

ALASKA BOARD OF GAME
Supplemental Proposals
Central/Southwest Regions
Spring, 2011

Proposals 232-233 will be scheduled for the Southcentral Region Board of Game Meeting scheduled for March 4-10, 2011 in Anchorage. Proposals 232 and 233 were added to the agenda by the Board of Game through the Agenda Change Policy.

Interior Region – Unit 20

Proposal 232 Allow motorized vehicle access in the Yanert Controlled Use Area in Unit 20
Proposal 233 Extend the hunting season for moose in Unit 20B.

The Board of Game added this proposal to the March 4-10, 2011 meeting agenda through an Agenda Change Request.

PROPOSAL 232 - 5 AAC 92.540(H)(ii). Controlled Use Areas. Allow motorized vehicle access in the Yanert Controlled Use Area in Unit 20.

Add language to 5AAC 92.540 (H)(ii) as follows:

“motorized vehicles restricted from August 1 through September 30”

ISSUE: The Fairbanks Advisory Committee has discussed changes needed to improve the antlerless moose hunts in Unit 20A as part of the annual reauthorization. One of the recommendations would change the motorized restrictions for antlerless moose hunting in the Yanert Controlled Use Area (YCUA). We request that changing the condition be part of the reauthorization discussion by the Board of Game at the upcoming meeting.

The suggested change to the now, year around access restriction would allow the Department of Fish and Game to raise the quota(s) for antlerless moose hunting, especially in the late fall/winter hunts. Access continues to be the biggest problem because of open water on the Tanana and other rivers and the lack of trail access (Rex Trail, Ferry Trail, etc.).

The lack of access routes causes both the overcrowding, negative, social aspects of the hunt and forces time constraints too late in the winter (January and February) for river crossings. The Intensive management moose harvest strategy includes approximately 300 antlerless (subunit total) to keep the population from growing. Spreading out the hunting pressure is very important to the success of harvesting the antlerless component.

The antlerless quota, especially for the late fall/winter hunt(s), is kept artificially low because of the restriction to motorized vehicles. (In this case, predominantly snow machines.) The Yanert

CUA could be accessed without crossing large, late freezing rivers. Allowing motorized vehicles after September 30 would allow the department to plan both an earlier date for antlerless hunts and would allow them to raise the quota for the subunit zone. With the difficulty of access for the late season hunts, it has been necessary to keep them open for long periods which causes additional conflicts with winter activities such as trapping. The public has testified that there has been too much focus for harvest along the Rex Trail, Ferry Trail and in the Goldking area.

Allowing motorized after September 30 would also align the YCUA with the Wood River CUA which is adjacent.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE? The Yanert CUA will offer only a handful of permits for the antlerless component of the 20A moose harvest. The potential for the benefits listed above will be lost.

WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCT PRODUCED BE IMPROVED? Yes, the product of avoiding overcrowded and concentrated hunting during the late season will be improved.

WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT? Hunters with antlerless moose permits and their families will benefit. There are no trophy antlerless hunters.

WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER? Depending on the exact dates and quota for the hunt ((not necessarily a long period), other winter recreation could be negatively impacted because of the need to share trails and back country with motorized vehicles.

OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED? None for the Yanert CUA.

PROPOSED BY: Fairbanks Advisory Committee

LOG NUMBER: I-11S-G-002

The Board of Game added this proposal to the March 4-10, 2011 meeting agenda through an Agenda Change Request.

PROPOSAL 233 - 5 AAC 85.045. Seasons and bag limits for moose. Extend the general season for moose hunting in Unit 20B.

Extend the season for moose in Unit 20B.

Issue: The Fairbanks Advisory Committee, in discussions with the Department of Fish and Game, is working on a strategy to stop the moose population growth or even lower the population in Unit 20B. This subunit has an intensive management (IM) moose population. The high population objective is 15,000 moose and the present estimate is well over 20,000. The existing harvest strategy meets the minimum IM harvest objective but in the face of a high

growth rate. The moose density averages over three moose per square mile with much higher concentrations in specific drainages.

Reason for Request: The newest (2010) population estimate shows that the population growth rate is basically unchanged by the addition of antlerless hunting zones and hunts last year. The Fairbanks Advisory Committee (FAC) and the department have been discussing the issues for a new strategy for 20B. The bull/cow ratio is above the objective and more bulls can be harvested. The bull season, however, is not part of the antlerless reauthorization proposal that is scheduled for the Spring Board of Game meeting.

In order to implement a new strategy and hopefully flatten out or even start to reduce this overpopulation, the Board of Game must address this issue. The FAC recommendation would be to add it in with the reauthorization discussion and look at the whole picture for moose harvest.

The concept of zoning moose hunts by geographic area and time (short seasons) for drawing antlerless hunts was added to the harvest strategy a couple of years ago. That part is working well but needs a few tweaks that are within the reauthorization discussion. Changing the bull season slightly can also help with the goal of stabilizing or reducing the population to avoid a disastrous crash because of overuse of habitat or a bad weather event.

The extension of the bull season by a few days would also align the subunit with seasons in 20A and slow a “move” of hunters from 20B that has occurred almost every year.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE? Even with an increase in antlerless moose permits the ability to stabilize the moose population will be lost. This extended season may only be necessary for a few years. The goal is to put moose into Alaskan’s freezers and not lose them to a bad winter. The whole subunit has a high of moose predators (wolves and bears) and does not have a predator management project in place.

WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCT PRODUCED BE IMPROVED? The issue is to improve the quality of the product, especially having a high moose harvest, for the long term. Capping the population now will keep the unchecked growth from causing loss of habitat from overbrowsing.

WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT? Moose hunters and those who enjoy sharing their environment with moose. Moose hunters in adjacent GMU’s or subunits who now look for a shift of hunters from 20B to their areas after the existing season ends. (Sept. 15)

WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER? No one.

OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED? A significant registration antlerless moose hunt but this option may cause a reduction in the bull cow ratio below the standards desired.

PROPOSED BY: Fairbanks Advisory Committee

LOG NUMBER: I-11S-G-002
