

ACR 10 – Increase the bag limit for the Mulchatna caribou herd.

SUBMITTED BY: Alaska Department of Fish & Game

MEETING ACR SUBMITTED FOR: 2016 Statewide Regulations

CITE THE REGULATION THAT WILL BE CHANGED IF THIS ACR IS HEARD.

5 AAC 85.025(15). Mulchatna caribou herd.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM YOU WOULD LIKE THE BOARD TO ADDRESS? STATE IN DETAIL THE NATURE OF THE CURRENT PROBLEM. The current restrictive bag limit and season dates were adopted when the bull:cow ratio estimates were consistently below the management objective of 35 bulls:100 cows. During the fall 2014 composition surveys the Mulchatna herd achieved the objective of 35 bulls:100 cows, suggesting that we no longer need to limit hunters to a single bull caribou. The restriction on bull harvest is no longer necessary. The current caribou harvest is well below the sustainable level for this herd. Liberalizing bull opportunity is desirable because it will increase the harvest towards the management objectives and places less pressure on the cow segment of the population, providing greater potential for herd growth.

WHAT SOLUTION DO YOU PREFER? We recommend the board allow hunters to harvest two caribou of either sex throughout the regulatory year by removing the restrictions that limit the harvest to no more than one caribou prior to January 31 and no more than one bull per regulatory year. Both of these changes will also simplify the caribou hunting regulations in the entire range of the herd.

STATE IN DETAIL HOW THIS ACR MEETS THE CRITERIA STATED ABOVE.

a) for a conservation purpose or reason: Liberalizing bull hunting opportunity would reduce the emphasis on cow harvest that exists in the current regulation. The current regulation was established at a time when the bull ratio was below objective, and it was expedient to harvest additional cows to correct a skewed age-distribution in the population. Now that the bull ratio is meeting management objectives and the age distribution has normalized, harvest should be focused more on the bull segment of the population to provide greater potential for herd growth and to meet the management objectives for population size and harvest.

b) to correct an error in regulation: N/A

c) to correct an effect on a hunt that was unforeseen when a regulation was adopted: N/A

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THIS PROBLEM IS NOT SOLVED PRIOR TO THE REGULAR CYCLE? The next regularly scheduled Board of Game meeting for Region IV will be held in 2018, and any regulation passed during that meeting will not go into effect until July 1, 2018. Delaying the consideration of this proposal until the 2018 meeting will postpone the

implementation of the liberalized bag limit that reduces the pressure on the cow segment of the population, provides additional hunting opportunity, and allows for increases in both population size and harvest towards the management objectives.

STATE WHY YOUR ACR IS NOT PREDOMINANTLY ALLOCATIVE. The bag limit liberalization proposed would apply equally to all Alaska residents. There is no nonresident season for Mulchatna caribou.

IF THIS REQUEST IS ALLOCATIVE, STATE THE NEW INFORMATION THAT COMPELS THE BOARD TO CONSIDER AN ALLOCATIVE PROPOSAL OUTSIDE OF THE REGULAR CYCLE. N/A

STATE YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE ISSUE THAT IS THE SUBJECT OF THIS ACR. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, hunt manager.

STATE WHETHER THIS ACR HAS BEEN CONSIDERED BEFORE, EITHER AS A PROPOSAL OR AS AN ACR, AND IF SO, DURING WHICH BOARD OF GAME MEETING. The proposed regulation has not been considered by the board previously.