

**FEDERAL AID
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

**WILDLIFE HABITAT MANAGEMENT
PERFORMANCE REPORT**

STATE: Alaska

GRANT AND SEGMENT NO. AKW-20

WORK LOCATION: Region III

PROJECT NO. 25.0

PERIOD: 1 July 2016 – 30 June 2017

PROJECT TITLE: Alaska Wildlife Habitat Monitoring and Enhancement

This project has 4 objectives (evaluate potential, planning and design, implementation, and reporting) related to habitat management projects that are intended to (1) enhance moose or small game harvest through land management and to (2) create or enhance public access for hunting and wildlife viewing in recent burns or timber sales near the road system in Region III. Most activity in FY17 addressed the second objective. Evaluation of project success, such as monitoring game harvest specific to an implemented project of limited geographic scope (i.e., not feasible through the existing spatial resolution of harvest reporting), would likely occur through a separate research project because of study design complexity.

Project Activities and Accomplishments (only those activities active in FY16 are listed)

ACTIVITY 1: Provide technical review of timber harvest plans and other planning documents affecting wildlife values.

Accomplishments: Tom Paragi provided comments regarding wildlife habitat conservation to Division of Habitat staff on Forest Land Use Plans for proposed timber sales on state lands, primarily in the Tanana Valley State Forest but also on a sale for biomass harvesting near Galena. He consulted with Julie Hagelin (Wildlife Diversity Program) when providing comments on non-game species. He continued work with Sue Rodman (Region II Program Coordinator, Landscape Ecology) to draft guidelines for planning, implementing, and evaluating habitat enhancement projects.

ACTIVITY 2: Gather digital imaging or geographical positioning data to document and analyze natural or anthropogenic disturbances or project accomplishments and to enhance public information capabilities.

Accomplishments: Paragi downloaded the 2016 update to the spatial database on fire history from the Alaska Fire Service website. He also obtained recent updates of timbers sale and forest road locations from the Alaska Division of Forestry (DOF) to enable Activity 3.

ACTIVITY 3: Create a GIS project with roads, known ATV trails, rivers, vegetation cover type, and land ownership to archive each year the location of new wildland fires and timber sales to identify those that intersect the highway or forest road system in Region III.

Accomplishments: A GIS tool created for this project in 2015 has been used to update annually where new forest roads or trails were within 1 mile of recent large burns as a means to identify new access potential for hunting and wildlife viewing in the early seral habitat created by recent burns or timber sales. In July 2016 Paragi sent a memo to Region III managers on the current status of access opportunities and followed up with a presentation at a staff meeting in October to elicit interest or recommendations. Staff felt that ADF&G creating access was an allocation of public use normally reserved for the Alaska Board of Game or the land manager or owner, but improvement of existing access to burns or timber sales for wildlife uses was appropriate. Paragi interviewed area biologists in Fairbanks and Delta to prioritize hunter use of state forest roads in the middle Tanana Valley and met with Division of Forestry (DOF) staff to see how these priorities met with their priorities for improving forest roads. DOF had received an emergency legislative appropriation to repair forest road and bridge damage caused by excessive rains in 2014, which is a non-federal source of matching funds for Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration. Paragi assisted Sue Rodman (Landscape Ecology program leader in Anchorage) in writing a Federal Aid proposal to make road improvements on the Tanana Valley State Forest beginning in FY2018, and they submitted the proposal to DWC headquarters in spring 2017.

ACTIVITY 4: Maintain currency in published and gray (agency) literature of forestry and wildlife information to define methods of vegetation manipulation and wildlife response potentially suited for use in the boreal forest of interior Alaska.

Accomplishments: Paragi continued literature review primarily as part of a related research project (34.0, Forest management and wildlife-habitat relationships in Interior Alaska).

ACTIVITY 5: Participate in Alaska Board of Forestry, interagency, or public meetings; workshops; and seminars related to study objectives.

Accomplishments: As part of a related Federal Aid research project (34.0, Forest management and wildlife-habitat relationships in Interior Alaska), Paragi participated in an August 2016 teleconference to the Alaska Board of Forestry when the reforestation standards were reviewed, including wildlife habitat recommendations developed during the prior two years of participation by Paragi and Hagelin in a scientific and technical committee and an implementation group. The standards were adopted by the Board and were approved by the Legislature, and the habitat recommendations will be incorporated into training materials for staff and operators that implement timber sales.

Paragi assisted Rodman with initial planning of an aspen ecology and management workshop for interior Alaska that will occur in September 2017.

ACTIVITY 6: Develop constructive working relationships with people that may potentially affect DWC's ability to meet study objectives

Accomplishments:

In 2015 Paragi was invited to discuss research opportunities on ecosystem services (game harvest, berry picking) from fuel breaks with faculty in the program for Long Term Ecological Monitoring at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks (UAF). In 2016 he led the faculty in a field trip to visit DWC aspen treatments at Nenana Ridge that are due for a second phase of monitoring for successional response to felling and prescribed fire during 1995-2006. They are currently scoping potential for collaboration in graduate student research on game species response and game harvest in hazardous fuel treatments near Fairbanks.

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ACTIVITY 12: Write annual survey and inventory reports and produce maps; use newspaper, television, radio, and internet media for information exchange and public notice; and provide public involvement as necessary.

Accomplishments: Paragi drafted the Federal Aid performance report and reviewed program needs for FY17 budget preparation.

Submitted by: Doreen I. Parker-McNeill, Region III Management Coordinator

Date: 24 August 2017