

Note: The Board of Game deferred this proposal from the 2017 Interior/Northeast Arctic Region Meeting. It was previously numbered Proposal 86.

PROPOSAL 65 – 5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou; and 92.510.

Areas closed to hunting. Close an area ¼ mile on either side of the Taylor Highway to hunting during caribou season, and limit the number of permits as follows:

We would like to see no-shoot zone ¼ mile from each side of the road, so a ½-mile wide corridor, with the highway in the center, along the Taylor Highway and Boundary Cutoff Road. If not along the entire highway (which we would prefer) at minimum between the Walker Fork Bridge (Mile Post 82) and the Alder Creek Bridge (MP 115.4) and along the Boundary Cutoff.

We would like to see the number of permits for these hunts limited to a level that will allow managers and law enforcement to be able to effectively manage the hunt in a safe and sustainable manner.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The fall Fortymile caribou hunt (RC860) along the Taylor Highway has become a very dangerous, wasteful, ugly, unethical, shooting gallery style of hunt. Resulting in numerous issues including:

-Hunters on ATVs run up and down the highway at high speeds (which is against state law) chasing after groups of caribou on or along the road (harassing animals is also against the law).

-Hunters commonly shoot animals on the highway, from the highway, across the highway and from their ATVs (all against the law). They'll see a group of caribou a ways off on or near the road, speed up to them, slam on their brakes and start shooting into the group. This happens often!

-Hunters along the road shoot down the road and at caribou sky lined on the road or just off the road, without any concern for safety of others, resulting in dangerous conditions for hunters and non-hunters alike along the Taylor Highway, especially in between the Walker Fork Bridge (MP 82) and the Fortymile River Bridge (MP 112.4) and along the Boundary Cutoff.

-Numerous pools of blood in the middle of the road, in this area, with no drag marks, during the fall 2015 season, prove these animals are being killed on the road. This was documented by state and federal managers and enforcement during the fall 2015 season.

-There is significant wounding loss from hunters flock-shooting from the highway, which has been documented by state and federal managers and law enforcement personnel. There were at least 12 caribou killed and left in this area in only a few days during the fall 2015 season, as documented by state and federal managers and law enforcement. And this is just what they were able to find.

-Each fall there are hundreds of people camped all across the high country along this stretch of highway, especially from the Y to MP 105. Garbage and animal remains litter the areas where the hunters camp when the hunters leave (littering is against the law).

-Dozens of gut piles litter the shoulder of the highway in this stretch and are occasionally left right in the middle of a pull-out or on the drivable surface of the road itself (this is against the hunt conditions for RC860 – thus illegal and can be verified by state and federal managers and law enforcement).

-During the fall 2015 season, my wife and I, while working in our garden, had bullets flying over our heads from people shooting at caribou on the road above our house. We also had caribou killed within a few hundred feet of our house that were shot by hunters shooting from the Fortymile River bridge toward our house. This hunt has put our lives and the lives of our dogs in danger, plain and simple, and has taken away our opportunity to hunt or even pick berries safely.

-Issuing over 3000 permits for this area is simply not manageable and not sustainable.

-While some may argue many of these things are already against the law, so much of it is happening that managers and enforcement officers cannot even come close to keeping up with all of this. It is uncontrollable and with dwindling enforcement presence due to state budget problems, the problem will only get worse.

The herd, the country, and those of us who live here can't take much more of this, changes need to be made.

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