

Summary of Actions Alaska Board of Game

ARCTIC BOARD OF GAME MEETING

November 11 - 14, 2005
Kotzebue, Alaska 99752

DESIGNATED REPORTERS: Charlie Gregg

This summary of actions is for information purposes only and is not intended to detail, reflect or fully interpret the reasons for the Board's actions.

PROPOSAL NO. 1

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Liberalize resident moose season and bag limit.

AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: The board and department discussed their satisfaction with the present moose registration hunt. The department recommended that the current permit system continue for two more years in order to better understand how regulatory changes made in 2003 will affect moose hunters and harvests.

PROPOSAL NO. 2

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Establish a uniform Sept. 1-14 moose season adjacent to the Nome road system in western Unit 22B, Unit 22D Kuzitrin River Drainage, and Unit 22D southwest.

AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: The board discussed the amount necessary for subsistence determination and expressed concern for the impact on the moose population and hunters by shortening the season. The department stated that shortening the season to two weeks, they hope to avoid overharvest and reduce hunting pressure in the areas where serious concerns about declining moose population exist.

PROPOSAL NO. 3

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Close all moose hunting in the central portion of Unit 22A.

AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: The department stated that the adult and yearling moose population in Central Unit 22A is a serious problem and immediate steps are needed to conserve the herd. The moose season in 22A will have to be closed to give the moose population a chance to rebuild to a harvestable level before opening a hunt season. The board agreed and took no action based on action taken on proposal 13.

PROPOSAL NO. 4

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Establish moose hunt area in Lower Yukon, modify bag limit and open winter hunt for antlered bulls or calves.

AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: The board questioned the harvest of calves versus cows and the support by local residents. The department indicated the moose population has increased in this area and taking of calves will not harm the moose population.

PROPOSAL NO. 5

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Remove restricted availability for moose registration permits, change bag limit for general season for any bull.

AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: The department and board discussed the need to continue the current registration moose hunt at least two more years and then evaluate the program. The board took no action in light of the action taken on proposal #1.

PROPOSAL NO. 6

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Shift December moose season to January in Unit 22A.

AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: The department and board discussed the impact on the harvest by changing the moose season from December to January. The department indicated it would not significantly increase harvest.

PROPOSAL NO. 7

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Convert nonresident moose registration hunt to a drawing in Unit 22D.

AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: The department and board discussed the current permitting process, providing nonresident hunting opportunity and the complaints from the public regarding the unfairness of the process compared to a lottery system. The board also raised questions about the need for power of attorney.

PROPOSAL NO. 8

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Require a specific number of nonresident moose registration permits to be issued in remainder of Unit 22D.

AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: This proposal is also addressed in proposal #7 and #12.

PROPOSAL NO. 9

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Create controlled use area in portion of Unit 18, prohibiting aircraft for moose hunting.

AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: The board discussed whether the use of aircraft to hunt and spot big game is illegal and raised concerns about poaching in the area. The department indicated that the moose population is very healthy and no need for additional restrictions. It was mentioned that the YKAC and FSB strongly support this.

PROPOSAL NO. 10

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Create new type of drawing hunt, after registering at local office.

AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: The board discussed the permit concept of utilizing a local sign up followed by a lottery-style drawing hunt for small hunts with limited number of registration permits. The board questioned whether they had the authority to implement this type of permit system. The department commented on difficulties and problems resulting from the first come first serve permitting system. The in-person lottery system is a fair way to allocate a limited number of permits in Unit 22. The board asked the Departments of Law and Fish and Game to discuss and bring back to the board at a future date.

PROPOSAL NO. 11

ACTION: Carried/A

DESCRIPTION: Establish drawing hunt for moose in portion of unit with use of aircraft allowed, establish winter season in portion of unit, lengthen season in other portion.

AMENDMENTS: Restricting aircraft in the Anaktuvuk River drainage.

DISCUSSION: The department discussed the increasing moose population in the Colville River and Anaktuvuk River drainages providing increased hunting opportunities and the issue of increased air traffic. Board members expressed interest for increased hunting opportunities, but were concerned with air traffic in the Anaktuvuk River drainage. It was also discussed whether the board has the authority to require moose hunters to hunt with guides. The board decided to look at the impact of the changes from this proposal in two years.

PROPOSAL NO. 12

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Convert nonresident registration moose hunt to a drawing in Unit 22D. .

AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: See discussion under proposal # 7.

PROPOSAL NO. 13

ACTION: Carried/A

DESCRIPTION: Establish a four year moratorium on moose hunting in Central 22A.
AMENDMENTS: Close the moose season within the central portion of 22A.

DISCUSSION: The department indicated the moose population in Central 22A is alarmingly low and measures are necessary to conserve the population. The board noted the concerns by residents of Unalakleet for the low density of moose in central 22A and their request that the department take steps to help build the moose population. The board agreed that measures need to be taken to build the moose population in central 22A.

PROPOSAL NO. 14

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Convert nonresident moose hunt to a drawing in Unit 22B.
AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: The department stated that this is a nonresident moose drawing hunt that is intended to preserve nonresident moose hunting and at the same time protect resident and subsistence hunting opportunity in Unit 22B. The declining moose population in 22B east is a concern to the department. They would like to establish a nonresident drawing hunt “up 10” permits that would help maintain harvest level near 5% and prevent over harvest in the future. The board discussed the opportunity for local guides to receive permits and have local residents help with the guiding operation. The Department of Law indicated this would be a legislative process not a board or department process.

PROPOSAL NO. 15

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Allow August hunt for any bull moose by residents of Pilot Station.
AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: The department indicated Pilot Station would like a 10 day moose hunt, but state law does not allow a priority for hunting by Alaska residents based on location of residence. The board felt more information is needed. The board and department discussed the issue of poaching.

PROPOSAL NO. 16

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Establish antlered bull tag limit, change winter season from emergency opening to permanent season.
AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: The department stated that this would establish set winter dates; extend the winter moose season along the Yukon and change bag limit to one antlered bull. This proposal is equivalent to proposal 19.

PROPOSAL NO. 17

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Remove restricted availability for moose registration permit.

AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: The department stated that the board should maintain current moose regulations in Unit 23 for two more years to better understand how the cumulative regulatory changes made in 2003 will affect moose hunters and harvest. The board took no action taken due to action taken on proposal #1.

PROPOSAL NO. 18

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Eliminate the nonresident moose hunt in Unit 22C.

AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: The department stated that moose harvest allocation in Unit 22C has been drastically reduced in recent years resulting in the possibility of intensive management practices. The board discussed the nonresident status of the hunt and the number and size of moose harvested. The board was concerned about the impact of eliminating nonresident hunters to the area and where they would be able to hunt if more hunting restrictions are put on Unit 22C. There was also discussion regarding the ANS determination for the area.

PROPOSAL NO. 19

ACTION: Tabled

DESCRIPTION: Establish antlered bull bag limit for all hunts, change winter season from emergency opening to permanent season.

AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: The department stated that current season would be changed to Dec 20 - Jan 10; this longer opening would provide a better hunting opportunity for local residents. The department would like the season to open concurrent with US Fish and Wildlife, which would be a longer season for the residents. The board tabled the proposal due to action taken on proposal #16.

PROPOSAL NO. 20

ACTION: Tabled

DESCRIPTION: Establish moose hunt area in lower Yukon with antlered bull fall season and winter hunt for antlered bulls or calves.

AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: The board expressed concerns for harvesting moose calves and discussed with the department data on calf and cow harvests. The department said that harvesting cows would be more detrimental to the moose population than harvesting calves. Calves have had a strong population in Lower Yukon. The board also discussed the support by local residents and their efforts to help rebuild the moose population with the moratorium. The proposal was tabled due to action taken on proposal #4.

PROPOSAL NO. 21

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Eliminate the winter moose season (opened by emergency order) south of the Eek River drainage.

AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: The department stated that this proposal would eliminate the winter moose season in a portion of Unit 18 south of the Eek River drainage as this area has a low moose population. The board discussed subsistence opportunity and noted that advisory committees do not support.

PROPOSAL NO. 22

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Close moose season south of and including the Goodnews River drainage. .

AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: The board and the department discussed the moose population and the time period for the closed season.

PROPOSAL NO. 23

**ACTION: Deferred to
Winter 2006 BOG in**

Anchorage

DESCRIPTION: Allow proxy hunting for muskox.

AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: The department stated the muskox population has grown to where harvests are now made available for subsistence proxy hunting in parts of Unit 22 and Unit 23. The board would like to defer this proposal to the winter 2006 BOG meeting in Anchorage, for more information will be given by the Departments of Law and Fish and Game

PROPOSAL NO. 24

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Open nonresident muskox drawing hunt, lengthen **drawing** season in Unit 22E.

AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: Current drawing muskox permits are only available to resident hunters in Unit 22E; nonresidents do not partake in the muskox drawing permit. The department stated that if this proposal is adopted then there would be 8 resident drawing permits and 2 nonresident drawing permits that will be made available. The board took no action because of the action taken on proposal #30

PROPOSAL NO. 25

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Use muskox harvest rates to determine harvestable surplus in Unit 22.

AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: The department stated that harvest quota will be replaced by harvest rates. Harvest rates will be increased to no less than 8% to no higher than 10% in all of Unit 22. The department said the muskox population is steadily growing and moving to all parts of Unit 22. They feel that having a percentage rate would not harm the muskox population but keep a harvestable record that would show a true decline or increase in muskox population. No action was taken on the proposal in light of the action taken on proposal #28.

PROPOSAL NO. 26

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Lengthen muskox drawing season in Unit 22E.

AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: Lengthening the drawing season is in alignment with the subsistence hunts in Unit 22E. The department indicated that changing the drawing hunt opening dates does not conflict with the quotas or opportunity of the Tier II permit holder. The board took no action because of the action taken on proposal #30.

PROPOSAL NO. 27

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Restrict muskox hunting in Mekoyuk to residents only, with two animal bag limit.

AMENDMENTS:

DISCUSSION: The proposal limits the number of permits per family, but is ambiguous whether the limit would be one or two muskox. The board commented that increasing permits to provide two animals per family would raise the take of muskox in that area. The department stated that they have the authority to limit the number of permits per household.

PROPOSAL NO. 28

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Establish muskox harvest guidelines levels; simplify regulations in Units 22B, Units 22D and 23 southwest.

AMENDMENT:

DISCUSSION: The department indicated the muskox population has been successfully managed for population growth and range expansion and are colonizing new areas in Unit 22 and 23. The board said that this was a good workable proposal supported by the department and Advisory Committees; good work.

PROPOSAL NO. 29

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Establish muskox harvest guideline levels; simplify regulations in Unit 22C.

AMENDMENT:

DISCUSSION: The proposal would create additional hunting opportunities in Unit 22C, winter season would protect calves and "bull only" hunt would encourage a high rate of productivity. It also would allow "up to 8%" harvest rate, create one large hunt area with a closed area around Nome with a season Jan 1 to Mar 15. The department stated that the area around Nome was closed because it is a large tourist attraction. The board discussed the size of the population, the success of the harvest, and the access to the area. The board said this was a well drafted proposal that was supported by department, muskox cooperators and local AC.

PROPOSAL NO. 30

ACTION: Carried/A

DESCRIPTION: Establish muskox drawing harvest guideline levels, create registration permit in Unit 22E, extend drawing season.

**AMENDMENT: 1) ANS range of 40-52 for sub-population
2) Provide permits to nonresident hunters**

DISCUSSION: Unit 22E residents favor a Tier I hunt because it will improve the ability to reach the harvest quota, slow herd growth, and make it easier to get permits. The department said that justification for Tier I hunt in Unit 22E is that the harvestable surplus (69 muskoxen) is greater than the number of applicants (47 in 2005), local demands for muskox are being met, and Tier I is reasonable without risking rapid overharvest. The board amended and discussed the amount necessary for subsistence range for a sub-population of the herd and conversion to a registration hunt from a Tier II hunt. The board also discussed the opportunity for a general and nonresident hunt which would benefit the local economy. The board acknowledged the local groups and the department for the successful management of the herd.

PROPOSAL NO. 31

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Require trophy destruction of subsistence muskox horns removed from Unit 22E.

AMENDMENT:

DISCUSSION: The department stated that this proposal requires the trophy value of all muskox skulls taken in 22E by subsistence permit be destroyed upon leaving Unit 22E rather than upon leaving Unit 22. The board did not support the proposal.

PROPOSAL NO. 32

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Increase drawing and registration permits for muskox on Nunivak Island.

AMENDMENT:

DISCUSSION: The muskox population has been slowly increasing on Nunivak Island and would like to increase the take of muskox from 45 bull drawing permits to 60 bulls and from 45 cow registration permits to 60 cow because the current population is above the management level goal. The board discussed the distribution of resident and nonresident permits. The department stated that most of the permits go to residents.

PROPOSAL NO. 33

ACTION: Carried/A

DESCRIPTION: Shorten caribou season in Units 22B, 22C, and western 22D.

AMENDMENT: Modify Hunting Season dates for Units 22B, 22C, 22D.

DISCUSSION: The department stated that reindeer are mistakenly harvested as caribou and the reindeer herders are slowly losing their herd both to the caribou herd and hunters. The department would like to change the caribou hunting season in the three areas in Unit 22 to help stop reindeer poaching. The board inquired about the breakdown of the harvest data and the seasons of harvest.

PROPOSAL NO. 34

ACTION: Carried/A

DESCRIPTION: Lengthen brown bear season to end June 15 in Unit 22A.

AMENDMENT: Modify brown bear season dates in Central and Northern Unit 22A.

DISCUSSION: The department stated that bear predation on moose is contributing to the serious decline in moose population in central Unit 22A. The department and local AC support the proposal.

PROPOSAL NO. 35

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Include area near Kotzebue in subsistence brown bear hunt area.

AMENDMENT:

DISCUSSION: The department stated that adding a portion of Baldwin Peninsula for the brown bear subsistence hunt would not harm the population. If the brown bear population starts to decline restrictions in hunting will be put in place. The board was concerned about possible decline in brown bear population, but was glad to hear that the department will impose restrictions in place if the bear population declines.

PROPOSAL NO. 36

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Open brown bear subsistence season July 1, general season Aug 1.

AMENDMENT:

DISCUSSION: The department stated that subsistence and recreational hunters have been requesting more opportunity to hunt brown bear. Residents have complained about

bear-human conflicts and declining muskox population due to bear predation. The board took no action given the action taken on proposal 38.

PROPOSAL NO. 37

ACTION: Carried/A

DESCRIPTION: Increase resident brown bear bag limit to 3 bears per year.

AMENDMENT: Reduce bag limit and reduce area applied to.

DISCUSSION: The board was concerned about the bear population if the bag limit is raised to 3 bear per year in each area and felt that in the future more permits for brown bear hunts will be applied for by both resident and nonresident hunters. The department said that nonresident drawing permits have quadrupled since 1990 (10 permits were available, 39 in 2005). The board inquired about the bear population in the area and if data supports the need for a lower bag limit.

PROPOSAL NO. 38

ACTION: Carried/A

DESCRIPTION: Lengthen brown bear season by opening July 1.

AMENDMENT: Modify bag limit and season dates.

DISCUSSION: The department stated that resident and recreational hunters have requested more opportunity to hunt brown bear in Unit 26A. Also discussed in proposal 36.

PROPOSAL NO. 39

ACTION: Tabled

DESCRIPTION: Increase resident brown bear bag limit to 3 bears per year...

AMENDMENT:

DISCUSSION: See discussion under proposal 37.

PROPOSAL NO. 40

**ACTION: Amended and
Deferred to Winter 2006
BOG Meeting**

DESCRIPTION: Allow taking of wolves with ATV's, snow machines, and boats in Unit 22A.

AMENDMENT: Include all of Unit 22.

DISCUSSION: The board deferred the proposal to the winter, 2006.

PROPOSAL NO. 41

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Lengthen wolf season and increase bag limit for hunting.

AMENDMENT:

DISCUSSION: The department stated that Unit 18 wolf hunting seasons were established to allow big game hunters the opportunity to take wolves during hunts for

other big game species. Wolf harvest by hunters is typically light and of little consequence to wolf population. The board discussed the similarity to the Unit 19 proposal.

PROPOSAL NO. 42

ACTION: Tabled

DESCRIPTION: Remove registration permit requirement for swans in Unit 22.

AMENDMENT:

DISCUSSION: The proposal would change swan hunting in Unit 22 by removing the requirements to obtain a registration permit before hunting. These permits are required under the federal regulations to hunt swans, by a) issue permits within maximum quotas, b) obtain adequate harvest reports responses, and c) submit an annual report on the results of each hunt. The board asked the department to pursue this through the Flyway Council and Alaska Migratory Bird Co-management Council.

PROPOSAL NO. 43

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Lengthen mink and weasel season to align with other furbearers.

AMENDMENT:

DISCUSSION: The department stated that this proposal would extend the season to align with the other furbearer animals that are trapped by the residents for subsistence or economical purposes. There was discussion about the impact if mink or weasel fur prices rise and the harvest increases at which point the department intends to revisit the proposal.

PROPOSAL NO. 44

ACTION: Tabled

DESCRIPTION: Allow the use of rim fire rifles for taking waterfowl in Unit 22.

AMENDMENT:

DISCUSSION: The board discussed public safety issues and whether to amend the proposal to allow rim fire rifles for the use of taking wounded birds. There was also discussion about pursuing use in certain areas through federal agencies.

PROPOSAL NO. 45

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Create controlled use area in portion of Unit, prohibiting the use of boats with 40+ for big game hunting.

AMENDMENT:

DISCUSSION: The department stated this proposal would create a new controlled use area in the Goodnews Bay which consists of the North, Middle and South Forks, including all streams accessible by skiff powered by outboard all the way to Goodnews Bay Lake. The department stated that this would be closed to 40+ hp outboard motors

used from June 15 to Nov 1. Board members commented that this area won't increase the harvest.

PROPOSAL NO. 46

ACTION: Carried/A

DESCRIPTION: Amend Unit 26A controlled use area to prohibit use of aircraft for caribou hunting from Aug 15 to Oct 15.

AMENDMENT: 1) Remove Chandalar River drainages and include sunset clause.

DISCUSSION: Aircraft are used north of the village of Anaktuvuk Pass, it tends to deflect the migration route of the caribou away from the village, costing villagers more money for gas and hunting necessities to get caribou they need for their winter survival. The board expressed concern about the importance of preserving the subsistence use in the area and discussed the uncertainty of caribou migration being impacted by aircraft activity near the village of Anaktuvuk Pass. The department was asked to monitor the situation more closely.

PROPOSAL NO. 47

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Establish a community subsistence harvest hunt area for moose in portion of Units 18, 19 and 21.

AMENDMENT:

DISCUSSION: The department stated this would be inconsistent with the original intent of the community subsistence harvest hunt area program. It would be a complicated proposal affecting 50+ villages, 25,000 + people, and non-local users. It will also be expensive and cumbersome administratively. The board discussed consolidation of the permitting system to satisfy all hunters in the areas and agreed it can be looked at in the future.

PROPOSAL NO. 48

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: Establish a community subsistence harvest hunt area for moose in portions of Units 18, 19 and 21.

AMENDMENT:

DISCUSSION: The board took no action (see discussion on proposal 47)