NEWS RELEASE
Thursday, May 14, 2015

CONTACT: Cathie Harms (907) 987-6111

Doreen Parker McNeill (907) 459-7381

ADF&G Closes Wolf Hunting along Stampede Trail

An emergency order issued today by the Department of Fish and Game closes wolf hunting in part of Unit 20C along the Stampede Trail west of the Savage River near Denali National Park and Preserve effective at midnight Friday, May 15, 2015.

The hunting season for wolves was scheduled to run through the end of May in this area. Wolf trapping season has already closed for the year.

The Board of Game prohibited hunting and trapping of wolves from 2001 until 2010 in an area known as the "wolf buffer" which includes the Stampede Trail. The controversy regarding the "wolf buffer" is centered around allocation of wolves between harvest by hunters and trappers and wildlife viewing opportunities for Park visitors. Allocation issues are the purview of the Board of Game.

Two wolves were harvested in the area during the first week of May by hunters. In previous years, no wolves were harvested by hunters in May along the Stampede Trail.

"Current levels of wolf harvest do not cause a biological or conservation problem for wolves in Unit 20C, which includes a large portion of Denali National Park and Preserve," stated Division of Wildlife Conservation Acting Director Bruce Dale.

Recent changes in bear hunting regulations have resulted in more hunters being in the field in May. Hunters commonly seek other legal species during bear hunts.

"This situation increases the chances of wolves commonly seen in the park to be taken as they venture on to adjacent lands," Fish and Game Commissioner Sam Cotten stated. "This temporary closure will prevent additional take of wolves this May so the Department and the Board can consider the new information."

# # #