

FINDINGS OF THE BOARD OF GAME

FINALIZATION OF THE AREA SPECIFIC WOLF MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR SOUTHCENTRAL/INTERIOR ALASKA

Introduction to Written Findings: During the publicly convened Board of Game meeting Nov. 9-19, 1992, the Alaska Board of Game heard and considered public testimony, ADF&G staff reports and advisory committee reports and deliberated in regard to the Area Specific Wolf Management Plan for Southcentral/Interior Alaska. After due consideration of public review and comment the board finds:

The Area-Specific Wolf Management Plan for Southcentral/Interior Alaska (Plan) was developed with unprecedented public participation. In developing the Plan the Department acted in accordance with the Strategic Wolf Management Plan for Alaska adopted by the board on October 30, 1991. The following amendments to the draft Plan tentatively approved by the board at its March 1992 meeting provide for a wide range of public values, and are consistent with the public interest.

1. Because of the high value expressed by state, national and international interests in providing maximum protection for wolves residing primarily within Denali National Park, it is appropriate to change the zoning in Game Management Unit 13E, north and west of the Parks Highway, from 4 to 2. A Zone 2 in this area would prohibit the hunting and trapping of wolves, including those which might venture out of Denali National Park.
2. The portion of Unit 13E south of Denali State Park to the Unit 14B boundary is changed from Zone 6 to Zone 4 to be consistent with the zone change in Unit 14B as outlined below.
3. Units 14A and 14B originally were proposed as a Zone 5, where wolf control is permitted. There are few wolves in the area, and no plans or need in the foreseeable future to do wolf control in Units 14A and 14B. However, moose are managed intensively and there is high human use in both areas. Thus a Zone 5 is consistent with moose management and use, but inconsistent with wolf management and use. The department has recognized this inconsistency and pointed out that the linear zoning approach adopted by the Board in the Strategic Wolf Management Plan does not fit actual conditions in every case. To address those inconsistencies, the Department will explore over the next year a two-level zoning approach which would take into account use as well as management. In the interim, where the level of use and management of wolves conflicts with the use and management of other species, the Department recommends zoning

areas to reflect the proposed intensity of wolf use and management. Thus, it is appropriate that Units 14A and 14B be Zone 4 where wolf control is not allowed. Nothing in this zoning change should be interpreted to lessen the management and use intensity of other species.

4. Recognizing public demand for areas near urban centers where wolves are protected, it is appropriate to zone that portion of Unit 14A north and west of Moose Creek and the Matanuska River as a 2 instead of 4. This will prohibit wolf hunting and trapping within that portion of Unit 14A.

5. Again in recognition of the public value attached to wolves residing primarily within national parks and preserves, and realizing that wolf control is not feasible in small areas, the private inholdings within the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve should be Zone 4 instead of Zone 5. In a Zone 5, wolf control is allowed. In Zone 4, it is not. No wolf control is anticipated on the inholdings in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve and none could be conducted effectively given the relatively small amount of private land interspersed throughout federal land.

6. Because of the high value expressed by state, national and international interests in providing maximum protection for wolves residing primarily within Denali National Park, it is appropriate to change the zoning in Game Management Unit 20C known as the Wolf Townships and that portion of Unit 20A east of the Nenana River from Ferry south to the 20A boundary including the lower drainage of the Yanert River from 4 to 2. A Zone 2 in this area would prohibit the hunting and trapping of wolves, including those which might venture out of Denali National Park. In addition, the department will work with the National Park Service to monitor movements of wolves that reside primarily in the Park or Preserve beyond the zone 2 area to ensure that these wolves are not subject to control.

7. Because a large segment of the public wishes to enjoy the opportunity to hear and view wolves in The Metropolitan Fairbanks-Eielson area in Unit 20B it is appropriate to place this area in Zone 2 to afford wolves protection from hunting and trapping.

8. Again, in recognition of the value people residing in the Metropolitan Fairbanks-Eielson area place upon living in an area approaching natural conditions, and because the board heard testimony from the department that wolf control would be difficult to accomplish in this area, a Zone 4 designation would be appropriate for the Middle Chatanika drainage portion of Unit 20B, and that designation of this area as a Zone 4 would not significantly impact management of Unit 20B for high consumptive use.

9. After reviewing the zone designations in eastern Unit 20B, the board found that due to its proximity to the Upper Tanana/Fortymile Zone 7 area and the difficulty of managing a relatively small area as a Zone 5, the drainages of the East Fork of the Chena River and the North fork of the Salcha River would be more appropriately zoned as a Zone 6 which is consistent with the adjacent zone designation to the west.

10. The board heard testimony from the department that the upper Beaver Creek drainage in Unit 25C which includes portions of the Steese White Mountains Recreation Area is receiving increased use by recreational users who wish to view and hear wolves and that this area would be more appropriately zoned as a Zone 4. The board also heard testimony from the department that a Zone 4 designation would not significantly affect management of wildlife for human use in this area.

11. Population and harvest objectives for Unit 13 were changed as follows to reflect the intent to intensively manage for high harvests of moose and caribou by humans.

SPECIES	POPULATION OBJECTIVE	HARVEST OBJECTIVE
Wolf	150-200	50-150
Moose	25,000-30,000	2,000-5,000
Caribou	40,000-60,00	4,500-6,500
Grizzly Bear	unknown 600-1,600?	reduce significantly

12. Population and harvest objectives for Unit 20A were changed as follows to reflect the intent to manage for high harvests of moose and caribou by humans.

SPECIES	POPULATION OBJECTIVE	HARVEST OBJECTIVE
Wolf	55-75a 150-300b	5-20 20-60
Moose	11,000-15,000	800-1,500
Caribou	7,000-9,000	500-1,000
Sheep	4,000-6,000	150-300
Grizzly Bear	100-175	10-20
Black Bear	500-700	50-100

a Proposed wolf population level during 3 year period when wolf reduction occurs in accordance with approved management criteria.

b Proposed wolf population level during years when wolf reduction does not occur in accordance with approved management criteria.

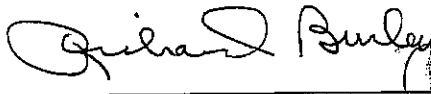
13. Adopted population and harvest objectives for the Upper Tanana/Fortymile Implementation Plan Area were changed as follows to reflect the intent to manage for recovery of the Fortymile Caribou Herd and increased harvests of moose and caribou by people.

SPECIES	POPULATION OBJECTIVE	HARVEST OBJECTIVE
Wolf	40-70a	5-50
Moose	9,000-10,000	300-650
Caribou	60,000	3,000-6,000
Sheep	1,000-1,700	30-50
Grizzly Bear	270-360	10-35
Black Bear	700-1,300	10-50

a Proposed wolf population level during 5 year period when wolf reduction occurs in accordance with approved implementation plan.

14. All oral testimony, written comments, staff reports, and previous board findings were considered and incorporated by reference.

Adopted November 18, 1992


 Richard Burley, Chair
 Alaska Board of Game