

**FEDERAL AID  
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

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

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
WILDLIFE RESTORATION GRANT**

**Grant Number:** AKW-4 Wildlife Restoration FY2015

**Project Number:** 25.0

**Project Title:** Alaska Wildlife Habitat Enhancement

**Project Duration:** 1 July 2014–30 June 2015

**Report Due Date:** 28 September 2015

**Principal Investigator:** Doreen Parker McNeil

**Work Location:** Region III

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This project has 4 objectives related to habitat management projects that are intended to enhance moose or small game harvest through land management and creating or enhancing hunter access in recent burns or timber sales near the road system: evaluate potential, planning and design; implementation, and reporting. Most activity in FY15 addressed the first objective. Evaluation of project success in meeting stated objectives would occur through a separate research project.

**Project Activities and Accomplishments** (only those activities active in FY15 are listed)

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

**Accomplishments:** Tom Paragi provided comments to Division of Habitat staff on Forest Land Use Plans regarding wildlife habitat conservation for several timber sales on state lands, primarily in the Tanana Valley State Forest. We also began work with Sue Rodman (Region II Program Coordinator) 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 2014 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) and a spatial layer of ATV trails 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 winter the location of new wildland fires and timber sales to identify those that intersect the highway or forest road system of the Tanana Valley.

**Accomplishments:** Matt Warren created a GIS project that identified recent disturbances within 1 mile of existing roads or trails in Region III and produced a tool in ArcGIS to update this analysis procedure with relative ease in future years as spatial data are updated by fire and land management agencies. The purpose is to identify potential sites of road or trail access to enhance game harvest opportunity.

ACTIVITY 4: Maintain currency in published and 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:** Paragi attended monthly meetings (Sept-May) of the Citizen Advisory Committee of the Tanana Valley State Forest in Fairbanks to provide a wildlife habitat context during discussions of proposed timber sales. He also accompanied a DOF forester for scoping a field trip to habitat enhancement sites implemented at Nenana Ridge during 1995-2003 for members of the Alaska Board of Forestry. As part of a related research project (34.0, Forest management and wildlife-habitat relationships in Interior Alaska), he also participated in several meetings of a Science and Technical Committee convened by the Alaska Board of Forestry to review reforestation stands in the boreal region.

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

**Accomplishments:** Paragi consulted with Julie Hagelin (Wildlife Diversity Program) when providing comments on non-game species for proposed timber sales. Paragi met with DOF staff to discuss concepts for incorporating wildlife habitat at the stand and landscape scales in timber sales being designed for the wood pellet mill near Fairbanks. He accompanied DOF foresters on field visits for scoping reforestation options on proposed layout for pellet mill timber sales where trees are smaller diameter than sawlogs. During the field visit recommendations for habitat conservation were provided (features to enhance, such as browse, and features to retain, such as snags and cavity trees). Paragi also provided information to 2 university colleagues preparing a research proposal on validating remote sensing techniques for burn severity and nutritional value of browse. If practical, these tools could potentially be used to identify recent burns with high likelihood of providing abundant forage, thus focusing evaluation of sites for creation of hunter access.

ACTIVITY 8: Establish or monitor permanent vegetation plots in post-logging treatments, prescribed burns or mechanically treated areas to infer change or treatment effect.

**Accomplishments:** Paragi assisted Delta Area staff in taking fuel images and estimating percent cover of trees, shrubs, grasses, and forbs in the cleared fields on the Delta Junction Bison Range. These data will provide pre-treatment data for evaluating efficacy of prescribed fire to reduce woody vegetation that has re-grown and enhance grasses and forbs that compose late summer and fall diet of plains bison in the Delta Area. Prescribed fire preparation occurred in a related project (24.0, Fire management planning for wildlife habitat).

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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 FY16 budget preparation.

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

**Date:** August 24, 2015