



Sportfish Guides Services Board Task Force Update April 17, 2008

The task force met in Anchorage on April 10th and 11th to further clarify and refine the draft legislation being developed in conjunction with ADF&G. Present at this meeting along with task force members were representatives from the Big Game Guide Services Board and the department of Commerce.

Some minor changes to the draft were implemented for clarification but the intent of the proposed legislation stays the same.

A Sportfish Guide Services Board would be created under the Dept. of Commerce to take over the licensing of guides, assistant guides, transporters and sportfish service outfitters (non-guided operations, boat rentals). This "new" license would replace the existing license issued by ADF&G. There would be some additional requirements to become a guide or assistant guide and some new reporting requirements for non-guided operations. Some of the benefits of these additional requirements would be to slow growth of the industry without totally preventing new entry, licensing and reporting of the un-guided operations, establishing guide use units for the purpose of regulating the number of guides that could use a particular area (a type of limited entry), better enforcement of people operating in the "gray" areas and professionalizing the industry.

Some drawbacks of the legislation could be increased license costs (thought to be minimal for resident operators but more significant for non-resident operators or guides), additional requirements for a new business to start up (assistant guide apprenticeship time requirements) and testing to get a guides license (some provisions "grandfathering" would likely be made for existing established businesses).

Task force members believe the benefits far outweigh the drawbacks. Traditional management tools are becoming so restrictive that the continued viability of our industry in some areas is in question. Without some way to slow growth and limit participation in these areas, the differential regulations between guided and non-guided will continue to widen and encourage more growth in the un-guided, un-regulated sector.

One additional meeting of the task force is being considered for early October. ADF&G is firm in wanting this draft legislation to go out to public in the fall of 08 and to the Legislature in the spring of 09.

For more information:

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