



September 27, 2017

An Agenda Change Request (ACR 1) has been submitted to the Alaska Board of Game requesting to change 5 AAC 85.045(a)(17) Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose in the Remainder of Unit 19A. The proponent is asking the board to open a registration moose hunt in Unit 19A with a few restrictions. First, registration permits would be available one week before the season opened, at a local vendor in Sleetmute only. Lastly, anyone who holds the proposed registration permit will not be eligible to hold any other hunting permits in the Kuskokwim River drainage.

With respect to the board's Agenda Change Request (ACR) acceptance criteria (5 AAC 92.005):

- A) The department does not believe there is a conservation concern that would be detrimental to the sustained use of moose in this portion of Unit 19A; however, it is possible that some harvest opportunity may be lost if regulations remain the same.
- B) The department is unaware of any error in regulation.
- C) Moose hunting has been closed in this area since 2006. Beginning in 2008 surveys have been conducted in the Wolf Control Focus Area (WCFA). Since then moose numbers have remained stable in the WCFA. Prior to 2006 the WCFA did not exist and different areas were surveyed, thus direct comparisons are difficult to make. The season was closed beginning in 2006 because it was determined that no harvestable surplus existed.

Moose in Unit 19A have benefited from an intensive management program intended to produce sustainable levels of moose for human consumptive use and to help meet subsistence needs. There is a positive Customary and Traditional use finding for moose in Unit 19 outside of the Lime Village Management Area, with an amount necessary for subsistence (ANS) of 400 – 700, which includes a nested ANS of 175-225 in Unit 19A.

In 2006 when 19A remainder was closed, 19A downstream of Downy Creek went to a tier II hunt. This area also had a very low density of moose. The Central Kuskokwim AC split over this issue and the SHAC AC came into existence. The SHAC AC was opposed to opening 19A remainder if it was going to be a tier II hunt.

The Department has been trying to conduct a GSPE in western 19A since 2015, but low snow prevented a survey. This past winter conditions finally were adequate for a survey and we were able to get a population estimate for all of Unit 19A. Results showed western Unit 19A has seen a substantial increase in moose since 2010 from 0.4 moose/mi² to 1.3 moose/mi² in 2017. With this increase, Unit 19A now has a harvestable surplus which would allow Unit 19A remainder to open outside of tier

II. However the survey was not completed until after the regularly scheduled Interior-Northeast Arctic Board of Game meeting.

The next regularly scheduled board meeting for Unit 19 is during winter/spring of 2019/2020. If the board accepts this ACR, the department recommends the proposal come before the board at its February 2018 meeting in Dillingham to allow the area biologist time to complete fall surveys in other parts of the McGrath area and also attend the meeting at which this ACR will be deliberated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Dale", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bruce Dale
Director
Division of Wildlife Conservation