

Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Staff Comments  
Interior/Northeast Arctic Region Proposals  
Alaska Board of Game Meeting  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
February 17-25, 2017



**The following staff comments were prepared by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for use at the Alaska Board of Game meeting, February 17-25, 2017 in Fairbanks, Alaska, and are prepared to assist the public and board. The stated staff comments should be considered preliminary and subject to change, if or when new information becomes available. Final department positions will be formulated after review of written and oral testimony presented to the board.**

**PROPOSAL 46 – 5AAC 92.015. Brown bear tag fee exemptions.** Reauthorize the brown bear tag fee exemption for Units 12, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26B, and 26C.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** The proposal would reauthorize the current resident tag fee exemptions for brown bears in Units 12, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26B, and 26C.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Brown bear tag fees and locking tags are not required for residents in Units 12, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26B, and 26C.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The \$25 resident tag fee exemption would be continued for brown bear hunts in Units 12, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26B, and 26C.

**BACKGROUND:** The Board of Game must annually reauthorize all resident tag fee exemptions. Resident brown bear tag fees were put in place statewide during the mid-1970s to discourage incidental harvest, elevate the status of brown bears to trophies, and to provide revenue. Today, Region III populations are healthy, brown bears are highly regarded as trophies, and season dates and bag limits effectively regulate harvest. Reauthorizing these tag fee exemptions would allow residents who are unable to purchase the \$25 tag before hunting, due to lack of vendors or economic reasons, to opportunistically and legally harvest brown bears.

Eliminating all resident brown bear tag fees throughout Region III simplifies regulations, increases resident hunter opportunity, and is not likely to cause declines in these brown bear populations. This reauthorization would assist with our objective of managing Region III brown bear populations for hunter opportunity and would continue to allow hunters to take brown bears opportunistically. During regulatory years 2006–2015 approximately 22% of brown bears harvested by resident hunters in Region III were taken incidentally to other activities, compared with 9% statewide.

We estimate that a kill rate of up to 8%, composed primarily of males, is sustainable. Human-caused mortality in most of Region III has been consistently less than 8% of the population. Where harvests are elevated (i.e., Units 20A, 20B, 20D, and portions of 26B), brown bear populations are managed through changes in seasons and bag limits. Resident tag fees that were in place prior to 2010 appeared to have no effect on harvest rates in these areas.

As part of this request to reauthorize exemption of resident brown bear tag fees throughout Region III, we recommend that the board, at a minimum, continue to reauthorize the tag fee exemptions for subsistence registration permit hunts in Units 19A and 19B (downstream of and including the Aniak River drainage), 21D, and 24. The customary and traditional use findings and amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence are presented below:

**Table 46-1.–Customary and traditional uses of brown bear populations, Region III:**

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Finding</b>	<b>Amount reasonably necessary for subsistence</b>
Unit 12	Negative	---
Units 19A and 19B upstream of and excluding the Aniak River drainage, and Unit 19D	Positive	10–15
Units 19A and 19B downstream of and including the Aniak River drainage	Positive	5
Unit 19C	Negative	---
Unit 19D	Positive	2–6
Units 20A and 20B outside the boundaries of the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Use Area and Unit 20C	Positive	1–3
Unit 20D, outside the boundaries of the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area	Positive	1–2
Unit 20E	Negative	---
Units 21 and 22	Positive	20–25
Units 23, 24, and 26	Positive	25–35
Unit 25	Negative	---

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal. Brown bear numbers appear to be stable in the Interior and Northeast Arctic Units. Resident tag fees that were in place prior to 2010 appeared to have no effect on harvest rates in the region. Therefore, this proposal does not present a biological concern.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 47 – 5 AAC 92.990(a)(26). Definitions.** Modify the definition of edible meat for all game birds.

**PROPOSED BY:** Central Kuskokwim Fish and Game Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal seeks to modify the definition of edible meat for small game birds so that the meat from the back, thighs, and legs are added to the definition of edible meat and would align all game birds with the definition of edible meat for cranes, geese, and swans, as follows:

92.990(a)(26) "edible meat" means, in the case of a big game animal, except a bear, the meat of the ribs, neck, brisket, front quarters, hindquarters, and the meat along the backbone between the front and hindquarters; in the case of a bear, the meat of the front quarters and hindquarters and meat along the backbone (backstrap); **For all game birds, the meat from the breast, back, thighs, legs;** [IN THE CASE OF SMALL GAME BIRDS, EXCEPT FOR CRANES, GEESE

AND SWAN, THE MEAT OF THE BREAST; IN THE CASE OF CRANES, GEESE, AND SWAN, THE MEAT OF THE BREAST AND MEAT OF THE FEMUR AND TIBIA-FIBULA (LEGS AND THIGHS);] however, "edible meat" of big game or small game birds does not include meat of the head, meat that has been damaged and made inedible by the method of taking, bones, sinew, incidental meat reasonably...

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** 5 AAC 92.990(a)(26) "edible meat" means, ... in the case of small game birds, except for cranes, geese, and swan, the meat of the breast; in the case of cranes, geese, and swan, the meat of the breast and meat of the femur and tibia-fibula (legs and thighs); ...

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If adopted, this proposal would require hunters to salvage additional meat from all game birds.

**BACKGROUND:** Effective July 1, 2014, the board created a different definition of edible meat for cranes, geese, and swans to require more meat salvage from large migratory waterfowl.

Under the current definition of edible meat the majority of meat is required to be salvaged, and many hunters voluntarily salvage the meat of the legs of smaller game birds such as ptarmigan and grouse.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal because it does not address a biological concern that affects game bird populations.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 48 – 5 AAC 92.080. Unlawful methods of taking game, exceptions; and 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking big game, exceptions.** Allow the use of crossbows in restricted-weapons hunts.

**PROPOSED BY:** Howard Delo.

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Allow crossbows to be used in weapons-restricted hunts (hunts limited to the use of bow and arrow, muzzleloaders or shotguns) and for hunting in specific management areas, controlled use areas, or state refuges that have weapons-restricted hunts.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

*5 AAC 92.530. Management areas:*

- Units 20F, 24A, 25A, and 26B, Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area (DHCMA) and Unit 26B Prudhoe Bay Closed Area (PBCA). By statute, hunting with firearms is prohibited within 5 miles on either side of the Dalton Highway between the Yukon River and the Arctic Ocean. By regulation, the DHCMA (5 miles on either side of the Dalton Highway) and the PBCA are closed to hunting; however, big game,

small game, and fur animals may be taken by bow and arrow only, and small game may also be taken by falconry. In addition, the PBCA, is closed to the taking of big game. Various seasons and bag limits are in place for big game, fur animals, and small game.

- Unit 20A, Healy–Lignite Management Area. This area includes the entire Lignite Creek drainage, and that portion of the Nenana River drainage south of the Lignite Creek drainage and north of a boundary beginning at the confluence of the Nenana River and Healy Creek, then easterly along the south bank of Healy Creek to its confluence with Coal Creek, then northeasterly to the headwaters of Sanderson Creek at Usibelli Peak. It is open to hunting by bow and arrow only, and small game may be taken by falconry. Various seasons and bag limits are in place for big game, fur animals, and small game. Caribou hunting rarely occurs in this area. Moose hunting is a major consideration in this area. The moose season is September 1–25 for one bull with spike-fork or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least 1 side.
- Unit 20B, Fairbanks Management Area. This area encompasses Fairbanks and North Pole from Rosie Creek on the West, Old Murphy Dome Road on the North, the Tanana River to the South and Chena River flood control dike to the East. The area is open to moose hunting by bow and arrow only, except that the portion within Creamer's Refuge is also open to moose hunting by drawing permit for antlerless moose by muzzleloader only. Up to 25 percent of all drawing permits are issued to qualified disabled veterans and qualified disabled active-duty military personnel.

*Chapter 85, hunting seasons and bag limits (in areas not listed above).*

- 20A muzzleloader hunt drawing hunt for moose. Residents: One bull, Nov. 1–30. Nonresidents: One bull with 50" antlers or 4 or more brow tines, Nov. 1–30
- Units 20A and 20B targeted moose hunts (AM751). In the Fairbanks Management Area one moose by bow and arrow. Season may be announced. In the remainder of 20A and 20B one moose by shotgun or bow and arrow. Season may be announced. The primary objective of this targeted hunt is to reduce moose–vehicle collisions and allow resident hunters to selectively harvest moose that pose a threat to public safety or are likely to die as a result of an injury. The method of take is limited to specific weapons that do not have long range trajectories. In the Fairbanks Management Area the bag limit is one moose by bow and arrow, season may be announced by emergency order. In the remainder of Units 20A and 20B the bag limit is one moose by shotgun or bow and arrow, season may be announced by emergency order.
- Unit 20B , Upper Salcha and Middle Fork of Chena. One bull by harvest ticket by bow and arrow, Sept. 26–30.
- Unit 20B Richardson Highway drawing moose hunt. Residents only: One moose by drawing permit by bow and arrow or muzzleloader, Sept. 21–Feb. 28

- Unit 20D Delta Bison. One bison every 10 regulatory years, Oct. 1–Mar 31. Weapons restrictions in this hunt are to reduce wounding loss of these large animals. By discretionary permit authority (5AAC 92.052), rifles must fire a minimum 200 grain bullet having 2,000 foot-pounds or more energy retained at 100 yards. However, hunters may use other legal methods of take, including crossbows.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The use of crossbows would be legal in hunts areas that only allow the use of muzzleloader, shotgun, or bow and arrow (weapons-restricted hunts). These areas currently include the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area, the Healy–Lignite Management Area, the Fairbanks Management Area, and Creamer’s Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge.

**BACKGROUND:**

Information for each of the weapons-restricted big game hunts in Region 3 is found below.

- Unit 20A Healy–Lignite Management Area. This management area is open to hunting all species by bow and arrow only, and small game may also be taken by falconry. The moose harvest is very low. Caribou hunting rarely occurs in this area.
- Unit 20A muzzleloader moose hunt. The department issues 75 drawing permits per year and average harvest is about 15 bulls.
- Unit 20B, Fairbanks Management Area (FMA). This area is open to moose hunting by bow and arrow only by harvest ticket (bulls) and drawing permits (antlerless moose). Within Creamer’s Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge there is also a muzzleloader drawing permit hunt for antlerless moose, and small game may be taken by falconry. The FMA lies mostly in the residential areas surrounding Fairbanks and North Pole. The weapons restrictions in this area were first implemented to increase extremely low bull:cow ratios. Since then, public sentiment has been strongly in favor of keeping these weapons restrictions in place because of safety concerns.
- Unit 20B, late-season archery moose hunts in the upper Salcha River drainage and the Middle Fork of the Chena River drainage. This harvest ticket hunt is 5 days long at the end of September for bull moose by archery only and harvest is low.
- Unit 20B, late-season muzzleloader moose hunt in the upper Salcha River and Middle Fork of the Chena River drainages. Harvest is low in this registration permit hunt and access is difficult.
- Unit 20B Richardson Highway moose hunts. This drawing permit hunt is by muzzleloader or bow and arrow. The hunt is intended to reduce moose numbers near the road to prevent highway collisions.
- Units 20A and 20B Targeted Hunts. Targeted hunts are used to harvest specific moose that have become a nuisance, endangerment to the public, or are injured. These targeted

hunts are near populated areas and the weapons restriction limits the method of take to specific weapons that do not have long range trajectories.

- Units 20F, 24A, 25A, 25D, and 26B, DHCMA.

Black Bear hunting in Units 20F, 24A, 25A, 25D — Very little black bear hunting occurs within the DHCMA, thus, potential for user conflicts is unlikely.

Brown Bear hunting in Units 20F, 24A, 25A, 25D, and 26B — There are no biological concerns related to allowing crossbows. However, biological concerns for brown bears in Unit 26B exist and the board may want to consider proposals 106, 107, and 109 which propose season extensions for brown bear in Unit 26B where harvest is slightly above harvestable surplus. Very little brown bear hunting occurs in this area so potential for user conflicts is low.

Caribou hunting in Units 20F, 24A, 25A, 25D, and 26B — There are no biological concerns related to allowing crossbows. The board may want to consider Proposal 104 which proposes to align seasons for Central Arctic caribou. In department comments for Proposal 104, we recommend reducing seasons and bag limits and considering reasonable opportunity for subsistence, in addition to aligning seasons, because the Central Arctic caribou herd has declined. The board may also wish to consider whether user conflicts between traditional archery hunters and crossbow hunters would occur, particularly in Unit 26B, where conflicts among road hunters already exist.

Moose hunting in Units 20F, 24A, 25A and 25D — There are no biological concerns related to allowing crossbows. Because hunts in Units 24A, 25A and 25D are limited by permits, there is little potential for user conflicts between traditional archery hunters and crossbow hunters.

Sheep hunting in Unit 24A — There are no biological concerns related to allowing crossbows. Sheep hunting occurs in a limited capacity because most sheep habitat is near the 5 mile boundary of the corridor. Potentially, user conflict between federally-qualified hunters who can hunt sheep within the DHCMA with a rifle and crossbow hunters could occur as well as between traditional archery hunters and crossbow hunters.

### *Weapons information*

The minimum draw weight requirements for bow and arrow are 40 or 50 pounds, depending on the species hunted. Technology has improved archery equipment so that it is much easier to reach the minimum draw weights required to hunt big game in Alaska.

A crossbow's effective shooting range is 30–40 yards, similar to bow and arrow, but a crossbow uses a cocking device that cocks the bow and holds it in the cocked position until the hunter pulls the trigger. Crossbows and bows deliver similar kinetic energy to the target: A crossbow's bolt travels approximately 300 feet per second (fps) with a 420-grain bolt, and generates 86.78 foot-pounds of kinetic energy, while a compound bow shooting a 350-grain arrow travelling 335 fps generates 87.24 foot-pounds of energy.

Muzzleloader ballistics vary greatly depending on the kind and amount of powder used, in addition to bullet weight. A typical .50 caliber muzzleloader shoots a 250 grain sabot, which travels at 2,197 fps, delivering 2,680 foot-pounds of energy at 100 yards. At 200 yards the sabot is almost 36 inches low and delivers 1,180 foot-pounds of energy. For comparison, a .308 caliber modern rifle with a 110 grain bullet has muzzle velocity of 3,165 fps and delivers 1,956 foot-pounds at 100 yards. At 200 yards it delivers 1,551 foot-pounds of energy, dropping only 1.8 inches.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** regarding the use of crossbows as a legal method of take in weapon-restricted hunts. This proposal is allocative in nature and does not address biological concerns.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 49 –5 AAC 92.130. Restrictions to bag limit.** Remove the bag limit restriction for resident relatives accompanying nonresident second degree of kindred.

**PROPOSED BY:** Kyle Jones

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** The proposal repeals the regulation that requires the nonresident bag limit for guide-required species to count towards the bag limit of both the nonresident as well as the resident relative if the nonresident is not accompanied by a guide.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

**92.130. Restrictions to bag limit**

...

(j) Beginning July 1, 2018, a brown bear, grizzly bear, mountain goat, or sheep taken by a nonresident personally accompanied by a resident relative under AS 16.05.407 (a)(2) will count as the bag limit of both the nonresident and the resident relative who accompanies the nonresident.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If this proposal is adopted, the regulation would not go into effect in 2018, as scheduled. The harvest of guide-required species by a nonresident accompanied by a resident relative would not count against the bag limit of both the nonresident and the resident.

**BACKGROUND:** This proposal is scheduled for the Arctic/Western Region meeting as Proposal 19. The board has adopted regulations to allocate hunting opportunity between resident and nonresident hunters and, in some cases, has made additional allocations for guided nonresident hunters and nonresidents hunting with resident relatives. When allocating hunting opportunity, the board has followed the guidelines in the board’s policy (2007-173-BOG).



**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocation of hunting opportunity between resident and nonresident hunters; however, because the board adopted this regulation during the 2016 Statewide Board of Game meeting, the department recommends that the board consider this topic on a statewide basis.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 50**–5 AAC 92.130. **Restrictions to bag limit.** Remove the bag limit restriction for resident relatives accompanying nonresident second degree of kindred.

**PROPOSED BY:** Chris Harper

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** The proposal seeks to repeal the recently passed regulation which requires nonresidents who hunt with resident relatives to count a harvested animal toward the bag limit of both the nonresident as well as the resident relative.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

**92.130. Restrictions to bag limit**

...

(j) Beginning July 1, 2018, a brown bear, grizzly bear, mountain goat, or sheep taken by a nonresident personally accompanied by a resident relative under AS 16.05.407 (a)(2) will count as the bag limit of both the nonresident and the resident relative who accompanies the nonresident.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If this proposal is adopted, the regulation would not go into effect in 2018, as scheduled. The harvest of guide-required species by a nonresident accompanied by a resident relative would not count against the bag limit of both the nonresident and the resident.

**BACKGROUND:** The board has adopted regulations to allocate hunting opportunity between resident and nonresident hunters and, in some cases, has made additional allocations for guided nonresident hunters and nonresidents hunting with resident relatives. When allocating hunting opportunity, the board has followed the guidelines in the board’s policy (2007-173-BOG).

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocation of hunting opportunity between resident and nonresident hunters; however, because the board adopted this regulation during the 2016 Statewide Board of Game meeting, the department recommends that the board consider this topic on a statewide basis.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 51 – 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose; and 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.** Prohibit nonresident hunting of any prey species in the Interior–Northeast Arctic Region under an Intensive Management Plan in the Interior–Northeast Arctic Region until harvest and population objectives are met.

**PROPOSED BY:** Resident Hunters of Alaska.

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** The proposal would eliminate the ability to have nonresident moose hunting seasons in Unit 19A and the eastern portion of Unit 19D (which currently have no nonresident seasons), and in Unit 21E should the board pass Proposal 75.

This proposal has the potential to eliminate hunting for Fortymile caribou (RC860) by nonresidents in Unit 20E and portions of Units 20B, 20D, 20E, and 25C if the herd drops below the Intensive Management (IM) population or harvest objectives during the life of the IM plan in 5AAC 92.113.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

*Unit 19A Moose:*

The Unit 19A predation control plan in 5AAC 92.123(b) authorizes predation control for wolves and bears to aid in achieving moose IM objectives. Moose in Unit 19A have a positive IM finding in 5 AAC 92.108 for providing high levels of harvest for human consumptive use, with a population objective of 13,500–16,500 and harvest objective of 750–950, which represent units 19A and 19B, combined. As outlined in 5 AAC 99.025, Unit 19 outside the Lime Village Management Area (LVMA) has a positive C&T finding and an ANS of 400–700 moose, including 176–225 moose in Unit 19A. Unit 19 in the LVMA (which is in Unit 19A) has a positive C&T and an ANS of 30–40 moose.

In accordance with AS 16.05.255(d), residents have preference for subsistence and personal uses over taking by nonresidents. There are no nonresident seasons for moose in Unit 19A.

*Unit 19D-East Moose:*

The Unit 19D-East predation control plan in 5AAC 92.123(c) authorizes predation control for wolves and bears to aid in achieving moose IM objectives. Moose in Unit 19D have a positive IM finding in 5AAC 92.108 for providing high levels of harvest for human consumptive use with a population objective of 4,000–6,000, and a harvest objective of 250–600. As outlined in 5 AAC 99.025, Unit 19 has a positive C&T use finding and an ANS of 400–700 moose, including 176–225 moose in Unit 19A and 20–24 in Unit 19B. That portion of Unit 19 located within the LVMA is associated with a positive C&T and an ANS of 30–40 moose.

In accordance with AS 16.05.255(d), residents have preference for subsistence and personal use over taking by nonresidents. Residents may hunt for antlered bulls throughout Unit 19D during either a 20- or 25-day season in September, depending on the area and whether they are hunting under a harvest ticket or a registration permit. There are no nonresident seasons within 19D East IM area. However, outside 19D East, nonresidents may hunt for moose in Unit 19D only in and between the Cheeneetnuk and Gagaryah River drainages and at least 2 miles off the Swift River (this area is not included in an IM plan and would not be affected by this proposal).

*Unit 21E Moose:*

The Unit 21E predation control plan in 19.124(b) to aid in achieving IM objectives for moose expired in July 2016. However, Proposal 75 seeks to reauthorize this plan as a proactive approach to allow for a timely response to a decline in the Unit 21E moose population. Moose in Unit 21E have a positive finding in 5AAC 92.108 for providing high levels of harvest for human consumptive use, with a population objective of 9,000–11,000, and a harvest objective of 550–1,100. As outlined in 5 AAC 99.025, Unit 21 has a positive C&T finding for moose and ANS of 600–800, including those taken in Unit 21E.

In accordance with AS 16.05.255(d), residents have preference for subsistence and personal use over taking by nonresidents. Both residents and nonresidents have a 21-day season. Residents may hunt for any antlered bull, using an unlimited number of registration permits, while nonresidents are limited to 50 drawing permits and may only harvest a bull with at least 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side.

*Fortymile Caribou Herd:*

The Upper Yukon–Tanana Predation control plan in 5AAC 92.113 authorizes predation control for wolves to aid in achieving Fortymile caribou herd IM objectives. This plan encompasses Unit 20E and parts of Units 12, 20B, 20D, and 25C.

The Fortymile caribou herd has a positive IM finding in 5AAC 92.108 for providing high levels of harvest for human consumptive use, a population objective of 50,000–100,000 caribou, and a harvest objective of 1,000–15,000 caribou. The herd has a positive C&T use finding and ANS of 350–400 caribou.

In accordance with AS 16.05.255(d), residents have preference for subsistence and personal uses over taking by nonresidents. Residents have 10 more days to hunt during the RC860 fall hunt than nonresidents. Only residents may hunt the 121-day RC867 winter hunt for any caribou. Seasons and bag limits are shown below:

**Table 51-1. –Seasons and bag limits for Fortymile Caribou**

<b>UNIT/ AREA</b>	<b>OPEN TO:</b>	<b>BAG LIMIT</b>	<b>HUNT NUMBER</b>	<b>OPEN SEASON</b>
<b>Fall Hunts</b>				
Zones 1 & 3, (parts of Units 20B, 20E & 25C, including the Steese & Taylor Hwys)	Residents	One bull	RC860	Aug 29–Sept 30
	Nonresidents	One bull	RC860	Aug 29–Sept 20
	Youth: residents & nonresident children of residents	One bull per lifetime	Drawing hunt YC831	Aug 10–Aug 21
Zone 2 & 4 (roadless parts of Units 20B, 20D, 20E, 25C)	Residents	One bull	RC860	Aug 10–Sept 30
	Nonresidents	One bull	RC860	Aug 10–Sept 20

UNIT/ AREA	OPEN TO:	BAG LIMIT	HUNT NUMBER	OPEN SEASON
<b>Winter/Other Hunts</b>				
Zones 1, 2, 3, 4	Residents only	One caribou	RC867	Dec 1–Mar 31
Zones 1 & 3, (parts of Units 20B, 20E & 25C, including Steese & Taylor Hwys)		One caribou	Targeted hunt	Season to be announced during Dec. 1–Mar. 31 if caribou near roads prevent opening RC867 due to biological concerns
Zone 3 (Portion of Unit 20E including the Taylor Hwy)		One caribou		Up to 3-day season to be announced during Oct. 20–Nov. 30

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If adopted, population and harvest objectives in 5 AAC 92.108 would determine whether or not the board could consider a nonresident season in areas with active predation control plans. Factors including the harvestable surplus, C&T findings, ANS, and historical harvest by residents and nonresidents would only be considered after the Intensive Management objectives are met.

**BACKGROUND:**

Unit 19A moose: The IM population objective for moose in Unit 19A would require a moose density within the entire area of approximately 0.75–0.93 moose/mi<sup>2</sup>. Our recent moose density estimate of 0.43 moose/mi<sup>2</sup> in eastern Unit 19A (Holitna) during March 2011 was well below this objective. The harvest of 122 moose in Unit 19A and 25 in Unit 19B during RY15 is typical and is well below the IM harvest objective of 750–950 moose.

Unit 19D-East moose: We estimate the population in Unit 19D East to be about 5,400 moose, which is below the IM objective of 6,000–8,000. The moose population is likely below the objective of 4,000–6,000 within the remainder of Unit 19D as well. Reported harvest of 179 moose in Unit 19D during RY15 is typical, and did not meet the Unit 19D East harvest objective of 400–600 or the harvest objective of 250–600 in the remainder of Unit 19D.

Unit 21E moose: While the board has not yet considered Proposal 75 to reauthorize the IM plan in this unit, we provide the following information. The current population estimate for all of Unit 21E is 9,931 moose. This is in the middle of the range of the Unit 21E intensive management objective (9,000–11,000). The current estimate of harvestable surplus is 400 moose. Harvest in RY14–RY16 was about 200 moose per year (about 15 by nonresidents), which is well below the IM harvest objective of 550–1,100 moose.

Fortymile caribou herd – This herd has met the IM population and harvest objectives, and so would not be affected by this proposal unless the population or harvest levels drop below these thresholds.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal to allocate harvest to residents when the population is below IM objectives. No biological concerns are identified or addressed by this proposal.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 52 – 5 AAC 92.057. Special provisions for Dall sheep and mountain goat drawing permit hunts; 92.061. Special provisions for brown bear drawing permit hunts; 92.069. Special provisions for moose drawing permit hunts; and 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.** Establish a ten percent nonresident drawing permit allocation cap in the Interior–Northeast Arctic Region for Dall sheep, moose, brown bear, and caribou.

**PROPOSED BY:** Resident Hunters of Alaska.

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Allocate no more than 10% of all drawing permits in Units 12, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26B, and 26C to nonresident hunters for Dall sheep, moose, brown bear, and caribou.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

*Brown Bears:* In RY16, 4 drawing permits were issued to nonresidents in Unit 26B. Residents hunt under an unlimited registration permit in Unit 26B.

*Caribou:* The Delta caribou herd in Unit 20A is the only caribou herd in the region that is hunted by drawing permit for both resident and nonresident hunters. There is no limit on permit allocation to nonresidents.

*Moose:* In RY16, 37% of moose drawing permits were available to nonresident hunters (63% are resident only hunts). Of the permits nonresidents are able to apply for (37% of the total permits), 89% were also available to residents and 11% were available to non-residents only.

*Sheep:* There are 5 drawing hunts for sheep: Two in the Tok Management Area (TMA), 2 in the Delta Controlled Use Area (DCUA), and one around Mount Harper. In the DCUA, up to 10% of permits are allocated to nonresidents. In the TMA, 10% of permits are allocated to nonresidents. There is no limit on the allocation to nonresidents of the 4 sheep permits for Mount Harper.

Refer to the 2016–2017 *Alaska Hunting Regulations* and the 2016–2017 *Alaska Drawing Permit Hunt Supplement* for specific details about drawing hunts in the Interior–Northeast Arctic Region.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** No more than 10% of any drawing hunt permits available to both residents and nonresidents could be allocated to nonresident hunters.

**BACKGROUND:** This proposal pertains to 1 caribou hunt, 116 moose hunts, and 5 Dall sheep hunts. Board policy (2007-173-BOG) indicates that allocations for specific hunts will be decided individually, based upon historical patterns of nonresident and resident permit use over the past 10 years. Drawing permit hunts have changed somewhat over the last 10 year, but Regulatory Year 2016 (RY16; i.e., RY16 = July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017) is representative of the patterns of nonresident and resident permit use for brown bear, caribou, moose and Dall sheep.

*Caribou* — Of 150 permits, 9 (6%) were awarded in RY16 to nonresidents in the Unit 20A Delta caribou drawing, even though there was no limit on the allocation to nonresidents.

*Moose* — A total of 2,107 moose drawing permits were available in the region in RY16. Of these, 1,321 were allocated exclusively to residents (such as portions of Unit 20B where 167 antlerless moose drawing permits were available only to residents); 700 were available to either residents or nonresidents (unallocated); and 86 were allocated exclusively to nonresident hunters. Most permits available to nonresidents were in hunt areas where residents could hunt by harvest ticket, registration permit, or both; and/or where residents had longer seasons and/or less restrictive bag limits. Examples include 1) the Koyukuk CUA in Units 21D and 24D, where residents had access to unlimited registration permits and 40 drawing permits for any bull and nonresidents were restricted to 10 drawing permits for bulls with 50-inch antlers or 4 or more brow tines on at least one side; and 2) Unit 20A muzzleloader hunt where residents could harvest any bull and nonresidents were restricted to bulls with 50-inch antlers or 4 or more brow tines on at least one side.

*Sheep* — 11 (6%) of 194 sheep permits were issued to nonresidents in RY16. In the TMA, 6 (10%) of 60 permits were issued to nonresidents. In the DCUA, 5 (4%) of 130 permits were issued to nonresidents. In the Mount Harper sheep hunt, zero of 4 permits were issued to nonresidents. Furthermore, 100% of Mount Harper permits were issued to residents during the previous 10 years.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal to allocate wildlife between residents and nonresidents. There are no conservation concerns created or addressed by this proposal.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional direct costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 53 – 5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.** Clarify the resident general and subsistence hunting seasons and the nonresident general hunting season for caribou in the Interior-Northeast Arctic Region.

**PROPOSED BY:** Al Barrette

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** The proposal would add new labels and classifications to hunts in the Alaska Administrative Code and change some existing labels and classifications for all caribou hunts in the Interior-Northeast Arctic Region. All caribou hunts open to nonresidents and all caribou hunts open to residents by drawing permit or within the

Fairbanks nonsubsistence area would be “General season”. All other caribou hunts open to residents would be “Subsistence”.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** There are very few labels on any of the caribou hunts in the Interior-Northeast Arctic Region. Alaska residents take caribou for a variety of uses.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The proposal, as written, would close caribou hunting in that portion of Unit 20B located within the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area, as well as that portion of Unit 20D, south of the Tanana River (Macomb herd). The proposal would also appear to provide a subsistence hunt in that portion of the Unit 20D, north of the Tanana River and within the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area, which may be a violation of AS 16.05.258(a). The White Mountain caribou herd hunt would be labeled as a subsistence hunt, despite the fact that the herd is located within the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area and additional inaccuracies within the current regulations would not be addressed, such as the designation of resident caribou hunts in Unit 20F south of the Yukon River and west of the Dalton Highway and Unit 20F north of the Yukon River, both of which are inaccurately labeled as “General hunt only”. The label for Unit 19D, excluding the drainages of the Nixon Fork River, would not be addressed for the winter resident caribou season (to be announced for 5 caribou), which is inaccurately labeled as “Subsistence hunt only.” All youth hunts would be labeled and classified as not providing for customary and traditional uses.

**BACKGROUND:** This proposal is scheduled for the Arctic/Western Region meeting as Proposal 6 and for the Interior-Northeast Arctic Region meeting as Proposal 53.

Under AS 16.05.258(a), except in nonsubsistence areas, the board is directed to identify game populations, or portions of populations, that are customarily and traditionally taken or used for subsistence. The board applies the *Joint Boards of Fisheries and Game Subsistence Procedures* (5 AAC 99.010), in place since the early 1980s, to identify game populations with customary and traditional uses (C&T) by Alaska residents. Harvest and use patterns for game populations are described and evaluated based on eight criteria to determine which, if any, are customary and traditional subsistence use patterns. For populations that support C&T uses, the board must identify the “amount reasonably necessary” for subsistence uses, called an “ANS finding.”

The board has made positive customary and traditional use findings (C&T findings) for caribou in Units 12, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26. The only caribou population in the Interior-Northeast Arctic Region with a negative C&T finding is the Chisana herd in Unit 12. Also, all caribou hunting within the Fairbanks nonsubsistence area cannot occur under subsistence regulations.

When there is a single set of regulations for residents for a game population with a harvestable surplus above the ANS, these regulations generally indicate that the open season is for “general and subsistence hunts” when a positive C&T finding has been made or when no C&T finding has been made. This practice provides for subsistence uses (as required by AS 16.05.258(b)) and other, nonsubsistence uses. If there is a negative C&T finding for a game population, or when hunting for that population takes place in a nonsubsistence area, or resident opportunity is limited through drawing permits, the resident open season is labeled “General hunt only.”

When making C&T findings, the board has recognized that Alaska residents harvest and use wildlife resources in a range of patterns, not all of which conform to the eight criteria that characterize subsistence use patterns. Participation in a hunt on a game population with a positive C&T finding by Alaskan residents does not by itself mean that the only use is a subsistence use. Subsistence use patterns by Alaskans may exist side by side with nonsubsistence use patterns by Alaskans. For example, a use pattern that involves considerable travel and expense is likely not consistent with Criterion 3, and harvest of game in an area with little to no use of other resources from that area (that is, not part of a broader range of uses) may not be consistent with Criterion 8.

Resident seasons listed in the Alaska Administrative Code currently have one of three labels: “General hunt only”, “Subsistence hunt only”, or they lack a label (i.e., the space for a label is left blank). The lack of a label for resident seasons means the season is the same for general hunting and subsistence hunting. Nonresident hunts also lack a label because the labels only apply to resident hunts.

The following guidelines have generally been applied when labeling hunts in the Alaska Administrative Code, but the regulations do not always conform to these guidelines:

- “General hunt only” is applied to resident hunts in areas designated as nonsubsistence areas by the Joint Board of Fisheries and Game and to hunts outside of nonsubsistence areas that have a negative customary and traditional use (C&T) finding for the game population.
- “Subsistence hunt only” is applied to resident hunts if the hunt occurs outside nonsubsistence areas on a game population with a positive C&T finding and the harvestable portion of the population is not great enough to allow for nonsubsistence harvests and uses.
- No label. These hunts generally include all types of resource use, subsistence and nonsubsistence, and do not differentiate between the various types of use.

The board discussed this topic extensively at the statewide meeting in March 2016. The board elected to maintain the status quo and directed the department and the Department of Law to make appropriate updates to 5 AAC 85 to ensure hunts are labeled accurately according to the above guidelines.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department recommends that the board **TAKE NO ACTION** on this proposal because most caribou in the Interior-Northeast Arctic Region have a positive C&T finding, and for hunts that provide subsistence and nonsubsistence uses, no label is the correct designation. Additionally, adopting the proposal would be inconsistent with prior board actions that recognize that not all uses of game populations by Alaska residents are customary and traditional subsistence uses. Wildlife populations may have multiple Alaska resident use patterns, some consistent with a C&T pattern as identified by the board and some consistent with a nonsubsistence use pattern. Although all Alaskans are eligible to participate in hunts classified as subsistence hunts (unless restrictions on participation are necessary for conservation reasons), participation in a hunt on a game population with a positive C&T finding by Alaskan residents does not by itself mean that the only use is a subsistence use.



**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal may result in additional costs to the department to prepare C&T and ANS analyses for all Interior-Northeast Arctic Region caribou populations and to staff and schedule the additional board meetings necessary to implement AS 16.05.258.

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**PROPOSAL 54 – 5 AAC 85.015. Hunting seasons and bag limits for black bear.** Change “general season” to “subsistence” for Interior-Northeast Arctic Region black bear hunts having positive customary and traditional use findings.

**PROPOSED BY:** Al Barrette

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** The proposal would change the label and classification of “General hunt only” in the Alaska Administrative Code to “Subsistence hunt only” in the Interior-Northeast Arctic Region for black bear populations with positive customary and traditional use findings outside of the Fairbanks nonsubsistence area. The result would be that the majority of resident hunting for black bears in the Interior-Northeast Arctic Region would be classified as subsistence hunting.

*Note: Unit 26B and 26C appear to have been inadvertently omitted from the printed proposal. It is likely the intent of the proposal was to include Units 26B and 26C.*

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
Units 9, 11-13, Remainder of Unit 16, Units 18, 19(B), 19(C), 20 – 24, 25(A), 25(B), and 26	No closed season. (General hunt only)	No closed season.
3 bears		

*Note: The current “General hunt only” label is incorrect and will be updated following the Interior-Northeastern Arctic Regional meeting.*

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If this proposal is adopted, the majority of hunting for black bears in the Interior-Northeast Arctic Region would be classified as subsistence hunting.

The current hunts allow for both subsistence and nonsubsistence uses, and the board has made positive findings of customary and traditional (C&T) patterns of use for some of these game populations (Units 12, 19, 20, 21, 24, and 25). To address the proposal as written, the board would need to address amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence (ANS) for black bears in the areas that lack an ANS in order to determine appropriate hunt type (Tier I, Tier II, or hunts that are open to all users). The board would need to revisit hunting patterns for all black bear populations in the Interior-Northeast Arctic Region to ensure the patterns are customary and

traditional – i.e., “subsistence” – hunting patterns, but especially in Units 18, 22, 23, and 26, since no findings have yet been made in those units. The department does not intend to change hunt administration. The effect on hunters in the field is unknown, pending board action on C&T and ANS findings.

Findings such as 2016-214-BOG *Board of Game Bear Conservation, Harvest, and Management Policy* may need to be revised to incorporate the new classification of all hunts on Interior-Northeast Arctic Region black bear populations with positive customary and traditional use findings as subsistence hunts, rather than for nonsubsistence uses.

**BACKGROUND:** This proposal is scheduled for the Arctic/Western Region meeting as Proposal 5, and the Interior-Northeast Arctic Region meeting as Proposal 54.

Under AS 16.05.258(a), except in nonsubsistence areas, the board is directed to identify game populations, or portions of populations, that are customarily and traditionally taken or used for subsistence. The board applies the *Joint Boards of Fisheries and Game Subsistence Procedures* (5 AAC 99.010), in place since the early 1980s, to identify game populations with customary and traditional uses (C&T) by Alaska residents. Harvest and use patterns for game populations are described and evaluated based on eight criteria to determine which, if any, are customary and traditional subsistence use patterns. For populations that support C&T uses, the board must identify the ANS finding for subsistence uses. The board has made positive C&T findings for black bear populations in Units 12, 19, 20, 21, 24, and 25, and has established an ANS for Units 12, 19, 20, and 25. The board has made no C&T findings for black bear populations in Units 18, 22, 23, and 26.

When there is a single set of regulations for residents for a game population with a harvestable surplus above the ANS, these regulations generally indicate that the open season is for “general and subsistence hunts” when a positive C&T finding has been made or when no C&T finding has been made. This practice provides for subsistence uses (as required by AS 16.05.258(b)) and other, nonsubsistence uses. If there is a negative C&T finding for a game population, or when hunting for that population takes place in a nonsubsistence area, or resident opportunity is limited through drawing permits, the resident open season is labeled “General hunt only.”

When making C&T findings, the board has recognized that Alaska residents harvest and use wildlife resources in a range of patterns, not all of which conform to the eight criteria that characterize subsistence use patterns. Participation in a hunt on a game population with a positive C&T finding by Alaskan residents does not by itself mean that the only use is a subsistence use. Subsistence use patterns by Alaskans may exist side-by-side with nonsubsistence use patterns by Alaskans. For example, a use pattern that involves considerable travel and expense is likely not consistent with Criterion 3, and harvest of game in an area with little to no use of other resources from that area (that is, not part of a broader range of uses) may not be consistent with Criterion 8.

Resident seasons listed in the Alaska Administrative Code currently have one of three labels: “General hunt only”, “Subsistence hunt only”, or they lack a label (i.e., the space for a label is left blank). The lack of a label for resident seasons means the season is the same for general hunting and subsistence hunting. Nonresident hunts also lack a label because the labels only apply to resident hunts.

The following guidelines have generally been applied when labeling hunts in the Alaska Administrative Code, but the regulations do not always conform to these guidelines:

- “General hunt only” is applied to resident hunts in areas designated as nonsubsistence areas by the Joint Board of Fisheries and Game and to hunts outside of nonsubsistence areas that have a negative customary and traditional use (C&T) finding for the game population.
- “Subsistence hunt only” is applied to resident hunts if the hunt occurs outside nonsubsistence areas on a game population with a positive C&T finding and the harvestable portion of the population is not great enough to allow for nonsubsistence harvests and uses.
- No label. These hunts generally include all types of resource use, subsistence and nonsubsistence, and do not differentiate between the various types of use.

The board discussed this topic extensively at the statewide meeting in March 2016. The board elected to maintain the status quo and directed the department and the Department of Law to make appropriate updates to 5 AAC 85 to ensure hunts are labeled accurately according to the above guidelines. This proposal has brought to light the fact that a labeling error exists in 5 AAC 85 for black bears in the Interior-Northeast Arctic Region. Following the Interior-Northeast Arctic Region meeting the department will update 5 AAC 85 to remove the label for all resident black bear hunts within the Interior-Northeast Arctic Region, because all resident hunts in these units provide for both subsistence and nonsubsistence uses.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department recommends the board **TAKE NO ACTION** on this proposal because the Department of Law has been working with the department, following guidance by the board, to make appropriate updates to 5 AAC 85 to ensure the hunts are labeled accurately. Following the board’s direction from the 2016 statewide meeting, the department will update 5 AAC 85 to remove the label for all resident black bear hunts within the Interior-Northeast Arctic Region because, absent a negative C&T finding or being located in a nonsubsistence area, the hunts provide for both general and subsistence uses. Additionally, adopting the proposal would be inconsistent with prior board actions that recognize that not all uses of game populations by Alaska residents are customary and traditional subsistence uses. Wildlife populations may have multiple Alaska resident use patterns, some consistent with a C&T pattern as identified by the board and some consistent with a nonsubsistence use pattern. Although all Alaskans are eligible to participate in hunts classified as subsistence hunts (unless restrictions on participation are necessary for conservation reasons), participation in a hunt on a game population with a positive C&T finding by Alaskan residents does not by itself mean that the only use is a subsistence use.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal may result in additional costs to the department to prepare C&T and ANS analyses for all Interior-Northeast Arctic Region black bear populations and to staff and schedule the additional board meetings necessary to implement AS 16.05.258.

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**PROPOSAL 55 – 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.** Clarify the resident general and subsistence hunting seasons and the nonresident general hunting seasons for moose.

**PROPOSED BY:** Al Barrette

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** The proposal would label and classify the majority of moose hunts in the Interior-Northeast Arctic Region open to residents as “Subsistence” in the Alaska Administrative Code, while keeping the existing “Subsistence hunt only” label and classification in others. All moose hunts administered by a drawing permit, open to nonresidents, and those without labels would be labeled “General season”.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The board has made positive customary and traditional use findings (C&T findings) for all moose populations in the Interior-Northeast Arctic Region. There are no moose populations in the Interior-Northeast Arctic Region with negative C&T findings, and no populations for which no C&T determination has been made by the board, though a large amount of moose hunting takes place within the Fairbanks nonsubsistence area.

The “Subsistence hunt only” label is used in a few moose hunts that are open to residents only, where the harvestable portion of the population is not great enough to allow for nonsubsistence harvest. The nonresident hunts are currently not labeled because nonresidents do not have a subsistence priority.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If this proposal is adopted, the majority of hunting for moose in the Interior-Northeast Arctic Region would be classified as subsistence hunting.

**BACKGROUND:** Under AS 16.05.258(a), except in nonsubsistence areas, the board is directed to identify game populations, or portions of populations, that are customarily and traditionally taken or used for subsistence. The board applies the *Joint Boards of Fisheries and Game Subsistence Procedures* (5 AAC 99.010), in place since the early 1980s, to identify game populations with customary and traditional uses (C&T) by Alaska residents. Harvest and use patterns for game populations are described and evaluated based on eight criteria to determine which, if any, are customary and traditional subsistence use patterns. For populations that support C&T uses, the board must identify the “amount reasonably necessary” for subsistence uses, called an “ANS finding.”

When there is a single set of regulations for residents for a game population with a harvestable surplus above the ANS, these regulations generally indicate that the open season is for “general and subsistence hunts” when a positive C&T finding has been made or when no C&T finding has been made. This practice provides for subsistence uses (as required by AS 16.05.258(b)) and other, nonsubsistence uses. If there is a negative C&T finding for a game population, or when hunting for that population takes place in a nonsubsistence area, or resident opportunity is limited through drawing permits, the resident open season is labeled “General hunt only.”

When making C&T findings, the board has recognized that Alaska residents harvest and use wildlife resources in a range of patterns, not all of which conform to the eight criteria that

characterize subsistence use patterns. Participation in a hunt on a game population with a positive C&T finding by Alaskan residents does not by itself mean that the only use is a subsistence use. Subsistence use patterns by Alaskans may exist side by side with nonsubsistence use patterns. For example, a use pattern that involves considerable travel and expense is likely not consistent with Criterion 3, and harvest of game in an area with little to no use of other resources from that area (that is, not part of a broader range of uses) may not be consistent with Criterion 8.

Resident seasons listed in the Alaska Administrative Code currently have one of three labels: “General hunt only”, “Subsistence hunt only”, or they lack a label (i.e. the space for a label is left blank). The lack of a label for resident seasons means the season is the same for general hunting and subsistence hunting. Nonresident hunts also lack a label because the labels only apply to resident hunts.

The following guidelines have generally been applied when labeling hunts in the Alaska Administrative Code, but the regulations do not always conform to these guidelines:

- “General hunt only” is applied to resident hunts in areas designated as nonsubsistence areas by the Joint Board of Fisheries and Game and to hunts outside of nonsubsistence areas that have a negative customary and traditional use (C&T) finding for the game population.
- “Subsistence hunt only” is applied to resident hunts if the hunt occurs outside nonsubsistence areas on a game population with a positive C&T finding and the harvestable portion of the population is not great enough to allow for nonsubsistence harvests and uses.
- No label. These hunts generally include all types of resource use, subsistence and nonsubsistence, and do not differentiate between the various types of use.

The board discussed this topic extensively at the statewide meeting in March 2016. The board elected to maintain the status quo and directed the department and the Department of Law to make appropriate updates to 5 AAC 85 to ensure hunts are labeled accurately according to the above guidelines.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department recommends the board **TAKE NO ACTION** on this proposal because, in the case of some hunts, no label is the correct designation. Additionally, adopting the proposal would be inconsistent with prior board actions that recognize that not all uses of game populations by Alaska residents are customary and traditional subsistence uses. Wildlife populations may have multiple Alaska resident use patterns, some consistent with a C&T pattern as identified by the board and some consistent with a nonsubsistence use pattern. Although all Alaskans are eligible to participate in hunts classified as subsistence hunts (unless restrictions on participation are necessary for conservation reasons), participation in a hunt on a game population with a positive C&T finding by Alaskan residents does not by itself mean that the only use is a subsistence use.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal may result in additional costs to the department to prepare C&T and ANS analyses for all Interior-Northeast Arctic Region moose populations, and to staff and schedule the additional board meetings necessary to implement AS 16.05.258.

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**PROPOSAL 56 – 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep.** Clarify the resident general and subsistence hunting seasons and the nonresident general hunting seasons for Dall sheep.

**PROPOSED BY:** Al Barrette

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** The proposal would label and classify all sheep hunts in the Alaska Administrative Code that are open to residents in the Interior/Northeast Arctic region with a positive customary and traditional use finding (C&T finding) as “Subsistence,” keep the existing “Subsistence hunt only” or “General hunt only” labels in others, and label all nonresident sheep hunts as “General season.”

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The board adopted positive customary and traditional use findings (C&T findings) for some Dall sheep populations in the Interior-Northeast Arctic Region, including those in Unit 19 and those in Units 24, 25A, and 26 (Brooks range, DeLong Mountains, Schwatka Mountains). There board adopted negative C&T findings for the Delta and Tok Management areas (portions of Units 12, 13B, 13C, and 20), and Units 25B and 25C. The board has not made a C&T determination for the remaining sheep populations, some of which occur within the Fairbanks nonsubsistence area.

The “Subsistence hunt only” label is used in a few sheep hunts that are open to residents only where the harvestable portion of the population is not great enough to allow for nonsubsistence harvest. Nonresident hunts are currently not labeled because nonresidents do not have a subsistence priority.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If this proposal is adopted, some hunting for Dall sheep in the Interior-Northeast Arctic Region would be classified as subsistence hunting.

Findings such as 97-116-BOG *Findings of the Alaska Board of Game on Dall Sheep Management in the Western Brooks Range* may need to be revised to incorporate the new classification of all hunts on Interior-Northeast Arctic Region Dall sheep populations with positive customary and traditional use findings as subsistence hunts, rather than for nonsubsistence uses.

**BACKGROUND:** This proposal is scheduled for the Arctic/Western Region meeting as Proposal 7 and the Interior-Northeast Arctic Region meeting as Proposal 56.

Under AS 16.05.258(a), except in nonsubsistence areas, the board is directed to identify game populations, or portions of populations, that are customarily and traditionally taken or used for subsistence. The board applies the *Joint Boards of Fisheries and Game Subsistence Procedures* (5 AAC 99.010), in place since the early 1980s, to identify game populations with customary and traditional uses (C&T) by Alaska residents. Harvest and use patterns for game populations are

described and evaluated based on eight criteria to determine which, if any, are customary and traditional subsistence use patterns. For populations that support C&T uses, the board must identify the “amount reasonably necessary” for subsistence uses, called an “ANS finding.”

When there is a single set of regulations for residents for a game population with a harvestable surplus above the ANS, these regulations generally indicate that the open season is for “general and subsistence hunts” when a positive C&T finding has been made or when no C&T finding has been made. This practice provides for subsistence uses (as required by AS 16.05.258(b)) and other, nonsubsistence uses. If there is a negative C&T finding for a game population, or when hunting for that population takes place in a nonsubsistence area, or resident opportunity is limited through drawing permits, the resident open season is labeled “General hunt only.”

When making C&T findings, the board has recognized that Alaska residents harvest and use wildlife resources in a range of patterns, not all of which conform to the eight criteria that characterize subsistence use patterns. Participation in a hunt on a game population with a positive C&T finding by Alaskan residents does not by itself mean that the only use is a subsistence use. Subsistence use patterns by Alaskans may exist side by side with nonsubsistence use patterns. For example, a use pattern that involves considerable travel and expense is likely not consistent with Criterion 3, and harvest of game in an area with little to no use of other resources from that area (that is, not part of a broader range of uses) may not be consistent with Criterion 8.

Resident seasons listed in the Alaska Administrative Code currently have one of three labels: “General hunt only”, “Subsistence hunt only”, or they lack a label (i.e. the space for a label is left blank). The lack of a label for resident seasons means the season is the same for general hunting and subsistence hunting. Nonresident hunts also lack a label because the labels only apply to resident hunts.

The following guidelines have generally been applied when labeling hunts in the Alaska Administrative Code, but the regulations do not always conform to these guidelines:

- “General hunt only” is applied to resident hunts in areas designated as nonsubsistence areas by the Joint Board of Fisheries and Game and to hunts outside of nonsubsistence areas that have a negative customary and traditional use (C&T) finding for the game population.
- “Subsistence hunt only” is applied to resident hunts if the hunt occurs outside nonsubsistence areas on a game population with a positive C&T finding and the harvestable portion of the population is not great enough to allow for nonsubsistence harvests and uses.
- No label. These hunts generally include all types of resource use, subsistence and nonsubsistence, and do not differentiate between the various types of use.

The board discussed this topic extensively at the statewide meeting in March 2016. The board elected to maintain the status quo and directed the department and the Department of Law to make appropriate updates to 5 AAC 85 to ensure hunts are labeled accurately according to the above guidelines.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department recommends the board **TAKE NO ACTION** on this proposal because, in the case of some hunts, no label is the correct designation. Additionally, adopting the proposal would be inconsistent with prior board actions that recognize that not all uses of game populations by Alaska residents are customary and traditional subsistence uses. Wildlife populations may have multiple Alaska resident use patterns, some consistent with a C&T pattern as identified by the board and some consistent with a nonsubsistence use pattern. Although all Alaskans are eligible to participate in hunts classified as subsistence hunts (unless restrictions on participation are necessary for conservation reasons), participation in a hunt on a game population with a positive C&T finding by Alaskan residents does not by itself mean that the only use is a subsistence use.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal may result in additional costs to the department to prepare C&T and ANS analyses for all Interior-Northeast Arctic Region Dall sheep populations, and to staff and schedule the additional board meetings necessary to implement AS 16.05.258.

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**PROPOSAL 57 – 92.008. Harvest guideline levels.** Establish a nonresident sheep harvest cap of 12% for the Interior–Northeast Arctic Region

**PROPOSED BY:** Jacques Etcheverry

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would limit nonresident sheep hunters to 12% of total harvest in Region III, based on the last 3-year average.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The current sheep hunting regulations can be found in 5 AAC 85.055 and in the *Alaska Hunting Regulations* summary

Opportunity for all residents and nonresidents is as follows:

- Resident and nonresident hunters may hunt using harvest tickets in most of the region during August 10–September 20.
- Nonresident hunters may harvest one full-curl ram every 4 years.
- Beginning July 1, 2018, a sheep taken by a nonresident personally accompanied by a resident relative will count as the bag limit of both the nonresident and the resident relative who accompanies the nonresident.

Drawing permit hunting opportunity is as follows:

- Delta Controlled Use Area (portions of Units 20D, 20A and 13B)
  - residents and nonresidents: August 10–25 or August 26–September 20, one full-curl ram.
  - nonresidents are limited to 10% of permits.
- Tok Management Area (Unit 12 and portions of Units 13C and 20D)
  - residents and nonresidents: August 10–25 or August 26–September 20, one full-curl ram every 4 years.
  - nonresidents are limited to a maximum of 10% of permits.
- Mount Harper (Units 20D and 20E)



- residents and nonresidents: August 10–September 20, one full-curl ram.
- four unallocated permits are available, but no nonresidents have drawn a permit in the last 10 years.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If this proposal is adopted, the allocation of sheep hunting opportunity for nonresidents would be reduced from approximately 324 hunters to 77 permittees each year. The department would attempt to limit nonresident sheep hunters to 12% of total harvest in Region III. To accomplish this goal, the board would need to create new nonresident sheep draw hunts and/or limited registration hunts to regulate harvest by nonresidents in areas that currently utilize harvest tickets.

**BACKGROUND:** Board policy (2007-173-BOG) indicates that allocations for specific hunts will be decided individually, based on historical patterns of resident and nonresident use over the past 10 years. The board has previously allocated hunting opportunity between resident and nonresident hunters for specific hunts by modifying season dates or by allocating permits. The goal of proposals 57–62 is to reduce nonresident hunting opportunity throughout the region. Similar requests for board changes in allocation of sheep hunting opportunity have been addressed previously by the board at meetings covering Regions II, III, IV and V.

Limiting nonresidents to 12% of the harvest may increase the number of legal rams available to residents and may increase resident success rates in some cases. During RY13–RY15 nonresident sheep hunters accounted for an average of 26% of the sheep hunters who used harvest tickets regionwide. Forty-five percent of the 1,367 rams harvested were taken by nonresidents, (62% success rate). To achieve a 12% harvest by nonresidents during the same period, nonresidents would need to have been reduced from 324 hunters to 77 permittees each year. Existing drawing permit hunts would be similarly reduced.

Some sheep hunts have season dates and bag limits that provide a reasonable opportunity for success in harvesting a sheep for subsistence uses. In all of these hunts, participants use harvest tickets or registration permits. The department has prepared a report on the status, by Game Management Unit, of sheep hunts on populations with positive customary and traditional use findings. The report is posted on the Board of Game website.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocation of sheep hunting opportunity between resident and nonresident hunters. No biological concerns are addressed by this proposal.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 58 - 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep; and 92.008. Harvest guideline levels.** Establish a 25% cap on nonresident harvest of Dall sheep in hunts in which hunters use harvest tickets and change all nonresident harvest ticket hunts to drawing permit hunts in the Interior–Northeast Arctic Region.

**PROPOSED BY:** Luke Graham

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would limit nonresident sheep hunters to 25% of the total sheep harvest in Region III hunts on a unit-by-unit basis, based on the last 5-year average. Additionally all nonresident sheep hunts would be converted to the drawing permit system.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The current sheep hunting regulations can be found in 5 AAC 85.055 and in the *Alaska Hunting Regulations* summary.

Opportunity for all residents and nonresidents is as follows:

- Resident and nonresident hunters may hunt using harvest tickets in most of the region during August 10–September 20.
- Nonresident hunters may harvest one full-curl ram every 4 years.
- Beginning July 1, 2018, a sheep taken by a nonresident personally accompanied by a resident relative will count as the bag limit of both the nonresident and the resident relative who accompanies the nonresident.

Drawing permit hunting opportunity is as follows:

- Delta Controlled Use Area (portions of Units 20D, 20A and 13B)
  - residents and nonresidents: August 10–25 or August 26–September 20, one full-curl ram.
  - nonresidents are limited to 10% of permits.
- Tok Management Area (Unit 12 and portions of Units 13C and 20D)
  - residents and nonresidents: August 10–25 or August 26–September 20, one full-curl ram every 4 years.
  - nonresidents are limited to a maximum of 10% of permits.
- Mount Harper (Units 20D and 20E)
  - residents and nonresidents: August 10–September 20, one full-curl ram.
  - four unallocated permits are available, but no nonresidents have drawn a permit in the last 10 years.
- Four unallocated permits are available, but no nonresidents have drawn a permit in the last 10 years.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The department would attempt to limit nonresident sheep hunters to 25% of the harvest based on harvest patterns that occurred during the previous 5 years. The board would also establish new nonresident sheep draw hunts to regulate nonresident hunting opportunity and harvest.

**BACKGROUND:** Board policy (2007-173-BOG) indicates that allocations for specific hunts will be decided individually, based upon historical patterns of nonresident and resident use over the past 10 years. The board has previously allocated hunting opportunity between resident and nonresident hunters by modifying season dates or by allocating permits for specific hunts. The goal of proposals 57–62 is to reduce nonresident hunting opportunity throughout the region. Similar requests for board changes in allocation of sheep hunting opportunity have been addressed previously by the board at meetings covering Regions II, III, IV and V.

Limiting nonresidents to 25% of the harvest may increase the number of legal rams available to residents and may increase resident success rates in some cases. The 5-year (RY11–RY15) average harvest by nonresidents is 45% of the rams taken in harvest ticket hunts. To achieve a 25% harvest by nonresidents during the same period, nonresidents would need to be reduced from an average of 327 hunters to 174 permittees each year.

Some sheep hunts have season dates and bag limits that provide a reasonable opportunity for success in harvesting a sheep for subsistence uses. In all of these hunts, hunters use harvest tickets or registration permits. The department has prepared a report on the status, by Game Management Unit, of sheep hunts on populations with positive customary and traditional use findings. The report is posted on the Board of Game website.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocation of sheep hunting opportunity and harvest between resident and nonresident hunters. No biological concerns are addressed by this proposal.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 59 - 5 AAC 92.057. Special provisions for Dall sheep and mountain goat drawing permit hunts.** Establish a ten percent nonresident sheep permit allocation for the Interior–Northeast Arctic Region.

**PROPOSED BY:** Jeff Barney

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal establishes drawing permit hunts for all nonresident sheep hunts in Region III. The number of nonresident permits issued would be based on 10% of the total hunt participation (resident and nonresident hunters combined) that occurred during the previous 3 years.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The current sheep hunting regulations can be found in 5 AAC 85.055 and in the *Alaska Hunting Regulations* summary.

Opportunity for all residents and nonresidents is as follows:

- Resident and nonresident hunters may hunt using harvest tickets in most of the region during August 10–September 20.
- Nonresident hunters may harvest one full-curl ram every 4 years.
- Beginning July 1, 2018, a sheep taken by a nonresident personally accompanied by a resident relative will count as the bag limit of both the nonresident and the resident relative who accompanies the nonresident.

Drawing permit hunting opportunity is as follows:

- Delta Controlled Use Area (portions of Units 20D, 20A and 13B)
  - residents and nonresidents: August 10–25 or August 26–September 20, one full-curl ram.

- nonresidents are limited to 10% of permits.
- Tok Management Area (Unit 12 and portions of Units 13C and 20D)
  - residents and nonresidents: August 10–25 or August 26–September 20, one full-curl ram every 4 years.
  - nonresidents are limited to a maximum of 10% of permits.
- Mount Harper (Units 20D and 20E)
  - residents and nonresidents: August 10–September 20, one full-curl ram.
  - four unallocated permits are available, but no nonresidents have drawn a permit in the last 10 years.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The board would create new nonresident sheep draw permit hunts in any area where they currently do not exist. The department would issue the nonresident permits based on hunting participation that occurred during the 3 previous years, and the number of permits issued would represent 10% of the total number of hunters that reported hunting sheep in each area.

**BACKGROUND:** Board policy (2007-173-BOG) indicates that allocations for specific hunts will be decided individually, based upon historical patterns of nonresident and resident use over the past 10 years. The board has previously allocated hunting opportunity between resident and nonresident hunters by modifying season dates or by allocating permits for specific hunts. The goal of proposals 57–62 is to reduce nonresident hunting opportunity in harvest ticket hunts throughout the region. Similar requests for board changes in allocation of sheep hunting opportunity have been addressed previously by the board at meetings covering Regions II, III, IV and V.

If adopted, the allocation of sheep hunting opportunity for nonresidents would be reduced from approximately 324 hunters to 151 permittees each year. Limiting nonresidents to 10% of the sheep hunters may increase the number of legal rams available to residents and may increase resident success rates in some cases. During RY13–RY15 nonresident sheep hunters accounted for an average of 26% of the sheep hunters who used harvest tickets regionwide. Forty-five percent of the 1,367 rams harvested were taken by nonresidents, (62% success rate). To achieve 10% of hunters being nonresidents during the same period would require trial and error because the number of nonresidents who obtained harvest tickets intending to hunt in Region III but who did not hunt is unknown. However, an average of 324 nonresidents hunted, and the number would need to be reduced to approximately 137 permittees each year.

Some sheep hunts have season dates and bag limits that provide a reasonable opportunity for success in harvesting a sheep for subsistence uses. In all of these hunts, participants use either harvest tickets or registration permits. The department has prepared a report on the status, by Game Management Unit, of sheep hunts on populations with positive customary and traditional use findings. The report is posted on the Board of Game website.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocation of sheep hunting opportunity between resident and nonresident hunters. No biological concerns are addressed by this proposal.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 60 - 5 AAC 92.057. Special provisions for Dall sheep and mountain goat drawing permit hunts.** Establish a ten percent nonresident sheep permit allocation for the Interior–Northeast Arctic Region.

**PROPOSED BY:** Jake Sprankle

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would limit nonresident sheep hunters to 10% of the permit allocation for sheep hunts in Region III based on the average participation that occurred during the 3 previous years.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The current sheep hunting regulations can be found in 5 AAC 85.055 and in the *Alaska Hunting Regulations* summary.

Drawing permit hunting opportunity is as follows:

- Delta Controlled Use Area (portions of Units 20D, 20A and 13B)
  - residents and nonresidents: August 10–25 or August 26–September 20, one full-curl ram.
  - nonresidents are limited to 10% of permits.
- Tok Management Area (Unit 12 and portions of Units 13C and 20D)
  - residents and nonresidents: August 10–25 or August 26–September 20, one full-curl ram every 4 years.
  - nonresidents are limited to a maximum of 10% of permits.
- Mount Harper (Units 20D and 20E)
  - residents and nonresidents: August 10–September 20, one full-curl ram.
  - four unallocated permits are available, but no nonresidents have drawn a permit in the last 10 years.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** For all permit hunts, the department would issue a limited number of permits to nonresident sheep hunters based on 10% of the average number of hunters (residents and nonresidents) that participated in the hunt during the previous 3 years.

**BACKGROUND:** Board policy (2007-173-BOG) indicates that allocations for specific hunts will be decided individually, based upon historical patterns of nonresident and resident use over the past 10 years. The board has previously allocated hunting opportunity between resident and nonresident hunters by modifying season dates or by allocating permits for specific hunts. The goal of proposals 57–62 is to reduce nonresident hunting opportunity in areas where hunters currently use harvest tickets throughout the region. Similar requests for board changes in allocation of sheep hunting opportunity have been addressed previously by the board at meetings covering Regions II, III, IV and V.

Some sheep hunts have season dates and bag limits that provide a reasonable opportunity for success in harvesting a sheep for subsistence uses. All of these hunts are harvest ticket or registration permit. The department has prepared a report on the status, by Game Management

Unit, of sheep hunts on populations with positive customary and traditional use findings. The report is posted on the Board of Game website.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocation of sheep hunting opportunity between resident and nonresident hunters. No biological concerns are addressed by this proposal because the requirement to harvest full-curl rams should prevent overharvest from affecting sustainability of sheep populations.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 61 - 5 AAC 92.057. Special provisions for Dall sheep and mountain goat drawing permit hunts.** Establish a ten percent nonresident sheep permit allocation in drawing permit areas of the Interior–Northeast Arctic Region.

**PROPOSED BY:** Leonard Jewkes

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would limit nonresident sheep hunters to 10% of the sheep permit allocation in Region III hunts based on the last 3-year average.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The current sheep hunting regulations can be found in 5 AAC 85.055 and in the *Alaska Hunting Regulations* summary.

Current drawing permit hunts are as follows:

- Delta Controlled Use Area (portions of Units 20D, 20A and 13B)
  - residents and nonresidents: August 10–25 or August 26–September 20, one full-curl ram.
  - Nonresidents are limited to 10% of permits.
- Tok Management Area (Unit 12 and portions of Units 13C and 20D)
  - residents and nonresidents: August 10–25 or August 26–September 20, one full-curl ram every 4 years.
  - Nonresidents are limited to 10% of permits.
- Mount Harper (Units 20D and 20E)
  - residents and nonresidents: August 10–September 20, one full-curl ram.
- Four unallocated permits are available, but no nonresidents have drawn a permit in the last 10 years.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If this proposal is adopted, the department would limit nonresident sheep hunters to no more than 10% of the available hunting opportunity in drawing hunt areas. Currently only the Mount Harper drawing permit area for sheep is not allocated. However, only 4 permits are available each year, and nonresidents have not drawn any permits in the last 10 years, so it is unclear how this proposal would affect that hunt. The Tok Management Area and the Delta Control Use area are already allocated 10% to nonresidents.

**BACKGROUND:** Board policy (2007-173-BOG) indicates that allocations for specific hunts will be decided individually, based upon historical patterns of nonresident and resident use over

the past 10 years. The board has previously allocated hunting opportunity between resident and nonresident hunters by modifying season dates or by allocating permits for specific hunts. The goal of proposals 57–62 is to reduce nonresident hunting opportunity in which hunters currently use harvest tickets throughout the region. Similar requests for board changes in allocation of sheep hunting opportunity have been addressed previously by the board at meetings covering Regions II, III, IV and V.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocation of sheep hunting opportunity between resident and nonresident hunters. No biological concerns are addressed by this proposal because the requirement to harvest full-curl rams should prevent overharvest from affecting sustainability of sheep populations.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 62 - 5 AAC 92.008. Harvest guideline levels.** Establish a ten percent nonresident sheep 3-year average harvest allocation for the Interior–Northeast Arctic Region.

**PROPOSED BY:** Resident Hunters of Alaska

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would limit nonresident sheep hunters to a 3-year average of 10% of the sheep harvest in Region III hunts or limit the harvest to a specified number of sheep annually using a 3-year average.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The current sheep hunting regulations can be found in 5 AAC 85.055 and in the *Alaska Hunting Regulations* summary.

Opportunity for all residents and nonresidents is as follows:

- Resident and nonresident hunters may hunt using harvest tickets in most of the region during August 10–September 20.
- Nonresident hunters may harvest one full-curl ram every 4 years.
- Beginning July 1, 2018, a sheep taken by a nonresident personally accompanied by a resident relative will count as the bag limit of both the nonresident and the resident relative who accompanies the nonresident.

Drawing permit hunting opportunity is as follows:

- Delta Controlled Use Area (portions of Units 20D, 20A and 13B)
  - residents and nonresidents: August 10–25 or August 26–September 20, one full-curl ram.
  - nonresidents are limited to 10% of permits.
- Tok Management Area (Unit 12 and portions of Units 13C and 20D)
  - residents and nonresidents: August 10–25 or August 26–September 20, one full-curl ram every 4 years.
  - nonresidents are limited to a maximum of 10% of permits.
- Mount Harper (Units 20D and 20E)

- residents and nonresidents: August 10–September 20, one full-curl ram.
- four unallocated permits are available, but no nonresidents have drawn a permit in the last 10 years.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If this proposal is adopted, the board would need to create new nonresident sheep draw hunts in all areas that are currently managed under a harvest ticket system. The department would attempt to limit nonresident sheep harvest to 10% of 3-year annual harvest on a unit-by unit basis. Alternately, nonresident harvest could be limited to a specified number of sheep for each hunt area using a 3-year running average.

**BACKGROUND:** Board policy (2007-173-BOG) indicates that allocations for specific hunts will be decided individually, based upon historical patterns of nonresident and resident use over the past 10 years. The board has previously allocated hunting opportunity between resident and nonresident hunters by modifying season dates or by allocating permits for specific hunts. The goal of proposals 57–62 is to reduce nonresident hunting opportunity throughout the region. Similar requests for board changes in allocation of sheep hunting opportunity have been addressed previously by the board at meetings covering Regions II, III, IV and V.

Limiting nonresidents to 10% of the harvest may increase the number of legal rams available to residents and may increase resident success rates in some cases. During RY13–RY15 nonresident sheep hunters accounted for an average of 26% of the sheep hunters who use harvest tickets regionwide. Forty-five percent of the 1,367 rams harvested were taken by nonresidents, (62% success rate). To achieve a 10% harvest by nonresidents during the same period, nonresidents would need to have been reduced from 324 hunters to 67 permittees each year.

Some sheep hunts have season dates and bag limits that provide a reasonable opportunity for success in harvesting a sheep for subsistence uses. In all of these hunts hunters must use a harvest ticket or registration permit. The department has prepared a report on the status, by Game Management Unit, of sheep hunts on populations with positive customary and traditional use findings. The report is posted on the Board of Game website.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocation of sheep harvest between resident and nonresident hunters. No biological concerns are addressed by this proposal because the requirement to harvest full-curl rams should prevent overharvest from affecting sustainability of sheep populations.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 63 - 5 AAC 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions.** Remove the restriction on the use of aircraft for spotting Dall sheep in the Interior–Northeast Arctic Region.

**PROPOSED BY:** John Frost.



**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would repeal the regulation that restricts certain uses of aircraft during the sheep hunting season.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** During August 10–September 20, aircraft may be used by and for sheep hunters only to place and remove hunters and camps, maintain existing camps, and salvage harvested sheep. A person may not use or employ an aircraft to locate sheep or direct hunters to sheep during the open sheep hunting season.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Hunters would be able to use aircraft to locate and evaluate Dall sheep rams during the sheep hunting season.

**BACKGROUND:** Over the last few years there has been increasing pressure on the board to make changes to sheep regulations for various reasons. During the 2015 board cycle, the board adopted a proposal to restrict aircraft use. The current regulation allows hunters to use an aircraft to establish and maintain sheep hunting camps, but prohibits the use of aircraft to spot or locate sheep during the hunting season.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on allowing this type of aircraft use during sheep hunts because it does not create or address a biological concern; however, because the board adopted this regulation during the 2016 Statewide Board of Game meeting, the department recommends that the board consider this topic on a statewide basis.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 64 - 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep; and 5 AAC 92.050. Required permit hunt conditions and procedures.** Restrict the harvest of Dall sheep in the Interior/Northeast Arctic Region to one every five years.

**PROPOSED BY:** Jacques Etcheverry

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** If a hunter takes an illegal ram in Region III, he or she cannot harvest another sheep for 5 years.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

- **Resident hunters:** Drawing hunts in the Mt. Harper Area and the Delta Controlled Use Area (DCUA) and all harvest ticket Dall sheep hunts in the region have a bag limit of one full-curl ram per regulatory year. The Tok Management Area (TMA) drawing permit hunts (DS102 and DS103) have a bag limit of one ram every 4 regulatory years.
- **Nonresident hunters:** All harvest ticket and drawing permit hunts for Dall sheep in the region have a bag limit of one full-curl ram every 4 years. This bag limit was established by the board during the 2016 statewide meeting.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** An additional bag limit restriction would be applied to hunters who harvest sub-legal rams. If an illegal ram is taken, the hunter would not be able to hunt another sheep during the next 5 years.

**BACKGROUND:** The full-curl bag limit is used to provide maximum annual participation in sheep hunts and has not been linked to negative effects on the sheep population or lamb production. During 2013–2015, a total of 1,531 hunters successfully harvested Dall sheep rams in the region in harvest ticket and drawing permit hunts. Less than 4% of these rams did not meet legal requirements of full-curl horns or at least 8-years old (46 rams harvested by residents, 12 by nonresidents).

The survey conducted by Dr. Todd Brinkman at University of Alaska Fairbanks showed that the majority of users surveyed (74%) favored a waiting period of 3 years before sheep hunting again. All three groups surveyed, those identifying themselves as resident hunters, guides and nonresident hunters, supported this option.

Some sheep hunts have season dates and bag limits that provide a reasonable opportunity for success in harvesting a sheep for subsistence uses. In all of these hunts hunters must use a harvest ticket or registration permit. The department has prepared a report on the status, by Game Management Unit, of sheep hunts on populations with positive customary and traditional use findings. The report is posted on the Board of Game website.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocation of sheep hunting opportunity for residents and nonresidents who harvest less-than-full-curl rams.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 65 - 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep.** Revert the nonresident bag limit of one Dall sheep ram every four years in the Interior–Northeast Arctic Region to one ram every regulatory year.

**PROPOSED BY:** Chris Harper.

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would allow nonresidents to harvest a full-curl ram more often than once every four years if they voluntarily give up their right to hunt other species of big game during the same regulatory year.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

- **Resident hunters:** Drawing hunts in the Mt. Harper Area and the Delta Controlled Use Area (DCUA) and all harvest ticket Dall sheep hunts in the region have a bag limit of one full-curl ram per regulatory year. The Tok Management Area (TMA) drawing permit hunts (DS102 and DS103) have a bag limit of one ram every 4 regulatory years.

- Nonresident hunters: All harvest ticket and drawing permit hunts for Dall sheep in the region have a bag limit of one full-curl ram every four years. This bag limit was established by the board during the 2016 statewide meeting.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal affects successful nonresident sheep hunters who want to hunt sheep more frequently than once every four years. It allows nonresidents to apply for permits and take a sheep more frequently than allowed under the current bag limit (one sheep every four years) if the hunter waives his or her right to hunt other big game species.

**BACKGROUND:** The full-curl bag limit provides maximum participation in sheep hunts and has not been linked to any negative effects on the sheep population or lamb production.

During 2013 through 2015, a total of 972 rams were harvested by nonresidents in Region 3. Statewide, 4.5% of successful nonresidents returned to Alaska to hunt sheep within 4 years of successfully harvesting a ram.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocation of sheep hunting opportunity for residents and nonresidents. No conservation concerns are addressed or created by this proposal.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 66 – 58.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep.** Open an archery-only hunting season for Dall sheep in the Interior–Northeast Arctic Region.

**PROPOSED BY:** Jacques Etcheverry

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would create an archery-only season for sheep from August 1–9.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The current sheep hunting regulations can be found in 5 AAC 85.055 and in the *2016–2016 Alaska Hunting Regulations*.

Opportunity for all residents and nonresidents is as follows:

- Resident and nonresident hunters may hunt using harvest tickets in most of the region during August 10–September 20.
- Nonresident hunters may harvest one full-curl ram every 4 years.
- Beginning July 1, 2018, a sheep taken by a nonresident personally accompanied by a resident relative will count as the bag limit of both the nonresident and the resident relative who accompanies the nonresident.

Refer to the *2016–2017 Alaska Hunting Regulations* for specific details about all sheep hunting seasons in the Interior–Eastern Arctic Region.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal creates an archery-only sheep season in all harvest ticket hunt areas throughout the

region with a season of August 1–9. The new season would overlap with the youth sheep hunt (August 1–5), which allows the use of firearms. The proponent requests that only conventional bows be allowed.

**BACKGROUND:** This proposal is not likely to affect sheep populations because the current full-curl bag limit adequately guards against overharvest. Allocating additional hunting opportunity could increase sheep harvests, but it is difficult to predict how many resident hunters will participate in the hunt and how successful they will be.

Some sheep hunts have season dates and bag limits that provide a reasonable opportunity for success in harvesting a sheep for subsistence uses. All of these hunts are by harvest ticket or registration permit.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocation of sheep hunting opportunity between archers and hunters who use other methods of taking sheep. No biological concerns are addressed or created by this proposal because the requirement to harvest full-curl rams should prevent overharvest from affecting sustainability of sheep populations. If adopted, the record should show that the board has determined that the new regulations continue to provide a reasonable opportunity for success in customary and traditional uses of Dall sheep in units with positive customary and traditional use findings.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in significant additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 67 – 5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures.** Lengthen the season for bear baiting in the Interior–Northeast Arctic Region.

**PROPOSED BY:** Michael Cronk

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would change the date in which bear bait can be placed in the field in Region III from April 15 to April 1.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Bear baiters are allowed to register bear bait sites with the department beginning April 1, but are not allowed to place bait at the site or harvest a bear over bait until April 15. The baiting season dates are set using discretionary permit hunt conditions and procedures (5 AAC 92.052).

Black bears are allowed to be harvested over bait during April 15–June 30 in all of Region III with the exception of Units 26B, and 26C. In addition, brown bears are allowed to be harvested over bait in Units 12, 20A, 20B, 20C, 20E, 21D, 24C, 24D, and 25D.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If the proposal were adopted, bear baiters would be allowed to register bait sites and place bait in the field beginning April 1, but still would not be able to take a bear over bait until April 15. In some areas and during some years, this may mean that the transportation of bait and baiting supplies into the field could occur via snowmachine, which might not otherwise be possible if bait could not be placed in the field until April 15 or later. Bait in the field would overlap longer with

hunting and trapping seasons for wolf, which could reactivate the allocative conflict involving the take of wolves over bait in the Stampede area of Unit 20C.

**BACKGROUND:** The impact of this proposal on black and brown bear harvest during hunting season would likely be negligible but would result in an increased period of time when bait in the field would overlap with coyote and wolf trapping and hunting.

The current starting date for setting out bear bait statewide has been set at April 15 for more than 25 years. One (<1%) of 817 black bears and 6 (3%) of 216 grizzly bears harvested prior to July 1 in Region III during Regulatory Year (RY) 2013 (RY13=1 July 2013–30 June 2014) through RY15 were taken prior to April 15. If bait was allowed to be placed in the field on April 1 instead of April 15, some bears might be attracted to the bait earlier than normal. However, few bears are out of the den prior to April 15.

Furbearers can be legally harvested over bait, and current wolf trapping seasons extend past April 1 throughout Region III, where bear baiting is allowed. Coyote trapping seasons extend beyond April 1 in much of the region, while the hunting season is open regionwide through April. The trapping season for coyote in Units 12 and 20E and the trapping season for wolves in all Region III closes on April 30, with the exception of the Stampede area in Unit 20C which closes on April 15 to avoid overlap between the bear baiting and wolf trapping seasons.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocation issue. The earlier placement of bear bait in the field would likely have a negligible impact on harvest of black bears or brown bears. The increased period of overlap between bear baiting and some wolf and coyote seasons could result in an increase in incidental harvest of these species; however the harvest of wolves and coyotes during this period will likely be negligible.

Although there are no biological concerns with this proposal, allowing bait to be placed in the field on April 1 could increase public concern in some areas, such as around the Stampede area in Unit 20C. If the board instructs the department to allow the placement of bait in the field on April 1, the department requests the board consider making the change apply to all spring baiting seasons in every region (statewide).

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 68 – 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.** Change the “any bull” or “one bull” bag limits to “any antlered bull” for all moose hunts in the Interior–Northeast Arctic Region.

**PROPOSED BY:** Delta Fish and Game Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would change the bag limit for all “any bull” or “one bull” moose hunts in Region III to “any antlered bull.”

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

- 5 AAC 85.045: Within the areas of Region III that do not have an antler restriction for moose, the most common bag limit is “one bull.” In portions of Region III, including portions of Units 19A, 19D, 21A, 21E, 24B, and 24C, the bag limit is “one antlered bull.”
- 5 AAC 92.990(16) defines a “bull moose” as a male moose. This means that male calves are legal animals in areas where the bag limit is “one bull.”
- 5 AAC 92.990(3) defines “antler” as the annually cast and regenerated bony growth originating from the pedicle portion of the skull in members of the deer family. Although male calves have a small amount of antler growth covered with hair and skin, they are not legal animals in areas where the bag limit is “any antlered bull.” Adult bull moose that have shed (cast) their antlers and the antlers have not yet begun to regrow are also not legal where the bag limit is “any antlered bull.”
- The board has made positive customary and traditional use findings for moose throughout Region III.

The bull moose hunts without antler restrictions in Region III are as follows:

**Table 68.1–Bull moose hunts without antler restrictions, Region III.**

OPEN TO <sup>1</sup>	UNIT/AREA	BAG LIMIT	PERMIT/HUNT NUMBER <sup>2</sup>	OPEN SEASON
R	<b>19A</b> Lime Village Management Area	2 Bulls	TM684	Nov 20–Mar 31
R	<b>19C</b> Unitwide	1 Bull	RM655	Feb 1–Feb 28
R	<b>20A</b> Ferry Trail Management Area, Wood River Controlled Use Area, and the Yanert Controlled Use Area	1 Bull	DM770/ 771/774	Sept 1–Sept 25
R		1 Bull <i>by muzzleloader only</i>	DM766	Nov 1–Nov 30
N		1 Bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side <i>by muzzleloader only</i>		
R	<b>20A</b> Remainder	1 Bull	DM768/769/ 772/773	Sept 1–Sept 25
R	<b>20B</b> Within the Minto Flats Management Area	1 Bull	HT	Aug 21–Aug 27
B	<b>20B</b> drainage of the Middle (East) Fork of the Chena River, and the Salcha River drainage upstream from and including	1 Bull	HT	Sept 1–Sept 25

<b>OPEN TO<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>UNIT/AREA</b>	<b>BAG LIMIT</b>	<b>PERMIT/HUNT NUMBER<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>OPEN SEASON</b>
	Goose Creek	1 Bull by bow and arrow only	HT	Sept 26–Sept 30
R		1 Bull by muzzleloader only	RM782	Nov 10–Dec 10
R	<b>20B</b> Salcha River drainage downstream from Goose Creek and upstream from and including Butte Creek	1 Bull	HT	Sept 1–Sept 25
R		1 Bull by muzzleloader only	RM782	Nov 10–Dec 10
N		1 Bull	HT	Sept 5–Sept 20
R	<b>20B</b> Southeast of the Moose Creek dike within a half mile of each side of the Richardson Highway except Birch, Harding, and Lost lake Closed Areas	1 Bull	HT	Sept 1–Sept 20
N		1 Bull	HT	Sept 5–Sept 20
R	<b>20B</b> Remainder	1 Bull	HT	Sept 1–Sept 20
N		1 Bull	HT	Sept 5–Sept 20
R	<b>20C</b>	1 Bull	HT	Sept 1–Sept 25
R	<b>20D</b> South of the north bank of the Tanana River and east of the west bank of the Johnson River, excluding that portion within the Robertson River drainage south of the confluence of the east and west forks, and within one mile west of the west fork	1 Bull	HT	Sept 1–Sept 15
R	<b>20D</b> Within the Robertson River drainage south of the confluence of the east and west forks, and within one mile west of the west fork	1 Bull	HT	Sept 1–Sept 15
R	<b>20D</b> that portion lying west of the west bank of the Johnson River and south of the north bank of the Tanana River, except the Delta Junction Management Area and the Bison Range Controlled Use Area	1 Bull	DM792	Sept 1–Sept 15 Not currently held
B	<b>20D</b> within the Healy River drainage	1 Bull	HT	Sept 1–Sept 20
B	<b>20D</b> north of the north bank of the Tanana River and draining into the Volkmar River east to include the Billy Creek drainage, excluding the Healy River drainage.	1 Bull	HT	Sept 1–Sept 20
B	<b>20D</b> remainder	1 Bull	HT	Sept 1–Sept 15

<b>OPEN TO<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>UNIT/AREA</b>	<b>BAG LIMIT</b>	<b>PERMIT/HUNT NUMBER<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>OPEN SEASON</b>
R	<b>20E</b> portion within the Ladue River Controlled Use Area	1 Bull	RM865	Aug 24–Aug 28; Sept 8–Sept 17
R		1 Bull	DM794/ 796	Nov 1–Dec 10
R	<b>20E</b> drainages into the Middle Fork of the Fortymile River upstream from and including the Joseph Creek drainage	1 Bull	HT	Aug 24–Aug 28; Sept 8–Sept 17
R		1 Bull		Aug 24–Aug 28; Sept 8–Sept 17
N		<b>20E</b> Remainder	1 Bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side	RM865
R	<b>20F</b> Yukon River drainage downstream from but not including Hess Creek drainage and excluding Tanana River drainage	1 Bull	HT	Sept 5–Sept 25; Dec 1–Dec 15
R	<b>20F</b> Tanana River drainage	1 Bull	HT	Sept 5–Sept 25
R	<b>20F</b> remainder	1 Bull	HT	Sept 1–Sept 15
R	<b>21B</b> within the Nowitna River drainage upstream from the Little Mud River drainage, and outside a corridor extending two miles on either side of, and including, the Nowitna River	1 Bull	HT	Aug 22–Aug 31; Sept 5–Sept 25
R	<b>21B</b> remainder	1 Bull	RM834	Aug 22–Aug 31; Sept 5–Sept 25
R		1 Bull	DM802/ 806/808/ 810	Sept 5–Sept 25
R	<b>21C</b> that portion within the Dulbi River drainage	1 Bull	RM834	Sept 5–Sept 25
R		1 Bull	DM812	Sept 5–Sept 25
R	<b>21C</b> remainder	1 Bull	HT	Sept 5–Sept 25
R	<b>21D</b> that portion within the Koyukuk Controlled Use Area	1 Bull	RM832	Sept 1–Sept 25
R		1 Bull	DM828/ 830	Sept 5–Sept 25
R	<b>21D</b> remainder	1 Bull	RM834	Aug 22–Aug 31; Sept 5–Sept 25
R		1 Bull	DM815- 820	Sept 5–Sept 25



<b>OPEN TO<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>UNIT/AREA</b>	<b>BAG LIMIT</b>	<b>PERMIT/HUNT NUMBER<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>OPEN SEASON</b>
R	<b>24A</b> Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area	1 Bull by bow and arrow only	DM980/922	Sept 1–Sept 25
R	<b>24A</b> remainder	1 Bull	HT	Sept 1–Sept 25
R	<b>24B</b> all drainages of the Koyukuk River upstream from the Henshaw Creek drainage, excluding the North Fork of the Koyukuk River drainage	1 Bull	HT	Sept 1–Sept 25
R	<b>24B</b> remainder	1 Bull	HT	Sept 1–Sept 25
R	<b>24C</b> Koyukuk Controlled Use Area	1 Bull	RM832	Sept 1–Sept 25
R		1 Bull	DM828/830	Sept 5–Sept 25
R	<b>24C</b> remainder	1 Bull	RM834	Sept 5–Sept 25
R		1 Bull	DM896	Sept 5–Sept 25
R	<b>24D</b> Koyukuk Controlled Use Area	1 Bull	RM832	Sept 1–Sept 25
R		1 Bull	DM828/830	Sept 5–Sept 25
R		1 Bull	HT	Dec 1–Dec 10
R	<b>24D</b> remainder	1 Bull	RM834	Sept 5–Sept 25
R		1 Bull	DM892	Sept 5–Sept 25
R	<b>25A</b> Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area	1 Bull by bow and arrow	DM920	Sept 1–Sept 25
R	<b>25A</b> remainder	1 Bull	HT	Sept 5–Sept 25
R	<b>25B</b> within the Porcupine River drainage upstream from but excluding the Coleen River drainage	1 Bull	HT	Sept 10–Sept 25
R	<b>25B</b> remainder	1 Bull	HT or CM001	Sept 5–Sept 25; Dec 1–Dec 15
R	<b>25C</b>	1 Bull	HT	Sept 1–Sept 15
N		1 Bull	HT	Sept 5–Sept 15

OPEN TO <sup>1</sup>	UNIT/AREA	BAG LIMIT	PERMIT/HUNT NUMBER <sup>2</sup>	OPEN SEASON
R	<b>25D</b> west of a line extending from the Unit 25D boundary on Preacher Creek, then downstream along the west banks of Preacher Creek, Birch Creek, and Lower Mouth Birch Creek to the Yukon River, the downstream along the north bank of the Yukon River (including islands) to the confluence of the Hadweenzik River, then upstream along the west bank of the Hadweenzik River to the confluence of Forty and One-Half Mile Creek, then upstream along Forty and One-Half Mile Creek to Nelson Mountain on the Unit 25D boundary	1 Bull	TM940	Aug 25–Feb 28
R	<b>25D</b> remainder	1 Bull	HT/ CM001	Sept 10–Sept 20 Feb 18–Feb 28
R	<b>26B</b> excluding the Canning River drainage	1 Bull	DM966	Sept 1–Sept 14 Not currently held
R		1 Bull	HT	Feb 15–April 15 season may be announced. Not currently held
R	<b>26C</b> drainages of Firth River and Mancha Creek and the upper Kongakut River, upstream from and including Drain Creek	1 Bull	drawing permit	Sept 1–Sept 25 Not currently held

<sup>1</sup> R = Residents, N = Nonresidents

<sup>2</sup> Hunt numbers starting with a “C” = Community, “D” = Drawing, “HT” = Harvest Ticket, and “T” = Tier II

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If this proposal is adopted, moose hunters would no longer be able to harvest male calves or adult bulls after they have shed their antlers in any hunts that are restricted to bulls-only.

**BACKGROUND:** During Regulatory Year 2013 (RY13; i.e. RY13 = 1 July 2013 through 30 June 2014) through RY15, moose hunters in Region III reported killing one male calf in areas where the bag limit was “one bull” or “any bull.” Although the taking of calves or cows accompanied by calves is restricted in some antlerless hunts (e.g. Unit 20D), this proposal incorrectly states that these animals are not allowed to be taken in all antlerless hunts. Although the harvest of male calves is low in areas where the bag limit is “one bull” or “any bull,” calf harvest is more common in antlerless hunts where it is legal. For example, during RY13–RY15, calf harvest during antlerless hunts in Units 20A and 20B (which together account for the majority of the antlerless harvest in Region III) averaged 30 calves per year (range 20–44), which accounted for 11% of the total harvest during these hunts. The proposal mentions safety concerns as one reason calves should not be taken during moose hunts. However, the department does not collect data on safety components of hunts.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal and has no biological concerns. Research by the department indicates that moose mortality is usually highest

during the first year of life, suggesting that harvest of calves is more likely to be compensatory than harvest of adult moose. However, the board may wish to consider restricting take of calves in any-bull hunts on a hunt-by-hunt basis.

Although the proposal only addresses the potential harvest of calves during any-bull hunts, the proposal also restricts the harvest of older age class bulls to bulls that are 1 year of age or older that still retain their antlers during winter hunts. However, there were no bulls harvested without antlers during winter moose hunts in Region III during RY13–RY15 in which the bag limit was “one bull” or “two bulls.”

The board has made positive customary and traditional use findings for moose throughout Region III. This proposal would result in a reduction of moose hunting opportunity in some cases; therefore, the board may wish to consider whether implementing the restrictions outlined in this proposal would continue to provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses. In addition, the department and the board have made efforts to maximize harvest in intensive management areas for moose, and this proposal would result in a reduction in opportunity in some of these areas.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 69 – 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.** Lengthen the archery-only hunting seasons for moose in Unit 20 and open an archery-only hunting season for moose in all of Unit 20.

**PROPOSED BY:** Nicholas Muche, Zachri Kendl, and Kyle Moll

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would create an archery-only, antlered-moose hunt in all of Unit 20 during September 26–October 5 and extend current archery-only, antlered-moose hunts to close on October 5.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Current archery-only, harvest ticket moose hunts in Unit 20 are as follows:

Residents and nonresidents:

- Fairbanks Management Area (FMA), one bull with spike-fork or greater antlers, September 1–30 and November 21–27
- Middle Fork of the Chena River and upper Salcha River, one bull, September 26–30
- Unit 20F, the portion within the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area (DHCMA), one bull, September 1–15
- Healy-Lignite Management Area, one bull with spike-fork or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least 1 side, September 1–25

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If the proposal were adopted, additional archery-only moose hunting opportunity would be created through a 10-day archery-only, antlered-moose hunt in all of Unit 20, and the current archery-only, bull-moose hunts would be extended to end October 5.

**BACKGROUND:** Estimates of bull:cow ratios and management objectives vary across Unit 20. In some areas, the bull:cow ratios are near or below management objectives, and additional harvest, without a corresponding decrease in harvest during other hunts, could result in a failure to meet or achieve the established objectives. For example, the current bull:cow ratio estimate along the road system in central Unit 20B is 25 bulls:100 cows, which is below the objective of 30 bulls:100 cows. Conversely, bull:cow ratios are above management objectives in the Middle Fork of the Chena River and the upper Salcha River. As a result, archery seasons in these areas provide additional opportunity in some areas. Other areas, such as the FMA, have archery-only restrictions due, in part, to public safety concerns with using firearms in urban areas.

The current archery-only seasons in Unit 20 for antlered moose allow either: 1) the opportunity to harvest a moose in areas where other methods and means (e.g. rifles) are prohibited (FMA, DHCMA, and the Healy-Lignite Management Area) or 2) additional opportunity to harvest a moose after the fall season has closed (Middle Fork of the Chena River and upper Salcha River). Annual harvest within these areas during Regulatory Year 2013 (RY13; i.e., RY13 = 1 July 2013–30 June 2014) through RY15 averaged 30 bull moose within the FMA, 1 bull moose in the Middle Fork of the Chena River and upper Salcha River, no moose in the DHCMA portion of Unit 20F, and 4 bull moose in the Healy–Lignite Management Area.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocation of hunting opportunity and harvest between hunter who use archery equipment and other hunters.

The department is also **NEUTRAL** on extending existing archery-only seasons in Unit 20 and has no biological concerns with the proposed seasons. It is unlikely that the additional archery hunting opportunity in these areas would result in a significant increase in harvest, and bull:cow ratios would likely remain above objectives.

However, the department is **OPPOSED** to additional moose harvest in the other portions of Unit 20 during late September and early October. Success rates are typically higher during this time compared to earlier in the fall due peak rutting activity. Therefore, creating a new 10-day archery season in all of Unit 20 would result in additional harvest that could be significant, especially in easily-accessed areas such as along roads and trails. In some of these areas, bull:cow ratio estimates are currently near objectives. As a result, if a unit-wide, 10-day archery season is adopted, the season length or bag limit (e.g. antler restriction) for the currently existing seasons may need to be restricted in order to maintain objectives. Some of these moose populations (outside the Fairbanks nonsubsistence area) have positive C&T findings, so if currently existing seasons were restricted, the board would need to consider if the new regulations still provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses of moose.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 70 – 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.** Open a resident disabled veteran hunting season for moose in the Interior–Northeast Arctic region.

**PROPOSED BY:** Michael Coots

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would allow veterans to harvest any moose with the exception of calves or cows with calves in Region III in any unit where the moose population can sustain the harvest. Eligible veterans would meet the following criteria:

1. Alaska resident
2. 100% service-connected disability
3. Purple Heart recipient
4. Receiving special monthly compensation from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Within certain areas, the department could designate which sex of moose can be taken; however, no antler restrictions would apply and proxy hunting would not be allowed.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The only moose hunt in Region III with similar qualifications is DM795, a moose drawing permit within the Delta Junction Management Area. This hunt is limited to resident and nonresident disabled veterans or disabled active-duty military who are either: 1) a Purple Heart recipient and have a military physician’s affidavit stating 100% service-connected disability, or 2) a Purple Heart recipient and are certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as having incurred a 100% service-connected disability. The bag limit for this hunt is any moose other than calves or cows with calves.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If this proposal were adopted, additional moose hunting opportunity would be created for qualified resident veterans.

**BACKGROUND:** Bull:cow ratios, population estimates, and management objectives vary across Region III. In some areas, bull:cow ratios and population estimates are at or below objectives, and additional harvest in these areas could hinder progress towards maintaining or achieving management objectives.

Antlerless moose hunts must be authorized annually by the Board of Game and the majority of the active local advisory committees in the unit. Antlerless hunts are currently authorized in Units 20A, 20B, and 20D. This proposal would potentially create antlerless hunts outside of these hunt areas, so authorizations would need to be acquired before antlerless hunts can be implemented outside of these areas.

The only similar hunt in Region III is DM795, within the Delta Junction Management Area. This hunt is open to resident and nonresident hunters who meet the specified qualifications; 98 people applied during regulatory year (RY) 2014 (RY14 = 1 July 2014–30 June 2015) and 66 applied in RY15.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocative nature of this proposal. The department has not identified any biological concerns with the proposals because it allows the department to determine if the moose harvest will be sustainable based on population parameters. It is likely that the number of people who would qualify to participate in this hunt will be relatively low; however, additional harvest in some hunt areas or subunits could hinder

progress towards maintaining or achieving management objectives. For these areas the board may wish to consider whether the season length or bag limit for other moose seasons in the same hunt area or unit might need to be modified in order to maintain or continue progress towards achieving moose population objectives.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 71 – 5 AAC 92.080(11). Unlawful methods of taking game; exceptions; 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking game; exceptions; and 92.990. Definitions.** Allow the use of crossbows in archery hunts in Unit 20 for hunters over 60.

**PROPOSED BY:** Jim Sackett

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** The proposal would allow Alaska residents 60 years or older in possession of a permanent Alaska resident hunting, fishing, and trapping license to use a crossbow in an archery-only restricted weapons hunt in Unit 20.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

5 AAC 92.080. Unlawful methods of taking game; exceptions. The following methods of taking game are prohibited:

(11) with the use of a crossbow in any restricted weapons hunt that authorizes taking by bow and arrow;

5 AAC 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions.

(3) with a longbow, recurve bow, or compound bow, unless the...

5 AAC 92.990. Definitions.

(11) “bow” means a long bow, recurve bow, or compound bow that is a device for launching an arrow which derives its propulsive energy solely from the bending and recovery of two limbs, and that is hand-held and hand-drawn by a single and direct pulling action of the bowstring by the shooter with the shooter’s fingers or a hand-held or wrist-attached release aid; the energy used to propel the arrow may not be derived from hydraulic, pneumatic, explosive, or mechanical devices, but may be derived from the mechanical advantage provided by wheels or cams if the available energy is stored in the bent limbs of the bow; no portion of the bow’s riser (handle) or an attachment to the bow’s riser may contact, support, or guide the arrow from a point rearward of the bowstring when strung and at rest; “bow” does not include a crossbow or any device that has a gun-type stock or incorporates any mechanism that holds the bowstring at partial or full draw without the shooter’s muscle power;

(19) “crossbow” means a bow, mounted on a stock, which mechanically holds the string at partial or full draw, that shoots projectiles which are generally called bolts or quarrels;

Archery-only areas within Unit 20 include within the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area, Fairbanks Management Area, Healy–Lignite Management Area, the Richardson Highway any-moose drawing permit (DM783; restricted to muzzleloader or bow and arrow only), the targeted hunts in Units 20A and 20B (AM751; restricted to shotgun or bow and arrow only), and the Lost Lake Closed Area. In addition, portions of the Middle Fork of the Chena River and the upper Salcha River are open for short archery-only moose seasons following the closure of the regular moose season.

Refer to the *2016-2017 Alaska Hunting Regulations* for specific details about hunting seasons in Unit 20.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If the proposal were adopted, resident hunters who are 60 years or older and in possession of a permanent hunting, fishing, and trapping license would be able to use a crossbow in archery-only hunts in Unit 20. A person in this age category would no longer need to apply for a methods and means exemption per 5 AAC 92.104 to use a crossbow for these hunts.

**BACKGROUND:** Currently, a person who is physically disabled and unable to use a bow may apply for a methods and means exemption permit, which allows him or her to use a crossbow in an archery-only hunt. A crossbow’s effective shooting range is similar to a bow and arrow. Crossbows and bows deliver similar kinetic energy to the target. A crossbow’s bolt travels approximately 300 feet per second (fps) with a 420-grain bolt, and generates 86.78 foot-pounds of kinetic energy, while a compound bow shooting a 350-grain arrow travelling 335 fps generates 87.24 foot-pounds of energy.

The minimum draw weight requirements for bow and arrow are 40- or 50-pounds, depending on the species hunted. The technology of modern archery equipment makes it easier to reach the minimum draw weights required to hunt big game in Alaska. With archery equipment, the hunter must physically hold the bow in the cocked position, whereas a crossbow uses a cocking device that cocks the bow and holds it in the cocked position until the hunter pulls the trigger.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocation of hunting opportunity to a subset of hunters.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal will not result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 72 – 5 AAC 92.095. Unlawful methods for taking furbearers; exceptions, and 92.110. Control of predation by wolves.** Allow trappers to take wolves and coyotes the same day they have been flying.

**PROPOSED BY:** Coke Wallace

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would allow same-day airborne land-and-shoot take of wolves and coyotes in Region III with a trapping license.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** It is currently legal to land and shoot coyotes the same day you have flown, provided you are 300 feet from the airplane. It is not legal to take wolves until after 3:00 a.m. following the day in which the flying occurred; however, it is legal to dispatch a wolf in a snare the same day the flying occurred.

**AS 16.05.783 (a)** prohibits shooting or assisting in shooting a free-ranging wolf or wolverine the same day that a person has been airborne. However, the Board of Game may authorize a predator control program that allows airborne or same-day airborne shooting under conditions laid out in the statute.

**5 AAC 92.085 (8). Unlawful methods of taking big game.** This regulation prohibits the taking or assisting in taking big game until after 3:00 a.m. following the day in which the flying occurred. The exceptions to this regulation include a person flying on a regularly scheduled commercial airline, including a commuter airline.

**5 AAC 92.095 (8). Unlawful methods of taking furbearers.** This regulation prohibits a person from taking or assisting in taking wolf and wolverine until after 3:00 a.m. following the day in which the flying occurred; however, it does not prohibit the dispatch of wolves and wolverine in a snare the same day the flying occurred. The regulation also prohibits same-day airborne taking of coyote, arctic fox, or lynx unless that person is over 300 feet from the airplane at the time of taking.

**5AAC 92.990 (5). Definitions.** This regulation defines “big game” as black bear, brown bear, bison, caribou, Sitka black-tailed deer, elk, mountain goat, moose, muskox, Dall sheep, wolf and wolverine.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Adoption of this proposal would be a violation of AS 16.05.783, which prohibits the take of wolves same-day airborne unless authorized by the board through a predator control program.

If this proposal is adopted for coyotes, hunters and trappers may be in violation of the federal Airborne Hunting Act if their activities are viewed as harassing an animal while the plane is still airborne; however, there are no Alaska statutes or regulations currently prohibiting the board from adopting this proposal for coyotes.

If same-day airborne, land and shoot within 300 feet of an airplane was allowed for coyotes, minimal take would be expected by this method due to low fur value of coyotes, the high expense of operating an aircraft, the difficulty in tracking and spotting coyotes from the air, and the limited likelihood of finding coyotes in suitable landing locations. Therefore, there is no biological concern if this regulation is adopted for coyotes. In addition competition for coyotes with trappers using traditional trapping and snaring methods would likely be minimal due to the low take anticipate by same-day airborne land and shoot.

**BACKGROUND:** The board has authorized same-day airborne harvest of wolves in predator control programs in portions of Units 9, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25. Not all of these programs are currently active. Each of these programs was established to reduce predation by wolves on moose or caribou populations that have been identified by the board as being important for high levels of consumptive use. The programs were designed to reduce the wolf population’s size and wolf predation on a specific prey population while ensuring that the



resulting wolf harvests are sustainable in each respective area. This is achieved by defining areas where same-day airborne is allowed and establishing benchmarks for the wolf population that define when these activities can occur. Predator control areas are also limited in size to provide a refugia for wolves in each unit to further protect the wolf populations and provide for sustained yield.

Coyotes are an underutilized furbearer in Alaska, with 97–386 raw coyote furs reported exported annually by Raw Fur Export Permit data during regulatory year 2010 (RY10; i.e., RY10 = July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011) through RY12 and 184–329 coyotes reported being acquired by Alaska fur buyers annually during RY10–RY11. Coyotes are rarely the primary target species of Alaska trappers based on responses to the department’s annual trapper questionnaire and anecdotal information from Interior trappers. During RY10–RY12, less than 5% of trappers ranked coyotes as the most important species they were trying to targeting (2010–2011 through 2012–2013 Alaska Trapper Questionnaire Reports <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=trapping.reports>).

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department’s recommendation is to **TAKE NO ACTION** on the wolf portion of this proposal because same-day airborne take of wolves outside of a predator control program is prohibited by Alaska statute and thus is outside the board’s authority. The department is **NEUTRAL** on the coyote portion of this proposal because there is no biological concern.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 73 – 5 AAC 92.090. Unlawful methods of taking fur animals.** Allow the use of dogs to hunt coyote in Unit 20.

**PROPOSED BY:** Delta Fish and Game Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Allow the use of dogs to hunt coyotes in Unit 20.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The coyote hunting and trapping season area as follows:

- Hunting: No bag limit and no closed season in Unit 20;
- Trapping: No bag limit and a November 1–March 31 season.

Use of dogs is a prohibited method of taking coyotes under both hunting and trapping licenses.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Hunters would be allowed to use dogs to aid them to hunt coyotes in Unit 20.

**BACKGROUND:** Several states allow dogs to be used for hunting coyote and other furbearers. Even in these more heavily populated states where more people participate in coyote hunting, liberal coyote seasons have been maintained. States that allow coyote hunting with dogs include Missouri, Montana, Arkansas, Kansas, Ohio, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, Texas, and Colorado. Some

of these states only allow the use of dogs for pursuit, bringing to bay, or retrieval of the animal and not the actual kill. Allowing hunting of coyotes with dogs may increase the opportunity to harvest coyotes when pelts are in prime condition. Few people have dogs suitable for this activity, so while opportunity would increase, harvest would be minimally affected. Only a small percentage of Unit 20 experiences any volume of trapping pressure, and of the small amount of area that is trapped in Unit 20, coyotes are not a preferred or targeted species.

Alaska's vastness provides abundant habitat for predator species, including coyotes. This vastness and remoteness, coupled with a small human population, results in a buffer that supports and conserves healthy coyote populations. There is potential for conflicts with trappers and risk of coyote hunting dogs getting caught in traps and snares since coyote hunting season overlaps with trapping season. There have been reports of hunting hounds being killed by wolves in Montana and on the Kenai Peninsula.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocative proposal and has no biological concerns. This proposal would increase coyote hunting opportunity with little effect on the overall coyote population. If this proposal is adopted the board may wish to consider a registration permit similar to the permit that is required to use dogs for black bear hunting. This would allow the department to monitor the harvest using this method of take, and prohibit it in perceived areas of concern.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 74 – 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.** Change the antler restrictions for resident moose hunting in Unit 19B.

**PROPOSED BY:** Central Kuskokwim Advisory Committee.

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would liberalize the resident bag limit for moose in the Aniak River drainage portion of Unit 19B by allowing bulls with 3 or more brow tines to be harvested.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Residents - All of Unit 19B:

- one bull with spike-fork, 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side
- September 1–20

Nonresidents - Outside the nonresident closed area:

- one bull with 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side
- September 5–20
- Hunter orientation and hunting with a guide or next of kin is required.

There is a positive C&T finding for moose in Unit 19 outside the Lime Village Management Area and an ANS of 400–700, including 175–225 in Unit 19A and 20–24 in Unit 19B.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If this proposal were adopted, resident hunters in the Aniak River drainage of Unit 19B would be able to shoot moose with 3 brow tines. The remainder of Unit 19B would remain 4 brow tines.

**BACKGROUND:** The *Central Kuskokwim Moose Management Plan* (CKMMP) was completed in 2004 to address concerns over the moose population in Units 19A and 19B. A diverse group of guides, transporters, conservationists, Native organizations, and Advisory Committees made recommendations to limit moose harvest in an effort to rebuild the moose population. These recommendations were adopted by the Alaska Board of Game and the Federal Subsistence Board in 2004. The plan specifically recommended spike-fork, 50 inch, or 4 brow tines for residents (nonresidents already had antler restrictions) and in regulatory year (RY) 2004 (RY04 = 1 July 2004–30 June 2005) the season was shortened by 4 days for residents and 9 days for nonresidents.

A resident-only registration permit was put in place for RY04–RY05 allowing the take of any bull, but beginning in RY04 residents hunting with a harvest ticket went from any bull to the current spike/fork, 50-inch, or 4 brow tines. Since RY06 all resident hunting opportunity is with a harvest ticket and spike-fork, 50-inch, or 4 brow tine restrictions.

The department does not have a moose population estimate for Unit 19B; however the population is thought to contain approximately 225–340 moose with a harvestable surplus of 9–14 moose. Harvest is currently low in this portion of Unit 19B and during RY11–RY15 an average of 2 bulls were shot annually by residents and 7 annually year by nonresidents.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal; however, the reported harvest is currently very close to the harvestable surplus of 9–14 moose. Since the harvestable surplus in 19B is below the low end of the ANS range, the board may wish to consider if the current regulations are providing a reasonable opportunity for harvesting a moose for subsistence uses, or if Tier I or Tier II management is indicated.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 75 – 5 AAC 92.124(b). Intensive Management Plans VIII.** Reauthorize the predation control program in Unit 21E.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would reauthorize and update the intensive management (IM) plan in Unit 21E and would establish a wolf control focus area (WCFA) and bear control focus area (BCFA).

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The Intensive Management (IM) plan in 5 AAC 92.124(b) expired June 30, 2016 and there is currently no IM plan in place for Unit 21E.

There is a positive C&T finding for moose in Unit 21, and an ANS of 600–800.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal authorizes the Unit 21E IM plan for a 9 year period from July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2026. However, we now recommend authorizing the plan for 6 years, from July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2023, which is 2 board cycles. This IM plan includes options for aerial wolf control conducted by public permittees and the department, and aerial black and brown bear control conducted by the department only. Additional details are available in the companion IM operational plan. This plan is proactive and will allow a more rapid response if declining moose numbers are detected.

**BACKGROUND:** Residents of Unit 21E [the Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk, Holy Cross Fish and Game Advisory Committee (GASH AC)] and other hunters expressed concern about a perceived decline in the moose population during the mid-1990s. To address this concern, the department established a citizen-based working group in January 2005. The working group was asked to review all available information and to develop a comprehensive moose management plan for the area. The final product was the *Yukon–Innoko Moose Management Plan*, which includes the following mission statement: “Maintain healthy and abundant moose populations by proactively managing moose, predation, and habitat, and keeping moose harvest within sustained yield so that subsistence needs for moose are met on an annual basis, and there are sufficient moose to provide for personal and family use by Alaska residents and some nonresident hunting opportunity for generations to come.” This plan was endorsed by both the Board of Game and the Federal Subsistence Board in 2006.

Because proactive management is a major tenet of the plan, the working group recommended an aerial wolf control program to prevent further declines in moose densities and maintain hunting opportunities in Unit 21E. As recommended by the *Yukon–Innoko Moose Management Plan*, the board adopted an IM plan in March 2010 authorizing wolf control if the moose population declined below 1.0 moose/mi<sup>2</sup>. The most recent survey in 2016 estimated a density of 2.0 moose/mi<sup>2</sup> corrected for sightability.

The program was first authorized to include wolf control only; however, a bear control program is being added as a potential option based on information collected in adjacent Unit 19A and Unit 19D, which indicated that predation control for bears in addition to wolves is feasible and would be more effective than wolf control alone. The Unit 21E IM plan expired on June 30, 2016.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal, because having an intensive management plan in place will allow the department to be proactive in managing the Unit 21E moose population according to the *Yukon–Innoko Moose Management Plan* and recommends it be amended to expire in 6 years instead of 9 years.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in significant additional costs for the department unless control programs are initiated

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**PROPOSAL 76 – 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose. Lengthen the hunting season for moose in Unit 21E.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk, and Holy Cross Fish and Game Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would change the start date of the moose season for resident hunters in Unit 21E from September 5 to September 1.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Unit 21E moose hunting regulations:

Residents:

- one antlered bull
- September 5–25
- by registration permit (RM836)

Nonresidents:

- one bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side
- September 5–25
- by drawing permit (DM837/839)

There is a positive C&T finding for moose in Unit 21, and an ANS of 600–800.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If this proposal were adopted the resident moose season in Unit 21E would begin September 1, and the season would be more closely aligned with the federal season. Based on average harvest under the current registration permit, the change would result in the harvest of approximately 40 moose during the 4 extra days of this season.

**BACKGROUND:** Since implementation of the registration permit in 2014, harvest has averaged 199 moose per year. The estimated harvestable surplus for Unit 21E is approximately 400 moose based on the most recent survey in the Unit 21E moose survey area, which resulted in an estimate of 8,372 moose (corrected for sightability) and a unitwide estimate of 9,931 moose.

There is currently a federal season for moose during August 25–September 30 in addition to the state seasons listed above. The Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk, Holy Cross Advisory Committee (GASH AC) have indicated that they would like to work with the Board of Game and the Federal Subsistence Board to align these seasons to simplify regulations for local hunters as well as add additional opportunity for all resident hunters.

The GASH AC has been actively involved in moose management in Unit 21E. In recent years they have worked with the department and the board to change moose hunting regulations in ways that increase opportunity and improve harvest reporting. Specifically in 2014, the nonresident season was extended 5 days and a resident registration permit requested by the GASH AC was initiated to improve harvest reporting.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocation of hunting opportunity and has not identified biological concerns related to this proposal. Reported harvest is well below the harvestable surplus, and the additional anticipated harvest is thought to be sustainable. Adoption of this proposal would also begin to align the state and federal seasons;

reducing confusion for local hunters and providing additional hunting opportunity for resident hunters.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in significant additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 77 – 5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limit for brown bear. Increase the bag limit for brown bear in Unit 21E.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk, and Holy Cross Fish and Game Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would increase the bag limit for brown bear in Unit 21E.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The current bag limit for brown bear is 1 bear per year.

There is a positive C&T for brown bears in Units 21 and 22, and an ANS of 20–25.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If this proposal were adopted hunters in Unit 21E would be allowed to take 2 brown bears per year and sell hides.

**BACKGROUND:** Although data are limited for brown bears in Unit 21E, the estimated population is 100–200 bears. Brown bear harvest in Unit 21E averaged 6 bears annually during Regulatory Year 2011 (RY11; e.g. RY11=1 July 2011– 30 June 2012) through RY15.

The Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk, Holy Cross Fish and Game Advisory Committee would like to increase the bag limit in Unit 21E to 2 bears, so the hides and skulls can be sold. Brown bear hides sold at the fur auction in 2015 in Anchorage averaged \$1,000 and ranged from \$225 to \$2,800.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal since there is no biological concern. If adopted it is unlikely there would be an increase in bear harvest. Based on experience in Units 19A and 19D adoption of this proposal is unlikely to result in an increase in bear harvest and would not affect moose survival. For example during RY06–RY15 only 5 hunters in Unit 19A and 1 hunter in Unit 19D harvested 2 brown bears during a single regulatory year

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in significant additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 78 – 5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear. Lengthen the hunting season for brown bear in Unit 19C.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Jeff Pralle

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would lengthen the season for brown bear in Unit 19C.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Units 19B and 19C

Residents and nonresidents:

- one brown bear
- September 1–May 31
- Cubs and sows with cubs may not be taken.

There is a negative C&T finding for brown bears in Unit 19C.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If this proposal were adopted the brown bear season would open in Unit 19C on August 10, which is the opening date for brown bears in Units 19A and 19D, and sheep and caribou hunting seasons in Unit 19C.

**BACKGROUND:** Brown bear harvest in Unit 19C is stable with around 13 bears taken per year during Regulatory Year 2006 (RY06; i.e., RY06 = July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007) through RY15. Average age and skull size of harvested bears was relatively stable at 6.9 years and 20 inches respectively, and an average sex ratio of approximately 39% being females.

The Unit 19C population is thought to include 290 brown bears based on extrapolation of bear densities in similar habitats. At an 8% harvest rate, this provides a harvestable surplus of 23 bears, of which no more than 9 should be females. However, there is uncertainty associated with the population estimate. Therefore, to maintain a stable population, the department would prefer to maintain a cautious approach to harvest in Unit 19C.

During August a large number of nonresident hunters pursue sheep. Currently, with a September 1 opening date most of the brown bear harvest (82%) occurs in the fall and 75% of grizzlies are taken by nonresidents. An August 10 starting date would align the brown bear season with sheep and caribou seasons and harvest could easily increase above sustainable levels.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **OPPOSED** to this proposal because the risk of overharvest is relatively high. Having the season open during a time when a large number of hunters are in the field may lead to an unsustainable level of harvest.

Unit 19C is managed, along with adjacent Unit 19B, to provide for high quality hunts with the opportunity to take large grizzly bears. This is a significantly different management approach than Units 19A and 19D, which have active predation control programs and season dates of August 10–June 30 in order to provide for the greatest sustained opportunity to hunt brown bears. A cautious approach to harvest in Unit 19C would help to maintain a stable brown bear population.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in significant additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 79 – 5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures. Allow the harvest of brown bear at bear bait stations in Unit 19A.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Central Kuskokwim Fish and Game Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would allow the take of brown bear over bait in Unit 19A.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Residents and nonresidents:

- 2 brown bears every regulatory year
- August 10–June 30
- Cubs and sows with cubs may not be taken.

Currently only black bear may be taken over bait in Unit 19A during April 15–June 30.

There is a positive C&T finding for brown bears in Units 19A and 19B downstream of and including the Aniak River, and an ANS of 5. There is also a positive C&T finding for black bears in Unit 19, and an ANS of 30–50.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If this proposal were adopted, it would be legal to take brown bears at bait stations, and it would be legal to take brown bears at bait stations the same day the hunter has been airborne.

**BACKGROUND:** Data are limited for brown bears in Unit 19A; however, the unit has been identified for intensive management of moose, and regulations have been relaxed to increase the opportunity to harvest bears. These regulations have been largely ineffective and have not resulted in increased harvest.

An average of 11 brown bears were taken annually during Regulatory Year 2011 (RY11; i.e. RY11 = 1 July 2011–30 June 2012) through RY15. With an average of only 3 registered bear baiters each spring in Unit 19A, this proposal is unlikely to result in significant additional harvest.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal. There are no biological concerns.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 80 – 5 AAC 92.540(7)(B). Controlled Use Areas. Remove the restriction on boat horsepower in the Holitna–Hoholitna Controlled Use Area in Unit 19A.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Tim Crace

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Adoption of this proposal would eliminate the Holitna–Hoholitna Controlled Use Area (CUA).



**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The Holitna–Hoholitna CUA currently does not allow the use of any boat equipped with an inboard or outboard motor with an aggregate horsepower in excess of 40 horsepower for transportation when taking big game – including transportation of big game hunters, their gear, and/or parts of big game during August 1–November 1.

There is no open season for moose hunting in the Unit 19A portion of the Holitna–Hoholitna CUA.

There is a positive C&T finding for moose in Unit 19 outside the Lime Village Management Area and an ANS of 400–700, including 175–225 in Unit 19A and 20–24 in Unit 19B.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Big game hunters would be able to use boats with no motor restriction.

**BACKGROUND:** The *Central Kuskokwim Moose Management Plan* (CKMMP) was written to address concerns about the moose population in Units 19A and 19B. A diverse group of guides, transporters, conservationist, Native organizations, and Fish and Game Advisory Committees made recommendations to limit moose harvest in an effort to rebuild the moose population. One of the key regulations identified by the planning group was the Holitna–Hoholitna CUA, which has been in place since 1992 to reduce conflicts between user groups. The board endorsed the CKMMP in 2004.

Moose hunting has been closed in the Holitna river drainage since 2006. In an effort to rebuild the moose population, the department conducted bear control in 2013 and 2014 in addition to ongoing public wolf control. The department has not been able to update the moose population estimate in this area due to poor survey conditions; however, these surveys are a high priority for the department to determine whether a harvestable surplus of moose warrants re-opening the moose season in this area.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is neutral on this proposal. The proposal is allocative in nature and the department is neutral on those aspects, the department has biological concerns that there is a potential to overharvest this population if this proposal is adopted, and moose seasons are re-opened.

Moreover, the CKMMP was endorsed by the board in 2004 and is still recognized as the current moose management plan. The board upheld the Holitna–Hoholitna CUA recommendation in the plan in 2008 even though moose hunting in the Unit 19A portion of the CUA was closed at that time. When moose population data are available, the department recommends the board consider all options for moose hunting simultaneously, including whether reasonable opportunities for subsistence uses of moose are provided, and if the Holitna–Hoholitna CUA remains necessary to manage newly re-opened moose seasons.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in significant additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 81 – 5 AAC 92.540(7)(a)(ii). Controlled use areas. Specify airports allowed for transporting moose hunters within the Upper Kuskokwim Controlled Use Area (UKCUA).**

**PROPOSED BY:** Barney Anselment.

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would specifically list the public airports within the UKCUA to include Takotna, McGrath, Medfra (63° 06.333' North, 154° 43.133' West), and Nikolai.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The UKCUA prohibits the use of aircraft for hunting moose, including the transportation of moose hunters, their hunting gear, or parts of moose; however, this provision does not apply to the transportation of moose hunters, their hunting gear, or parts of moose by aircraft between publicly owned airports or the transportation into the area of game meat that has been processed for human consumption. Medfra is a public airport; however it is not listed in the Federal Aviation Administration's *Chart Supplement Alaska*.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Big game hunters would be able to hunt moose after having flown into the Medfra airport in addition to Takotna, McGrath, and Nikolai.

**BACKGROUND:** The UKCUA was established in 1981 and was amended in 2001 and 2008. Its purpose is to separate hunters using aircraft from those using boats by prohibiting aircraft to transport moose hunters and gear within its boundaries. However, it allows access within the UKCUA through publicly owned airports. The Medfra Airport is within the boundaries of the UKCUA and was owned and maintained by the Alaska Department of Transportation when the UKCUA was established. It continues to be publicly owned by the Bureau of Land Management, but no longer appears in the supplement, so it no longer fits the Department of Transportation's definition of an airport. Medfra has a 2,200 foot runway and was previously identified as MDR. While it is not listed in the supplement, MDR is a public airport. The airports in Takotna, McGrath, and Nikolai are all listed in the supplement.

Medfra was permanently occupied through 2003 (by the proponent and his extended family) and is still used seasonally. People with property in Medfra have a long history of regularly accessing their property through the airport, but because it is no longer in the supplement, they cannot hunt moose after flying to Medfra.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocation issue. The purpose of the UKCUA is to separate hunters using aircraft from those using boats.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in significant additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 82 – 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep. Change the nonresident sheep season in Unit 19C to a drawing permit hunt with up to 80 permits.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Ray Collins

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would change nonresident hunting for sheep in Unit 19C from a harvest ticket to a draw permit, and cap nonresident use at current levels.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Residents and nonresidents: One full-curl ram, August 10–September 20 by harvest ticket or one full-curl ram, August 1–5, by harvest ticket, youth hunt only

Residents only: one sheep with ¾-curl horn or smaller; excluding rams with both tips broken, lambs, and ewes with lambs; October 1–April 30 by registration permit.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?**

Nonresidents would be required to obtain a drawing permit to hunt sheep in Unit 19C.

**BACKGROUND:** Currently nonresidents take 69% of the sheep harvested in Unit 19C annually. Public concerns of crowding, hunt quality, and restricted access are common. Just over half of the sheep hunters in Unit 19C are guided nonresidents with an average of 75 hunters taking 52 sheep per year during Regulatory Year 2006 (RY06 = 1 July 2006–30 June 2007) through RY15. An average of 73 resident hunters took 23 sheep per year during the same time frame.

Board “Nonresident Drawing Permit Allocation Policy” (2007-173-BOG) indicates that allocations for specific hunts will be decided individually, based upon historical patterns of nonresident and resident use over the past 10 years. Nonresident hunting for sheep in Unit 19C is currently managed through the use of harvest tickets.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocative proposal. No biological concerns are addressed or created by this proposal.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in significant additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 83 – 5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.** Open a nonresident draw hunt for caribou in Units 18 and 19.

**PROPOSED BY:** Aaron Bloomquist.

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would open a nonresident draw hunt for Mulchatna caribou in Units 18, 19A, and 19B. The bag limit would be one bull caribou, and the open season would be September 1–30. The author recommends a maximum of 50 permits could be issued, but suggests that the department only issue 20 permits initially.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

- Registration permits RC501, RC503, and RC504 are used to manage caribou hunting for Mulchatna herd caribou (MCH).

- Season dates for the RC503 hunt area that includes Units 18, 19A, 19B, 9A and the portion of 9C north of the Alagnak River drainage are August 1–March 15 with a bag limit of 2 caribou.
  - Season dates for the RC503 hunt area that includes Unit 9B and all but a small portion of Unit 17 are August 1–March 31 with a bag limit of 2 caribou.
  - Season dates for the RC504 hunt area that includes a portion of Unit 9C north of the north bank of the Naknek River and south of the Alagnak River drainage “may be announced” depending on caribou abundance in this area. The bag limit is 1 caribou.
  - Season dates for the RC501 hunt area including a small portion of Unit 17A and a small portion of 17C “may be announced” depending on the abundance of caribou in this area. The bag limit is 2 caribou.
- There is currently no nonresident season in regulation for the Mulchatna caribou herd.
  - The Mulchatna caribou population has a positive finding for intensive management, with a population objective of 30,000–80,000 and an annual harvest objective of 2,400–8,000. There is an intensive management plan in regulation for this herd; however, the current plan does not include Unit 18.
  - There is a positive C&T finding for the Mulchatna caribou herd in Units 9A, 9B, 17, 18, 19A south of the Kuskokwim River, and 19B, and an ANS of 2,100–2,400 caribou in all units combined.
  - There are positive C&T findings for other caribou herds (Big River, Rainy Pass, Kilbuck, Andreafsky, Tonzona, Beaver Mountains, Sunshine Mountains) in various units and subunits affected by this proposal (16B, 18, 19), with ANSs for each herd.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If this proposal were adopted a portion of the area managed for the MCH would be included in the nonresident draw hunt.

**BACKGROUND:** This proposal is scheduled for the Arctic–Western Region meeting as Proposal 25 and the Interior–Northeast Arctic Region meeting as Proposal 83. The MCH has gone through a dramatic change in abundance over the past 20 years with an estimated population of 200,000 animals in 1996 to approximately 27,000 today. Population models indicate that the harvestable surplus lies in the range of 800–1,200 caribou with a likely point estimate near 1,000 caribou.

With that change in abundance, management of this herd has changed as well. Season dates during peak abundance extended to April 15, but were shortened to March 15 in 2006 as this herd declined to fewer than 50,000 animals. During the peak years, the bag limits also reflected a more liberal management strategy with up to 5 caribou allowed annually for residents and a bag limit of 2 caribou for nonresidents. As the herd declined during the mid-2000s, bag limits were lowered, season length shortened, and the nonresident season was closed by board action after the 2008 hunting season.

The Mulchatna caribou population has a positive finding for intensive management with a population objective of 30,000–80,000 and an annual harvest objective of 2,400–8,000. Due to low population and harvest levels below these objectives, an intensive management plan was initially authorized by the board under 5 AAC 92.111 *Mulchatna Caribou Herd Predation Management Area* in March 2011 for Units 9B, 17B, and 17C; this plan was modified in March 2012 to include Units 19A and 19B. This plan is implemented as a wolf predation control area in those portions of Units 17B and 17C that encompass the southern calving grounds of the Mulchatna herd and has been active each year. The goal of this program is to increase caribou calf survival and thereby recruitment by removing wolves which have been shown to be an important predator on neonate caribou calves in this area. Our most recent abundance estimate from June 2016 was just over 27,000 caribou.

The reported harvest of Mulchatna caribou during 2010–2015 in all units combined ranged from 101–494 caribou, averaging of 281 caribou per year. Harvests during this time period have come from all units within the MCH range; in more recent years, the majority of harvest has been taken in Unit 18. Both population size and harvest are below the objectives defined in 5 AAC 92.108, therefore the predation control program will remain active for the 2016 regulatory year.

In spring 2013 the board adopted a department proposal that required the use of a registration permit (RC503) to hunt Mulchatna caribou throughout this herd's range; this permit replaced the harvest ticket. The purpose of this change was to provide the department with better information for managing this herd to help with addressing management issues such as this proposal. Permit conditions require a 5-day reporting period after harvesting a caribou, and the permit is also subject to the failure to report (FTR) process that allows the department to impose penalties to those parties failing to report their effort and harvest. This increases the harvest reporting rate, which is important in assessing harvest and effort over time. However, harvest reporting continues to significantly underestimate harvests of Mulchatna caribou in Unit 18. For example, Bethel residents harvested an estimated total of 446 caribou in 2011, whereas the average reported harvest during the period 1998–2011 was 160 caribou.

The ANS for the MCH (2,100–2,400 caribou) was adopted by the board in 1992; however subsistence use in the Unit 18 portion of the range was not included in the ANS because the herd did not migrate into that unit when the ANS was developed. At the March 2016 Statewide meeting the board established a positive customary and traditional finding for MCH in Unit 18 but did not alter the ANS.

The positive C&T finding and ANS for the Kilbuck and Andreafsky caribou herds in Unit 18, which no longer exist, is 350–500 caribou.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocation of Mulchatna caribou in Units 18 and 19 but recommends this proposal be **DEFERRED** to the next regularly scheduled Central–Southwest Region Board meeting in spring 2018. Under AS 16.05.258(b), nonsubsistence uses of a game population with C&T uses are not permitted if the harvestable surplus is below the ANS.

The MCH spans multiple game management units and includes multiple ADF&G regions, but is managed across its range as a single caribou herd with the primary management responsibility resting with Region IV and the Dillingham office. The proponent indicates he will be submitting

a proposal similar to this proposal at the Central–Southwest Region meeting in spring 2018 to allow for a nonresident draw permit hunt for caribou in Units 9 and 17. The department’s recommendation to defer this proposal to the spring 2018 meeting would allow the board to address the concept of establishing a nonresident draw permit for the entire range of the MCH, which adheres to the board and the department’s intentions of having a uniform management approach for this herd. Additional advantages of this deferment would be that the department could gather another year of harvest information under the relatively new RC503 registration permit, and we could acquire another abundance estimate from our annual photo census in June of 2017. Both of these data are important in calculating harvestable surplus which is an important component when addressing ANS which will likely be part of this discussion.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in significant additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 84 – 5 AAC 84.270. Furbearer trapping.** Change the wolf trapping season dates in Units 12 and 20E.

**PROPOSED BY:** Upper Tanana–Fortymile Fish and Game Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** The proposal would change the starting date of the wolf trapping season in Units 12 and 20E from October 15 to October 1.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Wolf Trapping Seasons in Units 12 and 20E

- Residents and nonresidents: October 15–April 30.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Wolf trapping season in Units 12 and 20E would begin 14 days earlier on October 1 and align the state and federal wolf trapping seasons in these units. This season extension is unlikely to increase the annual take of wolves in these units.

**BACKGROUND:** This proposed season extension is unlikely to have a significant effect on annual take of wolves in these units, and it is not expected to aid in reducing the wolf population within the predation control area. The Units 12 and 20E wolf populations have been above the population objectives of maintaining at least 100 wolves in Unit 12 and 60 wolves in Unit 20E during Regulatory Year 2011 (RY11; i.e., RY11 = 1July 2011– 30 June 2015) through RY15. The management objectives for wolves in Units 12 and 20E were developed to align with the wolf population objectives for the Upper Yukon–Tanana Predator Control program, which encompasses northern Unit 12 and all of Unit 20E.

Harvest by trapping during the October 15–31 portion of the season in these units is low. During RY11–RY15, a total of 1 wolf was reported harvested in October by trap or snare in Units 12 and 20E combined. Harvest is likely to increase very little, if at all, if the first 14 days of October are added to the season.

The board has authorized a wolf predator control program in the Upper Yukon–Tanana Predation

Control Area (predator control area) in Units 12, 20B, 20D, 20E and 25C. This program was designed to reduce predation by wolves on the Fortymile caribou population while maintaining wolf harvests at a sustainable level. This is achieved by defining areas where same day airborne is allowed and establishing triggers for the wolf population that define when these activities can occur. This predator control area is limited in size to provide a refugia for wolves in each unit to further protect the wolf population.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal because it does not address or create a biological concern.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in significant costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 85 – 5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.** Open a resident drawing hunt for Nelchina caribou in Unit 20E.

**PROPOSED BY:** Aaron Bloomquist

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** The proposal seeks to establish a resident-only drawing permit hunt to provide opportunity to hunt Nelchina herd caribou in the portion of Unit 20E south of an east–west line running through the West Fork bridge on the Taylor Highway (Latitude 63.89 North), during September 1–30 and October 21–March 31, with a bag limit of one caribou.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Caribou hunting in Unit 20E is regulated under a fall (RC860) and winter (RC867) registration permit intended for Fortymile caribou.

Residents:

- August 29–September 30, one bull;
- December 1–March 31, one caribou.

Nonresidents:

- August 29–September 20, one bull.

There is a positive C&T finding for caribou in Units 12, 20D, 20E, and 25C associated with the Fortymile caribou herd with an ANS of 350 – 400 caribou.

There is a positive C&T finding for caribou in Units 12 and 13 associated with the Nelchina caribou herd with an ANS of 600–1,000 caribou.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The bag limit of one caribou under the proposed drawing permit hunt would be more liberal than the bag limit of one bull caribou under the existing fall caribou registration hunt RC860. The winter portion of the proposed drawing permit hunt would start 41 days before the current RC867 winter season on December 1.

Although the proponent is asking for a drawing permit hunt to provide opportunity to harvest Nelchina herd caribou, both Fortymile and Nelchina herd caribou could be present during the proposed season dates. Therefore, some Fortymile herd caribou would likely be harvested under the proposed drawing permit hunt. Because both of these herds have an annual harvest quota, a portion of the annual quota for each herd would need to be allocated to this proposed drawing permit hunt, which would reduce opportunity for hunters participating in current hunts for these herds.

**BACKGROUND:** The Alaska Board of Game has determined that both the Fortymile and Nelchina caribou herds are customarily and traditionally used for subsistence and therefore must provide reasonable opportunity for subsistence use of these herds. Alaska Statute 16.05.258(f) states: “For purposes of this section, ‘reasonable opportunity’ means an opportunity, as determined by the appropriate board, that allows a subsistence user to participate in a subsistence hunt or fishery that provides a normally diligent participant with a reasonable expectation of success of taking of fish or game.” Drawing permit hunts do not provide ‘reasonable opportunity’ as defined in statute, and a drawing permit hunt has not been adopted for the Fortymile or Nelchina herds in Unit 20E.

Current harvest regulations have been developed to accommodate all users of the Nelchina and Fortymile caribou herds, including subsistence users. The addition of a drawing permit hunt would further complicate the already complex hunting regulations for these herds.

All caribou hunting in Unit 20E is currently guided by the 2012–2018 Fortymile Caribou Herd Harvest Plan (harvest plan) that was developed by the Fortymile Harvest Management Coalition (HMC) consisting of members of the Anchorage, Central, Delta, Eagle, Fairbanks, Matanuska Valley, and Upper Tanana/Fortymile advisory committees, and the Eastern Interior Regional Subsistence Advisory Council in cooperation with Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, Yukon Department of Environment, Yukon First Nations, Bureau of Land Management and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. However, management provisions specific to Alaska were developed by the Alaska delegates of the coalition. Yukon delegates abstained from Alaska hunt management decisions. The harvest plan can be viewed on line at: [http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/research/plans/pdfs/fortymile\\_harvest\\_plan\\_2012\\_2018.pdf](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/research/plans/pdfs/fortymile_harvest_plan_2012_2018.pdf).

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocation issue and has no biological concerns associated with a small harvest of caribou for either the Nelchina or Fortymile caribou herd. The current caribou registration hunts in Unit 20E have provided opportunity to harvest Nelchina herd caribou in some years; and the department will continue to provide that opportunity as long as the harvest in Unit 20E does not impact the harvestable portion needed to meet the ANS in Units 12 and 13. There is currently no C&T finding in Unit 20E for Nelchina herd caribou and the board may wish to make a C&T finding before considering this proposal.

In a written comment submitted to the board, the proponent has requested to withdraw this proposal from consideration.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.



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**PROPOSAL 86 – 5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou and 92.510.**

**Areas closed to hunting.** Close an area ¼ mile on either side of the Taylor Highway to caribou hunting during caribou season and limit the number of Fortymile caribou permits.

**PROPOSED BY:** David Likins

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** The proposal seeks to establish a ½ mile corridor (1/4 mile on either side of the road) along the Taylor Highway and the Boundary Cutoff Road that would be closed to Fortymile caribou hunting under the fall RC860 Registration Permit. The proposal would also limit number of permits available in this area. At a minimum, the proponent recommends establishing the corridor between the Walker Fork Bridge (MP 82) and the Alder Creek Bridge (MP 115.4) and along the Boundary Cutoff.

In a written comment submitted to the board, the proponent has clarified that the proposal was intended to apply only to caribou. Hunting for all other game species would be unaffected by this proposal.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Under the fall Fortymile Caribou Registration Hunt (RC860), hunters along the Taylor Highway (Zone 3) are allowed to hunt caribou on public land immediately off the road surface along the entire length of the Taylor Highway and the Boundary Cutoff Road when the season is open. However, hunters are not allowed to shoot on, from, or across the highway. When large numbers of Fortymile caribou cross these roads, the department has discretionary permit authority [5 AAC 92.052 (7)] to close portions of the hunt area by emergency order to prevent overharvest.

The board has made a positive customary and traditional use finding for Fortymile herd caribou in Units 12, 20D, 20E and 25C with an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence uses of 350–400 caribou.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Fortymile caribou hunters participating in the RC860 fall caribou registration hunt would not be allowed to hunt caribou within a ½ mile (1/4 mile on either side of the road) corridor along the Taylor Highway and the Boundary Cutoff Road.

**BACKGROUND:** Harvest management of the Fortymile Herd is guided by the *2012–2018 Fortymile Caribou Herd Harvest Plan* (harvest plan) that was developed by the Fortymile Harvest Management Coalition (HMC), which included representatives of the Anchorage, Central, Delta, Eagle, Fairbanks, Matanuska Valley, and Upper Tanana/Fortymile Fish and Game Advisory Committees, and the Eastern Interior Regional (Federal) Subsistence Advisory Council in cooperation with the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, Yukon Department of Environment, Yukon First Nations, Bureau of Land Management, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. However, management provisions specific to Alaska were developed by the Alaska delegates of the coalition. Yukon delegates abstained from Alaska hunt management decisions.

The HMC recommended the following options for managing situations where large numbers of caribou congregated near, or crossed, roads (including the Taylor Highway and Boundary Cutoff

Road). The options are presented with those most preferred listed first.

- Temporary closures and openings in specific drainages or clearly specified areas. These would include management tools such as establishing subzones, temporary openings, delayed openings, and patterned openings, e.g., Sundays through Wednesdays.
- Limited registration for state winter hunts that could include various options, including: telephone, on-line, checkstation, ADF&G office access to registration permits on a first come, first served basis. Other ideas include multiple permit periods for different hunt dates so that hunters could enter specified areas at specified times. Up to 20% of the remaining winter zone quota could be allocated to this hunt, not to exceed 25 permits per hunt period.

In addition to specifying options for management of harvest during road crossings, the HMC also recognized that “*when large numbers of caribou are crossing major roads, such as the Taylor or Steese Highways, special hunt management provisions are needed to avoid the possibility of exceeding harvest quotas and to minimize public safety concerns*” (2012–2018 Fortymile Caribou Herd Harvest Plan, page 15). The department has been successful using such delayed hunt openings and hunt closures to maintain harvest within, or close to, the annual quota as outlined in the harvest plan. However, the HMC did not develop recommendations to address specific allocation, enforcement or safety issues such as those outlined by the author of this proposal.

In recent decades, department staff observed many of the same hunter activities identified by the proponent, including:

- Hunters driving ATVs on highways at high speeds (>30 mph)
- Hunters shooting into groups of caribou from the edge of the highway, including groups running and at distances beyond 300 yards.
- Hunters shooting parallel to roads at caribou in the ditches along the road.
- Blood pools and gut piles on roadways, the shoulder of roads and in turnouts along roads.
- Garbage and animal remains left at camping locations along the roadways.

The current harvest plan is scheduled to expire in June 2019. The department plans to begin working with the HMC in 2017 to develop a revised herd harvest management plan that will be presented to the board before the expiration date so that the new plan would be in place for the RY19 hunting season. The issues identified by the proponent will be shared with the HMC during the development of the revised harvest plan.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** regarding this proposal because it seeks to address allocation and safety issues. If the board intends to adopt this proposal, the department recommends amending it to clarify that the area is only closed to the take of caribou, not all species. Because it would be a permanent part of the hunt area, this proposal would result in a reduction of Fortymile herd caribou hunting opportunity; therefore, the board may wish to consider whether implementing the restrictions outlined in this proposal would continue to provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in significant costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 87 – 5 AAC 92.540(3)(E)(ii). Controlled use areas.** Lengthen the time during which motorized access is restricted in the Glacier Mountain Controlled Use Area.

**PROPOSED BY:** Upper Tanana–Fortymile Fish and Game Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would change the starting date of the motorized vehicle restrictions within the Glacier Mountain Controlled Use Area (Glacier Mountain CUA) from August 5 to July 26.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The Glacier Mountain CUA is closed to the use of motorized vehicles for hunting, including transportation of hunters, their hunting gear, and/or parts of game from August 5 through September 20.

There is a youth sheep hunt (using harvest tickets) in Unit 20 remainder, which includes the Glacier Mountain CUA, from August 1–5, and an open sheep hunting season August 10–September 20. The bag limit for both hunts is 1 ram with full-curl or larger horns.

Caribou and moose seasons in the Glacier Mountain CUA begin after the August 5 motorized restrictions are in place.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If the proposal were adopted, the restrictions imposed by the Glacier Mountain CUA would overlap the youth sheep hunting season (August 1–5 season) by advancing the starting date of the restriction to July 26.

**BACKGROUND:** The Glacier Mountain CUA was established by the board in 1971 to protect the isolated sheep population. The population is managed by limiting harvest to full-curl rams. Due to the difficult access imposed by these restrictions and low sheep population, sheep harvest has historically been low in this area. However, harvest pressure is sufficient in some years, especially during years with low sheep numbers, to harvest most or all of the full-curl rams. During 2012–2016, harvest averaged 2.2 (range 0–5) rams per year. During this same period, an average of 97 (range 63–159) sheep and 2.8 (range 0–9) full-curl rams were observed annually during aerial surveys conducted by ADF&G. Fall 2016 was the first year of the youth sheep hunt, and no rams were reported harvested during this season within the Glacier Mountain CUA. The board has made no C&T findings for sheep populations in Unit 20 remainder.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocative nature of this proposal between hunters that want to use motorized vehicles and those that believe motorized vehicles detract from their hunting experience. There are no biological concerns associated with the proposed change. The full-curl harvest regulation is a conservative strategy that allows for unrestricted hunting opportunity, while harvesting a sustainable number of rams from this population.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 88** – 5 AAC 85.045(a)(10). **Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.** Clarify the boundary of the Unit 12 antler-restricted moose hunting area within the Tok River drainage.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This housekeeping-like proposal would modify the boundary of the Unit 12 antler-restricted moose hunting area within the Tok River drainage to the following:

Unit 12, remainder of that portion in the Tok River drainage upstream **of a line from Peak 5885 at 63° 9.243 N. lat., 143° 24.248 W. long., to Milepost 105 of the Tok Cutoff Highway at 63° 7.438' N. lat., 143° 18.135 W. long., then south along the Tok Cutoff Highway to the Little Tok River Bridge at Milepost 98.2; and within the Little Tok River drainage upstream of the Little Tok River Bridge at Milepost 98.2 [FROM THE TOK CUTOFF BRIDGE].**

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** 5 AAC 85.045(a)(10) currently defines the area as “Unit 12, remainder of that portion in the Tok River drainage upstream from the Tok Cutoff Bridge.”

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Adoption of this proposal would clarify the boundary for the antler-restricted area in Unit 12. The proposed boundary follows the Tok Cutoff highway between two well-defined landmarks (Milepost 105 and the Little Tok River bridge). This proposal changes the antler restricted bag limit in a portion (approximately 0.6 miles along the Tok Cutoff) of the area north of the Tok River bridge and west of the Tok Cutoff from any bull to antler-restricted and changes a portion (approximately 3.5 miles along the Tok Cutoff) of the area south of the Tok River bridge and west of the Tok Cutoff, which has antler restrictions, to any bull.

**BACKGROUND:** The current boundary has been difficult for the public, the department, and law enforcement to identify in the vicinity of the Tok Cutoff and the Tok River bridge.

The antler-restricted moose hunting area within the Tok River drainage was expanded in regulatory year (RY) 2006 (RY06 = 1 July 2006–30 June 2006) from a portion of the Little Tok River drainage to all of the Tok River drainage upstream from the Tok Cutoff bridge due to a declining trend of bull:cow ratio estimates. Bull:cow ratio estimates increased and stabilized within the area after the restriction was implemented.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal. This is a housekeeping-like proposal that would clarify the antler-restriction boundary along the Tok Cutoff.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 89** – 5 AAC 85.045. **Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.** Change the antler restrictions for moose in Unit 12.

**PROPOSED BY:** Upper Tanana/Fortymile Fish and Game Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal changes the antler-restricted bag limits in Unit 12 for resident and nonresident hunters. If adopted bulls with the following antler configurations would be legal for harvest during the hunting season:

- spike-fork antlers
- antlers with a spread of 50-inches or greater
- antlers less than 50-inches, but no more than 2 brow tines on either side.

This proposal would not affect the registration hunt RM291 nor the resident any-bull harvest ticket hunt for residents. If adopted, this will create a new category of legal moose, and some additional outreach may be necessary to educate hunters.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Unit 12, all drainages into the west bank of the Little Tok River from its headwaters in Bear Valley at the intersection of the boundaries between Units 12 and 13 to its junction with the Tok River and all drainages into the south bank of the Tok River from its junction with the Little Tok River to the Tok Glacier:

Resident hunters:

- One bull with spike-fork or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side, by harvest ticket, August 24–28 and September 8–17
- One bull with spike-fork or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side, by one CM300 permit per household, August 24–28 and September 8–17.

Nonresident hunters:

- One bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side, by harvest ticket, September 8–17.

Unit 12, remainder of that portion in the Tok River drainage upstream from the Tok Cutoff Bridge, including the Little Tok River drainage:

Resident hunters:

- One bull with spike-fork or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side, by harvest ticket, August 24–28 and September 8–17

Nonresident hunters:

- One bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side, by harvest ticket, September 8–17.

Unit 12, that portion east of the Nabesna River and south of the winter trail running southeast from Pickerel Lake to the Canadian border:

Residents and nonresident hunters:

- one bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side, by harvest ticket, September 1–30.

Unit 12, that portion within the Nabesna River drainage west of the east bank of the Nabesna River upstream from the southern boundary of the Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge:

Resident hunters:

- One bull with spike-fork or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 3 or more brow tines on at least one side, by registration permit RM291, August 20–September 17

Nonresident hunters:

- One bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 3 or more brow tines on at least one side, by permit RM291, August 20–September 17.

Unit 12 remainder:

Resident hunters:

- One bull by harvest ticket, August 24–28 and September 8–17.

Nonresident hunters:

- One bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side by harvest ticket September 8–17.

There is a positive C&T finding for moose in Unit 12, and an ANS of 60–70.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal would liberalize the antler restriction for moose for residents and nonresidents in portions of Unit 12. The change would increase the number of bulls that are legal, particularly of smaller bulls (<40 inches) and would increase harvest. However, there might be a reduction in harvest of large bulls (>50 inches) if some hunters are hesitant to harvest a bull based solely on antler width, which would protect a segment of the bull population.

**BACKGROUND:** Reported moose harvest and population estimates have been relatively stable for the last 10 years in Unit 12. Average annual reported harvest during RY06–RY15 was 143 moose, and there are an estimated 220 moose available for harvest, based on a 4% harvest rate of the current population estimate. The most recent surveys indicate that the bull-to-cow ratios are above minimum management objectives throughout Unit 12.

*Antler restriction history*

Antler restrictions, including a minimum size of 50 inches or at least 4 brow tines on at least one side, have been in place in southeastern Unit 12 since 1983 and in portions of the Tok River drainage since 1993. Due to a declining trend in estimated bull-to-cow ratios, the antler-restricted area was expanded in 2006 from a portion of the Little Tok River drainage to the current area, which includes all of the Tok River drainage upstream from the Tok Cutoff bridge. Antler restrictions have been in place for nonresidents in the remainder of Unit 12 since 1991.

Although antler restrictions vary across Unit 12, the restrictions primarily limit the harvest to large bulls with limited opportunity for residents to harvest young bulls (spike-fork bulls) in some areas. Spike-fork bull harvest is provided in certain areas to allow additional opportunity.

*Management objectives, population estimates, and harvest*

Bull-to-cow ratio estimates are above objectives in all areas that would be affected by this proposal (Table 89-1). In addition, estimates of harvestable surplus are at least 36% greater than the average reported harvest during RY13–RY15.

**Table 89-1. Management objectives, population estimates, and reported harvest from the portions of Unit 12 that would be affected by Proposal 89.**

Area	Most recent survey	Bull:cow management objective <sup>a</sup>	Bull:cow ratio estimate (90% CI)	Population estimate (90% CI)	Harvestable surplus <sup>b</sup>	Average reported harvest <sup>c</sup>
Upper Tok River	2012	25:100	33:100 (±8)	839 (±168)	34	25
Southeastern Unit 12	2014	40:100	50:100 (±10)	673 (±155)	27	14
Unit 12 remainder, west of Nabesna River <sup>d</sup>	2012	25:100	37:100 (±8)	3,904 (±664) <sup>e</sup>	156 <sup>e</sup>	104 <sup>e</sup>
Unit 12 remainder, east of Nabesna River <sup>d</sup>	2012	40:100	46:100 (±10)			

<sup>a</sup> Minimum early winter post-hunt objective

<sup>b</sup> 4% of the population estimate

<sup>c</sup> Average reported harvest, including reported potlatch harvest, during RY13–RY15

<sup>d</sup> Any-bull hunt area for residents and antler-restricted for nonresidents

<sup>e</sup> Population, harvestable surplus, and harvest estimates combined for all of Unit 12 remainder due to identical moose hunting regulations throughout this area

*Impacts of the proposal on harvest*

To estimate how harvest would change if this proposal was adopted, the current and proposed antler restrictions were applied to the any-bull harvest from Unit 12. A total of 205 bulls were harvested by residents in the any-bull portion of Unit 12 during RY13–RY15, and antler size and the number of brow tines were reported for 177 of these bulls. When the current antler restriction of spike-fork, 50-inch, or 4 or more brow tines on at least one side was applied to these 177 bulls, 57% (101) were legal. When the proposed antler restriction of spike-fork, 50-inch or no more than 2 brow tines on either side was applied to the 177 bulls, 76% (135) were legal. For further comparison, when the antler restriction of spike-fork, 50-inch, or 3 or more brow tines on at least one side (which is a common antler restriction throughout Alaska) was applied to the 177 bulls, 73% (129) were legal.

The proposed antler restrictions would result in an increased number of smaller bulls (bulls with antler widths ranging 20–40 inches) that would become legal. Table 89-2 shows the proportion of the bulls harvested in the any-bull area that would be legal under different brow tine restrictions. The minimum restriction of at least 3 brow tines on one side is included for comparison. Thirty-three of 40 bulls (83%) with antler widths of 20–40 inches had no more than 2 brow tines on either side compared to 2 (5%) with antler widths of 20–40 inches that had at least 4 brow tines on at least one side.

**Table 89-2. Bull moose harvest, by reported antler width and number of brow tines, by resident Alaska hunters within the any-bull area in Unit 12 during fall 2013–2015.**

Antler width (inches) category	Number with 2 or fewer brow tines on both sides (%)	Number with minimum of 3 brow tines on at least one side (%)	Number with minimum of 4 brow tines on at least one side (%)	Total bulls harvested in any-bull area*
Spike-fork	NA	NA	NA	14
20 - <30	9 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	9
30 - <40	24 (77%)	7 (23%)	2 (6%)	31
40 - <50	14 (28%)	36 (72%)	13 (26%)	50
≥50	11 (15%)	62 (85%)	37 (51%)	73
Total	58 (36%)	105 (64%)	52 (32%)	177

\*Antler width and number of brow tines was reported for 177 of a total of 205 bulls harvested.

Overall, it appears that the proportion of bulls with antlers under 50 inches that would be legal under the restriction of no more than 2 brow tines on both sides (47 of 90; 52%) is similar to the proportion of bulls under 50 inches that are legal that would be legal under a brow tine restriction of 3 or more brow tines on at least one side (42 of 90; 47%). However, harvest under the 2 or fewer brow tine restriction would be more focused on 20–40 inch bulls compared to the 3-brow tine restriction, which would be more focused on bulls >40 inches. Antler width and age data collected from bulls harvested during the 1970s in Units 12 and 20 and in Units 21 and 24 during fall 2000–2015 found that bulls with antler widths of 20–40 inches consisted mostly of 1–3 year olds, while bulls with antler widths of 40–50 inches were mostly 4–5 years old and bulls with antler greater than 50 inches were mostly ≥6 years old.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal, since there are no biological concerns. Estimated bull-to-cow ratios are above objectives in all areas of Unit 12 that would be influenced by this proposal. In addition, estimates of harvestable surplus are greater than estimated harvest during recent years. The proposed antler restrictions would be a completely new way of regulating bull moose harvest; therefore, if this proposal is passed, the department would closely track the moose population and harvest to ensure objectives continue to be met.

Based on the information available, it is possible that harvest in some areas could be increased by up to approximately 33%, but the anticipated harvest should remain within the unitwide harvestable surplus. Bull-to-cow ratios will likely decline but would remain above management objectives, which are to maintain at least 25 bulls per 100 cows west of the Nabesna River and at least 40 bulls per 100 cows east of the Nabesna River.



**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 90 – 5 AAC 92.074(d). Community subsistence harvest hunt areas.** Expand the Copper Basin Community Subsistence Harvest hunt area by adding a part of Unit 12.

**PROPOSED BY:** Ahtna Tene Nené Customary and Traditional Use Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Add the portion of Unit 12 within the Nabesna River drainage west of the east bank of the Nabesna River and upstream from the southern boundary of the Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge to the Copper Basin Community Subsistence Harvest (CSH) hunt area for both moose and caribou.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The Copper Basin CSH area includes all of Unit 11, Unit 13, and that portion of Unit 12 including all drainages into the west bank of the Little Tok River, from its headwaters in Bear Valley at the intersection of the unit boundaries of Units 12 and 13 to its junction with the Tok River, and all drainages into the south bank of the Tok River from its junction with the Little Tok River to the Tok Glacier.

The season dates and bag limit for the Copper Basin CSH moose hunt in Unit 11 and Unit 13 are August 20–September 20 with a bag limit of one antlered bull. The current season dates and bag limit for the Copper Basin CSH moose hunt in Unit 12 is the same as the harvest ticket season in this area (August 24–28 and September 8–17; 1 bull with spike-fork antlers or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side).

In Units 11 and 13, up to 100 “any-bull” moose (including bulls that do not meet the antler restriction for moose taken by hunters using a harvest ticket in this area) may be taken during the fall season. When area-specific quotas are reached, the CSH bag limit is changed by emergency order to match the harvest ticket season antler restrictions for that area for the remainder of the season.

The Copper Basin CSH caribou hunt is limited to Unit 13 (by discretionary permit hunt conditions and procedures; 5 AAC 92.052), where it is open during August 10–September 20 and October 21–March 31 with a bag limit 1 caribou per household. However, the season dates and bag limit may be changed via emergency order. The caribou hunt is limited to Unit 13 to minimize the risk of harvesting animals from adjacent herds.

Copper Basin CSH moose permittees and household members may not hold state or federal moose or caribou permits outside of the Copper Basin CSH hunt area or hold moose or caribou harvest tickets. Copper Basin CSH caribou permittees and household members may not hold caribou harvest tickets or other state caribou permits. In addition, no member of a household with a Copper Basin CSH caribou permit may apply for state or federal moose or caribou permit hunts outside of the Copper Basin CSH hunt area, and no member of the household may hunt moose outside of the Copper Basin CSH hunt area.

Within the proposed area of Unit 12, the moose season for residents using a harvest ticket is a registration hunt during August 20–September 17 with a bag limit of 1 bull with spike-fork

antlers or 50-inch antlers or 3 or more brow tines on at least one side. There is no open season for caribou within the proposed area.

There is a positive C&T finding for moose in Unit 13, and an ANS of 300–600 moose. There is a positive C&T finding for moose in Unit 12, and an ANS of 60–70. There is a positive C&T finding for moose in Unit 11, and an ANS of 30–40.

There is a positive C&T finding for caribou in Units 12 and 13 (Nelchina herd), and an ANS of 600–1,000. There is a positive C&T finding for caribou in Unit 11 (Mentasta herd); however, the board has not made an ANS finding for this herd. There is a negative C&T finding for the Chisana herd in Unit 12.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The Copper Basin CSH hunt area would be expanded to include a larger portion of Unit 12. Since Copper Basin CSH permit holders and household members are limited to hunting moose and caribou only within the Copper Basin CSH area, this proposal would expand the area in which these hunters could legally hunt moose and caribou (with either state CSH or federal permits).

**BACKGROUND:** A portion of the Nelchina caribou herd migrates through the proposed hunt area of Unit 12 in the spring and fall, and caribou from the Mentasta caribou herd may be in the area at any given time of the year. The Mentasta caribou herd population estimate averaged 293 animals (range 155–445) annually during RY02–RY10, and the most recent Nelchina caribou herd population estimate was 49,500 animals.

In Regulatory Year 2012 (RY12; that is, RY12 is 1 July 2012–30 June 2013) the resident moose hunting season dates and bag limit were changed from a 15-day (August 24–28 and September 8–17) any-bull season to a 29-day (August 20–September 17) season with a bag limit of 1 bull moose with spike-fork antlers or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 3 or more brow tines on 1 side. This aligned season dates and bag limits for moose along the Nabesna Road and created a registration hunt that included portions of Units 11 and 12.

The moose bull-to-cow ratio was 35 bulls:100 cows (90% confidence interval: 26–44 bulls:100 cows) in the portion of Unit 12 proposed to be added in 2011 and was above the management objective of 25 bulls:100 cows. The observable moose population estimate within this proposed added area was 1,261 moose (90% confidence interval: 1,041–1,481 moose), and the harvestable surplus is estimated to be 50 moose in this portion of Unit 12 (4% of the population estimate). Harvest during RY12–RY16 averaged 21 bulls (range 19–23) per year, which is slightly greater than the RY07–RY11 average of 15 bulls (range 5–24) per year.

The CSH program was initiated in RY09 with only one participating community/group for both moose and caribou. The CSH program was not offered in RY10, but in RY11 the hunt was reinstated with separate participation opportunities for moose and caribou. Since the first year of the Copper Basin CSH program in RY09, only 1 moose has been harvested by CSH hunters along Nabesna road in Unit 11. Hunt participation and harvest is summarized in the table below:

**Table 90-1. - Community Subsistence Harvest participation, RY09–RY16**

Regulatory Year	CSH Moose (CM300)			CSH Caribou (CC001)		
	# of Groups	# of participants that hunted	Harvest	# of Groups	# of participants that hunted	Harvest
2009	1	293	100 (70 any bulls)	1	288	127
2011	9	311	91 (64 any bulls)	6	176	87
2012	19	358	101 (76 any bulls)	17	238	150
2013	45	842	162 (88 any bulls)	28	308	114
2014	43	599	148 (76 any bulls)	25	266	144
2015	43	593	171 (92 any bulls)	26	254	191
2016	73	*	192 (113 any bulls)*	45	*	221*

\*2016 data as of 10/3/2016; reports are still being filed

A comparison of results from household harvest surveys of a combined 21 Copper Basin communities conducted by the department during the 1980s and 2010s shows use of portions of the proposed area for both moose and caribou hunting by the surveyed communities. During the 2010s, efforts by the surveyed communities to harvest both moose and caribou expanded further into the proposed portion of Unit 12. These results are summarized in figures 90-1 through 90-4, below.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department recommends this proposal be **DEFERRED** to the March 2017 special meeting on Copper Basin hunting and subsistence.

The department is **NEUTRAL** regarding the allocative nature of this proposal, including expansion of the Copper Basin CSH area to include a larger portion of Unit 12 and regarding opening a CSH moose season in the proposed portion of Unit 12. We have no biological concerns regarding this moose portion of the proposal. The most recent bull-to-cow ratio was above management objectives and reported harvest during recent years is below estimates of harvestable surplus.

However, the department is **OPPOSED** to opening a CSH caribou season in the current or proposed portion of the CSH area that lies within Unit 12 due to biological concerns regarding the Mentasta Caribou Herd. The Copper Basin CSH caribou hunt is restricted to Unit 13 due to concerns for adjacent herds. Expanding the CSH caribou hunt to include portions of the home range of the Mentasta herd may result in unsustainable harvest of Mentasta caribou.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

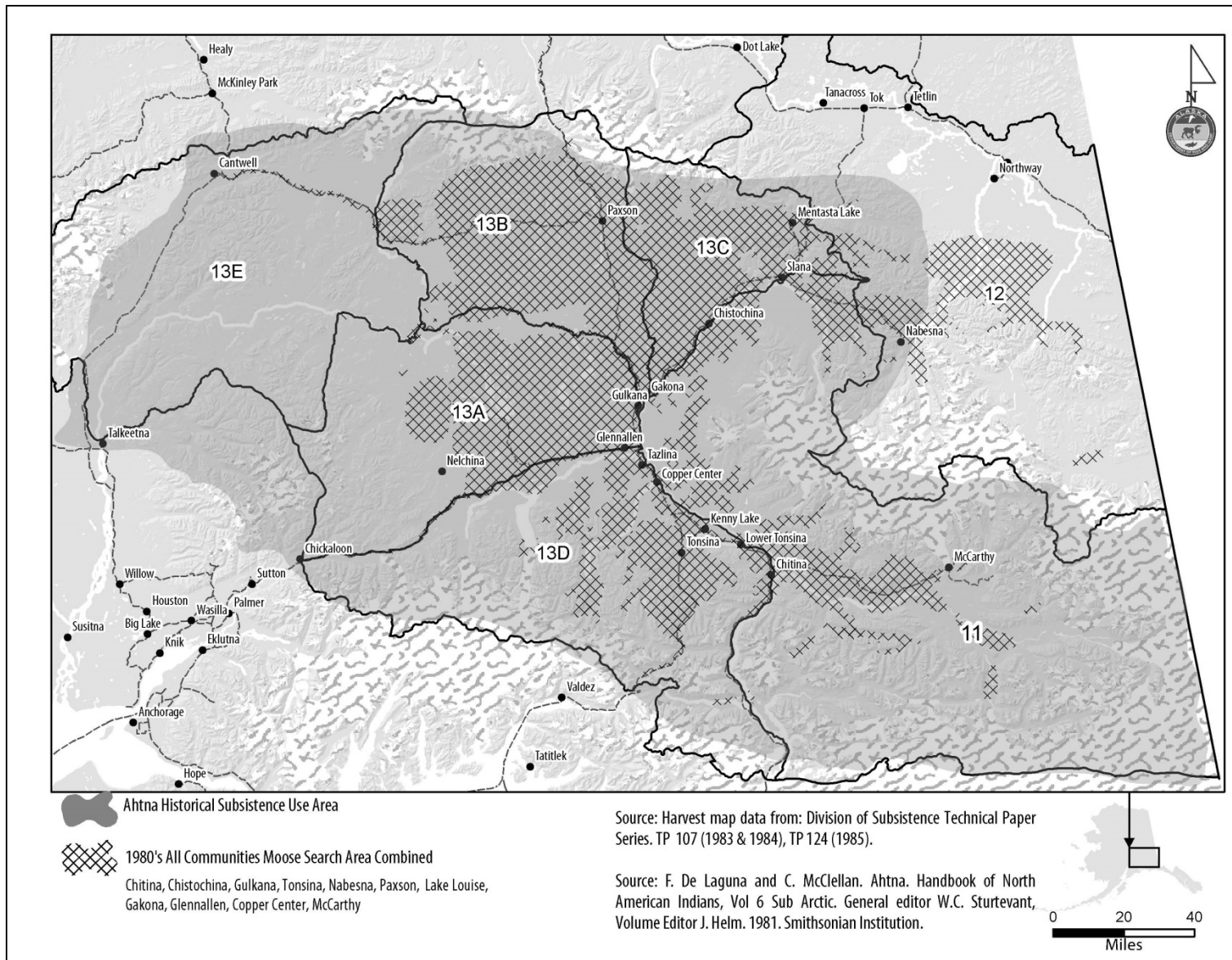


Figure 90-1.—All communities moose search areas, combined, 1980s.

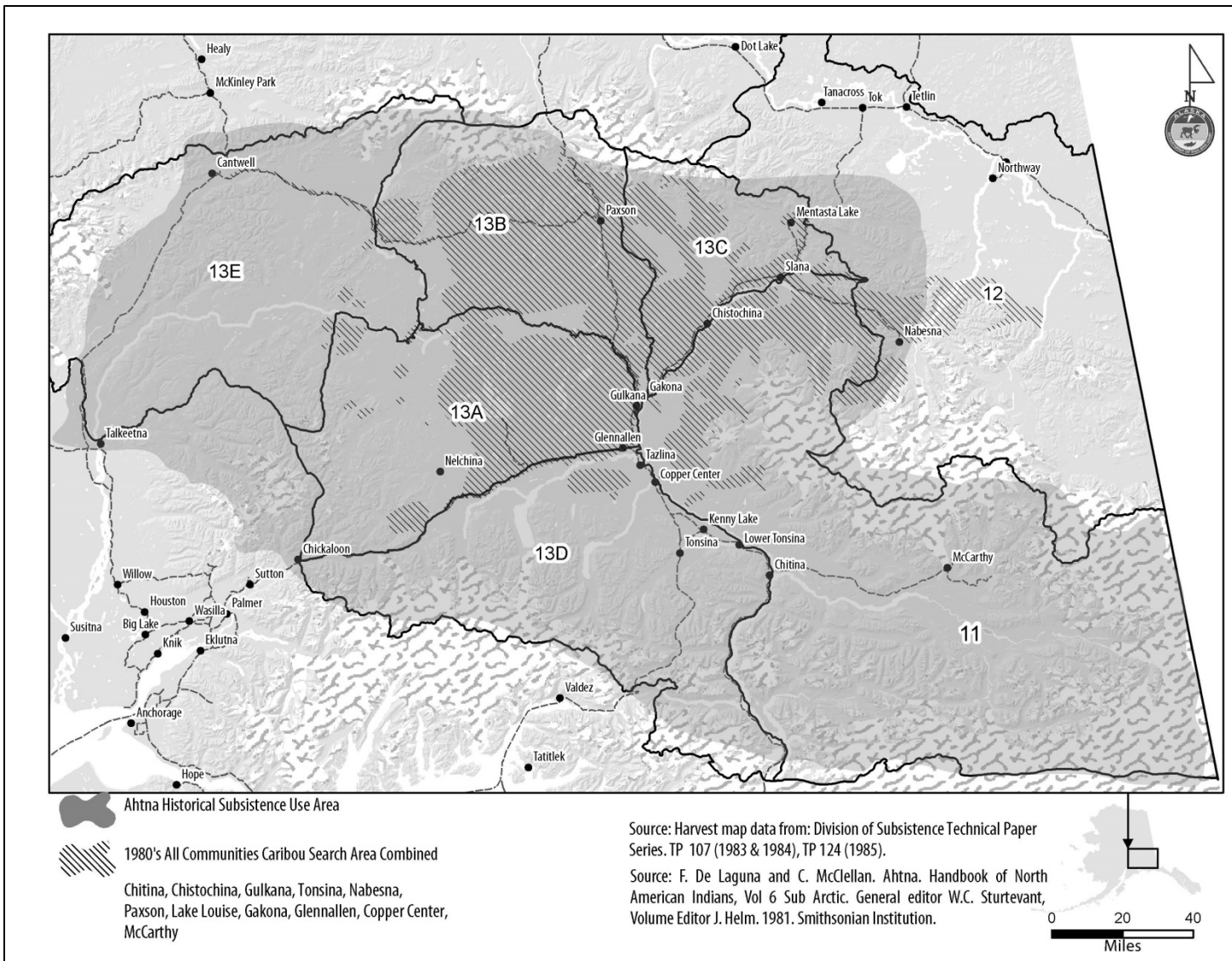


Figure 90-2.—All communities caribou search areas, combined, 1980s.

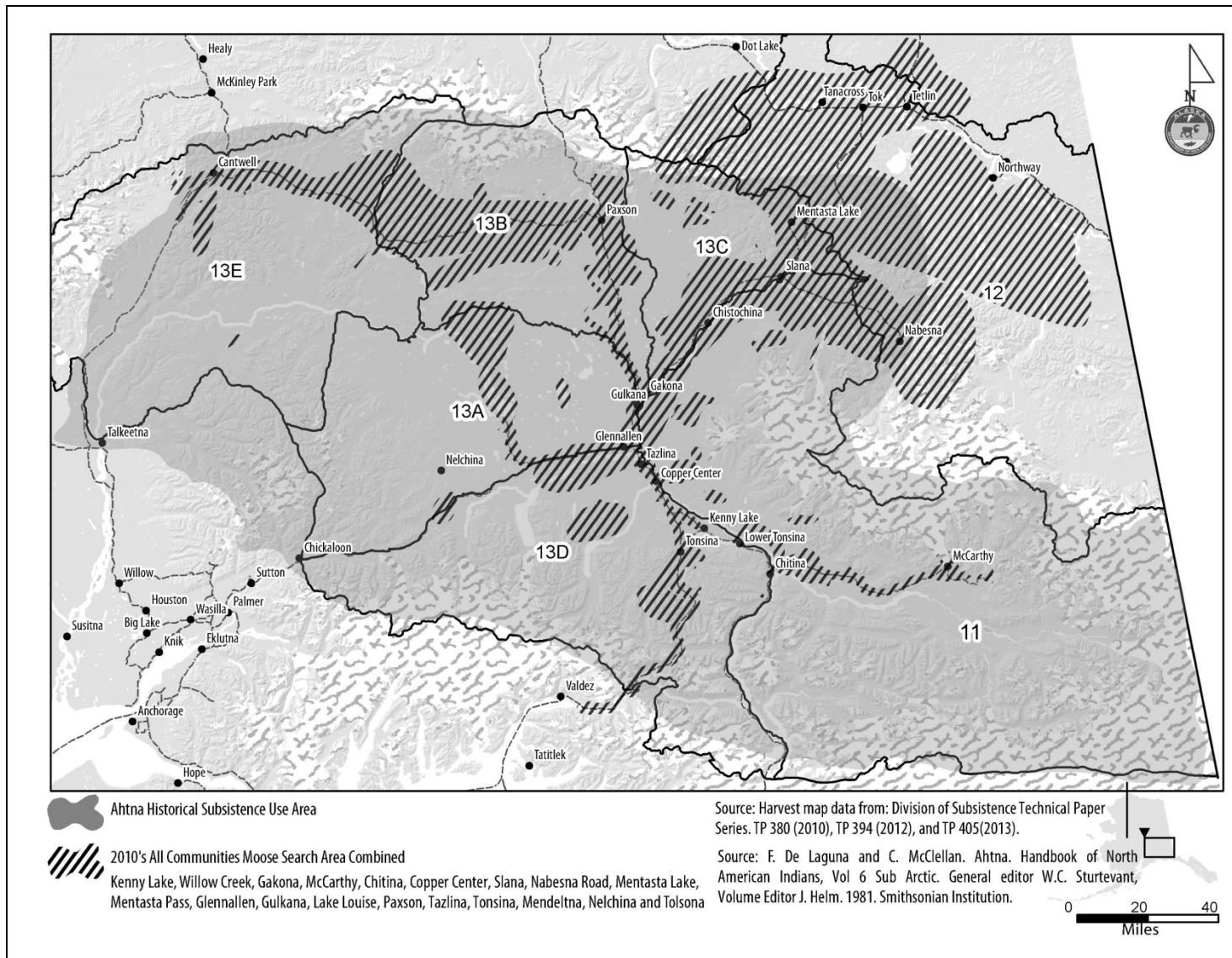


Figure 90-3.—All communities moose search areas, combined, 2010s.

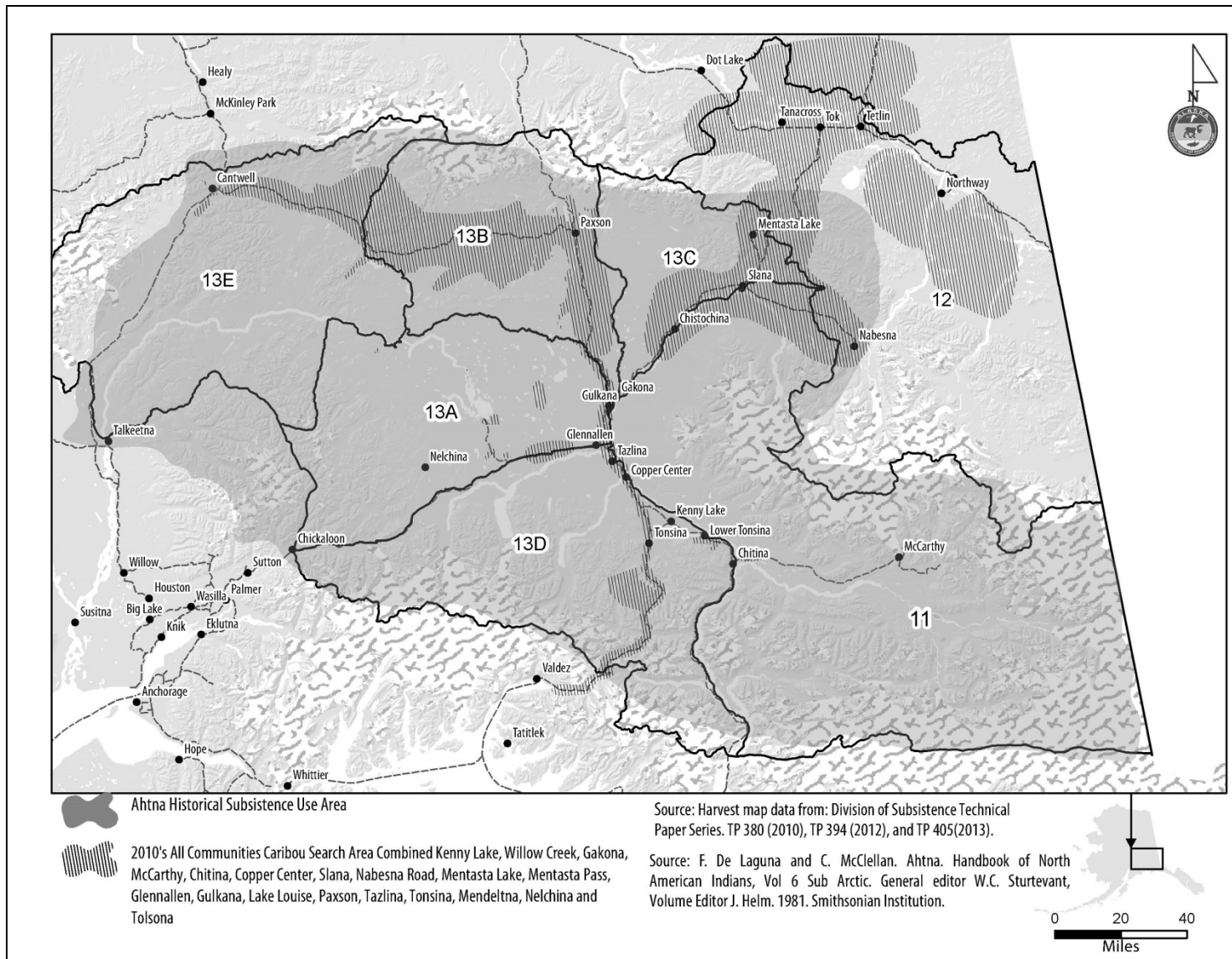


Figure 90-4.—All communities caribou search areas, combined, 2010s.

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**PROPOSAL 91 – 5 AAC 85.065. Hunting seasons and bag limits for small game.** Modify the hunting season and bag limits for grouse in Unit 12.

**PROPOSED BY:** Lee Adler

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would reduce the bag limit and season length for grouse in Unit 12. The bag limit would be reduced to 5 per day, 10 in possession, of which not more than 2 per day and 4 in possession could be ruffed grouse. The season would be reduced to August 20–November 10.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

*Grouse*

Units 11 and 12, Unit 20 (except 20D), and Unit 25

- 15 per day, 30 in possession, August 10–March 31.
- A season may be announced by emergency order during which the bag limit is less than 15 grouse per day, 30 in possession.

The board made a positive customary and traditional use finding for grouse in all of Unit 12, although no amount reasonably necessary for subsistence uses is defined.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If the proposal were adopted, there would be a reduction in grouse hunting opportunity in Unit 12 through both a reduction in the bag limit and season length. Season dates would no longer be aligned with nearby units.

**BACKGROUND:**

Spruce, ruffed, and sharp-tailed grouse are all present in Unit 12. Spring drumming survey data in northwestern Unit 12 (around the vicinity of Tok) and anecdotal observations suggest ruffed grouse have increased in abundance in recent years. Similarly, limited spring lek (areas where males and females gather in the spring for courtship displays and mating) count survey data and anecdotal observations suggest sharp-tailed grouse have also increased in abundance in recent years. Ruffed grouse are likely nearing the high point in the population cycle, while sharp-tailed grouse likely increased at least in part due to new habitat created from several large wildfires during the last 25 years.

With the exception of the Alaska and Tok Cutoff highways and areas around several communities (Northway, Tanacross, Tetlin, and Tok), most of Unit 12 is relatively inaccessible. As a result, overall Unit 12 grouse harvest is likely low, although relatively high grouse harvest likely occurs in localized areas around communities. Based upon grouse wings turned in by hunters statewide during RY11–RY15, 95% of the grouse harvest occurred during August–October, with the majority of the harvest occurring during September (46%) and October (35%).

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal because it does not address a biological concern because the current season dates and bag limit are sustainable. This proposal would result in a reduction of grouse hunting opportunity for



subsistence uses; therefore, the board may wish to consider whether implementing the restrictions outlined in this proposal would continue to provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 92 – 5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures.**  
Allow harvest of brown bear at bear bait stations in Unit 21C.

**PROPOSED BY:** Benjamin Holbrook

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal seeks to allow the take of brown bears at registered bear bait stations in Unit 21C.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Current black bear baiting season in Unit 21C is April 15–June 30.

Harvest of brown bears at bear bait stations is currently allowed in several adjacent subunits (Units 21D, 24C, and 24D) with the following season dates:

- August 1–September 30
- April 15–June 30

There is a positive customary and traditional use finding for brown bears in Units 21 and 22. The board found that 21–25 animals are reasonably necessary for subsistence in Units 21 and 22 combined. There is a positive C&T for black bears in Unit 21; however, the board has not yet made an ANS finding.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The area where brown bears could be taken at black bear bait stations would expand to include all of Unit 21C.

**BACKGROUND:** The Board of Game first approved harvest of brown bears at bear bait stations in Unit 21D in 2012 and for Units 24C and 24D in 2014. Previously the harvest of brown bears over bait had only been approved in specific areas where active Intensive Management programs were conducted. A combined total of 22 bait stations have been registered annually in these 3 units during RY11– RY15, and 2 brown bears have been harvested. Based on this harvest history it is unlikely that additional brown bear harvest at bait sites in Unit 21C will increase harvest significantly.

During RY11–RY15 a total of 6 brown bears have been harvested in Unit 21C.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocation issue, and the department has no biological concerns with brown bear harvest in Unit 21C.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 93 – 5 AAC 92.530(7)(C)(i)(2). Management Areas.** Remove the Bettles Winter Trail travel exception for public use within the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area (DHCMA).

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish & Game

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** The proposal will remove the Bettles Winter Trail as a designated road within the DHCMA. This will prohibit the use of motorized vehicles for hunting.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** No motorized vehicle may be used to transport hunters, hunting gear, or parts of game, within the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area (DHCMA), except that licensed highway vehicles may be used on designated roads, including the Bettles Winter Trail, during periods when the Bureau of Land Management and the city of Bettles announce that the trail is open for winter travel.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The effect of this proposal will be to remove the Bettles Winter Trail as a designated road that provided egress from the DHCMA into Units 24A and 24B for hunting purposes.

**BACKGROUND:** The department submitted this proposal as a placeholder to provide the Board of Game with an opportunity to make changes to the DHCMA regulation that may become necessary based on possible actions taken by land manager in the affected area.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is currently soliciting comments for an environmental assessment of permitted use of the Bettles Winter Trail. The decision was originally expected by June 2016, which was after the deadline for proposals for this Board of Game meeting. The BLM is also currently assessing the Bettles Winter Trail in their Central Yukon Management Plan.

At this time, it appears that if the Bettles Winter Trail permit is approved by BLM in its current form, vehicle access will be restricted to only commercial fuel and supply trucks or Bettles residents. Therefore, the existing regulation which designates the Bettles Winter Trail as a legal motorized travel exception within the DHCMA would mislead hunters and possibly subject them to citations if the road is closed to public use. The department submitted comments to the BLM recommending that any alternative carried forward in the EA should include a provision for access for all members of the public to fish and wildlife resources on public lands. The right-of-way authorization for winter use should allow for public access on BLM land, including those traveling to the communities of Bettles and Evansville.

The Bettles Winter Trail is currently the only designated road that extends beyond the 5-mile corridor of the DHCMA. This proposal would remove the Bettles Winter Trail as a motorized travel exception from the DHCMA regulation.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department recommends **TAKE NO ACTION** on this proposal. The BLM is considering 7 alternatives (and additional options) in their pre-Environmental Assessment comment period. Therefore, a final recommendation will be developed for this placeholder proposal depending on the outcomes from that process. The

department will generate a position when the BLM finalizes the Environmental Assessment and Record of Decision. In addition, other access issues along the DHCMA have recently come to our attention. At this time we are still investigating what the issues are along the entire corridor. The department will provide a new proposal to the board if these issues require board action.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 94 - 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.** Modify the hunting season for moose in Unit 21D.

**PROPOSED BY:** Galena Village Council

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal modifies the moose season for resident hunters in Unit 21D, outside the Koyukuk Controlled Use Area (KCUA), by eliminating the ten-day moose season in August (August 22–31) and replacing it with nine additional days in September (September 1–4 and September 26–30).

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The current regulations in Unit 21D, outside the Koyukuk Controlled Use Area (Unit 21D remainder) are as follows:

Resident hunters may take one bull by registration permit from August 22–31 or from September 5–25; however, the trophy value of the antlers must be destroyed under the registration permit hunt conditions. Resident hunters with a drawing permit may also take one bull from September 5–25.

Nonresident hunters may take one bull with 50-inch antlers or with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side by drawing permit from September 5–25.

There is a positive customary and traditional use finding for moose in Unit 21, and an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence of 600–800 moose.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The proposed season reduces the resident hunter’s moose season length by one day. However, based on historic harvest levels, the harvest would increase from approximately 8 moose during the August season to as many as 86 moose during the added days in September, primarily during the September 26–30 portion. This would likely exceed the harvestable surplus in Unit 21D. Unknown effects that may occur include redistribution of hunters within 21D hunts during September and creation of additional demand for Unit 21D hunts.

**BACKGROUND:** The 10-day August season was implemented in 2006 to replace a 10-day December season. The August season was proposed by the Middle Yukon Fish and Game Advisory Committee (AC) and was supported by the federal Regional Advisory Council (RAC). The AC chose these dates to limit demand among non-local hunters who might identify the dates as a unique hunting opportunity that extends the September season. The September 1–4 closed period was designed to be a disincentive for hunting early in the season and helped alleviate

conflict between local and nonlocal hunters. Potential hunter conflicts are still a relevant concern.

From 1995 through 2014, an average of 0.8 moose/day were reported harvested in the August 22–31 season; an average of 3.5 moose/day were reported September 1–5 within the KCUA portion of Unit 21D; and an average of 14.4 moose/day were harvested during September 16–25. Using these averages, trading the 10-day hunt for 9 days in September will increase harvest from approximately 8 bulls to up to 86 bulls. It is unlikely that additional harvestable surplus exists in Unit 21D to support an additional harvest of up to 78 bulls. Compared to the current seasons that provide 31 days of hunting, a season that includes a September 30 closing date, would achieve the same level of harvest if it were open from September 11–30 (20-day season).

The moose population in Unit 21D currently has a young age structure due to several poor cohorts during 2008–2013 and improved recruitment in 2014 and 2015. The population also had good twinning rates in 2016. Bull:cow ratios in the majority of the Unit 21D hunted population are at or below the management objective of at least 30 bulls:100 cows. Fall 2015 bull:cow ratios in the four most heavily hunted trend count areas ranged from 15 to 23 bulls:100 cows.

Research literature indicates that populations with low bull:cow ratios that are skewed heavily to yearling bulls, like Unit 21D, are negatively impacted by disruption to normal rutting activities, and exhibit delayed calving that is less synchronous. In addition, a late September hunt would occur during the beginning of the peak rutting period and may also result in some level of disruption. Therefore, the potential to negatively affect calving is a concern, particularly since the population estimate [8,611 ( $\pm$  1,300) observable moose] is likely at the low end of, or below, the population management objective (9,000–10,000 observable moose). Because the amount of potential disruption is unknown, devising a management strategy to mitigate the effect is not possible. Although we do not monitor breeding dates, peak calving observed during spring twinning surveys appears to be consistent, therefore we do not have evidence that rutting or breeding dates have changed.

Moose harvest in the community of Galena has been stable. The 2000 through 2015 reported moose harvest averaged 63 moose/year and was 70 moose in 2015. According to 2000–2014 U.S. Census Data, the Galena population has declined from 675 to 449 people; therefore moose harvest per capita has increased.

The supposition that temperatures have increased during the fall hunt is not supported by weather data. An analysis conducted by the National Weather Service (NWS), using 42 years of data from 1960 to 2006 showed the Galena temperatures in early and mid-September were stable. The department submitted a request to the NWS for an update of this analysis and will be presented at the meeting. Although vegetation and moose movements have not been analyzed, stable moose harvest levels indicate hunters continue to be successful.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **OPPOSES** this proposal because of biological concerns. If this proposal were adopted, harvest will likely exceed the harvestable surplus.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 95 - 5 AAC 85.045(19), (22). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**  
Change the drawing permits hunts DM812 in Unit 21C and DM896 in the remainder of Unit 24C to a single registration permit hunt, and also change the RM834 subsistence registration permit in those areas to a registration permit without the antler destruction requirement of RM834.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would change the drawing permit hunts in Unit 21C, the remainder of Unit 24C, and a portion of Unit 24D (DM812 and DM896) to a single registration permit and change the RM834 subsistence registration permit to a registration permit that eliminates the antler destruction requirement in the DM812 and DM896 portions of the RM834 subsistence registration permit area.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Unit 21C Dulbi River drainage and Unit 21C remainder

Residents:

- September 5–25 for one bull by registration hunt (RM834) in which the trophy value must be destroyed,
- or September 5–25 for one bull by drawing hunt (DM812),
- or September 5–25 for one bull by harvest ticket for Unit 21C remainder.

Nonresidents:

- September 5–25 for one bull with spike-fork, 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 4 or more brow tines by drawing permit (DM812) in Unit 21C Dulbi River drainage
- or September 5–25 for one bull with spike-fork, 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 4 or more brow tines by harvest ticket in Unit 21C remainder.

Unit 24C outside Koyukuk Controlled Use Area (KCUA)

Residents:

- September 5–25 for one bull by registration permit (RM834), in which trophy value must be destroyed; or one bull by drawing permit (DM896).
- Dec. 15–Apr. 15 for one antlered bull by registration permit (RM833).

Nonresidents:

- September 5–25 for one bull with spike-fork, 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 4 or more brow tines by drawing permit (DM812)

Unit 24D east of the Koyukuk Controlled Use Area (KCUA)

Residents:

- September 5–25 for one bull by drawing permit (DM896)

Nonresidents:

- September 5–25 for one bull with spike-fork, 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 4 or more brow tines by drawing permit (DM896)
- There is a positive C&T finding for moose in Unit 21, and an ANS of 600–800. There is a positive C&T finding for moose in Unit 24, with an ANS of 170–270.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The effect of this proposal would be to eliminate the DM812 and DM896 drawing hunts and the RM834 (within the DM812 and DM896 hunt areas) subsistence hunt which requires antler destruction. These hunts will then be monitored by a single registration permit to assess response in hunter participation with the change from draw to registration. Antler destruction will no longer be required for any of the hunts.

**BACKGROUND:** These two hunt areas are remote and access is difficult. As a result, hunter participation in the drawing permit hunts has been low. Concerns about 1) hunters “bootlegging” moose from the KCUA by claiming they were harvested in these areas if antler destruction was not required and 2) the need to distribute hunters from heavily hunted areas are diminished due to the remoteness of these hunts. The proposed registration hunts will still allow the department to monitor hunter participation, harvest, and address any potential concerns.

Since the DM812 permit hunt was established in 2004, an average of 31 permits have been issued annually. An average of 74% of permittees did not hunt, and an average of 5 moose were harvested annually over the 12-year period. An average of 1.7 hunters harvested 0.5 moose annually on the RM834 permit in Unit 21C.

Since the DM896 permit hunt was established in 2004, an annual average of 52 permits were issued, an average of 51% of permittees did not hunt, and an average of 11 moose were harvested annually over the same 12-year period. An annual average of 29 hunters harvested 6 moose annually on the RM834 permit in the remainder of Units 24C and 24D.

The department uses discretionary authority to destroy trophies under 5 AAC 92.052(5). The authority is generally applied to game populations with positive C&T findings, high trophy value, low harvestable surplus (quota-based hunts), liberal seasons for subsistence, liberal bag limits (any-bull), no tag fees, and lower overall costs for subsistence hunting. Trophy destruction is used to discourage hunters seeking trophies from participating in subsistence hunts. The Board will need to determine whether the removal of antler destruction will affect subsistence opportunity.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal because it provides more hunting opportunity, simplifies regulations for hunters, and reduces drawing hunt limitations. The department is **NEUTRAL** on the antler destruction component since it is the board’s determination that the change would still provide a normally diligent participant a reasonable opportunity for success in harvesting a moose in these portions of Units 24 and 21C. No biological concerns are created by this proposal.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 96 - 5 AAC 85.045(a)(22). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.** Expand the winter hunting season for moose to include all of Unit 24B.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would expand the RM833 winter season for one antlered bull to include all of Unit 24B to include the area above the Henshaw Creek drainage. This would align this winter season with the recently adopted federal regulations in this area.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Residents:

Unit 24B all drainages of the Koyukuk River upstream from the Henshaw Creek drainage, excluding the North Fork of the Koyukuk River drainage

- one bull by harvest ticket, September 1–25.

Unit 24B remainder

- one bull by harvest ticket, September 1–25.
- one antlered bull by registration permit (RM833), Dec. 15–Apr. 15.

Nonresidents:

- All of Unit 24B - One bull with 50-inch antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side, September 5–25.

There is a positive C&T finding for moose in Unit 24, with an ANS of 170–270.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Expansion of the winter moose season will reduce confusion with federal regulations and land status in Unit 24B, simplify the regulations, and provide additional hunting opportunity.

**BACKGROUND:** The Federal Subsistence Board expanded the winter hunt in Unit 24B at their spring 2016 meeting, which makes the State and Federal regulations out of alignment.

Since the RM833 winter hunt was implemented in 2010, a total of 95 hunters have registered for the hunt, 35 reported hunting, and one moose was harvested in 7 years. Although one or two additional moose may have been harvested under the federal hunt, we anticipate fewer than one moose per year additional harvest with this season expansion.

Bull:cow ratios in Unit 24B are high (the fall 2010–2015 average was 62 bulls:100 cows) and can support an antlered bull hunt. There is no management objective for bull:cow ratios in Unit 24B, but the *Koyukuk River Moose Management Plan* prescribed a ratio of 30–40 bulls:100 cows as an appropriate level due to the low moose density. The existing winter hunt did not result in increased harvest because access to Unit 24B is limited. As a result, hunter participation has been low due to the remoteness, extreme weather conditions, and darkness during the hunting season dates. However, the hunt provides additional opportunity to hunters who were not successful during the fall season.

The board's decision on Proposal 93 will be a consideration for this proposal.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal because it provides more hunting opportunity where additional harvestable surplus exists, and it would simplify regulations. However the department is neutral on any effects on allocation. There are no biological concerns with this proposed regulation change.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 97 – 5 AAC 92.069. Special provisions for moose drawing permit hunts.**

Remove the nonresident guide requirement for moose hunts in the Interior–Northeast Arctic Region and change the permit allocation in Unit 21B (upper Nowitna area) to 90/10 (residents/nonresidents).

**PROPOSED BY:** Resident Hunters of Alaska

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would remove the nonresident guide requirement for moose drawing permit hunts DM811, DM819, DM823, DM825, and DM839, as well as change the current allocation of permits between resident and nonresident hunters in Unit 21B for permits DM809, DM810, and DM811 to a 90/10 allocation instead of a 50/50 allocation.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Currently moose drawing permit hunts DM811, DM819, DM823, DM825, and DM839 require nonresidents to have a guide.

For moose drawing permits in the Upper Nowitna River Corridor of Unit 21B, there is a 50/50 allocation of permits to residents and nonresidents. Among the nonresident permits awarded, there is a 75/25 allocation to guided/nonguided. For moose in Unit 21E, residents have access to an unlimited number of registration permits, while nonresidents are limited to drawing permits with a 75/25 allocation to guided/nonguided.

Season dates are as follows:

Unit 21B, within a corridor extending 2 miles on either side of and including the upper Nowitna River:

Residents:

- Registration permit RM834, 1 bull, August 22–31 and September 5–25
- Or, drawing permit DM810, 1 bull, September 5–25

Nonresidents, nonguided only:

- drawing permit DM809, 1 bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side, September 5–25

Nonresidents, guided only: drawing permit DM811

1 bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side, September 5–25

Unit 21B, outside a corridor extending 2 miles on either side of and including the Nowitna River:



Residents:

- Harvest ticket, 1 bull, August 22–31 and September 5–25

Nonresidents:

- Harvest ticket, 1 bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side, September 5–25

Unit 21E

Residents:

- Registration permit, 1 antlered bull, September 5–25

Nonresidents:

- Drawing permit, one bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side, September 5–25

Refer to the *2016–2017 Alaska Hunting Regulations* for specific details about moose hunting seasons in Region III.

There is a positive C&T finding for moose in Unit 21, with an ANS of 600–800. There is a positive C&T finding for moose in Unit 24, with an ANS of 170–270.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?**

Nonresidents who receive drawing permits DM811, DM823, DM825, DM819, or DM839 would no longer be required to contract the services of a guide to participate in the hunt. Available drawing permits for the upper Nowitna hunt area in Unit 21B encompassing DM809, DM810, and DM811 would be allocated 90% to residents and up to 10% for nonresidents.

**BACKGROUND:**

Nonresident Guide Requirement:

For specific moose drawing permits, the Board of Game allocated portions of the nonresident permits to hunters who would be required to use a guide. Proposals requesting this allocation did so in areas where it had become difficult for a guide’s clients to draw a permit. Additionally, proponents of this regulation argued that these changes also meant that more meat from the harvested moose would be better cared for and remain in the local area with community members, guides, or assistant guides.

Unit 21B Permit Allocation:

The board’s “Nonresident Drawing Permit Allocation Policy” (2007-173-BOG) indicates that allocations for specific hunts will be decided individually, based upon historical patterns of nonresident and resident use over the past 10 years. In 2008 the board allocated 50% of the recently-created moose drawing permit to residents (DM810) and 50% to nonresidents. The allocation between residents and nonresidents was done based on historic patterns of participation. Of the 50% nonresident allocation, 75% of those permits were to be issued to guided nonresidents (DM811) with the remaining 25% to unguided nonresidents (DM809).

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocation issue.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 98 - 5 AAC 92.124(b). Intensive Management Plans VIII.** Eliminate the requirement for a nonresident wolf tag in Unit 21.

**PROPOSED BY:** Middle Yukon Fish and Game Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal seeks to eliminate the nonresident tag fee in Unit 21.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Alaska Statutes AS 16.05.340(a)(15)(J) and AS 16.05.340(a)(21)(K) put into place by the Alaska Legislature stipulate that nonresident tag fees are not required for any Game Management Unit with an active Wolf Control Intensive Management Program.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The regulation will not change the statutes or existing regulations. This proposal brings to light an error in the printed hunting regulations book, not the codified regulations. The department will correct the error if the board passes Proposal 75 to reauthorize the Unit 21E IM plan.

**BACKGROUND:** This regulation change is not needed because the nonresident tag fee exemption in Unit 21 is based upon the Unit 21E Intensive Management (IM) program. If the board passes Proposal 75 to reauthorize the Unit 21E IM program, the wolf tag fee waiver will be applied to all of Unit 21, and the department will correct the error in the published hunting regulation book. If the board does not pass Proposal 75, the wolf tag fee waiver will not be applied to this unit.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department requests that the board **TAKE NO ACTION** because this is an administrative issue.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 99 – 5 AAC 85.056. Hunting seasons and bag limits for wolf.** Change the hunting season for wolves in Units 24, 25, 26B, and 26C to July 31–April 20.

**PROPOSED BY:** Aaron Bloomquist

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Proposal 99 addresses wolf hunting seasons in Units 24, 25, 26A, 26B, and 26C; however, only Units 24, 25, 26B, and 26C fall within Region III and are addressed in this analysis.

This proposal would change the starting dates for wolf hunting season to July 31 and change the closing dates to April 20 in Units 24, 25, 26B, and 26C. There would be no change in season length in Units 26B and 26C, and a decrease in season length of 30 days in Units 24 and 25.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Residents and nonresidents

- Units 24 and 25, August 10–May 31 with a bag limit of 10 wolves.
- Units 26B and 26C, August 10–April 30 with a bag limit of 10 wolves.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The wolf hunting season would begin July 31, which would provide additional opportunity to hunters that may be hunting caribou or grizzly bears in the fall; however, the season would close April 20, reducing spring hunting opportunity. The hunting season closure date would no longer coincide with the closure of the trapping season. The change would also reduce late season opportunity for hunters to harvest prime furs, and the pelt quality of wolves harvested in the early fall season may not be as high.

**BACKGROUND:** This proposal was scheduled for the Arctic/Western Region meeting as Proposal 35. The proponent seeks to increase opportunity for hunters who are in the field during fall hunting seasons (caribou and bear) that are open prior to the current wolf seasons. The proponent notes that quality of early season pelts is less important than having the opportunity to harvest a wolf.

Under hunting licenses during Regulatory Year 2012 (RY12; e.g. RY12 = 1 July 2012–30 June 2013) through RY16 in Units 24 and 25, an annual average of 0.75 and 3.6 wolves, respectively, are harvested during August and 0 wolves are taken in May. In Units 26B and 26C, an average of 5 wolves are taken annually in August and 0 wolves are taken annually in April. Unit 24B had an active departmental wolf control program during RY12–RY15, although no wolves were taken in this program during August or May.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocation issue. Changes to the season dates are not expected to significantly change harvest of wolves in these units and there is no biological concern with the wolf populations in these areas. If the board chooses to adopt this proposal, the department recommends that the board consider retaining the current hunting season closure dates so as to provide hunters additional opportunity to harvest wolves while their pelts are in their prime.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 100 – 5 AAC 92.085.** Institute no-fly zones for caribou hunting in Units 21D, 22, 23, 24 and 26A.

**PROPOSED BY:** Neil DeWitt

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would allow the use of aircraft for caribou hunting (i.e., used for transport of hunters, equipment, or meat) on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday throughout the ranges of the Western Arctic and Teshekpuk caribou herds (WAH and TCH).

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Use of an aircraft for caribou hunting is allowed seven days per week in Units 21D and 24.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Aircraft use for caribou hunting would only be authorized on Friday through Monday, which would likely increase hunting-related air traffic on those days. The effect that this reallocation of flying activity would have on caribou movements, on success rates of hunters that do not use aircraft, or on the satisfaction of hunters or other caribou users is unknown. This restriction could reduce the number of fly-in hunters in the field due to a variety of potentially limiting factors related to commercial services, hunt planning, and flight conditions in Alaska.

**BACKGROUND:** This proposal was scheduled for the Arctic/Western Region meeting as Proposal 4.

The proponent notes that there is dissatisfaction with the number of aircraft and fly-in hunters in some parts of the WAH range. Most proposals to limit the use of aircraft to hunt caribou in Region V revolve around the potential to disturb caribou migrations through aircraft activity and camp placement and increased competition for caribou crossing rivers, resulting in reduced success rates for local hunters who are primarily limited to rivers systems in the fall.

Two communities have been frequently surveyed by the Division of Subsistence, in part due to the persistence of local concerns. Noatak residents' harvests documented since 1994 show a decline in annual community harvests. In many recent years, the primary migration route of the WAH has taken caribou to the west and east of Noatak and affected local harvest success rates. Harvests by Anaktuvuk Pass residents have been more variable. Caribou have frequently approached Anaktuvuk Pass from the west, but have infrequently used Anaktuvuk Pass itself.

The Unit 23 User Conflict Working Group was formed in 2008 to formulate recommendations to address user conflicts in the area. Recommendations have included changes in dates and places where aircraft can be used, in part to accommodate variation in caribou migration timing and routing, as well as efforts to expand the authority of the Big Game Commercial Services Board to regulate transporter activities in addition to guiding services. Actions have included enhanced inter-agency communication and a broad array of educational efforts, including the requirement for pilots involved in hunting to take an orientation course regarding big game hunting and meat transportation in Unit 23. Federal actions within the Noatak National Park and Preserve (NP&P) include a cap on commercial operators and clients as well as a delayed entry system for transporters in the western part of NP&P. In 2016, the Federal Subsistence Board passed a temporary Wildlife Special Action request to close federal lands to caribou hunters who do not qualify to participate in federal hunts.

Over the course of the last 20 years, it appears that some sources of significant conflict in Unit 23 may have declined (i.e. wasted meat, frequency of negative interactions between hunters). It is difficult to attribute those changes to specific actions. Based on harvest ticket reports, the number of visiting hunters in Unit 23 has gradually declined to approximately 60% of the average observed in the late 1990s, perhaps due to changes in caribou abundance, bag limits, or changes in the guiding and transporting businesses in the area. Educational efforts and focused law enforcement efforts may also have played significant roles.

Despite some success in reducing tensions, user conflict remains an issue in some areas of the WAH range, particularly in Unit 23 which has the greatest portion of nonlocal caribou hunters. The most recent attempts to address user conflicts was the special action request submitted by the Northwest Arctic Regional Subsistence Advisory Council, which closed federal lands to hunters who do not qualify to hunt caribou under federal regulations in Unit 23 (WSA16-01).

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal because it is allocative and does not address a biological concern.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 101** – 5 AAC 92.XXX. Create a regulation allowing the harvest of moose under a permit for a “celebration of life” event.

**PROPOSED BY:** Yukon Flats Fish and Game Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would create a new regulation allowing the harvest of moose under a permit for “celebration of life” events in addition to funerary and mortuary potlatches, which are currently available.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Current regulations (5 AAC 92.017, 5 AAC 92.019, 5 AAC 92.055) include the taking of big game for certain religious ceremonies, specifically for customary and traditional Alaska Native funerary and mortuary religious ceremonies (e.g. funeral and memorial potlatches). 5 AAC 92.053 allows for the harvest of up to 3 moose for the Nuchalawoyya Potlatch held annually in Tanana. 5 AAC 92.034 provides for the taking of game for cultural purposes.

There is a positive finding for the customary and traditional use of moose in Unit 25, and the Board of Game established amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence (ANS) at 150–250 moose in Unit 25D east and 50–70 moose in Unit 25D west.

Unit 25D has an intensive management population objective of 10,000–15,000 moose and a harvest objective of 600–1,500 moose.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal would provide permits to the Gwichyaa Zhee Gwich’in Tribal Government for the harvest of moose to be used in their celebratory events not associated with the passing of individuals, such as the Annual Meeting, Holiday Potlatch, Spring Carnival Potlatch and Community Spring Clean-up Potlatch, etc.

**BACKGROUND:** In 1979, the Alaska Supreme Court reversed a 1975 District Court conviction of a resident for taking a cow moose out of season for a funeral potlatch. In its finding, the Alaska Supreme Court noted that killing moose out of season for a funeral ceremony does not violate the establishment of religion clauses of both United States and State of Alaska constitutions. Rather, it allows the observance of ancient traditions and ensures the governmental obligation of neutrality in recognizing religious difference rather than suggesting involvement in

religious institutions. The Supreme Court concluded that the state should adopt carefully crafted regulations to provide an exemption for funeral potlaches that guard against abuses and aid in record keeping for sustainable management purposes. In 1987, the board adopted 5 AAC 92.019 described above but that limited harvest for events specifically for funerary and mortuary purposes because of their fundamentally sacred nature.

Potlatches also are regularly given for other important community-based social or secular purposes, and some regulatory mechanisms for the harvest of game species exist for these. The Nuchalawoyya Potlatch regulation (5 AAC 92.053) provides subsistence permits to the Native Village of Tanana for up to 3 moose to be shared in this historical, annual celebration where traditional methods, skills, and values are passed from generation to generation. As such, the taking of moose for the Nuchalawoyya Potlatch is considered a customary and traditional use with a long history predating Alaska's purchase by the United States. Hunting under the Nuchalawoyya Potlatch permit occurs annually in early June.

Finally, under 5 AAC 92.034, the commissioner may issue permits, upon application, for the taking and use of game for the purposes of teaching and preservation of historic or traditional Alaskan cultural practices, knowledge, or values. Examples of events for which permits were issued include the Old Minto Recovery Camp, the annual Denakkanaaga Elders and Youth Meeting, and Fairbanks Native Association events, among others.

Moose density in Unit 25D has historically been low and population estimates from the late 1990s through 2015 have resulted in average densities that range from 0.13 to 0.52 moose per square mile. Based on the most current estimated moose density range (0.29–0.44 moose per square mile) from the 2015 fall survey conducted in a portion of Unit 25D East, the extrapolated moose population size in all of Unit 25D East (10,750 square miles) is 3,118–4,730 moose. Based on the estimated density range (0.38–0.66 moose per square mile) from the 2015 fall survey conducted in a portion of Unit 25D West, the extrapolated moose population size in all of Unit 25D West (6,750 square miles) is 2,565–4,455 moose. Combining extrapolated estimates for Unit 25D East and 25D West combined, the total moose population for Unit 25D (17,500 square miles) is 5,683–9,185 moose (0.32–0.52 moose per square mile).

The majority of land in Unit 25D consists of the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge. Non-federal lands are primarily owned by private or corporation entities. The western portion of Unit 25D is closed to moose hunting except for federally qualified subsistence hunters on federal lands. In addition, the state administers a Tier II hunt in Unit 25D West on non-federal lands. A state-administered harvest ticket hunt occurs in 25D East.

Reporting rates by residents of Unit 25D have historically been low when using harvest tickets, Tier II permits, or federal subsistence permits. The average annual reported moose harvest under the harvest ticket in Unit 25D East during RY10–RY14 was 24 moose (range = 18–28). The total number of hunters averaged 97 (range = 93–104), and success rates averaged 30% (range = 21%–35%). An average of 53 (range = 32–75) TM940 permits (Unit 25D West) were issued per year during RY10–RY14. Average annual reported harvest was 5 moose (range = 2–11), and success rate averaged 22% (range = 9%–37%). A total of 75 permits were available in each year.

The department's Division of Subsistence worked with the Council of Athabaskan Governments (CATG) to conduct big game harvest surveys in Unit 25D communities in 2008 and 2009. Results of those surveys estimated that local hunters harvested 105 moose in 2008 and 124 moose in 2009. These 2008 and 2009 estimates fall within the range reported by CATG for 1993–2007 when 94–228 moose were reported harvested annually. Residents reported approximately 89% (93 moose) and 85% (106 moose) of their harvest in Unit 25D in 2008 and 2009 respectively, although a small number of moose were also harvested in adjacent Units 25A, 25B, and 25C. Subsistence household surveys were not conducted in RY10–RY14; however, based on similar moose population estimates, it is likely that harvest levels by residents of Unit 25D during RY10–RY14 were similar to those estimated by the department in 2008 and 2009 and by CATG during 1993–2007.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal if harvest is restricted to bulls only because this is an allocation issue, however, the harvest of cow moose should not be allowed. Based on the Unit 25D moose population size and intensive management population and harvest objectives there is currently no harvestable surplus of cow moose. The department also requests that the board make it clear in regulation which specific events would qualify for taking moose and whether reporting is required.

The proposal does not address whether cow moose could be legally harvested under this new regulation. If the proposal is adopted and only allows the harvest of bull moose, it would be difficult for the department to anticipate how many additional moose would be taken. The current hunt structure has resulted in a bull:cow ratio that meets or exceeds management objectives of 40 bulls per 100 cows. While a small number of moose may be biologically sustainable, a significant increase in harvest would compromise that ratio and changes to seasons or bag limits would be needed in the future.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 102 – 5 AAC 99.025. Customary and traditional uses of game.** Establish a separate ANS for the Teshekpuk Caribou Herd.

**PROPOSED BY:** North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would evaluate and establish an amount necessary for subsistence (ANS) for the Teshekpuk Caribou Herd (TCH) that is separate from the adjacent Western Arctic Herd (WAH). Both herds currently have a positive customary and traditional use finding, with a combined ANS of 8,000–12,000.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

*99.025 Customary and traditional uses of game populations*

Species and Unit: Units 21, 22, 23, 24 and 26 (Western Arctic herd, Teshekpuk Lake herd)

Finding: positive

Amount Reasonably Necessary for Subsistence Uses: 8,000–12,000 caribou.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The primary effect of this proposal would be to establish specific thresholds for allocating hunting opportunity (Tier I, Tier II, or hunts that are open to all users) for the Teshekpuk Caribou Herd (TCH). Depending upon the approach taken, the ANS for the WAH could also be affected.

**BACKGROUND:** This proposal is scheduled for the Arctic–Western Region meeting as Proposal 1 and the Interior–Northeast Arctic Region meeting as Proposal 101. ANS helps the board assess if the regulations provide a reasonable opportunity for success in harvesting that game population for customary and traditional uses.

Both the WAH and TCH herds have declined from peak abundance in the last decade. Although harvest levels are difficult to estimate, data from a combination of harvest tickets and modeled harvests based on systematic household surveys indicate that both herds are currently harvested at rates greater than or equal to 6%. At this point, nonresident harvest of the TCH is low, typically less than 0.5% of the total harvest.

The WAH and TCH have some seasonal overlap, as do many large caribou herds. As a result, differentiating harvest between herds can prove difficult in areas where overlap occurs and is complicated by the need for spatially explicit caribou distribution and harvest data. However, in large portions of the respective ranges of these herds, harvest can be reliably assigned to a specific herd.

Changes to seasons and bag limits instituted in Regulatory Year 2015 (RY15; i.e. RY15 = July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016) were a significant step toward reducing harvest on these herds and were the first change to resident seasons in approximately 30 years. The regulatory changes adopted were tailored to each herd based on differences in harvestable surplus estimates, harvest patterns and local desires.

Currently, the TCH is much smaller than the adjacent WAH, and the allocative regime that the TCH is in will be largely driven by the size and harvestable surplus of the WAH.

The type of hunt opportunities the board may offer on a given stock or population is determined by the relationship between harvestable surplus and the upper and lower bounds of ANS. The department will prepare a written analysis of the ANS in time for the Arctic–Western Region meeting.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal because it is allocative. The department recommends the board consider whether the regulations provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses, which is defined as “an opportunity, as determined by the appropriate board, that allows a subsistence user to participate in a subsistence hunt or fishery that provides a normally diligent participant with a reasonable expectation of success of taking of fish or game” (AS 16.05.258(f)).

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in significant additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 103** – 5 AAC 92.010 Harvest tickets and reports, and 85.025 Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou. Modify the hunt structure for Western Arctic and Teshekpuk Caribou Herds.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would establish a registration permit hunt structure for the Western Arctic caribou herd (WAH) and the Teshekpuk caribou herd (TCH), with no changes to seasons or bag limits. The region 5 portion (Units 22, 23, and 26A) of this proposal will be considered as Proposal 2 at the Region 5 meeting in January.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Hunters have been required to use a harvest ticket to hunt caribou in Units 21, 24, 26B, and 26C since fall 2016. Refer to 5 AAC 85.025 or the 2016–2017 *Alaska Hunting Regulations* for area-specific seasons and bag limits.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The primary effect of the proposal would change the harvest ticket hunt to a registration permit.

**BACKGROUND:** This proposal would overturn a decision made by the board at the 2016 statewide meeting to use harvest tickets for caribou hunting in Units 21, 24, 26B, and 26C. The department supports keeping this recent change for these units because the WAH and TCH herds seldom occupy these areas and few WAH or TCH caribou are harvested in these units.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department recommends **TAKE NO ACTION** on Proposal 103 because of action taken at the 2016 Statewide meeting for Units 21, 24, 26B, and 26C and in January for the Arctic/Western Region units via Proposal 2.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 104** – 5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou. Expand the bag limits for caribou in Units 24A, 25A, 25D, 26B, and 26C.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal aligns seasons and bag limits within the range of the Central Arctic caribou herd and within the range of the Porcupine caribou herd.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** 5 AAC 85.025 (19) (20) (21) and 5 AAC 99.025 (a)(4).

Unit 24A, that portion north of the south bank of the Kanuti River.

Resident hunters: 5 caribou per day as follows:

- up to 5 bulls per day July 1–October 14 and February 1–Jun 30; however, calves may not be taken; and
- up to 5 cows per day during July 15–April 30, however calves may not be taken.

Nonresident hunters: 1 bull, August 1–September 30, however, calves may not be taken.

Unit 25A, those portions east of the east bank of the East Fork Chandalar River extending from its confluence with the Chandalar River upstream to Gilbeau Pass; Unit 25B; and Unit 25D, excluding the drainage of the west fork of the Dall River west of 150° W. long.

Resident hunters: 10 caribou, July 1–April 30.

Nonresident hunters: 2 bulls, August 1–September 30.

Remainder of Unit 25A.

Resident hunters: 10 caribou, July 1–June 30, however, cow caribou may not be taken during May 16–June 30.

Nonresident hunters: 5 caribou, July 1–June 30, however, cow caribou may not be taken during May 16–June 30.

Unit 26B, that portion north of 69° 30' N. Lat. and west of the east bank of the Kuparuk River to a point at 70° 10' N. Lat., 149° 04' W. Long., then west approximately 22 miles to 70° 10' N. Lat., 149° 56' W. Long., then following the east bank of the Kalubik River to the Arctic Ocean.

- Resident hunters: 5 caribou per day, July 1–June 30, however, cow caribou may not be taken during May 16–June 30.
- Nonresident hunters: 5 caribou, July 1–April 30.

Unit 26B, that portion south of 69° 30' N. lat. and west of the Dalton Highway.

- Resident and Nonresident hunters: 5 caribou, July 1–October 10 and May 16–June 30, however, cow caribou may not be taken during May 16–June 30.

Unit 26B, that portion south of 69° 30' N. lat. and east of the Dalton Highway.

- Resident and Nonresident hunters: 5 caribou, July 1–June 30, however, cow caribou may not be taken during May 16–June 30.

Remainder of Unit 26B.

- Resident and Nonresident hunters: 5 caribou, July 1–April 30.

There is a positive C&T finding for the Central Arctic caribou herd in Unit 26B and an ANS of 250–450 caribou. There's a positive C&T finding for the Porcupine caribou herd in Units 25A, 25B, 25D, 26B, and 26C and an ANS of 1,250–1,550 caribou.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Seasons and bag limits would be aligned as much as possible within each herd's range. Regulations would also be simplified and clarified for hunters. Changes recommended for the Porcupine caribou herd represent increased opportunity by extending seasons during late spring and summer.

## **BACKGROUND:**

### *Porcupine Caribou Herd (PCH)*

The PCH was estimated at 197,000 caribou in 2013 and is likely stable based on trend in abundance, low adult mortality, and average pregnancy rates and early calf survival. Hunting pressure in Alaska on the PCH is relatively low because the herd is frequently inaccessible to hunters. The combined annual harvest rate between Alaska and Canada was <2% during RY12–RY13. Aligning seasons and bag limits within the PCH range will simplify regulations and increase opportunity for Alaska residents who hunt the PCH. PCH regulations in Unit 25A, east of the east bank of the East Fork Chandalar River (Unit 25A East), Unit 25B, Unit 25D, excluding the drainage of the west fork of the Dall River west of 150° West longitude, and Unit 26C currently reflect PCH regulations, but seasons for resident hunters could be expanded.

Below are 2 areas that are predominantly occupied by PCH caribou, but do not reflect PCH regulations and could be aligned with Units 25A East and 26C:

Unit 24A north of the south bank of the Kanuti River. Current seasons and bag limits reflect the Western Arctic caribou herd regulations, but this herd rarely ranges into Unit 24A. We recommend aligning seasons and bag limits in northern Unit 24A with adjacent Unit 25A East, which has a bag limit of 10 caribou for residents and 2 bulls for nonresidents, a longer season for resident hunters and a shorter season for nonresidents.

Northern Unit 24A is occupied mostly by PCH caribou during late-fall through early-spring. Most harvest in this area is on the PCH and harvest is relatively small. Hunters typically access caribou via the Dalton Highway in October and November and in March and April. There is overlap between the CAH and PCH in this area during winter, but generally the PCH greatly outnumbers the CAH. The Hodzana caribou herd also occupies a portion of Unit 24A from north of the Kanuti River to the South Fork Koyukuk River.

During RY10–RY15, an average of 12 caribou (range: 2–25; average of 1 harvested by nonresidents) were reported harvested in Unit 24A, north of the south bank of the Kanuti River by an average of 30 hunters (4 nonresidents). During this period, residents who lived north of the Yukon River were not required to obtain a harvest ticket, but they were required to register with ADF&G or an authorized vendor. Beginning in RY16, all hunters are required to obtain harvest tickets.

Unit 25A, west of the east bank of the East Fork Chandalar River (Unit 25A West). Season dates and bag limits for residents are shorter in Unit 25A West than in adjacent Unit 25A East, which has a bag limit of 10 caribou for residents and 2 bulls for nonresidents, a longer season for resident hunters (if the proposed season is adopted) and a shorter season for nonresidents. This would reflect PCH regulations because most harvest is on the PCH and harvest is relatively small. There is overlap between the CAH and PCH during winter, but generally the PCH greatly outnumbers the CAH.

During RY10–RY15, an average of 42 caribou (range: 21–79, average of 9 harvested by nonresidents) were reported harvested in 25A West by an average of 72 hunters (21 nonresidents). During this period, residents who lived north of the Yukon River were not

required to obtain a harvest ticket, but they were required to register with ADF&G or an authorized vendor. Beginning in RY16, all hunters are required to obtain harvest tickets.

*Central Arctic Caribou Herd (CAH)*

Data from radiocollared caribou indicate that lower adult female survival was the most important factor in the decline followed by emigration to the Porcupine and Teshekpuk caribou herds. Of the 54 radiocollared caribou located in the 2013 photocensus, 29 (54%) died by the 2016 photocensus and 10 (18%) were found with either the Porcupine or Teshekpuk caribou herd. Harvest was not an important factor. Additionally, the 2013 population size may have been overestimated, and emigration to the PCH may also be a factor. The department is planning surveys to continue to closely monitor the CAH population status.

The current management objective for the CAH is a population of at least 28,000–32,000 caribou, which reflects the Intensive Management objective.

CAH harvest (Unit 26B harvest ticket reports): During Regulatory Year 2010 (RY10; i.e., RY10 = July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011) through RY15, the average number harvested annually was 988 caribou, including 234 (24%) females. During this period, residents who lived north of the Yukon River were not required to obtain a harvest ticket, but they were required to register with ADF&G or an authorized vendor. Beginning in RY16, all hunters are required to obtain harvest tickets.

Table 104-1 describes average harvest of all CAH caribou by hunter residency and the minimum reduction in caribou harvest necessary to reduce harvest to the harvestable surplus of 680 caribou. Most harvest occurs in August and September. Most nonlocal residents and nonresidents harvest CAH caribou primarily in August, while local residents harvest CAH caribou primarily in July and August.

**Table 104-1. Central Arctic caribou herd average harvest (Unit 26B) by residency, RY10–RY15, harvestable surplus, and number of caribou to reduce.**

<b>Residency</b>	<b>Average harvest RY13–RY15</b>	<b>Average harvest RY10–RY12</b>
Local resident	100	100
Nonlocal resident	492	887
Nonresident	339	248
<b>Total harvest</b>	<b>931</b>	<b>1,235</b>
Harvestable surplus	680	680
Number of caribou to reduce	251	555

Harvest of female caribou: During RY10–RY15, most harvest of female caribou occurred in the fall, primarily August. The average number harvested during fall was 168 female caribou. The average number harvested in spring was 57 female caribou. A large proportion of the spring female harvest may have been Teshekpuk herd caribou in most years. Harvest of the CAH during spring in Unit 26B was also dependent on timing of spring migration.

Harvest by Nonresidents: During RY10–RY15, nonresident harvest comprised an average of 31% of the harvest (293 caribou). This composition changed over time from 22% during RY10–RY12 to 41% during RY13–RY15. The average number of hunters was also higher during RY13–RY15 (429 nonresident hunters) compared to RY10–RY12 (315 nonresident hunters). Approximately 100 more nonresident hunters were in the field during RY13–RY15 compared to RY10–RY12. The increase in nonresident hunters was likely due to decreased opportunities for nonresidents in the Western Arctic and Teshekpuk caribou herds. Most nonresident harvest occurs in August (77%) with 18% occurring in September and the remaining 5% throughout the year.

Harvest by Residents: There were fewer resident hunters in the field during RY13–RY15 (912 resident hunters) compared to RY10–RY12 (1,155 resident hunters). Nonlocal residents harvested an average of approximately 492 caribou (including 157 females) during RY13–RY15 compared to an average of 887 caribou (including 259 females) during RY10–RY12.

We estimated approximately 70–110 CAH caribou were harvested annually by Nuiqsut residents in northwestern Unit 26B during RY02–RY07. Approximately 80% were bulls and most harvest took place in July and August. We believe this estimate remains valid for more recent years. Additional local harvest of CAH likely occurs in other units when the caribou are distributed near Kaktovik in summer (Unit 26C) and near Wiseman and Coldfoot (Unit 24A) and Arctic Village (Unit 25A) in fall and winter. Most caribou harvested in these settings were not reported.

Success Rates: During RY10–RY15, average success rates for all hunters were higher during RY10–RY12 (54%) compared to RY13–RY15 (46%). However, nonresident hunter success rates were similar during all 6 years (range: 60–64%, except in one year when it was 71%). Resident hunter success rate was lower during RY13–RY15 at 38% average success compared to RY10–RY12 when the average was 51%. Although some changes in success rate can be attributed to fewer caribou, it is likely that distribution of caribou in August and September was also a large factor influencing hunter success rates, particularly resident hunters. Most hunters (residents and nonresidents) harvested 1 or 2 caribou (93%). Only an average of 2 nonresidents took 3 caribou during the 6-year period.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** portions of this proposal with **AMENDMENTS** to adjust bag limits according to each herd’s harvestable surplus and to align seasons as much as possible within each herd’s range. The specific recommendations for each caribou herd are listed below:

*Porcupine Caribou Herd (PCH)*

The department **SUPPORTS** the portion of the proposal for the PCH with **AMENDMENTS** that align the seasons and bag limits across all of the PCH range.

Proposed PCH Amendment (Unit 24A, north of the south bank of the Kanuti River, Unit 25A, Unit 25B, Unit 25D, excluding the drainage of the west fork of the Dall River west of 150° W. long, and Unit 26C):

- Resident hunters: 10 caribou by harvest ticket, July 1–June 30; however cow caribou may be taken only during July 1–April 30.
- Nonresident hunters: 2 bulls by harvest ticket, August 1–September 30.

In Unit 24A, north of the south bank of the Kanuti River, the amendment would increase the resident season, but decrease the resident bag limit. The board will need to determine whether adopting this change in regulation still provides a normally diligent person a reasonable opportunity for success in harvesting a caribou for customary and traditional uses. Nonresident hunter opportunity (bag limit) would increase in Unit 24A and decrease in Unit 25A West. No biological concerns are created or addressed by this portion of the proposal or recommended amendments.

Simplifying and aligning seasons and bag limits for the PCH would increase opportunity for resident hunters by extending seasons during late spring and summer and decrease nonresident opportunity in some portions of the PCH range and increase nonresident opportunity in other portions.

#### *Central Arctic caribou herd (CAH)*

The department recommends **TAKE NO ACTION** on this portion of the proposal based on the action taken in Proposal 105. When Proposal 104 was submitted, the CAH was estimated at 50,753 caribou (range: 40,924–60,582) in 2013 and the herd was determined to be either stable or slightly declining with an annual harvest rate of 2–4%. However, the July 2016 photocensus resulted in a population estimate of 22,630 caribou (range: 20,074–25,186), indicating a substantial decline in the herd. Even though the herd declined markedly, harvest rates did not exceed 5% during 2013–2015.

Our recommendations in comments for Proposal 105 provide amendments that continue to align CAH seasons and bag limits. However, because the CAH declined markedly, the department is now also recommending significant changes to seasons and bag limits. To allow for herd growth, these recommendations would maintain a 3% harvest rate on the current population estimate of 22,630 caribou, which results in a harvestable surplus of 680 caribou with no more than 75 females. This requires harvest to be reduced by approximately 200 to 300 caribou. Reductions in seasons and bag limits are necessary to accomplish this reduction in harvest.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 105 – 5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.** Change the nonresident bag limit for caribou and resident cow season in Unit 26B.

**PROPOSED BY:** Resident Hunters of Alaska

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would reduce the nonresident bag limit from 5 caribou to 2 bulls in Unit 26B. In addition, the start of the resident cow season would open on August 1 instead of July 1, reducing the cow season by 31 days for resident hunters.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** 5 AAC 85.025 (21) and 5 AAC 99.025 (a)(4).

Caribou seasons and bag limits in Unit 26B are as follows:

Unit 26B, that portion north of 69° 30' N. Lat. and west of the east bank of the Kuparuk River to a point at 70° 10' N. Lat., 149° 04' W. Long., then west approximately 22 miles to 70° 10' N. Lat., 149° 56' W. Long., then following the east bank of the Kalubik River to the Arctic Ocean.

Resident hunters: 5 caribou per day, July 1-June 30, however, cow caribou may not be taken during May 16-June 30.

Nonresident hunters: 5 caribou, July 1–April 30.

Unit 26(B), that portion south of 69° 30' N. lat. and west of the Dalton Highway.

Resident and Nonresident hunters: 5 caribou, July 1–October 10 and May 16–June 30, however, cow caribou may not be taken from May 16–June 30.

Unit 26(B), that portion south of 69° 30' N. lat. and east of the Dalton Highway.

Resident and Nonresident hunters: 5 caribou, July 1–June 30, however, cow caribou may not be taken from May 16–June 30.

Remainder of Unit 26(B).

Resident and Nonresident hunters: 5 caribou, July 1–April 30.

There is a positive C&T finding for the Central Arctic caribou herd in Unit 26B and an ANS of 250–450 caribou.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The effect of this proposal would be a reduction in caribou harvest. Caribou bag limits for nonresidents would be reduced from 5 caribou to 2 bulls, and the resident cow season would be reduced by 31 days.

**BACKGROUND:** This proposal was submitted to reduce caribou seasons and bag limits in Unit 26B because of concerns about increased hunting pressure due to a federal closure on Western Arctic caribou to non-federally qualified hunters, wanton waste by nonresident hunters in Unit 26B taking more than 2 caribou, and harvest of cows when calves were only a month old.

When this proposal was submitted, the Central Arctic caribou herd (CAH) was estimated at 50,753 caribou (range: 40,924–60,582) in 2013 and the herd was determined to be either stable or slightly declining with an annual harvest rate of 2–4%. However, the July 2016 photocensus resulted in a population estimate of 22,630 caribou (range: 20,074–25,186), indicating a substantial decline in the herd.

Data from radiocollared caribou indicate that lower adult female survival was the most important factor in the decline, followed by emigration to the Porcupine and Teshekpuk caribou herds. Of the 54 radiocollared caribou located in the 2013 photocensus, 29 (54%) died by the 2016 photocensus and 10 (18%) were found with either the Porcupine or Teshekpuk caribou herd. Harvest was not an important factor. Additionally, the 2013 population size may have been overestimated, and emigration to the PCH may also be a factor. The department is planning surveys to continue to closely monitor the CAH population status.

The current management objective for the CAH is a population of at least 28,000–32,000 caribou, which reflects the Intensive Management objective.

*CAH harvest (Unit 26B harvest ticket reports):* During Regulatory Year 2010 (RY10; i.e., RY10 = July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011) through RY15, the average number of caribou harvested annually was 988, including 234 (24%) females. During this period, residents who lived north of the Yukon River were not required to obtain a harvest ticket, but they were required to register with ADF&G or an authorized vendor. Beginning in RY16, all hunters are required to obtain harvest tickets.

Table 105-1 describes average harvest of all CAH caribou by hunter residency and the minimum reduction in caribou harvest necessary to reduce harvest to the harvestable surplus of 680 caribou. Most harvest occurs in August and September, primarily August for both nonlocal residents and nonresidents. Local residents harvest CAH caribou primarily in July and August.

**Table 105-1. Central Arctic caribou herd average harvest (Unit 26B) by residency, harvestable surplus, and number of caribou to reduce RY10–RY15.**

<b>Residency</b>	<b>Average harvest RY13–RY15</b>	<b>Average harvest RY10–RY12</b>
Local resident	100	100
Nonlocal resident	492	887
Nonresident	339	248
Total harvest	931	1,235
Harvestable surplus	680	680
Number of caribou to reduce	251	555

Harvest of female caribou: During RY10–RY15, most harvest of female caribou occurred in the fall, primarily August. The average number harvested during fall was 168 female caribou. The average number harvested in spring was 57 female caribou. A large proportion of the spring female harvest may have been Teshekpuk herd caribou in most years. Harvest of the CAH during spring in Unit 26B was also dependent on timing of spring migration.

Harvest by Nonresidents: During RY10–RY15, nonresident harvest comprised an average of 31% of the harvest (293 caribou). This composition changed over time from 22% during RY10–RY12 to 41% during RY13–RY15. The average number of hunters was also higher during RY13–RY15 (429 nonresident hunters) compared to RY10–RY12 (315 nonresident hunters). Approximately 100 more nonresident hunters were in field during RY13–RY15 compared to RY10–RY12.



The increase in nonresident hunters was likely due to decreased opportunities for nonresidents in the Western Arctic and Teshekpuk caribou herds. Most nonresident harvest occurs in August (77%) with 18% occurring in September and the remaining 5% throughout the year.

Harvest by Residents: There were fewer resident hunters in the field during RY13–RY15 (912 resident hunters) compared to RY10–RY12 (1,155 resident hunters). Nonlocal residents harvested an average of 492 caribou annually (including 157 females) during RY13–RY15 compared to an average of 887 caribou annually (including 259 females) during RY10–RY12.

Approximately 70–110 CAH caribou were harvested annually by Nuiqsut residents in northwestern Unit 26B during RY02–RY07, and approximately 80% were bulls with most of the harvest taking place in July and August. This harvest estimate continues to be applied. Additional local harvest of CAH likely occurs in other units when the caribou are distributed near Kaktovik in summer (Unit 26C) and near Wiseman and Coldfoot (Unit 24A) and Arctic Village (Unit 25A) in fall and winter. Most caribou harvested in these settings were not reported.

Success Rates: During RY10–RY15, average success rates for all hunters were higher during RY10–RY12 (54%) compared to RY13–RY15 (46%). However, nonresident hunter success rates were similar during all 6 years (range: 60–64%, except in one year when it was 71%). Resident hunter success rate was lower during RY13–RY15 at 38% average success compared to RY10–RY12 when the average was 51%. Although some changes in success rate can be attributed to fewer caribou, it is likely that distribution of caribou in August and September was also a large factor influencing hunter success rates, particularly resident hunters. Most hunters harvested 1 or 2 caribou (87%). Only 2 nonresidents during the 6-year period took 3 caribou.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal with an **AMENDMENT** to further reduce seasons and bag limits for the CAH in Unit 26B. To allow for herd growth, the department recommends maintaining a 3% harvest rate on the current population estimate of 22,630 caribou, which results in a harvestable surplus of 680 caribou with no more than 75 females. This requires harvest to be reduced by approximately 200 to 300 caribou.

The following amended seasons and bag limits are offered as a starting point for the board's consideration of a new harvest management strategy to address the identified biological concerns. The proposed amendment aligns large areas of Unit 26B, simplifying regulations for hunters, but also decrease hunting opportunity (both seasons and bag limits). The Board will need to determine whether adopting this change in regulation still provides reasonable subsistence opportunity for residents. This amendment also addresses the proponent's concerns about wanton waste by nonresident hunters by reducing the bag limit and harvest of cows when calves are only a month old.

Potential Season Dates and Bag Limits:

Unit 26B, that portion north of 69° 30' N. Lat. and west of the east bank of the Kuparuk River to a point at 70° 10' N. Lat., 149° 04' W. Long., then west about 22 miles to 70° 10' N. Lat., 149° 56' W. Long., then following the east bank of the Kalubik River to the Arctic Ocean):

- Resident hunters: 5 caribou total, July 1–June 30, however, no more than 3 cows may be taken (projected harvest of 60 bulls, 15 cows).
- Nonresident hunters: One bull by harvest ticket, August 25–September 7 (projected harvest of ≤5 bulls).

Unit 26B, Remainder

- Resident hunters: 2 caribou by harvest ticket, August 1–April 30; however, cow caribou may only be taken November 1–April 30 (projected harvest of 320 bulls, 50 cows).
- Nonresident hunters: One bull by harvest ticket, August 25–September 7 (projected harvest of 130 bulls)

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 106 – 5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear.** Extend the resident archery-only season within the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area (DHCMA) for brown bear in Unit 26B by opening the season August 10 versus August 25.

**PROPOSED BY:** Resident Hunters of Alaska

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would lengthen the Unit 26B resident archery-only brown bear season by 15 days by opening the season on August 10 instead of August 25 in the DHCMA.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** 5 AAC 85.020(24) and 5 AAC 92.530(7):

Unit 26B:

The DHCMA extends 5 miles each side of the Dalton Highway and is open to big game, small game and fur animals by bow and arrow only.

- Residents: One brown bear every regulatory year by registration permit, August 25–May 31. Cubs and sows with cubs may not be taken.
- Nonresidents: One brown bear every regulatory year by drawing permit; up to 20 permits may be issued, August 25–May 31. Cubs and sows with cubs may not be taken.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The brown bear season in Unit 26B would be liberalized for residents hunting within the Dalton Highway

Corridor Management Area. There is potential that this change would result in an overharvest of brown bears in Unit 26B.

### **BACKGROUND:**

In 2016, the brown bear population in Unit 26B was estimated to include 260–439 bears with a midpoint of 333 bears. This estimate was based on a survey conducted during 2000–2003; these data were re-analyzed in 2016.

The current 3-year mean annual human-caused mortality objective for brown bear in Unit 26B is 27 bears (8% of 333 bears), of which no more than 11 can be females (40%). Human-caused mortality includes harvest, predator control, illegal take, and Defense of Life and Property (DLP).

The 3-year mean annual human-caused mortality during RY13–RY15 was 24 bears (5 females, 21%), slightly below the harvestable surplus estimate of 27 bears. During this period, the season was August 25–May 31 and 6 drawing permits were issued to nonresidents annually. Of the 72 bears killed over the 3 years, 63 were harvested by resident hunters, 2 were harvested by nonresidents, 5 were killed as DLPs, 1 was illegal, and 1 was killed in predator control. All 5 DLP bears were taken in August before the season opened August 25. Ages of bears sealed ranged 2–29 years old with 34 bears 2–5 years old, 10 bears 6–10 years old, 6 bears 14–19 years old, and 6 bears 20–29 years old. No trend in bear ages was apparent. Four nonresident drawing permits were issued for RY16, before our new population estimate was completed.

Few bears were taken by bow and arrow during 2004–2013 (0–1 annually); however, a substantial increase in the number of bears taken by bow and arrow in RY15 (6 bears) suggests that a cautious harvest strategy should be maintained.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal because it is an allocation issue among resident bow hunters and resident and nonresident hunters throughout Unit 26B. The department could decrease the number of permits issued to nonresidents if bow hunter harvest in the earlier season resulted in additive mortality. The board may also want to consider proposals 107 and 109, which recommend liberalizing brown bear seasons in Unit 26B.

The department is concerned about potential overharvest with an additional brown bear season by archery-only without adjusting the season for residents and nonresidents or adjusting the number of drawing permits issued to nonresidents. It is possible that some of the mortality that would occur in an archery-only hunt during August 10–24 would be compensatory. However, the current permit systems and August 25 season opening have resulted in a 3-year mean annual human-caused mortality of 24 bears, which is slightly below the estimated harvestable surplus of 27 bears. However, there is some uncertainty associated with the population estimate from which the harvestable surplus estimate is derived, and it is possible that additional bear harvest may be unreported. Therefore, the department would prefer to maintain a cautious approach to harvest.

The proponent suggests that harvest of brown bear within the DHCMA could result in reducing brown bear predation on muskoxen because much of the muskox population is within the DHCMA. While a bow hunter could potentially harvest a brown bear that preys on muskoxen, most of the predation events occur in the spring when the bear season is currently open. As a result, it is unlikely that the proposed change would influence the muskoxen population

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 107 – 5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear.** Lengthen the hunting seasons for brown bear in Unit 26B and change the nonresident drawing permit to a registration permit.

**PROPOSED BY:** Richard Guthrie

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would add 15 days to the brown bear hunting season in Unit 26B for resident and nonresident hunters by opening the season on August 10 instead of August 25. This proposal would also replace the nonresident drawing permit (DB987) with a registration permit.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** 5 AAC 85.020 (24):

Unit 26B:

Resident hunters: One bear every regulatory year by registration permit, August 25–May 31.

Nonresident hunters: One bear every regulatory year by drawing permit; up to 20 permits may be issued, August 25–May 31.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The brown bear season in Unit 26B would be liberalized for both residents and nonresidents, and a limited drawing permit system for nonresidents would be replaced by an unlimited registration permit system. These actions would likely result in an overharvest of brown bears in Unit 26B.

**BACKGROUND:** It is possible that some of the mortality that would occur during an August 10–24 portion of the season would be compensatory. However, the current permit systems and August 25 season opening have resulted in a 3-year mean of human-caused mortality of 24 bears, which is slightly below the estimated harvestable surplus of 27 bears. Although the 3-year mean annual human-caused mortality was slightly below the estimated harvestable surplus, there is some uncertainty associated with the population estimate from which it is derived. In addition, it is possible that some bear harvest may be unreported. Therefore, the department is concerned about potential overharvest if bear seasons are liberalized and nonresident drawing hunts are eliminated.

*Unit 26B brown bear population estimate:* In 2016, the Unit 26B population was estimated at 260–439 bears with a midpoint of 333 bears. This estimate is based on a survey conducted during 2000–2003; these data were re-analyzed in 2016. Although the midpoint of the population estimate was used to determine the harvestable surplus, this population estimate is not precise due to the tremendous amount of uncertainty associated with the estimate (as reflected in the wide range of 260–439 bears).

Management objectives: Based on the population estimate from the 2016 analysis, the current 3-year mean annual human-caused mortality objective for brown bear in Unit 26B is 27 bears (8% of 333 bears), of which no more than 11 can be females (40%). Human-caused mortality includes harvest, predator control, illegal take, and Defense of Life and Property (DLP). In Regulatory Year 2010 (RY10; e.g. RY10 = 1 July 2010–30 June 2011) and RY11, the harvest objective was to reduce brown bear predation on muskoxen. In RY12, our strategy changed to a department predator control program to kill bears that were preying on muskoxen while providing sustainable opportunity for bear hunters, including the 3-year mean annual human-caused mortality objective of 27 bears and no more than 11 female bears.

Harvest: The 3-year mean annual human-caused mortality during RY13–RY15 was 24 bears, including 5 females (21% of the harvest), slightly below the estimated harvestable surplus of 27 bears. During RY13–RY15, the hunting season was August 25–May 31 and 6 drawing permits were issued annually to nonresidents (with authority to issue up to 20 nonresident permits). Of the 72 bears killed over the 3 years, 65 were harvested by hunters, 5 were DLP, 1 was illegal, and 1 was killed in predator control. All 5 DLP bears were taken in August before the season opened August 25. Ages of bears sealed ranged 2–29 years old with 34 bears representing 2 to 5 years old, 10 bears were 6 to 10 years old, 6 bears were 14 to 19 years old, and 6 bears ranged 20 to 29 years old. No trend in bear ages was apparent. On average, 2 bears were killed annually by nonresident hunters during RY13–RY15. Four nonresident drawing permits were issued for RY16, before our new population estimate was completed.

Seasons were opened earlier for 2 years in RY10 and RY11 in an effort to reduce brown bear predation on muskoxen. In RY10, all 20 nonresident drawing permits were issued. In RY11, an unlimited registration permit was available for both residents and nonresidents in most of Unit 26B where muskoxen occurred. Nonresidents were required to have a drawing permit for the remainder of Unit 26B. In RY10, 28 bears were killed: 26 were harvested and 2 were DLP. A total of 11 of these bears were killed during August 10–24. In RY11, 26 bears were killed: 22 were harvested, 3 were predator control, and 1 was DLP. A total of 17 of these bears were killed during August 1–24.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **OPPOSES** this proposal because liberalizing the brown bear season in Unit 26B and replacing the nonresident drawing permit with a registration permit would likely result in overharvest.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 108 - 5 AAC 99.025(a)(3). Customary and traditional uses of game populations.** Reevaluate the customary and traditional use finding for brown bear in Unit 25D.

**PROPOSED BY:** Yukon Flats Fish and Game Advisory Committee.

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal requests the board revisit the previous finding that brown bear in Unit 25 are not associated with customary and traditional uses.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** There is a negative finding for customary and traditional uses of brown bear in Unit 25.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If, after following the *Boards of fisheries and game subsistence procedures* outlined in 5 AAC 99.010, the board determines that there are customary and traditional uses of Unit 25 brown bear, the board would need to review existing hunting opportunities to determine whether the current regulations provide reasonable opportunities for subsistence uses or adopt a regulation that provides reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses. If the board identifies a subsistence harvest history, the board would eventually need to determine the amount reasonably necessary for subsistence uses of brown bear in Unit 25.

**BACKGROUND:** In 1987, the Board of Game determined that brown bear in Unit 25 were not associated with customary and traditional (C&T) uses and therefore not subject to the subsistence priority statute (AS 16.05.258). The Yukon Flats Fish and Game Advisory Committee has requested the board reevaluate its previous C&T determination based on new information from the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee stated that a negative finding does not accurately represent historic or contemporary patterns of using brown bear by residents of the Yukon Flats. The department will provide a customary and traditional use worksheet that will assist the board in evaluating the 8 criteria outlined in the Joint Boards' subsistence procedures in 5 ACC 99.010.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocation of brown bear between subsistence uses and other uses.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in significant additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 109 – 5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear.** Lengthen the hunting seasons for brown bear in Units 25A, 25B, 25D, 26B, and 26C (except the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area) to August 1–June 30.

**PROPOSED BY:** Aaron Bloomquist

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal changes the opening date of the brown bear hunting season in Units 25A, 25B, 25D, 26B, and 26C to August 1 for resident and nonresident hunters. The proposal also adds a mid-winter season to Unit 25D by making the overall season August 1–June 30.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Units 25A, 25B, and 26C:

- Resident and nonresidents: One brown bear every regulatory year during August 10–June 30.

Unit 25D:

- Residents: Two brown bears every regulatory year during July 1–November 30 and March 1–June 30
- Nonresidents: One brown bear every regulatory year during September 1–November 30 and March 1–June 15.

#### Unit 26B

- Residents: One brown bear every regulatory year by registration permit during August 25–May 31.
- Nonresidents: one brown bear every regulatory year by drawing permit during August 25–May 31; up to 20 permits may be issued.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal adds 9 days to the brown bear season in Units 25A, 25B, and 26C for residents and nonresidents by opening the season on August 1.

In Unit 25D, the proposal adds 58 days to the brown bear season for resident hunters and eliminates the July 1–31 hunting season when local hunters are in fish camps. The modification also changes the season opening date from August 1 to July 1 and opens a season during the months of December, January and February: a period during which brown bears are typically in their dens. The nonresident hunting season would be extended for 45 days by opening the season on August 1 instead of September 1; opening a season during the months of December, January and February; and changing the season closure date from June 30 to June 15.

In Unit 26B, excluding the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area, the brown bear season would be increased by 54 days by opening the season on August 1 instead of August 25 and closing the season on June 30 instead of May 31 for residents and nonresident hunters.

Liberalizing the season in Units 26B and 26C will likely result in an overharvest of brown bears in Units 26B and 26C.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

##### Units 25A, 25B, and 25D:

The brown bear population is estimated at 596 bears in Unit 25A, and 587 bears in Units 25B and 25D combined. These estimates were based on extrapolations from studies done during the 1980s in portions of the eastern Brooks Range in Units 26B and 25A, or in similar habitat in the western Brooks Range.

The 3-year mean annual human-caused mortality objective for brown bear in Units 25A was 48 and 47 bears in Units 25B and 25D combined. The objectives also state that no more than 40% of the harvest in each unit can be females. Human-caused mortality includes harvest, illegal take, and Defense of Life and Property (DLP). This “human-caused mortality” represents 8% of the estimated population.

During Regulatory Years 2013 (RY13; i.e., RY13 = 1 July 2013 through 30 June 2014) through RY15, the 3-year mean annual human-caused mortality in Unit 25A was 25 bears (8 females) and 7 bears (3 females) in Units 25B and 25D combined. The harvest was

well below the harvestable surplus for all of the units, although most of the harvest in Unit 25A occurred west of Arctic Village between the Dalton Highway and the East Fork Chandalar River. The number of brown bears taken and not reported in Units 25B and 25D is unknown, but there were occasional reports of bears being killed but not sealed, especially near villages in Unit 25. Some of this mortality was probably DLP, but the total number of bears killed in Units 25B and 25D was still thought to be below the harvestable surplus of 47 bears.

#### Unit 26B:

In 2016, the brown bear population in Unit 26B was estimated at 260–439 bears with a midpoint of 333 bears. The 2016 population estimate is based on a survey conducted during 2000–2003 whose data were re-analyzed in 2016. Although we use the midpoint of the population estimate to determine harvestable surplus, it is likely that this population estimate is not precise due to the tremendous amount of uncertainty associated with the estimate (as reflected in the wide range of 260–439 bears).

Based on the population estimate for 2016, the current 3-year mean annual human-caused mortality objective for brown bear in Unit 26B is 27 bears (8% of 333 bears), of which no more than 11 can be females (40%). Human-caused mortality includes harvest, predator control, illegal take, and Defense of Life and Property (DLP).

The 3-year mean annual human-caused mortality during RY13–RY15 was 24 bears (5 females, 21%), slightly below the harvestable surplus estimate of 27 bears. During these years, the season was August 25–May 31 and 6 drawing permits were issued to nonresidents annually. Of the 72 bears killed over the 3 years, 65 were harvested by hunters, 5 were killed as DLPs, 1 was illegal, and 1 was killed in predator control. All 5 DLP bears were taken in August before the season opened August 25. Ages of bears sealed ranged 2–29 years old with 34 bears 2–5 years old, 10 bears 6–10 years old, 6 bears 14–19 years old, and 6 bears 20–29 years old. It is possible that some of the mortality that occurs in the earlier part of the season is compensatory.

#### Unit 26C:

The brown bear population in Unit 26C is 391 bears. This estimate was based on extrapolations from studies done in portions of the eastern Brooks Range in Unit 26C during the 1980s.

The 3-year mean annual human-caused mortality objective for brown bear in 26C was 21 bears of which no more than 8 (40%) of the harvest can be females. This “human-caused mortality” represents 8% of the estimated population.

During RY13–RY15, the 3-year-annual mean of human caused mortality in Unit 26C was 20 bears (8 females). Of the 60 bears killed over the 3 years, 58 were killed by hunters and 2 were DLPs. Most bears were killed in August (54), with 2 in September and 2 in May. It is possible that some of the mortality that would occur in the earlier part of the season would be compensatory. However, the current seasons resulted in a 3-year



mean annual human-caused mortality of 20 bears, very close to the harvestable surplus of 21 bears in Unit 26C.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the portion of this proposal that affects Units 25A, 25B, and 25D because there is no biological concern; however the changes could result in a loss of opportunity in Unit 25B and 25D during the summer for local hunters. Adopting this proposal in Unit 25A would also misalign the opening date for brown bear in adjacent Unit 24A.

The department **OPPOSES** the portion of this proposal that liberalizes the seasons in Units 26B and 26C because the change would likely result in an overharvest of the bear population in these units. The board may also want to consider proposals 106 and 107 because they recommend liberalizing brown bear seasons in Unit 26B.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 110 – 5 AAC 85.015. Hunting seasons and bag limits for black bears.** Increase the bag limit for black bears in Unit 25B.

**PROPOSED BY:** Yukon Flats Fish and Game Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would increase the annual bag limit for black bears in Unit 25B from 3 black bears to 5 black bears for resident and nonresident hunters.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Unit 25B

Residents and nonresidents: no closed season, 3 black bears. Cubs and sows with cubs may not be taken.

There is a positive C&T finding for black bears in Unit 25 with an ANS of 150–250 bears.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The annual bag limit would increase from 3 black bears to 5 black bears for residents and nonresidents in Unit 25B and would align the bag limit with adjacent Unit 25D.

**BACKGROUND:** Current black bear harvest is likely well below sustainable levels. Black bear abundance in Unit 25B is unknown but thought to be high. In a portion of adjacent Unit 25D, black bear density was estimated at 425 independent black bears (95% CI=350–535) per 1,000 mi<sup>2</sup> in 2010. This documented the highest known black bear density in Interior Alaska. Although the overall black bear density across all of Unit 25B is likely lower compared to Unit 25D, the eastern portion of Unit 25B has habitat similar to the area surveyed in Unit 25D. Annual harvest of black bears in Unit 25B is unknown because sealing and harvest tickets are not required.

Most land in Unit 25D and a large portion of Unit 25B is part of the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal and has not identified any biological concerns associated with the proposed changes. Black bears are thought to occur at a high population size, and harvest is likely relatively low.

In addition to increasing the annual bag limit from 3 black bears to 5 black bears, the proposal was intended to align seasons and bag limits with adjacent Unit 25D. Currently, black bear cubs and sows accompanied by cubs may be taken by resident hunters in Unit 25D. If this proposal is adopted, the department requests that the board decide whether cubs and sows accompanied by cubs may be taken by resident hunters to fully align the black bear bag limit with the limit in Unit 25D.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 111 – 5 AAC 84.270. Furbearer trapping; and 92.080. Unlawful methods of taking game; exceptions.** Open a snaring season for black bears in Unit 25D as follows.

**PROPOSED BY:** Yukon Flats Fish and Game Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would allow black bears to be taken by neck snare in Unit 25D during July 1–December 31. It would also allow the incidental take of brown bears by neck snare until the brown bear season was closed by emergency order when a specified number (determined by the department) of brown bears were taken. The proposal also indicates that the regulation will be terminated when one of the following conditions are met:

- reaching the end of a “sunset” clause in regulation, which would expire after 5 years,
- the board revokes the regulation as a method of take, or
- the moose population objective is met.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

5 AAC 84.270. Furbearer trapping. Trapping season and bag limits for furbearers are as follows: no current trapping season or bag limit for black or brown bears.

5 AAC 92.080. Unlawful methods of taking game; exceptions. The following methods and means of taking big game are prohibited: (8) with a snare, except for taking an unclassified game animal, a furbearer, grouse, hare, or ptarmigan.

5 AAC 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions. The following methods and means of taking big game are prohibited in addition to the prohibitions in 5 AAC 92.080: (6) with the use of a trap or snare.

There is a positive C&T finding for black bears in Unit 25 with an ANS of 150–250.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Neck snaring of black bears would be a legal method of take for a 5-year period if the proposal is adopted. Snare locations must be marked to alert other users of the presence of snares and snare sets must be checked daily. The season would be closed when a specified number of brown bears were taken incidentally.

**BACKGROUND:** In 2010, black bear density was estimated at 425 independent black bears (95% CI=350–535) per 1,000 mi<sup>2</sup> in a portion of western Unit 25D. The 2010 estimate documented the highest known black bear density in Interior Alaska. Although the survey area only occurred in a portion of the unit, black bear density unit wide is likely similar to the survey area.

Annual harvest of black bears in Unit 25D is unknown because sealing and harvest tickets are not required. However, estimated annual harvest of black bears from subsistence harvest surveys of Yukon Flats communities was 26 black bears in Regulatory Year 2008 (RY08; i.e. RY08 = 1 July 2008–30 June 2009) and 49 black bears in RY09. Estimates of harvest from these surveys included bears taken outside of Unit 25D in southern Unit 25A and western Unit 25B. Snares are listed as a traditional and historic method of taking black bears in the Customary and Traditional (C&T) worksheet provided to the board in 2002, the use of which was further developed, at the board's request, in a revised C&T worksheet presented to the board in November 2008. Some additional black bear harvest occurs by nonlocal residents, particularly along the Yukon River during the spring black bear baiting season.

No surveys to estimate brown bear abundance have been conducted in Unit 25D. Currently, the department considers a density of 2.2 brown bears per 100 mi<sup>2</sup> in Unit 25D to be appropriate based on extrapolation from prior studies in similar habitat. This results in an estimated population size of 385 brown bears in Unit 25D and an annual harvestable surplus of 31 brown bears based on an 8% harvest rate.

Annual brown bear harvest from sealing records in Unit 25D averages 5 brown bears per year (range = 2–12); however, additional unreported harvest likely occurs by local residents of the unit. Estimated annual harvest of brown bears from subsistence harvest surveys of Yukon Flats communities was 2 brown bears in RY08 and 16 brown bears in RY09. Estimates of harvest from these surveys included bears taken outside of Unit 25D in southern Unit 25A and western Unit 25B.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal and has not identified any biological concerns with the proposed regulatory change. If this proposal is adopted, the board and department would need to determine how to administer a hunt allowing this method of take. Presumably a permit system would be required to provide timely harvest reporting to monitor incidental brown bear take. It is important to note that the department has concerns about the potential for incidental take of moose in snares set for bears.

This proposal may increase black bear harvest slightly; however, any increase in black bear harvest would not be sufficient to reduce the effects of black bear predation on moose. Therefore, neck snaring of bears is unlikely to contribute toward meeting the moose population objective.

Most land in Unit 25D is part of the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge. Current federal regulations prohibit the use of snares for taking black bears on U.S. Fish and Wildlife lands.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 112 – 5 AAC 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions; and 92.095. Unlawful methods of taking furbearers; exceptions.** Allow same-day airborne hunting for wolf in Unit 25D.

**PROPOSED BY:** Yukon Flats Fish and Game Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would allow same-day airborne hunting of wolves in Unit 25D.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

**AS 16.05.783 (a).** This statute prohibits shooting or assisting in shooting a free-ranging wolf or wolverine the same day that a person has been airborne. However, the Board of Game may authorize a predator control program that allows airborne or same day airborne shooting under conditions laid out in the statute.

**5 AAC 92.085 (8). Unlawful methods of taking big game.** This regulation prohibits the taking or assisting in taking big game until after 3:00 a.m. following the day in which the flying occurred. The exceptions to this regulation include a person flying on a regularly scheduled commercial airline, including a commuter airline.

**5 AAC 92.095 (8). Unlawful methods of taking furbearers.** This regulation prohibits a person from taking or assisting in taking wolf and wolverine until after 3:00 a.m. following the day in which the flying occurred, however it does not prohibit the dispatch of wolves and wolverine in a snare the same day the flying occurred. The regulation also prohibits the taking of coyote, arctic fox, or lynx unless that person is over 300 feet from the airplane at the time of taking.

**5AAC 92.990 (5). Definitions.** This regulation defines “big game” as black bear, brown bear, bison, caribou, Sitka black-tailed deer, elk, mountain goat, moose, muskox, Dall sheep, wolf and wolverine.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Adoption of this proposal would be a violation of AS 16.05.783 which prohibits the take of wolves the same day a hunter has been airborne (same-day-airborne) unless authorized by the board through a predator control program.

**BACKGROUND:** In 2012, the department presented an intensive management feasibility assessment for moose in Unit 25D to the board. An Intensive Management (IM) plan was determined to not be feasible and an IM plan was not adopted.

The board has authorized the same-day airborne harvest of wolves in predator control programs in portions of Units 19, 12, 20 and 25. Each of these programs was established to reduce

predation by wolves on moose or caribou populations that have been identified by the board as being important for high levels of consumptive use. The programs are designed to reduce the wolf population's size and wolf predation while ensuring that the resulting wolf harvests are sustainable in each respective area. This is achieved by defining areas where SDA is allowed and establishing benchmarks for the wolf population that define when these activities can occur. Predator control areas are also limited in size to provide a refugia for wolves in each game management unit to further protect the wolf populations and provide for sustained yield.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department recommends **TAKE NO ACTION** on this proposal because same-day airborne hunting of wolves outside of a predator control program is prohibited by statute and outside the board's authority.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in significant costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 113 – 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep.** Modify the resident bag limit for Dall sheep in portions of Unit 24B, 25A, 26B, and 26C by changing the 3 sheep bag limit to 3 rams.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Outdoor Council

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would change the bag limit from 3 sheep to 3 rams in the following units:

- Unit 24B within the John River drainage upstream from Till Creek and that portion within the Glacier River (on private lands within Gates of the Arctic National Park)
- Unit 26B, on private lands within Gates of the Arctic National Park (GAAR)
- Unit 25A, that portion east of the Middle Fork Chandalar, excluding the federally designated Arctic Village Sheep Management area, in the registration sheep hunt area (RS595)
- Unit 26C, the entire unit in the registration sheep hunt area (RS595)

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** 5 AAC 85.055 (10):

Unit 24B, within the John River drainage upstream from Till Creek, and that portion within the Glacier River (effective on private lands only within GAAR) and Unit 26B on private lands within GAAR:

Resident hunters: 3 sheep August 1–April 30 by harvest ticket.

Nonresident hunters: No open season.

Unit 26C and Unit 25A, that portion east of Middle Fork Chandalar River, excluding the federally designated Arctic Village Sheep Management Area:

Unit 26C Resident hunters:

- 1 full-curl ram by harvest ticket, Youth hunt only, August 1–5
- 1 full-curl ram by harvest ticket, August 10–September 20
- 3 sheep October 1–April 30 by registration permit (RS595).

Unit 26C Nonresident hunters:

- 1 full-curl ram by harvest ticket, Youth hunt only, August 1–5
- 1 full-curl ram by harvest ticket, August 10–September 20

Unit 25A (that portion east of Middle Fork Chandalar River, excluding the federally designated Arctic Village Sheep Management Area)

Resident hunters:

- 1 full-curl ram by harvest ticket, August 10–September 20
- 3 sheep October 1–April 30 by registration permit (RS595)

Unit 25A (that portion east of Middle Fork Chandalar River, excluding the federally designated Arctic Village Sheep Management Area) Nonresident hunters:

- 1 full-curl ram by harvest ticket, August 10–September 20

The board made positive customary and traditional (C&T) findings for sheep in Units 24, 25A, and 26 (Brooks Range) and determined amounts necessary for subsistence (ANS) at 75–125 (also includes a portion of Unit 23).

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The any-sheep bag limit for private lands within Gates of the Arctic National Park and the RS595 permit hunt would be changed to 3 rams.

**BACKGROUND:**

*Background information on specific hunt areas*

Units 24B and 26B, private lands within Gates of the Arctic National Park, by harvest ticket

During Regulatory Year 2010 (RY10; i.e. RY10 = July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011) through RY15, few sheep were reported harvested (0–1 annually) on private lands within GAAR in Units 24B and 26B, where this proposal would take effect. Some sheep may have been harvested and not reported, but harvest was likely low. Overall harvest rates in GAAR, including federal hunts and the private lands in 24B and 26B, was probably  $\leq 2\%$  of the population, indicating that harvest and hunting pressure was low.

Seasons and bag limits for Unit 24B and 26B (private lands within GAAR) were originally aligned with the federal subsistence regulations surrounding the private lands. In RY14, the federal bag limit was changed to 3 sheep (of which no more than 1 can be a ewe) in Unit 24B, with a harvest quota of 60 sheep for residents of Anaktuvuk Pass, no more than 10 can be ewes, and a daily limit of 3 sheep per person, no more than 1 can be a ewe. State and federal seasons are no longer aligned.

### Unit 25A and 26C, by registration permit RS595

During RY10–RY15, mostly nonlocal hunters obtained the RS595 permit. A total of 3 permits were issued to local residents of Unit 26 during the 6-year period. An average of 12 permits were issued annually and 4 hunters harvested an average of 2 to 3 sheep annually ( $\leq 3$  rams,  $< 1$  ewe). During RY10–RY15, all of the sheep reported on the RS595 permit were harvested in Unit 26C. In addition to the state registration permit, federally qualified users can obtain a permit for Unit 25A and a permit for Unit 26C, essentially covering the same area as the RS595 hunt. In Unit 25A, a total of 2 federal permits were issued and no sheep were reported harvested during RY10–RY15. In Unit 26C, 8 federal permits were issued and 1 ram was reported harvested. It is likely that harvest by local residents occurred, but was not reported.

Local residents of Units 25A and 26C presumably hunt mostly under the federal regulations; although few federal permits were issued. For example, estimated community harvest from Kaktovik (Community Subsistence Information System database) was 44 sheep in 1992 and 30 sheep in 1995.

The bag limit of 3 sheep in Unit 25A east of the Middle Fork Chandalar River (RS595) is currently aligned with the federal subsistence bag limit; but the seasons are not aligned. In Unit 26C, seasons and bag limits are aligned with the federal subsistence regulations. Most of the RS595 hunt in Unit 25A occurs within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR); all of the RS595 hunt in Unit 26C occurs within ANWR.

### *Sheep population surveys*

Several sheep surveys conducted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve indicated a range-wide decline in the Western and Central Brooks range sheep population occurred in 2013. Although the magnitude of the decline for all areas of the range was unknown, severity of the decline appeared to be greatest in the western portion of the range compared to the central portion. Anecdotal observations by hunters, guides, and department staff indicated a decline in the Eastern Brooks Range had also occurred. This widespread decline across the Brooks Range in 2013 was likely related to a very late spring, resulting in high adult mortality and little or no recruitment. Caribou and moose from the region also experienced a decline following the late spring in 2013. Sheep survey data indicate that the number of lambs observed in the Central Brooks Range and a portion of the Eastern Brooks Range adjacent to the Central Brooks Range increased in 2015 and 2016 when compared to 2013 and 2014 observations.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal because we have not identified a biological concern with the current level of harvest.

In Units 24B and 26B on private lands within GAAR, few sheep were harvested, and it is likely that minimal hunting takes place on these lands. Adopting this proposal in Units 24B and 26B, on private lands within GAAR, would misalign the bag limit with Unit 26A where the current bag limit is 3 sheep on private lands within GAAR.

In Units 25A and 26C, few sheep were harvested under either the state or federal system. Harvesting ewe sheep in this hunt could potentially result in additive mortality; however, local

residents would hunt under the federal system which currently has a bag limit of 3 sheep. Most of the hunt area occurs on federal lands.

The board made positive customary and traditional (C&T) findings for sheep in Units 24, 25A, and 26 (Brooks Range) and determined amounts necessary for subsistence (ANS) at 75–125 (also includes a portion of Unit 23). Changing the bag limit from 3 sheep to 3 rams represents a decrease in subsistence opportunity; the board will need to determine if this decrease still provides for a reasonable opportunity for success in harvesting sheep for customary and traditional uses.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 114 – 5 AAC 85.057. Hunting seasons and bag limits for wolverine.** Lengthen the hunting season for wolverine in Unit 26B and 26C.

**PROPOSED BY:** Aaron Bloomquist

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Lengthen the wolverine hunting season for residents and nonresidents by opening the season on July 15 instead of September 1.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Wolverine hunting season in Unit 26B and 26C:

Residents and nonresidents: September 1–March 31.

There is a positive C&T finding for wolverines as furbearers in all units with a harvestable portion, and an ANS of 90% of the harvestable surplus.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Resident and nonresident hunters would be allowed to start hunting wolverine on July 15 instead of September 1 in Unit 26. This would add 47 days of additional hunting opportunity in the affected area.

**BACKGROUND:** Proposal 114 considers all of Unit 26; however, only Units 26B and 26C fall within Region III and are considered in this analysis. The portion of that proposal that affects Unit 26A will be considered at the January Board of Game meeting as Proposal 34.

Wolverine population surveys have never been conducted in Units 26B and 26C, so wolverine abundance and population trends are unknown. However, observations of wolverines and wolverine tracks are common by department biologists while conducting moose, caribou, and muskox surveys.

Sealing records indicate wolverine harvest is low and variable in Units 26B and 26C. During 2006–2015, an average of 8 (range = 4–15) wolverines were harvested per year in Unit 26B. In most years, no wolverines are sealed from Unit 26C. In addition to reported harvest, a small



number of wolverines are likely harvested annually by residents of Unit 26C and not reported because the furs are used locally for clothing.

Wolverines have a relatively low reproductive output and lifespan, and females and their kits are highly visible and active during July and August. Female wolverines with kits wean their young from late July through early August. Harvesting females with young in July or August may result in decreased survival rates of kits.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocation issue. The department has no biological concerns associated with a longer season because additional harvest is expected to be minimal and sustainable. However, an early opening of the wolverine hunting season in Unit 26 has the potential to reduce offspring survival if the adult female is taken.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 115 – 5 AAC 84.270. Furbearer trapping.** Lengthen the trapping season for lynx in Unit 25.

**PROPOSED BY:** Yukon Flats Fish and Game Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Extend the lynx trapping season in Unit 25 to March 31.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Residents and nonresidents:

Units 25A, 25B, 25D: November 1 through the last day of February

Unit 25C: November 1 through March 15

There is a positive C&T finding for lynx as furbearers in all units with a harvestable portion, and an ANS of 90% of the harvestable surplus.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If adopted, this proposal would add 31 days to the lynx trapping season in March in Units 25A, 25B, and 25D, and it would add an additional 16 days in March in Unit 25C. It would also allow the legal retention of lynx that are trapped incidentally when targeting wolf and wolverine in March.

**BACKGROUND:** During regulatory years (RY) 2006–2015 (RY06 = 1 July 2006–30 June 2007), an average of 1,011 (range = 314–2,357) lynx were sealed annually across all of Unit 25. However, the majority of harvest occurs in Unit 25D (72%) and is taken primarily by local residents.

Prior to 1988, the board regularly adjusted season lengths for lynx trapping in Unit 25 in attempt to adjust harvest as the population cycled through low and high phases. Since RY88, the lynx trapping season has remained the same at November 1–February 28 or 29. Although 8- to 10-year cycles in lynx abundance have been strongly evident in harvest data for other Interior

Alaska units, predictable cycles in lynx abundance have been less evident for Unit 25 which appears to experience protracted highs and reduced periods of scarcity.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocation issue. The department has no biological concerns associated with a longer season because any additional harvest is expected to be minimal and sustainable.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 116 – 5 AAC 85.065. Hunting seasons and bag limits for small game.** Reduce the bag and possession limit for ruffed grouse in Unit 20D.

**PROPOSED BY:** Delta Fish and Game Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal seeks to reduce the bag and possession limit for ruffed grouse to five a day, ten in possession in Unit 20D west of the Johnson River and south of the Tanana River.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

*Unit 20D west of the Johnson River and south of the Tanana River:*

Fifteen per day, thirty in possession provided that not more than five per day and ten in possession may be sharp-tailed grouse.....August 25–March 31

By falconry only: Ten per day, ten in possession, provided that not more than two per day and two in possession may be sharp-tailed grouse.....August 10–August 24

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If adopted, this proposal would align the ruffed grouse bag limit with the sharp-tailed grouse bag limit at five per day and the total bag limit would remain the same at 15 grouse per day.

**BACKGROUND:** Ruffed grouse are present throughout all of Unit 20D. This proposal only addresses the southwestern portion of Unit 20D, which is the most easily accessed portion of the Unit. Spring breeding surveys for ruffed grouse have been completed since 2008 in this area. Limited data suggest that ruffed grouse are likely nearing what is normally the peak in their 8–10 year population cycle.

The board passed a similar regulation to reduce the sharp-tailed grouse bag limit from 15 to 5 in 1990 due to the concern they were more susceptible to harvest in the highly developed, unnatural habitat of the Delta Agricultural Project because of their grouping behavior.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal because it is allocative. At this time the department does not have any evidence that suggests there is a biological concern associated with the current ruffed grouse season and bag limit or with changes requested in this proposal.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 117 – 5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures.** Allow harvest of brown bears over bait the same day airborne in Unit 20D.

**PROPOSED BY:** Delta Fish and Game Advisory Committee.

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Proposal 117 would also allow the same-day-airborne harvest of brown bears at bear bait stations if the hunter is at least 300 feet from the airplane at the time of taking.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

**Resident and nonresident hunters:** Unit 20D; one brown bear every regulatory year, August 10–June 30. Cubs and sows accompanied by cubs may not be taken.

Current regulations do not allow brown bears to be taken over bait in Unit 20D, and it is prohibited to take a brown bear the same day you have flown in an aircraft.

There is a positive C&T finding for brown bears in Unit 20D, outside the boundaries of the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area, with an ANS of 1–2 bears.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If adopted, this proposal would allow harvest of brown bears over bait and allow hunting of brown bears over bait in Unit 20D the same day the hunter is airborne. This would align the brown bear baiting season and same-day-airborne hunting over bait with the unit’s black bear baiting season (April 15–June 30) and same-day-airborne regulations.

**BACKGROUND:** Risk of overharvest would be relatively high if brown bear baiting was allowed in Unit 20D. The current brown bear harvest appears to be stable to slightly increasing. The average 10-year harvest of 11 bears per year (range = 3–18) is within the harvest objective of 5–15 bears per year. Harvest of an additional 5 bears per year would exceed sustainable harvest limits. In fact, harvest of 18 bears in Regulatory Year 2008 (RY08; i.e., RY08 = July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009) exceeded this annual harvest objective. The proportion of females in the harvest is also of concern. During 6 of the last 10 years, the female harvest exceeded the recommended 45% maximum female harvest. Furthermore, females made up 54% of the total harvest during RY11–RY15. Sustainable harvest is based on the Unit 20D estimated brown bear population of 185–220 total bears, with 143–167 bears ≥2-years old.

Brown bear harvest in Unit 20D would likely increase at a rate that is similar to or higher than the increase observed in Units 20A (average of 3.5 bears taken over bait) and 20B (average of 12 bears taken over bait) during RY14–RY15, compared with pre-baiting harvest averages. Like Units 20A and 20B, black bear baiting is popular in Unit 20D, with 65 black bear bait stations registered during RY15. Nearly 75% of these bait stations were located in southern Unit 20D where access is well-developed and most brown bear harvest already occurs. Harvest data for

Unit 20B show that brown bear harvest over bait was highest in the road-accessible areas of the unit. The brown bear season in Unit 20D is also one month longer than in Units 20A and 20B.

In other areas proximate to Unit 20D, annual harvest of brown bears taken over bait since baiting became legal averaged 2.8 in Unit 20E, and 5.5 in Unit 12. These units are farther from population centers, fewer black bear bait stations are registered, and access is less well-developed.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **OPPOSED** to this proposal because of biological concerns regarding the sustainability of additional harvest. The department lacks precise scientific data regarding bear numbers and harvest rates, and thus recommends a conservative management strategy. Risk of overharvest is relatively high because of the high volume of bear baiting coupled with well-developed access, particularly in southern Unit 20D.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 118 – 5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures.** Allow harvest of brown bears over bait in Unit 20D.

**PROPOSED BY:** Roy Louis Peters.

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would allow the harvest of brown bears at bear bait stations in Unit 20D.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

**Resident and nonresident hunters:** Unit 20D; one brown bear every regulatory year, August 10–June 30. Cubs and sows accompanied by cubs may not be taken.

Current regulations do not allow brown bears to be taken over bait in Unit 20D, and it is prohibited to take a brown bear the same day you have flown in an aircraft.

There is a positive C&T finding for brown bears in Unit 20D, outside the boundaries of the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area, with an ANS of 1–2 bears.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If adopted, this proposal would allow harvest of brown bears over bait in Unit 20D.

**BACKGROUND:** Risk of overharvest would be relatively high if brown bear baiting was allowed in Unit 20D. The current brown bear harvest appears to be stable to slightly increasing. The average 10-year harvest of 11 bears per year (range = 3–18) is within the harvest objective of 5–15 bears per year. Harvest of an additional 5 bears per year would exceed sustainable harvest limits. In fact, harvest of 18 bears in Regulatory Year 2008 (RY08; i.e., RY08 = July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009) exceeded this annual harvest objective. The proportion of females in the harvest is also of concern. During 6 of the last 10 years, the female harvest exceeded the recommended 45% maximum female harvest. Furthermore, females made up 54% of the total

harvest during RY11–RY15. Sustainable harvest is based on the Unit 20D estimated brown bear population of 185–220 total bears, with 143–167 bears ≥2-years old.

Brown bear harvest in Unit 20D would likely increase at a rate that is similar to or higher than the increase observed in Units 20A (average of 3.5 bears taken over bait) and 20B (average of 12 bears taken over bait) during RY14–RY15, compared with pre-baiting harvest averages. Like Units 20A and 20B, black bear baiting is popular in Unit 20D, with 65 black bear bait stations registered during RY15. Nearly 75% of these bait stations were located in southern Unit 20D where access is well-developed and most brown bear harvest already occurs. Harvest data for Unit 20B show that brown bear harvest over bait was highest in the road-accessible areas of the unit. The brown bear season in Unit 20D is also one month longer than in Units 20A and 20B.

In other areas proximate to Unit 20D, annual harvest of brown bears taken over bait since baiting became legal averaged 2.8 in Unit 20E, and 5.5 in Unit 12. These units are farther from population centers, fewer black bear bait stations are registered, and access is less well-developed.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **OPPOSED** to this proposal because of biological concerns regarding the sustainability of additional harvest. The department lacks precise scientific data regarding bear numbers and harvest rates, and thus recommends a conservative management strategy. Risk of overharvest is relatively high because of the high volume of bear baiting coupled with well-developed access, particularly in southern Unit 20D.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 119 – 5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures.** Allow harvest of brown bears over bait the same day airborne in Units 20D and 20F.

**PROPOSED BY:** Nicholas Muche, Zachri Kendl, and Kyle Moll.

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would allow the harvest of brown bears at bear bait stations in Units 20D and 20F.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

**Resident and nonresident hunters:** Units 20D and 20F; one brown bear every regulatory year, August 10–June 30. Cubs and sows accompanied by cubs may not be taken.

Current regulations do not allow brown bears to be taken over bait in Units 20D and 20F, and it is prohibited to take a brown bear the same day you have flown in an aircraft.

There is a positive C&T finding for brown bears in Unit 20D, outside the boundaries of the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area, with an ANS of 1–2 bears.

The board has not made a C&T finding for brown bears in Unit 20F.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If adopted, this proposal would allow harvest of brown bears over bait in Units 20D and 20F, making the baiting brown bears legal throughout Unit 20. Unit 20F is also addressed separately in proposals 139 and 140 during the Fairbanks Area portion of the board meeting.

**BACKGROUND:** Risk of overharvest would be relatively high if brown bear baiting was allowed in Unit 20D. The current brown bear harvest appears to be stable to slightly increasing. The average 10-year harvest of 11 bears per year (range = 3–18) is within the harvest objective of 5–15 bears per year. Harvest of an additional 5 bears per year would exceed sustainable harvest limits. In fact, harvest of 18 bears in Regulatory Year 2008 (RY08; i.e., RY08 = July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009) exceeded this annual harvest objective. The proportion of females in the harvest is also of concern. During 6 of the last 10 years, the female harvest exceeded the recommended 45% maximum female harvest. Furthermore, females made up 54% of the total harvest during RY11–RY15. Sustainable harvest is based on the Unit 20D estimated brown bear population of 185–220 total bears, with 143–167 bears  $\geq$ 2-years old.

Brown bear harvest in Unit 20D would likely increase at a rate that is similar to or higher than the increase observed in Units 20A (average of 3.5 bears taken over bait) and 20B (average of 12 bears taken over bait) during RY14–RY15 compared with pre-baiting harvest averages. Like Units 20A and 20B, black bear baiting is popular in Unit 20D, with 65 black bear bait stations registered during RY15. Nearly 75% of these bait stations were located in southern Unit 20D where access is well-developed and most brown bear harvest already occurs. Harvest data for Unit 20B show that brown bear harvest over bait was highest in the road-accessible areas of the unit. The brown bear season in Unit 20D is also one month longer than in Units 20A and 20B.

Although very little information exists regarding brown population size in Unit 20F, the majority of the unit has low densities, while the remainder (i.e., the Tozitna River drainage and Ray Mountains) has medium densities. Based on this, we estimate at least 30 brown bears in Unit 20F. Reported harvest of brown bears averaged 1.8 brown bears (range 0-5) annually during Regulatory Year 1995 (RY95; i.e. RY95 = July 1, 1995–June 30, 1996) through RY15. Therefore, harvest rates are presumed to be below sustainable levels.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **OPPOSED** to the portion of this proposal pertaining to Unit 20D because of biological concerns regarding the sustainability of additional brown bear harvest in this unit. The department lacks precise scientific data regarding bear numbers and harvest rates, and thus recommends a conservative management strategy. Risk of overharvest is relatively high because of the high volume of bear baiting coupled with well-developed access, particularly in southern Unit 20D.

The department is **NEUTRAL** on the portion of this proposal pertaining to Unit 20F since there are no biological concerns. Unit 20F is also addressed separately in proposals 139 and 140 during the Fairbanks Area portion of the board meeting. We believe that additional harvest would be minimal due to low human density and relatively poor access. Thus, there would be no measurable population effect. If this proposal passes, the board may wish to consider whether to align meat salvage requirements with other units where brown bear baiting is legal.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 120 – 5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures.** Allow harvest of brown bears over bait in Unit 20D.

**PROPOSED BY:** Timothy Dow.

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would allow the harvest of brown bears at bear bait stations in Unit 20D.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Resident and nonresident hunters: Unit 20D; one brown bear every regulatory year, August 10–June 30. Cubs and sows accompanied by cubs may not be taken.

Current regulations do not allow brown bears to be taken over bait in Unit 20D, and it is prohibited to take a brown bear the same day you have flown in an aircraft.

There is a positive C&T finding for brown bears in Unit 20D, outside the boundaries of the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area with an ANS of 1–2 bears.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If adopted, this proposal would allow harvest of brown bears over bait in Unit 20D.

**BACKGROUND:** Risk of overharvest would be relatively high if brown bear baiting was allowed in Unit 20D. The current brown bear harvest appears to be stable to slightly increasing. The average 10-year harvest of 11 bears per year (range = 3–18) is within the harvest objective of 5–15 bears per year. Harvest of an additional 5 bears per year would exceed sustainable harvest limits. In fact, harvest of 18 bears in Regulatory Year 2008 (RY08; i.e., RY08 = July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009) exceeded this annual harvest objective. The proportion of females in the harvest is also of concern. During 6 of the last 10 years, the female harvest exceeded the recommended 45% maximum female harvest. Furthermore, females made up 54% of the total harvest during RY11–RY15. Sustainable harvest is based on the Unit 20D estimated brown bear population of 185–220 total bears, with 143–167 bears  $\geq$ 2-years old.

Brown bear harvest in Unit 20D would likely increase at a rate that is similar to or higher than the increase observed in Units 20A (average of 3.5 bears taken over bait) and 20B (average of 12 bears taken over bait) during RY14–RY15, compared with pre-baiting harvest averages. Like Units 20A and 20B, black bear baiting is popular in Unit 20D, with 65 black bear bait stations registered during RY15. Nearly 75% of these bait stations were located in southern Unit 20D where access is well-developed and most brown bear harvest already occurs. Harvest data for Unit 20B show that brown bear harvest over bait was highest in the road-accessible areas of the unit. The brown bear season in Unit 20D is also one month longer than in Units 20A and 20B.

In other areas proximate to Unit 20D, annual harvest of brown bears taken over bait since baiting became legal averaged 2.8 in Unit 20E, and 5.5 in Unit 12. These units are farther from population centers, fewer black bear bait stations are registered, and access is less well-developed.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **OPPOSED** to this proposal because of biological concerns regarding the sustainability of additional harvest. The department lacks precise scientific data regarding bear numbers and harvest rates, and thus recommends a conservative management strategy. Risk of overharvest is relatively high because of the high volume of bear baiting coupled with well-developed access, particularly in southern Unit 20D.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 121 – 5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures.** Allow harvest of brown bears over bait in Unit 20D.

**PROPOSED BY:** Brian Sauer.

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would allow the harvest of brown bears at bear bait stations in Unit 20D.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

**Resident and nonresident hunters:** Unit 20D; one brown bear every regulatory year, August 10–June 30. Cubs and sows accompanied by cubs may not be taken.

Current regulations do not allow brown bears to be taken over bait in Unit 20D, and it is prohibited to take a brown bear the same day you have flown in an aircraft.

There is a positive C&T finding for brown bears in Unit 20D, outside the boundaries of the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area with an ANS of 1–2 bears.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If adopted, this proposal would allow harvest of brown bears over bait.

**BACKGROUND:** Risk of overharvest would be relatively high if brown bear baiting was allowed in Unit 20D. The current brown bear harvest appears to be stable to slightly increasing. The average 10-year harvest of 11 bears per year (range = 3–18) is within the harvest objective of 5–15 bears per year. Harvest of an additional 5 bears per year would exceed sustainable harvest limits. In fact, harvest of 18 bears in Regulatory Year 2008 (RY08; i.e., RY08 = July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009) exceeded this annual harvest objective. The proportion of females in the harvest is also of concern. During 6 of the last 10 years, the female harvest exceeded the recommended 45% maximum female harvest. Furthermore, females made up 54% of the total harvest during RY11–RY15. Sustainable harvest is based on the Unit 20D estimated brown bear population of 185–220 total bears, with 143–167 bears ≥2-years old.

Brown bear harvest in Unit 20D would likely increase at a rate that is similar to or higher than the increase observed in Units 20A (average of 3.5 bears taken over bait) and 20B (average of 12 bears taken over bait) during RY14–RY15 compared with pre-baiting harvest averages. Like Units 20A and 20B, black bear baiting is popular in Unit 20D, with 65 black bear bait stations registered during RY15. Nearly 75% of these bait stations were located in southern Unit 20D where access is well-developed and most brown bear harvest already occurs. Harvest data for



Unit 20B show that brown bear harvest over bait was highest in the road-accessible areas of the unit. The brown bear season in Unit 20D is also one month longer than in Units 20A and 20B.

In other areas proximate to Unit 20D, annual harvest of brown bears taken over bait since baiting became legal averaged 2.8 in Unit 20E, and 5.5 in Unit 12. These units are farther from population centers, fewer black bear bait stations are registered, and access is less well-developed.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **OPPOSED** to this proposal because of biological concerns regarding the sustainability of additional harvest. The department lacks precise scientific data regarding bear numbers and harvest rates, and thus recommends a conservative management strategy. Risk of overharvest is relatively high because of the high volume of bear baiting coupled with well-developed access, particularly in southern Unit 20D.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 122 – 5 AAC 85.045(a)(18). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**  
Reauthorize antlerless moose hunting seasons in Unit 20D.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish & Game

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Reauthorize antlerless moose hunting seasons in Unit 20D.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Unit 20D currently has antlerless hunts available by drawing permit only, and fewer than 30 permits are issued each year. Antlerless moose (except a cow accompanied by a calf or a calf) seasons in Unit 20D are listed below.

- Bison Range Youth Moose Hunt (YM792)
  - youth (ages 10 to 17) hunters that are residents or nonresident children of residents
  - September 1–30
  - one bull per lifetime, with spike-fork or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side, or one antlerless moose; however, a calf or cow accompanied by a calf may not be taken
- Purple Heart-Recipient Hunt (DM795)
  - qualified Purple Heart-recipient resident and nonresident hunters
  - September 1–15
  - one moose every 4 years; however, a calf or cow accompanied by a calf may not be taken
- Unit 20D in southwestern Unit 20D, excluding the Delta Junction Management Area (DM791)
  - resident hunters
  - October 10–16

- one antlerless moose; however, a calf or cow accompanied by a calf may not be taken

In addition to these drawing hunts, there are registration hunts in regulation that have not been offered, but that are retained in case the department determines that additional management action is needed to reduce or maintain the moose population by increasing antlerless harvest.

Hunts for bull moose are also available in Unit 20D. Refer to the *2016–2017 Alaska Hunting Regulations* for specific details about moose hunting seasons in Unit 20D.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If adopted, this proposal would allow the department to continue to provide harvest tools and options for moose management in Unit 20D and allow hunters to take a harvestable surplus of antlerless moose (except a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf) in the Bison Range Youth Moose Hunt, the hunt by Purple Heart Recipients, and the Southwestern 20D drawing hunt.

**BACKGROUND:** Antlerless moose hunting seasons must be reauthorized annually. The goals of the antlerless hunts are to stabilize population growth in Unit 20D and to address concerns about range degradation, reduced nutritional conditions, and reduced reproductive success. These antlerless moose hunts will likely improve or maintain the ability of moose habitat to support the current moose population. Hunting opportunity and harvest could increase and the additional harvest could contribute to meeting Intensive Management (IM) harvest objectives. Meat hunters will benefit from the opportunity to harvest cow moose. Moose populations will benefit by having moose densities compatible with their habitat. Delta Junction residents and motorists may benefit from reduced moose–vehicle collisions and moose–human conflicts.

Antlerless hunts help regulate moose population growth and achieve IM objectives for high levels of harvest. Continued antlerless hunts are likely needed to maintain the population at the optimal density and will contribute toward meeting the IM harvest objective of 500–700. However, registration permits will only be issued if additional harvest is needed in specific areas to maintain optimal moose densities. With the exception of the Bison Range Youth Moose Hunt and the hunt by Purple Heart Recipients, antlerless permits were not issued during RY09–RY15. In RY16, we issued 12 antlerless drawing permits (DM791).

The antlerless moose hunts and their effect on moose density and population growth will continue to be evaluated. Three indices of density-dependent moose nutritional conditions (biomass removal of current annual growth on winter browse, proportion of females with twin calves, and late-winter calf weights) will be evaluated in relation to changes in moose density. Antlerless moose hunts for Unit 20D will continue to be implemented as needed based on this evaluation. The total number of permits in RY17 will continue to be fewer than 30.

The moose population in Unit 20D reached the IM objective of 8,000–10,000 animals in 2006. The highest density was in southwestern Unit 20D at 5.6 moose/mi<sup>2</sup>. The population in this area was exhibiting the effects of increased competition for food, with a moderately-low, 2-year average twinning rate of 14%. Antlerless hunts during RY06–RY09 contributed to reducing the density in southwestern Unit 20D to 3.9 moose/mi<sup>2</sup>. Overwinter browse utilization decreased from 25% in 2007 to 15% in 2010. The average weight of 9 month-old calves increased from 340 lb in 2010 to 366 lb in 2012 (K. Seaton, ADF&G, unpublished data, Fairbanks).

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal. We have no biological concerns regarding continued antlerless hunts. However, we do have biological concerns regarding overpopulation if antlerless hunts are eliminated. The Unit 20D moose population has great potential for growth due to the extensive agricultural land, burns, and high predator harvest. If antlerless moose hunts are not reauthorized, the moose population may exceed carrying capacity and need reduction when new data is available. These hunts offer an opportunity to hunt a harvestable surplus of cow moose and meet IM harvest objectives.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 123 – 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.** Lengthen the resident hunting season for moose in Unit 20D.

**PROPOSED BY:** Tom Geyer

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Extend the green harvest ticket moose season dates by 5 days from September 1–15 to September 1–20 for residents in the portion of Unit 20D south of the Tanana River and east of the Johnson River (except within the Robertson River drainage south of the confluence of the east and west forks, and within one mile of the west fork).

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Unit 20D south of the Tanana River and east of the Johnson River (except within the Robertson River drainage south of the confluence of the east and west forks and within one mile of the west fork)

- Residents: one bull by harvest ticket; September 1–15
- Nonresidents: no open season.

There is a positive C&T finding for moose for the portion of Unit 20D that is south of the Tanana River and east of the Johnson River and an ANS of 5 moose.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Adoption of this proposal would misalign moose hunting seasons in southern Unit 20D, but would align the season with the season in eastern Unit 20D (north and south of the Tanana River). Moose harvest could increase by approximately 10 moose.

**BACKGROUND:** The Unit 20D moose population is managed to maintain a bull:cow ratio of at least 30 bulls:100 cows. The last complete population estimate for southern Unit 20D (which encompasses the proposed area) was conducted in the fall of 2012. Southeastern Unit 20D had an estimated population of 1,408 moose (2.3 moose/mi<sup>2</sup>), 30 calves:100 cows, and 39 bulls:100 cows. The moose population in this area is robust and the harvest has been stable and below the sustainable level. The harvestable surplus for this area is approximately 59 moose and 17–21 moose have been harvested annually during RY11–RY15.

The area that would be affected by this proposal is the most southeasterly portion of Unit 20D and is largely undeveloped. Much of this area is encompassed by the Macomb Plateau

Controlled Use Area which prohibits the use of motorized vehicles for hunting during August 10–September 30. The Alaska Highway provides the main access throughout the remainder of the area. This area has a relatively low moose density and has less hunting pressure compared to the other road-accessible areas of southern Unit 20D. In 2008, the board extended the moose hunting season in the eastern portion of Unit 20D north of the Tanana River to September 1–20. This made this the only portion of Unit 20D open to moose hunting during September 16–20.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocation issues associated with hunting season dates for this area. The department has no biological concerns regarding this proposal. Approximately 1–2 moose per day have been taken during the final 5 days of the hunting season since Regulatory Year 2011 (RY11; e.g., RY11 = 1 July 2011 through 30 June 2012). Based on this information, an additional 5 days of hunting is not likely to increase harvest significantly and is likely to result in the annual harvest of approximately 10 additional moose.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 124 – 5 AAC 92.530(19), Management Areas.** Modify requirements for drawing permits within the Delta Junction Management Area.

**PROPOSED BY:** Joshua Revak

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Require proof of qualifying status prior to awarding Purple Heart recipients’ drawing permits in Unit 20D within the Delta Junction Management Area (DJMA).

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Up to 25% of the drawing permits available in the DJMA must be issued to qualified Purple Heart recipients with 100% service-connected disability. This hunt (DM795) currently has 6 permits available, as follows:

- **Resident and nonresident hunters:**
  - September 1–15
  - one moose every 4 regulatory years; however, the taking calves or cows accompanied by calves is prohibited

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If adopted, this proposal would limit the number of unqualified applicants who draw these permits by requiring applicants to submit paperwork to the department proving that they qualify, and it would require the department to make a determination regarding applicants’ status as Purple Heart recipients with 100% service-connected disability. It would also require the department to reissue permits to the next qualified applicant in the applicant pool if a permit is awarded to an unqualified applicant.

**BACKGROUND:** The board modified this hunt during the previous board cycle to only issue permits to active-duty and veteran Purple Heart recipients with 100% service-connected

disability in Regulatory Year 2015 (RY15; i.e., RY15 = 1 July 2015–30 June 2016). Previously, eligible applicants were veterans with 50% service-connected disability.

During RY15–RY16, a total of 6 out of 12 permit winners were not eligible to participate in the DM795 hunt. We recently determined that an alternate applicant list can be created under discretionary permit authority so that permits can be reissued to the next qualified applicant. The department plans to use this authority for the RY17 hunt to ensure that permits go to qualified Purple Heart recipients with 100% service-connected disability. In addition, the online drawing application for DM795 will be equipped to ask applicants to verify their qualifications during the application process. Based on reactions of unqualified permit winners (who all asked that we reissue their permits to qualified individuals), we believe these changes will adequately address the issue.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal because it is allocative and does not address a biological concern. The department is confident that this issue can be resolved without a regulation change by increasing application screening and by using the department’s discretionary authority to create an alternate list so permits awarded to ineligible individuals can be reissued. Both of these steps are currently being implemented.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in any additional direct costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 125 – 5 AAC 85.045(18) Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

Reauthorize the antlerless moose hunting seasons in Unit 20A.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Reauthorize the antlerless moose hunting seasons in Unit 20A.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Unit 20A Ferry Management Trail, Wood River Controlled Use, and the Yanert Controlled Use Areas

Residents:

- drawing permit for one antlerless moose, August 15–November 15. Permits have not been issued for 2 years because of uncertainty regarding population size;
- registration permit for one antlerless moose, October 1–February 28, permits have not been issued for several years because of because of uncertainty regarding population size;
- targeted hunt for one moose by permit (AM751) announced by emergency order.

Nonresidents:

- No antlerless moose seasons

Unit 20A remainder

Residents:

- drawing permit for one antlerless moose, August 15–November 15. Permits have not been issued for 2 years because of uncertainty regarding population size;
- registration permit for one antlerless moose, August 25–February 28, permits have not been issued for several years because of uncertainty regarding population size.

Nonresidents:

- No antlerless moose seasons

Hunts for bull moose are also available in Unit 20A. Refer to the *2016–2017 Alaska Hunting Regulations* for specific details about moose hunting seasons in Unit 20A.

There is a positive C&T finding for moose in Unit 20A, outside the boundaries of the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area with an ANS of 50–75 moose.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) will have the authority to use antlerless hunts as a management tool to regulate the moose population in Unit 20A.

**BACKGROUND:** Antlerless moose hunting seasons must be reauthorized annually. The purposes of antlerless moose hunts in Unit 20A are to regulate population growth, to meet the intensive management (IM) mandate for high levels of harvest, to provide subsistence hunters with a reasonable opportunity for success in obtaining moose for subsistence uses outside the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area (part of the western Tanana Flats), and to use the targeted hunt as a tool to manage moose–vehicle collision and nuisance situations. Overall, the goal is to protect the health and habitat of the moose population over the long term and to provide for a wide range of public uses and benefits.

This reauthorization will allow the department to manage the moose population at the optimum level (i.e., in concert with the available habitat). Additional hunting opportunity and harvest will be provided by utilizing a harvestable surplus of antlerless moose. The antlerless harvest will help in meeting IM harvest objectives without reducing bull:cow ratios to low levels. Meat and subsistence hunters will benefit from the opportunity to harvest cow moose. The moose population will benefit by having moose density compatible with the habitat. Motorists and residents may benefit from reduced moose–vehicle collisions and moose–human conflicts.

The current objective is to maintain the Unit 20A population at roughly 12,000 moose while continuing to monitor nutritional condition. In 2015, the post-hunt moose population estimate was 12,315 (10,622–14,009 @ 90% confidence interval). This high-density moose population (approximately 2.5 moose/mi<sup>2</sup>) continues to experience density-dependent effects, including low productivity and relatively light short-yearling weights of females. Although sporadic signs of improvement in nutritional condition have been observed (i.e., higher twinning rates in 2012 and 2016 and increases in short-yearling weights of males in 2015–2016 compared to the late 1990s through early 2000s), no clear signals or significant trends have yet been detected. The department recommends continued antlerless hunts in regulatory year 2017 to regulate population growth (i.e., stabilize the population at 12,000 moose).

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal because antlerless harvests are an important management tool in regulating this high-density, nutritionally-stressed moose population. If antlerless moose hunts are not reauthorized, the department will lose the ability to regulate this moose population and our ability to meet intensive management harvest objectives will be compromised. Additionally, the public will lose an opportunity to hunt a harvestable surplus of cow moose, and subsistence hunters in the portion of Unit 20A outside the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area (part of the western Tanana Flats) may not have a reasonable opportunity to pursue moose for subsistence uses.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 126 – 5 AAC 85.045 Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.** Modify the muzzleloader hunting season for moose in Unit 20A.

**PROPOSED BY:** David Machacek.

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Shifts the muzzleloader drawing permit season to start 10 days later and end 10 days later. The proposed season would occur from November 10–December 10.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Resident hunters: one bull by drawing permit only during November 1–November 30; by muzzleloader only; up to 75 permits may be issued.

Nonresident hunters: one bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with four or more brow tines on at least one side by drawing permit during November 1–November 30; by muzzleloader only; up to 75 permits may be issued.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal would change the season dates to November 10–December 10 and allow hunters to take advantage of better travel conditions into the hunt area.

**BACKGROUND:** Unit 20A has a moose population that has supported this bull-only hunt for many years. The main access into this hunt area is by snowmachine. Due to poor snow and ice conditions in recent years during November, access into the area has been difficult. Over the last several years access remained marginal even late into this hunting season. The proponent would like the season to be shifted 10 days later with the hope that access will be available during more of the hunting season.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:**

The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocation of hunting opportunity to hunters that use muzzle-loading rifles. The department **SUPPORTS** providing additional hunting opportunity when it is biologically sustainable and offers an **AMENDMENT** if the proposal is adopted by the board, which retains the season opening date of November 1 and extends the season closure

date to December 15. This amendment lengthens the season 15 days by changing the season dates to November 1–December 15 rather than delaying the start of the season as proposed. This drawing permit hunt is for bulls-only, and the number of animals harvested can be controlled by the number of permits issued. As a result, the department has not identified any biological concerns with the season extension. Access is difficult into this area unless snow and ice conditions are adequate for snowmachine travel. Extending the season should increase the portion of hunting season in which travel conditions are adequate and enhance hunting opportunities for hunters who draw this permit.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 127 – 5 AAC85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.** Change the antler restriction for moose hunting in Unit 20A.

**PROPOSED BY:** Jake Sprankle

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal seeks to change the moose hunting bag limit in Unit 20A from one bull with spike-fork, 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 3 or 4 brow tines on one side to “any bull”.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Unit 20A Ferry Trail Management Area, Wood River Control Use Area, and the Yanert Controlled Use Area.

Residents:

- One bull with spike-fork, 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side; September 1–25;
- One bull by drawing permit; September 1–25.

Nonresidents:

- One bull with 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side; September 1–25.

Unit 20A remainder

Residents:

- One bull with spike-fork, 50-inch antlers, or antlers with or 3 or more brow tines on one side; September 1–25;
- or one bull by drawing permit; September 1–25.

Nonresidents:

- One bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side; September 1–25.



Antlerless moose hunting opportunities are also available in Unit 20A. Refer to the *2016–2017 Alaska Hunting Regulations* for specific details about moose hunting seasons in Unit 20A.

There is a positive C&T finding for moose in Unit 20A, outside the boundaries of the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area with an ANS of 50 – 75 moose.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal would eliminate the bag limit restriction of spike-fork antlers, 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 3 or 4 brow tines on one side for harvesting a bull moose in Unit 20A with a harvest ticket. It would allow the bag limit for moose to be any bull. This would increase the harvest of bull moose and also eliminate the any bull drawing permits hunts in the unit.

**BACKGROUND:** Antler restrictions outside of the FTMA began in Unit 20A in 2002 due to high harvest of bulls. This high harvest caused bull:cow ratios to fall below our objective of 30 bulls per 100 cows to around 26 bulls per 100 cows. Antler restrictions were a tool that allowed the opportunity to hunt a 25-day harvest ticket season and recover the bull:cow ratio. After antler restrictions were put in place, the bull:cow ratio recovered to levels reaching 38 bulls:100 cows. The department subsequently began issuing drawing permits for any bull. The number of any bull permits issued is based on survey data and the allowable number of bulls that can be harvested while maintaining an adequate bull:cow ratio. This management scheme has allowed the department to continue to have a 25-day harvest ticket moose season, issue as many as 1,000 permits for hunters to harvest any bull and maintain an optimal bull:cow ratio of 30:100.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **OPPOSES** this proposal. The current harvest strategy in this Intensive Management area provides adequate hunting opportunity, high levels of harvest, and maintains the bull:cow ratio within management objectives. The proposed change would likely result in a high harvest rate of bull moose and a steep decline in the bull:cow ratio to levels below the objective. Areas with high access and hunter effort (e.g. Ferry Trail Management area, North-Central Tanana Flats) would experience the highest harvest rates and sharpest declines in bull:cow ratios. These areas would require additional restrictions (e.g., shorter seasons, drawing permits) to manage the bull:cow ratios at desirable levels. At the unitwide scale, eventually harvest would likely need to be regulated either with shorter seasons, drawing permit hunts or a combination of these strategies. If adopted, it may take several Board of Game cycles and trial and error with different season lengths or harvest strategies to determine if the strategy is providing a population composition that meets the department’s management objectives.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 128 –5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.** Change the antler restriction for moose hunting in Unit 20A.

**PROPOSED BY:** Leonard Jewkes

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal seeks to change the moose hunting bag limit in Unit 20A from one bull with spike-fork, 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 3 or 4 brow tines on one side to “any bull”.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Unit 20A Ferry Trail Management Area, Wood River Control Use Area, and the Yanert Controlled Use Area.

Residents:

- One bull with spike-fork, 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side; September 1–25;
- One bull by drawing permit September 1–25.

Nonresidents:

- One bull with 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side, September 1–25.

Unit 20A remainder

Residents:

- One bull with spike-fork, 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 3 or more brow tines on one side; September 1–25;
- or one bull by drawing permit September 1–25.

Nonresidents:

- One bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side; September 1–25.

Antlerless moose hunting opportunities are also available in Unit 20A. Refer to the *2016–2017 Alaska Hunting Regulations* for specific details about moose hunting seasons in Unit 20A.

There is a positive C&T finding for moose in Unit 20A, outside the boundaries of the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area with an ANS of 50–75 moose.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal would eliminate the spike-fork, 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 3 or 4 brow tines on one side requirement for harvesting a bull moose in Unit 20A with a harvest ticket. It would allow the bag limit for moose to be any bull. This would increase the harvest of bull moose and also eliminate the “any bull” drawing permits hunts in the area.

**BACKGROUND:** Antler restrictions began in Unit 20A outside of the FTMA in 2002 due to high harvest of bulls. This high harvest caused bull:cow ratios to fall below our objective of 30 bulls per 100 cows to around 26 bulls per 100 cows. Antler restrictions were a tool that allowed the opportunity to hunt a 25-day harvest ticket season and recover the bull:cow ratio. After antler restrictions were put in place, the bull:cow ratio recovered to levels reaching 38 bulls:100 cows. The department subsequently began issuing drawing permits for any bull. The number of any bull permits are issued based on survey data and the allowable number of bulls that can be

harvested while maintaining an adequate bull:cow ratio. This management scheme has allowed the department to continue to have a 25-day harvest ticket moose season, issue as many as 1,000 permits for hunters to harvest any bull and maintain an optimal bull:cow ratio of 30:100.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **OPPOSES** this proposal. The board may wish to **TAKE NO ACTION** based on action taken on Proposal 127. The current harvest strategy in this Intensive Management area provides adequate hunting opportunity, high levels of harvest, and maintains the bull:cow ratio within management objectives. The proposed change would likely result in a high harvest rate of bull moose and a steep decline in the bull:cow ratio to levels below the objective. Areas with high access and hunter effort (e.g., Ferry Trail Management area, North-Central Tanana Flats) would experience the highest harvest rates and sharpest declines in bull:cow ratios. These areas would require additional restrictions (e.g., shorter seasons, drawing permits) to manage the bull:cow ratios at desirable levels. At the unitwide scale, eventually harvest would likely need to be regulated either with shorter seasons, drawing permit hunts or a combination of these strategies. If adopted, it may take several Board of Game cycles and trial and error with different season lengths or harvest strategies to determine if the strategy is providing a population composition that meets the department’s management objectives.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 129 –5 AAC85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.** Change the antler restriction for moose hunting in Unit 20A.

**PROPOSED BY:** Jeff Barney

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal seeks to change the moose hunting bag limit in Unit 20A from one bull with spike-fork, 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 3 or 4 brow tines on one side to “any bull”.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Unit 20A Ferry Trail Management Area, Wood River Control Use Area, and the Yanert Controlled Use Area.

Residents:

- One bull with spike-fork, 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side; September 1–25;
- One bull by drawing permit September 1–25.

Nonresidents:

- One bull with 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side; September 1–25.

Unit 20A remainder

Residents:

- One bull with spike-fork, 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 3 or more brow tines on one side; September 1–25;
- or one bull by drawing permit September 1–25.

Nonresidents:

- One bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side; September 1–25.

Antlerless moose hunting opportunities are also available in Unit 20A. Refer to the *2016–2017 Alaska Hunting Regulations* for specific details about moose hunting seasons in Unit 20A.

There is a positive C&T finding for moose in Unit 20A, outside the boundaries of the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area with an ANS of 50–75 moose.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal would eliminate the bag limit restriction of spike-fork antlers, 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 3 or 4 brow tines on one side for harvesting a bull moose in Unit 20A with a harvest ticket. It would allow the bag limit for moose to be any bull. This would increase the harvest of bull moose and also eliminate the any bull drawing permits hunts in the unit.

**BACKGROUND:** Antler restrictions began in Unit 20A in 2002 due to high harvest of bulls. This high harvest caused bull:cow ratios to fall below our objective of 30 bulls per 100 cows to around 26 bulls per 100 cows. Antler restrictions were a tool that allowed the opportunity to hunt a 25-day harvest ticket season and recover the bull:cow ratio. After antler restrictions were put in place, the bull:cow ratio recovered to levels reaching 38 bulls:100 cows. The department subsequently began issuing drawing permits for any bull. The number of any bull permits are issued based on survey data and the allowable number of bulls that can be harvested while maintaining an adequate bull:cow ratio. This management scheme has allowed the department to continue to have a 25-day harvest ticket moose season, issue as many as 1,000 permits for hunters to harvest any bull and maintain an optimal bull:cow ratio of 30:100.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **OPPOSES** this proposal. The board may wish to **TAKE NO ACTION** based on action taken on Proposal 127. The current harvest strategy in this Intensive Management Area provides adequate hunting opportunity, high levels of harvest, and maintains the bull:cow ratio within management objectives. The proposed change would likely result in a high harvest rate of bull moose and a steep decline in the bull:cow ratio to levels below the objective. Areas with high access and hunter effort (e.g., Ferry Trail Management area, North Central Tanana Flats) would experience the highest harvest rates and sharpest declines in bull:cow ratios. These areas would require additional restrictions (e.g., shorter seasons, drawing permits) to manage the bull:cow ratios at desirable levels. At the unitwide scale, eventually harvest would likely need to be regulated either with shorter seasons, drawing permit hunts or a combination of these strategies. It may take several Board of Game cycles and trial and error with different season lengths or harvest strategies to determine if the strategy is providing a population composition that meets the department's management objectives.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 130 – 5 AAC 85.045(a)(18). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**  
Reauthorize antlerless moose seasons in Unit 20B and remove incorrect language for the winter muzzleloader registration hunt for bulls, and the targeted antlerless hunts in Unit 20B.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Reauthorize antlerless moose hunting seasons in Unit 20B and remove incorrect language regarding antlerless hunts.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Antlerless moose hunts are available in Unit 20B by drawing, registration, or targeted permit only, as follows:

Creamer’s Field within the Fairbanks Management Area

Residents and nonresidents:

- 1 antlerless moose by drawing permit, by bow and arrow only, up to 150 permits, a recipient is prohibited from taking an antlered bull in the Fairbanks Management Area, September 1–November 27;
- 1 antlerless moose by muzzleloader by drawing permit, up to 10 permits, a recipient is prohibited from taking an antlered bull in the Fairbanks Management Area, Dec 1–January 31.

Remainder of the Fairbanks Management Area

Residents and nonresidents:

- 1 antlerless moose by drawing permit, by bow and arrow only, up to 150 permits, a recipient is prohibited from taking an antlered bull in the Fairbanks Management Area, September 1–November 27

Residents only:

- 1 moose by targeted permit by shotgun or bow and arrow only, up to 100 permits, season to be announced by emergency order

Minto Flats Management Area

Residents only:

- 1 antlerless moose by registration permit, October 15–February 28

Middle Fork of the Chena River drainage

Residents only:

- 1 antlerless moose by drawing permit, up to 300 permits, taking of calves or cows with calves is prohibited, August 15–November 15

- 1 antlerless moose by registration permit, taking of calves or cows with calves is prohibited, October 1–February 28

Salcha River drainage downstream of Goose Creek and upstream from and including Butte Creek

Residents only:

- 1 antlerless moose by drawing permit, up to 1,500 permits, taking of calves or cows with calves is prohibited, August 15–November 15
- 1 antlerless moose by registration permit, taking of calves or cows with calves is prohibited, October 1–February 28
- 1 moose by targeted permit by shotgun or bow and arrow only, up to 100 permits, season to be announced by emergency order

Southeast of the Moose Creek dike within ½ mile each side of the Richardson Highway

Residents only:

- 1 moose by drawing permit, by bow and arrow or muzzleloader, up to 100 permits, September 16–February 28
- 1 moose by targeted permit by shotgun or bow and arrow only, up to 100 permits, season to be announced by emergency order

Remainder of Unit 20B

Residents only:

- 1 antlerless moose by drawing permit, by youth hunt only, up to 200 permits, August 5–14;
- 1 antlerless moose by drawing permit, up to 1,500 permits, taking of calves or cows with calves is prohibited, August 15–November 15
- 1 moose by targeted permit by shotgun or bow and arrow only, up to 100 permits, season to be announced by emergency order.

Hunts for bull moose are also available in Unit 20B. Refer to the *2016–2017 Alaska Hunting Regulations* for specific details about moose hunting seasons in Unit 20B.

There is a positive C&T finding for moose in Unit 20B, within the Minto Flats Management Area, with an ANS of 20 – 40 moose.

There is a positive C&T finding for moose in Unit 20B, outside the boundaries of the Minto Flats Management Area and outside the boundaries of the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area, with an ANS of 75–100 moose.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Antlerless hunts will continue to be available to hunters, and the department will continue to have the authority to use antlerless hunts as a tool to regulate the moose populations. It would also remove the language that states there are antlerless hunts and targeted moose hunts in the Salcha river drainage.

**BACKGROUND:** Antlerless moose hunting seasons must be reauthorized annually. Our goal in Unit 20B is to provide for a wide range of public uses and benefits and to protect the health and habitat of moose populations. Antlerless hunts are important for improving or maintaining the ability of moose habitat to support current populations. They also help regulate moose population growth, provide hunting opportunity, help meet Intensive Management (IM) objectives for high levels of harvest, and provide subsistence hunters with a reasonable opportunity to pursue moose for subsistence uses without reducing bull-to-cow ratios. If antlerless hunts are not reauthorized, subsistence hunters in the portion of Unit 20B outside the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area may not have a reasonable opportunity to pursue moose for subsistence uses.

To mitigate hunter conflicts, we spread hunters out over space and time. Each of 16 hunt areas has permits in four time periods: two before the harvest ticket hunt, one during, and one after. The earliest of the four hunts is a youth hunt that gives hunting opportunity prior to the start of school. Spreading these hunts out over time maintains a few hunters during each season in each permit area, yet is expected to achieve our intended harvest.

Extensive burns in northcentral Unit 20B will provide high quality moose habitat in the future. With improving habitat, continued high predator harvest, and relatively mild winters, we can expect continued high productivity and survival of moose, along with increased yield.

*Fairbanks Management Area (FMA)* – The purposes of these antlerless hunts are to regulate population growth in the FMA and potentially reduce moose–vehicle collisions and nuisance moose problems.

The number of moose–vehicle collisions in the FMA is high and poses significant safety risks to motorists. In addition, moose nuisance issues continue to place significant demands on property owners. To increase hunting opportunity and harvest and to reduce moose–vehicle collisions, the department incrementally increased the number of drawing permits for antlerless moose in the FMA during Regulatory Year 1999 (RY99; that is, RY = 1 July 1999—30 June 2000) through RY10. Moose–vehicle collisions and moose nuisance problems declined during RY06–RY15, presumably, in part due to the consistent antlerless moose harvests during RY09–RY15.

*Minto Flats Management Area (MFMA)* – The primary purposes of this antlerless hunt are to provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses and to regulate the moose population in the MFMA.

The MFMA moose density was high in 2010 (4.1 moose/mi<sup>2</sup>). In order to reduce the moose population, harvest of antlerless moose during RY12 and RY13 was about 2.5% of the population. The fall 2013 estimate showed a more sustainable density (2.6 moose/mi<sup>2</sup>) in the MFMA. Our best estimate now indicates densities remain high, probably around 2.5 moose/mi<sup>2</sup>. The antlerless harvest in this area is intended to stabilize this population, therefore we intend to only harvest antlerless moose at about 1% of the total population to maintain the current population size.

*Targeted Hunts* – The purpose of the targeted hunts is primarily to reduce moose–vehicle collisions by harvesting moose that habitually spend time along roadways and have a high likelihood of being injured by highway vehicles or have already been injured. We also use targeted

hunts as an option for resolving nuisance situations. These permits are used sparingly but allow the public to harvest specific moose instead of the department dispatching them.

*Unit 20B, drainage of the Middle Fork of the Chena River and the Remainder of Unit 20B* – The antlerless moose harvest in this area is designed to regulate the moose population in this portion of Unit 20B and help meet the IM harvest objectives for Unit 20B. The 2013 population estimate (14,057 moose) indicated the population declined from the 2009 estimate (20,173 moose) to a more appropriate level for the habitat. Based on all of our indicators, we currently estimate that the population remains at appropriate levels for the habitat, and therefore, we recommend antlerless harvest continue to be utilized to maintain population stability. The antlerless harvest goal will be approximately 1% of the total population to maintain the level of the population estimate.

*Salcha River drainage downstream of Goose Creek and upstream from and including Butte Creek* – As part of this proposal we would like to remove antlerless hunts in the Salcha River drainage downstream of Goose Creek and upstream of and including Butte Creek. This area has a low density of moose which does not warrant antlerless harvest. It is also unlikely that an antlerless hunt would be warranted in this area in the foreseeable future. In 2014, the Board of Game adopted a regulation regarding a muzzleloader hunt that required creating this new portion of the Salcha river drainage. When this was created, language that refers to antlerless hunts in other portions of central and western Unit 20B was included in this new area of the regulations. Removal of this language would make the regulations in this area consistent with the remainder of the Salcha River drainage.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal with the **AMENDMENT** of removing the reference to antlerless hunts in the Salcha River drainage, downstream of Goose Creek and upstream of and including Butte Creek. The Salcha River drainage has a low density of moose which does not warrant antlerless harvest.

There are no biological concerns associated with the harvest of antlerless moose taken under these regulations in the remaining hunt areas; however, elimination of these hunts would create a biological concern, and the board should also consider whether a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses on populations with positive C&T findings would still be provided. The Unit 20B moose population has potential for growth due to the extensive burns (i.e., increased productivity) and high survival rates. If antlerless moose hunts are not reauthorized, the moose population may exceed carrying capacity and would require population reduction. These hunts maintain the opportunity to hunt a harvestable surplus of cow moose, and help to meet IM harvest objectives.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs.

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**PROPOSAL 131 – 5 AAC 85.045 Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.** Modify the hunting season dates for antlerless moose in the Minto Flats Management Area portion of Unit 20B.

**PROPOSED BY:** Al Barrette



**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would change the season dates for the resident-only antlerless moose registration hunt in Minto Flats Management Area (MFMA) in Unit 20B from October 15–February 28 to August 21–Aug 27 and September 8–February 28.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Minto Flats Management Area of Unit 20B

Resident hunters:

- one bull, August 21–27;
- or, one bull with spike-fork, 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 3 brow tines on one side from September 8–25;
- or, an antlerless moose by registration permit (RM785), October 15–February 28, unless closed by emergency order.

Nonresident hunters:

- One bull with 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 3 brow tines on one side, September 8–25.

There is a positive C&T finding for moose in Unit 20B, within the Minto Flats Management Area, with an ANS of 20 – 40 moose.

There is a positive C&T finding for moose in Unit 20B, outside the boundaries of the Minto Flats Management Area and outside the boundaries of the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area, with an ANS of 75–100 moose.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If adopted, this proposal would shift the antlerless moose hunt season dates to begin during the bull season during August 21–27 and then again September 8–February 28 unless closed by emergency order.

**BACKGROUND:** The current registration hunt for antlerless moose in the MFMA was adopted in 2012. It replaced a limited registration hunt that caused public outcry to change the way these antlerless hunts were managed. The registration hunt provides opportunity for hunters to harvest moose during the winter and to help the department reduce the high moose population in the area. The moose population in Minto Flats peaked at about 4,000 moose (4 moose per mi<sup>2</sup>) in 2009. Since that time the population has been reduced to a more appropriate population size of approximately 2,500 moose. In 2012 the department allowed for the harvest of 100–120 female moose. The harvestable surplus and registration hunt quota of antlerless moose has since decreased to 30 female moose in 2016 with the goal of stabilizing the population at its current size.

The hunt also provides harvest opportunity for customary and traditional uses. In 1987, the board made a positive C&T finding for moose in all of Unit 20B and determined an ANS at 20–40 moose. According to the C&T worksheet, hunting in both the fall and winter seasons is part of the customary and traditional pattern of harvest and use.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **OPPOSES** this proposal. Changing the antlerless moose season to August 21–27 and September 8–February 28 has a high potential to

result in a reduction of hunting opportunity and would limit the ability of the department to manage harvest.

The harvest quota of antlerless moose is based on harvestable surplus, which is set before each season, and the hunt can be closed by emergency order when the harvest quota is met. However, modifying the season dates to overlap with the bull season will increase the number of hunters participating in the hunt. Despite the proposed increase in season length, the quota would likely be reached in the fall due to an increase in hunter participation and rate of harvest, which would require managers to close the winter season. As a result, this proposal has a high potential to result in a reduction of subsistence opportunity, including opportunity specifically outlined in the C&T worksheet; therefore, the board may wish to consider whether implementing the restrictions outlined in this proposal would continue to provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses. It may also take several Board of Game cycles and trial and error with different season lengths to find a management strategy that provides a harvest that does not exceed the management objectives for this population.

In 2012, the department worked with advisory committees and local hunters to develop the current harvest strategy for antlerless moose in the MFMA. This strategy provides opportunity to harvest moose during the winter months and helps reduce an overabundant moose population in Minto Flats. Currently, the harvest strategy of antlerless moose is to maintain the current population of moose in Minto Flats which is done by harvesting cow moose at a 1% harvest rate. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the current hunt structure is ongoing, and in future years, this will also entail shifting the harvest around Minto Flats so that easily accessible areas are not overharvested and the more remote areas can have moose harvested out of them.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 132 – 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.** Lengthen the nonresident hunting season for moose in Unit 20B remainder.

**PROPOSED BY:** Ken Wegner

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would change the nonresident moose hunting season starting date in the remainder of Unit 20B from September 5 to September 1.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Unit 20B remainder

Residents: one bull, September 1–20

Nonresidents: one bull, September 5–20

Other hunting opportunities for bull moose are also available in Unit 20B, remainder. Refer to the *2016–2017 Alaska Hunting Regulations* for specific details about moose hunting seasons in Unit 20B.

A portion of Unit 20B remainder is inside the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area and a portion is outside the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area. There is a positive C&T finding for moose in Unit 20B, outside the boundaries of the Minto Flats Management Area and outside the boundaries of the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area, with an ANS of 75–100 moose.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal would add 4 days to the nonresident moose hunting season in the remainder of Unit 20B and is anticipated to increase the moose harvest.

**BACKGROUND:** Unit 20B has a population of approximately 12,000 moose and an estimated harvestable surplus of approximately 600 bull moose. Unit 20B remainder is heavily hunted in areas within immediate proximity to Fairbanks. An average of 3,122 hunters harvested an average of 581 bull moose annually during RY11–RY15. This included an average of 191 nonresidents who harvested an average of 63 bull moose annually.

It is worth noting that when the hunting season was increased from 15 days to 20 days in 2012 for resident hunters, an increase in harvest was not observed, although other factors, such as a declining moose population may have been a confounding factor. As a result any increase in harvest is expected to be minimal.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocation issue and has not identified a biological concern with the proposed regulatory change. Based on harvest data collected between RY11–RY15 and the amount of area affected by this proposal (approximately two-thirds of Unit 20B), the department anticipates that nonresidents will likely harvest an additional 11 bull moose annually, which would bring the total harvest to an average of approximately 600 moose annually if the harvest trends continue. The resulting harvest would be sustainable at the current moose population size and would not have an effect on the status of the bull population or on the bull:cow ratio.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 133– 5 AAC 92.530. Management Areas.** Restrict waterfowl hunting in 20B in the Chena Slough.

**PROPOSED BY:** Debra Vance, North Pole Aurora Lodge

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would close Chena Slough (Badger Slough) in Unit 20B to the taking of waterfowl except by falconry or bow and arrow with flu-flu arrows.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The waterfowl season in Unit 20B within the Chena Slough area is September 1–December 16. The use of shotguns is currently permitted in this area.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If adopted this proposal would prohibit the use of shotguns when waterfowl hunting in Chena Slough.

**BACKGROUND:** Chena Slough is a tributary of the Chena River that flows from the North Pole area along Badger Road and flows into the Chena River upstream of Fort Wainwright. The slough mainly flows through residential areas and near roadways and rarely flows through unpopulated areas. The slough is primarily outside city limits in an area where the use of firearms is not prohibited. The department does not have data on effort or harvest by waterfowl hunters in this area.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal because it is allocative and does not address a biological concern.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 134 – 5 AAC 92.530 Management Areas.** Create a management area for the Eielson Farm Road area in Unit 20B.

**PROPOSED BY:** Jacques Etcheverry

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would create a management area along Eielson Farm Road in Unit 20B that would close the area to hunting and trapping unless permission is granted by landowners.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Hunting and trapping is currently open for all species and no management area is associated with this area. See the *2016–2017 Alaska Hunting Regulations* and the *2016–2017 Alaska Trapping Regulations* for specific hunting and trapping regulations.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal would require hunters and trappers to obtain permission from private landowners before hunting or trapping in the new management area. It is unclear how this would change hunting and trapping practices because other laws require permission prior to accessing private lands.

**BACKGROUND:** Eielson Farm Road is an agriculture area that lies between North Pole and Salcha. The area along the road is made up of many large parcels of private agriculture land and fields as well as smaller parcels of private land; however, there are a few small parcels and easements of state land as well.

Hunting and trapping does occur in the area. It is common for people to hunt moose, waterfowl, and other small game in the area, and some trapping also takes place.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal because it is allocative and does not address a biological concern. Because the area has large tracts of private land and permission must be obtain to access these lands, it is already the hunter’s responsibility to get permission from landowners prior to hunting.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 135 – 5 AAC 84.270. Furbearer Trapping.** Lengthen the trapping season for wolverine in Unit 20C.

**PROPOSED BY:** Mike Turner

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would lengthen the trapping season for wolverine from November 1–February 29 to November 1–March 31 in the western portion of Unit 20C, west of the Toklat River.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The wolverine trapping season in Unit 20C is November 1–February 29 with no bag limit.

There is a positive C&T finding for wolverines in all units with a harvestable portion with an ANS of 90% of the harvestable portion.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If adopted, this would lengthen the wolverine trapping season by 31 days, therefore it is likely there would be an increase in the number of wolverines harvested in this unit.

**BACKGROUND:** There are no population estimates for wolverine in the affected area, but it is common to see wolverine tracks and other wolverine sign in Unit 20C while conducting surveys for other species. An average of 12 wolverines were harvested in Unit 20C each year during regulatory year 2011 (RY11; i.e. RY11 = July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012) through RY15. Most harvest occurs in the eastern portion of the unit where access from the road system is easier.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal. The proposed change is not expected to increase harvest significantly enough to be detrimental to the overall wolverine population based on the small number of trappers that utilize the affected area. As a result, the anticipated harvest should be sustainable.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 136 – 5 AAC 92.108. Identified big game prey populations and objectives.** Reevaluate the intensive management (IM) finding for the Delta Caribou Herd

**PROPOSED BY:** Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Retain or rescind the current positive Intensive Management (IM) finding for the Delta Caribou Herd.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The Delta Caribou Herd has a positive Finding for Intensive Management, with a population objective of 5,000–7,000 caribou and a harvest objective of 300–700 caribou.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Change the IM finding from positive to negative or lower the population and/or harvest objectives such that the board and department would be in compliance with IM statutes and regulations.

**BACKGROUND:** The Delta caribou herd has not met the IM population or harvest objectives since these objectives were established, and population data suggest that the Delta caribou herd should be managed so that it does not exceed 3,500 to 4,000 caribou. Winter range becomes a major limiting factor when the herd is at large population sizes, and the tendency of the herd to temporarily expand its ranges will complicate management. Achieving the harvest objectives would likely not be sustainable.

The Delta caribou herd is thought to include approximately 2,000–3,000 caribou, but a population census has not been conducted since 2011. The primary limitation on conducting a census is that a portion of the herd has been mixing with the Nelchina caribou herd during survey periods. There has been no observed improvement in female calf weights since the herd declined sharply in the early 1990s, which suggests that nutrition is still a limiting factor for population size.

Despite more than 25 years of study and considerable knowledge of this herd, it is also one of the most complicated herds to manage. The shift in the herd’s range to overlap with the Nelchina herd during fall and winter makes it difficult to develop an effective monitoring and management strategy. The herd also occupies an area with high moose densities, and wolf numbers are also high. Any management of predation in the range of the Delta Caribou Herd must also consider moose management goals.

Harvest averaged 48 bulls per year (range 25–70) during Regulatory Year 2004 (RY04; i.e., RY04 = 1 July 2004–30 June 2005) through RY15. This is a harvest rate of roughly 1.5%–2.5% annually. The maximum sustainable harvest rate of 3% of the Delta Caribou Herd at 3,500–4,000 caribou would be 105–120 bull caribou.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal, but recommends adopting a more attainable IM population and harvest objective. If the board directs the department to implement predator control, it will be challenging to implement the program in a manner that does not increase the size of the moose population in Unit 20A, which is already nutritionally-stressed. Antlerless moose hunts would be needed to curb the moose population’s growth, but the hunts in Unit 20A have been extremely controversial and obtaining the required Advisory Committee and public support needed to administer the hunts remains uncertain.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 137 – 5 AAC 92.106. Intensive Management of identified big game prey populations.** Implement an intensive management (IM) program for the Delta Caribou Herd.

**PROPOSED BY:** Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee.

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Require the department to write a feasibility assessment of the Delta Caribou Herd for conducting intensive management (IM) actions, including predation control.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** For purposes of implementing the Intensive Management statute, regulation 5 AAC 92.106 requires the board to

(1) Consider the following criteria when identifying big game prey populations that are important for providing high levels of human consumptive use:

(A) harvest size: the average annual historic human harvest meets or exceeds values as follows:

(i) caribou: 100;

(ii) deer: 500;

(iii) moose: 100;

(B) accessibility to harvest;

(C) utilization for meat: a population that is used primarily for food; and

(D) level of hunter demand: as reflected by total hunter effort, number of applications for permits, or other indicators;

(2) consider the following criteria when establishing population objectives and harvest objectives for each identified big game prey population consistent with maintaining near maximum sustainable yield from the population:

(A) effects of weather, habitat capability, diseases, and parasites;

(B) maintenance of viable predator populations;

(C) maintenance of habitat conditions suitable for other species in the area;

(D) effects on subsistence users;

(E) cost, feasibility, and potential effectiveness of possible management actions;

(F) land ownership patterns within the range of the population;

(G) accessibility to harvest; and

(H) other factors considered relevant by the board;

(3) find that depletion of a big game prey population or reduction of the productivity of a big game prey population has occurred when

(A) the number of animals, estimated by the department, that can be removed by human harvest from a population, or portion of a population, on an annual basis without reducing the population below the population objective, preventing growth of the population toward the population objective at a rate set by the board, or altering a composition of the population in a biologically unacceptable manner is less than the harvest objective for the population; and

(B) the population size is less than the population objective for the population;

(4) determine whether a finding made under (3) of this section may result in a significant reduction in the allowable human harvest of the population;

(5) not consider as significant:

(A) any reduction in taking that continues to allow a level of harvest equal to or greater than the minimum harvest objective established by the board; or

(B) any reduction in taking that is intended or expected to be of a short-term and temporary nature and is necessary for the conservation of the population;

(6) utilize active management of habitat and predation as the major tools to reverse any significant reduction in the allowable human harvest of the population.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The proponent is asking the board to direct the department to develop an IM feasibility assessment for the Delta caribou herd. After this feasibility assessment is completed, the board may or may not conclude that the herd meets the requirements for predation control.

**BACKGROUND:** The Delta caribou herd has not met the IM population or harvest objectives since these objectives were established, and population data suggest that the Delta caribou herd should be managed so that it does not exceed 3,500 to 4,000 caribou. Winter range becomes a major limiting factor when the herd is at large population sizes, and the tendency of the herd to temporarily expand its ranges will complicate management. Achieving the harvest objectives would likely not be sustainable.

The Delta caribou herd is thought to include approximately 2,000–3,000 caribou, but a population census has not been conducted since 2011. The primary limitation on conducting a census is that a portion of the herd has been mixing with the Nelchina caribou herd during survey periods. There has been no observed improvement in female calf weights since the herd declined sharply in the early 1990s, which suggests that nutrition is still a limiting factor for population size.

Despite more than 25 years of study and substantial knowledge of this herd, it is also one of the most complicated herds to manage. The shift in the herd’s range to overlap with the Nelchina herd during fall and winter makes it difficult to develop an effective monitoring and management strategy. The herd also occupies an area with high moose densities, and wolf numbers are also high. Any management of predation in the range of the Delta Caribou Herd must also consider moose management goals.

Harvest averaged 48 bulls per year (range 25–70) during Regulatory Year 2004 (RY04; i.e., RY04 = 1 July 2004–30 June 2005) through RY15. This is a harvest rate of roughly 1.5%–2.5% annually. The maximum sustainable harvest rate of 3% of the Delta Caribou Herd at 3,500–4,000 caribou would be 105–120 bull caribou.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal because developing a feasibility assessment does not immediately affect herd management. Nutritional indicators (i.e., calf weights, range expansion into neighboring units) suggest that the herd should not be managed for population growth.

If the board directs the department to implement predator control, it will be challenging to implement the program in a manner that does not increase the size of the moose population in Unit 20A, which is already nutritionally-stressed. Antlerless moose hunts would be needed to curb the moose population’s growth, but the hunts in Unit 20A have been extremely controversial and obtaining the required Advisory Committee and public support needed to administer the hunts remains uncertain.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would likely result in no additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 138 – 5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear.**

Lengthen the hunting season for brown bear in Units 20A and 20B remainder from September 1–May 31 to September 1–June 30 to align it with the black bear baiting season.

**PROPOSED BY:** Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Lengthen the brown bear season by 30 days to September 1–June 30 in Unit 20A and remainder of Unit 20B.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Unit 20A and remainder of Unit 20B

**Resident and nonresident hunters:**

- One brown bear every regulatory year, September 1–May 31.
- Cubs and sows with cubs may not be taken.
- Hunting brown bears over bait is legal, April 15–May 31.
- Hunters must salvage the entire hide (including claws attached) and skull of a brown bear.

Refer to the *2016–2017 Alaska Hunting Regulations* for specific details about brown bear hunting seasons, methods, salvage, and other requirements.

There is a positive C&T finding for brown bears in Units 20A and 20B, outside the boundaries of the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area, and Unit 20C with an ANS of 1–3 brown bears.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** By extending the brown bear season to June 30, this proposal would align the brown bear baiting season with the black bear baiting season (April 15–June 30) as intended by the proponent.

**BACKGROUND:** Brown bear harvest in Unit 20A and remainder of Unit 20B is higher than the estimated sustainable harvest. Research in the 1980s and 1990s estimated that the annual sustainable harvest of bears  $\geq 2$  years old was  $\leq 12$  bears in Unit 20A and  $\leq 9$  bears in Unit 20B. Average reported harvest during regulatory year (RY) 2006 (RY06; i.e., RY06 = 1 July 2006–30 June 2007) through RY15 was 24 bears in Unit 20A and 13 bears in Unit 20B. Also, in Unit 20A the proportion of females in the harvest was higher (49%) during RY12–RY15 than the recommended 45% or less of the estimated population, which is necessary to sustain the population at current levels.

Brown bear hunting seasons and bag limits have been liberalized over the last decade in Region III through resident tag fee exemptions, increased bag limits, longer seasons, and, in some units (including Units 20A and 20B), allowing the take of brown bears at registered bear bait stations. In the Fairbanks Area, the take of brown bears over bait was first allowed in Unit 20C during RY12, followed by Units 20A and 20B in RY14. Most bear hunting seasons in Region III are August 10–June 30, with the exception of easily accessed and heavily hunted areas, including Unit 20A and central and western portions of (remainder) Unit 20B.

There is a high volume of registered bear bait stations in Units 20A and 20B (n=116 and 594, respectively during RY15). Harvest of brown bears taken over bait during RY14–RY15 averaged 3.5 in Unit 20A and 11.5 in Unit 20B.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **OPPOSED** to this proposal because of biological concerns regarding the sustainability of additional harvest on this bear population. The department lacks precise scientific data on the number of bears and harvest rates and recommends a conservative management strategy. The take of brown bears at bait stations became legal in RY12, but it may take several years to assess whether harvest under this additional method of take is sustainable. As a result, the department would prefer to maintain a cautious approach to harvest management. The risk of overharvest is relatively high because of the high volume of bear baiting coupled with excellent access, particularly in the central portion of Unit 20B.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 139 – 5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures.** Allow the harvest of brown bear at bear bait stations in Unit 20F.

**PROPOSED BY:** Craig Odom

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Allow the harvest of brown bear at bear bait stations in Unit 20F.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Unit 20F

- **Resident and nonresident hunters:**
  - One brown bear every regulatory year, September 1–June 30.
  - Cubs and sows with cubs may not be taken.
  - Hunting brown bears over bait not is legal in Unit 20F.
  - Hunters must salvage the entire hide (including claws attached) and skull of a brown bear in Unit 20F.

Refer to the *2016–2017 Alaska Hunting Regulations* for specific details about brown bear hunting seasons, methods, salvage, and other requirements.

The board has not made a customary and traditional use determination for brown bears in Unit 20F.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal would allow hunters to take brown bears at bear bait stations in Unit 20F. Authorization of this proposal would provide additional bear harvest opportunity and would likely result in a minimal increase in harvest.

**BACKGROUND:** Although very little information exists on the current status of brown bear populations in Unit 20F, the majority of the unit has low densities, while the remainder (i.e, the Tozitna River drainage and Ray Mountains) has medium densities. Based on this, we estimate that there are at least 30 brown bears in Unit 20F. Reported harvest averaged 2 brown bears annually (range 0-5) during Regulatory Year 1995 (RY95; i.e. RY95 = July 1, 1995–June 30, 1996) through RY15, and the current harvest rate is presumed to be sustainable.

Brown bear hunting seasons and bag limits have been liberalized over the last decade in Region III through resident tag fee exemptions, increased bag limits, longer seasons, and, in some units (including Units 20A, 20B, and 20C), allowing the take of brown bears at registered bear bait stations. In the Fairbanks Area, the take of brown bears was first allowed in Unit 20C during RY12, followed by Units 20A and 20B in RY14. Most bear hunting seasons in Region III (including Unit 20F) are long (August 10–June 30) because hunting pressure is low, which is partially due to difficult access.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal because it has not identified a biological concern associated with the proposed regulation. The additional harvest is likely to be minimal due to low human density and relatively poor access. As a result, there would likely be no measurable population effect.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department

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**PROPOSAL 140 – 5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures.** Allow the harvest of brown bear at bear bait stations in Unit 20F.

**PROPOSED BY:** Brock Graziadei

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Allow the harvest of brown bear at bear bait stations in Unit 20F.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Unit 20F

- Resident and nonresident hunters:
  - One brown bear every regulatory year, September 1–June 30.
  - Cubs and sows with cubs may not be taken.
  - Hunting brown bears over bait not is legal in Unit 20F.
  - Hunters must salvage the entire hide (including claws attached) and skull of a brown bear in Unit 20F.

Refer to the *2016–2017 Alaska Hunting Regulations* for specific details about brown bear hunting seasons, methods, salvage, and other requirements.

The board has not made a customary and traditional use determination for brown bears in Unit 20F.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal would allow hunters to take brown bears at bear bait stations in Unit 20F. Authorization of this proposal would provide additional bear harvest opportunity and would likely result in a minimal increase in harvest.

**BACKGROUND:** Although very little information exists on the current brown status of brown bear populations in Unit 20F, the majority of the unit has low densities, while the remainder (i.e., the Tozitna River drainage and Ray Mountains) has medium densities. Based on this, we estimate that there are at least 30 brown bears in Unit 20F. Reported harvest averaged 1.8 brown bears annually (range 0-5) during Regulatory Year 1995 (RY95; i.e. RY95 = July 1, 1995–June 30, 1996) through RY15, and the current harvest rate is presumed to be sustainable.

Brown bear hunting seasons and bag limits have been liberalized over the last decade in Region III through resident tag fee exemptions, increased bag limits, longer seasons, and, in some units (including Units 20A, 20B, and 20C), allowing the take of brown bears at registered bear bait stations. In the Fairbanks Area, the take of brown bears was first allowed in Unit 20C during RY12, followed by Units 20A and 20B in RY14. Most bear hunting seasons in Region III (including Unit 20F) are long (August 10–June 30) because hunting pressure is low, which is partially due to difficult access.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal because it has not identified a biological concern associated with the proposed regulation. The additional harvest is likely to be minimal due to low human density and relatively poor access. As a result, there would likely be no measurable population effect.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 141 – 5 AAC 92.510. Areas closed to hunting; and 92.550. Areas closed to trapping.** Close a portion of Unit 20C to the taking of wolf.

**PROPOSED BY:** Denali National Park and Preserve

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would modify wolf hunting and trapping seasons in a portion of Unit 20C as follows:

Those portions of Uniform Coding Unit 0607 and 0605, west of George Parks Highway and bounded by Denali National Park on three sides, are closed to the taking of wolves by hunting from February 1 to July 31 and by trapping from February 1 to October 31.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Resident and nonresidents

Hunting:

- Unit 20A and Unit 20C remainder: ten wolves, August 10–May 31
- Unit 20C, within the Stampede Corridor: ten wolves, August 10–April 15

Trapping:

- Units 20A and 20C: No limit, November 1–April 30

There is a positive C&T finding for wolves in all units with a harvestable portion with an ANS of 90% of the harvestable portion.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal reduces wolf hunting and trapping opportunity in portions of Units 20A and 20C.

**BACKGROUND:** From 2000 to 2010, the board approved a year-round closure of wolf hunting and trapping in areas adjacent to the Stampede Corridor, near the Denali National Park boundary, to protect wolf viewing opportunities in the park. The board rescinded the Stampede and Nenana Canyon wolf buffers in 2010 and passed a regulation which closed the wolf hunting season in the Stampede area on April 15 to prevent the take of wolves at bear bait stations in 2016, which will be implemented in the spring of 2017.

The following information is provided for the board, Advisory Committees, and public to consider evaluating this proposal:

- 1) the recently adopted early closing date for wolf hunting in the area has not been implemented yet, so its influence on wolf survival and viewing opportunity cannot be measured at this time;
- 2) Current information indicates that the harvest of wolves outside the park is not a biological concern for sustainability of wolf populations or packs within or outside of the park and preserve;
- 3) although harvest by trappers increased in the area, it is unlikely that all of the harvest occurred within the proposed buffer area and/or was associated with packs that are available for viewing opportunity by park visitors; and
- 4) wolf viewing opportunities in the park are primarily influenced by wolf den site location, prey kill site locations, and the amount of vegetation cover, which may influence sightability.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal since this is an allocation issue between consumptive and non-consumptive users. There are no biological concerns because the harvest of wolves in the proposed area is low (averaging <5 annually) and has no effect on the wolf population.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 142 – 5 AAC 92.510. Areas closed to hunting; and 92.550. Areas closed to trapping.** Establish a no-wolf-take zone in a portion of Units 20A and 20C, adjacent to Denali National Park.

**PROPOSED BY:** Denali Citizens Council and Alaska Wildlife Alliance

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Prohibit the take of wolves in portions of Units 20A and 20C. The area where this regulation would apply is bounded on the west by the east boundary of Denali National Park; extending east to one mile east of, and parallel to, the Anchorage–Fairbanks Intertie Electrical Power Line; on the south by Carlo Creek; and on the north by a line from the southeast corner of Township 11S, Range 9W (Latitude 63 degrees, 55 minutes North), due east to the George Parks Highway, then south along the Parks Highway to a line running due east from the highway through the town of Healy, to one mile east of the Intertie Line; inclusive of all lands west of the George Parks Highway commonly referred to as the “Wolf Townships,” and/or “Stampede Trail.”

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Resident and nonresidents

Hunting:

- Unit 20A and Unit 20C remainder: ten wolves, August 10–May 31
- Unit 20C, within the Stampede Corridor: ten wolves, August 10–April 15

Trapping:

- Units 20A and 20C: No limit, November 1–April 30

There is a positive C&T finding for wolves in all units with a harvestable portion with an ANS of 90% of the harvestable portion.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal would reduce hunting and trapping opportunity in portions of Units 20A and 20C. Depending on other factors, this proposal has the potential to increase viewing opportunity in Denali National Park.

**BACKGROUND:** From 2000 to 2010, the board approved a year-round closure of wolf hunting and trapping in areas adjacent in the Stampede Corridor, near the Denali National Park boundary, to protect wolf viewing opportunities in the park. The board rescinded the Stampede and Nenana Canyon wolf buffers in 2010 and passed a regulation which closed the wolf hunting season in the Stampede area on April 15 to prevent the take of wolves at bear bait stations in 2016, which will be implemented in the spring of 2017.

The following information is provided for the board, Advisory Committees, and public to consider evaluating this proposal:

- 1) the recently adopted early closing date for wolf hunting in the area has not been implemented yet, so its influence on wolf survival and viewing opportunity cannot be measured at this time;
- 2) Current information indicates that the harvest of wolves outside the park is not a biological concern for sustainability of wolf populations or packs within or outside of the park and preserve;

3) although harvest by trappers increased in the area, it is unlikely that all of the harvest occurred within the proposed buffer area and/or was associated with packs that are available for viewing opportunity by park visitors; and

4) wolf viewing opportunities in the park are primarily influenced by wolf den site location, prey kill site locations, and the amount of vegetation cover, which may influence sightability.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal since this is an allocation between consumptive and non-consumptive users. There are no biological concerns because the harvest of wolves in the proposed area is low (averaging <5 wolves annually) and has no effect on the wolf population.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 143 – 5 AAC 85.045(a)(1). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**  
Reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 1C.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would reauthorize the antlerless moose hunts in Unit 1C.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Two antlerless moose hunts are authorized in Unit 1C. Those hunts are authorized for the Berners Bay drainages during the September 15–October 15 drawing hunt and in the Gustavus registration hunt area from November 10–December 10. In Berners Bay a maximum of 30 permits may be issued, and in Gustavus a maximum of 100 permits may be issued. Bag limit in both areas is one moose, and both hunts are open to residents and nonresidents. The board made a negative customary and traditional use finding for moose in the Unit 1C Gustavus hunt area, but has not evaluated the Berners Bay hunt area.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The antlerless hunts in Unit 1C (Berners Bay and Gustavus) would be reauthorized for RY2017. Season dates and bag limits would remain the same as summarized above.

**BACKGROUND:** Under 5 AAC 98.005 a majority of the Juneau-Douglas Advisory Committee must annually vote to reauthorize the Berners Bay antlerless moose hunt and a majority of the Icy Straits and the Juneau-Douglas advisory committees must annually vote to reauthorize the Gustavus antlerless moose hunt. The advisory committees are aware that they need to vote on these proposals, but have not yet scheduled meetings to do so.

Antlerless hunts in Unit 1C were originally adopted as tools to manage relatively small and isolated moose populations nearing or exceeding carrying capacity of the limited winter range available in the Berners Bay and the Gustavus areas. Due to the unusually warm and snow-free winter of 2015-16, we were unable to survey moose in Berners Bay. However, during a

December 2014 aerial survey in Berners Bay department staff counted 105 moose (22 bulls, 52 cows, 24 calves, and 7 unknown adults). Correcting for sightability based on radio-marked cows, we estimated the population to be 109±6 moose. We assume survival over the warm winter of 2015-16 was high and believe this population is stable or slowly growing. The antlerless moose hunt in Berners Bay was last open in RY2006.

A November 2015 aerial survey in Gustavus counted 105 moose (74 cows, 15 bulls, 14 calves, and 2 unknown). Correcting for sightability based on radio-marked cow moose, the department estimated the population to be 285±60. The March 2015 estimate was 244±98. We believe the Gustavus moose population is stable. The antlerless moose hunt in Gustavus was last open in RY2008.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal to reauthorize antlerless moose hunts in the Berners Bay and Gustavus hunt areas.

Based on surveys in recent years both populations appear stable and below carrying capacity of the range. We will continue to monitor both herds using annual aerial surveys as snow conditions allow and to maintain collared animals in both herds to estimate sightability correction factors as funding allows. Antlerless hunts will only be opened when survey data and population estimates suggest a herd is rapidly expanding or that cow harvests can be sustained over time without detrimental effect on the herd.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 144 – 5 AAC 85.045(a)(3) Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**  
Reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 5A, Nunatak Bench.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would reauthorize take of antlerless moose during registration hunt RM059 in Unit 5A, Nunatak Bench.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Registration moose hunt RM059 is authorized for the Nunatak Bench portion of Unit 5A. Season dates are November 15–February 15 with a bag limit of one moose. A maximum of 5 moose may be taken. This hunt is open to residents and nonresidents. The board made a positive customary and traditional use finding for all of Unit 5, with an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence of 50 moose for the entire unit.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Take of antlerless moose during registration moose hunt RM059 in Unit 5A would be reauthorized for RY2017. Season dates and bag limits would remain the same as summarized above.

**BACKGROUND:** Under 5 AAC 98.005 antlerless moose hunts must be reauthorized annually by a majority vote of the Yakutat advisory committee. The advisory committee is aware that it needs to vote on this proposal, but has not yet scheduled a meeting to do so.



Because season dates for the Nunatak Bench hunt (RM059) include the period after bulls have dropped their antlers, take of either sex is allowed. Deep snow accumulates in the Nunatak Bench area, greatly limiting habitat accessible to moose. To ensure the small area of available winter habitat can support the number of moose using it, the department manages for relatively low numbers of moose. However, because so few moose have been seen during recent surveys, no registration permits for RM059 have been issued since RY2005. During a December 2015 survey only 14 moose were seen, including 3 bulls, 2 cows, 3 calves, and 6 adult moose of unknown sex. During the next most recent survey in February 2012 only 12 moose (10 adults and 2 calves) were seen. Regular surveys in this area are hampered by its remote location, frequently inclement weather, and lack of suitable survey aircraft in Yakutat. However, the department will continue surveys as opportunity allows, and does not plan to issue permits for this hunt until at least 25 moose are counted during a single survey.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal to reauthorize the antlerless moose hunt in Unit 5A, the Nunatak Bench. This hunt (RM059) is considered an attractive option for hunters who were unsuccessful in the other Yakutat area moose hunts (RM061 & RM062).

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 145 – 5 AAC 085.045(a)(4) Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**  
 Reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 6C.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 6C.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

<b>Seasons and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
(4)		
...		
Unit 6(C)	Sept. 1–Oct. 31 (General hunt only)	No open season.
1 moose by drawing permit only; up to 40 permits for bulls and up to 20 permits for antlerless moose may be issued		

1 moose by registration permit only                      Nov. 1–Dec. 31                      No open season  
...

The board made a negative customary and traditional use finding for all of Unit 6 moose.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal reauthorizes antlerless hunts in Unit 6C as required by statute. Resident hunters would be able to continue to harvest antlerless moose during hunts administered by ADF&G on state-managed lands in Unit 6.

**BACKGROUND:** Antlerless moose seasons must be reauthorized annually. The population objective is 400–500 moose. A population survey completed during February 2014 yielded an estimate of 610 moose, 25% of which were calves. This population is above its objective and could be negatively impacting habitat. This hunt is managed cooperatively with the U. S. Forest Service and the available antlerless harvest quota in Unit 6C is currently harvested under a federal subsistence season. The state antlerless hunt has not been held since the 1999–2000 season. In 2013, a registration hunt was established that could be used to harvest moose, including antlerless, if the federal subsistence hunt is not held or it does not result in the desired amount of harvest. At this time, quotas have been raised on both the federal and state side to bring the population to within its objectives. Continuation of the antlerless hunts is necessary to maintain the population at objectives.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal to reauthorize antlerless harvests in Unit 6.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 146 – 5 AAC 85.045(a)(5). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**  
Reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Units 7 and 14C.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would reauthorize the antlerless moose season in the Twentymile/Portage/Placer hunt area in Units 7 and 14C.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>		

(5)

...

Unit 7, the Placer River

drainages, and that portion of the Placer Creek (Bear Valley) drainage outside the Portage Glacier Closed Area, and that portion of Unit 14(C) within the Twentymile River drainage

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 moose by drawing permit only; up to 60 permits for bulls will be issued in combination with nonresident hunts, and up to 70 permits for antlerless moose will be issued

Aug. 20—Oct. 10  
(General hunt only)

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull by drawing permit only; up to 60 permits for bulls will be issued in combination with resident hunts

Aug. 20—Oct. 10

...

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Antlerless moose seasons must be reauthorized annually. The harvest of antlerless moose provides the department with a management tool to maintain the number of moose in the Twentymile/Portage/Placer area at a population level low enough to reduce over-browsing of winter habitat, moose-vehicle collisions, and starvation during severe winters. The moose population will be healthier and more productive due to decreased stress levels associated with winter food shortages.

**BACKGROUND:** The moose population in the Twentymile/Portage/Placer area has a history of rapid increase following mild winters, and sharp reductions during severe winters. In 2009, antlerless permits were issued for the first time since 2004. The number of permits issued (Table 146-1) depends on the current population estimate and bull:cow ratios, as well as estimated winter mortality. A November 2013 aerial composition count of moose in the Twentymile, Portage, and Placer river drainages found 155 moose with a bull:cow ratio of 23 bulls per 100 cows and a calf:cow ratio of 27 calves per 100 cows. Weather conditions the last two winters have precluded flying surveys, but harvest and roadkill numbers have remained relatively steady, indicating that the population is unlikely to have decreased substantially.

Table 146-1. Moose harvest in the Twentymile/Portage/Placer hunt area in Units 7 and 14C, regulatory years 2009-2015.

<b>Regulatory Year</b>	<b>Bull Permits</b>	<b>Antlerless Permits</b>	<b>Bulls Harvested</b>	<b>Cows Harvested</b>
2009	40	30	25	17
2010	40	30	15	15
2011	40	30	19	8
2012	25	20	12	7
2013	25	20	10	7
2014	40	30	17	10
2015	30	30	11	8

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal to maintain antlerless hunts in Units 7 and 14C. These hunts have been successful in creating additional moose hunting opportunities with little or no controversy. In addition, the harvest of antlerless moose has helped achieve the department’s goal of maintaining moose numbers at a level to avoid die-offs during harsh winters.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 147 – 5 AAC 85.045(a)(11). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**  
 Reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 13.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal reauthorizes the antlerless moose hunts in Unit 13.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The department is authorized to issue up to 200 drawing permits for antlerless moose hunts in Unit 13 for an October 1–31 and March 1–31 season. Hunters are prohibited from taking calves and cows accompanied by a calf. The board has made a positive customary and traditional use finding for all of Unit 13, with an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence of 300–600 moose for the entire unit.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal reauthorizes the antlerless moose hunts in Unit 13 and will allow the department to issue antlerless moose permits for the Unit 13A hunt areas during the regulatory year 2016 season.

**BACKGROUND:** The Unit 13 antlerless hunt was established in March 2011, and the first Unit 13 antlerless hunt under this regulation took place in September 2012. Ten permits have been issued annually for a single hunt area in the western portion of Unit 13A. This hunt resulted in the harvest of 4 cow moose during the 2012 season, 2 during the 2013 season, 7 during the 2014 season, 7 during the 2015 season, and 4 during the fall 2016 season.

During the 2013 Board of Game meeting in Wasilla, the board adopted a proposal that changed the hunt from September 1–20 to October 1–31 and March 1–31. These new season dates were implemented in the fall of 2014, after which harvest success appears to have increased.

The board has also directed the department to issue antlerless moose permits when the moose population is at or above the midpoint of the population objective with the goal of harvesting up to 1% of the cow moose population.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal. Antlerless moose hunts must be re-authorized annually by the board to comply with statutory requirements. These hunts are required to regulate the moose population within the established Intensive Management (IM) objectives for population size and harvest.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 148 - 5 AAC 85.045(13). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**  
 Reauthorize the antlerless moose hunting season on Kalgin Island in Unit 15B.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish & Game

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would reauthorize the antlerless moose hunt on Kalgin Island in Unit 15B.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
<p>(13) ...</p> <p>Unit 15(B), Kalgin Island 1 moose per regulatory year, by registration permit only</p>	<p>Aug. 20—Sept. 20</p>	<p>Aug. 20—Sept. 20</p>

There is a positive C&T finding for moose on Kalgin Island, and an ANS of 2.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The antlerless moose season on Kalgin Island (RM572) in Unit 15B would be reauthorized.

**BACKGROUND:** Antlerless moose hunts must be reauthorized annually. The current regulation for hunting moose on Kalgin Island in Unit 15B allows hunters to harvest antlerless moose with the goal of reducing the population to the management objective.

In response to concerns that the moose population on Kalgin Island had exceeded the island’s carrying capacity and due to deteriorating habitat conditions, the board established a drawing permit hunt for antlerless moose in 1995. In a further attempt to reduce the number of moose on the island, the board established a registration hunt for any moose in 1999. Despite these measures to reduce moose numbers, moose remain abundant on the island and continue to exceed the management objective.

During the most recent moose survey, department staff counted 104 moose on Kalgin Island in December 2012. This count exceeded the population objective of 20–40 moose.

The "any moose" registration hunt is recommended to provide additional mortality on this predator-free island population. A registration hunt also allows the department to continue gathering biological information from specimens provided by successful hunters. The difficult hunting conditions and limited access will minimize the danger of over-harvest.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal. This hunt helps to control the moose population on Kalgin Island and keep it within sustainable limits.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 149 - 5 AAC 85.045.(a)(13). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**  
Reauthorize the antlerless moose season in a portion of Unit 15C.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish & Game

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would reauthorize the antlerless moose hunt for the Homer benchland and the targeted, antlerless hunt along the Sterling Highway in Unit 15C.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
(13)		
...		
Unit 15(C), that portion south of the south fork of		

the Anchor River and northwest of Kachemak Bay

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull with spike or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side; or

Sept. 1—Sept. 25  
(General hunt only)

1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; the taking of calves, and females accompanied by calves, is prohibited; up to 100 permits may be issued in combination with the nonresident drawing hunt: or

Oct. 20—Nov. 20

1 moose by targeted permit only,

Oct. 15—Mar. 31

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side; or

Sept. 1—Sept. 25  
(General hunt only)

1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; the taking of calves, and females accompanied by calves, is prohibited; up to 100 permits may be issued in combination with the resident drawing hunt

Oct. 20—Nov. 20

Remainder of Unit 15(C)

RESIDENT HUNTERS

1 bull with spike or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side; or

Sept. 1—Sept. 25  
(General hunt only)

1 moose by targeted permit only,

Oct. 15—Mar. 31

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS

1 bull with 50-inch antlers  
or antlers with 4 or more brow  
tines on one side;

Sept. 1—Sept. 25

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The antlerless moose season for the Homer benchland (DM549) and the targeted hunt (AM550) along the Sterling Highway in 15C would be reauthorized.

**BACKGROUND:** Antlerless moose seasons must be reauthorized annually. The Homer benchland in Unit 15C that encompasses the hunt boundary of DM549 often holds high moose densities in winters when deep snow pushes the moose down into human populated areas. Even without deep snow, a high number of moose die due to malnutrition and negative interactions with humans are common as moose become more aggressive in their search for food around human residences.

In February 2013, 1,345 moose were counted during a population survey in the northern portion of Unit 15C. Fall composition counts in December 2015 provided a bull ratio of 46 bulls:100 cows and a calf ratio of 23 calves:100 cows. The bull ratio is likely biased high and the calf ratio biased low due to poor survey conditions and moose distribution at the time of surveys. The number of permits issued for DM549 will depend on the fall 2016 survey information for this area. Fifty permits were issued in each of the last 10 years resulting in an average harvest of 23 cows per year.

The purpose of AM550 is to allow for the harvest of antlerless moose along the Sterling Highway in Unit 15C during the winter if they pose a threat to highway vehicles. On average 62 moose are known to be killed each year in vehicle collisions in Unit 15C. The department will decide when and where permits will be issued during the hunt period. The hunt is administered through a registration permit and up to 100 moose may be taken. The number of permits issued each year will depend on conditions, and it is possible no permits will be issued in some years.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal. Local residents are in favor of a limited antlerless moose harvest that provides additional opportunity and helps to limit habitat degradation and wildlife conflicts.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department and is expected to help limit costs to the department associated with nuisance moose.

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**PROPOSAL 150 – 5 AAC 85.045(a)(15). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

Reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 17A.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal reauthorizes the antlerless moose season for the Unit 17A winter moose hunt.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**



- The current regulations for the Unit 17A moose hunt allow resident hunters a bag limit of two moose per regulatory year.
- A fall hunt during August 25–September 20 for resident hunters is managed under registration permit RM573, with a bag limit of one bull moose.
- The winter hunt is managed through the use of two registration permits: RM575 for one antlered bull moose and RM576 for one antlerless moose. The regulations state that “up to a 31-day season may be announced December 1–the end of February”.
  - The winter hunt is opened by emergency order authority, when good snow conditions exist for winter travel.

The board has made a positive customary and traditional use finding for moose in Unit 17, and has found that 100–150 are reasonably necessary for subsistence.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal would reauthorize the antlerless moose hunt in Unit 17A. This antlerless hunt would continue to provide hunters with additional harvest opportunity, while helping managers by decreasing the productivity of the Unit 17A moose population that is already at the upper limit of our population objectives.

Under the present hunt structure hunters can obtain two registration permits for the winter season, RM575 for one antlered bull and RM576 for one antlerless moose. When these hunts are running concurrently hunters will often have both permits and can harvest an antlerless moose and an antlered bull legally. However, when the antlerless season is closed because the quota is met, hunters would be limited to an antlered bull moose.

**BACKGROUND:** Moose are relative newcomers to much of Unit 17A, with only about 35 animals being present along the eastern border in 1980. Since then, moose have continued to increase in population size and expand throughout Unit 17A and west into Unit 18. The most recent survey in 2011 enumerated 1,166 moose in Unit 17A, but no subsequent surveys have been conducted due to insufficient snowfall and poor survey conditions.

Moose management in Unit 17A has been guided by the Unit 17A Moose Management Group, consisting of members from the Bristol Bay Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, the Nushagak and Togiak Fish and Game advisory committees, the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. This group produced a *Unit 17A Moose Management Plan* that went through several iterations during 1996–2013, with the 2013 plan being used as the guiding document today. This plan has goals and objectives for hunter opportunity, harvest allocation, habitat mapping and population monitoring.

Per the moose management plan, a drawing hunt for nonresident hunters was adopted by the board in 2013, with fall 2014 being the first year of that hunt. The impetus behind the nonresident hunt was abundant opportunity provided by this growing moose population, and objectives within the plan that provide for the nonresident opportunity when the moose population reaches a certain level. It is this same abundance that allows for the annual bag limit of two moose including up to 10 antlerless animals that residents can take advantage of.

During RY2010-2015, the mean annual moose harvest in Unit 17 was 294 moose.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal. The moose population in this unit is increasing and is near the upper limit of the population objectives. Allowing a small harvest of antlerless moose will help limit population growth while providing additional harvest opportunity for hunters.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in significant costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 151 – 5 AAC 85.045(a)(12). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**  
Reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Units 14A and 14B.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal reauthorizes the antlerless moose hunts in Units 14A and 14B; these hunts must be re-authorized annually by the Board to comply with statutory requirements.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

- The department is allowed to issue up to 1,000 drawing permits to resident hunters in Unit 14A with a bag limit of one antlerless moose. The season is August 25–September 25 for DM400–DM412 and November 1–December 25 for DM413.
- The department may also issue up to 200 permits to resident hunters for the targeted hunt in Unit 14A with a bag limit of one moose during a winter season to be announced by emergency order.
- The department may also issue up to 100 additional permits to resident hunters for a targeted hunt in Unit 14B with a bag limit of one moose during a winter season to be announced by emergency order.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal reauthorizes the antlerless moose hunts in Units 14A and 14B; these hunts are needed to keep the moose population within management objectives and provide additional hunting opportunity for residents. The targeted hunt also provides managers with a tool to reduce moose-vehicle collisions and address nuisance moose issues.

**BACKGROUND:** Moose surveys conducted in November 2013 resulted in an estimate of 8,500 moose in Unit 14A. This estimate is greater than both the 2011 estimate of 8,000 moose and the population objective of 6,000–6,500 moose. The bull ratio is 21 bulls:100 cows and the calf ratio is 45 calves:100 cows.

Based on current projections, the Unit 14A moose population is expected to grow and continue to exceed population objectives. If the density of moose is allowed to increase, we anticipate an increase in the number of moose-human conflicts, and moose may experience nutritional stress, particularly during severe winters.

The targeted moose hunt in Units 14A and 14B provide an additional tool to address public safety concerns related to moose-vehicle collisions and nuisance management issues.

Moose-vehicle collisions result in property damage and may result in human injury or death. An average of 276 moose per year were killed in the Unit 14 portion of the Mat-Su Valley during the last few years of average snowfall and substantially more were killed during higher snowfall years. The department also receives periodic complaints from the public about crop depredation and aggressive behavior that can be mitigated by this hunt structure.

The department uses the targeted hunts to mitigate public safety concerns by issuing permits to selected hunters and assigning them to hunt areas that correspond with areas of high moose-vehicle collisions or reoccurring nuisance issues.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal. Cow harvests are warranted to control the moose population’s growth and reduce moose-human conflicts in the Mat-Su Valley. These hunts also provide additional moose hunting opportunity in the Mat-Su Valley.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in significant costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 152 – 5 AAC 85.045(a)(12). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**  
 Reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 14C.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 14C.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
(12)		
...		
Unit 14(C), Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) Management Area	Day after Labor Day —Mar. 31 (General hunt only)	Day after Labor Day —Mar. 31
1 moose by regulatory year by		

drawing permit, and by muzzleloading blackpowder rifle or bow and arrow only; up to 185 permits may be issued

Unit 14(C), that portion known as the Birchwood Management Area

Day after Labor Day  
—Sept. 30  
(General hunt only)

Day after Labor Day  
—Sept. 30

1 moose by drawing permit, by bow and arrow only; up to 25 permits may be issued

Unit 14(C), that portion known as the Anchorage Management Area

Day after Labor Day  
—Nov. 30  
(General hunt only)

No open season

1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only, and by bow and arrow, shotgun, or muzzleloader only; up to 50 permits may be issued

Unit 14(C), that portion of the Ship Creek drainage upstream of the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) Management Area

1 moose by drawing permit only; up to 50 permits may be issued; or

Day after Labor Day  
—Sept. 30  
(General hunt only)

Day after Labor Day  
—Sept. 30

1 bull by registration permit only

Oct. 1—Nov. 30  
(General hunt only)

Oct. 1—Nov. 30

...

Remainder of Unit 14(C)

1 moose per regulatory year, only as follows:

1 bull with spike-fork antlers or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 3 or more brow tines on one side; or

Day after Labor Day  
—Sept. 30  
(General hunt only)

Day after Labor Day  
—Sept. 30

1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 60 permits may be issued; or	Day after Labor Day —Sept. 30 (General hunt only)	No open season
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1 bull by drawing permit only, by bow and arrow only; up to 10 permits may be issued	Oct. 20—Nov. 15	No open season
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...

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Adoption of this proposal is necessary for the hunts to continue. The harvest of antlerless moose provides the department with a management tool to maintain the number of moose in Unit 14C at the desired population objective (1,500 moose). At this population level we have seen reductions in over-browsing of winter habitat, moose-vehicle collisions, moose-human conflicts in urban areas, and starvation during severe winters. At this level, the moose population will be healthier due to decreased stress levels associated with winter food shortages.

**BACKGROUND:** Moose in Unit 14C are managed intensively for a population objective of 1,500–1,800 moose and an annual harvest objective of 90–270 moose (5AAC 92.108). In 2013, we estimated a moose population of approximately 1,533 moose in Unit 14(C) from a combination of population census, composition surveys and extrapolation to unsurveyed areas. Weather conditions the last two winters have precluded flying surveys, but harvest and roadkill numbers have remained relatively steady, indicating that the population is unlikely to have decreased substantially. At this population level, we have experienced a decline in human-moose conflicts and decreased winter mortalities. Harvesting cow moose is paramount to maintaining the population at the low end of the objective while providing harvest opportunity.

Antlerless moose hunts must be reauthorized annually. The number of antlerless permits issued (Table 152-1) depends on the current population estimate and bull:cow ratios, as well as estimated winter mortality.

Table 152-1. Cow moose harvest in Unit 14C, regulatory years 2003–2015.

Regulatory Year	Either Sex Permits	Antlerless Permits	Cows Harvested
2003	55	60	32
2004	57	80	20
2005	100	46	33
2006	110	46	33
2007	110	40	37
2008	110	35	36
2009	110	25	29
2010	110	23	32
2011	67	23	25
2012	58	23	18
2013	58	23	24

2014	50	26	19
2015	65	27	23

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal to reauthorize antlerless hunts in Unit 14C. These hunts have been successful in providing additional moose hunting opportunities in the state’s human population center with little controversy. In addition, the harvest of antlerless moose has helped achieve the department’s goal of maintaining moose numbers at the low end of the population objective.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 153 – 5 AAC 92.015. Brown bear tag fee exemptions.** Reauthorize the brown bear tag fee exemptions for the Central/Southwest Region.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal will reauthorize the brown bear tag fee exemptions in Units 9, 11, 13, 16, and 17.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The following regulations are currently in effect for Region IV brown bear hunts:

5AAC 92.015. Brown bear tag fee exemption

(a) A resident tag is not required for taking a brown bear in the following units:

- (1) Unit 11;
- (2) Units 13 and 16A;
- (3) Units 16B and 17;

...

(11) Unit 9, within the following areas, unless a smaller area is defined by the department in an applicable permit:

(A) Unit 9B, within five miles of the communities of Port Alsworth, Nondalton, Iliamna, Newhalen, Pile Bay, Pedro Bay, Pope Vanoy Landing, Kakhonak, Igiugig, and Levelock;

(B) Unit 9C, within five miles of the communities of King Salmon, Naknek, and South Naknek;

(C) Unit 9D, within five miles of the communities of Cold Bay, King Cove, Sand Point, and Nelson Lagoon;

(D) Unit 9E, within five miles of the communities of Egegik, Pilot Point, Ugashik, Port Heiden, Port Moller, Chignik Lake, Chignik Lagoon, Chignik Bay,

Perryville, and Ivanof Bay;

(12) Unit 10, within three miles of the community of False Pass, unless a smaller area is defined by the department in an applicable permit.

(b) In addition to the units as specified in (a) of this section, if a hunter obtains a subsistence registration permit before hunting, that hunter is not required to obtain a resident tag to take a brown bear in the following units:

(1) Unit 9B;

(2) Unit 9E, that portion including all drainages that drain into the Pacific Ocean between Cape Kumliun and the border of Units 9D and 9E;

(3) Unit 17;

...

See below for C&T and ANS regulatory information.

### **WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?**

Hunters will not be required to purchase a brown bear locking tag before hunting brown bears in Units 11, 13, 16, and 17. In addition, brown bear tag fees will not be required for subsistence hunts in Units 9 and 17 or for permit hunts near communities in Unit 9.

**BACKGROUND:** Brown bear tag fee exemptions must be reauthorized annually or the fee will be automatically reinstated.

General Season Hunts: The Board liberalized brown bear hunting regulations, including the tag fee exemption, to increase the opportunity to take brown bears in Units 11, 13, and 16 during the March 2003 Board of Game meeting and in Unit 17 during the March 2011 Board of Game meeting. The tag fee exemption in these Units provides greater opportunity to harvest brown bears by allowing opportunistic take. The brown bear populations in Units 11, 13, and 16B have negative C&T findings.

The board also exempted brown bear tag fees for bear hunts near communities in Unit 9 to address public safety concerns in communities during the March 2011 Board of Game meeting. There is a positive customary and traditional use finding in Unit 9B, with an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence of 10–20, and a positive customary and traditional use finding in 9E, with an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence of 10–15. The remainder of Unit 9 has a negative customary and traditional use finding. Brown bears are abundant in Unit 9 and are managed as a trophy species in a majority of the unit. Brown bears are frequently observed in communities destroying property in search of food or garbage and occasionally killing pets. The liberalized bear seasons and bag limits along with the elimination of the tag fee is intended to allow people to take bears before they destroy property, to promote a greater acceptance of the unit's bear population, and to resolve some of the compliance issues associated with the take of DLP bears.

Subsistence Brown Bear Hunts: The Board waived the brown bear tag fee requirement for subsistence brown bear hunts in Unit 17 and portions of Unit 9. There is a positive customary

and traditional use finding for brown bears in those portions of Units 17A and 17B that drain into the Nuyakuk and Tikchik lakes, with an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence of 5. There is a positive customary and traditional use finding for brown bears in the remainder of Unit 17B, and in Unit 17C, with an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence of 10–15 bears.

Subsistence brown bear harvest rates are low and well within sustainable limits. Exempting the resident tag fee has not caused an increase in subsistence harvest in these units. Continuation of the exemption accommodates cultural and traditional uses of brown bears in these units and provides an alternative to hunters who take brown bears primarily for their meat.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal because it provides greater harvest opportunity in Units 11, 13, 16, and 17; addresses public safety concerns in Unit 9; and provides for a customary and traditional pattern of taking and use in portions of Units 9 and 17.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal would not result in significant costs to the department.

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*Note: Proposal 159 was accepted by the Board of Game as an Agenda Change Request for consideration at the Interior-Northeast Arctic Region meeting scheduled for February 2017.*

**PROPOSAL 159 - 5 AAC 92.003. Hunter education and orientation requirements. Require hunters on the Kenai Peninsula to take an ADF&G approved hunter orientation course for identifying legal moose.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Kenai/Soldotna Fish and Game Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would require all moose hunters to complete an online orientation course on the identification of legal moose prior to hunting on the Kenai Peninsula (Units 7 and 15).

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** There is currently no orientation course required for moose hunters in Units 7 and 15. Hunters born after January 1, 1986 and 16 years of age or older must complete a Basic Hunter Education course before hunting in these units.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WAS ADOPTED?** This proposal applies to all moose hunts on the Kenai Peninsula and makes moose hunter orientation a mandatory requirement for participation in the hunts. An orientation course and administrative process will need to be developed prior to implementation, and the requirement would apply to all hunts types: drawing, registration, general season, targeted, and Tier II.

**BACKGROUND:** The percentage of illegal moose taken that do not meet antler requirements is unknown across the state. The Kenai Peninsula is one of very few areas where sealing is required for harvested moose. Of the 263 moose killed in Units 7 and 15 in 2016, 57 animals were illegal based on their antler configuration. The highest percentage of illegal take was in Unit 15C



(23%), which was also highest harvest area (193 out of 263 moose taken). Even though illegally taken moose do not survive to achieve a legal antler size and become legal for hunting, the bull:cow ratio in Unit 15C is above the management objectives.

In Units 17 and 19B, an orientation program, which includes viewing the “Is This Moose Legal?” and “Field Care of Big Game” videos, is required for nonresident moose hunters who are not hunting with an Alaska-licensed guide or resident family-member within second-degree of kindred. There are no other orientation requirements, and resident hunters are not required to view the video or complete any other certification. Sealing is not required for moose in either of these units, and it is unknown if completing the orientation has any effect on the percentage of illegal moose harvested.

The department is in the process of remaking the “Is This Moose Legal?” video and the new version should be available for viewing in 2017.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal to require a moose orientation course for hunters on the Kenai Peninsula.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal may result in additional costs to the department in developing a new orientation course and certification process.

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