



GMU 6
Proposals

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Black Bear

Prince William Sound (Unit 6D) Black Bear 3 ACRs accepted:

- One bear every three years
- Institute a registration hunt
- Shorten the season to start Sept. 25 instead of Sept. 10

These are all public proposals

Black Bear

Background: Value of Black Bears



Photo by Mills Burcham

- ⌘ Black bears in Unit 6D are important to hunters. Positive C&T
- ⌘ Spring trips to PWS are very popular.
- ⌘ Black bears are prized for hides and meat (mandatory salvage in the spring)

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Black Bear

Background: Value of Black Bears

- ⌘ Black bears in Unit 6D are important to other users of Prince William Sound
- ⌘ An estimated 600-700 visitors per day during peak season for wildlife viewing



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Black Bear

Background: Population Information

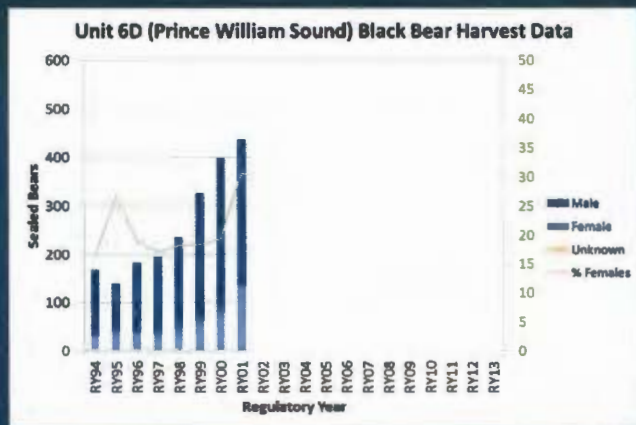
- ⌘ Without a population estimate, what are the **red flag**?
- ⌘ Harvest has steadily declined
- ⌘ Harvest of females has increased (over 40% for 3 years)
- ⌘ Success rates have declined
- ⌘ Widespread public concern from diverse parties

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Black Bear

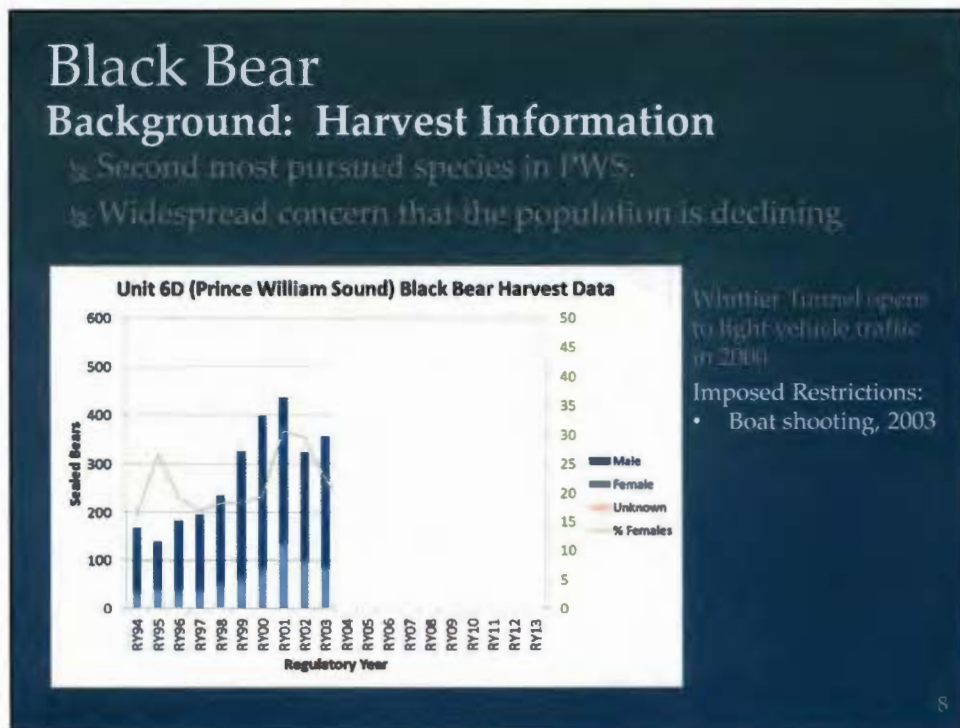
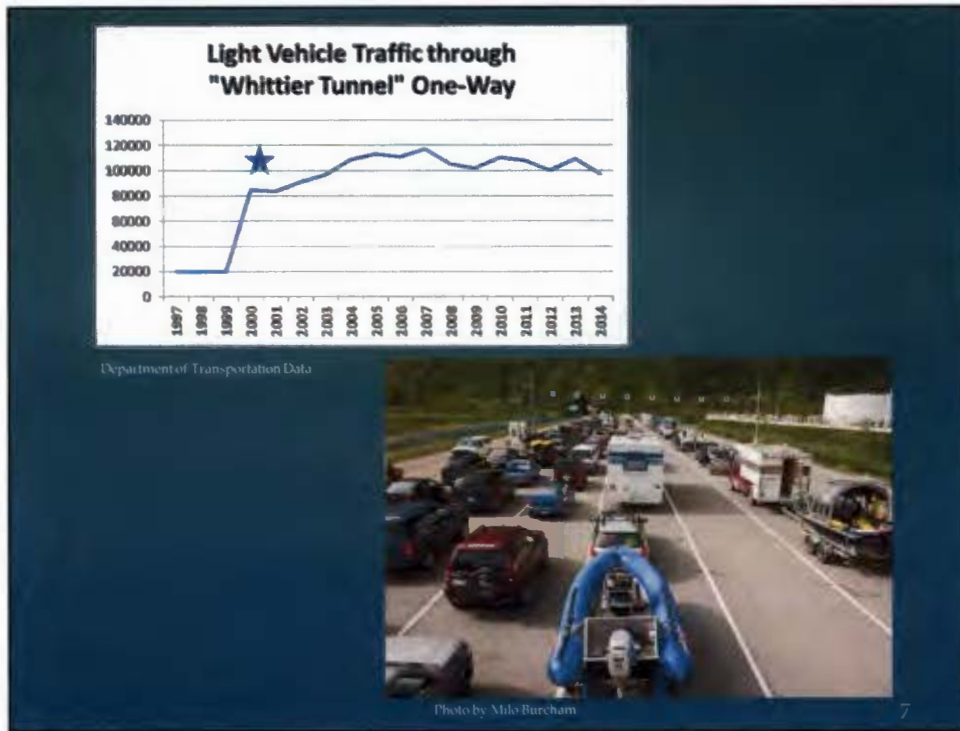
Background: Harvest Information

- ⌘ Second most pursued species in PWS.
- ⌘ Widespread concern that the population is declining



Whittier Tunnel opens to light vehicle traffic in 2000

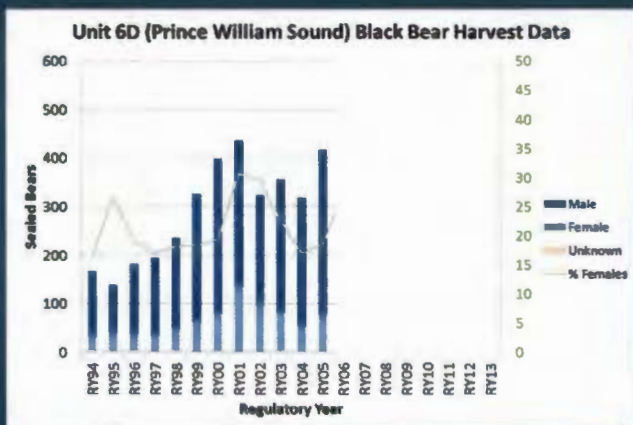
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Black Bear

Background: Harvest Information

- ▣ Second most pursued species in PWS.
- ▣ Widespread concern that the population is declining



Winter Tunnel opens to light vehicle traffic in 2000.

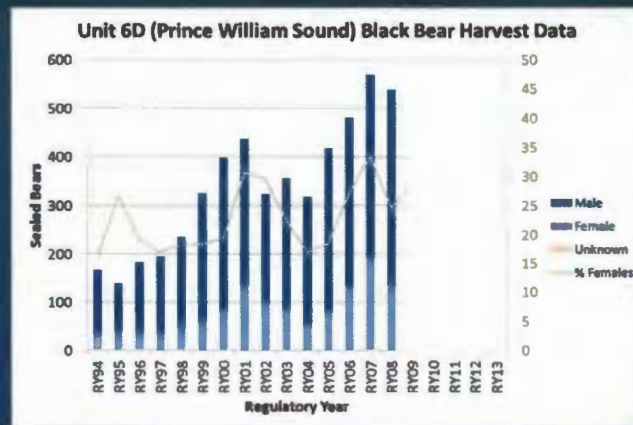
- Imposed Restrictions:
- Boat shooting, 2001
 - Season length, 2005
 - Bear baiting, 2005

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Black Bear

Background: Harvest Information

- ▣ Second most pursued species in PWS.
- ▣ Widespread concern that the population is declining



Winter Tunnel opens to light vehicle traffic in 2000.

- Imposed Restrictions:
- Boat shooting, 2001
 - Season length, 2005
 - Bear baiting, 2005
 - Season length, 2009

Harvest continued to climb until 2007. From 2008-2011 harvest declined by an average of 5% a year

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Black Bear

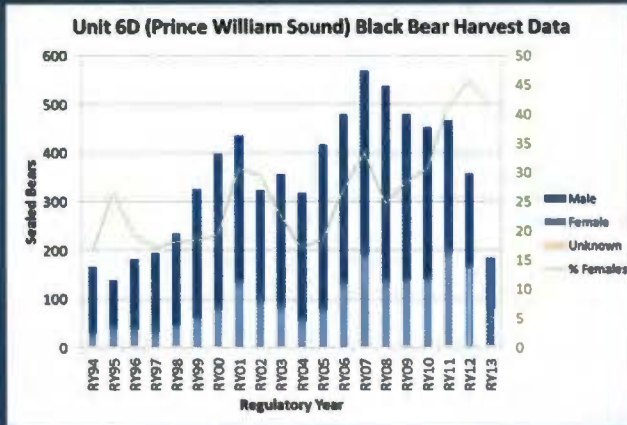
Background: Harvest Information

- Second most pursued species in PWS
- Widespread concern that the population is declining

Whittier Tunnel opened to light vehicle traffic in 2000

- Imposed Restrictions:
- Boat shooting, 2003
 - Season length, 2005
 - Bear baiting, 2005
 - Season length, 2009

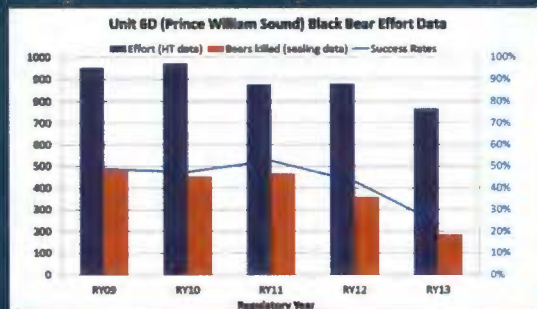
From 2008-2011 harvest declined by an average of 5% a year. RY 12 was 23% lower than RY11. RY13 was 48% lower than RY12. Take of females has increased to more than 40%



Black Bear

Background: Effort

- Effort data shows some decline (19%) but the decline in harvest is steeper (62%)
- If the decline in harvest is truly only driven by a decline in effort, the success rates should be stable or increased because of less competition.
- Effort data may also be driven by bear abundance.



Black Bear

Background: Potential causes of harvest declines and/or increased take of females

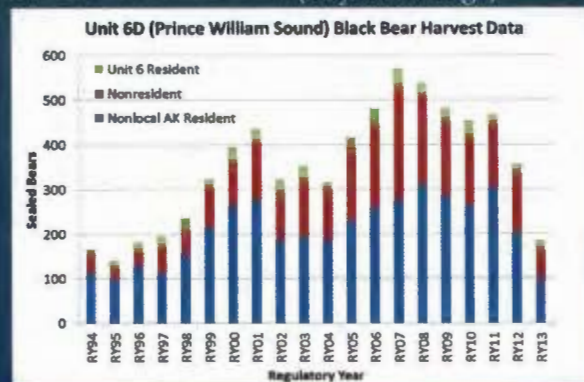
- ↳ Changes in weather could have affected:
 - ⌘ Bear abundance
 - ⌘ Bear distribution
- ↳ Black bear numbers could be down across a broader area
- ↳ Behavior change- risk avoidance
- ↳ Effort has declined some since 2009 (the earliest data we have)
- ↳ Harvest rates on black bears have been too high
- ↳ Some combination of the above

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Black Bear

Background: Who is harvesting?

- ↳ Of the bears that are killed:
 - ⌘ Nonlocal Alaska residents harvest 56% (20 year average)
 - ⌘ Nonresidents harvest 37% (20 year average)
 - ⌘ Unit 6 residents harvest 7% (20 year average)

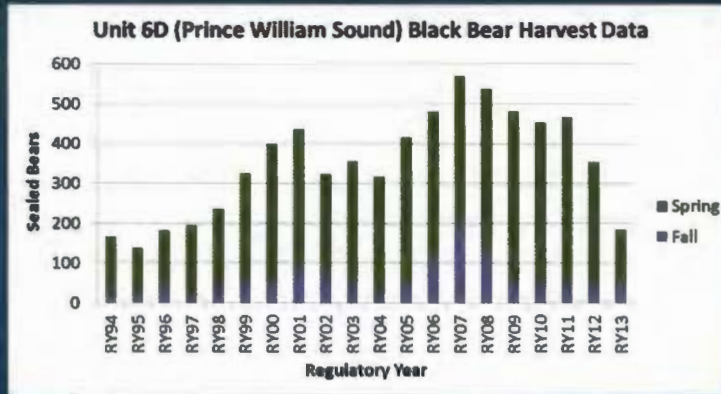


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Black Bear

Background: When are bears harvested?

- ⌘ Of the bears that are killed:
 - ⌘ The majority (84%- 20 year average) are taken in the spring
 - ⌘ Most of this harvest happens after May 21st



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Black Bear

Background: Where are bears harvested?

- ⌘ The harvest of black bears is mostly (75-90%) in western PWS
- ⌘ Habitat is better with very few brown bears to prey on them
- ⌘ Proximity to Whittier is a driving factor behind the harvest distribution.

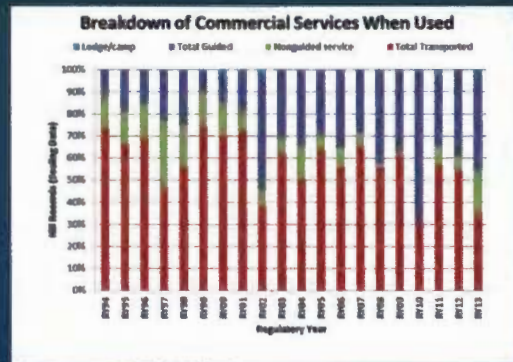


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Black Bear

Background: How are bears harvested?

- Most bears (84%) are taken by "spot and stalk". Only 16% taken over bait.
- Most hunters (78%) are self supported.
- Of the remainder, transporters (53%) are the most utilized commercial service

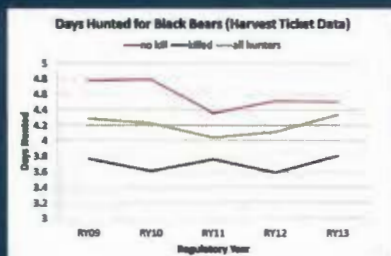
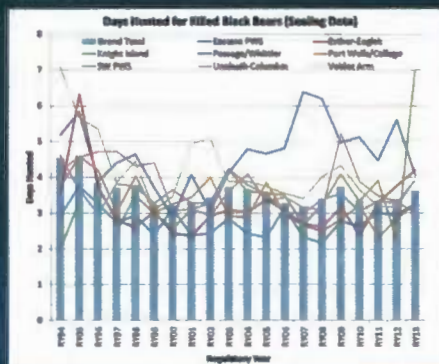


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Black Bear

Background: Is it taking longer to get a bear?

- Sealing data can be used to look at only killed bears but further back in time.
- Harvest ticket data can be used for both successful and unsuccessful but only since RY09.
- Around 3 or 4 days to get a bear.



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Black Bear

Proposal 209:

Seeks to change the bag limit for black bears in Unit 6D to one bear every three years

Department Position: Neutral

This is a public proposal

Copper River/Prince William Sound AC- oppose
Anchorage AC- oppose
Whittier AC- could not meet
Valdez AC- met February 18

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Black Bear

Proposal 209



- ⌘ One bear every three years
 - ⌘ To be effective, requires a significant number of repeat hunters
 - Only 23% of hunters will kill more than one bear in Unit 6D
 - Average harvest reduction of 12%
 - ⌘ Positive Customary and Traditional finding (80-120 bears)
 - Some hunters (9%) harvested 3 or more bears in a 10 year period. These hunters may be more likely to be targeting a bear primarily for meat.

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Black Bear

Proposal 209

Recommendation: Neutral

⌘ The department supports measures to reduce black bear harvests in Unit 6D.

⌘ Proposal 210 is the preferred alternative.

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Black Bear

Proposal 210:

Seeks establish a registration hunt for black bears in Unit 6D

Department Recommendation: Support

This is a public proposal

Copper River/Prince William Sound AC- support

Anchorage AC- support

Whittier AC- could not meet

Valdez AC- met February 18

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Black Bear

Proposal 210

Current Regulatory framework

- ⌘ Wide open participation
- ⌘ Slow response time



What would help

- ⌘ Better tracking of effort and faster reporting
- ⌘ Faster response time

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Black Bear

Proposal 210

- ⌘ Hunt area could focus on all of Unit 6D or on just the western portion as shown
- ⌘ Emergency Order closure in 2015 will focus on the area west of a line from Cape Freemantle to Rocky Point.



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Black Bear

Proposal 210

Department Recommendation: Support

- ⌘ The department supports measures to reduce black bear harvests in Unit 6D.
- ⌘ This is the preferred alternative.
- ⌘ allows you to leave the season open as long as possible but still get the reduction in harvest.
- ⌘ Will allow the department to close the season when 200 bears have been taken

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Black Bear

Proposal 211:

Seeks to shorten the fall black bear season in Unit 6D by 15 days to start September 25

Department Recommendation: Neutral

This is a public proposal

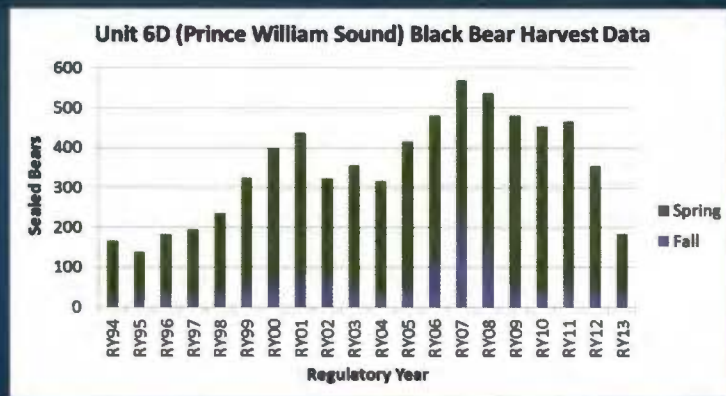
Copper River/Prince William Sound AC- oppose
Anchorage AC- support
Whittier AC- could not meet
Valdez AC- met February 18

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Black Bear

Proposal 211

- ⌘ Most of the harvest happens in the spring (84%)
- ⌘ Take of females is higher in the fall (45%) than in the spring (30%) but the contribution to the total harvest is minimal



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Black Bear

Proposal 211

- ⌘ Fall season date changes may not lead to a significant reduction in harvest
- ⌘ If the proposed season dates had been used in the last 10 years an average of 36 bears (17 sows) may not have been harvested.
- ⌘ Considering the last 10 years, the overall reduction of harvest may have been 9%

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Black Bear

Proposal 211

Department Recommendation: Neutral

⌘ The department supports measures to reduce black bear harvests in Unit 6D.

⌘ Proposal 210 is the preferred alternative.

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Proposal 212-Unit 6B (Moose)

Controlled Use Area

Seeks to allow a boat crossing of the Copper River to access the hunt area previously available by the Copper River Highway which now cannot be accessed by highway vehicle due to bridge failure.

Department Recommendation: Support

This is an Advisory Committee proposal

Copper River/Prince William Sound AC- support
Whittier AC- could not meet
Valdez AC- could not meet

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Unit 6B CUA

Proposal 212

Background: CUA History

- ∅ Starting in RY93 Hunt Conditions
 - ∅ Limited the use of motorized vehicles to only highway vehicles on the Copper River Highway.
 - ∅ Created 4 day "walk-in hunt"
- ∅ Hunt conditions added a prohibition on same day use of only airboats.
- ∅ Board of Game addressed the issue in RY03
- ∅ RY04- present
 - ∅ No same-day motorized rule is passed for Sept 5- Oct. 31
 - ∅ Created 4 day "walk-in hunt" Sept 1-5
 - ∅ Season opens Sept 1-Oct 31
 - ∅ Included all motorized vehicles except Highway Vehicles
 - ∅ Pre-season nonmotorized from Aug 15-Aug 30 with hunt conditions

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Unit 6B CUA

Proposal 212

Background: Copper River Highway

- ∅ Approximately 50 miles long
- ∅ Miles 27-50 are in the CUA
- ∅ August 2011- Bridge failed around Mile 36 of the Copper River Highway
 - ∅ Copper River channels changed
 - ∅ Repairs are fraught with engineering challenges
 - ∅ Funding is uncertain
 - ∅ DOT has no plan for repair



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Unit 6B CUA

Proposal 212

⌘ Background: Hunt Impact

- ⌘ Hunters that used the east side of the bridge cannot participate in the "walk-in" portion of the hunt.
- ⌘ More than half of the Copper River Highway within the hunt area is now inaccessible by highway vehicle.



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Unit 6B CUA

Proposal 212

Department Recommendation: Support with Amendments

- ⌘ Proposer's language would also put the early camp deployment closure (Aug 15-Sept 4) in regulation instead of hunt conditions
- ⌘ Amended Language
 - ⌘ Removes "maintained surface" because the Copper River Highway is no longer maintained past the bridge failure
 - ⌘ Clarifies where vehicles may be used once the same-day motorized rule becomes effective.

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