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Big Game Guide Charged After Lengthy Investigation by AWT

(ANCHORAGE, Alaska) – On July 5, 2016, registered big game guide Garrett W. Cox, age 49 of Anchorage, permanently surrendered his registered guide license and future right to practice any class of guide or transporter service in an agreement he made with the Office of Special Prosecutions and the Big Game Commercial Services Board.

Mr. Cox was charged in March 2016 with several counts related to guiding offenses after an investigation conducted by the Alaska Wildlife Troopers, Wildlife Investigations Unit revealed that in 2011 Mr. Cox and former business partner Vernon C. Humble, age 76 of Arizona, had allowed several of their unlicensed employees, or “packers,” to guide clients while unaccompanied by licensed professionals in pursuit of big game animals in hunts conducted near Icy Bay west of Yakutat. Mr. Cox was also charged for participating in two brown bear hunts at Icy Bay where two of his employees took brown bears without purchasing the required \$500 non-resident brown bear locking tags. The Office of Special Prosecutions negotiated a resolution with Mr. Cox resulting in the permanent forfeiture of his registered guide license.

The packers involved, Jonathan Monier, age 29 of Illinois, Phillip Zimmermann, age 29 of Wyoming, and Brandon Kolstad, age 27 of North Dakota, were convicted of charges related to the illegal take of brown bears. Zimmermann and Monier were convicted of taking brown bear without the required nonresident tag. Kolstad was convicted of hunting without the proper tags and possession of illegally taken game. They agreed to cooperate with the state in the proceedings involving Mr. Cox and were sentenced to pay fines and restitution for the bears taken without nonresident tags.

Mr. Humble and Mr. Cox had previously been investigated and prosecuted for offenses occurring in 2012. In those matters Mr. Humble agreed to surrender his Master Guide license for life and Mr. Cox was fined \$3,100 and received a one year guide license suspension.

As this case illustrates, illegal guiding activity in Alaska is thoroughly investigated and prosecuted. For allowing unlicensed packers to act as assistant guides, Mr. Cox has permanently forfeited his ability to continue his career as a registered guide outfitter. The Alaska Wildlife Troopers and Office of Special Prosecutions hope that this case serves as a reminder to other guides and hunters about the consequences of failing to follow the laws designed to protect natural resources within Alaska.

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