

Note: Proposals 198-200 were received prior to the proposal deadline but were unintentionally omitted from the proposal book.

PROPOSAL 198 - 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting season and bag limits for moose. Modify the cow moose drawing hunt for Unit 13 as follows:

Eliminate the current cow moose drawing hunt. Establish new cow moose drawing hunts in Unit 13A that will be triggered when the current population is above the midpoint of the moose population objective in each subunit (refer to proposal 200 submitted by the Copper Basin Fish and Game Advisory Committee setting new population objectives for Unit 13). The hunts will not be offered when the current moose population is below the midpoint of the moose population objective in each subunit. The take allowed will be up to one percent of the total cow moose population in each subunit. It will be for residents only and instructions to take only lone cows with no calves. Zones within the subunit will be defined with no more than one percent of the cow population in each zone to be taken in order to spread out the harvest. There will be two hunt numbers to apply for, the first being a fall hunt (October 1 to October 31) and the second a winter hunt (March 1 to March 31) to allow better access by snow machine to the more remote zones of the unit. Successful hunters must submit a report to ADF&G within three days of a kill.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Additional harvest opportunities for cow moose in Unit 13 will be provided to take advantage of the increasing moose population in an intensive management area. With separate seasons from other moose hunts and low numbers of hunters in each zone it should result in a fairly low impact type hunt. It should help to balance the harvest and the bull/cow ratio by taking some cows in a previously bull-only hunting season.

The cow hunt currently on the books only allows for ten cow permits unit-wide and doesn't touch the potential that Unit 13 has, considering the current increased moose population of approximately 19,000 as a result of wolf control.

If adopted by the Board of Game, this will provide meat hunters with additional opportunity to harvest a moose. If it's not adopted, a resource will go untapped in an area targeted to be managed for abundance.

PROPOSED BY: Copper Basin Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-C14-356)

PROPOSAL 199 - 5 AAC 92.121. Intensive Management Plan V. Modify the intensive management plan for the Unit 13 wolf predation control area for Unit 13 as follows:

Reword the Unit 13 intensive management plan under 5 AAC 92.121 V as follows:

- ...
- (6) other specifications the board considers necessary are as follows:
 - (A) the commissioner will suspend wolf control activities

- (i) when wolf inventories or accumulated information from permittees indicate the need to avoid reducing wolf numbers **in the IM** area below the management objectives of **100** [135] wolves specified in this subsection;
- (ii) when spring conditions deteriorate to make wolf control operations infeasible;
- (iii) no later than April 30 in any regulatory year, or
- (iv) when prey population **meets or exceeds the midpoint of the population objectives by subunit;** [AND HARVEST OBJECTIVES ARE RELIABLY ATTAINED;]

(B) wolf control activities will be terminated upon expiration of the period which the commissioner is authorized to reduce predator numbers in the predator control plan area;

(C) **wolf control activities will commence by subunit when prey population falls below minimum objective.** [THE COMMISSIONER WILL ANNUALLY CLOSE WOLF HUNTING AND TRAPPING SEASONS AS APPROPRIATE TO ENSURE THAT THE MINIMUM WOLF POPULATION OBJECTIVE IS MET.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Reword the Unit 13 Intensive Management Plan to give the managers more direction and flexibility to scale back a successful wolf control plan. We need recognizable triggers to start and stop the wolf control activities in intensive management areas. Another problem with the current wording is that wolf trapping and hunting has to stop when wolf control activities stop. We feel that the regular wolf trapping and hunting seasons should not be affected in any way by the wolf control seasons. It should also be mentioned that this proposal was submitted along with another proposal by the Copper Basin Fish and Game Advisory Committee (proposal 200) setting new moose population objectives for Unit 13 that would trigger beginning or ending wolf control that are different than current triggers if the objectives are left as is.

If the Board of Game does not adopt the changes, managers will not have definite trigger points as to when to start or stop wolf control activities. If adopted, there will be better triggers for wolf control and wolf trappers will benefit. For other solutions considered, it was suggested to regulate the wolf take by subunit instead of unit-wide, as some areas of the unit are more open and easier to take wolves. As a result, the more open subunits may end up early in the winter with less than the desirable density of wolves (spring management objective), and should probably be closed to taking of wolves earlier in the winter. However, the total unit-wide numbers when balanced with the areas more timbered and thus more difficult to take wolves are averaged together and then more in line with the unit-wide goal. It was explained that there is almost no budget for counting wolves as it is, and the additional cost to do it by subunit would not be possible with the current monies available.

PROPOSED BY: Copper Basin Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-C14-357)

PROPOSAL 200 - 5 AAC 92.108. Identified big game prey populations and objectives.

Modify the moose population and harvest objectives for Unit 13 as follows:

Subunit	Moose Population Objective Range	Harvest Objective	Harvest Objective Range:
13A	3,500-4,200	7%	<u>245-294</u> [210-420]
13B	5,300-6,300	5%	<u>265-315</u> [310-620]
13C	<u>2,000-3,000</u> [2,600-3,500]	5%	<u>100-150</u> [155-350]
13D	<u>1,500-2,200</u> [1,200-1,900]	5%	<u>75-110</u> [75-190]
13E	<u>5,500-6,500</u> [5,000-6,000]	5%	<u>275-325</u> [300-600]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Moose population and harvest objectives in Unit 13 that may not be realistic, or good for the long term health of the Unit 13 animal populations. Harvest objectives should not be used as triggers; only the moose population as the harvest objective may never be met in some parts of the unit due to limited access (difficult terrain, private lands, and remote areas). We feel some of the harvest numbers seemed unrealistic and also some population goals. Until the goals set are reached, the wolf control doesn't stop. We feel we have enough moose, so we changed the goals.

This proposal, in conjunction with another proposal (Proposal 199) by the Copper Basin Fish and Game Advisory Committee rewording some of the Unit 13 intensive management plan, will allow wolf control to slow down or stop for a period of time in most of the unit. The moose herd should continue to grow slightly for a couple more years until the wolf population jumps back up. Then hopefully a combination of increased harvest opportunity (cow hunt proposal) and higher wolf numbers will level out the growth of the moose herd.

If adopted, the successful wolf control program in Unit 13 should shift gears and scale back for a period of time to allow the wolf population to return to more natural numbers and this proposal will help to allow that to happen. Close monitoring of moose and wolf numbers will be essential. It is also essential that the wolf control tool be available to the managers if needed. There will be increased moose hunting opportunity with the increased moose numbers and increased wolf trapping opportunity.

If the Board of Game doesn't adopt this, unforeseen problems may develop from keeping the predator (wolf) population at unnaturally low levels for long periods of time in order to keep increasing moose numbers to abnormally high levels. We feel current (2014) moose population and harvest levels are healthy and sustainable, and so adjusted the population and harvest objectives to match current levels with a range to allow some growth. This healthy population of moose was brought back from record declines and low numbers of ten years ago mainly due to the successful wolf control program. It is time to take into consideration that there may be nearly enough moose for this area, as far as carrying capacity, and we feel it is time to start slowing

down the growth of the moose herd by closing the same day airborne (SDA) hunt on wolves for a period of time, to let the wolves build up to more natural numbers. We are really not sure how many moose the area can handle and we don't want to find out the hard way.

PROPOSED BY: Copper Basin Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-C14-358)
