

ALASKA BOARD OF GAME

**Teleconference
January 22, 2016**

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Submitted By
Nancy Bale
Submitted On
1/21/2016 11:28:12 AM
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I am submitting these comments on behalf of

Denali Citizens Council
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Alaska Wildlife Alliance
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Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the ACR (#18) we filed asking the Board of Game to consider a proposal to prohibit the take of wolves on certain lands in Unit 20, adjacent to Denali National Park, at its March 2016 meeting.

With the ACR, we submitted a map of the area to be considered for closure. The map includes lands in the Stampede townships and along the Nenana Canyon formerly closed to the take of wolves by the Board of Game. Although not the subject of these comments, we also submitted a draft of the Proposal we would like to have considered at the Board of Game's only 2016 meeting.

By request, we will confine our comments in support of this ACR to the criteria of acceptance as specified in 5 AAC 92.005.

1. Conservation purpose or reason – low numbers of wolves in Unit 20C

As already pointed out, the overall population of the five wolf families in eastern Denali numbered 27 wolves in both spring and fall 2015. Even small numbers of additional take (4 wolves) could reduce this vulnerable subset by 14%. Significance for individual packs, such as the East Fork Pack, has already been profound.

We have not asserted a biological concern regarding these wolves, but have pointed out that, at low numbers, even a small additional hunter/trapper "take" can be disruptive to individual packs and, potentially, viewing opportunities in a national park that contributes millions of dollars to the tourist economy. Efforts to even-out this potential shock to the wolf population could have beneficial overall effects, especially considering the high public importance of wolf conservation in this area of Alaska.

(Relevant note: The Department provides little guidance for defining "conservation concern" in its ACR policy. The Department has chosen to apply a very high standard of "biological concern" when addressing our previous ACR on this subject, while supporting other ACRs in which there was clearly no overall biological concern. This has created a lack of clarity and consistency, from ACR to ACR, making it difficult to present a viable ACR.)

2. To correct the effect on a hunt that was unforeseen when a regulation was adopted.

The unforeseen effect of bear baiting regulations on the overall number of hunters and on wolf hunting pressure just north of the eastern national park is clear, both to DCC and AWA, and to the Department, which used this "unforeseen" argument as justification for the Emergency Closure to wolf hunting in this same area on May 15, 2015. This regulatory effect has not been considered by the Board at any regulatory meeting since the Emergency Closure, and will remain in place for at least two hunting seasons unless the issue goes before the Board of Game in March 2016.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments. Together, Denali Citizens Council and Alaska Wildlife Alliance represent more than 600 members.

Sincerely,

Nancy Bale, Board Member Denali Citizens Council
Connie Brandel, Board Member Alaska Wildlife Alliance

Submitted By
Beth Davidow
Submitted On
1/20/2016 2:37:16 PM
Affiliation

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Dear Fish & Game Representatives,

As a former Alaskan resident, one who spent many years working at Denali park and throughout the state, I saw first hand how visitors to Alaska were thrilled by the sight of a wild wolf! The harvesting of wolves along the Denali boundaries creates not just a devastating cascade of negative effects on a healthy ecosystem, but also a negative visitor experience. Hunting wolves, especially near the Crown Jewel of Alaska's National Parks, diminishes the ecosystem, the park, the visitor experience, and Alaska as a whole.

Therefore, I respectfully request that you consider the following:

- Please vote "yes" to approve ACR #18 (AWA and DCC's wolf buffer) and ACR #20 (NPS' proposal to shorten the wolf hunting season).
- Regarding the buffer proposal, the Board's 2010 decision clearly stated the moratorium was for a six-year period, meaning its expiration coincides with the March 2016 meeting. The current Board should honor the intent of that decision. The interim change to a meeting schedule that postpones the Interior Region proposals to 2017 is not a valid reason for stretching the moratorium to seven years.
- The diminished Denali-area wolf population is clearly a conservation issue. According to the park's most recent fall survey, the wolf population remains at a near-record-low number. Moreover, the five packs in the eastern areas of the park - the wolves that are most easily visible to visitors and are most vulnerable to hunting/trapping when they cross onto adjacent state land - totaled just 27 wolves. That is identical to the spring 2015 number, indicating no population growth among the five packs last year.
- Reducing the length of the wolf hunting season certainly would help stem some of the population losses; however, a no-harvest buffer area is necessary to halt the more significant season-long losses to hunters and trappers.



Submitted By
Bill Sherwonit
Submitted On
1/21/2016 11:27:48 AM
Affiliation
self

I ask the members of the Board of Game to approve ACRs 18 and 20, both of which are connected to wolf management issues on state lands just outside Denali National Park and Preserve.

The need to approve ACR20 should be self-evident, based on the killing of wolves belonging to Denali's East Fork Pack at bear-baiting stations last spring. To prevent that circumstance from being repeated, the wolf hunting season on state lands adjacent to Denali park should be shortened and end on April 15 (when bear baiting begins) rather than May 31, to prevent an overlap of the wolf hunting and bear-baiting seasons. By approving ACR20 and taking up the associated proposal at its March 2016 meeting, the Board would have the opportunity to address—and correct—an unforeseen consequence of its decision to approve brown bear baiting in the area adjacent to Denali Park, which has resulted in the unexpected—and controversial—kills of wolves. Given the already contentious issue of wolf trapping and hunting on state lands in this area, and recent dramatic declines in the wolves that inhabit Denali National Park and Preserve, the BOG should recognize the importance and relevance of approving this Agenda Change Request and adding its associated proposal to its March 2016 meeting and deliberations.

I also ask BOG members to approve ACR18, which would allow it to consider a proposal seeking a no-hunting and no-trapping "buffer" on state lands adjacent to Denali National Park and Preserve at its March 2016 meeting. As members of the current Board are well aware, in 2010 the Board of Game placed a six-year moratorium on any Denali wolf-buffer proposals (which would have coincided with the 2016 Interior Region meeting). Since then, the Board revised its meeting schedule, so that proposals for Alaska's Interior Region won't be considered until 2017. Given those circumstances and the already long wait that buffer proponents have had to accept to get this issue considered again, it seems reasonable and fair for the Board to consider such a proposal at its March 2016 meeting. Whether or not Board members agree, it can be further argued that Denali's declining wolf population is indeed a conservation issue, and that question merits deliberation sooner rather than later. Finally, as others have pointed out, ACR18, like ACR20, is also intended to correct or address an unforeseen consequence of a Board action (namely its approval of brown bear baiting in the area adjacent to Denali Park, which has resulted in the unexpected kills of wolves). It thus meets the Board's own criteria to approve an ACR. It would also take into account changing circumstances (the new schedule) that weren't anticipated in 2010. Thanks for considering my comments, Bill Sherwonit



Invasive doves reach King Salmon

♥ 0 f 1 t 1 g+ 0 p 0

By Hannah Colton, KDLG July 19, 2015 Environment, Featured News, Southwest, Wildlife No Comments



Two Eurasian collared doves perching on a balcony and about to take flight. (Creative Commons photo by Horia Varlan)

An invasive species of dove was spotted in King Salmon Tuesday afternoon. It's the farthest west the Eurasian collared dove has been found in the U.S.

Matthew McFarland was working outside of the inn he co-owns when

Handwritten signature or initials.

Bruce Weyrauch

7/20/2015 1:20 PM



An invasive species of dove was spotted in King Salmon Tuesday afternoon. It's the farthest west the Eurasian collared dove has been found in the U.S.

Matthew McFarland was working outside of the inn he co-owns when he heard a whistling from the porch behind him.

"And I heard that noise, that distinctive noise that doves make. So I said 'Oh, it's just a dove!' But then I thought to myself, 'Well, we don't have doves here,'" McFarland says.

McFarland thought he must be mistaken. But his cousin, who was working nearby, heard it too.

"He poked his head around the corner out and asked if we have doves here. I said, no, we don't have doves here at all! And he said 'Well, that was a dove!' So we went around the house and it had flown up and landed on one of the power lines."

McFarland quickly took a few photos. It was a gray dove, with a big black band across the back of its neck and a straight edge on the bottom of its tail.

He was pretty sure he knew what kind of dove this was – he'd seen them when he lived in Arizona – but he called Stuart Fety, a biological technician with Fish and Wildlife in King Salmon.

"It was in fact a Eurasian collared dove, surprisingly enough," Fety says.

He says this particular species has a long history of moving in where it shouldn't. It's native to Europe and Asia, but first became established in the U.S. in 1982 after escaping a pet shop in Florida, Fety says.

"And they were first seen in Alaska in 2009 along the Denali Highway... and they've kinda rapidly expanded their range," he says.

Until now, the furthest west the dove had been seen was in Homer, a few weeks ago.

So how can these doves thrive in habitats ranging from Florida to Alaska? Fety says they're just really good at finding a niche wherever humans live.

"They're well adapted to utilizing food put out by people in their feeders and just utilizing resources around urban or developed areas," he says.

Fety says Fish and Wildlife isn't too worried about the dove. Unlike some invasive species, such as Chena Slough elodea or Adak Island rats, he says the Eurasian collared dove doesn't really threaten native wildlife, and he was planning on leaving it alone.

As many Lower 48 hunters will attest, doves are quite a tasty prey. Whether this dove is a lone wanderer, or a forerunner for a whole new population, birdwatchers in Bristol Bay can keep an eye, an ear, and maybe a shotgun out for this unique visitor.



Submitted By
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1/21/2016 7:45:52 AM
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Self

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I am objecting to accepting ACR 17 as I believe it does not meet the ACR submission requirements. The goat count in 2013 was 463 and the goat count in 2015 was 471. After two severe winters (2012-13) we still have a growing and healthy goat population. Management is based on a 5 to 7% harvest and they have continually set the harvest goal at 5%. Non-residents are allocated 1/3 of this harvest allocation and at 5% that would be 7 goats, at 6% it would be 9 goats, so at that level the harvest quota was not exceeded most hunts. They quote in here that there were 12 goats harvested "last fall" and that was actually in 2014, with their 5%, 7 goat allocation. In 2015 they only allocated 3 goats after their count of 471, and in a 3 day non-resident season 6 goats were harvested. This is below the harvest quota for the goat count, and by maintaining a shorter season or later start date (guides will be busy guiding other species in other locations) there will be less chance of exceeding the harvest quota. In actuality, the so called overharvesting has not affected the goat population and there is no valid conservation concern.

Submitted By

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Submitted On

1/20/2016 9:32:07 AM

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Please vote "yes" to approve ACR #18 (AWA and DCC's wolf buffer) and ACR #20 (NPS' proposal to shorten the wolf hunting season).

Regarding the buffer proposal, the Board's 2010 decision clearly stated the moratorium was for a six-year period, meaning its expiration coincides with the March 2016 meeting. The current Board should honor the intent of that decision. The interim change to a meeting schedule that postpones the Interior Region proposals to 2017 is not a valid reason for stretching the moratorium to seven years.

The diminished Denali-area wolf population is clearly a conservation issue. According to the park's most recent fall survey, the wolf population remains at a near-record-low number. Moreover, the five packs in the eastern areas of the park - the wolves that are most easily visible to visitors and are most vulnerable to hunting/trapping when they cross onto adjacent state land - totaled just 27 wolves. That is identical to the spring 2015 number, indicating no population growth among the five packs last year.

Reducing the length of the wolf hunting season certainly would help stem some of the population losses; however, a no-harvest buffer area is necessary to halt the more significant season-long losses to hunters and trappers.

Thanks for your time on this important matter.

Submitted By
Jeanne Fedel
Submitted On
1/20/2016 5:55:07 AM
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Please vote "yes" to approve ACR #18 (AWA and DCC's wolf buffer) and ACR #20 (NPS' proposal to shorten the wolf hunting season).

I firmly believe that a wildlife "no harvesting" buffer is crucial for generations of a species to rebound, and that healthy population of predators will provide for better, more impressive, and more challenging individuals for hunters to harvest.

I am very concerned that the population growth amongst this pack of wolves has stagnated, whereas the public has repeatedly sought to support it for tourist and conservationist reasons for over twenty years that I have been aware of. Making it illegal to harvest or kill wolves at bait stations here would be a tangible step towards assisting population stabilization and hopefully growth amongst the Denali wolves.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.



Submitted By
Jef Harvey
Submitted On
1/21/2016 12:06:49 AM
Affiliation

In full agreement with the Alaska Wildlife Alliance and the Denali Citizens Council, I ask that you please vote "yes" to approve ACR #18 (AWA and DCC's wolf buffer) and ACR #20 (NPS' proposal to shorten the wolf hunting season). Their words are more polite, and are phrased more effectively, than what I could come up with on my own. Those words follow...

Regarding the buffer proposal, the Board's 2010 decision clearly stated the moratorium was for a six-year period, meaning its expiration coincides with the March 2016 meeting. The current Board should honor the intent of that decision. The interim change to a meeting schedule that postpones the Interior Region proposals to 2017 is not a valid reason for stretching the moratorium to seven years.

The diminished Denali-area wolf population is clearly a conservation issue. According to the park's most recent fall survey, the wolf population remains at a near-record-low number. Moreover, the five packs in the eastern areas of the park - the wolves that are most easily visible to visitors and are most vulnerable to hunting/trapping when they cross onto adjacent state land - totaled just 27 wolves. That is identical to the spring 2015 number, indicating no population growth among the five packs last year.

Reducing the length of the wolf hunting season certainly would help stem some of the population losses; however, a no-harvest buffer area is necessary to halt more significant season-long losses.

Thank you for your consideration.

Submitted By
Jeff Sloss
Submitted On
1/20/2016 9:04:00 AM
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36 year AK resident & hunter

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- Please vote "yes" to approve ACR #18 (AWA and DCC's wolf buffer) and ACR #20 (NPS' proposal to shorten the wolf hunting season).
- Regarding the buffer proposal, the Board's 2010 decision clearly stated the moratorium was for a six-year period, meaning its expiration coincides with the March 2016 meeting. The current Board should honor the intent of that decision. The interim change to a meeting schedule that postpones the Interior Region proposals to 2017 is not a valid reason for stretching the moratorium to seven years.
- The diminished Denali-area wolf population is clearly a conservation issue. According to the park's most recent fall survey, the wolf population remains at a near-record-low number. Moreover, the five packs in the eastern areas of the park - the wolves that are most easily visible to visitors and are most vulnerable to hunting/trapping when they cross onto adjacent state land - totaled just 27 wolves. That is identical to the spring 2015 number, indicating no population growth among the five packs last year.
- Reducing the length of the wolf hunting season certainly would help stem some of the population losses; however, a no-harvest buffer area is necessary to halt the more significant season-long losses to hunters and trappers.

Thanks for your consideration, Jeff Sloss

Submitted By
Jos Bakker
Submitted On
1/20/2016 9:34:40 AM
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Please vote **yes** to approve ACR#18 regarding the Denali Buffer zone:

The six year moratorium has expired.

Please vote **yes** to approve ACR#20 regarding the shortening of the wolf hunting season:

The diminished Denali-area wolf population is clearly a conservation issue. According to the park's most recent fall survey, the wolf population remains at a near-record-low number. Moreover, the five packs in the eastern areas of the park – the wolves that are most easily visible to visitors and are most vulnerable to hunting/trapping when they cross onto adjacent state land – totaled just 27 wolves. That is identical to the spring 2015 number, indicating **no** population growth among the five packs last year.

Submitted By
Karen Walker
Submitted On
1/20/2016 4:17:35 PM
Affiliation

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Alaska Board of Game:

I am requesting that you approve ACR #18 and ACR #20 in regard to the hunting of wolves in the Healy/Stampede area. Six years ago, a moratorium prohibiting the presentation of any new buffer proposals until 2016 was put into place. It is now 2016 and this issue should be addressed once again. To wait until 2017 for the Interior Region proposals goes against what was decided previously. The wolf population in Denali National Park has dropped so significantly that the "buffer zone" issue needs to be addressed now. It cannot wait another year. I am a nature tour guide, and myself and my guests have not had the opportunity to see a wolf in Denali for many years. This tremendously impacts the visitor experience of Alaska's wilderness. The visitors are also appalled to hear that these wolves are being drawn into bait stations just outside the park. The wolf hunting season absolutely should not overlap into the baiting season.

Please respect the wishes of tourists, wildlife viewers and nature lovers and address ACR #18 and #20 at the next board meeting.
Thank you.

Karen Walker



Submitted By
Laurie Schlieb
Submitted On
1/20/2016 10:30:03 AM
Affiliation
--

I am submitting my support of ACR #18 and ACR #20 being considered on Friday, January 22. I live in Denali and support my family guiding wildlife viewing in Denali National Park. The potential of seeing a wolf lures visitors to the Denali region where they invest in the community through tourist dollars. Robust wolf populations, especially along the park road corridor, are key to the tourism economy. Additionally, as an apex predator, wolves help maintain the health of the ecosystem, and a healthy ecosystem benefits everyone. Finally, changing the end date of the wolf hunting season from May 31 to April 15 in 2016 maintains the importance of non-overlapping hunting seasons for wolf and bear-- something the Commissioner recognized and enacted in 2015.



Submitted By
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1/20/2016 2:07:57 PM
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I support ACR#18 and ACR#20 scheduling. Both are needed to be scheduled because of the dramatic decline in wolf populations in Denali National Park and because the moratorium after the 2010 ending of the buffer will expire in March, 2016.

Submitted By
Linda Wagner
Submitted On
1/21/2016 6:02:00 AM
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Please support ACR #18 and ACR #20 being scheduled for the March 2016 Statewide Regulations meeting.

In 2010 the BOG set a 6 year period time limit before reviewing the the no-take wolf buffer zone approved for state land adjacent to Denali National Park. The expiration dare Of March 2016 makes ACR#18 appropriate for BOG's meeting agenda in March 2016.

ACR #20 is based on the National Park Service concern that the Denali East Fork wolf pack numbers are dwindling. It is appropriate for the BOG to review ACR #20 to shorten the wolf hunting season on buffer state lands adjacent to the national park.

Thank you..

Submitted By
m. lee zucker
Submitted On
1/20/2016 1:40:29 PM
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On behalf of me and my family, we respectfully request that you vote "yes" to approve ACR #18 (AWA and DCC's wolf buffer) and ACR #20 (NPS' proposal to shorten the wolf hunting season).

Re: the buffer proposal: The Board's 2010 decision clearly stated the moratorium was for a six-year period, meaning its expiration coincides with the March 2016 meeting. The current Board should honor the intent of that decision. The interim change to a meeting schedule that postpones the Interior Region proposals to 2017 is not a valid reason for stretching the moratorium to seven years.

We are convinced that the diminished Denali-area wolf population is a pressing conservation issue. According to the park's most recent fall survey, the wolf population remains at a near-record-low number. Moreover, the five packs in the eastern areas of the park - the wolves that are most easily visible to visitors and are most vulnerable to hunting/trapping when they cross onto adjacent state land - totaled just 27 wolves. That is identical to the spring 2015 number, indicating no population growth among the five packs last year.

Reducing the length of the wolf hunting season certainly would help stem some of the population losses; however, a no-harvest buffer area is necessary to halt the more significant season-long losses to hunters and trappers.

Thank you.

Ed

Submitted By
Melanie Heacox
Submitted On
1/21/2016 10:03:43 AM
Affiliation

--Agenda Change Request #18 and #20: Denali Wolf Buffer Zone

Reason for Change: A Conservation Concern

Recent changes in Board of Game process have bumped the 2016 Interior Region meeting to 2017, delaying a discussion of this critical and timely issue. Therefore I am requesting an agenda change which will allow a full discussion of the buffer zone during your March proceedings.

Why:

1. Public policy: The moratorium on consideration of wolf buffers from 2010 to 2016 was not good public policy. Adding another year onto this moratorium, in a climate of intense public interest, disrespects public discourse. The Board of Game specifically requested a study about this issue, which was completed, and the results should be reviewed as soon as possible for making science-based decisions.
2. Conservation: The overall population health of wolves in GMU 20 does not mean that a subunit-level conservation issue does not exist. The Department should reconsider making a region-wide interpretation of population health. The data from GMU 20C are not indicative of the overall wolf population health.
3. Impact of hunting/trapping: The fact that habitat and prey may be limiting numbers of wolves in 20C to densities near the lower management limit argues for considering stressors that can be controlled, such as hunting and trapping.
4. Impact of hunting/trapping: Although, from the numbers standpoint, human harvest of wolves in areas northeast of Denali National Park is low, the loss of just one wolf can disrupt the pack, if breeders are taken. This has been shown in a recent study. Since hunting season moves through the entire breeding season and into the denning season, breeders can be and have been taken.

Because of these four factors, this discussion should not wait till 2017. I urge you to allow an agenda change request for a full discussion of wolf buffer zones. Thank you, Melanie Heacox



Submitted By
Michael Raffaeli
Submitted On
1/20/2016 10:24:21 PM
Affiliation

I respectfully request that the Board of Game support ACR #18 and #20 that look at hunting issues of wolves in the Stampede corridor. Though the moratorium to discuss the issue is supposed to end in 2016, it is not scheduled to be addressed until the 2017 Interior meeting. Given the low number of wolves again reported by the NPS and the change in bear baiting in the area, I urge the Board to include this issue in its 2016 meeting. Thank you.



Submitted By
michelle anderson
Submitted On
1/20/2016 8:11:09 AM
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Please vote "yes" to approve ACR #18 and ACR #20.

Regarding the buffer proposal, ACR 18, the Board's 2010 decision clearly stated the moratorium was for a six-year period, meaning its expiration coincides with the March 2016 meeting. The current Board should honor the intent of that decision. The interim change to a meeting schedule that postpones the Interior Region proposals to 2017 is not a valid reason for stretching the moratorium to seven years.

The diminished Denali-area wolf population is clearly a conservation issue. According to the park's most recent fall survey, the wolf population remains at a near-record-low number. Moreover, the five packs in the eastern areas of the park – the wolves that are most easily visible to visitors and are most vulnerable to hunting/trapping when they cross onto adjacent state land – totaled just 27 wolves. That is identical to the spring 2015 number, indicating no population growth among the five packs last year. Delaying further protection to these wolves could result in detrimental affects to the population. Now is the time to act on this critical conservation issue.

Regarding ARC #20, reducing the length of the wolf hunting season certainly would help stem some of the population losses; however, a no-harvest buffer area is necessary to halt the more significant season-long losses to hunters and trappers.

Thank you for your consideration in approving ARC 18 and 20.

Sincerely,

Michelle Anderson

Submitted By
Louise Kane
Submitted On
1/20/2016 1:04:26 AM
Affiliation
JD

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As a wildlife enthusiast, lawyer, and frequent visitor to Alaska who had connections in your state because my brother in law was a long time resident and a close friend who was an admiral in the Coast Guard was also a resident and his wife an oil spill coordinator in the Aleutians I have been dismayed and angered, as they were, at the Alaska Board of Games determined campaign against predators and especially wolves.

When The Board of Game removed the previous no-take wolf buffer on state land adjacent to the park in 2010, and at the same time approved a six-year moratorium prohibiting the presentation of any new buffer proposals until 2016, many people including myself felt a sense of outrage.

Since that time, the National Park has had to implement procedures to minimize the state's impact on wolves, and thousands of people have spoken out against the excessive killing of wolves and other predators.

Since the buffer ended and the moratorium began, the Denali-area wolf population has dropped to record lows; the additional harvest of the wolves near bait stations last year exacerbated the decline.

Alaska is truly a great state with beautiful resources, however it is unconscionable how Alaska treats wolves. Do not underestimate the scrutiny that is focused on your poor treatment of wolves and the lack of consideration given to all stakeholders. Alaska is known by many to be a poor example of state wildlife management and one of the best examples of why wildlife management reform is needed in state wildlife agencies.

I urge you to create a buffer zone around Denali, and to consider reasonable management strategies that maximize non-consumptive management of predators. Wolves are social creatures that also regulate their own numbers through territoriality and according to lack of prey and or availability of prey. Alaska is in no danger of losing its prolific and abundant game herds yet wolves in one of the most spectacular national parks are foundering. This is unacceptable. There is a great deal of money to be made through wolf watching and tourism related to healthy robust diverse ecosystems and a great deal at risk in continuing in your destructive ecologically damaging predator eradication policies. .

I urge you to approve the ACRs.

Sincerely,

Louise Kane, JD



Submitted By
Kneeland Taylor
Submitted On
1/20/2016 11:16:42 AM
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I support the agenda change request submitted by the Alaska Wildlife Alliance asking that the Board of Game consider at its March, 2016 meeting the issue of whether there should be a special management area designated on the borders of the Denali National Park so that wolves from the Park not be trapped or hunted near the Park's borders. This issue should be considered now because wolf viewing in the Park has declined drastically since the "buffer" was removed in 2012, because the issue is of great concern to many Alaskans, and because airing of the issue within the BOG process has been wrongfully prohibited since 2012.

Northern Norton Sound Advisory Committee
1/20/2016
Teleconference

- I. Call to Order: Time 2:00 pm by Charlie Lean
- II. Roll Call:
Members Present: Charlie Lean (Chair), Kevin Knowlton (Nome-Secretary), Nate Perkins, Paul Kosto (Vice Chair –Nome), Adem Boeckmann (Nome), Tom Gray (Nome), Clifford Seetook (Wales), Jack Fagerstrom (Golovin), Brandon Ahmasuk (At Large), Peter Buck (White Mountain) , Stanley Tocktoo (Shismaref).
Members Absent: Dan Stang, Sara Okbaok, Charlie Saccehus (Elim), William Kakoona (Brevig Mission)
Number Needed For Quorum on AC: 8
List of User Groups Present: Subsistence users, commercial fisherman, and hunting guides
Nome Eskimo, Southern Norton Sound Advisory Committee, Seward Peninsula Caribou Working Group, Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation, National Park Service, Reindeer Herder's Association.
- III. Fish and Game Staff Present:
Bill Dunker (WC), Letty Hughes (WC), Tony Gorn (WC), Nicole Braem (Subsistence), and Carmen Daggett (Boards)
- IV. Guests Present:
Ken Adkisson, Matilda Hardy (Southern Norton Sound AC-Shaktoolik), Wes Jones (Southern Norton Sound-Unalakleet), Mike Sloan (Nome Eskimo Community), Jacob Martin (Nome Eskimo Community), Kevin Keith
- V. Old Business:
Board of Fisheries results from AYK meeting
Charlie gave an update of the Board of Fish meeting that was conducted last week in Fairbanks. He advised that all of the proposals from both Northern and Southern Norton Sound AC's passed. These included the winter commercial crab fishing pot limits, cast and dip nets are allowed throughout the region on all rivers for subsistence fishing. Commercial beach seine in districts 5&6 passed, and the district boundary change proposal for the area around Stebbins passed.

Wes Jones added that the Kotzebue region got approved for use of rod and reel for subsistence fishing and how that is the first time subsistence fishing with rod and reel has been expanded in several years.
- VI. New Business:
Agenda Change Request to the Alaska Board of Game #19 Hunting season and bag limits for caribou.
Charlie Lean gave a brief summary of the agenda change request and how it address' two out of the three criteria for an agenda change request.

Adem: Addressed a spring (May 15th – June 30th) closed season for cows during calving.

Charlie: The majority of the heard are not on the Seward Peninsula during that time and that they mainly calve in Unit 23.

Roy and Tom talked about the regulations from 2014/15 would have the verbiage to address the spring season cow hunting closure.

Charlie: Inquires if there are significant harvests between April 1-August 30th.

Roy: Says he hunts in August

Charlie: Addressed ability to submit an amendment for April 1st-August 30th or that the board could change it if they saw a need.

Stanley: Inquired from Tony Gorn if the caribou herd was still in decline and just more spread out on the peninsula and if there are any indications of the herd staying on the Seward Peninsula year round?

Tony: Advised that in 2014 the herd was down from over 400,000 to approximately 235,000 and was showing a decline of around 7% annually so at this time the department estimates the herd population to be around 200,000. There are no indications that there is a herd remaining on the peninsula year round.

Another key factor in the change request was to do away with the late fall/winter closure of bull caribou putting all of the focus of harvest on breeding cows. It appears that the herd ratio is currently 40 bulls to every 100 cows, according to the department the herd could handle a ratio of 30 to 100. This closure also created a situation of accidental shooting of young bulls and instead of the hunter taking responsibility, they would wanton waste the animals.

Tony: Explains how this ACR would meet the criteria by reducing cow harvest during times of conservation, as well as due to correct a regulation because of the unforeseen event due to high numbers of cow take.

Tom: If the board wants dates for cow closure, let them propose it.

Charlie: I don't think we have strong feelings about a cow closure during the summer. Expressed past concern of shooting cows when caribou herd is in decline, we don't like shooting breeding females.

Tom Gray made a motion to support the agenda change request as it has been submitted, Paul Kosto seconded. Motion carried 9 – 0.

Charlie asked for comments from Southern Norton Sound AC who said they would submit it from the Unalakleet and Shaktoolik side of things. The two members of the Southern Norton Sound Advisory Committee made supportive comments of ACR 19.

Northern Seward Peninsula AC didn't have any participants.

Tom: Inquired from Tony if the department of fish and game supported the request.

Tony: advised that locally the Department did but he could not speak to what Juneau would do.

Adjournment: Paul motioned and Tom seconded for meeting adjournment at 1455hrs. Motion carried.

Minutes Recorded By: Kevin Knowlton

Minutes Approved By: 

Minutes Approved By: 

Minutes Approved By: 

Date: 1/20/2016