

Upper Tanana – Fortymile AC Testimony

2014 February BOG Meeting in Fairbanks

Proposal 82 – Glacier Mountain Controlled Use Area Proposal

- UTF AC Position: Require walk-in only for sheep hunting in the Glacier CUA, but not other game species

Proposal 85 – Unit 12 - Nelchina Caribou Hunting Season Proposal

- UTF AC Position: Withdraw Proposal

Proposal 86 – Unit 12 – Robertson River Moose Proposal

- UTF AC Position: Withdraw Proposal, based on bull:cow ratio of over 30 bulls:100 cows from the fall 2013 ADF&G Moose Survey

Proposal 88 – Unit 20E - Bear Control Proposal

The Upper/Tanana Fortymile Advisory Committee supports Proposal 88 to allow bear snaring in a small area in eastern Unit 20E.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

From 2010 to 2012 the moose in Unit 20E east of the Taylor Highway have had an average of 9 calves per 100 cows. We would like to increase the moose calf survival rate to 60 calves per 100 cows to increase the moose population in this area.

We feel this can be accomplished very effectively by keeping our bear control area small (~1,030 mi²) and using a very intensive snaring effort to reduce the bear population by more than 60% in this area in 1 to 2 years. With an estimate

BY: Danny FRANGAARD

of 28 – 35 grizzly bears in this area, we would need to remove 17-21 bears. This is an achievable objective.

We plan to use a minimum of 100 foot snares, at baited trap-sites (using a call lure and road-killed moose and caribou for bait) spread no more than 3 miles apart utilizing the extensive road and trail system within the area (see Road and Trail System Map – RC2 – Proposal 88). This trail system will not only provide access for bear trappers, but for moose hunters as well. It would take 89 snares to place a snare every 3 miles along the 266 miles of main trails. In addition, there are numerous spur trails all along the trail/road system to set snares at strategic locations.

With a median home range, ~~_____~~, of 309 mi² for female grizzlies and 800 mi² for male grizzlies each bear home range should encompass a portion of the trail system. In addition, our area trappers know about dozens of bear rub trees, along the trail system, that attract bears annually and bears in this area travel the trail system extensively.

In the months of May and June Unit 20E has very little food for bears as there are no ground squirrels and/or fish. Bears must travel frequently to locate the only protein available at this time of the year, which is primarily calf moose or adult moose.

METHODS

The call lure we will use will be the same as what Craig Gardner used in his bear study in 2006. His study area overlapped our proposed bear control area (see Grizzly Bear Population map RC2-Propoal 88). The bait we will use will be the same as what was effectively used on the McGrath bear project in the early 2000's and the predation study on moose and caribou in Unit 20E during the 1980's (Boertje et al. 1987 and Gasaway 1992).

Some of the most experienced and successful trappers within the state of Alaska live in Tok and Chicken and actively trap within the proposed area and know the area like the back of their hand.

Thor Jorgensen has actively travelled and trapped within the proposed area the past 30 years. He has 6 camps and cabins within the proposed area to work from.

As the retired ADF&G Wildlife Tech in Tok (1980-1999), Danny Grangaard was the lead trapper in the McGrath ADF&G Bear Control Project done in the early 2000's where foot snares were utilized to catch bears along river corridors. In the 1980's he was the lead trapper for a study in Unit 20E on Predation on Moose and Caribou by the use of radio collared neck snares. (see Bear/Moose Research Map – RC2-Prop 88). Danny helped catch most of the 18 grizzly bears in this project, by luring in grizzly bears to bait sites (baited with road killed moose carcasses) and using break-away neck snares, with VHF transmitters attached to them. The department then tracked these temporarily collared (snare with VHF transmitter) bears and darted and collared them using a helicopter. This experience will be critical for the success of this program.

Portions of this study area overlapped the proposed bear control area. During this study, 60% of moose calves were killed by grizzly bears within the first 6 weeks of life. In addition, based on results of this study, it was determined that grizzly bears killed more than 5% of the yearlings and adults in this moose population annually. Cows giving birth or cows with new born calves were the adults killed most often.

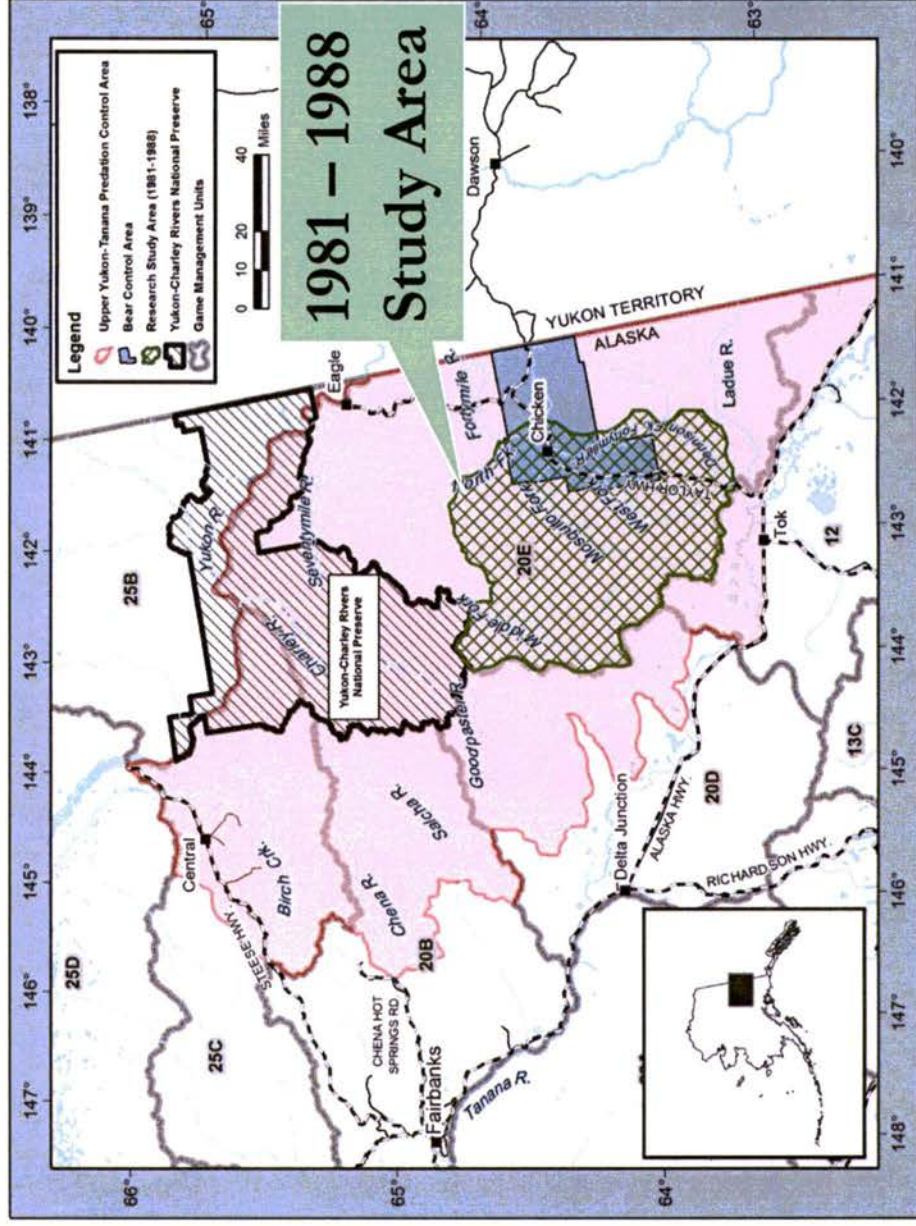
There are large amounts of excellent moose habitat within the control area as over a third of it was burned in 2004 (see Moose Habitat Map RC2 – Proposal 88). This area has the potential to support high numbers of moose and has the road and trail access necessary for hunters to take advantage of any increases in the moose population.

Danny and Thor would need to be the lead on this project to take advantage of their experience and area knowledge. They would coordinate the trapping effort and hand-pick their team to help them with the project. All needed aircraft support (pilots, fixed-wings and helicopter), ground vehicles, trappers and bait (road killed moose and caribou off Alaska Highway and Tok Cutoff collected over the winter) are available out of Tok and Chicken. We would

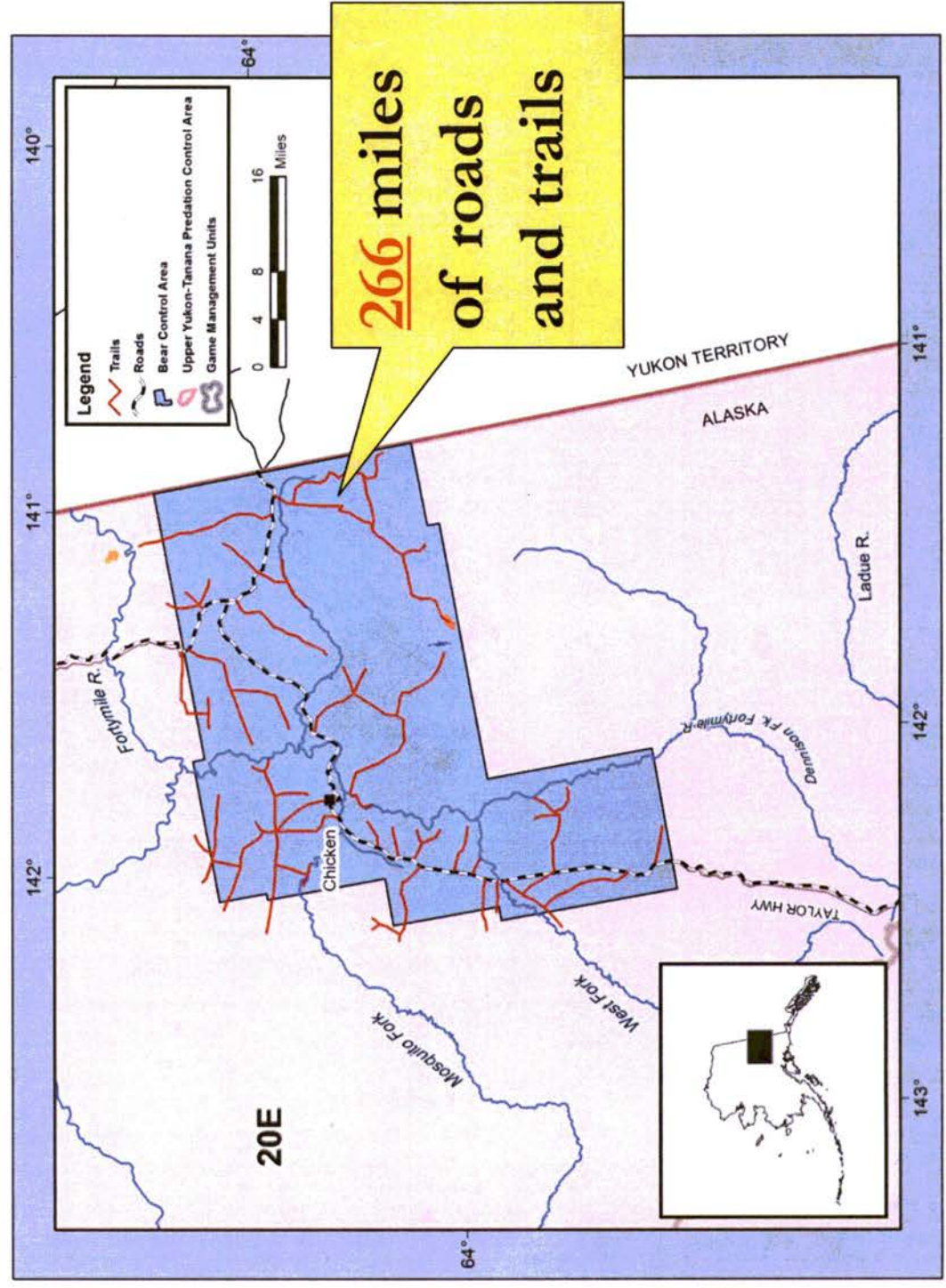
prefer to have funding to contract trappers for this program, but with Danny being retired and Thor being self-employed, they are willing to implement this effort with sale of hides, skulls and claws if other funding is not available.

Bear/Moose Research

Grizzly Bears
killed > 50%
of all moose
calves
annually in
study area.



Road and Trail System



Grizzly Bear Population

2006 Study

- Density Est.
 - 2.8-3.5 grizzly bears/100 mi²

BCA (1,030 mi²)

- Est. # Grizzlies = 28-35
- 60% reduction, need to remove 17-21 grizzly bears

