lots. Most of them are coming from Ketchikan mainly. We never used to see guides out on the water but the last few years we have.

I agree that the price of fuel has caused people to stay a little closer to home or at least not travel as much. It is more important that when they do go, they can get something. We are surrounded by quite a bit of private land, so I would like to see the Forest Service not increase the amount of guides hunting wise and also fishing wise.

There has been a lot more pressure on steelhead. Some of the guide outfits, if there is somebody already there, they have got to have these people go someplace, so they drop them off and don’t leave them a vehicle. So when they go down to the holes, they don’t have a lot of choices on where to go when there is someone already there. That is becoming more and more prevalent and the steelhead are getting a lot of pressure. I would just as soon there not be any more fishing stream guides and stay status quo. If it could be, I would just assume it be a little bit less.

People have to go farther away from their place of residency just because it seems there are a lot of guides that are fairly close to town. They are not the ones having to travel the distance; it is the residents that have to go farther to find a place that does not have a bunch of guided people

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on it. I would just as soon the Forest Service choose alternative 1, because I do not want to see more guides fishing or hunting on the island.

Thank you very much for letting me testify.”

Vaughn Skinna: “I am a commercial fisherman, and also a tribal member. Some of the issues that I have seen as a tribal member is not only a reduction in the area where we get to hunt and fish but in technology and people needing 4-wheelers or off-road vehicles to break over the bars, to get to the more better hunting spots. On the island here, I don’t believe we have as many 4-wheelers as what comes over from Ketchikan. It doesn’t take a brain surgeon to figure out how much deer are going out. You just have to go to the ferry when people are coming in and out.

As for the charter business, as a commercial fisherman, in spots I have fished I have had charter boats try and push me out of where I make my living.

Another issue I have that nobody talks about, or keeps really quiet about is in my eyes, the charter industry is just another commercial industry. All you have to do is go the airport and see all the fish boxes that are getting shipped out every day. I am sure there are limits on what they are allowed to catch, but you accumulate all that and it’s just another commercial fisheries and should be treated as such. It is frustrating to try and be a subsistence hunter, gatherer, and you go by an airport and see masses of fish being brought out. It is difficult for our local traditional people who thrive on that. It is not a lifestyle; it is just our way of life that is how we have been forever. To see all that fish shipped out every day on Alaska Airlines is quite frustrating. As traditional people, we basically eat the whole fish, and people off the charter boats take select parts off the fish and the rest is gone.

My idea of the proposal is it really should be reduced. Pressure should be reduced and brought back to people on this island so they could hunt and fish in a manner that they have been used to for ten thousand years. It is out of hand and I would like to see people look at it as it is already to the point where the pressure is too high and it definitely needs a handle on it.

That is all I have, thank you”

Don Nickerson “I am the president of our tribe in Klawock. I was very happy and glad we got invited to this testimony. One of the things I saw right off the bat was its sports fishing guide. You take a look at the people on this island, and I was hoping there would be other entities here, glad to see City of Craig here. There is a big difference in subsistence harvesting and sports guide. Sports guide comes here to shoot a deer for their thrill. When we shoot a deer, it is our food.

The high cost of fuel has impacted everybody, not only on this island but the United States. In the last 10 years, I have seen drastic changes.

I live off the land especially with our deer and I am in favor of Alternative 1. I think we need to be more in control of it.

I would like the Forest Service to take a look at the deer tickets and collect some data for this issue. Compare what is being taken off the island to what is being traditionally harvested on this island. It is a very important resource, not only to our tribe, but to the people that live on this

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island. There is a lot of people that do hurt and it is not only Klawock, but Coffman Cove, Naukiti, Whale Pass. A lot of these people in the outlying communities attend celebrations in Klawock and you can see the impact on everything. I was hoping there would have been more people here from the outlying communities.

I had a lot of concern about the 4-wheelers. They are everywhere; no matter where I hike I hear 4-wheelers. Not only adults but children driving them, they are careless. The thing that scares me about 4-wheelers, it takes one drop of oil to destroy a stream. When they go through the wash bars it is going to have an impact, not only on sport hunting our deer, but could wipe out a stream. I am hoping the Forest Service will take a look at that and put some restrictions on it. I think it is important that we protect our environment. I think they should not be allowed to go through wash bars, or creeks or streams. Every machine will always drip oil regardless.

As far as the sports fishing goes, I think there needs to be more of a control on that also. Everything on that has gotten out of control. I understand that the State needs some revenue to keep their department going. I think it is imperative that they start collecting accurate data on that. I understand that we have a lot of local fisherman that do troll that area, but at the same time there are many charter boats. The charter boats are coming in with small halibut. It scares me. We don't have halibut where we normally have it, we don't have sea cucumbers where we used to. A lot of our resources are diminishing due to commercialization. I am really hoping that the federal Forest Service will work with the State and look into these important factors. I don't want our resources to diminish. I think food is an important aspect of our diet here on the island and I think accurate data needs to be documented. Not only to benefit the resources, but to benefit the people on this island. I don't want to sit down 20 years from now and say "what happened to our resources"? We need to be managing that a little bit better. I am really hoping the Department of Agriculture will collaborate with the State in a more professional manner. It bothers me because I have seen these resources diminish in the last ten years.

I can support the commercial trollers because they have to feed their families and pay taxes to say on this island. But a lot of the sports guiding that is happening here do not live on the island. So that revenue and those resources leave the island. I am really hoping we can collaborate and work with not only the Forest Service but the State to realize these things. I don't want to just be sitting here watching trees grow 20 years from now. I want to make sure these resources are here. I am really in favor of alternative 1.

As far as off island hunters go, there is quite a few of them, not only from Ketchikan, but everywhere. Ted Nugent just got in trouble for shooting a bear. There needs to be some kind of policy in place whether it be a lottery system or something. There should be a minimized number that should be allowed on this island. Due to the fact that the statements you heard earlier. We are gradually getting downsized. I don't know what the data is on the deer. I know we can tell by what is harvested through our deer tickets, but at the same time, how many are getting killed by the bear and how many are getting killed by the wolves? I have seen a lot more bear in the last 5 years than I have seen in my life. The population of wolves is growing. There really aren't any trappers for the wolves. There are a lot of things that are impacting the deer.

I want to thank you for allowing me to do this testimony. I think it is important not only on our tribal behalf, but also on the people that live on this island. Thank you."

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Francisco “Is there anyone else here that wants to testify? We have no one else signed up to testify I will suspend the hearing at this time. I will restart the hearing if someone wishes to testify. We are here until 8:00pm so I can entertain questions, my staff can entertain some questions about the alternatives, but if someone shows up to testify, we will go back to the hearing. “

Francisco “I officially restart the hearing. The time is now 7:17pm and I call Mr. Cook.”

Clinton Cook: “I just have a question for you guys. You made the statement that you were unable to manage what you have already with guides and you are understaffed. This is another strike against you opening up the outfitter business. How are you going to police more outfitters when you can’t police what you have got in place? Thank you”

Scott Willburn: “The reason I am here tonight, is I am concerned about adding more pressure to the areas that are often times over used by non-residents. I have encountered on the Klawock River guys that have come up rented cabins and gone down to the river fished their limit, gone home had lunch come back and fished their limit again. I have been on the Thorne River when a group of 20 people descended upon the hole that I was fishing and literally crossed my lines continually. I am more concerned about the fact that this stuff is still going on and it looks like the use will be increased.

It is possible that the TLUMP that basically stimulated just requires everyone to have their say in this matter. My say is, if you enter into a set up where there is a contractual agreement between you and a charter person or a guide, it seems like that would supersede subsistence and because of the contract you entered into the subsistence would become secondary in priorities. Because of that my opinion is subsistence should continue to be the highest priority to the use of the area. If that includes cutting trees down for homes or firewood, fishing, hunting and any economic benefits that come off of it should be secondary.”

Francisco “At this time if there is no further testimony I will suspend the hearing and open it up for questions. The time now is 7:22pm.”

Francisco Sanchez “Is there anyone else in here that would like to testify? Since no one else would like to testify, so I will end the hearing at this time. The time is 8:01pm.”