

# *Annual Report*

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# *Fiscal Year 2021*

## **Big Game Commercial Services**



**Department of Commerce, Community  
and Economic Development**

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**Division of Corporations, Business  
and Professional Licensing**

This annual performance report is presented in accordance with  
Alaska statute AS 08.01.070(10).

Its purpose is to report the accomplishments, activities, and the  
past and present needs of the licensing program.

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**Identification of the Board**

<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Duty Station</b>	<b>Date Appointed</b>	<b>Term Expires</b>
<b>Pete Buist</b> Public Member	Fairbanks	Mar 01, 2021	Mar 01, 2025
<b>Adam Trombley</b> Public Member	Anchorage	Feb 02, 2017	Mar 01, 2022
<b>Ely Cyrus</b> Private Landholders/Restricted	Kiana	Mar 01, 2021	Mar 01, 2024
<b>Martin Boniek</b> Licensed Transporter	Glennallen	Mar 01, 2021	Mar 01, 2025
<b>Michael Flores</b> Licensed Transporter	Soldotna	May 11, 2020	Mar 01, 2023
<b>Jerry Burnett</b> Designated Board of Game Member/Restricted	Juneau	Jan 01, 2021	Mar 01, 2024
<b>Aaron Bloomquist</b> Licensed Registered Guide- Outfitter	Copper Center	Mar 01, 2021	Mar 01, 2025
<b>Jason Bunch, Chair</b> Licensed Registered Guide- Outfitter	Kodiak	Mar 01, 2019	Mar 01, 2023

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**Identification of Staff**

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# Big Game Commercial Services FY 2021 Annual Report

## Narrative Statement

The Big Game Commercial Services Board (Board) was created by the Legislature “For the purpose of licensing and regulating the activities of providers of commercial services to big game hunters in the interest of the state’s wildlife resources...” (AS 08.54.591(a)). The Board consists of nine members, including two active guides, two transporters, two private landowners, two members of the public, and one Board of Game member. Currently there is one vacant private landowner member seat on the Board.

The Board’s duties include developing and administering guide examinations, overseeing guide applications and authorizations, assuring guides and transporters have appropriate permission from landowners, establishing codes of ethics, imposing appropriate disciplinary sanctions, and adopting procedural and substantive regulations (AS 08.54.600). The Board typically meets three times per year - twice a year in person, one telephonic meeting in July as well as periodic teleconferences primarily for executive session disciplinary considerations. During the COVID-19 pandemic all meetings have been held virtually via Zoom. All meetings are advertised and open to the public, except for the executive sessions. Funding for Board activities, including legal costs and associated support by staff from the Division of Corporations, Businesses and Professional Licensing, is provided by license fees collected from guides and transporters. There is one investigator assigned to the Board, one occupational licensing examiner and one Executive Administrator who is also responsible for one other professional Board.

FY 2021 brought many changes to the Board: Jason Bunch (Registered Guide) was elected Chairman and five new appointments included Mr. Burnett (Board of Game), Mr. Boniek (Transporter), Mr. Flores (Transporter), Mr. Bloomquist (Registered Guide) and Mr. Cyrus (Private Landowner). Mr. Buist was also appointed for a second term.

Regulatory changes included AS 08.54.610 (b) and AS 08.54.710 (k) Master Guide license requirements, 12 AAC 75.230 Guide Use Area registration requirements, 12 AAC 75.130 Criteria for application for Assistant Guide, 12 AAC 75.120 Criteria for application for Class-A Assistant Guide, 12 AAC 75.140 Criteria for Application for Transporter License.

Current sub-committee, staff and other Board related projects include game management unit certification exam map updating with Dept. of Natural Resources, Transporter regulation review, 12 AAC 75.750 Supervision regulation review, 12 AAC 75.460 (a) removing caribou from minimum harvest criteria, 12 AAC 75.450 (b)(13) addressing unlawful provisions and removing game processing equipment, 12 AAC 75.150 Professional Development for all classes of guides, New “Survivorship/Successorship” regulation which entails possible statute change and addressing details of lawful “partnerships” business model.

Financial status of the Board is in good standing. The Board is diligently managing funds and consistently works with executive administrator, Ms. Hoffard, to ensure finances are handled appropriately. The third quarter report reflects a surplus of \$358,000. Due to the collection of fees with biannual licensing, this is an appropriate and adequate balance for expenditures throughout this non-licensing fee year. Adjustments to Board finances include allocation of funds for Investigative Officer field travel and reduced cost for registered guide game management unit certification applications.

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**Narrative Statement (continued)**

Investigative Efforts include 77 cases opened, 90 cases closed, and 28 that are currently open. The apparent cause for investigation of nearly half of these cases was administrative error and license application issues.

Communication to licensees has increased dramatically through electronic and postal mail. Additionally, “seminar” style education has been incorporated into board meetings to address current undesirable trends and simply to provide refresher training. These efforts have resulted in a growing number of active participants in the board process. The desired long-term outcome is fewer investigations for unlawful administrative actions.

The Board continues to support State and Federal landowner permitting processes including Alaska Dept. of Natural Resource, USDA - Forest Service and National Wildlife Refuge Managers.

The Board wrote a letter expressing opposition to Federal Subsistence Board proposal WSA21-01.

The big game guiding industry creates about \$80 million in economic activity within the state annually. While no similar hard data or figures are available for transporters, a good estimate would be in the \$40-50 million range. About 1,600 jobs with \$13 million in wages and \$12 million spent in rural areas for goods and services can be attributed specifically to the guiding industry in Alaska. In addition to guide fees, visiting clients indirectly spend approximately \$29.5 million within Alaska.

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**Budget Recommendations for FY 2022**

The Budget Recommendations section anticipates the board’s fiscal priorities for the upcoming year. Please complete all parts of this section with details about anticipated meetings, conferences, memberships, supplies, equipment, to other board requests. Meeting expenses that are being funded through third-party reimbursement or direct booking must be identified separately from expenses paid through license fees (receipt-supported services or RSS). Be sure to explain any items listed as “other” so they may be tracked appropriately.

Board Meeting Date	Location	# Board	# Staff
July 2021	Video Conference		
<input type="checkbox"/> Airfare:			\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel:			\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Ground:			\$0.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other:			\$300.00
<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>			<b>\$300.00</b>

Board Meeting Date	Location	# Board	# Staff
Nov 30-Dec 2, 2021	Anchorage	8	2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airfare:			\$1,500.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hotel:			\$3,100.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ground:			\$500.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other:			\$2,500.00
<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>			<b>\$7,600.00</b>

Board Meeting Date	Location	# Board	# Staff
March 2022	Fairbanks	8	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Airfare:			\$2,500.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel:			\$6,800.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Ground:			\$1,000.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:			\$2,500.00
<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>			<b>\$12,800.00</b>

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**Budget Recommendations for FY 2022 (continued)**

**Travel Required to Perform Examinations**

Not applicable

Date	Location	# Board	# Staff
12/1-3/2021	Anchorage	2	2
<b>Description of meeting and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:</b>			
Written and practical examinations provided in conjunction with scheduled board meeting.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Airfare:			\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel:			\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Ground:			\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Conference:			\$0.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other:			\$3,000.00
Describe "Other" (break out all sections):			
<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>			<b>\$3,000.00</b>

**Out-of-State Meetings and Additional In-State Travel** (Rank in order of importance)

#1 Rank in Importance or  Not Applicable

Date	Location	# Board	# Staff	
March 2022	Fairbanks	2	2	
<b>Description of meeting and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:</b>				
Written and practical examinations provided in conjunction with scheduled board meeting.				
Expenditure	License Fees (RSS)	Third-Party Reimbursement	Third-Party Direct Booked	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Airfare:	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel:	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Ground:	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Conference:	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other	\$3,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,000.00
Describe "Other" (break out all sections):				
<b>Net Total:</b>	<b>\$3,000.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$3,000.00</b>

### Out-of-State Meetings and Additional In-State Travel

#2 Rank in Importance

Date	Location	# Board	# Staff	
TBD	Varied		1 (INV)	
<b>Description of meeting and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:</b>				
Board approved 2 in-the-field travel trips for the program investigator to work with Alaska Wildlife Troopers and other state/federal agencies. Not to exceed \$6000 per fiscal year.				
Expenditure	License Fees (RSS)	Third-Party Reimbursement	Third-Party Direct Booked	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Airfare:	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel:	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Ground:	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Conference:	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other	\$6,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$6,000.00
Describe "Other" (break out all sections):				
<b>Net Total:</b>	<b>\$6,000.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$6,000.00</b>

### Out-of-State Meetings and Additional In-State Travel

#3 Rank in Importance

Date	Location	# Board	# Staff	
<b>Description of meeting and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:</b>				
Expenditure	License Fees (RSS)	Third-Party Reimbursement	Third-Party Direct Booked	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Airfare:	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel:	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Ground:	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Conference:	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Describe "Other" (break out all sections):				
<b>Net Total:</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

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**Budget Recommendations for FY 2022 (continued)**

**Non-Travel Budget Requests**

- Not Applicable                       Resources                       Examinations  
 Membership                               Training                               Other

Product or Service	Provider	Cost Per Event
		\$0.00

**Description of item and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:**

**Other Items with a Fiscal Impact**

**Cost Per Event:                      \$0.00**

- Not Applicable

**Number of Events:                      0**

Product or Service	Provider	Total Cost
		\$0.00

**Description of item and its role in supporting the mission of the Board:**

**Summary of FY 2022 Fiscal Requests**

Board Meetings and Teleconferences:	\$20,700.00
Travel for Exams:	\$3,000.00
Out-of-State and Additional In-State Travel:	\$9,000.00
Dues, Memberships, Resources, Training:	\$0.00
Total Potential Third-Party Offsets:	-\$0.00
Other:	\$0.00
<b>Total Requested:</b>	<b>\$32,700.00</b>

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**Legislation Recommendations Proposed Legislation for FY 2022**

**No Recommendations**

The Board has no recommendations for proposed legislation at this time.

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**Recommendations**

The Board has the following recommendations for proposed legislation:

There may be cause for the BGCSB to propose to the legislature a statutory change to address supporting a guide business during times of emergency. The concept entails modification of AS 08.54.750 Use Area Registration (a), which would remove the 30 day requirement for Guide Use Area registration from statute and address it in regulation to provide for emergency conditions.

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**Regulation Recommendations Proposed Legislation for FY 2022**

**No Recommendations**

The Board has no recommendations for proposed regulations at this time.

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**Recommendations**

The Board has the following recommendations for proposed regulations:

The following regulation topics will be considered for regulation amendments.

- Professional Development criteria for all classes of guides
- UVC regulation clarification
- Adding Survivorship for Emergency transfers
- Supervision regulation criteria
- Definitions of “physically present”, “primarily in the field”, “in or near camp”
- Remove caribou from minimum harvest criteria
- Unlawful provisions by transporters
- Marine Transporter Regulation

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**Goals and Objectives**

**Part I**

**FY 2021's goals and objectives, and how they were met:**

Projects completed this year that were forecast in the FY2020 annual report include passage of regulations that were in progress, clarification of UVC regulation, a plan and proposal for professional development, addition of educational seminars during meetings, increasing communication and education to address trends in violations, development and passage of the felons and firearms position statement and holding a March board meeting in Fairbanks. Communication, licensee trust and participation, efficient subcommittee work and board member participation have proven fundamental elements to success in fulfilling the goals outlined by the board and all who participate in the public process.

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## Goals and Objectives

### Part II

#### **FY 2022 goals and objectives, and proposed methods to achieve them.**

#### **Describe any strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and required resources:**

The board's primary goal is to complete current projects:

- Implementation of proposed Professional Development criteria for all classes of guides
- Implementation of proposed UVC regulation clarification
- Add Survivorship for Emergency transfers regulation
- Re-write Supervision regulation criteria for clarity and purpose
- Define "physically present" for Assistant Guide supervision
- Define "primarily in the field" for contracting Registered Guide criteria
- Remove caribou from minimum harvest criteria
- Regulate activities of Transporters

Continue to strengthen the ethics standards. We continue to incorporate ethical violations into sanction actions. Moving forward, ethics violations may need to be incorporated into the disciplinary guidelines and precedence matrix. These violations are very difficult to maneuver through and often lack enough proof to justify board action. The board recognizes these barriers and plans to move forward with procedures to aid in the decision process of ethics violations once current projects are complete.

Continue to build and strengthen partnerships between the various agencies involved in the Guide Profession including ADF&G, Alaska Wildlife Troopers and the various land managers.

Continue to monitor trends in violations and make adjustments as required.

Continue to strengthen public trust and participation through communication, education and efficiency.

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**Sunset Audit Recommendations**

**Date of Last Legislative Audit: September 14, 2018**  
**Board Sunset Date: June 30, 2024**

<b>Audit Recommendation:</b>	DCBPL’s director should improve management oversight procedures to ensure required documentation is obtained, reviewed, and retained to support licensure.
<b>Action Taken:</b>	The division requested and filled an additional Records and Licensing Supervisor position to reduce turnover and increase oversight of licensing processes, and a manual to formalize internal audit procedures is currently in development. The responsibilities of licensing examiner and licensing document have been consolidated under a single position now to maximize accountability. We propose to review licensing and documentation procedures and requirements to reflect accurate and complete documentation as the highest priority and responsibility. Furthermore, the Division Director and Deputy Commissioner are reviewing all regulations pertaining to this activity to ensure the Legislative intent can be reasonably fulfilled.
<b>Next Steps:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Date Completed:</b>	October 2017

<b>Audit Recommendation:</b>	DCBPL’s chief investigator should increase oversight to improve the timeliness of investigations.
<b>Action Taken:</b>	The division adopted an investigative Standard Operating Procedure on May 1, 2018, requiring each case file reflect documented progress at least every 30 days. This standard is being reinforced by in-service training with all investigators on a biannual basis, as well as improved management oversight by the senior investigator over this program. The senior investigator will conduct quarterly case reviews with the investigator along with reviewing any open matters greater than six months and determine if adequate progression is being made. The chief investigator will review any matters greater than one year to determine if adequate progression is being made and there are no untimely delays. The division constantly seeks to improve processes to resolve allegations completely and quickly.
<b>Next Steps:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Date Completed:</b>	January 2019

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**Sunset Audit Recommendations (continued)**

**Audit Recommendation:** The Office of the Governor, Boards and Commissions director should work with the board to identify potential applicants in a timely manner.

**Action Taken:** The department will continue to assist the Office of the Governor in publicizing openings on the board and providing them with lists of licensed guides and transporters.

**Next Steps:** Not applicable

**Date Completed:** Ongoing