

Fairbanks Area Proposals

PROPOSAL 125 - 5 AAC 85.045(18). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose. Reauthorize the antlerless moose hunting seasons in Unit 20A as follows:

| Units and Bag Limits | Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts) | Nonresident Open Season |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| (18) | | |
| Unit 20(A), the Ferry Trail Management Area, Wood River Controlled Use Area, and the Yanert Controlled Use Area | | |
| RESIDENT HUNTERS: | | |
| 1 bull with spike-fork antlers or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side; or | Sept. 1—Sept. 25 (General hunt only) | |
| 1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 2,000 permits may be issued in combination with the Remainder of Unit 20(A); a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or | Aug. 15—Nov. 15 (General hunt only) | |
| 1 antlerless moose by registration permit only; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or | Oct. 1—Feb. 28 (General hunt only) | |
| 1 bull by drawing permit only; up to 1,000 permits may be issued in combi- nation with the Remainder | Sept. 1—Sept. 25 (General hunt only) | |

of Unit 20(A); or

1 bull by drawing permit only; by muzzleloader only; up to 75 permits may be issued in combination with nonresidents in Unit 20(A); or

Nov. 1—Nov. 30
(General hunt only)

1 moose by targeted permit only; by shotgun or bow and arrow only; up to 100 permits may be issued

Season to be announced by emergency order
(General hunt only)

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side; or

Sept. 1—Sept. 25

1 bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side, by drawing permit only; by muzzleloader only; up to 75 permits may be issued in combination with residents in Unit 20(A);

Nov. 1—Nov. 30

Remainder of Unit 20(A)

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull with spike-fork antlers or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 3 or more brow tines on one side; or

Sept. 1—Sept. 25

1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 2,000 permits may be issued in combination with Unit 20(A), the Ferry Trail Management

Aug. 15—Nov. 15
(General hunt only)

Area, Wood River
Controlled Use Area,
and the Yanert Con-
trolled Use Area; a
person may not
take a cow accompanied
by a calf; or

1 antlerless moose by
registration permit
only; a person may not
take a cow accom-
panied by a calf; or

Aug. 25—Feb. 28

1 bull by drawing permit
only; up to 1,000
permits may be issued
in combination with
Unit 20(A), the Ferry
Trail Management
Area, Wood River
Controlled Use
Area, and the
Yanert Controlled
Use Area; or

Sept. 1—Sept. 25

1 moose by targeted
permit only; by shotgun or
bow and arrow only; up
to 100 permits may be issued

Season to be announced
by emergency order
(General hunt only)

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull with 50-inch
antlers or antlers
with 4 or more brow
tines on one side;

Sept. 1—Sept. 25

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Antlerless moose hunting seasons must be reauthorized annually. The purpose of antlerless moose hunts in Unit 20A is to regulate population growth, to meet the intensive management (IM) mandate for high levels of harvest, to provide subsistence hunters with a reasonable opportunity for success in obtaining moose for subsistence uses in Unit 20A outside the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area (part of the western Tanana Flats), and to use the targeted hunt as a tool to manage moose-vehicle collision and nuisance situations. Overall, the goal is to protect the health and habitat of the moose population over the long term and to provide for a wide range of public uses and benefits.

This reauthorization will allow the Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) to manage the moose population at the optimum level (i.e., in concert with the available habitat). Additional hunting

opportunity will be provided, and harvest will remain high by utilizing a harvestable surplus of antlerless moose. The antlerless harvest will help in meeting IM harvest objectives without reducing bull-to-cow ratios to low levels. Meat and subsistence hunters will benefit from the opportunity to harvest cow moose. The moose population will benefit by having moose density compatible with the habitat. Motorists and residents may benefit from reduced moose-vehicle collisions and moose-human conflicts.

The current objective is to maintain the Unit 20A population at roughly 12,000 moose while continuing to monitor nutritional condition. In 2015 the post-hunt moose population estimate was 12,315 (10,622–14,009 @ 90% confidence interval). This high-density moose population (~2.5 moose/mi²) continues to experience density-dependent effects, including low productivity and relatively light short-yearling weights. Although sporadic signs of improvement in nutritional condition have been observed (i.e., higher twinning rates in the 2012 and 2016 and increases in short-yearling weights in 2015–2016 compared to the late 1990s–early 2000s), no clear signals or significant trends have yet been detected. ADF&G recommends continued antlerless hunts in regulatory year 2017 to regulate population growth (i.e., stabilize the population at 12,000 moose).

If antlerless moose hunts are not reauthorized, ADF&G will lose the ability to regulate this moose population. Opportunity to hunt a harvestable surplus of cow moose will be lost, and our ability to meet intensive management harvest objectives will be compromised. Subsistence hunters in the portion of Unit 20A outside the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area (part of the western Tanana Flats) may not have a reasonable opportunity to pursue moose for subsistence uses.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F16-127)

PROPOSAL 126 - 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and big limits for moose. Modify the muzzleloader hunting season for moose in Unit 20A as follows:

| | |
|---|--|
| 1 bull by drawing permit only; by muzzleloader only; up to 75 permits may be issued in combination with nonresidents in Unit 20(A); | <u>Nov. 10</u> [NOV. 1]— <u>Dec. 10</u> [NOV. 30] (General hunt only) |
|---|--|

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The current Unit 20A moose muzzleloader hunt (DM766) season is: 1 to 30 November. Creating a hunt that often is not accessible during the first couple weeks of the season. This also consolidates all hunters into the last few days of November. Hunters are placing themselves in extreme danger attempting to cross open rivers. Delaying the season start will help disperse hunters and allow for safer access. Changing to a 10 November to 10 December season would also align this hunt with the Unit 20B muzzleloader hunt. Unit 20F also has a general moose hunt that runs to 15 December. Holding bull moose seasons running to 10 or 15 of December is reasonable.

PROPOSED BY: David Machacek (EG-F16-011)

PROPOSAL 127 - 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose. Change the antler restrictions for moose hunting in Unit 20A as follows:

Unit 20A will return to **any bull**. Should the Department of Fish and Game feel the harvest gets too high, they can adjust the season dates accordingly. If they still want to keep the bull harvest lower, they can put nonresident hunters—who care more about harvesting a trophy animal than filling their freezer anyways—on antler restrictions.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Unit 20A should be **any bull** for Alaska residents. Most residents hunt to fill their freezers and the antler restrictions (spike-fork/50 inch) make harvesting a moose unnecessarily difficult and at times stressful. It also leads to wanton waste by unscrupulous and unethical hunters.

Personnel at the Department of Fish and Game have stated concerns about whether or not Unit 20A can handle increased hunting pressure from southcentral Alaska residents should the subunit go to “any bull.” Units 20B, C, D, E, & F are mostly “any bull” for residents already, and those subunits do have many hunters from southcentral. This “any bull” approach would help alleviate some pressure on those subunits, B through F, as well. Returning Unit 20A to “any bull” is a better option for residents and helps fill freezers. Hands down, it is also a better and wiser option than harvesting cows.

PROPOSED BY: Jake Sprinkle (EG-F16-073)

PROPOSAL 128 - 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose. Change the antler restrictions for moose hunting in Unit 20A as follows:

Change Unit 20A to any bull for residents and 50-inch antlers or three brow tines for nonresidents. Keep the hunt dates of September 1 until the 25 the same. The Department of Fish and Game may in the future change the season dates to maintain a healthy moose population.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Antler restrictions in Unit 20A. Resident hunters use this area to put meat in their freezers. With antler restrictions, it makes that task more difficult and stressful. It also puts higher hunting pressure on neighboring units.

PROPOSED BY: Leonard Jewkes (EG-F16-089)

PROPOSAL 129 - 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose. Change the antler restrictions for moose hunting in Unit 20A as follows:

Unit 20A: Change the season to any bull and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) can adjust the length of the season if they feel too many bulls are being harvested. If ADF&G has a concern about the number of bulls being taken - then nonresidents should be put on antler restrictions of spike/fork/50 inch antlers before the season is shortened for residents. This unit and all game management units in Alaska should be managed for maximum benefit to Alaska residents. No antlerless permits should be issued under any circumstances.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Unit 20A should be changed back to any bull. Units 20 B, C, D, E, & F are any bull except for a few small areas. Most Alaska residents hunt to fill their freezer and antler restrictions make it difficult because no one wants to shoot an illegal moose. Trying to judge a 50 inch moose, or count brow tines, is very stressful to the hunter. These antler restrictions really diminish the experience and are not necessary. Guides like antler restrictions (spike/fork/50) so the season lasts longer and they can keep guiding nonresidents.

PROPOSED BY: Jeff Barney (EG-F16-094)

PROPOSAL 130 - 5 AAC 85.045(18). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose. Reauthorize antlerless moose hunting seasons in Unit 20B, and remove incorrect language for the winter muzzleloader registration hunt for bulls and the targeted antlerless hunts in Unit 20B as follows:

| Units and Bag Limits | Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts) | Nonresident Open Season |
|--|---|---|
| (18) Unit 20(B), that portion within Creamer’s Refuge | | |
| 1 bull with spike-fork or greater antlers, by bow and arrow only; or | Sept. 1—Sept. 30 (General hunt only) Nov. 21—Nov. 27 (General hunt only) | Sept. 1—Sept. 30 Nov. 21—Nov. 27 |
| 1 antlerless moose by bow and arrow only, by drawing permit only; up to 150 bow and arrow permits may be issued in the Fairbanks Management Area; a recipient of a drawing permit is prohibited from taking an antlered bull moose in the Fairbanks Management Area; or | Sept. 1—Nov. 27 (General hunt only) | Sept. 1—Nov. 27 |
| 1 antlerless moose by muzzleloader by drawing permit only; up to 10 permits may be issued; a recipient of a drawing | Dec. 1—Jan. 31 (General hunt only) | Dec. 1—Jan. 31 |

permit is prohibited from taking an antlered bull moose in the Fairbanks Management Area

Unit 20(B), remainder of the Fairbanks Management Area

1 bull with spike-fork or greater antlers, by bow and arrow only; or

Sept. 1—Sept. 30
(General hunt only)
Nov. 21—Nov. 27
(General hunt only)

Sept. 1—Sept. 30
Nov. 21—Nov. 27

1 antlerless moose by bow and arrow only, by drawing permit only; up to 150 bow and arrow permits may be issued in the Fairbanks Management Area; a recipient of a drawing permit is prohibited from taking an antlered bull moose in the Fairbanks Management Area; or

Sept. 1—Nov. 27
(General hunt only)

Sept. 1—Nov. 27

1 moose by targeted permit only; by shotgun or bow and arrow only; up to 100 permits may be issued

Season to be announced by emergency order
(General hunt only)

No open season.

Unit 20(B), that portion within the Minto Flats Management Area

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull; or

Aug. 21—Aug. 27
(Subsistence hunt only)

1 bull with spike-fork antlers or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 3 or more brow tines on one side; or

Sept. 8—Sept. 25

1 antlerless moose by

Oct. 15—Feb. 28

registration permit only

(Subsistence hunt only)

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull with 50-inch antlers
or antlers with 4 or more
brow tines on one side by
drawing permit only; up
to 8 permits may be issued

Sept. 8—Sept. 25

Unit 20(B), the
drainage of the
Middle Fork of
the Chena River

1 antlerless moose by
drawing permit only;
up to 300 permits
may be issued; a
person may not take
a cow accompanied
by a calf; or

Aug. 15—Nov. 15
(General hunt only)

1 antlerless moose by
registration permit only;
a person may not take
a cow accompanied
by a calf; or

Oct. 1—Feb. 28
(General hunt only)

No open season.

1 bull; or

Sept. 1—Sept. 25

Sept. 1—Sept. 25

1 bull, by bow
and arrow only; or

Sept. 26—Sept. 30

Sept. 26—Sept. 30

1 bull by registration permit
only; by muzzleloader only;
[IN THE SALCHA RIVER
DRAINAGE UPSTREAM
FROM AND INCLUDING
BUTTE CREEK]

Nov. 10—Dec. 10
(General hunt only)

No open season.

Unit 20(B), that
portion of the
Salcha River
drainage upstream
from and including
Goose Creek

1 bull; or

Sept. 1—Sept. 25

Sept. 1—Sept. 25

| | | |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| 1 bull, by bow and arrow only; or | Sept. 26—Sept. 30 | Sept. 26—Sept. 30 |
| 1 bull by registration permit only; by muzzleloader only [, IN THE SALCHA RIVER DRAINAGE DOWNSTREAM OF GOOSE CREEK AND UPSTREAM FROM AND INCLUDING BUTTE CREEK;] | Nov. 10—Dec. 10 (General hunt only) | No open season. |
| Unit 20(B), that portion of the Salcha River drainage downstream of Goose Creek and upstream from and including Butte Creek | | |
| 1 bull; or | Sept. 1—Sept. 20 | Sept. 5—Sept. 20 |
| [1 ANTLERLESS MOOSE BY DRAWING PERMIT ONLY; UP TO 1,500 PERMITS MAY BE ISSUED IN COMBINATION WITH THE HUNT IN THE REMAINDER OF UNIT 20(B); A PERSON MAY NOT TAKE A COW ACCOMPANIED BY A CALF; OR] | [AUG. 15—NOV. 15] [(GENERAL HUNT ONLY)] | [NO OPEN SEASON.] |
| [1 ANTLERLESS MOOSE BY REGISTRATION PERMIT ONLY; A PERSON MAY NOT TAKE A COW ACCOMPANIED BY A CALF; OR] | [OCT. 1—FEB. 28] | [(GENERAL HUNT ONLY)] |
| [1 MOOSE BY TARGETED PERMIT ONLY; BY SHOTGUN OR BOW AND ARROW ONLY; UP TO 100 PERMITS MAY BE ISSUED; OR] | [SEASON TO BE ANNOUNCED BY EMERGENCY ORDER (GENERAL HUNT ONLY)] | [NO OPEN SEASON.] |
| 1 bull by registration permit only; by muzzleloader only [, IN THE DRAINAGE OF THE MIDDLE FORK OF THE CHENA RIVER AND IN THE SALCHA RIVER | Nov. 10—Dec. 10 (General hunt only) | No open season. |

DRAINAGE UPSTREAM
FROM AND INCLUDING
GOOSE CREEK;]

Unit 20(B), that
portion southeast
of the Moose
Creek dike within
one-half mile of
each side of the
Richardson highway

| | | |
|---|---|------------------|
| 1 bull; or | Sept. 1—Sept. 20 | Sept. 5—Sept. 20 |
| 1 moose by drawing permit only; by bow and arrow or muzzleloader only; up to 100 permits may be issued; or | Sept. 16—Feb. 28 (General hunt only) | No open season. |
| 1 moose by targeted permit only; by shotgun or bow and arrow only; up to 100 permits may be issued | Season to be announced by emergency order (General hunt only) | No open season. |
| Remainder of Unit 20(B) | | |
| 1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; by youth hunt only; up to 200 permits may be issued; or | Aug. 5—Aug. 14 | No open season. |
| 1 bull; or | Sept. 1—Sept. 20 | Sept. 5—Sept. 20 |
| 1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 1,500 permits may be issued in the Remainder of Unit 20(B); a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or | Aug. 15—Nov. 15 (General hunt only) | No open season. |
| 1 antlerless moose by registration permit only; | Oct. 1—Feb. 28 (General hunt only) | |

a person may not take
a cow accompanied by
a calf; or

1 moose by targeted
permit only; by shotgun or
bow and arrow only; up
to 100 permits may be
issued

Season to be announced
by emergency order
(General hunt only)

No open season.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Antlerless moose hunting seasons must be reauthorized annually. Our goal in Unit 20B is to provide for a wide range of public uses and benefits and to protect the health and habitat of moose populations. Antlerless hunts are important for improving or maintaining the ability of moose habitat to support current populations. They also help regulate moose population growth, provide hunting opportunity, help meet intensive management (IM) objectives for high levels of harvest, and provide subsistence hunters with a reasonable opportunity to pursue moose for subsistence uses without reducing bull-to-cow ratios. If antlerless hunts are not reauthorized, subsistence hunters in the portion of Unit 20B outside the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area may not have a reasonable opportunity to pursue moose for subsistence uses.

Fairbanks Management Area (FMA): The purpose of this antlerless hunt is to regulate population growth in the FMA and potentially reduce moose–vehicle collisions and nuisance moose problems. The number of moose–vehicle collisions in the FMA is high and poses significant safety risks to motorists. In addition, moose nuisance issues continue to place significant demands on property owners. To increase hunting opportunity and harvest and to reduce moose–vehicle collisions, the department incrementally increased the number of drawing permits for antlerless moose in the FMA during regulatory year (RY) 1999–RY2010. Moose–vehicle collisions and moose nuisance problems declined during RY2006–RY2015, presumably, in part due to the consistent antlerless moose harvests during RY2009–RY2015.

Minto Flats Management Area (MFMA): The primary purpose of this antlerless hunt is to provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses and to regulate the moose population in the MFMA. The MFMA moose density was high in 2010 (4.1 moose/mi²). In order to reduce the moose population, harvest of antlerless moose during RY2012 and RY2013 was about 2.5% of the population. The fall 2013 estimate showed a more sustainable density in the MFMA (2013 = 2.6 moose/mi²). Our most recent estimates indicate densities are still high, probably about 2.5 moose/mi². Since antlerless harvest in this area is used to stabilize the population, our goal is to maintain antlerless harvest at about 1% of the total population to maintain the current population size.

Targeted Hunt: The purpose of the targeted hunt is to allow the public to harvest moose that are causing a nuisance or public safety issue. These permits are used sparingly but allow the public to harvest the moose instead of the department just dispatching them.

Unit 20B, drainage of the Middle Fork of the Chena River and the Remainder of Unit 20B: The antlerless moose harvest in this area is designed to regulate the moose population in this portion of Unit 20B and help meet the IM harvest objectives for Unit 20B. The 2013 population estimate

(14,057 moose) indicated the population declined from the 2009 estimate (20,173 moose) to a more appropriate level for the habitat. Based on the population trend analysis, twinning rates, harvest rate, and success rates, we estimate the population remains at appropriate levels for the habitat. Therefore, to regulate the population at this level, our goal is to maintain antlerless harvest at about 1% of the total moose population to maintain the current population size.

To mitigate hunter conflicts, the Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) attempts to distribute hunters over space and time. Each of 16 hunt areas has permits in four time periods: two before the general hunt, one during, and one after. The earliest of the four hunts is a youth hunt that gives hunting opportunity prior to the start of school. Spreading these hunts out over time maintains a few hunters during each season in each permit area, yet is expected to achieve our intended harvest.

Extensive burns in northcentral Unit 20B will provide excellent habitat in the future. With improving habitat, continued high predator harvest, and relatively mild winters, we can expect continued high productivity and survival of moose, along with increased yield. Antlerless hunts will continue to be available to hunters, and ADF&G will continue to have the authority to use antlerless hunts as a tool to regulate the moose populations.

Finally, we propose to remove the antlerless hunts in the Salcha River drainage downstream of Goose Creek and upstream of and including Butte Creek. This area has a low density of moose and currently does not warrant antlerless harvest. It is unlikely that an antlerless hunt would be warranted in this area in the foreseeable future.

Housekeeping: To simplify and clarify regulations, we propose to remove incorrect language from the winter registration muzzleloader hunt for bulls in those portions of Unit 20B in the drainage of the Middle Fork of the Chena River, the Salcha River drainage upstream from and including Goose Creek, and the Salcha River drainage downstream of Goose Creek and upstream from and including Butte Creek. Also, we propose to remove the targeted and antlerless hunts in Unit 20B, that portion of the Salcha River drainage downstream of Goose Creek and upstream from and including Butte Creek. This area has a lower density of moose and antlerless hunts are not warranted. Nuisance or injured moose are also not a problem, so there is no need to issue targeted permits. These regulations are artifacts of changes to “the remainder” portion of Unit 20B in codified in previous years that made this language irrelevant and inaccurate.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F16-128)

PROPOSAL 131 - 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose. Modify the hunting season dates for antlerless moose in Unit 20B as follows:

Unit 20(B), that portion
Within the Minto Flats
Management Area

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| | |
|--|--|
| 1 antlerless moose by registration permit only | [OCT. 15–FEB. 28] <u>Aug. 21–27 then Sept. 8–Feb. 28</u> (Subsistence hunt only) |
|--|--|

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Change the antlerless moose hunt dates. Moose are in better condition for human consumption and less conflict with other users. The management plan for antlerless moose has a quota of about 30 moose. We feel this quota will be met well before November and not have to go to the end of season date of February 28.

PROPOSED BY: Al Barrette (EG-F16-064)

PROPOSAL 132 - 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose. Lengthen the nonresident hunting season for moose in Unit 20B remainder as follows:

Change the nonresident season dates for moose in Unit 20B remainder to be September 1 through September 20 to coincide with resident season dates.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Nonresident moose season dates have been changed in several high population units (population above target level) to coincide with resident season dates. Unit 20B remainder is a high-population unit but the nonresident opening date was not changed in this unit and currently remains September 5, while season opens September 1 for residents. This proposal would have nonresident and resident season dates be the same (September 1 through September 20) for Unit 20B remainder, making it consistent with other high-population units with the same resident and nonresident seasons.

PROPOSED BY: Ken Wegner (EG-F16-032)

PROPOSAL 133 - 5 AAC 92.530. Management areas. Restrict waterfowl hunting in the Chena Slough, Unit 20 as follows:

The Chena Slough would be open to waterfowl hunting only by falconry and archery with flu-flu arrows. No firearm discharge of any kind is allowed in this zone.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Duck hunting is legal on the Chena Slough, also known as Badger Slough, which is in my back yard. Hunters step over the guard rail on Repp Road and begin shooting down the slough, which is approximately 60 feet from my yard. I own a bed and breakfast, with guest seating and a fire pit by the slough, which could easily be in the line of fire if they were shooting at ducks along that shore. There is a hamburger stand across Repp Road that has guests and children playing along the slough. There is a private residence across the slough from the hamburger stand that has children playing along the slough. This scenario is representative of many areas along the slough due to population growth and expanding businesses to service that population. Hunting in residential and/or business areas is not safe and/or responsible hunting. In addition, swans, which are protected, nest all along the slough.

PROPOSED BY: Debra Vance, North Pole Aurora Lodge (EG-F16-054)

PROPOSAL 134 - 5 AAC 92.530. Management areas. Create a management area for the Eielson Farm Road area in Unit 20 as follows:

I'm asking the Board of Game to create a new management area that covers the entire Eielson Farm Road and surrounding private farm lands (fields and woods) much like the areas and refuges on page 98-99 of the hunting regulations.

Example: #15 Eielson Farm Road Management Area - all private land (woods and fields) on either side of the Farm Road the entire length are closed to hunting, fishing and trapping without owner's permission.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Hunting on/along Eielson Farm Road and surrounding farm lands.

This area is a unique area that holds good populations of moose, waterfowl and fish all in close proximity to the towns of Fairbanks and North Pole, along with military bases Fort Wainwright and Eielson.

Each year countless numbers of "road hunters" travel up and down the road looking for moose or geese in fields, some with "no trespassing" signs. The problem is that there are many instances of trespassing and sometimes taking of game past these signs. At the start of the road there is a large metal sign stating that it is private property along the road and "no hunting, shooting."

PROPOSED BY: Jacques Etcheverry (EG-F16-058)

PROPOSAL 135 - 5 AAC 84.270(14). Furbearer trapping. Lengthen the trapping season for wolverine in Unit 20C as follows:

Wolverine, west of the Parks Highway in Unit 20C trapping season is open from November 1 to March 31.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like to see the trapping of wolverines in Unit 20C west of the Toklat River extended from the end of February to the last day of March.

There is very little trapping pressure on wolverines in this area and due to the wolf trapping season being open during this time period there is always the possibility of an incidental catch of a wolverine in a wolf trap, and removing a live wolverine from a trap is a very tough and dangerous job. If you have to dispatch said wolverine, it has to be turned over to the Department of Fish and Game at a financial loss to the trapper.

Due to the nature of wolverines to be very widely dispersed and territorial and the low trapping pressure on them, I feel there would be very little negative pressure on them.

PROPOSED BY: Mike Turner (EG-F16-005)

PROPOSAL 136 - 5 AAC 92.108. Identified big game prey populations and objectives. Reevaluate the intensive management finding for the Delta caribou herd as follows:

Reevaluate the current finding. The regulation 5 AAC 92.106. Intensive management of identified big game prey populations states in paragraph (1)(A) that the average annual historical human harvest for caribou should meet or exceed 100. We do not believe this has ever happened since the Delta caribou herd had a positive finding of intensive management (IM), nor has the population objective ever been met (5,000-7,000).

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Board of Game and the Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation is not compliant with the IM statute or regulations set by the Board of Game. The Fairbanks Advisory Committee requests that the positive finding of the IM for the Delta caribou herd be reevaluated.

PROPOSED BY: Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F16-061)

PROPOSAL 137 - 5 AAC 92.106. Intensive management of identified big game prey populations. Implement an intensive management program for the Delta caribou herd as follows:

Start with a feasibility plan for intensive management (IM) for the Delta caribou herd (DCH).

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Why the Board of Game and the Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation have not addressed the IM laws/regulations concerning the DCH; the management of the DCH is not in compliance with its positive finding of IM.

PROPOSED BY: Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F16-057)

PROPOSAL 138 - 5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear. Lengthen the hunting season for brown bear in Units 20A and 20B remainder as follows:

| | Resident Open Season | Nonresident Open Season |
|---|---|--|
| Units 20(A) and Remainder of Unit 20(B) 1 bear every regulatory year | Sept. 1 - <u>June 30</u> [MAY 31] (General hunt only) | Sept. 1 - <u>June 30</u> [MAY 31] |

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Lengthen the brown/grizzly bear season in Units 20A and 20B remainder to September 1—June 30. This will better align with bear baiting season April 15 to June 30. If you are bear baiting, hunters can take black bear until June 30 but you can only take brown/grizzly bear until May 31. This change will allow hunters to take brown/grizzly bear till the end of baiting season on June 30.

PROPOSED BY: Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F16-024)

PROPOSAL 139 - 5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures.

Allow the harvest of brown bear at bear bait stations in Unit 20F as follows:

(a) A person may not establish a bear bait station to hunt bear with the use of bait or scent lures without first obtaining a permit from the department under this section.

(b) In addition to any condition that the department may require under 5 AAC 92.052, a permit issued under this section is subject to the following provisions: (1) a person may establish a black bear bait station, or a black and brown bear bait station in Units 7, 11, 12, 13, 14(B), 15, 16, 20(A), 20(B), 20(C), 20(E), **20(F)**, 21(D), 24(C), 24(D), and 25(D), only if that person obtains a permit under this section;

...

(13) in Units 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14(A), 14(B), 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26(B), and 26(C), a hunter who has been airborne may take or assist in taking a black bear at a bait station with the use of bait or scent lures under a permit issued by the department, and if the hunter is at least 300 feet from the airplane at the time of taking; in Units 7, 11, 12, 13, 14(B), 15, 16, 20(A), 20(B), 20(C), 20(E), **20(F)**, 21(D), 24(C), 24(D), and 25(D), a hunter who has been airborne may take or assist in taking a brown bear at a bait station with the use of bait or scent lures under a permit issued by the department, and if the hunter is at least 300 feet from the airplane at the time of taking.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like to be able to take brown bears over bait in Unit 20F. There have been increased encounters/sightings of brown bears in recent years and there are a lot more brown bears now then there has been in the past. I would like to respectfully request that we are allowed to take brown bears at bait sites in Unit 20F.

PROPOSED BY: Craig Odom (EG-F16-107)

PROPOSAL 140 - 5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures.

Allow the harvest of brown bear at bear bait stations in Unit 20F as follows:

My proposal is to open Unit 20F for grizzly bears to be taken over bait during the regulatory black bear baiting season and under the current regulations for harvesting grizzly bears over bait.

Salvage for brown/grizzly bears:

You must salvage the entire hide (including claws attached) and skull of a brown/grizzly bear unless it was taken in (and not remove from) one of the subsistence hunt areas under a subsistence registration permit (see page 25). For brown bears taken at black bear stations in Units 7, 12, 13D, 15, 16, 20A, 20B, 20C, 20E, **20F**, 21D, 24C, 24D, and 25D, the edible meat must be salvaged and may not be used for bait or pet food. (See black bear baiting season and requirements on page 26-27 or handout available at Department of Fish & Game offices and online at <http://huntalaska.gov>.)

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? My proposal is to open Unit 20F for grizzly bears to be taken over bait during the regulatory black bear baiting season and under the current regulations for harvesting grizzly bears over bait. I have active bear baits in Unit 20F and have had issues with grizzly bears eating all the bait and keeping black bears away from the bait. I have noticed over the past few years the units such as 20A, 20B, 20C, and 20E and 25D

are all open for harvesting grizzly bears over bait and would like to propose Unit 20F to do the same. Unit 20F also has a short moose season that ends on September 15. This leads me to believe that moose population is a concern and that allowing for the harvest of grizzly bears over bait would only help the moose population grow.

PROPOSED BY: Brock Graziadei (EG-C15-063)

PROPOSAL 141 - 5 AAC 92.510. Areas closed to hunting; and 92.550. Areas closed to trapping. Close a portion of Unit 20C to the taking of wolf as follows:

Within Game Management Unit 20C; those portions of UCU 0607 and 0605 west of George Parks Highway and bounded by Denali National Park on three sides, is closed to the taking of wolves by hunting from February 1 to July 31 and by trapping from February 1 to October 31.

Note: Maps/figures and references submitted with the proposal are available on the meeting information website for the Interior/Northeast Arctic Region meeting at: www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.meetinginfo&date=02-17-2017&meeting=fairbanks.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In Alaska, wolves are among the most desired species for viewing (Shea & Tankersley 1991), and state wildlife management includes mandates to provide for multiple uses, including non-consumptive uses such as wildlife viewing (Alaska Department of Fish and Game 2006). Wildlife viewing also brings an important socio-economic benefit to the state of Alaska, with wildlife viewing activities in Alaska supporting over \$2.7 billion in economic activity in 2011. Forty percent of visitors to Alaska reported hoping to view wild wolves during their visit (ECONorthwest 2012).

More than anywhere else in Alaska, wolves in the eastern region of Denali National Park (Denali) provide significant wolf viewing opportunities as visitors travel along the Park Road. Denali is recognized as one of the best places in the world for people to see wolves in the wild and several thousand park visitors may see wolves in a given year. In addition, viewing large carnivores, particularly wolves and grizzly bears, is a main indicator of a satisfying visitor experience in Denali (Manning & Hallo 2010).

Wolf viewing opportunities in Denali are primarily provided by one to three packs of wolves that center their activity near the Park Road during the summer months. Analysis of 12 years of data from the National Park Service (NPS) GPS radio collars shows that these same wolf packs that provide the majority of wolf sightings during the visitor season show a seasonal shift in habitat use, increasing their use of areas just outside of the boundary of the park during the winter and spring. Wolves that frequent the Park Road are accustomed to the presence of humans and may be particularly vulnerable to harvest and even older breeding wolves are more susceptible to being trapped or shot. Harvest of wolves, particularly breeding wolves, has the potential to decrease wolf numbers, alter wolf behavior, and decrease opportunities for wolf viewing by park visitors. Borg et al. (2016) documented that the probability for wolf sighting during the period a buffer was in place was twice that of the periods when the buffer was absent. While wolf harvest just outside the northeastern boundary of the park may have little effect on regional scale wolf populations, it can

have significant effects on wolf packs whose territories intersect the Park Road and on the experience of Denali's visitors.

From 2000 to 2010, the Alaska Board of Game (board) approved the closure of certain areas adjacent in the Stampede Corridor to the park boundary to wolf hunting and trapping year round in order to protect wolf viewing opportunities in the park. In 2010, members of the board requested more information and research into the relationship between harvest of wolves in the Stampede corridor and wolf sightings within Denali ("Unit 20C Wolf Closure Proposals" 2010). In September 2010, the NPS, with collaboration from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) embarked on a five-year study of the relationship of wolf harvest adjacent to the park boundaries on wolf population and pack dynamics and on wolf viewing opportunities (Borg 2015).

Based on this research, we found that the presence of the trapping and hunting buffer zone during 2000-2010 was associated with increased wolf sightings in Denali compared to 2011-2013 and 1997-2000 (Borg et al 2016). Both the wolf population size and an index measuring the number of wolves denning near the park road, which were strongly associated with increased wolf sightings, were also greater during the period when the buffer zone was in place. Thus, the presence of the buffer may have increased local population size and the likelihood that wolves would den near the park road. Alternatively, the increase in sightings may have been a result of coincidental peaks in population size or the number of wolves denning near the park road as a result of variables not measured or explicitly included in our analysis. However, we note that the two natural variables generally considered to be strong drivers of wolf population dynamics (prey density and snow conditions, which influence prey vulnerability to wolf predation (Mech et al. 1998) were relatively consistent during the period of our study with no statistically significant differences (Adams & Roffler 2010; Owen & Meier 2009; Schmidt & Rattenbury 2013; Western Regional Climate Center 2015)).

It should also be noted that the presence of the buffer did not decrease the average annual number of wolves harvested in UCUs overlapping the Stampede corridor (UCUs 502, 605, 607), in fact harvest was higher during the years the buffer was in place (ADF&G 2013); note that these UCUs extend beyond the buffer area. During the presence of the buffer zone, harvest of wolves adjacent to Denali (7 ± 11.25 SE) was on average greater than during the period without the presence of the buffer zone (2.6 ± 4.3). Simultaneously the buffer was associated with substantially increased wolf sightings (Borg et al 2016). Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that closure of wolf hunting and trapping in an area within the Wolf Townships would present the optimal solution in meeting both consumptive and non-consumptive objectives of state and federal management agencies, and benefit about 400,000 visitors to Denali with potentially a greater likelihood of observing wild wolves.

We recognize that it is possible that the higher wolf population size, higher harvest levels and increased sightings during the buffer years were coincidental and not related to the buffer itself but some other unknown factor(s). Resolving this uncertainty would require additional years of monitoring the response of the system with a new buffer zone in place. The NPS will continue to monitor the wolf population and wolf viewing index to assess several factors (including the efficacy of the buffer, if enacted) that may affect wolf viewing opportunities in the park.

It has been suggested that given the large number of Alaska's visitors that view wildlife along the Denali Park Road and the relatively small number of wolf trappers and hunters active in the

Stampede corridor, that the seasonal closure of the corridor to wolf harvest is a negative impact for a few with a positive outcome for many (Mowry 2013). Indeed, annually well over 400,000 people visit Denali (Fix, Ackerman & Fay 2012), while the numbers of active trappers in the Stampede Corridor is between 1-3 in any given year (ADF&G 2013). However, the NPS recognizes the impact of the closure to the lifestyle and livelihood of these trappers may represent a significant trade-off.

If nothing is done, wolves from the most commonly viewed packs will continue to be trapped and hunted just outside of park boundaries, in places as close as four miles from the park road. This will result in continued disruption of wolf packs in the areas where wolves are seen by Alaska's visitors, a decrease in wolf numbers along the park road, possible loss of packs that frequent the park road (Borg 2015, Borg et al 2016) and decreased opportunities for wolf viewing.

This proposal would help to protect and improve the opportunities for Alaskans and others to see wolves along the Denali Park Road. It would have a small effect on the number of wolves harvested in a portion of Unit 20C.

Those likely to benefit if the proposal is adopted are the visitors who come to Alaska to see a diversity of wildlife (about 400,000 annually); tour operators and the Alaska tourism industry that promote and provide wildlife viewing tour products; and people who value the concept of conservation areas for wildlife.

Those likely to suffer if it is the proposal is not adopted are trappers and hunters who wish to harvest wolves in the 152 square mile area that we are proposing to close within the Stampede Corridor. Over the last 20 years, the average number of different individuals harvesting a wolf from this area is less than two people per year. This proposed change may impact the lifestyle or livelihood of a few trappers who use the area. Within the proposed closed area, under this proposal, wolf hunting would be open from August 1 to January 31, and wolf trapping would be open from November 1 to January 31. Within the proposed buffer, this proposal curtails the wolf hunting season by 29% and the wolf trapping season by 50% of the days.

Other solutions considered: Including UCU-502 in Unit 20C. Limiting harvest in a larger area that included the western most UCU within the Stampede Corridor, which has a much lower density of use by wolves than in UCUs 605 and 607 (over the last 12 years) was considered. This would have limited harvest opportunity with only a moderate reduction in risk to wolves.

Closing the entire wolf hunting and trapping season within the buffer was also considered. Wolves' reproductive capacity and pack structure is most vulnerable to disruption during the breeding season (Borg et al 2015). Packs that lose breeders during the breeding season are more likely to disband. Therefore, we chose to submit a proposal where the buffer is implemented during the proestrus and the breeding season. Wolves in Denali typically come into oestrus in March (Mech et al. 1998) and give birth in early May following a two-month gestation (Hayssen & van Tienhoven 1993). There is a prolonged period of proestrus in grey wolves of about six weeks (Asa & Valdespino 1998) during which the mated pair spends time together coordinating their activity, and this period appears important for the formation and maintenance of the pair bond (Mech & Knick 1978; Rothman & Mech 1979). We therefore define the breeding season and spring as February–April.

PROPOSAL 142 - 5 AAC 92.510. Areas closed to hunting; and 92.550. Areas closed to trapping. Close a portion of Unit 20 near Denali National Park to the taking of wolf as follows:

We are asking the Board of Game (board) to establish a no-wolf-take zone in a small portion of Unit 20, Subunits 20A and 20C, adjacent to Denali National Park. The proposed boundaries coincide approximately with the Denali National Park wolf population area, delineated by telemetry locations.

Take of wolves is prohibited on lands (Unit 20), in the area bounded on the west by the east boundary of Denali National Park; extending east to one mile east of, and parallel to, the Anchorage-Fairbanks Intertie Electrical Power Line; on the south by Carlo Creek; and on the north by a line from the southeast corner of Township 11S, Range 9W (Latitude 63 degrees, 55 minutes North), due east to the George Parks Highway, then south along the Parks Highway to a line running due east from the Highway through the town of Healy, to one mile east of the Intertie Line; inclusive of all lands west of the George Parks Highway commonly referred to as the “Wolf Townships,” and/or “Stampede Trail.”

Note: A map and references submitted with the proposal are available on the meeting information website for the Interior/Northeast Arctic Region meeting at:

www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.meetinginfo&date=02-17-2017&meeting=fairbanks

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?

1. Declines in the population of wolves that den inside Denali National Park have been associated with significantly diminished wolf viewing opportunities for park visitors. For 2015, the likelihood that a visitor would see wolves along the park road was five percent, down from 45% in 2010. Updated survey information on wolves that den inside Denali National Park and venture onto state lands outside the park (<http://www.nps.gov/dena/learn/nature/wolves.htm>) points to continued low numbers and densities of wolves. It also addresses the particular risk of additional population decline due to harvest of wolves that den in eastern parts of the park. In spring of 2015, three wolves were taken on state lands in the Wolf Townships by hunter/trapper activity, all three from the East Fork Pack, and one of them a pregnant female. Unfortunately, these are also the wolves that are among the most easily viewed by the park’s half-million annual visitors. The East Fork pack did not produce young in 2015, and was down to two individuals in spring 2016. Even a documented yearly human take of four to six wolves will be significantly detrimental to Denali’s five eastern packs, which at last count numbered 27 individuals, and whose numbers did not increase between the 2015 spring and fall 2015. The risk is compounded by the regionally low population of wolves (total for the park was 49 in spring 2016), and when breeding females are taken. Adequate evidence exists that the taking of one wolf, if a pregnant female, can disrupt an entire pack.

2. Wolves that den inside Denali National Park are particularly vulnerable to hunting and trapping in winter and spring when they take hunting forays onto lands north and east of the park. Hunting forays onto lands north and east of Denali National Park (in Units 20A and 20C) have been noted and recognized by wildlife scientists since the 1980s. Radiolocations have

shown over many years that wolves that den within the park tend to follow caribou into the Wolf Townships in spring. They have also been known to cross to the east and take forays into the Yanert River valley. This makes them specifically and predictably vulnerable to hunting and trapping during these times.

3. The Alaska Board of Game acted in the past to create no wolf take areas in Units 20A and 20C adjacent to Denali National Park and Preserve, to enhance their numbers for the viewing public. This idea makes economic sense and fulfills ADF&G management goals for wolves. Acknowledging that the park wolves were a valuable resource for visitors, in 2001 and 2002 the board approved no-take closed areas (Stampede and Nenana Canyon) adjacent to the park. This was at a time when the wolf population was double the current number (a 2002 spring count of 97 wolves).

This decision - to allocate wolves from hunting and trapping to viewing and enjoyment by tourists and Alaskans - is within the power of the board and makes sense in this particular area, where economics support it and Alaskans have repeatedly requested it. Neither Unit 20A nor Unit 20C is identified for intensive management to control predator numbers. Additionally, one of the world's premier scientific wolf study programs has been collecting data in this region for almost 30 years.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) management policies include management for non-consumptive uses of wolves. Note below, from the wolf management report of survey-inventory activities, 1 July 2008 – 30 June 2011 (ADF&G, Division of Wildlife Conservation) [p. 160]:

MANAGEMENT GOALS

ADF&G will manage wolf populations to provide for human uses and to ensure that wolves remain an integral part of Interior Alaska's ecosystems. Compatible human uses include hunting and trapping (both for personal use and commercial sale of furs), photography, viewing, listening, and scientific and educational purposes. We recognize the aesthetic value of observing wolves in their natural environment as an important human use of wolves.

Unquestionably Denali National Park's iconic wolves are high on visitors' lists of animals they hope to see. Those visitors spend money that has an enormous impact on the local Denali economy. A recent NPS report showed that the more than 530,000 visitors who came to the park in 2014 spent \$5.24 million in nearby communities. That spending supported almost 7,000 jobs in the local area – including 300-plus employees of the park's largest concessionaire - and had a cumulative benefit to the local economy of \$7.48 million.

If nothing is done, human take of park wolves on lands adjacent to the park will continue. The wolf population within the park and adjacent lands will be at significant risk for continued declines in numbers and view-ability.

Reallocation of use from hunting/trapping to viewing wolves will enhance the economic benefit of this area to all Alaskans. The local and state tourism economies will benefit when visitors have an improved chance of seeing wolves. Almost 30 years of collaborative scientific study of wolf ecology in the Denali region will benefit.

This proposed buffer would inconvenience a few recreational hunters/trappers. Trappers would have to set their traps farther away from the park boundary. Likewise, hunters would be prohibited from taking wolves on land closest to the park. This “no-take” zone is quite small in the context of the entire state.

PROPOSED BY: Denali Citizens Council and Alaska Wildlife Alliance (EG-F15-114)
