

Juneau, Haines, Skagway, & Yakutat Areas – Units 1C, 1D, & 5

PROPOSAL 20

5 AAC 85.030. Hunting seasons and bag limit for deer.

Change the bag limit for deer on Douglas Island in Unit 1C as follows:

Units and bag limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
(1)		
Unit 1 (C), that portion including [DOUGLAS,] Lincoln, Shelter, and Sullivan Islands	Aug. 1—Dec. 31	Aug. 1—Dec. 31
4 deer; however, only bucks may be taken before Sept. 15		
<u>Unit 1(C), Douglas Island</u>	<u>Aug. 1—Dec. 31</u>	<u>Aug. 1—Dec. 31</u>

4 deer total, only one of which may be a doe, and only bucks may be taken before Sept. 15

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Douglas Island offers the greatest road-accessible opportunity to hunt deer in the Juneau area and harvest from the island usually accounts for over 70% of deer harvested in Unit 1C. In recent years, hunters have expressed concern over the return of wolves to Douglas Island and a perceived increase in effort required to harvest deer. During regulatory years (RY) 2012–2016, deer harvest on Douglas Island ranged from 192 to 272 and averaged 245 deer per year, slightly below the ten-year average of 258 (RY2007–2016). Hunter success ranged from a low of 21% in 2014 to a high of 30% in 2015 with an average of 26%, which was similar to the ten-year average of 27%. The days of hunting effort required to harvest a deer ranged from 6.8 days in RY2015 to 10.7 days in 2014 (average 8.7 day).

Following a decade of absence or use by only individual wolves, a breeding pack is thought to have occupied the Douglas Island in 2013. At about 77 square miles Douglas Island is smaller than wolf pack territories documented elsewhere in Southeast Alaska (average. ~125 square miles), suggesting that Douglas Island is part of a pack territory and that pack members likely move between the island and mainland. The number of wolves using Douglas Island is unknown. During RY2016, the Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) closed the wolf hunting and trapping seasons on Douglas Island following harvest of three wolves in accordance with the

Douglas Island Management Area (5 AAC 92.530(23)). Despite considerable effort, during the RY2017 hunting and trapping seasons only one wolf has been harvested on Douglas Island.

In addition to harvest statistics, ADF&G monitors the Douglas Island deer population using annual spring pellet group surveys. Because pellet survey results can be influenced by snow fall patterns, pellet persistence, deer distribution, and timing of leaf-out, they are only considered reliable indicators of substantial ($\geq 30\%$) changes in the population. Deer pellet group counts on Douglas Island have been below the ten-year average since 2013. From RY2008–2017, pellet group counts averaged 1.37 groups/plot on the north side of Douglas Island and 1.59 groups/plot on the west side of Douglas Island. In RY 2014, pellet group counts declined by 47% on north Douglas Island and 36% on the west side compared to 2013. Pellet group counts fell to a ten-year low in RY2016 when 0.77 groups/plot were observed on northern Douglas Island and 1.01 groups/plot were found on the west side of Douglas Island. Although the number of pellet groups/plot increased slightly from 2016 to 2017, pellet group counts during 2017 remained 37% lower on north Douglas Island and 52% lower on the west side of Douglas Island compared to counts in 2013.

Winters with little snow can result in low pellet group counts because deer remain dispersed, rather than concentrating in low elevation wintering habitat. From 2014 through 2016, winters were mild to very mild with little snow. Lower pellet group counts in recent years are consistent with anecdotal reports that deer numbers have declined but could also result from deer remaining dispersed during mild winters.

Because the Douglas Island deer population is important to Juneau hunters, wolves are again using the island, a new pioneer road has increased access for hunters, and there is some uncertainty over the current status of the population, ADF&G believes more conservative harvest management is warranted. Current regulations allow harvest of four deer including does. Rather than reducing the overall bag limit, we propose keeping the bag limit at four deer, but limiting hunters to harvest of one doe. Historically, 30–40% of the deer harvested from Douglas Island have been does. Until more is known about the status of the Douglas Island deer population, we believe this modest change will still allow ample harvest opportunity while conserving does for reproduction.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F18-040)

PROPOSAL 21

5 AAC 92.510. Areas closed to hunting.

Amend the area closed to hunting along the Douglas Highway in Unit 1C as follows:

5 AAC 92.510(3) is amended to read:

Unit 1(C):

(B) in the Juneau area, that area between the coast and a line one-fourth mile inland of the following road systems is closed to the taking of big game:

(ii) Douglas Highway from the Douglas city limits to [MILEPOST 7] **the northeast bank of Fish Creek.**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Current regulations use “Milepost 7” as the landmark to identify the boundary of the area adjacent to the Douglas Highway closed to big game hunting. The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities recently relocated mile markers on the Douglas Highway. That change resulted in confusion about the boundary of the closed area. The current mapped boundary for the closed area is close to Fish Creek. Changing the legal description of the closed area boundary to a fixed and readily identifiable geographic feature like Fish Creek will clarify the location of the boundary.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F18-070)

PROPOSAL 22

5 AAC 92.530(23). Management areas.

Eliminate the Douglas Island Management Area in Unit 1C as follows:

Remove the Douglas Island Management Area in Unit 1C from regulation.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? This proposal would remove the Unit 1C Douglas Island Management Area from current regulation. There is no science or data that suggests this management area is necessary or effective, particularly as it applies to wolf management. While wolves certainly play an important part in the ecosystem, they are apex predators and must be managed as such. Wolves are transient to and from Douglas by either swimming the channel at high tide or crossing overland at low tide. It is very hard to manage and set a quota for a population of any species, especially one that is very wide-ranging. Wolf predation has reduced the deer population on the island which is solely estimated using the Department of Fish and Game’s (ADF&G) annual deer pellet survey at two locations on the north end of the island. Douglas Island is specifically used by deer hunters who don't have a boat and is a commonly used area where youth and new hunters have relatively easy access to deer hunting areas. The current data shows that the deer pellet survey samples increased when wolves were actively trapped. Removing this management area from regulation will allow for wolf management using hunters and trappers during the allowed seasons without a quota system while creating less of a burden to ADF&G staff and will increase deer populations for sport hunting and wildlife viewing. This is how the rest of the state manages wolf numbers, with the exception of Prince of Wales Island. Wolves will continue to be wolves and travel back and forth between the mainland and Douglas as they have for many years. If no change is made, wolves will continue to suppress the deer population on Douglas Island and further decrease the sport hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities.

PROPOSED BY: Jesse Ross (EG-F18-060)

PROPOSAL 23

5 AAC 85.040(a)(1). Hunting seasons and bag limits for goat.

Expand the archery-only registration permit hunt area for goat in Unit 1C as follows:

5 AAC 85.040(a)(1) Seasons and bag limits for goat in Unit 1C: That portion of Unit 1C to include all mainland areas between the south bank of the Mendenhall River and the Mendenhall Glacier and south to the western bank of Taku Inlet and Taku Glacier. 1 goat by permit and bow and arrow only. The taking of nannies with kids is prohibited Aug. 1–Nov. 30.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Expand the Unit 1C archery-only registration permit (RG014) hunt area to include all mainland areas between the south bank of the Mendenhall River and the Mendenhall Glacier and south to the western bank of Taku Inlet and Taku Glacier.

During the last Southeast Region Board of Game (board) cycle, the board voted to expand this area to include a small portion of Blackerby Ridge. This new area is described as follows: "That portion between the south side of Blackerby Ridge and the north side of Salmon Creek Reservoir, above the 1,000 ft contour and east to Observation Peak."

Expanding this hunt area using the above boundary lines would open up a large area to hunting opportunity that has not previously been open, to my knowledge. This area would include Mount Bullard, Thunder Mountain, Heintzelman Ridge, all of Blackerby Ridge, Mount Juneau, Mount Roberts and areas in between.

Adopting this new boundary area would also simplify the boundary areas for this hunt, making it dramatically easier to understand for hunters from the current boundaries.

Juneau is an area that is fortunate to have a relatively large population of goats that could be accessed via the road system without the need to charter an aircraft or use a boat. Based on my own observations, it appears that there is an ample population of goats that could sustain some level of harvest. I believe the Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) could manage this hunt utilizing their point system, as to allow harvest while still allowing other user groups (hikers, tourism industry) the ability to enjoy and view these animals. This hunt would also be self-limiting to some degree since it is an archery-only hunt and does not experience the same level of effort that any weapon hunts generally do. With the exception of the Blackerby Ridge area, which currently has a harvest objective of 1–2 points, the current registration area has rarely, if ever, met the maximum harvest objective. This is, in part, due to the difficulty in accessing the current area.

In short, I believe the current archery only registration area in Unit 1C (permit hunt RG014) could be expanded to include all areas between the Mendenhall River/Glacier and Taku Inlet/Glacier. This would allow hunters who do not own a boat or cannot afford to charter a plane the ability to have more hunting opportunities for goats.

PROPOSED BY: Jake Abbott

(EG-F18-004)

PROPOSAL 24

5 AAC 85.040. Hunting seasons and bag limits for goat.

Clarify the boundary description for the RG014 mountain goat hunt area in Unit 1C as follows:

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
(1) Unit 1 (C), that mainland portion draining into the south bank of Little Sheep Creek, Gastineau Channel south of Little Sheep Creek, Stephens Passage, and Taku Inlet between the mouth of Little Sheep Creek and Taku Glacier, including that portion <u>on the south side of Blackerby Ridge encompassed by a line from Observation Peak west along the ridgeline down to the 1,000-foot contour, east along that contour to the north shore of Salmon Creek Reservoir, north of the main drainage into the head of reservoir following that drainage south and east up to the ridgeline and east to Olds Mountain</u> [BETWEEN THE SOUTH SIDE OF BLACKERBY RIDGE AND THE NORTH SIDE OF SALMON CREEK RESERVOIR, ABOVE THE 1,000 FOOT CONTOUR AND EAST TO OBSERVATION PEAK] 1 goat by registration permit Only, and by bow and arrow	Aug. 1—Nov. 30 (General hunt only)	Aug. 1—Nov. 30

only; the taking of nannies
with kids is prohibited

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The current description of the portion of the boundary for mountain goat registration hunt RG014 between the head of Salmon Creek Reservoir and Olds Mountain lacks detail, resulting in uncertainty among hunters. The suggested changes add landmarks to help hunters locate the boundary.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F18-069)

Note: The Board of Game does not have constitutional authority to limit hunting for Alaska residents based on residency.

PROPOSAL 25

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Restructure the moose hunt in Unit 5A Remainder to align with the federal subsistence regulations as follows:

Unit 5A, except Nunatak Bench, west of the Dangerous River – 1 bull by joint state/federal registration permit only, October 8 – November 15. From October 8 – October 21, federal public lands are closed to harvest of moose except by residents of Unit 5A.

Unit 5A, except Nunatak Bench, east of the Dangerous River – 1 bull by joint state/federal registration permit only, September 16 – November 15. From September 16 – September 30, federal public lands are closed to harvest of moose except by residents of Unit 5A.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Currently, the area in Unit 5A west of the Dangerous River receives heavy hunting pressure during the first few days of the subsistence season, resulting in a rapid harvest and multiple animals taken out of localized areas. In recent years, the quota has been met and the season closed within about 4–5 days of the opening. The area east of the Dangerous River is less accessible than the west side, including minimal to no local air taxi service after September, and receives less pressure (the harvest quota is not usually met in this area). By opening up the east side of the Dangerous River earlier, access will be improved for subsistence users (longer days, potentially better weather conditions, and greater availability of local air taxi), allowing additional opportunities for subsistence users and potentially reducing the hunting pressure during the opening days of the subsistence season on the west side.

We also considered and discussed proposing a draw hunt for the west side of the Dangerous River, but since that would leave some subsistence users without any opportunity in that area, we decided not to pursue this option as a proposal.

This change will allow additional harvest opportunities (increased season length) on the east side of the Dangerous River, potentially resulting in an increased number of animals harvested. The harvest is managed by a quota, however, so overharvest is not anticipated to be a concern. This

change may reduce and/or redistribute hunting pressure on moose on localized areas on the west side.

This change will allow additional opportunities for subsistence users, allowing additional time for harvesting and during a time when the harvest area is more accessible. It may also provide a longer, safer, more enjoyable and less competitive harvest opportunity on the west side.

PROPOSED BY: Yakutat Fish and Game Advisory Committee (HQ-F18-006)

PROPOSAL 26

5 AAC 85.045(a)(3). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Reauthorize the antlerless moose season in Unit 5A, Nunatak Bench, as follows:

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
(3)		
Unit 5(A), that portion south of Wrangell - Saint Elias National Park, north and east of Russell and Nunatak Fiords, and east of the east side of East Nunatak Glacier to the Canadian Border (Nunatak Bench)	Nov. 15—Feb. 15	Nov. 15—Feb. 15
1 moose by registration permit only; up to 5 moose may be taken		

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Nunatak Bench (Unit 5A) hunt area is managed as a separate population because it is generally isolated from other moose populations by fiords and glaciers. The area is subject to severe winters and has low capability to support moose relative to other moose habitat in Unit 5A. The purposes of this hunt are to provide opportunity as the population allows and to maintain the number of moose within a level the limited habitat can support. This hunt opens after other moose hunts in the unit have closed, and it is a popular alternative for hunters who were unsuccessful during those hunts. Because much of the open season for this hunt takes place after bulls have dropped their antlers, either sex may be harvested.

The Nunatak Bench strategic moose management plan calls for a post-hunt population of no more than 50 moose. During an aerial survey in 2001, 52 moose were seen. From 2005 through 2012, only 11–14 moose with one or two calves were seen during surveys. The decline in moose numbers following the 2001 survey may be related to the 68-foot rise of Russel Fiord flooding and damaging habitat when it was blocked by the surging Hubbard Glacier during 2003. Due to poor weather and the remoteness of the location, this area was not surveyed again until December 2015 when a total of 14 moose (three bulls, two cows, three calves, and six unknown) were seen. A series of severe winters from 2006 through 2012 may have inhibited recovery of the population. Anecdotal reports from hunters indicate that wolves in the area may also be inhibiting recovery of this small population.

From 1997 through 2004, an average of 12 either sex permits were issued annually with an average of four people hunting each year. During that period a total of 15 moose (nine bulls, six cows) were harvested for an average of about two moose per year. No permits have been issued and no moose have been harvested in this area since 2004.

The Department of Fish and Game (department) believes it is important to retain the ability to implement an antlerless hunt in this area to prevent habitat damage should the population increase. The department will continue to monitor this population as conditions allow, but we do not plan to issue hunt permits until the population reaches at least 25 moose.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F18-051)

PROPOSAL 27

5 AAC 85.045(a)(1). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 1C as follows:

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
Unit 1C, Berners Bay drainages	Sept. 15—Oct. 15 (General hunt only)	Sept. 15—Oct. 15

1 moose by drawing permit only; up to 30 permits may be issued

...

Unit 1C, that portion west of Excursion Inlet and north of Icy Passage

1 moose per regulatory year,
only as follows:

...

1 antlerless moose by drawing
permit only; up to 100 permits
may be issued

Nov. 10—Dec. 10
(General hunt only)

Nov. 10—Dec. 10

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Antlerless moose hunts have been authorized for the Berners Bay and Gustavus moose populations in Unit 1C for over a decade. Those hunts were instituted as tools that could be used to manage both populations to within carrying capacity of the limited habitat in each area and to offer additional harvest opportunity as warranted. Antlerless hunts have been periodically and successfully used in both areas but must be reauthorized each year.

Berners Bay: The Berners Bay (Unit 1C) strategic moose management plan calls for a post-hunt population of 90 moose based on the area's estimated carrying capacity. The Department of Fish and Game (department) has been successful at maintaining the Berners Bay population close to the post-hunt population objective by implementing both bull and cow hunts.

From 1998–2006, the number of drawing permits for Berners Bay moose ranged from ten bull and ten antlerless permits to seven bull permits and no antlerless permits. The average annual harvest of bulls during that period was seven moose, and in years when antlerless permits were issued, the annual harvest averaged four cow moose. Although the department has authorization to issue a total of 30 permits each year, no more than 20 total permits have been issued during a single year. Several severe winters from 2006–2009 resulted in overwinter mortality and population declines. No Berners Bay moose permits were issued from 2007–2013.

The number of drawing permits issued annually for Berners Bay is based on the number of moose observed during winter aerial surveys. The mean number of moose seen during aerial surveys conducted from 1990–2006 was 77 (range: 59–108). The number of moose seen on surveys declined during consecutive severe winters from 2006–2009 and with only 33–62 moose seen during surveys from 2007–2009. Since 2010, most winters have been moderate to mild and the population has recovered. Under ideal survey conditions in 2012, 102 moose were observed, including 21 bulls, 81 cows, and 14 calves. Adjusted for sightability based on collared moose, the 2012 population was estimated at 113 +/- 11 moose. During the most recent survey in December 2016, a total of 115 moose were observed, including 18 bulls, 31 cows, 27 calves, and 39 adult moose of unknown sex. Based on that survey and sightability of collared moose, the population was estimated to be 141 +/- 25 moose. The winter of 2017–18 was relatively snow-free until mid-February, and we were unable to survey this population. However, survival of radiocollared moose was high and we believe the population continues to slowly grow. The Berners Bay population now exceeds the population and bull:cow objectives in the management plan. However, more recent habitat data suggests habitat in Berners Bay can support a higher post-hunt population than previously thought.

The department plans to manage the population by harvesting bulls. Five bull permits were issued in 2014 and 2015, and in response to growing population estimates, seven bull permits were issued in 2016 and 2017. However, the department would like to retain the ability to implement an antlerless moose hunt should the population or habitat conditions warrant that type of management.

Gustavus: The Gustavus moose population (Unit 1C) rapidly expanded from just a few animals in the 1980s and early 1990s to a peak of about 400 animals in 2003. In 2002, the department estimated the density of moose on the Gustavus Forelands winter range exceeded five moose per km² despite only a small proportion of the area consisting of productive (abundant willow) winter habitat. In response to concerns about moose damaging the winter habitat, the department initiated spring browse surveys in 1999 and determined that an unsustainable level (85% – 95%) of the current annual growth of willow twigs had been consumed by moose.

To conserve winter habitat, the department requested the Board of Game authorize an antlerless moose hunt and the first antlerless hunt was held in the fall of 2000. From 2002–2008, hunters harvested between 11 and 67 antlerless moose annually, depending on the number of permits issued. No hunt was held in fall 2007 due to high moose mortality during the severe winter of 2006–2007 and no antlerless hunts have been held since 2009.

The objective of antlerless moose hunts in Gustavus is to maintain the moose population using the winter range to levels commensurate with habitat capability. Based on aerial surveys corrected for sightability and annual browse surveys, management of the population using antlerless hunts has been successful. In 2013, under favorable survey conditions, 186 moose (25 bulls, 121 cows, and 40 calves) were observed. The population estimate corrected for sightability was 323 +/- 87 moose. Under poor late winter survey conditions in March 2014, 91 (24 cows, 12 calves, and 55 unknown) moose were seen yielding a sightability corrected population estimate of 244 +/- 98 moose. Due to exceptionally mild winter weather, at the time of this survey, a number of radiocollared moose had already transitioned to forested summer range outside the survey area. There was little snow cover during the winter of 2014–15, so no survey was attempted. The most recent survey under moderate conditions in March 2018 resulted in a population estimate of 230 ± 30 moose.

Severe winters from 2006 through 2009 reduced calf survival, but since then calf survival has improved. Even during severe winters, survival of adult females remained high at about 89%. Given the improved survival rate of calves during successive mild winters and stable cow survival, the potential exists for the Gustavus moose population to rapidly increase.

The Gustavus moose population is currently at a level the department believes is appropriate for the available winter habitat. However, we believe it is important to retain the ability to implement antlerless hunts should the population increase to a level that is detrimental to the habitat.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F18-049)

PROPOSAL 28

5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures.

Issue permits for using bait or scent lures to hunt black bear in Unit 1C as follows:

Either compel the Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) to issue black bear baiting permits for Unit 1C or adopt a new subsection under 5 AAC 92.044 that states that ADF&G shall issue these permits so that they may not make an arbitrary decision on a method and means without public input.

5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures.

(e) Notwithstanding 5 AAC 92.052, the department shall issue a permit under this section.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Currently, even though technically legal under 5 AAC 92.044 - Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures, ADF&G refuses to issue permits to hunters wishing to hunt black bears over bait in Unit 1C.

This practice is out of line from the majority of the state and either adopting a regulatory change or compelling ADF&G to issue these permits would bring Unit 1C methods and means regulations in line with the majority of the rest of the state.

If this change is not adopted, ADF&G will continue to not issue bear baiting permits in Unit 1C, thereby denying hunters of a lawful method of harvesting black bears for no apparent reason even though this method is allowed in more populated areas of the state such as the Mat-Su Valley.

Adopting this regulatory change or compelling ADF&G to issue permits for Unit 1C would allow archery hunters better opportunities for harvesting black bears while insuring they have time to take quality animals and make effective shots. This change would also allow more harvest opportunity to hunters who do not have access to boats to participate in spring “beach hunting.”

PROPOSED BY: Jake Abbott

(EG-F18-009)

PROPOSAL 29

5 AAC 85.065. Hunting seasons and bag limits for small game.

Shift the hunting season for waterfowl in Unit 1C as follows:

Waterfowl season starts September 1 and ends on December 16.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Change the waterfowl season in the Juneau-Douglas area (or whatever the corresponding federal area is for Juneau-Douglas) back to a September 1 opening day with closure on December 16. The switch from September 1 to December 16 to a September 16 to December 31 season resulted in the

equivalent of 15 fewer days to hunt and much lower probability to harvest teal in Juneau area. During September 1–16 there are 13–14 hours of daylight during shooting hours while during December 16–31 there are about only six hours of shooting light. Thus, 15 fewer days to hunt. Green-winged teal, considered by many the best duck to eat in the Juneau area, are pretty much gone by late September. During December, mostly sea ducks and resident mallards and Canada geese are available and often low-quality table fare. In contrast to the September 16 opening, the traditional September 1 opening also allows hunters to hunt before and after school and/or work.

PROPOSED BY: Tom Rutecki

(EG-F18-023)

PROPOSAL 30

5 AAC 92.520(a). Closures and restrictions in state game refuges.

Create a youth hunt for waterfowl in the Unit 1C Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge as follows:

Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge Youth Hunt Area: Unit 1C; the area is open to waterfowl hunting from September 16 through September 18 by a child aged 10 to 17 years of age who has successfully completed a Department of Fish and Game-approved hunter education class and who is accompanied by a licensed resident adult aged 21 years of age or older.

*A permit may be issued to a child aged 10 to 17 who will be accompanied in the field by a resident adult 21 years of age or older, with the child being the permittee. Both the adult and child will need the Mendenhall Waterfowl Permit (WU001).

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? We propose to create a three-day youth-only hunt on the Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge to occur during the first three days of the waterfowl season (September 16 through September 18). Open to a child 10 to 17 years of age who has successfully completed a Department of Fish and Game-approved hunter education class and who is accompanied by a licensed resident adult aged 21 years of age or older, this hunt would be the first of its kind in Alaska.

As national organizations like Delta Waterfowl, Ducks Unlimited, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have found, waterfowl hunter numbers in the US have been on a steady decline for the last several decades (see especially <https://deltawaterfowl.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/LoomingCrisis.pdf>). Important efforts are in place to recruit underrepresented groups like women (Becoming an Outdoors Woman) and youth (hunter education courses), and there are efforts to engage with lapsed and new adult hunters, too, but these educational opportunities are not always met with adequate youth-friendly access to hunting opportunity.

There is significant interest in shooting sports among the younger generations in Juneau—the Juneau Youth Trap Shooting Team saw significant growth over the last few years, for example. The key to this program’s success lies in dedicated youth-only time at the Juneau Gun Club and appropriate adult supervision and coaching. Not all of these shooters have made the transition to field shooting, however, as the Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge can be intimidating.

The majority of Juneau road-system waterfowl hunting effort takes place on the Mendenhall Wetlands (ADF&G reports that over 2,000 hunter days result in over 3,000 ducks taken annually on the Refuge), so even with 13 access points and approximately 3,800 acres, the good hunting spots accessible without a boat get crowded, especially early in the season. Without this dedicated youth hunt the barriers to entry for next generation of waterfowl hunters will remain high.

Although we are requesting a three-day youth hunt, we considered requesting both a single day and a week-long hunt. The latter would ensure that weekend opportunities would be available for all interested youth and their adult mentors, while the shorter hunt might not allow all young hunters the chance to get out due to school or mentor work obligations. We think a three-day hunt will create access for youth without adversely impacting adult access to the resource.

The Juneau-Douglas Fish and Game Advisory Committee was consulted on this drafting of proposal, as was the leadership of the local chapter of Ducks Unlimited, and there is general support for the idea among these organizations.

Finally, we feel that this proposal is consistent with the Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge Management Plan's goal of enhancing public use, as the change would directly enhance opportunity for "public use of fish, wildlife, and refuge lands" (http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/lands/protectedareas/_management_plans/mendenhall.pdf).

PROPOSED BY: Kevin Maier (EG-F18-054)

PROPOSAL 31

5 AAC 92.550(1)(F). Areas closed to trapping.

Allow the use of submerged traps in the Juneau closed area in Unit 1C as follows:

AREAS CLOSED TO TRAPPING

Unit 1C, (Juneau Area)

A strip within 1/4 mile of the following trails as designated on 1962 U.S. Geographical Survey maps and revisions: Herbert Glacier Trail, Windfall Lake Trail, Peterson Lake Trail, Spalding Meadows Trail, (including the loop trail), Nugget Creek Trail, Outer Point Trail, Dan Moller Trail, Perseverance Trail, Granite Creek Trail, Mount Roberts Trail, Nelson Water Supply Trail, (off of Mt. Roberts Trail), Sheep Creek Trail, Point Bishop Trail, Amalga Trail, Auke Nu/John Muir Trail, Eagle Glacier Trail, Point Bridget Trail, Treadwell Ditch Trail, and Salmon Creek Trail; however **traps that are completely submerged, and** traps with an inside spread of five inches or less which are set at least five feet above the ground and snow are allowed if more than 50 yards from the trail.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Areas closed to trapping in Unit 1C, Juneau area. Specifically, trail area closures and set-backs.

There are currently 19 trails that require 1/4 mile set-backs for trapping, with the exception of small traps that are elevated at least five feet above ground/snow. Many of these trails follow water courses to some extent. The Juneau area also is closed to all trapping within 1/4 mile of the coast along the entire road system. This severely restricts the ability to harvest water-oriented furbearers such as mink, otter, and beaver. While this area has an abundance of these species, for the most part they are not available to local trappers.

To compound the issue, the area is experiencing a large increase in the beaver population, resulting in an increase of complaints regarding personal property damage, flooding, and roads and culverts being compromised.

The ability for local trappers to make submerged sets and under-ice sets would allow the safe harvest of these animals, increase opportunity (which is severely limited under current regulation), and aid the Department of Fish and Game in managing damage complaints.

PROPOSED BY: Juneau Trappers Association (EG-F18-010)

PROPOSAL 32

5 AAC 92.550. Areas closed to trapping.

Modify the regulations to close trapping and restrict the use of certain traps near roads and trails within the Skagway Borough in Unit 1D as follows:

The Municipality of Skagway recommends that the Board of Game (board) adopt regulations on trapping within the boundaries of the Skagway Borough as detailed in Skagway Municipal Code (SMC) Chapter 9.04. Per SMC 9.04.015(B), the established trails are those detailed in Resolution No. 15-02R.

The Municipality recommends that the board adopt the regulations as additions to 5 AAC 92.550, Areas closed to trapping, to add certain areas within the game management unit that encompasses the Skagway Borough as closed to trapping and/or to establish limitations in these areas on the use of certain kinds of extremely dangerous traps. The areas and traps of particular concern to the municipality are set out in Attachments A and B: SMC Chapter 9.04 and Resolution No. 15-02R.

Note: The attachments submitted with this proposal are available on the Board of Game proposal book webpage at www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.proposalbook or by contacting the ADF&G Boards Support Section at (907) 465-4046.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Municipality of Skagway would like the board to address the issue of trapping within certain distances of public roads, rights-of-way, and established trails located within the boundaries of the Skagway Borough as set out in Chapter 9.04 of the Skagway Municipal Code (SMC). The established trails are further described in Resolution No. 15-02R.

The Municipality of Skagway has an extensive road and trail system in a relatively consolidated area. All of the road and trail system is within what was the city limits for Skagway before Skagway became a borough. Trapping on trails frequented by hikers and skiers with their pets creates a serious public safety risk to the hikers and skiers and pets. These trails are not wilderness trails or seldom used trails. Complaints from hikers and skiers reached the borough assembly and a compromise between user groups was in the works for over 18 months with little success. Recreational trail use has increased dramatically in recent years and is only expected to increase. Traps should not be set in areas of high public use within the Skagway City limits (now borough limits) and certain kinds of extremely dangerous traps should have limitations on how they are used within the borough limits, in the manner currently established in SMC Chapter 9.04.

PROPOSED BY: Municipality of Skagway

(HQ-F18-003)

