



PC301

Submitted by: Mary Simondsen

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Anchor point, ak

Comment:

I support proposals #146-147 to protect dogs that are recreating with their family. All traps could be set 100 yards off the trail system. Trails should be safe for all users and should be inclusive of people that wish to bring their companion animals.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 146: Support Proposal 147: Support



PC302

Submitted by: Nancy Simpson

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Juneau

Comment:

I support AWA"s proposal 145. Thank you,

Nancy Simpson



PC303

Submitted by: Heidi Sinclair

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: seaward, AK

Comment:

I am an avid outdoor enthusiast and I have 2 dogs that go with me on many of these adventures. I feel having the 100 yard setback is more then enough space for me to feel safe to have my dogs off leash and also enjoy the freedom. I am in SUPPORT of proposals 145-154 and 146-148

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 145: Support Proposal 146: Support Proposal 147: Support Proposal 148: Support Proposal 149: Support Proposal 150: Support Proposal 151: Support Proposal 152: Support Proposal 153: Support Proposal 154: Support



Rick Sinnott
Certified Wildlife Biologist
Chugiak, Alaska

I am a certified wildlife biologist who worked for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for 28 years. For 17 of those years I was the Anchorage area wildlife biologist.

Having read the proposals and department comments it strikes me that the department and the board's decision-making is seriously hampered by preventing the management biologists – who know the area, the wildlife and a cross-section of the local residents (not just the hunters, trappers and guide/outfitters) better than most – from commenting on potential user conflicts and public safety concerns. The department has apparently also been instructed to not comment on hunting methods and means, which means its management biologists are not allowed to advise the board, for instance, that baiting bears in or near the state's largest urban area or in Alaska's most heavily used state park is a terrible idea (refer to the department's "neutral" position on Proposal 103).

Board members are not familiar with the terrain, the wildlife, and the people in every region of the state. A board member from the Seward Peninsula is likely to be completely unfamiliar with conditions in Southeast Alaska and vice versa. It goes without saying that most rural board members will be unfamiliar with the conditions and issues in and adjacent to the state's largest city.

This blanket gag order often leaves the department with the lame response that a hunt would be biologically justifiable when other aspects of the hunt raise red flags. The board is clearly the decision-maker. Why not consider the advice of local management biologists?

Interestingly, comments by members of the public and representatives of non-governmental organizations are not restricted by the board. They can freely discuss their concerns regarding allocation, public safety, methods and means, and even the principles and goals of wildlife management – as they should.

Fortunately, I am not hamstrung by the department's inability to offer reasonable advice on local conditions and issues that the board needs to hear in order to make good decisions.

5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep

PROPOSAL 82 – OPPOSE

This proposal would add the East Fork of the Eklutna River sheep hunt area (currently an archery-only hunt) to adjacent sheep hunt areas where rifles are allowed.



Dall sheep populations in Unit 14C are lower than they were in previous decades. Although the populations appear to be rebounding, the record snow loads in the winter of 2022-23 will undoubtedly decrease sheep numbers again. Although the department supports this proposal, its recommendation notes that “there is not a sufficient number of full-curl rams to warrant opening any new drawing hunts.” I would argue that adding the existing archery-only hunt area to areas where rifles are allowed is in effect adding a new drawing hunt because rifle hunters are much more efficient at harvesting full-curl rams.

I do, however, support the department’s alternative recommendation to combine the archery-only hunt areas in the East Fork and West Fork of the Eklutna River into one archery-only hunt area to reduce hunter crowding in the West Fork and to increase opportunity for bowhunters who have limited areas in which to hunt Dall sheep in early fall without competition from rifle hunters. Of course, another way to reduce hunter crowding is to reduce the number of drawing permits.

PROPOSAL 83 – OPPOSE

This proposal would reopen the late season rifle hunts for Dall sheep in Unit 14C and redistribute the existing permits.

These hunts were closed in 2011 after the department observed a significant and serious decline in sheep numbers. The department’s aerial counts between 2011 and 2022 show that sheep numbers have fluctuated somewhat but were not that different in 2022 compared to 2011. The winter of 2022-23 has had record snowfalls that will undoubtedly increase sheep mortality in Unit 14C. Now is not the time to be reopening hunt areas that were temporarily closed due to a declining sheep population and have yet to rebound.

PROPOSAL 84 – OPPOSE

This proposal would create a new early-season, archery-only hunt for Dall sheep in the Eklutna River drainage and allow hunters to use aircraft to spot sheep because the new hunt would occur earlier than the prohibition is in effect.

The department does not support this proposal because the added hunting opportunity as well as the hunters’ ability to locate sheep from the air would likely increase harvest of all age and sex classes, which is unwarranted considering the relatively low numbers of sheep in the drainage.

Although the board requires the department to remain neutral on the issue of allocation, I can also assure you as the former management biologist for this subunit that extending the sheep hunting season will conflict with the high number of visitors using Eklutna Valley in the summer and early fall periods, including many hikers and mountain climbers in sheep habitat. Chugach State



Park requires a special park permit for the discharge of weapons, and the department and board should work closely with the park to both maximize hunting and viewing opportunities and minimize conflicts between park users.

PROPOSAL 208 – OPPOSE

This proposal would modify the nonresident permit allocation for Dall sheep in Unit 14C.

This proposal purports to address an allocation issue that would bring guides more revenue at the expense of resident hunters and their relatives. However, as the department noted, the proposal has a conservation-related flaw in that it would force the department to issue at least one nonresident sheep permit in every hunt area in Unit 14C every year. This limits the ability of the department to close hunts temporarily to protect the sheep populations in these areas. In these small hunt areas, with a limited surplus of sheep in the best-case scenarios, harvesting one sheep can be one too many.

5 AAC 85.040. Hunting seasons and bag limits for goat

PROPOSAL 85 – OPPOSE

This proposal would create an archery-only hunt for mountain goats in the West Fork of the Eklutna River drainage.

Drawing goat hunts were expanded in several drainages of Chugach State Park decades ago, with the park managers' approval, because the small populations of goats in those drainages could support a very limited harvest. Thus, additional hunting opportunities were created with very little impact on other users. However, as the department noted in its recommendations, there does not appear to be sufficient numbers to open a new hunt in the drainage. Undoubtedly, some of the goats found in the West Fork of the Eklutna River during summer surveys are available for hunters in the East Fork of the Eklutna River. The two areas are separated by a ridgeline that presents no barrier at all to goat movements.

In addition, as noted in my comments regarding Proposal 84, the upper end of Eklutna Valley is heavily used by park visitors during September and early October, hikers may be encountered in and near goat habitat, and rounds discharged from most of the steep slopes surrounding the drainage are easily within range of the valley bottom where most visitors are concentrated. Chugach State Park requires a special park permit for discharge of weapons, and the department and board should work closely with the park to both maximize hunting and viewing opportunities and minimize conflicts between park users.

5 AAC 85.045(5). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose



PROPOSAL 86 – SUPPORT

This proposal would reauthorize the antlerless moose season in the Twentymile/Portage/Placer hunt area in Units 7 and 14C.

The department needs the flexibility provided by antlerless moose hunts to manage moose populations in these drainages.

On a related topic, the requirement to reauthorize antlerless moose hunts annually is a huge waste of time for the department and the board, not to mention a waste of paper. The board should consider amending this requirement so that antlerless hunts need to be reauthorized only when other proposals for the same region are considered. Moose populations are typically not so mercurial as to require the current level of oversight. If the department finds that antlerless permits should be reduced or eliminated to limit hunter harvest, it has the authority to do so. If, for some reason, the department decides that antlerless permits should not be reduced even when a moose population has suffered a significant decline, then the board cycle would allow the problem to be corrected in two or three years.

PROPOSAL 88 – OPPOSE

This proposal is confusing. It asks to restrict the registration moose hunt in the Chugach State Park Management Area (i.e., what the proposal calls RM445) to archery only, but RM445 already is an archery-only hunt. RM445 is in the Eklutna Lake Management Area, which is not part of the Chugach State Park Management Area. Additional language in the proposal appears to ask for an archery-only moose hunt throughout the Chugach State Park Management Area (excluding Ship Creek drainage) for bulls with spike-fork or 50 inch antlers or bulls with at least 3 brow tines on at least one side.

Assuming that the proposal is asking to create an archery-only hunt throughout the Chugach State Park Management Area (excluding Ship Creek drainage), I agree with the department that this proposal would reduce overall moose hunting opportunity and harvest in Unit 14C. Bowhunters are currently allowed to hunt moose in the Chugach State Park Management Area and, unlike some areas in the state, competition from rifle hunters is not onerous. In addition, bowhunters already have several unique and very accessible opportunities to harvest moose without competition from rifle hunters in Unit 14C, including RM445, DM448, DM424, DM426, DM427, DM428, DM430, and DM444. These archery-only hunts produce a sizeable portion of the moose harvested in Unit 14C.

PROPOSAL 89 – SUPPORT



This proposal would reauthorize the antlerless moose hunts on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Birchwood Management Area, Anchorage Management Area, Ship Creek drainage, and the Remainder of Unit 14C.

As stated previously regarding Proposal 86, the department needs the flexibility provided by antlerless moose hunts to manage moose populations in these areas and to provide additional hunting opportunity in areas with relatively high levels of human activity, in part to reduce the number of moose-vehicle collisions in the Anchorage bowl and surrounding communities.

Furthermore, the requirement to reauthorize antlerless moose hunts annually is a huge waste of time for the department and the board, not to mention a waste of paper. The board should consider amending this requirement so that antlerless hunts need to be reauthorized only when other proposals for the same region are considered. Moose populations are typically not so mercurial as to require the current level of oversight. If the department finds that antlerless permits should be reduced or eliminated to limit hunter harvest, it has the authority to do so. If, for some reason, the department decides that antlerless permits should not be reduced even when a moose population has suffered a significant decline, then the board cycle would allow the problem to be corrected in two or three years.

PROPOSAL 203 – OPPOSE

This proposal would create an antlerless moose drawing hunt for shotguns or muzzleloaders in Kincaid Park for hunters who meet the 70% disability with mobility impairments.

I support hunts for impaired hunters, who have far fewer hunting opportunities than less physically challenged hunters and include a fair share of veterans. However, Kincaid Park is not an ideal, or even a somewhat acceptable, location for such a hunt.

The department has had the authority to issue permits for antlerless moose hunts in the Anchorage Management Area for nearly three decades. It has repeatedly refrained from exercising its permitting authority in Kincaid and other large city parks in the Anchorage bowl because they are heavily used in every season, and the trails systems are both extensive and interwoven to an extent that it would prove exceeding difficult to discharge even a short-range firearm in the park without risking hitting a person using a nearby trail.

In the past the municipal division of parks and recreation has opposed even archery-only moose hunts in Kincaid Park. The only feasible and reasonably safe way to conduct the hunt would be to close the entire park or a large portion of it. A closure of this nature would be unpopular and unenforceable. People access the park's trails via a bewildering array of short, social trails from neighborhoods on the east side, and Kincaid Park is a major destination for



people hiking, biking, running and skiing the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail, which connects most of west Anchorage all the way to downtown.

5 AAC 85.015. Hunting seasons and bag limits for black bear

5 AAC 92.530. Management areas

PROPOSAL 90 – OPPOSE

This proposal asks to establish a new hunt area for black bears using “primitive” or any legal weapons in the West Fork of Eagle River, excluding that area within ½ mile of a developed facility. Later the proposal specifies the South Fork. To be clear, Eagle River has a North Fork and a South Fork; there is no West Fork.

The lower half of the South Fork drainage has many houses in the valley bottom and part way up the slopes. Because these houses are on private property, there is little or no public access to the slopes. Furthermore, if, as the proposal states, the hunt would exclude a buffer area of ½ mile from any developed facility, hunting in the lower valley would be largely restricted to the ridge tops.

Public access in the lower end of the valley leads primarily to a heavily forested strip of Chugach State Park land in the lower valley with a trail that leads a few hundred yards south to Barbara Falls, a popular hiking destination, and north a short distance to the confluence of the North Fork of Eagle River. For much of the summer black bears avoid this area because it is frequented by brown bears, being the only segment of the South Fork with spawning salmon.

At the upper end of the valley, public access is gained via a single, small parking lot that leads to one of the most popular hiking trails in the park. Hence, user conflicts will inevitably arise. Many of the people hiking the trail would like to see black bears in the park, albeit at a distance. The slopes of the valley for a considerable distance upstream from the access point are popular berry-picking sites; thus, hunting with firearms will be problematic from a safety perspective. Hunting with any weapon, but particularly bow and arrow, will inevitably wound bears, creating a potential safety issue with other, often unarmed visitors.

The South Fork drainage abuts the Ship Creek drainage and other portions of the Chugach State Park Management Area where black bear hunting with any legal weapon is allowed from September 1 through May 31. Black bears using the South Fork Valley also use Ship Creek Valley and other adjacent areas and can be hunted there without the user conflicts and public safety concerns of this proposed hunt.

PROPOSAL 92 – OPPOSE

This proposal would add bow and arrow to the legal means of taking black bears in DL457, the drawing hunt in McHugh Creek drainage.



Bowhunters have been asking for an opportunity to harvest bears in the Anchorage Management Area, including McHugh Creek drainage, for decades. Bowhunting has not been approved in the McHugh Creek drainage because the valley is heavily used by Chugach State Park visitors. It took many years and much discussion with park managers and the public to gain the opportunity to hunt in this drainage, and archery hunting was a non-starter due to user conflicts, the likelihood of wounding bears, and public safety concerns.

This is a difficult drainage in which to hunt black bears because much of it is heavily wooded or brushy and, for obvious safety reasons, baiting is not allowed. Without baiting, hunters using a bow and arrow are going to be even less successful than hunters using a firearm. If the objective is to harvest bears and perhaps instill a measure of wariness in the remaining bear population so that individual bears are less likely to become problems in nearby neighborhoods, then hunting should be restricted to muzzleloaders and shotguns with slugs.

PROPOSAL 93 – SUPPORT AS AMENDED

This proposal would add bow and arrow to the legal means of taking black bears in DL455 and DL457, the drawing hunts on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson and in McHugh Creek drainage, respectively.

I oppose adding archery to DL457 for the reasons discussed under Proposal 92. However, adding archery to DL455 could be feasible if approved by JBER.

PROPOSAL 94 – OPPOSE

This proposal would establish a weekday-only, archery-only drawing hunt for black bears in the McHugh Creek drainage.

The proposed hunt would allow bowhunters to hunt on the same days and throughout the same season (September 1 through May 31) as DL457 currently does for hunters using muzzleloaders and shotguns with slugs. In other words, it is unclear if the proposal is asking that bow and arrow be added to the existing hunt or that only archery be allowed in DL457. I oppose both interpretations for the reasons discussed under Proposal 92.

PROPOSAL 95 – OPPOSE

This proposal would establish a limited registration, weekday-only, archery-only, resident-only, black bear hunt in the McHugh Creek drainage.

Like Proposal 94, it is unclear if the proposal is asking that bow and arrow be added to the existing hunt or that only archery be allowed in what is currently the DL457 hunt area. I oppose both interpretations for the reasons discussed under



Proposal 92. This hunt has always been managed as a drawing hunt because that is the best way to limit the number of hunters. A registration hunt would only exacerbate user conflicts and safety issues.

In addition, like other hunt areas in Chugach State Park, this hunt would require a special permit for discharging a weapon. With drawing hunts, a list of hunters can be shared with the park managers leaving plenty of time for them to issue each hunter a permit. How could the park's regulatory requirement to issue a special permit be fulfilled when a hunter might register the day before hunting?

5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear

5 AAC 92.530. Management areas

PROPOSAL 97 – OPPOSE

This proposal would establish a primitive weapons brown bear hunt in the South Fork of Eagle River drainage.

I oppose this hunt for many of the same reasons discussed under Proposal 90. Hunting in the lower valley would be limited by the ½ mile buffer, the lower South Fork trail system is short and abuts a residential neighborhood, and the upper valley trails are all heavily used by hikers and berry pickers. The department's recommendation to limit hunters by requiring a drawing permit would reduce some of the conflicts; however, public access is severely limited and accessible park areas are relatively congested with people, particularly during the fall berry-picking period. Public safety is a serious concern because a wounded brown bear could easily turn up in a residential neighborhood. Public surveys sponsored by the department have found that most park users like to see brown bears in the park and find the risk acceptable. As with other proposals, this hunt would require a special use permit from Chugach State Park for the discharge of weapons for each hunter.

PROPOSAL 98 – OPPOSE

This proposal would establish a brown bear hunt in the Rainbow Creek drainage, excluding those areas within ½ mile of the Seward Highway or any developed facility.

The proposal raises many of the same user conflict and public safety concerns as Proposal 97. Excluding the ½ mile buffer from the Seward Highway leaves a roughly square-shaped valley about 2 miles across. A road and a residential neighborhood occupies the center of the valley, leaving primarily the ridges and steep, rocky slopes for this hunt.

Allowing an unlimited number of brown bear hunters in this small valley would create problems. Residents of Rainbow Valley would not appreciate wounded



brown bears in their neighborhood. Outside of the private property much of the valley is in Chugach State Park. Public surveys sponsored by the department have found that most park users like to see brown bears in the park and find the risk acceptable. As with other proposals, this hunt would require a special use permit from Chugach State Park for the discharge of weapons for each hunter.

PROPOSAL 99 – OPPOSE

This proposal would establish an archery-only drawing hunt for brown bears in the McHugh Creek drainage.

The proposal raises many of the same user conflict and public safety concerns as Proposals 97 and 98. The narrow valley is bisected by a popular hiking trail, and McHugh Creek trailhead is one of the most popular picnic areas in Anchorage. McHugh Creek is heavily wooded in some areas and has extensive subalpine alder and willow thickets. Without using a bait station, it will be difficult and unsafe to hunt brown bears in the valley with bows and arrows. The conditions lend themselves to deflected shots and lost bears. Residents of South Anchorage would not appreciate wounded brown bears in their neighborhood. It would be irresponsible to authorize a bow hunt for brown bears a little more than a mile from the residential neighborhoods in Potter Heights, Southpointe Ridge, Potter Valley and Bear Valley. As with other proposals, this hunt would require a special use permit from Chugach State Park for the discharge of weapons for each hunter.

PROPOSAL 100 – OPPOSE

This proposal would establish an archery-only drawing hunt for brown bears on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

JBER is a military reservation that uses its wildlands intensively for training purposes. In addition, the base has large housing areas along its southern border. The base also allows recreational use, primarily hiking and running, by the residents of Anchorage in some areas by permit only. Much of JBER borders residential neighborhoods and popular city parks like Beach Lake Park and Far North Bicentennial Park in the Anchorage bowl, Eagle River and Chugiak. None of these current uses and activities will happily accommodate wounded brown bears. It would be irresponsible to authorize a bow hunt for brown bears on JBER.

PROPOSAL 101 – OPPOSE

This proposal would extend the general season to allow an archery-only brown bear hunt in Unit 14C Remainder during the month of June.



The “remainder” of Unit 14C consists of mostly Chugach National Forest and other federal lands east of Chugach State Park. Most of the area, except for the southern portion around the communities of Girdwood and Portage, and a small neighborhood in the northwest corner of the hunt area, south of the Knik River, is remote and has few brown bears. The current hunting season for all legal weapons runs from September 1 through May 31.

In the most recent five-year period for which the department has records, an average of 3 brown bears have been harvested annually. Although the department has no idea how many brown bears inhabit the remainder of Unit 14C, because most of the area is far from salmon-spawning habitat I would hazard a guess that three bears per year (in addition to wounding loss) may be approaching the level of sustainability. Furthermore, many bear hunters believe that June bear hides have rubbed areas that detract from their trophy value.

PROPOSAL 102 – OPPOSE

This proposal would extend the general season to hunt brown bears in Unit 14C Remainder.

The “remainder” of Unit 14C consists of mostly Chugach National Forest and other federal lands east of Chugach State Park. Most of the area, except for the southern portion around the communities of Girdwood and Portage, and a small neighborhood in the northwest corner of the hunt area, south of the Knik River, is remote and has few brown bears. The current hunting season for all legal weapons runs from September 1 through May 31.

In the most recent five-year period for which the department has records, an average of 3 brown bears have been harvested annually. Although the department has no idea how many brown bears inhabit the remainder of Unit 14C, because most of the area is far from salmon-spawning habitat I would hazard a guess that three bears per year (in addition to wounding loss) may be approaching the level of sustainability. Furthermore, many bear hunters believe that June bear hides have rubbed areas that detract from their trophy value.

5 AAC 85.015. Hunting seasons and bag limits for black bear

5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear

5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures

5 AAC 92.530. Management areas

PROPOSAL 103 – OPPOSE

This proposal would establish a bait hunt for black and brown bears in the McHugh Creek drainage from May 1 through June 15.



This proposal trots out the common misperceptions that baiting bears will help keep bears from dangerous encounters with people: a “large number” of bears are present in the drainage, the bait station can be sited to “eliminate dangerous encounters with bears and recreational users of the park,” reducing overall numbers of bears is a “conservation” issue, bears “have taken the lives of people using the park for recreational purposes,” the bait station will “lure the bears away from heavily used trails,” if this proposal does not pass “more dangerous encounters and possible deaths may occur,” and without the hunt “the bear population will increase.”

What is a “large number”? The department admits it has no idea how many bears occupy the McHugh Creek drainage. And if there is a “large number” of bears what possible circumstances will allow the population to increase if the hunt is not authorized? There are no salmon in the drainage. Black bears are already hunted in the drainage, brown bears are hunted in nearby drainages, and the population of both species is likely at or below carrying capacity already.

This is a narrow valley, on average about a mile wide, with a popular recreational trail along its entire length. It would be impossible to site a bait station anywhere in the valley that is more than a 10-15 minute stroll to the trail. Another trail across the base of the valley, the Turnagain Arm Trail, is even more heavily used. The McHugh Creek trailhead is the most popular picnic area in the park. Hikers frequent Turnagain Arm trails earlier in spring than other Anchorage area trails because the trails become snow-free sooner on south-facing slopes. The trails are popular destinations in May and June.

There is no way that bears who are attracted to human-provided bait will not be attracted to hikers with food, tents, and the picnic area. Several Anchorage neighborhoods are little more than a mile from the McHugh Creek drainage. Food-conditioned bears will be encouraged by the bait stations to visit those neighborhoods and wounded bears could also find their way into nearby residential areas.

Both black and brown bears have killed and injured people in Chugach State Park. However, these are rare events and park managers are not asking for help in reducing bear populations. The incident mentioned in the proposal, where a young man was killed by a black bear, occurred in another valley several miles away. There was a tragic brown bear attack nearly 30 years ago that killed two runners on McHugh Creek Trail. The attack occurred because a sow and cubs were resting on a moose kill close to the trail. In other words, the attack was likely exacerbated by both the presence of the cubs and a coveted food source. A moose kill is not very different from a regularly restocked pile of bait, except it is a natural consequence of the wild nature of the park and not a place picked by some sport hunters to dump doughnut grease or dog food so they can each harvest one of the many bears that would be attracted to the site. The proposal doesn't even consider the food conditioning of bears, especially sows with cubs



or small bears that are less likely to be harvested because hunters are waiting for a bigger, male bear. I submit that a bait station in McHugh Creek drainage would increase the number of dangerous bear encounters in the Anchorage area and increase the number of bears shot by the department and private citizens in defense of life or property, not decrease them as the proposal claims. Authorizing the use of bait stations in Chugach State Park or anywhere in the vicinity of Anchorage would be the height of irresponsibility.

This is not an isolated or protected population of bears. Collared and radio-tagged brown and black bears frequently move between Turnagain Arm drainages, the Anchorage bowl, Eagle River and Chugiak. There are opportunities to hunt bears in many parts of Chugach State Park.

5 AAC 84.270. Furbearer trapping

5 AAC 85.060. Hunting seasons and bag limits for fur animals

PROPOSAL 104 – OPPOSE

This proposal would close lynx hunting and trapping in Chugach State Park and the Glacier Creek drainage near the ski resort community of Girdwood.

It is interesting how the department's recommendation on this proposal splits hairs. The department supports lynx hunting and trapping in the park and the ski resort community, which is clearly stating a preference between two user groups. And yet the department subsequently claims to be neutral on the allocation between consumptive and non-consumptive users. A categorical statement in support of lynx hunting and trapping in Alaska's most visited state park, where people want to see lynx, and a ski resort with lots of people walking dogs off leash on woodland trails will not be considered a neutral stance by most people.

Nevertheless, I oppose this proposal because the opportunity to hunt and trap lynx has been carefully adjusted to accommodate at least some of the concerns of park visitors and dog walkers. For example, the park requires trappers to register and mark their traps to encourage responsible behavior. I just wish the board and the department would recognize the blatant hypocrisy inherent in supporting hunting and trapping almost everywhere in the state, including in parks and near urban and exurban areas, while often discounting the desires of nonconsumptive users, who the board and department are also required to serve.

Certainly adding one or more nonconsumptive users to the board itself would be a step in the right direction. The board should actively promote the idea of greater diversity – which can only lead to better decision-making in the service of all Alaskans – with the Governor and Legislature.



Comments on Alaska Board of Game Proposals March 2023:

As a full time, year-round Moose Pass resident and federal subsistence user of Unit 7 public lands and trails - trapping, hunting, and recreating with my dogs - **I oppose all trapping setback proposals in Unit 7 (Proposals 148-153)** which would institute trap setback near many miles of trails, roads, and campgrounds. **I also oppose Proposal 154 requiring signs for trapping.** I hope my comments weigh into other trap setback proposals, as I am not as familiar with Unit 15 but these issues may apply and should be scrutinized before removing trapping opportunities from Alaskans.

First, these proposals would make State trapping regulations more restrictive than Federal subsistence trapping regulations. The Subsistence Board rejected similar trapping proposals in the past. This would create confusion by both trappers and dog owners if setbacks were required only by trappers under State regulations but not federal subsistence rules on federal land. Three different federal rural subsistence communities – including Cooper Landing – utilize the proposed area and would not be bound to setbacks. The Alaska constitution and ANILCA are clear that harvesting wildlife is a fundamental right and it is unfair to make it harder for families to snare hares, or trap beaver for food and warm clothing - just because some people do not want to control their dogs. We live within an area with abundant wildlife and a rich heritage of hunting and trapping that still exists. We don't loudly get on the radio or social media to gain attention because trapping for many of us is akin to getting groceries or buying pants – set our traps, hopefully catch meat and fur for personal use or income. But once again the legal harvest of wildlife under highly regulated methods in the backcountry is being unjustly vilified. The longest trapping season in the proposal area is six months - which provides six months without trapping for off leash dogs. Public land is managed for multiple uses, and this separation in time allows for both user groups to engage in their activities for half of the year. And contrary to the proposal, most trappers run their traplines via ski or snowshoe in this area because most of it is closed to snowmachines, so the impacts on trapping effort are more than being claimed.

Trappers aren't "holding others hostage" - the refusal by some dog owners keep their pet under control and within sight for 6 months is holding themselves hostage. The vast majority of dog owners recreating in the winter understand they are responsible for their pet if they are off leash and share the trails safely. It is no different than a skier learning about avalanche safety and being equipped with the knowledge and gear to recognize hazards and act accordingly when they ski the backcountry. Trapping is not fundamentally incompatible with any other user group. I have not heard of traps being placed right in the official tread of trails with official administrative signs. Biking, skiing, snowshoeing, or any other user will not encounter a trap "in the middle of the trail" if they are on an official trail with a trailhead around here – the only user group experiencing issues on these trails are dogs that are not with, and controlled by, their owner. Sometimes people accidentally recreate on a trapline, leaving from a pullout without a kiosk, thinking it is a real trail instead of recognizing the packed tracks are from repeated trap checks; in some cases, some do it on purpose to claim a trap is "right in the trail!" and create an uproar. Trappers may also think they are not on a trail, but unknown to them it is an unmarked, unofficial "local secret" trail and they just so happened to be first ones to travel it that winter.



These facts are being left out of the narrative of “traps are right in the trails!”. It would be interesting to see an actual map of trap incidents as reported on Map the Trap, but I don’t think that information was ever shared publicly.

As a trapper, I am not opposed to some reasonable compromises in certain high use, easily located and identified (by all users, not just a subgroup of locals) trails or areas with clearly definable and officially recognized boundaries – such as the Campgrounds; or trails with permanent, official administrative trailheads, kiosks, and a set route that does not change. There is NO question by any user if you are on the Resurrection Pass trail, for example. But Safe Trail’s claim that they would simply like to make some “safe multi-use trails in Cooper Landing” is misleading. They want to restrict trapping in the backcountry far from towns; long stretches of highway without official trailheads; and bans on traps that pose zero risk to dogs. There is already a huge area closed to trapping entirely that is closer to Cooper Landing than many of these proposed areas - Skilak Lake Road loop of the Kenai NWR, which is 19 miles long and has at least 32,000 acres of trap free trails and backcountry, ~10 miles away from the center of Cooper Landing. This is much closer to Cooper Landing than some of the proposed areas. To put it in perspective: from town center, Tern Lake is 12 miles; Devil’s Pass trailhead is 14 miles; Summit Lake is 19 miles; Manitoba is 23 miles. Moose Pass center is slightly farther from these areas. It has been very misleading to the public that Cooper Landing Safe trails is trying to simply make Cooper Landing areas safe –. In fact, that section of the Seward highway could be considered the wheel hub of 3 federally recognized rural subsistence communities – Cooper Landing itself, Moose Pass, and Hope.

Another issue is that while trappers will read the regulations - as trapping is already highly regulated – what if dog owners don’t read them? Or they think “Summit area is safe of traps” and don’t seek out the exact mile markers and distance of setback? If they already read trapping rules, they would know when and where trapping season is open and know to keep their dog under control and/or scout out areas to see if traps are nearby. How accurate is the general public at recognizing 100 yards, uphill, in the snow (as would be the case near Summit Lake on the Seward Highway)? Will dog owners suddenly decide to leash their pet once they reach 100 yards? What if the mile markers on the highway are missing (as some are right now)? That’s a burden on not just trappers but also dog owners. What if somebody THINKS they are on one of the proposed trails that does not have a trailhead or administrative signage, but they accidentally follow a trapper’s off-trail tracks in the snow and follow their trapline? What is safer – assuming there are traps on public land and getting educated on trapping/controlling your dog to keep it safe, or putting an even bigger burden on dog owners to seek out, understand, and follow pages of regulations? It is guaranteed that if setbacks were instituted, a trapper with totally legal sets would still get demonized if a dog owner was ignorant of the rules - and further bans on trapping would be demanded.

There are further implications on allowing setbacks in areas that do not have legal, set boundaries or a fixed, hardened, known route, and do not have permanent administrative signage. The fact that they had to make their own maps to label areas with slang terms such as



“Japan Woods” and “Park and Poke” illustrates this point – they are only areas known by certain groups but known to the general public. It’s not on google; it’s not on the USGS quads. “Devil’s Pass Ski Loop” is not an officially designated recreation area; volunteers groom old skid trails in a moose habitat project. There isn’t an official boundary or recognized as federal recreation area, and I don’t believe the skid roads are even counted as permanent roads or trails as they are supposed to be restored - and the quickly growing habitat forage regeneration will certainly change the shape and accessibility of the area as trees grow back and cause confusion on what the boundary is. Setbacks from trail center of a known, hardened route – such as Resurrection Pass – is subject to less confusion and interpretation than “Manitoba Ski Area” in which skin trail/snow tracks by skiers or snowshoers within the vicinity could easily be mistaken as the “trap free” trail and can be too subjective. Another huge issue is that allowing setbacks on unofficial areas would set a dangerous precedent for traplines - if a trapper packs down, brushes and maintains a trapline, other users could hijack his trapline, give it a local slang name, and claim it is now “multi-use” and ask for setbacks. What would stop this from happening if this precedent is set?

For all setback proposals, setbacks are unnecessary for traps with an inside spread of 5 inches or less, that are set at least 4 feet above the ground or snow level, and size 3 leghold marten traps set in boxes as there is zero risk to a dog being killed in this scenario. Lack of education, and/or the purposeful spread of misinformation about the risks posed by small elevated sets, should not lead to unnecessary burden on trappers. The same can be said for submerged water sets, under ice sets, or weasel sized sets.

Proposal 149: Regarding campgrounds, the Forest Service has a leash law for all the areas in the proposal. I have not heard of any dog incidents with traps in campgrounds on OR off leash. I am not opposed to keeping ground set 330s or other legitimately lethal traps out of campgrounds. However, I am opposed to setbacks extending outside of campgrounds for any sets (and campgrounds have definite boundaries, and dogs are required to be on leash anyway), and some sets do not pose any risk to dogs.

As noted before, setbacks are unnecessary for certain elevated marten/ermine sets as there is zero risk to a dog being killed in this scenario. If a setback were to be implemented as a compromise specifically and only in campgrounds, I would only suggest using the campground roads and loops/day use footprints to implement the 50’ setback for these traps – not the outer boundaries of the campground. Some campgrounds – such as Russian River – are not developed within the entire physical footprint and have large areas of undeveloped forest. Totally prohibiting these sets from being placed in peripheral woods away from the groomed roads is restrictive without just cause. Some campgrounds listed in the proposal are adjacent to rivers that beavers that have, at times, dammed up and may cause flooding. The ability to utilize trapping as a legal and effective management tool for trappers to harvest and utilize the fur and meat from areas where they can damage infrastructure should be maintained without having an unnecessary burden to request a special permit to remove nuisance animals because submerged beaver sets should be of no risk to a controlled dog under owner control.



For proposals 150 and 151: I disagree with setbacks along Seward and Sterling highways and pullouts because children and dogs should always be closely watched and never left to roam next to highways. From obvious dangers of high speed traffic, to disposed needles and abundant human waste unfortunately found at pullouts, to the chance a roadkill animal has drawn in predators close to the road are all very real dangers.

It is a misnomer for the organization to be called "Safe Trails", because the entire platform is based solely around restricting trapping, which would in turn encourage others to allow their dogs to run uncontrolled under the guise of safety. But not only are there endless other hazards for loose dogs in the backcountry – moose, porcupine, running away, predators, getting lost – uncontrolled dogs are literally a potential hazard to **all** other user groups. Children, adults, and other dogs can be bit or knocked over by an uncontrolled dog. Dogs can harass or kill wildlife, or spread or catch disease with wildlife, or interfere with people hunting. Popular outdoors publications have many articles about the conflicts between off leash dogs and other users – all state to keep your dog on a leash if it does not stay close and have perfect recall. Ironically, the reasons Safe Trails wants these setbacks – increasing recreation on multi use trails – is exactly why many public land managers – including Anchorage – are instituting new or stronger leash controls! The public outcry on negative dog interactions is abundant and conflicts with many other user groups. Dogs are mobile and have teeth. Traps just sit there. To ignore other user groups that may be negatively affected by increased dogs at large is a disservice to the very idea of multi-use and what a "Safe Trail" is. Even non-trappers are not happy with the rhetoric of user groups trying to force others out, and the discord being sown in our rural communities. Who will they try to exclude next?

One positive of this proposal cycle is that Safe Trails did prove just how effective education and outreach is to educate people on how to recreate safely during trapping season – WITHOUT trapping setbacks! I have not heard of any negative interactions in Unit 7 this winter! If they spend as much time and money promoting trap safety for pet owners in the future as they did pushing their proposal all over social media and in person, dog owners would be empowered with the awareness and skills that will benefit them far more than pages of regulations and a patchwork of setbacks.

Thank you for considering my comments.



Submitted by: Morgan Smith

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Homer, AK

Comment:

I would like to express my strong support proposals 146 and 147 to require setbacks for traps from popular trails in Kachemak Bay State Park and the Homer area. More than 8 dogs have been recently trapped on trails in the Homer area. Setback requirements are a powerful solution to prevent conflict and allow popular trails to be enjoyed by all. These proposals still provide trappers with access to public areas to continue trapping safely.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 145: Support Proposal 146: Support Proposal 147: Support Proposal 156: Support Proposal 160: Support
Proposal 162: Oppose Proposal 163: Oppose Proposal 164: Support Proposal 166: Support Proposal 169: Support
Proposal 171: Support



Submitted by: James Smith

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Anchorage, Alaska

Comment:

Proposal 65- Strongly OPPOSE- I strongly oppose this proposal.

I have a resident buddy who's down in that area for an extended amount of time for the passed few years. He has record of the number of goats he sees on the hoof or sees harvested. Just alone in Kiavak Bay last year there were 80 goats. He says through out the other areas there is a large population of goats.

If there might be a decline of billy goats- maybe the solution should be is to limit the number of goats harvested per person- switch it from 2 to 1. I feel like limiting the season dates is only benefiting the user who submitted this proposal. If the season is shortened this will effect user access and opportunity for residents. As a resident myself changing the season dates will not allow me to hunt down there because of my current job. The season dates now will allow me to have a lengthy amount of time to chose when i decide to hunt this area.

Proposal 73- SUPPORT

Because of the low population of deer in areas- I agree with prop 73. I think if you limit non residents from 2 to 1, this will help the population in areas where there is a decline. I think most Non-residents harvest 1 deer anyways when they come up either on a guided deer hunt or a boat-based hunt.

Proposal 78- Strongly OPPOSE- I strongly oppose this proposal.

This Proposal is a direct anti-Guide Proposal. Like in the past this was not passed. The Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge has a excellent Brown bear management system that should not be changed. Majority of the guides submit non-residents for the draw and do not skip the draw. This is an obvious attack against guides.



[REDACTED]
Kodiak, AK 99615

February 7, 2023
[REDACTED]

To Whom it may Concern:

Please accept this letter of concern regarding proposal 76. First and foremost, let me start by stating that I am not anti-bear hunting. I find that extending the current road system bear hunting seasons in order to eliminate "problem" bears is an archaic and thinly veiled proposal on how to manage bears that live near our residential areas. This proposal does not address the underlying problem of people and garbage. With proper and enforced garbage management we could alleviate most of our bear issues.

This proposal also lacks substance on how a bear is deemed a "problem" bear. Who determines this? Where and when will this bear be eliminated. Hunting near our residential areas seems to invite a myriad of problems with potential for catastrophic results.

Finally, as a photographer and bear viewing guide, I feel that this proposal has potential to take out some of the local bears that many find wonderful to watch and photograph. We need to recognize that bear viewing, and photography also provides a substantial economic resource to our community. We tend to forget that Kodiak bears are and should be considered a shared resource.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Smith



PC309

Submitted by: Laura Sneddon

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: CA

Comment:

I support Proposal #145 to secure hunting and trapping setbacks from new wildlife crossings on the Sterling Highway Cooper Landing bypass. It is important that fencing keep wildlife off the road and funnel them through these new crossings, but at the same time regulations must restrict hunting and trapping on these crossings. Why would crossings be allowed only to subject the animals to the dangers of hunting and hunters?!

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 146: Support Proposal 147: Support Proposal 149: Support Proposal 150: Support Proposal 151: Support Proposal 152: Support Proposal 153: Support Proposal 154: Support Proposal 156: Support Proposal 157: Support Proposal 158: Support Proposal 160: Support



PC310

Submitted by: David Mastolier

Organization Name: Snomads, Inc.

Community of Residence: Homer, Alaska

Comment:

To whom it may concern,

It has been brought to our organization's (Snomads, Inc., a non-profit) attention that a Proposal involving southern Kenai Peninsula trails is in the works.

PROPOSAL 147 5 AAC 92.550. Areas closed to trapping.

Snomads, Inc. does not support our organization's name in this proposal, nor do we authorize any map we may produce. Snomads do not own any trails; we maintain public trails for multi-use. Labeling a trail as Snomads is incorrect. The trails we maintain can change yearly, making the proposed rules a moving target.

Snomads puts out a map for general use rather than for navigating or official use. These maps can be inaccurate and may include trails not meant to be in the proposal. Trails on our maps are public trails, open to the public, not Snomad trails. Using a Snomads-produced map for official use is firmly discouraged.

We can appreciate the attempt to simplify the writing of the proposal; however, our organization's name within the proposal needs to be removed, as well as any reference to any map we may produce. We suggest correctly identifying the trails proposed by their proper name and using a map source that is for official use.

To be clear, Snomads, Inc. will only allow our organization's name and maps to be used with proper written permission.



February 24, 2023

To whom it may concern,

It has been brought to our organization's (Snomads, Inc., a non-profit) attention that a Proposal involving southern Kenai Peninsula trails is in the works.

PROPOSAL 147 5 AAC 92.550. Areas closed to trapping.

Snomads, Inc. does not support our organization's name in this proposal, nor do we authorize any map we may produce. The Snomads do not own any trails; we maintain public trails for multi-use. Labeling a trail as Snomads is incorrect. The trails we maintain can change yearly, making the proposed rules a moving target.

Snomads puts out a map for general use of our members rather than for navigating or official use. These maps can be inaccurate and may include trails not meant to be in the proposal. Trails on our maps are public trails, open to the public, not Snomad trails. Using a Snomads-produced map for official use is firmly discouraged.

We can appreciate the attempt to simplify the writing of the proposal; however, our organization's name within the proposal needs to be removed, as well as any reference to any map we may produce. We suggest correctly identifying the trails proposed by their proper name and using a map source that is for official use.

To be clear, Snomads, Inc. will only allow our organization's name and maps to be used with proper written permission.

Snomads, Inc. maintains and preserves access to the backcountry. Attaching a restriction to the trails we maintain could have us losing support amongst our members. In addition, user groups could be afraid that any trail we maintain, there could be attached restrictions that were not meant to be.

We believe Proposal 147 should not pass, and the authors/supporters of this proposal rewrite it with no mention of Snomads.

Regards,
David L. Mastolier, President

Snomads, Inc. maintains and preserves access to the backcountry. Attaching a restriction to the trails we maintain could have us losing support amongst our members. In addition, user groups could be afraid that any trail we maintain, there could be attached restrictions that were not meant to be.

We believe Proposal 147 should not pass, and the authors/supporters of this proposal rewrite it with no mention of Snomads.

Regards,

David L. Mastolier, President

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 147: Oppose



PC311

Submitted by: Beverly Snyder

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Anchor Point, AK

Comment:

Proposals # 146 and 147: I think a 50 foot setback is reasonable on all trails. This protects trappers setups and people/pets who may take a tumble off a trail. Dogs should be leashes at all times—in all public use spaces—do anything further off the trail should not be necessary to protect pets. Pet owners—of which I am one—cannot pick and choose the enforcement of leash laws to allow for THEIR greatest benefit. Laws should be to protect the majority's rights.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 146: Oppose Proposal 147: Oppose



Submitted by: Mike Soik

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Anchorage, Alaska

Comment:

Proposal 104

I oppose this proposal as there is no biological reason to support it. The author wants to improve the "rare opportunities" to see lynx, yet "thousands of Alaskans" have seen lynx and videos of lynx "often appear on social media." It appears there is ample opportunity to see lynx with the current regulations.

Proposal 145

I oppose this proposal. I don't see the necessity for hunting/trapping closures because of highway construction.

Proposal 146

I oppose this proposal. I am opposed to trapping setbacks. You can trap many furbearers (squirrel, ermine, mink, marten, muskrat, under ice beaver) without catching domestic animals. This limits the opportunities for youth trappers who often begin trapping these animals. It states that park "rangers are already strapped with responsibilities and regulation enforcement is difficult at best" when it comes to leash laws. Why should there be new trapping regulations then? Are these trails well defined, marked, and mapped as far as measuring the 100 yards?

Proposal 148

I oppose this proposal. I am opposed to trapping setbacks. You can trap many furbearers (squirrel, ermine, mink, marten, muskrat, under ice beaver) without catching domestic animals. This limits the opportunities for youth trappers who often begin trapping these animals. Are trappers supposed to guess which "know multi-use trails" that this proposal would apply to? Are these trails well defined, marked, and mapped as far as measuring the 100 yards?

Proposals 149, 150, 151, 152, and 153

I oppose these proposals. I am opposed to trapping setbacks. You can trap many furbearers (squirrel, ermine, mink, marten, muskrat, under ice beaver) without catching domestic animals. This limits the opportunities for youth trappers who often begin trapping these animals. I don't know anyone who uses a #3 foothold trap for marten, so I don't understand that part of the proposal regarding the 50 yard setback. Are these campground perimeters, highway pullouts, backcountry access points, trails, trailheads, and beaches well defined, marked, and mapped as far as measuring the 100/50 yards?

Proposal 154

I oppose this proposal. I am opposed to mandatory trapline signage. The Alaska Trappers Association encourages trapline signs in certain areas, they do not recommend mandatory signs as this proposal states. What happens when a trapper's sign is removed/stolen by someone who doesn't approve of trapping? It will be easy for anti-trappers to create a violation for the trapper.

Proposal 156

I support this proposal as the beaver population is depleted and a trapping closure may help the population to recover.

Proposal 157

I support this proposal as the beaver population has been depleted by the extended season and a shortened season may help the population to recover.

Proposal 159

I oppose this proposal. I don't believe there is an over abundance of wolverine in these units. I would think that pelt quality will be poor in August.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 104: Oppose Proposal 145: Oppose Proposal 146: Oppose Proposal 148: Oppose Proposal 149: Oppose Proposal 150: Oppose Proposal 151: Oppose Proposal 152: Oppose Proposal 153: Oppose Proposal 154: Oppose Proposal 156: Support Proposal 157: Support Proposal 159: Oppose



PC313

Submitted by: Chad Sorenson

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Soldotna, AK

Comment:

Reduce the harvest limit on Kodiak Island Sitka Black Tail deer to Two. With any buck w first kill and the second buck be at least 3X3.

With the continued growth in popularity of hunting from in state and out of state hunters, the population is seeing unprecedented pressure. Additionally, with the influx of the number of transporters working the Island, this is not helping with the deer population.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 55: Support



PC313

Submitted by: Chad Sorenson

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Soldotna, AK

Comment:

Limit the number of transporters working the greater Kodiak Island deer hunting season.

In many areas on the Island, we are seeing a number of Transporters working on top of each other, thus causing the hunters in the field to be on top of each other, and an nonstainable deer population harvest rate.

Requesting to close down the ability to have new Transporters to begin working on or around Kodiak Island.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 55: Support



PC314

Submitted by: Mystie Spargo

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Rainbow Valley, Alaska

Comment:

Hello Board of Game,

I'm writing to you about:

PROPOSAL 98

5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear. 5 AAC 92.530. Management areas.

Our family with two small children live in Rainbow valley and we are concerned about hunting so close to home.

Many hikers are unaware of property lines and often trespass. It is difficult to see where the park and where properties begin and end. I imagine it would be difficult to stay outside of the required ¼ mile from a developed facility. Hunters searching for boundary lines will probably lead to trespassing. Stray bullets traveling well beyond the ¼ mile boundary and pose a safety concern for families in the area. This would be a very stressful and dangerous burden on residents to maintain safety and potential increased conflicts with hunters.

Thank you for listening to my concerns,

Mystie Spargo



Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 98: Oppose



Submitted by: Ted Spraker

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Soldotna, AK

Comment:

see attached.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 106: Oppose Proposal 107: Oppose Proposal 110: Oppose Proposal 111: Oppose Proposal 112: Oppose
Proposal 113: Oppose Proposal 119: Oppose Proposal 120: Oppose Proposal 121: Oppose Proposal 122: Oppose
Proposal 123: Oppose Proposal 124: Oppose Proposal 125: Oppose Proposal 126: Oppose Proposal 129: Support
Proposal 130: Support Proposal 132: Support with Amendment Proposal 134: Support Proposal 135: Support Proposal
136: Support Proposal 137: Support Proposal 138: Support Proposal 139: Support Proposal 145: Oppose Proposal 146:
Oppose Proposal 147: Oppose Proposal 148: Oppose Proposal 149: Oppose Proposal 150: Oppose Proposal 151: Oppose
Proposal 152: Oppose Proposal 153: Oppose Proposal 155: Support with Amendment Proposal 156: Support with
Amendment Proposal 157: Support with Amendment Proposal 158: Support with Amendment



Comments for March 2023 Southcentral Board of Game meeting.

Proposals **106 and 107**, seek to eliminate or change the Lower Kenai Controlled Use Area (CUA) in Subunit 15C. This CUA was approved by Board of Game (BOG) in 1985 to address the increasing harvest of moose during the September 1 - 20 "any bull" season. The proposal was submitted by department staff and approved by the BOG for the fall 1985 season. Although the public suggested several options other than motorized vehicle restrictions, data showed hunters using off road vehicles (ORVs) comprised 30% of the hunters but they harvested 50% of the moose taken in 15C. The original proposal requested the closure of ORVs during the first half of the season. The BOG amended the proposal and closed the last half instead. The goal of maintaining a harvest of less than 250 bulls was accomplished with this restriction. In the spring of 1987, another staff proposal was approved by BOG to implement the spike/fork-50 inch or three brow tine regulation (selective harvest strategy) for Units 7 and 15, and BOG kept the Lower Kenai Controlled Use Area restriction in place.

The selective harvest management strategy achieved the goal of maintaining an adequate bull to cow ratio, resulting in several proposals over the years to rescind the CUA. However, the ORV restriction was supported by many testifying at the BOG, stating hunting improved by the reduction in competition and noise. All thought about 70% of the hunters, at that time, did not use ORVs, they wanted to modify the CUA to allow for game retrieval. As a result of several changes in the season length and ORV restrictions, the current regulation only restricts ORV use for moose hunting from September 16 to 19 and September 22 to 25 in the September 1 to 25 seasons.

The benefits of maintaining this CUA far outweigh rescinding it, especially now that ORV traffic has increased greatly, especially large mud buggies. I suggest the Board **opposes** any changes to the CUA.

Proposals **110 to 113** request special archery seasons for sheep hunting in the remainder of Unit 7 and 15. I **oppose** all these special interest requests. With few exceptions, archery only areas are limited to areas where safety is a concern because the hunt area is close to residential areas or an "any weapons" hunt would result in over harvest. Restricting these areas to archery only would reduce hunter opportunity unnecessarily under the full-curl requirements. Additionally, allowing for archery only seasons before the general season will disturb sheep for the opening of the general season. The sheep population in the Kenai Mountains has undergone a major decline in the past couple of decades, and any additional harvest is not justified. At the current sheep population density in Units 7 and 15, we should be investigating methods to reduce harvest and enhance habitat, rather than increase hunter opportunity.



Proposal 118, increase the moose bag limit to allow harvest of forked antler bulls in Unit 15. The selective harvest program has been in place on the Kenai for 35 years and during that time several changes have been made. The first season length for the general hunt was 20 days, then changed to 32, then to the current season of 25. The bag limit has also been changed a couple times, starting with Spike/Fork-50" or 3 brow tines, then Spike-50" or 4 brow tines, and now Spike-50 or 3 brow tines. I believe these adjustments in season and bag limit have resulted in an optimum allowable harvest strategy. Additionally, the number of large bulls taken now is greater than under the S/F-50" or 3 brow tine regulations because by only allowing the harvest of spikes, larger antlered yearlings were allowed to survive. These larger yearlings have a higher over-winter survival rate, resulting in a higher bull to cow ratio. In the past, when forked yearlings were legal, the harvest was comprised of 60-70% spikes and forks. Now by saving these larger yearlings, the harvest has reversed so the large bulls make up 60-70% of the harvest. The yield of meat on a yearling is about 220-250 lbs. compared to about 450 or more, on a large bull.

We are also achieving our bull to cow ratio objective under the current regulations. If we change the bag limit now, we will be changing it back in a few years when the ratio declines. For these reasons, I **oppose** this request.

Proposals 119 to 126, establish an archery moose season in Units 7 and 15C. Similar requests have been made since archery seasons first opened in 15A and 15B, in 1993. The BOG has not supported any of these requests in the past, stating there are two areas on the Kenai for archery moose hunting currently (season August 22-29) and anyone can hunt using archery equipment during the general season. Additionally, there has been little to no support from ACs on the peninsula with the exception now of Homer submitting proposal 121, to open an archery season in 15C.

I oppose this request, however, if the Board adopts one of these proposals, the season should be the same as the season in 15A and 15B, i.e., August 22 to 29.

Proposal 129, expand the hunting area for DM549, the Homer cow hunt. This permit hunt has been in place for about 30 years, providing increased hunter opportunity and an inexpensive moose hunt. However, as the area has built up it has become difficult to find a place to hunt that is not on private land. This proposal has merit, and I **support it**. It will open a large area and potentially reduce conflicts with local property owners. The department currently issues 50 permits for this hunt and an average of 25-30 cows are taken annually. If hunting success increases with a larger area, the department will adjust the number of permits issued.

Proposal 130, intensive management plan for 15C. I **support** this plan to enhance habitat and conduct predator control.



Proposal 132, remove the sealing requirement for moose taken on Kalgin Island. I **support this request** by the department and suggest the Board amend it to include Units 7 and the remainder of 15 (Kalgin Island is in 15B). Over the past several years there has been an increasing number of moose confiscated from hunters during sealing that were thought to be sublegal, that were later determined to be legal. In most cases, the meat was given to a charity before the case was reversed so the hunter lost the meat or was offered to be placed on the road-kill list. It is unfortunate that the Board is being asked to remove this requirement that provides an opportunity to talk with hunters, explain the selective harvest program and collect biological data but if the department and Alaska Wildlife Troopers cannot adequately train and supervise field staff that seal antlers, the requirement must be removed. Additionally, Kenai is the only place in the state with mandatory antler sealing in a general moose hunt. This requirement is also an inconvenience to hunters to present their antlers for sealing during business hours, especially if they work normal 8 to 5 jobs.

I'm sure there will be concern about the number of illegal moose taken will increase if mandatory reporting is removed. The current (known) percentage of sublegal moose taken is 11%, down from 23% when the bag limit was 4 brow tines. These are primarily reported by hunters that have mistakenly killed a sublegal animal and turned themselves in to protection. People that knowingly kill sublegal moose do not turn themselves in.

Proposals 134 to 139, requests to extend the brown bear season in Units 7 and 15 to either June 15th or 30th. This proposal was before the Board several years ago and failed in a 3 to 4 vote. Those on the opposing side were concerned about rubbed hides and hunting brown bears under a longer season plus the quota system that had only been in place a couple seasons.

Under the current quota system used to manage brown bear harvest, it will be difficult to over harvest bears. The Department has only closed the season (September 1st to May 31st, opened in the fall of 2013) due to reaching the harvest limit on females one time, in the fall of 2022. The season was reopened on January 1st, 2023. The quota for units 7 and 15 is 50-60 bears from all known mortality or 8-12 adult females (five years old or older), based on a three-year running average.

I **support** this request to allow for more hunting opportunities. Since the black bear baiting season extends to June 30th, the Board may accept the longer season date to reduce confusion. Extending the season will not impact the management objective since a quota is in place.

Proposals 145 to 154, trapping closures.

Proposal 145. Seeks to close five 1/2-mile areas (1/4 mile each side) to hunting and trapping around the four underpasses and one overpass, on the Cooper Landing bypass highway. I investigated this concern in western states where wildlife passes are in place and none of the



states I contacted prohibited trapping or hunting near underpasses. Another point of needed clarification is the reference to wildlife use of the underpass at Watson Lake. The author failed to mention there are four miles of eight-foot-high fence funneling animals through this underpass. The author also stated this noted success is due to the trapping closure imposed by the Refuge. That is not true. Only the south side of the highway is closed, trapping is allowed on the north side. Their data also fails to show how many of each species and how often they used the underpass.

The reference to the benefit of these new wildlife crossings to reduce moose-vehicle accidents is gravely overstated. This portion of Units 7 and 15A has some of the lowest moose densities on the peninsula so I doubt the moose-vehicle incidents will even be significant, when compared to the remainder of the peninsula.

Since this highway project is not scheduled to be completed for several years, I **oppose this request** pending additional data on the benefits of closures.

Proposals 146 to 153. Authors of all these requests are basing their proposal on traps being set more than 100 yards will make trails safe for free ranging dogs. That is clearly not true. Lures used for trapping can easily attract the attention of a coyote or wolf (and dog) from a much greater distance. The only way to assure the safety of dogs on trails during the 5 months of trapping season is to require dogs be under control by voice commands or on a leash.

Alaska Trappers Association (ATA) has worked with these groups for years trying to establish a reasonable solution to their concerns. ATA produced a video, Shared Trails, to inform the non-trapping public about ways both users can enjoy these trails and avoid conflicts. Contrary to the statement that there is no money available for trail signs, money is available, and ATA has signs available to trappers.

Proposals 155 to 157, beaver trapping in 15C. Rather than closing trapping for beaver in these areas, I suggest the Board reduce the season to not allow open-water trapping. The season has traditionally been November 10 to March 31. When the season was increased to October 15 to April 30, trappers were able to trap beaver in open water rather than under the ice. I suggest the Board amend one of these proposals to change the season back to November 10 to March 31. Also, once beaver trapping is closed in an area, it is extremely difficult to have it reopened.

Proposal 158, reduce the season for coyote trapping. Early season snaring of wolves and coyotes was approved by the Board about 7- 8 years ago to address the high Dall lamb predation by coyotes and predation on moose and caribou by wolves. Harvest records show little effort was made during October to snare coyotes or wolves. This longer season failed to produce the results



hoped for, was confusing to users and increased the chances of catching a bear. I **support an amendment** to include wolf snaring and reduce the season to November 10th to March 31st.

Proposal 199, This request is for a “village” registration hunt for elk on Afognak Island. I suggest the Board amend the proposal to remove the word village to allow Board discussion. The current draw supplement shows 467 draw permits are issued to hunt elk on Afognak and Raspberry islands. There were 170 permits issued in the draw for Eastern Afognak and the remainder of Unit 8. **I support this request.** Several of the larger private Native lands are only open to their shareholders, however, lands owned by the Ouzinkie and Afognak Native Corporations are open to hunting for non-shareholders. If this proposal is amended to provide for open registration for all hunters, it is no different from the requirement to travel to Dillingham in July to register for an “any bull” moose permit.



PC316

Submitted by: Janelle Spurkland

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Homer Alaska

Comment:

I support Proposal 146 and 147 - setbacks of traps around popular winter trails. As a local veterinarian, I have seen numerous pet dogs that have gotten trapped while hiking or skiing with their owners. 100yd setbacks will not decrease the efficacy of traps, but can help to decrease the likelihood of pets getting caught.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:



PC317

Submitted by: Samuel Starr

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Kodiak, Alaska

Comment:

My name is Samuel Starr and I am strongly in favor of Proposal 76. As a home owner in the Bells Flats community I regularly see damage caused by bears on the property of my friends and neighbors in the area. While I take precautions with electric fencing an extended bear season would provide me with a legal avenue to harvest and use a bear threatening my property without having to do a defense of life and property killing.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 76: Support



PC318

Submitted by: Charlie Stewart

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Homer, AK

Comment:

Hi Board of Game, Thank you for the time you put into our state. My name is Charlie Stewart and I live at 5660 Katie Jean Circle Homer AK. I'd like to comment on proposals # 145 and #146. I am in favor of both as I feel they are a fair compromise given our changing user groups and better reflects the actual numbers of users in these areas. I realize that this is something that previous meetings have been reluctant to vote in favor of; however its feels like just a matter of time before we have a serious encounter between some of these user groups. Thanks for your time. Charlie Stewart



PC319

Submitted by: judith steyer

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Fritz Creek, Alaska

Comment:

I have lived in Alaska for 25 years and have been a skier and dog owner for most of this time. I support proposal 146 and 147 because I feel it would allow access to multiuse trails for dog owners that are now too dangerous to access during trapping season. 100 foot trap setbacks would help to alleviate most of the risk to dogs that accompany recreational users of these trails during trapping season.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 146: Support Proposal 147: Support



Submitted by: David Story

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Cooper Landing

Comment:

I support BOG Proposal #145 creating a ¼ mile hunting and trapping buffer from highway wildlife crossings, especially those designed specifically to facilitate safe wildlife passage.

I support BOG Proposal #149 establishing trapping setbacks along the perimeter of campgrounds in Game Unit 7.

I support BOG Proposal #150 establishing trapping setbacks along listed roads and pullouts.

I support BOG Proposal #151 establishing trapping setbacks along listed highway pullouts, backcountry access points, and winter trails.

I support BOG Proposal #152 establishing trapping setbacks along listed trails and trailheads in Game Unit 7.

I support BOG Proposal #153 establishing trapping setbacks along described Kenai Lake beaches.

Multi-use winter recreation is important to Cooper Landing and the number of users of our area continues to grow. Proposals 149-153 acknowledge the changing pressures and create reasonable and intuitive locations that will minimize the potential for unintended conflict.

I support BOG Proposal #154 requiring signs at all access points to operating traplines as encouraged by the Alaska Trappers Association for trappers in road-accessible regions of the State.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 145: Support Proposal 149: Support Proposal 150: Support Proposal 151: Support Proposal 152: Support
Proposal 153: Support Proposal 154: Support



Submitted by: Martha Story

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Cooper Landing

Comment:

I support BOG Proposal #145 creating a ¼ mile hunting and trapping buffer from highway wildlife crossings, especially those designed specifically to facilitate safe wildlife passage.

I support BOG Proposal #149 establishing trapping setbacks along the perimeter of campgrounds in Game Unit 7.

I support BOG Proposal #150 establishing trapping setbacks along listed roads and pullouts.

I support BOG Proposal #151 establishing trapping setbacks along listed highway pullouts, backcountry access points, and winter trails.

I support BOG Proposal #152 establishing trapping setbacks along listed trails and trailheads in Game Unit 7.

I support BOG Proposal #153 establishing trapping setbacks along described Kenai Lake beaches.

Multi-use winter recreation is important to Cooper Landing and the number of users of our area continues to grow. Proposals 149-153 acknowledge the changing pressures and create reasonable and intuitive locations that will minimize the potential for unintended conflict.

I support BOG Proposal #154 requiring signs at all access points to operating traplines as encouraged by the Alaska Trappers Association for trappers in road-accessible regions of the State.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 145: Support Proposal 149: Support Proposal 150: Support Proposal 151: Support Proposal 152: Support Proposal 153: Support Proposal 154: Support



PC322

Submitted by: Jennifer Stroyeck

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Homer, AK

Comment:

Thank you for considering the following proposals: #146, #147, #149, #152, #153 which require setbacks for trapping along popular trails and recreational use areas. I have personally witnessed dogs caught in both traps and snares set within 20 feet of a well-used and groomed ski trail maintained by the Kachemak Nordic Ski Club. In addition to endangering dogs, the trappers tore up the ski trails in the process of setting and checking their traps. Doesn't seem very sportsmanlike, does it? There is plenty of unused land available in these areas for those who need to trap. Please allow a setback from trails and popular recreation sites for those of us who would like to recreate without worrying about the safety of our pets, and possibly, our children.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 146: Support Proposal 147: Support Proposal 149: Support Proposal 152: Support Proposal 153: Support



Submitted by: Michael Sturm

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Anchor Point

Comment:

I am opposed to the following proposals:

145, 149, 150, 151,152,153,154. Trapping is a heritage, our history and safe. If people keep animals on leashes setbacks and signage are not necessary.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 145: Oppose Proposal 149: Oppose Proposal 150: Oppose Proposal 151: Oppose Proposal 152: Oppose
Proposal 153: Oppose Proposal 154: Oppose



Submitted by: Tim Sturm

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Soldotna, Alaska

Comment:

This is [REDACTED]

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 64: Oppose Proposal 81: Oppose Proposal 104: Oppose Proposal 145: Oppose Proposal 149: Oppose
Proposal 150: Oppose Proposal 151: Oppose Proposal 152: Oppose Proposal 153: Oppose Proposal 154: Oppose



Submitted by: Adam Sullivan

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Moose Pass, AK

Comment:

I have been a resident of Moose Pass for 3 years. Prior to moving here I lived in Cooper Landing for close to 15 years. I am writing in opposition to proposals 149 -154 concerning trapping setbacks in unit 7 and 15. My family and I are frequent users of numerous popular and lesser used trails during all seasons throughout our communities and have never had issues or seen signs of trapping in these areas. Although the authors of these proposals would lead you to believe our communities are fraught with danger and traps around every corner.

Admittedly I'm not a trapper, but if one of my kids is interested in the activity in the future I could be. These proposals, while far reaching seem like no big deal, but this is how these issues always start. 50 yards here a 100 yards there no big deal. Until the next cycle when they go for a quarter, half, or full mile setback ultimately making it impossible for a person working 40 hours a week to actively run a trap line.

I think the most glaring issue I have with these proposals is the fact there is already a solution in place. A leash. I would be willing to bet of the 7 encounters between pets and traps none of those animals were being properly controlled by its owner. It would be a shame for the opportunities of one user group to be limited by the unwillingness of another to simply control their animals.

Additionally, for these proposals to insinuate a person or business can't market Cooper Landing and surrounding areas as a safe place to recreate is flat out ridiculous, and further just fear mongering. 7 encounters in all of south central is what is driving one user group to attempt to use a government board to limit the rights of another? Furthermore, I feel it is necessary to mention that the group suggesting these proposals has already placed regulatory looking signs in these areas essentially attempting to set land use regulations without any official capacity to do so.

On the surface these proposals seem reasonable. Unfortunately, like many other situations an inch turns into a mile. The group proposing these setbacks would have you believe everyone supports these proposals, and the scourge of this issue on the community is undeniable. This simply isn't true. I live and recreate in these communities and have for going on 20 years. It would be a shame to see an activity that literally built this state limited because one group can't simply control their animals with a leash while on public land.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 149: Oppose Proposal 150: Oppose Proposal 151: Oppose Proposal 152: Oppose Proposal 153: Oppose Proposal 154: Oppose



Submitted by: Wenona Suydam

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Kodiak, Alaska

Comment:

Yes

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 73: Support Proposal 74: Support Proposal 75: Support Proposal 76: Oppose Proposal 77: Support Proposal 78: Support Proposal 79: Oppose Proposal 80: Oppose Proposal 81: Support



Wenona Suydam
Kodiak, Ak 99615

February 7, 2023

To the Department of Alaska Fish & Game and Bear Management,

I am against and am addressing why Proposal 76 to extend the Kodiak Brown Bear Hunting Seasons RB230 and RB260 to almost double is not a good idea for this island.

RB260 original hunting days are: April 1st through May 15th. Proposal 76 would change hunting days to March 1st through May 15th adding 31 days to the already 45 days almost doubling the hunting of Kodiak Brown Bears for a total of 76 days.

RB 230 original hunting days are: October 25th through November 30th. Proposal 76 would change hunting days to October 25th through December 31st adding 36 days almost doubling the hunting of Kodiak Brown Bears for a total of 66 days

We are lucky here in Kodiak to have good Bear Management. Only Alaska, remote parts of Canada and Russia have a good healthy bear population left. If you have lived in Kodiak for two years and hike, you have probably walked right by a bear and did not even know it. Considering we live on an island with 3500 Brown Bears, one per mile you would think there would be many more incidences of unruly bears.

In the past there have been problems in the Winter due to excessive garbage left unattended leaving easy access to a bear with a good nose. Bears can smell up to 20 miles away. I have lived on Larch Street for 40 years and have seen a bear or two. Two years ago, the town of Kodiak received bear garbage containers. Now I know we all saw on social media a Sow opening up one of the bear containers. I also know that in the last two years I have not had a problem with bears roaming by my house. I am a believer in the bear garbage cans and keeping garbage contained so that bears will be good and go to bed.

Almost one million households-residents and visitors took at least one trip in 2011 to hunt or view wildlife in Alaska. Of those, more than 100,000 households, 86 percent of them Alaska residents, went hunting. Almost 900,000 households, 77 percent of them visitors, went wildlife viewing. Bear Wildlife viewing is important to Kodiak.

I am a Wildlife Photographer and Kodiak used to be a Photographers dream place to live. Now, we have a new group of people that arrive every June wanting to live the Alaskan Dream by shooting fox, ermine, beaver, river otter and of course the Kodiak Brown Bear. I have watched the wildlife on the road system in the past 10 years disappear. I feel that if the Kodiak Brown Bear Hunting Season was extended to almost double, we would cease to be able to enjoy watching and photographing a Kodiak Brown bear in their element, in the streams along the Kodiak Road system.



I feel like proposers of Proposal 76 are using the idea that there are many unruly bears when in fact there are very few if you think of the 3500 bears that live on this island. I believe Proposal 76 is being proposed for the sole purpose of making more money by extending the season rather than because of problematic bears. Please consider how much the Kodiak Bears contribute to this island and do not allow Proposal 76 to go through.

Thank you,
Wenona Suydam



Submitted by: Adrienne Swan

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Juneau, AK

Comment:

I strongly OPPOSE Proposal 82. Keep the archery only sheep hunt area!

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 67: Support Proposal 71: Support Proposal 72: Support Proposal 82: Oppose Proposal 87: Support
Proposal 91: Support Proposal 92: Support Proposal 93: Support Proposal 99: Support Proposal 100: Support Proposal
101: Support Proposal 110: Support Proposal 111: Support Proposal 112: Support Proposal 113: Support Proposal
119: Support Proposal 120: Support Proposal 121: Support Proposal 122: Support Proposal 123: Support Proposal 124:
Support Proposal 125: Support Proposal 126: Support

Missed some proposals

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 66: Support Proposal 84: Support Proposal 85: Support Proposal 94: Support Proposal 95:
Support Proposal 96: Support Proposal 97: Support Proposal 114: Support



Submitted by: Carol Swartz

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Homer' Ak

Comment:

Please please approve proposals 145, 146, 147 and 155 and with amendments 156, 160,161, 166, 171. Oppose 162 and 163.

I live in the Homer area...only 4 miles from town and in major residential area. I and my neighbors walk our dogs everyday. Last fall, one of us found a on 8' from side of road in the brush where ALL our pet dogs wander close by to us. What a scare that was! How could someone put a trap where a dog or worse could be maimed or killed? There are skiers, children, snowshoers, walkers, runners and bikers who use the sides of area roads for safety reasons. Winter and summer trails should not have such hazards close to the sides of trails that have seen increased use these past few years. The State of Alaska has been encouraging tourists to come to AK and spend money....hike trails, etc. I know a few that will not use trails if traps will be allowed to be out close to the trapping area. I know I will be wary of walking my dog , and frankly I should not have to be worried in this way when recreating.

A 100 yd. compromising set-back will not impact the goals of trappers who, by the way, represent only .4 of Alaskans. Unit 15C is particularly an issue as many are using ski trails

, hiking and snow machining. Thank you for voting for the 100 set- back proposals and others with amendments and including requiring trailers to get permits in Kachemak Bay State Park and added related informative trail and area signage.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 145: Support Proposal 146: Support Proposal 147: Support Proposal 155: Support Proposal 156: Support with Amendment Proposal 160: Support with Amendment Proposal 162: Oppose Proposal 163: Oppose Proposal 164: Support with Amendment Proposal 166: Support with Amendment Proposal 169: Support with Amendment Proposal 171: Support with Amendment



Submitted by: Eric Szymoniak

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Moose pass property owner

Comment:

In regards to the trapping setback proposals I do not want 100 yard setbacks on trails. I am an active trapper in the area at this time on one of the trails included in the proposal. I understand the concern for animal safety but there are clearly posted signs at the trailheads of the certain trail I have active traps stating all animals must be on a leash. 100 yards is way too far to require trappers to be off trail.

I have trail cams on one of the trails included in the proposal and NOT ONE hiker, skier or person on foot had utilized the trail in the first two months of this winter. It is not a high traffic trail.

Don't group all trails into this proposal just because people say they use the trail when I know for a fact hikers and skiers aren't using all the trails they are trying to claim for themselves.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 145: Oppose Proposal 146: Oppose Proposal 147:
Oppose Proposal 149: Oppose Proposal 150: Oppose Proposal 151: Oppose Proposal 152: Oppose Proposal 153: Oppose
Proposal 154: Oppose



Taiga Resources Conservation

a management and consulting firm specializing in natural resource industry support. We provide industrial, environmental, regional, and community assistance in understanding, developing, and maintaining conservation based initiatives that will help sustain long term stewardship for important social/cultural atmospheres, fish, wildlife, land/water habitats, and industry developments within them.



PC 330

HC60 Box 299C Copper Center, Alaska USA 99573 Phone: 1.907.320.0228
Email: fithian@cvinternet.net

March 3, 2023

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Boards Support Section
PO Box 115526
Juneau, Alaska 99811-5526

Alaska Board of Game South-Central Region Meeting, Spring 2023 Comments on Proposal 204

Dear Alaska Board of Game Members,

Please find the following comments for your consideration regarding proposal 204 from Robert R. Fithian doing business as Alaskan Mountain Safaris and Taiga Resources Conservation. Please know that I am a tenured Alaskan conservationist, and professional guide who has conducted long term, conservation based, fair chase, multiple species hunts within GMU 19C for the past forty years.

Proposal 204: Oppose

Summary Opposition:

During my 40-year tenure within this region, I have seen and recorded our Dall's sheep population fluctuation in nearly identical numbers and occurrence as to where they are at today. During that time, (2003 – 2009) the sheep populations fell due to predation and winter conditions from an average annual sighting of 350 animals to 40-50 animals within the small region we traditionally hunt.

Note that:

a. Subsistence utilization/dependency at that time was much greater than it is now as the Minchumina, Nikolai and McGrath human populations were much higher then.

b. We had recently lost the previously established guide area system (1988 Owsichek Decision) and the

guide industry was in a near free for all, especially on SOA lands.

b. We had lost our Guide Board (1989 legislative sunset) and were licensing over 100 new guides per year, (up from 6-10 per year) which nearly all had a focus on SOA lands of which GMU19C was a prime target.

c. The number of guides registered within the small GOUA which I operate within went from 3 to 14.

d. The only resident sheep hunter activity I have ever witnessed on the ground occurred within that same timeframe.

e. **Still, due primarily to the full curl law, the sheep numbers came back up without imposing restrictions on hunting.**

We are in a better position now that we were then for several reasons:

1. Development and implementation of the 19D East Predator Control Program in 2003. Wolves from GMU 19C follow the caribou out into the Kuskokwim Valley floor during the late fall and winter and become susceptible to harvest within the 19D East management program. This action more than any other has led to recruitment of sheep, moose and caribou within GMU 19C.

2. Establishment of the Big Game Commercial Services Board (2005) created new and higher standards of professional licensing. It also created a liaison position between the two board to address situations exactly like this.

3. The full curl law has held and maintained its performance ground for many years now. No matter how many older age class rams are harvested or die of natural causes, recruitment is still viable and sustainable through the less than full curl or eight-year-old rams. Harvest or die off of older aged rams has little or no effect on recruitment.

Recommendations:

1. Consider acting on the basis of this proposal or upcoming proposals related to the Interior Region which would:

a. Create an IM finding for GMU 19C.

b. Establish an annual harvest goal/quota for wolves within GMU 19C. The goal/quota could be established by reviewing historic 19C wolf harvest data from when 19C was created to current and working with ADF&G McGrath to establish an average annual harvest goal. This action, more than any other, will help recruitment of our wild sheep and management for sustained yield, abundance, and

2. Utilize the BOG/BGCSB liaison position to deliver a joint board written letter to all professional guides licensed for GMU 19, that the Dall's sheep population is at a low density and request that bookings for sheep hunters be reduced or curtailed until improvement occurs.
3. Utilize ADF&G harvest report data to identify resident hunters who have hunted sheep within GMU 19C within the past ten years and send them a similar letter as what goes to the guides.
4. Encourage stiff fines and minimal leniency for harvest of sub-legal rams.
5. Continue to support the development ASAP of the Guide Concession Program and if the program is developed with a staggered regional implementation, request that GMU 19 is considered a priority. Also note and request that graded criteria for area selection should reference the applicants response to low density wildlife population occurrences.

Additional Consideration:

If the BOG deviates from full curl management by affirmative action to proposals that eliminate hunting opportunity for any user group other than our subsistence requirements, it will create a domino effect of proposals for the whole of the Dall's sheep ranges across Alaska, which, very probably, after all of the fight is said and done, will not help wild sheep conservation or recruitment.

Note that the age class of harvested rams is always variable between 8 and 12 years of age showing that legal rams are left after each hunting season. Stopping the hunting season for five years will not provide additional recruitment over just leaving the season alone. It will create a stampede of hunters for the year that it opens back up which will result in conflict situations.

During most of the forty years I have been guiding within this region, I have provided respectful detailed annual reports to ADF&G McGrath depicting:

- a. Wildlife populations including grouse, raptors, rodents, furbearers, and big game, with a focus on indicator species.
- b. Range conditions, impacts and change.
- c. Points of interest including weather, predators, hunting pressure etc.

These reports include substantial data including population densities, annual sightings of cow/calf, ewe/lamb ratios, yearling survival of ungulates and bears, eagle populations and much more. These reports have been submitted with respect to our wildlife and wildlife professional with the hope that they may provide an anecdotal "trend" relative to overall wildlife conservation concerns.

Once again, relative to this extensive past, I want to state that I can find no conservation basis benefit to

proposal 204.



PC 330

During the past several years including 2022, there have been plenty of 3/4 - 7/8 curl rams to facilitate recruitment. Ewe-lamb ratio continues to be high but yearling carryover is low. Overall sheep numbers are down. However, the sheep will come back over time, especially if IM can be established and wolf numbers can be lowered.

Submitted As Always,
Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert R. Fithian".

Robert R. Fithian



Submitted by: Diane Taylor

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Clam Gulch, Alaska

Comment:

I am writing in full support of Proposal 145, to secure hunting and trapping setbacks from new wildlife crossings on the Sterling Highway Cooper Landing bypass. This is a critical time to protect the all wildlife effected by the new bypass. As a 40+ year resident of the Kenai Peninsula, I encourage the board to be a visionary with this issue, and balance the impact of “progress” with Alaska’s spectacular wildlife. Thank you.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 145: Support



[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK 99517

e-mail: [REDACTED]

February 27, 2023

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Board Support Section
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Subject matter: Comments for consideration at the
Southcentral Meeting March, 2023

Dear Members of the Board of Game:

Please consider my comments on the following proposals:

Region wide and Multiple Units

Proposal 56. Support. Current State regulations prohibit taking big game from a boat (motorized or non-motorized) in Units 1-5, (Southeast Alaska). This proposal would add Units 6,7, and 15 (Kenai Peninsula east to Cordova) to the list. Hunters who don't own boats would benefit, as well as non-consumptive users, and tourists who enjoy seeing goats and bears on wildlife viewing tours. Wildlife viewing tours are offered by commercial businesses in communities such as Whittier, Seward, Homer, Valdez and Cordova and provide substantial employment and other economic benefits in these communities.

GMU 14 C

Proposal 82. Oppose. This proposal would open the East Fork of the Eklutna River drainage to rifle sheep hunting. I have hiked and climbed in the East Fork drainage on at least a dozen occasions, perhaps more. In the period beginning in the early 1990's and continuing through 2010, or thereabout, I would usually see many



sheep, but in recent years, I have seen only goats. Table 82-1 in the Department Comments show that 2017 and in 2018 there were only 8 and 4 sheep in the entire East Fork drainage; but that in 2021 and 2022 the total observed were 18 and 42, indicating a sizeable recovery is underway. But there were virtually no full curl rams in the entire East Fork. Rather than expanding hunter opportunity, the recovery needs to be allowed to continue until sheep numbers in this beautiful area recover. These sheep are watch-able wildlife, easily accessible, and they should be allowed to fully recover.

Proposal 83. Oppose. This proposal would increase the take of sheep in Chugach State Park, and nearby areas. I have spent most of my life hiking and skiing and mountaineering in Chugach State Park, and nearby, and the numbers of sheep I have seen have declined substantially. I value seeing sheep in the mountains, and hope that the decline in their numbers can be reversed, and not made worse.

Proposal 84. Oppose. This proposal would create a new archery only Dall sheep hunt in the Eklutna Management Area, with a season starting August 5. Most significantly, it would begin early enough to allow hunters to use aircraft to spot sheep. I investigated the crash and death of pilot/hunter near the summit of Peeking Mountain in Chugach State Park, and know that even the best pilots die spotting wildlife. In doing so, they leave behind spouses and children, and also endanger mountain rescue volunteers. I frequently hike in Chugach State Park in August and September, and do not wish to be bothered by low flying planes. Aircraft hunting has no place in CSP, is dangerous to pilots and rescue personnel, and violates the Park's purposes. Finally, the Department's surveys and harvest records show that the numbers of rams is insufficient to warrant making more permits available.

Proposal 85. Oppose. This proposal would create an archery only hunt for mountain goats in the West Fork of the Eklutna Drainage. The Department's surveys and records show that goat numbers are low in the Eklutna drainage. While this proposal would apparently allow only one permit, and apply to the "west fork" of the upper Eklutna drainage, which I presume means the West Fork of the Eklutna Glaciers, and mountains above it, where I have climbed on several occasions, nevertheless, I would prefer that these watch-able wildlife not be hunted until the population fully recovers.

Proposal 92. Oppose. This proposal would authorize the taking of black bears by archery in the McHugh Creek drainage. This area sees large numbers of hikers throughout the year, and nearby: for instance on the Turnagain Arm trail and



at the McHugh Creek rest area. Archery bear hunts carry the risk of archers wounding but not killing bears. Wounded bears are dangerous, and adoption of this proposal would unreasonably increase the risk to hikers, and people who merely stop for a few minutes at the McHugh Creek rest area. If nuisance bears are reported in this area, ADF&G professionals and not amateurs should remove them, lethally or otherwise.

This proposal, and the other proposals (Proposals 94, 95, 97, 98, & 99) regarding archery and rifle hunts for bears near Anchorage's subdivisions and heavily used hiking trails close to Anchorage raise public safety issues. The Department's comments regarding this proposal (#92) (and proposals 94, 95, 97, 98, & 99) fail to address public safety, but instead refer only to biology and allocation between user groups. This avoidance of comment regarding public safety makes sense in light of the Department's apparent view that the Board of Game has no authority to enact regulations the purpose of which is to address public safety. But that point of view is mistaken, and contradicted by legal experts, including the attorneys representing the Alaska Trappers Association.

The Board of Game's authority to enact regulations aimed at public safety was addressed in the Alaska Supreme Court recently at Oral argument in *Alaska Trappers Association v. City of Valdez*, Supreme Court No. S-18189. There the attorney representing the Alaska Trappers Association argued that the Board of Game has the authority to enact regulations aimed at public safety.

If the leadership of the ADF&G genuinely believes the BOG has no authority to consider public safety concerns in fulfilling its mandate to enact regulations regarding the management and taking of game, then the Commissioner should ask the Legislature to give the Board of Game this authority, expressly. In the meantime, members of the Board of Game should consider public safety in their deliberations at their meeting in March 2023, and include their findings in the record. In other words, if the members of the Board of Game think that public safety will not be negatively impacted by authorizing black and brown bear archery only hunts in the McHugh creek drainage (as proposed in #92 and #99), then the record should show this, so that the archery-only hunts of these dangerous animals can be defended in court in the event of legal challenge aggrieved members of the public.

There is also the need for the ADF&G to be truthful. To put it bluntly, it is false for the Department to state that these archery-only bear hunts at McHugh Creek, Rainbow Valley, and the South Fork of Eagle River present only questions



Proposal 94. Oppose. This proposal is the similar to Proposal 92. It would authorize the taking of black bears by archery in the McHugh Creek drainage.

Proposal 95. Oppose. This proposal is similar to Proposal 92. It would authorize the taking of black bears by archery in the McHugh Creek drainage.

Proposal 97 Oppose. This proposal would open the South Fork Eagle river drainage to brown bear hunting. Wounded brown bears can be very dangerous, and there is a risk that some hunters, will injure but not kill a brown bear. The ½ mile set back contained in the proposal, if adopted, will not reduce that risk. The South Fork of Eagle River public lands are heavily used by hikers and skiers, and the risk to these non-consumptive users, as well as to children of local residents is too high.

Proposal 98. Oppose. This proposal would open the Rainbow Valley drainage to brown bear hunting. Wounded brown bears can be very dangerous, and there is a risk that some hunters will injure but not kill a brown bear. A ½ mile set back will not reduce that risk. The Rainbow Valley drainage and public lands nearby are heavily used by hikers and skiers, and children reside in some of the homes in Rainbow Valley. The risk of tragic human-bear encounters would be increased if this proposal is adopted. Let ADF&G professionals, not amateurs, control bears, lethally or otherwise, in areas like this.

Proposal 99. Oppose. This proposal would authorize an archery only brown bear hunt in the McHugh Creek drainage. Archery bear hunts, especially for brown bears, carry the risk of archers wounding but not killing bears. The comments made regarding Proposal 92 apply.

Proposal. 103. Oppose. This proposal would authorize a bear baiting station in the McHugh Creek drainage. This proposal if adopted would present a public safety issue, and the comments made opposing Proposal 92 apply. In addition to the public safety issues raised by this proposal, there are other reasons why authorizing a bear baiting station in the McHugh Creek drainage is a bad ideas.

First: Anchorage neighborhoods on the Hillside already have problems with bears habituated to human garbage left outdoors in unsecured containers. If this proposal is approved, the BOG will set a bad example negatively impacting public awareness campaigns in which residents are urged to avoid leaving garbage in



Second: More bears will be habituated to human food near subdivisions on the Hillside and in Rainbow Valley.

Proposal 104. Support. The undersigned Kneeland Taylor is the sponsor of this proposal. It would close lynx trapping in Chugach State Park, and the Glacier Creek Drainage to Lynx trapping. Lynx are treasured watchable wildlife for thousands of residents of Anchorage and Girdwood. The Department's comments indicate that the Department is opposed to the loss of lynx hunting and trapping opportunity, but that the Department is neutral as to the allocation between consumptive and non-consumptive users.

Table 104-1 in the Department's comments indicates that in the years 2017-2021, a total of 37 lynx were reported killed, or taken in Unit 14C, and that 6 of these were taken by hunters or trappers in Chugach State Park in 2020. The table does not provide specifics as to the take of lynx in the Glacier Creek drainage. (Girdwood area). Table 104-1 also makes it clear that many lynx are being killed every year, and that the total of lynx killed in Unit 14C is not strictly tied to the abundance of snowshoe hare. In other words, it is not true that almost all the lynx in a geographic area die off in years when snowshoe hare numbers crash. For instance, in 2017-2019 when lynx hunting and trapping was closed by emergency order, 10 lynx were killed in Unit 14C in D.L.P. incidents, by road kill and illegal take. The numbers are probably higher, especially in regard to illegal take. Adding to those numbers is number of lynx harvested legally when emergency orders closing the season are not issued. That number could be eliminated if the proposal were to be adopted, which it should.

The statutes authorizing and creating Chugach State Park provide for the purposes of the park, and include "the display of wildlife". Trapping is not mentioned as one of the purposes. This proposal would increase lynx numbers in Chugach State Park and the Girdwood area, and increase opportunities for watchable wildlife in that part of Alaska where half of all Alaskan live, and that a million tourists visit every year. These magnificent cats are worth so much more residents and tourists than as pelts for a few lucky hunters and trappers.

The undersigned notes that the BOG's Anchorage Advisory Committee did not allow any public testimony on this subject or any other subject at the meeting of its "Game subcommittee", notwithstanding the attendance, and efforts of the



undersigned and others to testify, and notwithstanding the agenda for the subcommittee's meeting. This proposal and many others were not addressed by the full Anchorage Advisory Committee, which proceeded in accordance with a procedure providing that if all three of the participating subcommittee members unanimously approved or opposed a proposal, the subcommittee's position was automatically adopted by the full Advisory Committee. The point is that the position of the Anchorage Advisory Committee on this proposal and many others was reached without public input and without any discussion by the full Advisory Committee.

Proposal 200. Oppose. This proposal would provide for a moose hunt for seniors over the age of 65 throughout the Southcentral Region. It would appear to apply anywhere, including closed areas such as the Anchorage Management Area, and others where special controls apply. It is objectionable for that reason.

Proposal 203. Oppose. This proposal would authorize a moose hunt in Kincaid Municipal Park for hunters that meet the 70% disability standard and require a mobility device; for instance a wheel chair, prosthetic limbs, or a motorized vehicle of some type. This proposal if adopted would deprive thousands of people of the pleasure of viewing moose, and would benefit only a handful of hunters. The use of motor vehicles anywhere in Kincaid Park (with the exception of the roads and parking lots within the Park) is prohibited by Municipal ordinances and regulations. In addition, hunting in Kincaid Park is prohibited by Municipal ordinance.

The proposal provides that the time for the Kincaid Park hunt would be in September through November. Those three months are when the Park is busy with cross country runners of all ages, competing and training. It is also prime season for single track biking. The Department's comments fail to mention cross country running, suggesting insufficient investigation of the impact if this proposal were to be adopted. The Department's comments also make it clear that mountain bikers only rarely have injury causing encounters with moose on the trails.

Viscera from harvested moose might be required to be removed, according to ADF&G regulation, but total removal and enforcement is highly unlikely: increasing the danger to the thousands of people walking, running or biking within the Park. The Department's neutral position reflects its failure to take seriously the interests and preferences of the thousands of Anchorage residents and visitors who treasure recreation in this beautiful Park.



Proposal 81. Support. This proposal by the Humane Society of Kodiak Board of Directors would require all snares set on the Kodiak road system to include breakaway mechanisms. If adopted it would reduce the number of non-target species maimed or killed in snares set by trappers along the road system. The Department reports that breakaway devices are required in other states, and that the Department receives a significant number of complaints of domestic pets (dogs) getting caught in snares in popular, high traffic areas, and that quite a few bears and deer have been killed or maimed in snares in the last several years. This proposal should be amended to include all snares set in Unit 8, and not only those set along the road system.

KENAI PENINSULA GMUs 7 & 15

Proposal 109. Support. This proposal, as intended by the proponent, would close all Dall Sheep hunting on the Kenai Peninsula. The Department's surveys and records (as indicated in Figure 109-1, and the Department's comments) make it clear that the population of Dall Sheep on the Kenai Peninsula has crashed from more than 2000 animals in 1968 to less than 500 today; an 80% decline according to the Department. The Department's comments and chart also indicate that the five year harvest, including the federal subsistence harvest, is six sheep per year. Dall Sheep on the Kenai Peninsula should be conserved for future generations to enjoy, and not reduced to unsustainable levels by over harvest. The Department opposes this proposal (and is neutral as to other proposals which provide for additional sheep hunting) stating the following:

"Sheep are managed under full curl regulation, currently negating concerns of harvest affecting the trajectory of sheep populations."

I attended the six day conference on Dall Sheep sponsored by the Safari Club and the Department held several years ago. Several members of the Board of Game attended on all six day. I raised the issue of whether reliance on the full curl regulation might be causing negative impacts on Dall Sheep populations in Alaska. Some information provided in response to my focus indicated that there are negative impacts.

In the last 13 years, the population of Dall Sheep on the Kenai Peninsula has

fallen 50%. See Figure 109-1 which shows a population of approximately 600 Dall Sheep on the Kenai Peninsula in 2020, and a current population of approximately 400. This ongoing collapse of Dall Sheep on the Kenai Peninsula suggests that the Department's reliance on "full curl regulation" as a panacea is mistaken.



Wildlife conservation should be the Department's priority, not hunting. Here, the preservation of a sustainable population of Dall Sheep on the Kenai Peninsula is at risk. Hunting should be closed until there is evidence of recovery. Reliance on full curl regulation clearly is not working.

Proposal 130. Oppose. This proposal would authorize Intensive Game Management in the Unit 15 C Predation Control Area which consists of all lands within 15C north of Kachemak Bay including the Fox River Flats and State and private lands consisting of approximately 2027 square miles. The stated purpose of Proposal 130 is to continue the habitat enhancement and predator control plan first adopted in 2012, but with minor amendments.

This proposal if adopted would violate AS 16.05.255(e). The relevant applicable statutory language is as follows:

"The Board of Game shall adopt regulations to provide for intensive game management to **restore the abundance** or productivity of identified big game populations as necessary..."

[Emphasis added.]

The Department makes it clear in Proposal 130 that moose population and harvest goals are being currently met. In other words, there is no evidence of a need to "restore" the abundance of moose, and there is no evidence that it is "necessary" to authorize intensive game management in Unit 15C.

The Department's proposal authorizes extreme measures to take wolves. Those extreme measures include the following:

- A. hunting and trapping of wolves by the public using motorized vehicles [i.e. chasing wolves using snow machines]
- B. public aerial shooting permits issued by the Commissioner under AS 16.05.783



AS 16.05.783 provides for authorization of these extreme measures as part of a predator control program in **only two circumstances**, described in AS 16.05.783 (a) as follows:

(1) in regard to an identified big game prey population under AS 16.05.255(g) that **objectives set by the board for the population have not** been achieved and that predation is an important cause for the failure to achieve the objectives set by the board, and that a reduction of predation can reasonably be expected to aid in the achievement of the objectives; or

(2) that a disease or parasite of a predator population (A) is threatening the normal biological condition of the predator population; or (B) if left untreated would spread to other populations.

[Emphasis added.]

The Department's explanation for its proposal is stated in relevant part as follows:

"The department would like to have the plan [adopted in 2012] reauthorized with predator control and habitat enhancement options. While Unit 15 C moose population and harvest objectives are currently being met the department sees a benefit to reauthorizing and updating the plan. Updates to the plan include adding habitat enhancement, which was not the focus in the initial IM plan development. The department's intent is to utilize habitat work to maintain moose populations within objectives." [Emphasis added.]

The statutes authorizing intensive game management and extreme measures for controlling wolves do not allow intensive game management, and the use of extreme measures in these circumstances. The mere fact that the Department "sees a benefit" in reauthorization is insufficient grounds for approving an intensive game management plan, with extreme measures for controlling predators. For this reason, the proposal should be rejected by the Board of Game in its entirety. It's illegal and that fact can easily be demonstrated to a court having jurisdiction.



Proposal 133. Support. This proposal by the Homer Advisory Committee would prohibit taking black bear from boats in Unit 15 C. By Homer Adv. Committee. Support. See comments regarding Proposal 56, which would cover not only Unit 15C but also the rest of Unit 15, and all of Units 6 & 7.

Proposal 145. Support. This proposal if adopted would close areas close to the Sterling Highway where there are underpasses and overpasses for wildlife. The purpose of these planned underpasses and overpasses is to reduce motor vehicle collisions with moose and other animals. If hunting and trapping is permitted at these underpasses and overpasses, moose and other animals will not become habituated to using them. The number of moose killed in motor vehicle collisions on the Sterling Highway is similar to the take by predators, and similar to the take by human harvest. Reduction of the number of moose killed by motor vehicles will increase the number of moose available for human harvest, and should be a significant goal of moose management on the Kenai Peninsula.

Proposals 146-147 and 149-153. Support. These proposals all address the same issue, namely traps on or near trails, trail heads, and other locations where large numbers of people hike, ski, and walk, some of whom take their dogs. I support all these proposals.

I have been involved with this issue, as an advocate for buffers, for 23 years. I wish to add some comments on **procedure** if the Department and the Board of Game wish to deal with this issue responsibly.

First, the Board of Game should direct the Department to include in the handbook of current trapping regulations specifics regarding municipal ordinances providing for trapping buffers, and safe no-trapping zones. The Department doesn't do that at the current time. It is worth noting that at least 12 municipalities in the State have enacted ordinances banning traps and snares within certain areas within their jurisdictions. The purpose of these ordinances is to address the same problem as the people who have submitted Proposals 146-154; namely traps on trails and in other locations where traps pose a threat to dogs, and small children. The issue of the validity of these ordinances is currently before the Alaska Supreme Court, and a decision should be issued soon. When the validity of these ordinances is affirmed, the Board of Game should make it clear that the specifics of these ordinances are included in the handbook of trapping regulations, or that links to these ordinances are included in the handbook.



Second, the Anchorage ordinance and some of the other municipal ordinances should be used as models of how to deal with the issue responsibly. The elected representatives of Anchorage and other municipalities are smart, experienced representatives of the Alaskan public.

Third, the Cooper Landing Safe Trails Committee and the other people and organizations submitting Proposals 145-147 and 148-153 have sufficiently identified, and described the trails and other locations that deserve protection, and these proposals should be approved. But government employees should assist in the technical process of identifying and describing trails, trail heads, and other locations requiring protection in other areas of the state. Relying on volunteers such as the Cooper Landing Safe Trails to come forward with proposals often results in proposals that are not perfect in terms of descriptions, maps, and supporting data. If not perfect, trappers routinely nitpick the details and waste everyone's time. Regulations providing for sanctions for trapping in closed areas need to be specific, and well defined if they are to be enforceable. It is time to enlist the professionals employed of the Department and other agencies in developing lists and reliable information on where common sense instructs us that traps should no be set. Relying on volunteer non-professionals is not a realistic way to address the issue. It was the City of Anchorage's planning department that identified and developed lists and maps of all the trail heads, campgrounds, and developed areas where traps are prohibited by the substantive provisions of the Anchorage ordinance. A similar process should be used statewide.

Fourth, if meetings are to be held the purpose of which is to reach compromise regarding the proposals currently before the BOG, individuals and organizations participating should come to meetings prepared. That means familiar with the trails and other locations to be addressed. No one should be given absolute veto power at these meetings.

Proposal 154. Support, but with amendment. This proposal would require trappers to post signs indicating that trapping is being conducted. This proposal should be adopted with amendment providing for signs within 100 yards of traps, and not at trail heads. Public lands belong to the public, and signs at trail heads warning of traps unfortunately convey the implied message that public lands are the exclusive preserve of trappers, and that responsible pet owners should keep out.

Proposal 155, 156, & 160. Support. These three proposals would address the low numbers of beavers in various locations on the Kenai Peninsula. The people and



organizations who have made these proposals have noticed that beaver numbers have declined in recent years, and the Department's comments confirm this. The failure of beavers to re-colonize the Anchor River drainage after many years of heavy beaver trapping should stand as a warning to the Department and the BOG. Conservation of this important species and not continued harvest should be the priority.

Proposals 164--172. Support. These proposals would reduce the take of sea ducks in and near Kachemak Bay, and provide for accurate reporting of harvest. Most are made by the Homer Advisory Committee, which reports "a drastic decline in sea duck numbers in Kachemak Bay in recent years." Ms. Penelope Haas, who is a sponsor of some of these proposals, goes into detail regarding "community sea duck surveys in Kachemak Bay" conducted by more than 30 concerned individuals, which show that sea duck populations in Kachemak Bay are limited and do not bounce back after harvest. I have attended the Kachemak Bay Shorebird Festival for more than ten years. People travel from all over America to attend the Festival each year, and birding is big business in Homer both during the Festival, and throughout the summer. There are many expert birders who reside in Homer; and at least one of them is a member of the Homer Advisory Committee. Their expertise, and the expertise of volunteers doing community surveys, should be relied upon. They are asking that the harvest of sea ducks be reduced so that these sea duck species may recover in Kachemak Bay. Additional information should be gathered through detailed harvest data, as proposed. Conservation and recovery should be the priority, not hunting. The Board of Game should adopt all of these proposals.

I thank you in advance for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Kneeland Taylor



PC333

Submitted by: Christina Teaford

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Seward, Alaska

Comment:

For everyone's safety please approve trapping setbacks.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 145: Support Proposal 146: Support Proposal 147: Support Proposal 148: Support Proposal 149: Support Proposal 150: Support Proposal 151: Support Proposal 152: Support Proposal 153: Support Proposal 154: Support



PC334

Submitted by: Matt Teaford

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Seward, AK

Comment:

Only .4% of Alaskans have a trapping permit, that means 99.6% DON'T engage in trapping. It is time to manage public lands in accordance with usage. Please, at the very least, require trappers to move away from trails.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 145: Support Proposal 146: Support Proposal 147: Support Proposal 148: Support Proposal 149: Support Proposal 150: Support Proposal 151: Support Proposal 152: Support Proposal 153: Support Proposal 154: Support



Submitted by: Lorraine Temple

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Cooper Landing

Comment:

I strongly support proposal numbers 145-154.

Please See Attached for comment.

Lorraine Temple

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 145: Support Proposal 146: Support Proposal 147: Support Proposal 148: Support Proposal 149: Support Proposal 150: Support Proposal 151: Support Proposal 152: Support Proposal 153: Support Proposal 154: Support



Dear Board of Game,

I strongly support proposals 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153 and 154 regarding trap setbacks and signage. My name is Lorraine Temple and I'm the head of the Cooper Landing Safe Trails Committee as well as a 40-year resident of the Kenai Peninsula having homes in both Cooper Landing and Homer. I am an avid outdoor enthusiast and spent 20 years on the trail by dog team with my business as a tour guide. Today, I am the owner of a vacation rental business and bike rental business. My interest in the conflict between recreationalists and trappers was piqued years ago when several local dogs were left maimed or dead from traps on multi-use areas. I have owned hundreds of dogs as a musher, but only a few as pets. These pet dogs are no less important to me than a human child is to a mother. The thought of one of my pets getting stuck in a trap is intolerable. It is also disturbing not to be able to take them on the trails we have enjoyed the rest of the year and let them run and play freely as dogs should be able to do. I am also concerned about the impact to our winter vacation rental business; I've already had repercussions. Professional wildlife photographers came here, but were reluctant to go too far off the trail to explore and indicated they would probably go somewhere else next time. Lost income. Young families are trying to grow year-round businesses here to thrive and be able to stay local, but this growing conflict has the potential of stumping economic growth.

My efforts began in the fall of 2020 by creating a local committee interested in establishing safer trails and areas to winter recreate in the Cooper Landing and Summit Lake Recreation Area. Soon, we submitted proposals to the Federal Subsistence Management Board for trap setbacks which we knew were futile under ANILCA and that federal regulations cannot supersede State Regulations. Nevertheless, I thought it was important to bring the conflict to the public's attention and to let our community know that this issue needs addressing. This is not a new issue for Cooper Landing; in 2012, an online survey was conducted to get a feel for the residents' attitude regarding trapping and setbacks. The Conclusion of the 2012 survey echoed our 2020 Cooper Landing Safe Trails Committee survey. We mailed surveys to every PO Box in Cooper Landing to gauge their concern for traps near recreational areas and suggestions for setbacks. Our survey found that 90% of the Cooper Landing community supports setbacks. Our polling resulted in a 35% return, and some were from households with many having 2 or more people living there, so it can be assumed the percentage of support was even higher.

This is not the first time the community has rallied to support trap setbacks. Around 2013, community members created the Committee for Safe Public Lands and Trails which submitted proposals to the BOG after a failed effort to work with local trappers, and their proposals were opposed by the BOG. Since then, encounters between unethically set traps and dog owners continue, and irritation from our growing community of younger families and winter visitors is increasing. This issue has been on a slow boil, but I truly believe there is hope for resolve.

ADF&G estimates there are 3,000 active trappers out of the over 23,000 permits issued annually. This estimate comes from sealing records, the annual Trappers Questionnaire sent out, and harvest reports. Permits are sold often in a bundle and the extra money spent is utilized for education and research so the investment is worthy. I have some friends who buy a trapping license for this purpose only. With a state population of around 730,000 and a Kenai Peninsula Borough population of around 60,000, it breaks down to about .4% of the Alaskan population traps, if you apply the percentage of trappers to Cooper Landing, that is 1.2 people in our community who trap! The current land use regs, or lack thereof, are unfairly in favor of this very small number of trappers. 99.6% of Alaskans cannot use the public lands safely or without fear of traps close to trails, beaches, campground, roads and pull outs due to the violent nature of



this activity. These are supposed to be “multi-use” areas, but they clearly are not comfortably “multi-use” in the winter. It’s time for change.

The argument has been made that encounters have decreased since the ATA put up informational signs at various places in the Cooper Landing area. The truth is, people are too scared to take their dogs to their favorite places because of the fear of traps so they leave them home or just don’t go. That is a shame. How do you quantify emotions? These are very real facts for our community. Our ability to enjoy our ‘backyard’ here in rural Alaska has been taken away. Yes, the Wildlife Refuge has trap setbacks and is a safe place to go, but that is inconvenient, time consuming and not a good alternative to being able to walk out your door or a 5-minute drive to a beach. As a resident of the State of Alaska, I hope our Board of Game, tasked with representing all Alaskans, can provide setbacks on state-managed lands - a request the public has repeatedly made of this board for over a decade. One longtime resident who actively hikes and skis in the winter says she “feels held hostage” when the traps come out. Another lifelong local Alaskan who traps and hunts with her family shared concerns about her young kids being curious and exploring off the trails a bit, and the dangers of active traps.

My desire is to create a safe buffer between the traps and multiple other non-lethal user groups, such as hikers, skiers, snowshoers, Nordic ice skaters, search and rescue teams. This is not an anti-trapping campaign. I respect and honor the long-standing tradition and lifestyle of trapping in our state. I spent 24 years as a motivational speaker in the lower 48 and extolled the virtues of fur, and how my beaver hat was a game changer for this Santa Barbara transplant back in the early 80’s when I was out on the trail with my dog team. I will acknowledge though, that the necessity of fur, and the low prices a pelt commands, makes trapping rather obsolete, but, like keeping a traditional language alive, there is a place for it. I have friends and neighbors taking their children out to teach them ethical trapping and then how to tan the hides. There is an art and value to that. We wrote these proposals with the intent that they will not meaningfully impact subsistence users and ethical trappers who are already setting away from multi-use areas. Knowing that the subsistence users are local, our neighbors and friends, makes it more likely they will be respectful of trap placement and the possible conflicts with dogs. It’s the weekend, hobby, problem trappers that our proposals target for accountability. Further, local trappers are Federally Qualified subsistence users, so they would not be impacted by these proposals.

The 100-yard setback was established as an appropriate distance to be as preventative as possible for conflict. In our survey, we got many responses that suggested up to a mile setback; Juneau has ¼ mile setbacks. A trapper from Homer is actually the one who suggested the distance and I’ve heard it supported by at least 4 other trappers that this is “acceptable” and very easy to work with. 100 yards is literally 120 steps and should take a person about 2 minutes to walk; even less if they use a snowmachine. As one of our AC members who is supportive of setbacks stated, “trappers need to get off the main trails and get out there in the wilderness, cut their own traplines and stay away from busy areas. The trapping isn’t that good there anyway”. He continued with “come on guys, we need to address this and make some changes. It’s not going away”. I couldn’t agree more. Sure, the scent of a trap will catch the attention of any dog and most likely cause the dog to check it out, but at least with some distance, the possibility is less. And I agree, dogs should be in voice command or electric collar control. There are no tethered leash laws in place for the areas we seek protections.

Without regulations put in place today, the possibility exists that trapping may be even more regulated or even banned in the future which would be tragic for those who enjoy it so much. It would be much



better all-around to work together now to create a more harmonious, equitable allocation of our public lands.

There are two special areas the Committee submitted proposals for, and that is the Summit Lake Recreational Area and the Stetson Creek Parking Area and 100 yards of the trail. The reason these are special is that the Summit Lake Recreation Area is high avalanche danger and search-and-rescue dogs are used there. The last thing a rescuer needs to deal with is their trained dog getting caught in a trap while on a mission. The Stetson Creek parking and bit of trail area is used for search-and -rescue training by local people. It's important to have a space where this training can take place safely.

One of the ADF&G staff comments that showed up in reference to our proposals was that "the department is generally opposed to a reduction in opportunity where a harvestable surplus exists, and instead encourages trappers to be cognizant of potential conflicts and to follow the trapper's Code of Ethics." I question if there have been studies done on how much "harvestable surplus exists" within the 100-yard corridor we have proposed? Is the trapping productivity so abundant around those busy areas that it will truly reduce the 'opportunity' to the trapper? What is the effect to the recreationalist who is clearly in the majority? The Forest Service's Our Values Statement includes the intention of managing for "Safety. In every way; physical, psychological, and social". Land use management and allocation is not safe physically, psychologically, or socially today - ask the 90% of the Cooper Landing residents who support trap setbacks. I wish we could rest on the assumption that trappers would all recognize potential conflicts and follow the trappers Code of Ethics which states in part:

3.) Promote trapping methods that will reduce the possibility of catching non-target animals.

9.) Concentrate trapping in areas where animals are over-abundant for the supporting habitat.

Trapping close to highly used areas increases the potential of catching non-target animals, and utilizing the 100 yard corridor between the areas referred to in the proposals for trapping is not concentrating on where animals are over-abundant for the supporting habitat. Abiding by the conservative requests in the proposals, asking for 100-yard setbacks would be right in line with the trappers Code of Ethics so shouldn't be hard to agree to.

I feel that this loose, 'self-regulating' means of regulating trappers is an ideology that might have worked in the past, but these are new times with unfamiliar, ambitious out-of-town trappers that are creating a nightmare for local residents and recreationalists.

Should trapping of a species within this setback be proven biologically necessary, I would recommend a temporary permit system that identifies active traps in specific cases and make sure the public has full awareness. We had an issue here in Cooper Landing with a trapper trying to eradicate problem beaver close to a prominent rafting business and private home who had their dogs loose on their property, which added to existing tension and conflict. More communication could have avoided this.

There is a safety issue at the center of all this, but also, just as important, a 'community rights' issue. I hear all the time about 'trappers rights' but I have not heard anything about the rights of the 99.6% of Alaskans who want to recreate without fearing the wilderness instead of enjoying it. When are their 'rights' considered? This is another 'fact' that is hard to get scientific data for however, it is equally, if not more important.

"It's time to address this evolving need and make some changes"; I agree with this sentiment that was voiced by a former Board of Game chairman recently at 'Trap Release Seminar' the Cooper Landing Safe



Trails Committee organized in Moose Pass. I encourage education for all user groups on how to identify a trapping area, how to release your dog from a trap, different types of traps used, what ethical trapping means and most importantly, how to respect each other's value on outdoor recreating. I plan on organizing more seminars next fall as a combined effort with the Soldotna/Kenai ATA to continue public awareness and hopefully prevent that unfortunate outcome of a lost pet.

There is a disturbing aspect to this process that needs to be addressed which is the recommendations and makeup of our local Advisory Committee. The discussions leading up to the AC's decision to oppose or support the proposals regarding Cooper Landing were manipulative, inadequate, glossed over and left myself and community members feeling our voices really didn't matter. I am an alternate on the AC by default. I nominated myself to fill a vacancy in the last election. After our spring meeting where I presented the Safe Trails trap setback proposals to the AC, I received 3 phone calls from community members who had attended the meeting and the word I heard describing what happened during that time was "disgusting". My understanding is that the AC is created to provide a forum for individuals, agencies and interested organizations to discuss, understand, and add their opinion to the process. I was also under the understanding that the AC is supposed to represent the community as a whole. The current AC is composed of a group, many of whom have been on the committee for 10-22 years as they re-elect each other year after year. They all have common interests and how they vote reflects personal interests rather than the broader scope. Recently, in discussing these current proposals, 19 community members commented about the setbacks; 17 supported them and only 2 opposed them. Even with all the information from the community survey, desires and the comments during the meeting, the AC opposed any setbacks, clearly not representing the community as a whole. The AC votes were fueled by personal agendas and not reflective of the community they represent. ADF&G states: "The Value of Working Together Advisory committees serve as a forum to bring individuals, agencies, and interested organizations together to review important fish and game resource matters. These forums not only provide an opportunity for collaboration and communication, keystones to forging regulatory change with the boards, but serve to strengthen relationships among each of these parties in their work to improve Alaska's fish and game resource."

I hope in the future the input from our community can be respected, honored, heard with more sincerity and our AC can become a "strengthening" force as it should. We have a few community members who are both consumptive and non-consumptive users, who would like to be part of the AC, so I see a more equitable committee in the future.

If the proposals before the Board of Game need more attention and discussion, I would encourage the Board to create a committee to discuss the appropriate trails and areas for setbacks. This committee should be a group that can logically, cohesively, comfortably, respectfully discuss the issues and have equal representation from both user groups. Please consider all these qualities when choosing the constituents if it comes to pass.

More importantly, I again, urge the Board of Game to consider the evolving nature of our population and the importance of having the ability to thoroughly enjoy where we call 'home' safely, freely, respectfully and support the 100-yard setbacks outlined in proposals #145-#154.

Thank you,

Lorraine Temple



THE BLUE HERON INN

John & Fran Latham
P.O. Box 254
Yakutat, Alaska 99689
907/784-3287
FAX 907/784-3603



PC 336

February 23, 2023

ADFG BOARD SUPPORT SECTION

P.O. BOX 115526
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801

RE: PROPOSAL 204 - SHEEP CLOSURE UNIT 19C

I AM IN OPPOSITION TO THIS PROPOSAL OF TOTAL CLOSURE. AS A REGISTERED GUIDE HAVING GUIDED IN UNIT 19C FOR OVER 40 YEARS WE EXPERIENCED THE UPS AND DOWNS OF SHEEP CYCLES BUT WERE ALWAYS ABLE TO HARVEST TROPHY RAMS FOR OUR CLIENTS WITH A HIGH RATE OF SUCCESS. THE ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF A COMPLETE CLOSURE WOULD BE LARGE TO MANY SMALL BUSINESSES STILL RECOVERING FROM COVID YEARS. A FULL CLOSURE MIGHT EVEN PUT SOME FOLKS OUT OF BUSINESS.

SOME SUGGESTIONS IN LIEU OF A COMPLETE CLOSURE:

- ① REDUCE THE SHEEP SEASON TO ALL HUNTERS.
- ② HISTORICAL EXISTING CURRENT GUIDES HAVE SHEEP HUNTS REDUCED BY A PERCENTAGE EQUALLY.
- ③ HAVE RESIDENT HUNTERS REQUIRE PURCHASING A SHEEP TAG MONIES TO BE DIRECTED FOR SHEEP RESEARCH/STUDIES TO F&G.



AS A GUIDES REPUTATION IS BASED ON HUNTERS SUCCESS
FOR THE MOST PART, I THINK THEY FOR THE MOST PART
REGULATE THE HARVEST IN THE AREAS THEY OPERATE IN TO
INSURE FUTURE SUCCESS.

THANK YOU,

SINCERELY,

John H. Latham



PC337

Submitted by: Sydney Thielke

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Homer, Alaska

Comment:

I am writing in support of proposal 146 and 147. Trapping is no doubt part of many Alaskans heritage and in some cases livelihood. With population growth and increased accessibility to winter recreation via groomed trails, sensible management is needed to protect public safety. A 100 yard setback from mapped trails is a reasonable approach to keep everyone safe and still allow for trapping to occur in southcentral Alaska.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 146: Support Proposal 147: Support



PC338

Submitted by: John Thomas

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Cooper Landing, AK

Comment:

#145 Support. These wildlife crossings are to protect, should not be used to funnel wildlife into traps.

#149 Support. Families with children and pets use these campgrounds, should not have to worry about traps.

#150 Support. Again, used by families, trap where it doesn't endanger people and pets.

#151 Support. Same reasons.

#152 Support. If you have hiked these trails as I have, you know traps need to be far away, or skied them in winter.

#153 Support. Folks like to run their dogs along the lake, often with their children.

#154 Support. This just seems common sense, if trappers are concerned about steeling, that's a small price to pay for protecting those who are using these facilities.

#146, #147, #148 Support. Same reasons as expressed above.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 145: Support Proposal 146: Support Proposal 147: Support Proposal 148: Support Proposal 149: Support
Proposal 150: Support Proposal 151: Support Proposal 152: Support Proposal 153: Support Proposal 154: Support

Cooper Landing Trap Setback Proposals, Comments & Ballot



PC 339

I support the following proposal(s) that have been submitted by the Cooper Landing Safe Trails Committee to the Alaska Board of Game to reduce conflicts with trappers and increase safety among the rising number of multi-use groups in Game Unit 7 (the Cooper Landing area). I believe the proposed are reasonable setbacks to maintain safe recreation for trail users and their pets.

There are multiple proposals for trap setbacks or trap signage in the Cooper Landing area.

Please select the proposals that you are in support of (select all that apply).

If there is more than one person in your household, please have each person submit their comments separately. You can copy this, or contact cooperlandingsafetrails@gmail.com for extra forms.

- # 145 Wildlife Crossings:** ¼ mile hunting and trapping buffers from mouths of new highway wildlife crossings on the upcoming Cooper Landing bypass
- #149 Campgrounds:** Establish 1) a 100-yard trapping setback along the perimeter of the Quartz Creek, Crescent Creek, Russian River, and Cooper Creek (North and South) campgrounds, AND 2) a 50-yard trapping setback for traps with an inside spread of 5 inches or less, that are set at least 4 feet above the ground or snow level, and size 3 leghold marten traps set in boxes.
- # 150 Roads and pullouts:** Establish 1) a 100-yard trapping setback along both sides of roads and all sides of the the pullouts listed: Quartz Creek Road, East Quartz Creek and Williams Road, Old Sterling Highway, Snug Harbor Road, Bean Creek Road, Russian Gap Road, and all pullouts along the Sterling Highway. AND 2) a 50-yard trapping setback for traps with an inside spread of 5 inches or less, that are set at least 4 feet above the ground or snow level, and size 3 leghold marten traps set in boxes.
- #151 Summit Recreation:** Establish trapping setbacks along the perimeter of all highway pullouts, backcountry access points, and winter trails in the Japan Woods area, Tenderfoot Campground ski area, Park-N-Poke area, and Manitoba Mountain.
- #152 Trails:** Establish 1) a 100-yard trapping setback along both sides of the trails and all sides of the following trailheads: Crescent Creek Trail, Lower Russian Lake Trail, Bean Creek Trail, Russian Gap Trail/Historic Quartz Creek Trail, Resurrection Trail (South End), West Juneau Bench Trail, Devil's Pass Ski Loops, and Stetson Creek Parking area and Trail, AND 2) a 50-yard trapping setback for traps with an inside spread of 5 inches or less, that are set at least 4 feet above the ground or snow level, and size 3 leghold marten traps set in boxes.
- #153 Beaches:** Establish 1) a 100-yard trapping setback from the mean high-water mark along the north and south side beaches of Kenai Lake, AND 2) a 50-yard trapping setback for traps with an inside spread of 5 inches or less, that are set at least 4 feet above the ground or snow level, and size 3 leghold marten traps set in boxes.
- # 154 Signage:** Establishing mandatory signs posted at all access points of active trapping in the Game Unit 7 area to reduce conflicts with trappers and increase safety among the rising number of multi-use groups.

Other areas setback proposals:

- #146 Trails in Kachemak Bay State Park:** Establish 100 yard trapping setback from the Diamond Creek Trail, the Grewingk Saddle Trail.
- #147 Ski Trails in Homer:** Establish 100 yard setback from the Snowmad Trails and the Kachemak Nordic Ski Club Trails
- # 148 Seward Trails:** Establish a 100 yard trapping setback from trails in Seward.



PC340

Submitted by: Elena Tillman

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: San Diego, CA (current)

Comment:

I SUPPORT Proposal #145 to secure hunting and trapping setbacks from new wildlife crossings on the Sterling Highway Cooper Landing bypass. The highway construction plans include multiple wildlife underpasses and Alaska's first wildlife overpass! Fencing will keep wildlife off the road and funnel them through these new crossings, but current regulations allow for hunting and trapping on these crossings, which defeats the purpose, and is not in line with the spirit of ethical hunting. Please make these crossings safe passages for wildlife.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 145: Support



PC341

Submitted by: Bruce Turkington

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: HOMER, ALASKA

Comment:

I support proposal 132 for not requiring sealing moose horns in areas of the Kenai Peninsula.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 132: Support



Submitted by: Ryan Turkington

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Homer Alaska

Comment:

Hi I am in support of proposal 132, eliminating the sealing requirements for moose in unit 15. There has been major inconsistencies between different biologists on what's legal antlers. They have taken several peoples meat and antlers when by definition the antlers are legal. As a hunter you only have definition to figure out what's legal. What kind of training have the biologists actually had on what is legal and what is not? I feel by getting them sealed really isn't accomplishing anything and honest people are having their meat taken away when in fact they felt by the definitions that are given to hunters there antlers are legal. I strongly hope you consider removing the sealing requirements.

Ryan Turkington

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 132: Support



File Code: 1500; 2630

Date: March 3, 2023

Alaska Board of Game
Boards Support Section
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, Alaska 99811-5526

Dear Alaska Board of Game,

The United States Forest Service-Chugach National Forest would like to submit the following comments in support of Proposals 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, and 154 submitted by the Cooper Landing Safe Trails Committee to establish trapping setbacks from heavily used recreation areas and to require signs be posted at all active trapping access points in Unit 7:

Year-round outdoor recreation is an important and growing segment of the Cooper Landing area's economy. As the amount of winter recreation has increased over the past 20 years, so has the number of encounters between user groups and traps set in recreational areas. Many of these areas occur on Forest Service lands.

The proposals include 100-yard setbacks from the most popular and heavily used multi-use trails, campgrounds, roads, pullouts, and beaches that are in the Cooper Landing area as well as areas of the Summit Lake Recreation Area. Trapping setbacks would establish safe zones for user groups accessing these areas for: cross-country skiing, backcountry skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, ice fishing, hiking, fat tire biking, dog mushing, snow machining, bird hunting, cabin rentals, and more.

The Forest Service strives to fairly manage the land for all uses balancing commercial, recreational, personal, and subsistence uses across our public lands. Our National Forest is multi-use and balancing those uses at times becomes difficult with opposing views and this issue is one of those that all parties have the right to continue using the Forest for their needs. The goal of these proposals is to establish safe corridors for recreation users with their families and pets, while still allowing trapping beyond a modest buffer.

For the reasons mentioned above, Chugach NF supports establishing effective regulatory measures including trapping setbacks and signs posted at all access points of active trapping along high use trails and recreation areas in Unit 7.





Thank you for the opportunity to share the Chugach NF comments on this proposal. If there are questions, please contact me at 907-288-7730 or by e-mail at ruth.damico@usda.gov.

Sincerely,

RUTH L. D'AMICO
District Ranger



File Code: 1500; 2630
Date: March 1, 2023

Alaska Board of Game
Boards Support Section
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, Alaska 99811-5526

Dear Alaska Board of Game:

The United States Forest Service-Chugach National Forest (Chugach NF) would like to submit the following comments in support of Proposal 145 submitted by the Alaska Wildlife Alliance to close areas to hunting and trapping within ¼ mile of five wildlife crossing structures related to the Sterling Highway MP 45-60 Project in Units 7 and 15:

- The construction of the new 10-mile segment of the Sterling Highway MP 45-60 Project north of Cooper Landing, and associated recreational development planned for the area, substantially impairs crucial north-south wildlife movement. The new 3-lane highway segment bisects the Juneau Creek drainage which is the primary wildlife movement corridor connecting nearly 1 million acres of habitat north of the highway with 1.4 million acres on the south side. Combined with the existing 2-lane highway, residential, commercial, and recreational development of Cooper Landing and the Russian River Area, and the natural barriers of Kenai and Skilak lakes, this new highway segment represents a substantial new impediment to effective north-south wildlife movement on the Kenai Peninsula.

A study completed in 2010 in anticipation of future development along the Sterling Highway found **“almost 80% of the area historically available for north-south movement by wildlife on the Kenai Peninsula has been lost”** (Morton et al., 2010). This study considered the 65-mile linear distance from the mouth of the Kenai River to the Seward Highway along the eastern most edge of Kenai Lake. Within this stretch Kenai Lake and Skilak Lake act as natural barriers, leaving the remaining 38.5 miles for wildlife movement. Expanding urbanization in the Kenai-Soldotna-Sterling area and in Cooper Landing has further bottlenecked these corridors. In addition to the new Sterling Hwy MP 45-60 Project, the Kenai Peninsula Borough has selected approximately 1,000 acres of land for community development. Cumulatively, these projects leave only two potential landscape-scale corridors across the Sterling Highway without additional, significant human interference: a 3.5-mile-wide segment immediately west of the outlet of Skilak Lake, and the area between the Skilak Lake inlet and Cooper Landing. (Figure 1).

In 2019, the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) completed the Sterling Highway MP 58-79 Project, which is immediately west of the new Sterling Highway MP 45-60 project. The project included widening shoulders, alignment improvements, and adding passing lanes over a 22-mile section that bisects the 2-million-acre U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Kenai National Wildlife Refuge on the Kenai Peninsula. Seeking to maintain wildlife movement and migration across this portion of the highway, and also focusing on safety and reducing moose-vehicle collisions, the Refuge and DOT&PF worked together, spending \$10.5 million to construct six wildlife underpasses and 2.3 miles of 9-ft-high fence with 22 jump-outs every 1/8 mile. Because this section of the highway is on Refuge land, the six underpasses are protected by current Refuge regulations including no trapping within one mile of public roads and no discharging of a firearm within a ¼ mile of the Sterling Highway.

- Project mitigation measures for the Sterling Highway MP 45-60 Project include 5 dedicated wildlife





crossing structures intended to help maintain wildlife movement patterns and minimize wildlife/vehicle collisions on the highway (Figure 2 & 3). To identify the best locations for mitigation measures that would help to retain wildlife movement patterns, DOT&PF sponsored a wildlife mitigation study in collaboration with wildlife management agencies. The scope of the study was developed in consultation with an interagency wildlife team (USFWS, Forest Service, and ADF&G). The results of the study, initiated in 2014, have been used to refine the location of wildlife crossing structures to accommodate wildlife movement.

- To function effectively and sustain habitat connectivity, wildlife use of these crossing structures must not be inhibited or impaired by human activities occurring on, within, or in proximity to these structures. The objective is to ensure that human activities occurring on or near the dedicated wildlife crossing structures do not function as a population mortality sink due to hunting or trapping.
- Long-term effectiveness of this substantial, multi-million-dollar investment in dedicated wildlife crossing structures requires a cooperative interagency approach to effectively manage and control human activities in the vicinity of these structures.
- To maintain long-term public safety in the Sterling Highway MP 45-60 project area, and to successfully achieve the project's wildlife mitigation objectives, management actions are necessary to prevent human activities such as trapping and hunting in and near the dedicated wildlife structures from impairing the effectiveness of dedicated wildlife crossing structures.

For the reasons mentioned above, Chugach NF supports establishing effective regulatory measures restricting hunting and trapping closures within ¼ mile of the five dedicated wildlife crossing structures, including two underpasses and one overpass in Unit 7 and two underpasses in Unit 15A.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the Chugach NF comments on this proposal. If there are questions, please contact me at 907-288-7730 or by e-mail at ruth.damico@usda.gov.

Sincerely,

RUTH L. D'AMICO
District Ranger

Enclosed: 3 Figures and 2 References

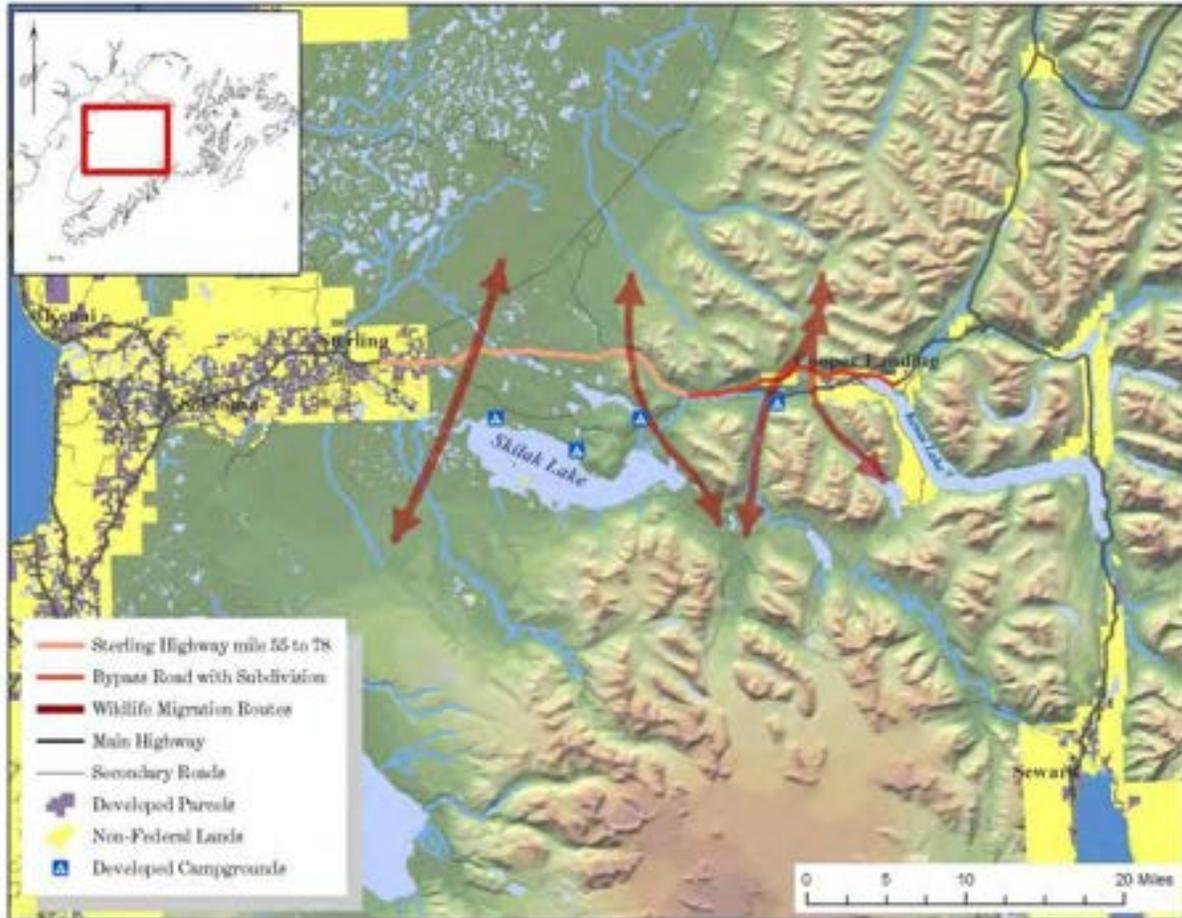


Figure 1. Potential landscape-scale movement corridors for wildlife remaining on the Kenai Peninsula east of the Seward Highway. (Morton and Benoit, *Delineation of Landscape Linkages in the Cooper Landing Planning Area*, Sept 2010)



Figure 2. Overview of Sterling Highway MP 45-60 Project (<http://sterlinghighway.net/>)



Figure 3. Photo of existing underpass on Kenai Wildlife Refuge. Sterling Highway MP 45-60 Project wildlife underpasses are expected to be similar.

References:

Morton, J., Magness, D., Benoit, M. (2010). *Delineation of Landscape Linkages in the Cooper Landing Planning Area* [White paper]. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Kenai National Wildlife Refuge & U.S. Forest Service, Chugach National Forest.

[Cooper_Landing_connectivity_revised_compressed_2.pdf \(kpb.us\)](#)



My name is Larry Van Daele and I am a retired Kodiak area wildlife biologist and former Board of Game member. I am submitting this comment to OPPOSE Proposal 76 (lengthening the brown bear season for RB230/260) and to SUPPORT Proposal 81 (require breakaway devices for snares on Kodiak road system).

Proposal 76 - OPPOSE

The proposal as written will not accomplish its stated goal of reducing DLPs or “problem” bears on the Kodiak road system, but it will greatly increase the opportunity for illegal harvest of bears from other parts of the archipelago.

Bears living in the vicinity of Kodiak City primarily occupy 3 drainages, all of which are largely closed to bear hunting. The Monashka and Pillar drainages are part of the City watershed and are completely closed above the main road. The Buskin drainage is almost exclusively US Coast Guard property and the vast majority of it is also closed to bear hunting due to security and safety concerns. Coastal areas between these drainages include the Kodiak Island Borough landfill, the vicinity of which is closed to bear hunting by State regulation, and urban areas of Kodiak city and surrounding subdivisions most of which are either illegal or impractical to hunt due to private lands and safety concerns. What this land use pattern does is essentially create a bear sanctuary surrounding the areas that experience the greatest degree of bear problems, and expansion of the seasons by a couple months will have little impact on DLP kills.

The portion of the registration hunts south and east of Kodiak city is mostly either owned by private individuals or by the Lesnoi or Ouzinkie Native Corporations. Lesnoi charges a \$800 land use fee for resident bear hunters and \$1,500 for non-residents. Afognak charges \$1,000 and \$1,700. There are some state lands on the south end of the road system. Regardless of land ownership or land use fees, any bears harvested in these areas will have little or no impact on the problem bears in and around Kodiak city.

Other compounding factors to the potential successful impact of this proposal are the behavior and reproductive status of the bears that cause problems within the area. The most effective “garbage bears”, including those that get into domestic livestock, cars and buildings, are almost exclusively nocturnal. Extension of the season still would not allow hunting with artificial light, so these bears would still be protected. The remaining bears that are seen during the day are typically sows with cubs, which are also protected, regardless of extension of the seasons. Finally, the season when bears are most likely to be attracted to human food/garbage is during August and September, a period known as hyperphagia, when they dramatically increase their food consumption in preparation for hibernation. The proposed season extensions would not allow hunting during this period.

While the proposal is expected to have little or no positive impact on the number of DLPs, it has a very likely chance of increasing illegal bear harvest from areas outside of the registration hunt area. Kodiak bears are a highly sought after trophy, and like most other parts of the state, the number of State Troopers and ADF&G personnel on Kodiak are woefully and chronically underfunded and understaffed. Having the registration and drawing permit hunt dates synchronized greatly reduces the likelihood of a person successfully “bootlegging” a bear that is shot in one area (for instance the closed drawing hunt area) and claiming it was taken in another area (such as the newly opened registration hunt area). Any alteration of this long-standing tradition will adversely impact the effectiveness of law enforcement and ultimately hurt the bear population.



In summary, the proposed regulation change will cause more harm than good. Time and again it has been proven that the most effective way of reducing bear problems is not by shooting more bears or by translocating bears. The only effective measure is to drastically reduce or eliminate bears' access to human food/garbage and aggressively educate both bears (averse conditioning) and people (outreach and enforcement) that bears and people can co-exist but only with consistent behavior by both species. Proposals such as this one have come up periodically over the past 4 decades I have been associated with bear management on Kodiak and each time the Board has voted it down. I urge you to do the same with this proposal.

Proposal 81 – SUPPORT

Kodiak road system has an ill-fated combination of healthy bear, deer, beaver, otter and fox populations; a community that loves to go onto the limited trails in the area with their dogs; and, US Coast Guard personnel and others moving to the island providing a constant stream of young, enthusiastic, and oftentimes naive outdoors people new to Alaska who want to try their hand at trapping. When these factors come together the unfortunately end result is a bear, deer or dog caught in a snare along a popular trail. Aside from the intense trauma inflicted on the animal and the humans associated with it, these incidents paint trappers in a very bad light. While Kodiak residents are generally accepting of trapping, that sentiment has eroded significantly in recent years. This was exacerbated by a similar proposal that was passed during the last Board cycle, only to be reconsidered later in the meeting during which time it was defeated with a promise that Alaska Trappers Association would come to Kodiak annually to give clinics on how to safely set snares and traps to avoid “by-catch”. Those clinics never happened and non-target species continue to be caught, even by snares remaining in the field after season closure.

While Boards have consistently avoided passing any proposals that attempt to minimize trap/dog encounters by regulation and opt for voluntary compliance and/or education instead, this case in Kodiak needs to be addressed by regulation. It is beyond the capabilities of the ATA to provide enough consistent education and peer pressure on all trappers to eliminate the problem. The proposal has strong public support and would codify an accepted “best practice” that most seasoned trappers use already. I urge the Board to support this proposal to enhance public safety, public acceptance of trapping, reduce harvest of non-target species, and to improve the quality of trappers in the area.



Submitted by: Craig Vanarsdale

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Soldotna, Alaska

Comment:

Oppose Proposal 82 but support the departments comments on adding the area in question the current archery hunt areas for DS141/241 to spread out hunters.

Support Proposal 87. It creates a great opportunity for Bowhunters to get some time afield outside of general seasons while likely not making a large affect on harvest.

Oppose proposal 109. As stated by the department, there is no biological reason to close sheep hunting under the full curl management structure.

Oppose proposal 204. As stated by the department, there is no biological reason to close sheep hunting under the full curl management structure. if there is to be reduction in harvest it should be a reduction to the allowed allocation of non-resident sheep hunters.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 55: Oppose Proposal 56: Support Proposal 57: Oppose Proposal 58: Support Proposal 59: Oppose Proposal 60: Oppose Proposal 61: Oppose Proposal 62: Support Proposal 63: Oppose Proposal 64: Oppose Proposal 65: Oppose Proposal 66: Oppose Proposal 67: Support Proposal 68: Support Proposal 69: Oppose Proposal 70: Support Proposal 71: Support Proposal 72: Support Proposal 73: Oppose Proposal 74: Oppose Proposal 75: Oppose Proposal 76: Oppose Proposal 77: Oppose Proposal 78: Support Proposal 79: Support Proposal 80: Support Proposal 81: Oppose Proposal 82: Oppose Proposal 83: Oppose Proposal 84: Oppose Proposal 85: Oppose Proposal 86: Support Proposal 87: Support Proposal 88: Support Proposal 89: Support Proposal 90: Support Proposal 91: Support Proposal 92: Support Proposal 93: Support Proposal 94: Support Proposal 95: Support Proposal 96: Oppose Proposal 97: Support Proposal 98: Support Proposal 99: Support Proposal 100: Support Proposal 101: Support Proposal 102: Oppose Proposal 103: Support Proposal 104: Oppose Proposal 105: Support Proposal 106: Oppose Proposal 107: Support Proposal 108: Oppose Proposal 109: Oppose Proposal 110: Oppose Proposal 111: Oppose Proposal 112: Oppose Proposal 113: Oppose Proposal 114: Oppose Proposal 115: Oppose Proposal 116: Support Proposal 117: Support Proposal 118: Oppose Proposal 119: Support Proposal 120: Support Proposal 121: Support Proposal 122: Support Proposal 123: Support Proposal 124: Support Proposal 125: Support Proposal 126: Support Proposal 127: Support Proposal 128: Support Proposal 129: Support Proposal 130: Support Proposal 131: Support Proposal 132: Support Proposal 133: Support Proposal 134: Oppose Proposal 135: Oppose Proposal 136: Support Proposal 137: Support Proposal 138: Support Proposal 139: Support Proposal 140: Support Proposal 141: Support Proposal 142: Oppose Proposal 143: Oppose Proposal 144: Support Proposal 145: Oppose Proposal 146: Oppose Proposal 147: Oppose Proposal 148: Oppose Proposal 149: Oppose Proposal 150: Oppose Proposal 151: Oppose Proposal 152: Oppose Proposal 153: Oppose Proposal 154: Oppose Proposal 155: Oppose Proposal 156: Oppose Proposal 157: Oppose Proposal 158: Oppose Proposal 159: Support Proposal 160: Oppose Proposal 161: Oppose Proposal 162: Oppose Proposal 163: Oppose Proposal 164: Oppose Proposal 165: Oppose Proposal 166: Oppose Proposal 167: Oppose Proposal 168: Oppose Proposal 169: Oppose Proposal 170: Oppose Proposal 171: Oppose Proposal 172: Oppose Proposal 173: Support Proposal 174: Support Proposal 175: Support Proposal 176: Support Proposal 177: Support Proposal 178: Support Proposal 179: Support Proposal 180: Support Proposal 181: Support Proposal 182: Support Proposal 183: Support Proposal 184: Support Proposal 185: Support Proposal 186: Support Proposal 187: Support Proposal 188: Support Proposal 200: Oppose Proposal 203: Oppose Proposal 204: Oppose Proposal 205: Support Proposal 207: Oppose Proposal 208: Support



PC346

Submitted by: Ryan Vanzo

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Homer, AK

Comment:

I strongly support 146 and 147. Trail setbacks are common sense and a win-win for all stakeholders.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 145: Support Proposal 146: Support Proposal 147: Support Proposal 156: Support Proposal 160: Support
Proposal 162: Oppose Proposal 163: Oppose Proposal 164: Support Proposal 166: Support Proposal 169: Support
Proposal 171: Support



PC347

Submitted by: Von Veeh

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Cooper Landing, AK

Comment:

As a homeowner in Cooper Landing on Kenai Lake, I oppose trapping near roads, trails, beaches, campgrounds, private property and any other areas frequently used by recreators and their pets.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 145: Support Proposal 149: Support Proposal 150: Support Proposal 151: Support Proposal 152: Support
Proposal 153: Support Proposal 154: Support



PC348

Submitted by: Robert Vernon

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Homer, Alaska

Comment:

Like many Alaskans I came to Alaska to see the wildlife, not to kill it.

I do not understand how one species can get pleasure out of killing another species.

I hope I am in a crowd you will cater to too.

Less than 5% of Americans were issued hunting licenses last year.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 145: Support Proposal 146: Support Proposal 147: Support Proposal 155: Support Proposal 160: Support
Proposal 162: Oppose Proposal 163: Oppose Proposal 164: Support Proposal 166: Support Proposal 169: Support
Proposal 171: Support



PC349

Submitted by: Kevin Walker

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Kachemak City, Alaska

Comment:

Proposal 147. I totally support no trapping within 100 yards from Snomad mapped trails in Unit 15C and 100 yards from Kachemak Nordic Ski Club Trails in Unit 15C. 8 family pets / domestic dogs have been trapped on these trails in the past few weeks. Trapping should be "in the woods", not next to existing trails with children and dogs.

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 147: Support with Amendment



Submitted by: Bill Watkins

Organization Name:

Community of Residence: Homer, Alaska

Comment:

See Attached:

Note: Respondents were allowed to participate in an optional survey to indicate support or opposition for proposals using the online comment submission form. This information allows Board Support staff to develop an index for the meeting and is included below as a courtesy:

Proposal 55: Support Proposal 56: Support Proposal 57: Oppose Proposal 58: Support Proposal 59: Support Proposal 60: Oppose Proposal 61: Support Proposal 62: Oppose Proposal 63: Oppose Proposal 64: Oppose Proposal 65: Oppose Proposal 66: Oppose Proposal 67: Support Proposal 68: Support Proposal 69: Oppose Proposal 70: Oppose Proposal 71: Oppose Proposal 72: Oppose Proposal 73: Support Proposal 75: Support Proposal 76: Oppose Proposal 77: Support Proposal 78: Oppose Proposal 79: Oppose Proposal 80: Oppose Proposal 81: Support Proposal 82: Oppose Proposal 83: Support Proposal 84: Oppose Proposal 85: Oppose Proposal 86: Oppose Proposal 87: Oppose Proposal 88: Support Proposal 89: Oppose Proposal 90: Oppose Proposal 91: Oppose Proposal 92: Oppose Proposal 93: Oppose Proposal 94: Oppose Proposal 95: Oppose Proposal 96: Oppose Proposal 97: Oppose Proposal 98: Oppose Proposal 99: Oppose Proposal 100: Oppose Proposal 101: Oppose Proposal 102: Oppose Proposal 103: Oppose Proposal 104: Support Proposal 105: Support Proposal 106: Oppose Proposal 107: Oppose Proposal 109: Support Proposal 110: Oppose Proposal 111: Oppose Proposal 112: Oppose Proposal 113: Oppose Proposal 114: Support Proposal 115: Oppose Proposal 116: Support Proposal 117: Support Proposal 118: Oppose Proposal 119: Oppose Proposal 120: Oppose Proposal 121: Oppose Proposal 122: Oppose Proposal 123: Oppose Proposal 124: Oppose Proposal 125: Oppose Proposal 126: Oppose Proposal 127: Oppose Proposal 128: Oppose Proposal 129: Oppose Proposal 130: Oppose Proposal 131: Oppose Proposal 132: Oppose Proposal 133: Support Proposal 134: Oppose Proposal 135: Oppose Proposal 136: Oppose Proposal 137: Oppose Proposal 138: Oppose Proposal 139: Oppose Proposal 140: Oppose Proposal 141: Oppose Proposal 142: Oppose Proposal 143: Support Proposal 144: Oppose Proposal 145: Support Proposal 146: Support Proposal 147: Support Proposal 148: Support Proposal 149: Support Proposal 150: Support Proposal 151: Support Proposal 152: Support Proposal 153: Support Proposal 154: Support Proposal 155: Support Proposal 156: Support Proposal 157: Support Proposal 158: Support Proposal 159: Oppose Proposal 160: Support Proposal 161: Oppose Proposal 162: Oppose Proposal 163: Oppose Proposal 164: Support Proposal 165: Support Proposal 166: Support Proposal 167: Support Proposal 168: Support Proposal 169: Support Proposal 170: Support Proposal 171: Support Proposal 172: Support Proposal 173: Oppose Proposal 174: Oppose Proposal 175: Oppose Proposal 176: Oppose Proposal 177: Oppose Proposal 178: Oppose Proposal 179: Oppose Proposal 180: Oppose Proposal 181: Oppose Proposal 182: Oppose Proposal 183: Oppose Proposal 184: Oppose Proposal 185: Oppose Proposal 186: Oppose Proposal 187: Oppose Proposal 188: Oppose Proposal 200: Oppose Proposal 203: Oppose Proposal 204: Support Proposal 205: Support Proposal 207: Oppose Proposal 208: Oppose



Dear Sirs,

I wish to express my support for the following trapping setback Proposals:

145 - ¼ mile hunting and trapping buffers from mouths of new highway wildlife crossings on the upcoming Cooper Landing bypass

- These wildlife overpasses/tunnels are being created specifically for the safety of both motorists and to provide safe crossings for wildlife. They are not being created as unethical, taxpayer funded, welfare queen benefits for trappers.

149 - 100yd. Setbacks from Cooper Landing area campgrounds.

- Common sense proposal to reduce potential conflicts between recreation users and their dogs and trappers.

150 - 100yd. Setbacks from highway pull outs in Cooper Landing.

- Common sense proposal to reduce potential conflicts between recreation users/ motorists and their dogs and trappers.

151 - 100yd. Setbacks from recreational areas in the Summit Lake Recreational Area.

- Common sense proposal to reduce potential conflicts between recreation users and their dogs and trappers.

152 - 100yd. Setbacks from some high-use Cooper Landing trails.

- Common sense proposal to reduce potential conflicts between recreation users and their dogs and trappers.

153 - 100yd. Setbacks from some Kenai Lake Beaches.

- Common sense proposal to reduce potential conflicts between recreation users and their dogs and trappers.

154 - Request for signage where active trapping is occurring.

- Common sense proposal to warn the public of nearby traplines so they can take measures to protect their dogs.



Additionally, I support trapping setback Proposals: 146 (Kachemak Bay State Park), 147 (Homer Ski Trails) and 148 (Seward trails).

- Common sense proposal to reduce potential conflicts between recreation users and their dogs and trappers.

All of these are common sense, practical proposals that are meant to avoid conflicts with other recreational users and their dogs. And further, to prevent the socialized targeting and trapping of wildlife that is attempting to safely cross the Sterling Hwy using wildlife overpasses or tunnels.

No dog owner should be so paranoid about the safety of their dog while taking it out on a walk, snowshoe, ski, dog mushing or skijoring trip where they may encounter traps or snares on or close to multiple use trails, parking lots, pull outs, campgrounds residential areas and schools. Nor, should they have to deal with the trauma of trying to save the life of their dog while recreating on such a trail.

For many people, they consider their dogs to be family members and feel they should be able to safely recreate with their dogs without fear of their dogs being injured or killed by traps and snares.

For every dog that is injured or killed by trappers, it creates anger and opposition to trapping. I highly doubt that dog owners who have had their dogs injured, strangled or killed by trappers are going to care about maintaining any type of "trapping tradition".

In my own case, I wish to get a future german shepherd and be able to hike, camp, x-c ski, and mountain bike with her without being paranoid about her being injured or killed in a trap or snare. And this would apply whether I am in Denali, Homer or anywhere else in the state.

This is further enraging when trappers are not required to sign their traplines, identify with contact information their traps, or are required to check them in a timely manner and are allowed to monopolize multiuser trails to the exclusion of all other recreational users.

No other form of recreation in Alaska enjoys such an extreme monopoly for roughly only 3,000+ Alaskans versus over 730,000 residents.

Please explain to me how this builds in any way shape or form public support for maintaining a "Culture of Death" tradition that excludes and takes priority over all other uses?

It has further come to my attention, that the BOG has not once authorized trapping setbacks for multiple use trails anywhere in Alaska.



Such attitudes and policy decisions feed an ever growing wave of opposition to trapping and eventually an opposition that will not be content with strict and needed regulations but one that wishes to see trapping banned throughout the state.

If it comes to a choice between maintaining a "Culture of Death" tradition for a tiny minority or protecting one's dogs for the majority, it is an easy choice in putting the protection of communities and dogs first.

If the BOG denies these common sense and ethical proposals then I do feel that the public should return to the BOG and the trapping community the same level of consideration that has been repeatedly shown them.

Wanton killing of man's (and women's) best friend should never be tolerated and only creates opposition and momentum to creating and working towards a "Trap Free Alaska".

I ask you to consider and approve each of these proposals for the benefit of each of these communities and to return common sense ethics and regulations to trapping.

Sincerely,

Bill Watkins