

Wildlife Restoration OPERATING GRANT FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
PO Box 115526
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Alaska Department of Fish and Game Wildlife Restoration Grant

GRANT NUMBER: AKW-B-SW-2020 Amendment #1

PROJECT NUMBER 21.0

PROJECT TITLE: Public and Hunter Services and Information

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE: July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021

REPORT DUE DATE: August 24, 2021

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Darren Bruning, Kristen Romanoff

Authorities: 2 CFR 200.328
2 CFR 200.301
50 CFR 80.90

I. PROGRESS ON PROJECT OBJECTIVES DURING PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

Many activities were completed in FY21 to meet the project's objectives. The activities listed below addressed at least one of the three objectives and many covered multiple objectives.

Objective 1: Connect people to wildlife to:

- a. Generate and strengthen people's connection with the natural environment and promote responsible hunting, trapping, viewing, and appreciation for wildlife.
- b. Promote awareness of the different ways people value and use wildlife and encourage tolerance towards different wildlife values and uses.
- c. Teach people how to stay safe and act responsibly to minimize problems with wildlife

Objective 2: Build support for wildlife conservation, management, and research.

- a. Improve public understanding of the interrelatedness of ecosystems, habitat and sustainable populations of wildlife.
- b. Improve public understanding of wildlife management principles and promote public support for DWC wildlife management and research efforts.

Objective 3: Promote awareness of Alaska wildlife law to:

- a. Empower people to engage and participate in the decision-making processes regarding wildlife and issues that affect the welfare of wildlife populations.
- b. Improve public understanding of and compliance with wildlife laws, and hunting and trapping regulations.

The following activities were completed to address the project objectives:

- Hunter Information Services (Frontline) Staff consisting of Fish and Wildlife Technicians, Office Assistant, Program Technicians, Wildlife Biologists and College Interns served as an initial interface between multiple and diverse public and the DWC.
- The Frontline staff provided a broad array of wildlife-related information and services to the DWC's multiple and diverse publics, including:
 - disseminating information on hunting and trapping regulations
 - disseminating information about refuge and/or special area use
 - issuance of permits, harvest tickets
 - selling licenses and big game harvest tags
 - receiving harvest reports and information
 - sealing of harvested bears, furbearers, and Dall's sheep
 - disseminating biological, ecological, and conservation and management information
- The Frontline staff accomplished providing the above information and services through
 - face-to-face interaction with the public at the department headquarters, 5 Regional offices, and 17 Area offices. These offices are open from roughly 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on weekdays, excluding holidays
 - Telephone conversations
 - Electronic and paper mail, and social media
- Most in-person community events scheduled for FY21 were cancelled due to COVID-19.
- All regional specialists worked with biologists to host virtual public presentations about wildlife management and research topics, such as: *Caribou herds across the Last Frontier*, *Counting Caribou*, *Diseases in Caribou*, *Herd Updates (Western Arctic herd, Mulchatna herd, and Nelchina herd)*, *Moose Surveys in Interior Alaska*, *Gustavus Moose Hunting*, and several *Wildlife Safety* presentations for target audiences and communities. Due to COVID-19, all presentations were offered virtually using Zoom. Presentations were recorded and made available via ADF&G's Vimeo and YouTube channels. The "live virtual presentations" averaged 100 attendees and hundreds more have viewed the recorded sessions.
- RIV specialist coordinated speakers and promoted *Wildlife Wednesdays Lecture Series* held monthly (Oct-April) focused on wildlife research/management in Alaska. Also, due to COVID-19, the series was held online and partner organizations co-hosted each of the events.
- Regional specialists and area staff provided wildlife safety to elementary and middle school students in Anchorage, Palmer/Wasilla, and Kenai Peninsula reaching approximately 9,000 students in Anchorage area and 2,000 in smaller communities. Spring 2021 presentations were delivered using virtual platform in cooperation with school districts. In addition to direct contact with students, many parents joined their child/children to watch the online presentations, expanding the reach of this program.

- Region I, II, III, and IV specialists and the public information officer serve on the department's Facebook committee. An average of three posts per week highlighting hunting, fishing, outdoor opportunities, wildlife safety and seasonal highlights. 37,000 followers as of 8/2021. Post reach about 47,000/month. 160 posts in FY21 covering a wide range of topics addressing objectives - hunting, wildlife viewing, wildlife safety, invasive species, Fish and Game research and monitoring, outdoor opportunities, and improvements to access and infrastructure. The typical post had a reach of 4,000 - 6,000; about 20% of posts performed in the 8,000-12,000 reach; the highest performer had a reach of 98,000. Facebook posts are picked up by local newspapers to run articles in the Anchorage Daily News, Juneau Empire and Fairbanks News Miner and also shared by many partner organizations and groups.
- RI, III and RV specialists manage and create content for regional Facebook pages to highlight wildlife management, research and hunting information specific to their region. Number of unique page followers: RI- 1,633, RIII- 2,925 and RV- 1,918.
- RI Education specialist manages an Instagram account for the Southeast region; site currently has 2,728 followers.
- Regional education specialists produced short videos to post on all social media pages. Unique views of the most popular videos reached up to 30,000 (Winter Lynx Sightings), 14,000 (Wood bison release), and 16,000 (Fortymile caribou jaw sampling for hunters).
- Regional education specialists developed scripts and gathered video footage of wildlife management and research projects for a new series of video shorts "*Working with Wildlife*", which will be posted on social media in FY22.
- Regional specialists and Information Officer distribute the inventory of publications, posters, guides, booklets and brochures to statewide visitor centers, bookstores, agency information centers (i.e. Forest Service, Park Service, wildlife refuges managed by USFWS), and ADF&G area offices and assist information center staff respond to inquiries related to the wildlife management, hunting, wildlife viewing and wildlife biology.
- All regional specialists produced printed products for regional and/or statewide distribution, see list of FY21 publications on page 4.
- All regional specialists and information officer complete content review of sections of the department's website and update and/or develop content on a regular basis.
- Webmaster updates content and page layout with input from Education Specialists and Information Officer.
- Education Specialists compiled materials and produced activity demonstrations from the *Alaska Wildlife Curriculum* to include on ADF&G's webpage, *At Home/At School* wildlife resources for educators.
- All Education Specialists facilitated virtual online workshops for 125 educators from ten Alaska school districts. Attendance at workshops was down in FY21 as a result of demands on teachers' time during COVID-19 related school closures.

- RV Education Specialist is a member of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group and served as the chair of the education/outreach committee and produced the annual *Caribou Trails* newsletter and managed the group’s website.
- The 12 issues of *Alaska Fish and Wildlife News* published in FY21 contained 35 articles, all of which address at least one objective. The magazine has 21,140 subscribers; analytics show current and archived AFWN articles received an average of 64,700 unique page views/month,
- Information Officer manages the *ADF&G Vimeo channel*, which enables the department to embed videos on our website. Wildlife related presentations, and “learn how to” instructional videos are produced and distributed via the channel. 307 videos are available and new videos are produced every year. Traffic: Average traffic is 100-200 views/day, about 10,000/month but there is higher traffic before and during hunting season openings in late summer Aug. 15-Oct 1; jumps up to 400-1,000/day with 38,000 views total in six-week period
- Information officer delivers “*Sounds Wild*” which is broadcast weekly and, in some cases daily on about 30 stations in Alaska, topics address all objectives. 60 episodes are produced annually, hundreds are accessible via archives.
- Webmaster recorded the following activity on ADF&G’s website pages during FY21. The numbers reported reflected by Google Analytics are the number of times visitors entered site through page or pages. This is the closest metric available to document “distinct users.”

All Wildlife	2,515,036
Hunting	1,748,146
Education	64,822
Viewing	160,499
Other License	3,173
WC News	10,229
Wildlife News	730,560
Wildlife Research	2,221
Regulations	43,953
Species	750,564

- Webmaster upgraded website to enhance functionality for podcast style dissemination of the “Sounds Wild” radio program.
- Regional specialists produce public service announcements for radio broadcast in Anchorage, Kenai, Mat-Su and the southcentral and southeast regions on a variety of wildlife management topics.
- Information Officer assists in the distribution of hundreds of news releases and advisory announcements were provided to statewide media, collectively meeting all objectives.

II. SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED ON PROJECT TO DATE.

This project provides information to members of the general public, as well as the media, civic service, and youth groups about hunting and trapping regulations and opportunities, wildlife, biology, research and management programs. This project also includes preparation of news releases and publications, production of displays, public presentations, assistance to teachers and school presentations, coordination and promotion of division workshops, and virtual presentations about wildlife related topics. Hunter Information Services are ongoing and substantial progress was made during this project period.

III. SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT REPORTS AND/OR AMENDMENTS.

Due to the outreach of COVID-19, some in-person outreach events were cancelled or re-designed to be delivered using virtual platforms (Zoom, Facebook Live, YouTube, Vimeo). To reduce in-person traffic to area offices, more resources were made available online. Also, interactive materials were developed and/or disseminated to make information more accessible during the pandemic.

IV. PUBLICATIONS

- **Alaska's wild wonders - Mighty migrators, Issue XI**
Curl, J. A., editor. 2021. Alaska's wild wonders - Mighty migrators, Issue XI [booklet]. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Fairbanks.
- **Are you bear aware?**
Snively, M. L., 2021. Are you bear aware? [display panels]. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Anchorage.
- **Caribou health and disease: a pocket guide**
Curl, J. A., editor. 2021. Caribou health and disease: a pocket guide [booklet]. Alaska Department of Fish and game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Fairbanks.
- **Caribou trails, 2021**
Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group. 2021. Caribou trails [newsletter]. H. Jameson, editor. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Nome.
- **The Comeback trail**
Taras, M., editor. 2021 The Comeback trail- Forty-mile caribou herd newsletter. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Fairbanks.
- **Delta Junction Bison Range habitat enhancement kiosk**
Curl, J. A. 2021. Delta Junction Bison Range Habitat Enhancement Kiosk [display panels]. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Fairbanks.

- **Dave Klein a lifetime in wildlife biology and ecology**
Woodford, R. 2021. Dave Klein a lifetime in wildlife biology and ecology. Alaska Fish & Wildlife News, January 2021. Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Juneau.
- **Feeding wild animals**
Woodford, R. 2021. Feeding wild animals. Alaska Fish & Wildlife News, March 2021. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Juneau.
- **Foxes wear new coats for spring**
Woodford, R., and A. Underwood. 2021. Foxes wear new coats for spring. Alaska Fish & Wildlife News, April 2021. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Juneau.
- **Hair snares “trap” grizzly bears**
Woodford, R. 2021. Hair snares “trap” grizzly bears. Alaska Fish & Wildlife News, May 2021. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Juneau.
- **Moose Research in Alaska redefining how moose respond to warm temperatures**
Woodford, R. 2020. Moose research in Alaska redefining how moose respond to warm temperatures. Alaska Fish & Wildlife News, August 2020. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Juneau.
- **Mulchatna caribou trails**
Doherty, S.R., editor. 2021. Mulchatna caribou trails [newsletter]. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Palmer.
- **Muskoxen: A guide to identification, hunting and viewing**
Jameson, H., editor. 2021. Muskoxen: A guide to identification, hunting and viewing [revised booklet]. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Nome.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS PROJECT

This project will need to be continued annually, as these services are integral to the division’s mission and are a critical part of its day-to-day operations.

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Date: August 18, 2021