

**ALASKA BOARD OF GAME
ARCTIC/WESTERN REGION MEETING
NOME, ALASKA
NOVEMBER 13 - 16, 2009**

GMU 18 –Bethel

PROPOSAL NO. 1

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Shift dates for resident moose season in Goodnews River drainage and eliminate quota.

AMENDMENT: Retain the registration permit.

DISCUSSION: The board supported the season extension and concurred with information provided by the department that the small number of moose in this area requires management with a harvest quota and through registration permits to prevent potential overharvest.

PROPOSAL NO. 2

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Lengthen resident registration moose season in Lower Kuskokwim by 10 days

DISCUSSION: The board discussed the moose population and harvest data and questioned whether there is a surplus of bulls that could be harvested. Noting advisory committee and department opposition, and because this is a recovering population, the board chose to act conservatively. The board also understood the boundary change that passed under Proposal 4 will also provide additional opportunity.

PROPOSAL NO. 3

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Open resident winter moose season in Lower Kuskokwim registration area.

DISCUSSION: The board referenced their discussion on Proposal 2. Board members noted that with the current hunt management the harvest quota for the fall hunt is met, leaving no moose available for a winter hunt.

PROPOSAL NO. 4

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Change boundary for the Lower Kuskokwim area registration moose hunt.

AMENDMENT: Modify the boundary to include ½ mile south of the Johnson River.

DISCUSSION: The board discussed making the boundary easier for hunters and enforcement to identify. Board members agreed that the boundary change encompasses moose habitat and would increase harvest opportunity; they also noted that there is no conservation concern.

PROPOSAL NO. 5

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Modify hunt area boundary and extend moose season in Lower Yukon area.

DISCUSSION: The board commented that they had allowed this extension by emergency action last year and their intention is to make the change permanent. The board supported increased hunting opportunity and concurred that the moose population is healthy and growing.

GMU 22 – Nome

PROPOSAL NO. 6

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Shorten hunting season and reduce bag limit for wolf.

DISCUSSION: Board members noted opposition from the department, advisory committees, and from the public. They considered the wolf population to be healthy and saw no biological reasons to reduce the harvest.

PROPOSAL NO. 7

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Extend wolverine hunting and trapping seasons to end April 30.

DISCUSSION: Board members expressed conservation concerns over the potential for increased incidental take which could result from an extended spring season.

PROPOSAL NO. 8

ACTION: Tabled

DESCRIPTION: Modify trophy destruction for muskox.

DISCUSSION: Board members tabled the proposal with an expectation that the department would work with the Seward Peninsula Muskox Cooperators Group to consider a drawing hunt for bulls that are four years and older, and to consider changing the subsistence hunt to cows and young bulls. Board members were concerned with the decline of mature bulls. The board discussed a variety of issues including the need for trophy destruction, what constitutes trophy destruction, and the subsistence value of the horns.

PROPOSAL NO. 9

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Modify same day airborne restrictions for caribou hunting.

DISCUSSION: Board members commented that there is sufficient opportunity for harvesting caribou and that few people take advantage of the existing same day airborne season. They were concerned about the potential for user-group conflicts. The board also noted that the area includes a large amount of federal land which would be excluded for same day airborne taking of caribou.

PROPOSAL NO. 10

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Extend brown bear season to June 15 in 22A.

DISCUSSION: Board members cited concerns over the increased harvest in recent years and noted that sufficient opportunity already exists in the area.

PROPOSAL NO. 11

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Require guide-client agreement for moose hunts in 22B.

DISCUSSION: Board members commented about the progress on the guide concession areas. They discussed whether this authority falls under the purview of the Big Game Commercial Services Board. There also discussed the statutory requirement for nonresidents to have guides for certain big game animals which does not include moose.

PROPOSAL NO. 12

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Modify the resident registration hunt for moose in 22B.

DISCUSSION: The department provided the board members information about the work by the Northern Norton Sound Advisory Committee to set up the current quota. In response to this proposal, the advisory committee voted to support changes to the winter moose hunt that included increasing the winter permits to eight, which would be available only in Golovin and White Mountain. Board members were concerned about the low moose density and recruitment; they also felt that the current management of the hunt is working well.

PROPOSAL NO. 13

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Lengthen brown bear hunting season in 22C.

DISCUSSION: Board members supported the department's strategy to target bear hunts towards Unit 22B which will support moose populations in that area.

PROPOSAL NO. 14

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Modify caribou season in 22D remainder.

DISCUSSION: The board took no action because the author of the proposal requested it be withdrawn.

PROPOSAL NO. 15

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Restrict brown bear season and bag limit in portion of 22E.

DISCUSSION: The board noted that the federal season is the same as the state season for that area. Members spoke to keeping seasons consistent, the lack of biological data to justify restricting opportunity, and the opposition from advisory committees.

PROPOSAL NO. 16

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Modify nonresident permit allocation for muskox in 22E.

DISCUSSION: The board took no action due to their action on Proposal 17.

PROPOSAL NO. 17

ACTION: Carried as Amended

DESCRIPTION: Modify nonresident permit allocation for muskox in Unit 22E.

AMENDMENT: Ten percent of the permits to be allocated to nonresidents for the DX097 hunt.

DISCUSSION: The board considered the historical harvest information. They discussed the Board of Game nonresident drawing permit allocation policy (#2007-173-BOG). In keeping with the policy, they amended the proposal to allocate 10% of the available permits for nonresidents.

GMU 23 –Kotzebue

PROPOSAL NO. 18

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Shorten wolf hunting season and reduce bag limit.

DISCUSSION: Board members did not see any biological reasons to restrict the hunt. They also noted that harvest is low.

PROPOSAL NO. 19

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Implement mandatory orientation for pilots transporting hunters or game.

AMENDMENT: Clarification that the orientation is required for pilots transporting big game parts.

DISCUSSION: The board discussed the effectiveness of the existing, voluntary online orientation for Unit 23 hunters and the printed material on meat salvage and conflict avoidance. Board members suggested the existing orientation could be used as the basis for the mandatory orientation and added that advisory committees and commercial operators could also be involved in developing the material. Board members questioned the Department of Public Safety about penalties for violations and how liability is assigned between transporters and their clients. Board members expressed concerns about complications with the orientation; they also discussed the authority of the Big Game Commercial Services Board for regulating transporters.

PROPOSAL NO. 20

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Lengthen wolf hunting season.

DISCUSSION: The board agreed with department and advisory committee comments against taking wolves during the pupping season.

PROPOSAL NO. 21

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Lengthen the dates for aircraft restriction in the Noatak Controlled Use Area.

DISCUSSION: The board took no action due to their action on Proposal 22.

PROPOSAL NO. 22

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Lengthen the dates for aircraft restriction in the Noatak Controlled Use Area.

DISCUSSION: The board mentioned that this proposal is an effort to reduce user conflicts between hunters using boats and aircraft. The new dates will maintain the effectiveness of the controlled use area in response to changing caribou movement, and will increase opportunity for Kotzebue and Noatak hunters.

PROPOSAL NO. 23

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Modify brown bear season and bag limits in Noatak Preserve.

DISCUSSION: The board concurred with information provided by department that this would impact subsistence hunting. There is no biological data to justify limiting the harvest, and this would create confusion by creating a new hunt area with different regulations..

PROPOSAL NO. 24

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Lengthen nonresident brown bear season.

AMENDMENT: Apply to all drawing hunt areas in Unit 23.

DISCUSSION: Board members agreed that extending the season would increase opportunity without significantly increasing the harvest. They also commented that fur quality could be better.

PROPOSAL NO. 25

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Increase nonresident caribou bag limit.

DISCUSSION: The board took no action due to their action on Proposal 26.

PROPOSAL NO. 26

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Increase nonresident caribou bag limit.

AMENDMENT: Change the bag limit to two caribou.

DISCUSSION: Board members reviewed past actions from previous board meetings in response to problems of waste, crowding, and user conflicts. They referred to action on this proposal, along with the actions on Proposals 19 and 22 (pilot orientation and extending the dates of the Noatak Controlled Use Area) as a package that will work towards addressing various conflicts and problems. The board cited proposed changes by the Big Game Commercial Services Board, the Department of Natural Resources, and federal land management agencies in Unit 23 that also address crowding and conflict issues. They mentioned that increased enforcement and effective education by the department on care of meat has also helped to resolve the problems in the area. The board commented that the Unit 23 Working Group will continue to meet and has the ability to address problems if they arise. With these safeguards in place, the board felt biological data justifies the increase to two caribou for nonresidents.

PROPOSAL NO. 27

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Increase nonresident caribou bag limit.

DISCUSSION: The board took no action due to their action on Proposal 26.

PROPOSAL NO. 28

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Increase nonresident caribou bag limit.

DISCUSSION: The board took no action due to their action on Proposal 26.

GMU 26A-Barrow

PROPOSAL NO. 29

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Shorten the wolf hunting season.

DISCUSSION: The board received information from the department that pelts sealed in April are in good condition, harvest is not high, and wolf populations are healthy. They noted advisory committee and public support for keeping the current season. The board concurred with maintaining the status quo.

PROPOSAL NO. 30

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Extend the trapping season for mink and weasel.

DISCUSSION: The board concurred with department rationale to add 74 days to the trapping season for mink and weasel. The board supported making the season consistent with the majority of trapping seasons in Unit 26.

PROPOSAL NO. 31**ACTION: Failed****DESCRIPTION: Increase the subsistence brown bear bag limit to two bears per year.****DISCUSSION:** Based on the action taken on Proposal 32, the board did not support the proposal. They agreed that time is needed to monitor the effects of Proposal 32 before making other changes.**PROPOSAL NO. 32****ACTION: Carried as amended****DESCRIPTION: Open subsistence brown bear season year round.****AMENDMENT: Open a general season for residents and nonresidents.****DISCUSSION:** Board members received information from the department that legalizing the taking of bears during the summer reduces the problem of dealing with defense of life and property cases. Board members discussed the impact of providing additional hunting opportunity for residents and nonresidents by opening a general season. They commented that harvest would be minimal because of the hide quality and the travel distance by non-local residents and nonresidents. The board did not believe there are any conservation concerns and that additional opportunity should be provided.**PROPOSAL NO. 33****ACTION: Failed****DESCRIPTION: Shorten wolf trapping season in Units 22, 23, and 26A.****DISCUSSION:** Board members commented about the resiliency of wolf populations over time. The board noted that there is no conservation concern and they supported the current season which provides more opportunity.**PROPOSAL NO. 34****ACTION: Deferred as amended****DESCRIPTION: Modify definition of edible meat under salvage requirement for Units 23 and 26A.****AMENDMENT: Apply to Units 1 through 26****DISCUSSION:** The Department of Law explained that “edible meat” is a statutory definition and the board has limited authority to weaken or alter the statute. Board members believed the issue deserved input by advisory committees and the public statewide. Proposal 34 was amended to apply to Units 1 through 26 and deferred to the statewide regulations meeting scheduled for January, 2010 for further discussion.**PROPOSAL NO. 35****ACTION: Carried as amended****DESCRIPTION: Reconsider the amount necessary for subsistence determination for moose in Units 18, 19 and 21.****AMENDMENT: Establish a new Amount Necessary for Subsistence (ANS) of 100 – 200 moose, for Unit 18 only.****DISCUSSION:** The board established a range of 100-200 moose based upon resident harvest data over the last ten years. The board wrestled with how to determine ANS in an area where data is limited because moose hunting was closed for the past five years. Hearing department comments that hunting was displaced from Unit 18 into adjacent units during the closure, board members discussed whether resumed hunting in Unit 18 affects the ANS in Units 19 and 21. The board expressed the desire for more information, and suggested that the ANS for Unit 19 can be addressed at an Interior Region board meeting.**Miscellaneous Actions**

The board approved an Agenda Change Request (ACR) submitted by the Department of Fish and Game for the Statewide, 2010 meeting. The ACR included the following topics: Dates for helicopter access under the Unit 16 bear control program; dates for foot-snaring of black bears in Unit 16B; the number of bear bait stations registered by licensed guides and their assistants in Unit 16B; and Unit 9 intensive management objectives

The board approved an Agenda Change Request submitted by the Department of Public Safety for the Statewide, 2010 meeting. The topic concerns banning the use of bait or scent lures near schools, businesses, and residences.

The board rejected an Agenda Change Request submitted by Doug Corl requesting the board reconsider past action on the bonus point program.

The board agreed to send a letter of interest to a legislator who is considering proposed statutory changes to the hunting restrictions and access in the Dalton Highway Corridor.

The board agreed to send a letter of support to the Department of Natural Resources supporting the proposed regulations concerning the guide concession areas.