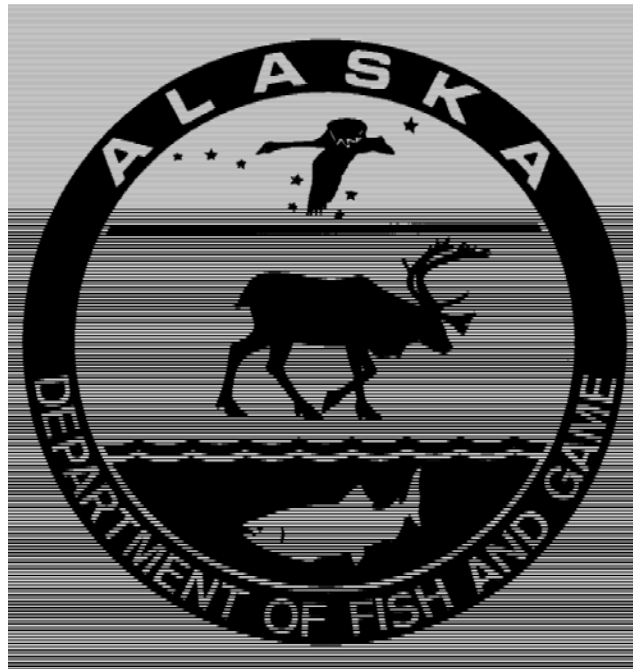


**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME**  
**STAFF COMMENTS**  
**INTERIOR REGION REGULATORY PROPOSALS**  
**ALASKA BOARD OF GAME MEETING**  
**FAIRBANKS, ALASKA**  
**FEBRUARY 14 - 23, 2014**



The following staff comments were prepared by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for use at the Alaska Board of Game meeting, February 14 – 23, 2014 in Fairbanks, Alaska, and are prepared to assist the public and board. The stated staff comments should be considered preliminary and subject to change, if or when new information becomes available. Final department positions will be formulated after review of written and oral testimony presented to the board.

## **PROPOSAL 39 – 5 AAC Chapter 85. Hunting seasons and bag limits.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Leonard Jewkes

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Allocate all Region III drawing hunts for big game between residents and nonresidents so that a minimum of 90% of all permits go to residents. This proposal may increase resident hunter opportunity in a few areas. It would decrease resident opportunity in antlerless moose hunts, in which only resident hunters may apply for the 3,016 drawing permits available.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** For brown bears, Unit 26B has a drawing hunt, in which 6 permits are issued to nonresident hunters. Residents hunt brown bears under a registration permit in this area. All bison hunts (Units 19 and 20D) are by drawing permit and there is no limit on permit allocation to nonresidents. The Delta caribou herd in Unit 20A is the only caribou herd in the region that is hunted by drawing permit. There is no limit on permit allocation to nonresidents. About 22% of moose drawing permits are for nonresidents only or for both nonresidents and residents. Most of these moose hunt areas place fewer restrictions on resident hunters, including the ability to hunt (without a drawing permit) in general or registration seasons. There are 3 drawing permit hunts for sheep: Mount Harper, Tok Management Area (TMA), and Delta Controlled Use Area (DCUA). In the TMA and the DCUA no more than 10% of permits are allocated to nonresidents. There is no limit on the allocation to nonresidents of the 4 sheep permits for Mount Harper.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** All drawing permits in Region III would be allocated at least 90% to residents and no more than 10% to nonresidents. As written, this proposal would allocate 10% of permits which are for residents only to nonresidents, and vice versa. It is unclear how this proposal could be implemented in areas where nonresidents must currently obtain drawing permits, but residents use harvest tickets or registration permits.

**BACKGROUND:** This proposal pertains to all drawing hunts in Region III: one brown bear hunt, 3 bison hunts, one caribou hunt, 142 moose hunts, and 3 Dall sheep hunts. There are no drawing permit hunts for black bears, wolves, or wolverine. Board policy (2007-173-BOG) indicates that allocations for specific hunts will be decided individually, based upon historical patterns of nonresident and resident permit use over the past 10 years.

During regulatory years 2007–2008 through 2011–2012 (RY07–RY13), all 6 of the brown bear permits in Unit 26B were allocated to nonresident hunters each year and residents hunted under general season or registration permits. Nonresidents received 2% of the 120 bison permits annually during RY04–RY13, although bison permits were not allocated to residents or nonresidents. In the Delta caribou drawing hunt in Unit 20A, 7% of permits were awarded to nonresidents during RY04–RY13, even though there was no limit on the allocation to nonresidents.

There were 3,861 moose drawing permits available during RY11 in Region III: 96 permits were allocated exclusively to nonresident hunters; 3,016 exclusively to residents (such as portions of Unit 20B where 1,116 antlerless moose drawing permits were available only to residents); and 749 to either residents or nonresidents (unallocated). This allocation allowed nonresidents to

apply for 22% of available moose drawing permits. However, most permits available to nonresidents were in hunt areas where residents could hunt by general season, registration permit, or both; and/or where residents had longer seasons and/or less restrictive bag limits. Examples include 1) the Koyukuk CUA in Units 21D and 24D, where residents had access to unlimited registration permits and 108 drawing permits for “any bull” and nonresidents were restricted to 28 drawing permits for bulls with 50-inch antlers or 4 or more brow tines on at least one side; and 2) Unit 21E where residents could harvest any bull under general season and nonresidents were restricted to 50 drawing permits for bulls with 50-inch antlers or 4 or more brow tines on at least one side.

DCUA and TMA sheep hunts are currently allocated, with no more than 10% of permits allocated to nonresidents. During RY04–RY13, there was no limit on the allocation of Mount Harper sheep permits. However, all 4 (100%) of these permits were issued to residents each year.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** regarding this allocation issue. The department has no conservation concerns.

**COST ANALYSIS:** This proposal has the potential to decrease income to guides, transporters, and others whose business involves nonresident hunters, if the result is a decreased number of nonresident hunters. Costs to the department would not increase.

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#### **PROPOSAL 40 – 5 AAC Chapter 85. Hunting seasons and bag limits.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Norman Pickus

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Allocate a small or token percent of the most abundant game for nonresident hunters in Units 24, 25, and 26B.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Regulations vary by unit and species.

Black bear hunting is open year-round in Units 24, 25, and 26B under general season, with no harvest ticket required. The bag limit for residents is 3 bears, except in Unit 25D, where the limit is 5 bears. The black bear bag limit for nonresidents is 3 bears. Cubs and females accompanied by cubs may not be taken. Sealing (and harvest reporting) is required only for bears transported out of state.

Brown bear hunting in this area has long seasons and is primarily open under general season. The bag limit for residents and nonresidents is 1 bear, except in Unit 25D, where it is 2 bears. In Unit 26B, residents hunt under a registration permit, while nonresidents apply for 6 drawing permits. Cubs and females accompanied by cubs may not be taken.

Caribou hunting throughout Units 24, 25 (except 25C), and 26B is open by general season harvest ticket. Nonresidents may harvest fewer caribou and have shorter seasons. In Unit 25C, residents and nonresidents hunt under a registration permit and nonresidents have a shorter fall season and only residents may hunt the winter season. Hunters who live north of the Yukon River and hunt these caribou do not need caribou harvest tickets and reports, but must register with the department.

Resident moose hunters in Unit 24 use either general season harvest tickets or registration permits, with some additional drawing permits allocated to residents. Nonresidents must hunt moose in Unit 24 under a drawing permit. Moose hunting is by general season harvest ticket in much of Unit 25, with nonresidents restricted to larger antlers and shorter seasons in those areas. In western Unit 25D and in Unit 26B moose hunting is open to resident hunters only.

Sheep hunting for full curl rams is under a general season harvest ticket in all of Units 24, 25, and 26B, with no additional restrictions for nonresident hunters. Residents also have a winter-long access-restricted registration hunt for 3 sheep (any sex) in part of Unit 25A.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** A small percent of game species would be allocated to nonresident hunters. The proposal leaves open the mechanism to accomplish this.

**BACKGROUND:** Board policy (2007-173-BOG) indicates that allocations for specific hunts will be decided individually, based upon historical patterns of nonresident and resident permit use over the past 10 years. Harvest statistics for regulatory years 2008–2009 through 2012–2013 indicate that, of big game species harvested in these units, more than 60% were harvested by resident hunters.

**Reported harvest of big game species in Units 24, 25, and 26B**

| <b>Species</b>                     | <b>Number of hunters</b> | <b>Percent of hunters who are residents</b> | <b>Total harvest where residency of hunter is known</b> | <b>Percent harvested by residents</b> |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| Black bear sealed                  |                          |   | 120   | 70%                                   |
| Brown bear sealed                  |                          |   | 389   | 63%                                   |
| Caribou (harvest ticket or permit) |                          |   | 3,596   | 84%                                   |
| Moose                              | 2,142                    | 84%   | 1,889   | 82%                                   |
| Sheep                              | 2,297                    | 78%   | 854   | 62%                                   |

Small game are also abundant in parts of these units. However, these areas are seldom a destination for nonresident ptarmigan and grouse hunters and there are no data regarding resident and nonresident take.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal to allocate wildlife among user groups. The department has no conservation concerns. The board may wish to TAKE NO ACTION, based on action taken on proposal 39

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

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**PROPOSAL 41 – 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Jake Sprinkle

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Open the resident sheep season 7 days before the nonresident season in the Interior Region (Units 12, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26B, and 26C).

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Drawing Permit Hunts

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

Registration Permit Hunt

- Unit 26C and that portion of Unit 25A east of Middle Fork Chandalar River, excluding the federally designated Arctic Village Sheep Management Area
  - residents only — 3 sheep, October 1–April 30, access restrictions apply.

General Season Hunts

- Unit 24B, John River drainage upstream from Till Creek, and in the Glacier River Drainage
  - residents only — 3 sheep.
- Remainder of Units 12, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26B and 26C
  - residents and nonresidents — one full-curl ram, August 10–September 20.
- No sheep hunting opportunity exists in Unit 21.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Resident sheep seasons would begin on 3 August, 7 days before nonresident seasons. In split-season drawing hunts, the second nonresident season would start later so that residents also begin the second season 7 days before nonresidents.

**BACKGROUND:** This proposal would provide more opportunity for Alaska residents than nonresidents in cases where there is a positive customary and traditional (C&T) use finding for sheep (all or portions of Units 19, 20, 24, 25, and 26). Providing a longer resident season is used to separate resident and nonresident hunters in some Region III moose hunts, as well as to provide for C&T uses pursuant to the state subsistence priority law. However, it may lengthen the overall period of crowding by creating two opening dates. A lengthened season could increase harvests and increase the complexity of state sheep hunting regulations. Nonresident hunters and guides may feel disadvantaged by an early opening for resident hunters.

Board policy (2007-173-BOG) indicates that allocations for specific hunts will be decided individually, based upon historical patterns of nonresident and resident use over the previous 10 years. The board can allocate hunting opportunity between resident and nonresident hunters by

modifying season dates or by allocating permits. Similar requests for broad changes in allocation of sheep hunting opportunity have been addressed previously by the board at meetings covering Regions III, IV, and V.

The requirement to harvest full-curl rams should prevent over-harvest from affecting sustainability of sheep populations. Lengthening the resident season is not likely to adversely affect sheep populations in the short term, even if general season harvest increases. However, there may be a perceived scarcity of legal rams in heavily hunted areas. Over time, it could reduce the ability of both residents and nonresidents to harvest a big ram, or increase the effort required to harvest a ram; but the extent that this might occur is unknown.

Region III sheep hunters are predominantly residents, who take a majority of the rams harvested. During 1981–2010, residents made up 75% of all (general season and drawing permit) sheep hunters and took 59% of the harvest. The number of nonresident hunters increased slowly throughout 1981–1996. At the same time, resident hunter numbers increased dramatically during the 1980s and declined sharply in the early 1990s. The proportional take by residents declined and stabilized at 54% of the overall harvest (drawing and general season) during 1997–2010 (range = 52–56%), accompanied by a slight decline in the proportion of resident sheep hunters.

In general season hunts, fewer residents hunted sheep when harvests declined in the early 1990s, whereas nonresidents changed their behavior very little. Residents took 60% of the general season harvest during 1981–1996 and 49% in 1997–2010. Resident harvest trended up during 2008–2012, when resident take increased to 53% of the general season harvest, due to increasing numbers of resident hunters (average = 940 residents) and relatively static nonresident hunter numbers (average = 340 nonresidents).

In drawing hunts, competition among hunters is controlled by the number of permits available. In the Tok Management Area and the Delta Controlled Use Area, nonresidents are limited to 10% of available permits.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this issue of allocation between resident and nonresident hunters. This proposal closely mirrors similar proposals regarding sheep throughout Alaska. The board has established a committee to evaluate this, and other, sheep management options over the next year.

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

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## **PROPOSAL 42 – 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Tom Lamal

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Open the resident sheep season 7 days before the nonresident season in the Interior Region (Units 12, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26B, and 26C).

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

### Drawing Permit Hunts

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

### Registration Permit Hunt

- Unit 26C and that portion of Unit 25A east of Middle Fork Chandalar River, excluding the federally designated Arctic Village Sheep Management Area
  - residents only — 3 sheep, October 1–April 30, access restrictions apply.

### General Season Hunts

- Unit 24B, John River drainage upstream from Till Creek, and in the Glacier River Drainage
  - residents only — 3 sheep.
- Remainder of Units 12, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26B and 26C
  - residents and nonresidents — one full-curl ram, August 10–September 20.
- No sheep hunting opportunity exists in Unit 21.

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

Sheep hunting season dates in Region III would change to:

- Alaska residents: August 5 – September 20
- Nonresidents: August 12 – September 20

**BACKGROUND:** This proposal attempts to reduce crowding during the first part of the sheep season by providing resident hunters with an earlier opening date. It would provide more opportunity for Alaska residents than nonresidents in cases where there is a positive customary and traditional (C&T) use finding for sheep (all or portions of Units 19, 20, 24, 25, and 26). Providing a longer resident season is used to separate resident and nonresident hunters in some Region III moose hunts, as well as to provide for C&T uses pursuant to the state subsistence priority law. A lengthened season could increase harvests and increase the complexity of state sheep hunting regulations. Nonresident hunters and guides may feel disadvantaged by an early opening for resident hunters.

Board policy (2007-173-BOG) indicates that allocations for specific hunts will be decided individually, based upon historical patterns of nonresident and resident use over the past 10 years. The board can allocate hunting opportunity between resident and nonresident hunters by modifying season dates or by allocating permits. Similar requests for broad changes in allocation of sheep hunting opportunity have been addressed previously by the board at meetings covering Regions III, IV, and V.

The requirement to harvest full-curl rams should prevent over-harvest from affecting sustainability of sheep populations. Lengthening the resident season is not likely to adversely affect sheep populations in the short term, even if general season harvest increases. However, there may be a perceived scarcity of legal rams in heavily hunted areas. Over time, it could reduce the ability of both residents and nonresidents to harvest a big ram, or increase the effort required to harvest a ram; but the extent that this might occur is unknown.

Region III sheep hunters are predominantly residents, who take a majority of the rams harvested. During 1981–2010, residents made up 75% of all (general season and drawing permit) sheep hunters and took 59% of the harvest. The number of nonresident hunters increased slowly throughout 1981–1996. At the same time, resident hunter numbers increased dramatically during the 1980s and declined sharply in the early 1990s. The proportional take by residents declined and stabilized at 54% of the overall harvest (drawing and general season) during 1997–2010 (range = 52–56%), accompanied by a slight decline in the proportion of resident sheep hunters.

In general season hunts, fewer residents hunted sheep when harvests declined in the early 1990s, whereas nonresidents changed their behavior very little. Residents took 60% of the general season harvest during 1981–1996 and 49% in 1997–2010. Resident harvest trended up during 2008–2012, when resident take increased to 53% of the general season harvest, due to increasing numbers of resident hunters (average = 940 residents) and relatively static nonresident hunter numbers (average = 340 nonresidents).

In drawing hunts, competition among hunters is controlled by the number of permits available. In the Tok Management Area and the Delta Controlled Use Area, nonresidents are limited to 10% of available permits.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this issue of allocation between resident and nonresident hunters. The board may wish to **TAKE NO ACTION** on this proposal, based on action taken on proposal 41. This proposal closely mirrors similar proposals regarding sheep throughout Alaska. The board has established a committee to evaluate this, and other, sheep management options over the next year.

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

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### **PROPOSAL 43 – 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Leonard Jewkes

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Open the resident sheep season 10 days before the nonresident season in the Interior Region (Units 12, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26B, and 26C).

### **WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

#### Drawing Permit Hunts

- Delta Controlled Use Area (portions of Units 20D, 20A and 13B)



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

Registration Permit Hunt

- Unit 26C and that portion of Unit 25A east of Middle Fork Chandalar River, excluding the federally designated Arctic Village Sheep Management Area
  - residents only — 3 sheep, October 1–April 30, access restrictions apply.

General Season Hunts

- Unit 24B, John River drainage upstream from Till Creek, and in the Glacier River Drainage
  - residents only — 3 sheep.
- Remainder of Units 12, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26B and 26C
  - residents and nonresidents — one full-curl ram, August 10–September 20.
- No sheep hunting opportunity exists in Unit 21.

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

Sheep hunting season dates in Region III would change to:

- Alaska residents: August 1 – September 20
- Nonresidents: August 10 – September 20

**BACKGROUND:** This proposal attempts to reduce crowding during the first part of the sheep season by providing resident hunters with an earlier opening date. It would provide more opportunity for Alaska residents than nonresidents in cases where there is a positive customary and traditional (C&T) use finding for sheep (all or portions of Units 19, 20, 24, 25, and 26). Providing a longer resident season is used to separate resident and nonresident hunters in some Region III moose hunts, as well as to provide for C&T uses pursuant to the state subsistence priority law. A lengthened season could increase harvests and increase the complexity of state sheep hunting regulations. Nonresident hunters and guides may feel disadvantaged by an early opening for resident hunters.

Board policy (2007-173-BOG) indicates that allocations for specific hunts will be decided individually, based upon historical patterns of nonresident and resident use over the past 10 years. The board can allocate hunting opportunity between resident and nonresident hunters by modifying season dates or by allocating permits. Similar requests for broad changes in allocation of sheep hunting opportunity have been addressed previously by the board at meetings covering Regions III, IV, and V.

The requirement to harvest full-curl rams should prevent over-harvest from affecting sustainability of sheep populations. Lengthening the resident season is not likely to adversely affect sheep populations in the short term, even if general season harvest increases. However,

there may be a perceived scarcity of legal rams in heavily hunted areas. Over time, it could reduce the ability of both residents and nonresidents to harvest a big ram, or increase the effort required to harvest a ram; but the extent that this might occur is unknown.

Region III sheep hunters are predominantly residents, who take a majority of the rams harvested. During 1981–2010, residents made up 75% of all (general season and drawing permit) sheep hunters and took 59% of the harvest. The number of nonresident hunters increased slowly throughout 1981–1996. At the same time, resident hunter numbers increased dramatically during the 1980s and declined sharply in the early 1990s. The proportional take by residents declined and stabilized at 54% of the overall harvest (drawing and general season) during 1997–2010 (range = 52–56%), accompanied by a slight decline in the proportion of resident sheep hunters.

In general season hunts, fewer residents hunted sheep when harvests declined in the early 1990s, whereas nonresidents changed their behavior very little. Residents took 60% of the general season harvest during 1981–1996 and 49% in 1997–2010. Resident harvest trended up during 2008–2012, when resident take increased to 53% of the general season harvest, due to increasing numbers of resident hunters (average = 940 residents) and relatively static nonresident hunter numbers (average = 340 nonresidents).

In drawing hunts, competition among hunters is controlled by the number of permits available. In the Tok Management Area and the Delta Controlled Use Area, nonresidents are limited to 10% of available permits.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this issue of allocation between resident and nonresident hunters. The board may wish to **TAKE NO ACTION** on this proposal, based on action taken on proposal 41. This proposal closely mirrors similar proposals regarding sheep throughout Alaska. The board has established a committee to evaluate this, and other, sheep management options over the next year.

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

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**PROPOSAL 44 – 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep, and 5 AAC 92.057, Special provisions for Dall sheep drawing permit hunts.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Chapter Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Change the nonresident general season sheep hunts to drawing permit hunts in the Interior Region, and limit the number of nonresident permits based on sheep density or historical harvest. Residents would continue to hunt under general season harvest tickets.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

General Season Hunts

- Unit 24B, John River drainage upstream from Till Creek, and in the Glacier River Drainage
  - residents only — 3 sheep.
- Remainder of Units 12, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26B and 26C
  - residents and nonresidents — one full-curl ram, August 10–September 20.
- No sheep hunting opportunity exists in Unit 21.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Nonresident hunters would be required to apply for drawing hunts throughout Interior Alaska. Resident hunters would continue to hunt under general season harvest tickets where general seasons currently exist. The department would recalculate the number of nonresident permits annually for each area based on survey and harvest data.

**BACKGROUND:** Board policy (2007-173-BOG) indicates that allocations for specific hunts will be decided individually, based upon historical patterns of nonresident and resident use over the past 10 years. The board can allocate hunting opportunity between resident and nonresident hunters by modifying season dates or by allocating permits. Similar requests for broad changes in allocation of sheep hunting opportunity have been addressed previously by the board at meetings covering Region III, IV, and V.

The proposer is primarily concerned about sheep conservation and continued resident general season sheep hunting opportunity. The requirement to harvest full-curl rams should prevent over-harvest from affecting sustainability of sheep populations. In heavily harvested areas, limiting the number of nonresident hunters may increase the number of legal rams available to residents, but the extent to which this might occur is unknown. In areas hunted primarily by residents, this proposal may not provide any benefit to resident sheep hunters.

Lower success rates compared with the 1980s and higher hunter numbers compared with the late 1990s suggest that competition among hunters for legal rams has increased. Region-wide, sheep harvest peaked during the late 1980s, declined through the late 1990s, and has been increasing since 2000. This pattern is most evident in the eastern Brooks Range and Unit 20A, which account for much of the total harvest for Region III. However, harvest in some areas has either remained stable since the initial population decline (Unit 19C, see proposal 65) or continued to decline (Unit 12).

During 2001–2010, 70% of general season sheep hunters were residents. They took 50% of the harvest and had a 29% success rate. Thirty percent of the general season sheep hunters were nonresidents. They took 50% of the harvest and had a 69% success rate.

**General season hunter statistics during fall 2001–2010 Dall sheep hunts:**

| Unit/Area         | Average annual hunter numbers | Percent resident hunters | Average annual harvest | Percent harvested by residents | Resident success rate | Non-resident success rate |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| All of Region III | 1,153                         | 70%                      | 470                    | 50%                            | 29%                   | 69%                       |
| Unit 12           | 295                           | 75%                      | 122                    | 54%                            | 30%                   | 75%                       |

|                                |     |     |    |     |     |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| <b>Unit 19C</b>                | 124 | 50% | 62 | 32% | 32% | 68% |
| <b>Unit 20A</b>                | 198 | 66% | 78 | 37% | 22% | 73% |
| <b>Unit 25A</b>                | 114 | 55% | 63 | 45% | 46% | 68% |
| <b>Units 26B<br/>&amp; 26C</b> | 243 | 73% | 97 | 56% | 30% | 67% |

Department records for fall 2011 differ from the proponent’s numbers because the database is updated as new records are received and the department is able to reconcile some ambiguous data. For example, the most recent data for fall 2011 in Units 26B and 26C indicate that 329 hunters (268 residents, 55 nonresidents, 6 unknown residency) hunted this portion of the Eastern Brooks Range; residents killed 98 rams (37% success, 72% of total harvest), nonresidents killed 39 rams (71% success, 28% of total harvest), and 2 of unknown residency killed 2 rams (33% success, 0.6% of total) .

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this issue of allocation between resident and nonresident hunters. The board may wish to **TAKE NO ACTION** on this proposal, based on action taken on proposal 41. This proposal closely mirrors similar proposals regarding sheep throughout Alaska. The board has established a committee to evaluate this, and other, sheep management options over the next year.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to private parties. Costs to the department would increase because of increased duties and costs associated with administering a large number of drawing hunts.

**PROPOSAL 45 – 5 AAC Chapter 85. Hunting seasons and bag limits.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Tom Lamal

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Allocate all Region III drawing hunts for big game between residents and nonresidents such that a minimum of 90% of the permits go to residents.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** For brown bears, only Unit 26B has a drawing hunt, in which 6 permits are issued to nonresident hunters. Residents hunt grizzly bears under a general season in this area, as in the remainder of Region III. The Delta caribou herd is the only caribou herd in the region that is hunted solely by drawing permit, and these 150 permits are not allocated among residents and nonresidents. Up to 30 drawing permits may be available for youth to hunt Fortymile caribou during August 10–21, and these permits also are not allocated.

Bison hunting in Region III is available by drawing permit only. Bison permits are not allocated among residents and nonresidents

There are 3 drawing permit hunts for sheep in Region III: Tok Management Area, Mount Harper, and Delta Controlled Use Area. Residents and nonresidents have general season access in the remainder of the region. In the Tok Management Area and the Delta Controlled Use Area, no

more than 10% of permits can be allocated to nonresidents. Only 4 permits are available annually in the Mount Harper hunt, and these are not allocated.

Of 3,861 moose drawing permits available in Region III, 96 are allocated exclusively to nonresident hunters, 3,016 exclusively to resident hunters, and 749 to either residents or nonresidents (unallocated). Thereby, nonresidents may apply for 22% of the available moose drawing permits. However, most moose permits available to nonresidents are in hunt areas where resident hunters hunt by general season or registration permit, have longer seasons and/or have less restrictive bag limits. Examples include 1) portions of Unit 20B, where 1,116 antlerless moose drawing permits are issued to residents only and no nonresident antlerless season exists; 2) the Koyukuk Controlled Use Area, where residents have access to unlimited registration permits and 108 drawing permits for bulls, and nonresidents are restricted to 28 drawing permits for bulls with 50-inch antlers or 4 or more brow tines on at least one side; and 3) Unit 21E where residents can harvest any bull under general season and nonresidents are restricted to 50 drawing permits for bulls with 50-inch antlers or 4 or more brow tines on at least one side.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** All drawing permit hunts would be allocated 90% to residents and 10% to nonresidents. This would include drawing permit hunts that are currently for residents only (e.g. antlerless moose hunts) and hunts in which residents currently do not need to apply for a drawing permit (e.g. Unit 26B brown bear and Unit 21E moose). Many moose drawing permits reallocated from nonresidents to residents would create confusing regulations wherein residents could hunt under general season or registration permits and apply for drawing permits with a more restrictive bag limit in the same area. Such drawing permits would likely be undersubscribed and the department would need to consider, on an annual basis, whether to make these permits available through a time-intensive process of offering them to the public on a first-come, first-served basis.

**BACKGROUND:** This proposal would pertain to brown bear, bison, caribou, moose, and Dall sheep. Board policy (2007-173-BOG) indicates that allocations for specific hunts will be decided individually, based upon historical patterns of nonresident and resident permit use over the past 10 years.

Residents do not need to apply for permits to hunt brown bear anywhere in the region. Residents draw about 98% of bison permits, 91% of caribou permits, and are allocated at least 90% of sheep permits (excluding the 4 Mount Harper sheep permits, which are unallocated, but usually awarded to resident hunters). Drawing permit hunts for moose vary widely across the region, but in general, resident hunters have easier access to moose hunting opportunities than nonresidents. There are no drawing permit hunts for black bears, wolves, or wolverine in the region.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocation issue. The department has no conservation concerns. The board may wish to TAKE NO ACTION, based on action taken on proposal 39

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person. Initially, increased cost to the department will result from reallocating permit hunts. Long-term, costs to the department will likely increase because more time will be

spent administering undersubscribed permits for resident hunters through a time-intensive process of offering the permits to the public on a first-come, first-served basis.

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**PROPOSAL 46 – 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Vern Fiehler

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Change all nonresident sheep hunts in Region III to drawing permit hunts and limit permits to 10% of the 10-year average harvest for the region.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Drawing Permit Hunts

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

Registration Permit Hunt

- Unit 26C and that portion of Unit 25A east of Middle Fork Chandalar River, excluding the Federally designated Arctic Village Sheep Management Area
  - residents only — 3 sheep, October 1–April 30, access restrictions apply.

General Season Hunts

- Unit 24B, John River drainage upstream from Till Creek, and in the Glacier River Drainage
  - residents only — 3 sheep.
- Remainder of Units 12, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26B and 26C
  - residents and nonresidents — one full-curl ram, August 10–September 20.
- No sheep hunting opportunity exists in Unit 21

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

Nonresidents would be required to apply for drawing permits to hunt Dall sheep anywhere in Region III. Resident seasons would not change from general season harvest tickets.

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

This proposal is not likely to affect sheep populations, since the current full curl ram bag limit adequately guards against overharvest, at least in most cases. In heavily harvested areas, limiting nonresident hunters may increase the number of legal rams available to residents, but the extent to which this might occur is unknown. In areas heavily hunted by residents, this proposal may not provide any benefit to resident sheep hunters.

During 2001–2010, 70% of general season sheep hunters throughout the region were residents who took 50% of the harvest (average = 29% success). Nonresident success in general season hunts is generally greater than 60%.

**General season hunter statistics during fall 2001–2010 sheep hunts in selected units:**

|                   | <b>Average<br/>annual<br/>hunter<br/>numbers</b> | <b>Percent<br/>resident<br/>hunters</b> | <b>Average<br/>annual<br/>harvest</b> | <b>Percent<br/>harvested<br/>by<br/>residents</b> | <b>Resident<br/>success<br/>rate</b> | <b>Non-<br/>resident<br/>success<br/>rate</b> |
|-------------------|--|---|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>All Region</b> |  |   |                                       |   |                                      |   |
| <b>III</b>        | 1,153  | 70%                                     | 470                                   | 50%   | 29%                                  | 69%   |
| <b>Unit 12</b>    | 295  | 75%                                     | 122                                   | 54%   | 30%                                  | 75%   |
| <b>Unit 19C</b>   | 124  | 50%                                     | 62                                    | 32%   | 32%                                  | 68%   |
| <b>Unit 20A</b>   | 198  | 66%                                     | 78                                    | 37%   | 22%                                  | 73%   |
| <b>Unit 25A</b>   | 114  | 55%                                     | 63                                    | 45%   | 46%                                  | 68%   |

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this issue of allocation between resident and nonresident hunters. The board may wish to **TAKE NO ACTION** on this proposal, based on action taken on proposal 41. This proposal closely mirrors similar proposals regarding sheep throughout Alaska. The board has established a committee to evaluate this, and other, sheep management options over the next year.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to private parties. Costs to the department would increase due to costs of implementing and administering new drawing hunts.

**PROPOSAL 47 – 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaskan Bowhunters Association

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Add a sheep hunt for bowhunters in all general season sheep hunting areas during August 1–9. The bag limit would be one full-curl ram. International Bowhunter Education Program (IBEP) certification would be required.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

General Season Hunts

- Unit 24B, John River drainage upstream from Till Creek, and in the Glacier River Drainage

- residents only — 3 sheep.
- Remainder of Units 12, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26B and 26C
  - residents and nonresidents — one full-curl ram, August 10–September 20.
- No sheep hunting opportunity exists in Unit 21.
- Hunts are not weapons-restricted, except within the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area, where only IBEP-certified bowhunters may hunt, only by bow and arrow.

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

Bowhunters would have the opportunity to hunt Dall sheep for 9 days without competition from rifle hunters. All bowhunters who pursue Dall sheep in the new August 1–9 general season hunts would be required to obtain International Bowhunter Education Program (IBEP) certification.

**BACKGROUND:** This proposal attempts to reduce crowding in general season Dall sheep hunting areas throughout Region III by allowing archery hunters IBEP certification to pursue Dall sheep prior to the regular season throughout Region III.

Board policy (2007-173-BOG) indicates that allocations for specific hunts will be decided individually, based upon historical patterns of nonresident and resident use over the past 10 years. The board can allocate hunting opportunity between resident and nonresident hunters by modifying season dates or by allocating permits. Similar requests for broad changes in allocation of sheep hunting opportunity have been addressed previously by the board at meetings covering Regions III, IV, and V.

This proposal is not likely to affect sheep populations, since the current full curl ram bag limit adequately guards against overharvest, at least in most cases. In heavily harvested areas, allowing archers to hunt sheep before hunters who use rifles may increase the number of legal rams available to bowhunters, separate bowhunters and rifle hunters, and spread hunting pressure through a longer season, but the extent to which this might occur is unknown. In heavily hunted areas, this proposal may not provide these benefits. During 2003–2012, about 5,000 sheep were harvested in Region III during general season hunts, of these, 74 (less than 2% of the known method of take) were harvested by bowhunters (74% residents). Hunting methods used by unsuccessful hunters are not recorded; therefore, the extent to which this proposal would spread out hunting pressure is unknown.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this issue of allocation between resident and nonresident hunters. The board may wish to **TAKE NO ACTION** on this proposal, based on action taken on proposal 41. This proposal closely mirrors similar proposals regarding sheep throughout Alaska. The board has established a committee to evaluate this, and other, sheep management options over the next year.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to private parties. Costs to the department would be minimal, since IBEP certification classes are currently offered by the department in Alaska and by agencies in other states.



**PROPOSAL 48 – 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep, and 5 AAC 92.057, Special provisions for Dall sheep drawing permit hunts.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Change the nonresident general season sheep hunts in all of Unit 20 to drawing permit hunts, and limit nonresident permits to 75% of the historical average number of nonresident harvest tickets issued. Residents would continue to hunt under general season harvest tickets.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

General Season Hunts (residents and nonresidents)

- Unit 20 (except in the Delta Controlled Use Area, the Tok Management Area and the Mount Harper sheep hunt area):
  - residents and nonresidents — one full-curl ram, August 10–September 20.

Drawing Permit Hunts (residents and nonresidents)

- Delta Controlled Use Area (portions of Units 20D, 20A and 13B)
  - residents and nonresidents — August 10–25 or August 26–September 20, one full curl ram. Nonresidents are limited to 10% of permits.
- Tok Management Area (Unit 12 and portions of Units 13C and 20D)
  - residents and nonresidents — August 10–25 or August 26–September 20, one full curl ram every 4 years. Nonresidents are limited to 10% of permits.
- Mount Harper (portions of Units 20D and 20E)
  - residents and nonresidents — August 10–September 20, one full curl ram. The board has not specified an allocation of these 4 permits between residents and non-residents.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** In the majority of Unit 20, where both residents and nonresidents hunt under general seasons, nonresident hunter numbers would be limited by drawing permit and resident hunter numbers would be unlimited. Nonresidents hunters would be required to apply for drawing hunts throughout Unit 20, in addition to the drawing hunt areas in the Delta Controlled Use Area (portions of Unit 20A and 20D), the Tok Management Area (portion of Unit 20D), and the Mount Harper sheep hunt area (portion of Unit 20D). Resident hunters would continue to hunt under general season harvest tickets where general seasons currently exist.

**BACKGROUND:** This proposal attempts to reduce crowding during the general sheep hunting season by limiting nonresident hunters throughout Unit 20 to drawing permits.

Board policy (2007-173-BOG) indicates that allocations for specific hunts will be decided individually, based upon historical patterns of nonresident and resident use over the past 10 years. The board can allocate hunting opportunity between resident and nonresident hunters by modifying season dates or by allocating permits. Similar requests for broad changes in allocation of sheep hunting opportunity have been addressed previously by the board at meetings covering Regions III, IV, and V.

The requirement to harvest full-curl rams should prevent over-harvest from affecting sustainability of sheep populations. In heavily harvested areas, limiting the number of nonresident hunters may increase the number of legal rams available to residents, but the extent to which this might occur is unknown. In areas heavily hunted by residents, this proposal may not provide any benefit to resident sheep hunters.

If the board adopts this proposal, the department suggests that it could be limited to specific areas where hunter crowding and nonresident harvest is an issue. Lower success rates compared with the 1980s and higher hunter numbers compared with the late 1990s suggest that competition among hunters for legal rams has increased. Sheep harvest in Unit 20 peaked during the late 1980s, declined through the late 1990s, and has been increasing since 2000. This pattern is most evident in Unit 20A, which accounts for most of the general season harvest in Unit 20.

During 2001–2010, most general season hunters in Unit 20 were residents. Although fewer nonresidents hunted (average = 72), their success rate was higher; consequently, they harvested more rams (average = 51) than resident hunters (average = 37) each year.

**General season hunter statistics during fall 2001–2010 Dall sheep hunts in Unit 20**

| Game Management Unit* | Average annual number of hunters | Resident hunters | Non-resident hunters | Average annual harvest | Harvest taken by residents | Resident success rate | Non-resident success rate |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Unit 20A              | 201                              | 65%              | 35%                  | 80                     | 36%                        | 22%                   | 73%                       |
| Unit 20B              | 14                               | 98%              | 2%                   | 2                      | 96%                        | 17%                   | 33%                       |
| Unit 20C              | 4                                | 78%              | 22%                  | 1                      | 64%                        | 23%                   | 57%                       |
| Unit 20D              | 3                                | 67%              | 33%                  | <1                     | 67%                        | 11%                   | 11%                       |
| Unit 20E              | 17                               | 95%              | 5%                   | 5                      | 90%                        | 29%                   | 63%                       |
| All Unit 20**         | 241                              | 69%              | 31%                  | 89                     | 42%                        | 22%                   | 71%                       |

\*Little sheep habitat occurs in Unit 20F, and no sheep were harvested in that unit.

\*\*Includes hunters in Unit 20F and those who did not specify where in Unit 20 they hunted

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this issue of allocation between resident and nonresident hunters. The board may wish to **TAKE NO ACTION** on this proposal, based on action taken on proposal 41. This proposal closely mirrors similar proposals regarding sheep throughout Alaska. The board has established a committee to evaluate this, and other, sheep management options over the next year.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to private parties. Costs to the department would increase because of increased duties and costs associated with administering a large number of drawing hunts.

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**PROPOSAL 49 – 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Chris Gossen

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Open the resident sheep season 7 days before the nonresident season in Units 25 and 26.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Unit 25 —

Residents

- general season (Aug 10–Sept 20, full-curl ram)
- registration (Oct 1–Apr 30, 3 sheep in the east of the Middle Fork of the Chandalar River)

Nonresidents

- general season (Aug 10–Sept 20, full-curl ram)

Unit 26A —

Residents

- registration (Aug 10–Apr 30 for 1 sheep or Aug 1–Apr 30 for 3 sheep, depending on the area),
- general season (Aug 10–Sept 20, full-curl ram)
- drawing permit (Aug 10–Sept 20, full-curl ram).

Nonresidents

- general season (Aug 10–Sept 20, full-curl ram),
- drawing permit (Aug 10–Sept 20, full-curl ram).

Unit 26B — Residents and Nonresidents

- general season hunts (Aug 10–Sept 20, full-curl ram)

Unit 26C — Residents and Nonresidents

- general season hunts (Aug 10–Sept 20, full-curl ram)
- registration hunt (Oct 1–Apr 30, 3 sheep)

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Resident sheep hunting seasons in Units 25 and 26 would open 7 days before the nonresident seasons. Exact dates are not specified.

**BACKGROUND:** This proposal attempts to reduce competition during the first part of the sheep season by providing resident hunters with an earlier opening date. Providing a longer resident season is used to separate resident and nonresident hunters in some Region III moose hunts, as well as to provide for C&T uses pursuant to the state subsistence priority law. A lengthened season could increase harvests and increase the complexity of state sheep hunting regulations. Nonresident hunters and guides may feel disadvantaged by an early opening for resident hunters.

Board policy (2007-173-BOG) indicates that allocations for specific hunts will be decided individually, based upon historical patterns of nonresident and resident use over the past 10 years. The board can allocate hunting opportunity between resident and nonresident hunters by modifying season dates or by allocating permits. Similar requests for broad changes in allocation

of sheep hunting opportunity have been addressed previously by the board at meetings covering Regions III, IV, and V.

The requirement to harvest full-curl rams should prevent over-harvest from affecting sustainability of sheep populations. Lengthening the resident season is not likely to adversely affect sheep populations in the short term, even if general season harvest increases. However, there may be a perceived scarcity of legal rams in heavily hunted areas. Over time, it could reduce the ability of both residents and nonresidents to harvest a big ram, or increase the effort required to harvest a ram; but the extent that this might occur is unknown.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this issue of allocation between resident and nonresident hunters. The board may wish to **TAKE NO ACTION** on this proposal, based on action taken on proposal 41. This proposal closely mirrors similar proposals regarding sheep throughout Alaska. The board has established a committee to evaluate this, and other, sheep management options over the next year.

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

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**PROPOSAL 50 – 5 AAC 99.025(a)(4). Customary and traditional uses of game populations.** *(This proposal will be considered at both the Region V and Region III meetings.)*

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** The proposal provides the board with the opportunity to consider the customary and traditional use worksheet developed by the department to make a determination as to whether there are customary and traditional uses of the Teshekpuk caribou herd (TCH). If the board determines that there are customary and traditional uses of TCH for subsistence, then this proposal provides the board with the opportunity to find an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence uses.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Previous customary and traditional use worksheets were provided to the board in 1990 and 1993, but no findings were made at that time. As a result, presently there is no determination of whether the TCH is associated with subsistence uses and no amount reasonable necessary for subsistence has been established.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If the board determined that there are customary and traditional uses of TCH caribou, the board would then need to find an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence and adopt regulations that provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses of the Teshekpuk caribou herd.

**BACKGROUND:** The Alaska Board of Game was first presented a customary and traditional use (C&T) worksheet for consideration of the customary and traditional uses of the TCH in 1990. The administrative record does not report whether a C&T determination was made at the 1990 board meeting. This same C&T worksheet was revised for the 1993 board meeting and stated:

[B]ecause the Teshekpuk Caribou Herd is not specifically identified in current hunting regulations, there is no specific harvest ticket for this herd, and because so little is actually known about its seasonal movements over time, little information on any hunting of this herd is actually available. Based on caribou harvest ticket returns from Unit 26A, it appears that there is little hunting of the herd by non-North Slope residents (within its central range around the Teshekpuk Lake) because of difficult access.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocative proposal.

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

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**PROPOSAL 51 – 5 AAC 85.056(a)(2)(3). Season Dates and Bag Limits for Wolf.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Smokey Don Duncan

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?**

Change the wolf hunting season to August 5–June 15 in Units 12, 19, 20, 21, 24, and 25.

- in Units 12, 20, 21, 24, 25, the new season would start 5 days earlier and end 15 days later than current seasons.
- in Unit 19 the new season would start 5 days later and end 45 days later than current seasons.
- In Units 26B and 26C the season would remain August 10–May 31.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

- Units 12, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26B and 26C — August 10–May 31.
- Unit 19 — August 1–April 30.
- Hunting bag limits would remain unchanged and are currently:
  - Units 12, 20, and 25C — 5 wolves.
  - Units 21, 24, 25A, 25B, 25D, 26B, and 26C — 10 wolves.
  - Unit 19 — 10 wolves per day.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Wolf hunting season dates across much of Region III would be lengthened and aligned, increasing hunting opportunity and simplifying regulations.

**BACKGROUND:** This proposal was incorrectly assigned to 5 AAC 85.060, season dates and bag limits for fur animals, which does not include hunting seasons for wolves. It should be assigned to **5 AAC 85.056, Hunting seasons dates and bag limits for wolves**, where wolves are classified as big game. It does not appear to be directed at changing wolf trapping seasons in 5 AAC 84.270(13), where wolves are classified as fur animals.

This change would not be a conservation concern, because additional harvest is likely to be minimal. For example, in Unit 19D during fall 1983–2013 (29 years) a total of 4 wolves were taken by people who shot them from the ground during August, while 5 wolves were shot in April. No wolves have been reported taken in May since the Unit 19D season was extended in fall 2006. In Unit 20B, where more than 400 bear bait stations are registered each spring, a total of 3 wolves were harvested during May 2007–2013. August wolf harvest was also low, with total of 3 wolves taken during August 10–31 in 2006–2012. Some increase in wolf harvest may occur in June, since most bear harvest at bait stations occurs in early June.

Fur quality of wolves taken in late spring and early summer is poor, and some hunters want wolves to be harvested only during winter when pelts are prime. Other hunters want extra opportunity to harvest wolves. In addition, some people feel that taking wolves is unethical when pups are dependent on adults, although seasons in much of the area already occur when females are nursing pups.

The board has made positive findings for customary and traditional uses of wolves in Units 12, 20, 21, 24, and 25, and has determined that the amount reasonably necessary for subsistence is 90% of the harvestable portion (5 AAC 99.025(a)(13)(L)). The board should consider whether this change would represent a reduction in subsistence opportunity by shortening the August wolf hunting season in Unit 19 by 5 days.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal to extend wolf hunting seasons. This is an allocation issue among consumptive users, as well as other members of the public who are interested in wolves. It is not likely to change wolf harvest in the affected units.

**COST ANALYSIS:** This proposal is not expected to result in additional direct costs for a private person or the department.

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## **PROPOSAL 52 – 5 AAC 92.015(a)(4). Brown bear tag fee exemptions.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Reauthorize brown tag fee exemptions for resident hunters in Region III.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The \$25 locking tags are currently not required for residents to take brown bears in Units 12, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26B, and 26C but the exemption needs to be reauthorized every year.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The tag fee exemption would continue and residents would not need to purchase a \$25 brown bear tag to hunt brown bears in Units 12, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26B, and 26C.

**BACKGROUND:** The Board of Game must annually reauthorize all resident tag fee exemptions. Resident brown bear tag fees were put in place statewide during the mid-1970s to

discourage incidental harvest, elevate the status of brown and grizzly bears to trophies, and to provide revenue. Today, Region III populations are healthy, grizzly bears are highly regarded as trophies, and revenue can be generated from non-tag fee sources.

Re-authorizing the resident grizzly bear tag fee exemption throughout the Interior and Eastern Arctic Alaska (Region III) simplifies regulations, increases resident hunter opportunity, and is not likely to cause declines in these grizzly bear populations. This reauthorization would assist with the objective of managing Region III grizzly bear populations for hunter opportunity and would continue to allow hunters to take grizzlies opportunistically. During regulatory years 2008–2009 through 2012–2013, 30% of grizzlies harvested by resident hunters in Region III were taken incidentally to other activities.

The department estimates that a kill rate of at least 8%, composed of predominately males, is sustainable for interior brown bears without causing a decline in bear numbers. Higher harvest rates may be sustainable at lower population sizes. Human-caused mortality in most of Region III has been consistently less than 8% of the population. Where harvests are elevated (i.e., Units 20D, 20B, 20A, and portions of 26B), grizzly populations are managed through changes in seasons and bag limits. Resident tag fees that were in place prior to 2010 appeared to have no effect on harvest in these areas.

As part of this request to reauthorize exemption of grizzly tag fees throughout Region III, the department recommends that the board, at a minimum, continue to reauthorize the tag fee exemptions for subsistence registration permit hunts in Units 19A and 19B (downstream of and including the Aniak River drainage), 21D, and 24.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal.

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

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### **PROPOSAL 53 – 5 AAC85.015(a)(3) Hunting seasons and bag limits for black bear.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Increase the bag limit from 3 to 5 black bears for residents and nonresidents in Unit 25C and nonresidents in Unit 25D.

### **WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Black bear seasons and bag limits

- Unit 25C, no closed season, bag limit is 3 bears for residents and nonresidents.
- Unit 25D, no closed season, bag limit is 5 bears for residents and 3 bears for nonresidents.

Cubs and females with cubs may not be taken.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The bag limit would be increased from 3 to 5 bears for residents and nonresidents in Unit 25C and nonresidents in Unit 25D. This would increase hunting opportunity, but will likely not increase harvest.

**BACKGROUND:** Few hunters are likely to take 5 bears per year in Units 25C and 25D. In Unit 20B, which has high harvest (133 bears per year), and a much higher density of bear hunters than these units, an average of 1 hunter per year takes the bag limit of 3 bears. Harvest tickets are not required in Units 25C and 25D and sealing is not required unless the hide and/or skull are transported from the state; therefore harvest is estimated.

The department estimates 15–30 black bears are taken annually in Unit 25C. On average, 12 black bear bait stations are registered. No population surveys have been conducted. However, based on densities in similar habitats, there are likely 618–1,545 independent black bears, not including cubs (12–30 independent black bears/100 mi<sup>2</sup>) and a harvestable surplus of 61–233.

This proposal would have little effect in Unit 25D. Most black bear hunters in this unit are likely residents, who already can harvest 5 bears. Nonresidents (who are more likely to seal hides and skulls to take them out of state) sealed a total of 11 black bears during the last 5 years. None of these nonresidents sealed more than one bear. An abundance estimate in a small portion of Unit 25D resulted in more than 40 independent black bears/100 mi<sup>2</sup> (not counting cubs), indicating the population could support a high harvest.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** because the department has no conservation concerns.

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

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**PROPOSAL 54 – 5 AAC 5 AAC 92.051. Discretionary trapping permit conditions and procedures.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Fairbanks and Delta Fish and Game Advisory Committees

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** The intent is to allow snaring of black bears by issuing bear trapping permits and to use discretionary permit authority in 5 AAC 84.270 to set the snaring seasons and bag limits in Region III.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** There are no seasons and bag limits for black bears under 5 AAC 84.270, furbearer trapping.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** There would be no effect because there are no trapping seasons where 5 AAC 92.051 can be used, so harvest of black bears will not be affected by adopting this proposal.



**BACKGROUND:** This proposal requests authority to take black bear under trapping regulations. However, because there are no trapping seasons in 5 AAC 84.270, black bears may not be snared (5 AAC 84.260), and there is no black bear trapping permit to which 5 AAC 92.051 may be applied. Region III units have substantial opportunity to take black bears, with a year-round season, a 3- or 5-bear bag limit, and lengthy baiting seasons. The department has no conservation concerns for the populations of black bears.

Black bears are classified as big game and as furbearers (5AAC 92.990). Snaring is not a legal method to take big game (5 AAC 92.085), but is a legal method to take furbearers (5 AAC 92.080). Hunting seasons and bag limits for black bears as big game are in 5 AAC 85.015. Hunting methods and means are regulated in 5 AAC 92.080, 5 AAC 92.085, and 5 AAC 92.044 as referenced by 5 AAC 92.085. The department issues black bear baiting permits under authority of 5 AAC 92.085 (through 5 AAC 92.044). Discretionary permit hunt conditions and procedures (5 AAC 92.052) are applied to permits issued under 5 AAC 92.044 to regulate the length of the bear baiting season. Without a season established in 5 AAC 85.015, this would not be possible.

Several regulations would need to be created by the board in order allow black bears snaring and regulate snaring seasons with discretionary trapping permit authority in 5 AAC 92.051. First, trapping seasons and bag limits for black bears would need to be added to 5 AAC 84.270. In order to apply 5 AAC 92.051, discretionary trapping permit authority, black bear trapping in those areas would need to be authorized by permit only, under seasons and bag limits. Regulation 5 AAC 92.044 could not be modified because it is specific to hunting black bears as big game.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the issue of methods and means allocation among users. The department has no conservation concerns.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional cost to private parties or the department.

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## **PROPOSAL 55- 5 AAC 92.095. Unlawful methods of taking furbearers; exceptions.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Wildlife Alliance

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Remove trapping and snaring as legal methods to take black bears when they are classified as furbearers.

### **WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

- Black bear are classified as furbearers — 5 AAC 92.990(a)(21).
- Snaring is a legal method of taking furbearers — 5 AAC 92.080(8).
- No seasons and bag limits are established to take black bears as furbearers — 5 AAC 84.270.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If adopted, trapping and snaring would not be legal methods to take black bears under trapping regulations. Harvest of black bears would not be restricted by adopting this proposal because there are no open seasons for black bears under trapping regulations.

**BACKGROUND:** Black bears were reclassified as furbearers in March 2010. No bag limits have been established, and no seasons have been set for black bears as furbearers. All bag limits and seasons for black bears are for hunting. Eliminating trapping and snaring as legal methods of take for black bears as furbearers will not prohibit snaring in the predator control areas, because the provision for allowing bears to be snared under predator control is in the predator control plans themselves.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the issue of methods and means allocation among users. The department has no conservation concerns.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional cost to private parties or the department.

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**PROPOSAL 56 – 5 AAC 92.220(a)(5). Salvage of game meat, furs, and hides.**

**PROPOSED BY:** : Joel Doner

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Eliminate the requirement to salvage all edible meat of a brown bear taken under a permit issued under bear baiting regulations in Region III.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Region-wide, salvage of brown bear meat is not required except:

- All edible meat of a brown bear taken under a bear baiting permit in Units 12, 20C, 20E, and 21D shall be salvaged.

In addition, the following regulations are relevant to discussion of aligning and simplifying salvage requirements for brown bears taken at bear bait stations.

- All edible meat of a brown bear taken under a subsistence registration permit in Units 19A and 19B downstream of and including the Aniak River drainage, Unit 21D, and Unit 24 must be salvaged for human consumption; salvage of the hide or skull is optional.

Region-wide black bear salvage requirements, regardless of method of take:

| <b>Unit</b>        | <b>January 1–May 31</b> | <b>June 1–December 31</b>      |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 12                 | Meat                    | Meat or hide                   |
| 19A, 19B, 19C, 19D | Meat                    | Meat or hide                   |
| 20A                | Meat                    | Meat or hide                   |
| 20B                | Meat, hide*, skull      | Skull and meat** and/or hide** |

|                    |      |              |
|--------------------|------|--------------|
| 20C, 20D, 20E, 20F | Meat | Meat or hide |
| 21                 | Meat | Meat or hide |
| 24                 | Meat | Meat or hide |
| 25                 | Meat | Meat or hide |
| 26B, 26C           | Meat | Meat or hide |

\* Evidence of sex must remain naturally attached to the hide

\*\*Evidence of sex must remain naturally attached to the meat or hide, whichever is salvaged.

| <b>Region III Game Management Units and areas open for bear baiting</b>  | <b>Baiting dates</b>                      | <b>Species allowed</b> |
|--|---|------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12, 20C, 20E</li> </ul>   | April 15–June 30                          | black and brown bears  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21D</li> </ul>  | August 1–September 30<br>April 15–June 30 | black and brown bears  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19A, 19B, 19C</li> <li>• 19D outside the Predation Control Area</li> <li>• 20A, 20B, 20D, 20F</li> <li>• 21A, 21B, 21C</li> <li>• 24D and 24C outside the Koyukuk Controlled Use Area</li> <li>• 24A, 24B</li> <li>• 25A, 25B, 25C</li> </ul> | April 15–June 30                          | black bears            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19D Predation Control Area</li> <li>• 24D and 24C in the Koyukuk Controlled Use Area</li> <li>• 25D</li> </ul>  | August 1–September 30<br>April 15–June 30 | black bears            |

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Hunters who harvest brown bears over bait in Units 12, 20C, 20E, and 21D will not be required to salvage any meat of brown bears harvested over bait stations.

**BACKGROUND:** The Board of Game recently liberalized methods and means in portions of the state to allow take of brown bears at registered bear bait stations. Beginning in regulatory year July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013 (RY12), the board adopted proposals to allow take of brown bears over bait in Units 20C, 20E and 21D. Units 20C and 20E have only a spring bear baiting season. Unit 21D has fall and spring baiting seasons.

With these new regulations, the board required that the edible meat be salvaged from all brown bears taken at bait stations. Some members of the public believe that edible meat of these bears should be salvaged for human consumption, while others oppose this requirement. Still others believe that brown bear meat should be salvaged for human consumption in the spring, when they are less likely to have an “off” flavor.

Since legalized, harvest of brown bears over bait has been low. In RY12, 3 brown bears were taken over bait in Unit 12, 4 in Unit 20C, and 2 in Unit 20E. In the 3 baiting seasons in Unit 21D (fall and spring RY12 and fall RY13), no brown bears have been taken over bait. The department estimates that kill rates of at least 8%, composed predominately of males, can be sustained without causing reductions in bear density. Higher harvest rates may be sustainable at reduced population densities. Human-caused mortality in these units has been consistently less than 8% of the population. Based on this low overall harvest and low harvest over bait, changes in brown bear salvage requirements are unlikely to increase harvest to unsustainable levels.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the issue of salvage requirements for brown bears. The department has no conservation concerns. If the board does not adopt this proposal, the department requests that it consider standardizing salvage requirements region-wide for both black and brown bears.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Passage or failure of this proposal is not expected to result in additional direct costs for a private person or to the department.

**PROPOSAL 57 – 5 AAC 92.220(a)(5). Salvage of game meat, furs, and hides.**

**PROPOSED BY:** : Smokey Don Duncan

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Eliminate the requirement to salvage all edible meat of a brown bear taken under a permit issued under bear baiting regulations in Region III.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Region-wide, salvage of brown bear meat is not required except:

- All edible meat of a brown bear taken under a bear baiting permit in Units 12, 20C, 20E, and 21D shall be salvaged.

In addition, the following regulations are relevant to discussion of aligning and simplifying salvage requirements for brown bears taken at bear bait stations.

- All edible meat of a brown bear taken under a subsistence registration permit in Units 19A and 19B downstream of and including the Aniak River drainage, Unit 21D, and Unit 24 must be salvaged for human consumption; salvage of the hide or skull is optional.

Region-wide black bear salvage requirements, regardless of method of take:

| <b>Unit</b>        | <b>January 1–May 31</b> | <b>June 1–December 31</b>      |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 12                 | Meat                    | Meat or hide                   |
| 19A, 19B, 19C, 19D | Meat                    | Meat or hide                   |
| 20A                | Meat                    | Meat or hide                   |
| 20B                | Meat, hide*, skull      | Skull and meat** and/or hide** |
| 20C, 20D, 20E, 20F | Meat                    | Meat or hide                   |

|          |      |              |
|----------|------|--------------|
| 21       | Meat | Meat or hide |
| 24       | Meat | Meat or hide |
| 25       | Meat | Meat or hide |
| 26B, 26C | Meat | Meat or hide |

\* Evidence of sex must remain naturally attached to the hide

\*\*Evidence of sex must remain naturally attached to the meat or hide, whichever is salvaged.

| Region III Game Management Units and areas open for bear baiting   | Baiting dates                             | Species allowed       |
|--|---|-----------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12, 20C, 20E</li> </ul>   | April 15–June 30                          | black and brown bears |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21D</li> </ul>  | August 1–September 30<br>April 15–June 30 | black and brown bears |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19A, 19B, 19C</li> <li>• 19D outside the Predation Control Area</li> <li>• 20A, 20B, 20D, 20F</li> <li>• 21A, 21B, 21C</li> <li>• 24D and 24C outside the Koyukuk Controlled Use Area</li> <li>• 24A, 24B</li> <li>• 25A, 25B, 25C</li> </ul> | April 15–June 30                          | black bears           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19D Predation Control Area</li> <li>• 24D and 24C in the Koyukuk Controlled Use Area</li> <li>• 25D</li> </ul>  | August 1–September 30<br>April 15–June 30 | black bears           |

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Hunters who harvest brown bears over bait in Units 12, 20C, 20E, and 21D will not be required to salvage any meat of brown bears harvested over bait stations.

**BACKGROUND:** The Board of Game recently liberalized methods and means in portions of the state to allow take of brown bears at registered bear bait stations. Beginning in regulatory year July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013 (RY12), the board adopted proposals to allow take of brown bears over bait in Units 20C, 20E and 21D. Units 20C and 20E have only a spring bear baiting season. Unit 21D has fall and spring baiting seasons.

With these new regulations, the board required that the edible meat be salvaged from all brown bears taken at bait stations. Some members of the public believe that edible meat of these bears should be salvaged for human consumption, while others oppose this requirement. Still others believe that brown bear meat should be salvaged for human consumption in the spring, when they are less likely to have an “off” flavor.

Since legalized, harvest of brown bears over bait has been low. In RY12, 3 brown bears were taken over bait in Unit 12, 4 in Unit 20C, and 2 in Unit 20E. In the 3 baiting seasons in Unit 21D

(fall and spring RY12 and fall RY13), no brown bears have been taken over bait. The department estimates that kill rates of at least 8%, composed predominately of males, can be sustained without causing reductions in bear density. Higher harvest rates may be sustainable at reduced population densities. Human-caused mortality in these units has been consistently less than 8% of the population. Based on this low overall harvest and low harvest over bait, changes in brown bear salvage requirements are unlikely to increase harvest to unsustainable levels.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the issue of salvage requirements for brown bears. The department has no conservation concerns. The board may wish to **TAKE NO ACTION** after consideration of proposal 56 which also concerns salvage of brown bears taken at black bear bait sites.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Passage or failure of this proposal is not expected to result in additional direct costs for a private person or to the department.

**PROPOSAL 58 – 5 AAC 92.220(a)(5). Salvage of game meat, furs, and hides.**

**PROPOSED BY:** : Bob Ermold

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Eliminate the requirement to salvage all edible meat of a brown bear taken under a permit issued under bear baiting regulations in Region III.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Region-wide, salvage of brown bear meat is not required except:

- All edible meat of a brown bear taken under a bear baiting permit in Units 12, 20C, 20E, and 21D shall be salvaged.

In addition, the following regulations are relevant to discussion of aligning and simplifying salvage requirements for brown bears taken at bear bait stations.

- All edible meat of a brown bear taken under a subsistence registration permit in Units 19A and 19B downstream of and including the Aniak River drainage, Unit 21D, and Unit 24 must be salvaged for human consumption; salvage of the hide or skull is optional.

Region-wide black bear salvage requirements, regardless of method of take:

| <b>Unit</b>        | <b>January 1–May 31</b> | <b>June 1–December 31</b>      |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 12                 | Meat                    | Meat or hide                   |
| 19A, 19B, 19C, 19D | Meat                    | Meat or hide                   |
| 20A                | Meat                    | Meat or hide                   |
| 20B                | Meat, hide*, skull      | Skull and meat** and/or hide** |
| 20C, 20D, 20E, 20F | Meat                    | Meat or hide                   |
| 21                 | Meat                    | Meat or hide                   |
| 24                 | Meat                    | Meat or hide                   |

|          |      |              |
|----------|------|--------------|
| 25       | Meat | Meat or hide |
| 26B, 26C | Meat | Meat or hide |

\* Evidence of sex must remain naturally attached to the hide

\*\*Evidence of sex must remain naturally attached to the meat or hide, whichever is salvaged.

| <b>Region III Game Management Units and areas open for bear baiting</b>  | <b>Baiting dates</b>                      | <b>Species allowed</b> |
|--|---|------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12, 20C, 20E</li> </ul>   | April 15–June 30                          | black and brown bears  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21D</li> </ul>  | August 1–September 30<br>April 15–June 30 | black and brown bears  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19A, 19B, 19C</li> <li>• 19D outside the Predation Control Area</li> <li>• 20A, 20B, 20D, 20F</li> <li>• 21A, 21B, 21C</li> <li>• 24D and 24C outside the Koyukuk Controlled Use Area</li> <li>• 24A, 24B</li> <li>• 25A, 25B, 25C</li> </ul> | April 15–June 30                          | black bears            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19D Predation Control Area</li> <li>• 24D and 24C in the Koyukuk Controlled Use Area</li> <li>• 25D</li> </ul>  | August 1–September 30<br>April 15–June 30 | black bears            |

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Hunters who harvest brown bears over bait in Units 12, 20C, 20E, and 21D will not be required to salvage any meat of brown bears harvested over bait stations.

**BACKGROUND:** The Board of Game recently liberalized methods and means in portions of the state to allow take of brown bears at registered bear bait stations. Beginning in regulatory year July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013 (RY12), the board adopted proposals to allow take of brown bears over bait in Units 20C, 20E and 21D. Units 20C and 20E have only a spring bear baiting season. Unit 21D has fall and spring baiting seasons.

With these new regulations, the board required that the edible meat be salvaged from all brown bears taken at bait stations. Some members of the public believe that edible meat of these bears should be salvaged for human consumption, while others oppose this requirement. Still others believe that brown bear meat should be salvaged for human consumption in the spring, when they are less likely to have an “off” flavor.

Since legalized, harvest of brown bears over bait has been low. In RY12, 3 brown bears were taken over bait in Unit 12, 4 in Unit 20C, and 2 in Unit 20E. In the 3 baiting seasons in Unit 21D (fall and spring RY12 and fall RY13), no brown bears have been taken over bait. The department estimates that kill rates of at least 8%, composed predominately of males, can be sustained

without causing reductions in bear density. Higher harvest rates may be sustainable at reduced population densities. Human-caused mortality in these units has been consistently less than 8% of the population. Based on this low overall harvest and low harvest over bait, changes in brown bear salvage requirements are unlikely to increase harvest to unsustainable levels.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the issue of salvage requirements for brown bears. The department has no conservation concerns. The board may wish to **TAKE NO ACTION** after consideration of proposal 56 which also concerns salvage of brown bears taken at black bear bait sites.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Passage or failure of this proposal is not expected to result in additional direct costs for a private person or to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 59 – 5 AAC 85.045(a)(19). Hunting season dates and bag limits for moose.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Steve White

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Add 5 days to the end of the nonresident moose season in Unit 21A by changing the season to September 5–25.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The nonresident moose hunting season is September 5–20 by general season harvest ticket. Nonresidents are restricted to bulls with 50-inch antlers or antlers with at least 4 brow tines on one side. The resident season is September 5–25 by general season harvest ticket, for one antlered bull.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The nonresident moose season in Unit 21A would be the same as the resident season of September 5–25.

**BACKGROUND:** The Yukon Innoko Moose Management Plan was adopted by the board in 2006 and is currently used to guide moose management decisions in Units 21A and 21E. The primary goal of the working group that developed the plan was to develop a proactive approach to moose management in reaction to local residents' observations that the moose population had undergone a decline from earlier years. Goals in the plan included preventing the moose population from decreasing below 1 moose/square mile, capping the then-current level of nonresident hunting, as well as other objectives. The plan recommended shortening the nonresident season in Unit 21E from September 5–25 to September 5–20, but did not recommend this change in Unit 21A. However, in 2006 the board shortened the season in Unit 21A to September 5–20, in order to align it with Unit 21E. However, in 2010, the board adopted a proposal which returned the nonresident season in 21E to September 5–25 because the nonresident drawing permit was chronically under-subscribed and an additional 5 days of hunting was expected to result in a nonresident harvest well below the maximum quota of 30 as specified in the management plan. As a result, the seasons are no longer aligned.



Unit 21A has a low density moose population and the preliminary population estimate (March 2013) is 2,442 moose (0.2 moose/mile<sup>2</sup>, not corrected for sightability). The harvestable surplus (4%) is 98 moose. Average annual harvest by all hunters during regulatory years 2008–2009 through 2012–2013 (RY08–RY12) was 30 moose per year, with an average of 9 taken by nonresidents. The bull:cow ratio is high, with 77 bulls per 100 cows (average of 2011 and 2012).

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal. An additional 5 days at the end of the nonresident season will not likely lead to a large number of additional bulls being harvested; therefore the department has no conservation concerns.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this hunt. Department cost may increase if harvest increases, requiring additional monitoring of population status and trend.

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**PROPOSAL 60 – 5 AAC 85.045(19). Hunting season dates and bag limits for moose.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Grayling/Anvik/Shageluk/Holy Cross Advisory Committee (GASH AC)

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Change the Unit 21E resident moose hunt from a general season hunt to a registration hunt.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Residents who hunt moose in Unit 21E are required to have a general season harvest ticket. The resident bag limit is one bull. Nonresidents are required to have a drawing permit. The nonresident bag limit is a bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with at least 4 brow tines on one side. The hunting season is September 5–25 for both residents and nonresidents.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Residents who hunt moose in Unit 21E would be required to obtain a registration permit instead of a harvest ticket.

**BACKGROUND:** The Yukon Innoko Moose Management Plan was adopted by the board in 2006 and is currently used to guide moose management decisions in Units 21A and 21E. The primary goal of the working group that developed the plan was to develop a proactive approach to moose management in reaction to local residents' observations that the moose population had undergone a decline from earlier years. Goals in the plan included preventing the moose population from decreasing below 1 moose/square mile, capping the then-current level of nonresident hunting, as well as other objectives

Reporting under the current general season harvest ticket is poor, and the GASH AC would like to see reporting improve by changing to a registration permit hunt. The AC is also concerned about hunters harvesting multiple moose and believes this proposal would help address both poor reporting and multiple kill issues. However, additional law enforcement may be more effective than registration permits in addressing the multiple kill issue.

There is a positive customary and traditional use finding for moose in all of Unit 21; the board found that 600–800 animals are reasonably necessary for subsistence. The midpoint of the current (March 2012) moose population estimate in Unit 21E was 6,959 moose, giving a harvestable surplus of approximately 278 bull moose.

Currently, it is difficult to assess moose harvest in Unit 21E on the basis of general season harvest reports alone. Household surveys during regulatory years 2002–2003 through 2004–2005 (RY02–RY04) indicated that harvests by residents of the unit ranged from 94–133, with an average of 115 per year. General season harvest reports during the same period by residents of the unit ranged from 30–43, with an average of 37 per year.

During RY08–RY12, the estimated harvest in Unit 21E averaged 180 moose per year. This was calculated by adding average annual harvests from Unit 21E residents (assumed 115 based on RY02–RY04 household surveys), Alaska residents living outside of Unit 21E (55 reported), and nonresidents (10 reported). If the estimate of 180 per year is correct, current harvest is likely sustainable.

Experience in adjacent subunits (19A, 19B, 21B, 21C, and 21D) has demonstrated that registration permits result in more accurate harvest reporting than results from general season harvest ticket reporting. An additional advantage of improved reporting would be more accurate information on the state’s fall hunt for bulls which is used by federal managers to determine to whom permits for the federal winter hunt (“any” moose, with a 40 moose quota. The winter hunt is limited to households that did not harvest a moose in the fall. ) should be awarded. The proposal does not specify, but it is the GASH AC’s intent, that the registration permits would be widely available, including license vendors and the internet.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal, because more accurate harvest reporting will allow us to better assess the status of this moose population on an annual basis. This would improve the department’s ability to implement timely management actions that might otherwise be delayed by less accurate harvest data. The board may wish to consider whether this change provides a reasonable opportunity for subsistence.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this hunt. Department cost would increase due to the higher cost of administering a registration hunt rather than a general season hunt.

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**PROPOSAL 61–5 AAC 85.045(19). Hunting season dates and bag limits for moose.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Bruce Werba

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Change the allocation of unguided to guided nonresident moose drawing permits in Unit 21E.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The resident and nonresident moose hunting season in Unit 21E is September 5–25.

The department may issue up to 100 drawing permits to nonresident moose hunters, with up to 20% issued to hunters who use a registered guide. Currently the department issues 50 permits with an 80:20 split of unguided to guided permits (40 permits to unguided hunters and 10 to guided hunters). Nonresidents are restricted to bulls with 50-inch antlers, or antlers with at least 4 brow tines on at least one side.

Resident hunters pursue moose under general season harvest tickets and may take antlered bulls.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The department would issue up to 30% of all permits to hunters who use a registered guide and the allocation would change to a 70:30 ratio (35 unguided and 15 guided nonresident permits). Fewer permits for unguided nonresidents will likely remain unused each year.

**BACKGROUND:** The Yukon Innoko Moose Management Plan was approved by the board in 2006 and is currently used to guide moose management decisions in Unit 21E. The plan recommended a nonresident drawing permit for moose in Unit 21E but made no recommendation for an allocation between unguided and guided hunters.

The drawing hunt began in regulatory year 2007–2008 (RY07) and during RY07–RY11, permits to both guided (DM839) and unguided (DM837) nonresidents were undersubscribed (there were fewer applicants than permits available). In 2010, the board extended the nonresident season by 5 days, to September 25, to align with the resident season. All permits to guided nonresidents (DM839) were issued in the draw during RY12 and RY13. Unguided permits (DM837) remained undersubscribed by 20 permits in RY12 and 17 in RY13. After they were offered on a first-come, first-served basis to unguided nonresidents, 15 and 8 DM837 permits remained unused in RY12 and RY13, respectively.

The midpoint of the current (March 2012) moose population estimate in Unit 21E was 6,959, giving a harvestable surplus of approximately 278 bull moose. While estimates of total harvest are imprecise, the department currently estimates the harvestable surplus to be 278 moose. Average harvest by nonresidents during RY07-RY12 was 10 moose/year. It is difficult to assess resident harvest by means of harvest ticket reports alone because of a low reporting rate. However, Subsistence household surveys indicate an average of 115 moose harvested per year.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocation issue. This proposal will not affect resident hunter opportunity and the department has no conservation concerns. Harvest by nonresidents is low and the number of limited permits will maintain low harvest by nonresidents. However; the current 80:20 split appears to reduce nonresident opportunity, since only DM839 (for guided nonresidents) is fully subscribed. Combining DM837 and DM839 into 1 permit for nonresidents would simplify this hunt; however, the proposer was concerned this would lead to an increase in guides in the area. Changing the permit allocation to 70:30 may allow more nonresidents to participate and alleviate this concern.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal may result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this hunt because more nonresidents would be required to have a guide. However, permits available for unguided nonresidents exceed demand, so nonresidents who do not wish to pay a guide will be able to continue to apply for permits for unguided

hunters. Costs to the department will likely decrease because less time will be spent administering undersubscribed DM837 permits through a time-intensive process of offering the permits to the public on a first-come, first-served basis.

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**PROPOSAL 62 – 5 AAC 92.123(a)(1). Intensive Management Plans VII.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Reauthorize the Unit 19A predation control program.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Under the Unit 19A Intensive Management (IM) Plan, the department is authorized to reduce black bears, brown bears, and wolves by department-conducted aerial bear and wolf control and by issuing aerial wolf control permits to the public within Wolf Control Focus Area (WCFA). Control efforts are designed to benefit moose.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The Unit 19A IM Plan will expire on June 30, 2014. This proposal would reauthorize the department to reduce black bears, brown bears, and wolves by department-conducted aerial bear and wolf control and by issuing aerial wolf control permits to the public within the WCFA during July 1, 2014–June 30, 2020. It would also simplify regulatory language. Control efforts would be designed to benefit moose.

**BACKGROUND:** The Unit 19A control program was first authorized by the board in 2004 for wolf control only. Black and brown bear control was added in 2012 and control efforts were concentrated in the WCFA (3,905 mi<sup>2</sup>) and BCFA (534 mi<sup>2</sup>). The control objective was to temporarily reduce bear and wolf numbers within the focus areas to the lowest level possible. The Unit 19A IM population objectives established by the board are for a population of 7,600–9,300 moose and an annual harvest of 400–550.

IM objectives for Unit 19A have not been achieved. Only wolf control was conducted between December 2004 and April 2013. Progress towards achieving unit-wide IM objectives was monitored in the WCFA. Public permittees using fixed-wing aircraft have reduced wolves in the WCFA by at least 60% below the pre-control level during most years since control started in 2004. However, no increase in moose numbers has been detected within the WCFA, and the moose hunting season has been closed in the area (except in the Lime Village Management Area) since fall 2006. Research conducted in nearby Unit 19D-East indicated that control of both wolves and bears resulted in measurable responses in the moose population. A similar approach in Unit 19A is expected to achieve an increase in the number of moose much sooner than conducting wolf control alone. The department conducted black and brown bear control within the BCFA in May 2013 when 84 black bears and 5 brown bears were removed from estimated pre-control numbers of 135–160 and 10–15, respectively. Meat and hides were salvaged and most was distributed to Unit 19A villages. Additional department-conducted bear control is planned for May 2014.

Additional details will also be made available for public review in a separate IM operational plan prior to the board meeting

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal with an **AMENDMENT** to change the proposed harvest objective from 4% of the estimated total number of moose present in late winter surveys in the BCFA to 120 moose within the WCFA.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal will not result in additional cost to private persons. Department cost will increase substantially due to department-conducted bear control.

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**PROPOSAL 63 – 5AAC 92.123(a)(2). Intensive Management Plans VII.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Reauthorize the Unit 19D East predation control program.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Under the Unit 19D East Intensive Management (IM) Plan, the department is authorized to reduce black bears, brown bears and wolves by issuing bear snaring permits and aerial wolf control permits to the public within Wolf and Bear Control Focus Areas (WCFA and BCFA). Control efforts are designed to benefit moose.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The Unit 19D East IM Plan will expire on June 30, 2014. This proposal would reauthorize the department to continue reducing black bears, brown bears, and wolves. However, public bear control permits would be deleted, and department-conducted aerial bear and wolf control would be added within the BCFA and WCFA. Public aerial wolf control permits would continue to be issued within the WCFA. The program would be reauthorized for July 1, 2014–June 30, 2020. Control efforts would still be designed to benefit moose. Also, the proposal contains simplified regulatory language.

**BACKGROUND:** The program was first authorized by the Board of Game in 1995. Wolf control began in 2003. Bear control began with nonlethal removal of bears by the department during May 2003 and 2004, and continued with public removal starting in 2010.

Unit-wide IM objectives for Unit 19D East have not been achieved, but progress has been made. Within the 1,118 mi<sup>2</sup> Upper Kuskokwim Villages Moose Management Area (MMA) where wolf and bear control have been conducted, point estimates of moose numbers increased from 868 in fall 2001 to 1,820 in fall 2009, but declined to 1,337 by 2012. Confidence intervals around the estimates overlap, but the department observes that a decline did occur due to a combination of deep snow winters and increased bear predation. Harvest of moose increased in the MMA from approximately 29 in 2001 to 69 in 2012. However, the present harvest will not be sustainable if moose numbers continue to decline.

The current wolf control focus area was established in 2009, and since then, wolves have been reduced within this area by an average of 71%. Public harvest by bear control permittees had no effect on bear numbers within the BCFA. During regulatory years 2009–2012, when permits were made available, average annual kill was 11 black bears from approximately 120 in the

BCFA. During the same time period, only 2 of the approximately 12 brown bears in the area were taken.

Additional details will also be made available for public review in a separate IM operational plan prior to the board meeting.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal with an **AMENDMENT** to change the proposed harvest objective from 4% of the estimated total number of moose present in late winter surveys in the BCFA to 180 moose within the WCFA.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal will not result in additional cost to private persons. Cost to the department will increase substantially due to addition of department conducted bear and wolf control.

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**PROPOSAL 64 – 5 AAC 84.270(5). Furbearer trapping.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Rhone Baumgartner.

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Lengthen the lynx trapping season in Unit 19 as follows:

Extend the lynx trapping season in Unit 19 to run concurrently with the open season on wolverine in Unit 19; November 1–March 31.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** November 1–February 28.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If adopted, the proposal would align the Unit 19 lynx and wolverine seasons, align the lynx season closing date with adjacent Units 17 and 18, misalign the Unit 19 lynx season with closing dates in Units 21A and 21E, reduce incidental catch in Unit 19, simplify enforcement, and increase opportunity.

**BACKGROUND:** During March, lynx are occasionally caught in traps set for other land furbearers, particularly wolverines and wolves. Trappers are required to surrender these incidentally-caught lynx to the department, but those without ready access to a Fish and Game office rarely surrender them.

The department has no concerns about a longer lynx trapping season causing a conservation issue. Longer seasons in Unit 19 are not likely to generate substantially more lynx harvest. The board may wish to consider the same season extension in Units 21A and 21E. Longer seasons in these units are also unlikely to generate substantially more lynx harvest.

Average annual lynx harvest in Unit 19 during regulatory years 2008–2009 through 2012–2013 (RY08–RY12) was 88 (range 69–118) and lynx harvest density is low, varying from 0.2 to 3.2 lynx per 1,000 mi<sup>2</sup>. Large areas are inaccessible, un-trapped, and provide refuge for lynx.

In adjacent Units 21A and 21E, average annual lynx harvest during RY08–RY12 was 10 (range 4–24) and lynx harvest density is low, varying from 0.1 to 1.0 lynx per 1,000 mi<sup>2</sup>. As with Unit 19, large areas are inaccessible, un-trapped, and provide refuge for lynx.

Opportunity would be increased if this proposal were adopted. Most trappers in the McGrath area primarily target marten and many leave their trap-lines after marten season closes at the end of February. Trappers that continue to trap through March primarily target wolverines and wolves and these sets have the potential to also catch lynx. Lynx cycles are not as pronounced in Unit 19 as in other portions of the Interior and a longer lynx season is unlikely to result in additional trapping pressure or substantially more lynx harvest.

Adopting this proposal would reduce incidental catch by aligning the lynx season with wolverine season and allowing wolverine and wolf trappers to retain captured lynx. It would simplify enforcement and incidentally-caught lynx could be legally retained by the trapper. Fur quality declines somewhat toward the end of March, but is saleable and useable for home garment-making. Also, lynx meat is used by some trappers and remains good through March.

This proposal was also considered by the Board of Game in 2012. Local support for a longer lynx season that is aligned with the wolverine season is unlikely to diminish.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this issue. The department has no conservation concerns associated with lengthening this lynx trapping season. Although this proposal would align the season closing date with adjacent Units 17 and 18, it would misalign the Unit 19 season closing date with Units 21A and 21E which are also managed from the McGrath office. The board may wish to take the same action on this proposal and on Proposal 73, which would lengthen the lynx trapping to March 31 in all of Unit 21. This would simplify McGrath area regulations and align lynx season closing dates throughout Units 17, 18, 19, and 21.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is expected to slightly reduce costs to private parties by allowing trappers to retain these incidentally-taken lynx, rather than surrendering them. Cost to the department would also be lowered by not having to store and process incidentally-taken lynx.

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**PROPOSAL 65 – 5 AAC 85.055(4). Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep, and 5 AAC 92.011. Taking game by proxy.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Nikolai Edzeno’ Village Council

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Create an additional hunting season and bag limit for residents to hunt Dall sheep by registration permit in a portion of Unit 19C as follows:

Establish a registration hunt for residents to hunt sheep in Unit 19C during October 1–April 30, with a bag limit of one sheep with <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-curl or less, excluding lambs and ewes accompanied by a lamb, and excluding rams with broomed horns. The proponent asks that the department use a number of specific discretionary permit conditions to restrict access methods and/or limit harvest: prohibit use of aircraft for access to hunt sheep except into and out of the McGrath,

Nikolai, and Telida airports; hunters would be required to call the McGrath area biologist within 3 days of the beginning and the end of each hunt and report any sheep harvested after each hunt; limit number of hunters in the field; and close the hunt by emergency order when the total harvest approaches or reaches 10 sheep. Horns would need to be sealed within 30 days of close of season rather than 30 days after kill. This hunt would be eligible for proxy hunting for elders over 65 years old.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Resident and nonresident general sheep hunts in Unit 19C are August 10–September 20 with a full-curl bag limit. There is currently no winter season nor a bag limit for ewes or for rams smaller than full curl. Proxy hunting is not authorized for Dall sheep.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** A new winter registration permit hunt would be established in Unit 19C for residents to hunt ewes without lambs and rams smaller than  $\frac{3}{4}$  curl. The proponent asks that the department use its discretionary permit authority to limit access by aircraft and to limit total harvest. The proponent’s position is that current regulations do not provide Alaska residents living in the communities of McGrath, Nikolai, Takotna, and Telida a reasonable opportunity to practice their recognized customary and traditional subsistence uses of Dall sheep, including proxy hunting on behalf of elders.

**BACKGROUND:** In 2010, a similar proposal submitted by Daniel Esai of Nikolai was considered by the board. During that meeting, the board made a positive customary and traditional (C&T) determination for Unit 19 sheep with an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence of 1–5 sheep. The board also determined that there was reasonable opportunity to satisfy this need during the fall season. Eighty-one sheep were harvested in 2011 and 84 were harvested in 2012. Of these, Alaska residents took 10 sheep in 2011 and 21 in 2012; however, no residents of Unit 19 reported taking sheep.

The department estimates that 4,000–5,000 sheep exist in Unit 19C. Fewer lambs were found during the June 2013 survey than during previous surveys (94 in 2013 compared to 292 in 2010), so the actual number of sheep may be toward the lower end of this range. However, the small number of sheep likely to be taken if the board passes this proposal would not have a negative impact on the Unit 19C sheep population.

Proxy hunting is not currently allowed for taking Dall sheep. To implement this portion of the proposal, the board would need to add Unit 19C sheep to 5 AAC 92.011, Taking of game by proxy.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the portion of this proposal to allocate additional sheep to residents during a winter season. The department is also **NEUTRAL** on the portion of this proposal to allow proxy hunting for Dall sheep in this hunt. The department has no conservation concerns about the small additional harvest expected from this season and adoption of the proposal would provide additional subsistence opportunity. The proposer requests tools that are adequate for the department to assure that harvest remains at 10 or fewer sheep: limiting the number of hunters in the field at any one time, closing the season after 10 or fewer sheep are reported, and aircraft restrictions. The department would also want to



assure that no single area was harvested too heavily, so it is likely that the more easily accessible portions of Unit 19C would occasionally be closed under discretionary permit authority, should the board adopt this proposal. Proxy hunting is not likely to affect harvest under these hunt conditions.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to private parties. It would result in additional costs for the department to implement the hunt, particularly with the “gate-keeping” aspect of this proposal and the proxy provision of adding sheep to the species eligible for proxy.

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**PROPOSAL 66 – 5 AAC 99.025(a)(9) ). Customary and traditional uses of game populations. and 5 AAC 85.050. Hunting seasons and bag limits for muskoxen.** *Note: The same proposal is also listed as Proposal 5 to be considered at the Arctic/Western (Region V) board meeting.*

**PROPOSED BY:** Myron Naneng Sr., Association of Village Council Presidents.

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Establish a new subsistence muskoxen hunt in Units 18 and 19 for residents of “close proximity communities.” Hunting season dates, specific permit types, or bag limits were not suggested. The Unit 18 portion of this proposal will be considered at the Arctic/Western board meeting.

If the board determines that there are customary and traditional (C&T) uses of muskoxen for subsistence in Unit 19, then this proposal would also provide the board with the opportunity to set an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence uses and establish regulations that provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses of muskoxen in Unit 19.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** There is currently no determination of customary and traditional (C&T) subsistence uses of muskoxen in Unit 19 and no hunting season.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If the board determined that there are customary and traditional uses of Unit 19 muskoxen, they could adopt regulations that provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses and postpone establishing an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence until such time that a harvest record is established. If the board determined that muskoxen in Unit 19 are not associated with customary and traditional uses, then the board could still address the proponent’s request to establish hunt opportunity. The proposal is not specific as to how such a hunt would be structured. However, the board would not be able to limit the hunt to residents of close proximity communities.

**BACKGROUND:** Muskoxen were re-introduced into Alaska in the 1930s and huntable populations were established on Nunivak and Nelson islands in Unit 18. They occasionally wander into the periphery of Unit 19 from Unit 18, but a muskoxen population has not become established in Unit 19, and the department’s information indicates there is no harvestable surplus at this time.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** regarding allocation of muskoxen among users. The department **OPPOSES** a muskoxen hunt in Unit 19 at this time. A muskoxen population is not established and harvest is not appropriate until a population exists that is capable of being harvested on a sustained yield basis.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to private parties, but would result in additional costs for the department to implement the hunt.

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**PROPOSAL 67 – 5 AAC 92.450(18)(19)(21). Description of game management units.** *Note: The same proposal is also listed as Proposal 10 to be considered at the Arctic/Western (Region V) board meeting.*

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Redefine the game management unit boundaries where Units 18, 19, and 21 join together with common boundaries:

Create new language for Unit 18 to read:

The area draining into the Yukon River downstream from a line starting at the down river boundary of Paimiut on the north bank of the Yukon River then across the river to the south bank to the northern terminus of the Paimiut Portage, proceed south through the Portage to the mouth of Hooking Creek on the northeast corner of Arhymot Lake, follow the northern and western bank of the lake to the head of Crooked Creek, follow the north bank of the creek downstream to the northern terminus of the Crooked Creek to Mud Creek Tramway, follow the tramway south to Mud Creek, follow its west bank downstream to First Slough, follow the west bank of the slough downstream to its confluence to the Kuskokwim River,

Use clearly visible land marks to create new language for Unit 19 to read:

The area draining into the Kuskokwim River upstream from the confluence of the First Slough and the Kuskokwim River; and the area draining into Crook Creek's south bank upstream from the northern terminus of the Mud Creek to Crook Creek Portage Tramway.

Use clearly visible land marks to create new language for Unit 21 to read:

The area draining into the Yukon River upstream from the down river boundary of Paimiut on the north shore of the Yukon River and, directly across the river, the northern terminus of the Paimiut Portage on the south shore of the Yukon River.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The current game management unit boundaries are as follows:

Codified regulations.

(18) Game Management Unit 18 consists of that area draining into the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers downstream from a straight line drawn between Lower Kalskag and Paimiut and the drainages flowing into the Bering Sea from Cape Newenham on the south to and including the

Pastolik River drainage on the north; Nunivak, St. Matthews, and adjacent islands between Cape Newenham and the Pastolik River, and all seaward waters and lands within three miles of these coastlines;

(19) Game Management Unit 19 consists of the Kuskokwim River drainage upstream from Lower Kalskag [*Note: This is slightly different from the hunting regulations booklet, see hunting regulations section below*];

(A) Unit 19(A) consists of the Kuskokwim River drainage downstream from and including the Moose Creek drainage on the north bank and downstream from and including the Stony River drainage on the south bank, excluding Unit 19(B);

...

(21) Game Management Unit 21 consists of drainages into the Yukon River upstream from Paimiut to but not including the Tozitna River drainage on the north bank, and to but not including the Tanana River drainage on the south bank, and excluding the Koyukuk River drainage upstream from the Dulbi River drainage [*Note: This is worded differently from the hunting regulations booklet, see hunting regulations section below*];

...

(E) Unit 21(E) consists of the Yukon River drainage from Paimiut upstream to but not including the Blackburn Creek drainage, and the Innoko River drainage downstream from the Iditarod River drainage;

...

#### Hunting Regulations booklet and maps.

Unit 18 is defined as: “That area draining into the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers downstream from a straight line drawn between Lower Kalskag and Paimiut and the drainages flowing into the Bering Sea from Cape Newenham on the south to and including the Pastolik River drainage on the north; Nunivak, St. Matthew, and adjacent islands between Cape Newenham and the Pastolik River and all seaward waters and lands within three (3) miles of these coastlines.”

Unit 19 is defined as: “All drainages into the Kuskokwim River upstream from a straight line drawn between Lower Kalskag and Paimiut.” [*Note: This is slightly differently from the codified regulations, see codified regulations section above.*]

Unit 21 is defined as: “Middle Yukon drainages into the Yukon River upstream from Paimiut to but not including the Tozitna River drainage on the north bank, and to but not including the Tanana River drainage on the south bank, and excluding the Koyukuk River drainage upstream from the Dulbi River drainage.” [*Note: This is worded differently from the codified regulations, see codified regulations section above.*]

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The game management unit boundaries would be redefined and clarified. The proposal would change a

straight-line point-to-point boundary in featureless terrain and other confusing sections to a route based on identifiable landmarks and drainages. Portions of resident moose hunt area RM615 in Unit 18 would move to a resident Tier II TM680 hunt area in Unit 19A.

**BACKGROUND:** This proposal is similar to others that were deferred in January 2010 (Proposal 44), deferred in spring 2011 (Proposal 205), and no action was taken during the statewide meeting in 2012 (Proposal 21).

Currently the game management unit maps produced by the department do not accurately reflect the codified definitions of Unit 18, 19, and 21. Three problems exist with the current maps:

- 1) the precise points used to define the line between Paimiut and Lower Kalskag are unclear (e.g., what part of Lower Kalskag or Paimiut should be used?);
- 2) the large slough locally known as Old River drains into the Kuskokwim downriver of Lower Kalskag and any water draining into that slough would be in Unit 18, but current maps show this area to be part of Unit 19, affecting approximately 700 mi<sup>2</sup>; and
- 3) the current map of Unit 21E includes a portion of the Kuskokwim River drainage which is defined as being in Unit 19A.

The department is aware of these discrepancies but has not corrected them pending action on boundary proposals addressing this specific area in 2010, 2011, and 2012.

Moose hunting is primarily by residents and managed by:

- 1) registration permit RM615 in Unit 18 Kuskokwim drainage, adjacent to Unit 19A;
- 2) general harvest ticket hunt in Unit 18 Yukon drainage, adjacent to Unit 21E;
- 3) Tier II permit TM680 in Unit 19A, adjacent to Units 18 and 21E; and
- 4) general harvest ticket hunt in Unit 21E, adjacent to Units 18 and 19A.

As this boundary changes, or as administration of this boundary is corrected, these hunts will be affected. Hunters with particular interest in any of these hunts and their representative advisory committees have strong opinions.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal. After multiple proposals and discussions, the affected advisory committees have not come to a consensus on a preferred solution. Proposals to change this boundary have gone through several regulatory cycles, and it is important that this regulatory issue get resolved. It is also important that the new boundary reflects landmarks that are more easily located by ground-based hunters. Regardless of the board's action on changing the boundaries, either the existing game management unit maps will need to be changed to match codified regulations, or the codified regulations describing the game management units will need to be changed to match the maps. Clarification of the discrepancies between the legal description and game management unit maps should not be further delayed. Board action will determine one of three options:

- 1) new maps will conform to the current regulations;
- 2) regulations will conform to the boundaries found on the current maps; or
- 1) new maps will conform to the regulations resulting from action on this proposal.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to private parties. Whether or not this proposal is adopted, there will be administrative costs for the department because administrative errors need to be corrected but it is unclear whether corrections or changes will have higher costs.

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**PROPOSAL 68 – 5 AAC 85.045 Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Mel Erickson

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Change Unit 21D moose drawing permit hunt DM818 to a general season hunt.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

In the Papa Willie Creek portion of Unit 21D:

- Twenty-five drawing permits (2013) for moose hunt DM818 during a September 5–25 season. Residents may harvest any bull and nonresidents must harvest a bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with at least 4 brow tines on at least one side. No destruction of the trophy value of antlers is required.
- An unlimited number of registration permits for moose hunt RM834 during August 22–31 and September 5–25 seasons. Permits are available to resident hunters only and trophy value of antlers must be destroyed.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The number of hunters would not be regulated by the limited number of DM818 drawing permits or by the requirement to destroy antler trophy value of bulls harvested on the resident-only RM834 permit. Hunter numbers would likely increase in the Papa Willie Creek area because it would have more liberal regulations. Some people may falsely report harvest in more restricted areas to be from the Papa Willie Creek area in order to avoid having to either apply for a drawing permit or comply with antler destruction in surrounding areas. Crowding issues, which occurred in portions of Unit 21D prior to 2002, would reoccur in the DM818 permit area.

**BACKGROUND:** In 1999, the Koyukuk River Moose Hunters Working Group (KRMHWG) was organized to address increasing hunter numbers, hunter conflicts, declining bull:cow ratios, declining moose numbers, and declining hunter success. In 2000, the Board of Game adopted a comprehensive management strategy developed by the KRMHWG that included a drawing permit system and additional antler destruction conditions on the registration permit hunts in the Koyukuk Controlled Use Area. In 2004 and 2006, the board adopted an expanded drawing and registration permit strategy throughout Units 21B, 21D, and 24 to respond to hunter distribution and bootlegging issues, including the Papa Willie Creek portion of Unit 21D. Most of the management issues were resolved, and moose population parameters continue to improve.

The 2001 through 2008 average total count of moose among the Kaiyuh Sub-Area trend areas immediately to the north of Papa Willie Creek was 786 moose, while the counts for 2009, 2010, and 2011 were 803, 945, and 1075 moose respectively. Calf:100 cow ratios were 47 calves:100 cows and 41 calves:100 cows in 2010 and 2011, compared to the average of 34 calves:100 cows

from 2001 through 2009. The calf and cow components of the population account for the largest gains in this area. Geospatial population estimation surveys show increasing numbers of cows and stable numbers of bulls.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:**

The department is **OPPOSED** to this proposal, because it would compromise the moose management strategy for Unit 21D.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to private parties. It would reduce department costs by eliminating drawing permit administrative expenses.

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**PROPOSAL 69 – 5 AAC 92.069 Special provisions for moose drawing permit hunts.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Virgil Umphenour

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Allow guides in Units 21D and 24 to transfer drawing permits awarded to guided nonresidents to an alternate client of their choice, if the original client is unable to hunt.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** In Units 21D and 24, within the Koyukuk Controlled Use Area (Koyukuk CUA), a list of alternate hunters is maintained by the department for guided nonresident hunts. Permit winners must verify, with the department, that they intend to hunt. If they do not, the permit is awarded to the next applicant who had applied through the drawing process and those hunters must verify that they intend to use the permit. However, there is no provision for an alternate list outside the Koyukuk CUA. In Unit 21D outside the Koyukuk CUA, undersubscribed guided nonresident permits may be made available to unguided nonresidents. In addition, current regulations specify that hunting permits are non-transferrable (5 AAC 92.050(a)(5)).

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal would transfer authority from the department to guides for administration of alternate lists, circumvent the order of the draw because guides would select the alternate hunter, and require additional department coordination because alternate permits would be issued according to the guide’s instructions. It will not change hunter opportunity or the number of moose harvested.

**BACKGROUND:** The affected hunts (DM819, DM823, and DM825) had a total of 14 permits in 2013; therefore, this proposal would impact a small number of permits. Under current alternate list regulations the department re-issues 1–3 permits annually. The DM823 and DM825 hunts have had an 80% participation rate (77 hunted:89 permits issued) since 2002. There is little interest in the DM819 hunt, so it will likely be unaffected.

In 2000, the board adopted drawing permits in the Koyukuk CUA, which includes parts of Units 21D and 24. In 2004 and 2006, the board adopted drawing permits for additional areas of Units 21D and 24. In 2004, the board also adopted an “alternate list” regulation for Koyukuk CUA

drawing permits, whereby unused drawing permits of guided hunters may be re-issued to unsuccessful alternates among drawing hunt applicants. Only 3 drawing hunts in Units 21D and 24 have a guided nonresident allocation that this change would affect: DM823, DM825, and DM819. Since 2007, only 3 of 14 available DM819 permits were issued and no moose were harvested on those permits. Since 2005, all 89 DM823 and DM825 permits were issued, either in the initial drawing or through the alternate list process.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocative proposal. Guide contracts are the purview of the Big Game Commercial Services Board.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to private parties. This proposal would require a new system for administering alternate lists that would increase the workload and costs for the department.

**PROPOSAL 70 – 5 AAC 85.045(a)(22). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Koyukuk River Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Retain the resident-only RM833 winter moose hunt beyond the sunset date.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Resident hunters may take 1 antlered bull by registration permit during December 15–April 15, downstream from and including Henshaw Creek Drainage and the North Fork Drainage portions of Unit 24B and Unit 24C (highlighted seasons, below). Other seasons in this area, which are not scheduled to sunset, are also shown.

| <b>OPEN TO</b> | <b>UNIT/AREA</b>   | <b>BAG LIMIT AND SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS</b>                         | <b>PERMIT #/<br/>HUNT #*</b> | <b>OPEN SEASON</b> |
|----------------|--|---|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Residents      | <i>all drainages of the Koyukuk River upstream from the Henshaw Creek drainage, excluding the North Fork of the Koyukuk River drainage</i> | One bull  | HT                           | Sept 1-Sept 25     |
| Non-residents  |  | One bull with 50-inch antlers or 4 or more brow tines on one side | HT                           | Sept 5-Sept 25     |

|               |  |   |                   |                |
|---------------|--|---|-------------------|----------------|
| Residents     | <b>24B</b> remainder   | One bull  | HT                | Sept 1-Sept 25 |
| Residents     |  | <i>or, One antlered bull by permit available online at <a href="http://hunt.alaska.gov">hunt.alaska.gov</a> or in person in Hughes, Allakaket or Fairbanks beginning December 15</i>    | RM833             | Dec 15-Apr 15  |
| Non-residents |  | One bull with 50-inch antlers or 4 or more brow tines on one side   | HT                | Sept 5-Sept 25 |
| Residents     | <b>24C</b> that portion within the Koyukuk Controlled Use Area | One bull by permit available at a check station established by the department, Huslia or Hughes beginning Aug. 31.  | RM832             | Sept 1-Sept 25 |
| Residents     |  | <i>or, One bull by permit</i>   | DM828/830         | Sept 5-Sept 25 |
| Residents     |  | <i>or, One antlered bull by permit available online at <a href="http://hunt.alaska.gov">hunt.alaska.gov</a> or in person in Hughes, Allakaket or Fairbanks beginning December 15</i>    | RM833             | Dec 15-Apr 15  |
| Non-residents |  | One bull with 50-inch antlers or 4 or more brow tines on one side   | DM823/825/827/829 | Sept 5-Sept 25 |
| Residents     | <b>24C</b> remainder   | One bull by permit available online at <a href="http://hunt.alaska.gov">hunt.alaska.gov</a> or in person at license vendors in Units 21B, 21D, 24 and ADF&G Fairbanks beginning Aug 18. | RM834             |                |
| Residents     |  | <i>or, One bull by permit</i>   | DM896             | Sept 5-Sept 25 |
| Residents     |  | <i>or, One antlered bull by permit available online at <a href="http://hunt.alaska.gov">hunt.alaska.gov</a> or in person</i>  | RM833             | Dec 15-Apr 15  |



|               |  |  |       |                |
|---------------|--|--|-------|----------------|
|               |  | <i>in Hughes, Allakaket or Fairbanks beginning December 15</i>           |       |                |
| Non-residents |  | <i>One bull with 50-inch antlers or 4 or more brow tines on one side</i> | DM896 | Sept 5-Sept 25 |

\*Hunt numbers starting with a “D” = Drawing, “HT” = Harvest Ticket, and ”R” = Registration

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The resident winter registration moose hunt (RM833) would be permanent. The season was allowed for up to 4 years beginning on July 1, 2010, and will sunset on June 30, 2014. Retaining the winter season will address a need expressed by local communities for a winter moose hunting opportunity.

**BACKGROUND:** In 2010, the board adopted the winter season in portions of Units 24B and 24C. Concerns about over-harvest, harvest of cows, and poor reporting, were reasons the season was adopted with a “sunset date” of June 30, 2014. No incidents of that nature have been observed since the regulation was adopted.

For the 3 winters that this season has been allowed, 48 permits were issued, 17 people hunted, and no moose were harvested. There is a positive customary and traditional use finding for moose in Unit 24; the board found that 170–270 animals are necessary for subsistence. Bull:cow ratios average 65–70 bulls:100 cows throughout most of the area, therefore, additional bull harvest can be supported and there is no conservation concern.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal. The department has no conservation concern and it will provide a winter moose season opportunity.

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

**PROPOSAL 71 – 5 AAC 92.540(8)(B). Controlled use areas.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Koyukuk River Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Expand the Kanuti Controlled Use Area (CUA) boundaries back to the boundary that was in effect before 2010.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The Kanuti Controlled Use Area consists of...to the highest peak of Double Point Mountain at 66° 40.322’ N. lat., 152° 30.132’ W. long., to the northern end of Fish Creek Lake, including all waters of the lake, at 66° 36.071’ N. lat., 151° 27.936’ W. long., ....

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The existing Kanuti CUA would revert to pre-2010 boundaries. This would expand the area where use of aircraft for moose hunting is not allowed during moose seasons.

If this proposal is adopted, the boundary description would be as follows: the Kanuti Controlled Use Area consists of...to the highest peak of Double Point Mountain at 66° 40.322' N. lat., 152° 30.132' W. long., **to the Bettles Field VOR at 66° 54.301' N. lat., 151° 32.153' W. long.,** to the northern end of Fish Creek Lake, including all waters of the lake, at 66° 36.071' N. lat., 151° 27.936' W. long., ....

The proposed boundaries of the Kanuti CUA would extend to Bettles Field VOR, but result in little real additional protection to the area northeast of the Kanuti CUA for several reasons: 1) the federal Closed Use Area/Controlled Use Area already excludes non-federally qualified hunters and most of the proposed expansion area is federal land, 2) there are limited landing sites, 3) the primary alternate landing site in the area is surrounded by private land, and 4) the expansion area is relatively poor moose habitat. The proposed change will increase the size of the Kanuti CUA by 298 mi<sup>2</sup> (13.6%), and it will renew the conflict identified by the proponent of the 2010 proposal described below that led to establishment of the current boundary.

**BACKGROUND:** The Kanuti CUA is one of the oldest controlled use areas in Alaska, first appearing in the 1979–1980 regulations. It was created to address user conflicts and biological concerns. Since that time, it has become an important management tool for maintaining reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses of moose. In 1992, federal lands in the Kanuti CUA were closed to non-federally qualified moose hunters.

In 2010, the board adopted a proposal to change the Kanuti CUA boundary that eliminated its northeastern corner. The proposal proponent has a cabin near the Koyukuk River that was within the CUA, and he wanted to access it with a plane. Some local residents favored the original boundary, and perceived the 2010 change as an erosion of protected areas. Prior to 2010, proposals were submitted to the board to eliminate the entire CUA.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocation issue. The department has no conservation concerns.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal may result in additional costs to at least one private party trying to access private property. Approval is not expected to result in additional costs the department.

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## **PROPOSAL 72 – 5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Virgil Umphenour

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Allow harvest of brown bears at black bear bait stations in Units 24C and 24D.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Harvest of brown bears at bait in the Galena Management Area is allowed only in Unit 21D. Unit 24 black bear baiting seasons are:

Units 24C and 24D, those portions within the Koyukuk Controlled Use Area (CUA)

- April 15–June 30.

- August 1–September 30.

Unit 24, remainder (includes those portions of Units 24C and 24D outside the Koyukuk CUA:

- April 15–June 30.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The area where grizzly bears could be taken at black bear bait stations would expand to include all of Units 24C and 24D.

**BACKGROUND:** At the March 2012 meeting in Fairbanks, the Board of Game voted to allow harvest of brown bears at black bear bait stations in Unit 21D. Prior to this decision the harvest of brown bears over bait had only been approved in specific areas where active Intensive Management programs were being conducted. Since the board’s decision in 2012, there have only been 3 open seasons in 21D in which brown bears could have been harvested over bait: August 1–September 30, 2012; April 15–June 30, 2013; and August 1–September 30, 2013. There has been no reported harvest of brown bears over bait in 21D during these 3 time periods. Total annual brown bear harvest in Units 24C and 24D combined has averaged fewer than 3 bears annually in the last 5 regulatory years (RY08–RY12; i.e., 2008–2009 through 2012–2013). It is unlikely that additional brown bear harvest at bait sites will increase harvest to unsustainable levels. There is a positive customary and traditional use finding for brown bears in Unit 21; the board found that 21–25 animals are reasonably necessary for subsistence in Units 21 and 22 combined.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal. The department has no conservation concerns. If the board wishes to adopt salvage requirements with this proposal, the department requests standardization of the requirements for both black and brown bears in Units 24C and 24D. The department also requests standardization in Unit 21D, which was previously approved by the board for taking brown bears at black bear bait stations.

Current black bear salvage requirements in these units are:

- January 1–May 31, edible meat.
- June 1–December 31, either the hide or the edible meat.

In Unit 21D, all edible meat of brown bears taken at black bear bait stations must be salvaged.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to either private parties or the department.

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**PROPOSAL 73 – 5 AAC 84.270(5). Furbearer trapping.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Extend the trapping season for lynx in Unit 21 from the last day in February to March 31.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Lynx trapping is currently open in Unit 21 from November 1 through the last day of February.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Trappers would be able to either specifically target lynx during March or retain lynx incidentally caught in sets made for other species (e.g. ,wolverine).

**BACKGROUND:** During March, lynx are occasionally caught in traps set for other furbearers, particularly wolverines and wolves. Trappers are required to surrender these incidentally-caught lynx to the department, but those without ready access to a Fish and Game office may not surrender them. Some lynx have pelts of high enough quality in March that they can be sold on the fur market.

The department has no concerns about a longer lynx trapping resulting in a conservation issue. Average annual lynx harvest in Unit 21 during regulatory years 2008–2009 through 2012–2013 was 102 (range 83–126).

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal to allocate lynx harvest. The department has no conservation concerns associated with lengthening the season.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal could reduce costs to private parties by not requiring trappers to surrender lynx taken incidentally in March and by allowing trappers to retain them. Costs to the department to implement the season may also be lowered by not having to store and process incidentally-taken lynx.

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**PROPOSAL 74 – 5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Jeff Alling

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** In the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area (DHCMA), create a resident youth-only hunt for caribou for one week sometime during August 1–25. Eliminate nonresident hunting within the DHCMA during August 1–25.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area extends 5 miles from each side of the Dalton Highway, including the drivable surface of the Dalton Highway, from the Yukon River to the Arctic Ocean in Units 20F, 24A, 25D and 25A, and 26B. It includes the Prudhoe Bay Closed Area, which is closed to the taking of big game. The remainder of the DHCMA is closed to hunting; however, big game, small game, and fur animals may be taken in the area by bow and arrow only. Aircraft and boats may be used to transport hunters, their gear, or game within the DHCMA. No motorized land vehicle may be used to transport hunters, their hunting gear or parts of game within the corridor, except on the highway itself.

**CARABOU SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS:**

| <u>Unit and location</u> | <u>Resident open season and bag limit</u> | <u>Nonresident open season and bag limit</u> |
|--------------------------|---|--|
|--------------------------|---|--|

| Unit and location  | Resident open season and bag limit  | Nonresident open season and bag limit   |
|--|---|---|
| Unit 20F, North of the Yukon River.  | 10 Aug–31 Mar; 1 caribou  | 10 Aug–30 Sep; 1 caribou  |
| Unit 24A, that portion south of the south bank of the Kanuti River.  | 10 Aug–Mar 31; 1 caribou  | 10 Aug–Sept 30; 1 caribou   |
| Remainder of Unit 24A  | 1 Jul–30 Jun; 5 caribou per day; however, cow caribou may be taken only from 1 Jul–15 May | 1 Jul–30 Jun; 5 caribou; however, cow caribou may be taken only from 1 Jul–15 May |
| Unit 25A, those portions east of the east bank of the East Fork Chandalar River extending from its confluence with the Chandalar River upstream to Guilbeau Pass, Unit 25B, and the remainder of 25D   | 1 Jul–30 Apr; 10 caribou  | 1 Aug–30 Sept.; 1 bull  |
| Remainder of Unit 25A  | 1 Jul–30 Jun; 10 caribou; however, cow caribou may be taken only from 1 Jul–15 May        | 1 Jul–30 Jun; 5 caribou; however, cow caribou may be taken only from 1 Jul–15 May |
| Unit 26B northwest, that portion north of 69°30' and west of the east bank of the Kuparuk River to a point at 70°10'N latitude 149°04'W longitude, then west approximately 22 miles to 70°10' latitude 149°56'W longitude, then following the east bank of the Kalubik River to the Arctic Ocean | 1 Jul–30 Jun; 5 caribou per day; however, cow caribou may be taken only from 1 Jul–15 May | 1 Jul–30 Apr; 5 caribou   |
| Unit 26B, south of 69°30'N latitude  | 1 Jul–30 Jun; 5 caribou; however, cow caribou may be taken only from 1 Jul–15 May         | 1 Jul–30 Jun; 5 caribou; however, cow caribou may be taken only from 1 Jul–15 May |
| Remainder of Unit 26B  | 1 Jul–30 Apr; 5 caribou   | 1 Jul–30 Apr; 5 caribou   |

| Unit and location | Resident open season and bag limit | Nonresident open season and bag limit |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
|-------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Adoption of this proposal may result in less crowding in the DHCMA for youth and resident hunters. This proposal would restrict caribou hunting opportunity for adult residents by 7 days and for nonresidents by 25 days in a herd that is being harvested well below sustainable levels.

Reducing opportunity during August would have the largest effect on hunters. During regulatory years 2008–2009 through 2012–2013 (RY08–RY12), an average of 60% of the harvest for all of Unit 26B occurred during August, indicating that this is the month when the largest proportion of hunting takes place along the DHCMA.

**BACKGROUND:** At the Region III meeting in 2012, the Board of Game encouraged the department to identify hunting opportunities for youth in the Interior. In August, hunters along the Dalton Highway pursue caribou associated primarily with 3 herds: the Central Arctic, Ray Mountains, and Hodzana Hills. In general, seasons and bag limits are more liberal where the Central Arctic herd is accessible and less liberal where the Ray Mountains and Hodzana Hills herds are accessible. In 2010, the Board of Game liberalized seasons and bag limits for the Central Arctic herd because it had grown substantially and harvest rates were low (<2% of the population).

The proposal would only restrict bow hunters within the DHCMA. During August, most caribou hunting along the Dalton Highway takes place in Unit 26B for Central Arctic caribou. This herd begins migrating from the coastal plain to the foothills of the Brooks Range during August, and most are usually found along the foothills by September. Bowhunters, specifically, take advantage of this movement, hoping to intercept caribou crossing the road. Many rifle hunters also hunt this time of year, but must walk or be transported by boat or aircraft more than 5 miles beyond either side of the highway (outside the DHCMA) before they can harvest caribou.

Harvestable surplus is calculated differently for these herds because population size, productivity, and survival differ. For the Central Arctic herd (2010 population estimate = 67,000; stable), a 5% harvest rate is appropriate, likely conservative, and results in a harvestable surplus of 3,350 caribou. Small mountain herds such as the Ray Mountains (population estimate = 1,200–1,500; stable) and Hodzana Hills (population estimate = 700–1,000; stable) herds are usually predator-limited and have low recruitment rates. Therefore, the harvestable surplus is estimated at a lower rate (2–3% of the estimated population), and is 24–45 caribou per year for the Ray Mountains and 14–30 for the Hodzana Hills herd.

Harvest from each herd is lower than the harvestable surplus. Data for RY08–RY12 indicate that in Units 20F, 25D, and 24A south of the Kanuti River, one caribou from the Ray Mountains or Hodzana Hills herds was harvested. In Unit 24A north of the Kanuti River and Unit 25A, an average of 27 hunters harvested an average of 9 caribou annually from either the Central Arctic or Hodzana Hills herds; an average of 2 of these were harvested in August and a total of 1 was taken by a youth <16 years old. In Unit 26B (north of the Brooks Range), an average of 1,300–1,600 hunters (approximately 20% were nonresident hunters) were reported to have taken an average of 966 Central Arctic herd caribou.

Of the average annual harvest in Unit 26B (966 caribou) during RY08–RY12, an average of 422 were harvested along the Dalton Highway. An estimated average of 274 residents and 72 nonresidents hunted in this portion of Unit 26B during August, including both rifle and bow hunters (including rifle hunters who crossed the DHCMA to access their hunt area). The average harvest was 129 by residents (88 by bow hunters) and 34 by nonresidents (23 by bow hunters).

Table 1 shows the 5-year mean number of caribou harvested weekly along the Dalton Highway, by residency, during August 2008–2012. An average of 14 youth (under 16 years old) hunted annually along the highway during 2008–2012, although some did not hunt in August. These youth harvested an average of 2.4 caribou each August.

Table 1. Five-year mean of caribou harvested weekly, by residency, in Unit 26B along the Dalton Highway, during August 2008–2012. Harvest includes both rifle and bow hunters who used a vehicle or travelled by foot to access their hunt area, suggesting that they hunted along the Dalton Highway. Harvest in parentheses is harvest by bow hunters only.

| <b>Week</b>  | <b>5-year mean<br/>resident harvest<br/>(by bow hunters)</b> | <b>5-year mean<br/>nonresident harvest<br/>(by bow hunters)</b> |
|--------------|--|---|
| August 1–7   | 16 (15)  | 5 (4)   |
| August 8–14  | 54 (39)  | 13 (9)  |
| August 15–21 | 37 (24)  | 11 (7)  |
| August 22–28 | 34 (19)  | 8 (5)   |
| August 29–31 | 13 (6)   | 3 (1)   |

The board made positive customary and traditional subsistence use findings for caribou herds in Units 26B (Central Arctic Herd); Units 25A, 25B, and 25D (Porcupine Caribou Herd); and Units 24A, and 20F (Ray Mountains Herd). The board also established amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence (ANS) ranges of 250–450 caribou in Unit 26B (Central Arctic Herd), 1,250–1,550 from Units 25A, 25B, 25D, 26B, and 26C (Porcupine Caribou Herd), and 150–200 from Units 20F, 21B, 21C, 21D, and 24 (Galena Mountain, Wolf Mountains, and Ray Mountains herds).

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS :** The department is **NEUTRAL** with respect to the allocation of caribou between resident youth hunters and resident hunters and between resident and nonresident hunters. If the board wishes to adopt this proposal, they should consider adopting specific hunt conditions consistent with other youth hunts. The board should also consider whether the proposed reduction in hunting opportunity still provides reasonable opportunity for subsistence.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in the hunt, or to the department.

**PROPOSAL 75 – 5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Tom Lamal

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Within the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area (DHCMA) north of the north bank of the Kanuti River, create a resident youth-only hunt (17 years and younger) for caribou for August 13–16. Eliminate nonresident hunting within the DHCMA during August 13–20. The proposal also suggests the board could also consider eliminating nonresident hunting for caribou September 1–7 within the DHCMA.

The proposal also asks the board to consider creating youth-only hunts and resident-only hunts for moose and sheep within the DHCMA, although the main focus is caribou.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The DHCMA extends five miles from each side of the Dalton Highway, including the drivable surface of the Dalton Highway, from the Yukon River to the Arctic Ocean in Units 20F, 24A, 25D and 25A, and 26B, and includes the Prudhoe Bay Closed Area. The Prudhoe Bay Closed Area is closed to the taking of big game. The remainder of the DHCMA is closed to hunting; however, big game, small game, and fur animals may be taken in the area by bow and arrow only. Aircraft and boats may be used to transport hunters, their gear, or game within the DHCMA. No motorized land vehicle may be used to transport hunters, their hunting gear or parts of game within the corridor.

**CARIBOU SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS:**

| Unit and location  | Resident open season and bag limit  | Nonresident open season and bag limit   |
|--|---|---|
| Unit 24A, that portion south of the south bank of the Kanuti River.  | 10 Aug–31 Mar; 1 caribou  | 10 Aug–31 Mar; 1 caribou  |
| Remainder of Unit 24A  | 1 Jul–30 Jun; 5 caribou per day; however, cow caribou may be taken only from 1 Jul–15 May | 1 Jul–30 Jun; 5 caribou; however, cow caribou may be taken only from 1 Jul–15 May |
| Unit 25A, those portions east of the east bank of the East Fork Chandalar River extending from its confluence with the Chandalar River upstream to Guilbeau Pass, Unit 25B, and the remainder of 25D | 1 Jul–30 Apr; 10 caribou  | 1 Aug–30 Sept.; 1 bull  |
| Remainder of Unit 25A  | 1 Jul–30 Jun; 10 caribou; however, cow caribou may be taken only from 1 Jul–15 May        | 1 Jul–30 Jun; 5 caribou; however, cow caribou may be taken only from 1 Jul–15 May |



| Unit and location  | Resident open season and bag limit  | Nonresident open season and bag limit   |
|--|---|---|
| Unit 26B northwest, that portion north of 69°30' and west of the east bank of the Kuparuk River to a point at 70°10'N latitude 149°04'W longitude, then west approximately 22 miles to 70°10' latitude 149°56'W longitude, then following the east bank of the Kalubik River to the Arctic Ocean | 1 Jul–30 Jun; 5 caribou per day; however, cow caribou may be taken only from 1 Jul–15 May | 1 Jul–30 Apr; 5 caribou   |
| Unit 26B, south of 69°30'N latitude  | 1 Jul–30 Jun; 5 caribou; however, cow caribou may be taken only from 1 Jul–15 May         | 1 Jul–30 Jun; 5 caribou; however, cow caribou may be taken only from 1 Jul–15 May |
| Remainder of Unit 26B  | 1 Jul–30 Apr; 5 caribou   | 1 Jul–30 Apr; 5 caribou   |

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Adoption of this proposal would result in a reduction of 4 days of hunting opportunity for adult resident hunters and a reduction of 8 days of hunting opportunity for nonresident hunters pursuing caribou within the DHCMA. If the board were to eliminate the nonresident season during September 1–7, nonresident opportunity would be reduced by an additional 7 days. This would result in a total reduction of 15 days for nonresident hunting opportunity.

The proposal also mentions that the board could create something similar for moose and sheep within the DHCMA, which would result in a reduction in hunting opportunity for both adult resident hunters and nonresident hunters in Units 24A. It would also create more resident youth-only hunts.

**BACKGROUND:** See Analysis and Recommendation for proposal 74 because this proposal is similar for caribou.

At the Region III meeting in 2012, the Board of Game encouraged the department to identify hunting opportunities for youth in the Interior.

Moose hunting within the DHCMA in Units 24A and 25A is by drawing permit, effectively controlling harvest. In Unit 26B, is a resident-only hunt. Regarding sheep season proposals, the board has established a committee to evaluate this and other sheep management options over the next year. In addition, very little nonresident sheep hunting occurs within the DHCMA.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocative issue. The board may wish to **TAKE NO ACTION** after consideration of proposal 74 which also concerns a youth hunt for caribou and a reduction in nonresident hunting within the DHCMA. Moose

hunting within the DHCMA is by drawing permit only and is already restricted to resident hunters only in Unit 26B.

The department is **NEUTRAL** concerning the portion of the proposal regarding sheep seasons. A committee has been established to evaluate sheep management options over the next year. The board may wish to consider whether this proposal should be considered, along with other allocative sheep proposals throughout the state.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in the hunt, or to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 76 – 5 AAC 92.530. Management areas.**

**PROPOSED BY:** James Fitzpatrick

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Allow sidelock muzzleloading rifles to be used within the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area, except no shooting within 500 yards of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (pipeline).

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area (DHCMA) is closed to hunting; however, big game, small game, and fur animals may be taken in the area by bow and arrow only. Small game may also be taken by falconry.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal would have no effect because a change in Alaska statutes would be required to allow the use of firearms in the DHCMA.

**BACKGROUND:** Adopting this proposal would require legislative action because there is a statutory prohibition on the use of firearms in the Dalton Highway Corridor Management area:

**Alaska Statute, Title 16.05.789. Prohibition on hunting adjacent to highway between Yukon River and Arctic Ocean.**

- (a) Hunting with firearms is prohibited north of the Yukon River in the area within five miles on either side of the highway between the Yukon River and the Arctic Ocean.
- (b) A person who violates this section is guilty of a class A misdemeanor.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal. The board may wish to **TAKE NO ACTION** because adopting it would have no effect unless the legislature took action to change the statutory prohibition on the use of firearms in the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in the hunt, or to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 77 – 5 AAC 92.450(26)(B). Description of game management units.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Add additional language in subunit 26B to clarify that the area described is not stand-alone language, but within the larger unit boundaries, as follows:

**5 AAC 92.450(26)(B)** Unit 26(B) consists of that portion of Unit 26 east of Unit 26(A), **and** west of **a line following** the west banks of **the Staines River branch of the Canning River**, the Canning River and [WEST OF THE WEST BANK OF] the Marsh Fork of the Canning River.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Unit 26B consists of that portion of Unit 26 east of Unit 26A, west of the west bank of the Canning River and the Marsh Fork of the Canning River.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The subunit boundary between Unit 26B and 26C would be clarified.

**BACKGROUND:** The current boundary between Units 26B and 26C is unclear due to multiple river branches near the mouth of the Canning River. The boundary line should follow the western-most branch, which is actually the Staines River branch. This proposal would clarify that line. In addition, some of the subunit descriptions in regulation do not clearly state that they apply only in that specific unit. For instance, if the subunit description generally references “the area upriver,” that reference may actually include areas in another unit. Adding the clarification will help focus the actual subunit description.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person, or to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 78 – 5 AAC 85.045. (a)(23). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Jim Kedrowski

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Change the bag limit for moose in Unit 25 for nonresidents from one bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side to one bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 3 or more brow tines on at least one side (Units 25A, 20B, and 25C). Presumably, no change in the nonresident bag limit would occur in Unit 25C because the current nonresident bag limit is one bull.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Seasons and bag limits in Unit 25 vary between subunits and include community, drawing permit, harvest ticket, and Tier II hunts:

| OPEN TO | UNIT/AREA                          | BAG LIMIT AND SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS   | PERMIT #/<br>HUNT #* | OPEN SEASON    |
|---------|------------------------------------|--|----------------------|----------------|
| R       | Dalton Highway Corridor Management | One bull <i>by bow and arrow only by permit</i>  | DM920                | Sept 1-Sept 25 |
| N       | 25A                                | One bull <i>with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side by bow and arrow only by permit</i> | DM920                | Sept 5-Sept 25 |

|   | Area   |  |       |                 |
|---|--|--|-------|-----------------|
| R | 25A remainder  | One bull   | HT    | Sept 5-Sept 25  |
| N |  | One bull <i>with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side</i> | HT    | Sept 5-Sept 25  |
| R | 25B within the Porcupine River drainage upstream from, but excluding the Coleen River drainage | One bull   | HT    | Sept 10-Sept 25 |
| N |  | One bull <i>with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side</i> | HT    | Sept 10-Sept 25 |
| R | 25B remainder  | One bull   | HT    | Sept 5-Sept 25  |
| R |  | One bull   | HT    | Dec 1-Dec 15    |
| R |  | One bull <i>by permit</i>  | CM001 | Sept 5-Sept 25  |
| R |  | One bull <i>by permit</i>  | CM001 | Dec 1-Dec 15    |
| N |  | One bull <i>with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side</i> | HT    | Sept 5-Sept 25  |
| R | 25C  | One bull   | HT    | Sept 1-Sept 15  |
| N |  | One bull   | HT    | Sept 5-Sept 15  |
| R | 25D West   | One bull <i>by permit</i>  | TM940 | Aug 25-Feb 28   |
| R | 25D Remainder (East)   | One bull   | HT    | Sept 10-Sept 20 |
| R |  | One bull   | HT    | Feb 18-Feb 28   |
| R |  | One bull <i>by permit</i>  | CM001 | Sept 10-Sept 20 |
| R |  | One bull <i>by permit</i>  | CM001 | Feb 18-Feb 28   |
| N |  | One bull <i>with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side</i> | HT    | Sept 10-Sept 20 |

\*Hunt numbers starting with a “C” = Community, “D” = Drawing, “HT” = Harvest Ticket, and “T” = Tier II

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Nonresident opportunity would increase and nonresident moose harvest would likely increase.

**BACKGROUND:** Moose densities have been historically low across most of Unit 25. Although aerial moose surveys designed to estimate population abundance are not conducted across most of the unit, abundance estimation surveys that were regularly conducted in Unit 25D resulted in density estimates of 0.15–0.40 moose/mi<sup>2</sup>. No estimates of moose abundance are available for Unit 25B and 25B. However, the density in Unit 25B is likely similar to or lower than estimates obtained in Unit 25D and the density in Unit 25A is likely lower than estimates obtained for Unit 25D. Across most of Unit 25, moose habitat is considered excellent and moose populations are likely primarily regulated by predation.

Over the past 10 years, reported moose harvest (by residents and nonresidents) has remained stable at 29–53 in Unit 25A; 23–38 in Unit 25B; 8–25 in Unit 25D (east); and 3–29 in Unit 25D (west, residents only–Tier II hunt). Nonresidents have composed 49% of hunters and 52% of the harvest in Unit 25A; 14% of hunters and 12% of harvest in 25B; 12% of hunters and 9% of harvest in 25D (east); and are not eligible for hunts in 25D west (Tier II hunt only).

Reporting by residents of Unit 25 using the harvest ticket system is low. However, the Council of Athabaskan Tribal Governments, with assistance of the department, conducted household surveys to estimate moose harvest by local communities (excludes Arctic Village in Unit 25A). Annual estimates of local moose harvest in regulatory years 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 (RY08–

RY09) were 1–12 in Unit 25A; 93–106 in Unit 25D; and 5 in Unit 25B. The total number of local hunters across all subunits ranged from 175 in RY08 to 253 in RY09.

In Unit 25D, current estimated harvest (includes reported harvest and household surveys) is near sustainable limits based on an extrapolated density across Unit 25D from surveys conducted within the unit and a harvest rate of 5% of the extrapolated moose density. Estimates of moose abundance in Unit 25B and 25A are unknown; however, current levels of harvest appear to be sustainable. Harvest will likely increase if this proposal is adopted, but the magnitude is unknown.

The board has made positive findings for customary and traditional uses of moose in all subunits in Unit 25 and established amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence (ANS) as follows: 25–75 in Unit 25A; 15–37 in Unit 25B; 50–70 in Unit 25D (west); and 150–250 in Unit 25D (east).

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** with respect to the allocation of moose between residents and nonresidents. However, the department **OPPOSES** any change to the moose hunting regulations in Unit 25D that would result in increased harvest.

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

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**PROPOSAL 79 – 5 AAC 85.045(a)(23). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Eastern Interior Alaska Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Create a new hunt area in Unit 25A in the Coleen River drainage, Old Crow River drainage, and the Sheenjek River drainage upstream from, but not including, the Koness River drainage. Regulations in this area would change the bag limit for resident hunters from one bull to one bull with 50-inch antlers or 4 brow tines on at least one side and change the hunt type for unguided nonresident hunters from a general season to a drawing permit hunt. Guided nonresident hunting would remain the same.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

| OPEN TO | UNIT/AREA                                   | BAG LIMIT AND SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS   | PERMIT #/<br>HUNT #* | OPEN SEASON    |
|---------|---|--|----------------------|----------------|
| R       | 25A Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area | One bull by <i>bow and arrow only</i> by permit  | DM920                | Sept 1-Sept 25 |
| N       |   | One bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side by <i>bow and arrow only</i> by permit | DM920                | Sept 5-Sept 25 |
| R       | 25A remainder                               | One bull   | HT                   | Sept 5-Sept 25 |
| N       |   | One bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side  | HT                   | Sept 5-Sept 25 |

\*Hunt numbers starting with a “D” = Drawing and “HT” = Harvest Ticket

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Resident hunters would be restricted to harvesting bull moose with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side, and unguided nonresidents would hunt under a drawing permit in most of the remainder of Unit 25A. As a result, hunter opportunity and harvest would likely decline.

**BACKGROUND:** Moose densities have been historically low across most of Unit 25A. No moose surveys designed to estimate population abundance have ever been conducted in Unit 25A. Trend count surveys to assess moose demographics have been sporadically conducted in two small areas in the headwaters of the Coleen and Sheenjek rivers since the late 1970s. Although the total number of moose observed in the trend count areas declined from the late 1970s through the early 2000s, the number of observed moose in these survey areas has remained stable over the past 10 years and bull:cow ratios have remained extremely high ( $\geq 80$  bulls:100 cows), indicating that harvest is not regulating population size.

Over the past 10 years, the number of hunters and harvest in the Coleen, Old Crow, and Sheenjek River (that portion upstream from, but not including, the Koness River) drainages has been relatively stable. The number of reported hunters was 39–68 (mean = 50) and reported harvest was 14–26 (mean = 21) moose. Residents and nonresidents composed, on average, 52% and 48%, respectively, of reported moose hunters. Annual success rates have varied between 20% and 58%.

Although moose density is unknown in Unit 25, the current average annual harvest of 21 would require a population of only 420 moose (density =  $0.06 \text{ moose/mi}^2$ ) to sustain a harvest rate of 5%. It is unlikely that moose density in this  $7,353 \text{ mi}^2$  portion of Unit 25 is as low as the theoretical population required to support current harvest.

The board has made positive findings for customary and traditional uses of moose in Unit 25A and has established amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence (ANS) at 25–75 (entire subunit). Annual reported resident harvest in all of Unit 25A has averaged 20 moose over the last 10 years. This proposal represents a restriction to subsistence opportunity by moving from an “any” bull bag limit to a bull with antler restrictions. The board should consider whether adoption would be consistent with providing for a resident subsistence priority.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **OPPOSES** the portion of this proposal that limits hunter harvest because current levels of harvest are sustainable. The department is **NEUTRAL** with respect to the allocation components of this proposal.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adopting this proposal is not expected to result in additional direct costs for a private person. Cost to the department would increase due to administration of a new drawing permit hunt.

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**PROPOSAL 80 – 5 AAC 92.044(b)(1). Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Eastern Interior Alaska Federal Subsistence Regulatory Advisory Council

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Allow the harvest of brown bears over registered bait stations in Unit 25D.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** A person may establish a black bear bait station or a black bear and brown bear bait station in Units 12, 20C, 20E, and 21D only if that person obtains a permit.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The take of brown bears over registered bear bait stations in Unit 25D would be allowed. This would result in additional opportunity to harvest brown bears and may result in a slight increase in brown bear harvest.

**BACKGROUND:** No brown bear surveys designed to estimate population size have been conducted in Unit 25D. Based on extrapolation from other surveys conducted in the 1980s and early 1990s, the estimated population size is 387, or a density of 2.2 brown bears/100 mi<sup>2</sup>. The sustainable harvest for Unit 25D, based on current estimates of population size and a guideline 8% harvest rate, is 31 brown bears annually.

The reported annual harvest (via sealing requirement) of brown bears in Unit 25D over the past 10 years was 1–6 bears (mean = 3.2), composed of 81% males. All reported harvest was taken by resident hunters. Compliance with the sealing requirement is low for residents of Unit 25D. However, Council of Athabaskan Tribal Government (CATG), with the assistance of the department, conducted household surveys in regulatory years 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 (RY08 and RY09) to estimate harvest by residents of communities in the Yukon Flats. That study estimated that local resident harvest in Unit 25D was 2 brown bears in RY08 and 14 in RY09. Sex and age composition of estimated local harvest are unknown.

Over the past 10 years, 8–32 (mean = 23) black bear stations have been registered annually in Unit 25D. Residents and nonresidents set out 77% and 23% of bait stations, respectively. Additional black bear hunting over unregistered bait stations by local residents likely occurs.

Beginning in RY12, the board adopted proposals to allow take of brown bears over registered black bear bait stations in Units 12, 20C, 20E, and 21D. Harvest was low during the first season in spring 2013, with 3 in Unit 12, 4 in Unit 20C, 2 in Unit 20E, and none in Unit 21D.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** with respect to allowing the take of brown bears over registered bait stations as a legal method in Unit 25D. If this proposal were adopted, the department anticipates that the harvest rate will remain well below 8% (31 brown bears) annually. Unit 25D has spring (April 15–June 30) and fall (Aug 1–Sept 25) black bear baiting seasons.

If the board wishes to adopt salvage requirements with this proposal, the department suggests standardization of the requirements for both black and brown bears in Unit 25D. Current black bear salvage requirements in Unit 25D are:

- January 1–May 31, edible meat.
- June 1–December 31, either the hide or the edible meat.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional direct costs for a private person, or to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 81 – 5 AAC 92.057. Special provisions for Dall sheep drawing permit hunts. And 85.055 (a)(2). Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Sue Entsminger and Matt Snyder

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?**

1. Establish separate Tok Management Area (TMA) Dall sheep drawing permits for residents and nonresidents for each hunt period (DS102 and DS103).
2. Allocate 10% of TMA permits to nonresidents, with no more than 50% issued to hunters hunting with second-degree kindred.
3. Revise the permit hunt application form to include the name of the guide or second-degree kindred and his or her relation to the hunter.
4. Require applications for nonresident hunters be submitted to ADF&G prior to the drawing application deadline by their contracted guide.
5. Restrict drawing of permits for nonresidents hunting with a registered guide to those with signed guide–client agreements with guides who have registered guide use areas within the TMA at the time of application.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Residents and nonresidents are drawn from the same applicant pool, with up to 10% of permits allocated to nonresidents. Of the up to 10% allocation to nonresidents, up to 50% may be allocated to nonresident hunters who hunt with second-degree kindred. Applications for TMA sheep permits are submitted by the hunter, and nonresidents are required to include the name of their contracted guide or their resident relative on the application.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If adopted, this proposal would clarify guide–client agreement requirements and nonresident drawing permit allocation, guarantee nonresident hunters 10% of the permits issued, and require the department to limit the nonresident drawing to applicants hunting with second-degree kindred or with signed guide–client agreements with guides registered to hunt in the TMA at the time of application.

**BACKGROUND:** In 2007 the Board of Game began limiting nonresidents to a maximum of 10% of TMA sheep permits. This insured that resident hunters continue to have a higher probability of receiving these valued permits and addressed concerns of high harvest of full-curl rams due to the disproportionately high success rates of guided nonresident hunters.

Since 2007, 7.5% to 10% of TMA permits have been issued to nonresidents. Although nonresidents have a higher success rate than residents, guaranteeing nonresidents 10% of the permits issued would have little or no influence on harvest since nonresidents are already receiving close to 10% of the permits.



If nonresidents are guaranteed 10% of the TMA permits, procedural problems could arise in the future if the department decided to issue a number of permits that was not divisible by 10%. For example, if 75 permits were issued, a decision would have to be made on whether 7 or 8 permits would be issued to nonresidents, and if 7 permits were issued, how those would be split between guided nonresident hunters and nonresidents hunting with second-degree kindred.

Board action is not needed for the department to create separate drawing permits for residents and nonresidents; therefore, if the board decides to allocate 10% of the permits to nonresidents, the department will likely create separate drawing permits for residents and nonresidents regardless of the actions taken by the board relating to part 1 of this proposal.

Regulation 5 AAC 92.057 requires nonresidents who apply for guided drawing hunts for sheep in the TMA to hire guides who previously select a guide use area within the drawing hunt area before applying for the hunts. Because guide use area selection is done through a different department, and is completed long after the drawing application period is closed, the department does not have the ability to verify that nonresident applicants select guides who are in compliance with these regulations. This has resulted in permits being issued to hunters contracted with guides who do not have guide use areas registered in the TMA at the time of application. To remedy this problem it would be necessary for the department to make significant programming changes to the current application process, to potentially change the timing of the application period to align with application dates for guide-use areas, and to have access to complete and timely electronic information from the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** regarding these allocation issues. Points 1, 2, and 3 would have little or no effect on the harvest level and therefore the department has no conservation concerns. Points 4 and 5 are procedural administrative matters and the department recommends the board **DEFER** these changes to the statewide meeting in March 2014. All guide-client agreement requirements will be reviewed at the 2014 statewide meeting (proposal 146), which will include the drawing process for TMA sheep hunts DS102 and DS103.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of portions 1, 2, and 3 of this proposal would reduce the complexity of the drawing process and therefore reduce department workload and expense. Currently, department staff double-checks allocation of permits to nonresidents. This is a time consuming task that would no longer be required if portions 1, 2, and 3 of this proposal were adopted.

Approval of portions 4 and 5 would increase the work required of guides and would increase department workload and expense to collect and use additional information in the drawing process.

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**PROPOSAL 82 - 5 AAC 92.540(3)(E). Controlled use areas.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Upper Tanana/Fortymile Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Restrict method of access for hunting in the Glacier Mountain Controlled Use Area (Glacier Mountain CUA) to walk-in only.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The Glacier Mountain CUA is closed to the use of motorized vehicles for hunting, including transportation of hunters, their hunting gear, and/or parts of game during August 5–September 20. However, there are no restrictions on the use of pack animals during that time.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The use of pack animals for hunting or transportation of hunters within the Glacier Mountain CUA would be eliminated during August 5–September 20. This will likely reduce the number of hunters and the number of sheep harvested. Although the hunting pressure for other game in the area is low, this proposal would likely further reduce it.

**BACKGROUND:** The Glacier Mountain CUA was established by the board in 1971, originally as walk-in only, to protect this isolated sheep population. In 1981, pack animals were added as acceptable methods to access the area, primarily to provide easier transportation for moose and caribou hunters. A full-curl regulation was implemented beginning in 1984.

In July 2012, the department observed 159 sheep in the Glacier Mountain CUA during aerial surveys. This included 9 rams with horns at or above full-curl. However, severe weather in spring 2013 appears to have resulted in a decline in the sheep population. In July 2013, 63 sheep and only 2 full-curl rams were observed.

Due to difficult access and a low sheep population in the Glacier Mountain CUA, sheep harvest has historically been low. During regulatory years 1990–1991 through 2011–2012 (RY90–RY11), harvest averaged 1.8 (range 0–4) rams per year. In RY12, horses were used to access the area and a record high harvest of 5 rams occurred. Of this harvest, 3 successful hunters reported using horses. In RY13, 3 hunters reported harvesting a sheep 2 of which used horses.

Although the Glacier Mountain sheep population is protected by a general season bag limit of full-curl rams, the recent increased use of horses and resulting increase in hunting pressure is sufficient to harvest most full-curl rams each year. This hunting pressure could influence the quality of the hunt by creating more crowded hunting conditions, along with a decreased chance of harvesting a full-curl ram.

During RY03–RY12, only 4 moose hunters and 16 caribou hunters reported hunting within or near the Glacier Mountain CUA and accessing the area with pack animals.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocation issue. Because full-curl regulations protect these sheep from overharvest, the department has no conservation concerns. This proposal has the potential to affect hunters who wish to use pack animals to hunt other game, such as moose and caribou, in the Glacier Mountain CUA, unless the restriction is applied to sheep hunters only.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to private parties, or to the department

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**PROPOSAL 83 – 5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Mike Cronk

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Limit guides to two bear bait sites per guide in Units 12 and 20E, similar to noncommercial bear baiters.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Guides are permitted to register up to 10 bait sites in each guide use area where the guide is registered to hunt in many areas of the state.

**5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures.** (a) A person may not establish a bear bait station to hunt bear with the use of bait or scent lures without first obtaining a permit from the department under this section.

(b) In addition to any condition that the department may require under 5 AAC 92.052, a permit issued under this section is subject to the following provisions:

...

(4) a person may not have more than two bait stations established with bait present at any one time, except that in Units 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14(A), 14(B), 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 24, and 25, a registered guide-outfitter may operate up to 10 bait station sites at a time in each guide use area that the registered guide-outfitter may conduct big game hunting services in under AS 08.54.750, and may either personally or through licensed class-A assistant or assistant guides establish and maintain those sites simultaneously, if a signed big game commercial services contract under 12 AAC 75.260 is used for each hunter that uses any of the sites;

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Guides would be limited to two bear bait sites in Units 12 and 20E, similar to noncommercial bear baiters.

**BACKGROUND:** Spring 2013 was the first time hunters were allowed to harvest brown bears over bait in Units 12 and 20E, which caused an increased interest in baiting bears. As a result, the number of registered bait stations increased from an average of 50 in Unit 12 and 12 in Unit 20E during regulatory years 2000–2001 through 2011–2012 (RY00–RY11) to a total of 89 and 23 in RY12, respectively. During these same regulatory years, no bear bait sites were registered by guides in either unit. In RY12, guides registered 17 (19% of the total) bear bait sites in Unit 12 and 13 (57%) in Unit 20E. This has resulted in complaints of hunter crowding and competition between guides and others for bait sites in road-accessible areas.

The increased interest in bear baiting has not resulted in increased black bear harvest, which is assumed to be far below sustainable levels in both units. The RY12 black bear harvest was 34 in Unit 12, and 9 in Unit 20E, compared to the mean harvest of 38 (RY00–RY11) and 16 (RY03–RY11), respectively.

In Unit 20E, the management objective for brown bears is to temporarily reduce the population where it may be limiting moose population growth. The RY12 harvest of 19 grizzlies was similar to the mean harvest (RY00–RY11) of 16 bears per year. Three of the grizzlies harvested in RY12 were taken over bait. Brown bear harvest has been ineffective at reducing the population.

In Unit 12, the objective for brown bears is to manage so the 3-year mean harvest does not exceed 28 bears and includes at least 55% males in the harvest. The RY12 harvest of 25 bears (60% of which were males) was higher than the mean harvest (RY00–RY11) of 19 bears per year. Four of the bears harvested in RY12 were taken over bait. Although the harvest in Unit 12 is approaching the maximum desired level, it remains within the sustainable yield of 5–8% of the population.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocation issue. Because the department has no conservation concerns, this is an allocative issue over hunter crowding and competition with guides.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to unguided hunters. It could reduce income opportunities available to guides. Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 84 – 5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Upper Tanana/Fortymile Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Allow ADF&G to issue permits to use game meat not fit for human consumption at bear bait sites in Units 12 and 20E.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The department issues permits to allow the use of game meat that is salvaged from road kill and other sources but that the department determines is unfit for human consumption, to be used as trapping bait. However, the use of game meat other than the head, bones, viscera, or skin of legally harvested game is not permitted at bear bait sites.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** It would allow bear baiters to use game meat that the department determined to be unfit for human consumption at bear bait sites in Units 12 and 20E. This change would likely have little influence on black bear harvest but could result in a slight increase in brown bear harvest.

**BACKGROUND:** During regulatory years 2000–2001 through 2012–2013 (RY00–RY12), an average of 18 black bears were taken at 53 bait sites in Unit 12, and an average of 3 black bears were taken at 14 bait sites in Unit 20E. In RY12, which was the first year hunters were allowed to harvest brown bears over bait in Units 12 and 20E, 3 were taken at bait sites in Unit 12 and 2 were harvested over bait in Unit 20E.

The use of game meat at bear bait sites would likely have little influence on black bear harvest, which is likely below sustainable harvest levels in both Units 12 and 20E. Influence of using game meat on brown bear harvest is unknown. Currently, harvest is below the department

objective for Unit 20E and is within sustained yield in Unit 12. Even if this proposal resulted in increased kill, it is unlikely that harvest would reach an unsustainable level in Unit 12.

Although precise road kill data are difficult to obtain, the number of road-killed moose and caribou during the bear baiting season (April 15–June 30) is generally low. On average (during 2002–2010), 7 road-killed moose and caribou were reported to the Alaska State Troopers during April–June in Units 12 and 20E. Information on how many of those animals were deemed unfit for human consumption is not available.

The Tok area ADF&G office issues an average of 6 permits per year to trappers interested in using road kill for trapping bait in Units 12 and 20E. Trappers are responsible for picking up the animal off of the side of the road and transporting it to their trapping location. However, unlike bear baiters, trappers are not required to clean up leftover trapping bait at the end of the season.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** because the department has no conservation concerns. In the interest of simplifying already complex regulations, the board may want to consider this regulation on a statewide basis.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal could reduce costs to private parties by providing a free source of bait that is currently unavailable. Department costs would increase due to administration of an additional permit.

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**PROPOSAL 85 – 5 AAC 85.025. (a)(7). Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would establish a winter Tier I registration permit hunt in Unit 12, excluding Wrangell–St. Elias National Park and Preserve, for the Nelchina Caribou Herd (NCH). If adopted, permits would be issued prior to the hunt through the Subsistence Hunt Supplement in the same manner as the Unit 13 Tier I caribou registration permits. Successful applicants will only be allowed to hunt caribou in Unit 12 during the regulatory year in which the permit is valid, unless the hunt is cancelled. The proposed season will be October 21–March 31 with a bag limit of one caribou. The hunt would be managed within the NCH annual quota.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** While hunting opportunity for Nelchina caribou can be accommodated in Unit 12 through existing regulations by emergency order announcement, no winter hunts have been held since 1998. Current regulations limit hunting to the remainder of Unit 12, which excludes the area west of the Glenn Highway and south of the Alaska Highway (Macomb caribou herd) and portions of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Preserve (Chisana caribou herd). The majority of hunting opportunity for Nelchina caribou is provided in Unit 13.

5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.

**Resident  
Open Season**

| Units and Bag Limits  | (Subsistence and General Hunts)   | Nonresident Open Season |
|---|---|-------------------------|
| (7)   |   |                         |
| Unit 12, that portion west of the Glenn Highway (Tok Cutoff) and south of the Alaska Highway within the Tok Drainage                      | Sept. 1–Sept. 20  |                         |
| 1 bull  |   |                         |
| Unit 12, that portion west of the Glenn Highway (Tok Cutoff) and south of the Alaska Highway within the Tok Drainage                      | Sept. 1–Sept. 30  |                         |
| 1 bull by registration permit only; up to 50 bulls may be taken in combination with Unit 20(D), in that portion south of the Tanana River |   |                         |
| Remainder of Unit 12  | (Winter season to be announced)   |                         |
| 1 caribou may be taken by registration permit only during a winter season to be announced by emergency order                              |   |                         |
| (8)   |   |                         |
| Unit 13   |   |                         |
| 1 caribou per harvest report per regulatory year by community harvest permit only; up to 300 caribou may be taken; or                     | Aug. 10–Sept. 20<br>(Subsistence Hunt only)<br>Oct. 21–Mar. 31<br>(Subsistence Hunt only) | No open season          |
| 1 caribou every regulatory  | Aug. 10–Sept. 20  | No open season          |

|  |   |                |
|--|---|----------------|
| year by Tier I subsistence permit only; or   | (Subsistence Hunt only)<br>Oct. 21–Mar. 31<br>(Subsistence Hunt only) |                |
| 1 caribou every regulatory year by drawing permit; up to 5,000 permits may be issued | Aug. 20–Sept. 20<br>Oct. 21–March 31                                  | No open season |

...

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal would replace the current winter season, which can be announced by emergency order, with a Tier I registration hunt for Nelchina caribou. The hunt area would be expanded to include all of Unit 12 with the exception of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve lands. The new winter season dates would be October 21–March 31. Most caribou harvest in the proposed hunt area would come from the NCH, although caribou taken west of the Yerrick drainage could be from the Macomb caribou herd.

To administer the proposed hunt, the department would accept Unit 12 Tier I registration permit applications and issue the permits in advance of the hunt in the same manner as Unit 13 Tier I registration permits. If this hunt were administered similar to the Unit 13 hunt, successful applicants would not be allowed to apply for any other caribou draw permits in the state or participate in caribou hunts (state or federal) outside of Unit 12, until after the Nelchina caribou hunting seasons are closed by emergency order when the herd’s quota is met or the Unit 12 Tier I registration permit hunt is closed for any other reason. However, the proposal also suggests a simpler structure where “hunters are restricted to taking caribou in Unit 12 only, unless the hunt is canceled.”

**BACKGROUND:** Existing regulations allow for a winter registration hunt for Nelchina caribou in the Remainder of Unit 12 (east of the Glenn Highway/Tok Cutoff, excluding Wrangell–St. Elias National Preserve), which can be opened by emergency order. Between 1993 and 1998, RC460 was offered annually with a season in October and November. During a typical year, the department issued just over 1,000 permits, and 268 caribou were taken. The bag limit during 1993–1997 was one bull. The bag limit in 1998 was one cow. The last hunt was opened on November 3, 1998, and closed by emergency order on November 7; a total of 397 caribou were reported taken. Harvest was concentrated along the Alaska Highway between Tok and the Alaska border as caribou were migrating north across the highway.

The state winter season in Unit 12 has not been opened since 1998, due in part to reduced Nelchina harvest quotas that have been in place since that time. However federal subsistence hunters have taken an average of 27 Nelchina caribou annually on the Tetlin Refuge in Unit 12.

The harvest quota for the NCH is adjusted annually to maintain a herd size of 35,000–40,000. Harvests can be highly variable due to changes in harvest quotas and herd distribution. Annual harvests from the NCH averaged 2,120 caribou (range 797–4,429) during 2003–2012. The board

has found that the amount reasonably necessary for subsistence (ANS) for Nelchina Caribou is 600–1,000 caribou for Units 12 and 13.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal because of the allocative nature of the proposal and because the proposed harvest opportunity can be offered through existing regulation, although a minor adjustment could be made to provide hunting opportunity west of the Glenn Highway.

If the proposal is adopted, the department recommends modifying the proposed hunt area to reduce the potential of harvesting caribou from other herds. The proposed area currently includes a portion of the Macomb caribou herd’s winter range and should be modified to only include the portion of Unit 12 within the Tanana River drainage upstream of Yerrick Creek, excluding Wrangell St.–Elias National Park and Preserve. Exclusion of national park lands is recommended to protect the Chisana caribou herd.

If the board adopts this proposal and directs the department to manage the hunt within the Nelchina harvest quota, the department anticipates that the hunt in Unit 12 will not be held on an annual basis. Since 2003, state hunts for Nelchina caribou in Unit 13 were closed before the winter season opened (October 21) during 4 of the past 10 years, and hunts were closed during winter seasons during 3 of the remaining 6 years.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to private parties. Approval of this proposal is expected to result in additional administrative costs to the department, but the costs will be negligible.

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**PROPOSAL 86– 5 AAC 85.045(a)(10) and (18). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Upper Tanana–Fortymile Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Implement antler restrictions in Units 12 and 20D for Alaska resident moose hunters within the Robertson River drainage south of the confluence of the West Fork and the mainstem Robertson River.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The bag limit for Alaska resident moose hunters in this area is one bull during September 1–15. Nonresidents are limited to one bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side during September 5–15.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Resident moose hunters’ bag limit would be restricted to bulls with spike-fork or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side.

**BACKGROUND:** Unit 12 moose surveys indicate that bull-to-cow ratios in the Robertson River drainage upstream from the confluence of the West Fork and the main stem may have declined from 43 bulls:100 cows in 2008 to 24 bulls:100 cows in 2012. Some local residents communicated to the department that they believed the 2012 survey supported their concerns that



the number of hunters and harvest in this area may have increased above sustainable levels. In response, the department conducted an intensive moose survey in this area in November 2013.

Based on 148 moose observed in the mainstem of the Robertson River during the 2008 survey in Unit 12, the department estimated 43 bulls:100 cows ( $\pm 7$  SE). In 2012, the ratio was 24 bulls:100 cows ( $\pm 10$  SE). However, only 4 units were surveyed and 36 moose were observed, so confidence in the estimate is low. The 2013 survey included 11 sample units in Unit 12 and 17 sample units in Unit 20D. Based on 240 moose observed, the department estimated 33 bulls:100 cows ( $\pm 5$  SE). This is comparable to the bull:cow ratios estimated from surveys in southeastern Unit 20D (all of Unit 20D east of the Johnson River, including the West Fork of the Robertson River) of 31 bulls:100 cows in 2011, 35:100 in 2010, and 32:100 in 2009.

Although moose harvest report information for the Robertson River drainage is imprecise, it appears that the hunting pressure increased between 1992 and 2012. Harvest ranged 0–8 (average = 3) during 1992–2001 and 3–14 (average = 8) during 2002–2012. Likewise, it appears that the number of hunters increased from an average of 10 hunters per year during 1992–2001 to 22 hunters per year during 2002–2012.

In Unit 12, the management objective for moose is to maintain a minimum ratio of 20 bulls:100 cows, while in Unit 20D the harvest objective is to provide a liberal bull bag limit for portions of 20D with a ratio of  $\geq 30$  bulls:100 cows.

The board made a positive customary and traditional use finding for moose in Unit 20D south of the Tanana River and in all of Unit 12. The board determined that 60–70 moose in Unit 12 and 5 moose in Unit 20D south of the Tanana River are reasonably necessary for subsistence. The board should consider whether implementing the antler restrictions outlined in this proposal would continue to provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department has received communications that the proponent has withdrawn support for this proposal because the bull:cow ratio of 33:100 observed during the 2013 survey is above the objective set for both Units 12 and 20D. The department **OPPOSES** this proposal because it would unnecessarily reduce opportunity for Alaska residents to harvest moose in the Robertson River drainage.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to increase the direct costs for a private person to participate in this hunt. However, if the proposal is passed, more intensive moose surveys than would otherwise be conducted in the Robertson River drainage may be required in the future to determine the outcome of the restriction. This would therefore increase department costs.

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### **PROPOSAL 87 – 5 AAC 92.113(a)(1). Intensive Management Plans III.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Reauthorize the Upper Yukon–Tanana Predation Control Program.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The department is authorized to conduct wolf control within the Upper Yukon–Tanana Predation Control Area (UYTPCA) to benefit the Fortymile Caribou Herd (FCH) in Units 12, 20B, 20D, 20E, and 25C and to benefit moose in Unit 12 north of the Alaska Highway and in Unit 20E.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The Upper Yukon–Tanana Intensive Management (IM) Plan will expire on June 30, 2014. This proposal would reauthorize the department to conduct wolf control within the UYTPCA to benefit the FCH during July 1, 2014–June 30, 2020. It includes options for aerial wolf control conducted by public permittees and the department. It would also simplify regulatory language. Control to benefit moose would not be reauthorized.

**BACKGROUND:** The program was first authorized by the Board of Game in 2004 to benefit moose in southern Unit 20E. Wolf and bear control began in 2005. The wolf control portion of the program was expanded to include the FCH in 2006. The bear control portion of the program was deleted in 2009 because it was determined to be ineffective at removing bears from the control area due to ineffective control methods. Moose are not included in this proposal because no focused predation control efforts specifically intended to benefit moose have been conducted or are planned. However, moose will likely continue to benefit to some degree from wolf control conducted to increase the FCH.

The FCH Intensive Management (IM) population objectives established by the board are for a population of 50,000–100,000 and an annual harvest of 1,000–15,000. The estimated population in June 2010 was 51,675 and the annual harvest during regulatory years 2009–2010 to 2011–2012 was 725–1,083. The population and harvest are within the lower end of the range of IM objectives; however, continued recovery of the FCH to a higher population and harvest within the range of the IM objectives is needed to provide for high levels of human consumptive use of the herd.

The wolf population control objective for the wolf control area is 88–103; the pre-control wolf population in the wolf control area was estimated in fall of 2004 at 350–410; a minimum population of 88 wolves is approximately a 75% reduction from the pre-control population and will assure that wolves persist in the plan area. Public wolf control has been conducted in the majority of the FCH range since 2006, and department wolf control, focused on the FCH calving area, was conducted during the winters of 2008–2009, 2009–2010, 2011–2012 and 2012–2013.

Additional control program details will be made available for public review in a separate IM operational plan prior to the board meeting.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal will not result in additional cost to private persons or the department.

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**PROPOSAL 88 – 5 AAC 92.113(b). Intensive Management Plans III.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Re-implement the brown bear control portion of the Upper Yukon–Tanana Predator Control Program in southern Unit 20E, with modifications.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The bear control portion of the Upper Yukon–Tanana Predator Control Program was suspended on July 1, 2009 and no bear control has been conducted under this program since that time.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The current Upper Yukon–Tanana Predator Control Program would be modified to include black and brown bear control to benefit moose in an 870 mi<sup>2</sup> portion of east-central Unit 20E and would include bear snaring and other provisions.

**BACKGROUND:** Residents of the upper Yukon–Tanana drainages have expressed concern, since the early 1980s, about the chronically low density moose in Units 12 and 20E. They felt the low density of moose was due to a combination of wolf and brown bear predation. During Board of Game meetings in March 2004 and 2006, the Upper Tanana–Fortymile Fish and Game Advisory Committee and the public provided testimony explaining the problem and requested corrective action.

The board has identified the Unit 20E moose population as important for providing high levels of harvest for human consumptive use and established an intensive management (IM) population objective of 8,000–10,000 moose and an IM harvest objective of 500–1,000. The board made a positive customary and traditional use finding for moose in Unit 20E, with an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence uses (ANS) of 50–75.

Research in Unit 20E indicates brown bear predation on calves is an important factor limiting moose population size and growth. During 1981–1988, brown bears killed 52% of the newborn moose calves and black bears killed 3%. In addition, brown bears and wolves accounted for 89% of all yearling and adult moose mortality.

Habitat does not appear to be limiting the moose population. Twinning rates above 20% indicate habitat can likely support a larger population. The average twinning rate in southern Unit 20E and Unit 12 north of the Alaska Highway during May 2009–2013 was 30% (range = 21–41%).

From fall 2010–2012 surveys, the department estimates 4,034–6,084 moose (0.5 –0.8–mi<sup>2</sup>) inhabit Unit 20E, well below the IM population objective of 8,000–10,000. These surveys indicate an average of 61 bulls:100 cows (range = 54–67:100) and 10 calves:100 cows (range = 5–15:100). This calf:cow ratio was lower than observed in fall 2006, 2007, and 2009 (average = 24 calves:100 cows, range = 22–25:100).

Based on a harvest rate of 4% of the population, the harvestable surplus of moose is 161–243 (midpoint = 202). The annual harvest was 164–186 bulls (average = 177) during regulatory years 2008–2009 through 2012–2013 (RY08–RY12). Although harvest remained within sustainable limits and achieved the ANS of 50–75 each year, it was below the IM harvest objective of 500–1,000.

The board first adopted the Upper Yukon–Tanana Predation Control Implementation Plan (plan) in November 2004 to increase the moose population in Units 12 and 20E. The plan authorized wolf control in northern Unit 12 and southern Unit 20E and brown bear control in southern Unit 20E. The plan was authorized for 5 years, and began on January 1, 2005. Baiting of brown bears under a control permit was allowed as a method of brown bear removal beginning in spring of 2005.

In January 2006, the board adopted a revised plan in the form of an emergency regulation. The emergency regulation limited wolf control activities to northern Unit 12 and southern Unit 20E and clarified and updated key components of the plan that included boundaries of the bear control area. In addition, at their January 2006 meeting the board adopted a regulation that allowed for sale of sealed, untanned brown bear hides (with claws attached) and skulls taken in active brown bear predation control areas.

In May 2006, the board further modified the emergency regulation and adopted it as a final regulation. Modifications intended to benefit moose included expanding the bear control area to include more of southcentral Unit 20E and allowing the take of brown bears same-day-airborne at bait stations registered as part of the control program.

In March 2009, the board reauthorized the plan, with modifications. The plan was authorized for an additional 5 years, beginning January 1, 2009. Modifications included suspending the bear control portion of the plan on July 1, 2009, because it was determined to be ineffective at removing bears from the control area due to ineffective methods and lack of permittee incentives. Moose remained in the plan and authorization for public wolf control permits was continued. It was assumed that moose would continue to benefit in northern Unit 12 and Unit 20E from continued wolf removal.

At the March 2012 board meeting, the Upper Tanana–Fortymile Fish and Game Advisory Committee proposed re-implementing the grizzly bear control portion of the plan in southern Unit 20E. The committee recommended reducing the size of the bear control area to focus efforts; snaring of black and brown bears, including females and cubs; and same-day-airborne use of airplanes and helicopters to set and check snare sets. This proposal was not adopted by the board. Since then, the department has had discussions with the advisory committee concerning what approach might be effective for reducing bears and increasing moose numbers and harvest.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal because the department has no conservation concerns. However, the board may wish to **TAKE NO ACTION** after consideration of proposal 87 which proposes reauthorization of the Upper Yukon–Tanana predator control program, but without re-implementation of bear control.

Although not opposed to bear control as part of this program, Region III would require additional personnel and additional operating funds for successful implementation. Regional personnel and operational funding available for predator control programs are fully utilized in the existing Upper Yukon–Tanana, Unit 19A, Unit 19D (East) and Unit 24B programs.

If the board wishes to adopt this proposal, it should consider authorizing an option for department contracting of private individuals to remove bears. The proposed use of public

permittees for bear removal may not be successful, given recent experience elsewhere in the state using many of the methods suggested in this proposal.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for private persons. Department cost would increase substantially due to addition of bear control to this control program.

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## **PROPOSAL 89 – 5 AAC 92.111. Intensive Management Plans I.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Establish an aerial or land-and-shoot wolf control program on state lands in Unit 12 so that the moose population will increase.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Aerial wolf control is currently allowed in Unit 12 north of the Alaska Highway as part of the Upper Yukon–Tanana Predator Control Program.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The current Upper Yukon–Tanana Predator Control Area (UYTPCA) would be expanded to include an additional 1,000 mi<sup>2</sup> of state land south of the Alaska Highway under the Upper Yukon–Tanana Intensive Management Plan.

**BACKGROUND:** Based on 2011 and 2012 surveys, the department estimates 4,199–6,175 moose inhabit Unit 12. This includes 3,786–5,555 moose (23 bulls and 36 calves per 100 cows) outside Wrangell–St. Elias National Park and Preserve and 413–620 (0.6–0.9/mi<sup>2</sup>, with 34 bulls and 27 calves per 100 cows) within the preserve. It does not include southeastern Unit 12 because no surveys have been conducted in this low density, remote area. Based on a harvest rate of 4%, the harvestable surplus in all of Unit 12 is 168–247. The average annual reported harvest was 109–157 (average = 130) during regulatory years 2008–2009 through 2012–2013 (RY08–RY12).

The board identified the Unit 12 moose population as important for providing high levels of harvest for human consumptive use and established an intensive management (IM) population objective of 4,000–6,000 and an IM harvest objective of 250–450. The current population estimate is within the IM objective. However, harvest was below the IM objective each year during RY08–RY12. This was due, at least in part, to the remote nature of much of the unit and travel restrictions on National Wildlife Refuge and National Park Service lands where some of the higher densities of moose exist. There is a positive customary and traditional use finding for moose in Unit 12 with an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence of 60–70.

When reauthorized by the board in March 2009, the Upper Yukon–Tanana IM program was intended to benefit moose and caribou in Unit 12 north of the Alaska Highway through reduction in the wolf population.

State land makes up about 20% (~2,000 mi<sup>2</sup>) of the land area in Unit 12, and is entirely in the northern half of the unit. About 50% of state land is included in the ongoing aerial wolf control program in the UYTPCA. The remaining state land (~1,000 mi<sup>2</sup>) is south of the Alaska Highway and is dominated by dense tree cover and mountainous terrain not well suited for aerial wolf control.

Because most wolf pack territories in Unit 12 south of the Alaska Highway would overlap state, federal, and private lands, wolves from these packs would only be available for removal under predator control when they travel onto state land. This would reduce the likelihood of successfully reducing wolves in this area.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **OPPOSES** this proposal. IM population objectives have been met. IM harvest objectives have not been achieved; however, hunter access is restricted. About half of the state land proposed for control already has wolf control as part of the existing Upper Yukon–Tanana predation control program, and in the remainder of Unit 12 the terrain and land ownership patterns are not well suited for aerial control. Also, personnel and operational funding are not available for additional Region III control efforts because both are fully utilized in the existing Upper Yukon–Tanana, Unit 19A, Unit 19D (East) and Unit 24B programs.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for private persons. It would result in substantial additional cost to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 90 – 5 AAC 85.045(a)(18). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Reauthorize antlerless moose seasons in Unit 20D.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Regulations allow these antlerless moose seasons in Unit 20D, including the allowance of an antlerless moose (except a cow accompanied by a calf or a calf) as part of the legal bag limit in the Bison Range Youth Moose Hunt.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If adopted, this proposal would allow the department to continue to provide harvest tools and options for moose management in Unit 20D and continue to allow hunters to take antlerless moose (except a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf) in the Bison Range Youth Moose Hunt.

Antlerless moose hunts, when determined to be necessary, will likely improve or maintain the ability of moose habitat to support the current moose population. Hunting opportunity and harvest could increase, and the additional harvest could contribute to meeting Intensive Management (IM) harvest objectives.

Meat hunters will benefit from the opportunity to harvest cow moose. Moose populations will benefit by having moose densities compatible with their habitat. Delta Junction residents and motorists may benefit from reduced moose–vehicle collisions and moose–human conflicts.

**BACKGROUND:** Antlerless moose hunting seasons must be reauthorized annually. The goal is to provide for a wide range of public uses and benefits, and to protect the health and habitat of moose populations. These antlerless hunts are important for improving or maintaining the ability of moose habitat to support current populations. They also help regulate moose population growth, and achieve IM objectives for high levels of harvest. With the exception of the Bison Range Youth Moose Hunt, antlerless permits have not been issued since fall 2009.

The population of moose in Unit 20D reached the IM objective of 8,000–10,000 in 2006. The highest density was in southwest Unit 20D at 5.6 moose/mi<sup>2</sup>. The population in this area was exhibiting the effects of increased competition for food, with a moderately low level 2-year average twinning rate of 14%. Antlerless hunts in regulatory years 2006–2007 through 2009–2010 contributed to reducing the density in southwest Unit 20D to 3.9 moose/mi<sup>2</sup>. The goals of the antlerless hunts were to stabilize population growth in the unit and to address concerns about range degradation, reduced nutritional conditions, and reduced reproductive success. Future antlerless hunts are likely needed to maintain the population at the optimal density and will contribute toward meeting the IM harvest objective of 500–700. However, registration permits will be issued only if additional harvest is needed in specific areas to maintain optimal moose densities.

The antlerless moose hunts and their effect on moose density and population growth will continue to be evaluated. Three indices of density-dependent moose nutritional conditions—biomass removal of current annual growth on winter browse, proportion of females with twin calves, and late-winter calf weights—will be evaluated in relation to changes in density. Future antlerless moose hunts for Unit 20D will be implemented as needed based on this evaluation. There are currently no plans to issue permits for antlerless moose hunting in Unit 20D during the 2014 season, with the exception that an antlerless moose (except a cow accompanied by a calf or a calf) is part of the legal bag limit in the Bison Range Youth Moose Hunt.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional direct costs for a private person to participate in antlerless moose hunts. Approval of this proposal will not change potential costs to the department, although costs may increase slightly if the hunts are implemented.

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**PROPOSAL 91 – 5 AAC 92.530(19), Management Areas and 5 AAC85.045(a)(18), Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Delta Fish and Game Advisory Committee and Fort Greely Garrison.

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?**

1. Change the bag limit for both residents and nonresidents in the disabled veteran drawing hunt for bull moose within the Delta Junction Management Area (DJMA) (DM795) to 1 moose every 4 years, except a person may not take a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf.

2. Align the DM795 seasons for residents and nonresidents to September 1–15.
3. Change the eligibility qualification for DM795 applicants to “recipient of the Purple Heart Medal” to certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as having incurred a 100% service-connected disability.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** DM795 currently has 6 permits available, and up to 25% of the drawing permits available in the DJMA will be issued to qualified veterans. Season dates for residents are September 1–15, with a bag limit of a bull with spike–fork or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side. Season dates for nonresidents are September 5–15 with a bag limit of a bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side. Qualified applicants must be disabled veterans and disabled active-duty military personnel with 50% or greater service-connected disability.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If adopted, this proposal would change the eligibility of applicants for DM795 to recipients of the Purple Heart Medal with 100% service-connected disability and provide an opportunity for permit winners with these qualifications to hunt moose with a high probability of success. It would also change frequency of permit eligibility to once every 4 regulatory years in an effort to provide opportunity to more individuals over time. It would align the DM795 season dates for resident and nonresident hunters, simplifying the hunting regulations for the public and law enforcement. It would also provide for a small, but consistent, opportunity for antlerless moose harvest in Unit 20D that will aid in managing the moose population and moderating the need for larger scale antlerless hunts.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Three indices of density-dependent moose nutritional conditions (biomass removal of current annual growth on winter browse; proportion of females with twin calves; and late-winter calf weights) suggest a stable to slowly increasing moose population. Therefore, no antlerless moose-only hunts are currently implemented to manage the population in Unit 20D. The potential take of 6 cow moose each year from a revised DM795, in conjunction with the antlerless take from the Bison Range Youth Moose Hunt (DM792, average = 5 antlerless moose), would provide a small, but consistent opportunity for antlerless moose harvest that will aid in managing the moose population and moderating the need for larger scale antlerless hunts in the future.

The board approved the DM795 moose hunt within the DJMA in 2010 for qualified disabled veterans and qualified disabled active-duty military personnel who have a 50% or greater service-connected disability. Six permits have been issued annually, and a total of 7 bulls were harvested. Take of antlerless moose under this proposal could result in harvest of up to 6 cows each year, although fewer are expected.

DM795, along with proposals for other special hunts in Unit 20D for disabled military individuals, has met with limited public acceptance in the Delta Junction community. Some retired veterans (including some disabled veterans) and other members of the public cited abuse or questionable qualifications for this hunt. Due to these concerns, the Delta Fish and Game



Advisory Committee expressed interest in developing a hunt for disabled personnel (veterans and active-duty military members) utilizing more stringent and straightforward qualification criteria.

In 2012, the U.S. Army Fort Greely Garrison renewed an interest in pursuing the creation of a special hunt for significantly disabled military personnel (veterans and active-duty). They contacted the Delta Fish and Game Advisory Committee, ADF&G, Alaska Wildlife Troopers, the Board of Game, state legislators, the Governor, Alaska's delegates in the U.S. Congress, veterans associations, sport hunting organizations, and members of the general public to seek support and input regarding the development of a hunt of this nature. Public input indicated support for a hunt designed to accommodate disabled veterans or active-duty military personnel who had completely lost or almost completely lost the ability to participate in hunting.

During the 2013 Alaska legislative session, legislation was passed that declared Alaska as a Purple Heart State to honor and show respect to those who have sacrificed so much for Alaska and the United States. This legislation was referenced by some advocates as the inspiration for identifying "Purple Heart Medal recipient" as part of the proposed criteria for hunt eligibility.

The Delta Fish and Game Advisory Committee and the U.S. Army Fort Greely Garrison worked closely with ADF&G to develop the criteria for this proposal. Fort Greely is located within the DJMA. The vested interest of the garrison in disabled military personnel, coupled with Fort Greely's location within the DM795 hunt area provided a good fit for being part of a joint effort to revise DM795. The garrison co-sponsored this proposal and has offered to assist disabled hunters by allowing hunting access to specific areas on post. The U.S. Army has also offered to inform disabled veterans and active-duty members of this hunting opportunity.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocative proposal and has no biological concerns. The board may wish to consider whether proxy hunting should be allowed in DM795. Proxy hunting is legal in all hunts for antlerless moose, but may not meet this proposal's intent of providing opportunity for disabled veterans or active-duty military personnel to actively and physically participate in hunting.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional direct costs for a private person to participate in the DM795 hunt, or for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 92 – 5 AAC 85.010(a)(3). Hunting seasons and bag limits for bison, and 5 AAC 92.050(a)(4)(H)and (b)(3). Required permit hunt conditions and procedures.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Dave Machacek

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Change the resident bag limit for bison in Unit 20D to 1 bison per lifetime, and provide that no more than 1 permit per household may be awarded during a regulatory year. This would effectively eliminate party applications from a single household.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Resident hunters may harvest one bison in Unit 20D every 10 regulatory years by drawing permit. A resident who is a successful applicant for a bison drawing permit hunt is ineligible to apply for another bison drawing permit for 10 years. The number of permits that may be issued per household is not limited. No more than 2 hunters desiring to hunt together may apply as a party, whether or not they are from the same household.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If adopted, this proposal would:

- Eliminate the eligibility of a resident to win more than one Unit 20D bison permit in a lifetime, aligning resident eligibility with that of nonresidents.
- Eliminate the possibility of 2 members from the same household being drawn for individual permits or together on a party permit application.
- Require the department to adjust administration of the drawing process for 20D bison permits to accommodate the difference in eligibility between Unit 20D hunts and other bison hunts.

**BACKGROUND:**

Delta bison hunts have been conducted since 1950. Electronic records for bison permits go back to 1982. Since then, approximately 103 individuals have drawn a permit more than once; 3 of these 103 individuals may have drawn 3 permits; and approximately 58 party permits have possibly been drawn by members of the same household. Since 1989, the average number of annual applicants for Delta bison permits has been 9,414. Since 2003, 10 individuals among 1,775 Delta bison permit winners (0.9%) have drawn a permit more than once.

In January 2008, the Board of Game approved changing the eligibility for bison permits for residents from 1 permit every 5 years to 1 permit every 10 years, and to 1 permit in a lifetime for nonresidents. No one who won a bison permit since the change went into effect in RY09 has subsequently won another permit.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocation issue. The department has no conservation concerns regarding this proposal.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional direct costs for a private person to participate in Unit 20D bison hunts. Department cost to administer these hunts would increase because eligibility requirements would be different than other bison hunts.

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**PROPOSAL 93 – 5 AAC 85.025(a)(7). Season dates and bag limits for caribou.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Allow the take of up to 100 bulls from the Macomb caribou herd in Unit 12, in combination with Unit 20D, and thereby align the harvest quota for the Macomb caribou herd in both units by correcting a discrepancy in the regulations.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** In Unit 12, that portion west of the Glenn Highway and south of the Alaska Highway, excluding the Tok River drainage, regulations allow residents to take 1 bull by registration permit from August 10–September 30, with a harvest quota of up to **50** bulls taken in combination with the portion of Unit 20D south of the Tanana River.

In Unit 20D, that portion south of the Tanana River, regulations allow residents to take 1 bull by registration permit from August 10–September 30, with a harvest quota of up to **100** bulls taken in combination with the portion of Unit 12 west of the Glenn Highway and south of the Alaska Highway, excluding the Tok River drainage.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If adopted, this proposal would

- Correct an inadvertent discrepancy in the hunting regulations.
- Improve the accuracy of the regulations.
- Help provide the public and the Alaska Wildlife Troopers with a better understanding of the department’s management of the Macomb caribou herd and benefit the public, who will know harvest management regulations are accurate and reliable.

**BACKGROUND:** This is a housekeeping proposal correct a discrepancy in the hunting regulations. The Macomb caribou herd is harvested in portions of Units 12 and 20D. In 2008, the board increased the harvest quota from 50 to 100 caribou for the Unit 20D portion of the hunt, as requested by the department. However, the department overlooked requesting the same quota increase for the Unit 12 portion of the Macomb hunt area.

The harvest quota was 50 bulls during regulatory years 2008–2009 through 2010–2011 (RY08–RY10) and 70 bulls during RY11–RY13. Annual Macomb caribou harvest ranged between 48 and 73 bulls during RY08–RY13, and is within sustainable harvest limits of this herd of more than 1,500 caribou.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional direct costs for a private person to participate in the Macomb registration hunt and is not expected to result in additional direct costs for the department.

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**PROPOSAL 94 – 5 AAC 85.025(a)(15). Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Tom Geyer

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Create 2 hunt areas with different seasons for Macomb caribou and extend the season in a portion of Units 12 and 20D, as follows:

- Unit 20D, that portion south of the Tanana River, east of Jarvis Creek, and west of the west bank of the Johnson River, with season dates of August 5–25.
- Unit 20D, that portion south of the Tanana River, and east of the west bank of the Johnson River, and Unit 12, that portion west of the Glenn Highway (Tok Cutoff) and south of the Alaska Highway, excluding the Tok River drainage, with season dates of August 26–September 20.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Current hunt area, bag limits, and dates in regulation:

In Unit 12, that portion west of the Glenn Highway (Tok Cutoff) and south of the Alaska Highway, excluding the Tok River drainage, residents may take 1 bull by registration permit during August 10–September 30, with a harvest quota of up to 50 bulls taken in combination with the portion of Unit 20D south of the Tanana River.

In Unit 20D, that portion south of the Tanana River, residents may take 1 bull by registration permit during August 10–September 30, with a harvest quota of up to 100 bulls taken in combination with the portion of Unit 12 west of the Glenn Highway and south of the Alaska Highway, excluding the Tok River drainage.

Current hunt structure:

Hunting for the Macomb caribou herd has been conducted as a registration permit hunt (RC835) for resident hunters only. Since 2006, the season dates have been August 10–25. In 2006 the hunting season dates are set under ADF&G’s discretionary permit authority to shorten the season within the August 10–September 30 framework in 5 AAC 85.025. The portion of Unit 20D west of Jarvis Creek is excluded from the hunt area, also under discretionary permit authority. In 2009, two days of hunter access by motorized vehicles and pack animals were added in the western portion of the hunt area during August 26–27 when the Delta Controlled Use Area (DCUA) has no access restrictions. Motor vehicle access to the Macomb Plateau portion of the hunt area is restricted by Macomb Plateau Controlled Use Area regulations during the entire season. The portion of the hunt area east of the east bank of Bear Creek (Mile 1357.3 Alaska Highway) has no access restrictions.

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

- Twenty-four days of potential hunting opportunity would be added to the Macomb caribou season.
- The additional season length in only a portion of the hunt area would increase law enforcement complexity and require additional law enforcement effort, including requiring Alaska Wildlife Troopers to patrol and enforce the extended caribou season during the Unit 20D moose season.

- Regulations for the hunt would become more complex with 2 sets of season dates for 2 different hunt areas.
- Hunters will have a reduced hunting area for the early part of the season compared to the current hunt area. This could result in a higher hunter density during the early part of the proposed season.
- Those who hunt the eastern part of the hunt area could lose opportunity to hunt in that area if they are not available to hunt during the proposed later dates. Some hunters may choose to not hunt the later season dates and hunt area due to the timing conflict with moose season.
- It is more likely the season will need to be closed by emergency order and the harvest quota could be exceeded. A significant portion of the proposed later season (August 26–September 30) is during moose season. Moose hunters who possess a permit could harvest caribou at a rapid rate. As with the current hunt period, it may be necessary to use department discretionary permit authority to shorten the hunt dates within the framework provided by 5 AAC 85.025 to adequately control harvest. This would be done only after consultation with the board.
- Unit 12 regulations will also require revision to reflect changes in the Macomb caribou hunt.

**BACKGROUND:** The Macomb caribou herd is harvested in portions of Units 12 and 20D. The Board has found that the Macomb caribou herd is customarily and traditionally used for subsistence and has set an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence (ANS) of 10–40 caribou. The efforts to balance reasonable subsistence opportunity and manage for sustained yield harvest (ANS) in this road-accessible caribou herd have been a long, ongoing management challenges.

The focus and goals of the department’s management efforts have been to provide subsistence harvest opportunity for resident hunters without exceeding harvest quotas while meeting ANS and Intensive Management (IM) population and harvest objectives. Most of these goals have been consistently met since regulatory year 2006–2007 (RY06) when core season dates in the middle of August were established. These core dates were selected to slow the rate of harvest by utilizing the motorized vehicle restrictions in the Delta and Macomb Plateau Controlled Use Areas (both located within the Macomb hunt area), to provide some motorized access opportunity, and to conduct the hunt outside of moose season. Since RY06:

- The ANS of 10–40 caribou has been met and 15 days of subsistence hunting opportunity have been provided every year.
- There have been no emergency closures of the hunting season.
- Reported harvest and quotas have increased. Harvest was 21 in RY06 and 27 in RY07 when the quota was 25. Harvest was 48 in RY08 and 56 in RY09 when the quota was 50. Harvest has averaged 69 (range 63–73) during RY10–RY13 with a quota of 70.
- The harvest quota was only slightly exceeded in 4 of the 8 years by: 2 in RY07, 6 in RY09, 3 in RY11, and 2 in RY12. In RY07, RY09, RY11, and RY12, illegal kills accounted for some or all of the numbers above the quota.
- The IM population objective of 600–800 caribou has been met or exceeded every year.

- The IM harvest objective of 30–50 caribou has been met 6 of the 8 years (every year since RY08). During RY06 and RY07, the harvest quota was below the Intensive Management Harvest Objective.
- With the exception of an incomplete count in RY08, population estimates and/or minimum counts of the Macomb herd were the highest documented. A composition survey and incomplete census of the Macomb herd conducted in October 2013 resulted in a count of 1,510 caribou with 37 bulls:100 cows, 10 large bulls:100 cows and 15 calves:100 cows.
- The area east of the Johnson River (including the Macomb Plateau) has produced an average of 42% of the total harvest.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocation issue. The board should consider if the current regulatory approach and the proposed changes provide reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional direct costs for a private person to participate in the Macomb registration hunt. Approval of this proposal has the potential to slightly increase department cost for hunt administration.

**PROPOSAL 95 – 5 AAC 85.025(a)(7) and (15). Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?**

- Change the season dates of the Macomb caribou registration hunt (RC835) to exclude motorized vehicle access when Delta Controlled Use Area (DCUA) restrictions are lifted. The proposed season dates are August 10–25.
- Create a drawing permit hunt during August 26–September 10 for the Macomb caribou herd.
- Require a locking tag for caribou harvested in the proposed drawing permit hunt.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Current hunt area, bag limits, and dates in regulation:

In Unit 12, that portion west of the Glenn Highway (Tok Cutoff) and south of the Alaska Highway, excluding the Tok River drainage, residents may take 1 bull by registration permit during August 10–September 30, with a harvest quota of up to 50 bulls taken in combination with the portion of Unit 20D south of the Tanana River.

In Unit 20D, that portion south of the Tanana River, residents may take 1 bull by registration permit during August 10–September 30, with a harvest quota of up to 100 bulls taken in

combination with the portion of Unit 12 west of the Glenn Highway and south of the Alaska Highway, excluding the Tok River drainage.

Current hunt structure:

Hunting for the Macomb caribou herd has been conducted as a registration permit hunt (RC835) for resident hunters only. Since 2006, the season dates have been August 10–25. In 2006 the hunting season dates are set under ADF&G’s discretionary permit authority to shorten the season within the August 10–September 30 framework in 5 AAC 85.025. The portion of Unit 20D west of Jarvis Creek is excluded from the hunt area, also under discretionary permit authority. In 2009, two days of hunter access by motorized vehicles and pack animals were added in the western portion of the hunt area during August 26–27 when the Delta Controlled Use Area (DCUA) has no access restrictions. Motor vehicle access to the Macomb Plateau portion of the hunt area is restricted by Macomb Plateau Controlled Use Area regulations during the entire season. The portion of the hunt area east of the east bank of Bear Creek (Mile 1357.3 Alaska Highway) has no access restrictions.

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

- The season designated in 5 AAC 85.025 for Macomb caribou would be reduced by 36 days.
- Two days of motorized access hunting (August 26–27) would be eliminated from RC835.
- Law enforcement effort needed for RC835 would significantly decrease with the elimination of the 2 days of motorized access hunting.
- The proposed drawing permit hunt would require additional law enforcement effort, including requiring Alaska Wildlife Troopers to patrol and enforce this season for 5 days of the 20D moose season.
- A locking tag to identify harvest from the proposed drawing permit hunt would aid law enforcement.
- The RC835 annual harvest will likely decrease. s of Units 12 and 20D. The efforts to balance

**BACKGROUND:** The Macomb caribou herd is harvested in portions of units 12 and 20D. Managing for reasonable subsistence opportunity, sustained yield harvest, and managing for the ANS in this road-accessible caribou herd have been a long, ongoing management challenge. Pertinent highlights in the history of management of the Macomb caribou herd include:

1970s-1980s

- A population decline was documented in the Macomb herd and the bag limit was reduced.
- The DCUA was established.
- The Macomb Plateau Management Area (later renamed the Macomb Plateau Controlled Use Area) was established.
- The hunting season was closed by emergency order in 1977.

1990s

- The hunt was changed from a drawing permit hunt to a resident-only registration permit hunt because court decisions found that conducting subsistence hunts under a drawing permit does not provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence on game populations with a positive customary and traditional (C&T) use finding.
- The Alaska Board of Game determined the ANS to be 10–40 caribou.
- The hunting season was closed during 1992–1996 because the herd was below the population objective.
- The hunting season was September 10–20 by registration permit during 1997–1998.
- The season was closed in 1999.

#### 2000s

- The hunting season was September 10–20 by registration permit in regulatory year 2000–2001 (RY00).
- The season dates were changed to August 15–25 by discretionary permit authority to separate the season from the moose hunting season in 2002. This change, along with a revision to the DCUA boundary, was implemented to maintain a reasonable subsistence opportunity for success without exceeding the harvest quota.
- The hunting season was closed by emergency order in RY02 and RY03.
- The department used discretionary permitting authority to move the western boundary of the Macomb hunt area from the Delta River to Jarvis Creek in RY04.
- Season dates were changed to August 10–25 in RY06 and RY07 with a harvest quota of 25 each year.
- Season dates were August 10–28 in RY08. This included 3 days (26–28 August) of motorized access in the western part of the hunt area. The board approved an increase in the allowable harvest quota of Macomb caribou from 50 to 100.
- The season dates were August 10–27 during RY09–RY13, including 2 days (26–27 August) of motorized access in the western part of the hunt area. The harvest quota was 50 in RY09 and 70 during RY10–RY13.

The department's management efforts focused on providing subsistence hunting opportunity to resident hunters without exceeding harvest quotas while meeting the ANS and Intensive Management (IM) population and harvest objectives. Most of these goals have been consistently met since RY06 when core season dates in the middle of August, beginning on the August 10, were established. These core dates were selected to slow the rate of harvest by utilizing the motorized vehicle restrictions in the Delta and Macomb Plateau Controlled Use Areas (both located within the Macomb hunt area), to provide some motorized access opportunity, and to conduct the hunt outside of moose season. Since RY06:

- The ANS of 10–40 caribou has been met and 15 days of hunting subsistence hunting opportunity have been provided every year.
- There have been no emergency closures of the hunting season.



- Reported harvest and quotas have increased. Harvest was 21 in RY06 and 27 in RY07 when the quota was 25. Harvest was 48 in RY08 and 56 in RY09 when the quota was 50. Harvest averaged 69 (range 63–73) during RY10–RY13 with a harvest quota of 70.
- The harvest quota was only slightly exceeded in 4 of the 8 years by: 2 in RY07, 6 in RY09, 3 in RY11, and 2 in RY12. In RY07, RY09, RY11, and RY12, illegal kills accounted for most harvest above the quota.
- The IM population objective of 600–800 caribou has been met or exceeded every year.
- The IM harvest objective of 30–50 caribou has been met 6 of the 8 years (every year since RY08). During RY06 and RY07, the harvest quota was below the IM harvest objective.
- With the exception of an incomplete count in RY08, population estimates and/or minimum counts of the Macomb herd were the highest documented. A composition survey and incomplete census of the Macomb herd conducted in October 2013 resulted in a count of 1,510 caribou with 37 bulls:100 cows, 10 large bulls:100 cows and 15 calves:100 cows.

#### Motorized Season Information

- The Jarvis Creek–McCumber Creek area (on the west side of the Macomb hunt area) is easily accessed from the Richardson and Alaska highways. This area experiences the highest use of motorized vehicles for caribou hunting in the entire Macomb hunt area.
- RY08 was the first year in the recent history of RC835 during which the last days of the hunt occurred outside the DCUA motor vehicle use restriction time period.
- An average of 30 caribou has been harvested annually since RY08 during the motorized access hunt days. RY08 was the first year since RY02 that motorized access was allowed for hunting Macomb caribou in the Jarvis Creek–McCumber Creek area (west end of hunt area).
- An annual average of 56 RC835 hunters reported using ATVs and other off road vehicles in the Jarvis Creek–McCumber Creek area since RY08. There was an increasing trend in reported motorized use in this area during RY08–RY10. Reported motorized use in this area peaked in RY10 and trended downward from RY10–RY13.
- An annual average of 83 hunters (all transportation types) reported hunting the Jarvis Creek–McCumber Creek area since RY08. Reported hunter numbers peaked at 101 in RY10, stabilized during RY10–RY12, and decreased in RY13.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal. It is primarily an enforcement issue. The department has no conservation concerns because harvest is expected to remain stable and within sustained yield. The locking tag would assist Alaska Wildlife Troopers and hunters with identifying legally harvested caribou. The board should consider if the current regulatory approach and the proposed changes provide reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional direct costs for a private person to participate in the Macomb registration hunt. Department administrative costs would increase due to adding a drawing permit hunt.

**PROPOSAL 96 – 5 AAC 85.045(a)(18). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Tom Geyer

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Change the general moose season dates for the area known as Johnson Slough Island in Unit 20D to September 1–September 20 by adding this small area south of the north bank of the Tanana River to the hunt area for the season north of the north bank of the Tanana River.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Moose hunting regulations in the affected areas are as follows:

| <b>OPEN TO</b>             | <b>UNIT/AREA</b>  | <b>BAG LIMIT</b> | <b>PERMIT/HUNT #*</b> | <b>OPEN SEASON</b> |
|----------------------------|---|------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Residents only             | Unit 20D south of the north bank of the Tanana River and east of the west bank of the Johnson River, except that portion within the Robertson River drainage south of the confluence of east and west forks, and within 1 mile west of the west fork. <i>(Applies to islands in the Tanana River, including Johnson Slough Island.)</i> | One bull         | Harvest Ticket        | Sept 1–15          |
| Residents and Nonresidents | Unit 20D north of the north bank of the Tanana River and draining into the Volkmar River east to and including the Billy Creek drainage, excluding the Healy River drainage   | One bull         | Harvest Ticket        | Sept. 1–20         |

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

- An approximately 6 square mile island in the Tanana River would be removed from the southern Unit 20D moose hunt area and added to the northern Unit 20D moose hunt area.
- The resident moose hunting season dates for this island would change from September 1–15 to September 1–20.
- A September 1–20 nonresident moose season for 1 bull would be added for Johnson Slough Island.
- Change a clear and distinct, long standing boundary between 2 moose hunt areas in Unit 20D.

**BACKGROUND:** Johnson Slough Island is separated from the southern Unit 20D hunt area by a narrow slough and from northern Unit 20D by the Tanana River. Like other islands in the river, the moose season on the 6 mi<sup>2</sup> Johnson Slough Island is aligned with southern Unit 20D and is in the Fairbanks Non-subsistence Area (5 AAC 99.015).

The 2012 population estimate in northern Unit 20D was 2,400 observable moose with 13 calves:100 cows and 59 bulls:100 cows. In southern Unit 20D, the moose population was stable during 2010 through 2011, at 4,200 to 4,500 observable moose and a 2011 population composition of 35 calves:100 cows and 30 bulls:100 cows. Moose harvest in all of Unit 20D was also stable during 2010 through 2012 (range = 245–261). The total reported moose harvest since 2009 along both banks of this portion of the Tanana River, including Johnson Slough Island, was 29 and the reported number of hunters was 103. Changing this season is not likely to significantly increase harvest.

In 2008, the Board of Game extended the moose hunting season in the eastern portion of Unit 20D north of the Tanana River to September 1–20. In making this determination, the board considered the moose hunting regulations that identified the north bank of the Tanana River as separating Unit 20D for moose hunting.

The Alaska Wildlife Troopers have stated that the current boundary is an aid to them for law enforcement. The Troopers report this long standing boundary is understood and acknowledged by hunters, including the knowledge and acceptance that all islands of the Tanana River in Unit 20D are part of the southern Unit 20D moose hunt area.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocation issues associated with hunting season dates for this island. The department has no conservation concerns regarding this proposal. However, the board may wish to consider the impact to law enforcement.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional direct costs for a private person to participate the Unit 20D general season moose hunt or to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 97 – 5 AAC 85.045(a)(18). Hunting Season dates and bag limits for moose.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 20A.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** One antlerless moose by drawing permit (up to 2,000 permits may be issued) Aug. 15–Nov. 15 or by registration permit Aug. 25–Feb. 28; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf.

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

If adopted, this proposal would allow the department to continue to provide harvest tools and options for moose management. When surpluses are available, hunters will benefit from the opportunity to harvest cow moose in Unit 20A. Moose populations will benefit by maintaining densities compatible with the habitat.

Antlerless moose hunts, when determined to be beneficial, will likely improve or maintain the ability of moose habitat to support the current moose population. Additional hunting opportunity and harvest would be provided, and the additional harvest could contribute to meeting Intensive Management (IM) objectives. The the ability to constrain moose populations through harvest is necessary for successful implementation of Intensive Management programs.

**BACKGROUND:** Antlerless moose hunting seasons must be reauthorized annually. The goal is to provide for a wide range of public uses and benefits, and to protect the health and habitat of moose populations. Antlerless hunts are important for improving or maintaining the ability of habitat to support current populations. They also help regulate population growth, help to meet intensive management (IM) objectives for high levels of harvest, and provide subsistence hunters with a reasonable opportunity for success in obtaining moose for subsistence uses without reducing bull-to-cow ratios.

The purpose of antlerless moose hunts in Unit 20A is to regulate population growth, to meet the IM mandate for high levels of harvest, and to provide subsistence hunters with a reasonable opportunity for success in obtaining moose for subsistence uses in Unit 20A outside the Fairbanks Non-subsistence Area (part of the western Tanana Flats). The goal is to protect the health and habitat of the moose population and to provide for a wide range of public uses and benefits.

The number of moose in Unit 20A was estimated at 17,768 in 2003. Research indicated this high-density moose population was experiencing density-dependent effects, including low productivity, relatively light calf weights, and high removal rates of winter forage. The objective beginning in regulatory year 2004–2005 (RY04) was to reduce moose numbers to the population objective of 10,000–12,000 unless indicators of moose condition showed signs of improvement at higher densities. The Unit 20A population was estimated at 10,272–14,115 moose (90% confidence interval) in 2012.

The Unit 20A antlerless moose hunt can also provide additional harvest opportunity, which helps to meet human consumption interests and IM harvest objectives. In addition, this hunt has been successful in reversing moose population growth and in increasing moose harvest and hunter participation.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal. The objective is to maintain moose numbers within the population objective of 12,000–15,000 moose (the IM population objective adopted by the board in 2012) while monitoring indicators of moose and habitat condition for density-dependent responses. Harvest rates and population trends observed during RY96–RY11 indicate that harvest of cow moose at appropriate rates will allow for slow population growth while providing additional harvest to meet human consumption interests.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this hunt, or to the department

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**PROPOSAL 98 – 5 AAC 85.045(a)(18). Hunting season dates and bag limits for moose.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Jeff Barney

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Change the bag limit for moose to “any bull” in Unit 20A, except close to roads or other areas if needed to limit harvest.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

Residents:

General season harvest ticket

- one bull, spike-fork or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 brow tines in the Wood River Controlled Use Area (CUA), Yanert CUA, and Ferry Trail Management Area (MA).
- one bull, spike-fork or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 3 brow tines on at least one side in the remainder of Unit 20A.

Drawing permit (up to 1,000 permits unitwide, including up to 75 muzzleloader permits in combination with nonresident hunters)

- any bull

Nonresidents:

General season harvest ticket

- one bull, spike-fork or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 brow tines

Drawing permit (up to 75 permits in combination with resident hunters)

- one bull, spike-fork or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 brow tines, by muzzleloader

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The harvest of bull moose would increase and exceed sustainable limits.

**BACKGROUND:** The bag limit was changed from “any bull” (except the Ferry Trail MA and Yanert CUA, where antler restrictions were already in place) to spike-fork/50-inch regulation unitwide in 2002 due to overharvest of bull moose and declining bull-to-cow ratios that had fallen below the management objective of 30 bulls to 100 cows. Unitwide antler restrictions were effective in reducing reported harvests to sustainable levels (i.e., from 534–669 bulls to 328–461 bulls, 1996–2001) and the recovery of bull-to-cow ratios to desirable levels (i.e., from the low- to mid-twenties, 1999–2001 to mid- to high-thirties, 2004–2005).

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **OPPOSES** this proposal due to conservation concerns. Liberalizing the bag limit without commensurate reductions in season length would

result in overharvest of bull moose and subsequent decline in bull-to-cow ratios. If this proposal were adopted, the general season would need to be reduced from the current 25 days to as few as 15 days to limit harvest to sustainable levels. An “any bull” bag limit would attract additional hunters to the unit, although the exact number would be difficult to predict. This regulation would likely still require antler restrictions in portions of the unit (i.e., high access areas near roads and major trails). The proposer states that antler restrictions result in higher rates of wanton waste, which has been demonstrated in studies in the lower 48 states. However, the department’s position is that antler restrictions may reduce wounding rate loss because, in general, hunters are forced to take a closer look at bulls’ antlers to determine if they are legal, leading to better shot placement and, ultimately, lower wounding rates, which may more than offset losses attributed to wanton waste.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this hunt or to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 99 – 5 AAC 92.540(3)(F). Controlled Use Areas.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Robert Caywood

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Remove the Wood River Controlled Use Area in Unit 20A.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The Wood River Controlled Use Area consists of that portion of Unit 20A bounded on the north by the south side of the Rex Trail beginning at its intersection with the Totatlanika River, then easterly along the Rex Trail to Gold King airstrip, then from Gold King airstrip along the trail’s extension along the north side of Japan Hills to the Wood River; bounded on the east by the east bank of the Wood River, including the Wood River drainage upstream from and including the Snow Mountain Gulch Creek drainage; bounded on the south by the divide separating the Yanert River drainage from the drainages of Healy Creek, Moody Creek, Montana Creek, and the Wood River; and bounded on the west by the east bank of the Nenana River from the divide separating the drainage of the Yanert River and Montana Creek north to Healy Creek, then easterly along the south bank of Healy Creek to the north fork of Healy Creek, then along the north fork of Healy Creek to its headwaters, then along a straight line to the headwaters of Dexter Creek, then along the east bank of Dexter Creek to the Totatlanika River, and then down the east bank of the Totatlanika River to the Rex Trail.

The area is closed to the use of any motorized vehicle, except aircraft, for big game hunting, including the transportation of big game hunters, their hunting gear, or parts of big game, from August 1 through September 30; however, this provision does not prohibit motorized access via, or transportation of game on, the Parks Highway, or the transportation into the area of game meat that has been processed for human consumption.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Conflicts between hunters using airplanes, horses, and foot travel and those using motorized transportation (e.g. ATVs, ORVs, etc.) would likely increase.

**BACKGROUND:** The Wood River Controlled Use Area (WRCUA) encompasses 972 mi<sup>2</sup> in southcentral Unit 20A. It was established in 1976 to include the Yanert drainage to the south and the Tanana Flats to the north. Its purpose was to reduce conflicts between ATV users and airplane and horse users. Boats and aircraft were the only motorized access allowed for hunting. In 1977, the Tanana Flats portion was removed. In 1983, the Yanert drainage was removed and made into the Yanert Controlled Use Area with year-round restrictions on use of motorized vehicles for big game hunters, except aircraft. The same year, the WRCUA's current boundaries were adopted (with the exceptions that the boundary along the Wood River downstream from Snow Mountain Gulch was clarified in 2000 and the western boundary was changed and changed back again in the early 2000s) and motorized vehicles, except aircraft, were restricted from use for the purpose of hunting big game during Aug. 1-Sept. 30.

Most hunters currently access the area via aircraft and horse. Since its inception, the WRCUA has had substantial use by guides accessing the area by aircraft and horseback for moose, sheep, caribou, and grizzly bear. A portion of the area covered under this proposal was open to motorized access in the early 2000s after the board passed a proposal by the Middle Nenana Fish and Game Advisory Committee. Within 2 years, that same committee proposed that vehicle restriction be reinstated in that area and the board accommodated their request.

Moose antler restrictions already in place would prevent overharvest of bull moose. Opening the area to motorized access in September would likely increase the harvest of antlerless moose and help meet harvest objectives for that area (Zone 4). However, during September, antlerless hunts in this area are by drawing permit only; thus, increases in antlerless harvest would likely be modest.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal. This is an allocation and user conflict issue among hunters using different modes of transportation and should therefore be determined by the board. If this proposal is adopted, there may be substantial increases in use of the area and user conflicts, and modest increases in harvests. Moose antler and sheep horn restrictions and moose and caribou drawing permits already in place would prevent overharvest of those species.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this hunt. Department cost is not expected to increase.

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**PROPOSAL 100 – 5 AAC 92.540(3)(F). Controlled Use Areas.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Robert Caywood

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Move the northeast boundary of the Wood River Controlled Use Area (WRCUA) in Unit 20A from the east bank to the west bank of the Wood River.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The Wood River Controlled Use Area consists of that portion of Unit 20A bounded on the north by the south side of the Rex Trail beginning at its intersection with the Totatlanika River, then easterly along the Rex Trail to Gold King airstrip, then from Gold King airstrip along the trail's extension along the north side of

Japan Hills to the Wood River; **bounded on the east by the east bank of the Wood River**, including the Wood River drainage upstream from and including the Snow Mountain Gulch Creek drainage; bounded on the south by the divide separating the Yanert River drainage from the drainages of Healy Creek, Moody Creek, Montana Creek, and the Wood River; and bounded on the west by the east bank of the Nenana River from the divide separating the drainage of the Yanert River and Montana Creek north to Healy Creek, then easterly along the south bank of Healy Creek to the north fork of Healy Creek, then along the north fork of Healy Creek to its headwaters, then along a straight line to the headwaters of Dexter Creek, then along the east bank of Dexter Creek to the Totatlanika River, and then down the east bank of the Totatlanika River to the Rex Trail.

The area is closed to the use of any motorized vehicle, except aircraft, for big game hunting, including the transportation of big game hunters, their hunting gear, or parts of big game, from August 1 through September 30; however, this provision does not prohibit motorized access via, or transportation of game on, the Parks Highway, or the transportation into the area of game meat that has been processed for human consumption.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Access by off-road vehicles (e.g., ATVs, ORVs, etc.) along the east side of the Wood River would be allowed, which would result in conflicts between vehicle users and hunters using rafts, airplanes, and horses along this stretch of the Wood River.

**BACKGROUND:** The WRCUA encompasses 972 mi<sup>2</sup> in south-central Unit 20A. It was established in 1976 to include the Yanert drainage to the south and the Tanana Flats to the north. Its purpose was to reduce conflicts between ATV users and airplane and horse users. Boats and aircraft were the only motorized access allowed for hunting. In 1977, the Tanana Flats portion was removed. In 1983, the Yanert drainage was removed and made into the Yanert Controlled Use Area with year-round restrictions on use of motorized vehicles for big game hunters, except aircraft. The same year, the WRCUA's current boundaries were adopted (with the exceptions that the boundary along the Wood River downstream from Snow Mountain Gulch was clarified in 2000 and the western boundary was changed and changed back again in the early 2000s) and motorized vehicles, except aircraft, were restricted from use for the purpose of hunting big game during Aug. 1-Sept. 30.

Most hunters currently access the area via aircraft and horse. Since its inception, the WRCUA has had substantial use by guides accessing the area by aircraft and horseback for moose, sheep, caribou, and grizzly bear. A portion of the area covered under this proposal was open to motorized access in the early 2000s after the board passed a proposal by the Middle Nenana Fish and Game Advisory Committee. Within 2 years, that same committee proposed that vehicle restriction be reinstated in that area and the board accommodated their request.

Regarding moose, antler restrictions already in place would prevent overharvest of bull moose. Opening the area to motorized access in September would likely increase the harvest of antlerless moose and help meet harvest objectives for that area (Zone 4). However, during September, antlerless hunts in this area are by drawing permit only; thus, increases in antlerless harvest would likely be modest.



**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal. This is an allocation and user conflict issue among hunters using different modes of transportation and should therefore be determined by the board. If this proposal is adopted, there may be increases in use of the area and in user conflicts and modest increases in harvests. Moose antler and sheep horn restrictions and moose and caribou drawing permits already in place would prevent overharvest of those species.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this hunt. Department cost is not expected to increase.

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**PROPOSAL 101 – 5 AAC 85.045(a)(18). Season dates and bag limits for moose.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Create targeted moose hunts in Units 20A and 20B.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** There are no targeted moose hunts in Units 20A or 20B. Targeted hunts occur in Units 14A and 14B.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The department would have an effective management tool to allow hunting of moose in situations where there are public safety or nuisance concerns. Residents in Units 20A and 20B will likely benefit from reduced moose–vehicle collisions and moose–human conflicts. These seasons will likely provide additional moose for human consumption, and hunters who obtain a targeted hunt permits will benefit.

**BACKGROUND:** Targeted permit hunts have been an effective management tool in Unit 14A to address public safety and nuisance moose concerns in very small areas. The department would also like to use targeted hunts as an option for resolving these situations in Units 20A and 20B.

With high moose numbers in Units 20A and 20B, human–moose conflicts commonly arise, including many calls each year related to injured moose along roadways and in residential areas, and aggressive moose (particularly in Fairbanks residential areas). Sixty to eighty moose are hit annually in the Fairbanks Management Area portion of Unit 20B. Over 150 are hit annually outside the Fairbanks Management Area in the remainder of Unit 20B and in Unit 20A. The department also responds to approximately 70 nuisance or aggressive moose situations annually.

The high moose populations in these units can sustain harvest of these moose, benefitting both the moose populations and humans. Targeted hunts would provide meat to hunters and alleviate some of the human–moose problems now occurring. Targeted hunts would also allow the use of bow and arrow to harvest moose in areas where local ordinances or ADF&G regulations (i.e., Fairbanks Management Area) prohibit the use of firearms.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal, with the intention of using targeted hunts primarily to reduce moose–vehicle collisions by harvesting moose that habitually spend time along roadways and have a high likelihood of being injured by highway vehicles or have already been injured. Targeted hunts would be implemented by

selecting hunters at random from an applicant pool. They will be required to respond quickly to harvest moose from specifically defined “targeted” moose–vehicle collision or nuisance areas.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this hunt. Cost to the department to administer this hunt is expected to be minimal.

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**PROPOSAL 102 – 5 AAC 85.045(18). Season dates and bag limits for moose.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Mark Albert

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Allow the take of any bull moose in Unit 20A and the antler-restricted portions of Unit 20B by utilizing 2 harvest tickets in the possession of 2 hunters, both of which must be in the field at the same time. The proposer’s statement that this hunt would benefit those opposing antlerless hunts suggests that he is interested in changing the bag limit for resident hunters only.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Resident seasons for moose:

Unit 20A:

- spike-fork or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 brow tines in the Wood River Controlled Use Area (CUA), Yanert CUA, and Ferry Trail Management Area (MA);
- 3 brow tines on at least one side (Remainder of Unit 20A);
- unitwide “any bull” bag limit by drawing permit (up to 1,000 permits).

Unit 20B:

- spike-fork or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 brow tines (Minto Flats MA);
- spike-fork or greater antlers (Fairbanks MA);
- any bull (remainder of Unit 20B).

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Harvest of bull moose would increase and exceed sustainable limits.

**BACKGROUND:** In Unit 20A, the bag limit was changed from any bull (except the Ferry Trail MA and Yanert CUA, where antler restrictions were already in place) to spike-fork/50-inch, regulation unitwide in 2002 due to overharvest of bull moose and declining bull-to-cow ratios that had fallen below the management objective. Unitwide antler restrictions were effective in reducing reported harvests to sustainable levels (i.e., from 534–669 bulls to 328–461 bulls, 1996–2001) and the recovery of bull-to-cow ratios to desirable levels (i.e., from the low- to mid-twenties, 1999–2001 to mid- to high- thirties, 2004–2005). In the antler-restricted portion of Unit 20B (i.e., the Minto Flats Management Area) antler restrictions have been in place for decades and have been successful in maintaining bull-to-cow ratios at desirable levels (i.e.,  $\bar{x}$  = 31 bulls: 100 cows, 1994–2010).

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **OPPOSES** this proposal due to conservation concerns. Liberalizing the bag limit on bulls without reductions in season length would likely result in overharvest of bull moose and subsequent decline in bull-to-cow ratios. Thus, if this proposal were adopted, the department would request that general season be shortened. A bag limit of any bull would attract additional hunters to these units, although precise numbers would be difficult to predict. The department would also request that antler restrictions in portions of the units (i.e., high access areas near roads and major trails) be retained. The department's current harvest reporting system would result in duplicate and inflated harvest numbers. The department would need to design a new harvest reporting program to accommodate this regulation. Adoption of this regulation would likely create enforcement issues and challenges.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this hunt. There would be additional cost to the department to design and administer a general season harvest reporting scheme that would accurately capture 2 hunters reporting the take of one moose on separate harvest reports.

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**PROPOSAL 103 – 5 AAC 92.011. Taking of game by proxy.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Limit the number of times a person can proxy hunt for moose in Units 20A and 20B to not more than once per regulatory year.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** There is no limit to the number of times or number of moose a person may take by proxy in Units 20A and 20B, but a person may not be a proxy for more than one beneficiary at a time.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? The proposal would shift allocation of moose from hunters using multiple proxies to those preferring not to proxy or only preferring a single proxy. It is not known whether people requiring proxies to obtain food will have trouble finding suitable proxy hunters under the change, but it is a possibility.**

**BACKGROUND:** Some individuals are harvesting multiple moose during antlerless moose registration hunts. During the 2004–2012 hunting seasons, an average of 18 of 347 (5%) cow moose harvested in Unit 20A were taken by proxy and 7 of 222 (3%) harvested in Unit 20B were taken by proxy.

Limiting the number of proxies may affect the ability of some Alaskans to obtain moose for food. The board should consider the effect of this proposal on reasonable opportunities for subsistence in those portions of 20A and 20B outside of the Fairbanks Non-subsistence Area, as well as general hunting opportunity in the Non-subsistence Area.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocation of proxy hunting among users.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this hunt, or additional cost to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 104 – 5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting black bear with the use of bait or scent lures.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Allow harvest of brown bears at registered black bear bait sites in Units 20A and 20B.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Harvest of brown bear at registered black bear bait sites in Units 20A and 20B is prohibited. Black bear baiting is authorized during April 15–June 30.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Hunters would have additional opportunity to harvest a brown bear in Units 20A and 20B. Additional opportunity would likely lead to an increase in the harvest of brown bears in these units.

**BACKGROUND:** The Board of Game recently liberalized methods and means in some areas of the state to allow the take of brown bears at registered black bear bait stations (over bait). Beginning in fall 2012, the board-authorized take of brown bears over bait in the Interior in Units 20C, 20E and 21D. Units 20C and 20E have only a spring bear baiting season. This proposal recommends that the take of brown bears over bait be expanded to include Units 20A and 20B, which also have a spring-only black bear baiting season. This would increase opportunity to harvest brown bears in these units and likely lead to increased harvest.

Units 20A and 20B had 68 and 479 registered black bear bait stations during spring 2013. In adjacent Unit 20C, 3 brown bears were reported taken over bait at 105 registered black bear bait stations during spring 2013. Applying baiting effort and harvest information from Unit 20C, the estimated harvest of brown bear over bait would be approximately 14 bears in Unit 20B, where average harvest was 13 brown bears during regulatory years (RYs) 2008–2009 through 2012–2013 (RY08–RY12). We estimate harvest of brown bears over bait would be approximately 2 bears in Unit 20A, where the average harvest was 23 brown bears during RY08–RY12. It is unknown to what degree brown bear harvest over bait would add to the total annual harvest (additive) or merely substitute for other harvest (compensatory).

It is difficult to evaluate sustainability of the increased harvest that is expected if this proposal is adopted because biologically acceptable harvest rates for brown bears are not well understood. There is much empirical data to indicate that previously-accepted harvest rates were unnecessarily conservative. Also, there is much circumstantial evidence that previous brown bear population estimates in Units 20A and 20B are inaccurate, resulting in significant underestimates of the actual population numbers. In addition, those estimates were obtained during the 1990s and are outdated. Population increases in both units are indicated by increasing frequency of sightings and harvests over the past 5 years that consistently exceeded predictions of

sustainability. In Unit 20A, the outdated estimate of sustainable harvest at an 8% harvest rate is 12 brown bears, while reported harvest during RY08–RY12 averaged 23 annually. In Unit 20B, the outdated estimate of sustainable annual harvest at 8% is 9 brown bears, while reported take during RY08–RY12 averaged 13 annually.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal. This proposal would increase opportunity to harvest brown bears and likely lead to increased harvest in these units. Units 20A and 20B have been designated for Intensive Management of moose and additional harvest of brown bears may increase moose calf survival, recruitment, and harvest in localized areas. Furthermore, increased take of brown bears near populated areas (i.e., Fairbanks, North Pole, Salcha, Easter, Nenana, Clear–Anderson, and Healy) may reduce bear–human conflicts and take in defense of life and property (DLP). The department would monitor grizzly bear harvests closely, particularly during the first year, and take action if needed.

If the board wishes to adopt salvage requirements with this proposal, the department requests standardization of the requirements for both black and brown bears in Units 20A and 20B.

Current black bear salvage requirements in Unit 20A are:

- January 1–May 31, edible meat.
- June 1–December 31, either the hide or edible meat.

Current black bear salvage requirements in Unit 20B are:

- January 1–May 31, hide, skull, and edible meat.
- June 1–December 31, skull and either the hide or edible meat.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this hunt. Because the department already issues a large number of black bear baiting permits for these units, additional cost to the department to administer this hunt is expected to be minimal.

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**PROPOSAL 105 – 5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting black bear with the use of bait or scent lures.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Lee Olsen

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Allow the harvest of brown bears at registered black bear bait sites in Units 20A and 20B.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The harvest of brown bears at registered black bear bait sites in Units 20A and 20B is prohibited. Black bear baiting is authorized during April 15–June 30.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Hunters would have additional opportunity to harvest brown bears in Units 20A and 20B. Additional opportunity would likely lead to an increase in the harvest of brown bears in these units.

**BACKGROUND:** The Board of Game recently liberalized methods and means in some areas of the state to allow the take of brown bears at registered black bear bait stations (over bait). Beginning in fall 2012, the board authorized take of brown bears over bait in the Interior in Units 20C, 20E and 21D. Units 20C and 20E have only a spring bear baiting season. This proposal recommends that the take of brown bears over bait be expanded to include Units 20A and 20B, which also have a spring-only black bear baiting season. This would increase opportunity to harvest brown bears in these units and likely lead to increased harvest.

Units 20A and 20B had 68 and 479 registered black bear bait stations during spring 2013. In adjacent Unit 20C, 3 brown bears were reported taken over bait at 105 registered black bear bait stations during spring 2013. Applying baiting effort and harvest information from Unit 20C, the estimated harvest of brown bears over bait would be approximately 14 bears in Unit 20B, where average harvest was 13 brown bears during regulatory years (RYs) 2008–2009 through 2012–2013 (RY08–RY12). Harvest of brown bears over bait would be approximately 2 bears in Unit 20A, where the average harvest was 23 brown bears during RY08–RY12. It is unknown to what degree brown bear harvest over bait would add to the total annual harvest (additive) or merely substitute for other harvest (compensatory).

It is difficult to evaluate sustainability of the increased harvest that is expected if this proposal is adopted because biologically acceptable harvest rates for brown bears are not well understood. There is much empirical data to indicate that previously-accepted harvest rates were unnecessarily conservative. Also, there is much circumstantial evidence that previous brown bear population estimates in Units 20A and 20B are inaccurate, resulting in significant underestimates of the actual population numbers. In addition, those estimates were obtained during the 1990s and are outdated. Estimated population increases in both units are indicated by increasing frequency of sightings and harvests over the past 5 years that consistently exceeded predictions of sustainability. In Unit 20A, the outdated estimate of sustainable harvest at an 8% harvest rate is 12 brown bears, while reported harvest during RY08–RY12 averaged 23 annually. In Unit 20B, the outdated estimate of sustainable annual harvest at 8% is 9 brown bears, while reported take during RY08–RY12 averaged 13 annually.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal. This proposal would increase opportunity to harvest brown bears and likely lead to increased harvest in these units. Units 20A and 20B have been designated for Intensive Management of moose and additional harvest of brown bears may increase moose calf survival, recruitment, and harvest in localized areas. Furthermore, increased take of brown bears near populated areas (i.e., Fairbanks, North Pole, Salcha, Easter, Nenana, Clear–Anderson, and Healy) may reduce bear–human conflicts and take in defense of life and property (DLP). The department would monitor grizzly bear harvests closely, particularly during the first year, and take action if needed. The board may wish to **TAKE NO ACTION** after consideration of proposal 104 which also concerns harvest of brown bears at registered black bear bait sites in Units 20A and 20B.

If the board wishes to adopt salvage requirements with this proposal, the department requests standardization of the requirements for both black and brown bears in Units 20A and 20B.

Current black bear salvage requirements in Unit 20A are:

- January 1–May 31, edible meat.
- June 1–December 31, either the hide or edible meat.

Current black bear salvage requirements in Unit 20B are:

- January 1–May 31, hide, skull, and edible meat.
- June 1–December 31, skull and either the hide or edible meat.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this hunt. Because the department already issues a large number of black bear baiting permits for these units, additional cost to the department to administer this hunt is expected to be minimal.

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**PROPOSAL 106 – 5 AAC85.045(a)(18). Season dates and bag limits for moose.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Reauthorize antlerless moose seasons in Unit 20B.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Unit 20B has both drawing and registration permits available to residents to harvest antlerless moose. The Minto Flats Management Area registration hunt RM785 for antlerless moose is October 15–February 28. The Fairbanks Management Area antlerless moose drawing permits DM786 and DM788 have a season of September 1–November 27. The Richardson Highway “any moose” drawing permit, DM783, has a season of September 21–February 28. The “Remainder of Unit 20B” antlerless moose permit hunts are divided into 16 hunt areas with 3 different seasons beginning August 15 and ending November 15.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Antlerless moose hunts in Unit 20B would be reauthorized.

**BACKGROUND:** Antlerless moose hunting seasons must be reauthorized annually. This proposal will allow the department to continue the current management strategy. The goal is to provide for a wide range of public uses and benefits, and to protect the health and habitat of moose populations. Antlerless hunts are important for improving or maintaining the ability of moose habitat to support current populations. They also help regulate moose population growth, help to meet intensive management (IM) objectives for high levels of harvest, and provide subsistence hunters with a reasonable opportunity for success in obtaining moose for subsistence uses without reducing bull-to-cow ratios.

*Fairbanks Management Area (FMA)* — hunt provides opportunity to harvest a surplus of antlerless moose in the FMA and potentially reduce moose–vehicle collisions and nuisance moose problems.

The number of moose–vehicle collisions in the FMA is high and poses significant safety risks to motorists. In addition, moose nuisance issues continue to place significant demands on property owners. To increase hunting opportunity and harvest and reduce moose–vehicle collisions, the department incrementally increased the number of drawing permits for antlerless moose in the FMA during regulatory years 1999–2000 through 2010–2011 (RY99–RY10). Moose–vehicle collisions and moose nuisance problems have declined during RY06–RY12, presumably in part due to the higher antlerless moose harvests of 35–55 during RY09–RY12.

*Minto Flats Management Area (MFMA)* — The primary purpose of this antlerless hunt is to provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses and to stop growth of a high density population.

Population estimation surveys indicate the MFMA moose density is high ( $>4$  moose/mi<sup>2</sup>). The annual reported harvest of antlerless moose taken during RY96–RY12 was approximately 1% to 2% of the MFMA moose population and is likely sustainable.

*Remainder of Unit 20B* — The antlerless moose harvest in this area is designed to curb growth of this population that has surpassed the upper limit of the IM population objective of 12,000–15,000 moose and helps to meet IM harvest objectives for Unit 20B. Increasing population estimates (from 12,313 in 2001 to 20,173 in 2009) and high calf:cow ratios (37–43:100 during 2003–2009) indicate numbers are increasing. Moreover, moose densities are relatively high (2.2 moose/mi<sup>2</sup>) in central Unit 20B surrounding Fairbanks.

The drawing permit hunts for antlerless moose were approved by the board in 2006 to take advantage of relatively high and increasing moose numbers in central Unit 20B. The goal is to increase the cow harvest until the growth is stopped to prevent over-use of the habitat. The harvest from drawing permits has ranged from 258 and 265 cow moose in 2009 and 2010, respectively, to 294 and 271 cow moose in 2011 and 2012. In combination with the registration antlerless permits in the MFMA, the department estimates the current antlerless harvest at approximately 2% of the total Unit 20B population of approximately 20,000 moose.

To mitigate hunter conflicts, hunters are spread out over space and time. Each of 16 hunt areas has permits in 3 time periods: one before the general hunt, one during, and one after. This way, there are only a few hunters at a time in each permit area, yet the harvest is 400–500 cows.

Mortality from vehicle and train collisions has been high: averaging 149 moose killed annually by motor vehicles in Unit 20B. Road kill may be reduced by focusing harvest in the central Unit 20B where road density is highest.

Finally, extensive burns in north-central Unit 20B will provide excellent habitat in the future. With improving habitat, continued high predator harvest, and relatively mild winters, the department expects continued high productivity and survival of moose, along with increased yield.



**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval or failure of this proposal is not expected to result in additional direct cost to a private person or to the department.

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**PROPOSAL 107 – 5 AAC85.045(a)(18). Hunting Seasons and bag limits for moose.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Ken Lamb

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Open a nonresident drawing permit hunt in Unit 20B within the Minto Flats Management Area (MFMA) during September 8–25 for bull moose. Eight permits would be issued, of which half would be allocated to guided hunters who have a signed contract with a registered guide licensed for the area.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Only resident moose hunting seasons occur in the MFMA. There are 2 general season hunts for bulls, one during August 21–27 and one during September 8–25, and a registration hunt for antlerless moose during October 15–February 28.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** A nonresident drawing permit hunt for bull moose in the MFMA would be created. The proposal states that 8 permits would be issued, so the potential effect on the moose population would be minor.

**BACKGROUND:** The most recent (2010) population estimate for the MFMA is 4,182 moose and the bull:cow ratio is 34:100. The harvestable surplus is 209 bulls and the average harvest during regulatory years 2008–2009 through 2012–2013 was 136 bulls. There is a positive customary and traditional use finding, and the board has set the amount of moose reasonably necessary for subsistence uses at 20–40.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocation issue. The department has no conservation concerns. The board should consider if adding a nonresident season would still allow reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional direct cost to a private person. Department cost would increase due to administration of an additional drawing permit hunt.

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**PROPOSAL 108 – 5AAC92.530(8). Management areas.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Lee Olsen

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Eliminate the Minto Flats Management Area (MFMA) restrictions on airboats.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The MFMA in Unit 20B is open to moose hunting by resident hunters only, except aircraft and airboats may not be used for moose hunting or to transport moose, moose hunters or moose hunting equipment within the management area.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Use of airboats for moose hunting in MFMA would be allowed. This would result in increases in number of hunters, harvest, and competition between hunters using airboats for transportation and those who do not. Significant increase in harvest may occur, requiring a shortened hunting season. User conflicts between hunters using airboats and hunters from Minto, Nenana, Fairbanks, and elsewhere who do not use this transportation method, may occur.

**BACKGROUND:** The MFMA was established in 1979 because of concerns about increased hunting pressure, competition between hunters using different methods of transportation, and a declining moose population. Airboats have been prohibited in the MFMA since 1995. It is an area with a positive customary and traditional use finding that currently has a high density of moose and a large number of users. It is unclear to what extent the access restrictions were originally intended to provide reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses. The amount reasonably necessary for subsistence is 20–40 moose. The board should consider whether reasonable opportunity for subsistence would still be provided if this proposal were adopted.

The most recent (2010) population estimate for the MFMA is 4,182 moose. The harvestable surplus is 209 bulls and the average harvest in regulatory years 2008–2009 through 2012–2013 was 136 bulls. Removing the prohibition on airboats would not create a biological concern at this time because moose numbers are high and the harvest can be regulated by seasons and bag limits (e.g., early seasons, antler restrictions, quotas). However, at their 2012 meeting, the board implemented major changes in hunting seasons in the MFMA, with the consensus of both the Fairbanks Advisory Committee and the Minto–Nenana Advisory Committee. Long-standing issues concerning reasonable opportunity for subsistence use, availability of permits, and season length and timing were addressed and seem to be working well.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal. This is an allocation and user conflict issue among hunters using different modes of transportation and should be determined by the board. Because of the diversity of the users who access the MFMA it has been difficult to balance user preferences with statutory, regulatory, and management requirements. The department anticipates increased competition between hunters who use airboats and other hunters if this proposal is adopted. Also, allowing the use of airboats may increase harvest and shift a significant proportion of the harvest to this efficient mode of transportation.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional direct cost to a private person, or the department.

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**PROPOSAL 109 – 5AAC85.045(a)(18). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Change the muzzleloader moose drawing hunt (DM782) in Unit 20B to a registration hunt, change the season to November 10–December 10, and enlarge the hunt area to include the Butte Creek drainage of the Salcha River drainage.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Resident hunters may harvest one bull by drawing permit with a muzzleloader during November 1–30 in the Middle Fork of the Chena River and Salcha River drainages upstream of Goose Creek. A total of 60 permits are available for the hunt.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** There would be a small increase in the hunt area size and more hunters would be allowed to participate because of potentially better traveling conditions. It is likely the harvest would increase slightly, but the hunt would still be difficult.

**BACKGROUND:** The DM782 muzzleloader hunt was adopted by the Board of Game in 2010 as a replacement for the popular November muzzleloader moose hunt in Unit 20A that had been modified. The DM782 hunt was initiated in 2011 when 60 “any moose” permits were issued by drawing and 1 cow moose was harvested. In 2012, in response to several public proposals, the hunt was changed to “bull only” and no moose were harvested. Access into the hunt area is extremely difficult, especially during November when travel conditions are poor. As a result, interest has been extremely low (e.g., for 2013, the department made 60 drawing permits available and only 15 people applied for permits).

A majority of this hunt is in eastern Unit 20B, which has a population of about 2,310 moose. The high bull:cow ratio (40 bulls:100 cows) indicates that the population is lightly harvested.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocation issue. The department has no conservation concerns. Note that Proposal 110 proposes to eliminate this hunt.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional direct cost to a private person. Costs to the department may decrease because administering a registration permit hunt will likely be less time-intensive than offering undersubscribed DM782 permits on a first-come, first-served basis.

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**PROPOSAL 110 – 5 AAC 85.045(a)(18). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Eliminate the muzzleloader drawing permit hunt (DM782) for bull moose in the Middle Fork of the Chena River and Upper Salcha River in Unit 20B.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Resident hunters may harvest one bull by drawing permit with a muzzleloader in the Middle Fork of the Chena River and Salcha River upstream of Goose Creek. A total of 60 permits are available for the hunt.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This muzzleloader hunt would be eliminated.

**BACKGROUND:** The DM782 muzzleloader hunt was adopted by the Board of Game in 2010 as a replacement for a popular November muzzleloader moose hunt in Unit 20A that had been modified. The DM782 hunt was initiated in 2011 when 60 “any moose” permits were issued by

drawing, and 1 cow moose was harvested. In 2012, in response to several public proposals, the hunt was changed to “bull only” and no moose were harvested. Access into the hunt area is extremely difficult, especially during November when travel conditions are poor. As a result, interest has been extremely low (e.g., for the 2013 season, 60 drawing permits were available and only 15 people applied for the permits).

A majority of this hunt is in eastern Unit 20B, which has a population of about 2,310 moose. The high bull:cow ratio (40 bulls:100 cows) indicates that the population is lightly harvested.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The board may wish to **TAKE NO ACTION** after consideration of proposal 109 which also concerns changes in the Unit 20B muzzleloader hunt.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional direct costs to a private person. Cost to the department will likely decrease because less time will be spent administering undersubscribed DM782 permits through a time-intensive process of offering the permits to the public on a first-come, first-served basis.

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### **PROPOSAL 111 – 5 AAC 85.045(a)(18) Moose hunting seasons and bag limits.**

**PROPOSED BY:** John Giuchici

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** In Unit 20B, lengthen the fall moose season for residents and nonresidents by 5 days to September 1–25 in the Salcha River drainage upstream from and including Goose Creek in Unit 20B.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Unit 25B Salcha River drainage upstream from and including Goose Creek

Residents and nonresidents general season:

- One bull during September 1–20.
- One bull during September 21–30 by bow and arrow only.

Residents drawing hunt:

- One bull during November 1–30 by muzzleloader only.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Bull harvest would likely increase.

**BACKGROUND:** Historically, this remote portion of eastern Unit 20B, including both the Middle Fork of the Chena and upper Salcha Rivers, had a bull season that was 5 days longer than the Remainder of 20B. Because of difficult access and a higher bull:cow ratio than the Remainder of Unit 20B, this has not been a conservation concern. However, in 2010, the board lengthened the season in Remainder of Unit 20B, aligning that season with the longer season in the Middle Fork of the Chena River and Salcha River upstream and including Goose Creek.

The 2012 population estimate for all of eastern Unit 20B is 2,310 moose with an estimated 40 bulls:100 cows. The average reported harvest during regulatory years 2008–2009 through 2012–2013 in the drainages of the Middle Fork of the Chena River and Salcha River upstream and including Goose Creek was 33 moose and the harvestable surplus is approximately 116 moose. This population can sustain increased hunting opportunity and increased bull harvest. Harvest has stayed consistent and the bull:cow ratio has remained relatively high in this portion of Unit 20B throughout the changes in season in the remainder of Unit 20B; therefore, a longer season with an increase in harvest will likely not be detrimental to the bull:cow ratio in the area.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal with **AMENDMENTS**. The department recommends the board consider also lengthening the season by 5 days in the drainages of the Middle Fork of the Chena River. This area has historically been linked to the upper Salcha River drainage because it has similar habitat and moose density. The area is difficult to access, the bull:cow ratio is high, and the harvest has been stable.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional direct cost to a private person, or the department.

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**PROPOSAL 112 – 5 AAC 84.045(a)(18) Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose, and 5 AAC 92.530. Management Areas.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Create a youth drawing permit hunt for antlerless moose in Unit 20B, and create a Unit 20B Youth Hunt Management Area, with specific hunt conditions.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Moose hunting seasons in Unit 20B include the following for resident hunters only:

- One antlerless moose by permit, August 20–November 15, up to 1,500 permits may be issued. The antlerless hunt areas are broken into 17 hunt zones with 3 hunt periods in each zone so that hunters are spread throughout western and central Unit 20B. There are currently no youth-only hunts in Unit 20B.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** About 20% of the antlerless moose drawing permits issued in central and western Unit 20B would be allocated to youth hunters, with a season of August 5–14. The number of antlerless permits would not increase; therefore, there would not be an increase in harvest of antlerless moose.

**BACKGROUND:** At the Region III meeting in 2012, the Board of Game encouraged the department to identify hunting opportunities for youth in the Interior. Unit 20B has approximately 18,000–20,000 moose and the department issues about 1,000 antlerless moose permits in central and western portions of Unit 20B outside the Fairbanks Management Area. This provides ample opportunity to allocate a portion (about 20%) of the drawing permits to youth hunters who are ages 10 to 17. Creating this hunt would give young people a greater

chance to harvest a moose before school starts, and it could easily be integrated into the department's Unit 20B moose harvest strategy.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocation issue. The department submitted this proposal at the request of the Board of Game to identify youth hunting opportunity in the Interior. If the board wishes to adopt this proposal, they should consider adopting specific hunt conditions consistent with other youth hunts.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this hunt. Cost to the department to administer this hunt is expected to be minimal.

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**PROPOSAL 113 – 5 AAC 85.055(8). Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Dave Machacek

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Create a drawing permit youth hunt for one Dall sheep per lifetime in the remainder of Unit 20 during July 20–August 5. While not specified in the proposal, a Youth Hunt Management Area would also have to be created in the Remainder of Unit 20 to specify drawing permit hunt conditions listed by the proposer that include:

- Successful completion of a department-approved Hunter Education Course.
- Accompaniment by a licensed resident adult that is at least 21 years of age or older.
- Prohibition of proxy hunting.
- Hunter age requirement of 10–17.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

For residents and nonresidents in:

- Unit 20D within the Tok Management Area, 1 ram with full-curl horn or larger every 4 regulatory years by permit, August 10–25 and August 26–September 20.
- Units 20A and 20D portions within the Delta Controlled Use Area, 1 ram with full curl horn or larger by permit, August 10–25 and August 26–September 20.
- Units 20D and 20E north of the Alaska Highway and north and west of the north bank of the Middle Fork of the Fortymile River upstream from and including the Joseph Creek drainage (Mount Harper hunt area), 1 ram with full curl horn or larger by permit, August 10–September 20 .
- Unit 20 Remainder, 1 ram with full curl horn or larger by harvest ticket, August 10–September 20.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** There would be 17 days of opportunity for youth hunters to hunt any sheep before the general season opens in Unit 20 outside the Tok Management Area (DM102, DM103), Delta Controlled Use Area (DM203, DM204), and the Mt. Harper drawing permit area (DM206).

**BACKGROUND:** In the Remainder of Unit 20, most of the available sheep and sheep hunting opportunity is in Unit 20A. The department believes that most of the harvest that may result from this hunt will come from this unit. A unit-wide survey has not been conducted in Unit 20A; however, survey results from the trend count area in central Unit 20A indicate the sheep population had been increasing or stable during 2008–2012. The late onset of spring in 2013 likely caused the lowest lamb:ewe ratio (11 lambs:100 ewes) on record in the area; therefore, the population will experience poor recruitment from this year’s cohort and likely decline. The average annual harvest in all of Unit 20A for regulatory years 2008–2009 through 2012–2013 (RY08–RY12) was 100 sheep.

Unit 20B has a small, low density sheep population that mainly inhabits the upper Chena River and upper Salcha River drainages. The department has not conducted surveys on this population. Access is difficult and the 5-year average (RY08–RY12) annual harvest is 4 rams.

Unit 20E, outside of the Mount Harper (DS206) and Tok Management Area (DM102, DM103) drawing permit areas, also has a small, low density sheep population. Most inhabit drainages of the Charley River and the Glacier Mountain Controlled Use Area. The average annual harvest in this portion of Unit 20E during RY08–RY12 was 4 rams.

Units 20C and 20F typically do not have sheep populations that could be hunted. Most sheep in Unit 20C are in Denali National Park, and therefore cannot be hunted. In Unit 20F, sheep rarely occur.

Most Unit 20D sheep are either in the Delta Controlled Use Area (DS203, DS204) or the Mount Harper (DS206) drawing permit area; therefore, there is little hunting opportunity outside these areas.

A drawing permit for any sheep would require that few permits could be issued and harvest would need to be spread throughout the unit. Such a hunt would be contrary to the full-curl management strategy used in most of the state to protect sheep populations from unsustainable harvest.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocation issue. The department has no conservation concerns if the number of permits is low, so that potential harvest of ewes and small rams does not affect these populations. The board may wish to **TAKE NO ACTION** on this proposal given that the board has established a committee to evaluate this, and other, sheep management options over the next year.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this hunt. Cost to the department would increase due to administration of an additional drawing hunt.

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**PROPOSAL 114 – 5 AAC 92.150(d). Evidence of sex and identity.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Al Barrette

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** There are two parts to this proposal. The first would repeal the requirement to leave evidence of sex on black bears harvested in Unit 20B. The second part would replace the word “sex” with the word “gender” in regulation.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Black bears harvested in Unit 20B must be sealed. Until sealing, evidence of sex must remain attached to the hide (in the spring) or to either the hide or meat (in the fall). The word “sex” is used in regulation.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Hunters would no longer be required to leave evidence of sex attached to bears that are harvested. This would lead to less accurate sex identification of black bears harvested in Unit 20B.

**BACKGROUND:** In 2010, the sealing requirement for black bears in Region III was eliminated in all units except Unit 20B, which has the highest harvest of black bears in the region. Hunters harvest an average of 125 black bears annually in Unit 20B and register an average of 479 black bear bait stations.

Because of the popularity of black bear hunting in Unit 20B, easy access, and high harvest, it is necessary to continue sealing these bears to closely monitor harvest over time and ensure that the current high harvest is sustainable. Sex ratio is an important metric in determining sustainability of black bear harvest. If the harvest of females in Unit 20B exceeded that of males, especially over an extended period of time, it would be an indication that harvest may not be sustainable and would prompt reevaluation of department management strategy. Leaving the sex organs attached allows the department to determine with certainty the sex of bears presented for sealing.

Changing the word “sex” to the word “gender” in 5 AAC 92.150 would not change the definition of the words or the intent of this regulation. In addition, the term evidence of “sex” is used in many different regulations in Title 5 of the Alaska Administrative Code. Changing it in this regulation would create inconsistencies in the regulations.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **OPPOSES** this proposal. Evidence of sex is important in ensuring that the department obtains the most accurate sex ratios possible to help evaluate sustainability of the harvest. Replacing the word “sex” with the word “gender” in the regulation would result in an inconsistency with other regulations in Title 5.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for private persons, or the department.

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## **PROPOSAL 115 – 5 AAC 85.045(a)(18). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Smokey Don Duncan

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Require resident hunters in Unit 20C to harvest bull moose with spike/fork antlers or 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 3 or more brow tines on at least one side; and extend the nonresident hunting season by 5 days to September 1-25.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**



- Residents: one bull moose, September 1-25.
- Nonresidents: one bull moose with 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 4 or more brown tines on at least one side, September 1-20.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Resident harvest opportunity would be reduced and nonresident harvest opportunity would be increased.

**BACKGROUND:** The most recent moose population estimate (November 2011) for Unit 20C is 3,801 moose outside Denali National Park and Preserve, with a density of 0.6 moose/mi<sup>2</sup>. Estimated ratios of 41 calves:100 cows and 49 bulls:100 cows suggest moderate calf recruitment and light hunting pressure.

The average harvest during regulatory years 2008–2009 through 2012–2013 (RY08-RY12) was 132 bull moose (123 by residents, 9 by nonresidents). The harvestable surplus is 190 bulls and the intensive management (IM) harvest objective is 150-400 moose. The amount reasonably necessary for subsistence (ANS) in Units 20C and 20F combined is 100–130 moose.

In 2012, the board extended the resident moose season by 5 days to attempt to increase harvest toward meeting the IM harvest objective. The nonresident season was also extended, but antler restrictions were added for nonresident hunters in order to address concerns that subsistence hunters need more opportunity than nonresidents. In RY12, the first year of the longer season, the reported harvest was 153 moose (152 by residents, 1 by a nonresident), which met the IM harvest objective.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **OPPOSES** antler restrictions for residents in Unit 20C because it would unnecessarily reduce harvest. Current harvests are sustainable.. Further, the board lengthened the resident season in Unit 20C in 2012 to increase harvest to work toward meeting the IM harvest objective. With a high bull:cow ratio, harvest below estimated harvestable surplus and difficult access to a large portion of the unit, the population can sustain harvest at the current rate. Adopting this proposal would decrease harvest and the IM harvest objective would not be met.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for private persons, or the department.

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**PROPOSAL 116 – 5 AAC92.540. Controlled use areas.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Adam Lammers

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Create the Nenana–Totchaket Resource Development Corridor Controlled Use Area in Unit 20C that would exclude highway and ATV/ORV use for moose hunting, including the transportation of moose hunters, their hunting gear, or parts of moose during September 1–25.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

- Residents: one bull moose, September 1-25.
- Nonresidents: one bull moose with 50-inch antlers, or antlers with 4 or more brown tines on at least one side, September 1-20.

There are no restrictions on transportation methods.

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

Controlled Use Area (CUA) would be created along the Nenana–Totchaket road that begins at 10<sup>th</sup> street in Nenana and extends due west about 25 miles towards the Kantishna River. The CUA would restrict the use of motorized vehicles for moose hunting, limiting hunting opportunity along this new road.

**BACKGROUND:** The most recent moose population estimate (November 2011) for Unit 20C is 3,801 moose outside Denali National Park and Preserve, with a density of 0.6 moose/mi<sup>2</sup>. Estimated ratios of 41 calves:100 cows and 49 bulls:100 cows suggest moderate calf recruitment and light hunting pressure.

The average harvest during regulatory years 2008–2009 through 2012–2013 (RY08-RY12) was 132 bull moose (123 by residents, 9 by nonresidents). The harvestable surplus is 190 bulls and the intensive management (IM) harvest objective is 150-400 moose. The amount reasonably necessary for subsistence (ANS) in Units 20C and 20F combined is 100–130 moose.

In 2012, the board extended the resident moose season by 5 days to attempt to increase harvest toward meeting the IM harvest objective. The nonresident season was also extended, but antler restrictions were added for nonresident hunters in order to address concerns that subsistence hunters need more opportunity than nonresidents. In RY12, the first year of the longer season, the reported harvest was 153 moose (152 by residents, 1 by a nonresident), which met the IM harvest objective.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocation issue. The department has no conservation concerns.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for private persons or the department.

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**PROPOSAL 117 – 5 AAC92.540. Controlled use areas.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Minto–Nenana Fish and Game Advisory Committee

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Reinstate the Nenana Controlled Use Area (CUA) in Units 20A and 20C. The CUA would be closed to the use of airboats for moose hunting, including the transportation of moose hunters, their hunting gear, or parts of moose, during September 1–25, except within the main channels of the Teklanika, Toklat, and Nenana rivers and at the public boat launch in Nenana.

The Nenana CUA would encompass those portions of Units 20A and 20C bounded by a line beginning at the confluence of the Wood and Tanana rivers, then southerly along the west bank

of the Wood River to the Rex Trail, then west along the Rex Trail to the Parks Highway, then west along the Bear Paw Trail to the Kantishna River, then northerly along the east bank of the Kantishna River to the Tanana River, then easterly along the south bank of the Tanana River to the point of beginning.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** In those portions of Units 20A and 20C included in this proposal, there are no restrictions on vehicle use during the moose season. The general moose season in both areas is September 1–25 with the bag limit of any bull in Unit 20C and a bag limit of one bull with spike/fork or 50-inch antlers or at least 3 brow tines on at least one side in Unit 20A. This portion of 20A also has a registration hunt for antlerless moose and a drawing permit hunt for any bull.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The use of airboats would be prohibited for moose hunting, including the transportation of moose hunters, their hunting gear, or parts of moose, during September 1–25 in portions of Unit 20A and 20C.

**BACKGROUND:** The previous Nenana CUA, which prohibited the use of airboats for moose hunting in portions of Units 20A and 20C from the early 1990s to 2004, was eliminated by the board in spring 2004. During regulatory years 2008–2009 through 2012–2013 (RY08–RY12), a total of 2 hunters out of 318 reported using an airboat as a means of transportation in the portion Unit 20C that would be included in this controlled use area. An average of 11 hunters each year out of an average of 317 hunters reported using an airboat as their means of transportation in the Unit 20A portion of the proposed Nenana CUA.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocation issue. The department has no conservation concerns.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval or failure of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for private persons, or the department.

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**PROPOSAL 118 – 5 AAC 85.045(a)(18). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Tanana Native Council

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Change the fall resident moose hunting season in the Yukon River drainage and Tanana River drainage of Unit 20F by one day, and shift the fall season to September 10–30.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Unit 20F is closed to nonresident moose hunters. The resident seasons and bag limits, by general season harvest ticket, are:

- 20F, Yukon River drainage downstream from but not including Hess Creek drainage and excluding Tanana River drainage — one bull, September 1–20 and December 1–10.
- 20F, Tanana River drainage — one bull, September 1–20.
- 20F, remainder — one bull, September 1–15.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Shifting the moose season in these areas to September 10–30 may increase harvest and exceed harvestable surplus because previously unsuccessful hunters from other areas where the season closes earlier may take advantage of the later season in Unit 20F. Such a late season hunt could result in unsustainable harvest due to increased hunter numbers, aggregation of bulls during the rut, and increased visibility caused by leaf fall in late September.

**BACKGROUND:** The department has not conducted moose surveys in Unit 20F; therefore, there is no moose population estimate. The density is low, likely 0.25–0.50 moose per mi<sup>2</sup>. With approximately 4,250 mi<sup>2</sup> of moose habitat, the estimated population is 1,000–2,000 moose, with a harvestable surplus of 50–100. During regulatory years 2008–2009 through 2012–2013 (RY08–RY12) for all seasons, hunting pressure (average = 164 hunters), harvest (average = 51 moose), and hunter success (average = 31%) have been relatively stable. However, harvest will likely increase because a road is being constructed from Tofty to Tanana that will provide new access for hunters.

The board has previously found that moose in Units 20C and 20F are customarily and traditionally used for subsistence and set an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence (ANS) range of 100–130.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal with **AMENDMENTS**. A September 10–30 season may result in unsustainable harvest as described above. However, many areas surrounding Unit 20F have seasons that end September 25. Therefore, the department has no major conservation concerns with shifting season dates by 5 days in most of the area, instead of 10 days in the entire unit, as follows:

- 20F, Yukon River drainage downstream from but not including Hess Creek drainage and excluding Tanana River drainage — one bull, September 5–25 and December 1–10.
- 20F, Tanana River drainage — one bull, September 5–25.
- 20F, remainder — one bull, September 1–15.

Based on the stable harvest in Unit 20F over the last 5 years, shifting these seasons by 5 days is not likely to exceed the harvestable surplus of bulls in this remote portion of Unit 20F. This would shift the season later into September to allow for better hunting conditions, align the season ending dates in Unit 20F with those in adjacent Unit 20C so that hunters on the lower Tanana River would have the same season ending dates on both sides of the river, and not exceed the harvestable surplus of 50–100 moose.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for private persons, or the department.

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**PROPOSAL 119 – 5 AAC85.045(a)(18). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Tanana Native Council

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Lengthen the resident winter moose season in Unit 20F, as follows:

20F, Yukon River drainage downstream from but not including the Hess Creek drainage and excluding the Tanana River drainage — one bull, September 1–20 and December 1–15.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** Unit 20F is closed to nonresident moose hunters. The resident seasons and bag limits, by general season harvest ticket, are:

20F, Yukon River drainage downstream from but not including the Hess Creek drainage and excluding the Tanana River drainage — one bull, September 1–20 and December 1–10.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The December season would be extended by 5 days. Harvest would likely increase.

**BACKGROUND:** The department has not conducted moose surveys in Unit 20F; therefore, there is no population estimate. The density is a low, probably in the range of 0.25–0.50 moose per mi<sup>2</sup>. With approximately 4,250 mi<sup>2</sup> of moose habitat, the estimated population is 1,000–2,000 moose. The harvestable surplus is estimated to be 50–100 moose. During regulatory years 2008–2009 through 2012–2013 (RY08–RY12) for fall and winter hunts, average annual hunting pressure ( $\bar{x}$  = 164 hunters), harvest ( $\bar{x}$  = 51 moose), and hunter success ( $\bar{x}$  = 31%) were stable. During RY08–RY12, the average harvest during the winter season was 3 moose per year. The board has previously found that moose in Units 20C and 20F are customarily and traditionally used for subsistence and set an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence (ANS) range of 100–130.

The Unit 20F winter season is only feasible because it is a difficult access, low harvest hunt. This hunt provides some winter harvest opportunity for those willing to put forth the effort to get into the hunt area. If access was easy and effort was high, hunters would likely exceed the harvestable surplus of bulls in the area.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **OPPOSED** to this proposal for a combination of reasons. First, there are no population data for Unit 20F moose and the harvestable surplus is estimated based on densities from other areas. Second, the department is concerned about additional harvest that will occur when the Tofty-to-Tanana road is completed. The new road would significantly improve access into this hunt area and this would be the only roadside, winter, “any bull” hunt in the region. It would likely attract a lot of hunters and harvest would likely increase. Finally, if proposal 118 passes and the fall season goes later into September, there is uncertainty about how much the harvest will increase. A combination of a later fall season (proposal 118), extending the winter season (this proposal), and increased access with the new road would increase the probability that the harvestable surplus of bulls would be exceeded.

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

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**PROPOSAL 120 – 5 AAC 92.151. Destruction of trophy value required in specific areas.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Tanana Native Council

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Require trophy destruction for all antlers of moose taken in the Yukon River and Tanana River drainages of Unit 20F.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** No destruction of trophy value of moose antlers is required in Unit 20F. The unit is closed to nonresident moose hunters and the resident seasons and bag limits, by general season harvest ticket, are:

- 20F, Yukon River drainage downstream from but not including Hess Creek drainage and excluding Tanana River drainage — one bull, September 1–20 and December 1–10.
- 20F, Tanana River drainage — one bull, September 1–20.
- 20F, remainder — one bull, September 1–15.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** Successful moose hunters would be required to cut one antler in half. This may result in a decrease in the number of hunters and harvest.

**BACKGROUND:** The department has not conducted moose surveys in Unit 20F; therefore, there is no moose population estimate. The moose density is low, probably in the range of 0.25 to 0.50 moose per mi<sup>2</sup>. With approximately 4,250 mi<sup>2</sup> of moose habitat, the estimated population is 1,000–2,000 moose and the harvestable surplus is estimated to be 50–100 moose. During regulatory years 2008–2009 through 2012–2013 (RY08–RY12) for all seasons, hunting pressure (average = 164 hunters), harvest (average = 51 moose), and hunter success (average = 31%) have been relatively stable. The average antler size of harvested moose was 42 inches, with an average of 2 moose (less than 5%) measuring over 60 inches.

The board has previously found that moose in Units 20C and 20F are customarily and traditionally used for subsistence and set the amount reasonably necessary for subsistence (ANS) at 100–130 moose. Harvest in the 2 units annually exceeds this ANS.

Trophy destruction has been employed as a management tool to help achieve sustainable harvests. The greatest effectiveness of trophy destruction is in conjunction with check stations. This allows the department to monitor compliance and collect antlers that have been cut in half. Trophy destruction in areas without check stations allows hunters to accomplish the destruction on their own, and keep the severed portion of the antler which is less of a deterrent than when the severed antler has to be forfeited. Access to Unit 20F is either from the Elliot Highway, Dalton Highway, Yukon River, or Tanana River. To ensure compliance with antler destruction, check stations would be required at many locations to contact all Unit 20F hunters. Also, enforcement would be difficult along the Tanana River because hunters there typically hunt both sides of the river and there would be no requirement to destroy trophy value of antlers of moose taken on the south side of the Tanana in Unit 20C.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **OPPOSES** this proposal. Implementation of trophy destruction is not feasible in this situation, and it is not necessary to prevent over harvest at this time.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for private persons. It would significantly increase cost for the department to attempt implementation. Most of the cost would be related to establishing and staffing several checkstations through the month of September.

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**PROPOSAL 121 – 5 AAC92.540. Controlled use areas.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Tanana Native Council

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Create a controlled use area (CUA) in Unit 20F that would extend 2 miles from each side of the new road from Manly Hot Springs to Tanana. This CUA would restrict motor vehicle use for the purposes of all hunting if the vehicles originated from the road.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** No CUA exists in this area and there are no access restrictions. Unit 20F is closed to nonresident moose hunters. The seasons and bag limits for the major big game species in the area are:

Moose, residents only:

- Unit 20F, Yukon River drainage downstream from but not including Hess Creek drainage and excluding Tanana River drainage — one bull, September 1–20 and December 1–10.
- Unit 20F, Tanana River drainage — one bull, September 1–20.
- 20F, remainder — one bull, September 1–15.

Black bear, residents and nonresidents:

- Unit 20F, 3 bears, no closed season.

Grizzly bear, residents and nonresidents:

- Unit 20F, one bear, August 10–June 30.

Wolf, residents and nonresidents:

- Unit 20F, 5 wolves, August 10–May 31.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** A controlled use area corridor would be created extending 2 miles each side of the new Manley-to-Tanana road in Unit 20F. The proponents appear to be concerned about big game in general and moose in particular. As written, the proposal would close this corridor to the use of motorized vehicles for all hunting, eliminating all motorized hunting opportunity from the new Manley-to-Tanana road. Hunters will be able to continue to access a small portion of Unit 20F on foot from the Unit 20B border.

**BACKGROUND:** The Manley-to-Tanana road is scheduled to be constructed during summer 2014. Currently, the right-of-way is being cleared by crews, but heavy equipment work has not

yet started. The new road is approximately 40 miles long and extends from the mining community of Tofty to the Yukon River across from the Village of Tanana.

The department has not conducted moose surveys in Unit 20F. However, the moose density is low, likely 0.25 to 0.50 moose per mi<sup>2</sup>. The estimated population in the entire unit is 1,000–2,000 moose, with a harvestable surplus of 50–100.

The reported 5-year average harvest in all of Unit 20F is 51 moose. The reported 5-year average harvest in the portion of Unit 20F where the new road will be constructed is 17 moose. Transportation methods for hunters that harvested moose in this portion of Unit 20F during this time were 43% ATVs, 29% boat, 22% highway vehicle, and 5% aircraft. The amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence uses (ANS) in Units 20F and 20C combined is 100–130 moose. This ANS is being met: resident harvest in Units 20F and 20C is more than 130 moose.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department is **NEUTRAL** concerning this allocation issue. Adopting this proposal may decrease hunting opportunity because there may be fewer hunters willing to walk than those who use motorized vehicles.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for private persons, or the department.

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## **PROPOSAL 122 – 5 AAC 92.015**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal will reauthorize the brown bear tag fee exemptions in Units 9, 11, 13, 16, and 17.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The following regulations are currently in effect for Region IV brown bear hunts:

5AAC 92.015. Brown bear tag fee exemption

(a) A resident tag is not required for taking a brown bear in the following units:

(1) Unit 11;

(2) Units 13 and 16(A);

(3) Unit 16(B) and 17;

...

(11) Unit 9, within the following areas, unless a smaller area is defined by the department in an applicable permit:

(A) Unit 9(B), within five miles of the communities of Port Alsworth, Nondalton, Iliamna, Newhalen, Pile Bay, Pedro Bay, Pope Vanoy Landing, Kakhonak, Igiugig, and Levelock;

(B) Unit 9(C), within five miles of the communities of King Salmon, Naknek, and South Naknek;



(C) Unit 9(D), within five miles of the communities of Cold Bay, King Cove, Sand Point, and Nelson Lagoon;

(D) Unit 9(E), within five miles of the communities of Egegik, Pilot Point, Ugashik, Port Heiden, Port Moller, Chignik Lake, Chignik Lagoon, Chignik Bay, Perryville, and Ivanof Bay;

(12) Unit 10, within three miles of the community of False Pass, unless a smaller area is defined by the department in an applicable permit.

(b) In addition to the units as specified in (a) of this section, if a hunter obtains a subsistence registration permit before hunting, that hunter is not required to obtain a resident tag to take a brown bear in the following units:

(1) Unit 9(B);

(2) Unit 9(E), that portion including all drainages that drain into the Pacific Ocean between Cape Kumliun and the border of Unit 9(D) and Unit 9(E);

(3) Unit 17;

...

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

Hunters will not be required to purchase a brown bear locking tag before hunting brown bears in Units 11, 13, 16, and 17. In addition, brown bear tag fees will not be required for subsistence hunts in Units 9 and 17, or for permit hunts near communities in Units 9 and 10.

**BACKGROUND:** Brown bear tag fee exemptions must be reauthorized annually or the fee will be automatically reinstated.

General Season Hunts: The board liberalized brown bear hunting regulations, including the tag fee exemption, to increase the opportunity to take brown bears in Units 11, 13, and 16 during the March 2003 Board of Game meeting and in Unit 17 during the March 2011 Board of Game meeting. The tag fee exemption in these units provides greater opportunity to harvest brown bears by allowing opportunistic take.

During the board meeting in March 2011, the Board also exempted brown bear tag fees for bear hunts near communities in Units 9 and 10 to address public safety concerns in communities. Brown bears are abundant in Unit 9 and are managed as a trophy species. Brown bears are frequently observed in communities where they destroy property in search of food or garbage and occasionally kill pets. The liberalized bear seasons and bag limits adopted along with the elimination of the tag fee were intended to allow people to take bears before they destroy property, to promote a greater acceptance of the unit's bear population, and to resolve some of the compliance issues associated with the take of defense of life and property (DLP) bears.

Subsistence Brown Bear Hunts: The board waived the brown bear tag fee requirement for subsistence brown bear hunts in Unit 17 and portions of Unit 9. Subsistence brown bear harvest

rates are low and well within sustainable limits. Exempting the resident tag fee has not caused an increase in subsistence harvest in these units. Continuation of the exemption accommodates cultural and traditional uses of brown bears in these units and provides an alternative for hunters who take brown bears primarily for their meat.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal because it provides greater harvest opportunity in Units 11, 13, 16, and 17; addresses public safety concerns in Units 9 and 10; and provides subsistence harvest opportunity in portions of Unit 9 and Unit 17.

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

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**PROPOSAL 123 – 5 AAC 085.045 Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?**

Reauthorize antlerless moose hunts in the Berners Bay (DM042) and Gustavus (DM043, DM044, DM045) portions of Unit 1C.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

| <b>Units and Bag Limits</b>  | <b>Resident<br/>Open Season<br/>(Subsistence and General<br/>Hunts)</b> | <b>Nonresident<br/>Open Season</b> |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| Unit 1(C), Berners Bay Drainage<br><br>1 moose by drawing permit               | Sept. 15-Oct. 15  | Sept. 15-Oct. 15                   |
| Unit 1(C), that portion west of<br>Excursion Inlet and north of<br>Icy Passage | Nov. 10-Dec. 10<br><br>(General hunt only)                              | Nov. 10-Dec. 10                    |

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

None. Antlerless moose hunts must be reauthorized annually by the Alaska Board of Game.

## **BACKGROUND:**

### Berners Bay

The Berners Bay antlerless moose hunt has been closed since 2007 with the intent to issue bull only permits once current population estimates increase to RY2006 levels. In 2006, two independent surveys resulted in population estimates of  $116 \pm 25$  and  $131 \pm 36$ , respectively. Two aerial surveys were conducted in 2012: one on November 27, 2012 and another on December 7, 2012. The November survey resulted in 85 total moose being observed (23 bulls, 53 cows, and 9 calves); no sightability data were collected and a population estimate based on this survey is not available. The December 7, 2012 survey resulted in 102 total moose observed (21 bulls, 67 cows, and 14 calves). Sightability data were collected during the December survey and the population estimate was  $113 \pm 11$  based on these data. While the 2012 survey data do not indicate concretely the herd has grown to RY2006 levels they do suggest continued growth since severe winter weather in 2006/2007 significantly decreased overall moose numbers.

### Gustavus

The Gustavus antlerless moose hunt has been closed since 2009, and permits will not be offered until the herd increases and it is necessary to limit the number of moose due to habitat constraints. Two aerial surveys were conducted in 2012: one on November 30, 2012 and another on December 8, 2012. The November survey resulted in a total of 142 moose observed (19 bulls, 19 cows, 28 calves, and 76 moose of unidentified sex). The number of unidentified moose is the result of concerns that bull moose had begun to cast antlers by the time the survey was conducted; it is likely these moose were cows and have been listed as females for bull:100 cow ratio calculations. Sightability data were collected during the November survey and the population estimate based on these data was  $330 \pm 111$  moose. This survey was conducted in fair conditions and less than half of the marked moose were detected.

The December survey resulted in a total of 274 moose observed (33 bulls, 201 cows, and 40 calves). The December survey was conducted in excellent conditions and staff felt the majority of bull moose had intact antlers. Sightability data were collected during this survey and the population estimate based on these data was  $317 \pm 37$ . The 2012 population estimate overlaps with the November 2011 estimate of  $274 \pm 90$  but because the conditions for the survey were optimal the majority of marked moose were detected (31 of 36), resulting in higher confidence in the 2012 population estimate. Based on these data it appears the Gustavus moose population remained stable or increased slightly.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department SUPPORTS this proposal.** The department will offer a limited number of bull only drawing permits for the 2014 hunting season in Berner's Bay based on data suggesting an increasing number of moose, and adequate bull:100 cow ratios (43 bulls:100 cows for the November 2012 survey and 33 bulls:100 cows for the December 2012 survey that included a larger sample of moose). An antlerless hunt will only be used when survey data and population estimates suggest the herd is rapidly expanding and may negatively

impact available habitat. The Juneau-Douglas Advisory Committee annually votes to support the reauthorization of the Berners Bay antlerless moose hunt.

There are no current plans for an antlerless moose hunt in Gustavus for the foreseeable future. The antlerless hunt is a tool that department managers would like to retain in the event the herd increases to a level that cannot be supported by the available habitat.

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

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**PROPOSAL 124 – 5 AAC 085.045 Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?**

Reauthorize antlerless moose hunts in the Nunatak Bench (RM059) portion of Unit 5A.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

| <b>Units and Bag Limits</b>  | <b>Resident<br/>Open Season<br/>(Subsistence and General<br/>Hunts)</b> | <b>Nonresident<br/>Open Season</b> |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| Unit 5 (A), that portion south of Wrangell-Saint Elias National Park, North and east of Russell and Nunatak Fiords, and east of the east side of East Nunatak Glacier to the Canadian Border (Nunatak Bench) | Nov. 15-Feb. 15   | Nov. 15-Feb. 15                    |
| 1 moose by registration permit only; up to 5 moose may be taken  |   |                                    |

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

None. Antlerless moose hunts must be reauthorized annually by the Alaska Board of Game.

**BACKGROUND:**

Registration permits for the Nunatak Bench hunt (RM059) have not been issued since 2005 because of persisting low number of moose observed during aerial surveys of the area. This hunt will not be reopened until this herd demonstrates a substantial increase in number and at least 25 animals are counted during aerial surveys. A February 2012 survey resulted in a count of 12

moose (10 adults and 2 calves). Surveys are difficult to conduct in this area due to inclement weather and lack of available survey aircraft. However the department intends to conduct moose surveys as conditions allow to monitor this population for future harvest considerations. The Yakutat Advisory Committee has annually voted to reauthorize the hunt. When implemented, this hunt was considered an attractive option for hunters who were unsuccessful in the other Yakutat area moose hunts (RM061 and RM062).

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department SUPPORTS this proposal.** The Nunatak Bench receives substantial snow fall each winter and severely limits the area where moose are able to forage. This limitation necessitates keeping moose on the limited habitat at low levels. Because the hunt occurs during the winter, when bulls have dropped their antlers, it is most practical for it to be an either sex hunt.

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

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**PROPOSAL 125 - 5 AAC 085.045.(4) Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Re-authorizes the antlerless moose season in Unit 6(C). Adoption of this proposal would ensure that the department has the necessary tools to manage the Unit 6C moose population within objectives.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?**

| <b>Seasons and Bag Limits<br/>(4)</b>   | <b>Resident<br/>Open Season<br/>(Subsistence and<br/>General Hunts)</b> | <b>Nonresident<br/>Open Season</b> |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| ...   |   |                                    |
| Unit 6(C)<br><br>1 moose by drawing permit only; up to 40 permits for bulls and up to 20 permits for antlerless moose may be issued | Sept. 1-Oct. 31<br>(General hunt only)                                  | No open season.                    |
| 1 moose by registration permit only   | Nov. 1- Dec. 31   | No open season                     |
| ...   |   |                                    |

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal reauthorizes antlerless hunts in GMU 6C as required by statute. Resident hunters would be able to continue to harvest antlerless moose during hunts administered by ADF&G on state-managed lands in Unit 6.

**BACKGROUND:** Antlerless moose seasons must be re-authorized annually. The population objective is 400 moose. A population survey completed during February 2012 yielded an estimate of 600 moose, 21% of which were calves. This population is above its objective and could be negatively impacting habitat. Because the available antlerless harvest quota in Unit 6(C) is currently harvested under a federal subsistence season administered by the U. S. Forest Service, the department has not held the antlerless hunt since the 1999-2000 season. In 2013, a registration hunt was established that could be used to harvest moose, including antlerless, if the federal subsistence hunt is not held or it does not result in the desired amount of harvest. If recruitment improves, continuation of the antlerless hunts will be necessary to achieve population at objectives.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal to reauthorize antlerless harvests in Unit 6.

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

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**PROPOSAL 126 – 5 AAC 85.045(12). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Re-authorize the antlerless moose season in the Twentymile/Portage/Placer hunt area in Units 7 and 14(C).

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The current regulations are:

| <u>Units and Bag Limits</u> | <u>Resident<br/>Open Season<br/>(Subsistence and<br/>General Hunts)</u> | <u>Nonresident<br/>Open Season</u> |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|

(5)

...

Unit 7, the Placer River drainages, and that portion of the Placer Creek (Bear Valley) drainage outside the Portage

Glacier Closed Area, and that portion of Unit 14(C) within the Twentymile River drainage

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 moose by drawing permit only; up to 60 permits for bulls will be issued in combination with nonresident hunts, and up to 70 permits for antlerless moose will be issued

Aug. 20—Oct. 10  
(General hunt only)

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull by drawing permit only; up to 60 permits for bulls will be issued in combination with resident hunts

Aug. 20—Oct. 10

...

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** If adopted, the population will probably decrease, resulting in less individuals dying during a severe winter. Moose populations that are not stressed by winter food shortages are healthier and more productive. If the population is not reduced, habitat may be over-browsed, reducing carrying capacity in subsequent years, and road and train kills will increase.

**BACKGROUND:** Antlerless moose seasons must be re-authorized annually. A November 2011 aerial composition count of moose in the Twentymile, Portage, and Placer river drainages found 178 moose with a bull:cow ratio of 21 bulls per 100 cows and a calf:cow ratio of 29 calves per 100 cows. This population has a history of rapid increase following mild winters; consequently, in 2009, antlerless permits were issued for the first time since 2004. Thirty antlerless permits were issued for 2009, 2010, and 2011, and twenty antlerless permits were issued for 2012 and 2013. Harvests for 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013 were 25 bulls and 17 cows, 15 bulls and 15 cows, 19 bulls and 8 cows, 12 bulls and 7 cows, and 10 bulls and 7 cows, respectively.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal to maintain antlerless hunts in the Twentymile/Portage/Placer hunt area in Units 7 and 14(C). Many people will benefit from these hunts including people who obtain a drawing permit, wildlife viewers, and motorists driving in the Portage area. Visitor use is high and viewing is an important activity in this area.

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

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**PROPOSAL 127 – 5 AAC 85.045 (11). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal reauthorizes the antlerless moose hunts in Unit 13.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The following regulations apply to antlerless moose hunts in Unit 13.

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

| <b>Units and Bag Limits</b>   | <b>Resident<br/>Open Season<br/>(Subsistence and<br/>General Hunts)</b> | <b>Nonresident<br/>Open Season</b> |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| (11)  |   |                                    |
| Unit 13   |   |                                    |
| 1 moose per regulatory year,<br>only as follows:  |   |                                    |
| ...   |   |                                    |
| 1 antlerless moose by<br>drawing permit only; up to 200<br>permits may be issued;<br>a person may not take a calf or a<br>cow accompanied by a calf | Oct. 1 – Oct. 31<br>Mar. 1 – Mar. 31<br>(General hunt only)             | No open season                     |
| ...   |   |                                    |

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal reauthorizes the antlerless moose hunts in Unit 13 that must be re-authorized annually by the board to comply with statutory requirements.

**BACKGROUND:** This Unit 13 antlerless hunt was initially adopted in March 2011, and the first Unit 13 antlerless hunt under this regulation took place in September 2012. Ten permits have been issued annually for a single hunt area in the western portion of Unit 13(A). The season has been concurrent with the general moose season, September 1–20. Four cow moose were



harvested in 2012, and 2 were harvested in 2013. If this proposal is adopted by the board, 10 permits will be issued for regulatory year 2014 for the same area with an October and March season based on new season dates adopted by the board in February 2013.

The moose population objective for Unit 13(A) is 3,500 – 4,200. The population increased from 3,890 moose in 2011 to 3,650 moose in 2012 and 4,000 moose in 2013. Much of this increase is attributed to reduced predation rates in the Unit 13 Wolf Predation Control Area during the past 10 years. As the moose population in western Unit 13(A) continues to increase, antlerless moose hunts will become increasingly important to slow population growth and keep it within management objectives.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal. This regulation allows hunters to take a limited number of cows in specific areas to keep the population within objectives. Providing an antlerless hunt opportunity will maximize the annual sustained yield and provide a management tool to keep the moose population within objectives. The department intends to continue offering a limited antlerless hunt in portions of Unit 13(A). No additional antlerless opportunities in other portions of Unit 13 are recommended at this time.

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

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**PROPOSAL 128 – 5 AAC 85.045(12). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** Re-authorize the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 14(C).

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The current regulations are:

| <u>Units and Bag Limits</u>   | <u>Resident<br/>Open Season<br/>(Subsistence and<br/>General Hunts)</u> | <u>Nonresident<br/>Open Season</u> |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| (12)  |   |                                    |
| ...   |   |                                    |
| Unit 14(C), Joint Base<br>Elmendorf-Richardson<br>(JBER) Management<br>Area | Day after Labor Day<br>—Mar 31<br>(General hunt only)                   | Day after Labor Day<br>—Mar 31     |

1 moose by regulatory year by drawing permit, and by muzzleloading blackpowder rifle or bow and arrow only; up to 185 permits may be issued

Unit 14(C), that portion known as the Birchwood Management Area

Day after Labor Day  
—Sept. 30  
(General hunt only)

Day after Labor Day  
—Sept. 30

1 moose by drawing permit, by bow and arrow only; up to 25 permits may be issued

Unit 14(C), that portion known as the Anchorage Management Area

Day after Labor Day  
—Nov. 30  
(General hunt only)

No open season

1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only, and by bow and arrow, shotgun, or muzzleloader only; up to 50 permits may be issued

Unit 14(C), that portion of the Ship Creek drainage upstream of the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) Management Area

1 moose by drawing permit only; up to 50 permits may be issued; or

Day after Labor Day  
—Sept. 30  
(General hunt only)

Day after Labor Day  
—Sept. 30

1 bull by registration permit only

Oct. 1—Nov. 30  
(General hunt only)

Oct. 1—Nov. 30

...  
Remainder of Unit 14(C)

1 moose per regulatory year, only as follows:

1 bull with spike-fork antlers or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 3 or more brow tines on one side; or

Day after Labor Day  
—Sept. 30  
(General hunt only)

Day after Labor Day  
—Sept. 30

1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 60 permits may be issued; or

Day after Labor Day —Sept. 30  
(General hunt only)

No open season

1 bull by drawing permit only, by bow and arrow only; up to 10 permits may be issued

Oct. 20—Nov. 15

No open season

...

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The harvest of antlerless moose provides the department with a management tool to maintain the number of moose in Unit 14C at the low end of the population objective (1500 moose). At this population level there will be reductions in over-browsing of winter habitat, moose-vehicle collisions, moose-human conflicts in urban areas, and starvation during severe winters. In addition, the moose population will be healthier and more productive due to decreased stress levels associated with winter food shortages.

**BACKGROUND:** Moose in Unit 14C are managed intensively for a population objective of 1500-1800 moose and an annual harvest objective of 90-270 moose. In 2011, the department estimated a moose population of approximately 1500 moose. At this population level, the department has experienced a decline in human-moose conflicts and decreased winter mortalities. Harvesting cow moose is paramount to maintaining the population at the low end of the objective while providing adequate harvest opportunity.

Antlerless moose hunts must be re-authorized annually. During summer, an estimated 200-300 moose inhabit the Anchorage metropolitan area. This number can increase up to 700-1,000 moose during the winter, when moose move into the metropolitan area from the surrounding mountain valleys. As a result, high moose densities cause severe over-browsing in some areas and lead to an increased incidence of moose-vehicle collisions and conflicts with humans. The number of antlerless permits issued depends on the current population estimate and bull:cow ratios, as well as estimated winter mortality (Table 1).

Table 1.

| Regulatory Year | Either Sex Permits | Antlerless Permits | Cows Harvested |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 2003            | 55                 | 60                 | 32             |
| 2004            | 57                 | 80                 | 20             |
| 2005            | 100                | 46                 | 33             |
| 2006            | 110                | 46                 | 33             |
| 2007            | 110                | 40                 | 37             |
| 2008            | 110                | 35                 | 36             |
| 2009            | 110                | 25                 | 29             |
| 2010            | 110                | 23                 | 31             |

|      |    |    |                |
|------|----|----|----------------|
| 2011 | 67 | 23 | 25             |
| 2012 | 58 | 23 | 18             |
| 2013 | 58 | 23 | 5 <sup>a</sup> |

<sup>a</sup>Number harvested as of 11/5/2013

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal to maintain antlerless hunts in Unit 14(C). These hunts have been successful in creating additional moose hunting opportunities in the state’s most heavily populated area with little or no controversy. In addition, the harvest of antlerless moose has helped achieve the department’s goal of maintaining moose numbers at the low end of the population objective.

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

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**PROPOSAL 129 – 5 AAC 85.045 (12). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal reauthorizes the antlerless moose hunts in Units 14(A) and 14(B).

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The following regulations apply to antlerless moose hunts in Units 14(A) and 14(B):

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

| <b>Units and Bag Limits</b>   | <b>Resident<br/>Open Season<br/>(Subsistence and<br/>General Hunts)</b>          | <b>Nonresident<br/>Open Season</b> |
|---|--|------------------------------------|
| (12)  |  |                                    |
| Unit 14(A)  |  |                                    |
| 1 moose per regulatory year,<br>only as follows:  |  |                                    |
| ...   |  |                                    |
| 1 antlerless moose by<br>drawing permit only; up to 1000<br>antlerless moose permits<br>may be issued; or | Aug. 20-Sept. 25<br>(General hunt only)<br>Nov. 1-Dec. 15<br>(General hunt only) | No open season                     |
| 1 moose by targeted<br>permit only; and by<br>shotgun or archery only; up to 200                          | Winter season to<br>be announced<br>(General hunt only)                          | No open season                     |

permits may be issued

Unit 14(B)

1 moose per regulatory year,  
only as follows:

...

1 moose by targeted  
permit only; and by  
shotgun or archery only; up to 100  
permits may be issued

Winter season to  
be announced  
(General hunt only)

No open season

...

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal reauthorizes the antlerless moose hunts in Units 14(A) and 14(B) that must be re-authorized annually by the board to comply with statutory requirements.

**BACKGROUND:** Moose surveys conducted in November 2013 resulted in an estimate of 8,500 moose in Unit 14(A). This estimate is greater than both the 2011 estimate of 8,000 moose and the population objective of 6,000 – 6,500 moose.

Based on current projections, the Unit 14(A) moose population is expected to grow and continue to exceed population objectives. If the density of moose is allowed to increase, it is likely that there will be an increase the number of moose-human conflicts, and moose may experience nutritional stress as the population nears carrying capacity.

The targeted moose hunt in Units 14(A) and 14(B) provide an additional tool to address public safety concerns related to moose-vehicle collision and nuisance management issues.

Moose-vehicle collisions result in property damage and may result in human injury or death. An average of 266 moose per year were killed in the Mat-Su Valley area during the last few years of average snowfall and substantially more were killed during higher snowfall years. The department also receives periodic complaints from the public about crop depredation and aggressive behavior that can be mitigated by this hunt structure.

The department uses the targeted hunts to mitigate public safety concerns by issuing permits to selected hunters and assigning them to hunt areas that correspond with areas of high moose-vehicle collisions or reoccurring nuisance issues.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal. Cow harvests are warranted to control the moose population's growth and reduce moose-human conflicts in the Mat-Su Valley.

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

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**PROPOSAL 130 - 5 AAC 085.045.(13) Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.** Reauthorize the antlerless moose season in a portion of Unit 15(C).

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal would reauthorize the antlerless moose hunt for the Homer benchland in Unit 15C.

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The current regulations as defined in 85.045 are:

| <b>Units and Bag Limits<br/>(13)</b>  | <b>Resident<br/>Open Season<br/>(Subsistence and<br/>General Hunts)</b> | <b>Nonresident<br/>Open Season</b> |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| ...   |   |                                    |
| Unit 15(C), that portion south of the south fork of the Anchor River and northwest of Kachemak Bay<br>1 bull with spike antlers or 50-inch antlers or with 4 or more brow tines on one side | Aug. 20—Sept. 20<br>(General Hunt only)                                 | No open season                     |
| 1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; the taking of calves, and females accompanied by calves, is prohibited; up to 100 permits may be issued  | Aug. 20—Sept. 20  | Aug. 20-Sept. 20                   |

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** The antlerless moose season for the Homer bench land would be reauthorized for the 2014/2015 hunting season.

**BACKGROUND:** Antlerless moose seasons must be re-authorized annually. The Homer benchland in Unit 15(C) often holds high moose densities in winters when deep snow pushes the moose down into human populated areas. Even without deep snow, a high number of moose die

due to malnutrition and negative interactions with humans are common as moose become more aggressive in their search for food around human residences.

In February 2013, 1345 moose were counted during a population survey in the northern portion of unit 15C, of which 13.7% were calves (19 calves:100 cows). Fall composition counts in November 2012 provided a bull ratio of 22 bulls:100 cows. The number of permits issued will depend on the fall 2013 survey information for this area. Fifty permits were issued in each of the last 10 years, resulting in an average harvest of 22 cows per year.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal. Local residents, as evidenced by the continued support by the Homer Advisory Committee, are in favor of a limited antlerless moose harvest that provides additional opportunity and helps to limit habitat degradation and wildlife conflicts.

**COST ANALYSIS:** Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to private parties and is expected to help limit costs to the department associated with nuisance moose.

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**PROPOSAL 131 – 5 AAC 85.045 (14). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal reauthorizes the antlerless moose hunts in Unit 16(B).

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The following regulations apply to antlerless moose hunts in Unit 16(B).

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

| <b>Units and Bag Limits</b>  | <b>Resident<br/>Open Season<br/>(Subsistence and<br/>General Hunts)</b> | <b>Nonresident<br/>Open Season</b> |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| (14)   |   |                                    |
| ...  |   |                                    |
| Unit 16(B), Kalgin Island<br>1 moose per regulatory year,<br>by registration permit only | Aug. 20 - Sept. 20  | Aug. 20 - Sept. 20                 |
| ...  |   |                                    |

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal reauthorizes the antlerless moose hunts in Unit 16(B) that must be re-authorized annually by the board to comply with statutory requirements.

**BACKGROUND:** In response to concerns about over-population and deteriorating habitat conditions on Kalgin Island, the board established a drawing permit hunt for cow moose in 1995. In a further attempt to reduce the population to the management objective, the hunt was converted to a registration hunt for any moose in 1999. Based on the most recent survey, the moose population is still above the objective of 20-40 moose, with 104 moose observed in December 2012.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal. The "any moose" hunt provides is a necessary tool to regulate the moose population on this predator-free island, and the difficult hunting conditions and limited access minimize the danger of over-harvest.

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

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**PROPOSAL 132 – 5 AAC 85.045 (15). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

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

**WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?** This proposal reauthorizes the antlerless moose hunts in Units 17(A).

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?** The following regulations apply to antlerless moose hunts in Unit 17(A).

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

| <b>Units and Bag Limits</b> | <b>Resident<br/>Open Season<br/>(Subsistence and<br/>General Hunts)</b> | <b>Nonresident<br/>Open Season</b> |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|

(15)

...

Unit 17(A)

Up to 2 moose per regulatory year only as follows:



RESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull by registration permit only; or Aug. 25-Sept. 20 (Subsistence hunt only)

Up to 2 moose by registration permit; during the period Dec. 1 - Jan. 31, a season of up to 31 days may be announced by emergency order. (Subsistence hunt only) (To be announced)

...

**WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?** This proposal reauthorizes the antlerless moose hunts in Unit 17(A) that must be re-authorized annually by the board to comply with statutory requirements.

**BACKGROUND:** Antlerless moose hunts must be re-authorized annually by the board. The board adopted an antlerless moose hunt in Unit 17(A) in support of the Unit 17(A) Moose Management Plan, which was revised by the Unit 17(A) Moose Management Planning Group in December 2012.

According to the third goal of the revised plan, antlerless moose hunting opportunity can be offered when the population is above 600 moose and increasing. The revised plan also recommends that a bag limit of up to 2 moose when the population exceeds 1,200 moose. Based on the most recent surveys, there were 1,166 moose in Unit 17(A) during March 2011.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal to continue to provide additional opportunity during the winter season.

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

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