



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MICHAEL J. DUNLEAVY

Department of Public Safety

DIVISION OF ALASKA WILDLIFE TROOPERS
Office of the Director

5700 East Tudor Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99507-1225
Main: 907.269.5641
Fax: 907.269.5079

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Chairman Spraker
Alaska Board of Game
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau Ak, 99811-5526

Dear Chairman Spraker:

The following comments give a brief description of the positions that the Department of Public Safety, Division of Alaska Wildlife Troopers have on the proposals that are up for consideration at the March 2019 Southcentral regulations meeting in Anchorage.

In general, when the board considers seasons and or bag limit changes, the Alaska Wildlife Troopers request that every effort possible be made to align the season dates and bag limits with adjacent game management units and/or sub units. This is mainly due to enforceability of multiple seasons in multiple locations as well as consistency of the regulations for the public. When the board considers proposals having to do with allocation or biological concerns, AWT is generally neutral in position.

AWT recognizes that regulations are developed by the Alaska Boards of Fish and Game through the public process to support management plans. Further, all management plans rely upon public compliance with regulations to achieve success. Enforcement is a crucial element needed to ensure long-term compliance with regulations by the public. The Alaska Wildlife Troopers request the board recognize that the division has limited resources and man power and any new regulation scheme or area restrictions may place an additional burden on AWT.

Comments on specific proposals are included in this letter.

Thank you for you for your time,

Bernard Chastain

Major Bernard Chastain
Deputy Director
Alaska Wildlife Troopers

Proposal 55

Remove the restriction on the use of aircraft for spotting Dall Sheep in GMU's 7 and 14

The Alaska Wildlife Troopers are the primary enforcement agency for this regulation. Since this regulation was enacted, the Alaska Wildlife Troopers have received reports of aircraft and sheep hunters violating this regulation across the state. Investigation of this crime takes considerable time and effort for Wildlife Troopers to look into these types of violations. To date, there has been no successful prosecution of a hunter for a violation of this regulation. This proposal seeks to remove the restriction in GMU's 7 and 14 only. For enforceability, if the board chooses to consider removal for GMU 7 and 14, consideration should be given to removing this requirement statewide.

Proposal 57

Modify the Controlled Use Area in Unit 6B

The Alaska Wildlife Troopers are neutral on this proposal as to the dates. The board should discuss the intent of this proposal and if it prohibits just the use of motorized vehicle for moose hunting or for all hunting during the closed period. If it is just moose hunters, it is suggested that the regulation reads

"... the area is closed to the use of any motorized vehicle for moose hunting, including the transportation of moose hunters, moose hunting gear, or parts of moose from ...".

If the intent was to prevent all hunting activity within the controlled use area from motorized vehicles during this period, then the regulation should remove the word moose hunters and be written to include all hunters.

Proposal 72/73

Change the resident moose hunt structure in 15C

These proposals are primarily allocative; however, the Alaska Wildlife Troopers will be able to answer questions about enforcement and high illegal take in the area.

Proposal 81

Require blaze orange be worn by moose hunters on Kalagin island in unit 15B

The Alaska Wildlife Troopers support this proposal. Requiring moose hunters on Kalagin Island to wear blaze orange is a good way to ensure hunters are seen in this heavily wooded area. The Alaska Wildlife Troopers are aware of at least two hunting deaths that occurred on Kalagin Island during moose season. It is unclear if wearing blaze orange would have prevented these deaths.

Proposal 88

Move the boundary of the Skilak Loop Wildlife Management Area in GMU 15

The Alaska Wildlife Troopers are neutral on this proposal. If this proposal were to pass, hunters and trappers would need to be educated that they could still not set traps or shoot from above the north bank of the Kenai River. Hunters and Trappers would still be required to wade out or be in a boat to participate in hunting or trapping in this area.

Proposal 91

Prohibit the discharge of certain weapons in GMU 15C

The Alaska Wildlife Troopers are neutral on this proposal but have enforcement concerns when dealing with the numerous boundary lines this will create around structures. As written in the proposal the hunter would need to have permission from the land owner if they are to discharge a weapon with ½ mile of a residence or its outbuildings. Private land owners already have the right to prohibit access to their land and the issues that are brought up in this proposal are seen statewide, not just in 15C. If this proposal were to be passed hunters would not only need to know land ownership information, but also information on adjacent land and where the distance from buildings on that land.

Proposal 120

Open a black bear baiting registration hunt for Anchorage Management Area

The Alaska Wildlife Troopers are neutral on this proposal. As brought up in the SE Region meeting, local ordinances should be considered prior to opening a hunt and determining where that hunt can occur. As written it is unknown if this hunt is intended to be for taking bears at bait station sites only or can a person spot and stalk with the permit. How far away from a bait site can a person be when taking a bear? If it is limited to taking bears at a bait site this could be difficult for the Alaska Wildlife Troopers to enforce due to the difficulty in determining if the bear was taken at a bait site. Additional considerations should be given to the public safety concerns of establishing a bait site in a populated area and if hunters are able to be a mile or more from structures to comply with regulations.

Proposal 125

Modify the Birchwood Management Area boundary in Unit 14C

The Alaska Wildlife Troopers support this change to prevent confusion amongst hunters and so that the regulations are clear for enforcement

Proposal 128

Modify the Clearwater Creek Controlled Use Area description

The Alaska Wildlife Troopers support making the description of the Clear Water Control Use Area defined on all its borders to prevent hunter misunderstandings and to clear for enforcement. Currently in the written description of this area, the name “Middle Fork of the Susitna River” is used. There is no part of the Susitna River named the “Middle Fork”, there is the West Fork and East Fork, and the main river that comes off the Susitna Glacier is the Susitna River. This causes confusion for hunters and enforcement in determining the area’s boundaries.

Proposal 129

Clarify transportation restrictions in the Dalton Highway Corridor management Area.

This is a proposal submitted by the Alaska Wildlife Troopers. We are asking the board to clarify the regulation that governs the restriction for motorized vehicles within the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area. Our comments are contained within the proposal.